



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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DELORES RUBIN

Chair

Jesse R. Bodine

District Manager

April 11, 2016

Chairman John Degnan
The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey
4 World Trade Center
150 Greenwich Street – 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10006

Re PABT International Design + Deliverability Competition

Dear Chair Degnan,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) welcomes the statement that the final choice of a new bus terminal from the Port Authority Bus Terminal's (PABT) International Design + Deliverability Competition ("Competition") "will be informed," by among others factors, input from "neighbors of the bus terminal."

As neighbors, we look forward to informing you.

We also welcome the Port Authority's "promise to continue to solicit public input and keep the public informed throughout the competition process" — though unfortunately the Port Authority neither solicited public input nor kept the public informed about the content or the release date of the Competition despite repeated requests by the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen community, this Board, and our elected state and city representatives to be so informed.

Therefore we were especially appreciative of Port Authority Director Pat Foye's statement about the importance of any plan for a new bus terminal "minimizing impacts on the community" since nowhere among the "key agency objectives" in Port Authority's press release do we find "preserving neighborhood homes, businesses, houses of worship, and community institutions." Surely their obliteration would constitute major —if not terminal— "impacts on the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen community."

And we appreciate the Port Authority agreeing to a community town hall meeting on April 18th. We look forward to the Port Authority's description of the new bus terminal planning effort and we welcome the opportunity for a public dialogue.

FIRST DO NO HARM

A primary key objective which should inform participants in the Competition is that the affected Hell's Kitchen South neighborhood is the home of many people, businesses, and important community organizations and the area immediately west of the existing bus terminal is an essential part of the larger Hell's Kitchen neighborhood. *It must not be demolished.*

This Hell's Kitchen South Core area ("HKS Core Area" – see two maps) is bounded by West 41st Street on the north, West 35th Street on the south, Tenth Avenue on the west, and Ninth Avenue on the east. The Port Authority has preliminarily identified part of this area for the Bus Terminal expansion *even though this area is governed by the Special Hudson Yards District and its Hell's Kitchen Subdistrict has specific restrictions against demolition.*

Parts of four blocks — on the northwest corner of Ninth Avenue and 40th Street; the north and south frontages of West 40th Streets between Ninth and Dyer Avenues; the east and west frontages of Ninth Avenue between West 39th and West 40th Streets; and a small midblock portion on the southern side of West 39th Street between Ninth and Dyer Avenues (the "Affected Area" within the Core Area) — are shown in the Port Authority's September 2015 "Midtown Bus Master Plan" for the site of a new or interim bus terminal and ramps. Properties in the Affected Area would have to be condemned by the Port Authority for the new or interim bus terminal, resulting in the destruction of residences, businesses and community facilities, or, as the Competition guidelines has it, "the acquisition of private real estate."

Participants in the Competition should be apprised of the fact that homes, businesses, houses of worship, and social service organizations are more than "private real estate." They are the essential components of the Hell's Kitchen South neighborhood. Any plan to improve the current Port Authority Bus Terminal should assume the preservation of homes and businesses in the affected area.

THE HISTORIC CORE OF HELL'S KITCHEN SOUTH

The core of historic Hell's Kitchen ran from West 30th to West 42nd Streets, and from Ninth Avenue to Eleventh Avenue, comprising Hell's Kitchen South. Over the past 110 years, it is this portion of Hell's Kitchen that has been impacted the most by the largest transportation infrastructure projects in the City of New York. Projects have included:

- The construction of Penn Station and its adjacent rail yards (1906);
- The construction of the Lincoln Tunnel (1938);
- The West Side Improvement creating a rail cut between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues

(1934);

- 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 improvement required the demolition of hundreds of apartments and the displacement of hundreds of neighborhood families. Also displaced were community institutions.

The HKS Core Area is a busy, vibrant neighborhood, part of the larger Hell's Kitchen area that stretches from West 59th Street to West 34th Street, Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River (see Land Use Map).

The area includes:

Residences

There are 1,430 housing apartments in the HKS Core Area, 283 units in the smaller Affected Area. Many of these apartments are affordable, rent regulated homes occupied by long-term low and moderate income residents. This stable population would be extremely hard-pressed to find affordable housing elsewhere. Many families have lived for generations in this neighborhood and have extended families nearby.

Approximately 84 percent of the buildings in the HKS Core Area were built in or before 1879. The Ninth Avenue main street and blocks west of Ninth represent the remnant of the most historic part of Hell's Kitchen. *A row of nine buildings in the Target Area, constructed prior to 1885, at 523-539 Ninth Avenue, are eligible for State National Register designation.*

Businesses

Ninth Avenue, running through the Core Area, is the "Main Street" of Hell's Kitchen. It is a bustling retail corridor which offers a wide variety of services, primarily in ground floor small stores, with residential units above. *In the Affected Area alone there are 30 businesses, including 15 restaurants and eight stores.*

Community Institutions

Metropolitan Community Church and MCC Charities

The Metropolitan Community Church (MCCNY) at 446 West 36th Street offers a spiritual home for all people, particularly LGBTQI people. Separate services are given in English and in Spanish. MCCNY provides social services through MCCNY Charities, an independent 501(c)3 comprehensive social service organization. MCCNY Charities:

- Operates an emergency shelter'
- Provides services to over 1,000 homeless LGBTQ youth per year;
- Operates a food pantry providing 450 bag lunches and 250 bags of groceries per week'
- Offers employment opportunities, including a skills-building workshop, job training, and job placement.

The Global Justice Institute

The Global Justice Institute (GJI) is an independent 501(c)3 and is housed at MCC. It is an umbrella organization, coordinating justice centers around the world. GJI allows for quick responses to events coordinated by people on the ground, and provides a place for spiritual activists from around the world for retreats, trainings and meetings.

THE IMPACTED AREA

As well as people's homes and businesses, there are also important community facilities in the Affected Area. Most of these facilities provide services for not only local people, but also for individuals from other parts of Manhattan. They include:

Metro Baptist Church/RMM

At the heart of the Hell's Kitchen South neighborhood is the Metro Baptist Church at 410 West 40th Street. The building was built at the turn of the 20th Century and originally housed the St. Clemens Polish-Catholic Church. The building still maintains many beautiful historic features; the sanctuary has ceiling murals and windows reflecting its Polish-Catholic origin. The church has over 100 members.

The service arm of Metro Baptist Church, Rauschenbusch Ministries (RMM), provides essential services and programs for the wider Hell's Kitchen neighborhood and mid-town Manhattan. RMM has become a lifeline for thousands of the most vulnerable people in the city. RMM employs 12 people, who are assisted by several hundred volunteers. Services include:

- After-school tutoring program for 30 to 40 students each weekday during the school year;
- Community activities for 10 to 20 teenagers on weekdays;

- A food pantry for over 700 families each month;
- A rooftop farm which donates all its fresh produce to the food pantry;
- Weekly support groups and education to dozens of HIV positive residents; and,
- Empowerment programs for military veterans and victims of domestic violence.

Hudson Guild's Head Start and Early Learning classes, housed in the Metro Baptist Church, serve 40 families. This low-cost program with multicultural and bi-lingual staff includes school readiness educational instruction and a focus on social/emotional development.

Clinton Housing Development Company (CHDC)

The non-profit Clinton Housing Development Company (CHDC), located at 403 West 40th Street, is also in the Affected Area. Founded in 1973, CHDC initially focused on protecting the historic Hell's Kitchen community and stabilizing the neighborhood. CHDC expanded to providing permanent affordable housing and housing services. Many of its developments were converted from vacant or poorly managed properties into quality low-and-moderate income housing.

In 1991, CHDC entered into partnerships with social service organizations to create new housing for special needs and homeless populations.

A total of 75 buildings are owned or leased by CHDC in Clinton/Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea, from West 53rd Street to West 17th Streets. Of these, 22 are owned by CHDC subsidiaries; 17 are managed by CHDC. Within the Hell's Kitchen South area from West 35th Street to West 40th Street, CHDC owns or leases 14 buildings with 100 affordable apartments. A seven-building affordable housing complex at 401 West 40th Street, owned and managed by CHDC, houses 38 low-income families in the Affected Area.

The Dwelling Place

The Dwelling Place at 409 West 40th Street, founded in 1977 by the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, New York, provides food and shelter for homeless women and their children in a nurturing environment. A team of eleven workers assists women at this transitional residence with emotional support and help finding treatment and affordable permanent housing. Over 75 percent of the graduates find and remain in permanent housing and are economically independent — a more successful model than city-run shelters.

The Uprising

The Mark Fisher Fitness (MFF) business at 411 West 39th Street, created a 501(c)3 non-profit called The Uprising, which provides opportunities for MFF members to donate their time to one of three programs:

- LevelUp Academy: Mentors provide day-long sessions for high school students and teenagers in personal development, creative expression, fitness and nutrition.
- SWARMS: Volunteers upgrade spaces that teenagers use such as schools, playgrounds and community centers.
- Uprising Connect: Volunteers work on meaningful projects around the city with organizations such as the Ali Forney Center and Story Pirates.

The Damayan Migrant Workers Association

The Damayan Association at 406 West 40th Street is a grassroots non-profit organization for Filipino migrant workers, particularly domestic workers. Launched in 2000, Damayan seeks to educate and mobilize Filipino workers to uphold their rights. Services include educational programs, free/low-cost legal and health services, and job and leadership training. Damayan has over 8,000 dues-paying members.

CONCLUSION

MCB4 values this portion of Hell’s Kitchen, particularly in light of all of the historically and dramatically altering infrastructure development that this part of the neighborhood has experienced in the past century. To paraphrase the philosopher George Santayana, those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. This Board and this community have not forgotten its history.

This Board believes that it is crucial to preserve the homes, businesses, and institutions in this area in order to maintain our neighborhood character. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the selected design takes the appropriate measures to help us achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



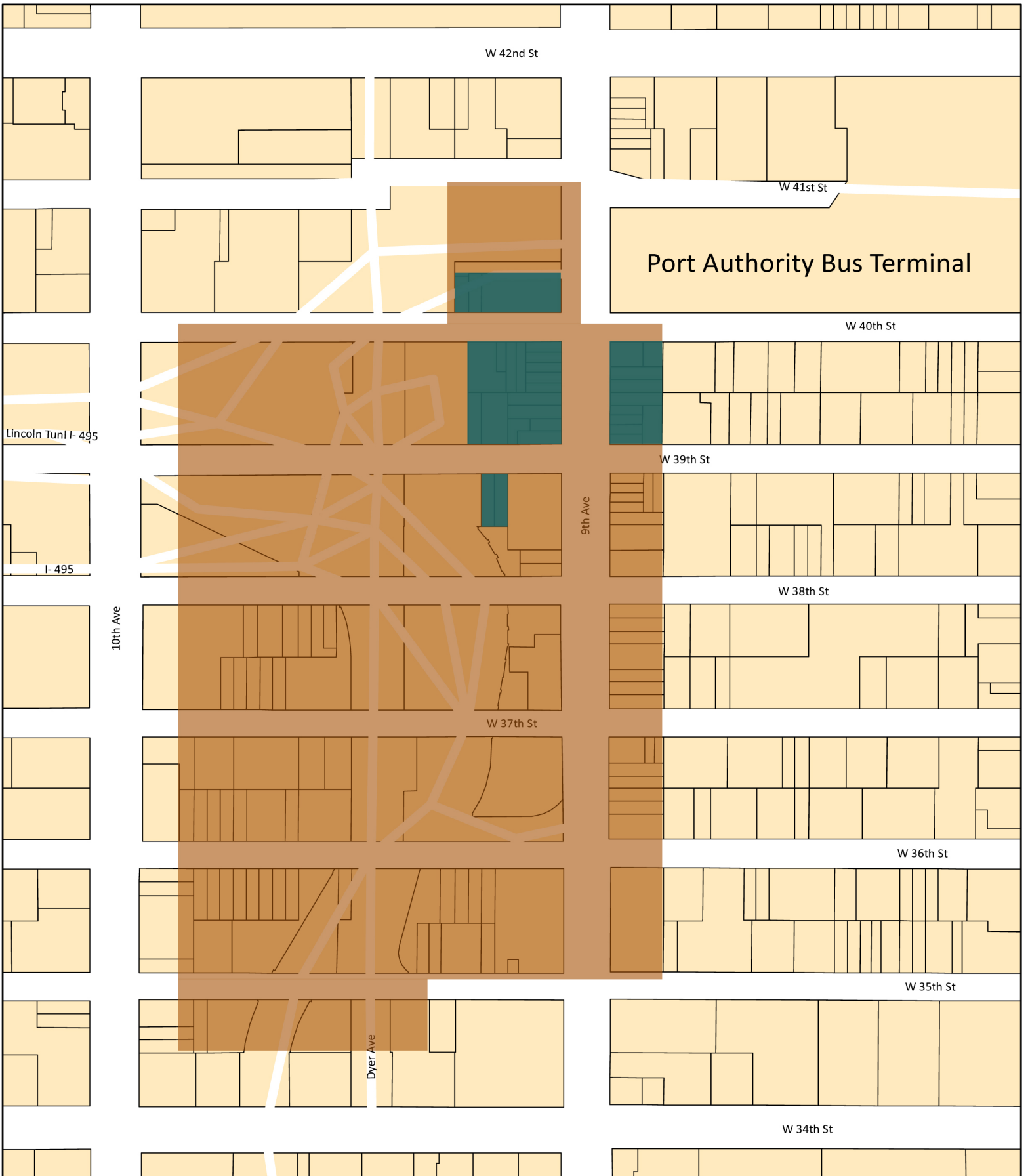
Delores Rubin
MCB4 Chair
and Zoning Committee





Jean Daniel Noland, Chair
Clinton Hell’s Kitchen Land Use

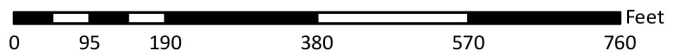
cc: Hon. Brad Hoylman, State Senate
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, State Senate
Hon. Richard Gottfried, State Assembly
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council
Pat Foye, Executive Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Hell's Kitchen South



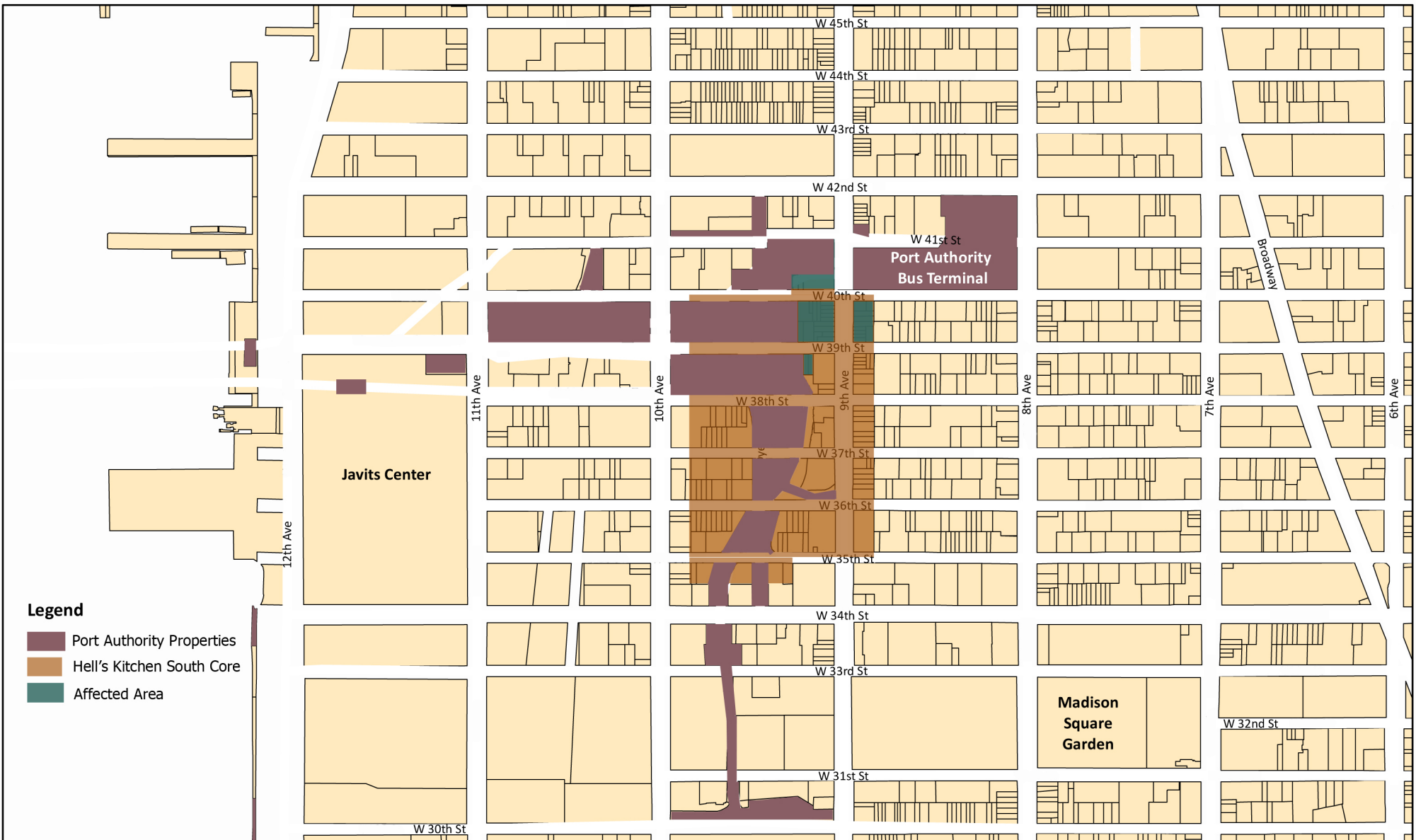
Legend

-  Affected Area
-  Hell's Kitchen South Core

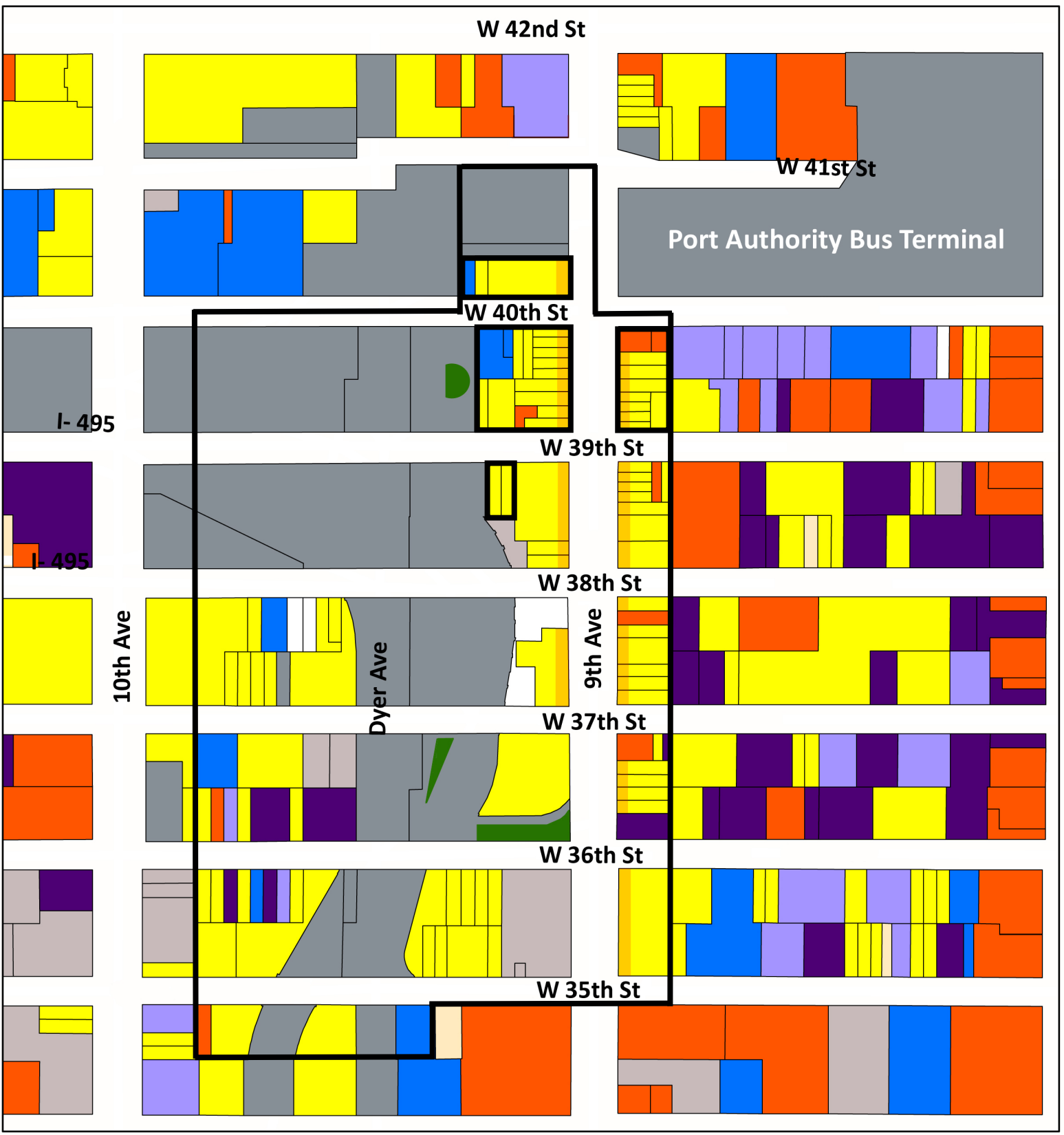


Source: NYC Department of City Planning, February 2016

Hell's Kitchen in Larger Context with Port Authority Properties



Land Uses in Hell's Kitchen South



- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Residential | Industrial & Manufacturing | Open Space |
| Residential & Ground Floor Commercial | Transportation & Utility | Parking Facilities |
| Commercial Office Buildings | Community Facilities | Vacant |
| Hotels | No Data | |

Source: NYC Department of City Planning, February 2016

