

August 9, 2002

Amanda M. Burden, A.I.C.P.
Director
Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Preliminary Draft Response to *Far West Midtown: A Framework for Development*

Dear Director Burden:

The Department of City Planning's *Far West Midtown: A Framework for Development* is a comprehensive document with multiple goals and mechanisms to transform the middle west side of Manhattan. Manhattan Community Board No. 4 recognizes the public review of this proposal will be lengthy, with ongoing opportunities through 2003 for review and public comment. However, given the DCP's recent engagement of consultants for zoning, urban design, and economic viability and impact, this Board also recognizes the need to provide preliminary comments at this critical juncture for consideration.

Given the time constraints, the Board has developed the attached preliminary responses in the following areas:

- 1. Hell's Kitchen South – 34th Street to 42nd Street, Eighth Avenue to the Hudson River**
(Bulk, height and use; Housing; Zoning types and districts)
- 2. Chelsea Transition Area**
- 3. Transportation**
- 4. Stadium Development**

In the Fall, we will provide further preliminary responses regarding:

- 1. Transfer of development rights throughout the proposed district**
- 2. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** – viability and appropriateness of the mechanism in the City of New York and particularly in the study area
- 3. Siting and development of public open space**
- 4. Development on the West Side Rail Yards site**

Overall Goals and Strategies

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 seeks to balance the proposed expansion of the Midtown Central Business District with the preservation and expansion of the Clinton and Chelsea residential neighborhoods. It seeks to reconcile the requisite high density needed for the proposed CBD expansion with the low to moderate density needed to maintain a livable neighborhood. It seeks to build on elements of the working model of the Special Clinton District which has successfully reconciled those opposing goals since 1973 in the portion of the Clinton neighborhood north of 42nd Street. It also recognizes the ongoing transformation of the manufacturing districts both from local real estate pressures and global economic changes, and seeks to manage the ongoing changes in those areas. In the northwestern Chelsea Transition Zone the Board's response reflects the current planning effort underway by its Chelsea Preservation and Planning Committee, which is based on similar principles.

The Board's response is built upon the platform of community input and study undertaken by the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association (HKNA) from 1999 to present. The following goals and strategies from HKNA's *Hell's Kitchen South: Developing Strategies* formed the basis for Board discussions and served as guideposts for the formulation of the Board's own ideas for density, height and use in specific portions of the study area.

Goal 1: Ensure that new development respects the varying scales of the existing neighborhood character, promotes community identity, and is held to superior design and environmental standards.

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Goal 2: Substantially increase the residential population while assuring a range of affordability.

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Goal 3: Transform Hell's Kitchen South into a model mixed-use neighborhood while protecting existing homes, jobs, and businesses.

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Goal 4: Improve and enhance public amenities - public open space, waterfront access and community services.

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Goal 5: Mitigate the environmental, social and economic consequences of traffic congestion.

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We look forward to working with the Department, consultants and other potential players throughout their efforts to complete the plan outlined in the *Framework for Development*.

Sincerely,



Simone Sindin
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4

Anna Hayes Levin
Chair
Clinton Land Use & Zoning Committee

Encl.

This letter was passed at Manhattan Community Board No. 4's July 24, 2002 full board meeting.

cc: Hon. Michael Bloomberg, Mayor
Hon. C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President
Local Elected Officials
Consultants

Manhattan Community Board No. 4
PRELIMINARY RESPONSE
to
Far West Midtown: A Framework for Development
August 7, 2002

HELL'S KITCHEN SOUTH
(34th to 42nd Streets, from 8th to 11th Avenues)

Overarching Goals

- Preserve existing residential buildings.
- Expand areas available for residential development.
- Reinforce Ninth Avenue as the middle West Side's "Main Street" and as a strong connector between northern Clinton and Chelsea.
- Direct density to the 34th and 42nd street corridors to maintain low density in residential core.
- Limit building heights at various rises in the residential core.
- Promote new infill residential development at contextual scale and design.
- Develop of Tenth Avenue as a mid-rise, medium density residential corridor connecting northern Clinton and upper Chelsea.
- Increase densities in specific portions of the 34th and 42nd Street corridors for primarily residential developments with ground floor commercial uses.
- Promote the Inclusionary Housing Bonus to ensure continued economic mix and affordability.

Recommendations

1. General

- a) Establish a Special Zoning District to fulfill specific needs and provide design controls.
- b) Limit permitted FAR bonuses solely to Inclusionary Housing to increase the supply of affordable housing and balance the income mix of new construction.

2. Ninth Avenue Corridor: Main Street

- a) The Ninth Avenue Corridor (Main Street) should extend from mid-block between 34th and 35th streets to the south side of 41st Street.
- b) Establish a contextual residential zone with ground floor commercial overlay.
- c) Implement zoning restrictions to prevent large square footage retail outlets.
- d) Establish a maximum height (66') and bulk as equivalent to Ninth Avenue north of 43rd Street.
- e) Limit retail uses to the ground floor.
- f) Prohibit demolition of buildings containing residential uses to preserve existing housing stock.

3. Mid-block Between Ninth and Tenth Avenues: Low- to mid-rise residential core

- a) Establish a contextual residential zone with no ground floor commercial uses.
- b) Do not allow commercial uses, including at ground floor level.
- c) Limit maximum heights to 66' between Ninth Avenue and 100' east of Tenth Avenue.
- d) Allow height up to 99' with special permit between a line 100' east of Tenth Avenue and Dyer Avenue (or roughly mid-block).
- e) Prohibit demolition of buildings containing residential uses to preserve existing housing stock.

4. Tenth Avenue Corridor: Dense residential corridor with ground floor retail

- a) Establish a contextual residential district with commercial overlay.
- b) Extend the corridor 100' along the east side of Tenth Avenue and 150' along the west side of Tenth Avenue.
- c) Encourage primarily residential, mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail.
- d) Provide for high lot coverage, medium density, bulky residential buildings. (R9 contextual-type bulk with a maximum FAR of 7.52 to 9.0).
- e) Use the original McGraw-Hill building (475 Tenth Avenue) as height limit guideline for both sides of the corridor.

5. Mid-block Between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues: Transition area

- a) Establish a mixed use commercial, production and residential area.
- b) Establish a zone that protects the proposed medium density residential uses on Tenth Avenue from higher densities on Eleventh Avenue.
- c) Provide for high lot coverage, medium density, bulky commercial and residential buildings. (R9 contextual-type zoning with a maximum FAR of 7.52 to 9.0).

6. Eleventh Avenue Corridor: High-rise dense commercial corridor

- a) Extend the existing mapped Eleventh Avenue high-rise, dense commercial corridor northward and southward to connect the high-rise, high-density spines along 34th and 42nd streets.
- b) Expand this corridor to a depth of 350' east of Eleventh Avenue.
- c) Limit bulk to 10 FAR, bonusable to a maximum of 12 FAR.
- d) Establish carefully considered design controls, in view of the impacts on the Convention Center from height opposite it and the impacts on narrow streets from large floorplates.

7. 34th and 42nd Street Corridors: High-density, primarily residential mixed use corridors

- a) Extend 42nd Street zoning southward to 39th Street, from Dyer to Eleventh avenues.
- b) Mirror 42nd Street zoning from the north side of 33rd Street to the south side of 35th Street, west of Tenth Avenue to Eleventh Avenue.
- c) Limit bulk to 10 FAR, bonusable to 12 FAR.

8. Mid-block Between Eighth and Ninth Avenues: Transition area

- a) Create a transition area between the Ninth Avenue corridor and the Garment Center Special District to promote mixed-use buildings.
- b) Expand opportunities for residential uses east of the Ninth Avenue corridor to a boundary to be determined, but at a depth no greater than 300' feet east of Ninth Avenue.
- c) Reinforce the Garment Center Special District regulations from that boundary east to Eighth Avenue.

CHELSEA TRANSITION AREA
(28th to 30th Streets, from 10th to 12th Avenues)

Recommendations

1. Encourage reuse of significant existing buildings by appropriate bulk controls adapted to the context. Between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues these controls should be based on the existing FAR of 5.0.
2. Preserve and expand the existing Tenth Avenue residential corridor south of 30th Street. The proposals that follow are limited to the area west of this corridor.
3. Extend the West Chelsea Mixed-use District as part of planning for the area and allow expansion of the art gallery district.
4. Limit residential uses to upper floors and restrict lower-floor uses to discourage destination shopping and large clubs.
5. Define other uses in this area as those supporting the Midtown central business district and compatible with art galleries. Displacement of compatible existing uses should be discouraged.
6. Limit bus and auto storage except to provide for relocation of sanitation facilities from the Gansevoort peninsula.

TRANSPORTATION

Recommendations

1. No. 7 Subway Line

- a) Extend the route along 41st Street, turning south at the Amtrak cut as the most sensible for long-term infrastructure needs.
- b) Construct an intermediate station near the southerly turn at 41st Street to provide access to an Eleventh Avenue commercial corridor and to transportation nodes and destinations near the western end of 42nd street.
- c) At 33rd Street, continue the line eastward to terminate at Penn Station or use other options for this connection.

2. Consolidated Bus Parking Facility

- a) Construct a facility to consolidated parking for commuter, charter and MTA buses, sited in a way to provide direct access to Lincoln Tunnel approaches. Such a facility is key to the area's transformation, the removal of dysfunctional and uncoordinated surface parking and making public land available for development.
- b) Removal of commuter and charter buses from the area's streets is essential to improve the area's habitability and marketability for either office or residential use .
- c) The siting and identification of funding for such a facility are requirements of any successful redevelopment plan.

3. Tow Pound / Pier 76

- a) Provide space for and construct an inland tow pound to enable the creation of a public open space on the western portion of Pier 76 in Hudson River Park as called for in its establishing legislation.
- b) Consider dispersing the pound to multiple inland sites with a central office.

4. Pedestrian Circulation and Environmental Improvements

- a) Maintain existing widths of existing roadways. This is especially important for Route 9-A and 30th Street.
- b) Preserve existing street walls.
- c) Where required, provide additional sidewalk widths by narrowing roadways, not by demolishing existing buildings.
- d) Maintain 39th Street as a mapped street providing public access to the waterfront, the Midtown Ferry Terminal and Hudson River Park.
- e) Mitigate the severe environmental consequences of traffic congestion with traffic reduction measures.
- f) Promote non-polluting means of public transportation and pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

STADIUM DEVELOPMENT

Based on a wide range of planning, development and environmental considerations as expressed in resolutions of April and December 2001, this Board remains opposed to the siting a stadium on the west side. The Board regards a stadium in this area as incompatible with effective development of the area, whether for the Central Business District or other uses.