

1.4 Visual Resources

Table 1.4-1 depicts the visual and aesthetic resources within three miles of the ED-NS, LD-CT, and CT-PV segments 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). An inventory of visual resources was not created for the NS-LD segment, because there is no anticipated change in visibility between the existing corridor and the proposed 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

In addition to the NRHP listed and pre-determined eligible properties discussed in Section 1.3, 115 visual and aesthetic resources were identified within three miles of the Project facilities between Edic Substation and New Scotland Substation and Leeds Substation and Pleasant Valley Substation. Visually-sensitive resources located within three miles of the ED-NS, LD-CT and CT-PV segments include: 66 state, county, and local parks; fifteen state forests; three wildlife management areas and seven scenic byways. There are five 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

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.

ED-NS Segment

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.

NS-LD Segment

There is no expected change in visibility between the existing transmission facilities and the proposed in the vicinity of the NS-LD segment. Reconductoring consists of replacing existing conductors with new

conductors. Following completion of the Project, the structures along the NS-LD segment will remain, and the new conductor will have a similar profile as the existing conductor.

LD-CT and CT-PV Segments

As shown in Table 1.4-1, the majority of the identified visual and aesthetic resources in the vicinity of the LD-CT and CT-PV segments will have no change in visibility between the existing transmission facilities and the proposed Project. Of the 39 resources that were evaluated, 19 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 LD-CT and CT-PV segment facilities). A total of 16 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 the visual resources, the existing transmission line is not currently visible whereas the proposed facilities might be (according to the viewshed analysis).

The mapped viewsheds that were used for this analysis are illustrated in Figure 1.4-2.

This page intentionally left blank.