COMMUNITY DISTRICT 7: NORTH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ) AREA

Bounded between Amsterdam Avenue and Central Park West, and 100th and 110th Street
- 26.7 percent or more of the total population is at or below the poverty line *
- 75 percent or more of the total population is a member of a minority group *
- Total Population = 21,561

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* An environmental justice area is a low-income community or a minority community, based on US Census data (2014-18 ACS). Map and Data can be found here.
CB7 NORTH EJ AREA: PLAYGROUNDS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

Anibal Aviles Playground on West 108th Street bet. Amsterdam & Columbus

Frederick Douglass Playground on West 100th Street on Amsterdam Ave
Frederick Douglass Playground

Amsterdam Ave between 100 and 101 Streets
Frederick Douglass Playground

This playground is named for Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), celebrated African American abolitionist, orator, author, and statesman. Frederick Douglass Playground is located on Amsterdam Avenue between 100th and 102nd Streets. In 1954, the City of New York acquired this parcel via condemnation for the benefit of the nearby Frederick Douglass Houses. The playground opened on September 10, 1958 and the Board of Estimate transferred the property from the New York City Housing Authority to Parks in August 1962.

In 1998, Frederick Douglass Playground received a renovation that included the installation of modular play equipment and safety surfacing as well as the repair of handball courts. In 2008, the aboveground swimming pool was replaced with a more attractive in-ground mini pool. Additional renovations to the playground include new curbs and sidewalks, World’s Fair benches, and new plantings throughout. The playground also features a handball court, turf athletic field, basketball court, comfort station, playing field, three basketball standards, swings, and camel play sculpture.

History from: https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/frederick-douglass-playground/history

Map from: https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/frederick-douglass-playground/map
Present-day Frederick Douglass Playground: Renovation Considerations

- **Fences**: Parks without Borders (perimeter of playground, handball court and pool)
- **Park entry**: need for more
- **Floor tiles**: covering small areas and not flat
- **Basketball Court**: Torn nets and floor mural
- **Handball court**: Floor mural and/or floor tiles
- **Seating issues**: Insufficient benches inside playground
- **Empty playspace**: unused play area
- **Other accessible and Inclusive playgrounds**: Bloomingdale playground
Frederick Douglass Playground fences:

Parks without Borders (perimeter of playground, handball court and pool)

Information from: https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/planning/parks-without-borders
Frederick Douglass Playground Entry: one entrance open only
Frederick Douglass Playground floor tiles

The Frederick Douglass Playground floor tiles are uneven--all raised in the center at the point where the square tiles meet (trip/falls) and are all black (attract/trap more heat).

Other, newer playgrounds in the city have colored tiles (trap less heat) that are flat to the ground (safer for falls).
Frederick Douglass Playground Basketball Court

Basketball Court grounds without mural

Artist MADSTEEZ’s Basketball court mural Together As ONE in NYC (Park Slope Playground)

Torn basketball nets at Frederick Douglass Playground Basketball Courts

The handball court was recently painted, but might also benefit from a mural like the one at Tompkins Houses in Brooklyn, NY.

Handball court mural at Tompkins Houses (NYCHA), Brooklyn, NY

Frederick Douglass Playground: 
Insufficient seating

Frederick Douglass Playground

Circular Bench seating area (Bella Abzug Park)

Tables with chairs and umbrellas (Bella Abzug Park)
Almost all playgrounds and recreational spaces in this area have complicated access issues, particularly in terms of recreation uses. The fields at Frederick Douglass Playground are technically available to all, but teams with permits take precedence and often overtake the fields at prime times (e.g., after school, weekends). The Bloomingdale Playground is beautiful and accessible. But access to portions of that playground are also shared with PS 145. Similar access issues also arise with the recreational spaces in Central Park and Riverside Park.
Frederick Douglass Playground unused play area: other playground ideas

There’s a large unused area in the playground that could be used to add sprinklers, a drum set, climbing rope ladders, a climbing tower and/or sun shade.

Climbing Rope Ladders (Hell’s Kitchen Park)

Drum set and Shade (Hell’s Kitchen Park)

Climbing Tower and sun shade (Bella Abzug Park)

Sprinklers (Hell’s Kitchen Park)
In 2018, reconstruction started on the park as part of the Community Parks Initiative—a multi-faceted program to increase the accessibility and quality of parks throughout the five boroughs. This project reconstructed the basketball courts, paths, benches, spray shower, plantings, play equipment, and adult fitness equipment. The redesign improves accessibility for children and adults of all mental and physical abilities, ensuring this playground remains an important asset for the Upper West Side community.

https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/bloomingdale-playground/history