FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE CATSKILL/DELAWARE UV FACILTY METHODOLOGIES

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3.3. VISUAL CHARACTER

3.3.1. Introduction

Visual character consists of an area's unique or important public view corridors, vistas, or natural or built features. Visual resources include views of the waterfront, public parks, landmark structures or districts, or natural resources (i.e. vegetation, topography, geologic formations, wetlands, rivers, and other water resources). A visual character assessment is conducted in order to provide a framework for determining the possible changes that could occur to visual resources as a result of activity associated with the Eastview Site and off-site work locations.

Urban design characteristics are composed of the various parts of the buildings and streets within an area, including building bulk, use, and type; building arrangement; block form and street pattern; streetscape elements; street hierarchy; and natural features. As with a visual character assessment, an evaluation of urban design characteristics within an area is performed in order to provide an estimation of possible changes that could occur to the urban design of areas in the vicinity of the proposed facility related activities.

A shadow analysis is conducted when a proposed structure would be tall enough to cast a shadow on a publicly accessible open space, historic resource, or an important natural feature that depends on a certain level and duration of light. In accordance with *CEQR Technical Manual* guidelines, the analysis assesses the potential for shadows to occur during various seasons, based on distance and orientation of open space or other light-sensitive uses to the project site and the potential height of the proposed facility components.

3.3.2. Baseline Conditions

3.3.2.1. Existing Conditions

In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study areas generally corresponded to those used in the Land Use, Zoning, Public Policy and Neighborhood Character analyses; however, in cases where the relationships between visual resources and view corridors extended outside that area, the study area was expanded to accommodate those specific resources and corridors. Using these guidelines, the study area for the project site was identified as a one-mile radius (approximately) and a one-quarter mile radius study area was identified for the associated off-site work locations.

Existing urban design and visual resources were identified for the Eastview Site and the associated off-site work locations through site visits, including a full study area survey that recorded building and street size and type, and visual amenities, where applicable. Significant visual resources identified and described, and included such landscape elements as water bodies, landmark structures and other cultural resources, shadows, parks, unique topographic or geologic features, and critical environmental areas, where applicable. Photographs were taken to document the urban design and visual character within the study areas, particularly the architectural features and physical dimensions of existing structures, where applicable. Critical environmental areas were considered where they contained sensitive viewer groups or important

vistas. For the project site, the study area was also assessed to determine whether there are any open spaces or sunlight-sensitive architectural resources that could be affected by the proposed facility. The distance and orientation of these resources to the project site were identified.

3.3.2.2. Future Without the Project

Using the list of development proposals compiled under the Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy analysis (see Section 4.2, Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy), an analysis was conducted to determine the urban design and visual resources of the project site and study area for the Future Without the Project scenarios.

3.3.3. Potential Impacts

3.3.3.1. Potential Project Impacts

The description of future conditions with the proposed facility components in place included an account of what the proposed facility would look like, how it would fit within the urban design of the area, and how and whether it would affect the visual resources of the area. To illustrate this, photographs were taken of the Eastview Site and associated off-site work locations and then combined electronically with projected three-dimensional drawings of the proposed facility components by architectural specialists. These illustrations provide a conceptual view of the proposed facility components from various points in the vicinity of the project site. These illustrations allow an assessment of the relationship between the proposed development and existing urban design elements in the surrounding area, including an assessment of whether the proposed facility components' architectural features and physical dimensions would be compatible with existing structures surrounding the project site. The illustrations also identified whether and how visual resources would be affected by the proposed facility components.

A screening analysis was conducted to determine whether the proposed facility components' shadows would fall on any open spaces or natural resources within the study area at any time of the year. For structures 50 feet or taller, the longest shadow that can be cast by the structure is 4.3 times its height. If open space resources or sunlight-sensitive resources were located within this range, a detailed analysis would have been conducted to determine the potential impact, pursuant to the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

3.3.3.2. Potential Construction Impacts

Potential construction-related impacts to urban design and visual resources in the study area were determined by examining the location of construction materials, equipment, and staging areas with respect to documented visual resources in the study area and assessing possible effects on these resources with consideration of the duration of the construction activity.

3.3.4. Mitigation

Mitigation measures for the proposed facility were developed when significant adverse impacts to visual resources or urban character were identified. These measures were proposed to make the facility visually more compatible with the area and to reduce or eliminate shadow impacts, if any are projected. Such actions can include changes to location or placement of facilities or alteration of design elements.