A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the effects of the proposed project on urban design and visual resources. The project site consists of the 4.7 miles of Rockaway Beach Boardwalk between Beach 20th and Beach 126th Streets, the section of beach between Beach 126th Street and Beach 149th Streets, and the section of beach between Beach 9th and 20th Streets.

As prescribed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidance (Environmental Review Guide HUD CPD 782, 24 CFR 58.40; Ref. 40 CFR 1508.8 &1508.27), a project's potential impact on environmental design (i.e., visual quality/coherence, diversity, compatibility of use and scale) are important components of the Environmental Assessment (EA). Under the 2012 *New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, urban design is defined as the totality of components that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. These components include streets, buildings, visual resources, open spaces, natural resources, and wind. An urban design assessment under CEQR must consider whether and how a project may change the experience of a pedestrian in a project area. The *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines recommend the preparation of a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources, followed by a detailed analysis, if warranted based on the conclusions of the preliminary assessment.

Therefore, to provide sufficient assessment under NEPA and CEQR, the analysis provided below addresses urban design characteristics and visual resources for existing conditions and the future without and with the proposed project. In summary, the proposed project is not expected to result in any significant adverse impacts to the urban design or visual resources of the study area.

B. METHODOLOGY

This chapter was prepared in conformance with the requirements of NEPA and follows the methodology of the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary 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' or in the future without the proposed project. The proposed project is not anticipated to require any modifications of yard, height, or setback requirements, and would not result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed 'as-of-right' or in the future without the proposed project. However, the project would result in boardwalk and related structures that are different in appearance from those that existed before Hurricane Sandy. Therefore, this chapter conservatively assumes that the project meets the threshold for a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources.

The study area for the urban design and visual resources analysis has been defined as the area within 400 feet of the project site (see **Figures 3C-1** through **3C-3**).

The *CEQR Technical Manual* recommends an analysis of pedestrian wind conditions for projects that would result in the construction of large buildings at locations that experience high wind conditions (such as 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. The proposed project would not result in the construction of large buildings. Therefore, a pedestrian wind conditions analysis is not warranted.

Consistent with the *Manual's* guidance, this analysis focuses on the considerations of the pedestrian experience in the public realm, such as streets and public open spaces. It does not consider views from residences or other non-public spaces. Furthermore, this analysis does not consider private access points to the boardwalk.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The project site consists of the approximately 4.7 miles of Rockaway Beach boardwalk between Beach 20th Street and Beach 126th Street, as it currently exists following the damage incurred by Hurricane Sandy in 2012; the section of beach between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets; and the section of beach between Beach 9th and Beach 20th Streets.

As it previously existed, the boardwalk visually defines the character of the adjacent Rockaway communities. Except for sections of the boardwalk that were completed prior to the summer of 2013 (the "island targeted repairs") or that survived the storm with little or no damage (see discussion below), the boardwalk remains damaged, unusable, and dangerous. Some chain link fencing has been put up around damaged portions of the boardwalk, to prohibit public access until repairs occur. The boardwalk, as it exists today, and as it formerly existed in other segments of the project site, is approximately 40 feet wide. Approximately 125 access points to the boardwalks existed prior to the storm; these generally correspond to public streets (see Figures 1-2 through 1-4 for the locations of existing and historic public access points).

As illustrated in **Figure 3C-2**, the boardwalk segment between approximately Beach 126th Street and Beach 90th Street, which formerly consisted of wood planking laid in a chevron pattern with tubular metal fencing on either side and ramps/stairs down to the beach, suffered significant damage. In this portion of the project site, the boardwalk either no longer exists except for the concrete piles that supported the wood planks, or has been moved inland off the concrete piles in segments by the force of the storm. The variety of street furniture that existed on the boardwalk—benches, public telephones, wayfinding signage, lampposts, and trash bins—also was washed away. Between roughly Beach 95th Street and Beach 90th Street, some of the red tile fire break panels that separated segments of the wood boardwalk still exist above the concrete piles.

Between approximately Beach 90th Street and Beach 74th Street, the boardwalk suffered only mild to moderate damage. In this area, the wood boardwalk between roughly Beach 90th Street and Beach 81st Street still exists, albeit with the loss of most of the benches, public telephones, trash bins, wayfinding signage, and lampposts that were formerly elements of the boardwalk.

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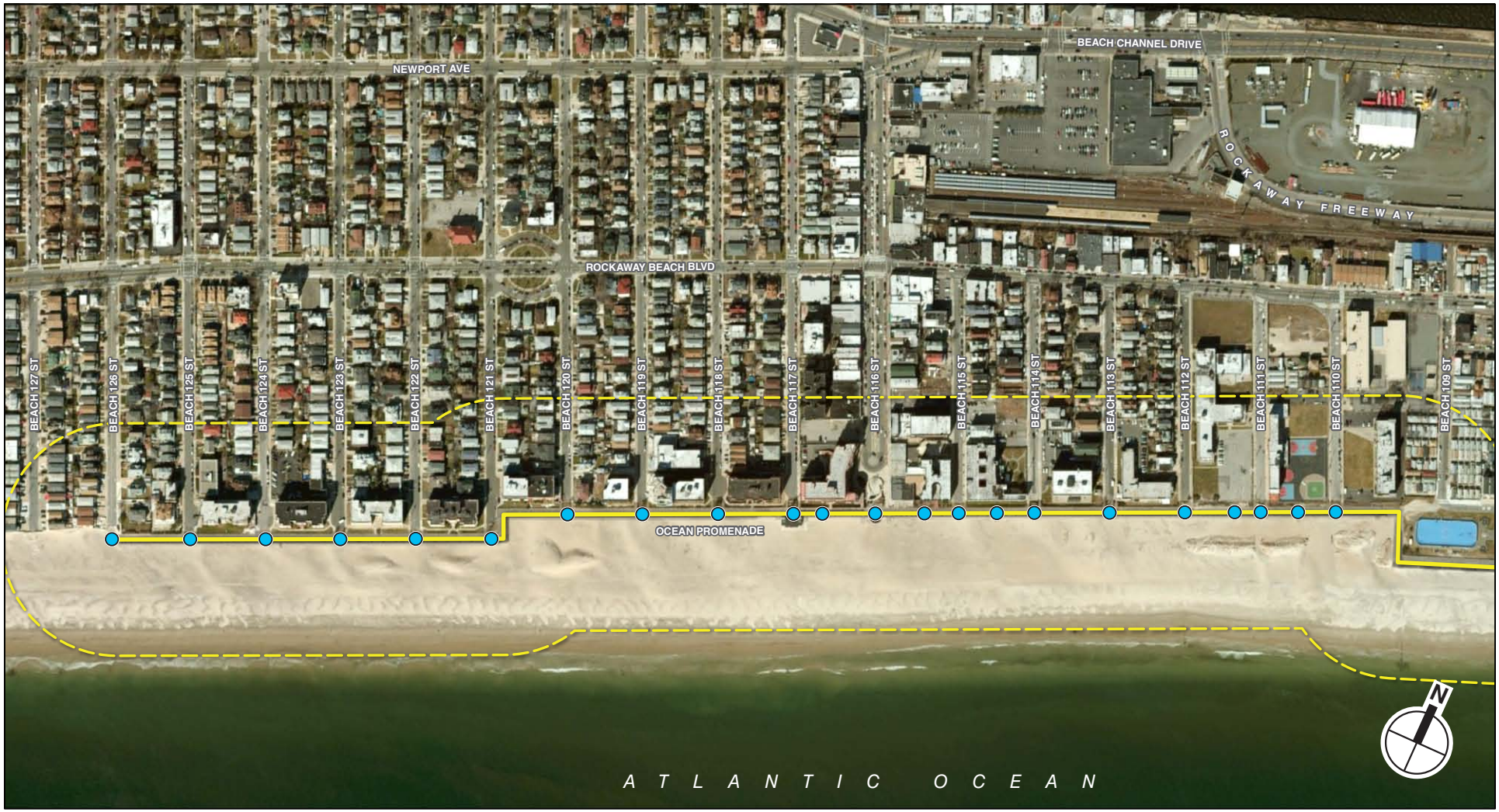

Boardwalk

400-Foot Study Area

Boardwalk Access

0 200 500 FEET

SCALE

Urban Design Study Area – Rockaway Park/Belle Harbor

Figure 3C-1

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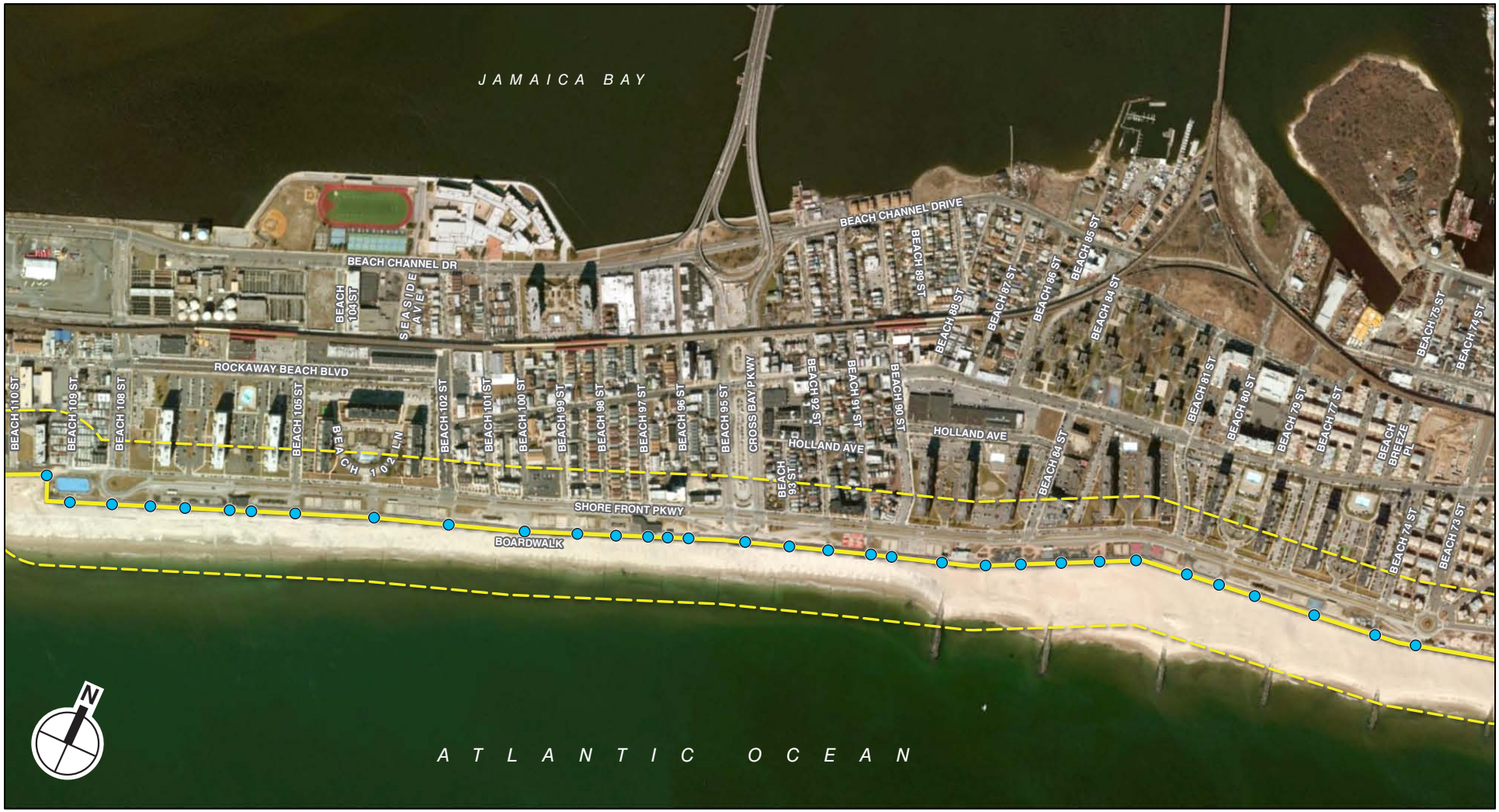

Boardwalk

400-Foot Study Area

Boardwalk Access

0 400 1000 FEET

SCALE

ROCKAWAY BOARDWALK RECONSTRUCTION

Urban Design Study Area – Seaside

Figure 3C-2

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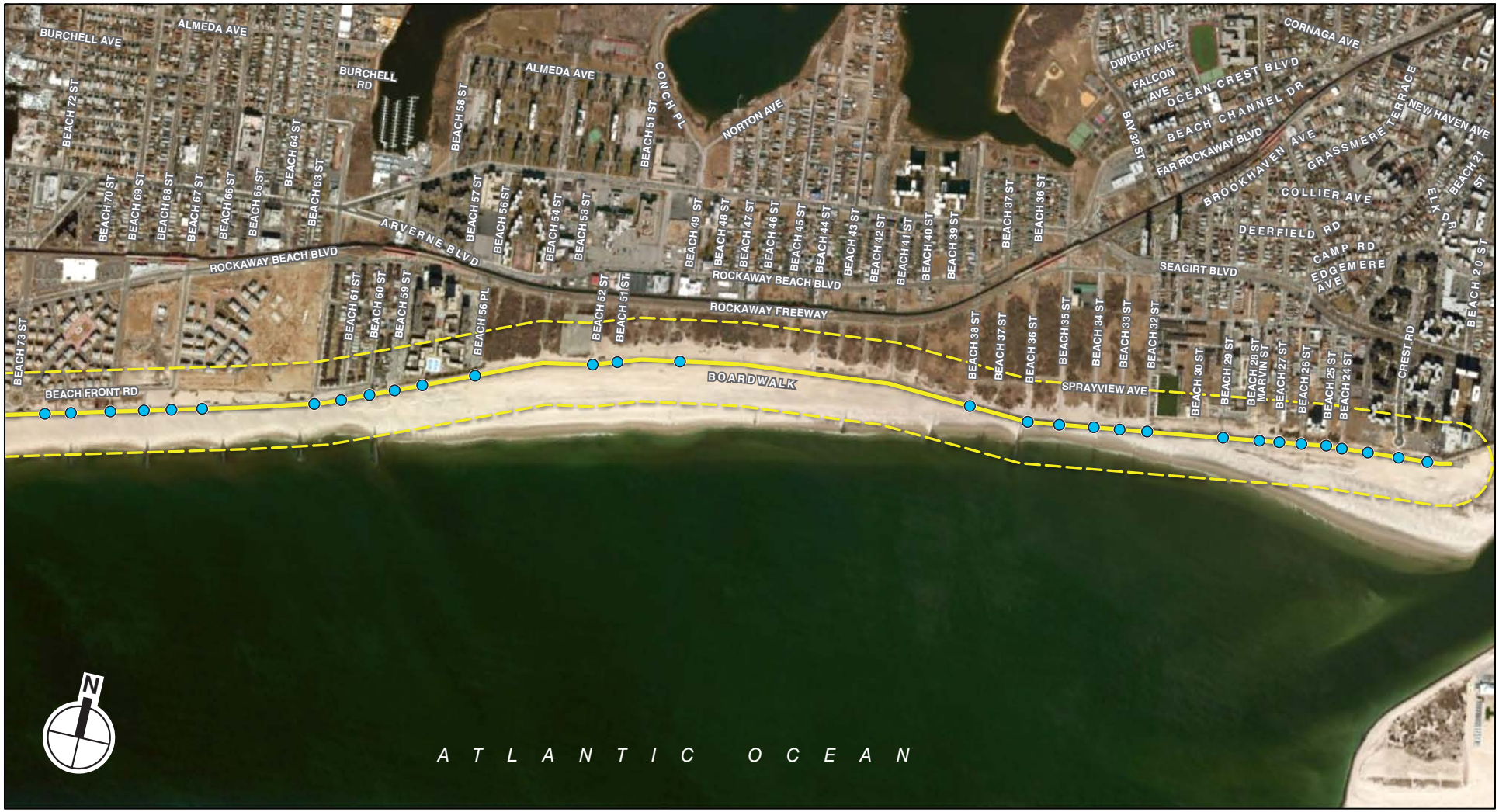


Boardwalk

400-Foot Study Area

Boardwalk Access

0 800 1600 FEET

SCALE

ROCKAWAY BOARDWALK RECONSTRUCTION

Urban Design Study Area – Arverne East/Far Rockaway

Figure 3C-3

The portion of the boardwalk between roughly Beach 81st Street and Beach 67th Street is of concrete designed to appear like wide planks of wood.

The boardwalk between approximately Beach 74th Street and Beach 59th Street, like the areas west of Beach 90th Street, suffered significant damage. This area was wood boardwalk, except for a small segment east of Beach 69th Street to just west of Beach 67th Street, which was paved with asphalt. More of the wood boardwalk remains in this area, but there are still significant washed-out areas and areas where only a portion of the wood still exists in place. As in the area to the west, most of the red tile fire break panels that separated segments of the wood boardwalk are still in place.

Between roughly Beach 59th Street and Beach 19th Street, the boardwalk suffered mild to moderate damage, except for a small segment between roughly Beach 40th and 35th Streets, which suffered significant damage. The boardwalk in this area is concrete panels between roughly Beach 59th Street and Beach 44th Street and Beach 27th Street to Beach 25th Street, and wood elsewhere. In the area that suffered significant damage, whole segments of wood boardwalk were washed inland, off their concrete pilings; only the red tile fire break panels were left in place.

Between approximately Beach 19th Street and Beach 9th Street, the boardwalk suffered no damage. The boardwalk in this area is concrete.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," targeted repairs were made at the following boardwalk islands—at Beach 116th Street, Beach 106th Street, Beach 97th Street, Beach 86th Street, Beach 73rd, Beach 59th, and Beach 32nd—in early 2013. The reconstruction of the boardwalk at these locations provided for repairs and new construction of stairs, ramps, beach access points, lifeguard stations, and restroom/comfort facilities. This targeted repair work also renovated existing structures to restore and/or improve the resiliency of flood sensitive uses and equipment (i.e., comfort stations).

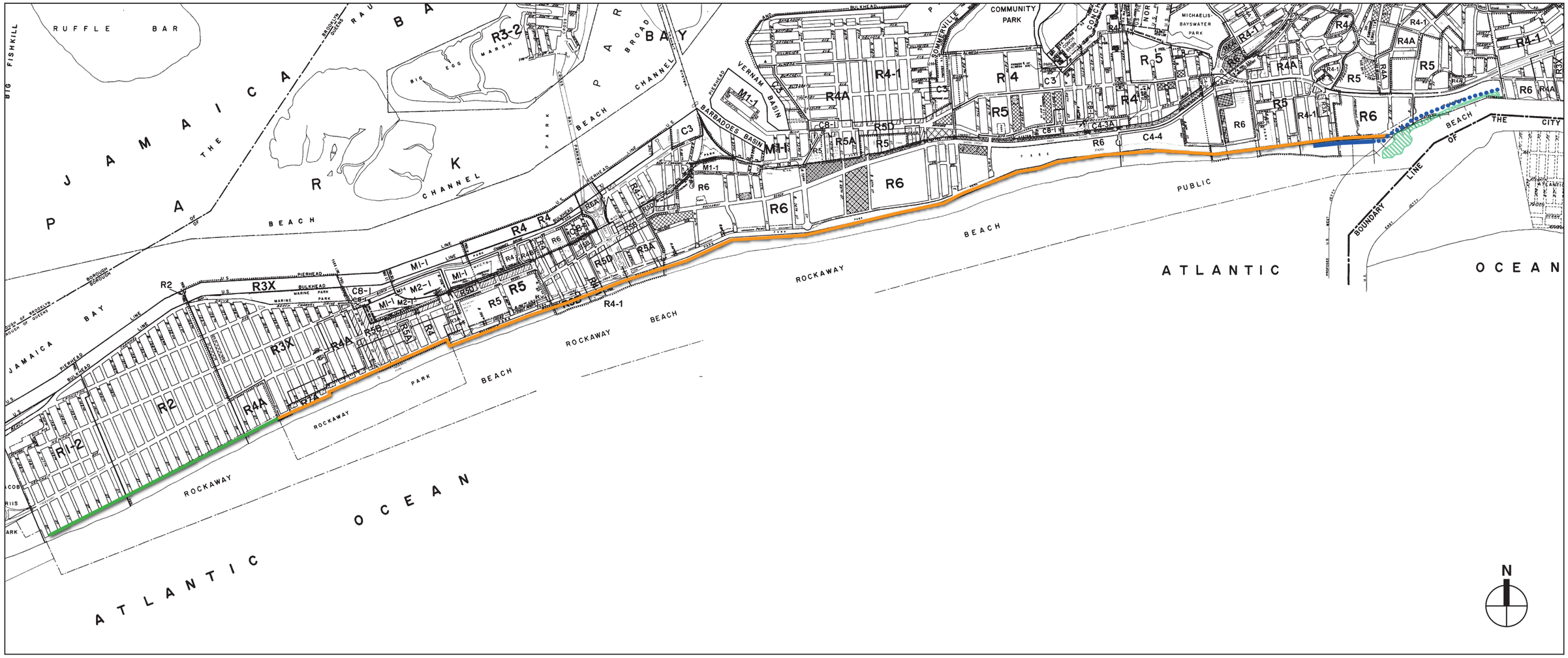
Targeted repairs to the boardwalk were also made between Beach 90th Street and Beach 74th Street, with both concrete and wooden boardwalk, the latter which in some place includes new metal railings on each side; a concrete segment just east of Beach 67th Street; and between Beach 60th Street and Beach 19th Street, which includes both concrete and wooden boardwalk. At that time, the key design specifications for the overall reconstruction of the boardwalk were established, including railings and fixtures (as well as surface treatment, for the construction at Beach 106th, Beach 97th, and Beach 86th Streets). In addition, trap bags were installed as a temporary protective measure between approximately Beach 69th and Beach 149th Streets.

Some segments of the project site are within the boundaries of zoning districts covering the adjacent neighborhoods; the remainder of the project site is located in parkland (see **Figure 3C-4**). Thus, this analysis does not include a discussion of lot or tower coverage or existing vs. built floor area ratios (FAR).

VISUAL RESOURCES

Visual resources are an area's unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. These can include historic structures, parks, natural features (such as rivers), or important views.

The project site itself is not considered to be a visual resource, particularly in its current significantly damaged form. Visual resources that can be seen from the project site are the



Proposed Reconstructed Boardwalk
Existing Dunes
Proposed Crossing Structures
USACE Dune
Proposed (No-Action) Sand Fencing

Zoning District Boundary
C1-1 Overlay
C1-2 Overlay
C1-3 Overlay
C1-4 Overlay
C1-5 Overlay
C2-1 Overlay
C2-2 Overlay
C2-3 Overlay
C2-4 Overlay
C2-5 Overlay

Zoning Map
Figure 3C-4

Rockaway beach and the Atlantic Ocean. Views inland from the project site include the variety of buildings in the adjacent Rockaway communities, but no visual resources.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

The study area surrounding the project site comprises Rockaway Beach to the south, and a variety of residential building types in the Rockaway communities to the north. Rockaway Beach is the area's main natural feature and public open space. The topography of the study area is generally flat. The upland portion of the study area is densely developed, and building heights, footprint sizes and shapes, and lot coverages vary. Some buildings in the study area, particularly the smaller residential structures, are built to the lot line; others, particularly those on superblocks, are not. Therefore, there are few consistent streetwalls throughout the study area. The main vehicular and pedestrian thoroughfares through the study area include Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Shore Front Parkway, which run east-west, and the wider north-south streets such as Beach 116th Street and Beach 73rd Street, which are wider, have landscaped medians with dual-light lampposts, and appear to be intended as the main routes to the shore.

The street pattern in most of the study area is generally a standard grid, forming long, rectangular blocks with their short sides facing the boardwalk. The north-south streets in the study area (e.g. Beach 126th Street, Beach 125th Street) end at the boardwalk or beach west of Beach 108th Street and east of Beach 56th Street. Between Beach 73rd and Beach 62nd Streets, this street pattern is interrupted by diagonal and curving streets, reflecting new and ongoing residential development in these areas.

In the portion of the study area between Beach 126th and 108th Streets, the boardwalk directly abuts residential structures; as the boardwalk ends at Beach 126th Street, the north-south streets to the west end at the beach itself. Most of the structures directly adjacent to the boardwalk are 4- to 8-story apartment buildings with rectangular footprints; their long sides are oriented toward the waterfront. There are also a few single family houses surrounded by landscaping facing the boardwalk. Some of the apartment buildings are separated from the boardwalk by a narrow band of landscaping. In some areas, this landscaping, including bushes, obscured the inland-side metal boardwalk railing. West of Beach 126th Street, the study area is mainly composed of single family houses on larger lots. At the southern terminus of Beach 116th Street is the Flight 587 Park Memorial, which was erected in memory of the persons who died in the crash of American Airlines Flight 587 in Belle Harbor, Queens, on November 12, 2001.

From roughly Beach 108th Street eastward to Beach 73rd Street, the boardwalk is separated from inland development by Shore Front Parkway. The long rectangular corridor between the boardwalk and the roadway is occupied by landscaping, paved areas with playground equipment, benches and picnic tables, and basketball/racquetball courts, and some paved parking areas. At the intersection of Beach 108th Street and the boardwalk is an open-air skating rink, which appears to have been damaged by the storm and is not currently open to the public. Inland of Shore Front Parkway, there are a number of superblocks bounded by Beach 108th and 105th Streets, Beach 105th and 102nd Streets, Beach 90th and 84th Streets, Beach 84th and 81st Streets, Beach 81st and 77th Streets, Beach 77th and 74th Streets, Rockaway Beach Boulevard, and Shore Front Parkway. These superblocks are occupied by large "tower in the park" type developments—including the Surfside Park Apartments, Dayton Towers West and Dayton Towers East complexes—with 12- and 13-story rectangular apartment blocks oriented primarily with their narrow sides facing the ocean. The open sites surrounding the apartment blocks

include surface parking, swimming pools and other recreational facilities, and landscaping. Other than the developments on these superblocks, the buildings in the study area are mainly low-scale residential structures on small lots, such as attractive 2- and 3-story single family houses, semi-detached 2- and 3-story homes, as well as some larger new apartment towers. The study area is predominantly residential.

The area extending perpendicular to the boardwalk between Beach 95th Street and Beach 94th Street is utilized for a series of public parking lots. These lots are landscaped with trees and bushes at their perimeter, and serve the beach-going community. Near the boardwalk at the southern terminus of Beach 95th Street, there is a mosaic tile whale sculpture, and prior to the storm, there was a skate park near the southern terminus of Beach 91st Street.

Between Beach 69th and Beach 62nd, and between Beach 56th Place and Beach 32nd Street, the area between the boardwalk and Rockaway Beach Boulevard/Edgemere Avenue to the north is vacant land, which from the boardwalk area looks rather wild, with unlandscaped and natural vegetation. As described below in "The Future Without the Proposed Project", the area between Beach 32nd and Beach 59th Streets is anticipated to be developed with approximately 1,300 residential units and retail uses in the near future, pursuant to the Arverne redevelopment plan. At Beach 32nd Street inland of the boardwalk, there is a new multi-purpose athletic field and running track, with adjacent parking.

The far western section of the study area, between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets, is developed with single-family detached houses of varying sizes, materials, and architectural styles. The houses facing the beach are set back from the beach behind low walls. In early 2013, as part of the targeted repairs, concrete baffle-walls were installed along the beach between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets to replace the walls lost during the storm.

At the eastern edge of the study area is the Rockaway Beach Bungalow Historic District, a rare and intact enclave of small, seasonal beach bungalows in the area roughly bounded by Beach 24th and Beach 26th Streets between Seagirt Avenue and the boardwalk. As described in more detail in Chapter 3, Section B, "Historic and Cultural Resources," the bungalows in this area were constructed in the 1920s and were placed on small lots either facing the street or interior, common alleyways.

East of Beach 24th Street, there are several additional superblocks containing large apartment complexes. The height of the apartment buildings range in size from six to 26 stories and are mainly constructed of brick. Between Beach 17th Street and Beach 9th Street south of Seagirt Avenue are two DPR-managed playgrounds, the Beach 17 Playground and the Beach 9 Playground, separated by a surface parking lot.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The study area's visual resources include the Rockaway beach and the Atlantic Ocean, which are visible along the north-south streets in the area, as well as from Shore Front Parkway. Most views to the north in the study area east of Beach 109th Street to Beach 90th Street and again east of Beach 73rd Street include, in the distance, the concrete viaduct carrying the A subway line to the Rockaway peninsula. North-south views in the study area are limited in some locations by the large residential complexes on superblocks, described above. North-south views between Beach 56th Place and Beach 32nd Street are very open at present, due to the lack of development in this area south of Edgemere Avenue.

D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In the future without the proposed project, the City is proposing to construct an interim boardwalk connection between Beach 35th Street and Beach 39th Street, where—as described above—the boardwalk suffered significant damage. The boardwalk surface in this area, which was constructed of wood, is currently completely absent, thus interrupting public use of the boardwalk. The proposed temporary structure will use salvaged *ipe* stringers that were recovered from the damaged boardwalk. These stringers will be placed on and anchored to the existing concrete piles, with timber decking placed on the stringers. The width of the deck will be approximately 12 feet and will be connected to the existing boardwalk at Beach 35th Street and Beach 39th Street. Upon completion of this interim connection, the entire stretch of boardwalk between Beach 9th and Beach 60th Streets would be usable, thus improving pedestrian access and enjoyment of this portion of the project site. The boardwalk section between Beach 35th and Beach 20th Streets and the boardwalk section between Beach 39th and Beach 126th Streets will not be reconstructed and will remain in their current conditions.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is currently undertaking a project to renourish Rockaway Beach between Beach 19th and Beach 149th Streets. The USACE project includes the creation of beachfill and new dunes between the shore and the boardwalk. The new dunes would be 14-16 feet in elevation (compared to a base beach elevation of approximately 8-10 feet), representing an increase in the height of the sand surface of approximately 6-8 feet over existing conditions, and thus would be higher than the boardwalk as it would exist in the future without the proposed project. DPR, in the future with or without the proposed project, would plant cape beach grass on the top of the USACE dune from Beach 20th Street to approximately Beach 73rd Street and on the top and seaward side of the dune from Beach 73rd Street to approximately Beach 149th Street. Planted areas would be protected by sand fencing until the vegetation becomes established. While the creation of dunes would not be anticipated to affect the urban design of the project site or study area, it would notably alter pedestrian views toward the ocean from surrounding north-south streets and sidewalks, and from the boardwalk itself (where accessible). The construction of new restroom facilities at Beach 67th Street would be completed in the future without the proposed project.

In the future without the proposed project, the City intends to install sand fencing that would aid in the gradual formation of a sand dune beyond the eastern end of the USACE dune in order to provide flood protection to communities between Beach 9th and Beach 20th Streets. The sand fencing would be placed in two parallel rows approximately 20 feet apart, adjacent to and in approximate alignment with the eastern terminus of the USACE dune and landward of the existing natural dunes that occur in this area. Pedestrian access would be through five at-grade openings in the sand fencing, where pedestrian access is now in the vicinity of Beach 19th, Beach 16th and Beach 9th Streets.

On the currently vacant blocks between Beach 32nd and Beach 59th Streets, it is expected that approximately 1,300 residential units and retail uses will be developed pursuant to the Arverne East redevelopment plan (see Chapter 3, Section A: "Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy"). No other major land use changes are currently anticipated in the study area. Homes and businesses affected by Hurricane Sandy are expected to be gradually repaired or redeveloped depending on the extent of damage, and small new developments such as single family houses and small businesses can be expected to be built in the coming years.

E. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

In the future with the proposed project, the boardwalk would largely be reconstructed in its pre-existing alignment but would install new piles and remove the existing piling and foundation system where it is in the way of new construction. As described above, the typical existing boardwalk section is 40 feet wide; the project proposes to rebuild all boardwalk areas generally to that width, although changes to the alignment could be made by shifting the boardwalk footprint in the north or south direction between 5 and 10 feet. In addition, certain locations may have a "bump-out" on the landward side of the boardwalk, to accommodate stair and ramp landing areas (particularly in creating ADA-compliant access points to the new boardwalk height) and other facilities such as locations for benches and other amenities. These bump-outs may extend up to 15 feet, resulting in small sections of boardwalk (each approximately 5 to 10 feet in length) that would be approximately 55 feet wide. For example, Figure 1-12 shows a detail for a beach-side landing area that existed prior to the storm and will be rebuilt as part of the project. Nowhere will the reconstructed boardwalk intrude seaward of the mean high water spring elevation. A sand-retaining wall would be created under the boardwalk to prevent the migration of sand. Similar to the baffle-walls that have been rebuilt between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets, west of the project site, the sand-retaining wall would be composed of concrete panels that extend above the sand surface, but below the surface of the boardwalk.

The reconstructed boardwalk would be raised to be approximately three feet above the 100-year FEMA storm surge levels (i.e., the 100-year floodplain). Therefore, the height of the new boardwalk would be raised from approximately 1.4 feet at the eastern portion of the site, to approximately 8.0 feet at the western portion (see Figures 1-11a to 1-11c). These elevations would vary to accommodate existing structures and to minimize changes in boardwalk elevations. The height of the reconstructed boardwalk is intended to allow users to continue to view the ocean over the dunes and access the beach.

The likely treatment options for the boardwalk reconstruction would vary, depending on the four typical boardwalk conditions described above (i.e., no boardwalk surface; damaged or obsolete wood and concrete boardwalks; intact concrete boardwalks; and rebuilt "islands"). The likely treatment options are described in detail in Chapter 1, "Project Description." New steel piles would be installed, and the existing piling and foundation system would be removed where it is in the way of new construction. Because the areas reconstructed in early 2013 are focal points of activity, generally have a high level of design and a relationship to existing buildings, and would be disruptive to reconstruct, it is anticipated that these would be left in place. Since they are generally below the new design elevations, however, additional flood control measures could be incorporated at these locations, including temporary solutions such as trap bags that get put in place when a major storm event is forecast. The boardwalk reconstruction also would include new lighting, benches, drinking fountains, charging stations, bike racks, and other amenities that may be identified in the design process.

New ADA-compliant public access ramps would be provided to replace those damaged in the storm. The work proposed for the approximately 125 previously-existing access points include redesign to meet the new boardwalk elevation. No new public access points are envisioned, and all reconstructed access points would be developed within the boardwalk right-of-way and on previously disturbed areas. In addition, all public stairs and ramps connecting local streets with

the boardwalk that were in use before the storm would be rebuilt, although some design modifications are required to accommodate additional elevation of the boardwalk.

The project anticipates filling the gap between the USACE created dune and the boardwalk with additional sand that would also fill the area under the boardwalk to the sand-retaining wall. This landward extension of the dune would be planted with vegetation and would provide further resilience and create a more direct access from the boardwalk across the USACE dune.

The proposed project would fully restore the Rockaway Boardwalk—a significant urban design element for the surrounding community, as well as an important recreational resource—while increasing its resiliency against future storms. It would enhance the pedestrian experience of the project site by reactivating the streetscape and restoring pedestrian activity to this area. The proposed project would replace damaged street furniture. Between Beach 126th and Beach 149th Streets, the project would provide new crossing structures over the dunes currently being constructed by the USACE; between Beach 9th and Beach 20th Streets, the project would maintain five existing at-grade crossings through the existing dunes.

VISUAL RESOURCES

As described above, the project site is not considered to be a visual resource. The reconstruction of the boardwalk above the level of the dunes to be developed in the No-Action condition would restore this area as a location for views to the Rockaway Beach and the Atlantic Ocean. The proposed project would not block any currently-accessible views to visual resources from the project site.

STUDY AREA

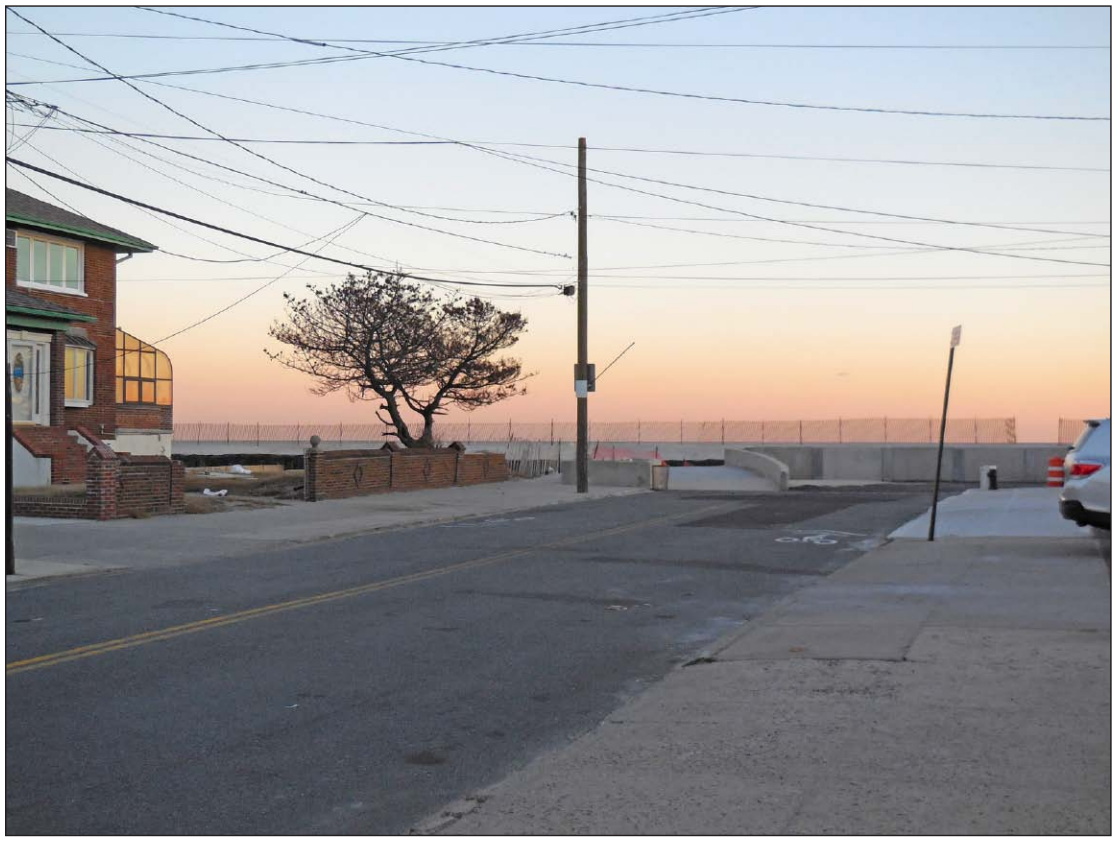
URBAN DESIGN

As in the future without the proposed project, the proposed project would not result in any changes to streets, buildings, visual resources, natural features, or open spaces in the study area. As described above, the reconstructed boardwalk would mostly be built on the existing alignment with some potential modifications to the alignment of between 5 and 15 feet. The materials to be utilized for the reconstruction would be in keeping with those used elsewhere within the study area, and the mix of open space and buildings in the area would not change.

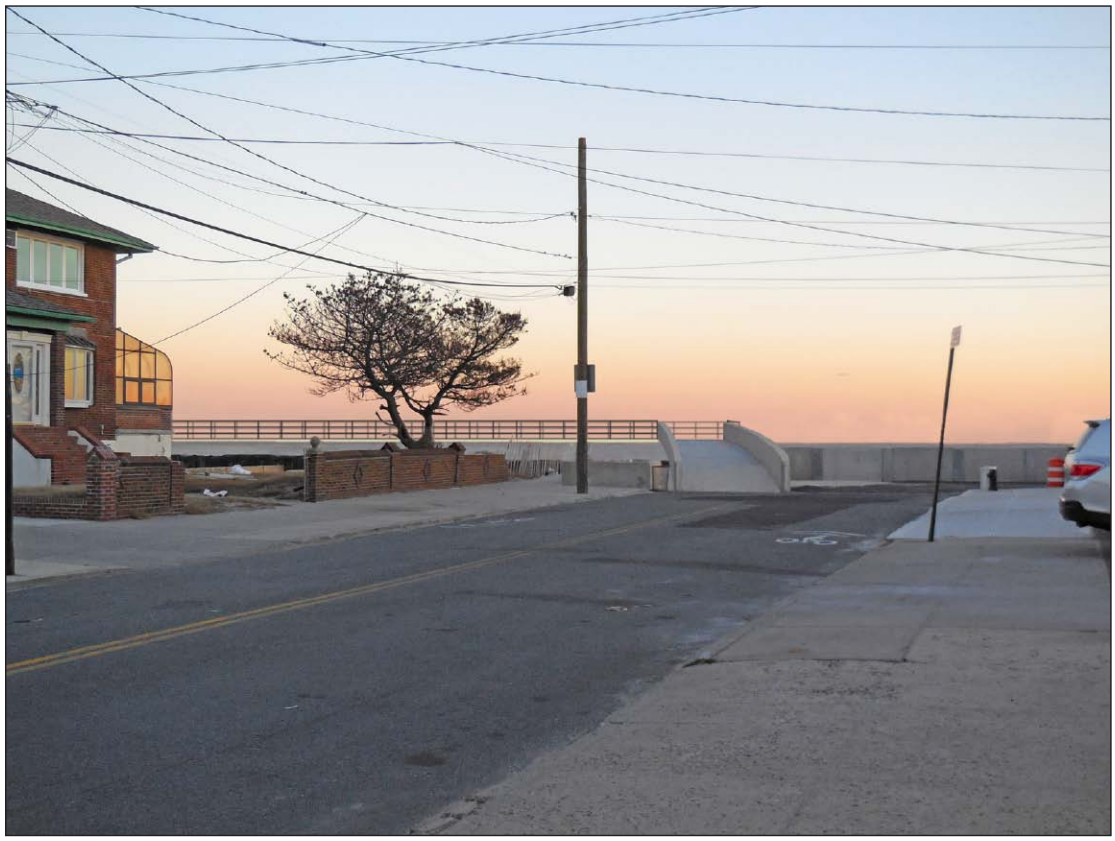
The proposed project would not introduce any different uses to the study area compared with the future without the proposed project; rather, it would materially enhance the existing use of the project site. Compared to the future without the proposed project, in which the boardwalk would remain in its current condition, the proposed project would revitalize a damaged and currently unusable resource and reintroduce new active uses and pedestrians to the study area. It also would be an integral part of the Rockaway Peninsula Plan, DPR's conceptual plan for the development and implementation of urban design and open space concepts for the Rockaway Peninsula (see Chapter 4, "Cumulative Effects").

VISUAL RESOURCES

The proposed change in the boardwalk's elevation would alter its visual relationship with neighboring buildings, as well as views from north-south streets. This change would be most notable in the portion of the study area between Beach 126th and Beach 110th Street (see **Figure 3C-5** above), where the boardwalk directly abuts adjacent buildings, and to a lesser extent in the area between Beach 62nd Street and Beach 56th Place; in the rest of the study area, the separation provided by Shore Front Parkway would lessen the effect of the change in views

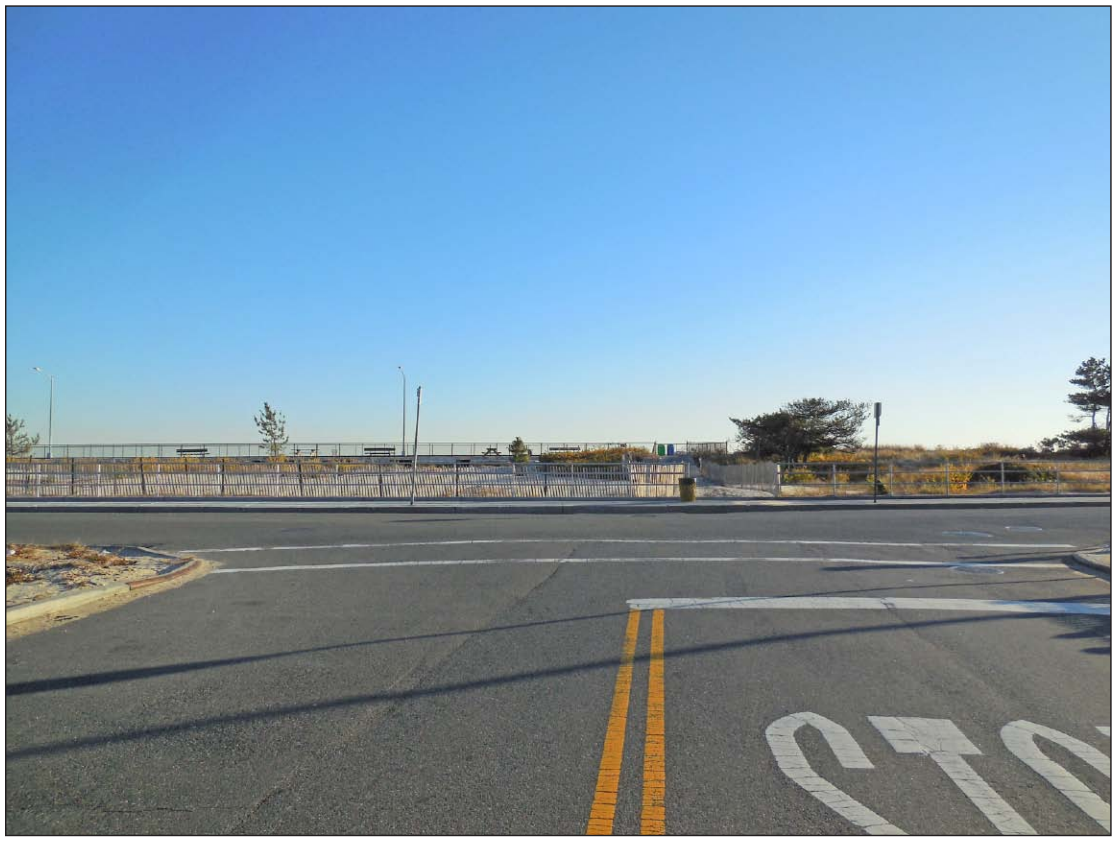


No-Action Condition

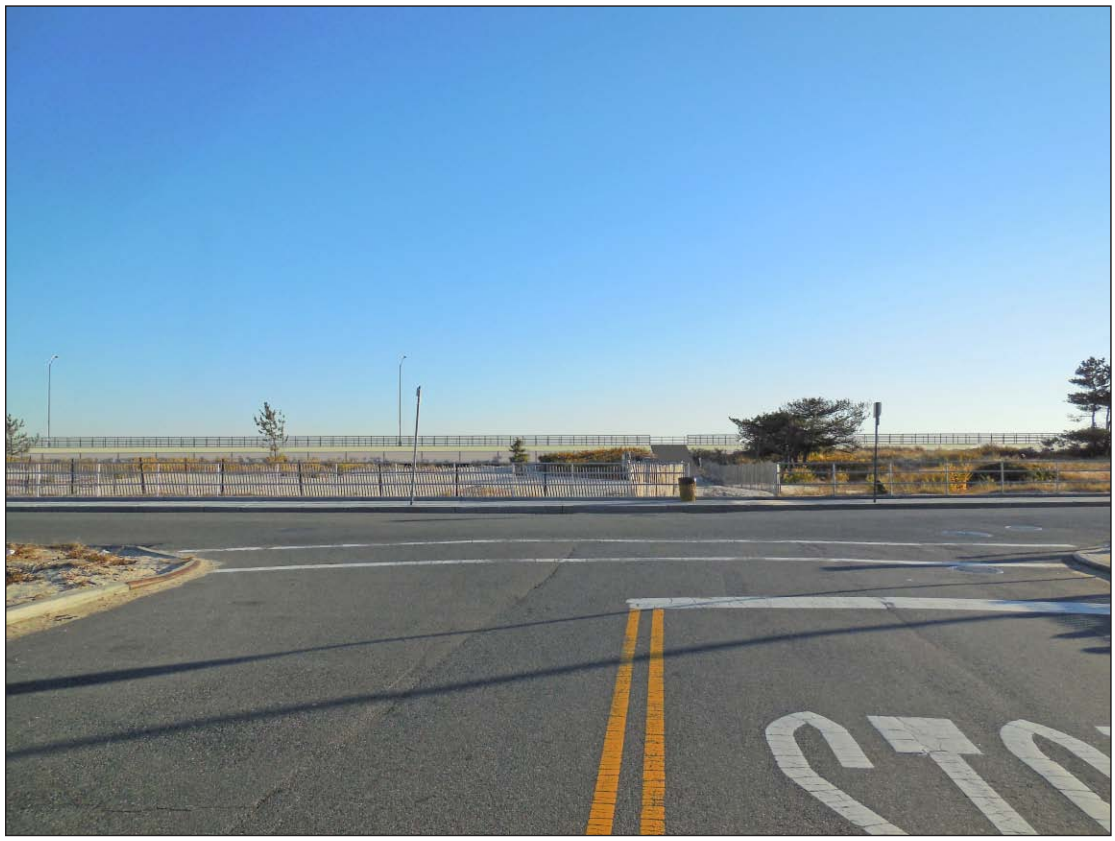


With-Action Condition

View Simulations: Beach 126th Street
Figure 3C-5



No-Action Condition



With-Action Condition

View Simulations: Beach 69th Street
Figure 3C-6

No-Action Condition

With-Action Condition

View Simulations: Beach 24th Street
Figure 3C-7

along north-south streets (see **Figures 3C-6 and 3C-7** above). It is noted that pursuant to the guidelines set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, views from private residences are not considered in this analysis.

As described above, the portion of the study area between Beach 32nd and Beach 59th Streets will be developed pursuant to the Arverne East redevelopment plan in the No-Action condition; since the USACE project would also create new dune structures in this area, there would be no views through this area in the No-Action condition that do not include those dunes. Thus, the changes to the boardwalk to allow views over the dunes would not represent a change in views from this portion of the study area.

The proposed project would not eliminate any existing view corridors and would not block view corridors to any natural or built visual resources, compared to the No-Action condition. While the Rockaway Beach and Boardwalk and the Atlantic Ocean are defining features of the neighborhood, the proposed project would improve views to visual resources compared to the future without the proposed project, where the boardwalk would remain in its deteriorated condition and the new dunes to be created by the USACE project would be higher than the boardwalk, limiting pedestrian views toward the ocean.

CONCLUSIONS

The *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines for an analysis of urban design and visual resources state that if a preliminary assessment shows that changes to the pedestrian environment are sufficiently significant to require greater explanation and further study, then a detailed analysis is appropriate. Examples include projects that would potentially obstruct view corridors, compete with icons in the skyline, or make substantial alterations to the streetscape of a neighborhood by noticeably changing the scale of buildings.

The proposed project would not noticeably change the scale of buildings; would not involve an area-wide rezoning that includes an increase in permitted floor area or changes in height or setback requirements; and would not result in substantial changes to the built environment of a historic district or components of a historic building that contribute to the resource's historic significance. While the reconstructed boardwalk would have a somewhat different design than the boardwalk that existed before Hurricane Sandy, this change is not considered to significantly alter any urban design characteristics of the project site or surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed project would not be anticipated to significantly affect any urban design features of the project site or study area, or the general urban design character of the neighborhood. Overall, the project would activate a damaged recreational resource currently closed to the public and would improve the pedestrian experience of the project site and study area.

Furthermore, the proposed project would not change any urban design features such that the context of a natural or built visual resource is altered, and would not partially or totally block any unique, publicly-accessible views to a visual resource. Rather, the proposed project would improve publicly-accessible views to visual resources, compared to the future without the proposed project, by rebuilding the boardwalk at a level to allow views over the new dunes that are being created by USACE.

Therefore, the proposed project does not merit further analysis of urban design and visual resources, and would not be anticipated to result in significant adverse effects to urban design and visual resources. ✷