

7. Parks and Recreational Resources

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter evaluates the potential effects of implementing the CBD Tolling Alternative on parks and recreational resources. Effects on publicly accessible open spaces, including parks and recreational areas, can result from physical changes in a park or recreation area, such as changes in the size and programming of, or access to an open space. In addition, changes in the enjoyment or usage of open spaces resulting from the introduction of substantial new shadows, noxious odors, or increased noise or air pollutant emissions that would affect its usefulness, whether on a permanent or temporary basis, are also considered effects to publicly accessible open spaces. This chapter also considers the Project's consistency with Federal laws that limit the incorporation of parkland and recreational resources into a transportation project or conversion of parkland to nonpark use — Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Act of 1966, Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA) of 1965 (54 United States Code (USC) Section 200301 et seq.), and Section 1010 of the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARRA) of 1978 (16 USC Section 2501–2514).

7.2 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

7.2.1 Inventory of Publicly Accessible Open Space in the Parks Study Area

The parks study area consists of the proposed locations of tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment and includes parks and recreational resources that are immediately adjacent to or directly across the street from proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling equipment. **Table 7-1** lists and **Figures 7-1a through 7-1g** show the publicly accessible open spaces in the parks study area.

These publicly accessible open spaces include small sitting areas in the median of Broadway, urban parks such as DeWitt Clinton Park, linear parks (e.g., Hudson River Park, East River Park, and the High Line), and the 840-acre Central Park. Most of the listed parks are under the jurisdiction of NYC Parks; some are managed by other public entities, such as the Hudson River Park Trust and New York City Economic Development Corporation. Privately owned public spaces (POPS) are also included in the list. POPS are spaces dedicated to public use and enjoyment, such as landscaped plazas or pocket parks that are owned and maintained by private property owners in exchange for the right to build larger developments.¹

NYC Parks and other public agencies are engaged in several ongoing and recently completed projects to rebuild existing parks and construct new parks in the parks study area. Some of the most substantial projects that are likely to be completed by the Project's analysis year of 2023 include the following:

- Reconstruction of Honey Locust Park
- East River Esplanade Expansion: East Midtown Greenway and renovation of Andrew Haswell Green Park

¹ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/pops/pops.page>.

- Reconstruction of St. Vartan Park
- Construction of new park at Pier 42 in the East River (between Gouverneur Slip and Jackson Street)
- Reconstruction of Mannahatta Park
- Reconstruction of Vietnam Veterans Plaza
- Construction of Pier 26 Science Play Area and rehabilitation of Pier 57 in Hudson River Park

In addition to these projects, several parks in the parks study area will be partially reconstructed as part of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project, a coastal protection initiative on Manhattan's East Side from Montgomery Street to East 25th Street that is aimed at reducing flood risk caused by coastal storms and sea level rise. Parks within the parks study area that are part of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project include Asser Levy Playground, Stuyvesant Cove Park, Murphy Brothers Playground, Captain Patrick J. Brown Walk, East River Park, and Corlears Hook Park. In addition, Pier 42 is immediately adjacent to the area affected by the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project.

Construction on the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project began in January 2021 and will continue in stages through 2025; work affecting some parks in the parks study area is likely to be complete by the Project's analysis year of 2023, while other parks will remain under construction at that time.

The CBD Tolling Alternative would locate tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment within Central Park and on the underside of the High Line, and the effects of the Project on these parks is described in **Section 7.3.2**. The following sections provide background information on these parks.

7.2.2 Central Park

Central Park is at the northern boundary of the proposed Project, and tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment are proposed at three detection locations, four poles in total, inside the park and two locations along its edges. **Section 7.3.2.2** describes the proposed infrastructure and equipment and its effects on the park. A general description of Central Park follows to provide context for that analysis.

Central Park is an 840-acre park bounded by Central Park South (59th Street), Fifth Avenue, Central Park North (110th Street), and Central Park West (Eighth Avenue), and the sidewalks abutting the sides of the park outside the park's walls are also under NYC Parks control. The park is managed by NYC Parks with maintenance support provided by Central Park Conservancy—a private, not-for-profit organization that raises money for the park's operating budget and manages the park under a contract with the City of New York—pursuant to a license agreement.² Central Park is the largest NYC Parks property in Manhattan and the fifth largest in New York City.³ Central Park is open to the public from 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. daily.

² <http://www.centralparknyc.org/about/>.

³ <https://www.nycgovparks.org/about/faq>.

Table 7-1. Publicly Accessible Open Spaces in the Parks Study Area

MAP ID	OPEN SPACE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	SIZE (ACRES)	DESCRIPTION
1	Riverside Park South	Riverside Boulevard between West 59th Street and West 72nd Street	NYC Parks	66.7	Waterfront park with landscaping, seating, soccer fields, and court space
2	Waterline Square	West 60th Street between Freedom Place South and Riverside Boulevard	Private (POPS)	2.6	Landscaped park with seating, a playground, and an interactive fountain
3	P.S. 452 playground	210 West 61st Street	DOE	0.6	Paved schoolyard with play equipment
4	The Regent Plaza	45 West 60th Street	Private (POPS)	0.1	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
5	Broadway Malls	Broadway from West 59th Street to West 168th Street	NYC Parks	5.6	Landscaped medians of Broadway, with benches and pedestrian refuges at crosswalks, subway entrances at Columbus Circle, 72nd, and 96th Streets
6	Trump International Hotel Plaza	1 Central Park West	Private (POPS)	0.4	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas, Columbus Circle subway entrance
7	Columbus Circle	Broadway and Central Park South	NYC Parks	0.8	Circular plaza with landscaping, seating, water feature, and central monument to Christopher Columbus
8	Central Park	Fifth Avenue to Eighth Avenue, 59th Street to 110th Street	NYC Parks	840	Regional park with landscaping, seating, active and passive recreation areas
9	Grand Army Plaza	Fifth Avenue and Central Park South	NYC Parks	0.6	Circular plaza that forms the gateway to Central Park with landscaping, seating, statue, and fountain
10	Savoy Plaza	200 East 61st Street	Private (POPS)	0.1	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
11	Tramway Plaza	Second Avenue between East 59th Street and East 60th Street	NYC Parks	0.5	Paved area with seating, trees, and landscaping adjacent to the Roosevelt Island Tram (currently closed for renovation)
12	Evansview Plaza	303 East 60th Street	Private (POPS)	0.1	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
13	Landmark Plaza	300 East 59th Street	Private (POPS)	0.3	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
14	Honey Locust Park	1130 Second Avenue	NYC Parks	0.3	Paved area with trees beside Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge
15	Bridge Tower Place Plaza	First Avenue and East 60th Street	Private (POPS)	0.2	Plaza with landscaping and seating
16	Bridgemarket Public Plaza	East 59th Street between First and York Avenues	NYCDOT/EDC	0.2	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas; public garden with monument (Evangeline Blashfield Fountain)
17	Queensboro Oval	York Avenue between East 59th and East 60th Streets	NYC Parks	1.2	Indoor tennis facility beneath Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge
18	Twenty-Four Sycamores Park	501 East 60th Street	NYC Parks	0.6	Neighborhood park with landscaping, seating, playground, and court space
19	Andrew Haswell Green Park	FDR Drive and East 60th Street	NYC Parks	2.0	Waterfront park with landscaping, seating, and dog-friendly areas

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MAP ID	OPEN SPACE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	SIZE (ACRES)	DESCRIPTION
20	Sutton Place Park	East 57th Street and Sutton Place	NYC Parks	0.3	Neighborhood park with landscaping and seating areas
21	Sutton Parks	25 Sutton Place South	NYC Parks	0.9	Neighborhood park with landscaping and seating areas
22	Peter Detmold Park	454 East 51st Street	NYC Parks	0.6	Neighborhood park with landscaping and seating areas, and dog run
23	MacArthur Playground	436 East 49th Street	NYC Parks	0.3	Neighborhood playground
24	Robert Moses Playground	East 42nd Street and First Avenue	NYC Parks	1.1	Neighborhood playground with court space and synthetic turf field
25	East River Esplanade-Midtown Section	East River and East 37th Street	NYC Parks	1.7	Waterfront esplanade with landscaping, seating, active and passive recreation areas (expansion currently under construction)
26	The Corinthian Plaza	330 East 38th Street	Private (POPS)	0.6	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
27	St. Vartan Park	613 First Avenue	NYC Parks	2.8	Neighborhood park with garden, courts space, synthetic turf field, seating, and playground space
28	Manhattan Place plaza	630 First Avenue	Private (POPS)	0.2	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
29	American Copper Buildings plaza	626 First Avenue	Private (POPS)	0.5	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
30	Alexandria Science Center plaza	450 East 29th Street	Private (POPS)	0.8	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
31	Bellevue Sobriety Garden	East 26th Street and FDR Drive	Private - Bellevue Hospital	0.3	Publicly accessible landscaped garden at Bellevue Hospital
32	Asser Levy Playground	501 East 23rd Street	NYC Parks	2.4	Neighborhood playground with court space, pools, fitness areas, recreation center, and a running track
33	Stuyvesant Cove Park	East River waterfront, from East 18th Street to East 23rd Street	NYC Parks	1.9	Neighborhood park with landscaping, an esplanade, bikeway, paths, seating, and the Solar One community facility
34	Murphy Brothers Playground	292 Avenue C	NYC Parks	1.3	Neighborhood playground with court space and baseball fields
35	Captain Patrick J. Brown Walk	East River waterfront, from East 13th Street to East 18th Street	NYC Parks	1.0	Walkway/bikeway along the East River connecting Stuyvesant Cove Park and John V. Lindsay East River Park, built alongside the FDR Drive
36	John V. Lindsay East River Park	East River waterfront, from Jackson Street to East 13th Street	NYC Parks	45.9	Regional waterfront park with landscaping, seating, active and passive recreation areas, and an amphitheater
37	P.S. 142 playground	100 Attorney Street	DOE	0.6	Paved schoolyard with sports facilities and play equipment

MAP ID	OPEN SPACE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	SIZE (ACRES)	DESCRIPTION
38	Luther Gulick Park	21 Columbia Street	NYC Parks	1.5	Neighborhood park with seating, courts, fitness areas, and playground space
39	Corlears Hook Park	397 FDR Drive	NYC Parks	4.4	Neighborhood park with playground, seating, dog run, batting cages, and a baseball field
40	Pier 42	East River waterfront at Jackson Street	NYC Parks/EDC	7.8	Neighborhood park (currently under construction)
41	P.S. 184M playground	327 Cherry Street	DOE	1.1	Paved schoolyard with sports facilities and play equipment
42	East River Esplanade-Lower Manhattan Section	East River waterfront between Broad and Jefferson Streets	NYC Parks	8.8	Waterfront esplanade with landscaping, seating, active and passive recreation areas (some sections currently under construction)
43	Forsyth Plaza	Forsyth Street and Canal Street	NYCDOT	0.1	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
44	Sophie Irene Loeb Playground	10 Market Street	NYC Parks	0.1	Park with playground space, located under the Manhattan Bridge
45	Coleman Playground	Intersection of Cherry Street, Pike Street, and Monroe Street	NYC Parks	2.6	Neighborhood park with skate park, dog run, playground, field, and court space
46	Murray Bergtraum softball field	Market Slip between Cherry and South Streets	DOE	2.9	Softball field and running track
47	Catherine Slip Malls	Catherine Slip between Cherry and South Streets	NYC Parks	0.3	Plaza with landscaping and seating
48	City Hall Park	Broadway, Chambers Street, Centre Street, and Park Row	NYC Parks	8.8	Landscaped park with pathways and seating
49	Drumgoole Plaza	Frankfort Street and Gold Street	NYC Parks/ NYCDOT	0.4	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
50	Verizon Building plaza	375 Pearl Street	Private (POPS)	0.1	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
51	Fishbridge Park Garden and Dog Run	Pearl Street and Dover Street	NYC Parks	0.1	Community garden and dog run
52	Peck Slip Plaza	Peck Slip and FDR Drive	NYC Parks	0.2	Plaza with landscaping and seating
53	Imagination Playground	89 South Street	NYC Parks	0.4	Neighborhood playground
54	Mannahatta Park	Wall Street between Front and South Streets	NYC Parks	0.4	Plaza with landscaping and seating
55	Financial Square plaza	South Street between Old Slip and Gouverneur Lane	Private (POPS)	0.1	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
56	55 Water Street plaza	55 Water Street	Private (POPS)	0.8	Elevated plaza with landscaping and seating areas

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MAP ID	OPEN SPACE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	SIZE (ACRES)	DESCRIPTION
57	Vietnam Veterans Plaza	24 South Street	NYC Parks	0.7	Plaza with landscaping and stepped seating
58	125 Broad Street plaza	125 Broad Street	Private (POPS)	0.2	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
59	Battery Park (also known as "Battery" or "The Battery")	State Street and Battery Place	NYC Parks/ The Battery Conservancy	21.9	Regional waterfront park with landscaping, seating, water features, and playground space
60	17 Battery Place Plaza	17 Battery Place	Private (POPS)	0.3	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
61	Elizabeth H. Berger Plaza	Edgar Street, Greenwich Street and Trinity Place	NYC Parks	0.1	Plaza with landscaping, seating areas, and subway entrance
62	Battery Park City Parks	Throughout Battery Park City neighborhood	BPCA	28.4	Series of open spaces throughout the Battery Park City neighborhood including a waterfront esplanade, lawns, neighborhood pocket parks and playgrounds, and athletic fields
63	50 West Street plaza	50 West Street	Private (POPS)	0.1	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
64	Liberty Park	Liberty, West, Cedar, and Greenwich Streets	PANYNJ	1.0	Elevated park with landscaping and seating areas located at the World Trade Center site
65	9/11 Memorial	West, Liberty, Greenwich, and Fulton Streets	PANYNJ	8.0	Memorial space at the World Trade Center site with landscaping, seating areas, and spaces for reflection and contemplation
66	101 Barclay Street plaza	101 Barclay Street	Private (POPS)	0.2	Paved plaza
67	One Eleven Murray plaza	111 Murray Street	Private (POPS)	0.3	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
68	Washington Market Park	199 Chambers Street	NYC Parks	2.2	Neighborhood park with landscaping, seating, court space, and playground space
69	Salomon Smith Barney plaza	388 Greenwich Street	Private (POPS)	0.7	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
70	Tribeca Park	8 Beach Street	NYC Parks	0.3	Plaza with landscaping and seating
71	Albert Capsouto Park	68 Varick Street	NYC Parks	0.4	Plaza with landscaping, seating, and sculptural fountain
72	Freeman Plaza	Hudson Street, Broome Street, Varick Street, Watts Street, Holland Tunnel Entrance Ramps	NYCDOT	0.8	Plaza with landscaping and seating
73	Canal Park	Canal Street between West Street and Washington Street	NYC Parks	0.7	Neighborhood park with landscaping and seating
74	Hudson River Park	Areas of waterfront and Hudson River west of West Side Highway/Route 9A from Battery Place to West 59th Street	HRPT	550.0	Regional waterfront park with landscaping, seating, active and passive recreation areas

MAP ID	OPEN SPACE	LOCATION	OWNERSHIP	SIZE (ACRES)	DESCRIPTION
75	14th Street Park	Eleventh and Twelfth Avenues, West 22nd to West 24th Streets	HRPT	0.9	Small park with landscaping, seating, and an open lawn
76	Chelsea Waterside Park	Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, West 14th and West 15th Streets	HRPT	2.5	Neighborhood park with playground, ballfields and basketball courts, a dog run, walking paths, seating areas, and landscaping
77	The High Line	Elevated linear alignment from Gansevoort Street to West 34th Street, roughly paralleling Washington Street, Tenth Avenue, West 30th Street, Twelfth Avenue/Route 9A, and West 34th Street	NYC Parks and Friends of the High Line	6.7	Elevated former freight rail line with walking paths, landscaping, public art installations, and seating areas
78	500 West 30th Street plaza	500 West 30th Street	Private (POPS)	0.2	Plaza with landscaping and seating areas
79	Hudson Yards Eastern Railyard plaza	Hudson Boulevard between Eleventh Avenue and 33rd Street	Private (Hudson Yards)	4.5	Privately owned, publicly accessible plaza with landscaping, seating areas, and the Vessel climbing sculpture
80	450 West 33rd Street plaza	450 West 33rd Street	Private (POPS)	0.4	Elevated plaza with landscaping and seating areas
81	Manhattan West plaza	Ninth and Dyer Avenues, 31st and 33rd Streets	Private (POPS)	1.4	Privately owned, publicly accessible plaza with landscaping and seating areas
82	DeWitt Clinton Park	Between West Side Highway/Route 9A and Eleventh Avenue from West 52nd Street to West 54th Street	NYC Parks	5.8	Neighborhood park with landscaping, seating, court space, synthetic turf field, and playground space

Notes: HRPT = Hudson River Park Trust.

DOE = New York City Department of Education.

NYCDOT = New York City Department of Transportation.

NYC Parks/DOE = Jointly operated playground.

POPS = Privately owned public space (as designated under the New York City Zoning Resolution).

BPCA = Battery Park City Authority.

PANYNJ = Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

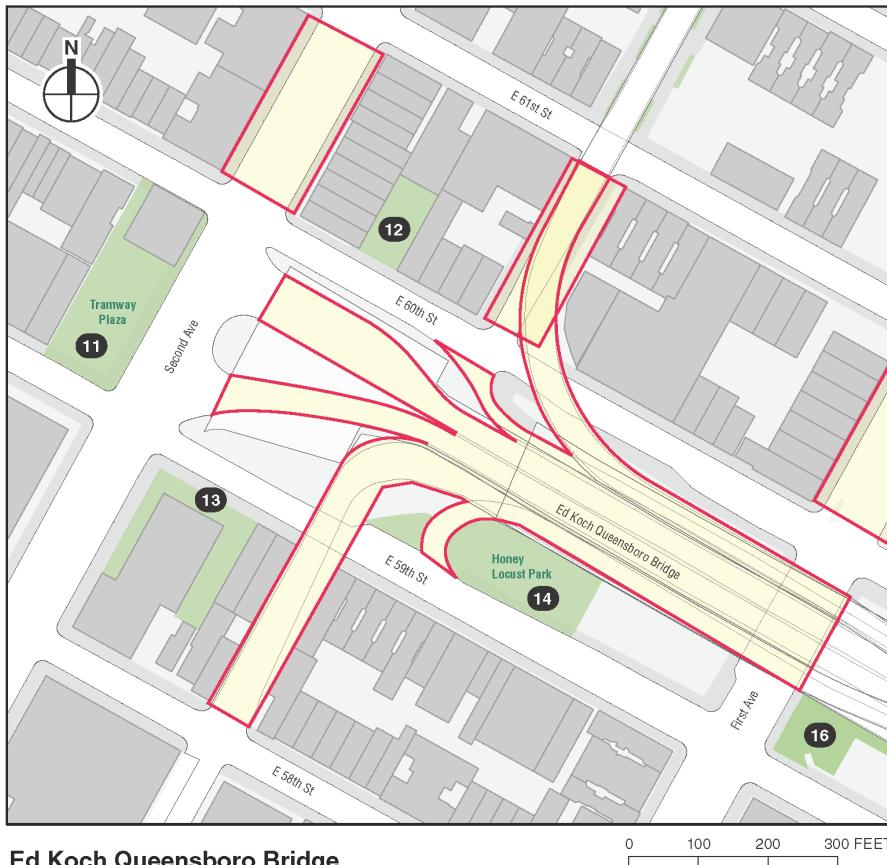
Figure 7-1a. Parks and Recreational Resources: Local Study Area for CBD Tolling Program Infrastructure



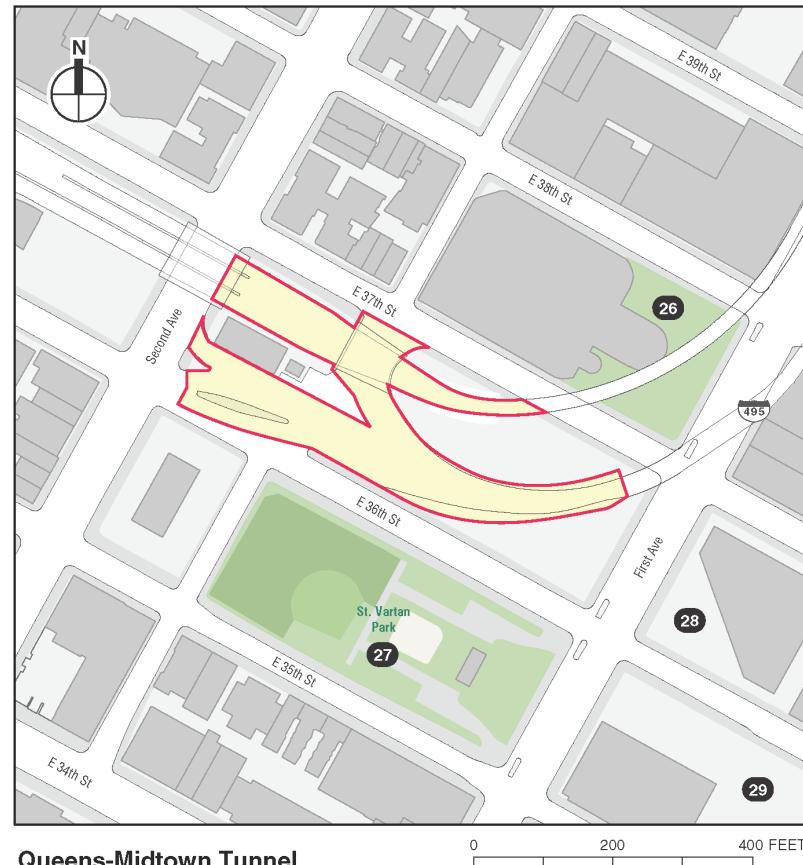
Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics.

<https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

Figure 7-1b. Parks and Recreational Resources: Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge and Queens-Midtown Tunnel



Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge



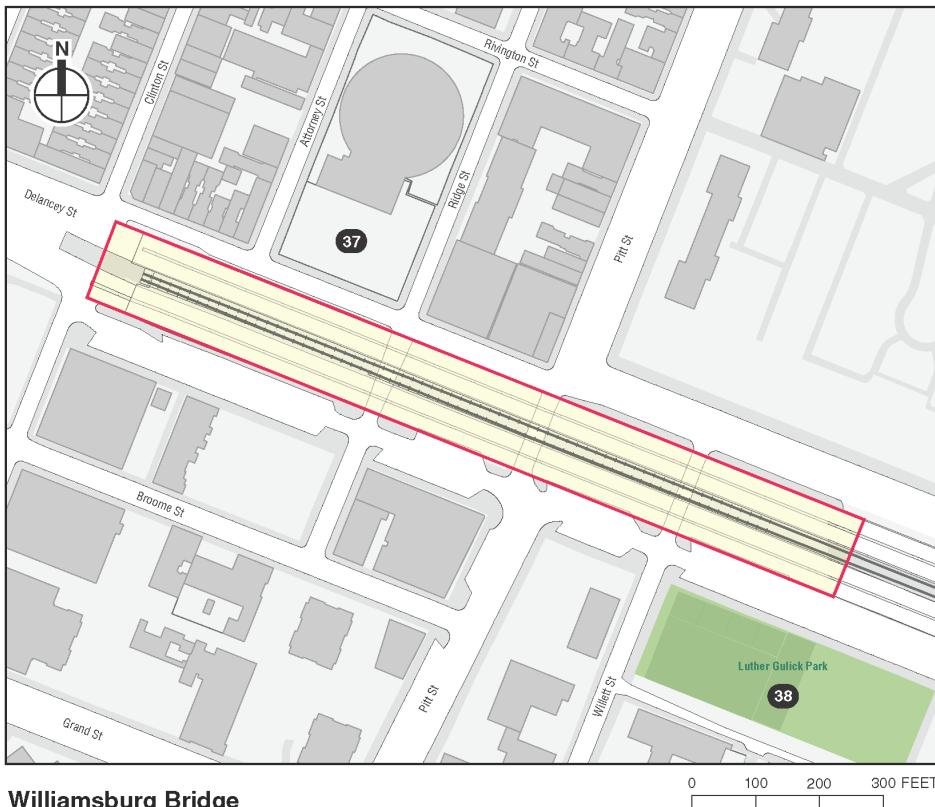
Queens-Midtown Tunnel

Local Study Area for Tolling Infrastructure and Tolling System Equipment

11 Park or Recreational Resource in Vicinity of Local Study Area
(see Table 7-1 for reference)

Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

Figure 7-1c. Parks and Recreational Resources: Williamsburg Bridge and Manhattan Bridge



Williamsburg Bridge



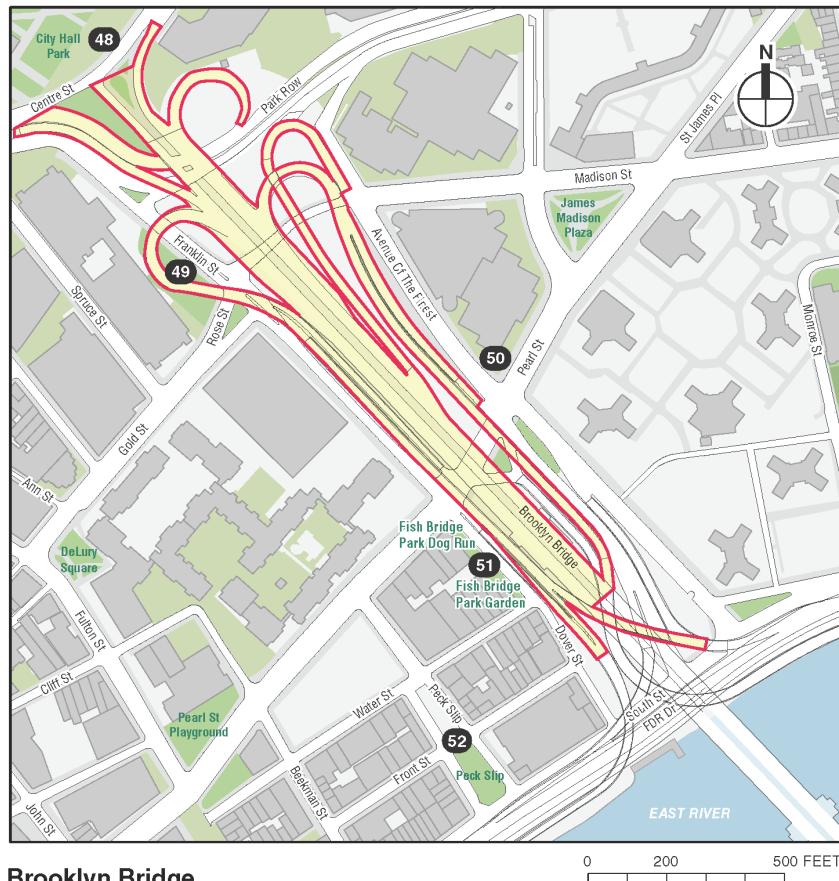
Manhattan Bridge

Local Study Area for Tolling Infrastructure and Tolling System Equipment

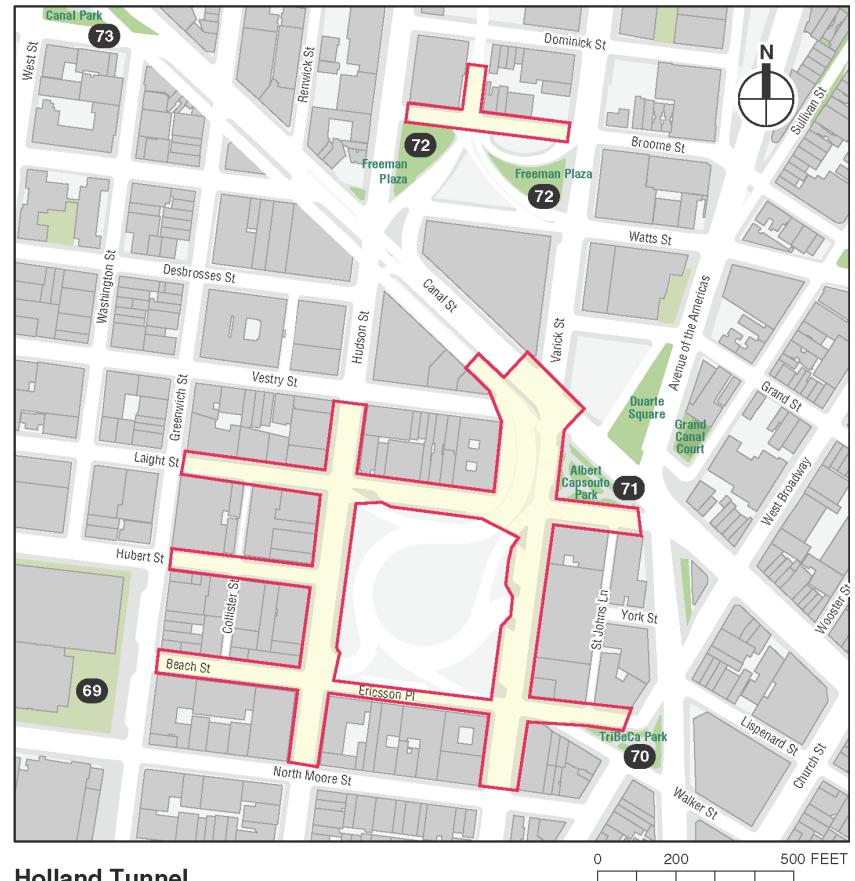
37 Park or Recreational Resource in Vicinity of Local Study Area
(see Table 7-1 for reference)

Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

Figure 7-1d. Parks and Recreational Resources: Brooklyn Bridge and Holland Tunnel



Brooklyn Bridge

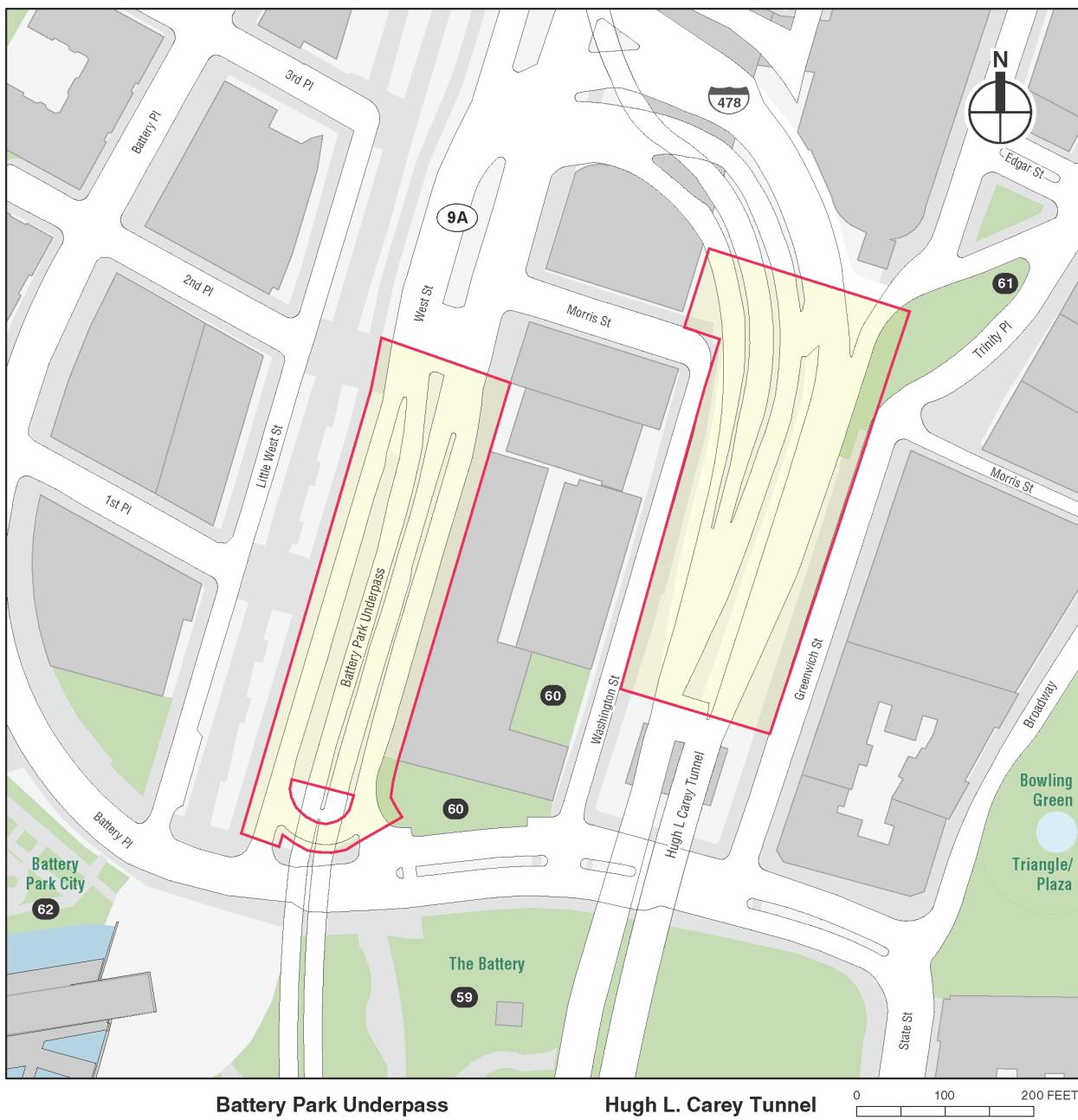


Holland Tunnel

Local Study Area for Tolling Infrastructure and Tolling System Equipment

Park or Recreational Resource in Vicinity of Local Study Area
(see Table 7-1 for reference)

Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

Figure 7-1e. Parks and Recreational Resources: Battery Park Underpass and Hugh L. Carey Tunnel

 Local Study Area for Tolling Infrastructure and Tolling System Equipment

59 Park or Recreational Resource in Vicinity of Local Study Area
(see Table 7-1 for reference)

Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics.
<https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

Figure 7-1f. Parks and Recreational Resources: Lincoln Tunnel



Local Study Area for Tolling Infrastructure and Tolling System Equipment

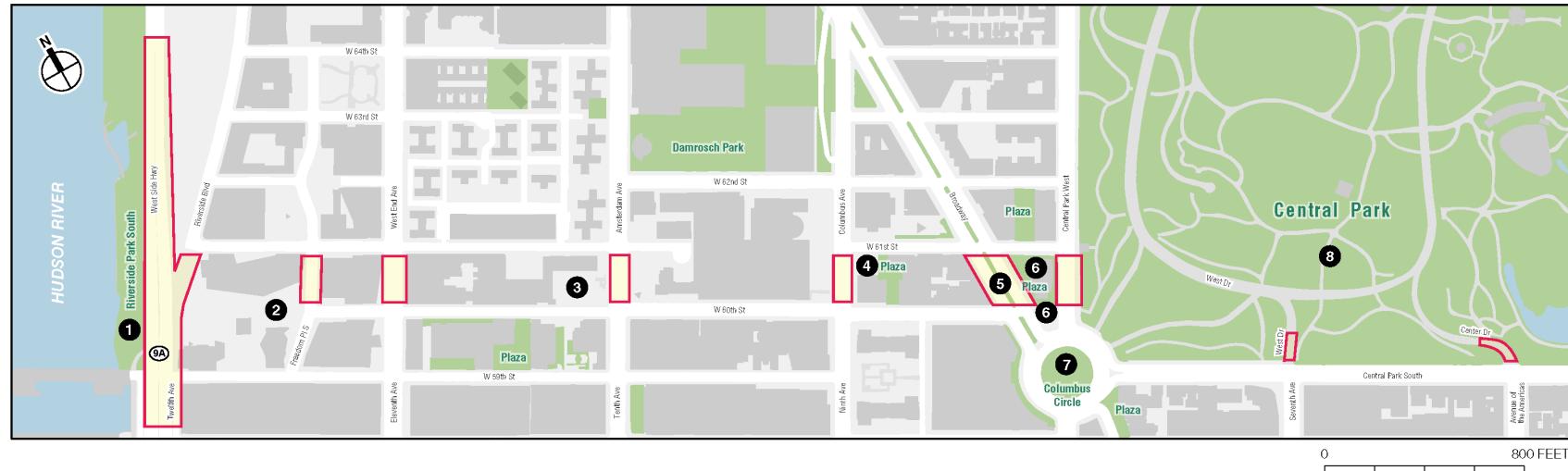
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74 Park or Recreational Resource in Vicinity of Local Study Area
(see Table 7-1 for reference)

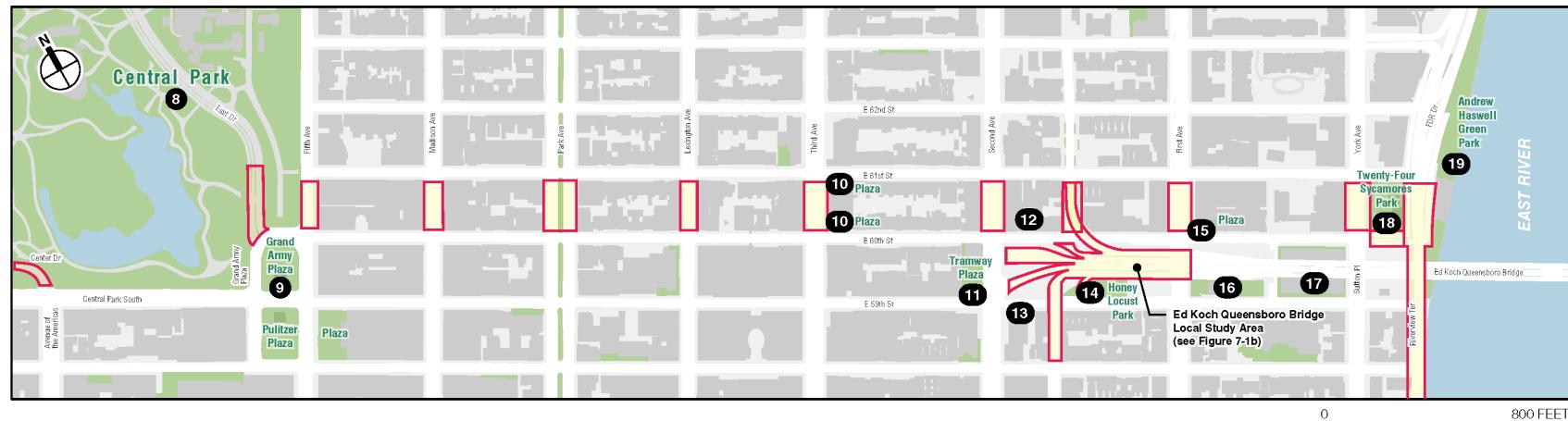
Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics.
<https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

Figure 7-1g. Parks and Recreational Resources: 60th Street

60th Street - Western Portion



60th Street - Eastern Portion



 Local Study Area for Tolling Infrastructure and Tolling System Equipment

1 Park or Recreational Resource in Vicinity of Local Study Area
(see Table 7-1 for reference)

Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

The park has a Park Drive that forms a loop through the park and has connecting roads that lead to access points to and from the streets bordering the park (see **Figure 7-2** for the Central Park Conservancy's map of the park).⁴ In 2018, NYC Parks closed Park Drive to vehicular traffic at all times except for park deliveries or other drivers with permitted business in the park (e.g., emergency response vehicles, park maintenance, park administration, vendors, and contractors). Park Drive and connecting roadways are heavily used by pedestrians (walking and jogging) and bicyclists as well as horse-drawn sightseeing carriages. Authorized vehicles (e.g., deliveries, maintenance, operations, concessionaires, horse carriages) can enter and exit the park through its vehicular entrances, including those on Central Park South (59th Street). Within the park, separate lanes of Park Drive are designated for each activity. The Central Park Conservancy's *Central Park Access Map* indicates the following:

Originally designed for carriage rides through the 19th-century Park, the Drive today is a recreation loop shared by cyclists, joggers, and pedestrians. The inner lane is designated for pedestrians and joggers traveling in either direction. The center lane is for cyclists and pedi-cabs, and the outer lane for authorized vehicles and horse carriages; all wheeled traffic is one-way, counterclockwise on the loop.⁵

The park also has a separate network of walking paths, including sidewalks alongside Park Drive.

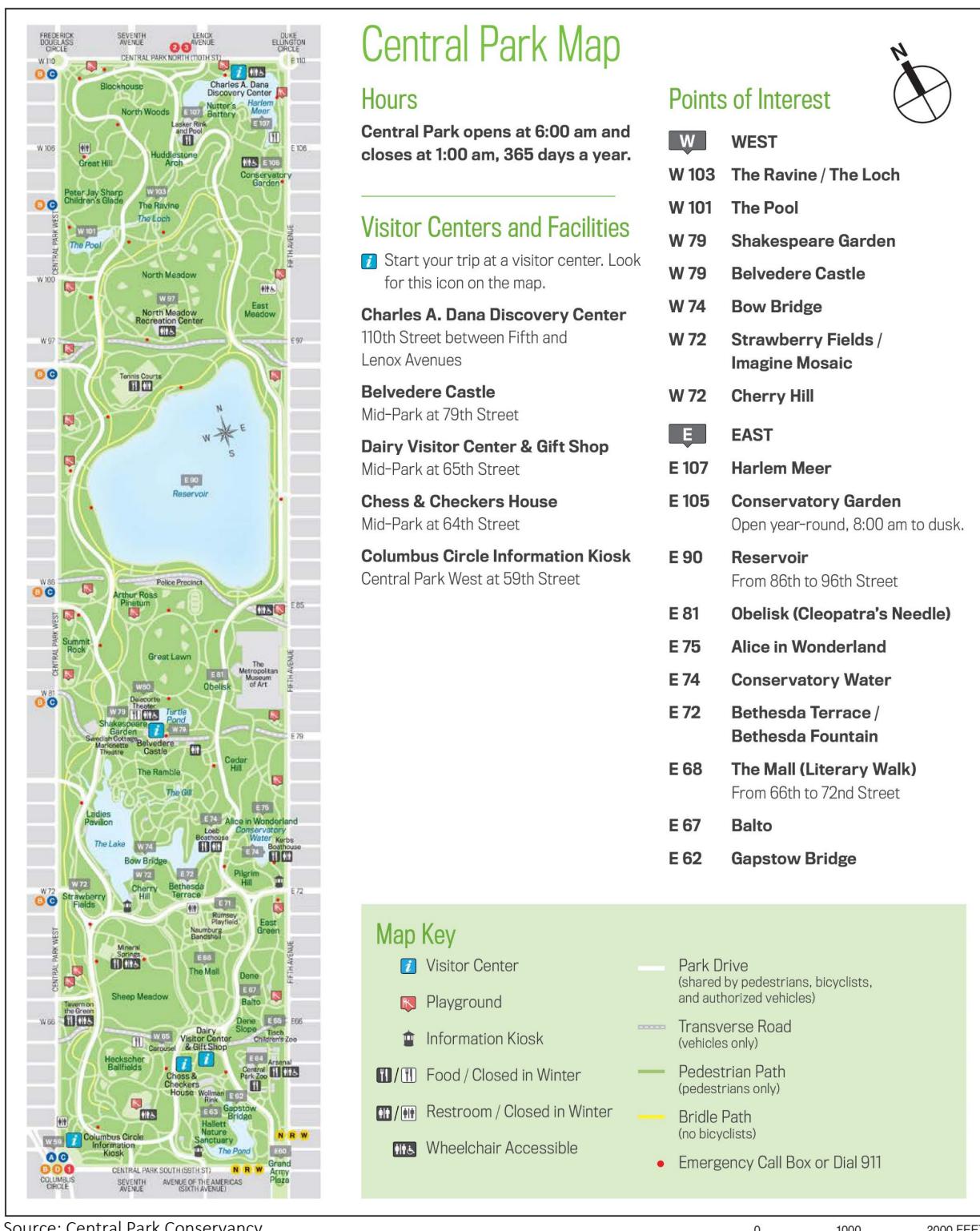
Central Park is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a National Historic Landmark. It is also designated by the City of New York as a New York City Scenic Landmark. **Chapter 8, "Historic and Cultural Resources,"** provides more information on the historic designation for Central Park.

7.2.3 High Line

The Project Sponsors would locate tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment adjacent to and on the underside of the structure of the High Line. A former freight rail viaduct, the High Line has been converted to a linear park, which is located on top of the structure. The High Line is a 1.45-mile-long greenway and rail trail created on a former New York Central Railroad spur along the west side of Manhattan. The High Line begins at Gansevoort Street and ends near 34th Street. It parallels Washington Street from Gansevoort Street to 14th Street, Tenth Avenue from 14th Street to 30th Street, 30th Street from Tenth Avenue to the West Side Highway/Route 9A, and the West Side Highway/Route 9A from 30th Street to 34th Street. The park opened in three phases between 2009 and 2014. The park's attractions include naturalized plantings inspired by plants that grew on the disused tracks and views of the city and the Hudson River. It includes a continuous walkway, benches, and viewing areas. The High Line also offers cultural attractions and art installations. The City of New York owns the High Line, but it is programmed, maintained, and operated by Friends of the High Line, in partnership with NYC Parks, through a license agreement between the City of New York and the Friends of the High Line.

⁴ Central Park also has four sunken east-west "transverse" roads that provide grade-separated vehicular access across the park at 65th/66th Streets, 79th/81st Streets, 85th/86th Streets, and 96th/97th Streets. These do not intersect with Park Drive and do not serve a recreational purpose.

⁵ Central Park Conservancy. 2018. *Central Park Access Map*. https://assets.centralparknyc.org/pdfs/maps/Central_Park_Access_Map.pdf.

Figure 7-2. Central Park Map

Source: Central Park Conservancy

0 1000 2000 FEET

7.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

7.3.1 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not result in a vehicular tolling program and would not involve installation of tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment. The No Action Alternative would not result in physical changes to or changes in the use of or demand for any parks and recreational resources. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not result in any effects on publicly accessible open space from the CBD Tolling Program.

7.3.2 CBD Tolling Alternative

This section describes the potential effects of implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative on publicly accessible open spaces. **Section 7.3.2.1** describes the potential effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on publicly accessible open spaces and other NYC Parks assets in general. **Section 7.3.2.2** describes the potential effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on Central Park, and **Section 7.3.2.3** describes the effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on the High Line. **Sections 7.3.2.4 through 7.3.2.6** describe the Project’s compliance with Federal programs and regulations for the protection of publicly accessible recreational space. **Chapter 15, “Construction Effects,”** provides a discussion of the construction-period effects on parks and recreational resources, including Central Park.

7.3.2.1 Overview of Potential Effects on Parks in the Manhattan CBD

Tolling Infrastructure and Equipment

The CBD Tolling Alternative would place new tolling system equipment, including signage, on existing infrastructure or place new tolling system equipment on new infrastructure comparable in form to existing streetlight poles, sign poles, or overhead structures on city streets and sidewalks. **Chapter 2, “Project Alternatives,”** provides more information on the proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment and **Figure 3-3a through Figure 3-3j** in **Chapter 3, “Environmental Analysis Framework,”** show the proposed locations of the tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment.

As noted above and discussed in **Section 7.3.2.2 and Section 7.3.2.3**, the CBD Tolling Alternative would place tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment within Central Park and on the structure of the High Line. In other locations, proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment would be adjacent to or directly across the street from publicly accessible open space in the parks study area. These types of infrastructure are already adjacent to, and sometimes within, publicly accessible open spaces throughout New York City. Tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment on city streets and sidewalks would not limit access to any publicly accessible open space, would not reduce the size or programming of any publicly accessible open space, and would not result in any conditions—such as increased noise, air

pollutant emissions, odors, or substantial new or increases in existing shadows—that would adversely affect the usefulness of any publicly accessible open space.⁶

In the parks study area, trees on city sidewalks and New York City public parks and recreation areas are regulated by NYC Parks. TBTA will mitigate any potential adverse effects to trees from the CBD Tolling Alternative in consultation with NYC Parks and will undertake tree protection measures consistent with the requirements of NYC Parks. A tree work permit will be required should construction, including utility, sidewalk, or pruning work, take place within 50 feet of a tree regulated by NYC Parks.⁷ If trees are removed as a result of the CBD Tolling Alternative or damaged during construction, tree replacement or restitution will be provided. TBTA will follow NYC Parks' specifications for all replacement trees.

7.3.2.2 Potential Effects on Central Park

The CBD Tolling Alternative would place tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment within Central Park. Side-fire⁸ tolling system equipment is proposed at three detection locations, four poles in total, just inside Central Park near 59th Street (see Chapter 2, “Project Alternatives”). The equipment would prevent authorized private vehicles that are using the park roads from entering the Manhattan CBD without paying the CBD toll. Equipment mounted on mast arms is also proposed at two locations along the east and west borders of the park to detect vehicles on Central Park West and Fifth Avenue. The tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment proposed within the jurisdictional boundaries of Central Park and adjacent sidewalks under NYC Parks control is described below:

- **On the roadways in the park that connect Park Drive to Seventh Avenue, Sixth Avenue, and Grand Army Plaza/Fifth Avenue:** On the park roads connecting to Seventh Avenue and Sixth Avenue (West Drive and Center Drive, respectively), the CBD Tolling Alternative would replace one existing streetlight pole—inside the park close to Central Park South/59th Street—on each road with a new streetlight pole with a side-fire-mounted detector and a small equipment box. **Figures 7-3a through 7-3d** show the locations of these poles, and **Figure 7-4a through 7-4c** compare views of these locations between the No Action and CBD Tolling Alternative. On the park road connecting to Grand Army Plaza (East Drive), the CBD Tolling Alternative would replace two existing streetlight poles—inside the park close to Central Park South/59th Street—with new poles with side-fire-mounted detectors and a small equipment box. These replacement streetlight poles would be in the same location and would have the same appearance as existing streetlight poles. The tolling system equipment mounted on them would use matching color schemes to blend with the appearance of the poles.

In addition, the CBD Tolling Alternative would place new signs on the replacement streetlight poles in Central Park to warn authorized drivers using the park roadway system that exiting to Central Park

⁶ Refer to Chapter 10, “Air Quality,” Chapter 12, “Noise,” and Chapter 14, “Asbestos-Containing Materials, Lead-Based Paint, Hazardous Wastes, and Contaminated Materials,” for more information. An analysis of the potential effects of shadows from tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment on publicly accessible open space was not warranted because the CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in new structures that would be taller than 50 feet, and therefore would not result in notable incremental shadows on any publicly accessible open space.

⁷ NYC Parks: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/street-tree-planting/best-practices>.

⁸ In certain locations, tolling system equipment would be mounted on a standard M2-A pole without a mast arm, referred to as a “side fire.”

South/59th Street via West Drive (at Seventh Avenue) or East Drive (at Grand Army Plaza) would incur a toll. Signs would be attached to the replacement pole on West Drive and to one of the poles on East Drive. The new signs would be on the replacement streetlight poles adjacent to the road, similar to other existing signs in the park, and would not affect any recreational area. The photographs in **Figures 7-3a through 7-3d** show existing views where signs are proposed on West Drive and East Drive, as well as the locations where tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment are proposed.

- **On Fifth Avenue:** On the sidewalk on the west side of Fifth Avenue (i.e., the sidewalk along Central Park), an existing streetlight pole would be replaced with a new pole at the same location. The new pole would contain a side-fire unit and a small equipment box. On the east side of Fifth Avenue, a new pole with a mast arm extending over Fifth Avenue would be installed. The streetlight pole would be similar in form to a standard NYCDOT streetlight pole. **Figure 7-5** shows a rendering of the proposed poles.
- **On Central Park West:** On the east sidewalk of Central Park West (i.e., the sidewalk along Central Park), a new pole with a 50-foot mast arm extending over the Central Park West roadway would be installed. The mast arm would have tolling system equipment mounted on it. **Figure 7-6** illustrates this proposed new tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment.

Equipment that is similar in appearance is already mounted on other poles in Central Park, and the tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment would be visually consistent with the existing streetlight poles found throughout Central Park, including matching the existing color scheme. Because the tolling system equipment would be mounted on replacement poles in the same locations as existing poles, the amount of park space would not be reduced. Therefore, there would be no adverse effect on recreational uses of Central Park from the proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment.

The Project Sponsors met with NYC Parks on multiple occasions to review project plans. NYC Parks was invited to review a preliminary draft of this EA. NYC Parks has also participated as a Consulting Party for the Project's review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (see **Chapter 8, "Historic and Cultural Resources"**). The Project Sponsors will also coordinate with NYC Parks and the Central Park Conservancy in the final design of the tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment in Central Park.

The CBD Tolling Alternative would result in changes in traffic patterns within and around the Manhattan CBD. As described in **Subchapter 4B, "Transportation: Highways and Local Intersections,"** based on the results of the traffic modeling conducted for the Project, the CBD Tolling Alternative under all tolling scenarios analyzed in this Environmental Assessment would reduce the traffic volumes adjacent to Central Park on Fifth Avenue and Central Park West as well as the traffic volumes crossing the park using the park's sunken transverse roads.⁹ Therefore, changes in traffic resulting from the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect the character of Central Park.

⁹ See **Chapter 2, "Project Alternatives,"** for more information on the tolling scenarios evaluated in this EA.

Figure 7-3a. Key to Central Park Photographs (Figures 7-3 through 7-6)



Source: Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. NYC Open Data, NYC Planimetrics. <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Transportation/NYC-Planimetrics/wt4d-p43d>.

Figure 7-3b. Photographs: Central Park East Drive near Grand Army Plaza



East Drive near Grand Army Plaza:
View south; light poles on west side of park roadway

1



East Drive near Grand Army Plaza:
View south; light poles on east and west sides of park roadway

2

Figure 7-3c. Photographs: Central Park Center Drive near Sixth Avenue



3
Center Drive near Sixth Avenue:
View southeast; light poles on northeast side of park roadway



4
Center Drive near Sixth Avenue:
View northwest; light poles on northeast side of park roadway

Figure 7-3d. Photographs: Central Park West Drive near Seventh Avenue

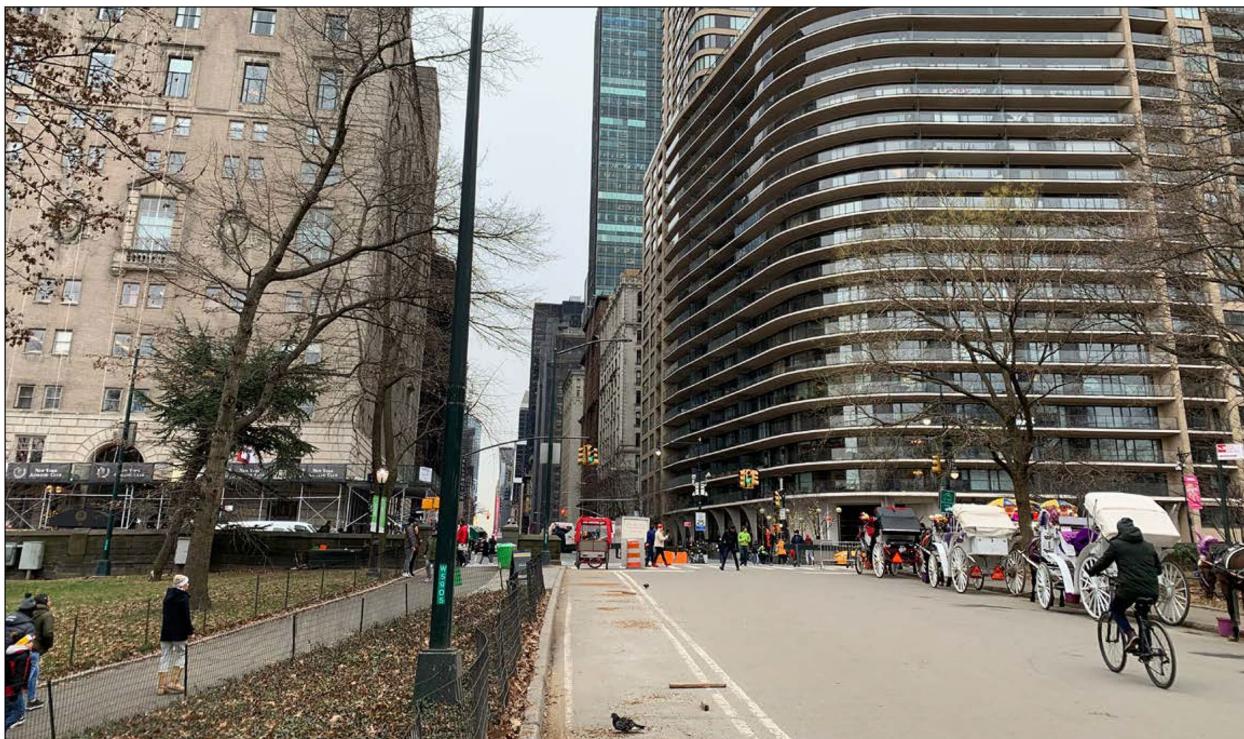


West Drive near Seventh Avenue:
View northwest; light poles on east side of park roadway

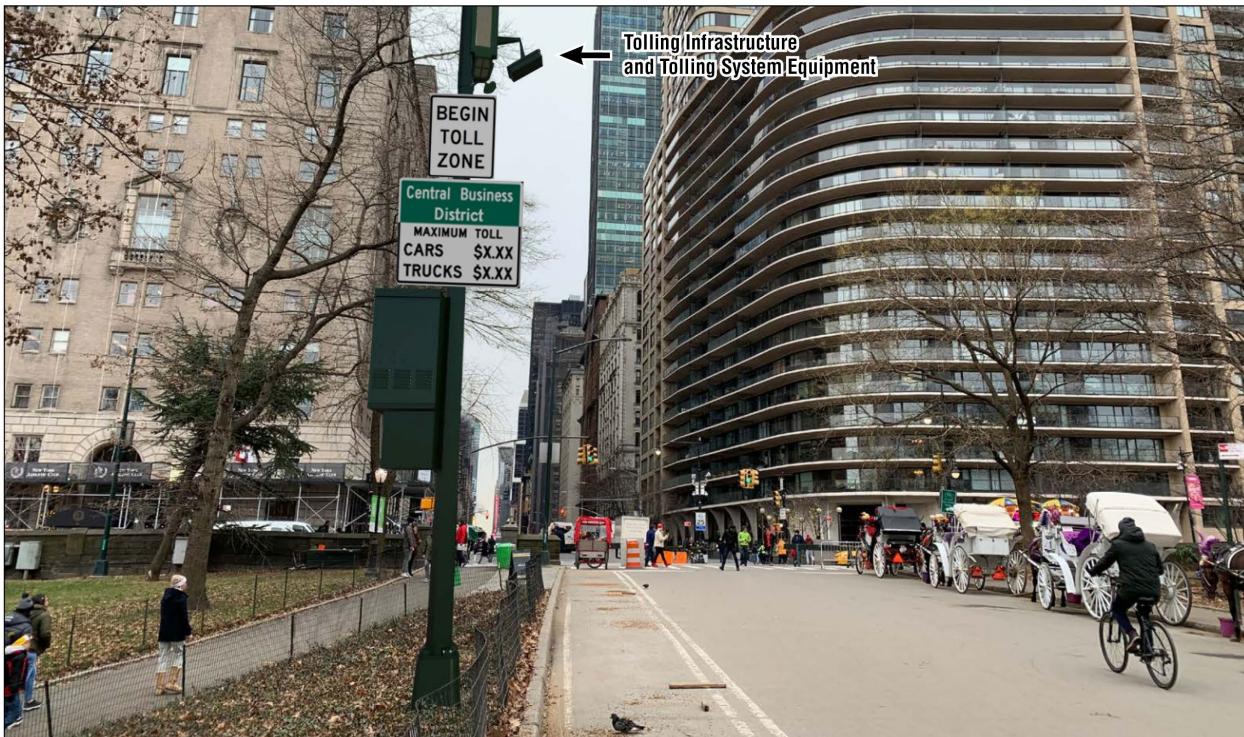


West Drive near Seventh Avenue:
View south; light poles on east side of park roadway

Figure 7-4a. Comparison of No Action Alternative versus CBD Tolling Alternative, Central Park West Drive near Seventh Avenue



No Action Alternative, view south



CBD Tolling Alternative, view south

Figure 7-4b. Comparison of No Action Alternative versus CBD Tolling Alternative, Central Park Center Drive near Sixth Avenue



No Action Alternative, view southeast



CBD Tolling Alternative, view southeast

Figure 7-4c. Comparison of No Action Alternative versus CBD Tolling Alternative, Central Park East Drive near Grand Army Plaza

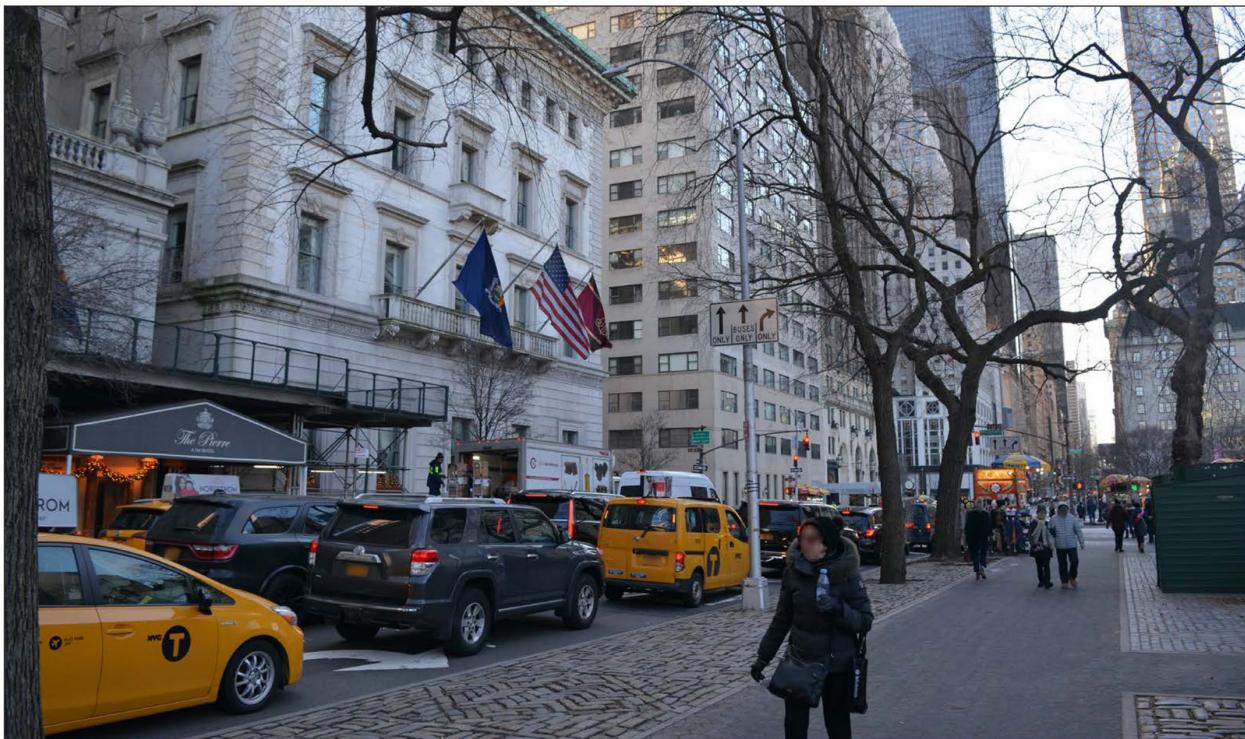


No Action Alternative, view northeast

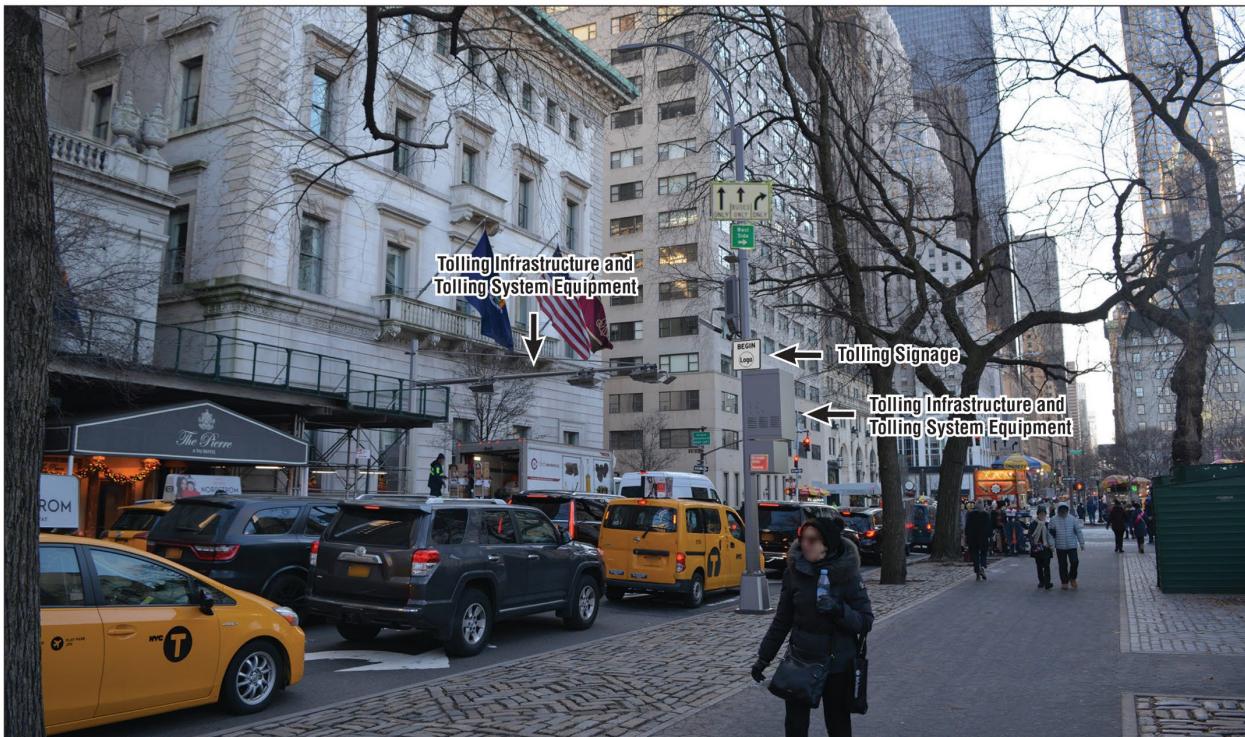


CBD Tolling Alternative, view northeast

Figure 7-5. Comparison Views of No Action Alternative versus CBD Tolling Alternative, Fifth Avenue at East 60th Street



No Action Alternative, view south



CBD Tolling Alternative, view south

Figure 7-6. Comparison Views of No Action Alternative versus CBD Tolling Alternative, Central Park West at West 60th Street



No Action Alternative, view north



CBD Tolling Alternative, view north

7.3.2.3 Potential Effects on the High Line

Proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment would be placed on a replacement pole adjacent to the High Line at the intersection of Tenth Avenue and West 30th Street. Tolling system equipment would also be attached to a metal pipe that would be bolted to the existing girders on the underside of the High Line (**Figure 7-7**). The CBD Tolling Alternative would add tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment of minimal visibility to the High Line structure that is consistent with the type of infrastructure already mounted on the structure including signage, traffic lights, and pedestrian crossing signals. No tolling infrastructure or tolling system equipment would be located atop the High Line within the publicly accessible parkland, and therefore, there would be no adverse effect on recreational uses of the High Line from the proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment.

7.3.2.4 Effects on Parks Protected by Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act

Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 (49 USC Section 303 and 23 USC Section 138) applies to the use of publicly owned parks and recreation areas.

FHWA has evaluated the potential use of parkland for this Project in accordance with Section 4(f). Implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative would require the placement of tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment within the jurisdictional boundaries of Central Park and adjacent sidewalks under NYC Parks control as well as on the underside of the High Line structure. FHWA, in consultation with NYC Parks, intends on finding that the CBD Tolling Alternative would result in a *de minimis* impact on the High Line and Central Park. (Refer to Chapter 19, “Section 4(f) Evaluation”.)

7.3.2.5 Effects on Parks that Have Received Section 6(f) Funding

Five parks within the parks study area have received LWCFA funding and are therefore Section 6(f) resources: The Battery, Coleman Playground, East River Park, Broadway Malls, and Central Park.¹⁰ The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and National Park Service must review any proposed conversions and temporary non-conforming uses of Section 6(f) resources in New York State.

The proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment near the parks that received LWCFA funding would be as follows:

- **The Battery:** No Project infrastructure or equipment is proposed within or adjacent to the park.
- **Coleman Playground:** No Project infrastructure or equipment is proposed within or adjacent to the park.
- **East River Park:** As part of the CBD Tolling Alternative, new tolling system equipment would be mounted on an existing pedestrian bridge above the FDR Drive at 25th Street, adjacent to this park. The presence of this new equipment would not affect any land within the park boundaries.

¹⁰ National Park Service. June 2019.

Figure 7-7. Comparison Views of No Action Alternative and CBD Tolling Alternative: High Line at Tenth Avenue and West 30th Street



No Action Alternative, view north on Tenth Avenue



CBD Tolling Alternative, view north on Tenth Avenue

- **Broadway Malls:** Based on preliminary design, the CBD Tolling Alternative would include new or replacement poles with mast arms on Broadway between West 60th and West 61st Streets. Based on preliminary design, these poles would be on the sidewalks on the east and west sides of Broadway and not within the median, where the Section 6(f) resource (recreational land) is located.
- **Central Park:** As discussed in **Section 7.3.2.2**, the CBD Tolling Alternative would place tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment at five locations just inside or adjacent to Central Park near Central Park South (59th Street). In all five locations, there would be no conversion of outdoor recreational space. To provide utility and communications connections to the new poles in Central Park, trenches would be dug from each pole to the nearest utility detection, and conduits would be laid in the trenches. Once the new connections are installed, the trenches would be covered and returned to their original condition. The amount of time required to construct these Project elements would be approximately two weeks at each location, and if additional time is needed, such as for regrowth of vegetation if any unpaved areas are affected for utility work, the total time from disturbance through restoration back to existing conditions would nonetheless be less than the six months set forth in the LWCFA guidance.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation found that the CBD Tolling Alternative would not adversely affect LWCF protected lands within Central Park because (1) the pole-mounted equipment would not remove any part of the LWCF recreation area from outdoor recreation use or impede recreational activities; (2) the construction activities for the trenching and laying of conduits are permissible under LWCF so long as the work is completed within six months and the lands impacted are returned to original surface condition; and (3) the Project would collect tolls from vehicles exiting the park and entering the tolling district that lies south of Central Park, and tolls would not be collected from vehicles entering Central Park from the tolling district and would not impede access by the public to the outdoor recreation facilities offered within the LWCF protected area (see **Appendix 7, “Parks and Recreational Resources: Documentation Related to Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act”**).

7.3.2.6 Effects on Parks that Have Received Section 1010 Funding

Central Park, which is partially within the parks study area, has received UPARRA assistance, but the CBD Tolling Alternative would not convert any park space from recreational use to another use (see discussion in **Section 7.3.2.5**); therefore, no coordination related to UPARRA Section 1010 is required.

7.4 CONCLUSION

Except for Central Park, the CBD Tolling Alternative would not place tolling infrastructure or tolling system equipment within mapped parkland. Tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment would be within the street, sidewalk, underside, or immediately adjacent areas of the parks and would not impair the use of or access to these parks. Except for Central Park, there would be no tolling infrastructure or tolling system equipment within parkland, and no tolling infrastructure or tolling system equipment would be located atop the High Line within the publicly accessible parkland.

The CBD Tolling Alternative involves the installation of four replacement poles within the southernmost portion of Central Park near 59th Street. It also includes a pole on Central Park West with a mast arm and a pole and sign on Fifth Avenue adjacent to the park. Equipment that is similar in appearance is already mounted on other poles in Central Park, and the tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment would be visually consistent with the existing streetlight poles found throughout Central Park, including matching the existing color scheme. Because the tolling system equipment would be mounted on replacement poles in the same locations as existing poles, the amount of park space would not be reduced. Therefore, there would be no adverse effect on recreational uses of Central Park from the proposed tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment. The Project Sponsors will coordinate with NYC Parks and the Central Park Conservancy in the final design of the tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment in and adjacent to Central Park.

In the parks study area, trees on city sidewalks and New York City public parks and recreation areas are regulated by NYC Parks. TBTA will mitigate any adverse effects to trees from the implementation of the CBD Tolling Alternative in consultation with NYC Parks and will undertake tree protection measures consistent with the requirements of NYC Parks. If trees are removed for the CBD Tolling Alternative or damaged during construction, tree replacement or restitution will be provided. TBTA will follow NYC Parks' specifications for all replacement trees.

As summarized in **Table 7-2**, the CBD Tolling Alternative would not result in adverse effects on parks and recreational resources in the local study area.

Table 7-2. Summary of Effects of the CBD Tolling Alternative on Parks and Recreational Resources

SUMMARY OF EFFECTS	EFFECT FOR ALL TOLLING SCENARIOS	POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT	MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS
New tolling infrastructure, tolling system equipment, and signage in the southern portion of Central Park	The Project would replace four existing streetlight poles at three detection locations in Central Park near 59th Street and on two adjacent sidewalks outside the park's wall. These poles would be in the same locations as existing poles and would not reduce the amount of park space or affect the features and activities of the park. The Project would also place tolling infrastructure beneath the structure of the High Line, outside the park area atop the High Line structure. FHWA through the public involvement process is soliciting public input related to the Project's effects on these parks (see Chapter 19, "Section 4(f) Evaluation.")	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment in and near Central Park visually consistent with streetlight poles that they replace, including the color scheme. ▪ Coordinate with NYC Parks and Central Park Conservancy in the final design of the tolling infrastructure and tolling system equipment in Central Park ▪ Avoid adverse effects to street trees; if needed, undertake tree protection measures consistent with the requirements of NYC Parks.