1.4 Visual Resources

1.4.1 Assessment of the Degree of Project Visibility and Probable Extent of Visual Contrast Change from Existing Conditions

There is no expected change in visibility between the existing transmission facilities and the proposed Project. Reconductoring consists of replacing existing conductors with new conductors. Following completion of the Project, the structures along the LD-PV segment will remain, and the new conductor will have a similar profile as the existing conductor.

Hudson River Crossing

The Hudson River, a prominent and valued visual resource in the study area is one of America's most important historic, commercial, and recreational waterways. More than 314 miles long, it extends south from its source in the Adirondack Mountains to the New York City Harbor. At the proposed Project crossing, the river is approximately 2,100 feet (0.4 miles) wide. The width of the Hudson River at the proposed facilities' crossing is relatively uniform in the northern and southern direction.

Parts of the Hudson River are designated by the New York State Department of State ("NYSDOS") as "Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance" pursuant to 19 NYCRR 602.4. The Hudson River is also designated as an American Heritage River (Executive Order 13061), a federal designation to protect and restore rivers and their adjacent communities.

There will be no discernible difference to the Hudson River viewshed of the Project because it is anticipated that the existing structures at the Hudson River crossing will remain in place; only the conductor will be changed.

1.4.2 Description of Mitigation Measures Appropriate to Minimize Adverse Visual Impacts

Visual quality is most frequently the result of the relationship of all the components of a landscape, rather than the presence of a single feature. Therefore, the landscape's visual features must be objectively identified and their character and quality assessed. The assessment must also identify the importance to people ("viewer groups"), or sensitivity of the views of visual resources in the landscape. Significant aesthetic impacts are those that may diminish public enjoyment and appreciation of an inventoried resource, or one that impairs the character or quality of such a place (NYSDEC 2000).

The potential adverse visual impact of these facilities is mitigated by using existing transmission line ROW when compared to the impacts associated with siting the new facilities in pristine rural settings. In

general, the overall visual character and visual quality of the Project corridor would not be substantially altered by the preliminary Project design for any viewer group.