

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The 2001 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* guidelines indicate the need for an open space analysis when an action would result in the physical loss of public open space or the introduction of 200 or more residents or 500 or more workers to an area. The proposed and future actions would add more than 200 residents and more than 500 daytime non-residential users to the area. Therefore, this analysis evaluates the effect of the new users generated by the proposed and future actions on open space resources in the surrounding area. This analysis assesses existing conditions (describing both open space users and resources) and conditions in the future without the proposed and future actions, and identifies any potential impacts that would result from the proposed and future actions.

Overall, the amount of active open space resources in the study areas does not meet City guidelines. However, the proposed and future actions would not have a significant adverse impact on open spaces. The shortfall of active open spaces exists under existing conditions, as well as in the future with and without the proposed and future actions.

Within the non-residential study area, the passive open space resources under Build conditions are adequate in serving the day-time user population, although they are below the standard for the combined residential and non-residential populations. This deficiency also exists under existing conditions and No Build conditions.

Within the residential study area, there would be a deficiency of active and passive open space under existing and future conditions. Although in the future with the proposed and future actions there would continue to be a shortfall of active open space, this shortfall would be compensated by the availability of active open space resources in the vicinity of the study area. In addition, the proposed projects would create 1.5 acres of publicly accessible passive open space, and approximately 17,200 square feet of private recreational space for use by residents of the Boricua Village development. The proposed and future actions would result in a decline of 4.7 percent in the active open space ratio and an increase of 1 percent in the passive open space ratio. The demand for open space generated by the proposed and future actions would result in a less than 5 percent decrease in open space ratios, and therefore would not significantly exacerbate the No Build deficiency.

## **B. METHODOLOGY**

This analysis of potential open space impacts was conducted based on methodologies contained in the *CEQR Technical Manual*. According to CEQR guidelines, the first step in assessing potential open space impacts is to establish study areas appropriate for the new population(s) to be added as a result of the proposed and future actions. The study is based on the distance an individual is assumed to walk to reach a neighborhood open space. Workers typically use passive open spaces and are assumed to walk up to about a ¼-mile distance from their places of

work. Residents are more likely to travel farther to reach parks and recreational facilities. They are assumed to walk up to about a ½-mile distance to reach both passive and active neighborhood open spaces.

The proposed and future actions would result in the construction of approximately 1,770 residential units, 99,900 square feet (sf) of retail, a 120,000 square foot building to house Boricua College's Bronx Campus, and an additional 20,000 sf of community facility space. Because the college student population would be commuting to the project site, it is included in the daytime non-residential population of open space users (i.e., the worker population). The Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area (URA) boundary was used to determine the open space study area. Because the proposed and future actions would introduce both residential and non-residential populations, two study areas are evaluated—a residential study area based on a ½-mile radius of the URA boundary, and a non-residential study area based on a ¼-mile radius of the URA boundary.

As recommended in the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the residential open space study area comprises all census tracts that have at least 50 percent of their area located within ½-mile of the Melrose Commons URA boundary. All publicly accessible open spaces, as well as current and future residents and employees within census tracts that fall at least 50 percent within the ½-mile radius are included in the residential study area. The non-residential open space study area comprises all census tracts that have at least 50 percent of their area located within ¼-mile of the Melrose Commons URA boundary. All publicly accessible open spaces, as well as current and future residents and employees within census tracts that fall at least 50 percent within the ¼-mile radius are included in the non-residential study area. Additional open spaces which are partially accessible to the public were considered qualitatively.

### INVENTORY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

All publicly accessible open spaces within the residential and non-residential study areas were inventoried to determine their character, condition, and acreage, differentiating between acreage dedicated to active and passive recreation. Active facilities provide opportunities for such activities as baseball, football, soccer, basketball, handball, tennis, jogging, and children's active play (such as on playground equipment). Passive facilities provide opportunities for sitting, strolling, picnicking, sunbathing, reading, etc.

### ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

The adequacy of open space in the study area was assessed quantitatively and qualitatively. Pursuant to *CEQR Technical Manual* guidance, a quantitative assessment of open space in the study area was calculated by computing the ratio of open space acreage for the residential and non-residential populations in the study area and then comparing these open space ratios against guidelines established by the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP). Although these guidelines are not meant to determine whether a proposed action might have a significant adverse impact on open space resources, they are helpful in understanding the extent to which user populations are served by open space resources. The following guidelines have been used in this analysis:

- For non-residential populations, 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents is typically considered adequate.
- For residential populations, the City attempts to achieve a ratio of 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons for large-scale proposals. Ideally, this would comprise 0.50 acres of passive space

and 2.0 acres of active open space per 1,000 residents. However, as noted above, these goals are often not feasible for many areas of the city and they do not constitute an impact threshold. Rather, it is a benchmark that represents how well an area is served by its open space.

- For the combined resident and non-resident population, a target open space ratio established by creating a weighted average of the amount of open space necessary to meet the DCP guideline of 0.50 acres of passive open space per 1,000 residents and 0.15 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents is considered in this analysis. Because it is assumed that residents and non-residents would use the same passive open spaces, a weighted average is used as a benchmark to assess the adequacy of passive open space for the total population. This ratio changes depending on the proportion of residents and non-residents in each study area.

The impact assessment is based on how the proposed and future actions would change the open space ratios in the study area. Open space ratios under existing conditions were calculated using 2000 Census data, and 2000 reverse journey-to-work data compiled by DCP. To account for the increase in residential population in the study area since the 2000 Census, a 0.5 percent annual growth rate was applied between 2001 and 2006. Open space ratios in the future without the proposed and future actions were calculated and compared to existing conditions. The future population was determined based on projects that are expected to be completed in the study area by 2009 independent of the proposed and future actions. To determine the effect of the proposed and future actions on the study area, changes to population and open space as a result of the proposed and future actions are discussed.

## **C. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

As shown on Figures 5-1 and 5-2, there are 14 publicly accessible open spaces in the ¼-mile non-residential study area and 23 publicly accessible open spaces within the ½-mile residential study area. In addition, there are 13 community gardens located in the Melrose Commons URA boundary. These gardens, operating under the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) GreenThumb Program, are required to be open to the public at specified hours posted on their gates. However, because these gardens are locked at other times and are therefore not fully accessible to the public, they are excluded from the quantitative open space analysis.

The non-residential study area contains a total of 10.38 acres of publicly accessible open space, including 3.16 acres of passive open space and 7.22 acres of active open space (see Table 5-1). The larger residential study area contains a total of 42.52 acres of publicly accessible open space, of which approximately 23.75 acres are for passive recreation and approximately 18.76 acres are for active recreational use.



- Development Sites
- Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area
- 1/4-Mile Perimeter
- Census Tract Number
- Census Tract
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Publicly Accessible Open Spaces
- Community Gardens

0 500 1000 FEET  
SCALE





- Development Sites
- 1/2-Mile Study Area
- Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Area
- 1/2-Mile Perimeter
- Publicly Accessible Open Spaces
- Community Gardens
- Census Tract Number
- Census Tract

0 1000 2000 FEET  
SCALE

Residential Open Space Study Area  
Figure 5-2

## Melrose Commons

**Table 5-1**  
**Open Space Inventory**

Map No.	Name	Location	Owner/ Managing Agent	Amenities	Total Acres	Passive Acres	Active Acres	Condition	Usage
<b>¼-Mile Study Area (Non-residential)</b>									
1	Arcilla Playground (J.H.S. 145)	164th St. between Clay and Teller Ave.	Jointly operated by NYC DPR and Board of Education	Playground, basketball and handball courts, benches, comfort station	1.37	(20%) 0.27	(80%) 1.10	Good	High
2	Franklin Triangle	3rd Ave. and Franklin Ave.	NYCDPR	Greenery	0.12	0.12	--	Good	Low
3	Charlton Gardens	East 164th St. between Boston Rd. and Cauldwell Ave.	NYCDPR	Pavilion, seating	0.49	0.49	--	Fair	Low
4	Dunbar Playground (J.H.S. 120)	Between Cauldwell Ave. and Trinity Ave. at East 163rd St.	Jointly operated by NYC DPR and Board of Education	Baseball (asphalt), basketball and handball courts, benches	1.44	(10%) 0.14	(90%) 1.30	Fair	High
5	Cauldwell Playground (P.S. 140)	Cauldwell Ave. between East 161st and East 163rd Streets	NYCDPR	Playground and spray-shower, benches, comfort station	0.45	(10%) 0.04	(90%) 0.41	Excellent	Moderate/ High
6	Grove Hill Playground (P.S. 157)	East 158th St. between Cauldwell Ave. and Eagle Ave.	Jointly operated by NYC DPR and Board of Education	Playground and spray-shower, basketball and handball courts, benches, comfort station	1.19	(20%) 0.24	(80%) 0.95	Good	Moderate/ High
7	Captain Rivera Playground (St. Mary's Houses Playground)	East 156th St. between Forest Ave. and Jackson Ave.	NYCDPR	Playground and spray-shower, basketball courts, benches, comfort station	1.00	(25%) 0.25	(75%) 0.75	Excellent	High
8	Bronxchester Houses Playground	St. Ann's Ave. south of East 156th St.	NYCHA	Basketball court, benches	0.40	(50%) 0.20	(50%) 0.20	Fair	Low/ Moderate
9	Flynn Playground	Brook Ave. between East 157th and East 158th St.	NYCDPR	Playground, basketball and handball courts, benches	0.82	(20%) 0.17	(80%) 0.66	Fair/Good	Moderate/ High
10	Melrose Houses Playground	Courtlandt Ave. between east 155th and East 156th St.	NYCDPR	Playground, basketball and handball courts, benches	1.00	(15%) 0.15	(85%) 0.85	Fair/Good	High
11	Jackson Houses Playground	Courtland Ave. at East 157th St.	NYCHA	Basketball courts, benches	1.15	(25%) 0.28	(75%) 0.87	Fair/Good	High
12	O'Neil Triangle	Elton Ave., East 161st St., and Washington Ave.	NYCDPR	Landscaping and benches	0.17	0.17	--	Good	Low
13	Triangle	East 163rd St., Washington Ave. and Brook Ave.	NYCDPR	Greenery and benches	0.05	0.05	--	Fair	Low
14	Railroad Park	East side of Park Ave. between East 161st and East 162nd St.	NYCDPR	Playground, benches	0.73	(80%) 0.59	(20%) 0.15	Fair	Low

**Table 5-1**  
**Open Space Inventory**

Map No.	Name	Location	Owner/ Managing Agent	Amenities	Total Acres	Passive Acres	Active Acres	Condition	Usage
<b>Community Gardens within the Melrose Commons URA*</b>									
A	Aguada Garden	3020 Park Avenue	HPD	Shelter, plant beds	--	--	--	--	--
B	"811" Family and Friends Assoc.	809 Courtlandt Avenue	HPD	Plant beds	--	--	--	--	--
C	Rainbow Block Assoc.	379 E. 159 <sup>th</sup> Street	HPD	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
D	Courtlandt Avenue Assoc.	364-66 E. 158th Street	HPD	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
E	Vogue Community	431 E. 156th Street	HPD	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
F	Family Community Garden	422 E. 158th Street	HPD	Shelter, plant beds	--	--	--	--	--
G	Community Garden	843 Elton Avenue	HPD	Shelter, plant beds	--	--	--	--	--
H	Edith Gardens	836 Elton Avenue	DPR	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
I	Centro Cultural Ricon Criollo**	E. 157th and Brook Ave.	HPD	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
J	A. Badillo Community Rose Garden	410 E. 163rd Street	HPD	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
K	Rose Family Garden Group	378 E. 162nd Street	HPD	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
L	Little Green Garden	377-81 E. 161st Street	HPD	Shelter, plant beds	--	--	--	--	--
M	Melrose Green House/Cabo Rojo Garden	902-904 Courtlandt Avenue	HPD	Shelter, plant beds, trees	--	--	--	--	--
<b>¼-Mile Study Area Total</b>					<b>10.38</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>7.22</b>		
<b>½-Mile Study Area (Residential)</b>									
15	Mott Playground (J.H.S. 22)	Between Morris Ave. and College Ave. at McClellan St.	Jointly operated by NYC DPR and Board of Education	Playground and spray-shower, basketball and handball courts, benches, comfort station	1.49	(5%) 0.07	(95%) 1.42	Fair	High
16	Youth Village Park	Home St., Boston Rd. and Jackson Avenue	NYCDPR	Playground, landscaping, benches	0.27	(25%) 0.07	(75%) 0.20	Good	Moderate
17	Behagen Playground (Forest Houses Playground)	Between Tinton Ave., Union Ave., East 166th and East 167th Streets	NYCDPR	Playground, basketball and handball courts, benches, comfort station	3.35	(20%) 0.67	(80%) 2.68	Good	Moderate
18	Abigail Playground (John Adams Houses Playground)	East 156th St. and Tinton Ave.	NYCDPR	Playground, benches, basketball and handball courts	0.53	(30%) 0.16	(70%) 0.37	Fair	Low

**Table 5-1 (cont'd)**  
**Open Space Inventory**

Open Space Inventory									
Map No.	Name	Location	Owner/ Managing Agent	Amenities	Total Acres	Passive Acres	Active Acres	Condition	Usage
½-Mile Study Area (Residential—cont'd)									
19	Fountain of Youth Playground (P.S. 161)	East 151st Street, between Tinton Ave. and Union Ave.	NYCDPR	Playground and spray-shower, basketball and handball courts, seating	1.37	(70%) 0.96	(30%) 0.42	Good	High
20	Pontiac Playground (P.S. 5)	East 149th Street, Jackson Ave. and Concord Ave.	Jointly operated by NYC DPR and Board of Education	Playground, basketball and handball courts, benches	0.91	(20%) 0.18	(80%) 0.73	Good	High
21	St. Mary's Park***	St. Mary's St., St. Ann's Avenue, East 149th St., Jackson Avenue	NYCDPR	Large lawns and seating, playgrounds, baseball, football, basketball courts, barbecuing, Recreation Center with pool, comfort station	7.5	(75%) 5.63	(25%) 1.88	Good	High
22	Clark Playground (J.H.S. 149)	Third Avenue between East 144th St. and East 145th St.	Jointly operated by NYC DPR and Board of Education	Basketball and handball courts, comfort station, playground, seating	0.72	(10%) 0.07	(90%) 0.65	Good	High
23	Franz Sigel Park	Grand Concourse, Walton Avenue, East 158th St., and East 151st St.	NYCDPR	Large lawns and seating, baseball, basketball and handball courts	15.99	(80%) 12.79	(20%) 3.20	Good	Moderate /High
½-Mile Study Area Total (includes ¼-Mile Study Area Totals)					42.52	23.75	18.76		
<b>Notes:</b> * Because they are not fully accessible to the public, community gardens are excluded from the total park acreage analyzed. ** Centro Cultural Ricon Criollo was recently relocated from 499 E. 158th Street. ***Although St. Mary's Park consists of is 35.31 acres, only the portion of the park that falls within the ½ mile radius (7.5 acres) is included in the quantitative analysis.									
<b>Sources:</b> AKRF field surveys, December 2004 and January 2006; NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation (DPR); New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA); New York City Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development (HPD); Trust for Public Land (TPL).									

Most of the open spaces in the study areas are neighborhood playgrounds that are less than 1.5 acres in size. There are two predominant open spaces within the ½-mile study area—Franz Sigel Park and St. Mary's Park, which together constitute the majority of the open space available for recreation.

Franz Sigel Park includes approximately 16 acres of open space with both active and passive recreational uses. The park is west of the Melrose Commons URA, and stretches along Grand Concourse, from East 151st Street to East 158th Street. St. Mary's Park, an approximately 35-acre park located to the south of the project site, is bounded by East 149th Street, St. Mary's Street, St. Ann's Avenue and Jackson Avenue. Both parks have expansive lawns and changing topography with excellent views of the surrounding area. St. Mary's Park provides many active recreational amenities, including baseball and football fields, and basketball and handball courts. In addition, St. Mary's Park contains New York's first indoor recreation center, which was opened in 1951 and includes an indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, and meeting rooms for



classes and community programs. A recently completed renovation included the rehabilitation of the existing track, the creation of a small synthetic turf area in the interior of the track, and the planting of new trees. Because less than 50 percent of the census tract in which St. Mary's Park is located (tract 37) within the ½-mile radius, only the portion of the park that falls within the ½-mile radius (approximately 7.5 acres) is included in the quantitative analysis. However, it is likely that residents and workers in the residential study area utilize the entire park area and all of the resources that this park provides.

Within the Melrose Commons URA, at the intersection of Elton Avenue, East 161st Street and Washington Avenue, is O'Neil Triangle, a 0.17-acre landscaped plaza containing pathways, benches and drinking fountains. Just north of this plaza, across Brook Avenue, is a small triangular green space under the jurisdiction of DPR. Also located within the Melrose Commons URA is Flynn Playground, a 0.82-acre park containing a playground, basketball and handball courts, and Railroad Park, which contains a playground as well as a lawn and benches for passive recreational use.

Seven open spaces adjacent to public schools are publicly accessible, several of which are jointly operated by DPR and the New York City Board of Education (BOE). These include: Mott Playground (J.H.S. 22) and Arcilla Playground (J.H.S. 145), located to the northwest of the project site; Cauldwell Playground (P.S. 140) and Dunbar Playground (J.H.S. 120), located two and three blocks east of the project site, respectively; Grove Hill Playground (P.S. 157), located southeast of the project site; and the Fountain of Youth Playground (P.S. 151), Pontiac Playground (P.S. 5), and Clark Playground (J.H.S. 145), located to the southeast of the project site. The primary use of these open spaces is active recreation.

Several New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) complexes contain publicly accessible open spaces. While these were developed for the use of NYCHA residents, they are open to the public and therefore included in the quantitative assessment of open spaces. The following open spaces are under the jurisdiction of DPR: Behagen Playground (Forest Houses), Captain Rivera Playground (St. Mary's Houses), Abigail Playground (John Adams Houses), Melrose Houses Playground, and Jackson Houses Playground. The Bronxchester Houses and Jackson Houses also contain open spaces, which are maintained by NYCHA. The primary use of these open spaces is active recreation.

Additional open spaces within the study areas that are primarily for passive recreation use include Youth Village Park, a 0.27-acre triangular open space located at the intersection between Boston Road, Jackson Avenue and Home Street; Charlton Gardens, a 0.49-acre raised open space on East 164th Street between Boston Road and Cauldwell Avenue; and Railroad Park, a 0.73-acre park located above the Metro North Railroad, north of East 161st Street.

As mentioned above, there are 13 community gardens located within the boundary of the Melrose Commons URA. Because they are not fully accessible to the public, they are not included in the quantitative analysis. However, these spaces constitute an important recreational resource for neighborhood residents. Community gardens are managed by neighborhood residents and often provide space for garden members to cultivate vegetables, fruit, and flowers. Many community gardens also contain a shelter for the storage of materials, as well as pavilions, seating, shade trees, and other amenities available for public use at times that are typically posted at each garden. In addition to providing green space, community gardens offer public programs and events, such as educational workshops, children's programs, and neighborhood block parties. Most of the community gardens within the study area are located on formerly vacant lots and are under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Housing, Preservation, and Development (HPD). The majority of these gardens are affiliated with GreenThumb, a DPR program that provides technical assistance to community garden members.

## STUDY AREA POPULATION

### *NON-RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA*

The worker population in the ¼-mile study area is estimated to be 7,530, based on 2000 reverse journey-to-work data compiled by the DCP. As shown in Table 5-3, the residential population in this study area is estimated to be 35,078 (assuming a 0.5 percent annual increase in the residential population between 2001 and 2006), with a total user population of 42,608. Although the analysis conservatively assumes that residential and non-residential users are separate populations, it is likely that some of the residents live near their workplace. As a result, there is likely to be some double counting of the daily user population when residential and non-residential populations overlap.

### *RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA*

As shown in Table 5-2, the residential population in the ½-mile study area is estimated to be 98,259, assuming a 0.5 percent annual increase in the residential population between 2001 and 2006. The *CEQR Technical Manual* calls for a quantitative analysis of the total population within the residential study area, which includes residential and non-residential populations. Based on 2000 journey-to-work data, the worker population within the ½-mile study area is 29,185. The total user population within this study area is 127,444. Again, this count conservatively assumes that the residential and non-residential populations are entirely distinct from each other. As shown in Table 5-2, Census tract 37, which includes St. Mary's Park, is included in the ½-mile study area population. Although only the portion of this park located within the ½-mile radius is included in the quantitative analysis, the entire population of the census tract was conservatively included in the residential study area population.

## ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACES

### *NON-RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA*

As described above, the analysis of the non-residential study area focuses on passive open spaces that may be used by daytime non-residential users in the ¼-mile study area. To assess the adequacy of the open spaces in the area, the ratio of non-residents to acres of open space is compared to DCP's planning guideline of 0.15 acres of passive space per 1,000 non-residents. In addition, the passive open space ratio for both residents and non-residents in the area is compared to the recommended weighted average ratio.

The non-residential study area includes 10.38 acres of open space, of which 3.16 acres are passive open space and 7.22 acres are active open space. Based on DCP's guidelines and the number of non-residents in the study area, 1.13 acres of passive open space is recommended for the non-residential population. The non-residential study area has a passive open space ratio of 0.419 acres space per 1,000 non-residents, which exceeds the City's guideline of 0.15 acres (see Table 5-3). The combined passive open space ratio is 0.074 acres per 1,000 residents and non-residents, which is less than the recommended weighted average ratio of 0.438 acres. Thus, while the existing passive open space resources in the area are adequate in serving the non-residential population, they do not meet the guideline for the combined residential and non-residential populations.

**Table 5-2**  
**Existing Population in the**  
**Non-Residential and Residential Study Areas**

Census Tract	Resident Population	Worker Population	Total User Population
<b>¼-Mile Non-Residential Study Area</b>			
173	4842	515	5357
69	4323	470	4793
67	6491	935	7426
71	1885	955	2840
75	4688	390	5078
137	4179	760	4939
139	571	355	926
143	817	335	1152
141	2209	660	2869
61	4039	2155	6194
<i>Total (2000 Census)</i>	<i>34,044</i>	<i>7,530</i>	<i>41,574</i>
<b>Adjusted total (with growth rate)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>35,078</b>	<b>7,530</b>	<b>42,608</b>
<b>½-Mile Residential Study Area</b>			
65	4655	8795	13450
43	4789	1420	6209
37	478	90	568
73	3248	605	3853
79	6598	925	7523
175	6466	620	7086
77	1307	620	1927
133	6047	390	6437
135	3126	440	3566
183	8377	3365	11742
181	8573	1110	9683
59.01	4972	2405	7377
59.02	2682	870	3552
<i>Total (2000 Census)</i>	<i>95,362</i>	<i>29,185</i>	<i>124,547</i>
<b>Adjusted total (with growth rate)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>98,259</b>	<b>29,185</b>	<b>127,444</b>
<b>Notes:</b> <sup>1</sup> Assumes a 0.5 percent annual increase in residential population from 2001 to 2006. Census tract 37 contains St. Mary's Park. To provide a more conservative analysis, the total population in the tract and only the portion of the open space located within the ½-mile radius are considered in the quantitative analysis. <b>Sources:</b> U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000; 2000 Journey-to-Work census data.			

**Table 5-3**

**Existing Adequacy of Open Space Resources in the Study Areas**

Total Population		Open Space Acreage			Open Space Ratios Per 1,000 People		
		Total	Passive	Active	Total	Passive	Active
Non-Residential Study Area							
Non-residents	7,530	10.38	3.16	7.22	N/A	0.419	N/A
Combined Residents and Non-residents	42,608				N/A	0.074	N/A
Residential Study Area							
Residents	98,259	42.52	23.75	18.76	0.433	0.242	0.191
Combined Residents and Non-residents	127,444				N/A	0.186	N/A
Sources: AKRF, Inc. 2006; Residential Data: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000. Non-residential Data: Census 2000 Journey-to-Work.							

### *RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA*

The following analysis of the adequacy of existing open space resources within the residential study area takes into consideration the ratio of active, passive, and total open space resources per 1,000 residents, as well as the ratio of passive open space per 1,000 combined residents and non-residents.

There are 42.52 acres of publicly accessible open space within the study area, including approximately 23.75 acres of passive open space and 18.76 acres of active open space. With a residential population of 98,259, DCP's recommended amount of active and passive open space for residential populations would be 49.13 acres of passive open space and 196.52 acres of active open space. Under existing conditions, the total open space ratio for residents (0.433 acres per 1,000 residents) is less than the city's planning guideline 2.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents (see Table 5-3). The area's residential active open space ratio (0.191 acres per 1,000 residents) is lower than the City's planning guideline of 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents. The residential passive open space ratio (0.242 acres per 1,000 residents) is also below the City's planning guideline of 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

The combined residential and non-residential passive open space ratio is 0.186 acres per 1,000 residents and non-residents. This does not meet the combined weighted average ratio guideline for passive open space in the area, which is 0.420 acres per 1,000 residents and non-residents.

### *QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT*

The study areas also include several recreational resources that are not included in the quantitative assessment because they are open for limited hours and therefore are not fully accessible to the public. However, when open, these spaces constitute an important recreational resource for neighborhood residents. These resources include schoolyards, playgrounds, and

playing fields which are primarily used by local schools. Although public use of these recreational resources is restricted, many school-aged children residing within the study area may attend local schools and utilize these recreational resources. Several schools in the study area, such as Morris High School (H.S. 400), P.S. 17, and P.S. 29, contain basketball courts where public access is restricted. Some high schools in the area contain recreational playing fields, which are available for community use when school activities are not taking place. Community use of these fields must be arranged with school administrators and coordinated around regular school use of the facilities. South Bronx High School (H.S. 470) contains basketball courts, and baseball and soccer fields. Alfred E. Smith High School (H.S. 600) contains recently-developed tennis and handball courts, as well as a football/soccer field, baseball field, and running track. The area's community gardens also provide passive open space that can be used for sitting, strolling, or picnicking. Although these open spaces were excluded from the quantitative assessment, it is likely that residents and workers within the study area would take advantage of these additional resources. If included in the quantitative analysis, these open spaces would substantially improve the open space ratios.

Furthermore, as described above, only 7.5 acres of the 35-acre St. Mary's Park is included in the quantitative analysis. This park contains a recreation center and numerous active and passive recreational facilities and is considered to be a destination park that attracts users from throughout the area. It is likely that residents of the study area would use the entire park.

## **D. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED AND FUTURE ACTIONS**

### **OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

The Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan (URP) identified several new open spaces to be developed within the URA, which are expected to be completed by 2009. These open spaces are as follows:

- "Central Park", a proposed 1.07-acre park that would be programmed primarily for active recreational use, and would be located on the western half of the block bounded by East 159th Street, Melrose Avenue, East 160th Street, and Elton Avenue.
- A proposed extension of the P.S. 29 playground east to Melrose Avenue, to create a 0.31-acre open space that would be jointly operated by DPR and BOE. This open space would be primarily for active recreational use.
- A proposed 0.12-acre open space extending through the midblock area of the block bounded by East 156th Street, East 157th Street, Melrose Avenue, and Elton Avenue. This open space would provide a connection to "Central Park" and would include both passive and active recreational use.
- A proposed 0.23-acre open space on the corner of Elton Avenue and East 160th Street, which would be developed for passive recreational use.

The proposed open spaces would result in an additional 3.33 acres of open space within both the non-residential and residential study areas, including 2.44 acres of active open space and 0.87 acres of passive open space. In addition to these proposed open space developments, Hines Park, a 0.38 acre narrow and triangularly shaped open space in the study area, is currently undergoing reconstruction. The park will contain new play equipment and a sitting area by the 2009 analysis year. Capital improvements are currently being planned at Clark Playground, where the City has



## **Melrose Commons**

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allocated funding for new play equipment that will enhance the active recreational resources in the area.

The Melrose Commons URP also calls for the development of a 1.61-acre public open space on URA site 61, which is located west of Elton Avenue between East 162nd and East 163rd Streets. This site was designated for public open space in the urban renewal plan as adopted in 1994 and continues to be an integral part of the plan. HPD is committed to providing publicly accessible open space on this site and is working with DPR to secure funding and develop construction plans for the new park. However, because it may not be completed by the proposed and future actions' 2009 build year, this planned public open space has not been included quantitatively in this analysis.

It is anticipated that absent the proposed and future actions, the Aguada Garden would be displaced from its current location in the Melrose Commons URA by 2009 in connection with the ongoing development facilitated by the Melrose Commons URP. Centro Cultural Ricon Criollo, a community garden that was located on an urban renewal development site, has already been relocated. It is anticipated that the remaining gardens within the Melrose Commons URA would remain at their current locations by 2009.

### **STUDY AREA POPULATION**

As described in Chapter 2, "Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy," 27 residential, commercial, or community facility development projects are currently planned and expected to be completed within the study areas by 2009. These new developments would increase both the residential and non-residential populations within the study areas, and are therefore included in this analysis.

#### ***NON-RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA***

As mentioned above, several development projects are expected to be completed in the non-residential study area by 2009 in the future without the proposed and future actions. These projects are expected to add approximately 7,105 new residents<sup>1</sup> and increase the non-residential daytime population by 3,902. Thus, by 2009, the non-residential population in the ¼-mile study area is expected to increase to 11,432 and the residential population is expected to increase to 42,183, with a combined residential and non-residential population expected to be 53,614.

#### ***RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA***

Several additional development projects are planned or expected to be completed within the ½-mile residential study area by 2009. These projects are expected to bring an additional 1,578 residents<sup>1</sup> and 454 workers to the area. Thus, by 2009, it is expected that the residential population in the ½-mile area will rise to 106,941, and the non-residential population will rise to 33,541, with a total user population of 140,482.

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<sup>1</sup> The anticipated number of new residents was determined by multiplying the number of units to be developed by the average household size of the census tract in which each development project is located.

## ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

### NON-RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA

By 2009 without the proposed and future actions, residential and non-residential populations in the ¼-mile study area would increase, as would the open space stock. The non-residential study area is expected to include 12.49 acres of open space, with 3.88 acres of passive open space and 8.61 acres of active open space.

Based on DCP's guidelines and the number of non-residents in the study area, 1.71 acres of passive open space is recommended for the non-residential population. Under No Build conditions, the non-residential study area is expected to have a passive open space ratio of 0.339 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents, which exceeds the City's guideline of 0.15 acres (see Table 5-4). The anticipated combined passive open space ratio decreases from existing conditions by approximately 2 percent, to 0.072 acres per 1,000 residents and non-residents. This continues to be below the recommended weighted average ratio, which is 0.425 acres in the future without the proposed and future actions.

**Table 5-4**  
**No Build Adequacy of Open Space Resources in the Study Areas**

Total Population		Open Space Acreage			Open Space Ratios Per 1,000 People		
		Total	Passive	Active	Total	Passive	Active
Non-Residential Study Area							
Non-residents	11,432	12.49	3.88	8.61	N/A	0.339	N/A
Combined Residents and Non-residents	53,614				N/A	0.072	N/A
Residential Study Area							
Residents	106,941	44.63	24.47	20.16	0.417	0.229	0.198
Combined Residents and Non-residents	140,482				N/A	0.174	N/A
<b>Sources:</b> AKRF, Inc. 2006; Residential Data: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000. Non-residential Data: Census 2000 Journey-to-Work.							

### RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA

By 2009 without the proposed and future actions, there would be an estimated 44.63 acres of open space, of which 24.47 acres would be for passive use and 20.16 acres would be for active use. With a residential population of 106,941, DCP's recommended amount of active and passive open space for residential populations would be 53.47 acres of passive open space and 213.88 acres of active open space. Under No Build conditions, the total open space ratio for every 1,000 residents would decrease slightly to 0.417 acres (see Table 5-4), remaining below the city's recommended planning guideline of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The active open space ratio would decrease by approximately 1 percent from 0.191 to 0.189 acres and would remain below the city's recommended planning guideline of 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents. The

passive open space ratio would decrease by 4 percent from 0.242 to 0.229, which is below the city's recommended guideline of 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

The combined residential and non-residential passive open space ratio in the future without the proposed and future actions is 0.174 acres per 1,000 residents and non-residents, which is an approximately 7 percent decline from under existing conditions (0.186). The combined weighted average guideline for passive open space is 0.416 acres per 1,000 residents and non-residents. Thus, in the future without the proposed and future actions, the study area would fall short of recommended planning guidelines for passive and active open space.

### *QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT*

It is anticipated that absent the proposed and future actions, the additional open space resources located in the area, including St. Mary's Park and playgrounds, and playing fields associated with local schools, would continue to be utilized by residents and workers in the study area.

## **E. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED AND FUTURE ACTIONS**

### **OPEN SPACE INVENTORY**

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the proposed Boricua Village project would create approximately 1.5 acres of publicly accessible passive open space on de-mapped portions of Brook Avenue, East 162nd Street, and East 161st Street. In addition, an approximately 17,200 square feet of private recreational space would be created within the proposed Boricua Village site. However, this passive open space would be for the use of residents and therefore is not included in the quantitative analysis of public open space.

The proposed Courtlandt Corners development project would displace four community gardens currently located in the Melrose Commons URA. These include A. Badillo Community Rose Garden, located on East 163rd Street between Melrose and Brook Avenues; the Melrose Green House/Cabo Rojo Garden, located on the corner of Courtlandt Avenue and East 162nd Street; Rose Family Garden Group, located on East 162nd Street between Courtlandt and Melrose Avenues; and Little Green Garden, located between Courtlandt and Melrose Avenues. Together, these gardens constitute 0.66 acres of passive open space.

In the future with the proposed and future actions, this loss of open space would be offset in part by the creation of two new community gardens within the Melrose Commons URA. As explained above, community gardens are not included in the quantitative analysis. A 0.18-acre community garden would be created as part of the proposed Courtlandt Corner South development, on East 160th Street between Courtlandt and Melrose Avenues. The proposed and future actions would result in the relocation of Vogue Community Garden to another site located on the same block as its current location, on East 156th Street between Melrose and Elton Avenues. The remaining community gardens within the Melrose Commons URA would not be affected by the proposed and future actions and are expected to remain in their current locations.

### **STUDY AREA POPULATION**

As described in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the proposed and future actions would result in new development that would include 1,770 new residential units as well as 99,900 sf of retail

space and 20,000 sf of community facility space, which would introduce an estimated 5,287 new residents<sup>1</sup> and 450 workers to the area. In addition, the proposed developments would include a new 120,000-square-foot college campus that is expected to result in 2,360 new day-time non-residential open space users, including college students and faculty and staff. Within the ¼-mile study area, these increases would result in an estimated total residential population of 47,469, and a non-residential population of 14,242, with a total user population of 61,711. Within the ½-mile study area, the proposed and future actions would result in an estimated total residential population of 112,228 and a non-residential population of 36,350, with a total user population of 148,578.

## ADEQUACY OF OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

### NON-RESIDENTIAL STUDY AREA

By 2009 with the proposed and future actions, the non-residential study area would include 13.99 acres of open space, including 5.38 acres of passive open space and 8.62 acres of active open space. Based on DCP's guidelines and the non-residential population in the study area, 2.13 acres of passive open space is recommended for the non-residential population. As compared to No Build conditions, the passive open space ratio would increase by 11 percent, from 0.339 to 0.377 acres of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents. This ratio is well above the city's guideline of 0.15 acres (see Table 5-5) of passive open space per 1,000 non-residents. Therefore, as under existing conditions and No Build conditions, the passive open space resources under Build conditions are adequate in serving the non-residential population.

**Table 5-5**  
**Build Adequacy of Open Space Resources in the Study Areas**

Total Population		Open Space Acreage			Open Space Ratios Per 1,000 People		
		Total	Passive	Active	Total	Passive	Active
Non-Residential Study Area							
Non-residents	14,242	13.99	5.38	8.62	N/A	0.377	N/A
Combined Residents and Non-residents	61,711				N/A	0.087	N/A
Residential Study Area							
Residents	112,228	46.13	25.97	20.15	0.410	0.230	0.180
Combined Residents and Non-residents	148,578				N/A	0.174	N/A
Sources: AKRF, Inc. 2006; Residential Data: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000. Non-residential Data: Census 2000 Journey-to-Work.							

The anticipated combined passive open space ratio would increase by 20 percent, from 0.072 to 0.087 acres per 1,000 residents and non-residents. This continues to be below the recommended

<sup>1</sup> The anticipated number of new residents was determined based on an average household size of 2.98.

weighted average ratio, which is 0.419 acres under Build conditions. Thus, as under existing conditions and No Build conditions, the passive open space resources under Build conditions are below the standard for combined residential and non-residential populations. However, the proposed and future actions would reduce this deficiency and would not result in a significant adverse impact.

### *RESIDENTIAL POPULATION*

In the future with the proposed and future actions, there would be 46.13 acres of open space, of which 25.97 acres would be for passive use and 20.15 acres would be for active use. With a residential population of 112,228, DCP's recommended amount of active and passive open space for residential populations would be 56.11 acres of passive open space and 224.46 acres of active open space.

As compared with the No Build condition, the total open space ratio per 1,000 residents would decrease by approximately 2 percent, from 0.417 to 0.411, remaining below the city's recommended planning guideline of 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents (see Table 5-5). The passive open space ratio would increase slightly from 0.229 to 0.231, but would remain below the recommended guideline of 0.5 acres per 1,000 residents. The active open space ratio under Build conditions would decrease by 4.7 percent, from 0.189 to 0.180, also remaining below the recommended guideline of 2.0 acres per 1,000 residents. As under existing conditions and No Build conditions, the active open space resources under Build conditions are below the recommended guideline for the residential population. However, the proposed and future actions would result in less than 5 percent decrease in the active open space ratio and therefore would not result in a significant adverse impact to active open space resources.

The passive open space ratio for the combined residential and non-residential population would increase to at 0.175, which is less than the recommended combined weighted average ratio for passive open space in the area under Build conditions (0.414). Therefore, as under both existing and No Build conditions, open space ratios would fall short of the recommended planning guidelines for the study area. However, while the area would continue to have a shortfall of open space, the demand for open space generated by the proposed and future actions would not significantly exacerbate the No Build deficiency. Therefore, the proposed and future actions would not result in a significant adverse impact on active or passive open space.

### *QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT*

As mentioned above, the quantitative analysis does not include several open space resources located in the vicinity of the proposed and future actions. St. Mary's Park is a significant open space in the community that provides a range of active and passive recreational resources. Although less than a quarter of St. Mary's Park is included in the quantitative analysis, it is expected that the residents generated by the proposed and future actions would utilize the park in its entirety. There are also a number of recreational schoolyards and playing fields which are likely utilized by many of the school-aged children residing in the study area. Furthermore, the proposed and future actions would create an additional 0.45 acres of passive open space on the proposed Boricua Village site for use by residents. If included in the quantitative analysis, these open spaces would substantially improve the open space ratios.



*CONCLUSIONS*

Within the non-residential study area, the passive open space resources under Build conditions are adequate in serving the day-time user population. However, the passive open space ratios do not meet DCP's planning guidelines for the combined residential and non-residential populations. This deficiency also exists under existing conditions and No Build conditions.

Within the residential study area, there is a shortfall of active and passive open space within the study area under existing and future conditions. The proposed and future actions would result in a decline of 4.7 percent in the active open space ratio and an increase of 1 percent in the passive open space ratio for residents. Thus, the demand for open space generated by the proposed and future actions would result in a decrease of less than 5 percent in open space ratios. As described above, there are a number of active open space resources not included in the quantitative analysis that would help to meet open space demands. These include school playgrounds and athletic facilities in the study area that are open to the public at limited times. Additionally, even though most of St. Mary's Park lies outside the study area and was therefore not included in the quantitative analysis, many study area residents would likely make use of this entire park. Overall, there would continue to be a shortage of public open space, but the increased demand resulting from the proposed and future actions would not result in a significant adverse impact. \*