Vertical Contagion,
The Future of New York's Urban Density

Chris Brown, FA2020

Vertical Contagion
Chris Brown

Manhattanism is the one urbanistic ideology that has fed, from its conception, on the splendors and miseries of the metropolitan condition - hyperdensity - without once losing faith in it as the basis for a desirable modern culture. Manhattan's architecture is a paradigm for the exploitation of congestion.

-Rem Koolhaus, *Delirious New York*

Table of Contents

Covid-19 has created a second White Flight from New York City. A massive amount of vacant office and residential space creates not only a loss for owners and developers, but a loss for the city. Office and residential building has perpetuated the forces of privatization, especially since the 1960's, and the city has relied on corporate money and gentrification to further its urbanization. New York is experiencing an unprecedented shift in density; the world is suffering the effects of a pandemic that will continue to impact us for years to come. Often, you hear people expressing their urge to "return to normal" But why return to normal when there is an opportunity for a bigger and brighter future? Why return to a city built on privatization and self-isolation when there is an opportunity to develop a remarkable, equitable and empathic city for the future?

There are three specific locations for deployment. The existing office tower, the existing residential tower and new construction. Existing buildings have an increase in vacancy, especially office towers built in the 1960's and 1970's. This creates a moment of opportunity in the city for thinking. Instead of lowering rental agreements to draw back corporate America, we should retrofit office towers with multiple programs to reinvigorate the city, and provide multiple housing typologies, public program, and office spaces. The combination of these programs have existed in mixed use buildings in New York City. However, the stacking of programs has been normalized. If programs are mixed both sectionally and in plan it provides an opportunity to develop new forms of habitation.

It is of uppermost importance to select sites specifically. The re-appropriation of space in Manhattan is a delicate and particular task. Rafi Segal and Stan Allen's "Block/Tower" shows the application of such a process. However, it is unspecified and unresponsive to its surroundings. Each site must be specifically assessed and studied. It must understand the complex situation that the existing condition finds itself in. Every skyscraper is designed to push against the ground. It similarly pushes against its community. The goal is to develop a rich and complex integration with both the community and the city. Physically, aesthetically and socially it should connect, not separate.

The goal is not to develop a building. The goal is to develop a new city. The project shall develop a new way of thinking, a new way of believing; hope. It exists at the culmination of years of architects obsession with the city of New York. The intersection of Delirious New York, Supreme City and the future of the world.

Project Proposal

The Context

We in New York celebrate the black

mass of Materialism

We are concrete

We have a body

We have sex
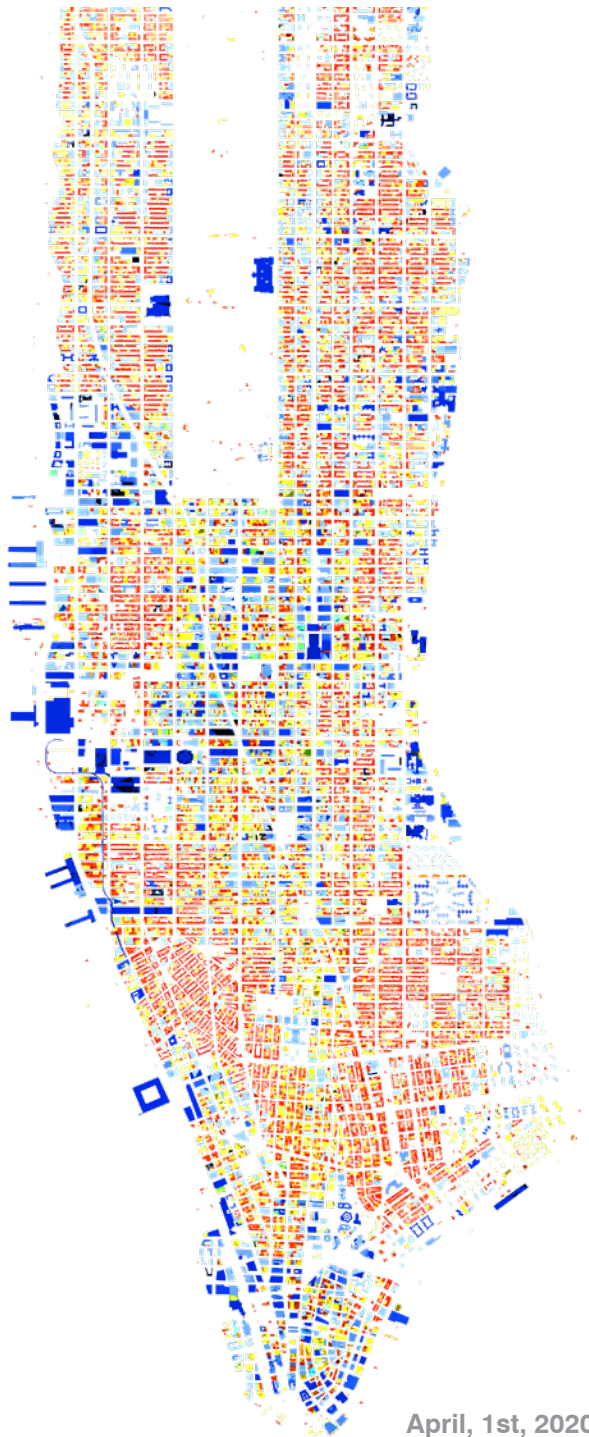
We are male to the core

We divinize matter, energy, motion,

change.

Benjamin de Casseres, *Mirrors of New York*
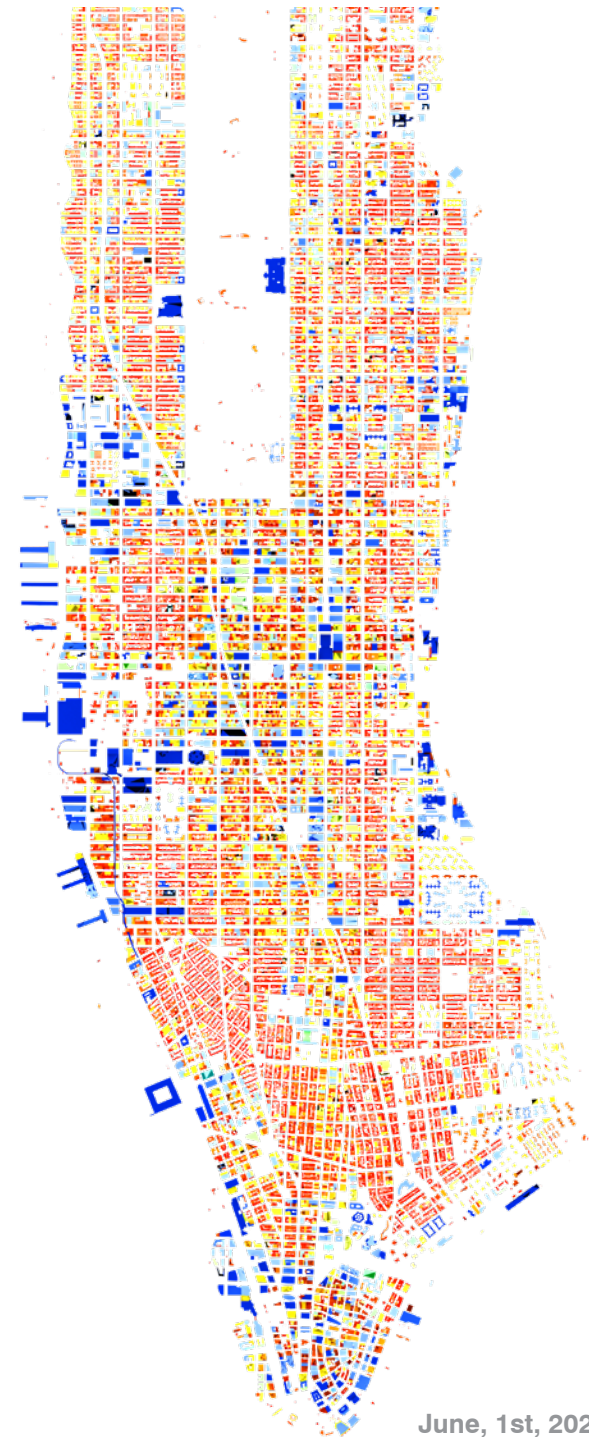Quoted in Michael Sorkin, Skyscrapers from A to Z,
Rem Koolhaas, Delirious New York

Vertical Contagion, The Future of New York's Urban Density

Context: The Second White Flight
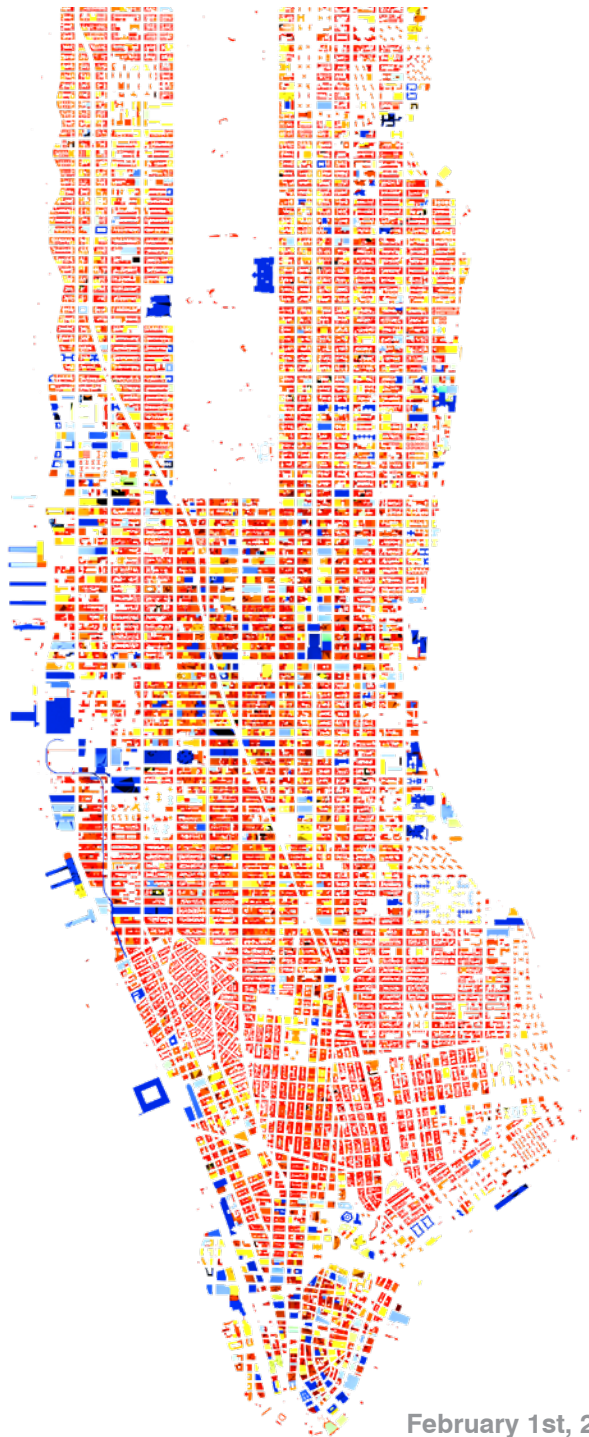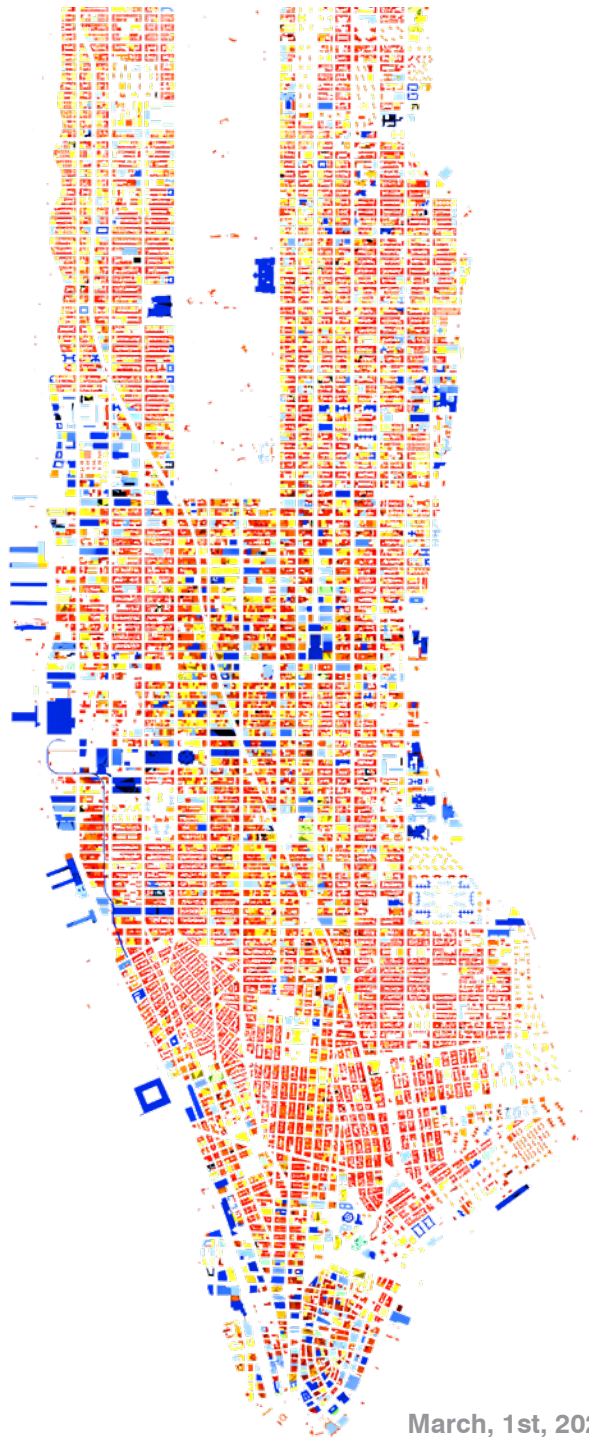
February 1st, 2020

March, 1st, 2020

April, 1st, 2020

June, 1st, 2020

Vertical Contagion, The Future of New York's Urban Density
Covid-19 and The Second White Flight

Density Analysis:

February 1st, 2020

Data Source:

New York City Department of Health. "Nychealth/Coronavirus-Data."

GitHub. NYC-DOH, October 11, 2020.

https://github.com/nychealth/coronavirus-data.

Specialty Buildings

Large Scale buildings with many vacancies

Medium Scale buildings with some vacancies

Small Scale buildings with fewer vacancies

Vertical Contagion, The Future of New York's Urban Density

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GitHub. NYC-DOH, October 11, 2020.

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Vertical Contagion, The Future of New York's Urban Density
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Density Analysis:

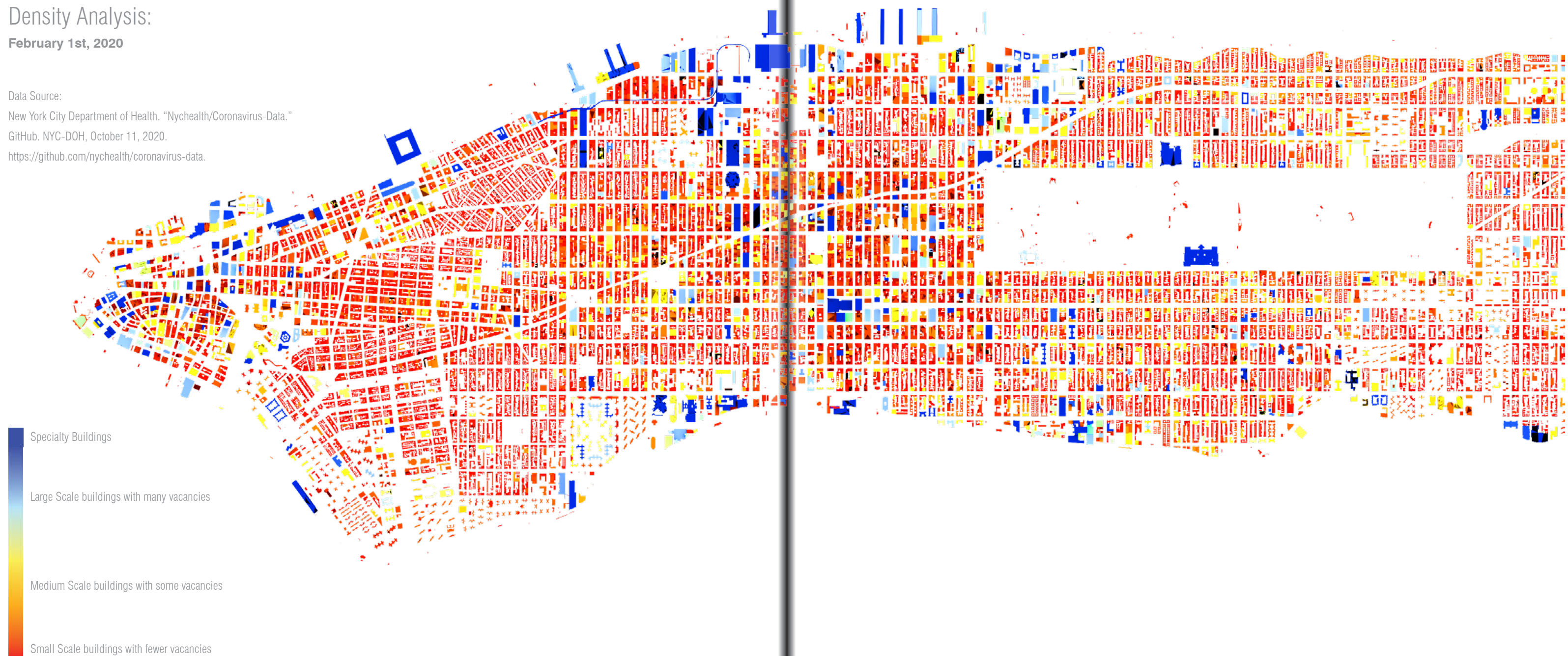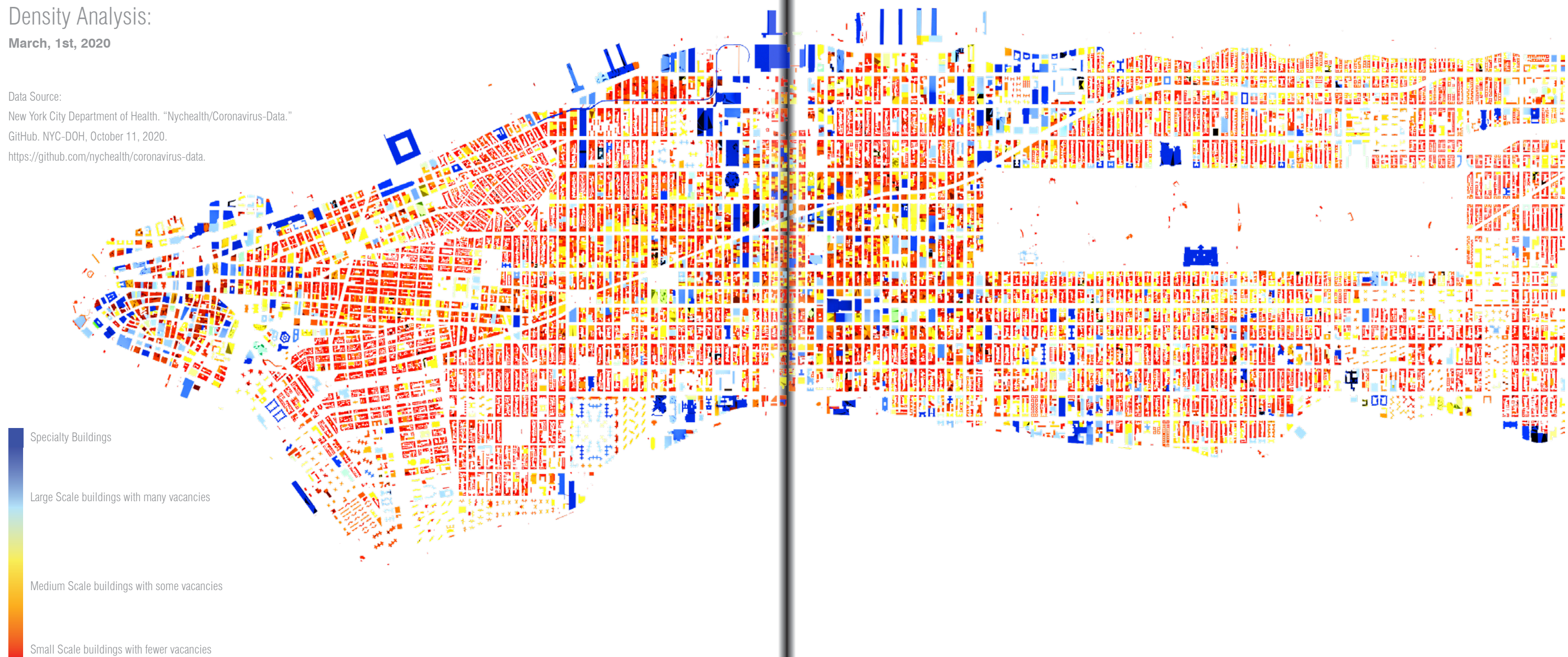**April 1st, 2020**

Data Source:

New York City Department of Health. "Nychealth/Coronavirus-Data."

GitHub. NYC-DOH, October 11, 2020.

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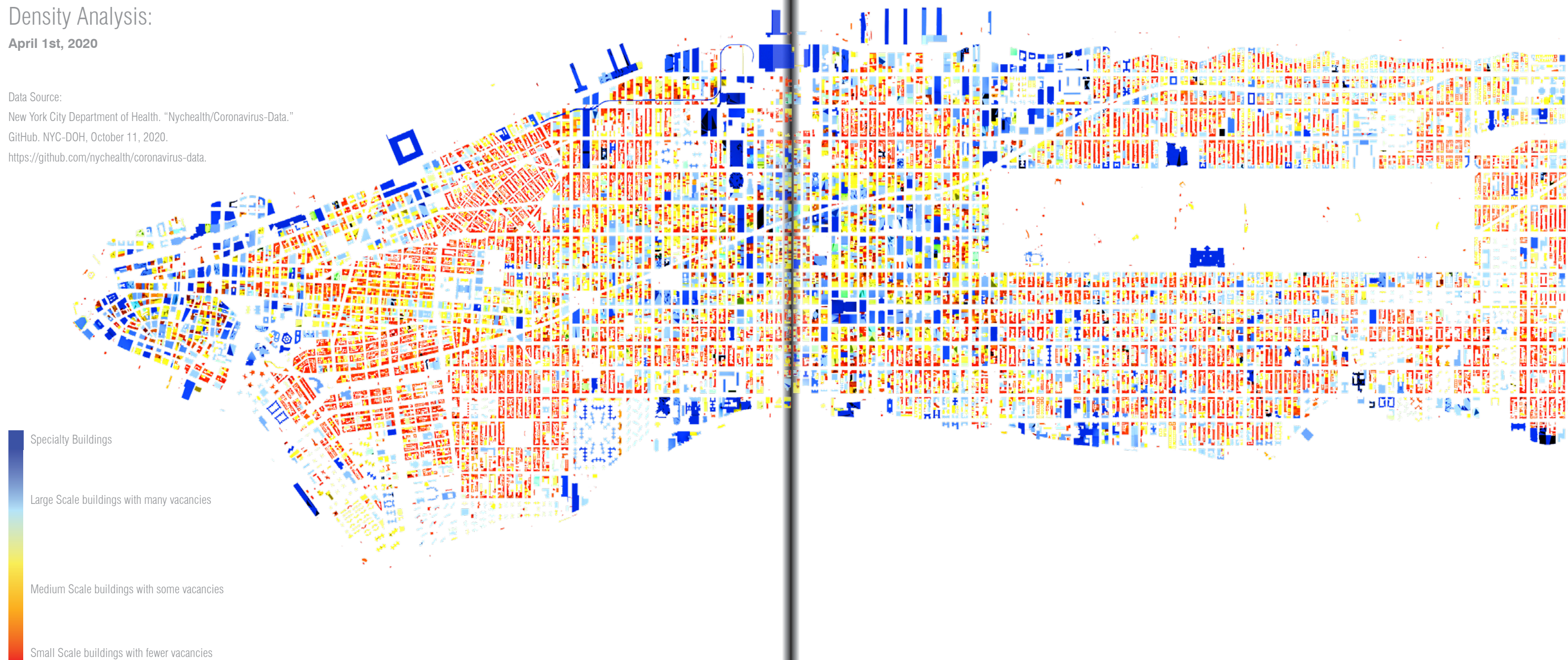
Covid-19 and The Second White Flight

Density Analysis:

June, 1st, 2020

Data Source:

New York City Department of Health. "Nychealth/Coronavirus-Data."

GitHub. NYC-DOH, October 11, 2020.

https://github.com/nychealth/coronavirus-data.

Specialty Buildings

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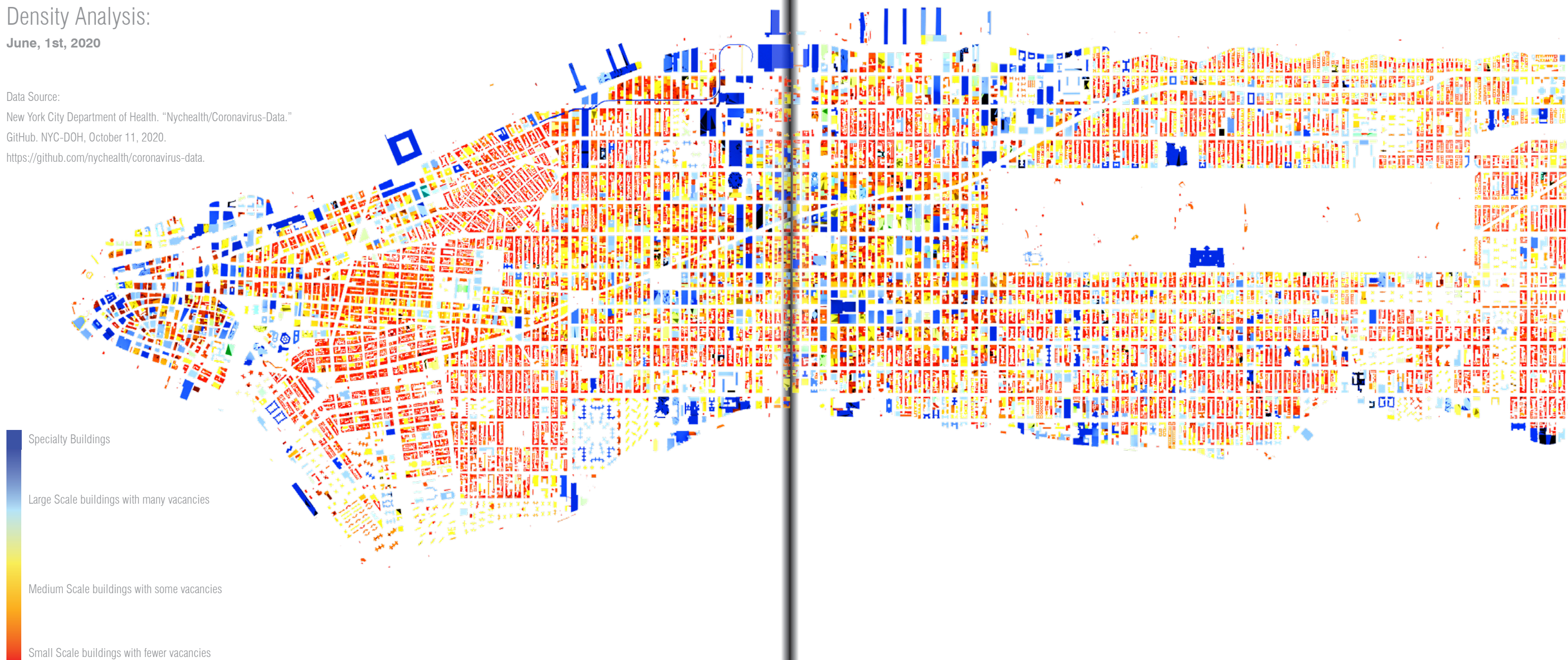
Context

With vacancy at a new high in Manhattan we are at a point of contingency. We can look both forward and backward to inspire our reaction to develop a future.

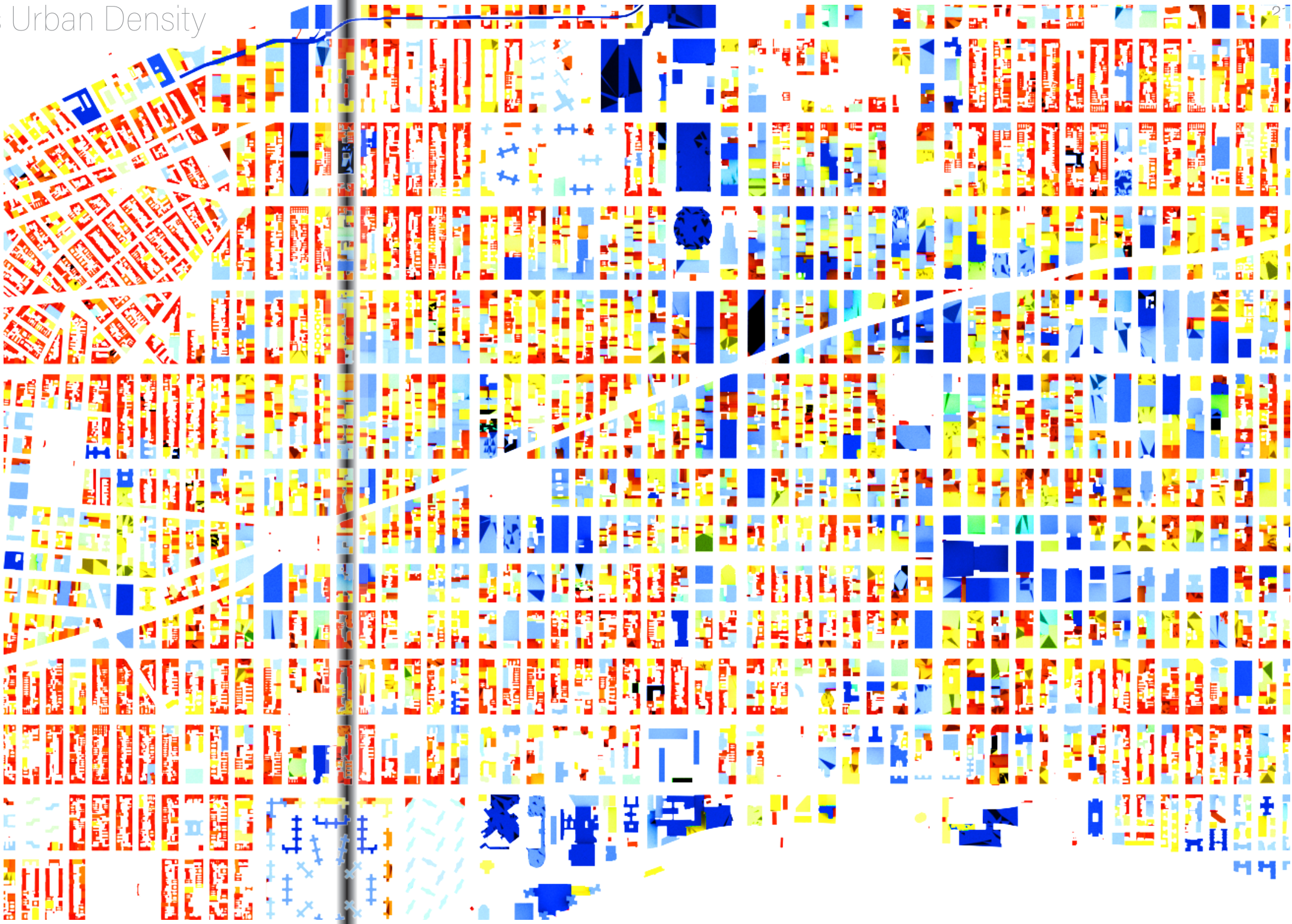Context Statement

Manhattan's grid comes from the ever ephemeral and lofty goal of rationalizing and organizing nature. An imaginary order and logic developed into reality and defined the rational we have for so long accepted. A simple answer in an attempt to create a simple, sellable, Manhattan. Since, we have built within these boundaries, vertical towers have seldom failed to resist the eternal pull of nature. They exist, shuttered from the outside, in their rationale of isolation and autonomy. Thus, they have only perpetuated a culture of privatization and ownership. Since the inception of skyscrapers, they existed to epitomize the idea of New York. As Louis Sullivan says, "What is the chief characteristic of the tall office building? It is lofty. It must be tall. The force and power of altitude must be in it, the glory and pride of exaltation must be in it. It must be every inch a proud and soaring thing, rising in sheer exaltation that from bottom to top it is a unit without a single dissenting line." The Skyscraper boom created these towers of prideful acceptance. These towers became the epitome of metropolitan corporate, nine-to-five life, a life for too long we have accepted. For many years these skyscrapers existed as a place traveled to, worked in, and then left. The only time enough capital was created to construct such an edifice was for work. Today, we develop massive amounts of vertical real estate; constructed by the lowest bidder to be sold at top dollar. Be it office, housing, or a mixture of programs, we develop.

The Novel Coronavirus has been a massive cost to the city. It has taken from this city more than we will ever have the opportunity to return. Failure in leadership, camaraderie and understanding created a wound New York will take years to mend. This impact has shown the city who the real New Yorkers are.
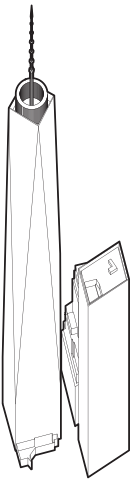
The extraordinarily rich, often majority white members of New York City have fled to summer homes and idyllic countrysides. Leaving their sprawling multi million dollar apartments vacant. Private investments dropping out of new developments due to the lack of interest and clientele. Corporate America has shown its fickle nature in the face of adversity; revealing its need to evolve. Many companies laying off massive numbers of staff and shifting to an all online work flow. Many corporate proletariats do not have the infrastructure needed to work efficiently from home. We have accepted the continued downsizing of New York apartments, they are not prepared for a work integrated lifestyle.

We have the opportunity to heal, to create a new and idealistic New York. One that panders to its local clientele. One that slowly and progressively creates a city that becomes idealized. The ephemeral and radical idea can once again become liquidatable reality. These buildings can become subservient to their occupants. This time, creating assets to be developed by the people, not to be developed for the people.
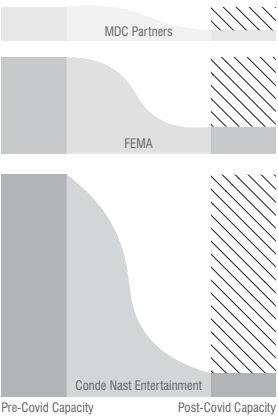
Context

Many high-rise buildings in the city have dramatically reduced their capacity. These major buildings have many cornerstone tenants that have also had to either lay off or reduce their company size. This has created a massive influx of open space in these buildings.

One World Trade Center

One World Trade Center

MDC Partners

FEMA

Conde Nast Entertainment

Pre-Covid Capacity   Post-Covid Capacity

MetLife Building

MetLife Building

Barclays Investments

Dreyfus Corp.

Metropolitan Life Ins.

Pre-Covid Capacity   Post-Covid Capacity
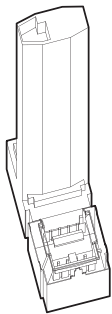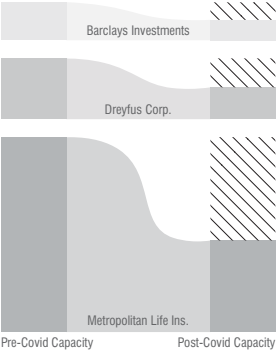
Empire State Building

Empire State Building

0787.HK

Shutterstock

LinkedIn

Pre-Covid Capacity   Post-Covid Capacity
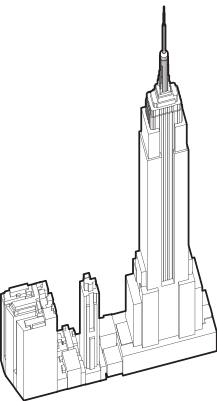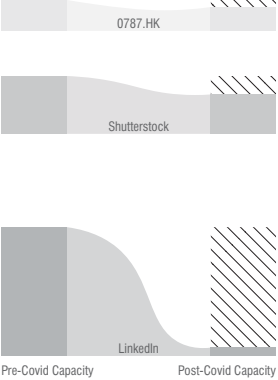
Bank of America Tower

Bank of America Tower

HBK Investments

The Durst Org.

Bank of America

Pre-Covid Capacity   Post-Covid Capacity

Third Places in the City
Impromptu meeting and working

Local Community Hubs
Short Commute, Local Services

Work From Home
Reduced Travel

Core Office Urban Hub
Key Meetings, Collaboration, Innovation
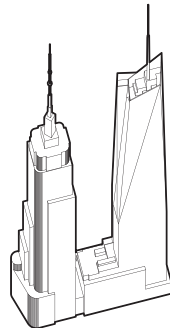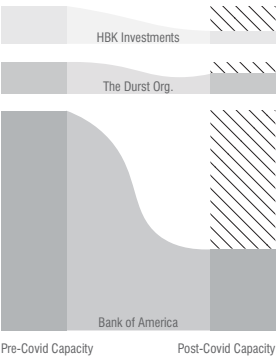
The Future of Work

The future of the office space has everyone dreaming the future possibilities. Corporations often propose new lifestyles; separating the office and work life into multiple different locations.

Work At Home
Develop a Vertical Neighbourhood

Third Places in the City
Impromptu Meeting and Working

Redeveloped Office

Work From Home
Reduced Travel
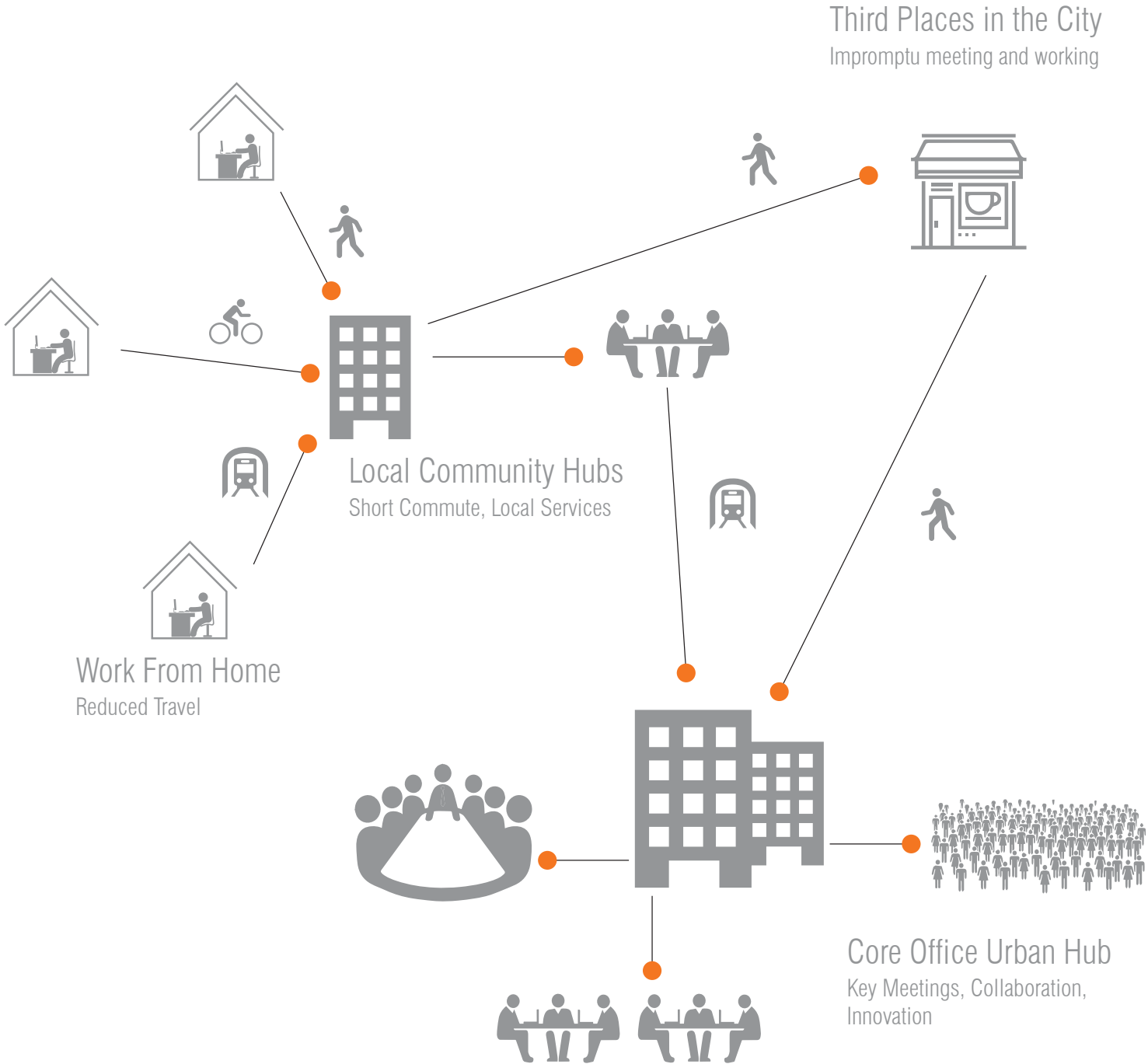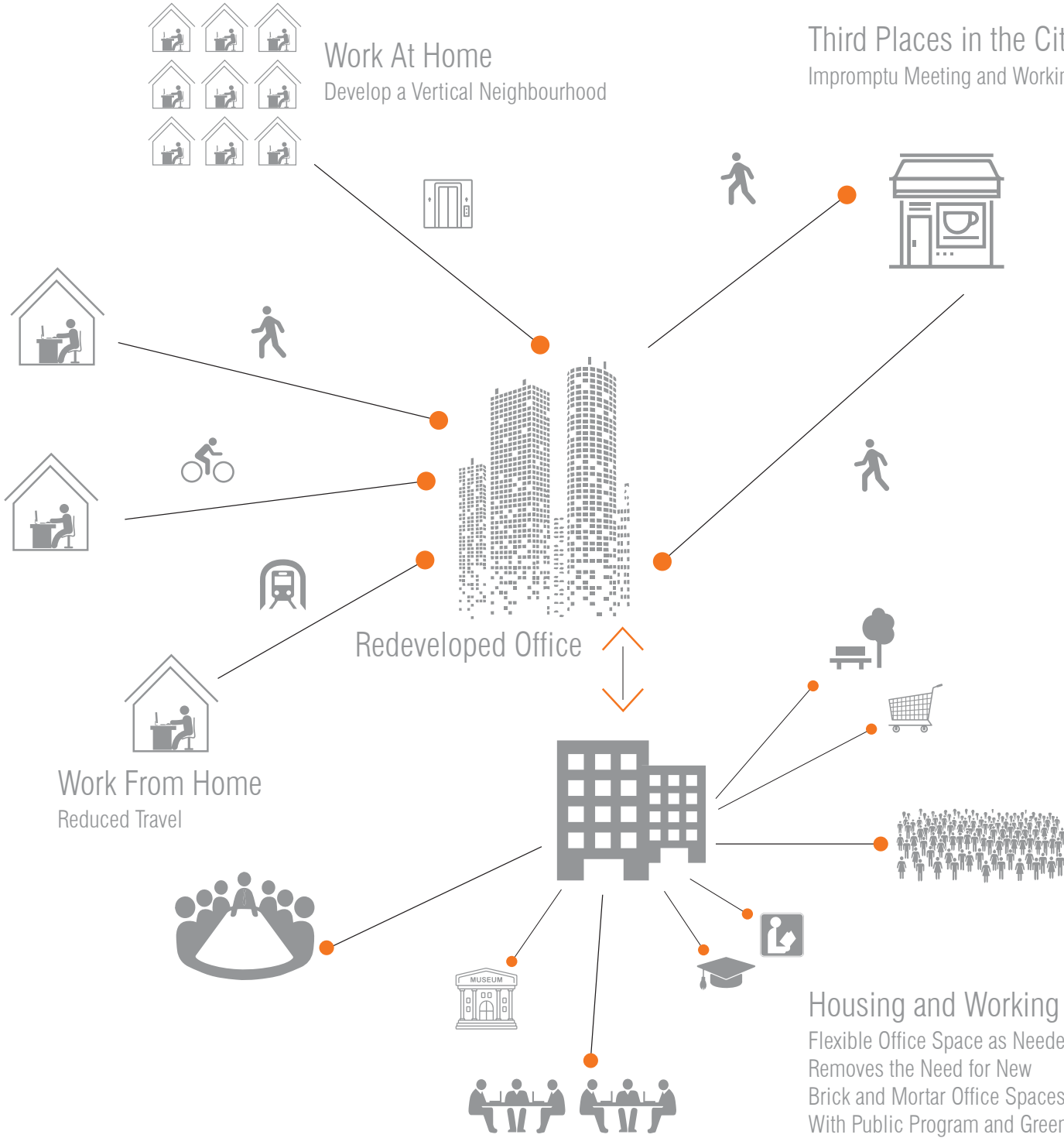
The Future of Work

With the redevelopment of existing office buildings with new combined programs, come new opportunities for vertical neighbourhoods and lifestyles; never before experienced.

Housing and Working

Flexible Office Space as Needed
Removes the Need for New
Brick and Mortar Office Spaces
With Public Program and Green space

MUSEUM

Vertical Contagion, The Future of New York's Urban Density

Historical Precedent

One Chase Plaza

At the time, One Chase Manhattan Plaza (now known as 28 Liberty Street) Was erected in the 1960's to prevent the corporate exodus from Manhattan.

The sudden glut of office space in New York and the softening of the labor market are causing second thoughts among many top executives who have considered or actually gone ahead with moving their companies out of the city.

Karen Gerard, economic consultant on urban affairs for the Chase Manhattan Bank, cited changes in the labor and real-estate markets as "putting in perspective" such "emotional things" as the general plight of the city and the specific malaise of the executive sick of commuting on the Penn Central.
-The New York Times Jan 10, 1971

What if the goal was to invite New York back to New York? Not just Corporate America.

Historical Precedent : Site Analysis

One Chase Manhattan Plaza

Stacking
Floor
Plates

Elevator
and Stair
Cores

Event Space
Vacant Floor
Leased Floor

FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY
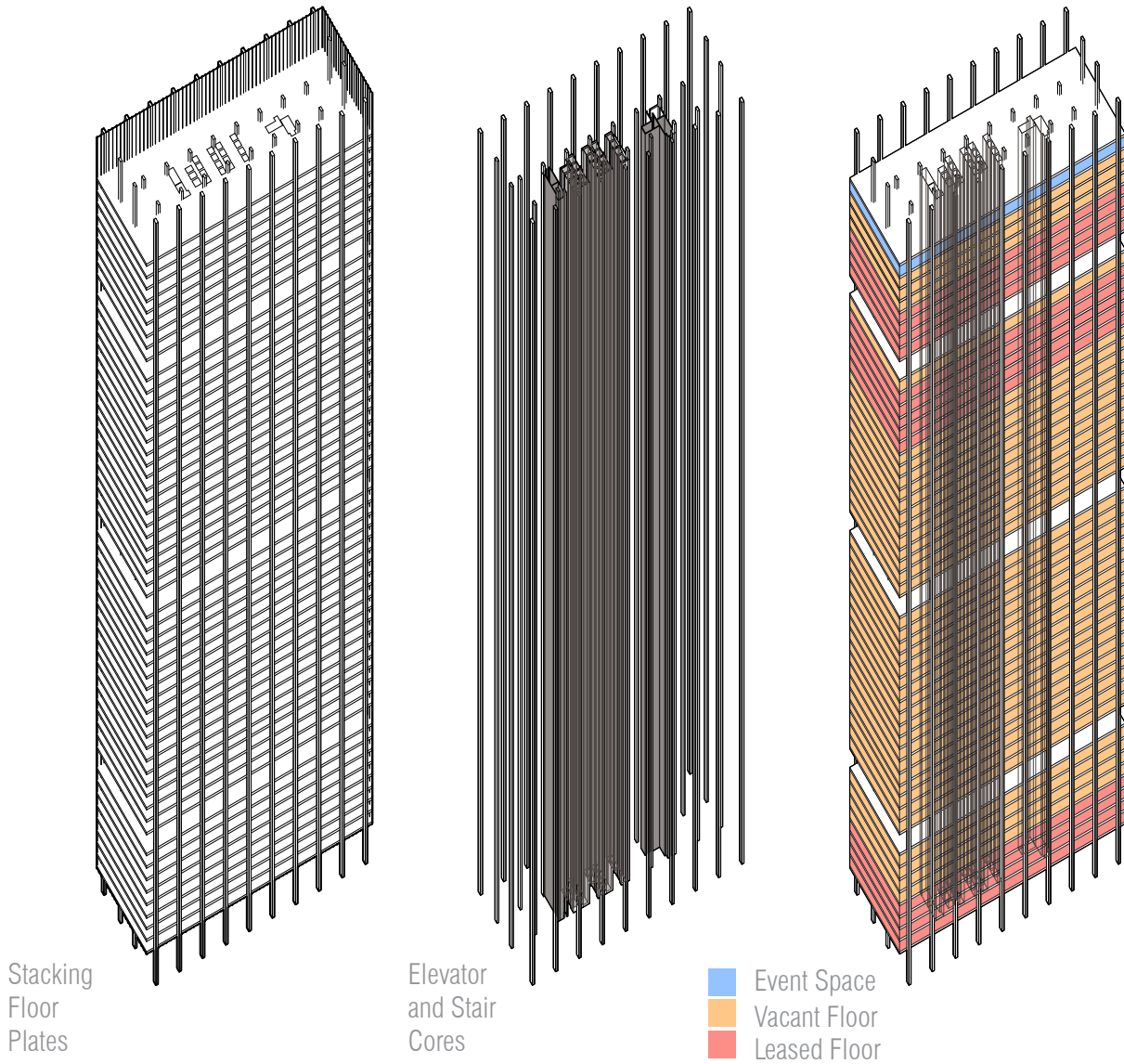
Developmental Problem

625 Fulton St.

Rabsky Development proposed seeking the expansion of the footprint of this building by FAR grabbing. However, the major issue here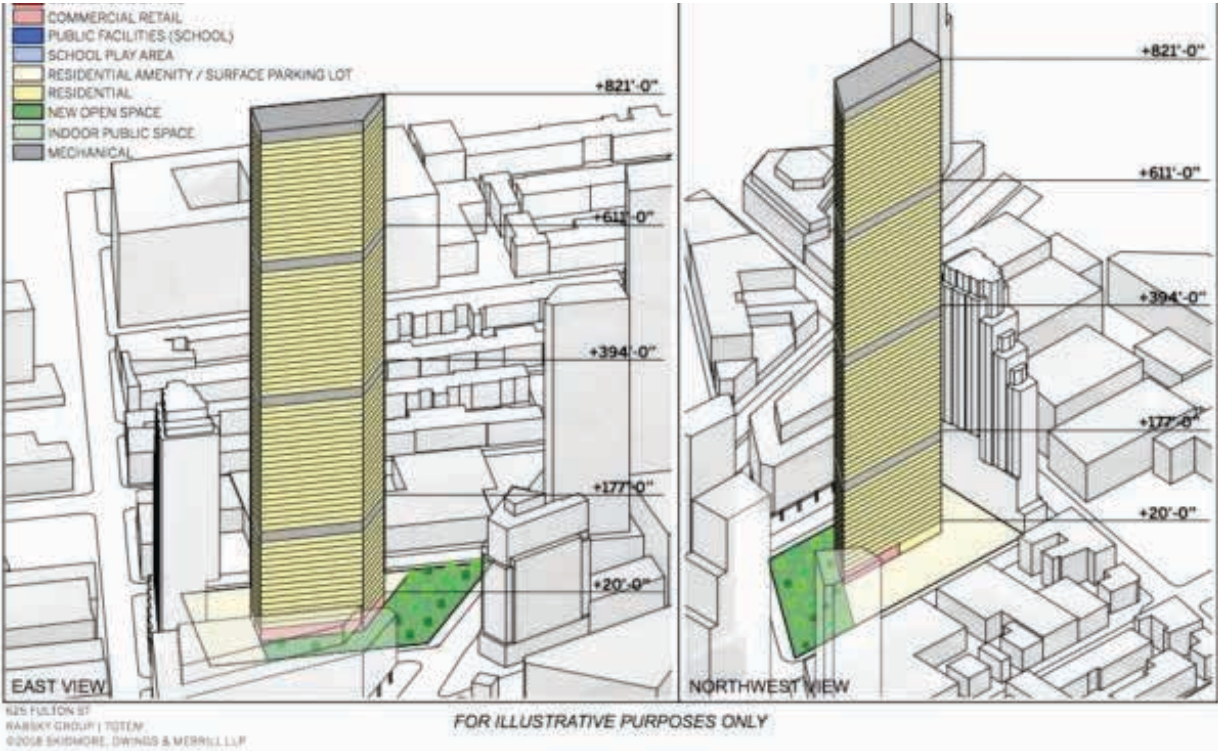 is its intersection of greed and grid. When the developer went to Community Board 2, they proposed two options. A high rise according to current zoning (above) and one to a proposed doubling of square footage. (below) The developer hired attorney David Karnovsky, former general counsel to the Department of City Planning. If this building was completed, it would have generated value worth more than the 250 Million or more spent on the lot. The rezoning also cuts the price per build-able square foot down from $400 down to about $152 by having the public provided subsidies.
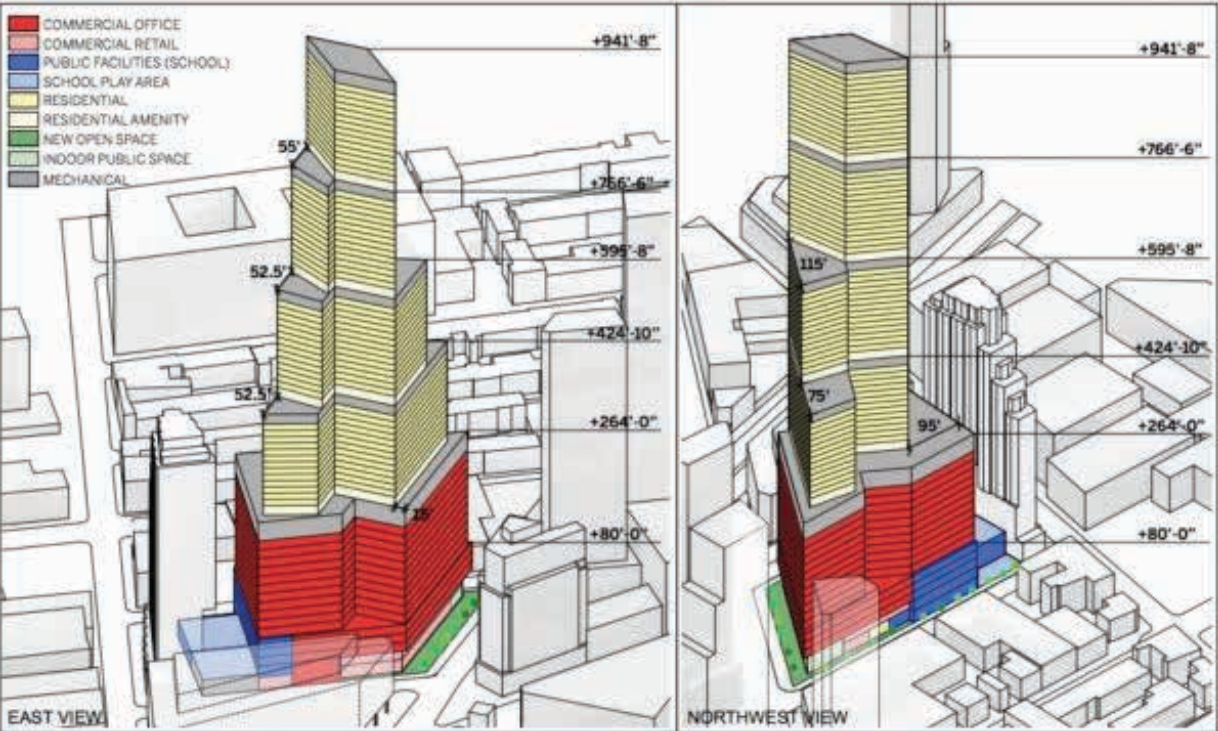
Supertall Problem

9 Dekalb Ave.

Before the 2000's imagine the incredible difference of downtown Brooklyn. The paragon of 21st century gentrification, acts as inspiration for the progressive privatization of New York. The Supertall that is 9 Dekalb is another ultra high value residential building that will be one of the tallest buildings in New York City. However, similar to many other projects a significant amount of the building we be vacant when it opens; at this rate it could be that way for years to come. Credit: JDS Development

Demolition Problem

270 Park Ave. JP Morgan Chase Demolition

Formerly the Union Carbide Building was
bought out by JPMorgan Chase Bank.
The building, originally designed by SOM
has been approved to be destroyed and
replaced by a new headquarters for JP
Morgan Chase. A complex demolition
process will take place over months of slowly
and carefully lowering the building and
replacing it with a new structure.

We are throwing away the embedded carbon
energy and the work that was originally put
into this tower. Credit: JP Morgan Chase Co.
GCS

The Methodology

Future urbanisms need to work from a nuanced ecological understanding, in which the intricate interrelatedness of the urban realm is given full scope to operate. A city is only sustainable if it can support a vital social ecology. Buildings can no longer afford to be detached from their context, but must instead be linked back into the many and competing social, economic and natural ecologies of the city.

-Stan Allen and Rafi Segal, *Block - Tower*

Precedent: Block/Tower

Rafi Segal and Stan Allen

This project proposes the re-appropriation of an office tower at the brink of its lifespan. Constructed during the 60's during a time of abundance, they are beginning to reach the end of their productive life. By maintaining its heightened floor plates and elevator cores, housing and mixed use programs give new life to the building.

Precedent: Block/Tower

Rafi Segal and Stan Allen

The building is given a new facade to replace the under-preforming dated facade. Floor plates are maintained to their maximum efficacy. Multiple programs are added in an interlocking fashion, denying the traditional stacked program. The green core provides a slowly climbing public and open space throughout the entire building.
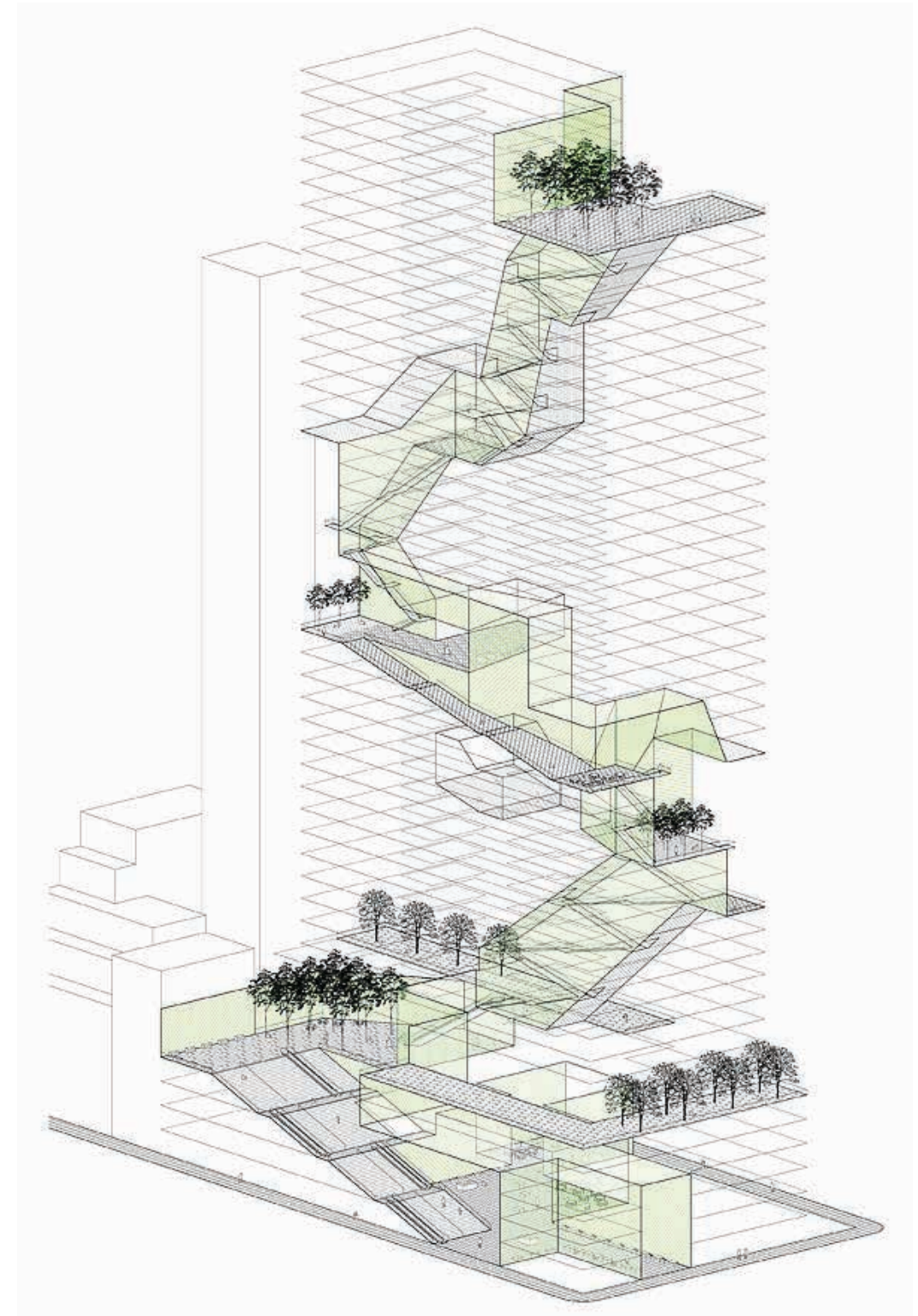
Precedent: Block/Tower

Rafi Segal and Stan Allen

The building is given a new facade to replace the under-preforming dated facade. Floor plates are maintained to their maximum efficacy. This maintains the embodied carbon within the building. It is a more ethical way to build high-rises. Specifically, when the overwhelming majority of these building types in Manhattan contain empty floors. This Re-use allows the continued use of the embodied carbon in the building, while reducing the operational carbon.
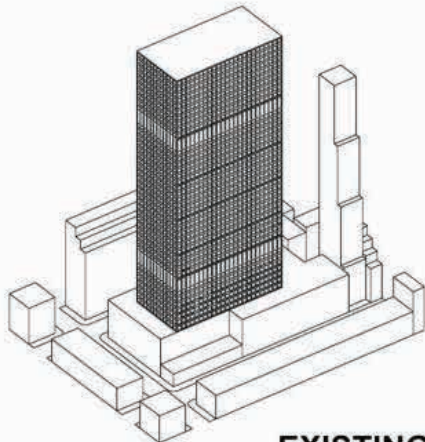
EXISTING BUILDING
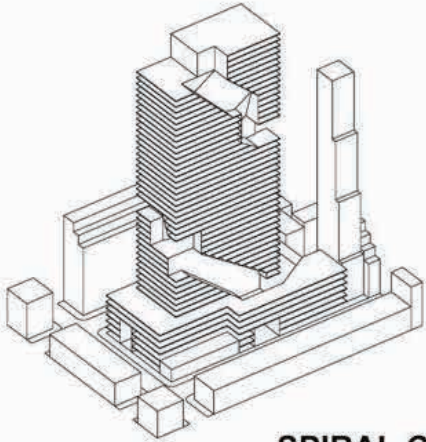
SPIRAL CUT-OUT
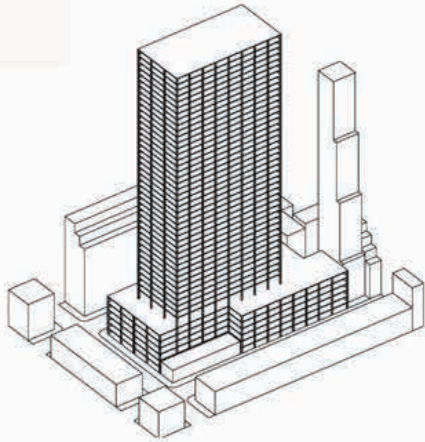
STRUCTURE + CORE

PROGRAM DISTRIBUTIO

The Urban Future

It is predicted that atleast 70% of
of the world's population will live
in cities by 2050,
up from the current 55%

**The Role
of Buildings**

Cities cover 2%
of the world's
land area.

However, they account
for 70% of the
greenhouse gas
emissions.

30% of those
being generated by
buildings.

But that could change
Compared to traditional
construction, green
buildings in the U.S.
can reduce CO2
emissions by at least
34%.

The Economy

Though initial construction costs will be higher,
the operational costs and energy use provide
a larger long term return on the investment.

The Environment

Efficient green buildings consume
much less energy, save water, decreate emissions
and generate less waste.

-20%

Maintenance costs.

+17%

Higher Occupancy

-25%

Reduced Energy Consumption

-11%

Water Usage

Billions of $USD

2005   2020   2035

Green Construction Spending in the U.S.

7
New York

20
D.C.

29
U.S. City Avg.

CO2 Emissions in Tons per Capita

Environmental Factors

Important Impacts

2005-2009 ●●●●●●●●● 0.85 Million

2010-2014 ●●●●●●●●●●
           ●●●●●●●●●● 2.54 Million
           ●●●●●●

Green Construction Jobs

MIllions of tons of waste
diverted from landfills

540

80

Pre-Covid   Projected 2030

Waste Reduction

Vertical Contagion, The Future of New York's Urban Density

Legend (left and right charts):
- Eighty Year Operational Carbon
- Forty Year Operational Carbon
- First Year Operational Carbon
- Embodied Carbon

Y-axis: Carbon Use per 2,000 Living Units

X-axis categories: Megatall, Supertall, High-Rise, Mid-Rise, Low-Rise, Courtyard, Townhouse, Urban Single Family, Suburban Single Family

Block/Tower by Rafi Segal and Stan Allen is a remarkable example for the future of New York. Using a typical office tower typology they offer a new way of living, and experiencing the skyscraper. There are many advantageous decisions made by the designers. Starting with the strategic removal of parts of the floor plate. Taking advantage of the increased floor to floor height in office towers, three floors are able to infill the space of two. Dramatically increasing the capacity of the building. A new and developed green core is carved throughout the building; progressively rising to the roof level. This carve brings the public in from the street up and through the tower. Creating a remarkable space unlike any other in the city. Developing a vertical circulation that becomes part of the neighbourhood. Reinventing the neighbourhood in the way we have always experienced it. While this carve dramatically impacts the building, it maintains the original cores of the building.

Block/Tower focuses on the idea more than the location of the project. However, the location is just as incredibly important as the idea. It is radically reinventing the horizontal and vertical ideas we have come to accept. The ideas in Block/Tower opens up the opportunity for mixed programs throughout the entire building. No longer does retail have to remain on the lowest floors, now a cafe and a clothing store can exist halfway up the tower overlooking a garden. Their proposal focuses mostly on a plethora of housing typologies. However, the complex interplay between places of rest, places of exchange and places of work become possible. The traditional stacking of programs in High Rise design is no longer required when the neighbourhood and street becomes integrated into the building. This intersection forces the rest of the space in the building to adapt. Housing typologies will thus develop in a new way, for new people. They must react to the need for lower cost high occupancy housing. Housing must also react to our new way of living with a pandemic. Post-Pandemic design must be flexible and reactionary to both the past and the future.

It is most important to remember who the design is for. This is no longer about designing big budget capital "a" architecture for billion dollar corporations. This is about developing a way of life that is novel and inventive; centered on the people who will occupy it. An epoch that symbolizes a shift to the real New Yorkers. Those who stay here because they came for a better and remarkable future. Those who came with everything they had and will leave with everything or nothing. These people deserve everything the city can offer them, because they give their everything to the city.

Methodology Statement

Stacked Problem

10 Hudson Yards

The new Hudson Yards development epitomizes the typical office tower development. Lower floors provide public retail while the upper floors are high end office space. Similarly, the only public integration throughout the building is at the extremes. The very top contains a new observation deck. Both programs require a monetary exchange, occupants are either shopping or paying high prices to enjoy a view.

Diagram / ダイアグラム

35
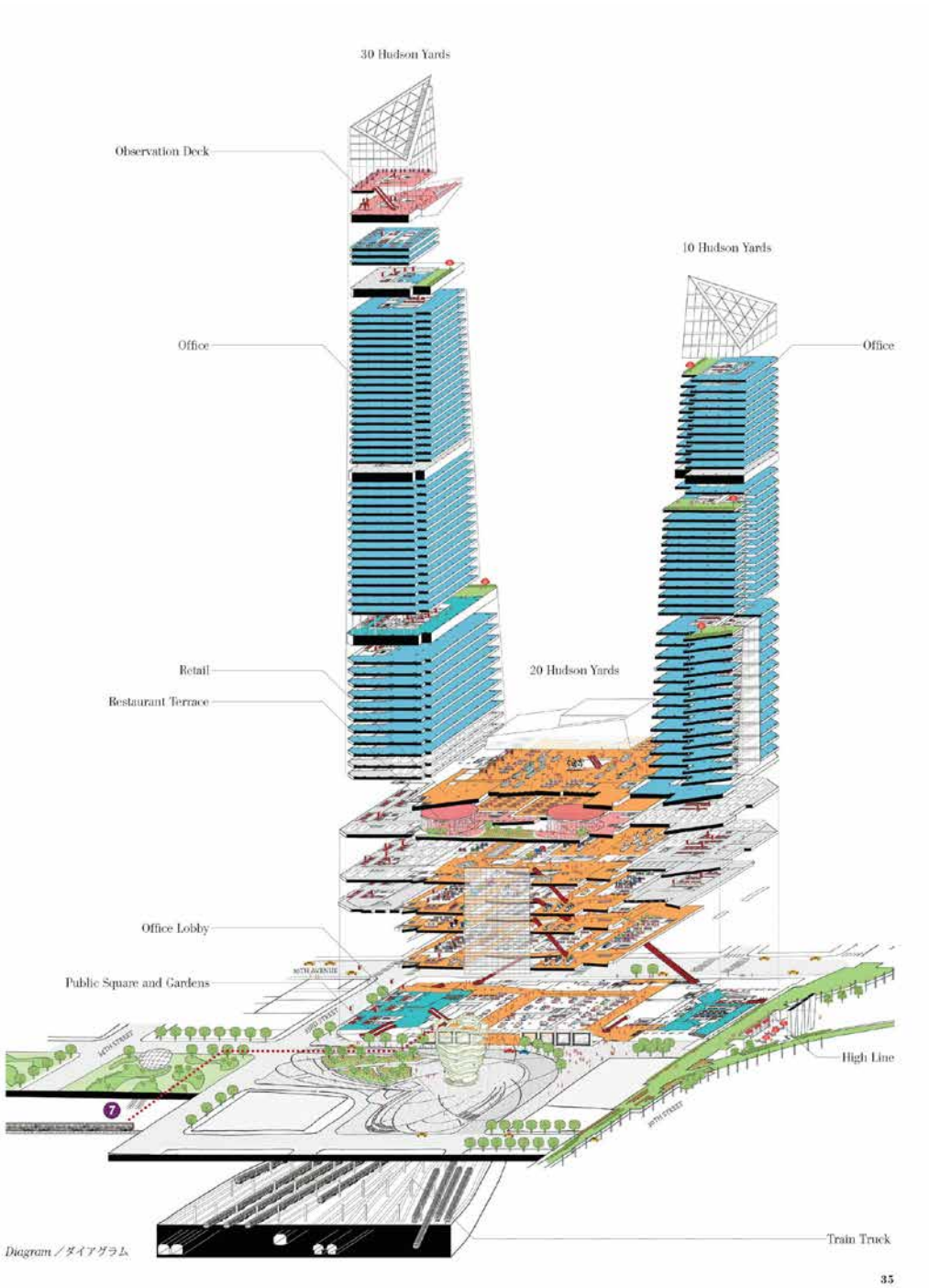
Setbacks and Code

C6-1 through C6-7

We have come to accept the stacking of program in a high-rise. We developed the typical condition of housing above office space. This is required by our code. It makes the bureaucratic organization and approval of the building easier, but it does not provide flexibility and opportunity.
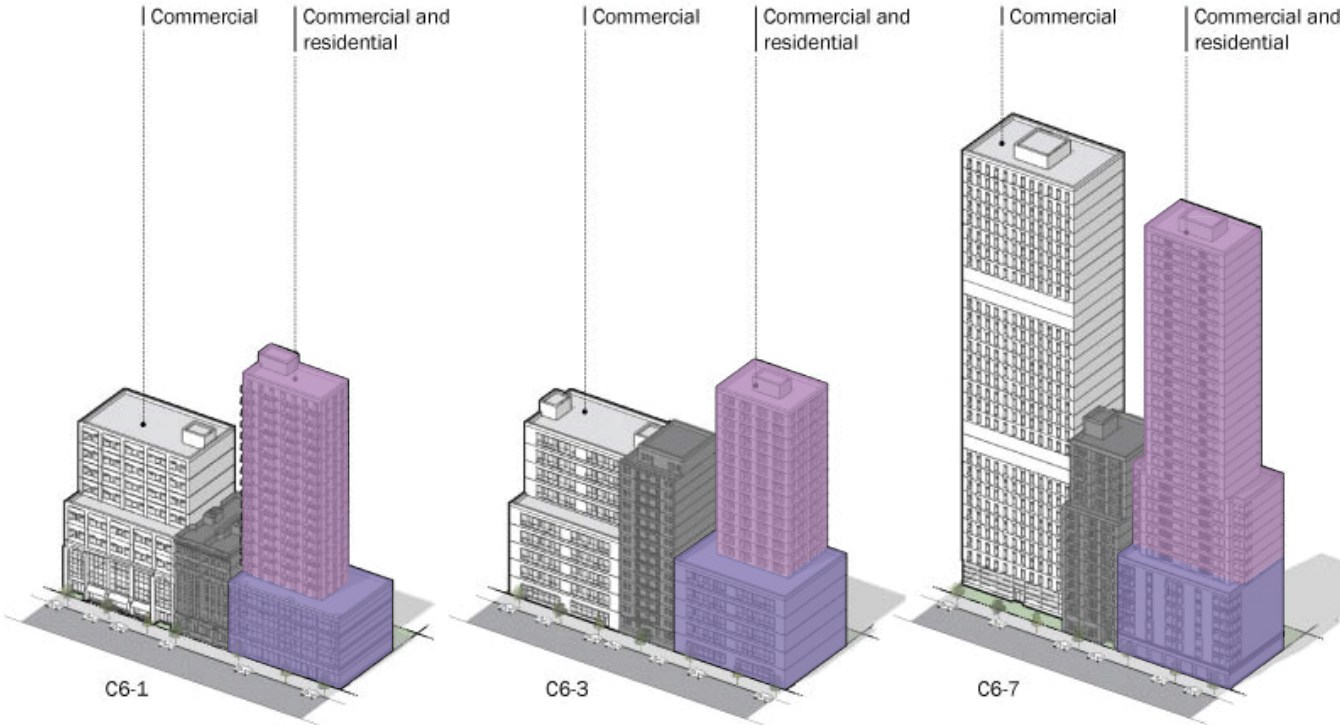
Tower Typologies

The Past, The Present, The Future

The Base Stacked Floor Plates
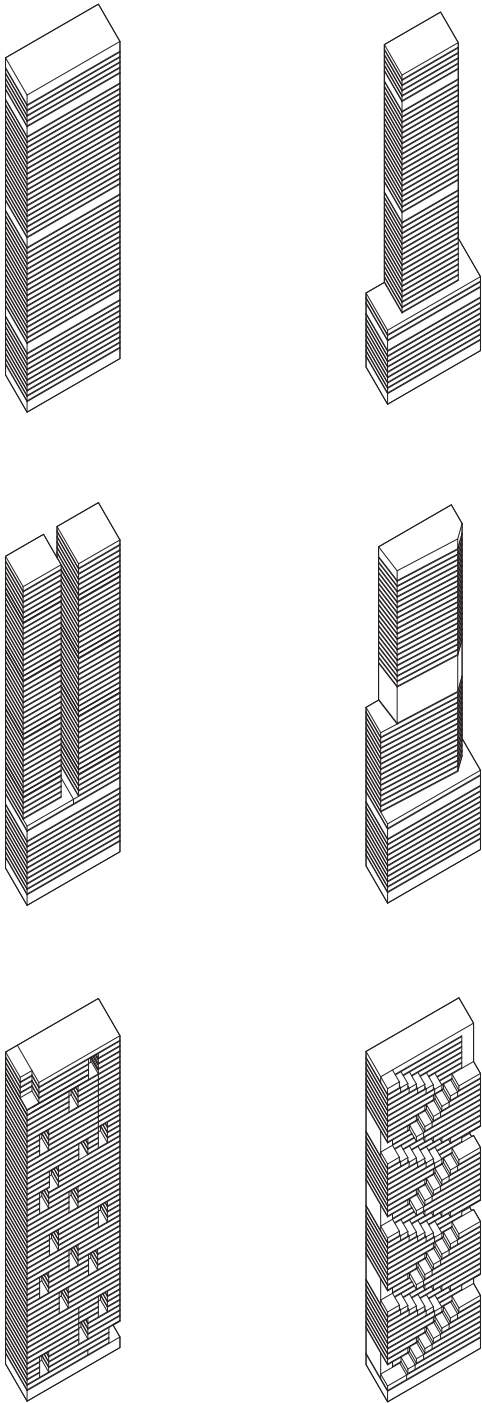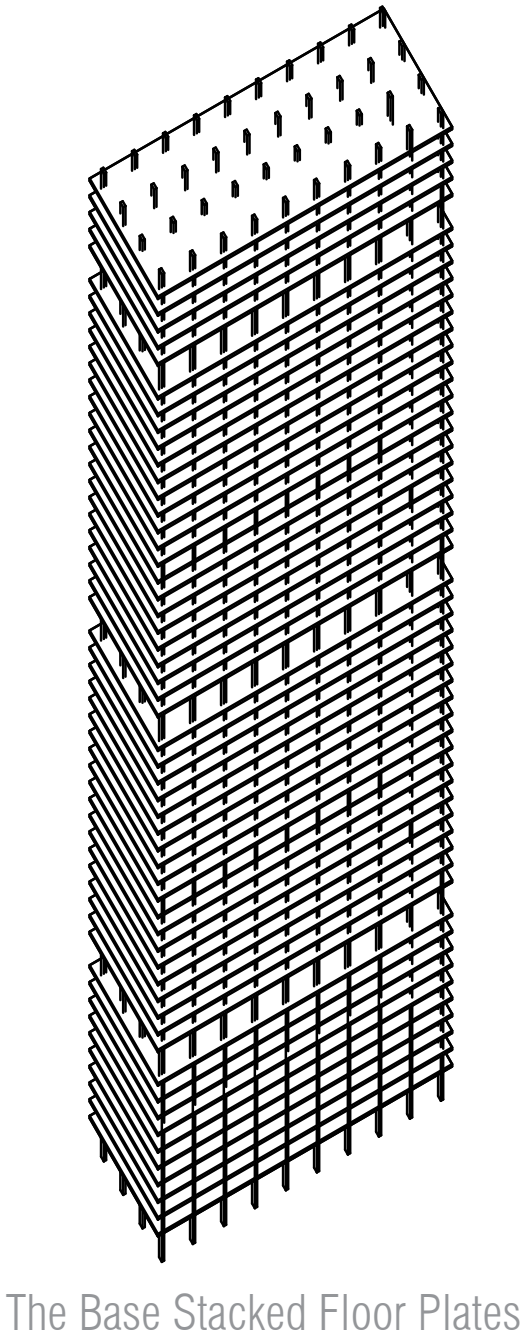
The Past

The Present

The Future

High-Rise Typologies

The Past

Typical high-rise towers from the 60's and 70's created horizontal floor plates with their own autonomy. There is no difference between the different layers and focused solely on its verticality.

Residential Space

Mechanical Space

Green Space

Office Space

Retail Space

Residential Space

Mechanical Space

Green Space

Office Space

Retail Space
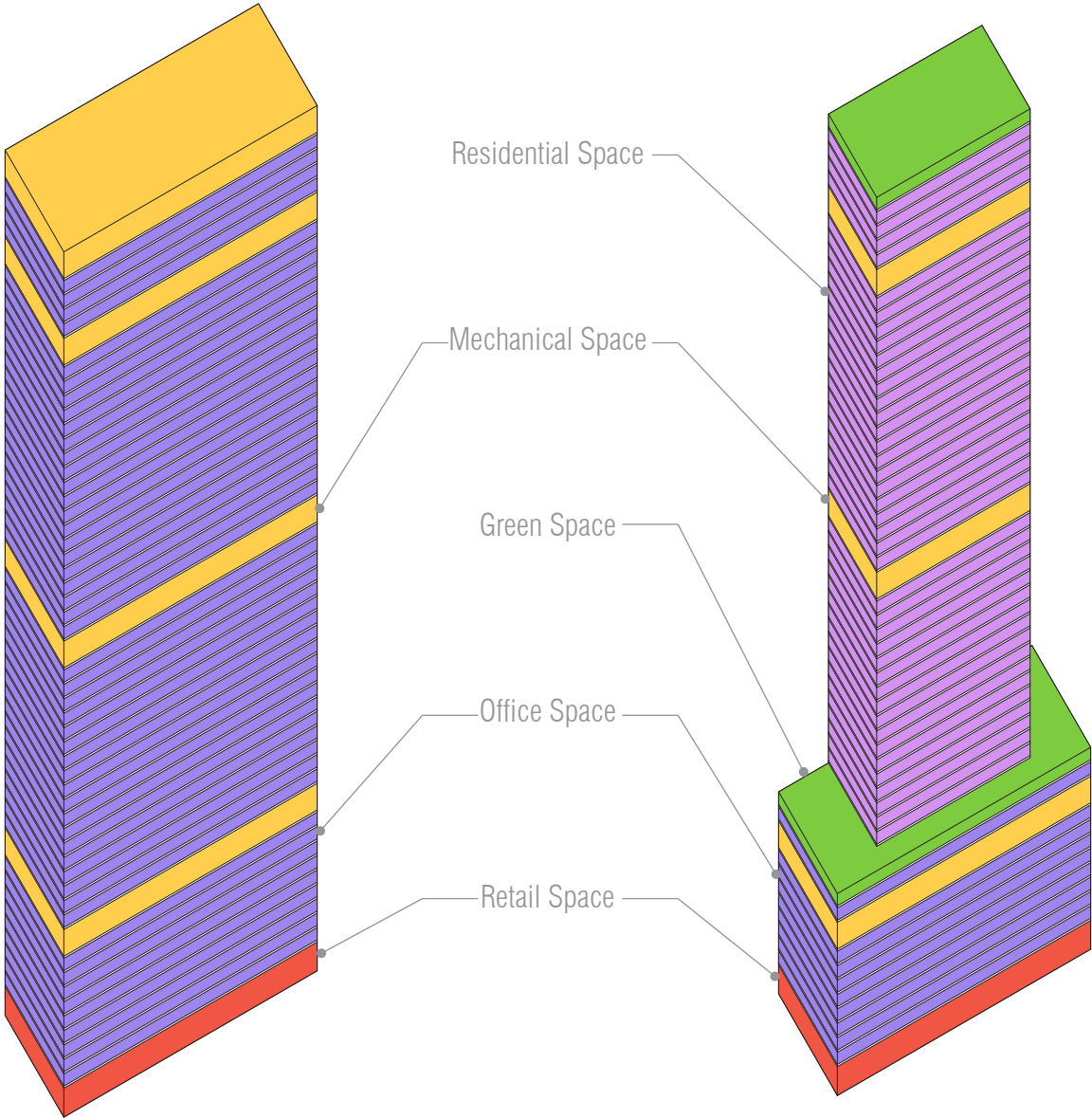
High-Rise Typologies

The Present

New setback rules impact the high rises built
after the skyscraper boom and their form.
The vertical stacking of program has been
maintained. The Multi-use tower has become
norm. However, the opportunity to overlap
and interlock different programs still exists.
The developers involved build many of these
towers and they are extremely adept.
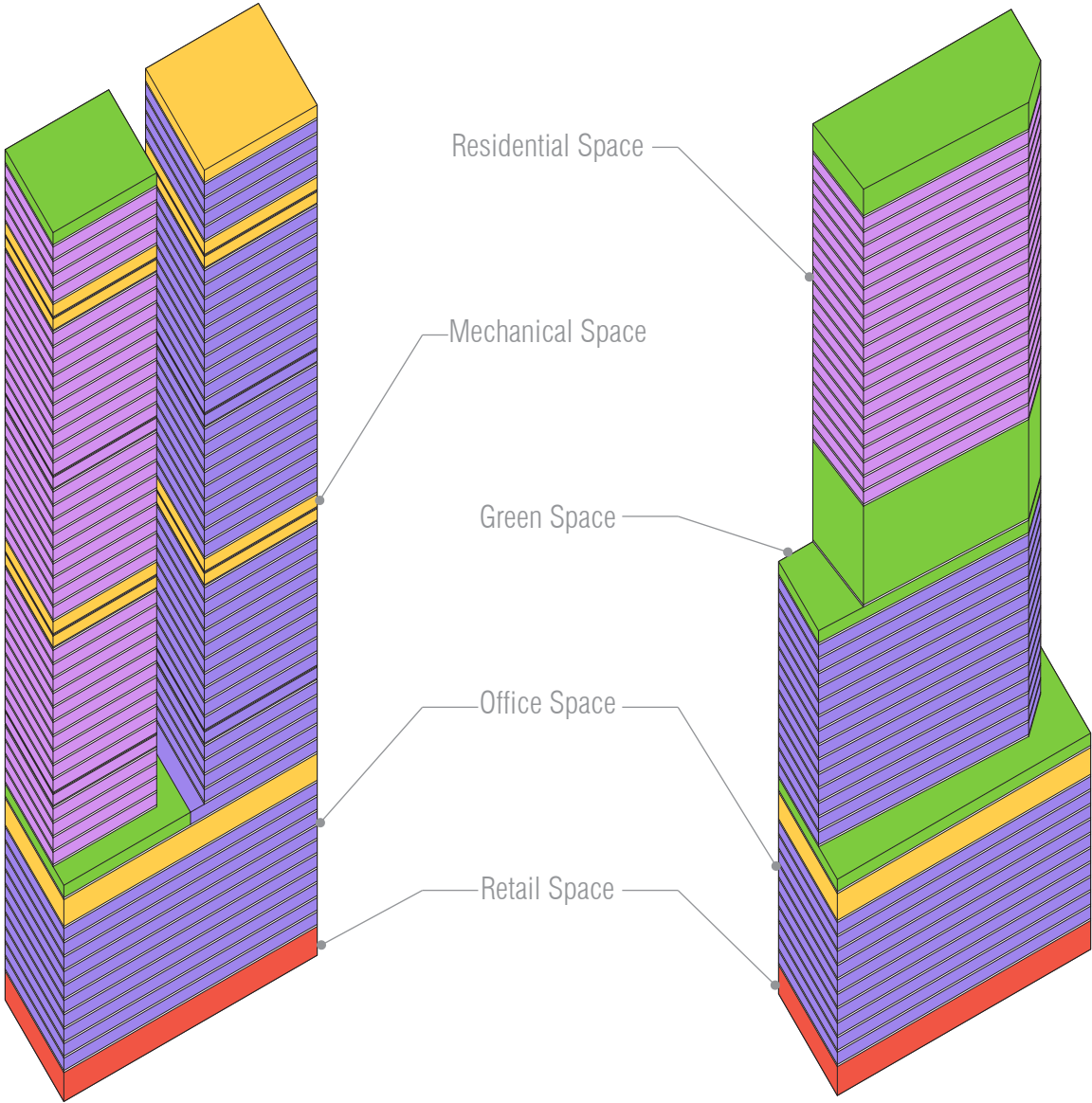
High-Rise Typologies

The Future

The future possibility of the post COVID-19 high rise creates opportunity for interlock and overlap. The opportunity for corporate, public and private spaces to intersect.

Residential Space

Public Space

Green Space

Office Space

Retail Space
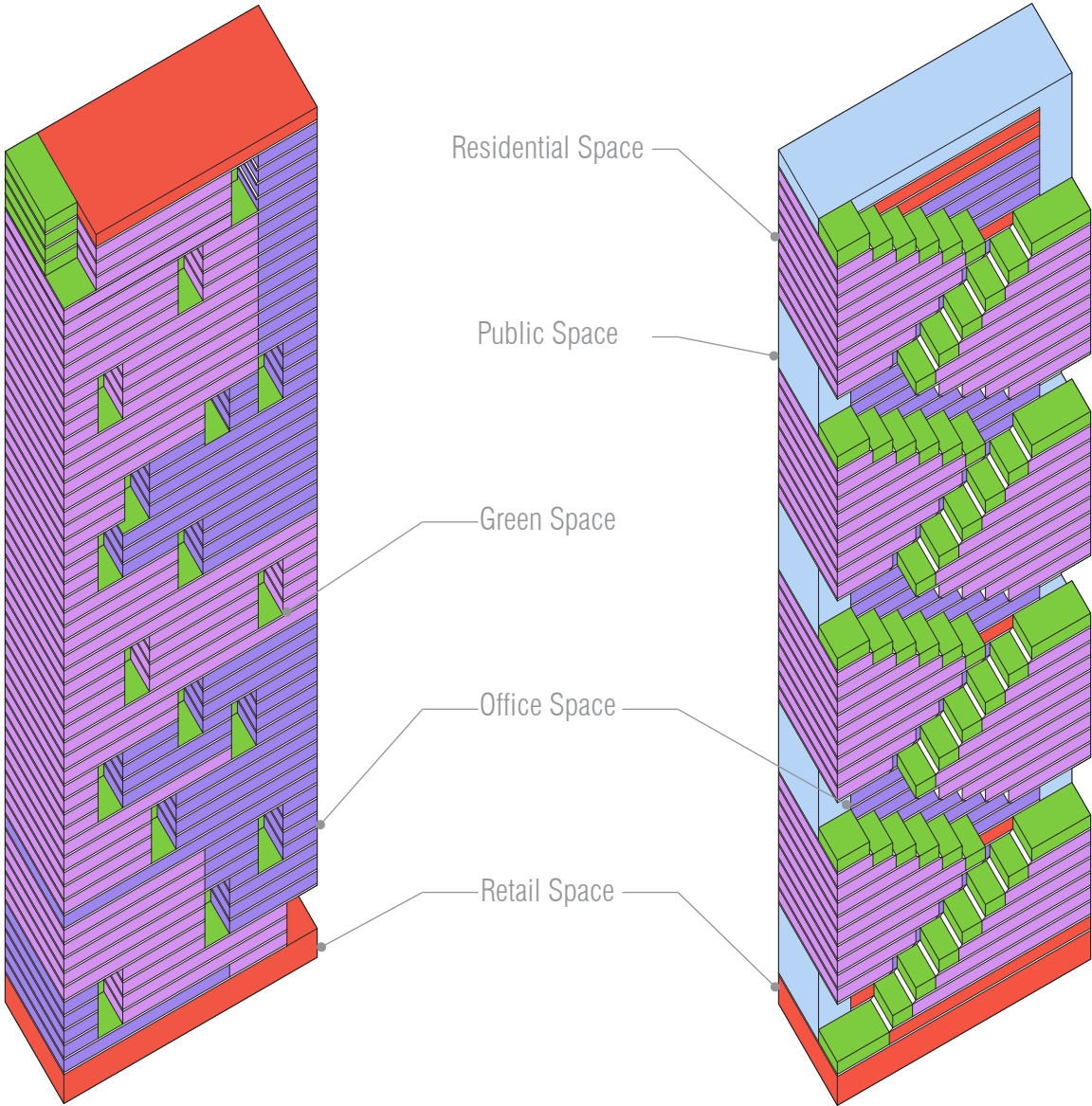
Intervention Association Diagram

Interconnectivity of Architectural Elements

Site Analysis

Manhattan Hot - Zones

Analysis of the prime zones for intervention based on size and age.

High End Residential,
9 Dekalb Ave.
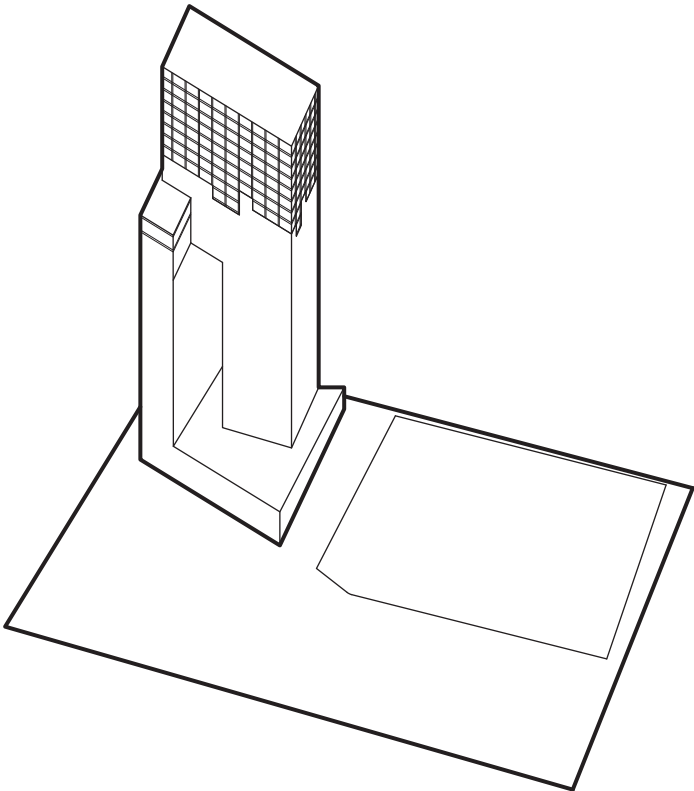
New Construction,
Domino Sugar Park
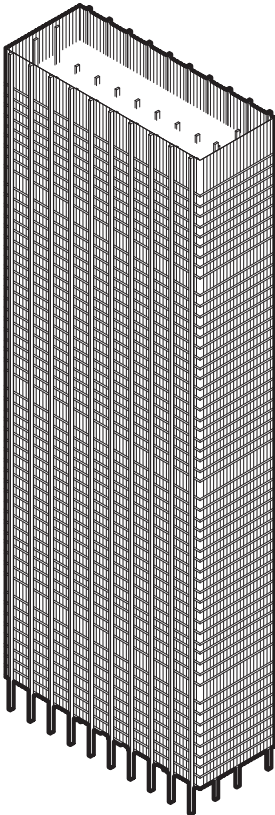
Existing Office Tower,
One Chase Plaza

Proposed Site Typologies

Existing Office, High End Residential, New Construction

The Stakeholders

All of these critics aud theorists agree, however, positively, unequivocally, in this, that the tall office building should not, must not, be made a field for the display of architectural knowledge in the encyclopaedic sense; that too much learning in this instance is fully as dangerous, as obnoxious, as too little learning ; that miscellany is abhorrent to their sense; that the sixteen-story building must not consist of sixteen separate, distinct, and unrelated buildings piled one upon the other until the top of the pile is reached.

-Louis H. Sullivan, *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered*

Understanding Stakeholders

Stakeholder Sankey Diagram

Analyzing the stakeholders is a key to the redevelopment of the building in question. Housing, public programs and green space must be supported by multiple parties and organizations.

Proposed Public Services:
New York Parks and Rec
New York Restoration Porject
Museum
New York Public Libraries
NYU
Nwe York Public School
Wegmans
Small Retail

Proposed Housing Stakeholders:
JDS Developers
Rockwell Developers
NYCHA
WIN NYC
Ali Forney Center
Phipps Neighbors
New York Community Trust
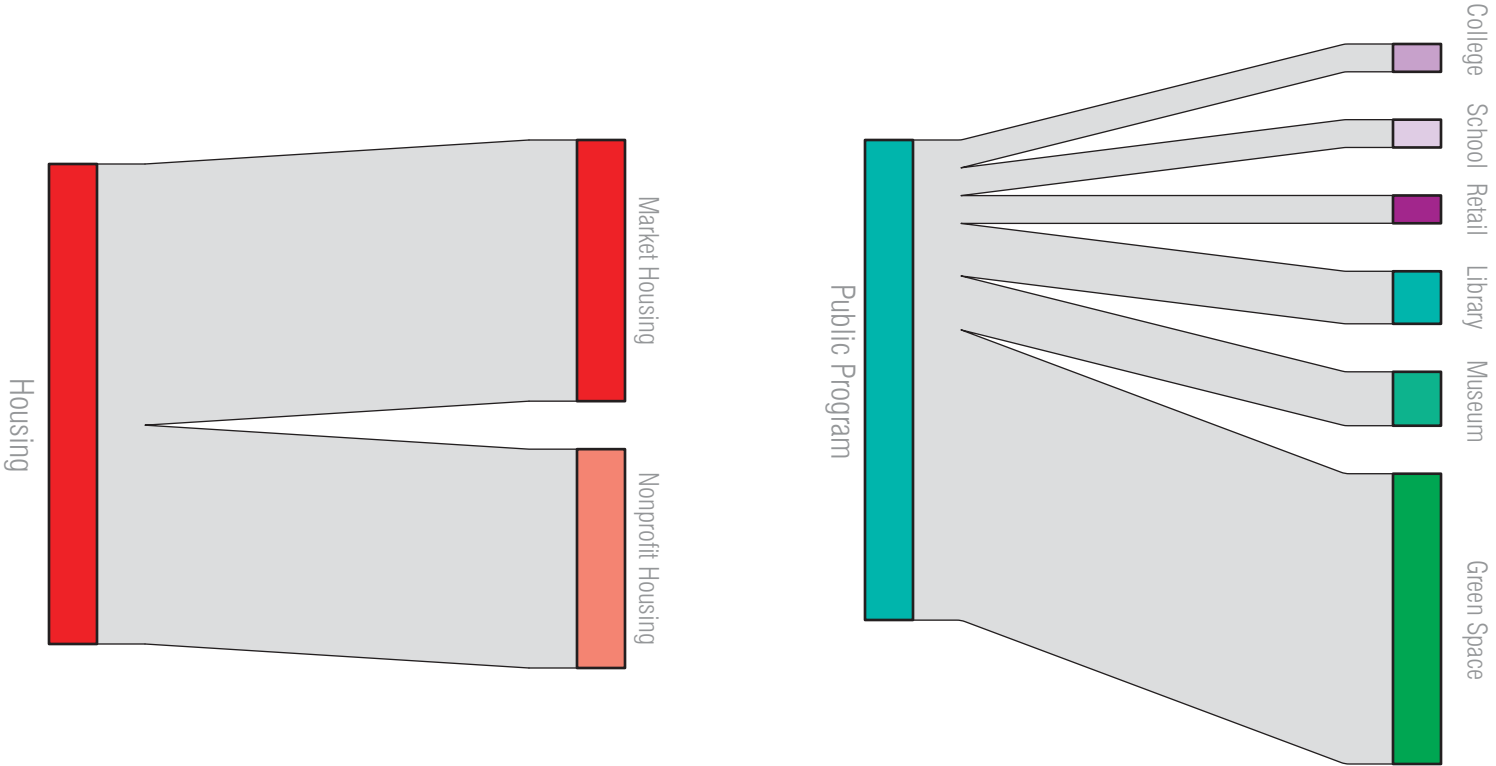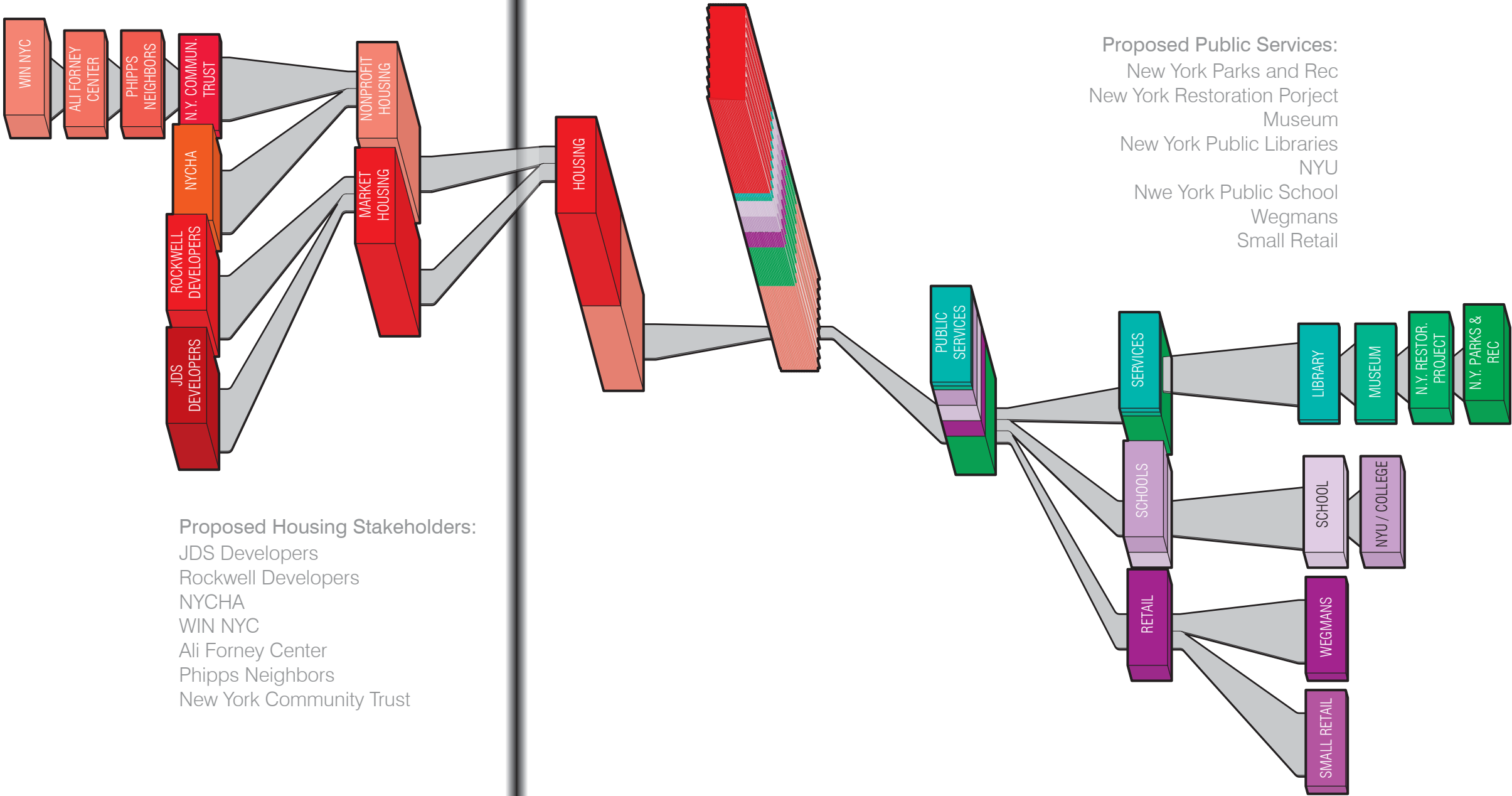
Stakeholder Analysis

28 Liberty St. Sankey Diagram

28 Liberty street proposes multiple housing supports for both profit and nonprofit housing. Green space supported by both Parks and Rec. as well as a local interest group. Schools, retailers, and public programs support the redevelopment.

Diagram labels (left to right):
WIN NYC · ALI FORNEY CENTER · PHIPPS NEIGHBORS · N.Y. COMMUN. TRUST · NYCHA · ROCKWELL DEVELOPERS · JDS DEVELOPERS · NONPROFIT HOUSING · MARKET HOUSING · HOUSING · PUBLIC SERVICES · SERVICES · SCHOOLS · RETAIL · LIBRARY · MUSEUM · N.Y. RESTOR. PROJECT · N.Y. PARKS & REC · SCHOOL · NYU / COLLEGE · WEGMANS · SMALL RETAIL

Stakeholder Proposals

28 Liberty St.

28 Liberty street proposes multiple housing supports for both profit and nonprofit housing. Green space supported by both Parks and Rec. as well as a local interest group. Schools, retailers, and public programs support the redevelopment.
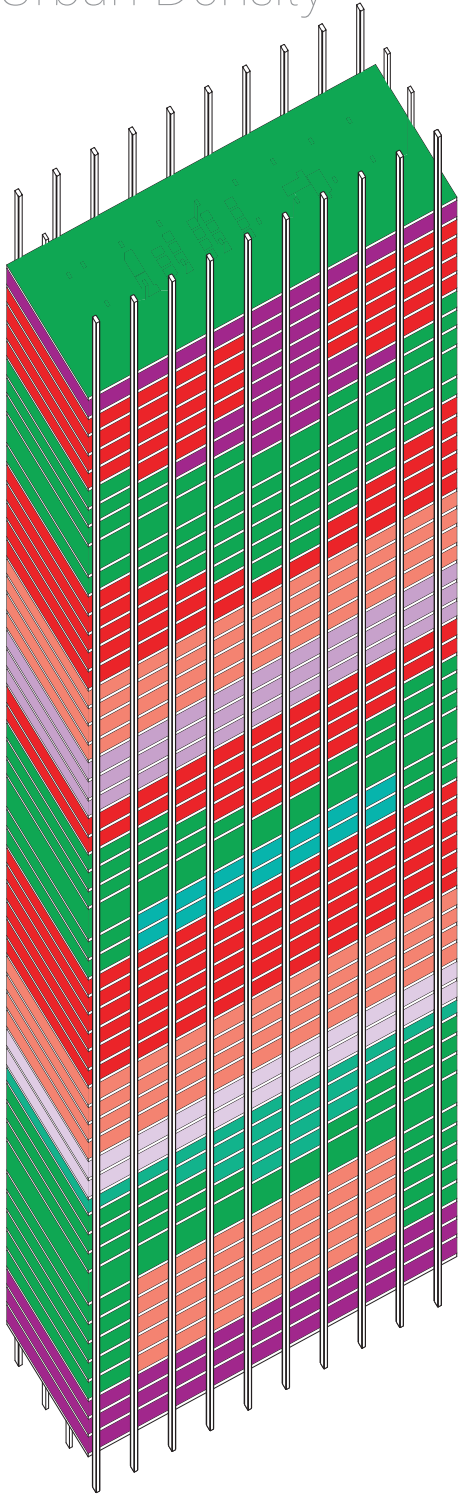
Legend:
- For Profit Housing
- Not for Profit Housing
- New York University
- New York Public School
- Retail
- New York Public Library
- Museum
- Green Space
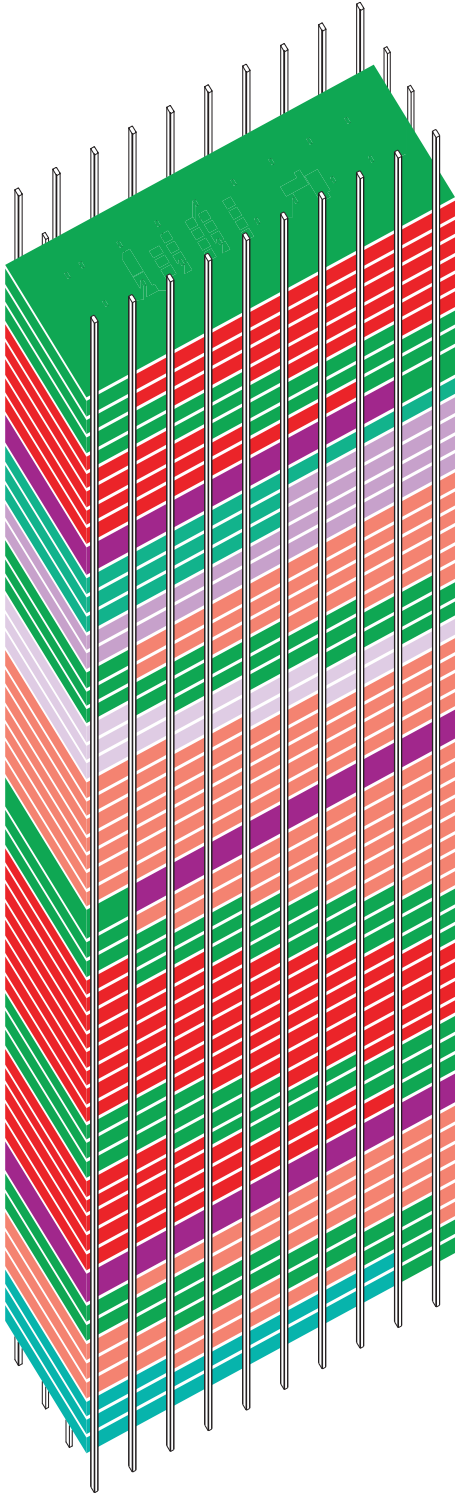
Thesis Intentionality

Connection and Mitigation

The interplay between these groups allow opportunity for an equitable building. One that is built for every occupant, to bring New York into a new remarkable future.
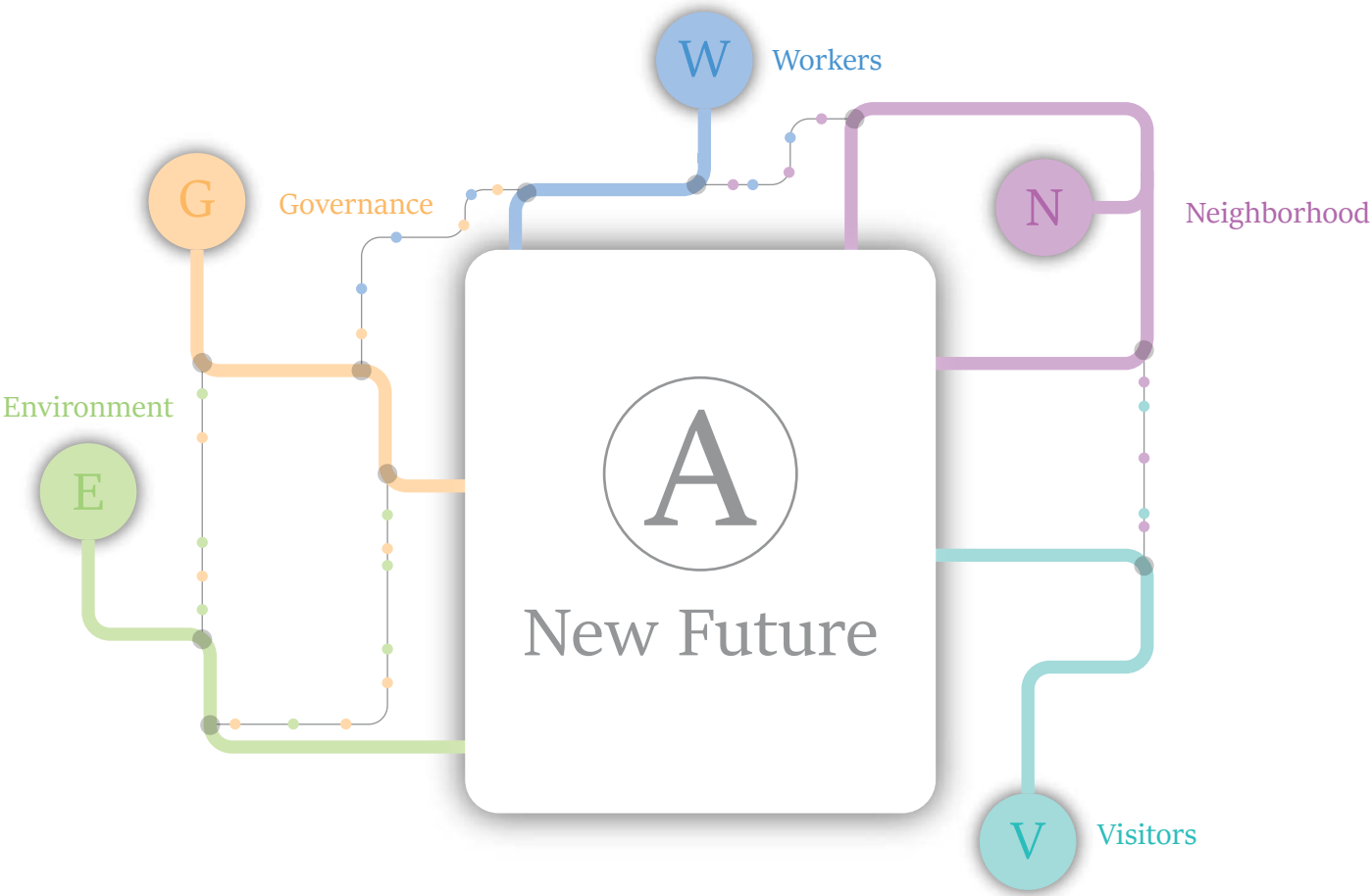
Genealogy Essay

The Zoning Law - which codified

the character of set-backs and

the skinniness of towers was, as

Koolhaas has so succinctly put it,

"a back-dated birth certificate for the

skyscraper."

-Michael Sorkin, *Skyscrapers from A to Z*

New York City is at a pivotal moment in its existence. Today, as Covid-19 continues to impact our everyday lives, there is an opportunity to redevelop the city. New York City is experiencing a Second White Flight from the city. Leaving a void of vacancies in its wake. Architecture has the opportunity to respond to these new social and political pressures. New York City developed on edifice construction and has yet to develop a new way of thinking. These high-rises are intrinsically autonomous and are centered on corporate income. They are just as devoid of connection to their surroundings. Privatization and development create the skyline of New York; all while an uncontrolled pandemic ravages the United States. We are living through an unprecedented time which allows us to offer opportunity in the face of disaster. Why return to the 'normal' of the past if we could arrive at a better future?

> "One is too precious about the past, the other too hungry for the future. One arm being dragged into the past by the ethics of historic preservation, the other being yanked towards a hopeful (bigger, brighter, better) future."
> - Winy Maas, Visionary Cities. Urgencies for the City of the Future

Architectural precedent lays the groundwork for the future. Architecture is inherently political and personal. It directs both our ethos and pathos. If we continue to develop buildings focused on privatization and corporate development this remains precedent. Remarkability focuses on the ideas that challenge this. For Winy Maas of MVRDV, remarkable buildings create the aesthetics of the city. They create anchor points and ideals that slowly develop from the city and spread out into the periphery.

When we imagine New York City, we imagine its powerful and iconic skyline. We often picture its buildings as edifices; 'stones in a field'. They are massive objects that are idealized from their base, to tip; all while you only experience their presence. One World Trade Center, Rockefeller Center, all major buildings in New York City conjure up their edifice and exterior qualities. They are, inherently, private objects that exist autonomously. The understanding of this disconnect is picked up by Koolhaus, the buildings are lobotomized, disconnected from their exterior by their interiority.

Skyscrapers are designed as objects of privatization that then continue to work in private. The most likely option for public engagement is a few floors for an observation deck, for which they charge massive amounts of money; limiting access and furthering its privatization. Thus, the only experiences of the building are in one of two ways. You are either experiencing the building as an edifice, in a sea of other edifices, or you are experiencing other edifices inside the edifice itself. Skyscrapers and high-rise construction are the pinnacle of design in a vacuum. The only goal is to develop the most

horizontal area for the least amount of money. Michael Sorkin notes that the Manhattan grid is most vehemently the intersection of "Greed and Grid". They are seen as active developments of the future when in reality they fade into the filigree of their constituents.

The object quality of these buildings create multiple failures: one that results from privatization, which encourages isolation and often fails to develop any sense of neighbourhood. In Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, the protagonist of the novel is forced to appropriate an existence because of his racial identity in a closed and shuttered time in America. The 1940's has set the groundwork for development in the 1950's and 1960's. The absorption of white immigrants into the white culture created the dichotomy between white people and people of color. This predicated the way neighbourhoods, and livelihoods developed. Ellison explains beautifully the issues with privatization and the idea of a shack or a space of one's own. In his epilogue, he explains how his protagonist becomes so isolated he becomes too domestic, too invisible. Appropriating a space of one's own in such a way is a fantastic ad hoc imposition on political laws, but they do not divest the occupant from identity politics. The Federal Housing Administration develops in this period on these racist ideologies. Through monetary sleight of hand they begin to restrict the vertical economic growth of people of color and minorities. Thus, these are the struggles the skyscraper boom completely overlooked. Similarly to the 1940's being a foundation of the skyscraper boom, these skyscrapers are now the base of the 21st century New York City.

> "Yellow areas are characterized by age, obsolescence, and change of style; expiring restrictions or lack of them; infiltration of a lower grade population; the presence of influences which increase sales resistance such as inadequate transportation, insufficient utilities, perhaps heavy tax burdens, poor maintenance of homes, etc. "Jerry" built areas are included, as well as neighborhoods lacking homogeneity. Generally, these areas have reached the transition period. Good mortgage lenders are more conservative in the Yellow areas and hold loan commitments under the lending ratio for the Green and Blue areas."
> -Quoted in Race and Real Estate, edited by Adrienne Brown and Valerie Smith

It is important to recognize the developmental process in identity politics that happens through such oppression. The plethora of issues to be solved will forever evolve. The way of thinking must be changed to develop skyscrapers for people of the city. Not corporations that benefit from a very specific group of people. Jane Jacobs describes the complex qualities of beneficial neighbourhoods through her complex integration in New York City.

"A city street equipped to handle strangers, and to make a safety asset, in itself, out of the presence of strangers, as the streets of successful city neighborhoods always do, must have three main qualities:

First, there must be a clear demarcation between what is public space and what is private space. Public and private spaces cannot ooze into each other as they do typically in suburban settings or in projects.

Second, there must be eyes upon the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. The buildings on a street equipped to handle strangers and to insure the safety of both residents and strangers, must be oriented to the street. They cannot turn their backs or blank sides on it and leave it blind.

And third, the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers. Nobody enjoys sitting on a stoop or looking out a window at an empty street. Almost nobody does such a thing. Large numbers of people entertain themselves, off and on, by watching street activity."

-Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Not only are skyscrapers often lobotomized from their urban context, they are disconnected from their socio-political context. Homi Bhabha's Third Space theory explores this complex developmental process in his work. According to Bhabha, "The space that arises between the colliding of cultures, which in turn gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable. It is this in-between space where new cultural identities are formed, reformed and constantly in a state of becoming" The location of the first space is the cultural home. For instance, a person who moves to or is raised in the United States from another country would have a cultural home that is not simply American.. The second place is the developmental home, or the colonial space. This is the area in which they grow up performatively. This exists in multiple forms. These ideas are still deeply rooted in the United States.. A colonized space in which deliberate and obvious racial grounds divide a group of people. Where black people or other minorities brought to or forced into the space are forced into a performative way of living in spaces dominated by a majority of white people. His third space involves post colonial living and how this is constantly evolving as a combination of the colonial and precolonial aspects creating a whole new existence.

This post colonial identity is an important factor in the development of neighbourhoods. Every neighbourhood contains at least one colonial identity, if not more often multiple. Neighbourhoods must contain and maintain their surroundings; this includes the persons within them. The neighbourhood must constantly evolve and

develop with the changing dynamics of the persons who live there.
There is another approach to third space and place. Edward Soja looks at the physicality of the space. What the space is; he develops the trialectic of space that intersects the historical, social and spatial impacts of a space. It not only involves how we act in a space, but how a space asks us to act. Ray Oldenburg similarly looks at physical space more directly. He follows the understanding of soviet spatial and political ideals. The first space is the home, the second is the place of work and the third is the social house or gathering. A clubhouse or pub; today places like coffee shops or collegiate groups. Something that you go to voluntarily. Something like church would be disqualified due to the inherent social pressure.

All of these opinions on space impact the development of a neighbourhood. It is important to recognize the different approaches to social space. Especially now; in a time that is unprecedented. Now, Covid-19 has completely changed these ways of thinking. The Oldenburg way of thinking has overlapped. A person could now wake up, go to class, go to work, attend a social club, all without leaving their home.

The urban contexts of New York City are in a complex transition. Many people are questioning the need to live in New York City. It could be proposed that a second white flight is taking place. The ability of high income majority white members of society to retreat to their summer homes or other more suburban areas while Covid-19 impacts the city is a privilege. It has since created a complex problem in the city; there is now a proliferation of vacant apartments and spaces in the city. The more people move from the density of New York, architects must take this opportunity for change. It is time to question the constant privatization and anonymous autonomy of the architecture of the city. It is possible to create architecture that is introspective as well as remarkable.

Architects like Winny Maas of MVRDV and Michael Sorkin look at cities not as business opportunities, but as a place for a better way of life. As Stan Allen comments on MVRDV's methodology, "Creativity becomes not about new forms, but reformulation of constraints". Their strength is an incredible understanding of logic to create new rules. They do not purely reinterpret precedent, for they focus on the needs and the public reaction of the building, not simply on the form. An important example of reinterpretation of the tall tower typology that has come to exemplify the dominant architecture of New York, is Stan Allen and Rafi Segal's proposed "Block/Tower," reconstitution of a 1960's office tower into an artfully and detailed mixed use tower for the neighbourhood. Along with creating a plethora of housing typologies, they also extend public programs from the ground floor to the top floor through a secondary spine, all while maintaining the central original core of the building. Not only is it a more sustainable approach to historic repurposing but it also counters the privatization issue and social isolation that developed in highrises constructed since the 1960's.

Michael Sorkin and Terreform develop different schemes for development. Sorkin on his own has written a plethora of books on urban planning, skyscrapers and architecture. In the section on New York in his book Exquisite Corpse he notes the genius loci of Manhattan, "The New York skyscraper occurs at the intersection of greed and grid. Regulated by the patterns of property, it finds its identity eking out singularity within the constraints of a uniform matrix." He is recognizing the intricacy of skyscrapers in New York City. They only exist as a social idea because of their aggregation. One on its own would not create the effect of New York. They require one another and their adjacencies to other similar high value land to be valuable.

Sorkin lays out in his work and his books what he believes could counter these approaches. Terreform often uses data driven design with a careful socially pragmatic eye. A project like Gowntown: A 197-X Plan for Upper Manhattan provides a look into what they believe. Providing architecture and urban planning that is socially aware of its surroundings; of its development in a post colonial third space.

New York City is by no means a simple creature, rather a complex behemoth that lives and breathes while we trot about our daily lives. It is paramount to articulate this behemoth in a way that respects and reflects those that occupy it. It is time to look into the eyes of the tutelar with opportunity and drive, not submission and admiration. We have an opportunity that may never come again, to create an equitable and admirable city; a city of adoration. That is the future I want to see. That is the future New York City deserves.

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It is hard to untangle the grubby day-

to-day practices and discourses

that affect urban living from the

grandiose metaphorical meanings

that so

freely intermingle with emotions and

beliefs about the good life and

urban form.

-David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*

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Vertical Contagion

Chris Brown, FA2020