

- Legend**
- 1 Marina
 - 2 Sports Center
 - 3 West Park
 - 4 Garden & Recreation Area
 - 5 World's Fair Historic Core
 - 6 Meadow Lake
 - 7 Willow Lake





To spend any time in Flushing Meadows Corona Park is to realize that it is not one park; it is many. If one spends enough time in the Park, one can describe precisely the character of these sub-parks and quantify them. There are seven.

SEVEN ZONES

1

Marina

The former World's Fair Marina is a marine park and promenade along the Flushing Bay. The promenade was redone as recently as 2001 with money from the DEP. The Marina provides 1.4 miles of waterfront access including areas for strolling, sitting and biking. The Marina is unlike much of the rest of the Park in character, and it is a reminder of the all-encompassing nature of the Fairs.

2

Sport Center

The Sports Center encompasses two major professional sports venues: Citi Field/Shea Stadium and the USTA National tennis center. The gravitational pull of these two facilities is enormous, and this area of the Park extends its influence out into the rest of the Park unlike any of the other areas.

3

West Park

West Park is separated from the western edge of the World's Fair Area by the Grand Central Parkway. Although it is connected via two bridges which cross over the GCP, the West Park is functionally separate. Despite being the smallest zone, the West Park contains two of the Park's most dynamic facilities: the NY Hall of Science and the Queens Zoo. It is also the only area of the Park with a truly porous relationship to its surrounding communities.

4

Recreation & Garden Botanical Area

The organized, activity filled "backyard" of FMCP is the recreation and Garden Botanical Area. This area is located to the north and east of the Core area. Although one can pass under the raised Van Wyck Expressway, it is still a significant boundary. With the new Rec Center and the Pool and Rink, this is the most rapidly changing area of the Park. As downtown Flushing and Willets Point develop, this area will be very heavily used. This area has the most potential to develop a porous relationship with surrounding residents like the West Park.

5

Historic World's Fair Core Area

What many people think of when they think of Flushing Meadows Corona Park is the historic World's Fair Core Area. Presided over by the Unisphere and the New York State Pavilion, this area is the spiritual center of the Park. The Queens Museum of Art, keeper of the World's Fair history is the only major cultural institution in

the Core area. Although there are several heavily used soccer fields, the Core area is still dominated by the formal geometry of the path system left over from the Fairs and subsequently modified innumerable times.

6

Meadow Lake

The Park's active lake is Meadow Lake. The paths around the lake are used heavily by joggers and cyclists. The lake itself is used for sailing and rowing. To the south and west, baseball fields surround the lake. There are also areas for picnicking, including areas where grilling is allowed.

7

Willow Lake

The Park's only nature preserve is Willow Lake. It is currently only open by appointment, but there are plans in the works to make this area more accessible to all New Yorkers, who would like to experience a working wetland.

Queens is the City's largest and most diverse borough. It contains many different cultural and ethnic enclaves side by side. FMCP mirrors this diversity; this is one of its greatest assets. To recognize that the Park has seven distinct zones does not preclude an overall identity for FMCP. In fact, the best way to unify FMCP into a single and cohesive whole is to ensure that each of the seven regions or Zones is uniquely fit to serve its individual purpose. By amplifying the best aspects of each of the seven zones and, most critically, providing appropriate connections between them, we establish FMCP as one park with many qualities.

It is neither essential nor possible to connect every zone to every other zone. Calibrating the connections between zones to link compatible activities and create a continuous experience is an important goal for the Park as a whole. We describe a strategy in the section, "Ecology of Activity." There are, of course, significant barriers to easy travel in the Park. Several of these problems and potential solutions are addressed in the consultants' memoranda included in the Appendix. They include: better signage; more clearly defined path systems; location of activities -new or relocated- on well defined routes; new modes of transportation such as water bus, shuttle bus or bicycle.

One of the respondents to our questionnaire characterized the Park quite elegantly. "Flushing Meadows," she said, "is a place that engenders diversity and understanding by providing a space for activities, organizations and institutions, which allow Park users to expand their cultural knowledge and understanding of their neighbors." Each of the seven areas contributes to this definition in a slightly different way.



Neighborhood Park



**Regional Park
&
Cultural Campus**



Large Event Space



Three Major Modes



Because of its location in the heart of Queens, its proximity to highways and mass transit and its sheer size, the Park functions at three very different scales of activity. The three major modes of operation for Flushing Meadows Corona Park are: Neighborhood Park, Regional Park and Large Event Space. They are more intertwined than might be apparent.

THREE MAJOR MODES

Neighborhood Park

For many people who live close to the Park, FMCP is their local neighborhood park: it is where their children play, where they picnic and where they go to exercise or to escape the heat.

Regional Park

Users who do not necessarily live close to the Park are drawn to it as a Regional Park. In FMCP they participate in sports leagues with park users from other communities. They visit the cultural institutions, take advantage of some of the other facilities that are available only in a park of its size and scale such as the new pool and ice rink. The Park's role as a Regional Park is, of course, magnified by the presence of its two major sports facilities – Shea (Citi Field) Stadium and the USTA.

Large Event Space

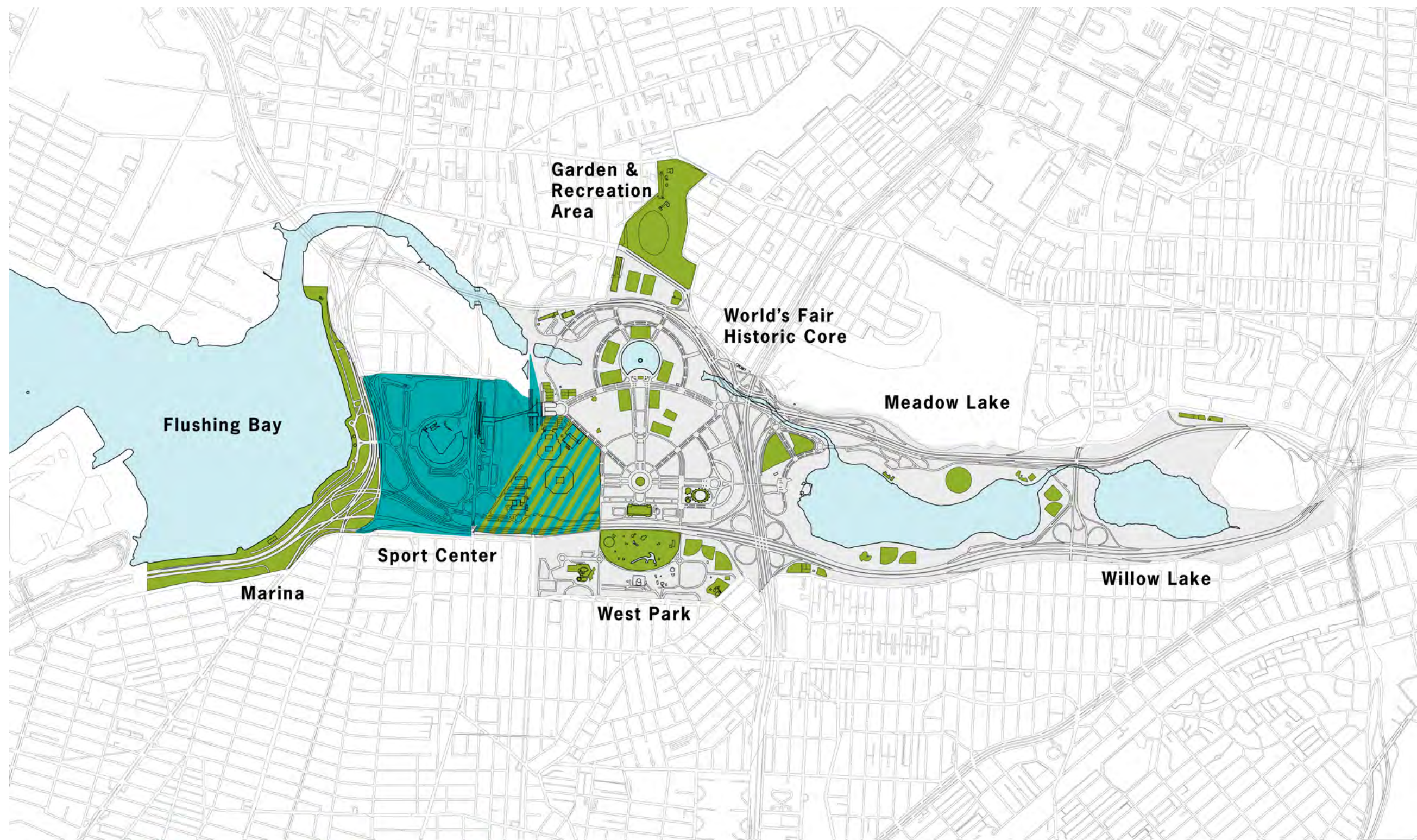
FMCP is the one of the preeminent sites in the City for large events. From outdoor concerts to the myriad cultural festivals that take place each summer, FMCP regularly hosts events which can draw upwards of 150,000 people. The US Open and the Mets regularly draw large crowds to the Park in the Spring, Summer and Fall.

Many local users for whom the Park is a Neighborhood Park provide the base constituents for the ethnic festivals which draw users from much greater distances to the Park's current Large Gathering Space. Similarly, the large events in the Park are key to establishing FMCP as a Regional Park with amenities unavailable in smaller parks.

As one of the most heavily used parks in the City, FMCP is filled to capacity on a typical summer weekend. Its seven playgrounds, seven ball fields and nine soccer fields serve both neighborhood and regional residents. Many of the Park's users come from Queens' residential neighborhoods including the six surrounding Community Boards. Other Park users come from elsewhere in Queens, other boroughs or even as far away as Long Island and Westchester.

While these three modes are a great asset to the Park, they also present many challenges. Conflicts arise from difficulty in managing the balance among the three modes. Some areas of the Park are easily accessed from surrounding neighborhoods while many areas are not. Some amenities, which would draw Park users from great distances, are located far from public transportation.

As the Park is transformed for the 21st Century, great care must be taken to maintain the balance of the three modes and the connections among the seven zones. We address this idea on page 27 as part of our "Ecology of Activity." Proposed changes and amenities must be considered in terms of their appropriateness for all three of these modes. Even on days in which there are festivals or other events at FMCP, the Park must be available for local users to stroll and for sports leagues to practice and compete.



Legend ● IN THE PARK ● OF THE PARK ● BOTH



We developed the concept “In the Park & Of the Park” as a way of thinking about the Park’s uses and institutions in terms of the overall identity of Flushing Meadows Corona Park. We call those things which actively contribute to the Park, “Of the Park.” We use “In the Park” to describe those elements, which sit on land inside the administrative boundaries of FMCP but could, in truth, be anywhere. We believe that many of the aspects we classify as “In the Park” could be made to be “Of the Park.”

IN THE PARK & OF THE PARK

We intend the construct of “In the Park & Of the Park” to be a test for future uses which we cannot anticipate and which may be proposed for the Park. We believe that every aspect of Flushing Meadows Corona Park should contribute to the overall sense of place. The majority of the infrastructure and the institutions in the Park do. They are in dialogue with the Park as a whole. Indeed, it is the strong sense of place at FMCP that makes those aspects of the Park which are incongruous or hermetically cut-off from the rest of the Park more conspicuous.

In the Park

These institutions include: Terrace on the Park, Citi Field, the National Tennis Center and the Olmsted Center itself. At their best, these institutions offer little to the Park. Terrace on the Park, for example, would work equally well if it were in another location. The Olmsted Center, which serves all boroughs as the Department’s principle design and construction office would better serve the Park and the City if it were relocated elsewhere in a sustainable, modern facility.

At their worst, these institutions cause harm to Flushing Meadows Corona Park as a whole. Citi Field and, to a lesser extent, USTA/NTC are the most incompatible uses due to their huge demand for parking and the spill-over effect on surrounding neighborhoods, especially when their schedules overlap. Like Shea, the USTA/NTC brings large crowds for the brief period of the US Open. Unlike Citi Field, the USTA/NTC does offer real benefits when its tennis courts are made available to Park users.

On the other hand, these institutions add luster to the Park’s image and could, potentially, provide much-needed revenue to support its operation. Furthermore they both draw large numbers of visitors to the Park at times bringing FMCP into the national and international spotlight.

Of the Park

These institutions include the Hall of Science, The Queens Museum, The Queens Zoo, The Queens Botanical Garden and Queens Theatre In the Park. All of these institutions have their own agendas and constituencies, but they are still important members of the Park community, and their visitors often come to more than one institution or event.



Terrace on the Park



National Tennis Center



Shea Stadium



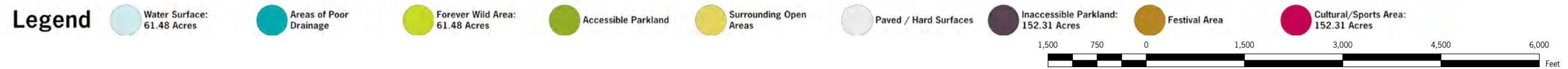
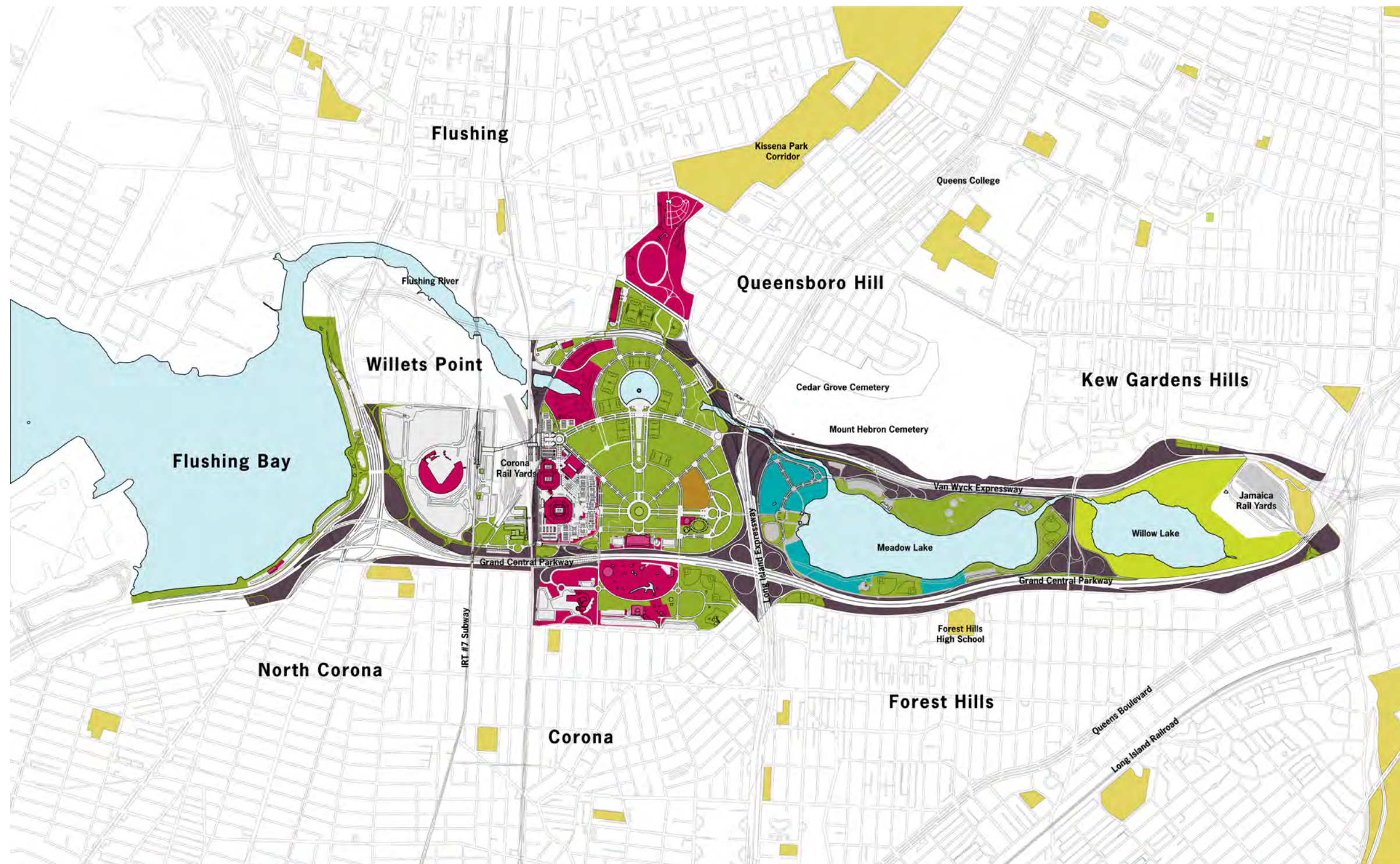
New Pool and Ice Rink



Olmsted Center



Queens Zoo





Accessible Parkland



Inaccessible Parkland



Cultural/Sports Areas



Forever Wild Areas



Water



Paved Areas



Surrounding Parkland



Major Areas of Poor Drainage

By understanding the active and passive areas of the Park as a single ecology, we can make the Park more suitable for both. Activity will become more intense and more accessible. At the same time, Park users will have a richer and more varied experience of nature. The Park will become safer, a tranquil respite from the city.

ECOLOGY OF ACTIVITY

A big part of the popular appeal of Flushing Meadows Corona Park is the wealth and diversity of programs existing within its borders. We have already described both the three major modes of use and the seven zones of activity in the Park.

Today, the Park is heir to its history both as an urban fairground and as a massive experiment in re-naturalized landscape. One of the great paradoxes of FMCP is that despite all of this activity, the Park can feel, at times, vacant and flat. The Park contains two massive lakes, yet, although the Willow Lake area is currently a restricted access nature preserve, one is hardly aware of this important aspect of the Park. Very little of the Park gives the user any sense of being in close contact with nature. The institutions are separated from one another by great distances, and the unprogrammed interstitial areas are largely undifferentiated. These areas of passive or unspecified program are where visitors create their own experience of FMCP. They are a part of the ecology of activity in FMCP, and they are particularly important to the Park.

We see these paradoxes as fundamentally related. The reason that FMCP with all of its activity can feel vacant is that program has not been thoughtfully distributed through the Park. To understand this phenomenon we thought of FMCP in terms of an Ecology of Activity. By that, we mean that program is always thought of in relationship to surrounding programs, to circulation and to lack of program.

Parks are often understood either as a picturesque Olmstedian ideal or as a kind of communal backyard for active recreation. FMCP is large enough that these two very different ideas of “park” can exist simultaneously. Indeed, it is so large that they must both exist to support each other. This symbiosis can only happen where active and passive zones are considered part of a continuum. Areas of intense program actively create spaces where landscape can intervene. Water, plants, and new topography carve out new spaces where activity can be concentrated, making it more accessible and more intense. Specifically, we propose creating corridors of program to link the seven zones to one another by connecting Park activities at each of the three scales (or modes). Programmed space would be concentrated strategically to allow for larger swathes of unprogrammed “natural spaces.”

By recalibrating the relationship between programmed experience and unprogrammed naturalized areas, we would make the Park more vital as a place. Active recreation would become more active and passive recreation would be given more space to establish itself as a place where New Yorkers could experience the Environment. At the same time, the Park would rediscover its purpose as the Park of the Future. It would serve as a vital laboratory and place of discovery and experiment.