

**FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE
CROTON WATER TREATMENT PLANT
AT THE MOSHOLU SITE**

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6.3. VISUAL CHARACTER

6.3.1. Introduction

This section examines the effects of the proposed Croton Water Treatment Plant project (Croton project) at the Mosholu Site on the existing visual quality and design characteristics that include building types, heights, materials, topography and vegetation.

The study area for this analysis includes the water treatment plant site and a one half-mile radius of the water treatment plant site. The Mosholu Golf Course and driving range is bound by the Mosholu Parkway to the west and north, Jerome Avenue and the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) No.4 elevated subway (the Woodlawn station) to the east, and West Gun Hill Road to the south. The methodology used to prepare this analysis is presented in Section 4.3, Data Collection and Impact Methodologies, Visual Character.

6.3.2. Baseline Conditions

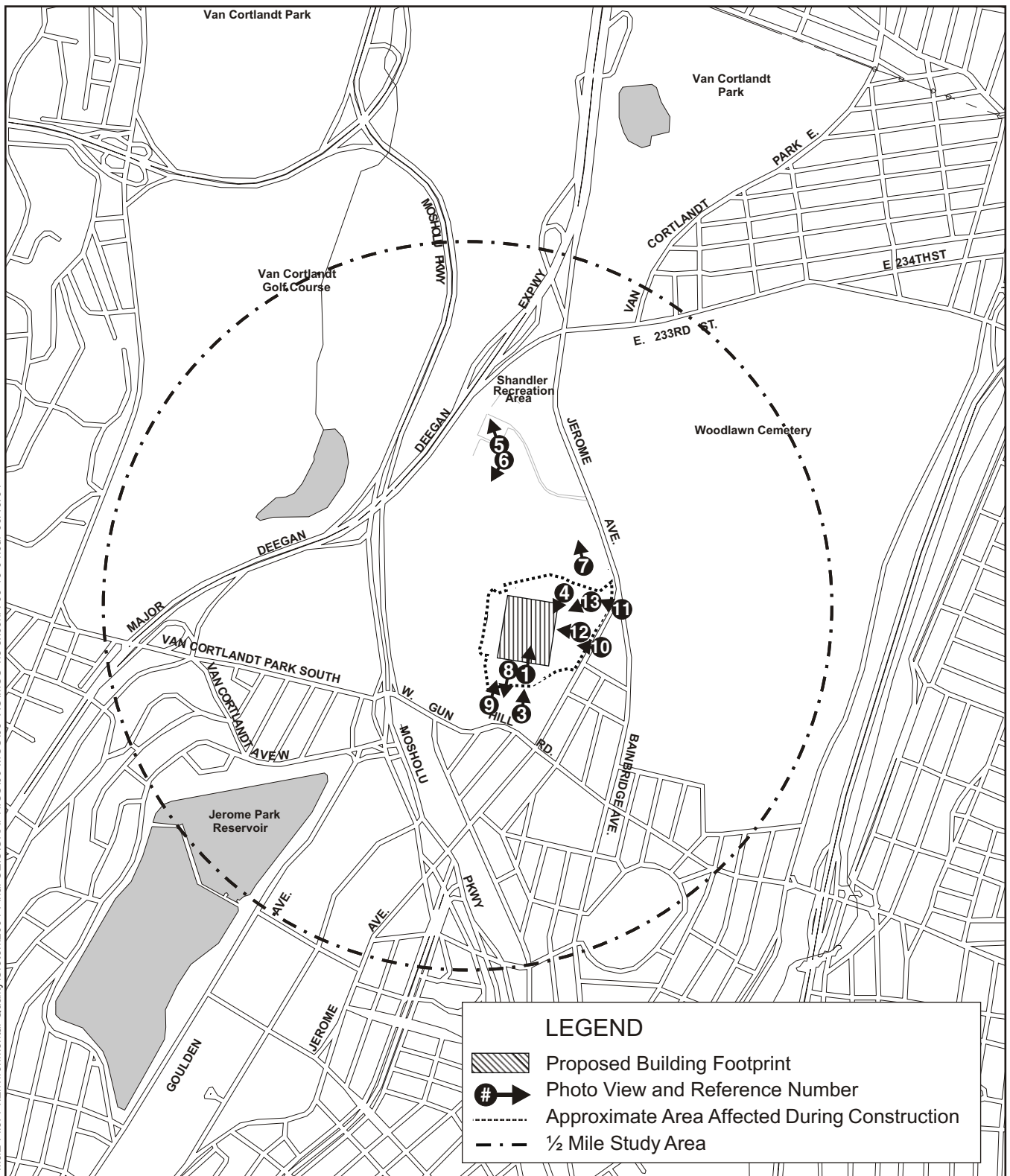
Figure 6.3-1 provides a key map for the photographs of the water treatment plant site and the study area. Although the study area extends approximately one-mile from the site, views were taken from publicly accessible locations that are generally located in close proximity to the water treatment plant site. Photographs were taken during in the Spring, Summer and Fall of 2003.

6.3.2.1. Existing Conditions

Water Treatment Plant Site. The proposed project at the Mosholu Site would be located primarily within the existing driving range, and partially within Holes No. 1 and No. 8 adjacent to the driving range. The driving range is oriented east to west and located at the base of a gently sloping grade to the west of Jerome Avenue. Users can utilize both ends of the driving range for practice. Mowed grass covers the driving range. A line of trees separates the driving range from Hole No. 1 of the golf course to the south (Photograph No.1 of Figure 6.3-2). Adjacent to the driving range, to the north, is the parking lot and Clubhouse including offices, the Lew Rudin Youth Golf Center, the Golf Shop, and a snack bar (Photograph No.2 of Figure 6.3-2). The mowed fairways, patches of trees between holes, and forested land surrounding the golf course and driving range, defines the visual resources and urban design of the water treatment plant site (Photograph Nos.3 and 4 of Figure 6.3-3).





The Mosholu Golf Course is open year-round, dawn to dusk. The course draws people from throughout New York City and Westchester and Rockland Counties. Weekday users are primarily retirees. Five local school golf teams, including teams from Herbert H. Lehman High School and Bronx High School of Science, use the course for practices and competitions. Approximately 30,000 rounds of golf were played at the Mosholu Golf Course in 2002. This user number is down from 32,669 rounds and 31,012 rounds of golf reported from 1997 and 1998. In 2002 approximately 14,250 people utilized the driving range; this user number is a slight increase from the 10,000 users reported in 1998.

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Not to Scale

LEGEND

-  Proposed Building Footprint
-  Photo View and Reference Number
-  Approximate Area Affected During Construction
-  1/2 Mile Study Area

Key to Photographs Mosholu Site



Photograph 1 - Existing view looking south toward the clubhouse and driving Range from the Mosholu Golf Course and Driving Range parking lot.



Photograph 2 - Existing Conditions: Existing view looking south toward the clubhouse and driving range from the parking lot.

Visual Character Mosholu Site



Photograph 3 - Existing view looking north of recreation facilities south of the golf course and driving range. The Mosholu Golf Course and Driving Range is located north of tree line in the background.



Photograph 4 - Existing view from the clubhouse looking south of the driving range and forested land surrounding the golf course and driving range.

Visual Character Mosholu Site

Study Area. The one-half mile study area for the Mosholu Site consists primarily of Van Cortlandt Park (Park) to the north, west, and south of the water treatment plant site. Woodlawn Cemetery accounts for a majority of the eastern portion of the study area. The northern portion of the water treatment plant site is the Allen Shandler Recreation Area which provides picnic tables, barbecues, paved walking paths throughout the forested areas, two baseball fields, and a parking lot, capable of accommodating more than 200 cars (Photograph Nos. 5, 6, and 7 of Figure 6.3-4 and 6.3-5). The area south of the water treatment plant site is part of Van Cortlandt Park and contains mowed fields, randomly dispersed trees, and a playground (Photograph No.3, Figure 6.3-3 and Photograph No.8, Figure 6.3-5). There are few unobstructed views from this part of the Park into Mosholu Golf Course and Driving Range during spring and summer months. The fence between the portion of Van Cortlandt Park south of the water treatment plant site and Mosholu Golf Course is covered with vegetation, preventing clear views of the golf course (Photograph No.9, Figure 6.3-6).

Van Cortlandt Park provides a large expanse of open space for local users and commuters who travel along the major thoroughfares, which bisect the study area. Visitors come from a distance to enjoy this uniquely large expanse of woodland in the Borough of the Bronx.

To the west, the Major Deegan Expressway and Mosholu Parkway run north south in the study area and Jerome Avenue is adjacent to the east. The INT No. 4 elevated subway runs above Jerome Avenue and an elevated station (Woodlawn) is located at the intersection of Jerome Avenue and Bainbridge Avenue. However, walls along the raised subway prevent views into the driving range from northeast of the water treatment plant site. The eastern side of Jerome Avenue consists of small one-story commercial businesses, including small food shops and vacant storefronts. From these commercial businesses there are views to the water treatment plant site (Photograph Nos.10 and 11, Figure 6.3-6 and 6.3-7).

The Mosholu Golf Course hosts a Professional Golf Association training center for disadvantaged youth called the First Tee of Metropolitan New York. The program at the Mosholu Golf Course, the Lew Rudin Youth Golf Center, includes a multipurpose classroom, a trailer located at the west end of the driving range and a junior learning center built for outside uses. The Youth Golf Center has been in operation since September 2001 and hosts about 100 children per day between the ages of seven and 17 during the summer months.

6.3.2.2. *Future Without the Project*

The Future Without the Project conditions were developed for the anticipated peak year of construction (2010) and the anticipated year of operation (2011) for the proposed project. The anticipated peak year of construction is based on peak truck traffic and the peak number of workers. Visual resources and urban design of the Mosholu Site in the year 2010 are anticipated to change slightly through 2011.

The Lew Rudin Youth Golf Center is still evolving and there would be continued need for improvements and space allocated on the golf course for these new golfers to learn and play. As



Photograph 5 - Existing view looking northwest of the parking lot at the Allen Shandler Recreation Area. One ballfield is in the background.



Photograph 6 - Existing view looking southwest of Allen Shandler Recreation Area.

Visual Character Mosholu Site



Photograph 7 - Existing view looking northwest of picnic benches and barbeque grills at the Allen Shandler Recreation Area. Comfort station is in the background.



Photograph 8 - Existing view looking south of the water treatment plant site to the adjacent parkland. Saturn Playground is in the distance in the southwest direction.

Visual Character Mosholu Site



Photograph 9 - Existing view looking north of tree line that covers the fence between the portion of Van Cortlandt Park south of the project site and the Mosholu Golf Course and Driving Range. This tree line prevents a clear view of the project site from the south.



Photograph 10 - Existing view looking west into Mosholu Golf Course and Driving Range from the east sidewalk along Jerome Avenue.

Visual Character Mosholu Site



Photograph 11 - Existing view looking north-west into Mosholu Golf Course and Driving Range from the east sidewalk along Jerome Avenue.

Visual Character Mosholu Site

for future developments, there is a future plan to construct a new structure that will offer golf instructional programs year round.

As presented in Section 3.2, Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy, improvements to the Van Cortlandt Park and open space resources in the study area have been proposed for the future without the project. Multiple greenway projects are proposed that could be located within the study area. These include the Aqueduct University Greenway (proposed to run north and south through Van Cortlandt Park), Putnam Railroad Greenway (also proposed to run north and south through Van Cortlandt Park), and Woodlawn/Seton Falls Greenway (proposed in the eastern section of Van Cortlandt Park). The development of these trails would enhance the open space character of the study area and maintain the visual character of the area. Also proposed are improvements to the Old Croton Aqueduct railway and signage.

6.3.3. Potential Impacts

6.3.3.1. *Potential Project Impacts*

The anticipated year of operation for the proposed plant is 2011. Therefore, potential project impacts have been assessed by comparing the Future With the Project conditions against the Future Without the Project conditions for the year 2011.

The proposed project would be constructed below finished grade. While some trees would be removed, these trees would be replanted where possible upon completion of construction. The driving range would be temporarily displaced but would be restored on top of the proposed facility. The Clubhouse would also be reconstructed south of the facility to match its existing style. Therefore, the existing view looking south from the Mosholu Golf Course parking lot would be altered, but not significantly (Photograph No. 12, Figure 6.3-8). The views of the holes and driving range from within the property would not noticeably change. Once the construction of the proposed project is complete, the driving range, tees, fairways, and other golf course related facilities, including the Clubhouse and parking lot would be reconstructed.

The proposed project would be designed so that the entire water treatment facility would be a below grade plant with the exception of some necessary above ground facilities north of the main treatment plant facility. The existing grade would be restored following completion of the construction so that a new driving range could be built above the finished underground plant.

The roof level of the proposed water treatment plant building, varying from 194.0 feet to 188.0 ft, would be approximately two feet below grade. The reason for the variation in elevations is to maintain the existing topography of the site. The proposed chemical fill building and the arrival and receiving building, located north of the water treatment plant building, would have a grade elevation of 191.0 feet. The rebuilt Clubhouse would dominate the southern side of the project site. It would be designed and built to resemble the existing Clubhouse. The above ground facilities north of main water treatment facility would also be designed and built in a style resembling other modern park structures. Vehicle interdiction walls would be constructed around the facility for safety concerns. These walls would be constructed with facades similar to those on the existing retaining walls that line Jerome Avenue's west side north of Gun Hill Road.

These changes would be most pronounced when viewing the project site from Jerome Avenue at the edge of the park (Photograph No. 13, Figure 6.3-9). Views from the east side of Jerome Avenue are not expected to be disrupted, since the elevated subway line already dominates those views. Therefore, no significant adverse changes would be anticipated.

Shadow Analysis. The only exposed portions of the proposed facility would be the buildings to the north of the main treatment facility. Shadows cast from these above ground facilities would not be considered significant based on CEQR requirements for needing a shadow analysis.

The reconstructed Clubhouse would create shadows during morning and afternoon sun hours. These shadows would not affect the use of open space within the Mosholu Golf Course and Driving Range, Van Cortlandt Park, and the nominal decrease in hours of sunlight would not have a significant effect on vegetation in the area.



Photograph 12 - Future Without the Project.



Photograph 12 - Future With the Project.

Visual Character Mosholu Site



Photograph 13 - Future Without the Project.



Photograph 13 - Future With the Project.

Visual Character Mosholu Site

6.3.3.2. *Potential Construction Impacts*

The anticipated year of peak construction of the proposed plant is 2010. Therefore, potential construction impacts have been assessed by comparing the Future With the Project conditions against the Future Without the Project conditions for the year 2010.

During the construction period, the water treatment plant site would be an extensive work zone. Construction of the proposed plant and accompanying structures would commence in May 2005, and would last for approximately five and a half years. The Golf Clubhouse would be temporarily displaced to the Allen Shandler Recreation Area and operation of the Golf Course would continue during the construction of the proposed project.

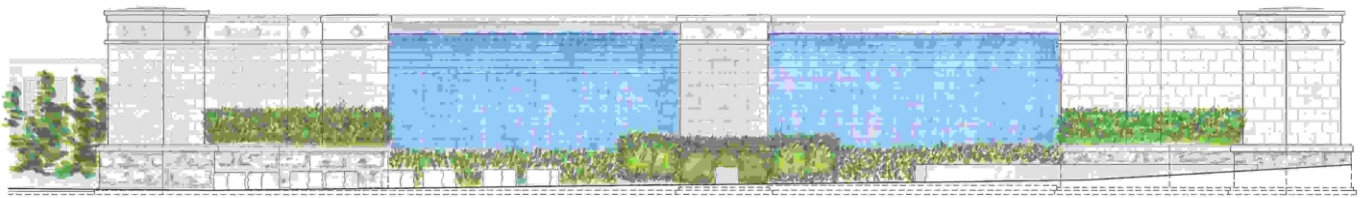
The construction and staging activities associated with the proposed project at the Mosholu Site would involve the disturbance of approximately 24 acres of the 78 acre golf facility, the excavation of 1,250,000 cubic yards of fill, and the grading of material for the building foundations and tunnels. Construction truck trips would be anticipated to peak in 2007, whereas construction worker trips would peak three years later in 2010.

It is anticipated that heavy equipment and construction materials would be present on the site during construction. All construction materials would enter and leave the site through the access road on Jerome Avenue. Excavated material would also leave through the same access road.

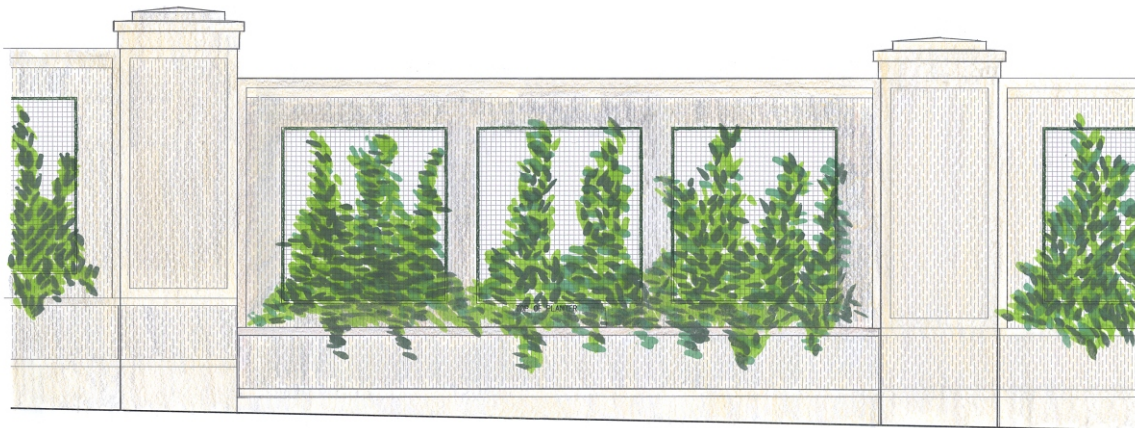
All tunneling work would be staged from the Mosholu Site. Materials excavated during tunnel construction would be removed via the shafts and trucked off-site for disposal. The concrete and steel lining for the tunnels would also be staged from the Mosholu Site. Tunneling activities and the raw and treated water connection to the proposed plant could be completed in approximately 34 months. Temporary use of cranes, a tunnel boring machine, and other tall and/or heavy building equipment would be anticipated at various times during the construction period. These types of equipment would be visible from various off-site vantage points, but these views would be temporary.

Most of the visual effects related to construction at the water treatment plant site would take place on-site. Construction of the proposed plant would change the existing visual character of the Mosholu Site. During construction, the site would be screened from public view along Jerome Avenue by a 15-foot high ornamental wall. The wall would include planters for a “green screen” and stone decorative features. The north and south ends of the wall would have an ornamental waterfall feature. An architect’s rendering of the construction wall is depicted in Figure 6.3-10. It would be removed after construction and be replaced with a decorative fence unless NYCDEP is requested to keep it permanently. Overall, the visual effects of constructing the proposed plant would be temporary, and therefore no significant adverse impacts would be anticipated to occur.

Based on the analyses presented above, the proposed Croton project at the Mosholu Site would have no significant adverse impacts on Visual Character. For comparison purposes, this is true of the Eastview and Harlem River sites as well.



End section of ornamental wall including waterfall features.



Middle section of ornamental wall.

Not To Scale

Rendering of the Ornamental Wall Along Jerome Avenue During Construction Mosholu Site

Croton Water Treatment Plant

Figure 6.3-10