

**BEFORE THE FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION  
APPLICATION FOR LICENSE FOR MAJOR PROJECT –  
EXISTING DAM**

**Cannonsville Hydroelectric Project**

**FERC Project No. 13287**



**VOLUME 8**

**Appendix E-6: Impact of Construction-Related Activities and New Construction on  
Aesthetics**



**February 2012**

**City of New York  
West of Hudson Hydroelectric Project**

**Project No. 13287**

**Aesthetics Report**

**Impact of Construction-Related Activities and New  
Construction on Aesthetics**

*Cannonsville, Pepacton, and Neversink Developments*



**June 2011**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of New York (“City”), acting through the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”) has filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) a Notice of Intent to develop hydroelectric generation at the West of Hudson Hydroelectric Project (“Project”). As part of the licensing process for the Project, the DEP conducted a study to evaluate the impact of construction-related activities and permanent structures on aesthetics at the Cannonsville, Pepacton, and Neversink Reservoirs.

A field survey was conducted in June 2010 to evaluate the aesthetic impact of construction activities and construction of permanent structures on the character of the area. In addition, public viewsheds were identified and the views from those locations evaluated to determine the visual impacts, if any, of the Project.

At the Cannonsville development, the new powerhouse will be slightly larger than the adjacent existing low-level outlet works, but it will be constructed in a manner that will cause it to be visually compatible with the existing structure. The new overhead power lines will be constructed along the same path as the existing power lines, thereby minimizing their impact. The new substation will be constructed adjacent to existing structures, which will minimize its aesthetic impact. Although some trees will be removed for the substation and interconnection facilities, sufficient screening around the structures and facilities will remain, thereby minimally disrupting the character of the area. The construction activities will be concentrated in a few locations. While such activities may impact the character of the area, any such impacts will be temporary and should not be considered significant.

Public viewing of the low-level outlet works, construction sites, and staging areas at the Cannonsville development (generally, “Project areas”) is possible only from State Route 10 and the Cannonsville Reservoir. Parking and stopping areas along State Route 10 offer obstructed views of the Project areas, and there is no public location at which the entirety of the Project areas may be seen. Access to Cannonsville Dam is controlled by a DEP gate adjacent to State Route 10, and none of the Project areas are accessible by, or open to, the public. Although the Cannonsville Reservoir is open to the public, subject to certain requirements set forth in the DEP’s regulations, the elevation of the earthen dam prevents boaters from seeing any of the Project areas. For the foregoing reasons, neither the construction of the Project, nor the presence of the new structure and appurtenances, will have any material adverse impact on aesthetics or the general character of the area.

At the Pepacton development, the turbine and generator set will be located within the existing release water chamber, so they will not affect aesthetics or the character of the area. The appurtenances to be constructed and the construction activities will be limited in scope and scale. They will be located adjacent to the release water chamber with a short run (approximately 80 feet) of subsurface electrical lines to tie into an existing distribution pole. The appurtenances will be visible from some parts of the Pepacton Reservoir, but, to a large extent, they will be screened by the release water chamber. They will be barely visible from State Route 30 due to their small size and the distance between their location and the road. They will not be visible from the Village of Downsville due to their size and the screening provided by the surrounding natural vegetation. The temporary staging area will be visible from both the reservoir and roadway, but the visual impact of the construction activities is expected to be minimal. For the foregoing reasons, neither the construction of the Project, nor the presence of the new facilities, will have any material adverse impact on aesthetics or the general character of the area.

At the Neversink development, as at the Pepacton development, the turbine and generator set will be located within the existing structure. Also, the appurtenances to be constructed and the construction

activities will be limited in scope and scale. They will be located near the intake structure, with the electrical lines between the structure and the substation, and between the substation and New York State Electric & Gas Corporation's ("NYSEG") distribution system being located underground in existing conduits. The appurtenances will be visible from certain vantage points along State Route 55 and the lands surrounding the reservoir, but barely so because of their small size and the distances between them and the identified viewsheds. The appurtenances will be almost entirely screened from the reservoir by the existing structure. Further, the location of the appurtenances adjacent to the forested area will further shield their appearance. While the temporary staging area will be more visible due to its location next to the intake structure, the limited scale of the construction activities will minimize the visual impacts of the construction activities. For the foregoing reasons, neither the construction of the Project, nor the presence of the new facilities, will have any material adverse impact on aesthetics or the general character of the area.

At all three developments, the staging areas and new structures and appurtenances will be located predominantly in areas that are paved or mowed lawns, and therefore have little to no aesthetic significance. Upon completion of construction, all staging areas will be restored to their previous conditions, thereby eliminating all construction-related impacts. As a result, neither the Project nor its associated construction activities will change the character of the area or cause any measureable impact to these sites over either the short- or long-term.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City, acting through DEP, has filed with the FERC a Notice of Intent to develop the Project, FERC Project No. 13287. The four sites are owned by the City and operated by the DEP as part of the City's water supply system. The DEP seeks to develop hydroelectric facilities at those sites while simultaneously maintaining its primary water supply function and adhering to the statutory and regulatory requirements governing its water supply operations, conservation releases, directed releases, water quality standards, and other related activities.

In accordance with the Preliminary Permit issued to the City by the FERC, the DEP is evaluating the technical and economic merit and feasibility for each proposed hydroelectric development. Based on the feasibility analysis completed to date, the DEP has suspended the completion of environmental studies at the Schoharie development while it continues to evaluate the economic feasibility of any hydroelectric facility at that site. The DEP will proceed with appropriate studies for that development in the event such an alternative is identified. Accordingly, this study is limited to the following three proposed developments:

<b>Development</b>	<b>Dam</b>	<b>River</b>
Cannonsville	Cannonsville Dam	West Branch Delaware River
Pepacton	Downsville Dam	East Branch Delaware River
Neversink	Neversink Dam	Neversink River

During the study plan development process, the DEP proposed to conduct a study to evaluate the impact of construction-related activities and permanent structures and facilities at the Cannonsville, Pepacton, and Neversink developments on aesthetics and the general character of the three areas.

The goals of this study, as outlined in the study plan, are to determine the potential impacts of construction-related activities and new structures on the aesthetics and general character of the Project areas. The objectives of this report are to:

- Document the existing visual character of the Project areas.
- Evaluate how newly constructed features and construction-related activities will impact the short-term and long-term aesthetics of the Project areas.
- Identify publicly accessible viewsheds and create photo renderings indicating the effect of new structures on the vistas.
- Discuss the need for, and potential types of, mitigation measures to address any short-term or long-term material adverse impacts caused by the Project.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES**

This section summarizes the proposed construction-related activities and locations of new permanent structures and facilities based on the current designs for the Project. These designs, and the corresponding structure locations and analysis of potential impacts on aesthetics and the character of the areas, are subject to change as the DEP's proposal is refined and the licensing process advances.

### **2.1 Cannonsville Development**

The Cannonsville development includes the construction of a separate powerhouse adjacent to the existing low-level outlet works. The existing penstock would be extended into the powerhouse, with the turbine discharges flowing through steel draft tubes into concrete chambers beneath the powerhouse floor. Water from these chambers will be discharged into a widened common tailrace channel and into the West Branch of the Delaware River. The powerhouse will be longer and slightly taller than the existing low-level outlet works. The approximate powerhouse dimensions are 168 feet long, 54 feet high and 52 feet high. The outside walls of the powerhouse will be constructed in a manner that creates the same granite look as the existing release works building.

[Figure 2.1-1](#) presents an overview of the proposed Cannonsville development, showing the location of the powerhouse, tailrace, the spoils area where excavated material from the powerhouse and tailrace construction will be disposed, and the temporary staging areas for equipment and material storage during construction. Additional work involves relocating the sewer pump station and leach field, installing a temporary cofferdam in the river, installing a temporary siphon over the spillway to maintain conservation flows during the tie-in to the existing conduit, constructing a generator lead from the powerhouse to an indoor switchgear, and installing the interconnection facilities from the substation to NYSEG's transmission system. The route for the generator lead is not yet finalized, but it is likely to run underground from the powerhouse indoor switchgear to a pole, then overhead approximately 1200 feet to the substation (approximately 43 feet wide by 115 feet long). There are existing poles in this area which will be replaced with 50-foot poles, of which approximately 10 feet will be below ground. The interconnection facilities between the new substation and the transmission line, approximately 460 feet, will consist of new overhead poles approximately 40 feet above ground. Access to the new structure and appurtenances will be from existing roadways at the site.

### **2.2 Pepacton Development**

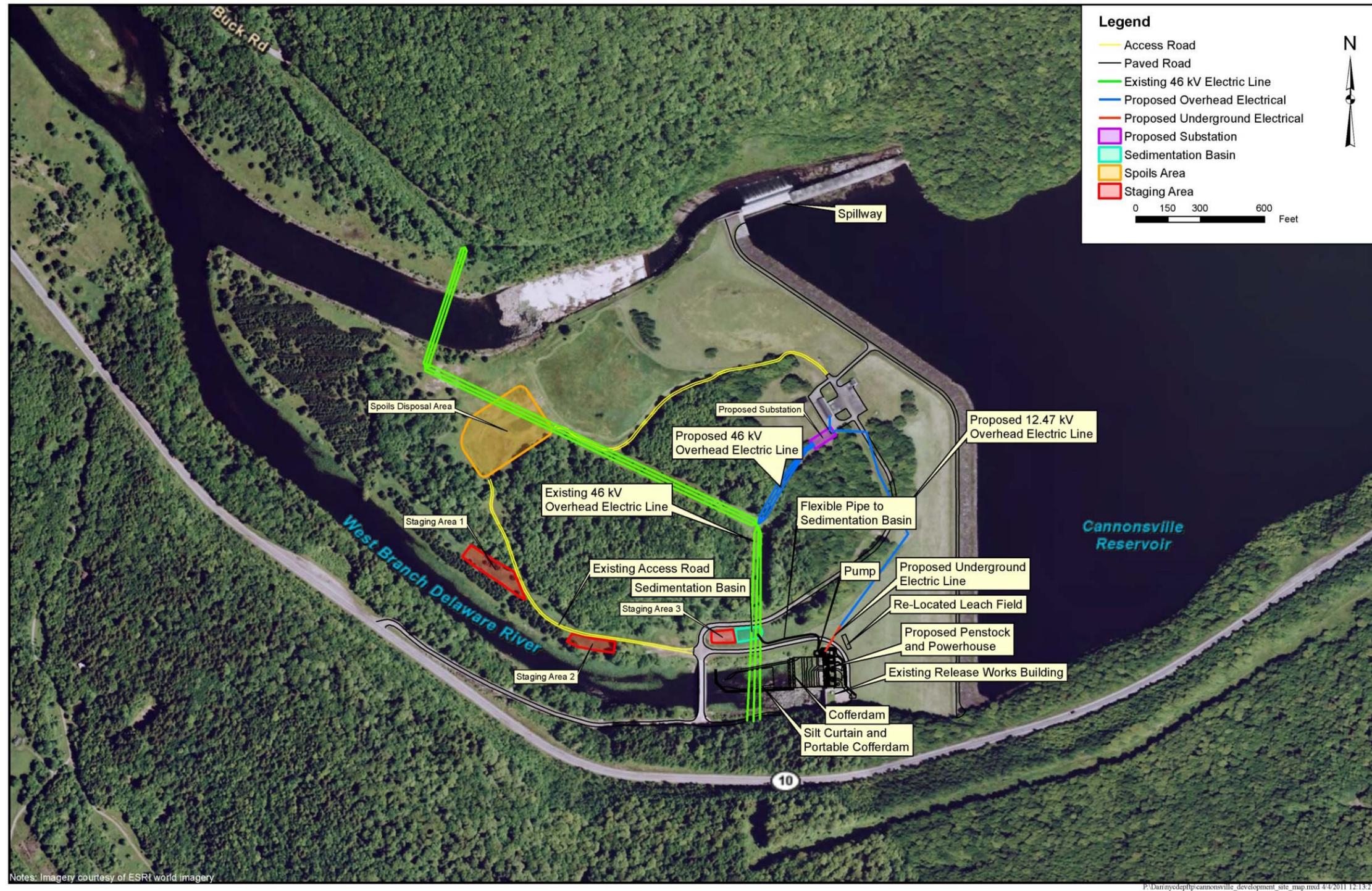
The Pepacton development consists of installing a turbine in one of the two pipe and valve assemblies in the existing release water chamber. [Figure 2.2-2](#) is the site plan showing the release water chamber, the proposed location of the associated electrical equipment (which will occupy an area approximately 9 feet wide by 12 feet long and include a small building), construction staging area, and interconnection with the NYSEG distribution system. Access to the electrical equipment will be from the existing roadway leading to the release water chamber and spillway crest. The interconnection lines connecting the facility to NYSEG's distribution system will be approximately 80 feet long and will be buried, if practical.

### **2.3 Neversink Development**

The Neversink development consists of installing a turbine in one of the two pipe and valve assemblies in the valve chamber of the existing intake structure. [Figure 2.3-1](#) presents an overview of the proposed construction area showing the staging area, the location of the associated electrical equipment (which will occupy an area approximately 8 feet wide by 20 feet long and include a small building), and the interconnection with the NYSEG distribution system. Access to the electrical equipment will be from the

existing parking area adjacent to the intake chamber. Separate from the Project, the DEP is installing three three-inch conduits in an underground duct bank from State Route 55 to the intake chamber. One of those conduits will be used for the interconnection of the facility with NYSEG's distribution system.

Figure 2.1-1: Cannonsville Development Study Area



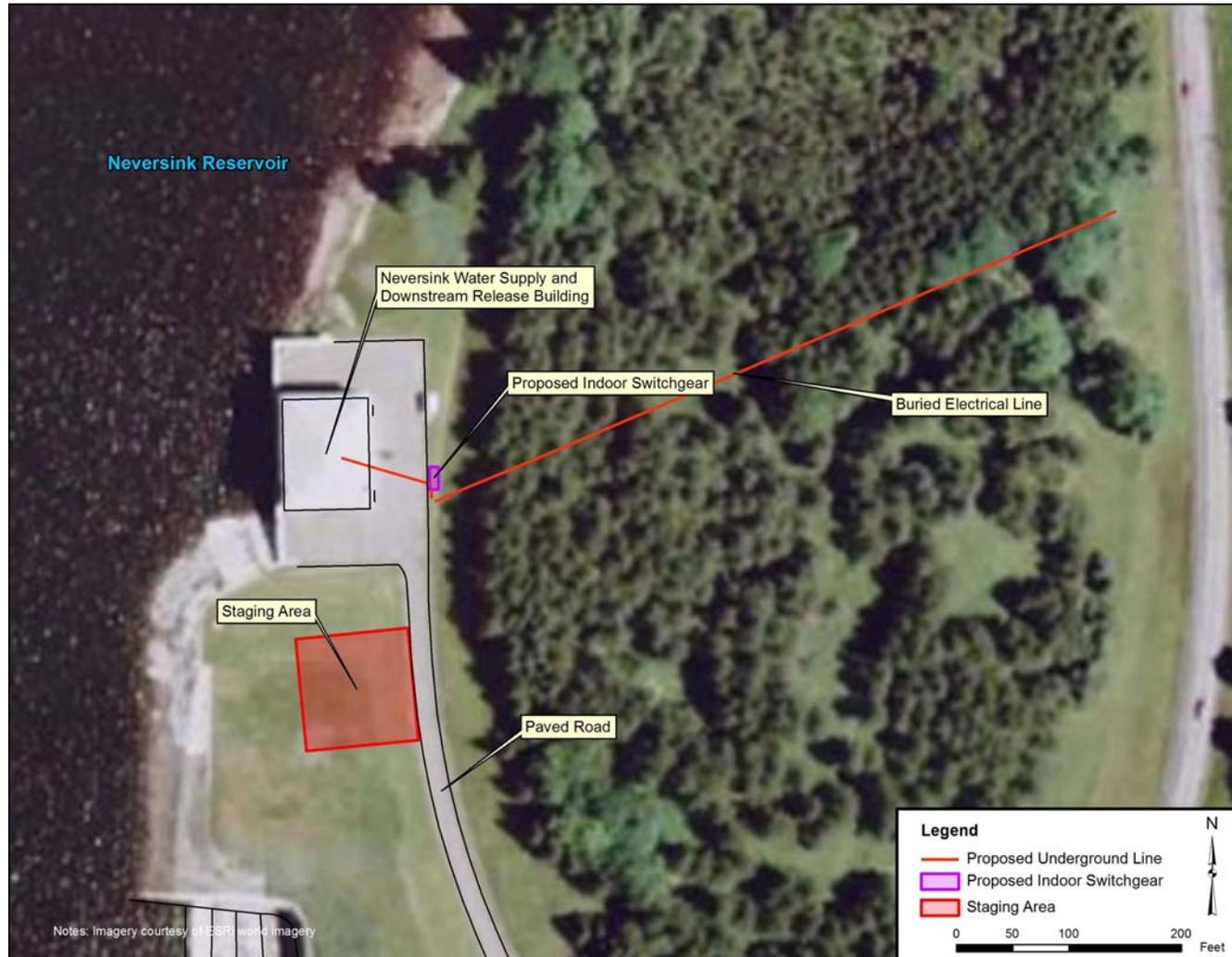
Notes: Imagery source: ESRI world imagery. All other data layers created by Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, P.C.

**Figure 2.2-1: Pepacton Development Study Area.**



Notes: Imagery source: ESRI world imagery. All other data layers created by Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, P.C.

**Figure 2.3-1: Neversink Study Area.**



Notes: Imagery source: ESRI world imagery. All other data layers created by Gomez and Sullivan Engineers, P.C.

## 3.0 METHODS

### 3.1 Base Map Preparation

Base maps were created prior to the field survey showing the Project areas and identifying potential public viewsheds of the Project areas. The identification of the potential viewsheds was accomplished using a combination of orthoimagery (ArcGIS software) and sightlines from the roadways and other areas to the Project areas.

### 3.2 Field Survey

On June 28, 29, and 30, 2010, the field survey was conducted and photographs were taken documenting the character of each development. In addition, photographs were taken from the identified public viewsheds and City-owned lands, referred to as “restricted areas”.<sup>1</sup>

The field survey evaluated the potential viewsheds shown on the base maps. At Cannonsville, viewsheds of the location of the Cannonsville release works and proposed powerhouse, work/staging areas, substation, and the routes for the interconnection facilities were assessed. At Pepacton, the viewsheds were all directed to the release water chamber and surrounding area. At Neversink, the viewsheds were directed to the intake structure and surrounding area, as well as the route of the interconnection facilities. The survey examined the potential for impacts to aesthetics and the general character of the Project areas over the long-term arising from the new construction at the developments and temporarily associated with the construction activities.

[Figure 3.2-1](#) shows the photo locations taken at the Cannonsville development, which are labeled C1-C6. Photos locations are color-coded and reflect publicly accessible viewsheds (C1-C2) and restricted area viewsheds (C3-C6). The only sightlines from readily-accessible public viewsheds are from State Route 10, as shown on C1 and C2, and from Buck Road.<sup>2</sup> However, the views of the Project areas from those locations are highly obstructed by the surrounding vegetation.

[Figure 3.2-2](#) shows the photo locations taken at the Pepacton development, which are labeled as P1-P3 (P1-P2 are from publicly accessible viewsheds and P3 is from the restricted area). As a boater approaches the Project areas, the view would become obstructed by the earthen dam and the release water chamber. The distance between the public viewshed from State Route 30 and the electrical equipment, as well as the location of the release water chamber, as shown on P1 and P2, make the new facilities barely visible. Similarly, the distances involved will make the staging areas minimally visible from the reservoir and other public viewsheds.<sup>3</sup>

[Figure 3.2-3](#) shows the photo locations taken at the Neversink development, which are labeled as N1-N5 (N1-N4 are from publicly accessible viewsheds and N5 is from the restricted area). While the elevation differences between the reservoir surface and the Project areas will not present the same screening as at the other developments, the intake structure will shield the new facilities from view from many areas of

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<sup>1</sup> While the reservoirs at all three developments are generally accessible to the public, boaters must stay at least 500 feet away from the dams and spillways.

<sup>2</sup> It may possible to see some or all of the Project areas from the surrounding hillsides, but such areas are not generally used by the public and are not included in the analysis.

<sup>3</sup> As at Cannonsville, it may possible to see the Project areas from the surrounding hillsides, but such areas are not generally used by the public and are not included in the analysis.

the reservoir. As shown on NI-N3, there are public viewsheds of the new facilities and staging area from State Route 55. However, from all such viewsheds, the small size of the new facilities, their location relative to the intake structure and forest, and the distance between the roadway and the facilities will make them difficult to see or distinguish.<sup>4</sup> The staging area will be more visible from the reservoir and roadway.

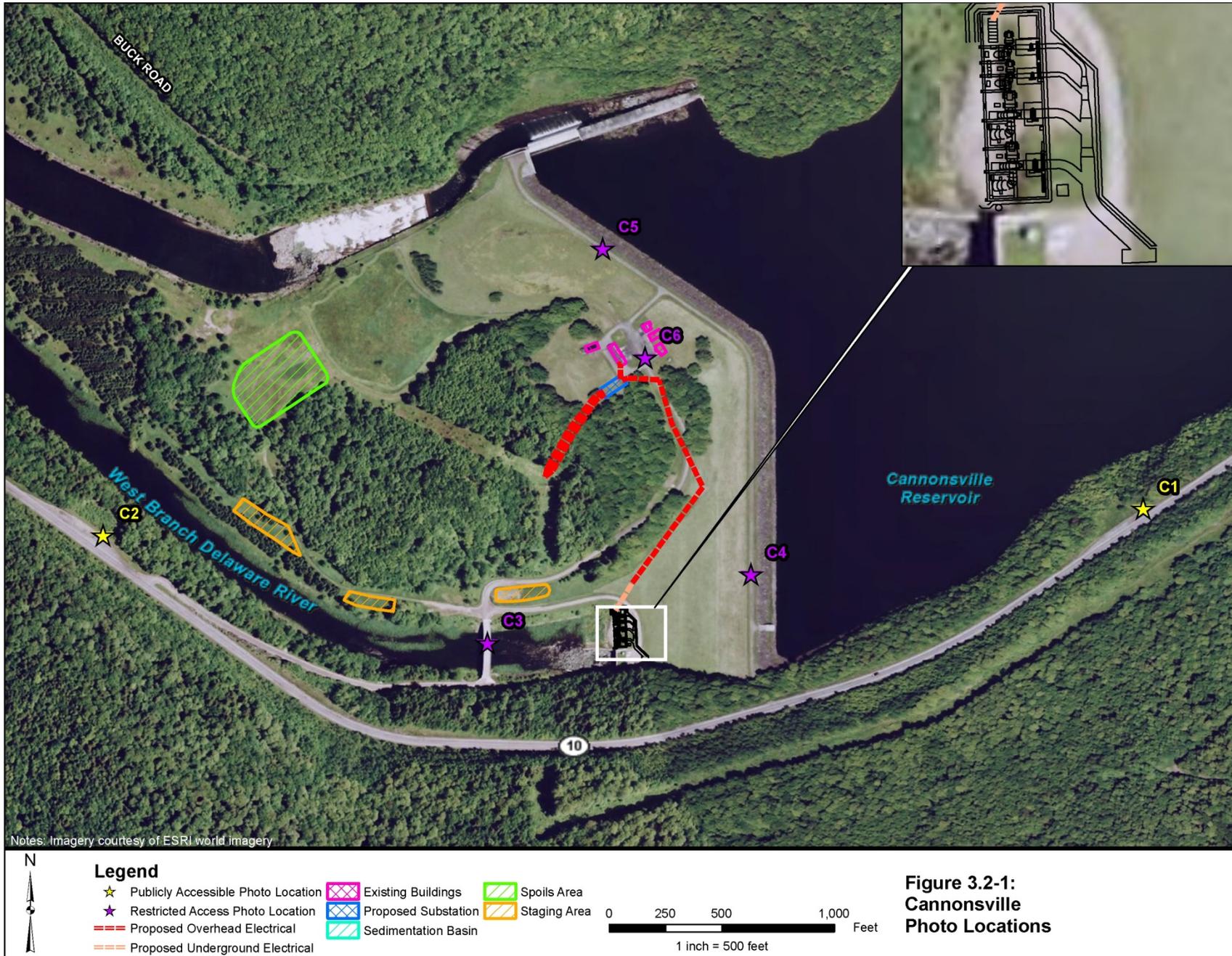
### **3.3 Photo Renderings**

Using Adobe Photoshop, photo renderings were developed to depict the visual effect permanent structures and appurtenances will have on the character of the areas and, to the extent the new facilities are visible, to depict their aesthetic effect. These renderings are included in Section 4.0. At each development, vantage points were selected to highlight the relationship of the new facilities to their surroundings. In many cases, because the facilities are not visible from public viewsheds, the vantage points are from within the restricted areas. As applicable, such as at Neversink, both public and restricted vantage points were used.

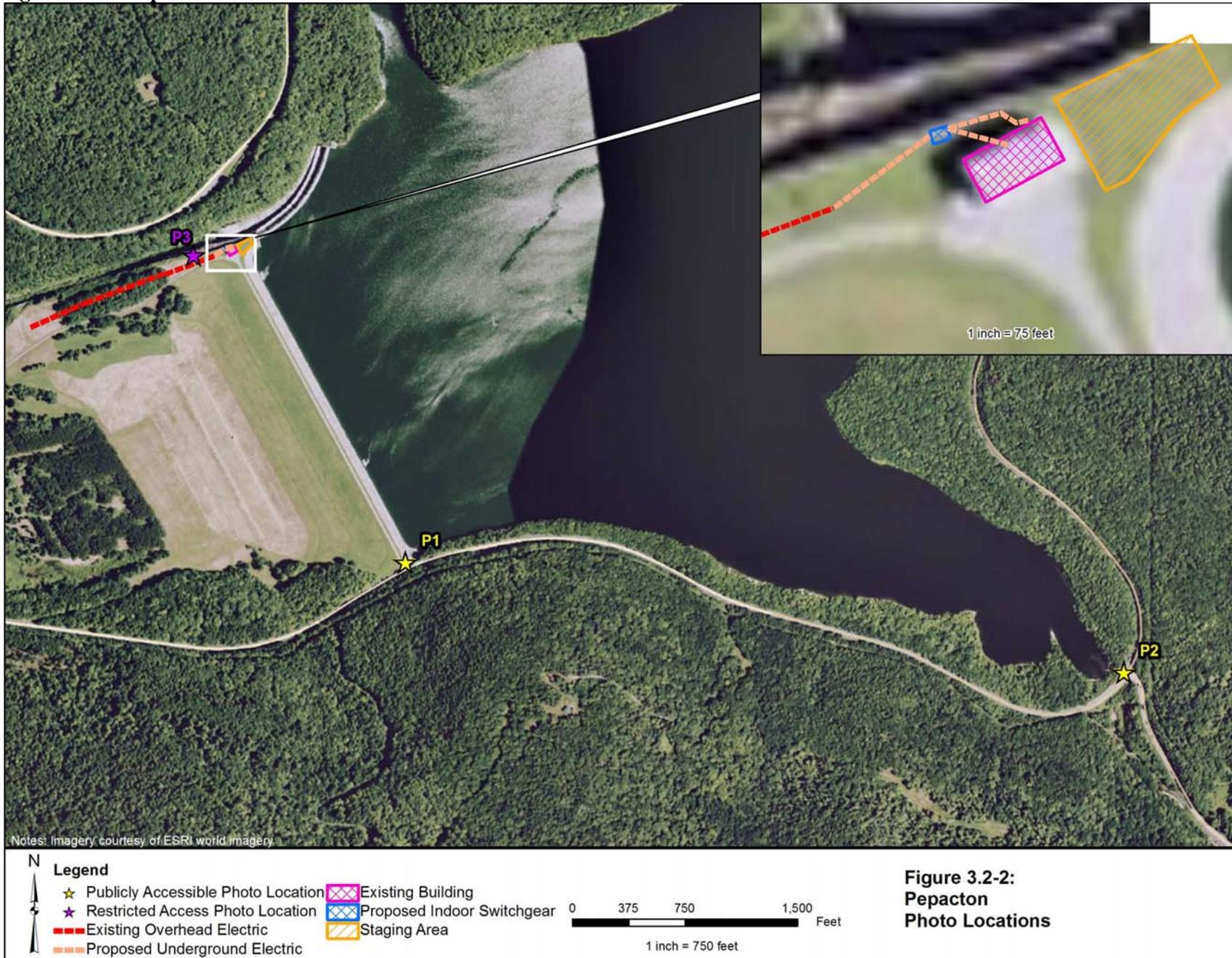
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<sup>4</sup> The elevations of the lands around the Neversink Project areas are not as high as at Cannonsville and Pepacton. Therefore, the potential viewsheds from the surrounding lands are far more limited, and more likely to be obstructed by the vegetation. In any event, such areas are not generally used by the public and are not included in the analysis.

Figure 3.2-1: Cannonsville Photo Locations

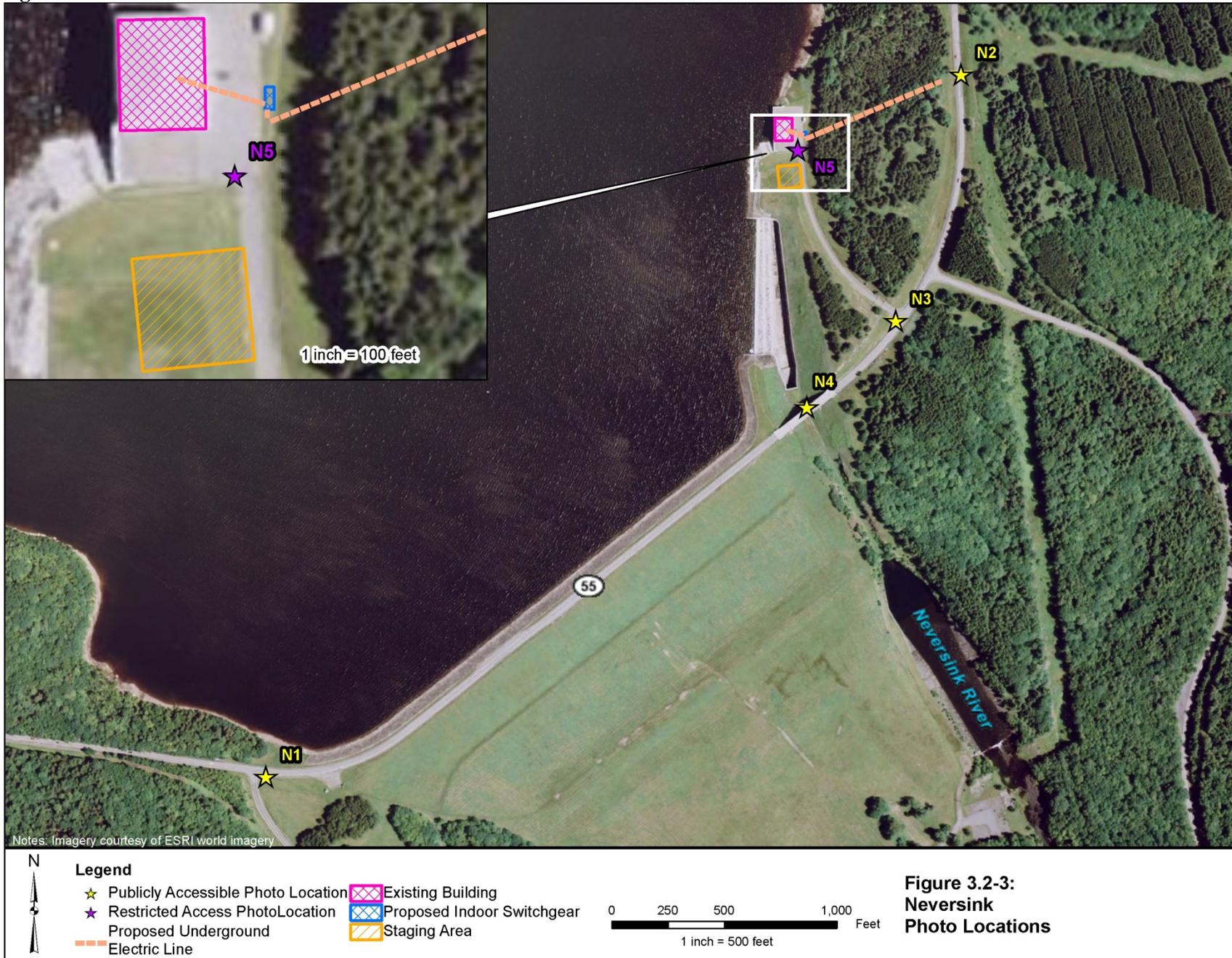


**Figure 3.2-2: Pepacton Photo Locations**



**Figure 3.2-2:  
Pepacton  
Photo Locations**

Figure 3.2-3: Neversink Photo Locations



## 4.0 RESULTS

### 4.1 Cannonsville Development

Public access for fishing on the Cannonsville Reservoir is allowed. Such access provides opportunities for the public to view the Project areas from the reservoir during this time. The land surrounding the Project areas is dense forest, with one major road traversing its southern edge and a minor road to the northwest. The Project areas maintain a natural feel, despite the existing structures, some of which (*e.g.*, the overhead power lines) blend in with the surrounding trees. Because the new structures and facilities will be constructed in the same locations as the existing structures, the general character of the development will remain the same.

#### 4.1.1 Cannonsville Viewsheds

[Figure 4.1-1](#) shows the sightlines from the potential viewsheds discussed in Section 3.0. Based on the field survey and the ArcGIS analysis (which included a digital elevation model and 3D analyst extension), DEP concluded that the Project areas are not visible along any of the sightlines from the public viewsheds east of the Cannonsville Dam. The height of the earthen dam exceeds the height of the new structures and appurtenances. Therefore, and as shown on the figure, the dam fully screens the Project areas from the eastern viewsheds. As noted in Section 3.2 and above, the dense vegetation around the Project areas similarly screens the Project areas from the northern, western, and southern public viewsheds.

[Figure 4.1-2](#) shows the public viewshed located on State Route 10, about one-half mile east of the Project areas. This photograph demonstrates the above conclusion that the dam, as well as the vegetation in the area of the viewshed and behind the dam, fully screens the Project areas. Indeed, the existing service building that is next to the planned location of the substation is not visible at all from this location, indicating that the substation and other appurtenances also will not be visible.

To the west of the project location there is a pull-off on State Route 10, just before the access road, shown on [Figure 4.1-3](#). This viewshed is about 1,700 feet from the Project areas. Due to the dense vegetation around this public viewshed, the bulk of the Project areas are fully screened. Although construction vehicles entering and leaving the development site would be visible from this location, the relatively compact nature of the construction activities and the plan to dispose of spoils on-site, the number of vehicles trips is expected to be relatively limited and primarily involve mobilization, deliveries, demobilization, and the arrival and departure of the construction workers.

Buck Road is north of the Project areas, as shown on Figure 4.1-1, but does not extend along the entire northern boundary. The point at which this road ends, approximately 3,000 feet northwest of the Project, does not provide any public viewshed of the Project areas.

#### 4.1.2 Cannonsville Aesthetic and Area Character Analysis

The Project will not have any material adverse impact on aesthetics or the character of the area because none of the Project areas are visible from the identified public viewsheds.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, most of the new structures and appurtenances will be constructed adjacent or near to existing structures, thereby

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<sup>5</sup> As noted in Section 3.2, it may possible to see some or all of the Project areas from the surrounding hillsides. For the same reasons explained in this Section 4.1.2, the visibility of the Project areas from such locations would not lead to any material adverse impacts on aesthetics or the general character of the area.

minimizing the magnitude of the disruption to the natural environment. To the extent possible, the new structures will be constructed using materials and techniques that will harmonize them with the existing structures. Further, while the distances from the public viewsheds to the Project areas and the dam are sufficient to screen the Project areas from most vantage points, a majority of the trees comprising the vegetative screening are coniferous, obstructing views even during winter months.

Within the restricted area, there could be some minimal impacts on aesthetics and the character of the area, but such impacts would not rise to level of being materially adverse. The powerhouse will be constructed next to the low-level outlet works and will be visible from the access road bridge ([Figure 4.1-4](#)) and the road atop the reservoir ([Figure 4.1-5](#)). The substation will be visible from the road atop the reservoir ([Figure 4.1-8](#)) and some of the lands near the spillway ([Figure 4.1-10](#)). [Figure 4.1-6](#) and [Figure 4.1-7](#) depict the powerhouse from the access road bridge and atop the dam, and [Figure 4.1-9](#) and [Figure 4.1-11](#) depict the substation from different vantage points along the road atop the dam. As noted above, the manner of location of these new structures and appurtenances will minimize their effect on the natural character of the Project areas.

The generator lead from the powerhouse to the substation will traverse the same path as an existing overhead electric line. For this reason, it will not have any incremental impact on aesthetics or the character of the area. The construction of the interconnection facilities will involve new poles and overhead electric lines, but they will be virtually unseen from most of the restricted area due to the shielding provided by surrounding trees and the topography of the land. For this reason, the area will maintain its current character.

Figure 4.1-1: Cannonsville Viewsheds and Sightlines

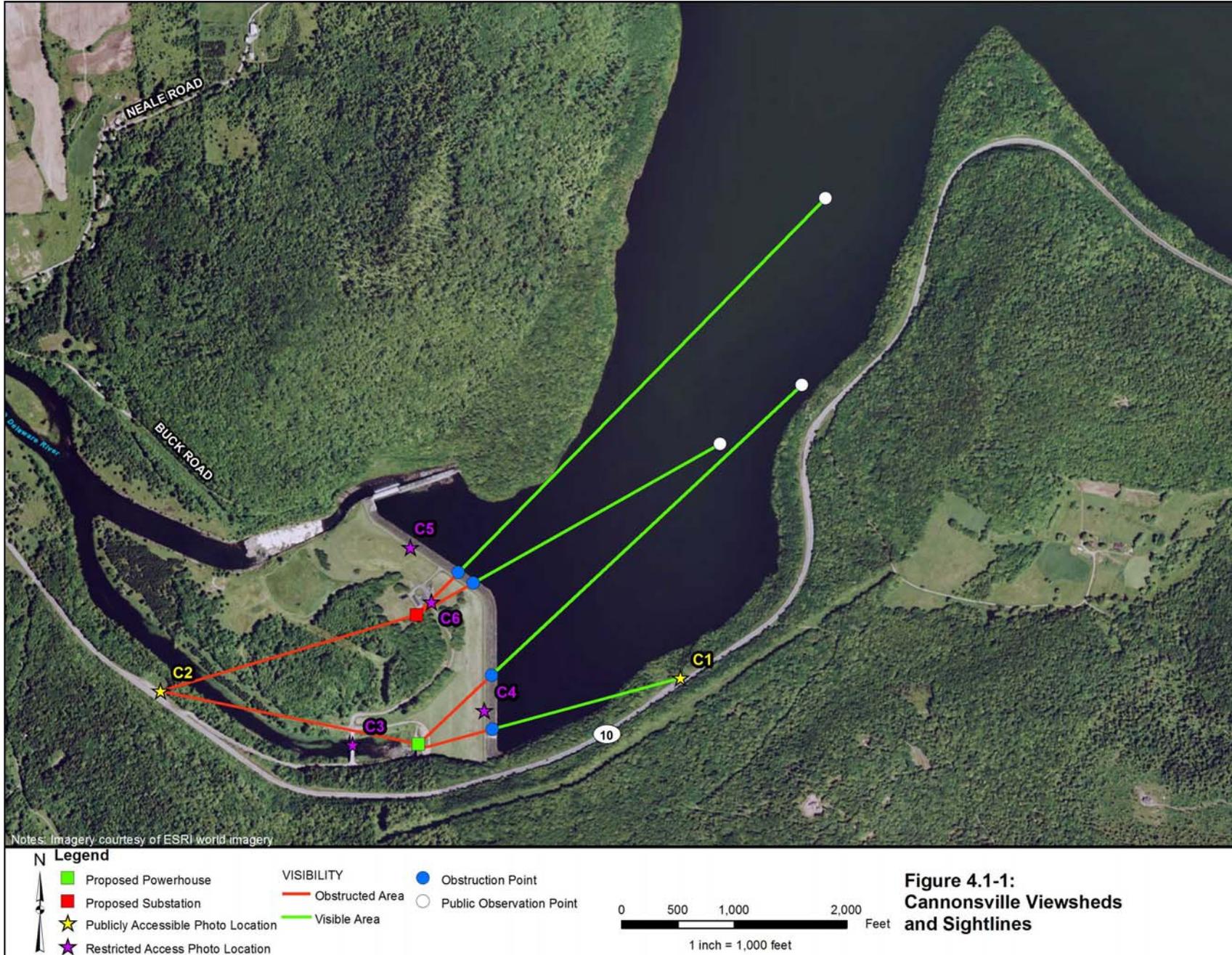


Figure 4.1-1:  
Cannonsville Viewsheds  
and Sightlines

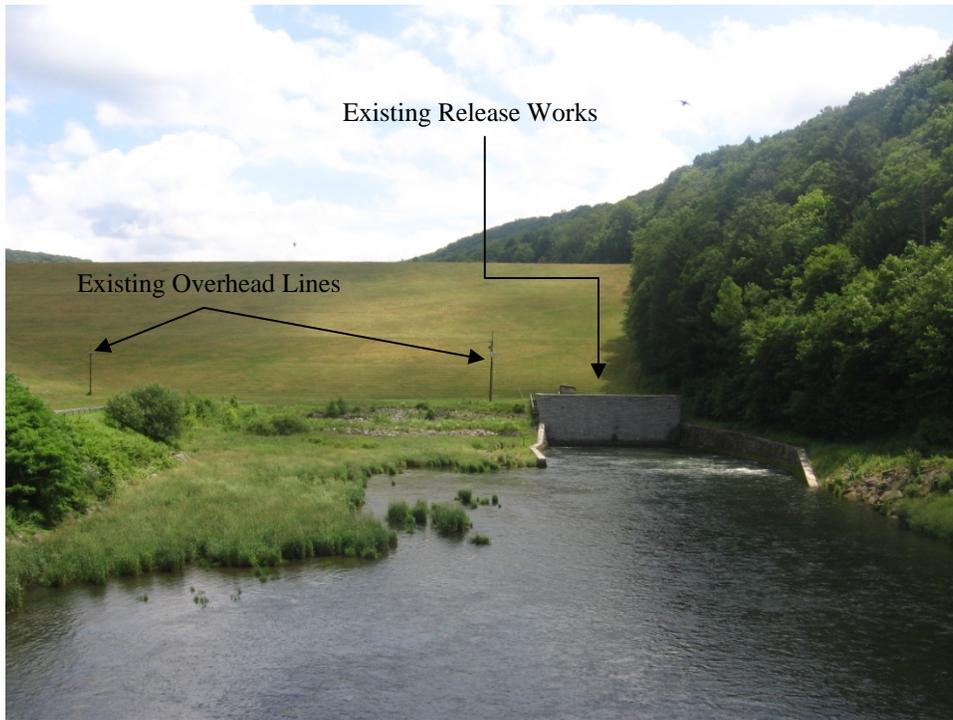
**Figure 4.1-2: C1 – View of Cannonsville from pulloff on State Route 10**



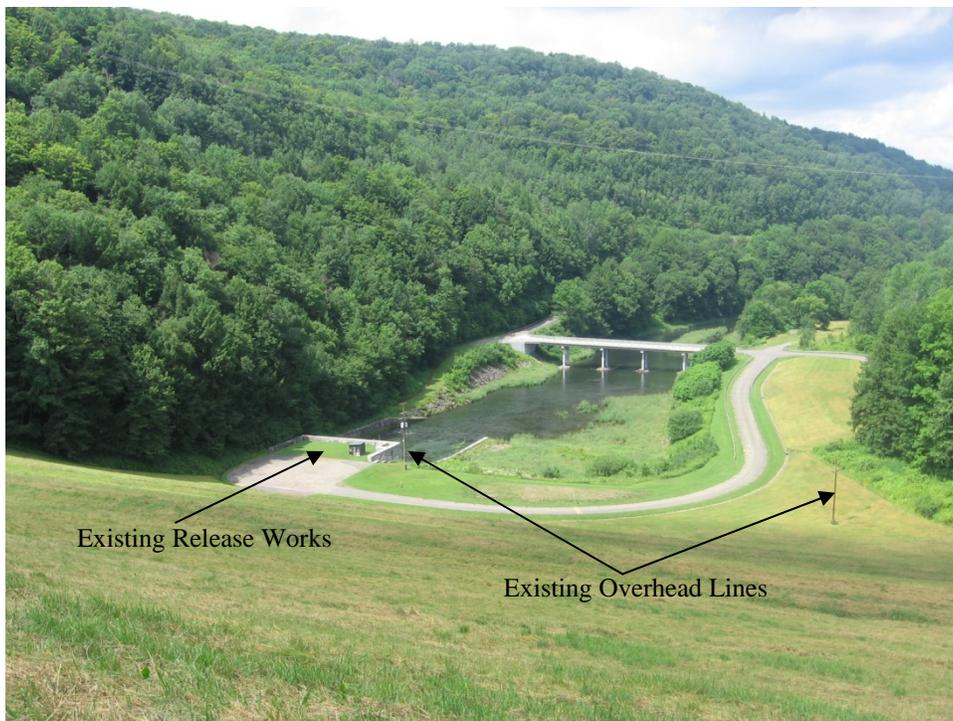
**Figure 4.1-3: C2 – View of Cannonsville from State Route 10**



**Figure 4.1-4: C3 – View of proposed powerhouse area from the bridge within the restricted area**



**Figure 4.1-5: C4 – View of proposed powerhouse area from the road atop the Cannonsville Dam within the restricted area**



**Figure 4.1-6: Photo rendering from the bridge within the restricted area**



**Figure 4.1-7: Photo rendering from the road atop the Cannonsville Dam within the restricted area**



**Figure 4.1-8: C5 – View of proposed substation location from atop dam within restricted area**



**Figure 4.1-9: Photo rendering of substation from atop dam within restricted area**



**Figure 4.1-10: C6 – View from near existing building within restricted area of substation location**



**Figure 4.1-11: Photo rendering from the road atop the Cannonsville Dam within the restricted area**



## 4.2 Pepacton Development

Public access for fishing on the Pepacton Reservoir is allowed. This access provides opportunities for the public to view the Project areas from the reservoir. The land surrounding the Project areas is dominated by dense forest, with one major road along the southern edge of the reservoir and a minor road along the northern edge. The Project areas are comprised of mowed lawn and pavement, with an existing release water chamber and adjacent distribution line. Because the generating equipment will be constructed within the existing structure, and the new appurtenances are small and will be constructed either underground or very near the existing structure, the general character of the development will not be changed by the Project.

### 4.2.1 Pepacton Viewsheds

[Figure 4.2-1](#) shows the sightlines from the potential viewsheds discussed in Section 3.0. Based on the field survey and the ArcGIS analysis, DEP concluded that public viewsheds of the Project areas will be limited and the new appurtenances will be barely visible, if visible at all. There are direct sightlines to the appurtenances from the entrance to the Project areas on State Route 30 and from a small area on the reservoir, but the distances from those public viewsheds would be approximately 2,500 feet and at least 1,300 feet (the elevation difference between the surface of the reservoir and the top of the dam will obstruct the view of the Project areas from 1,300 feet to the 500-foot boundary of the restricted area), respectively. From the north and east, dense vegetation will fully screen the Project areas.

The public viewshed from State Route 30 at the entrance to the Project areas is shown on [Figure 4.2-2](#). The staging area would be visible from this location but the new electrical equipment that comprises the appurtenances to the generating facility would be partially shielded by the release water chamber. Additionally, construction vehicles entering and leaving the development site would be visible from this location. However, given the nature and extent of the construction activities, the number of vehicles trips is expected to be relatively limited and primarily involve mobilization, deliveries, demobilization, and the arrival and departure of the construction workers.

[Figure 4.2-3](#) shows a second public viewshed from State Route 30 to the southeast of the Project areas. While the staging area is potentially visible from this location, it is barely visible. The appurtenances would be fully screened by the release water chamber.

A third possible public viewshed was identified from State Highway Route 30A, which is directly north of the site. However, due to the topography of the area and the dense vegetation, the Project areas are not visible from this location.

### 4.2.2 Pepacton Aesthetic and Area Character Analysis

The Project will not have any material adverse impact on aesthetics or the character of the area because the visibility of the appurtenances and staging area from the public viewsheds is very limited to non-existent.<sup>6</sup> To the extent the Project areas are visible, they are at substantial distances from the public viewsheds. As a result, the relative size of the appurtenances is greatly reduced, and the ability to distinguish the construction activities taking place on the staging area is similarly restricted. Moreover, due to their size and scale relative to the release water chamber, the appurtenances will essentially blend

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<sup>6</sup> As noted in Section 3.2, it may possible to see some or all of the Project areas from the surrounding hillsides. For the same reasons explained in this Section 4.2.2, the visibility of the Project areas from such locations would not lead to any material adverse impacts on aesthetics or the general character of the area.

in with the existing structure from most of the public viewsheds, further minimizing their impact on aesthetics and the character of the area. Because all new electric lines will be constructed underground, they will not have any impacts on aesthetics or the area character.

Temporary impacts may arise from the construction activities and vehicle trips described above. However, due to the size of the Project, the amount of visible construction activity and traffic will be limited. Therefore, the construction activities will not cause any material adverse impacts on aesthetics or the character of the area.

[Figure 4.2-4](#) shows a view of the location of the appurtenances from a grassy area to the west of the release water chamber, within the restricted area. [Figure 4.3-5](#) depicts the appurtenances that would be constructed at this location. Because they will occupy an already disturbed area, and as shown by the rendering, the addition of these facilities will not change the character of the area.

Figure 4.2-1: Pepacton Viewsheds and Sightlines

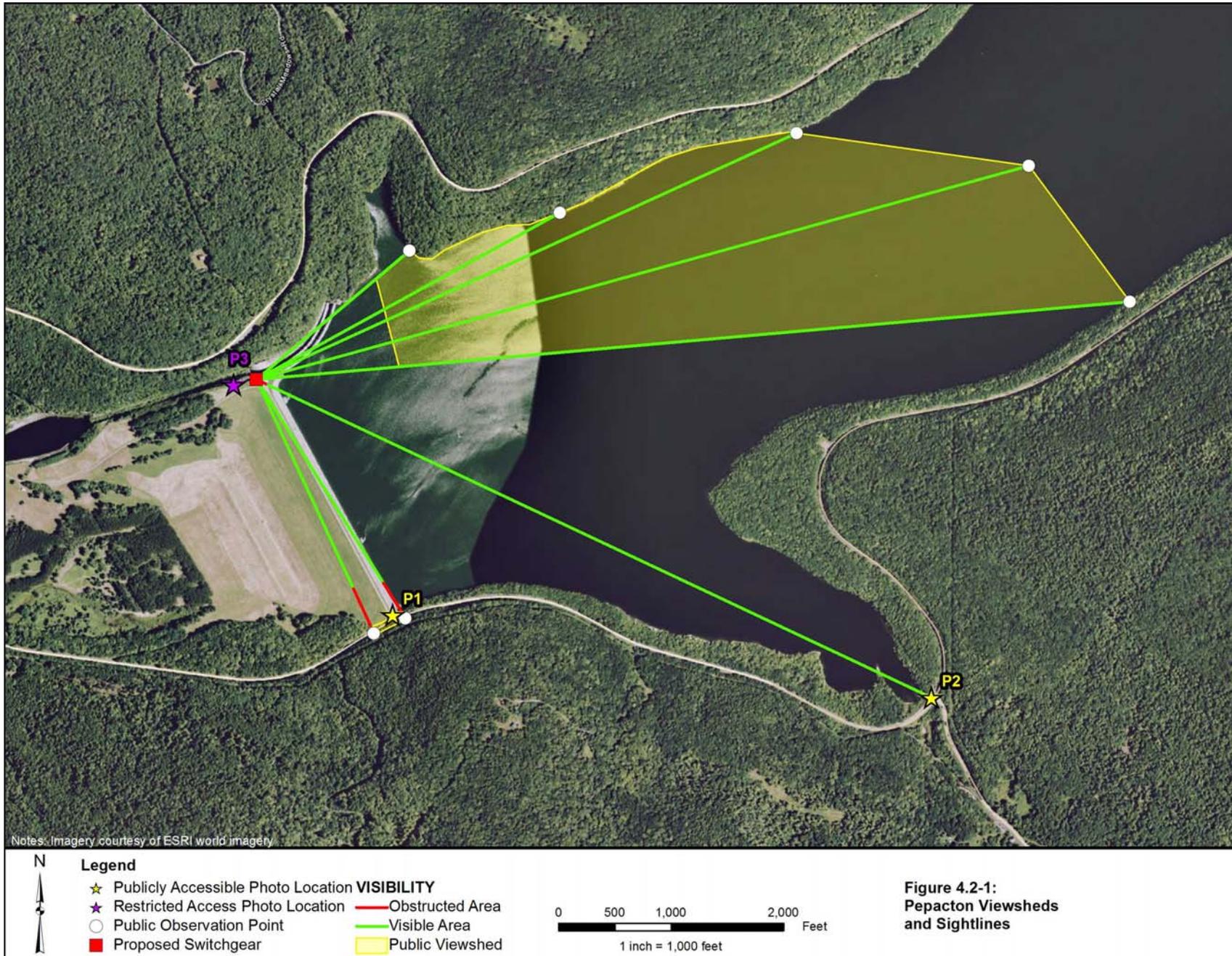
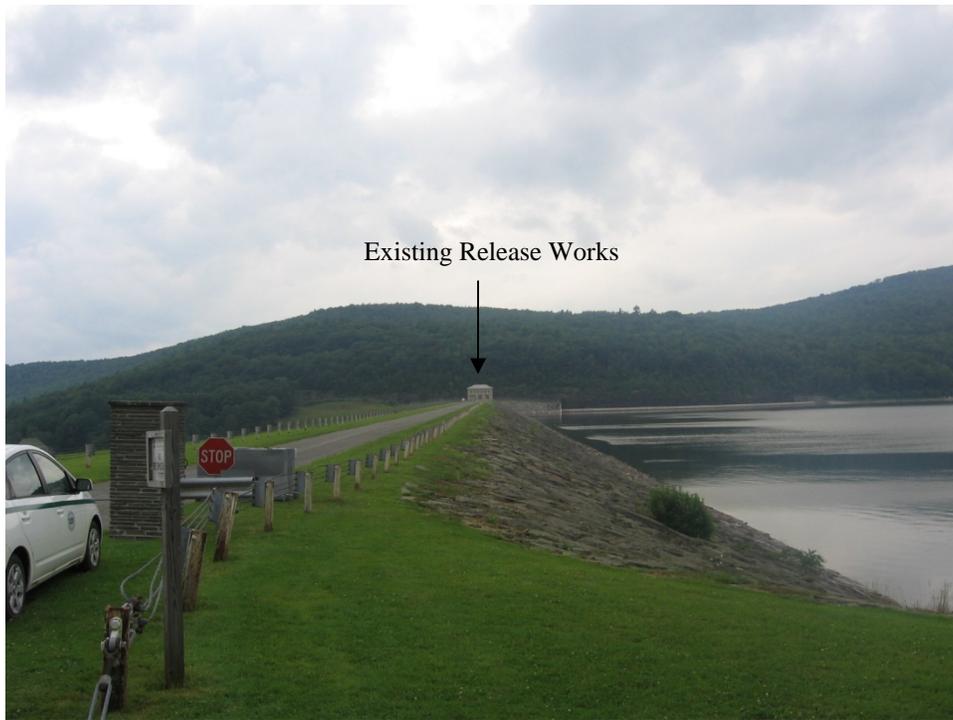
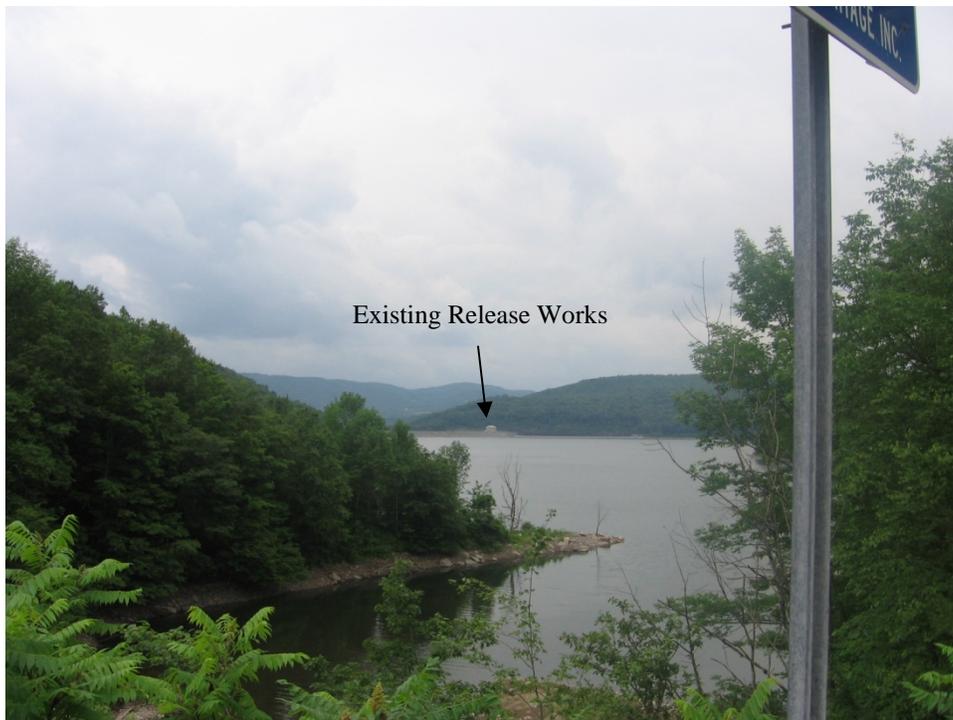


Figure 4.2-1:  
Pepacton Viewsheds  
and Sightlines

**Figure 4.2-2: P1 – View of Pepacton development from DEP owned Access Road**



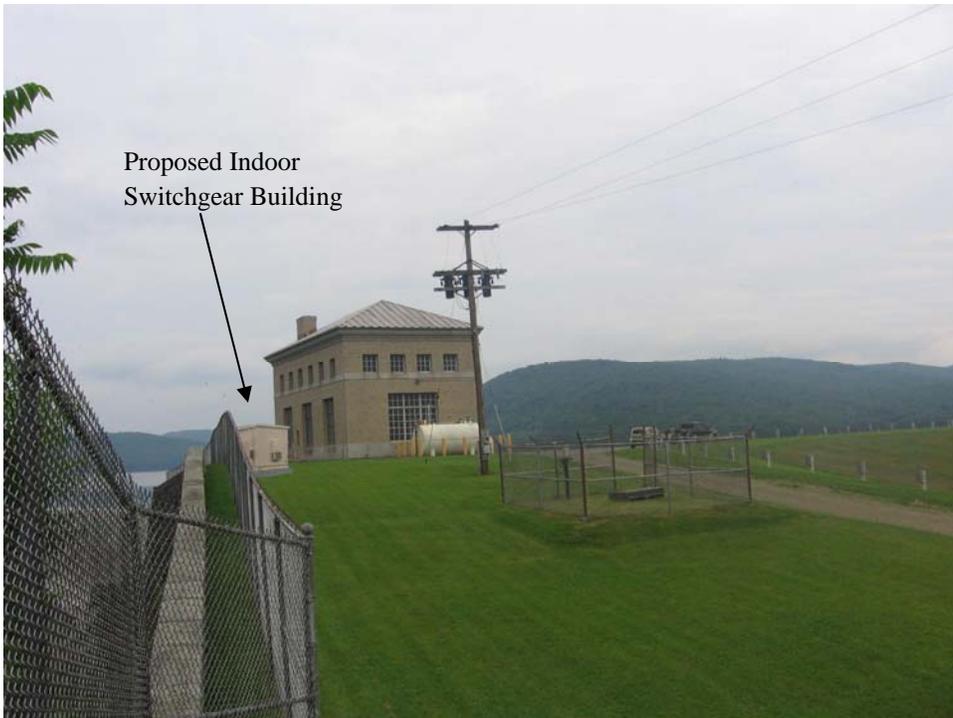
**Figure 4.2-3: P2 – View of Pepacton development from State Route 30**



**Figure 4.2-4: P3 – View of proposed switchgear building location from within restricted area**



**Figure 4.2-5: Photo rendering of switchgear building from within restricted area**



### 4.3 Neversink Development

Public access for fishing on the Neversink Reservoir is allowed. This access provides opportunities for the public to view the Project areas from the reservoir. The land surrounding most of the Project areas is comprised of dense forest, with a major road along the top of the dam to the west, south, and east of the development site. The Project areas consist of mowed lawn, pavement, the existing intake structure, and a forested area. Because the generating equipment will be constructed within the existing structure, and the new appurtenances are small and will be constructed either underground or very near the existing structure, the general character of the development will not be changed by the Project.

#### 4.3.1 Neversink Viewsheds

[Figure 4.3-1](#) shows the sightlines from the potential viewsheds discussed in Section 3.0. Based on the field survey and the ArcGIS analysis, DEP concluded that public viewsheds of the Project areas will be limited and the new appurtenances will be barely visible, if visible at all. There are direct sightlines to the appurtenances from certain parts of the reservoir and from State Route 55. However, the distances from those public viewsheds range from 500 feet to more than a half-mile.

[Figure 4.3-2](#) shows the public viewshed from the southwest, near the intersection of State Route 55 and Divine Corners Road. From this viewshed, there is a clear view of the intake structure. However, because this viewshed is nearly a half-mile from the structure, and the electrical equipment that comprises the appurtenances to the generating facility is screened by existing structure, the addition of such facilities will not change the view of the Project areas. While the temporary staging area will be visible from this location, it will comprise a very small portion of the view.

[Figure 4.3-3](#) shows the public viewshed directly to the east of the powerhouse on State Route 55. The dense vegetation obstructs all views of the Project areas except the point of interconnection with NYSEG's distribution facilities. Because the interconnection facilities will be placed underground, they will not be seen.

[Figure 4.3-4](#) shows the access road leading from State Route 55 to the intake building. Although construction vehicles will be seen entering and leaving the Project areas, the elevation drop will prevent the public from seeing the construction activity or the appurtenances from this location. Given the nature and extent of the construction activities, the number of vehicles trips is expected to be relatively limited and primarily involve mobilization, deliveries, demobilization, and the arrival and departure of the construction workers.

[Figure 4.3-5](#) shows the public viewshed from State Route 55 as it traverses the spillway adjacent to the Neversink Dam. From this vantage point, the Project areas would be visible. Because there is no pull-off at this location, the public would not routinely stop in this area and would have no more than fleeting glances of the Project areas.

### 4.3.2 *Neversink Aesthetic and Area Character Analysis*

The Project will not have any material adverse impact on aesthetics or the character of the area because the visibility of the appurtenances and staging area from the public viewsheds is limited.<sup>7</sup> To a large extent, the Project areas are at substantial distances from the public viewsheds. As a result, the relative size of the appurtenances is greatly reduced. Further, due to their size and scale relative to the intake structure, and their location near a forested area, the appurtenances will essentially blend in with that structure and forest from most of the public viewsheds, further minimizing their impact on aesthetics and the character of the area. Because all new electric lines will be constructed underground, they will not have any impacts on aesthetics or the area character.

While the construction activities taking place on the staging area may be more noticeable, the nature of the Project will limit the amount of visible construction activity and traffic, and the staging area itself is relatively small. Therefore, the construction activities will not cause any material adverse impacts on aesthetics or the character of the area.

[Figure 4.3-6](#) depicts the appurtenances that would be constructed as seen from State Route 55. As shown by the photograph, they are essentially invisible from this vantage point. [Figure 4.3-7](#) shows the location appurtenances from within the restricted area, and [Figure 4.3-8](#) depicts the appurtenances from the same vantage point. Because the appurtenances will occupy an already disturbed area, and as shown by the rendering, the addition of these facilities will not change the character of the area.

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<sup>7</sup> As noted in Section 3.2, it may possible to see some or all of the Project areas from the surrounding lands. For the same reasons explained in this Section 4.3.2, the visibility of the Project areas from such locations would not lead to any material adverse impacts on aesthetics or the general character of the area.

Figure 4.3-1: Neversink Viewsheds and Sightlines

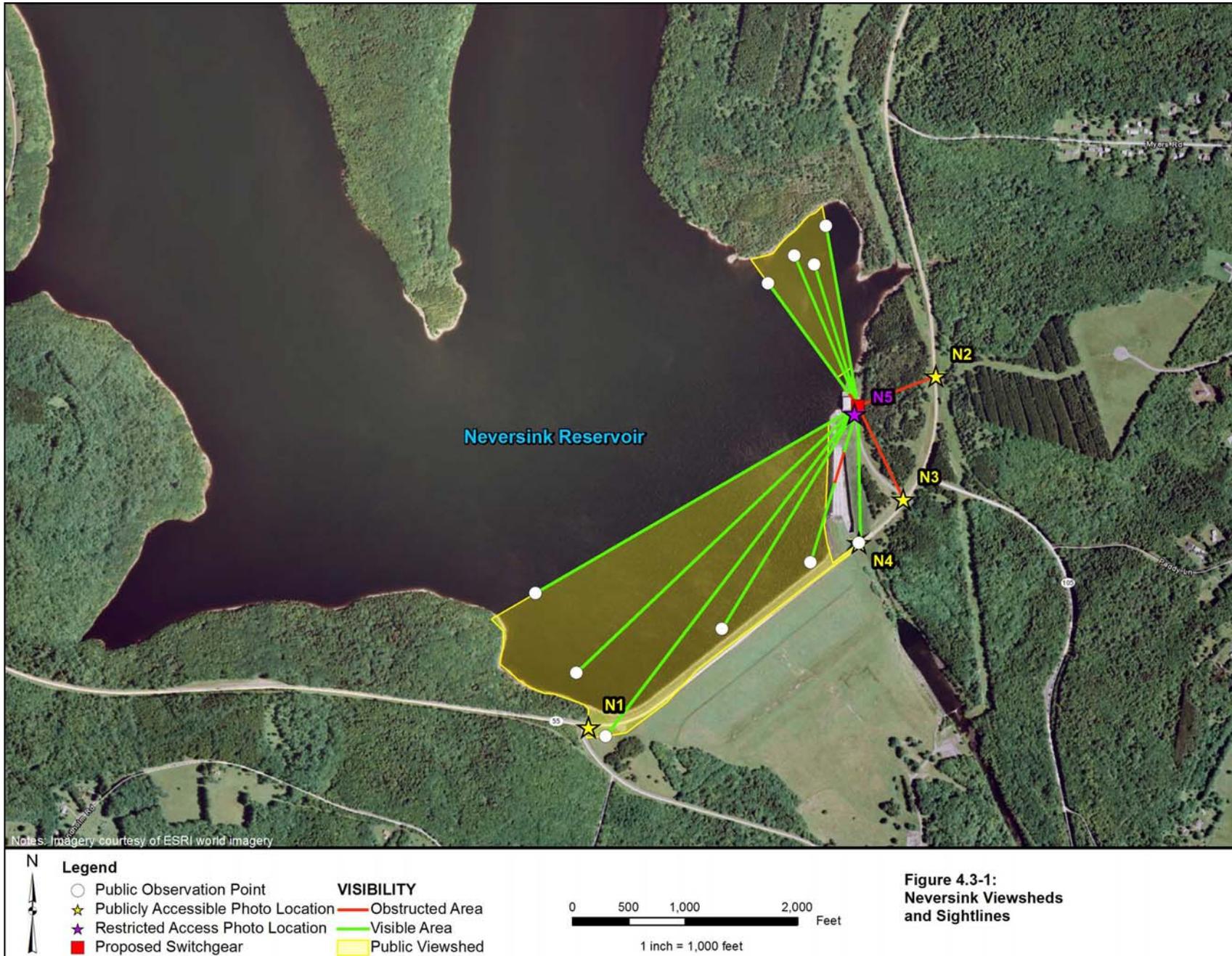


Figure 4.3-1:  
Neversink Viewsheds  
and Sightlines

**Figure 4.3-2: N1 – View to Neversink development from State Route 55**



**Figure 4.3-3: N2 – View along State Route 55 of the existing distribution line serving the Neversink intake structure**



**Figure 4.3-4: N3 – View of the restricted access road to the Neversink development from State Route 55**



**Figure 4.3-5: N4 – View of the Neversink development from State Route 55 (note: this is not a stopping area)**



**Figure 4.3-6: Rendering of indoor switchgear building from photo location N4**



**Figure 4.3-7: N5 – Photo of indoor switchgear building location from restricted area**



**Figure 4.3-8: Rendering of indoor switchgear building from restricted area**



## **5.0 MITIGATION**

Because no material adverse impacts have been identified related to the construction activities or permanent structures to be added at the three developments, no mitigation strategies need to be developed or assessed.