

4.10 Parklands

A. INTRODUCTION

The project area contains various types of parklands and recreational spaces. For the FEIS analysis, an area extending approximately 250 feet from both sides of each affected railroad line has been considered. This section of the FEIS documents the potential of the Build Alternative to affect parklands once the Build Alternative would be in operation, whether by encroaching on the areas directly or indirectly by causing increased noise and vibration, visual quality and aesthetics impacts, air quality impacts, vehicular and pedestrian traffic and circulation impacts and other disturbances that would affect these parklands.

Federal, state, and local regulatory requirements protect park and open space resources. Transportation projects affecting parks, recreation areas, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic sites require an evaluation pursuant to Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. 303) and the FHWA/FTA Environmental Impact and Related Procedures (23 CFR 771). According to Section 4(f), the federal government takes special effort to develop transportation plans and programs that include measures to maintain or enhance the natural beauty of lands crossed by transportation activities or facilities. Section 4(f) evaluation appears in Appendix 8 of this FEIS.

The United States Department of Interior (DOI) provides funding under The Land & Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA), 16 U.S.C. §§ 460l-4 to 460l-11 [commonly referred to as Section 6(f)], since the provision was originally contained in Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCFA, Public Law 88-578 of 1962, before codification) for state and local efforts to plan, acquire, or develop land to advance outdoor recreational activities. Using LWCFA funds, however, creates certain limitations on future changes to LWCFA-funded projects. Once LWCFA funds are utilized for a particular recreation project, conversion of that park facility for any non-recreational purpose is prohibited unless alternatives are assessed and steps are taken to identify, evaluate, and supply replacement parklands. In addition, DOI must grant prior approval for the conservation and replacement of parkland. No Section 6(f) funds were used to develop parklands in either the New Jersey or New York portions of the project area. Correspondence documenting this condition is contained within Appendix 4.10. Therefore, no Section 6(f) involvement would be anticipated.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

NEW JERSEY

APPLICABLE LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The New Jersey Green Acres program was created in 1961 to meet the state's recreation and conservation needs. The Program funds land acquisition and park development to preserve the natural environment, as well as the state's historic and cultural heritage. The diversion or disposal of land within the NJDEP Green Acres Program must be approved by property owners, the Commissioner of NJDEP, and the New Jersey State House Commission (NJSHC) (N.J.A.C. 7:36-26.1). However, regardless of funding from the NJDEP Green Acres Program, any recreation, conservation area, or parkland in New Jersey that is encroached upon due to the proposed Build Alternative would require the approval of NJDEP and the NJSHC.

EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Numerous plans identify the need and support for the development of open space and recreational facilities across Hudson County, including the NJMC Master Plan, the Hudson County Park Master Plan Update, the Hudson County Master Plan, the Hudson County Strategic Revitalization Plan, and the Hudson County Open Space and Recreation Plan. Each plan cites the importance of enhancing connections between inland areas and the Hackensack and Hudson Rivers, as well as reclaiming and redeveloping brownfield areas for recreational use. Both the Hudson County Open Space Recreation Map and the NJMC Green Map (which covers both Hudson and Bergen Counties) illustrate the proposed initiatives described in this section's future No Build conditions. Contents of these documents are summarized below.

Figures 4.10-1 and 4.10-2 depict existing parklands and open space within the New Jersey portion of the project area, as well as proposed initiatives. Further description of proposed initiatives are outlined in the No Build conditions found later in this section.

New Jersey Meadowlands Commission Master Plan

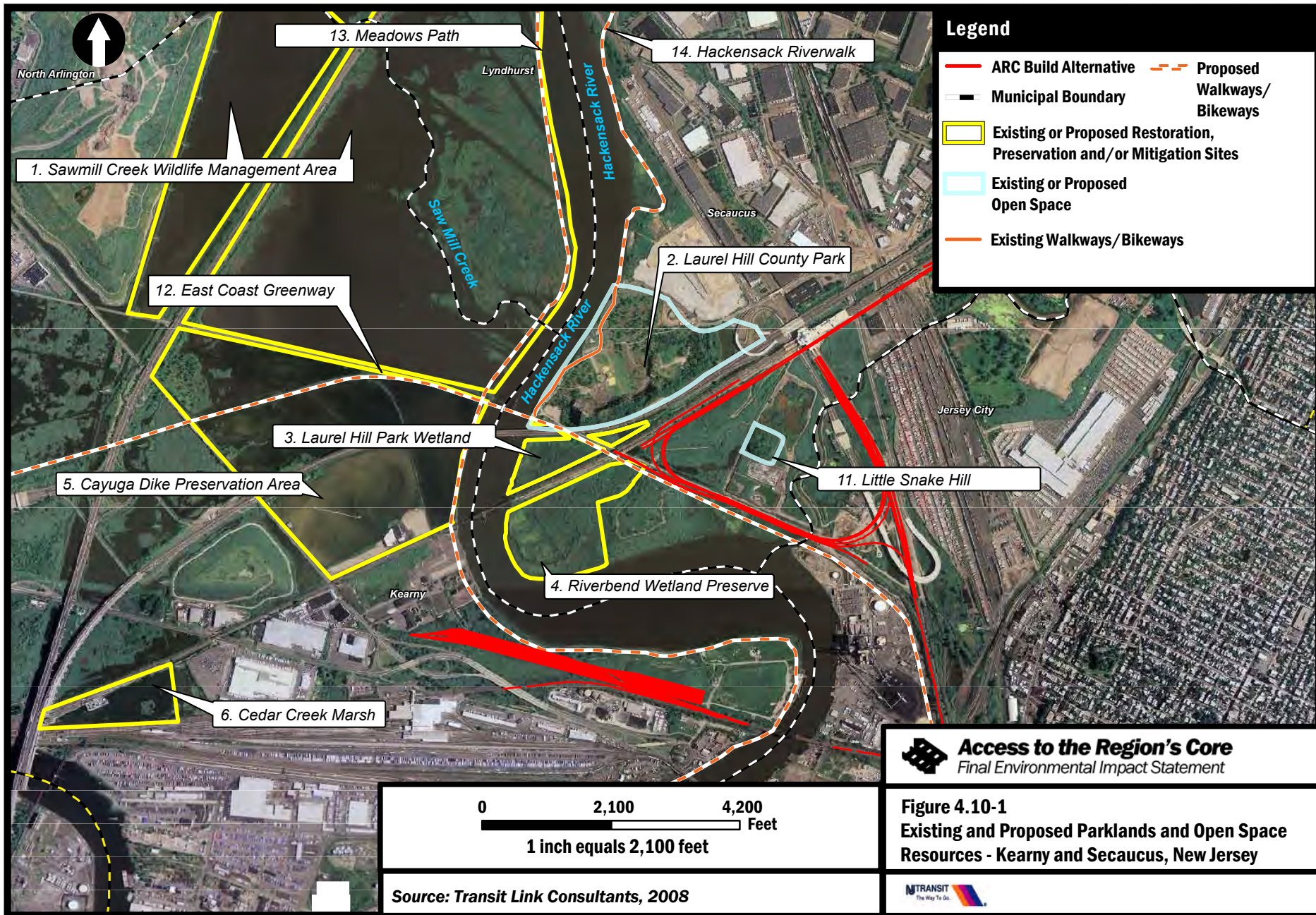
The NJMC Master Plan provides an overview of the existing and proposed parks within its jurisdiction. Of those resources, the proposed Meadows Path, which traverses the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area in Kearny, and the proposed Secaucus Greenway, a 15-mile waterfront greenway running from Secaucus to Jersey City, are two of the largest initiatives that would be undertaken by NJMC. The Secaucus Greenway would be a segment of the larger Hackensack RiverWalk (a.k.a. the Hackensack River Greenway). The Hackensack RiverWalk is further outlined in the future No Build conditions found later in this section.

Hudson County Strategic Revitalization Plan

The Strategic Revitalization Plan, drafted in 1999, cites the redevelopment of waterfront areas, including those properties along the Hudson River and Newark Bay, as one of the County's main priorities for revitalization. Waterfront walkways should be easily accessible and provide valuable waterborne activities not feasible at inland parks. Primary efforts for enhancing park and recreational facilities in the County include the completion of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway and the Hackensack River Urban Promenade. The County also plans to increase the number of acres devoted to parks and open space by 2010.

Hudson County Master Plan

The Hudson County Master Plan, adopted in 2002, identified the construction of waterfront walkways along the county's riverbanks as essential to the health and vitality of the County. Where appropriate, these improvements should be complemented by development in adjacent neighborhoods to create strong physical linkages. The Master Plan cites poor design and properties that have not yet been converted from their former industrial and rail-related uses to public open spaces as major hindrances to the completion of the Hudson River Walkway. To overcome the current obstacles, the Master Plan recommends the acquisition and construction of the missing links to complete the Walkway. According to the Hudson County Green Map, missing links exist in Jersey City, Hoboken, and in particular, North Bergen, as well as other municipalities not in the project area.





Legend

- ARC Build Alternative
- Municipal Boundary
- Parks and Open Space
- Proposed/Possible Parkland



Figure 4.10-2
Existing and Proposed Parklands and Open Space Resources - Union City and Hoboken, New Jersey

Source: Transit Link Consultants, 2008

Hudson County Open Space and Recreation Plan

Adopted in 2005, the Hudson County Open Space and Recreation Plan recommends that three percent of developable land in each Hudson County municipality and seven percent of developable land in the County be set aside for open space. The Plan identifies the development and redevelopment of the Hudson River waterfront as one of its primary objectives to create a sustainable environment with an appropriate balance of open space. The completion of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway enhances the potential for the redevelopment of neighboring areas and infill development.

Hudson County Park Master Plan Update

In April 2007, the Hudson County Park Master Plan Update identified nine parks in the County that would receive significant financial investment through 2013. Laurel Hill County Park in Secaucus is the only park identified that is located within the project area. Laurel Hill County Park is the most recently created park in Hudson County. The park has playing fields, picnic tables, playgrounds and water-oriented facilities such as boat launches, kayak rentals, and fishing piers. To maximize the potential to attract visitors to the park, upgrades, renovations, and new facilities totaling more than \$10 million will be implemented through 2013.

PARKLANDS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Table 4.10-1 lists existing parklands and open space located in the New Jersey portion of the project area. These resources are also shown on **Figures 4.10-1 and 4.10-2**, and are summarized by municipality.

Kearny

Within the Town of Kearny, the project area includes portions of the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area, the Cedar Creek Marsh, and the Cayuga Dike Preservation Area. The Meadows Path, which is partially completed, is a trail system that traverses the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area, located just north of the NEC.

Secaucus, Jersey City and North Bergen

In Secaucus, portions of the Riverbend Wetland Preserve and the proposed Little Snake Hill are in the project area. In addition, the unofficial Penhorn Preserve, which includes the headwater areas north of Secaucus Road in North Bergen (Penhorn Creek), the area surrounding the former Malanka Landfill, and PSE&G facilities, is located in Secaucus and North Bergen. No parklands are located in the Jersey City or North Bergen portions of the project area.

Union City

As shown in **Table 4.10-1**, three small parks are located within the Union City portion of the project area.

Hoboken

Several segments of the existing Hudson River Waterfront Walkway in Hoboken are in the planning stages, and would be anticipated to be completed when adjacent private developments, currently under construction, are completed.

HUDSON RIVER

The waterside portion of Hudson River Park extends from the Manhattan shoreline westward to the outermost pier edges. Boundaries, uses, facilities and permitting requirements for Hudson River Park and the jurisdiction and operations of the Hudson River Park Trust are described in the following New York section and in Section 4.9.

TABLE 4.10-1: EXISTING PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACE IN THE PROJECT AREA (NEW JERSEY)

Sl. No.	Parkland	Location	Total Area
1	Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area	Lyndhurst and Kearny – Along the Hackensack River, north of the NEC	477 acres
2	Laurel Hill County Park	Secaucus – Southern end of Secaucus east of the Hackensack River, north of the NEC, and south of the New Jersey Turnpike-Eastern Spur	105 acres

Source: *Transit Link Consultants, 2008; Green Map, January 2004, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission; Hudson County Master Plan, 2002; Hudson County Open Space and Recreation Plan 2005.*
 See Figures 4.10-1 and 4.10-2

TABLE 4.10-2: EXISTING PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACE IN THE PROJECT AREA (NEW JERSEY)

Sl. No.	Parkland	Location	Total Area
3	Laurel Hill Park Wetland	Secaucus – At a bend in the Hackensack River just north of the NEC and southwest of Laurel Hill County Park	(included above)
4	Riverbend Wetland Preserve	Secaucus – Bound by the Malanka Landfill to the south and east, the Hackensack River to the west and south, and Laurel Hill County Park to the north.	58 acres
5	Cayuga Dike Preservation Area	Kearny – North of the NEC	Approximately 60 acres
6	Cedar Creek Marsh	Kearny – Located on either side of the NEC	Approximately 20 acres
7	Veterans' Memorial Park	Union City – Corner of 17 th Street and West Street	Approximately 0.25 acre
8	Recreational field	Union City – Along 21 st Street on the block formerly owned by the St. Michael's Passionate Monastery Church	Approximately 1.5 acres
9	Public open space	Union City – At the corner of 18 th Street and West Street	Approximately 0.3 acre
10	Hudson River Waterfront Walkway	Hoboken – Along the Hudson River waterfront	18.5 miles

Source: *Transit Link Consultants, 2008; Green Map, January 2004, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission; Hudson County Master Plan, 2002; Hudson County Open Space and Recreation Plan 2005.*
 See Figures 4.10-1 and 4.10-2

NEW YORK

APPLICABLE LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

For New York City, the *CEQR Technical Manual* provides the most relevant guidance on the methods for assessing impacts to open space in New York City, and advises on the issue of “alienation” and conversion of parkland. In most cases, the requirement to obtain legislative authorization for the “alienation” of parkland is found in case law, not statutes, with the exception of statutory requirements relating to specific grant programs. CEQR advises that New York courts consistently hold that land dedicated for park purposes cannot be conveyed or used for another purpose without an authorizing act of the legislature.

Any construction activity within Hudson River Park would require State legislative action. New York State law declares that the City’s right to its parks and other public places is inalienable. Temporary or long-term use of publicly owned parkland for non-park purposes constitutes “alienation”, and requires the approval of the New York State Legislature. Before construction within any publicly owned parks can occur, approval from the New York State Legislature for such activity is necessary. Applicable legal and regulatory statutes include:

- Article 15 of the New York Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law, and the Park and Recreation Land Acquisition Bond Acts of 1960 and 1962
- Article 17 of the New York Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Law, and the Outdoor Recreation Development Bond Act of 1965
- Title 9 of Article 52 of the New York Environmental Conservation Law, and the Environmental Quality Bond Act of 1986
- Environmental Conservation Law Section 56 of the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act of 1996, which prohibits the sale, lease, exchange, donation, or other disposal of land acquired, developed, improved, restored, or rehabilitated for parks projects or use for other than public park projects without express authority of the State legislature. Legislative approval of an alienation would include specific requirements, such as substitution of property.
- Section 432.4 and 432.5 of Title 9 of the New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations (NYCRR), which sets forth procedures and requirements for alienation of Bond Act project parklands

Federal Section 4(f) (see Appendix 8) and Section 6(f) regulations are also applicable to the New York portion of the project area.

PARKLANDS AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

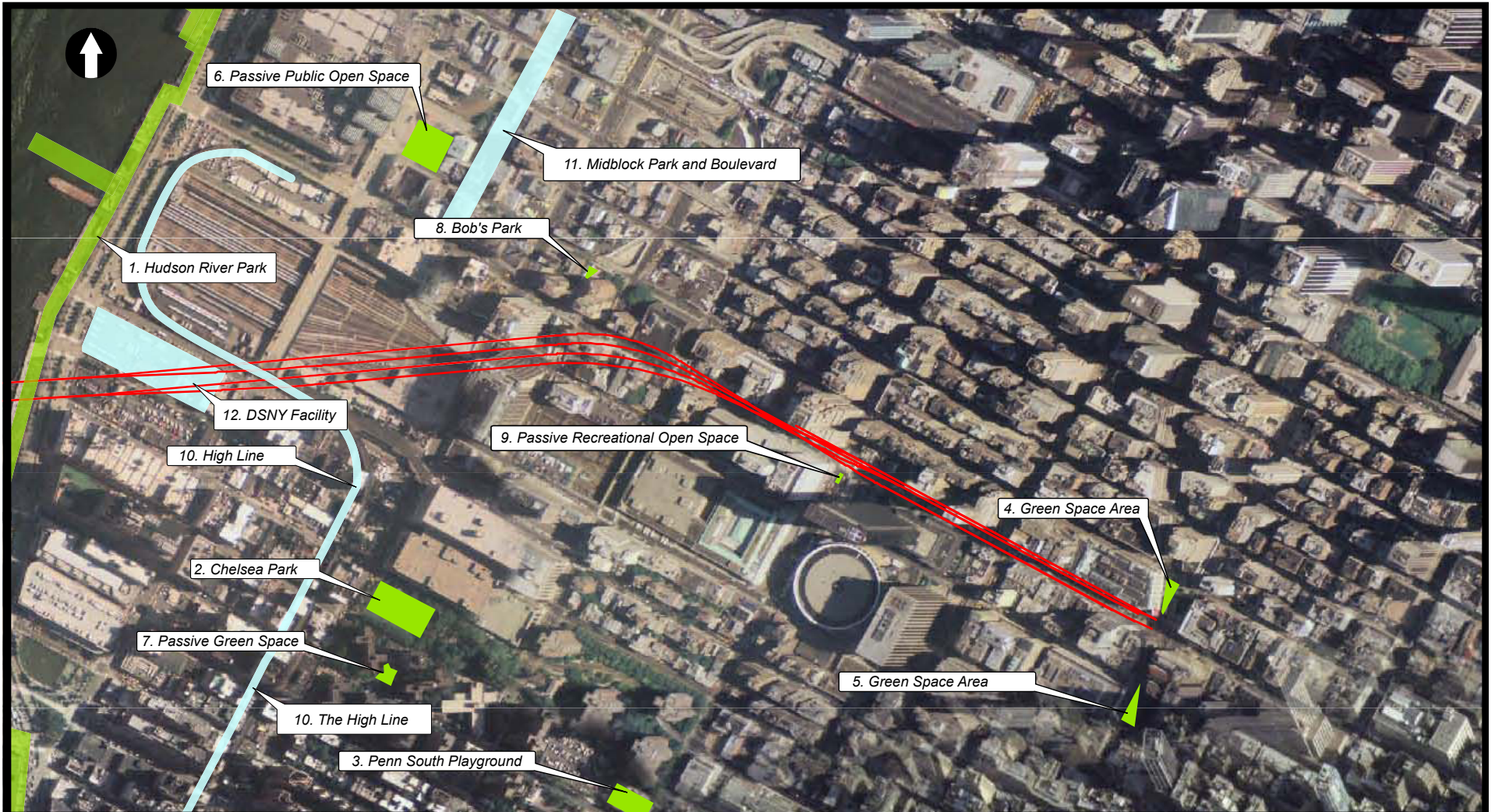
Table 4.10-2 lists existing parklands located in the New York portion of the project area. These resources are also shown on **Figure 4.10-3**.

C. FUTURE NO BUILD CONDITIONS

NEW JERSEY

PARKLANDS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Table 4.10-3 lists proposed parklands and open space expected to be in place by 2030 in the New Jersey portion of the project area. These resources are also shown on **Figures 4.10-1 and 4.10-2**. The future No Build conditions in the New Jersey portion of the project area comprise these proposed resources in **Table 4.10-3** and the existing resources listed in **Table 4.10-1**.



Legend

- ARC Build Alternative
- Parks and Open Space
- Proposed/Possible Parkland



Source: Transit Link Consultants, 2008

Figure 4.10-3
Existing and Proposed Parklands and Open Space Resources - West Midtown Manhattan, New York

TABLE 4.10-2: EXISTING PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACE IN THE PROJECT AREA (NEW YORK)

Map Key	Parkland	Location	Total Area
1	Hudson River Park	Extends from Battery Place to West 59 th Street on Manhattan's west side, including Pier 66 at West 26 th Street	5 miles
2	Chelsea Park	Bordered by West 28 th and West 27 th Streets and Ninth and Tenth Avenues	3.9 acres
3	Penn South Playground	On West 26 th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues	0.6 acre
4	Green space area	Bordered by Broadway to the west, Avenue of the Americas to the east, and West 35 th Street to the north	0.04 acre
5	Green space area	At the intersection of Greeley Square, West 33 rd Street, and Broadway	0.14 acre
6	Passive public open space	East side of Eleventh Avenue between West 35 th and West 36 th Streets, across from the Jacob Javits Convention Center	Approximately 0.9 acre
7	Passive green space	Across the street (West 27 th Street) from the southern boundary of Chelsea Park (part of a multi-family housing development)	Approximately 0.08 acre
8	Bob's Park	West 35 th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues	Approximately 0.02 acre
9	Passive recreational open space	Adjoining One Penn Plaza on the east side of Eighth Avenue between West 33 rd and West 34 th Streets	Approximately 0.05 acre

Source: *Transit Link Consultants, 2008.*

See Figure 4.10-3

TABLE 4.10-3: PROPOSED PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACE IN THE PROJECT AREA (NEW JERSEY)

Sl. No.	Parkland	Location	Total Area
11	Little Snake Hill	Secaucus/Laurel Hill – Little Snake Hill would be considered part of Laurel Hill County Park, although not physically connected to it, and would be located east of the Riverbend Wetland Preserve and Malanka Landfill, adjacent to the NEC.	59 acres
12	East Coast Greenway	Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City – This proposed route would run parallel to the Boonton Line through the Meadowlands and across the Hackensack River.	-
13	Meadows Path	Kearny – This proposed trail would run along the western side of the Hackensack River.	25.5 miles
14	Hackensack RiverWalk/ Hackensack River Greenway	Secaucus, Jersey City, and North Bergen – This proposed waterfront greenway would run along the eastern side of the Hackensack from Bayonne to North Bergen.	8 miles in total
15	Public open space	Hoboken – This proposed park would be located at 1600 Park Avenue (Block 256) and the northernmost portion of Block 141.	2 acres

Source: *Transit Link Consultants, 2008; Hudson County Park Master Plan Update, 2007; Hackensack RiverWalk 2003; East Coast Greenway Alliance, Inc. 2007; and Hudson County Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2005.*

Note: Numbers are a continuation of those found in Table 4.10-1. Existing and proposed parklands and open space are depicted on Figures 4.10-1 and 4.10-2.

Hudson County Recreational Development Initiatives

East Coast Greenway. The East Coast Greenway (ECG), upon completion, would be a continuous, off-road path running from Maine to Florida. In early 2007, a study proposed the routing for the Greenway in Northern New Jersey, which includes portions of the New Jersey project area. Five corridors were examined, including the Historic Rail/Jersey City Corridor to the Hudson River Ferry Crossing, which runs through Kearny, Secaucus, and Jersey City. The proposed route for this portion of the ECG would follow Norfolk Southern's former Newark Industrial and Boonton Line corridors, through the Meadowlands, across the Hackensack River via a new bridge or ferry, and would continue to Liberty State Park in Jersey City. Constructing a new bridge for bicycle and pedestrian use or implementing ferry service along the Historic Rail crossing at Laurel Hill County Park is unlikely. Consequently, the preferred Hackensack River crossings are the soon to be reconstructed Wittpenn Bridge and one of the two proposed spans that would replace the existing Portal Bridge. Both of the proposed routes would run through or parallel to the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area, Cayuga Dike Preservation Area, Riverbend Wetland Preserve, and Laurel Hill County Park.

Hackensack RiverWalk Plan/Hackensack River Greenway Plan. The Hackensack RiverWalk Plan contains a planned eight-mile waterfront park extending from Newark Bay in Bayonne to Bellman's Creek in North Bergen. Portions of the walkway currently have trails, such as those areas running through Laurel Hill County Park, just north of the NEC and within the project area. However, most of the RiverWalk is still in the planning phase, and land is being acquired by the county on a parcel-to-parcel basis. As proposed, the Hackensack RiverWalk Plan would run through the Riverbend Wetland Preserve. Links to the Liberty-Water Gap Trail at Lincoln Park and the ECG are anticipated.

Hackensack River Water Trail. In 2004, the Hackensack Riverkeeper and its partners began working with the National Park Service Rivers & Trails Program to develop a twenty-one-mile trail along the Hackensack River. Designed to connect communities, reconnect citizens with the riverfront, and provide new opportunities for passive and active recreation, the trail will stretch from the Oradell Dam to Newark Bay. Numerous points along the proposed water trail have been identified as areas requiring investment to make those locations suitable to host boat launching and other recreational activities along the riverfront. Because of its proximity to the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area, Laurel Hill County Park in Secaucus, located just north of the NEC, is currently one of the boat launch sites for the Hackensack River Water Trail. This boat launch site is the only site located within the New Jersey portion of the project area. Other sites located within project area municipalities, but outside the project area, include Mill Creek Point Park, also in Secaucus, and Lincoln Park in Jersey City.

Kearny

The Meadows Path is an urban trail running parallel with the western bank of the Hackensack River. When completed, this proposed resource would comprise a 25.5-mile trail system from Losen Slote Creek Park (Little Ferry) to Kearny Marsh in Kearny. To date, more than five miles of the path have been completed, of which more than one mile crosses the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area, located just north of the NEC. The ECG would also extend through Kearny.

Secaucus, Jersey City and North Bergen

Proposed greenways in Secaucus include the Hackensack RiverWalk/Hackensack River Greenway and the ECG, both described above. The ECG would also extend through Jersey City. The Hackensack RiverWalk/Hackensack River Greenway would also extend through Jersey City and North Bergen. Little Snake Hill, as described in Table 4.10-3, would be located in Secaucus.

Union City

No proposed park, open space or recreational areas are in this portion of the project area.

Hoboken

Several segments of the existing Hudson River Waterfront Walkway through Hoboken are in the planning stages, and would be anticipated to be completed when adjacent private developments are constructed. Construction is underway for a planned unit development that would include construction of a section of the walkway from the Hoboken-Weehawken border south to 16th Street near Weehawken Cove.

The City of Hoboken has recently acquired a two-acre site consisting of Block 256 located between 16th and 17th Streets and bounded by Willow Street to the west and Park Avenue to the east, and the northernmost portion of Block 141 located along 17th Street between Clinton and Willow Avenues, for use as park. The area is currently undergoing tests to determine if the land is contaminated and would require remediation.

HUDSON RIVER

No proposed parklands are planned in this portion of the project area.

NEW YORKPARKLANDS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Table 4.10-4 lists proposed parklands and open space expected to be in place by 2030, in the New York portion of the project area. These resources are also shown on Figure 4.10-3. The future No Build conditions in the New York portion of the project area comprise these proposed resources in Table 4.10-4 and the existing resources listed in Table 4.10-2.

TABLE 4.10-4: PROPOSED PARKLANDS AND OPEN SPACE IN THE PROJECT AREA (NEW YORK)

Sl. No.	Parkland	Location	Area
10	The High Line	West 34 th Street to Gansevoort Street between the West Side Highway and Ninth Avenue; currently under construction.	1.5 miles
11	Midblock Park and Boulevard	Midblock between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues from West 33 rd Street to West 39 th Street.	4.3 acres
12	DSNY Facility	Located between West 29 th and West 30 th Streets west of Eleventh Avenue (Block 675).	1 city block

Source: Friends of the High Line, 2007; Hudson Yards Development Corporation, 2007.

Note: Numbers are a continuation of those found in Table 4.10-2. Existing and proposed parklands and open space are depicted on Figure 4.10-3.

Hudson River Park has been divided into six construction segments that share common design elements. The segments located within the project area are Segment 5 (Gansevoort Peninsula to West 25th Street) and Segment 6 (West 25th Street to West 44th Street). Both of these segments are under construction; the Hudson River Park Trust is responsible for these construction activities.

Segment 5 is planned to feature two expansive spaces for active recreation, including a beach, an area for small boating and ball fields on the southern end and a passive recreation area at the north. Among the piers in Segment 5, Pier 66 at West 26th Street is closest to and just south of the Build Alternative. Pier 66 has been rebuilt with a boathouse for kayaking and community boating, and is open to the public. Pier

64, located at West 23rd Street, is within the project area. Pier 64 is part of a larger area known as Chelsea Cove, which also includes Piers 62 and 63 located to the south and outside the project area. Chelsea Cove is currently under construction, and the old piershed portion of Pier 64 will be removed and a new pier will be built. The new pier will host a green space stretching into the Hudson River. Just south of Pier 66, Pier 66a, also known as the historic Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Float Transfer Bridge, will host a private concession, which will include a barge and the historic *Frying Pan* and *John J. Harvey* vessels.

Segment 6 is planned to include a large ecological habitat area, two boathouses, a rocky beach, and a major civic plaza with a fountain near West 42nd Street. North of Pier 66 is Pier 72 at West 32nd Street. Depending on permitting and approval, a heliport, currently located along the Hudson River at West 30th Street, may be relocated to Pier 72 within the next few years. The area between West 30th and West 34th Streets will include two small park buildings—one will serve as a classroom/educational center and the other for park maintenance needs and public restrooms. A non-swimming beach is planned for the area south of Pier 76 along the existing bulkhead. Still in preliminary design stages is a pedestrian bridge that would connect Hudson River Park to new developments at the Hudson Rail Yards. This bridge would be located in the area of West 30th Street. A horse stable for NYPD police horses has recently been relocated from Pier 63 to Pier 76 at West 36th Street.

The block between West 29th and West 30th Streets west of Eleventh Avenue (Block 675) is occupied by New York City Department of Sanitation facilities, truck parking, an auto body shop and filling station. In recent years, various plans have been contemplated for Block 675, including a public park. The property is not currently a mapped park or designated a park in current zoning. The current property owner has plans to construct a 60-story hotel and event space on a portion of the block.

Another planned open space is a 1.5-mile-long linear park atop a historic elevated rail structure (High Line) that spans 22 blocks from West 34th Street to Gansevoort Street, between the West Side Highway and Ninth Avenue. Currently under construction, this passive linear open space will contain a walkway, benches, landscaping, and kiosks. While used as passive open space, the High Line will retain its status as a railroad right-of-way. Under the Special West Chelsea District Rezoning Proposal, development rights would be allowed to be transferred from the High Line to designated receiving sites within the Special District, to encourage preservation of light and air around the High Line. To encourage connections to the High Line and the preservation of light, air, and views, new development along Tenth Avenue adjacent to the High Line would be subject to a series of building bulk and use controls. Some of the manufacturing and commercial uses in the area would be rezoned to permit further residential development.

The Midblock Park and Boulevard System would run between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues from West 33rd Street to West 39th Street. Phase I, which includes the area from West 33rd Street to West 36th Street, is proposed to be completed in 2013.

D. LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF THE BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Long-term impacts of the Build Alternative have been assessed primarily with respect to encroachment on park resources, noise and vibration, visual quality and aesthetics, air quality and vehicular and pedestrian traffic and circulation and disruption of its use. Since the majority of the Build Alternative would be underground, long-term impacts on existing and proposed recreational areas would not occur. However in Secaucus, Jersey City and North Bergen, the Build Alternative would be located above ground, but located in either undeveloped or minimally developed areas. The impacts that would result because of construction activities are described below and in Section 5.10. A Section 4(f) evaluation appears in Chapter 8.

NEW JERSEY

Several properties in Hoboken and Secaucus have been identified to be potentially encumbered by the NJDEP Green Acres Program. Research with local municipalities would be necessary to verify if there are Green Acres restrictions. If Green Acres restrictions are identified, the use of these properties for the project would require the approval of property owners, the Commissioner of NJDEP, and the NJSHC. (See previous discussion of Applicable Legal and Regulatory Requirements.)

KEARNY

Within the Town of Kearny, the project area includes portions of the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area, Cayuga Dike Preservation Area, Cedar Creek Marsh, and the proposed Meadows Path and ECG. The Build Alternative would not cause any long-term impacts to these resources. However, since the proposed Meadows Path would run along the western bank of the Hackensack River and would be adjacent to the proposed Kearny Rail Yard under the Build Alternative, long-term access to this linear greenway would be coordinated as the Build Alternative and these parkland initiatives would advance through the design phase. Access to the ECG, which would run parallel to Norfolk Southern's former Boonton Line, would not be precluded by the Build Alternative.

SECAUCUS, JERSEY CITY AND NORTH BERGEN

In Secaucus, as a result of the Build Alternative, Little Snake Hill would be encircled by the Secaucus Connection, which would be sited at-grade and along a viaduct parallel to the NEC. The Build Alternative would not cause any long-term impact to Little Snake Hill, because it is anticipated that Hudson County would obtain an access easement from PSE&G, the current owners of the site, for the creation of a path that would permit access to Little Snake Hill. This path, which would be coincident with a portion of the proposed ECG, would run along the west side of the Build Alternative Secaucus Connection. Permanent access to PSE&G property within the Secaucus Connection would be provided by a bridge over the loop tracks with connections to existing access roads. No long-term noise, vibration, or visual/aesthetic impacts to Little Snake Hill would be expected, since the Build Alternative would not markedly change these conditions from those already experienced from rail operations on the NEC and the Main, Bergen, and Pascack Valley lines.

A connection between the ECG and Little Snake Hill would allow for the linkage of proposed greenways across Hudson County, permitting uninterrupted bicycle and pedestrian movements. Construction of the Build Alternative would not preclude Hudson County or others from acquiring lands to effectuate the ECG or the Hackensack RiverWalk/Hackensack River Greenway. Access would be maintained under the Build Alternative; therefore, no long-term impacts are anticipated. Approximately 0.16 acre of the Riverbend Wetland Preserve would be impacted by construction of the Secaucus Connection (see Section 4.8). **Figure 4.10-1** shows existing and proposed parklands, open space, and greenways and their relation to the Build Alternative.

In Jersey City and North Bergen, no parklands are located in the project area, and no impacts would be anticipated.

UNION CITY

In Union City, parklands and public open space areas are located in the project area, including: Veterans' Memorial Park, which is approximately located above the proposed tunnels, and Union City Board of Education and city-owned land (a ball field and a small area of city-owned public open space). Since the Build Alternative would be located up to 250 feet below grade, no impacts to parkland and public open space would occur.

HOBOKEN

The Build Alternative would require a fan plant and construction access shaft to be built in the northernmost section of Hoboken, adjacent to the Adams Street Wastewater Treatment Plant. The fan plant would be 56 feet tall, with a diameter of 164 feet. As identified in the Hoboken Master Plan, the municipality has recently acquired a two-acre site consisting of Block 256 located between 16th and 17th Streets and bounded by Willow Street to the west and Park Avenue to the east, and the northernmost portion of Block 141 located along 17th Street between Clinton and Willow Avenues, for use as a park. The site is currently undergoing tests for contamination. The proposed park would be located on the south side of the HBLRT. The Hoboken Fan Plant would be located north of the HBLRT more than 450 feet to the west of the proposed park, and, as such, no operational or long-term impacts are anticipated, including air quality, noise, and visual/aesthetic conditions.

Before reaching the western edge of the Hudson River, the Build Alternative would cross under a section of the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway that is being developed in Hoboken. The tunnels depth, which would be approximately 100 feet in this area, would be sufficient to avoid any conflicts with or impacts to the walkway.

HUDSON RIVER

The Build Alternative tunnels in the Hudson River would be aligned just north of the northwestern edge of Pier 66 within Hudson River Park. As discussed in Chapter 5, Build Alternative tunneling would be over 100 feet below the Hudson River Bulkhead, the waterside portion of Hudson River Park, and the landside portion of the park between the shore and Twelfth Avenue. This depth would be well below the remains of wharves and piers that lie under the riverbed; thus, tunneling activities would not disturb them. Since tunneling would be limited to areas underneath the river bottom, adverse impacts to existing marine habitats, waterside activities, or the shoreline are not anticipated.

NEW YORK

Tunneling and construction staging areas would be limited to Block 674, on the east side of Route 9A between West 28th and West 29th Streets. Tunneling would begin on Block 674, where it would reach a depth of approximately 150 feet below grade after passing under Hudson River Park and the eastern portion of the Hudson River. Therefore, no long-term or temporary construction-related impacts and no alienation to either the waterside or landside portions of Hudson River Park would occur. However, tunneling underneath Hudson River Park would require obtaining a permit processed through HRPT (see Section 5.10 and Chapter 11). Coordination with HPRT in that regard is ongoing.

As summarized in **Table 4.10-2**, Manhattan parklands/open space areas located in the project area also include: Chelsea Park (approximately 1,000 feet from the Build Alternative alignment); Penn South Playground (approximately 1,300 feet from the Build Alternative alignment); and several smaller green/public open space areas (the closest of which would be adjacent to West 34th Street above the Build Alternative alignment. The Build Alternative alignment would be approximately 150 feet below grade in this area).

The Build Alternative would not require the encroachment of parklands, and would not impact or disrupt activities in the above-mentioned parklands, including the High Line and Hudson River Park.

A shadow screening analysis (see Section 4.5) was performed in accordance with *New York City Environmental Quality Review* regulations and criteria to determine if the proposed fan plants in Manhattan would impact nearby parklands. No significant shadows from the Twelfth Avenue Fan Plant would impact Hudson River Park. No impacts on a PANYNJ-owned community garden would result from the Dyer Avenue Fan Plant.

E. MITIGATION

- Compensatory wetland mitigation for the impacted portion (0.16 acre) of the Riverbend Wetland Preserve, which is an open space resource, is proposed, as discussed in Section 4.8.
- Access to the proposed Little Snake Hill from the adjacent PSE&G property is anticipated through an easement between PSE&G and Hudson County, separate from the Build Alternative. To assure permanent access to the PSE&G property within the proposed Secaucus Connection, NJ TRANSIT will provide a bridge over the loop tracks with connections to existing access roads.
- NJ TRANSIT will conduct research with local municipalities to verify if any properties in the New Jersey project area are subject to Green Acres restrictions. The use of Green Acres properties will comply with the diversion process for the New Jersey Green Acres Program (N.J.A.C. 7:36-26.1).