
Addendum to the LandWorks Visual Assessment for the Seacoast Reliability Project

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Prepared for

Public Service Company of New Hampshire,
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Prepared by

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I. ADDENDUM TO LANDWORKS VA

SEACOST RELIABILITY PROJECT VISUAL ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this Addendum to the Project Visual Assessment (VA) is to provide revisions to the VA based on Mr. Denis Hebert’s pre-filed testimony submitted to the SEC on July 28, 2017, which identifies Nimble Hill Road as a locally designated scenic road in the Town of Newington. The Town’s Master Plan identifies that all class V roads east of the Spaulding Turnpike are locally designated roads. When LandWorks completed its original review LandWorks relied on NH DOT data that had Nimble Hill Road listed as a Class II road. At some point after my initial review, I was made aware that Nimble Hill Road was given to the Town to maintain by NH DOT. This change altered Nimble Hill Road’s status from a Class II road to a Class V road. Therefore, Nimble Hill Road would be classified as a locally designated scenic resource according to the Town’s master plan.

The designation of Nimble Hill Road as a scenic road is based on one basic criterion in the Town of Newington, as forwarded in the Town Plan – that all Class V roads are scenic. This qualifies the road as a scenic resource under the SEC Rules 102.45 (c). However, the town designation is one based on road classification rather than any evaluation, identification or guidance as to how and why it is considered to be a scenic road. Thus, it is left up to the reviewer in a scenic assessment to establish the parameters for assessing its scenic qualities, their importance and value, and the effects of any changes in the landscape that might affect such roads.

In the case of Nimble Hill, as with all other scenic resources, we have applied the established and accepted methodology for assessing visual sensitivity by initially evaluating its cultural designation and scenic quality. If the first step of the assessment yields a ‘Moderate-High’ or ‘High’ visual sensitivity rating, then the reviewer applies the second step, which is to assess visual and viewer effect. The evaluation of Nimble Hill Road yielded a ‘Moderate’ level of sensitivity and thus it was not necessary to proceed with the second step of the analysis. (see Tables 1-3 below)

TABLE 1. CULTURAL DESIGNATION RATINGS

RESOURCE WITH POTENTIAL VISIBILITY	DESIGNATION/OWNERSHIP/ MANAGEMENT	CULTURAL DESIGNATION RATING
Nimble Hill Road	LOCAL (Town of Newington) SCENIC ROAD	HIGH

TABLE 2. SCENIC QUALITY RATINGS

RESOURCE WITH POTENTIAL VISIBILITY	SCENIC VALUE CRITERIA							TOTAL SCORE	SCENIC QUALITY RATING ¹
	(a) Landform	(b) Vegetation	(c) Water	(d) Color	(e) Adjacent Scenery	(f) Scarcity	(g) Cultural Modification		
Nimble Hill Road	1	3	0	2	2	1	1	10	LOW

¹ The total scores for scenic quality are calculated and assigned one of three ratings based on the total points:

Low = Resource has features that are fairly common to the physiographic region (11 or less points)

Moderate = Resource has a combination of some outstanding features and some that are fairly common to the physiographic region (12-18 points)

High = Resource combines the most outstanding characteristics of each rating factor (19-32 points)

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TABLE 3. OVERALL SENSITIVITY RATINGS

RESOURCE WITH POTENTIAL VISIBILITY	CULTURAL DESIGNATION RATING	SCENIC QUALITY RATING	OVERALL SENSITIVITY RATING ²
Nimble Hill Road	HIGH	LOW	MODERATE

Nimble Hill Road is a “main street” for the town of Newington and as such has several town properties and facilities along it, and is characterized by extensive open mowed areas, intermittent treelines, as well as low density residential uses. It is typical of many rural and suburban roads in this region and does not have any identified vantage points, scenic resources (aside from the Darius Frink Farm) or unusual or compelling landscapes along its length. The road begins at Route 4 in a developed area with some large industrial type structures and a strong sense of a highway environment and associated infrastructure. It does have several historic properties at the end of the road, but these are well out of view of the overhead portions of the proposed transmission upgrade and will experience no visual effect from the upgrade. Distribution lines and structures exist along the road edge.

The proposed SRP crosses Nimble Hill Road in the vicinity of the Old Post Road intersection and then roughly parallels the road for about 3,500 feet before turning southeast as the corridor leads to its terminus in Portsmouth. At the Post Road intersection, the transmission line will be buried underground so the current crossing of the existing 34.5kV line is eliminated, which will actually improve the visual character of the roadscape. The other key view of the proposed transmission line will be from the vicinity of the school and recreation facilities (which are closer to Fox Point Road) and the view towards the line is not a visually sensitive area – in fact, a smokestack is in the view along with the existing 34.5kV line. There are intervening trees, parking lots and buildings when viewed from the Nimble Hill roadside – all contributing to a pleasant effect, but not one that most people would consider out of the ordinary or particularly scenic in and of itself. The landscape is fairly flat in this area, and there is suburban type landscaping along with typical trees and wooded areas found in the Seacoast region. Taken together, the road is scenic insofar as any similar road of this area has some scenic qualities of a rural/low density suburban landscape with tree and lawn lined streets, but it does not rise to a level of being a highly valued and distinct scenic resource that is overly sensitive to change. Over the length of Nimble Hill Road, which is slightly more than a mile and a half in length, the potential views of any overhead structures would be quite brief. Travelers northbound may possibly experience a brief view of the riser structure 1,500’ – 1,750’ to the west along a 500 foot stretch of roadway, and southbound/northbound travelers will cross the ROW in the vicinity of Old Post Road where, for about 100 feet, the riser structures would be visible to the west and east. At best, about 8% of the total length of road would have views of the riser structures - and of that only 100 feet with a view of the easterly structure. The primary view will be of the underground section when looking to the west. Overall visibility of the project will be relatively short in duration, and thus Nimble Hill Road can reasonably accommodate the potential visual effects that will result from the proposed Project.

² Overall rating system:
 Each rating is assigned a point value:
 Low = 1
 Moderate = 2
 High = 3
 Total points are then combined and assigned overall ratings based on the following breakdown:
 Low = 2 points
 Low-Moderate = 3 points
 Moderate = 4 points
 Moderate-High = 5 points
 High = 6 points

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Photo from Nimble Hill Road at the intersection with Old Post Road looking west towards the existing corridor.



Photo from Nimble Hill Road looking east towards the existing corridor where it parallels Hannah Lane.

SEACOST RELIABILITY PROJECT VISUAL ASSESSMENT



Photo looking north to the existing corridor to the west of Nimble Hill Road just before it crosses the road, as viewed from Little Bay Road.



Photo taken from Nimble Hill Road looking southeasterly across playing fields adjacent to the Newington School towards the existing corridor.

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Two photos showing typical winter conditions and landscape along Nimble Hill Road.

