

5 Open Space

Introduction

Under CEQR, open space is defined as publicly or privately owned land that is publicly accessible and available for passive or active recreation or is set aside for the protection and/or enhancement of the natural environment. The purpose of a CEQR open space analysis is to determine the potential for a proposed action to have a direct impact resulting from the elimination or alteration of open space and/ or an indirect impact resulting from overtaxing available open space. The analysis focuses on officially designated existing or planned public open space.

Direct effects may occur when a proposed action causes a loss of open space, or results in changes to the facilities within an open space to the extent that the resource no longer serves the same user population. Direct effects may also include limitation of public access; changes in the type and amount of public open space; and the imposition of noise, air pollutant emissions, odors, or shadows that may affect the usability of the open space. Assessment of these effects is addressed in the relevant technical chapters of this EIS and should be referenced for the open space analysis. In addition, direct effects may not always result in an adverse impact on open space. Park modifications and reprogramming may be beneficial to some resources and may or may not have an adverse effect on others.

Indirect effects may occur when the population generated by a proposed action or project overtaxes the capacity of existing open spaces so that their service to the future population of the affected area would be substantially or noticeably diminished.

The sites where development would be facilitated by the Proposed Actions are difficult to predict, given their broad applicability. Additionally, the proposed zoning text and map amendments are not expected to induce development or cause a significant change in the overall amount, type, or location of development. However, because the land use actions necessary to facilitate development on a site (e.g., certifications, authorizations, and special permits) may change or be eliminated by the

proposed regulations, the Proposed Actions could increase the proportion of development sites proceeding as-of-right.

Principal Conclusions

The Proposed Actions are not anticipated to result in any direct or indirect, significant, adverse impacts related to open space resources.

The proposed regulations are not anticipated to generate development that would not otherwise occur in the future without the Proposed Actions and would not generate substantial demand for open space resources compared to the No Action scenario. In addition, the indirect effects screening analysis results indicate that further analysis of open space is not warranted for the prototypical analysis sites.

Methodology

The Proposed Actions are generic actions with no known projected or potential development sites. Therefore, development scenarios for four prototypical analysis sites have been established for environmental analysis, as presented in **Chapter 1, Project Description**. These sites are not necessarily representative of a specific lot, but rather reflect prevalent conditions as a basis for analyzing the effects of the Proposed Actions. Under the No Action scenario, each prototypical analysis site is assumed to maximize development potential permitted under existing zoning without pursuing discretionary actions such as authorizations. Similarly, under the With Action scenario each prototypical analysis site is assumed to maximize development potential permitted under the proposed zoning regulations.

The following evaluation of direct and indirect open space effects are primarily based on the incremental amount of development that would occur on each prototypical analysis site under the With Action scenario compared to the No Action scenario. In accordance with 2014 *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, the assessment addresses direct and indirect impacts on open space. Based on the screening assessment, a preliminary analysis is warranted only for direct effects.

Direct Effects

As noted in the 2014 *CEQR Technical Manual*, a proposed action may have a direct effect on open space resources if it would result in a physical loss of public open space; change the use of an open space so that it no longer serves the same user population; limit public access to an open space; or result in increased noise or air pollutant emissions, odors, or shadows that temporarily or permanently affect the usefulness of a public open space.

A preliminary assessment of direct effects was conducted for each prototypical analysis site to determine the need for further detailed analysis.

Indirect Effects

If a proposed action introduces a new population to an area, demand for existing open space facilities typically increases. As described in the 2014 *CEQR Technical Manual*, open space can be indirectly affected when the population generated by an action would be sufficiently large to noticeably diminish the ability of an area's open space to serve the future population.

A preliminary assessment of indirect effects is typically conducted for proposed actions that would introduce more than 200 residents or 500 workers to an area; however, the thresholds for assessment may vary in certain areas of the city that are considered either underserved or well-served by open space. If a proposed action is located in an underserved area,⁵ an open space assessment should be conducted if the action would generate more than 50 residents or 125 workers. If a proposed action is in a well-served area, an open space assessment should be conducted if it would generate more than 350 residents or 750 workers.

The proposed special district is a large area that encompasses approximately 1,000 parcels in the Bronx. Portions of the proposed special district would be located in areas designated as “underserved” and “well-served” and in areas that are neither “underserved” nor “well-served,” by open space. For the purposes of a conservative screening analysis, the threshold for “underserved” areas has been applied to each prototypical analysis site. Therefore, a preliminary assessment would be required for any prototypical analysis site that is projected to introduce more than 50 residents or 125 employees.

Existing Public Open Space Resources

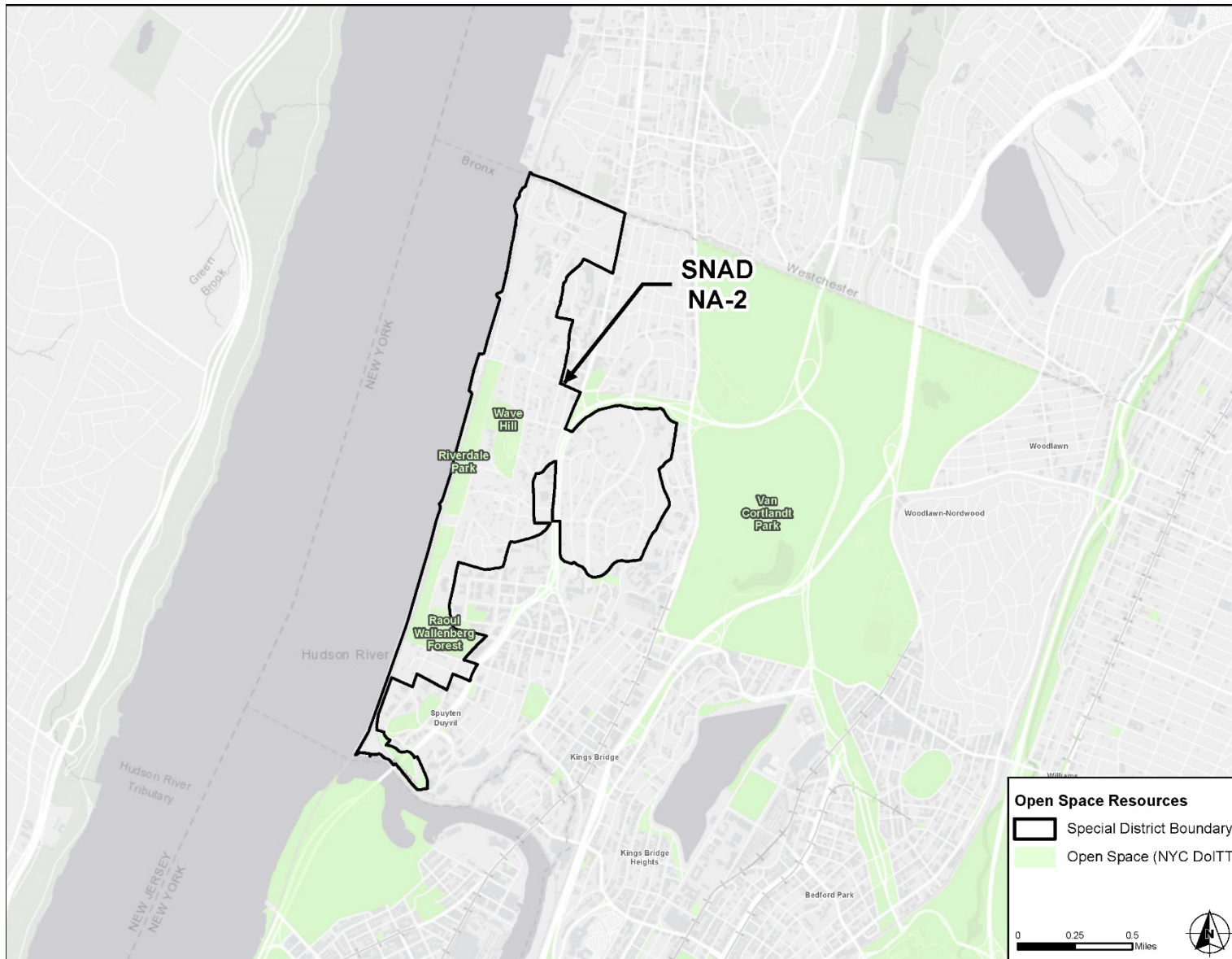
- Public open space is a key feature and land use mapped throughout the existing NA-2. In general, except for state and national parks, public open space resources in New York City are under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks.

Key open space resources in the proposed special district, as shown in **Figure 5-1**, include:

⁵The 2014 *CEQR Technical Manual* defines underserved areas as densely populated areas that are generally the greatest distance from parkland, where the amount of open space per 1,000 residents is currently less than 2.5 acres. Well-served areas are defined as those areas with an open space ratio above 2.5, accounting for existing parks that contain developed recreational resources; or are located within 0.25 mile (approximately a 10-minute walk) from developed and publicly accessible portions of regional parks.

- Riverdale Park, a 144-acre nature area that is situated upland of the Hudson River in the western portion of the Bronx, which features the 112-acre Raoul Wallenberg Forest Preserve, a Forever Wild site.
- Wave Hill Public Garden and Cultural Center, a 20-acre, historic house park overlooking the Hudson River, which features the landmark Wave Hill House, botanic gardens, and a large arboretum.

Figure 5-1. Bronx Open Space Resources – Existing Special Natural Area District (NA-2)



Preliminary Assessments

Direct Effects

The development of the prototypical analysis sites could introduce incremental development adjacent to existing public open space. Because the incremental development has the potential to impose noise, air pollutant emissions, odors, or shadows that may affect the usability of public open space. a preliminary assessment of direct effects is warranted.

Public Open Space

The development of the prototypical analysis sites under the With Action scenario is not anticipated to result in significant, adverse direct effects on public open space. The buildout of some of the prototypical analysis sites under the With Action scenario would increase the overall amount of development (floor area) and/or hard surface area relative to the No Action scenario. For example, two of the prototypical analysis sites (sites 2 and 3) would result in an incremental increase in floor area and/or lot coverage.⁷ However, because no public open space has been identified on the prototypical analysis sites, encroachment or loss of public open space would not result from the incremental development.

Furthermore, as discussed in **Chapter 6, Shadows**; **Chapter 15, Air Quality**; and **Chapter 17, Noise**, the development of prototypical analysis sites under the With Action scenario is not expected to result in direct effects on open space resources. Prototypical analysis site 4 is assumed to be located adjacent to a sunlight-sensitive open space resource and would result in an incremental increase in building height. As discussed in Chapter 6, prototypical analysis site 4 would result in new, incremental shadows of varying duration and coverage on adjacent natural areas. The duration and coverage of incremental shadows would be limited; therefore, they would not constitute a significant, adverse impact on open space resources. Similarly, no adverse air quality or noise impacts have been identified for prototypical analysis site 4. Therefore, the usefulness of the adjacent open space resources would not be adversely affected by increased noise or air pollutant emissions, odors, or shadows resulting from the incremental development.

Indirect Effects

Table 5-1 displays the estimated number of residents and workers that would be introduced by the development of the prototypical analysis sites in the No Action and With Action scenarios. The residential population estimates are based on an average household size of 2.5 for Bronx

⁷ Lot coverage and/or floor area would decrease for one prototypical analysis site (site 4), while both lot coverage and floor area would remain the same for one site (site 1).

Community Board 8 (2012–2016 American Community Survey Census Data).

As **Table 5-1** shows, nominal increases in the number of residents were identified for one prototypical analysis site. Because none of the sites include institutional or commercial use, no worker populations would be added in the No Action scenario. The incremental number of residents and workers that would be introduced at each site under the With Action scenario is well below the most conservative threshold for a preliminary open space analysis (50 residents or 125 workers). Moreover, the proposed zoning text and map amendments are not expected to induce development or cause a significant change in the overall amount, type, or location of development. Accordingly, the Proposed Actions do not warrant a preliminary open space assessment for indirect effects and would not adversely affect the capacity of open space resources.

Table 5-1. Residents and Workers by Prototypical Analysis Site

Prototypical Analysis Site	No Action Residents	No Action Workers	With Action Residents	With Action Workers	Increment Residents	Increment Workers
1	<u>3</u>	0	<u>3</u>	0	0	0
2	3	0	3	0	0	0
3	0	0	3	0	+3	0
4	3	0	3	0	0	0

* This table has been modified for the FEIS.

Conclusion

Direct Effects

The development of the prototypical analysis sites under the With Action scenario is not anticipated to result in significant, adverse direct effects on public open space.

The development of the prototypical analysis sites could introduce incremental development adjacent to existing public open space. However, the usefulness of the adjacent open space resources would not be adversely affected by increased noise or air pollutant emissions, odors, or shadows resulting from the incremental development.

Indirect Effects

Although the Proposed Actions may increase the number of as-of-right development sites, they are not expected to change the overall amount, type, and location of development within the proposed special district. As

such, the Proposed Actions would not generate a substantial demand for open space resources relative to the No Action scenario. Furthermore, per the indirect effects screening analysis, the prototypical analysis sites do not exceed the residential or worker thresholds for an open space assessment. Therefore, the Proposed Actions are not anticipated to result in a substantive change in the capacity of existing or proposed open space resources.