

The Party in Bryant Park

Learning from the world's most carefully managed park



About Bryant Park

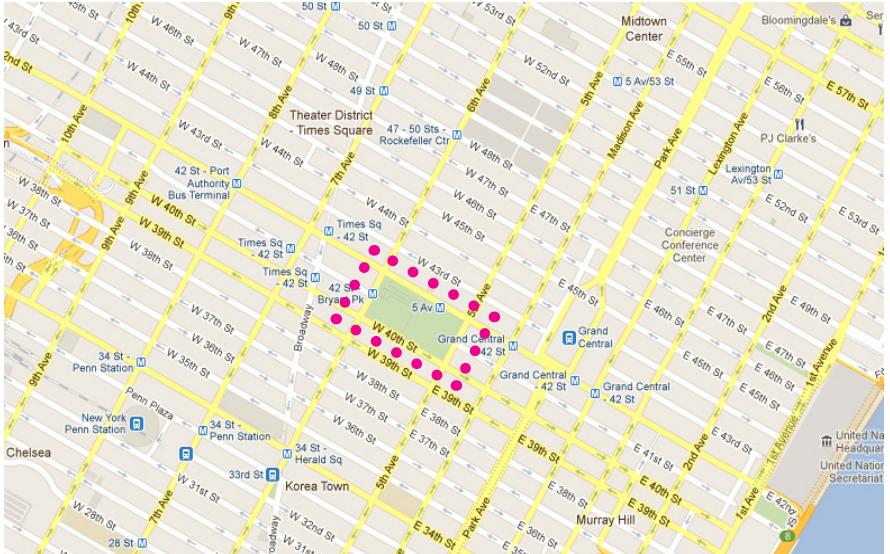
Located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, Bryant Park is a **9.603 acre** park.

Situated between 5th and 6th Avenues and between 40th and 42nd Streets, the park is nestled between soaring office towers and high-end apartment buildings.

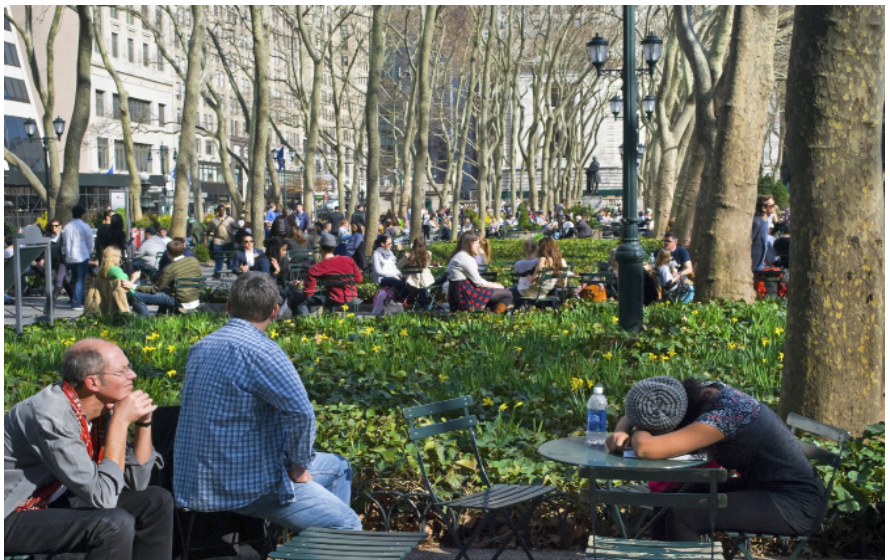
It is a vibrant, safe and inviting place filled with office workers enjoying a breath of fresh air, local residence grabbing a quick coffee, and city visitors spending long hours taking in all the sites and sounds of the city.

The number of daily visitors is often more than **1000 people per acre**, making it the most densely occupied urban park in the world.

Bryant Park is part of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, but it is managed by a private not-for-profit corporation, the **Bryant Park Corporation**.



There is plenty any park, large or small, urban, suburban or rural, can learn from this meticulously managed park.



A photograph of a park with people lying on the grass. In the foreground, a man in a blue shirt and jeans lies on his back, and a woman in a blue shirt and jeans lies on her side. In the middle ground, a man in a blue shirt and jeans lies on his back, and a woman in a blue shirt and jeans lies on her side. In the background, a man in a blue shirt and jeans lies on his back, and a woman in a blue shirt and jeans lies on her side. The park has a large green lawn, a hedge on the left, and a fountain in the background. The text "Known as 'Needle Park' in the 1980's" is overlaid on the image.

Known as 'Needle Park'
in the 1980's

It's come a long way

In the 1970s and 1980s Bryant Park earned the unwelcome title of 'Needle Park'. High crime rates and drug sales defined the park. It was poorly maintained, under-used and dangerous.

In 1980 the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation was formed and was assigned with the task of revitalizing the park.

Under the careful management of Daniel Beiderman, a Harvard MBA and urban management consultant, Bryant Park became one of the signature examples of New York City's revival in the 1990s.

So, how do you go from this...



To this...



You focus on people.

The management and staff at Bryant Park know that creating a great place is like throwing a good party.

You have to focus on your guests, and anticipate what they will need, want, and enjoy.



When thinking about any park or public space, from a small neighborhood square to a large urban park, ask yourself the questions below. By thinking carefully about how people will get to the place, what they'll do when they will get there, what kind of infrastructure is, and who manages or take care of the space, you can start to assess what's working, what's not, and what could be improved.

Who takes care of this place?

Is there evidence of volunteerism?

Do you see any maintenance workers or staff?

Is there a contact information so you can reach someone in charge of the space?

Is there a security presence?

What's there to do?

Is there a mix of stores and services nearby?

Are there opportunities for people to be physically active?

Are there inviting place for people to rest or relax?

Is there a diversity of people?

Are there activities for people of all ages?

How did I get here?

Is the place visible from a distance?

Is it accessible to wheelchairs and strollers?

Can you easily walk or bike to the place?

Is there a paved path?

Is the path clear of snow, debris, or water?

Are there 'desire line' or beaten paths?

What's here?

Are there comfortable places to sit?

What kind of lighting is there?

Is there a paved or gravel path?

Are there public washrooms? Are they clean and inviting?

Is there somewhere to get a snack or drink?



Who takes care of this place?

According to Project for Public Spaces, 80% of the success of any public place is dependant upon the management.

In Bryant Park, the park staff manage every detail of the park; from horticulture, to public events, to visitor information and waste management



The Bryant Park Corporation Mission Statement

The Bryant Park Corporation was founded in 1980 with a charge to reclaim Bryant Park for the **people** of New York City.

Since then, the talent, dedication and execution of the BPC board and staff has transformed the park into the greatest public space in the world.

The ongoing mission of the BPC is:

- to create a rich and dynamic visual, cultural and intellectual outdoor experience for New Yorkers and visitors alike
- to enhance the real estate values of its neighbors by continuously improving the park
- to burnish the park's status as a prime NYC tourist destination by presenting a meticulously maintained venue for free entertainment events
- and to help prevent crime and disorder in the park by attracting thousands of patrons, at all hours, thus fostering a safe environment.



What's
here?

Comfortable seating is a key feature of any successful public space.

The movable french bistro style chairs in Bryant Park are loved by park goers for their versatility and comfort. The chairs have become an icon not only of the park, but of Manhattan. They appear on Bryant Park's logo, and if you want to take a little piece of New York home with you, you can purchase them at numerous American retailers.

Bryant Park Map

✓ The Grounds

- A Library Terrace
- B Upper Terrace
- C Fountain Terrace
- D 40th Street Allée
- E 42nd Street Allée

✓ Amenities & Attractions

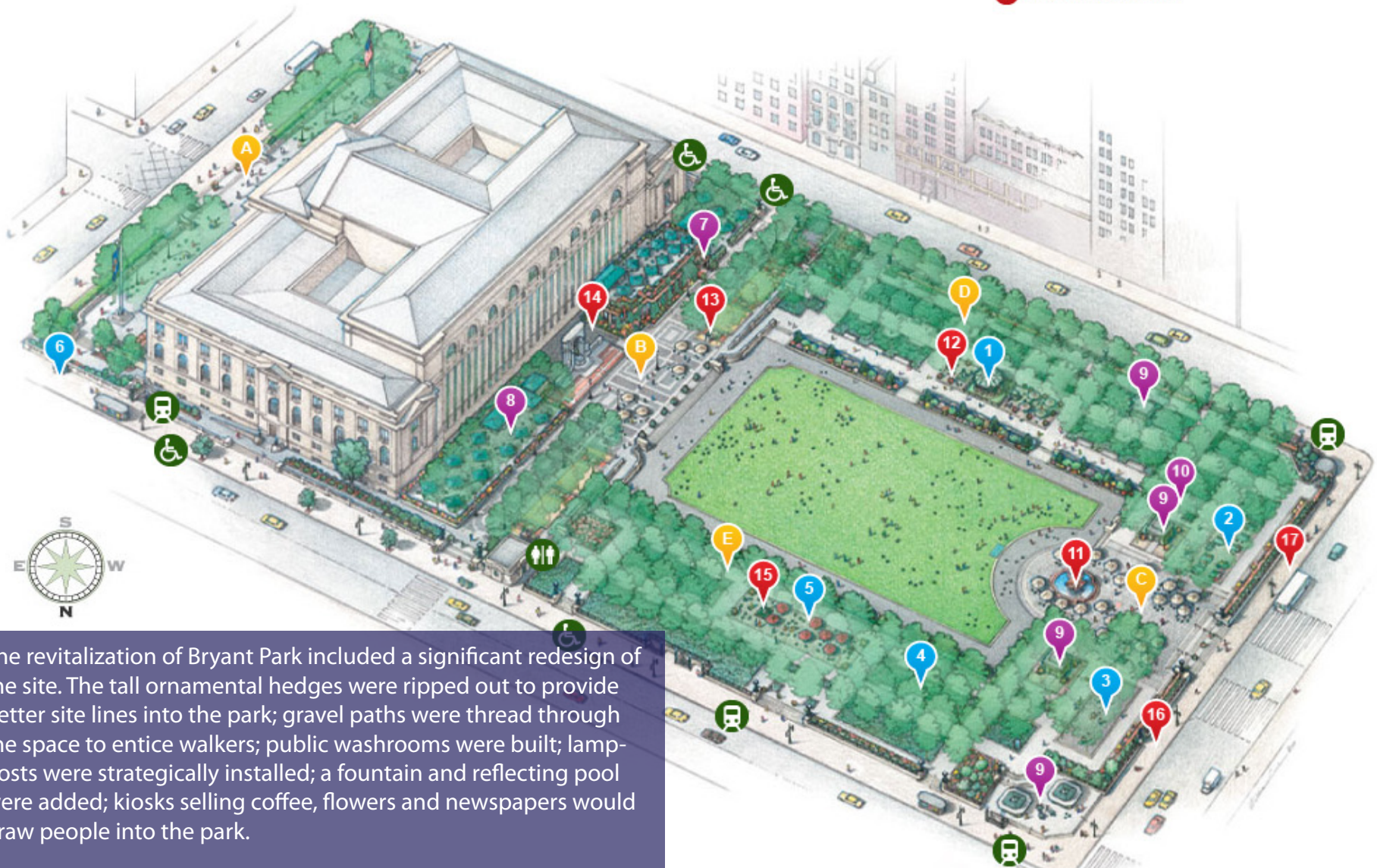
- 1 Le Carrousel
- 2 Chess & Backgammon
- 3 Pétanque
- 4 Bryant Park Ping Pong
- 5 Bryant Park Reading Room
- 6 Shoe Shine Stand

✓ Food

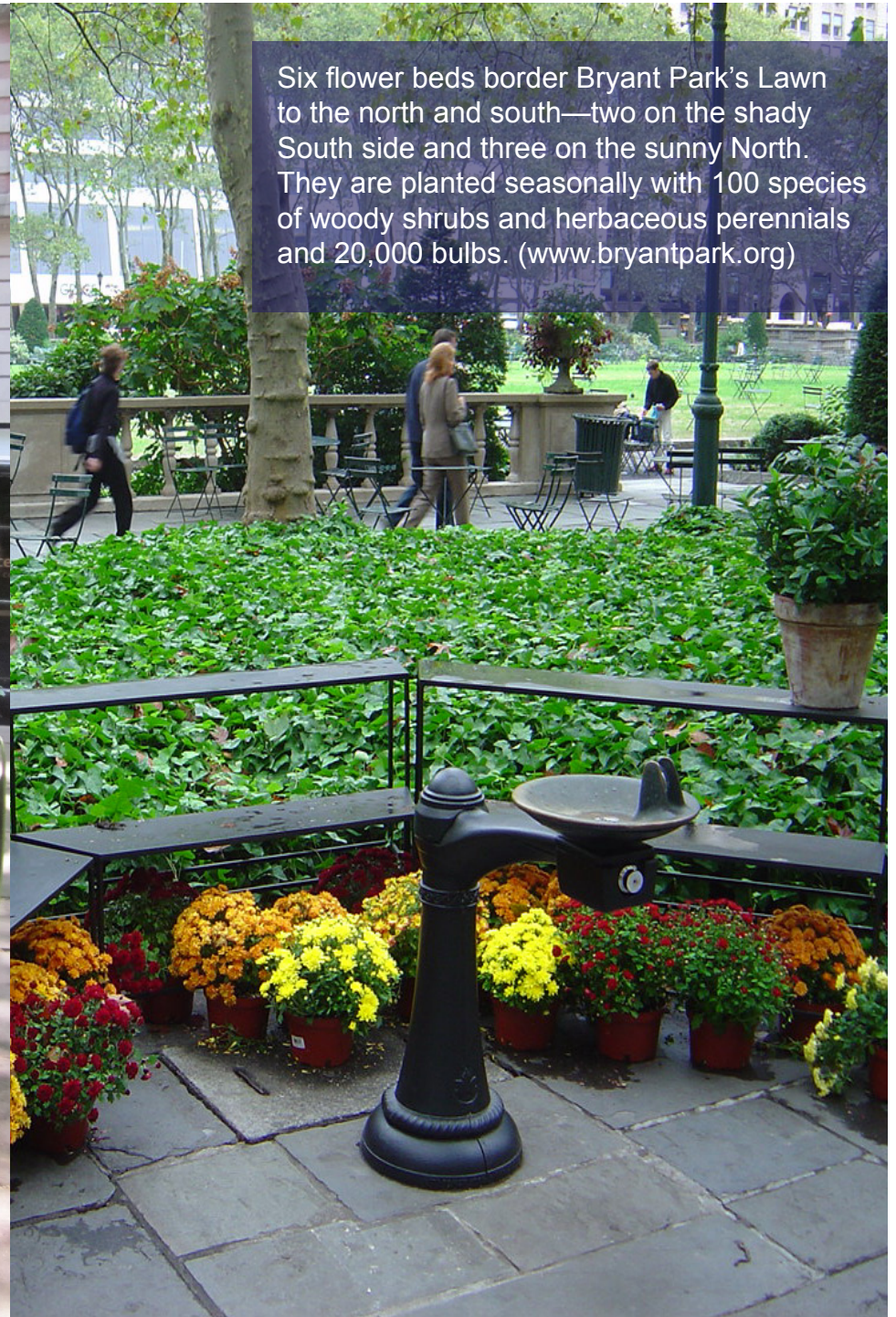
- 7 Bryant Park Grill
- 8 Bryant Park Café
- 9 'wichcraft Food Kiosks
- 10 Southwest Porch

✓ Sculpture & Monuments

- 11 Shaw Lowell Memorial Fountain
- 12 Goethe Monument
- 13 Gertrude Stein Monument
- 14 Bryant Memorial
- 15 Dodge Monument
- 16 Juarez Monument
- 17 Andrada Monument



The revitalization of Bryant Park included a significant redesign of the site. The tall ornamental hedges were ripped out to provide better site lines into the park; gravel paths were thread through the space to entice walkers; public washrooms were built; lamp-posts were strategically installed; a fountain and reflecting pool were added; kiosks selling coffee, flowers and newspapers would draw people into the park.



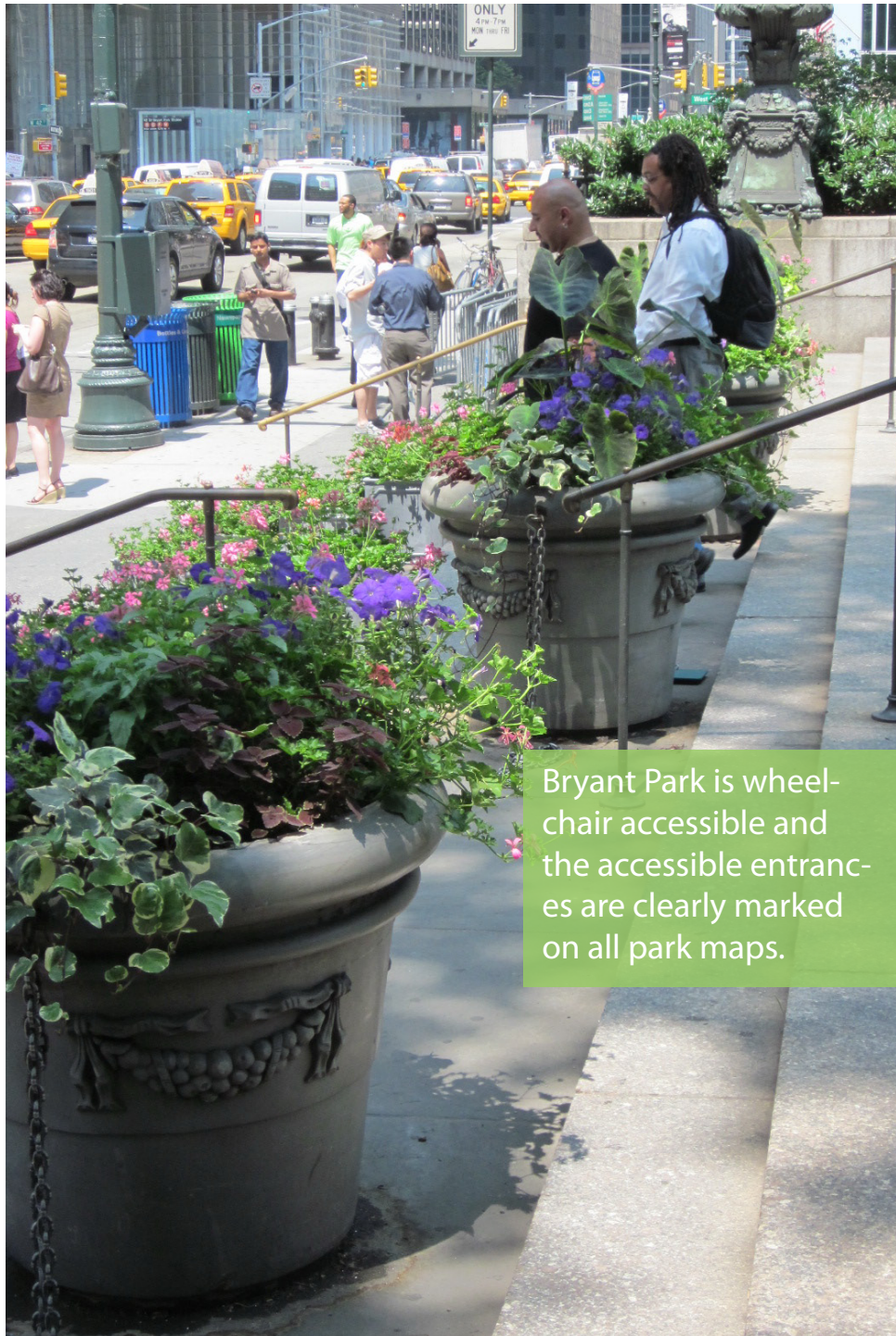


Talk about attention to detail! Bryant Park's public washrooms are meticulously maintained. Fresh cut flowers greet restroom users and send the message that you are a welcome guest, and that this is a place to be treated with care and respect.



How did I
get here?

This mid-block pedestrian crossing
is essential to creating a safe and
accessible entrance to the park.



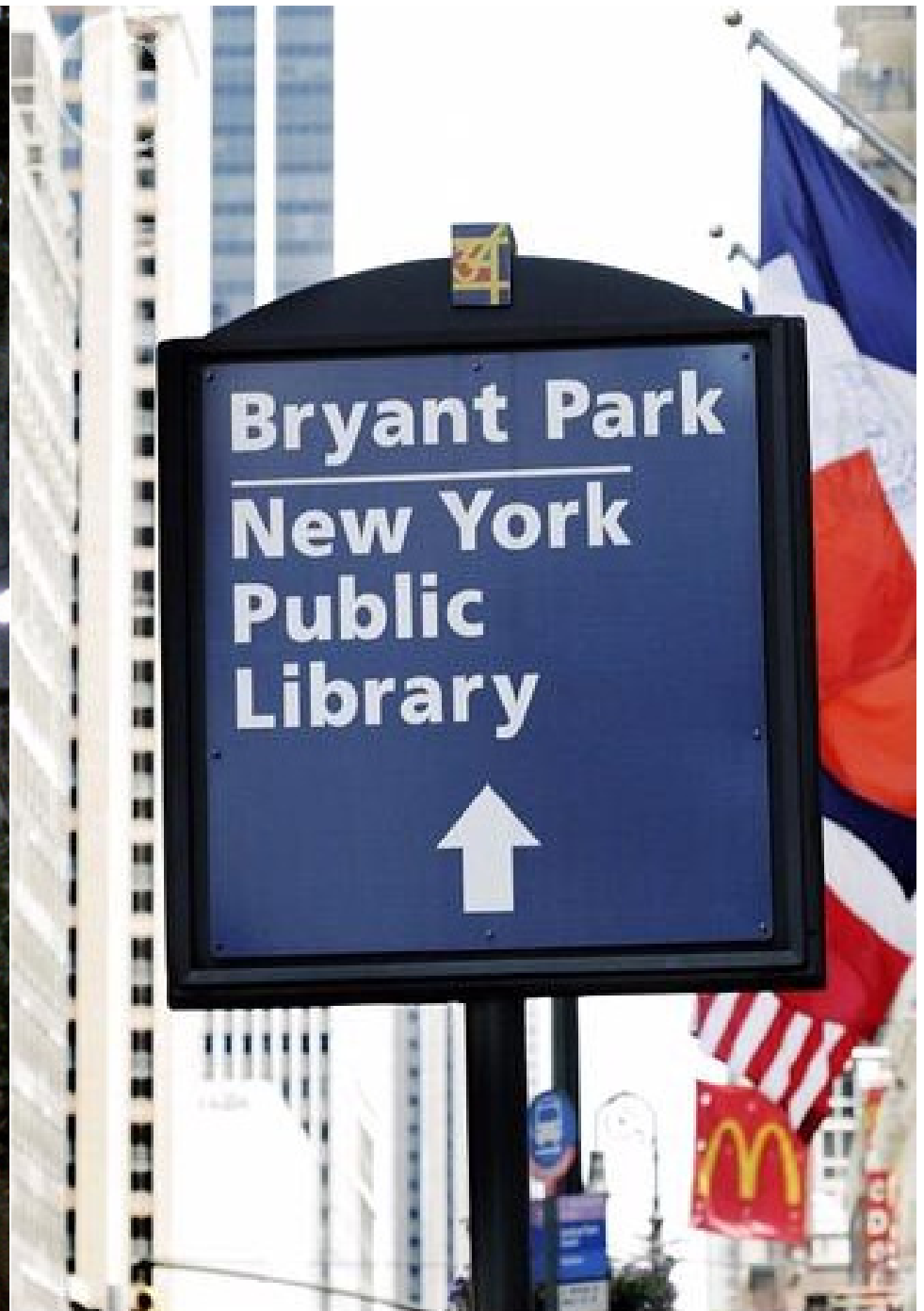
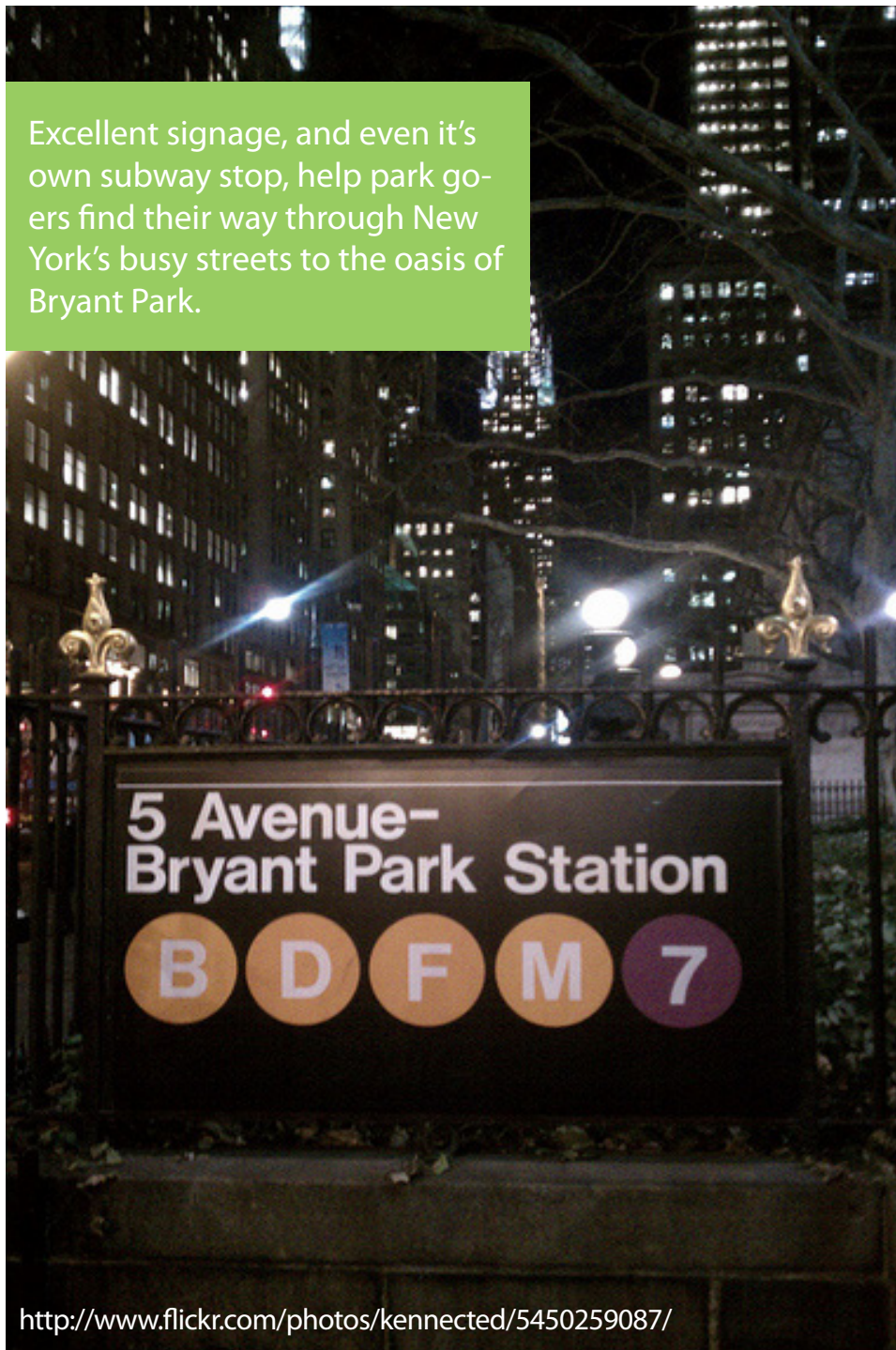
Bryant Park is wheel-chair accessible and the accessible entrances are clearly marked on all park maps.





This parking lot (yes, it's a parking lot) is located down the street from the park. The Bryant Park Corporation has worked with the property owner to extend the 'edges' of the park. The soft greenery sends the message to passers-by that they are entering a special part of the city.

Excellent signage, and even it's own subway stop, help park goers find their way through New York's busy streets to the oasis of Bryant Park.



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/kennected/5450259087/>

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What's there
to do?

Many urban parks are 'unofficially closed' during the winter months. Paths aren't cleared of snow and ice, programs and activities are suspended.

Throughout the winter Bryant Park continues to invite people into the park. A huge public ice rink is surrounded by a lively winter market. The illuminated Christmas tree creates an eye catching focal point at all hours of the day.

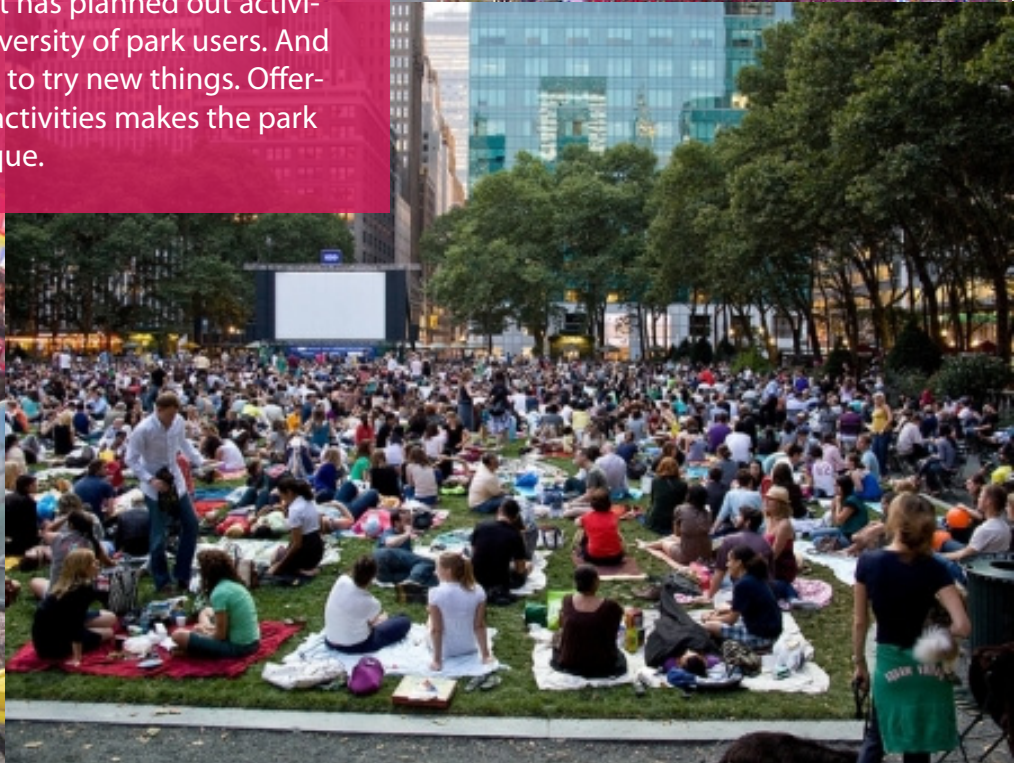




From knitting, to yoga; chess, to late night movies; a children's reading room to a game of ping-pong, the activities in Bryant Park are endless.



The management has planned out activities to entice a diversity of park users. And they're not afraid to try new things. Offering unexpected activities makes the park exciting and unique.





Clear and attractive signage is an often overlooked element of creating a great park. Bryant Park provides excellent examples of how you can communicate with users.

