

Visual Impact Severity Rating

VISUAL ELEMENTS	VISUAL SUBELEMENTS	INDICATORS/CLUES	SCORING		
			ELEMENT RATINGS	ELEMENT SCORE	
LANDSCAPE COMPATIBILITY ↓	COLOR	Significantly different color, hue, value, chroma	3	Severe	1
			2	Moderate	
			1	Minimal	
			0	None	
	FORM	Incompatible 2/3 dimensional shape with landscape surroundings	3	Severe	1
			2	Moderate	
			1	Minimal	
			0	None	
	LINE	Incompatible edges, bands, or silhouette lines introduced	3	Severe	1
			2	Moderate	
			1	Minimal	
			0	None	
	TEXTURE	Incompatible textural grain, density, regularity or pattern	3	Severe	1
			2	Moderate	
			1	Minimal	
			0	None	
A. Subtotal →				4	
SCALE CONTRAST ↓		Major scale introduction/intrusion	12	Severe	↓
		One of several major scales or major objects in confined setting	8	Moderate	
		Significant object or scale	4	Minimal	
		Small object or scale of activity	0	None	
B. Score →				4	
SPATIAL DOMINANCE ↓		LANDSCAPE SITUATION BACKDROP Object/activity dominates or is prominent in whole landscape composition; or is predominantly situated within the landscape; or dominates landform, water or sky backdrop.	12	Dominant	↓
			8	Co-dominant	
			4	Subordinate	
			0	Insignificant	
C. Score →				6	
TOTAL VISUAL IMPACT SEVERITY →			Total Score (A+B+C)→		14

Visual Impact of Development Matrix

		Impact Severity Rating			
		Severe 36-27	Strong 26-18	Moderate 17-9	Low 8-0
Scenic Significance of View	Extreme			14	
	High				
	Medium				
	Low				

	UNACCEPTABLE. High level of visual contrast in line, form, color, or texture between existing landscape and the development proposal; view of water or other significant visual resource obstructed. Visual impacts are unreasonable even with mitigation and cannot be offset by compensation.
	ACCEPTABLE WITH MITIGATION & COMPENSATION. High degree of contrast on landscape. Project impacts may be minimized further through mitigation. Visual impacts may be acceptable with mitigation and appropriate compensation.
	ACCEPTABLE WITH MAJOR MITIGATION. Visual impacts are acceptable with some modification to project siting or design to achieve better landscape 'fit.'
	ACCEPTABLE WITH MINOR MITIGATION. Visual impacts are acceptable with minor adjustments to plan or siting necessary to achieve a higher level of project compatibility with existing landscape.
	ACCEPTABLE. Visual impacts are acceptable and result in no perceptible change to the visual landscape. No mitigation required.

The visual analysis matrix should be filled out by the DEP project manager for each application pursuant to the Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA). The Matrix is the DEP's method for reviewing visual impacts and determining level of effort required for mitigation/reconsideration of project siting and design and/or the potential need for compensation of project impacts.

Project Manager Analysis & Recommendation: Department staff visited the project site on 11/5/2021. Staff observed existing structure; landscape features; local viewpoints of interest (see site visit notes and photos). Red buoys were placed at the outer end of the proposed floats for reference. Surrounding harbor is highly developed with numerous piers, including the Public Landing pier and floats, the Pearl Restaurant (on a pier), and Landings Marina. Proposed expansion would be similar in color, line, texture, and form to these structures. Large vessels, ranging from 70 to 200 feet long, may dock at the expanded marina temporarily. The applicant has indicated these stays average 2-3 days. The applicant further indicated that vessels of this size already access the inner harbor, either at the applicant's pier or the Public Landing, so their presence is not new. (continued...)

(continued):

For Landscape Compatibility, each visual sub-element was rated 1, on a scale of 0-3, due to the potential impact of large vessels docked at the marina. The proposed floats alone would rate 0 based on their low profile and the developed nature of the harbor. The vessels using the marina will also match the existing character of the harbor, and will be transient and seasonal; however, there may be occasional large vessels that could temporarily affect views.

Scenic Significance of View is rated “extreme” due to the proximity to Sandy Beach, Harbor Park, Buoy Park, Harbor Walk, and Rockland Public Landing, all within 1,000 feet of project site. Project may be visible from Breakwater and Breakwater Lighthouse; however, due to distance (1.3 mi) the visual impact from those points would be minimal.

Sandy Beach faces NE; project would affect only about 17° (14%) of the beach viewshed, on the far left periphery of that viewshed. Vessels docked at the expanded marina would only block views of other piers, and possibly some moored vessels. Harbor Park and Buoy Park face east; views already include floats in the foreground, including occasional cruise ships (200+ feet in length) docked at Public Landing. The Harbor Walk is located partially over the applicant’s property. Public access has been allowed for years. The view from the Harbor Walk will be affected by the proposed Dock C; however, this dock configuration was previously approved by the Department twice, though never constructed. It will consist of smaller vessels that will not significantly obscure views.

The nature of the project is compatible with the existing visual landscape. It may bring large vessels closer to shore on a more frequent basis, and potentially for longer periods, than the current marina layout. Based on these considerations, the scale contrast is rated minimal (significant object or scale), and the spatial dominance is rated midway between subordinate and co-dominant.

Based on these ratings, the visual impact of the project is “acceptable with major mitigation.” During project design over multiple years, based on public feedback, the applicant reduced the size and scope of the project considerably. The applicant has also designed the landward pier extension to serve as a public viewing platform. During the review, the applicant extended the public access area on the pier to include a total of 120 feet of viewing area. Further, the applicant proposes to maintain public access to the Harbor Walk over their property indefinitely. In light of these mitigation measures, the visual impact of the project is acceptable.

Scenic Significance of View

Extreme: The project is directly visible from and located <1000 feet from a natural landmark or other outstanding natural or cultural feature, State or National Wildlife Refuge, Sanctuary, or Preserve, National, State or local park, National, State, or locally designated trail.

High: The project is directly visible from and located >1000 feet from a natural landmark or other outstanding natural or cultural feature, State or National Wildlife Refuge, Sanctuary, or Preserve, National, State or local park, National, State, or locally designated trail.

Medium: The project is directly visible from several vantage points on the water or a public way and is viewed by > 25 people/day. The project is not visible from any natural landmark or other outstanding natural or cultural feature, State or National Wildlife Refuge, Sanctuary, or Preserve, National, State or local park, National, State or locally designated trail.

Low: The project is directly visible from several vantage points on the water or a public way and is viewed by < 25 people/day. The project is not visible from any natural landmark or other outstanding natural or cultural feature, State or National Wildlife Refuge, Sanctuary, or Preserve, National, State or local park, National, State or locally designated trail.

Definitions Associated with Visual Impacts Assessment

- A. Backdrop. The distant part of a landscape location from 4 miles to infinity from the viewer.
- B. Color. The property of reflecting light of a particular wavelength that enables the eye to differentiate otherwise indistinguishable objects. A hue (red, green, blue, yellow, etc.) as contrasted with a value (black, white, or gray).
- C. Contrast. Diversity or distinction of adjacent parts. Effect of striking differences in color, form, line, or texture of landscape.
- D. Dominance. The extent to which an object is noticeable when compared to the surrounding context.
- E. Form. The structure, mass or shape of a landscape or an object. Landscape form is often defined by the edges or outlines of landforms, rockforms, vegetation patterns, or waterforms, such as a plain, mountain, or valley.
- F. Landform. One of the attributes or features that make up the Earth's surface, such as a plain, mountain, or valley.
- G. Landscape. An area composed of interacting ecosystems that are repeated because of geology, landform, soils, climate, biota, and human influences throughout that area.
- H. Landscape Character or Landscape Composition. Particular attributes, qualities, and traits of a landscape that give it an image and make it identifiable or unique.
- I. Landscape compatibility. The elements of color, form, line, and texture that typically determine landscape character.
- J. Line. Anything that is arranged in a row or sequence. In landscapes – ridges, skylines, structures, changes in vegetation, or individual trees and branches – may be perceived as line.
- K. Scale Contrast. The degree to which an activity or object dominates or intrudes into a landscape or confined setting.
- L. Situation. The position of the activity or object within the landscape.
- M. Spatial Dominance. The degree to which an activity or object dominates the landscape, is prominently situated within the landscape; or dominates landform, waterform, or sky backdrop.
- N. Texture. The grain of a landscape or repetitive pattern of tiny forms. Visual texture can range from smooth to coarse.
- O. Visual Elements. The landscape's components that make up the overall visual character of a landscape.
- P. Waterform. One of the attributes or features that make up the Earth's surface, such as a pond, lake, stream, river, waterfall, estuary, or ocean.