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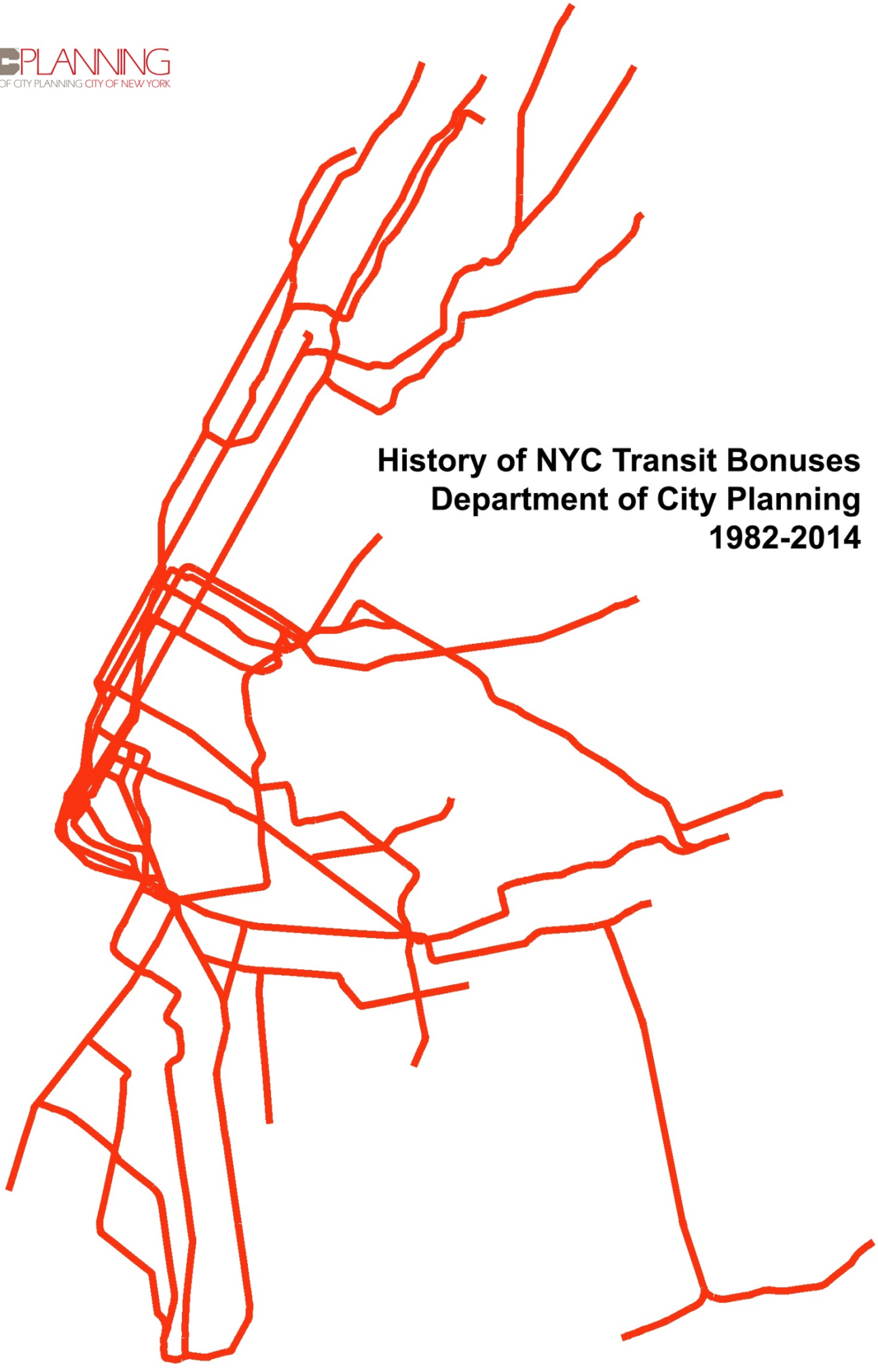
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING CITY OF NEW YORK



History of NYC Transit Bonuses
Department of City Planning
1982-2014

Introduction

As part of the City's ongoing planning work in the East Midtown area, the Department of City Planning has received a number of inquiries about the history of the subway bonus mechanism and the projects which have been developed using it. In response, DCP has compiled the following information about the individual proposals that have received floor area bonuses for transit improvements. In 1982, the City instituted a floor area bonus for subway station improvements as part of its Special Midtown District proposal (N 820253 (A) ZRM). Developers were then able to apply for a new special permit in order to obtain a floor area bonus in exchange for improvements to the station which, upon approval, they were then required to undertake. The development site had to be located adjacent to a Midtown subway station and the maximum floor area bonus was limited to a 20 percent increase over the zoning lot's base FAR. However, the amount of bonus floor area for each proposal was subject to approval of the City Planning Commission, based on findings relating to the type and scale of the proposed improvements, as well as the overall benefits to the City.

This provision was expanded in 1984 to apply to subway stations in high-density commercial districts throughout Manhattan as well as Downtown Brooklyn (N 840541 ZRY). In addition, an as-of-right floor area bonus was instituted in the Court Square area of Queens in 1986 (N 860683 ZRQ). In Court Square, specific sites were required to develop identified improvements to obtain the maximum permitted floor area.

In the over 30 years since these provisions have existed, they have led to a number of improvements to the City's subway stations. These have included new pedestrian connections between formerly disconnected stations, new vertical accesses to and within stations, as well as expanded mezzanines and platforms. To date, seven projects have utilized the special permit subway bonus, all of which have been in Manhattan. In addition, three projects have used the as-of-right transit bonus that exists in the Court Square area in Queens.

Each improvement project is unique, but the following data attempts to put them in a cohesive descriptive framework so that decision makers and the broader public can make easy comparisons between them. To do so, each subway bonus project is broken down into a series of general project types which appear in some or all of the proposals. Additional information about each project including the total bonus floor area it received is also included. The predominant source of this information is the City Planning Commission reports which document the public review processes for the various projects, and each project therefore includes a link to the web version of the corresponding Commission report.

In addition, DCP has also included information about three additional projects in the East Midtown area for which the Department has received similar inquiries. These include the current One Vanderbilt proposal, as well as the earlier Philip Morris and 383 Madison projects that included transit improvements pursuant to other zoning mechanisms.

Transit Bonus Projects

Transit Bonus Project	Year	Bonus FAR	FAR sf	Page
599 Lexington	1984	2.7	146,293	4
Hines Building	1984	2.7	71,544	5
Zeckendorf Towers	1985	2.0	153,006	6
Worldwide Plaza	1986	1.3	200,000	7
New Colisum Project	1986	3.0	448,260	8
Citicorp - Queens	1986	13.0	1,068,093	9
Hearst Tower	2002	3.0	120,000	10
Court Square 2	2006	13.0	533,273	11
45 Courthouse Sq	2010	13.0	147,147	12
15 Penn Plaza	2010	3.0	480,000	13

Other Project	Year	Bonus FAR	FAR sf	Page
One Vanderbilt (proposal)	2014	12.3	528,900	14-15
Philip Morris (Covered Pedestrian Space bonus and landmark transfer)	1979	3.0	62,000	16
383 Madison (landmark transfer)	1998	-	-	17

Common Improvement Types

New or expanded connecting corridor – Projects that provide corridors between stations or station portions

Mezzanine expansion – Projects that expand the mezzanine level of subway stations

Platform widening – Projects that widen the platform area of subway stations

Public space – Projects that include public space, in addition to transit improvements

Elevators – Projects that include elevators, either from street level or within the subway station

Exterior access - Projects that include new or improved access between street and station

Interior access – Projects that include new or improved access between levels of the station

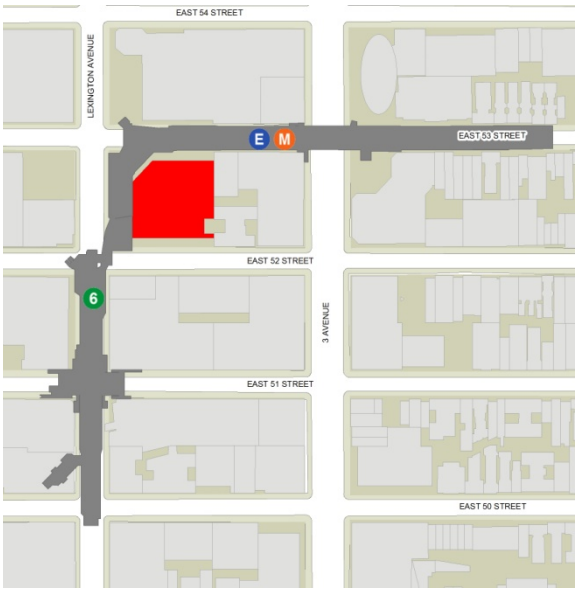
Other interior work – Other environmental improvements to the station, including token booths

Light wells – Projects that permit natural light to enter into the station

Other – Other types of improvement work, including design drawings for future projects

599 Lexington

Address: 599 Lexington Avenue
Station: Lexington/53rd and 51st Street
Year: 1984
Project Type: Subway Improvement Bonus
ULURP: C 840045 ZSM
FAR: 2.7 FAR
Bonus floor area: 146,293 sf
Status: Built



New or expanded connecting corridor
New corridor between 52nd Street and station at 53rd Street

Mezzanine expansion
-

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
New elevator from street to concourse level

Exterior access
New stairway entrance at 52nd Street

Interior access
New escalator and stairway from concourse to underpass level

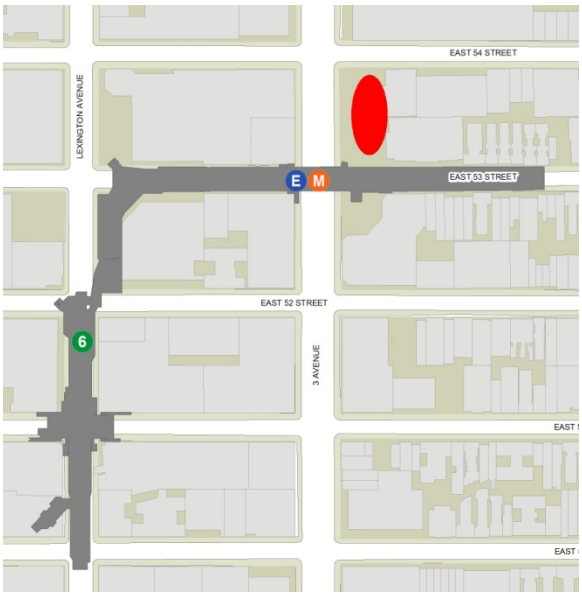
Other interior work
New token booth and turnstiles

Light wells
New light well to corridor

Other
Excavation and footings for future mezzanine enlargement by MTA
Preparation of drawings and documents for future mezzanine enlargement by MTA

Hines Building

Address: 885 Third Avenue
Station: Lexington/53rd
Year: 1984
Project Type: Subway Improvement Bonus
ULURP: C 840379 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 2.7 FAR
Bonus floor area: 71,544 sf
Status: Built



New or expanded connecting corridor
-

Mezzanine expansion
New westward expansion of E and M line station mezzanine

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
-

Exterior access
New stairway entrance

Interior access
New escalator from platform to expanded mezzanine level

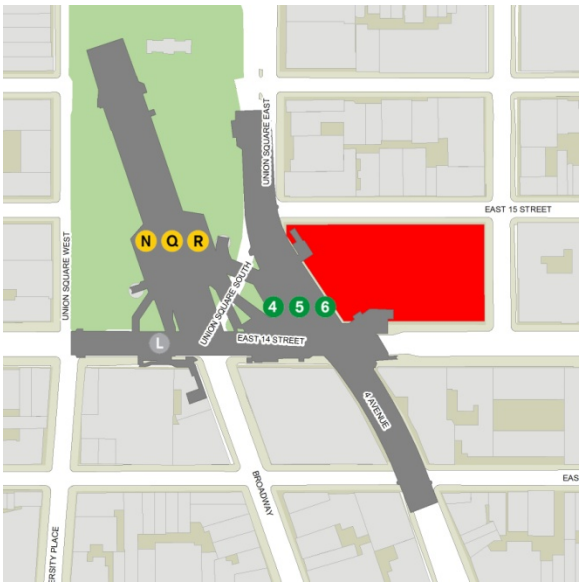
Other interior work
-

Light wells
New light well to mezzanine

Other
-

Zeckendorf Towers

Address: 1 Irving Place, Manhattan
Station: 14th Street/Union Square
Year: 1985
Project Type: Subway Improvement Bonus
ULURP: C 850001 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 2.0 FAR
Bonus floor area: 153,006 sf
Status: Built



New or expanded connecting corridor
-

Mezzanine expansion
New mezzanine expansion between control area and station entrance
New mezzanine connection over 4, 5, 6 line tracks

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
-

Exterior access
New escalator and stairway entrance at 14th Street
New stairway entrance at 15th Street

Interior access
-

Other interior work
Relocated various MTA facilities including token booths and improved finishes

Light wells
-

Other
-

Worldwide Plaza

Address: 1 Worldwide Plaza, Manhattan
Station: 50th Street
Year: 1986
Project Type: Subway Improvement Bonus
ULURP: C 860305 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 1.3 FAR
Bonus floor area: 200,000 sf
Status: Built

New or expanded connecting corridor
-

Mezzanine expansion
New mezzanine expansion adjacent to building

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
New elevator from street to mezzanine
New elevator from mezzanine to lower level platform

Exterior access
New stairway entrance at 49th Street
New stairway entrance at 50th Street
Two reopened stairways at 49th street

Interior access
Two new stairs and one escalator from mezzanine to lower level platform

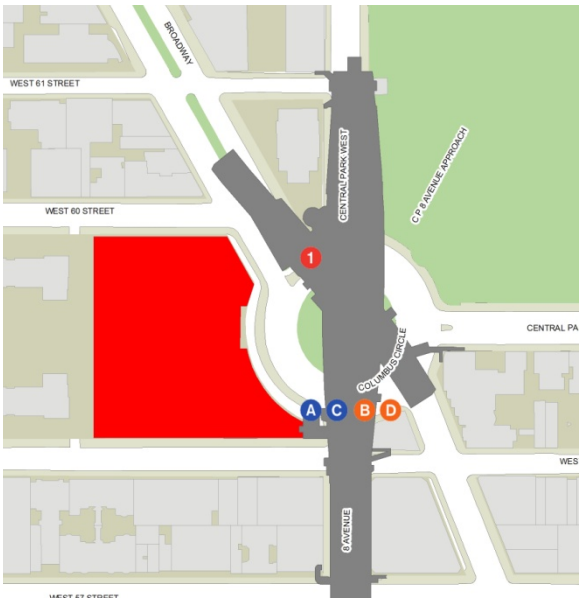
Other interior work
Mezzanine improvements including new control area, finishes, and lighting
New MTA storage and scrubber room

Light wells
New light wells at 49th and 50th streets from street to lower level platform

Other
-

New Coliseum Project

Address: 10 Columbus Circle, Manhattan
Station: 59th Street / Columbus Circle
Year: 1986
Project Type: Subway Improvement Bonus
ULURP: C 860777 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 3.0 FAR
Bonus floor area: 448,260 sf
Status: Unbuilt



New or expanded connecting corridor
New corridor between south and northbound #1 line platforms

Mezzanine expansion
Reconfigured northbound mezzanine adjacent to G&W Building
Reconfigured 58th Street entrance and control area

Platform widening
Widened southbound #1 line platform
Widened northbound #1 line platform

Public space
-

Elevators
-

Exterior access
New stairway entrance at 60th Street

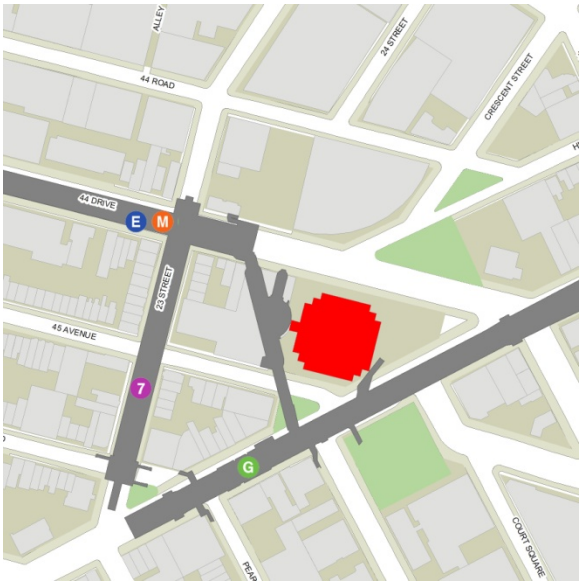
Interior access
-

Other interior work
Other mezzanine and platform improvements including finishes, lighting and signs
New token booth and fare array at Central Park South entrance

Light wells
-

Other
New underplatform padding and ceiling treatment for #1 line tracks
New underplatform padding and ceiling treatment for A, C, E, line tracks

Citicorp – Queens



Address: One Court Square, Queens
Station: Court Square
Year: 1986
Project Type: Court Square Subway Improvement
ULURP: N 860683 ZRM
Bonus FAR: 13.0 FAR
Bonus floor area: 1,068,093 sf
Status: Built

New or expanded connecting corridor
New corridor between the E, F, and G lines

Mezzanine expansion
-

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
-

Exterior access
-

Interior access
-

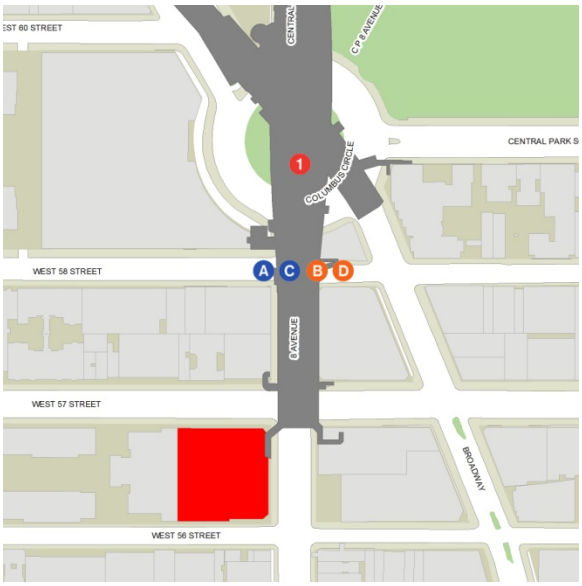
Other interior work
-

Light wells
-

Other
Preparation of plans for a connection between G and #7 lines

Hearst Building

Address: 300 West 57th Street, Manhattan
Station: 59th Street / Columbus Circle
Year: 2002
Project Type: Subway Improvement Bonus
ULURP: C 020397 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 3.0 FAR
Bonus floor area: 120,000 sf
Status: Built



New or expanded connecting corridor
-

Mezzanine expansion
-

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
Three new station elevators

Exterior access
New station entrance

Interior access
New stair between uptown A, C, E line platform and mezzanine
New stair between #1 line downtown platform and downtown A, C, E line platform
Three relocated stairs between #1 line platforms and lower mezzanine
Three relocated stairs between A, C, E line platform and mezzanine

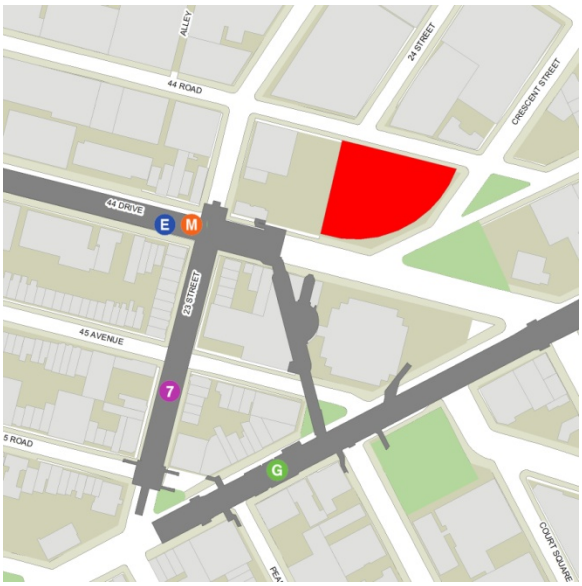
Other interior work
Reconfigured control area 58th Street

Light wells
-

Other
-

Court Square 2

Address: 23-29 44th Drive, Queens
Station: Court Square
Year: 2006
Project Type: Court Square Subway Improvement
ULURP: N 060246 ZCQ
Bonus FAR: 13.0 FAR
Bonus floor area: 533,273 sf
Status: Built



New or expanded connecting corridor
New corridor between G and #7 lines

Mezzanine expansion
-

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
-

Exterior access
-

Interior access
-

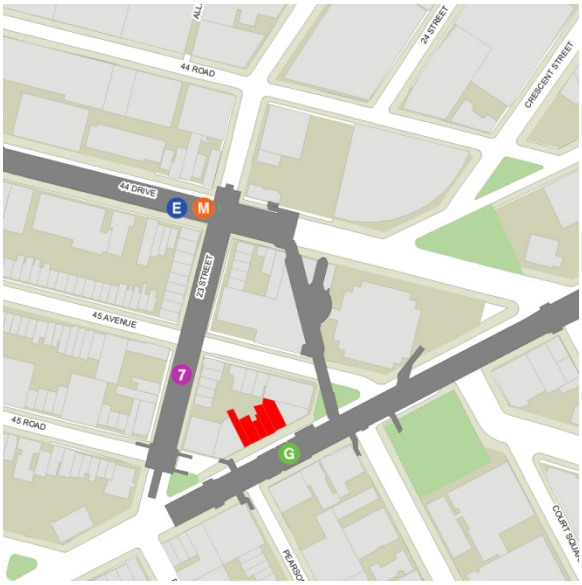
Other interior work
-

Light wells
-

Other
-

45th Road Courthouse Square

Address: 45th Road Courthouse Square, Queens
Station: Court Square
Year: 2010
Project Type: Court Square Subway Improvement
ULURP: N 100062 ZCM
Bonus FAR: 13.0 FAR
Bonus floor area: 147,147
Status: Incomplete



New or expanded connecting corridor
-

Mezzanine expansion
New improvements to station mezzanine

Platform widening
-

Public space
-

Elevators
-

Exterior access
New entrance to station platform

Interior access
-

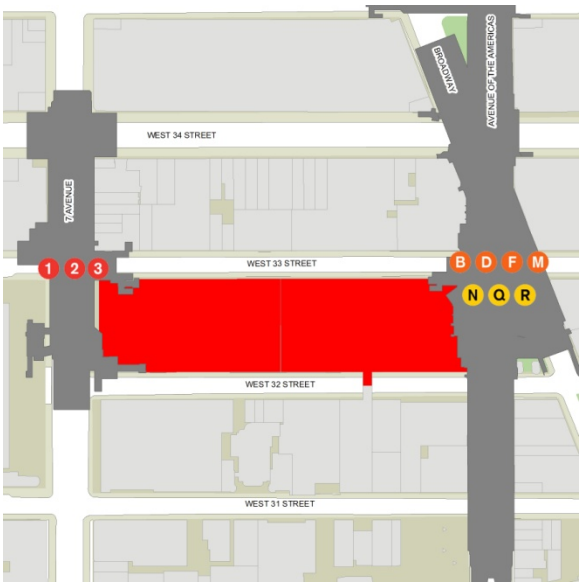
Other interior work
-

Light wells
-

Other
-

15 Penn Plaza

Address: 15 Penn Plaza, Manhattan
Station: 34th / Herald Square and 34th / Penn
Year: 2010
Project Type: Subway Improvement Bonus
ULURP: C 100049 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 3.0 FAR
Bonus floor area: 480,000 sf
Status: Unbuilt



New or expanded connecting corridor
Reopened corridor between Seventh Avenue and Sixth Avenue/Broadway subway lines

Mezzanine expansion
-

Platform widening
Widened northbound #1 line platform between 32nd and 33rd streets

Public space
-

Elevators
New elevator between street and concourse level at 33rd Street

Exterior access
New escalator and stairway entrance to PATH station at 33rd Street
Reconfigured escalator and stairway entrance to PATH station at 32nd Street

Interior access
New stair between #2, 3 line platform and 32nd Street underpass
New stair between PATH mezzanine and subway mezzanine at 32nd Street
New stair between PATH mezzanine and subway mezzanine at 33rd Street
Widened stair between downtown #1 line platform and 32nd Street underpass
Widened stair between uptown #1 line platform and 32nd Street underpass

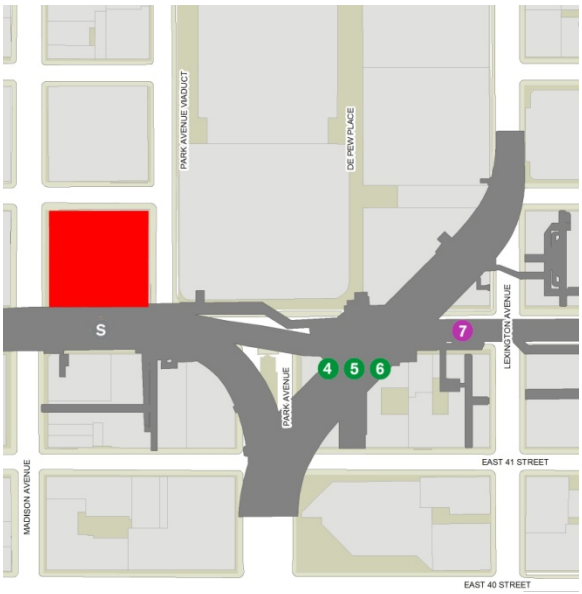
Other interior work
Reconfigured fare array at Sixth Avenue/Broadway subway lines

Light wells
-

Other
-

Proposal - One Vanderbilt

Address: One Vanderbilt Avenue, Manhattan
Station: Grand Central Terminal complex
Year: 2014
Project Type: Grand Central Public Realm Improvement Bonus
ULURP:
Bonus FAR: 12.3 FAR
Proposed Bonus floor area: 528,900 sf
Status: Proposal



New or expanded connecting corridor
New corridor between GC subway station and GCT concourse
Reopened Mobile corridor between GC subway station and Mobil Building

Mezzanine expansion
Expanded mezzanine in northern section of GC subway station
Expand mezzanine in central section of GC subway station

Platform widening
-

Public space
New ground-level indoor public space and waiting area at 43rd Street
New improvements to public place at Vanderbilt Avenue

Elevators
New elevator between street and GC subway station shuttle platform level at 42nd Street
New elevator between street and GCT concourse level at 43rd Street
New elevator between GCT concourse level and East Side Access
New elevator between street and GC subway station at Lexington and 42nd Street

Exterior access
New escalator and stairway entrance to GC subway station and new corridor at 42nd Street
New stairway entrance in indoor public space to new corridor at 43rd Street
Two new on-street stairway entrances to Mobil corridor at Lexington and 42nd Street
Expanded stairway entrance to GC subway station at Lexington and 42nd Street

Interior access
New escalator and stairs between new corridor and East Side Access
Two new stairs between GC subway station mezzanine and downtown platform
New stair between GC subway station mezzanine and uptown platform
Five reconfigured stairs between GC subway station mezzanine and downtown platform
Six reconfigured stairs between GC subway station mezzanine and uptown platform

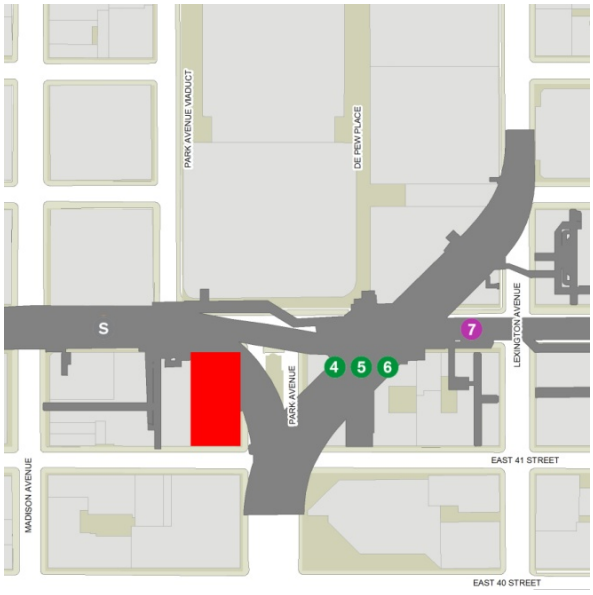
(Continued on next page)

Other interior work
Expanded control area in western section of GC subway station (shuttle platform area)
Reconfigured control area in northern section of GC subway station
Other GC subway station mezzanine finishing improvements

Light wells
New light wells to new corridor

Other
-

Philip Morris



(Covered Pedestrian Space bonus and 74-79 floor area transfer, not subway improvement bonus)
Address: 120 Park Avenue, Manhattan
Station: Grand Central Terminal complex
Year: 1979
Project Type: Covered Pedestrian Space bonus and floor area transfer from landmark
ULURP: C 780404 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 3.0 FAR through Covered Pedestrian Space bonus
Bonus floor area: 62,000 sf
Status: Built

New or expanded connecting corridor
-

Mezzanine expansion
-

Platform widening
-

Public space
New ground-level indoor public space at Park Avenue (pursuant to Covered Pedestrian Space bonus

Elevators
-

Exterior access
New escalator and stairway entrance to GC subway at Park Avenue and 42nd Street

Interior access
-

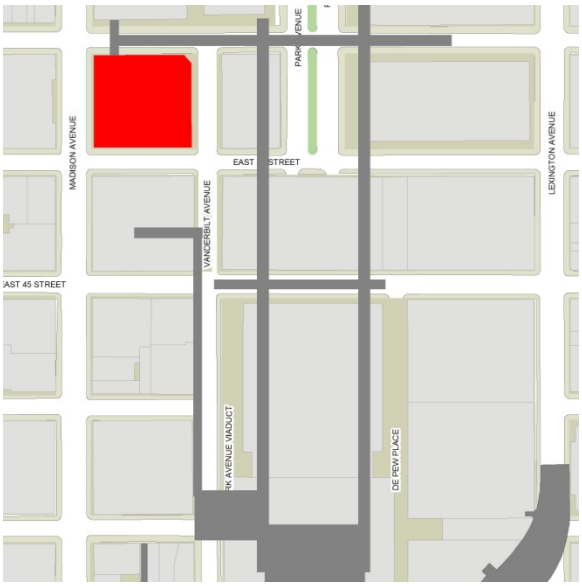
Other interior work
-

Light wells
-

Other
-

383 Madison Avenue

(81-635 floor area transfer, not subway improvement bonus)
Address: 383 Madison Avenue, Manhattan
Station: Grand Central Terminal complex
Year: 1998
Project Type: Floor area transfer from landmark
ULURP: C 980682 ZSM
Bonus FAR: 0
Bonus floor area: 0 sf (required pursuant to transfer)
Status: Built



New or expanded connecting corridor
-

Mezzanine expansion
-

Platform widening
-

Public space
New ground-level public passageway along Vanderbilt Avenue

Elevators
-

Exterior access
New stairway entrance to North End Access passageway at 47th Street

Interior access
-

Other interior work
Enclosed North End Access passageway

Light wells
-

Other
-