

## B. Visual Resources

### 1. Existing Conditions

#### *Visual Character On-Site*

The Project site is comprised of vacant dilapidated buildings, deteriorating parking lots, former agricultural uses, overgrown campus grounds, and open space areas.

The central portion of the site is fairly level on both sides of Route 22 and was extensively disturbed during the development and operation of the HVPC. The western portion of the site features more of a rolling terrain consisting of shrub, meadow, and landscaped golf course areas. Much of this portion of the site has been disturbed by farming operations and the creation of the golf course. Exceptions to this pattern include the Great Swamp, a wooded wetland, and a few small pockets of forested area. The visual character of the eastern portion of the site beyond the existing HVPC buildings is influenced by the forested hillside rising behind the Division for Youth buildings and Sullivan Tower.

There are currently 81 principal and accessory buildings associated with the former HVPC operations located within the Project site. The bulk of the buildings located within the core area of the Project site are large institutional buildings of approximately four stories, with some 2½ story residences located towards the site's periphery. Sullivan Tower, the largest of the buildings, stands 10 stories and is located towards the base of the hillside on the east side. The H-buildings and those used by the New York State Division for Youth detention center are also large structures, ranging up to approximately 143,000 square feet in size.

The buildings exhibit a range of architectural styles. Most of the structures, particularly the institutional buildings, date to from the 1920's and 1930's. The larger institutional buildings were typically built in a Romanesque Revival architectural style, while the smaller homes exhibit a variety of styles, including Colonial Revival and Greek Revival. However, over the fifteen years of abandonment, the campus buildings have been severely impacted by the elements and vandalism. The parking lots have also deteriorated and are partially overgrown. Similarly, much of the landscaping has grown out of control and contributes to an unkempt appearance. These parking lots and landscaping are especially visible from Route 22, and contribute to the site's unattractive presence. As a result, the core of the project site presents a negative visual image, and has a detrimental impact on the visual character of the Route 22 corridor and the surrounding properties.

#### *Visual Character of Surrounding Area*

As described earlier, the surrounding area generally features a mixed pattern of development, including residential, retail, heavy commercial and industrial uses, interspersed with vacant tracts and dedicated open space lands. Generally, the surrounding area has a rural/suburban visual character, exhibiting traits of a sprawling pattern of development spreading linearly along the road frontages throughout the area. The more rural aspect of the area's visual character becomes more pronounced as one moves further from the Route 22 corridor.

### Residential

The architectural style of the residential uses in the surrounding area varies, but generally contributes to a rural/suburban residential visual environment. The Wingdale hamlet includes homes ranging from late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century construction, while residences to the south of the Project site are primarily one-story and two-story single-family homes built in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on lots ranging from one to five acres. Housing to the west of the Project site varies in age and styles range from farmhouse to ranch style homes. The one-story Pleasant Ridge Apartments are readily visible from Route 22 north of the site. Mobile homes are also prevalent throughout the surrounding area, and the Wingdale Village Park, as well as smaller parks fronting onto Route 22, further influences the visual character of the area. Overall, the variation in styles and type of units contributes to a sense of the area as a settled, rural/suburban community (see Exhibit III.B-1).

### Commercial

The visual aspects of the commercial uses in the area surrounding the Project site also vary, but generally contribute to a highway commercial character along Route 22. A strip mall, diner and deli are located north of the Project site. The diner has a classic 1950's metallic look, while the delicatessen is located in a structure with the appearance of a single-family home or an accessory structure. To the south of the Project site, there are a number of commercial uses such as used car dealership, a beverage center, a restaurant, and a delicatessen, among others. Some of the buildings have a converted residential appearance; while others are typical strip automobile-oriented commercial buildings with parking in the front (see Exhibit III.B-2). The corridor also includes intense and unsightly uses, such as an auto scrapyard to the south of the site, and the frontage generally lacks effective screening or landscaping.

### Industrial, Manufacturing and Storage

The industrial and manufacturing uses along Route 22 are highly visible and detract from the community image. For example, the west side of Route 22 between the intersections of Wheeler Road and Pleasant Ridge Road includes a tractor trailer storage yard, which is unscreened from the road and has extended into the Great Swamp. A large self-storage facility is also located to the south of the site and readily visible from the road. The other mining and industrial sites within proximity to the site are located off of the Route 22 corridor and do not have as great an influence on the overall community image (see Exhibit III.B-3).

### The Route 22 Corridor

The Route 22 corridor is characterized largely by automobile-oriented uses with parking in the front yard. Most lack front yard landscaping or separation between the roadway and parking. All buildings in this corridor (outside of the Project site) are either one or two stories in height (see Exhibit III.B-4).

The intersection of Route 22 and Pleasant Ridge Road is one of Dover's main intersections and features the Dover Veterans Memorial Library at the northwest corner, the Wingdale Elementary School at the northeast corner, a diner at the southeast corner,

and a small apartment complex at the southwest corner. The school is located on top of a hill with an extensive lawn that fronts at the intersection. The diner is surrounded by parking. Further north the corridor includes a strip mall, a used car sales lot, a soil extraction site, vacant land and single-family uses (see Exhibit III.B-5).

The corridor does not have a consistent or coherent style, with uses having a variety of appearances. Building styles range from typical strip commercial plazas, to single use buildings to converted residential structures, but overall contribute to a highway commercial character.

## 2. Potential Impacts

### *Project Visual Character*

While the visual character expressed by the project's traditional neighborhood design would differ from the existing suburban/rural pattern of development in the area, it would be visually compatible in terms of scale. The project would introduce a pattern of development that reinforces the concept of "centers", and respects neighboring properties and land uses with perimeter buffers. In addition, the site's historic presence and image would remain, maintained by the restoration and reuse of the majority of the existing HVPC buildings located along Route 22, including the Power Plant and Storehouse along the west side and the two I-buildings, Administration Building and the U-shaped building along the east side of the corridor.

Landscaping and open space buffers would be present throughout the entire perimeter of the site with buffer sizes ranging from approximately 50 feet to approximately 1,000 feet in some of the southern and eastern portions of the proposed development. In a few locations on the northwestern portion along Pleasant Ridge Road and the western portion along Hoags Corners Road, new single family homes would blend with existing single-family homes. There the residential lot sizes are larger in order to be consistent with the neighboring pattern of development. The project would include large contiguous areas throughout the interior of the site preserved as open space. The clustering of the neighborhoods within a network of large open spaces would reflect a traditional settlement pattern. As a result, the Project would be expected to be visually compatible with surrounding land uses and appropriate for the landscape.

The visual character of the neighborhoods and the individual buildings would be defined and maintained through the use of design guidelines. The Knolls of Dover Design Guidelines, would provide a host of development standards for the project, including locations for land uses, street layout and design, lot and building dimensional standards, and specific architectural standards. The proposed guidelines would employ the transect system, which divides the site into zones with common characteristics, with the more dense mixed-use core in proximity to the train station, less dense neighborhoods beyond the center, and rural hamlets and lots located on the periphery as a transition to the surrounding community. The design standards would vary by location. Design components such as block configuration, parking and alley treatments, open space and buffers, stormwater management, curbs,

streetscapes, and building materials and colors would all be subject to the proposed design guidelines.

The maximum building height for new residential construction would be three stories, with most of the residential building types having a height of two stories. This scale is consistent with traditional neighborhood design and typical residential development in the Town. The accompanying Exhibits III.B-6 through III.B-13 present a series of representative examples of the unit-types proposed for the project.

In the Town Center, building heights may be somewhat higher (2 to 3 stories) in accordance with its role as the downtown and heart of the community. The new Wheeler Road “Main Street” would be flanked by mixed-use buildings containing residential and office space above ground floor retail, and would typically be of two to three stories in height (see Exhibits III.B-14 through III.B-16). In addition, a “Build-to-Line” would be established in the Town Center in order to maintain a strong streetwall and define the public realm. The design guidelines would also stipulate the use of special architectural features in key locations in the Town Center in order to further highlight its role as the downtown and maintain visual quality and interest. These types of items include tower elements, balconies, screening walls and façade treatments.

Uses in the Town Center would be designed to provide activity at the street level, with restaurants, shops and sidewalk cafes. Coordinated street furniture would include benches, ornamental light fixtures and trash receptacles. Street trees would be provided at regular 40’ intervals.

The proposed architectural design treatment would take its inspiration from the styles of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century styles found in the neighboring communities, with residences including a stoop or porch element. Depending on location in the transect, a variety of architectural styles would be provided, ranging from Folk, Colonial, Romantic, Victorian and Eclectic. Modern, Neo-Eclectic, and Contemporary Folk styles would not be permitted.

The design guidelines also include standards for signage and lighting. Street lighting would be comprised of ornamental poles and fixtures, generally 12-14’ tall, with 20’ tall poles potentially used at major intersections. In the Town Center, retail signage would be expected. The design guidelines include size limitations and restrictions on flashing or internally illuminated box signs. Signs would also be expected to use design, materials and colors that complement the building style and use.

The proposed Project would result in the comprehensive redevelopment of a degraded site, by incorporating transit-oriented development and traditional neighborhood design principles to create a mixed-use community centered on a train station. The proposed Project would create a positive visual impact by converting an abandoned and deteriorating facility that exerts a blighting influence on the community, into a new Town Center that provides expanded retail and office space, increases recreational opportunities and increases housing choices and diversity. The project also includes a comprehensive set of design guidelines to

ensure that the visual character of the project is consistent with traditional neighborhood design principles and compatible with the site's context.

*Visibility from Identified Areas Surrounding the Site*

In addition to discussion of the Project's design concept and appearance, the DEIS scope also requires an assessment of the Project site's visibility from public scenic locations within a two-mile radius of the site, including the Appalachian Trail right-of-way along the southeast side of the site boundary, Lakes Ellis, Schaghticoke Mountain, Hammersly Ridge, and any Nature Conservancy pathways.

The following Exhibits III.B-17 through III.B-21 were utilized as a first step for determining potential project visibility within the two-mile radius of the site, as required by the DEIS scope. The analysis was prepared utilizing Global Mapper v.8.01 software and using National Elevation data from the USGS. The red shading identifies the areas of potential visibility based on topographic data only. (Assumes in effect a "bald" landscape, and does not account for screening provided by existing vegetation or structures.) This baseline was used in conjunction with the identified scenic resources in the scope to identify whether any recreation spaces or other designated scenic resources would potentially have visibility of the site based on the area's topography. The analysis utilized four control points: one in the residential neighborhood slated to occupy the site of the existing Sullivan Tower hospital building; one in the residential neighborhood on the lower slopes of the hill behind the existing campus; one in the residential neighborhood on the west side of the property by the Swamp River; and one in the neighborhood on the former Dykeman parcel.

Although the Project site is large, the surrounding topography limits its potential visibility to a relatively confined area, with West Mountain and the on-site hillside on the east side and East Mountain providing significant barriers, particularly to the east and west. The Hammersly Ridge provides further screening of areas to the east and south.

An inventory of potentially sensitive places, as defined in the NYSDEC guidelines, within the identified area of potential visibility was then undertaken. Aesthetic resources of significance are identified as:

- Properties on or eligible for inclusion in the National or State Register of Historic Places;
- State Parks;
- Urban Cultural Parks;
- State Forest Preserve;
- National Wildlife Refuges;
- National Natural Landmarks;
- National Park System, Recreation Areas, Seashores, Forests;
- Rivers designated as National or State Wild, Scenic or Recreational;
- A site, area, lake, reservoir or highway designated or eligible for designation as scenic;
- Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance;
- A State or federally designated trail;

- Adirondack Park Scenic Vistas;
- State Nature and Historic Preserve Areas;
- Palisades Park;
- Bond Act Properties purchased under Exceptional Scenic Beauty or Open Space category.

Generally, few of these types of resources, other than those already identified in the scope, exist within a two-mile radius of the site (e.g., there are no State Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Natural Landmarks, etc.) The only property on the National or State Register of Historic Places in the Town is the Tabor-Wing House, which is located in Dover Plains and outside of the radius. Other sites identified as potentially eligible are generally located around Dover Furnace or to the north, and as a result lie outside of the study radius.

West Mountain State Forest is located just on the fringe of this distance. This forest is managed as a multiple use area and does not have formal trails.

Of those identified resources lying within the area of potential visibility, field visits were undertaken to determine whether the project site is in fact visible. As indicated below, the project site does not have visibility from Lake Ellis, the Schaghticoke Mountain lookout, or the adjacent Appalachian Trail right-of-way. Potential visibility from the Hammersly Ridge area (Pawling Nature Preserve) is limited to only one vantage point (an opening in the canopy on the orange trail) which provides view of a limited portion of the west side (see Photo Exhibit III.B-22)

The Nature Conservancy manages several preserves in Dutchess County, including one, the Pawling Nature Reserve, which is located within two miles of the site. The preserve encompasses much of the Hammersly Ridge to the south of the site and has a trail network, including a portion of the Appalachian Trail. However, the hiking trails primarily offer internal views of the reserve. Potential visibility from the Reserve is limited to only one vantage point (an opening in the canopy on the orange trail), which provides a view of a limited portion of the west side of the project site (see Photo Exhibit III.B-22). In addition to the on-site Manor House (visible as tan structure in middle of frame), the viewshed from this point also includes Route 22 commercial development including a relatively large self storage facility.

The Appalachian Trail right-of-way is adjacent to the southeastern side of the project site. One hundred acres of the former HVPC property were transferred to the NYS DEC prior to the sale of the HVPC property to increase the buffer for the Appalachian Trail and the trail has since been moved further south, away from the project's boundary. Due to the area's topography, vegetation, and the increased width of the federal easement surrounding the trail, which ranges between approximately 450 and 1,100 feet, the Trail does not provide views into the site (see Viewshed Exhibit III.B-23).

Lake Ellis lies to the north of the project site and was identified as a potential scenic receptor location in the scope. This location was also visited to confirm whether the project site was

visible. As seen in Photo Exhibit III.B-24, due to the topography and vegetation, views of the site are not possible from this location.

Schaghticoke Mountain is located to the northeast of the project site and contains a portion of the Appalachian Trail. The portion of the trail on the southern end of the mountain was hiked to confirm whether views to the site were possible. While excellent views are available from an area near the southern end of the mountain, the project site is not visible. The open views are oriented primarily towards the south and towards Connecticut in the east (see photo Exhibit III.B-25, with development along Route 7 visible in the distance). In the view to the south, Tenmile Hill and Gardiner Hill and portions of the valley floor along the Tenmile River are visible. Leather Hill is also discernible further in the background.

Based on this inventory, the project would not have significant visual impacts on identified scenic resources. Project visibility would be primarily confined to the areas directly adjacent to or located within the project site. In order to provide for an assessment of the character of the proposed project, a series of renderings and simulations have been prepared for several vantage points, including the Wingdale hamlet area, Wheeler Road, the Metro-North station area, and Hutchinson Avenue and are presented in Exhibits III.B-14 through III.B-16 and Exhibits III.B-26 through III.B-28.

### 3. Mitigation Measures

As described previously, the creation of a new mixed-use community development with compact clustered neighborhoods that provide substantial commercial activity and preserve valuable open space on-site, would be anticipated to have a positive impact on the visual character of the Project site and the surrounding area. The Proposed Action includes the demolition and rehabilitation of deteriorated structures, eliminating a visually unappealing and blighting influence. The project also includes a comprehensive set of Design Guidelines to ensure that the project's visual character reflects traditional neighborhood design.

More dense development would occur in the core of the site, while rural scale lots and residences would be located on the periphery to provide for a suitable transition to neighboring uses. The Project would also feature extensive landscaping and open space buffers around the perimeter of the Project site, as well as the preservation of large and contiguous open space areas in the interior of the site. The NYSDEC's Visual policy document identifies possible mitigation strategies to consider including screening, relocation, camouflage, low profile, downsizing, alternate technologies, non-specular materials, and lighting requirements that do not exceed the functional needs of the project. By maintaining natural buffer areas, visibility of the project is effectively screened from many locations. The project also intends to utilize pedestrian scale lighting and employ cut-off luminaires to minimize light trespass and glare. The project would also remove the highest and most visible building (Sullivan Tower) in accordance with the downsizing strategy. The remaining NYSEC policy strategies are generally more applicable for industrial or infrastructure projects (e.g., cell towers, power plants) and are not appropriate for use with this type of project. In addition, visibility towards the project site from identified significant scenic resources is limited. As a result, no significant adverse impacts on visual resources are anticipated, and no further mitigation is required.