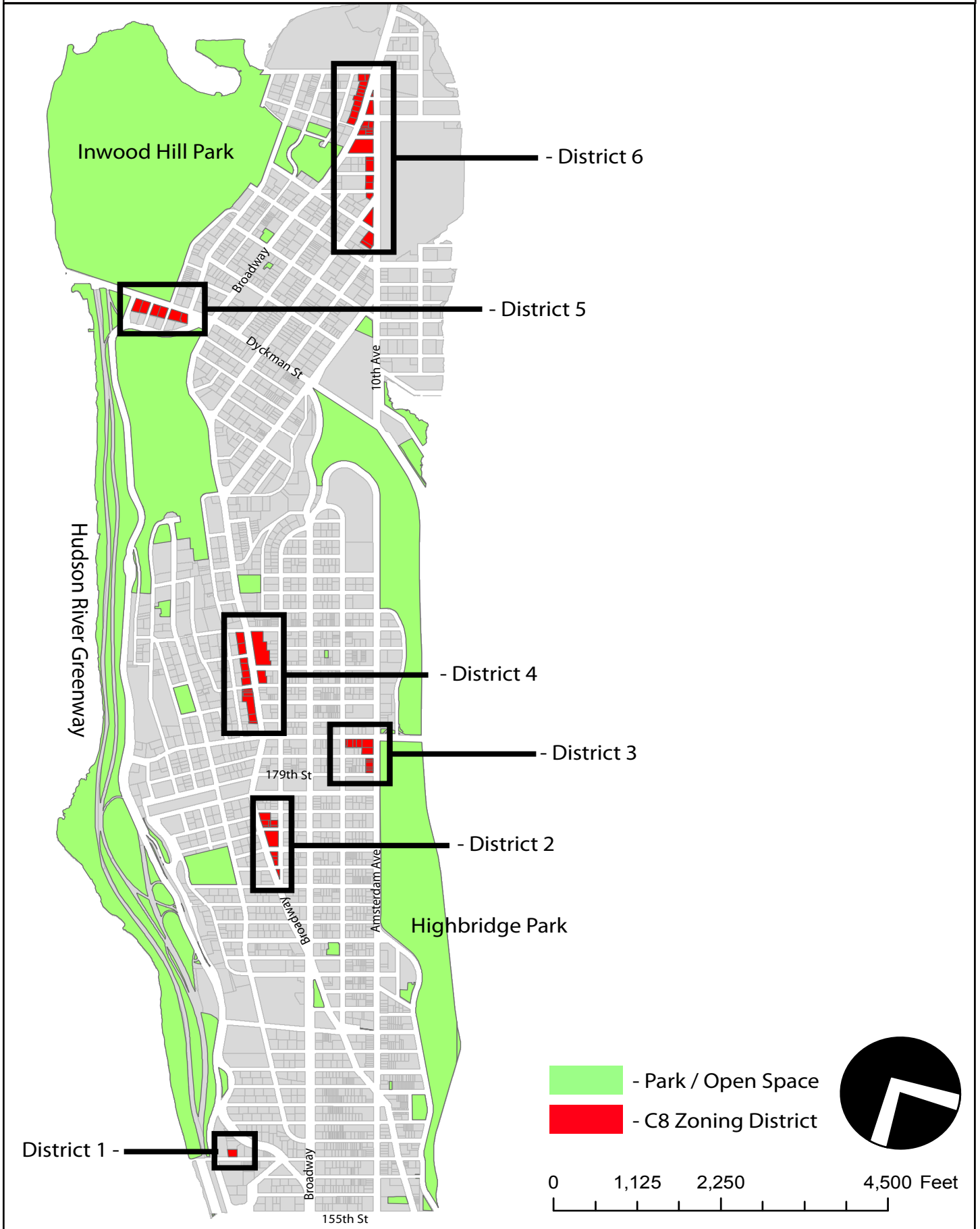


Recommendations for the Rezoning of C8 Districts in Manhattan Community Board 12



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Rezoning Recommendations

Figure 1. Manhattan Community Board 12 C8 Zoning District Map



Introduction

Manhattan Community Board 12 (“MCB 12”) is home to six C8 zoning districts (**see Figure 1**), which are intended to promote intensive commercial land uses, typically automobile repair and service businesses; such a designation also prohibits residential uses. However, an analysis undertaken by the previous fellow at MCB 12 found that many of the land uses in these C8 districts were not reflective of uses intended by this designation. In speaking with Wayne Benjamin, Chair of the Land Use Committee at MCB 12, he articulated a need for residential development in the community board in order to take redevelopment pressure off of the historic housing stock. Redeveloping parcels in these districts for residential uses represents such a possibility.

Four of these six districts were ultimately selected as candidates for rezoning, which were identified as:

- **Area 2:** Broadway b/w 173rd and 177th Streets
- **Area 3:** Amsterdam Avenue b/w 179th and 181st Streets
- **Area 4:** Broadway b/w 181st and 187th Streets
- **Area 5:** Dyckman Street b/w Staff Street and Broadway

Area 1 was not selected for a rezoning analysis because of its small size - it only encompasses one tax lot. Area 6 was not selected for a rezoning analysis because land uses found within this district reflect uses intended by C8 zoning, as well as providing appropriate transition uses to the the 207th Street Rail Yards to the east.

Area 2:

Uses observed in this district included general retail and commercial uses, generally not intended (but allowed) by a C8 zoning designation. This, combined with the fact that residential uses surround the district and that there is access to multiple transit options nearby, makes the district a prime candidate for rezoning. It was determined that a R9A zoning designation with a C2 commercial overlay would be the appropriate designation, given

the MCB 12’s interest in increasing allowable residential densities. R9A zoning features the following bulk regulations:

- **FAR:** 7.52
- **Max Lot Coverage:** 80% (Corner Lots); 70% (Through Lots)
- **Min / Max Base Heights:** 60 / 102 ft
- **Max Height:** 145 ft (i.e., approximately 15 stories)

Under such a rezoning scenario, a maximum of 422 residential units (at the minimum size allowance of 740 sq. ft. per unit in R9A zoning set by the New York City Zoning Code) could be built. However, ground floor uses could be utilized for general commercial and retail purposes as well; there would be approximately 40,000 sq. ft. available for ground floor commercial development (which would allow for the development of 350 residential units under the same density parameters).

See **Figures 2 and 3**, found on page 4, for conceptual models of buildouts in the proposed rezoning. Additionally, R9A is a Contextual Zoning Designation which would require that new development in the district respect the character and scale of the existing built form.

Area 3:

Commercial and retail uses found in this district varied, including spaces utilized for general convenience and retail goods as well as more intensive commercial uses. Residential uses, likely grandfathered in after the 1961 rezoning, were also found. A large vacant lot at the northwest corner of Amsterdam Avenue and 180th Street was formerly used as a gas station; its demise signals that automobile related businesses may no longer be viable in this district. Given this, and the presence of moderately intense commercial uses in the district, it is recommended that the the district be rezoned to C4-4A which would allow for a variety of commercial as well as residential uses.

A C4-4A zoning designation has the following bulk requirements:

- **FAR:** 4.0
- **Max Lot Coverage:** 80% (Corner Lots); 65% (Through Lots)
- **Min / Max Base Heights:** 40 / 65 ft

• **Max Height:** 80 ft (i.e., 8 stories)

These bulk requirements are applicable to both commercial and residential development in a C4-4A district.

Under this rezoning scenario a maximum of 257,780 sq. ft. of space could be built; this could all be dedicated to commercial and retail uses or could create a maximum of 379 residential units (at the minimum size allowance of 680 sq. ft. per unit in C4-4A zoning set by the New York City Zoning Code). See **Figure 4**, on page 5, for a conceptual buildout in the recommended rezoning. Additionally, C4-4A is a Contextual Zoning Designation which would require that new development in the district respect the character and scale of the existing built form. Finally, C4-4 zoning promotes regionally oriented commercial uses, which would complement the presence of major automobile thoroughfares nearby.

Area 4:

A variety of uses are found in this district, primarily public institutions, general commercial and retail and some residential uses, with very little intensive commercial uses. Given this, and the presence of multiple transit options nearby, this district represents a prime candidate for residential upzoning. It is recommended that the district be rezoned to R9A with a C2 commercial overlay.

R9A zoning features the following bulk requirements:

- **FAR:** 7.52
- **Max Lot Coverage:** 80% (Corner Lots); 70% (Through Lots)
- **Min / Max Base Heights:** 60 / 102 ft
- **Max Height:** 145 ft (i.e., approximately 15 stories)

Under this rezoning scenario, the maximum number of residential units that could be built would be 1,077 (at the minimum size allowance of 740 sq. ft. per unit in R9A zoning set by the New York City Zoning Code). However, if the groundfloor of these buildouts were to be used for general commercial and retail uses, there would be more than 106,000 sq. ft. for such uses, while still allowing the construction of a maximum of 934 residential units under the same density parameters.

See **Figures 5 and 6**, on page 5, for conceptual models of buildouts in the recommended rezon-

ing. Additionally, R9A is a Contextual Zoning Designation, which would require that new development in the district respect the character and scale of the existing built form.

Area 5:

Uses in this district generally reflect uses intended by C8 zoning, primarily automobile related services. Therefore, it is recommended that the current zoning designation be left as is. Further, rezoning could jeopardize existing views of The Cloisters (see **Pictures 1 and 2** on page 7), as the allowable height of new development under a rezoning could obscure said views.

Summary:

The proposed rezonings have the potential to create up to 1,878 residential units. Creating opportunities for residential development in order to prevent the demolition of the underbuilt historic housing stock was articulated as a concern of MCB 12. The proposed rezonings should help mitigate this problem. However, it should be noted that developers would not be required to build at the maximum allowable density, so actual development would likely yield fewer units.

Figure 2. Area 2 Conceptual Model, Looking Northwest

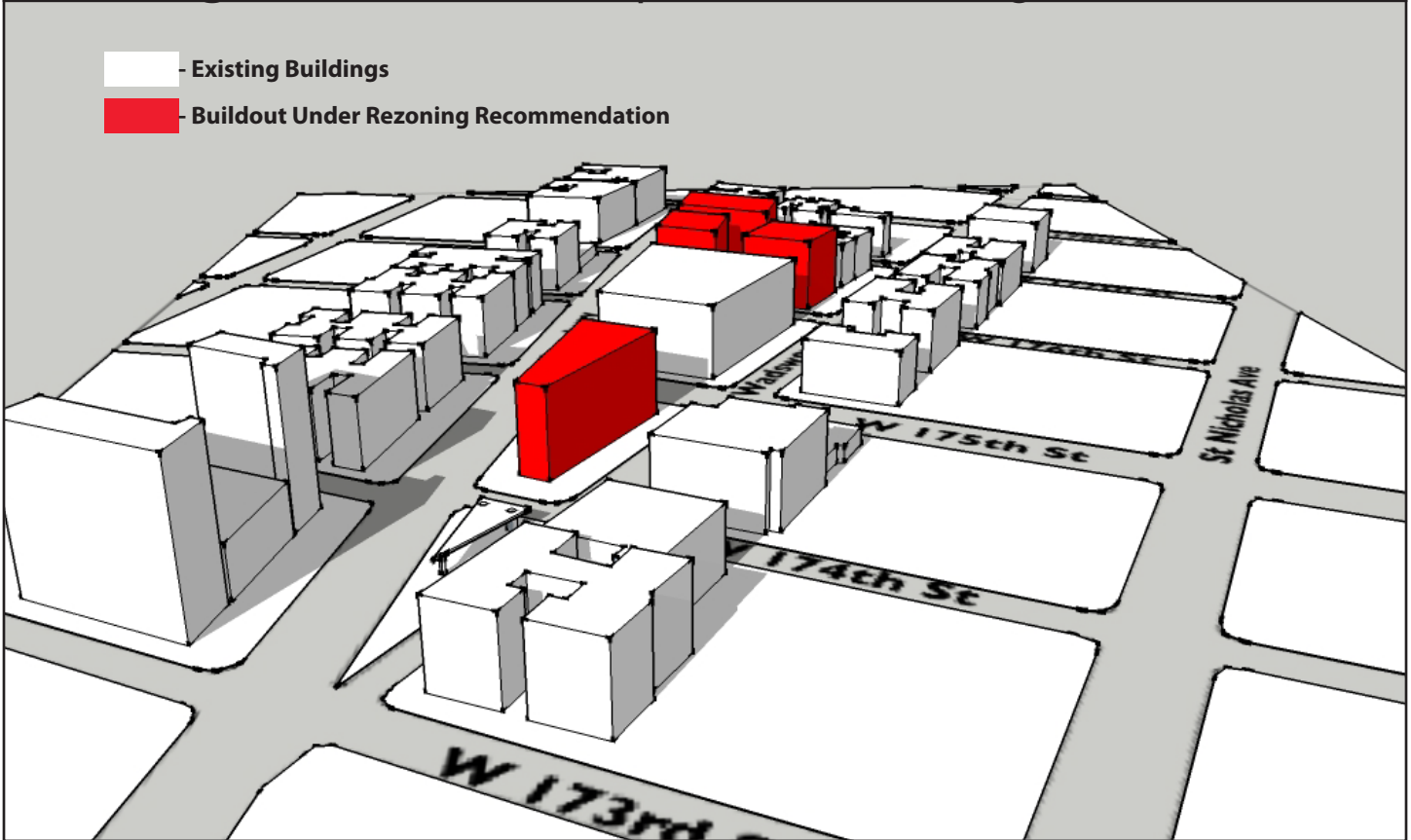


Figure 3. Area 2 Conceptual Model, Looking Southeast

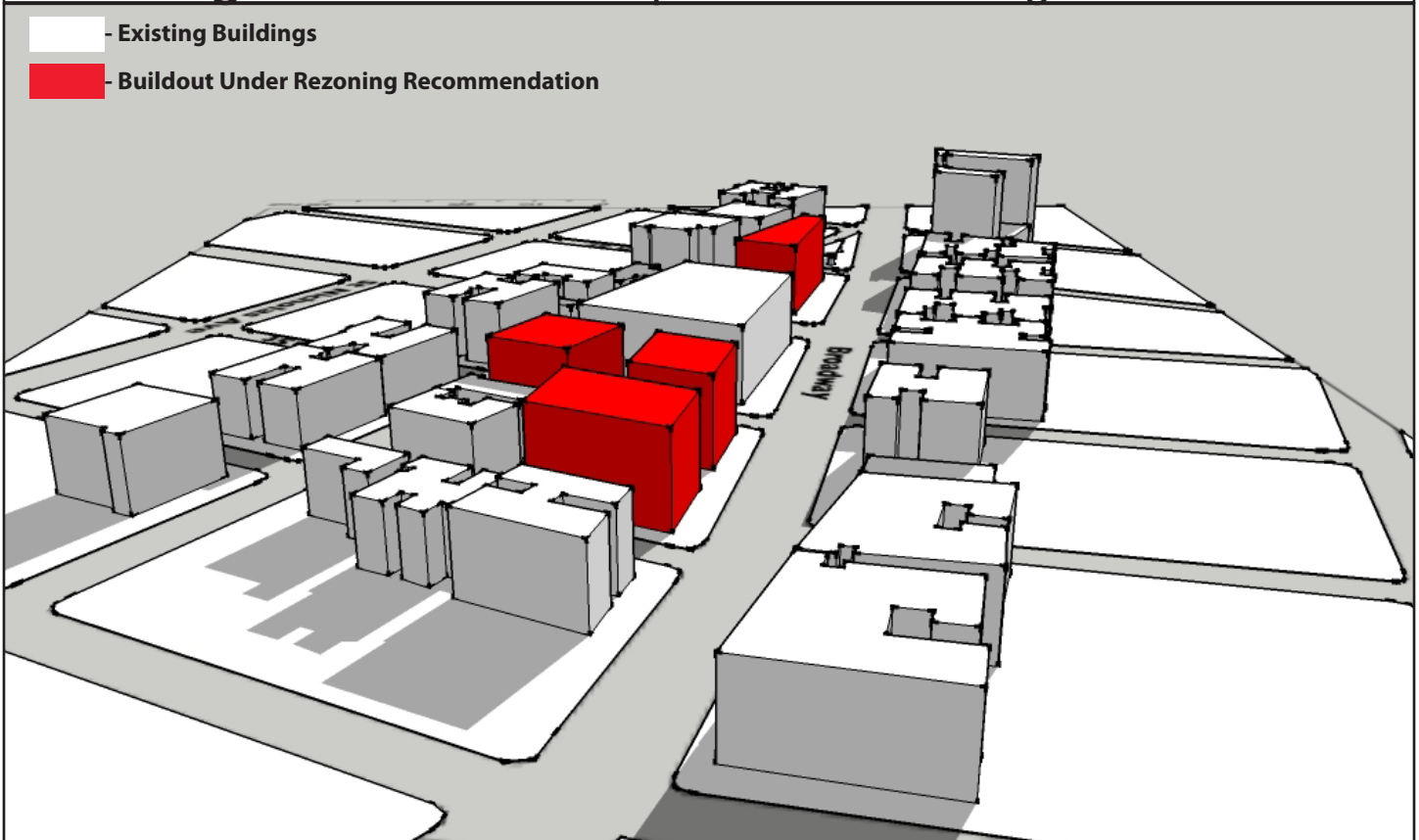


Figure 5. Area 3 Conceptual Model, Looking Northwest

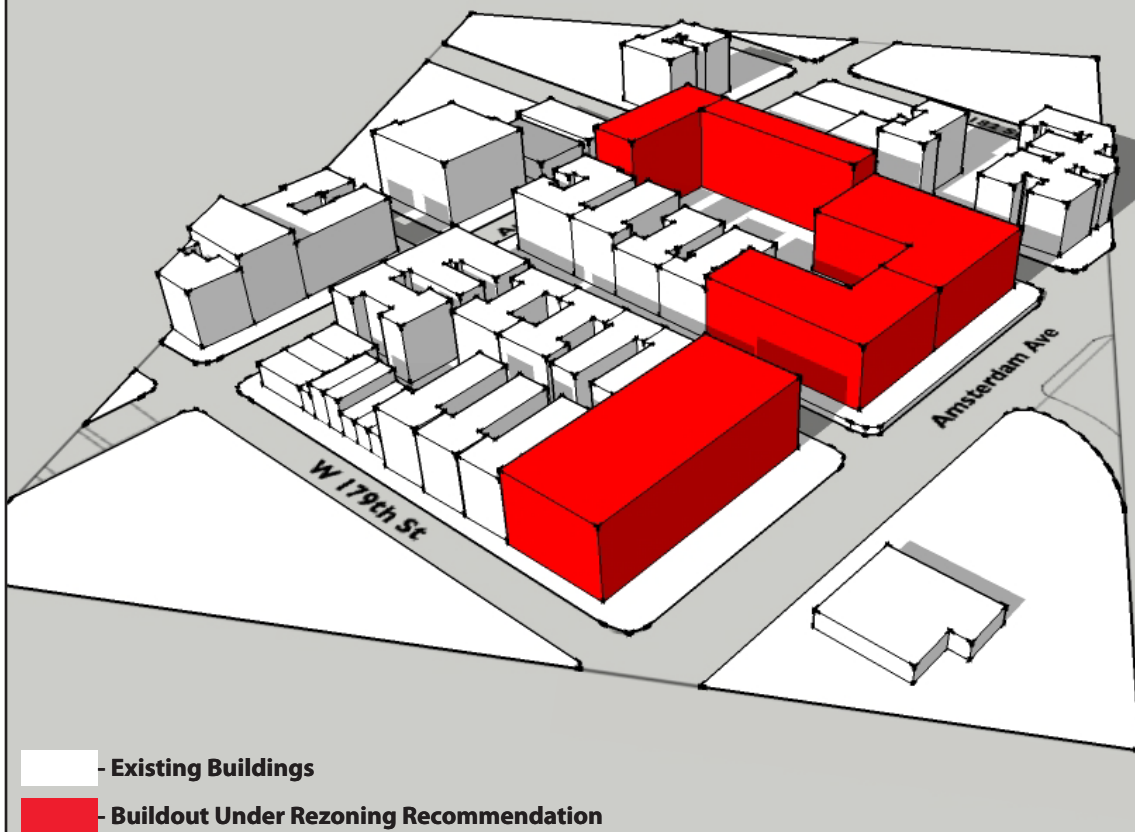


Figure 6. Area 4 Conceptual Model, Looking Northwest

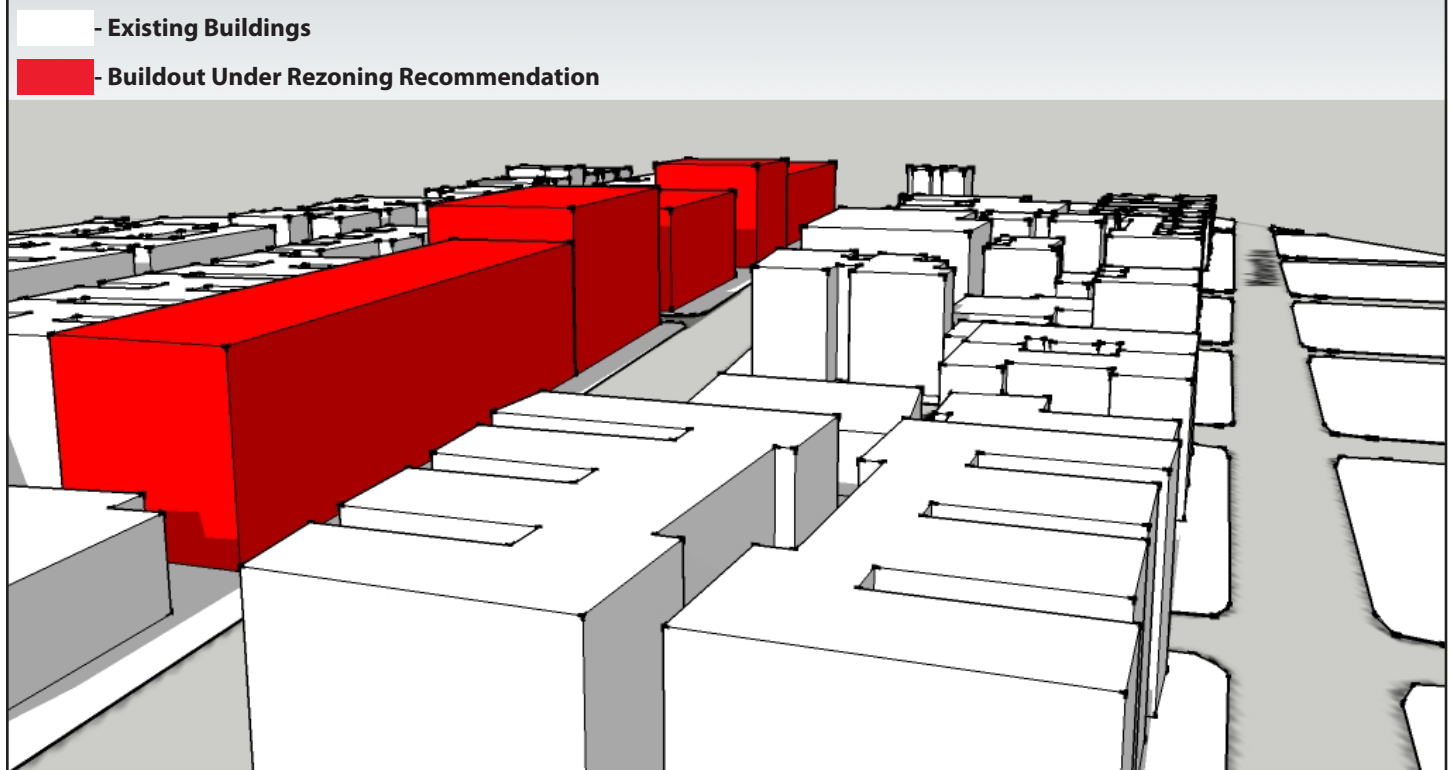
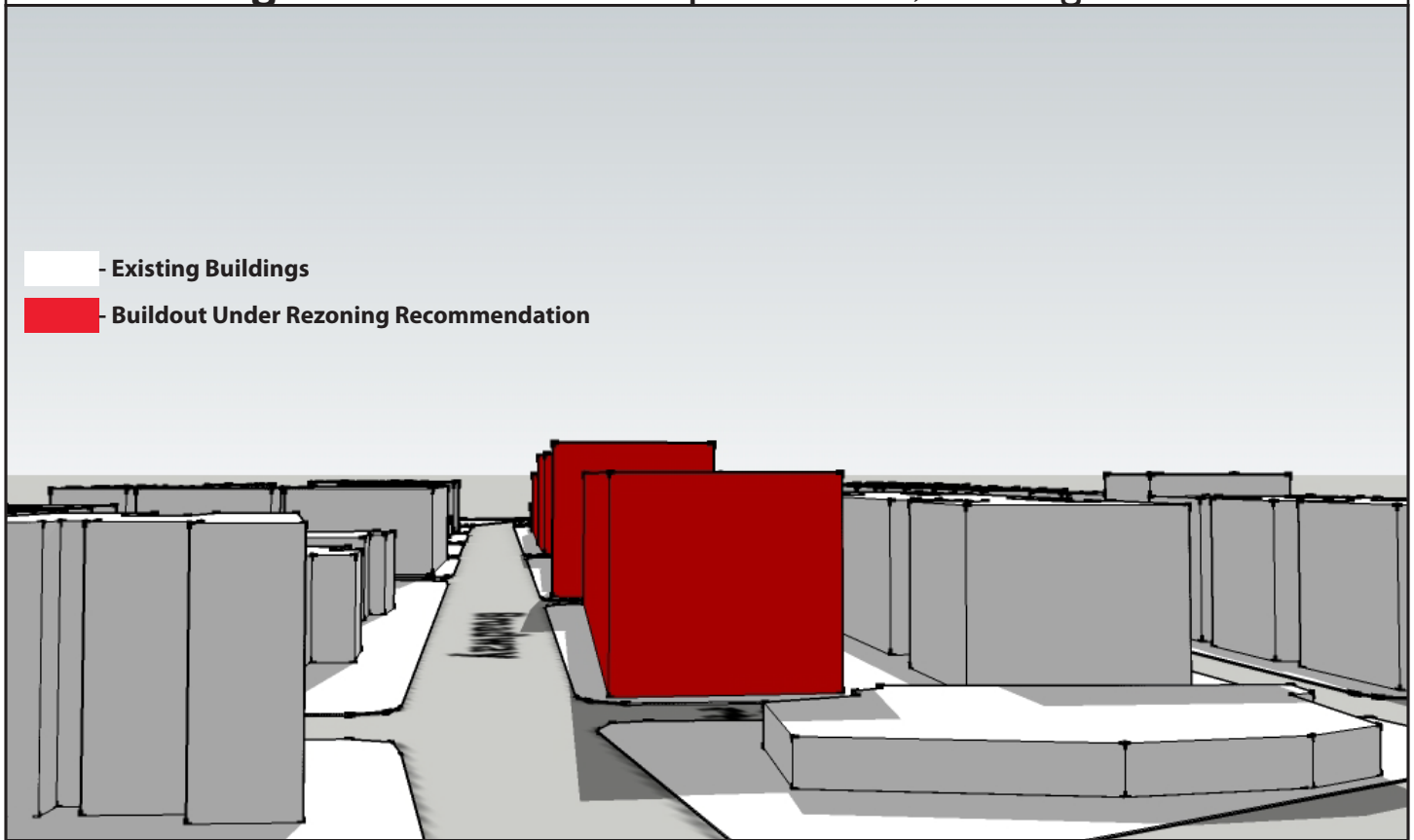


Figure 6. Area 4 Conceptual Model, Looking South



Picture 1. Area 5 Scenic View (Looking South From Payson Ave and Dyckman Street)



Picture 2. Area 5 Scenic View (Looking Northwest from Payson Ave and Riverside Dr)



Bibliography:

-New York City Department of City Planning. (2006). *Zoning Handbook*. New York, NY: New York City Department of City Planning.