DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
CITY OF NEW YORK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW DIVISION

Carl Weisbrod, *Director*
Department of City Planning

August 29, 2014

Christopher Reo, Interim Director
Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination
100 Gold Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10038

NOTICE OF LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATION AND REVIEW

Re: West 15th Street/Special West Chelsea District Expansion
CEQR No. 15DCP037M
ULURP No. 150101ZMM and N150102ZRM
Manhattan, Community District 4
SEQR Type: Type I

The above-referenced application involves discretionary actions subject to City Planning Commission approval. The actions are subject to review under the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), Executive Order No. 91, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6 NYCRR 617.

Pursuant to Sections 5.03 and 5.05 of the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) as adopted June 26, 1991, the Department of City Planning, acting on behalf of the City Planning Commission, is assuming lead agency status for this application and is initiating the CEQR review.

The applicant, the New York City Department of City Planning is proposing a zoning map amendment and zoning text amendment to the NYC Zoning Resolution (ZR) to expand the Special West Chelsea District to include a portion of a block bounded by West 14th and West 15th Streets, and Ninth and Tenth Avenues in the West Chelsea neighborhood in Manhattan, Community District 4. The proposed Special West Chelsea District extension (the "Project Area") is bounded by West 14th and West 15th streets, and Ninth and Tenth Avenues (Block 712, Lots 1, 6, 11, 36, 38, 40, 42, 46, and 51 and part of Lots 26, 27, and 29). In addition, the proposal includes text amendments related to street wall regulations, rear yard provisions, maximum building heights, and unenclosed sidewalk cafés that would apply to the 17 blocks within the Special West Chelsea District and proposed extension area, generally bounded by West 14th Street to the south, West 30th Street to the north, Eleventh Avenue to the east, and Tenth Avenue to the west. The Proposed Action is intended to reinforce the context and scale of the Special West Chelsea District and implement height and setback controls on West 15th Street that are

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consistent with envelope regulations governing adjacent blocks, and would have no effect on the amount of development that could take place in the Project Area or the overall district.

The Proposed Action includes the following:

Zoning Map Amendment

- To extend the Special West Chelsea District to the block that is directly south of the district, bounded by West 14th and West 15th Streets, and Ninth and Tenth Avenues, excluding the segment of the block beyond 325 feet east of Tenth Avenue and south of the block centerline (the "Project Area"). It should be noted that with the proposed incorporation of the Project Area into the Special West Chelsea District, the underlying zoning district designation, M1-5, will remain.

Zoning Text Amendments

- To Appendix A of Article IX, Chapter 8 to expand the Special West Chelsea District map to include the Project Area, as described above;
- To Appendix B of Article IX, Chapter 8 to expand the High Line Transfer Corridor Location map to include the Project Area as described above;
- To ZR Section 98-423, Street Wall Location, Minimum and Maximum Base Heights and Maximum Building Heights, to:
    - Strengthen street wall requirements applicable to corner lots located outside of a Special West Chelsea District subarea and containing narrow street frontages, by requiring that beyond 50 feet of an intersection along a wide street, buildings at applicable lots contain street walls that extend along the street line for at least 70% of their zoning lot's narrow street frontage for up to at least the minimum base height required; and
    - To correct the maximum building height permitted in Subarea C for zoning lots with Tenth Avenue frontage from 145' to 125';
- To Section 98-41, Special Rear Yard Regulations, to clarify that where rear yard equivalents are required, they shall be provided at the mid-block;
- To ZR Section 14-44, Special Zoning Districts Where Certain Sidewalk Cafes Are Permitted, to allow sidewalk cafes on wide streets, along portions of Ninth Avenue, Tenth Avenue, Eleventh Avenue, and West 23rd Street.

While the Proposed Action would not increase the amount of allowable floor area, a range of development alternatives could occur as a result of the proposal. Therefore, for conservative analysis purposes, two reasonable worst case development scenarios ("RWCDS 1" and "RWCDS 2") have been identified. For environmental assessment purposes, projected development was identified as being likely to occur on two sites pursuant to the Proposed Action, "Development Site 1" (Block 712, Lots 36 and 38) and "Development Site 2" (Block 712, Lots 1 and 6).

Under RWCDS 1, Development Site 1 (Block 712, Lot 36 and 38) would be developed with a commercial building consisting of 83,450 gross square feet (gsf) with a base height of 50 feet and an overall height of 252 feet in the future without the Proposed Action (the "no-action scenario"), In future with the Proposed Action (the "with-action scenario") the proposed 83,450

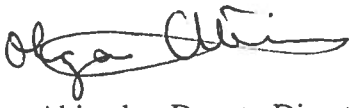
gsf commercial building would reach a height of 135 feet. As the overall effect of the Proposed Action is a modification in the permitted height and bulk, there is no net increment between the no-action and with-action scenarios under RWCDS 1.

RWCDS 2 differs from RWCDS 1 in that it considers an additional development site (Block 712, Lot 1 and 6) and assumes that certain administrative actions would be sought, resulting in a difference of bulk configuration on both sites. Under RWCDS 2 for Development Site 1 (Block 712, Lot 36 and 38), it is assumed that 22,479 sf of floor area would be transferred from an under-built building adjacent to the south (Block 712, Lot 29). Development Site 1 would be improved with a 297-foot, 105,929 gsf commercial building in the no-action scenario. In the with-action scenario, Development Site 1 would be developed with a 105, 929 gsf commercial building, with a reduced overall height of 135 feet. Development Site 2 (Block 712, Lot 1 and 6) consists of an existing commercial 111' foot-tall, 241,567 gsf building containing office and light manufacturing uses, and a single story 16,558 gsf retail building. Under RWCDS 2, it is assumed that an administrative certification from the Department of City Planning pursuant to ZR Section 43-121 (Expansion of Existing Manufacturing Buildings) would be sought to expand the floor area available to Development Site 2 by 30,724 gsf. In the no-action scenario, the western portion (Lot 1) of the existing building at Development Site 2 would be enlarged with a 34-foot tall, 30,724 expansion, for a total building height of 145 feet and a total gross square footage of 272,291 gsf. In the with-action scenario, the 30,724 sf addition would be in the form of a 24-foot enlargement, for a total building height of 135 feet. As with RWCDS 1, no net square footage increment between the no-action and with-action scenarios under RWCDS 2 would result; the overall effect of the Proposed Action is a change in the height and bulk of the development.

The analysis year for the Proposed Action is 2024.

An Environmental Assessment Statement is attached. Please contact the project manager, Lauren Hamid-Shapiro of the Department of City Planning, at (212) 720-3426 if you have any questions regarding the application.

Sincerely,



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cc:

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