

**FINAL SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE
CROTON WATER TREATMENT PLANT
METHODOLOGIES**

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4.3. VISUAL CHARACTER

4.3.1. Introduction

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

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

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

4.3.2. Baseline Conditions

4.3.2.1. Existing Conditions

Existing urban design and visual resources were identified for the Eastview Site, Mosholu Site and Harlem River Site and the off-site facilities through site visits, including a full study area survey that recorded building and street size and type, and visual amenities. In accordance with the *CEQR Technical Manual*, the study areas generally corresponded to those used in the Land Use, Zoning, Public Policy and Neighborhood Character analyses; however, in cases where the relationships between visual resources and view corridors extended outside that area, the study area was expanded to accommodate those specific resources and corridors. Using these guidelines, the study areas for the project sites and off-site facilities were identified as follows: (1) a one-mile radius (approximately) was identified for the Eastview Site; (2) a one-half mile radius was identified for the Mosholu Site and Harlem River Site, the Jerome Park Reservoir-area facilities, and Gate House 1; and (3) a one quarter-mile radius was identified for the NCA Shaft Sites. Significant visual resources were identified and described, and included such landscape elements as waterfronts, water bodies, landmark structures and other cultural resources, shadows, parks, unique topographic or geologic features, and critical environmental areas, where applicable. Photographs were taken to document the urban design and visual character within each study area, particularly the architectural features and physical dimensions of existing structures. Critical environmental areas were considered where they contained

sensitive viewer groups or important vistas. For the Eastview, Mosholu and Harlem River Sites, each study area was also assessed to determine whether there are any open spaces or sunlight-sensitive architectural resources that could be affected by the proposed project. The distance and orientation of these resources to the project sites were identified.

4.3.2.2. *Future Without the Project*

Using the list of development proposals compiled in the Land Use, Zoning and Public Policy section, the analysis determined whether urban design or visual resources on the project sites and in the study area would change in the Future Without the Project.

4.3.3. Potential Impacts

4.3.3.1. *Potential Project Impacts*

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

A shadow analysis is required when a proposed action would result in new structures or additions to existing structures, and the shadows of these structures are tall enough to reach a park, natural feature (e.g., wetlands), or other significant resource dependent on sunlight. A screening analysis was conducted to determine whether the proposed project's shadows would fall on any open spaces or natural resources within the study area at any time of the year. For structures 50 feet or taller, the longest shadow that can be cast by the structure is 4.3 times its height. If open space resources or sunlight-sensitive resources were located within this range, a detailed analysis was conducted to determine the potential impact, pursuant to the *CEQR Technical Manual*.

4.3.3.2. *Potential Construction Impacts*

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

4.3.4. Mitigation

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