

## 5.3 OPEN SPACE

### 5.3.1 Introduction

This Section evaluates the potential effects of construction activity required for the water main connections on the use and enjoyment of nearby publicly accessible open spaces. As described in Chapter 3, “Impact Methodologies,” in Section 3.3, “Open Space,” the Study Area consists of the area within 400 feet of the potential water main connection routes analyzed in this EIS.

### 5.3.2 Existing Conditions

The 400-foot Study Area for the water main connections encompasses 16 publicly accessible open spaces. Those open spaces are listed in Table 5.3-1 and shown in Figure 5.3-1.

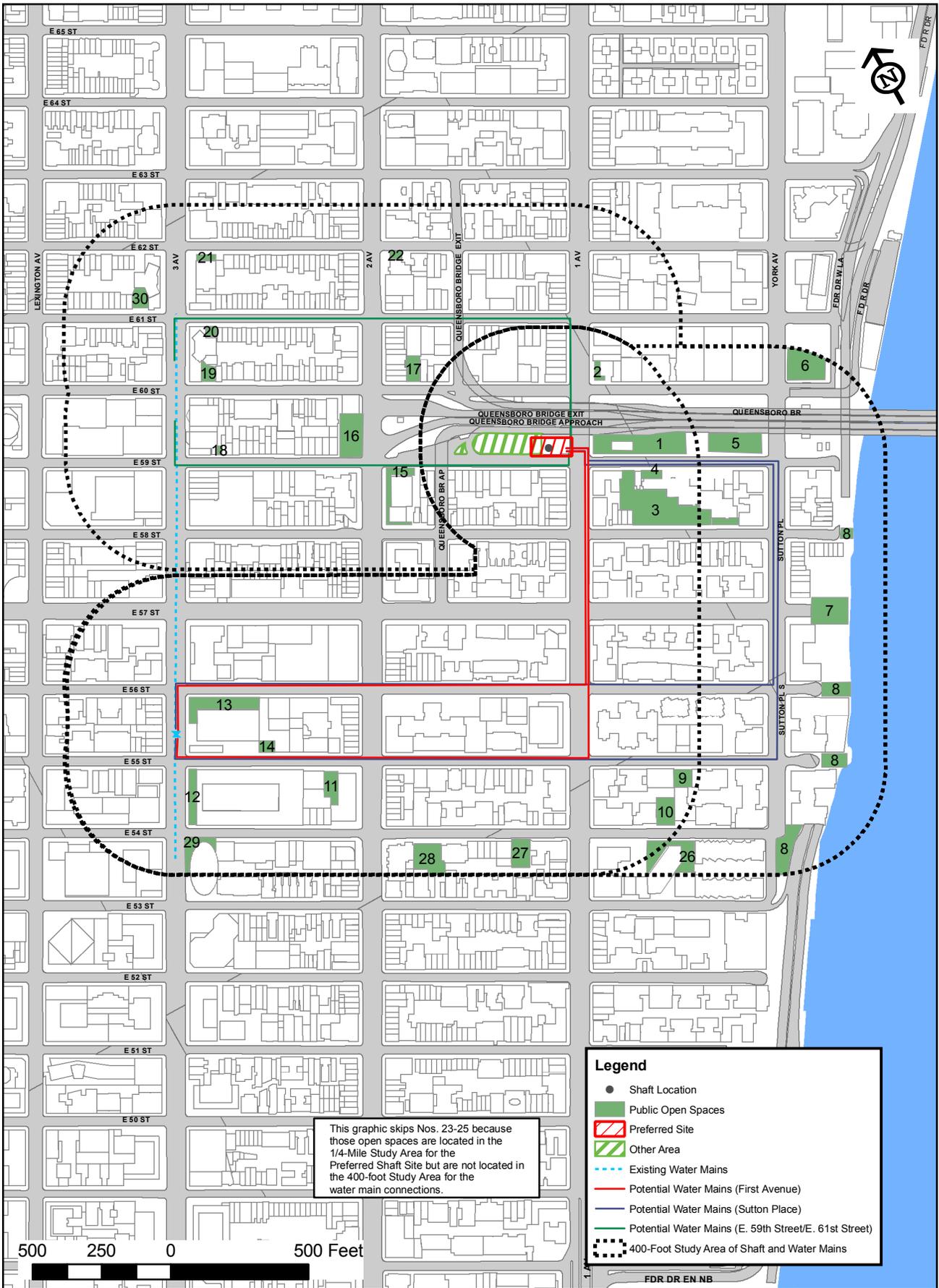
#### First Avenue Route

The First Avenue water main route passes within 400 feet of open spaces near E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street and First Avenue and open spaces near E. 55<sup>th</sup> and E. 56<sup>th</sup> Streets. The open spaces closest to the preferred Shaft Site at First Avenue and E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street are the largest; as described in Section 4.3 “Open Space” in Chapter 4 “Preferred Shaft Site,” these include the plaza at Bridgemarket (No. 2); the plazas adjacent to the BridgeTower Place, Sovereign, and Grand Sutton apartment buildings (Nos. 3, 4, and 5, respectively); and the “multi-use” area adjacent to the Queensboro Bridge, which is often referred to as 14 Honey Locusts Park.

The other open spaces located within 400 feet of the First Avenue route for the water main connections are predominantly plazas associated with apartment buildings or office buildings that are used as sitting areas. As indicated in the figure and table, these are located within 400 feet of the portion of the water main connections route along E. 55<sup>th</sup> and E. 56<sup>th</sup> Streets and include:

- St. James Tower plazas (Nos. 9 and 10)—plaza adjacent to Cornell Weill Medical College and a residential building
- Rivertower plaza (No. 26)—plaza adjacent to residential building
- Connaught Tower plaza (No. 28)—plaza adjacent to residential building
- Brevard plaza (No. 11)—plaza adjacent to residential building
- Lipstick Building plaza (No. 29)—plaza adjacent to office building
- 909 Third Avenue plaza (No. 12)—widened sidewalk adjacent to office building
- 919 Third Avenue plaza (Nos. 13 and 14)—plazas adjacent to office building

In addition, the 400-foot Study Area also includes the 54<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Center, a City-owned, indoor public recreation center.



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**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
 PROPOSED SHAFT 33B TO CITY TUNNEL NO. 3  
 STAGE 2- MANHATTAN LEG  
 WATER MAIN CONNECTIONS  
 PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

**FIGURE 5.3-1**

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**Table 5.3-1**  
**Open Spaces in the 400-Foot Study Area for Water Main Connections**

Map No <sup>1</sup>	Name (if any)	Route <sup>2</sup>			Description/Amenities	Active or Passive	Total Acres
		F	S	59			
	Multi-use area	F*	S*	59*	Shared space used jointly by NYCDOT and as an open space; nine trees but no open space amenities	Both	0.27
1	Bridgemarket	F*	S*	59*	Plaza with seating and landscaping	Passive	0.49
2	BridgeTower Place	F	S	59*	Plaza with bike parking, plantings, seating, trees	Passive	0.15
3	Sovereign	F	S	59*	Residential plaza with plantings, trees, benches and steps	Passive	0.65
4	Grand Sutton	F	S	59*	Plaza with sculpture, bike parking, plantings, seating, trees	Passive	0.06
5	Queensboro Oval		S	59*	Outdoor ballfield May through October; enclosed tennis courts October through April	Active	1.24
6	24 Sycamores Park		S		Park with basketball court, handball courts, playground, tables, seating, restrooms	Both	0.62
7	Sutton Place Park		S		Multi-level park with benches, trees, plantings, sandbox, statue	Both	0.30
8	Sutton Place Parks		S		Open plazas with river views; seating and landscaping at E. 54 <sup>th</sup> and E. 58 <sup>th</sup> Streets	Passive	0.46
9	St. James Tower, Cornell Weill Medical College	F	S		Plaza with seating and landscaping	Passive	0.07
10	St James Tower	F	S*		Residential plaza with bike parking, planting, benches, fountain	Passive	0.07
11	Brevard	F*	S		Residential plaza with bike parking, planting, seating, trees, waterfall	Passive	0.21
12	909 Third Avenue	F	S		Wide sidewalk at office building with trees and arcaded pedestrian area	Passive	0.25
13	919 Third Avenue	F	S		Plaza and pedestrian space at office building with landscaping	Passive	0.38
14	919 Third Avenue	F	S		Paved plaza at office building	Passive	0.05
15	The Landmark			59*	Plaza with bike parking, seating, trees, and landscaping	Passive	0.31
16	Tramway Plaza			59*	Paved plaza and pedestrian space with trees	Both	0.35
17	Evansview			59	Plaza with seating and landscaping	Passive	0.10
18	205 E. 59 <sup>th</sup> Street			59*	Plaza with landscaping	Passive	0.04
19	Savoy			59	Plaza with seating, landscaping, restaurant	Passive	0.07
20	Savoy			59*	Plaza with bike parking, seating, trees, plantings	Passive	0.04
21	Wellington Estates			59	Wide sidewalk with plantings	Passive	0.05
22	Paladin			59	Plaza with sculpture, bike parking, seating, planting, trees	Passive	0.07
26	Rivertower	F	S		Residential plaza with seating, steps, landscaping	Passive	0.35
27	54 <sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Center	F	S		Indoor recreation center with gym, pool, track, programs and activities	Active	0.17
28	Connaught Tower	F	S		Park and plaza with sculpture, trees, plantings	Passive	0.23
29	“Lipstick Building” Plaza	F	S		Paved plaza and pedestrian space at office building with landscaping and trees	Passive	0.19
30	Trump Plaza			59	Plaza with seating, bike parking, landscaping, trees, water element	Passive	0.16

**Notes:**

- 1 This table skips Nos. 23 through 25 because those open spaces are located in the ¼-Mile Study Area for the Preferred Shaft Site but are not located in the 400-foot Study Area for the water main connections.
- 2 **F** indicates open space within 400 feet of First Avenue route; **S** indicates open space within 400 feet of Sutton Place route; **59** indicates open space within 400 feet of E. 59<sup>th</sup>/E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street route. \* indicates location adjacent to water main construction route.

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At open spaces that provide seating and are located adjacent to the potential First Avenue water main route, user surveys were conducted to determine the level and types of usage (for more information, see Section 3.3, “Open Space” in Chapter 3, “Impact Methodologies”). The results of the user surveys for the open spaces that are also located in the 400-foot Study Area for the Preferred Shaft 33B Site—Nos. 1 through 4 on Table 5.3-1—are presented in Section 4.3, “Open Space” of Chapter 4, “Preferred Shaft Site” in the discussion of existing conditions in the 400-foot Study Area for the preferred Shaft Site. As described there, the four open spaces near the preferred Shaft Site are used for passive enjoyment.

Results of the user surveys for the other open spaces adjacent to the First Avenue water main route—the park at the Brevard (No. 11) and the main plaza at the office building at 919 Third Avenue at E. 56<sup>th</sup> Street (No. 13)—are presented in Table 5.3-2 and discussed below. The other open space adjacent to the First Avenue route, the second plaza at 909 Third Avenue (No. 14) has no seating, and therefore is assumed to serve open space users for short durations only. Open spaces within the 400-foot Study Area for the First Avenue route but not adjacent to the potential location of construction were also not surveyed, since these spaces are less likely to be directly disrupted by construction activities.

**Table 5.3-2**  
**Results of Open Space User Surveys**

Area (see Figure 5.3-1)	Activities Observed	Weekday/ Weekend	Usage								
			Morning		Midday		Afternoon		Evening		
			Ppl	Mins	Ppl	Mins	Ppl	Mins	Ppl	Mins	
11	Brevard	Sit	Weekday	22	1-36	57	3-35	53	2-34	15	5-26
			Weekend	7	1-43	8	5-36	14	1-57	19	2-53
13	919 Third Avenue	Sit and stand	Weekday	>100	1-35	83	1-49	70	1-54	50	1-60
			Weekend	10	2-12	19	1-11	22	1-13	21	1-60
		Pass through to retail spaces in building	Weekday	>300	N/A	>300	N/A	>250	N/A	>100	N/A
			Weekend	109	N/A	127	N/A	158	N/A	193	N/A

**Notes:** All open spaces were surveyed for one-hour periods in the morning, midday, afternoon, and evening. Weekday surveys were conducted on Wednesday, April 6, 2005. Weekend surveys were conducted on Saturday, August 27, 2005.  
Ppl = number of people observed in each hour.  
Mins. = number of minutes people stayed in the open space each hour.  
N/A = Not applicable. The duration of how long people spent passing through an area was not recorded.

Brevard Park (No. 11) on the south side of E. 55<sup>th</sup> Street between Second and Third Avenues, is a paved and landscaped plaza with benches, wrought iron tables with seating, and a fountain and sculptures. During surveys, people used this space to sit and read, drink, eat, smoke, and play cards. The plaza at 919 Third Avenue (No. 13) occupies a wide sidewalk area along Third Avenue and along E. 56<sup>th</sup> Street east of Third Avenue. The plaza is set off from the rest of the sidewalk by planters and staircases. As shown in the table, this space is heavily used by people

who sit and stand to smoke, talk on the phone, talk, play (children), and on the day of the surveys, ride bicycles and observe a bicycle demonstration. Many people also pass through on their way to or from the retail spaces in the building.

### **Sutton Place Route**

The Sutton Place water main route passes within 400 feet of the same open spaces as the First Avenue route, described above. In addition, it also passes within 400 feet of five additional open spaces, shown on Figure 5.3-1 as Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9 (which itself consists of several different open spaces). These include the large Queensboro Oval (No. 5), a space beneath the Queensboro Bridge used for active outdoor recreation in warm weather months and enclosed tennis in cold weather months; 24 Sycamores Park (No. 6), a City park north of the Queensboro Bridge on York Avenue; a sitting area in front of Cornell Weill Medical College (No. 9), and the parks along the East River at the east end of E. 54<sup>th</sup>, E. 55<sup>th</sup>, E. 56<sup>th</sup>, E. 57<sup>th</sup>, and E. 58<sup>th</sup> Streets. Those five parks (collectively Nos. 7 and 8), the Sutton Place Parks, provide wide vistas of the East River waterfront. The parks at E. 54<sup>th</sup>, E. 57<sup>th</sup>, and E. 58<sup>th</sup> Streets have landscaped sitting areas and the other two consist of unimproved paved areas.

### **E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street/E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street Route**

The E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street/E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street water main route passes within 400 feet of several of the same open spaces as described above. It also passes within 400 feet of nine additional publicly accessible open spaces, shown on Figure 5.3.1 as Nos. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 30. Most of these are privately owned landscaped courtyards and plazas, including the plaza at The Landmark (No. 15), which has a small landscaped area on E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street and a large plaza area atop a one-story commercial building on E. 58<sup>th</sup> Street; Evansview (No. 17) on E. 60<sup>th</sup> Street; 205 E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street (No. 18); Savoy (Nos. 19 and 20) on E. 60<sup>th</sup> and E. 61<sup>st</sup> Streets; Wellington Estates (No. 21) and Paladin (No. 22) on E. 62<sup>nd</sup> Street; and Trump Plaza (No. 30) on E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street near Third Avenue. Tramway Plaza (No. 16), on Second Avenue and E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street, is a City-owned mapped park consisting of a plaza and pedestrian space.

### **5.3.3 Future Conditions Without the Project**

Based on information collected for Section 5.2, “Land Use and Community Facilities, Zoning, and Public Policy,” and a telephone call with a representative of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR)<sup>1</sup>, in the Future Without the Project some developments are proposed in the Study Area. These are summarized in Section 5.2. The new residential buildings would bring additional population to the Study Area, who would presumably use the area’s open spaces.

Changes are also proposed to some of the open spaces in the Study Area in the Future Without the Project. NYCDPR is planning a restoration of the multi-use area on E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street in the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Telephone conversation with Jennifer Hoppa, Deputy Director, Planning, NYCDPR, September 19, 2005.

Future Without the Project. In addition, rehabilitation of Tramway Plaza, at Second Avenue and E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street, is also planned. Reconstruction of the FDR Drive would continue in the Future Without the Project, and is scheduled for completion in 2008. As part of the reconstruction, the New York State Department of Transportation will restore and improve the green spaces on the roof deck and alongside the construction area. This includes the Sutton Place Parks at the foot of E. 54<sup>th</sup> through E. 58<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Community Board 8's 197-a plan, which is discussed in more detail in Section 4.2, makes recommendations for the Queensboro Bridge area that focus on streetscape and open space elements. Key issues, as identified in the 197-a plan, include access to the East River waterfront and improvement of the quality of and access to park spaces. The 197-a plan discusses possible improvements to Tramway Park and the Bridge Plaza area near the preferred Shaft Site. These are discussed in Section 4.3. Community Board 6's 197-a plan does not make recommendations that would affect any of the open spaces in the Study Area.

#### **5.3.4 Future Conditions With the Project**

##### **Construction**

No water main construction activities are anticipated to occur in open spaces in the Study Area; therefore, no direct effects to open spaces would occur during construction. In general, the noise, dust, and disruption to traffic and pedestrian flows associated with water main construction could temporarily disrupt the use of nearby open spaces for the 10- to 12-week period when work occurs nearby. For open spaces located near an intersection, the disturbance would be longer, since it would include the 10 to 12 weeks of work on the block and another 10 to 12 weeks of work at the intersection. Construction activities for the water main would result in increased traffic delays and congestion associated with temporary adverse traffic impacts, and temporary adverse noise impacts on adjacent areas. Specific effects on open spaces from construction on each of the three potential water main routes analyzed in this EIS are discussed below.

##### *First Avenue Route*

Construction of water mains using the First Avenue route would have the potential to affect Bridgemarket Plaza, the plazas at the Sovereign and Grand Sutton apartment buildings (although these spaces would be buffered from the construction zone by intervening buildings), Brevard plaza, and the plazas at 909 and 919 Third Avenues. The construction noise would at times be intrusive and disruptive, resulting in temporary adverse noise impacts. These open spaces are all used for passive recreation, where users are likely to value the relative quiet the spaces currently provide. The plazas located on avenues, however, are already noisy because of their locations along those major thoroughfares. At the open spaces adjacent to the construction zone, the noise and traffic congestion could make the plazas less attractive for open space users, and it is possible that fewer people would choose to use these spaces during the construction period. During those times, people would likely use other plazas in the Study Area. Construction work would be adjacent to a particular open space for only a short duration, however, with construction on each block lasting an estimated 12 weeks and construction at each intersection

lasting an estimated 10 weeks. Further, access to all open spaces would be maintained at all times. Because of the short-term nature of this project-related effect, the disruption during construction is not anticipated to result in a potential significant adverse impact to open spaces in the Study Area.

Other open spaces within the 400-foot Study Area for the First Avenue route, including the plaza at St. James Tower (in front of Cornell Weill Medical College), the 54<sup>th</sup> Street Recreation Center, Connaught Tower plaza, and the Lipstick Building plaza, are located a full block away from the construction zone. Intervening buildings and increased distance from construction activities would buffer those open spaces from construction activities, and therefore no potential significant adverse impact would be anticipated.

#### *Sutton Place Route*

Construction of the water mains along the Sutton Place route would have the same effect on the same open spaces as described for the First Avenue route. In addition, the Sutton Place route would also affect additional open spaces in the Study Area. As discussed earlier, the Queensboro Oval and 24 Sycamores Park are both located within 400 feet of the Sutton Place route. However, these spaces are located in the context of the noisy Queensboro Bridge. Twenty-four Sycamores Park is a full block away, and the Queensboro Oval provides predominantly active space, which is generally not considered as noise-sensitive as passive space. Thus, those spaces would not be anticipated to experience significant adverse impacts because of water main construction activities.

Water main construction would pass relatively close to the Sutton Place Parks, located at the ends of E. 54<sup>th</sup> through E. 58<sup>th</sup> Streets overlooking the East River. These spaces provide sweeping views of the East River waterfront and are predominantly for passive recreation. Construction within close proximity to the Sutton Place Parks could potentially affect the usage of those spaces for the 10 to 12 weeks while construction occurs nearby. However, the parks are all buffered from Sutton Place by some distance, and two of the parks (at E. 55<sup>th</sup> and E. 56<sup>th</sup> Streets) currently have no amenities.

Construction of the water mains along the Sutton Place route would also bring construction directly in front of the sitting area at the Grand Sutton on E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street, and to the St. James Tower open space at Weill Medical College on E. 54<sup>th</sup> Street. Since both these spaces provide passive open space amenities close to the street, construction work could adversely affect the use of these spaces for passive recreation during the construction period. As described above, the construction noise would at times be intrusive and disruptive, resulting in temporary adverse noise impacts. At the open spaces adjacent to the construction zone, the noise and traffic congestion could make the plazas less attractive for open space users, and it is possible that fewer people would choose to use these spaces during the construction period.

Overall, however, given the brief duration of the construction disturbance on specific areas and since access would be maintained at all times, no significant adverse impact to open spaces would be anticipated due to construction of water mains on the Sutton Place route.

*E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street/E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street Route*

Construction of the water mains along the E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street/E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street route would be in close proximity to Bridgemarket Plaza on First Avenue, discussed above. On E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street, it would also pass the multi-use area on E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street, a narrow landscaped area at the Landmark apartments, Tramway Plaza, and a plaza at 205 E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street. On First Avenue, it would pass the plaza at BridgeTower Place. On E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street, it would pass a plaza at the Savoy apartment building.

Construction of the water mains would temporarily disrupt the use of these plazas, as they are all used for passive recreation and any nearby construction work would make these open spaces less attractive for open space users. The construction noise would at times be intrusive and disruptive, resulting in temporary adverse noise impacts. As noted above, the plazas located on avenues are already noisy because of their locations along those major thoroughfares. At the open spaces adjacent to the construction zone, the noise and traffic congestion could make the plazas less attractive for open space users, and it is possible that fewer people would choose to use these spaces during the construction period. However, given the brief duration of construction disturbance on specific open spaces (with construction on any specific block lasting approximately 12 weeks and construction at a specific intersection lasting 10 weeks), this disruption would not be anticipated to result in potential significant adverse impacts on these open spaces. Access to these open spaces would be maintained at all times during water main construction.

Other open spaces within the 400-foot Study Area, such as the plazas at Wellington Estates and the Paladin, are located a block away from the construction area, and the plaza at the Grand Sutton and Queensboro Oval park are located over 200 feet away from the construction area. Intervening buildings and increased distance from construction activities would buffer those open spaces from construction activities, and therefore no potential significant adverse impact would be anticipated.

*Conclusions*

No potential significant adverse impacts to open space would be anticipated from construction of the water main connections along the First Avenue route, the Sutton Place route, or the E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street/E. 61<sup>st</sup> Street route. The noise, dust, and disruption to traffic and pedestrian flows associated with water main construction could temporarily disrupt the use of nearby open spaces for the 10- to 12-week period when work occurs nearby. For open spaces located near an intersection, the disturbance would be longer, since it would include the 10 to 12 weeks of work on the block and another 10 to 12 weeks of work at the intersection. During this period, some people might choose to use different open spaces not near the construction zone. Overall, however, given the short duration of the disruption at any given open space, as well as the short total duration for all open spaces in the Study Area, construction activities for the water mains would not be anticipated to result in significant adverse impacts to open spaces.

In addition, the combination of construction activities for the water mains and construction activities for Shaft 33B at the preferred Shaft Site also would not be anticipated to result in

significant adverse impacts to open spaces. While disruption to the multi-use area and the plaza at Bridgemarket would be affected by construction at the Shaft Site and along any of the water main routes, the combined effect of both construction projects would not result in substantially greater effects than the effect of either one of the activities. This is also true for the potential combined effect of the two construction activities on open spaces that are farther from the preferred Shaft Site.

### **Operation**

Operation of the water main connections does not have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts to open spaces. The water main connections would be located beneath the street and sidewalks and would have no above-ground features or other associated above-ground operational activities.

