

6.3 OPEN SPACE

6.3.1 Introduction

This Section evaluates the potential effects of construction and operation of Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site on open space resources. The Study Area is the same as for land use, described in Section 6.2, “Land Use and Community Facilities, Zoning, and Public Policy,” and consists of the area within 400 feet of the alternative Shaft Site and potential water main connection route from the alternative Shaft Site along E. 59th Street to First Avenue.

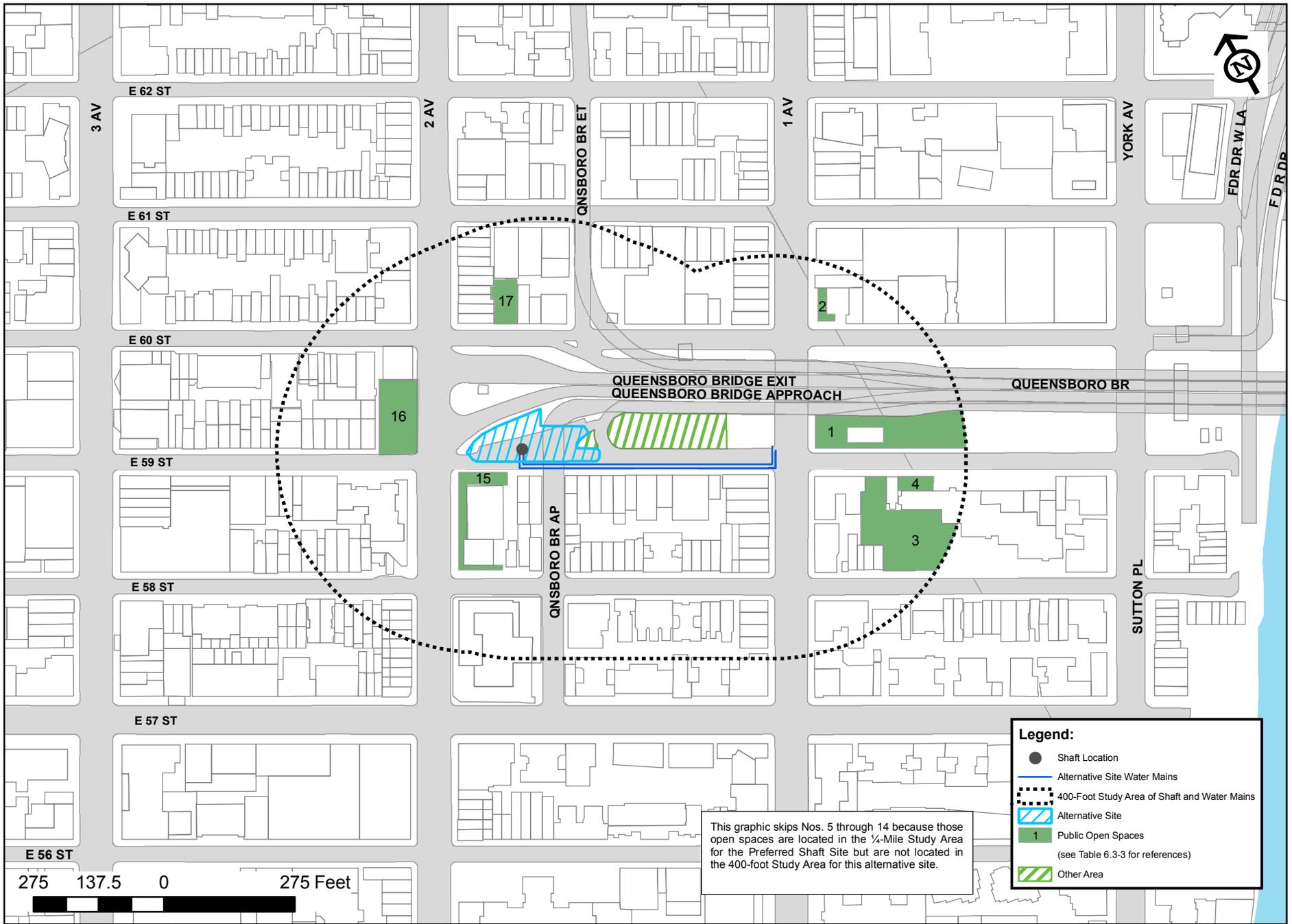
6.3.2 Existing Conditions

The 400-foot Study Area for the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site includes seven publicly accessible open spaces and one shared space. Those are listed in Table 6.3-1 and shown in Figure 6.3-1.

**Table 6.3-3
Open Spaces in the 400-Foot Study Area**

Map No	Name (if any)	Owner	Description/Amenities	Total Open Space Acres	Active Open Space Acres	Passive Open Space Acres
	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
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
<p>Note: * This table skips Nos. 5 through 14 because those open spaces are located in the ¼-Mile Study Area for the Preferred Shaft Site but are not located in the 400-foot Study Area for the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site.</p>						

As shown in the table, most of these open spaces are small plazas associated with residential buildings. The plaza at BridgeTower Place (No. 2) is on the north side of the Queensboro Bridge and east of First Avenue, and therefore completely isolated from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site. The two plazas at the Sovereign and Grand Sutton apartment buildings (Nos.



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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
 PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY TUNNEL NO. 3
 STAGE 2- MANHATTAN LEG
 E. 59TH STREET/SECOND AVENUE SHAFT SITE
 PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

FIGURE 6.3-1

3 and 4) are also east of First Avenue and separated from the alternative Shaft Site by numerous intervening buildings.

Four of the open spaces—the plaza at Bridgemarket (No. 1), Tramway Plaza (No. 16), the plaza at the Landmark apartment building (No. 15), the plaza at Evansview (No. 17)—and the multi-use area, are closer to the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site. Bridgemarket is on the north side of E. 59th Street east of First Avenue, with a direct line of sight to the eastern portion of the alternative Shaft Site. A series of honey locust trees at the multi-use area (discussed below) block some views from the plaza to the alternative Shaft Site; in addition, the elevated Queensboro Bridge ramp that divides the alternative Shaft Site also blocks views from the plaza to the western portion of the Shaft Site. Tramway Plaza is directly across Second Avenue from the alternative Shaft Site. This space is a mapped New York City park consisting of a widened sidewalk area with trees but no other amenities. It is adjacent to the entrance to the Roosevelt Island tram. The open space at the Landmark apartment building, across E. 59th Street from the alternative Shaft Site, consists of two distinct open space elements. The first element is a narrow landscaped area in front of the building along E. 59th Street and along Second Avenue; the second element is an elevated public plaza at the corner of E. 58th Street and Second Avenue above a one-story commercial portion of the building. This open space is separated from the alternative Shaft Site by the tall Landmark building. Finally, the paved public plaza at the Evansview apartment building faces E. 60th Street, on the north side of the Queensboro Bridge.

In addition to the public open spaces listed in the table, the 400-foot Study Area also includes an area that is jointly used for both public space and by the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT) for parking and Queensboro Bridge maintenance. This “multi-use” area is sometimes referred to as “14 Honey Locusts Park” or “Gateway Plaza,” and is marked by a sign indicating that it is 14 Honey Locust Park. As described in Section 4.3, “Open Space” in Chapter 4, “Preferred Shaft Site”, the multi-use area includes two separate sections. The smaller of the two sections is the 1,100-square-foot triangular traffic island between the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site and the curved on-ramp to the Bridge from E. 59th Street. The traffic island has three honey locust trees and is not used by the public as an open space, given its inaccessibility. The larger section of the multi-use area is an 11,900-square-foot parcel east of the curved Bridge on-ramp, which has nine honey locust trees and has no other amenities. This parcel is generally used for passive recreation, including people walking their dogs (see Section 4.3 for more information).

6.3.3 Future Conditions Without the Project

In the Future Without the Project, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) is planning to rehabilitate Tramway Plaza, providing new landscaping and other features at this plaza along Second Avenue. Similarly, NYCDPR is also planning a rehabilitation project at the multi-use area, to add landscaping, seating, paving, and lighting (see Section 4.3 for more information). The Tramway Plaza project will be completed in the next several years, while the multi-use area restoration will be completed once the NYCDOT’s Queensboro Bridge Rehabilitation Program is complete in 2009. No other changes to open spaces are anticipated in

the Future Without the Project. The new residential buildings planned in the Study Area (see Section 6.2) would bring additional population to the Study Area, who would presumably use the area's open spaces.

6.3.4 Future Conditions With the Project

Construction

Shaft 33B

Construction activities at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would create some disruption for surrounding land uses, as noted in Section 6.2 (“Land Use and Community Facilities, Zoning, and Public Policy”). Construction equipment would be visible above the construction barrier, particularly the crane on the site, and a limited amount of construction-related traffic would arrive at and depart from the alternative Shaft Site. Noise from construction equipment on the site would be audible in the nearby vicinity (for more information on noise, see Section 6.12, “Noise”). However, the 20-foot-high construction barrier that would surround the alternative Shaft Site would limit the disruption. No open spaces would be directly affected by construction.

At the plaza at BridgeTower Place and the plazas at the Sovereign and Grand Sutton apartment buildings, construction activities at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not be noticeable. At the plaza at Bridgemarket, construction activities might be noticeable, but they would be mostly buffered by the distance from the construction site as well as by the presence of the busy First Avenue roadway, the honey locust trees at the multi-use area, and the elevated Queensboro Bridge ramp between the plaza and the construction work. The 35-story Landmark apartment building would buffer its plaza area from the construction site. The narrow, landscaped area on E. 59th Street in front of the Landmark building would be directly across from the alternative Shaft Site. Although construction activities would be in close proximity to this space, the 20-foot construction barrier would buffer the landscaped area from the construction work and no changes to the space or access to the space would occur. Overall, therefore, construction activities for Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts at any of these open spaces.

Tramway Plaza would be directly across Second Avenue from the construction activity. The presence of the busy and wide Second Avenue roadway, as well as the wide entrance ramps to the Queensboro Bridge adjacent to the alternative Shaft Site, would effectively separate Tramway Plaza from the construction site, so that the construction activities would generally not disrupt users of Tramway Plaza in the future.

Similarly, the presence of the wide and upward sloping Queensboro Bridge entrance plaza at Second Avenue between E. 59th and E. 60th Street effectively separates the alternative Shaft Site from the plaza at the Evansview apartment building on E. 60th Street. At Tramway Plaza and the Evansview plaza, because of the buffers created by wide roadways between the construction

activity and the open spaces, no potential significant adverse impacts on users of those open spaces are anticipated.

The multi-use area would be the closest open space-type area to the construction activities. As described in Section 4.3, as an area adjacent to the Queensboro Bridge and its curving entrance ramp, the multi-use area is subject to high noise levels. It also lacks open space amenities and is used by NYCDOT for Bridge parking and access for maintenance and construction activities as well as by the public for open space activities. The multi-use area is generally used for strolling or by people walking their dogs, who visit the space for short periods of time. 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 people from continuing to use this site. Overall, therefore, activities related to construction of the proposed Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts to peoples' enjoyment of the multi-use area.

As described in Chapter 2, "Purpose and Need and Project Overview," during the initial period when blasting would occur (4 months using the raise bore method or 12 months using surface excavation), there would be some limits to access in the area closest to the alternative Shaft Site. Access and traffic restrictions would be necessary up to two times a day 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 Tramway Plaza, the northern landscaped area at the Landmark building, and the multi-use area would therefore not be allowed during that period. NYCDEP would seek a whistle waiver from FDNY to allow a shorter blasting sequence to be conducted, which would reduce the duration when pedestrians would be cleared from those spaces to approximately 1 minute. The FDNY has indicated that they could issue this waiver. This very brief limitation to access to open spaces would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts to the affected open spaces.

In summary, construction activities on the alternative Shaft Site would not occur in, or directly affect, any open spaces. Most open spaces in the Study Area are removed from the alternative Shaft Site and buffered by intervening uses and would not be adversely affected by construction of Shaft 33B on the alternative Shaft Site. At closer open spaces, the 20-foot construction barrier would serve as an effective buffer, limiting construction-related disruption in the open spaces. Construction activities associated with Shaft 33B on the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue 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.

Water Main Connections

Construction of the new block-long water main connections from the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site to E. 59th Street at First Avenue, where they would meet the First Avenue and Sutton Place water main routes described in Chapter 5, would also bring some additional temporary construction disruption to the nearby area. This work would last an estimated 20 weeks, and would pass directly adjacent to the landscaped area at the Landmark apartment building and the multi-use area. As described in Section 5.3, “Open Space,” in Chapter 5, “Water Main Connections,” construction activity for the water mains is anticipated to be disruptive to adjacent open spaces, with some disruption to nearby traffic patterns and temporary adverse noise impacts to the nearest properties, which would include the two nearby open spaces. Overall, however, this disruption would be of short duration and therefore would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts to the usability of open spaces in its immediate vicinity. Other than the addition of an extra block for the First Avenue and Sutton Place routes, the water main connections would be the same from this alternative Shaft Site as from the preferred Shaft Site, and the potential effects of the work is described in Section 5.3.

To allow eastbound traffic to continue to use E. 59th Street during the 20 weeks when water main construction is under way, it is possible that traffic coming from Second Avenue would be rerouted to the north side of E. 59th Street, passing through the northern arch of the elevated Bridge ramp that crosses E. 59th Street. This is illustrated in Figure 6.1-3 in Section 6.1, “Project Description.” In that case, the three trees on the smaller, traffic island portion of the multi-use area would have to be removed so that the temporary detour could pass through that area. Following completion of construction, the trees would be replaced in accordance with NYCDPR’s tree replacement policy.

Conclusions

Overall, construction of Shaft 33B at the alternative Shaft Site and the associated water mains would not occur in, or directly affect, any open spaces. Construction of the shaft would be buffered from nearby open spaces by a 20-foot-high construction barrier. While the water main construction would be disruptive to open spaces adjacent to the water main route, the disruption would be of short duration. Overall, construction of Shaft 33B at the alternative Shaft Site and the water mains would not result in potential significant adverse impacts at any of the open spaces in the Study Area.

Operation

Activation and operation of Shaft 33B are not anticipated to have potential adverse effects on any publicly accessible open spaces near the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site. As described in Chapter 2, activation would occur for a very short period of time and would involve limited on-site activity. The shaft would not be located in any open space, and the completed shaft would have only limited equipment above grade. Activities associated with operation of the shaft would not result in increased traffic, air pollution, or increased noise or vibration levels at the site. For more information, see Sections 6.6 (“Urban Design and Visual Resources”), 6.9

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(“Traffic and Parking”), 6.11 (“Air Quality”), 6.12 (“Noise”), and 6.13 (“Vibration”). Limited on-site activity would occur once the shaft is operational. 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. Overall, therefore, operation of Shaft 33B at the E. 59th Street/Second Avenue Shaft Site is not anticipated to result in any potential significant adverse impacts to nearby open spaces.

