MSMX

Midtown South Mixed-Use Neighborhood Plan

City Planning Commission Review Session

January 21, 2025



Housing



Economy



Public Realm

- Allow for **more housing** by mapping **high density districts**
- **Require affordable housing** in new construction and conversions via MIH
- **Remove existing restrictions** on converting large buildings to housing
- **Allow community uses** such as schools, libraries and museums

- **Continue to allow** a mix of businesses including **light manufacturing**, **wholesalers**, **offices**, and **other commercial** businesses
- Utilize new tools to promote **commercial uses** and **live-work**
- **Explore non-zoning tools** to further support economic sectors

- Incentivize transit improvements and public spaces to **improve the public realm**
- **Craft urban design rules** to balance high density with vibrant, pedestrian-oriented streetscape
- Explore non-zoning approaches to **improve quality of life** by working with partner agencies

Proposed Actions

Zoning Map Amendment
Enable growth of housing and jobs with zoning districts appropriate for the Midtown South urban fabric.

Zoning Text Amendment
Apply Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and establish a Special District to support pedestrian-oriented bulk regulations and incentivize public realm improvements.

The MSMX Plan will:

Create ~9,700 homes
including up to 2,900 income-restricted homes

Support economic resiliency
with Midtown South's 135,000 jobs and 7,500+ businesses

Outline

1. Introduction

2. Background

3. Existing Conditions

4. Engagement

5. Proposal

6. Environmental + RER

Study Area

Community Districts 4 and 5

Represented by: Council Members Erik Bottcher and Keith Powers

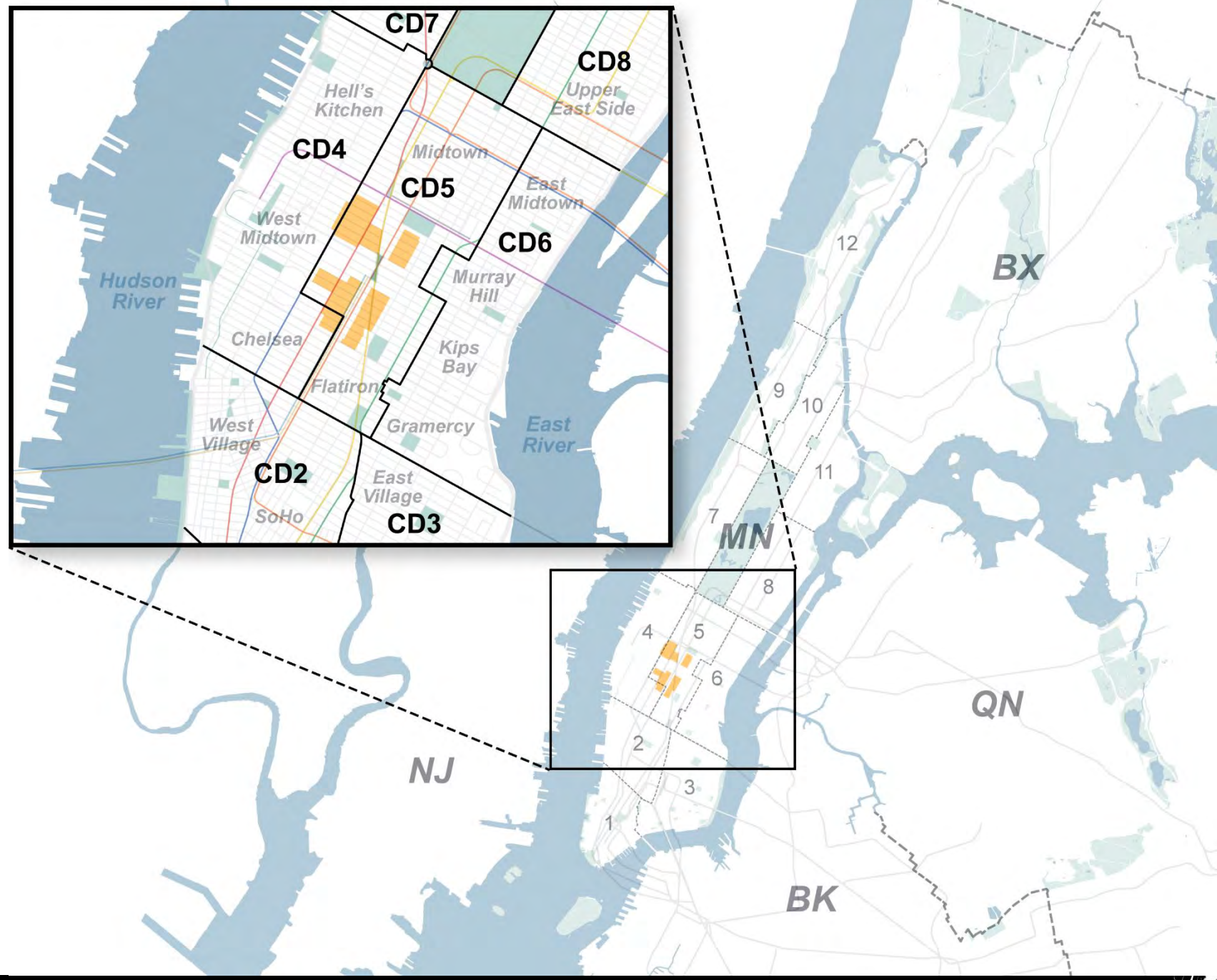
Centrally located

Exceptional transit access

Proximity to jobs and amenities

Surrounded by mixed-use neighborhoods

Five-decade old manufacturing zoning



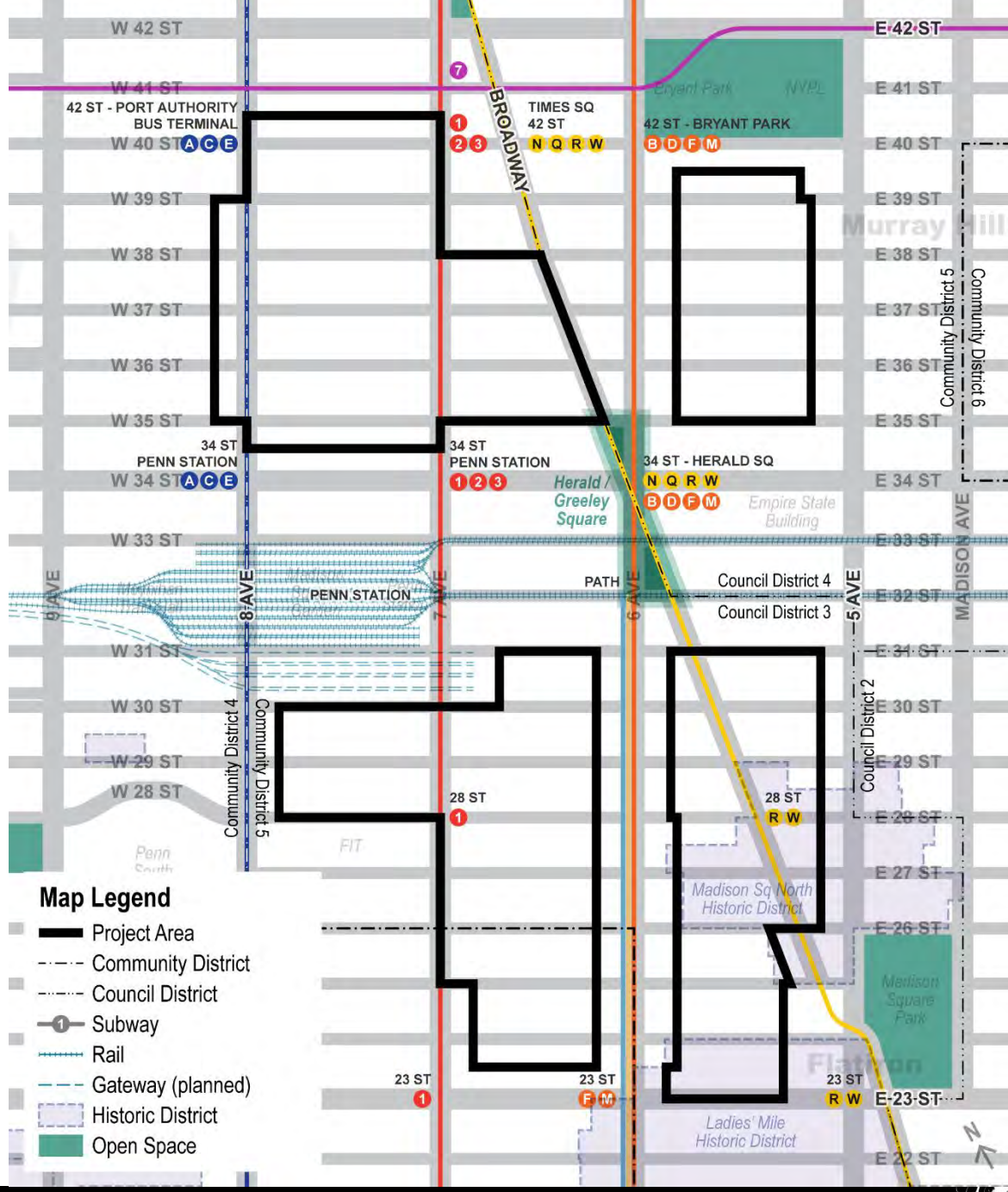
Study Area

Project Area

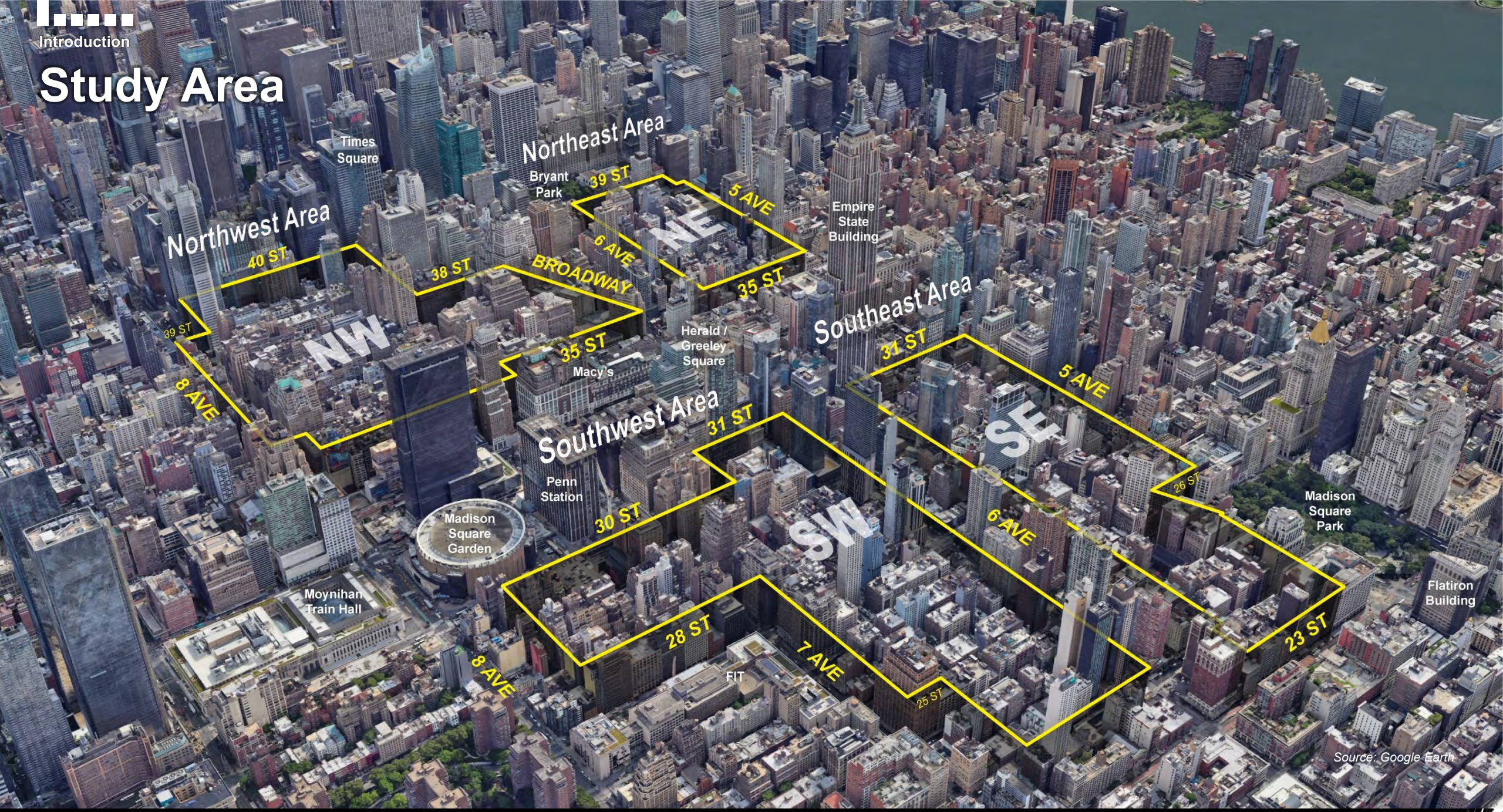
- 42 full or partial blocks
- Four non-contiguous industrially zoned areas

Historic Districts

- Madison Square North Historic District
- Ladies' Mile Historic District



Study Area



Source: Google Earth

Northwest Area



Source: DCP

Northeast Area



Source: DCP

Southeast Area



Source: DCP

Southwest Area



Source: DCP


CONE
OR RESTORATION
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SAMSONIC
TRADING

Background

Historical Context

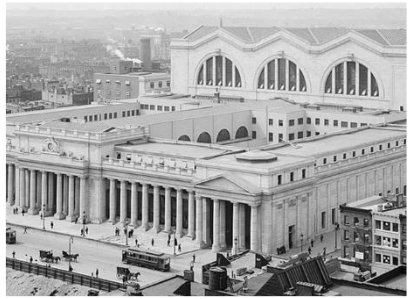


Commissioners Plan of 1811 defined the street grid, spurring development in Midtown South

Floral Businesses on W 28th St. (NYC DOF)



Flower + Wholesale
Wholesale cut flower companies began relocating to 28th St. to be closer to area's hotels, residents and elegant department stores



Penn Station (1910) + Grand Central Terminal (1913) helped transform area from entertainment to manufacturing

Garment workers protest clothing imports from overseas in 1977 (AP Photo)



Garment + Manufacturing Decline
Changes in transportation, automation and overseas production led to decline in garment manufacturing business - decreasing by half from 10,000 to 5,000 between 1958 and 1977

1750-1800

Residential
Area was mostly farmland, villages and estates in the late 18th Century



Plan of the city of New York in North America: surveyed in 1766 & 1767

1800-1850

Entertainment + Shopping
SE and NE areas towards Madison Sq. Park became a social nexus with grand hotels, opera houses and shopping district



Hotel Marlborough, Broadway/West 36th St. (NYPL Digital Collection)

1850-1900

Garment + Manufacturing
In the years before WWII garment manufacturing, wholesale, retail, and related trades became NY's largest industry by employment and commercial output



Garment buildings on W. 39th St. (NYC DOF)

1900-1950

1950-2000

1961-1981
Zoning protections initiated by the city to try to stabilize declining garment manufacturing

1987
Special Garment Center District established in 1987 to insulate garment manufacturers from market competition for loft space

2000-Present

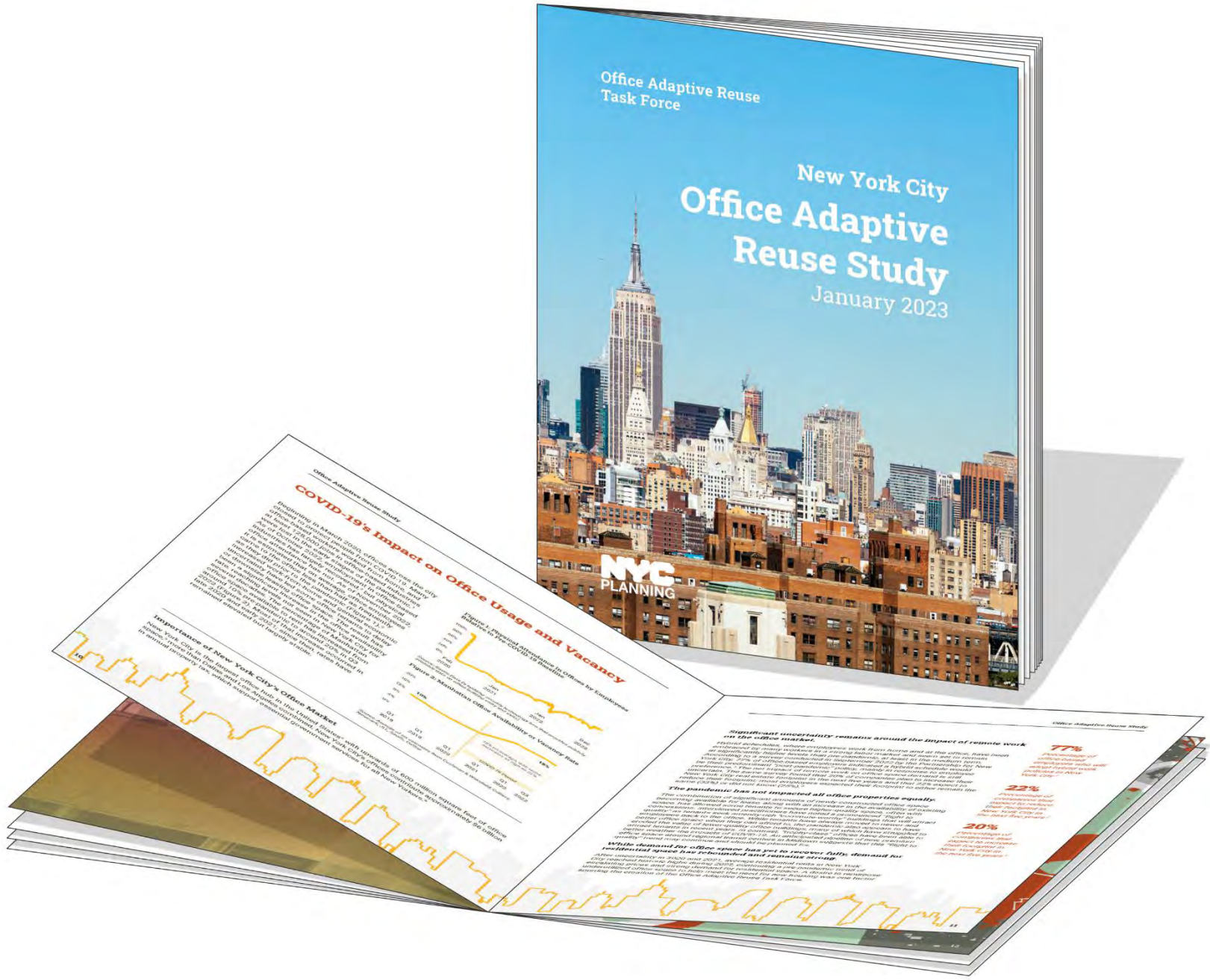
2005
Hudson Yards Rezoning amended Special Garment Center District to allow limited housing, office and hotel

2018
Special Garment Center District amended to remove preference for manufacturing use and allow wide range of non-residential uses

2025 MSMX

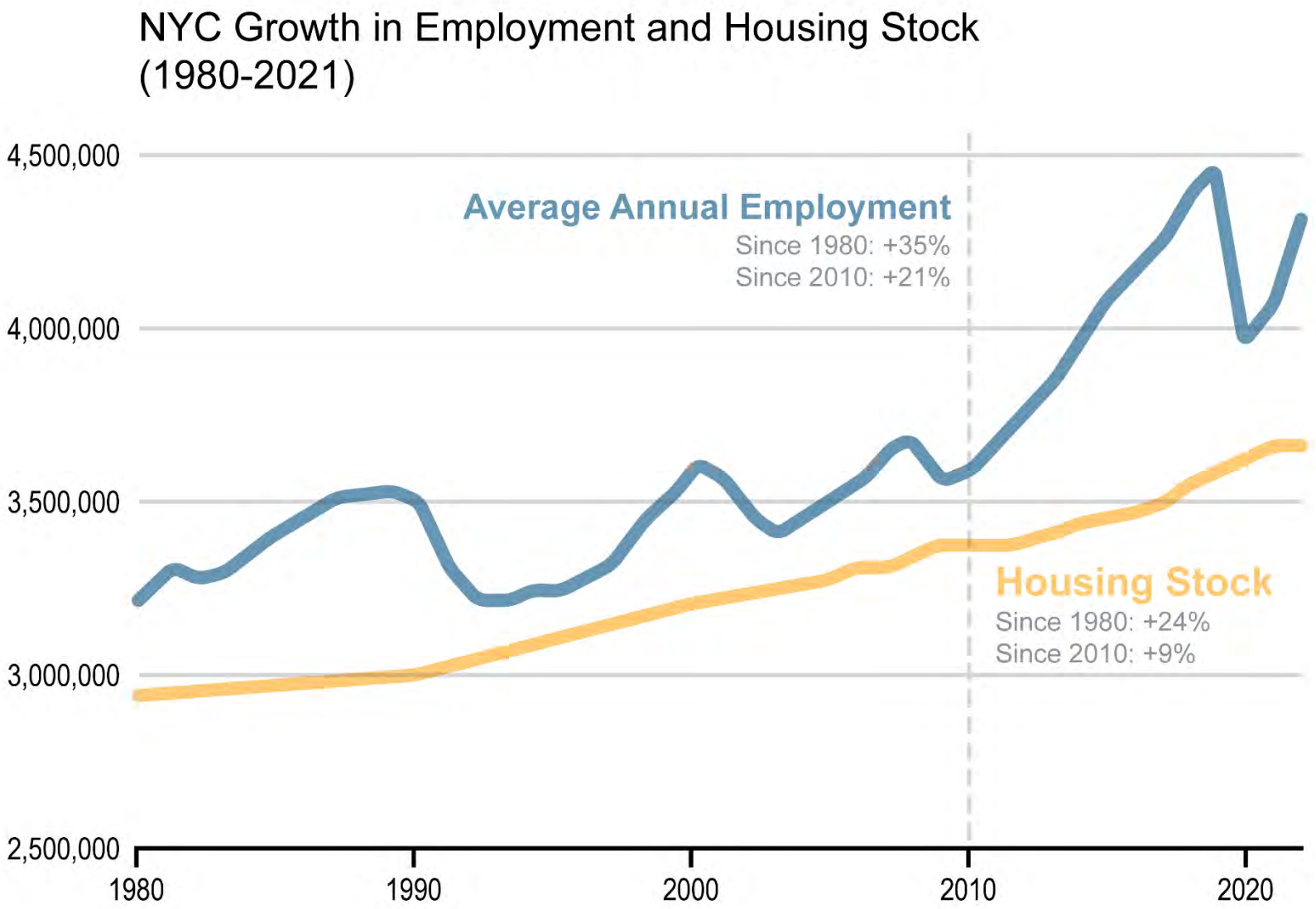
Post-Covid disruptions have decreased demand for office space, impacting the commercial real estate market

Manhattan office vacancies have risen from around 10% before the pandemic to about 19% today.



NYC faces a housing and affordability crisis, intensifying the demand for more housing options

Only 1.4% of NYC apartments are available for rent, the lowest vacancy rate since 1968.



Existing Conditions

Excellent transit access makes this area ideal for more housing and jobs

Exceptional regional and local transit access, with four major stations in the surrounding area

A C E 7 1 2 3
N R Q W B D F M

NJ TRANSIT The Way To Go.

MTA Long Island Rail Road

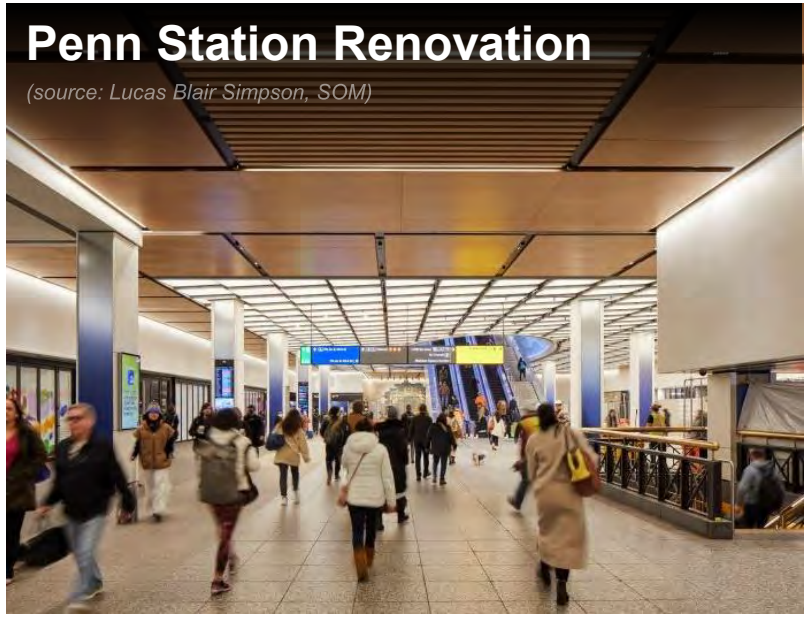
MTA Metro-North Railroad

PATH AMTRAK PORT AUTHORITY NY NJ

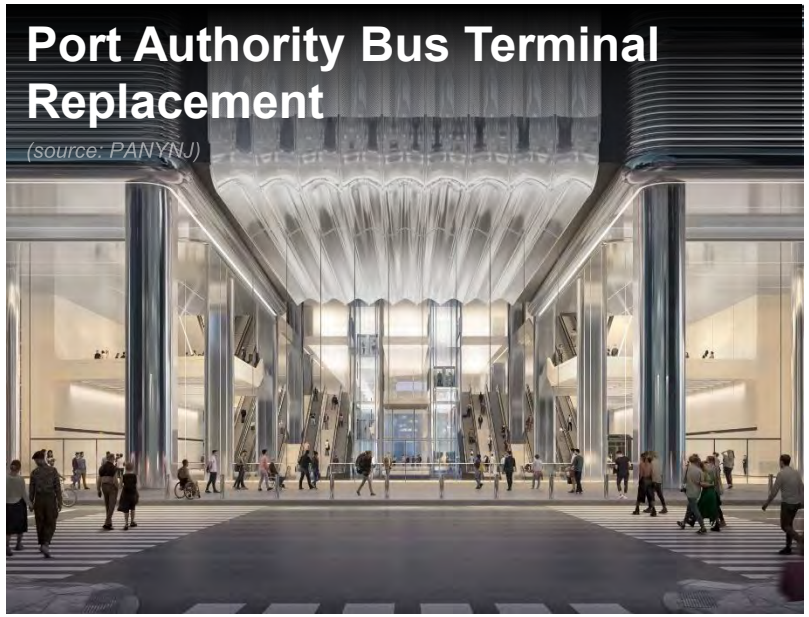


Planned investments and significant public realm improvements prime the area for mixed-use, including housing

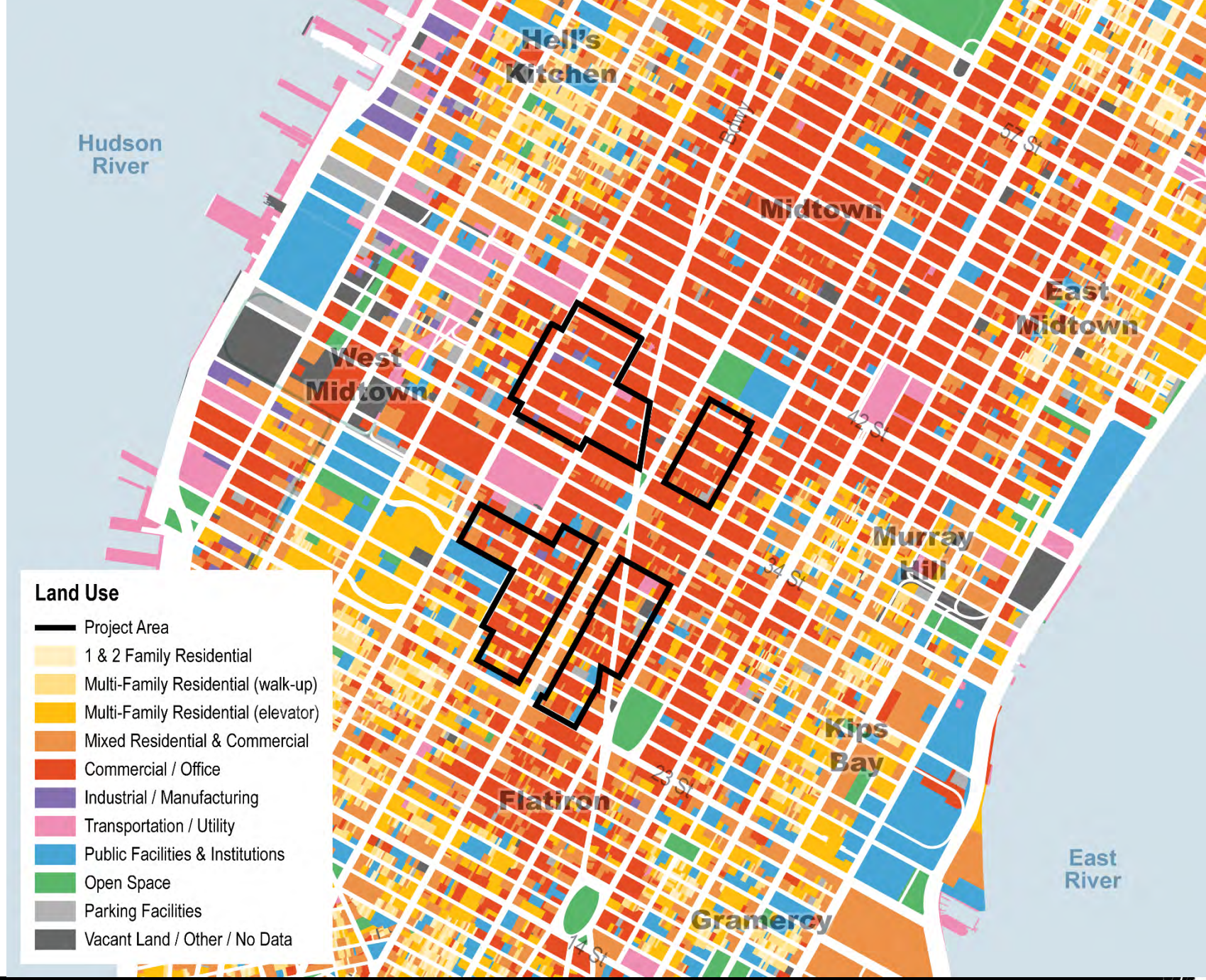




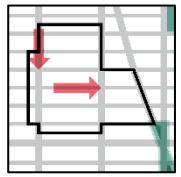




Area mostly comprised of commercial uses towards Midtown and more mixed commercial and residential uses towards Flatiron



Northwest Area Photographs



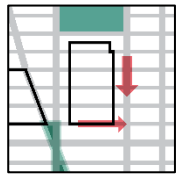


Looking south from Eighth Avenue and 40th Street



Looking east on 37th Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues

Northeast Area Photographs





Source: DCP

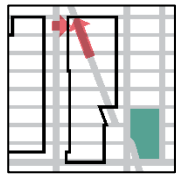
Looking south on Fifth Avenue between 39th and 38th streets



Source: DCP

Looking east on 35th Street between Sixth and Fifth avenues

Southeast Area Photographs



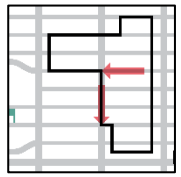


Looking east on Sixth Avenue between 30th and 31st streets



Looking northwest on 29th Street from Broadway

Southwest Area Photographs



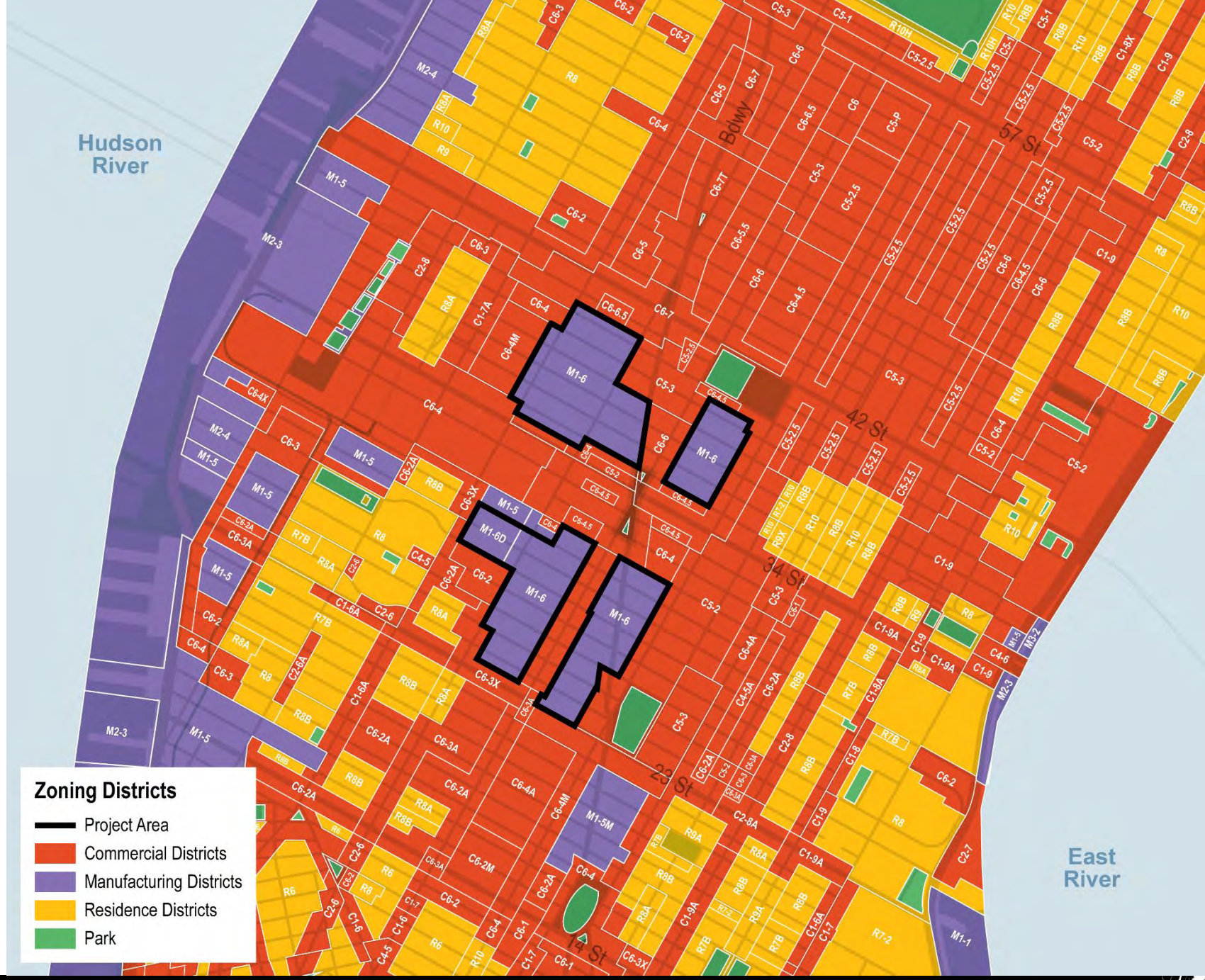


Looking southeast on 27th Street from Seventh Avenue



Looking west on 28th Street between Sixth and Seventh avenues

Outdated, half-century old zoning has prevented the area from evolving into a more mixed-use community like its surroundings



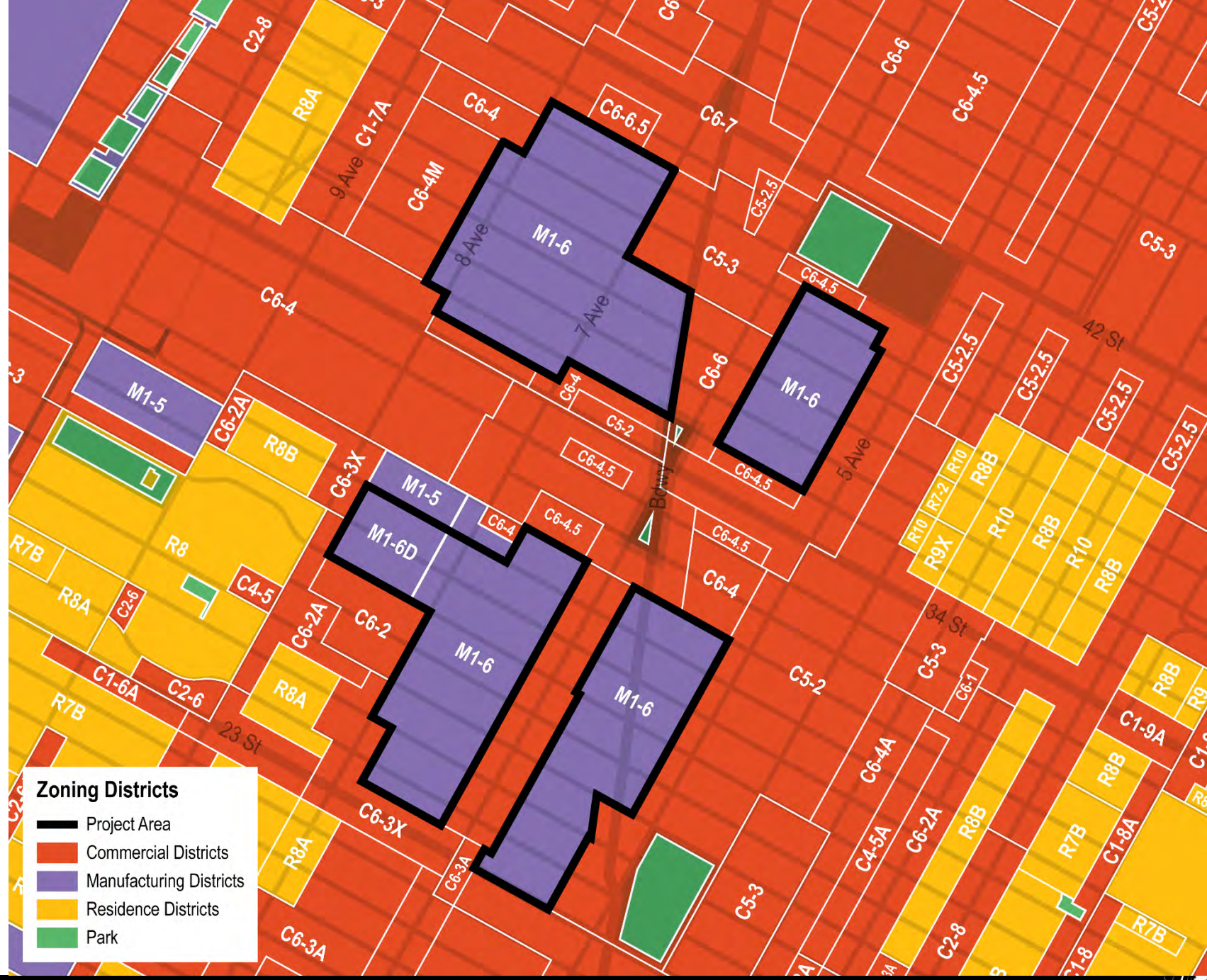
Outdated zoning limits new housing in the area

M1-6 Zoning District

- Largely mapped over 50 years ago
- Allows light manufacturing, commercial and some community facility uses
- Housing not permitted

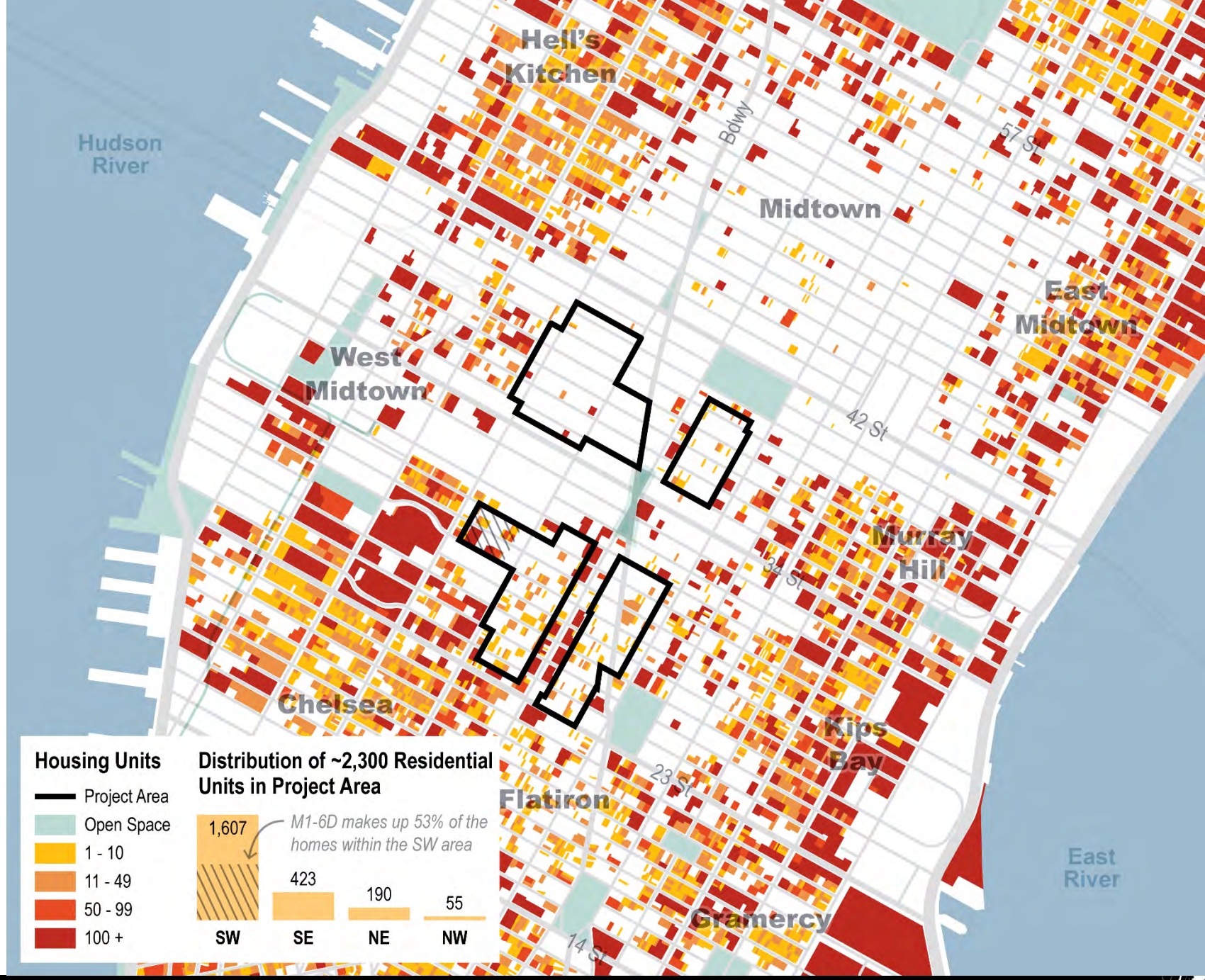
M1-6D Zoning District

- Rezoned in 2011
- Prioritizes non-residential use in large buildings
- Allows limited housing



Area lacks housing despite central location, nearby amenities and job proximity

- Housing generally prohibited
- No zoning requirement for income-restricted housing
- Surrounding areas have large amounts of housing
- Existing homes were permitted through Loft Law, BSA variance, CPC Special Permit, or existed before the current zoning rules



Examples of Housing Developments in/around MSMX



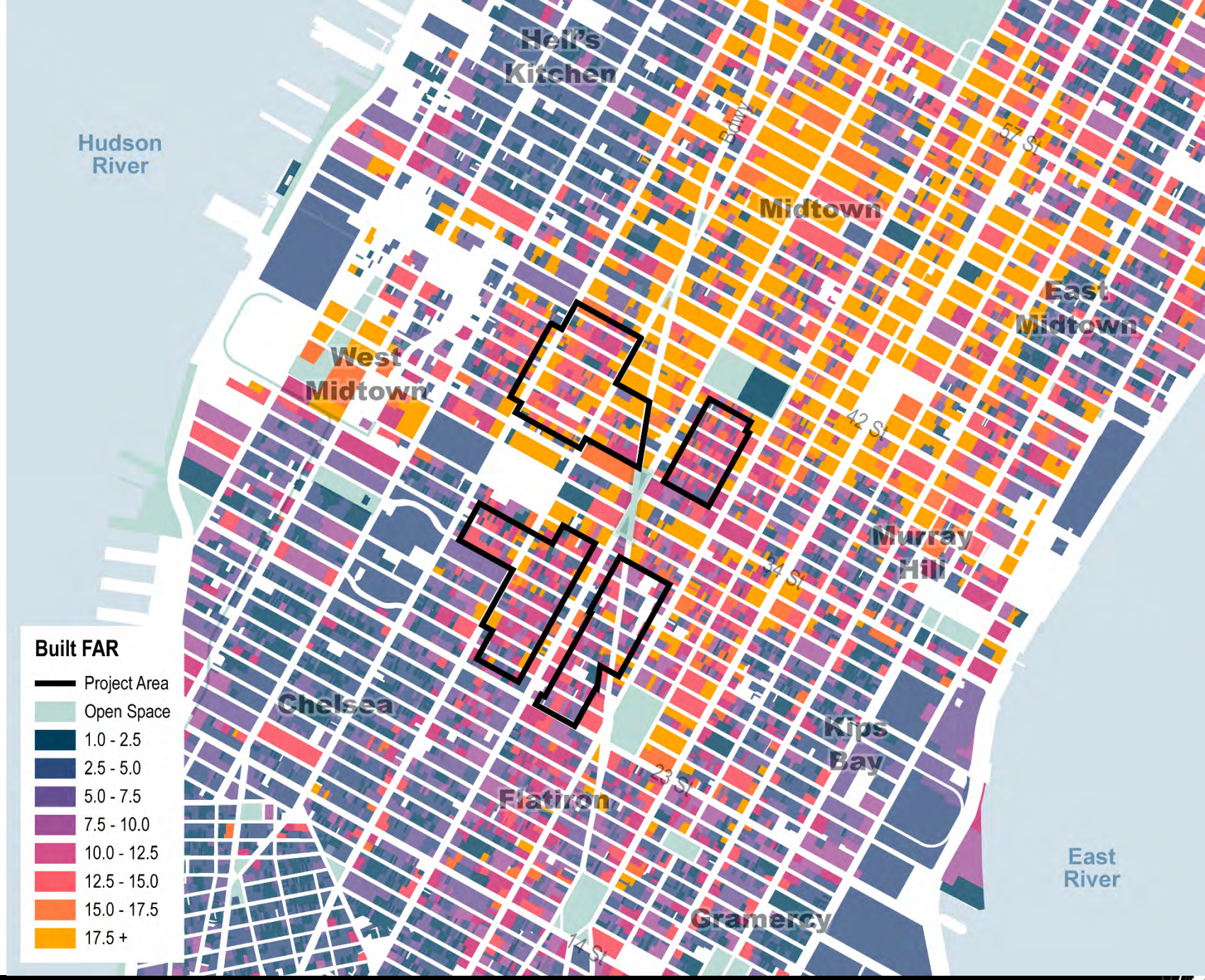
Loft-like new housing developments in M1-6D district



Residential towers on 6th Ave (adjacent to MSMX Plan Area)

Area's dense urban fabric positions it well for increased mixed-use and residential density

- Existing high-density areas (yellow) surround the majority of the MSMX Plan Area
- Wider range of density seen in the SE area towards Madison Square Park
- Lower densities seen south and west of the SW area towards FIT



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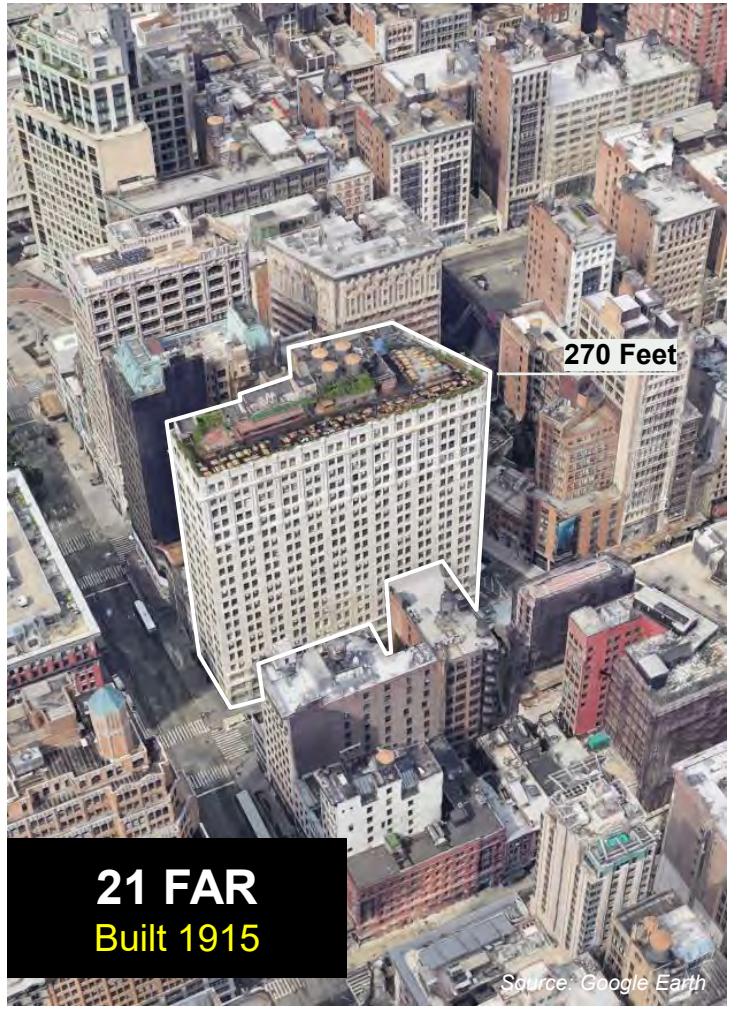
Existing Urban Fabric is Dense and Varied



230 Fifth Ave in the Southeast Plan Area



Nelson Tower partially in the Northwest Plan Area



The Ritz-Carlton in the Southeast Plan Area

Existing Urban Fabric is Dense and Varied



275 Seventh Ave. in the Southwest Plan Area



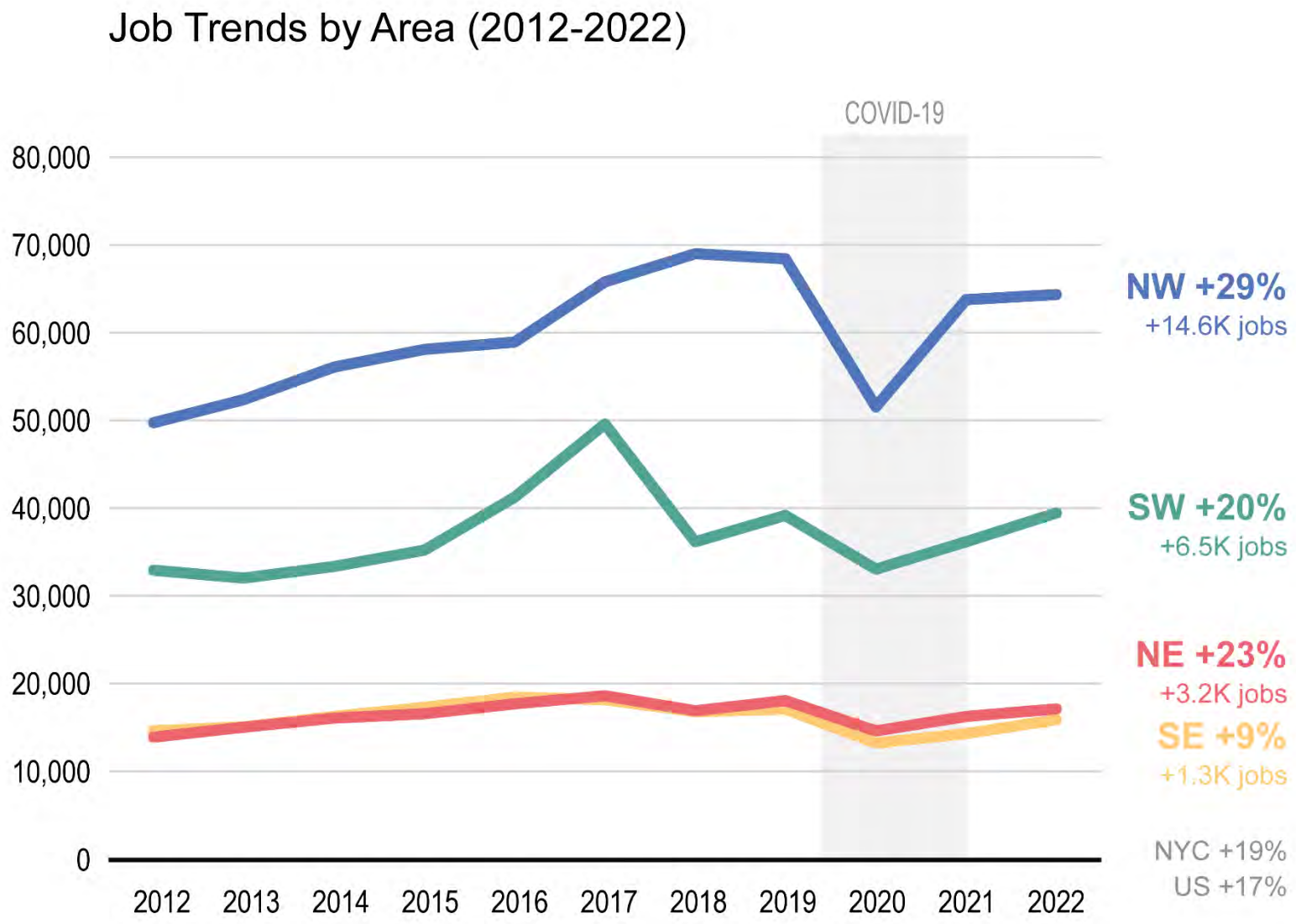
25 W 39th Street in the Northeast Plan Area



The Navarre Building in the Northwest Plan Area

Robust and resilient economic landscape

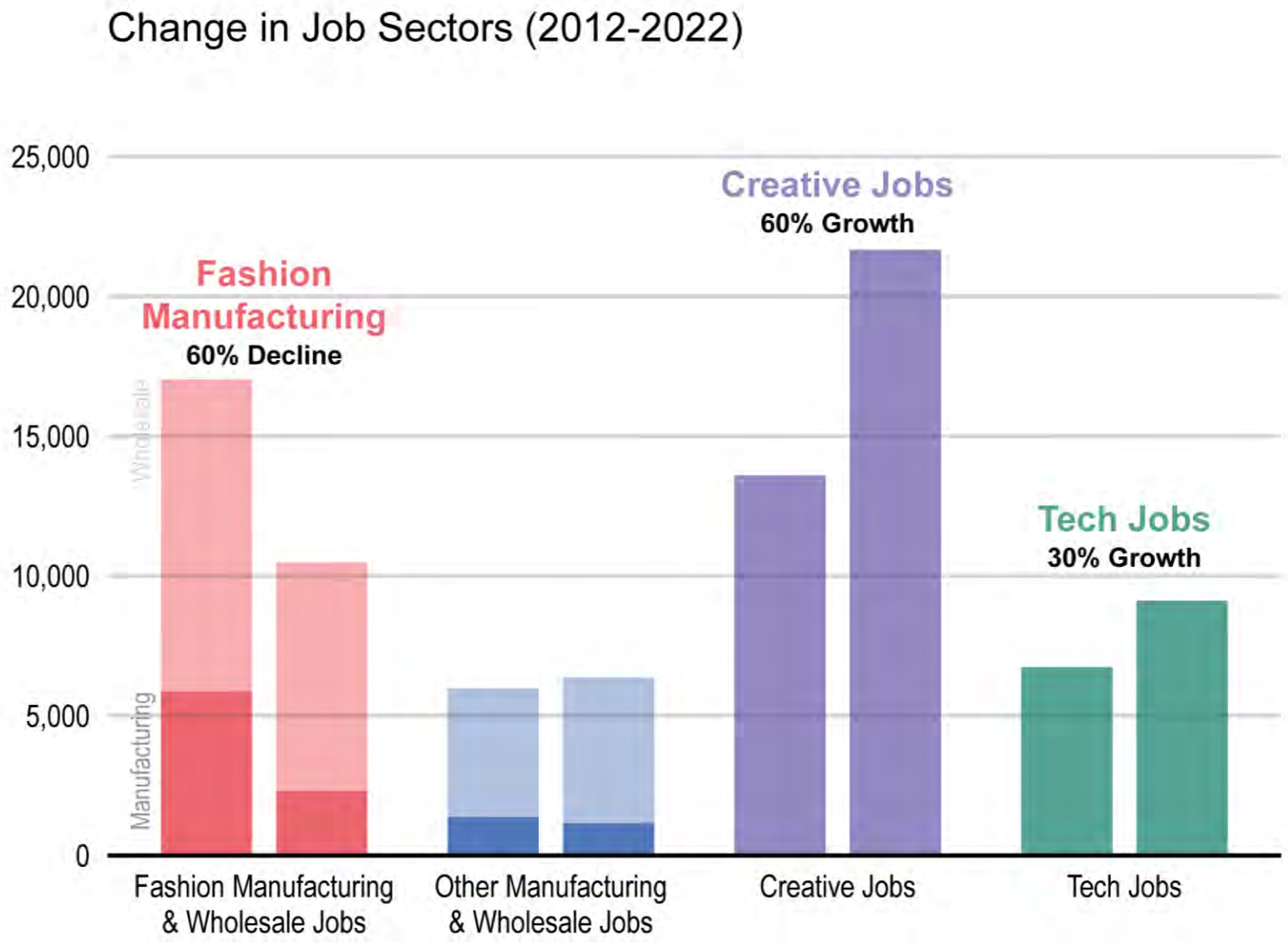
- **135,000 jobs** in 7,650 businesses
- Gained jobs and grew employment faster than city and national averages over the last decade.



Sources – DCP analysis of NYS Department of Labor (DOL) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Q3 2012 and Q3 2022 (preliminary); job change represents private sector employment only.

Major changes in the job landscape over time, including in legacy and emerging sectors

- Nearly **30% decline in manufacturing and wholesale sector jobs** in the last decade, mostly associated with the fashion industry.
- **Increase in office-based jobs**, with largest share of jobs in professional and business services.



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W 29 ST
ONE WAY
WRONG WAY
LinkNYC
Honoring The Lunar New Year
Crimson Kings Band, 2013
PIZZA
GOURMET

Engagement

Community Outreach

3 Public Events	
Oct 17, 2023	Kickoff Meeting
Mar 7, 2024	Town Hall
Oct 30, 2024	Info Session

7 Stakeholder Roundtables	
Nov 30, 2023	Housing
Jan 18, 2024	Existing Residents
Jan 23, 2024	Businesses
Jan 25, 2024	Real Estate
Feb 08, 2024	Social Services
Feb 13, 2024	Small Businesses
Feb 15, 2024	Small Businesses

Weekly Public Office Hours

36 office hour slots made available over three months to meet with a team member

Online Engagement

Survey

Interactive Map



Key Stakeholders

Housing
30 NOV 2023

- Breaking Ground
- Center for Urban Community Services
- New York Citizens Housing and Planning Council
- New York Housing Conference
- Open NY
- Supportive Housing Network of New York

Area Residents
18 JAN 2024

- Open to all residents in the area

Businesses
23 JAN 2024

- Alfresco NYC / Design Trust for Public Space
- Association for a Better New York
- Costume Industry Coalition
- Council of Fashion Designers of America
- Flatiron NoMad Partnership
- Garment District Alliance
- Small businesses from Fashion and Flower industries

Real Estate
25 JAN 2024

- GFP Real Estate
- Landmarks Conservancy
- Local Initiatives Support Corp
- Municipal Art Society
- Regional Plan Association
- Real Estate Board of New York
- Vornado

Social Services
08 FEB 2024

- Housing Works / Positive Health Project
- Manhattan Outreach Consortium
  - Center for Urban Community Services
  - Breaking Ground
- Project Renewal
- Urban Pathways

Sm. Businesses
13 & 15 FEB 2024

- Open to all local and small business owners in the area

Elected Offices:
CM Powers | CM Bottcher | BP Levine

NYC Agencies:
Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) | Health (DOHMH) | Small Business Services (SBS)

Community Boards:
4 & 5

Online Engagement

Engagement Recap

Survey

180

Responses

62% of whom live or work in the area

Top Three Priorities

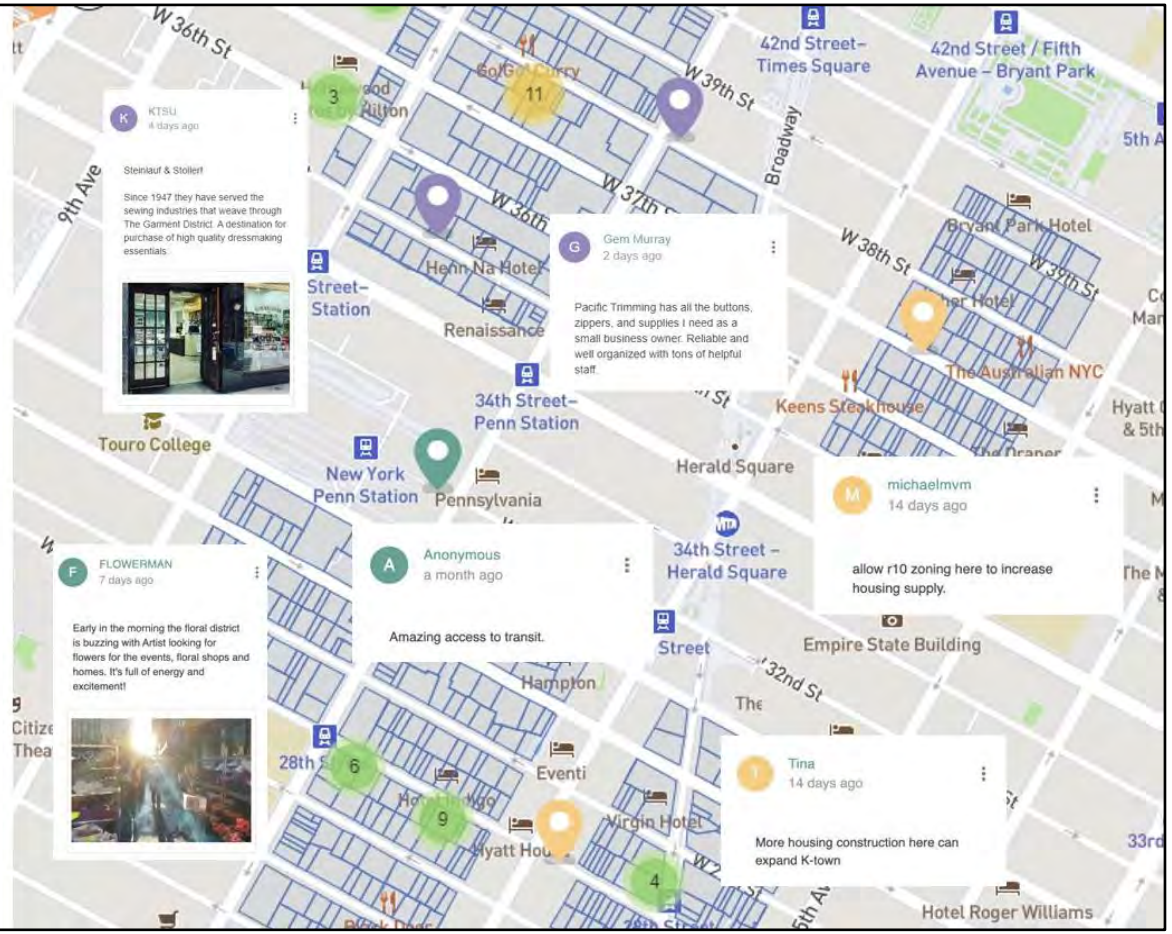
- Housing
- Public Safety
- Street Conditions

Interactive Map

My Experiences pin to locations where you have personal experiences to share.

Community Assets pin to share what you like about the area, highlight hidden gems or resources.

Opportunity & Ideas pin to share your ideas on how certain areas could be improved.

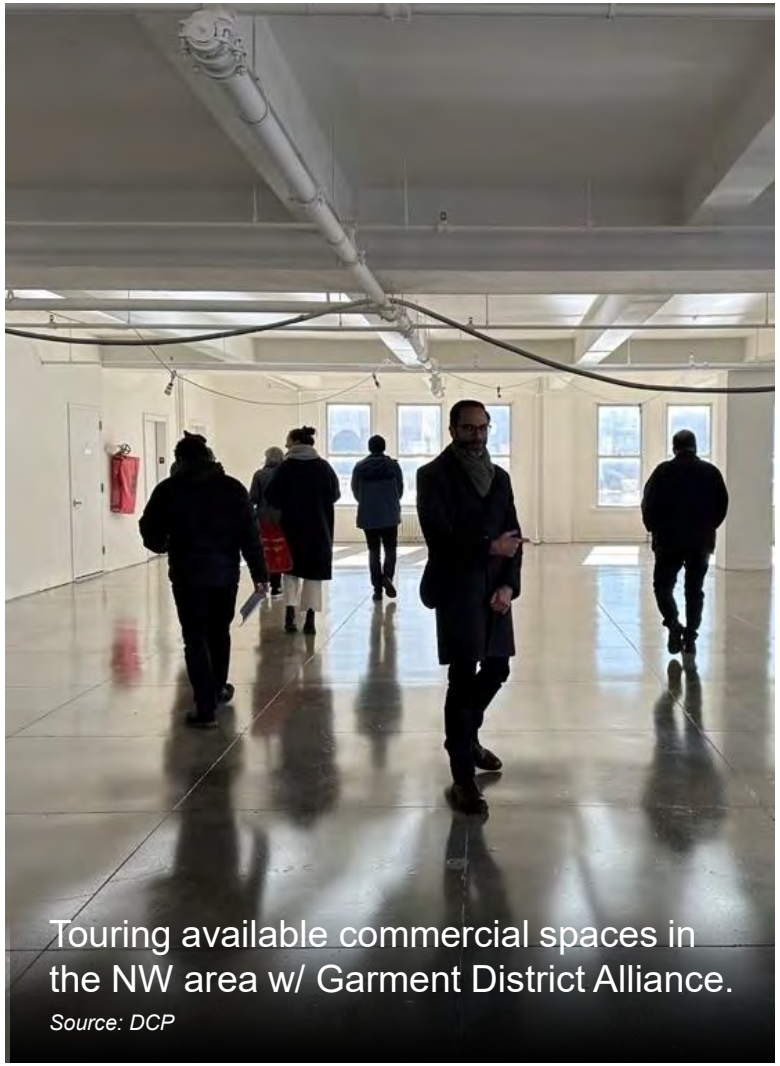


Tours and Site Visits



Touring the SE area with Flatiron Nomad Partnership.

Source: DCP



Touring available commercial spaces in the NW area w/ Garment District Alliance.

Source: DCP



Touring garment businesses in the NW area with small business owners.

Source: DCP

Community Priorities: What We Heard

Housing

- Increase opportunities for **more housing** and **affordable housing**
- Allow flexibility to **facilitate conversions** of existing buildings to housing
- Provide State and City **tax incentives** to facilitate more housing and conversions

Economic Activity

- **Balance** addition of housing with commercial businesses
- **Foster legacy industries** like fashion and wholesale
- Encourage **live/work** opportunities

Buildings & Neighborhood

- **Allow conversions** of existing buildings to help preserve the area's architectural character
- Ensure new development in the area is **consistent with the existing context**
- Recognize the **unique characteristics** of the northern and southern areas

Local Amenities

- Encourage more **local retail and services**
- Create a **24/7 neighborhood** with housing, jobs, shops, restaurants, etc.
- Improve **trash pickup** and anticipated changes with more residents to improve sidewalk conditions

Improved Connections

- Invest in the **public realm** (open spaces, streetscape, sidewalk conditions)
- Develop a comprehensive approach to public realm improvements for better **connection across neighborhoods**
- Improve congestion and traffic conditions for **pedestrian safety**

Public Safety

- **Social services are providing necessary resources,** but more support is needed
- Address **illegal street activity**
- More residents in the area would **encourage safer streets**

Community Priorities: What We Heard

- Housing
- Local Amenities
- Economic Activity
- Improved Connections
- Buildings & Neighborhood
- Public Safety

Community-Informed Plan Goals

Community Priorities

- Housing
- Local Amenities

→ **Create Vibrant Mixed-Use Communities**

- Economic Activity
- Improved Connections

→ **Support Critical Economic Activity**

- Buildings & Neighborhood
- Public Safety

→ **Enhance Neighborhood Character**

Plan Goals



Proposal

Neighborhood Plan Proposal Goals

Create Vibrant Mixed-Use Communities



Support Critical Economic Activity



Enhance Neighborhood Character



Proposed Actions

Zoning Map Amendment

- Rezone all M districts to **paired manufacturing and residential MX districts**
- Establish a new **Special Midtown South Mixed-Use District (MSX)**
- **Reconfigure boundaries of the three special districts** in the area to remove overlap and align with proposal

Zoning Text Amendment

- Map **Mandatory Inclusionary Housing areas** across all plan area
- **Special Midtown South Mixed-Use District (MSX) regulations** for:
  - Bulk requirements reinforcing surrounding loft character
  - Bulk flexibility for challenged sites
  - Use flexibility appropriate for the neighborhood context
  - Incentives for public realm improvements
- Remove restrictions on residential conversion in **neighboring C6-4M zoning district**

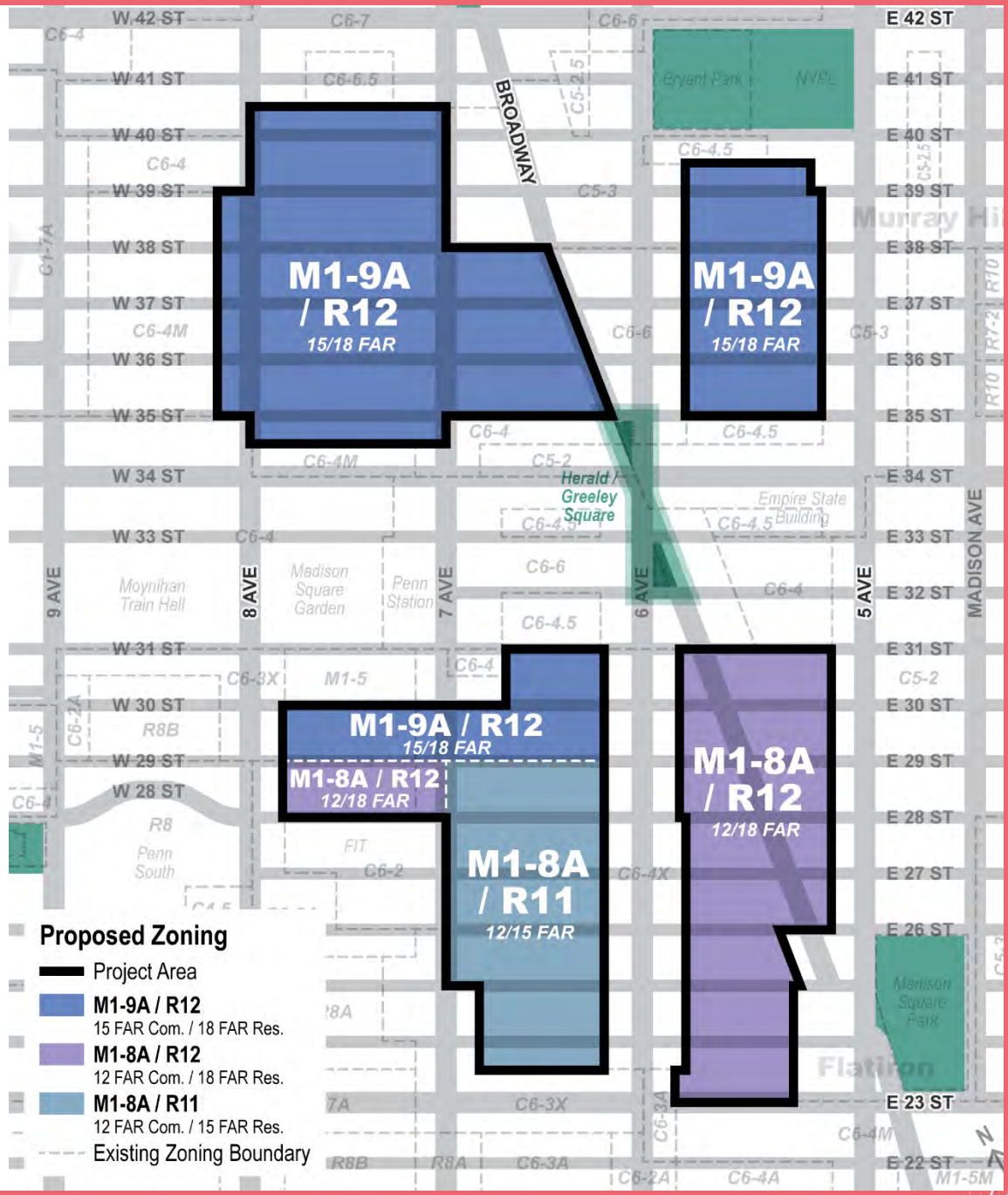
Proposed Zoning

Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

- **Map paired manufacturing / residential districts** to support dynamic mix of housing, commercial, manufacturing, and community facility uses
  - **M1-9A / R12**
  - **M1-8A / R12**
  - **M1-8A / R11**

- **Establish Special Midtown South Mixed-Use District (MSX)** to shape building form and incentivize public realm improvements

- Designate **Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area** to require permanently income-restricted affordable housing in Midtown for the first time



M1-9A / R12 Districts

Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

M1-9A / R12 Maximum Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR)

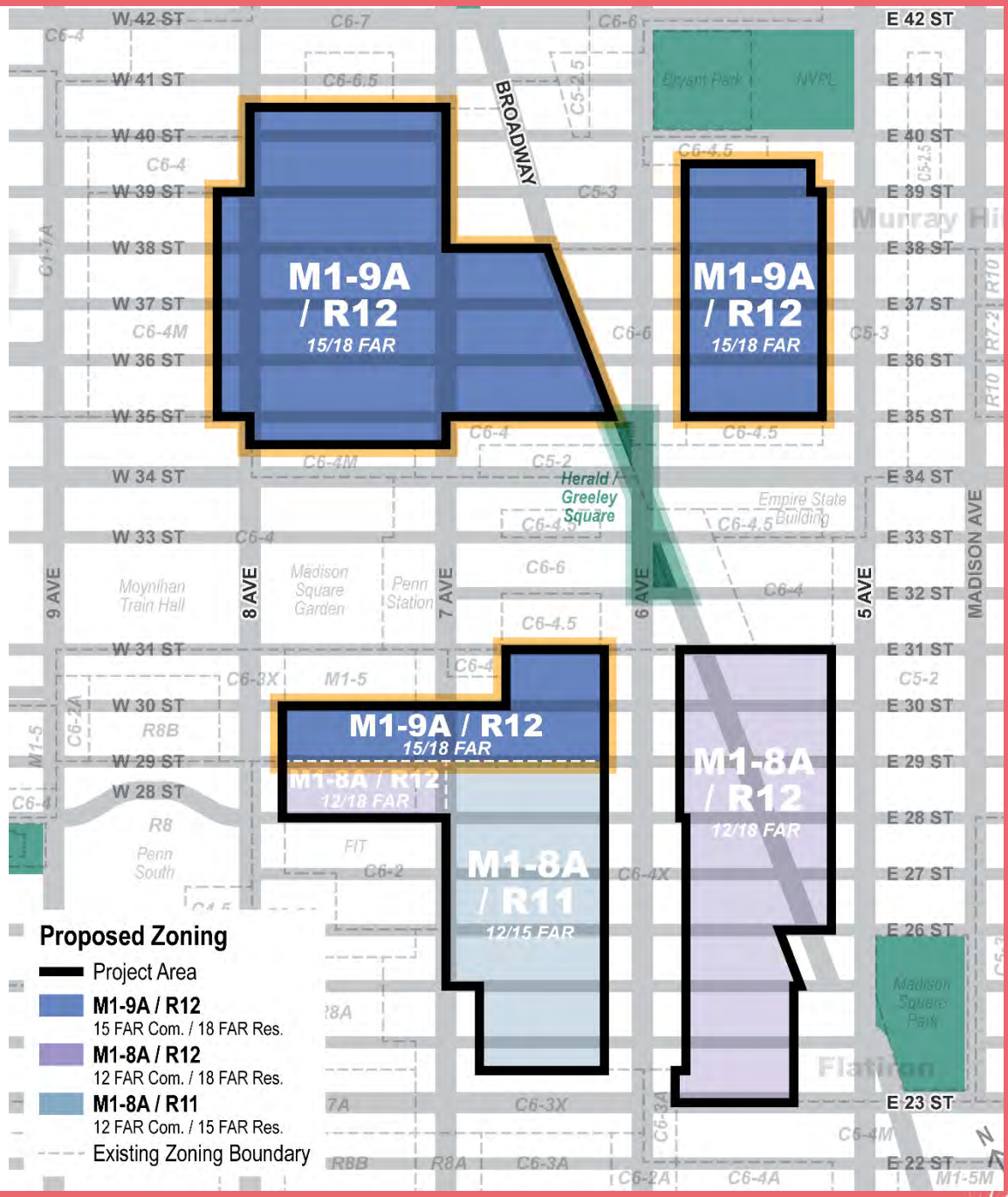
Residential	18.0
Community Facility	15.0
Commercial/Manufacturing	15.0

MSX-wide Bulk

Flexible, minimum/maximum base heights with street wall requirements.

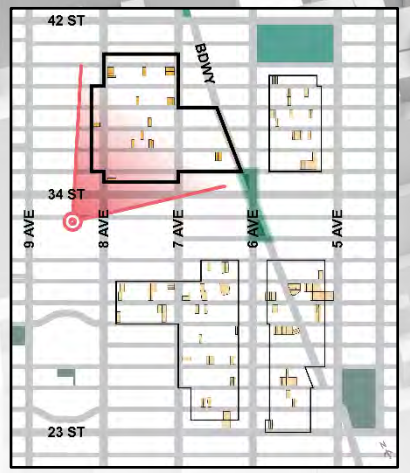
MSX-wide Permitted Uses

Residential, most community facility and commercial, and light manufacturing uses.



M1-9A / R12 Aerial View

NW quadrant looking northeast from Penn Station

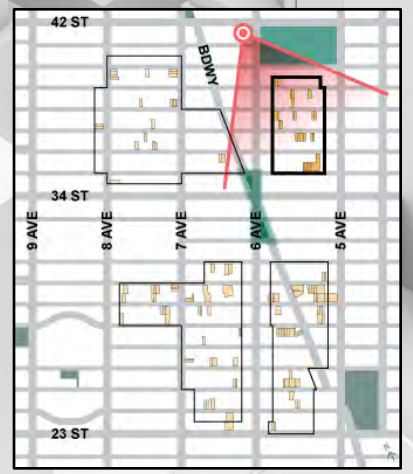


Conceptual image based on projected sites identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Permitted FAR is in line with the **dense urban fabric** of the area

M1-9A / R12 Aerial View

NE quadrant looking south from Bryant Park



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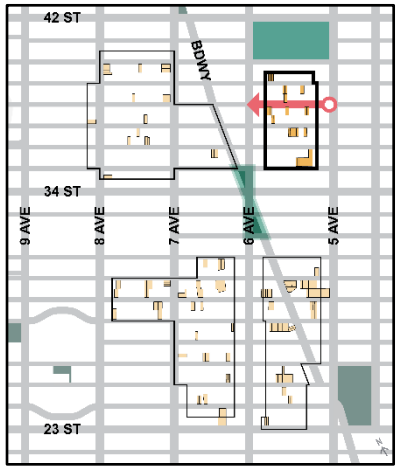
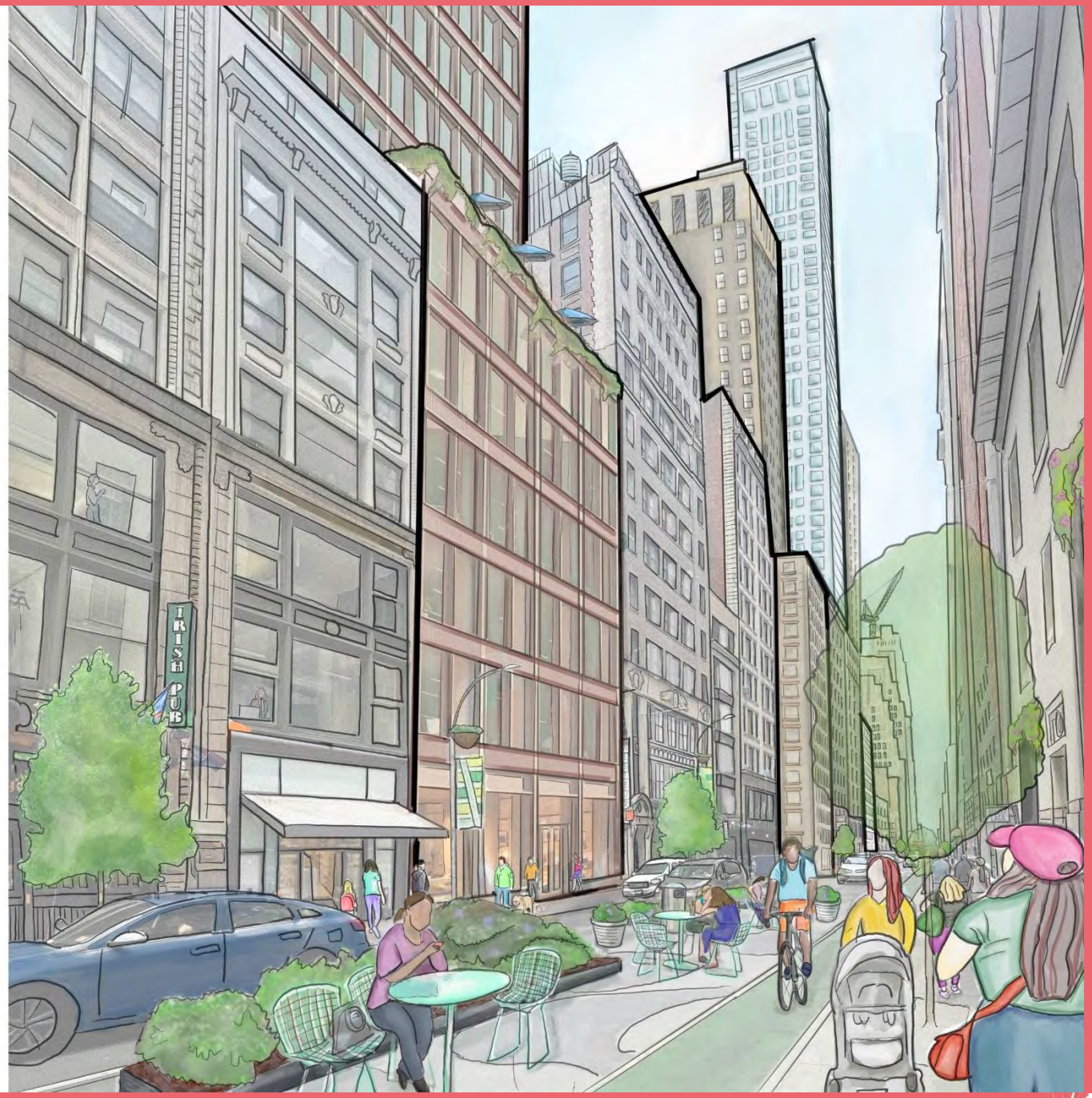
M1-9A / R12 Street

Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

Pedestrian view within a M1-9A / R12 zoning district – looking west on West 38th Street from Fifth Avenue



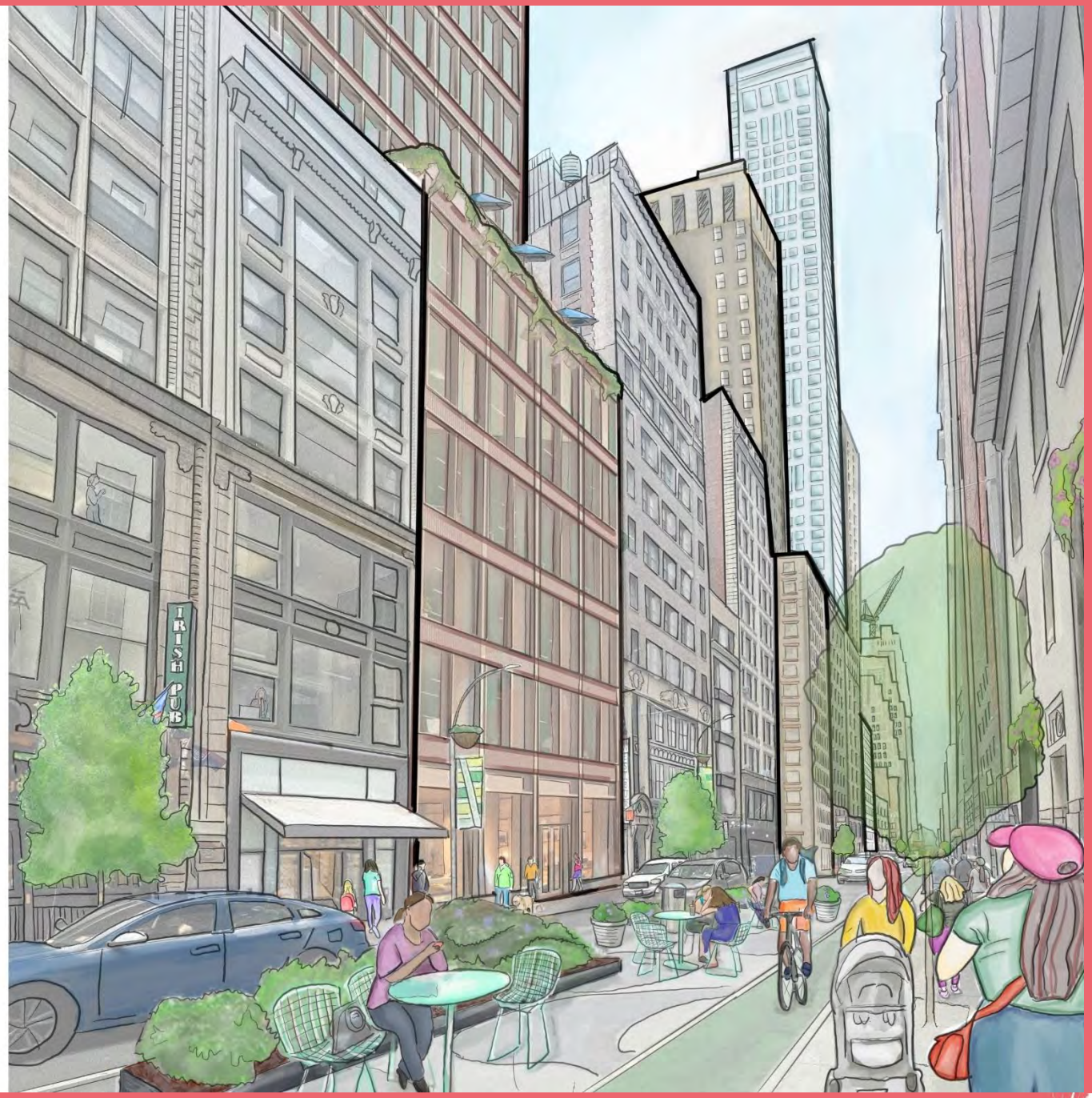


MSX Bulk

Zoning Map Amendment | **Zoning Text Amendment**

Special Midtown South Mixed-Use District would reinforce loft character with strong street walls

MSX-wide Base Height	
Minimum	60’
Maximum	155’
Flexibility	Match neighboring
MSX-wide Street Wall	
First Story	100% within 8’ of the street line
Up to Min. Base	70% within 8’ of the street line



Proposal

MSX Bulk

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Encourage **active street frontages** to create an inviting pedestrian experience

MSX Bulk

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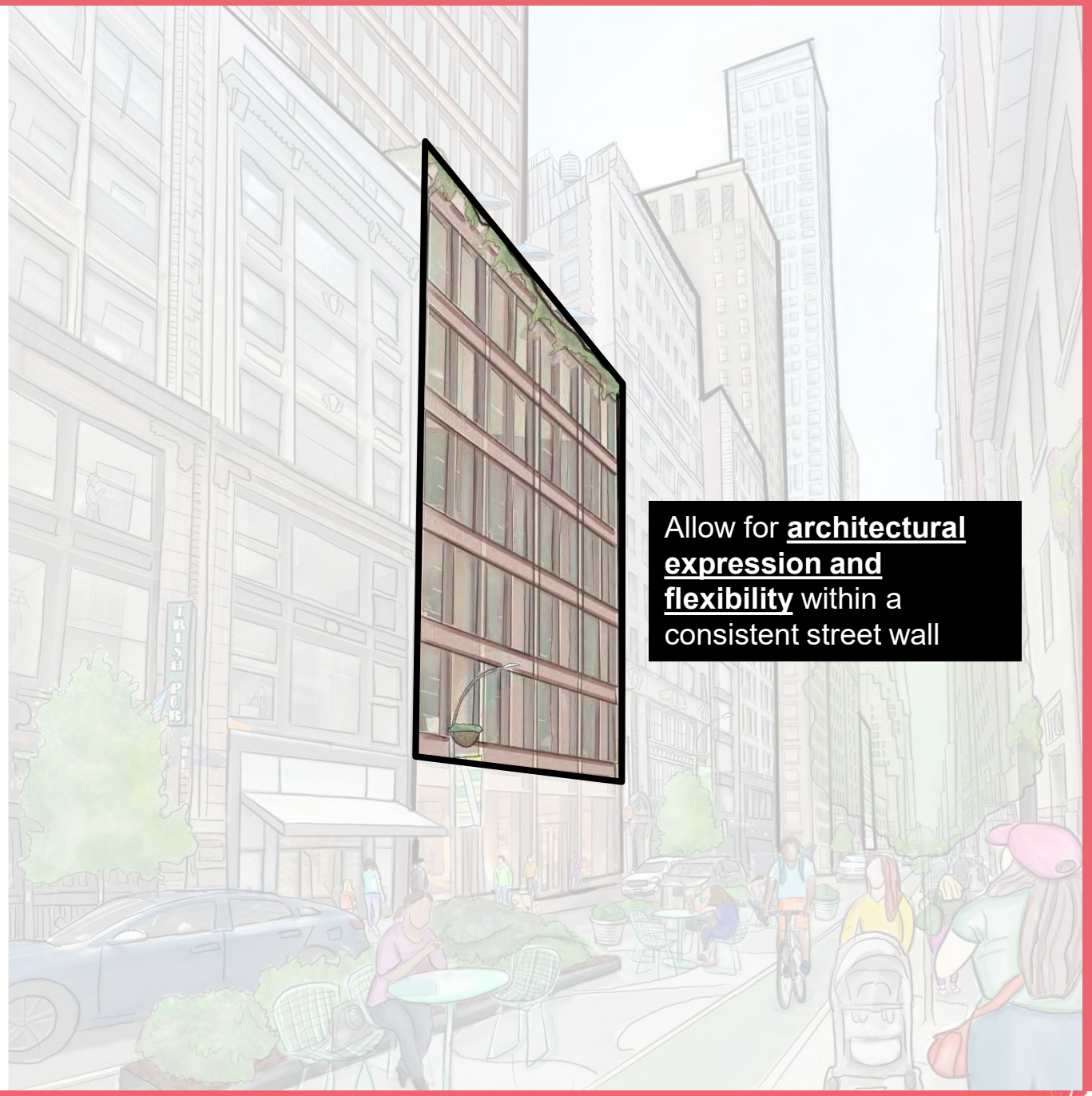
Maximum	155’
Flexibility	Match neighboring
MSX-wide Street Wall	
First Story	100% within 8’ of the street line
Up to Min. Base	**70% within 8’ of the street line**



Allow for **architectural expression and flexibility** within a consistent street wall

MSX Bulk

Zoning Map Amendment | **Zoning Text Amendment**

Special Midtown South Mixed-Use District would reinforce loft character with strong street walls

MSX-wide Base Height	
Minimum	60’
Maximum	155’
Flexibility	Match neighboring
MSX-wide Street Wall	
First Story	100% within 8’ of the street line
Up to Min. Base	70% within 8’ of the street line



M1-8A / R12 Districts

Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

M1-8A / R12 Maximum Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR)

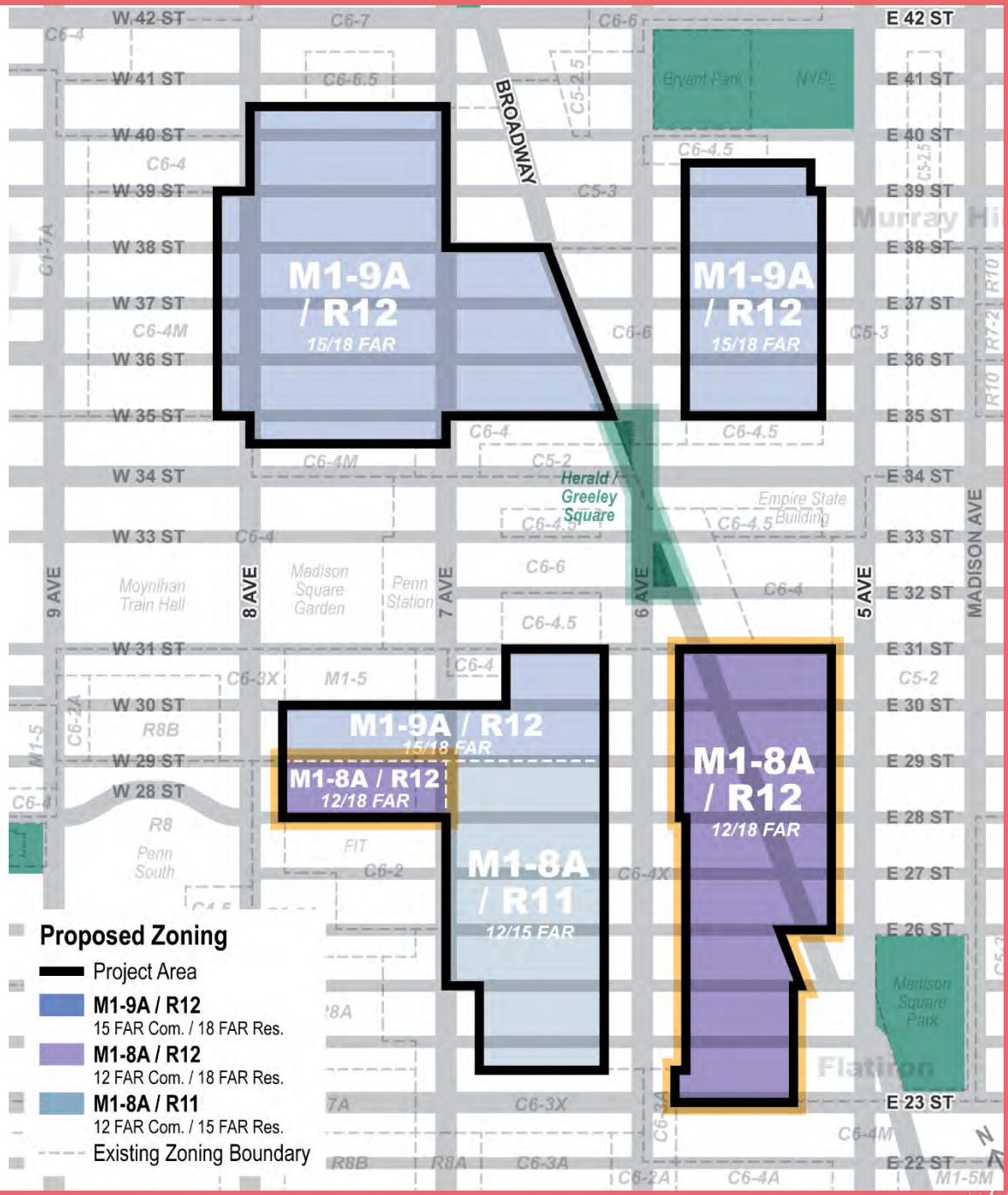
Residential	18.0
Community Facility	12.0
Commercial/Manufacturing	12.0

MSX-wide Bulk

Flexible, minimum/maximum base heights with street wall requirements.

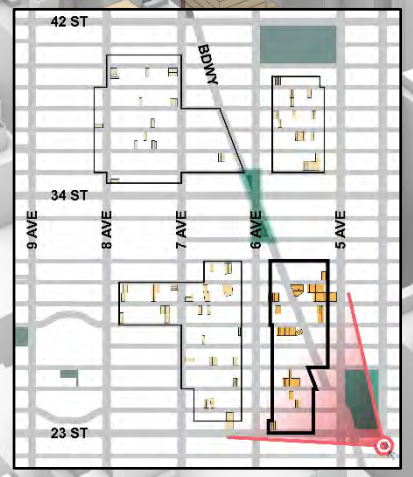
MSX-wide Permitted Uses

Residential, most community facility and commercial, and light manufacturing uses.



M1-8A / R12 Aerial View

SE quadrant looking northwest from Madison Square Park



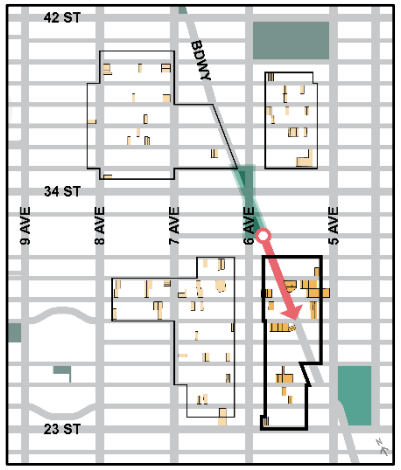
Conceptual image based on projected sites identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Building form in line with existing **varied context**

M1-8A / R12 Street

Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

Pedestrian view within a M1-8A / R12 zoning district – looking south on Broadway from 32nd Street





Proposal

M1-8A / R11 District

Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

M1-8A / R11 Maximum Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR)

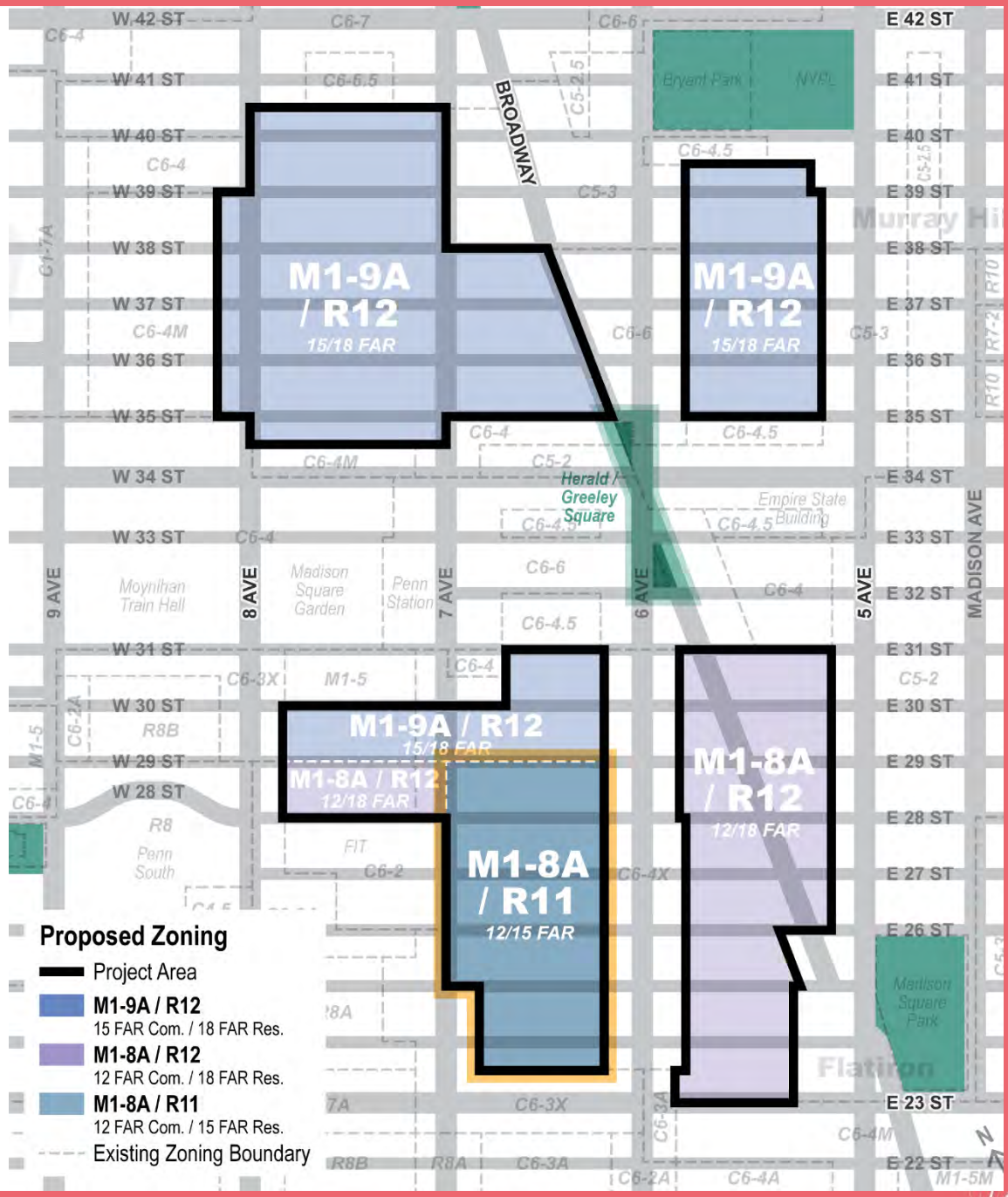
Residential	15.0
Community Facility	12.0
Commercial/Manufacturing	12.0

MSX-wide Bulk

Flexible, minimum/maximum base heights with street wall requirements.

MSX-wide Permitted Uses

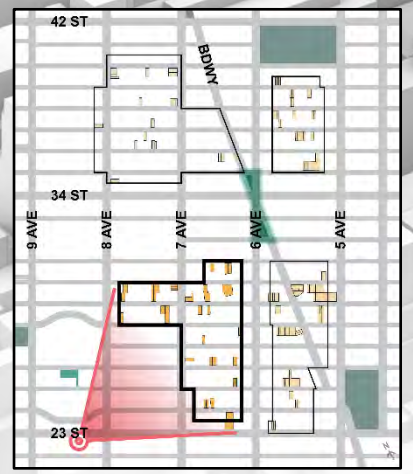
Residential, most community facility and commercial, and light manufacturing uses.



Proposal

M1-8A / R11 Aerial View

SW quadrant looking northeast from Penn South



Conceptual image based on projected sites identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

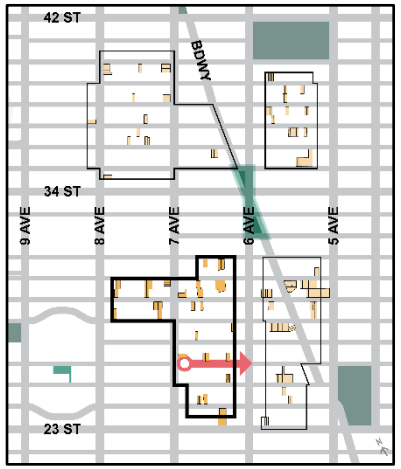
Transition between higher-density fabric to the N + E, and medium density to S + W

Proposal

M1-8A / R11 Street

Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

Pedestrian view within a M1-8A / R11 zoning district – looking east on West 26th Street from Seventh Avenue



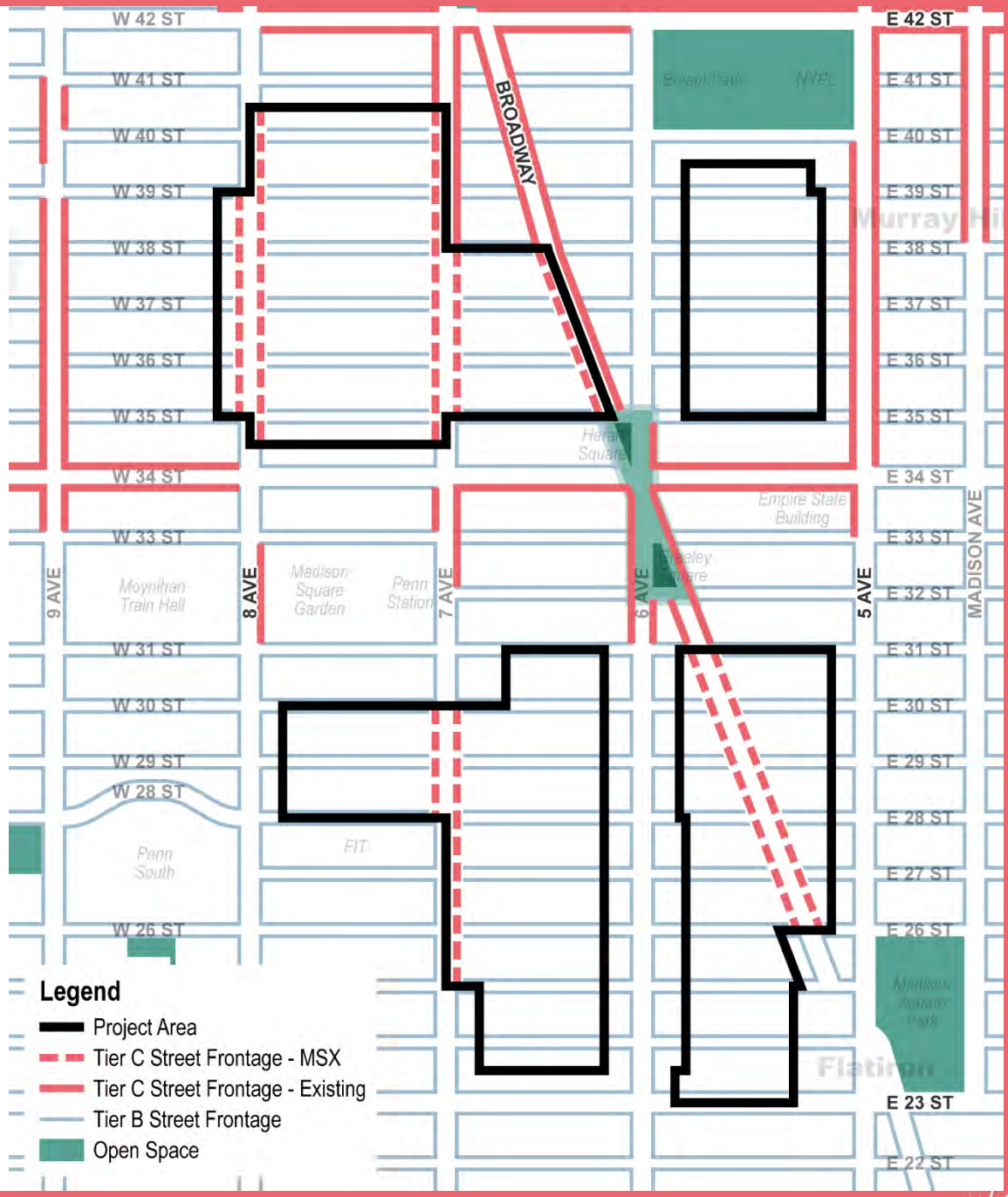


Promote Active Streets

Zoning Map Amendment | **Zoning Text Amendment**

Tier B & C Street Frontages

- Ground-floor use and lobby restrictions promote active pedestrian experience
- Transparency requirements & blank wall prohibitions
- Parking/loading location prohibitions and screening requirements



Public Improvements for Quality of Life

Zoning Map Amendment | **Zoning Text Amendment**



Public Schools Exemption

Exempt up to 150,000 square feet of floor space for a public school on qualifying sites of at least 20,000 sq.ft.



Covered Pedestrian Space

Enable new developments or enlargements to seek a special permit for a floor area bonus of up to 20%.



Transit Improvements

Extend the ZR 66-50 transit bonus applicability to 1,500 feet from mass transit stations, instead of 500 feet.

Other Regulations

Zoning Map Amendment | **Zoning Text Amendment**

Large Retail Uses

Remove the 10,000-square-foot limit on retail establishments in MSX to align with the area's role as a regional shopping destination.

Minimum Distance between Buildings

Reduce min. distance between buildings on a zoning lot to 8' to provide additional site planning flexibility for large lots.

Split Lots with Historic Landmarks

Allow floor area to be freely distributed on a split zoning lot containing an LPC-designated historic landmark.

Signage

Prohibit flashing illuminated signs on the mid-blocks in MSX.

Establishing MSX District

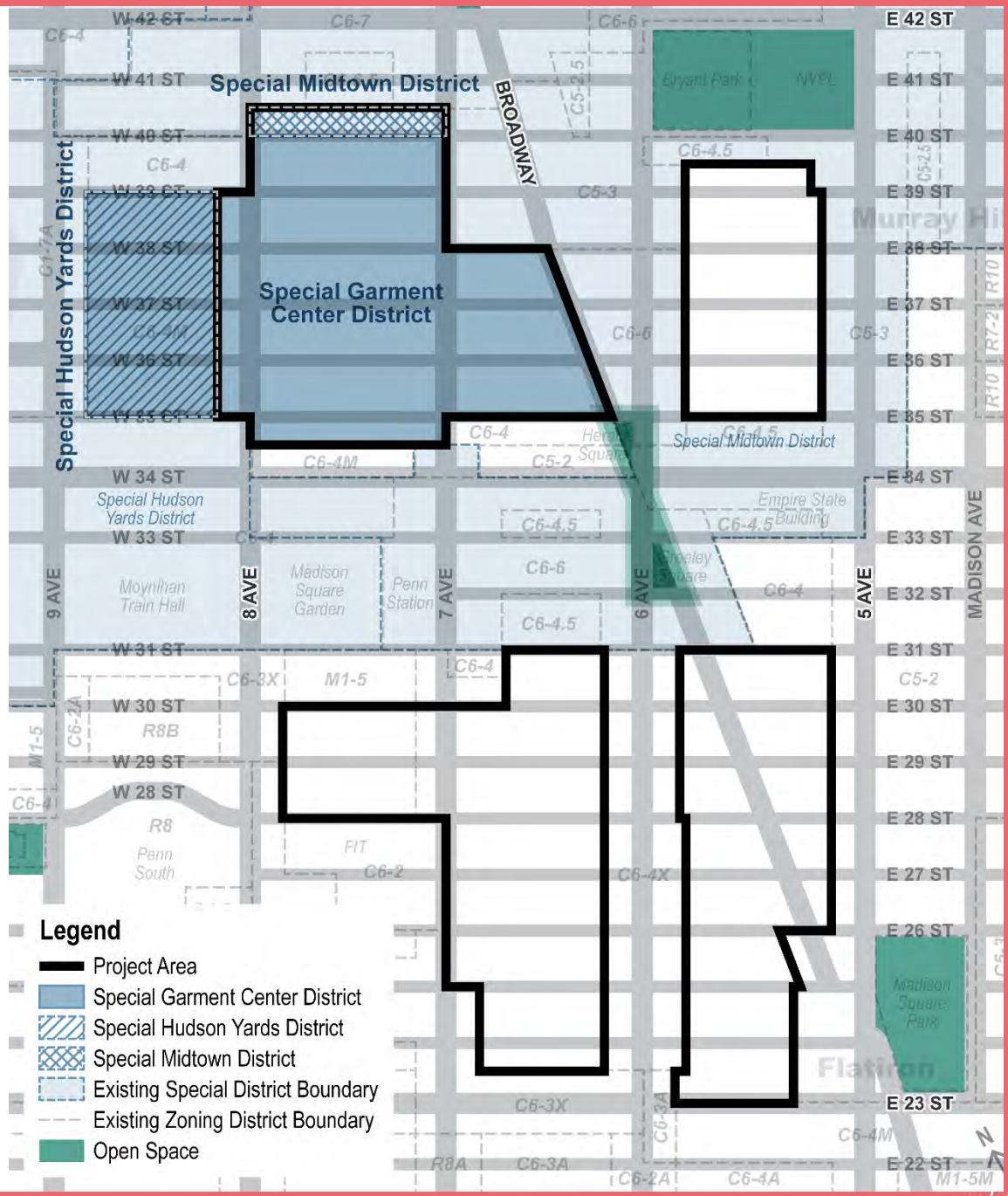
Zoning Map Amendment | Zoning Text Amendment

Changes to Special District Boundaries

- Special Garment Center District
- Special Hudson Yards District
- Special Midtown District

Changes to Underlying C6-4M Zoning

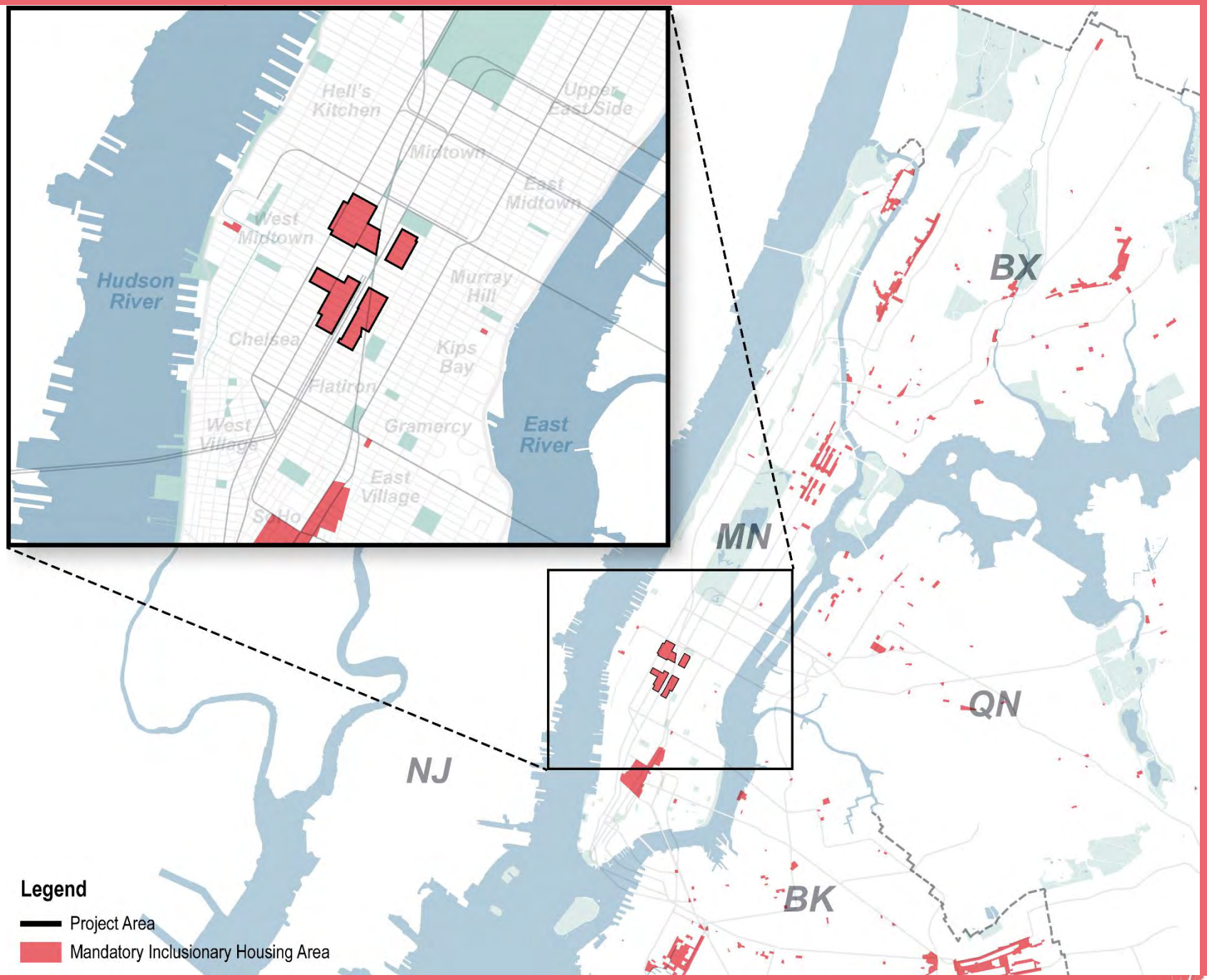
- Removes restrictions preventing large buildings from converting to housing



Mandatory Inclusionary Housing

Zoning Map Amendment | **Zoning Text Amendment**

- Map Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) with Options 1, 2 and 3 (F/K/A the Deep Affordability Option)
- First application of MIH in Midtown
- **Require up to 2,900 permanently income-restricted units in Midtown South**





Environmental + RER

Environmental Review

A Notice of Completion of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was issued on January 17, 2025

The DEIS identifies no impacts in these categories:

- Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy
- Socioeconomic Conditions
- Community Facilities
- Urban Design and Visual Resources
- Water and Sewer Infrastructure
- Solid Waste and Sanitation
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
- Public Health
- Neighborhood Character

The DEIS identifies potential for "significant adverse impacts" in these categories:

- Open Space
- Shadows
- Historic Resources
- Transportation (traffic, transit, pedestrian)
- Air Quality (industrial source)
- Construction (Transportation, AQ, Noise, Historic and Cultural Resources)

The DEIS could not preclude impacts in the following categories because their likelihood depends on specific site characteristics related to residential conversions: Hazardous Materials; Air Quality; Noise.

No other significant adverse impacts were identified. Mitigation measures are identified in the DEIS and will be detailed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

RER: Displacement Risk Index

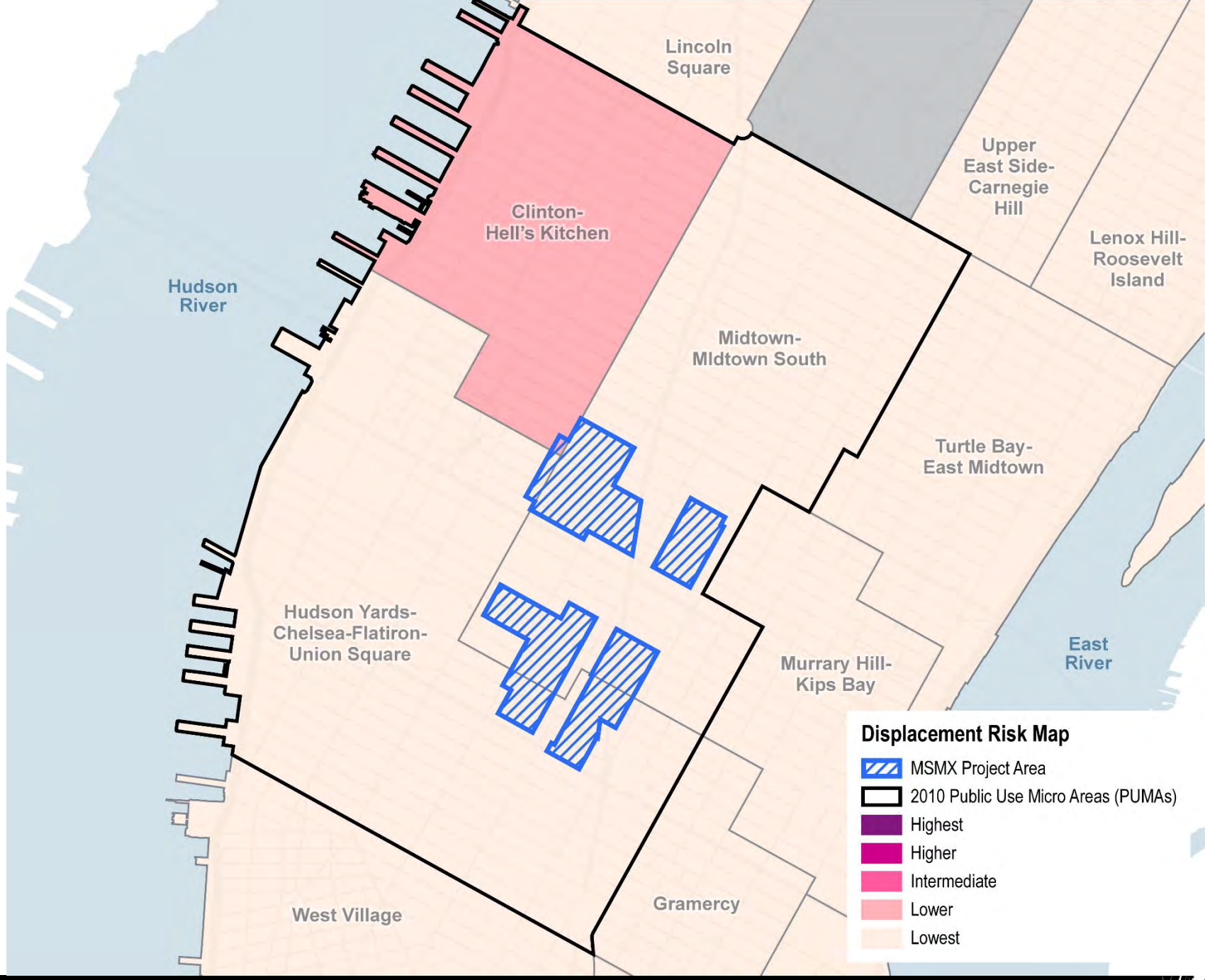
Incorporates factors that may contribute to displacement (the inability to remain in one's home or neighborhood)

Population Vulnerability
Household characteristics
(i.e., rent burden, income)

Housing Conditions
Household characteristics
(i.e., rent stabilization, maintenance deficiencies)

Market Conditions
Neighborhood characteristics
(i.e., housing price changes, change in rents)

PUMA (Public Use Microdata Area) 3807 covering Chelsea, Clinton, & Midtown Business District (approximately Manhattan CD 4 & 5)



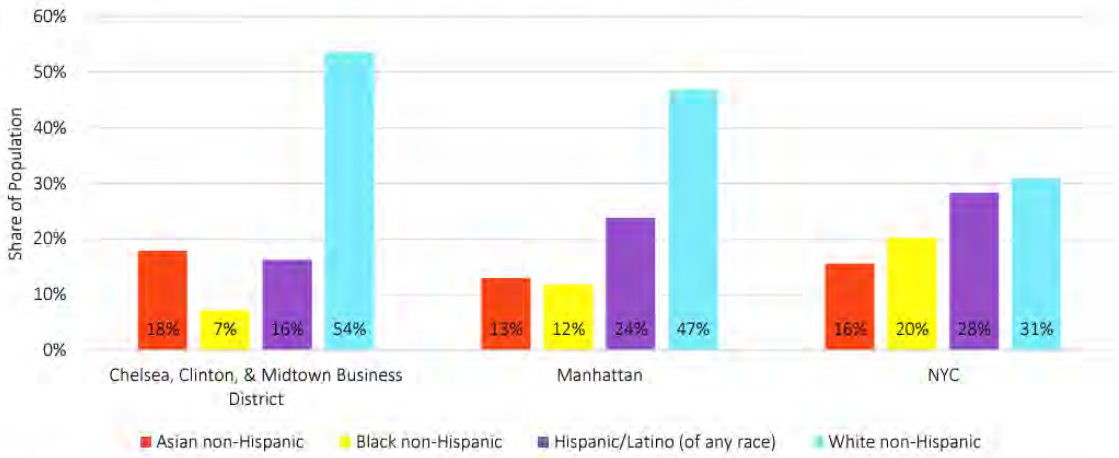
RER: Demographic Data

PUMA (Public Use Microdata Area) 3807 covering Chelsea, Clinton, & Midtown Business District (approximately Manhattan CD 4 & 5)

Figure 1: Race & Ethnicity, 2020

Shows the share of area population by mutually exclusive race and Hispanic ethnicity. Compares the local area to the borough and city.

"In 2020, [percent] of the population in [area] identified as [race/ethnicity]."

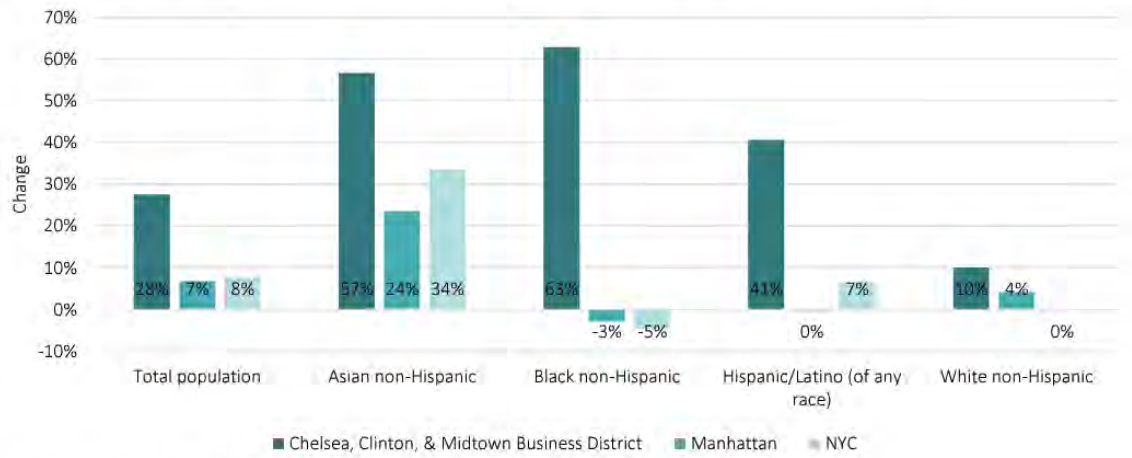


Source: Census 2020; Community Profile Table 1.01

Figure 2: Percent Change in Race & Ethnicity, 2010 to 2020

Shows the percent change of the area population by mutually exclusive race and Hispanic ethnicity. Compares the local area to the borough and city.

"From 2010 to 2020, the [race/ethnicity] population in [area] increased/decreased by [percent]."



Source: Census 2010, 2020; Community Profile Table 1.01

Summary

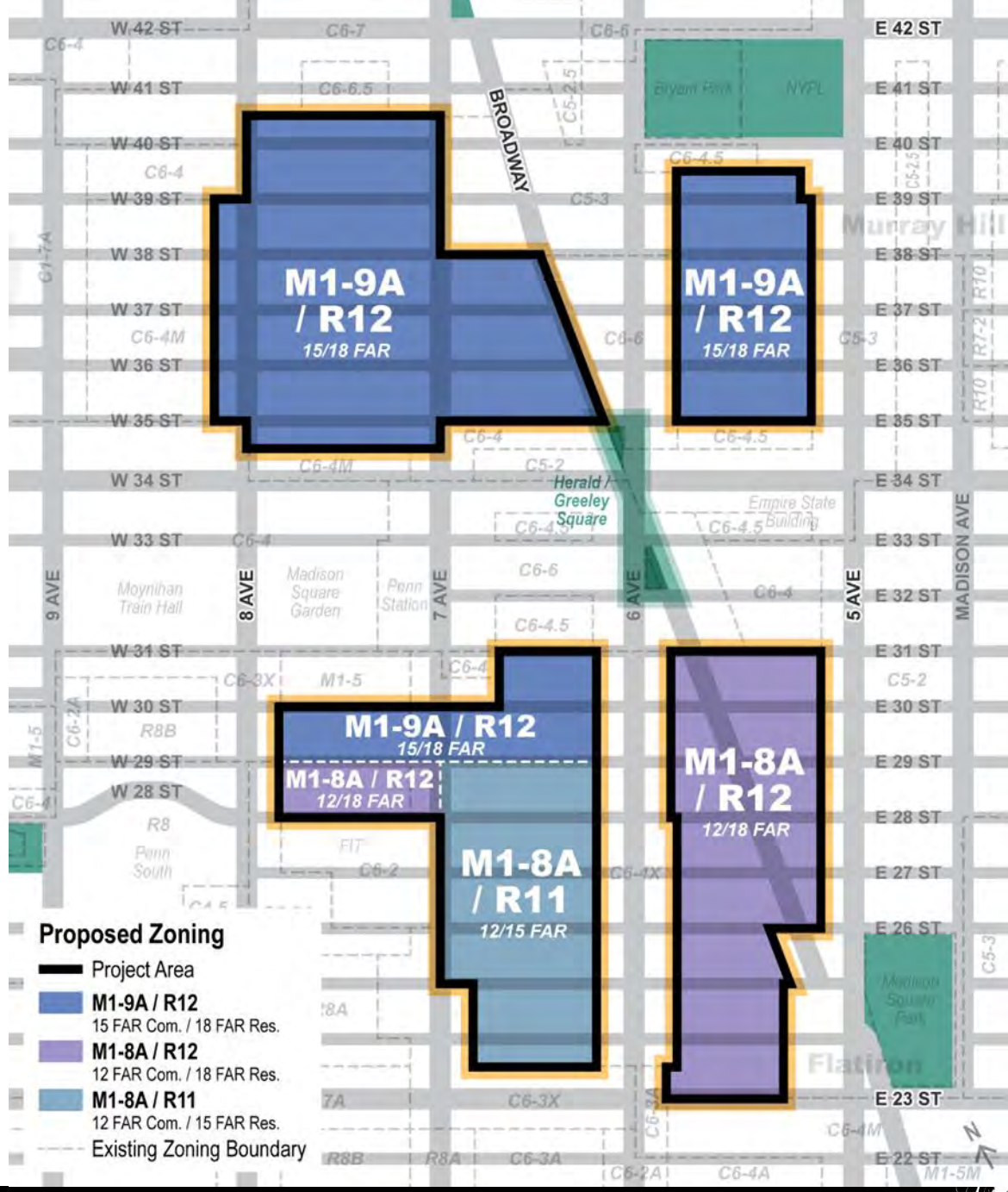
Zoning Map Amendments

- **Map paired manufacturing / residential districts** to support dynamic mix of housing, commercial, manufacturing, and community facility uses

Zoning Text Amendments

- **Establish Special Midtown South Mixed-Use District (MSX)** to shape building form and incentivize public realm improvements
- Designate **Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area** to require permanently income-restricted affordable housing in Midtown for the first time

Together, actions could deliver ~9,700 new homes, up to 2,900 of which would be permanently income restricted



MSMX would foster vibrant, 24/7 mixed-use neighborhoods across 42 blocks of Midtown South.

Create Vibrant Mixed-Use Communities



Create opportunities for housing, including affordable housing.

Support Critical Economic Activity



Support diverse economic sectors and job growth as a regional job hub.

Enhance Neighborhood Character



Active sidewalks, streets, and public spaces for quality-of-life improvements.

MSMX

Thank You!

City Planning Commission Review Session | January 21, 2025