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

Project: 2G Rockaway Beach Substation Feeder and Conversion and Reinforcement Project – Phase II (the "Proposed Action")

Date: December 9, 2021

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 (LIPA) 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: 2G Rockaway Beach Substation Feeder and Conversion and Reinforcement Project – Phase II (the "Proposed Action")

Location: 2G Rockaway Beach Substation (the "Substation") located at the corner of Beach Channel Drive and Rockaway Freeway, Rockaway Park; along the right-of-ways of Rockaway Freeway, Beach 102nd Street, Rockaway Beach Boulevard, Beach 96th Street, and Beach Channel Drive in Rockaway Park and Rockaway Beach, Queens County, New York

SEQR Status: Unlisted

Conditioned Negative Declaration: No

Proposed Action Description:

The 2G Rockaway Beach Substation Feeder and Conversion and Reinforcement Project consists of two phases, which will collectively convert the Substation and surrounding distribution circuits from 4kV to 13kV. Phase I of the project included the installation of a new underground (UG) distribution exit feeder, reconfiguration of existing UG distribution cable, and conversion and reinforcement activities in the neighborhoods of Rockaway Park, Belle Harbor, and Nesponsit, Queens County, New York. A separate SEQRA was prepared pursuant to 6 NYCRR 617.3(g)(1) for Phase I activities, and a Negative Declaration was issued by LIPA on March 27, 2020. At that time, engineering and design for Phase II was not established. This SEQRA has been prepared for Phase II activities of the project, including a cumulative analysis of Phase I

and Phase II, collectively. Completing a separate environmental review under SEQRA for the Phase II work is no less protective of the environment.

The Proposed Action includes the removal of existing substation equipment and the installation of new substation equipment within the existing LIPA Substation in order to convert the Substation from a 33-4kV substation to a 33-13kV substation, as well as the extension of an existing underground distribution exit feeder exiting the Substation. In addition, three wood distribution utility poles will be replaced, one new mid-span wood distribution pole will be installed, and one unused pole will be removed. An underground distribution bypass will be replaced, connecting two distribution riser poles located on opposite sides of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) overpass.

The Substation is located at the corner of Beach Channel Drive and Rockaway Freeway in Rockaway Park, New York (see Figures 1 and 2). Existing Feeder 2G-415 exits the Substation to the west, and then extends in a generally eastern direction along Rockaway Freeway. This feeder will be extended in an easterly direction approximately 4,300 linear feet, along Rockaway Freeway, Beach 102nd Street, Rockaway Beach Boulevard and Beach 96th Street, as shown on Figure 2. Six manholes will be installed along the underground distribution feeder route, and spare conduits will be installed for potential future use.

New substation equipment to be installed includes: one 33-13kV transformer bank; one 13kV switchgear and control center, equipped with a battery enclosure on an approximate 5-foot high elevated foundation; four gas circuit breakers; and associated switching/pothead structures and bus supports. Underground cable connections will be completed, as needed. Spill containment curbing will be constructed for the new and existing transformers. New substation equipment will range from approximately 10 feet to 20 feet in height.

Existing equipment to be removed from the Substation includes: two 33-4kV transformer banks; two gas circuit breakers; one 4kV switchgear and control center; one battery enclosure; and associated switching/pothead structures and bus supports. Existing substation equipment planned for removal ranges from approximately 10 feet to 17 feet in height.

The three replacement wood distribution utility poles will be of the same material, no more than 10 feet taller than existing poles within the immediate area, and will be installed in the same general locations of the existing pole. The new wood distribution utility pole will be installed in-line with existing poles, and will be similar in height to existing poles in the immediate area. Pole top equipment (transformers, switches, capacitor banks, etc.) will be installed or replaced within the area of the Proposed Action. If possible, the underground distribution bypass will be installed utilizing existing conduit. If the existing conduit cannot be utilized, then new conduit will be installed within the same general area.

The Proposed Action will support load growth due to new developments in the surrounding areas, by upgrading and modernizing the existing Substation, which will allow the associated distribution infrastructure to supply the increased load. In addition, these upgrades will increase the electric reliability in the area.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

Based on a review of the Proposed Action's scope of work in accordance with the requirements of SEQRA, a Short Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2 & 3 ("SEAF") was prepared to evaluate potential impacts of the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action is an "Unlisted" Action as defined in SEQRA.

The SEAF evaluates the effect of the Proposed Action upon land use, natural resources, visual resources and character of the areas, energy use, environmental hazards and human health resources. Key findings are outlined below.

- The Proposed Action involves the removal and installation of substation equipment within the limits of the fenced Substation property. New substation equipment to be installed (approximately 10 feet to 20 feet above ground level) is similar in height to the substation equipment being removed (approximately 10 feet to 17 feet above ground level). New equipment installed will be lower in height than existing substation equipment that will remain in place (approximately 10 feet to 34 feet above ground level). The underground distribution exit feeder cables and manholes, and underground distribution bypass, will be installed beneath existing roadways and sidewalks. At completion of construction, the roadways and sidewalks will be restored to match the current condition of the roadways and sidewalks. All distribution pole replacements/installations will involve wood utility poles that will be no more than 10 feet taller than existing poles in the immediate area and will be in-line with existing pole alignments. In addition, all pole-top work will be performed along existing pole alignments where similar equipment exists. As such, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse visual impacts or impacts to land use.
- The Proposed Action is not located within a New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) designated archaeologically sensitive area, nor on or adjacent to any property that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse impacts to archaeological and/or historic resources.
- Portions of the Proposed Action include circuit installation within 200 feet of MTA property. Prior to the commencement of construction, PSEG Long Island Real Estate will work with MTA to obtain any necessary access agreements and approvals needed to complete work in these areas. MTA will review project scope and design documents to verify that the project will not impact MTA assets. Access and approvals will be obtained

from MTA prior to commencement of construction in these areas, and work will be conducted in accordance with any conditions of access/approval.

- The Proposed Action is not located within any state or federally regulated wetlands, or regulated wetland adjacent areas. The Proposed Action is not located in 100-year flood plain based on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), but is located within the 100-year flood plain based on preliminary New York City FIRMs that are not fully effective/adopted. The installation of the substation equipment within the Substation property; the installation of the distribution feeder cables and the distribution bypass beneath existing roadways and sidewalks; and the installation or replacement of distribution utility poles, will not cause a significant increase in impervious area. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse impacts to these areas.
- Due to the shallow depth of groundwater in the vicinity of the Proposed Action, dewatering will be required during construction. If extracted groundwater requires discharge to surface waters or the sewer system, the appropriate permit(s) will be obtained from the NYSDEC and/or New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), including but not limited to a NYSDEC Water Withdrawal Permit, Long Island Well Permit, and/or NYCDEP Discharge Application/Permit. Alternatively, if there are no discharges to surface waters or sewers, extracted groundwater may be containerized on-site for subsequent off-site transportation and disposal at a PSEG Long Island approved disposal facility.
- As the Proposed Action is located within the New York State coastal zone and within a New York City waterfront revitalization program (WRP) area, a New York State Coastal Assessment Form was completed and submitted to New York Department of State (NYSDOS) and a New York City WRP Consistency Assessment Form (CAF) was completed and submitted to the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) (see Appendix B). The Proposed Action will be consistent with and will not substantially hinder the achievement of any of the coastal policies set forth in 19 NYCRR Part 600.5 or New York City WRP.
- One State-listed threatened animal species (Common Tern) was identified in the vicinity of the Proposed Action. Common Terns inhabit sand and shell beaches, grassy uplands and rocky inland shores. The Proposed Action will occur entirely within the existing Substation or within existing roadways and sidewalks located inland from the shoreline. No portions of the Proposed Action will occur within or immediately adjacent to habitats suitable for the Common Tern. Thus, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to the Common Tern.
- The Proposed Action is located partially within the Jamaica Bay Critical Environmental Area (CEA), which has been identified as a CEA due to its ecosystem and the significant wildlife concentrations. Construction activities in this area will be completed within the existing Substation; no work will encroach into Jamaica Bay. Further, Jamaica Bay is separated from the work activities by substantially fabricated structures (Beach Channel

Drive, bulkheads and/or sea walls). Best Management Practices will be implemented during construction activities to avoid any impacts to the CEA. As a result, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse impacts to the Jamaica Bay CEA.

- The Proposed Action involves the removal of two existing 33-4kV transformer banks and the installation of one new 33-13kV transformer bank. The new transformer will utilize similar cooling equipment as the existing transformers, and thus will not cause an increase to existing noise levels. The New York State Public Service Commission (NYPSC) has published no guideline specific to the magnetic fields encountered in the vicinity of electric substation facilities. However the IEEE Standard 1127-2013 states "[i]n a substation, the strongest fields near the perimeter fence come from the transmission and distribution lines entering and leaving the substation. The strength of the fields from equipment inside the fence decreases rapidly with distance, reaching very low levels at relatively short distances beyond substation fences." The *Electric and Magnetic Field Assessment: The Navy Road Substation* (the "Assessment), dated July 2017, analyzed a similar 33/13kV substation, which stated that the largest estimated peak-load electromagnetic field level would be 17.1 milliguass at the substation fencing. Based on the results of the Assessment and the similar builds of the Substation and the Navy Road Substation, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse impacts due to noise or electromagnetic fields.
- The Proposed Action adjoins one property listed in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) environmental remediation database, the Rockaway Beach Manufactured Gas Plant Site (NYSDEC State Superfund Site – 241029). PSEG Long Island's contractor will be required to submit an acceptable Health and Safety Plan (HASP) to PSEG Long Island prior to construction. Proper health and safety protocols will be implemented during soil excavation activities. If necessary, excavation activities will be halted if any unanticipated contamination is identified until proper testing is completed, as warranted. As such, significant adverse impacts to human health are not anticipated during construction or operation of the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Review of Phase I and Phase II Activities

A combined review of both phases of the project was conducted in order to assess the overall cumulative impact of the project.

Although Phase I and Phase II of the Proposed Action are located in the same general area. The pole replacement work performed as part of Phase I was completed mainly to the west of the Substation, with minimal pole replacement and underground work areas to the north and southeast of the Substation, which extended into the Substation in order to complete electrical connections. The Phase II work activities will be limited to the footprint of the Substation and along roadways and sidewalks to the east of the Substation. Thus, Phase II will not increase any

visual impacts already evaluated under Phase I to a level that would be considered significant Therefore, cumulative construction impacts associated with both phases will not be significant.

The Phase II activities will not impact, nor result in any increased impacts to any resources previously identified and evaluated in the Phase I SEQRA documents. Phase I was determined to have no potential for significant impacts on the environment. Consequently, the Phase II activities will not result in any significant increase to any impacts evaluated under this SEQRA.

No potential for a significant adverse impact on the environment, flora, fauna, community character or human health has been identified as a result of the Proposed Action. Based on the SEAF and PSEG Long Island'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.

For Further Information:

Contact Person: Erin Gorman, Manager, Environmental Projects & Permitting
PSEG Long Island

Address: 175 East Old Country Road, Hicksville, NY 11801

Telephone Number: (800) 490-0025

E-mail: PSEGLongIslandSEQR@pseg.com

/s/ Billy Raley
Billy Raley
Senior Vice President, Transmission and Distribution System Oversight

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