FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE CROTON WATER TREATMENT PLANT AT THE HARLEM RIVER SITE

7.5. OPEN SPACE

7.5.1. Introduction

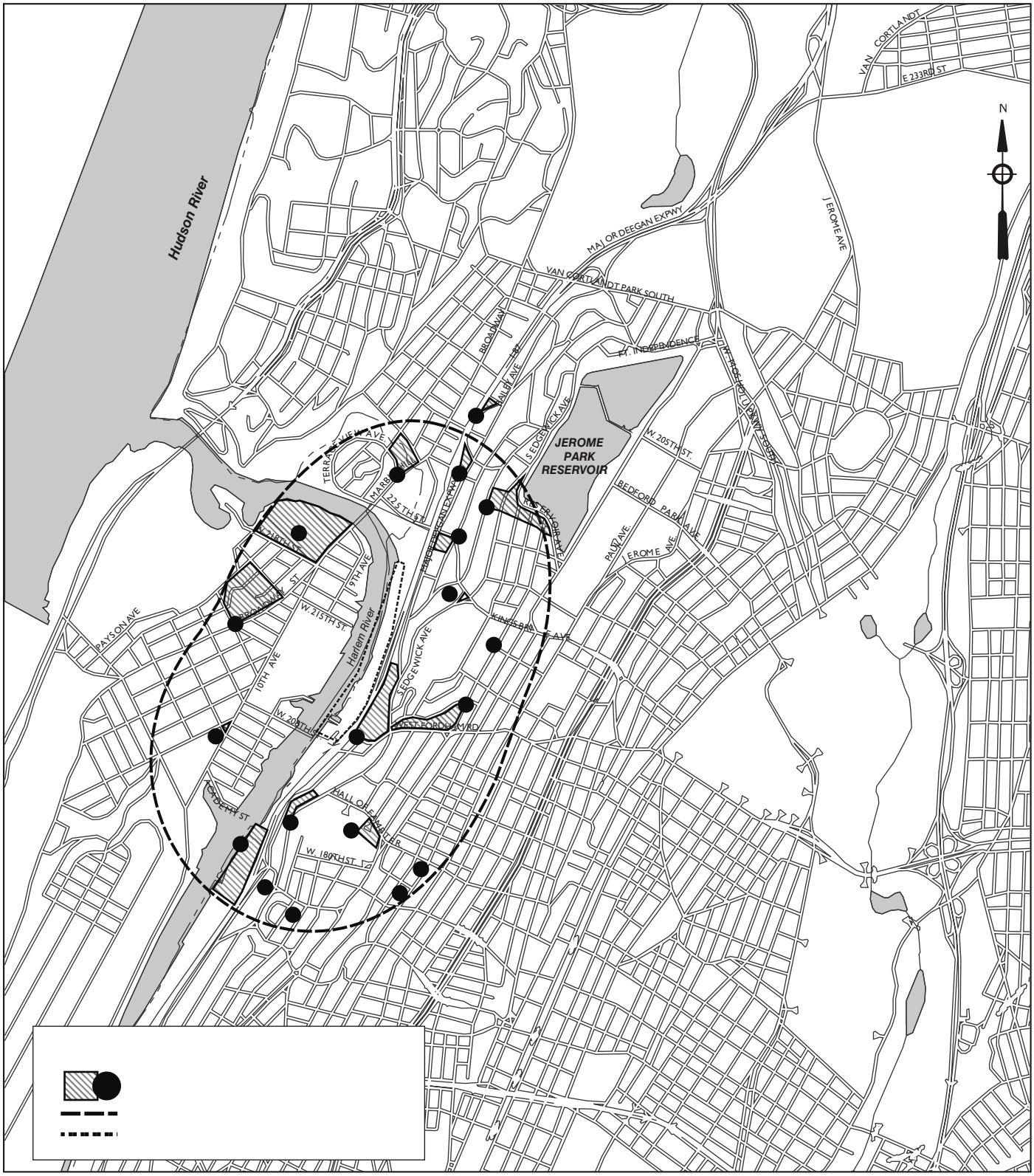
Open space can be privately or publicly owned land that is accessible to the public for leisure, play, sport, or that has been dedicated to protecting the natural environment of an area. The purpose of the open space analysis for the proposed Croton Water Treatment Plant project (Croton project) is to characterize existing open space conditions, and to evaluate both quantitative and qualitative impacts upon open space resources during construction and operation of the proposed project if it were built at this site. To facilitate an understanding of open space resources in the vicinity of the Harlem River Site, a one-half mile study area was established. The study area was measured from the limits of the potential construction disturbance at the water treatment plant site. The methodology used to prepare an Open Space analysis is presented in Section 4.5, Data Collection and Impact Methodologies, Open Space.

7.5.2. Baseline Conditions

7.5.2.1. Existing Conditions

Within the study area, there are several large private/institutional recreational facilities (Figure 7.5-1). The Bronx Community College athletic field (map key # 10, Figure 7.5-1) and Columbia University's Baker Field/Wein Football Stadium and athletic fields (map key # 16, Figure 7.5-1) (Borough of Manhattan), are located south and west, respectively, of the water treatment plant site. Each has athletic fields that are accessible to the public either directly or by custodial approval. The approximate total area of these recreational facilities is 32 acres.

A number of large (greater than five acres) public parks are located throughout the study area, along with numerous smaller parks/sitting areas (Figure 7.5-1 and Table 7.5-1). To the northeast of the water treatment plant site, and adjacent to the southern edge of the Jerome Park Reservoir, is the Old Fort Four Park. This park is composed of a playground, benches, and a community garden. To the south of the water treatment plant site are University Woods and the Roberto Clemente State Park. University Woods is a wooded area traversed by walking paths. A portion (8 acres) of the 25-acre Roberto Clemente State Park is located within the study area; open space features within this park include baseball fields and swimming pools. To the east of the water treatment plant site, adjacent to the Major Deegan Expressway, is the Fordham Landing Playground. This park includes a wooded area as well as baseball, basketball, and handball courts. To the east of Fordham Landing Playground, across Sedgwick Avenue, is Devoe Park. This park is composed of walking paths, benches, basketball courts, and play areas. In Manhattan, two open space areas exist within the boundaries of the study area for the water treatment plant site. Monsignor Kett Playground, located southwest of the water treatment plant site, contains playground areas and basketball courts. Isham Park, located to the west of the water treatment plant site, is comprised of lawns, walking paths, and wooded areas.


Hudson River
JEROME PARK RESERVOIR
Harlem River
MAJOR DEEGAN EXPWY
VAN CORTLANDT PARK SOUTH
VAN CORTLANDT
E 233RD ST
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W 225TH ST
W 215TH ST
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W 205TH ST
W 180TH ST
BEDFORD PARK BLVD
JEROME AVE
PAULDING AVE
KINGSBRIDGE AVE
WEST FORDHAM RD
HALL OF FAME TER
CABRINI BLVD
PAYSON AVE
10TH AVE
9TH AVE
7TH AVE
BROADWAY
N

TABLE 7.5-1. OPEN SPACE INVENTORY WITHIN THE HARLEM RIVER SITE STUDY AREA

Name	Map Key (Fig. 7.5-1)	Public/ Private	Acreage within study area (Approx.)	Description		Open Space Features: Facility Types	Facility Conditions	Hours of Access	User Group	Utiliz-ation Levels
				Active %	Passive %					
Old Fort No. 4 Park Reservoir Avenue at Strong Avenue, Bronx	1	Public	6	40	60	Playground, paved playground, benches, community garden	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate
PS 122 Playground Kingsbridge Road, Bailey Avenue, Heath Avenue, Bronx	2	Public	0.70	95	5	Playgrounds	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate
Sitting areas (1)	3	Public	5	0	100	Benches, paths	Good	Not posted	All	Moderate
Roberto Clemente State Park Bronx	4	Public	8	100	0	Baseball, pools	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	High
University Woods Cedar Street and Sedgwick Avenue, Bronx	5	Public	3	0	100	Trees, paths	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Low
Playground Cedar Avenue, West 179th Street, Sedgwick Avenue	6	Public	1.2	95	5	Playgrounds	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate

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				Active %	Passive %					
Grand Avenue Playground Grand Avenue at West 181st Street	7	Public	0.38	0	100	Playgrounds	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate
Billingsley Terrace Playground Billingsley Terrace, Phelan Place, Sedgwick Avenue	8	Public	0.27	0	100	Playgrounds	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate
Davidson Avenue Community Playground	9	Public	0.21	0	100	Playgrounds	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate
Fordham Landing Playground Bronx	11	Public	4	30	70	Trees (on steep slope); baseball, basketball, handball	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate
Devoe Park 101 West Fordham Road, Bronx	12	Public	5	30	70	Paths, basketball, benches, play areas	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	High
Aqueduct Lands/Aqueduct Walk Aqueduct Avenue and University Avenues	13	Public	7	0	100	Benches, paths	Good	Not posted	All	Moderate

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				Active %	Passive %					
Monsignor Kett Playground Between Nagle and 10th Avenues, Manhattan	14	Public	1	95	5	Playgrounds, basketball	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	High
Isham Park Broadway Manhattan	15	Public	16	0	100	Mowed lawns, paths, trees	Good	Dawn to Dusk	All	Moderate
TOTAL STUDY AREA	-	-	57.76	27.45%	72.55%	-	-	-	-	-

Notes:
(1) There are a number of public sitting areas in the study area. A number of private sitting areas also exist, but are not listed in this table. They include courtyards and open space areas, which are part of apartment/condominium complexes.

Several private sitting areas also exist in the study area. These sitting areas are typically incorporated as courtyards or 'designed' open space between apartment/condominium complexes. These private open spaces seem to be more prevalent in the west-southwest portions of the study area, such as the complex north of Isham Park or the one south of Monsignor Kett Playground.

Also located throughout the study area are Greenstreets. Launched in 1996, Greenstreets is a City-wide program to convert paved, vacant traffic islands and medians into green spaces filled with shade trees, flowering trees, shrubs, and groundcover. As of August 2003, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR) has placed over 2,002 Greenstreets sites throughout the five boroughs 379 sites are located in the Bronx, 387 in Brooklyn, 250 in Manhattan, 703 in Queens, and 283 in Staten Island.

As Table 7.5-1 indicates, there are approximately 58 acres of open park space in the study area of the water treatment plant site. Of the 58 acres, approximately 16 acres are active open space and 42 acres are passive open space.

The estimated population for the study area is 101,400 residents (see Section 7.7, Socioeconomic Analysis). The open space estimate derived from the acres of open space and study area population is approximately 0.57 acres per thousand residents (0.16 acres/1,000 residents for active open space and 0.41 acres/1,000 residents for passive open space).

For comparison purposes, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation has standard ratios for specific open space facilities, shown in Table 7.5-2. The New York City planning goal for open space is 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

TABLE 7.5-2. NEW YORK STATE STANDARD OPEN SPACE RATIOS (ACRES/1,000 RESIDENTS)

Play Lot	Pocket Park	Neighborhood Park	District Park	City Park	Large Regional Parks	Metro
2	0.25	1	2	5	15	0.124

7.5.2.2. Future Without the Project

The Future Without the Project conditions were developed for the anticipated peak year of construction (2009) 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. Open space resources in the vicinity of the Harlem River Site are not anticipated to change substantially by the year 2009 or by 2011.

The New York City Department of City Planning, the New York City Department of Transportation (NYCDOT), and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation have developed a greenway plan for the City. This entails the development and/or improvement of

rail and highway right-of-ways, river corridors, waterfront spaces, parklands, and city streets for the use of bicycles and pedestrians. There are four greenway routes proposed within the study area: the Putnam Railroad Greenway; the Aqueduct University Greenway; the Harlem River Trail Greenway; and the Grand Concourse Greenway. The development of these trails would increase the amount of active and passive open space in the study area. The number of acres by which the open space would increase is not presently known.

Other project proposals located within the study area include: a boating facility in the Sherman Creek area (Manhattan); reconstruction of Old Fort No. 4 Park; bicycle network improvements proposed in the New York City Bicycle Master Plan; an upland bikeway connection from Dyckman Street to the 225th Street Bridge (Manhattan); public waterfront access along the east side of the Harlem River; cleanup of the NYCDOT parcel that is part of the Harlem River Site; and the Regatta Park Project, which would create a park along the eastern shore of the Harlem River south to Roberto Clemente State Park. No implementation dates have been established for these project proposals. If constructed, these proposed projects would also increase and enhance the open space within the study area.

7.5.3. Potential Impacts

7.5.3.1. Potential Project Impacts

The anticipated year of operation of 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.

There would be no significant qualitative or quantitative adverse impacts to open space in the study area with the introduction of the proposed project at the Harlem River Site. In fact, upon completion of the proposed project approximately 4.5 acres of new public open space would be introduced. This is because a portion of the previously privately-owned and publicly inaccessible land would be acquired under the proposed project and opened to public use with a variety of public amenities. Additionally, it is not anticipated that the number of employees at the proposed plant (53) would significantly impact the availability of open space within the study area.

Under the proposed project, publicly accessible open space would be located to the north and south of the proposed plant. A pedestrian walkway would be located along the western boundary of the Harlem River Site, between the proposed plant and the Harlem River; this walkway would run along the river, around the perimeter of the cove, and could connect to the West Fordham Road access ramp, pending a feasibility study and discussions with involved agencies. Access to the south of the University Heights Bridge is not currently being incorporated as part of the proposed project, but if and when development occurs south of the bridge, the pedestrian walkway could be connected to this development.

This proposed project would provide public waterfront access along the entire length of the project area. This would increase the total acres of open space in the study area from 58 to approximately 63 acres. The open space ratio would increase from 0.57 to 0.61 acres per 1,000

residents. Public amenities provided under the proposed project would assist the Bronx Borough President's Waterfront Report (released in June 2003) and other area proposals in adding additional recreation facilities and open spaces for the community while improving the utilization and appearance of the waterfront. The community would also benefit from the improved access and safety conditions introduced under the proposed project. Therefore, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated to the open space under the proposed project, but there would be a beneficial effect to open space in the area.

7.5.3.2. Potential Construction Impacts

The anticipated year of peak construction of the proposed plant is 2009. 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 2009. It is anticipated that a peak number of 634 construction workers would be at the water treatment plant site in November 2009.

Temporary impacts to open space in the area of the water treatment plant site are not anticipated to result during the construction period of the proposed project. There is currently no publicly available open space at the water treatment plant site that would be affected by construction of the proposed project. The addition of up to a maximum of 634 construction workers (and potentially their families, representing a maximum of 1,788 persons, based on an average household size of 2.82 in the Borough of the Bronx[1]) during the peak construction year would decrease the total open space ratio from 0.57 to 0.56 acres/1,000 residents during the construction period. However, construction workers would not be anticipated to utilize open spaces during their workday. They would typically spend their lunch breaks on the construction site. Additionally, most construction workers are not anticipated to relocate themselves or their families to the construction area. Therefore, the decrease in the total open space ratio would be significantly smaller than the ratio presented above (which is extremely conservative), and would not likely affect users of the existing open space in the area. Consequently, this temporary decrease would not be considered a significant adverse impact.

[1]Information obtained online from the 2000 U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey Profile, at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Products/Profiles/Single/2000/ACS/Tabular/001/ A4000US0181.htm.