

A. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

The City of New York Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), in coordination with USTA National Tennis Center, Incorporated (USTA)¹, is seeking a number of discretionary actions in connection with proposed improvements and an expansion to the facilities at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center (NTC), located in Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens (see **Figure 1-1**). These improvements collectively are known as the NTC Strategic Vision (the proposed project). The NTC is located on a portion of Queens Block 2018, Lot 1, on park land leased by DPR to USTA. The leased site is bounded to the north by the railway tracks of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR)'s Port Washington line; United Nations Avenue North to the south; the Passerelle Building (connects LIRR's Mets-Willets Point station to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)'s 7 train station, and Citi Field, the New York Mets baseball stadium) and Path of the Americas to the east²; and Grand Central Parkway to the west.³

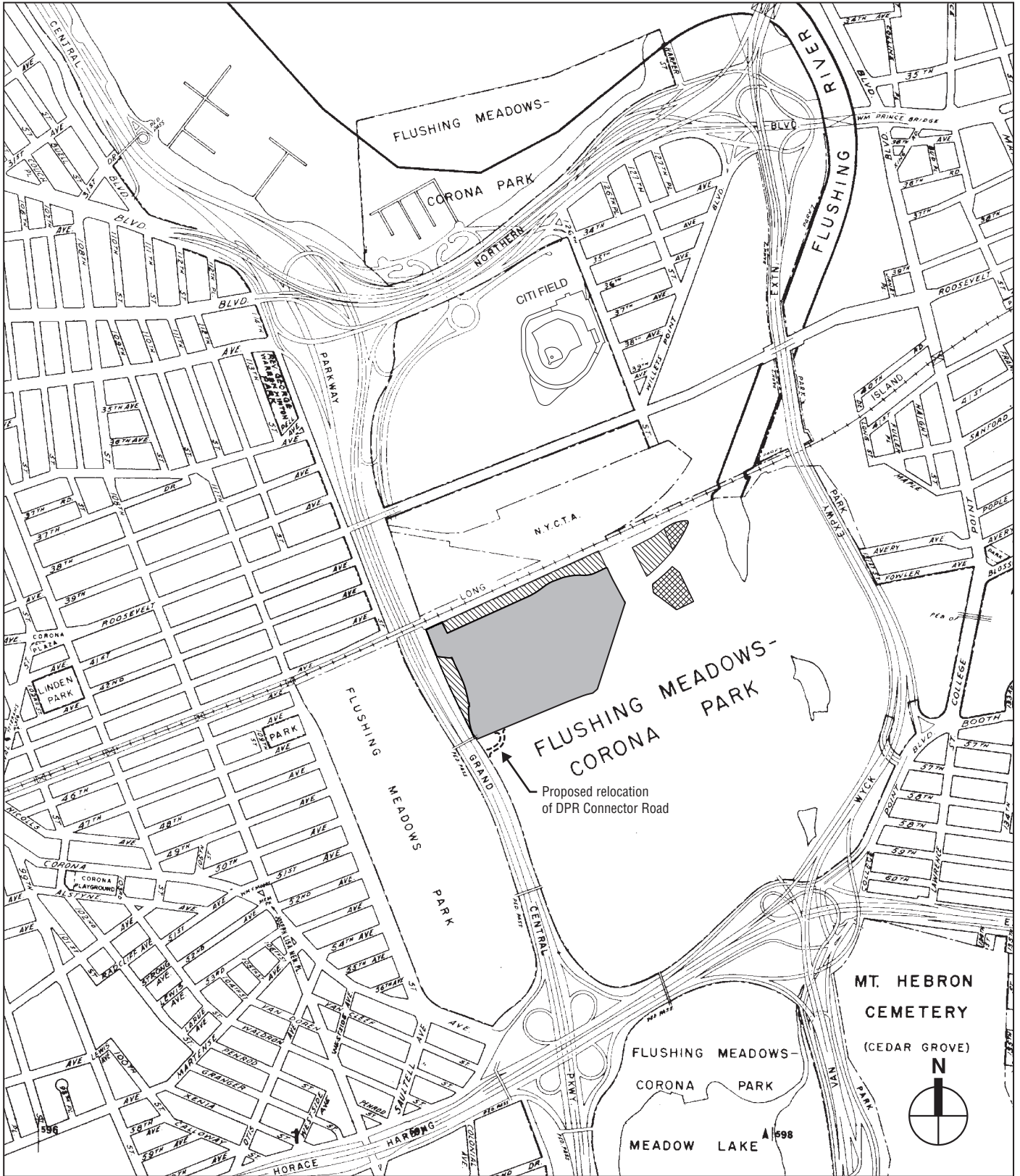
The 42-acre NTC is one of the world's largest public recreational tennis facilities. For 11 months of the year, its facilities are open to the public for indoor and outdoor tennis; USTA maintains the facilities year-round. The NTC is also host to the US Open, one of the sport's four Grand Slam championship tennis tournaments. The event is staged during a two-week period around the beginning of September, is attended by approximately 700,000 spectators, and is broadcast worldwide.

The proposed project would improve the NTC site plan, circulation, visitor amenities, and landscaping, and would include construction of two new stadiums to replace the existing Louis Armstrong Stadium (Stadium 2) in the same location, and Grandstand Stadium (Stadium 3), in a new location at the southwest corner of the NTC site, as well as possible improvements to Arthur Ashe Stadium (Stadium 1). The proposed project would also include modifications to tournament courts and ancillary buildings, the construction of two new parking garages, the relocation of a connector road, and pedestrian enhancements. To accommodate the proposed project, 0.94 acres of land would be added to the NTC site, including 0.68 acres of park land that would be alienated, and 0.26 acres of previously alienated park land associated with the connector road that is outside the current lease. Replacement park land in two parcels totaling 1.56 acres would be surrendered from within the current boundaries of the NTC in connection with the alienation of the 0.68-acre parcel. Just to the south of the NTC, the relocated connector road and new sidewalks would be built on an approximately 0.3-acre area. Improvements to park

¹ USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center Incorporated, an affiliate of the United States Tennis Association, Incorporated, operates the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.

² The NTC lease also covers 11 tennis courts located to the east of the Passerelle Building ~~that are not affected by the proposed project.~~

³ The roads within the NTC site are not included in the lease.



-  Project Site
-  NTC Leased Premises Land not Affected by the Proposed Project
-  Currently Alienated Land to be Returned as Replacement Park Land

Note: Roads within the NTC site are not included in the lease

Project Location
Figure 1-1

features in Flushing Meadows Corona Park would also be provided, as described in greater detail below. If approved, the proposed project is expected to be completed by 2019.

In the early stages of the development of the project, DPR issued a predictive determination that the project may have a significant impact on the environment, requiring that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared. This ~~Final Draft~~ EIS (FDEIS), in conformance with the final scope dated December 27, 2012, has been prepared to describe the proposed project, present the proposed framework for the EIS analysis, and assess the potential for project impacts. The 2012 *City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) Technical Manual* serves as a guide on the methodologies and impact criteria for evaluating the project's potential effects on the various environmental areas of analysis.

B. PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed project is to sustain the long-term viability of the NTC as a world-class spectator venue and outstanding public recreational facility. It would result in a much needed improvement to the visitor experience and provide substantial long-term economic benefits to Queens, New York City, and the region.

BACKGROUND

The US Open, which dates back to 1881, moved to its current site in Flushing Meadows Corona Park in 1978, making its facilities available to the public 11 months of the year. In 1993, the NTC site expanded from 21.6 acres to approximately 42.2 acres to allow for the construction of a new 23,500-seat stadium (Arthur Ashe Stadium), completed in 1997. The 1993 expansion required alienation of park land following review by the City through its Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). The tennis center was renamed the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in 2006. Today, the NTC is one of the largest public tennis facilities in the world. The US Open attracts over 700,000 spectators annually and generates substantial economic benefits in New York City.

The nearly 900-acre Flushing Meadows Corona Park—Queens' largest public park—was created for the 1939-1940 World's Fair. It offers a variety of event-oriented recreational activities, as well as lawns, fields, and playgrounds for active and passive recreation. Portions of this park (but not the NTC) have been improved with funds from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act, and much of the park, including the NTC, is subject to LWCF requirements. The health, welfare and recreational public purposes of the NTC have been recognized by the New York State Legislature and the New York City Council in the State legislation and City Administrative Code provisions that govern the NTC lease, as well as by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS), which determined in 1993 that the expansion and renovation of the NTC is consistent with the LWCF grant-in-aid manual requirements governing Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

The USTA and the affiliated United States Tennis Association promote and develop tennis in the community through a wide range of programs. More than 100,000 participants of all ages, the majority of whom are from the local Queens community, participate in hundreds of community tennis programs at the NTC each year. The NTC is home court for more than 70 New York City high schools and colleges and a number of diverse organizations seeking a place to play tennis or host tournaments. USTA offers court rentals to the public at rates calculated under USTA's lease with the City. The grounds of the NTC are also open 11 months of the year to visitors of

Flushing Meadows Corona Park, free of charge. Approximately \$1 million is spent each year for other United States Tennis Association tennis programs in New York City as well, including grants for free tennis programs, free equipment, court refurbishments, and scholarships, all supported by revenues from the US Open.

Through its flagship event, the US Open, USTA has significant world-wide reach and economic impact on the City of New York. Approximately 42 percent of US Open patrons come from outside the New York metro area, including 14 percent from outside the US. During the US Open, attendees, players, media, sponsors and staff generate substantial demand for the City's hotel and hospitality industry. The US Open also creates 6,000 seasonal jobs, a large percentage of which go to residents of Queens and Brooklyn. On television and through the media, the US Open's reach is global. It attracts 85 million US TV viewers and is seen in 188 countries, with more than 41,000 hours of coverage.

CURRENT PROJECT SITE CONDITIONS

Two of the NTC site's three stadiums—Louis Armstrong Stadium and Grandstand Stadium—are approaching 50 years of age and nearing the end of their useful lives. Notable deficiencies include: constricted circulation; inadequate restrooms; prone to flooding; and infrastructure issues, as the stadiums were designed for the 1964-1965 World's Fair.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the project include the following:

- Replace and upgrade aging, out-of-date infrastructure and facilities that have reached the end of their useful lives.
- Expand public plazas and promenades and improve functionality of public spaces and open areas within the NTC.
- Improve circulation, comfort and safety for visitors and players.
- Activate underutilized spaces within the NTC site.
- Increase the capacity of the NTC site to allow for more daytime attendance at the US Open.
- Enhance economic benefits of the US Open in Queens, New York City, and the region.
- Increase availability of on-site parking.
- Improve the reliability of the NTC site for the US Open during inclement weather.
- Increase player visibility during US Open practice and early tournament play.
- Increase efficiency and sustainability of infrastructure and landscaping.
- Develop a consistent design experience for sponsor partners.
- Enhance food service and retail offerings during the US Open.
- Develop a consistent visual theme and signage for food service.

Within the framework of these goals, the proposed project would: minimize expansion beyond NTC lease boundaries; maintain or improve public availability of courts; improve the NTC's context within the park; and maintain opportunities for public programming throughout the year. Without the expansion of the NTC attributable to the disposition of 0.94 acres of City property, the NTC Strategic Vision would not be implemented and the project goals would not be met.

The proposed site improvements and other components of the NTC Strategic Vision are intended to collectively further these key objectives, addressing serious deficiencies in the three existing stadiums and making the NTC more comfortable and friendly to the public, fans, sponsors and players, and recreational users, year-round.

The proposed project would also enable the USTA to accommodate an extra 10,000 daily spectators during the US Open. It is expected that the proposed project would increase attendance at the US Open by up to approximately 100,000 new visitors, positively affecting not only the revenues from the US Open but the local hospitality market as well. It would also create jobs during construction and upon completion.

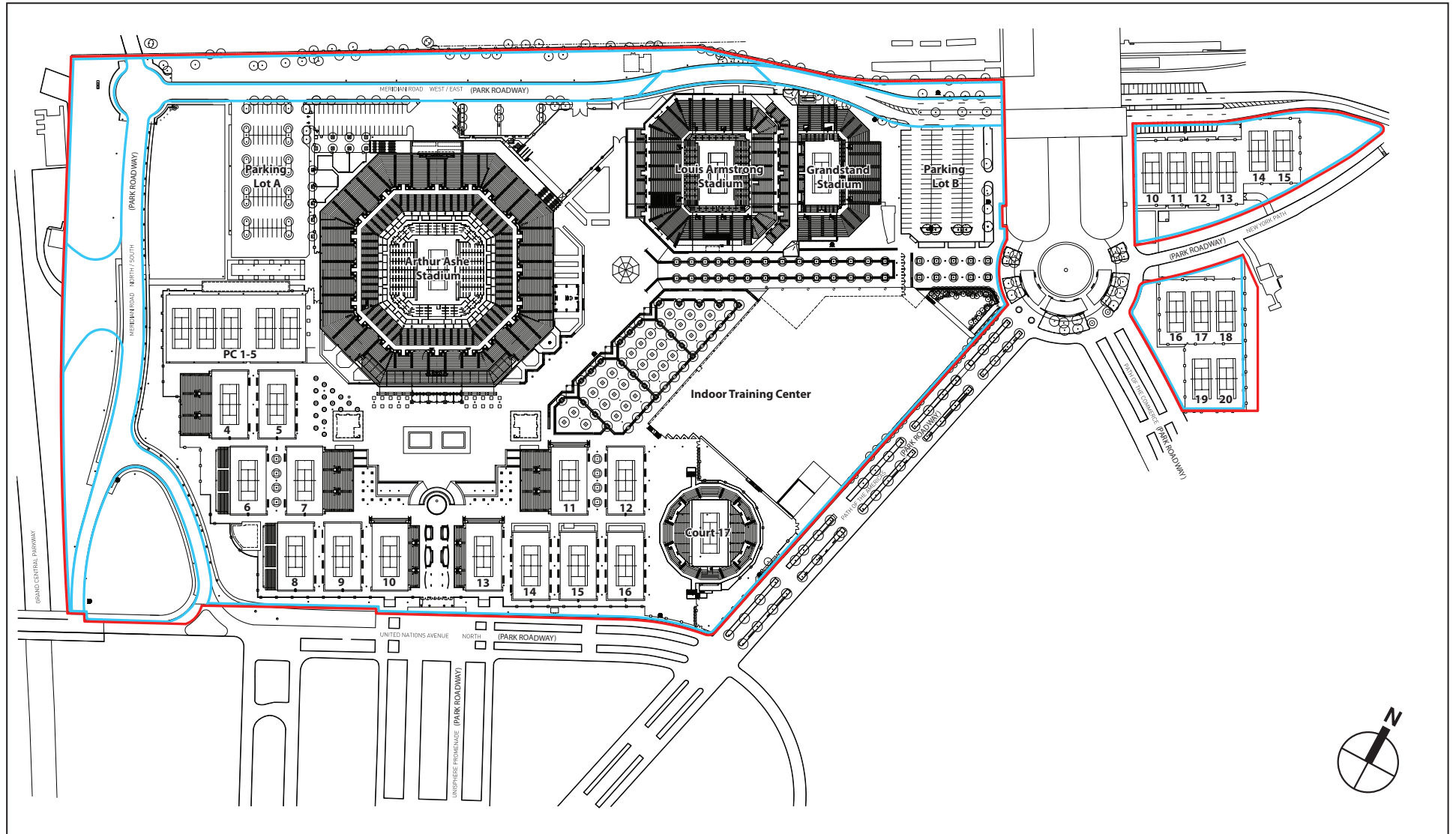
C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The NTC and the US Open are important recreational and economic assets to Queens, New York City, and the region. The NTC Strategic Vision reflects the need to maintain and enhance NTC facilities, to ensure its continuing contribution to the local community and the City.

OVERVIEW

The NTC Strategic Vision would result in a number of physical improvements and alterations to the facility's plan. Overall, the proposed project would add 0.94 acres to the NTC site, including 0.68 acres of park land that would be alienated, and 0.26 acres of previously alienated park land associated with the connector road that is currently not included in the lease. **Figure 1-1** shows the approximately 37.48-acre¹ project site and the additional areas of the 42-acre NTC site located in Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens; **Figure 1-2** and **Figure 1-3** show the alienated and leased boundaries of the NTC and the additional 0.94 acres provided for as part of the proposed project; **Figure 1-4** shows the current site plan for the NTC; and **Figure 1-5** shows the proposed future site plan under the proposed project. The major project elements are summarized in **Table 1-1**, and more detailed descriptions of the project elements, including new stadiums, tournament courts, ancillary buildings, parking and transportation modifications, and pedestrian enhancements, are provided below.

¹ The full NTC is 42.2 acres. The 37.48-acre project site includes: the 35.3-acre portion of the NTC site bounded by Meridian Road, United Nations Avenue North, and Path of the Americas; the 0.94 acres that would be added to the site along the southern and western boundaries; the 0.94-acre Lot S1, located west of Meridian Road at the northwest corner of the site; and the approximately 0.3-acre relocated connector road area, which would remain under City ownership and control.



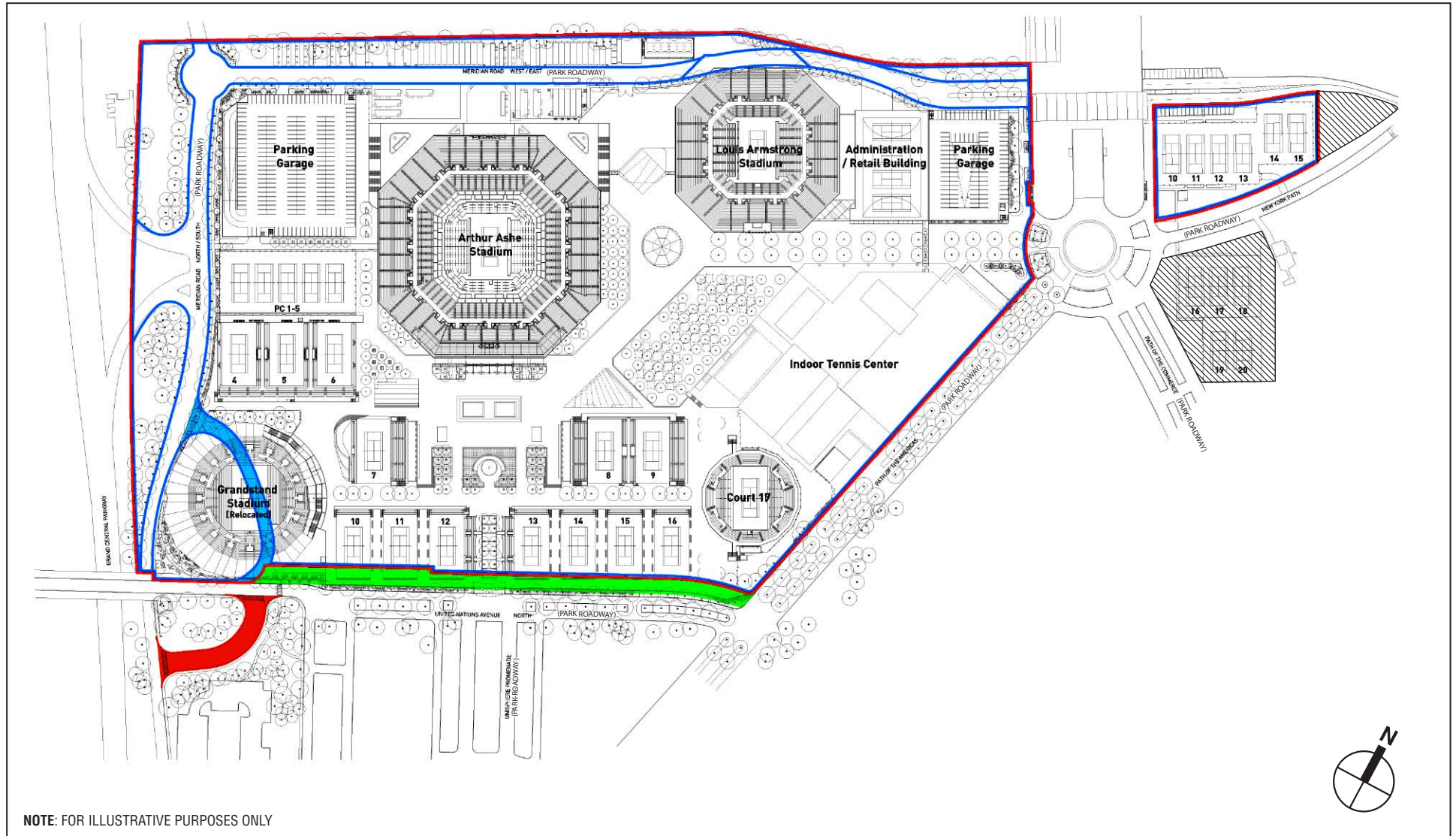
NOT TO SCALE

— Current Limit of Alienated Lands

— Current Limit of NTC Lease

•NOTE: Roads within NTC Site are not included in lease

Existing Lease Boundary and Alienation Boundary of NTC Site
Figure 1-2



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

NOT TO SCALE

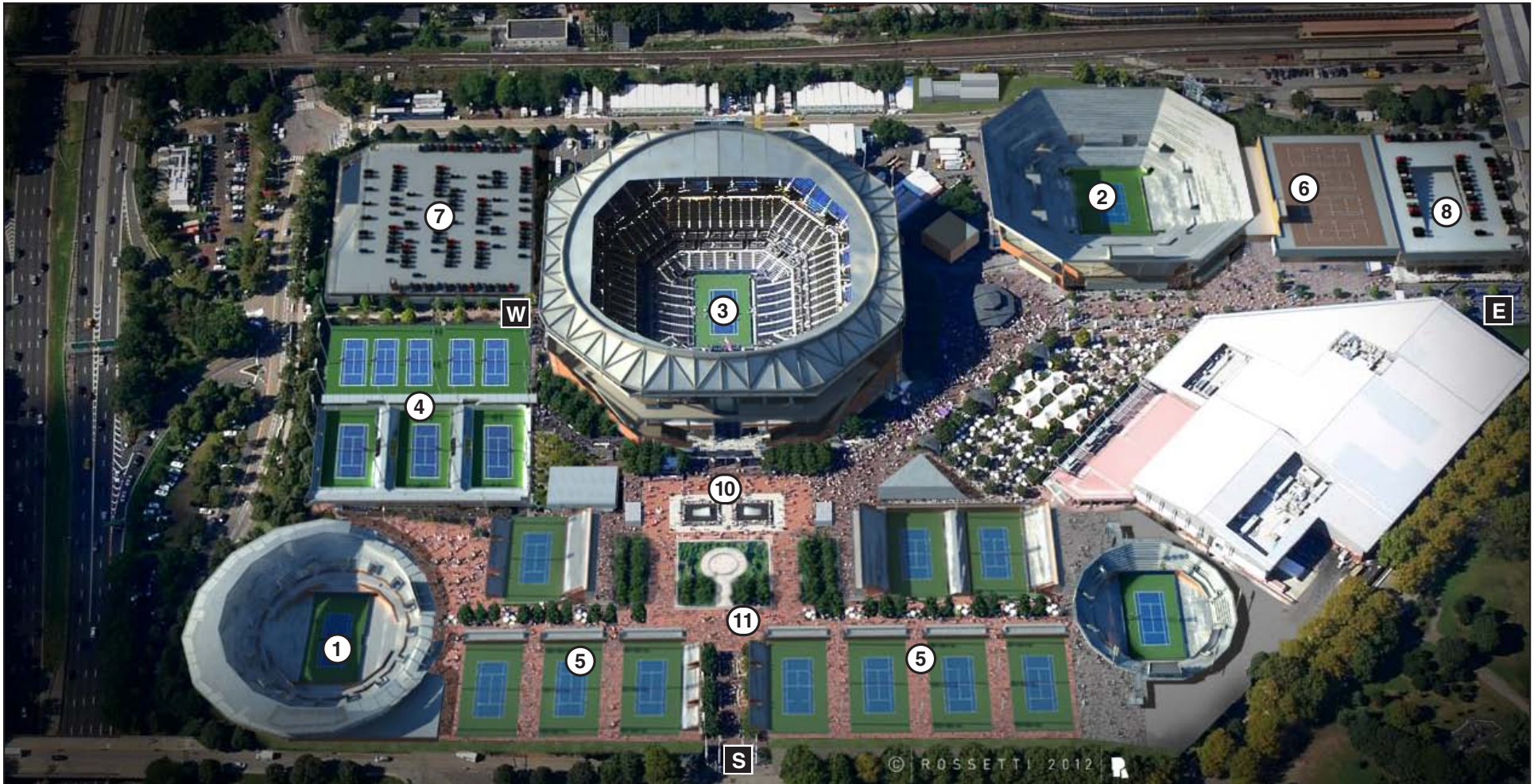
- Proposed Park Road Relocation (Approx. 0.3 Acres) (not part of NTC Lease)
- Previously Alienated Land to be Added to NTC Lease (0.26 Acres)
- Land to be Alienated and Added to NTC Lease (0.68 Acres)
- Current Limit of Alienated Lands
- Current Limit of NTC Lease
- Previously Alienated Land to be Returned as Replacement Park Land (1.56 Acres)

Proposed Lease Boundary and Alienation Boundary of NTC Site
Figure 1-3



- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Grandstand Stadium | 7 Parking Lot A | E East Gate |
| 2 Louis Armstrong Stadium | 8 Parking Lot B | S South Gate |
| 3 Arthur Ashe Stadium | 9 Existing Connector Road | W West Gate |
| 4 Northwest Tournament Courts | 10 Arthur Ashe Concourse | |
| 5 Southerly Tournament Courts | 11 Walkway (See Figure 1-5) | |
| 6 Retail and Sponsorship Building
(See Figure 1-5) | | |

Existing Site Plan
Figure 1-4



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 Stadium 3 | 7 Parking Lot A | E East Gate |
| 2 Louis Armstrong Stadium | 8 Parking Lot B | S South Gate |
| 3 Arthur Ashe Stadium | 9 Relocated Connector Road (See Figure 1-6) | W West Gate |
| 4 Northwest Tournament Courts | 10 Arthur Ashe Concourse | |
| 5 Southerly Tournament Courts | 11 Walkway | |
| 6 Retail and Sponsorship Building | | |

NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY
 DETAIL ALONG SOUTHERN BOUNDARY NOT SHOWN;
 PLEASE REFER TO FIGURE 3-2 FOR THIS INFORMATION

Table 1-1

NTC Strategic Vision: List of Proposed Improvements

Map No. ¹	Name	Description
Stadium Improvements and New Construction		
1	Grandstand Stadium (Stadium 3)	Demolition of existing 6,000-seat stadium and replacement with 8,000-seat stadium in southwest corner of NTC site
2	Louis Armstrong Stadium (Stadium 2)	Demolition of existing 10,500-seat stadium and replacement with 15,000-seat stadium in place
3	Arthur Ashe Stadium (Stadium 1)	Renovation and expansion to include 90,000-gsf administrative/operational space; and canopy above center court
Tournament Court Modifications		
4	Northwest tournament courts	Replacement of existing courts with five practice courts, three tournament courts, and viewing platform
5	Southerly tournament courts	Relocation of existing courts 30 to 50 feet to the south
Ancillary Building Construction		
6	New administrative and retail building	Construction of new 80,000-gsf administrative and retail building, including four tennis courts on its roof, on former site of relocated Grandstand Stadium (Stadium 3)
Parking and Transportation Improvements		
7	New Parking Garage A	Construction of new 423-space, 2-level garage, including a 6,500-sf transportation center.
8	New Parking Garage B	Construction of new 270-space, 3-level garage
9	Relocated connector road and related improvements	Relocation of connector road and sidewalks to new location south of United Nations Avenue North near Queens Museum of Art parking lot
Pedestrian Enhancements		
10	Arthur Ashe Concourse	Expand existing concourse by 11,000-sf
11	New walkway	Construction of new walkway connecting the new Stadium 3 and Court 17
Notes:	¹ See Figure 1-4 for the location of these elements under existing conditions. See Figure 1-5 for their proposed future location.	
Source:	USTA	

STADIUM IMPROVEMENTS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

GRANDSTAND STADIUM (STADIUM 3)

The current 6,000-seat Grandstand Stadium is located adjacent to Louis Armstrong Stadium, on its east façade. Grandstand Stadium was built for the 1964-1965 World's Fair Singer Bowl, and is at the end of its useful life. The proposed project would replace the existing Grandstand Stadium with a new up to 55-foot tall, 8,000-seat stadium in the southwest corner of the site. The replacement stadium would include a two-story (one story above grade), approximately 31,000-gross square foot (gsf), structure for administrative and operational uses, such as locker rooms, restroom facilities, and first aid facilities. Most of the area in which the stadium would be located is within the boundaries of USTA's lease with DPR. However, a small portion of the new stadium site would be located on the western end of the 0.68 acres of park land that would be alienated as shown on **Figure 1-3**. In addition, the area of the City-owned park connector road between United Nations Avenue North and Meridian Road, which runs through the leased area

in which the new stadium would be located, would be added to the area covered by the lease, increasing the area subject to the lease by approximately 11,449-sf (0.26 acres) as shown on **Figure 1-3**.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG STADIUM (STADIUM 2)

Louis Armstrong Stadium (Stadium 2), located in the northeast corner of the site, is a 10,500-seat facility. As with Grandstand Stadium, it was built for the 1964-1965 World's Fair Singer Bowl and is at the end of its useful life. After demolition of the existing stadium, a new 15,000-seat stadium would be built on the same site, in an up to 80-foot tall facility. Similar to the existing facility, the new stadium would include approximately 80,000-gsf of enclosed space for concession, retail, broadcasting, and administrative uses, as well as expanded rest room, first aid, and guest services facilities.

Since the replacement of Louis Armstrong Stadium would take more than one year to complete, the demolition process would be scheduled so that a temporary replacement stadium could be built for the US Open, on the same site. Construction of the new stadium would continue after the US Open and take-down of the temporary structure.

ARTHUR ASHE STADIUM (STADIUM 1)

Arthur Ashe Stadium (Stadium 1), located in the north center portion of the site, is an approximately 23,500 seat facility. USTA continues to explore possible methods of covering Arthur Ashe Stadium in the event of rain during the US Open, and is analyzing possible engineering solutions for a canopy system that would attach along the upper edge of the stadium. USTA is also considering the addition of approximately 90,000-gsf of administrative and operational support space on the north side of the stadium, underneath the existing seating platform and above an area currently used for loading and temporary facilities (including broadcast facilities), along with a reconfiguration of administrative and operational space within the existing stadium building. The existing loading area would remain in the same location, underneath the new structure. Improvements could also be made to the existing concourse areas at the promenade level on the south side of Arthur Ashe Stadium, as described below.

TOURNAMENT COURT MODIFICATIONS

NORTHWEST TOURNAMENT COURTS

Currently, the northwest courts include five practice courts and two tournament courts, with bleacher seats. The proposed project would replace these courts and bleachers with five new practice courts and three new tournament courts. There would also be a new elevated viewing platform constructed between the practice and tournament courts.

SOUTHERLY TOURNAMENT COURTS

Currently, there is a row of seven tournament courts on the southern portion of the site. Under the proposed project, four of these courts would be relocated approximately 50 feet to the south, and three of these courts would be relocated approximately 30 feet to the south. New bleacher seating areas would be provided for some of the tournament courts. To allow for the court relocation and pedestrian circulation around these courts, the new NTC boundary line under the lease would move 25 to 38 feet south to abut the reconfigured United Nations Avenue North and planted area. This would increase the area subject to the lease by approximately 29,534-sf (0.68-

acres) as shown on **Figure 1-3**. On the northern side of the relocated courts, a new walkway would be constructed, as described below.

ANCILLARY BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE AND RETAIL BUILDING

Adjacent to the new Stadium 2, at approximately the same location as the existing Grandstand Stadium, a new 2-story, approximately 80,000-gsf building, would be built. This building would include approximately 48,300-gsf of space for administrative and storage uses for the NTC, as well as approximately 31,700-gsf of retail storage and merchandise space, much of which would be used as retail space during the US Open. Four courts that were temporarily in use at Lot A would be replaced with four permanent enclosed courts on the roof of the proposed administrative and retail building. These courts would be made available to the public on the same basis as the other courts managed by USTA.

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

TWO NEW PARKING GARAGES AND RELOCATED TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Currently, there is an approximately 100-space surface parking lot in the northeast corner of the site (Lot B), and a 200-space parking lot in the northwest corner of the site (Lot A) that additionally contains a transportation center used for staff and facilities for handling player and sponsor transportation and credentials and media credentials, as well as sponsor ticketing and lounge space. Under the proposed project, Lot B would be replaced with an approximately 270-space, 3-level parking garage, and Lot A and the transportation center would be replaced with an approximately 423-space, 2-level parking garage and 6,500 square foot (sf) transportation center.

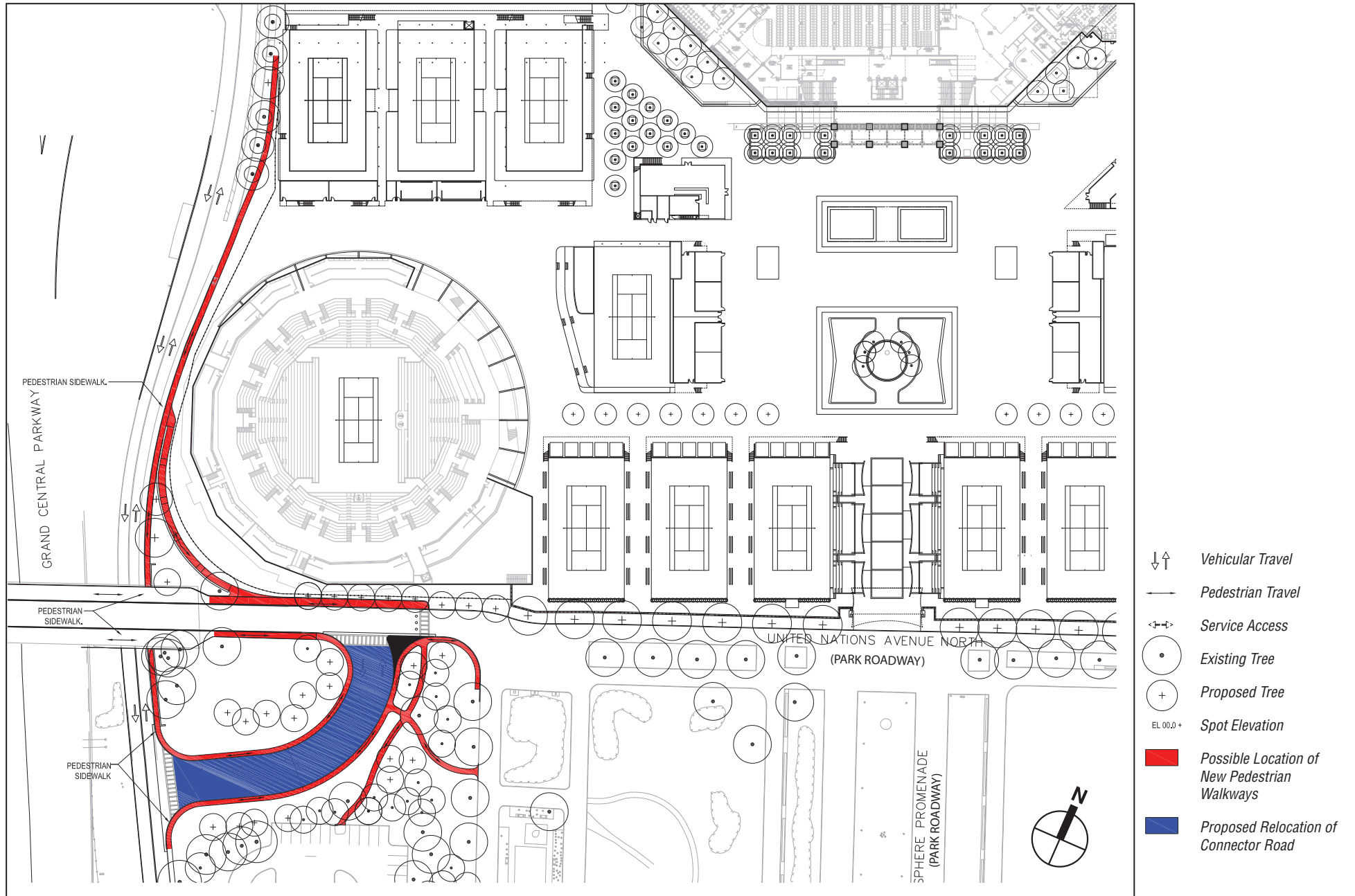
RELOCATED CONNECTOR ROAD

The connector road displaced by the relocation of Grandstand Stadium (Stadium 3) would be relocated to an approximately 0.3-acre area south of United Nations Avenue North near the Queens Museum of Art parking lot, as shown on **Figure 1-6**. New approximately five-to-six-foot wide pedestrian walkways would also be created; possible locations for these pedestrian walkways are shown on **Figure 1-6**. As part of the proposed project, the small portion of Meridian Road below the overpass would be widened to connect to an existing bicycle lane. The relocated connector road would not impede access to the Queens Museum or theater, but rather would enhance access by extending sidewalks and a bike lane.

PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS

ARTHUR ASHE CONCOURSE

The existing concourse areas at the promenade level on the south side of Arthur Ashe Stadium (Stadium 1) would be expanded by approximately 11,000-sf, to improve circulation and amenities. Potential façade improvements could also be implemented.



NOTE: FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

Connector Road Relocation Plan
Figure 1-6

PROPOSED WALKWAY

As described above, four of the southerly tournament courts would be relocated approximately 50 feet to the south and three of the southerly tournament courts would be relocated approximately 30 feet to the south. On the northern side of the relocated courts, a new walkway would be constructed, connecting the proposed relocated Grandstand Stadium (Stadium 3) with the NTC entrance at the South Gate, the South Plaza, and Court 17 on the southeast corner of the site. The proposed walkway would improve circulation within the site and include new plantings that would enhance the pedestrian experience. The area to be added to the NTC lease is described below.

AREAS TO BE ADDED TO NTC SITE

As noted above, the proposed project would require 0.94 acres of land to be added to the NTC site, including 0.68-acres of park land that would be alienated, and 0.26-acres of previously alienated park land associated with the connector road that is outside the current lease. The approximately 0.3-acre area that would be affected by the relocated connector road would not be added to the NTC.

The 0.26-acre portion of previously alienated land consists of the existing connector roadway between Meridian Road and United Nations Avenue North. The roadway is mapped park land that was alienated for the 1993 expansion, and contains sidewalks but no other park features.

The 0.68-acre area that would be alienated is located north of United Nations Avenue North, and south of the existing NTC fence line, as shown in **Figure 1-3**. This area is currently a mix of landscaped and paved areas, including one lane of the three-lane United Nations Avenue North. The lane that would be eliminated is lightly used for walking, running, or bicycling, as well as by DPR vehicles and to service the NTC during the US Open. The landscaped portion includes a triangular median area near the connector road, a median adjacent to the northernmost lane of United Nations Avenue North, and a narrow strip of lawn adjacent to the current NTC fence line. The landscaping includes trees in some areas, but no other notable park features, such as play equipment, benches, or statues. The impacts of alienating this area and adding it to the NTC site are analyzed in Chapter 3, “Open Space and Recreational Resources,” including an estimate of the number of park users that would be affected.

TREE LOSS AND REPLACEMENT

Construction of the proposed project ~~would affect~~ ~~would require removal of trees~~ located both outside the existing fence line, including United Nations Avenue North and in the area of the proposed location of the connector road relocation project south of United Nations Avenue North and along Meridian Road, and inside the NTC site, including in the vicinity of the practice courts, parking lot A, northwest corner of Arthur Ashe Stadium, west side of parking lot B, west side of the Grandstand Stadium, proposed Grandstand Stadium relocation site, and a small number in the Food Village. Tree replanting and replacement would comply with DPR’s applicable rules and regulations. Approximately 349 422 trees would be affected, two of which are dead, removed, which would be transplanted to the extent practicable. USTA is working with DPR’s Forestry Division to minimize the number of trees that would be removed and not replanted and has currently identified approximately 45 of the 347 living trees that would be replanted in place or transplanted. The other approximately 302 affected trees are being evaluated. Under a worst case scenario those approximately 302 trees would be removed and not replanted. However, some of these trees are expected to be determined by DPR to be suitable for

transplant. Trees that could not be transplanted would be replaced pursuant to City regulations. All trees determined to be suitable for transplant would remain subject to the City's requirements that provide for a two-year guarantee period, which requires that trees that do not survive are replaced. The transplanted trees would be subject to a DPR Forestry Permit, which would detail a maintenance plan to ensure tree vitality.

Tree replacement, protection, and transplanting would comply with the City's applicable rules and regulations. Trees under the jurisdiction of DPR may not be removed without a permit pursuant to Title 18 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York. Chapter 5 of Title 56 of the Rules of the City of New York establishes rules for valuing trees that are approved for removal in order to determine the appropriate number of replacement trees. Tree replacement would be in accordance with the New York City Tree Valuation Protocol. This protocol is an adaptation of the Trunk Formula method, as outlined by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers' (CTLA) Guide for Plant Appraisal (9th edition), to assess trees under DPR's jurisdiction that are targeted for removal. This protocol uses size (as measured by the basal area [a cross-section of the trunk]), species, tree condition, and tree location to determine the number of trees necessary to replace a tree. As such, replacement trees are used instead of the monetary value to ensure the continued maintenance and possible increase of tree canopy cover. This method to calculate the number of replacement trees would be used to quantify the size and number of trees that would be required to replace those removed from the NTC and adjacent area. Measures to protect existing trees and transplant trees would include protection plans to minimize impacts to the critical root zones, trunks, and canopies. Plans would show the exact locations, species, and installation details of the replacement and transplant trees.

REPLACEMENT PARK LAND AND PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

At the outset of the environmental review process, the City proposed that improvements to Flushing Meadows Corona Park would result in a more meaningful degree of public benefit than an in-kind replacement of alienated park land. It was anticipated that the proposed project would provide for a range of park improvements for members of the public who utilize Flushing Meadows Corona Park, and that the specific scope of work would be determined by the local community and relevant public agencies and decision makers. However, in response to comments made during the review process, the City and USTA have agreed that USTA will surrender a portion of its currently alienated and leased land that is more than double the 0.68 acres of park land that USTA seeks to add to its lease.

The replacement park land totals 1.56 acres, comprising 0.75 acres of passive landscaped areas and 0.81 acres of space for active recreation containing 5 tennis courts. These parcels were alienated in 1993 and are used as practice courts, with seating and related facilities, during the US Open and other major tennis tournaments. The two parcels, which are shown in **Figure 1-3**, are:

- A 1.31-acre parcel located southeast of David Dinkins Circle, occupied by five tennis courts and 0.5 acres of landscaped areas. When not in use by USTA, these courts are used by the City Parks Foundation for lessons, hourly rentals, tournaments, leagues and special events. A portion of this parcel located along the eastern edge of the tennis courts is alienated but not included in the NTC Lease. The area included in the NTC lease is 1.16 acres.
- A 0.25-acre landscaped parcel located just beyond the eastern end of the bank of six tennis courts to the east of the Passerelle.

USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center Strategic Vision

With the proposed amendment of the 1993 USTA alienation legislation, these two parcels of replacement park land would no longer be alienated land and would be returned to Flushing Meadows Corona Park for recreational use under the jurisdiction of DPR. The NTC lease would also be amended, so these parcels would not be part of the NTC premises. Other than the tennis courts, the replacement park land is not fenced, so the landscaped portions of these parcels would be available as passive open space, accessible to the public.

USTA would have use of the replacement park land parcels during the US Open and, possibly, other tournaments, and USTA would remain responsible for maintenance and repair of the five tennis courts on an annual basis, so they continue to be available in good condition for public use.

The context for consideration of possible park improvements in lieu of replacing park land has changed. Under the current plan, park improvements would occur and replacement park land would be provided. With respect to park improvements, the affected Community Boards and some elected officials have advocated for the creation of a conservancy/alliance for Flushing Meadows Corona Park. It is proposed that this entity would serve several functions, including the oversight of a fund to be established that could be used, in part, for park improvements. USTA is being asked to provide upfront funding for this conservancy as well as ongoing annual maintenance, and to serve as a member of its Board. DPR and USTA are open to working with a not-for-profit partner for Flushing Meadows Corona Park. Further assessment and discussion would need to occur to determine the feasibility of the proposed conservancy/alliance and its functions, as well as the best vehicle through which to financially support Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

~~In addition to the improvement of the NTC, which would require the alienation of 0.68 acres of park land, certain additional improvements would be undertaken for the benefit of the general public within Flushing Meadows Corona Park.~~

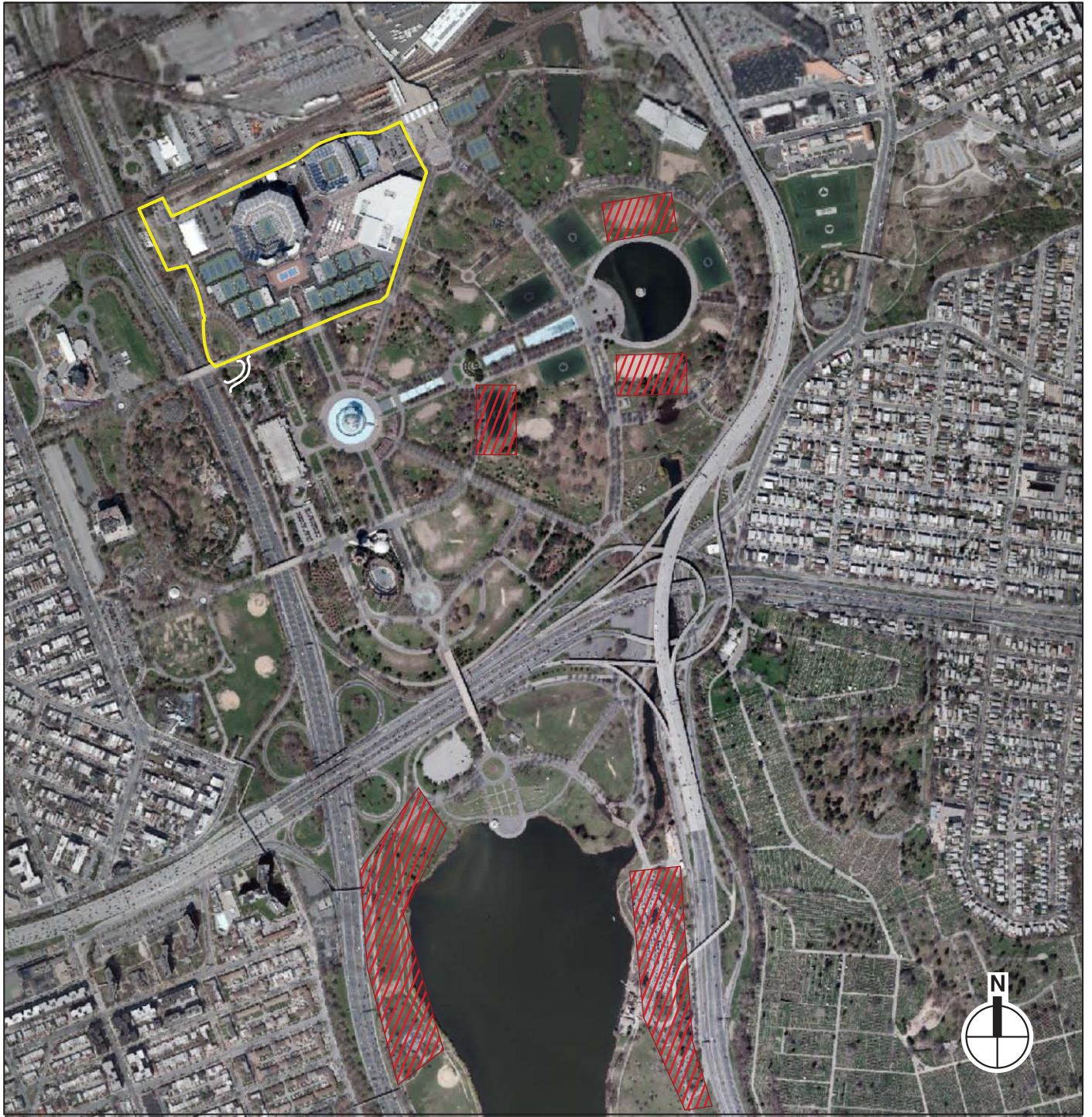
In this regard a ~~A~~ range of possible park improvement projects was developed by DPR as part of project planning, consistent with the Flushing Meadows Corona Park Strategic Framework Plan, prepared in 2008. Some examples of possible projects include: conversion of two soccer fields from natural to synthetic turf; reconstruction of one existing synthetic turf soccer field; the development of a new comfort station at Jurassic Playground; vehicular, pedestrian, landscape, and drainage upgrades to an area in the northeast corner of Meadow Lake Drive; and the development of new picnic and barbecue areas and improvements to pathways around Meadow Lake. The approximate locations of these possible park improvements are indicated on **Figure 1-7**.

~~The City would not seek replacement park land for the area to be included in the lease because: the land would remain mapped park land (the alienation legislation would authorize the inclusion of park land within the lease); the leased area would remain publicly accessible in the same way the rest of the NTC is publicly accessible; and improvements and upgrades to existing sport fields and infrastructure within Flushing Meadows Corona Park would result in a more meaningful degree of public benefit than an in-kind replacement.~~

~~The final selection of park improvement projects would be determined by DPR.~~

~~In addition to the capital projects referred to above, and i~~

Independent of the NTC Strategic Vision, DPR is contemplating other capital projects within Flushing Meadows Corona Park, including various field improvements, undertaking a study to



 *Project Site Boundary*

 *Approximate Area of Potential Park Improvement Projects*

0 400 1000 FEET
SCALE

determine the condition of the Porpoise Bridge over the Flushing River (including repair of the bridge's tide gates, in order to improve drainage flow that affects existing park facilities), and exploring a possible Major League Soccer (MLS) stadium.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIC VISION ELEMENTS

In addition to the physical improvements, the proposed project would allow for an increase in spectator attendance at daytime sessions of the US Open. Specifically, the attendance cap set forth in the NTC lease would increase from 35,000 spectators to 45,000 on days when Citi Field is in use, and would increase from 40,000 spectators to 50,000 on days when Citi Field is not in use. There would be no change in attendance for the evening session.

The proposed project would also include various lighting, infrastructure and utility improvements, as well as improvements to landscaping, paving and drainage within the NTC site, with sustainability features.

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

Components of the proposed project would be constructed beginning towards the end of 2013, with overall completion by approximately 2019. By 2014, the relocation of the connector road, construction of ~~the new transportation center~~ Parking Garage A, and replacement of the northwest tournament courts would be expected to be complete, with the anticipated completion of Stadium 3 and the southerly tournament courts following in 2015. By 2016, the canopy over Arthur Ashe Stadium (Stadium 1), ~~construction of the administrative and retail building~~, and construction of Parking Garage AB, would be expected to be complete. The park improvement projects would also be expected to be built by 2019. Stadium 2 ~~and the administrative and retail building~~ would be expected to be complete by 2017, and the addition to Arthur Ashe Stadium is anticipated to be complete by 2019.

D. PROPOSED ACTIONS

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE

Development of the proposed project would require disposition of 0.68 acres of City property to USTA by long-term lease for the relocation of the fence and playing courts and a small portion of the Grandstand Stadium along the site's southern boundary; this lease is subject to approvals pursuant to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP).

LEGISLATION

The disposition by long-term lease of the 0.68-acre southern boundary area would require a home rule request from the City Council to the State Legislature, and New York State legislation to authorize the alienation of that site. Following that disposition, this area would remain mapped park land. As described above, it is expected that improvements in other portions of Flushing Meadows Corona Park would be provided in connection with the alienation of 0.68 acres of park land.

OTHER APPROVALS

Development of the proposed project would also require the following discretionary approvals:

USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center Strategic Vision

- Amendment of existing lease between DPR and USTA;
- DPR approval under the existing lease for alterations to the site;
- DPR approval for roadway alterations and improvements in Flushing Meadows Corona Park; and
- Coastal Zone consistency determination by DPR and the New York City Planning Commission (CPC).

The proposed project would require design approvals from the New York City Public Design Commission, and a determination by NPS as to whether any approval is required in connection with LWCF Act program requirements due to previously funded improvements to Flushing Meadows Corona Park. NPS has determined that no approval is required in connection with LWCF Act program requirements because the NTC is and would continue to be used for public recreational purposes for 11 months of the year, consistent with LWCF requirements.

E. ON-GOING CAPITAL PROJECTS AT NTC

As part of USTA's on-going management of capital projects at the NTC, a range of improvements are typically made to the NTC between US Open periods. These projects are not part of the NTC Strategic Vision and would proceed regardless of the status of the NTC Strategic Vision. Therefore, within the framework of the EIS, these projects will be considered part of the background condition in which the NTC Strategic Vision project would be built. The program of ongoing projects includes repairs, upgrades, and reconstruction of existing facilities and infrastructure, as well as the construction of minor new facilities within the lease boundaries. Some of the current projects that are anticipated in this category include: site-wide upgrades to video technology; replacement of canopies at primary entryways and departure points; relocation of ticket office, with associated improvements to queuing; renovation of a retail building; upgrades to food service and retail service locations; and relocation and upgrade of a substation, cooling tower and chiller plant within the leased area north of Meridian Road.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Various approvals associated with development of the proposed project would require environmental review under CEQR. DPR is the CEQR lead agency and the ULURP applicant, and the City Planning Commission and City Council are involved agencies in the CEQR process.

UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW PROCEDURE (ULURP)

Development of the proposed project would require disposition of 0.68 acres of City property to USTA by long-term lease for the relocation of the fence and playing courts and a small portion of the Grandstand Stadium along the site's southern boundary; this lease is subject to approvals pursuant to ULURP.

The City's ULURP, mandated by Sections 197-c and 197-d of the City Charter, is a process specifically designed to allow public review of the proposed actions at four levels: Community Board, Borough President, CPC, and City Council. The procedure sets time limits for review at each stage to ensure a maximum total review period of approximately seven months. The process begins with certification by CPC that the ULURP application is complete.

The application is then referred to Queens Community Boards 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8, which have up to 60 days to review and discuss the proposal, hold a public hearing, and adopt a resolution regarding the proposed project. Once this is complete, the Queens Borough President has up to 30 days to review the project. CPC then has up to 60 days for review of the application, during which time a public hearing is held. Following the hearing, CPC may approve or disapprove the application. The required public hearing for the DEIS (see below) may be held jointly with the CPC ULURP hearing. Comments made at the DEIS public hearing are incorporated into a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS); the FEIS must be completed at least 10 days before the CPC action.

CPC forwards the application to the City Council, which has 50 days in which to consider the proposed project. Following the Council's vote, the Mayor may approve or veto the proposed actions. The City Council may override the mayoral veto. Once ULURP is complete, DPR may take action on the proposed project.

CITY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW

Responding to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and its implementing regulations, New York City has established rules for its environmental review process, CEQR. The environmental review provides a means for decision-makers to systematically consider environmental effects along with other aspects of project planning and design, to evaluate reasonable alternatives, and to identify and, when practicable, mitigate significant adverse environmental effects. Most recently revised in 2012, CEQR rules guide environmental review through the following steps:

- **Establishing a Lead Agency.** Under CEQR, the “lead agency” is the public entity responsible for conducting the environmental review. Usually, the lead agency is also the entity primarily responsible for carrying out, funding, or approving the proposed project. DPR is the CEQR lead agency for the proposed project, and CPC and City Council must also make discretionary decisions under this CEQR process.
- **Determination of Significance.** The lead agency's first charge is to determine whether the proposed project might have a significant impact on the environment. To do so, DPR prepared an Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS). Based on the information contained in the EAS, DPR determined that the project might result in significant adverse environment impacts and issued a *Positive Declaration* on June 20, 2012.
- **Scoping.** Along with its issuance of a Positive Declaration, DPR issued a draft Scope of Work for the EIS on June 20, 2012. This draft scope was widely distributed to concerned citizens, public agencies, and other interested groups. “Scoping,” or creating the scope of work, is the process of focusing the environmental impact analyses on the key issues that are to be studied. A public scoping meeting was held for the proposed project on July 23, 2012, and additional comments were accepted until August 3, 2012. Modifications to the draft Scope of Work for the proposed project's DEIS were made as a result of public and interested agency input during the scoping process. A Final Public Scoping Document for the project (dated December 27, 2012), which reflected comments made on the draft scope and responses to those comments, was prepared and issued.
- **Draft Environmental Impact Statement.** In accordance with the Final Public Scoping Document, A DEIS was prepared. After reviewing the DEIS and determining that the document has fully disclosed the project program, its potential environmental impacts, and

recommended mitigation, the DPR issued a Notice of Completion January 3, 2013. Having been certified as complete, the DEIS has been circulated for public review.

- **Public Review.** Publication of the DEIS and issuance of the Notice of Completion signal the start of the public review period. During this time, which extends for a minimum of 30 days, the public has the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS either in writing or at a public hearing convened for the purpose of receiving such comments. Where the CEQR process is coordinated with another City process that requires a public hearing, such as ULURP, the hearings may be held jointly. In any event, the lead agency must publish a notice of the hearing at least 14 days before it takes place and must accept written comments for at least 10 days following the close of the hearing. All substantive comments received at the hearing or during the comment period become part of the CEQR record and are summarized and responded to in the FEIS.
- **Final Environmental Impact Statement.** After the close of the public comment period for the DEIS, DPR will prepare an FEIS. This document will include a summary restatement of each substantive comment made about the DEIS and a response to each comment. Once DPR has determined that the FEIS is complete, it will issue a Notice of Completion and circulate the FEIS.
- **Findings.** To demonstrate that the responsible public decision-makers have taken a hard look at the environmental consequences of a proposed project, any agency taking a discretionary action regarding a project must adopt a formal set of written findings. These findings would reflect their conclusions about the significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed project, potential alternatives, potential mitigation measures and, as appropriate, the balancing of social and economic considerations with the impacts. The findings may not be adopted until 10 days after the Notice of Completion has been issued for the FEIS. Once findings are adopted, the lead and involved agencies may take their actions (or take “no action”).

G. FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

As set forth in the Positive Declaration, the lead agency has determined that the proposed project may result in one or more significant adverse environmental impacts and thus requires preparation of an EIS. The EIS has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the 2012 *CEQR Technical Manual*, which sets forth methodologies and guidelines for environmental impact assessment consistent with SEQRA.

For all technical analysis in the EIS, the assessment includes a description of existing conditions, an assessment of conditions in the future without the proposed project for the year that the proposed project would be completed, and an assessment of conditions for the same year with the completion of the action in the future with the proposed project. Identification and evaluation of impacts of the proposed project are based on the change from the future without the proposed project (No-Action condition) to the future with the proposed project (With Action condition).

ANALYSIS YEAR

An EIS analyzes the effects of a proposed action on its environmental setting. Since a proposed action, if approved, would take place in the future, the action’s environmental setting is not the

current environment but the environment as it would exist at project completion, in the future. Therefore, future conditions must be projected. This prediction is made for a particular year, generally known as the “analysis year” or the “Build year,” which is the year when the action would be substantially operational.

As previously described, 2019 is the year that the proposed project is expected to be completed, including park improvement projects.

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREAS

For each technical area in which impacts may occur, a study area is defined for analysis. This is the geographic area likely to be affected by the proposed project for a given technical area, or the area in which impacts of that type could occur. Appropriate study areas differ depending on the type of impact being analyzed. It is anticipated that the direct principal effects of the proposed project would occur within the project study areas. The methods and study areas for addressing impacts are discussed in the individual technical analysis sections.

DEFINING BASELINE CONDITIONS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

For each technical area being assessed in the EIS, the current conditions must first be described. The assessment of existing conditions establishes a baseline, not against which the project is measured, but from which future conditions can be projected. The prediction of future conditions begins with an assessment of existing conditions because these can be measured and observed. Studies of existing conditions are generally selected for the reasonable worst-case conditions. In the case of the proposed project, while considering year-round operations, where appropriate the analyses will focus on US Open event conditions, when activity at the NTC is greatest.

DEFINITION OF FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The “future without the proposed project,” or “No-Action condition,” describes a baseline condition, which is evaluated and compared to the incremental changes due to the proposed project. The No-Action condition is assessed for the same 2019 analysis year as the proposed project.

The No-Action condition uses existing conditions as a baseline and adds to it changes known or expected to be in place by 2019. For many technical areas, the No-Action condition incorporates known development projects that are likely to be built by the analysis years. This includes development currently under construction or which can be reasonably anticipated due to the current level of planning and public approvals. These would include certain projects that will be built on the NTC site independent of the proposed project, as part of the NTC’s management of ongoing capital projects, as described above, and nearby substantial projects in Flushing Meadows Corona Park and the surrounding neighborhood. The No-Action analyses for some technical areas, such as traffic, use a background growth factor to account for a general increase expected in the future. Such growth factors may also be used in the absence of known development projects. The No-Action analyses must also consider other future changes that will affect the environmental setting. These could include technology changes, such as advances in vehicle pollution control and roadway improvements, changes to applicable City policies, or changes in public policy related to operation of the existing facilities.

IDENTIFYING SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Identification of significant adverse environmental impacts is based on the comparison of future conditions without and with the proposed project. In certain technical areas (e.g., traffic, air quality, and noise) this comparison can be quantified and the severity of impact rated in accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*. In other technical areas, (e.g., neighborhood character) the analysis is more qualitative. The methodology for each technical analysis is presented at the start of each technical chapter.

MITIGATION

CEQR requires that any significant adverse impacts identified in the EIS be minimized or avoided to the fullest extent practicable, given costs and other factors. In the DEIS, options for mitigation can be presented for public review and discussion, without the lead agency having selected one for implementation. Where no mitigation is available, the EIS must disclose the potential for unmitigatable significant adverse impacts.

With the exception of transportation, the technical analysis determined that there would not be significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed project.

The transportation analysis determined the projected trip increments would result in significant adverse traffic impacts including increased levels of congestion and delays. However, the traffic management program currently in place including the Traffic Enforcement Agents (TEAs) would effectively manage the increased level of traffic. Therefore, due to the infrequency and duration of the event, and the ability of the traffic management program and TEAs to adequately manage traffic flow and safety of all street users during the US Open, no mitigation measures beyond the continuous traffic management provided by the TEAs would be necessary.

Overall, none of the analyses performed for this DEIS identified the need for mitigation measures. *