

Community Board 8, Borough of Manhattan

# 197-A PLAN FOR THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE AREA



A 197-a plan as adopted by the City Planning Commission  
and the City Council

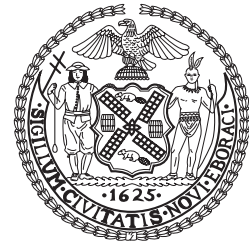


Department of City Planning  
City of New York

Community Board 8, Borough of Manhattan

# 197-A PLAN FOR THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE AREA

A 197-a plan as adopted by the  
City Planning Commission and the City Council



City of New York  
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor

Department of City Planning  
Amanda M. Burden, Director

Summer 2006  
DCP# 06-08

## INTRODUCTION



Under Section 197-a of the New York City Charter, community boards may propose plans for the development, growth and improvement of land within their districts. The plans are reviewed in accordance with standards and rules of procedure for 197-a plans which were developed and adopted by the City Planning Commission. Once approved by the Commission and adopted by the City Council, as submitted or as modified, 197-a plans serve as policy guides for subsequent actions by city agencies.

In the summer of 2006, the City Planning Commission and the City Council approved the 197-a plan submitted by Manhattan Community Board 8, 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area. This report provides information for those interested in the plan's policies and recommendations. It may also be of interest to other communities considering the 197-a process. The report contains three sections:

1. The City Council resolution, dated August 16, 2006, adopting the plan as approved by the City Planning Commission.
2. The City Planning Commission report, dated July 12, 2006, approving the plan.
3. The Community Board's proposed 197-a plan, as submitted August 2005 and modified May 2006.





# Section 1

## City Council Resolution

City Council Resolution, dated August 16, 2006,  
adopting 197-a plan as approved by the City Planning Commission



**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
RESOLUTION NO. 489**

**Resolution approving the decision of the City Planning Commission on Non-ULURP No. N 060096 NPM, a Section 197-a Plan concerning the open spaces, parks and waterfront access in the Queensboro Bridge Area of Community District 8, Manhattan (L.U. No. 217).**

**By Council Members Katz and Garodnick**

WHEREAS, the City Planning Commission filed with the Council on July 14, 2006 its decision dated July 12, 2006 (the "Decision"), on the Plan, *The Manhattan Community Board 8 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area*, submitted by Manhattan Community Board 8, pursuant to Section 197-a of the New York City Charter (Non-ULURP No. N 060096 NPM) (the "Plan");

WHEREAS, the Decision is subject to review and action by the Council pursuant to Section 197-d(b)(1) of the City Charter;

WHEREAS, upon due notice, the Council held a public hearing on the Decision and Plan on August 14, 2006;

WHEREAS, the Council has considered the land use implications and other policy issues relating to the Decision and Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Council has considered the relevant environmental issues and the Negative Declaration, issued on January 9, 2006 (CEQR No. 06DCP063M);

**RESOLVED:**

The Council finds that the action described herein will have no significant effect on the environment;

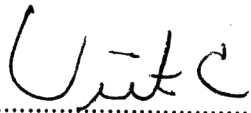
Pursuant to Sections 197-a and 197-d of the City Charter and on the basis of the Decision and Plan, the Council approves the Decision.

Page 2 of 2  
N 060096 NPM  
Res. No. 489 (L.U. No. 217)

Adopted.

Office of the City Clerk, }  
The City of New York, } ss.:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a Resolution passed by The Council of The City of New York on August 16, 2006, on file in this office.

  
.....  
City Clerk, Clerk of The Council



## Section 2

# City Planning Commission Report

City Planning Commission's consideration and resolution,  
dated July 12, 2006, approving the 197-a plan



## **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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July 12, 2006/Calendar No.10

N 060096 NPM

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**IN THE MATTER OF** a plan submitted by Manhattan Community Board 8 concerning the open spaces, parks and waterfront access in the Queensboro Bridge area of Community District 8, for consideration pursuant to Section 197-a of the New York City Charter. The proposed plan for adoption is called “The Manhattan Community Board 8 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area”.

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### **BACKGROUND**

In 2002 Manhattan Community Board 8 began an extensive public outreach process to develop its vision for the Queensboro Bridge area in a targeted plan called the *197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area*. Following a public hearing on March 9, 2005, the Board voted unanimously to approve the plan for review pursuant to Section 197-a of the New York City Charter. The plan was submitted to the Department of City Planning on August 23, 2005, in accordance with the City Planning Commission’s *Rules for the Processing of Plans Pursuant to Charter Section 197-a* (197-a rules).

### **PLAN DESCRIPTION**

The 197-a plan is intended to serve as a guide for the coordinated revitalization of the area around the Queensboro Bridge. The plan has recommendations for open space and waterfront access in the L-shaped area generally bounded by the East River, East 59<sup>th</sup> Street, Second Avenue, and the mid-block line between East 60<sup>th</sup> and East 61<sup>st</sup> streets. The area also includes blocks bounded by York Avenue from East 60<sup>th</sup> to East 63<sup>rd</sup> streets, and East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street from York Avenue to the East River. This area is dominated by the Queensboro Bridge, the Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) Drive and the Roosevelt Island Tram. Near these transportation features are a number of small open spaces ranging from well-used active recreation areas to underutilized

parks lacking amenities. Community District 8 is the most densely populated district in New York City and has a ratio of parkland per person well below the City average. The lack of parkland and open space is especially acute in the eastern and southern parts of the district which are relatively far from Central Park and have limited access to the East River waterfront. In the last 15 years, new residential and commercial development near the Queensboro Bridge area has intensified the need for public open space. Additional similar development is expected in the future.

## **Goals**

The plan's stated goals are to:

- Improve waterfront access, including links with the East River Esplanade;
- Provide improved connections between existing open space areas;
- Provide more street greenery with overall streetscape improvements;
- Create more open space, including dedicated park space and passive recreational facilities;
- Preserve views to and from the Queensboro Bridge and the waterfront; and
- Promote outreach and coordination with New York City agencies concerning the plan.

## **Recommendations**

### *New Waterfront Park*

- Create a new waterfront park in the area of the former heliport and Department of Sanitation (DOS) building on the East River between East 60<sup>th</sup> and East 63<sup>rd</sup> streets.
- Extend the East River Esplanade through the new park.
- Provide additional space for a variety of uses that could include a children's playground, landscaped seating areas, a seasonal cafe, and a restroom.
- Rehabilitate the former DOS building at East 60<sup>th</sup> Street, the roof of which is currently used for Pavilion Park, to allow for a variety of park-related uses.

- Utilize and improve the existing vehicular ramp/sidewalk at East 60<sup>th</sup> Street and York Avenue for pedestrian access to the park and limited vehicular access.

The plan notes that the former heliport site and the DOS building are currently being utilized for FDR reconstruction activities and that once reconstruction is completed, the area will be available for parkland. The New York City Economic Development Corporation, which currently owns the site, has made a commitment to make the site available for park use and to transfer jurisdiction to New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

#### *Existing Open Spaces*

- Improve Tramway Park, 14 Honey Locust Park and Pavilion Park through the provision of additional amenities, landscaping and enhanced designs.

Both Tramway Park and 14 Honey Locust Park are already slated for renovation by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

#### *Streetscapes*

- Provide decorative paving, street furniture, light posts and signage.
- Plant street trees at close intervals.
- Light the Queensboro Bridge to draw attention to the significant architectural elements.

Community Board 8 revised some of its original recommendations in response to concerns expressed by City Planning staff based on comments received from affected city agencies. On May 11, 2006 Community Board 8 deleted three recommendations: the relocation of the trolley kiosk on Bridge Plaza, the landscaping of Bridge Plaza and the landscaping alternative for the ramp from 14 Honey Locust Park to the Queensboro Bridge. Community Board 8 also provided five clarifications related to the location of facilities at Pavilion Park and the new waterfront



park; sidewalks adjacent to DOT property; decorative paving materials; railings; and the ramp treatment for the ramp from 14 Honey Locust Park to the Queensboro Bridge (see page 5A in the plan).

## **THRESHOLD REVIEW AND DETERMINATION**

Pursuant to Section 3.010 of the 197-a rules, Department staff conducted a threshold review of the plan's consistency with standards for form, content and sound planning policy. On November 14, 2005, the City Planning Commission determined that *The Manhattan Community Board 8 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area* complied with threshold standards for form, content and sound planning policy as set forth in Article 4 of the *Rules for Processing 197-a Plans*.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This application (N 060096 NPM) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et. seq. and the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The designated CEQR number is 06DCP063M. The lead is the City Planning Commission.

After a review of the potential environmental impact of the proposed action, a Negative Declaration was issued on January 9, 2006. It was determined that the 197-a plan would not, in itself, result in construction, funding, or approval of projects or changes in regulations by city

agencies nor does the 197-a plan advance or effectuate any change or activity that would trigger environmental impacts.

On January 9, 2006, the plan was duly referred to Manhattan Community Board 8 and the Manhattan Borough President for review and comment, in accordance with Article 6 of the *Rules for the Processing of Plan Pursuant to Charter Section 197-a*.

### **WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM CONSISTENCY**

This application (N 060096 NPM) was reviewed by the Department of City Planning for consistency with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program (WRP), as amended, approved by the New York City Council on October 13, 1999 and by the New York State Department of State on May 28, 2002, pursuant to the New York State Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act of 1981 (New York State Executive Law, Section 910 et. seq.) The designated WRP number is 06-001.

This action was determined to be consistent with the policies of the New York City Waterfront Revitalization Program.

### **COMMUNITY BOARD PUBLIC HEARING**

Community Board 8 waived a public hearing on the application, considering a prior public hearing, recommending approval of the plan, was held on March 9, 2005. A sponsor community board may waive their public hearing if one was held before the plan was filed, in accordance with Article 6, Section 6.020 of the *Rules for Processing 197-a Plans*.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT RECOMMENDATION**

This application (N 060096 NPM) was considered by the Manhattan Borough President, who issued a recommendation approving the application on April 19, 2006. The Borough President strongly supported the plan, stating that, “By planning carefully for a manageable area, Community Board 8 has focused its planning energy where it is likely to be able to have a tangible and immediate impact. This plan serves as a fine example for long-range planning that other communities can follow.”

## **CITY PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING**

On May 24, 2006 (Calendar No. 1), the City Planning Commission scheduled June 7, 2006, for a public hearing on this application (N 060096 NPM). The hearing was duly held on June 7, 2006 (Calendar No. 15). There were three speakers, all in favor of the 197-a plan.

The co-chairperson of the Community Board 8 197-a Plan Committee reviewed the purpose and major components of the plan, highlighting the unique opportunity to create new waterfront open space and extend the East River Esplanade. It was also mentioned that work had already begun on implementing the various recommendations of the plan through meetings with the involved City agencies, and that these meetings will continue.

A representative for the New York State Assemblyman of the 65<sup>th</sup> District endorsed the plan, supporting the need to add usable green space and waterfront access to Community District 8 and applauding the Community Board for their hard work.



The Director of Land Use for the Borough President praised the targeted recommendations of the plan, noting that the plan was manageable and achievable. The speaker echoed the Borough President's recommendation, saying that the plan was a model for other 197-a plans to follow and that the Borough President would continue to work with the community to ensure the successful implementation of the plan.

Written testimony was received from the Councilmember from the Fifth District, who strongly supported the plan. The Councilmember noted the need to increase the quantity and quality of open space and street greenery in Community District 8 and the area surrounding the Queensboro Bridge in particular.

## **CONSIDERATION**

The Commission has carefully reviewed and considered the *Manhattan Community Board 8 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area* as originally submitted by Manhattan Community Board 8 on August 23, 2005, and as modified by the Board on May 11, 2006. The Commission applauds the efforts of Community Board 8 in producing a well-written, carefully considered targeted plan, in coordinating closely with affected city agencies, and in reaching a consensus within the community on an approach to public open spaces. The Commission believes that the plan will provide a sound policy framework to guide future planning, design and implementation efforts in keeping with the purpose and intent of 197-a plans. The Commission notes the Board's successful efforts to work collaboratively with involved city agencies, identify funding and obtain necessary commitments, evaluate the feasibility of specific components of the plan, and to develop detailed design alternatives.

The Commission agrees with the plan's goals for creating substantial new waterfront open space at the site of the former heliport and DOS building. The proposed waterfront park reflects objectives identified in the Department's Greenway Plan for New York City and the New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan by extending the East River Esplanade south to East 60<sup>th</sup> Street. The creation of a new waterfront park would provide a needed public waterfront destination in the southern portion of Community District 8 and has the potential to invigorate the entire area surrounding the Queensboro Bridge.

The Commission finds the 197-a plan noteworthy in that elements of it are already being advanced. Portions of the plan – the renovation of Tramway Park – have already begun, while other parts of the plan – the rehabilitation of 14 Honey Locust Park – have funding in place and will be rehabilitated in consultation with the Community Board. In addition, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has agreed to make the former heliport site available for park use after completion of the FDR reconstruction, an essential step toward making the proposed waterfront park a reality.

With respect to the feasibility of specific design proposals in the plan, the Commission notes that Community Board 8 recognizes that the design proposals in its plan are intended to be representative, and actual plans will evolve as detailed planning and design work moves forward.

The Commission notes that on May 11, 2006, in response to comments received from interested city agencies, Community Board 8 revised its plan to provide further clarification and remove untenable recommendations. Specifically, in response to Department of Transportation's

objections to three recommendations (the relocation of the trolley kiosk on Bridge Plaza, the landscaping of Bridge Plaza and the landscaping alternative for the ramp from 14 Honey Locust Park to the Queensboro Bridge), CB 8 has deleted these recommendations from the plan. The Commission believes the revisions do not impact the goals or objectives embodied in the plan.

## **RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant effect on the environment; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the City Planning Commission, in its capacity as the City Coastal Commission, has reviewed the waterfront aspects of this application and finds that the proposed action will be consistent with WRP policies, and be it further

**RESOLVED**, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Section 197-a of the New York City Charter, that the 197-a plan, *The Manhattan Community Board 8 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area*, submitted by Manhattan Community Board 8, is approved.

The above resolution (N 060096 NPM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 12, 2006 (Calendar No. 10), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.



**AMANDA M. BURDEN, AICP Chair**

**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, Esq., Vice Chairman**

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ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, JANE D. GOL, LISA A. GOMEZ, CHRISTOPHER KUI, JOHN  
MEROLO, DOLLY WILLIAMS, Commissioners**



# Section 3

## Community Board's Proposed 197-a Plan

as submitted August 2005 and modified May 2006

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**197-A PLAN  
FOR  
THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE AREA**

**COMMUNITY BOARD 8  
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
NEW YORK CITY**



Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

August 2005

**197-A PLAN  
FOR  
THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE AREA**

**BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
NEW YORK CITY**

Prepared for:

Manhattan Community Board 8

Prepared with the assistance of

Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

August 2005

*This document is being submitted by Community Board 8 as a community sponsored plan under Section 197-a of the City Charter.*

## **CREDITS**

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#### ***197-a Committee***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area

Over the past twenty years numerous studies and plans have considered the enhancement of open space areas around the Queensboro Bridge and improvement of waterfront access, but a comprehensive vision for the area has never been clearly articulated (see Figure 1). Recognizing this need for a coordinated plan to guide the revitalization of the Queensboro Bridge Area, Community Board 8 passed a resolution authorizing a 197-a Plan in September of 2002. Since that time the Community Board's 197-a Committee has worked to gain consensus on a vision for the future of the area and develop a plan that will serve as a framework for the realization of that vision. Working with Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc. (BFJ Planning), Community Board 8 Board has prepared this 197-a Plan for acceptance by the City Planning Commission and City Council to guide future actions of City agencies in the Queensboro Bridge area.

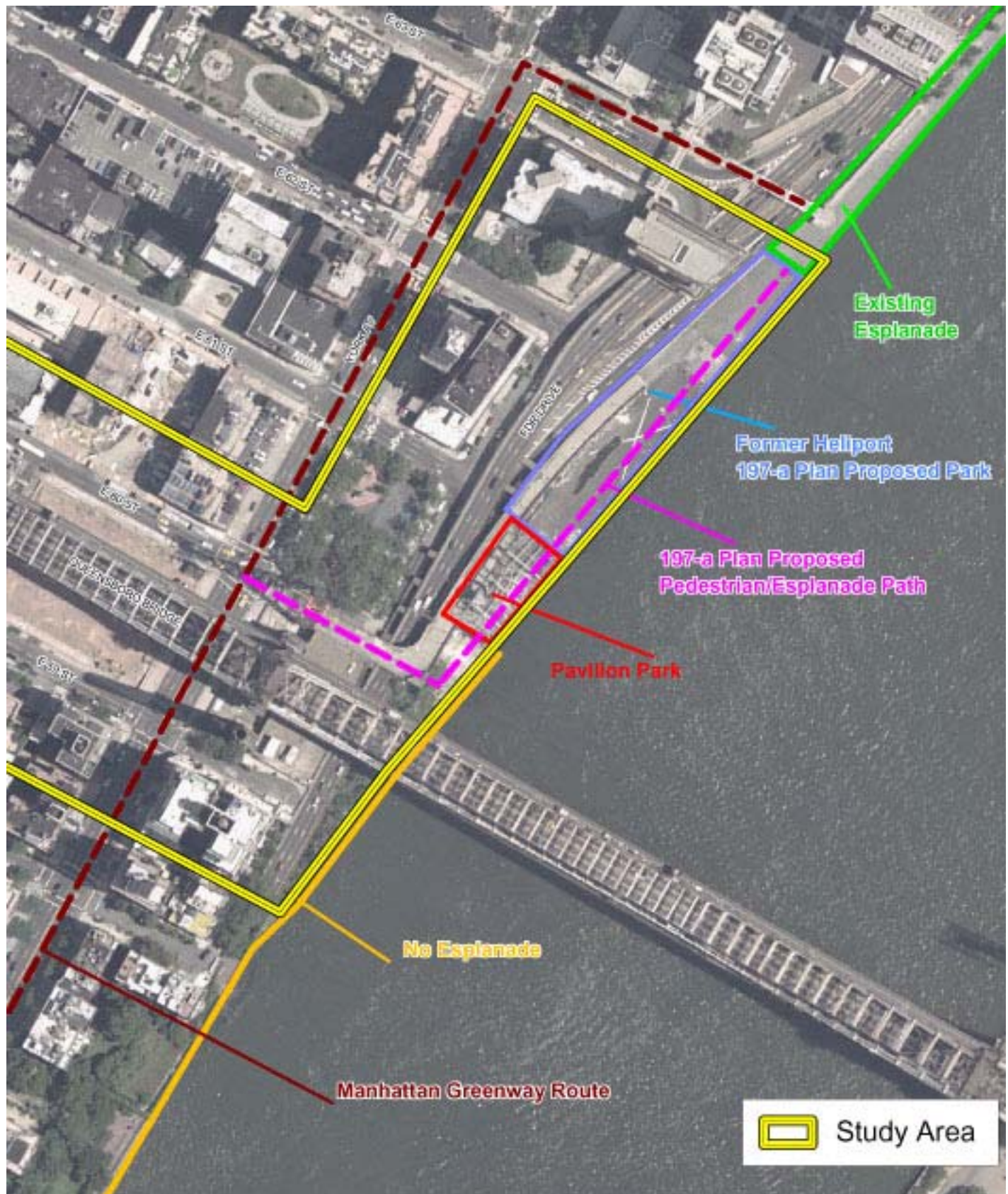
The boundaries of the study area include the East River waterfront to the east, the Roosevelt Island Tramway Station and Second Avenue to the west, 59th Street to the south, 61st Street to the north, and a section of the East River promenade between 59th and 63rd Streets. Land uses in this area include medium and high-density residential development, retail, restaurant and office space, auto-related uses, and open space and waterfront areas.

Currently the area in the vicinity of the Bridge has relatively little open space, limited access to the waterfront and lacks street greenery. As Community Board 8 comprises one of the most densely populated residential areas in the City, its parks and open spaces are highly valued resources. Today the ratio of park acres to residents in the area is only 0.60 acres per 1,000 persons (including 10% of Central Park). This is far below the City average of 3.82 acres per 1,000 persons. Addressing this issue and enhancing waterfront access are central objectives of this 197-a Plan. The specific goals of the Plan are to:

- Improve waterfront access, including links with the esplanade;
- Provide improved connections between existing open space areas;
- Provide more street greenery with overall streetscape improvements;
- Create more open space, including dedicated park space and passive recreational facilities;
- Preserve views to and from the Queensboro Bridge and the waterfront; and
- Enhance outreach and coordination with New York City agencies.

In order to establish a framework for the realization of these goals, this Plan analyzes existing conditions and issues in the area, including land use, open space, streetscapes, transportation, and zoning, describing what the Queensboro Bridge Area is like today and making recommendations for improvements that will provide for enhancement of its waterfront, open spaces, and streetscapes in the future.





# 197-a PLAN Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8



BFI Planning

August 2005

Figure 1: Queensboro Bridge Area

Source: NYC Department of City Planning



## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview of New York City 197-a Plan Process

Section 197-a of the New York City Charter authorizes community boards and borough boards, along with the Mayor, the City Planning Commission (the "Commission"), the Department of City Planning ("DCP"), and the Borough President, to sponsor plans for the development, growth, and improvement of the city, its boroughs and communities. Once approved by the Commission and adopted by the City Council, 197-a plans guide future actions of city agencies in the areas addressed in the plans. Although the Charter allows for citywide and borough wide 197-a plans sponsored by various entities, the 197-a process has generated the most interest at the community or neighborhood level.

Review of 197-a plans occurs in two stages:

- 1) Threshold review is conducted by the Department of City Planning and the City Planning Commission to ensure that a plan is complete and properly documented before it is reviewed on its merits.
- 2) Substantive review is then conducted whereby the Borough President, City Planning Commission and City Council consider the plan's objectives, policies and proposals and comment on the plan. City agencies have the opportunity to provide comments on the plan to the community board, Borough President and City Planning. The Borough President then submits its recommendations to the City Planning Commission.

### 1.2 Study Area Location

The Queensboro Bridge study area encompasses the Manhattan side of the Bridge, and includes its associated roadways, sidewalks, riverfront space, parks, and the tramway landing<sup>(1)\*</sup>. The study area is bounded by the East River waterfront to the east<sup>(2)</sup>, the Roosevelt Island tramway station in Tramway Park and Second Avenue to the west, 59th Street to the south, and 61st Street to the north. The study area also includes a section of the East River promenade between 59th and 63rd Streets (see Figure 2).



(1) View looking west from Queensboro Bridge



(2) East River and FDR, looking South

\* Numbers in parentheses refer to accompanying photographs





197-a PLAN  
Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8

Figure 2: Study Area Location

Source: NYC Department of City Planning



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August 2005



Land uses surrounding the study area include a mix of residential, commercial and institutional uses, parkland, garages and parking. Residential uses include mid-rise buildings and tenements, as well as high-rise apartment buildings<sup>(3)</sup>. Directly south of the bridge is the Sutton Place residential neighborhood and south of that, the United Nations complex. To the north of the Bridge and west of York Avenue is another residential neighborhood. Several major medical and research institutions, including The New York Presbyterian Hospital, Rockefeller University, the Animal Medical Center, the Hospital for Special Surgery, and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, are located north of the study area, between First Avenue and the East River. Further to the west is the midtown commercial district, which includes offices and shopping along the Avenues (Figure 3).

### 1.3 Goals and Objectives

This 197-a Plan has been prepared to address open space, waterfront access, and related issues for the Queensboro Bridge Area. The area in the vicinity of the Queensboro Bridge has relatively little open space and limited access to the waterfront, and is notably lacking in street greenery<sup>(4)</sup>. Since Manhattan Community District 8 is one of the most densely populated residential areas in the city, its parks and open spaces are highly valued resources. However, the ratio of park acres per 1,000 persons in Community Board 8 (including 10 percent of Central Park) is only 0.60 acres per 1,000 persons, which is far below the City average of 3.82. Proposed, potential and active development projects in or adjacent to the study area will add additional population in the next ten years.

Since 1986, several studies and plans, summarized in Appendix B, have considered the enhancement of open space areas around the Bridge, preservation of views, and improvement of waterfront access, and also proposed the creation of a comprehensive open space plan for a "gateway park." In 2002, Community Board 8 passed a resolution authorizing a 197-a plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area to help guide the city in its attempts to revitalize the area.



*(3) Residential uses South of 59th Street*



*(4) View of Tramway and Bridge from Second Avenue*



The renovation of the FDR Drive is scheduled for completion in April 2007 at which time the former heliport site will no longer be needed as a detour for the FDR Drive. According to the Department of City Planning, the site will not be returned to heliport use and Community Board 8 is using this unique window of opportunity to express its vision for this last gem of waterfront property in the District. This 197-a Plan seeks to improve and regenerate precious and vastly underutilized waterfront and open spaces. The overall objectives include the enhancement of existing recreational areas, park space, and the creation of improved connections to the waterfront.

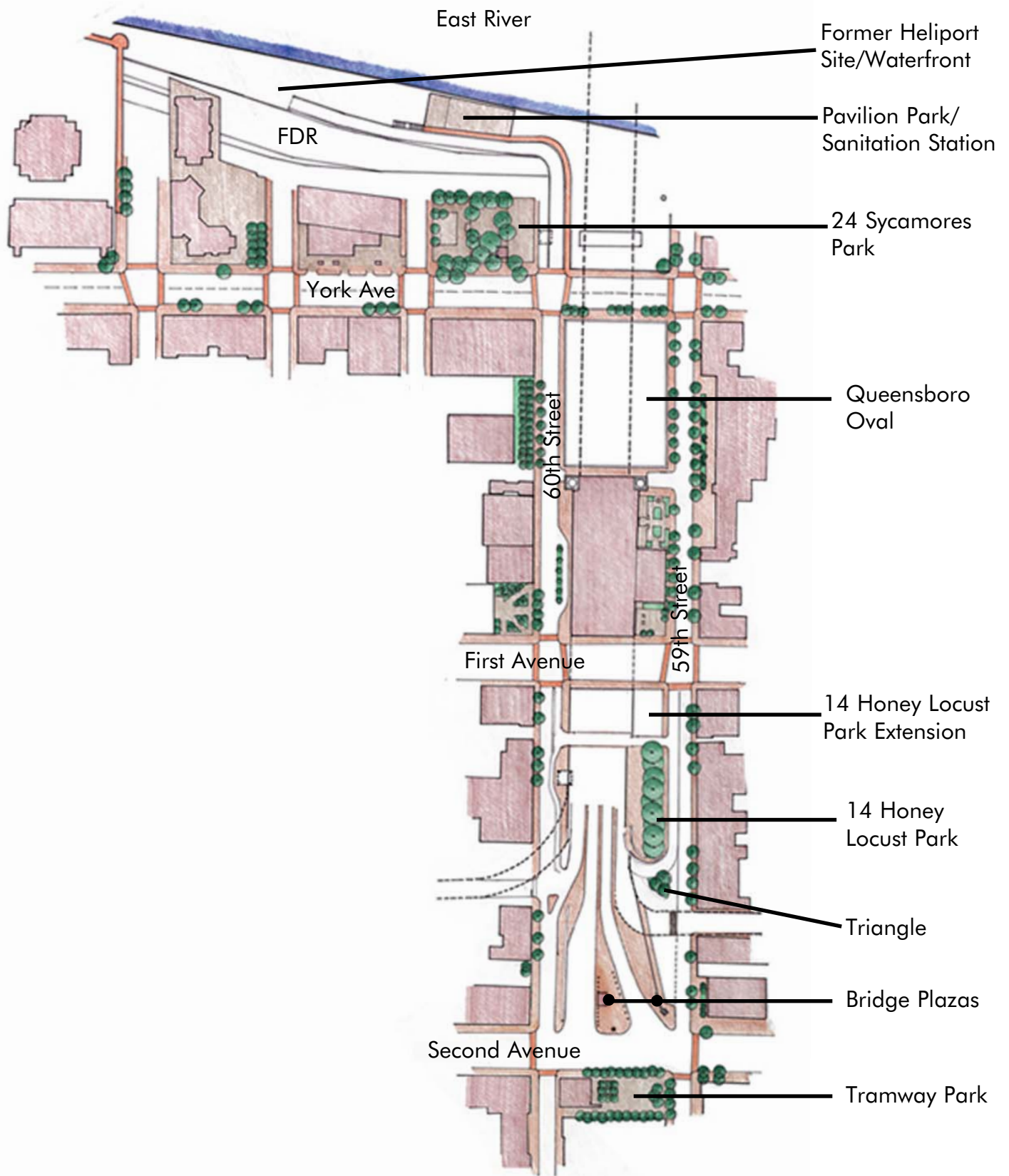
The basic goals of the 197-a Plan are the following:

- Improve waterfront access, including links with the esplanade
- Provide improved connections between existing open space areas
- Provide more street greenery with overall streetscape improvements
- Create more open space, including dedicated park space and passive recreational facilities
- Preserve views to and from the Queensboro Bridge and the waterfront
- Outreach and coordination with New York City agencies concerning the Plan

Two key features to be focused on are the former Heliport Site from 59th to 63rd Streets along the East River, and the entrance to Bridge Plaza at Second Avenue<sup>(5)</sup>. The former heliport site on the waterfront is under the jurisdiction of the NYC Economic Development Corporation. The permanent closing of the Heliport Site provides an opportunity to create a waterfront park connecting to the esplanade to the north, and reduce the isolation of the former Sanitation Station at 60th Street and the East River. These aspects of the Plan also address the gaps in the East River Esplanade, part of the larger Manhattan Waterfront Greenway.



*(5) Bridge Plaza at Second Avenue*



# 197-a PLAN

Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8



0 250 500 ft

BFJ Planning

August 2005

Figure 3: Study Area Features

## 1.4 Overview of the 197-a Plan Study Area

The dramatic span of the Queensboro Bridge and the open space setting of the East River are key features of the study area<sup>(6)</sup>. In addition to the Bridge providing vehicular access to Queens, the area includes other major transportation elements: the FDR Drive and the aerial tram along the north side of the Bridge, crossing the East River to Roosevelt Island.

The study area's East River waterfront provides expansive views to the western edge of Roosevelt Island and the Queens waterfront beyond. Open space, recreational, transportation and commercial areas in the study area include Tramway Park, an open plaza with the Roosevelt Island Tram Station, the bridge entrance plaza areas, the triangle just west of 14 Honey Locust Park, 14 Honey Locust Park along 59th Street between First and Second Avenues, the Honey Locust Park extension at 59th Street and First Avenue, a Little League ballfield and tennis bubble, also known as "Queensboro Oval," under the Bridge along York Avenue and 24 Sycamores Park, just north of the bridge, between York Avenue and FDR Drive. Pavilion Park is located over the FDR Drive, off 60th Street, with impressive views of the East River. The proposed park for the former heliport site, overlooks the waterfront just east of Pavilion Park. Bridgemarket, a retail center with a food market, furniture store and restaurant, is located in the space beneath the Bridge between York and First Avenue.



(6) View across East River from Pavilion Park



## CHAPTER 2 DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

### 2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Queensboro Bridge Study Area was the site of country manors and farms in the 18th century. Industrial uses were later added to the area, including Youle's Shot Tower, built in 1823, at East 58th Street along the East River<sup>(7)</sup>, and gas tanks built north of the Bridge in 1935<sup>(8)</sup>. The small inlet in front of the tower provided a landing place for boats conveying prisoners and hospital patients to the Charity Hospital, Alms-House, Work-House, and other institutions on Blackwell's Island across the River. With the establishment of new transportation lines, including the New York and Harlem Railroad along Fourth Avenue in the 1830s, and a horse-drawn trolley system along Second Avenue in the 1850s, residential development in this waterfront area expanded. During the post Civil War era, into the 1870s, a number of industries, including those that needed water transportation, were established along the East River, with early tenements and shanty towns established to accommodate the workers.

Steadily increasing river traffic led to studies for a bridge connection between Manhattan and Queens. As early as 1838, a multi-span suspension bridge linking the East Side of Manhattan with Queens was proposed over Blackwell's Island (now Roosevelt Island), with initial designs, including one by John Roebling in 1856. Eventually, the City decided to build the bridge, and the Queensboro Bridge, designed by Henry Hornbostel and engineer Gustav Lindenthal, finally opened for traffic in 1909<sup>(9)</sup> as the longest cantilever bridge in the country. The heavy steel towers and frame rest on stone piers, with Beaux-Arts-style granite components. The Bridge was designated a National Landmark in 1973. The cast iron and terra cotta trolley kiosk located at the Bridge Plaza area was once part of the Queensboro Bridge Railway Company Trolley. Trolley service began in 1909, after the opening of the Bridge. The trolley line ran alongside the Bridge to as far east as Astoria. Bus service to Queens replaced the trolleys in 1957.



(7) Youle's Shot Tower: 1844 Painting



(8) Gas Tanks north of Queensboro Bridge, 1935

The construction of the Queensboro Bridge in 1909 required the demolition of numerous older dwellings in the area to accommodate the Manhattan portion of the Bridge structure and accessory roadways. In the following decades In the following decades Rockefeller University, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Hospital for Special Surgery, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and the Animal Medical Center were built along York Avenue between East 62nd and 72nd Streets, attracting doctors and other professionals to the area. With the demolition of the elevated subway lines in the 1940s and 1950s, the area had become a more desirable residential neighborhood. Apartment towers have replaced many older tenement structures in the vicinity of the Bridge east of Second Avenue.



*(9) Queensboro Bridge under Construction, 1908*

Other key developments impacting the study area include:

- **The Roosevelt Island Tramway.** Built by the Swiss company Vonroll under designers Prentice & Chan and Ohlhausen in 1976, and run by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, the tramway is the only commuter cable car in North America. Access to the tramway occurs via the elevated ticket office at Tramway Park, on the west side of Second Avenue at 60th Street<sup>(10)</sup>.
- **Pavilion Park.** This 12,000-square foot roof-top space, created as part of the City's 1980s water front revitalization program, was built at the site of the former sanitation station with funding provided by New York Hospital, Rockefeller University, and the Hospital for Special Surgery as part of the mitigation for their use of the air rights over the FDR<sup>(11)</sup>. In 1995 Alice Aycock's aluminum helix "East River Roundabout" sculpture was attached to the Pavilion's skeletal steel roof supports. The park is currently used mostly by dog owners who utilize the north section of the park.
- **Bridgemarket.** Upscale retail and restaurant uses under the elevated Queensboro Bridge structure between First and Second Avenues opened in 2000.
- **FDR Highway Reconstruction.** The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) began work on the FDR Drive Reconstruction Project from 54th to 63rd Street in December 2002 to rehabilitate that portion of the 60-year old highway. Work included repaving the at-grade (lower level) portion on the FDR Drive between 54th and 56th Streets, safety improvements to correct roadway geometry including a new acceleration lane at the 63rd Street entrance, new drainage, signage and lighting systems. Highway reconstruction is to be completed in Spring 2007. To accommodate this construction project, NYSDOT constructed a temporary Outboard Detour Roadway (ODR) in the East River adjacent to the FDR Drive between 56th and 63rd Streets, to replace the travel lanes that will be closed during the FDR reconstruction.



(10) Tramway ticket office at Tramway Park



(11) View of Pavilion Park looking North

## CHAPTER 3 EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES

### 3.1 Land Uses

#### *Surrounding Area*

Uses surrounding the study area include a number of significant institutional and commercial buildings as well as larger scale high-rise residential development (Figure 4). In summary these uses include:

**Institutional Uses.** Several major medical and research institutions, including the New York Presbyterian Hospital, the Hospital for Special Surgery, Rockefeller University, the the Animal Medical Center and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center are located north of the study area, from 62nd Street north, along First and York Avenues and the East River.

**Commercial Uses.** The majority of commercial space in the immediate vicinity of the study area consists of local neighborhood retail. Larger retail stores in the study area include Conrans, Bed Bath & Beyond and Guastavino. There are other large retailers (including Bloomingdales) located west of the study area along Third and Lexington Avenues, as well as several movie theaters. Further to the west and the south is the mid-town commercial district.

**Residential Uses.** Residential uses include mid-rise and high-rise apartment buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Bridge. Older residential areas include Sutton Place located to the south.

**Transportation Features.** In addition to the Queensboro Bridge, the study area includes additional transportation infrastructure providing local and regional access to and from the east side of Manhattan, including the FDR ("East River") Drive<sup>(12)</sup>. The north-south Second, First and York Avenue buses and the Roosevelt Island Tramway serve the study area.



(12) View south from 59th Street showing FDR Drive detour roadway





Bridge Exit at 59th Street



Guastavino's Restaurant



Bridgemarket



FDR Drive at the Queensboro Bridge



## Study Area

Land uses within the study area include medium- and high density residential development dispersed among a mix of commercial, retail, office, automotive and light industrial uses. The area also includes parks and open space, historic buildings and community facilities (see Figure 5).

### Residential Uses

The residential buildings in the study area range in age, height, and style. The residences along 59th Street between Second Avenue and York Avenue are predominately high rise luxury brick, steel, and glass towers<sup>(13)</sup>. The high rises often have adjoining parking garages, plazas and open spaces. The Landmark, Sovereign, and the Grand Sutton, which has a residential plaza of 2,612.50 square feet, are luxury high rise apartments, located on 59th Street and Second Avenue and First and York Avenues respectively; smaller tenement style five to six-story mixed-use walk ups are scattered between York and 2nd Avenues.

North of the Queensboro Bridge are several residential buildings dispersed around the entrance of the bridge. These include a high rise at 440 East 62nd Street off York Avenue, the Solow Tower made of glass, several towers owned by Rockefeller University, and the 38-story Bridge Tower Place which is enveloped with bold glass facades and light and dark color contrasts and has a 6,736 square foot residential plaza that encompasses two sides of the building<sup>(14)</sup>. There are two isolated sets of tenement walk ups north west of the bridge along 60th Street between York and Second Avenues, and modern high-rise buildings at 401 East 60th Street and the Evansview at 303 East 60th Street, which has a 4,316 square foot residential plaza in front of the building.

### Commercial/ Retail and Office Uses

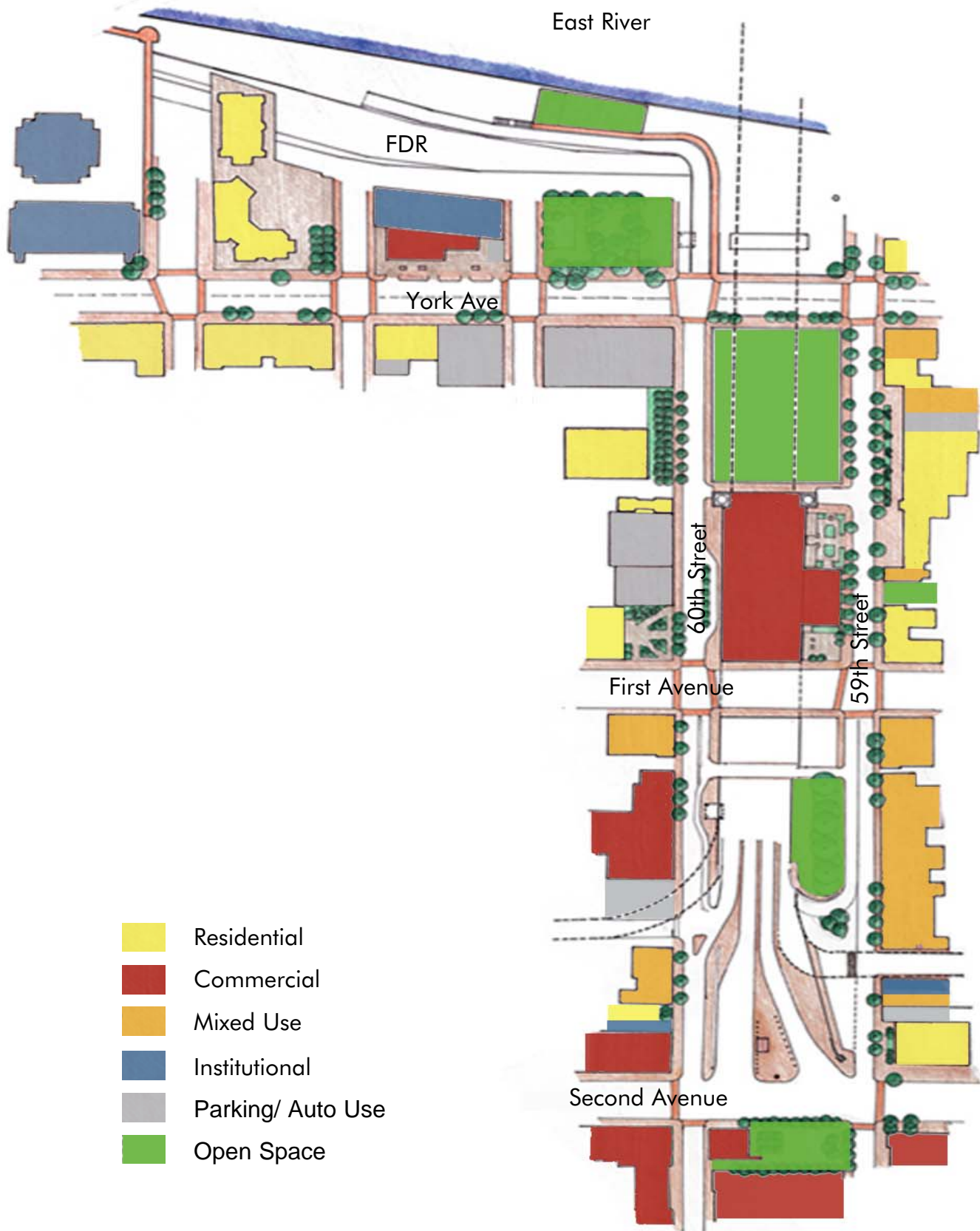
The Queensboro Bridge area contains a variety of commercial/retail and office uses at the street level. Local retail stores continuously line First and Second Avenues primarily on the ground floor with residential uses above. Such uses include doctors' offices and the



(13) Residential development on 59th Street between First and Second Avenues



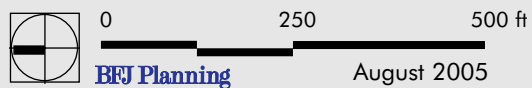
(14) Bridge Tower Place on north side of Bridge



- Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Institutional
- Parking/ Auto Use
- Open Space

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Figure 5: Land Uses

Humane Society of New York, The Strive Fitness Center, as well as home furnishing retailers offering antiques, chandeliers, tiles, and stone furnishings. Existing retail shops provide basic services for area residents, including restaurants and food related stores (delicatessens and small markets), clothing stores such as Betsy Johnson on 60th between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, an early childhood pre-school, newsstands, dry cleaning and laundry services. The Bridgemarket consists of recently opened upscale food and home emporiums and a restaurant located on 59th Street between First and York Avenues<sup>(15)</sup>. It includes a privately leased, publicly accessible open space plaza in front of Food Emporium and the Terence Conran Shop, and a large open green space in front of Guastavino's Restaurant on East 59th Street. A multi-story movie theater complex is located at First Avenue and East 62nd Street.



*(15) Bridgemarket - view from 59th Street*

The study area also includes Bed Bath & Beyond and an office building situated on East 61st and East 62nd streets between York and First Avenues. A former mid-rise office building, located on the east side of York between East 61st and East 62nd streets has been converted into the Bentley Hotel adjacent to the Animal Medical Center.

### **Automotive-Related and Light Industrial Uses**

Besides parking garages adjoining several area luxury apartment buildings, automotive-related uses predominate in the vicinity of York to Second Avenue, East 60th to East 61st streets. The uses are typically contained in low-rise brick buildings. A portion of this automotive district (a large part of the block bounded by First and York Avenues and East 60th and 61st streets) was rezoned to permit a mixed-use development.

### **Parkland**

Mapped parkland in the area includes Tramway Park between 59th and 60th Streets at Second Avenue and 24 Sycamores Park between 60th and 61st Streets at York Avenue. These parks and other open spaces in the area are described in Section 3.2.



### 3.2 Open Spaces

A number of small-scale parks and open space areas exist within the study area, with the former heliport site along the East River and associated Pavilion Park representing the key (and presently underutilized) major recreation resources for the area. Following is a brief description of these open space areas, shown in Figures 6 and 7. (A detailed description of the status of public and open space projects and this Plan's recommendations for those areas is provided in Appendix D.)

- **Tramway Park.** This block-wide park, between 59th and 60th Streets on the west side of Second Avenue, will undergo major renovation in 2005. At present this fully paved space is overwhelmed by the activity of passing traffic and generally presents an uninviting image.
- **Bridge Plaza Area.** Two small plaza areas exist adjacent to the entry and exit ramps from Second Avenue. Without pedestrian access, they represent isolated but very visible open areas due to their "gateway" location for the bridge. The central triangular space includes the historic trolley kiosk, located close to the edge of the exit roadway from the bridge. (Due to its location, the kiosk has been damaged in the past and the structure continues to be threatened with additional damage from passing traffic).
- **59th Street Triangle.** Although acting as a traffic island adjacent to the on-ramp between First and Second Avenues on 59th Street, this small space contains three trees which form a positive element in the local streetscape.
- **14 Honey Locust Park.** Located along the south side of the bridge, this park contains an attractive line of Honey Locust trees<sup>(16)</sup>. Now largely unused, the park is planned for restoration upon completion of the bridge renovation program and/or the proposed water tunnel shaft in 2012.
- **14 Honey Locust Park Extension.** This area extends eastward from 14 Honey Locust Park to First Avenue. NYCDOT intends to retain this space for parking and service uses once the bridge renovation is complete<sup>(17)</sup>.



(16) 14 Honey Locust Park



(17) Honey Locust Park Extension

- **Queensboro Oval.** A recreation area located under the bridge structure on the west side of York Avenue. The site is used as a softball field during the summer and is enclosed with a "bubble" for use as tennis courts in winter.
- **24 Sycamores Park.** This park is located adjacent to the north side of the bridge on York Avenue, and includes active recreation facilities including play ground equipment and ball courts<sup>(18)</sup>.
- **Pavilion Park.** This paved upper-level space is located above the former Department of Sanitation building. Pedestrian access is available via a ramp at 60th Street and a stairway leading down to the former heliport site to the north. A prominent outdoor sculpture by Alice Aycock is located on the framed structure above the park<sup>(19)</sup>.
- **Former Heliport Site.** Much of this site is currently utilized as a temporary detour road for north bound traffic on the FDR Drive. With the removal of heliport uses, the area represents an opportunity to expand the East River park and esplanade to the south, adding to the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway.

### 3.3 Streetscapes

Although the 59th Street and 60th Street streetscapes are dominated by the attractive stone-faced structure of the Queensboro Bridge, both corridors present a generally fragmented and unappealing image for the pedestrian<sup>(20)</sup>. In large part this is due to the transportation elements that interrupt sidewalks and block views along the street corridors. In particular the on and off ramps (at two levels) between Second and First Avenues create major obstacles for pedestrian movement and to the East-West views. Street planting is inconsistent throughout the study area (Figure 8). Few trees exist along streets between Second and First Avenues, although to the east, new plantings associated with recent residential development (such as Bridge Tower Place) and the Bridgemarket have upgraded the quality of the local streetscape.



(18) 24 Sycamores Park

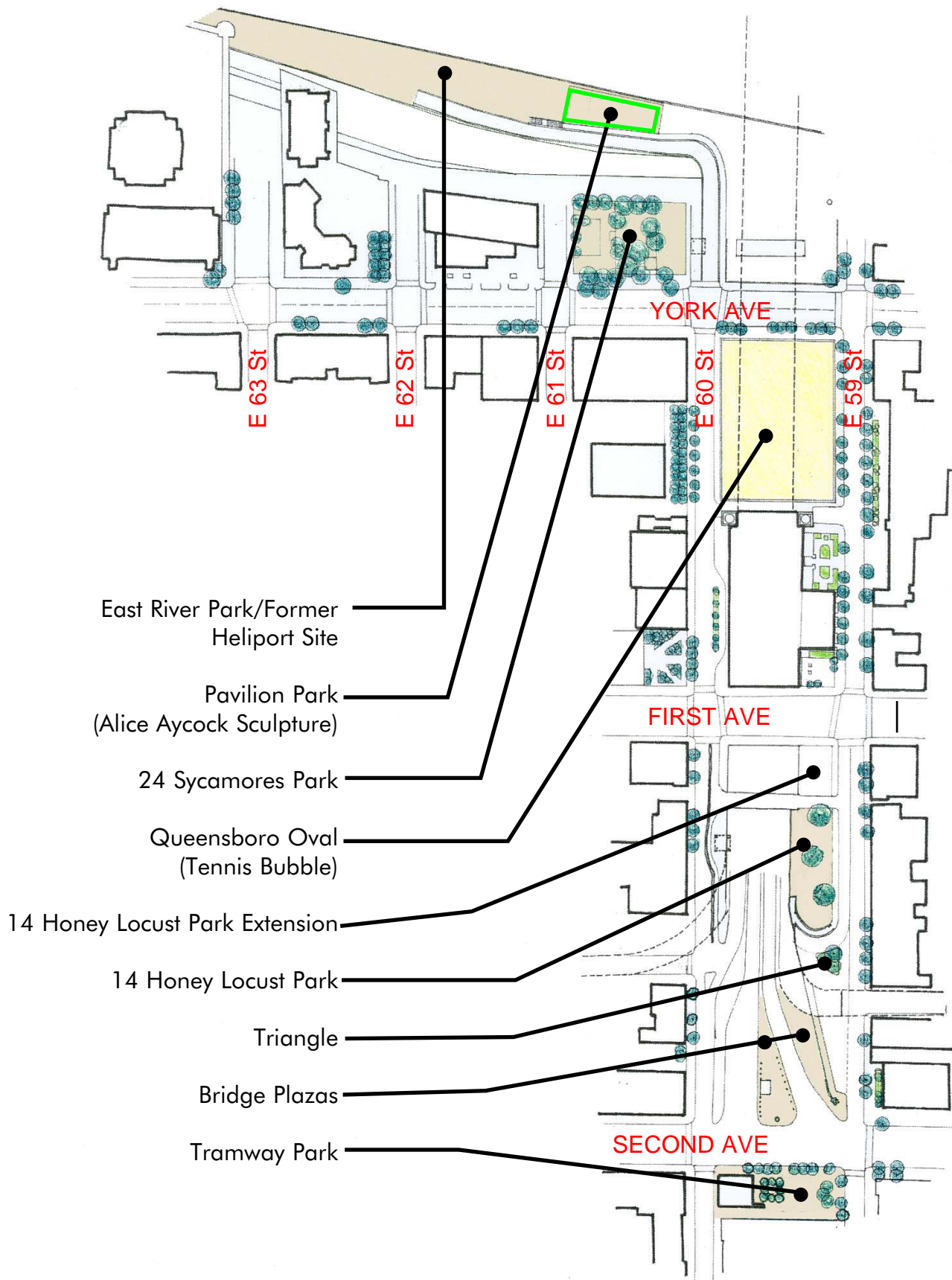


(19) Pavilion Park and Alice Aycock Sculpture



(20) View of 60th street looking west





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Figure 6: Existing Open Space

Existing Open Space





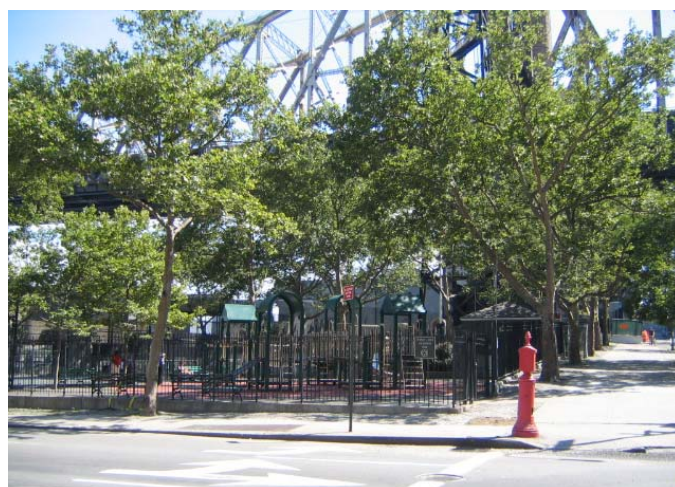
Tramway Park



Bridge Plaza



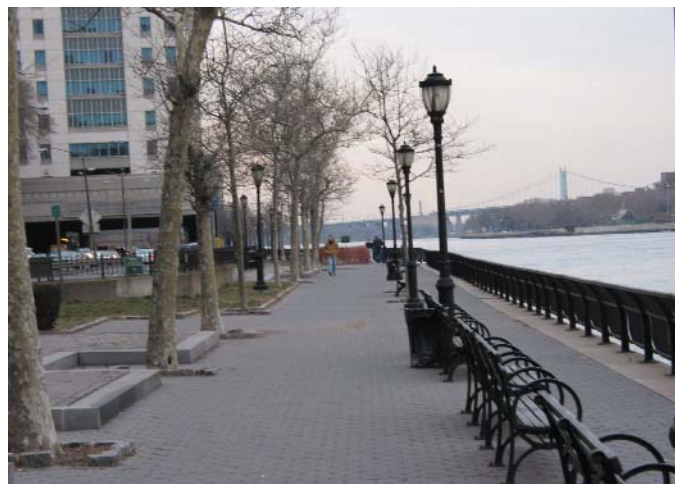
14 Honey Locust Park



24 Sycamores Park



Pavilion Park



East River Esplanade

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Figure 7: Views of Existing Open Space





60th Street looking west



Bridgemarket on 60th Street



Landscape treatment on north side of 60th Street



59th Street at First Avenue



Pedestrian access from 60th Street ramp



View of 60th Street from bridge

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**Figure 8: Views of Existing Streetscapes**



Attractive street furnishing and details are lacking in the area<sup>(21)</sup>. Existing tree surrounds and tree pits lack any consistent design treatment and a number of trees are in poor condition. Lighting poles consist of traditional highway-scaled cobra fixtures and present a poor image when seen against the historic stone detailing of the bridge structure.

### 3.4 Transportation

#### Road Network

Much of the study area is devoted to transportation uses with the FDR Drive and the Queensboro Bridge as the major roadway elements. Both the drive and the bridge are undergoing extensive renovation and improvement. The need for temporary northbound lanes for the FDR Drive necessitated the construction of two temporary outboard lanes that pass under Pavilion Park, through the rear portion of the former sanitation station. The Queensboro Bridge, a major arterial, terminates at Second Avenue between East 59th and East 60th Streets. The bridge, which connects to the borough of Queens, breaks the regular street pattern. The entrance and exit ramps to and from the upper roadway of the bridge divide the blocks between East 60th and East 63rd Streets to the north of the bridge and the blocks between East 59th and East 57th Streets to the south of the bridge.

The key transportation issue within the study area concerns the traffic congestion and public safety, within the 59th and 60th Street area at Second Avenue, related to the entrance and exits to and from the bridge. Second Avenue serves as a local truck route between uptown and downtown Manhattan and also as a major south-bound bus route (M15). The Avenue consists of five moving lanes, one bus lane, and one parking lane, although the segment between East 59th and East 60th Streets has no parking lane due to the exit/entrance to the Queensboro Bridge.

The heavy traffic on Second Avenue and traffic exiting from the bridge to 60th Street results in the need for pedestrians to take special care in crossing these streets. Foot traffic is also heavy at these intersections given that no pedestrian access is allowed on the east side of Second Avenue between the north side of 60th Street and the south side of 59th Street.



*(21) View of 59th Street looking west*

## Bus Service

The study area is well served by bus routes operated by MTA Bus. These routes include the Q60 and Q101, which operate between Queens and Manhattan via Queensboro Bridge and terminate in the vicinity of East 60th Street and Second Avenues, and the M15 and M31 on First, Second and York Avenues. York Avenue also includes Manhattan Express Bus service (Route X90). In addition, the area is served by the privately operated Command and Green bus lines<sup>(22)</sup>.

## 3.5 Zoning Context

The existing zoning for the Bridge and immediately surrounding streets is commercial (C8-4 district), with a small manufacturing (M3-2) zone at the eastern edge where the Con Edison plant is located. At the entrance to the Queensboro Bridge is a C2-8 district within a Special Transit Land Use District (TA) (see Figure 9).

The C8-4 zoning district permits warehouse and commercial use up to a floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 5 and is usually mapped along major traffic arteries as a transition between commercial and manufacturing areas. It should be noted that C8-4 districts do not allow residential uses, but do allow Use Group 4 community facilities up to an FAR of 6.5. In the Queensboro Bridge area the C8-4 zone serves as a transition area between residential neighborhoods adjacent to the study area and the area's vehicular arteries: the Queensboro Bridge and the FDR Drive<sup>(23)</sup>.

The south side of 59th Street is zoned C1-9, R8 and R10 with a C2-5 overlay in the residential districts. The north side between York and 1st Avenues and 60th and 61st Streets are C4-7 and C6-3 districts, which allow a mix of commercial, community facility, and residential uses. The other areas on the north side of 60th Street are zoned C8-4. This zoning allows for a wide range of commercial and retail uses. The C6-3 zoning found along 60th Street between York Avenue and First Avenue is designed for general commercial districts outside central business districts and permits a wide range of commercial uses. The C2-5 zoning found on the south side of 59th Street allows for a wide range of local retail and service establishments. High-density residential zones (R8, R9, R10) are located to the north and south.



(22) Bus traffic at 60th Street and Second Avenue



### 3.6 Existing Resources

Capital funding has been made available for the restoration of many of the parcels in the plan area and maintenance funds are available for many of the sites. Funding sources include elected officials, mitigation for building on the re-zoned former "Glick" site through an agreement between the City and a developer, NYC Department of Design and Construction, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Hospital for Special Surgery and Rockefeller University (see Appendix E). The Municipal Art Society also maintains a fund for the maintenance of the Alice Aycock sculpture on top of Pavilion Park. \*

\* "Glick" Development Site Restrictive Declaration

As part of a zoning change (860117 ZMM) to Block 1455, Lots 1, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, and 46 (located between E. 60th Street, E. 61st Street, 1st Avenue and York Avenue) from C8-4 to C4-7, C6-2 and C6-3, the CPC required open space mitigations tied to the development of the site. The original mitigations, outlined in a restrictive declaration dated November 14, 1988, were never completed. Instead, the restrictive declaration was modified in recent years as new owners developed the site. The modifications include monetary contributions to a fund set up by the Parks Department for improvements and maintenance of open spaces (the Overall Open Space Program). Selection of specific elements of the Overall Open Space Program were/are to be made by Parks Department in consultation with representatives of Community Board 8 and any other agencies or officials with whom the Parks Department elects to consult for that purpose.

Agreement Between NYC & New York Hospital, Hospital for Special Surgery, & Rockefeller University  
Third Amendment to Agreement Dated March 22, 1973, amended March 17, 1993

The third amendment to the original agreement requires that the institutions improve, maintain, and provide public access to open spaces along the East River Esplanade in exchange for being allowed to build over the FDR Drive. The improvements relevant to the CB8 197-a Plan included:

- Construction of the 60th Street Pavilion by New York Hospital, including commissioning an artist for the sculpture;
- Payment of \$1.5 million by Rockefeller University to the East River Esplanade Maintenance Fund to be administered by the Parks Department. The yearly income generated from this payment is to be earmarked for the maintenance of the 60th St. Pavilion.



(23) Queensboro Bridge spanning the East River



## CHAPTER 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area takes into consideration a range of issues affecting this area, including the improvement of open spaces, provision of streetscaping and pedestrian access to the waterfront, the recognition of historic elements, and the provision of an economic element at the waterfront as described in the following sections.

### 4.1 Open Space Areas

Many of the Plan recommendations focus on the streetscape and open space elements in the Queensboro Bridge Study Area. Key issues include access to the waterfront and improvement of the quality of and access to park spaces. The 59th and 60th Street corridors and the Bridge Plaza area require significant upgrading in terms of landscaping, lighting, signage and improved pavement treatment. In addition the 60th Street ramp connection leading to Pavilion Park and East River Esplanades should be designed to encourage greater pedestrian activity.

The NYC Economic Development Corporation currently controls the waterfront site and will turn it over to NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC DPR) at such time as NYC DPR is ready to begin development of the site. Open space features could include play areas, seating and lighting. Additional greenery should also be provided to soften hard surfaces in open space areas. Figure 10 illustrates the various recommendations for the study area, extending from Second Avenue to the East River. Recommendations for specific open space and park areas are outlined as follows.

#### Tramway Park/Bridge Plaza Area

The Tramway Park and Bridge Plaza areas help to define the "gateway" for travelers entering or leaving Queensboro Bridge. Tramway Park is already scheduled for major improvement with proposals for new plantings, paving and park furniture. The new plan provides generous areas of new planting that is designed to transform the character of Tramway Park from an open paved space to a more park like green area, furnished with ample bench seating<sup>(24)</sup>.

Although the Bridge Plaza areas opposite Tramway Park are denied pedestrian access, they form an important visual element as part of the bridge gateway. In partic-



(24) Preliminary Concept Plan for Tramway Park

ular the central plaza accommodates the historic trolley kiosk<sup>(25)</sup>. Relocation of this structure (which will shortly undergo full restoration) to a more central, protected and dominant location would help establish the plaza as an important element for this area. In addition, some limited landscape treatment should be considered for Bridge Plaza to visually link this space with Tramway Park. This could include the use of planters in the vicinity of the kiosk, and also adjacent to the on-ramp to the bridge, as shown in Figure 11. This landscape treatment will also help to visually link the kiosk with the historic torchiere overlooking Second Avenue<sup>(26)</sup>. Consideration should also be given to lighting the kiosk at night in order to increase the structure's impact on this gateway area. The National Landmark bridge should also receive stronger recognition through improved lighting, signage and the use of historic markers or displays.

### Triangle and 14 Honey Locust Park

14 Honey Locust Park and the triangle are scheduled for future restoration by the City Parks Department. The triangle currently contains three trees and will be developed along with plans for the park. The future design will need to be carefully related to three adjacent areas:

- *The pedestrian ramp leading to the bridge roadway.* Although this short length of ramp now terminates at the roadway, it overlooks 14 Honey Locust Park and is enclosed on one side by an attractive stone wall that duplicates the historic stonework of the bridge. Plantings and furnishings should be considered to make the ramp area active. Figure 12 illustrates possible alternative treatments for the ramp, utilizing the area for the display of historic markers or outdoor sculpture, or for the development of a landscaped garden.
- *14 Honey Locust Park Extension.* The open area to the east of the park will be retained as a service/parking area for use by NYCDOT<sup>(27)</sup>, but they have agreed to work to improve the site. These improvements should include screening of vehicles and storage equipment from view by low walls and/or planting. Figure 13 shows a stone screen wall that incorporates the decorative features found in the bridge and on the screen wall in 14 Honey Locust Park to the pedestrian ramp, thus providing a more unified design vocabulary for this park area.



(25) Historic Trolley Kiosk at Bridge Plaza

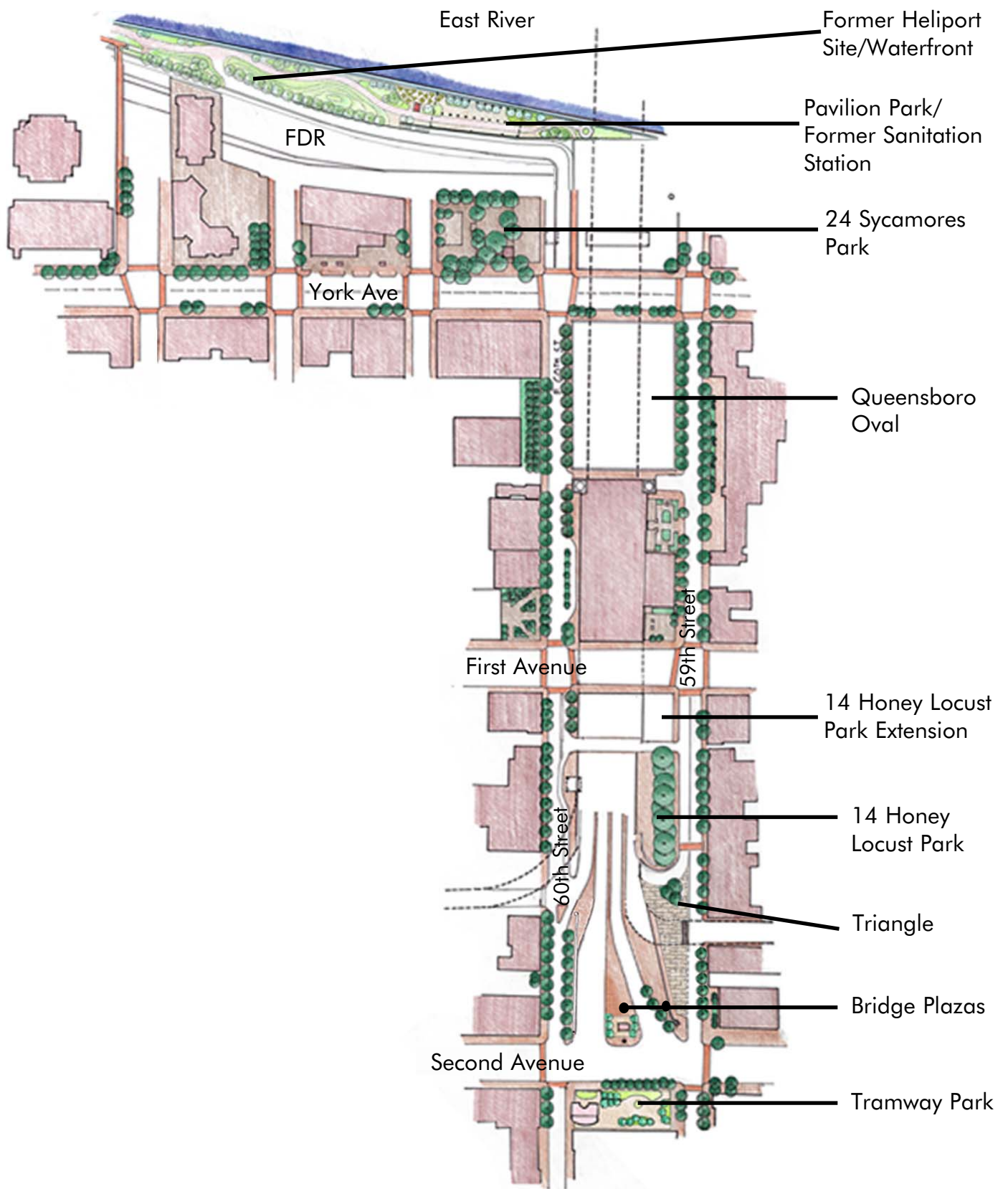


(26) Torchiere at bridge entrance



(27) View of NYC DOT parking area at 14 Honey Locust Park Extension





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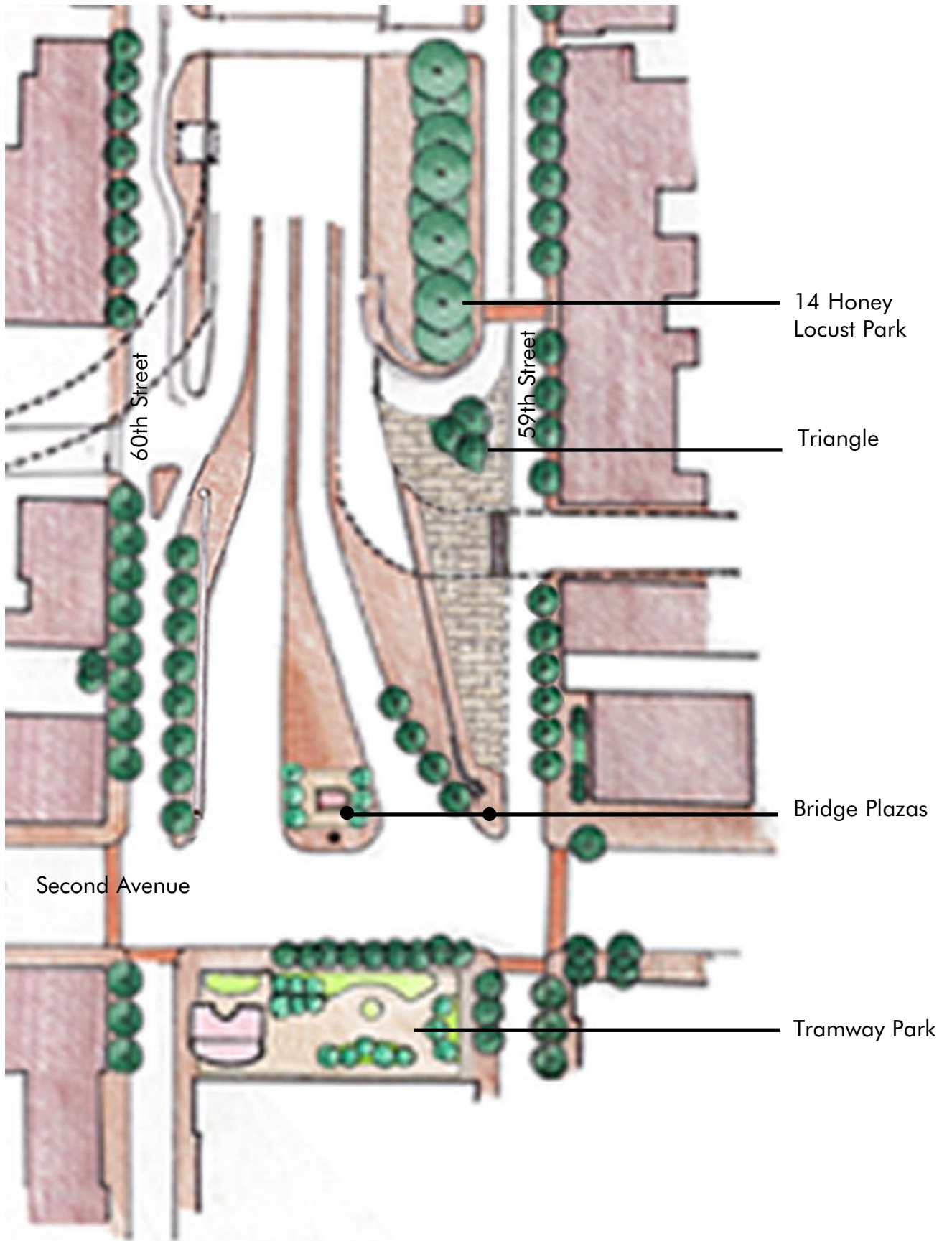


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Figure 10: Summary of Recommendations



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Figure 11: Tramway Park and Bridge Plazas



## Existing Conditions



View towards 1st Avenue and 59th Street



Existing Ramp

## Potential Ramp Treatments



Proposed Ramp Treatment



Alternative Ramp Treatment





Existing Conditions



Proposal



## Pavilion Park

This upper-level paved open space is connected by the pedestrian ramp from 60th Street and by stairs that will re-link the park to the East River Esplanade once the FDR Drive reconstruction program is complete<sup>(28)</sup>. Future recommendations for the Pavilion Park focus on improving access and in upgrading the park landscape. These actions will encourage greater use of this unique space, taking advantage of the uninterrupted views of the river and the Queens skyline<sup>(29)</sup>.

The suggested improvements include:

- Improving the pedestrian ramp entry from 60th Street. The function of the roadway portion of the ramp will change once the renovation work on FDR Drive is complete. In the future the ramp will have only limited vehicular use for servicing and emergency vehicles only that need access to the proposed park and esplanade. This provides the opportunity to establish this roadway as a major pedestrian access point to Pavilion Park and, via the stairway, to the esplanade. Decorative paving, landscape treatment and creating an attractive gateway at the entry point off York Avenue should be considered for this major entry to the East River waterfront (Figure 14).
- New landscaping should be included in any future restoration work at Pavilion Park. This could include the addition of modest-scale planters for shrubs and small trees that would soften the hard landscape of the park and provide shade for sitting areas (Figure 15).
- The existing glass brick wall on the former sanitation station structure, which served as a protective barrier while the site was used as an active heliport, should be removed to open up views to the north.
- The proposed layout for Pavilion Park includes a dog run, utilizing the existing space at the north end of the park.
- Consideration should be given to adding one or two light wells within the floor of the park in order to allow daylight to reach the space below. This could be achieved through the use of protected roof lights or by inserting glass blocks into the floor structure



(28) Pavilion Park showing view across East River



(29) View of Pavilion Park above temporary FDR Drive detour road

- The Alice Aycock sculpture within the framed roof of the park needs remedial maintenance work. Night time lighting should also be considered to give the sculpture a more obvious presence in the proposed park.

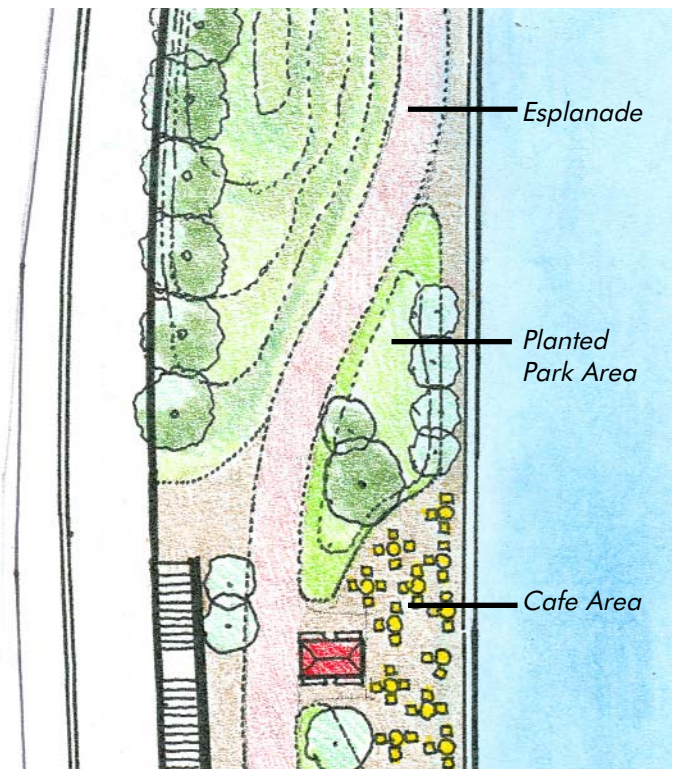
### Proposed Park

This area represents the community's most important open space asset within the study area. The potential exists to create a significant extension to the East River Esplanade, incorporating the former sanitation station structure. The site has sufficient depth to incorporate an esplanade as well as space for activities such as a children's playground, areas for planting, benches for seating, and a restroom and public telephone. A seasonal café should also be considered in order to enliven this area and incorporate some economic activity into the proposed park. Preliminary discussion with the City Park's Department suggest that this could be a viable use at this location given the level of activity along the East River Esplanade and the convenience of the nearby service ramp leading to 60th Street.

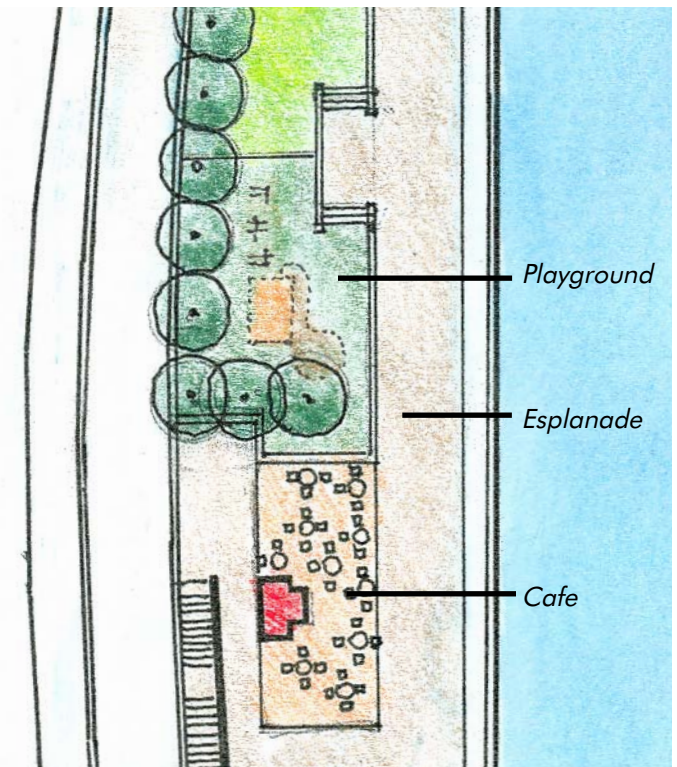
Figure 16 illustrates two possible layouts for this section of the proposed park. Both alternatives incorporate the lower level space of the former sanitation station structure, and include an area for seasonal café use. Alternative A provides a curvilinear treatment for the major pedestrian/bike route, creating a series of informal planting and grassed areas which are mounded to reduce the visibility and noise of traffic on FDR<sup>(30)</sup>. Alternative B incorporates a more formal design for the esplanade, replicating the layout that exists immediately north of the study area<sup>(31)</sup>.

### Former Sanitation Station Building

The space below Pavilion Park provides an opportunity to extend the East River Park and Esplanade to the area beneath the span of the Queensboro Bridge. Approximately one half of this space is currently being used by NYS DOT as temporary northbound lanes for the FDR Drive as repairs are being made to the roadway. With a ceiling height of over 25 feet, opening up the front portion of the concrete-framed structure would create a well-lit and undercover space accommodating the extended esplanade and other associated park space. Figure 17 shows the cross section through the former sanitation building, illustrating the possibility of

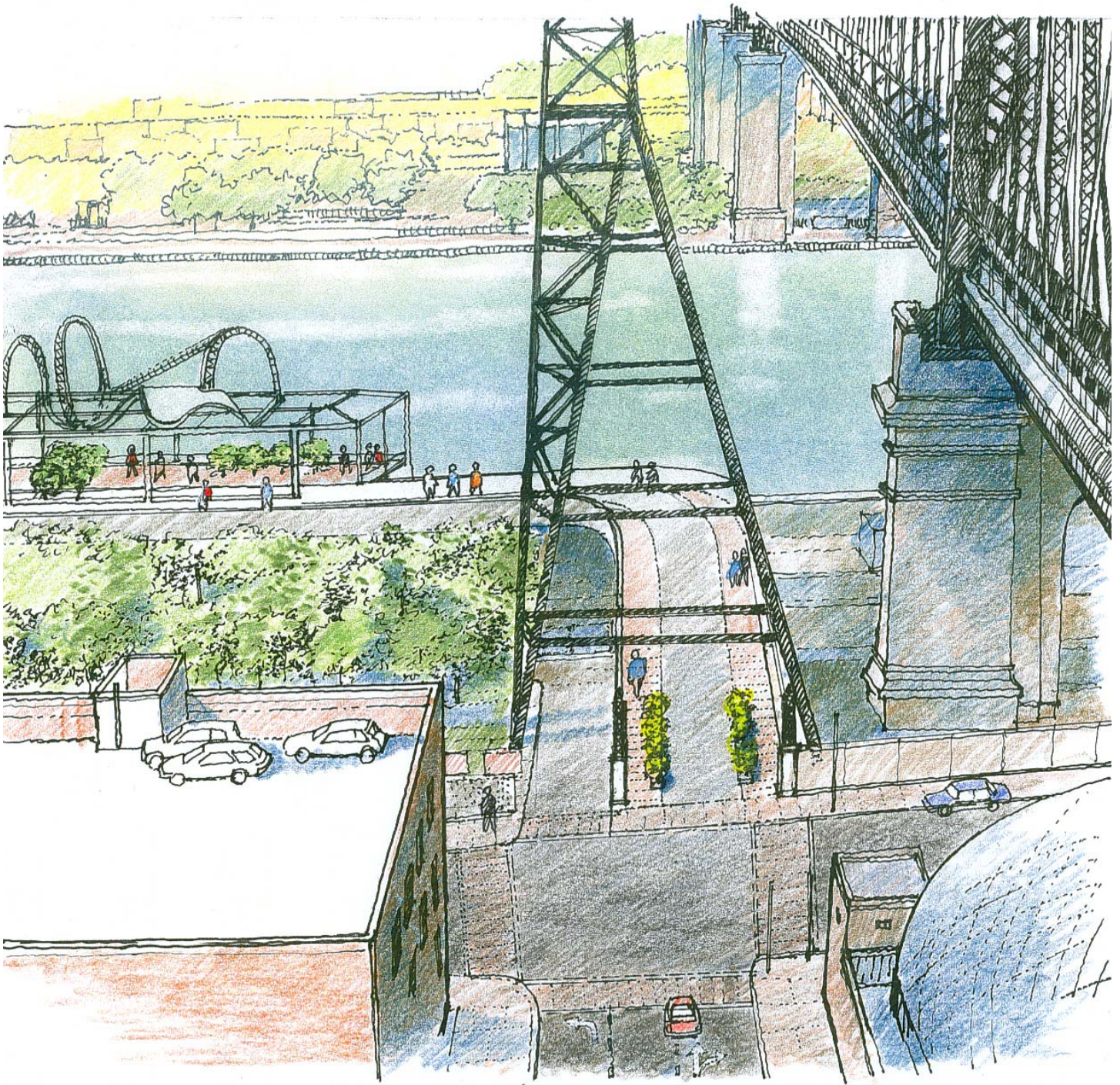


(30) Detail of Proposed Park Alternative A



(31) Detail of Proposed Park Alternative B





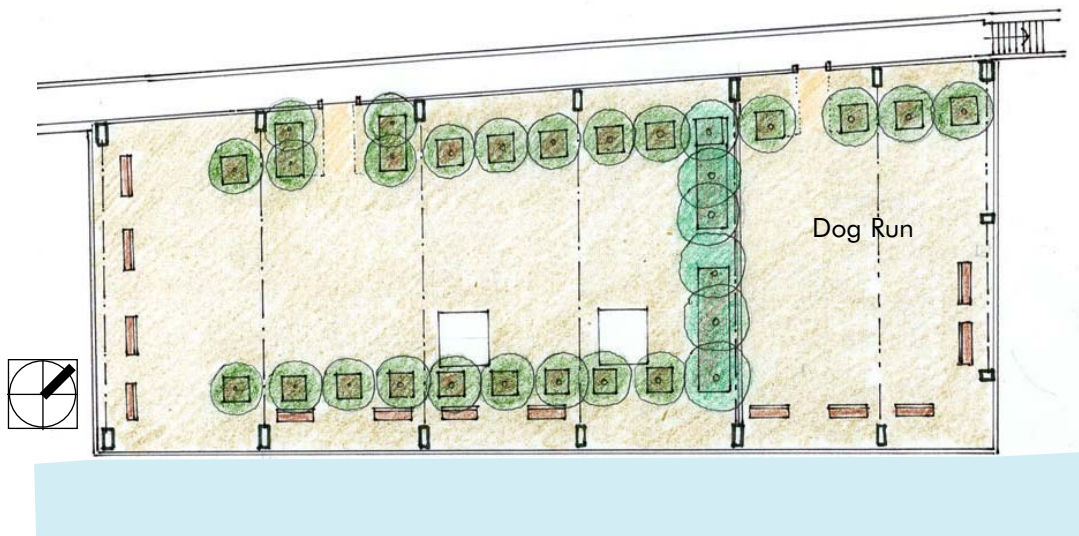
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Figure 14: 60th Street Access Ramp





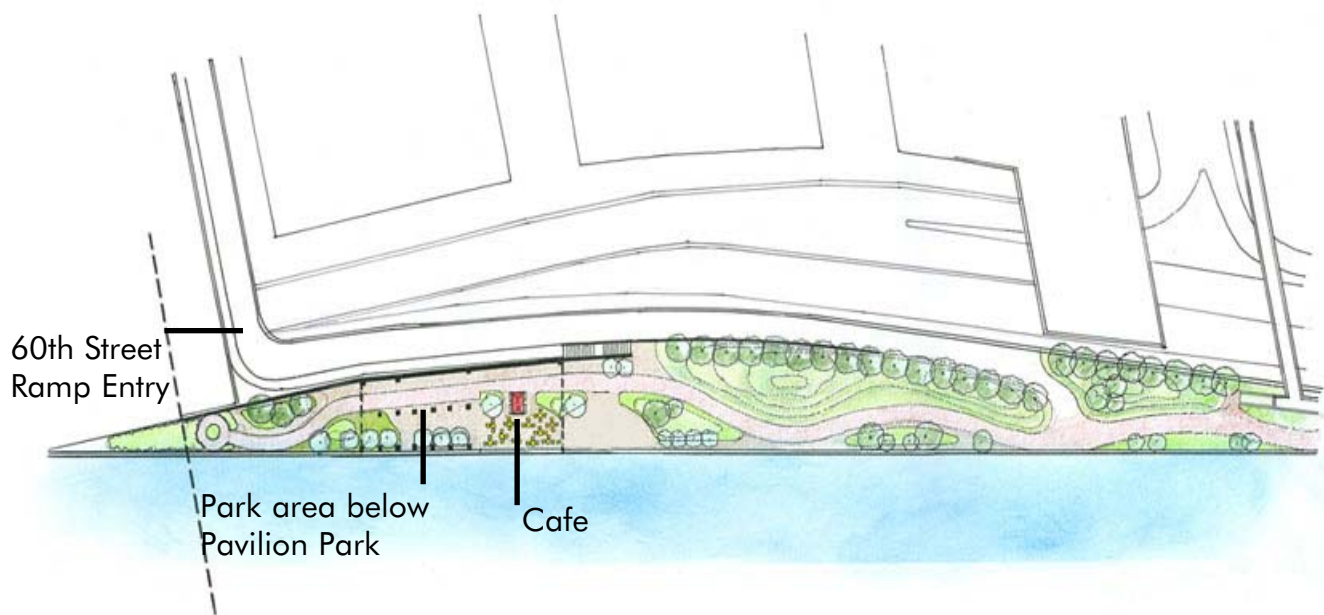
Sketch of proposed landscape treatment (looking north)



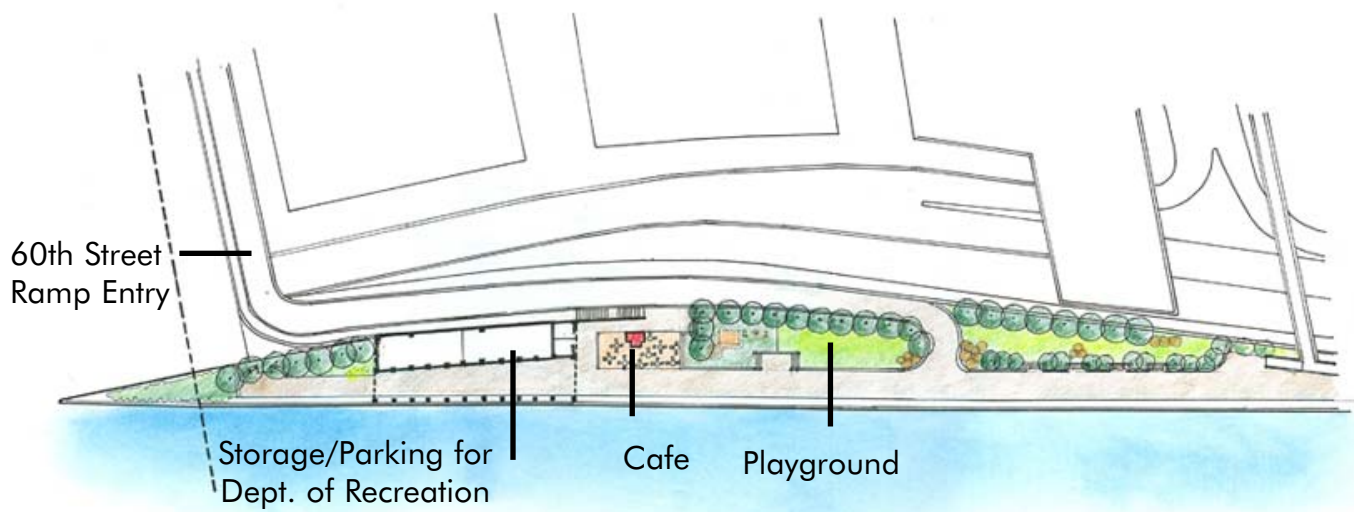
Site Plan

**197-a PLAN**  
Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8

**Figure 15: Pavilion Park Proposals**



Alternative A



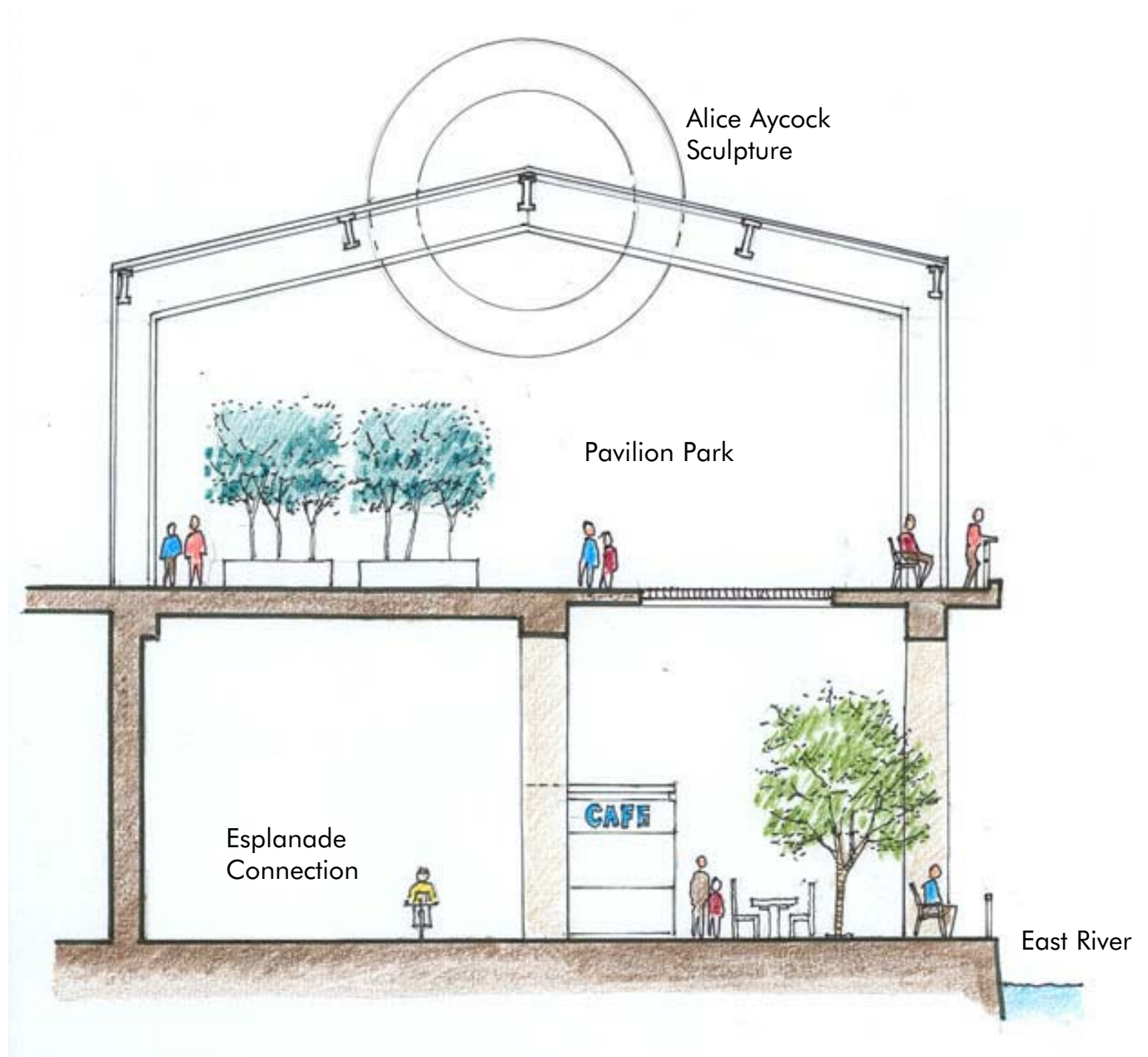
Alternative B

# 197-a PLAN

Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8



Figure 16: Proposed Park Alternatives



**197-a PLAN**  
Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8

**Figure 17: Pavilion Park/Former Sanitation Building**



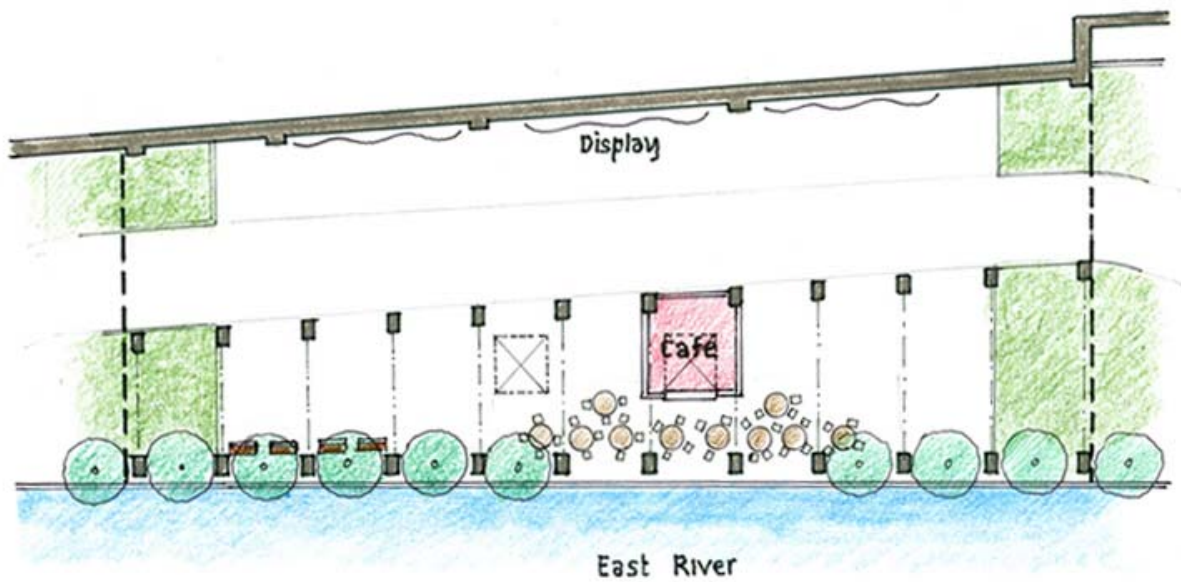
creating a unique two-level park with Pavilion Park at the upper level.

Two possible layouts for the lower level are shown in Figure 18. Alternative A utilizes the total space for park uses, and suggests that a seasonal café could be located within the structure as an alternative to a site further north. Alternative B uses the rear portion of the structure for park maintenance uses, including storage space and a parking area for maintenance vehicles. Public toilets and telephones are also indicated in this option. In both alternatives a paved pedestrian/bike pathway extends through the building, terminating in a landscaped open space (see Figure 19).

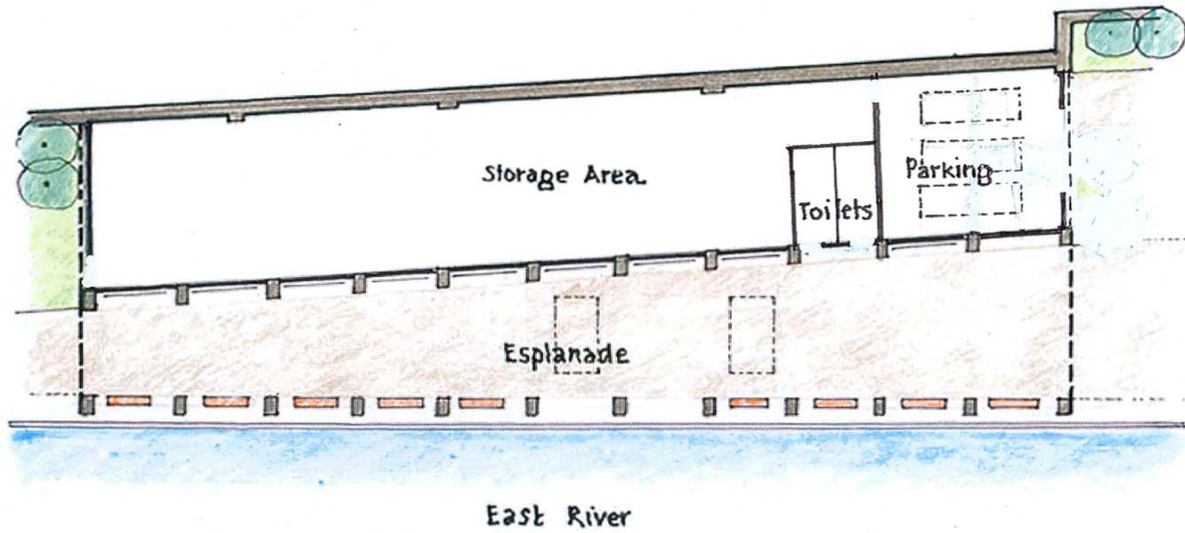
### **Proposed Ferry Landing**

In 1996 the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) proposed the development of a commuter ferry service from the Upper East Side to Lower Manhattan. In the early part of this decade the EDC, in conjunction with the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation, identified sites in Community District 8 as potential locations for a ferry landing, including East 90th Street, East 75th Street and East 62nd Street.

Prior to the development of this 197-a Plan, Community Board 8 supported these potential locations for a ferry landing, but as the Plan evolved it became apparent that siting a ferry landing at East 62nd Street would be inconsistent with the Board's vision for the Queensboro Bridge Area. The upland infrastructure for the ferry, which would include a ticket booth, passenger waiting area, passenger loading facility, passenger pathways, signage and lighting would severely compromise the proposed waterfront park. The Community Board has subsequently learned that the future of commuter ferry service at East 62nd Street is uncertain. It is the position and recommendation of Community Board 8 that EDC identify an alternate location in the East Sixties for the siting of a ferry landing (see Appendix C, Community Board 8 resolution, dated February 16, 2005.)



Alternative A



Alternative B

# 197-a PLAN

Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8



0 30 60 ft

BFI Planning

August 2005

Figure 18: Former Sanitation Building Proposals





197-a PLAN  
Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8

Figure 19: View of Park/Former Sanitation Building



## 4.2 Streetscapes

The pedestrian experience in the study area varies from block to block. A few blocks have been developed with street trees, special paving, and other amenities that provide a relatively attractive and comfortable experience for pedestrians; but many blocks in the study area are much less inviting. In addition, several blocks, particularly along 60th Street east of 2nd Avenue, are characterized by narrow sidewalks and substantial volumes of fast moving traffic that is noisy and somewhat threatening for pedestrians. Finally, although some blocks are more attractive and offer pedestrian amenities, there is no consistent treatment of streetscape elements that might bring a greater sense of unity and provide a more coherent street experience in the study area.

To address these issues, the streetscape recommendations have two primary objectives: (1) to bring a greater sense of unity to the street experience and (2) to raise the comfort level by providing a more secure, protected, and attractive pedestrian environment. To enhance the overall continuity, there should be a consistent and compatible set of streetscape elements and details. Sidewalk paving, furniture, lighting, and signage should be drawn from a basic palette of compatible materials. For example, benches and trash receptacles should all be of a similar style, such as wood and steel, and the materials should be consistent in color and detail. Other metal elements such as light posts and rails should have a similar finish and color, preferably matching the metal finish of the furniture. Paving materials should include Belgian block, should be generally consistent in color and pattern and should have a color range that is compatible with the other streetscape elements. Although these various elements will be composed in different ways from block to block, this coordinated vocabulary will provide a sense of familiarity to unify the streetscape environment in the study area.

In addition to a unified palette of materials from which to develop the overall streetscape character, it is also important to create a more pedestrian friendly environment wherever possible. Closely spaced trees, decorative steel guard rails, street furniture, and a change in paving along the curb are all devices that can be used to create a separation between pedestrians and vehicles. Together, these elements create an edge that

defines the pedestrian space and provides a protective barrier that enhances the feeling of security and raises the comfort level for pedestrians.

Likewise, the tree canopy helps to enclose the sidewalk space making it feel more sheltered. Although the goal would be to provide a continuous line of street trees along all the sidewalks in the study area, it is not feasible to do so, given the frequency of obstructions such as sidewalk grates, bus stops, and curb cuts for driveways. However, wherever it is possible to plant street trees in the study area, it is recommended that they be planted as close together as possible. Columnar or upright forms of trees are useful on narrow sidewalks to limit the spread of branches and avoid conflicts with various overhead obstructions, such as store awnings and signage. These narrower trees can also be planted closer together to create an edge along the curb and to maximize the amount of planting in the limited space available.

Finally, a verge strip of Belgian block as illustrated in Figure 18 and, which is similar to the existing treatment along York Avenue at 60th Street, can also help to separate pedestrians from vehicles by serving as a transitional element between the sidewalk and the street. The continuous strip of granite pavers will help unify the streetscape by eliminating the piecemeal treatment of tree pits. It will also provide a better environment for street trees.

The cobra-headed lampposts along 59th and 60th Streets should be replaced with more decorative lampposts that reflect the historic importance of the bridge and its environs. NYCDOT and the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission supports the use of the "M" pole design. Figure 20 illustrates this design which is shown with a decorative luminaire and a pedestrian arm with luminaire.

Background floodlighting of the bridge superstructure and the decorative stonework should also be considered for this area. This additional lighting, which will not be attached to the bridge structure, will draw attention to the significant architectural elements that characterize the bridge structure as well as enlivening the image of the 59th and 60th Street corridors between Second and York Avenues.



Sketch showing streetscape recommendations



Existing Street Lights: 60th Street



'M' Pole design

**197-a PLAN**  
Queensboro Bridge Area, Manhattan CB 8

**Figure 20: Streetscape Proposals**



## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The anticipated implementation of this 197-a Plan would have a positive impact on both Community Board 8 and communities well beyond the boundaries of the study area. With rapid residential, commercial and institutional development of the far East Sixties area, the need for public open spaces continues to grow. From the 35-story rental apartment building planned at York Avenue and East 61st Street by the Solow Organization, to the 18-story, block long Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Imaging and Breast Treatment Facility on Second Avenue and East 65th/66th Streets and the condominium residences on the site of the former Bethany Church at First Avenue and 67th Street, the Greater Queensboro Bridge Area is experiencing rapid expansion.\* The realization of the vision expressed in this Plan is key to ensuring that the area can successfully accommodate this growth and provide residents and visitors with the open space and passive recreational resources necessary to maintain and enhance quality of life in this community.

Community Board 8 has identified existing and potential funding sources in order to achieve the goals of this Plan and carry out its recommendations, as stated under "Existing Resources" on page 29. The Board plans to seek additional funding to implement the recommendations of this 197-A Plan once it is adopted. Potential funding sources that will be pursued include elected officials, private institutions, charitable organizations, corporate sponsors, real estate developers in the community and federal grant sources as well as major national corporations and others that participate in these types of endeavors.

\* Other projects currently in the planning process or under construction include:

Witkoff	York Avenue at East 61st St.	Luxury Condominiums
Rockefeller University	E. 60th St. b/w 1st & York Aves.	Housing
Ronald McDonald House	E. 60th St. b/w 1st & York Aves.	Residence
Atlantic Development Group	First Ave. at E. 61st St.	Inclusionary Housing
Memorial Sloan Kettering C.C.	E. 68th ST. b/w 1st & York Aves.	Research Facility
205 East 59th Street	Third Ave. b/w E. 59th & 60th Sts.	Luxury Condominiums

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: RECORD OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

#### CB8 Meetings on 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area

The Committee held regularly scheduled meetings, all of which were open to the public, with notification through the Board's regular channels and posting the area. The 197-a Plan was the subject of a public hearing before the Board on March 9, 2005, and, as always, the public was offered the opportunity to speak and comment on its findings. The Board officially adopted the proposed 197-a Plan on March 9, 2005.

3/21/02	Committee Mtg	Organization & goals
4/12/02	Committee Mtg	Walk around waterfront site
6/13/02	Committee Mtg	Scope of Project and best possible uses for waterfront
7/25/02	Committee Mtg	Continued discussion of goals for plan
9/18/02	Full Board Mtg	CB8 authorizing the 197-a Plan
10/23/02	Committee Mtg	Review procedure for 197-a Plan
1/23/03	Committee Mtg	Continued discussion of waterfront use & role of professional planner
2/26/03	Committee Mtg	Discussion of White Paper draft
4/30/03	Committee Mtg	Discussion & proposed resolution approving draft of White Paper
6/11/03	Full Board Mtg	1-Resolution approving White Paper 2-Resolution authorizing raising of funds for 197-a Plan
9/30/03	Committee Mtg	Report on meetings with elected officials & possible conduits
1/13/04	Committee Mtg	Discuss conduits and resolution naming New York League for Conservation Voters--Education Fund (NYLCV-EF)
1/21/04	Full Board Mtg	Resolution approving NYLCV-EF as conduit
2/23/04	Committee Mtg	Discussion & preparation of RFP for retaining a planner
7/21/04	Full Board Mtg	Resolution approving Buckhurst Fish Jacquemart (BFJ) as planner
9/29/04	Committee Mtg	Discussion with BFJ on goals and objectives
10/25/04	Committee Mtg	Discussion of Streetscape & Bridge approach issues
11/15/04	Committee Mtg	Summary of City Agency meetings & discussion of waterfront
1/25/05	Committee Mtg	Preliminary landscape proposal; drawings for project; ferry resolution
2/9/05	Full Board Mtg	Resolution that there be no ferry landing at East 62nd Street and suggesting NYC Economic Development Corporation find alternate site in the sixties
3/9/05	Public Hearing	Presentation to the Community and full Community Board 8 of 197-a Plan; Resolution by Community Board 8 approving 197-a Plan

### Meetings with Public Officials

1/14/03	Meeting with Speaker Gifford Miller
1/22/03	Meeting with Manhattan Borough President's Waterfront Task Force Re: discussion of 197-a plans
3/19/03	Meeting with Manhattan Borough President's Waterfront Task Force Re: Jeanette Rausch of EDC on 197-a Plans
7/10/03	Meeting with State Senator Liz Krueger
8/1/03	Meeting with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney
8/5/03	Meeting with Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields
8/26/03	Meeting with Assemblyman. Pete Grannis
1/25/04	Meeting with Lee Chong, Manhattan Borough President Fields' Director of Land Use
2/6/04	Meeting with Assemblyman Jonathan Bing
2/23/04	Meeting with Councilmember Eva Moskowitz

The Community Board has the support of all the elected officials representing the Community District referred to above.

### Meetings with City Agencies

Community Board 8 submitted a white paper to all City agencies prior to meeting with them to discuss the proposed 197-a plan. This paper served as the basis for this 197-a Plan and was discussed in detail with all the agencies.

10/21/02	DOT	Walk around site with Manhattan Borough Commissioner Margaret Forgione
10/22/02	DCP	Reviewed outline of plan & procedures to accomplish goal
12/13/02	DP&R	Walk around with Joshua Laid to look at parks properties and waterfront
7/31/03	DP&R	Met with Commissioner Benepe & Manhattan Borough Commissioner Castro on 197-a Plan
10/25/04	DP&R	Met with Manhattan Borough Commissioner Castro on 197-a Plan
10/28/04	DOT	Met with Manhattan Borough Commissioner Forgione on 197-a Plan
10/28/04	LPC	Met with Chairman Tierney on 197-a Plan
11/04/04	EDC	Met with Stephen Hayes, Vice President, Real Estate Development Division, on 197-a Plan
2/24/05	DP&R	Met with Manhattan Borough Commissioner Castro on 197-a Plan



### Meetings with Other Groups

11/1 & 2/02	MAS	Municipal Art Society workshop on 197-a Plans
11/15/02	MAS	Met with Eva Handhardt to discuss 197-a Plan
1/23/05	EMA	East Midtown Association Bid to discuss plan
2/08/05	Alice Aycock	Artist, whose sculpture is located on top of Pavilion Park- discussion of 197-a Plan (see letter of support for plan)

### CB8 Resolutions Pertaining to 197-a Queensboro Bridge Area Plan

9/18/02	Community Board 8 authorizing the 197-a Plan	
6/11/03	Community Board 8 approving the White Paper prepared by Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart	
6/11/03	Community Board 8 authorizing the 197-a Committee to raise funds to retain Planner	
7/16/03	Community Board 8 authorizing retaining and repositioning kiosk on Bridge Plaza	
1/21/04	Community Board 8 authorizing retention of the New York League for Conservation Voters- Education Fund (NYLCV-EF) as a conduit for 197-a Plan	
7/21/04	Community Board 8 authorizing retention of and signing contract with planner, Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart	
2/9/05	Community Board 8 stating there should be no ferry landing at East 62nd Street and suggesting the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC) find alternate site in the sixties	
3/9/05	Community Board 8 approving the adoption of the 197-a Plan prepared by Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart	

### Resolution of Manhattan Borough Board

2/17/05	The Department of City Planning shall accelerate its review of a Community Board's 197-a Plan
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## APPENDIX B: CONSISTENCY WITH RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES & CHRONOLOGY OF PLANNING EFFORTS SINCE 1986

### CONSISTENCY WITH RELATED PLANS AND POLICIES

The Queensboro Bridge Area 197-a Plan is consistent with the goals set forth in planning policy documents produced by the City of New York, including the City Planning Commission's *Strategic Plan*, the Mayor's *Preliminary Ten-Year Capital Strategy (2006-2015)*, and the Manhattan Borough President's *Comprehensive Manhattan Waterfront Plan*, as modified and adopted Summer 1997.

As a community-sponsored plan centered on the goals of improving waterfront access, enhancing existing open space, creating new open space areas, improving connectivity between open spaces, enhancing streetscapes and preserving views to and from the Queensboro Bridge and the waterfront, this 197-a Plan is consistent with the City Planning Commission's *Strategic Plan*, that includes the objective to "revitalize the waterfront and enhance public open spaces." The 197-a Plan is also in harmony with stated strategies of the Mayor's *Preliminary Ten-Year Capital Strategy*, which supports the Department of Parks and Recreation's continuing commitment to provide quality open space. This strategy provides \$86.7 million for the acquisition of new parkland and tree planting, with \$74.4 million dollars of the allocation directed toward tree planting and the Greenstreets program to transform concrete traffic triangles and malls into green spaces, and \$18.3 million to reconstruct the landscape and bikeway at East River Park. The Plan is also consistent with the Manhattan Borough President's *Comprehensive Manhattan Waterfront Plan*, which calls for the creation of "a waterfront gateway along the Queensboro Bridge corridor by redeveloping spaces on the north side of 59th Street between Second Avenue and the East 60th Street Pavilion Park and esplanade," and the continuation of efforts "to relocate the 60th Street heliport and create public open space."

The current proposal is also consistent with a number of plans and policies that the City has developed for the waterfront area, as follows:

*A Greenway Plan for New York City*, 1993, NYC Department of City Planning (DCP).

The Greenway Plan's goal of creating 350 miles of greenway throughout the City includes the Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, a continuous 32-mile pathway around the Borough. This Plan seeks to connect existing waterfront segments, create new waterfront pathways and, where necessary, on-street routes to serve as interim links between the waterfront paths in Manhattan.

*Plan for The Manhattan Waterfront, NYC Comprehensive Waterfront Plan*, 1993, NYCDCP.

This waterfront plan addressed detailed studies of waterfront areas ("reaches") in Manhattan and makes specific recommendations for improved connections to and from the waterfront, esplanade construction, and creation of improved access at specific cross streets, including pedestrian bridges.

*East River Bikeway and Esplanade Master Plan Report*, 1996, NYC Economic Development Corporation. Describes a continuous bikeway and esplanade running the length of the East River, from the Battery to East 125th Street, and lists plans and concerns for the area from the Battery to East 63rd Street. The Report includes design guidelines for mixed-use paths, on-street bike lanes, and plants and architectural elements along the esplanade.

*New Waterfront Revitalization Program*, NYC Department of City Planning, 2002.

Addresses the City's waterfront policies and consistency review process for projects located within the New York State coastal zone. A project is considered consistent with the WRP when it will advance one or more of

the 10 WRP policies. Relevant NYC Waterfront Revitalization Plan Coastal Zone policies in the study area include:

- Policy 8.1 Preserve, protect, and maintain existing physical, visual and recreational access to the waterfront;
- Policy 8.2 Incorporate public access into new public and private development where compatible with the proposed land use and coastal location;
- Policy 9.1 Protect and improve visual quality associated with New York City's urban context and the historic and working waterfront;
- Policy 10.1 Retain and preserve designated historic landmarks and features.

### ***CHRONOLOGY OF PLANNING EFFORTS SINCE 1986***

#### Upper East Side Public Recreational Open Space Facilities Inventory & Analysis, 1986-1987

Prepared by Thomas Balsley Associates.

This study assessed the general recreational needs of the area between 53rd Street, 96th Street, Fifth Avenue, and the East River. While it does not address the Queensboro bridge area specifically, it does identify some of the primary issues in the vicinity of the bridge that remain relevant today. These issues include the lack of open space, particularly in the inland areas, and the need to redistribute active and passive open space in order to provide a more balanced recreational system for the surrounding communities.

#### Queensboro Bridge East River Waterfront Gateway Planning and Urban Design Study, 1988

Prepared by Buckhurst Fish Hutton Katz and Quennell Rothschild Associates for The Parks Council and The Municipal Art Society.

This study was the first to focus specifically on the Queensboro bridge area. It presents data on the area's existing conditions and discusses its potential as a recreational area. It also reviews the relationship between a possible revitalization effort and current city policies and plans such as the Waterfront Revitalization program. In addition, it makes a strong case against the hotel/heliport proposal that the Department of Ports and Terminals had been supporting at that time. The study argues that a hotel/heliport complex would ruin opportunity for further revitalization efforts, as well as increase pollution and noise in an already crowded area.

#### Proposal for Open Space Plan: Queensboro Bridge Waterfront Gateway, January 5, 1990

Prepared by the East River Waterfront Conservancy and NYC Dept. of City Planning.

This proposal for the improvement of open space around the Queensboro Bridge recommended integrating a number of publicly owned open spaces along the waterfront and several parcels along 59th and 60th Streets to Second Avenue, into a linear gateway park, providing access to the East River waterfront.

#### East River Waterfront Park: A Feasibility Study, February 1990

Prepared by Quennell Rothschild Associates and Craig Whitaker Architects for Greenacre Foundation.

This study reviewed various economic, jurisdictional, and engineering issues for the creation of the gateway park, and presented two possible plans for a waterfront park between 59th and 61st Street. The goals of



both plans included increasing the amount of open space around the waterfront and improving public access. It does not address the areas under the bridge (between 59th and 60th Streets, and Second Avenue to the west) that were discussed in the Queensboro Bridge Waterfront Gateway proposal.

East 60th Street Restaurant Facility Entrance Design Criteria, 1993

This document provides guidelines for the creation of a restaurant in the waterfront area, as proposed by both plans discussed in the February 1990 feasibility study. The primary issue discussed in the document is the contextual relationship between the park and the restaurant and whether the restaurant will create a private space within the public waterfront area.

The East River Gateway Proposal, 1994

This proposal calls again for a comprehensive open space plan to guide the many agencies that control property in the area.

Comprehensive Manhattan Waterfront Plan, as modified and adopted, 1997

Prepared for the Manhattan Borough President.

The borough-wide 197-a plan provides recommendations for the waterfront of the entire borough, including some specific recommendations for 59th to 62nd Street. For instance, there are recommendations for a Roosevelt Island Tramway signage program and a gateway enhancement plan for the approach into Manhattan from the bridge.

Greater Bridgemarket Traffic Study, 1998

Prepared by New York City Department of City Planning, Transportation Division.

This study examined present and future traffic conditions, on- and off-street parking conditions, transit service, and pedestrian circulation in the area bounded by York Avenue/Sutton Place on the east, Second Avenue on the west, East 57th Street on the south and East 64th Street on the north. It recommended improvements to enhance vehicular and pedestrian safety, reduce congestion and improve air quality including signal timing modifications, transit improvements and truck signage improvements.

Resolution by Community Board 8 authorizing the Development of a 197-a Plan for the Queensboro Bridge Area, September 30, 2002

This resolution states that because the city proposes to redevelop the waterfront area, and because the city wants the community to become involved in the redevelopment process, the community has decided to create a 197-a plan to guide the city in its attempt to revitalize the area.

**APPENDIX C: RESOLUTIONS AND LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

**APPENDIX D: RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATUS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND PARK PROJECTS**



**APPENDIX E: EXISTING RESOURCES FROM DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS AFFECTING OPEN SPACE  
PLANS**

**APPENDIX F: 197-A PLAN TRANSMITTAL LETTERS TO CITY AGENCIES**