

*Study for the potential expansion of*

# THE SPECIAL WEST CHELSEA DISTRICT

*New York City Department of City Planning  
Manhattan Office  
June 28, 2013*

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# Introduction

As part of a commitment made by Deputy Mayor Robert Steel to City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Manhattan Community Board 4 on October 25, 2012, the Department of City Planning agreed to consider the potential expansion of the Special West Chelsea District. This report includes an analysis of existing conditions and draft recommendations, and will further inform consultation with the local community, elected officials, and private stakeholders on the potential for rezoning the study area.

## STUDY AREA

The study area comprises eight blocks in West Chelsea in Manhattan Community District 4. To reflect differences in built form, location and use, the study area has been divided into three parts. Area A includes the south side of West 15th Street between Ninth and Tenth avenues; Area B contains West 15th to 17th streets, between Tenth and Eleventh avenues; and Area C encompasses West 24th to 30th streets between Eleventh and Twelfth avenues.<sup>1</sup>

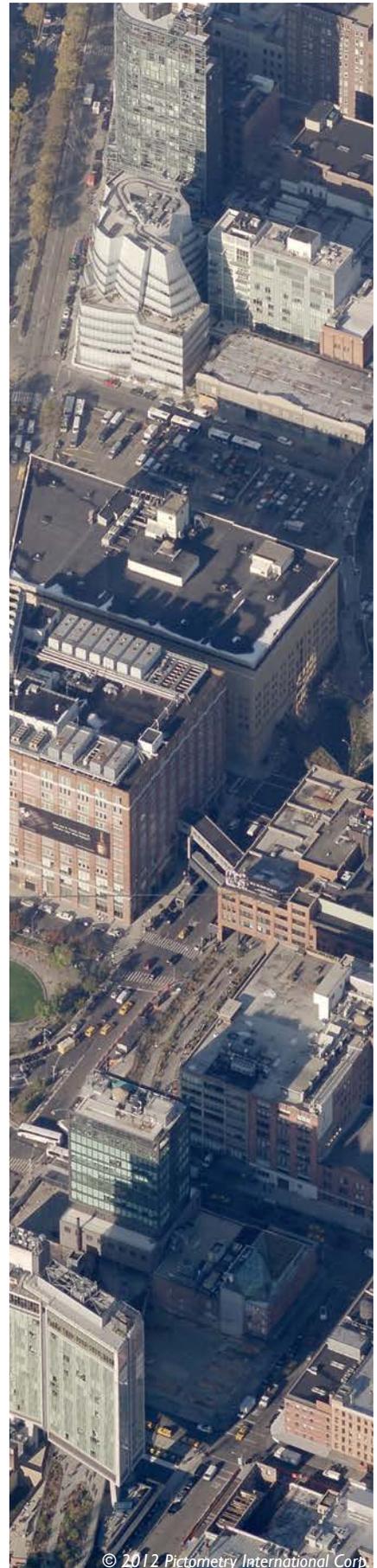
## PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to:

- Reinforce the goals of the Special West Chelsea District, a zoning special district adopted in 2005;
- Understand recent trends in and the evolving character of West Chelsea, and assess their compatibility with the goals of the special district;
- Ensure that the land use regulations that govern the blocks adjacent to the special district are compatible with existing conditions and reflect appropriate land use policy for the future; and
- Support the continued growth of West Chelsea as a mixed use district that contains residential, commercial, office and gallery uses, and space for critical citywide infrastructure and services.

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<sup>1</sup> The October 25, 2012 letter from Deputy Mayor Robert Steel includes West 22nd to 24th streets between Eleventh and Twelfth avenues. These two blocks are now occupied by the Chelsea Waterside Park and have, therefore, been omitted from the study.



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# Introduction



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# Context



Chelsea developed in the 19th century as an affluent residential area east of Tenth Avenue and industrialized district of warehouses, factories and worker tenements along the piers of the Hudson River to the west. Long characterized by light manufacturing, storage, and auto-related uses, West Chelsea experienced a growth of galleries, restaurants, bars and nightclubs beginning in the 1990s. The Chelsea Piers sports and entertainment complex and Hudson River Park further strengthened the area as a destination. In 2005, the City Council adopted the Department of City Planning-led Special West Chelsea District. The purpose of the rezoning was to:

- Encourage and guide the development of West Chelsea as a dynamic mixed use neighborhood;
- Encourage the development of residential uses along appropriate avenues and streets;
- Encourage and support the growth of arts-related uses;
- Facilitate the restoration and reuse of the High Line elevated rail line as an accessible, public open space;
- Ensure that the form of new buildings relates to and enhances neighborhood character and the High Line open space; and
- Create and provide a transition to the lower-scale Chelsea Historic District to the east and the higher-density Hudson Yards area to the north.

# Existing Zoning

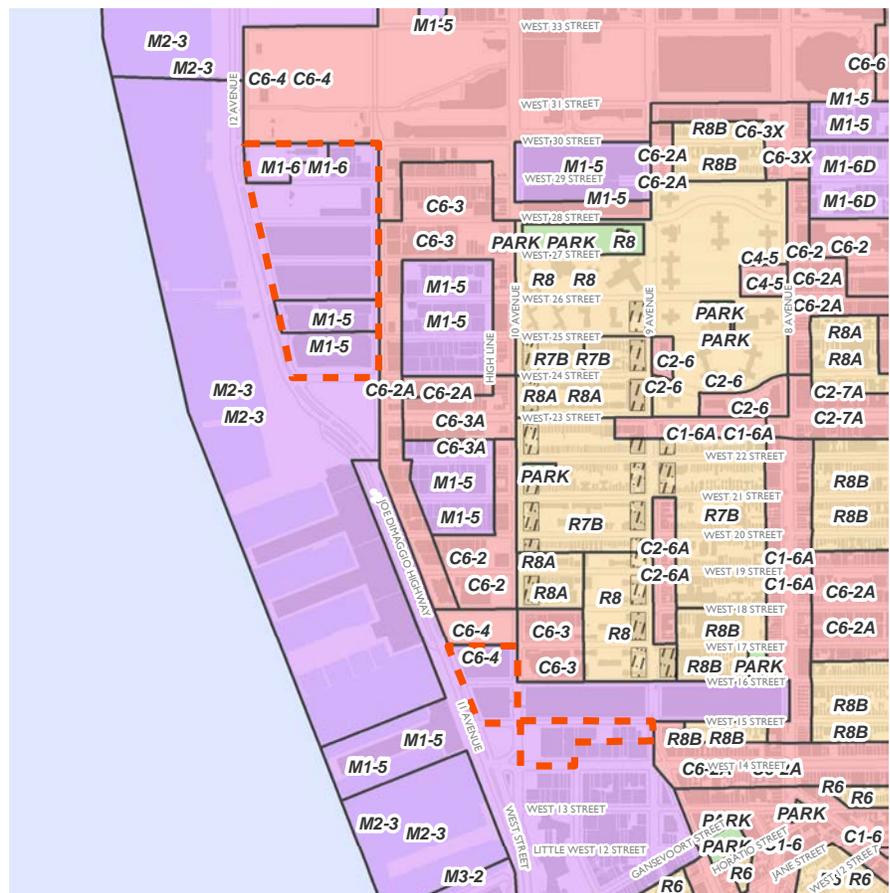
The Special West Chelsea District (WCh) comprises ten subareas with special bulk regulations that respond to the unique conditions along the High Line and surrounding streets. The special district supersedes the controls of the underlying zoning districts.

In the WCh, the base FAR within C6-4 districts is 6.5 FAR. It can be increased to 9.15 with development rights from the High Line Transfer Corridor (HLTC) and up to 12.0 FAR with the modified Inclusionary Housing bonus. The C6-3 district base FAR is 5.0 and increases to 7.5 with acquisition of development rights from the HLTC and through the modified Inclusionary Housing bonus. Bulk controls within the C6-2 areas between West 27th and West 29th Streets require high street walls and loft-like building forms. Bulk controls across from Chelsea Piers permit slender, tower-on-a-base forms. The base FAR within C6-2 areas is 5.0, and as much as 6.0 with development rights from the HLTC. The C6-2A and C6-3A permitted FARs are consistent with underlying regulations, which allow 6.02 and 7.52 FAR for residential respectively, 6.0 FAR for commercial and 6.5 and 7.5 respectively for community facility uses. M1-5 districts in the WCh permit 5.0 FAR for commercial uses, but prescribe height limitations and require street walls.

Outside of the special district, West Chelsea is mapped to the east with residential districts, including R7B, a contextual district, which permits 3.0 FAR, a base height of 40 to 60 feet and maximum building height of 75 feet; R8, a

height factor district, which permits FAR of up to 6.02 and a maximum height established by the sky exposure plane; and R8A, a contextual district, which permits 6.02 FAR, a base height of 60 to 85 feet and a maximum building height of 120 feet. M1-5 outside of the WCh permits an FAR of 5.0, or 6.5 for some community facility uses, with a base height maximum of 85 feet and an overall height dictated by the sky exposure plane. M2-3, along the Hudson River, permits 2.0 FAR with a base height maximum of 60

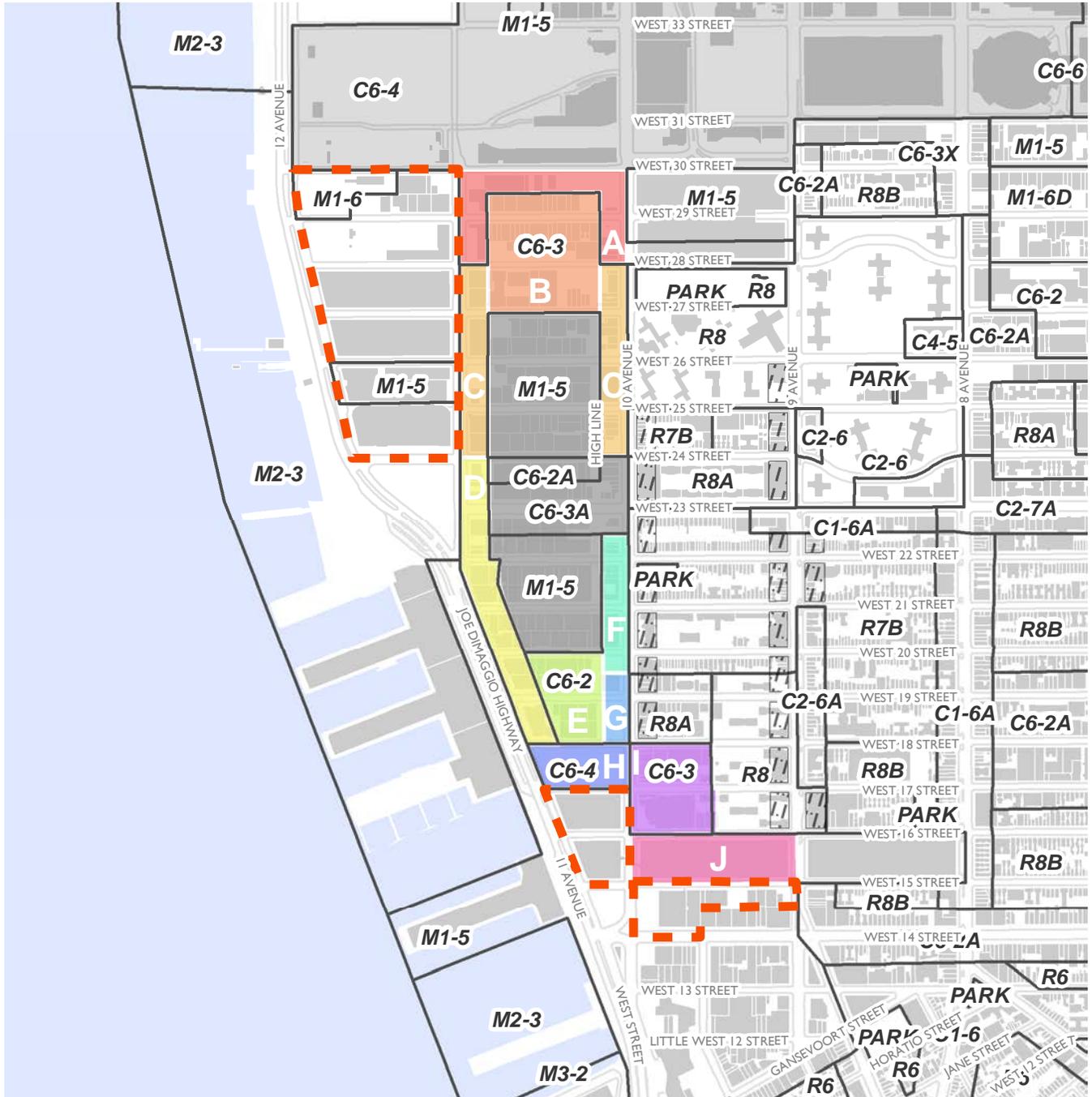
feet and an overall height determined by the sky exposure plane. M1-6, mapped over a small area at West 30th Street and Twelfth Avenue, permits 10.0 FAR with a base height maximum of 85 feet and an overall height dictated by the sky exposure plane. C2-5 commercial overlays are mapped along Ninth and Tenth avenues.



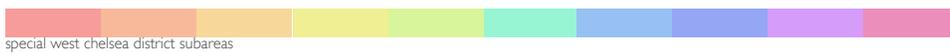
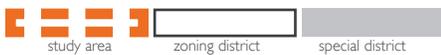
Data source: NYC DCP, DOITT



# Existing Zoning



Data source: NYC DCP, DOITT



# Land Use

Neighborhoods surrounding the study area are varied in character. To the south of Chelsea Market and West 14th Street, the historic Gansevoort and Meatpacking districts are attracting burgeoning creative firms, fashionable retail, restaurants and nightlife. To the east is residential Chelsea, made up of low-rise row houses, new condominiums and low lot-coverage towers. Midblocks in West Chelsea are dominated by art galleries occupying converted warehouses and loft buildings. Immediately to the north of the study area is the high-density, mixed use Hudson Yards development.



9 Avenue and West 14 Street



Chelsea Waterside Park



Galleries on West 25 Street

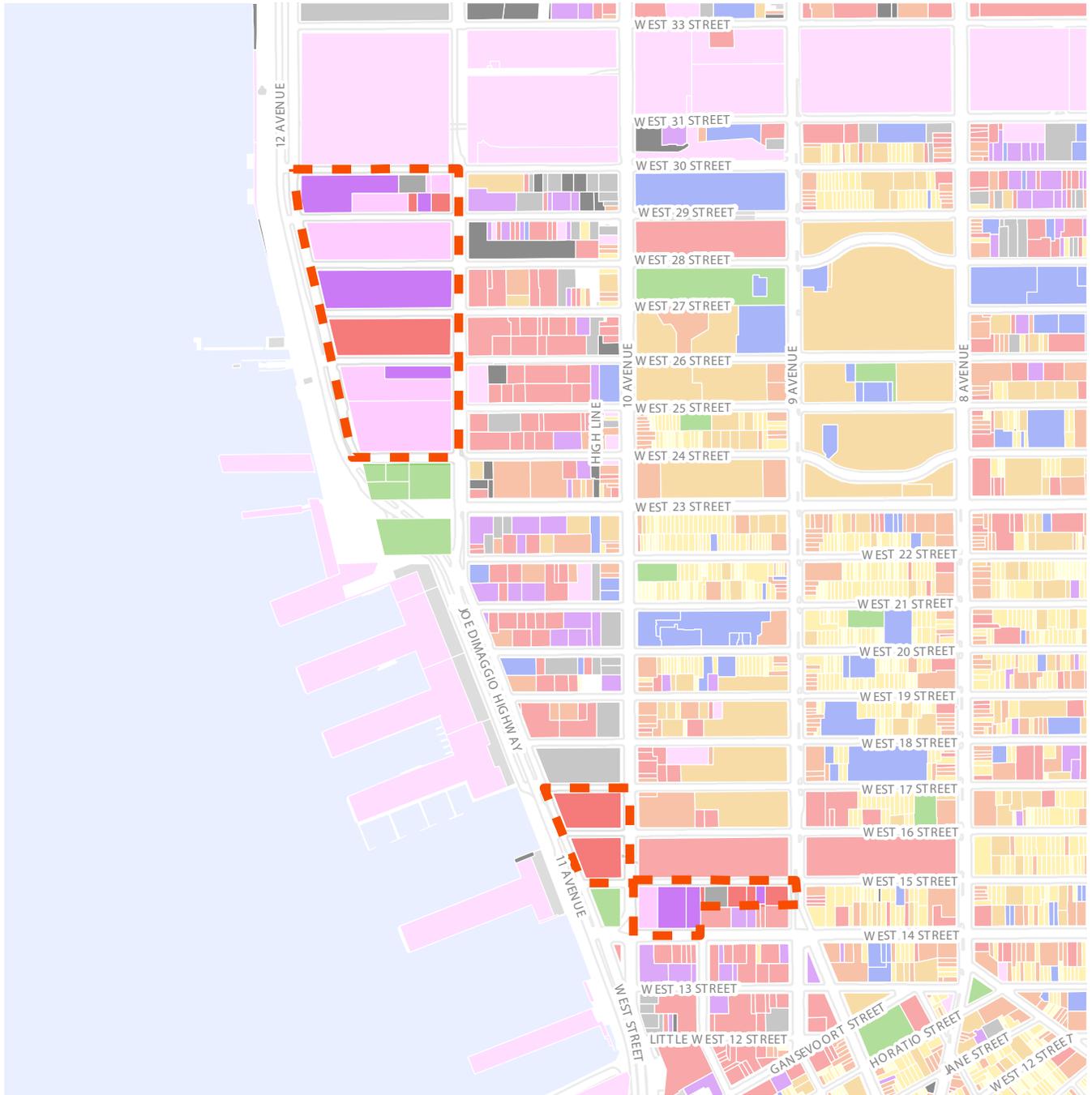


NYCHA Fulton Houses



Chelsea Market

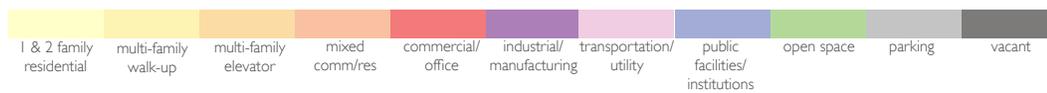
# Land Use



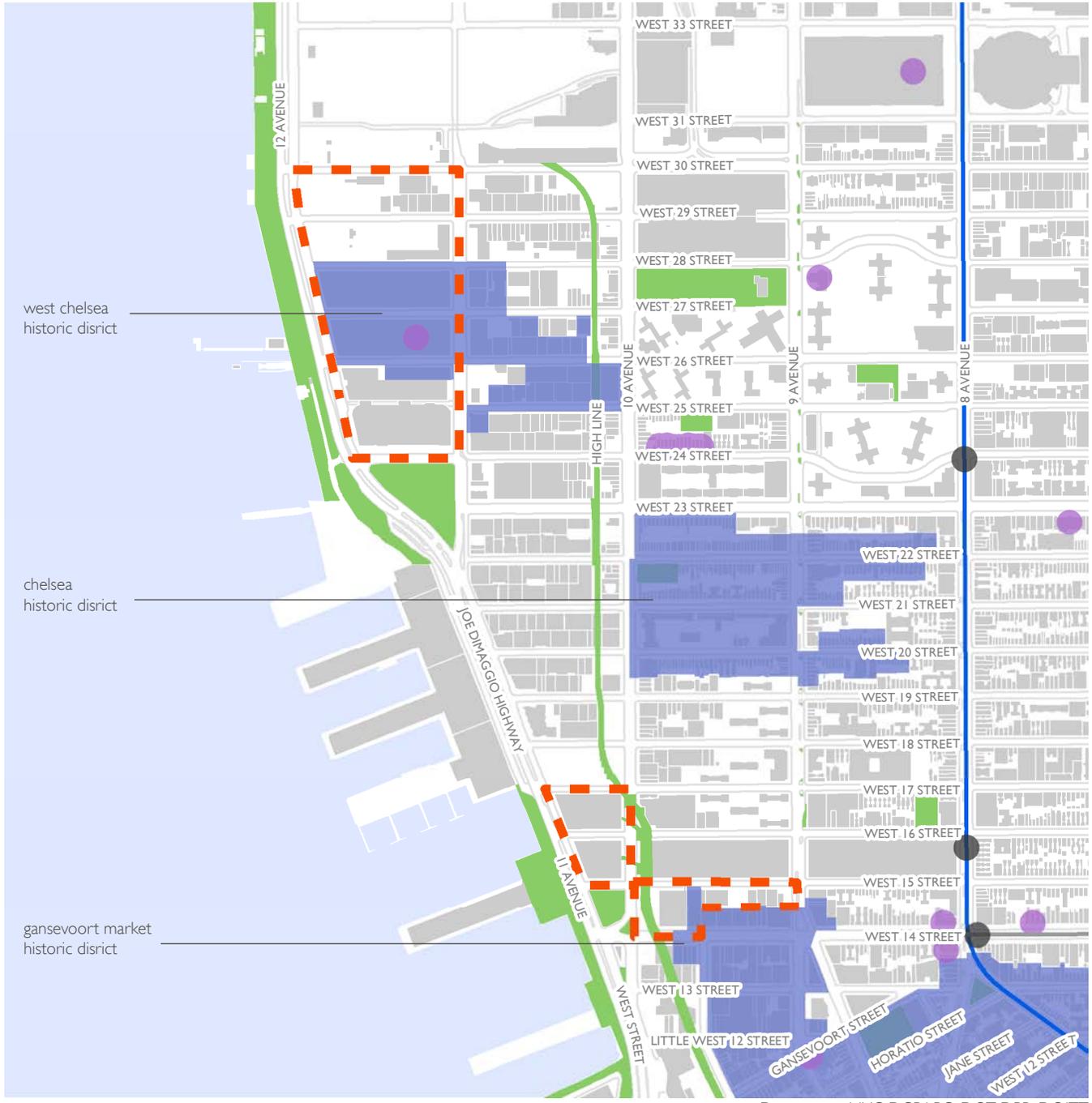
Data source: NYC DCP



study area



# Landmarks, Parks & Transit

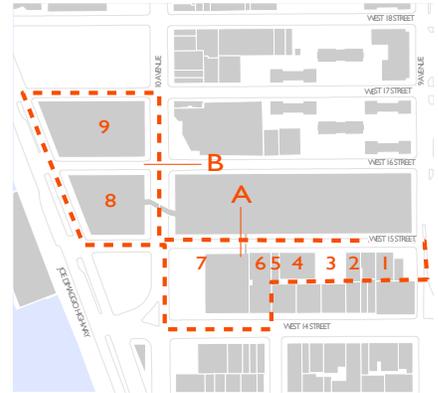


Data source: NYC DCP, LPC, DOT, DPR, DOITT



# Study Area A

The south side of West 15th Street between Ninth and Tenth avenues is zoned M1-5, which permits an FAR of 5.0, or 6.5 for some community facility uses, with a base height maximum of 85 feet and an overall height dictated by the sky exposure plane. It is directly across the street from Chelsea Market to the north and abuts the Gansevoort Historic District to the south.



## I. PRINCE LUMBER

- Two tax lots totaling ~16,700 SF
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 0.85 FAR built over two lots
- 3 single story warehouses

Lumber and construction material sales center.



## 2. 408 WEST 15<sup>TH</sup> STREET

- 5,163 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 4.85 FAR built
- 69 feet tall without setback

Vacant, five-story loft building with permits for facade work and an eating/drinking establishment on the first and second floors.



## 3. 412 WEST 15<sup>TH</sup> STREET

- 10,330 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- ~10.5 FAR planned per DOB permits

Vacant site of a future 25-story hotel.



## 5. 436 WEST 15<sup>TH</sup> STREET

- 2,581 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 0.97 FAR built

25-foot frontage, single story former bar that has transferred unbuilt floor area to 412 West 15th Street.

# Study Area A



## 4. 422 WEST 15<sup>TH</sup> STREET

- 12,906 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 5.81 FAR built
- 73 feet tall without setback

Six-story loft building used as a parking garage and auto repair facility.



## 6. HIGH LINE STAGES

- 5,487 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 3.0 FAR built
- 70 feet tall without setback

Through-lot with three-story photography studio in the Gansevoort Historic District.



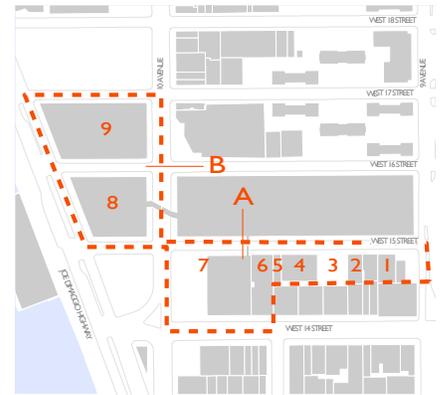
## 7. MILK STUDIOS & CORNER LOT

- 51,625 SF over two tax lots
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 5.0 FAR accounted for
- 113 feet tall without setback

Eight-story Milk Studios building occupies 241,567 SF of floor area. The remaining 16,000 SF has been allocated to the corner; former gas station site for the construction of a single-story retail space beneath the High Line.

# Study Area B

Each of the two blocks from West 15th to 17th streets between Tenth and Eleventh avenues is occupied by large, full-block, formerly-industrial loft buildings. The M1-5 district permits 5.0 FAR and 6.5 FAR for some community facilities, with a base height maximum of 85 feet and an overall height dictated by the sky exposure plane. The existing buildings are non-complying.



## 8.85 10<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE

- 45,950 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 11.8 FAR built
- 172 feet tall without setback

Over the past two decades, the majority of floors have been converted from warehousing to office use. The building is now occupied by high-end restaurants at the ground level and numerous design, communications and financial firms above.



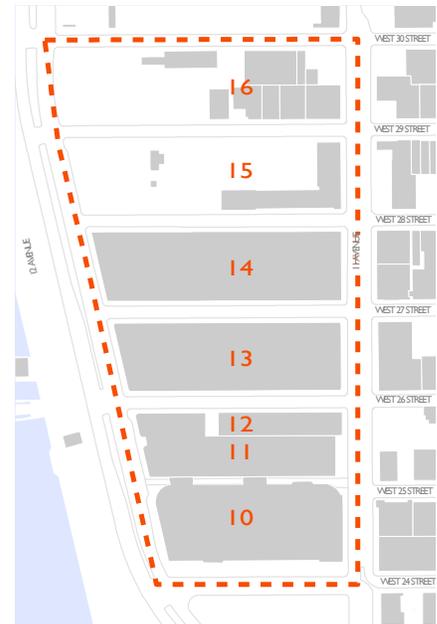
## 9.99 10<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE

- 59,100 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 12.0 FAR built
- 137 feet tall without setback

Contains the offices of the US Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration and a mini storage facility.

# Study Area C

The blocks that make up the northern portion of the study area are generally occupied by active manufacturing and commercial uses. They are zoned M2-3, with the exception of the block between West 25th and 26th streets, which was zoned M1-5 in 1986, and a portion of the block bordering West 30th Street, which was zoned M1-6 in 1969. M2-3 permits 2.0 FAR with a base height maximum of 60 feet and an overall height dictated by the sky exposure plane. M1-6 permits 10.0 FAR with a base height maximum of 85 feet and an overall height dictated by the sky exposure plane. The West Chelsea Historic District is to the east. West 30th Street marks the border between Chelsea and Hudson Yards to the north.



## 10. UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE (“USPS”), WEST 24<sup>TH</sup> TO 25<sup>TH</sup> STS

- 246,200 SF lot
- 2.0 FAR permitted
- 1.79 FAR built
- 60 feet tall without setback

This USPS-owned vehicle repair facility was built in 1988. Manhattan and Bronx operations were consolidated at this location in 2012. The building includes repair stations, USPS vehicle parking, employee parking, management offices and fueling facilities. The USPS has expressed no intention to relocate the facility. The segment of West 25th Street between Eleventh and Twelfth avenues is demapped and the USPS facility is constructed within the former street bed.



## 11. DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION (“DSNY”), WEST 25<sup>TH</sup> TO 26<sup>TH</sup> STS

- 82,301 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- ~5.0 FAR built
- Between 56 and 80 feet tall

This City-owned DSNY Manhattan Repair Shop was built in 1992 and services Manhattan and the Bronx. It is occupied by mechanics' facilities and office space; there is no employee parking in the building. An average of ten vehicles or pieces of machinery arrive and leave the facility each day. The DSNY has expressed no intention to relocate the facility, citing the considerable difficulty in finding manufacturing districts to locate such operations.

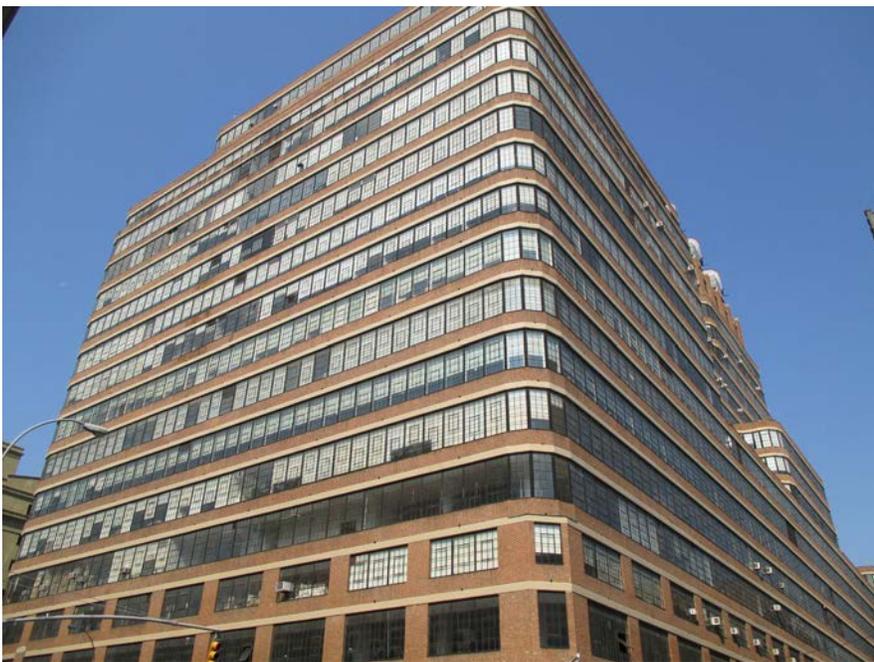
# Study Area C



## 12. B&O BUILDING, 231 11<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE

- 23,848 SF lot
- 5.0 FAR permitted
- 9.0 FAR built
- 110 feet tall without setback

Abutting the DSNY Manhattan Repair Shop, this nine-story building in the West Chelsea Historic District includes a mini-storage facility and recording studio.



## 13. STARRETT-LEHIGH, WEST 26<sup>TH</sup> TO 27<sup>TH</sup> STS

- 124,100 SF lot
- 2.0 FAR permitted
- 15 FAR built
- Between 120 and 263 feet tall

Built in 1931, the Starrett-Lehigh building is both an individual New York City landmark and is included in the West Chelsea Historic District. The building is fully tenanted by several high-profile design companies.



## 14. TERMINAL STORES, WEST 27<sup>TH</sup> TO 28<sup>TH</sup> STS

- 136,000 SF lot
- 2.0 FAR permitted
- 8.3 FAR built
- Between 80 and 107 feet tall



Built in 1891 as cold storage, Terminal Stores comprises 25 buildings connected by a central spine. It is in the West Chelsea Historic District and occupied by a wide range of creative firms.

# Study Area C



## 15. CONSOLIDATED EDISON (“CONED”), WEST 28<sup>TH</sup> AND 29<sup>TH</sup> STS

- 148,000 SF lot
- 2.0 FAR permitted
- ~0.25 FAR built

The only building on the block is a roughly 37,000 SF, one- and two-story structure at the eastern end of the block that includes offices, employee lockers, “workout” space used by personnel for mechanical work, and a car repair. The parking area is occupied exclusively by company equipment: cable trucks, cable wheels, clean-up trucks and a refueling station. A flush pit, or liquid and solid waste transfer facility, for trucks returning from job sites to deposit work debris underwent rigorous permitting by the DEP in 1996. Service vehicles operate on a daily three-shift cycle and tractor-trailers regularly deliver cable wheels from Eleventh Avenue. As Chelsea grows and Hudson Yards is built out, ConEd anticipates expanding its facility within ten years to include a transmission switching station and two area substations, which will add approximately 160,000 SF of floor area to existing operations.



## 16. WEST 29<sup>TH</sup> TO 30<sup>TH</sup> STS

- M1-6 portion is 113,000 SF; remainder is 80,000 SF
- 10.0 and 2.0 FAR permitted
- 0.07 FAR built on M1-6 portion and 1.0 FAR built on remainder

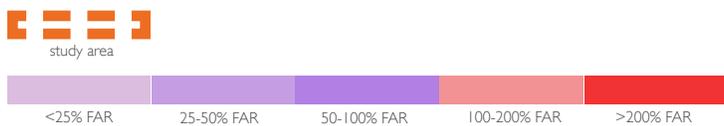
This block is under mixed ownership. The M1-6 portion at the northwest corner is subject to a temporary easement by the Port Authority intended for construction of the ARC tunnel project; the agreement terminates in 2020 and the site is now used for bus parking. This easement also includes Lot 38, a single-story car repair facing West 30th Street. 606 West 30th Street is under a month-to-month lease by the City for use as the DSNY Community District 6 garage. DSNY is pursuing construction of a replacement facility on East 25th Street. The remainder of the properties include a gas station on Eleventh Avenue, and a surface parking lot, two-story building leased for DSNY offices, a single-story night club, a four-story loft building and single-story garage fronting West 29th Street. In 2005, as part of the Hudson Yards land use actions, this block was contemplated as a shared DSNY garage and New York Police Department tow pound below-grade, with a full-block public park above. The DSNY garage has since located elsewhere and the NYPD is no longer pursuing a facility at this location. Environmental review analyses have since considered non-park uses for this block.



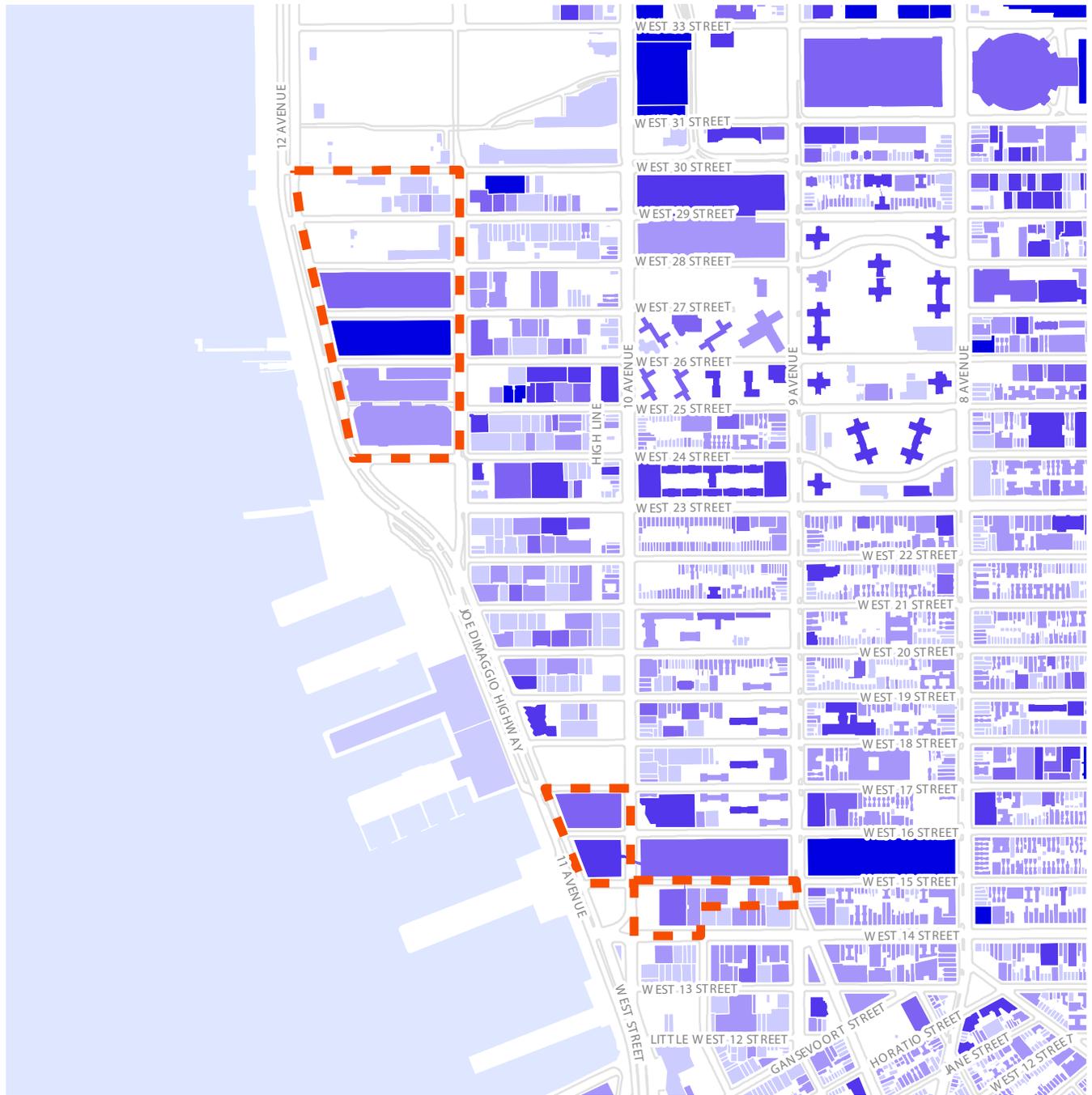
# Built Density



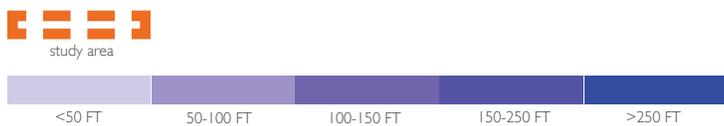
Data source: NYC DCP, DOITT



# Building Heights



Data source: NYC DCP, DOITT



# Development since 2005



New residential, 520 West 19 Street



Office conversion, 428 West 14 Street

A central purpose of the WCh was to provide a zoning mechanism to help preserve the High Line elevated rail structure and convert it into a publicly accessible open space. The opening of the first section of the High Line in 2009 and second section in 2011 has drawn record numbers of visitors. The last decade has seen a transformative level of investment in West Chelsea.

## RESIDENTIAL AND OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Development in the study area and within a 600-foot buffer reveals growth has generally been consistent with the goals of the WCh adopted in 2005. The C6-2, C6-3 and C6-4 districts in special district's north and south have experienced new residential development, such as the Ohm at 312 Eleventh Avenue and West 30th Street, the Nouvel Chelsea at 100 Eleventh Avenue and West 20th Street, and the Caledonia at 450 West 17th Street, next to the Chelsea Market. The vast majority of the residential development has been new construction.



Office conversion, 415 West 13 Street

There has also been a considerable addition of office space, some in the WCh M1-5 districts and a concentration on the border with the Meatpacking District in the vicinity of West 14th Street. Office development has largely consisted of adaptive reuse or expansion of existing buildings. Recent office development includes the High Line Building at 450 West 14th Street, 520 West 27th Street and 415 West 13th Street.



New office, 520 West 27 Street

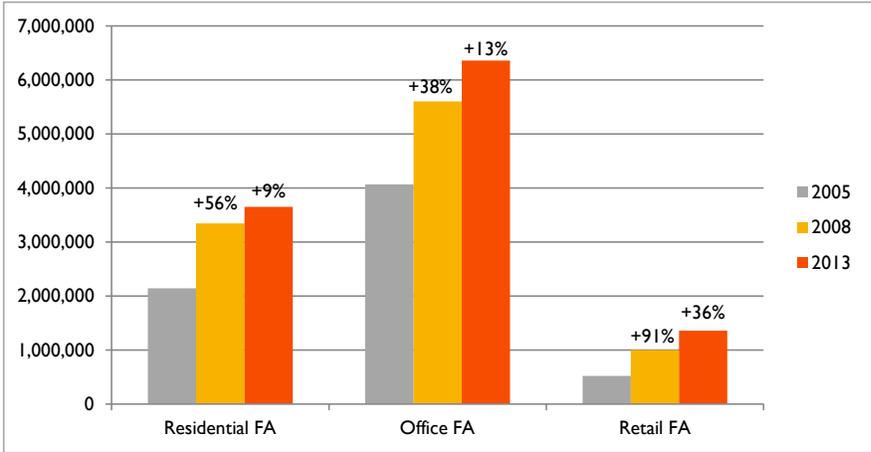


New residential, 537 West 27 Street

# DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

PLUTO data for the years 2005, 2008 and 2013 provides floor areas by use in the study area and 600-foot buffer area. The total building floor area rose from 17.3 million SF in 2005 to 19.4 million SF in 2013. Residential floor area increased by 56% between 2005 and 2008; growth slowed by 2013 with only a 9% rise. In units, there were approximately 2,700 residential units in 2005, 3,600 in 2008 and 3,800 in 2013. Office floor area also increased significantly between 2005 and 2008, from 4 million to 5.6 million SF; it rose to 6.4 million SF by 2013. Retail floor area grew by 159% between 2005 and 2013.

*PLUTO Floor Area in SF, 2005-2013, with % change from previous period Study area and 600-foot buffer*



Data source: PLUTO, DCP



*New residential, 200 11 Avenue*



*New residential, Nouvel Chelsea, 100 11 Avenue*



*Office conversion, High Line Building*

**HOTEL DEVELOPMENT**

Since 2005, four new hotels have opened within the study area and 600-foot buffer: HotelAmericano at 518 West 27th Street, the Maritime Hotel on 363 West 16th Street and Ninth Avenue, the Dream Downtown next door at 355 West 16th Street and the Standard Hotel, famously over the High Line at 848 Washington Street. Three of the four buildings are new construction.

Among 55 hotels that are expected to open in Manhattan by 2016, none are located in West Chelsea. <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> NYC & Company. "Hotel Development in NYC New York City Briefing Sheet – Winter Update 2013". NYC & Company, 25 Feb. 2013.



Dream Hotel



HotelAmericano

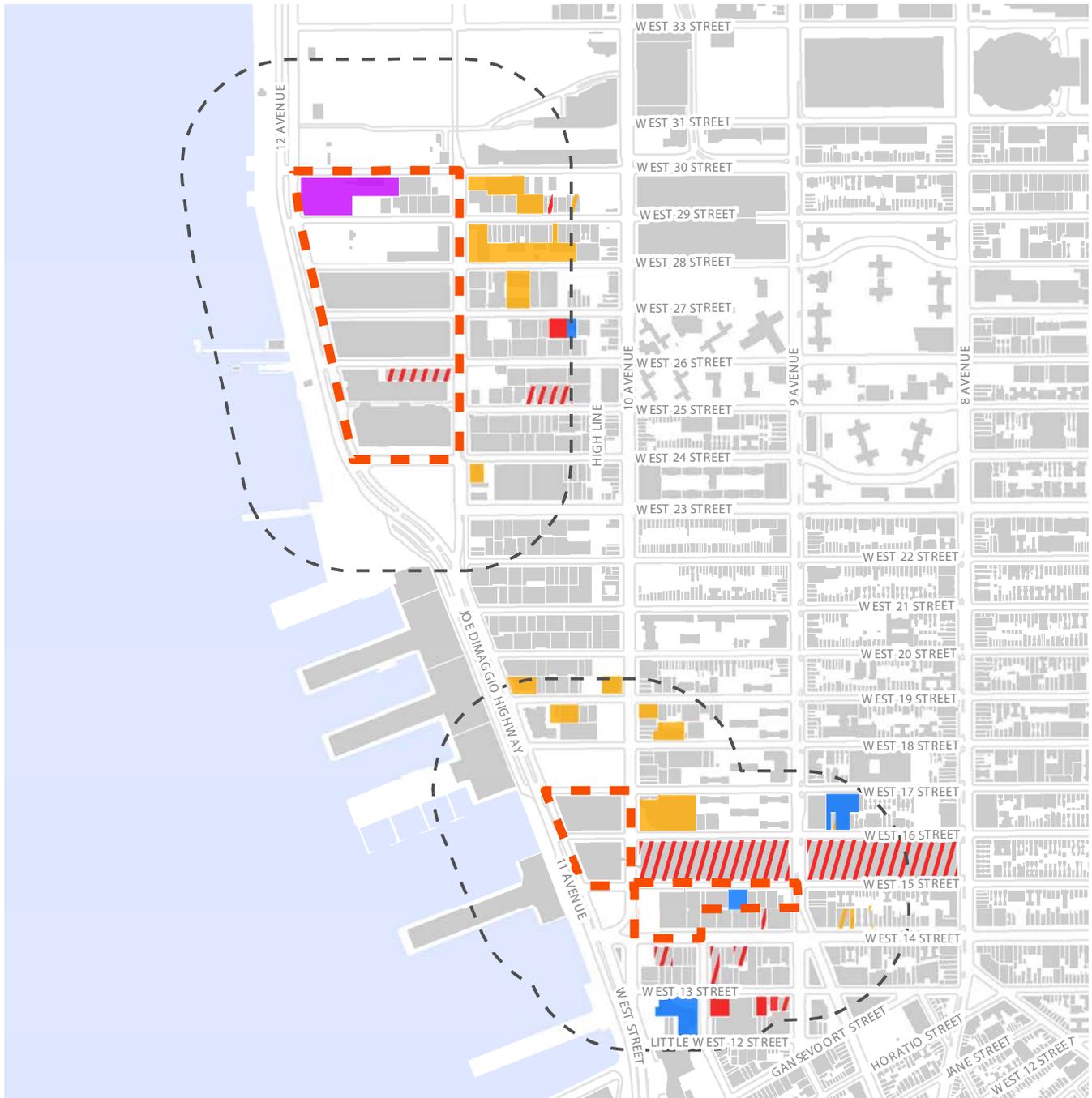


Maritime Hotel



Standard Hotel

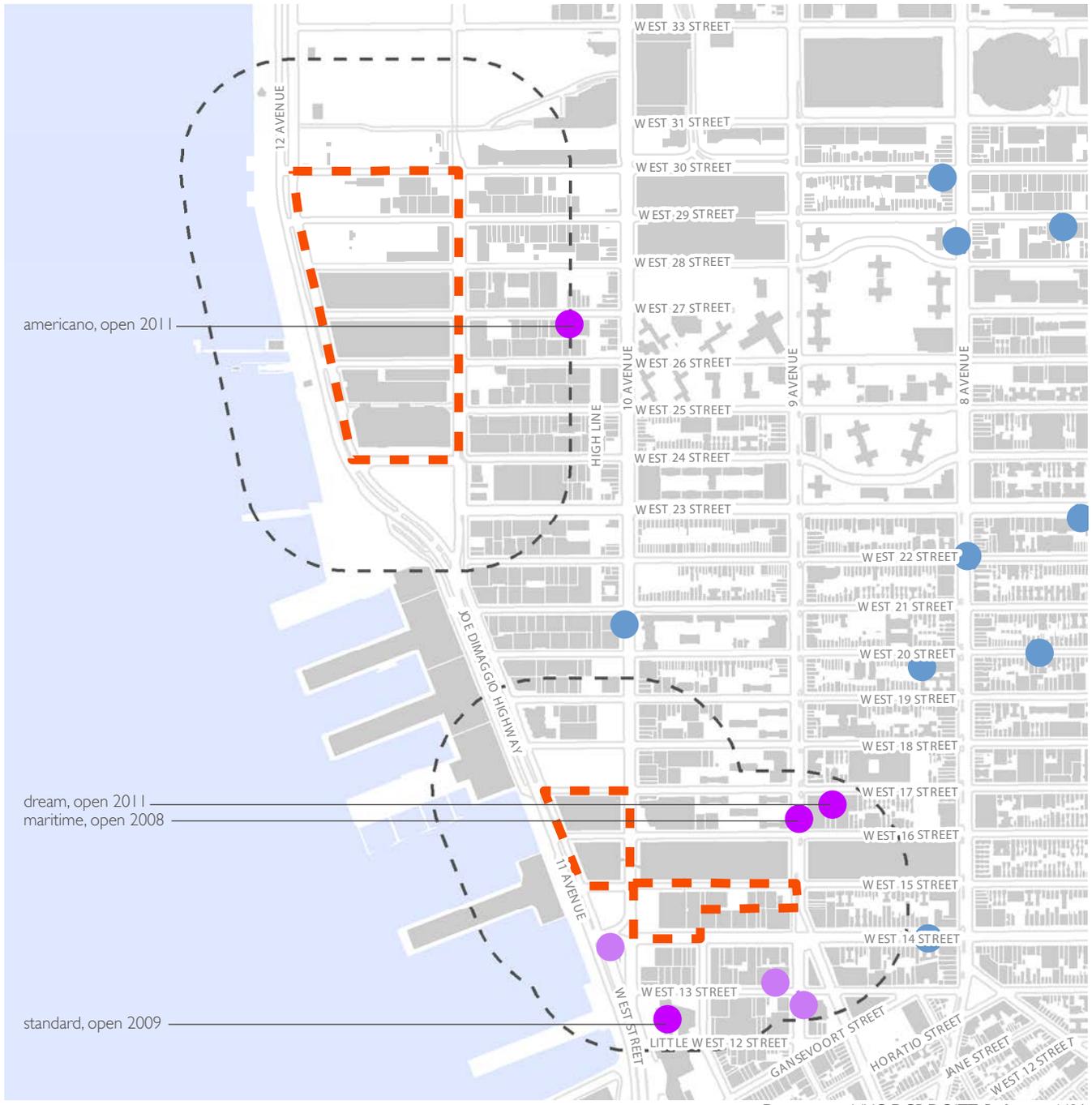
# Development since 2005



Data source: NYC DOB New Building and Alteration I permits since 2005; NYC DCP, DOITT



# Hotels in West Chelsea



Data source: NYC DCP, DOITT; Reference USA



# Economic trends

Employment figures from the New York State Department of Labor show a 61% decline in manufacturing firms between 2000 and 2011 in an area that comprises the study area and 600-foot buffer. The industries that have seen the greatest growth in this period include information (up 57% in firms and 230% in employees); professional, scientific and technical services, among which architectural and engineering firms rose by 131%, and advertising and PR firms rose almost 400%.



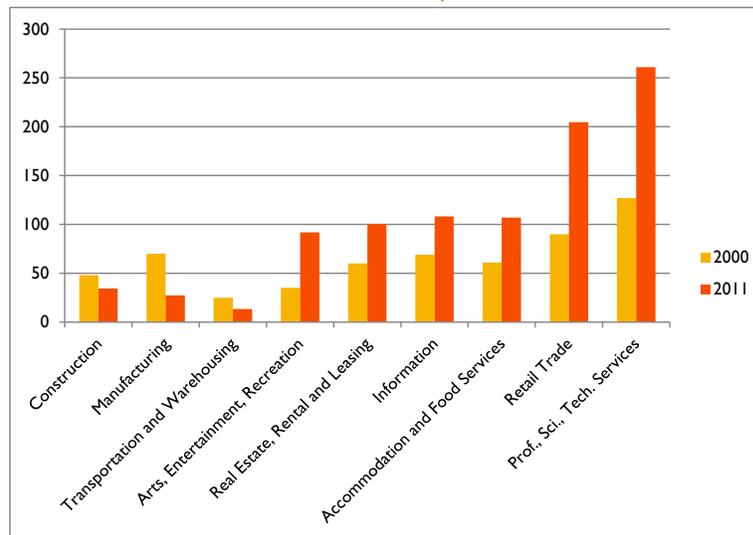
The strong demand for office space in Chelsea has been broadly publicized, particularly with the arrival of Google at 111 Eighth Avenue and the proposal to expand Chelsea Market in 2012. This growth is largely attributed to the location of tech startups, media firms, and specialized design agencies. The New York Times credits the Flatiron District's and Chelsea's supply of loft spaces with fostering these creative hubs. Flexible floor plates and high ceilings are conducive to the needs of both small startups and larger, established companies. Businesses are further drawn to neighborhood amenities, like Chelsea Piers, the High Line and numerous bars and eateries, whose innovative spirit these companies share.<sup>3</sup>

Chelsea/Meatpacking District had the lowest availability of office space of any submarket in Manhattan in the first quarter of 2013, while asking rents increased in this same period. Overall, Midtown South (which includes the Chelsea/Meatpacking District submarket) is the only market where current average asking rents have surpassed historic highs; asking rents in the first quarter of 2013 are 16% higher than 2007.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Vatner, Jonathan. "Manhattan Tech Start-ups Settle in the Flatiron and Chelsea." The New York Times. 19 Apr. 2011.

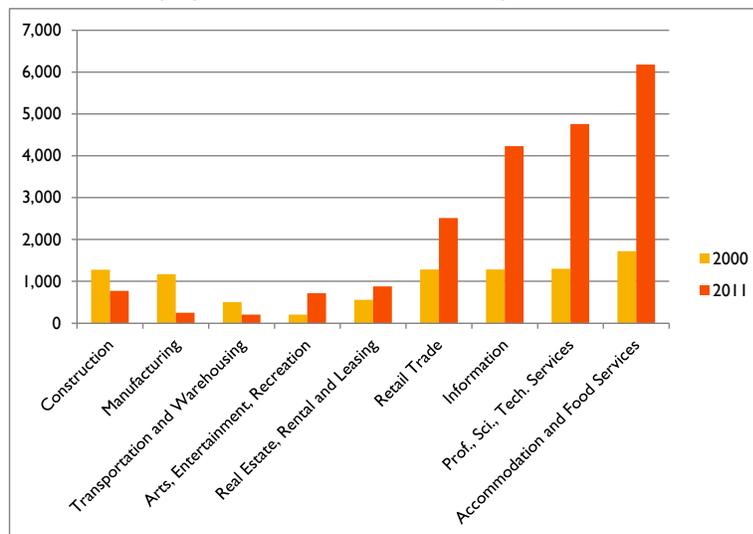
<sup>4</sup> Cassidy Turley. "Manhattan Office Market Report April 2013." www.cassidyturley.com.

Number of firms, 2000 and 2011 in study area and 600-foot buffer



Data source: NYS Dept of Labor, 3Q, QCEW, 2000 and 2011

Number of employees, 2000 and 2011 in study area and 600-foot buffer



# Recommendation: Area A

After a thorough examination of the study area, the Department of City Planning has arrived at the following recommendations.

The Chelsea Market between West 15th and 16th streets and Ninth and Tenth avenues serves as the dividing line between residential West Chelsea to the north and the non-residential Meatpacking District to the south. This segment of West 15th Street is occupied by a mix of active commercial and light manufacturing uses that reflect broader trends in the neighborhood. While the M1-5 zoning district conforms to existing uses, building heights and street walls are not prescribed.

This portion of the study area lies between Chelsea Market, which is subject to a building envelope established through land use approvals in 2012, and the low-rise Gansevoort Historic District fronting West 14th Street. The block's remaining loft buildings retain much of the historic industrial waterfront character that contributed to the landmark designation of blocks to the south. As an M1-5 zoning district without any additional regulations, this section of West 15th Street is vulnerable to development that could disrupt the cohesive built fabric. Community Board 4 has expressed concern about the planned hotel at 412 West 15th Street, which will rise to 25 stories, a height that is achieved through the utilization of floor area from adjacent properties in the Gansevoort Market Historic District. The Prince Lumber site at the corner of Ninth Avenue is the only parcel on the block built to less than half of the permitted floor area ratio; it is also possible that other buildings could be demolished for new construction.

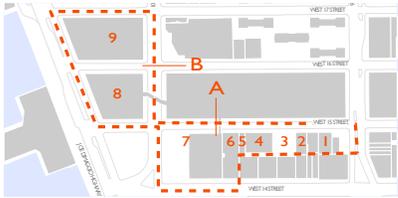
To protect the low-rise character of blocks south of the Chelsea Market, it is appropriate to extend the WCh to include the south side of West

15th Street between Ninth and Tenth avenues. M1-5 districts in the WCh are subject to envelope controls with base heights of 50 to 95 feet and a maximum building height of 135 feet. The special district also permits museum and non-commercial gallery uses in M1-5 districts as-of-right. This envelope is consistent with bulk regulations prescribed to the Chelsea Market to the north, where the midblock portion of the building is limited to 130 feet in height and segment fronting Ninth Avenue is limited to 135 feet. These envelope controls would not increase non-compliance among buildings on the south side of West 15th Street as many already exceed underlying base maximum heights of the M1-5 zoning district.

The community is concerned that hotels and hotel bars are detrimental to the quality-of-life of nearby residents, particularly on blocks north and east of Ninth Avenue and West 14th Street, and recommends excluding hotel uses. Four hotels have opened within 600 feet of the study area since 2005; hotels are

generally clustered on the border with the Gansevoort Market district among predominantly commercial blocks. Since the adoption of the WCh, building permit data demonstrates that the vast majority of construction in loft buildings similar in typology to the stock of buildings on West 15th Street has been conversion to office uses. Given the record demand for office space in West Chelsea and the compatibility of these buildings with the industries that are growing in the area, it is likely that there will be continued office growth on West 15th Street. It was recently announced that the Prince Lumber site at Ninth Avenue will be developed with a 12-story office building.

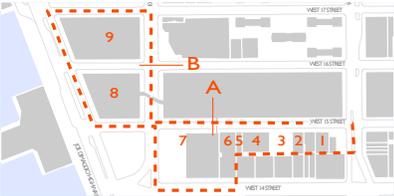
Maintaining the M1-5 district and including this portion of West 15th Street in the WCh is recommended.



# Recommendation: Area B

85 Tenth Avenue and 99 Tenth Avenue are overbuilt, actively tenanted commercial buildings. These formerly industrial, full-block loft buildings are built to 12.0 FAR in an M1-5 zoning district, which permits 5.0 FAR.

Given the strong demand for large-footprint office loft conversions in Chelsea and the existing tenancies in these buildings, there is no action recommended to amend bulk or use controls on these two blocks.



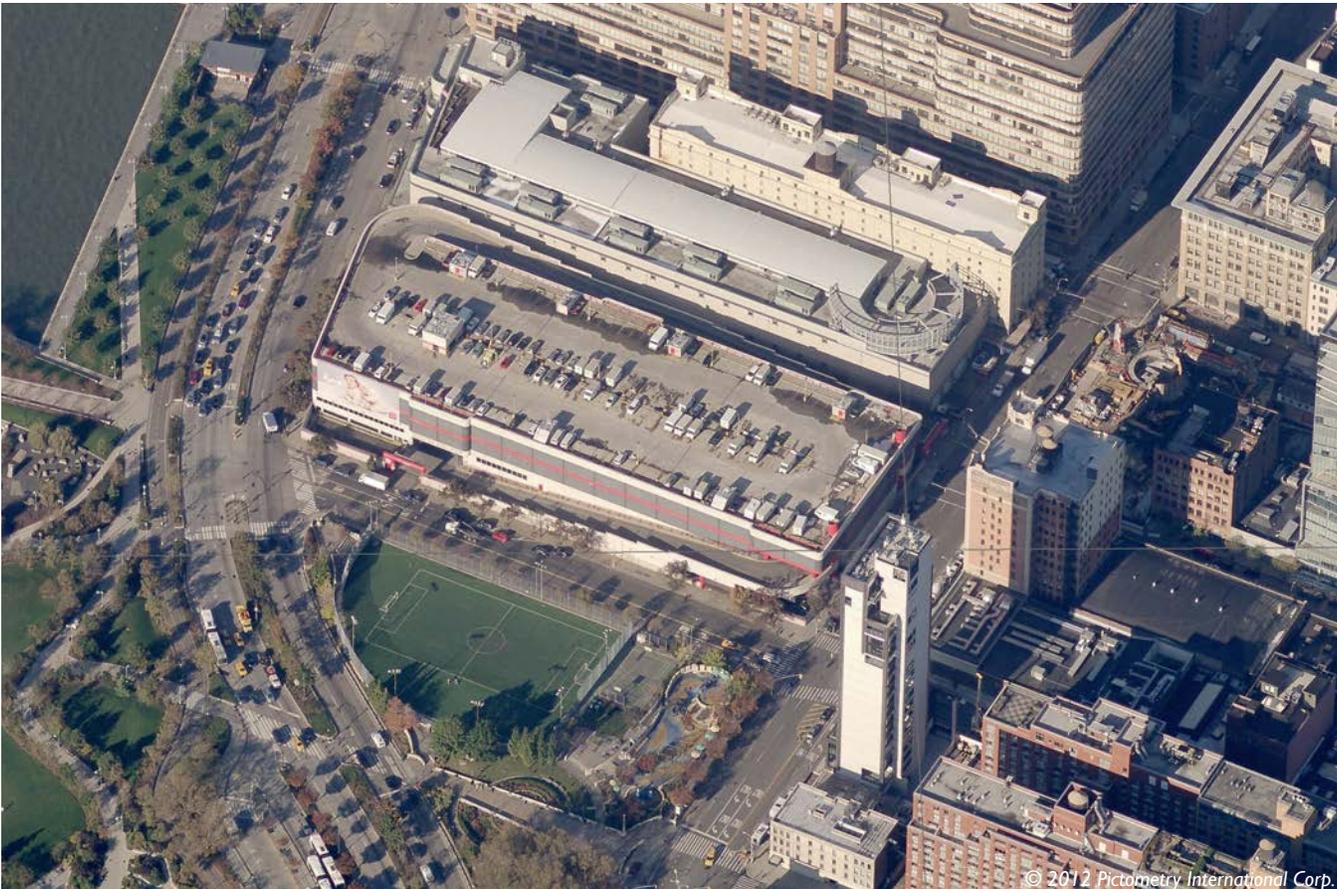
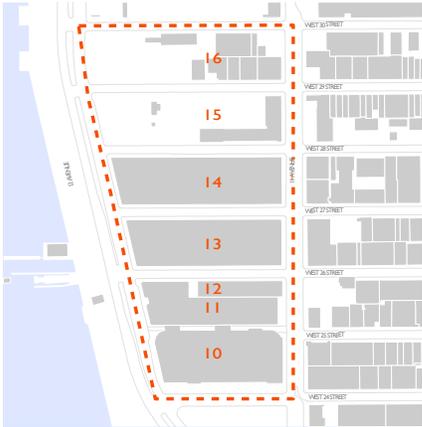
# Recommendation: Area C

The blocks in the northern study area are diverse in form, use, character and need. The buildings occupied by commercial and office uses, such as Starrett-Lehigh and Terminal Stores, are further indication of the growing office sector in West Chelsea. The utilities and infrastructure facilities represent the few remaining waterfront manufacturing districts in Manhattan and reinforce the importance of these services to the function of the borough and the city. Community Board 4 has expressed concern about the long term viability of these facilities in West Chelsea.

The USPS vehicle repair facility at West 24th Street between Eleventh and Twelfth avenues is built to 1.79 FAR in an M2-3 zoning district, which permits 2.0 FAR. It is also constructed over the

demapped portion of West 25th Street. While USPS has expressed that there is no intention to relocate, the institution's financial challenges are widely recognized. USPS is actively assessing its property portfolio to identify buildings and land to sell. While the facility is valuable to USPS' operations, it is prudent to begin to set a context for the future of this site. Government agencies are regularly challenged to locate essential services in Manhattan that require manufacturing zoning districts; this location could help to meet citywide infrastructure needs. Equally, this site is advantaged by its location across the street from the Chelsea Waterside Park to the south, valuable residential developments along Eleventh Avenue to the east and unobstructed views of the Hudson River to the west. Residential uses could be

considered in the future as well. With consultation from USPS, a study should be prepared to advance a framework for development of this block in the future. Such a study should be undertaken at the time that USPS informs the Department of its formal plans to locate off the site.



# Recommendation: Area C (cont)

The DSNY Manhattan Repair Shop on West 26th Street is built to the maximum 5.0 FAR permitted in M1-5 districts and critical to sanitation operations. As a City-owned site, it is valuable to DSNY and New York City agencies, who strive to find sites to locate necessary services. The sale of the site would require relocation and disposition through ULURP. No action is recommended for this site.



The B&O building, Starrett-Lehigh and Terminal Stores contain vital commercial uses with active office spaces that are increasingly sought-after in Chelsea. All three buildings are in the West Chelsea Historic District and are built well above the density permitted in M1-5 and M2-3 zoning districts. While the community has expressed the desire to preclude hotel uses in these buildings through rezoning, the Zoning Resolution includes a special permit available to landmark properties to allow uses not permitted as-of-right. There is no recommended action for these sites.



As has been described, ConEd, which occupies the block between West 28th and 29th streets, plans to intensify use of this site in the future. Additional floor area to accommodate a transmission switching station and two area substations will likely require discretionary action, as would the introduction of use groups that are currently not permitted. Without a firm understanding of ConEd's plans and needs, it is impractical to consider a change in zoning on this block.

The northernmost block in the study area between West 29th and 30th streets is in mixed ownership and currently constrained by legal agreements that will terminate in the next decade. While the assortment of uses is consistent with M2-3 and M1-6 zoning districts, the block is generally underbuilt and underutilized. With the

Western Rail Yard and third section of the High Line across the street to the north, new residential development on Eleventh Avenue to the east, landmark buildings to the south and the Hudson River to the west, this block requires a structured approach to planning its future. Developing a framework through consultation with property owners, the community and stakeholders is recommended to guide future decisions on zoning and development for these sites. A study to develop such a

framework should be undertaken at a time when circumstances regarding the future of the northern blocks and their surroundings have been made clearer, such as the assured relocation of the DSNY garage and plans from ConEd defining the parameters for its facility's expansion.

