

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses a variety of issues related to social conditions in the LIRR ESA Project study areas—including general neighborhood character, community facilities, and relevant population and labor force characteristics. The East Side Access Project has the potential to affect social conditions if it results in a change in neighborhood character (by introducing new land uses, for example), adversely affects community facilities (for example, by reducing access to a facility), or has adverse impacts on the local population. The discussion of social conditions focuses on the same study areas in Manhattan, Queens, and Long Island that are assessed in Chapter 3, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy.” For each study area, the existing conditions are assessed, including an evaluation of neighborhood character, identification of community facilities, and assessment of population characteristics. The expected changes in the future are then considered, followed by an evaluation of each alternative’s effects on social conditions in the analysis years 2010 and 2020.* The future without the proposed project (“No Action” Alternative), the TSM Alternative, and the Preferred Alternative are analyzed to show the probable impacts of each alternative. As in Chapter 3, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” each discussion of existing conditions, changes expected to occur in the future without the project, and probable impacts of project alternatives begins with a regional overview and is followed by a discussion of the study areas in Manhattan, Long Island City/Sunnyside, Long Island, replacement yards in New York City, and *potential* new Long Island storage yards.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**LONG ISLAND TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR OVERVIEW**

The Long Island Transportation Corridor (LITC), encompassing Manhattan and all of Long Island (Nassau and Suffolk Counties and Brooklyn and Queens), is a large, varied metropolitan subregion, stretching for approximately 122 miles east-west, from the Hudson River to the tip

* Sources for population and housing data are the 1980 and 1990 *Census of Population and Housing* and New York Metropolitan Transportation Council’s (NYMTC) population forecasts for 1995, and projections for 2000, 2010, and 2020. The inventory of community facilities is based on the *Community District Needs 1998* for Manhattan and Queens Community Boards and supplementary information gathered for the analysis of land use, zoning, and public policy (in Chapter 3, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy”). The assessment of neighborhood character is based on information gathered for other studies, particularly the analysis of land use.

Countywide projections were prepared for NYMTC by Urbanomics. Projections were made for MTA planning districts by preparing subcounty allocations of the countywide totals. Most of these subcounty allocations were prepared for MTA Long-Range Planning Framework by URS, September 18, 1997. For Manhattan, the Queens study area, and downtown Brooklyn, updated forecasts were prepared for the Long-Range Planning Framework by AKRF, Inc. in May 1999.

of Montauk Point. At the western end of this area is Manhattan, with its dense core of activity. Manhattan is characterized by its famous skyline, bustling Times Square and surrounding Theater District, commerce on Wall Street, the hustle of the Garment Center, fashionable shopping districts, and mix of residential neighborhoods—some ethnic, some historic and most very dense. Queens and Brooklyn, across the East River, are home to an extraordinarily varied mix of ethnic groups in established neighborhoods, less dense than Manhattan, but, with a few exceptions, still very urban in character. These boroughs also contain thriving downtown centers, major industrial areas, a vast agglomeration of transportation infrastructure (including the city's two major airports), Shea Stadium, the National Tennis Center, and several major parks and beaches.

The character of the LITC becomes progressively more suburban as one moves eastward into Nassau County, the denser and older of the two suburban counties, with urbanized town centers and a variety of housing types, ranging from the estates of its northern hills to post-World-War II tract housing, the most famous of which is Levittown. Suffolk County, developed later, is strongly suburban in its western end; to the east, however, the suburban development gives way to farms and wineries, fishing ports, and a substantial number of vacation homes. Both counties are known for the extraordinary beaches that line the Island's bays, sound, and ocean shores.

The LITC is home to a substantial population—an estimated 8,405,400 in 1995—and a large labor force—estimated at 3,590,620 in 1995. The LIRR runs east-west through the LITC, serving commuters and those visiting other regional attractions, such as shopping, theaters, museums, sports and other events, parks, beaches, universities, and medical centers. Although the LIRR played a strong role in shaping the character of development on Long Island from the mid-19th to mid-20th century (see discussion in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy"), it has been less significant to the LITC's character through the waves of post-World-War II development centered around the automobile as a primary means of transportation. Nonetheless, the LIRR remains a valuable and important transportation resource in the LITC, supporting a host of activities and conditions relevant to the social and community character of the project's study areas.

As shown in Table 4-1, the residents of the LITC work predominantly at jobs in Manhattan, elsewhere in New York City, and on Long Island. Some 22.1 percent (275,947 people) of the Long Island labor force commutes to New York City for work, and 10.3 percent commutes to Manhattan for work. Those Long Island residents make up 6.9 percent of the total work force in Manhattan and 7.9 percent of the total work force in New York City. Conversely, some residents of the New York City portion of the LITC commute to Long Island for work. In total, an estimated 79,489 people commute from Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens to Long Island for work. These workers make up 7.5 percent of the workforce on Long Island.

The neighborhood character, community facilities, and population characteristics of each project study area are described below.

MANHATTAN STUDY AREA

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Manhattan study area is the most densely developed mixed residential and commercial area in the country. Commercial districts are located next to residential districts with significant crossover of uses in each area. Different neighborhoods in Manhattan south of 79th Street vary

Table 4-1

LITC 1995 Labor Force by Employment Location

Location of Residence	Total Labor Force	Location of Employment					
		Manhattan		Other NYC		Long Island	
		Workers	Percent of Man-hattan's Work Force	Workers	Percent of NYC's Work Force	Workers	Percent of LI's Work Force
Nassau County	643,677	96,676	5.1%	109,007	6.6%	424,598	39.6%
Suffolk County	624,795	35,112	1.8	39,382	2.4	543,200	50.7
Nassau & Suffolk	1,268,472	131,789	6.9%	148,389	9.0%	967,798	90.3%
Manhattan	675,243	560,801	29.4	72,457	4.4	7,597	0.7
Queens	866,641	318,051	16.7	456,906	27.8	62,536	5.8
Brooklyn	835,729	291,474	15.3	510,627	31.1	10,796	1.0
NYC portion of LITC	2,377,613	1,170,326	61.3%	1,039,990	63.3%	80,929	7.6%
LITC	3,646,085	1,302,114	68.3%	1,188,379	72.3%	1,048,727	97.9%
Total Work Force		1,907,021	100.0%	1,643,029	100.0%	1,071,335	100.0%
Note: This table presents employed trip-based labor force and trip-based work force which do not include those who work at home. Employed labor force consists residential population that works (outside the home); work force consists of employees, at their workplace. Source: Journey-to-Work Forecasting and Analysis, Urbanomics/NYMTA, September 27, 1995 as used in MTA Long Range Planning Framework Projects: MESA, ARC, LIRR/ESA.							

widely in character. There are the dense commercial business districts of Lower Manhattan and Midtown, where the streets are lined with tall office buildings and busy with traffic and pedestrians, and the retail districts along avenues throughout the study area, including Sixth Avenue in Chelsea, and at Herald Square and Fifth and Madison Avenues in Midtown. The study area also contains some of the most expensive and luxurious housing in the region (e.g., Sutton Place, Park and Fifth Avenues), and some of the most impoverished (e.g., Lower East Side). Types of housing involve high-rise apartment towers, bulkier and shorter masonry buildings of the pre-War era, mid-rise brick apartment buildings, tenements, brownstones, and row houses. Neighborhood character varies from the historic small-scale Greenwich Village to the newer high-rise developments on the Upper East Side. Many neighborhoods clearly show their mix of incomes, for example, the Lower East Side and Chelsea contain mixes of low-rise older residential and industrial buildings and large blocks of public housing. The study area is served by rail, subway, bus, and taxi, providing local and regional access.

Midtown contains a dense office district from Third to Sixth Avenues, with a major shopping area along Fifth Avenue. The historic Grand Central Terminal (GCT) lies in the heart of the midtown Manhattan commercial core, an active area of offices, shops, hotels, urban plazas, and other uses that define the surrounding urban environment. There are shops and restaurants at street level on all sides of the GCT superblock and on the blocks between Vanderbilt and Madison Avenues. Many travelers using GCT are commuters working in large nearby office buildings, such as the Metropolitan Life Building, Chrysler Building, Helmsley Building, and Graybar Building. Concentrated along 42nd Street and Park and Madison Avenues, these offices and their many employees give a distinctive "corporate" quality to the area. North of GCT, Park

Avenue is a broad two-way boulevard with a wide landscaped median that is home to corporate headquarters for companies such as Bear Stearns and Chase Manhattan Bank. The avenue is also the location of several renowned landmarked structures: the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, Saint Bartholomew's Church, the Racquet & Tennis Club, and Lever House and the Seagram's Building, two early and fine examples of steel and glass "tower-on-plaza" architecture (for more information, see Chapter 7, "Historic Resources"). Some of these plazas serve as open spaces for workers in the area during the day.

To the west, Madison and Fifth Avenues comprise a major shopping district, with Saks Fifth Avenue, Tiffany, Fortunoff, and a number of upscale boutiques and related shops. At Lexington Avenue and 59th Street is Bloomingdale's, the anchor of another important shopping district.

Manhattan is famous for its major regional community facilities and institutions, including museums, concert halls, parks, medical centers, and religious institutions. Closest to GCT are the Museum of Modern Art, the New York Public Library Research Center, the United Nations, the theaters of Times Square, the hospitals of East Midtown (New York University Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital) and the Upper East Side (New York University-Cornell Medical Center, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center), and East Side institutions such as Hunter College and Rockefeller University. Farther north on the Upper East Side (and outside the study area, but important destinations for visitors to Manhattan) are the numerous museums of Museum Mile (the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Jewish Museum, the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, El Museo del Barrio, the Museum of the City of New York, etc.). Institutions on the West Side or near Penn Station include Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden, and St. Luke's-Roosevelt and New York Presbyterian Hospitals. Farther north (and outside the study area), the West Side is home to the American Museum of Natural History and, still farther, Columbia University.

Despite its dense commercial core, as described in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," Manhattan includes many residential neighborhoods between and outside its two commercial areas (see Figure 3-2). The population in those neighborhoods is described below.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

As shown in Table 4-2, the Manhattan study area includes nearly 648,000 residents—about 42 percent of the total population of Manhattan (1995 population estimates). Some 8 percent of the LITC's population lives in the Manhattan study area. Most of these study area residents live in the Village and Midtown South subareas, which are the largest subareas in terms of acreage (see Figure 3-1 in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," for a map of the subareas). As shown in the table, the majority of the residents in the Manhattan study area are white, and the 1989 median household income (reported in the *1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing*) is nearly \$42,000, with 14.7 percent living below the poverty level. Minority populations are concentrated in Lower Manhattan (this area, which includes most of Chinatown, has an Asian population of 40 percent), the Village, Chelsea, the Garment Center, and Clinton. A relatively high percentage of the population lives below poverty level in Lower Manhattan, the Village, Chelsea, and the Garment Center. Overall, the percentage of low-income residents in the Manhattan study area is slightly higher than in the LITC, but lower than in Manhattan as a whole or in New York City.

Table 4-2
Manhattan Study Area
Population Characteristics, 1990 and 1995

Area	1990 Population	Estimated 1995 Population	Selected Demographic Characteristics, 1990						
			Percent of Study Area	Race and Ethnicity (Percent)				Economic Profile	
				White	Black	Asian	Hispanic*	1989 Median Household Income**	Below Poverty Level*** (Percent)
Lower Manhattan	45,069	47,487	7.1%	45.5%	8.3%	40.3%	10.2%	\$38,086	17.7%
Village	232,603	235,814	36.5	60.3	8.6	19.5	23.1	\$30,679	21.6
Chelsea	25,443	25,551	4.0	76.7	11.3	3.4	25.2	\$30,619	14.7
Lower Fifth	27,298	27,592	4.3	82.4	7.6	6.0	14.1	\$37,380	12.9
Midtown South	86,731	87,819	13.6	83.0	6.9	7.4	8.4	\$43,543	9.4
Garment Center	5,890	5,980	0.9	56.9	31.9	6.2	35.1	\$33,123	40.8
Clinton	37,807	38,176	5.9	73.9	9.4	7.0	23.9	\$28,448	16.5
Midtown	14,569	14,690	2.3	82.1	8.7	6.4	7.9	\$39,646	13.4
Midtown East	63,409	64,720	9.9	88.6	2.4	7.5	4.5	\$53,232	6.0
Lincoln Square	29,035	29,600	4.6	82.2	9.7	4.5	10.5	\$51,147	9.3
Upper East Side	69,745	70,383	10.9	92.9	2.1	4.2	4.0	\$65,095	4.7
Total Study Area	637,599	647,812	100.0%	72.6%	7.4%	13.4%	15.2%	\$41,499	14.7%
Total Manhattan	1,487,536	1,509,996	—	58.3%	22.0%	7.4%	26.0%	\$32,262	20.5%
Total NYC	7,322,564	7,348,600	—	52.3%	28.8%	7.0%	23.7%	\$29,823	18.9%
Total LITC	8,349,010	8,394,177	—	64.5%	21.8%	6.2%	16.3%	\$36,300	13.8%
Notes: * An ethnic group that can include members of all different racial categories. ** The median household income reported for the study area is a weighted average of those reported for the census and/or block groups in the study area. The median household income for the LITC is a weighted average of those reported for the counties in the LITC. *** Percent of persons with incomes below the established poverty level; poverty level varies depending on household size. Sources: 1990 figures are from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, <i>U.S. Census of Population and Housing</i> , 1990. 1995 forecasts are from NYMTC.									

LONG ISLAND CITY/SUNNYSIDE STUDY AREA

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Long Island City/Sunnyside study area includes commercial, industrial, residential, and educational uses, making it both an origin and destination point throughout the day. The study area is well served by roads, subways, and buses, but it is not particularly accommodating to pedestrians. Those sections of the area that do not contain major arteries leading to and from the Queensboro Bridge or the Queens-Midtown Tunnel, or across Sunnyside Yard, are quieter, but even these usually contain truck docks or curb cuts that make walking difficult.

As described in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area is primarily commercial and industrial near the site of the proposed Sunnyside station, and residential at the edges of the study area. As shown in Figure 4-1, the study area includes portions of four different neighborhoods. South of Sunnyside Yard, the far western edge of the tree-lined Sunnyside residential neighborhood is included in the eastern portion of the study area. Dutch Kills lies north of the eastern part of Sunnyside Yard and is a

mixed industrial and residential use neighborhood where sidewalks are generally uneven and unkempt, landscaping in front of houses or apartments is scarce, and street life is limited. Additionally, isolated residential pockets are located north of Sunnyside Yard in Long Island City.

The study area south of Sunnyside Yard in Long Island City is primarily industrial, typified by loft and low industrial buildings on open streets with few trees or pedestrians. An exception is the area along Thomson Avenue and Queens Boulevard, where there is a concentration of institutional and commercial offices located in large converted manufacturing buildings, including LaGuardia Community College, the Aviation High School, and the International Design Center of New York, or IDCNY (now predominantly occupied by office uses).

Sunnyside Yard and Yard A/Arch Street Yard bisect the middle of the study area, forming the center of a large industrial area. These train yards are actively used for storage and maintenance of a large number of trains. The yards, roughly between Skillman Avenue and Northern Boulevard, are predominantly below the grade of surrounding streets and surrounded by large industrial buildings (and, in some locations, fencing). Therefore, the yards are not visible from most of the surrounding study area. Bridges cross the yards at Queens Boulevard, Thomson Avenue, Honeywell Avenue, and 43rd Street, connecting the areas to the north and south and providing some views into the yards.

Long Island City is known for its large industrial lofts occupied by factories and warehouses and for the elevated N and No. 7 trains that wind above the streets. However, among the many commercial and industrial buildings are scattered row houses and the historic Hunters Point residential district, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the proposed site for the new Sunnyside station. At the intersection of Thomson and Jackson Avenues just north of the yards, the 49-story Citibank tower, which dominates the Long Island City skyline, and the Queens Court House Square lend a corporate feel to the immediate area. Although recent development has occurred south of Queens Plaza, Court Square is still the study area's major commercial and transportation center. Silvercup Studios and P.S. 1 Museum of Contemporary Art in Long Island City (just outside the study area), along with smaller art galleries and studios, make the area a locus of creative production.

Noise levels in the study area are consistent with other urban areas. Industrial pockets tend to be intermittently noisy with large trucks and machine operation. Traffic is a significant source of noise for the area, particularly along Jackson Avenue and Queens and Northern Boulevards. Traffic is particularly heavy during the morning and evening rush hours, since the area is used to access the Queensboro Bridge, Queens-Midtown Tunnel, and regional highways.

Many of the community facilities in the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area are public and private schools (see Table 4-3 and Figure 4-1). LaGuardia Community College, located on Thomson Avenue just west of Queens Boulevard, is a two-year college that is part of the City University of New York and that draws students from around the city. An associated middle school and high school are in the same building. Other prominent community facilities include the 11th District Courthouse, located north of the yard at Court Square (at Jackson and Thomson Avenues). Additionally, there is a state correctional facility located in a primarily industrial area two blocks south of the yard.

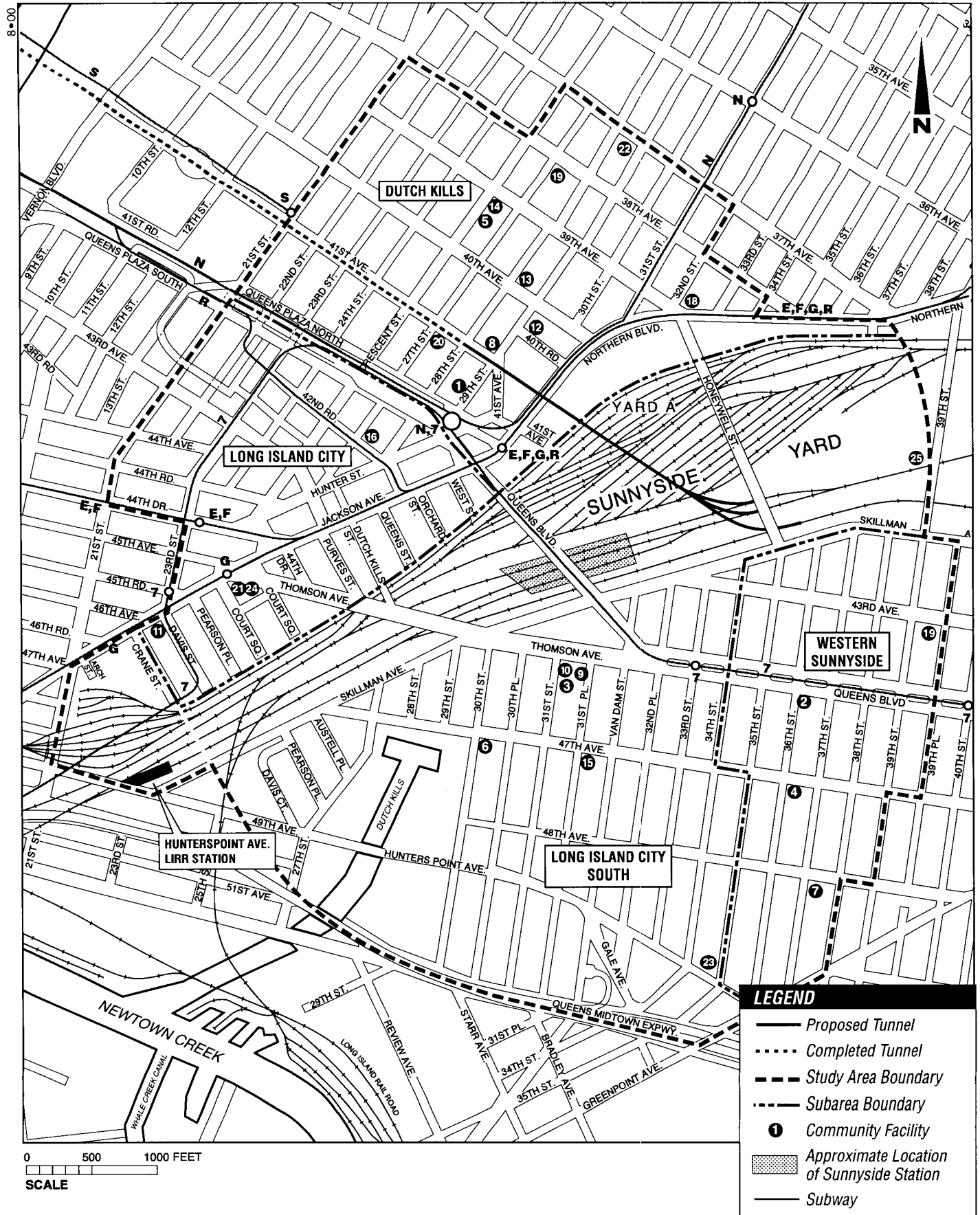


Figure 4-1

Social Conditions: Long Island City/Sunnyside Study Area

Table 4-3
Long Island City/Sunnyside Study Area
Community Facilities

Map No.	Name	Address
1	I.S. 235 Academy of New Americans	28-04 41st Avenue
2	Aviation High School	36-02 Queens Boulevard
3	International High School	31-10 Thomson Avenue
4	Queens Vocational High School	37-02 47th Avenue
5	Evangel Christian School	39-21 Crescent Street
6	Robert F. Wagner Jr. Institute for the Arts	30-00 47th Avenue
7	St. Raphael School and Church	48-25 37th Street
8	Academy of American Studies/Newcomers High School	28-01 41st Avenue
9	Fiorello LaGuardia Community College (CUNY)	31-10 Thomson Avenue
10	Middle College High School	31-11 Thomson Avenue
11	Church of God	22-48 Jackson Avenue
12	Korean Phillips Presbyterian Church	40-09 Northern Boulevard
13	St. Patrick's Church	39-42 40th Avenue
14	Gospel Tabernacle Church	39-21 Crescent Street
15	Queens State Correctional Facility	31-28 31st Place
16	Group Home	42-25 27th Street
17	Greek Cultural Center	38-11 27th Street
18	HRC NYC New Projects Training School	32-03 39th Avenue
19	Cultural Center	43-15 39 Street
20	YMCA	27-04 41st Avenue
21	11th District Courthouse	25-10 Court Square
22	Fire Department: Engine 261	37-20 29th Street
23	Fire Department: Engine 259	48-67 Hunters Point Avenue
24	Court House Square	Jackson-Thomson Avenues, Court Square

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Although not primarily residential in character, the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area includes a small residential population of some 6,300, less than 1 percent of the population of Queens. Based on information from the 1990 census, income levels are, on average, low within the study area, with the median income approximately \$27,000 (see Table 4-4). Areas with the lowest median annual income are located in the northwestern, Long Island City portion of the study area. In 1990, black residents constituted approximately 6 percent of the study area's population, much less than in Queens or the LITC as a whole (both at 22 percent), while the percentage of Asian and Hispanic residents (19 and 40 percent, respectively) was higher than in Queens as a whole or in the entire LITC.

Table 4-4

**Long Island City/Sunnyside Study Area
1990 Population Characteristics**

Portion of Study Area ¹	Population	Race and Ethnicity (Percent)				Economic Profile	
		White	Black	Asian	Hispanic ²	1989 Median Household Income ³	Below Poverty Level ⁴
Long Island City	498	72.1%	9.4%	5.4%	43.4%	\$19,208	20.9%
Dutch Kills	3,368	59.6	5.4	20.0	41.4	\$27,667	11.0
Western Sunnyside ⁵	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Long Island City South	2,487	57.8	7.0	20.1	36.4	\$25,685	17.4
Total Study Area	6,353	59.9%	6.4%	18.9%	39.6%	\$27,075	14.3%
Total Queens	1,951,598	57.9%	21.7%	12.2%	19.5%	\$34,186	10.8%
Total NYC	7,322,564	52.3%	28.8%	7.0%	23.7%	\$29,823	18.9%
Total LITC	8,349,010	64.5%	21.8%	6.2%	16.3%	\$36,300	13.8%
Notes: 1 See Figure 4-1. 2 An ethnic group that can include members of all different racial categories. 3 Weighted average. 4 Percent of persons with incomes below the established poverty level; poverty level varies depending on household size. 5 The entire population of the southwestern portion of the study area resides in a state correctional facility. Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.							

LONG ISLAND

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Long Island, which extends 120 miles from the East River to Montauk Point, includes Kings (or Brooklyn), Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. Most often, however, the name refers to Nassau and Suffolk Counties and does not include Brooklyn or Queens. The Island includes a wide range of communities. These include suburban towns, remnants of the large estates first developed in the late 1800's and early 1900's, small villages, farmland, and fishing communities.

Much of the Island is suburban in character, occupied by numerous subdivisions developed beginning in the 1950's, such as Levittown. The overall design of these residential communities is automobile-dependent; residents must drive to the store, work, or train. Largely because of the distance from the region's economic core in New York City, Suffolk County contains areas that are less densely developed, particularly on the North and South Forks. In this eastern portion of Suffolk County, farmland remains (potato and duck farms are the Island's most famous agricultural resources), although the 1970's and 1980's saw a trend toward subdivision of agricultural land for second homes and retail uses. Other farmland is now being used for local vineyards and wineries.

Long Island includes some 1,180 miles of coastal shoreline, including land along the Atlantic Ocean, numerous bays, and Long Island Sound. As such, it serves as a major recreational resource to the entire region. Most famous among the Island's beaches are Jones Beach State Park,

Robert Moses State Park, and the beaches of Fire Island and the Hamptons. Other regional attractions include numerous educational institutions, such as SUNY at both Stony Brook and Old Westbury, Long Island University's several campuses, Adelphi University, Hofstra University, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

Key to the development of the Island's commercial character has been its transportation systems: the LIRR, major roads, and highways. In addition to serving as a major east-west transportation corridor, the LIRR spurred the development of most of the older "downtown" commercial centers on Long Island. These centers, which grew up around LIRR stations, are characterized by small-scale shops and restaurants, often front on the town's main street, and are almost always oriented toward the pedestrian. Good examples include downtowns in Great Neck, Huntington, and Syosset. Newer commercial centers of the strip-mall and superstore variety owe their existence to the Island's highways and major roads, which, in addition to opening up significant areas of the Island to residential development, allowed customers to reach formerly inaccessible areas to shop. These commercial centers are oriented toward the automobile: surrounded by paved parking lots, set back a considerable distance from the street and often accessible only by car. Examples include the Roosevelt Field Mall in Carle Place, the strip malls along Northern Boulevard (25A) and Sunrise Highway, and the outlet malls of Riverhead.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AND LABOR FORCE

As shown in Table 4-5, Nassau and Suffolk Counties together include a population of 2.6 million people, some 31.3 percent of the LITC's total population. Largely as a result of its proximity to New York City, Nassau County experienced a development boom immediately after World War II that peaked around 1970. Population then decreased between 1970 and 1990 for a few reasons: families began to have fewer children and manufacturing and defense industry job losses forced residents to move elsewhere in search of work. As shown in the table, the population in Nassau County has declined overall since 1970, by approximately 9 percent. Most of that decrease was between 1970 and 1980, when population decreased by 7.5 percent. Between 1980 and 1990, the decline was only 2.6 percent; since 1990, the population has been growing again.

In contrast, the population of Suffolk County has been increasing steadily over the past decades. Long Island's building boom spread to relatively rural Suffolk County in the 1960's, and population grew at the rate of 69 percent between 1960 and 1970, to 1.1 million residents. During the 1970's, the rate of growth slowed to 14 percent and further decreased to 3 percent between 1980 and 1990 due to some of the same factors that led to lower Nassau County populations. Overall, the population in Suffolk County has grown by 19.7 percent since 1970, and by 1995 its population had eclipsed that of Nassau County by approximately 45,000 people. Consequently, Suffolk County's share of the LITC's population has also grown, from 13.0 percent in 1970 to 16.0 percent today, while Nassau County's share has shrunk slightly, from 16.5 percent to 15.5 percent. In total, population in the two counties has grown by 3.8 percent between 1970 and 1995.

As shown in Table 4-6, population on Long Island is predominately white (88.4 percent), with a small overall percentage of minorities. Long Islanders are also fairly wealthy, particularly in comparison with other residents of the LITC (the median household income for Nassau and Suffolk Counties together is \$51,671, compared with \$36,300 for the LITC as a whole). Consequently, the percentage of the population living below the poverty level on Long Island is much smaller than in the LITC as a whole (4.2 percent compared with 13.8 percent).

Table 4-5
Long Island Population Trends (in thousands)

Area	1970		1980		1990		1995		Percent Change	
	Number	% of Total LITC	Number	% of Total LITC	Number	% of Total LITC	Number	% of Total LITC	1970-1995	1980-1995
Nassau County	1,428.1	16.5%	1,321.6	16.0%	1,287.3	15.4%	1,302.3	15.5%	-8.8%	-1.5%
Hempstead	801.6	9.2	738.5	8.9	725.6	8.7	NA	NA	NA	NA
North Hempstead	235.0	2.7	218.6	2.6	211.4	2.5	NA	NA	NA	NA
Oyster Bay	333.3	3.8	305.8	3.7	292.7	3.5	NA	NA	NA	NA
Glen Cove (City)	25.8	0.3	24.6	0.3	24.1	0.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
Long Beach (City)	33.1	0.4	34.1	0.4	33.5	0.4	NA	NA	NA	NA
Suffolk County	1,125.0	13.0%	1,284.2	15.6%	1,321.9	15.8%	1,347.1	16.0%	19.7%	4.9%
Babylon	204.3	2.4	203.5	2.5	202.9	2.4	NA	NA	NA	NA
Brookhaven	245.3	2.8	365.0	4.4	407.8	4.9	NA	NA	NA	NA
East Hampton	11.0	0.1	14.0	0.2	16.1	0.2	NA	NA	NA	NA
Huntington	200.2	2.3	201.5	2.4	191.5	2.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
Islip	278.9	3.2	298.9	3.6	299.6	3.6	NA	NA	NA	NA
Riverhead	18.9	0.2	20.2	0.2	23.0	0.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
Shelter Island	1.6	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.3	0.0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Smithtown	114.7	1.3	116.7	1.4	113.4	1.4	NA	NA	NA	NA
Southampton	36.2	0.4	43.1	0.5	45.0	0.5	NA	NA	NA	NA
Southold	16.8	0.2	19.2	0.2	19.8	0.2	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nassau and Suffolk	2,553.0	29.4%	2,605.8	31.6%	2,609.2	31.3%	2,649.4	31.5%	3.8%	1.5%
Total LITC	8,680.8	100.0%	8,256.4	100.0%	8,349.0	100.0%	8,405.4	100.0%	-3.2%	1.8%
New York City	7,894.8	90.9%	7,071.6	85.7%	7,322.6	87.7%	7,348.6	87.4%	-6.9%	3.9%
Sources: 1970, 1980, and 1990 figures from <i>U.S. Census of Population and Housing</i> and <i>1998 Long Island Almanac</i> , 31st edition, published by <i>Long Island Business News</i> ; NYMTC February 23, 1996 for countywide 1995 figures.										

Table 4-6
Long Island 1990 Population Characteristics

Area	Population	Race and Ethnicity				Economic Profile	
		White	Black	Asian	Hispanic ¹	1989 Median Household Income ²	Below Poverty Level ³
Nassau County	1,287,348	86.6%	8.6%	3.1%	6.0%	\$54,283	3.7%
Suffolk County	1,321,864	90.0%	6.3%	1.7%	6.6%	\$49,128	4.6%
Nassau and Suffolk	2,609,212	88.4%	7.4%	2.4%	6.3%	\$51,671	4.2%
Total LITC	8,349,010	64.5%	21.8%	6.2%	16.3%	\$36,300	13.8%
Notes:							
¹ An ethnic group that can include members of all different racial categories.							
² Weighted average.							
³ Percent of persons with incomes below the established poverty level; poverty level varies depending on household size.							
Source: 1990 <i>U.S. Census of Population and Housing</i> .							

In the past 25 years, the LITC's employed labor force has grown 17 percent, by approximately 620,000. Growth on Long Island has far outpaced growth in the boroughs of New York City. Nassau and Suffolk's labor force grew at a rate of 44 percent between 1970 and 1995, compared with 6 percent in that same period in New York City. As shown in Table 4-7, Long Island's labor force has also increased far more quickly than its population in recent decades.

Table 4-7
Total Labor Force Trends
(in thousands)

	1970	1980	1990	1995	Percent Change 1970- 1990
Nassau	585.5	654.8	690.1	719.1	23%
Suffolk	403.2	573.8	698.7	700.0	74
Nassau & Suffolk	988.7	1,228.6	1,388.8	1,419.1	44
LITC	3,651.7	3,792.4	4,277.7	4,271.7	17%
New York City	3,330.8	3,161.3	3,579.8	3,529.5	6
Source: <i>U.S. Census of Population and Housing</i> (for 1980 and 1990 figures); NYMTC/Urbanomics, February 23, 1996 (for 1995 figures).					

REPLACEMENT YARDS

BLISSVILLE YARD

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

The Blissville study area lies at the southern reaches of the Long Island City Industrial Park—one of the city's largest industrial parks—which extends north into Long Island City. The section of the study area along Review Avenue is heavily traveled by large trucks that make frequent stops to load and unload cargo. It is a busy area of predominantly storage and warehousing activity. Most of the buildings in the area north of the yard are 2- or 3-story warehouses, while the sites between the yard and Newtown Creek contain a mix of open industrial yards, gasoline storage facilities, and manufacturing facilities. The yard itself is buffered from surrounding public streets by these industrial and warehouse sites, which provide an effective barrier between the yard and local streets. The J.J. Byrne Memorial Bridge, which spans Newtown Creek just south and east of the study area, provides the only direct view into the yard. There are no community facilities in the Blissville Yard study area.

Population Characteristics

The Blissville study area contains no residences and has no permanent population. While there are a limited number of residential buildings mixed among industrial and auto-related uses along 35th Street, Van Dam Street, and Greenpoint Avenue, they all lie outside the study area and are not within a 400-foot radius of the yard boundaries.

*MASPETH YARD**Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities*

The Maspeth study area is a busy industrial area with many active warehousing, industrial, and auto-related operations that generate substantial truck traffic and high levels of noise. Cars and trucks commonly block sidewalks while loading and unloading, and trucks obstruct traffic. Most of the buildings in the area around the yard are large, low-rise manufacturing structures. The intersection of Maurice and Maspeth Avenues is a small commercial node with a diner/bar and a deli/coffee shop.

As shown in Figure 3-4 in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the eastern portion of the study area includes a small corner of a residential neighborhood that extends east along Maspeth and Grand Avenues. Within the study area, a church (an older structure now occupied by the San Sun Fortress Korean Methodist Church) on a wooded lot backs onto Rust Street across from Maspeth Yard. This area also includes two blocks of small residential rowhouses.

Population Characteristics

The smallest geographical areas for which 1990 census data are available are block groups, generally combinations of several city blocks. In the Maspeth study area, even these block groups are much larger than the small residential area in the corner of the study area (see Figure 4-2). As noted in Table 4-8, the block groups that fall within the Maspeth study area contain a total of 1,500 people. However field surveys indicate the study area includes only an estimated 32 housing units. Consequently, the census data only roughly approximate characteristics of the study area's population. Assuming one household per unit and using the average household size for the study area's two block groups of 2.4 persons per household, the population of the study area is approximately 77. For the census block groups that fall partially within the study area, the median annual household income is \$27,489, similar to that of Queens as a whole and lower than that of the LITC. The percent of the population living below the poverty level, 10 percent, is also similar to that of Queens and lower than that of the LITC. The population in the study area is 95 percent white, 4 percent Asian and 9 percent Hispanic (see Table 4-9).

Table 4-8
Replacement Yard Study Areas
Community Facilities

Map No.	Name	Address
Blissville Yard		
	None	
Maspeth Yard		
1	San Sun Fortress Korean Methodist Church	57-40 57th Road
Fresh Pond Yard		
1	Mafera Park	25-80 65th Place
2	Christ the King High School	68-02 Metropolitan Avenue
Highbridge Yard		
1	NYPD Bronx Task Force	1278 Sedgwick Avenue
2	P.S. 46	2987 Frederick Douglass Boulevard
3	P.S. 156	2930 Frederick Douglass Boulevard
4	Highbridge Park	NA

Table 4-9

Yard Study Areas—1990 Population Characteristics

Area	Population in Surrounding Census Block Groups ¹	Race and Ethnicity (Percent)				Economic Profile	
		White	Black	Asian	Hispanic ²	1989 Median Household Income ³	Below Poverty Level ⁴ Percent
Blissville Yard	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maspeth Yard	1,500	94.7%	0.0%	4.1%	8.9%	\$27,489	9.6%
Fresh Pond Yard	16,097	95.9	0.1	2.1	5.9	\$32,170	7.4
Total Queens	1,951,598	57.9%	21.7%	12.2%	19.0%	\$34,186	10.8%
Highbridge Yard							
Bronx portion	4,699	8.0	71.3	1.9	34.4	\$12,971	38.9
Manhattan portion	7,558	7.5	85.6	0.1	16.8	\$15,718	36.0
Total	12,257	7.7%	80.1%	0.8%	23.6%	\$14,665	37.1%
Total Bronx	1,203,789	35.7%	37.3%	3.0%	43.5%	\$21,944	27.8%
Total Manhattan	1,487,536	58.4%	22.0%	7.4%	25.6%	\$32,262	20.0%
Total NYC	7,322,564	52.3%	28.8%	7.0%	23.7%	\$29,823	18.9%
Total LITC	8,349,010	64.5%	21.8%	6.2%	16.3%	\$36,300	13.8%
Notes: 1 The characteristics of populations in census block groups surrounding yards are not necessarily representative of the people living within yard study areas. 2 An ethnic group that can include members of all different racial categories. 3 Weighted average. 4 Percent of persons with incomes below the established poverty level; poverty level varies depending on household size.							
Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.							

FRESH POND YARD

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

As shown in Figure 4-3, the Fresh Pond study area is long and irregular in shape. The study area faces four different neighborhoods: Maspeth to the northwest, Middle Village to the northeast, Glendale to the southeast, and Ridgewood to the southwest. As illustrated in Figure 3-5 in Chapter 3, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” the area immediately around Fresh Pond Yard contains a buffer of industrial uses. Outside of that buffer, the study area is largely residential but also includes a portion of a large cemetery. The Maspeth portion of the Fresh Pond Yard study area lies off Metropolitan Avenue, a busy arterial lined by cemeteries and retail, including the Metro Mall at Metropolitan Avenue and Rentar Plaza. West of the Metro Mall, a small residential area along Admiral Avenue abuts the railroad tracks of Fresh Pond Yard. East of the Metro Mall and on the other side of the railroad tracks leading to the yard, the Middle Village section of the study area is fully occupied by a small portion of the Mt. Olivet Lutheran Cemetery. Near the cemetery, Christ the King High School is just outside the study area (see Figure 4-3, No. 2).

Southeast of Fresh Pond Yard, the Glendale section of the study area consists primarily of low-rise residences on quiet tree-lined streets that dead end at the Fresh Pond Yard or the few adjoining industrial and warehouse sites. Southwest of the yard, the Ridgewood section of the study area is more densely developed than other portions of the study area. It consists predominantly of attached houses and apartments. Shaler Avenue, Mafera Park, and Traffic Avenue, lined with industrial and warehouse buildings, buffer the residential area from the rail line. In

this portion of the study area, the 5.4-acre Mafera Park (on the east side of 65th Place—No. 1 in Figure 4-3) abuts the railroad tracks. The park, which was renovated in 1995, includes a roller rink with bleachers, baseball, basketball, and handball courts, softball and football fields, and play equipment. A softball field is in the area closest to Fresh Pond Yard. The central portion of the yard is not visible from the park.

Population Characteristics

The census block groups that fall wholly or partially within the Fresh Pond study area include a total of 16,097 residents (see Figure 4-3 and Table 4-9). The median household income is \$32,170, slightly lower than for Queens as a whole or for the entire LITC, but the percent below poverty level, at 7 percent, is smaller than that in Queens or the LITC. The population is 96 percent white, 2 percent Asian, and 6 percent Hispanic.

HIGHBRIDGE YARD

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

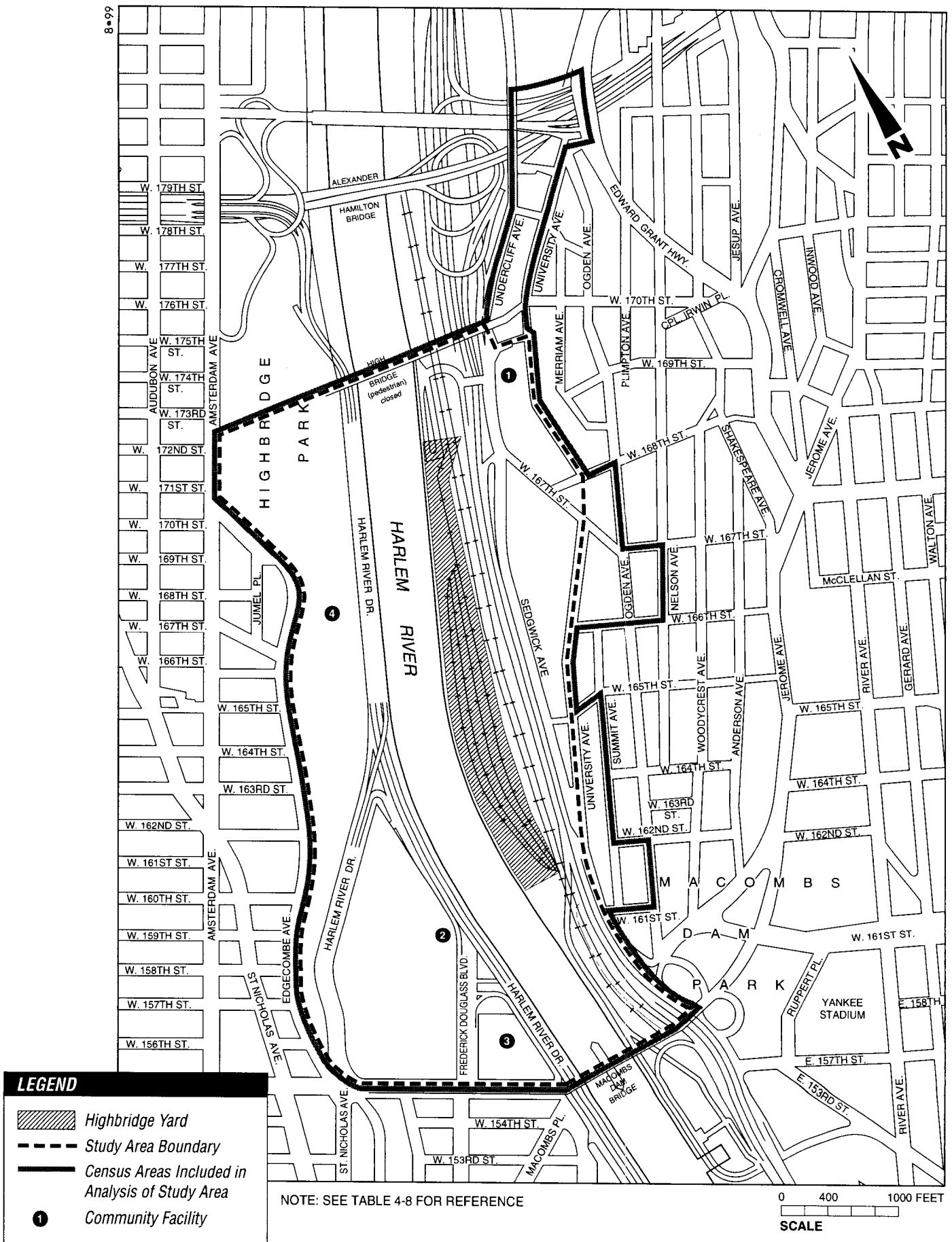
The Highbridge study area is bisected by the Harlem River (see Figure 4-4). The Highbridge Yard is located on the eastern side of the river, in the Bronx. The yard is inactive as a rail car storage yard and is partially overgrown, although it includes some tracks. The Oak Point Link freight line and Metro-North Railroad's Hudson Line mainline tracks pass through this area west of the Major Deegan Expressway. The abandoned Putnam Division railroad right-of-way just east of Highbridge Yard is proposed as a possible bicycle/pedestrian Greenway trail extending as far south as Macomb's Dam Bridge in the *New York City Greenway Plan* published by the New York City Department of City Planning.

The Bronx side of the study area is dominated by the Major Deegan Expressway, which acts as a physical and visual barrier between the rail yard and the neighborhood to its east. The Major Deegan (I-87) is a wide and heavily trafficked, limited access interstate highway that is elevated as it enters the study area from the south. It then descends to grade level as it passes the yard. The yard is accessible only from Depot Place, which crosses the Major Deegan Expressway from Sedgwick Avenue. Two other major infrastructure elements also dominate the study area: the Macombs Dam Bridge at the south end of the study area, and High Bridge at the north. Both of these bridges are historic resources. The Macombs Dam Bridge carries traffic between West 155th Street in Manhattan to West 161st Street and Jerome Avenue in the Bronx. In Manhattan, 155th Street meets the bridge on a historic viaduct that runs above the regular street grade from Edgecombe Avenue to the bridge. High Bridge once carried water in an aqueduct across the river from the Bronx to Manhattan and was subsequently a pedestrian bridge, but is now closed.

As described in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy" (see also Figure 3-6 in that chapter), the neighborhood east of the Major Deegan Expressway in the Bronx is largely residential. This area is significantly higher in elevation than the Highbridge Yard. Residential uses include the high-rise High Bridge Houses complex, located on University Avenue on a steep hill overlooking the Major Deegan Expressway and the Harlem River. This "superblock" complex includes six 13-story buildings to the north and two 6-story buildings to the south, where stairs provide pedestrian access between University Avenue at the top of the hill and Sedgwick Avenue below. The study area also includes some smaller apartment buildings and rowhouses north of West 167th Street. Pedestrian and auto traffic is light, but ambient noise from the expressway is loud. The New York City Police Department Bronx Task Force is located at 1278 Sedgwick

Figure 4-3

Social Conditions: Fresh Pond Yard Study Area



Avenue between 167th Avenue and Depot Place. Sedgwick Avenue is also designated as a bicycle route on New York City's Citywide Cycling Map.

The Manhattan portion of the study area is dominated by the Harlem River Drive, a limited access parkway with a riverfront bicycle and pedestrian path running along the western shore of the Harlem River, and the southern half of the 119-acre Highbridge Park. Highbridge Park slopes steeply uphill from the Harlem River Drive to its western boundary at Edgecombe and Amsterdam Avenues. The eastern portion of the park is a steep wooded hill that is not accessible to the public. At the top of the hill, the park includes a grassy area and a scenic overlook with views of the river and the Highbridge Yard partially obstructed by trees.

South of Highbridge Park, the Manhattan portion of the study area includes two housing complexes on a large triangular plot: the eight 14-story buildings of Colonial Park Houses to the north and the four 30-story buildings of Polo Grounds Houses to the south. These complexes front onto Frederick Douglass Boulevard; their western boundary is the Harlem River Driveway (an access road to the Harlem River Drive); and their southern boundary is the elevated 155th Street viaduct. Colonial Park Houses also includes a school, P.S. 46, on the east side of Frederick Douglass Boulevard near the Harlem River Drive. Across Frederick Douglass Boulevard from these two residential complexes is another school, P.S. 156 (the Eugene Percy Roberts School) and its 3-acre playground, both located alongside the Harlem River Drive.

Population Characteristics

As shown in Table 4-9, the Highbridge study area include a total of 12,257 residents—4,699 (38 percent) in the Bronx, and 7,558 (62 percent) in Manhattan. Overall, these tracts consist predominantly of minorities and low-income households. Only 8 percent of the population in these tracts is white (compared with 36 percent for the Bronx, 58 percent for Manhattan, and 65 percent for the LITC). As shown in the table, most of the study area residents are black and many are Hispanic. The median annual household income in the area is relatively low at \$14,665 (\$12,971 in the Bronx portion and \$15,718 in Manhattan), substantially less than the median household incomes for either the Bronx, Manhattan, or the LITC (see Table 4-9). Similarly, the percentage of residents living below the poverty level, 37.1 percent, is much higher than in either the Bronx (27.8 percent), Manhattan (20 percent), New York City as a whole (18.9 percent) or the LITC (13.5 percent).

LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS

CERRO WIRE SITE

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

The Cerro Wire property is a long-abandoned, vacant industrial facility located in a largely industrial area along the LIRR Port Jefferson Branch. The derelict structures on the site resemble those of the adjacent industrial area along Robbins Lane. The former Syosset Landfill property is now an open, paved, vacant area that is vacant on the north and used to store Department of Public Works vehicles on the south. The character of both sites are in keeping with neighboring uses along the Long Island Expressway (LIE) North Service Road (Miller Place): the Town of Oyster Bay's Department of Public Works Facility and the New York State Department of Transportation maintenance facility. Overall, the Cerro Wire site lies in an area of Syosset with a strong manufacturing and industrial character. Most of the lots in the study area are developed

with large-floor-plate, single-story industrial buildings. Trains pass by on the Port Jefferson Branch with relative frequency.

The yard site is visible from Robbins Lane and from the industrial neighborhood across the LIRR from the site. Outside the industrial area surrounding the project site are a number of residential neighborhoods of detached, single-family dwellings. These neighborhoods are organized around community facilities including public schools, neighborhood parks, and religious institutions (none of which extend into the study area). The Cerro Wire site is also visible from the Colony Lane area across the former landfill, if the yard layout that uses the landfill is selected.

Population Characteristics

The Cerro Wire study area contains no residences and has no permanent population. While there are a number of homes to the north and east along Colony Lane, they all lie outside the study area and are not within a 400-foot radius of the proposed yard boundaries under either yard configuration.

BABYLON SITE

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

The Babylon site is mixed in character, with vacant land, industrial, commercial, and residential buildings fronting on Union Boulevard, a main thoroughfare that runs through much of the Town of Islip. The overall appearance of the site is industrial, dominated by the large fuel holders near the Route 231 overpass at the western end of the site. The site has little or no vegetation, except for small yards at the site's three residential buildings, which are incongruous with the site's generally industrial appearance. In comparison, the area south of Union Boulevard has a more residential presence. The buildings on the project site currently block views of the railroad or adjacent Babylon Yard from passersby on Union Boulevard or from the businesses and residences south of Union Boulevard. Buildings along the south side of Union Boulevard, opposite the site, are a mix of businesses and residences. Most of the residences are part of a larger residential area to the south and are thus oriented away from Union Boulevard.

Higbie Street is a major commercial corridor through the eastern end of the study area, lined with local services and retailers. It also provides access to the residential neighborhoods north and south of the LIRR. On the north side of the LIRR right-of-way, the large Babylon Yard facility is separated from the adjacent residential neighborhood by a high noise wall with limited openings to provide access for vehicles.

Population Characteristics

The Babylon yard site includes five residences: two in two-family houses and one in a single-family house. The 400-foot Babylon study area contains approximately 30 homes spread primarily across two census block groups. Since the study area includes only 30 of 965 households in those two block groups (3 percent), census block group demographic characteristics can only begin to approximate the characteristics of the study area population and in fact may not illustrate the characteristics of the study area at all. In 1990, these block groups contained 2,416 people in 736 households. More than 98 percent of the population was white and 4.5 percent was Hispanic. Based on an estimation of approximately 30 homes within 400 feet of the proposed yard and a census block group household size of 3.3, the study area contains approximately 98 people. In 1990, the block group population had a median annual household income of just under \$51,000 (see Table 4-10).

Table 4-10

**Long Island Storage Yard Study Areas—
1990 Population Characteristics**

Area	Estimated Population of Study Area ¹	Total Population of Relevant Census Block Groups	Race and Ethnicity (Percent)				Economic Profile	
			White	Black	Asian	Hispanic ²	1989 Median Household Income ³	Percent Below Poverty Level ⁴
Cerro Wire	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Babylon	98	2,416	98.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	\$50,880	1.3%
Ronkonkoma	32	1,381	99.3	0.0	0.7	7.2	\$44,839	20.7
Yaphank (East)	34	2,219	78.7	16.6	3.0	11.8	\$42,000	10.7
Yaphank (West)	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pilgrim Hospital	Unknown	2,709 ⁵	76.4	22.4	0.6	2.0	\$35,000	47.7
Riverhead	115	1,155	88.8	10.3	0.9	1.0	\$23,981	8.4

Notes:

1 Number of homes in study area multiplied by average household size of census block group.

2 An ethnic group that can include members of all different racial categories.

3 Weighted average.

4 Percent of persons with incomes below the established poverty level; poverty level varies depending on household size

5 The population at Pilgrim Hospital is institutional rather than residential.

Source: 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

YAPHANK EAST SITE

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

The Yaphank East site is quiet and isolated from surrounding uses, since it is on the interior of the Department of Public Works facility. It is not visible from public thoroughfares and only partly visible from surrounding properties. The Department of Public Works facility, on the other hand, is a busy municipal facility with many trucks and large equipment moving around during the day. The facility consists of numerous low buildings separated by driveways and open areas, and is accessed via an entrance from Yaphank Avenue. At the southern end of the Department of Public Works, the small Yaphank station is accessed via a driveway from the opposite side of Yaphank Avenue that curves under the avenue to the station. This driveway also provides access to the tree farm just to the east of the Department of Public Works.

Just south of the Department of Public Works facility, Park Street runs east-west from Yaphank Avenue just south of the LIRR right-of-way. The Georgia Pacific distribution center at the corner of Park Street and Yaphank Avenue is active with 18-wheel trucks throughout the day. To the east of the center, Park Street also has some residences south of the LIRR, as well as a residential neighborhood along Crescent Street, outside of the study area. At its end, Park Street bends north to cross the LIRR and provide access to two houses on the north side of the tracks.

The Yaphank East site is adjacent to the 1,356-acre Southaven County Park, a pine-oak forested park bisected by the Carmans River. The park includes a picnicking site with group areas that can accommodate up to 1,000 people, recreation fields, nature trails, an equestrian center, a

MTA/LIRR East Side Access FEIS

campground for tents and trailers, row boat rentals, canoeing, and a skeet and trap shooting range. Access to the park is from Sunrise Highway.

Population Characteristics

The 400-foot study area around the Yaphank East site includes approximately 8 to 10 houses. These houses are located in a census block group that includes some 446 households. Since these households represent such a small percentage of the block group, an examination of the demographic characteristics of the entire block group is useful only as an approximation of neighborhood characteristics and cannot be viewed as illustrative of the characteristics of the 10 or so households within the study area. In 1990, the block group contained 2,219 people in 446 households. This population was 78 percent white, 17 percent black, and 12 percent Hispanic. Based on an estimation of approximately 10 homes within 400 feet of the proposed yard and a census block group household size of 3.4, the study area contains approximately 34 people. In 1990, the block group population had a median annual household income of \$42,000 (see Table 4-10).

YAPHANK WEST SITE

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

In contrast to the isolated Yaphank East site, the Yaphank West site is in an area that is widely visible to the public. Currently occupied by a wide flat farmed field, the site is part of a larger agricultural area that extends across the LIRR right-of-way to the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center there. On both sides of the LIRR, land uses are associated with Suffolk County: on the south side of the railroad, neighboring uses are municipal facilities (police headquarters building and related buildings); the municipal landfill is visible farther to the south. On the north side of the tracks, however, the farm center is the dominant feature. The Suffolk County Farm and Education Center, operated by Cornell Cooperative Extension, is a working farm that was once part of a county-run almshouse (see Chapter 7, "Historic Resources"). The farm center has educational programs throughout the year for a wide range of age groups, focusing on history, animals, agriculture, and science, and providing hay rides, birthday parties, a pumpkin fest, and other special events. The farm also houses a recycling education center and museum, a greenhouse, butterfly garden, and children's garden. A dirt road crosses the LIRR tracks to connect the farm center and the proposed rail yard site to the south.

Population Characteristics

There are no residences within the 400-foot study area of the Yaphank West site.

RONKONKOMA SITE

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

The Ronkonkoma expansion site is currently partially occupied by LIRR facilities and otherwise undeveloped and wooded. The site is not visible from surrounding roadways. The immediate area is similar in character, consisting predominantly of vacant wooded land and the existing Ronkonkoma Yard. The northern portion of the study area includes a small number of residences north of the existing yard. These are completely separated from the expansion site by a high noise barrier and the existing Ronkonkoma Yard. No community facilities are located within close proximity of the yard. Just outside the study area, the Ronkonkoma Yard vicinity is dominated by the MacArthur Airport to the south and, to the west, by the extensive parking

lots of the Ronkonkoma LIRR station on both sides of the rail right-of-way, as well as the five-level parking structure and related retail uses at the station itself.

Population Characteristics

The 400-foot Ronkonkoma study area includes fewer than 10 residences, all north of the existing LIRR right-of-way. Since there are so few homes in the study area itself, an examination of the demographic characteristics of the entire block group is useful only as an approximation of neighborhood characteristics and cannot be viewed as illustrative of the characteristics of the households within the study area. In 1990, the block group contained 1,381 people in 436 households. More than 99 percent of the population was white and just over 7 percent were Hispanic. Based on an estimation of approximately 10 homes within 400 feet of the proposed yard, and a census block group household size of 3.2, the study area contains approximately 32 people. In 1990, the block group population had a median annual household income of just under \$45,000 (see Table 4-10).

PILGRIM HOSPITAL SITE

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

The potential yard site at Pilgrim Hospital is on a portion of the hospital campus that is no longer fully used, and includes various unused utility buildings that are in some disrepair. These include the massive former power plant, as well as smaller associated structures. The site and surrounding area are consequently isolated, somewhat desolate, and forbidding. The yard site is not visible from the nearby Sagtikos Parkway, because of a dense buffer of vegetation. The only active neighbor is the nearby Heartland industrial park.

Population Characteristics

The study area includes two of the buildings still in active use by Pilgrim Hospital. These buildings are on the north side of Campus Road. Overall, 1990 census data for all of Pilgrim Hospital indicated a hospital population of 2,709, of whom 76 percent were white, 22 percent were black, less than 1 percent were Asian, and 2 percent Hispanic. The median household income of residents was \$35,000 and almost half (47.7 percent) of the population was living below the poverty level. The number of people living in the two buildings closest to the yard site is unknown.

RIVERHEAD SITE

Neighborhood Character and Community Facilities

The Riverhead site is an open field adjacent to a residential community. The LIRR right-of-way along side the site divides the residential area from the proposed yard site to the south. North of the tracks are a number of houses of all different sizes, as well as residential streets and the occasional business or institutional use. On the south side of the tracks, the proposed yard site is part of a larger parcel of undeveloped land. A portion of the site may have once been used for agricultural purposes, but is now covered by various grasses and saplings. The yard site provides an open area and visual amenity to the people living nearby. The LIRR right-of-way in this area consists of a very lightly used single track, which, other than an occasional train passby every few hours, does not significantly alter the residential/open space character of the neighborhood. The track has no electrified third rail and can be crossed easily to access the open field (the yard site) to its south. Nearby community facilities include the Riverhead Fire Department, on the south side of Hubbard Avenue, just outside the northeastern corner of the study area; the

American Legion Post 273, also on the south side of Hubbard Avenue just east of 3rd Street; and Indian Island County Park, a 275-acre park adjacent to the east side of the yard site. Indian Island County Park extends from the LIRR right-of-way south to Saw Mill Creek and the estuarine mouth of the Peconic River. It features facilities for hiking, picnicking, camping, and fishing, as well as a playground, activity field, and small zoo.

Population Characteristics

The study area includes an estimated 50 residences. These residences constitute a small proportion of the 504 households located in their census block group. Consequently, the available census data can only begin to approximate the study area's characteristics and in fact may not illustrate the characteristics of the study area at all. Using the average household size in the census block group of 2.3, the estimated 50 households in the study area house approximately 115 residents, 10 percent of the 1,155 total people in the block group in 1990. In 1990, the block group population was 89 percent white and 10 percent black, and had a median annual household income of just under \$24,000 (see Table 4-10). However, observations of the housing type and size within the study area, compared to that outside the study area yet still within the block group (primarily on streets north of Hubbard Avenue), indicate that the median income of people within the study area is most likely lower than that of the block group as a whole.

C. FUTURE CONDITIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

LONG ISLAND TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR OVERVIEW

Given the generally highly developed character of the LITC, future (2010 and 2020) conditions are not likely to see broad changes. The character of the region will still show similar relationships: Manhattan will continue as the dense commercial hub, with major cultural and other institutional attractions; Queens and Brooklyn will remain strong population centers, with growing business districts in Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City and a diminished industrial character; and Nassau and Suffolk Counties will continue to have a varied suburban character while western Suffolk will become increasingly suburbanized. The attractions of the region's community facilities and institutions will remain high.

NYMTC projections show a population increase for the LITC of 4.7 percent from 1995 to 2010, and 10.3 percent from 1995 to 2020, as shown in Table 4-11. More telling for the issue of travel, however, is the predicted increase in trip-based, employed labor force: as shown in Table 4-11, those who will have jobs and travel to work will increase 11.2 percent from 1995 to 2010 and 16.1 percent from 1995 to 2020. Demand for travel from Long Island to Manhattan is predicted to increase at an even higher rate. As shown on Tables 4-12, 4-13, and 4-14, Long Island residents commuting to Manhattan will increase from 129,446 in 1995 to 159,183 in 2010 and 167,959 in 2020; this represents an increase of 23 percent in the first period and 30 percent overall. Together, these figures indicate that, while the automobile-dependent character of Nassau and Suffolk Counties is unlikely to wane, reliance on the LIRR as a means of transportation is likely to increase.

Proposed actions to improve transportation service in the LITC that could reasonably be in place by 2010 and 2020 are described in detail in Chapter 1, "Project Purpose and Need," and Chapter 9, "Transportation." Several of these, such as the light rail system between John F. Kennedy Airport and Jamaica Station, and new equipment on the LIRR that would permit riders on diesel lines to get to Penn Station without a transfer, will offer new or more convenient service.

Table 4-11
LITC Population 1995, 2010, 2020 (in thousands)

	1995	2010	2020	Percent Change		
				1995 to 2010	2010 to 2020	1995 to 2020
Nassau	1,302.3	1,349.8	1,433.6	3.6%	6.2%	10.1%
Suffolk	1,347.1	1,495.2	1,658.1	11.0	10.9	23.1
Nassau & Suffolk	2,649.4	2,845.0	3,091.7	7.4%	8.7%	16.7%
Manhattan	1,510.0	1,556.7	1,575.0	3.1	1.2	4.3
Queens	1,970.3	2,062.4	2,189.2	4.7	6.1	11.1
Brooklyn	2,275.7	2,333.7	2,412.4	2.5	3.4	6.0
LITC	8,405.4	8,797.8	9,268.3	4.7%	5.3%	10.3%
Source: NYMTC/Urbanomics February 23, 1996.						

Table 4-12
LITC Employed Labor Force
1995, 2010, 2020 (in thousands)

	1995	2010	2020	Percent Change		
				1995 to 2010	2010 to 2020	1995 to 2020
Nassau	643.7	720.4	769.6	11.9%	6.8%	19.6%
Suffolk	624.8	760.2	894.6	21.7	17.7	43.2
Nassau & Suffolk	1,268.5	1,480.6	1,664.2	16.7	12.4%	31.2%
Manhattan	675.2	729.9	743.0	8.1	1.8	10.0
Queens	866.6	958.9	1,030.9	10.7	7.5	19.0
Brooklyn	835.7	913.0	973.0	9.2	6.6	16.4
LITC	3,646.0	4,082.4	4,411.1	12.0%	8.1%	21.0%
Note: Figures are for trip-based, employed labor force, and do not include those who work at home. Source: Journey-to-Work Forecasting and Analysis, Urbanomics/NYMTC, September 27, 1995 as used in MTA Long Range Planning Framework Projects: MESA, ARC, LIRR/ESA.						

Table 4-13

LITC 2010 Labor Force by Employment Location

Location of Residence	Total Trip-Based Employed Labor Force	Location of Employment					
		Manhattan		Other NYC		Long Island	
		Workers	Percent of Manhattan's Work Force	Workers	Percent of NYC's Work Force	Workers	Percent of LI's Work Force
Nassau County	72,039	112,706	5.2%	117,637	6.8%	474,684	38.1%
Suffolk County	760,217	46,625	2.1	46,690	2.7	657,402	52.8
Nassau & Suffolk	1,480,596	159,331	7.3%	164,327	9.4%	1,132,086	91.0%
Manhattan	729,870	611,464	28.0	73,863	4.2	7,921	0.6
Queens	958,919	366,818	16.8	490,368	28.2	68,886	5.5
Brooklyn	913,004	350,198	16.0	523,626	30.1	12,226	1.0
LITC	4,082,389	1,487,811	68.1%	1,252,184	72.0%	122,119	98.1%
Total Work Force		2,185,093	100.0%	1,739,212	100.0%	1,244,726	100.0%
Note: This table presents employed trip-based labor force and trip-based work force which do not include those who work at home. Employed labor force consists residential population that works (outside the home); work force consists of employees, at their workplace. Source: Journey-to-Work Forecasting and Analysis, Urbanomics/NYMTC, September 27, 1995 as used in MTA Long Range Planning Framework Projects: MESA, ARC, LIRR/ESA.							

Table 4-14

LITC 2020 Labor Force by Employment Location

Location of Residence	Total Trip-Based Employed Labor Force	Location of Employment					
		Manhattan		Other NYC		Long Island	
		Workers	Percent of Manhattan's Work Force	Workers	Percent of NYC's Work Force	Workers	Percent of LI's Work Force
Nassau County	769,611	117,198	5.2%	129,093	6.8%	506,847	36.0%
Suffolk County	894,635	51,011	2.3	53,677	2.8	779,202	55.4
Nassau & Suffolk	1,664,246	168,200	7.4%	182,779	9.6%	1,286,048	91.5%
Manhattan	743,003	617,751	27.3	78,496	4.1	8,286	0.6
Queens	1,030,857	380,610	16.8	541,135	28.4	73,585	5.2
Brooklyn	973,004	363,338	16.1	567,018	29.7	13,215	0.9
LITC	4,411,110	1,529,899	67.6%	1,369,428	71.8%	1,381,134	98.2%
Total Work Force		2,261,857	100.0%	1,906,766	100.0%	1,406,188	100.0%
Note: This table presents employed trip-based labor force and trip-based work force which do not include those who work at home. Employed labor force consists residential population that works (outside the home); work force consists of employees, at their workplace. Source: Journey-to-Work Forecasting and Analysis, Urbanomics/NYMTC, September 27, 1995 as used in MTA Long Range Planning Framework Projects: MESA, ARC, LIRR/ESA.							

However, none of these proposals would improve the LIRR to the point where it could offer service and capacity increases needed to accommodate the rapidly increasing numbers of commuters to and from Manhattan, who make up the vast majority of LIRR patrons, or to improve conditions for those seeking other destinations served by the railroad (e.g., museums, arenas, stadiums, parks, beaches, theaters, hospitals, courts, etc.).

MANHATTAN STUDY AREA

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The character of the Manhattan study area is well established as a densely developed Central Business District (CBD), surrounded by substantial and varied residential neighborhoods. Recent trends toward changing neighborhood character through the turnover of manufacturing and loft buildings to office, retail, or residential space, can be expected to continue in portions of the Lower East Side, NoHo, the section of Soho west of Sixth Avenue, known as the Graphic Arts district, the Gansevoort Meat Market, West Chelsea, West Midtown/Garment Center, and West Clinton. The trend, bolstered by public policy and public actions, toward strengthening and upgrading West Midtown/Times Square and the Theater District is also expected to continue. Projects such as the ongoing 42nd Street Development Project and other new development proposed in that area will serve to intensify its character as the region's (perhaps the nation's) premier entertainment district and to increase its presence as a first class office district. Several of the proposals and trends in the area around Penn Station will likely improve the CBD character of this portion of West Midtown, as well. These include the new Amtrak station in the General Post Office (Farley) Building, development of the site on Ninth Avenue west of the Farley Building, and the influence of the 42nd Street Development Project, coupled with ongoing real estate trends in the blocks south of 42nd Street between Sixth and Eighth Avenues, to replace manufacturing and wholesaling with office and residential uses.

The neighborhood surrounding GCT in East Midtown is likely to retain the same general character over time. Park Avenue, with its elegant landscaped median, will continue to be the most desirable location in the CBD; on Madison Avenue, the Bear Stearns building at 46th Street (383 Madison), now under construction, and the proposed office tower just south of 42nd Street (known as 310 Madison Avenue) will solidify the area's character as an extremely dense office district. South of GCT in the Midtown South and Union Square areas, the current trends toward upgrading of office uses and new construction (where sites can be found) of residential buildings will continue, underscoring the mixed-use, slightly less dense character of this commercial neighborhood.

The trend toward a 24-hour community in Lower Manhattan, discussed in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," is particularly marked, and is expected to continue into the future. The expansion of the New York Stock Exchange in generally the same location as the existing Exchange building will maintain Wall Street's character as the hub of the financial district. The completion of Battery Park City and the conversion of older office and loft buildings to residential use will strongly influence the area's neighborhood character in the future, as one of a dense mix of uses in a 24-hour working and living community.

The regional community resources in the Manhattan study area will maintain their role in serving the metropolitan area and tourists in the future. Several planned moves or expansions, such as the expansion of the Museum of Modern Art on West 53rd Street and the consolidation

of the City University Graduate Center in the old B. Altman's building on 34th Street and Fifth Avenue, will help to strengthen these facilities in meeting the needs of their constituencies.

POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE

Predictions for increases in population in the Manhattan study area show a relatively stable situation overall, with an increase of 3.1 percent from 1995 to 2010 and another 1.2 percent from 2010 to 2020 (see Table 4-15). Specific neighborhoods, however, will see greater increases. These include: Lower Manhattan, reflecting the completion of Battery Park City and the trend to residential conversion; Garment Center, reflecting new residential construction slated for Sixth Avenue between 23rd and 31st Streets; Midtown, where residential development along Eighth Avenue is expected; and Lincoln Square, which anticipates completion of Riverside South and other large projects with residential components.

Table 4-15
Manhattan Population Trends: 1995, 2010, and 2020

	1995	2010	2020	Percent Change		
				1995-2010	2010-2020	Total 1995-2020
Lower Manhattan	47,487	56,925	59,148	19.9%	3.9%	24.6%
Village/Lower East Side	235,814	239,418	240,267	1.5	0.4	1.9
Chelsea	25,551	25,626	25,686	0.3	0.2	0.5
Clinton	38,176	39,154	41,990	2.6	7.2	10.0
Garment Center	5,980	8,832	9,503	47.7	7.6	58.9
Lower Fifth	27,592	29,474	31,231	6.8	6.0	13.2
Midtown	14,690	15,607	17,556	6.2	12.5	19.5
Midtown South	87,819	89,593	90,010	2.0	0.5	2.5
Midtown East	64,720	65,584	66,524	1.3	1.4	2.8
Lincoln Square	29,600	35,080	36,864	18.5	5.1	24.5
Upper East Side	70,383	71,809	72,527	2.0	1.0	3.0
Manhattan Study Area	647,812	677,102	693,326	4.5%	2.4%	7.0%
Other Manhattan	862,184	879,590	883,689	2.0	0.5	2.5
Total Manhattan	1,509,996	1,556,692	1,577,015	3.1%	1.3%	4.4%
Source: Countywide projections from NYMTC February 23, 1996, with local population forecasts prepared by AKRF, Inc.						

As shown in Table 4-11, above, the labor force in Manhattan will increase by more than 8 percent between 1995 and 2010. This predicted labor force increase is more than double the predicted population increase and reflects an increase in multiple-worker households and families. These additional workers will, for the most part, work in Manhattan—according to NYMTC's projections, the increase in reverse commuters from Manhattan to Long Island will be small and Manhattan residents will still represent a very small portion (less than 1 percent) of the Long Island work force (see Table 4-14). From 2010 to 2020, the imbalance between population growth (1.2 percent) and labor force growth (1.8 percent) will be less pronounced, as the growth in both areas will slow considerably.

LONG ISLAND CITY/SUNNYSIDE STUDY AREA

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

In the future, the character of the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area should continue to evolve. As noted above, a trend toward more and upgraded office use has taken hold in “downtown” Long Island City. This movement will be accelerated if the proposed Long Island City rezoning is approved (see Chapter 3, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy”). Four to five office towers, similar to, but not as large as the Citicorp tower would be built in the area of Jackson Avenue on the south side of Queens Plaza and at Court Square. A small amount of residential infill and new buildings are expected, as well. These changes would be enough to clearly alter the visual character of the area and, with anticipated office and retail upgrading, introduction of new, larger institutional uses and perhaps a department store, the rezoning would transform the character of Long Island City. It would be more like a CBD—development would be denser and the types of commercial uses would more closely resemble those in downtown Brooklyn. *To accommodate increased employee populations, the rezoning would require areas of open space to be set aside on blocks in the vicinity of Queens Plaza.*

The recent acquisition of P.S. 1 by the Museum of Modern Art and the proposed expansion of LaGuardia Community College across Sunnyside Yard from “downtown” Long Island City signal the continuing strength of the area’s cultural and educational institutional base.

POPULATION

The study area should see modest increases in population as a result of the Long Island City rezoning, which is predicted to result in approximately 300 new housing units, for an estimated 750 new residents. Nearby, just outside the study area, the Hunters Point Mixed Use district should see some increase in housing resulting from a recent rezoning permitting such development.

LONG ISLAND

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The estimates of the future of Nassau and Suffolk Counties show some similarities and some differences. Both counties contain large, previously industrial sites that are likely to be developed with a mix of other uses by 2010 and 2020. These include the Lockheed Martin site in Lake Success (for which a mixed-use commercial development is proposed), the Grumman Bethpage site (slated for office, institutional, and distribution uses), the Nassau Hub (the County proposes a mixed commercial and entertainment development near the existing Nassau Coliseum), the Cerro Wire site in Oyster Bay (an upscale fashion mall is proposed), and Calverton in Riverhead (proposed for modern industrial use). These will continue a trend to replace industrial centers with other commercial and job-producing uses. The trend toward continued residential construction where land is available is expected to continue throughout the area. This trend will, however, be stronger in western Suffolk County, which is less developed than Nassau County and still a reasonable commuting distance from employment centers on the Island and in Manhattan. These trends will maintain the character of both counties as a distinct metropolitan area, with suburban development and strong employment centers.

The character of eastern Suffolk County, which is rural, agricultural, and influenced by the area’s strong recreational attraction, will be maintained to some extent through public policy,

which is focused on preserving farmland and maintaining environmental quality in the area, and also on the marketplace, which has found both the North and South Fork farmland to be attractive for the wine-making industry. Most recently, national and international wineries have begun to invest in existing Long Island wineries and to plan expansions through the purchase of other types of farmland and vacant land. However, the pressure for second homes is expected to continue as are increases in the types of retail uses associated with a recreational area (e.g., Tanger Factory Outlet Centers) plus the retail uses associated with increases in population throughout Suffolk County (e.g., the proposed major shopping center at the intersection of William Floyd Parkway and the Sunrise Highway).

Long Island's role as a provider of substantial community resources will remain in the future, as well. The beaches along both shores will continue to serve local and county residents, the entire metropolitan area, and visitors from throughout the world. And all of Long Island's major community resources that are served by the LIRR will continue as off-peak trip generators.

POPULATION AND LABOR FORCE

As shown in Table 4-11, above, the population of Long Island is expected to increase by 7.4 percent from 1995 to 2010 and by another 8.7 percent from 2010 to 2020. Not surprisingly, since it is relatively less developed now, Suffolk County will outpace Nassau in population growth for both periods. This will be accompanied by strong increases in the trip-based, employed labor force in both counties, with Suffolk County leading the way. As shown in Table 4-11, the labor force on Long Island will increase drastically in the future: by 16.7 percent from 1995 to 2010 and by another 12.4 percent from 2010 to 2020. Suffolk County increases will be the higher and more dramatic—21.7 and 17.7 percent for the two time periods, respectively. With the strong increase in population and trip-based labor force, the number of Long Island residents who commute into New York City will rise as well (by 15.5 percent from 1995 to 2010 and by another 8.4 percent from 1995 to 2020).

REPLACEMENT YARDS

The neighborhood character of the replacement yard study areas is unlikely to evolve or change much in the future. Additionally, each of the yard study areas is largely developed and there is unlikely to be much growth in either population or labor force in the Blissville, Maspeth, Fresh Pond, or Highbridge study areas. However, as noted in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the city has a proposed to create a public access easement just east of Highbridge Yard for a Greenway bicycle/pedestrian path extending as far south as Macomb's Dam Bridge.

LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS

At the sites *analyzed* for storage yards at Babylon, Yaphank East, Yaphank West, and Riverhead, the overall character of the study area will remain unchanged in the future. If the Town of Oyster Bay approves the proposed mall on the Cerro Wire site, the character of that site and surrounding area would drastically change in the future (and *this new use would be in direct conflict with* development of the site with a rail yard). At the Pilgrim Hospital site, the character of the immediate area is likely to change substantially as new uses are developed at the hospital campus. Regardless of what uses are eventually developed, the area north of Campus Road would remain in active use, while the area to the south may not. A portion of the campus would remain in use as a psychiatric hospital. *Similarly, if new housing is developed on the*

Riverhead site, the character of that area will change (and this new use would be in direct conflict with a rail yard on the site).

D. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

In general, the No Action Alternative would result in adverse effects on social conditions throughout the LITC. Without improvements to the transportation system, access to the region's community facilities, workplaces, homes, and areas of commerce would become more difficult and less convenient. As described earlier, population and labor force are projected to grow; ridership on the LIRR is also predicted to increase. The increasing demand for transportation service would result in growing conflicts as the system reaches or even exceeds its capacity (see Chapter 1, "Project Purpose and Need"). On Long Island, where use of the LIRR is strongest, the decrease in quality of LIRR service would be felt most strongly. This change would inconvenience all study area residents and support the trend toward an area characterized by increased dependence on the automobile. A portion of the labor force living on Long Island may be more likely to seek jobs outside the region's commercial center—New York City. Furthermore, the railroad's influence on land use trends would weaken, resulting in a stronger trend toward sprawling development and auto-dependent land use patterns. This is likely to have an adverse impact on efforts to preserve community character in areas dependent on the LIRR.

Within the Manhattan study area, the east-west movement of commuters between Penn Station and East Midtown would increase, intensifying the crowding and congestion on Midtown's side streets. This would adversely affect community character. There would be no improvement in access to employment centers or to the area's many important regional community facilities and services.

The Long Island City/Sunnyside study area would not benefit from a new station in Sunnyside Yard. The Long Island City/Sunnyside study area would be relatively unaffected by deterioration in LIRR service, since without the new station very few of its residents or workers would be riding the LIRR.

The No Action Alternative would have no effect on social conditions in any of the replacement yard study areas. The No Action Alternative *would require a new storage yard for electric rail cars on the Port Jefferson Branch.** If a new rail storage yard is constructed at the Cerro Wire site on the Port Jefferson Branch, it would have limited effect on the character of the area. The Cerro Wire site and immediate area are in an industrial and commercial corridor centered along the LIRR right-of-way, and the new yard would be consistent in character with that corridor. Since the residential neighborhoods just outside the study area were developed after the railroad and associated industrial uses were developed, they were designed from the start to exist in harmony with and avoid conflict with the industrial uses.

The small expansion to Ronkonkoma Yard proposed in the No Action Alternative would have no effect on the social conditions of the surrounding area, as the southern side of the yard is isolated from any neighboring uses and quite distant from the nearest residences.

* 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 other rail storage yard sites analyzed in this FEIS would not be affected under the No Action Alternative and therefore no changes would occur to the character of the surrounding areas because of new rail yards.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT (TSM) ALTERNATIVE

The TSM Alternative would slightly improve transportation service to East Midtown Manhattan, and therefore would result in small decreases in congestion in Midtown. Overall, however, the TSM Alternative would have little effect in terms of strengthening the CBD or improving access to regional community facilities. Overall, the TSM Alternative would not improve neighborhood character in Midtown.

By providing additional service to the LIRR Hunterspoint Avenue station, the TSM Alternative might somewhat strengthen the emerging CBD in Long Island City and improve access to the Long Island City/Sunnyside area. While it would not provide improved transportation access to the population in the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area or improve neighborhood character there (because it would not build new Sunnyside station), it would improve access from Long Island to the area just west of the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area.

By offering some increase in capacity for commuter service on the LIRR, the TSM Alternative would cause less inconvenience to residents of Long Island than the No Action Alternative, but it would not abate the trend toward a neighborhood character more strongly characterized by dependence on the automobile.

Effects at Long Island yard study areas would be the same as under the No Action Alternative—a new yard would be required on the Port Jefferson Branch, but the other yard sites would not be required for rail storage.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The discussion below focuses on the effects of the Preferred Alternative once operational. Potential short-term effects of construction on neighborhood character, community facilities, and residential population in the LITC and study areas are discussed in Chapter 17, “Construction and Construction Impacts.”

LONG ISLAND TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

Overall, by improving access to the region’s CBD, the Preferred Alternative would support and enhance existing social conditions in the LITC. The LIRR is a key transportation element throughout the LITC. By greatly improving service to Manhattan from eastern Queens and Long Island, and by adding origin/destination options (GCT and Sunnyside station), the Preferred Alternative would benefit all corridor residents and would improve access to the region’s community facilities. Those residents of Long Island and eastern Queens, who would use the LIRR for their daily commute, would experience the greatest benefit. However, since the LIRR serves the region’s community facilities, all residents would benefit. In addition, because the Preferred Alternative would succeed in diverting to the LIRR some commuters who would otherwise drive to work, it would support transit-centered development and help to shift the trends that currently favor suburban sprawl and automobile dependence.

MANHATTAN STUDY AREA

Within the Manhattan study area, the Preferred Alternative would greatly improve access for LIRR commuters to East Midtown. This would support the character and development patterns of the Midtown CBD, which shows a strong trend to increased attractiveness and commercial development between 42nd and 59th Streets, from Seventh to Third Avenue—an area within walking distance of GCT. By restructuring the Manhattan trip patterns of LIRR commuters (i.e., removing the need for many commuters to travel east to their ultimate destinations), the Preferred Alternative would also reduce east-west pedestrian, subway/bus, and vehicular travel in Midtown. Although LIRR commuter movements are only a small percentage of overall activity in the area, this reduction would nonetheless be beneficial to neighborhood character in Midtown.

As discussed in Chapter 6, “Visual and Aesthetic Considerations,” the new street entrances/exits would be visible and consistent in character with the busy East Midtown area north of GCT. The new entrances/exits would add pedestrians to the immediately surrounding sidewalks, changing these very localized conditions. The effect of these additional pedestrians would dissipate quickly, since these commuters would be coming to the East Midtown area in any case, and therefore would not be new to the area as a whole but only to the particular entrance/exit that they chose to use. A proposed new entrance at 280 Park Avenue under both Options 1 and 2 of the Preferred Alternative would affect a plaza area occupied by planters that serves as an open space resource, as well as a plaza space with planters at 270 Park Avenue that generally does not. Overall, these effects would not be considered significant, as plaza space would remain available for use at both locations.

In addition, by providing greatly improved access for LIRR passengers to East Midtown and destinations on the Upper East Side as well, the Preferred Alternative would increase the accessibility of several major regional community facilities (such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Frick Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the New York Public Library, the East Side medical centers), the Theater District, East Midtown shopping areas, and a number of other tourist and entertainment attractions.

LONG ISLAND CITY/SUNNYSIDE STUDY AREA

Introduction of the new Sunnyside station under the Preferred Alternative would benefit the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area. The new station would add rail access to the study area, and thus support the anticipated new CBD in Long Island City, the industrial area of Long Island City/Sunnyside, and the public, cultural, and education institutions in the area (e.g., Court House, LaGuardia Community College, P.S. 1/MoMA). The new station would benefit some residents of the Long Island City/Sunnyside study area by providing them with improved access to the LIRR.

On a more local level, the new station would be attractive in design and visible from neighborhoods on both sides of Sunnyside Yard. This, and the increased pedestrian activity across the Queens Boulevard bridge that the station would engender, would help to better link the two neighborhoods both visually and through practical use.

LONG ISLAND

The Preferred Alternative would greatly improve LIRR service to Long Island residents, both by adding capacity and by providing direct access to East Midtown. This increased mobility

would benefit Long Island's population. Commuters and visitors would benefit from reduced travel times, more efficient connections, increased capacity, and reduced crowding. These improvements would draw new customers to the LIRR from their cars, so that the Preferred Alternative would reduce traffic on the area's regional highway system and reduce vehicle miles traveled (see Chapter 9, "Transportation"). This would have a beneficial effect on the area's generally auto-dependent character. As described in Chapter 3, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," the project would also support the development of transit-oriented land use patterns on Long Island, further assisting in curtailing sprawl. Furthermore, more convenient commutes, reduced travel time, and less traffic congestion on Long Island would improve the quality of life for many Long Island residents.

The traffic and noise impacts identified in Chapters 9 and 11 ("Noise and Vibration") would not have significant impacts on neighborhood character. Although increases in noise constitute a noise impact under FTA guidelines, these adverse effects would occur in areas that are already subject to train noise. Thus, no new factor to alter neighborhood character would be introduced. Traffic impacts would all be mitigated with standard improvement measures. The impacts identified were along major station access routes, and the changes would not be enough to alter the characters of an area already subject to moderate to high peak hour traffic.

REPLACEMENT YARDS

The Preferred Alternative would intensify the use of the freight yards analyzed in this chapter—Blissville or Maspeth, Fresh Pond, and Highbridge Yards.

Blissville Yard

The new freight activity in Blissville Yard associated with the Preferred Alternative would not result in changes to the character of the area surrounding the yard. The area is strongly industrial and would remain as such. There are no residences in the yard study area, and no residences outside the study area that are not separated from the rail yard by a buffer of industrial uses. The Preferred Alternative would not have adverse impacts on the character of the Blissville study area.

Maspeth Yard

As noted earlier, NYAR is not considering Maspeth Yard as a replacement yard any longer, but the analysis of this site is provided for comparison purposes. The increase in rail freight activity at Maspeth Yard associated with the Preferred Alternative would not result in changes to the character of the surrounding area. The Maspeth Yard study area is predominantly industrial, and the new rail activity would be consistent with that character. The small residential area in the eastern part of the study area would also not be adversely affected by the increase in rail activity, as it already coexists with rail activity. The changes to the yard similarly would not affect the church in that residential neighborhood, which faces away from the yard. Without adverse impacts on neighborhood character, the Preferred Alternative would not have adverse effects on the population in the yard study area, either.

Fresh Pond Yard

The new freight facility in the East Yard at Fresh Pond (see Chapter 3) would not adversely affect the character of the surrounding neighborhood. As described earlier, the surrounding residential neighborhood is buffered from the yard by a wall of industrial buildings and, therefore, for most of the study area, the proposed changes would not be visible or perceptible. Even from

the park, those residential uses that are not buffered from the yard, the changes proposed with the Preferred Alternative would largely not be visible or perceptible. All proposed changes would occur within Fresh Pond Yard and therefore would not affect access to any community facilities. *Further, as described in Chapters 10, "Air Quality," and 11, "Noise and Vibration," the Preferred Alternative would not result in changes to air quality and noise in the area surrounding Fresh Pond Yard.* Overall, therefore, the Preferred Alternative would not adversely affect the character of the Fresh Pond Yard study area, *its community facilities (including Mafera Park)* or the population living in that study area.

Highbridge Yard

The Preferred Alternative would also increase rail activity at Highbridge Yard. However, this change would not adversely affect nearby residential uses or parks, since the yard is buffered from surrounding neighborhoods by the Major Deegan Expressway and the Harlem River. The re-use of Highbridge Yard for rail activity would not conflict with the proposed use of the abandoned rail right-of-way to the east for a bicycle/pedestrian path. While views of the yard from some apartments in the study area and from Highbridge Park would change, the change would not be adverse. *Further, as described later in Chapters 10 and 11, the Preferred Alternative would not result in significant changes to air quality or noise in the area around Highbridge Yard even under the full build-out scenario (with new tracks not related to East Side Access).* Overall, therefore, the Preferred Alternative would not adversely affect the character of the Highbridge Yard study area, *the community facilities nearby (including Highbridge Park),* or the population living in the study area.

LONG ISLAND STORAGE YARDS

Cerro Wire Site

Like the No Action Alternative's construction of an eight-track yard at Cerro Wire, the Preferred Alternative's potential construction of eight additional tracks at that *site* would not have an adverse effect on the character of the immediate or surrounding neighborhoods. As described above, the site and immediate area are in an industrial and commercial corridor centered along the LIRR right-of-way, and the new yard would be consistent in character with that corridor. The nearest residential neighborhoods are oriented away from the railroad and associated industrial uses.

Babylon Site

The construction of a train storage yard on the north side of Union Boulevard would completely change both the land use and the appearance of the site and immediate surroundings. The mix of vacant land, commercial, industrial, and residential buildings along Union Boulevard would be replaced by one large rail yard. This would change the character of the immediate area, particularly for residents and businesses on the south side of Union Boulevard. Although the disparate mix of uses on the north side of Union Boulevard give the site an industrial feeling today, this change would result in significant adverse impacts on community character. As described below under "Mitigation Measures," a barrier wall would be provided around the yard to mitigate this impact.

A new yard at Babylon would require displacement of the businesses and residents currently on the site. Chapter 5, "Economic Conditions," includes a detailed discussion of the rights of property owners and tenants who would be displaced by the project. As noted there, the project

would be required to follow the FTA's acquisition and relocation regulations. The rights of owners and tenants of property affected by the project would be protected under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Following these procedures, the project would be required to compensate owners for the fair market value of their property and provide relocation services and payments to those affected. These payments include moving expenses and replacement housing payments for affected residents. In addition, the Uniform Act requires that housing resources meet the need of displaced residents in terms of size, price, rental, location, and timely availability. Payments must be made to displaced residents at the time they are needed to obtain replacement housing.

Yaphank East Site

A new train storage yard adjacent to the Department of Public Works facility at the Yaphank East site would change the character of the yard site itself, by replacing municipal facilities and a wooded area with an active transportation use. The yard might also affect a portion of the tree farm adjacent to the Department of Public Works facility. Outside of the yard site, however, the effects of this change on the surrounding area would be quite limited. As described earlier, this yard is not accessible or visible from public places. The new yard would basically extend the existing municipal complex farther east. This would bring municipal uses closer to a small number of nearby residences, but wooded areas would continue to separate those residences from the new yard. The new yard would also require acquisition of a portion of the tree farm. The owner of the tree farm would be compensated for the property as required by law (see Chapter 5 for additional discussion on displacement and relocation benefits). The new yard would not be expected to adversely affect the adjacent Southaven County Park; since the portion of the park close to the yard is wooded and little used, the yard would be placed as far from that park as possible, and a vegetated buffer area would remain between the yard and the park.

Yaphank West Site

At Yaphank West, a new yard would change the appearance of the now agricultural site. The new yard would appear as an extension of the surrounding municipal uses, and so would not be out of character with the surrounding area. However, a yard at this site would be inconsistent with Suffolk County Farm and Education Center to the north. By replacing an agricultural use with an industrial use, the new yard would change the immediate context of that community facility. However, this change would not be a significant adverse impact, because of the distance between the yard site and the main portion of the farm center, and because the yard would only be active at night.

Ronkonkoma Site

Expanding Ronkonkoma Yard to the south would have no effect on social conditions or community character. The proposed yard site is completely buffered from surrounding uses by a wooded area, and the closest neighbors are parking fields and an airport. The new yard would be similar in character to the airport equipment and LIRR facilities that would be displaced.

Pilgrim Hospital Site

A new yard at Pilgrim Hospital would be consistent with the traditionally industrial character of the area south of Campus Road. While it might make the immediate area somewhat noisier and more active than the currently inactive site, a new yard would not represent a significant change in character. The area's character has historically been based on the utilities and sewage treatment facilities that served Pilgrim Hospital and the yard would mark a return to that active,

industrial-type character. The new yard would be separate from and therefore would not conflict with the new uses to be created at the campus by its large-scale redevelopment or with those hospital uses that are to remain at Pilgrim Hospital north of Campus Road.

Riverhead Site

The construction of a train storage and maintenance yard at Riverhead would significantly alter the character of the residential community that borders the yard to the north. The yard would require conversion of an open field that serves as a visual resource to the surrounding area to an active industrial use. This change would be significant. The new yard would bring activities and train movements to an area that is currently very quiet. The yard would be active and lit at night, which would be inconsistent with the character of the surrounding residential community. Overall, a new rail yard at Riverhead would result in significant adverse impacts to community character. As described below under “Mitigation Measures,” a wall would be provided around the yard to provide a buffer. *Further, as described in Chapter 3, a new rail yard at this site would be in direct conflict with development proposals for the property.*

The site would not adversely affect nearby Indian Island County Park, as most of that park is across Route 105 (Cross-River Drive) from the proposed rail yard.

E. MITIGATION MEASURES

No significant adverse impacts on social conditions—including neighborhood character, community facilities, and relevant population and labor force characteristics—were identified, and therefore, no mitigation would be required.

As described above, the project would require acquisition of private property for the nighttime storage yards required on Long Island. The rights of owners and tenants of real property acquired to implement the proposed project, including permanent easements, are protected under the Uniform Act. FTA would be required to abide by the Uniform Act to ensure that displaced residents and businesses are treated fairly.

To mitigate the significant impacts of several of the proposed Long Island storage yards on neighborhood character, *MTA LIRR would construct* barrier walls around certain yard sites, should those sites be selected. Specifically, the walls would be created at the following yards:

- **Babylon.** A new wall would line the southern side of the yard, to buffer the site from neighboring uses on the south side of Union Boulevard. With this wall in place, the site would appear more unified than it does today, but it would still retain its industrial character. With the buffering wall, the new yard would not result in a significant adverse impact on community character.
- **Yaphank East.** A vegetated buffer area would be retained along the eastern and southern portion of this yard would buffer the rail uses from the nearby Southaven County Park and from residential uses. With the buffer, no significant adverse impact on community character would occur.
- **Riverhead.** New buffer walls and possible vegetation would surround the yard and the north side of the adjacent LIRR right-of-way. However, while they would separate the yard from the nearby residential neighborhood, the new walls would also block views across the currently open site. Overall, the new walls would only partially mitigate the new yard’s significant adverse impact on community character. ❖