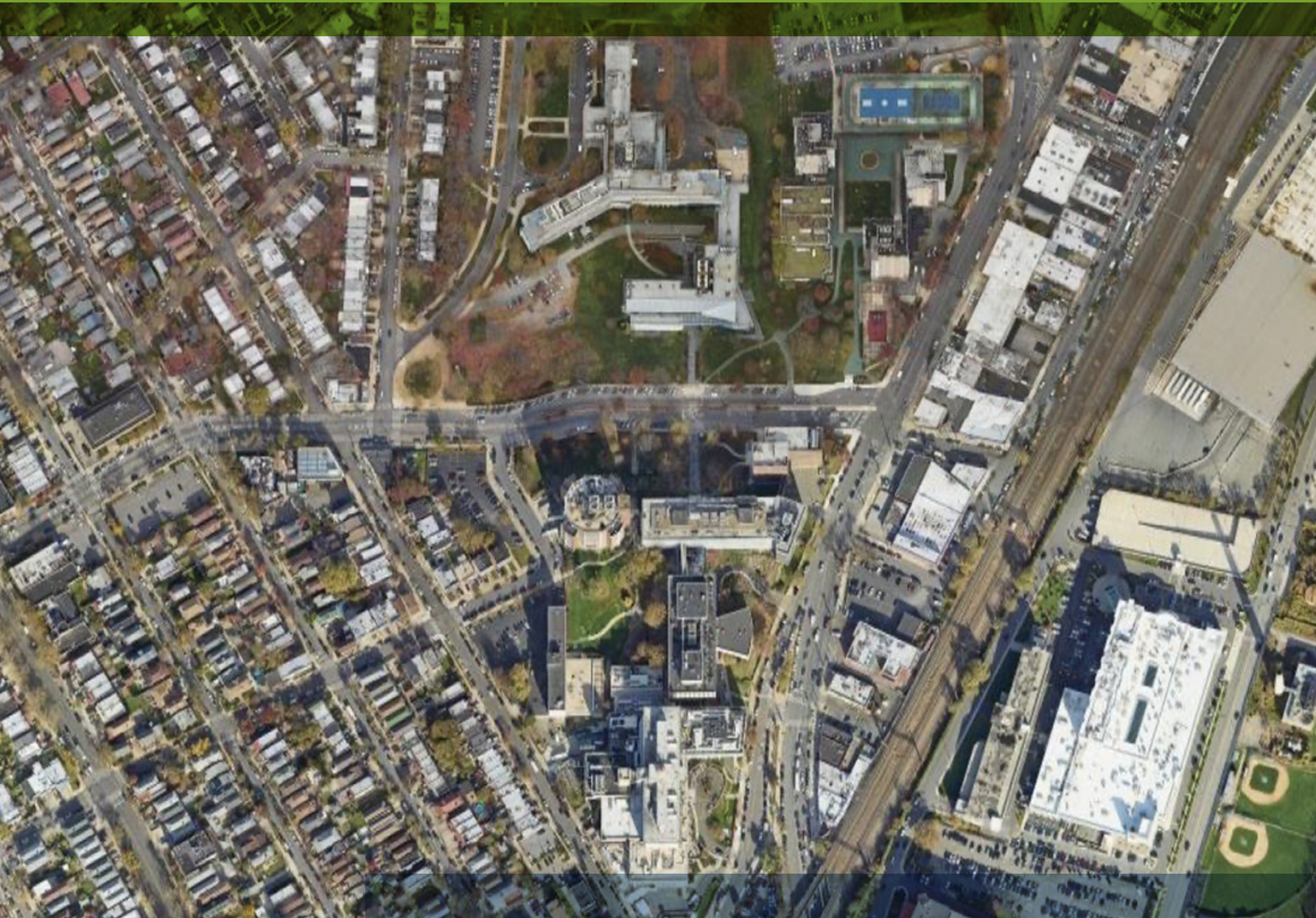




New York

# REIMAGINING MONTEFIORE EINSTEIN-MORRIS PARK AS A TRANSIT-CONNECTED CAMPUS

Bronx, New York



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MONTEFIORE HEALTH SYSTEM

ON THE COVER: An aerial view of the Montefiore campus.  
(Google Earth)



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ULI New York would like to thank the leaders of Montefiore Einstein Health System for convening this Technical Assistance Panel to make recommendations on the future of real estate and land use on the health system's campus. Specifically, ULI would like to thank Ruben Diaz, Jr, senior vice president of strategic initiatives, Tina Macica, associate vice president for design and construction, Edward Pfleging, senior vice president—facilities and real estate, and Alan Suna, Montefiore trustee, for their work leading up to and during the study.

ULI would also like to thank the stakeholders who shared their insights and perspectives with the panelists. Representing staff of the health system, the public sector, business owners, and neighborhood leaders, these stakeholder insights were critical to the study and the panel's associated discovery process.



STEVEN LEE



The new Metro-North station is currently under construction and anticipated to open in 2027.

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Students walking between buildings on the Montefiore campus.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Montefiore Health System has been a significant and steadfast anchor for the Bronx Morris Park neighborhood for decades. Situated alongside, but without access to the Metro-North rail line, the Montefiore Health System (Montefiore) Morris Park campus is an impressive collection of buildings and open space and provides critical healthcare services to the community, jobs for residents in the area, and educational opportunities for those seeking a career in health care and research. The somewhat isolated nature of this campus and surrounding neighborhood is about to change, however, with the anticipated 2027 opening of a train station at the intersection of the rail line with Morris Park Avenue. The new station is expected to spark additional commercial and residential development in the area, bringing new residents attracted by proximate train access, businesses seeking new or expansion space, employees for the new businesses, and visitors who will be able to access the neighborhood and healthcare system's services more easily.

Recognizing the impacts the new train station will have on the campus and the surrounding neighborhood, Montefiore's leadership is preparing to reshape its built environment to capitalize on this once-in-a-generation infrastructure investment. To leverage this opportunity, Montefiore has embarked on a new master planning process and invited the Urban Land Institute–New York District Council (ULI) to conduct a technical assistance panel (TAP or panel) to study the current campus and make recommendations for the future of the system's built environment at Morris Park.

More specifically, Montefiore's questions to the ULI panel centered around economic development opportunities adjacent to the campus, improved pedestrian connections and circulation across the campus, zoning modification suggestions to better support new development on campus and on adjacent sites, and planning recommendations to facilitate movement between the new station and the campus.

## Identity, Activation, and Connectivity

In pursuit of answers to Montefiore's questions, the panel first identified a framework that needs to be in place to support any improvements to the system's campus.

**Refine Montefiore's identity and branding.** Montefiore has an excellent reputation in the community, yet it is unclear where the campus begins or ends or, following recent acquisitions, which buildings are part of the system's network. The campus needs branding assistance and wayfinding signage, featuring this brand, is needed at the

gateways to campus, along the sidewalks, at buildings, and more. Branded signage will also be critical at the train station to help guide transit riders to the campus.

**Increase campus activations.** The campus is marked by open spaces that help differentiate Montefiore from other urban healthcare campuses. At the same time, these open spaces are scattered, disconnected, and underused. While quiet spaces are often needed, particularly for patients or students studying, activation in other areas would create a more engaging environment and help welcome the surrounding community to use and enjoy the campus.

**Improve connectivity.** Montefiore's leadership identified connectivity, particularly for pedestrians, as an area for improvement. The new train station will better connect the campus to other stops along the Metro-North line. Once at the station, careful attention will be needed to connect transit riders to the campus and, once on campus, to the various buildings they plan to visit.

## Development Recommendations

The panel's recommendations for development, both new structures and repositioning or renovating existing structures, centered around three primary geographies on campus: the eastern gateway adjacent to the new train station, the central campus node along Morris Park Avenue, and the western gateway at the intersection of Morris Park and Tenbroek avenues. Each of these nodes provides unique opportunities for Montefiore and deserves specific attention.

**Create an eastern gateway at the station plaza.** The addition of the train station creates a new front door to the campus and presents compelling opportunities to use the space to create a sense of arrival to the campus.

- The station plaza, as currently designed, could use improvement and expansion, leveraging this opportunity to create a broader space that would facilitate movement to and from the train and create a vibrant and memorable public space marked by a wide array of events and community gatherings.
- This gateway could be further supported through the addition of new mixed-use buildings on the parcels directly north and south of the plaza. Montefiore is encouraged to seek a development partner to gain control of these sites and to redevelop both into uses that would complement the health system and serve the community.
- The parcels that mark the entrance to the campus on either side of Morris Park Avenue also deserve attention. To the north, the open space could be better leveraged as a multi-story building that could house medical or other offices above ground-floor retail. On the south, the current brick building facade creates an imposing wall for pedestrians walking alongside. A more transparent facade, creating visual interest for those passing by, would be a welcome update at this important campus entrance.

**Create a central nexus along Morris Park Avenue.** As the central spine of the campus, this highly visible corridor has potential for greater uses.

- The panel identified several sites that, if redeveloped, could help transform Montefiore's suburban-style campus into the urban center its leadership envisions.
- The open space across campus is an asset to both preserve and leverage. Much of the current open space can be characterized as underutilized passive lawn areas. By repositioning some of the existing open spaces as a blend of internal- and external-facing courtyards, lawns, and gardens, users from the university and community beyond can find spaces suited to their needs. New wayfinding will be needed to assist people in finding these spaces and inviting their

use. Further, active ground floor uses and robust foot traffic will help activate these open spaces.

- Morris Park Avenue should also be redesigned. As the central corridor within the campus, cars must be accommodated, but by reconfiguring lanes and parking, expansive and shaded sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and a planted median with bioswales could be added. Benefits include slowing traffic, improving non-vehicular access to and through campus, and creating opportunities to add tree canopy and green infrastructure to mitigate localized flooding.

**Create a western gateway to transition from the neighborhood onto the campus.** The western side of the campus is largely surrounded by residential uses.

As such, this area warrants development attention that employs a community development approach and supports Montefiore's needs. Replacing the current low-rise buildings with mixed-use, mid-rise buildings would provide both space for office and administrative uses for Montefiore while reserving the ground floor for uses that would serve the surrounding community, such as an urgent care clinic.

## Zoning Updates

The City of New York is currently seeking zoning modifications to the area surrounding the train station, which may open the door for Montefiore leadership to suggest revisions that would support the improvements contemplated by the panel and Montefiore.

The addition of a train station next to the Montefiore campus presents exciting opportunities for the health system and the surrounding neighborhood. While development around this new station will take time, Montefiore should act now, launch its master planning efforts to guide future development on campus and maximize current potential development opportunities on key sites adjacent to and on campus. Montefiore's identity, campus activation, and connections to and around campus should be factored into these development and planning decisions. With these plans in place, Montefiore can continue to grow and expand intentionally, serve the community responsibly, and improve the quality of life on campus for all who visit, work, or seek care there.

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

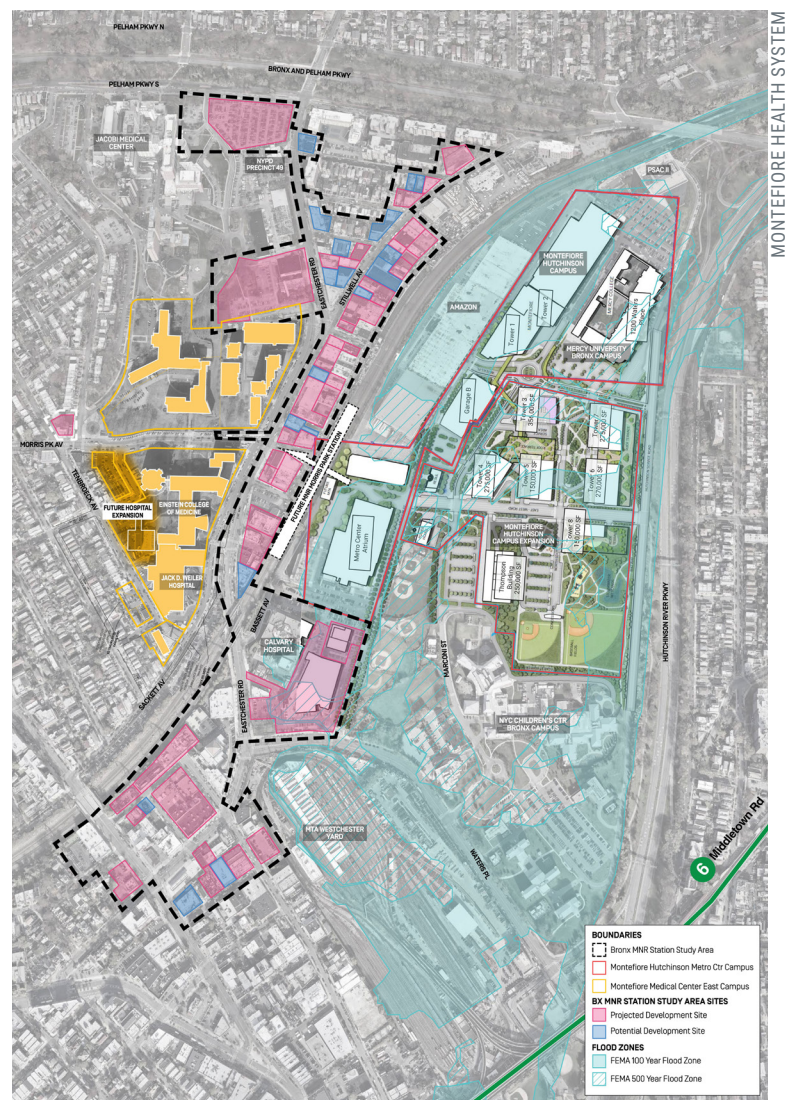
Over the course of its 140-year history, the Montefiore Einstein East Campus in Morris Park, Bronx, has expanded with acquisitions, new building construction, and additional leased space as opportunities or needs arose. The result is a healthcare campus that is spread out across a suburban-style landscape, marked by buildings and spaces that feel separate, disjointed, and only loosely connected. Throughout the course of its history and these campus additions, Montefiore has maintained its reputation in the community as a good healthcare provider, steadfast employer, and a responsible community member.

Today the Montefiore East Campus, the specific area of study for this technical assistance panel, includes the following principal facilities:

- The Jack D. Weiler Hospital, a 421-room private hospital, state-designated stroke center, and perinatal and family care center.
- The Albert Einstein College of Medicine, which was an academic partner for decades and was acquired from Yeshiva University in 2015.
- Montefiore Medical Park, which includes ambulatory care facilities, clinical practices, and administrative offices.

Not included in the study was an additional 450,000 square feet of leased space housing an ambulatory care center, faculty practices, and office space. This space is leased from Simone Development Corporation and is part of the 42-acre Hutchinson Metro Center on the east side of the Metro-North rail line. Simone has an additional 1.8 million additional square feet in the planning stages for the Hutchinson Metro Center.

The addition of four new Metro-North stations in the Bronx, one of which will be the much-needed Morris Park station along the eastern edge of the campus, represents a significant public investment in the area. Concurrent with the development of the station, the City of New York is rezoning the area to support the anticipated additional transit-oriented development likely to



The main campus of the Montefiore Health System is bisected by Morris Park Avenue, and the Medical Center sits to the south and east of the Metro-North rail line.

take shape along Eastchester Road and proximate to the new station.

### TAP Scope and Questions

As Montefiore launches its master planning process, the health system's leadership asked ULI to convene a TAP to examine the following scenarios:

- Potential urban planning and economic development solutions adjacent to the station that support economic growth and expanded community services regionally.
- The potential for walkable and intuitive pedestrian connections for patients, providers, researchers, students, and the community between the Montefiore Einstein properties and the train station.

The specific questions posed by Montefiore to the ULI panel included the following:

- What zoning would best serve the train station district and complement and connect the Montefiore Einstein campus and Hutchinson Metro Center campus? What mix of retail, commercial, and residential development would best complement Montefiore Einstein, support the transportation hub, and help create a healthy, thriving community?
- How can pedestrian circulation in the area between the proposed train station, the Montefiore Einstein campus, and the Hutchinson Metro Center campus be improved to increase the level of safety and deliver a more pleasant experience with amenities?
- What strategies and opportunities could be employed to increase circulation between the campuses and the train station?

### New Morris Park Station

Already under construction, the forthcoming Morris Park Metro-North Station (opening in 2027) will be located at the intersection of Morris Park and Bassett avenues, creating proximate access (within 0.25 miles) for the entire Montefiore campus and the Hutchinson Metro Center.

Morris Park is one of four new Bronx stations that will connect the East Bronx with Penn Station in Manhattan

as well as points beyond in Westchester County and Connecticut. The new station will support Montefiore's pursuit of several organizational goals, including improving patient access, attracting more privately insured patients, drawing additional top-tier talent to campus, and improving the patient and visitor experience. With an anticipated pedestrian flow of 3,000 to 4,000 people a day, the new station is expected to stimulate growth and development in the neighborhood, expanding job and housing opportunities.

### NYC Department of City Planning Rezoning

The New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) has recognized the opportunities that the addition of these new train stations will create in the surrounding neighborhoods and is proposing several rezoning measures to support transit-oriented development. The measures are intended to promote additional housing development, support the addition of new businesses, which would come with employment opportunities, create a lively and appealing streetscape, and create a cohesive pedestrian and public realm.

In order to achieve these objectives, DCP has proposed rezoning areas around the new stations (currently in the public review process), including 18 blocks that surround the new Morris Park Station on Eastchester Road between Pelham Parkway and Williamsbridge Road.

### Simone Development Corporation Plan

Simone Development Corporation's Hutchinson Metro Center currently consists of four buildings housing 1.4 million square feet of office, medical, retail, and hotel uses. Proposed westward expansion of the Hutchinson Metro Center, also anticipated to finish in 2027, will add 1.8 million square feet of new space, including LEED-certified medical research and office space, a second hotel, retail, restaurants, and 250 residential units for employees, students, and researchers working at Hutchinson Metro Center. Expansion plans also include 3,500 new parking spaces and more than ten acres of green open space.





The panel toured the campus, interviewed stakeholders, and spent time deliberating a set of recommendations that will help create a more connected and inviting Montefiore campus.

## Montefiore's Strategic Goals

The strategic goals of the Montefiore Einstein Health System, established to guide its planning process, informed the panel's approach to this study. The goals include:

- Expanding access to care for all patients.
- Recruiting and cultivating top talent (staff, faculty, and medical school students).
- Attracting more privately insured patients from surrounding areas, such as Westchester, to support a more financially resilient system.
- Integrating care across the health system and its centers, providers, and disciplines.
- Developing new and expanding existing innovative programs.
- Enhancing patient and visitor experiences.
- Positively benefiting the wider community and supporting the overall health and well-being of neighborhood residents.

## A Historic Opportunity

According to the panel's estimates, the forthcoming station development, the zoning updates from DCP, the expansion of the Hutchinson Metro Center, and Montefiore's expansion have the potential to add six to nine million square feet of new real estate development to the area, attract 6,000 new residents, and create an estimated 15,000 new jobs around the station. This is an exciting time for Montefiore and the Morris Park neighborhood as these investments have the potential to catalyze new development that could serve both the community and the healthcare system. Recognizing this unique opportunity, Montefiore has embarked on a path to re-imagine its campus, improving the buildings and surroundings to the benefit of its patients, employees, and visitors.

# GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The panel toured the study area and interviewed a wide variety of stakeholders, including leaders from Montefiore, the public sector, the business community, and the neighborhood. The information gathered and the panel's observations fell into three primary categories: identity, activation, and connections. Within each category, the panel identified assets currently in place for Montefiore, as well as challenges and existing barriers that are limiting the campus from reaching its full potential. As the panel formulated its recommendations, it used these three characteristics as a guiding framework and the lens through which it recommended potential development opportunities, modifications to the campus's urban design, and improvements to movement and circulation across and around the campus.

## Identity

**Assets.** Montefiore has earned its great reputation and has a positive identity within the Bronx. The health system is known for providing excellent care, and its mission resonates with the community. Montefiore is considered to be a good employer and continues to be a responsible Bronx community member. Stakeholders also noted that while the health system's relationship with the community was positive, its community engagement activities could be improved by increased frequency.

**Challenges.** There are also challenges related to the health system's identity. Recent acquisitions have exacerbated issues caused by the lack of a cohesive campus brand, making it difficult for visitors to understand which buildings or services are affiliated with which entity. The campus lacks adequate signage, wayfinding, well-designed outdoor spaces, and a clear delineation of where the Montefiore campus begins and ends. The result is a confusing and seemingly sprawling campus marked by disparate, disjointed spaces.

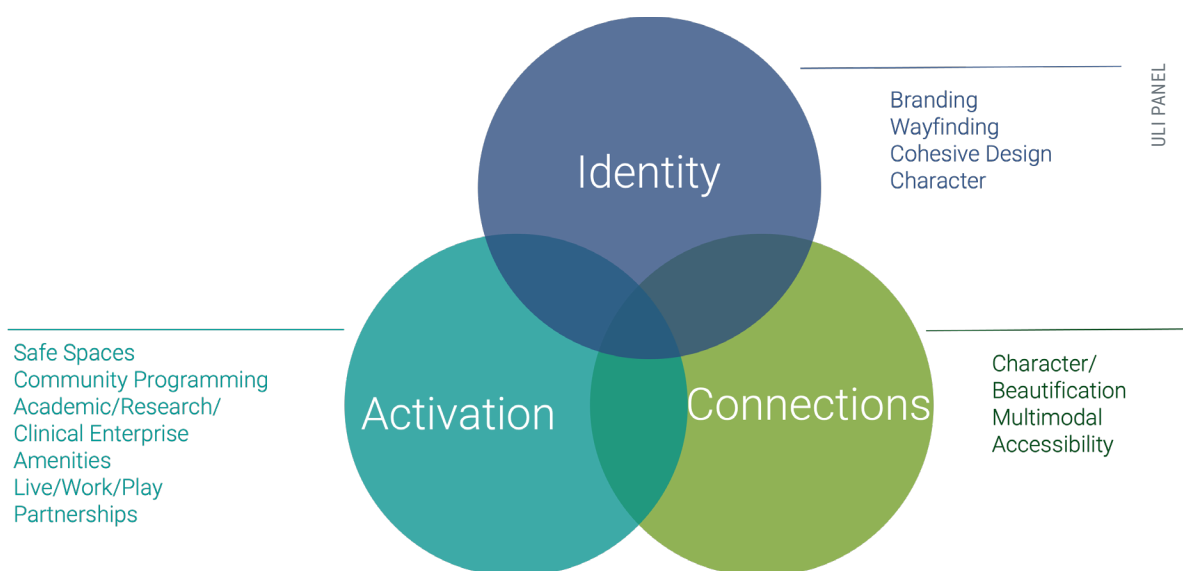
**Design constraints.** The current positioning of the buildings also creates challenges for visitors. The buildings are often inwardly focused, set back from the sidewalk, and feature materials or walls that create visual barriers to the activity inside, all of which combine to create a rather unwelcoming and unengaging pedestrian experience across campus.

## Activation

**Assets.** Stakeholders noted that the Montefiore campus is alive with nodes of activity scattered across the campus. The open space and grassy lawns, unusual for an urban medical campus, invite people to sit and relax or stretch their legs and play. (These open grassy areas were also noted as an asset that attracted employees and students to Montefiore.) It is expected that the new train station will spark additional development across the neighborhood, increasing activation generally through the addition of more jobs, retail opportunities, and economic activity.

**Challenges.** At the same time, Montefiore faces challenges in its activations and amenities. The current nodes of activity are scattered and unconnected. Stakeholders noted that the area lacks convenient food and retail options.

**Design constraints.** The idea of a public plaza on the west side of the new train station sparked some stakeholder concerns. While the plaza would help activate the area and welcome visitors and employees to the campus, questions arose about management of the plaza, specifically maintenance and security responsibilities.



The panel identified the three areas of focus that should serve as guiding principles for Montefiore's upcoming campus development. The three framing ideas intersect to create an experience on campus that is enjoyable and easy to navigate.

## Connectivity

**Assets.** The new train station will be a tremendous asset to Montefiore, connecting more employees, students, and patients to the health system and expanding the reach of its potential patient base. The station will also help position Montefiore's neighborhood as a desirable and convenient place to live.

**Challenges.** Connectivity to and within the campus is challenging today by car, bicycle, or on foot. Some stakeholders worried that the new station and the expected increase in neighborhood density will increase traffic congestion and parking demands—two challenges already present today. The area also lacks an effective bike and pedestrian network, which adds to campus access issues. Montefiore's location vis-à-vis Manhattan is also challenging in that the campus is difficult to access directly from Manhattan, which also impacts the system's ability to attract talent.

**Design constraints.** The rail corridor, while soon providing key connectivity and access at the new station, does present a significant barrier in moving from the campus to points east. The sprawling nature of the current campus configuration is also a design constraint as is the arterial nature of Eastchester Avenue.

Using this framework as a basis for its recommendations, the panel shifted to design thinking, considering how to best transition the campus away from its current suburban, auto-centric design to a transit-oriented urban campus that is better suited for Morris Park today and well suited for the Morris Park of tomorrow when the train station is complete.

# DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the identity, activation, and connectivity of the campus today and to set it on a path toward maximizing the opportunities associated with the forthcoming train station, the panel organized its recommendations geographically around an eastern gateway, a western gateway, and a center of activity along Morris Park Avenue in the center of campus.

Morris Park Avenue will soon become the heart of the campus as a center of activity—the new crossroads for pedestrians accessing the train and the destinations beyond. A western gateway of sorts also exists and holds potential for much greater use.

## Eastern Gateway

With the addition of the new Metro-North station, a new eastern gateway to the campus will be created at the station's associated pedestrian plaza. The addition of the station is expected to catalyze both residential and

commercial development in the immediate surroundings, and new retail opportunities could soon benefit from the influx of commuters in addition to the residents calling the area home. This eastern gateway becomes the new front door to the campus for transit riders.

## A More Ambitious Plaza

The plaza design proposed for the Morris Park Station is a good start. Transit riders exiting the train will have easy and direct access to the Montefiore campus, Hutchinson Metro Center, and nearby bus and shuttle stops. There is, however,



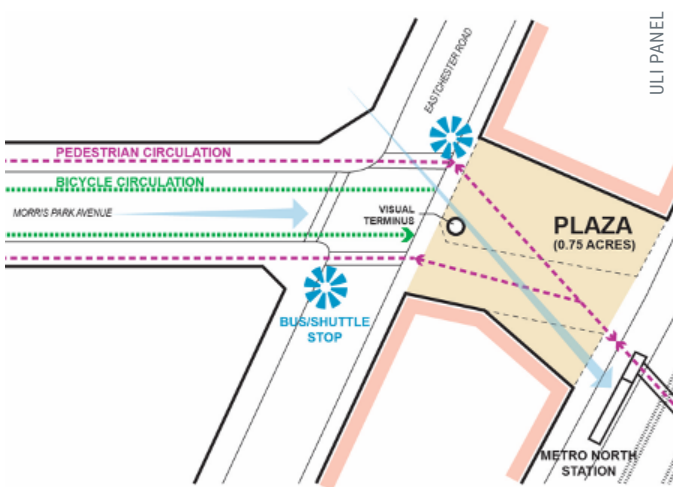
The Montefiore main campus divides into three sections. The eastern gateway welcomes visitors from the train station. The western gateway connects the campus to the neighborhood beyond. In the center, the Morris Park Avenue corridor forms the central spine of the campus and connects people north and south, deeper into the campus.



greater potential for this plaza than the current design templates.

**Improve connectivity.** The right of way at the Morris Avenue terminus is generous and could provide a wide plaza well suited for easy pedestrian flow to and from the train as well as future community gatherings. (As proposed, the narrow plaza might instead create a choke point at the approach to the train station.) A larger plaza would better facilitate transfers between bus and shuttle services cross-circulating at the station while increasing visibility to the station and to the campus. With some additional planning and design refinement, the nearly 0.75-acre site could become a true community gathering space, with plantings, seating, public art, and flexible open spaces for community events.

**Enhance activation potential.** There is a compelling case to be made for Montefiore assuming responsibility for the maintenance and programming of the plaza. By controlling the plaza—providing security, maintenance, and programming—the health system could activate the space with community amenities like a farmer’s market, performances, festivals, and food trucks. Successful activation of the plaza in the near term will benefit current residents, attract new residential interest in the neighborhood, and could catalyze further development in the area.



The new station plaza at the eastern gateway to the campus could better leverage the full 0.75 acres to become more than a pedestrian corridor to the train. By using the full expanse of the site, the plaza space can facilitate train passenger movement and also provide ample space for community gatherings and more.

## CASE STUDIES

### Wynkoop Plaza

Situated outside of multimodal transit hub Denver Union Station, Wynkoop Plaza is a 30,000 square foot public space that is managed and maintained by the Regional Transportation District and Wynkoop Plaza Events LLC, an affiliate of the Downtown Denver Partnership. The plaza has been furnished with computer programmed fountains, tables and chairs, shade trees, and seasonal plantings. Opened in 2014, the plaza hosts farmers markets and outdoor performances as well as private special events.



### Hassalo on Eighth

A mixed-use project in Portland, Oregon, close to light rail and streetcar service, Hassalo on Eighth was jointly developed by American Assets Trust, GBD Architects, and Place Studio landscape architects. The 657 apartment units are housed in three buildings, and 44,000 square feet of retail surround a plaza with a glass pavilion, trees, and plantings to assist with stormwater management. Opened in 2015, Hassalo on Eighth replaced surface parking with underground parking, pedestrian circulation, and 1,200 bicycle parking spaces, among many other bicycle amenities.



## Eastern Campus Entrance

The eastern entrance to the campus proper, the intersection of Eastchester and Morris Park Avenue, provides another compelling opportunity for meaningful transformation. Entering the Montefiore campus from the new train station



BRANDYWINE REALTY TRUST

The northwest quadrant of the Eastchester and Morris Park Avenue intersection would be a fitting site for a new anchor development with a visible groundfloor use.



ALAN SCHINDLER, COURTESY OF CETRAUDDY ARCHITECTURE

The brick walls of the Belfer building on the southwest quadrant of the Eastchester and Morris Park Avenue intersection would be much more welcoming and engaging if the groundfloor was more transparent.

and plaza, pedestrians should experience a sense of arrival, knowing they have reached the Montefiore Health System campus.

**Improve connectivity.** At this eastern gateway, connectivity takes the form of assisting passengers exiting the train station and plaza in finding the campus beyond. Branded signage and wayfinding will be important right off the train and should be repeated at the intersection with Eastchester. The design of the northwest and southwest quadrants of this intersection can also aid connectivity and wayfinding.

Signage on the northwest quadrant's open space can support a sense of arrival. On the southwest quadrant, the Belfer Institute's building is wrapped in brick with windows starting well above pedestrian height; this creates a visually impenetrable brick wall along the sidewalk. Modifying the first floor to include more transparent materials, like floor-to-ceiling windows, will allow passersby to see the activity within, which can also help connect people to the building and campus.

**Enhance activation.** Activation at this eastern entrance likely takes two forms: passive activation gained through transparent building walls on the Belfer building; and more active uses in the open space on the northwest quadrant, which contains a sidewalk, stairs, and ample green space. Further activation could take the form of a new mixed-use building at this northern site, potentially containing research facilities, housing, and ground-floor retail clearly visible from the surrounding sidewalks. Open vistas, transparency, and visual connection are needed throughout the campus and are particularly important at this intersection to signify this eastern campus gateway.

## Plaza Sites (north and south)

The sites flanking the station plaza are under private control. While Montefiore is unlikely to purchase these two sites directly, the panel encourages the health system to consider a potential joint development opportunity with a private developer. Montefiore's reputation in the community, its status as an institutional anchor, and its ability to drive property values should prove attractive to potential development partners. Together with the right partner,



## CASE STUDY

## The Bulletin Building at Schuylkill Yards

One useful reference point is Schuylkill Yards in Philadelphia. In this project Drexel University partnered with private developer Brandywine Realty Trust to build a vertically mixed use building across from 30th Street Station. Opened in 2021, the Bulletin Building incorporates laboratory and office space in a five-story structure designed by KieranTimberlake. The ground floor features 10,000 square feet of new retail space. The building fronts the new 1.3-acre Drexel Square park, designed by West 8 and SHoP Architects, an activated community gathering space with an elliptical lawn, plantings, and public use furnishings such as tables, chairs, and umbrellas.



STEVEN LEE

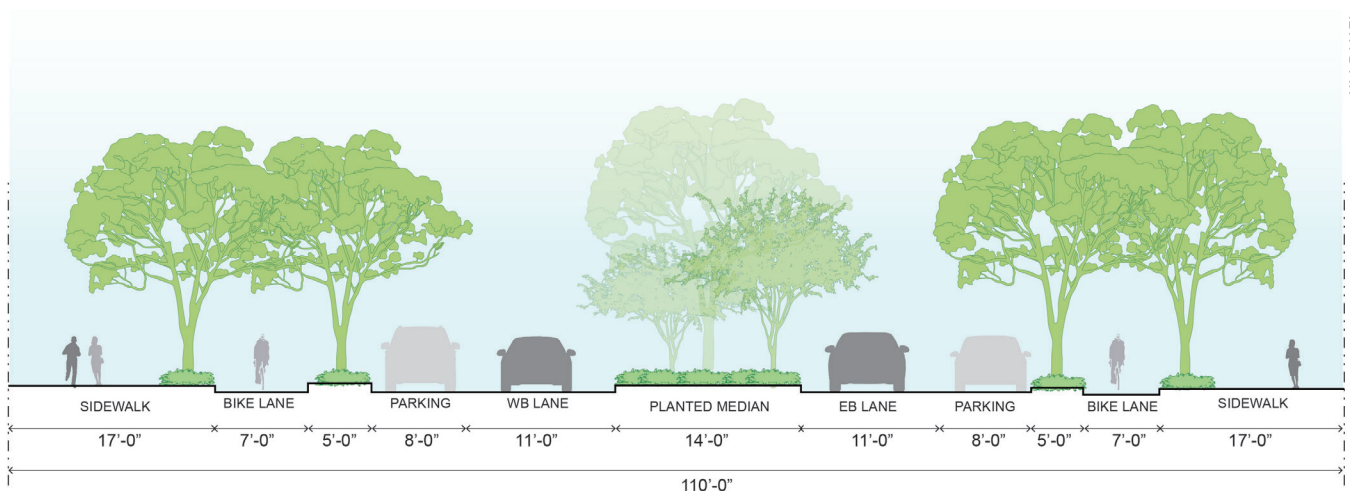
Montefiore can bring new projects to these sites that benefit the neighborhood and the medical campus. These sites help establish the front door to the campus and, with the addition of the station and the rezoning occurring in the neighborhood, these sites will be of increasing interest to other developers. Time is of the essence.

**Enhance activation.** The proposed zoning on these sites would encourage parcel assembly (combining smaller parcels into larger sites) and participation in open space uses, which could enhance the activation of the plaza. For instance, if the one-story commercial building on the corner became part of a larger assembled parcel, a portion of the new larger parcel could be dedicated to the open space facing the plaza, enlarging the public space in the process.

**Enhance identity.** As a joint developer on these sites, Montefiore could use the sites and buildings to enhance its brand and program the spaces to align with the health system's mission and financial priorities.

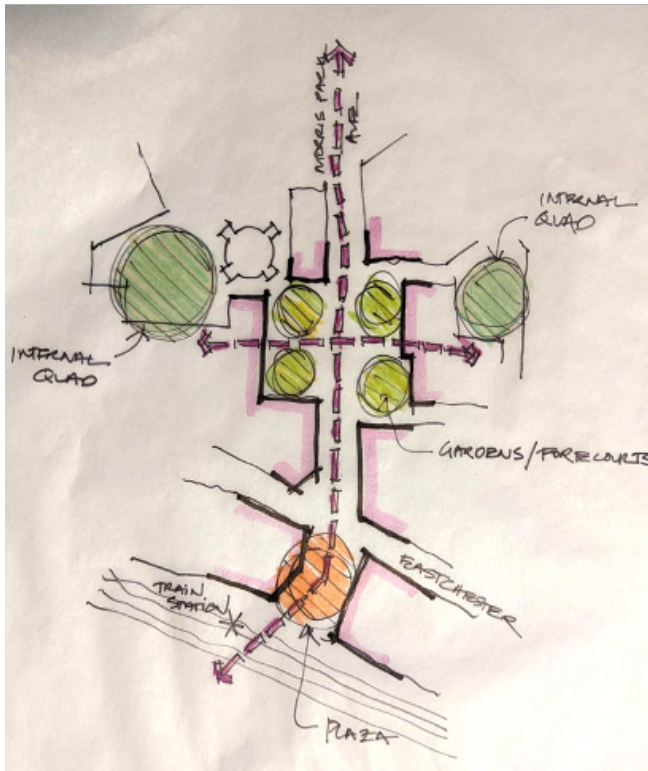
## Morris Park Avenue

The Morris Park Avenue corridor is the heart of the Montefiore campus. The buildings and open space that line the corridor define the campus—and can do a better job defining, activating, and connecting the campus.



ULI PANEL

The panel re-envisioned the Morris Park Avenue roadway, reducing the vehicular travel lanes to accommodate safer spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists. The revised roadway would also accommodate a planted median and additional street trees on the northern and southern edges.



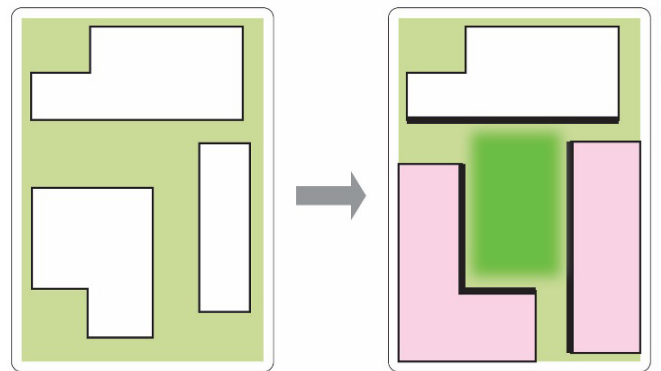
ULI PANEL

The center of campus, the intersection of Morris Park Avenue and the central pedestrian crossing, forms a core around which open space can radiate, inviting visitors and community members to enjoy the active park setting at the center or the quieter courtyard spaces formed by the repositioned buildings.



TCL

A more active and public space in the center of the campus could provide community gathering space, casual park space, and a welcome break in the streetscape that is otherwise full of buildings.



ULI PANEL

Repositioning buildings closer to the sidewalk can create more purposeful open spaces in the center of a building grouping. These spaces, more protected from the activity along the street could provide patients, employees, and visitors with welcome respite.

## CASE STUDY Memphis Medical District

To better serve its population of 40,000 employees and 10,000 residents, community development corporation Memphis Medical District Collaborative (a collaboration of hospital and medical school anchor institutions) established the Memphis Medical District as a health improvement district. The district's community development approach includes the creation of affordable housing, improved streetscapes, mixed-use development, place-based programs, and workforce development. Through these efforts, MMDC has revitalized a neighborhood that suffered from disinvestment for decades and established shared public spaces that promote community wellbeing.

## Potential Development Sites

With three to eight sites ripe for redevelopment, this central corridor is well-positioned to help define the Montefiore campus and assist with activation. These sites present a viable opportunity to transform Montefiore into an urban-style campus more fitting its surroundings and lead the health system's built environment into the future.

## Open Space

Residents, employees, and visitors appreciate the open space found across the Montefiore campus. To better serve the community, and the Montefiore community specifically, the health system is encouraged to rethink its open space, infusing intentionality into its placement, positioning buildings to create a purposefully-designed network of open spaces that will better serve Montefiore and the entire community. These include outwardly facing forecourts and gardens that



invite public use, and more inwardly facing courtyards that more directly serve hospital and university functions.

**Enhance connectivity.** By bringing new buildings close to the sidewalk, the building entrance is street-facing, closer to the sidewalk, and easier to access. The space created on the other side of the building is then protected from the street, traffic, and noise, and provides a more peaceful setting for use by hospital employees, students, visitors, and community members. The open spaces between the existing buildings and the potential development sites are also important to the campus as they provide compelling sites for connection deeper into the campus and to interior buildings.

**Build identity.** While the idea of one large park space or quad may seem appealing, the panel recommends Montefiore create four distinct, smaller-scale open public spaces that would act as gardens or courts in the heart of the campus along Morris Park Avenue (see the panel's sketch on page 20, upper left). These spaces, open to the public and terraced to accommodate the grade change, can create a sense of place and connect people to the campus by inviting them to use the space and feel welcome.

### Morris Park Avenue as Parkway

Designed for automotive traffic, Morris Park Avenue has potential to transform into a verdant parkway, following the tradition of the grand parkways that criss-cross the Bronx, better serving all transportation modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. The 110-foot right-of-way provided the panel with a wide canvas on which to carve out space for protected bike lanes, separate sidewalks, on-street parallel parking, a lane in each direction for vehicles, and a wide planted median. The median and the planted buffers separating the transportation uses can help soften the corridor, cool the environment through shade from trees and a lower urban heat island effect (from the reduction in impervious surfaces), and assist with stormwater capture during heavy rainfalls thereby mitigating flooding in low-lying areas directly to the east.

### Western Gateway

Located on the western edge of Montefiore's campus, at the intersections of Morris Park Avenue and Seminole and Tenbroek avenues, this area has the most potential for new community uses. At this gateway, Montefiore is encouraged





The panel identified three sites that could provide good redevelopment opportunities at the western gateway to campus.

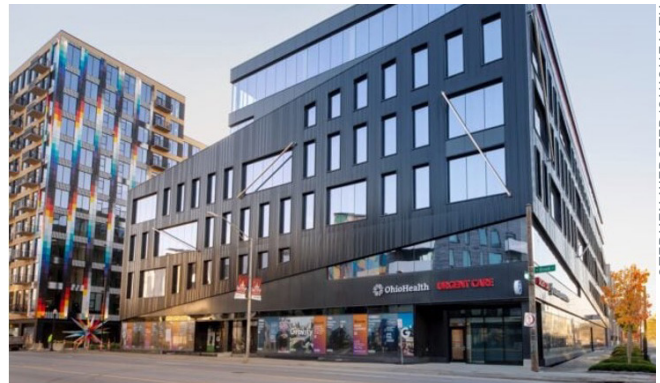
to define the entrance to the campus, use space to amplify the campus identity, and begin to connect people deeper into the health system's campus and resources beyond.

## Community-focused Development

At this western gateway, the panel recognized the proximity of the houses in the surrounding neighborhoods and recommends Montefiore consider leveraging potential development for community-focused uses. Three parcels, in particular, hold promise for Montefiore:

1. The parcel bordered by Morris Park Avenue on the south, Seminole on the east, and Tenbroek on the west;
2. The parcel bordered by Morris Park Avenue on the south, Seminole on the west, and the gated entrance to the campus on the north; and
3. The parcel bordered by Morris Park Avenue on the north, Newport Avenue on the east, Tenbroek on the west.

Put to higher and better use as mixed-use, mid-rise development sites, these parcels would work well as locations for an urgent care clinic, neighborhood community center, or other community-focused use topped by office space, particularly office space for Montefiore functions that do not require a central location on campus.



The OhioHealth primary care and urgent care services building is a good example of potential redevelopment at the western gateway that could include multi-story mixed use buildings featuring a community space on the ground floor.

## St. Barnabas Wellness Care and Affordable Housing

Located in the Belmont neighborhood of the Bronx, St. Barnabas Hospital partnered with L+M and Hornig Capital Partners to develop a two-site mixed-use project. St. Barnabas Wellness Care and Affordable Housing is a 450,000 square foot complex that includes 314 units of affordable housing and 95 units for formerly unhoused families. St. Barnabas leases 57,000 square feet for an ambulatory care center, primary care offices, and a wellness center to that supports community health with a fitness center, culinary medicine center, and rooftop farm.

## Value Capture Financing

Value capture financing is a public financing mechanism that leverages a share of the increase in property values created by the addition of public infrastructure, including transit. For Montefiore, the panel considered the possibility of utilizing value capture financing for future development on the campus and identified three tools in particular that might prove beneficial.

- A district assessment could be applied to property owners within a geographic area to fund improvements in that same geography.
- A public-private development approach could be used to generate funds from the sale of the land for development

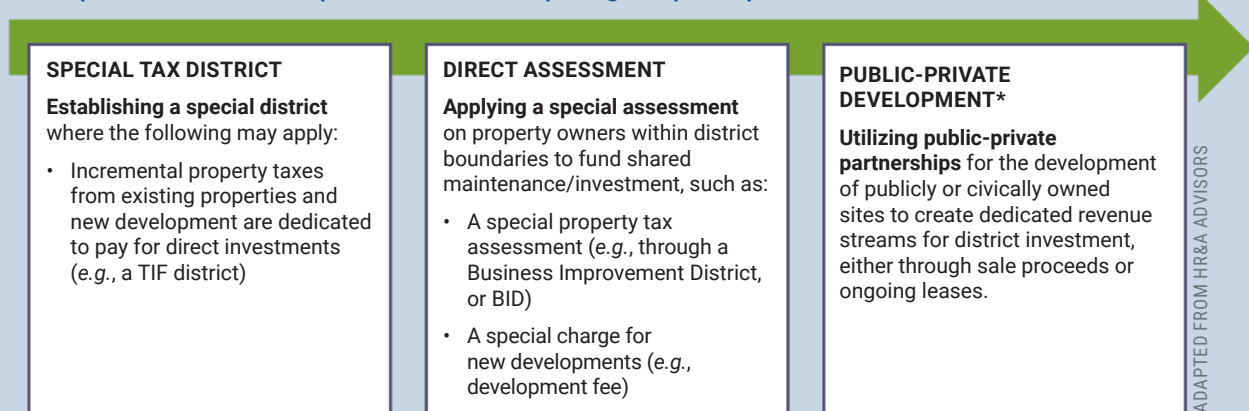
or from the lease proceeds generated by the resulting development.

- An expanded or new Business Improvement District (BID) could capture revenue from property tax appreciation or through the proceeds generated from fees paid by a developer wishing to exceed certain zoning thresholds on a site within the BID's footprint.

Alternatively, Montefiore, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), or a private development partner could potentially acquire critical properties and dedicate future revenue from those properties to district investments, maintenance, and programming activities.

## Mechanisms for Capture

Value capture can take multiple forms, each requiring unique implementation actions:

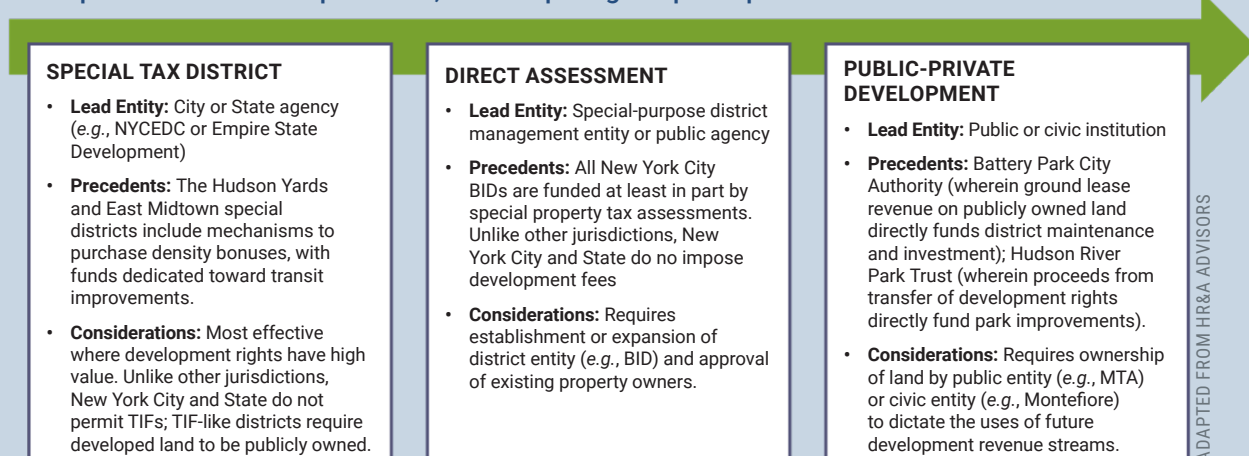


\* Public-private development describes partnerships in which a public or civic institution and private developer jointly deliver a project, typically with the public or civic institution contributing land and the private developer performing buildout, with ongoing proceeds from the development being shared among the parties.

ADAPTED FROM HR&A ADVISORS

## Required Actions

Value capture can take multiple forms, each requiring unique implementation actions:



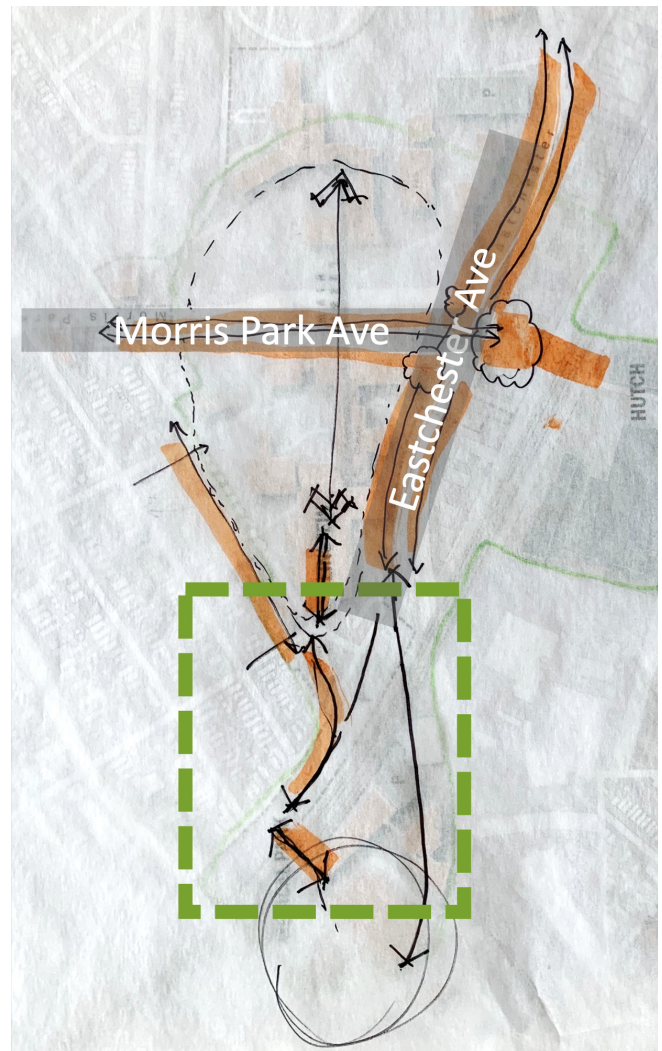
ADAPTED FROM HR&A ADVISORS



# IMPROVING CIRCULATION

Connecting across and through the campus today is challenging and circulation needs improvement. As work continues across campus, Eastchester Avenue and Morris Park Avenue should remain key campus axes. The panel identified the following goals to help Montefiore guide traffic flow improvements and strengthen campus connectivity throughout its current and future planning efforts.

- **Add wayfinding and branding** to define the edges of campus and direct visitors to key facilities, resources, the (future) train station, and other destinations of note.
- **Improve connection to the outpatient Medical Center.** While a pedestrian bridge to connect the Montefiore main campus to the Medical Center may not be feasible in the near term, Montefiore should continue exploring other connectivity options, improve the experience and safety of the Eastchester underpass, and provide a connection along Basset Avenue (on the east side of the rail lines) from the train station.
- **Improve the pedestrian experience**, especially at the intersection of Eastchester and Morris Park avenues, to increase safety and create a more welcoming environment for those walking around campus. These may include traffic calming measures, safe pedestrian crossings, street trees, lighting, and street furniture.
- **Facilitate other modes of transportation beyond personal automobiles** by expanding the campus shuttle service and improving facilities for bicycle useage.
- **Ensure safe connections** from Bassett Avenue on the east side of the rail lines to the main campus on the west.
- **Create a porous campus** with multiple access points.
- **Work closely with MTA to ensure that the station bridge is highly visible** and open to public use at all times. The bridge is a key east-west connector for Montefiore, and the surrounding parcels must be designed and developed in a way that highlights and facilitates access to the bridge.



Circulation around campus is challenging, particularly with the rail lines separating key assets. Focusing on the pedestrian experience on campus and at the Eastchester underpass should be a priority.



# PROPOSED ZONING FRAMEWORK

The goals Montefiore leadership has established for the built environment on its campus will require certain zoning modifications to the underlying zoning as well as to the existing land use controls. Those zoning changes would leverage and build upon DCP's proposed rezoning of the neighborhood and include the following recommendations from the panel.

## Extend C4-4

The City is proposing modified C4-4 zoning along the eastern portion of Eastchester Avenue. The panel recommends extending the C4-4 zoning across Eastchester Avenue to include the two parcels, one on each side, along Morris Park Avenue. This zoning modification would allow for increased density at the site, which could include commercial, residential, and community uses, and will better connect to the development that is expected to emerge around the new train station. Additionally, Montefiore could consider seeking to extend the C4-4 zoning along Morris Park Avenue from Eastchester Avenue to the edge of the western gateway at Seminole Avenue.

## Expand R6

To spur more development within the campus proper, the current R4-zoned parcels should be rezoned to R6 and the existing land use controls should be modified to allow for additional community facility use and housing. This

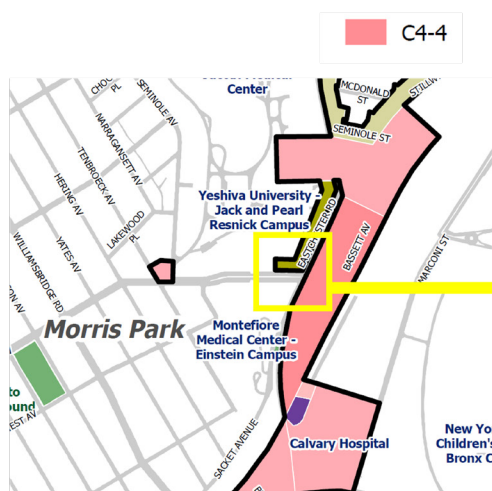
modification would allow for increased density and use on those sites, which will support the health system's broader goal of transforming its suburban-style campus into an urban environment more fitting its high-profile location within the Bronx.

## Demap Key Streets

The outpatient Medical Center is surrounded by streets and not welcoming to pedestrians. To create a more pedestrian-friendly environment around the Medical Center, Montefiore should work with the City to identify and close certain underutilized streets to vehicular traffic. This street demapping will better support pedestrian circulation around the center.

## Connect the Campuses

Montefiore should further study a potential connection above the rail lines to bridge the southern portion of the Einstein Campus to the Montefiore Medical Park.



As the City updates zoning in the area, Montefiore should advocate for an extension of the C4-4 and R6 zoning to better support the type of development contemplated in the future growth of the health system.

# IMPLEMENTATION

The transformation that Montefiore leadership has envisioned for its campus is exciting, bold, and potentially catalytic for the surrounding area. Similarly, the addition of the Morris Park train station in the near future is also anticipated to catalyze additional development around the neighborhood. While these types of transformations will take years to realize, there are a number of key steps that Montefiore Einstein can take in the near and medium term that will have immediate positive impacts while also laying the foundation for the bigger moves yet to come.

## Short Term (Year 1)

**Establish branding and deploy wayfinding.** The branding work on tap for Montefiore should encompass all aspects of the health system, including all of its Morris Park facilities. Demarcating the campus and creating a sense of place is a fundamental step. Once the brand is established, wayfinding signage, featuring the new brand, should be posted across the campus to help visitors navigate the pathways, roads, and building complexes that connect people to the places and services they seek.

**Encourage open space use.** Students, staff, visitors, and the community should be encouraged to use the existing open spaces on campus. Adding benches and moveable furniture (tables and chairs) encourage people to use the space, linger, and make it their own. Activating the open space with regular programming—such as yoga or tai chi classes—would also help to enliven the campus and activate its open space assets.

**Explore interim opportunities to activate plaza.** Engage with NYCDOT and its Plaza Program to create an interim plaza space prior to permanent improvements.

**Conduct regular community engagement and outreach.** Montefiore will benefit from more frequent and consistent engagement and communication with the surrounding community. Particularly as campus planning evolves, community outreach should remain a consistent priority.

**Assess needs for the development team.** Given the plans under consideration by Montefiore, the health system is encouraged to build a development team with experience guiding institutions through large-scale planning, real estate transactions, rezonings, and development projects, including joint ventures and multi-use facilities.

**Initiate master planning.** Montefiore's new campus master plan should be informed by the recommendations from this study. With station development imminent, master planning should begin now.

**Explore joint development and value capture opportunities.** Montefiore is encouraged to seek a development partner for the sites it does not yet control closest to the station. Time is of the essence on these sites. Montefiore can also continue conversations with the City, MTA, and local stakeholders to explore potential value capture strategies.

## Medium Term (Year 2-5)

**Finalize the master plan.** With ongoing community engagement fostering neighborhood buy-in, master planning efforts should be completed in the medium term and development plans should be established with corresponding timelines.

**Secure zoning approvals.** Montefiore should seek the zoning approvals needed to facilitate the development envisioned in the master plan. The approvals process should begin within the next 18 months.



**Help shape the new station plaza.** When the train station opens in 2027, Montefiore should have a plan in place to partner with Metro-North to activate and maintain the station plaza, and to influence its design and programming.

**Create a district governance strategy.** A district governance strategy will help Montefiore manage public spaces, including the station plaza, in a cohesive coherent manner. This work could be managed by Montefiore alone or through the creation of a Business Improvement District (BID).

**Initiate development adjacent to the station.** If the City's rezoning is approved, Montefiore should work with a development partner to make the two sites closest to the station shovel-ready.

## Long Term (Year 5+)

**Initiate a major hospital/research facility project.** With a fully operational train station, Montefiore is encouraged to complete its land use entitlement process and launch its first major development project. Leading with a high-profile project, such as a high-acuity tower, will signal the health system's commitment to and investment in the neighborhood and this campus.

**Implement remaining campus development.** Montefiore's master plan will take years to realize. Diligence, consistency, and authentic community engagement will serve the system well as the years progress and development across the campus continues.



Existing open space on campus awaiting transformation.



## CONCLUSION

On the cusp of transformative infrastructure investments, the Morris Park neighborhood—long under-resourced and disconnected from transit—is poised for significant growth. The new Metro-North train station at Morris Park is projected to attract large numbers of new residents, job seekers, and visitors to the area. These developments are sure to impact Montefiore Einstein Health System as well, and leaders of the health system recognize this as an opportunity to foster the system's growth, serve more patients, and strengthen its position as a leader in healthcare, research, and academic medicine.

With an anticipated 2027 completion date for the new Morris Park train station, there is much to do to prepare the Montefiore campus for the opportunities the station will provide. Improving connections to and through campus should be a priority. Establishing a clear brand for the health system and deploying that brand across campus wayfinding will assist all visitors and constituents in understanding and navigating Montefiore's assets. Activating the campus today—in existing plazas and open space—and tomorrow in a more connected and porous campus environment will serve the system well and benefit the surrounding

neighborhood by inviting the community in to enjoy the spaces. Each of these three actions—branding, connecting, and activating—should be considered at each campus gateway, in the heart of the campus, and at key connection points and facilities between.

From the completion of the master planning process to zoning modifications and approvals to identifying campus parcels for future development, there is a great deal of work to be done—and Montefiore's leadership team is up to the task.



STEVEN LEE



# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: For Further Reading

ULI New York: [\*A Vision for a Greener, Healthier, Cooler Gowanus: Strategies to Mitigate Urban Heat Island Effect Report\*](#) (January 2018)

ULI New York: [Bronx Community Board Four TAP Report](#) (March 2019)

## Appendix B: Stakeholder List

Bernadette Ferrara, Chair, Bronx Community Board 11

Diana Finch, Bronx Park East Community Association

Jennifer Garner, Senior Associate Dean of Finance and Operations, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Johana Guerrero, Deputy Chief of Staff Senator, Natalia Fernandez

Megan Guy, SVP Development, Simone Development Corporation

Juton Horstman, Director of Planning and Development, Bronx Borough President's Office

Michael Kavalal, Senior Team Lead, Department of City Planning

Bradley Knote, Assistant Director, MTA

Grace Lovoglio, Founder & Chair, Allerton Barnes Block Association

Beverly Michaels, Executive Director, Einstein Campus & Vice President Montefiore

Hazel Miura, Director of Housing and Community Development, Neighborhood Initiatives Development Corp.

Robert Paley, Director of Transit-Oriented Development, MTA

Paul Philips, Borough Director, Department of City Planning

Dr. Meisha Porter, President and CEO, Bronx Community Foundation

Lisa Sorin, Bronx Chamber of Commerce

Marshall Strawbridge, Director of Outreach, Bronx Borough President's Office

Dr. Camelia Tepelus, Executive Director, Morris Park Business Improvement District

Dr. Yaron Tomer, Dean and Chief Academic Officer, Albert Einstein College of Medicine

## ABOUT THE PANEL

### **Vivien R. Krieger**

#### **Panel Chair**

#### **Co-Chair, Zoning, Land Use & Development Cozen O'Connor**

Vivien concentrates her practice on real estate law, representing developers, lenders, owners, purchasers, and nonprofits in New York City land use and zoning matters.

Vivien regularly prepares applications and appears before various city and state entities, as well as public benefit corporations including, NYC City Planning Commission, NYC Board of Standards and Appeals, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Office of General Services, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Port Authority of NY and NJ, and Empire State Development Corporation. She also presents projects to community boards and elected officials, and works closely with architects, engineers, financial experts, and environmental experts.

Vivien has drafted and negotiated various zoning lot development agreements, easement agreements, restrictive declarations, zoning opinions and letters, analyses of site development potential, zoning resolution determination requests, and zoning challenges. She has also litigated complex real estate matters involving land use.

Vivien is an active member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) where she serves as a member of the Awards for Excellence in Development Committee and as a member of the Technical Assistance Panels Steering Committee. She also serves on the Land Use Planning and Zoning Committee of the New York City Bar Association and she is a fellow of the Urban Design Forum.

### **Mike Aziz, AIA, LEED AP**

#### **Partner**

#### **Cooper Robertson**

Mike Aziz, AIA, LEED AP has directed large, long-range and interdisciplinary efforts for multiple developments including the TenMile River Development in Wassaic, New York; Riverton in Sayreville, New Jersey, and Penn's Landing in Philadelphia. He has also played a principal role on a number of campus planning projects including The George Washington University, Georgia State University and the University of Maryland Facilities Master Plan in College Park, Maryland.

Mike joined Cooper Robertson in 2008, became partner in 2019 and is a member of the firm's management committee. He has also served as a critic and guest lecturer at Yale University, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, and New York Institute of Technology. Mike has also authored the book, "Reshaping Gentrification: An Urban Design Proposal for the Redevelopment of Columbia Heights", which was released by VDM Publishers in 2010. In 2019, Mike was selected for 2019 BD+C 40 Under 40 list of leaders in the design and construction industry.

A graduate of the University of Maryland and Savannah College of Art and Design, he is a registered architect and a LEED Accredited Professional.

**Bret Collazzi****Partner****HR&A Advisors**

Bret helps advance projects that revitalize neighborhoods, strengthen local economies, and broaden economic opportunity. With a background in the public and private sectors spanning real estate, land use, policy, and communications, Bret works with clients to transform bold project concepts into feasible projects and then to articulate their impact and chart a path to implementation. He supports a range of clients and project types, including public-private real estate developments, cultural and open spaces, workforce and entrepreneurship strategies, regional investment strategies, and neighborhood plans. He has worked in all corners of New York City and State, and across the country in markets including New Orleans, Miami, and Detroit. He holds an MBA from Cornell University and a BA in Journalism from New York University. He is a proud Bronx native.

**Douglas Smith Land****Senior Manager****Real Estate & Infrastructure Development****JetBlue**

Douglas Smith Land is an urban planner bringing experience managing complex real estate development projects and public-private partnerships within city, non-profit, and private sector organizations. At JetBlue, he manages corporate real estate and infrastructure development projects, including the \$4.3B redevelopment of JFK Terminal 6/7 into a 1.2M SF state-of-the-art airport facility. An alumnus of HR&A Advisors and NYCEDC, Douglas' past projects include the redevelopment of Bronx Point and the Universal Hip Hop Museum, 175 Park, South Street Seaport, Flatbush Caton Market, and the L10 Cultural Arts Center in Downtown Brooklyn. He is Chair of the ULI NY TAPs Steering Committee and a member of the Long Island City Partnership Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. Douglas received his Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies from Wesleyan University and his Master's in City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania with a Certificate in Real Estate Design and Development through PennDesign and The Wharton School.



### **Steven T. Lee, PLA, ASLA**

**Associate Principal**

**SWA/Balsley**

Steven T. Lee, PLA, is a landscape architect and urban designer based in New York City with a passion for crafting meaningful, equitable, and resilient public spaces and urban landscapes. At SWA/Balsley he brings a strong design voice to lead complex public realm projects domestically and abroad, including urban master plans, parks, waterfronts, plazas, streetscapes, mixed-use developments, and academic campuses. Steven also helps nurture a dynamic and collaborative studio environment, enabling the SWA/Balsley design team to collectively generate great ideas and innovative solutions for all projects. In all his work, Steven continually strives to push boundaries around landscape narrative, performance, and experience. His work is notable for fusing human comfort and sociability with a formal language driven by culture and place.

Steven holds an undergraduate degree from Claremont McKenna College and a Master of Landscape Architecture and Master of City Planning from the University of California, Berkeley. He has served as a design critic or guest lecturer at numerous universities across the US including UC Berkeley, Penn State University, North Carolina A&T, Columbia University, and Cornell University.

### **Jee Mee Kim-Diaz**

**City Executive, NYC Region**

**Arcadis**

Jee Mee Kim is a City Executive for Arcadis -- a global design and engineering firm that works with public and private sector clients to develop sustainable solutions that improve quality of life. As City Executive for the New York metro area, Jee Mee leads the firm's operations and client relationships in the region, pursues new business development opportunities and partnerships, and shapes strategic growth initiatives.

Jee Mee brings 20 years of experience in managing complex urban development and transportation projects across the United States. Prior to joining Arcadis, Jee Mee was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio to serve as the Chief Strategy Officer for the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) where she oversaw the Policy, Intergovernmental Affairs, Press/Communications, and Safety Education teams. During her tenure at the NYCDOT, she advanced Mayor de Blasio's 2021 transportation commitments, developed a strategic plan for the BQE triple cantilever, and helped author Delivering Green, a progressive vision for freight movement in the city. She is a recognized thought leader and practitioner on urban transportation and mobility issues, real estate and economic development, transit-oriented development, and infrastructure funding and financing. Before joining NYCDOT, Jee Mee led a range of complex transportation, land use, real estate, and community planning projects at consulting firms HR&A Advisors and Sam Schwartz Engineering.

Jee Mee has a BFA from Parsons School of Design and a BA in American Studies from Eugene Lang College, the New School. She has a Masters of Urban Planning from NYU's Wagner School of Public Service.





STEVEN LEE





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WHERE THE FUTURE IS BUILT

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