

# I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

## SECTION 6-4-2

### PARKLANDS AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

This section presents the assessment of potential effects of project alternatives on parklands and recreational and open space resources in the Central Study Area, I-481 North Study Area, I-481 East Study Area, and I-481 South Study Area (as defined in **Section 6-1, Introduction**).

#### 6-4-2.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

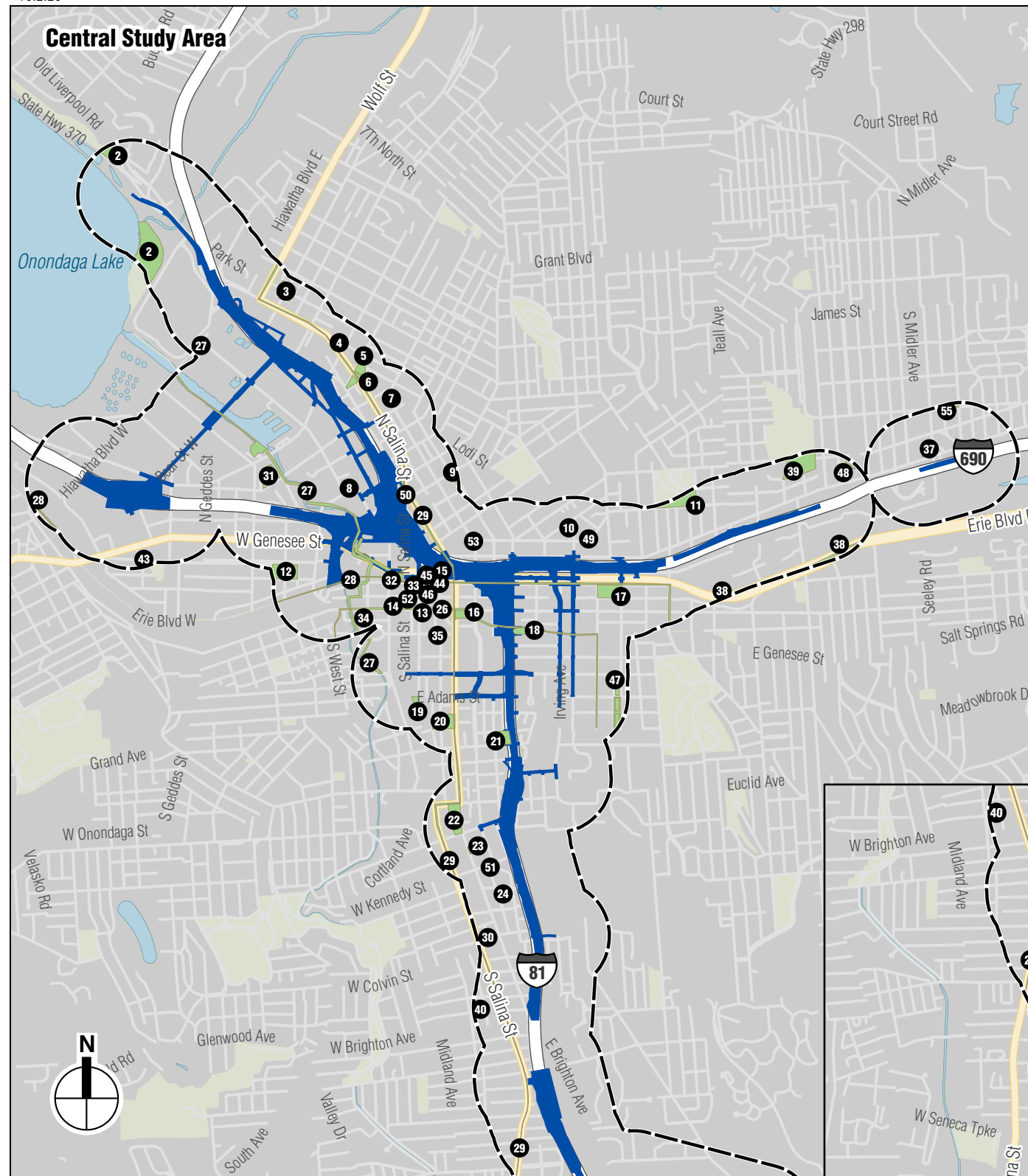
Recreational resources include parks, recreational areas, and state and local trails. Recreational resources adjacent to or near the Project have the greatest potential for direct effects, but resources located within close viewing proximity of the project alternatives are also considered for potential visual effects (see **Section 6-4-3, Visual Resources and Aesthetic Considerations**, for further discussion on potential visual effects related to the Project).



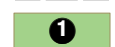
To identify parks and recreational resources in each of the study areas, information was compiled through field reconnaissance, internet research, and geographic information systems (GIS) databases for Onondaga County.

**Table 6-4-2-1** lists the parks and recreational resources identified in the study areas. **Figure 6-4-2-1** shows the locations of these parks and recreational resources using the map codes provided in the table. As shown in the table and figure, 55 recreational resources are in the study areas. There are no wildlife or waterfowl refuge areas or National Natural Landmarks within the study areas. The recreational resources in the study areas comprise a mix of active and passive uses. Active resources generally include opportunities for more exertive physical activities (e.g., playgrounds, sports facilities), and passive resources have a greater emphasis on open space and low levels of development (e.g., picnic areas, walking trails, green space).

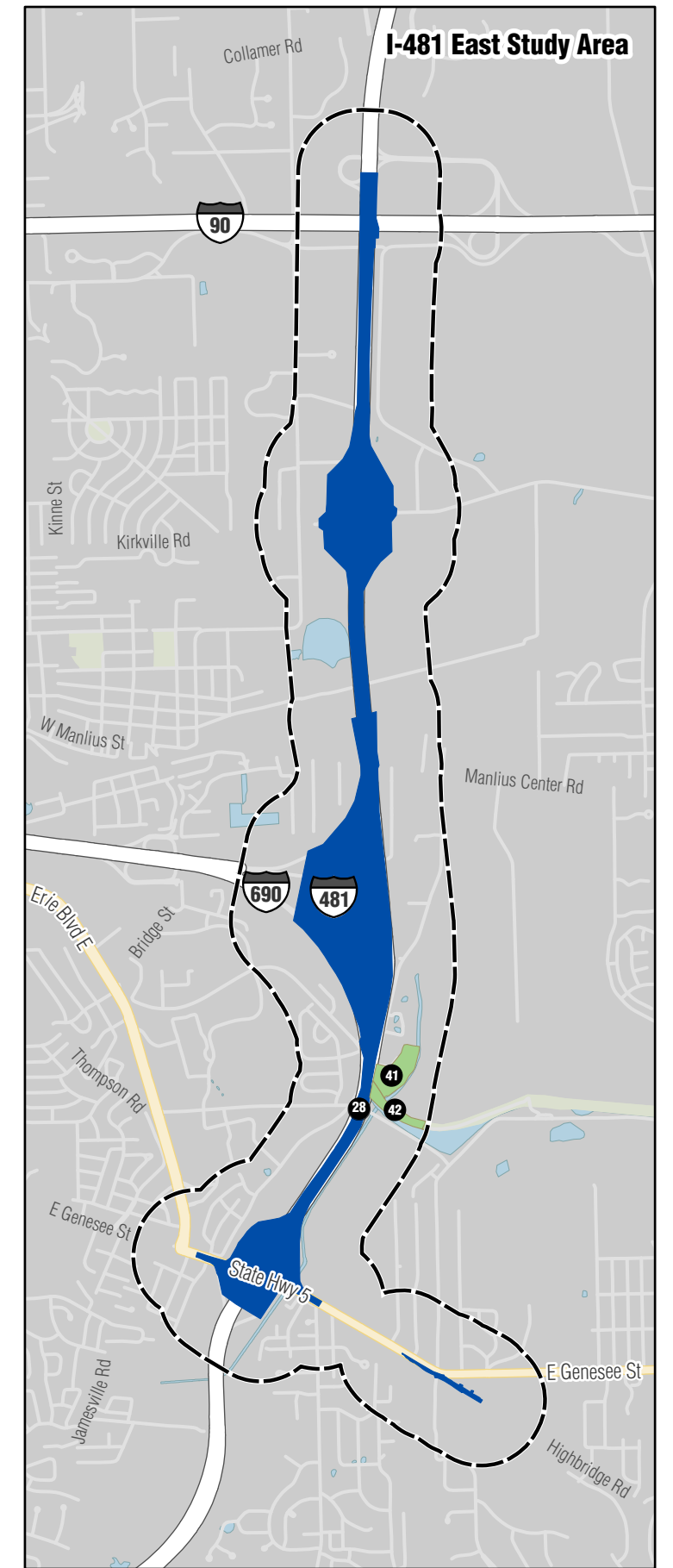
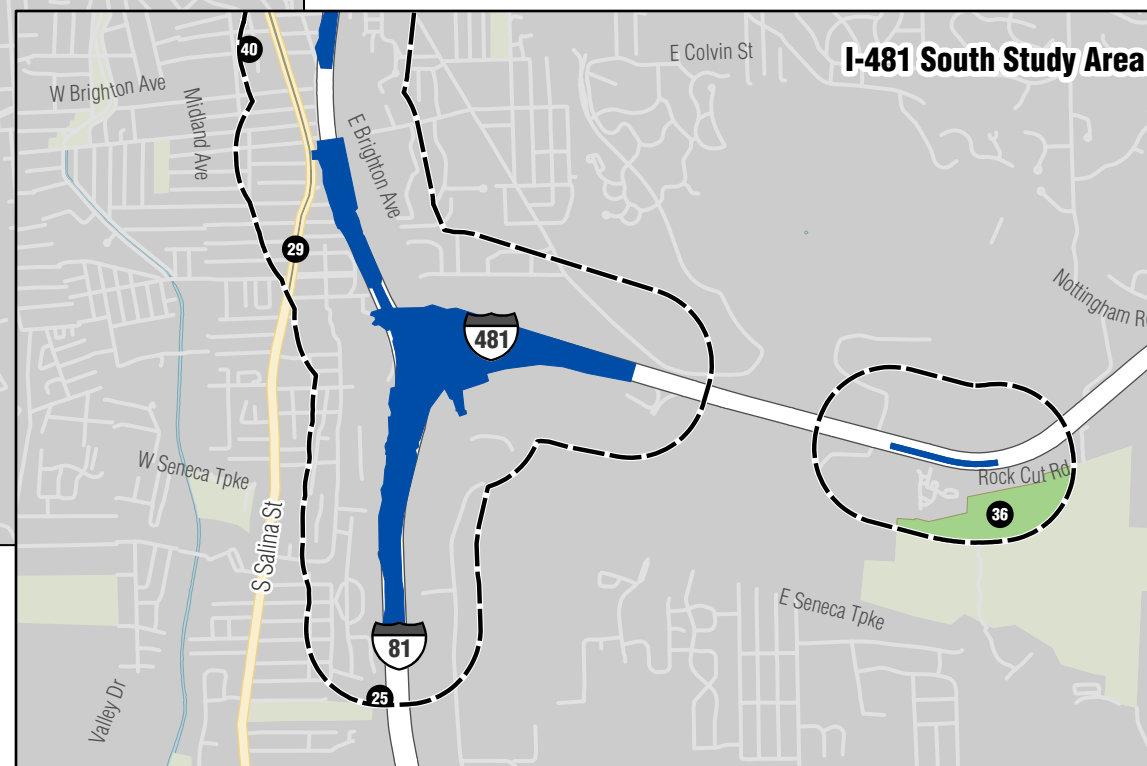
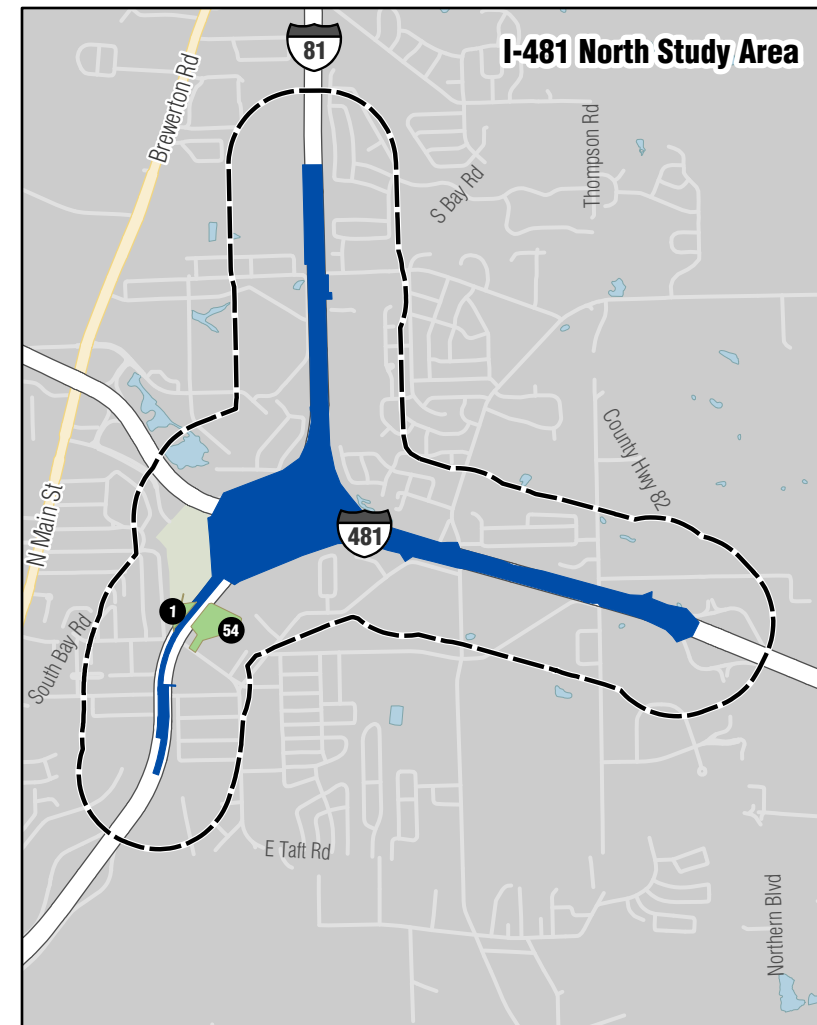
Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (LWCF) (16 U.S.C. § 4601-4) requires that property acquired or developed with LWCF funds shall not be converted to uses other than for public outdoor recreational uses. Coordination with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) is necessary since it is the state agency responsible for administering the LWCF funds. Consultation with the National Park Service (NPS) is required for final approval if it is determined that a conversion is needed.

During public review of the DDR/DEIS, OPRHP reviewed LCWF grants for Onondaga County and provided a full list of these resources in correspondence to NYSDOT (see **Appendix M-6**). Table 6-4-2-1 and the text that follows identify the parklands and recreational resources within the study area that have improvements funded by the LWCF.



-  Project Limits
-  Study Area (1/4-Mile Boundary)
-  Parklands and Trails

**I-81 Viaduct Project**



Parklands and Trails Within the Study Areas  
**Figure 6-4-2-1**

# I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-4-2-1  
Parklands and Trails Within the Study Areas

Map Code	Park or Trail Name	Location	Jurisdiction	Type of Resource	Size <sup>1</sup>	Description/Notes
1	Kennedy Park	114 Grove Street, North Syracuse, NY	Village (North Syracuse)	Active	2.5 acres	Outdoor swimming pool, picnic/pavilion facilities, playground, and volleyball court
2	Onondaga Lake County Park <sup>2</sup>	6790 Onondaga Lake Parkway, Liverpool, NY	County	Active	7.5 miles	Linear greenway featuring trails, waterfront picnic areas, skate and dog parks, playground, and sporting and other recreational spaces
3	Washington Square Park	Park Street and LeMoyne Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	3.2 acres	Neighborhood park with basketball court, Little League diamond, playground, picnic pavilion, and monument
4	Grosso Park	North Salina Street and Alvord Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.8 acres	Green space within triangular intersection with trees, grassy areas, and a monument
5	DeMong Park	Lodi Street, Kirkpatrick Street, and Union Place, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	1.0 acres	Green space with trees, grassy areas, and benches
6	Union Park	North Salina Street and Kirkpatrick Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	0.9 acres	Grassy areas, playground, seating areas, and a fountain
7	Freedom Garden	North Townsend Street and Lodi Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.1 acres	Small green space with seating area
8	Franklin Park	Solar Street and Plum Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.9 acres	Downtown park with gardens, a fountain, and etched quotes from Benjamin Franklin
9	James McGroarty Park	North McBride Street and East Laurel Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.8 acres	Green space within McBride Street with grassy areas, trees, and a seating area
10	Clinton Playlot	Lodi Street and Gertrude Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	0.5 acres	Playground, basketball court, grassy areas
11	Lincoln Park	Robinson Street and Mather Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	19.3 acres	Neighborhood park with swimming pool, children's spray fountain, tennis court, Little League field, playground
12	Leavenworth Park	Park Avenue and Barker Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	3.5 acres	Neighborhood park with grassy areas, trees, and a playground
13	Lemp Park	Fayette Street and Warren Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.1 acres	Small green space with benches and public art

# I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-4-2-1 (cont'd)  
Parklands and Trails Within the Study Areas

Map Code	Park or Trail Name	Location	Jurisdiction	Type of Resource	Size <sup>1</sup>	Description/Notes
14	Perseverance Park	South Salina Street and West Washington Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	0.2 acres	Small green space with terraced lawn area, seating, and public art
15*	Hoggee Monument	Erie Boulevard East and Oswego Boulevard, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.3 acres	Small green space with grassy areas, seating, trees, and the Hoggee and Mule statue
16	Firefighter's Memorial Park <sup>2</sup> (formerly Fayette Park)	East Genesee Street and South State Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	1.2 acres	Downtown park with firefighter monuments and memorials, a fountain, and statuary
17	Ormond G. Spencer Park	East Water Street and University Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	7.0 acres	Neighborhood park with a Little League field, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground, and a pavilion
18*	Forman Park <sup>2</sup>	East Genesee and Almond Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	1.3 acres	Downtown park with monument and a police and firefighter memorial
19	Billings Park	South Salina Street and East Adams Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.1 acres	Downtown park with Rock of the Marne monument and Spanish War Memorial
20	Roesler Park	Montgomery Street and New Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	2.6 acres	Neighborhood park with Little League field, full basketball courts, tennis court, and playground
21*	Wilson Park	McBride Street and Taylor Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	2.1 acres	Neighborhood park with the Wilson Community Center, swimming pool, basketball courts, green space, and a playground
22	Libba Cotten Grove	Castle Street and State Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	1.8 acres	Neighborhood park with the Elizabeth "Libba" Cotten Statue, playground, and a basketball court
23	Dunbar Park	1453 South State Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.5 acres (not including Dunbar Center building)	Adjacent to Dunbar Center; includes playground, small green area, basketball court, and recreational blacktop area
24	Baker Playlot	200 block of Baker Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	0.5 acres	Neighborhood park with a playground, grassy areas, and seating areas

**I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT**

**Table 6-4-2-1 (cont'd)**  
**Parklands and Trails Within the Study Areas**

<b>Map Code</b>	<b>Park or Trail Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Type of Resource</b>	<b>Size<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Description/Notes</b>
25	Heath Park	South Salina Street and Conifer Drive, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	30.6 acres	Natural area containing open green space
26*	Connective Corridor	Citywide, Syracuse, NY	County/Local/Private	Active	2 miles	Paved pedestrian and bicycle facilities along local City of Syracuse streets
27*	Onondaga Creekwalk	Citywide, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	2.6 miles	Bicycle and pedestrian paved path generally used for recreational purposes from Armory Square to Onondaga Lake
28*	Empire State Trail	Statewide	Federal/State/Local	Active	360 miles	Statewide off- and on-road trail generally used for recreational purposes following the historic Erie Canal alignment
29*	NYS Bicycle Route 11	Statewide	State	Active	320 miles	Marked bicycle route along Route 11 (shared roadway)
30	Sankofa Park	2101-11 South Salina Street and Wood Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.5 acres	Sidewalk/paved path across the site with sandbox, green space and plantings, benches, and a stage area
31	White Oaks Park	408 - 412 Spencer Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	5.63 acres	Main Office and administrative offices for the Parks and Recreation Department; open space
32	Clinton Square <sup>2</sup>	Erie Blvd. West & North Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	0.6 acres	Downtown park, historic elements, seasonal ice skating rink
33	Hanover Square <sup>2</sup>	East Water & South Warren Streets, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.11 acres	Fountain, plaza, seating areas, landscaping, and benches
34	Armory Square Park	228 West Jefferson Street (Walton Street and S. Franklin Street), Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	1 acre	Benches and historic elements
35	Columbus Circle <sup>2</sup>	Onondaga Ave, E. Jefferson and Montgomery Streets, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.16 acres	Christopher Columbus statue, fountain, benches, and landscaping
36	Clark Reservation State Park <sup>2</sup>	6105 E Seneca Turnpike, Jamesville, NY	State	Active	287 acres	Hiking trails, fishing, playgrounds, pavilions, and picnic tables. Park also includes guided nature walks and numerous exhibits
37	Sheridan Playground	Burnet and Midler Avenues, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	1.2 acres	Playground/lot

# I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

**Table 6-4-2-1 (cont'd)**  
**Parklands and Trails Within the Study Areas**

Map Code	Park or Trail Name	Location	Jurisdiction	Type of Resource	Size <sup>1</sup>	Description/Notes
38	Erie Boulevard Parkway	Parkway south of I-690, Syracuse, NY		N/A	12.81 acres	Roadway
39	Sunnycrest Park <sup>2</sup>	Bound by Robinson Street, Sunnycrest Road and Caleb Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	15.93 acres	Includes one lighted softball diamond and one lighted baseball diamond, two turf football fields, and an Olympic running track. The park also has a golf course, six tennis courts, and basketball courts
40	Cannon Street Park	515 Cannon Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	0.75 acres	Building, swing set, and basketball hoop
41	Ryder Park / 9/11 Memorial	5368 Butternut Drive, East Syracuse, NY	City	Active	12.78 acres	Park adjacent to the DeWitt Town Hall; includes James L. Guyette Arboretum, butterfly garden, bicycle and exercise trail, canoe launch into Butternut Creek, fishing pond, picnic areas, grills, playground, swings, picnic shelter, and a pavilion with restrooms. The Town of DeWitt 9/11 Memorial is located on Butternut Drive in front of the Town Hall
42	Old Erie Canal State Historic Park / Cedar Bay Park <sup>2</sup>	Statewide; Butternut Drive north of Kinne Road, East Syracuse, NY	State	Active	813.42 acres	An approximately 35-mile stretch of 363-mile Old Erie Canal that also includes other trails, bench, gazebo, picnic areas, bridle path, fishing, restrooms, grills, swings, and 2 picnic shelters
43	Frazer Park	800 Park Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	5.73 acres	Playground and athletic fields adjacent to Frazer Elementary School. Park has one softball diamond, one multi-purpose athletic field (for football, soccer, and lacrosse), a roller rink area, and a playground with swings, slides, seesaws, and climbing bars
44	Bruce Park	301-31 Erie Boulevard East and Oswego Boulevard, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.022 acres	A small space with a memorial dedicated to the Onondaga Native Nation. The monument is a large boulder with a commemorative plaque recognizing the generosity of the Onondaga toward the early non-native settlers of Syracuse
45	Pitts Park <sup>2</sup>	257 Water Street E and Montgomery S, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.05 acres	A small area with plantings, green space, and seating

# I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Table 6-4-2-1 (cont'd)  
Parklands and Trails Within the Study Areas

Map Code	Park or Trail Name	Location	Jurisdiction	Type of Resource	Size <sup>1</sup>	Description/Notes
46	City Place	225 Genesee Street E, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.47 acres	The space is a plaza with lighting, seating, plantings, with lawn and paved surfaces
47	Walnut/Comstock Park	800 Walnut Avenue and Adams Street E, Syracuse, NY	City	N/A	2.57 acres	The area includes three consecutive blocks of wide landscaped medians (or narrow blocks) and sidewalks
48	Huntington Park <sup>2</sup>	400 Sunnycrest Road, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.61 acres	Green space associated with school
49	Finegan Park	516 Hawley Avenue and Lodi Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.09 acres	A small area with plantings, green space, and seating
50	Sniper Green	North State Street and North Salina Street, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.98 acres	A small area with green space, statue/monument, and seating
51	Danforth Park	220 Kennedy Street E and Baker Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	N/A	0.3 acres	Green space/lawn owned by the City of Syracuse
52	Vanderbilt Square <sup>2</sup>	131 Salina Street S and Washington, Syracuse, NY	City	Passive	0.41 acres	An extension of the sidewalk with plantings and seating
53	Bagg Place Park	498 James Street to Hawley Avenue, Syracuse, NY	City	N/A	0.03 acres	Green space/lawn next to a parking lot
54	Sleeth Park	415 Church Street N, Cicero, NY	Town of Cicero	N/A	8.8 acres	Green space
55	Eastwood Heights Park/Cummings Field	1039 Sunnycrest Road and Mosley, Syracuse, NY	City	Active	3.77 acres	City park with basketball court and playing field

**Notes:**

1 This column indicates the full acreage or length of the parkland or trail resource. **Figure 6-4-2-1** shows the portion of the resource that falls within the study areas.

2 Recreational sites that have received financial assistance through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 4601-4).

\* Park or recreational resource that is within or adjacent to the project limits and is described in further detail in this section.

**Sources:** ESRI, 2015; Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation & Youth Programs, <http://www.syracuse.ny.us/parks>.

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

---

Of the 55 recreational resources located within the study areas, 13 resources are located within, immediately adjacent to, or traverse (i.e., trails) the Project Area and would have a higher likelihood of being affected by the I-81 Viaduct Project. These 13 resources are described below.

- **Kennedy Park (Map Code #1):** This park, located at 114 Grove Street, is a 2.5-acre city park with a swimming pool, picnic/pavilion facilities, playground, and ball courts.
- **Hoggee Monument (Map Code #15):** Located at 318 Erie Boulevard East, across the street from the Erie Canal Museum, is a 0.3-acre green space with seating and a sculpture of a mule and driver, also known as a hoggee. This monument pays homage to the historic Erie Canal operations.
- **Forman Park (Map Code #18):** Forman Park is a 1.3-acre park flanked by eastbound and westbound Genesee Street near its intersection with Almond Street and the I-81 viaduct. The park has benches, a fountain, and a monument, upon which are three bronze statues representing historical figures of Syracuse. The park also includes a police and firefighter memorial. Improvements at Forman Park were funded under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.<sup>1</sup>
- **Wilson Park (Map Code #21):** Wilson Park is a 2.1-acre neighborhood park located on the block bordered by South McBride Street, East Taylor Street, Almond Street and the I-81 viaduct, and Jackson Street. The park includes a swimming pool, basketball courts, a playground, unused, former tennis courts, a splash pad, and green space for active or passive recreational activities. The site also contains the Wilson Community Center, which offers a variety of recreational, educational, and support programs for children. Wilson Park was a recipient of funds under the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Act of 1978 for upgrade of the interior recreation center to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, relocation of the playground, and installation of new playground equipment.<sup>2</sup> The easternmost portion of Wilson Park is on land owned by NYSDOT.
- **Connective Corridor (Map Code #26):** The City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, and Syracuse University partnered to develop the Connective Corridor, which was completed in the fall of 2015. It is an on-street pathway consisting of green-painted bicycle lanes and streetscape enhancements, such as public art, improved lighting, green infrastructure, and tree plantings. The Connective Corridor travels primarily along University Place, East Genesee Street (where it crosses Almond Street beneath the I-81 viaduct), and West Fayette Street.
- **Onondaga Creekwalk (Map Code #27):** Onondaga Creekwalk (Creekwalk), a bicycle/pedestrian paved path generally used for recreational purposes, generally follows Onondaga Creek through the City of Syracuse. The completed portion stretches 2.6 miles from Armory Square in Downtown Syracuse to Onondaga Lake. The Creekwalk is largely a separated pathway, but it does continue along city sidewalks in some areas, such as along West Washington Street, North and South Franklin Street, and West Genesee Street. It passes beneath I-690 as an off-road path just east of the West Street interchange and passes beneath Bear Street on the southwest side of Onondaga Creek. The Creekwalk links to other existing recreational trails

---

<sup>1</sup> Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965 (LWCF) (16 U.S.C. § 4601-4).

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/uprr/cities/new\\_york.html](https://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/uprr/cities/new_york.html). Accessed November 20, 2019.



outside the project limits and the Central Study Area along Onondaga Lake, as well as the Inner Harbor, which includes open space areas and an amphitheater.

- **Empire State Trail (Map Code #28):** The Empire State Trail is a 360-mile trail following the former Erie Canal alignment and historic rail corridors from Albany to Buffalo. The trail is part of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, established in 2000 by the U.S. Congress to recognize the historical importance of the Erie Canal. The trail passes through Syracuse primarily as an on-road path along local streets, with some areas including marked bicycle lanes. Within the Central Study Area, the Empire State Trail travels just south of I-690 primarily along East Water Street, where it intersects the I-81 viaduct, and then along Erie Boulevard West. A planned segment of the trail would follow Van Rensselaer Street in the Lakefront neighborhood, parallel to Onondaga Creek, and intersect with Bear Street. In the I-481 East Study Area, another planned segment of the trail would run along Towpath Road, pass above I-481 on Kinne Road, and then turn north along Butternut Drive and enter Old Erie Canal State Historic Park / Cedar Bay Park (Map Code #42).
- **New York State Bicycle Route 11 (Map Code #29):** New York State Bicycle Route 11 is an on-road signed bicycle route that extends along U.S. Route 11 for 320 miles, north-south across New York State from the Pennsylvania border (near Binghamton, New York) to the Quebec border (near Rouses Point, New York). Route 11 traverses the Central Study Area primarily along South State Street, where it intersects the I-690 overpass, and then continues along North Salina Street north of I-690. While the route is signed, generally there are no designated bicycle lanes through the Central Study Area.
- **Ryder Park, 9/11 Memorial (Map Code #41):** Ryder Park is a 12.78-acre park adjacent to the DeWitt Town Hall and the 9/11 Memorial is located on Butternut Drive in front of the Town Hall. Ryder Park includes James L. Guyette Arboretum, a butterfly garden, bicycle and exercise trail, a canoe launch into Butternut Creek, fishing pond, picnic areas and shelter, grills, a playground, and a pavilion with restrooms.
- **Old Erie Canal State Historic Park / Cedar Bay Park (Map Code #42):** This 813.42-acre park includes a stretch of the Old Erie Canal trail and includes other trails, benches, gazebo, picnic areas, bridle path, fishing, restrooms, grills, swings, and two picnic shelters. The park has improvements funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.
- **Bruce Park (Map Code #44):** Listed as a City of Syracuse downtown park, Bruce Park is 0.3 acres in size with a memorial dedicated to the Onondaga Indians. The monument is a large boulder with a commemorative plaque recognizing the generosity of the Onondaga toward the early non-native settlers of Syracuse.
- **Pitts Park (Map Code #45):** This 0.05-acre park is listed as a City of Syracuse downtown park. The space includes a small area with plantings, green space, and seating. The park has improvements funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.
- **Sniper Green (Map Code #50):** This 0.98-acre park includes two triangular lawns owned by the City of Syracuse with a monument and bench seating.

The Bear Trap Creek Bikeway is located near a proposed noise barrier in the I-481 North Study Area. This bikeway is a 3.3-mile, paved path used by walkers and bicycles. It was built during renovations to this segment of I-81 roughly following along the side of I-81 (there is a fence between the highway and the trail) and Bear Trap Creek.

Parklands are protected under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (49 U.S.C. § 303, as amended) and FHWA regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 23 CFR § 774). A Section 4(f) evaluation for the Project was prepared (see **Chapter 7, Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation**).

Section 1010 of the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. § 2501–2514) protects recreation sites that received funding under the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) Program. This program provided Federal funds to economically distressed urban communities for the rehabilitation and renovation of recreational facilities. Pursuant to Section 1010 of the Act, no property improved or developed with UPARR assistance can be converted to other than public recreation uses without the approval of the NPS. A conversion will be approved only if it is found to be in accordance with the current local park and recreation Recovery Action Program and/or equivalent recreation plans and only upon such conditions as deemed necessary to assure the provision of adequate recreation properties and opportunities of reasonably equivalent location and usefulness. Two parks in the Project Area, Wilson Park and Frazer Park, received funding from the UPARR Program.

### **6-4-2.2 NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE**

The No Build Alternative would not change existing parks or recreation areas, as no project-related disturbances or property acquisitions would occur.

### **6-4-2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE VIADUCT ALTERNATIVE**

#### **6-4-2.3.1 PERMANENT/OPERATIONAL EFFECTS**

The Viaduct Alternative would not result in permanent adverse effects to parks and recreational resources, including those that were identified above as being near the Project Area (see discussion under **Section 6-4-2.3.2** for a description of temporary effects during construction).

Under the Viaduct Alternative, the new viaduct would be wider than the existing viaduct to meet current Federal highway design standards. The wider viaduct would be located over existing state right-of-way that is currently used as parkland and is part of Wilson Park. The parkland is permitted in the state right-of-way through a deed between the State of New York and the City of Syracuse. There would be no change in the use of this land as part of Wilson Park, but the wider viaduct would overhang a small section of it, including a portion of the existing basketball courts and an open grass area. The viaduct overhang would be approximately 10 feet wider toward the southern end of the park (including the open grass area) and between three and five feet wider toward the northern end of the park (where the basketball courts are located). The new viaduct would also be about 10 to 15 feet higher than the existing viaduct. The areas beneath the widened viaduct would be retained as parkland and the Viaduct Alternative would not diminish the usefulness of this open space. Therefore, the Viaduct Alternative would not result in permanent adverse effects to Wilson Park.

The Viaduct Alternative would enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Downtown Syracuse, resulting in benefits to existing and planned recreational paths that pass through the Project Area. As detailed further in **Chapter 3, Alternatives**, streets within the project limits in the Central Study Area would be improved with pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, such as distinctive pavement markings (in compliance with FHWA’s Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices [MUTCD]) to clearly define pedestrian and bicycle spaces, signals to facilitate safe crossings for both bicyclists and pedestrians, bollards and traffic islands for pedestrian protection and refuge, and “bump-outs” at sidewalk corners to narrow pedestrian crossings.

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities implemented under the Viaduct Alternative would be designed to connect with existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (including the Connective Corridor and Empire State Trail), and to not preclude planned future improvements outlined in the “Syracuse Bicycle Plan 2040,” thereby improving connectivity with the larger recreational path and trailway network throughout Syracuse. **Figure 6-4-2-2** shows proposed bicycle facilities under the Viaduct Alternative in relation to existing and future City bicycle facilities.

Under the Viaduct Alternative, the West Street interchange on I-690 would be rebuilt. As part of this effort, a new path would be built along the west bank of Onondaga Creek between Erie Boulevard and Evans Street, which could be incorporated into the Creekwalk, pending coordination with the City of Syracuse. This would provide a benefit to the Creekwalk by increasing its off-road designated trail components and removing it from existing street sidewalks, enhancing the recreational experience of this trail.

Kennedy Park, Ryder Park, Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, and the Bear Trap Creek Bikeway are near recommended noise barriers. These barriers are recommended within transportation rights-of-way. The noise barriers within the transportation rights-of-way would be separated from the parks by local streets or dense vegetation adjacent to the bikeway. The roadways and vegetation would help limit views of these barriers from the parks, and the barriers would lower projected noise levels within the parks.

No portion of the 12 recreation sites in the Project Area that have received LWCF funds would be acquired or converted to a non-recreational use under the Viaduct Alternative. In addition, no construction activities would occur within those sites. Therefore, an analysis pursuant to Section 6(f) of the Act is not needed.

As previously noted, elements of Wilson Park and Frazer Park were funded through UPARR grants. No portion of either park would be acquired or permanently converted to non-recreational use under the Viaduct Alternative. Therefore, further review under Section 1010 of UPARR is not required.

### 6-4-2.3.2 CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

The eastern edge of Wilson Park is within the existing NYSDOT right-of-way. This area would be temporarily occupied during the removal of the existing viaduct and construction of the new viaduct. In addition, a 20-foot-wide strip, or 0.12 acres, of the park immediately adjacent to the state right-of-way would be used to create a “safety barrier” during construction, separating park users, who would not be able to access the area, from the construction zone. The Contractor would install fencing around this buffer area, and there would be no public access to it for approximately two years of the seven-year construction period. NYSDOT would coordinate with the City of Syracuse and the



Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities -  
Viaduct Alternative  
**Figure 6-4-2-2**

Syracuse Housing Authority on an agreement to establish the safety buffer area, or NYSDOT would seek a temporary easement for a 0.12-acre buffer area of Wilson Park. The buffer area includes one of the two existing basketball courts at the park, as well as a section of grassy area. While these amenities would be inaccessible to park users during a two-year period of construction, NYSDOT would provide a new basketball court prior to construction, so that two courts would be available during construction and three would be available in the permanent condition. The use of 0.12 acres constitutes a small section of the 2.1-acre park, and the inaccessibility would be temporary. Construction activities would also increase noise, vibration, and dust at the park, and would affect views of and from it, but these effects would be temporary.

As previously noted, Wilson Park and Frazer Park received funding under the UPARR Program. Wilson Park received funding for upgrades to facilities on the western portion of the park, including the recreational center and playground. While no portion of Wilson Park would be acquired or converted to non-recreational use for the Project, public access to the easternmost 0.12 acres of Wilson Park would be temporarily restricted during construction. The area would be re-opened to the public after construction is complete with and would continue to be used as parkland. The portion of Wilson Park that would be temporarily closed off during construction does not contain the facilities funded by UPARR, and therefore, no conversion of UPARR resources would occur under the Viaduct Alternative. Temporary occupancy with respect to Section 4(f) is discussed in **Chapter 7, Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation**.

Frazer Park would not be affected by any construction activities and no conversion of UPARR resources would occur under the Viaduct Alternative.

The designated trailways and bicycle paths that intersect the construction zone would be subject to temporary closures or detours at these intersections to protect pedestrian and bicyclist safety. These include the Connective Corridor crossing along Genesee Street at Almond Street under the I-81 viaduct, the Empire State Trail crossing along Water Street under the I-81 viaduct, New York State Bicycle Route 11 along State Street under I-690, and the Onondaga Creekwalk under I-690. Where each of these pedestrian and bicycle facilities passes through intersections or underneath highway bridges that would be removed and rebuilt, pedestrian and bicycle access would be restricted for up to one to two months several times during construction. Although portions of the trails may be inaccessible for short spans of time, trail/path connectivity would be maintained throughout construction. Connection of trail and path segments on either side of the construction activities would be provided via designated and clearly marked detours on nearby local streets. Since these effects would be temporary, and overall use of the trails and paths would not be impeded, they would not constitute adverse effects.

Forman Park would be adjacent to the construction zone, but no construction activities would encroach within the park boundary. Sidewalks along the western edge of Forman Park, within the transportation right-of-way, would be reconstructed in conjunction with reconstruction of the Genesee Street/Almond Street intersection. A fence may be installed along the western perimeter of the park for the safety of the public during construction, but access to the park would still be available from the north, south, and east. Construction activities would also increase noise, vibration, and dust at the park and would affect views of and from it, but these effects would be temporary. Upon completion of construction, there would be no permanent effects to the park.



The Hoggee Monument would be in proximity to demolition and reconstruction of I-690 bridges, but all construction activities would be outside of the park. While construction activities may temporarily increase noise, dust, and vibration in the vicinity of the monument, the plaza in which the monument is located would remain accessible during construction.

While construction activities may temporarily diminish user experience of parks and recreational features near the construction zone due to noise, vibration, dust, visibility of construction activities and equipment, construction vehicles, traffic detours, and altered or restricted access, these effects would be short-term. NYSDOT would implement measures to minimize or otherwise mitigate adverse effects, which include measures to minimize temporary adverse effects on parks and recreational resources during construction (see **Table 4-7 in Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods**). Upon the completion of construction, all affected facilities would be restored to existing, or improved, conditions.

### 6-4-2.3.3 INDIRECT EFFECTS

Since the Viaduct Alternative would replace an existing transportation facility on a similar alignment, it would not result in adverse indirect effects. As discussed in **Section 6-2-1, Neighborhood Character**, the Viaduct Alternative would not substantially induce growth or development beyond what would occur under the No Build Alternative. Therefore, it would not result in adverse indirect effects with respect to additional users or the development of uses adjacent to parks, trails, and other recreational resources that would change the use experience of the parks. However, the enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities implemented with the Viaduct Alternative would result in beneficial indirect effects to parks and recreational resources. The improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the Project Area would provide better connectivity between areas east and west of the I-81 viaduct, potentially providing a greater opportunity for the City of Syracuse to implement its pedestrian and bicycle initiatives. This would enhance connectivity throughout the greater trail and path network within Syracuse.

### 6-4-2.3.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The Viaduct Alternative would not result in adverse cumulative effects with respect to parks and recreational resources. The Project would not result in long-term effects on the demand for or provision of parklands, and therefore, there would be no adverse cumulative effects in combination with planned development or parks improvement projects. Rather, potential cumulative effects of the Viaduct Alternative would be beneficial to these resources. Enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities under this alternative, in combination with other conceptualized and planned improvements that could be undertaken by the City of Syracuse, would work collectively to enhance the overall efficiency, function, and connectivity of the recreational trail and path network throughout Syracuse.

### 6-4-2.3.5 MITIGATION

The Viaduct Alternative would not result in operational (permanent) adverse effects to parks and recreational resources in the Project Area.

A portion of Wilson Park (0.12 acres) would not be publicly accessible for about two years of the seven-year construction period to provide a safety buffer between the operating sections of the park

and the construction zone. NYSDOT would coordinate this temporary closure through an agreement with the Syracuse Housing Authority and the City of Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation, and Youth Programs. This buffer area would be fenced off from the remainder of the park and would be inaccessible to park users. Signage would be provided to inform the public that the area is closed to park users. To mitigate this temporary loss of parkland, NYSDOT would make improvements within the portion of the park that would remain open (see **Figure 6-4-2-3**). Prior to construction, a basketball court would be constructed west of the bleachers in the location of the former tennis court, so that two basketball courts would be available for use during construction. A third hoop and backboard would be added to the new court as well as benches. Other improvements include adding new shade trees, a new water fountain in the basketball court area, a new splash pad, new pavement for access from Jackson Street and other fence, pedestrian gates, and parking improvements. Once construction is complete, the existing eastern basketball court would be reconstructed, and the adjacent lawn area would be graded and reseeded. Thus, the park would be returned to include its current uses, in the same or improved condition, upon the completion of construction.

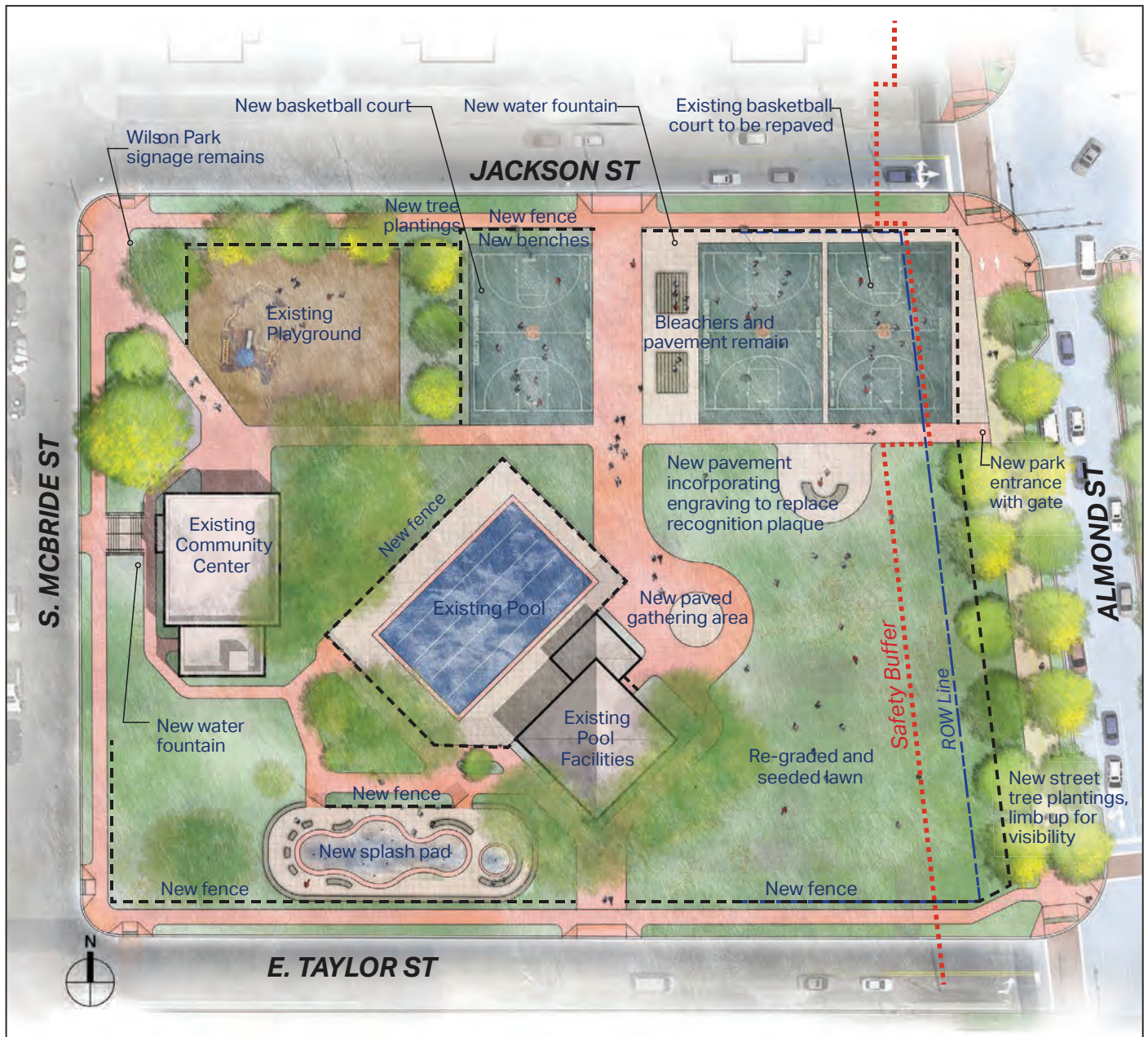
Access to all other parks and recreational resources would be maintained during construction. Construction duration would be minimized to the extent feasible and practicable at each location to minimize effects to parks and recreational resources. Where path and trail segments are temporarily impeded (e.g., due to intersection closures and demolition or reconstruction of the viaduct), detours would be established to route users around the construction zone, which would be incorporated into the Project's measures to minimize or otherwise mitigate effects, as listed in **Table 4-7 in Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods**.

### **6-4-2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE COMMUNITY GRID ALTERNATIVE**

#### **6-4-2.4.1 PERMANENT/OPERATIONAL EFFECTS**

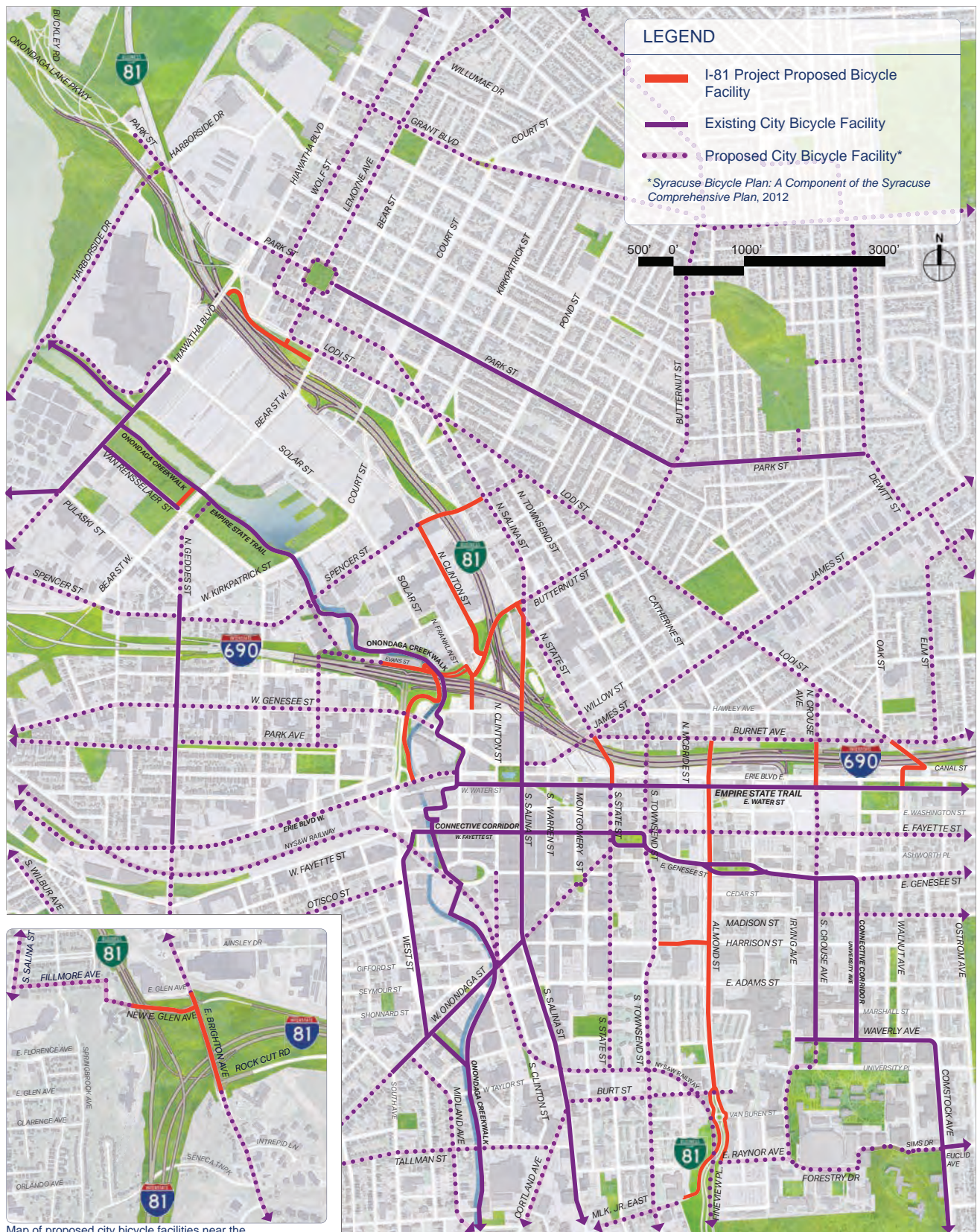
The Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse effects to parks and recreational resources. Enhancement to pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be beneficial to these resources. Under the Community Grid Alternative, the I-81 viaduct would be demolished, and Almond Street would be reconstructed. Almond Street and other roadways in the Project Area would be enhanced with pedestrian and bicycle facilities as described in **Chapter 3, Alternatives**. The pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be designed to connect with existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (including the Connective Corridor and Empire State Trail) and to not preclude planned future improvements outlined in the "Syracuse Bicycle Plan 2040," thereby improving connectivity with the larger recreational path and trailway network throughout Syracuse. In addition, removal of infrastructure at the I-690/West Street interchange would allow potential path improvements to the Creekwalk, pending coordination with the City of Syracuse, as described under the Viaduct Alternative. **Figure 6-4-2-4** shows proposed bicycle facilities under the Community Grid Alternative in relation to existing and future City bicycle facilities.

Within the project limits, Almond Street would be reconstructed as a two-way urban arterial with a 7.5- to 30-foot-wide planted center median, adding new green space to this corridor. The reconstructed corridor would also include dedicated cycle tracks as well as shared use (bicycle and pedestrian) paths, and vegetated buffers between the cycle tracks/shared use paths, sidewalks, and the



- ..... Safety Buffer
- - - - ROW Line
- - - - New Fence





Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities -  
Community Grid Alternative  
**Figure 6-4-2-4**

roadway. Other notable pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Project Area associated with the Community Grid Alternative include new sidewalks along Crouse and Irving Avenues between Burnet Avenue and Genesee Street, as well as a new shared use (bicycle/pedestrian) path on the west side of Crouse Avenue between Burnet Avenue and Water Street. A two-way raised cycle track would be provided on the west side of State Street between James Street and the Empire State Trail on Water Street.

There is opportunity under the Community Grid Alternative to provide new open space resources in the area near James Street and near MLK, Jr. East.

The proposed improvements in the Bear Street corridor would include work adjacent to the Onondaga Creekwalk and the proposed Empire State Trail segment that would run along Van Rensselaer Street. The Community Grid Alternative would include a new connection between Van Rensselaer Street and the Creekwalk on the north side of Bear Street along where the Empire State Trail would run, providing the benefit of added connectivity for both open space resources.

Kennedy Park, Ryder Park, Old Erie Canal State Historic Park, and the Bear Trap Creek Bikeway are near recommended noise barriers. These barriers are recommended within transportation rights-of-way. The noise barriers within the transportation rights-of-way would be separated from the parks by local streets or dense vegetation. The roadways and vegetation would help limit views of these barriers from the parks, and the barriers would lower projected noise levels within the parks.

No portion of the 12 recreational sites in the Project area that have received LWCF funds would be acquired or converted to a non-recreational use under the Community Grid Alternative. In addition, no construction activities would occur within those sites. Therefore, an analysis pursuant to Section 6(f) of the Act is not needed.

As previously noted, elements of Wilson Park and Frazer Park were funded through UPARR grants. No portion of either park would be acquired or permanently converted to non-recreational use under the Community Grid Alternative. Therefore, further review under Section 1010 of UPARR is not required.

### **6-4-2.4.2 CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS**

Under the Community Grid Alternative, a portion of Wilson Park would be temporarily occupied for less than one year to remove the existing viaduct. The eastern edge of Wilson Park currently encroaches on NYSDOT right-of-way, and this area would be used by NYSDOT to demolish the viaduct. In addition, a 20-foot-wide adjacent strip, or 0.12 acres, of Wilson Park outside of the state right-of-way would be inaccessible to serve as a safety buffer between the section of the park that would remain open and the construction zone. NYSDOT would coordinate with the City of Syracuse and the Syracuse Housing Authority on an agreement to establish the buffer area or NYSDOT would seek a temporary easement for the 0.12-acre buffer area of Wilson Park. The Contractor would install fencing around this buffer area, and there would be no public access to it for less than one year of the approximate six-year construction period. NYSDOT would coordinate with the City of Syracuse and the Syracuse Housing Authority on an agreement to establish the safety buffer area, or NYSDOT would seek a temporary easement for a 0.12-acre buffer area of Wilson Park. The buffer area includes one of the two existing basketball courts at the park, as well as a section of grassy area. While these amenities would be inaccessible to park users during the approximate one year period of construction,

NYSDOT would provide a new basketball court prior to construction, so that two courts would be available during construction and three would be available in the permanent condition. The use of 0.12 acres constitutes a small section of the 2.1-acre park, and the inaccessibility would be temporary. Construction activities would also increase noise, vibration, and dust at the park, and would affect views of and from it, but these effects would be temporary.

The portion of Wilson Park that would be temporarily closed off during construction does not contain the facilities funded by UPARR, and therefore, no conversion of UPARR resources would occur under the Community Grid Alternative. Temporary occupancy with respect to Section 4(f) is discussed in **Chapter 7, Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation**. Frazer Park would not be affected by any construction activities and no conversion of UPARR resources would occur under the Community Grid Alternative.

There are some other parks and recreational resources in the Project Area that would experience temporary effects associated with construction activities for the Community Grid Alternative. The designated trailways and bicycle facilities that cross the construction zone (i.e., along Crouse Avenue, Irving Avenue, Almond Street, Bear Street, I-690, etc.) would be subject to temporary closures or detours at these intersections to protect pedestrian and bicyclist safety. These include the Connective Corridor crossing along Genesee Street, the Empire State Trail crossing along Water Street under the I-81 viaduct, the proposed Empire State Trail crossing of Bear Street at Van Rensselaer Street, New York State Bicycle Route 11 along State Street under I-690, and the Onondaga Creekwalk under I-690. Pedestrian and bicycle access would be temporarily restricted for one to two months and several times during construction in areas where pedestrian and bicycle facilities pass through the construction area. Connection of trail and path segments on either side of the construction activities would be provided via designated and clearly marked detours on nearby local streets. Since these effects would be temporary, and overall use of the trails and paths would not be impeded, they would not constitute adverse effects.

Forman Park would be adjacent to the construction zone, but no construction activities would encroach within the park boundary. Sidewalks along the western edge of Forman Park, within the transportation right-of-way, would be reconstructed in conjunction with reconstruction of the Genesee Street/Almond Street intersection. A fence may be installed along the western perimeter of the park for the safety of the public during construction, but access to the park would still be available from the north, south, and east. Construction activities would also increase noise, vibration, and dust at the park and would affect views of and from it, but these effects would be temporary. Upon completion of construction, there would be no permanent effects to the park.

The Hoggee Monument would be in proximity to demolition and reconstruction of I-690 bridges, but all construction activities would remain outside of the park. While construction activities may temporarily increase noise, dust, and vibration near the monument, the green space, in which the monument is located, would remain accessible.

Bruce Park would be in proximity to reconstruction of sidewalks in the Central Study Area, but all construction activities would remain outside the park. The sidewalk reconstruction would occur over a short period (less than six months). If necessary, the marker could be covered to protect it while construction activities occur nearby.

While construction activities may temporarily diminish user experience of parks and recreational features near the Project Area due to construction noise, visibility of construction activities and equipment,



construction traffic, and altered or restricted access, these effects would be short-term. NYSDOT would implement measures to minimize or otherwise mitigate effects, which include measures to minimize temporary adverse effects on parks and recreational resources during construction (see **Table 4-7** in **Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods**). Upon the completion of construction, all affected facilities would be restored to existing, or improved, conditions.

### 6-4-2.4.3 INDIRECT EFFECTS

As discussed in **Section 6-2-1, Neighborhood Character**, the Community Grid Alternative may enhance development interest in the existing I-81/Almond Street corridor in Downtown Syracuse due to the removal of the I-81 viaduct. The potential new development and growth-inducing effects of this alternative would not result in adverse indirect effects to parks and recreational resources. Existing parks and recreational resources would be able to accommodate additional usage from new development and any adjacent land development would be executed in accordance with local, approved planning regulations/guidance. Indirect effects to parks and recreational resources under the Community Grid Alternative would be largely beneficial. The improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the Project Area would provide better connectivity between areas east and west of the existing I-81 viaduct as compared to existing conditions and the No Build Alternative, potentially providing a greater opportunity for the City of Syracuse to implement its pedestrian and bicycle initiatives. This would enhance connectivity throughout the greater trail and path network within Syracuse.

### 6-4-2.4.4 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The Community Grid Alternative would not result in adverse cumulative effects with respect to parks and recreational resources. The Project would not result in long-term effects on the demand for or provision of parklands, and therefore, there would be no adverse cumulative effects in combination with planned development or parks improvement projects. Rather, potential cumulative effects of the Community Grid Alternative would be beneficial to these resources. Enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities under this alternative, in combination with other conceptualized and planned improvements by the City of Syracuse and others, would work collectively to enhance the overall efficiency, function, and connectivity of the recreational trail and path network throughout Syracuse.

### 6-4-2.4.5 MITIGATION

The Community Grid Alternative would not result in operational (permanent) adverse effects to parks and recreational resources in the Project Area.

A portion of Wilson Park (0.12 acres) would not be publicly accessible for less than one year during the six-year construction to provide a safety buffer between the operating sections of the park and the construction zone. NYSDOT would coordinate this temporary closure through an agreement with the Syracuse Housing Authority and the City of Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation, and Youth Programs. This buffer area would be fenced off from the remainder of the park. Signage would be provided to inform the public that the area is closed to park users. To mitigate this temporary loss of parkland, NYSDOT would make improvements within the portion of the park that would remain open (see **Figure 6-4-2-3**). Prior to construction, a basketball court would be constructed west of the bleachers in the location of the former tennis court, so that two basketball courts would be available

for use during construction. After construction, a third hoop and backboard would be added to the new court as well as benches. Other improvements include adding new shade trees, a new water fountain in the basketball court area, a new splash pad, new pavement for access from Jackson Street, and other fence, pedestrian gates, and parking improvements. Once construction is complete, the existing eastern basketball court would be reconstructed, and the adjacent lawn area would be graded and reseeded. Thus, the park would be returned to include its current uses, in the same or improved condition, upon the completion of construction.

Access to all other parks and recreational resources would be maintained during construction. Construction duration would be minimized to the extent feasible and practicable at each location to minimize effects to parks and recreational resources. Where path and trail segments are temporarily impeded (e.g., due to intersection closures and demolition or reconstruction of the viaduct), detours would be established to route users around the construction zone, which would be incorporated into the Project's measures to minimize or otherwise mitigate effects, as listed in **Table 4-7** in **Chapter 4, Construction Means and Methods**.

## I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

---

*This page is intentionally left blank.*