

**A. INTRODUCTION**

The Proposed Action would physically improve an approximately two-mile segment of the East River Waterfront comprising both the riverside esplanade and several piers between Whitehall Ferry Terminal and East River Park. Physical improvements generally consist of pavers, street furniture, landscaping, and some small structures. This chapter considers the potential effects of the Proposed Action on urban design and visual resources. The Proposed Action would involve alterations to the urban design of the project site and could change views to surrounding visual resources.

The technical analysis follows the guidance of the 2001 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*. As defined in the manual, urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the size and shape of buildings, and their arrangement on blocks, the street pattern, and the noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions, the future without the Proposed Action, and probable impacts of the Proposed Action by 2009, the build year of the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action would change some aspects of the urban design of the project site and study area but these changes would not be adverse as they would improve accessibility and would relate to the urban design of the project site and surrounding study area.

The 14 pavilions and space for temporary outdoor activities below the FDR Drive in the area between Old Slip and Rutgers Street would be positioned to avoid blocking existing views from streets perpendicular to the project site. Most pavilions would be faced in glass to promote transparency. However, in and immediately adjacent to the South Street Seaport Historic District (the area between Maiden Lane and the northern edge of the Brooklyn Bridge), the Program Zone elements would be developed to be appropriate within the context of the historic district. Further, the removal of automobile parking areas beneath the FDR Drive and along South Street and their replacement with pavilions would establish a streetscape that would complement the streetscape of the adjacent study area.

The underside of the FDR Drive would be clad in a material to reduce noise from the overhead roadway. The cladding would change the urban design and visual character of this industrial structure but this change would not be adverse.

The expansion of the existing narrow walkway/bikeway areas and improvements to existing esplanades and the creation of new similar features would enhance the project site’s urban design. The project site would also have plantings and seating areas and would include features such as benches, railings, planters, and arbors. The railing would have enhanced lighting, fishing rod holders, and brackets for attachment information placards about the area, and viewfinders for sights of interest. The arbors along the esplanade would provide shade and would have swings and built-in lighting.

## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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The relocation of the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass would allow for the creation of the BMB Pedestrian Plaza. The plaza would connect the walkway/bikeway from the esplanade to the Peter Minuit Plaza and would have design elements appropriate to the context of the historic BMB. These changes would improve the urban design of this area of the project site by replacing a narrow walkway/bikeway and roadway with a landscaped, publicly accessible plaza and a new walkway/bikeway. The BMB Pedestrian Plaza would enhance the streetscape in the areas closest to it by removing traffic from this area and improving accessibility to the streetscape features, the new Whitehall Ferry Terminal, and the historic BMB. The relocation of the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass to the north would not significantly affect the urban design of the project site or study area.

The project site's existing esplanade between Pier 11 and the Brooklyn Bridge would be landscaped with larger plants and trees in planter boxes among the seating areas. The area of the project site within the boundaries of the South Street Seaport Historic District would be developed in consultation with the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to be appropriate to the context of the historic district. As part of the Proposed Action, Pier 15 would be rebuilt and could have two levels with enclosed uses. The new pier would allow vessels to dock along both sides. The structure would be developed to be appropriate to the context of the historic district. Bus parking would be eliminated from this section of the project site. These proposed changes would improve the urban design of the project site by making it more easily accessible.

The abandoned New Market Building north of Pier 17 would be demolished and replaced with a new structure. The new two-story New Market Building would be located at approximately the same location as the existing structure and would be faced in highly transparent materials. It would improve the urban design of this section of the project site by creating an attractive and accessible community resource. The existing parking area on the pier structure between Pier 17 and the New Market Building would be removed and this area would be improved with a publicly accessible landscaped pier. The existing esplanade on the project site between the New Market Building and Pier 35 would be improved with new pavement, benches, and lighting.

Pier 35 could be developed with a landscaped two-tiered structure. The north end of Pier 36 would be developed with a cove for small boats. Pier 42 would be developed with a new urban beach with berms similar to dunes. These changes to Piers 35, 36, and 42 would greatly alter the urban design of the existing piers as they would be transformed from publicly inaccessible surface parking and pier sheds into publicly accessible waterfront amenities.

The street pattern along some sections of South Street would be modified with the Proposed Action, however, these changes would improve accessibility to the project site and study area. The widening and more consistent location of the walkway/bikeway and the extensions and enhancements of the esplanades would improve the urban design of the project site. The public amenities proposed for the project site piers would improve accessibility to the waterfront and would provide additional open space and recreation areas in an area of Manhattan where such features are limited.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

Changes to the project site include the enhancement of existing esplanades, the creation of new esplanades and walkways, and the addition of 14 new pavilions, the New Market Building, and other related amenities.

The new buildings proposed for the project site would include the approximately 14 pavilion structures that would be built beneath the FDR Drive and located within the areas adjacent to the existing blocks in the study area west of the project site. By locating these structures in these areas and by using highly transparent building materials, these pavilions would maintain most views to and from the project site. In the South Street Seaport Historic District, these structures would be designed to blend with or complement the historic district and would be developed in consultation with LPC and SHPO. View corridors along adjacent streets in the study area would remain unobstructed.

In addition to the pavilion structures, the area below the FDR Drive could also be used for temporary functions that would change the visual context of this area depending on the use, such as small performance spaces and farmers' markets. These uses would not be long-term or permanent visual changes. The proposed pavilions and temporary uses would enliven the project site by attracting more visitors and activities to the project site.

The creation of the BMB Plaza would replace a narrow walkway/bikeway and the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass and at-grade roadway. The approximately three-quarters of an acre plaza would have design elements appropriate to the context of the historic BMB and would visually connect Peter Minuit Plaza on the south to the project site north of the BMB. The relocated mouth of the Battery Park Underpass would not significantly alter the visual character of this section of the project site. Some views to and from the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and the BMB would change as the roadway adjacent to the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and the BMB would be improved with the addition of a landscaped plaza on the project site adjacent to the BMB.

The proposed reconstruction of Pier 15 would create a new visual amenity that would improve views to and from the project site. This pier would allow opportunities for coming to the waterfront in a way that is currently limited on the project site. The pier design and any landscaping would visually relate to the nearby historic district but would also become a visual resource itself.

The New Market Building north of the Tin Building and Pier 17 would be reconstructed and would be a two-story, approximately 40,000-square-foot building. Its design would allow the creation of a view corridor to the water in the area between it and Pier 17 to its south. The parking area on the pier between the New Market Building and Pier 17 would be removed and this area would be redeveloped with a publicly accessible esplanade with some landscaping features.

The proposed two-tier structure at Pier 35 would be landscaped with open space that would greatly improve the appearance of this currently unused pier structure. The proposed landscaping could be developed to obstruct views of the existing building on adjacent Pier 36. A sloping path could rise to an elevated platform at the southeastern end of the pier. A launch for small boats may also be provided at Pier 35 which would change the visual character of this area. At the north end of Pier 36 a cove would be created that would attract small boats to the area, changing the visual appearance of this current service area into a publicly accessible recreation destination. The proposed changes to Pier 42 would transform this derelict-looking pier and pier shed into a publicly accessible urban beach with berms reminiscent of dunes that would separate the continuing esplanade and the beach area. These changes would be an improvement over current conditions. Views of Piers 35, 36, and 42 would change as these largely unattractive piers would become visual resources in the study area as they would be activated by the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action would improve views of the project site from the Brooklyn Bridge by replacing views that include the parked automobiles currently located beneath the FDR Drive with views of the proposed pavilion structures, improvements to the esplanades, the New Market Building north of Pier 17, and the improvements to Pier 15. Similarly, the view of the project site from the Manhattan Bridge would be improved with views of the proposed pavilion structures that would be located below the FDR Drive. Views north toward the project site would be improved by the proposed changes to Pier 35 as the enhanced pier structure would obstruct some views to the surface parking and structures on Pier 36 to its north. Views to Piers 35, 36, and 42 may also include several boats that would be moored at these piers.

Overall, the Proposed Action would enhance the project site creating new visual resources on the project site where none currently exist. Visual resources in the study area would not be adversely affected by the Proposed Action.

## B. METHODOLOGY

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

- *Block Form and Street Pattern.* This urban design feature refers to the shape and arrangement of blocks and surrounding streets, such as a grid pattern with regularly sized, rectangular blocks. These features set street views, define the flow of activity through an area, and create the basic format on which building arrangements can be organized.
- *Building Arrangement.* This term refers to the way that buildings are placed on zoning lots and blocks. The buildings can have small or large footprints, be attached or detached and separated by open space uses, and be varied in their site plans. This urban design feature helps to convey a sense of the overall form and design of a block or a larger area.
- *Building Bulk, Use, and Type.* Buildings are usually described by these characteristics. A building's bulk is created from an amalgam of characteristics that include its height, length, and width; lot coverage and density; and shape and use of setbacks and other massing elements. The general use of a building (e.g., residential, manufacturing, commercial, office) gives an impression of its appearance and helps to convey visual and urban design character. Building type refers to a distinctive class of buildings and suggests distinguishing features of a particular building. Examples of building type include: industrial loft, church, gas station, walk-up tenement.
- *Streetscape Elements.* Streetscape elements are the distinctive physical features that make up a streetscape, such as street walls, building entrances, parking lots, fences, street trees, street furniture, curb cuts, and parking ribbons. These features help define the immediate visual experience of pedestrians.
- *Street Hierarchy.* Streets may be classified as expressways, arterials, boulevards, collector/distributor streets, or local streets, and they may be defined by their width, type of access, and the presence or absence of at-grade pedestrian crossings. Street hierarchy helps convey a sense of the overall form and activity level of a neighborhood.
- *Topography and Natural Features.* Topographic and natural features help define the overall visual character of an area and may include varied ground elevations, rock outcroppings and steep slopes, vegetation, and aquatic features.

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

The analysis evaluates impacts in two areas—the project site and a surrounding study area (see Figures 7-1 and Figures 1-1 through 1-4). The project site generally encompasses the East River waterfront, the area under the elevated FDR Drive and South Street extending along two miles from the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and Peter Minuit Plaza on the south to East River Park on the north. Piers 15, 35, and 42 as well as the New Market Building pier and a portion of Pier 36 are included in the Proposed Action. The surrounding study area is roughly bounded by the East River on the east, the buildings along South Street west of the project site and streets that terminate at South Street, the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and Peter Minuit Plaza on the south, and East River Park on the north. Views to the project site from west of the elevated portions of the FDR Drive are limited by this roadway. Given the project site's location adjacent to and along the East River waterfront, views from the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges were also considered for this analysis.

## **C. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **PROJECT SITE**

The discussion below focuses first on the project site's urban design—its basic layout and structures—and then describes its visual resources.

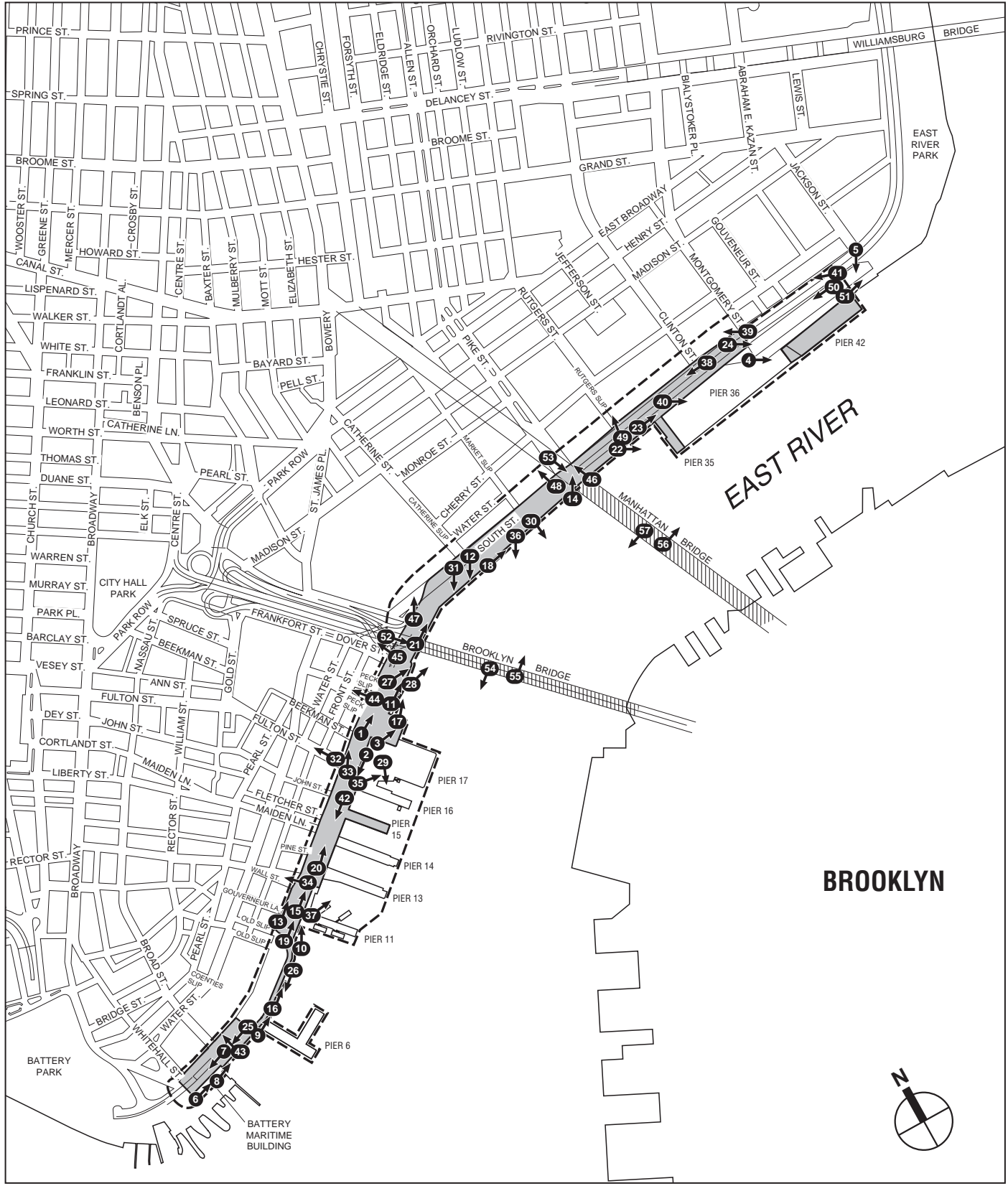
#### *URBAN DESIGN*





##### *Building Bulk, Height, and Setbacks*

There are very few buildings on the project site. Most buildings on the project site are small, single-story structures, including parking attendant kiosks and service buildings located below the FDR Drive and on the esplanade. The two larger buildings on the project site are the New Market Building and the Pier 42 pier shed. The New Market Building, located east of the FDR Drive between Beekman Street and Peck Slip, rises 36 feet in height and has a canopy structure that cantilevers over the former loading docks that open onto the former truck parking area that once provided access to the former fish market. The other larger building on the project site, the Pier 42 pier shed, rises 32 feet in height. All of the buildings on the project site are low-rise, rectangular structures without setbacks.

##### *Building Use*

The buildings on the project site include parking attendant kiosks, three small service buildings, the Maritime Crafts Center, the New Market Building, and the Pier 42 pier shed. The parking attendant kiosks are small structures below the FDR Drive (see View 1 of Figure 7-2). A small gray service building is located on the esplanade near the base of Pier 13. On the esplanade near former Pier 15 is a small, rectangular single-story structure perpendicular to the FDR Drive that houses the South Street Seaport's Maritime Crafts Center (see View 2 of Figure 7-2). A small, white cinder block service building is located below the FDR Drive. The New Market Building, located between Beekman Street and Peck Slip, is a two-story empty industrial structure that is set away from the FDR Drive structure on the east beyond a paved area where fish market trucks once parked. The building has abandoned-looking truck loading docks below a flat canopy



-  Project Site
-  Study Area Boundary
-  Photo Location and View Direction
-  Addition Views Considered



**Urban Design and Visual Resources  
Project Site and Study Area**

EAST RIVER Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

Figure 7-1



Parking area below the FDR Drive north of Fulton Street 1



View south from near Pier 16 2

## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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structure at the building's second floor (see View 3 of Figure 7-3). North of this building on a paved platform over the water is a small, square service building with a pitched roof. The Pier 42 pier shed is an abandoned-looking large, low two-story structure with several loading docks on its west elevation (see Views 4 and 5 of Figure 7-4).

### *Building Arrangement*

The buildings on the project site are all detached structures with rectangular footprints and range in size from small, narrow parking attendant kiosks to the long, low Pier 42 pier shed. The smallest structures, the kiosks, are located below the FDR Drive and are set within designated surface parking areas. A gray cinder block service building with a slanted roof is located on the esplanade near the base of Pier 13. A white cinder block service building with a flat roof is also located below the FDR Drive near John Street. On the esplanade near former Pier 15 is a single-story small, rectangular structure perpendicular to the FDR Drive. Another small structure is a square service building with a pitched roof. The two larger buildings on the project site, the New Market Building located between Beekman Street and Peck Slip and Pier 42 located between Montgomery Street and East River Park, are sited on pier structures that extend over the East River. The New Market Building is a two-story industrial structure faced in beige corrugated metal siding that is set away from the FDR Drive structure on the east beyond a paved area where fish market trucks once parked. The building has abandoned-looking truck loading docks below a flat canopy structure at the building's second floor. The largest building on the project site is the Pier 42 pier shed, a large, low two-story brick structure partially faced in corrugated metal with several loading docks on its west elevation.

### *Block Form and Street Pattern*

There are no blocks on the project site as the streets perpendicular to the project site dead end at South Street, the roadway that forms the project site's western boundary.

At its southernmost portion, the project site includes the ramp to the Battery Park Underpass and multiple traffic lanes of South Street surrounding the ramp on the south, east, and west (see Views 6 and 7 of Figure 7-5). The mouth of the Battery Park Underpass is surrounded by concrete barrier walls. To its south is a traffic island with a seating area with concrete benches. The east side of the roadway is lined by jersey barriers separating it from a narrow sidewalk along the western elevation of the Battery Maritime Building (BMB). The west side of the roadway abuts a sidewalk and ventilation wall for a building west of the project site. There are no blocks on the project site.

The southern portion of the project site includes the FDR Drive, a multi-lane roadway. This portion of the FDR Drive, roughly between Whitehall Street and the area just south of Pier 6, is at grade. This section of the FDR Drive, beginning at the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass is surrounded by low concrete barrier walls with green metal railings and includes the ramp to the Battery Park Underpass and multiple traffic lanes surrounding the ramp on the south, east, and west. The project site between Broad Street and Pier 6 also includes the adjacent narrow waterfront walkway/bikeway (see View 8 of Figure 7-6).

North of Pier 6, and outside the project site, the central six lanes of the FDR Drive begin to slope up to where it becomes a fully elevated structure at Old Slip (see View 9 of Figure 7-7). The elevated FDR Drive spans above much of the project site between Old Slip and Montgomery Street and curves with the East River waterfront. The structure's footings extend down onto the project site as two rows of fairly regularly spaced columns. The structure's underside is



New Market Building (former Fulton Fish Market Building) 3



View from the south of Pier 42 4



View from the north of Pier 42 5



View north from the Battery Maritime Building 6



View south from the Battery Maritime Building toward the Whitehall Ferry Terminal 7

**Project Site and Study Area Views**



View north of the walkway/ bikeway from the Battery Maritime Building 8



characterized by steel beams and columns with heavily riveted joints (see View 10 of Figure 7-7). The elevated structure between Old Slip and Peck Slip has a central portion between the column footings and cantilevered sections east and west of the central portion. Between Peck Slip and Market Street the FDR Drive includes numerous additional ramps and structural support columns, several of which extend to the east beyond the project site into the East River and to the west into the adjacent streetbeds and sidewalks (see Views 11 and 12 of Figure 7-8).

The western edge of the project site is defined by South Street, a two-way, north-south arterial roadway located beneath and immediately adjacent to the elevated portion of the FDR Drive between Whitehall Street on the south and Montgomery Street on the north. The north and south traffic lanes of the portion of South Street south of Old Slip are separated by the at-grade portion of the FDR Drive. Between Old Slip and the Brooklyn Bridge, South Street generally has two northbound lanes and one southbound lane with parking along one or both sides of the street (see View 13 of Figure 7-9). Between the Brooklyn Bridge and Montgomery Street, South Street has a single northbound and two southbound lanes with bus layover areas on both sides of the street and curbside parking in the southbound lanes (see View 14 of Figure 7-9). There are traffic signals along South Street at most of the major cross streets, including Fulton, Pike, and Montgomery Streets.

### *Streetscape Elements*

The streetscape is largely defined by the elevated FDR Drive and the varying conditions of the waterside esplanade. A limited number of planters with small bushes and flowers are located along some segments of the esplanade in the areas between Piers 11 and 16 and between Peck Slip and Dover Street (see View 15 of Figure 7-10). There is one tree on the project site on the esplanade near Peck Slip where there are also several other landscaping elements. Street furniture includes benches in a variety of styles but generally have metal frames and wooden seats and are located intermittently along the esplanades (see View 16 of Figure 7-10). Metal railings line the waterfront. The railing along the waterfront between Broad Street and Old Slip is standard, rounded brushed metal; whereas the railing along the remainder of the project site's waterfront is more decorative metal with patterned elements. South of Pier 16 the project site has standard cobrahead lampposts along the esplanade and cobrahead street lamps that arc over the project site from the cantilevered eastern edge of the elevated portion of the FDR Drive. Decorative lampposts are located near Piers 16 and 17 and along the esplanade between Peck Slip and the Brooklyn Bridge (see View 17 of Figure 7-11). Between the Brooklyn Bridge and Pier 35 the lighting is decorative arc lamps that project over the project site from the FDR Drive's eastern columns (see View 18 of Figure 7-11). Lighting for the Pier 42 pier shed is from building-mounted lights along the structure's roofline. Additional lighting for the project site between Old Slip and Montgomery Street is provided by light fixtures mounted to the underside of the FDR Drive.

The streetscape is described below according to segments of the project site from south to north.

### *Area to become the BMB Pedestrian Plaza*

The southernmost portion of the project site includes the ramp to the Battery Park Underpass and multiple traffic lanes surrounding the underpass ramp on the south, east, and west (see Views 6 and 7 of Figure 7-5). The mouth of the Battery Park Underpass is surrounded by concrete barrier walls. To its south is a traffic island with a seating area with concrete benches. The east side of the roadway is lined by jersey barriers separating it from a narrow sidewalk along the western

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elevation of the BMB. The west side of the roadway abuts a sidewalk and ventilation wall for a building west of the project site.

### ***BMB to Pier 11***

North of the BMB between Broad Street and Pier 6, the project site extends west to include South Street. This portion of South Street has multiple lanes of north-south traffic divided jersey barriers. Cobrahead lights illuminate the roadway. Parked cars line both sides of the roadway. Large and small roadway signs are located above and along South Street. This section of the waterfront walkway/bikeway shifts east and becomes slightly wider.

North of Pier 6 to Old Slip the project site narrows and only includes the portion of the waterfront walkway that is paved in concrete. The walkway is bounded on the east by a metal railing separating it from the East River and on the west by cars and buses parked along South Street. The concrete walkway ramps down slightly at the two automobile access points for Pier 6. The access area has a tall black metal fence with two gates along the eastern edge of the project site (see View 9 of Figure 7-7). Pier 6 is not part of the project site. North of Pier 6 the walkway curves eastward over the water. This segment of the walkway includes a few flat wooden benches and is lined by parked buses along the roadway west of the walkway (see View 10 of Figure 7-7). The walkway curves back to the west at the north side of Old Slip where it meets the granite bulkhead, visible from the walkway south of Old Slip. North of Old Slip the FDR Drive becomes an elevated structure and the project site expands upland to include the area under the FDR Drive. South Street becomes the project site's western edge.

In general, the underside of the elevated FDR Drive reveals the roadway's structural steel columns and platform for the roadway's deck (see View 19 of Figure 7-12). The roadway has a central section between the columns and overhangs that cantilever on the east and west. The underside of the elevated structure includes lighting and various types of signage identifying walkway/bikeway areas and adjacent streets and piers. The area below the FDR Drive is paved in a variety of materials, including concrete, asphalt, and decorative pavers. Automobile parking—including cars, buses, and motorcycles—is typical below much of the length of the FDR Drive, including this section of the project site.

Automobile parking occupies much of the project site below the FDR Drive between Old Slip to Gouverneur Lane. The eastern edge of esplanade is the granite bulkhead which is just outboard of the FDR Drive overhang. This portion of the walkway is paved with decorative pavers, concrete, and asphalt and has a decorative metal fence along its eastern edge. These elements contrast the concrete pavement and metal railing of the walkway south of Old Slip. A walkway/bikeway is delineated in the pavement separating the benches near the water from the parked vehicles under the FDR Drive. The walkway/bikeway ends near Pier 11 (just north of Gouverneur Lane) where signage instructs bikers to walk their bikes. This portion of the esplanade provides access to Pier 11, located east of the project site. Nautical bollards are in the esplanade at the base of Pier 11 for safety and security measures. Additional bollards demarcate an east-west walkway connecting Pier 11 to Gouverneur Lane.

### ***Pier 11 to Fulton Street***

Within the project site between Pier 11 and Wall Street, the eastern portion of the esplanade is paved with decorative pavers and has flat wooden benches, bollards, and garbage cans. A portion of the esplanade expands beyond the project site over the water as a metal grid walkway. The remaining western portion of the esplanade is paved with concrete. The walkway/bikeway is

not delineated in this area of the project site. Between Pier 11 and Maiden Lane buses are parked perpendicular to the FDR Drive (see View 16 of Figure 7-10).

At Wall Street the project site widens out over the water on a concrete platform that continues the line of the metal grid platform to the south (where it is outside the project site). This wider waterfront portion of the project site extends from Wall Street north to John Street. This area has a decorative fence along its eastern waterfront perimeter and includes flat wooden benches and large planters with flowers and small trees. The walkway/bikeway below the FDR Drive is paved in asphalt and is delineated by yellow and white lines (see View 16 of Figure 7-10). East of the walkway/bikeway the project site has pathways identifiable by their decorative pavers. The remainder of this section of the project site is paved in concrete. A small gray service building lies within this area of the esplanade near the base of Pier 13. East of the service building, a chainlink fence with green mesh fabric visually separates the esplanade from the waterfront and Piers 13 and 14 (outside the project site). The project site north of the service building is similarly landscaped as the area to its south but the waterfront is more visually accessible from this area as its waterfront perimeter is lined by a low, approximately three-foot-tall decorative fence.

Motor bikes are parked on the project site in the area under the FDR Drive just north of Wall Street. The area of the project site under the FDR Drive between Pine Street and Maiden Lane is occupied by buses parked perpendicular to South Street (see View 20 of Figure 7-12). These areas are separated from the walkway/bikeway and the esplanade by a guardrail and a fence. This section of the walkway/bikeway is demarcated by yellow and white lines on the asphalt pavement.

The concrete platform of the wide esplanade ends opposite the north side of Maiden Lane. The walkway slopes down approximately three feet in this area and the esplanade narrows significantly. Parked cars occupy the project site under the FDR Drive between Maiden Lane and Fletcher Street. The parking area is separated by jersey barriers from the walkway/bikeway. There is a small parking attendant kiosk in this area of the project site.

The remains of Pier 15, located just north of Fletcher Street, are marked by four wooden pilings standing in the water. The esplanade adjacent to the site of Pier 15 is surfaced in wooden beams and includes several wooden benches. A small service building separates the esplanade from the waterfront in this area on the south side of John Street. Between John and Beekman Streets the project site narrows and includes only the area below the FDR Drive and South Street. The area below the FDR Drive between John and Fulton Streets is occupied by construction equipment and vehicles. This area is enclosed by a chainlink fence and screened by green mesh fabric. The area of the project site at Fulton Street has a variety of decorative pavers, including gray granite slabs and Belgian block (see View 2 of Figure 7-2). Fulton Street is the major east-west tourist corridor for the South Street Seaport adjacent to the project site.

### *Fulton Street to the Brooklyn Bridge*

The project site below the FDR Drive between Fulton Street and Peck Slip is occupied by surface parking paved in a patchwork of concrete and asphalt (see View 1 of Figure 7-2). The parking area between Fulton and Beekman Streets is surrounded on the south, east, and north by jersey barriers. Also within this area is a small parking attendant kiosk. This section of the project site is generally dark and uninviting and is lined on the east and west by abandoned-looking sheds of the former fish market stalls (the Fulton Fish Market closed in early 2006). These buildings, in addition to the FDR Drive above, block sunlight from reaching this area of

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the project site. The sidewalk along the west side of the parking lots on this section of the project site is paved in concrete but does not have a defined curb, making it nearly indistinguishable from South Street to the west. The walkway/bikeway in this area is paved in asphalt and is a narrow path between the former fish market sheds and the parked cars.

North of this area, the project site between Beekman Street and Peck Slip extends to the waterfront and includes the New Market Building and its narrow pier along the north side of Pier 17 (outside the project site). The New Market Building, a two-story industrial structure faced in beige corrugated metal siding, is set away from the FDR Drive structure on the east beyond a paved area where fish market trucks once parked. The building has abandoned-looking truck loading docks below a flat canopy structure at the building's second floor (see View 3 of Figure 7-3). The building obstructs views to the river. The waterside of this building is next to the refuse containers for Pier 17. The area immediately north of the former market building is a paved, chainlink fence-enclosed platform over the water that contains a small service building. The walkway/bikeway on this section of the project site is paved in asphalt and is not clearly demarcated. It lies between the eastern columns supporting the central FDR Drive structure and rows of parked cars on the west and the columns of the FDR Drive's exit ramp to the Civic Center on the east.

North from the New Market Building to Dover Street, the esplanade extends eastward on a concrete platform near the water's edge and has been improved with benches, decorative street lamps, plantings, large rocks, and decorative multi-colored pavers. The benches are brushed metal and the low fence that separates the esplanade from the waterfront is gray metal with a red upper railing. A row of decorative lampposts on the esplanade lines the walkway/bikeway on the east. West of the esplanade the walkway/bikeway is only demarcated by movable metal barrier fences separating it from the car parking lots below the FDR Drive (see View 17 of Figure 7-11). The FDR Drive's eastern exit ramp separates from the central FDR Drive structure between Peck Slip and Dover Street where it becomes elevated above the FDR Drive creating an opening that allows light to filter to the project site below. Four of the exit ramp's T-shaped footings are within this section of the project site west of the esplanade. Near Peck Slip the west side of the FDR Drive widens above the project site to accommodate a southbound entrance ramp. The footings for this entrance ramp are set in South Street, a Belgian block-paved narrow island between Peck Slip and Dover Street, and the sidewalk on South Street just south of Dover Street. Car parking is below the exit ramp and the remaining section of the FDR Drive in this area of the project site.

### *Brooklyn Bridge to Pier 35*

Beneath the Brooklyn Bridge the esplanade has decorative pavers and a fence with a red railing in the same style as the section of the esplanade immediately to the south. The esplanade has a clearly demarcated walkway separated from the waterfront esplanade by regularly spaced bollards and Belgian block pavers. The area beneath the FDR Drive is paved in asphalt, is occupied by parked cars, and often has standing water.

The project site between the Brooklyn Bridge and Pier 35 has a fairly consistent urban design (see View 18 of Figure 7-11 and View 21 of Figure 7-13). The esplanade is shaded by the access ramp to the northbound FDR Drive as it curves outboard overhead between the Brooklyn Bridge and the area just south of Market Street. The ramp footings are outside the bulkhead (and outside the project site) until just south of Market Street. The esplanade north of Market Street generally extends east of the FDR Drive and is in sunlight. The esplanade has decorative pavers and a fence with a red railing in the same style as the section of the esplanade immediately to the

south. Similarly, the esplanade has a clearly demarcated and well-maintained walkway separated from the waterfront esplanade by Belgian block pavers. The area is well marked with signage for nearby streets and nearby points of interest. This section of the esplanade also includes benches, bicycle racks, and decorative light fixtures. The esplanade is well used by walkers, bikers, runners, fishers, and other recreational users. Access points to the esplanade are generally from the streets and sidewalks of the cross streets that dead end on the west side of South Street in the area below the FDR Drive. Access in this area is limited to these locations because of the jersey barriers and chainlink fences along the east side of South Street.

Automobile parking is limited to the area immediately south of the Brooklyn Bridge north to the area opposite the south side of Catherine Slip. The parking area below this portion of the FDR Drive is separated from South Street by jersey barriers and chainlink fences. The asphalt pavement along this portion of the project site is in good condition. North of Catherine Slip there is no car parking below the center section of the FDR Drive, however, there is bus parking below the FDR Drive's southbound lane that cantilevers over the east side of South Street.

### Pier 35 to Montgomery Street

The esplanade is fenced off at the southern edge of Pier 35, a wide, flat, and unused pier perpendicular to the shoreline (see View 22 of Figure 7-13). Pier 35 abuts Pier 36 to its north, which is used by the Department of Sanitation, Fire Department Rescue Units, and the New York Police Department (NYPD). The esplanade ends at this point but the walkway shifts to the west where a large parking area for Piers 35, 36, and 42 are located. The walkway narrows significantly but continues north with a demarcated section below the western cantilevered portion of the FDR Drive and a section immediately east of the FDR Drive's western columns (see View 23 of Figure 7-14). The central portion of the project site located below the FDR Drive ends just south of Pier 35 where the walkway shifts westward. Only a small portion of Pier 36 is part of the project site. The walkway shifts eastward at Montgomery Street where it terminates (see View 24 of Figure 7-14). The FDR Drive begins to return to grade north of Montgomery Street. The portion of Pier 36 that is part of the project site would be north of Montgomery Street along the waterfront where trucks and other heavy machinery currently park.

### Pier 42

Pier 42 is similar to Pier 36 as it comprises a wide paved area and a pier shed near the waterfront. The pier shed is a large, low two-story brick structure partially faced in corrugated metal and has several loading docks on its west elevation (see View 4 of Figure 7-4). The paved area north, west, and south of the structure is strewn with various kinds of construction materials (see View 5 of Figure 7-4).

### Street Hierarchy

The project site is largely defined by two roadways: the FDR Drive and South Street. The most defining urban design element of the project site is the FDR Drive, a multi-lane elevated roadway above the majority of the length of the project site. The southern portion of the FDR Drive, roughly between Whitehall Street and the area just south of Pier 6, is at grade and is part of the project site. This section of the FDR Drive includes the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass, the ramping up of the FDR Drive, and multiple traffic lanes surrounding the ramp on the south, east, and west (see View 8 of Figure 7-6). Forming the project site's western boundary is South Street, an at-grade, north-south through street that carries local traffic through the project site and provides curbside parking for cars and buses along much of its length. There are no other roadways on the project site.

## East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

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### *Topography and Natural Features*

The project site is defined by the East River, a natural feature that forms the project site's eastern boundary and separates Manhattan and Brooklyn. The project site also has a limited number of planters with small bushes and flowers located along the landscaped segments of the existing esplanade in the areas between Piers 11 and 16 and between Peck Slip and Dover Street.

In general, the project site is flat. The only change in topography on the project site is where the walkway slopes down to the north by approximately three feet near the north side of Maiden Lane. The walkway/bikeway that extends along the entire project site is occupied by a variety of walkers, bikers, fishers, tourists, and others participating in recreation activities along the waterfront.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS*

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

The Whitehall Ferry Terminal and the BMB are visual resources visible from the southern section of the project site. The Whitehall Ferry Terminal is an approximately 75-foot-tall glass and steel structure located along the waterfront adjacent to the terminus of the project site. The building's north elevation—with an angled roof, transparent glass curtain wall, and a portion of a large sign reading "Staten Island Ferry"—is prominent in views from the southern sections of the project site (see View 25 of Figure 7-15). The building's transparent curtain wall is a distinct contrast to the masonry-faced and ornately designed buildings to its west and east, respectively. North of this building is the BMB, an ornately designed, multi-colored early 20th century ferry terminal (originally the Whitehall Ferry Terminal), also located on the waterfront. The BMB has three slips that open through the building and provide physical access and views to the East River from the building's streetside elevation along this portion of the project site. The BMB is visible from many areas of the project site to the north because the building extends out over the river on wooden piers (see View 26 of Figure 7-15).

Two of the most prominent visual resources in the study area are the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, as they are visible from most areas of the project site (see View 15 of Figure 7-10 and Views 27 and 28 of Figure 7-16). The Brooklyn Bridge, dating from 1883, spans above the project site near Dover Street and across the East River to Brooklyn. The suspension bridge, with its intricate web of cables and Gothic-inspired piers, is one of the most prominent visual resources in the project study area. A similarly visually prominent bridge in the study area is the Manhattan Bridge that spans above the project site just south of Pike Street and across the East River to Brooklyn. The Manhattan Bridge opened in 1909 and is a two-level steel suspension bridge with blue-painted steel towers. In the areas closest to the bridges—near Dover Street for the Brooklyn Bridge and Pike Street for the Manhattan Bridge—their massive piers are also visible prominent features in these views from the project site.

Views from the project site toward the waterfront can generally be divided into three areas—south of Pier 17, between Pier 17 and the Manhattan Bridge, and north of the Manhattan Bridge. Views toward the waterfront from the area south of Pier 17 include views of trees and a ventilation structure on Governor's Island and the Brooklyn skyline, including waterfront industrial buildings and tall gantry cranes, and taller apartment and office buildings. Views of

the Brooklyn skyline are visual resources. Some views toward the waterfront from this section of the project site are partially obscured by piers, related pier structures, and chainlink fences. In the area near Pier 17 and the South Street Seaport, the tall ships—including *The W. O. Decker* (tugboat), *The Wavertree*, *The Ambrose* (lightship), *The Lettie G. Howard*, *The John A. Lynch* (ferryboat), and *The Helen McAllister* (harbor tugboat)—are visual resources (see View 29 of Figure 7-17). Views east toward the waterfront from the project site below the FDR Drive are often obstructed in some areas by the cars and buses parked below the FDR Drive.

Waterfront views from the area between Pier 17 and the Manhattan Bridge include Pier 17 to the south and the rocky shoreline that abuts the extended esplanade in the area between the New Market Building and Dover Street. In the water near the rocky shoreline are wooden pilings grouped together with heavy rope. Beneath and slightly to the north of the Brooklyn Bridge is a narrow sand and pebble beach littered with debris. At the north end of this small beach are remnants of concrete columns with protruding rusted rebar elements. Views from the area between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges include views of both bridges and their enormous footings and views of the smaller and larger buildings of Brooklyn’s skyline (see View 30 of Figure 7-18). Views to the north and south from this area of the project site also include views of the Manhattan skyline (see View 31 of Figure 7-18).

Views from the area north of the Manhattan Bridge similarly include the Brooklyn skyline and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, all significant visual resources. Views to the north also include distant views of one of the towers of the Williamsburg Bridge and, to the east, views of the powerhouse on the Brooklyn waterfront near the Navy Yard.

Views inland from the project site are generally limited to the buildings that line the west side of South Street along the majority of the project site as they obstruct most views farther west. The buildings visible along the west side of the project site are generally not considered visual resources except for buildings within the South Street Seaport Historic District that are along the west side of South Street generally between Maiden Lane on the south and the Brooklyn Bridge on the north.<sup>1</sup> The buildings in the historic district that are adjacent to and within the project site along South Street are visual resources visible from some areas of the project site closest to the historic district. As with most views west from the project site, most views of the historic district buildings are limited by the elevated FDR Drive. Views to the historic district are most open along Fulton Street because it is one of the wider streets in the historic district and includes views of the historic buildings on the north and south sides of Fulton Street and Belgian block pavers (see View 32 of Figure 7-19). Buildings in the historic district primarily date from the 19th and early 20th centuries and are three- to five-story brick structures, some of which have ground floor retail and restaurants and some that have fire escapes on their primary facades. The historic district buildings along South Street between Fulton Street and Peck Slip were part of the former Fulton Fish Market; many of these buildings now have sealed windows and doors and the buildings are not in use (see View 33 of Figure 7-19).

The tall ships identified above and the New Market Building are also within the historic district and are visible to the east of the project site (see View 29 of Figure 7-17). The tall ships are visual resources whereas the New Market Building, described above, is not considered a visual resource.

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<sup>1</sup> The South Street Seaport is a designated State/National Register Historic District and a New York City Historic District. The boundaries for these historic districts are somewhat different (see Figures 6-1 and 6-2).

## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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There are two view corridors west from the project site—along Wall and Fulton Streets. The view corridor west along Wall Street includes the landscaped plaza at South Street in the foreground and Trinity Church along Broadway in the distant background where the view corridor terminates. The church's Gothic steeple is a sharp contrast to the many angular glass and masonry curtain wall skyscrapers that are visible along the view corridor. Views of Trinity Church are available from the project site from both sides of the FDR Drive and also from the East River where views of the church are commonly identified by tour boat operators (see View 34 of Figure 7-20). A second view corridor is Fulton Street, a physical and visual east-west corridor through the project site. To the west, Fulton Street is characterized by its Belgian block streetbed lined with a variety of three- to five-story 19th and 20th century brick buildings, many with ground floor retail uses. Views west along the Fulton Street view corridor include the tower of the Woolworth Building in the distant background. Fulton Street is improved with decorative lampposts, ballasts, potted plants, and Belgian block pavers (see View 32 of Figure 7-19). Views east along the Fulton Street view corridor include the extended esplanade with Pier 17 along the north and several of the tall ships moored to the piers south of Fulton Street (see View 35 of Figure 7-20 and View 29 of Figure 7-17). These features frame views to the east along the Fulton Street view corridor to the Brooklyn skyline on the far side of the East River.

In the areas of the project site where vehicles are not parked below the FDR Drive, most views east from the west side of the FDR Drive and below the roadway include existing esplanades, the waterfront, existing piers, and views of Brooklyn and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. In the areas where automobiles are parked on the project site or immediately adjacent to the project site, views are obstructed from the west and from below the FDR Drive. Views east from most streets that run perpendicular to the project site are limited to views of the areas below the FDR Drive and views of the areas east of the FDR Drive that are framed by the structure's columns. These views are not considered visual resources or view corridors.

Pier 17 is a large two- and three-story pier structure that is one of the most visually prominent structures in the study area immediately east of the project site. The western portion of Pier 17 is the Tin Building, a smaller gray structure with colored awnings above its windows. The remaining majority of the pier is a large red shed-like structure with "Pier 17" painted in white along the building's north and south facades. Both sections of Pier 17 have walkways along their southern elevations that open onto the extended esplanade in this area. Pier 17 also has outdoor dining areas with handrails on its upper floors, exterior stairs, exposed metal structural columns and decorative elements, and a gray corrugated metal pitched roof. Pier 17 is visible from areas of the project site to the north, south, and west (see View 35 of Figure 7-20 and View 36 of Figure 7-21). Automobile parking is located on the extended pier platform north of the Pier 17 building but this is not highly visible.

The shape of this section of Lower Manhattan and the length of the project site allow views from within the project site that often include other sections of the project site. These views are generally available from the areas of the project site between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges where the shoreline curves in allowing views of the areas to the north and south where the shoreline extends further into the East River. Views north in this area generally include the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, the FDR Drive and its various exit and entrance ramps, and taller apartment buildings west of the FDR Drive (see View 17 of Figure 7-11). From some vantage points, views also include one of the towers of the Williamsburg Bridge in the background. Similarly, because of the shape of this area of Manhattan, views from the project site looking south from the area near Market Street include the Brooklyn Bridge, Pier 17, sections of the FDR Drive, and many of the skyscrapers of Lower Manhattan (see View 31 of

Figure 7-18). Views north and east from the project site also include the four smokestacks of a power facility across the East River in Brooklyn.

### STUDY AREA

#### *URBAN DESIGN*

The study area includes the buildings and features along South Street facing the project site and streets that terminate at South Street, the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and Peter Minuit Plaza on the south, and East River Park on the north. The study area also includes the FDR Drive and the East River.

#### *Building Bulk, Height, Setbacks, Use, and Arrangement*

The buildings and structures in the study area to the south and east of the project site are all maritime structures. The two most prominent maritime buildings in the southern portion of the study area are the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and the BMB (see Views 25 and 26 of Figure 7-15). The Whitehall Ferry Terminal is an approximately 75-foot-tall glass and steel structure located along the East River waterfront immediately south of the project site. The building's north elevation faces the project site and its primary elevation faces west. The profile of the building's northern elevation—its angled roof, transparent glass curtain wall, and a portion of the large sign reading “Staten Island Ferry”—is prominently visible from the project site because it is adjacent to the southern terminus of the project site. The BMB, the former Whitehall Ferry Terminal, is located north of the current Whitehall Ferry Terminal, also along the waterfront. This building is an ornately designed, multi-colored early 20th century ferry terminal. The building has three slips that open through the building and provide physical access and views to the East River from the building's streetside elevation.

Also on the waterfront in the study area are Piers 6, 11, 13, 14, 16, and 17. These piers are all long, single level structures, many of which are paved or have wooden plank surfaces. The structural systems of these piers are partially visible depending on the water level. Pier 6 is a heliport and has a small two-story structure at mid-point on the pier. The pier also has surface parking and is separated from the project site by a tall fence (see View 8 of Figure 7-6). Pier 11 is a concrete platform on round concrete piers. This pier accommodates five ferry lines with arriving and departing commuter ferries. The area between Pier 11 and Wall Street expands over the water by a metal grid walkway with two large and three small openings allowing light and views to the water (see View 37 of Figure 7-21). Piers 13 and 14 are two flat structures that stretch out into the East River (see View 15 of Figure 7-10). Also in this area is a floating pier, Pier 13, for a ferry to Hoboken. This short pier is enclosed by a round white fabric-covered structure.

Pier 16 is the esplanade area south of Pier 17. It has a wooden surface, seating areas, and small kiosks. Pier 17 is a large two- and three-story pier structure that is one of the most visually prominent structures in the study area immediately east of the project site. The western portion of Pier 17 is the Tin Building, a smaller gray structure with colored awnings above its windows. The remaining majority of the pier is a large red shed-like structure with “Pier 17” painted in white along the building's north and south facades. Both sections of Pier 17 have walkways along their southern elevations that open onto the extended esplanade in this area. Pier 17 also has outdoor dining areas with handrails on its upper floors, exterior stairs, exposed metal structural columns and decorative elements, and a gray corrugated metal pitched roof. Pier 17 is visible from areas of the project site to the north, south, and west (see View 35 of Figure 7-20).

## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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Automobile parking is located on the extended pier platform north of the Pier 17 building but this is not highly visible. The only other waterfront structures are part of Pier 36, described above.

The buildings in the study area west of the project site and south of the Brooklyn Bridge include tall, modern office buildings and smaller, three- to five-story buildings that date from the 19th and 20th centuries. Most buildings in this portion of the study area are built to the lot lines and have few setbacks. Most of the taller, modern buildings in this section of the study area are located south of smaller, 19th and 20th century buildings near Maiden Lane and the South Street Seaport Historic District. The taller buildings are generally faced in glass or masonry; the smaller, older buildings are primarily faced in brick or stone. However, the FDR Drive physically and visually divides the project site from these buildings in the study area making their height and scale less prominent. The smaller buildings include some small offices, museums, restaurant, and retail spaces, mostly on the ground-floor.

The buildings in the study area west of the project site and north of the Brooklyn Bridge are much larger in scale and include a storage facility, grocery store, and several residential towers that are set back from the street among open space and surface parking areas. These buildings are mostly rectilinear shapes although the two towers of the Governor Alfred E. Smith Houses in the study area have an X-like shape. Most of these buildings are faced in gray stucco or red, brown, or tan brick.

The study area between Catherine Slip and Market Street is occupied by a storage facility that is built to the sidewalk. There are two buildings that are part of the facility. Both buildings are faced in gray stucco. A smaller building with its entrance facing Catherine Slip is set back slightly from South Street. The larger portion of the storage facility forms a solid streetwall along South Street and has its windows sealed. There are a few small street trees along the adjacent sidewalk.

North of the Manhattan Bridge is a Pathmark grocery store. A portion of the building's rear wall abuts a small grassy area along the sidewalk of South Street. Most of the building is set back from this grassy area by a surface parking lot and truck delivery area. The parking lot ramps up slightly and has a metal guardrail near South Street. The building is faced in brown brick but the wall facing South Street is painted white. To its north is a tall residential building faced in brown and orange brick with signage and an entrance to a parking garage along South Street (see View 14 of Figure 7-9).

The area between Rutgers and Montgomery Streets includes several tall residential towers that are set back from the street by surface parking lots and small grassy areas. The two residential towers between Rutgers and Jefferson Streets, Lands End Housing, have 26 stories, are faced in red brick, and are set perpendicular to South Street (see View 38 of Figure 7-22). The buildings are set back from South Street by Rutgers Park which includes a basketball court, a surface parking area, and small grassy areas. There are several tall trees in these three areas. North of Jefferson Street is a 19-story residential building faced in white brick that is also part of Lands End Housing (see View 38 of Figure 7-22). This building is parallel to South Street and has balconies on each floor. At the southern corner of Clinton Street is a single-story gray shed-like building with a low pitched roof enclosed by a chainlink fence. North of Clinton Street is a 26- and 27-story residential tower faced in brown brick. It is set back from the corner by surface parking and a low wall.

P.S. 137 is a four-story school building located south of Montgomery Street. It set back from South Street by a paved, chainlink fence-enclosed playground that includes a brightly colored mural, a basketball court, a baseball diamond, and tennis courts (see View 39 of Figure 7-22).

Pier 36 is occupied by a large, single-story pier shed with a tan brick base and blue siding at its roof line. The structure has several loading docks that open toward the pier's land side. Also on Pier 36 are two smaller orange brick structures located west of the large pier shed. The remainder of the pier is occupied by surface parking and is enclosed by a chainlink fence that separates it from the project site (see View 40 of Figure 7-23).

The buildings between Montgomery and Jackson Streets are also within the study area and include three 21-story residential buildings with an H-like form that are faced in brown brick and are part of the Gouverneur Gardens Co-Operative Apartments. One of these three buildings is on the corner of Montgomery and South Streets; the other two are north of Gouverneur Slip. All three buildings are set back from the sidewalk by grassy areas. Between the southernmost and the middle co-operative buildings are two buildings that are not part of the co-operative. Gouverneur Hospital is five-story red brick structure with turret-like segments and cast iron balconies on the second through fourth floors. This building dates from 1899. North of the hospital building and Gouverneur Slip East is a seven-story rectangular structure at 7 Gouverneur Slip East with its primary entrance along South Street. The building's base dates from 1916 and its upper floors date from 1927. The base is faced in red brick and the upper floors are faced in brown brick. Both sections have decorative limestone and terra cotta detailing elements (see View 41 of Figure 7-23). North of this building are the two remaining co-operative residential buildings.

### *Block Form and Street Pattern*

The blocks that front onto South Street in the area south of the Brooklyn Bridge are generally regular in shape though some blocks are larger than others. The blocks north of the Brooklyn Bridge are generally much larger. Some of these larger blocks have smaller access roads leading into their parking areas.

As the project site is bounded on the east by the East River, the only streets in the study area are along the western side of the project site. These streets generally form perpendicular angles with South Street where they dead end west of the project site. The streets do not follow the grid-like pattern that is common to much of Manhattan as many of these streets were laid out before the grid-like pattern was adopted or were laid out after urban renewal initiatives, particularly in the area north of the Brooklyn Bridge, where blocks are larger and streets are spaced farther apart.

### *Streetscape Elements*

The streetscape in the study area has two distinct sections: the area south of the Brooklyn Bridge and the area north of the Brooklyn Bridge. The streetscape of the study area south of the Brooklyn Bridge and west of the project site is generally characterized by buildings that are built to the sidewalk forming a solid streetwall. The buildings in this part of the study area range considerably in height with most of the taller buildings south of Maiden Lane and the South Street Seaport Historic District (see View 13 of Figure 7-9 and View 42 of Figure 7-24). However, most views to the buildings along South Street are limited to the lower portions of these buildings making their heights less apparent.

There are a few elements that interrupt the streetscape of the study area. Peter Minuit Plaza, located immediately south of the project site west of the Whitehall Ferry Terminal, is partially

## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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under construction and is a paved area with seating. The Vietnam Veterans Plaza, across South Street from Pier 6, creates a break in the streetwall as the plaza's low granite wall and steps to the elevated plaza interrupt the high walls of the buildings to the plaza's north and south (see View 43 of Figure 7-25). Other breaks in the streetwall are on the north and south sides of John Street west of South Street. These corners are occupied by surface parking. Peck Slip also breaks the streetwall along South Street as this is also a surface parking area (see View 44 of Figure 7-25).

The area below the FDR Drive near the Brooklyn Bridge is characterized by overgrown grass and brush, debris, and the footings for the FDR Drive ramps and the Brooklyn Bridge (see View 45 of Figure 7-26). The sections of the study area below the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges between South Street and the bridges' massive stone piers are occupied by construction-related trailers and equipment. These areas are enclosed by chainlink fences with fabric mesh that obstruct views into the construction staging areas (see View 46 of Figure 7-26).

The streetwall of the study area west of the project site and north of the Brooklyn Bridge changes markedly with tall residential towers set back from the street by surface parking lots and small grassy yards. In this area the streetscape is characterized by tall residential buildings, including the Governor Alfred E. Smith Houses, that are set back from the streetwall (see View 47 of Figure 7-27). Some areas include open space along the sidewalk fronting onto South Street while the study area facing the project site north of the Manhattan Bridge is characterized by surface parking associated with the tall residential towers.

The majority of a storage facility in the study area between Catherine Slip and Market Street is built to the streetwall. There are two buildings that are part of the facility. Both buildings are faced in gray stucco. A smaller building with its entrance facing Catherine Slip is set back slightly from South Street. The larger portion of the storage facility forms a solid streetwall along South Street and has its windows sealed. There are a few small street trees along the adjacent sidewalk.

The block between Market Street and the Manhattan Bridge is occupied by the Murray Bergtraum High School's baseball field, basketball court, and running track (see View 48 of Figure 7-27). These recreation fields are enclosed by a chainlink fence and also include spectator bleachers and a small cinder block structure. The sidewalk along South Street adjacent to these fields is lined with medium size street trees.

North of the Manhattan Bridge the streetscape includes a Pathmark grocery store and a tall residential building between Pike Street and Rutgers Slip. A portion of the grocery store's rear wall abuts a small grassy area along the sidewalk of South Street. Most of the building is set back from this grassy area by a surface parking lot and truck delivery area. The parking lot ramps up slightly and has a metal guardrail near South Street. The building is faced in brown brick but the wall facing South Street is painted white. To its north is a tall residential building faced in brown and orange brick with signage and an entrance to a parking garage along South Street (see View 14 of Figure 7-9).

Like the section of the study area south of the Brooklyn Bridge, the northern section of the study area is also lined with parked cars and buses although this area has more buses than cars.

Also contributing to the streetscape north of the Brooklyn Bridge are a playground associated with the Governor Alfred E. Smith Houses between the Brooklyn Bridge and Catherine Slip, Rutgers Park which includes a basketball court and playground north of Rutgers Street, a playground south of Clinton Street, and P.S. 137's playground south of Montgomery Street (see View 49 of Figure 7-28 and View 39 of Figure 7-22). The Governor Alfred E. Smith Houses

playground is set back from South Street and has brightly colored play equipment. Rutgers Park has a basketball court and is enclosed by a chainlink fence along the east and north elevations and a decorative wrought iron fence along its Rutgers Slip elevation. There is graffiti along the base of court area and there are large trees within this fence-enclosed area. The playground near Clinton Street is screened from South Street by a cinder block fence pierced with small openings. The school playground is also enclosed by a chainlink fence and includes decorative murals, a basketball court, a baseball diamond, and tennis courts. Mature trees line the sidewalk adjacent to P.S. 137's playground.

Some of the tall residential buildings in this area are visually separated from each other and from South Street by tall bushes and by tall trees in grassy areas. The grassy areas are generally located in front of these residential buildings and are large enough to create a canopy effect. The surface parking areas in front of these buildings are separated from the sidewalk along South Street by narrow treelawns. Also in the vicinity of these tall residential buildings and along the treelawns and sidewalks are several large Dumpsters (see View 38 of Figure 7-22).

The FDR Drive slopes back down to grade near Montgomery Street. The roadway in this area also shifts to the east and north around the sloped base of the FDR Drive. The area below the FDR Drive is occupied by parked cars enclosed by a chainlink fence.

North of Pier 35 the study area north and east of the project site includes Pier 36 which is used by the Department of Sanitation, Fire Department Rescue Units, and the New York Police Department (NYPD). Pier 36 is occupied by a large, single-story pier shed with a tan brick base and blue siding at its roof line. The structure has several loading docks that open toward the pier's land side. Also on Pier 36 are two smaller orange brick structures located west of the large pier shed (see View 40 of Figure 7-23). This area also contains a large parking area for Piers 35, 36, and 42.

The portion of the study area adjacent to Pier 42 is a narrow access road paved in asphalt and concrete with many potholes (see View 50 of Figure 7-29). The access road is separated from Pier 42 by a chainlink fence. Some street trees line the west side of the access road separating it from patchy grassy areas. This area is separated from the north-bound on-ramp to the FDR Drive by concrete jersey barriers closest to Montgomery Street and a black wrought iron fence between that spans north to East River Park.

North of Pier 42 the access road terminates at a fence-enclosed parking area (see View 51 of Figure 7-29). Walkways continue north along the FDR Drive and the waterfront on the east and west sides of the parking area.

### *Street Hierarchy*

The FDR Drive is the primary thoroughfare of the study area. It is a highly trafficked north-south elevated roadway along the east side of Manhattan that separates the project site and study area into an upland portion to the west and a waterfront area to the east. The remaining streets in the study area are perpendicular to the FDR Drive and South Street and dead end at South Street. There are traffic lights at the intersections of the busier cross-streets, including Fulton, Pike, and Montgomery Streets. Less trafficked streets do not have traffic lights.

### *Topography and Natural Features*

The most prominent natural feature in the study area is the East River, as it spans the entire length of the study area, however, this natural feature is not publicly accessible apart from its

## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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views. In the areas near the Brooklyn Bridge there is a small beach with sand and rocks that is littered with debris. It is not publicly accessible.

The topography of the study area is generally flat although there is a drop in elevation where the project site meets the East River. The change in elevation varies depending on the river's changing water levels.

Other natural features in the study area include street trees and flowers along the west side of South Street and the streets perpendicular to the project site. The portion of the study area north of the Brooklyn Bridge includes more natural features such as small grassy areas along South Street in front of residential housing complexes. There are several flower gardens and larger trees along South Street adjacent to the Governor Alfred E. Smith Houses. There are also some limited trees and grassy areas along the access road and the southern portion of East River Park in the areas west and north of Pier 42.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES AND VIEW CORRIDORS*

Natural resources and structures of aesthetic and historic value make up the visual resources in the study area. The most prominent natural resource in the study area is the East River that flows along the eastern edge of the project site. The Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, spanning the East River connecting Manhattan to Brooklyn, extend above the project site and study area and are also prominent visual resources in the study area.

Views from piers in the study area include expansive vistas of the Brooklyn skyline, portions of the Manhattan skyline, Governor's Island, and the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges.

The FDR Drive is a visual corridor in the study area because of its elevation and location. This roadway provides largely uninterrupted views to the surrounding study area, portions of the project site, and other locations outside the study area. Views west from the FDR Drive are generally limited to the areas immediately adjacent to the FDR Drive as buildings obstruct most westward views.

Visual resources in the study area include resources in the South Street Seaport Historic District, discussed in "Chapter 6," Historic Resources. Among these visual resources are the tall ships moored between Piers 14 and 17. Other visual resources are the wide esplanade near Pier 16 and the large red structure at Pier 17. Visual resources in the study area that are within the historic district include the three- to five-story masonry structures west of South Street, many of which have ground-floor retail, restaurants, and other amenities. The Schermerhorn Row Block is a prominent visual resource in the historic district and this section of the study area. The buildings in this row are red brick. The building fronting onto South Street is six stories and has a mansard roof with dormers and fire balconies along its Fulton Street elevation. The buildings along the western portion of this row have four stories with dormers and tall chimneys emerging from pitched roofs. All of these buildings have ground floor retail and/or restaurants. As with most views of the study area west of the project site, views to these visual resources are limited by the presence of the elevated FDR Drive.

Visual resources in the study area also include the piers of the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges. The western pier of the Brooklyn Bridge is in the East River in the area near Dover Street. This massive stone structure is prominently visible from the project site and also from areas within the study area (see View 52 of Figure 7-30). Also within the study area and highly visible are two piers of the Manhattan Bridge. One pier is located in the East River near Pike Street, the other pier is west of South Street also near Pike Street. The Manhattan Bridge pier located in the

East River has a stone base above which stand a pair of the bridge's blue steel legs. The pier west of South Street is a tall stone structure (see View 53 of Figure 7-30).

#### *Brooklyn Bridge*

From most areas on the Brooklyn Bridge, the project site east of the FDR Drive and the surrounding study area can be seen. Views to the area of the project site below the FDR Drive are obscured by the elevated structure but include views of parked automobiles. Views south from the Brooklyn Bridge include some views of the New Market Building, Pier 17, and portions of some of the piers to its south, and the buildings in the Manhattan skyline (see View 54 of Figure 7-31). Views to the north also include the area below the FDR Drive and parked automobiles and views of the Manhattan Bridge (see View 55 of Figure 7-31). Other views of the project site closest to the Brooklyn Bridge are partially obstructed by the bridge's intricate cables and structural system and by other nearby waterfront structures such as Pier 17.

#### *Manhattan Bridge*

As with the Brooklyn Bridge, the Manhattan Bridge provides views of the project site and the surrounding study area. Views to the south from the Manhattan Bridge include the Brooklyn Bridge, portions of the waterfront esplanade and Pier 17 and the New Market Building, and automobiles parked below the FDR Drive (see View 56 of Figure 7-32). Many views to the north are obscured by the FDR Drive itself and also by the massive pier shed along the waterfront on Pier 36 (see View 57 of Figure 7-32). Views toward the project site from the Manhattan Bridge also include views of the Manhattan skyline.

## **D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION**

### **PROJECT SITE**

In the future without the Proposed Action, the project site would remain largely unchanged. While some limited improvements may be made to the project site in association with other future projects that will be underway in the adjacent study area, most changes to the project site would be minor.

### **STUDY AREA**

#### *URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES*

Several projects are planned for development in the study area by 2009. The South Ferry subway terminal in Peter Minuit Plaza would be reconstructed and would improve accessibility to this area of Lower Manhattan. This project is expected to be complete by 2007/2008. The BMB, east of the project site, is undergoing renovation to be reused as a food market. This project is not expected to change urban design or visual resources. A dramatically designed new residential tower is proposed for 80 South Street adjacent to the project site. Its developer expects it to be complete by 2009. A portion of Pier 36 is expected to be developed as Basketball City, an indoor basketball facility. The East River Waterfront Access project will enhance several existing open space areas adjacent to the project site in the areas of Peck, Catherine, Rutgers, and Montgomery Slips and between Montgomery and Jackson Streets. This project will improve urban design and visual resources in the study area. None of these projects will adversely affect urban design or visual resources in the study area.

## **E. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

### **PROJECT SITE**

The Proposed Action would remove the existing automobile parking, vacant buildings, and areas with standing water from the project site. The Proposed Action would develop the project site into two primary areas: a Program Zone and a Recreation Zone. The Program Zone would generally be the area below the FDR Drive and would be developed with pavilions and space for temporary outdoor activities. The Recreation Zone would be the area along the water's edge and would include seating areas, play spaces, and plantings. A uniform walkway/bikeway would be developed along the east side of South Street. The Proposed Action would also include the construction of a new pedestrian plaza in front of the BMB and improvements to Piers 15, 35, 36, and 42 and the New Market Building and pier.

### *URBAN DESIGN*

The Program Zone would largely be developed below the FDR Drive and would include small pavilion structures and space for temporary outdoor activities. The Recreation Zone would be developed in the areas adjacent to the Program Zone and would include the landscaped esplanades and walkway/bikeway areas and other recreation features described below.

#### *Program Zone*

The Program Zone would be developed with approximately 14 pavilions and space for temporary outdoor activities. Although the locations of the pavilions have not yet been determined, the pavilions would be located between Old Slip and Rutgers Street and positioned to avoid blocking existing views from streets that are perpendicular to the project site. As currently envisioned, the pavilions would be faced in glass to promote transparency (see Figure 7-33). However, in and immediately adjacent to the South Street Seaport Historic District (the area between Maiden Lane and the northern edge of the Brooklyn Bridge), the Program Zone elements would be developed in consultation with LPC and SHPO to be appropriate within the context of the historic district. The underside of the FDR Drive would be clad in a material to reduce noise from the overhead roadway. The cladding would change the character of this elevated transportation structure.

The Proposed Action would be an improvement to the project site compared to the future without the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not involve any changes to block form, street pattern, or hierarchy within the study area. Accessibility of the project site would be more clearly defined but would align with the streets that are perpendicular to the project site.

#### *Recreation Zone*

The urban design of the Recreation Zone would involve the expansion of existing narrow walkway/bikeway areas and improvements to existing esplanades and the creation of new similar features. The Recreation Zone would also have plantings and seating areas and would include features such as benches, railings, planters, and arbors. The railing would have enhanced lighting, fishing rod holders, and brackets for attachment information placards about the area, and viewfinders for sights of interest. The arbors along the esplanade would provide shade and would have swings and built-in lighting.

The depressed roadway in front of the BMB would be extended 350 feet to the northeast to relocate the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass and to create the BMB pedestrian plaza. It is

anticipated that a plaza would provide a new entrance to the BMB and would be approximately three-quarters of an acre (see Figure 7-34). The plaza would connect the walkway/bikeway from the esplanade to the Peter Minuit Plaza. Design elements would be appropriate to the context of the historic BMB. These changes would improve the urban design of this area of the project site by replacing a narrow walkway/bikeway and roadway with a landscaped, publicly accessible plaza and a new walkway/bikeway. The relocation of the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass north would not significantly affect the project site's urban design.

South Street would be modified for the Proposed Action. The portion of South Street between Old Slip and Montgomery Street would be narrowed to allow for a uniform sidewalk and bikeway along the east side of the street. The portion of South Street between Old Slip and Robert F. Wagner Sr. Place just north of the Brooklyn Bridge would be narrowed to accommodate a single through-lane in each direction and a center turn lane. Drop-off and pick-up lanes would also be added in certain locations. The section of South Street between Wagner Place and Montgomery Street would have a striped median with left-turn bays for northbound traffic, a single-through-lane in each direction, and parking on both sides of the street.

The existing approximately 58-foot-long esplanade between Pier 11 and the Brooklyn Bridge would be landscaped with larger plants and trees in planter boxes among the seating areas. The area of the project site within the boundaries of the South Street Seaport Historic District would be developed in consultation with LPC and SHPO to be appropriate to the context of the historic district. As part of the Proposed Action, Pier 15 would be rebuilt and could have two levels with enclosed uses. The new pier would allow vessels to dock along both sides. The structure would be developed in consultation with LPC and SHPO to be appropriate to the context of the historic district. Bus parking would be eliminated from this section of the project site. These proposed changes to the project site would greatly enhance the urban design of the project site by making it more easily accessible.

The New Market Building north of Pier 17 would be demolished and replaced with a new structure (see Figure 7-35). The new two-story New Market Building would be located at approximately the same location as the existing structure and would be faced in highly transparent materials. It would improve the urban design of this section of the project site by creating an attractive and accessible community resource. A new transient marina using floating platforms and a wave attenuation structure would be created at the New Market pier to provide opportunities to temporarily berth small- to mid-sized vessels. The existing esplanade on the project site between the New Market Building and Pier 35 would be improved with new pavement, benches, and lighting.

The two-tiered structure that could be developed on Pier 35 could include a path that could rise to an elevated platform at the southeastern end of the pier (see Figure 7-36). The entire pier may include picnic tables and outdoor grills. At the north end of Pier 36, a cove would be created where small boats could be moored and may have steps leading down to the cove. Open space would be created at Pier 42 in the form of a new urban beach with berms similar to dunes. These changes to Piers 35, 36, and 42 would greatly alter the urban design of the existing piers as they would be transformed from publicly inaccessible surface parking and pier sheds into publicly accessible waterfront amenities. The proposed changes to these piers would introduce new urban design elements that would enliven these areas of the project site by attracting more visitors and activities to the project site.

The widening and more consistent location of the walkway/bikeway and the extensions and enhancements of the esplanades would improve the urban design of the project site. The public

## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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amenities proposed for the project site piers would improve accessibility to the waterfront and would provide additional open space and recreation areas in an area of Manhattan where such features are limited. Overall, the Proposed Action would be an improvement to the project site's urban design.

### *VISUAL RESOURCES*

The new buildings proposed for the project site would include the approximately 14 pavilion structures that would be built beneath the FDR Drive and located within the areas adjacent to the existing blocks in the study area west of the project site. By locating these structures in these areas and by using highly transparent building materials, these pavilions would maintain most views to and from the project site. In the South Street Seaport Historic District, these structures would be designed in consultation with LPC and SHPO to blend with or complement the historic district.

In addition to the pavilion structures, the area below the FDR Drive could also be used for temporary functions that would change the visual context of this area depending on the use, such as small performance spaces and farmers' markets. These uses would not be long-term or create permanent visual changes. The proposed pavilions and temporary uses would enliven the project site by attracting more visitors and activities to the project site.

The creation of the BMB pedestrian plaza would replace a narrow walkway/bikeway and the mouth of the Battery Park Underpass and at-grade roadway. The approximately three-quarter-acre plaza would have design elements appropriate to the context of the historic BMB and would visually connect Peter Minuit Plaza on the south to the project site north of the BMB (see Figure 7-34). The relocated mouth of the Battery Park Underpass would not significantly alter the visual character of this section of the project site.

The proposed reconstruction of Pier 15 would create a new visual amenity that would improve views to and from the project site. This pier would allow opportunities for coming to the waterfront in a way that is currently limited on the project site. The pier design and any landscaping would visually relate to the nearby historic district but would also become a visual resource itself.

The New Market Building north of the Tin Building and Pier 17 would be reconstructed and would be a two-story, approximately 40,000-square-foot building. Its design would allow the creation of a view corridor to the water in the area between it and Pier 17 to its south. The parking area on the pier between the New Market Building and Pier 17 would be removed and this area would be redeveloped with a publicly accessible esplanade with some landscaping features.

The proposed two-tier structure at Pier 35 would be landscaped with open space that would greatly improve the appearance of this currently unused pier structure. The proposed landscaping could be developed to obstruct views of the existing building on adjacent Pier 36. A sloping path could rise to an elevated platform at the southeastern end of the pier. A launch for small boats may also be provided at Pier 35 which would change the visual character of this area. At the north end of Pier 36 a cove would be created that would attract small boats to the area, changing the visual appearance of this current service area into a publicly accessible recreation destination.

The proposed changes to Pier 42 would transform this derelict-looking pier and pier shed into a publicly accessible urban beach with berms reminiscent of dunes that would separate the

continuing esplanade and the beach area. These changes would be an improvement over current conditions.

Changes to the project site include the enhancement of existing esplanades, the creation of new esplanades and walkways, the addition of new pavilions, the New Market Building, and other related amenities. The Proposed Action would enhance the project site creating new visual resources on the project site where none currently exist.

## **STUDY AREA**

### *URBAN DESIGN*

The Proposed Action would change some aspects of the urban design of the study area but these changes would not be adverse as they would improve accessibility and would relate to the urban design of the surrounding study area.

#### *Building Bulk, Height, and Setbacks*

The Proposed Action would not change building bulk, height, or setbacks in the study area.

#### *Building Use*

The Proposed Action would not change building uses in the study area.

#### *Building Arrangement*

The Proposed Action would not change building arrangements in the study area.

#### *Block Form and Street Pattern*

The block form and street pattern would not change in the study area with the Proposed Action.

#### *Streetscape Elements*

The streetscape in the study area would be improved with the Proposed Action. The proposed BMB Pedestrian Plaza would enhance the streetscape elements in the areas closest to it by removing traffic from this area and improving accessibility to the streetscape features, the new Whitehall Ferry Terminal, and the historic BMB. The removal of automobile parking areas beneath the FDR Drive and along South Street and their replacement with 14 pavilions would establish a streetscape that would complement the streetscape of the adjacent study area.

#### *Street Hierarchy*

The street hierarchy would not change with the Proposed Action.

#### *Topography and Natural Features*

The Proposed Action would not change the topography of the study area. Accessibility to the East River in the study area near Piers 15, 35, 36, and 42 would be improved by the Proposed Action as the East River is currently physically inaccessible from most locations in the study area. The improvements to these piers would allow boats to moor along the piers and, at Pier 42, physical access to the East River from the urban beach.

*VISUAL RESOURCES*

The Proposed Action would not affect most visual resources in the study area. The proposed structures would be built below the FDR Drive and many would have transparent materials. Further, these structures would be designed and located within the “blocks” of the study area further limiting their visibility to the areas closest to the project site. View corridors along adjacent streets would remain unobstructed. Some views to and from the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and the BMB would change as the roadway adjacent to the Whitehall Ferry Terminal and the BMB would be improved with the addition of a landscaped plaza on the project site adjacent to the BMB. Views of Piers 15, 35, 36, and 42 would change as these largely unattractive piers would become visual resources in the study area as they would be activated by the Proposed Action.

The proposed changes to the FDR Drive would only affect the structure’s underside, not the area that is a view corridor.

*Brooklyn Bridge*

The Proposed Action would improve views of the project site from the Brooklyn Bridge by replacing views that include the parked automobiles currently located beneath the FDR Drive with views of the proposed pavilion structures, improvements to the esplanades, the New Market Building north of Pier 17, and the improvements to Pier 15.

*Manhattan Bridge*

Similarly, view of the project site from the Manhattan Bridge would be improved with views of the proposed pavilion structures that would be located below the FDR Drive. Views north toward the project site would be improved by the proposed changes to Pier 35 as the enhanced pier structure would obstruct some views to the surface parking and structures on Pier 36 to its north. Views to Piers 35, 36, and 42 may also include several boats that would be moored at these piers.

Overall, the Proposed Action would not have any significant adverse impacts to visual resources as the project would improve the visual character of the project site and study area. \*