

## **Attachment G**

Stakeholder Outreach Responses

# Attachment G: Visual Assessment Outreach Synopsis

## Hoffman Falls Wind Project

Town of Eaton, Fenner, Nelson, and Smithfield, Madison County, New York

Prepared for:



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Prepared by:



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Hoffman Falls Wind LLC (the Applicant) is proposing to construct and operate the Hoffman Falls Wind Project (the Project), a utility-scale wind energy generating project with a generating capacity of 100 megawatts (MW) in the Towns of Eaton, Fenner, Nelson, and Smithfield, Madison County, New York (the Facility). The proposed Facility is subject to the rules for siting a major renewable energy facility under Section 94-c of the New York State Executive Law (Section 94-c). In accordance with Title 19 of New York Codes, Rules and Regulations (19 NYCRR) §900-2.9 (b)(4) of the Section 94-c regulations, Exhibit 8, Visual Impacts, requires that *"In developing the application, the applicant shall confer with municipal planning representatives, the Office, and where appropriate, OPRHP and/or APA in its selection of important or representative viewpoints."*

Pursuant to 19 NYCRR §900-2.9(a) and (b), Environmental Design and Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering and Environmental Services, D.P.C. (EDR), as a representative of the Applicant, has conferred with municipal planning representatives, the Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES), the New York State Department of Public Services (DPS), and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), as summarized below, to solicit comments and recommendations on 1) visually sensitive resources (VSRs) in the vicinity of the Facility and 2) important or representative viewpoints for inclusion in the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA). The Facility is not located in or near the Adirondack Park and so consultation with the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) is not required.

Responses to this request for comment received by the Applicant, and actions taken based on those comments and recommendations, are summarized in this document. Written and digital communication received by EDR on behalf of the Applicant, and communications made in response, are included as Attachment B of this document unless otherwise noted.

This information has been used to help inform the content of a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) prepared for the Facility 94-c Application. As part of this consultation effort, the information presented in this document and its attachments summarizes the outcome of those consultations and is intended to provide context and information on visual consultation efforts conducted to date, visually sensitive resource identification, and the selection of important and representative viewpoints.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION EFFORTS

On October 5, 2023, a request for information on identifying VSRs and potential viewpoints to be used in the production of photosimulations was distributed to the parties identified above. This request included (1) a summary of background research undertaken as part of the VIA to date, (2) a description of the field review and photography conducted for the Project to date, (3) a table of identified VSRs within the 5-mile Visual Study Area (VSA), (4) viewpoints recommended to be selected for the preparation of photosimulations, and (5) a request for feedback on the identification of additional VSRs and potential photosimulation locations. Copies of the distributed correspondence, including a list of those parties receiving the original correspondence, is included as a portion of this attachment.

## 2.1 Visual Outreach and Consultation Respondents

Formalized comment and response to the October 5, 2023 request for information has been received from the following agencies and/or their representatives:

- Municipal Agency and Planning Representatives
  - Town of Fenner, Town of Fenner Planning Board
  - Town of Eaton, Town Supervisor
  - Town of Nelson, Town Supervisor
- Town of Smithfield Town Historian
- New York State Agency Representatives
  - ORES
    - Renewable Energy Siting Specialist

A copy of all formal comment and response received are included as a portion of this attachment.

## 2.2 Summary of Municipal Representative Comment and Response Action

### **Town of Fenner, New York**

Town of Fenner response to outreach was provided through Town Planning Board meeting minutes for the October 18, 2023 meeting, and distributed on the Town website.

The Town recommended four VSR locations and confirmed three of the viewpoint locations recommended for photosimulation.

*Response: The recommended resources (four geographic highpoints consistent with Town of Fenner Significant Viewshed locations) were assessed to determine location within the 5-mile VSA, and to identify the geographic locations of the high points on roadways provided by the town. All four locations were identified to be within the 5-mile VSA, and were added to the VSR analysis. Two of these locations were determined to view the Facility from within the foreground distance zone and a 360-degree photorealistic rendering was developed to illustrate potential Facility visibility in multiple directions.*

### **Town of Nelson, New York**

The Town of Nelson provided response on October 5, 2023. The response recommended three VSR locations.

*Response: The recommended resources (Scenic Route 20, Town of Nelson Scenic Roadways, Town of Nelson Scenic Overlay District) were assessed to determine location within the 5-mile VSA. All three locations were identified to be within the 5-mile VSA and were included in the VSR analysis.*

### **Town of Eaton, New York**

The of Eaton provided response on October 6, 2023. The response confirmed the request of the Town of Nelson.

### **Town of Smithfield Town Historian**

The Town of Smithfield Town Historian provided response on November 3, 202. The response asked if the Facility name was due to its proximity to the Hoffman Falls.

*Response: It was confirmed that the name was understood to relate to the Hoffman Falls.*

## **2.3 Summary of New York State Agency Representatives Comment and Response Action**

### **Office of Renewable Energy Siting**

ORES Renewable Energy Siting Specialist provided a response on behalf of ORES on October 30, 2023. The response requested additional VSRs, recommended viewpoints for photosimulation, and recommended updates/revisions to figures contained in the Visual Outreach material, and inclusion of interconnection facility analysis in the VIA.

*Response: Based on the response received local cemeteries and lands indicated to be owned by the Oneida Indian Nation were assessed to determine their location within the 5-mile VSA. Those determined to be located within the 5-mile VSA were included in the VSR analysis. Based on the viewpoint locations recommended for photosimulation an additional seven viewpoints were developed as photosimulations and three were developed as wireframe rendering due to limited wind turbine visibility.*

**Visual Outreach Correspondence Material**



October 5, 2023

**Municipal Planning, State Agency, and Party List Representatives  
Per Attached Distribution List**

**RE:** Hoffman Falls Wind (ORES Matter No. 23-00038), Towns of Eaton, Fenner, Nelson, and Smithfield, Madison County, New York  
Official Request for Stakeholder Input on Representative Viewpoints

Dear Municipal Planning, State Agency, or Party List Representative:

As you may be aware, Liberty Renewables, Inc. (the Applicant) is proposing to construct and operate the Hoffman Falls Wind Project (the Project), a 100-megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) wind energy generation facility in the Towns of Eaton, Fenner, Nelson, and Smithfield, Madison County, New York (hereafter referred to as the Facility; see Attachment A, Figure 1). The proposed Facility is subject to review under Chapter XVIII, Title 19 of New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations (NYCRR) Part 900, §900-2.9 and Section 94-c of the New York State Executive Law (hereafter referred to as Section 94-c). In accordance with Section 94-c regulations, Exhibit 8, Visual Impacts, *"the applicant shall confer with municipal planning representatives, the Office, and where appropriate, OPRHP and/or APA in its selection of important or representative viewpoints."*

Pursuant to Section 94-c requirements, Environmental Design and Research, Landscape Architecture, Engineering and Environmental Services, DPC (EDR) is reaching out to representatives from state agencies and each jurisdiction in the visual study area on behalf of the Applicant to request your assistance in identifying visually sensitive resources, existing and proposed sensitive land-uses, and potential photosimulation locations in the vicinity of the proposed Facility (see Attachment B for a list of all representatives included in this correspondence). This information will help inform the content of a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) that is being prepared to assess the potential visual effects resulting from the Facility. The information presented in this letter and its attachments are intended to provide you with enough context and information to assist in the identification of visually sensitive resources and candidate photosimulation locations.

Definitions of Specific Terms and Acronyms Used in this Letter

**Visual Impact Assessment (VIA)** is a study evaluating the potential visibility, appearance, and visual impact associated with a proposed project.

**Visual Study Area (VSA)** is defined as the area within a 5-mile radius of Facility components in accordance with 94-c regulations. The VSA boundary for the Facility is shown on Attachment A, Figure 1.

**Distance Zones** are defined in visual studies to divide the visual study area into distinct sub-areas based on the various levels of landscape detail available to the viewers based on their distance from visible Facility components. EDR has defined four preliminary distance zones within the visual study area: Near Foreground (0-300 feet), Foreground (300 feet – 0.5 mile), Near Middle Ground (0.5 – 4.0 miles), Background (over 4.0 miles). Mapped locations of the distance zones are shown in Attachment A, Figure 3.

**Landscape Similarity Zones (LSZs)** are subsets of the visual study area that are defined based on the similarity of various landscape characteristics including topography, vegetation, water, and land use patterns, in accordance with established visual assessment methods. EDR has defined five preliminary LSZs within the visual study area: forest, rural residential/agricultural, village, hamlet, and open water. Mapped locations of the LSZs are shown in Attachment A, Figure 3, and a brief description of each LSZ is provided below.

**Photosimulations** use existing photographs along with advanced 3D modeling and imaging to accurately illustrate how the proposed Facility would appear upon completion.

**Visually Sensitive Resources (VSRs)** are publicly accessible locations or historic resources that may be considered sensitive to changes in the visual environment, potentially affecting the public enjoyment of the resource. Mapped locations of known VSRs within the visual study area are shown in Attachment A, Figure 2 and a table with additional information for each known VSR can be found in Attachment C.

### Visually Sensitive Resources

Visually Sensitive Resources (VSRs) were identified within the 5-mile VSA in accordance with guidance provided by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Program Policy DEP-00-2 *Assessing and Mitigating Visual Impacts* (NYSDEC, 2019) and the requirements of Section 94-c. In addition, EDR identified other resources that could be considered visually sensitive based on the type or intensity of use they receive. The category of VSRs identified for this VIA include the following:

- **Properties of Historic Significance** (*National/State Historic Landmarks, National/State Historic Sites, Properties Listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, Properties Eligible for listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places*)
- **Designated Scenic Resources** (*Rivers Designated as National or State Wild, Scenic or Recreational, Adirondack Park Scenic Vistas, Sites, Areas, Lakes, Reservoirs or Highways Designated or Eligible for Designation as Scenic, Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance, Other Designated Scenic Resources (Easements, Roads, Districts, and Overlooks).*)
- **Public Lands and Recreational Resources** (*National Parks, Recreation Areas, Seashores, and Forests, National Natural Landmarks, National Wildlife Refugees, Heritage Areas, State Parks, State Nature and Historic Preserve Areas, State Forest Preserve, Other State Lands; Wildlife Management Areas and Game Refugees, State Forests, State Fishing/Waterway Access Sites, Trails; State and Federal Trails, Snowmobile/ATV Trails, Bike Trails/Routes Palisades Park, Local Parks and Recreational Areas,*



*Publicly Accessible Conservation Lands/Easements, Rivers and Streams with Public Fishing Rights Easements, Named Lakes, Ponds and Reservoirs)*

- **High-Use Public Areas** (US, State and Interstate Highways, Schools, Cities, Villages, Hamlets)
- **Native American Lands**
- **Resources Identified through Visual Outreach**

Please note that the architectural survey that identifies properties eligible for listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places is ongoing. Therefore, these resources have not been identified at this time. Once the architectural survey is completed, any resources identified as eligible for listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places will be added to the VSR inventory.

Attachment A, Figure 2 illustrates the location of each identified resource and Attachment C provides information about each resource, including its name, distance zone, and the potential visibility of the wind turbines based on a preliminary viewshed analysis.

### Landscape Similarity Zones

Five discrete LSZs within the VSA were identified based on the similarity of various landscape characteristics (including topography, vegetation, water, and land use). The LSZs are illustrated in Attachment A Figure 3 and a brief description of each LSZ is provided below. The LSZs will be described in greater detail in the VIA.

- The **Rural Residential/Agriculture LSZ** generally consists of cultivated crop land and low-density residential development backed by hedgerows and woodlots. These agricultural areas often include farm-related structures and elements such as barns, silos, and irrigation ponds along with residential structures typically positioned along county and local roads. The Fenner Wind Farm and Munnsville Wind Project turbines are also primarily located within this LSZ and are common elements in foreground, middle ground and background views. Views from within the Rural Residential/Agricultural LSZ generally include an open foreground of agricultural fields backed by woodlots and hedgerows. In some directions, undulating topography can enclose distant views or block visibility of the middle ground, while in other directions long-distance views open to rolling hilltops in the VSA and beyond.
- The **Forest LSZ** includes a mix of upland forest and forested wetlands. Outward views that occur in this LSZ typically offer a narrow field of view, tightly framed by trees, such as views along roadway corridors lined with trees. Available long-distance outward views are largely limited to views looking out from forested slopes adjacent to open agricultural fields or yards, but these views diminish when viewed from further within the forest.
- The **Hamlet LSZ** consists of small clusters of development in a rural setting typically surrounding a county highway intersection. Land use is predominantly comprised of medium density residential with well-maintained yards and occasional commercial or municipal structures. The Gerrit Smith Estate National Historic Landmark is also located in this LSZ where a central green and the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum are prominent features. Topography is generally level and

long-distance views are typically limited by foreground structures and trees. Outward views may be available in areas where the Hamlet LSZ abuts open agricultural land or along roadway corridors.

- The **Village LSZ** consists of portions of the Villages of Cazenovia, Morrisville, and Munnsville and is characterized by medium to high density residential and commercial development situated along an organized street network with a distinct, walkable commercial center surrounded by small lot residential development and lower density residential development primarily limited to the periphery of this LSZ. Views from within the Village LSZ generally include roadways and/or walkways tightly lined with mature trees and structures. Outward views from this LSZ are typically limited to roadway corridors tightly framed by foreground structures or when abutting open agricultural land and often include long-distance glimpses of background hills.
- The **Open Water LSZ** consists of broad expanses of open water and directly adjacent land with views of the water body. Land use includes water-based recreation on the water bodies themselves and year-round and seasonal residences along their shores. This LSZ occurs in conjunction with water bodies of various sizes including Stoney Pond in Stoney Pond State Forest, Tuscarora Lake, and Cazenovia Lake. Expansive views are typically available across the lake, but long-distance views across the landscape can be limited by waterfront structures and the densely forested, hilly nature of the land surrounding these water bodies.

### Field Review

EDR personnel conducted field review within the VSA on August 31, 2023 to observe the character of the existing landscape, obtain photographs for locations with potential Facility visibility, and identify locations that would be suitable for the development of photosimulations. Field review resulted in documentation of 69 representative viewpoints. A photograph for each viewpoint illustrating the most open and unobstructed view available towards the Facility Site, is included within Attachment D (Viewpoint Photolog). The viewpoint locations are illustrated in Attachment A, Figure 1.

### Feedback Requests

#### *Visually Sensitive Resources*

**EDR and the Applicant are formally requesting feedback from you to identify additional VSRs.**

Please review the mapped locations of VSRs identified to date in Attachment A, Figure 2 and listed in Attachment C. The Applicant believes the list of the VSRs included herein represents a substantially complete inventory of the significant VSRs within the VSA. Please let us know whether there are any additional sites/locations that are visually sensitive and that you believe should be added to the inventory. If so, please provide the name, location, and a brief description of the resources (not already identified in Attachment C) that you feel should be included in the inventory and subsequently evaluated for potential visual impacts in the VIA.

*Proposed Land Use*

**EDR and the Applicant are requesting feedback from you in the identification of any proposed land uses that may be sensitive to visual impact.**

Pursuant to Section 94-c requirements, “proposed land uses” are required to be considered as part of the viewpoint selection process. Publicly available zoning codes, comprehensive plans, and local laws for each municipality within the VSA will be reviewed to identify current and future land uses within the VSA. However, the Applicant anticipates instances in which a municipality is in process of completing updates to existing zoning codes, comprehensive plans, or local laws. In addition, it is recognized that projects/developments may be pending or currently under review by town boards, planning boards, or the zoning board of appeals. The Applicant requests any information outlining amendments to local codes or laws and/or information regarding proposed projects and/or land uses that should be considered in the VIA.

*Photosimulation Locations*

**EDR and the Applicant are requesting feedback from you in the selection of viewpoints for the production of photosimulations.**

As mentioned previously, a full viewpoint photolog including a representative photograph from each of the visited sites can be found in Attachment D, and viewpoint locations are illustrated in Attachment A, Figure 1. The Applicant anticipates preparing representative photosimulations to illustrate the appearance of the proposed Facility from various distances within a range of visual settings. Currently, the Applicant is considering the following nine viewpoints for the production of photosimulations:

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>Location, Coordinates</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>
3	E Mile Strip Road 42.99976, -75.70407	Town of Smithfield	Representative view looking South-southwest from the middle ground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
14	NYS Route 46 42.94724, -75.57975	Town of Stockbridge	Representative view looking West-southwest from the middle ground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
18	Gill Road 42.94291, -75.66677	Town of Smithfield	Representative view looking Southwest from the middle ground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
23	Stone Bridge Road 42.92730, -75.71330	Town of Nelson	Representative view looking Northeast from the middle ground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
25	Unnamed Street 42.88129, -75.71224	Town of Nelson	Representative view looking Northwest from the middle ground distance zone and the Water LSZ.
26	Tuscarora Road 42.85672, -75.75474	Town of Nelson	Representative view looking North-northeast from the background distance zone and the Water LSZ.

Viewpoint	Location, Coordinates	Municipality	Reason for Recommendation
30	English Avenue 42.86248, -75.60729	Town of Eaton	Representative view looking Northwest from the middle ground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
45	Nichols Pond Road 42.99812, -75.74024	Town of Fenner	Representative view looking South from the middle ground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
51	Cody Road 42.96448, -75.75196	Town of Fenner	Representative view looking Northwest from the foreground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
54	South Road 42.94408, -75.76462	Town of Fenner	Representative view looking South-southeast from the foreground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
60	Cazenovia Art Park 42.91162, -75.83416	Town of Cazenovia	Representative view looking Northeast from the background distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
63	NYS Route 13 42.92102, -75.86273	Town of Cazenovia	Representative view looking Northeast from the background distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.
68	Bingley Road 42.96933, -75.78953	Town of Fenner	Representative view looking Southeast from the middle ground distance zone and the Agricultural/Rural Residential LSZ.

Please review the recommended viewpoints and provide feedback regarding whether these viewpoints are appropriate, or if there are any additional locations that you would like to be considered as candidate viewpoints for photosimulation development. Please also note that the list of currently recommended simulations may change based on feedback provided by other stakeholders.

**Please provide any responses by November 5, 2023.**

All future correspondence regarding the VIA for the Facility will be by email, unless otherwise specified. Please confirm your email address from the distribution list or, if missing, please provide your email address in your response to this letter. Please direct any future correspondence specific to the visual assessment, visual resources, and photosimulations, including responses to this request, to the contact below. If you would like to meet to discuss the information presented in this letter, please send a request to the contact below. Please note email responses in excess of 15 megabytes will not be received. If you do not receive confirmation of email receipt, please call 315.471.0688 extension 654 and leave a voice mail for Kiva VanDerGeest.

- Via email to: [kvandergeest@edrdpc.com](mailto:kvandergeest@edrdpc.com)
- Via written letter to:  
Attn: Kiva VanDerGeest  
Environmental Design & Research  
Suite 700  
217 Montgomery Street  
Syracuse, NY 13202

Thank you in advance for your participation in this process.

Sincerely,



Kiva VanDerGeest, AICP  
Visualization Project Manager

Attachment A: Figures

Figure 1: Visual Study Area and Facility Site

Figure 2: Visually Sensitive Resources and Viewshed

Figure 3: Landscape Similarity Zones

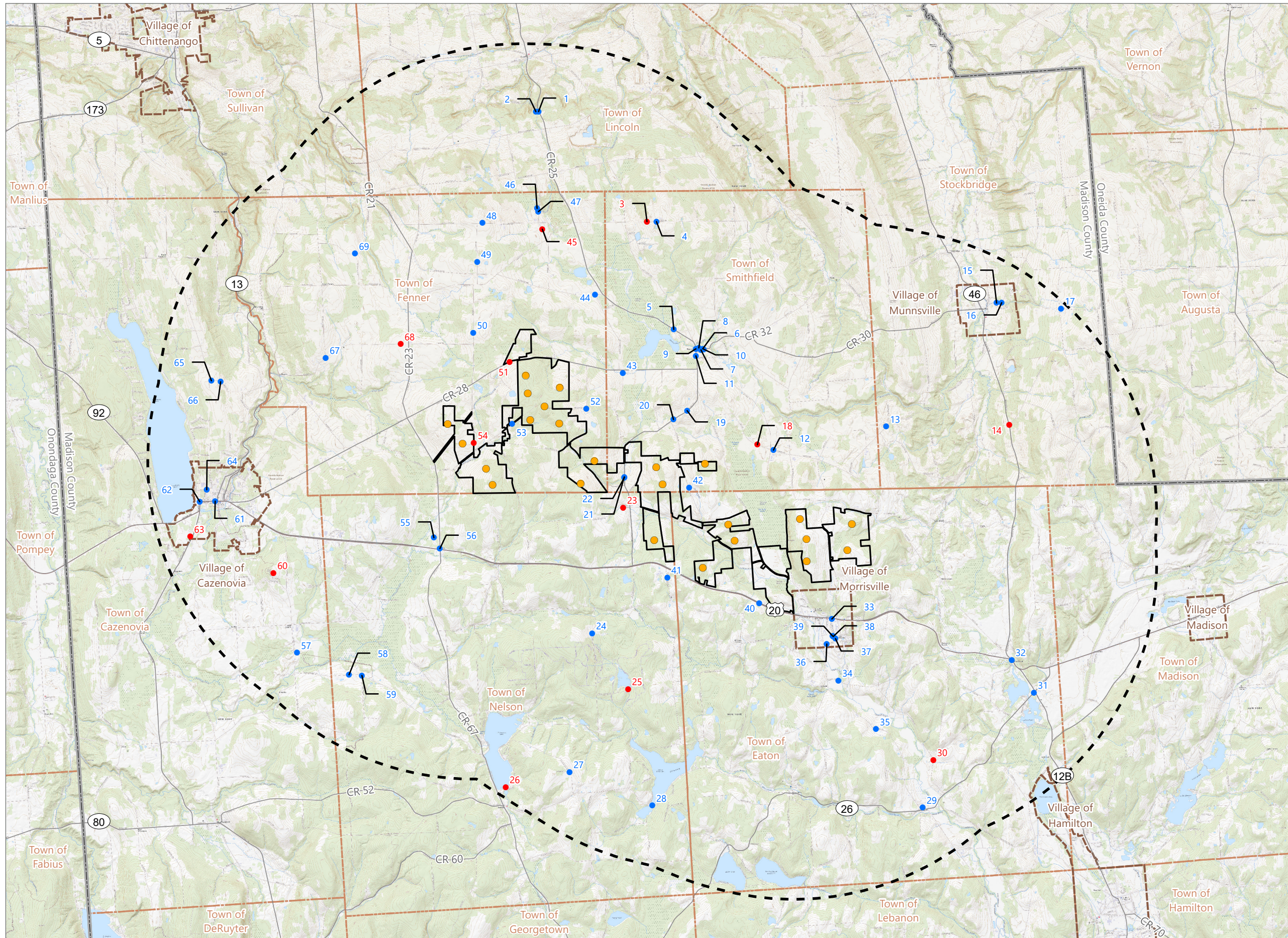
Attachment B: Distribution List

Attachment C: Visually Sensitive Resources

Attachment D: Viewpoint Photolog

## Attachment A: Figures

**Figure 1. Visual Study Area and Facility Site**



## Hoffman Falls Wind Project

Towns of Eaton, Fenner, Nelson, and Smithfield, Madison County, New York

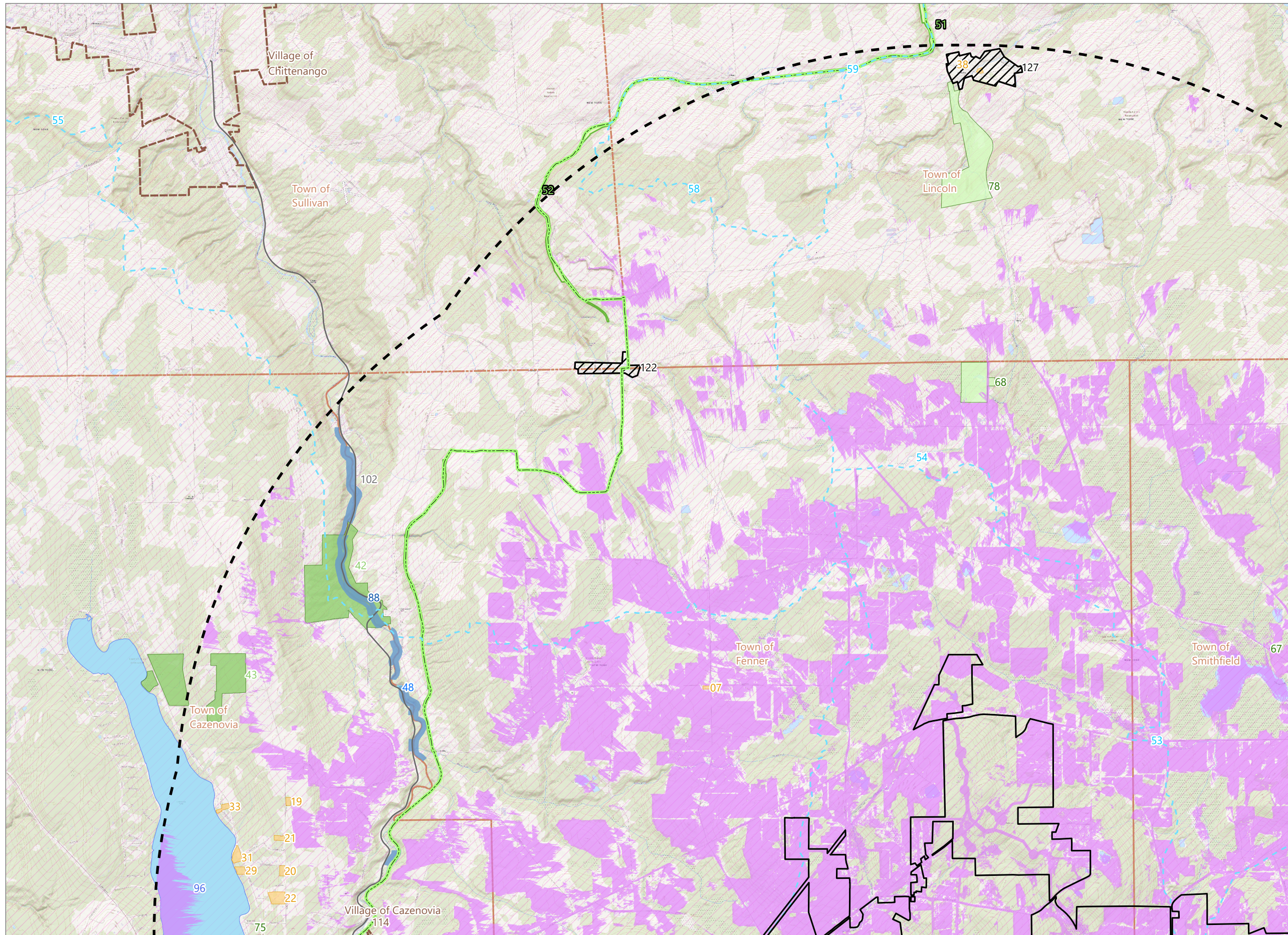
### Visual Outreach

- Viewpoint Location
- Recommended Viewpoint Location
- Wind Turbine
- Facility Site
- Visual Study Area
- Village Boundary
- Town Boundary
- County Boundary



Prepared October 4, 2023  
 Basemap: Esri "USGS Topo" map service

Figure 2. Visually Sensitive Resources and Viewshed

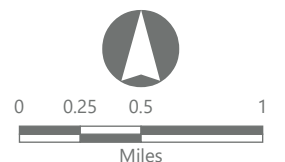
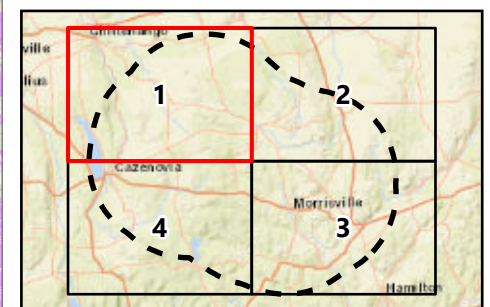


## Hoffman Falls Wind Project

Towns of Eaton, Fenner, Nelson, and Smithfield, Madison County, New York

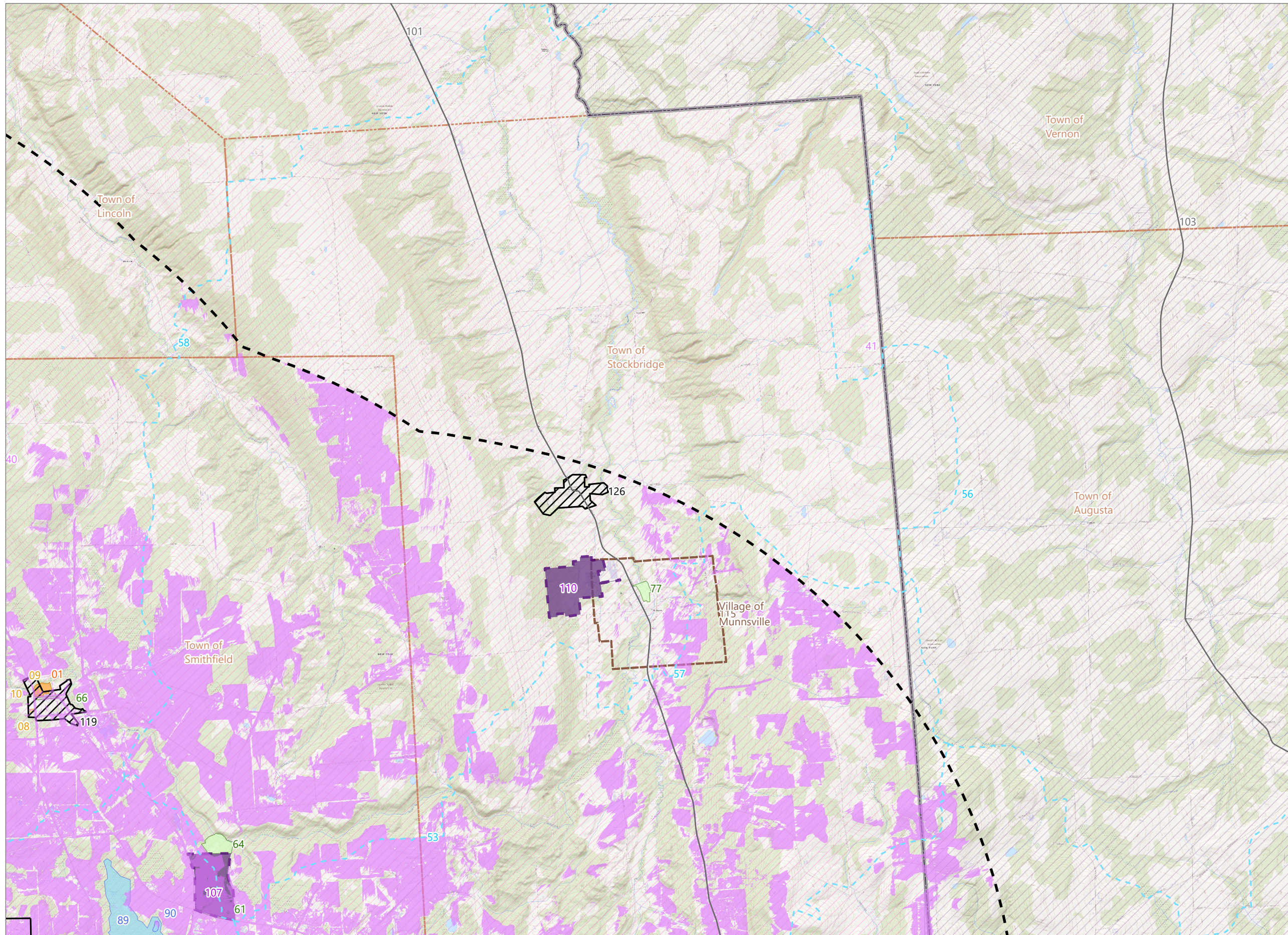
### Visual Outreach

- Snowmobile Trail
- National Scenic Trail
- State, US, and Interstate Highway
- Site Listed on National or State Registers of Historic Places
- State Fishing Waterway Access Site
- River and Stream with Public Fishing Rights Easement
- State Trail
- State Park
- Local Park and Recreation Area
- Named Lake, Pond, and Reservoir
- Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
- Hamlet
- Village Boundary
- Potential Turbine Blade Tip Visibility
- Facility Site
- Visual Study Area



Prepared September 14, 2023  
 Basemap: Esri "USGS Topo" map service  
 Note: Potential turbine blade tip viewshed visibility is based on the screening effects of topography, vegetation, and structures as represented in 2019 FEMA, 2016/17 FEMA, and 2015 NYSGPO lidar data and a maximum blade tip height of 677.5 feet.



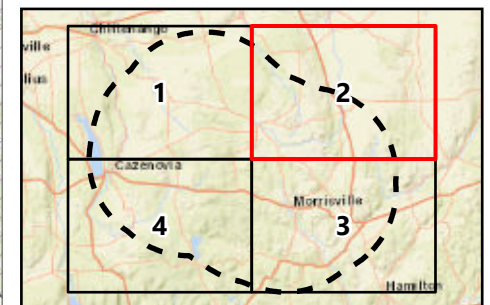


## Hoffman Falls Wind Project

Towns of Eaton, Fenner, Nelson, and Smithfield, Madison County, New York

### Visual Outreach

- - - Snowmobile Trail
- State, US, and Interstate Highway
- School
- Site Listed on National or State Registers of Historic Places
- National Historic Landmark
- Local Park and Recreation Area
- Named Lake, Pond, and Reservoir
- Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
- Mohawk Valley State Heritage Area
- Hamlet
- Village Boundary
- Potential Turbine Blade Tip Visibility
- Facility Site
- Visual Study Area



Prepared September 14, 2023  
 Basemap: Esri "USGS Topo" map service  
 Note: Potential turbine blade tip viewshed visibility is based on the screening effects of topography, vegetation, and structures as represented in 2019 FEMA, 2016/17 FEMA, and 2015 NYSGPO lidar data and a maximum blade tip height of 677.5 feet.