Chapter 3:

Visual and Community Character

A. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter analyzes the potential for the Proposed Project to impact the visual character of the Project Site and the character of the community surrounding the Project Site. In addition, this chapter analyzes potential impacts resulting from changes to the visibility of the Project Site from seven publicly accessible vantage points.

While the Proposed Project would change the visual character of the Project Site from an office campus to a residential neighborhood, and while portions of the Proposed Project would be partially visible through the tree cover in the leaf-off condition, in the opinion of the Applicant, these changes would not result in a significant adverse impact on visual and community character. The new residential buildings would generally be sited in the same areas of the Project Site as the existing office buildings and the Project Site's existing topography and wooded buffers would be largely maintained, further limiting the visibility of the Proposed Project from surrounding areas.

With respect to community character, the Proposed Project's residential use would be consistent with existing residential uses to the east and west of the Project Site and the Proposed Project would not interfere with the public's enjoyment of parks and other community assets in the Town. Project Site lighting would be selected and positioned to minimize spillover of light off-site and the proposed landscaping would improve the visual character of the Project Site.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes the visual character of the Project Site within the context of its surrounding community, including discussion of on- and off-Site structures, landforms, topography, vegetative/tree cover, and illumination patterns. It also illustrates and describes views of the Project Site from a range of publicly accessible vantage points, as identified in the DEIS Scoping Document.

B.1. VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE

Given the topography of the Project Site, with the developed portion of the Project Site sitting at a significantly higher elevation than Route 6, Old Route 6 and East Main Street, the interior of the Project Site is, for the most part, visually disconnected from the adjacent roadways and neighborhoods. The southern portion of the Project Site is an existing office campus, consisting of two office buildings that are surrounded by surface parking lots (see **Figure 3-2** for photographs of the Project Site). The Project Site is accessed by a single driveway that connects to Old Route 6 and East Main Street, with nearby access from there to U.S. Route 6. The driveway into the Project Site is relatively steeply sloping, connecting Old Route 6, at a lower elevation, with the developed portion of the Project Site, at a higher elevation (**Figure 3-1b [Photo 1]**). The western portion of the Project Site slopes steeply down to its border with the Taconic State Parkway.

The office buildings on the Project Site have "L-shaped" footprints of approximately 15,000 sf, feature a flat roof and are clad in reflective glass (Figure 3-1b [Photo 2]). Much of the developed portion of the Project Site is devoted to surface parking that is interspersed with landscaped medians, manicured plantings, and mature trees (see Figure 3-1b [Photo 2] and 3-1c [Photo 4]). There is a steep change in topography between the two buildings, with the northern office building at a higher elevation than the southern office building (see Figure 3-1d [Photo 5]). The courtyard between the two buildings has a large rock outcropping and is improved with patios, plantings, and mature trees (see Figure 3-1d [Photo 6] and 3-1e [Photo 7]). The Project Site is illuminated by light poles on the drive aisles and parking lots, and by short, pedestrian-scaled bollards along sidewalks closer to the buildings (see Figure 3-1c [Photo 4] and 3-1e [Photo 8]).

The perimeter of the Project Site is wooded (see Figure 3-1f [Photo 10] and 3-1g [Photo 11]), which visually buffers the interior of the Project Site from the Taconic State Parkway and proximate residential uses (see Figure 3-1c [Photo 3]). One neighboring property, 764-768 East Main Street, is partially visible from the Project Site through a wooded buffer in the leaf-off condition (see Figure 3-1f [Photo 9]).

Overall, the developed portions of the Project Site contain approximately 3.45 acres of developed and maintained landscapes (i.e., mowed lawns and mowed lawns with trees) and approximately 5.2 acres of impervious structures and pathways (i.e., paved roads/paths and structure exteriors). The undeveloped areas of the Project Site contain approximately 26.85 acres of forest. The Project Site is contiguous, or nearly contiguous, with hundreds of acres of woodland to the north and east, including State parklands.

B.2. VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREAS

North and northeast of the Project Site are forested areas comprising Donald J. Trump State Park. West of the Project Site is the Taconic State Parkway, beyond which are forested areas and the Trump Park Residences, an age-restricted condominium community set on approximately 50 acres. Directly to the west of the Trump Park Residences is a small residential neighborhood, generally comprised of single-family homes, fronting on two courts (Oriole Court and Fawn Court) and a more significant road (Barger Street) that provides access to U.S. Route 6 (to the south), and Putnam Valley (to the north) (see Figures 3-2b to 3-2e).

South of the Project Site is U.S Route 6, beyond which is a Town-owned Par 3 golf course ("The Links at Valley Fields"), beyond which are single-family residential neighborhoods. The streets and residential lots in these neighborhoods feature manicured landscaping and lawns, and tree plantings (see Figure 3-2b [Photos 1 and 2] and 3-2c [Photo 3]). The houses are generally one- to two-stories tall and set on roughly ¹/₄- to ¹/₂- acre lots.

To the east and southeast of the Project Site (along Indian Hill Road and Old Jefferson Valley Road) is a mix of one- to three-story single-family homes, set on larger lots and are generally more widely spaced than the homes in nearby neighborhoods. Many of the properties are dense with tree cover and the structures are set back from the road (see **Figure 3-2e [Photo 7]**). To the east of the Project Site (between East Main Street and Jefferson Valley Road) are several townhouse communities, featuring buildings that are two- to three-stories in height and that are landscaped with flowers, bushes, and trees throughout (see Figure 3-2d [Photo 6]).

Southeast of the Project Site is a mix of commercial developments, including a DeCicco's grocery store, gas station, strip malls, small office buildings, a self-storage facility, and the Jefferson Valley Mall (see Figure 3-2c [Photo 4] and 3-2d [Photo 5] and 3-2e [Photo 8]). The Jefferson Valley Mall is a typical suburban shopping mall, with several anchor tenants (Macy's, 24-Hour Fitness, Dick's Sporting Goods) and is surrounded by a large surface parking lot.

B.3. VIEWS OF THE PROJECT SITE AND EXISTING BUILDINGS FROM THE SURROUNDING AREA

This section describes views of the Project Site and the existing buildings from publicly accessible vantage points as identified in the DEIS Scoping Document.

B.3.a. Taconic State Parkway, Traveling Northbound (Vantage Point 1)

The Taconic State Parkway (the "TSP") runs north/south and is located to the west of the Project Site, generally at a significantly lower elevation than the Project Site. The TSP is a divided highway with two- and three travel lanes in each direction. It is separated from the Project Site by an approximately 150-footwide wooded buffer, which provides a natural screen between the TSP and the Project Site.

Vantage Point 1 is located south of the Project Site, along the TSP (see Figure **3-3a**). Views from this Vantage Point would be experienced only by motorists traveling northbound at highway speed. From this location, given the intervening topography and distance between the Project Site and the TSP's northbound travel lanes, the existing buildings on the Project Site are not visible.

B.3.b. Taconic State Parkway, Traveling Southbound (Vantage Point 2)

Vantage Point 2 is located on the TSP, looking southeast into the middle of the Project Site. This view would be experienced by motorists traveling south. However, given the existing curve on the TSP, the view into the Project Site would not be prominent as drivers would naturally be looking away from the Project Site. From this Vantage Point, the existing northern office building is partially visible through the trees in the leaf-off condition, although the top of that office building is below the tree line (which is approximately 70 feet high) (see **Figure 3-3b**). During the leaf-on condition, the office building would likely not be visible.

B.3.c. U.S. Route 6 and East Main Street (Vantage Point 3)

The intersection of U.S. Route 6 and East Main Street is located approximately 500 feet southeast of the Project Site. Due to the intervening topography and dense tree cover on the intervening properties, as well as on the southern portion of the Project Site, there is limited visibility of the Project Site from this intersection and neither of the existing on-Site buildings are visible (see **Figure 3-3c**).

B.3.d. U.S. Route 6, Between Main Street & Lee Blvd. (Vantage Point 4)

This Vantage Point is located approximately 1,400 feet southeast of the Project Site. As is the case from Vantage Point 3, the intervening topography and dense tree cover on intervening properties and on the Project Site itself limits visibility of the Project Site from this Vantage Point. From this Vantage Point, looking

northwest toward the Project Site, neither of the existing buildings are visible, however, a portion of the Project Site driveway is visible (see Figure 3-3d).

B.3.e. U.S. Route 6, Between Taconic State Parkway and Barger Street (Vantage Point 5)

This Vantage Point is located approximately 1,300 feet southwest of the Project Site, west of the Taconic State Parkway. From this Vantage Point, existing tree cover on the northern side of U.S. Route 6, along the eastern side of the Taconic State Parkway in the vicinity of the Project Site, and on the Project Site itself, occludes the Project Site and the existing office buildings from view (see **Figure 3-3e**).

B.3.f. Service Road for Town Golf Course (Vantage Point 6)

This Vantage Point, along the service road adjacent to the northern edge of The Links at Valley Fields (par 3 golf course), which runs parallel to the southern (eastbound) travel lanes of U.S. Route 6, is approximately 300 feet from the entrance to the Project Site. From this Vantage Point the Project Site's existing buildings are not visible given the intervening roadway and the vegetation along the northern side of U.S. Route 6, the residential properties to the southeast of the Project Site's driveway and the manicured lawn sloping up to the existing buildings is visible from this location (see **Figure 3-3f**).

B.3.g. Donald J. Trump State Park (Indian Hill Section) (Vantage Point 7)

Donald J. Trump State Park is located east and northeast of the Project Site and is accessed by a small gravel parking area off of Indian Hill Road. The Project Site and the existing office buildings are not visible from the walking trails within the State Park owing to the thick vegetation throughout the Park and the intervening topography (see **Figure 3-3g**).

C. THE FUTURE WITHOUT THE PROPOSED PROJECT

In the future without the Proposed Project, the existing office campus and buildings would remain, and the Project Site would not be redeveloped. Accordingly, the visual and community character of the Project Site would not be anticipated to change. There are no known off-site developments proximate to the Project Site that would significantly change the character of the community surrounding the Project Site.

D. THE FUTURE WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT

This section analyzes potential impacts to the existing visual and community character as a result of the Proposed Project. This section also describes and visually demonstrates the changes to views into the Project Site from the vantage points discussed in Section B, above.

D.1. VISUAL AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER OF THE PROJECT SITE

D.1.a. Visual Character

As detailed in Chapter 1, "Project Description," the Proposed Project would transform the visual character of the Project Site from primarily a large surface parking area and two commercial office buildings, to a landscaped residential neighborhood consisting of

multiple buildings of varying typologies. The Proposed Project would develop the Project Site with 24 residential buildings (4 villas, 7 flats, 1 apartment building, and 12 townhouse buildings), with 250 dwelling units, a centrally located clubhouse, and 383 surface and enclosed parking spaces. The Proposed Project would include large areas of open space, including active and passive recreation areas. Recreational amenities are anticipated to include natural walking trails, tennis courts, a swimming pool, and pickleball courts. The 150-foot-wide vegetative buffer between the Taconic State Parkway and the Project Site would be preserved, maintaining the character of the Project Site as visually disconnected from the adjacent roadways and neighborhoods.

The proposed buildings have been developed with a transitional, yet local vernacular architectural design against a backdrop of rolling hills and natural landscape. The architectural design emphasizes large windows and outdoor spaces, and each unit in the multi-family buildings would have its own balcony.

The Applicant has developed a conceptual landscaping plan for the Proposed Project (see Figure 1-12a-f). The driveway and main roads throughout the Project Site would be lined with a variety of street trees, and at the main entrance to the Project Site ornamental plantings would be used (see Figure 1-12b). The area around the villas and apartment building would be landscaped with small trees, shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses, and plantings will enhance the building style and size while providing a sense of home (see Figure 1-12c). Landscaping around the flats and townhomes would incorporate ornamental shrubs and evergreens for multi-season screening, and plantings would match the architectural style and smaller scale of the buildings in these areas (see Figure 1-12d). The central open space and pond would be landscaped with large native shade trees, creating a park-like atmosphere (see Figure 1-12f).

The Applicant has also developed a conceptual lighting plan for the Proposed Project (see Figure 1-13). As in the existing condition, the Proposed Project would incorporate lighting along the Project Site's driveways, parking areas, and certain walking paths. Unlike the existing condition, all proposed fixtures would utilize cut-off luminaires, be Dark-Sky compliant, and the distribution patterns would minimize light spillover onto adjacent properties to the maximum extent practicable. In addition, all fixtures would utilize LED lighting to reduce energy usage and maintenance costs. The lighting design would be compliant with Chapter 200, "Outdoor Lighting," of the Town Code.

The exact fixtures that would be used for the Proposed Project have not been finalized; however, Figure 1-13b illustrates the types of fixtures that are being considered. The Project Site driveway would feature architecturally distinct lighting to strengthen the boulevard character of the driveway. The light would be pole mounted 16 feet above the ground and placed every 50 to 60 feet. Directly under the pole, the lighting level would be approximately 6.2-foot candles (fc); however, throughout the boulevard area the average lighting level at the ground surface would be shorter, 12 to 14 feet in height, and spaced every 50- to 55 feet. The zones would be controlled by a photocell that would be lit with 12-foot-tall pole lights spaced 25 to 50 feet. The maximum light level immediately under the fixture would be 4 fc, with an average light level of 0.4 to 0.75 fc. Pathways would be lit with bollards that are three to four feet tall and that produce an average light level of 0.5 fc.

D.1.b. Community Character

With respect to community character, the Proposed Project's residential use would be consistent with the residential use immediately west of the Project Site across the Taconic State Parkway (Trump Park Residences) as well as the residential and commercial uses to the south and east of the Project Site. Constructing a residential neighborhood on what is currently an office campus is consistent with the broader regional and national trend of redeveloping vacant commercial sites with residential uses. The Proposed Project would not interfere with the public's enjoyment of parks or other community assets in the Town, as the Proposed Project would be consistent with the existing community character. As discussed above, the Proposed Project would not be visible from Donald J. Trump State Park, and would have limited visibility from the Town-owned golf course.

D.2. VIEWS OF THE PROJECT SITE AND PROPOSED BUILDINGS FROM VANTAGE POINTS

This section describes the potential changes in views from the vantage points discussed in Section C, above, of the Project Site and proposed buildings as a result of the Proposed Project, and evaluates the potential visual impacts of the Proposed Project using the thresholds established by the NYSDEC.

To evaluate the potential visual impacts of the Proposed Project, a three-dimensional computer model of the Proposed Project was created to represent the massing and general architecture of the proposed buildings. This model was added to a three-dimensional topographical model of the Project Site and surrounding area that was developed using LiDAR data, provided by Westchester County, of surface and vegetated features. The model (topography and buildings) was then superimposed on photographs taken from each Vantage Point. The photo simulations do not show the proposed landscaping program.

The potential visual impacts of the Proposed Project were assessed based on the NYSDEC Program Policy DEP-00-2, "Assessing and Mitigating Visual and Aesthetic Impacts."¹ This policy defines visual and aesthetic effects, describes when a visual assessment is necessary and how to review a visual effect assessment, differentiates state and local concerns, and defines avoidance, mitigation and offset measures that eliminate, reduce or compensate for negative visual effects. The methodology and impact assessment criteria established by the policy are comprehensive and can be used by other state and local agencies to assess potential effects. The guidance focuses on assessing visual impacts to inventoried resources of aesthetic significance, such as state and national parks, and scenic areas of statewide significance. While the Proposed Project is not subject to NYSDEC review for visual impact, and DEP-00-2 does not replace local discretion for determination of significance under SEQRA, the policy does provide useful guidelines for assessing potential visual impacts of the Proposed Project.

According to DEP-00-2, certain variables can affect a viewer's perception of an object or project and the visibility of that object or project in the overall viewshed; these variables include the character of the landscape (existing vegetation, buildings, and topography) and size perspective (reduction of apparent size of objects as distance increases).

¹ https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/115147.html

Consequently, according to the NYSDEC policy, an "impact" would occur when there is a detrimental effect on an aesthetic resource that interferes with or reduces the public's enjoyment of a resource and when the mitigating effects of perspective, such as vegetation, distance, and atmospheric perspective or other designed mitigation, do not reduce the visibility of a project to insignificant levels. It is also noted that visibility of a project, even startling visibility, would not necessarily result in a visual impact.

D.2.a. Taconic State Parkway, Traveling Northbound (Vantage Point 1)

From this Vantage Point on the Taconic State Parkway (a New York State Scenic Byway), a portion of the roof of one of the Proposed Project buildings would likely be visible at or above the tree line (see **Figure 3-3a**). The remainder of the Proposed Project would not be visible, owing to intervening vegetation, distance, and topography. Given that only a small portion of the Proposed Project would be visible from this Vantage Point, that the portion of the building that would be visible, the roof, would be dark in color and blend in with the surrounding vegetation, and that this view is only available for a short distance to motorists traveling at highway speeds, the change in views from this Vantage Point as a result of the Proposed Project would not be a significant adverse impact.

D.2.b. Taconic State Parkway, Traveling Southbound (Vantage Point 2)

From this Vantage Point the western-most buildings of the Proposed Project would be visible through the 150-foot-wide vegetated buffer in the leaf-off condition (see **Figure 3-3b**). During the leaf-on condition, visibility of the proposed buildings would likely be obscured. This is a similar condition to the existing condition, where one of the existing office buildings is visible through the vegetation in the leaf-off condition.

In addition to the visual simulations, the Applicant prepared line-of-sight sectional diagrams that examine the potential for visibility of the Proposed Project from the Taconic State Parkway (see **Figure 3-4a through 3-4g**). As shown in those figures, the intervening wooded buffer between the Taconic State Parkway and the Proposed Project, as well as the change in grade, significantly minimizes the potential visibility of the proposed buildings from the TSP. As shown, the proposed buildings would be well below the tree line.

Therefore, although portions of the Proposed Project would be visible from this Vantage Point, it would not be anticipated to significantly change or impact the views from passing drivers (especially at highway speeds). The Proposed Project would therefore not have a significant adverse impact from this Vantage Point.

D.2.c. U.S. Route 6 and East Main Street (Vantage Point 3)

The intersection of U.S. Route 6 and East Main Street is located southeast of the Project Site, at a lower elevation than the Project Site. Given the intervening topography and dense tree cover between this Vantage Point and the Project Site, there would be limited visibility of the Proposed Project from this intersection (see **Figure 3-3c**). Specifically, in the leaf-off condition, a portion of some of the southernmost building may be visible through the trees, but the tops of the proposed buildings would remain below the tree line from this Vantage Point. In the leaf-on condition, the buildings would not be visible. Therefore, as the Proposed Project would not be anticipated to interfere with the views from this

publicly accessible Vantage Point, the Proposed Project would therefore not have a significant adverse impact from this Vantage Point.

D.2.d. U.S. Route 6, Between Main Street and Lee Boulevard (Vantage Point 4)

This Vantage Point is located southeast of the Project Site, at a greater distance than Vantage Point 3, and is also at a lower elevation than that of the Project Site. Given the intervening topography and the tree cover on residential properties and the Project Site itself, there would be limited, if any, visibility of the proposed buildings from this Vantage Point in the leaf-off condition (see **Figure 3-3d**). Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact from this Vantage Point.

D.2.e. U.S. Route 6, Between Taconic State Parkway and Barger Street (Vantage Point 5)

From this Vantage Point, located southwest of the Project Site and the Taconic State Parkway, existing tree cover on the northern side of U.S. Route 6, along the eastern side of the Taconic State Parkway, and on the Project Site itself, would almost entirely occlude visibility of the proposed buildings (see **Figure 3-3e**). The top of the proposed buildings would remain below the tree line and any visibility from this location would occur only in leaf-off condition, through dense vegetation. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact from this Vantage Point.

D.2.f. Service Road for Town Golf Course (Vantage Point 6)

Portions of the southernmost proposed buildings may be visible through intervening vegetation, in the leaf-off condition only, from this Vantage Point (see **Figure 3-3f**). The top of the proposed buildings would remain below the tree line as viewed from this Vantage Point. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact from this Vantage Point.

D.2.g. Donald J. Trump State Park (Indian Hill Section) (Vantage Point 7)

Donald J. Trump State Park is located to the east and northeast of the Project Site. As shown in **Figure 3-3g**, from trails within the State Park, the Proposed Project would not be visible, owing to the thick vegetation throughout the State Park, and the intervening distance and topography. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact from this Vantage Point.

E. MITIGATION

The Proposed Project would replace a vacant commercial office campus with a residential community. As such, the Proposed Project would result in a change to the visual character of the Project Site. To mitigate the potential impacts of this change, the Proposed Project has been designed to be consistent with surrounding land uses and minimize adverse impacts to views of the Project Site from nearby neighborhoods and public vantage points. In addition, the materials and color scheme of the proposed buildings would blend the Proposed Project into its surroundings. The Proposed Project would provide additional landscaping and tree coverage within the Project Site and new lighting and other site features have been designed to avoid impacts to neighboring properties. Changes in the visibility of the Project Site as a result of the Proposed Project would not be significant, owing to the perceived scale of the proposed buildings,

existing and proposed tree coverage and proposed landscaping (which will contribute to screening and buffering from neighboring areas), and the context into which the proposed buildings would be sited. Therefore, no additional mitigation measures are required.



01

Photograph View Direction and Reference Number

Key to Photographs Figure 3-1a



Entrance and driveway to Project Site



South office building 2



Looking west from Project Site, Trump Park Residences, located on west side of the Taconic State Parkway



Parking lot with landscaped medians 4



Walking path from south office building to north office building 5



View from courtyard between office buildings looking toward south office building 6



View towards north office building from within courtyard 7



North office building and associated landscaping and sidewalks 8



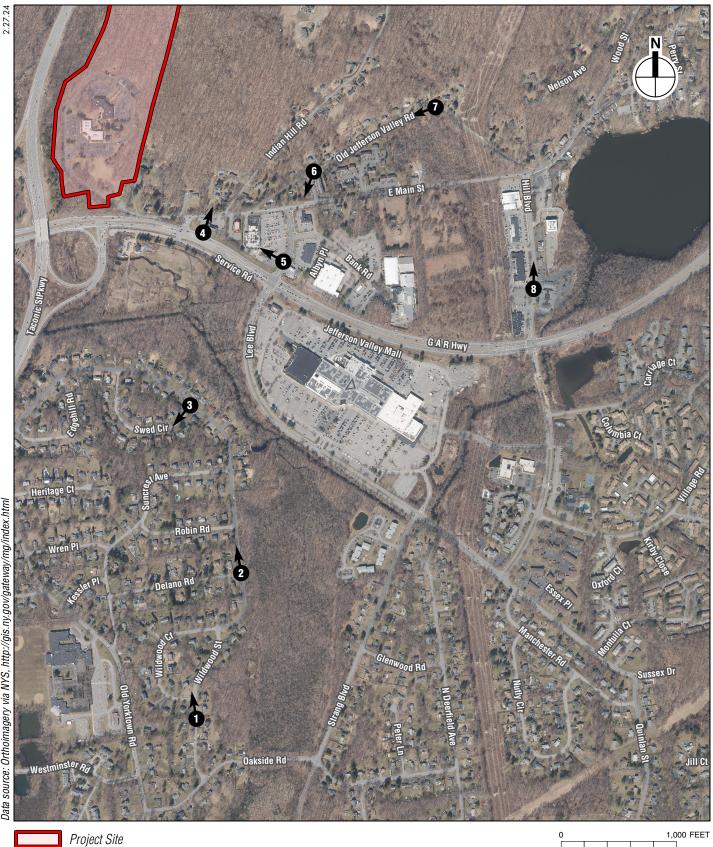
Neighboring property at 764-768 East Main Street 9



View from Project Site south towards Town golf course 10



View from Project Site southeast towards Taconic State Parkway 11



07

Photograph View Direction and Reference Number



Residential neighborhood south of Project Site

1



Residential neighborhood south of Project Site 2



Nearby residential street 3



Commercial building at intersection of East Main Street and U.S. Route 6 4



Commercial retail shopping center southeast of Project Site on Lee Boulevard 5



Multifamily housing development east of Project Site 6

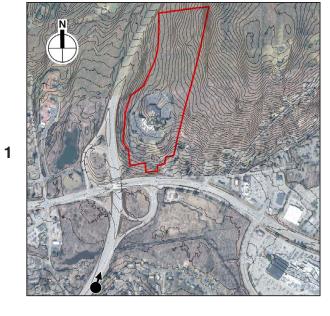


Residential neighborhood east of Project Site 7



Commercial development southeast of Project Site on Hill Boulevard 8





View Location 1





Proposed Simulation Building Height Outline 1a

Existing Condition

Simulation 1b

Photo Simulations - View Location 1 Figure 3-3a





View Location 2



Proposed Simulation Building Height Outline 2a



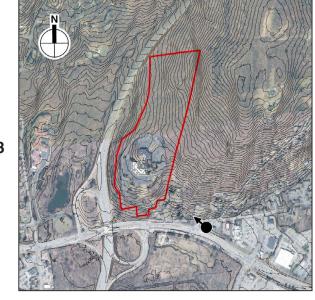
Existing Condition



Simulation 2b

Photo Simulations - View Location 2 Figure 3-3b





View Location 3



Proposed Simulation Building Height Outline 3a

2.27.24

Existing Condition



Simulation 3b

Photo Simulations - View Location 3 Figure 3-3c



View Location 4

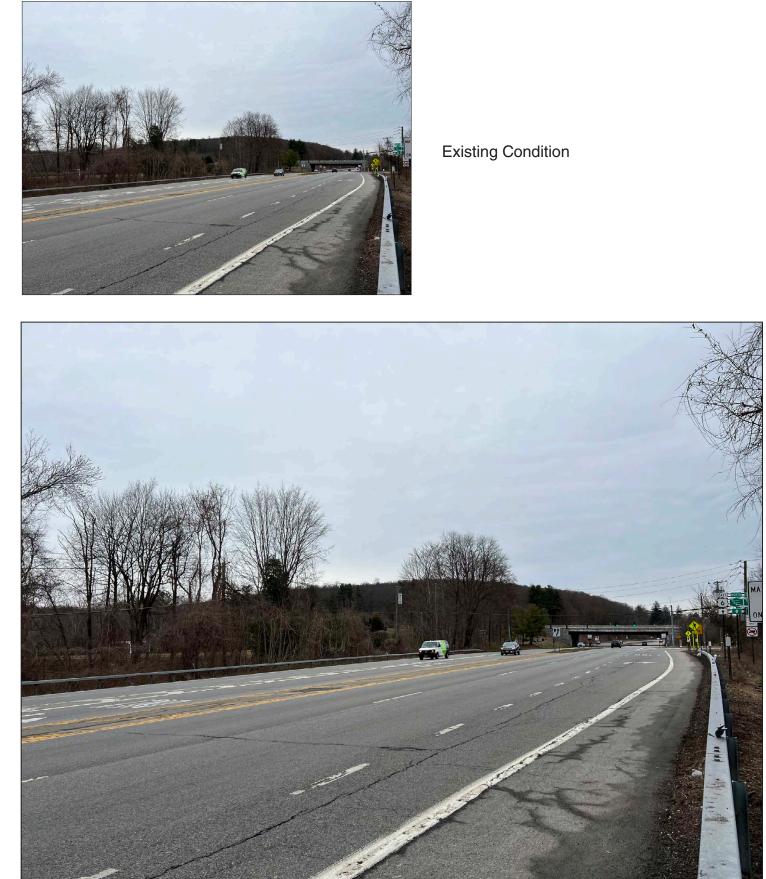




Proposed Simulation Building Height Outline 4a

Simulation 4b

Photo Simulations - View Location 4 Figure 3-3d





View Location 5

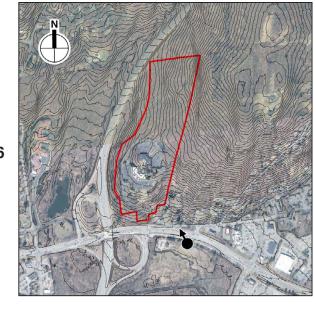


Proposed Simulation Building Height Outline 5a

Simulation 5b

Photo Simulations - View Location 5 Figure 3-3e





View Location 6





Proposed Simulation Building Height Outline 6a

Existing Condition

Simulation 6b

Photo Simulations - View Location 6 Figure 3-3f





View Location 7





Proposed Simulation Building Height Outline 7a

Existing Condition

Simulation 7b

Photo Simulations - View Location 7 Figure 3-3g

