7

Urban Design and Visual Resources

In an urban design assessment under CEQR, one considers whether and how a project may change the experience of a pedestrian in the project area. The assessment focuses on the components of a proposed project that may have the potential to alter the arrangement, appearance, and functionality of the built environment.

Introduction

According to the *2021 City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual*, urban design is defined as the totality of components—including streets, buildings, open spaces, wind, natural resources, and visual resources—that may affect a pedestrian's experience of public space. A visual resource is defined as the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, and natural resources.

Based on the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is appropriate when there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Examples include projects that permit the modification of yard, height, and setback requirements, and projects that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed "as-of-right," or in the future No-Action condition.

As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, the Proposed Actions include zoning map amendments, zoning text amendments, and zoning special permits (collectively, the Proposed Actions) to facilitate the development of two buildings (collectively, the Proposed Projects): a 44-story, mixed-use residential and commercial building at 629 W 54th Street (Manhattan Block 1102, Lot 11) and a 38-story, mixed-use residential and commercial building at 801 Eleventh Avenue (Manhattan Block 1103, Lot 36).

Principal Conclusions

Urban Design

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse impacts to urban design at either the Project Area or within the study area. The development sites would include two new mixed-use towers, which would increase the area's density and diversify its land uses while seamlessly blending with the existing architectural context. Ground-floor commercial spaces would activate the streetscape, fostering a more engaging and pedestrian-friendly environment. The proposed development would maintain the cohesive street wall, ensuring visual harmony. The project's emphasis on urban design, coupled with consistent architectural treatments and setbacks, would enhance the pedestrian experience without disrupting the flow of traffic. Additionally, the Proposed Actions would support the transfer of floor area from the Granting Sites to the development sites, allowing for the maintenance and improvement of piers, bulkheads, and infrastructure within Hudson River Park.

Visual Resources

The Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse effects on visual resources either at the Project Area or within the study area.

The proposed building envelopes would not affect views of the Hudson River, a visual resource in the study area. Both Development Sites 1 and 2 are designed to align seamlessly with the lot line, merging smoothly with the existing street layout and preserving the characteristic street wall of the neighborhood. As a result, pedestrian views from the sidewalks and roadways within the study area would remain unobstructed.

The proposed building envelopes would integrate harmoniously with the existing street grid of Hell's Kitchen, upholding the visual corridors along the roadways. Development Site 1 would not block views, as it fits within the existing grid and is surrounded by tall buildings that already restrict visibility. Similarly, Development Site 2 would not impact views of the Hudson River, as these views are already largely obstructed by the DSNY building on West 56th Street and other structures from West 55th Street. The dense urban environment and limited view corridors to the river from sidewalks along West 54th, West 56th, and West 57th Streets further diminish the likelihood of visual impacts. Therefore, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse effects on visual resources either at the Project Area or within the study area.

Methodology

Per the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the urban design and visual resources assessment is conducted in three basic steps. First, a proposed action is reviewed to determine whether such an assessment is warranted, based on whether it would be expected to result in changes to elements particular to urban design—such as streets, buildings, visual resources, open space, natural features, and/or potential wind effects, and whether there is the potential for a pedestrian to observe, from the street level, a physical alteration beyond that allowed by existing zoning. Pursuant to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, projects that permit modification of yard, height, and setback requirements, and projects that result in an increase in built floor area beyond what would be allowed as-of-right, or in the

future without a proposed action, require preliminary analysis. When such changes, or "effects," could be expected with a proposed action, then a preliminary assessment of urban design and visual resources is conducted to determine which particular effects expected with the proposed action may warrant further investigation in a detailed analysis. A detailed analysis may be needed for projects or actions that potentially obstruct view corridors, compete with icons in the skyline, or make substantial alterations to the streetscape of a neighborhood by noticeably changing the scale of buildings. The effects are characterized within the detailed analysis and a determination is made as to whether any changes to the urban design and visual resources of an area would alter the pedestrian's experience of public space in a significant way. The development sites are located adjacent to historic and visual resources, and given their proposed height, the Proposed Projects would be visible among existing recognizable buildings in the skyline. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the potential impacts of the Proposed Actions on urban design and visual resources is warranted per the *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines and is provided below. This analysis describes existing conditions and compares the future with and without the Proposed Actions, to determine potential urban design and visual resource impacts. As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, for conservative analysis purposes, two distinct reasonable worst-case development scenarios (RWCDS) will be assessed. A single, maximum building envelope is used to encompass both development scenarios for each site. This envelope will serve as the basis for analyzing the RWCDS concerning the bulk, height, and massing of each building and will be used to determine the Proposed Actions' potential to result in significant adverse impacts related to urban design and visual resources.

Per the criteria listed in Section 230 of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a pedestrian wind condition analysis is not warranted for the Proposed Action. The *CEQR Technical Manual* identifies wind as a concern when channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and/or downwashed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings causes winds that affect pedestrian comfort and safety. The Project Area is not located in a high wind location, such as directly along the waterfront, and would not create a uniform street wall that would result in channelization or downwash effects. Therefore, wind is not warranted or considered in this analysis.

Information pertinent to the assessment of the urban design and visual resources analysis includes data collected and analytical information prepared as part of other analyses included in this DEIS, specifically **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**; **Chapter 5, Open Space**; and **Chapter 7, Historic and Cultural Resources**. In addition, the study of existing urban design and visual resources conditions has been informed by field visits and photography, and future conditions without and with the Proposed Action also rely on computer imaging and graphic renderings. Photos included in this assessment were taken on December 1, 2023, July 25, 2024, and October 9, 2024.

Assessment Criteria

In general, an assessment of urban design is needed when a project may have effects on one or more of the elements that contribute to a pedestrian's experience of public space. The elements contributing to urban design are described in the *CEQR Technical Manual* as follows:

- **Streets:** For many neighborhoods, streets are the primary component of public space. The arrangement and orientation of streets define the location and flow of activity in an area, set street views, and create the blocks on which buildings and open spaces are organized. The apportionment of street space between cars, bicycles, transit, and sidewalk is critical to making a successful streetscape, as is the careful design of street furniture, grade, materials used, and permanent fixtures, including plantings, streetlights, fire hydrants, curb cuts, or newsstands.

- **Buildings:** Buildings support streets. A building's streetwalls form the most common backdrop in the City for public space. A building's size, shape, setbacks, lot coverage, placement on the zoning lot and block, orientation of active uses, and pedestrian and vehicular entrances all play major roles in the vitality of the streetscape. The public realm also extends to building façades and rooftops, offering more opportunity to enrich the visual character of an area.
- **Open Space:** For the purpose of urban design, open space includes public and private areas such as parks, yards, cemeteries, parking lots and privately-owned public spaces.
- **Natural Features:** Natural features include vegetation and geologic, topographic, and aquatic features. Rock outcroppings, steep slopes or varied ground elevation, beaches, or wetlands may help define the overall visual character of an area.
- **Visual Resources:** A visual resource is the connection from the public realm to significant natural or built features, including views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, otherwise distinct buildings or groups of buildings, or natural resources.
- **Wind:** Channelized wind pressure from between tall buildings and downwashed wind pressure from parallel tall buildings may cause winds that jeopardize pedestrian safety.

As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, the Proposed Actions include zoning map amendments, zoning text amendments, and zoning special permits. In the areas where those actions would be applicable, there would be physical alterations beyond what is allowed by existing zoning. Therefore, an urban design and visual resources analysis is warranted.

Study Area

Consistent with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the area within 400 feet of the Project Area is defined as the study area for this analysis, the same study area as used for the land use analysis in **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**. As shown in **Figure 7-1**, the study area is generally bounded by West 57th Street to the north, West 52nd Street to the south, Twelfth Avenue/Clinton Cove at Hudson River Park to the west, and a line parallel to and 300 feet east of Eleventh Avenue to the east.

Detailed Analysis

Existing Conditions

Figure 7-1 provides an aerial image of the Project Area with accompanied site-specific photo locations. **Figure 7-1** and study area and provides a photo key for area photographs. This section provides a narrative of the existing development on the project block and in the study area. **Photo 7-1** through **Photo 7-28** show existing conditions of the Project Area and Study Area.

Urban Design: Streets, Buildings, Open Space, and Natural Features

Project Area

As described in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, the Project Area comprises (i) the portion of Manhattan Block 1102 bounded by Twelfth Avenue (also known as Henry Hudson Parkway or New York State Route 9A [U.S. 9A]) to the west, West 55th Street to the north, West 54th Street to the south, and a line parallel to and 175 feet east of Twelfth Avenue to the east (the "Project Area

Southern Portion"), and (ii) the portion of Manhattan Block 1103 bounded by Eleventh Avenue to the east, West 56th Street to the north, West 55th Street to the south, and a line parallel to and 150 feet west of Eleventh Avenue to the west (the "Project Area Northern Portion"), both of which are located in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan Community District 4. The Project Area has a total area of approximately 61,975 square feet (sf). Within the Project Area, there are two development sites— (1) the property at 629 W 54th Street (Manhattan Block 1102, Lot 11, a.k.a. "Development Site 1") and (2) the property at 801 Eleventh Avenue (Manhattan Block 1103, Lot 36 a.k.a. "Development Site 2") (see **Photo 7-1** and **Photo 7-2**). Additionally, the Project Area also includes a portion of the non-Applicant-owned Block 1103, Lot 23, which is adjacent to and directly southeast of Development Site 2.

Street Network

The portion of Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A fronting the Project Area runs north-south and is a 150-foot-wide, two-way, eight-lane, principal arterial roadway along the Hudson River, with minimal crosswalks, sidewalks on either side and concrete islands between the two directions of traffic landscaped with trees. Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A also has large overhead directional highway signage, metal lampposts. The buildings containing frontage along the street generally have ground floor retail with large windows along the ground floor. A portion of the Hudson River Greenway—a 12.9-mile multi-use trail along the Hudson River—runs directly west of Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A and provides more direct views and access to the waterfront (see **Photo 7-3** and **Photo 7-4**).

The portion of Eleventh Avenue fronting the Project Area is a 100-foot-wide, four-lane, one-way (southbound) minor arterial roadway, generally fronted by ground floor retail on either side of the street, featuring glass windows, fire hydrants, and modern post lamps. On-street parking is permitted on the east side of street and the west side of street largely governed by No Stopping regulations (see **Photo 7-9**).

The portion of West 55th Street fronting the Project Area is a 60-foot-wide, one-way (westbound), single-lane minor arterial roadway, with parking on both sides of the street and a bike lane on the southern portion of the roadway. The ground floor buildings fronting West 55th Street are a mix of blank window-less facades, ground floor retail, loading docks, and an active driveway. The portion of West 54th Street fronting the Project Area is a 60-foot-wide, one-way (eastbound), single-lane, major collector roadway which is fronted by high rise buildings on the north side of the street and a public open space—De Witt Clinton Park—on the south side of the street (**Photo 7-25**). The park is visible through a concrete barrier and wrought iron fence providing views of the landscaped bushes, trees, and sports fields. The sidewalks along West 54th Street are dotted with fire hydrants and metal lampposts. On-street parking is permitted on the north side of the street, whereas the south side of the street is governed by "No Stopping Anytime" regulations. Additionally, a separated bike lane is located along the south side of the street (see **Photo 7-11**). The ground floor of the buildings on north side of West 54th Street primarily include retail with large glass windows and loading docks.

The portion of West 56th Street fronting the Project Area is a 60-foot-wide, three-lane, one-way (eastbound) minor arterial roadway largely flanked by loading docks and dotted with street trees along the edge of sidewalks. Both sides of the street are governed by No Parking Anytime regulations. On the western portion of this segment of the roadway, between Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, is a modernist glass and concrete DSNY skybridge/cantilever which spans the street—creating a shaded tunnel portion of the roadway (**Photo 7-10**).

Buildings

Development Site 1 encompasses a total area of 35,145 sf and is occupied by a three-story building which stands approximately 35 feet tall as well as a six-story commercial auto dealership building, which stands 82 feet tall and is comprised of 152,375 gross square feet (gsf) of commercial auto dealership uses. These structures, originally built in 1930, feature a distinctive façade of concrete, glass, and brick.

Development Site 2 encompasses a 26,830-sf lot and includes two interconnected buildings that serve as a single commercial auto dealership. The site features a two-story building, approximately 50 feet tall, with a concrete and metal façade, and a three-story building, standing about 35 feet tall, with a concrete façade. Together, these buildings offer a combined built area of around 57,805 gsf. Both structures were originally built in 1920, and the northern building has since undergone expansion in 2011.

Open Space and Natural Features

There are no publicly accessible open space resources within the Project Area. Additionally, as the footprint of the Project Area is largely improved with existing structures, the Project Area does not contain any natural resources. However, there are several street trees along Development Site 1's western frontages and Development Site 2's northern frontages. Additionally, from the Project Area, the principal natural resources that can be seen from the Project Area are the Hudson River and portions of the Hudson River Greenway.

Study Area

As described above, the study area is generally bounded by West 57th Street to the north, Twelfth Avenue/Clinton Cove at Hudson River Park to the west, and a line parallel to and 300 feet east of Eleventh Avenue to the east. Study area photographs can be found in **Photo 7-1** through **Photo 7-28** below, and their locations can be found in **Figure 7-1**.

Streets

The study area is generally characterized by rectangular shaped blocks organized along a typical street grid commonly found throughout the portions of Manhattan north of Houston Street and is largely comprised of one-way streets.

The study area includes a major collector roadway (West 54th Street), a principal arterial expressway (Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A) and several minor arterial roadways (West 55th Street, West 56th Street, and Eleventh Avenue), which are described in greater detail above.

In addition, a portion of West 57th Street, a 100-foot-wide, two-way, four-lane, principal arterial roadway, falls within the study area and runs east-west. There is parking on both sides of the street, and it is flanked by sidewalks dotted with street trees with tree guards, and bike racks.

Buildings

The area surrounding the Project Area (within a radius of roughly 400 feet) is largely characterized by mid-rise, high-lot-coverage commercial and utility buildings, and high-rise residential and mixed-use development. Recent development in the area has consists of high-rise residential developments such as the 42-story stone and metal building with a wide base and rising tower and ground floor

retail at 827 Eleventh Avenue (constructed in 2015) and the 38-story glass and steel frame Helena 57 West Apartments building at 601 W 57th Street (constructed in 2003) (see **Photo 7-13**).

Buildings within the study area exhibit a diverse assortment of massing and forms, which closely correlate to land use. As discussed in **Section 2, Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy,** land use within the study area primarily includes mid-rise, high-lot-coverage commercial and utilities buildings, high-rise residential and mixed-use development.

There are several large luxury auto dealership buildings that feature integrated service centers, such as the Jaguar dealership at 787 Eleventh Avenue with a two-story glass showroom on the eastern portion of Block 1102 and the five-story Audi dealership with a glass ground floor showroom at 802 Eleventh Avenue directly east of Development Site 2 (see **Photo 7-16**). Apart from several office and warehouse buildings throughout the area, other notable commercial uses include the CBS headquarters of CBS News and Broadcasting Studio which is a three-story brick building with stone lintels and a metal entrance overhang at 530 W 57th Street (see **Photo 7-17**).

Located directly west of Development Site 2 on Block 1103, partially within the Project Area, there is a two-story concert venue known as Terminal 5 with a black façade and a ground-floor wooden-framed loading dock. Adjacent to Terminal 5 at 614 W 56th Street is a 5-story brick building that once served as a Lexus service center, alongside a 6-story, modernist glass and concrete New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) building that spans Blocks 1103 and 1004 with a skybridge across the roadbed (see **Photo 7-18**). Additionally, DSNY owns a salt shed facility used for storage, which is located north of the Project Area on Block 1103 (see **Photo 7-19**).

This area is undergoing a transition from an industrial and commercial neighborhood to a residential neighborhood. There are many high-rise buildings in the area. Recent development in the area has consisted of the 42-story concrete and glass rectangular high rise building at 827 Eleventh Avenue to the north of the site (see **Photo 7-6**). There is also a seven-story Mercedes Benz dealership with a glass showroom on the ground floor located at 770 11th Avenue (see **Photo 7-12**). There is a 38-story high rise building with balconies and a wider base containing a Pilates studio and grocery store and potted planters on the ground floor at 601 W 57th Street (constructed in 2003) (see **Photo 7-7**). There is also a tetrahedron-shaped 32-story, 460-foot apartment "VIA 57 West" luxury apartment building with a sloping façade and cutouts for terraces and glass balconies at 625 W 57th Street (constructed in 2013) (see **Photo 7-9**).

Along the waterfront, Pier 96 in the Hudson River Park's Clinton Cove feature a single-story corrugated metal boathouse (see **Photo 7-26**) which is currently closed to the public. Pier 95 features a wooden gazebo.

Open Space and Natural Features

To the west of the Project Area, across Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A, lies a portion of the Hudson River Park, a four-mile linear open space with separated pedestrian and cycling lanes along Manhattan's West Side with a variety of recreational and educational activities (see **Photo 7-24**). This portion includes Clinton Cove, which connects Pier 95, Pier 96, and Pier 97. Clinton Cove features a green lawn, outdoor seating, a single-story corrugated metal Pier 96 Boathouse providing kayak access, bike racks and paths, and a "get-down" on the pier with steps down to the water (see **Photo 7-21**). The boathouse and the steps to the water are currently closed to the public.

Located directly south of Development Site 1 along West 54th Street, De Witt Clinton Park is a 5.83-acre public park with seating areas, a playground, a dog run, a garden, and a perennial garden, as

well as baseball, basketball, soccer, handball sports fields(see **Photo 7-20, Photo 7-25, Photo 7-27,** and **Photo 7-28**). Just outside the study area, Pier 97 is a new extension of Hudson River Park with playground equipment, a sloping lawn, walking promenade, an athletic field, flowers and plants, and a sunset deck with bistro tables.

The geological features of Hell's Kitchen include primarily bedrock formations that form the foundation of Manhattan Island. This bedrock, predominantly made of Manhattan schist, is visible in certain areas as natural rock outcroppings, especially near the Hudson River where the land meets the water. These rock formations are crucial to the city's structural integrity, providing a sturdy base for its skyscrapers and infrastructure.

Visual Resources

The Hudson River is a visual resource situated west of the study area. The Hudson River flows from north to south through eastern New York, forming the western boundary. Some of the publicly accessible sidewalks along Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A as well as the Hudson River Park along the waterfront provide direct views of the Hudson River. The sidewalks around the study area adjacent to the Hudson River such as West 54th, and West 56th, and West 57th streets have limited view corridors to the river due to tall buildings and the DSNY building passing over the street on West 56th Street.

Figure 7-1 Development Site and Study Area Photograph Locations

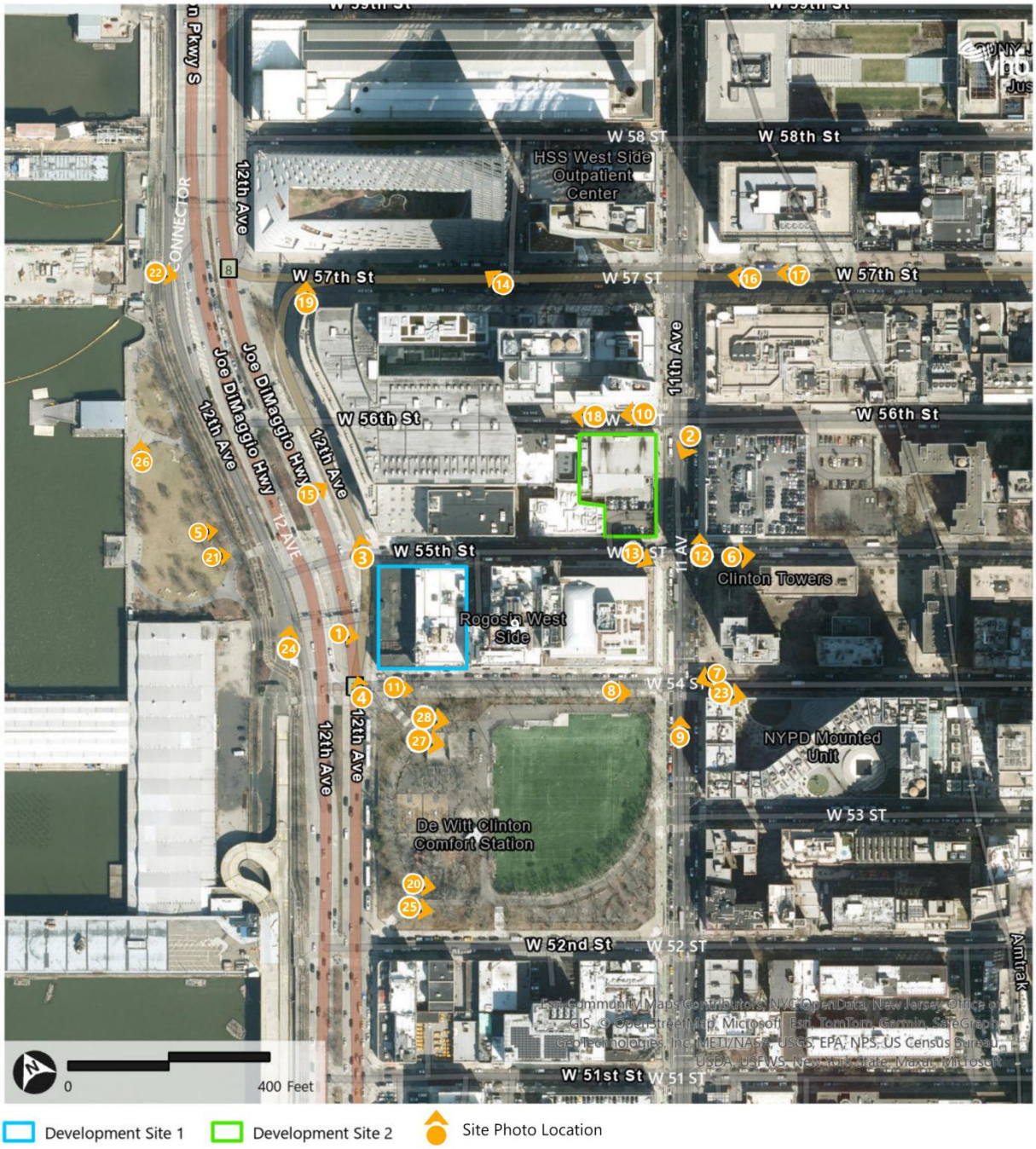


Photo 7-1 Development Site 1 (Block 1102, Lot 11)



View of Development Site 1 facing northeast across Twelfth Avenue. Photo captured December 1, 2023.

Photo 7-2 Development Site 2 (Block 1103, Lot 36)



View of Development Site 2 facing west across Eleventh Avenue. Photo captured December 1, 2023.

Photo 7-3 Route 9A Looking North



Photo captured July 25,2024

Photo 7-4 Route 9A Looking Northwest



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-5 Hudson River Greenway Looking East



Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-6 West 55th Street Looking East



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-7 De Witt Clinton Park

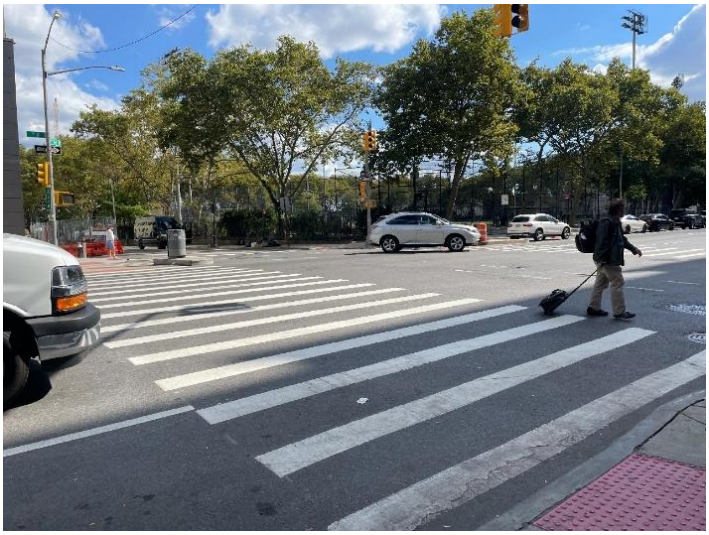


Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-8 West 54th Street Looking West



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-9 11th Avenue Looking North



Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-10 West 56th Street Looking West

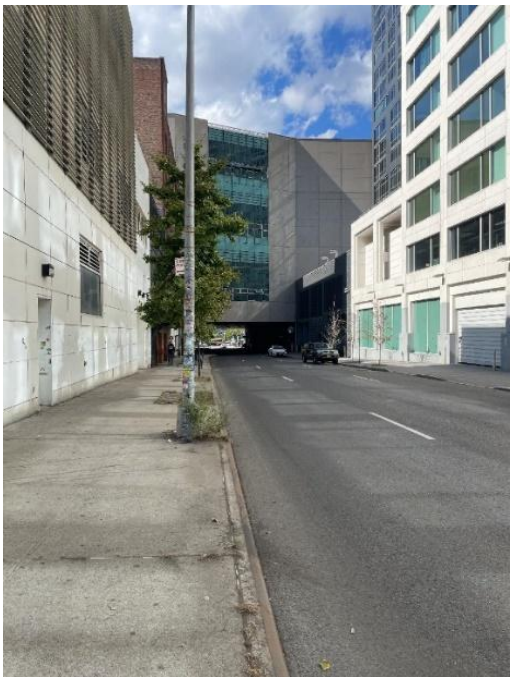


Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-11 West 54th Street Looking East



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-12 827 Eleventh Avenue



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-13 Helena 57 West Apartments, 601 West 57th Street



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-14 625 West 57th Street

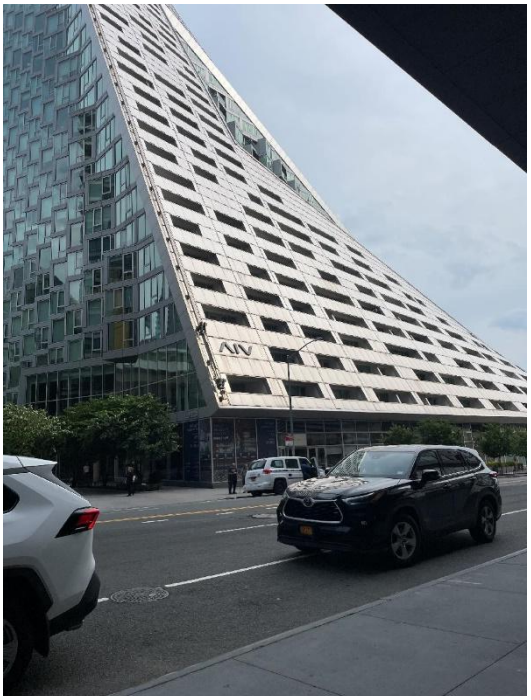


Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-15 Department of Sanitation



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-16 Mercedes Dealership



Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-17 CBS Studios



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-18 Terminal 5 & DSNY Skybridge



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-19 DSNY Salt Shed

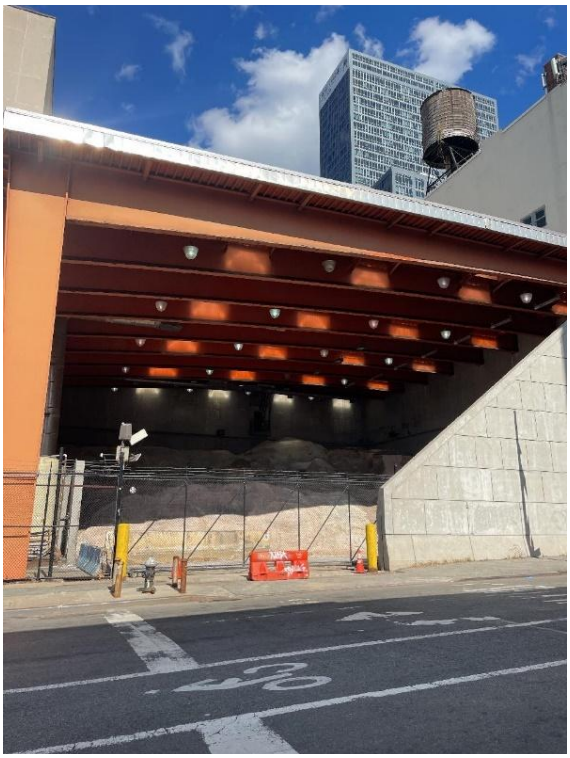


Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-20 DeWitt Clinton Park



Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-21 View From Clinton Cove



Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-22 Route 9A

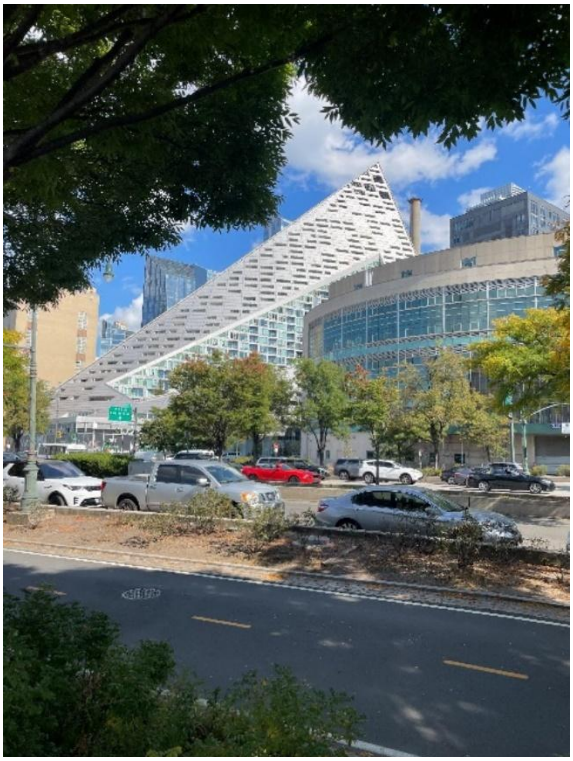


Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-23 West 54th Street Looking East

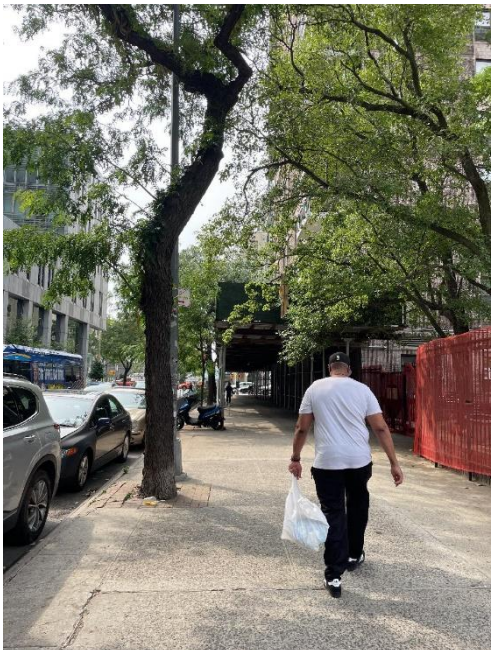


Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-24 Hudson River Greenway



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-25 De Witt Clinton Park



Photo captured July 25, 2024

Photo 7-26 Manhattan Community Boathouse



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-27 De Witt Clinton Park



Photo captured October 9, 2024

Photo 7-28 De Witt Clinton Park



Photo captured October 9, 2024

No-Action Condition

In the future, without the Proposed Actions (No-Action condition), it is anticipated that Development Site 1 would remain occupied by the existing auto dealership. Similarly, the current auto dealership space on Development Site 2 would be leased to new tenants. No changes are anticipated for the portion of non-Applicant-owned Block 1103, Lot 23, which makes up the remainder of the Project Area. Under the No-Action scenario, no floor area would be transferred from the Hudson River Park. Additionally, it is anticipated that a single planned project within the study area identified in this section (i.e., 755 Twelfth Avenue) would be completed and operational by the 2029 Analysis Year.

Urban Design: Streets, Buildings, Open Space, and Natural Features

Project Area and Study Area

Streets

While there are no planned street or transportation-specific projects anticipated in the study area in the No-Action Condition, one new development at 755 Twelfth Avenue is anticipated for completion by the 2029 Analysis Year. As this development is constructed, general street improvements and sidewalk amenities such as street trees and bike safety improvements are anticipated to be added, which would improve the pedestrian experience throughout the study area.

The planned project at 755 Twelfth Avenue, detailed below, is expected to provide film and television production studios. This site is located on Pier 94 so it will not affect the street grid since the area is primarily a waterfront space, separate from the main thoroughfares of the city. As such, the street grid would largely remain the same as existing conditions in the No-Action Condition.

Buildings

As described above, one planned project at 755 Twelfth Avenue was identified that would introduce a new building to the study area under the No-Action condition. Known as Sunset Pier 94 Studios, the development at 755 Twelfth Avenue aims to transform Manhattan's Pier 94 into a state-of-the-art television and film production complex. This 266,000-square-foot facility would include six purpose-built soundstages equipped with production control room facilities and 145,000 square feet dedicated to production support space and offices. The studio is designed to offer public amenities and enhance open spaces for the surrounding community. The project is projected to be completed in 2025. No other changes to the study area's built form are anticipated in the No-Action condition.

Open Space and Natural Features

Existing study area open spaces would remain unchanged under the No-Action condition. Additionally, under the No-Action condition, Sunset Pier 94 Studios would provide public amenities to the surrounding area. These amenities include new public restrooms for the nearby Hudson River Park, a 1,850-square-foot community amenity space, 25,000 square feet of waterfront open space with pier access, and safety enhancements to the bikeway. No other changes to open space and natural resource conditions are anticipated in the No-Action condition.

Visual Resources

Under the No-Action Condition, there would be no changes to existing conditions that would affect views to or from visual resources in both the project and study area.

Figure 7-2 Comparative View Facing West on Eleventh Avenue at West 56th Street

No-Action Condition (Showing Development Site 2)



With-Action Condition



Note: This massing represents a building envelope within which the building can be constructed rather than the final proposed building design

Figure 7-3 Comparative View Facing North on Eleventh Avenue at West 54th Street

No-Action Condition (Showing Development Site 2)



With-Action Condition



Note: This massing represents a building envelope within which the building can be constructed rather than the final proposed building design

Figure 7-4 Comparative View Facing North from DeWitt Clinton Park

No-Action Condition (Showing Development Site 1)



With-Action Condition



Note: This massing represents a building envelope within which the building can be constructed rather than the final proposed building design

Figure 7-5 Comparative View Facing South on Twelfth Avenue between West 55th Street and West 56th Street

No-Action Condition (Showing Development Site 1)



With-Action Condition

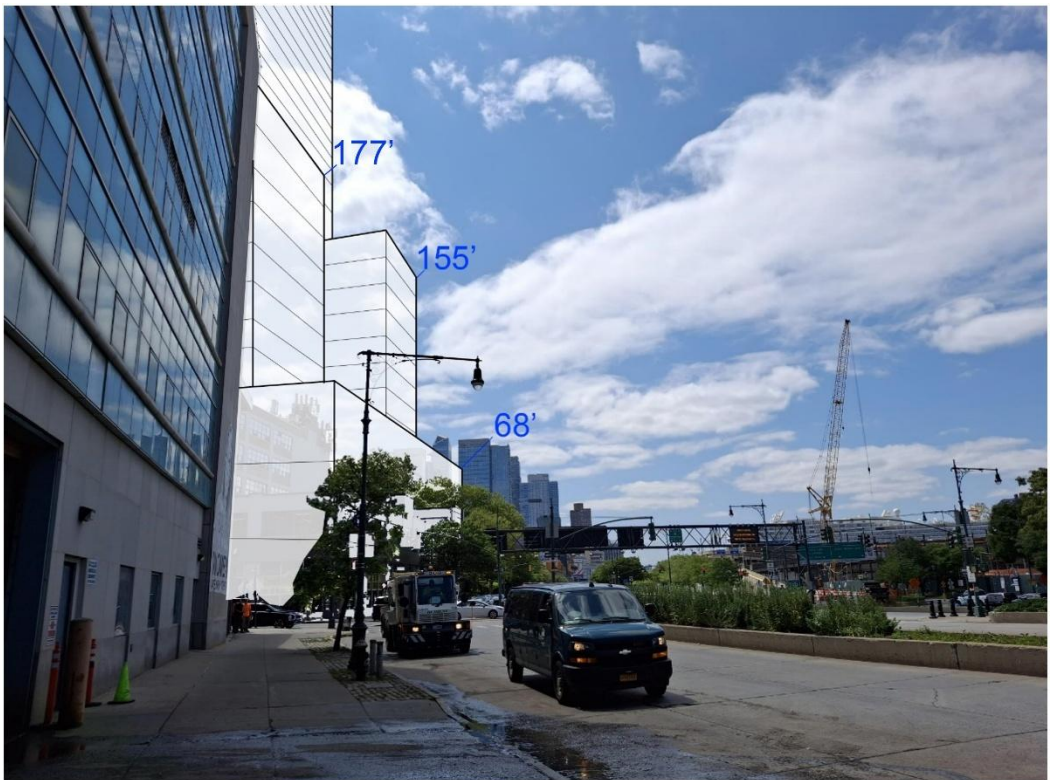


Figure 7-6 Comparative View Facing West on Eleventh Avenue at West 54th Street

No-Action Condition (Showing Development Site 1)



With-Action Condition



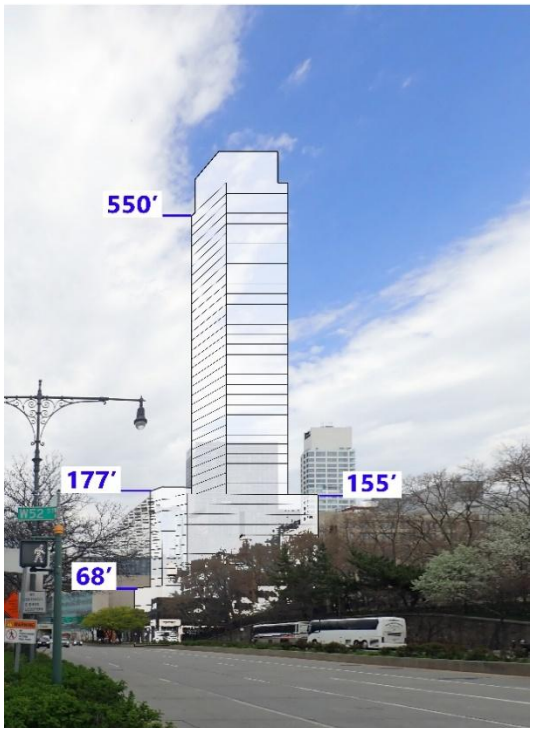
Note: This massing represents a building envelope within which the building can be constructed rather than the final proposed building design

Figure 7-7 Comparative View Facing North on the Hudson River Greenway at West 52nd Street

No-Action Condition (Showing Development Site 1)



With-Action Condition



Note: This massing represents a building envelope within which the building can be constructed rather than the final proposed building design

Figure 7-8 Comparative View Facing East from Hudson River Park at West 55th Street

No-Action Condition (Showing Development Site 1)



With-Action Condition



Note: This massing represents a building envelope within which the building can be constructed rather than the final proposed building design

With-Action Condition

The With-Action condition reflects the future conditions with the Proposed Actions. The Proposed Projects would create approximately 1,179,321 gsf of new construction, comprising approximately 939,934 gsf of residential space and approximately 199,750 gsf of commercial space across the identified development sites. The project involves several land use actions, including amendments to the zoning map, zoning text amendments, and the issuance of special permits. These measures are specifically designed to enable rezoning of the area to accommodate the proposed development, adjust current land use regulations to better suit the evolving needs of the neighborhood, and reallocate development rights to optimize space utilization, encourage residential growth, and allow for specific commercial activities. These actions collectively aim to ensure cohesive urban planning and enhanced development of the Project Area and Hudson River Park, harmonizing new developments with the existing urban fabric.

Illustrative sections, as shown in **Figure 7-2** through **Figure 7-8**, provide a comparative visual analysis of the No-Action and With-Action conditions. These diagrams highlight both the maximum permissible building envelopes under the Proposed Actions and the Proposed Projects, emphasizing the development potential and anticipated urban form.

Renderings of the development sites are shown in **Figure 7-9** through **Figure 7-11** which provide a more concrete visualization of the development sites design intent.

Figure 7-9 Illustrative Rendering of Development Site 1



Figure 7-10 Illustrative Rendering of Development Site 2



Figure 7-11 Development Sites Illustrative Aerial Rendering



Urban Design: Streets, Buildings, Open Space, and Natural Features

Project Area and Study Area

Streets

The Proposed Actions would not affect the urban design conditions of local streets and streetscapes. The existing street grid and its infrastructure would remain unchanged, ensuring a consistent flow of traffic for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. The new buildings would feature ground-floor commercial spaces designed to activate and enliven the streetscape, creating an inviting atmosphere for pedestrian activity and enhancing the area's existing commercial vitality.

The proposed buildings are designed with street walls at the street line, ensuring a consistent and cohesive appearance along the block. The proposed street walls along West 54th and West 55th streets and Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A for Development Site 1, and along West 55th and West 56th streets and Eleventh Avenue for Development Site 2, are planned to maintain a consistent street wall appearance. These treatments would enhance the overall pedestrian experience without disrupting the flow of movement. At Development Site 2, the building would set back adjacent to the residential entrance at the corner of Eleventh Avenue and West 55th Street (10 feet along Eleventh Avenue and 15 feet along West 55th Street); this limited building recess would provide pedestrian circulation area and visual interest without compromising the appearance of a strong street wall on the block.

Buildings

As discussed in **Chapter 1, Project Description**, and **Chapter 2, Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy**, the Proposed Actions consist of zoning text and map amendments and special permits to increase the permitted density in the Project Area and modify bulk regulations and height, among other actions. These Proposed Actions aim to facilitate the development of two mixed-use towers on the identified development sites.

The Proposed Projects total approximately 1,179,321 gross square feet, comprising approximately 939,934 gross square feet of residential space, which includes affordable housing, and approximately 199,750 gross square feet of commercial space. **Figure 7-12** through **Figure 7-17** show a series of illustrative sections and axonometric diagrams for Development Site 1 and Development Site 2. Under the With Action conditions, the proposed building envelope at Development Site 1 would feature a building that reaches a roof height of 550 feet, with a total height of 590 feet when including the 40-foot mechanical bulkhead. The building envelope would have a maximum base height of 182 feet fronting on West 54th and West 55th streets, followed by a 10-foot setback on West 54th Street and a 15-foot setback on West 55th Street before ascending to its full height. Along Twelfth Avenue, the building envelope would have a maximum base height of 68 feet, followed by a setback ranging between 24 feet and 70 feet. Commercial spaces would occupy the first through third floors, while residential units would be situated from the fourth to the 44th floors. On Development Site 2, the proposed building envelope would rise to a roof height of 485 feet, with a total height of up to 525 feet including a 40-foot mechanical bulkhead. The building envelope would have a maximum base height of 155 feet, with a 10-foot setback from Eleventh Avenue and 15-foot setbacks from West 55th and West 56th Streets, prior to reaching its full height. The structure would house commercial activities on the first through third floors and residential units from the fourth to the 38th floors.

Figure 7-12 Development Site 1 Illustrative Sections – Maximum Commercial Scenario

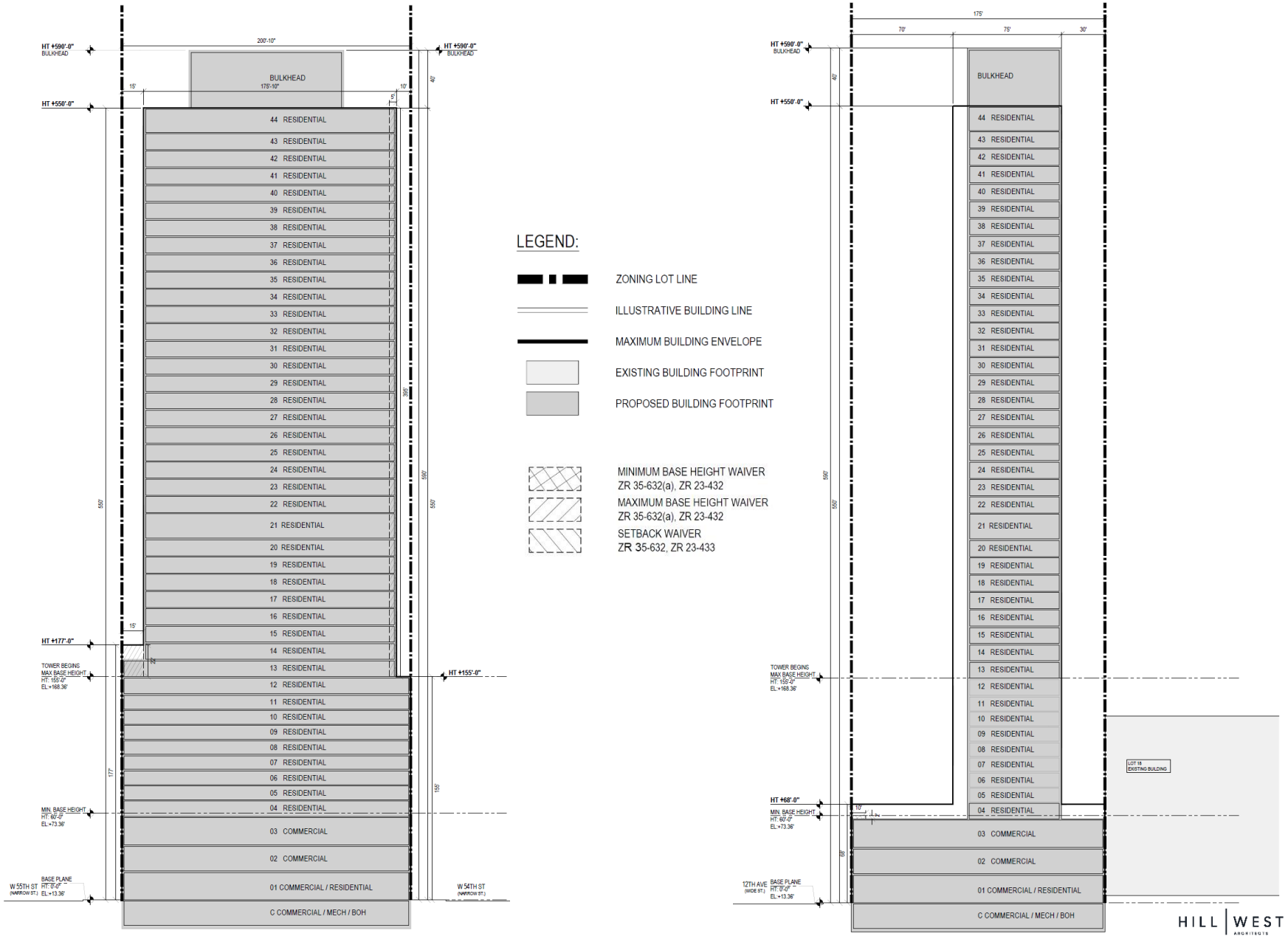


Figure 7-13 Development Site 2 Illustrative Sections – Maximum Commercial Scenario

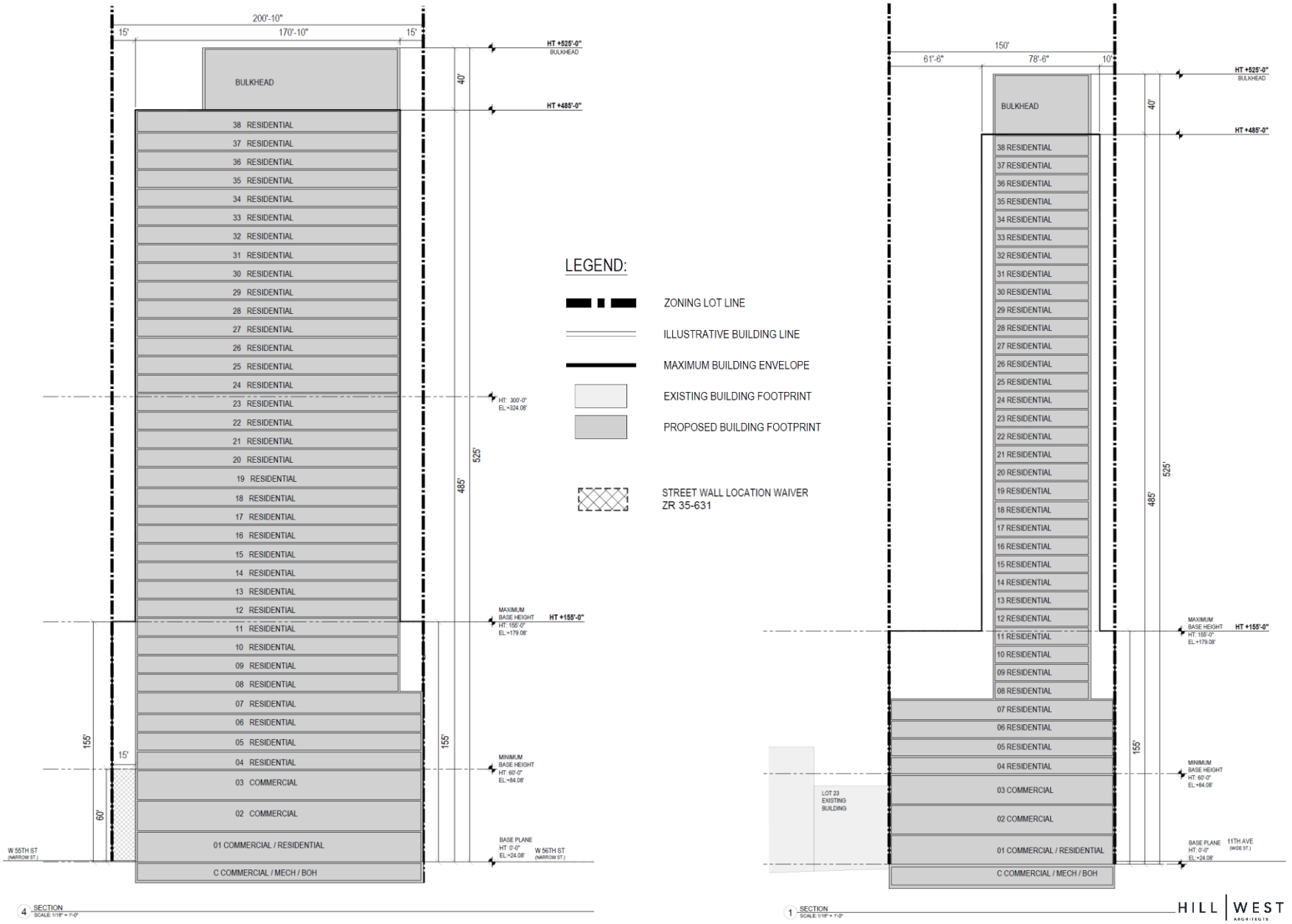


Figure 7-14 Development Site 1 Illustrative Sections – Maximum Residential Scenario

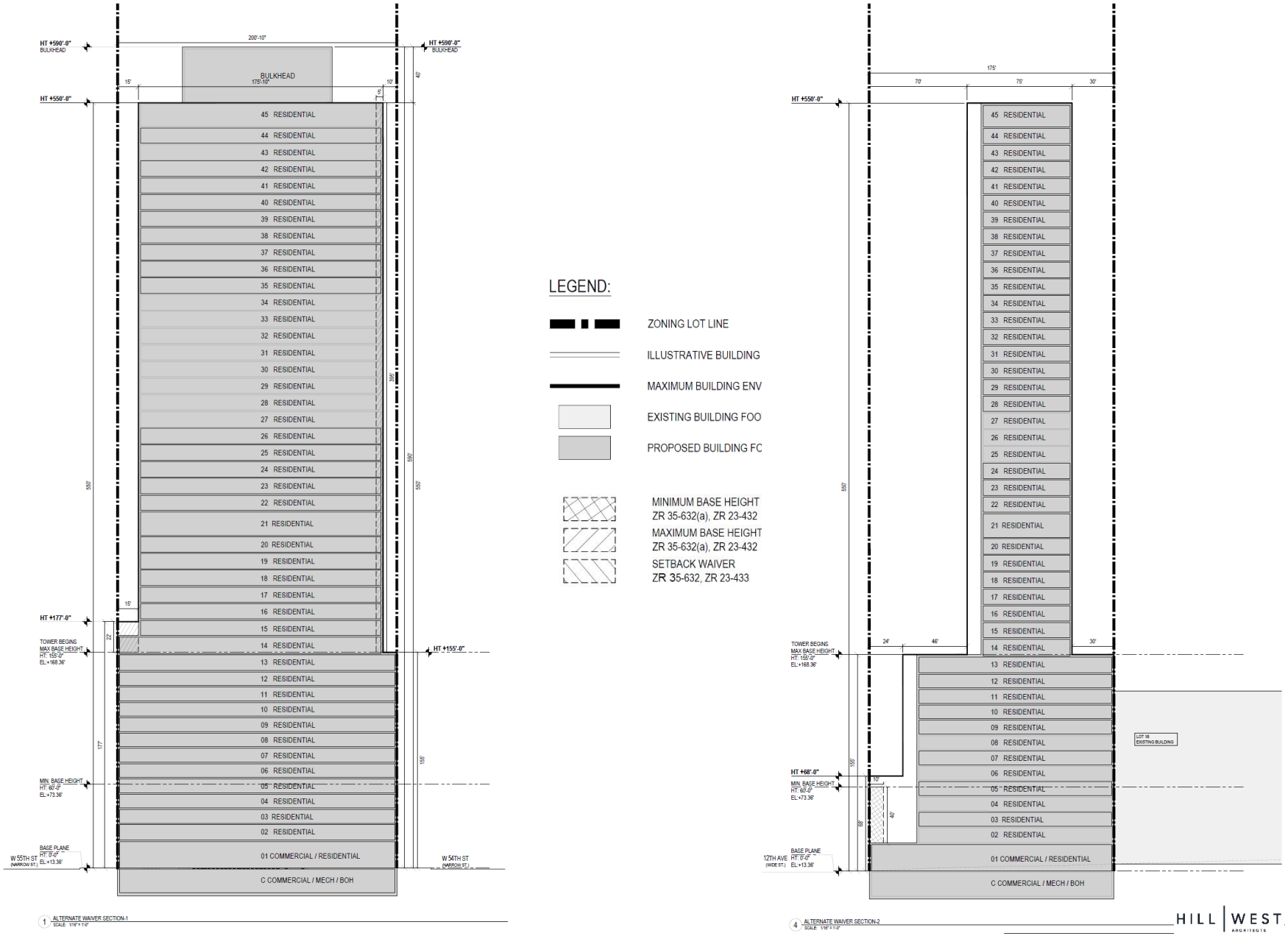


Figure 7-15 Development Site 2 Illustrative Sections – Maximum Residential Scenario

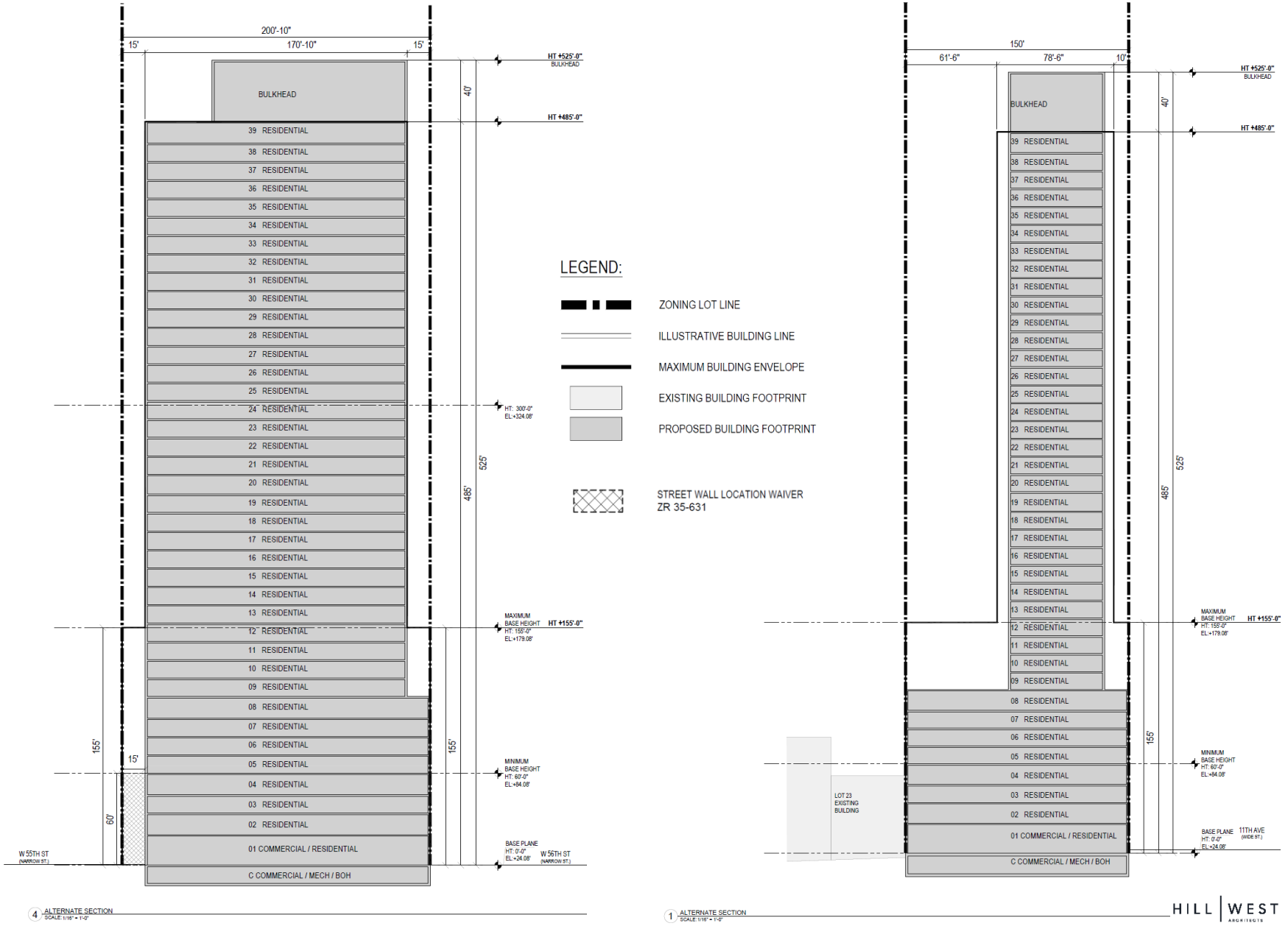
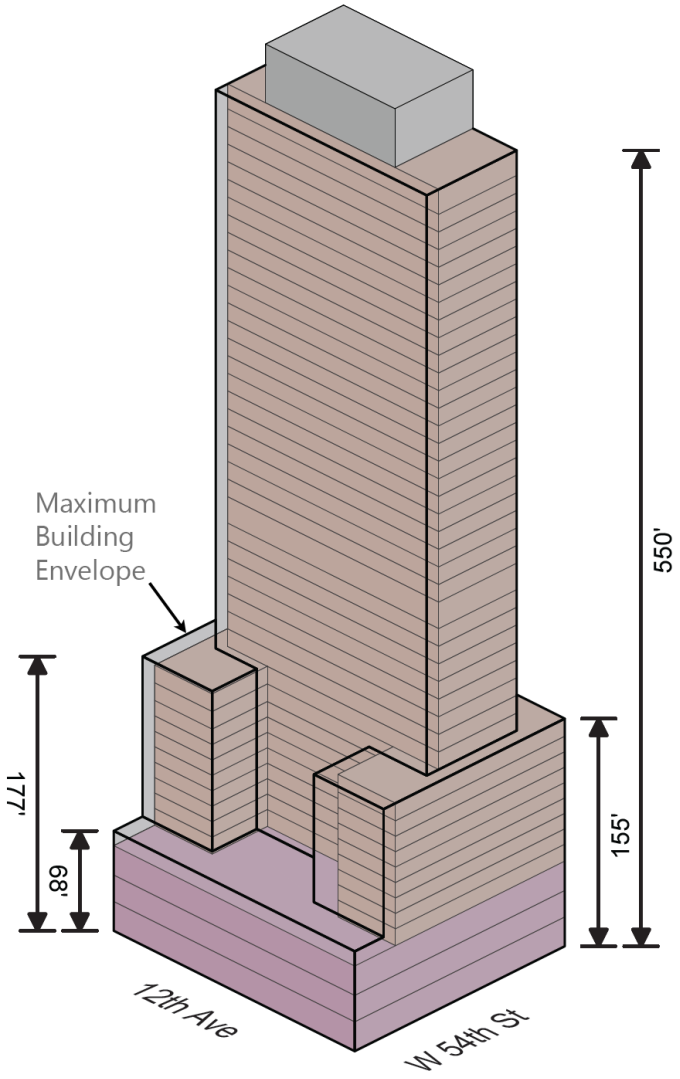


Figure 7-16 Development Site 1 Illustrative Axonometric Diagrams

Maximum Commercial Scenario



Maximum Residential Scenario

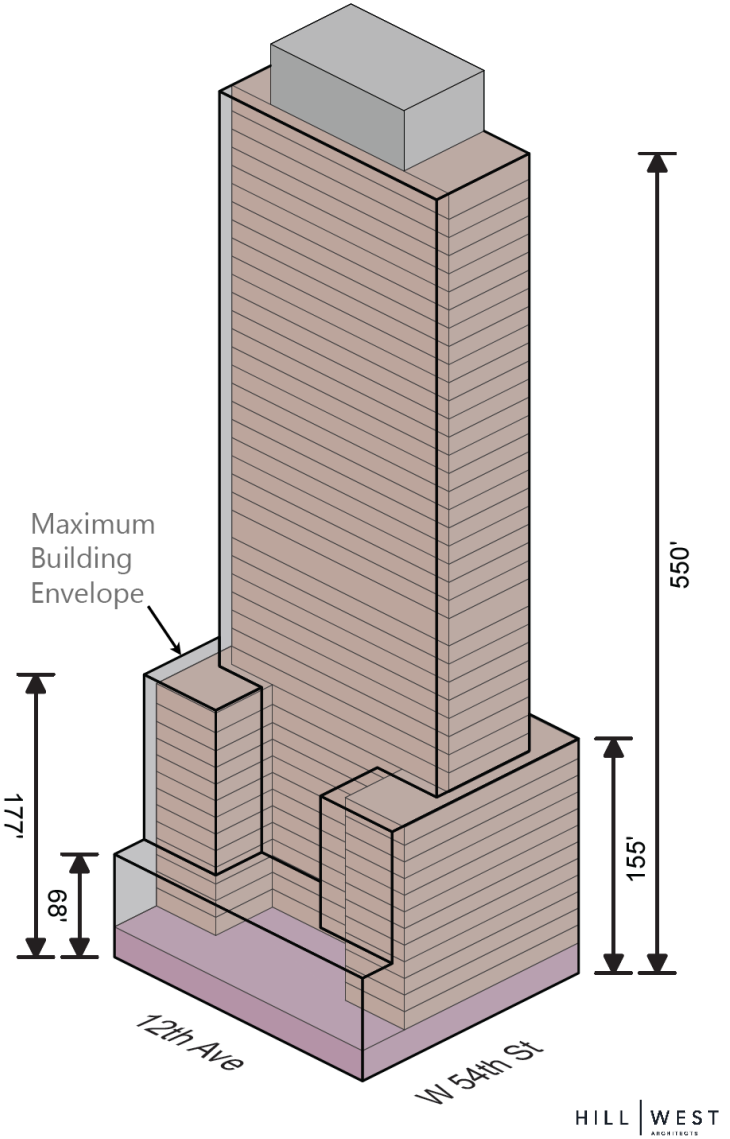
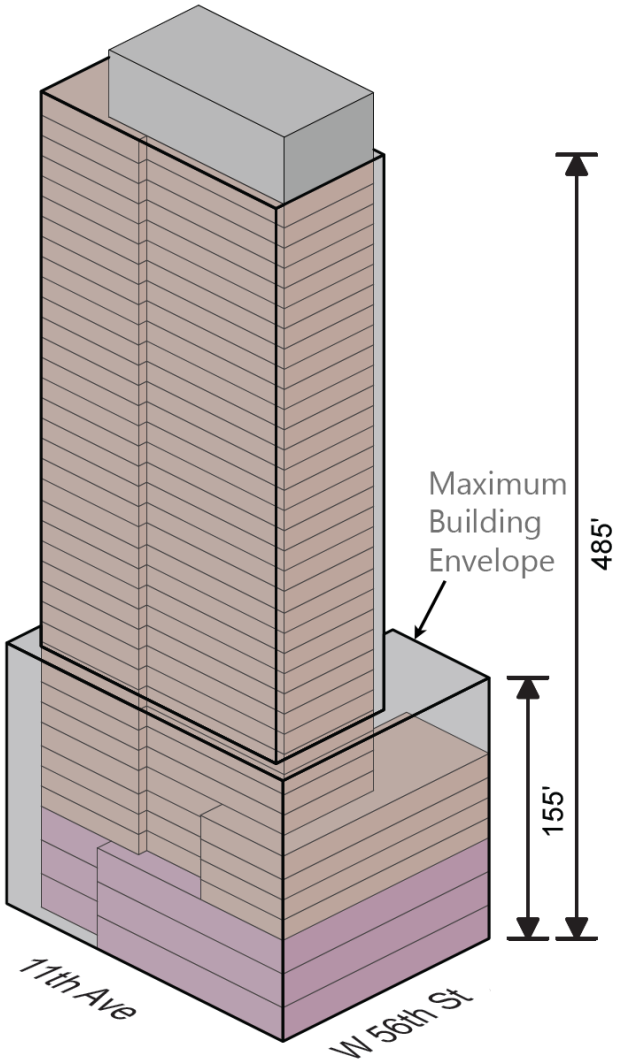
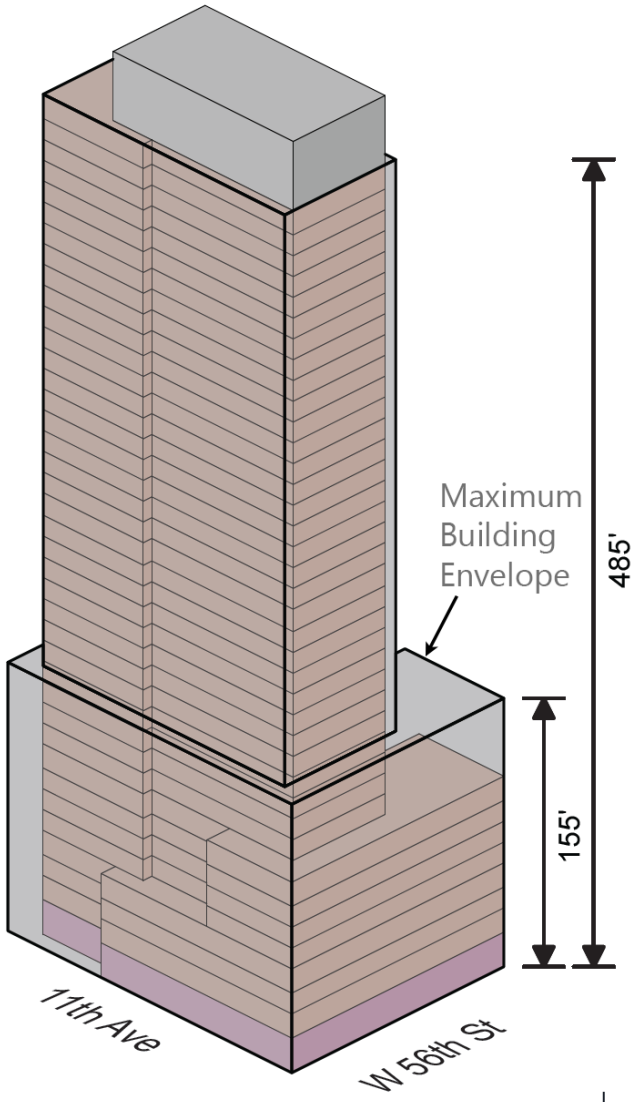


Figure 7-17 Development Site 2 Illustrative Axonometric Diagrams

Maximum Commercial Scenario



Maximum Residential Scenario



HILL | WEST ARCHITECTS

The designs of the development sites emphasize an active and transparent ground level and would maintain consistent street walls along West 54th Street, West 55th Street, West 56th Street, 11th Avenue, and Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A (see **Figure 7-9** and **Figure 7-10**). This enhances the overall urban design and maintains visual continuity. Development Sites 1 and 2 would contribute to increased density and diversified land use in the Project Area, enhancing the vibrant character of the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood.

The Proposed Actions would facilitate an increase in height on both Development Site 1 and Development Site 2, relative to the No-Action condition, by an increment of approximately 443 feet and approximately 435 feet respectively. While taller, these buildings would complement several existing tall architectural structures in the area, such as 611 West 56th Street (at 448 feet in height) and 601 West 57th Street (at 382 feet in height), ensuring they blend seamlessly into the urban design context without any negative impacts (see **Figure 7-11**). The With-Action buildings would have a higher base height compared to the No-Action condition; however, the cohesive street wall effect would be maintained, ensuring visual harmony along the surrounding streetscapes.

Overall, as shown in **Figure 7-2** through **Figure 7-6**, mid-range views from the surrounding blocks reveal that the proposed building envelopes of each development site would blend harmoniously into Hell's Kitchen's street grid. Despite its height, the design upholds the study area's distinctive and robust street wall characteristic, ensuring a cohesive urban landscape.

Open Space and Natural Features

The Proposed Actions involve securing funding through the transfer of development rights from specified Granting Sites within Hudson River Park to the development sites. The City Planning Commission established the Special Hudson River Park District in 2016 to facilitate these efforts and ensure the park's vitality through the strategic transfer of development rights within the Special District. In exchange for this increased development potential, the funding would support ongoing repair and rehabilitation efforts for piers, bulkheads, and infrastructure within Hudson River Park, ensuring their maintenance and development. This initiative aims to promote optimal land use and development in the area, which includes the anticipated residential and commercial uses.

Summary

Overall, the Proposed Actions would not result in a change in the streetscape across both the Project Area and study area.

The Proposed Actions aim to work with the urban design of local streets and streetscapes without altering the existing street grid, traffic flow, or infrastructure. These changes include new buildings with ground-floor commercial spaces that would help to enliven the streetscape, provide a cohesive street wall along the development sites' frontages along West 54th, West 55th, West 56th, Eleventh Avenue, and Twelfth Avenue/U.S. 9A (with some proposed building setbacks along Development Site 2's West 55th and Eleventh Avenue frontages that would effectively result in sidewalk widenings and additional light and air) and enhance the pedestrian experience at and within the vicinity of the development sites. The project would feature two new mixed-use towers, increasing the area's density and diversifying land uses. Development Site 1 would have a building envelope with a height of 590 feet, housing commercial spaces on the lower floors and residential units above, and Development Site 2's building envelope would reach 525 feet with a similar layout. These structures

would integrate well with the surrounding architecture and maintain the neighborhood's visual continuity and vibrant character.

The Proposed Actions align with the district's overall objectives. They would enable the development of a locally desirable combination of land uses, including new housing and auto dealership space, which are common in the study area. The new housing would feature affordable options catering to various income levels. Additionally, the Proposed Actions would support the transfer of floor area from the Granting Sites to the development sites, allowing for the maintenance and improvement of piers, bulkheads, and infrastructure within Hudson River Park. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are expected due to the Proposed Actions' effects on urban design in the Project Area or study area.

Visual Resources

The proposed building envelopes would not impact views of the Hudson River, which is a significant visual resource in the study area. Development Site 1 and Development Site 2 would extend to the lot line, which would align seamlessly with the existing street grid, continuing the characteristic street wall of the neighborhood. Therefore, pedestrian views from the sidewalks and roadways within the study area would remain largely uninterrupted.

Seamlessly integrated into Hell's Kitchen's existing street grid, the proposed building envelopes would maintain visual corridors along the roadways. Development Site 1 would not obstruct views, as it blends into the existing grid and is surrounded by tall buildings that already limit visibility. Similarly, Development Site 2 would not impact views of the Hudson River, given that these are already largely obstructed by the DSNY building along West 56th Street and other structures from West 55th Street. The dense urban environment and limited view corridors to the river from sidewalks along West 54th, West 56th, and West 57th Streets further reduce the potential for visual impacts. Consequently, the Proposed Actions would not result in significant adverse effects on visual resources at the Project Area or within the study area.