Chapter 4: Open Space

A. INTRODUCTION

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," based on projections issued by the national Centers for Disease Control, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) expects that new cancer cases in New York City will increase from the current rate of 40,000 annually to 60,000 annually by 2050. While this increase is a projection among all age groups, this rise is being driven by two populations: older patients, whose cases are more acute and require more complex treatment, and younger patients who are being diagnosed with prostate, colon, and breast cancer at alarming rates. To meet this increase in patient volume and the new interventions that are needed to treat the growing number of acute cases, MSKCC will need to supplement its existing capacity with a purpose-built structure with 28 operating rooms (with four dedicated to interventional radiology procedures) and up to 206 patient beds including intensive care unit (ICU) and single rooms for immunocompromised patients, as well as medical support areas.

To fulfill this need, MSKCC is requesting a series of zoning actions to establish a zoning envelope to facilitate the development of a new 31-story (up to 594 feet including mechanical bulkhead), approximately 901,697 gross square foot (gsf) inpatient hospital building (the Proposed Project), also referred to as the "MSK Pavilion." It would be located on York Avenue between East 66th and East 67th Streets and would consist of 28 operating rooms, including recovery and intensive care facilities, up to 206 single-bedded patient rooms, clinical support, a double-height lobby, and 5 mechanical floors to house intensive technologies and air exchange systems. A two-story patient bridge across East 67th Street (Patient Bridge) connecting floors 5 and 6 of the Proposed Project with floors 8 and 9 of the Memorial Hospital building would serve as the primary connector for patients in either building to access medical services in the other building.

This chapter assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on open space resources. Open space is defined in the 2021 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* as publicly accessible, publicly or privately owned land that is available for leisure, play, sport, or serves to protect and enhance the natural environment. An open space assessment should be conducted if a project would have a direct effect on open space, such as eliminating or altering a publicly accessible open space, or an indirect effect, such as when an increase in population could overtax the capacity of an area's open spaces.

The Proposed Project would result in a new population coming to the Development Site—an incremental increase of an estimated 657 workers and 480 visitors (1,137 total) as compared to future conditions absent the Proposed Project. This projected population could result in additional demand for passive open space in the area. Therefore, in accordance with *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance, an open space assessment was conducted to determine whether the Proposed Project would result in significant adverse open space impacts.

B. PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

An open space analysis was conducted that determined that the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact due to an increase in open space users. The Proposed Project would not alter or eliminate any publicly accessible open space resources. Based on the analyses provided for shadows, air quality, noise, and construction, study area open spaces would not experience project-related significant adverse impacts.

The Proposed Project would introduce new workers and visitors to the Rezoning Area, which would increase demand on publicly accessible open space resources. Currently the passive open space ratio in the study area for non-residential users (0.058 acres/1,000 people) is below the City's guideline of 0.15 indicated in the *CEQR Technical Manual* and would remain below the guideline in both the future with the Proposed Project (the With Action condition) and the future without the Proposed Project (the No Action condition). While the Proposed Project would add some hospital workers and visitors to the area, it would also create a small amount of on-site open space to help offset the demand for passive open space from that new population. Overall, the Proposed Project would result in a very minimal decrease in the passive open space ratio from 0.0683 to 0.0680 compared with the No Action condition and therefore would not result in a significant adverse open space impact.

C. METHODOLOGY

DIRECT EFFECTS

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a project would directly affect open space conditions if it causes the loss of publicly accessible open space, changes the use of an open space so that it no longer serves the same user population, limits public access to an open space, or results in increased noise or air pollutant emissions, odor, or shadows that would temporarily or permanently affect the usefulness of publicly accessible open space. This chapter uses information from Chapter 5, "Shadows," Chapter 11, "Air Quality," Chapter 13, "Noise," and Chapter 16, "Construction") to determine whether the Proposed Project would have the potential to directly affect any open spaces in the area. A project can also directly affect an open space by enhancing its design or increasing its accessibility to the public. The direct effects analysis is included below in "The Future with the Proposed Project (With Action Condition)."

INDIRECT EFFECTS

Following the methodology of the *CEQR Technical Manual*, indirect open space effects may occur when a project would add enough of a population, either residents or workers, to noticeably diminish the ability of an area's open space to serve the future population.

Typically, an assessment of indirect effects is conducted when a project would introduce 200 or more residents or 500 or more workers to an area. The Proposed Project would introduce an incremental increase of approximately 657 workers and 480 visitors to the area by the analysis year. The Proposed Project would not introduce a new residential population to the area. Therefore, this assessment focuses on the anticipated non-residential population's effect on open space ratios. For smaller projects, a preliminary assessment is typically provided as an initial assessment of conditions within the study area and to clarify the degree to which an action would affect open space and the need for further analysis. If the assessment indicates the need for further analysis, a detailed analysis of open space should be performed.

The following sections describe the methodology for the analysis of indirect effects on open space, including establishing the study area, identifying open space user populations, creating an inventory of open space resources, and assessing the adequacy of open space resources.

WALK-TO-A-PARK SERVICE AREA

As part of *OneNYC 2050—Building a Strong and Fair City*, the City has put forth a goal that calls for 85 percent of New York City residents to live within walking distance of a park by 2030. To help the City reach this goal, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) has a Walk to a Park initiative that focuses on increasing access to parks and open space in areas of the City where residents live beyond walking distance to a park. The Walk to a Park Service Area is shown on **Figure 4-1**. Portions of the map that are not covered by a Walk to a Park Service Area are considered "walk gaps;" i.e., areas of the City that are not within a walking distance to a park.

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, as part of the preliminary assessment for open space, a project should be reviewed to determine if it is located in an area of the City within a Walk to a Park Service Area. Project sites that are located outside of a Walk to a Park Service Area (i.e., located in a known walk gap area) suggest that there is a need for a detailed analysis to be performed to determine if the project may further exacerbate a condition of residents living in areas of the City with inadequate park access, potentially leading to a significant impact. The Project Site is not located within a known walk gap area, and therefore further analysis with regard to this initiative is not warranted.

STUDY AREA

The *CEQR Technical Manual* recommends establishing study area boundaries as the first step in an open space analysis. Workers and visitors are assumed to travel up to ¼-mile to use open space and recreation areas. Therefore, as recommended in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a ¼-mile study area is used to analyze the Proposed Project's indirect effects on open space.

Consistent with *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance, the study area was adjusted to include all census tracts with at least 50 percent of their area within a ¼-mile of the Project Area. **Figure 4-2** shows the open space study area and the census tracts that comprise the study area.

OPEN SPACE USER POPULATIONS

Existing Conditions

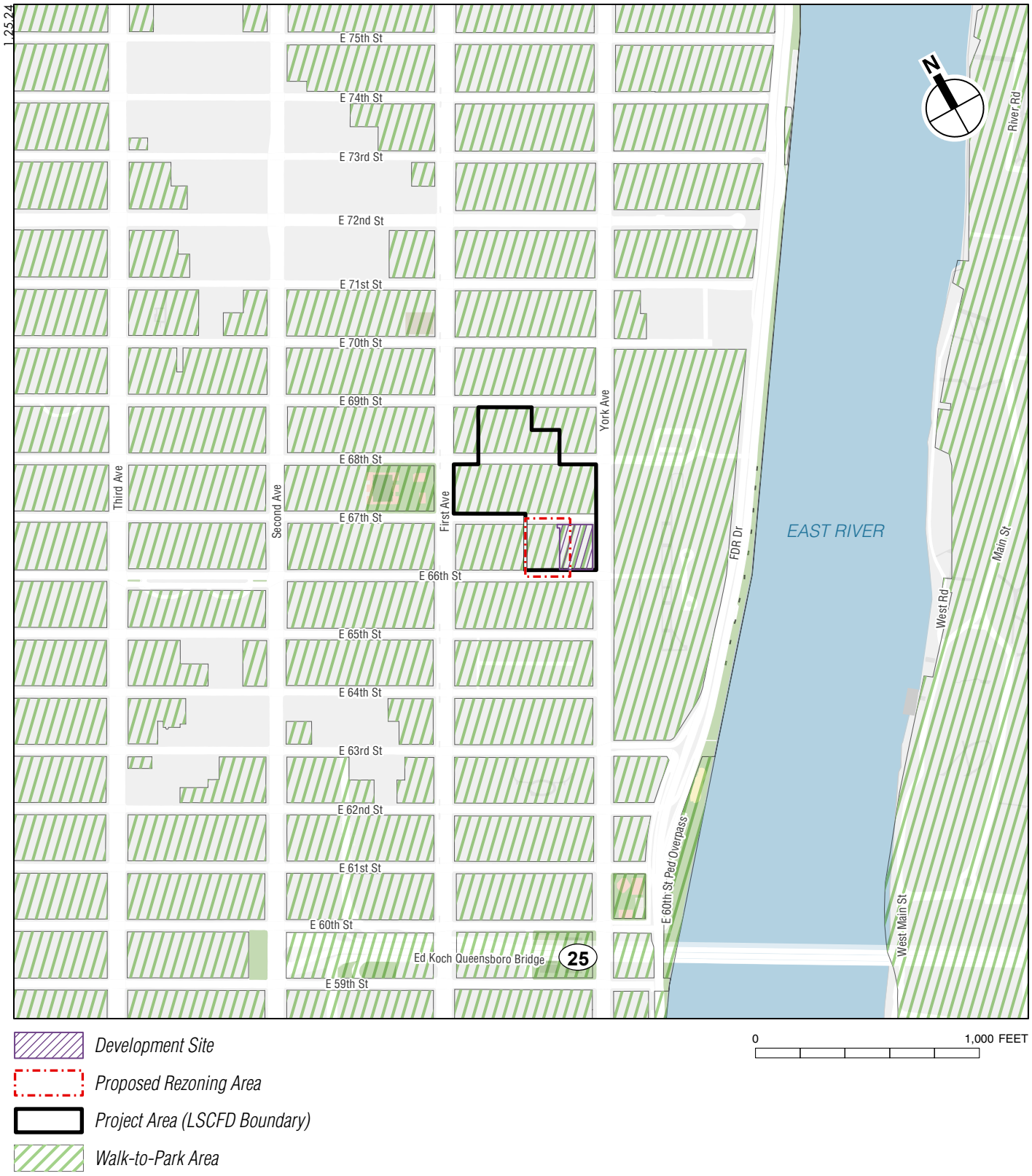
Data on the existing worker population within the study area was compiled from the 2019 Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) worker data for the census tracts in the study area.

No Action Condition

The future worker population in the study area in the No Action condition was projected by adding the number of workers anticipated to result from developments that are expected to be completed in the study area by the analysis year to the existing worker population.

With Action Condition

The future non-residential population in the With Action condition was determined by adding the incremental number of workers and visitors anticipated from the Proposed Project to the population in the No Action condition.



Walk-to-a-Park Service Area

MSK PAVILION

Figure 4-1



Open Space Study Area

MSK PAVILION

Figure 4-2

INVENTORY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Publicly accessible open spaces and recreational facilities located within the study area were inventoried using information from NYC Parks.

The *CEQR Technical Manual* defines publicly accessible open space as open space that is regularly open to the public during designated daily periods. Open spaces that do not fit this definition because they are not available to the public on a regular basis or are available only to a limited set of users are considered private open space and are not included in the quantitative open space analysis.

A field visit was conducted in October 2022 to document active and passive open spaces in the area. Active facilities are intended for vigorous activities, such as jogging, field sports, and children's active play. Such facilities might include basketball and handball courts, jogging paths, ball fields, and playground equipment. Passive facilities encourage such activities as strolling, reading, sunbathing, and people watching. Passive open spaces are characterized by picnic areas, walking paths, or gardens. Certain areas, such as lawns or public esplanades, can serve as both active and passive open spaces. This analysis focuses on passive open space, because workers and hospital visitors would not be expected to use active resources. However, for the open space inventory both active and passive amenities were recorded.

The analysis also accounts for open space within the study area that will be created in the No Action condition. New plaza areas that would be created as part of the Proposed Project are also accounted for in this analysis.

ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

The adequacy of open space in the study area is quantitatively assessed using a ratio of usable open space acreage to the study area population; this is referred to as the open space ratio. To assess the adequacy of open space resources, open space ratios are compared with planning goals set by the City as described in the *CEQR Technical Manual*. Although these open space ratios are not meant to determine whether a project might have a significant adverse impact on open space resources, they are helpful guidelines in understanding the extent to which user populations are served by open space resources. For non-residential populations, 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 people is typically considered an "optimal ratio." In terms of assessing potential project impacts, projects that would reduce the open space ratio for a nonresidential population consider the project's effect on passive open space in the study area. The more the open space ratio falls below the optimal ratio of 0.15 acres of passive space per 1,000 population, the more likely the decrease would lead to a significant impact.

In addition to the quantitative factors cited above, the *CEQR Technical Manual* also recommends consideration of qualitative factors in assessing the potential for open space impacts, when warranted. These include the availability of nearby destination open space resources and the beneficial effects of new open space provided by a project, as applicable.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

STUDY AREA POPULATION

Based on 2019 LEHD data, the study area has a population of approximately 51,089 workers (see **Table 4-1**). The worker population consists primarily of office workers. Typically, these

"non-residential" open space users seek leisure in passive open spaces during the lunch hour and midday period.

Table 4-1
Existing Worker Population

Census Tract	Worker Population
106.02	2,142
116	30,008
118	4,870
124	10,204
126.01	3,865
Total Worker Population	51,089
Source: U.S. Census Bureau LEHD Data, 2019	

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

There are 14 publicly accessible open spaces within the study area that provide a total of 5.28 acres of publicly accessible open space, including 2.95 acres of open space for passive recreation (see **Figure 4-2** and **Table 4-2**).

Table 4-2
Study Area Open Space Inventory

Map No.[1]	Name	Location	Owner	Total Acres	Active	Passive	Amenities	Condition/ Utilization[2]
1	Andrew Haswell Green Park	FDR Drive between East 60th and East 63rd Streets	NYC Parks	0.846	0.423	0.423	Landscaping, seating (benches), waterfront esplanade, dog run, lawn, art installation	Excellent/Low
2	400 East 70th Street (POPS)	Southeast corner of First Avenue and East 70th Street	Insignia Residential Group	0.11	0.00	0.11	Landscaping, seating (ledge and bench)	Good/Low
3	524 East 72nd Street (POPS)	South side of East 72nd Street between FDR Drive and York Avenue	Gumley-Haft Inc.	0.06	0.00	0.06	Seating (ledge) and water feature	Good/Low
4	422 East 72nd Street (POPS)	South side of East 72nd Street between First and York Avenues	Insignia Residential Group	0.11	0.00	0.11	Landscaping, seating (ledge)	Excellent/Low
5	Twenty-Four Sycamores Park	East side of York Avenue between East 60th and East 63rd Streets	NYC Parks	0.62	0.31	0.31	Landscaping, seating (benches), playground, basketball and handball courts, spray shower	Good/Moderate
6	300 East 74th Street (POPS)	Southeast corner of Second Avenue and East 74th Steet; 301 E 73rd Street	AKAM Associates - 260 Madison Avenue	0.14	0.00	0.14	Landscaping, seating (benches)	Excellent/Low
7	254 E 68th Street (POPS)	Full blockfront on West side of Second Avenue between East 67th and 68th Streets	Rudin Management Co. Inc., 345 Park Avenue	0.19	0.00	0.19	Landscaping, seating (tables and chairs)	Excellent/Low
8	St. Catherine's Park	Full blockfront on First Avenue, between East 67th and 68th Streets	NYC Parks	1.38	1.00	0.38	Landscaping, seating (tables, benches, and chairs), water feature, playground equipment, sports court, and a track	Excellent/High
9	304 E 65th Street (POPS)	Southeast corner of Second Avenue and East 65th Street	Stroock & Stroock & Lavin LLP - 180 Maiden Lane	0.09	0.00	0.09	Landscaping, seating (benches and ledges), water feature	Excellent/Low
10	200 E 65th Street (POPS)	East side of Third Avenue between East 64th and 65th Streets	Milford Properties - 200 East 65th Street	0.18	0.00	0.18	Landscaping, seating (ledges)	Excellent/Low
11	One East River Place (POPS)	North side of East 72nd Street between FDR Drive and York Avenue	One East River Place Realty Company, LLC, c/o Sheldon H. Solow	0.11	0.00	0.11	Landscaping, seating (café chairs and tables) and water feature	Good/Low
12	401 East 60th Street (POPS)	Full blockfront on east side of First Avenue between East 60th and 61st Streets.	East 60th Street Associates L.P., c/o The Brodsky Organization	0.15	0.00	0.15	Landscaping, seating (fixed chairs)	Good/Low
13	John Finley Walk - East River Esplanade	FDR Drive between East 63rd and 74th Streets	NYC Parks	1.20	0.60	0.60	Walkway, bikeway, seating (benches)	Good/Moderate
14	York Avenue Open Space	West Side of York between East 70th and 71st Streets	NYP/Weill Cornell	0.09	0.00	0.09	Trees, plantings, seating	Excellent/High
			Study Area Total	**5.28**	**2.33**	**2.95**		

Note:
[1] See Figure 4-2 for open space resources.
[2] A field survey was conducted in October 2022.
Source:
NYC Parks; Municipal Arts Society POPS Mapper

EAST RIVER ESPLANADE

The study area contains two open spaces that are part of the East River Esplanade: a 1.20-acre section of Andrew Haswell Green Park and an adjacent portion of the esplanade known as John Finley Walk.

The linear John Finley Walk runs along the FDR Drive, with a walking path/bikeway, and bench seating. Within the study area there are approximately 1.2 acres, of which approximately 0.60 acres are devoted to passive uses while 0.60 acres are devoted to active uses. John Finley Walk continues to the north of the study area and to the south where it passes through Andrew Haswell Green Park. Andrew Haswell Green Park is in the process of being reconstructed; portions currently open include the elevated sitting platform and dog park.

ST. CATHERINE'S PARK

The largest open space in the study area is the 1.38-acre St. Catherine's Park, occupying the eastern half of the block bounded by First and Second Avenues and East 67th and 68th Streets. The layout of the park mimics that of the Santa Maria Sopra Minerva church in Rome, which houses the remains of St. Catherine. A flagpole represents the altar, play areas are the pews, and the elephant sprinklers are an adaptation of a sculpture that resides in front of the Roman church. St. Catherine's Park is devoted to both active and passive uses. Amenities include landscaping, seating (tables, benches, and chairs), a water feature, playground equipment, sports court, and a track.

TWENTY-FOUR SYCAMORES PARK

Just west of Andrew Haswell Green Park, Twenty-Four Sycamores Park takes up the small block bounded by York Avenue, the FDR Drive and 60th and 61st Streets. It includes landscaping, seating (benches), playground areas, basketball and handball courts, and a spray shower.

PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES (POPS)

In addition to the City-owned parks described above, there are eleven privately owned public spaces in the study area. These open spaces, which generally surround residential buildings and contain landscaped areas with bench or ledge seating. Some of these spaces, such as 254 East 68th Street and 304 East 65th Street, are newly renovated. They range in condition from good to excellent, with low to moderate utilization. The open space along the west side of York Avenue between East 70th and 71st Streets is in front of the New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Stich Medical Building and Payson House. It includes set back plaza areas with seating and plantings along the York Avenue blockfront.

ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE ADEQUACY

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

The study area has a total of 2.95 acres of passive open space. With an estimated worker population of 51,089, the worker study area has a passive open space ratio of 0.058 acres per 1,000 workers (see **Table 4-3**). This is below the City's goal of 0.15 acres of passive space per 1,000 workers.

Table 4-3
Existing Conditions: Adequacy of Open Space Resources

Worker Population	Passive Open Space Acreage	Passive Open Space Ratio per 1,000 People	Passive Open Space Goal
51,089	2.95	0.058	0.15

Notes:
Ratios in acres per 1,000 persons.
The City's open space ratio goals for total and active open spaces are not applicable to the Proposed Project under *CEQR Technical Manual* methodology, as the project would only be introducing a worker population to the study area.
Sources: NYC Parks; MapPLUTO

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

In addition to publicly accessible open spaces described in the quantitative analysis, there are a number of other resources available to local workers.

Central Park is located several blocks beyond the open space study area. With abundant landscaping and bench seating along the western side of Fifth Avenue, it serves as a lunch hour spot for workers who are able to travel a bit farther.

Rockefeller University, located along York Avenue and the FDR Drive between East 63rd and East 68th Streets, contains private open space that is accessible to scientists, students, and staff of the University. The existing user population includes approximately 720 on-campus residents among 1,900 faculty and staff, and approximately 10 non-residential students. The university population has access to a 14-acre campus with abundant open space interspersed throughout university buildings and laboratories. A recent expansion added approximately 55,000 (sf) (1.26 acres) of landscaped roof area to the campus.

Additional open spaces include public parks such as Tramway Plaza at 59th Street and Second Avenue, as well as privately owned publicly accessible spaces such as the large garden at 211 East 70th Street.

E. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT (NO ACTION CONDITION)

Absent the approval of the Proposed Project, the two existing buildings on the Development Site, Scholars and Sloan would remain in place and there would be no open space areas added to the site.

INDIRECT EFFECTS

STUDY AREA POPULATION

In the No Action condition, there are known development projects within the ¼-mile study area that are expected to be completed: a 94,000-sf expansion at the Hospital for Special Surgery with 26 inpatient beds at 71 East 71st Street (at FDR Drive); an approximately 134-unit residential building with 8,585 sf of retail at 242 East 71st Street; and the New York Blood Center project at 310 East 67th. Taken together, these projects are expected to add approximately 3,116 workers to the ¼-mile study area, bringing the total worker population to 54,205 in the No Action condition.

STUDY AREA OPEN SPACES

In the No Action condition, two known changes to the open space resources within the study area are expected to be completed by the analysis year. These include the renovations at Andrew Haswell Green Park and the POPS plaza at 200 East 69th Street. Overall, the total open space acreage will increase by approximately 1.3 acres, of which 0.757 acres would be passive open space (see **Table 4-4**). The total amount of passive open space in the study area would therefore increase to 3.70 acres in the No Action condition.

There are also planned improvements to St. Catherine's Park that will not affect the quantitative analysis but are expected to enhance user's experience and enjoyment of the park. Improvements may include a limited reconstruction of the playground in the eastern section of the park, reconstruction of the comfort station, and renovation of the multipurpose play area.

Table 4-4
No Action Condition: Publicly Accessible Open Space Changes

Map No.[1]	Name	Location	Owner	Planned Acreage	Planned Amenities
1B	Andrew Haswell Green Park	FDR Drive between East 60th and East 63rd Streets	NYC Parks	1.134 Total 0.567 Passive	New landscaping, path, and seating
15	200 E 69th Street (POPS)	East side of Third Avenue between East 68th and 69th Streets	Trump Org.	0.19 Total 0.19 Passive	New landscaping and seating
Study Area Total				**0.757 Passive**	

Note: [1] See **Figure 4-2** for open space resources.
Source: NYC Parks; MAS POPS Mapper

ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE ADEQUACY

As shown in **Table 4-5**, with a total worker population of 54,205 and 3.70 acres of passive open space, the passive open space ratio will increase to 0.0683 acres per 1,000 workers in the No Action condition. The open space ratio will remain below the City's goal of 0.15 acres per 1,000 workers.

Table 4-5
No Action Condition: Adequacy of Open Space Resources

Worker Population	Passive Open Space Acreage	Passive Open Space Ratio per 1,000 People	Passive Open Space Goal
54,205	3.70	0.0683	0.15

Note: Ratios in acres per 1,000 people.
Sources: NYC Parks; MapPLUTO.

F. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT (WITH ACTION CONDITION)

DIRECT EFFECTS

The detailed analysis presented in Chapter 5, "Shadows," determined that the Proposed Project would not result in incremental shadows that would substantially affect the use of area open spaces or the health of their trees and plantings. Similarly, the analyses presented in Chapter 11, "Air

Quality," Chapter 13, "Noise," and Chapter 16, "Construction," have not identified any conditions that would result in direct effects that would constitute a significant adverse impact to open space.

INDIRECT EFFECTS

STUDY AREA POPULATION

Development by the analysis year would introduce an estimated 657 workers and 480 daily visitors (assuming two visitors per day for each of the 240 daily patients), for an incremental increase in the nonresidential population of 1,137. Accounting for these workers and visitors added by the Proposed Project, the total population would be 55,342.

STUDY AREA OPEN SPACES

The Proposed Project is expected to result in a small increase in open space on the Development Site. Accounting for the new entry plazas to the building, there would be approximately 2,800 sf of space that would include landscaping and seating. This passive open space would work towards addressing the needs of the building population and the general public for a place to sit, read, or eat lunch outdoors and would reduce the need for occupants of the building to use other open spaces in the study area.

The addition of this new amenity to the open space inventory would increase the amount of passive open space in the study area by 0.064 acres.

ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE ADEQUACY

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

As shown in **Tables 4-6 and 4-7**, with a total worker population of 55,342 and 3.77 acres of passive open space, the passive open space ratio would decrease very minimally, from 0.0.0683 to 0.0680 acres per 1,000 nonresidents in the With Action condition. The open space ratio would remain below the City's goal of 0.15 acres per 1,000 workers.

Table 4-6
With Action Condition: Adequacy of Open Space Resources

Worker Population	Passive Open Space Acreage	Passive Open Space Ratio per 1,000 People	Passive Open Space Goal
55,342	3.77	0.0680	0.15

Note: Ratios in acres per 1,000 people.
Sources: NYC Parks; MapPLUTO.

Table 4-7
Passive Open Space Ratios Summary

Ratio	City Goal (acres per 1,000 Workers)	No Action Condition	With Action Condition	Percent Change
Passive	0.15	0.0683	0.0680	0.44%

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

As noted above, in addition to the study area open spaces, it is assumed that local workers would also be able to access more distant major parks such as Central Park, additional open spaces such as Tramway Plaza at 59th Street and Second Avenue, and privately owned publicly accessible spaces such that lie just outside the study area boundaries. In addition, Rockefeller University would continue to provide access for its students and staff on its 14-acre campus, thereby reducing the demand of some of the area's nonresidential population on publicly accessible open spaces.

IMPACT DETERMINATION

The Proposed Project would not result in a direct displacement or alteration of existing open space within the study area and would not substantially reduce the passive open space ratio.

While the Proposed Project would add some hospital workers and visitors to the area, it would also create a small amount of on-site open space to help offset the demand for passive open space from that new population. Overall, the change in the passive open space ratio from 0.0683 to 0.0680 would constitute a 0.44 percent change from the No Action condition (below the 1 percent threshold for further assessment) and would not be considered significant, especially when considering the additional public open spaces available just outside of the study area and larger public open spaces further out including Central Park. The Proposed Project would not result in noise, air pollutants, odors, or shadows on public open spaces that would affect their function, usability, or enjoyment. Overall, there would be a minimal change in the passive open space ratio and the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact to open space. ✶