

1.4 Visual Resources

Edic to New Scotland Segment

Table 1.4-1 depicts the visual and aesthetic resources within three miles of the Project (except NRHP listed and pre-determined eligible properties, which are listed in Tables 1.3.1 and 1.3-2 and Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (“SASS”) within five miles of the Project). The inventory of visual resources provided in this section is in accordance with the guidance provided in the NYSDEC Program Policy #DEP-00-2, Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts (NYSDEC Visual Policy). The policy identifies 13 categories of aesthetic resources of statewide significance that are germane to this Project including:

- NRHP listed or eligible properties;
- State parks;
- Urban cultural parks;
- State forest preserve lands;
- National wildlife refuges, state game refuges and state wildlife management areas;
- National natural landmarks;
- National Parks;
- Designated wild, scenic or recreational rivers;
- Designated scenic areas and highways;
- SASS;
- State or federally designated trails;
- State nature and historic preserve areas; and
- Certain Bond Act Properties.

Local parks were also inventoried as visual resources although they are not listed as an aesthetic resource of statewide significance by NYSDEC.

1.4.1 Facility locations with visual resources within three miles or Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance (SASS) within five miles

ED-NS Segment

In addition to the NRHP listed and eligible properties discussed in Section 1.3, 76 visual and aesthetic resources were identified within three miles of the Project facilities between Edic Substation and New Scotland Substation.

Visually sensitive resources located within three miles of the ED-NS segment include: one national park; three scenic byways; five designated trails; and 45 state, county and local parks. There are four NYSDOS-Designated SASS sites within five miles of the Project facilities (see Table 1.4-1 below).

1.4.1.1 Viewshed analysis assessment of the degree of Project visibility and probable extent of visual contrast change from existing conditions

ED-NS Segment

To evaluate potential Project visibility, a viewshed analysis was conducted for the existing and proposed transmission line structures along the Project centerline. Information on the location and height of the proposed structures was based on preliminary design. The viewsheds account for the potential screening effects of vegetation by incorporating the areas of forest cover based on the NLCD 2011 data.

As shown in Table 1.4.1 the majority of the identified visual and aesthetic resources in the vicinity of the ED-NS segment will have no change in visibility between the existing transmission facilities and the proposed Project. Of the 76 resources that were evaluated, 26 resources are located outside both the existing and proposed viewsheds (i.e., based on the viewshed analysis, these resources do not have a view of the existing facilities and will not have a view of the proposed ED-NS segment facilities). A total of 49 identified visual resources are located within both the existing and proposed viewsheds (the degree of visibility was not evaluated as part of this assessment). For one of these visual resources, the proposed ED-NS segment facilities will not be visible whereas the existing facilities might be (according to the viewshed analysis).

The mapped viewsheds that were used for this analysis are illustrated in Figure 1.4-1.