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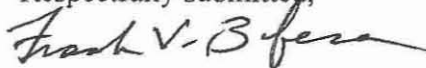
Hon. Jaclyn Brilling  
Secretary  
New York State Public Service Commission  
Three Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12223-1350

Re: Application of Champlain Hudson Power Express, Inc. for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need Pursuant to Article VII of the Public Service Law for the Construction, Operation and Maintenance of Two 1,000 MW High Voltage Direct Current Circuits from the Canadian Border to New York City and Bridgeport, Connecticut  
Case 10-T-0139

Dear Secretary Brilling:

Enclosed please find the Response to the New York State Department of Public Service Visual Assessment Information Needs Request. Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions or concerns with respect to this filing. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



Frank V. Bifera  
Attorney for Champlain Hudson  
Power Express, Inc. and CHPE  
Properties, Inc.

The New York State Public Service Commission

Case 10-T-0139

Application of Champlain Hudson Power Express, Inc. for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need Pursuant to Article VII of the Public Service Law for the Construction, Operation and Maintenance of Two 1,000 MW High Voltage Direct Current Circuits from the Canadian Border to New York City and Bridgeport, Connecticut

Response to the New York State Department of Public Service Visual Assessment  
Information Needs Request

August 11, 2010  
Submitted by Champlain Hudson Power Express, Inc.

## Introduction

Following the submittal of the Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) Visual Assessment Report on July 22, 2010, the New York Department of Public Service (NYSDPS) provided a Visual Assessment Information Needs Request, (Visual Assessment information needs – Case 10-T-0139), requesting clarification of some items and expansion of the west side of the Yonkers HVDC converter station site study area to address the river and select locations within Palisades Park on the New Jersey side. CHPEI hereby provides the requested additional information.

**Comment 1a.** *Application does not provide justification for limiting study area to 0.25 mile radius. While urban setting of converter station site may limit viewing in foreground within the City of Yonkers, DPS identified significant resources at foreground, middle ground and near background distances along Hudson River that warrant additional evaluation and representation in visual assessment.*

**Response 1a.** Although the Visual Policy recommends a 5-mile radius as a minimum study area for large projects, CHPEI chose a 0.25 mile study area around the aboveground facility sites. Initially, CHPEI performed site walkovers and concluded that due to high buildings, the elevated railway (at Yonkers), and awkward viewing angles, few areas surrounding the sites provided adequate full views for the purposes of photosimulations unless directly adjacent to the property. The general areas were photo-documented showing these obstructions. Based on these observations during the site visits and the general lack of views further out at ground level within the New York boundary, CHPEI chose a 0.25 mile study area due to these urban obstructions.

In addition, CHPEI would like to further clarify why a viewshed analysis was not used in the evaluation. In the NYSDEC visual policy “Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts”, July 200 (Visual Policy), a viewshed analysis is recommended as part of a visual assessment. CHPEI did not perform a viewshed analysis for the proposed permanent aboveground facilities including the Yonkers converter station site and alternative Sherman Creek substation site because these are proposed in urban environments, for which the building footprints and corresponding heights in three dimensions are not available for model input. Thus, the viewshed analysis results would be misrepresented for the majority of the project since the lack of building data would not provide a proper visual impediment in most areas surrounding the sites. Essentially all treeless urban locations would show views of the Project. Generally, the viewshed analysis works well with vegetated site locations or if 3D building data is available. Instead, CHPEI provided an inventory of resources and identified all sensitive receptors that fell within the 0.25 mile study area.

**Comment 1b** ... *DPS identified significant resources at foreground, middle ground and near background distances along Hudson River that warrant additional evaluation and representation in visual assessment.*

**Response 1b.** Below is a discussion of the areas of concern outlined in the request.

### **Additional Areas of Concern within the Expanded Study Area**

NYSDPS requested that the west side of the study area be expanded to include waters of the Hudson River, select locations within the Palisades Park on the New Jersey side, and further discussion of Habirshaw Park on the New York side. For the new locations of concern, photos were taken at 50 mm equivalents focal length representing normal human vision. Included also are zoom-in photographs that assist in illustrating the narrative. The red arrow in the photographs indicates the facility location unless otherwise noted.

#### **1) Hudson River Greenway Water Trail**

The Hudson River Greenway Water Trail is a part of the Hudson River Greenway Trail System, established to provide a small boat paddling trail along the river for day and long distance use. The Water Trail begins in two locations; the first is in the northern Saratoga County Town of Hadley in the Adirondack Park and the second in the northern Washington County Village of Whitehall at the north end of the Champlain Canal and at the head of Lake Champlain. The trail ends at Battery Park in Manhattan and encompasses 256 miles of the river. From on-the-water locations, there will be partial views of the facility at varying vantage points as one passes in the vicinity of the Yonkers shoreline.



**Photo 1.** This is a view of the Project area from the north side of the pier at the Alpine Picnic Area and Boat Basin located on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. This view is approximately 1.1 miles



from the Project site and provides a representative view of the Yonkers shoreline and the project location at distance.



**Photo 2.** This is a 92 mm equivalents focal length zoom-in detail from the same location as Photo 1. Although this view is not taken from on the water directly, it indicates a potential water view of the Yonkers shoreline and project location if one were closer.

There are 90 landfall locations for day use sites and designated camping areas along the water trail with the intention of providing an access point every 10 miles or less. The nearest use site, Kinnally Cove, Hastings-on-Hudson in Westchester County, is approximately 4.2 miles to the north. Figure 1 shows locations of these designated water trail use areas. The next nearest site is 5.1 miles down river at Inwood Hill Park, Dykman Landing in Manhattan.

## **2) Palisades Interstate Park, New Jersey**

There are several designated overlook locations in the park with scenic views of the Hudson River looking north, east, and south (Figure 2). Additionally, there exist several hiking trails and winter cross country ski trails in the New Jersey section of the park. For hiking, general access can be found at picnic areas and overlooks as well as from Park Headquarters. The two main hiking trails, Shore Trail and Long Path generally cover the length of the park in a north-south orientation. These two trails have been designated as National Recreation Trails. Several other shorter east-west trails serve as connectors. Designated cross country ski trails are available at the State Line Lookout area. It should be noted as a general comment that in the summer, much

of the visibility to the Project will likely be limited due to leaf-on conditions except for those overlook areas and treeless gaps along the trail. The potential for visibility will increase at any point in the park during leaf-off conditions.

The following provides discussion on those NYSDPS requested viewpoints within the New Jersey section of the Palisades Park.

*a) Alpine Picnic Area and Boat Basin, including NRHP Kearney House site.*

The Alpine Picnic Area and Boat Basin is a riverfront picnic area and marina in Alpine, New Jersey. Facilities include boat docking, beach, car-top boat launching (canoe and kayak) restrooms, water, grills, and vending machines. Several hiking trails can be accessed from the park.

The NRHP Blackledge-Kearney House is located on the premises and is the oldest building in the New Jersey section of the Palisades Interstate Park. This area was known throughout the nineteenth century as "Closter Landing." It was part of the fishing villages and riverfront landings along the Palisades today. Of the dozen or more houses at Closter Landing, only the Blackledge-Kearney House remains.



**Photo 3.** This photo is a view of the Alpine Picnic Area and the location of the Blackledge-Kearney House. Figure 2 shows the plan view location, approximately 1.1 mile from the Project site. Photos 1 and 2 show the view from the picnic area looking across the Hudson River towards the site.



From Photos 1 and 2, one sees an urban waterfront. Although there is a mix of building heights and sizes and industrial/commercial land uses, the waterfront development in a direct line of site from the camera location to the proposed facility is low enough to indicate that there will be views of the facility. From a further distance such as this location, one can see the homogeneity that the brick buildings bring to the view, and that the lighter inconsistent building materials of several of the other buildings give contrast. The selection of an appropriate color for building materials will assist in lending to some of the existing homogeneity.

***b) Alpine Lookout***

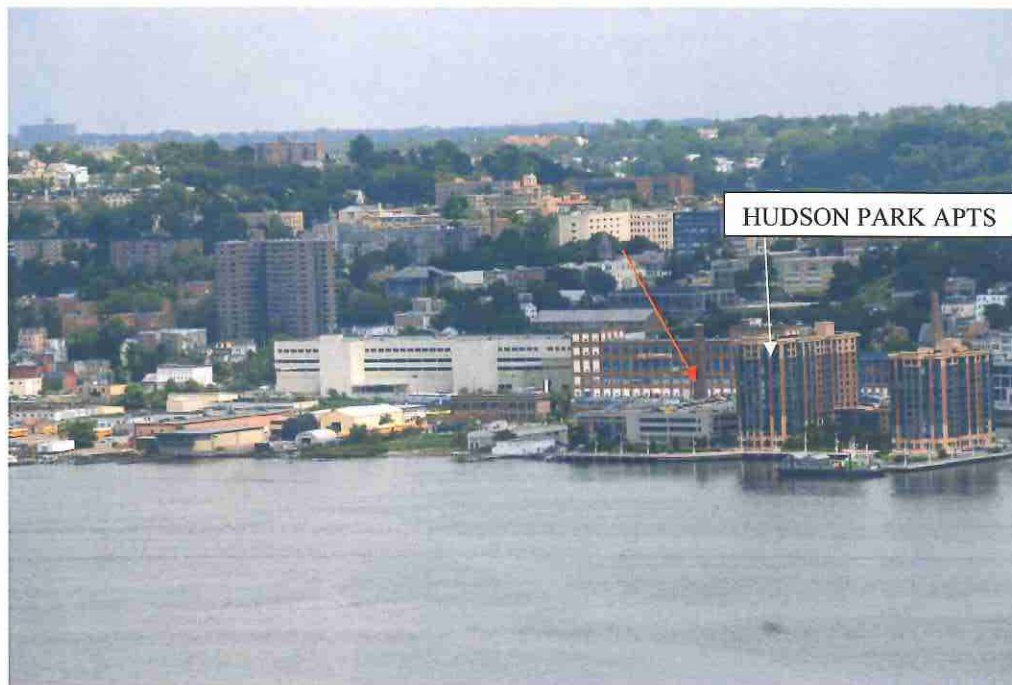
Alpine Lookout is a transportation pull-off area along the Palisades Interstate Parkway in Alpine, New Jersey with views of the Hudson River. It has an elevated view of 430 ft above and towards the Project site that is approximately 1.4 miles away. It has a zoom viewing scope available on the premises.



**Photo 4.** The Alpine pull-off overlook with scenic views of the Hudson River and Yonkers, and Westchester County. This lookout is situated approximately 430 feet msl, higher than the Project location and is approximately 1.4 miles southwest of the site. See Figure 2 for plan view location.



**Photo 5.** View from Alpine Lookout towards the site using a 50 mm equivalents detail focal length representing normal human vision.





**Photo 6.** View from Alpine Lookout at a zoom level of 300 mm equivalents. There is a panorama viewing scope at the lookout site that allows magnified views.

The Alpine Lookout area, approximately 430 feet msl, is 1.4 miles southwest of the site with a view that is distinctly elevated over the Yonkers shoreline. In Photo 5 representing normal human vision, the view is distant and objects lose detail, and aside from some of the larger developments that are consistently rectangular or square, most of the remaining shapes blend together in a more homogenous fashion. The terrain rises in elevation from the shoreline where the horizon and furthest treeline are unimpeded with any dissimilar shapes. The foreground, including that area of the Project site however, do give the appearance of visual scatter due to varying colors and contrast of an urban nature. From this vantage point, the upper middle to left portion of the facility would be visible. The Hudson Park Apartments at the shoreline and to the right provides a visual impediment to the transformer area of the Project. Photo 6 shows a zoomed in view that is representative of those who may be using binoculars or the viewing scope at the site.

#### **c) Park Headquarters**

The Palisade Park Headquarters located along Henry Hudson Drive in Alpine, New Jersey is approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the Project location. The Park Headquarters contain the administrative offices for the park in addition to the parkway police, and offices of the Palisades Nature Association and the Blackledge-Kearney House. There is a grassy landscaped area behind the headquarter buildings that leads to an overlook area that is near the cliffs.



**Photo 7.** View of Yonkers shoreline from Park Headquarters. This photo represents a view with normal human vision. The camera location is approximately 1.3 miles from the Project site.



**Photo 8.** View of Yonkers shoreline at 300 mm equivalents focal length from Park Headquarters.

The Yonkers shoreline from the Park Headquarters vantage point is similar to the Alpine Lookout area. The distances are similar, 1.3 miles and 1.4 miles from the Project site, respectively. Likewise the elevations are similar as well and as such offer views of a similar appearing shoreline in terms of size and scale as seen from a northwesterly orientation. As indicated in Photos 7 and 8, due to the higher vantage point and low waterfront development, nearly the entire facility will be visible.

### State Line Lookout Vista



**Photo 9.** View of the State Line Lookout in the northern section of the Palisades Interstate Park.





**Photo 10.** State Line Lookout with a view representing unaided vision. The proposed facility is approximately 3.5 miles away from this location.



**Photo 11.** State Line Lookout view towards the site at 300 mm equivalents focal length detail.

The State Line Lookout is in the northern section of the Palisades Interstate Park located at the highest point on the Palisade cliffs at an elevation of 532 feet in Alpine, New Jersey. It is approximately 3.5 miles from the Project location. From this distance at normal human vision the details found in the landscape become subordinate to the whole: trees become solid masses and buildings become simple forms. Edges define the patterns in the view. The colors of any new structure will become somewhat muted. Although the Project will theoretically be visible, Photos 10 and 11 illustrate the limitations of human vision at greater distances or those atmospheric/meteorological conditions that may cause other visual interference, such as haze or inclement weather.

### **3) Tappan Zee Area of Exceptional Beauty**

Figure 2 shows the southern extent of the Tappan Zee scenic area. The Tappan Zee area general extent is from near Clarkstown/Ossining, NY to the north down to Greenburg, NY to the south. At distances in the northern region views will be limited from water level. Many of the views to the site at the southern extent may likely be blocked by larger waterfront development. The State Line Lookout noted in Section 2d may provide the most optimal representative viewing location mostly because of its elevated position in the landscape. Elevated areas can offer significant panoramas when views extend further out. When seen at these greater distances, the effects of distance and atmospheric conditions should make the surface textures, detailing, and

form of the structures significantly less visible. Colors will be reduced to neutral shades and atmospheric conditions may degrade the view.

4) **Habirshaw Park on the Hudson**

Habirshaw Park along with the Beczak Environmental Education Center is located off of Alexander Street approximately 300 feet northwest of the Project site, adjacent to the Hudson River. The property is protected by a 25-acre conservation easement held by The Scenic Hudson Land Trust. This area of approximately 2-acres hosts a walking trail, a restored tidal wetland, views of the Palisades, and the Beczak Environmental Education Center, a non-profit environmental education facility.



**Photo 12.** This view is from Habirshaw Park looking southeast towards the site. Camera location is approximately 500 feet northwest of the site.





**Photo 13.** This view is from the waterfront dock area near a restored wetland, looking southeast towards the site. Camera location is approximately 680 feet to the proposed facility.

Although the photographs were taken during hazy conditions, the proximity to the site clearly shows there will be a high level of discernible detail of the facility from Photos 12 and 13 vantage points. Photo 12 shows an urban condition with the brick Kawasaki Rail Car Inc. building standing prominent in the background. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Amtrak elevated rail line can be seen as a horizontal shape running across the view at nearly the same height as the black iron fence in the foreground. The facility will be clearly visible above the rail line from this location aside from a few single intervening trees. The leftmost portion of the facility will be partially blocked by the environmental center (white building on left). Photo 13 taken from one of the western most locations on the property shows that the view of the facility will be partially obstructed by the vegetation of the wetland existing at the shoreline.

**Comment 2.** *The report should address appearance and potential viewing opportunities from public vantages for cable marking signs at landfall locations.*

**Response 2.** CHPEI has prepared conceptual warning signage for the cable landfall location at Yonkers noted below.



Representative signage in the conceptual stage. This sign as represented in Photos 14 and 15 has an 8'x8' mounted dimension. Figure 2 shows the cable landfall location at the western end of Wells Avenue.



**Photo 14.** This view is northerly towards the cable landfall location area from the waterfront park at the end of Dock Street, showing a conceptual image of the proposed signage. Distance to the sign is approximately 435 feet.



**Photo 15.** View southerly to the cable landfall location showing a conceptual view of the proposed signage. The photograph is taken from a waterfront dock behind (westerly) the Beczak Environmental Education Center, approximately 380 feet away. The Yonkers Canoe Club is the white building to the left. The Hudson high-rise apartments are the tall brick buildings. Yonkers Pier can be seen towards the right of the photograph with the blue roof.





**Photo 16.** View of the signage towards the water at the waterfront park at the end of Wells Avenue. For mitigation efforts, the back of the sign was designed to generally match water color.

**Comment 3.** *Facility design, color (including roof), surface treatment and lighting controls are appropriate considerations for minimizing contrasts. Exterior switchyard equipment screening, partial enclosure, and use of non-specular surfaces should be addressed for potential mitigating measures. Use of full-cutoff exterior lighting fixtures without drop-down optics, and use of task lighting as appropriate for switchyard areas should be specified.*

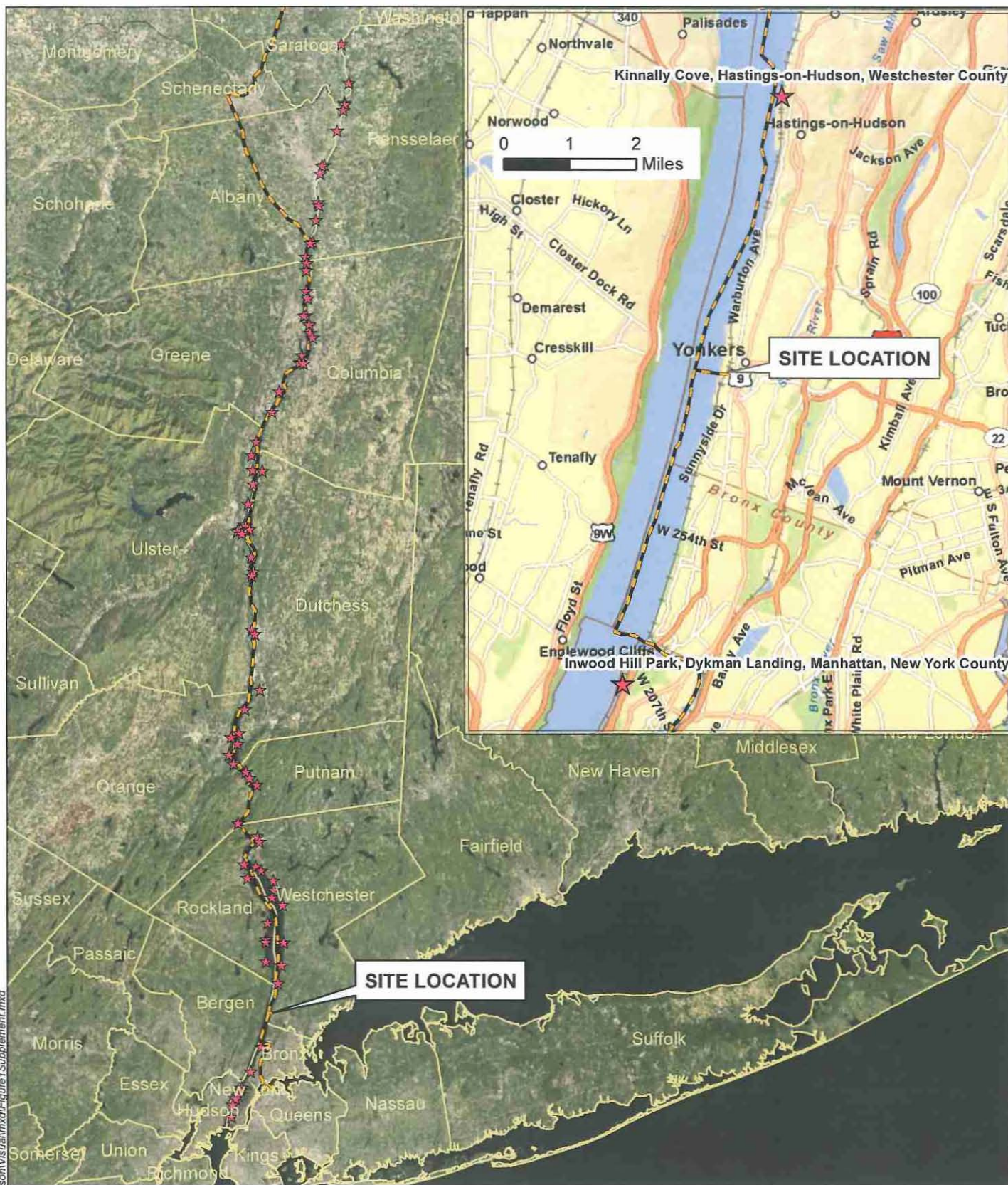
**Response 3.** The composition of the Yonkers substation will in itself be part of the visual mitigation for this project. CHPEI will be working with professional designers to design a building that will house the substation blending in with the existing buildings and having minimal impacts on the viewshed. The surfaces of the building will be non-specular, using materials that do not shine. The roof may be designed as a “green roof” covered with vegetation that would help reduce stormwater runoff. If possible, solar panels may also be included in the design.

Effective screening from some vantage points will be provided by existing buildings such as: an existing parking garage and a large building on the waterfront northwest of the proposed substation. Within the switch yard, equipment will be screened with walls that match the theme of the converter station and the surrounding buildings.

Full cut off exterior lighting will be implemented reduce the impact of lighting on adjacent buildings. Where possible, task lighting will be used within the switch yard to reduce visibility and light pollution.

All structures will be routinely maintained to prevent substation from becoming an "eye sore". Grounds will be kept and maintenance such as cleaning and painting will be routine.





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- ★ HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY WATER TRAIL SITES
- CHPEI PROJECT ROUTE



0 10 20 Miles



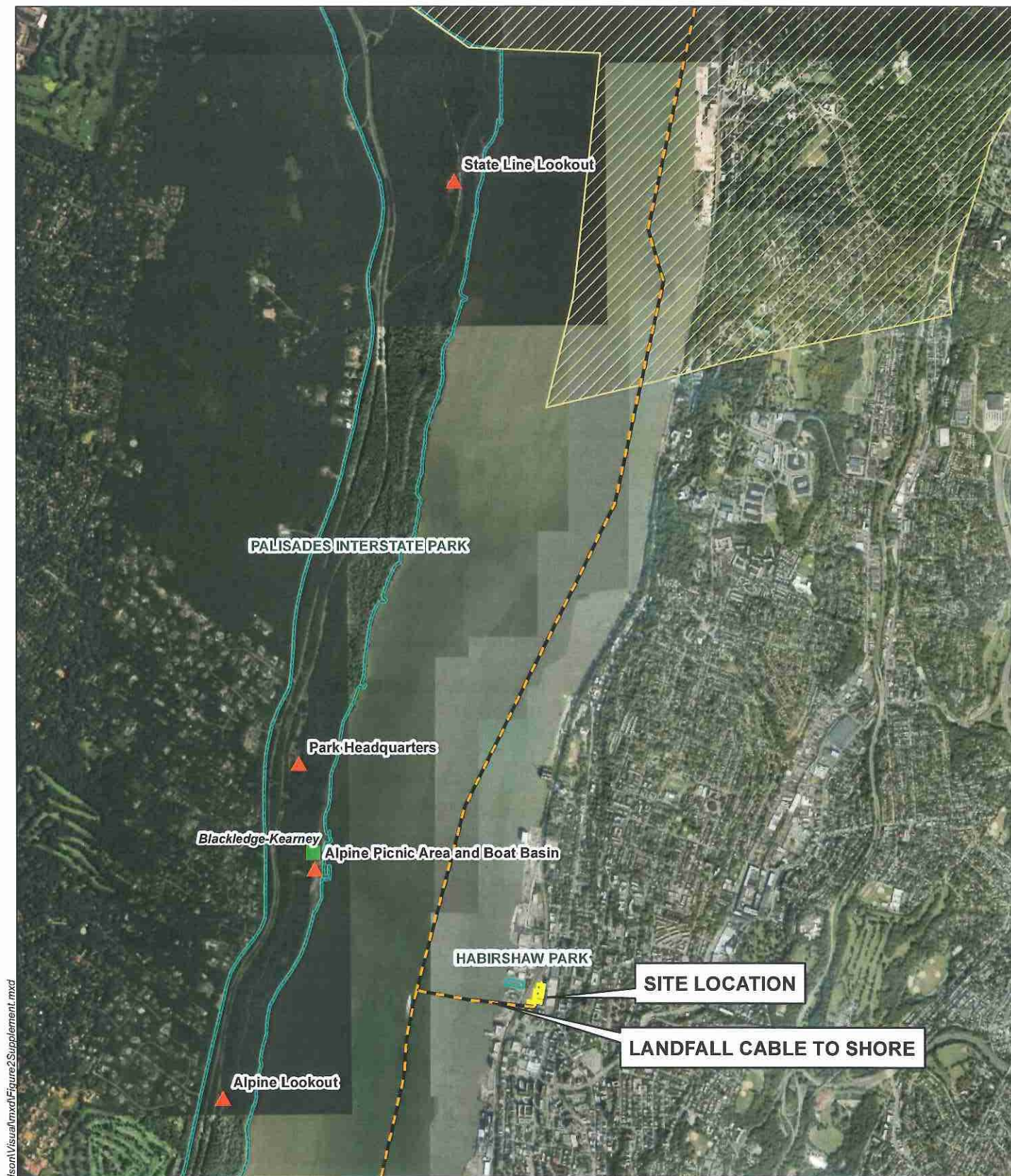
**Champlain Hudson Power Express Project**  
Champlain Hudson Power Express Inc.

Figure 1

**HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY WATER TRAIL  
DAY USE AND LONG DISTANCE SITES**

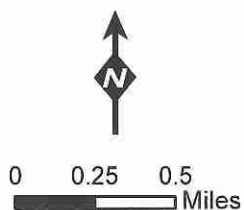
Prepared by: 8/10/2010





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- PROPOSED CONVERTER STATION LAYOUT
- CHPEI PROJECT ROUTE
- NJ PALISADES AREAS OF CONCERN
- PARKS OF CONCERN
- TAPPAN ZEE AREA OF EXCEPTIONAL BEAUTY
- NRHP OF CONCERN



Transmission  
Champlain Hudson Power Express Project  
Champlain Hudson Power Express Inc.

Figure 2

### Additional Sensitive Receptors