

**Minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee Meeting  
Bronx Community Board 8  
Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 7:00pm  
Board Office – 5676 Riverdale Ave, Suite 100, Bronx, NY 10471**

**Attendees**

Committee:

Present: Bob Bender, Carol Blake, Miriam Filer, Debra Travis (Chair)

Absent: none

NYC Department of Design and Construction: Anna Killion, Helen Ko, Ari Gerhman, Ray Hanul-Islam, Ruju Joshi, Francisco Ruela, Jahneille Edwards, Devin Phillips

NYC Department of Parks and Recreation: Stephanie Ehrlich (Van Cortlandt Park Administrator); Christina Taylor (Deputy Executive Director, Van Cortlandt Park Alliance); Gabriella D’Erasmio (Environment and Planning); Alexander Han (Chief of Concessions); Anthony Macari (Director of Concession Architecture and Development); Angel Williams (Project Manager); Valerie Davis-O’Neal (Special Assistant to the Bronx Borough Commissioner)

The meeting commenced at 7:05pm

**Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members and Guests**

**Approval of the October 22, 2025 Minutes**

The meeting minutes were approved unanimously

**Chair’s Report**

**Litter Around the Jerome Park Reservoir**

The Community Board 8 office has been receiving complaints of litter, specifically doggie poop bags, adjacent to the walkway along the Jerome Park Reservoir from Fort Four Playground to Fort Independence Playground. The Parks Committee and the Environment and Sanitation Committee chairs are following up with their respective agency partners.

**Deteriorated Conditions at Seton Park Dog Run**

The Community Board 8 office has been receiving complaints regarding the Seton Park Dog run including poor drainage, leaves blown against the fence, poor fence conditions, rats and holes. The Board office is working to address the immediate maintenance issues. A dog run group is needed for Seton Park Dog Run before the committee can recommend capital improvements. Please contact the Community Board 8 office if you would like to be involved in organizing such a group.

**PRESENTATION AND VOTE: NYC Department of Design and Construction: Public Restroom Building at Van Cortlandt Park**

DDC presented to the committee the attached PowerPoint presentation. The restroom would be constructed in Van Cortlandt Park, near West 252<sup>nd</sup> Street and Broadway at the north end of the

Parade Ground, along the existing walkway, which would be improved to be ADA compliant. The restroom design was approved by the New York City Public Design Commission in November as one of five restrooms to be built in multiple parks throughout New York City as one project. Due to this, the Parks Committee was unable to offer any meaningful feedback regarding the structure itself. The restroom building will be 720 square feet and contain one men's and one women's restroom along with a mechanical room. There will be lights on the exterior of the structure and an ADA compliant drinking fountain on the front. The total cost for the project will be \$3.1M. The restroom will be open standard hours which are 8am until 8pm in the summer and 8am to 6pm in the winter. Construction is planned to begin in early 2026 and expected to be completed the same year. The committee voted unanimously in support. The committee continues to believe that it would be beneficial for the Parks Department to add a standalone or attached drinking fountain with integrated bowl for dogs as part of the project either immediately adjacent to the new restroom or by replacing a standard drinking fountain near the Van Cortlandt "Canine Court" dog run. Drinking fountains like this normally have a standard drinking fountain for people, a bottle filler and a bowl at dog level that can be filled by pressing a button. An example of one can be found in Fort Independence Playground near the basketball courts/dog run and it is very popular.

**Parks and Recreation Committee  
Resolution in Support of  
P-108VCCS\_Van Cortlandt Park: Public Restroom Building**

**December 11, 2025**

WHEREAS the New York City Department of Design and Construction presented their plan for constructing a restroom in Van Cortlandt Park at the north end of the Parade Ground near Broadway and West 252<sup>nd</sup> Street;

WHEREAS, this project would include construction of the current NYC Parks standard restroom, utility connections and site work and the reconstruction of the non-ADA compliant walkway from the park entrance at West 252<sup>nd</sup> Street and Broadway to the new building at a cost of \$3.1M;

WHEREAS, the restroom will be 720 square feet, be ADA compliant, contain a men's room with two urinals and a stall and a women's room with three stalls and will provide a drinking fountain;

WHEREAS, the construction is expected to begin in early 2026 and be completed at the end of 2026;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Parks and Recreation Committee approves the P-108VCCS\_Van Cortlandt Park public restroom design.

**Committee Vote**

In favor: Bender, Blake, Filer, Travis

Opposed: None

**DISCUSSION: NYC Department of Parks & Recreation Planting Team: Tree Plantings in Kingsbridge Heights-Van Cortlandt Village, Van Cortlandt Park**

Gabriella D’Erasmus with New York City Parks presented on the Comprehensive Neighborhood Tree Planting Program. The Parks Department now replaces trees based on neighborhood on a nine-year cycle. This will enable them to plant the entire city every nine years more equitably and will make maintenance and planning more efficient. Tree plantings are planned for Van Cortlandt Park South, Van Cortlandt Avenue West and Sedgwick Avenue in December. This program is currently transitioning and will be in full effect in 2027. Phase one will involve planting trees in Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights and Marble Hill where the heat index is as high as four on a scale of 1-5 with five being severely impacted by heat and lack of tree cover. This contract will officially transition beginning in January of 2027 with planting occurring in March - June and October – December. Removing stumps and tree removal is part of this process. Individual tree pits will be assessed at this time to determine if they are the correct size and verify that they do not interfere with utilities. Empty tree pits may be converted back to sidewalk if there is interference with underground utilities and the site is deemed not plantable. Trees or shrubs that have been planted by the community may be removed by the Parks planting team if they do not match Parks specification, are not appropriate species or are shrubs. Individuals who are interested in replacing a tree outside of this program at their expense should request a permit through the Parks Department, which will require installation by a private contractor of an approved species. New York City Parks Tree Time program can assist with this process as well as offset the cost of tree guards which are highly recommended. For more information on the Tree Time program, visit the New York City Parks webpage:

<https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/tree-care/nyc-parks-tree-time>

For information on specific blocks and species being planted, please visit the NYC Parks Tree Hub <https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/street-tree-planting/locations>

For more information on heat islands in the city, visit the DHMH data portal: <https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/data-features/hvi/>

According to this site, the heat scores by Neighborhood Tabulation Zone for Bronx Community Board 8 are:

Kingsbridge Heights-Van Cortlandt Village – 3

Kingsbridge-Marble Hill – 4

Riverdale-Spuyten Duyvil – 1

If you would like to report an issue with a street tree, you can do so via 311 or directly through the Forestry portal: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/services/forestry/request/submit>

The pin oaks around the Jerome Parks Reservoir have been part of an ongoing replacement program. D’Erasmus was unsure if this program would be impacted by the transition to the Comprehensive Neighborhood Tree Planting Program. She will inquire and get back to the committee.

The committee would also like to thank Catrock Ventures and the Washington’s Walk Coalition who attended the meeting for fundraising for and building wooden tree guards around six tree beds in front of the entrance to Fort Four Park. Craig Meisner, with Catrock, thanked Partnership for Parks, City Parks Foundation and Big Reuse for providing assistance with securing supplies and permits to make and install the guards with their volunteers.

## **DISCUSSION: Request for Comments Regarding the Scope of the RFP for the Van Cortlandt Golf Course Concession**

The New York City Parks Concessions Unit has requested comments from the committee by December 22, 2025 regarding the Van Cortlandt Golf Course concession license which expires on June 30, 2027.

The committee raised the following issues based on past conversation with the concession unit at the September 2023 Parks Committee meeting:

**Condition of the Birding Bridge** – the Birding Bridge is located between holes 9 and 10 and runs adjacent to the John Kiernan Nature Trail near the Old Putnam Trail. In 2023, the bridge was divided by a chain link fence with the hikers on the John Kiernan Nature Trail on one side of the fence and golf carts traveling between the holes on the other. The hiking side of the bridge at that time was closed due to poor condition and hikers were unable to get across the wetlands. Subsequent to discussions with the Parks Committee, a portion of the fence was removed to allow hikers to temporarily access the existing bridge to reconnect the trail. \$500k has already allocated for year for repairs or replacement of the bridge. Replacement of the bridge is now in a pre-engineering phase. Once the design package and estimates are complete, any additional funding will be understood and some portion of it may be included in the concession agreement. Replacement of the bridge will happen within the new concession license term. In the meantime, the concessionaire will be expected to maintain the existing bridge. The committee is excited that the bridge will be replaced with a new bridge that accommodates both hikers and carts equally and recommends that the bridge continue to have separate spaces for each to keep them safely divided, however, a tall fence is not necessary for this purpose.

**Fencing** – the fencing around the perimeter of the golf course is in poor condition and there is too much of it. Parks is looking into removing some fencing where it does not make sense. The committee recommends removal of the fencing where there is little to no risk of conflict between users of the park and golfers. The committee recommends replacement of remaining fence that is in poor condition including removing invasives at the golf course edge.

**Golf Carts** – electric golf carts are standard conditions for most new golf course concessions. The golf carts in Van Cortlandt Golf Course are currently stored very close to the edge of the Hester and Piro Mill Pond (nee Van Cortlandt Lake). If they were electric, they would need to be stored indoors and so would be moved to another location. The committee recommends that the concession agreement require electric golf carts with a maximum equivalent speed equal to e-bike regulations in parks in NYC. The committee recommends that this new location be as close to the entrance of the golf course as possible to avoid conflict with park goers and cars. The committee also strongly recommends that golf carts are no longer stored near Van Cortlandt Lake at all due to the sensitive nature of its shoreline and flooding risk.

**Van Cortlandt Golf House Restaurant** – currently the restaurant has limited hours and a limited menu. The Concession unit was asked how other restaurants were managed within concessions. For example, Great Performances manages the cafe at Wave Hill and does a very good job of providing good quality food and beverage at a range of prices. Han stated that Great Performances was a sublicensee at Wave Hill and that nothing is currently preventing the existing concessionaire from having a sublicensee. If the community board is aware of businesses that are interested in being a sublicensee, Han recommended that we connect the business with his office in order to facilitate the

discussion and provide information on the process. They can also reach out to a concessionaire directly. The committee recommends that the concessionaire is encouraged to seek a sublicensee to operate the restaurant professionally as an amenity for the whole community to enjoy.

**The East Coast Greenway** – the East Coast Greenway passes alongside the golf course, between the Mosholu Extension and the park where it connects with the Putnam Greenway in front of the golf house. It is in poor condition and poorly labeled. Maintenance of the greenway is the responsibility of the concession. The committee recommends that the greenway is resurfaced at the beginning of the concession agreement and that additional resurfacing is mandated at five-year intervals.

**Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Certification** – the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program is a program of Audubon International and is designed to help golf courses protect natural resources including wildlife habitat and water quality and engage in sustainable practices. The Parks Department will consider requiring this certification for golf courses where it is feasible. The committee recommends that Parks assesses the feasibility of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program Certification at Van Cortlandt Golf Course and, if feasible, requires the new concessionaire to be certified.

**Community Benefit** – the current concessionaire primarily restricts their community outreach to local private schools with existing golf teams. Parks has other golf courses that host non-golf activities like movie night on the golf course which provides community benefit for a broader population. The committee would like to see more outreach to public schools and to adults to engage them in this outdoor sport and lower the cost barrier to sample golf. The committee would also like to encourage non-golf events at the Van Cortlandt Golf Course either through the concessionaire or in partnership with Van Cortlandt Park Alliance or other community partners.

If anyone is interested in joining the Parks solicitation list to receive notifications of new concession opportunities, they should email [concessions@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:concessions@parks.nyc.gov).

### **Old Business**

**Parks Resource Guide** – the committee has made some progress on the new version of the Parks Resource Guide. The work continues.

### **New Business**

#### **Conditions at the Van Cortlandt Park Stadium Track Soccer Field**

The Riverdale Soccer Club presented photos of the unsafe condition of the soccer field at Van Cortlandt Stadium where they play. There are large holes on the field and the artificial turf is torn and completely worn away in large sections especially in front of the goal areas where children are most likely to come in contact with it. Referees have begun cancelling matches because it is too dangerous to play. This soccer field was allocated budget in January, 2023 for a State of Good Repair project which would remove all of the existing artificial turf, regrade the field and replace all of the turf with new artificial turf. The SGR repair has been delayed and is now scheduled for calendar year 2027. The Riverdale Soccer Club is requesting to have stopgap repairs as soon as possible and ideally to have the full replacement occur over the summer of 2026 instead of 2027. Bronx Borough Commissioner Jessenia Aponte and her staff visited the site this week and are investigating short term repairs, however, large swaths of turf will need to be replaced to address the most severe damage.

The committee expressed concern that the SGR replacement work has not been completed yet since it was planned for 2024. The committee is also concerned that replacing large swaths of turf in 2026 temporarily will waste time and money when the full replacement is planned to take place in 2027 and that these temporary measures will create a field where new turf and old turf are side by side at different heights due to the deterioration of the underlayment of the old turf. The committee resolved to send a letter to the Parks Department demanding the full replacement of the turf immediately.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm

Minutes submitted by Deb Travis

Recording Link: <https://youtu.be/JhAkB2enl00?si=ADYqtfCJVIsYdBnl>

Attachments – VCP Restroom PowerPoint Deck

December 2025

# Van Cortlandt Park

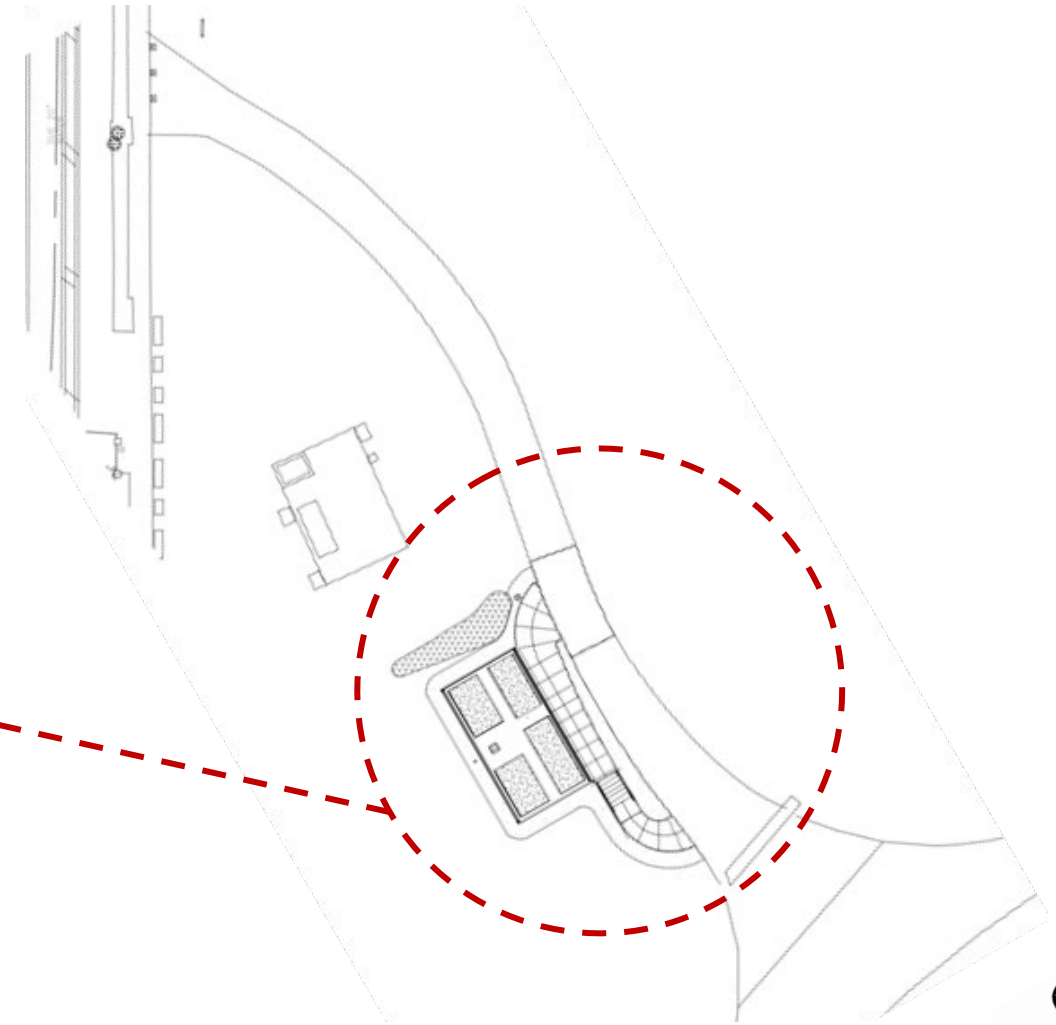
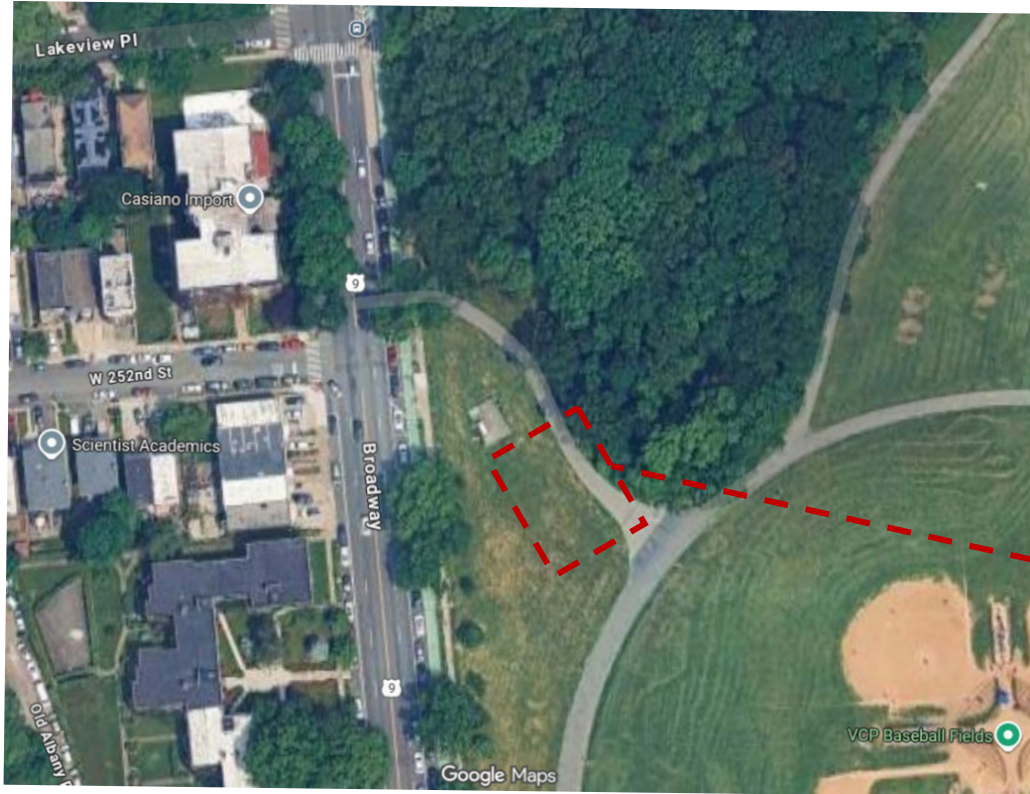
Public Restroom Buildings Bundle

**Bronx Community Board 8  
Presentation**

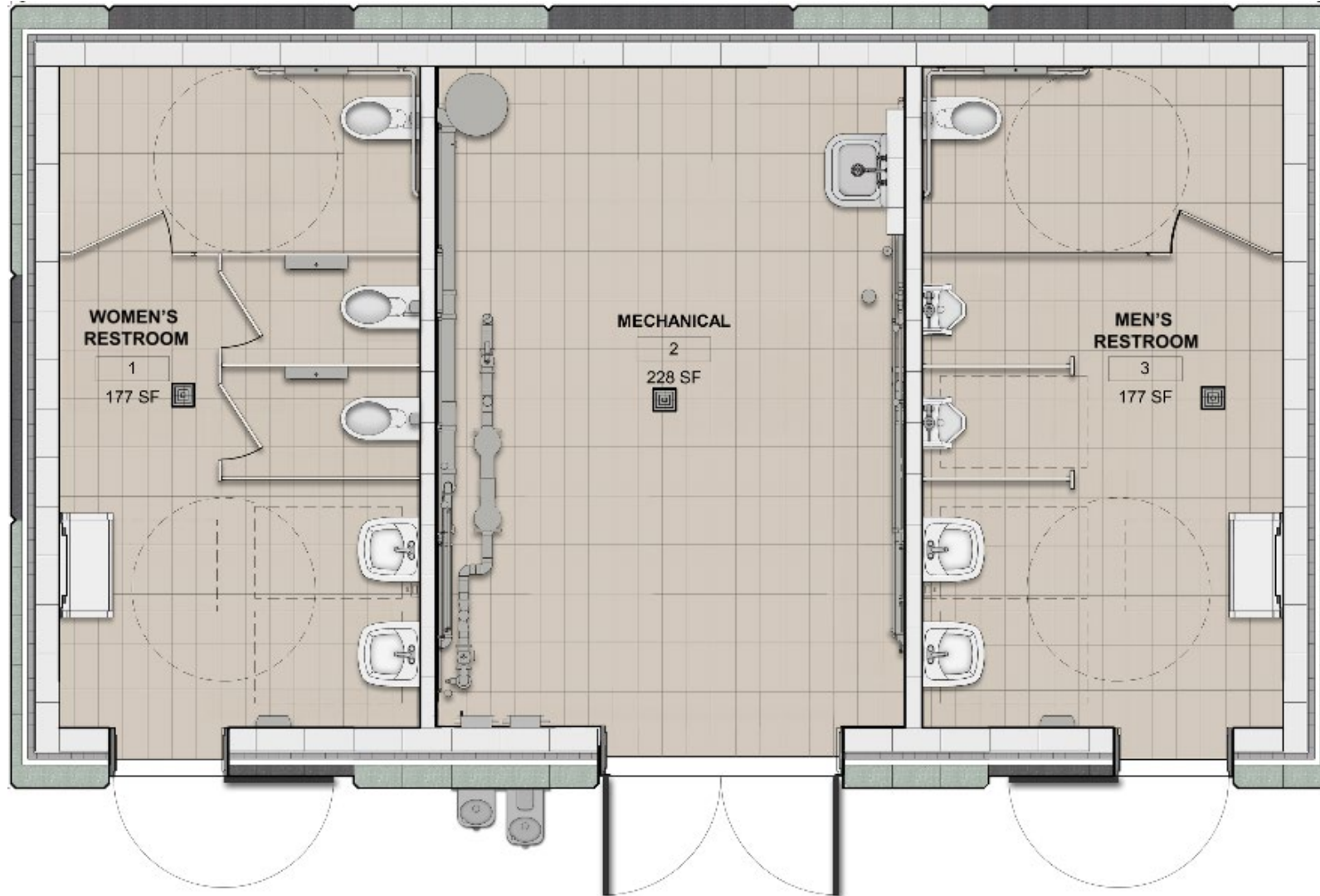
# About the Project

- Design-Build contract to construct a **new public restroom** building at Van Cortlandt Park.
- Approximately **720 sq ft** with a **Men's** Restroom, **Women's** Restroom, and a **Mechanical Room**.
- **Modern, ADA-compliant, energy-efficient** restroom building.
- **Multi-site project** includes (4) other restrooms buildings to be built throughout NYC Parks.

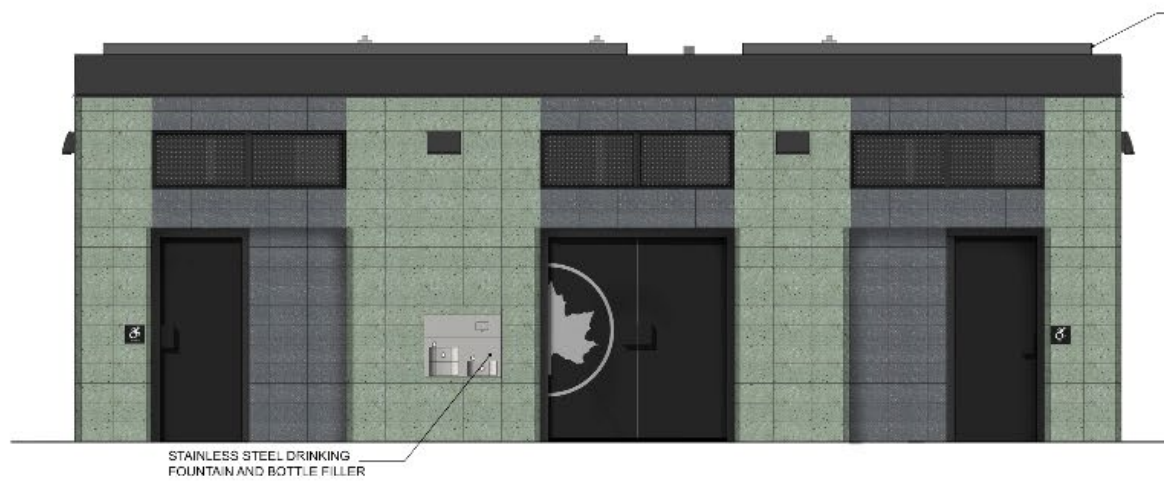
# Project Location



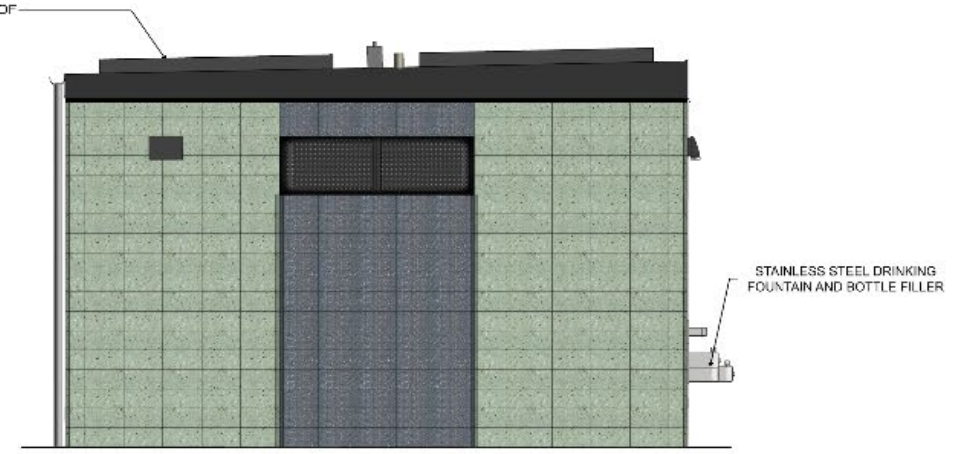
# Floor Plan



# Building Elevations



1 - Front Elevation



1 - Side Elevation



2 - Side Elevation



1 - Rear Elevation

# Interior Views



2  
A-04  
WOMEN'S RESTROOM



1  
A-04  
MENS RESTROOM



# Project Schedule

- NTP Date – **May 2025**
- PDC Submission Date – **November 2025**
- Construction Start – **Early 2026**
- Substantial Completion – **End of 2026**

# Thank You



Office of Community Outreach  
and Notification

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