

6.0 OPEN SPACE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The *CEQR Technical Manual* defines open space as “publicly or privately owned land that is publicly accessible and has been designated leisure, play or sport or land set aside for the protection and/or enhancement of the natural environment.” Uses of open space are classified as active or passive. Active space is used for sports, exercise or play; passive space is used for activities such as sitting and relaxing.

This chapter evaluates the Proposed Action’s potential effects on existing and planned open space. The Proposed Action would house three DSNY District Garages in one new facility above the UPS staging operations and the construction of a salt shed on the site of the existing MN 1 Garage. The existing MN 1 Garage would be demolished and replaced with a salt shed. There are no existing or planned open space uses on these sites.

6.2 METHODOLOGY

The study area for the open space assessment was defined as the area within approximately a one-quarter mile radius of the Proposed Action sites. In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an analysis of both direct and indirect impacts to open space was conducted. A direct impact would physically change, diminish or eliminate open space or reduce its utilization or aesthetic value. An indirect impact would add population to the area that would place an increase demand on the open space facility. According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a complete, quantitative open space analysis is recommended for residential projects that would add a population of 200 people or greater or a commercial project that would add 500 or greater employees to the area. The Proposed Action is not a residential project, nor would it increase employment. The Proposed Action would cause a relocation of approximately 158 employees to the vicinity from Gansevoort above the existing 64 employees currently assigned to the MN 1 Garage. Therefore, a detailed quantitative assessment the Proposed Action’s effect on open space is not required. Qualitative impacts that are addressed include potential significant physical impacts on existing open space in terms of increasing shadow, noise, air pollutant emissions or odors as compared to the Future Without the Proposed Action condition.

Existing open space uses were identified through a review of several data sources including the NYCDPR, NYCDPC and field surveys.


6.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The open space study area is defined to allow for the analysis of nearby open spaces and the population using those spaces. Generally, a reasonable walking distance defines the study area; for commercial projects, a one-quarter mile radius is typically used (including the lands within census tracts with at least 50 percent of their area within the generalized study area). Several open space uses, both active and passive, currently exist within an approximately one-quarter mile radius of the two Proposed Action sites (Figure 6-1).

The nearest public open space use is Canal Park, located at the intersection of West Street/Route 9A and Canal Street. This park is situated directly south of the existing MN 1 Garage. It fronts West Street and sits between the eastbound and westbound lanes of Canal Street. The 0.66 acre park was recently restored and re-dedicated in 2005. It offers passive uses such as sitting and strolling. A central, curving pathway with benches, harkening back to the park’s original design, is lined with plantings on both sides.



Base Map Copyrighted by the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, 2004
 Parcel Data Source: NYC Department of City Planning
 Land Use Source: NYC Department of City Planning, Real Property Assessment Data, 2005
 Land Use modified based on field verification December, 2006

 1200 MacArthur Boulevard Mahwah, New Jersey 07430 (201) 529-5151 f.(201) 529-5728	Manhattan Districts 1/2/5 Garage and Salt Shed	Figure 6-1 Existing Open Space
	City of New York Department of Sanitation	

The 550 acre (including 400 acres underwater) Hudson River Park which is under construction and is operated by the Hudson River Park Trust, is situated west of the two sites between West Street/Route 9A and the Hudson River. West Street/Route 9A, in the vicinity of the UPS Equipment Staging Lot, is a major arterial roadway with four travel lanes of traffic (and one parking lane) in the northerly direction; there are three travel lanes with two turning lanes (onto Canal Street) in the southerly direction. The park system generally runs along the Hudson River waterfront from Battery Park to West 59th Street, although areas of the park are still in the development stages or are currently under construction. The open space study area includes portions of two construction segments of the park – Segment 3 (from Chambers Street to Clarkson Street) and a small portion of Segment 4 (from Clarkson Street to Horatio Street). Construction of Segment 4 began in 1998; in July of 2006 ground was broken on Segment 3 and marine construction is currently underway.

About five acres of Hudson River Park land area lie within the one-quarter mile open space study area. Parkland in the study area contains passive and active open space areas on Piers 34 and 40. The southern portion of Pier 34, located west of Spring Street, offers benches, a walkway and access to the river for fishing. Pier 40 located west of West Houston Street is predominantly a long-term parking garage (2,300 long-term parking spaces), but also contains several turf athletic fields (3.5 acres for soccer, baseball, rugby and football) and a boat launch. A public esplanade is located around the perimeter of the pier. There are several tennis courts south of Pier 40 along a bicycle path and pedestrian walkway that were developed by the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) in the West Street/Route 9A corridor.

The James J. Walker Park, located on Carmine Street, is a 1.67 acre park operated by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (NYCDPR) and is situated approximately 0.2 miles northeast of the UPS Equipment Storage Lot. The park is generally bounded by Hudson Street to the west, St. Luke's Place to the north, 7th Avenue to the east and Clarkson Street to the south. The park offers passive and active uses, including a playground, soccer and softball fields.

Immediately east of the park is the Carmine Recreation Center (Tony Dapolito Recreation Center) operated by the NYCDPR. The center is available for children, adults and senior use and has athletic fields, swimming pools, a computer center, a weight room and many more amenities. The center is open Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 10 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 9 AM to 4:30 PM. From June through September, the center is closed to adults and seniors Monday through Friday from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM for an after school program.

Several parks are situated east of the site (outside the one-quarter mile study area but within Census Tract 51) along the Avenue of the Americas. These parks offer mostly passive recreation with the exception of the Playground of the Americas which offers a play area for children:

- Duarte Square (0.448 acres) located at the Avenue of the Americas, Canal and Grand Streets.
- Playground of the Americas (0.079 acres), located on West Houston Street between MacDougal Street and Avenue of the Americas.
- Charlton Plaza (0.039 acres), a sitting area bounded by Avenue of the Americas, King and Charlton Streets.
- Father Fagan Park (0.048 acres), another sitting area located at Avenue of the Americas, Spring and Prince Streets.
- SoHo Square, a 0.425 acre passive area located at Spring and Broome Streets and Duarte Square (0.448 acres) located at Canal and Grand Streets.

There is one identified privately-owned public space in the study area. The plaza and arcade of the Saatchi & Saatchi Building at 375 Hudson Street are classified by NYCDPR as marginal spaces (public spaces lacking satisfactory levels of design, amenities, or aesthetic appeal and deter members of the public from using the space for any purpose).

6.4 FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION (FUTURE NO BUILD)

The Future No Build condition was reviewed to assess potential effects on open space resources by 2012. In general, demands on open space and outdoor recreation would likely increase based on the expected future development in the project study area including on the UPS Staging Lot, where as of right development is projected to introduce an estimated 1,389 workers.

The Hudson River Park construction under the auspices of the Hudson River Park Trust, would be completed in the project study under the Future Without the Proposed Action. Within the project study area there is a portion of Segments 3 and 4 of the park (Figure 6-1). Assuming the Project schedule is maintained, Segment 3 would be completed and open by the year 2010. The plans for Segment 3 of the park include: the complete reconstruction of Piers 25 and 26 located approximately between Harrison and Hubert Streets; construction of the upland park and public esplanade; and the construction of various park buildings to support the park program.

In 2006, the Hudson River Park Trust issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for redevelopment designs of Pier 40, also part of Segment 3. The pier would continue to serve both the community and the overall park. Under the Hudson River Park Act, at least 50 percent of the Pier 40 footprint (300,000 sq ft) must be reserved for public park uses, with the rest committed to commercial activities that are compatible with park activities. The existing fields would continue to operate.

A small portion of Segment 4 is within the study area; however, within the overall segment three public piers and upland areas have been open to the public since 2003.

Another open space would be developed by the year 2012. It would be located just outside and to the southeast of the study area. CaVaLa (for Canal, Varick and Laight) Park would be a small passive open space in the triangle at Canal, Varick and Laight Streets. A tiered-canal like fountain will be the main feature of the park. The park is scheduled to be open to the public in the Spring of 2009 (www.lowermanhattan.info).

No other identified open spaces or parks would be present in the study area in the year 2012.

In the Future No Build condition, it is assumed that DSNY would continue operations of the garages (Districts 2 and 5) and a salt shed on Gansevoort /Pier 52 (although DSNY is legally mandated to vacate that location) and the MN 1 Garage would continue operations at its current location. Therefore, the eight-acre Gansevoort/Pier 52 part of Hudson River Park could not be developed a public open space; and facilities such as courts for active recreation, a playground and a lawn would not be constructed. Plans for the berthing of historic ships would also not be implemented.

It is anticipated that the residential population would increase by an estimated 2,274 people by the year 2012 under the Future Without the Proposed Action (~~Section~~Chapter 4.4.1) based on the likely residential development in the study area. As per the *CEQR Technical Manual* the City attempts to achieve an open space ratio of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. However, that ratio is not achievable in many parts of the City. Therefore, the *CEQR Technical Manual* advises that the open space ratio planning goal of 2.5 acres is not to be used as a threshold for determining impact significance, but as a benchmark for an area well served by open space. As noted in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, a Citywide survey and review of all 59 Community Districts found that half of the districts had a residential open space ratio of 1.5 acres

(per 1,000 residents). A residential open space ratio below 1.5 generally indicates a shortfall of open space.

The new residential population would require an estimated 5.40 additional acres of open space to comply with the CEQR planning goal open space ratio. The development and proposed timing of the Hudson River Park would provide adequate open space for the additional residents. For example, as part of work in Segment 3 Piers 25 and 26 would be reconstructed. Pier 25 would be rebuilt to its original 1,000 ft length (www.fohrp.org). Pier 26 would be constructed to a total length of 800 ft. Together, these two piers that represent but a part of Segment 3 of the Hudson River Park would themselves provide an estimated total of about 4.5 to 5 acres of open space, encompassing active and passive components. Therefore, it is anticipated that open spaces would be nearly adequate for the new residents of the study area in the Future No Build condition.

Commercial as-of-right development of the “soft-site” UPS Equipment Staging Lot would result in an increase in the worker population within the study area of approximately 1,389 employees. Due to the proximity of the Hudson River Park and Canal Park to the office building site, there would likely be a limited, but increased use of the parks and open spaces by this non-resident population.

According to the *CEQR Technical Manual*, an indirect effect may occur when the population generated would be sufficient to noticeably diminish the ability of an area’s open space to serve the existing or future population. The *CEQR Technical Manual* indicates that non-residents, specifically workers, tend to use passive open space; typically, 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents has been determined to be adequate. In this case, about 0.21 acres of passive open space would be sufficient for the worker population under the Future No Build condition. The planned development of Hudson River Park, in particular Segment 3, would include adequate upland park and public esplanade components. There would be adequate passive open space for the 1,389 workers in the Future Without the Proposed Action. The use of the open space by the new worker population would typically occur during the week (Monday – Friday) and not on the weekends when the park use is the greatest.

Shadow impacts upon Hudson River Park in the Future No Build condition were analyzed and found not to be significant (Chapter 7).

The Future No Build could result in a significant adverse impact to open space by interfering with Hudson River Park development plans at the Gansevoort Peninsula.

6.5 FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED ACTION (FUTURE BUILD)

Under the Proposed Action, DSNY would provide a base of operations for three garages at one location. The MN 1 Garage across Canal Street from Canal Park would be replaced by a salt shed, with a reduced intensity of use compared with the Future No Build. The Proposed Action would not displace nor result in a direct impact to an open space resource in the study area.

The new MN 1/2/5 Garage and Salt Shed would not introduce a residential, worker or visitor population that would place a measurable demand on open space resources. A relocation of about 167 employees from two other Sanitation Districts would take place to staff the Proposed Action operations. A total of 108 DSNY employees would work at the facility’s peak shift. Because there would be no new employment, and the shift of employees is in proximity to the new garage site, there would be no anticipated influx of residential population.

Additional traffic generated by the garage (Chapter 17) would not adversely affect open space within the one-quarter mile radius, including the two nearest parks, Canal Park and Hudson River Park. The peak hour increases associated with the Proposed Action occur at 6:45 – 7:45 AM (~~9244~~ vehicles) and 2:30 – 3:30 PM (~~83424~~ vehicles) during the weekday; on the weekend the peak hours are 5:45 – 6:45

AM (72136 vehicles) and 12:30 – 1:30 PM (64123 vehicles). Similarly, noise impacts associated with Proposed Action garage operations (Chapter 20) would not be significant, and would be less than the applicable CEQR absolute and incremental thresholds. Based on monitoring of weekend morning hours, noise levels near both parks substantially exceed the CEQR noise exposure standard of 55 dBA (L₁₀). The study area in general, but particularly in the vicinity of these two parks, has relatively high ambient noise levels from the volumes of vehicles on West Street/Route 9A and Canal Street.

Potential odor impacts from the MN 1/2/5 Garage on public open space were considered. Under the Future Build condition, DSNY trucks would no longer be stored outside at Gansevoort/Pier 52 or on city streets near the MN 1 Garage. The Zoning Resolution Performance Standards Article IV 42-24 requires that emissions of odorous matter in M1 or M2 Districts be in such quantities as to not be readily detectable at any point along lot lines or to produce a public nuisance or hazard beyond lot lines. The Proposed Action would not be expected to cause significant adverse odor impacts compared to the Future No Build condition based on prior quantitative studies by DSNY of comparable waste collection vehicles. Refer to discussions in Chapter 19.

Shadow impacts from the Proposed Action upon Hudson River Park were analyzed and found not to be significant compared with the Future No Build condition (Chapter 7).

By the build year of 2012, the development of the Hudson River Park would be nearly completed and would ultimately offer a total of approximately 550 acres of open space (150 acres of upland), both active and passive. The new garage would not displace or encroach on this resource. The multiple lanes and median barrier of West Street/Route 9A would continue to physically separate the Proposed Action from the park and the West Street/Route 9A pedestrian/bicycle pathway.

The Proposed Action would allow DSNY to vacate the Gansevoort Peninsula/Pier 52 as legally mandated. This would permit the development of the Gansevoort Peninsula/Pier 52 by the Hudson River Park Trust. A public pier and other facilities such as courts for active recreation, a playground and a lawn would be constructed. There are also plans for the berthing of historic ships at the pier. This would occur following the departure of DSNY, the demolition of the structures, and any necessary environmental investigation and clean up work. Consequently, these facilities would be available subsequent to the Proposed Action build year of 2012.

Canal Park sits in a triangle with Canal Street's east and west travel lanes forming its northern and southern boundaries; while West Street/Route 9A is the park's western edge. The salt shed would not hinder the use or access to Canal Park, located just to the south of the shed. The shed would not be used in the spring, summer or fall. During the winter months the salt shed would be operated to handle snow and ice storms. Only an occasional trip for the resupply of salt would be made outside of the winter months. Because of this limited use, there would no impact to the park during the three seasons when the park would be most used. During storm events in the winter, when the park would be expected to have little if any use, the front end loader and salt trucks would produce increased temporary noise and emissions from the salt shed.

In summary, the MN 1/2/5 Garage and Salt Shed would not physically change, diminish or eliminate any open space or significantly reduce its use or aesthetic value; nor would it introduce a measureable, let alone substantial, new user population that would create or intensify over-utilization of open space resources in the build year of 2012. Therefore, the Proposed Action would not result in any significant adverse impacts on open space resources.