# Chapter 5: Open Space

## A. INTRODUCTION

The proposed project would result in an increase in residential population on the project block compared to conditions analyzed in the 2001 *FEIS*. Therefore, this chapter examines the proposed project's potential impacts on open space resources in accordance with the guidelines of the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*. The analysis updates changes in background conditions since the 2001 *FEIS* and assesses whether any changed background conditions and the differences in program elements between the proposed development program and those assessed in the 2001 *FEIS* for the project block would result in any significant adverse impacts on open space that were not addressed in the 2001 *FEIS*.

This chapter examines potential direct effects of the proposed project on nearby publicly accessible open spaces (e.g., addition or reduction in open space, shadows, noise increases) as well as indirect effects created by changes in demand for and use of the area's open spaces. The analysis inventories conditions and use of open spaces within a ½-mile radius of the project area and addresses impacts on these facilities both qualitatively and quantitatively. Compared to conditions on the project block in the future without the proposed project, the proposed project would result in a decrease in the number of workers, and this analysis therefore focuses on potential effects on residential users of the area's open space resources.

### PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the methodology of the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, a preliminary analysis of the proposed project's indirect effects on open space was conducted to determine the need for a detailed analysis. The preliminary analysis concluded that the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts on public open space that were not addressed in the 2001 *FEIS* and that a detailed analysis is not necessary. Consistent with the findings in the 2001 *FEIS*, the proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts on public open space.

Under the existing and future conditions, the active open space ratios would be below DCP's planning goals for open space. There would continue to be a shortfall of active open space, and the proposed project would result in an approximately 2.3 percent decrease in the active and passive public open space ratios as compared to the future without the proposed project. However, these decreases would be approximately 0.03 and 0.01 acres per 1,000 residents and would not be considered a significant change. There are large open space resources outside the study area, such as Central Park and other portions of Hudson River Park, that would continue to serve the study area population and the proposed project would provide recreation facilities for residents, such as an outdoor courtyard and fitness center, to offset project-generated open space demand. Furthermore, the proposed project would not result in any adverse direct effects to public open space related to shadows, air quality, noise, or odors. The proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts on public open space resources in the study area that were not addressed in the 2001 *FEIS*.

## B. SUMMARY OF 2001 FEIS FINDINGS

The 2001 *FEIS* analyzed the potential impacts on open space resulting from the resulting from the development of the office-office and office-residential scenarios. In the office-office scenario, two office towers would have been developed; in the office-residential scenario, there would have been a western office tower and an eastern residential tower. In both scenarios, the midblock would have had a lower-rise structure that would be used for auto sales and service, storage uses, possible studio space, ground-floor retail, and parking. The 2001 *FEIS* assessed potential impacts on open space within a study area covering the area west of Eighth Avenue between West 47th and West 68th Streets. As presented in the 2001 *FEIS*, both scenarios would add new workers to the area; the office-residential scenario would also add new residents.

While the area would have remained underserved in terms of active open space, it was found that the West 57th Street Rezoning project would result in only a minimal decline in open space per resident and would not significantly affect the open space ratios of the study area. Moreover, the 2001 *FEIS* found that the proximity of Central Park would have continued to be a factor in relieving the active open space deficiency of the residential study area. The analysis also considered the benefits of the Hudson River Park, located just across Route 9A from the project block and providing a 5-mile waterfront bikeway/walkway and Riverside South parks.

Overall, the 2001 *FEIS* concluded that both scenarios would not have resulted in any significant adverse impacts on open space on the project block or within the study area.

## C. METHODOLOGY

### ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

As discussed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the analyses in this Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) compare conditions in the future without the proposed project to conditions in the future with the proposed project. The future without the proposed project scenario in all technical areas assumes that none of the discretionary actions now being sought by the applicant are approved. Absent those approvals, it is assumed that development on the projected development sites would be within the envelope of the development analyzed in the 2001 *FEIS*, but with a commercial building containing approximately 331,300 gsf of office use, 67,500 gsf of retail use and 239 public parking spaces on projected development site 1. (Absent the approvals, there would be no change in the assumed development of projected development site 2—the existing mini-storage building would remain). The assumption regarding projected development site 1 is based on the fact that the applicant has applied for a building permit for such a building (the permitted building). The permitted building can be constructed under the land use approvals granted in 2001 without further discretionary approvals or actions. It would be smaller than that which is permitted under current zoning, and, accordingly, assuming that development on projected development site 1 as a basis for comparing the impacts of the proposed project to the future without the proposed project is more conservative than using the more fully built out development scenario that was analyzed in the 2001 *FEIS*.

### DIRECT EFFECTS ANALYSIS

According to the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, a proposed action would have a direct effect on an open space if it causes the physical loss of public open space because of encroachment onto

the space or displacement of the 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 causes increased noise or air pollutant emissions, odors, or shadows that would affect its usefulness, whether on a permanent or temporary basis. This chapter uses information from Chapter 6, "Shadows," Chapter 11, "Air Quality," and Chapter 13, "Noise," to determine whether the proposed project would directly affect any open spaces near the project area. A proposed 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 in the "Probable Impacts of the Proposed Project" portion of Section D, "Preliminary Assessment."

## INDIRECT EFFECTS ANALYSIS

Following the methodology of the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, indirect open space impacts may occur when a proposed action would add enough population, either residents or non-residents to noticeably diminish the ability of an area's open space to serve the existing or future population.

The 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines call for an open space analysis when an action would result in a direct effect (e.g., the physical loss or alteration of public open space) or an indirect effect caused by the added demand on an area's open spaces. Typically, an assessment is conducted when a project would introduce 200 or more residents or 500 or more workers to an area. However, the thresholds for an open space assessment vary depending on whether the project is located in an area of the city that is considered either underserved or well-served by open space. Since the proposed project is located in an area that is neither well-served nor underserved, the 200 resident and 500 worker thresholds were applied in this analysis. When compared to the future without the proposed project and the scenarios analyzed in the 2001 *FEIS*, the proposed project would result in a net increase of up to 863 residential units and 1,415 new residents on the project block. Because the proposed project would introduce more than 200 new residents, a preliminary analysis was conducted to assess the proposed project's potential indirect effects on residential users of the area's open space resources. The purpose of a preliminary assessment is to clarify the degree to which an action would affect open space and the need for further analysis. If the preliminary assessment indicates the need for further analysis, a detailed analysis of open space should be performed.

Although the proposed project would introduce new workers to the project block, it would introduce fewer workers than would exist on the project block in the future without the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a decrease of workers on the project block compared to the future without the proposed project and the scenarios analyzed in the 2001 *FEIS*, and an analysis of potential impacts on non-residential users of open space is not warranted.

Using the methodology of the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, the adequacy of open space in the study area is assessed quantitatively using a ratio of usable open space acreage to the study area population—the open space ratio. This quantitative measure is then used to assess the changes in the adequacy of open space resources in the future, both with and without the proposed project. In addition, qualitative factors are considered in making an assessment of a proposed action's effects on open space resources. New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) correspondence regarding the conclusions of the analysis is included in Appendix A, "Agency Correspondence."

*STUDY AREA*

According to the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, the first step in assessing potential open space impacts is to establish study areas appropriate for the new population(s) to be added as a result of the proposed project. Study areas are based on the distance a person is assumed to walk to reach a neighborhood open space. Workers (or non-residents) typically use passive open spaces within an approximately 10-minute walking distance (about ¼-mile). Residents are more likely to travel farther to reach parks and recreational facilities. They are assumed to walk about 20 minutes (about a ½-mile distance) to reach both passive and active neighborhood open spaces. The proposed project is expected to result in new residential development; therefore, a residential study area based on a ½-mile radius from the proposed project area was evaluated (see **Figure 5-1**).

As recommended in the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, the residential open space study area comprises all census tracts that have at least 50 percent of their area located within ½-mile of the project block. All publicly accessible open spaces, as well as all residents and non-residents within census tracts that fall at least 50 percent within the ½-mile radius, were included in the study area. The open space study area is mapped over portions of Community Districts 4 and 7.

*OPEN SPACE USER POPULATIONS*

*Existing Conditions*

Census data were used to identify potential open space users within the study area. For this analysis, the open space user group is area residents. To determine the number of residents within the study area, data were compiled from the 2010 Census for the tracts in the study area.

*The Future Without the Proposed Project*

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy" a number of new developments are expected to be constructed by 2015 in the ½-mile study area. To estimate the population expected in the study areas in the future without the proposed project, an average household size of 1.64 persons per household was applied to the number of new housing units expected in each area.[1]

*Probable Impacts of the Proposed Project*

The population introduced by the proposed project was estimated by multiplying the maximum number of units by an average household size of 1.64 persons per household.

*INVENTORY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES*

Publicly accessible open spaces and recreational facilities within the study area were inventoried to determine their size, character, utilization, amenities, and condition. Open spaces that are not accessible to the general public or that do not offer usable recreational areas, such as spaces where seating is unavailable, were generally excluded from the survey. The information used for this analysis was gathered through field studies conducted in April 2011 on weekdays and from the DPR website.

[1] Consistent with the socioeconomic conditions study area, this is the average household size for the area within approximately ¼-mile of the project site (including Census Tracts 63, 71, 73, 77, and 81).

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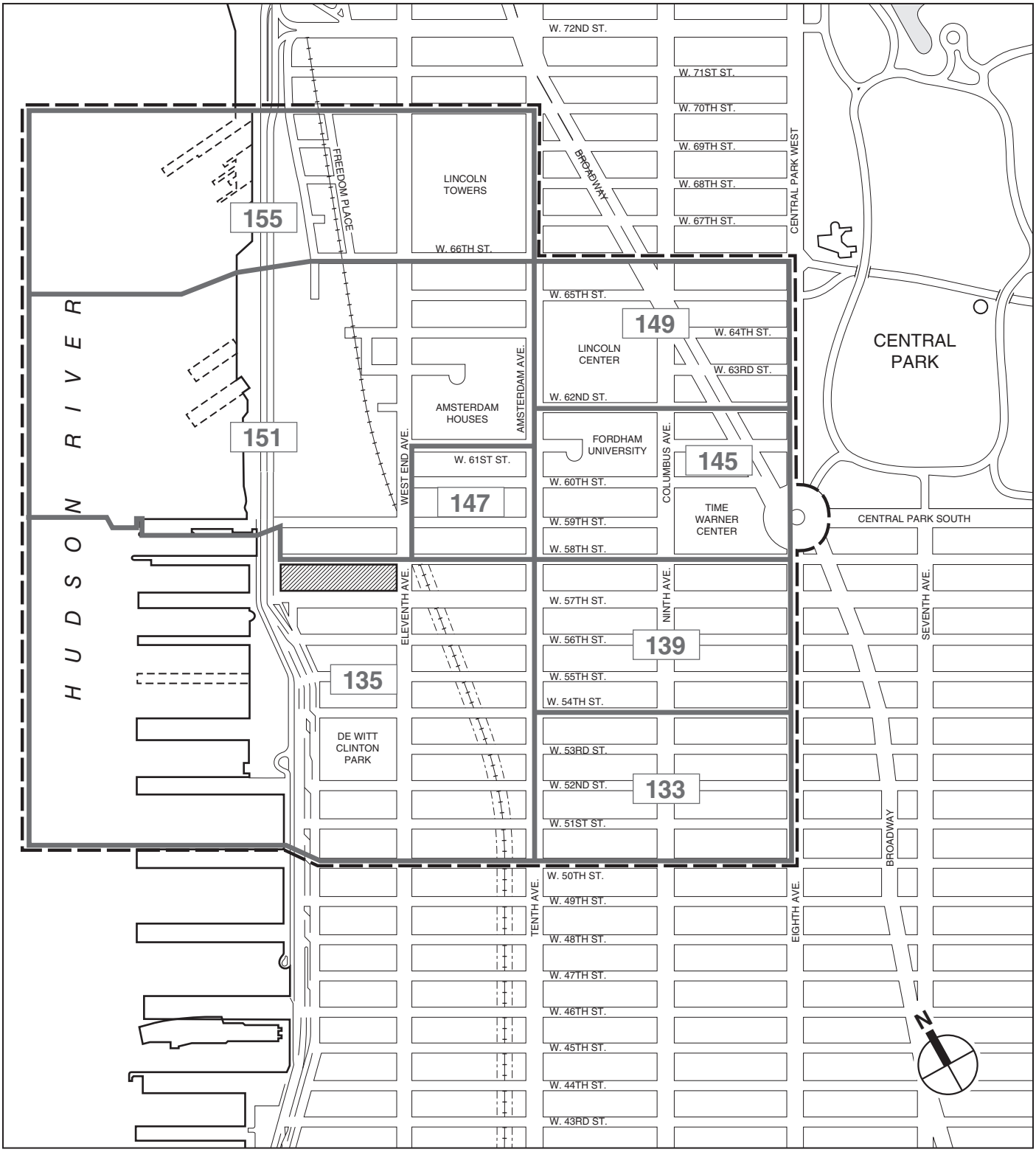


Project Block

Census Tract Boundary

135 Census Tract Number

Open Space Study Area Boundary

# Open Space Study Area

Figure 5-1

625 WEST 57TH STREET

At each open space, active and passive recreational spaces were noted. Active open space acreage is used for activities such as jogging, field sports, and children's active play. Such open space features include basketball courts, baseball fields, and play equipment. Passive open space usage includes activities such as strolling, reading, sunbathing, and people-watching. Some spaces, such as lawns and public esplanades, can be considered both active and passive recreation areas since they can be used for passive activities such as sitting or strolling, and active recreational uses like jogging or frisbee. The use level at each facility was determined based on observations of the amount of space or equipment determined to be in use as described in the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*. Open spaces with less than 25 percent of space or equipment in use were categorized as low usage; those with 25 to 75 percent utilization were classified as having moderate usage; and those with over 75 percent utilization were considered heavily used.

In addition to the open spaces located within the residential study area, open spaces falling outside the study area were considered qualitatively. These spaces provide additional open space resources and are likely to be visited by the study area user populations.

*ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES*

*Comparison to DCP Guidelines*

As noted above, the adequacy of open space in the study area can be quantitatively assessed using a ratio of usable open space acreage to the study area population—referred to as the open space ratio. To assess the adequacy of open space resources, open space ratios are compared against goals set by DCP. Although these open space ratios are not meant to determine whether a proposed 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. The following guidelines are used in this type of analysis:

- For non-residential populations, 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents is typically considered adequate.
- For residential populations, two guidelines are used. The first is a citywide median open space ratio of 1.5 acres per 1,000 residents. In New York City, local open space ratios vary widely, and the median ratio at the Community District level is 1.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. The second is an open space planning goal established for the City of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents—2.0 acres of active and 0.5 acres of passive open space per 1,000 residents—for large scale plans and proposals. However, these goals are often not feasible for many areas of the city, and they are not considered an impact threshold. Rather, they are used as benchmarks to represent how well an area is served by its open space resources.

*Impact Assessment*

Impacts are based on how a project would change the open space ratios in the study area. According to the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, if a proposed project would reduce an open space ratio and consequently result in overburdening existing facilities, or if it would substantially exacerbate an existing deficiency in open space, it may result in a significant impact on open space resources. In general, if a study area's open space ratio falls below city guidelines, and a proposed action would result in a decrease in the ratio of more than five percent, it could be considered a substantial change and a detailed analysis is warranted. However, in areas that are extremely lacking in open space, a reduction as small as 1 percent may be considered significant, depending on the area of the City.

In addition to the quantitative factors cited above, the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual* also recommends consideration of more qualitative factors in assessing the potential for open space impacts. These include the availability of nearby destination resources, the beneficial effects of new open space resources provided by the project, and the comparison of projected open space ratios with established city guidelines. It is recognized that the open space ratios of the city guidelines described above are not feasible for many areas of the city, and they are not considered impact thresholds on their own. Rather, they are benchmarks that indicate how well an area is served by open space.

## D. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

A preliminary assessment of open space consists of calculating total population, tallying the open space acreage within the area, and comparing the open space ratios for existing conditions and the future without and with the proposed project.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

*STUDY AREA POPULATION*

As shown in **Figure 5-1**, the study area includes Census Tracts 133, 135, 139, 145, 147, 149, 151, and 155. This study area reaches approximately ½-mile from the project block, extending to West 70th Street to the north, Eighth Avenue to the east, West 50th Street to the south, and the Hudson River to the west. Based on 2010 Census data, the study area had a total of 53,856 residents in 2010 (see **Table 5-1**).

**Table 5-1**
**Existing Residential Population**

| Census Tract | Population |
|---|---|
| 133 | 6,208 |
| 135 | 6,596 |
| 139 | 9,257 |
| 145 | 5,542 |
| 147 | 2,755 |
| 149 | 5,842 |
| 151 | 8,306 |
| 155 | 9,350 |
| **Total Population** | **53,586** |

**Sources:** U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

### STUDY AREA OPEN SPACES

The study area includes a variety of parks, playgrounds, gardens, and plazas that are accessible for use by the public, and generally include properties maintained by DPR, the New York City Department of Education (DOE), and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). The study area contains 41 publicly accessible open spaces, which comprise a total of approximately 56.9 acres. This includes approximately 35.1 acres of passive and 21.8 acres of active open space (see **Table 5-2** and **Figure 5-2**). The largest of these open space resources within the study area include: portions of Hudson River Park, Riverside Park South, and De Witt Clinton Park.

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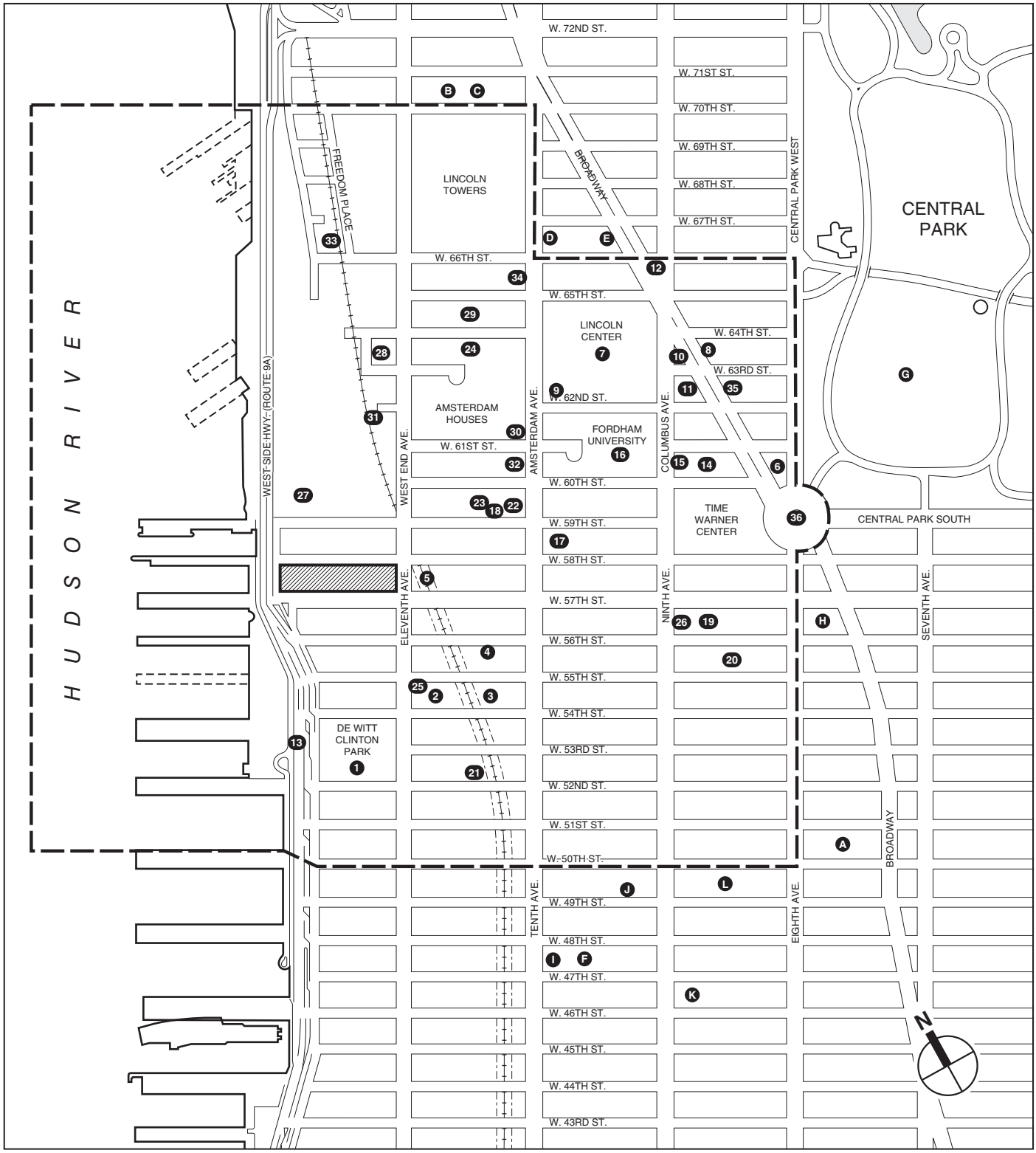



Project Block

Open Space Resource Study Area

1 Open Space Resource within Study Area

A Open Space Resource near Study Area

# Open Space Resources

Figure 5-2

625 WEST 57TH STREET

## Table 5-2
## Open Space Resources Within Residential Study Area

| Map No.[1] | Name | Owner/ Agency | Features | Total Acres | Passive Acres | Active Acres | Condition | Utilization |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | De Witt Clinton Park | DPR | Lighted ball fields, basketball courts, benches, dog run, chess tables, trees, and plantings | 5.83 | 1.13 | 4.7 | Good | High |
| 2 | Clinton Towers Plaza: 790 Eleventh Avenue | P&L Management & Consulting | Trees, benches, plantings, children's basketball court, slides | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.1 | Poor | Low |
| 3 | Harborview Terrace Plaza: 530 West 55th Street | NYCHA | Seating, plantings, flowers | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0 | Fair | Low |
| 4 | Amsterdam Plaza at Harborview Terrace | NYCHA | Planting, seating, playground equipment, lighting, paved sports courts | 2.1 | 1.3 | 0.8 | Fair | Low |
| 5 | 555 West 57th Street | 555 West 57th Street Association | Seating, plantings | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0 | Fair | Moderate |
| 6 | Trump International Hotel and Tower Plaza | Trump International Homeowners Association | Lighting, seating, plantings | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0 | Excellent | Moderate |
| 7 | Lincoln Center Plaza | DPR | Seating, fountain, sculpture | 3.80 | 3.80 | 0 | Good | Moderate |
| 8 | One Lincoln Plaza | John Amodeo / Condominium | Garden, seating | 0.47 | 0.47 | 0 | Good | Low |
| 9 | Damrosch Park: Amsterdam Avenue and West 62nd Street | DPR | Bandshell, concrete plaza, benches, plantings | 2.44 | 2.44 | 0 | Good | High |
| 10 | Dante Park | DPR | Seating, plantings, statue | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0 | Good | High |
| 11 | Harmony Atrium | 61 West 62 Owners Corp | Indoor seating, piano, coffee bar, movable stage, skylight, climbing wall (climbing wall not included in quantified analysis because it requires a user fee) | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0 | Fair | Moderate |
| 12 | Richard Tucker Park | DPR | Seating, plantings | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0 | Good | High |
| 13 | Hudson River Park | DPR; HRPT | Paved walkways and bikeways paths, benches, seating, lighting, tables, trees, flowers, plants, play area with water features, lawn space, dog run, esplanade, public art, public boat house, bike rentals, bathrooms | 13.39[2] | 3.99 | 9.4 | Excellent | High |
| 14 | Beaumont: 30 West 61st Street | Condominium Association | Seating, plantings, pool and fountain, drinking fountain , lighting | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0 | Excellent | Moderate |
| 15 | Regent: 45 West 60th Street | Columbus 60th Realty LLC | Seating, plantings, drinking fountain | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0 | Excellent | High |
| 16 | Fordham Plaza | Fordham University | Benches, plantings, trees, sculptures, lighting | 2.98 | 2.98 | 0 | Good | Moderate |
| 17 | St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center: | 400 West 59th Street Partners | Trees, plantings, benches, flowers, lighting | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0 | Good | Moderate |
| 18 | 515 West 59th Street Plaza | 515 West 59th Street | Benches, plantings, bicycle racks | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0 | Good | Low |
| 19 | Parc Vendome/ Sheffield Plazas: 322/350 West 57th Street | Southcroft Company | Seating, plantings | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0 | Good | Moderate |
| 20 | 330 West 56th Street | Marbru Associates | Concrete seating, trees, planters, sculpture on arcade | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0 | Good | Moderate |
| 21 | Oasis Community Garden –West 52nd Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues | DPR | Trees, grass, seating, planters | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0 | Excellent | Low |

**Table 5-2 (cont'd)**
**Open Space Resources Within Residential Study Area**

| Map No.[1] | Name | Owner/ Agency | Features | Total Acres | Passive Acres | Active Acres | Condition | Utilization |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Concerto: 200 West 60th Street | Columbus/ Amsterdam Associates | Benches, trees, play equipment, spray shower, lawn | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0 | Good | Moderate |
| 23 | West 59th Street Recreation Center | DPR | Indoor pool, multi-use gym, paved outdoor area | 0.69 | 0 | 0.69 | Good | Moderate |
| 24 | Amsterdam Houses Playground/Samuel N. Bennerson 2nd Playground | DPR | Playground, basketball courts, plantings, seating, drinking fountain, lighting | 0.8 | 0.3 | 0.5 | Good | High |
| 25 | Clinton Towers Street Seating | Clinton Towers | Seating | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0 | Fair | Moderate |
| 26 | Balsley Park | Rose 29 LLC | Gardens, lawn, toddler play area, food kiosk, seating | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.1 | Excellent | High |
| 27 | Riverside Park South | DPR | Soccer, handball courts, basketball courts, fishing pier, esplanade, bikeway, tot lot, drinking fountains, spray shower | 12.93 | 10.43 | 2.5 | Excellent | High |
| 28 | West End Towers Park | Broadcom West Development Company | Animal art, lighting, lawns, playgrounds, benches, trees and plantings | 1.7 | 0.5 | 1.2 | Excellent | High |
| 29 | James Felt Plaza | NYCHA | Seating, plantings, children's playground reserved for tenants | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0 | Fair | Low |
| 30 | Amsterdam Houses Open Space | NYCHA | Seating, plantings, playground | 2.5 | 1.3 | 1.2 | Good | High |
| 31 | Parcel "O" Open Space on West 62nd Street | DPR | Benches, trees, walkway | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0 | Good | Moderate |
| 32 | P.S. 191 School | DOE | Plantings, seating, paved courts, playgrounds | 0.6 | 0 | 0.6 | Fair | High |
| 33 | Freedom Place and 67th Street | EQR - 160 Riverside Blvd | Seating and plantings | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0 | Excellent | Low |
| 34 | Martin Luther King Jr. High School | DOE | Seating, plantings, sculpture | 1 | 1 | 0 | Fair | High |
| 35 | 30 W 63rd St Plaza | S&P Associates | Trees, grass, seating, planters, fountain, waterfall | 0.49 | 0.49 | 0 | Excellent/ Moderate | Moderate |
| 36 | Columbus Circle | DPR | Benches, plantings, sculpture | 0.12 | 0.12 | 0 | Excellent | High |
| **Totals** | | | | **56.84** | **35.05** | **21.79** | | |

**Notes:**
HRPT= Hudson River Park Trust
1. See **Figure 5-2** for open space resources.
2. Acreage for Hudson River Park includes only the areas within the residential study area.
**Sources:** AKRF Field Surveys, April 2011; DPR, April 2011.

Hudson River Park, a joint New York State and New York City resource managed by the Hudson River Park Trust, stretches north from Battery Park to West 59th Street. Approximately 13.39 acres (estimated at 3.99 and 9.40 acres of passive and active open space, respectively) of this waterfront park is located within the study area, including Clinton Cove and the West Side Highway (Route 9A) walkway and bikeway. Nearly one linear mile (0.97 mile) of the Route 9A bikeway is within the study area, providing off-street paths for active recreational activities such as running, biking, and rollerblading. The 2.2 acre Clinton Cove section of Hudson River Park opened in 2005 and is located along the waterfront between Pier 94 (near West 54th Street) and Pier 97 (near West 57th Street). This area includes an esplanade with benches, lawns, shade trees, and a public boat house at the waterfront. Park users also have access to a café in the Unconvention Center, and access to a "get-down" which allows users to get closer to the water (below the level of the bulkhead). The park also hosts free live music performances during the summer months.

Riverside Park South—the open space associated with Riverside South development—is located in the northern portion of the study area and stretches along the Hudson River from West 59th Street north to West 72nd Street. Of the planned 22.51 acres of open space affiliated with the Riverside South development, 12.93 acres (estimated at 10.43 and 2.50 acres of passive and active open space, respectively) are complete. This park contains numerous amenities, including: multi-purpose athletic fields, baseball fields, handball and basketball courts, playgrounds, a 740-foot-long recreational pier, overlook terraces/esplanades/promontories, landscaped areas, and walkways and bikeways. The pier extends into the Hudson River at approximately West 70th Street and can be used for fishing, sunbathing or other passive activities. The approximately 20-foot-wide esplanade runs along the entire length of the Riverside South development and connects to the existing esplanade at Riverside Park to the north and to the Hudson River Park esplanade to the south.

De Witt Clinton Park, also located in the study area, is a 5.8-acre park that occupies two full city blocks between West 52nd and West 54th Streets from Eleventh Avenue to Twelfth Avenue. This park contains play equipment, game tables, swings, benches, spray showers, basketball courts, handball courts, lighted baseball fields, a dog run, and Maria's Perennial Garden. De Witt Clinton Park also contains the Clinton War Memorial, which was dedicated in 1929 to commemorate the service of soldiers during World War I. The lighted baseball fields with bleachers are the most heavily used facilities in the park.

In addition to Riverside Park South and De Witt Clinton Park, DPR operates a large number of smaller neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and community gardens in the study area. The 0.57-acre Hell's Kitchen Park is located on the east side of Tenth Avenue between West 47th and West 48th Streets. This park contains play equipment, basketball courts, volleyball courts, handball courts, benches, game tables, and extensive plantings and trees. The Gutenberg Playground is located to the north of Hell's Kitchen Park. This 0.55-acre park, adjacent to the High School for Graphic Communication, contains basketball and handball courts, and closes daily at dusk. The 0.17-acre Ramon Aponte Park at 351 West 47th Street features play equipment and basketball courts. The 0.35-acre Clinton Community Garden is located on the south side of West 48th Street just east of Tenth Avenue and Hell's Kitchen Park. DPR's West 59th Street Recreation Center, located on West 59th Street between Amsterdam and West End Avenues, is an entirely active recreation space with a multi-use gymnasium, indoor sports courts, an indoor pool, an outdoor pool, and an outdoor water play feature for children. Damrosch Park is part of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. It is a 2.4-acre passive open space that has trees, plantings, benches, and a bandshell, but no lawns. The park is a popular area for passive recreation and in the summer is heavily programmed with outdoor music and dance performances.

There are also two open spaces under DOE jurisdiction in the study area. A 0.6-acre playground for Public School (P.S.) 191 is located at Amsterdam Avenue between West 60th and West 61st Streets. This open space includes well-maintained playgrounds and a large paved area with amenities for different activities, including baseball, basketball, and tennis. While use is available only to students during school hours, the facilities are open to the public at other times. The other DOE open space in the study area is the 1-acre plaza associated with the Martin Luther King Jr. High School at Amsterdam Avenue and West 66th Street. The 3.8-acre Lincoln Center Plaza, between the theaters at Lincoln Center, is a major open space and gathering place. It has a fountain, a reflecting pool with sculptures, and ledges for sitting.

The remaining open spaces within the open space study area consist of community gardens, publicly accessible plazas associated with either private residential developments or office buildings or open spaces within NYCHA developments. These plazas typically are entirely passive resources that consist of through-block arcades, indoor atriums, or outdoor plazas that contain seating, landscaping, or other plantings. These resources are well-maintained and well-utilized by workers or residents. While open space within a public housing development is primarily meant for use by residents of that housing development, the space is generally accessible to the public. Several of the housing developments within the study area (including Harborview Terrace and Amsterdam Houses) incorporate amenities such as benches, trees, walkways, playgrounds, and basketball courts. Together, NYCHA open spaces include a total of 4.8 acres, estimated at 2.8 and 2.00 acres of passive and active open space, respectively.

*Additional Open Spaces*

Several publicly accessible open spaces are located a short distance from the study area boundaries and, as a result, are not included in the quantitative analysis. However, it is likely that these open spaces also serve the study area's population. There are a number of smaller passive open space resources totaling approximately 3.3 acres near the open space study area (see **Table 5-3**).

**Table 5-3**
**Open Space Resources Nearby Residential Study Area**

| Map No.[1] | Name | Owner/ Agency | Features | Total Acres | Passive Acres | Active Acres | Condition | Utilization |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Paramount Plaza: 1633 Broadway | Broadway Pl. Associates | Seating, plantings | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.00 | Good | Moderate |
| B | Septuagesimo Uno | DPR | Garden, seating | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.00 | Good/ Moderate | Moderate |
| C | P.S. 199 Playground (Playground 70) | DPR | Fountain, a comfort station, basketball courts, handball courts, play equipment with safety surfacing, a small garden, and benches. | 1.37 | 0.10 | 1.27 | Excellent/High | Moderate |
| D | 145 W 67th St (Tower 67) | Amsterco | Plantings, seating, seasonable fountain, trees | 0.33 | 0.33 | 0.00 | Good/High | Moderate |
| E | Broadway Malls | DPR | Benches in Broadway Median, planters | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.00 | Good/High | Good |
| F | Clinton Community Garden | DPR | Trees, flowers, plants, paths, benches | 0.35 | 0.35 | 0.00 | Excellent | Low |
| G | Central Park | DPR | Trees, lawns, walking paths, benches, ballfield, jogging and bi-cycling routes | 843 | 536 | 307 | Excellent/High | High |
| H | Symphony Plaza: 1755 Broadway | Broadway and 56th St Associates | Seating, plantings, café space | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.00 | Good | Moderate |
| I | Hell's Kitchen Park | DPR | Play equipment, trees, plants, basketball and handball courts | 0.57 | 0.40 | 0.17 | Good | High |
| J | Gutenberg Playground | DPR | Bleachers, basketball and handball courts, playground equipment | 0.55 | 0.00 | 0.55 | Good | Low |
| K | Ramon Aponte Park: 351 West 47th Street | DPR | Basketball courts, play equipment, benches, trees, paved walkways | 0.17 | 0.12 | 0.05 | Fair | Moderate |
| L | Worldwide Plaza: West 49th to 50th Streets between Eighth and Ninth Avenues | EOP - Worldwide Plaza LLC | Food pavilions, fountain, plantings, paved paths, trees, tables and chairs | 0.84 | 0.84 | 0.00 | Excellent | High |
| **Totals** | | | | **848.31** | **539.27** | **309.04** | | |

**Note:**
1. See Figure 5-2 for open space resources.
**Sources:** AKRF Field Surveys, April 2011; DPR, April, 2011.

In addition to nearby open space resources located entirely within ½-mile of the proposed project area or within the open space study area, there are other open spaces, which can be characterized as borough-wide or regional in nature, that also provide study area residents and workers with a substantial amount of passive and active open space acreage that is within reasonable walking distance and/or connected to existing study area open space. These include Riverside Park, Hudson River Park (the portion that extends outside the study area), and Central Park.

Both Riverside Park and Hudson River Park run along the Hudson River to the north and south of the study area, respectively. These primarily linear parks contain many passive and active open space amenities, including walking and biking paths, landscaping, benches, playing fields and courts, and recreational piers. Central Park, Manhattan's 843-acre preeminent destination park, is located across the street from the residential study area boundary. Central Park contains an abundance of features, including lakes and ponds, fountains, monuments and sculptures, walking tracks, biking paths, dog runs, ball fields, playground equipment, two ice-skating rinks (one of which is a swimming pool in July and August), the Central Park Zoo, the Central Park Conservatory Garden, a wildlife sanctuary, a large area of natural woods, a reservoir with an encircling running track, and the outdoor Delacorte Theater.

### ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

With a total of 56.9 acres of open space (of which 35.1 are for active use and 21.8 are for passive use) and a total residential population of 53,856, the residential study area has an overall open space ratio of 1.06 acres per 1,000 residents (see **Table 5-4**). This is less than DCP's planning guideline of 2.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents.

The study area's current residential passive open space ratio is 0.65 acres of passive open space per 1,000 residents, which is more than DCP's goal of 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The area's residential active open space ratio is 0.40 acres per 1,000 residents, which is substantially below DCP's planning guideline of 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

**Table 5-4**
**Existing Conditions: Adequacy of Open Space Resources**

| | 2010 Total Population | Open Space Acreage | | | Open Space Ratios per 1,000 People | | | DCP Open Space Guidelines | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Passive | Active | Total | Passive | Active | Total | Passive | Active |
| Residents | 53,856 | 56.84 | 35.05 | 21.79 | 1.06 | 0.65 | 0.40 | 2.5 | 0.5 | 2.0 |

**Notes:**
1. Non-residents typically use passive spaces; therefore, for the non-residents, only the passive open space ratio is calculated.
2. Weighted average combining 0.15 acres per 1,000 non-residents and 0.50 acres per 1,000 residents.

## E. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

### STUDY AREA POPULATION

The future without the proposed project assumes that none of the discretionary actions currently being sought are approved. In this case, absent the proposed project, the permitted building would be constructed on projected development site 1. As described above, the permitted building would contain of office, retail, and public parking spaces. In the future without the proposed project, no new residential population would be introduced to the project block.

In addition to these expected changes, it is anticipated that approximately 4,331 new dwelling units will be added to the open space study area by projected developments in the future without the proposed project, as detailed in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy." In all, the projected future development sites are expected to add approximately 7,103 new residents to the entire study area.[1] Thus, the 2015 residential population in the study area without the proposed project would be 60,959 residents.

## STUDY AREA OPEN SPACES

Four proposed open space improvement projects are expected to be completed in the study area by 2015 in the future without the proposed project (see **Table 5-5** and **Figure 5-3**).

**Table 5-5**
**Future Without the Proposed Project: Changes to Open Space Resources**

| Map No.[1] | Name | Owner/ Agency | Features | Total Acres | Passive Acres | Active Acres |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Riverside Park South (full build-out) | DPR | Athletic courts, pedestrian links to local east-west streets, landscaped areas, seating, multi-purpose fields, DPR maintenance facility, children's play area | 9.58 | 6.31 | 3.27 |
| AA | Riverside Center Open Space | Riverside Center | Water feature, seating, landscaping, children's play area, lighted pathways, central plaza | 2.70 | 2.54 | 0.16 |
| BB | Pier 92/94: additional open space | HRPT | Waterfront esplanade, a viewing platform, and a public plaza | 0.41 | 0.41 | 0.00 |
| CC | Pier 97 on the Hudson River | HRPT | Waterfront esplanade | 1.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 |
| **Totals** | | | | **13.69** | **10.26** | **3.43** |

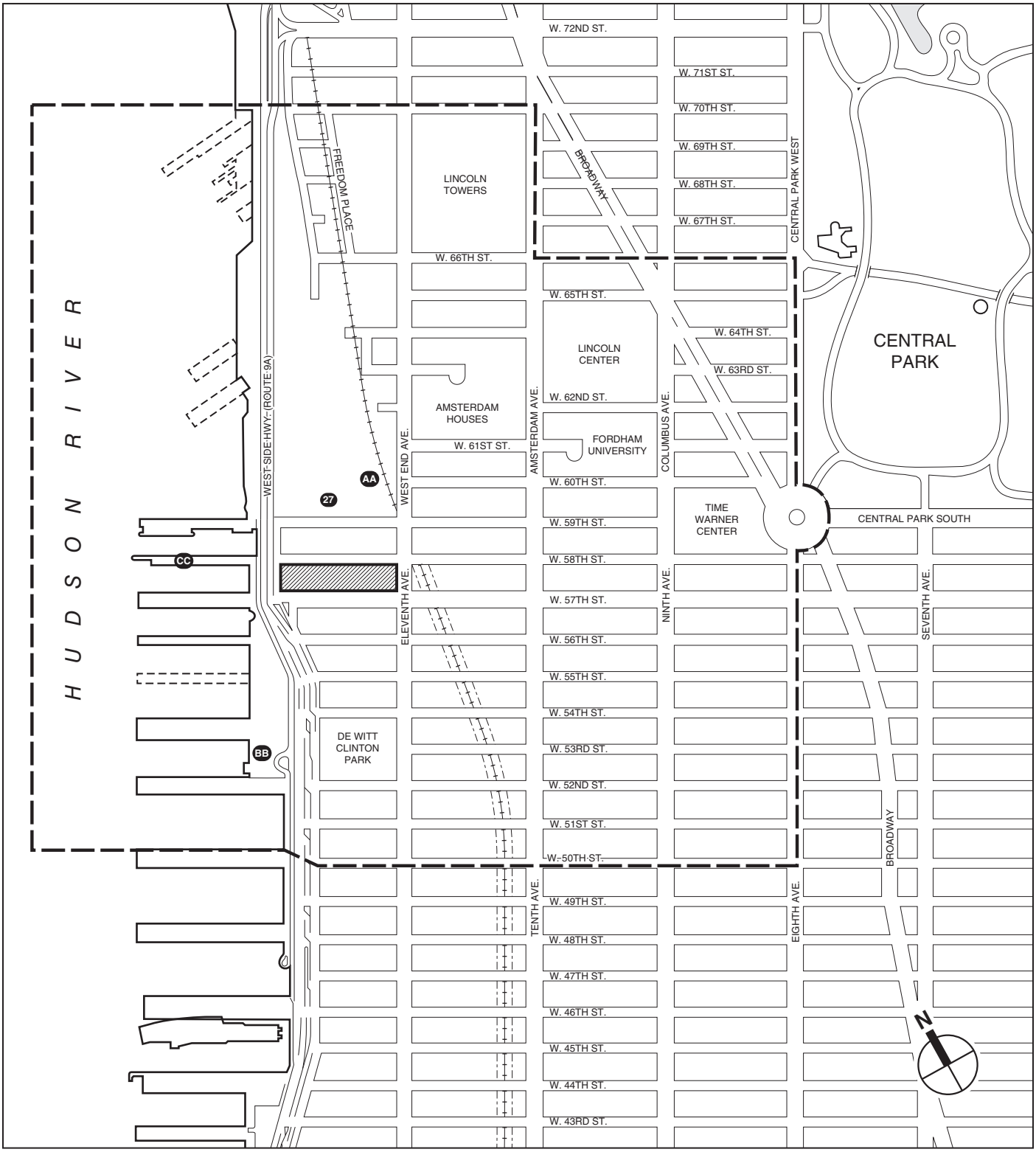
**Notes:**
1. See Figure 5-3 for changes to open space locations.
**Sources:** AKRF Field Surveys, April 2011; DPR, April 2011.

The continued build-out of the Riverside South Park parcels will add 9.58 acres of new open space to the study area by 2020, of which 6.31 acres will be passive space and 3.27 acres will be active space. The full build-out of Riverside Park South, to be completed in three phases, will include areas for passive seating, lawns, kiosks, pedestrian links to local east-west streets, athletic fields and courts, a DPR maintenance facility, and a naturalized planted slope. An additional 2.7 acres of open space (estimated at 2.54 and 0.16 acres of passive and active open space, respectively) will be part of the Riverside Center development. The objective of this (Riverside Center) primarily passive open space is to connect the West 60th Street corridor to Riverside Park South while also serving as the most direct connection from Columbus Circle to the Hudson River waterfront. Planned amenities within this open space include at the point where West 60th Street meets Freedom Place South, a 1.2-acre central plaza with a fountain at West 60th Street and Freedom Place South, several areas for outdoor seating, landscaping, children's play area, lighted pathways, dense groves of trees acting as a buffer to Route 9A, and scenic Hudson River overlooks.

Other new open spaces in the study area will include: an additional 0.41 acres of passive open space at Pier 92/94 that will consist of a waterfront esplanade, a viewing platform, and a public plaza; and an additional acre of passive open space at Pier 97.

[1] The number of new residents generated by developments in the future without the proposed project was estimated based on the average household size for Manhattan Community Board 4 of 1.64.

9.14.11




Project Block

Open Space Study Area Boundary

AA New Open Space Resource

27 Change to Existing Open Space Resource

# Future without the Proposed Project: Changes to the Open Space Resources

625 WEST 57TH STREET

Figure 5-3

Overall, the total amount of open space is expected to increase by approximately 13.69 acres, of which 10.26 acres would be passive open space and 3.43 acres would be active open space. With the additional open spaces, the study area would be expected to have a total of 70.53 acres of open space divided between 45.31 acres of passive space and 25.22 acres of active space.

### ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

In the future without the proposed project, the study area open space ratios would increase slightly as compared to the existing conditions. The overall open space ratio would increase from 1.06 to 1.16 acres per 1,000 residents (see **Table 5-6**). This would be less than DCP's planning guideline of 2.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. The study area's residential passive open space ratio would increase from 0.65 to 0.74 acres of passive open space per 1,000 residents, which would exceed DCP's goal of 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The area's residential active open space ratio would increase slightly to 0.41 acres per 1,000 residents, and would remain below DCP's planning guideline of 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

**Table 5-6**
**Future Without the Proposed Project: Adequacy of Open Space Resources**

| | 2015 Population – Future Without the Proposed Project | Open Space Acreage | | | Open Space Ratios per 1,000 People | | | DCP Open Space Guidelines | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Passive | Active | Total | Passive | Active | Total | Passive | Active |
| Residents | 60,959 | 70.53 | 45.31 | 25.22 | 1.16 | 0.74 | 0.41 | 2.5 | 0.5 | 2.0 |

## F. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

### DIRECT EFFECTS

As described earlier in the discussion of methodology, direct adverse effects on an open space occur when a proposed action would cause the physical loss of public open space; change the use of an open space so that it no longer serves the same user population; limit public access to an open space; or cause increased noise or air pollutant emissions, odors, or shadows that would affect its usefulness, whether on a permanent or temporary basis. The proposed project would not result in significant adverse shadow, noise, or air quality impacts on any of the open spaces in the study area. See Chapter 6, "Shadows," Chapter 11 "Air Quality," and Chapter 13, "Noise," for additional information.

### STUDY AREA POPULATION

The proposed project would result in a net increase of up to 863 residential units on the projected development sites. Based on a weighted average household size of 1.64 persons for Manhattan Community Board 4, the additional 863 dwelling units would add an estimated 1,415 residents to the study area. The study area residential population would increase to 62,374.

### STUDY AREA OPEN SPACES

In the future with the proposed project, the total amount of open space in the study area would remain the same as in the future without the proposed project with a total of 70.53 acres, with 45.31 acres of passive open space and 25.22 acres of active open space.

## ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

In the future with the proposed project, the public open space ratios pertaining to the residential populations would decrease slightly as compared to the conditions in the future without the proposed project. The total open space ratio would decline slightly from 1.16 to 1.13 acres per 1,000 residents (see **Tables 5-7 and 5-8**). This would be less than DCP's planning guideline of 2.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. The study area's residential passive open space ratio would decrease slightly to 0.73 acres of passive open space per 1,000 residents, and would remain higher than DCP's goal of 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The area's residential active open space ratio would decrease slightly from 0.41 to 0.40 acres per 1,000 residents, and would remain below DCP's planning guideline of 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

**Table 5-7**
**Future With the Proposed Project: Adequacy of Open Space Resources**

| | 2015 Population – Future With the Proposed Project | Open Space Acreage | | | Open Space Ratios per 1,000 People | | | DCP Open Space Guidelines | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Passive | Active | Total | Passive | Active | Total | Passive | Active |
| Residents | 62,374 | 70.53 | 45.31 | 25.22 | 1.13 | 0.73 | 0.40 | 2.5 | 0.5 | 2.0 |

**Table 5-8**
**Future With the Proposed Project: Open Space Ratios Summary**

| Ratio | DCP Guideline | Future Without the Proposed Project Ratio | Future With the Proposed Project Ratio | Percent Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total/residents | 2.50 | 1.16 | 1.13 | -2.3 |
| Passive/residents | 0.50 | 0.74 | 0.73 | -2.3 |
| Active/residents | 2.00 | 0.41 | 0.40 | -2.3 |

Although the open space ratios would be below the levels recommended by the City, it is recognized that these goals are not feasible for many areas of the City, and they are not considered impact thresholds. For areas that are not extremely lacking in open space, such as the study area, the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual* indicates that a decrease of approximately five percent would be considered substantial, warranting more detailed analysis. As described above (see **Table 5-8**), the proposed project would not in a substantial decrease in any of the open space ratios in the study area.

*QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT*

While the quantitative analysis indicates that the active open space ratio is below the City's planning guideline of 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents, this analysis does not include the open spaces that are located just beyond the study area boundaries. These open spaces include smaller urban plazas and parts of destination parks, such as Riverside Park, Hudson River Park, and Central Park.

Both Riverside Park and Hudson River Park (the portion that extends beyond the study area) run along the Hudson River to the north and south of the study area, respectively. These primarily linear parks contain many passive and active open space amenities, including walking and biking paths, landscaping, benches, playing fields and courts, and recreational piers. Central Park, Manhattan's 843-acre preeminent destination park, is located across the street from the residential study area boundary. As described above, Central Park contains an abundance of features, including numerous active open space resources such as walking tracks, biking paths,

dog runs, ball fields, playground equipment, two ice-skating rinks (one of which is a swimming pool in July and August), and a reservoir with an encircling running track.

It is likely that workers and residents from the rezoning area would utilize these resources. As such, these open spaces would help to alleviate a portion of the shortfall that would exist within the residential study area.

In addition, the proposed project is expected to include recreational amenities for the residents including an outdoor courtyard and fitness center. These amenities would serve to offset a portion of the open space demand that would be generated by project residents.

## G. CONCLUSION

Under the existing and future conditions, the active open space ratios would be below DCP's planning goals for open space. There would continue to be a shortfall of active open space, and the proposed project would result in an approximately 2.3 percent decrease in the active and passive open space ratios as compared with the future without the proposed project. However, these decreases would be approximately 0.03 and 0.01 acres per 1,000 residents and would not be considered a significant change. As noted above, there are large open space resources outside the study area, such as Central Park, that would continue to serve the study area population and the proposed project would provide private recreation facilities to offset project-generated open space demand. Furthermore, the proposed project would not result in any adverse direct effects to open space related to shadows, air quality, noise, or odors. Therefore, a detailed open space analysis is not required. The proposed project would not result in any significant adverse impacts on open space resources in the study area. ✷