

12. Visual Quality

12.1. Existing Conditions

Aside from the northern and western perimeter, Area A has poor visual quality due to the industrial type buildings and storage areas present. The industrial-type structures comprise utilitarian facades – which are generally lacking in architectural detail – while the storage yards host collections of exposed maintenance and construction materials as well as heavy vehicles (e.g., trucks and other road maintenance equipment). The other proposed development areas are mostly vegetated and have no existing architecture or lighting.

12.2. Potential Impacts of Proposed Project

The proposed project is conceptual in nature at this stage. Until the Selected Developer prepares site plans and architectural plans of the proposed building structures it is difficult to gauge the change in visual character, except in a very general manner.

Area A will have the greatest change in visual character, both from removal of unsightly buildings and outdoor storage, and by addition of the largest buildings proposed. The Selected Developer's proposal indicated that the arena would be 70 feet in height. This is taller than the government buildings in the area, the tallest of which is the multi-story skilled nursing center. The upper portion of the arena is likely to be visible from a wide area, depending on the viewer's line of site and the trees and other buildings that would be in between the viewer's location and the arena. The heights of the other Area A buildings were not specified.

Area B buildings consist of townhouses and condominiums, where the height was not specified. If these are two story buildings they would be largely hidden by buffer vegetation along the site perimeter. If they are three story buildings or higher, the upper levels will likely be visible from some of the surrounding area.

Area C would have no structures other than a small restroom/concession building and as a recreation area, would be visually pleasing. Lighting of the athletic fields would have to be designed to minimize off-site transmission.

Area D would be similar in visual character to other area industrial parks that are located within close proximity.

Areas E and F would be internal to the County's property with limited views from are roadways. The structures would likely be similar in visual character to the existing County maintenance and administration buildings.

12.3. Proposed Mitigation

In terms of visual character, mitigation can be in the form of architectural style, lighting and landscaping (including screening by trees and shrubs).

Architecture

The Selected Developer's proposal showed the architectural style of the housing in Area B (Figure 2-3) which would be reasonably similar to other area housing types. The architecture of the other structures was not specified.

Lighting

The proposed project is conceptual at this time. Thus, there is no detailed site plan to review for potential lighting impacts. However, in order to receive site plan approval, the developer of the proposed project must comply with the lighting requirements and limitations of the Town of Brookhaven's "dark skies" ordinance that was adopted "to protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare, the quality of life, and the ability to view the night sky."

Article § 85-463.B of the Town of Brookhaven Code (Code) establishes the following provisions for exterior lighting in order to:

- (1) To provide safe roadways for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians;*
- (2) To protect against direct glare and excessive lighting;*
- (3) To ensure that sufficient lighting can be provided where needed to promote safety and security;*
- (4) To prevent light trespass in all areas of the Town;*
- (5) To protect and reclaim the ability to view the night sky;*
- (6) To allow the flexibility in the style of lighting fixtures;*

- (7) To provide lighting guidelines;*
- (8) To discourage the wasting of energy used to produce excessive lighting;*
- (9) To provide assistance to property owners and occupants in bringing nonconforming lighting into conformance with this article.*
- (10) To minimize the impact of stray lighting on human health, habitat and environment.*

Under Article § 85-466, the Code establishes limitations for the placement and height of fixtures for residential and nonresidential lighting as follows:

- A. No residential or nonresidential luminaires shall be taller than 20 feet from the natural grade to the lowest light-emitting part of the fixture. Parking area lights are encouraged to be greater in number, lower in height and lower in light level, as opposed to fewer in number, higher in height and higher in light level.*
- B. Luminaires for municipal playing fields and new municipal streetlights shall be exempt from the height restriction, provided all other provisions of this article are met.*
- C. Privately owned or leased light fixtures located on public utility poles or located in the public right-of-way are prohibited.*
- D. All exterior lighting rated to be lamped at 1,800 lumens (100 watts incandescent) and greater shall use full cutoff luminaires, as determined by photometry test or certified by the manufacturer, and installed as designed with the light source directed downward. All exterior lighting 1,800 lumens (100 watts incandescent) and less shall use fully shielded fixtures and shall be installed as designed.*

The Code also establishes illumination levels and prohibits negative effects of lighting according to the following excerpts from Article § 85-467:

- A. All residential and nonresidential exterior lighting shall not cause light trespass and shall protect adjacent properties from glare and excessive lighting.*
- B. All lighting in the Town of Brookhaven shall not exceed recommended light levels as listed in Table of Illumination Limits.*

C. All streetlight luminaries shall be full cutoff, except that a historic-style decorative luminaire may emit up to 2% of its total lumens above the horizontal plane; and

(1) For roadway lighting a determination is made that the purpose of the lighting installation or replacement cannot be achieved by installation of reflectorized roadway markers, lines, warnings, informational signs, or other passive means; and

(2) Adequate consideration has been given to conserving energy and minimizing glare, sky glow, and light trespass.

The Code also provides general standards for nonresidential exterior lighting according to Article § 85-469 as follows:

A. All exterior lighting shall be designed, located, and lamped in order to prevent:

(1) Overlighting;

(2) Energy waste;

(3) Glare;

(4) Light trespass; and

(5) Unnecessary skyglow.

B. All conforming and nonconforming exterior lighting shall be turned off within 1/2 hour after the close of business and no later than 11:00 p.m. for those businesses that are closed to the public on or before 9:00 p.m. Lights that are controlled by photocells and timers are encouraged, as is the use of sensor-activated lights to replace existing lighting which may be needed for safety or emergency purposes.

C. Under-canopy lights, such as service station lighting, shall be full cutoff and fully recessed to prevent glare and light trespass. Illuminance levels at gas stations shall not exceed those established in Table 3. Editor's Note: Table 3 is included at the end of this chapter (see Attachment 9).

D. Area exterior lights. All area exterior lights shall be full cutoff luminaries.

E. After the adoption of this article, no person, firm, owner, tenant, person in possession, partnership, corporation or other business entity shall install, replace, relamp, or repair any luminaire that lights a public right-of-way within the Town of Brookhaven, under the Town's jurisdiction, without first receiving prior written approval for such installation from the applicable board, department, division or agency of the Town of Brookhaven.

F. Automatic teller machine (ATM) and other bank lighting shall be full cutoff and shall not cause glare or light trespass. Light levels shall not exceed those established by the New York State ATM Lighting Law as enacted in 2006.

G. Unshielded wall packs and floodlights are prohibited.

Because the Site Plan must comply with Article XXXIX § 85-463 through § 85-475, the negative impacts of lighting from the proposed project will be mitigated to a level that is considered acceptable to the Town of Brookhaven. There are numerous examples of equipment and techniques that are currently employed by the lighting industry for complying with the Code's lighting requirements. Fixture types are described and depicted in a guidelines attachment to the Code. The Code's lighting guidelines include configurations and placement methods as examples of acceptable practices. Because the technology and practice of efficient illumination is well developed, with appropriate fixtures available as standard equipment, there would be no technological or implementation barriers to meeting the lighting requirements of the Code.

Landscaping

The Master Plan showed significant landscaping in all Areas. It is anticipated that natural buffers would be maintained and enhanced along the site perimeter. An excerpt from the Selected Developer's proposal indicates the design philosophy:

The Great Lawn will be the single largest open area within the community established as a natural setting for the gathering of neighbors. The drama and spectacle of the open area enhanced by a variety of landscape and activity areas will attract many residents to visit. A wide variety of landscaped areas will be provided from formal gardens, which will take advantage of the natural cycles of the seasons, to natural landscaped areas that represent and reflect the varied

natural habitats of Long Island. Plant material that encourages local wildlife to flourish will be utilized. Bird watching will become a favorite pastime of residents and visitors. The Great Lawn will rival the great arboretums of Long Island as the plants and trees mature. Places like Old Westbury Gardens, Bayard Cutting Arboretum, and others are living examples of the natural landscape evolving into centers of beauty. Community gardens, in association with the Suffolk County Farm, will be developed for residents to grow their own vegetables and flowers. Nature trails and a timed jogging trail will circumvent the residential community, the recreational area and the fishing lake. Kiosks for timed events will be placed along the jogging trail.