

K. AESTHETICS

The project study area from an aesthetics classification can be considered as sprawling open space with low density development concentrated along the major highway corridors. Although the project study area has similar characteristics throughout, several unique viewsheds have been identified as follows (Exhibit II-K-1):

1. I-87 corridor from Exit 7 to Century Hill Drive (Photograph 1)
2. Route 9 corridor (south) from Route 7 to Dunsbach Ferry Road (Photograph 2)
3. Route 9 corridor (north) from Dunsbach Ferry Road to Fonda Road (Photograph 3)
4. Route 9 corridor viewing east to Rensselaer County (Photograph 4)
5. Miller Road from Haswell Road north to Route 7 viewing east to Rensselaer County (Photograph 5)
6. Route 7 corridor from Route 9 east to Elm Sheet (Photograph 6)

I-87 Corridor:

Running in a north-south direction there are significant views from I-87 into the study area which extend eastward to Route 9. This viewshed, as well as the viewshed from within the study area to I-87 to the west, is generally concentrated in an area from Exit 7 of I-87 extending north to Century Hill Drive. This area contains a mix of commercial/retail/office uses along with large tracts of open space. The viewshed is extensive allowing generally uninterrupted views over a broad area.



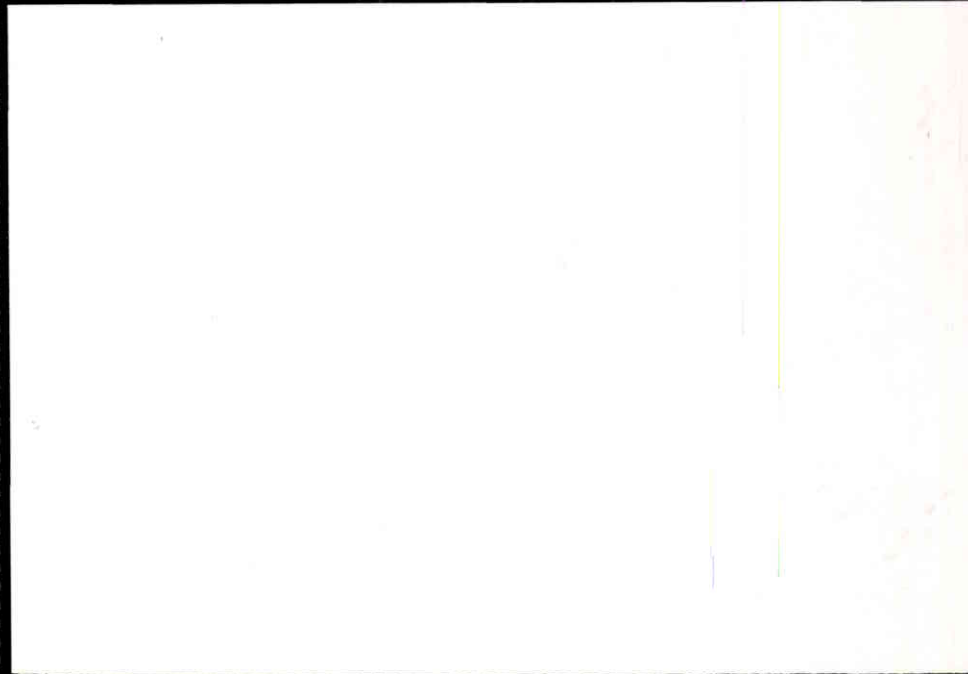
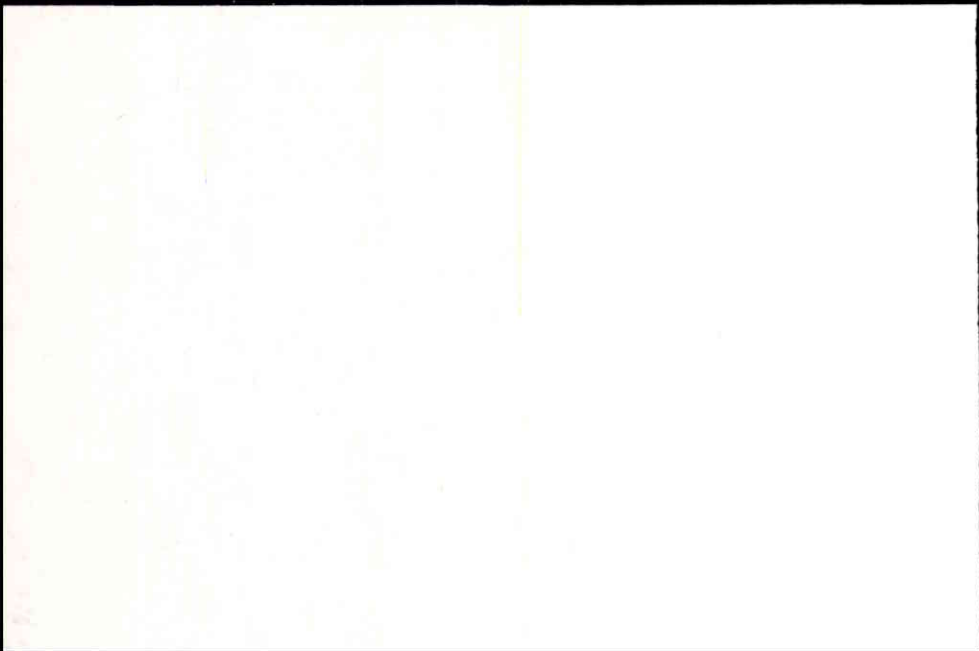
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Route 9 Corridor (south):

The predominant viewshed in this area is from the Route 9 corridor west to I-87 and beyond as well as views along the corridor itself. Existing views immediately adjacent to the corridor tend to be consistent with commercial strip type development.

Route 9 Corridor (north):

The predominant viewshed in this area is from Route 9 along the immediate fringe of the corridor, interdispersed with views from the road into outlying viewsheds. Existing views are for the most part unobtrusive reflecting the low density scale of existing development. Views are primarily concentrated from the highway and framed by the linear development which has occurred along Route 9.

Route 9 Corridor Viewing East to Rensselaer County:

Concentrated primarily north of Dunsbach Ferry Road and south of Boght Road, the distant viewsheds are primarily from Route 9 east to Rensselaer County. The area is typified by low density development consisting of single family residential homes on large lots, with a mix of undeveloped open space.

Miller Road:

This is one of the more significant viewsheds in the project study area. Initiating from Haswell Road and continuing north to Route 7 this area offers significant vistas and views east to Rensselaer County. The predominant land use is single family homes which are concentrated along the west side of

Miller Road. The east side of Miller Road is generally open with the topography dropping rapidly towards the Hudson River floodplains. This allows for uninterrupted distant views east into Rensselaer County.

Route 7 Corridor:

Running in an east-west direction the Route 7 corridor is typified by single family residential development concentrated to the north with undeveloped open space the predominant land use to the south. A visual architectural barrier has been installed primarily along the northern edge of Route 7 in an effort to screen the adjacent residential subdivisions. The most dramatic viewsheds initiate in the Miller Road area with distant viewsheds into the City of Troy, New York and surrounding communities.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

Future development will undoubtedly have an impact on the visual and aesthetic character of the project study area. However this is an area where close cooperation between the Town and developers results in site plans which are sensitive to aesthetics and viewsheds.

The major visual impact will occur in the immediate vicinity of the above mentioned highway corridors. Guidelines for protecting and enhancing the aesthetic character should be developed which are specifically tailored to the development trend projected for these corridors. However, there are certain mitigation measures which can be implemented in most situations; these include:

- Limiting the number of curb cuts along major highway corridors
- Encourage proper circulation of interior subdivision roads which permits the design of residential lots that are sensitive to

existing drainage patterns, that minimize disturbance to natural vegetation and buffer zones, and maximize existing topographic conditions to create a more imaginative design.

- Encourage circulation of interior subdivision roads that avoids typical grid type pattern layout
- Encourage cluster type development where appropriate so as to protect existing vegetation, scenic views, and natural drainage courses.
- Encourage the use of buffer zones between residential and commercial land uses. Also encourage the maintenance of natural vegetation cover or enhancing the existing vegetation with additional landscaping in these buffer zones.
- Require all new development to install electric, telephone and cable TV utilities underground.
- Require parking for commercial and retail land uses to be located behind the building along with proper screening (i.e., berms, landscape, fencing) of the parking lots.
- Require a specific setback in commercially zoned corridors so as to maintain the openness of the road while reducing the number of roadside distractions.

In addition to the above, there are specific mitigation measures that should be implemented in the following identified viewsheds:

I-87 Corridor:

The constraining factor in this area is the change in elevation. From I-87 the topography gradually rises to a high point in the general vicinity of the Route 9 corridor. From this high point the land begins to drop off to the Hudson River basin to the east. Development in this area has a unique opportunity for creative expression especially due to the exposure to I-87. Nowhere else in the Town are the views as extensive as they are from this portion of I-87 corridor which view directly into the study area.

Development in this area should give careful consideration to building height and scale. Opportunities exist so as to allow development to take advantage of this exposure to I-87 while at the same time insisting upon site development construction techniques which protect the viewshed.

Bordered by I-87 to the west and Route 9 to the east, this envelope of land can be considered as having two (2) exterior view points. Encouraging building placement along the fringes and concentrating parking, services and circulation within the interior envelope of the land will help ensure visual compatibility. Allowing development to "turn it's backs" on either one of these corridors may result in views across large expansive parking lots and services which will undoubtedly have a negative impact. The architectural design of the buildings along with site development should be sensitive to the topographic changes in elevation while maximizing these natural changes for aesthetic and functional screening purposes.

Route 9 Corridor

The majority of the developed land use north of Dunsbach Ferry Road is that of single family residential or low intensity type commercial office. Particular attention should be directed toward future development to ensure that the architectural character, height and bulk of new buildings are compatible with those adjacent land uses. Maintaining the appropriate setbacks is also important for any new construction so that the visual integrity of the corridor is not reduced.

Miller Road

As mentioned previously the topography of the land east of Miller Road drops off very rapidly to the Hudson River Floodplain. Careful consideration in protecting these views should be required during the project review phase for all future development. Possible use of cluster type development and requiring new development to blend into the existing topography so as not to obstruct these views is recommended.

Route 7

Due to the fact that Route 7 is a major link between I-87 and I-787 it is recommended that careful consideration be given to providing for proper setbacks, vegetative buffer areas, and physical visual barriers for all new residential construction along the Route 7 corridor. This will reduce the overall potential aesthetic impacts created by the major highway systems.