



## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015

David Everett, Esq.  
Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna  
99 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12210

**RE: Change #7: Appendix A – Letter from VHB Regarding Visual Analysis Comments, dated December 8, 2014**

Dear David,

Enclosed please find a copy of the revised Appendix A – Letter from VHB Regarding Visual Analysis Comments, dated December 8, 2015. As per our discussions with George M. Janes regarding Appendix A of the Addendum to the EAF, Silo Ridge has gone ahead and made all changes to the document that Mr. Janes suggested. Additionally, as was agreed upon with Mr. Janes, the document has kept the same title. We have added a revision date underneath the title to note today's date of April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any comments or questions.

Sincerely yours,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Juan C Torres

CC: Mike Dignacco  
Pedro Torres  
Joseph Fontaine - Chairperson  
Peter J. Wise, Esq.  
George M. Janes, AICP



December 8, 2014  
(Revised April 7, 2015)

Ref: 29011.00

Chairman Norm Fontaine  
Members of the Planning Board  
Town of Amenia  
4988 Route 22  
Amenia, New York 12501

**Re:** Silo Ridge Response to Visual Analysis Comments

Dear Chairman Fontaine and Members of the Planning Board:

Silo Ridge Ventures, LLC (the "Applicant") submitted a Confirmatory Visual Analysis ("CVA") dated July 20, 2014. The CVA is based on 8 viewpoints selected for assessment in accordance with the November 17, 2005 SEQRA Scoping Document, the January 8, 2009 SEQRA Findings Statement, and the instructions of the Planning Board. The CVA was submitted in August in support of the pending applications, which were deemed complete for public review on August 21, 2014.

The CVA disclosed the project's visual impacts allowing the Planning Board and the public to understand the impacts the project would have on Visual Resources. According to SEQR standards, the CVA was prepared using reasonable worst case assumptions.

After consideration of public and Planning Board comments, there have been several changes to the development plan since the CVA was prepared. All of these changes should either lessen the project's overall visual impacts, or will have no additional impact on the visual impacts that were disclosed in the 2014 CVA. Because the changes made to the project will lessen overall visual impacts disclosed in 2014, a new CVA has not been prepared. A summary of material plan changes that might have an impact on the area's visual resources are discussed below:

**A. Removal of Water Tank from Hairpin Turn**

As requested by Planning Board consultants, the water tank located inside the Route 44 hairpin turn has been relocated to the northwest portion of the driving range. The tank will be buried with only one side exposed to the west. This new location removes the tank from the Route 44 and Artisan's Park Overlook viewshed by placing it behind those looking from DeLaVergne Hill to the valley below.



## **B. Relocation of WWTP**

As requested by Planning Board consultants, the WWTP has been relocated from the formerly approved location on Route 44. The WWTP has been relocated to the proposed maintenance facility on Route 22 by the entrance of the former Harlem Valley Landfill. This results in the following:

1. Increases the WWTP's distance to the nearest residence
2. Reduces Forest Habitat disturbance by approximately 1 acre;
3. Reduces Steep Slope disturbance;
4. Increases open space within the RDO District; and
5. Decreases disturbance across Route 44.

## **C. Removal of Proposed Hedge and Existing Vegetation along Hill:**

At the Planning Board's request the applicant has removed the proposed hedge and fence along the hairpin turn on Route 44. The CVA includes photosimulations showing the project with and without this screening hedge and fence. The Planning Board decided that leaving views from DeLaVergne Hill open and unobstructed was preferable to the proposed hedge, which screened views to the proposed development, but also to the Harlem Valley below. Additionally, the Planning Board requested that existing vegetation along the hairpin turn be cleared to open and maximize the views from DeLaVergne

Hill and the Artisan Park Overlook. The Applicant will work with the Planning Board and NYSDOT to remove this existing vegetation at the hairpin curve.

## **D. Additional Landscaping Screening at the Maintenance Facility & WWTP**

As requested by Planning Board consultants, additional screening has been added within the green vegetated buffer along Route 22 (Site Plan Drawing L3.14). The screening includes a combination of berms and installation of native trees. This screening should lessen the visibility of the facility from Route 22. The new location for the WWTP is in the Trail Protection Visual Protection Corridor of the SPO. However, there is little visibility from the Rail Trail to the facility since the portion of the Rail Trail closest to the facility is roughly 15' below grade on the eastern side of Route 22, which prevents views to the site.

## **E. Additional Landscape Revisions**

The plans have been revised to:

1. Move and eliminate certain previously proposed trees on the hill east of the hairpin further downslope;
2. Remove all non-native trees from the SPO Green Buffer; and
3. Add landscaping to the northern edge of the Village Green, Golf Villas, and the Village Green Neighborhood. This landscaping will screen this portion of the development in views from DeLaVergne Hill.

## **F. Revisions to the Estate Home Area**

In response to comments, the design of the roads and lots in the Estate Home area has been refined. This refinement reduces grading impacts and tree removal, and better situates proposed improvements in the natural setting. Cumulatively, these refinements reduce potential visual impacts. Specifically:



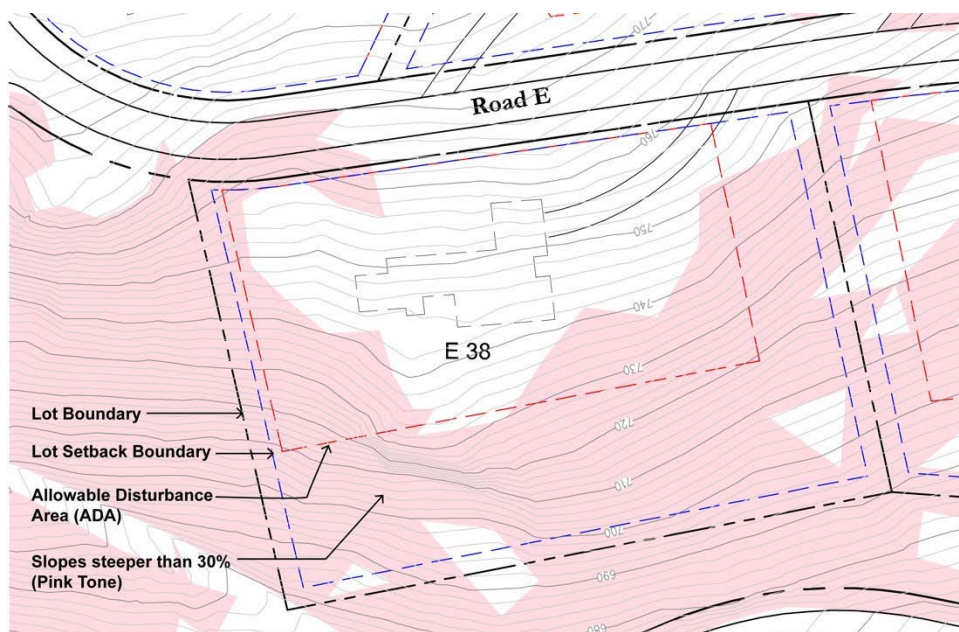
*Revisions to Redtail Pass (Road E), Ridgeline Road (Road K) and Oak Tree Lane (Road Q)*

The alignments of these roads have been modified to better fit the land and reduce grading impacts and associated tree removal. Further, retaining walls are now proposed in certain areas to reduce grading impacts. This allows for more existing trees to be retained, which provides additional screening for the proposed improvements.

*Delineation of the Allowable Disturbance Area (ADA)*

The plans have been revised to show the ADA for all Estate Home lots 30,000 square feet and greater. This is the area within which all improvements (with limited exceptions) must be contained. The ADAs have been located on the shallowest existing slopes, thereby reducing the amount of grading and tree removal required for the construction of homes.

A representative estate lot indicating ADA, with ADA placement primarily in lot area with less than 30% slopes, is shown below:



All of these revisions reduce the amount of grading and tree removal in the Estate Home area, and yield a corresponding reduction of potential adverse visual impacts.

**Additional Resource Materials**

At the Planning Board's request, the applicant has provided additional resource materials to help communicate the project's potential visual impacts and properly assess any mitigation measures needed.



### **A. Panoramic Images**

Large-scale panoramic images of viewpoints 1 and 7 were developed from the CVA and presented to the Planning Board for its consideration. These panoramas were designed to better communicate the wide panoramic views seen from these viewpoints by stitching together the individual images found in the CVA and making a single image that encompassed a very wide view. While the information in the panoramas is the same as what is found in the CVA, the Planning Board found these images easier to understand and helpful in guiding their requests. They remain available in the Town's Planning Board office so that the public may also view them.

### **B. Tour of the Property by Planning Board Members**

On October 21, 2014, certain members of the Planning Board visited the Silo Ridge property. At the Board's request, the applicant toured the following areas:

1. Former proposed location of the WWTP;
2. DeLaVergne Hill;
3. DeLaVergne Hill overlook;
4. Proposed landscape screening areas along Route 44;
5. Proposed location of the most southern of the Estate Homes, including the highest homes;
6. Proposed location for the maintenance facility (including the WWTP);
7. Completed golf holes (holes 18, 16, 11 & 10);
8. Current golf holes under construction (driving range, holes 1, 2, 3 & 9; and
9. Erosion Control measures currently in place for the Cascade Amenia Brook.

### **C. "Artisan's Park" Public Overlook**

The Artisan's Park public viewing area proposed to be located inside the hairpin turn on DeLaVergne Hill with access off of Route 44, is a condition of the 2009 special permit/master development plan approval. Based on further discussions with the Town, the Applicant, and its successors and assigns, will maintain the public overlook and will get into a public easement access with the Town of Amenia. A new revised plan has been included within the February 2015 Site Plan submission. Artisan's Park Overlook remains a visual off-set to the proposed development, as it provides public access to one of the best views in the region where there was previously no public access outside of the roadway.

### **D. Estate Home Design Guidelines**

Design Guidelines have been created for all Estate Homes – please see Appendix K: Design Standards for the Estate Homes of the Amended Master Development Plan. The Design Guidelines include the following provisions that impact visibility:

1. An Allowable Disturbance Area (ADA) for each lot greater than 30,000 square feet has been delineated. The ADA limits clearing that can occur on these larger lots, which protects many large trees that provide screening to other parts of the development
2. Defines color palettes and materials to blend within the natural landscape;
3. Includes specific landscaping standards, including planting one (1) shade tree per 1,000 square feet of the home floor area proposed to be developed on the lot, except that for every one (1) existing

GMJ - Visual Response

Ref: 29011.00

December 8, 2015

(Revised April 7, 2015)

Page 5V



shade tree 8 inches DBH or greater within the ADA preserved by the lot owner, one (1) less new shade tree shall be required;

4. Includes specific architectural standards including guidelines for houses to use the existing topography in the home design; and
5. Limits building height to 35' feet.

Plans will be reviewed for compliance by the Town's Building Inspector and Town Engineer prior to the issuance of a building permit. Any deviation from the Design Guidelines will require Minor Site Plan approval from the Planning Board.

**Conclusion**

Changes in the plan since the CVA was conducted have been relatively minor. Where there were changes to the plan these changes should either have no impact, or will reduce the project's impact on visual resources. Consequently, a new CVA does not need to be performed since the project's impact on the visual resources of the area will be less than those disclosed in the 2014 CVA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda DeCesare". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Amanda DeCesare, PE

Senior Project Manager

[adecesare@vhb.com](mailto:adecesare@vhb.com)

CC: David Everett, Esq.;  
George Janes;  
Peter Wise, Esq.; and  
Pedro Torres