



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR
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Burt Lazarin
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

May 8, 2018

Pastor Tiffany Henkel
Chair
Hell's Kitchen South Coalition
410 W. 40th Street
New York, NY 10018

**Re: Hell's Kitchen South Coalition Neighborhood Draft Plan:
Analysis of Nine Port Authority-Owned Sites**

Dear Pastor Henkel,

On April 11, 2018, the Hell's Kitchen South Coalition ("Coalition") presented its Draft Neighborhood Plan ("Draft Plan") to the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4). The Draft Plan (see attachment A) includes an analysis of nine sites the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey owns in Hell's Kitchen South (HKS) and how the sites might be developed as residential housing, commercial retail, and open public green space.

The Hell's Kitchen South Coalition is an alliance of community stakeholders including residents, business owners, and civic, business, and social organizations serving the historic core of Hell's Kitchen, from West 30th to West 42nd Streets, Ninth Avenue to Eleventh Avenue.

At its May 2, 2018 Full Board Meeting, Manhattan Community Board 4, by 42 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible, voted to thank the Coalition for its presentation and to recommend approval of the Draft Plan's concept for the development of the Port Authority sites in Hell's Kitchen South.

HISTORY: HELL'S KITCHEN SOUTH

The core of the historic Hell's Kitchen neighborhood ran from West 30th to West 42nd Streets, Ninth to Eleventh Avenues. Over the past 112 years, this core — Hell's Kitchen South — was ravaged by the largest transportation infrastructure projects in the City of New York, including building Penn Station and its rail yards (1906); the construction of

the Lincoln Tunnel (1938); the extension of the Lincoln Tunnel Dyer Avenue approaches (1957 and the mid-1970s); and, the construction of the Port Authority Bus Terminal (1949-1950).

Each successive project required the demolition of scores of apartment buildings and the displacement of hundreds of neighborhood families. Also demolished were community institutions and organizations which shattered the neighborhood cohesion. The resulting transportation infrastructure of roadways, access ramps, bus lots, and tunnel entrances and egresses still deface and divide the neighborhood today.

Déjà Vu All Over Again

In 2016, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey announced it was proposing to replace its bus terminal on Eighth Avenue and build a new one west of Ninth Avenue. One site under consideration would have called for eminent domain and the demolition of residential buildings, small neighborhood businesses, community organizations, and a community church.

The reaction of the community was immediate, its message blunt: the days of bulldozing Hell's Kitchen for transportation infrastructure were over.

In April 2016 in a town hall meeting sponsored by MCB4 and the district's elected city, state, and federal representatives, over 300 community members came to the Metro Baptist Church on West 40th Street to hear a presentation by the Port Authority about its replacement bus terminal on future projections. After the presentation the community and MCB4 made it manifestly clear that further destruction of the neighborhood by the Port Authority was not an option.

In December 2016, MCB4 and the district's elected representatives hosted a community planning session at the Metro Baptist Church with over 150 community members. It was announced at the meeting that a community coalition would be forming in order "to protect the interests of the Hell's Kitchen South neighborhood" as plans for a replacement bus terminal developed.

In February 2017, the newly formed Hell's Kitchen South Coalition held its first meeting at the Metro Baptist Church.

THE HELL'S KITCHEN SOUTH COALITION

The Hell's Kitchen South Coalition is an alliance of local residents, business owners and community, business, and social organizations. Eighty percent of the Coalition's members are residents and 20% are business owners. Community organizations include the West Side Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA), Checkpeds, Housing Conservation Coordinators (HCC), the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association (HKNA), and the Garment District Alliance. Social service organizations include Hudson Guild, Rauschenbusch Metro Ministries, The Dwelling Place, and Metro Baptist Church.

Members also include the Clinton Housing Development Corporation (CHDC) and the Hudson Yards/Hell's Kitchen Alliance (HY/HK BID).

Members of MCB4 and local elected representatives are also members of the Coalition.

The Coalition mandate seeks to “preserve, protect, and strengthen” the HKS community. To that goal, the Coalition recognized a number of issues confronting the community and set out to develop a plan to address them. The issues include:

Air Quality

Manhattan Community District 4 has the third worst air quality in the City. For the community, this is a primary health concern, especially considering the specter of the Port Authority's projection for increased bus traffic to Hell's Kitchen South in the coming decades. The absence of any plan to reduce pollution caused by vehicular traffic is alarming.

Motor vehicles, which have a chokehold on Hell's Kitchen South, contribute about 48% of emissions that lead to the formation of fine particulates. Evidence continues to mount that fine particulate matter (PM2.5 which are pollution-causing particles that are about 3 percent of the diameter of human hair) is damaging to the health of humans, especially teens and adults. A recent ground-breaking study¹, the largest to date on this health concern, found that even the briefest increase in airborne fine particulate matter PM2.5 is associated with the development of acute lower respiratory infection (ALRI) in young children.

Vehicular Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

A recent op-ed piece in the New York Times² asserts that, “the decision to turn our public streets so completely over to the automobile, as sensible as it might have seemed decades ago, nearly wrecked the quality of life in our cities.” The transportation infrastructure inflicted on Hell's Kitchen for much of the last century did more than damage the quality of life. It destroyed homes and amputated a community.

The enormous amount of vehicular traffic disgorged and reabsorbed daily by that infrastructure continues to endanger the safety and health of residents, workers, and visitors to the Hell's Kitchen South community.

¹ “Short-Term Elevation of Fine Particulate Matter Air Pollution and Acute Lower Respiratory Infection,” The research was undertaken by a team from Intermountain Healthcare, Brigham Young University, and the University of Utah, and is published online in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, an American Thoracic Society journal.

² New York Times, April 25, 2018 —“Cars Are Ruining Our Cities”
https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/25/opinion/cars-ruining-cities.html?ref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fopinion&action=click&contentCollection=opinion®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=30&pgtype=sectionfront

Affordable Housing

The need for affordable housing has been a hot button issue in New York City since the 19th Century — which is not surprising given the fact that the City has been one of the most open places in human history for the aspirations of newly arrived immigrants, dreaming entrepreneurs, and culturally diverse talents. This is especially true in the historically diverse immigrant community of Hell’s Kitchen. The need for affordable housing is acutely consequential today since the district has one of the widest gaps of income-disparity in the City.

The mandate of the Clinton Special District to the north is to preserve and strengthen the residential character of the community, maintain the mixture of income groups present in the area and ensure that the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood is not adversely affected by new development. This strengthening and maintaining of a mixture of income groups, by extension, should also apply to Hell’s Kitchen South.

Affordable housing is critical to the well-being of families, parents and children in Hell’s Kitchen South — as well as vital to the civic and economic dynamism of New York City. The Draft Plan calls for all new residential housing to include at least 30% of units as permanent affordable housing.

Public Open and Green Space

Smart urban planning recommends designing and implementing "green infrastructure" in the built environment to create a healthier urban lifestyle. Trees and plantings in green spaces act as porous bodies to disperse pollution and help in the deposition and removal of airborne pollutants, making the air cleaner — an especially urgent need in the park-starved, vehicle-congested Hell’s Kitchen South neighborhood. Open public and green space also lower levels of social isolation, a growing public health concern.

Local and Small Businesses

Part of the reason living in a city is desirable lies in the abundance of small, independent retail stores, restaurants, cafés and bars you can walk to, owners you get to know. These establishments function as essential components linking a community together. Hell’s Kitchen is an especially vibrant neighborhood because of its wealth of small businesses and dearth of big box stores. The Draft Plan calls for affordable, small scale retail to serve — and enliven — the proposed new residential development.

THE DRAFT PLAN

Methodology

The Hell’s Kitchen South Coalition Neighborhood Draft Plan grew out of and was informed by community input from a number of public meetings called by the Coalition’s Steering Committee, including two town hall meetings and three full community meetings where public input was solicited, collected, and collated. The Coalition’s Planning Committee examined the existing zoning of the area and tabulated the existing land uses including the number of affordable residential units and the amount of open

space. The Draft Plan developed over several months through numerous Coalition Steering Committee and Planning Committee meetings.

Community input from public meetings was incorporated into each iteration of the developing Plan.

At the Coalition community meeting on February 15th of this year, the membership reviewed the Draft Plan and feedback was again solicited. Suggestions and recommendations from that meeting and from the April 11th Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee meeting will be incorporated into the next iteration of the Plan, which the Coalition plans to present to MCB4 at a later date.

The Goals

The goals of the Draft Plan were:

1. To comply with existing zoning;
2. To improve air quality;
3. To generate new public green space;
4. To generate affordable housing; and,
5. To preserve and foster local businesses.

To design a framework for implementing these goals, the Coalition looked at nine Port Authority-owned sites from West 30th to West 40th Streets, between Ninth and Eleventh Avenues. The sites were visited by the Coalition's Planning Committee, studied, photographed, and analyzed for square footage, elevation, current use, and existing condition. Over a period of almost a year, the Coalition's Planning Committee scrutinized each site to determine how best to incorporate the community's goals, input, and recommendations in developing the sites. Schematics were made showing how each site might be developed with commercial, residential, and public open space and how much square footage might be generated by each component.

Platforming would be required over some sites and some form of air filtration or ventilation of platformed-over roadways necessary. Building heights would conform to current zoning.

The Board notes that the Special Hudson Yards District zoning would have to be amended to accomplish some of the Coalition's goals and a sub-district created for development rights to be transferred. The concept to establish a Sub-district within the Special Hudson Yards District would allow, in the mid-blocks between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, transfer of development rights from Port Authority owned properties (Dyer Avenue rights of way and open cuts) to larger Port Authority sites such as the bus terminal on Eighth Avenue and Galvin Plaza. The transfer of development rights would be generated from the public open spaces, which cannot be developed with revenue-generating uses, such as commercial or residential buildings.

The largest of the nine sites, Galvin Plaza between West 39th and West 40th Streets, Tenth to Eleventh Avenues, offers — as well as residential and commercial development possibilities — the potential of parking buses, thereby getting them off midtown streets.

The Draft Plan, if implemented, would generate:

1. Substantial residential housing, including 30% affordable housing
2. Significant public open green space;
3. Commercial, office space and affordable neighborhood retail; and,
4. An ongoing revenue stream for the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

As well as provide a 150,000 square feet enclosed bus parking facility.

Knitting A Community Back Together

The Board congratulates the Coalition on its detailed, thoughtful, and community-informed Draft Plan — a plan grounded in real numbers and smart urban planning. The Board also commends the Coalition for its proactive and positive engagement with the Port Authority about the possibility of developing its sites.

The Board is especially supportive of the Coalition's efforts to knit the Hell's Kitchen South community back together again with affordable housing and green space that winds like a small green river through the central core. A restored neighborhood in the heart of midtown Manhattan is good not only for the community: it is vital for the future of the City.

And the Draft Plan is an encouraging response to the Board's call that before the current Port Authority Bus Terminal is replaced and bus traffic increased, the air quality of Manhattan District 4 must meet Federal environmental air quality standards. This means all options for reducing bus congestion in Hell's Kitchen — and the attendant pollution — must be thoroughly considered. Building a tour and charter bus layover facility, as the Draft Plan proposes, to replace current on-street bus parking spaces thereby reducing the number of *all* buses circling and idling through the district is one such option.

At the Coalition community meeting on February 15th of this year, U.S. Congressman Jerrold Nadler told the attendees that through continued activism they could “seize this opportunity” for improvements to their neighborhood.

The Board agrees. If opportunity is knocking, the Coalition's Draft Plan may just be the way to answer the call.

The Board looks forward to the final iteration of the Neighborhood Plan.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazarin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



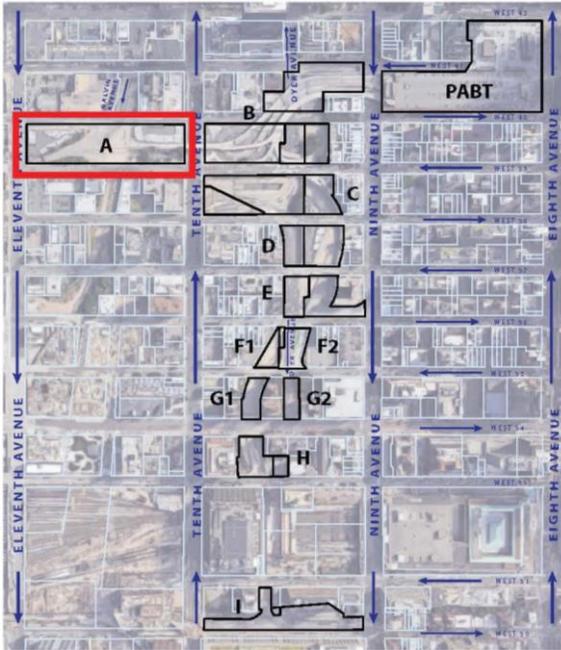
Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

Enclosure

Cc Hon. Jerrold Nadler, U.S. Congressman
Hon. Brad Holyman, New York State Senate
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, Council Speaker
Marisa Lago, Chair, Department of City Planning
Luis Sanchez, Manhattan Borough Commissioner, Department Of Transportation
Rick Cotton, Executive Director, Port Authority of New York & New Jersey

Site A

Location: between West 39th & West 40th Streets and 10th and 11th Avenues



Existing Condition



Total size of site is 158,000 sqft.



Proposed Development



- Public Green/Open Space
- Residential
- Commercial
- Affordable Small Scale Retail
- Ground Floor Retail



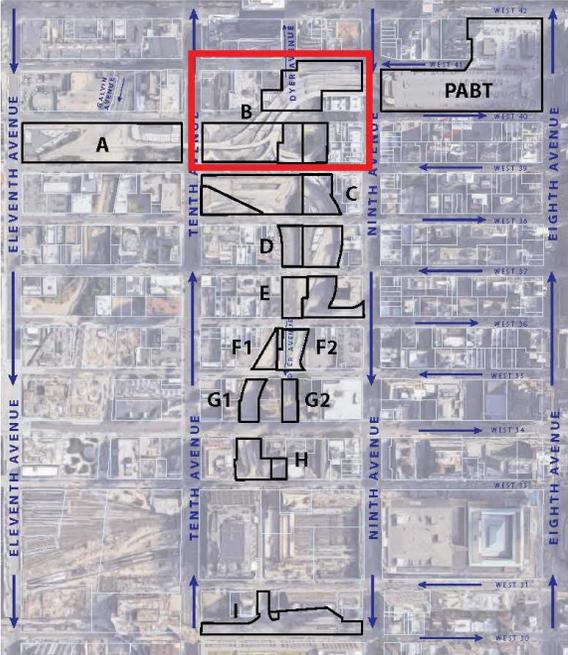
■ Total of 100,000 sq ft of platforming required

Total Proposed Development

• Commercial	:	1,548,000 sqft
• Residential	:	668,400 sqft
• Public Green/Open Space	:	24,900 sqft

Site B (Option 1)

Location: between West 39th & West 41st Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



Existing Condition



- Total Proposed Development
- Commercial : 0 sqft
 - Residential : 56,250 sqft
 - Public Green/Open Space : 59,500 sqft

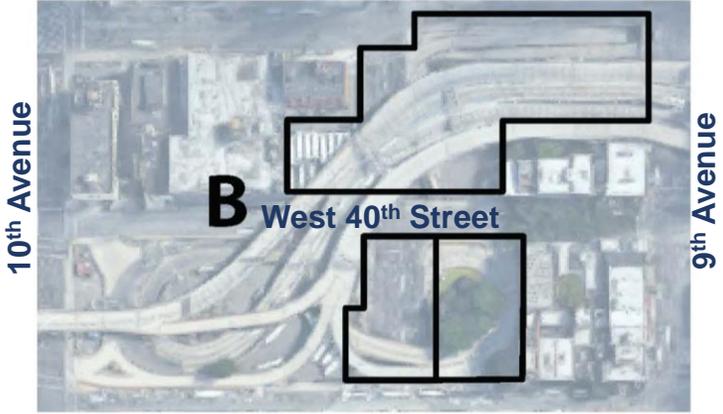
Total size of site is 34,500 sqft.



Proposed Development



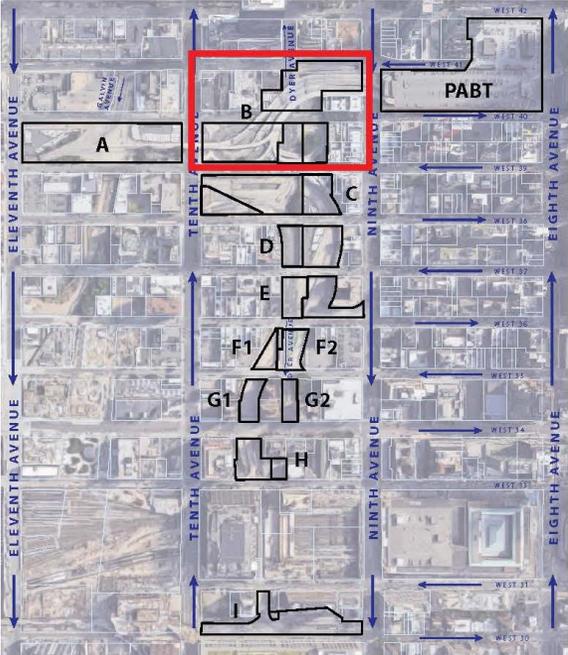
- Public Green/Open Space
- Residential



No platforming required

Site B (Option 2)

Location: between West 39th & West 41st Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



Existing Condition



Total size of site is 34,500 sqft.



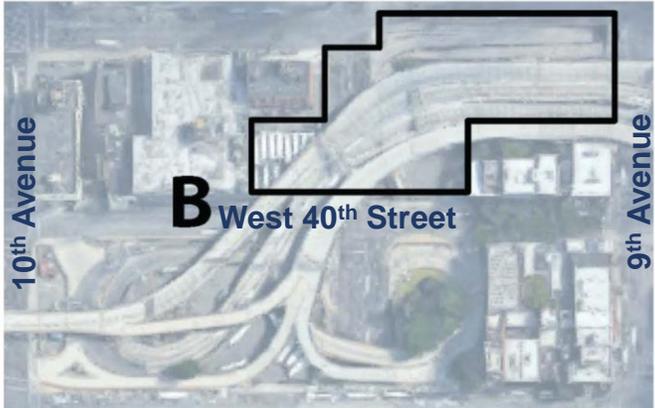
Total Proposed Development

- Commercial : 0 sqft
- Residential : 56,250 sqft
- Public Green/Open Space : 27,000 sqft

Proposed Development



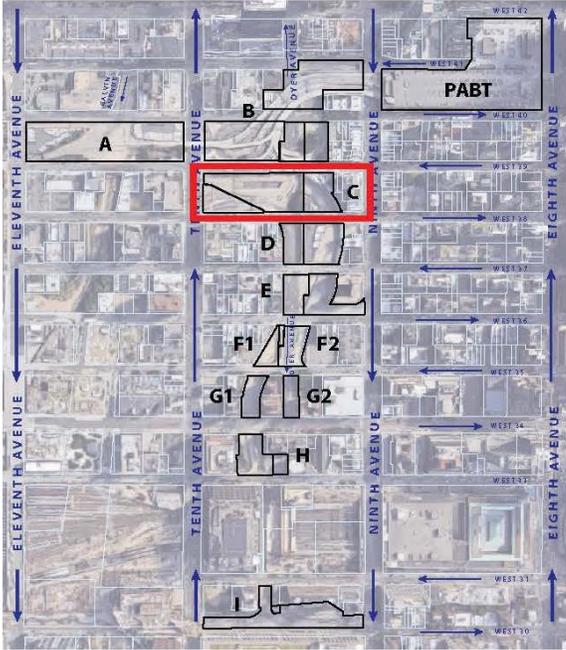
- Public Green/Open Space
- Residential
- Ground Floor Retail



- No platforming required

Site C

Location: between West 38th & West 39th Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



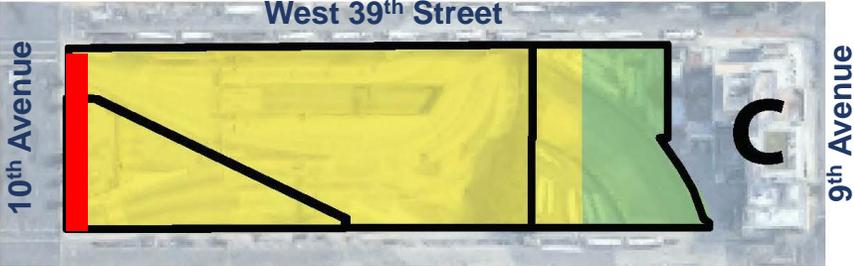
Existing Condition



Total size of site is 138,000 sqft.



Proposed Development



- Public Green/Open Space
- Residential
- Ground Floor Retail



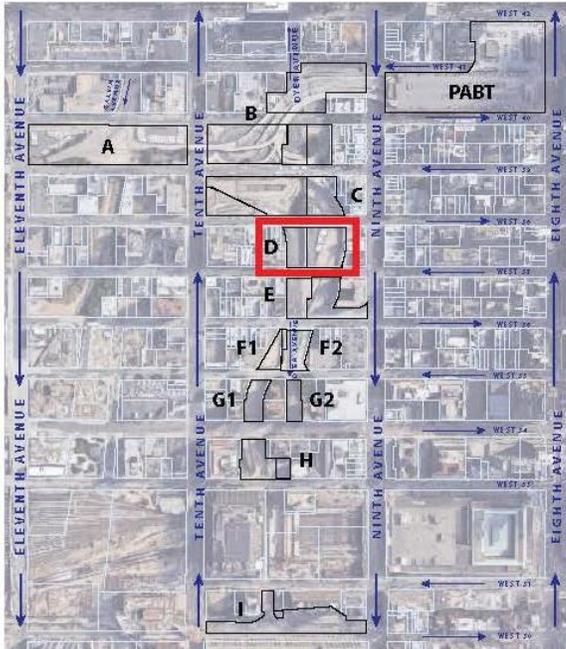
■ Total of 122,500 sq ft of platforming required

Total Proposed Development

• Commercial	:	0 sqft
• Residential	:	829,302 sqft
• Public Green/Open Space	:	22,500 sqft

Site D

Location: between West 37th & West 38th Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



Existing Condition



Total size of site is 56,850 sqft.



Proposed Development



- Public Green/Open Space
- Residential



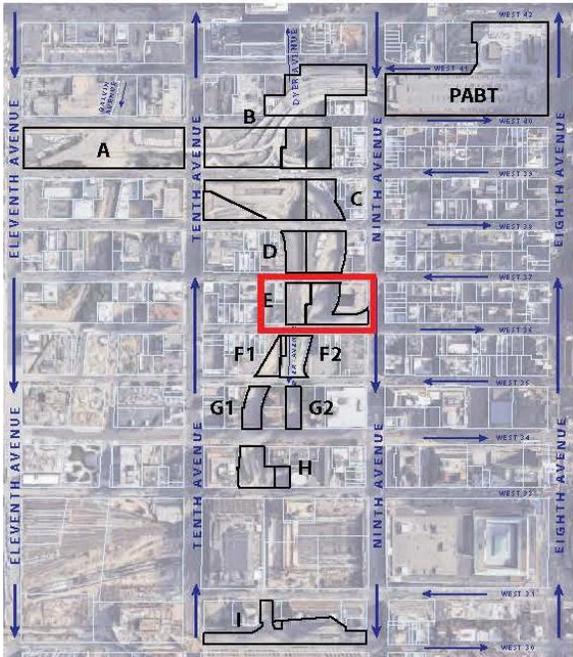
■ Total of 37,150 sq ft of platforming required

Total Proposed Development

- Commercial : 0 sqft
- Residential : 167,055 sqft
- Public Green/Open Space : 29,100 sqft

Site E

Location: between West 36th & West 37th Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



Existing Condition



Total size of site is 29,100 sqft.



Proposed Development



Public Green/Open Space



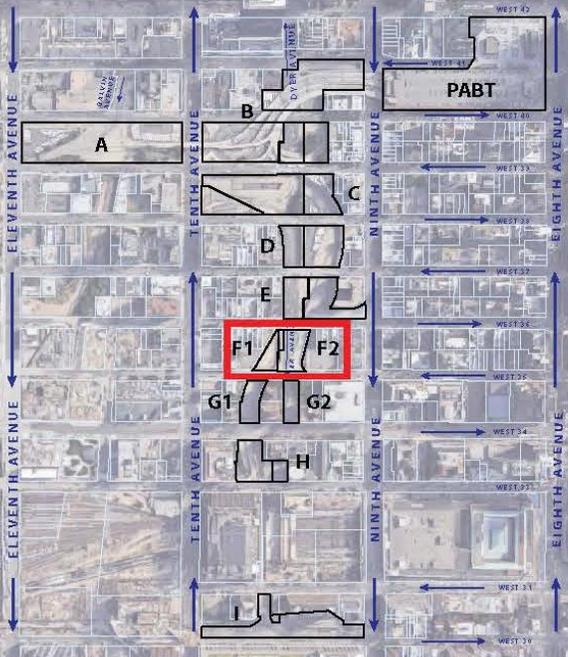
Total of 29,100 sq ft of platforming required

Total Proposed Development

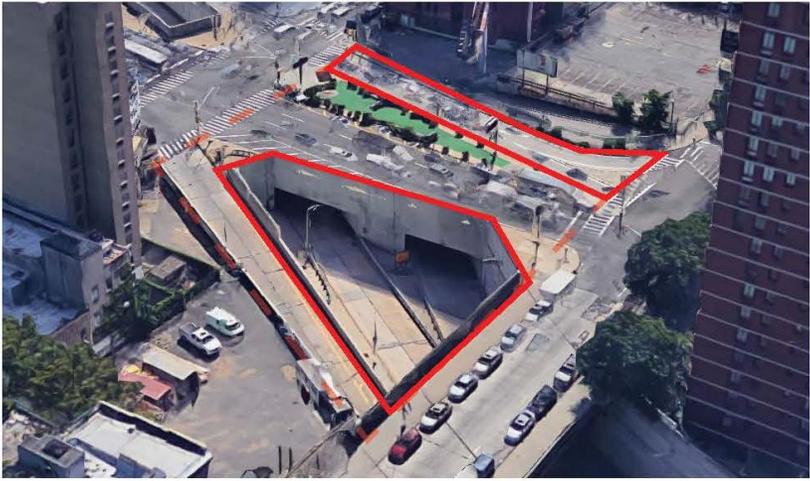
- Commercial : 0 sqft
- Residential : 0 sqft
- Public Green/Open Space : 29,100 sqft

Site F

Location: between West 35th & West 36th Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



Existing Condition



Total size of site is 15,200 sqft.



Proposed Development



Public Green/Open Space



Total of 8,900 sq ft of platforming required

Total Proposed Development

- Commercial : 0 sqft
- Residential : 0 sqft
- Public Green/Open Space : 15,200 sqft

Site G

Location: between West 34th & West 35th Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues

Existing Condition



Total size of site is 28,400 sqft.

Proposed Development



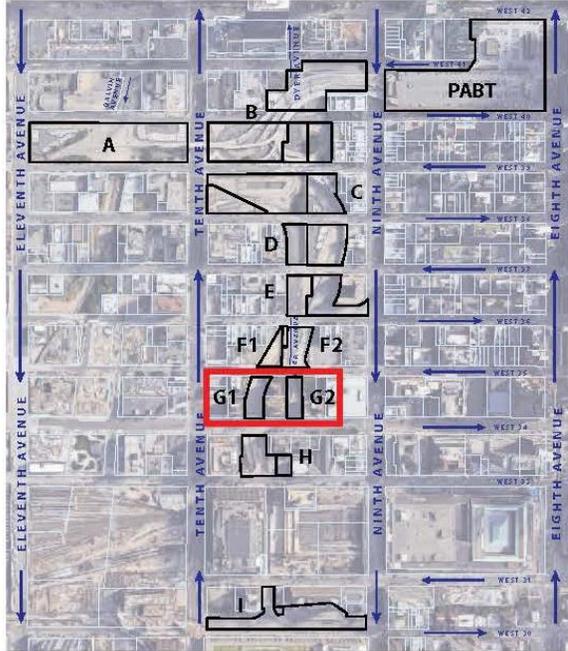
- Public Green/Open Space
- Residential



- Total of 20,000 sq ft of platforming required

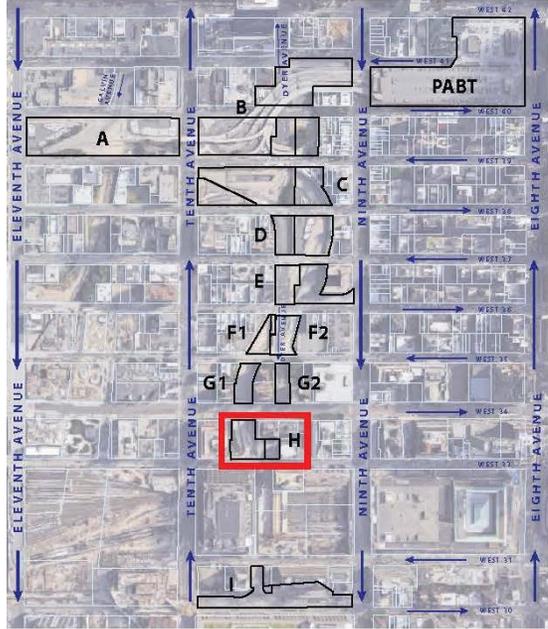
Total Proposed Development

- Commercial : 0 sqft
- Residential : 155,570 sqft
- Public Green/Open Space : 9,700 sqft



Site H

Location: between West 33rd & West 34th Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



Existing Condition



Total size of site is 22,906 sqft.



Proposed Development



- Public Green/Open Space
- Residential



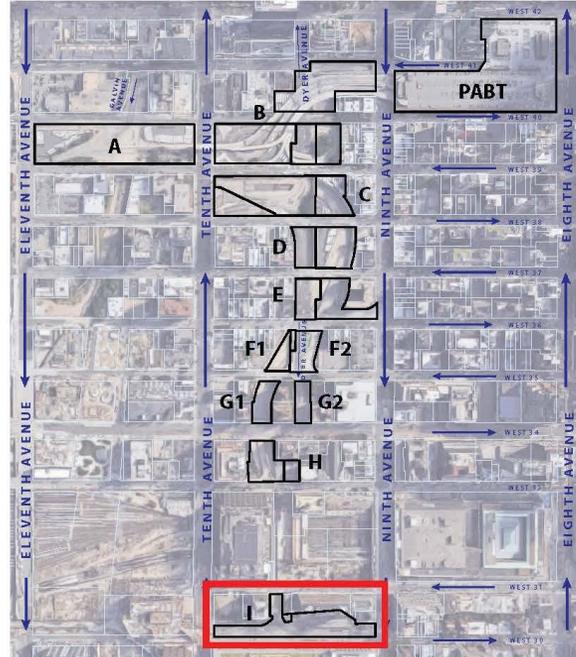
■ Total of 5,000 sq ft of platforming required

Total Proposed Development

- Commercial : 0 sqft
- Residential : 136,872 sqft
- Public Green/Open Space : 11,500 sqft

Site I

Location: between West 30th & West 31st Streets and 9th and 10th Avenues



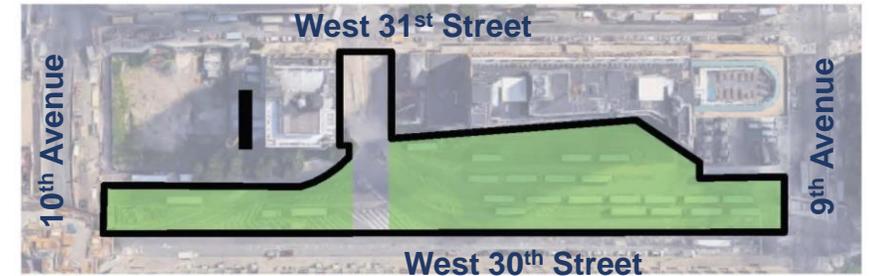
Existing Condition



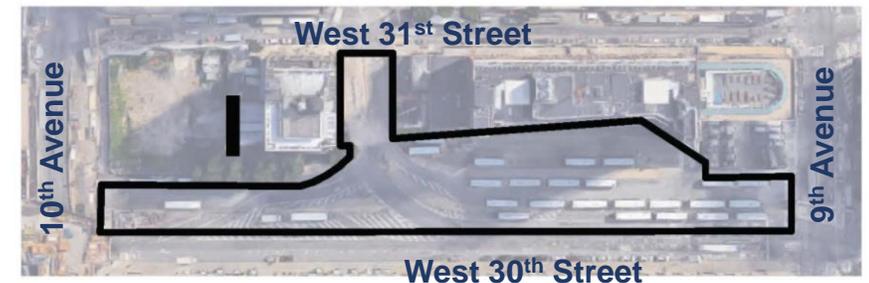
Total size of site is 63,277 sqft.



Proposed Development



Public Green/Open Space



No platforming required

Total Proposed Development

- Commercial : 0 sqft
- Residential : 0 sqft
- Public Green/Open Space : 63,277 sqft