

4.3 OPEN SPACE

4.3.1 Introduction

This Section evaluates the potential adverse effects of the project at the preferred Shaft 33B Site on the use and enjoyment of nearby publicly accessible open spaces. In particular, the analysis considers whether the construction activities required for the project at the preferred Shaft Site could result in disruptions to open spaces that could affect the use and enjoyment of those spaces. This includes an evaluation of potential effects related to the use of a small portion of the multi-use area during construction. The Study Area is underserved in terms of open space resources. A quantified analysis of open space resources is provided to measure the effect of the use of a portion of the multi-use area during Stages 2 and 3 of the construction period.

4.3.2 Existing Conditions

Preferred Shaft Site

Base Configuration

As described in Section 4.2, “Land Use and Community Facilities, Zoning, and Public Policy,” under the base configuration, the preferred Shaft 33B Site would consist of a fenced parcel under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) at First Avenue and E. 59th Street, as well as a portion of the adjacent sidewalks on E. 59th Street and First Avenue. For a portion of the construction period (23 months during Stages 2 and 3), the preferred Shaft Site under the base configuration would also use a portion of the area to the west of the fenced NYCDOT site. This area is a multi-use area that is under the jurisdiction of NYCDOT, which uses it for Bridge access and parking, but also is generally used for strolling and dog walking by members of the public. It is sometimes referred to as “14 Honey Locusts Park” (as reflected in a sign located on-site that indicates this name) or “Gateway Plaza.” This area is not mapped parkland. This multi-use area is described below in the discussion of the 400-foot Study Area.

Alternate Site Configuration

In the alternate site configuration, the preferred Shaft 33B Site would consist of the same fenced parcel described above, as well as the same portion of the multi-use area for the same amount of time. In addition, the alternate site configuration would use the full width of the sidewalks on the north side of E. 59th Street and the west side of First Avenue and portions of the E. 59th Street and First Avenue roadways alongside the construction area. For more information on the site configuration, see Section 4.1, “Project Description.”

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400-Foot Study Area

The 400-foot Study Area for the preferred Shaft Site includes the multi-use area and four publicly accessible open space areas. These areas are described in detail below and are identified on Figure 4.3-1; results of user surveys conducted in these five areas are provided in Table 4.3-1.

Table 4.3-1
Results of User Surveys

Area (see Figure 4.3-1)	Activities Observed	Usage									
		Weekday / Weekend	Morning		Midday		Afternoon		Evening		
			Ppl	Mins	Ppl	Mins	Ppl	Mins	Ppl	Mins	
Multi-use Area	Stand, walk dog, sit on ground	Weekday*	9	1-8	10	2-20	9	1-6	8	2-10	
		Weekend	8	2-9	11	1-22	2	1-5	4	1-2	
1	Bridgemarket	Sit (read, eat, smoke, use phone), stand, walk; retail workers arranging flowers	Weekday	10	1-16	16	1-20	25	1-24	11	2-30
			Weekend	1	12	9	1-17	15	1-12	16	1-35
	Pass through to Bridge-market stores	Weekday	60	N/A	58	N/A	77	N/A	55	N/A	
		Weekend	61	N/A	105	N/A	135	N/A	19	N/A	
2	BridgeTower Place	Sit (eat, drink, work, use phone, read)	Weekday	9	2-20	48	2-24	22	1-42	26	1-51
			Weekend	84	1-59	54	1-60	71	1-60	51	2-60
	Pass through to apartments	Weekday	68	N/A	71	N/A	42	N/A	83	N/A	
		Weekend	78	N/A	97	N/A	3	N/A	0	N/A	
3	Sovereign	Sit (read, eat, drink, use phone, walk through, play)	Weekday	12	1-15	27	1-60	29	1-32	20	1-48
			Weekend	9	3-58	9	1-20	9	1-9	7	2-20
	Pass through to apartments	Weekday	31	N/A	48	N/A	38	N/A	42	N/A	
		Weekend	4	N/A	14	N/A	15	N/A	6	N/A	
4	Grand Sutton	Sit (read, drink, use phone)	Weekday	5	5-10	6	4-20	4	3-15	3	3-7
			Weekend**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Notes: All open spaces were surveyed for one-hour periods in the morning, midday, afternoon, and evening. Weekday surveys were conducted on Wednesday, April 6, 2005. Weekend surveys were conducted on Saturday, April 9, 2005 for the multi-use area and Saturday, August 27, 2005 for the other open spaces.

Ppl = number of people observed in each hour.
Mins. = number of minutes people stayed in the open space each hour.
N/A = Not applicable. The duration of how long people spent passing through an area was not recorded.

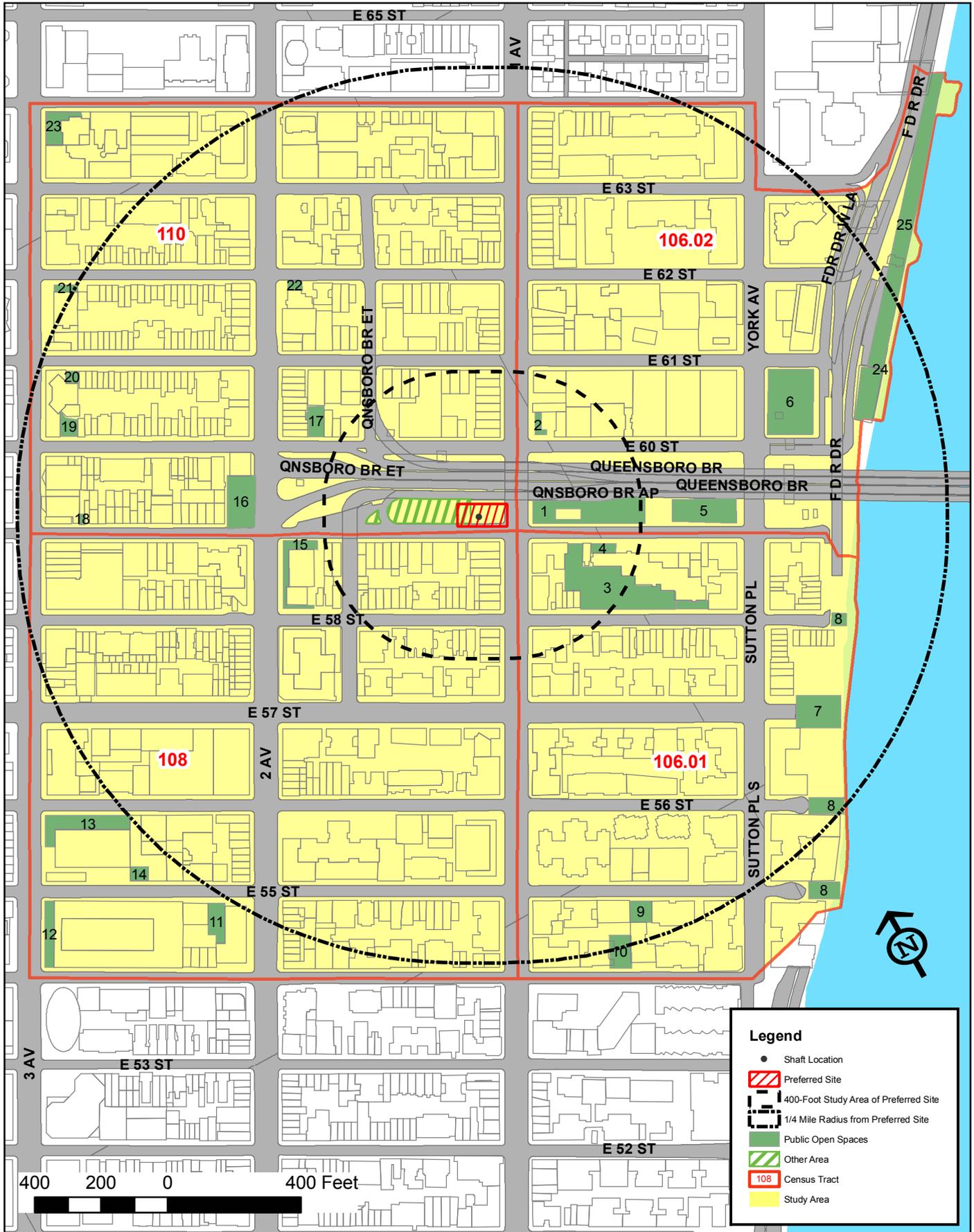
* People observed at the multi-use area include one man who appeared to be homeless who was present all day. This individual is included in the table, but the duration of his visit (all day) is not included.

** No open space users were observed at the Grand Sutton during the weekend survey, conducted in August 2005.

Multi-Use Area

The multi-use area is located on the north side of E. 59th Street immediately to the east of the elevated Queensboro Bridge approach (Figure 4.3-1). This area is under the jurisdiction of NYCDOT and is used as an access area for Bridge maintenance and staging activities, including vehicle parking, as well as for open space activities. The area is 13,000 square feet in size and is divided into two areas bisected by the curved entrance ramp to the lower level of the Queensboro Bridge. The 11,900-square-foot main portion extends from the Bridge entrance ramp

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Legend

- Shaft Location
- ▨ Preferred Site
- 400-Foot Study Area of Preferred Site
- 1/4 Mile Radius from Preferred Site
- Public Open Spaces
- Other Area
- 108 Census Tract
- Study Area



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2 - MANHATTAN LEG
PREFERRED SHAFT SITE
PUBLIC OPEN SPACES WITHIN 400 FEET AND 1/4 MILE

FIGURE 4.3-1

approximately to the fenced NYCDOT parcel. The other portion is west of the Bridge entrance ramp, and consists of a separate 1,100-square-foot traffic island area that is generally inaccessible to the public. The main portion of the multi-use area is predominantly paved and has nine honey locust trees. These trees range in size between 13 and 25 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh). Three additional honey locust trees between 12 and 16 dbh are growing in the separate traffic island segment. No benches or other improvements are located in the multi-use area. As described in Section 4.12, "Noise," noise levels in this area are high (71 dBA) because of the multi-use area's proximity to the elevated roadways of the Queensboro Bridge.

During the surveys conducted in spring 2005, eight to nine people were observed in each of the four hours of weekday survey and two to 11 people used this space in each of the four hours of weekend survey (see Table 4.3-1). People who visited the multi-use area sat on the ground, used the wastebasket, stood in the area, played catch, or walked a dog. As identified in Table 4.3-1, people were generally observed to use the space for short periods of time, typically less than 10 minutes, although in the midday people stayed up to 20 minutes. In addition, a man who appeared to be homeless was observed sitting in the back corner of this area for the entire day (9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) during the weekday survey. These survey results are considered to provide a representative range of public uses within this space. Figure 4.3-2 illustrates typical conditions at the multi-use site during numerous field visits.

Bridgemarket Plaza

Immediately across First Avenue from the preferred Shaft Site, the plaza at Bridgemarket is located along the north side of E. 59th Street on the east side of First Avenue. (Figure 4.3-1, No. 1). This area is approximately ½ acre (21,000 square feet) in size and surrounds the glass pavilion that serves as the entrance to the Terence Conran Shop. Bridgemarket Plaza is also the entrance to the Food Emporium store and restaurant space located beneath the Queensboro Bridge. The paved plaza has benches, landscaping and grassy areas, and iron fencing; to the east of the Conran Shop it also has a recently restored historic fountain.

As identified in Table 4.3-1, people were observed using this plaza to sit on the benches to eat, read, or smoke; walk around; stand in the plaza to smoke; and make flower arrangements in the plaza space (Conran shop workers). Many people (55 to 77 per hour) pass through the plaza on their way to the retail spaces at Bridgemarket. Ten to 25 people per hour were observed in the plaza on the weekday survey, with fewer than 20 people on weekends.

BridgeTower Place

At the northeast corner of E. 60th Street and First Avenue, a landscaped plaza area is located in front of the high-rise BridgeTower Place, an apartment building (Figure 4.3-1, No. 2). This 6,500-square-foot plaza is a paved area with landscaping, trees, and benches. The plaza also serves as the entrance area for the large apartment building on the block, and extends along First Avenue in front of the entrance to the retail stores on the building's ground floor. As identified in Table 4.3-1, 25 to 50 people per hour were typically observed in this plaza on weekdays, with more (50 to 85) on weekends. People typically stay ½ hour or longer in this open space. Individuals used the open space area to sit and drink, eat, work on a laptop computer, talk on a



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY WATER TUNNEL NO. 3
STAGE 2-MANHATTAN LEG
PREFERRED SHAFT SITE

ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW OF
TYPICAL ACTIVITIES AT THE MULTI-USE AREA

FIGURE 4.3-2



cell phone, and/or to read a paper. In addition, many people pass through the area to enter the BridgeTower Place apartment building (typically more than 70 per hour).

Plaza at Sovereign Apartments

On the block east of First Avenue, a large publicly accessible plaza extends between E. 58th and E. 59th Street (Figure 4.3-1, No. 3). This “bonus” plaza,¹ which is across E. 59th Street from Bridgemarket Plaza, is sandwiched between apartment buildings and is owned by the adjacent high-rise Sovereign Apartments. More than ½ acre in size, the plaza includes a northern area along E. 59th Street that has landscaping, trees, and benches, and is gated to prevent access at night; and a southern section, along E. 58th Street, with landscaping and seating on walls. Together, these two areas create a shaded pass-through for pedestrians walking between E. 59th and E. 58th Streets. During the weekday open space surveys, the Sovereign plaza was typically used by 20 to 30 people per hour on weekdays, but fewer than 10 per hour during the summer weekend survey. These people used the open space area to sit and read, eat, drink and/or talk on a cell phone, and to play on the grass or paved areas (children). Many people also use the through-block plaza as a pass-through between E. 58th and E. 59th Streets. People were observed using this open space for more than ½ hour at a time during each hour of the survey. In addition, other people (30 to 50 people per hour) pass through the plaza to enter or exit from the Sovereign Apartments building on weekdays.

The Grand Sutton Building Plaza

Farther east on the south side of E. 59th Street, a plaza is located in front of the Grand Sutton apartment building (Figure 4.3-1, No. 4). This approximately 2,600-square-foot plaza has landscaping and seating. During the weekday surveys, an average of five people per hour were observed using this open space for short periods of time, to sit and read, drink, or talk on a cell phone. No users were observed during the summer weekend survey.

¼-Mile Study Area

As described in Section 3.3, “Open Space Methodology,” to determine whether the area around the preferred Shaft Site is adequately served by public open spaces and to measure the effect of using a portion of the multi-use area during Stages 2 and 3 of the construction period, an additional assessment of open spaces was undertaken for an approximately ¼-mile Study Area around the site.² In this area, all publicly accessible open spaces were tallied, and the ratio of useable open space acreage to the Study Area population—referred to as the open space ratio—was calculated and compared with guidelines established by the New York City Department of City Planning (NYCDCP).

¹ “Bonus” plazas are publicly accessible plazas provided on private property that were created to obtain additional development rights for the adjacent building. The Zoning Resolution of the City of New York sets forth the rules for bonus plazas, including the hours when they must be accessible to the public.

² As described in Section 3.3, “Open Space,” in Chapter 3, “Impact Methodologies,” the ¼-mile Study Area consists of all census tracts that have at least half their area within ¼ mile of the preferred Shaft Site.

Four census tracts (Tract 106.01, 106.02, 108, and 110) are included in the ¼-mile Study Area (Figure 4.3-1). According to Census 2000, the residential population of this Study Area in 2000 was 26,728. The Study Area also has a relatively high daytime worker population, particularly Tract 108, which extends into East Midtown. A total of 17,145 employees work in the four census tracts in the ¼-mile Study Area (see Table 4.3-2). Although the analysis conservatively assumes that residents and employees are separate populations and that they may use the open spaces at the same time, it is possible that some of the residents are also employees within the Study Area and therefore that there is some double-counting of the daily user population when residential and worker populations overlap.

Table 4.3-2
Population in the ¼-Mile Study Area

Census Tract	Residents	Workers
106.01	7,968	2,210
106.02	3,949	1,905
108	8,079	9,680
110	6,732	3,350
Study Area Total	26,728	17,145
Sources: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, Census 2000; 2000 Census Transportation Planning Package Part 2: Total Workers at Place of Work (Regardless of Residence), Table CTPP2 P-1.		

Figure 4.3-1 shows the ¼-mile Study Area and the publicly accessible open spaces in the Study Area. As shown in the figure and listed in Table 4.3-3, there are a total of 25 publicly accessible open spaces in the ¼-mile Study Area, including the four open spaces that are within the 400-foot Study Area discussed above. The Study Area includes the Queensboro Oval, a 1.24-acre active open space beneath the Queensboro Bridge just east of Bridgemarket, which has an outdoor ballfield in warm weather and enclosed tennis courts during cold weather; and the 0.6-acre 24 Sycamores Park at York Avenue and E. 60th Street, with ball courts, a playground, seating, and restrooms. Several of the Study Area’s open spaces are along the East River and provide waterfront vistas. These include the East River Esplanade, which extends from E. 61st Street northward past the Study Area boundary into East Harlem; Pavilion Park at E. 61st Street and the East River; and the five Sutton Place Parks, at the ends of E. 54th, E. 55th, E. 56th, E. 57th, and E. 58th Streets. The park at E. 57th Street is the largest of these, and has benches, landscaping, and a sandbox. The park at E. 58th Street is currently being renovated as part of the reconstruction of the FDR Drive, which runs below the park. Many of the other open spaces in the ¼-mile Study Area are relatively small bonus plazas adjacent to apartment buildings.

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Table 4.3-3
Open Spaces in the ¼-Mile Study Area

Map No	Name (if any)	Owner	Description/Amenities	Open Space Acres		
				Total	Active	Passive
	Multi-use area*	Public	Shared space used jointly by NYCDOT and as an open space; nine trees but no open space amenities	0.27	0.14	0.14
1	Bridgemarket	Public	Plaza with seating and landscaping	0.49	0.00	0.49
2	BridgeTower Place	Private	Plaza with bike parking, plantings, seating, trees	0.15	0.00	0.15
3	Sovereign	Private	Plaza with plantings, trees, benches and steps	0.65	0.00	0.65
4	Grand Sutton	Private	Plaza with sculpture, bike parking, plantings, seating, trees	0.06	0.00	0.06
5	Queensboro Oval	Public	Outdoor ballfield May through October; enclosed tennis courts October through April	1.24	1.24	0.00
6	24 Sycamores Park	Public	Park with basketball court, handball courts, playground, tables, seating, restrooms	0.62	0.52	0.10
7	Sutton Place Park	Public	Multi-level park with benches, trees, plantings, sandbox, statue	0.30	0.02	0.28
8	Sutton Place Parks	Public	Open plazas with river views	0.23	0.00	0.23
9**	St. James Tower, Cornell Weill Medical College	Private	Plaza with seating and landscaping	NA	NA	NA
10	St James Tower	Private	Residential plaza with bike parking, planting, benches, fountain	0.07	0.00	0.07
11	Brevard	Private	Residential plaza with bike parking, planting, seating, trees, waterfall	0.21	0.00	0.21
12	909 Third Avenue	Private	Wide sidewalk with trees and arcaded pedestrian area	0.25	0.00	0.25
13	919 Third Avenue	Private	Plaza and pedestrian space with landscaping	0.38	0.00	0.38
14	909 Third Avenue, E. 55 th Street area	Private	Paved plaza	0.05	0.00	0.05
15	The Landmark	Private	Plaza and arcade with bike parking, seating, trees, and landscaping	0.31	0.00	0.31
16	Tramway Plaza	Public	Paved plaza and pedestrian space with trees	0.35	0.18	0.18
17	Evansview	Private	Plaza with seating and landscaping	0.10	0.00	0.10
18	205 E. 59 th Street	Private	Courtyard with landscaping	0.04	0.00	0.04
19	Savoy E. 60 th Street	Private	Plaza with seating, landscaping, restaurant	0.07	0.00	0.07
20	Savoy E. 61 st Street	Private	Plaza with bike parking, seating, trees, plantings	0.04	0.00	0.04
21	Wellington Estates	Private	Wide sidewalk with plantings	0.05	0.00	0.05
22	Paladin	Private	Plaza with sculpture, bike parking, seating, planting, trees	0.07	0.00	0.07
23	Carlton Towers	Private	Plaza with seating, steps, plantings	0.11	0.00	0.11
24	Pavilion Park dog run	Public	Dog run	0.30	0.30	0.00
25	East River Esplanade/ Bobby Wagner Walk	Public	Esplanade with bike and pedestrian path, benches, trees	1.23	0.62	0.62
TOTALS				7.64	3.01	4.64
<p>Notes: * For purposes of a conservative analysis, the 0.27-acre multi-use area is included in the total open space acreage.</p> <p>** Open space No. 9, the plaza at Cornell Weill Medical Center, was not included in the tally of open space acreage because it is not open on weekends. It is conservatively included on the map, since it is a public open space when it is open on weekdays.</p>						

To assess the adequacy of the open spaces in the Study Area to meet the needs of the residential and worker population, the ratio of population to open space acres is compared to NYCDCP's planning guidelines. The employee population of the Study Area is most likely to use the area's passive open spaces, since workers will typically use open spaces during their lunch break, while the residential population of the Study Area likely uses its passive and active open spaces.

Therefore, following the methodology set forth in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, several open space ratios are calculated and compared to NYCDCP guidelines: the ratio of residential population to total open space acres, the ratio of residential population to active and passive open space acres, and the ratio of combined residential and worker population to passive open space acres.

Table 4.3-4 provides the existing open space ratios and NYCDCP guidelines for the ¼-mile Study Area. With a residential population of 26,728 and 7.64 acres of open space (of which 4.64 is passive and 3.01 is active),³ the total residential open space ratio in the Study Area for existing conditions is 0.29 acres per 1,000 residents. The residential active open space ratio is 0.11 acres per 1,000 residents and the residential passive open space ratio is 0.17 acres per 1,000 residents. These ratios are far below the City-wide median of 1.5 total acres per 1,000 residents and the City's optimal planning goal of 2.5 acres of combined active and passive acres per 1,000 residents, indicating that in the existing conditions, the Study Area is underserved by open spaces. Including the Study Area's worker population, the combined residential and worker population is 43,873, for a combined passive open space ratio of 0.11, below the recommended ratio for this population of 0.36 (this ratio consists of 0.15 acres per 1,000 workers and 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents). Overall, therefore, the ¼-mile Study Area is underserved by open space resources; existing open space ratios for the Study Area are far below NYCDCP planning goals.

It should be noted that several factors not accounted for in the quantitative analysis help to alleviate the shortage of open space in the ¼-mile Study Area. First, many of the larger apartment buildings in the Study Area have private open spaces for use by their residents. These include rooftop spaces as well as private courtyards and gardens. Second, the Study Area also has several open spaces that were not included in the quantitative assessment, but that are also available as public open spaces. These include the gardens at the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden on E. 61st Street between First and York Avenues and a large landscaped area adjacent to the high-rise residential building at 424 E. 61st Street (between First and York Avenues). In addition, the East River Esplanade continues outside the Study Area, providing far more than the 1.2 acres of open space that is located in the Study Area; in total, the East River Esplanade contains 3.3 acres. Another open space resource, the City's 54th Street Recreation Center, an indoor recreation center with gym, pool, track, and scheduled programs, is also located just outside the Study Area.

³ As noted in Table 4.3-3, the total open space acreage for the ¼-mile Study Area includes the 0.27-acre multi-use area. The multi-use area has been included in the open space calculations to estimate the potential change in open space ratios while a portion of this area is used during the construction period.

**Table 4.3-4
Open Space Ratios in the ¼-Mile Study Area**

	Open Space Acres		
	Total	Active	Passive
	7.64	3.01	4.64
	Population		
	Residential	Worker	Total
	26,728	17,145	43,873
Open Space Ratios – Residential Population			
	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents	Active Acres per 1,000 Residents	Passive Acres per 1,000 Residents
NYCDP Guideline	2.50	2.00	0.50
Existing ratio	0.29	0.11	0.17
Open Space Ratios – Combined Residential and Worker Population			
	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers	Active Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers	Passive Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers
NYCDP Guideline	Not applicable	Not applicable	0.36
Existing ratio	Not applicable	Not applicable	0.11

4.3.3 Future Conditions Without the Project

400-Foot Study Area

In the Future Without the Project, construction work on the Queensboro Bridge will continue and a portion of the preferred Shaft Site will continue to be used by NYCDOT for Bridge maintenance and reconstruction staging. When the Bridge project is completed, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) is planning a restoration of the multi-use area, potentially including new seating, lighting, landscaping, and paving.⁴ In addition, NYCDPR is considering creation of a landscaped buffer area between the fenced NYCDOT site and the multi-use area. Community Board 8 is also seeking improvements to the open spaces near the Queensboro Bridge as part of its 197-a plan, described in Section 4.2, “Land Use and Community Facilities, Zoning, and Public Policy.” The plan recommends installation of a low wall or plantings around the perimeter of the preferred Shaft Site; it also recommends landscaping or other aesthetic enhancements to a portion of the currently closed pedestrian ramp to the Queensboro Bridge overlooking the multi-use area.

Several new developments are proposed in the 400-foot Study Area, as described in Section 4.2. During construction (approximately 2006 through 2008), these developments—a new Ronald McDonald House and a dormitory for Rockefeller University on E. 60th Street between First and

⁴ Source: Telephone conversation with Jennifer Hoppa, Deputy Director, Planning, NYCDPR, September 19, 2005.

York Avenues—have the potential to result in some disruption to the nearest open space, the public plaza at BridgeTower Place on First Avenue at E. 60th Street. Once completed, both projects will bring additional population who will use nearby open spaces in the Study Area. Other developments proposed in the ¼-mile Study Area could also contribute population to the open spaces in the 400-foot Study Area.

¼-Mile Study Area

In addition, several other development projects are proposed outside the 400-foot Study Area but within the ¼-mile open space Study Area. These include the following:

- Development at York Avenue between E. 60th and E. 61st Streets: Potentially 220 new apartments; although no rezoning application has been approved.
- Development on York Avenue between E. 61st and E. 62nd Streets: 120 new apartments; application for rezoning has been approved.
- Developments on E. 57th Street: Four new residential buildings are currently under construction on E. 57th Street in the ¼-mile Study Area at 207 E. 57th Street, 220 E. 57th Street, 330 E. 57th Street, and 415 E. 57th Street. This will bring a total of approximately 130 new apartments to that street.
- Sutton Hotel (330 E. 56th Street, between First and Second Avenues): This hotel is currently being converted to 76 apartments.
- 1115 First Avenue (between E. 61st and 62nd Streets): A 45-unit residential building is currently under construction at this site.
- Potential development of a new residence for priests on E. 61st Street between First and Second Avenues.
- Potential development of a new residential tower above the E. 57th Street Educational Campus, at Second Avenue between E. 56th and E. 57th Streets.

During construction, these projects will result in some disruption to the nearest open spaces. Once completed, they will add population who will use nearby open spaces, including the open spaces in the ¼-mile Study Area.

As described above, NYCDPR is planning a restoration of the multi-use area in the Future Without the Project. In addition, rehabilitation of Tramway Plaza, at Second Avenue and E. 59th Street, is also planned. Reconstruction of the FDR Drive will continue in the Future Without the Project, and is scheduled for completion in 2008. As part of the reconstruction, the New York State Department of Transportation will restore and improve the green spaces on the roof deck and alongside the construction area. This includes the Sutton Place Parks at the foot of E. 54th through E. 58th Streets. The dog run at Pavilion Park, at East 61st Street and the East River, which is currently difficult to access, will become more accessible when construction is complete. In addition, space currently used for roadway reconstruction work alongside the highway near E. 61st Street may become available for use as an open space.

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CB 8’s 197-a plan, which is discussed in more detail in Section 4.2, makes recommendations for the Queensboro Bridge area that focus on streetscape and open space elements. Key issues, as identified in the 197-a plan, include access to the East River waterfront and improvement of the quality of and access to park spaces. As described in Section 4.2, Community Board 8’s 197-a plan makes specific recommendations for future changes at the preferred Shaft 33B Site, including introduction of a buffer around the preferred Shaft Site, such as low walls and/or planting that would make the continued NYCDOT use of the site more aesthetically pleasing, and introduction of landscaping on the pedestrian ramp leading to the Queensboro Bridge that overlooks the multi-use area. The 197-a plan also discusses possible improvements to Tramway Park, Pavilion Park, and the East River Esplanade.

With the addition of the new population but conservatively assuming that no new public open space acreage is provided, the ¼-mile Study Area will continue to be underserved by open spaces (see Table 4.3-5). Open space ratios will decrease slightly, for a total open space ratio of 0.27 acres per 1,000 residents, an active open space ratio of 0.11 acres per 1,000 residents, a passive open space ratio of 0.17 acres per 1,000 residents, and a combined passive open space ratio of 0.10 acres per 1,000 workers and residents.

Table 4.3-5
Open Space Ratios in the ¼-Mile Study Area—Future Without the Project

	Open Space Acres		
	Total	Active	Passive
	7.64	3.01	4.64
	Population		
	Residential	Worker	Total
	28,063	17,145	45,208
Open Space Ratios – Residential Population			
	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents	Active Acres per 1,000 Residents	Passive Acres per 1,000 Residents
NYCDCP Guideline	2.50	2.00	0.50
No Build ratio	0.28	0.11	0.17
Open Space Ratios – Combined Residential and Worker Population			
	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers	Active Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers	Passive Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers
NYCDCP Guideline	Not applicable	Not applicable	0.37
No Build ratio	Not applicable	Not applicable	0.10
Note: <u>The future open space ratios were calculated with the additional residents expected at future development projects listed in the text, with the exception of the E. 61st Street residence for priests and the E. 57th Street Educational Campus project, since no future program was available for those projects, which are still in the planning stages.</u>			

4.3.4 Future Conditions With the Project

Construction

400-Foot Study Area

Base Configuration

The base configuration for the preferred Shaft Site would involve construction on the currently fenced NYCDOT site at E. 59th Street and First Avenue for 52 months; during 23 months (Stages 2 and 3), the construction site would also extend into a portion of the adjacent multi-use area. During this period, approximately 1,800 square feet of the multi-use area would be behind the construction enclosure and used to provide additional area for construction staging. Two honey locust trees would be removed from this portion of the multi-use area. Following completion of Stage 3 (in 2008), the directly affected portion of the multi-use area would be restored in accordance with NYCDOT and the community as applicable. In addition, NYCDEP would fund and support NYCDPR re-vegetation and greening efforts in the Study Area; these efforts could include the provision of additional street trees or support for other park or open space improvement initiatives intended to benefit the residents of local communities. NYCDEP would work with NYCDPR and the community to identify desired improvements in the general project area.

The base configuration would also use a portion of the sidewalk areas adjacent to the construction site, but narrowed sidewalks would remain so that access to the multi-use area would be maintained throughout the construction period. Section 4.1, "Project Description" in this Chapter provides an illustration of the area that would be affected in the base configuration.

Of the open spaces in the Study Area, construction activities would be most noticeable at the multi-use area, because of its proximity to the construction site at the preferred Shaft Site and because of the direct use of a portion of the multi-use area during construction. Construction activities at the four open spaces in the 400-foot study area would not be as noticeable because of distance and the buffer created by the construction barrier, as discussed below.

Construction Effects on Multi-Use Area

While the multi-use area has been available for open space uses, it is under the jurisdiction of NYCDOT and has been and continues to be used for parking and as an access area for Bridge maintenance and rehabilitation work by NYCDOT. Recognizing the existing and ongoing use of the multi-use area for Bridge maintenance and rehabilitation activities, the limited nature and duration of the proposed use (1,800 of 11,900 square feet for 23 months), and the multi-use area's lack of basic open space amenities, as well as the restoration of the affected area following construction staging, the use of the multi-use area during construction of Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site would not represent a significant adverse impact to that open space.

During all construction stages, construction activity on the preferred Shaft Site would result in some disturbance at the multi-use area, because of its proximity to the construction site. During Stages 1 and 4, this disturbance would occur to the entire multi-use area; during Stages 2 and 3,

it would occur to the 10,100-square-foot portion of the multi-use area that would remain open to the public. The construction area would be surrounded by a 20-foot-high barrier that would buffer the multi-use area from the construction site. Construction equipment, particularly the crane on the site, would be visible above the construction barrier. In addition, construction-related traffic would arrive at and depart from the site. During the busiest construction period, up to 30 truck trips would arrive at and depart from the construction site on a typical day. This truck traffic would not result in significant adverse traffic impacts but would be a noticeable element of construction on the site. Construction work would at times be noisy and disruptive, but a construction barrier surrounding the construction site would buffer the disturbance to the adjacent multi-use area. As described in Section 4.12, “Noise,” no potential significant adverse noise impacts are predicted at the multi-use area. In addition, no potential significant adverse air quality impacts are anticipated at the multi-use area (see Section 4.11, “Air Quality”).

Pedestrians traveling to the multi-use site would walk on a narrower sidewalk on E. 59th Street alongside the construction area, but since no potential significant adverse impacts are predicted to pedestrian conditions from this sidewalk condition (see Section 4.10, “Pedestrians and Transit”), no potential significant adverse impacts to the access to the multi-use area are expected. During approximately the first four months of the eight-month period when blasting is occurring, there would be some limits to access in the area closest to the preferred Shaft Site. As described in Chapter 2, “Purpose and Need and Project Overview” and in Section 4.9, “Traffic and Parking,” blasting could occur up to two times a day during an eight-month period during Stages 2B and 2C. Access and traffic restrictions would be necessary during the first four months of this period. During this period, a warning whistle communication protocol would be used to halt vehicular and pedestrian traffic within 100 to 150 feet of the blast site immediately prior to the blast, for a total anticipated duration of 5 minutes or less. Access to the multi-use area would therefore not be allowed for up to five minutes at a time for each blast. NYCDEP would seek a whistle waiver from FDNY to allow a shorter blasting sequence to be conducted at the preferred Shaft Site, which would reduce the duration when pedestrians would be cleared from the multi-use area from 5 minutes to approximately 1 minute. The FDNY has indicated that they could issue this waiver.

While the 20-foot-high construction barrier would result in some shadow increment on the multi-use area, no potential significant adverse shadow impacts are anticipated. The shadow increment would not cover the entire multi-use area and would be off the area by approximately midday; this limited coverage would not affect the usability of the area. The *CEQR Technical Manual* considers the sensitivity of open space to shadow. Facilities such as children’s playgrounds and sprinklers, swimming pools, sitting or sunning areas, and play areas are considered sensitive to shadow. Open spaces considered not sensitive to shadow include those that are paved, contain no sitting areas, and either contain no vegetation or plant species that are shade tolerant. The multi-use area is predominantly paved and contains no sitting areas. While the multi-use area does contain several trees, the shadow increment would be of limited coverage and would not remain on the multi-use area for the day. Therefore, no potential significant adverse shadows impacts are anticipated, and no further analysis is warranted.

Disturbances from nearby construction activities on the preferred Shaft Site together with the reduction in area during Stages 2 and 3 could mean that some people would choose not to use the multi-use area during construction of Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site in the base site configuration. Overall, however, the presence of construction activity adjacent to the multi-use area during all stages of construction is not anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts to the use and enjoyment of the multi-use area, since the multi-use area is already located adjacent to a construction area, lacks basic open space amenities and is subject to high noise levels, and is used primarily by people who spend little time there. As described in the discussion of existing conditions, the multi-use area is used as an open space predominantly by people walking their dogs, who tend to spend short periods of time there. The area has also been used by NYCDOT for Bridge access and parking for maintenance and construction activities, is already subject to high noise levels, and lacks open space amenities. The addition of more intensive construction activity on the adjacent parcel, which is already used by NYCDOT for construction-related work, would not change the overall character of the multi-use area or prevent dog-walkers and others from continuing to use this site. The multi-use area would be restored in coordination with NYCDOT and the community, as applicable, immediately following the 23-month period when the 1,800-square-foot portion would be used. This restoration would occur following completion of Stage 3 of construction, in 2008, which is consistent with the planned schedule for restoration of the multi-use area by NYCDPR, which is planned to occur in 2009 when Bridge construction work is complete. Overall, therefore, activities related to construction of the proposed Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site are not expected to result in potential significant adverse open space impacts on the multi-use area.

Construction Effects on Open Spaces in 400-Foot Study Area

When the proposed Shaft 33B is in construction, construction activities on the preferred Shaft Site would cause some disturbance to the nearest open spaces because of noise, truck traffic, dust, and other construction-related effects. However, disturbances from construction activities also would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts on the four public open spaces in the 400-foot Study Area. At the Bridgemarket Plaza, construction activities on the preferred Shaft Site might be noticeable, but they would not affect the use or enjoyment of that open space. Bridgemarket Plaza would be separated from the preferred Shaft Site by First Avenue, a busy roadway. While construction work would be visible from Bridgemarket Plaza, the construction barrier around the preferred Shaft Site would generally buffer the plaza from construction activities on the preferred Shaft Site. No potential significant adverse traffic, air quality, or noise impacts would occur at that distance from the construction site (see Sections 4.9, “Traffic and Parking,” 4.11, “Air Quality,” and 4.12, “Noise”). Therefore, construction at the preferred Shaft Site would not be anticipated to have a potential significant adverse impact on the use or enjoyment of that open space.

At the other open spaces in the 400-foot Study Area, construction activities are unlikely to be noticeable. At BridgeTower Place, the construction barrier would be visible from the outermost corner of the plaza, at E. 60th Street and First Avenue, but trucks and noise would generally not be perceptible because of the buffer created by the Queensboro Bridge. Similarly, from the open

spaces on E. 59th Street (Sovereign and Grand Sutton), construction activities would be buffered by intervening buildings and would be barely noticeable. Overall, therefore, construction activities associated with Shaft 33B on the preferred Shaft Site would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts on open spaces in the immediate area.

In addition, NYCDEP would fund and support NYCDPR re-vegetation and greening efforts in the Study Area; these efforts could include the provision of additional street trees or support for other park or open space improvement initiatives intended to benefit the residents of local communities. NYCDEP would work with NYCDPR and the community to identify desired improvements in the general project area.

It is possible that construction workers working on Shaft 33B might use some of the nearby open spaces during their breaks. Given the proximity to the site, construction workers would be most likely to use the multi-use area, although they might also choose to use one of the other open spaces in the 400-foot Study Area. As described in Chapter 2, “Purpose and Need and Project Overview,” an estimated 10 to 15 workers would be on the site on a given day when construction work is occurring at the site. Work would be done in two shifts (7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.), except during the 3 months of Stage 2B of construction, when a third (night) shift would be required. Construction workers would likely use the available open spaces during breaks on all three shifts. These workers would not represent a permanent addition to the work force of the area and would not be large enough in number to adversely affect the available capacity of the multi-use area or any of the other open spaces in the 400-foot Study Area. In addition, people who choose not to use the multi-use area would instead use other open spaces nearby, but this would not place an undue burden on any of those open spaces, considering the limited number of people who use the multi-use area each day.

Alternate Site Configuration

As in the base configuration, the 1,800-square-foot portion of the multi-use area would be used for 23 months during Stages 2 and 3, and two trees would be removed from this portion of the multi-use area. The rest of the multi-use area would remain unchanged and accessible to the public, separated from the construction area by a construction barrier. In addition, the sidewalk along E. 59th Street in front of the construction site would be closed to pedestrian traffic. A 5-foot-wide temporary walkway would be provided along E. 59th Street to allow pedestrian access to the multi-use area. Section 4.1, “Project Description,” provides an illustration of the area that would be affected in the alternate site configuration.

The effects of Shaft 33B construction on open space use at the multi-use area would be the same in the alternate site configuration as in the base configuration. At the multi-use area, construction disturbances, such as increased traffic, air pollution, and noise, would be noticeable, as discussed earlier for the base configuration. As in the base configuration, during the first four months of the blasting period, access would be temporarily prohibited to the multi-use area for up to 5 minutes when blasting is occurring. This could occur up to two times a day during that period. NYCDEP would seek a whistle waiver from FDNY to allow a shorter blasting sequence to be conducted at the preferred Shaft Site, which would reduce the duration when pedestrians would be cleared

from the multi-use area from 5 minutes to approximately 1 minute. The FDNY has indicated that they could issue this waiver.

Disturbances from nearby construction activities on the preferred Shaft Site together with the reduction in area during Stages 2 and 3 could mean that some people would choose not to use the multi-use area during construction of Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site in the alternate site configuration. Overall, however, the use of a portion of the multi-use area for construction in the alternate site configuration is not expected to result in a potential significant adverse open space impact, recognizing the importance of this area as an access area for Bridge maintenance and rehabilitation work by NYCDOT together with open space activities, the limited nature of the proposed use (1,800 of 11,900 square feet), the limited time period it would be used for construction (23 months), the limited use of this space today as an open space resource, its lack of basic open space amenities, and its high noise levels, as well as the restoration of the affected area following construction staging. For the same reasons, the presence of construction activity adjacent to the multi-use area during all stages of construction is not anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts to the use and enjoyment of the multi-use area, since the multi-use area is already located adjacent to a construction area, lacks basic open space amenities and is subject to high noise levels, and is used primarily by dogwalkers for very short periods of time.

The effects of the alternate site configuration on other open spaces in the 400-foot Study Area would be the same as those of the base configuration, described above.

¼-Mile Study Area

During Stages 2 and 3 of construction while a portion of the multi-use area is used, the ¼-mile Study Area would have a temporary decrease in open space acreage. The temporary decrease in open space acreage (by 1,800 square feet) would result in a very small decrease in the open space ratios in the ¼-mile Study Area (see Table 4.3-6). The total open space ratio, the residential passive open space ratio, and the combined worker and residential passive open space ratios would decrease by less than 1 percent. While the ¼-mile Study Area is currently underserved by open space resources, this minute level of change, which would endure for only 23 months, is not considered potentially significant, following the guidance in the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

As noted above, people who choose not to use the multi-use area during construction of Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site would instead use other open spaces nearby for walking their dogs, but this would not place an undue burden on any of those open spaces, considering the limited number of people who use the multi-use area each day. Some of these people would likely use the dog run on E. 61st Street at the East River, which will become more easily accessible once FDR Drive construction is complete. In addition, as noted above, construction workers building the shaft at the preferred Shaft Site would likely use the available open spaces close to the Site during breaks. These workers would not represent a permanent addition to the work force of the area and would not be large enough in number to adversely affect the availability of open spaces in the ¼-mile Study Area.

**Table 4.3-6
Open Space Ratios in the ¼-Mile Study Area—Future With the Project**

	Open Space Acres		
	Total	Active	Passive
	7.60	3.01	4.60
	Population		
	Residential	Worker	Total
28,063	17,145	45,208	
Open Space Ratios – Residential Population			
	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents	Active Acres per 1,000 Residents	Passive Acres per 1,000 Residents
NYCDP Guideline	2.50	2.00	0.50
Build ratio	0.27	0.11	0.16
Open Space Ratios – Combined Residential and Worker Population			
	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers	Active Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers	Passive Acres per 1,000 Residents and Workers
NYCDP Guideline	Not applicable	Not applicable	0.37
Build ratio	Not applicable	Not applicable	0.10

Conclusion

With either the base or alternate site configuration, no potential significant adverse impacts on open space are expected to occur. Construction activities would be most noticeable at the multi-use area, but are not expected to significantly adversely affect this area. Access to the multi-use area would be maintained in both configurations. The temporary use (23 months) of a small portion (1,800 square feet) of the multi-use area during two stages of construction would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts on the multi-use area, given its proximity to a construction site today, its current use for both transportation and open space activities, and its lack of basic open space amenities. Construction activities at the four open spaces in the 400-foot study area would not be as noticeable because of distance and the buffer created by the construction barrier. Within the ¼-mile study area, for a period of 23 months open space ratios would decrease by less than 1 percent; however, open spaces in the area would not be overburdened by the few people who might choose not to use the multi-use area during construction or by the limited numbers of workers at the preferred Shaft Site who might visit open spaces nearby during their breaks. Therefore, no potential significant adverse impacts on open space are expected to occur. A combined assessment of the effects of construction of Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site and its water main connections is presented in Section 5.3, “Open Space,” in Chapter 5, “Water Main Connections.”

Operation

Activation and operation of Shaft 33B are not anticipated to have potential direct or indirect adverse impacts on any publicly accessible open spaces. Because shaft activation would occur for a very short period of time (approximately one month), would involve only a limited number of employees on the Shaft 33B site and a limited number of truck trips per day, and would not directly affect any open spaces, it would not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts to open space.

Shaft operations at the preferred Shaft Site are also not anticipated to result in any adverse impacts to open spaces. The shaft would not be located in an open space and would not affect the utilization of any open spaces in the surrounding area. Once construction of Shaft 33B is completed, the portion of the multi-use area that was used for equipment staging would be restored in coordination with NYCDOT and the community as applicable. In addition, NYCDEP would fund and support NYCDPR re-vegetation and greening efforts in the Study Area; these efforts could include the provision of additional street trees or support for other park or open space improvement initiatives intended to benefit the residents of local communities. NYCDEP would work with NYCDPR and the community to identify desired improvements in the general project area.

Shaft 33B would be located below grade; the only above-grade features at the shaft site would be a 10-foot tall by 14-inch diameter air vent and two small hydrants on the site or in the adjacent sidewalk area. No above-grade shaft features would be present on the multi-use area. In addition, activities associated with operation of Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site would not result in increased traffic, air pollution, or increased noise or vibration levels at the site that might adversely affect use of nearby open spaces. For more information, see Sections 4.6 (“Urban Design and Visual Resources”), 4.9 (“Traffic and Parking”), 4.11 (“Air Quality”), 4.12 (“Noise”), and 4.13 (“Vibration”).

The operation and maintenance of the shaft would also not bring a significant number of new workers to the Study Area who might add to the utilization of existing open spaces. During shaft operations, a small maintenance crew (between 2 and 10 people, but most often 2 to 4 people) of NYCDEP personnel would visit the site an average of 1 to 3 times a week (roughly 10 to 12 visits total in a month) for routine inspection and maintenance activities. This number of employees is not large enough to result in a noticeable change in the use of open spaces in the surrounding area.

Overall, operation of Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site would not result in potential significant changes to the use or enjoyment of public open spaces relative to the existing condition and the Future Without the Project. Therefore, no potential significant adverse impact on open spaces is anticipated from operation of the Shaft at the preferred Shaft Site.

