

# West 108<sup>th</sup> Street WSFSSH Development

## Chapter 5: Urban Design and Visual Resources

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### A. INTRODUCTION

An urban design and visual resources assessment guided by the *City Environmental Quality Review* (CEQR) *Technical Manual* focuses on the components of a project that may have the potential to alter the arrangement, appearance, and functionality of the built environment, as experienced by pedestrians in the study area. The urban design characteristics of the built environment studied include building bulk, use, and type; building arrangement; block form and street pattern; streetscape elements; street hierarchy; natural features and visual resources. The concept of bulk relates to the size of a building and the way it is massed on a site. Height, length, and width define a building's size; and volume, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, and density define its mass. A visual resource can include views from public thoroughfares of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures and districts (or otherwise distinct buildings), and natural resources.

This chapter considers the potential of the Proposed Project to affect the urban design characteristics and visual resources of the primary and secondary study areas. The analysis follows the guidelines of the *CEQR Technical Manual* and addresses each of the urban design characteristics for existing conditions and the future without and with the Proposed Project for the analysis year of 2025. As detailed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the City of New York – Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the project sponsor, the West Side Federation for Senior and Supportive Housing (WSFSSH), as co-applicants, are seeking approval for several discretionary actions subject to City Planning Commission (CPC) approval (the "Proposed Actions") to facilitate the construction of two new buildings consisting of affordable housing and community facility uses on West 108<sup>th</sup> Street in the Manhattan Valley neighborhood of Manhattan Community District (CD) 7 (the "Project Area").

The Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of an estimated combined 277 affordable units, an approximately 31,000 gross square foot (gsf) transitional housing facility for older adults with 110 shelter beds, and approximately 6,400 gsf of community facility space in the Project Area (the "Proposed Project"). This proposed development would consist of two buildings. Building 1 is expected to be up to 11 stories tall and approximately 193,000 gsf, and Building 2 is expected to be up to 11 stories tall and approximately 45,000 gsf. Absent the Proposed Actions, the Development Site would remain unchanged from existing conditions, with a shelter on Lot 10 and three public parking garages on Lots 5, 13, and 26.

### B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design and visual resources in the primary or secondary study areas in the 2025 analysis year. The Proposed Actions would facilitate the redevelopment of the Development Site with affordable and transitional housing and community facility space in an established residential neighborhood in close proximity to numerous local transit options. Although the Proposed Actions include zoning map and text amendments, these changes would result in densities and building bulks that would be within the range of what is currently allowed in the secondary study area. Furthermore, the Proposed Project would not utilize the entire developable area

allowed under an R8A district, but would be capped at a lower FAR of approximately 5.3 pursuant to an enforceable restriction. The continuous streetwall base and varying heights of building volumes set back from the base would complement the current variety of building heights in the area. Additionally, the Proposed Actions would facilitate the development of underbuilt properties, activating sidewalks in the vicinity of the Project Area and improving the streetscape of West 108<sup>th</sup> Street. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design in the primary or secondary study areas, but, rather, are expected to enhance the pedestrian experience in the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, as the Proposed Project would occur on a block on lots occupied by existing buildings that are generally built to the lot line and would remain in the No-Action condition, the proposed new buildings would not obstruct or alter views of any visual resources from existing public thoroughfares.

## C. METHODOLOGY

### Determining Whether an Urban Design Analysis is Necessary

Urban design is the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of the built environment as experienced from the public realm. These components include streets, buildings, visual resources, open space, natural features, and, in certain instances, wind. These elements, as defined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, are described below:

- **Streets**. The arrangement and orientation of streets define the location and flow of activity in an area, set street views, and create the blocks on which buildings and open spaces are organized. The apportionment of street space between cars, bicycles, transit, and sidewalk areas is critical to making a successful streetscape, as is the careful design of street furniture, grade, materials used, and permanent fixtures, including plantings, street lights, fire hydrants, curb cuts, or newsstands.
- **Buildings**. A building's streetwalls form the most common backdrop in the City for public space. A building's size, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, placement on the zoning lot and block, the orientation of active uses, and pedestrian and vehicular entrances all play major roles in the vitality of the streetscape. The public realm also extends to building façades and rooftops, offering more opportunity to enrich the visual character of an area.
- **Visual Resources**. A visual resource is the visual connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources.
- **Open Space**. For the purpose of urban design, open space includes public and private areas such as parks, yards, cemeteries, parking lots, and privately owned public spaces.
- **Natural Features**. Natural features include vegetation and geologic, topographic, and aquatic features. Rock outcroppings, steep slopes or varied ground elevation, beaches, or wetlands may help define the overall visual character of an area.
- **Wind**. Channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and downwashed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings may cause winds that jeopardize pedestrian safety.

Based on the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an assessment of urban design and visual resources is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Examples include projects that permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements and projects that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be

allowed “as-of-right” in the future without the proposed project. The Proposed Actions would result in physical alterations to the Development Site not allowed by existing zoning, which would be observable by pedestrians. Therefore, the Proposed Actions meet the threshold for an assessment of potential impacts to urban design and visual resources.

Per criteria of Section 230 of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a wind condition analysis is not required for the Proposed Actions. The Project Area is located in the Manhattan Valley neighborhood of the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and is not located in a high wind location such as immediately along the waterfront, or other location where winds from the waterfront are not attenuated by buildings or natural features, which may result in an exacerbation of wind conditions due to “channelization” or “downwash” effects that may affect pedestrian safety. Therefore, a pedestrian wind conditions analysis is not warranted for the Proposed Actions.

## Study Area

As defined in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the urban design and visual resources study areas consist of the areas where the Proposed Actions may influence land use patterns and the built environment, and are generally consistent with the land use analysis in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy.” For visual resources, the view corridors within the secondary study area from which such resources are publicly viewable should be identified. For the purpose of this assessment, the primary study area consists of the area within 400-feet of the Project Area, and the secondary study area includes the area within an approximate ¼-mile radius of the Project Area. As shown in **Figure 5-1**, the primary study area is generally bounded by Cathedral Parkway to the north, lots fronting Columbus Avenue to the east, lots fronting West 107<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, and lots fronting Amsterdam Avenue to the west. The secondary study area is generally bounded by lots fronting West 113<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Central Park to the east, West 103<sup>rd</sup> Street to the south, and midblock between Riverside Drive and West End Avenue to the west.

The following analysis is based on field visits, photographs, aerial views, and other graphic images of the Project Area and surrounding study area. Zoning calculations, including floor area calculations, building heights, and lot coverage information are also provided for the Project Area and, where applicable, the secondary study area.

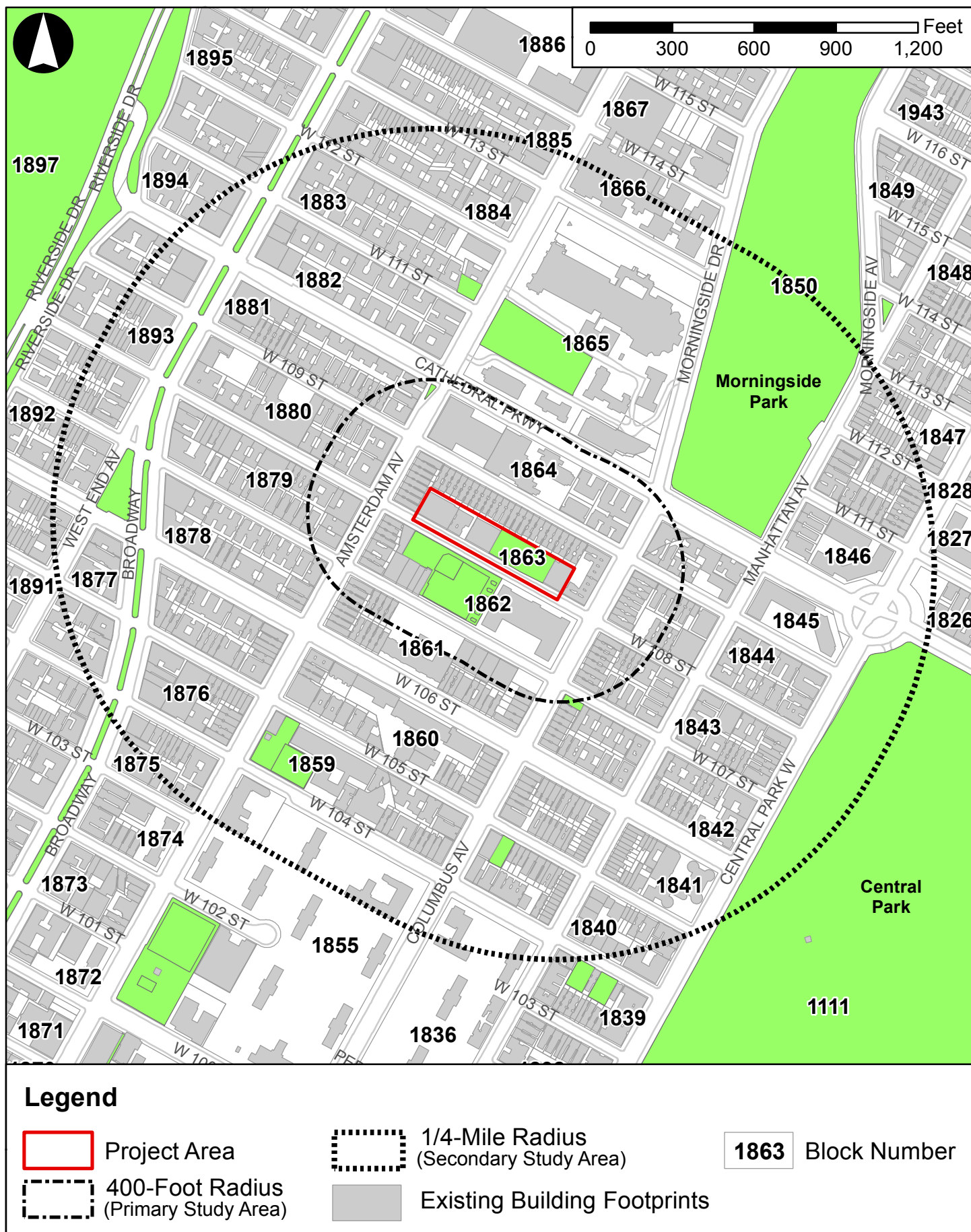
## D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Urban Design

#### **400-Foot Primary Study Area**

##### *REZONING AREA/PROJECT AREA*

The Project Area is comprised of approximately 60,552 sf of lot area (Block 1863, Lots 5, 10, 13, 17, and 26) fronting the north side of West 108<sup>th</sup> Street midblock between Amsterdam and Columbus avenues in Manhattan Valley (refer to **Figure 5-1**). As discussed above, the Project Area consists of two development sites: Lots 5, 10, and 13 make up the site for proposed Building 1 (the “Western Development”), and Lot 26 is the site for proposed Building 2 (the “Eastern Development”). This portion of the Project Area is proposed for development by the project sponsor, and is currently occupied by three HPD-owned public parking garages with a combined total capacity of 675 spaces, as well as the approximately 18,730-sf



project sponsor-owned five-story Valley Lodge shelter, which provides transitional housing for homeless older adults. Lot 17, which is located between Lots 13 and 26, is a “public park” for zoning purposes and not subject to zoning regulation. Lot 17 is not proposed for any redevelopment pursuant to the Proposed Actions.

#### Lot 5

151-159 West 108<sup>th</sup> Street is a 12,615-sf lot with 125 feet of frontage along West 108<sup>th</sup> Street. The lot contains a single, four-story, approximately 46,190-gsf public parking garage clad in light brown brick. The building has a floor area ratio (FAR) of 3.66 and is built out to the lot line. The main vehicular entrance for the 250-space garage is located in the western section of the lot, and a secondary vehicular entrance is in the eastern section of the lot (refer to **Figure 5-2b**). The garage is owned by HPD and operated by HRF Operating Corporation.

#### Lot 10

149 West 108<sup>th</sup> Street is a 7,569-sf lot with 25 feet of frontage along West 108<sup>th</sup> Street. The lot contains a single, five-story, approximately 18,730 gsf building clad in tan brick, with an FAR of 2.47 (refer to **Figure 5-2b**). The building houses the Valley Lodge shelter, which is owned and operated by the project sponsor and contains 92 beds for older homeless persons. The main pedestrian entrance is in the western section of the lot, and there is an outdoor garden and seating area in the eastern section of the lot, surrounded by a tall, black, cast-iron fence.

#### Lot 13

143 West 108<sup>th</sup> Street is a 10,092-sf lot with 100 feet of frontage along West 108<sup>th</sup> Street. The lot contains a single, five-story, approximately 45,000-gsf public parking garage clad in light brown brick. The main vehicular entrances for the 300-space garage are located in the center of the building (refer to **Figure 5-2b**). The garage has an FAR of 4.46 and is owned by HPD and operated by E. & B. Operating Corporation.

#### Lot 17

Lot 17 is a 22,707-sf lot that is occupied by Anibal Aviles Playground. The playground includes trees, benches, playground equipment, and spray showers. The lot is under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and, as such, is a “public park” for zoning purposes and not subject to zoning regulation.

#### Lot 26

103 West 108<sup>th</sup> Street is a 7,569-sf lot with 75 feet of frontage along West 108<sup>th</sup> Street. The lot contains a single, three-story, approximately 21,800-gsf public parking garage clad in brown brick. The main vehicular entrances for the 125-space garage are located in the center of the building (refer to **Figure 5-2b**). The garage has an FAR of 2.88 and is owned by HPD and operated by Ca-Li Automatic Transmission Corporation.

### *REMAINDER OF 400-FOOT PRIMARY STUDY AREA*

#### Streets & Streetscape

Blocks in the primary study area adhere to the standard Manhattan street grid. As shown in **Figure 5-1**, there are three local streets in the primary study area: West 107<sup>th</sup>, West 108<sup>th</sup>, and West 109<sup>th</sup> streets. West 107<sup>th</sup> and West 109<sup>th</sup> streets both have one westbound vehicular lane with parallel parking on each





**West 108th Street WSFSSH Development**

**Figure 5-2a**  
**Aerial Map & Photo Key**





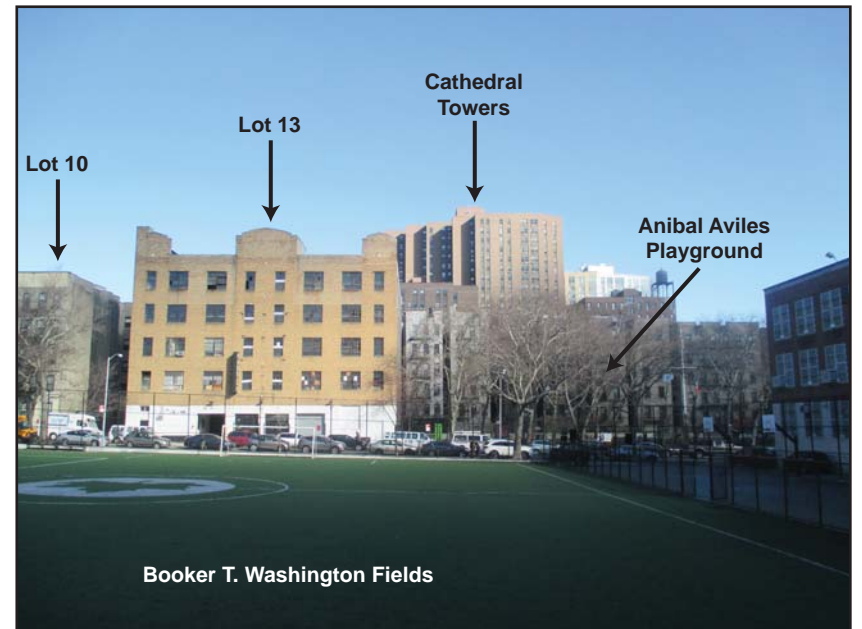
1) View east along West 108th Street at the Project Area.



2) View north across West 108th Street at the Project Area.



3) View northeast across West 108th Street at the Project Area.



4) View north of the Project Area & Anibal Aviles Playground.

**West 108th Street WSFSSH Development**

**Figure 5-2b**  
**Existing Conditions Photos - Rezoning Area**





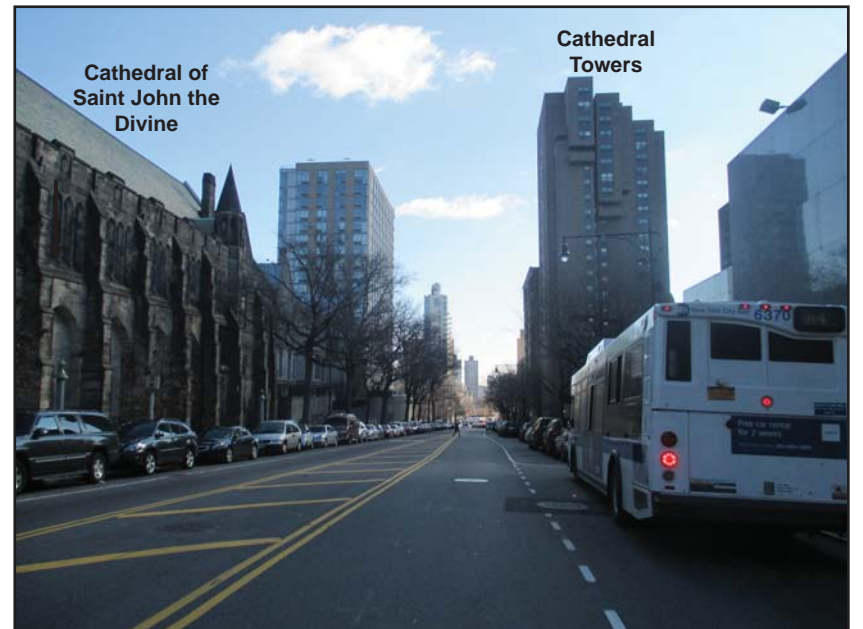
5) View west along West 108th Street with the Project Area to the right.



6) View west along West 109th Street just west of Columbus Avenue.



7) View north along Amsterdam Avenue just south of West 108th Street.



8) View east along Cathedral Parkway from Amsterdam Avenue.

# **West 108th Street WSFSSH Development**

**Figure 5-2c**  
**Existing Conditions Photos - Primary Study Area**

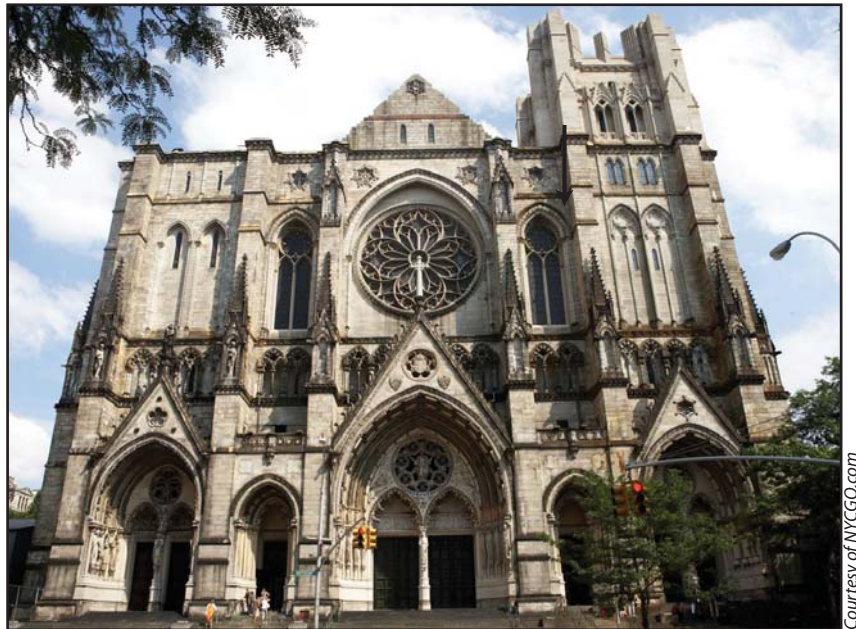




9) View of high-rise buildings along Broadway south from West 108th Street.



10) View west along Cathedral Parkway from Manhattan Avenue.



Courtesy of NYCDO.com

11) Cathedral of Saint John the Divine on Amsterdam Avenue.



12) View west along West 104th Street from Columbus Avenue.

side of the street. West 108<sup>th</sup> Street has one eastbound vehicular lane, also flanked by two lanes of parallel parking.

As shown in **Figure 5-1**, there are three major thoroughfares in the primary study area: Amsterdam Avenue, Columbus Avenue, and Cathedral Parkway. Amsterdam Avenue contains three northbound vehicular lanes with parallel parking lanes on each side of the street. A protected bike path was recently constructed in the eastern portion of the avenue. Just south of Cathedral Parkway on Amsterdam Avenue is the Minerva Bernardino Greenstreet (refer to **Figure 5-1**). Columbus Avenue contains three southbound vehicular lanes with parallel parking lanes on each side of the street and a protected bike path in the easternmost lane. Cathedral Parkway has one eastbound, one westbound vehicular lane, and parallel parking lanes on each side of the street.

Concrete sidewalks flank all streets in the primary study area and are in generally good condition (refer to **Figure 5-2a**). All sidewalks in the primary study area accommodate street trees, tree pits, and street furniture, including bike racks, bus stops, phone booths, fire hydrants, garbage and recycling cans, newspaper racks, mailboxes, parking meters, street lights, and signs.

### Buildings

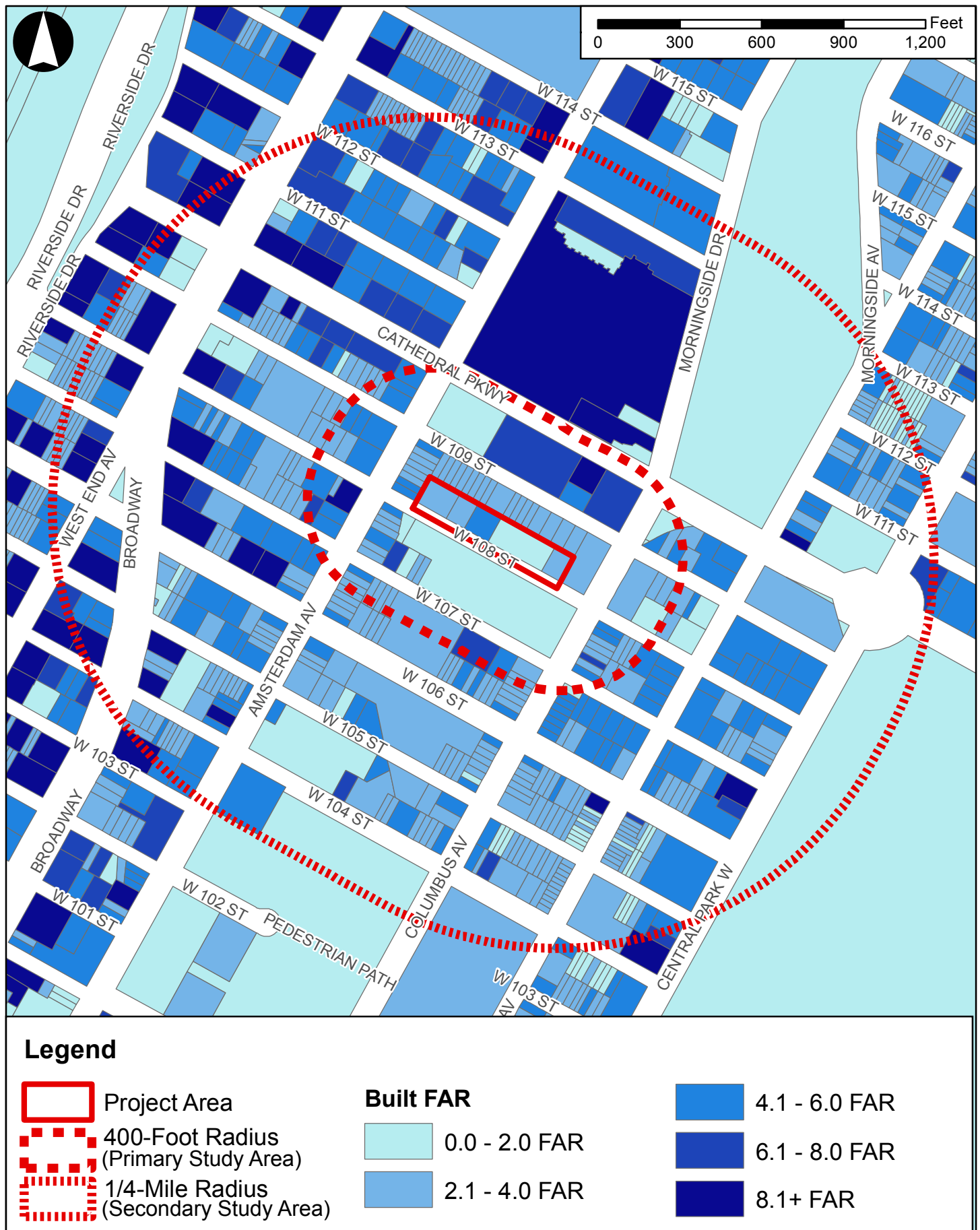
The approximately 400-foot area surrounding the Project Area contains a variety of building types, heights, and densities (refer to **Figures 5-3** and **5-4**). As detailed in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” buildings in the primary study area are predominately residential, mixed residential/commercial, and institutional. The majority of buildings fronting the north-south streets contain ground floor retail spaces, creating vibrant pedestrian commercial corridors on Amsterdam and Columbus avenues. Most buildings in the primary study area are oriented towards the street and built out to their respective lot lines, creating generally continuous streetwalls and allowing for minimal side and rear yards (refer to **Figures 5-1** and **5-2a**).

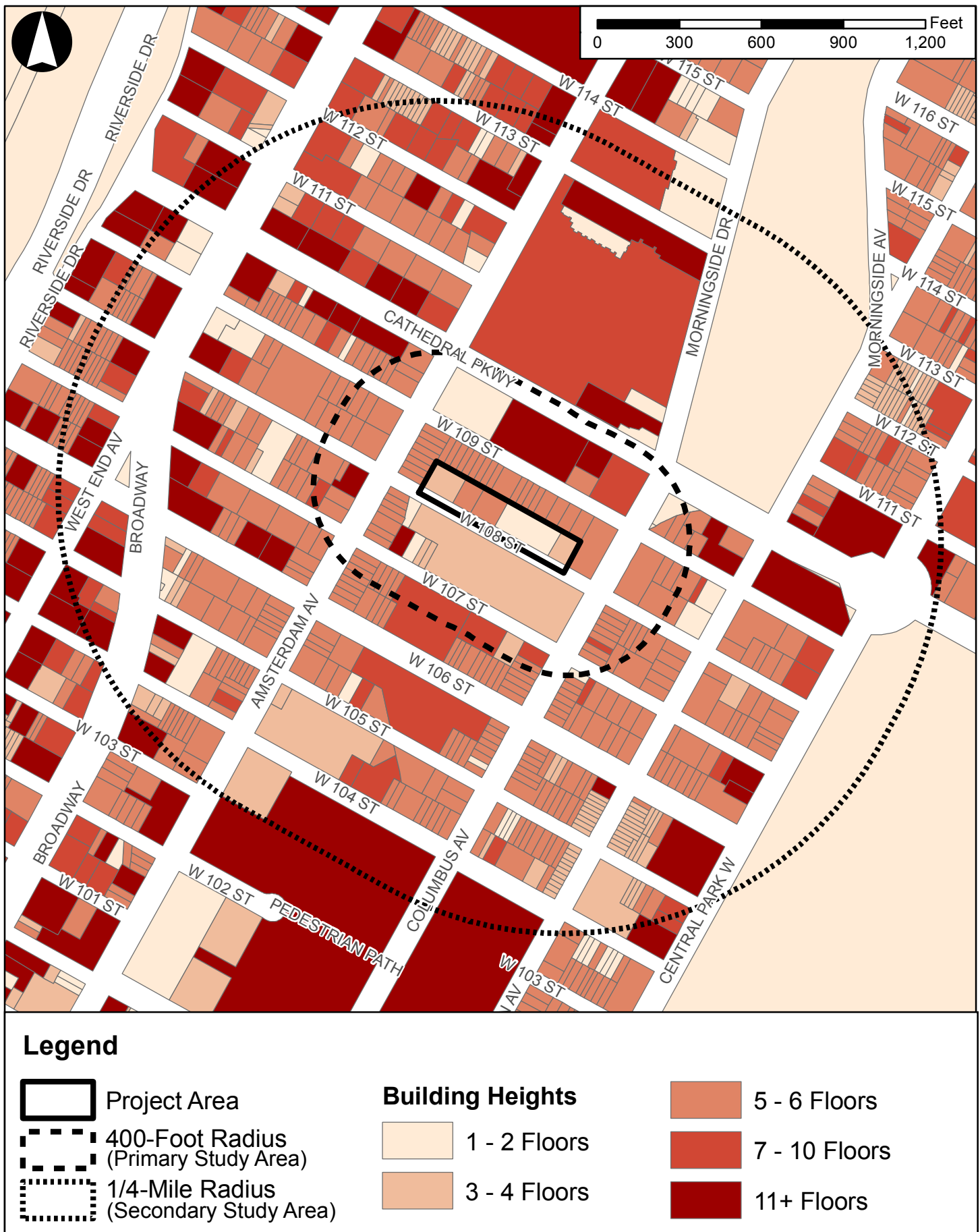
Outside the Project Area (detailed above), the remainder of Block 1863 and many of the blocks to the west, south, and east accommodate five- to six- story, multi-family walkup buildings with FARs of 3.3 to 5.1, resulting in uniform streetwalls throughout much of the primary study area (refer to **Figure 5-2c**). As noted above, most of the buildings fronting Amsterdam and Columbus avenues contain ground floor retail spaces below the residential spaces.

In addition to five- and six-story residential buildings, Block 1879 in the southwestern section of the primary study area accommodates a nine-story residential building at 203 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street with an FAR of 6.84 and a 17-story residential tower at 968 Amsterdam Avenue with an FAR of 12.3. Additionally, Block 1843 accommodates a ten-story mixed-use building at 965 Columbus Avenue with an FAR of 6.8. Block 1861 contains the nine-story Red Oak Apartment complex, supportive housing operated by the project sponsor, a four-story parking garage located at 102 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street with an FAR of 4.95, and a nine-story Manhattan Mini-Storage facility located at 108 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street with an FAR of 7.52 (refer to **Figure 5-2a**). A seven-story residential building with a ground floor church was recently constructed at 952 Columbus Avenue.

To the north of the Project Area on Block 1864 is the Con Edison West 110<sup>th</sup> Street Power Substation, with austere streetwalls, no windows, decorative vents, and an imposing front entrance on Amsterdam Avenue. The remainder of buildings on Block 1864 are high-rise, high-density residential structures, including the 12- and 22-story Cathedral Parkway Towers at 141 West 109<sup>th</sup> Street (6.65 FAR); the 12-story tower at 412 Cathedral Parkway (8.68 FAR); the six-story Morningside Apartments at 107 West 109<sup>th</sup>









Street (4.32 FAR); and the two, seven-story Morningside Housing buildings at 410 Cathedral Parkway (7.82 FAR) (refer to **Figure 5-2c**).

The majority of Block 1862 immediately south of the Project Area is occupied by the one- to three-story Booker T. Washington Middle School (M.S. 54) on Columbus Avenue between West 107<sup>th</sup> and West 108<sup>th</sup> streets, and its adjacent 1.44-acre fields and playground midblock between Columbus and Amsterdam avenues (refer to **Figure 5-2c**). This block also accommodates a 15-story mixed-use building at 171 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street (7.08 FAR), two low-rise churches at 163 and 167 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street, and a single-story industrial/manufacturing building at 156 West 108<sup>th</sup> Street.

Unlike the remainder of the primary study area, the easternmost lots of Block 1845 are not rectangular as a result of the Ninth Avenue Elevated Train that once ran along Columbus Avenue and turned eastward at West 110<sup>th</sup> Street, cutting across Block 1845 above the existing one-story commercial structure (refer to **Figure 5-1**).

#### Open Space & Natural Resources

The topography of the primary study area slopes downward from west to east (refer to **Figure 5-2c**), and the area immediately north of Cathedral Parkway rises into Morningside Heights. As detailed above, most streets in the primary study area are lined with street trees. The area encompasses several open space resources that include natural resources, such as trees, grass, landscaping, and gardens. As detailed above, the Project Area encompasses the 0.52-acre Anibal Aviles Playground, and across the street is the 1.44-acre Booker T. Washington Playground. As shown in **Figure 5-1**, the 2,143-sf Mobilization for Change Community Garden is located at 955 Columbus Avenue in the southeastern corner of the primary study area, and the 724-sf Minerva Bernardino Greenstreet is located on Amsterdam Avenue just south of Cathedral Parkway in the northwestern corner of the primary study area (refer to **Figure 5-1**). There are no aquatic features, beaches, or wetlands in the primary study area.

#### ***¼-Mile Secondary Study Area***

##### ***STREETS & STREETSCAPE***

Similar to the primary study area detailed above, blocks in the secondary study area largely adhere to the standard Manhattan street grid, with Broadway and Morningside Drive curving slightly in the southwest and northeast corners of the secondary study area, respectively. Larger “superblocks” in the area include Morningside Park and the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine to the north of the Project Area, Central Park to the east, and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Douglass I and II Houses to the south.

As shown in **Figure 5-1**, most north-south streets in the secondary study area are major thoroughfares, including West End Avenue/Broadway, Amsterdam Avenue (northbound vehicular traffic only south of Cathedral Parkway), Columbus Avenue/Morningside Drive (southbound vehicular traffic only south of Cathedral Parkway), Manhattan Avenue, and Central Park West. Major east-west streets in the secondary study area include West 106<sup>th</sup> Street and West 110<sup>th</sup> Street/Cathedral Parkway (refer to **Figure 5-2c**). All of these thoroughfares have parking lanes on each side of the street. Protected bike paths are located on Columbus and Amsterdam avenues south of Cathedral Parkway; bike lanes are located on Cathedral Parkway and Central Park West.

The remaining east-west streets in the secondary study area accommodate local, one-way vehicular traffic, and most contain parallel parking on each side of the street. Concrete sidewalks flank the majority of streets in the secondary study area and are in fair to good condition (refer to **Figure 5-2a**). Most

sidewalks in the area accommodate street trees, tree pits, and street furniture, including bike racks, bus stops, phone booths, fire hydrants, garbage and recycling cans, newspaper racks, mailboxes, parking meters, street lights, and signs.

### **BUILDINGS**

As detailed in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” the secondary study area is dominated by institutions/public facilities and residential buildings. The majority of buildings fronting the north-south streets contain ground floor retail spaces, creating vibrant pedestrian commercial corridors along the avenues. Most buildings in the secondary study area are oriented towards the street and built out to their respective lot lines, creating generally continuous streetwalls and allowing for minimal side and rear yards (refer to **Figures 5-1** and **5-2a**). Exceptions include the NYCHA Douglass I and II Houses in the southern portion of the secondary study area, which are high-rise brick towers surrounded by open space and trees, and the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and surrounding buildings, which are also setback from the lot lines and surrounded by landscaping and trees (refer to **Figure 5-2d**).

As shown in **Figure 5-3**, buildings in the northern and western sections of the secondary study area, particularly along Broadway and Cathedral Parkway, are denser than those to the south and east of the Project Area. The lot containing the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and its surrounding buildings has a built FAR of 30.02, extremely high for the secondary study area. Buildings in the northwest section of the area have built FARs up to 10.0, and structures along Broadway have built FARs up to 15.0. In contrast, most of the remainder of buildings in the secondary study area have built FARs below 8.0. For example, the high-rise NYCHA Douglass I and II Houses have FARs of 1.11 and 2.02, respectively.

The tallest buildings in the secondary study area tend to cluster around the major thoroughfares of Broadway, Central Park West, and Cathedral Parkway, as well as along West 104<sup>th</sup> and West 113<sup>th</sup> streets (refer to **Figure 5-4**). The tallest building in the area (25 stories) is located on Central Park West between West 105<sup>th</sup> and West 106<sup>th</sup> streets; the remainder of buildings along Central Park West typically rise five to 20 stories. The buildings in the NYCHA Douglass I and II superblocks rise 17 and 20 stories, respectively. Buildings along Broadway also rise up to 20 stories, and those along Cathedral Parkway tend to be ten to 18 stories tall. There are also several 15- to 20-story buildings along West 113<sup>th</sup> Street, in the northern section of the secondary study area. The remainder of the secondary study area is predominately comprised of low-rise buildings of three to six stories.

### **OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES**

Manhattan Valley is located between higher-level areas, including Morningside Heights to the north and Riverside Drive to the west. As such, the topography of the secondary study area slopes downward from Morningside Heights to the north, and downward from west to east, particularly between Amsterdam and Manhattan avenues.

As detailed above, most streets in the secondary study area are lined with street trees; Broadway also contains a 5.6-mile landscaped median called the “Broadway Malls,” a portion of which is located in the secondary study area (refer to **Figures 5-1** and **5-2d**). Large open space resources in the secondary study area include the southern portion of Morningside Park and the northwestern corner of Central Park. The secondary study area also encompasses Straus Park at the intersection of West End Avenue, Broadway, and West 106<sup>th</sup> Street; the West 111<sup>th</sup> Street People’s Garden on Amsterdam Avenue; the La Perle Community Garden on West 105<sup>th</sup> Street; the P.S./M.S. 165 playground on West 109<sup>th</sup> Street; and the Bloomingdale Playground at West 104<sup>th</sup> Street and Amsterdam Avenue. As noted above, the Cathedral of



Saint John the Divine and the NYCHA Douglass I and II Houses are also surrounded by grass and trees. There are no aquatic features, beaches, or wetlands in the secondary study area.

## **Visual Resources**

### ***400-Foot Primary Study Area***

The Project Area encompasses Anibal Aviles Playground (detailed above and shown in **Figure 5-2b**), which is considered a visual resource. The playground can be seen from certain vantage points along West 107<sup>th</sup> and West 108<sup>th</sup> streets. The primary study area also encompasses Booker T. Washington Playground, which is considered a visual resource, and can be seen from certain vantage points along West 107<sup>th</sup> and West 108<sup>th</sup> streets (refer to **Figure 5-2c**). There are no other significant natural or built features in the primary study area, such as rivers, geological formations, or landmark structures or districts.

### ***¼-Mile Secondary Study Area***

There are several historic buildings and districts designated by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and/or listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places (S/NR) in the secondary study area. The western section of the secondary study area encompasses a portion of the LPC-designated Riverside-West End and Morningside Heights Historic Districts. Additionally, the LPC-designated Manhattan Avenue Historic District is located in the southeastern section of the secondary study area.

Landmarks in the secondary study area include Fire Engine Company No. 47 at 500 West 113<sup>th</sup> Street (NYCL); the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine at 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (NYCL) (refer to **Figure 5-2d**); Saint Luke's Hospital Plant & Scrymser Pavilions at 401 West 113<sup>th</sup> Street (NYCL); the Manhasset Apartments at 301 West 108<sup>th</sup> Street (NYCL); the New York Cancer Hospital at 455 Central Park West (NYCL and S/NR); the Association Nursing Home at 891 Amsterdam Avenue (NYCL and S/NR); the Horn & Hardart Automat Cafeteria Building at 2710 Broadway (NYCL); the H.H. Lilien Apartments at 461 Central Park West (S/NR); the Church of Notre Dame at 405 West 114<sup>th</sup> Street (S/NR); and the West Side Unitarian Church at 550 West 110<sup>th</sup> Street (S/NR).

Morningside Park and Central Park are LPC-designated Scenic Landmarks located in the secondary study area; Central Park is also listed on the S/NR. The Broadway Malls are also considered a significant visual resource in the area (refer to **Figure 5-2d**). Additionally, Riverside Park is an S/NR-listed and LPC-designated Scenic Landmark located to the west of the secondary study area, which can be seen when looking west from multiple vantage points in the western portion of the secondary study area. There are no other significant built or natural features in the secondary study area, such as rivers, beaches, or wetlands.

## **E. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT (NO-ACTION CONDITION)**

### **Urban Design**

#### ***400-Foot Primary Study Area***

##### *STREETS & STREETScape*

The existing streetscape of the primary study area is not anticipated to change significantly in the future without the Proposed Actions.

##### *BUILDINGS*

As discussed in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” it is expected that in the future without the Proposed Project, no major changes to land use or zoning would occur in the approximate 400-foot primary study area. Redevelopment of the Project Area would not be able to occur without approval of the Proposed Actions. It is expected that Lots 5, 13, and 26 on Block 1863 would remain under the jurisdiction of HPD and would continue to accommodate three public parking garages, and Lot 10 would remain under the project sponsor’s control and continue to operate as a shelter. Additionally, Lot 17 would remain the Anibal Aviles Playground under the jurisdiction of DPR in the future without the Proposed Actions. Additionally, there are no developments planned or under construction within an approximate 400-foot radius of the Project Area expected to be completed and occupied in the future without the Proposed Actions.

##### *OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES*

The existing open spaces and natural resources in the primary study area are not anticipated to change significantly in the future without the Proposed Actions, and no new open space resources are expected to be introduced into the primary study area by 2025.

#### ***¼-Mile Secondary Study Area***

##### *STREETS & STREETScape*

In the No-Action condition, the streetscape of the secondary study area is expected to improve, as compared to existing conditions. The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) has proposed an Amsterdam Avenue corridor redesign north of West 110<sup>th</sup> Street/Cathedral Parkway, which would include northbound and southbound bike lanes, as well as landscaped pedestrian islands.

##### *BUILDINGS*

As discussed in Chapter 2, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” it is expected that in the future without the Proposed Project, no major changes to land use or zoning would occur in the secondary study area, with only one new development planned within an approximate ¼-mile radius of the Project Area. As presented in Chapter 2, in the 2025 future without the Proposed Project, it is anticipated that 61 West 104<sup>th</sup> Street will be redeveloped with a seven-story residential building with 34 units. No other development projects are under construction or planned within the secondary study area under No-Action conditions.

## **OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES**

The existing open spaces and natural resources in the secondary study area are not anticipated to change significantly in the future without the Proposed Project, and no new open space resources are expected to be introduced into the secondary study area by 2025.

## **Visual Resources**

No changes to visual resources or existing views of visual resources in the primary or secondary study areas are expected in the 2025 future without the Proposed Project.

## **F. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT (WITH-ACTION CONDITION)**

As described in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the Proposed Actions include designation of an Urban Development Action Area (UDAA), Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP) approval, disposition of City-owned property, a zoning map amendment to change the Project Area zoning from R8B to R8A, a zoning text amendment to Appendix F of the New York City Zoning Resolution to map a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area on the Project Area, and potential construction financing. This section describes the urban design conditions that would result from the Proposed Actions by the analysis year of 2025 and evaluates the potential for the Proposed Actions to result in significant adverse impacts related to urban design and visual resources.

## **Urban Design**

Development facilitated by the Proposed Actions would be built on existing blocks and would not entail any changes to existing topography, street pattern or hierarchy, streetscapes, block forms, open space, or natural resources in the primary or secondary study areas. Additionally, the Proposed Actions would not alter or building uses, bulks, or arrangements in the secondary study area. Under With-Action conditions, the proposed zoning map and text amendments would be implemented, modifying the use, bulk, and parking regulations of the Project Area in order to facilitate the construction of two residential buildings with community facility space. The proposed zoning map amendment would change the underlying zoning of the Project Area from an R8B to an R8A district, and the proposed zoning text amendment would map the area as an MIH Area. In the future with approval the Proposed Actions, the maximum residential FAR of the Project Area would be increased from 4.0 to 7.2 (when utilizing the MIH Program), and the maximum building height would be increased from 75 feet to 120 feet. As detailed in Chapter 1, “Project Description,” the Proposed Project would not utilize the entire developable area allowed under an R8A district, but would be capped at a lower FAR of approximately 5.3 pursuant to an enforceable restriction. Additionally, the MIH Program would require affordable housing to be provided equivalent to either 25 or 30 percent of the residential floor area development. Illustrative site plans and renderings of the Proposed Project are provided in **Figures 5-5a** through **5-5c**, while comparison streetviews are provided in **Figures 5-6** through **5-10**.

No development on Lot 17 (Anibal Aviles Playground) would occur in the future with the Proposed Actions. Under With-Action conditions, it is anticipated that access to restrooms would be provided to users of Anibal Aviles Playground.



### ***Building 1***

In the future with the Proposed Project, the two existing public parking garages and the 92-bed shelter for homeless persons on the site of the proposed Building 1 (Block 1863, Lots 5, 10, and 13) would be demolished, and a new building (Building 1) would be constructed on the site. As shown in **Figures 5-5a** and **5-5b**, Building 1 would include a continuous streetwall base along West 108<sup>th</sup> Street, with varying heights of building volumes setback from the base. In the western portion of the site, the building would rise seven stories from the lot line before setting back with a green roof, and the central portion of the building would rise nine stories from the lot line before setting back with a green roof. Behind the western and central setbacks, the building would rise to a maximum height of 11 stories (approximately 118 feet, not including mechanical bulkhead). The 11-story portion of the building would be setback approximately 15 feet from the streetline. Additionally, the eastern section of the building would rise six stories before setting back with a roof terrace for building tenants (refer to **Figure 5-5b**).

Building 1 would contain approximately 193,000 gsf (an FAR of 5.3), including 195 affordable dwelling units (DUs), a transitional housing facility with 110 shelter beds, and approximately 6,400 gsf of community facility space; the rear yard of Building 1 would be developed with a courtyard for use by building tenants (see **Figure 5-5a**).

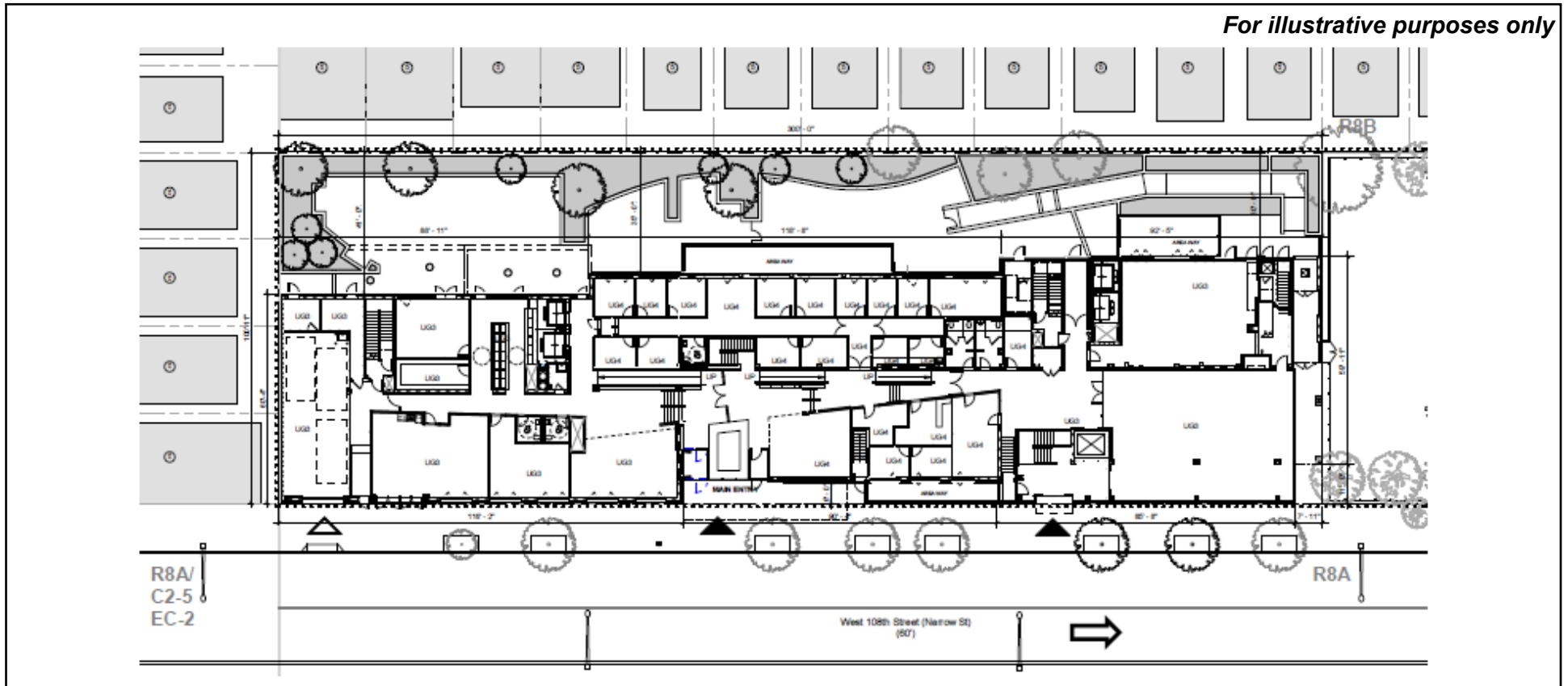
### ***Building 2***

In the future with the Proposed Project, the existing public parking garage on the site of the proposed Building 2 (Block 1863, Lot 26) would be demolished, and a new building (Building 2) would be constructed on the site. As shown in **Figure 5-5c**, it is expected that Building 2 would front West 108<sup>th</sup> Street with a streetwall of 82 feet before setback, before rising up to 11 stories (approximately 110 feet, not including mechanical bulkhead). The building would total approximately 45,000 gsf (5.3 FAR) and include 82 units of either supportive housing for older adults or affordable senior housing.

### ***Assessment***

The Proposed Actions would facilitate the redevelopment of the Project Area, which would remain underbuilt in the future without the Proposed Project. With the provision of additional FAR and an additional 45 feet of building height, the proposed zoning map and text amendments would provide the flexibility required to develop a substantial amount of affordable housing, transitional housing, and community facility space in an established residential neighborhood where there is a strong demand for housing and, in particular, affordable DUs. As presented in **Figures 5-6** through **5-8**, the proposed residential and community facility uses on the Development Site would be in keeping with the existing predominately residential, mixed-use, and institutional land use character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The proposed new buildings would also be in context with the established urban design characteristics of the secondary study area. As shown in **Figures 5-3** and **5-4**, the height and density of the proposed buildings would be constructed at a density and bulk compatible with existing properties. As discussed above, multiple high-rise, high-density apartment towers are located within 400-feet of the Project Area. Examples include the 12- and 22-story Cathedral Parkway Towers at 141 West 109<sup>th</sup> Street (6.65 FAR), the 12-story tower at 412 Cathedral Parkway (8.68 FAR), the seven-story buildings at 410 West Cathedral Parkway and 108 West 109<sup>th</sup> Street (7.82 FAR), the 15-story tower at 171 West 107<sup>th</sup> Street (7.08 FAR), the 17-story tower at 986 Amsterdam Avenue (12.3 FAR), and the ten-story building at 965 Columbus Avenue (6.8 FAR). The continuous streetwall base and varying heights of building volumes set back from

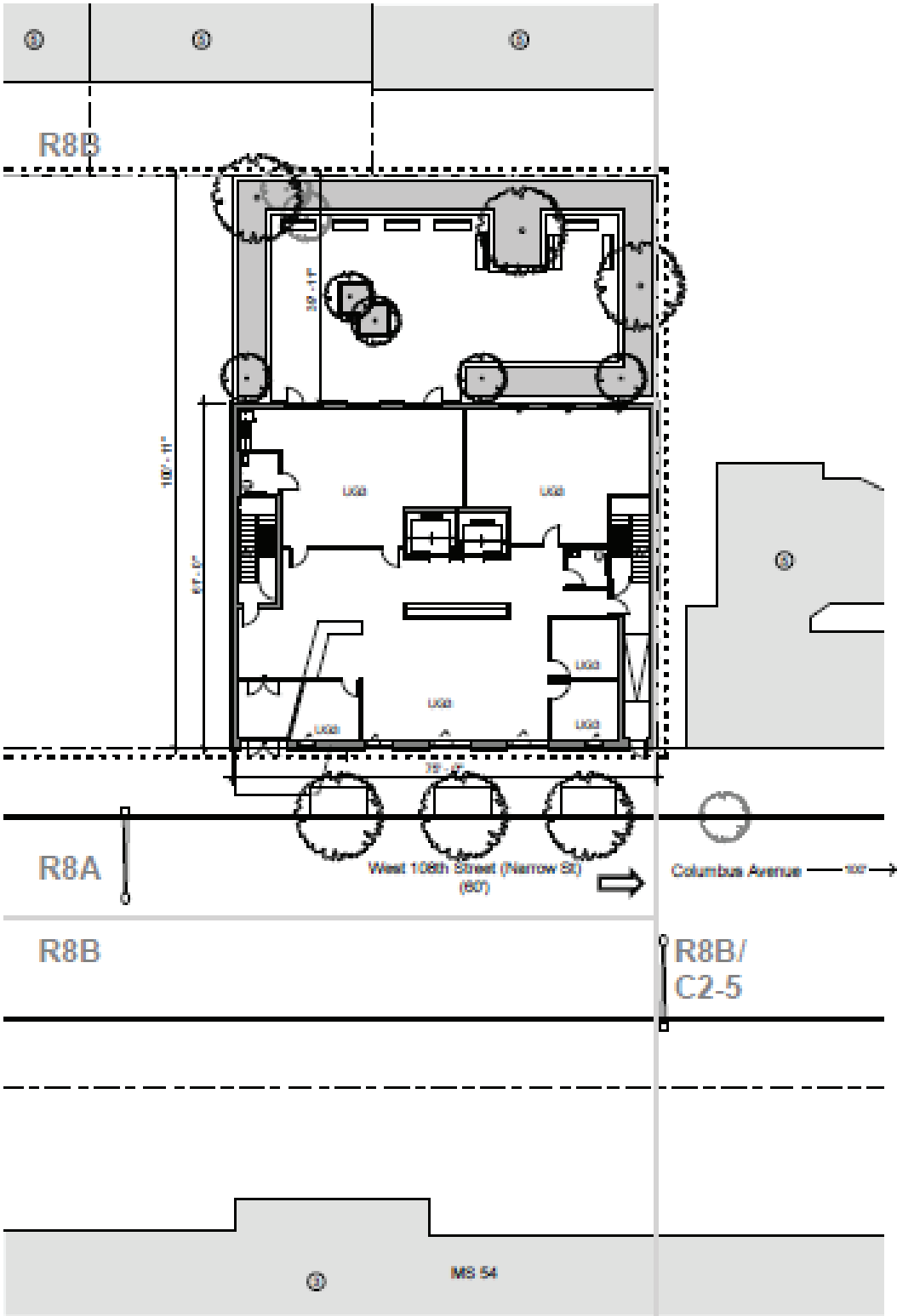


Courtesy of Dattner Architects



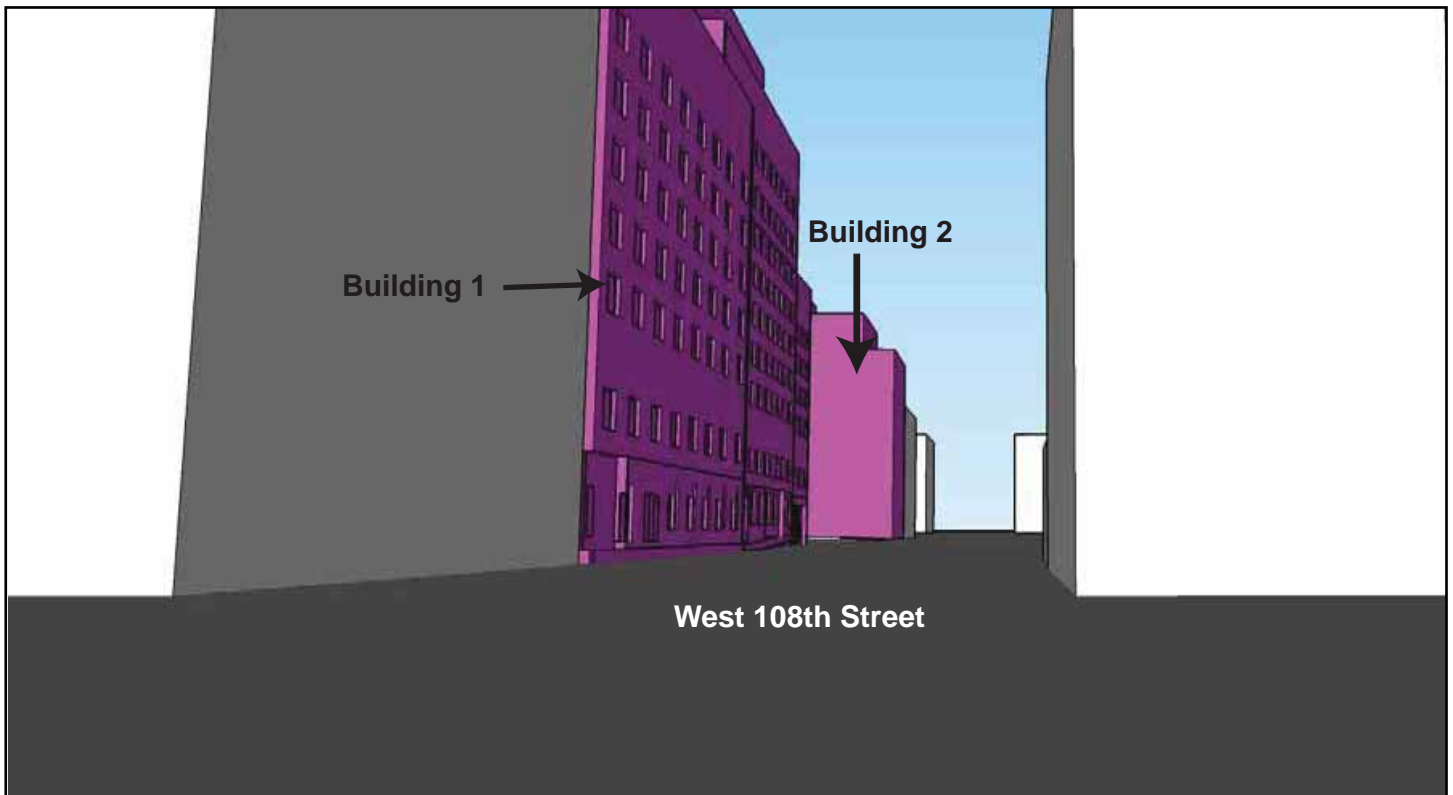


*For illustrative purposes only*





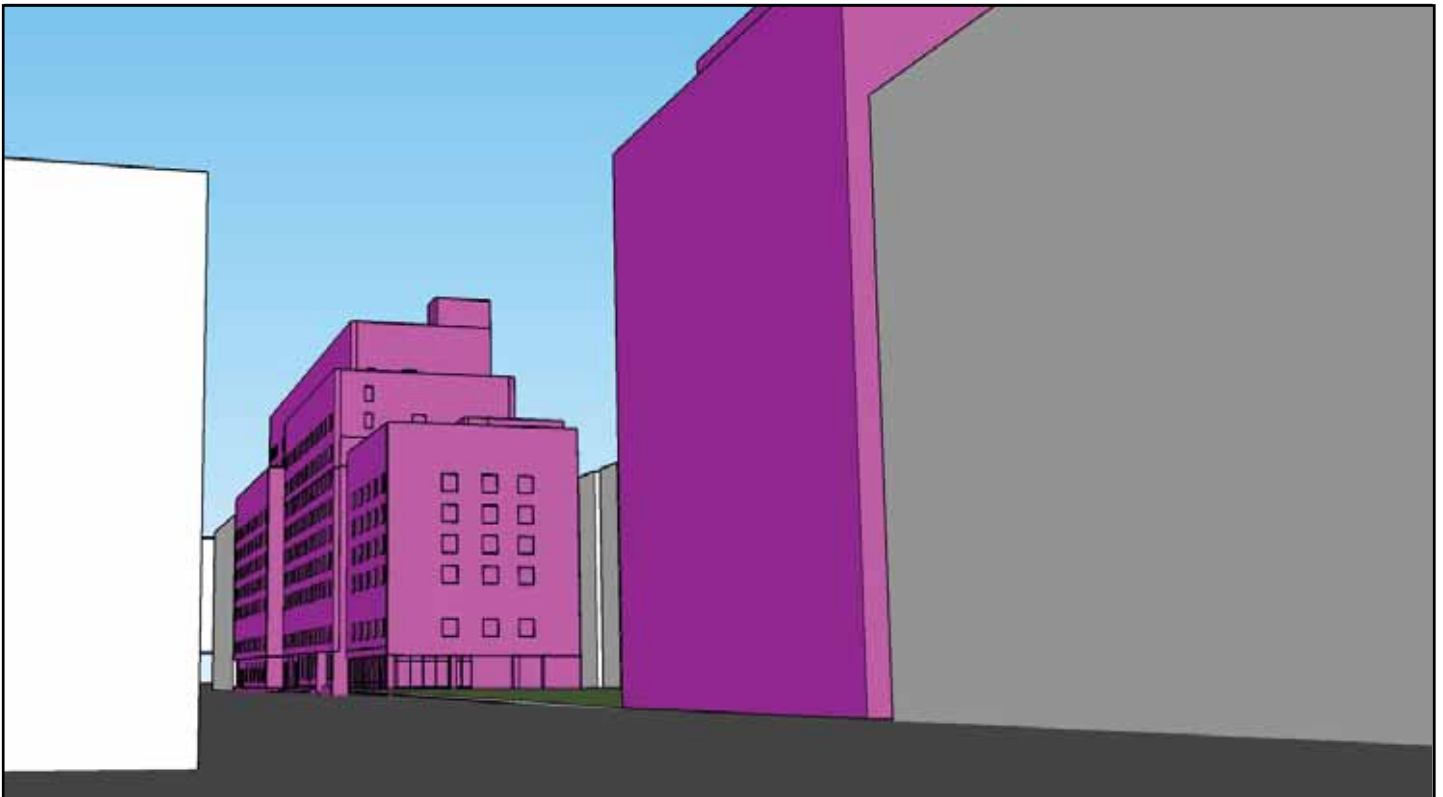
Existing/No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition



Existing/No-Action Condition

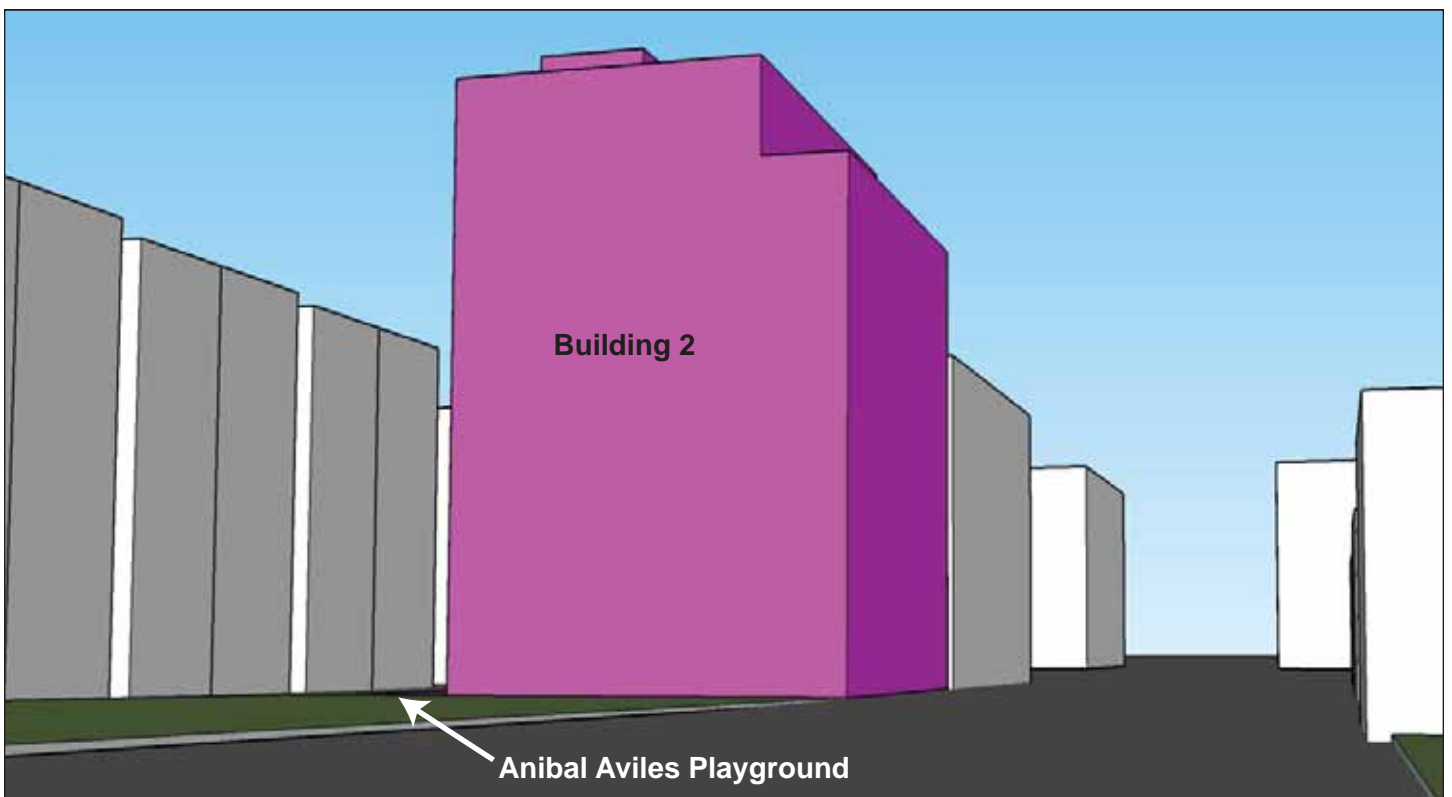


With-Action Condition





Existing/No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition

the base would complement the current variety of building heights in the primary study area, from mid-rise rowhouses and apartment complexes to high-rise residential towers. The proposed up to 11-story buildings along West 108<sup>th</sup> Street with FARs of 5.3 would be in keeping with the existing built environment of the secondary study area (refer to **Figure 5-6** through **5-8**).

**Figures 5-9** and **5-10** present comparison conceptual views of the Building 1 from the intersection of Amsterdam Avenue and West 109<sup>th</sup> Street and Building 2 from Columbus Avenue and West 109<sup>th</sup> Street under existing/No-Action and With-Action conditions. As shown in the figures, only the top floors of the proposed buildings are visible from these public vantage points. The proposed buildings would not be visible to pedestrians along West 109<sup>th</sup> Street due to the heights of the existing five-story buildings on the south side of the street, as well as the proposed rear courtyard of Building 1 pushing the building south to the streetline of West 108<sup>th</sup> Street.

Additionally, the Proposed Actions would result in the development of residential and mixed-use buildings on underbuilt properties, activating sidewalks in the vicinity of the Project Area, which would complement the established character of the surrounding area and improve the streetscape of West 108<sup>th</sup> Street. As such, the Proposed Actions would not result in any significant adverse impacts to urban design in the primary or secondary study areas, but, rather, are expected to complement and enhance the pedestrian experience in the surrounding neighborhood.

## **Visual Resources**

No changes to visual resources, including Anibal Aviles Playground in the Project Area, would occur in the future with the Proposed Project. Additionally, the proposed With-Action buildings in the Project Area would not obstruct or alter any existing visual resources or view corridors in the secondary study area.

## **Assessment**

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to visual resources. As detailed above, Anibal Aviles Playground and Booker T. Washington Playground are considered visual resources in the primary study area. Both public open spaces can be seen from multiple vantage points along West 107<sup>th</sup> and West 108<sup>th</sup> streets (refer to **Figure 5-2b** and **5-2c**). The proposed new developments would occur on a block with existing structures built-out to the lot lines that would remain under No-Action conditions. The proposed new buildings in the Project Area would not extend beyond the lot lines, and, as such, would not result in new obstructions to the existing view corridors of either open space resource from existing public thoroughfares (refer to **Figure 5-7** and **5-8**). Additionally, the proposed new buildings would not alter views of any historic or scenic landmarks or other open space resources in the primary or secondary study areas, such as views of the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine from Amsterdam Avenue and Cathedral Parkway, or views of Morningside Park from Cathedral Parkway and Columbus Avenue.



**Existing/No-Action Condition**

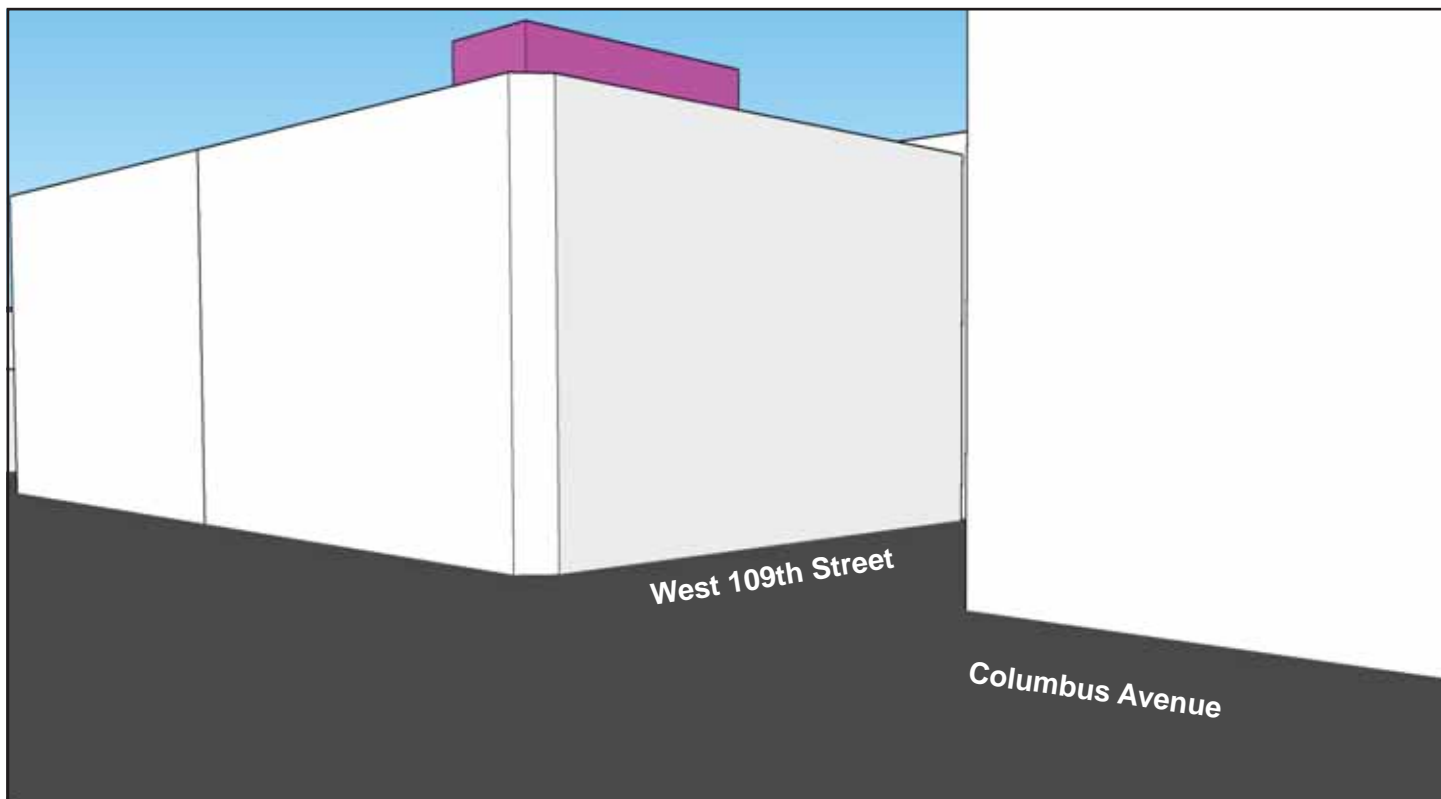


**With-Action Condition**





Existing/No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition