

Measuring the Impact of Historic District Designation on Real Estate in New York City

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Architecture and Planning
Columbia University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Historic Preservation

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Readers: Erica Avrami & Jesse Keenan
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May 2014

Thesis Context

HISTORIC DISTRICT DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Policy and Process

- The Roles of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and City Planning Agencies
- Length of the Approval Process
- Individual Landmark or Historic District?

Operations Associated with Historic Districts

- Do Historic Districts “Freeze Development” or Limit Investment?

Monetary Value of Properties in Historic Districts

- Initial Historic District Property Value Studies
- Cost of Fees, Time, and Materials
- Affordable Housing

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 - Study 1: Ages of Buildings in New York City
 - Study 2: Remaining Developable Area in Manhattan
 - Study 3: Vacant Land and Parking Facilities in Historic Districts

Operations Associated with Historic Districts

- Do Historic Districts “Freeze Development” or Limit Investment?
 - Study 4: New Uses in Historic Districts
 - Study 5: Investment in Historic Districts
 - Study 6: Occupancy and Density in Historic Districts

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Study 1: Ages of Buildings in New York City

GIS SERIES 1: TESTING THE ACCURACY OF PLUTO DATA

FIGURE 1

Year Construction Completed According to PLUTO Data on Manhattan Block 821

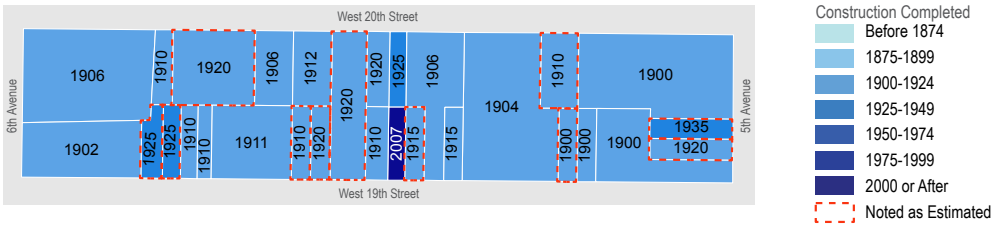


FIGURE 2

Year Construction Completed According to Ladies' Mile Historic District Designation Report on Manhattan Block 821

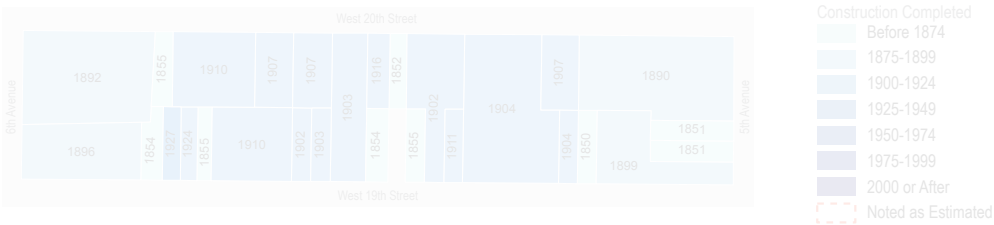


FIGURE 3

Overlay of data from PLUTO and the Ladies' Mile Historic District Designation Report in regards to Year of Construction

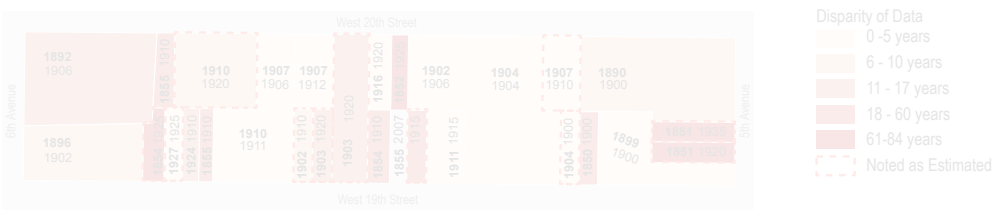
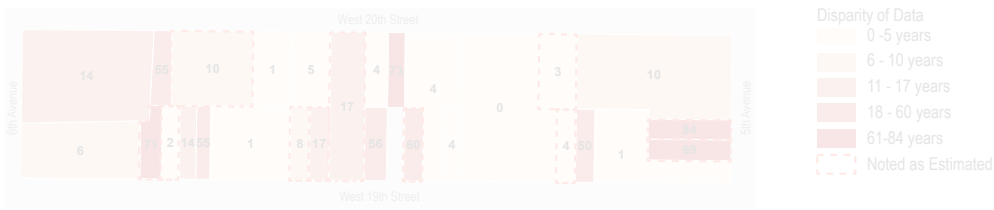


FIGURE 4

Disparity of Data by Years



Data Sources:
"Ladies' Mile Historic Designation Report," Landmarks Preservation Commission, The City of New York, 1989.
"MapPLUTO" [Shapefile geospatial data], Coverage: New York City, Updated October 2013 (Release 13v2), New York City Department of City Planning, Downloaded: March 2014.
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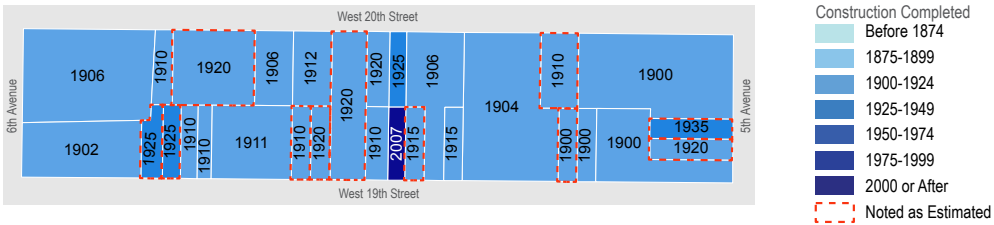


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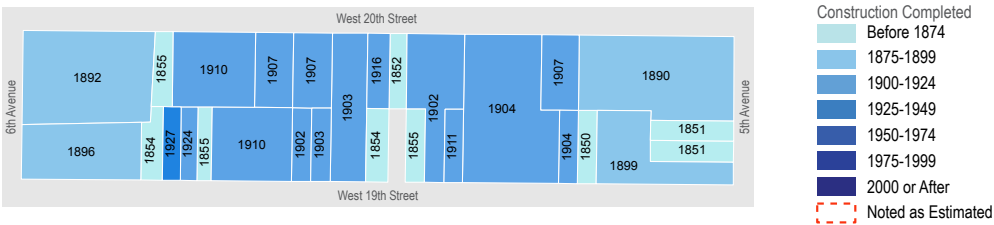


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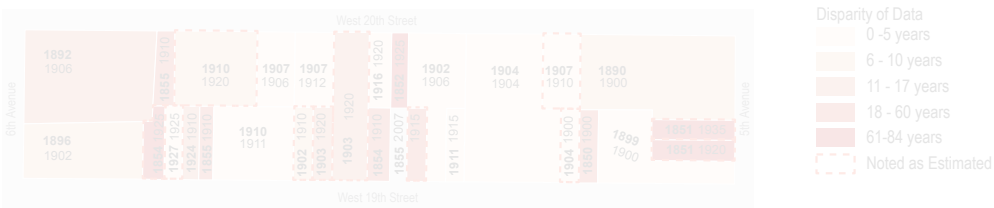
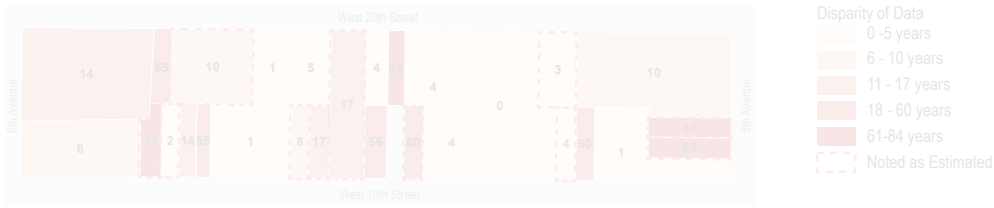


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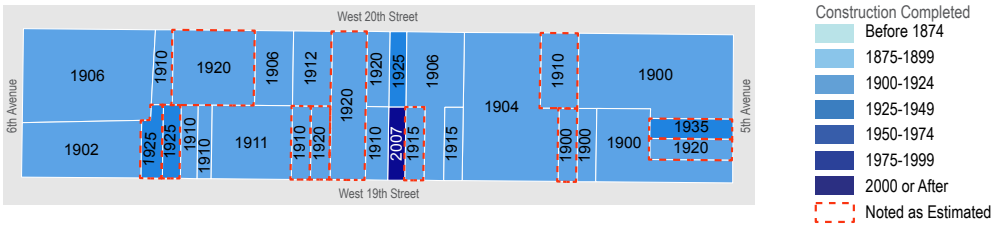


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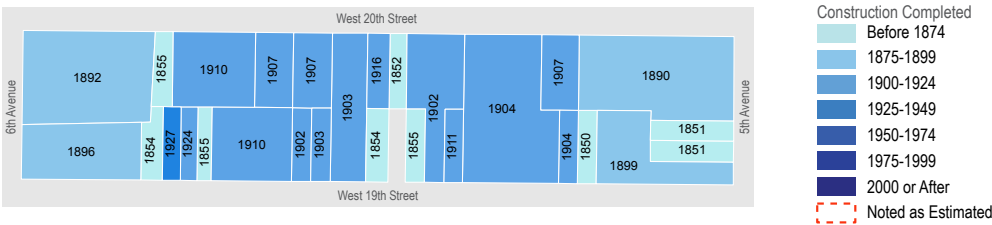


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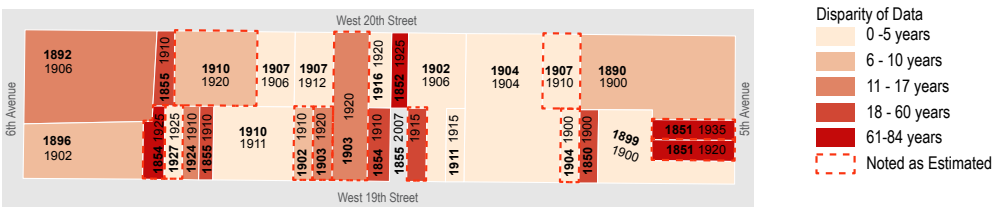
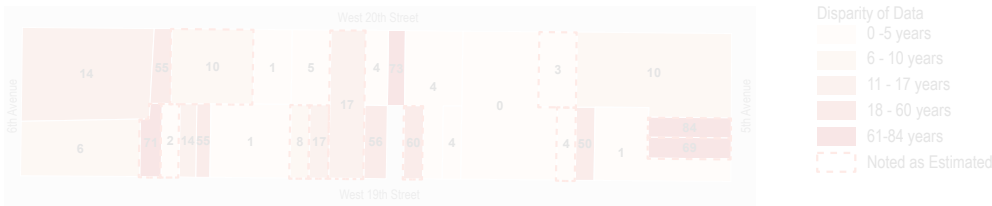


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Study 1: Ages of Buildings in New York City

- Only **one** building had the same year built date reported in the PLUTO data and the historic district designation report meaning for this block the PLUTO data was inaccurate more than **96%** of the time.
- Among the 28 lots, **eleven** buildings were within five years of an accurate build date according to PLUTO and the historic district designation report, accounting for **39.3%** of the lots.
- Nine** buildings (**32.1%**) were over twenty years off in date. Some buildings were misdated by **84** years.
- 11** of the **28** buildings were identified as having their date of construction estimated.
- Out of the nine buildings that were over twenty years off in date, only four were identified as building estimates.
- The estimate category incorrectly dated buildings by **eighty-four to two years**, a range of eighty-two whereas the buildings identified by PLUTO as “non-estimates” were incorrect by as much as **seventy-three years**.

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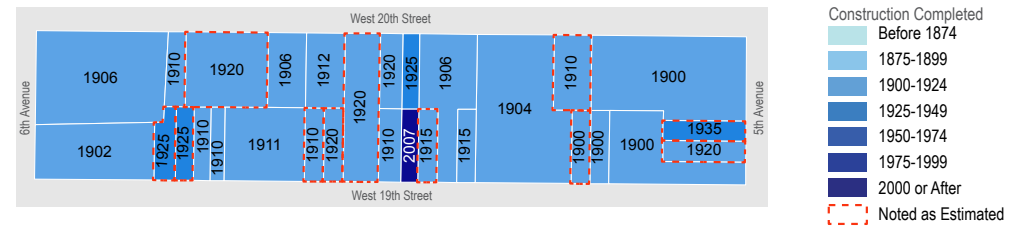


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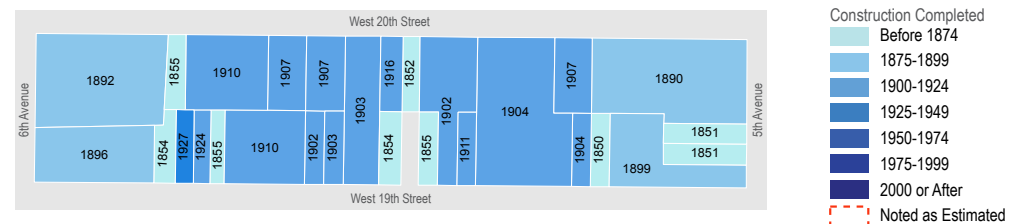


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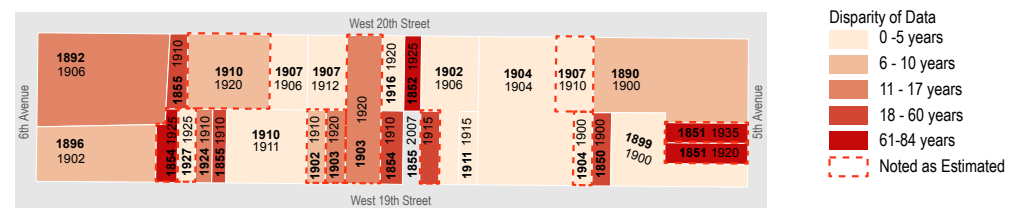
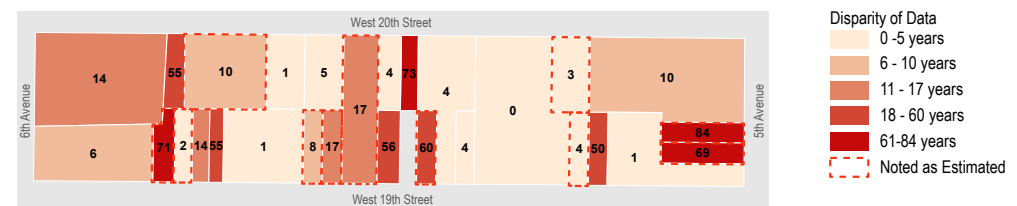


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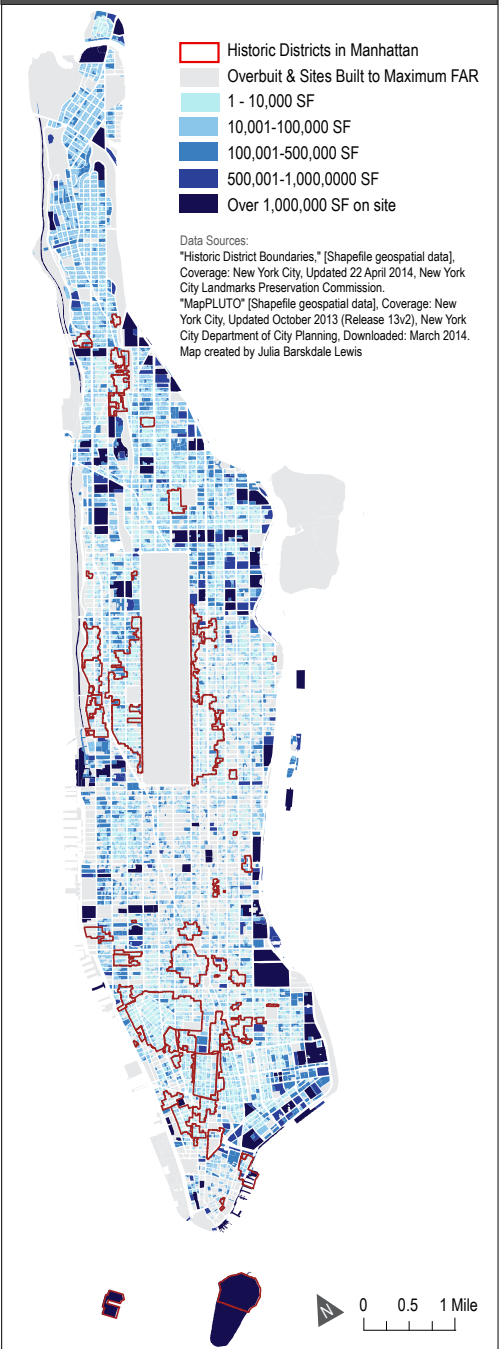
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Study 2: Remaining Developable Area in Manhattan

	Lots in Manhattan	Lots outside of Historic Districts	Lots inside of Historic Districts
# of Lots	43,315	32,886	10,429
Overdeveloped SF	354 million square feet	322 million square feet	33 million square feet
Number of Lots Built to Maximum FAR	590 lots	531 lots	59 lots
Remaining SF of Potential Development	981 million square feet	894 million square feet	87 million square feet

- The **87 million square feet** of available development in historic districts accounts for **8.89%** of the remaining developable square feet in Manhattan. This means that **91.1%** of the available developable square footage in Manhattan is outside of historic districts.

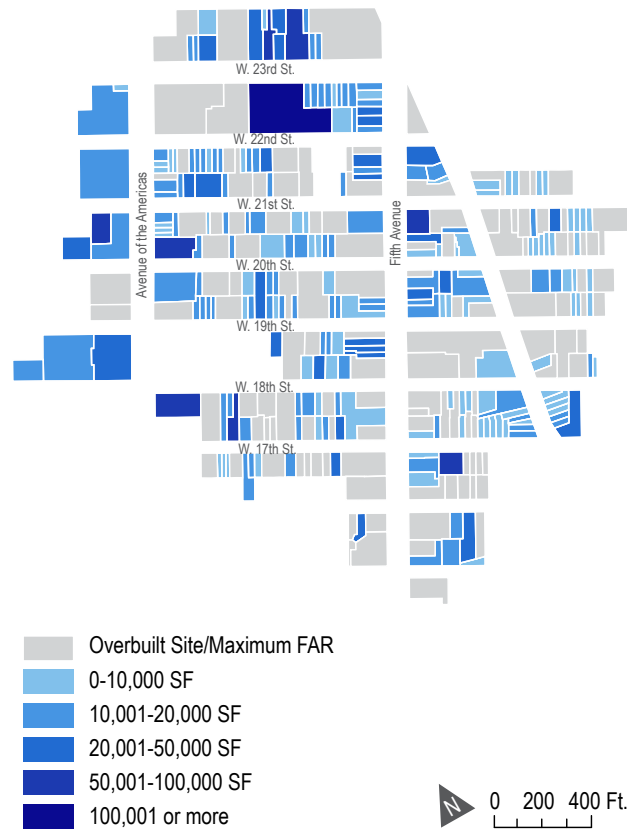
FIGURE 5
Remaining Square Feet of Development in Manhattan



Study 2: Remaining Developable Area in Ladies Mile

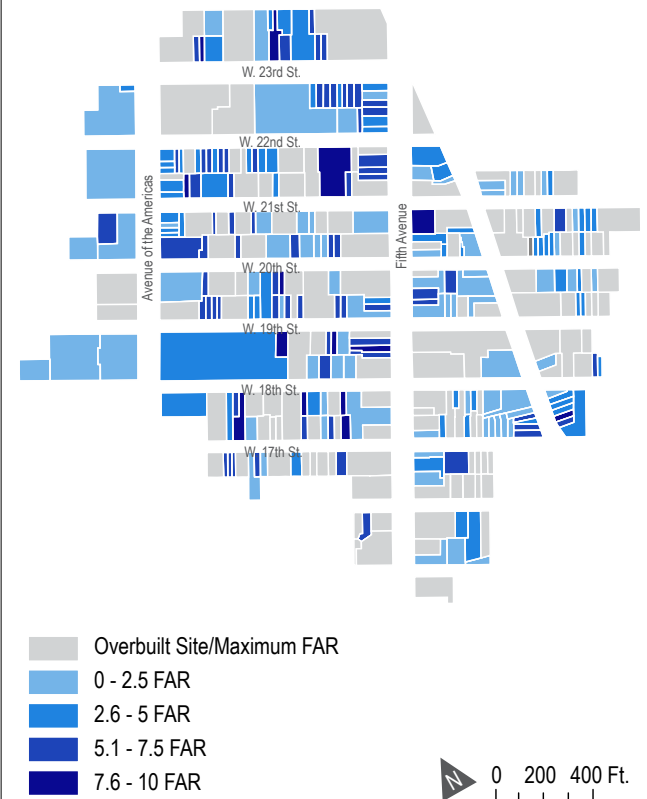
- **118 lots (33.42%)** are overbuilt totaling **2,539,956** square feet
- **Four** lots are built to the maximum FAR
- **4,036,211** square feet of remaining developable square feet on **231** lots
- The maximum developable square feet in Ladies' Mile is **19,547,545** so the remaining square feet of development potential account for **12.99%** of the developable area making the district **87.01%** built out.
- If the overbuilt portion is taken into account, Ladies Mile as a whole district is built out to **92.34%** capacity.

FIGURE 10:
Square Feet of Development Available in Ladies' Mile



Data Sources:
 "Historic District Boundaries," [Shapefile geospatial data], Coverage: New York City, Updated 22 April 2014, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.
 "MapPLUTO" [Shapefile geospatial data], Coverage: New York City, Updated October 2013 (Release 13v2), New York City Department of City Planning, Downloaded: March 2014.
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FIGURE 11:
FAR in Ladies' Mile

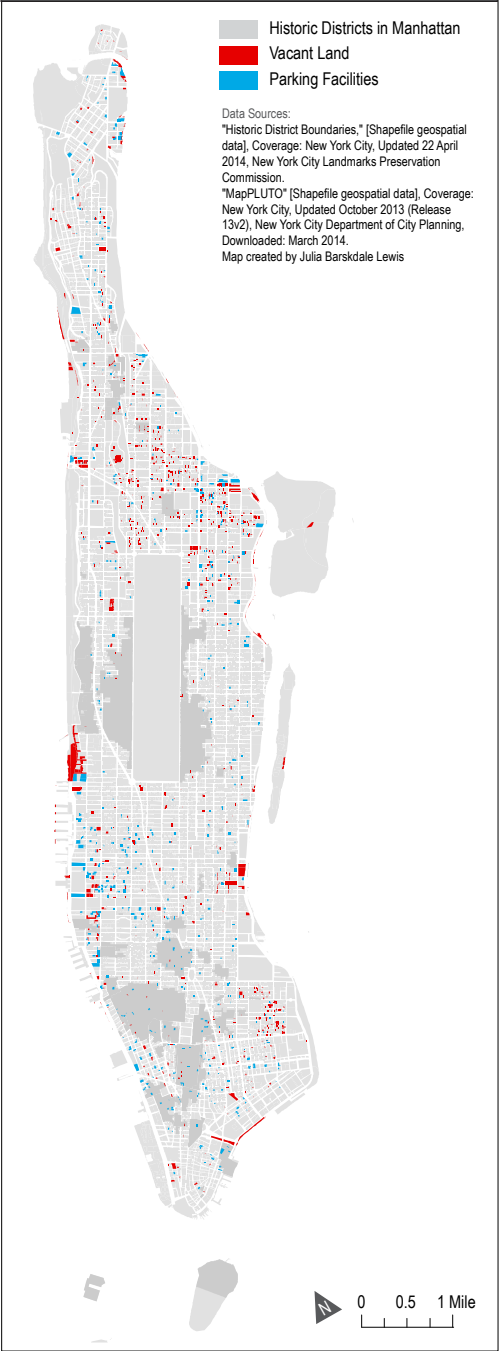


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Study 3: Vacant Land and Parking Facilities in Historic Districts

	Lots in Manhattan	Lots outside of Historic Districts	Lots inside of Historic Districts
# of Lots Accounted For	43,281 lots	32,886 lots	10,395 lots
Lots of Vacant Land	1,306 lots	1,256 lots (96.2%)	50 lots (3.8%)
Lots of Parking Facilities	781 lots	719 lots (92.1%)	62 lots (7.9%)

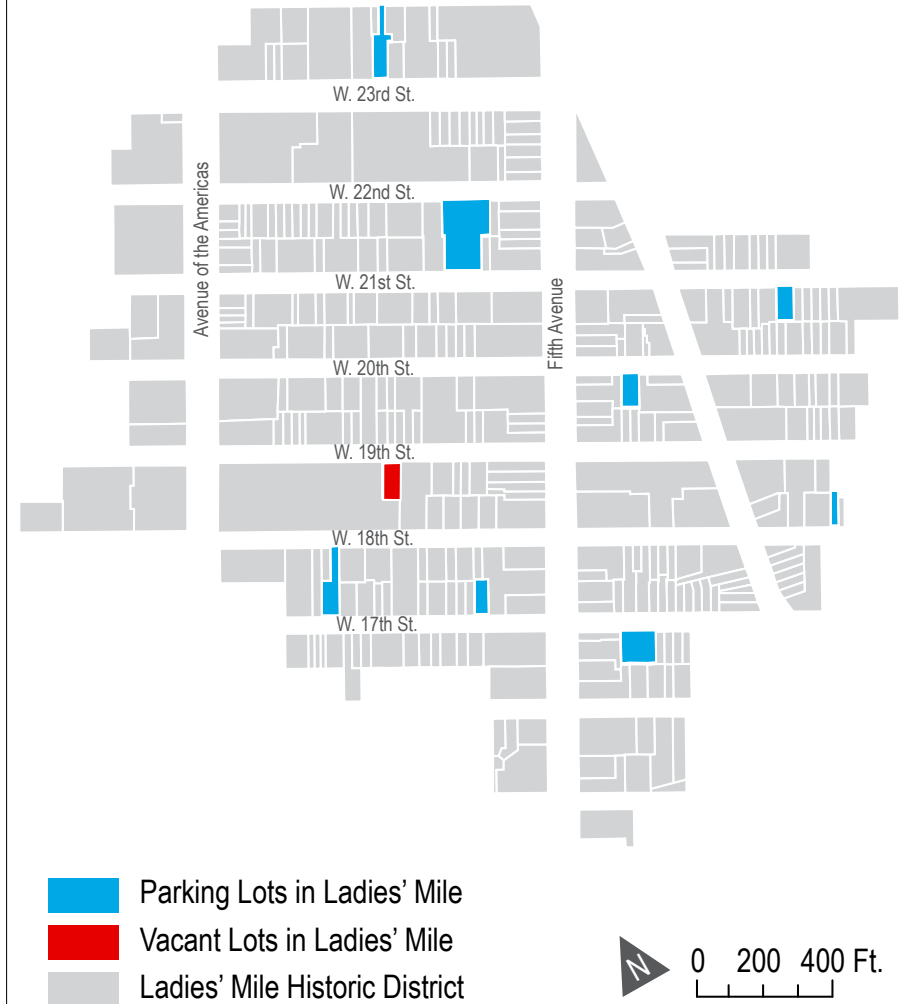
FIGURE 6
Vacant Land and Parking Facilities in Manhattan



Study 3: Vacant Land and Parking Facilities in Historic Districts

- **10** Parking Lots
- **1** Vacant Lot

FIGURE 12:
Vacant Land and Parking Facilities in Ladies' Mile



Data Sources:

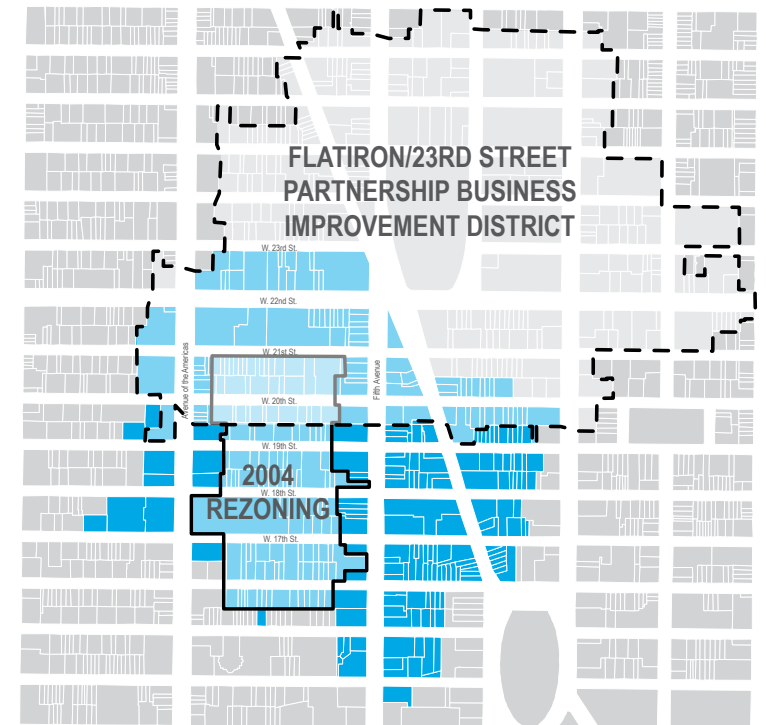
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

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Map created by Julia Barskdale Lewis

Study 4: New Uses in Historic Districts

FIGURE 13:
Ladies' Mile Rezoning & Business Improvement District



-  Ladies' Mile Historic District
-  Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership Business Improvement District
-  2004 Rezoning

 0 200 400 Ft.

Data Sources:

"Historic District Boundaries," [Shapefile geospatial data], Coverage: New York City, Updated 22 April 2014, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

"Ladies' Mile Rezoning – Proposed Zoning (C6-4A)" New York City Department of City Planning.

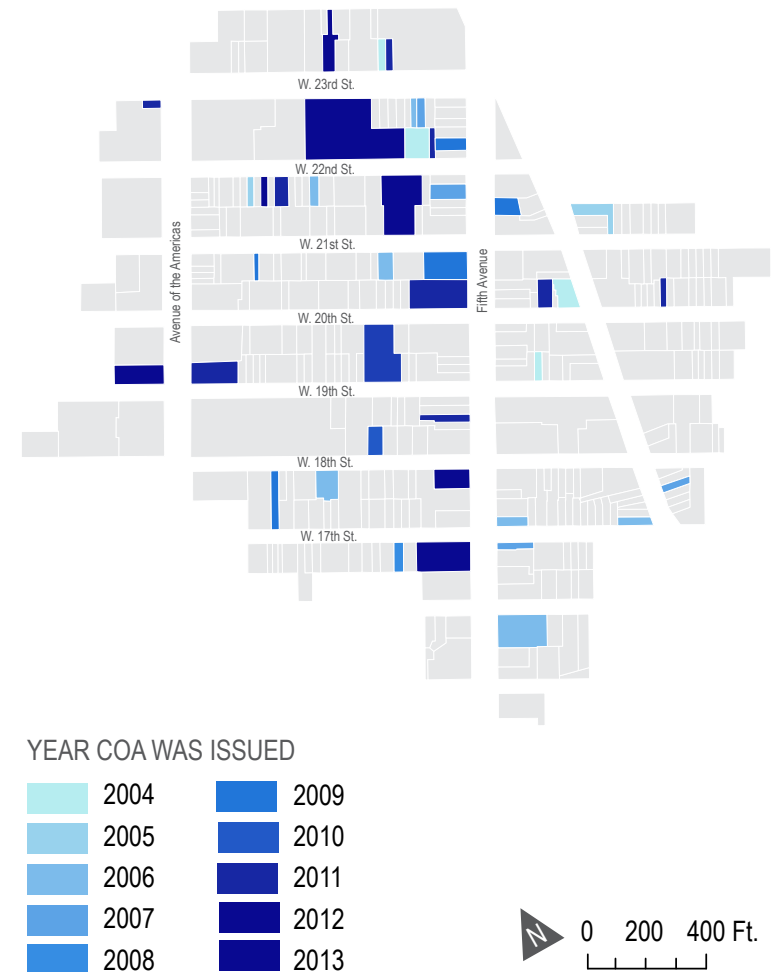
"MapPLUTO" [Shapefile geospatial data], Coverage: New York City, Updated October 2013 (Release 13v2), New York City Department of City Planning. Downloaded: March 2014.

"Neighborhood Map." Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership. Flatironbid.org. Accessed: 12 April 2014.

Map created by Julia Barskdale Lewis

Study 5: Investment in Historic Districts

FIGURE 14:
COA's Issued in Ladies' Mile Between 2003 and 2013



Data Sources:

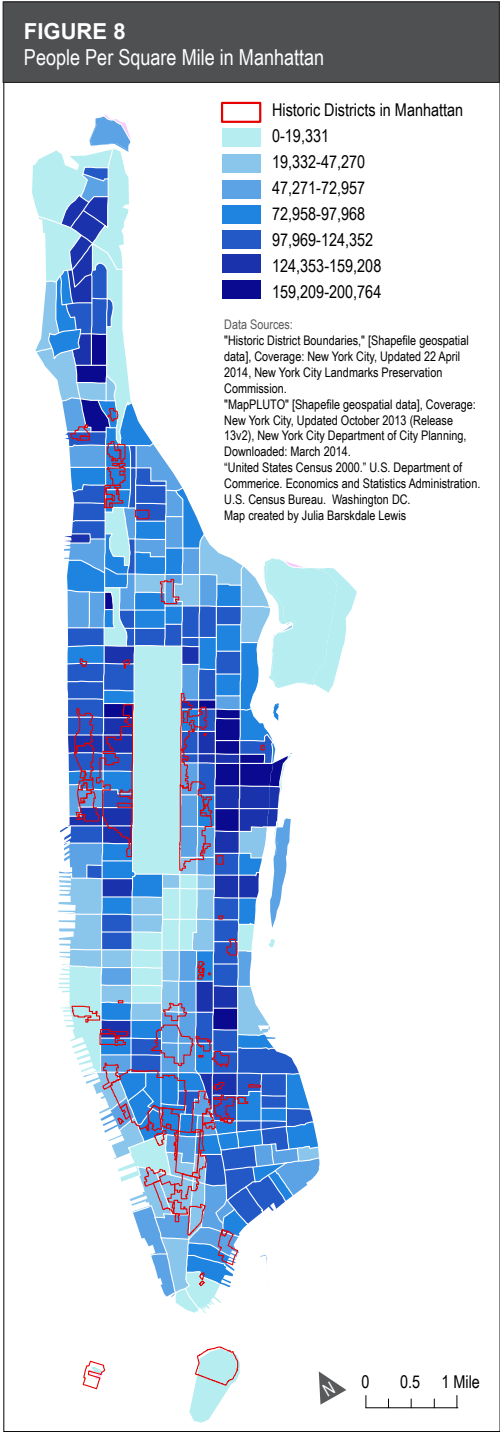
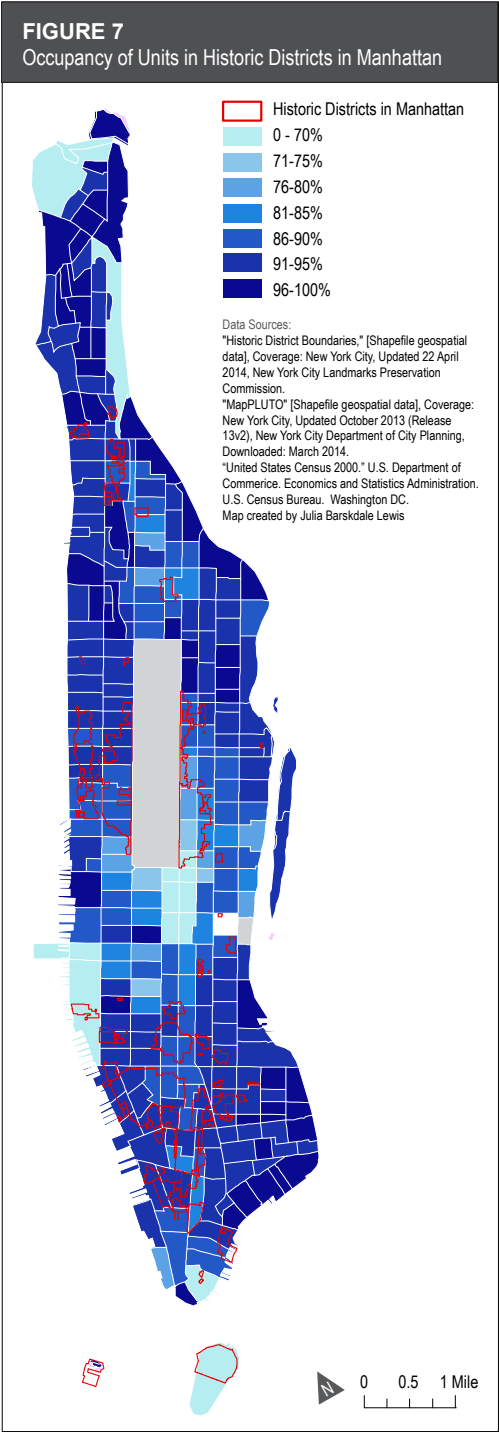
"Archive." Search Query: Ladies' Mile. New York Law School.
<http://www.citylandnyc.org/archives>. Accessed: March 2013.

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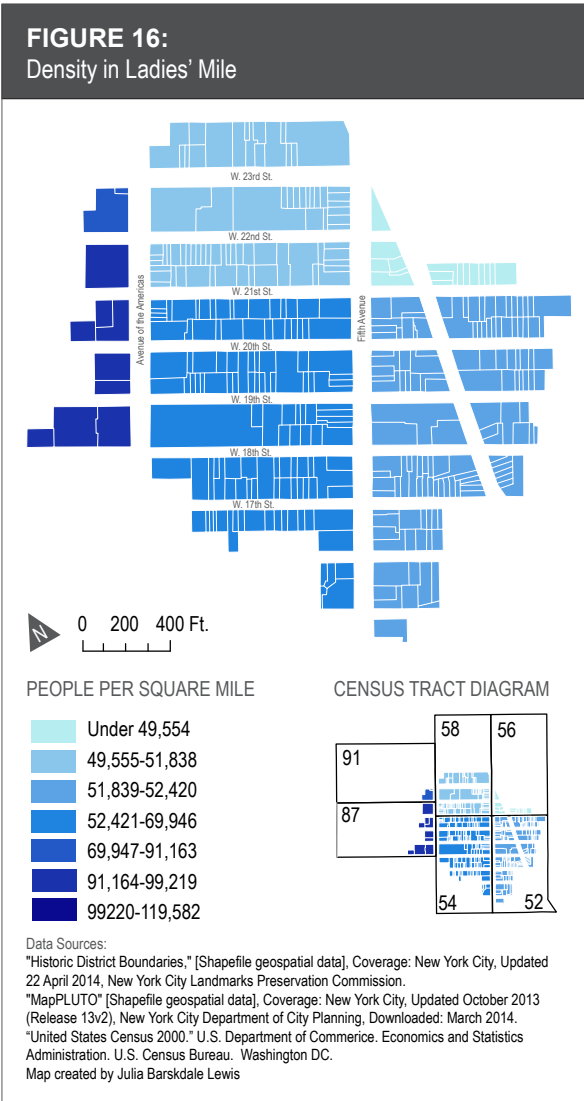
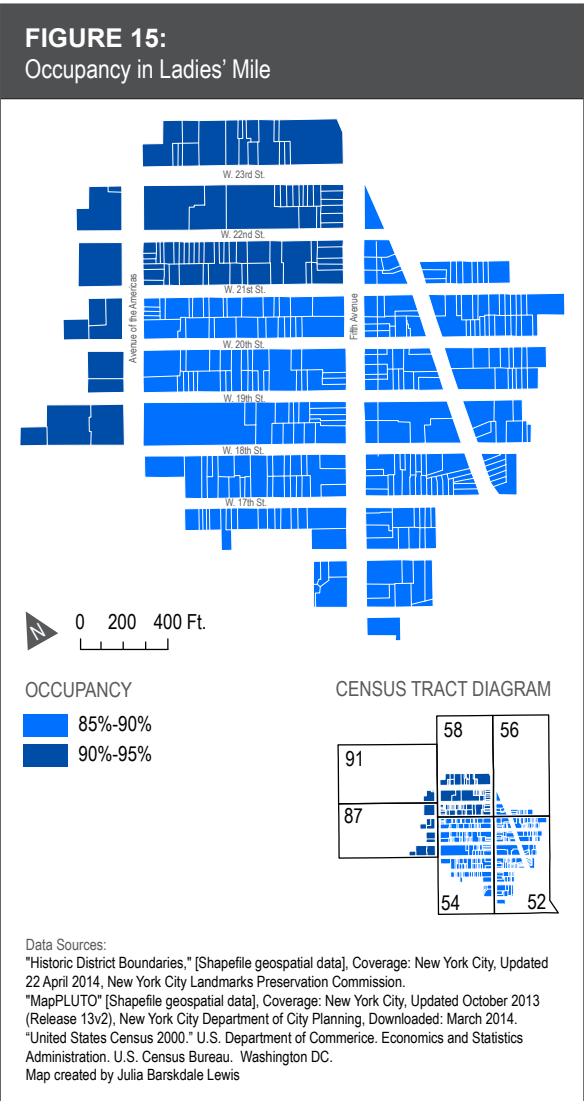
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Study 6: Occupancy and Density in Historic Districts



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Thank You!

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