

A. INTRODUCTION

This attachment summarizes the findings of the Visual Resources Assessment, which evaluated the potential for visual impacts to sensitive receptors resulting from the Proposed Action. The Visual Resource Assessment identifies and examines the visual resources and visual qualities of the landscape within a one-mile radius of the Proposed Action, and evaluated visual and aesthetic impacts on scenic, recreational and historic areas from the construction and operation of the Proposed Action.

An inventory of aesthetic/scenic resources was conducted for areas within one-mile of the Proposed Action. However, since the UG transmission circuits and distribution exit feeders associated with the Proposed Action do not have the potential for significant visual impacts, the Visual Resources Assessment primarily focuses on impacts associated with the Proposed Substation.

B. METHODOLOGY

An inventory of sensitive aesthetic and visual resources was prepared following the guidance in the New York State Department and Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Program Policy “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts” including locations or resources identified by local jurisdictions as having scenic or aesthetic quality. To determine the visual impacts of the Proposed Action on sensitive receptors from typical view sheds, a field investigation was conducted on August 28, 2018. Photograph locations were selected to depict representative views of existing conditions from access ways adjacent to the Proposed Action (see **Appendix B**). At each of the photograph locations, the direction in which the photographs were taken was recorded. In addition, visual renderings of the Proposed Substation from several viewsheds are included in **Appendix C**. The visual renderings do not provide an exhaustive collection of views from every location where the Proposed Substation would be visible. Rather, these views are intended to demonstrate the appearance of the Proposed Substation in areas that may be visible to area residents and the general public.

NYSDEC GUIDANCE

NYSDEC Visual Impact Assessment Methodology, “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts,” (DEP-00-2) was developed as guidance for NYSDEC’s review of actions, however the methodology and impact assessment criteria established by the policy are comprehensive and are readily used by other State and local agencies to assess potential impacts. This Visual Resources Assessment utilizes this methodology.

According to DEP-00-2, a “visual impact” occurs when “the mitigatingⁱ effects of perspective” do not reduce the visibility of an object to insignificant levels. While beauty does not play a role in whether there is a “visual impact,” it does play a role as to whether there is an “aesthetic impact”:

Aesthetic impact occurs when there is a detrimental effect on the perceived beauty of a place or structure. Mere visibility, even startling visibility of a project proposal, should not be a threshold for decision making. Instead a project, by virtue of its visibility, must clearly interfere with or reduce the public’s enjoyment and/or appreciation of the appearance of an inventoried resource. (DEP-00-2, p. 9)

The “mitigating effects of perspective” are important to understand in the assessment of visual impact. While an object such as a switchgear itself may be visible over a long distance, “atmospheric perspective,” which DEP-00-2 describes as the “reduction in intensity of colors and the contrast

between light and dark as the distance of the objects from the observer increases,” and which is a product of the natural particles within the atmosphere that scatter light, serves to minimize the significance of the object in the overall viewshed. A second factor that reduces the potential for impact is the overall character of the surrounding landscape, including existing vegetation, buildings, and topography. The effects of distance and contextual topography typically reduce the visibility of switchgears to insignificant levels.

Thus, while the elements of the Proposed Action may be visible within a viewshed, mere visibility is not a threshold of significance. The significance of the visibility is dependent on several factors: the perceived beauty, presence of any designated historic or scenic resources within the viewshed of the Proposed Action; distance; general characteristics of the surrounding landscape; and the extent to which the visibility of the Proposed Action interferes with the public’s enjoyment or appreciation of the resource. A significant adverse visual impact will only occur when the effects of design, distance, and intervening topography and vegetation did not minimize the visibility of an object and the visibility significantly detracts from the public’s enjoyment of a resource.

STUDY AREA

Although the NYSDEC program policy “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts” provides direction to inventory scenic or aesthetic resources within five miles of the Proposed Action, the Proposed Action is not discernable beyond a distance of one mile based on field observations. As such, a study area of one-mile was determined to be more appropriate for inventorying scenic and aesthetic resources.

Views of the Proposed Action will vary throughout the study area as a function of topography, vegetation, and built structures. Visibility of the Proposed Substation is non-existent, or limited, from locations beyond a 0.25-mile radius due to the generally flat topography of the area and the limited vertical profile of the Proposed Substation and associated equipment. Views of the Proposed Substation equipment (i.e., switchgears) will vary as a function of the presence or absence of vegetation and buildings. In addition, the areas within one mile of the Proposed Substation and minimal overhead components of the Proposed Action (two replacement distribution poles along Round Swamp Road and installation of three wood riser poles adjacent to Ruland Road Substation) are well developed and include existing utility transmission and distribution infrastructure and lighting poles. As such, the Proposed Action will be consistent with the current use and character of the area.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

LAND USE

The Project Site is located in a mixed-use area within the hamlets of Plainview, Old Bethpage and Melville. Land uses in the vicinity of the aboveground components of the Proposed Action are discussed below. Land uses at and in the vicinity of the Proposed Action are discussed in **Attachment B**, “Land Use and Cultural Resources”.

Land uses adjacent to the Proposed Substation parcel are comprised of commercial and industrial uses. The Proposed Substation is immediately adjacent to several large surface parking lots which serve industrial and commercial tenants. The Proposed Substation is located approximately 0.1 mile south of the Long Island Expressway (I-495). Across Old Country Road to the east of the Proposed Substation parcel are two hotels. To the south of the Proposed Substation parcel across Old Country Road is a

commercial shopping center beyond which lies a new multi-family residential development. To the southeast of the Proposed Substation is the Pine Ridge Conservation Area.

Land uses adjacent to the proposed transmission circuits are mixed-use, and primarily consist of low to high density residential, commercial and industrial, with some institutional and recreation/open space uses. Land uses adjacent to the distribution feeders consist primarily of commercial and residential uses.

The distribution pole replacements located along Round Swamp Road are within an existing utility pole alignment. The new approximately 70-foot transmission riser poles to be installed adjacent to the Ruland Road Substation will be located just outside the Ruland Road Substation fence, in close proximity to an existing overhead transmission line consisting of approximately 50-foot transmission poles and approximately 100-foot transmission towers, immediately south of the Ruland Road Substation.

TOPOGRAPHY

The existing topography at the Proposed Substation parcel is generally flat with a gentle slope from west to east and from north to southⁱⁱ. A detailed topographic survey of the Proposed Substation parcel indicated that topographic elevations range from 202 to 165 NAVD88.

The topography surrounding the Proposed Substation parcel is a generally flat. The highest elevations within a one-mile radius of the Proposed Substation parcel are located to the north adjacent to the Northern State Parkway at 300 NAV83 (approximately 100 feet above elevations at the Proposed Substation site). The lowest elevations within a one-mile of the Project Site radius are located south of Bethpage Sweet Hollow/Spagnoli Road near the Farmingdale State College, at approximately 100 NAV83 (approximately 60 feet below elevations at the Proposed Substation).

INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

Visual resources are landscape areas and features that are significant because of either their inherent visual quality or their cultural importance, including landscapes that demonstrate historical significance, designated recreation area and scenic areas, natural features, naturally occurring landscapes and manmade features.

NYSDEC Visual Policy Categories

An inventory of sensitive aesthetic and visual resources was prepared following the guidance in DEP-00-2. The DEP-00-2 guidance identifies 15 categories of aesthetic and natural resources of statewide significance which have been recognized through either national or state designations. The location of the identified aesthetic and visual resources are depicted on **Figure 8**. An inventory of visual resources designated by the NYSDEC within the study area are identified below.

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”)ⁱⁱⁱ identified one State and National Register Listed Building District within the Proposed Action study area, as summarized in **Table D-1** below.

**Table D-1: State/National Register Listed Building Districts
Within One-Mile of Project Site**

Resource	Figure ID No.	Location	Approximate Location
Long Island National Cemetery	S/NR01	2040 Wellwood Ave Wyandanch, NY 11798	0.87 mile from Project Site

The review also identified 28 sites that were determined to have eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (see **Table D-2**) within the Proposed Action study area. The ownership of the sites is mixed and several of the structures have been repurposed as classrooms for Farmingdale State College. Additionally, some of the historic residences are privately owned.

Table D-2: National Register Eligible Sites Within One-Mile of Project Site

USN Number	Figure ID No.	Site/Property	Approximate Location
10301.000046	NR01	Conklin Hall	0.48 mile from Project Site
10301.000359	NR02	Heating Plant	0.49 mile from Project Site
10301.000360	NR03	Horticultural Supply House	0.50 mile from Project Site
10301.000042	NR04	Campus Commons (Formerly AGR Equip Bldg.)	0.53 mile from Project Site
10301.000060	NR05	Garage	0.55 mile from Project Site
10301.000044	NR06	Bookstore	0.57 mile from Project Site
10301.000038	NR07	Conservatory	0.57 mile from Project Site
10301.000040	NR08	Cutler Hall	0.65 mile from Project Site
10301.000061	NR09	Thompson Hall (1938) Farmingdale State College	0.67 mile from Project Site
10301.000045	NR10	Ward Hall	0.68 mile from Project Site
10301.000052	NR11	Cottage – Conference Center (Former President’s House)	0.69 mile from Project Site
10301.000889	NR12	The Cottage / President’s House	0.75 mile from Project Site
10301.000047	NR13	Hooper Hall	0.75 mile from Project Site
10301.000358	NR14	Horton Hall	0.75 mile from Project Site

Table D-2: National Register Eligible Sites Within One-Mile of Project Site

USN Number	Figure ID No.	Site/Property	Approximate Location
10301.000869	NR15	Roosevelt Hall, 1965, Farmingdale State College	0.81 mile from Project Site
10301.000359	NR16	Knapp Hall	0.81 mile from Project Site
10301.000043	NR17	Garages 9 & 9A	0.83 mile from Project Site
05903.000416	NR18	Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School (1960)	0.86 mile from Project Site
05903.000243	NR19	Bridge Path	0.89 mile from Project Site
05903.000040	NR20	Stable #1	0.90 mile from Project Site
05903.000042	NR21	Stable #3 / Top Dressing Shed (017)	0.97 mile from Project Site
05903.000041	NR22	Stable #2	0.98 mile from Project Site
05903.000046	NR23	Main Pump House (007)	1 mile from Project Site
05903.000047	NR24	Plumbing Shop (006)	1 mile from Project Site
05903.000049	NR25	Maintenance Building Garage (004)	0.97 mile from Project Site
05903.000048	NR26	Main Maintenance Building (005)	1 mile from Project Site
05903.000050	NR27	Tower Pump House (003)	0.98 mile from Project Site
05903.000224	NR28	Red Refreshment Stand (020)	1 mile from Project Site

A consultation request was submitted to the NYSOPRHP in order to evaluate the potential impact from the Proposed Action on archaeological and/or historic resources within the project area. A response was received from the NYSOPRHP on March 8, 2019 stating that the Proposed Action will have no impact on archaeological and/or historic resources listed in or eligible for the New York State and National Register of Historic Places. A copy of the NYSOPRHP's Letter of No Impact is provided in **Appendix D**.

2) State Parks [Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law Section 3.09].

Two State Parks, as defined by Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law §3.09 were identified within the Proposed Action study area, as summarized below in **Table D-3**.

Table D-3: State Parks within One-Mile of Project Site

Resource	Figure ID No.	Location	Approximate Location
Bethpage State Park	SP01	99 Quaker Meeting House Rd, Farmingdale, NY 11735	0.60 mile from Project Site
Trail View State Park	SP02	8101 Jericho Turnpike, Woodbury, NY 11797	Adjacent to Project Site

3) *Urban Cultural Parks [Parks, Recreation And Historic Preservation Law Section 35.15].*

The State Heritage Areas program has replaced the 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”). In 2006, the New York Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (“OPRHP”) received and approved the LINSHA Management Plan. The Proposed Action and study area are not location within the LINSHA.

4) *The State Forest Preserve [NYS Constitution Article XIV].*

All lands within the State Forest Preserve (New York State Constitution Article XIV) are located within the boundaries of the Adirondack and Catskill Parks in northern New York State. Thus, the Proposed Action and study area are not located within the State Forest Preserve lands.^{iv}

5) *National Wildlife Refuges [16 U.S.C. 668dd], State Game Refuges and State Wildlife Management Areas [ECL 11-2105].*

No National Wildlife Refuges (“NWR”) are located within the Proposed Action area or study area. No State Game Refuges and State Wildlife Management Areas (“WMA”) are located within the Proposed Action area or study area.^v

6) *National Natural Landmarks [36 CFR Part 62].*

No National Natural Landmarks (defined by 36 CFR Part 62) are located within the within the Proposed Action area or study area.^{vi}

7) *The National Park System, Recreation Areas, Seashores, Forests [16 U.S.C. 1c].*

No National Parks (as defined by 16 USC 1c) are located within the Proposed Action area or study area.^{vii}

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 present within the Proposed Action area or study area.^{viii}

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].*

No resources identified in Article 49 of the ECL including Scenic Byways (under the purview of New York State Department of Transportation [NYSDOT]), parkways (designated by the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation [NYSOPRHP]), and or other areas designated by NYSDEC are present within Proposed Action or study area.

10) *Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance [of Article 42 of Executive Law].*

No Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (of Article 42 of Executive Law) are located within the Proposed Action or study area.^{ix}

11) *A State Or Federally Designated Trail, Or One Proposed For Designation [16 U.S.C. Chapter 27 Or Equivalent].*

Two federally designated trails (as defined by 16 USC Chapter 27) is located within the Proposed Action or study area, as defined below in **Table D-4**.^x

Table D-4: State/National Designated Trails Within One-Mile of Project Site

Resource	Figure ID No.	Location	Approximate Location
Nassau-Suffolk Green Belt Trail	T01	Bethpage, NY 11714	0.60 mile from Project Site
Bethpage Bikeway	T02	Bethpage, NY 11714	0.60 mile from Project Site

13) *State Nature and Historic Preserve Areas; [Section 4 of Article XIV of the State Constitution].*

There are no State Nature or Historic Preservation Areas located within the Proposed Action or study area.^{xi}

14) *Palisades Park; [Palisades Interstate Park Commission].*

Palisades Park is not located within the Proposed Action or study area.

15) *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 are located within the Proposed Action or study area.^{xii}

LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES

An inventory of additional visual resources including public parks and recreation areas is also considered within the context of the NYSDEC Visual Resources Policy. Ten county, municipal and privately-owned recreational sites were identified in within the Proposed Action study area, as summarized in **Table D-5** below. These municipal recreational areas include municipal parks, golf courses and tennis courts.

**Table D-5: Local Recreational/Community Service Sites
Within One-Mile of Project Site**

Resource	Figure ID No.	Location	Approximate Relative Distance
Battle Row Campground	PS01	1 Claremont Rd Old Bethpage, NY 11804	Adjacent to Project Site
Old Bethpage Village Restoration	PS02	1303 Round Swamp Road Old Bethpage, NY 11804	Adjacent to Project Site
Pine Ridge Conservation Area	PS03	Paumonauk Hills Court Melville, NY 11747	0.02 mile from Project Site
Plainview Community Playground	PS04	Old Country Road Plainview, NY 11803	0.19 mile from Project Site
Haypath Road Park	PS05	23 Oxford Road Old Bethpage, NY 11804	0.20 mile from Project Site
Manetto Hill Preserve	PS06	Plainview, NY 11803	0.40 mile from Project Site
Plainview-Old Bethpage Park	PS07	175 Washington Avenue Plainview, NY 11803	0.41 mile from Project Site
Borella Field Park	PS08	650 Plainview Rd Plainview, NY 11803	0.46 mile from Project Site
Lincoln Road Park	PS09	Lincoln Road Plainview, NY 11803	0.83 mile from Project Site
West Hills Nature Preserve	PS10	6 Country Meadow Ct, Melville, NY 11747	0.9 mile from Project Site

D. POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Field visits were conducted on October 23, 2018 and March 29, 2019 to assist in the determination of potential visibility of the Proposed Action from the visual resources inventoried in Section C above. Photographs documenting existing viewsheds of the Project Site from inventoried resources and areas in the vicinity of the Proposed Action are included in **Appendix B**.

As demonstrated by the photographs in **Appendix B**, based on the vertical profile of the Proposed Substation, the generally flat topography of the lands adjacent to the Proposed Substation parcel, and existing vegetation/structures in the areas surrounding the Proposed Substation, the visibility of the

Proposed Substation will be limited from most of the identified visual resources. An exception includes the Pine Ridge Conservation area (PS03), depicted in Photo Location 3.

The Proposed Substation parcel is potentially visible from vantage points within the limits of Trail View State Park (SP02, 0.07 miles from the Proposed Substation) and Old Bethpage Village Restoration (PS02, 0.26 miles from the Proposed Substation), given the close proximity of the Proposed Substation parcel to these visual resources. However, while the parcel may be visible from these resources, the actual Proposed Substation and associated equipment will be significantly blocked from the Old Bethpage Village Restoration viewshed due to intervening development (residential and commercial, including the Country Pointe Plainview Development) and vegetation. The Proposed Substation may be visible from Trail View State Park during the construction phase of the Proposed Substation's development, however it will not be visible once vegetation is installed post construction.

Existing distribution infrastructure exists along Round Swamp Road. Given that the two pole replacements on Round Swamp Road will be no more than 10 feet taller and in their same general locations, they will not result in significant adverse visual impacts. In addition, the approximately 70-foot transmission riser poles to be installed adjacent to the Ruland Road Substation will be located just outside the Ruland Road Substation fence, in close proximity to an existing overhead transmission line consisting of approximately 50-foot transmission poles and approximately 100-foot transmission towers, and surrounded by intervening vegetation.

Visual renderings, provided in **Appendix C**, were prepared to illustrate the future view of the Proposed Substation, as well as illustrate the visibility of the Proposed Substation from select viewing locations in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Substation. A summary of the visual renderings is provided below. Note that the overhead distribution infrastructure depicted in the renderings is all existing infrastructure.

Conceptual Plan View is an overhead view of the Proposed Substation, located in the northernmost portion of the Proposed Substation parcel. As shown on this view, the majority of the Proposed Substation parcel will remain utilized as a recharge basin. As can be seen in this view, the Proposed Substation is primarily surrounded by parking lots associated with commercial and industrial properties, and existing and proposed vegetation will be present around the substation.

Rendered Views 1 through 5 are views looking towards the Proposed Substation parcel from adjacent parking lots and roadways. As shown in these views, existing utility infrastructure exists along roadways surrounding the Proposed Substation parcel, and existing and proposed vegetation will effectively screen the Proposed Substation, minimizing visibility from surrounding areas.

Bird's Eye Views 1, 2 and 3 are looking down towards the Proposed Substation parcel from the east, north and south, respectively. As shown in these views, the Proposed Substation is situated in the northernmost corner of the Proposed Substation parcel, and will be set back from public roadways (Old Country Road and Round Swamp Road), limiting visibility from public roadways. The closest properties to the Proposed Substation include the commercial and industrial properties located to the north and west of the Proposed Substation, which both have large asphalt parking lots located immediately adjacent to the Proposed Substation parcel.

After construction is complete, the Proposed Substation will not result in a significant impact to the viewshed of visual resources within the study area. Given that the proposed transmission circuits and distribution exit feeders will be installed underground, they will not result in insignificant adverse impacts to visual resources within the study area. The results of the field visit and visual impact assessment indicate that most of the identified visual resources have intervening vegetation, topography and/or structures that block the view of the Proposed Substation from most vantage points.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the field visit, visual impact assessment, and the visual renderings; the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to the visual resources within the study area.

The two distribution pole replacements along Round Swamp Road will be consistent in height to existing poles and will be located in an area where overhead utility infrastructure exists. In addition, the wood riser poles connecting the UG transmission circuit to the Ruland Road Substation will be located adjacent to the Ruland Road Substation, where abundant electrical infrastructure exists, and will be surrounded by intervening vegetation.

Additionally, the Proposed Substation will not significantly impair the visual landscape as experienced from any scenic or aesthetic resources and will not interfere with or reduce the public's, or area residents', enjoyment or appreciation of the appearance of any inventoried scenic, open space, or other resource. Thus, there will be no significant adverse visual impacts as a result of the Proposed Action.

ⁱ DEP-00-2 uses the term “mitigating” or “mitigation” to refer to design parameters that avoid or reduce potential visibility of a project. This should not be confused with the use of the term “mitigation” with respect to mitigation of significant adverse environmental impacts as required by the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

ⁱⁱ USGS. 2016. “Huntington Quadrangle New York 7.5-Minute Series.” Available Online: https://prd-tnm.s3.amazonaws.com/StagedProducts/Maps/USTopo/PDF/NY/NY_Huntington_20160824_TM_geo.pdf. Accessed 11/12/2018.

ⁱⁱⁱ CRIS. 2019. Available Online: <https://cris.parks.ny.gov/>. Accessed 8/6/2019.

^{iv} NYSDEC. “New York’s Forest Preserve.” Available Online: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4960.html>. Accessed 11/12/2018.

^v USFWS. “National Wildlife Refuge System.” Available Online: <http://www.fws.gov/refuges/>. Accessed 8/6/2019.

^{vi} NPS. “National Natural Landmarks by state: New York” Available Online: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nl/landmarks/state.htm?State=NY>. Accessed 8/6/2019.

^{vii} NPS. “National Natural Landmarks by state: New York” Available Online: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nl/landmarks/state.htm?State=NY>. Accessed 8/6/2019.

^{viii} NPS. “Wild and Scenic Rivers Program.” Available Online: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1912/plan-your-visit.htm>. Accessed 8/6/2019.

^{ix} NPS. “New York.” Available Online: <https://www.nps.gov/state/ny/index.htm>. Accessed 8/6/2019.

^x NRT. “Walt Whitman Trail.” Available Online: <http://www.nrtdatabase.org/trailDetail.php?recordID=3534#one>. Accessed 11/26/2018.

^{xi} NYSDEC. “Nassau County Map.” Available Online: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/73964.html>. Accessed 11/12/2018.

^{xii} Nassau County, Long Island, New York. “Environmental Bond Act Map.” Available Online: <http://archive.nassaucountyny.gov/EnvironmentalBondActMap.html>. Accessed 11/12/2018.