1. INTRODUCTION & PROJECT DESCRIPTION

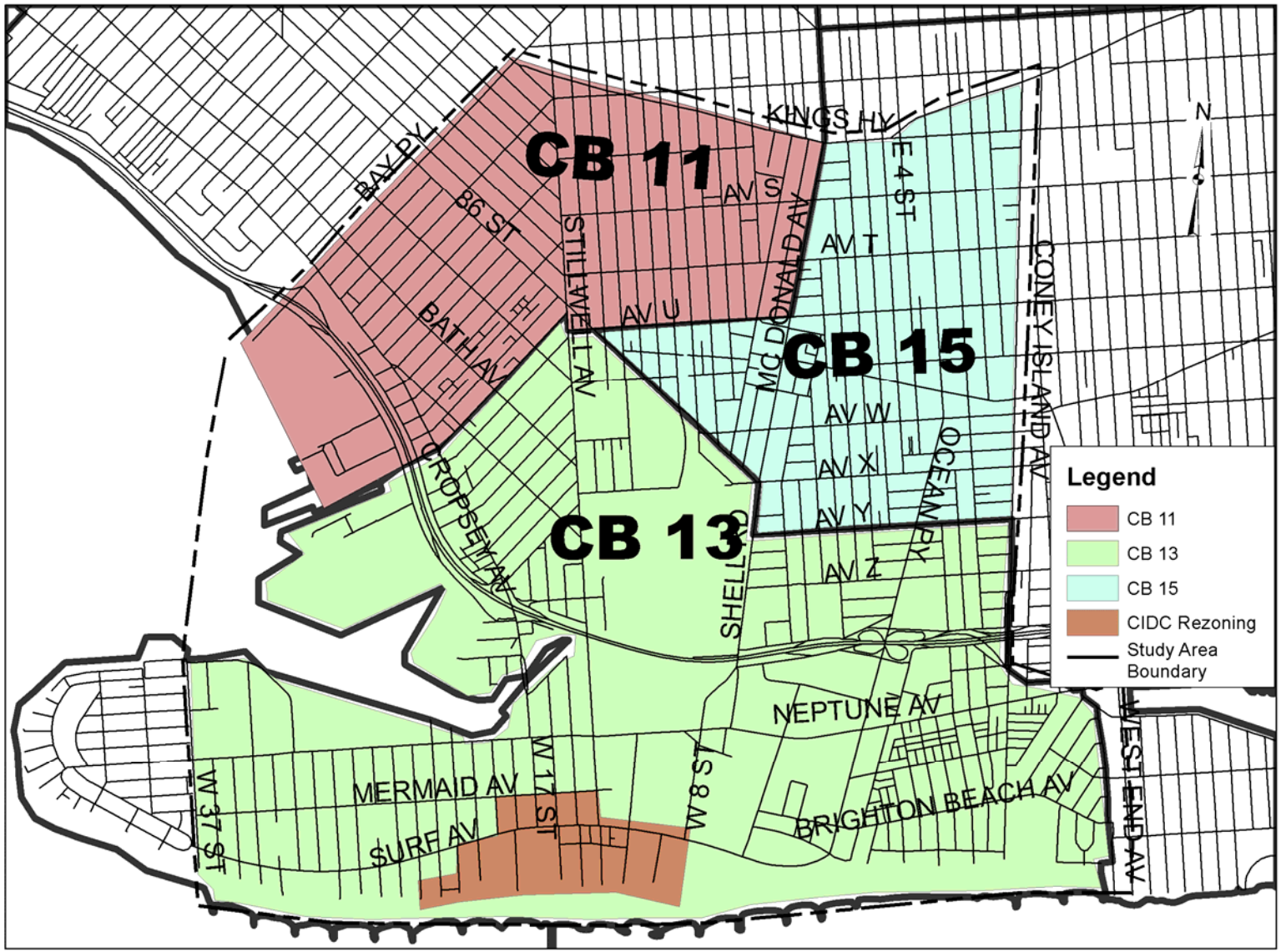
1.1 Introduction

The Coney Island/Gravesend Sustainable Development Transportation Study is a multi-modal transportation and planning study that was initiated in response to community concerns about development trends and the resultant negative externalities (such as increased congestion and changes to the neighborhood character). The purpose of the study is to assess current and future land use changes and transportation conditions in a sustainable development framework. From a transportation-centered perspective a sustainable development process occurs in a manner where the transportation system maintains its ability to serve communities in safe and environmentally friendly ways. The study complements the regional multi-modal transportation study, the Southern Brooklyn Transportation Investment Study, that was conducted by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC); it also relied on the NYMTC staff and the NYBPM to model and to evaluate development options. The application of NYMTC's Best Practice Model in this effort was significant, both in terms of analysis and staff development. This tool was used in conjunction with New York City's City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) methodology. The Technical Memorandum No. 1 documented the existing conditions (2002) and was released in 2004. Technical Memorandum No. 2 analyzes future conditions (2015 and 2025) with recommendations.

The study area includes all or portions of Coney Island, Brighton Beach, and Gravesend; and covers parts of Community Boards 11, 13, and 15. The boundaries are Coney Island Avenue to the northeast and West End Avenue to the southeast, Riegelmann Boardwalk to the south, West 37th Street to the southwest and Bay Parkway to the northwest, and Kings Highway to the north. Figure 1-1 shows its boundaries and community boards.

Two of the communities in the study area (Coney Island and Brighton Beach) are southern Brooklyn's legendary communities, being destination points for the beach and other recreational and entertainment purposes for generations. All three communities have diverse populations and neighborhood characteristics. Gravesend primarily has one-and two-

Figure 1-1: Study Area Boundary & Community Boards



family homes with pockets of high-rise multi-family dwellings; while Coney Island and Brighton Beach are beachfront communities that primarily have multi-family dwellings and pockets of two- and three-family homes. Coney Island is one of New York City's major summer destinations that attract millions of visitors each year. It is especially attractive because it is home to an amusement park, the New York Aquarium, Keyspan Park (Steeplechase Park), Nathan's (home of the famous hot dog), and the beach.

All three communities that make up the study area are experiencing growth and revitalization or have the potential for further development. New commercial, residential, and recreational developments are changing the economic and social makeup of these communities. Three relatively recent major developments in these communities are Home Depot (located in Gravesend) built in 2000, Keyspan Park (located in Coney Island) built in 2001, and Oceana, a large residential development (located in Brighton Beach), completed in 2005. New developments, such as these increase vehicular and pedestrian traffic adding pressure to the existing traffic and transportation system, creating the need to develop measures to alleviate current and future congestion.

Based on the concept of sustainable development, the Coney Island/Gravesend Sustainable Development Transportation Study examined the existing and future land use, demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, traffic and transportation conditions in the study area to identify immediate and long-term travel demand. The study involved significant community participation in an effort to support the vision of community stakeholders.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

As a sustainable development study, the study's goal is to provide a framework to facilitate the development of transportation improvement measures that safely accommodate future travel needs (including those generated by new developments and economic growth), thereby satisfying future travel demand without negative environmental consequences. Also, to develop proposals that expand transportation alternatives, improve travel conditions, air quality, preserve and help to restore local economic and social vitality. The study's main objectives therefore are:

- To examine the spatial distribution and intensity of land uses and the resultant derived demand for travel.
- To identify the travel and traffic characteristics and assess the existing and future traffic conditions.
- To develop and test land use/transportation scenarios.
- To recommend improvement measures aimed at reducing vehicular congestion, improving safety for all users (vehicular, bicycles, and pedestrian) and increasing the use of public transit or alternative modes.
- To generate the recommendation and improvements measures the study examined, the following subject areas:
  a. Demographics
  b. Land use and Zoning
  c. Traffic and Transportation
  d. Accident and Safety
  e. Parking, and
  f. Public Transportation