

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE
CATSKILL/DELAWARE UV FACILITY
METHODOLOGIES**

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3.8. GROWTH INDUCEMENT

3.8.1. Introduction

The analysis of potential growth inducement impacts focuses primarily on potential residential development that may occur as a result of the proposed Catskill/Delaware Ultraviolet Light Disinfection Facility (UV Facility) project. Growth inducement refers to the potential for the proposed project to increase the attractiveness of a community and accelerate its rate of development, primarily as a consequence of four types of actions: (1) tax payments or payments in lieu of taxes that New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) would make to the taxing districts with jurisdiction over the project site; (2) induced employment, sales and other economic activity due to capital and operating expenditures made in the area; (3) induced growth due to relaxed watershed controls as a result of filtering the water supply; and (4) potential changes in water supply service to Westchester County municipalities. NYCDEP has already stated that it will not relax components of the watershed memorandum of agreement signed in January 1997, and therefore no potential growth inducement would occur.

An analysis of tax payments was performed, as well as an analysis of potential induced employment and other activity due to construction-related capital investments and the annual operating and maintenance expenditures associated with the proposed project.

The potential for indirect regional employment growth is discussed for the Eastview Site using information from the Socioeconomic Conditions analysis ([Section 3.7](#), Data Collection and Impact Methodologies, Socioeconomic Conditions).

The growth inducement analysis also includes an identification of those downstream communities that may have the opportunity to obtain disinfected water from the UV disinfected Catskill/Delaware System.

3.8.2. Baseline Conditions

The proposed project includes the Eastview Site in the Town of Mount Pleasant and Town of Greenburgh, in Westchester County, New York, where the UV Facility would be located, and several off-site work locations within the Town of Mount Pleasant. The off-site facilities would involve temporary construction work that would not generate increases in property tax payments, permanent employment or other long-term economic activity. Therefore, the analysis of growth inducement focuses on the UV Facility at the Eastview Site.

3.8.2.1. Existing Conditions

3.8.2.1.1. Eastview Site

Property Tax Payments. Information on current tax payments made on the Eastview Site was provided by the local assessor's office of each town.

Watershed Protection Program in the Catskill/Delaware System. Details of the existing watershed program applicable to the area east of the Hudson River, as well as details on the existing watershed program as it relates to land development in Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh, are presented.

Downstream Communities with Access to Catskill/Delaware Water Supply System. Communities downstream of the Eastview Site with existing access to the Catskill/Delaware Water Supply System have been identified. A discussion of their current water rates is briefly presented here, with a more detailed discussion presented in [Section 4.7](#), Socioeconomic Conditions.

3.8.2.1.2. Study Area

Undeveloped Land. Estimates of the amount of undeveloped land in the Towns of Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh, and the Pocantico Hills school district have been made using Westchester County's Generalized Land Use Map (1996) with subsequent updates provided by Town representatives and through field visits. Undeveloped land that contains wetlands has been eliminated from the evaluation. Wetland areas have been identified through the use of available mapping. Although land with slopes greater than 25 percent has limited development potential, all undeveloped land, regardless of slopes, has been included in the inventory.

Residential Development Patterns. Development activity and overall growth in a community can be gauged by many factors. The analysis examines the annual number of building permits issued by a particular municipality as the primary indicator of residential development patterns.

Housing Prices. The median sale prices for single-family homes in the Towns of Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh and Westchester County from 1993 to 2002, the latest year for which data are available, are presented. Data was obtained from the Westchester County Department of Planning.

Recent Effective Tax Rates for Residential Development. Information on current tax rates has been collected from the Westchester County Department of Planning. Effective, or equalized tax rates for the County, as well as the Towns of Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh and relevant school districts, have been collected.

Most Important Factors to Homebuyers. Interviews have been conducted with a sampling of real estate brokers working in Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh to help verify the role and relative importance of property taxes in influencing home purchases. Additional information has been collected on the quality and achievement of school districts. These factors have been measured using information on per-pupil expenditures, pupil-teacher ratios, the percentage of secondary school graduates going to college, and standardized test scores.

School Districts in Westchester County. A comparison of Pocantico Hills School District with other Westchester County school districts is presented. The school characteristics

considered in this analysis include total enrollment, student/teacher ratio, percentage of graduates going to four-year colleges, expenditure per student, and combined average SAT scores.

Current School, Town, and County Budgets. This analysis presents information on the 2003/2004 budget for the Pocantico Hills School District, the adopted FY 2003 budget for the Town of Mount Pleasant, the adopted FY 2003 budget for the Town of Greenburgh, and the adopted FY 2003 budget for Westchester County.

3.8.2.2. Future Without the Project

For the Eastview Site, a discussion of growth in the Future Without the Project was presented, based on the list of development proposals compiled as part of the Land Use, Zoning, and Public Policy analysis. Information concerning other NYCDEP projects that may be located on the Eastview Site in the Future Without the Project was presented, where available, including the estimated employment and property tax revenues. Information on possible changes in property tax rates and income, school district taxes, or other special assessments has been obtained from local and school financial offices. Any special changes planned in school operations that might affect quality of schools have been noted. Any proposed changes in the City's watershed program east of the Hudson River have been noted. Any planned changes in water rates for the Croton and Catskill/Delaware Water Supply Systems have also been noted, based on the analysis of Socioeconomic Conditions.

3.8.3. Potential Impacts

3.8.3.1. Potential Project Impacts

The anticipated year of operation for the proposed project is 2010. Therefore, potential project impacts are assessed by comparing the Future With the Project conditions against the Future Without the Project conditions for the year 2010.

This evaluation addresses whether the development of the proposed UV Facility at the Eastview Site would induce residential development in the Town of Mount Pleasant, Town of Greenburgh, and Pocantico Hills school district.

3.8.3.1.1. Property Tax Payments

An increase in tax revenues and a resultant increase in spending on community services and/or a decrease in tax rates could potentially induce growth by making the Towns of Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh more attractive to home buyers. The evaluation examines net gain in property tax revenue to Mount Pleasant and Greenburgh as a result of implementation of the proposed project. The resultant change in property tax revenue has been evaluated in light of whether property taxes are considered a major factor in home selection.

The impacts of potential increases in annual tax payments to the school district as a result of implementation of the proposed project have been evaluated. The increase related to the

proposed project has been assessed in light of existing school costs and a determination has been made as to whether the increase would be considered significant.

Indirect Economic Benefits Due to the Proposed Facility's Capital and Operating Expenditures. Using the economic information provided in the analysis of Socioeconomic Conditions, the potential for indirect employment growth has been assessed for the Eastview Site. The significance of the growth has been reviewed in light of existing and future anticipated employment and output to the County's economy.

Continuing Implementation of the Watershed Protection Program in the Catskill/Delaware System. Throughout the planning efforts for the development of a UV Facility, questions were raised regarding how the construction of a proposed facility might affect the NYCDEP's regulatory authority in the Catskill and Delaware watersheds (i.e., would NYCDEP relax its controls within the watershed on the assumption that a high level of protection would no longer be needed once disinfection is available). The argument was made that if these controls were relaxed with disinfection, more development would take place in the watershed, resulting in the potential for the proposed project to induce growth. These potential issues were examined in this section.

Downstream Communities with Access to Catskill/Delaware Water Supply System. The analysis identifies the downstream communities that may have the opportunity to obtain disinfected water from the Catskill/Delaware System. The evaluation considers the costs that identified communities would incur to provide or modify infrastructure required to connect or reestablish a connection to the City Water Supply System versus the savings that might be achieved if the community could avoid constructing its own disinfection facility.

3.8.3.2. *Potential Construction Impacts*

The anticipated year of peak construction for the proposed project is 2008. Therefore, potential construction impacts are assessed by comparing the Future With the Project conditions against the Future Without the Project conditions for the year 2008.

Capital costs spent during the construction period and the number of construction jobs created as a result of the proposed project are assessed to determine what (if any) growth-inducing effects would be felt by the local economy. Capital costs associated with other NYCDEP projects planned for the Eastview Site, including the Croton Water Treatment Plant project, are also assessed to determine what, if any, effects would be felt by the local economy during the construction period.

3.8.4. Mitigation

The need for mitigation was evaluated if any significant impacts were identified. Mitigation strategies are dependent upon the nature of the estimated displacement, and the potential impacts causing such displacement.