3.6 Visual Resources

This section provides an analysis of potential visual impacts based on visual field tests, photographs, and landscape architectural drawings including plans, sections, elevations, and other graphic representations of existing and proposed conditions. The analysis includes a description of the existing site conditions and natural features contributing to the visual quality of the site and its surrounding environment. This section also addresses changes to the existing visual character and visual quality as a result of the Proposed Action, along with mitigation measures, where necessary.

3.6.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is characterized by steeply sloping, wooded hillsides to the north, south, and west which surround an open valley floor with rolling hills. There are significant elevation differences on-site; the northern hillside rises 300± feet above the valley and the western hillsides rise more than 700 feet above the valley floor. The central portion of the site is dominated by the existing 18-hole golf course, as illustrated below.

Figure 3.6-1 Existing Silo Ridge Golf Course

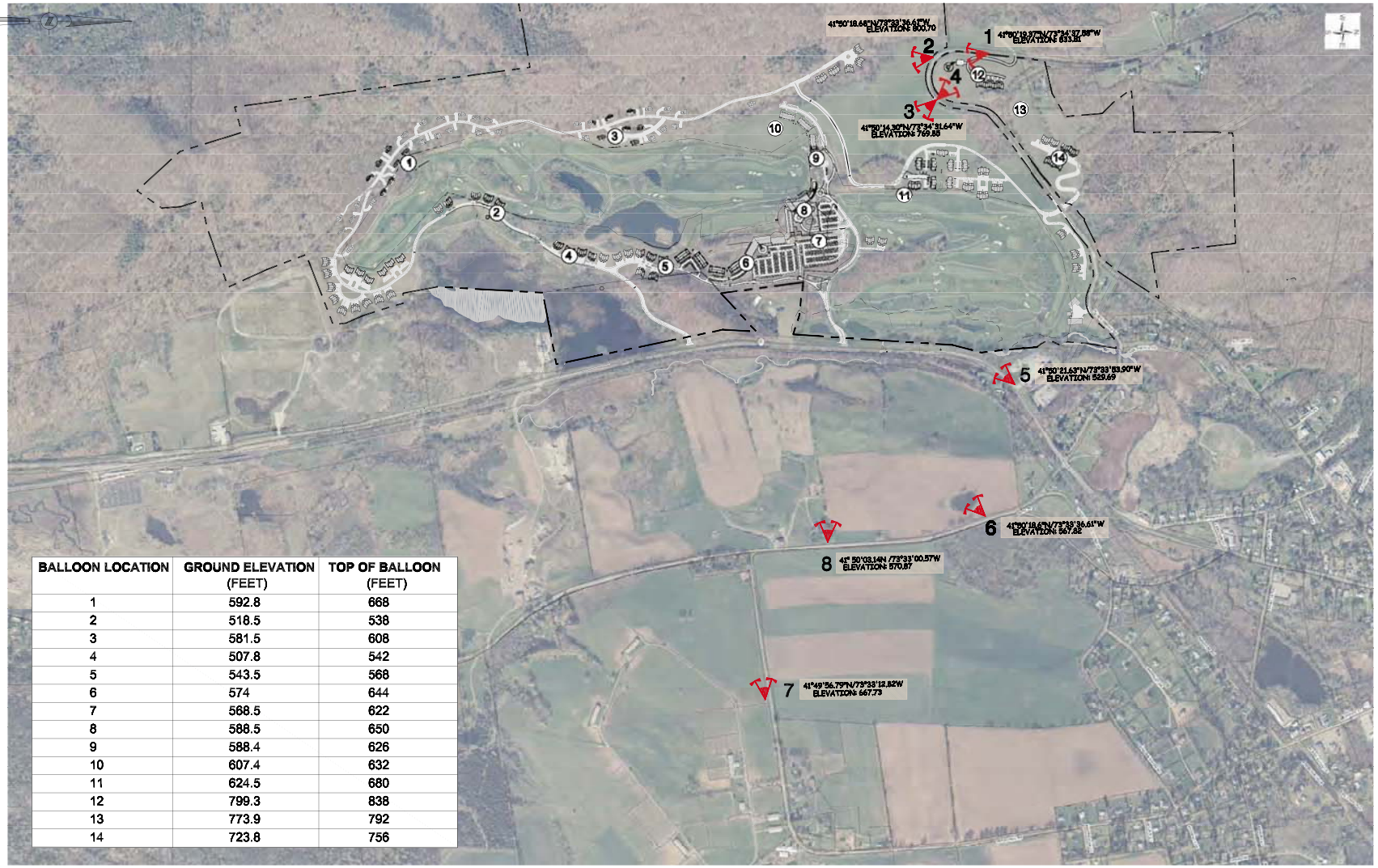
The golf course is supported by a 25,000 square foot clubhouse, an outdoor pavilion (see Figure 3.6-2), and a maintenance building. The clubhouse contains a ballroom, pro shop, and restaurant and grill room.

Figure 3.6-2 Existing Silo Ridge Pavilion

Adjacent land uses include wooded areas of Tamarack Preserve to the west, vacant land comprised of open fields and wooded areas to the south, and agricultural fields, sand and gravel pits, and sparsely settled single-family homes to the east. Approximately ½-mile to the northeast is the hamlet of Amenia, which generally consists of a mix of more densely developed businesses and residences.

In order to evaluate the potential visual impact of the proposed development, key visual receptors were identified and presented to the Town of Amenia Planning Board for their input. A total of 8 critical receptors were identified, as shown on Figure 3.6-3, "Viewpoint Locations." These viewpoints were identified in the field to locate viewpoints from which the resort development might be seen.

In visual simulation work, a 50mm lens setting is typically utilized for photographic documentation. While a 35mm lens will provide the best approximation of the field of view perceived by the human eye, an 85mm lens setting will provide the best representation of the degree of detail perceivable by the human eye. As a result, a 50mm lens setting is the most reasonable composite of these two parameters and gives the best overall representation of the perception of the human eye.



BALLOON LOCATION	GROUND ELEVATION (FEET)	TOP OF BALLOON (FEET)
1	592.8	668
2	518.5	538
3	581.5	608
4	507.8	542
5	543.5	568
6	574	644
7	568.5	622
8	588.5	650
9	588.4	626
10	607.4	632
11	624.5	680
12	799.3	838
13	773.9	792
14	723.8	756

THE Chazen COMPANIES

Silo Ridge Resort Community
Proposed Action

VIEWPOINT/ REFERENCE BALLOON LOCATIONS

Town of Amenia, Dutchess County, New York

SCALE: 1"=1000'

Figure 3.6-3

JOB NUMBER: 10454.00

The camera used in the field work for this project was a Nikon Digital SLR (model D200) fitted with an 18-200mm lens (model AF-S DX VR Zoom-NIKKOR). Due to the fact that this is a digital camera, and there are technological differences in the mechanics and function of digital cameras versus analogue cameras, a mathematical adjustment was necessary (per the manufacturers' specifications) to achieve the same graphic representation of an analogue camera with a 50mm lens setting.

Each of the viewpoint photographs was taken with the camera set and leveled on a tripod at 5 feet above ground elevation for the best approximation of true observer eye level. Additionally, each photograph was taken through remote triggering to eliminate any distortion or blurring which may be caused by human error.

Viewpoints 1, 2, and 3 show the project site's visibility from the US Route 44 hairpin turn overlook at DeLavergne Hill. These views look generally to the south down on the open valley floor from various points of travel along Route 44. Route 44 on DeLavergne Hill runs through the northern portion of the project site and offers expansive views of the project site as well as open fields and the mountains in the distance. This is a scenic vista familiar to many who travel through the area and is also recognized as a scenic resource in Dutchess County's "Directions: A Plan for Dutchess County." While portions of the golf course are visible, the existing Silo Ridge clubhouse is mostly screened.

From these viewpoints, the open areas of the site adjacent to Route 44 in the foreground and the area within the hairpin turn are highly visible. More distant mid-ground areas of the site around the "Island Green" pond in the central portion of the site are also visible; however, due to their distance from these viewpoints of approximately 0.6 mile and relative elevation of about 300 feet below the viewpoint, these areas appear small and less significant to the overall viewshed. Many other areas of the site are shielded from these viewpoints due to existing landforms, topography, and vegetation.

Viewpoint 4 looks back up DeLavergne Hill generally north to the area within the hairpin turn. This area again is highly visible and significant from this viewpoint. Viewpoint 5 is taken from the entrance of the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office on Route 22, looking towards the front nine holes of the golf course. Most of the southern part of the site is shielded from view by existing vegetation while the hillside immediately below the Route 44 hairpin turn is quite visible from this location. Viewpoint 6 is looking west from County Route 81 across rising agricultural fields in the foreground. From this location only the higher elevations of the northern parts of the site are visible but at a great distance from the viewer.

Viewpoints 7 and 8 illustrate the project site's visibility from across the valley to the east of the site on Depot Hill Road. Viewpoint 7 is taken directly from Depot Hill Road looking west toward the project site. Most of the western hillside and many of the higher elevations of the site are visible from this location, including the area within the hairpin turn on DeLavergne Hill. However, much of the lower central portions of the existing golf course are shielded from view by the onsite steep hill and vegetation adjacent to Route 22. The most significant feature from this viewpoint is the ridgeline of the western hill. Viewpoint 8 represents the view from the lower part of Depot Hill Road where it intersects with Route 81. From this lower elevation, only the higher face of the west hill and areas within the hairpin turn are visible.

Viewpoints to the south and west, including other locations along Deep Hollow Road, were not included in the analysis due to the fact that the steeply sloped and wooded hillsides surrounding the project site in these areas completely block views of the project site.

Photographs of the existing conditions on the site from each viewpoint are provided below.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 1 (Left): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (just north of hairpin turn).

Existing Conditions Photograph

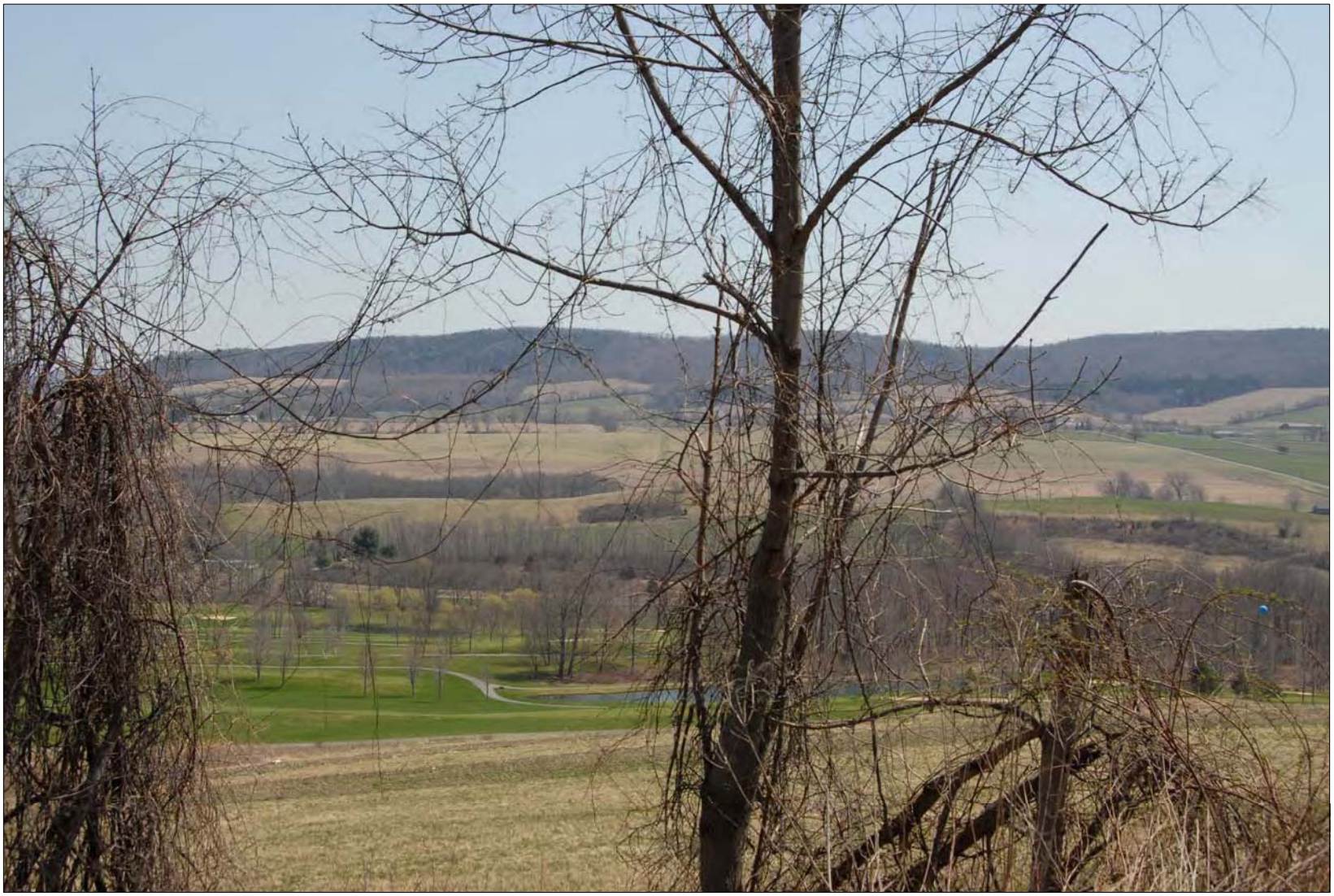
Viewpoint 1 (Right): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (just north of hairpin turn).

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 2 (Left): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (western end of hairpin turn).

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 2 (Right): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (western end of hairpin turn).



Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 3 (Left): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (eastern end of hairpin turn).

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 3 (Right): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (eastern end of hairpin turn).

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 4: Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing north (further eastern end of hairpin turn).

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 5 (Left): Located at Route 22 near the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office Amenia substation facing southwest.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 5 (Right): Located at Route 22 near the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office Amenia substation facing southwest.

Existing Conditions Photograph
Viewpoint 6 (Left): Located at Route 81 facing west.

Existing Conditions Photograph
Viewpoint 6 (Right): Located at Route 81 facing west.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 7 (Left): Located at Depot Hill Road from a higher elevation facing west.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 7 (Center): Located at Depot Hill Road from a higher elevation facing west.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 7 (Right): Located at Depot Hill Road from a higher elevation facing west.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 8 (Left): Located at Route 81 just north of where it intersects with Depot Hill Road facing west.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 8 (Center): Located at Route 81 just north of where it intersects with Depot Hill Road facing west.

Existing Conditions Photograph

Viewpoint 8 (Right): Located at Route 81 just north of where it intersects with Depot Hill Road facing west.

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3.6.2 Potential Impacts

The assessment of visual impacts involves a qualitative analysis that is inherently subjective in nature, as different viewers react to viewsheds and aesthetic conditions differently. This evaluation measures the existing visual resources against proposed conditions, analyzing the extent and nature of the anticipated change. Photosimulations of the proposed project were prepared to evaluate the changes in visual character of the project site and surrounding area.

The first step in generating photosimulations is to fly balloons at the approximate heights and locations of the proposed structures. To accomplish this, a six-person team went to the project site on April 23, 2007 to fly four-foot-diameter weather balloons from 14 reference points. It should be noted that moderate winds and wind gusts throughout the day of the field work did at times distort the exact elevation and location of balloons when photographed. Field-flown balloons are utilized in the visual simulation process as a source for visual reference points only, and should not be interpreted as precise locations for proposed buildings. The final visual simulations from each of the viewpoints for this study represent the computerized 3-Dimensional modeling and actual field survey data in combination with the balloon reference points.

Once all 14 balloons were in the air, a three-person team (including the surveyor who conducted the original stake-out) went to each of the 8 pre-determined viewpoint locations to take photographs. The remainder of the field team remained at the project site to oversee the balloon locations and communicate back to the photo-team.

Utilizing the proposed project layout and three-dimensional architectural data provided by the architect, a three-dimensional computer-generated massing model was developed. This model involved the creation of basic overall shape and massing blocks for each of the proposed buildings within the project. These building forms were then placed in the three-dimensional master plan model relative to their correct positions, elevations, and relationships to each other.

Once the buildings were complete, point data gathered in the field for each of the photograph locations and balloon reference points was imported into the software. This data was utilized to assist in matching the computer camera points and angles to the actual photographs taken in the field.

The next step in the creation of the massing model was to mask those portions of the proposed buildings which would not be visible due to intervening topographic features. This was accomplished through the creation of a 3-D terrain model in concert with the building massing model. Adjustments were then made to account for geographic positioning of the project site (latitude and longitude), atmospheric

conditions, date and time of day for each of the photographs. This process ensured that sun angles and shadow casting were as accurate as possible.

Finally, with the camera matching and settings complete, computerized "snap-shots" were taken from each of the receptor locations. This resulted in a graphic depiction of the proposed buildings as they would appear in each of the photographs. These graphics were then brought into PhotoShop for final editing in order to re-layer the existing foreground, middle-ground, and background vegetation and provide an accurate representation of the final built condition of the proposed project without enhancement or proposed landscaping.

In order to portray the highest level of potential visual impact, blank forms for the proposed structures were used with no architectural detail, fenestration, materials or true color representation, which would mute the impact. Additionally, proposed landscaping was intentionally left out of the photo simulations to ensure that the full visual impact, height, mass and relative scale of structures in their proposed locations could be assessed. It should also be noted that, in accordance with the preferred methodology for conducting visual analysis, the existing conditions photographs were taken during leaf-off conditions. As a result, the proposed simulations depict a greater level of visual impact than that which would occur during much of the year, when leaves on the trees and other vegetation would provide significantly more screening.

The resulting photo-simulations are described below and illustrated on the following pages. Please note that the balloon heights identified on the photo-simulations are measured from the existing ground elevation, whereas the building heights are measured from the proposed ground elevation, taking into account proposed grading.

Viewpoint 1: To a viewer located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (just north of the hairpin turn) it is estimated that the following structures will be visible or partially visible during leaf off conditions: the water storage tank/observation area, portions of the hotel, Area "B" townhomes, Area "D" townhomes and Area "E" single family homes. The remainder of the development is screened from view by existing landforms and vegetation.

Viewpoint 2: This viewpoint is located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (western end of hairpin turn). Portions of the hotel, Area "B", Area "D" and Area "H" townhomes, Area "E" single family homes and the water tank/observation area are visible from this viewpoint. Due to their distance from the viewer, the townhomes appear as small objects within the cone of vision. The remainder of the development is screened from view by existing landforms and vegetation.

Viewpoint 3: To a viewer located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (eastern end of hairpin turn), the second floors and roofs of the townhomes in the Village Center (Area "J") are clearly visible in the semi-foreground from this location, although the buildings are set into the hillside.

Viewpoint 4: To a viewer located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing north (further eastern end of hairpin turn), the Area "M" townhomes and water storage tank/observation area will be visible.

Viewpoint 5: Area "J" and Area "L" townhomes will be visible from Route 22 near the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office Amenia substation facing southwest. Although the Village Center is fully visible from this location, the structures do not break the distant ridgeline and are set back in the distance. The remainder of the proposed project is not visible from this location due to the intervening topography.

Viewpoint 6: To a viewer located at Route 81 facing west, Area "J", Area "M", and Area "L" townhomes will be visible. Due to the existing topography, most of the southern portion of the proposed development is not visible from this viewpoint. The higher elevations of the northern part of the site are visible from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 7: From Depot Hill Road facing west Area "E" and "F" single family homes, Area "B", Area "J", Area "L", Area "M" and Area "I" townhomes, and portions of the hotel will be visible. Due to the higher elevation of this viewpoint, a large portion of the project site is visible, yet none of the structures breaks the ridgeline and they appear small within the overall landscape. Fields on the eastern face of the hillsides are visible, while fields on the western face of the hillsides are not. As a result, Area M townhomes within the hairpin turn, Area "L" townhomes, and a portion of the hotel will be visible. The townhomes in the Village Center on the hillside south of Route 44 will also be visible, while the remaining townhomes and single-family homes will be partially screened or fully screened by existing topography and vegetation. None of the structures break the ridgeline of the west hill; and, due to the distance from the viewer, the structures appear small within the landscape.

Viewpoint 8: Due to the existing topography and vegetation, most of the proposed development is not visible from this viewpoint. To a viewer located on Route 81 just north of the Depot Hill Road intersection, facing west portions of Area "M" townhomes within the hairpin turn and Area "E" single family townhomes will be visible during leaf off conditions. Existing topography and vegetation obscures the remainder of the development from this view.

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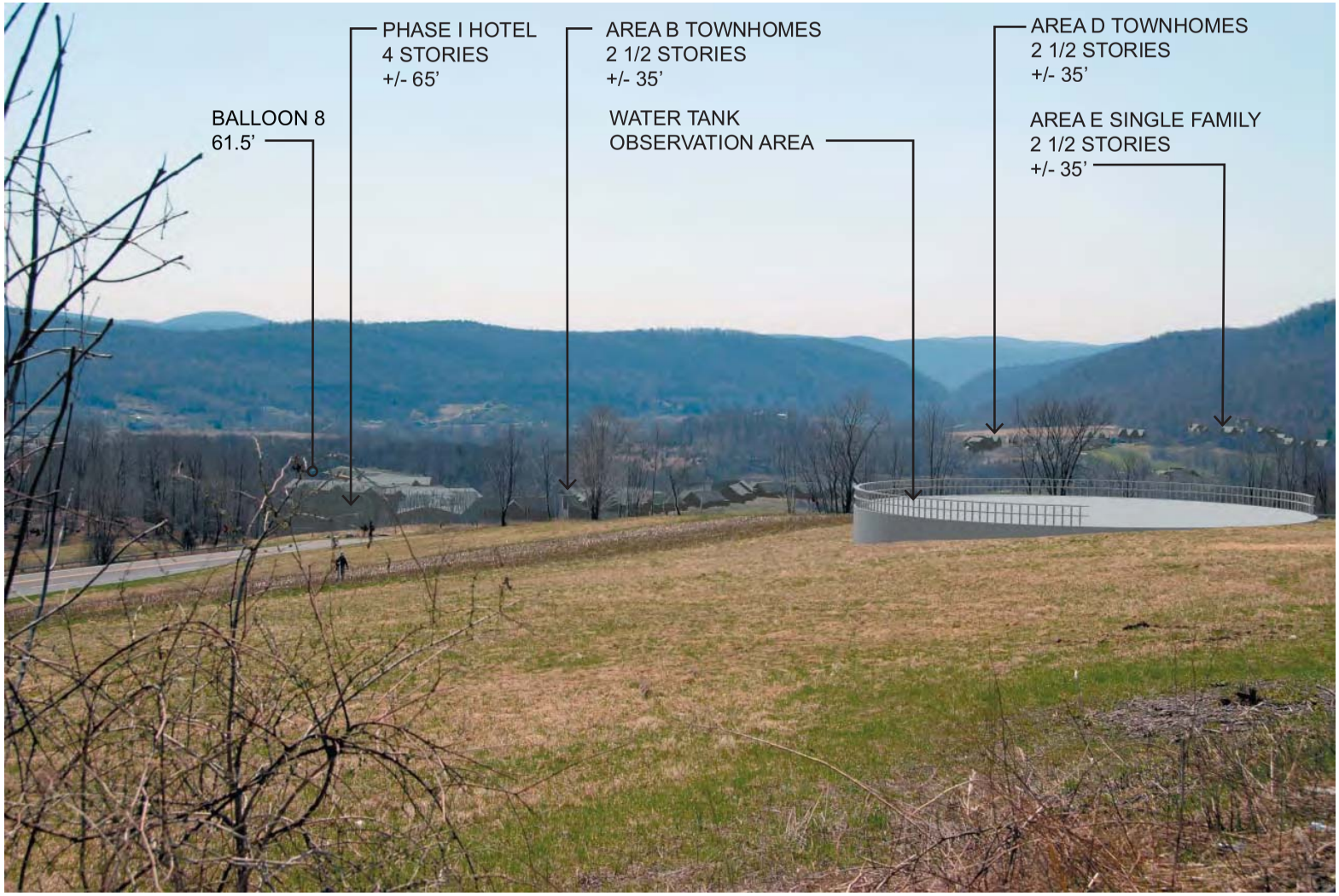
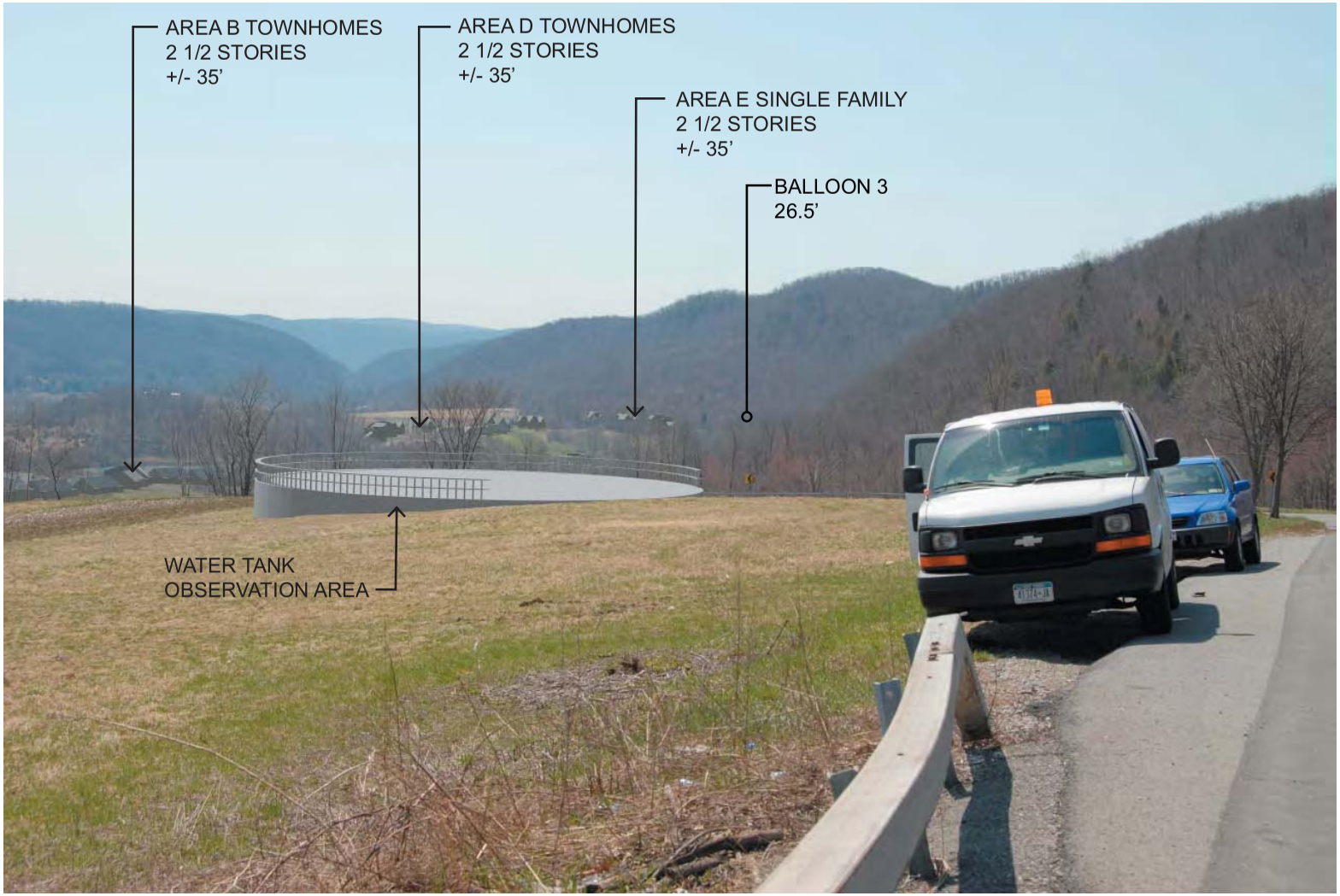


Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 1 (Left): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (just north of hairpin turn).

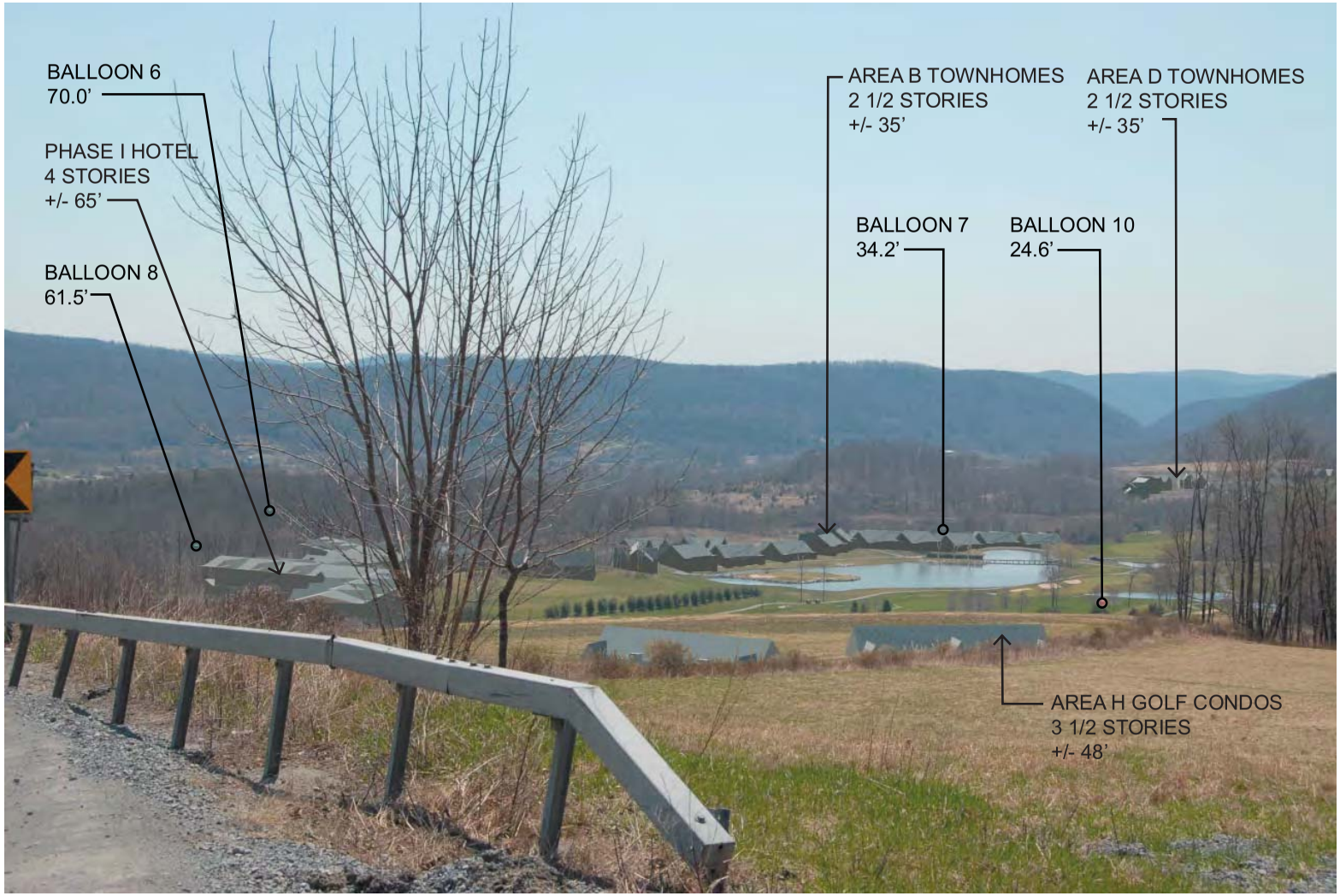
For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 1 (Right): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (just north of hairpin turn).

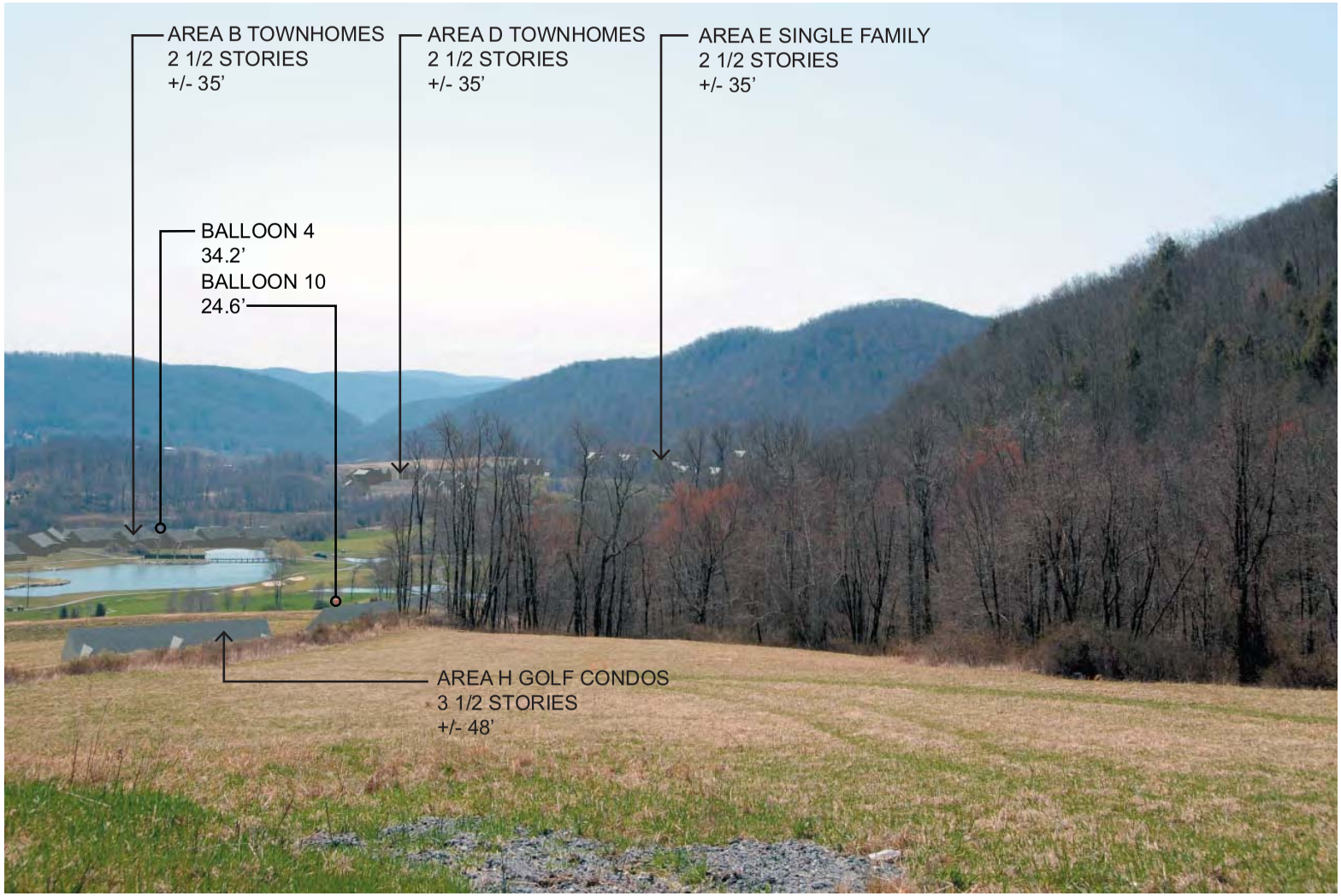
For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 2 (Left): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (western end of hairpin turn).

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge.
Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

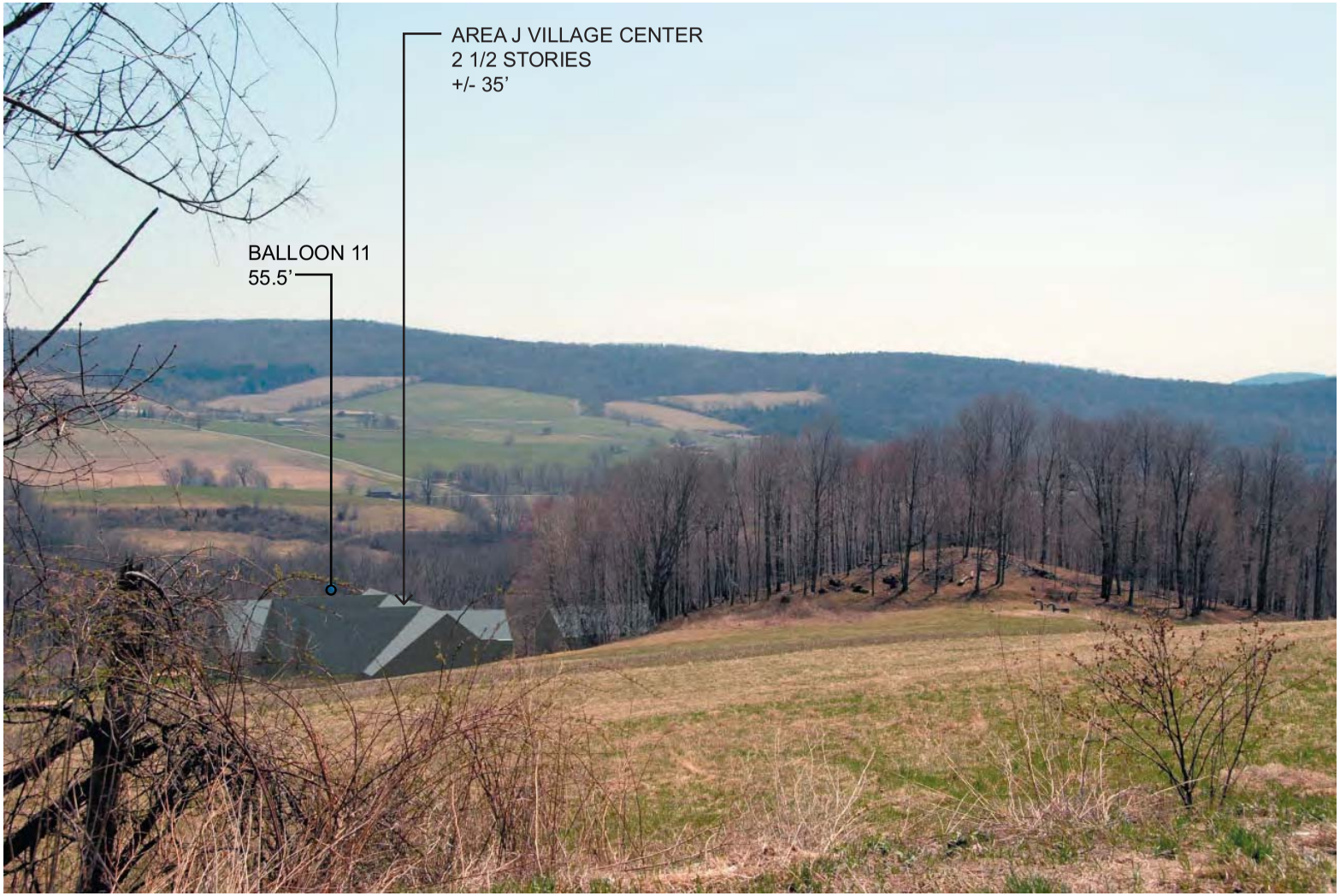
Viewpoint 2 (Right): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (western end of hairpin turn).

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 3 (Left): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (eastern end of hairpin turn).

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 3 (Right): Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing south (eastern end of hairpin turn).

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 4: Located at Route 44 at DeLavergne Hill facing north (further eastern end of hairpin turn).

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

** Balloon 12 was not set to reference Area M Townhomes.*

Proposed Action Simulation

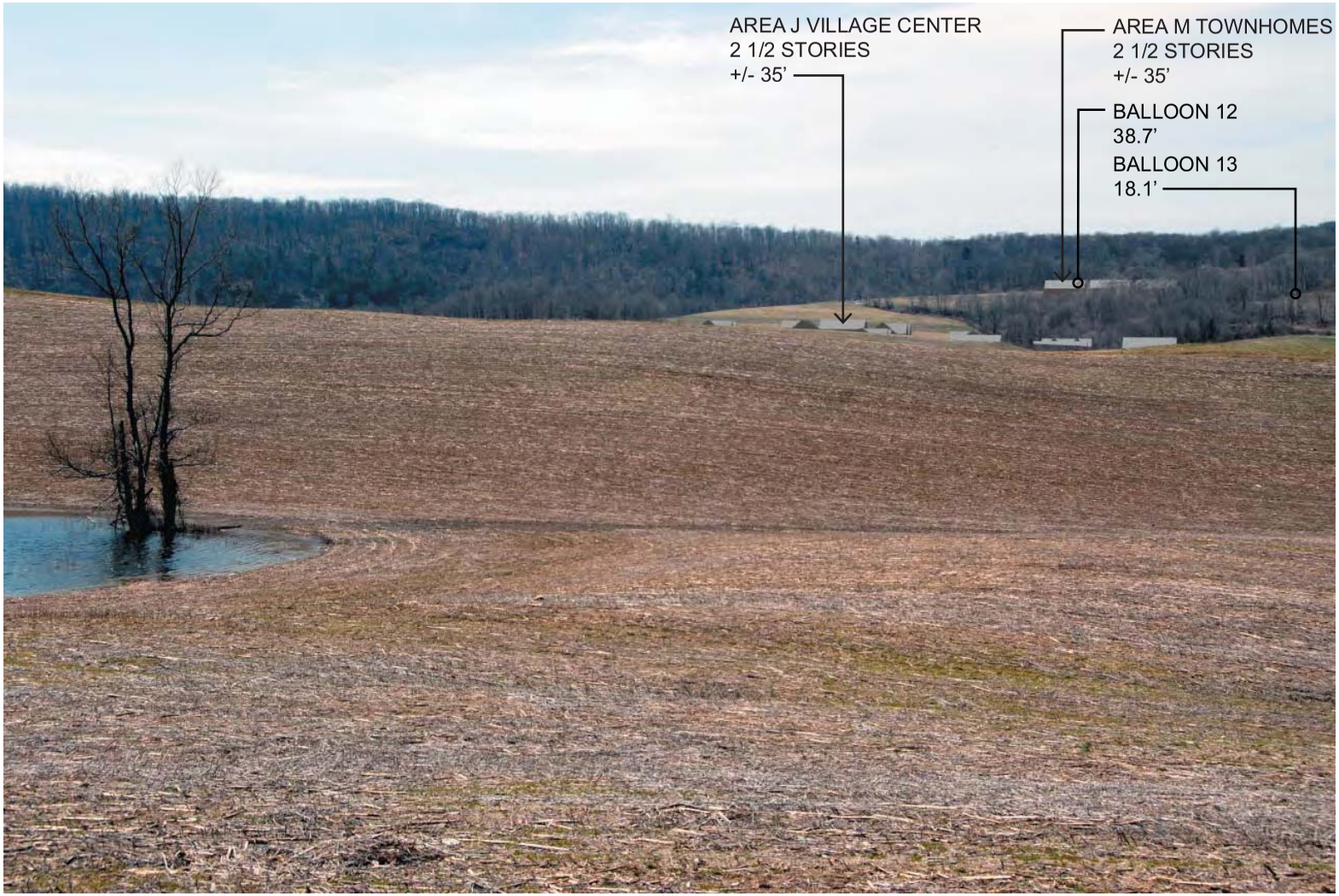
Viewpoint 5 (Left): Located at Route 22 near the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office Amenia substation.

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 5 (Right): Located at Route 22 near the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office Amenia substation.

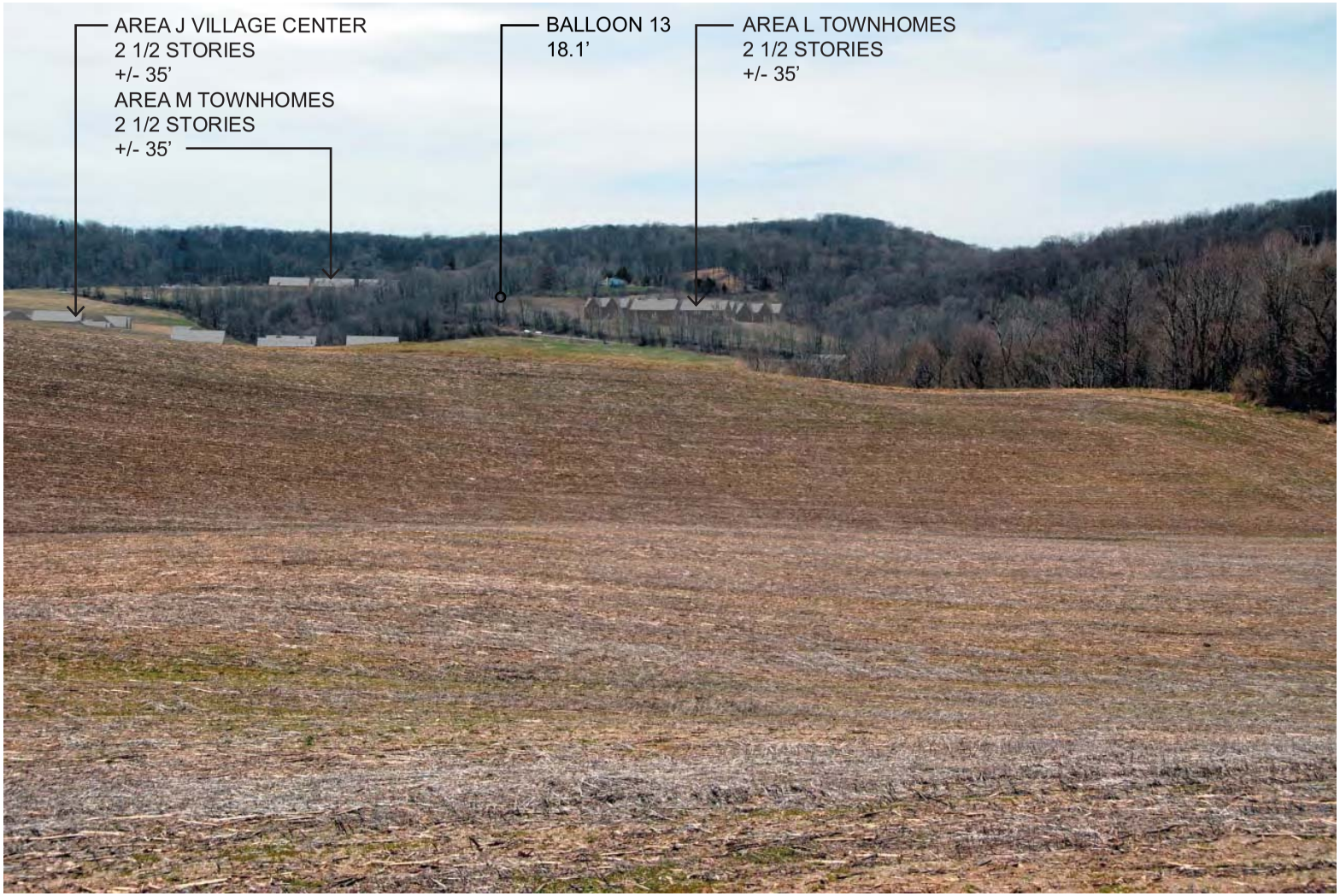
For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 6 (Left): Located at Route 81 facing west.

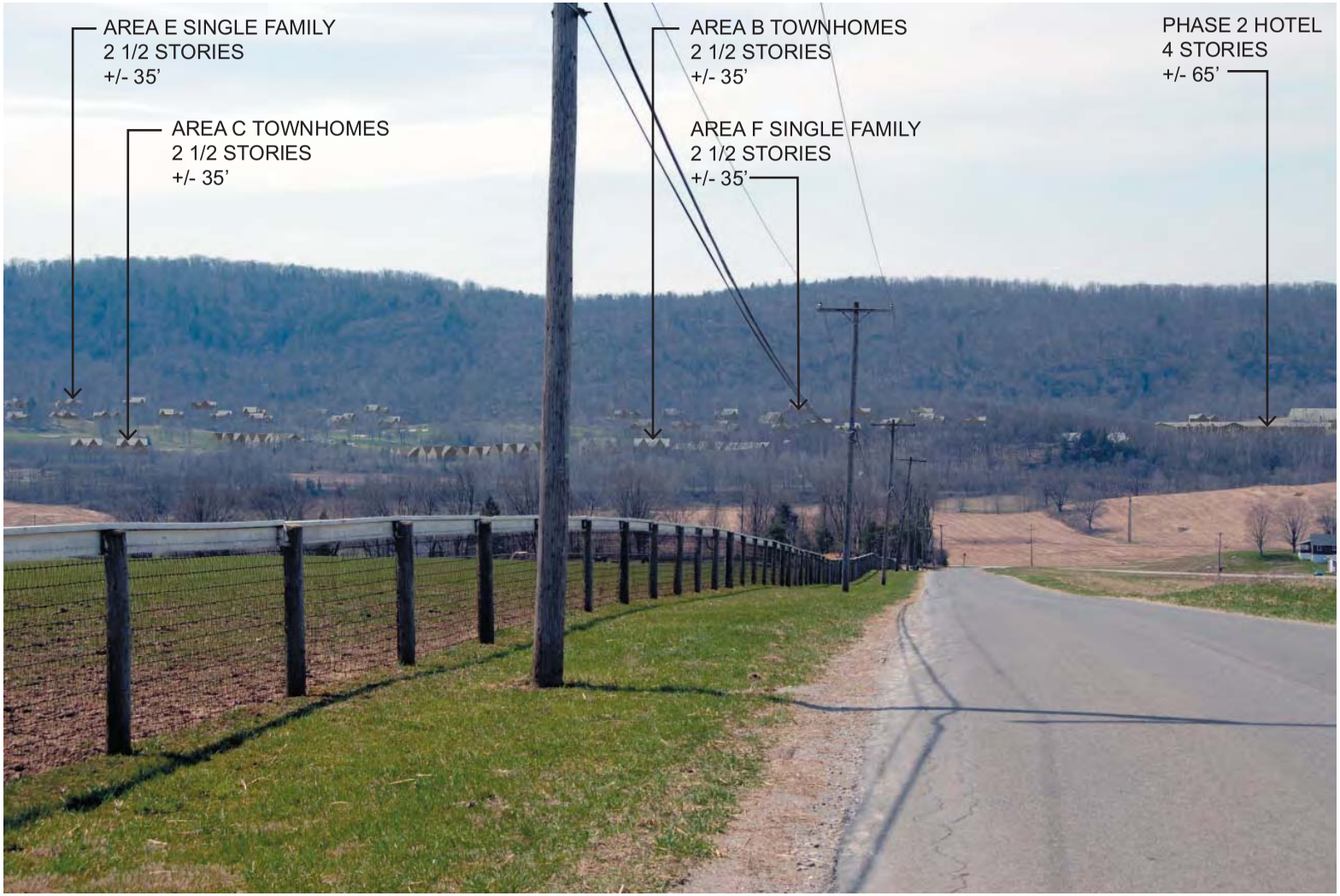
For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 6 (Right): Located at Route 81 facing west.

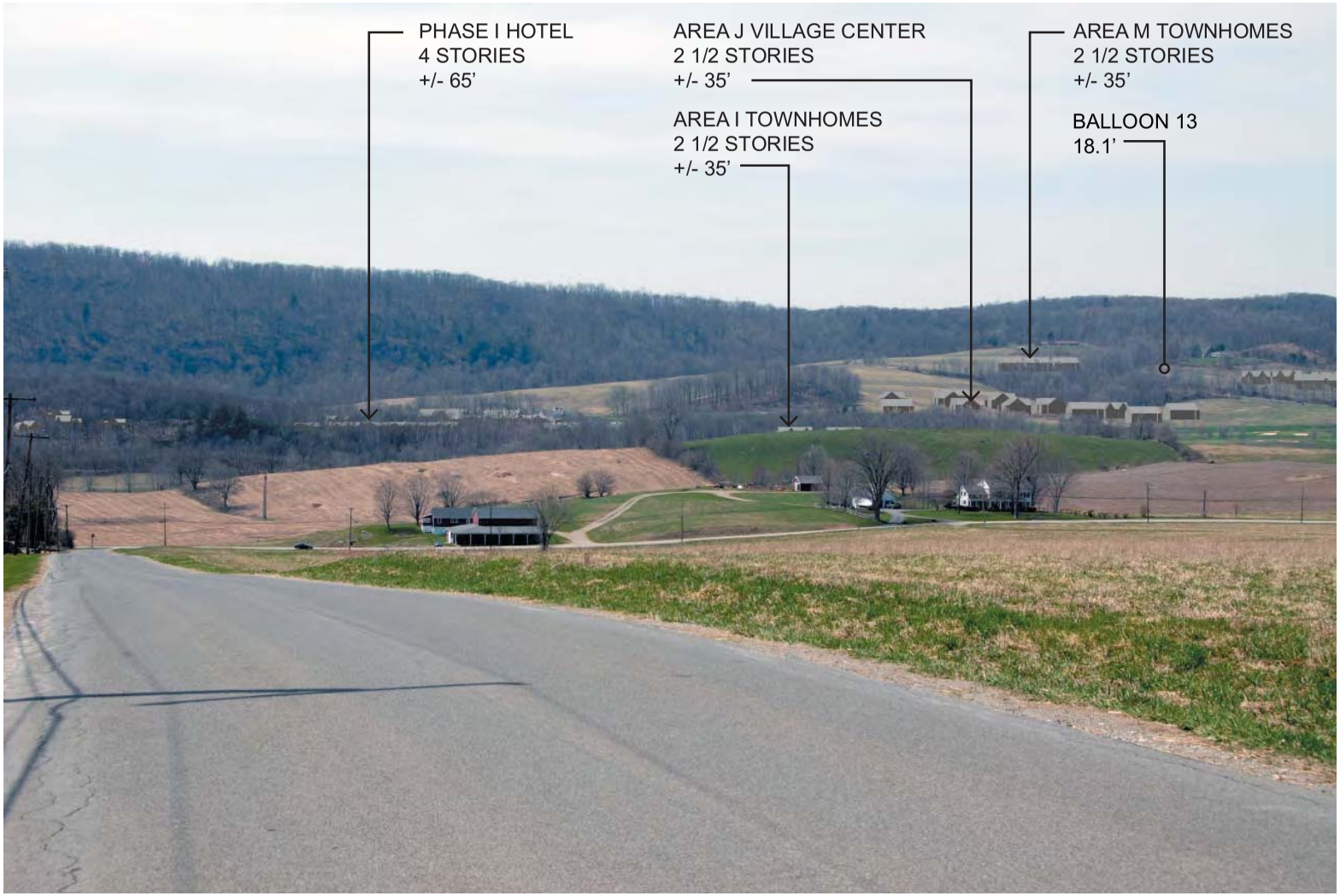
For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 7 (Left): Located at Depot Hill Road from a higher elevation facing west.

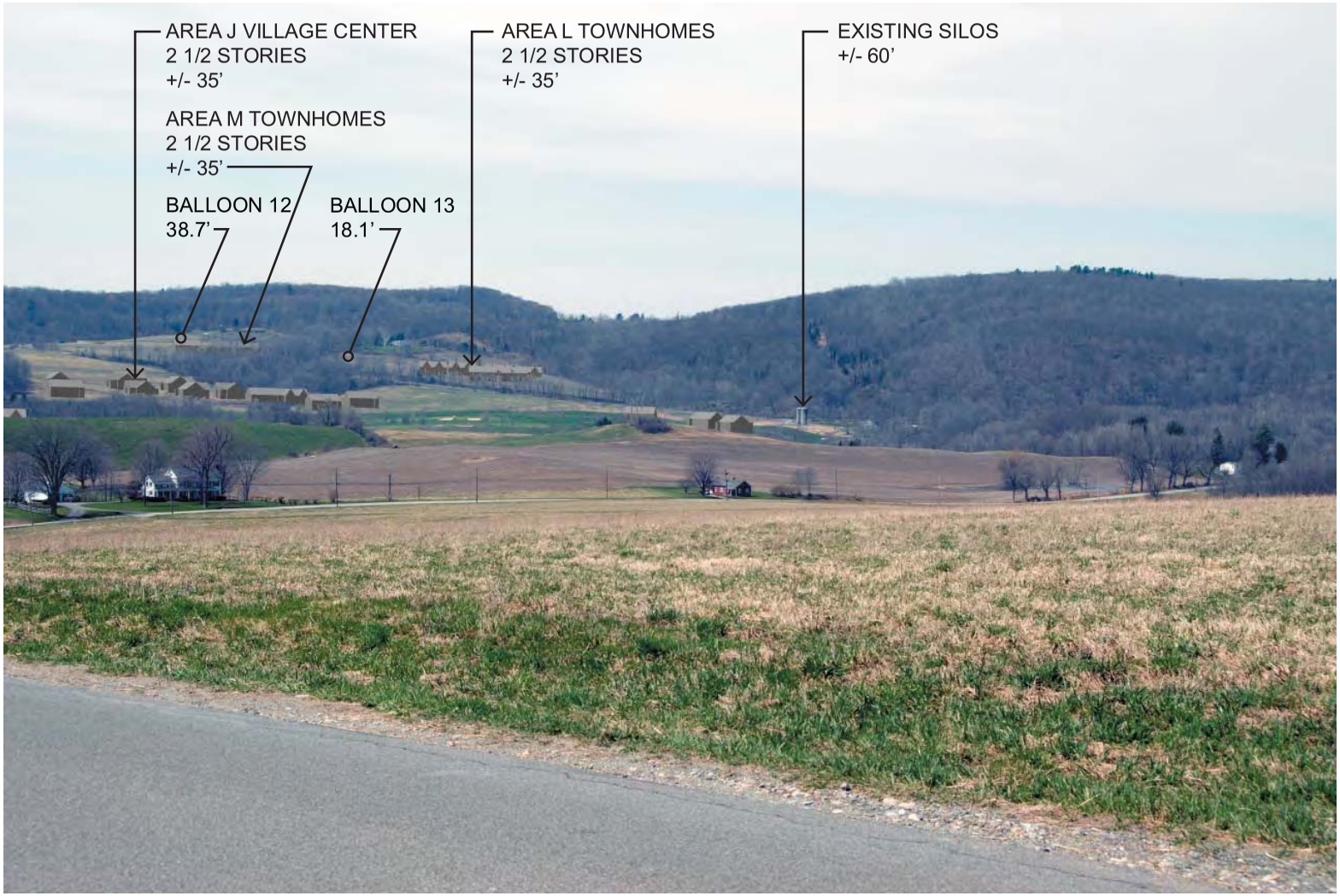
For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 7 (Center): Located at Depot Hill Road from a higher elevation facing west.

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.



Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 7 (Right): Located at Depot Hill Road from a higher elevation facing west.

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 8 (Left): Located at Route 81 just north of where it intersects with Depot Hill Road facing west.

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 8 (Center): Located at Route 81 just north of where it intersects with Depot Hill Road facing west.

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge.
Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

Proposed Action Simulation

Viewpoint 8 (Right): Located at Route 81 just north of where it intersects with Depot Hill Road facing west.

For this exercise, building height is measured from ground line at building front to the mid point of the highest roof ridge. Balloon height is measured from existing ground elevation.

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Based on the above analysis, portions of the project will be visible from the viewpoints examined. Through the use of sensitive site design and vegetative screening, visual impacts can be minimized, particularly for the lower, more central portions of the site. However, even with vegetative screening and sensitive site design, development on certain areas of the site will be visible from Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. These locations include the area within the hairpin turn on Route 44 and the broad open area of the site immediately south of the Route 44 hairpin turn. The development in Area J - Village Center and Area M – Townhomes may change the visual character of the site and affect views from the Route 44 hairpin turn and Depot Hill Road.

The proposed project will increase the amount of lighting on the project site compared to current conditions. A detailed discussion of lighting is included in Section 5.0, "Alternatives." In general, the proposed lighting as viewed from Route 22 will be muted by plant massing at building sites and along the interior roads. New lighting will be minimal in outer residential areas. Lighting levels will be below what would be specified in a hamlet location, although for public safety and aesthetics there will be some concentration of lighting in the public areas and roadways of the hotel and clubhouse, resulting in an inviting appearance when approached from US Route 44, or when viewed from the south from Depot Hill Road.

The target light levels will be designed for the rural location and surrounding conditions, with the understanding that lower light levels are sufficient in darker areas. The lighting design will specify the minimum light levels necessary to accomplish the project's lighting objectives for safety and security, as well as for aesthetic enhancement.

3.6.3 Proposed Mitigation Measures

The proposed project has been designed to be sensitive to the Town's rural character. The main way in which this is achieved is through preservation of the golf course as part of the 75% preserved open space on the project site. Preservation of the golf course maintains the open feel of the site, and the large expanses of greens and fairways in a sense mimic the open agricultural fields that are common throughout the Town and contribute heavily to its rural character. From most public views of the site, the golf course will remain the dominant feature.

The site plan also takes advantage of the site's topography and existing natural features to screen many buildings from view and reduce the project's visual impact. In addition, proposed landscaping will feature a combination of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs. Supplemental plantings and street trees will be added to existing vegetation screening along internal roadways. The mixture of vegetation types of varying heights along the roadways and near most proposed structures will

add interest and diversity to the landscape. Likewise, streetscapes will be supplemented with a variety of deciduous trees to enhance the area's aesthetic appeal.

No further mitigation is proposed.