

CHAPTER 4.J

OPEN SPACE

A. INTRODUCTION

This section assesses the potential for impacts to open space resources as a result of the proposed *Mosquito Population Control Program in the Rockaways*. Impacts to open space resources would include changes to the availability, accessibility, or use of open space resources, or the elimination of such resources.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

A detailed discussion of open spaces on the Rockaway Peninsula can be found in Chapter 4.B, “Land Use, Community Facilities, Public Policy, and Zoning.” The study area contains a range of open spaces, from small, paved neighborhood playgrounds, to large destination spaces such as Jacob Riis Park and Rockaway Beach. These spaces vary widely in terms of type of use, patronage, condition, hours of use, and accessibility. Most parks are open from dawn to dusk, but many have operating hours that extend beyond daylight hours.

C. FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED ACTION

In the future without the Proposed Action, the amount of formal open space on the Rockaway Peninsula may increase somewhat due to development between the elevated subway line and Rockaway Beach, in the Arverne area. This development would also reduce the number of undeveloped lots on the peninsula. Aside from this development, open space resources on the peninsula are not expected to change significantly.

The New York City Department of Health (NYCDOH) would continue its *Routine Program* to control mosquito breeding while enhancing existing disease surveillance and public and medical provider education activities. While the *Routine Program* would continue regardless of the population-control program in the Rockaways, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) is planning habitat restoration in Bayswater State Park, Dubos Point, and Brant Point, the presence of biting mosquitoes would likely be greater in the future without the Proposed Action. Thus, avoidance of outdoor open spaces during times of mosquito activity is likely to increase in the future without the Proposed Action.

D. PROBABLE IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

As discussed in the Chapter 4.B, “Land Use, Community Facilities, Public Policy, and Zoning,” the *Mosquito Population Control Program in the Rockaways* is not expected to result in permanent changes to open spaces in the Rockaways. However, the application of adulticides as part of the plan’s Mosquito Prevention and Control component may cause some open spaces open to be closed to

the public during the time period immediately before, during and shortly after population-control activities.

During the summer months, when the *Mosquito Population Control Program in the Rockaways* would be in effect, many of the peninsula's open spaces would be closed during periods of application. However, population-control activities would only prevent the use of open spaces that are currently open past dusk. This reduction in availability of open space resources for a limited number of nights each summer would not be significantly greater than the reduction in use of open space resources that would occur in the future without the *Mosquito Population Control Program in the Rockaways*. While the adulticiding actions would result in the closure of some parks and other spaces for limited times, the lack of a *Mosquito Population Control Program in the Rockaways* (and the attendant rise in the number of biting mosquitoes) would likely result in similar, if not greater, reductions in use of open spaces during the summer months.

Since population control activities would occur on a limited number of nights during the summer, and since the reduction in use of open spaces would be similar to or less than the reduction that would take place in the No Action condition, the impacts to open space resources would not be considered significant adverse impacts. 

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