

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The Proposed Action would improve existing open space and create new public open space along a two-mile stretch of the East River and would thus help to alleviate the shortage of open space experienced by the dense residential and worker populations of Lower Manhattan. Furthermore, the Proposed Action represents an important step in increasing public access to the waterfront and providing the recreational and open space amenities needed to support Lower Manhattan as a diverse, mixed-use neighborhood.

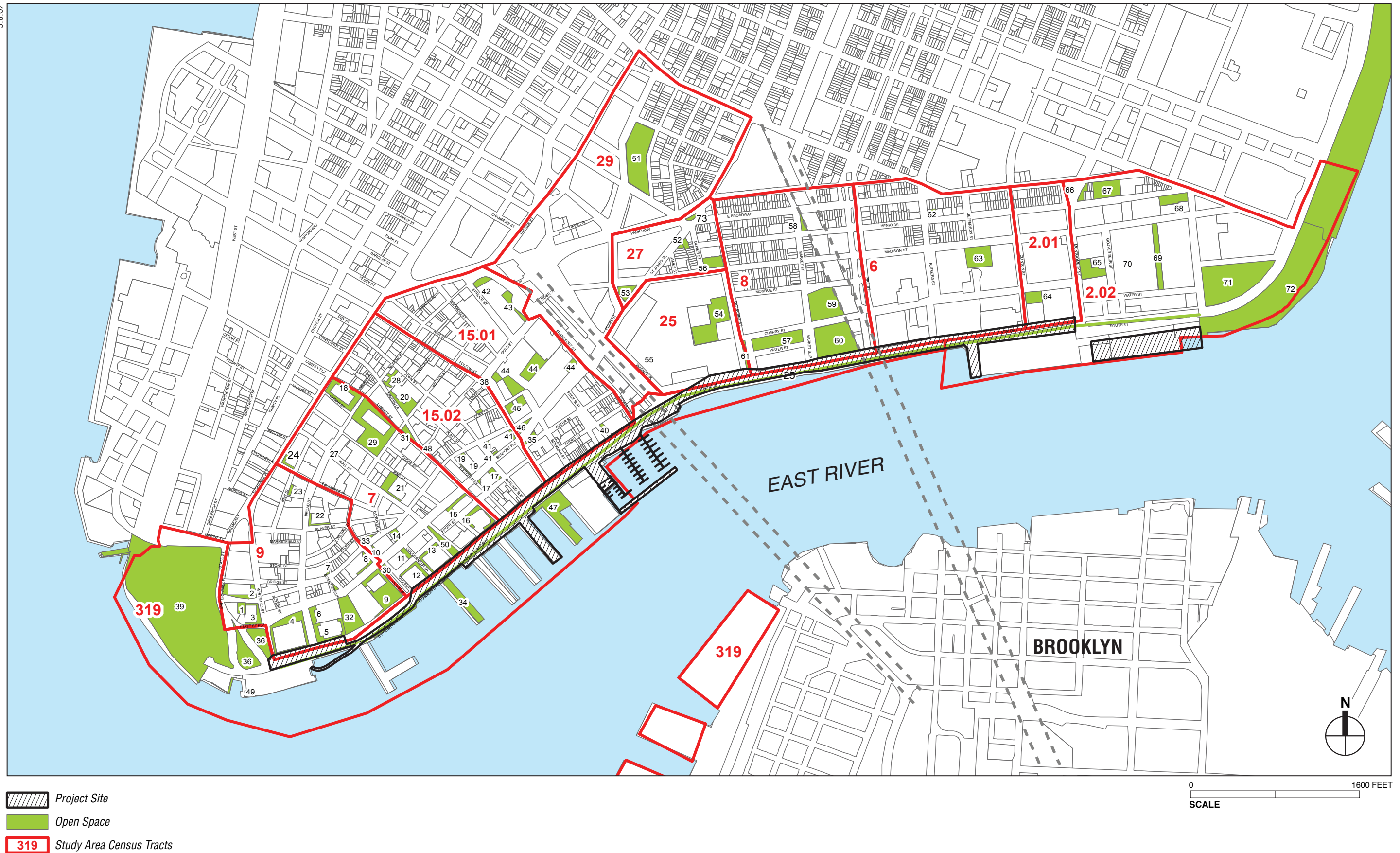
The 2001 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* guidelines indicate the need for an open space analysis when an action would have a direct effect on a public open space or would introduce 200 or more residents or 500 or more workers to an area. The *CEQR Technical Manual* notes that alterations to existing open spaces may result in beneficial changes, in which case significant adverse impacts on open space are unlikely and a full analysis may not be needed.

The Proposed Action would improve existing open space, add new publicly accessible open space, and create retail and cultural space in up to 14 pavilions and in a rebuilt New Market Building. However, it would not introduce any new residents to the project site, nor would the programmed pavilions and uses in the New Market Building introduce more than 500 workers. Furthermore, the Proposed Action would improve existing open space and increase the amount of open space in the area and as such does not pose a potential for adverse impacts on open space and recreational resources. Therefore, this chapter provides a qualitative discussion of open space conditions in the areas adjacent to the project site and the benefits associated with the Proposed Action. The boundaries of the open space study area are roughly coterminous with those of the secondary land use study area described in Chapter 3, “Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy,” though the open space study area is slightly larger in order to encompass entire census tracts (see Figure 5-1). This study area includes all of the census tracts on and adjacent to the project site.

This analysis concludes that the Proposed Action would result in a substantial improvement to open space conditions in Lower Manhattan. In addition to providing needed active and passive open space to serve the residential and working populations of Lower Manhattan, the Proposed Action would help to achieve longstanding policy goals relating to waterfront access and open space.

## **B. NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

Of New York City’s five boroughs, Manhattan has the highest number of residents per acre of park land and is therefore the most underserved with respect to open space. The project site, which extends along the waterfront from the Battery Maritime Building (BMB) Plaza at Whitehall Street to Pier 42 near Jackson Street, represents an opportunity to provide increased waterfront access and well-designed recreational space along a two-mile stretch of waterfront with dramatic views of the East River and New York Harbor. This new and enhanced open space would serve the dense employee population and growing residential population of Lower Manhattan’s Financial District as well as the residents of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. While the study area includes a



number of public open spaces ranging from small plazas to substantial parks, the population is underserved in terms of the amount of open space available. As described below, the amount of open space available to residents and workers in the study area does not meet City guidelines, and the Proposed Action would help to alleviate the shortage of open space. Additionally, the Proposed Action would help to meet the City's policy goals of increasing public access to the waterfront.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS ON PROJECT SITE**

The project site extends along the waterfront from the BMB Plaza at Whitehall Street to Pier 42 near Jackson Street. Although a walkway/bikeway runs the length of the site, it has few or no amenities in most places and is conspicuously lacking in visual appeal. Much of the area beneath the elevated Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Drive is used for parking or is vacant. The project site includes Piers 35 and 42, which are currently vacant and unavailable for public use, and Pier 15, which consists of four piles in the water outlining the former pier structure. In its current state, the project site is underutilized and does not maximize public access to the waterfront.

### **OPEN SPACE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY AREA**

The study area encompasses a range of open spaces including parks, plazas, and playgrounds (see Figure 5-1 and Table 5-1). The Manhattan Waterfront Greenway runs through the project site, providing a pedestrian and bike path of varying width and quality. The 23-acre Battery Park, which includes lawns, landscaping, an esplanade, play equipment, and the historic Castle Clinton, is the major open space in the portion of the study area south of the Brooklyn Bridge. Renovations to Battery Park's playground and Town Green are under way, and an aquatic-themed ride called The Carousel will be created in the park by the Proposed Action's 2009 Build year.

The remaining open space in the portion of the study area south of the Brooklyn Bridge consists mostly of plazas and small parks that offer opportunities for passive recreational activities such as reading, sitting, and sunbathing. Open spaces adjacent to the project site include Peter Minuit Plaza (which is currently undergoing construction related to the South Ferry subway station), Vietnam Veterans Plaza, and plazas at Old Slip and Peck Slip. Just north of the intersection of Wall and South Streets is the recently completed Wall Street Triangle Park, which includes benches, tables, and landscaping. Publicly accessible plazas with amenities such as seating and landscaping are also located at several large office buildings, including 1, 2, and 4 New York Plaza, 55 Water Street, 111 Wall Street, and 180 Maiden Lane. The British Memorial Garden, a memorial to British citizens who were killed on September 11, 2001, is under construction at Hanover Square at the intersection of William and Pearl Streets.

The section of the study area between the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges includes mostly active recreational areas such as parks and playgrounds. A baseball/softball field with a six-lane track is adjacent to the project site just south of the Manhattan Bridge opposite the project site. This field, which serves as athletic facilities for the Murray Bergtraum High School, is maintained by the public-private partnership Take the Field and is known as the Verizon Field. When it is not being used for school events, the field is made available to community groups through a permit process.

Tannahey Playground, located a block inland from the project site along Market Street and operated by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), offers basketball courts, play equipment, and seating areas. Coleman Playground, also operated by DPR, includes a baseball field. The grounds of the Alfred E. Smith Houses, a housing complex run by the New York City Housing Authority, include approximately 3.25 acres of open space, including play

**Table 5-1**  
**Study Area Open Spaces**

Ref #	Name	Amenities	Acres
1	17 State Street	Plaza, plantings, statue, seating, trees	0.14
2	1 Battery Park Plaza	Plaza, planters, flagpoles, seating	0.27
3	1 State Street Plaza	Plaza, planters, landscaping, trees	0.22
4	1 New York Plaza	Plaza, planters, seating	0.9
5	2 New York Plaza	Plaza, planters, seating, fountain, trees	0.57
6	4 New York Plaza	Open plaza, planters, seating	0.23
7	85 Broad Street Plaza	Seating, planters, lighting	0.52
8	7 Hanover Square	Through block covered arcade with seating and plants	0.17
9	55 Water Street Elevated Plaza and Arcade	Seating, open plaza, arcade, planters	2.1
10	86 Water Street/10 Hanover Square	Stairs, trees	0.08
11	77 Water Street Plaza	Benches, tables, fountains, trees, sculpture	0.32
12	Gouverneur Lane/32 Old Slip	Trees, benches, lighting, fountain	0.41
13	111 Wall Street Plaza	Benches, trees, planters, bike racks	0.31
14	75 Wall Street Plaza	Seating, planters, trees	0.3
15	Wall Street Plaza/88 Pine Street	Benches, trees, sculpture, water feature, lighting	0.23
16	180 Maiden Lane	Benches, trees, indoor open space, lighting	0.52
17	175 Water Street	Open area, trees, moveable chairs and tables, plantings	0.13
18	140 Broadway Plaza	Planters, trees, seating, sculpture	0.62
19	160 Water Street	Seating, open plaza	0.13
20	Home Insurance Company Plaza	Seating, landscaping, lighting, trees, artwork	0.19
21	60 Wall Street/JP Morgan	Indoor space with seating, plants, restrooms, pedestrian thoroughway	0.35
22	55 Broad Street	Tables, chairs	0.09
23	40 Broad Street Plaza	Open plaza, plants, seating, trees	0.05
24	Bank of New York	Seating, planters, trees	0.11
25	Waterfront greenway and esplanade (portion)	Bikeway, walkway, seating	2.9
26	Coenties Slip	Benches, planters, seating, trees, plants	0.01
27	Federal Hall Steps	Steps, statue, plantings	0.06
28	2 Federal Reserve Plaza	Covered pedestrian space, trees, movable seats	0.1
29	Chase Manhattan Plaza	Benches, trees, planters, lighting, sculpture	1.31
30	Old Slip Plaza	Trees, lighting, fountain, seating	0.05
31	Louise Nevelson Plaza	Benches, trees, sculpture, lighting	0.25
32	Vietnam Veterans Plaza	Benches, trees, monument, steps, amphitheater, fountain	0.73
33	Hanover Square Park	Seating, statue, planters	0.06
34	Pier 11 Esplanade	Benches, covered waiting area	0.76
35	Fulton Street Plaza	Benches, trees, monument	0.2
36	Peter Minuit Plaza	Currently undergoing construction for South Ferry subway station	N/A
37	Cliff Street Plaza	Seating, plants, trees	0.04
38	John Delury Plaza	Seating, trees, plants	0.04

## East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers

**Table 5-1 (cont'd)**  
**Study Area Open Spaces**

Ref #	Name	Amenities	Acres
39	Battery Park	Lawn, trees, benches, play equipment, sculptures, esplanade, Castle Clinton National Monument	23
40	Peck Slip	Cobblestone street, seating	0.01
41	200 Water Street	Art, seating, water feature	0.17
42	Pace Plaza	Trees, plants, seating, statue	0.07
43	Drumgoole Square	Seating, trees	0.18
44	Southbridge Tower and Plaza	Seating, pedestrian boulevard, landscaped areas	1.35
45	St. Margaret's House	Seating, plants, trees	0.01
46	Pearl Street Playground	Play equipment, benches, trees	0.2
47	South Street Seaport	Seating, panoramic views, pedestrian boulevard, renovated pier	2.25
48	2 Gold Street	Seating, trees	0.19
49	Staten Island Ferry/ Whitehall Terminal	Benches, panoramic views	0.6
50	Wall Street Triangle Park	Landscaping, seating	0.45
51	Columbus Park	Soccer field, landscaping, game and picnic tables, pavilion	3.14
52	St. James Square	Seating, landscaping	
53	Triangle at Pearl St. and St. James Pl.	Seating	0.36
54	Alfred E. Smith Playground	Play equipment, benches, comfort station, basketball courts	2.77
55	Alfred E Smith Houses	Play equipment, basketball courts	3.25
56	Playground One	Play equipment, basketball courts, benches	0.44
57	Tanahey Playground	Basketball courts, benches, play equipment	1.25
58	Sophie Irene Loeb Playground	Play equipment	0.12
59	Coleman Square Playground	Play equipment, basketball courts, baseball field	2.61
60	Verizon Field	Baseball field and track	2.47
61	Catherine Slip Malls	Landscaping	0.14
62	Captain Jacob Joseph Playground	Play equipment	0.14
63	Little Flower Playground (at LaGuardia Houses)	Seating, play equipment, comfort station	1.24
64	Cherry Clinton Playground	Play equipment	0.48
65	Lillian D. Wald Playground	Play equipment	0.53
66	Community Garden	Plantings, seating	0.15
67	Sol Lain Playground (PS 134)	Play equipment	0.89
68	Henry M. Jackson Playground	Play equipment	0.58
69	Vladeck Park	Benches, mall, playground	0.79
70	Vladeck Houses Open Space	Play equipment	1.09
71	Corlears Hook Park	Landscaping, seating, pathways, play equipment, and sports courts	4.36
72	East River Park (portion)	Baseball fields, amphitheater	17.3
73	Chatham Square	Seating	.09
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>88.14</b>
<b>Notes:</b> See Figure 5-1.			
<b>Sources:</b> NYCDPR; AKRF field visits.			

equipment and basketball courts. The Alfred E. Smith Playground, which is adjacent to the housing complex and operated by DPR, also has play equipment, basketball courts, and a comfort station.

The portion of the study area east of the Manhattan Bridge includes a number of parks and playgrounds, many of which are associated with adjacent schools or housing complexes. The 4.36-acre Corlears Hook Park, located to the east of the project site, includes landscaping, seating, pathways, play equipment, and sports courts. The southernmost portion of the 57-acre East River Park falls within the study area. This segment of East River Park includes baseball and soccer fields and an amphitheater. Other playgrounds within this part of the study area include Cherry Clinton Playground, Little Flower Playground at the LaGuardia Houses, Lillian D. Wald Playground, and Sol Lain Playground at P.S. 134.

### OPEN SPACE USER POPULATION IN STUDY AREA

As shown in Figure 5-1 and in Table 5-2, the study area includes 12 census tracts with a total of 58,356 residents and 212,615 employees, according to the 2000 Census. Conservatively assuming that the residential and worker populations are entirely distinct (i.e., none of the residents of the study area also work there), the total 2000 population of the study area was 270,971.

**Table 5-2**  
**Study Area Population**

Census Tract	Residents	Age Breakdown of Residents								Employees
		Under 5	% under 5	5-17	% 5-17	18-64	% 18-64	65+	% 65+	
2.01	3,329	200	6.0%	613	18.4%	2,145	64.4%	371	11.1%	705
2.02	6,837	374	5.5%	986	14.4%	3,992	58.4%	1,485	21.7%	2,805
6	12,276	644	1.9%	1,919	1.7%	7,670	95.5%	2,043	1.0%	2,820
7	907	17	4.8%	15	13.5%	866	66.0%	9	15.6%	71,745
8	10,917	527	4.1%	1,477	4.4%	7,208	88.9%	1,705	2.6%	3,710
9	1,111	45	3.0%	49	5.9%	988	64.1%	29	27.0%	57,265
15.01	4,562	136	1.9%	267	2.5%	2,925	94.5%	1,234	1.2%	14,350
15.02	3,937	73	4.8%	97	18.8%	3,720	57.0%	47	19.4%	30,270
25	5,209	249	3.4%	981	9.5%	2,968	58.8%	1,011	28.3%	670
27	1,517	51	2.4%	144	8.6%	892	69.4%	430	19.5%	730
29	7,422	181	8.1%	640	8.7%	5,151	80.7%	1,450	2.4%	24,780
319*	332	27	5.2%	29	15.6%	268	62.5%	8	16.6%	2,765
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>58,356</b>	<b>2,524</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>7,217</b>	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>38,793</b>	<b>66.5%</b>	<b>9,822</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>212,615</b>
<b>Notes:</b> *Tract 319 includes a small portion of the Brooklyn waterfront with no residents. <b>Sources:</b> 2000 U.S. Census										

The portion of the study area south of the Brooklyn Bridge, which comprises census tracts 7, 9, 15.01, 15.02, and 319, includes the Financial District and therefore has the heaviest concentration of employees in the study area. As discussed in Chapter 3, many large office buildings in this area have been converted to residential use, and this trend is expected to continue. Due to the recent conversion of commercial buildings and construction of new residential buildings, the residential population in this area has grown substantially since the

2000 Census. As discussed above, open spaces available in the immediate vicinity of this population consist predominantly of plazas and sitting areas for passive recreational use.

Generally speaking, the census tracts north and east of the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges have a larger and more established residential population. With the exception of census tract 29, which encompasses several large office buildings in Lower Manhattan's Civic Center, the number of people working in this area is relatively low.

Given that the study area contains 88.14 acres of open space and approximately 58,356 residents, the total open space ratio is 1.5 acres per 1,000 residents. This falls well short of the City's planning goal, as described in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, of providing 2.5 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. This open space ratio is expected to be reduced further due to the various residential projects planned or under way in Lower Manhattan that will add thousands of new residents to the area.

### **C. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION**

The Proposed Action would improve existing public open space on the project site and create new public open space beneath the FDR Drive, on piers not currently accessible to the public, and on new structures built over the water. Enclosed pavilions housing community, cultural, and commercial uses would be constructed beneath the FDR Drive. Lower Manhattan has a very limited amount of available land on which to create new open space, and the Proposed Action would enhance the utility and enjoyment of existing publicly accessible waterfront open space as well as create new open space on piers.

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Action was designed to meet the following goals:

- Provide open space amenities to Lower Manhattan communities currently underserved by the City's parks. The reconstruction of Pier 15 and the New Market Building pier and the reinforcement of Pier 42 and Pier 35 are essential parts of that effort and will create new recreational space and waterfront access where there are few alternative locations for such space. The piers would provide recreation space that is removed from the traffic and noise of Lower Manhattan;
- Create a vibrant, active and welcoming water's edge;
- Improve public access to the waterfront;
- Find new uses for the waterfront by providing basic infrastructure to support waterfront and community activities;
- Open certain piers to community uses, including reinforcing existing Piers 35 and 42 and reconstructing the New Market Building pier;
- Provide a place for recreational, community, and maritime activities;
- Enhance maritime activities along the traditional working waterfront, including through the construction of a new marina at the New Market Building pier, and historic ships and other maritime educational programming at Pier 15;
- Claim the space under the FDR Drive for community, cultural, and limited commercial development;
- Replace the outmoded New Market Building;
- Improve access to and around the BMB; and



- Expand the existing esplanade between the BMB and Old Slip to provide a larger and safer connection between the BMB and Battery Park to the south and the esplanade improvements and existing East River Park to the north.

The Proposed Action would include a Recreation Zone extending the length of the project site with new features that would enhance passive and active recreational opportunities. The existing esplanade in this area would be enhanced with a variety of amenities that would improve opportunities for recreational use, and new recreational space would be created on Piers 15 and 35. Along the esplanade, new benches and planters would be provided, and the railing at the water's edge would be enhanced with lighting, fishing pole holders, and brackets for attaching historic placards and viewfinders for sights of interest. The existing esplanade would be widened with a pile-supported structure extending over the water between the BMB and Pier 11. The new overwater esplanade structure may pull away from the existing bulkhead line between the BMB and Pier 6, creating an archipelago with gaps where the historic bulkhead structure would be visible. Between Pier 11 and the Brooklyn Bridge, the esplanade would be enhanced with larger plants, and trees in planter boxes would be interspersed between the existing seating. The Proposed Action would also enhance the existing esplanade from the Brooklyn Bridge to Pier 35 north of the Manhattan Bridge.

The Proposed Action would introduce new open space and recreational activities on piers that are currently vacant or dilapidated. Pier 15, which currently consists of four piles in the East River, would be reconstructed to provide recreational space and a docking area for vessels. A new transient boat marina would be created at the New Market Building pier, which is just north of Pier 17, for temporary mooring of small- to mid-sized vessels. The New Market Building itself would be demolished, and a new structure housing a museum and retail space would be constructed. The existing vacant Pier 35 would be renovated to provide open space opportunities for family gatherings. It is anticipated that a multilevel landscape could be created, and a gently sloping path could rise to an elevated platform at the southeastern end of the pier. Public open space would be created at the northern end of Pier 36. At the south end of Pier 42, a cove would be created for public enjoyment and temporary mooring of small boats. A new “urban beach” would be created above the East River on Pier 42. Berms reminiscent of dunes would separate the promenade from the beach. A protected open water area with a small craft launch would be created at the northern end of Pier 42. Active recreational amenities along the esplanade and on the piers would include beach volleyball courts, a bocce court, a dog run, and small craft launches.

New passive recreational space would also be created at the southern end of the project site in front of the BMB. A new BMB Plaza would be created to improve access to the BMB and Governors Island as well as to serve as the southern gateway to the new esplanade. The new plaza would connect the bikeway from the esplanade to Peter Minuit Plaza.

Additionally, the Proposed Action would include a Program Zone under the FDR Drive with indoor structures and spaces for temporary outdoor activities. Pavilions housing community, cultural, and commercial uses would be constructed at some locations beneath the FDR Drive.

In summary, the Proposed Action would help to achieve longstanding policy goals relating to waterfront access and open space. It would provide needed active and passive open space to serve the residential and working populations of Lower Manhattan and would greatly improve use of this stretch of the East River waterfront, which is currently an underutilized resource. Furthermore, by providing expanded and improved open space along the Lower Manhattan waterfront, the Proposed Action would help to fulfill the City's long-range vision of a revitalized Harbor District. The Proposed Action, along with the new Brooklyn Bridge Park and a



## **East River Waterfront Esplanade and Piers**

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redeveloped Governors Island, is an integral component of the planned transformation of the New York Harbor for recreational and cultural use. The Proposed Action would constitute a substantial improvement to open space within the study area and would not result in any significant adverse impacts. \*