Chapter 4: Open Space

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on open space resources. Open space is defined in the 2020 *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.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the New York Blood Center (the Applicant) is requesting a rezoning and other discretionary actions (the Proposed Actions) to facilitate the construction of the Proposed Project, an approximately 596,200 gross-square-foot (gsf) building on the site of its existing NYBC building at 310 East 67th Street, Block 1441 Lot 40 (the Development Site). The Development Site is located on the Upper East Side in Manhattan Community District 8. Block 1441 is bounded by East 66th and East 67th Streets and First and Second Avenues and is part of a larger Rezoning Area which also includes Block 1441, Lots 1001–1202, and Block 1421, p/o Lot 21.

The Proposed Project would result in a substantial new worker population—an incremental increase of 1,960 workers as compared to future conditions absent the Proposed Project. The projected worker population could result in additional demand for open space in the area. The Proposed Project would provide a roof garden for NYBC occupants. However, this amenity would not be publicly accessible and cannot be counted in the analysis. 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

A detailed open space analysis was conducted and 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 in the Rezoning Area. Based on the analyses provided for air quality, noise, and construction, study area open spaces would not experience project-related significant adverse air quality, noise, or construction impacts. The Proposed Project would have potentially significant adverse shadows impacts on St. Catherine's Park. However, the Proposed Project would not result in the potential for significant adverse shadows impacts to any other open spaces in the study area.

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 (0.065 acres/1,000 people) is below the City's guideline of 0.15 as 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). However, the Proposed Project would not result in a decrease in the passive open space ratio of more than five percent 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 chapters (5, "Shadows,"11, "Air Quality," 13, "Noise," and 16, "Construction") to determine whether the Proposed Project would have the potential to directly affect any open spaces near the Rezoning 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."

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; however, the thresholds for assessment are slightly different for areas of the City that have been identified as either underserved or well-served by open space. Since the Rezoning Area is in an area identified as underserved, the threshold of 50 residents and 125 workers was applied in this analysis.

The Proposed Project would introduce an incremental increase of approximately 1,960 workers 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 worker 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. Due to the size of this project, a detailed assessment has been provided.

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.

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 Rezoning Area. **Figure 4-1** 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 2017 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 worker population in the With Action Condition was determined by adding the incremental number of workers anticipated from the Proposed Project to the worker population in the No Action Condition.

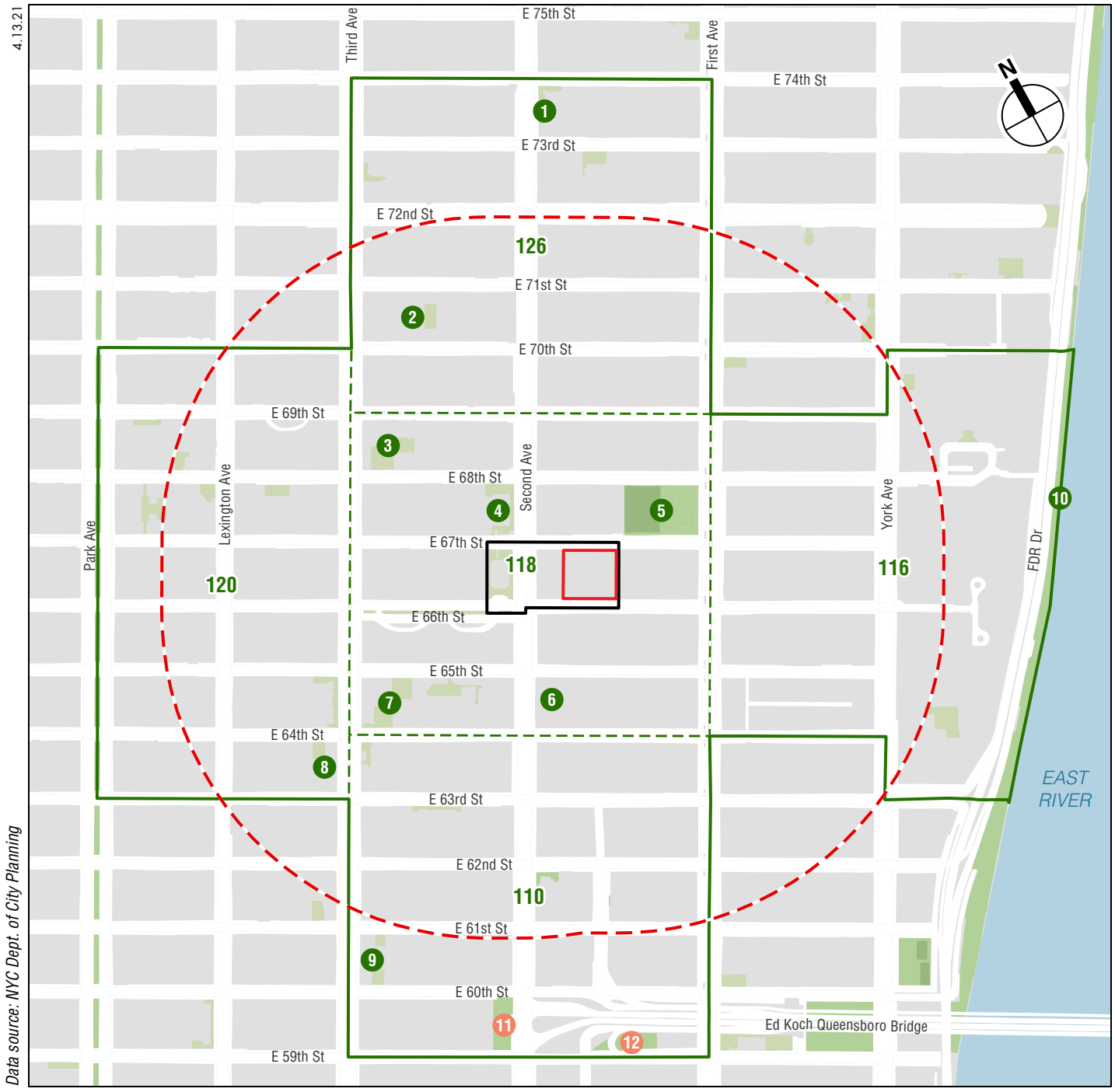
INVENTORY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Publicly accessible open spaces and recreational facilities located within the study area were inventoried using information from the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (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.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to study area open spaces was limited, and field visits have not been conducted since October of 2019. Active and passive amenities were noted at each open space. 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. Where noted, condition and utilization at study area open spaces are based on pre-pandemic levels, which are assumed to return as the pandemic subsides.

The analysis also accounts for open space within the study area that will be created in the No Action condition.



Open Space Study Area and Resources

NEW YORK BLOOD CENTER—CENTER EAST

Figure 4-1

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 worker populations, 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 workers is typically considered adequate. If an assessment shows that a study area's open space ratio falls below the City guidelines of 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 residents; and a proposed action would result in a decrease in the ratio of more than 5 percent, it could be considered a substantial change warranting a more detailed analysis. However, in areas that are extremely lacking in open space, any change in the ratio may be considered significant.

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 2017 Census data, the study area has a population of approximately 44,914 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
110	2,946
116	27,398
118	4,810
120	5,832
126	3,928
Total Worker Population	**44,914**
Source: U.S. Census Bureau LEHD Data, 2017	

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

There are 10 publicly accessible open spaces located within the study area providing a total of 4.51 acres of publicly accessible open space, including 2.91 acres of open space providing passive recreation (see **Figure 4-1 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	300 East 74th Street (POPS)	Southeast corner of Second Avenue and East 74th Street; 301 E 73rd Street	AKAM Associates - 260 Madison Avenue	0.14	0.00	0.14	Landscaping, seating (benches)	Excellent/Moderate
2	211 E 70th Street (POPS)	North side of East 70th Street between Second and Third Avenues	Rudin Management Co. Inc., 345 Park Avenue	0.87	0.00	0.87	Landscaping, seating (benches), water feature	Excellent/Moderate
3	200 E 69th Street (POPS)	East side of Third Avenue between East 68th and 69th Streets	The Trump Organization - 725 Fifth Avenue	0.19	0.00	0.19	Landscaping, seating (benches)	Excellent/Low
4	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/Moderate
5	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
6	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 (ledges), water feature	Excellent/Low
7	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 (benches)	Excellent/Low
8	188 E 64th Street (POPS)	West side of Lexington Avenue between East 63rd and 64th Streets	Insignia Residential Group - 675 Third Avenue	0.15	0.00	0.15	Landscaping, seating (ledges)	Good/Low
9	200 E 61st Street (POPS)	East side of Third Avenue between East 60th and 61st Streets	Janoff and Olshan - 654 Madison Avenue	0.12	0.00	0.12	Landscaping, seating (ledges)	Good/Low
10	John Finley Walk - East River Esplanade	FDR Drive between East 63rd and 70th Streets	NYC Parks	1.20	0.60	0.60	Walkway, bikeway, seating (benches)	Good/Moderate
			Study Area Total	**4.51**	**1.60**	**2.91**		

Note:
[1] See **Figure 4-1** for open space resources.
[2] Condition and utilization are based on pre-pandemic levels. Due to atypical conditions, field surveys were not used; therefore, past environmental review documents were consulted, as noted in the sources below.
Sources:
NYC Parks; Municipal Arts Society POPS Mapper

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 to the north of the Development Site. 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. The park is in excellent condition with high utilization.

EAST RIVER ESPLANADE

The Study Area contains a 1.20-acre section of the East River Esplanade known as John Finley Walk. This section along the FDR Drive, between East 63rd and East 70th Streets, contains a walking path/bikeway, and bench seating. Approximately .60 acres are devoted to passive uses while .60 acres are devoted to active uses. John Finley Walk continues to the north of the study area while to the south of the study area, the East River Esplanade contains Andrew Haswell Green Park, as described further in the qualitative analysis section.

PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLIC SPACES (POPS)

In the remainder of the study area there are eight privately owned public spaces (POPS). These open spaces, which surround residential buildings, primarily contain landscaped areas with bench or ledge seating. Several 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.

ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE ADEQUACY

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

The study area has a total of 2.91 acres of passive open space. With an estimated worker population of 44,914, the worker study area has a passive open space ratio of 0.065 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
44,914	2.91	0.065	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, 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 could be utilized as a lunch hour spot for workers.

Andrew Haswell Green Park, which is located immediately southeast of the study area, between East 60th and East 63rd Streets, contains a dog park as well as active and passive recreation spaces which are currently undergoing renovation. Upon completion of the renovation in 2021, this 1.98-acre resource is anticipated to contain new landscaping and lawn areas, in addition to an already-completed 0.88-acre section that features a dynamic art installation. Furthermore, the East River Esplanade continues to the north of the existing John Finley Walk section within the study area, with similar active and passive recreation space along the FDR Drive.

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 square feet (1.26 acres) of landscaped roof area to the campus.

E. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

DIRECT EFFECTS

The No Action building would not alter or remove any study area open spaces. It would cast minimal afternoon shadow on St. Catherine's Park in the spring/fall, summer, and winter. It would only cast a small shadow on 265 East 66th Street in the morning on December 21 and an even smaller shadow on the Manhattan House on May 6/August 6 and June 21 for around 10 minutes.

While construction of the No Action building would result in noise level increases that would exceed the *CEQR Technical Manual* construction noise screening thresholds, any exceedances of the *CEQR Technical Manual* construction noise screening thresholds would occur for less than 24 consecutive months, and increments would not reach the objectionable or very objectionable ranges and would not rise to the level of a significant impact.

INDIRECT EFFECTS

STUDY AREA POPULATION

In the No Action Condition, there are two known development projects within the ¼-mile study area that are expected to be completed: 1059 Third Avenue, which is a planned 38-unit residential tower with 7,558 gsf of retail floor area and 8,849 gsf of community floor area, as well as 323 East 61st Street, which is a planned community facility building with 49,806 gsf of floor area. These projects will add an estimated 80 new workers to the study area. Combined with the No Action population on the Development Site (670 workers), the study area population is expected to increase by 750 to 45,664 in the No Action condition.

STUDY AREA OPEN SPACES

In the No Action Condition, several changes to the open space resources within the study area are expected to be completed by the analysis year. Overall, the total open space acreage will increase by 0.74 acres as shown in **Table 4-4**.

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

Map No.[1]	Name	Location	Owner	Planned Acreage	Planned Amenities
10	Tramway Plaza	Full blockfront on Second Avenue, between East 59th Street and East 60th Street	NYC Parks	0.45	New landscaping and seating
11	Honey Locust Park	East 59th Street, between First and Second Avenues	NYC Parks	0.29	New landscaping and seating
			Study Area Total	**0.74**	

Note:
[1] See **Figure 4-1** for open space resources.
Source:
NYC Parks

Tramway Plaza

The 0.45-acre Tramway Plaza, occupying the full blockfront on Second Avenue, between East 59th Street and East 60th Street, is currently undergoing renovation. It is anticipated to contain new landscaping and seating upon completion. s

Honey Locust Park

The 0.29-acre Honey Locust Park is located on East 59th Street, between First and Second Avenues. The park, which currently contains overgrown vegetation, is anticipated to be renovated by 2022. It is anticipated to contain new landscaping and seating upon completion.

ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE ADEQUACY

As shown in **Table 4-5**, with a total worker population of 45,664 and 3.65 acres of passive open space, the passive open space ratio will increase to 0.080 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
45,664	3.65	0.080	0.15

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

F. FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

DIRECT EFFECTS

The Proposed Project would cast three to four hours of new shadows on St. Catherine's Park during the afternoons in the spring, summer, and fall, covering large areas of the park at times, thereby causing a potentially significant adverse shadow impact in the late afternoons in those seasons. The park's trees and plantings would continue to receive adequate sunlight over the course of each day throughout New York City's growing season and therefore their health would not be significantly affected by the project-generated shadows. The Proposed Project would also cast new shadows on the park in winter, but these would be limited in extent and duration and would not be significant. In addition, the Proposed Project would cast new shadows on five other nearby sunlight-sensitive resources in one or more seasons, but in those cases the incremental shadow would not be of substantial enough extent or duration to cause significant impacts.

Construction of the Proposed Project would, for some portion of the construction period, result in noise level increases that would exceed the *CEQR Technical Manual* construction noise screening thresholds. However, any exceedances of the *CEQR Technical Manual* construction noise screening thresholds would occur for less than 24 consecutive months, and increments would not reach the objectionable or very objectionable ranges. Consequently, while construction noise would be perceptible at these receptors, it would not rise to the level of a significant impact at these receptors according to the impact criteria described above.

INDIRECT EFFECTS

STUDY AREA POPULATION

Development by the analysis year would introduce 2,630 workers. That would introduce 1,960 With Action workers over the No Action Condition (45,664), for a total worker population of 47,624 workers by the analysis year.

STUDY AREA OPEN SPACES

The Proposed Project would not result in any changes to the amount of publicly accessible open space within the study area. However, the Proposed Project would provide a 15,000-square-foot garden on the roof of the podium (Level 6) which can be used by NYBC occupants of the building. While this passive open space would not be publicly accessible and cannot be counted in the quantitative analysis, it would reduce the need for occupants of the building to use other open spaces in the study area.

ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE ADEQUACY

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

As shown in **Tables 4-6 and 4-7**, with a total worker population of 47,624 and 3.65 acres of passive open space, the passive open space ratio will decrease from 0.080 to 0.077 acres per 1,000 workers in the With Action Condition. The open space ratio will 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
47,624	3.65	0.077	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	0.080	0.077	-3.75%

In addition to the study area open spaces, it is assumed that workers would also be able to access Andrew Haswell Green Park which continues the East River Esplanade south of 63rd Street. For scientists, students and staff associated with Rockefeller University and affiliated institutions, there is ample, well-tended open space on the Rockefeller University campus.

Further, although the Proposed Project would not provide any publicly accessible open space, approximately 15,000 square feet of exterior open space would be created in a roof garden where the building is setback on the sixth floor. The open space would wrap around the entire building, but it would be widest on the west side. It would feature plantings as well as paved areas. The roof garden would be an important tenant amenity. Being more immediately accessible to tenants, it would likely reduce the tenants' use of public open spaces in the neighborhood.

IMPACT DETERMINATION

The *CEQR Technical Manual* indicates that a decrease in the open space ratio of 5 percent or more, particularly in areas below the Citywide goal of 0.15, could result in an open space impact. In the 2026 analysis year, the Proposed Project would result in an approximately 3.75 percent decrease in the passive open space ratio (see **Table 4-7**). The percent change would fall below the 5 percent identified in the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

Further, the Proposed Project would provide an open space amenity for its tenants. Nearby Rockefeller University will continue to provide ample open space for its scientists, students and staff. Given all these considerations, the Proposed Project would not result in a significant adverse impact to open space. ✷