

State Environmental Quality Review
NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

Project: County Road 48 Pole Relocation Project

Date: April 24, 2020

This notice is issued in accordance with Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations at 6 NYCRR Part 617 and 21 NYCRR LXXXI 10052.

The Long Island Power Authority (“Authority”) has determined, based on information provided by PSEG Long Island and the Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2 & 3 prepared by PSEG Long Island that the Proposed Action described below will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Name of Action: County Road 48 Pole Relocation Project

Location: County Road 48, Town of Southold, Greenport, NY 11944

SEQR Status: Unlisted

Conditioned Negative Declaration: No

Proposed Action Description:

The Proposed Action is located along County Road 48 (North Road) between Albertson Lane and Chapel Lane continuing south along Chapel Lane and within LIPA’s right of way on the west side of Chapel Lane.

The Proposed Action is being carried out in support of Suffolk County Department of Public Works (SCDPW) County Road 48 reconstruction project. The Proposed Action includes the replacement, removal, and installation of both distribution and transmission utility poles, and relocation of a portion of a transmission line from overhead to underground. The transmission work includes the replacement of 26 wood transmission poles, the removal of seven (7) wood transmission poles, the installation of four (4) new wood transmission poles, and the installation of one (1) temporary wood transmission pole. The distribution work includes the replacement of four (4) wood distribution poles, and the installation of eight (8) new wood distribution poles. The four (4) distribution poles to be replaced will increase in height by less than eight feet. Two (2) transmission poles will increase in height between 21 and 25 feet, thirteen (13) transmission poles will increase in height between 15 and 20 feet, eight (8) transmission poles will increase in height between 10 and 14 feet, and three (3) transmission poles will increase in height by less than 10 feet (see Figure 1).

Approximately 1,900 linear feet of trenching is planned to relocate an existing 23 kV transmission line underground. Trenching will begin at transmission pole 180.2, then will travel north along Chapel Lane, and will end on County Road 48 at pole 9, located east of Chapel Lane. The trench will be 3 feet wide, and associated disturbance will total approximately 0.13 acres.

The Proposed Action will result in approximately 0.20 acres of ground disturbance for all proposed improvements.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

The SEAF evaluates the effect of the Proposed Action upon land use, natural resources, visual resources and community character, energy use, environmental hazards and human health resources. Since the Proposed Action primarily involves the removal and replacement of overhead transmission poles and wires and installation of underground transmission and distribution cables, there will be no changes to land use or community character, nor will there be any effects on human health.

The Proposed action requires a NYSDEC Freshwater Wetlands (Article 24) Permit (coverage obtained through PSEGLI General Permit 1-9901-00011/00026) as a portion of the Proposed Action is close to freshwater wetlands. A notification letter will be sent to the NYSDEC 14 days prior to the commencement of construction. In addition, concurrence through the Town of Southold Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) must be obtained. After conducting a Coastal Consistency Review, it was found that the Proposed Action is consistent with the policies of the LWRP and will not hinder the achievement of those policies.

Existing scenic resources include the beach located about 400 feet to the north of the Proposed Action and the adjacent nature preserve (Arshamomaque Preserve) located directly south of CR 48 and west of Chapel Lane. Aboveground transmission wires and poles will be replaced in the same location as the original utility poles with an increase in height of the poles, as depicted in the Photo Simulation Attachment. On Chapel Lane, an improvement in the viewshed will be realized as one set of transmission poles will be removed, and one transmission line will be buried, thus reducing the number and predominance of the electrical infrastructure within the viewshed (see Views 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12). Along CR 48, the height increase is noticeable when standing on the beach and looking towards Soundview Inn (see Views 3 and 4). The change in height is also noticeable when traversing CR 48 (see Views 1, 2, and 5). However, this height increase does not result in a significant change to the character of the corridor that results in the visual resource integrity being compromised.

The pole height increases will not significantly impair the visual landscape as experienced from any aesthetic resources of concern or interfere with or reduce the public's or area residents' enjoyment (ie., the beach) and/or appreciation of the appearance of any scenic, open space (Arshamomaque Preserve), or other resource. Thus, there will be no significant adverse visual impacts as a result of the Proposed Action.

Ground disturbance will primarily take place within previously disturbed areas and paved roadway. Disturbed areas will be restored upon completion of the project.

A portion of the Proposed Action is located within a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) regulated freshwater wetland adjacent area (NYSDEC ID: SO-2) Coverage under PSEGLI's Wetlands General Permit (#1-9901-00011/00026) will be obtained two weeks prior to the commencement of construction. A 2,400 square foot (0.06 acre) area will be cleared within the Adjacent Area along Chapel Lane. The clearing is necessary to facilitate the replacement of poles 180.1, 180.2, and the installation of pole 180 on LIPA's right of way (ROW). There will be various utility pole removals, replacements, and new installations within the regulated wetland adjacent area. Most of the adjacent area work will be located on Chapel Lane. Also, within the adjacent area, there will be trenching within the paved roadway along Chapel Lane. The disturbance associated with the utility poles planned to be replaced and installed within the regulated freshwater wetland adjacent area will be reduced to be the minimum necessary for installation work, and will be no more than 0.06 acres. Measures to protect the

wetlands include the use of standard erosion and sediment controls. Any disturbed areas will be reseeded and/or replanted, as necessary, with appropriate native vegetation.

The Proposed Action is located within the 100-year Flood Plain. The Proposed Action includes the replacement and installation of wood utility poles and does not include the introduction of impervious surfaces or structures. Further, the Proposed Action will not result in changes in grade or flood patterns. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to the 100-year flood plain.

As a portion of the work is located within a New York State coastal zone, a New York State Department of State Coastal Assessment Form was completed for this work (see Attachment A). This work will be consistent with State coastal policies.

The EAF Mapper Summary Report identified that there are Northern Cricket Frogs (NCF) located at or around the Proposed Action site. NCF is listed as endangered in New York State but is not listed Federally. NCF utilize aquatic vegetation to lay egg masses and they prefer slow-moving, algae-filled watercourse habitats¹. The Proposed Action will include vegetation trimming and removal in Freshwater Wetland Adjacent Areas but will not include disturbance to habitats utilized by NCF. Further, the Proposed Action Site was not observed to contain suitable NCF habitat. Moreover, NCF populations are listed as extirpated (locally extinct) in New York State since the 1940s, therefore, it is unlikely that a NCF population will be present within the Proposed Action Site. Given the foregoing, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to wildlife or ecological communities, and will not result in an impact to the NCF at either the individual or the population level.

Based on the SEAF and PSEGLI's recommendation according to the standards as set forth in SEQRA, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

¹ New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Northern Cricket Frog Fact Sheet, <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7120.html>, Accessed 3/4/2020

For Further Information:

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Dated: April 24th, 2020