

6.2 LAND USE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES, ZONING, AND PUBLIC POLICY

6.2.1 Introduction

This Section evaluates the effects on land use and community facilities of construction and operation of Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site. It also considers the consistency of Shaft 33B at that location with applicable zoning and public policy. In addition to the alternative Shaft Site itself, this analysis also describes potential effects associated with construction and operation of water main connections for the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site where they are different from the water main connections analyzed for the preferred Shaft Site in Chapter 5. The Study Area for this assessment is the area within 400 feet of the alternative Shaft Site and block-long water main connection along E. 59th Street from Second to First Avenue (Figure 6.2-1).

6.2.2 Existing Conditions

Land Use

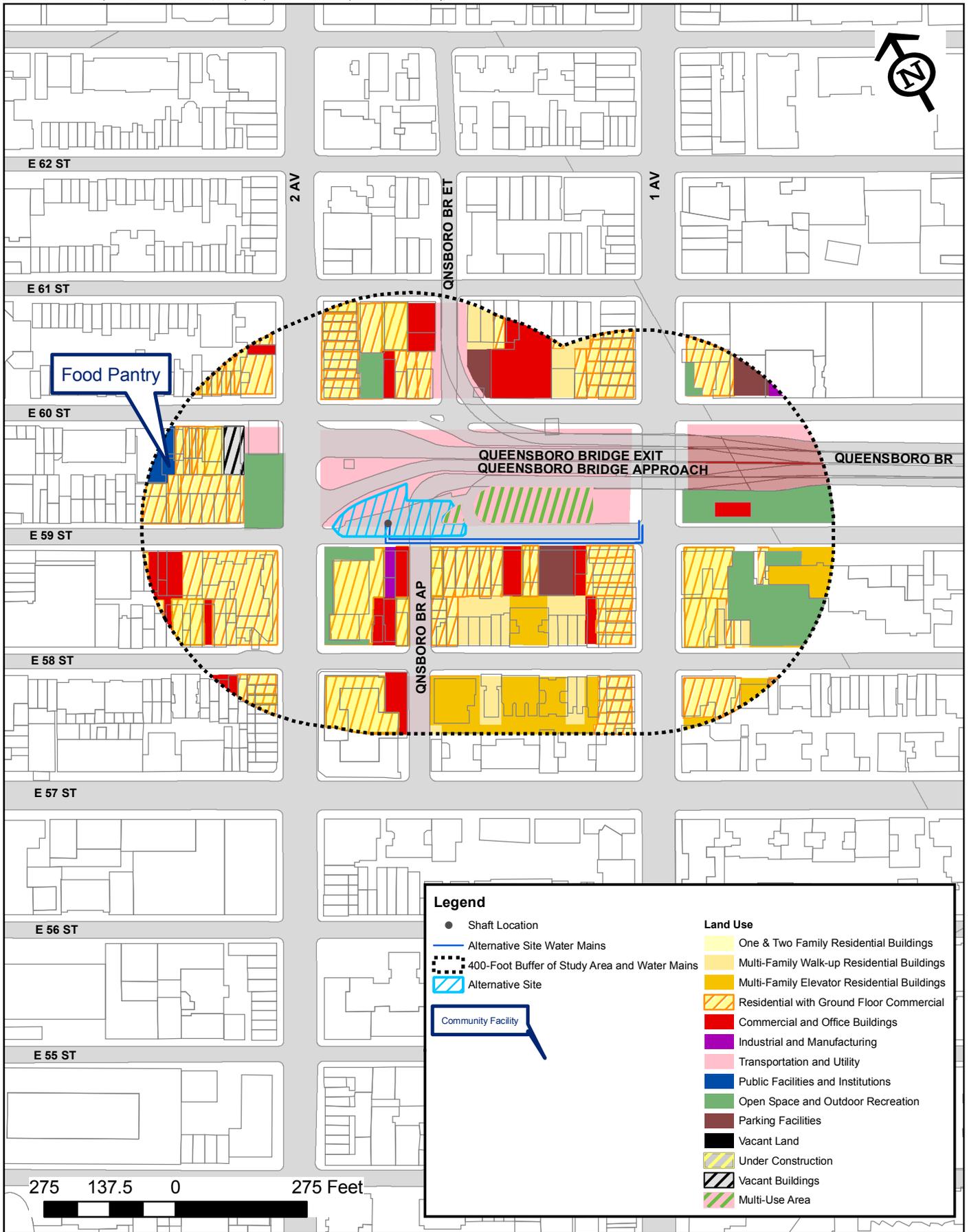
Alternative Shaft Site

The E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is a vacant, paved area at the foot of the entrance ramp to the Queensboro Bridge (“Bridge”). The Site is City-owned and located within an area adjacent to and on the Queensboro Bridge that is mapped as street. The site, which is irregularly shaped and approximately 15,000 square feet in size, is bounded on the north by the main approach to the Bridge from Second Avenue. It passes beneath the elevated Queensboro Bridge approach ramp from E. 58th Street and extends east to a curved entrance ramp to the Bridge from E. 59th Street. This alternative Shaft Site is currently in use by the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) for construction activities related to the ongoing rehabilitation of the Queensboro Bridge. NYCDOT has installed temporary fencing and concrete barriers along the edges of the site and on E. 59th Street near the site, and is using the alternative Shaft Site for equipment storage.

Study Area

Most of the Study Area for the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is the same as the Study Area for the preferred Shaft Site, described in Section 4.2, “Land Use and Community Facilities, Zoning, and Public Policy,” in Chapter 4, “Preferred Shaft Site.” As shown in Figure 6.2-1, the portion of the Study Area east of the Queensboro Bridge entrance and exit ramps is essentially the same area encompassed by the 400-foot Study Area for the preferred Shaft Site (shown in Figure 4.2-1 in Section 4.2). This Study Area is described in detail in Section 4.2; that information is summarized more briefly in this Section.

The Study Area for the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is divided by the massive Queensboro Bridge structure. The Bridge begins at Second Avenue, where it occupies the entire



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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2 - MANHATTAN LEG
E. 59TH STREET/SECOND AVENUE SHAFT SITE
LAND USE**

FIGURE 6.2-1

east side of Second Avenue between E. 59th and E. 60th Streets. Much of the block between First and Second Avenues and E. 59th and E. 60th Streets is occupied by Bridge-related activity, including the entrance and exit ramps. On the south side of the bridge along E. 59th Street, the area adjacent to the alternative Shaft Site is the planted multi-use area, used both by NYCDOT and as a public open space (for more information on the multi-use area, see Section 4.2). On the north side of the Bridge, the aerial tramway to Roosevelt Island begins on the west side of Second Avenue and continues along the north side of the Bridge. While the tram runs in the air above the Bridge and Study Area, its right-of-way includes the support structures from which the tram cables hang.

Around this transportation core, the Study Area is predominantly residential. As described in Section 4.2, the south side of E. 59th Street between First and Second Avenues is lined with a mix of residential and commercial buildings; most are four- to six-story buildings with ground-floor commercial space. West of the elevated Queensboro Bridge ramp that bisects the site, the two low-rise buildings facing the alternative Shaft Site house a commercial business and an animal shelter (the Humane Society of New York) with a roof-top dog run area. The 35-story Landmark apartment building, which contains office uses on its lower floors, occupies the east side of Second Avenue between E. 58th and E. 59th Streets across from the alternative Shaft Site. The building is set back from E. 59th Street by a landscaped area. Farther south on E. 58th Street, commercial structures and a few residential buildings with ground-floor commercial use are located close to the Queensboro Bridge approach ramp, while other buildings along both sides of E. 58th Street are entirely residential. These are generally 4- to 5-story buildings, but also include 11- and 12-story buildings. A 45-story building with ground-floor retail uses is located on the corner of Second Avenue, south of E. 58th Street.

West of Second Avenue, the Study Area is similarly residential and commercial in nature. Directly across from the Bridge entrance and alternative Shaft Site, the tramway entrance sits in a paved open plaza. To its south, between E. 58th and E. 59th Streets, a high-rise residential building has ground-floor retail uses. E. 59th Street west of Second Avenue is lined with small 4- and 5-story buildings with commercial uses on the lower floors. These are generally home-related retailers, with many antiques and furniture stores forming a small destination retail district.

North of the Bridge, land uses in the Study Area are also a mix of residential with ground-floor commercial use. Close to the Queensboro Bridge exit ramp, these uses include a multi-story tennis club on E. 61st Street and a multi-story health club on E. 59th Street. A small public plaza faces the Bridge on the north side of E. 60th Street. In general, the land uses on the north side of E. 60th Street are separated and buffered from the alternative Shaft Site by the large Bridge structure.

Community Facilities

One community facility is located in the 400-foot Study Area for the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site, a food pantry in the church at 230 E. 60th Street, between Second and Third Avenues. As described in Section 4.2 of Chapter 4, public safety in the Study Area is provided by Precincts 17 and 19 of the New York Police Department (NYPD).

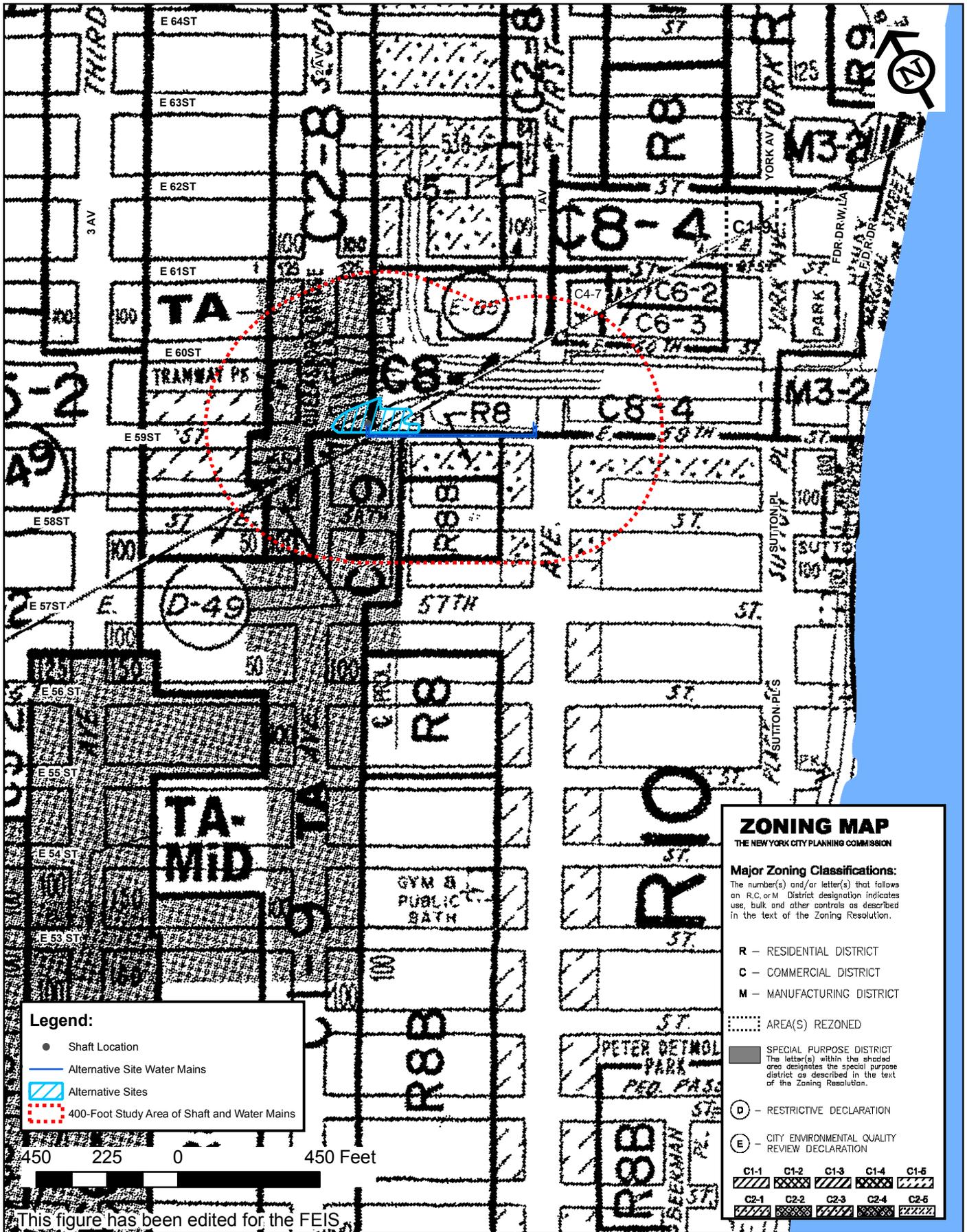
Zoning and Public Policy

Zoning districts in the Study Area are listed in Table 6.2-2 and shown in Figure 6.2-2. As shown in Figure 6.2-2, the eastern portion of the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is zoned C8-4, as part of a large C8-4 General Service commercial district that covers the Queensboro Bridge and adjacent areas between E. 59th and E. 60th Streets, and also extends up to E. 61st Street from the Queensboro Bridge exit ramp to First Avenue. C8-4 districts are intended to form a transition between commercial and manufacturing districts, and permit automotive and other heavy commercial uses, including public service establishments. These include, among others, electric or gas utility substations on a site of not more than 10,000 square feet, public utility stations for oil or gas metering or regulating, and water or sewage pumping stations. No residential uses are permitted in C8-4 districts. To the west of this district, a C2-8 zoning district is mapped along both sides of Second Avenue from E. 58th Street to E. 66th Street (outside the Study Area) and on the west side of Second Avenue from north of E. 56th Street to E. 58th Street. C2-8 districts are local shopping and services districts that allow low-density retail and medium- to high-density residential use. The C2-8 district in the Study Area is also part of the Transit Special Land Use District (shown as “TA” on the zoning map), intended to preserve easements for a future Second Avenue Subway. Because the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is mapped as street on City maps, zoning regulations do not apply to the site.

Other zoning districts in the Study Area also allow high-density residential and commercial use. As shown in Figure 6.2-2 and listed in Table 6.2-1, these include R10 along First Avenue and east of that avenue, R8 along the south side of E. 59th Street east of the Queensboro Bridge entrance ramp, and R8B on both sides of E. 58th Street in the midblock between the Bridge ramp and First Avenue. A C2-5 commercial overlay is mapped along the south side of E. 59th Street east of the Bridge ramp and along both sides of First Avenue in the Study Area.

The alternative Shaft Site’s location in the mapped street on the City map indicates that the intended use of the site is predominantly for transportation and utility uses. Other than zoning and the City map, no other public policies are currently in place in the Study Area.

As described in Section 4.2, Community Board 8 has prepared a 197-a plan for review by the New York City Department of City Planning. If that plan is enacted, it will become a guidance document for future City actions and public policy in the Study Area. The goals of that plan are described in Section 6.2.3 below.



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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2- MANHATTAN LEG
E. 59TH STREET/SECOND AVENUE SHAFT SITE
ZONING**

FIGURE 6.2-2

**Table 6.2-1
Zoning Districts in the Study Area**

Zoning	Zoning District	Permitted Uses
<i>Residential Districts</i>		
R8B	General Contextual Residential District	Medium-density residential and community facility uses with a maximum FAR of 4.0 except in Community District 8, where community facilities can be developed to an FAR of 5.1.
R8	General Residential District	Medium-density residential and community facility uses with a maximum FAR of 6.02.
R10	General Residence District	High-density residential and community facility uses with a maximum FAR of 10.0 (12.0 with bonus).
<i>Commercial Districts</i>		
C1-9	Local Shopping and Services	Wide range of retail stores and personal service establishments for local shopping, to a maximum FAR of 2.0. Residential and community facility uses at an R10 equivalent.
C2-5 Overlay	Local Shopping and Services	Wide range of local service establishments to a maximum FAR of 2.0; residential and community facility uses according to underlying zoning.
C2-8	Local Shopping and Services	Wide range of retail stores and service establishments to a maximum FAR of 2.0; residential and community facility uses at an R10 equivalent.
C8-4	General Service District	Warehouses, automotive service establishments, other commercial uses; maximum FAR of 5.0.
<i>Special Purpose Districts</i>		
TA	Special Transit Land Use District	Preserves easements for future Second Avenue Subway.
Sources: Zoning Resolution of the City of New York; <i>Zoning Handbook</i> , NYCDCP, July 1990.		

6.2.3 Future Conditions Without the Project

Land Use and Community Facilities

In the Future Without the Project, several development projects are planned in the northeastern portion of the Study Area that will contribute to the gradual conversion of that area from its existing commercial and manufacturing uses to high-density residential use. These projects—a new Ronald McDonald House and a new dormitory for The Rockefeller University—are both planned on the north side of E. 60th Street facing the Queensboro Bridge and are described in more detail in Section 4.2. No changes are anticipated to any of the existing community facilities in the Study Area. As described in Section 4.2, the Queensboro Bridge is currently undergoing reconstruction and rehabilitation, which is anticipated to be completed in 2009. As part of that project, NYCDOT will continue to use some of the roadway shoulder alongside the Bridge, including the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site, as a construction staging area.

Zoning and Public Policy

No zoning changes are currently anticipated in the Study Area in the Future Without the Project. The 197-a plan prepared by Community Board 8 may be adopted in the Future Without the

Project. As described in more detail in Section 4.2, this plan will be subject to an intensive review, which may include revisions, before it can be approved or disapproved. If approved, it will serve as a guidance document to be considered when City agencies take discretionary actions in the affected area. The plan proposed by Community Board 8, described in more detail in Section 4.2, recommends open space improvements near the Queensboro Bridge. This includes potential landscaping or other aesthetic improvements to the currently closed pedestrian access ramp to the Queensboro Bridge, located to the east of the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site. These improvements would not be implemented until the Bridge Rehabilitation Program is complete, anticipated for 2009.

6.2.4 Future Conditions With the Project

Construction

Land Use

Alternative Shaft Site

As described in Section 6.1, “Project Description,” of this Chapter, construction of Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would involve use of the site for approximately 52 months if raise bore excavation can be conducted there or 64 months if surface excavation must be used. Prior to the construction work, between 10 and 12 months of work in the streetbed of E. 59th Street would be required for relocation of a Con Edison oil-o-static line and associated chamber currently beneath E. 59th Street.

During construction, a 20-foot-high construction barrier would be erected along the south side of the Shaft Site, in E. 59th Street, to buffer the surrounding neighborhood from construction activities. Behind the barrier, the site would be occupied by construction trailers and other construction equipment, including a large crane. Depending on the stage of construction, a limited number of trucks would arrive at and depart from the site each day. If the shaft is constructed using surface excavation, an additional 5 to 10 trucks per day would remove excavated rock from the site during Stage 2.

Use of this alternative site for construction of Shaft 33B would bring a more intensive construction activity to the site, which is currently in use today by NYCDOT for construction staging associated with the Queensboro Bridge Rehabilitation Program. Since NYCDOT uses the site only for light staging activities and equipment storage, displacement of those activities from the site to allow construction of Shaft 33B would not adversely affect NYCDOT’s construction activities.

Study Area

While construction of Shaft 33B on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would represent a continuation of municipal uses on the site, construction activities for the project would be more noticeable to surrounding land uses than the current staging activities that occur on the site today and that will continue in the Future Without the Project.

The alternative Shaft Site would be enclosed by a 20-foot-high construction barrier during construction for security purposes and to buffer the surrounding neighborhood from the construction activities. Heavy construction activities would occur from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the alternative Shaft Site. Limited, quieter activities (such as clean-up) would occur during the evening, from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Construction associated with the raise bore excavation method (Stage 2A) would occur continuously for 24 hours a day for an approximately three-month-long period, but this work would occur largely below-ground.

Some trucks would arrive at or depart from the site in most construction stages—the maximum number of trucks expected per day is 30, during Stage 3. These trucks would include concrete deliveries as well as other deliveries of construction materials. These trucks arriving would be visible evidence of construction activity on the site, although no potential significant adverse traffic impacts are predicted. For more information on traffic associated with construction activities, see Section 6.9, “Traffic and Parking.”

Construction effects would be expected to be most disruptive to the nearest sensitive land uses, which are the residences directly across E. 59th Street from the alternative Shaft Site. Construction activity would be less disruptive to those sensitive uses located at a greater distance from the site. The nearest sensitive uses include the apartments in the 35-story Landmark apartment building at Second Avenue as well as those in the lower buildings along E. 59th Street just east of the elevated Bridge approach ramp. Disruptions during construction would include noise, dust, and traffic associated with the construction activity; however, as discussed later in this Chapter, no potential significant adverse impacts to traffic or air quality are anticipated at this site (see Sections 6.9, “Traffic and Parking,” and 6.11, “Air Quality”). Some construction equipment (e.g., the crane) would be visible above the construction barrier, and a small amount of construction-related traffic would arrive at and depart from the alternative Shaft Site.

Noise from construction equipment on the site would be audible and at times intrusive in the nearby vicinity. The most noticeable activity would be blasting, which would occur for approximately eight months using the raise bore method or 24 months with the surface excavation method. As discussed in Section 6.12, “Noise,” NYCDEP will implement a number of protective measures during blasting to minimize noise impacts, and the noise from blasting, although intrusive, would be short-term and temporary in nature. However, noise from other construction equipment on the alternative Shaft Site using either the raise bore or surface excavation method would also be intrusive and would result in potential significant adverse noise impacts at the upper floors of the Landmark apartment building directly across from the alternative Shaft Site and at the closest smaller residential buildings on E. 59th Street across from the alternative Shaft Site (see Section 6.12, “Noise,” for more information).

Overall, the construction activity on the alternative Shaft Site would be most noticeable to the nearest sensitive uses, the nearest residences across E. 59th Street, including a large apartment building. Disruption from construction of Shaft 33B on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would be limited, however, because the alternative Shaft Site is somewhat buffered from nearby residential uses by distance. The nearest residential building is the 35-story Landmark apartment building, which is approximately 72 feet from the edge of the excavation area at this alternative Shaft Site. Other residential buildings are on the south side of E. 59th Street on the

east side of the elevated Queensboro Bridge ramp. The Bridge would create an additional buffer between these residences and the most intensive construction activities on the alternative Shaft Site. From all other locations in the Study Area, and particularly from locations north of the Bridge, construction activities on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would be less perceptible. As detailed later in this Chapter (Sections 6.9, “Traffic and Parking,” and 6.11, “Air Quality”), the construction activity would not result in potential significant traffic impacts or air quality impacts; therefore, traffic and air quality changes would not be expected to result in potential significant adverse impacts to surrounding land uses during the construction period.

Access to all land uses in the Study Area would be maintained during construction activities on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site. As described in Section 6.1, during approximately the first four months of the eight-month period when blasting is occurring under the raise bore method and the first 12 months of the 24-month blasting period using surface excavation, there would be some limits to access in the area close to the alternative Shaft Site. Blasting could occur up to two times a day during those periods. A warning whistle communication protocol would be used to halt vehicular and pedestrian traffic within 100 to 150 feet of the blast site immediately prior to the blast, for a total anticipated duration of five minutes or less. However, NYCDEP would seek a whistle waiver from the FDNY to allow a shorter blasting sequence to be conducted; this would reduce the time when pedestrian traffic would be cleared from the area surrounding the alternative Shaft Site from five minutes to approximately one minute. FDNY has indicated that they could issue this waiver. This temporary disruption to access in the immediate vicinity of the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not be anticipated to result in a potential significant adverse land use impact.

Water Main Connections

Construction of new water main connections from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would also bring some construction disruption to the nearby area. As shown on Figure 6.2-1, the new water main segment for the First Avenue and Sutton Place routes would extend from the site east along E. 59th Street to First Avenue, where it would meet the First Avenue and Sutton Place water main routes described in Chapter 5. Using the E. 59th Street/E. 61st Street route, no additional water main connections would be required from this alternative Shaft Site. This alternative Shaft Site is in close proximity to the preferred Shaft Site, and therefore the potential construction activities and disruption caused by construction of water main connections from this site would be essentially the same as those described in Section 5.2, “Land Use and Community Facilities, Zoning, and Public Policy,” for water main connections from the preferred Shaft Site. Other than the addition of an extra block for the First Avenue and Sutton Place routes, the water main connections would be the same from this alternative Shaft Site as from the preferred Shaft Site, and the potential effects of the work is described in Section 5.2. Construction disruptions would be temporary and short-term in nature. Construction work on the block of E. 59th Street between First and Second Avenues, for example, is anticipated to last approximately 20 weeks; water main construction would last an estimated 12 weeks on other blocks and 10 weeks at intersections. As detailed in Section 5.1, the overall construction duration for the First Avenue and Sutton Place routes would therefore be slightly longer using the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site.

Using all three routes analyzed in this EIS, water main connections from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would require implementation of a traffic detour to route eastbound traffic coming from Second Avenue around the water main construction that would be occurring on the south side of E. 59th Street. As discussed in Section 6.1, this would involve routing traffic through the northern arch of the elevated Queensboro Bridge ramp that cuts through the block, and potentially through the traffic island just east of that ramp. This temporary traffic detour, which would be necessary only while construction of water mains is under way at the western end of the block, would not alter the access to nearby land uses and would therefore not result in potential significant adverse land use impacts. With the exception of this block, the water main connections from this site would be the same as from the preferred Shaft Site, and the potential disruptions associated with construction of these mains is described in Section 5.2.

Community Facilities

Construction of Shaft 33B on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would have no potential significant adverse effect on the food pantry located on E. 60th Street between Second and Third Avenues. That address is too far from the construction site to be adversely affected by traffic, noise, or air emissions from the construction of Shaft 33B on the alternative Shaft Site (for more information on these topics, see Sections 6.9, 6.11, and 6.12).

Construction activities on the alternative Shaft Site would also not adversely affect the ability of NYPD or FDNY to provide protection to the Study Area, particularly since the alternative Shaft Site is already occupied by similar construction uses. As described in Section 6.9, “Traffic and Parking,” construction activities on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not result in significant adverse traffic impacts; therefore, NYPD and FDNY would not be hampered in their ability to provide police and fire protection to the Study Area. During the period of blasting when traffic and pedestrian movements would be subject to temporary disruptions, blasting operations would be halted if emergency crews (NYPD, FDNY, or emergency medical services [EMS]) require passage by the site or access to any land uses around the site. In comments on the potential alternative Shaft Site dated September 13, 2005 (provided in Appendix 2), FDNY stated that it has no objection to construction of Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site, provided that the hydrant on the north side of E. 59th Street approximately 40 feet east of Second Avenue is relocated. FDNY noted a concern that traffic congestion that might occur during construction at this site could affect response times; however, neither construction of Shaft 33B on the alternative Shaft Site nor construction of its water main connections on the block are anticipated to result in traffic congestion, since both would maintain the same traffic lanes as exist today.

Zoning and Public Policy

The construction activities associated with Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not require a change in zoning on the site and would be consistent with the site’s location in the mapped street. Other than zoning, no adopted public policies apply to the alternative Shaft Site. If Community Board 8’s 197-a plan is adopted, construction activities for Shaft 33B at the alternative Shaft Site would not be in conflict with plans for aesthetic improvements to the currently closed pedestrian ramp onto the Queensboro Bridge.

Conclusions

Overall, construction of Shaft 33B on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would bring more intensive construction activities to a site that is currently in construction-related use by NYCDOT. The construction work for the new shaft, including relocation of the oil-o-static line, and its water main connections would result in limited disruptions to the surrounding Study Area, including significant adverse noise impacts on the upper floors of the 35-story residential building across from the alternative Shaft Site. The most disruptive activity would be blasting, which would occur for 8 months if raise bore excavation is used or 24 months if surface excavation is used. In addition to this disruption, construction-related disruption would also occur in connection with construction of the new water main connections. The effect of water main construction would be most noticeable and disruptive to land uses in the immediate vicinity, and would be of short duration in any one location. Overall, the disruption associated with construction of Shaft 33B and its water main connections would not be expected to result in changes to overall development patterns or trends in the Study Area, since they would be relatively short term. Finally, construction activities on the alternative Shaft Site would be consistent with the Site's zoning and applicable public policies in the Study Area. Therefore, no potential significant land use, community facilities, zoning, or public policy impacts would be anticipated to occur during construction of Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site and all its water main connections on any of the routes.

Activation and Operation

Activation and operation procedures for Shaft 33B would be consistent at any site selected for the shaft and are described in Chapter 2. The use of the site temporarily for approximately one month for activation activities, which would include water treatment, would be short-term and temporary in nature. No permanent changes in land use would occur as a result of activation of Shaft 33B. There would be no potential significant adverse land use impacts as a result of the one-month activation period.

Once Shaft 33B is operational, the shaft would operate unmanned, 24 hours a day, but NYCDEP maintenance crews would visit the site several times a week for inspection and maintenance activities. In addition to the underground shaft and distribution chamber, there would be some features of the shaft that would be above ground, including two at-grade access hatchways, a 10-foot-high by 14-inch-diameter air vent located on the site, and up to two air release hydrants. The shaft would operate unmanned, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Neither air emissions nor above-ground noise would be generated by the shaft during normal operations. Use of the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not preclude NYCDOT's ongoing use of the above-grade portion of the site for staging and maintenance activities, similar to their use of the site today.

Although regular operations of the shaft would occur unmanned, maintenance crews would routinely visit the site several times a week for inspection and maintenance activities. A small maintenance crew of NYCDEP personnel would visit the site an average of 1 to 3 times a week for routine inspection and maintenance activities.

The Shaft 33B operations at the alternative Shaft Site would also not adversely affect surrounding land uses or development trends in the Study Area. Other than limited activity for routine maintenance, the operation of the shaft would be completely underground and would not affect any surface use of the surrounding areas. There would be no conflict with nearby residential uses and no effect on the trend toward gradual conversion of commercial uses to residential uses in the northeast corner of the Study Area. Given the limited nature of these structures and the limited activity anticipated, no potential adverse effects to land use or community facilities, zoning, or public policy are anticipated. ◆