# Visual Resources

1. INTRODUCTIOn

An assessment of potential for visual impacts from the Proposed Action was performed. The assessment was based on the guidance contained within the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (“NYSDEC”) Program Policy “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts,” (DEP-00-2)[[1]](#footnote-2). This Visual Resource attachment assesses the visual and aesthetic impacts of the Proposed Action on scenic, recreational and historical areas and identifies and examines the visual resources and the visual qualities of the landscape within a one-mile radius of the Proposed Action.

The Study Area is defined as a one-mile radius surrounding the OH transmission/distribution pole relocations from the east to the west side of NYS-112 between Granny Road and Old Port Jefferson Road (refer to Figure A-1: Visual Resources Map – **Appendix A**). In the Study Area, the relocation of transmission poles from the east to west side of NYS-112 and the replacement of certain existing poles on the west side of NYS-112 will result in an increase of pole heights of more than 10 feet for three poles (13.5, 27 and 27 feet above ground level (agl)). Also, there will be one less pole within the Study Area. The visual impact analysis was limited to the one-mile radius Study Area because the flat topography limits potential viewsheds and the replacement and relocation of 83 distribution poles, the installation of four new distribution poles, and the switchgear installation outside of the Study Area do not involve a height increase of more than 10 feet.

A summary of the transmission and distribution pole modifications in the Study Area are presented in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1: Pole Modifications in the Study Area**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Existing Pole No.** | **Existing Height after embedment (feet above ground level (agl))** | **Action** | **Proposed Height after embedment (feet above ground level (agl))\*\*** | **Change in height after embedment (feet, +/-)** |
| 77 | 47.5 | Replacement (west) | 52 | 4.5 |
| 78.5 | 61 | Relocation (north to south) | 65.5 | 4.5 |
| 79 | 52 | Relocation (east to west) | 65.5 | 13.5 |
| 244 | 38.5 | Relocation (north to south), re-number as #79.5 | 65.5 | 27 |
| 80 | 56.5 | Relocation (east to west) | 65.5 | 9 |
| 245 | 38.5 | Removal (west), pole #80 above to be relocated to existing location of pole #245 | -- | -- |
| 246 | 38.5 | Replacement (west), re-number as #80.5 | 65.5 | 27 |
| 81 | 56.5 | Relocation (east to west) | 65.5 | 9 |
| 247 | 38.5 | Removal (west), pole #81 above to be relocated to existing location of pole #247 | -- | -- |
| 81.5 | -- | Install (west) | 65.5 | -- |
| 82 | -- | Install (east) | 65.5 | -- |
| 82.5 | 56.5 | Replacement of existing Pole #82 (east), re-number as #82.5 | 61 | 4.5 |
| Notes:  \*North to south and vice versa movements are in-line with proposed OH lines. East to west and vice versa movements are across NYS-112 roadway.  \*\*Heights prior to embedment are indicated in the Design Drawing M-30000. | | | | |

1. Existing Land use and topography

The existing topography surrounding the Study Area is generally flat with elevations along NYS-112 ranging from 100’ asl to 150’ asl NAVD88 (refer to Figure A-2: Topographic Map – **Appendix A**). Land use in the vicinity of the Study Area is comprised of a mix of generally flat wooded and developed environments. The highest elevations within the Proposed Action Study Area are located northeast of the Site, in the proximity of the Glacier Ridge Bike Trail, with a maximum elevation of 300’ asl (NAVD88), which is approximately 150’ above elevations found at the Study Area. The lowest elevations within a one-mile radius are located more than 500 feet south of the pole modifications in the Study Area with elevations at approximately 100’ asl (NAVD88).

The Proposed Action Study Area land uses are predominantly Recreation and Open Space. The Proposed Action is located in a developed area with a mix of commercial, industrial, residential, and institutional uses, which have other modern visual intrusions such as modern office and commercial buildings, apartment developments, a business school campus, street lighting, and other existing utilities (refer to Figure A-3: Land Use Map – **Appendix A**.

1. inventory of aesthetic resources

Visual resources are landscape areas and features that are significant because of either their inherent visual quality or their cultural importance. The NYSDEC’s Program Policy, Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts, identifies 15 categories of aesthetic resources of statewide significance which have been recognized through either national or state designations. An inventory of visual resources designated by NYSDEC located within the Study Area is included below. The location of the identified aesthetic resources is included on Figure A-1 in **Appendix A**.

1. *A property on or eligible for inclusion in the National or State Register of Historic Places [16 U.S.C.§470a et seq., Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law Section 14.07].* A review of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS)[[2]](#footnote-3) did not identify any properties on or eligible for listing in the National or State Register of Historic Places within the Study Area.
2. *State Parks [Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law Section 3.09].* No state parks are located within the Study Area.
3. *Urban Cultural Parks [Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law Section 35.15]*. The State Heritage Areas program has replaced the urban cultural parks program. The Long Island North Shore State Heritage Area (LINSHA) is defined as the entire north shore of Long Island from Great Neck to Orient Point, with its southern boundary generally following the Long Island Expressway (LIE). No urban cultural parks are located within the Study Area.
4. *The State Forest Preserve [NYS Constitution Article XIV]*. The state forest preserve is limited to Adirondack and Catskill Parks, and some portions of the counties where these two parks are located. No such lands are located on Long Island.
5. *National Wildlife Refuges [16 U.S.C. 668dd], State Game Refuges and State Wildlife Management Areas* *[ECL 11-2105].* No national wildlife refuges or wildlife management areas are present within the Study Area.
6. *National Natural Landmarks [36 CFR Part 62].* No national natural landmarks are present within the Study Area.
7. *The National Park System, Recreation Areas, Seashores, Forests [16 U.S.C. 1c].* No national parks are located within the Study Area.
8. *Rivers designated as National or State Wild, Scenic or Recreational [16 U.S.C. Chapter 28, ECL 15-2701 et seq.].* No rivers designated as national or state wild, scenic or recreational are located within the Study Area.
9. *A site, area, lake, reservoir or highway designated or eligible for designation as scenic [ECL Article 49 or DOT equivalent and APA Designated State Highway Roadside]. Areas subject to Article 49 designation include Scenic Byways (now under the purview of the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), parkways designated by the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, and other areas designated by NYSDEC.* No scenic areas are located within the Study Area.
10. *Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance [of Article 42 of Executive Law].* No Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance are located within the Study Area.
11. *A State or federally designated trail, or one proposed for designation [16 U.S.C. Chapter 27 or equivalent].* No state or federally designated trails are located within the Study Area.
12. *Adirondack Park Scenic Vistas. These vistas are limited to Adirondack Park located in northeastern New York State.* No such lands are located on Long Island.
13. *State Nature and Historic Preserve Areas; [Section 4 of Article XIV of the State Constitution].* The Proposed Action is located entirely within a State Nature and Historic Preserve Area as described below in **Table 2**.

**Table 2: State Nature & Historic Preserve Areas within One-Mile of Project Site**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resource** | **Map ID** | **Location** | **Approximate Location** |
| **Long Island State Pine Barrens –**  **Compatible Growth Area** | **PA01** | **Medford, NY 11763** | **0.0 mile from Proposed Action Site** |

The Long Island State Pine Barrens comprises approximately 105,000 acres of eastern Long Island. The Pine Barrens is comprised of two sub-regions, the Core Preservation Area which contains publicly owned and preserved land a in which new development is prohibited, and the Compatible Growth Area, which allows limited, environmentally-compatible development. The Proposed Action is within the Compatible Growth Area.

1. *Palisades Park; [Palisades Interstate Park Commission]*. Palisades Park is not located on Long Island.
2. *Bond Act Properties purchased under Exceptional Scenic Beauty or Open Space category.* No Bond Act Properties purchased under Exceptional Scenic Beauty or Open Space category were identified within the Study Area.

**PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SITES**

An inventory of additional visual resources including public parks and recreation areas is also considered within the context of the NYSDEC Visual Resources Policy. Six (6) county, municipal, and privately-owned recreational sites were identified within the Study Area, as summarized in **Table 3** below (refer to Figure A-1: Visual Resources Map – **Appendix A**).

**Table 3: Potentially Significant Local Sites within the Study Area**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Resource** | **Map ID** | **Location** | **Approximate Location** |
| Holy Sepulchre Cemetery | PS01 | 3442 NY-112  Coram, NY 11727 | 0.0 mile to project site |
| Country Fair Entertainment Park | PS02 | 3351 NY-112  Medford, NY 11763 | 0.23 mile from project site |
| Overton Preserve | PS03 | David Overton Rd, Coram, NY 11727 | 0.45 mile from project site |
| Blue Ridge Golf Club | PS04 | 899 Golf Lane  Medford, NY 11763 | 0.47 mile from project site |
| Glacier Ridge Bike Trail | PS05 | Farmingville, NY 11738 | 0.52 mile from project site |
| Bretton Woods Country Club | PS06 | 1027 Clubhouse Court  Coram, NY 11727 | 0.68 mile from project site. |

**VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

A field visit was conducted on November 15, 2018 to assist in the determination of potential visibility of the changes as a result of the Proposed Action from the visual resource locations inventoried in Section C above. Photographs documenting the existing views towards NYS-112 from these resources are included in the Pre-Construction Photo Log – **Appendix A**. The Study Area is located entirely within the State Nature and Historic Preserve area, the Long Island State Pine Barrens Compatible Growth Area, and adjacent to the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Visual Simulation – **Appendix B** provides three photographs of the existing and proposed conditions from three locations along NYS-112 (Location 1 through Location 3, Existing and Proposed). Location 1 and Location 2 are on the east side of NYS-112 and facing north, approximately 140 feet and 420 feet north of Granny Road, respectively. Location 3 is on the west side of NYS-112 and facing south, approximately 930 feet north of Granny Road.

The Study Area is defined as a one-mile radius surrounding the OH transmission/distribution pole relocations from the east to the west side of NYS-112 between Granny Road and Old Port Jefferson Road (refer to Figure A-1: Visual Resources Map – **Appendix A**). The Study Area land uses are predominantly Recreation and Open Space uses and Commercial. The Study Area pole relocations will be seen from the immediate land uses along the west and east sides of NYS-112, including the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery on the west side of NYS-112 and the Country Fair Entertainment Park (“Park”) to the south and on the east side of NYS-112, as well as commercial, vacant, transportation (NYSDOT property) uses on the east side of NYS-112. Impacts to the uses on the east side are anticipated to be negligible as these uses are not considered sensitive visual receptors. Visual impacts to the cemetery property will not be significant due to the existing line of trees that will shield the poles from view, except for the top sections of the poles. Similarly, the visual impacts to the Country Fair Entertainment Park will be minimal due to the distance between the Study Area poles and the Park. There are no buildings or structures listed in the State or National Register of Historic Places or over 50 years old within the footprint or within 1 mile of the Propose Action area. The Proposed Action will not significantly impair the visual landscape as experienced from other scenic or aesthetic resources of concern or interfere with or reduce the public’s, or area residents’, enjoyment and/or appreciation of the appearance of inventoried scenic, open space, or other resource.

In the Study Area, the relocated transmission line will be placed over the existing distribution lines on new poles that will be approximately 10 to 30 feet taller than the poles they will be replacing, but only approximately 10 to 15 feet taller than the poles from which the line is removed. As a result of the Proposed Action, for this 0.12-mile section of NYS-112, the relocated transmission line on the west side will be approximately 10 to 15 feet taller at points than is the existing transmission line on the east side. However, this impact will not be significant because the adjacent land uses are warehouse-type facilities and a cemetery. The existing transmission line cannot be seen from local resource locations (see Figure A-1: Visual Resources Map – **Appendix A**). It is unlikely that the taller poles will be visible from the locations because of the intervening wooded landscape (refer to Pre-Construction Photo Log – **Appendix A**). At most, only the top sections of the poles might be partially visible from a few of the locations. Given the distance between these locations and the proposed transmission line, such a limited visibility change would not be significant. There will not be a significant adverse impact on designated visual resources or the character of the area. The replacement and relocation of 83 distribution poles, the installation of four new distribution poles, and the proposed UG work outside of the Study Area do not involve a height increase of more than 10 feet and thus do not have the potential for a significant adverse visual impact. Only minor tree trimming will be required for utility pole clearances, and it is not anticipated to significantly impact the visual landscape of the area. The Proposed Action modifications will be visible from several vantage points within the Pine Barrens and within the Cemetery, as well as from the Country Fair Entertainment Park (“the Park”), which is located approximately 0.23 mile south of the center of the Study Area on the east side of NYS-112 (refer to Photos 1 through 11 in Pre-Construction Photo Log – **Appendix A**). Existing pole heights adjacent to the cemetery will increase. Visual impacts to the cemetery property are anticipated to be minimal, as the majority of the existing vegetated buffer, which includes mature trees between the cemetery and the roadway, will remain (refer to Photos 6 and 7). As illustrated in the photosimulation provided at Location 1, the increased height of the line of poles on the west side of the road in the location of the existing cemetery does not significantly impact the view or character of the neighborhood. Only a small portion of the poles is visible above the existing tree line. The trees will continue to provide screening of the roadway and the poles, and the visibility of the taller poles is anticipated to be minor.

The pole relocations will also be visible from the Country Fair Entertainment Park, but the Proposed Action is not anticipated to significantly impact the viewshed from this location due to the distance between the Park and the Study Area (refer to Photo 2 in the Pre-Construction Photo Log: Photo 2 – **Appendix A**).

Overall, the existing trees on the west side of this road will continue to help decrease the visual impact of the taller poles. The NYSDOT tree plantings on the west side of the road and south of Granny Road will help decrease the visual impact from vantage points south of the proposed pole relocations. As illustrated in the photosimulation provided for Location 2, the line of poles on the west side continues and there is a visual change due to increased pole heights, but, the impact is not significant. Also, there are three existing poles near the northwest corner of Granny Road and NYS-112 which range in heights from 61 to 70 feet above ground level (agl), after embedment. These poles are similar in height to the three proposed pole relocations from the east side to the west side of the road, which will be 65.5 feet tall agl. The photosimulation provided at Location 3 looks south on that same line of poles. There is a visual change in the viewshed due to the increased pole heights, but the change is not significant.

Overall, the relocation of transmission poles from the east side of NYS-112 to the west side of the roadway will result in a change in the viewsheds from various points along NYS-112 in that the poles on the west side will be taller. However, there will be fewer poles along the east side of the roadway. The work entails relocation and replacement of OH electrical utility poles in which the quantity of poles will decrease by 1 pole, and thus the change in footprint of the Proposed Action will be insignificant. Given that most pole height increases are less than 10 feet, and the existing poles near the northwest corner of Granny Road and NYS-112 range in height from 47.5 to 70 feet above ground level after embedment, significant adverse impacts on the viewsheds within the Study Area are not anticipated.

1. NYSDEC. DEP-00-2 Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts. Issued July 31, 2000. <http://dec.ny.gov/permits_ej_operations_pdf/visual2000.pdf>. Accessed January 3, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://cris.parks.ny.gov/>. Accessed January 4, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)