

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the potential effects of the proposed project on urban design and visual resources. It is expected that the Farley Complex, an important visual resource, would be altered by the insertion of a new intermodal hall between West 31st and 33rd Streets that would be enclosed with a glass skylight, as envisioned in the preliminary design that was previously considered in 1999. Further, since Phase II of the proposed project could include construction of a structure of up to 1 million zoning square feet either above the Western Annex or on the Development Transfer Site at Eighth Avenue between West 34th and West 33rd Streets, it could create a more visible alteration to the urban design character of the study area. As recommended by the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study area is, therefore, defined as the area within approximately 400 feet of the project site—an area bounded by West 30th and 34th Streets, the west side of Ninth Avenue and the east side of Eighth Avenue (see Figure 9-1).

This chapter has been prepared in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), which requires that State agencies consider the effects of their actions on urban design and visual resources. The technical analysis follows the guidance of the *CEQR Technical Manual*. As defined in the manual, urban design components and visual resources determine the “look” of a neighborhood—its physical appearance, including the street pattern, the size and shape of buildings, their arrangement on blocks, streetscape features, natural features, and noteworthy views that may give an area a distinctive character. The following analysis addresses each of these characteristics for existing conditions and the future without and with the proposed project for two analysis years, 2010 and 2015.

PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS*PHASE I (SCENARIO 1 AND SCENARIO 2)*

The form of the Farley Complex would be altered in the future with the proposed project by 2010. Under the Developer A and B proposals, the new intermodal hall would separate the two integrated buildings on the block with a new, modern interlayer. The glass and metal skylight above the intermodal hall would become a notable element of the building, and would make the building more visible and visually interesting at night, when it is expected to be lit up. The Developer C proposal includes a skylight that would not rise as high above the existing Farley Complex, would be set back from the north and south building façades, and thus would be less visible than the skylight envisioned in the proposals of Developers A and B. The creation of the intermodal hall and the midblock entrances to the Farley Complex at West 31st and 33rd Streets would alter the Complex’s relationship to these streets. In the Developer C proposal, the midblock sections of the Farley Complex would be retained and restored at the new entrances, while those sections would be removed under the Developer A and B proposals. The streetscapes of Ninth and Eighth Avenues and West 31st and 33rd Streets surrounding the Farley

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Complex would also be expected to change considerably with the proposed project. All three proposals include a restoration plan for the Farley Complex that would be expected to enhance the appearance of the building.

Phase I of the proposed project would not involve any changes to block form, street pattern or hierarchy, building arrangement, bulk, use or type, topography, natural features, or streetscape elements within the area surrounding the Farley Complex.

From the majority of the study area, the most dramatic change to the form and design of the building—the glass and metal skylight of the new intermodal hall—would not be visible; however, views to the Farley Complex in which the skylight would be visible would change, as the skylight could become a notable element of the complex depending upon the final design. Views from the Farley Complex to surrounding visual resources would not be altered by the proposed development.

PHASE II (SCENARIO 1)

Under Scenario 1, the Phase II component of the proposed project would involve further considerable alterations to the Farley Complex. The appearance of the Western Annex would change with the construction of the proposed office building. The Western Annex would become a base for the overbuild, which would become the focal point of this portion of the complex; however, through the choice of materials and style, and by setting the overbuild well back from the edges of the Western Annex, the proposed project could create a composition in which each component is clearly different from the other, allowing each to retain its individual identity and essential character. The expected use of glass and metal for the overbuild would serve to highlight and differentiate the modern layer from the historic masonry base. However, it is also possible that a portion of the West 33rd Street façade of the Western Annex could be concealed by a glass curtain wall for the overbuild, in which case views of this portion of the façade would be lost and the differentiation of the historic masonry building from the modern structure above would be less clear.

In views from Eighth Avenue, the expected modern design of the new overbuild would be congruent with the new intermodal hall skylight and the new buildings on the Hudson Yards Projected Development Sites 32 and 33 across Ninth Avenue, forming a contrasting backdrop to the historic masonry Farley Complex. From the majority of the study area, views of the Farley Complex would be mainly of the overbuild alone as part of the new skyline of Ninth Avenue, and the juxtaposition of the historic masonry base and the tall, modern structure would not be disruptive.

The type of building on the project site also would undergo a dramatic change, from a 120-foot-tall historic, masonry community facility building to a mixed-use development with a historic masonry base and an overbuild that could be of a very modern design and materials. The streetscapes of Ninth Avenue and West 31st and 33rd Streets surrounding the Farley Complex also would be expected to change dramatically with the Scenario 1 overbuild development, as a large number of office workers and visitors would be expected to utilize these streets to access the new building. This heightened activity would be particularly noticeable on West 33rd Street, where a new entrance to the office building would be located. Together with the new commercial buildings at Hudson Yards Projected Development Sites 32 and 33 and the redevelopment of the Westyard Distribution Center building, as well as new residential developments at Hudson Yards Projected Development Sites 30, 43, and 44, the Phase II

overbuild would continue the trend toward expanding commercial and retail uses within the surrounding area.

PHASE II (SCENARIO 2)

Under Scenario 2, the utilization of the Farley Complex's unused development rights by Developer C would involve changes to the bulk, type, and arrangements of buildings on the Development Transfer Site. The proposed residential or mixed-use development would be considerably taller and bulkier than the existing one-story commercial buildings that are currently located on the site. The building would be taller than any other building in the surrounding area, with the exceptions of One Penn Plaza and the new development on Hudson Yards Projected Development Site 33. The uses proposed for the Development Transfer Site would be consistent with existing uses in the area. The streetscapes surrounding the Development Transfer Site would also be expected to change, as the development would eliminate the elevated pedestrian circulation space that currently exists on the Development Transfer Site, would form stronger streetwalls at this location, and would bring greater pedestrian and vehicular activity to the area; however, the streetscape of the remainder of the study area would not be expected to be altered by the project. The development of the Development Transfer Site through the floor area transfer would preclude any overbuild on the Farley Complex.

The view corridor of Eighth Avenue would change dramatically with the development on the Development Transfer Site. The new 1.1-million-gross-square-foot primarily residential or mixed-use building on the Development Transfer Site would become a notable element in views eastward to the Empire State Building and One Penn Plaza, and the context of views to the New Yorker Hotel would change with the addition of the tall new development on the opposite corner of West 34th Street and Eighth Avenue. Views from Ninth Avenue from West 27th through 29th Streets would now include the new building, as well as One Penn Plaza's tower. Views from the Development Transfer Site to the other surrounding visual resources would not be expected to change, with the exception of views from the former elevated pedestrian circulation space, which would be eliminated.

B. METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this analysis considers the effects of the proposed project on the following elements that collectively form an area's urban design:

- *Block Form and Street Pattern.* This urban design feature refers to the shape and arrangement of blocks and surrounding streets, such as a grid pattern with regularly sized, rectangular blocks. These features set street views, define the flow of activity through an area, and create the basic format on which building arrangements can be organized.
- *Building Arrangement.* This term refers to the way that buildings are placed on zoning lots and blocks. The buildings can have small or large footprints, be attached or detached and separated by open uses, and varied in their site plans. This urban design feature helps to convey a sense of the overall form and design of a block or a larger area.
- *Building Bulk, Use, and Type.* Buildings are usually described by these characteristics. A building's bulk is created from an amalgam of characteristics that include its height, length, and width; lot coverage and density; and shape and use of setbacks and other massing elements. The general use of a building (e.g., residential, manufacturing, commercial office)

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gives an impression of its appearance and helps to understand its visual and urban design character. Building type refers to a distinctive class of buildings and suggests distinguishing features of a particular building. Examples of building type include: industrial loft, church, gas station, rowhouse.

- *Streetscape Elements.* Streetscape elements are the distinctive physical features that make up a streetscape, such as street walls, building entrances, parking lots, fences, street trees, street furniture, curb cuts, and parking ribbons. These features help define the immediate visual experience of pedestrians.
- *Street Hierarchy.* Streets may be classified as expressways, arterials, boulevards, collector/distributor streets, or local streets, and they may be defined by their width, type of access, and the presence or absence of at-grade pedestrian crossings. Street hierarchy helps convey a sense of the overall form and activity level of a neighborhood.
- *Topography and Natural Features.* Topographic and natural features help define the overall visual character of an area and may include varied ground elevation, rock outcroppings and steep slopes, vegetation, and aquatic features.

This analysis also considers the effects of the proposed project on the area's visual resources, which the *CEQR Technical Manual* defines as unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. Visual resources can include waterfront views, public parks, landmark structures or districts, or natural features, such as a river or geologic formations.

As recommended by the *CEQR Technical Manual*, this technical analysis evaluates impacts in two areas—the project site and a surrounding study area (see Figure 9-1). The project site includes the Farley Complex—which occupies a superblock over the Penn Station Rail Yard between Eighth and Ninth Avenues from West 31st to 33rd Streets—as well as the Development Transfer Site, which is located on the east side of Eighth Avenue between West 33rd and 34th Streets. As described above, the surrounding study area is roughly bounded by West 30th and 34th Streets, the west side of Ninth Avenue and the east side of Eighth Avenue. Given the wider view corridors of Eighth and Ninth Avenues and West 34th Street, views outside the 400-foot study area boundary along Eighth and Ninth Avenues from West 27th to 37th Streets and along West 34th Street from Seventh to Tenth Avenues were also considered. Beyond this area, there are extremely limited views of the project site due to intervening buildings and to distance.

As described in Chapter 2, “Analytical Framework,” the proposed project should be viewed in light of the recently-approved No. 7 Subway Extension–Hudson Yards Rezoning and Redevelopment Plan (Hudson Yards project), and the mixed-use development envisioned by the proposed project is considered to be within the overall development envelope analyzed in the Hudson Yards Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS). The majority of the urban design and visual resources study area for the proposed project falls within the Special Hudson Yards Subdistrict B (Farley Corridor); a portion of Subdistrict C (34th Street Corridor) is also within the study area boundaries. The Farley Corridor comprises the superblocks between Eighth and Tenth Avenues and West 33rd and 31st Streets, plus the site of Madison Square Garden and the block between Ninth and Tenth Avenues and West 31st and 30th Streets. The 34th Street Corridor includes most of the blocks between Eighth and Tenth Avenues and West 35th and 33rd Streets. Therefore, this analysis will utilize relevant information from the Hudson Yards FGEIS, with updated information as appropriate.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

Farley Complex

As described above, the Farley Complex is located on a superblock over the Penn Station Rail Yard between Eighth and Ninth Avenues from West 31st to 33rd Streets. The Farley Complex is considered to be an important visual resource. Constructed between 1910 and 1913 as the U.S. General Post Office, the James A. Farley Building fronts on Eighth Avenue and covers the eastern half of the block; the Western Annex, which was built in 1934, covers the western half of the block to Ninth Avenue. The two Classical Revival-style buildings are five stories (or approximately 120 feet) tall and clad in granite. The Farley Building is a large, ceremonial structure with a row of 20 53-foot-tall Corinthian columns and a wide flight of stairs leading up to its Eighth Avenue façade (see Photograph 1 of Figure 9-2). The Eighth Avenue façade is currently being restored. The design of the Western Annex is somewhat stylized and less ceremonial (see Photograph 2 of Figure 9-2).

The Farley Complex creates a strong streetwall along Ninth Avenue; however, on West 31st and 33rd Streets a perimeter moat surrounded by a stone wall separates the building from these streets by approximately 30 feet (see Photograph 3 of Figure 9-3). On Eighth Avenue, the Farley Building is set back approximately 35 feet from the streetline behind the wide flight of stairs. The Eighth Avenue steps are well utilized by people in the surrounding area as a place to sit, eat, read, or people-watch, especially in good weather when the steps are in the sun.

Besides space for mail distribution, the Farley Building contains public lobbies, retail windows, administration spaces, and an office for New York City's District Manager/Postmaster. The building also has connections to Penn Station's platforms for Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, and Long Island Rail Road that are not accessible to the public. Much of the interior space of the Western Annex is used for truck loading and unloading. Truck entrances are located on the Ninth Avenue end of the Western Annex off of a service driveway with exits on West 33rd Street. Back-in loading docks are located along the West 31st Street façade of the Western Annex near Ninth Avenue. The truck entrances at the Ninth Avenue façade of the Western Annex are disruptive to pedestrian flow, and the perimeter moats on West 31st and 33rd Street limit the pedestrian activity leading toward the complex.

There are no natural features on the project site.

Development Transfer Site

The Development Transfer Site is located on the east side of Eighth Avenue between West 33rd and 34th Streets. This site is the western portion of the block that contains One Penn Plaza, a 57-story office tower. The Development Transfer Site contains one-story restaurant buildings along the length of Eighth Avenue, two additional small, one-story retail buildings, and an elevated public open space east of the restaurant buildings (see Photograph 4 of Figure 9-3). The public open space, which extends between West 33rd and 34th Streets, is well planted with flowerbeds and trees and includes shaded areas and a sculptural water feature (currently dry) (see Photograph 5 of Figure 9-4). There are subway entrances at the northwest and southwest corners

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of the Development Transfer Site, marked by the typical green and red globe lamps and green metal stair enclosures. There are no natural features on the Development Transfer Site.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Farley Complex

From the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the Farley Complex, several visual resources identified in the Hudson Yards FGEIS can be seen. These resources, which are described in greater detail below, are:

- St. Michael's Catholic Church, the West 33rd Street façade of which can be seen from West 33rd Street and Ninth Avenue;
- Glad Tidings Tabernacle on West 33rd Street, which can be seen from the West 33rd Street sidewalk; and
- One Penn Plaza, which can be seen from the Eighth Avenue and West 33rd Street, and from the northwest corner of Eighth Avenue and West 31st Street.

Development Transfer Site

From the Development Transfer Site, the following visual resources identified in the Hudson Yards FGEIS can be seen:

- Farley Complex;
- One Penn Plaza;
- Empire State Building;
- New Yorker Hotel, at the intersection of West 34th Street and Eighth Avenue;
- West Side Jewish Center, on West 34th Street west of Eighth Avenue; and
- Glad Tidings Tabernacle (oblique views).

STUDY AREA

As described above, the Hudson Yards FGEIS analyzed the majority of the proposed project's study area as Subdistrict B (Farley Corridor), which extended from Tenth Avenue to the east side of Madison Square Garden, generally between West 31st and 33rd Streets. The Hudson Yards FGEIS characterized the Farley Corridor as dominated by the presence of several large, bulky buildings and the rail approaches to Penn Station, which lie in a large open cut on the west side of Ninth Avenue surrounded by tall brick walls. Subdistrict C (34th Street Corridor), which extends roughly from Eighth to Tenth Avenues and West 33rd to 35th Streets, was noted as containing the widest range of building types in the Hudson Yards project area, including residential towers, large- and low-scale institutional structures, office towers, low-rise residential tenements with ground-floor retail, and low-rise former manufacturing buildings. Subdistrict C was also described as having an urban development pattern that is more characteristic of Midtown Manhattan than Subdistrict B.

URBAN DESIGN

Natural Features, Street Patterns, and Block Shapes

The study area is developed in the typical Manhattan grid street pattern, with wide avenues running north-south and narrow streets running east-west, creating short, wide rectangular

blocks. The superblocks occupied by the Farley Complex, the former Westyard Distribution Center building and the open rail cut, and Madison Square Garden and 2 Penn Plaza (and, below them, Penn Station) are exceptions to this pattern. These superblocks, which are rectangular in form and similar in dimensions (approximately 450 feet by 800 feet), interrupt West 32nd Street between Seventh and Tenth Avenues. The approach to the Lincoln Tunnel on the north side of West 34th Street and the north-south rail cut between Ninth and Tenth Avenues interrupts the rectangular block formed by Ninth and Tenth Avenues and West 34th and 35th Streets.

The topography of the area is relatively flat; however, there is a slight rise in grade from south to north on Eighth and Ninth Avenues and from east to west between the avenues. Eighth and Ninth Avenues are major north-south thoroughfares, and West 34th Street is a major cross-town arterial. Traffic in the study area is one-way with the exception of West 34th Street, which is two-way. Pedestrian traffic is busiest north of West 34th Street and on Eighth Avenue north of West 27th Street. There are no notable natural features within the study area.

Streetscape

Boxy concrete bollard planters are set in the sidewalk around Madison Square Garden and Penn Station on Eighth Avenue and West 31st and 33rd Streets (see Photograph 8 of Figure 9-5 and Photograph 11 of Figure 9-7.) There are several types of lampposts in the study area. One type, which is found along West 31st, 33rd, and 34th Streets between Seventh and Ninth Avenues, and on Eighth and Ninth Avenues between West 31st and 35th Streets, is a dark green lamppost with a central pole and two teardrop lamps (see Photograph 6 of Figure 9-4). The second type—the Bishop’s Crook lamppost—is found only on Eighth Avenue north of West 35th Street (see Photograph 7 of Figure 9-5). The remainder of the lampposts in the study area are the standard cobrahead design.

The 34th Street Partnership maintains standardized dark green newspaper bins and garbage cans, which are similar in design to the dark green lamppost, in the area north of West 31st Street. Street furniture, such as bus shelters and the newspaper bins and garbage cans mentioned above, also is prevalent on Eighth and Ninth Avenues and on West 34th Street. There are subway entrances at each of the corners of the West 34th Street and Eighth Avenue intersection, marked by the typical green and red globe lamps and green metal stair enclosures. Billboards are located on Ninth Avenue at West 30th and 33rd Streets and vertical advertising banners hang from the façades of Madison Square Garden. As described above, the Eighth Avenue steps of the Farley Building are well utilized by people from the surrounding area, especially in good weather when the steps are in the sun. The sidewalks within the study area are generally wide, but are particularly so along West 34th Street and Eighth and Ninth Avenues.

In general, the streets in the study area are not well planted with trees. There are a few street trees generally along West 34th Street and Ninth Avenue, and a few along West 30th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. Eighth Avenue has almost no trees within the study area, except near the Penn Station South apartment complex, which occupies the blocks between West 23rd and 29th Streets and Eighth and Ninth Avenues. There are also a few trees within the raised planting beds around 2 Penn Plaza and, as described above, at the elevated public open space on the Development Transfer Site.

Building Uses, Shapes and Forms

The study area is very densely developed and buildings mainly occupy their full lots, date from a variety of time periods, and are diverse in style and material. Eighth Avenue north of West 34th

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Street is typical of the Midtown area, with 12- to 25-story office and residential buildings, most of which are clad in brown brick with white stone or stucco on the bottom floors, as well as the 43-story, brick- and stone-clad Art Deco style New Yorker Hotel, which is denoted by its white and blue Art Deco signs on the lower floors and neon signs at roof level (see Photographs 9 and 10 of Figure 9-6). Nearly all buildings in the study area are built to the street line and create strong street walls. South of West 34th Street are the 57-story, full-block One Penn Plaza development and the 24-story 5 Penn Plaza office tower located on the west side of Eighth Avenue between West 33rd and 34th Streets. One Penn Plaza is a narrow, rectangular steel and gray glass-clad tower, with setbacks at the 7th, 12th, and 55th floors—at the western end of the complex is the Development Transfer Site. Eighth Avenue, like Ninth Avenue, is dominated by the large-scale developments on the superblocks between West 31st and 33rd Streets—the Farley Building on the west side, and the 150-foot-tall, drum-shaped Madison Square Garden on the east side of the avenue.

The intersections of Eighth Avenue and West 31st and 33rd Streets are unusually open because Madison Square Garden is set far back from the street, and its circular form allows for large pedestrian circulation areas on the east side of the avenue (see Photograph 11 of Figure 9-7). As described above, boxy concrete bollard planters encircle the Madison Square Garden site. Madison Square Garden is connected by a skyway to the adjacent 2 Penn Plaza, a 30-story, rectangular tower (on the west side of Seventh Avenue between West 31st and 33rd Streets) with long vertical bands of concrete and glass and a street-level vehicle drop-off for Penn Station beneath this overpass. As described above, the one-story retail buildings and the elevated public open space on the Development Transfer Site open up circulation and views within this area. Given this openness, the streetwalls of these blocks are not strong. South of the superblocks, Eighth Avenue mainly includes tenement buildings, some of which are stuccoed, with ground-floor retail uses, the concrete megastructure David Dubinsky Student Center at the Fashion Institute of Technology, the Penn Station South apartment complex, a parking lot, a modern 12-story brick apartment building, and an eight-story brick office building (see Photographs 12 and 13 of Figures 9-7 and 9-8). All along Eighth Avenue, with the exception of the Farley Complex and Madison Square Garden superblocks, ground-floor retail use is common.

The buildings along Ninth Avenue north of West 34th Street are mainly four- and five-story tenements interspersed with low-scale taxpayers, surface parking lots, a new 13-story red brick apartment building, an eight-story utilitarian brick building with horizontal ribbon windows, and an 18-story brick office building with terra cotta detail. South of West 34th Street, Ninth Avenue is dominated by the Farley Complex on the east side, and the tall brick wall enclosing the eastern portion of Caemmerer Yard (the rail approaches to Penn Station) along the west side between West 31st and 33rd Streets and extending along West 31st Street west of Ninth Avenue. At West 33rd Street and Ninth Avenue, there is a metal-clad, Streamline-design diner with vertical black and white enamel panels. The former Westyard Distribution Center building, a bulky 15-story Neo-Brutalist-style concrete building that slopes outward at its lower floors, is located above the western portion of Caemmerer Yard between West 31st and 33rd Streets (see Photographs 14-16 of Figures 9-8 and 9-9).

South of 31st Street, the buildings along Ninth Avenue include: a modern six-story stone-clad office building; the full-block, ten-story United States Postal Service (USPS) Morgan General Mail Facility and full-block, three-story modern Morgan Annex extension; 12- and 16-story modern brick apartment buildings; tenements; surface parking lots; Chelsea Park, which is surrounded by a short wrought-iron fence; the Church of the Holy Apostles, an Italianate brick church with a prominent bronze spire, which is also surrounded by a wrought iron fence; and the

Penn Station South apartment complex, a series of 22-story, unornamented brick apartment houses surrounded by landscaping (see Photographs 17 and 18 of Figure 9-10). Excluding the surface parking lots and the rail cut, the buildings along the avenue are mainly built to the street line and create strong streetwalls.

The buildings to the north of the Farley Complex on West 33rd Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues are: the J.C. Penney Company building, a bulky 18-story brick and stone office building designed in the style of an Italian palazzo; the brick 14-story Neo-Georgian YMCA building; the polychromatic, Romanesque Revival-style Glad Tidings Tabernacle; the new 35-story, residential Pennmark Towers building, which is clad in steel and glass; and 5 Penn Plaza (see Photograph 19 of Figure 9-11). West of Ninth Avenue, West 33rd Street includes the diner described above and the Gothic and Romanesque Revival style St. Michael's Catholic Church, which is clad in stone, and its adjacent brick and stone school, convent, and vestry (see Photograph 20 of Figure 9-11).

Immediately south of the Farley Complex, the south side of West 31st Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues contains a utilitarian brick four-story parking garage, a brick loft building, and a bulky 15-story brick office building with a wide 250-foot frontage (see Photograph 21 of Figure 9-12).

The north side of West 30th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues is occupied by three-story brick rowhouses, some with their cornices remaining; modern nine- and eleven-story brick apartment buildings, and a few four-story tenement buildings (see Photograph 22 of Figure 9-12). The south side of the street also includes three- and four-story brick rowhouses, tenement buildings, and six-, ten-, and twelve-story brick apartment buildings (see Photograph 23 of Figure 9-13). The buildings are mostly built to the streetline and create a strong streetwall.

The buildings along West 34th Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues include, on the south side, the full-block, 57-story One Penn Plaza and, on the north side, a series of three- to six-story tenements with ground-floor retail uses and a large amount of signage obscuring their facades; the Pennsylvania Building, a 22-story, Byzantine style brown brick office building; a run-down, stucco-clad Howard Johnsons hotel; and the Nelson Tower, a Moderne 46-story, 560-foot-tall brown brick office tower. Between Eighth and Ninth Avenues, the buildings along West 34th Street have bigger bulks and floorplates and include, on the south side, the 18-story, brick J.C. Penney Company building; the 14-story, brick YMCA building; the new Pennmark Towers building; and 5 Penn Plaza. The north side of the street includes a five-story parking garage, the New Yorker Hotel, the Renaissance Revival-style West Side Jewish Center, and a parking lot. Between Ninth and Tenth Avenues, there is an eight-story brick building with horizontal ribbon windows, several brick, medium-scale apartment buildings, St. Michael's Catholic Church and its adjacent school, which extend through the block to West 33rd Street, the Master Printers Building, a monumental concrete industrial building, a gas station, the approach to the Lincoln Tunnel, and the deep rail cut, which is surrounded by gray metal walls at the sidewalk.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The following are the visual resources within or visible from the study area, as identified in the Hudson Yards FGEIS (see Figure 9-14):

- Farley Complex;
- One Penn Plaza;
- Hudson River;

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- Empire State Building;
- New Yorker Hotel;
- St. John the Baptist R.C. Church, a Gothic-style church located on the north side of West 30th between Seventh and Eighth Avenues;
- St. Michael’s R.C. Church, a Romanesque Revival-style church that spans the midblock between West 33rd and 34th Streets west of Ninth Avenue;
- West Side Jewish Center, a Romanesque Revival-style three-story building on the north side of West 34th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues; and
- Glad Tidings Tabernacle, a Romanesque Revival-style church located on the north side of West 33rd Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues.

Because the topography of the area is relatively flat, view corridors are generally long, but are sometimes limited by the width of the side streets and the height of surrounding buildings.

There are some views along Eighth Avenue of the Farley Complex, particularly from south of West 34th Street and north of West 30th Street; however, it is not prominent in most views because of its relatively low scale and light color, because the building’s façade is set well back (approximately 35 feet) from the streetline, and because its bulk cannot be easily perceived except from immediately adjacent streets (see Photograph 24 of Figure 9-13). Views south on Eighth Avenue from West 31st Street and views north from West 35th Street do not end in any significant views. In views north along Eighth Avenue from south of West 31st Street, One Penn Plaza, the Pennmark Towers building, and a large-scale painted advertisement on a building north of West 34th Street are most visible (see Photograph 25 of Figure 9-15).

Views north along Ninth Avenue above West 34th Street are of the green-blue McGraw Hill building and the ramps across the avenue at West 40th Street leading to the Port Authority Bus Terminal. As on Eighth Avenue, there are some views of the Farley Complex, particularly from south of West 34th Street and north of West 30th Street; however, it is not prominent in most views because of its relatively low scale and light color—its bulk cannot be easily perceived except from immediately adjacent streets (see Photograph 26 of Figure 9-15). Views south on Ninth Avenue are mainly unremarkable, except where the steeple of the Church of the Holy Apostles can be seen. Other visual resources—specifically the Empire State Building, One Penn Plaza, Glad Tidings Tabernacle, West Side Jewish Center, and St. Michael’s Catholic Church—can be seen from the intersections of Ninth Avenue and West 33rd Street and/or West 34th Street (see Photograph 27 of Figure 9-16). The discontinuous eastern streetwall of Ninth Avenue from West 27th through 29th Streets, in combination with the relatively low scale of the buildings between West 29th and 31st Streets and Eighth and Ninth Avenues, allows for views above the Farley Complex and of One Penn Plaza’s tower (see Photograph 28 of Figure 9-16).

Views east along West 34th Street from Tenth Avenue are of the Empire State Building, One Penn Plaza, the New Yorker Hotel and its neon roof sign, and the new Pennmark Towers building (see Photographs 29 and 30 of Figure 9-17). The deep rail cut, which is surrounded by gray metal walls at the sidewalk along West 34th Street, opens up views south toward the project site area from West 34th Street west of Ninth Avenue (see Photograph 31 of Figure 9-18). Views west along West 34th Street from Seventh Avenue are of the New Yorker Hotel, from the south side of the street, and of the Farley Complex, from the north side of the street and past One Penn Plaza.

From west of Ninth Avenue, views west along West 30th, 31st, and 34th Streets and along West 33rd Street are of the buildings of Weehawken, New Jersey in the far distance (see Photograph 32 of Figure 9-18). Views west of Ninth Avenue along West 31st and 33rd Streets also include the Westyard Distribution Center building, and along West 30th Street include limited views of the High Line (see Photograph 33 of Figure 9-19). In views west from Eighth Avenue, the buildings of Weehawken are much less visible, and the Hudson River generally cannot be seen. Views east along West 31st and 33rd Street are of One Penn Plaza and the Empire State Building, as well as of the Farley Complex (see Photograph 34 of Figure 9-19). From the east along West 31st and 33rd Streets, the Farley Complex is most visible west of 2 Penn Plaza to the west of Seventh Avenue and from the elevated public open space on the Development Transfer Site.

D. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION: 2010

PROJECT SITE

URBAN DESIGN

The Eighth Avenue façade of the Farley Complex is currently being restored. The restoration will be completed by 2010 and it will improve the appearance of the building. In addition, the Farley Complex would be redeveloped for commercial and USPS uses by 2010 in the Future Without the Proposed Action. As described in Chapter 2, “Analytical Framework,” the project site would contain approximately 650,100 square feet of USPS service space, primarily at the Farley Building, and approximately 685,000 of commercial space, primarily at the Western Annex. The commercial space would comprise approximately 248,000 square feet of retail and 436,000 square feet of office uses.

The new and continuing uses of the Farley Complex in the Future Without the Proposed Action would not involve any changes to block form; street pattern or hierarchy; building arrangement, bulk, or type; topography; or natural features. Some alterations to the exterior of the Western Annex would be required, including new entrances, windows, and signage for the new commercial uses. The uses of the complex would change from solely USPS to a mix of retail, office, and USPS, but, as described above, retail and office uses are prevalent in the area surrounding the complex. Workers and visitors coming to the new retail and office uses at the Farley Complex could bring greater activity to the surrounding streets.

No changes to the Development Transfer Site are expected by 2010 in the Future Without the Proposed Action.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The proposed new uses and alterations to the Farley Complex would not be expected to change its status as an important visual resource, nor would they be expected to alter views to visual resources in the surrounding area from the publicly accessible sidewalks adjacent to the complex.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

2010 is the first phase of projected development associated with the Hudson Yards project. As analyzed in the Hudson Yards Rezoning FGEIS, no new development was anticipated in Subdistrict C, but one site within the Subdistrict B portion of the study area would be developed by 2010. Projected Development Site 33, which is located directly west of the project site on Ninth Avenue between West 31st and 32nd Streets, would be developed with a 2.2-million-square-foot, approximately 660-foot-tall office and residential building with ground-floor retail use (see Figure 9-20). A portion of the Caemmerer Yard would be covered over in order to construct the building.

Projected Development Site 33 would be required to provide a publicly accessible covered pedestrian space in line with West 32nd Street, connecting the Lincoln Tunnel approach bridge with the Westyard Distribution Center building. The covered pedestrian space would be enclosed, have a roof of transparent material, provide direct access to any adjacent buildings, and have retail uses fronting upon at least 50 percent of its northern and southern walls. Projected Development Site 33 also would be required to provide a publicly-accessible through-block connection, open to the sky, along its western boundary. This connection would have a minimum width of 20 feet and would provide a direct connection with the covered pedestrian space.

The development of Projected Development Site 33 would not involve any alterations to block form, street pattern or hierarchy, natural features, or topography. It would considerably change the streetscape of Ninth Avenue between West 31st and 33rd Streets, creating a strong streetwall where currently the tall brick wall enclosing the eastern portion of Caemmerer Yard allows for wide, open views to the surrounding area and the Westside Distribution Center building. The streetscape of Ninth Avenue would be enhanced by the new publicly-accessible covered pedestrian space in line with West 32nd Street, and a new streetscape would be developed at the publicly-accessible through-block connection along the western boundary of the site.

The new building would occupy a large site, similar to other buildings in the area such as One Penn Plaza, the USPS Morgan General Mail Facility, the Morgan Annex, Madison Square Garden, and the Farley Complex, and it would be dramatically taller than any other building in the surrounding area with the exception of One Penn Plaza. Therefore, the new development would add density and height to Ninth Avenue and would introduce a different urban form to the superblock on which it would be located. The new development is expected to have a modern design, similar to other new buildings in the surrounding area. Together with the more active retail and office uses anticipated at the Western Annex of the Farley Complex, this new development also could bring greater pedestrian and vehicular activity to Ninth Avenue south of West 34th Street, further enhancing the streetscape of this area.

In addition to the projected development associated with the Hudson Yards project, there are two other projects that will be completed or underway by 2010. The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) is developing a 1,104-bed dormitory on the southern side of West 31st Street west of Ninth Avenue, within an existing 15-story loft building. Since this project would mainly involve a change in the use of the building, it is not expected to result in any significant changes to urban design. However, the building's occupants could be expected to use the new covered pedestrian space and through-block connector at Projected Development Site 33. It is anticipated that Madison Square Garden could expand on its existing site to increase capacity and to improve

amenities, retail, and ancillary facilities, and that this expansion could be underway by 2010; however, the program of this potential project is not yet known.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The development of Projected Development Site 33 would change the context of views to the Farley Complex, particularly north and south along Ninth Avenue, where the new building would become the focus of views. In views from Eighth Avenue, the Farley Complex would be visible, but its context would be altered by the presence of the new building behind it. The new building could also be seen from West 34th Street west of Ninth Avenue, where the deep rail cut opens up views. As it would be built within an existing block form, the new building would not eliminate views westward along the side streets of the buildings of Weehawken, New Jersey in the far distance, or eastward views from east of Ninth Avenue to the Empire State Building and One Penn Plaza. However, the development would eliminate some north-facing views of St. Michael's Catholic Church and its ancillary structures. Some new views would be created through the publicly-accessible covered pedestrian space to the Farley Complex and the Westyard Distribution Center building, and the new publicly accessible through-block connection would create a new view corridor between West 31st and 33rd Streets west of Ninth Avenue.

E. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION: 2010

For analysis purposes, there are two development scenarios for the proposed project. For the 2010 analysis year, Scenario 1 assumes construction of Phase I of the proposed project. Under Scenario 2, an additional 1 million zoning square feet of primarily residential or mixed-use development would occur under Phase II at the Development Transfer Site by 2010. This development would occur concurrently with Phase I.

PROJECT SITE

SCENARIO 1

In the Future With the Proposed Action, the Farley Complex would be redeveloped as a new intermodal train station with private commercial development. As noted in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the private development portion of the reasonable worst-case development scenario for Phase I of the project comprises retail, banquet facilities, and hotel uses. The retail use would be 518,100 square feet, hotel would be 125,000 square feet (or 125 rooms), and the banquet facilities would be 35,000 square feet. In addition, approximately 265,000 square feet of the Farley Complex would be subleased to USPS for continued use, including the historic postal lobby.

Common to all three developer proposals, the following components of the project would change the exterior appearance of the Farley Complex:

- A new intermodal hall, characterized by a glass and metal skylight and new midblock entrances to the Farley Building from both West 31st and West 33rd Streets;
- Comprehensive restoration of the Farley Complex;
- New entrances to the Farley Building from Eighth Avenue;

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- The removal of a portion or all of the perimeter moats on West 31st and 33rd Streets and the creation of new porte cocheres and curb cuts for taxi access on the midblocks of West 31st Street and/or West 33rd Street;
- Reconfiguration of the Ninth Avenue arched truck entrances into the main pedestrian entrance to the Western Annex;
- Removal or reduction in number of the USPS loading docks on the exterior of the building at the intersection of West 31st Street and Ninth Avenue;
- New truck ramps to the Western Annex on West 31st Street, and possibly on West 33rd Street, from Ninth Avenue; and
- Erection of bollards in the sidewalks around the four sides of the Farley Complex.

No changes to the Development Transfer Site are expected by 2010 in Scenario 1.

Urban Design

Phase I of the proposed project would not require changes to the block form, street patterns or hierarchies, topography, or natural features of the project site. The restoration of the Farley Complex would be expected to enhance the appearance of the building, and the bulk of the Farley Complex would not substantially change with the reconfiguration of the building or the addition of the intermodal hall. Although some of the proposed new uses of the Farley Complex—hotel, banquet facility, retail, USPS, and intermodal train station—would be different than those that would occupy the complex by 2010 in the Future Without the Proposed Action (office, retail, and USPS), retail and transportation uses are common in the area. In addition, there are other hotels in the surrounding area, some of which have banquet facilities. In Midtown, hotels are often attached or located adjacent to rail stations, such as the Grand Hyatt New York hotel at Grand Central and the Hotel Pennsylvania at Seventh Avenue and West 32nd Street that was built across from the original Pennsylvania Station.

The form of the Farley Complex would change in the Future With the Proposed Action with the insertion of the intermodal hall, but the change would differ between the three developer proposals. Under the Developer A and B proposals, the new intermodal hall would visually separate the two buildings on the block with a new, modern interlayer. The glass and metal skylight above the intermodal hall would rise from a point outside the building's north and south façades to a height between 150 and 180 feet and would become a notable element of the building, making it much more visible and visually interesting at night, when it is expected to be lit up. Developer A and Developer B propose an arched skylight and the removal of the midblock sections of the Farley Building façades. In comparison, the Developer C proposal would fully retain and restore the West 31st and 33rd Street façade sections and the skylight would be designed as a barrel vault-like structure with light members. At 145 feet to the highest point of the vault, the skylight would be shorter than the arches proposed by the other developers, and it would be set back from the building façades (see Figure 9-21 and 9-22). It would thus be less visible than the skylight envisioned in the proposals of Developers A and B.

The streetscapes of Ninth and Eighth Avenues and West 31st and 33rd Streets surrounding the Farley Complex would be expected to change dramatically with the proposed project. It is anticipated that under all three proposals bollards would be placed in the sidewalks around the Farley Complex. In the Developer C proposal, these bollards are expected to be five feet tall, cylindrical in form with a 10-inch diameter, and clad in stainless steel. The bollards would be a new element to the project site streetscape. In addition, the creation of the intermodal hall and

the midblock entrances to the Farley Complex at West 31st and 33rd Streets would alter the complex's relationship to these streets. It is anticipated that these changes would involve the removal of a portion or all of the perimeter moats on the West 31st and 33rd Street facades of the building. In some cases, portions of the moats would be glassed over, replicating their original appearance. As currently contemplated, Developer C would lower the floor level of the north moat adjacent to the Farley Building and construct a glass enclosure within it so that the moat could be used for restaurant seating at the concourse level. With the partial removal or infill of the perimeter moats that serve to distance the Farley Complex from its surroundings, the addition of new building entrances, and the creation of new porte cocheres and curb cuts for taxi access, the streets and these portions of the Farley Complex would be expected to become much more utilized and active. In addition, in the Developer C proposal the midblock sections of the Farley Complex would be retained and restored at the new West 31st and 33rd Street entrances and a new exterior stair would be constructed on West 31st Street (see Figure 9-22). Each entrance would have a modern canopy. Further, a new train hall skylight similar in design to the intermodal hall skylight would be created (see Figure 9-23). This skylight would have a low vault and would be minimally visible from the surrounding area. The Developer A and B proposals would renovate the existing Farley Building skylight.

Although Eighth Avenue is already the primary entrance to the building, the new corner entrances on this facade, which would be installed at the existing moat level below existing spaces intended for statuary, would further facilitate access to the building and activate this facade. The removal or reduction in number of the USPS loading docks on the exterior of the complex at the intersection of West 31st Street and Ninth Avenue, the creation of new windows and entrances for commercial spaces on Ninth Avenue within existing arched openings, and new truck ramps from Ninth Avenue to the train concourse level of the Western Annex are all anticipated to improve the appearance and activity level of the Ninth Avenue streetscape and building facade; however, similar alterations to the existing arched openings for new windows and entrances could occur in the Future Without the Proposed Actions for new commercial uses at the Western Annex. The Ninth Avenue facade would become more pedestrian-friendly, and less truck-oriented.

Visual Resources

As described above, the Farley Complex, which is an important visual resource, would be altered by the proposed development. The appearance of the Farley Building and Western Annex would change with the construction of the glass and metal skylight rising out of the middle of the complex, in a space currently occupied by a connector element with different facades on West 31st and 33rd Streets. In the Developer C proposal the midblock sections of the complex would be retained and restored at the new West 31st and 33rd Street entrances, while in the Developer A and B proposals, the new intermodal hall would serve to visually separate the two buildings with a new, modern interlayer. Under all three proposals, the glass and metal skylight above the intermodal hall would become a new element of the building. As noted above, the skylight to be created in the Developer C proposal would not rise as high above the Farley Complex, and thus would be less visible than the skylight envisioned in the proposals of Developers A and B. The use of glass and metal for the skylight would serve to highlight and differentiate the modern structure from the historic masonry building. This differentiation would be much less pronounced in the Developer C proposal, in which the masonry midblock sections of the complex would be retained and restored at the West 31st and 33rd Street entrances. The restoration of the Farley Complex also would be expected to enhance the appearance of the

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building. Views from the Farley Complex to surrounding visual resources would not be altered by the proposed development.

SCENARIO 2

Under Scenario 2, the Farley Complex would be redeveloped in Phase I as described above. However, Scenario 2 would also involve the construction of a new, approximately 1.1 million-gross-square-foot building on the Development Transfer Site, adjacent to One Penn Plaza. There are two development options: a primarily residential building and a mixed-use structure. The discussion below focuses on the proposed changes to the Development Transfer Site.

Urban Design

The proposed project would not involve any changes to block form, street pattern or hierarchy, topography or natural features at the Development Transfer Site. However, it would involve changes to the bulk, type, and arrangement of buildings on this site as well as to the streetscape. The proposed development would be considerably taller and bulkier than the existing one-story commercial buildings that are currently located on this site. An illustrative rendering of the proposed development shows that it could rise from the street without setbacks to a height of up to 720 feet, or approximately 75 feet shorter than One Penn Plaza (see Figure 9-24). The new building would therefore be taller than any other building in the surrounding area, with the exceptions of One Penn Plaza and the new development on Hudson Yards Projected Development Site 33. The new development is expected to have a modern design, similar to other new buildings in the surrounding area. The range of uses proposed for the Development Transfer Site would be consistent with existing residential, hotel, and retail uses in this area. The streetscapes of Eighth Avenue and West 33rd and 34th Streets surrounding the Development Transfer Site would be expected to change in this scenario, as the development would eliminate the elevated pedestrian circulation space that currently exists on the site, would form stronger streetwalls, and would bring greater pedestrian and vehicular activity to the area,

Visual Resources

As discussed above, the appearance of the Farley Complex would be improved by the restoration program, and the building would become more visible with the addition of new entrances and the intermodal hall skylight. Views from the Development Transfer Site to the Farley Complex would change, as the intermodal hall skylight would become a new element of the complex. Views from the publicly-accessible sidewalks adjacent to the Development Transfer Site to the other surrounding visual resources—Empire State Building, One Penn Plaza, New Yorker Hotel, West Side Jewish Center, and Glad Tidings Tabernacle—would not be expected to change, but views from the former elevated pedestrian circulation space on the site would be eliminated.

STUDY AREA

SCENARIO 1

Urban Design

In Scenario 1, Phase I of the proposed project would not involve any changes to block form, street pattern or hierarchy, building arrangement, bulk, use, or type, topography, natural features, or streetscape elements within the area surrounding the Farley Complex.

The uses proposed for the Farley Complex would be consistent with existing uses in this area, including the proposed hotel and banquet facility. Although the streetscapes of Ninth and Eighth Avenues and West 31st and 33rd Streets surrounding the Farley Complex would be expected to change considerably with the proposed project, the streetscape of the remainder of the study area would not be expected to be altered by the project, except to the extent that some of the pedestrian traffic leading to the existing Penn Station would be diverted to the Farley Complex. The addition of bollards to the sidewalks around the Farley Complex would be in keeping with the existing presence of bollards around the Madison Square Garden site.

Visual Resources

From the majority of the study area, the most dramatic change to the form and design of the building—the glass and metal skylight of the new intermodal hall—would not be visible. However, views to the Farley Complex in which the skylight would be visible would be altered, as the skylight would become a new element of the complex. As described above, the skylight to be created in the Developer C proposal would not rise as high above the Farley Complex, and it would be set back from the building’s north and south façades. It would thus be less visible in views to the Farley Complex than the skylight envisioned in the proposals of Developers A and B. As shown on Figures 9-25 and 9-26, the skylight as proposed by Developer C would have limited visibility from Eighth Avenue and West 31st Street. It would also have limited visibility from Eighth Avenue and West 33rd Street. Figure 9-27 shows that a new mechanical bulkhead proposed by Developer C on the Western Annex would have limited visibility from Ninth Avenue. The new train hall skylight, similar in design to the intermodal hall skylight, to be created in the Developer C proposal, would not be visible in the immediate vicinity, as shown on Figures 9-25 and 9-26.

In views from Eighth Avenue, the modern design of the new intermodal hall skylight above the Farley Complex would be in keeping with the new building on Projected Development Site 33 behind it. As the changes to the Farley Complex would be created within an existing block form, it would not eliminate views westward along the side streets of the buildings of Weehawken, New Jersey in the far distance, or views eastward from east of Ninth Avenue to the Empire State Building or One Penn Plaza. The new, active Ninth Avenue façade of the Farley Complex would be visible through the newly-created, publicly-accessible covered pedestrian space at Projected Development Site 33.

SCENARIO 2

The discussion below focuses on the proposed effects to the urban design and visual resources of the study area from the development of the Development Transfer Site.

Urban Design

In Scenario 2, Phase I of the proposed project would not involve any changes to block form, street pattern or hierarchy, topography, natural features, or streetscape elements within the area surrounding the Farley Complex. As described above, the uses proposed for the Farley Complex and the Development Transfer Site would be consistent with existing uses in this area. The height and bulk of the proposed development on the Development Transfer Site would be consistent with One Penn Plaza and the new development on Projected Development Site 33. The streetscapes surrounding the Farley Complex and the Development Transfer Site would be expected to change considerably with the proposed project, as the development would eliminate the pedestrian circulation space that currently exists on the Development Transfer Site, would

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form stronger streetwalls at this location, and would bring greater pedestrian and vehicular activity to the area. The streetscape of the remainder of the study area would not be expected to be altered by the project. The development of the Development Transfer Site through the floor area transfer would preclude any overbuild on the Farley Complex.

Visual Resources

The view corridor of Eighth Avenue would change dramatically with the development on the Development Transfer Site. In views from Eighth Avenue, the height and modern design of the new building on the Development Transfer Site would be in keeping with One Penn Plaza, as well as the Pennmark Towers building and the new building on Projected Development Site 33, which would be visible behind the Farley Complex. The new building on the Development Transfer Site would become a notable element in views eastward to the Empire State Building and One Penn Plaza, and would eliminate views north on Eighth Avenue of a large-scale painted advertisement on a building north of West 34th Street. The new building would not eliminate eastward views of the Empire State Building along West 33rd and 34th Streets. It would, however, partially block eastward views from Ninth Avenue and farther west. Closer to Eighth Avenue, views of the Empire State Building along West 34th and 33rd Streets would open up. At Eighth Avenue and to the east, views of the Empire State Building would be largely unobstructed. The context of views to the New Yorker Hotel would change with the addition of the tall new development on the opposite corner of West 34th Street and Eighth Avenue and existing views over the Development Transfer Site from West 33rd Street would be eliminated. Long views from Ninth Avenue between West 27th through 29th Streets would now include the new building on the Development Transfer Site, as well as One Penn Plaza's tower. As the changes to the Farley Complex and the Development Transfer Site would be created within existing block forms, they would not eliminate views westward toward the West Side Jewish Center, Glad Tidings Tabernacle, or St. Michael's Catholic Church.

F. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION: 2015

Under Scenario 1, utilization of the Farley Complex's unused development rights for Phase II of the proposed project would occur by 2015 or at some point thereafter. To be conservative, this analysis considers the future conditions of the project site and study area with and without the proposed actions in 2025, by which time all the development that was projected to occur and analyzed in the Hudson Yards FGEIS could be in place.

PROJECT SITE

No further changes are expected to the Farley Complex or the Development Transfer Site by 2015 in the Future Without the Proposed Action.

STUDY AREA

URBAN DESIGN

In the Hudson Yards FGEIS, one site in Subdistrict C—Projected Development Site 43—was identified as likely for development after 2010 pursuant to the rezoning of West 34th Street. Located at the northeast corner of Ninth Avenue and West 34th Street, this new development would comprise office space with ground-floor retail. The development of Projected Development Site 43 would further enhance the mix of land uses—office, retail, residential,

institutional, and transportation—in Subdistrict C and would increase the density of development along this portion of Ninth Avenue.

Within Subdistrict B, Projected Development Site 32—located at the southwest corner of Ninth Avenue and West 33rd Streets—was to be developed by 2025 with 1 million square feet of commercial and residential use with ground-floor retail, as well as a publicly-accessible plaza of approximately 11,280 square feet (see Figure 9-20, above). Also in Subdistrict B, the Westyard Distribution Center building—also known as Projected Development Site 31—would be renovated to permit development of a mixed-use tower with retail and residential uses. Together, the new commercial towers at Projected Development Sites 32 and 33 and the Westyard Distribution Center building would completely cover the open, below-grade rail connection to Penn Station, greatly reducing the presence of transportation uses in Subdistrict B. By 2025, commercial uses would dominate Subdistrict B, and there would be expanded residential, retail, and entertainment uses. The new towers at Projected Development Sites 32 and 33 would be dramatically taller than other buildings in the study area, with the exception of One Penn Plaza.

Due to its site on a large superblock, the new development at Projected Development Site 32 would take the form either of a medium- to high-density building with a large floorplate or a tall tower with a somewhat smaller floorplate. The proposed buildings would range between approximately 600 and 800 feet in height and would create a dense hub of commercial uses. Building arrangements would be regular with respect to blocks. The publicly accessible covered pedestrian space at Projected Development Site 33, to be developed by 2010, would provide connections to the new intermodal rail station in the Farley Complex, commercial development on Caemmerer Yard to the west, and the new publicly-accessible plaza on Projected Development Site 32.

As described in the Hudson Yards FGEIS, sidewalk widening around Madison Square Garden and the west side of Ninth Avenue would be required in the Future Without the Proposed Action. An addition of 10 feet would be required along the east side of Eighth Avenue between West 31st and 33rd Streets, and five feet would be required along the west side of Ninth Avenue between West 31st and 33rd Streets, West 31st and 33rd Streets east of Eighth Avenue to 2 Penn Plaza, and west of Ninth Avenue to the new publicly-accessible through-block connection. These sidewalk widenings would enhance the pedestrian experience along these streets, and would help accommodate the increased numbers of pedestrians expected to utilize these streets because of the new Hudson Yards developments and the redevelopment of the Farley Complex.

The rezoning of the south side of West 31st Street, opposite the Farley Complex, would result in the development of Projected Development Site 44 for new residential and retail uses. This development would be approximately 120 feet in height, roughly comparable to the historic Farley Complex across the street, and its use and height would be comparable to other buildings along this block.

VISUAL RESOURCES

In the Future Without the Proposed Action by 2015, important views to the Empire State Building along the West 34th Street corridor would be maintained, but some other, limited views of the Empire State Building and One Penn Plaza from inside the study area would be eliminated or reduced. West 34th Street also serves as a strong visual corridor to the Hudson River, and would remain as a major view corridor and be enhanced with required sidewalk widenings and street tree plantings. The combination of new open spaces and landscaping, new buildings, and pedestrian amenities would give the area a vibrant identity and character.

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Sidewalk widenings would allow for more expansive views on the affected streets, including views to the Farley Complex. Most views west from Ninth Avenue to the Westside Distribution Center building would be eliminated. Eastward views to the Farley Complex and beyond from West 31st and 33rd Streets west of Ninth Avenue would be more limited because of the new, high-rise developments on Projected Development Sites 32 and 33. These views, however, are generally limited in existing conditions by the Westyard Distribution Center building and other intervening structures. Views to St. Michael's Catholic Church from Ninth Avenue and West 33rd Street would be further constrained by the new development on these sites, as well as by the new development on Projected Development Site 43. Views south on Ninth Avenue from north of West 37th Street and views east along West 34th Street also would be altered by other new development that would occur along these streets. The new development along Ninth Avenue, as well as the Farley Complex, would be visible from the publicly-accessible plaza on Projected Development Site 32 and the publicly-accessible covered pedestrian space on the west side of Ninth Avenue at Projected Development Site 33.

G. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION: 2015

In the Future With the Proposed Action in 2015, there is only one development scenario for the proposed project: the construction of a commercial overbuild on the Western Annex.

PROJECT SITE

SCENARIO 1

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the utilization of the Farley Complex's unused development rights under Scenario 1 is assumed to result in the development of a new commercial overbuild of approximately 1 million zoning square feet by 2015. Constructed above the Western Annex, this overbuild would be in addition to the Phase I redevelopment described above. The Developer A and Developer B proposals for Phase II differ in design, but both would construct the building over the north side of the Western Annex (see Figures 9-28 and 9-29). There would be no changes to the Development Transfer Site by 2015, which would continue to be occupied by the one-story retail buildings and public open space.

Urban Design

The proposed development of the Phase II overbuild would not involve any changes to block form, street pattern or hierarchy, topography, or natural features within the Farley Complex site. However, the bulk of the Farley Complex would be considerably altered with the addition of an overbuild atop the Western Annex. The type of building on the project site would also undergo a dramatic change, from a 120-foot-tall historic, masonry community facility building to a mixed-use development with a historic masonry base and an overbuild that could be of a modern design and materials, such as glass. The office uses proposed for the Farley Complex would be substantially the same as those that would occupy the complex in 2015 in the Future Without the Proposed Action (office, retail, and USPS). In addition, these uses would be consistent with existing uses in the surrounding area, particularly in 2025, by which time a considerable number of new commercial and residential buildings would have been developed in the immediately adjacent area. The streetscapes of the Ninth Avenue and West 31st and 33rd Streets surrounding the Farley Complex also would be expected to change dramatically with the overbuild development, as a large number of office workers and visitors would be expected to utilize these

streets to access the new tower. This heightened activity would be particularly noticeable on West 33rd Street, where a new entrance to the office building would be located.

Visual Resources

Under Scenario 1, the Phase II portion of the proposed project would involve further considerable alterations to the Farley Complex, an important visual resource. The appearance of the Western Annex would change with the construction of the proposed office overbuild. This portion of the Farley Complex would become a base for the overbuild, which would become the focal point of this portion of the complex; however, through the choice of materials and style, and by setting the overbuild well back from the edges of the Western Annex, the proposed project could create a composition in which each component is clearly different from the other, allowing each to retain its individual identity and essential character. The expected use of glass and metal for the overbuild would serve to highlight and differentiate the modern addition from the historic masonry base. However, it is also possible that a portion of the West 33rd Street façade of the Western Annex could be concealed by a glass curtain wall for the overbuild, in which case, views of this portion of the façade would be lost and the differentiation of the historic masonry building from the modern tower above would be less clear.

STUDY AREA

SCENARIO 1

Urban Design

The proposed overbuild development would not involve any changes to block form, street pattern or hierarchy, topography, natural features, or building arrangement, bulk, use, or type within the study area. The streetscapes of the study area would not be expected to be altered by the overbuild development, except to the extent that they may experience additional pedestrian and vehicular traffic leading to the new office building.

Together with the new commercial towers at Hudson Yards Projected Development Sites 32 and 33 and the redevelopment of the Westyard Distribution Center building, as well as new residential developments as Hudson Yards Projected Development Sites 30, 43, and 44, the overbuild development would continue the trend toward expanding residential, commercial, and retail uses within Hudson Yards Subdistricts B and C. The new overbuild above the Western Annex would be mostly consistent with the type and form of the new towers at Projected Development Sites 32 and 33. The publicly-accessible covered pedestrian space at Projected Development Site 33, to be developed by 2010, would provide connections and views to the new overbuild at the Farley Complex. The required sidewalk widenings on the blocks in the study area would help accommodate the increased numbers of pedestrians expected to utilize these streets because of the new office and retail development at the Farley Complex.

Visual Resources

As described above, the proposed overbuild development would involve further considerable alterations to the Farley Complex, an important visual resource. The overbuild would change the architectural integrity of the Farley Complex, which is a free-standing, 120-foot masonry building. Under Scenario 1, the Western Annex would become a base for the new overbuild, which would become the focal point of this portion of the complex. However, through the choice of materials and style, and by setting the overbuild well back from the edges of the Western Annex, the proposed

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project could create a composition in which each component is clearly different from the other, allowing each to retain its individual identity and essential character. However, it is also possible that a portion of the West 33rd Street façade of the Western Annex could be concealed by a glass curtain wall for the overbuild, in which case, views of this portion of the façade would be lost and the differentiation of the historic masonry building from the modern structure above would be less clear. As described above and in Chapter 8, “Historic Resources,” Developer C proposes transferring the Farley Complex’s unused development rights across Eighth Avenue to the Development Transfer Site to preserve the architectural integrity of the Farley Complex. Developer C would not construct an overbuild, thus maintaining the form and height of the visual resource.

In views from Eighth Avenue, the expected modern design of the new overbuild would be congruent with the new buildings on Hudson Yards Projected Development Sites 32 and 33 across Ninth Avenue, forming a contrasting backdrop to the historic masonry structures of the Farley Complex. From the majority of the study area, views of the Farley Complex would be mainly of the overbuild alone as part of the new skyline of Ninth Avenue, and the juxtaposition of the historic masonry base and the tall, modern structure would not be disruptive. The glass and metal skylight above the intermodal hall would become less visible behind the new overbuild in immediately-adjacent views from Ninth Avenue, the publicly-accessible plaza on Hudson Yards Projected Development Site 32, and the publicly-accessible covered pedestrian space at Hudson Yards Projected Development Site 33. However, as discussed above, the skylight to be created in the Developer C proposal would not rise as high above the Farley Complex, and thus would be less visible in views to the Farley Complex than the skylight envisioned in the proposals of Developers A and B.

The view corridor of Ninth Avenue would further change with the addition of another tall, modern development. As the changes to the Farley Complex would be created within an existing block form, they would not eliminate views westward along the side streets of the buildings of Weehawken, New Jersey in the far distance, or views eastward from east of Ninth Avenue to the Empire State Building or One Penn Plaza, though these views would no longer include views through the air space above the Farley Complex. Otherwise, views to the other visual resources within the study area would be the same as they are in the Future Without the Proposed Action (2015). *