

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION CLASSIFICATION FORM**

TIP Project No.                   **B-5244**  
W.B.S. No.                         **42846.1.1**  
Federal Project No.               **BRZ-3197(1)**

A. Project Description:

The purpose of this project is to replace Buncombe County Bridge No. 363, which is on SR 3197 (Lower Christ School Road) and over Robinson Creek. The replacement structure will be a bridge that is approximately 60 feet in length; this length is based on preliminary design information and is set by hydraulic requirement. The clear deck width will be 30 feet and 10 inches, providing two 11 feet lanes and two variable length offsets – minimum of 3 feet to a maximum of 5 feet and 10 inches. The roadway grade of the new structure will be approximately the same as the existing grade.

The approach roadway will extend approximately 118 feet from the west end of the new bridge and 120 feet from the east end. The approaches will be widened to include a 22 foot pavement width providing two 11 feet lanes. Four foot shoulders (two feet paved and two feet turf) will be provided on each side. Shoulders will be seven feet shoulders where guardrail is included. The roadway will be designed using Sub-regional Tier guidelines with a 40 mile per hour design speed.

Traffic will be detoured off-site during construction (see Figure1).

B. Purpose and Need:

NCDOT Bridge Management Unit records indicate Bridge No. 363 has a sufficiency rating of 28 out of a possible 100 for a new structure.

According to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) standards, the structure is functionally obsolete. In 2012, the structural condition evaluation was 3 out of 9 and deck geometry appraisal was 2 out of 9. Therefore the bridge is eligible for FHWA’s Highway Bridge Program

In 2011, Bridge No. 363 carried 2,200 vehicles per day with 4,000 vehicles per day projected for the future year 2035. The substandard superstructure, substructure and deck geometry are unacceptable and that cannot be addressed by maintenance activities. Replacement of the bridge will result in safer traffic operations.

C. Proposed Improvements:

Circle one or more of the following Type II improvements, which apply to the project:

1. Modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding auxiliary lanes (e.g., parking, weaving, turning, climbing).
  - a. Restoring, Resurfacing, Rehabilitating, and Reconstructing pavement (3R and 4R improvements)
  - b. Widening roadway and shoulders without adding through lanes
  - c. Modernizing gore treatments
  - d. Constructing lane improvements (merge, auxiliary, and turn lanes)
  - e. Adding shoulder drains
  - f. Replacing and rehabilitating culverts, inlets, and drainage pipes, including safety treatments
  - g. Providing driveway pipes
  - h. Performing minor bridge widening (less than one through lane)
  - i. Slide Stabilization
  - j. Structural BMP's for water quality improvement
2. Highway safety or traffic operations improvement projects including the installation of ramp metering control devices and lighting.
  - a. Installing ramp metering devices
  - b. Installing lights
  - c. Adding or upgrading guardrail
  - d. Installing safety barriers including Jersey type barriers and pier protection
  - e. Installing or replacing impact attenuators
  - f. Upgrading medians including adding or upgrading median barriers
  - g. Improving intersections including relocation and/or realignment
  - h. Making minor roadway realignment
  - i. Channelizing traffic
  - j. Performing clear zone safety improvements including removing hazards and flattening slopes
  - k. Implementing traffic aid systems, signals, and motorist aid
  - l. Installing bridge safety hardware including bridge rail retrofit
3. Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction, or replacement or the construction of grade separation to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings.
  - a. Rehabilitating, reconstructing, or replacing bridge approach slabs
  - b. Rehabilitating or replacing bridge decks
  - c. Rehabilitating bridges including painting (no red lead paint), scour repair, fender systems, and minor structural improvements
  - d. Replacing a bridge (structure and/or fill)
4. Transportation corridor fringe parking facilities.
5. Construction of new truck weigh stations or rest areas

6. Approvals for disposal of excess right-of-way or for joint or limited use of right-of-way, where the proposed use does not have significant adverse impacts.
7. Approvals for changes in access control.
8. Construction of new bus storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and located on or near a street with adequate capacity to handle anticipated bus and support vehicle traffic.
9. Rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing rail and bus buildings and ancillary facilities where only minor amounts of additional land are required and there is not a substantial increase in the number of users.
10. Construction of bus transfer facilities (an open area consisting of passenger shelters, boarding areas, kiosks and related street improvements) when located in a commercial area or other high activity center in which there is adequate street capacity for projected bus traffic.
11. Construction of rail storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and where there is no significant noise impact on the surrounding community.
12. Acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes, advance land acquisition loans under section 3(b) of the UMT Act. Hardship and protective buying will be permitted only for a particular parcel or a limited number of parcels. These types of land acquisition qualify for a CE only where the acquisition will not limit the evaluation of alternatives, including shifts in alignment for planned construction projects, which may be required in the NEPA process. No project development on such land may proceed until the NEPA process has been completed.
13. Acquisition and construction of wetland, stream and endangered species mitigation sites.
14. Remedial activities involving the removal, treatment or monitoring of soil or groundwater contamination pursuant to state or federal remediation guidelines.

D. Special Project Information:

The estimated costs, based on 2013 prices, are as follows:

Structure (bridge)	\$ 198,000
Roadway Approaches	\$ 152,000
Structure Removal	\$ 17,000
Misc. & Mob.	\$ 101,000
Eng. & Contingencies	\$ 82,000
Total Construction Cost	\$ 550,000
Right-of-way Costs	\$ 26,000
Utility Costs	\$ 17,000
Total Project Cost	\$ 593,000

**Estimated Traffic:**

Year 2011	-	2,200 vpd
Year 2035	-	4,000 vpd
TTST	-	1%
Dual	-	2%

**Accidents:** Traffic Engineering has evaluated a recent five-year period and found nine accidents occurring near the project. Those were not due to the geometry of the bridge.

**Design Exceptions:** There are no anticipated design exceptions for this project.

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations:** The bridge is on a recommended Buncombe County "Level 1" bicycle route. Additional pavement width will be provided to accommodate cyclists. Because of the relative shortness of the bridge, bike-safe railings would not be required. There is no indication of a high numbers of pedestrians.

**Bridge Demolition:** Bridge No. 363 was constructed of reinforced concrete on steel I-beams and timber piles. Based on standard demolition practices, it should be possible to remove with no resulting debris in the water.

**Alternatives Discussion:**

**No Build** – The no build alternative would result in eventually closing the road, which is unacceptable given the volume of traffic served.

**Rehabilitation** – The bridge was constructed in 1962 and is reaching the end of its useful life. Rehabilitation would not solve the problem of deck geometry or structural deficiency.

**Offsite Detour** – Bridge No. 363 will be replaced on the existing alignment. Traffic will be detoured offsite (see Figure 1) during the construction period. NCDOT Guidelines for Evaluation of Offsite Detours for Bridge Replacement Projects considers multiple project variables beginning with the additional time traveled by the average road user resulting from the offsite detour. The offsite detour for this project would include SR 3116, SR 3136, and SR 3197. The majority of traffic on the road is through traffic. The detour for the average road user would result in 2 minutes additional travel time (1.5 miles additional travel). Up to six-month duration of construction is expected on this project.

Based on the Guidelines, the criteria above indicate that based on delay alone, the detour is acceptable. NCDOT Division 13 has indicated the condition of all roads, bridges and intersections on the offsite detour are acceptable without improvement and concur with the use of the detour.

**Onsite Detour** – An onsite detour was not evaluated due to the presence of an acceptable offsite detour.

**Staged Construction** – Staged construction was not considered because of the availability of an acceptable offsite detour.

**New Alignment** – Given that the alignment for SR 3197 is acceptable, a new alignment was not considered as an alternative.

**Other Agency Comments:**

**N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission**

WRC in a standardized letter indicated that they prefer any replacement structure to be a spanning structure.

**Response:** DOT will be replacing the existing structure with a bridge.

**US Environmental Protection Agency**

EPA did not identify any comments or environmental issues of concern.

**US Forest Service**

The Forest Service indicated that they have no property in the area.

**N.C. Division of Water Quality**

DWQ provided standard comments and requests that are normal to bridge replacement projects.

**Response:** DOT will take all-appropriate measures to ensure that water quality standards are met and designated uses are not degraded or lost.

**Corps of Engineers**

The Corps indicated that the project is likely to impact streams and/or wetlands and advised that a permit authorization is needed.

**Response:** DOT will take all-appropriate measures to minimize any adverse impacts and would follow the normal procedures to obtain permits.

**Public Involvement:**

The Location & Surveys Unit sent a letter to all property owners affected directly by this project. Property owners were invited to comment. No comments have been received to date. Accordingly, a Citizen's Information Workshop was determined unnecessary.

E. Threshold Criteria

The following evaluation of threshold criteria must be completed for Type II actions

<u>ECOLOGICAL</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
(1) Will the project have a substantial impact on any unique or important natural resource?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) Does the project involve habitat where federally listed endangered or threatened species may occur?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Will the project affect anadromous fish?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(4) If the project involves wetlands, is the amount of permanent and/or temporary wetland taking less than one-tenth (1/10) of an acre and have all practicable measures to avoid and minimize wetland takings been evaluated?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) Will the project require the use of U. S. Forest Service lands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(6) Will the quality of adjacent water resources be adversely impacted by proposed construction activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(7) Does the project involve waters classified as Outstanding Resources Waters (ORW) and/or High Quality Waters (HQW)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(8) Will the project require fill in waters of the United States in any of the designated mountain trout counties?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(9) Does the project involve any known underground storage tanks (UST's) or hazardous materials sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

PERMITS AND COORDINATION

- |   | <u>YES</u>                          | <u>NO</u>     |
|---|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| (10) If the project is located within a CAMA county, will the project significantly affect the coastal zone and / or any "Area of Environmental Concern" (AEC)? | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <u>N/A</u>    |
| (11) Does the project involve Coastal Barrier Resources Act resources?  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <u>X</u>      |
| (12) Will a U. S. Coast Guard permit be required?   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <u>X</u>      |
| (13) Could the project result in the modification of any existing regulatory floodway?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <u>      </u> |
| (14) Will the project require any stream relocations or channel changes?  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <u>X</u>      |

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- |   | <u>YES</u>               | <u>NO</u>                |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (15) Will the project induce substantial impacts to planned growth or land use for the area?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (16) Will the project require the relocation of any family or business?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (17) Will the project have a disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effect on any minority or low-income population?                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (18) If the project involves the acquisition of right of way, is the amount of right of way acquisition considered minor?   | <u>X</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (19) Will the project involve any changes in access control?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (20) Will the project substantially alter the usefulness and / or land use of adjacent property?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (21) Will the project have an adverse effect on permanent local traffic patterns or community cohesiveness?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (22) Is the project included in an approved thoroughfare plan and / or Transportation Improvement Program (and is, therefore, in conformance with the Clean Air Act of 1990)? | <u>X</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- |      |   |                          |                          |
|------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (23) | Is the project anticipated to cause an increase in traffic volumes?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (24) | Will traffic be maintained during construction using <b>existing roads</b> , staged construction, or on-site detours?   | <u>X</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (25) | If the project is a bridge replacement project, will the bridge be replaced at its existing location (along the existing facility) and will all construction proposed in association with the bridge replacement project be contained on the existing facility? | <u>X</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (26) | Is there substantial controversy on social, economic, or environmental grounds concerning the project?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (27) | Is the project consistent with all Federal, State, and local laws relating to the environmental aspects of the project?   | <u>X</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (28) | Will the project have an "effect" on structures / properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (29) | Will the project affect any archaeological remains which are important to history or pre-history?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (30) | Will the project require the use of Section 4(f) resources (public parks, recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, historic sites, or historic bridges, as defined in Section 4(f) of the U. S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966)?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (31) | Will the project result in any conversion of assisted public recreation sites or facilities to non-recreation uses, as defined by Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, as amended?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |
| (32) | Will the project involve construction in, across, or adjacent to a river designated as a component of or proposed for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>X</u>                 |

F. Additional Documentation Required for Unfavorable Responses in Part E

**Response to Question 2:**

Survey was performed on May 10, 2011 for the **turquoise shiner** (*Cyprinella monacha*), **Appalachian elktoe** (*Alasmidonta raveneliana*) and **tan riffleshell** (*Epioblasma florentina walkerii*). Given the results of the survey, the review of GIS and NHP data, it appears that the **turquoise shiner**, **Appalachian elktoe** and **tan riffleshell** do not exist in the project area. Habitat for the **Appalachian elktoe** and **tan riffleshell** does not occur in Robinson Creek, because the stream is too small and too high gradient for mussels to occur. The records for **tan riffleshell** are historic and obscure. The records for **turquoise shiner** are also historic with no **turquoise shiners**

being found during the survey. This project will have no effect on the **turquoise shiner, Appalachian elktoe, and tan riffleshell**

**Mountain sweet pitcherplant, Virginia spiraea, Bunched arrowhead** - A survey was conducted by NCDOT biologists on May 23, 2011 for these three plant species that have habitat present. No individuals of these three species were observed. An updated survey for Virginia spiraea was conducted on June 27, 2013. No individuals of Virginia spiraea were observed during this updated survey. A review of NCNHP records, updated April 2014, indicates no known occurrences within 1.0 mile of the study area. The project will therefore have NO EFFECT on these three species.

A US Fish and Wildlife Service proposal for listing the **Northern Long-eared Bat** (*Myotis septentrionalis*) as an Endangered species was published in the Federal Register in October 2013. The listing may become effective as soon as October 2014. Furthermore, this species is included in USFWS's current list of protected species for Buncombe County. NCDOT is working closely with the USFWS to understand how this proposed listing may impact NCDOT projects. NCDOT will continue to coordinate appropriately with USFWS to determine if this project will incur potential effects to the Northern long-eared bat, and how to address these potential effects, if necessary.

#### **Response to Question 13:**

Buncombe County is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Regular Program, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Hydraulic Unit will coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to determine if a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and a subsequent final Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) are required for the project. If required, the Division will submit sealed as-built construction plans to the Hydraulics Unit upon project completion certifying the project was built as shown on construction plans.

G. CE Approval

TIP Project No.	<u>B-5244</u>
W.B.S. No.	<u>42846.1.1</u>
Federal Project No.	<u>BRZ-3197(1)</u>

Project Description:

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Categorical Exclusion Action Classification:

<u>      </u>	TYPE II(A)
<u>  X  </u>	TYPE II(B)

Approved:

6/17/14 William J. Hedden  
Date Bridge Project Development Engineer  
Project Development & Environmental Analysis Unit

6-17-14 John L. Williams  
Date Project Engineer  
Project Development & Environmental Analysis Unit

6-17-2014 US Qubain  
Date Project Planning Engineer  
Project Development & Environmental Analysis Unit

6-19-2014 Michael J. Sullivan  
Date for John F. Sullivan, III, PE, Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

## PROJECT COMMITMENTS

**Buncombe County  
Bridge No. 363 on SR 3197  
Over Big Branch  
Federal Aid Project No. BRZ-3197(1)  
W.B.S. No. 42846.1.1  
T.I.P. No. B-5244**

### **Division Thirteen, Resident Engineer's Office – Offsite Detour**

Contacted at least one month prior to road closure, the Schools and Emergency Services for them to make any necessary temporary changes in their routes.

### **Division Thirteen – As Built Construction Plans**

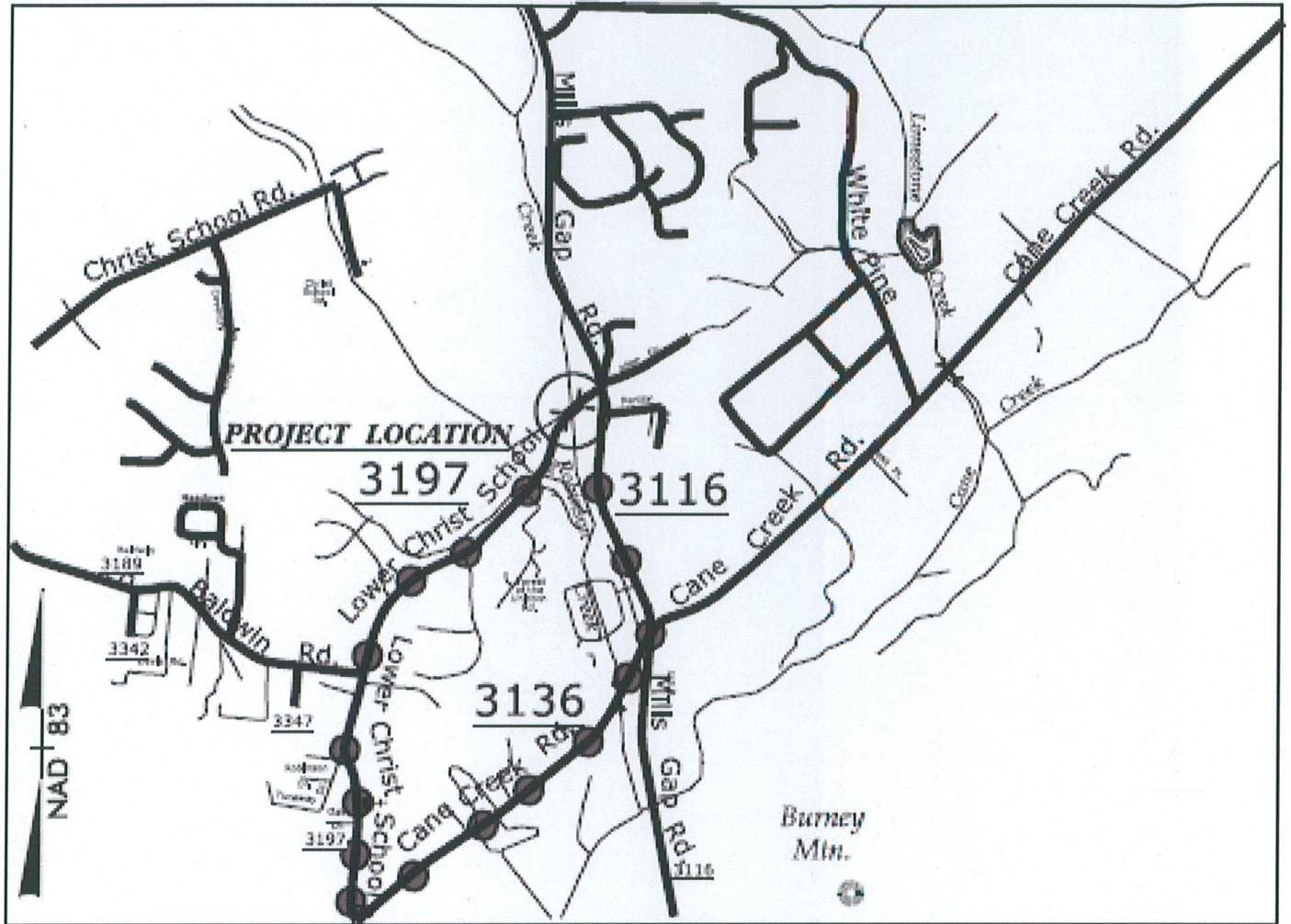
This project involves construction activities on or adjacent to FEMA-regulated stream(s). Therefore, the Division shall submit sealed as built construction plans to the Hydraulics Unit upon completion of project construction, certifying that the drainage structures and roadway embankment that are located within the 100-year floodplain were built as shown in the construction plans, both horizontally and vertically.

### **Hydraulics Unit – FEMA Coordination**

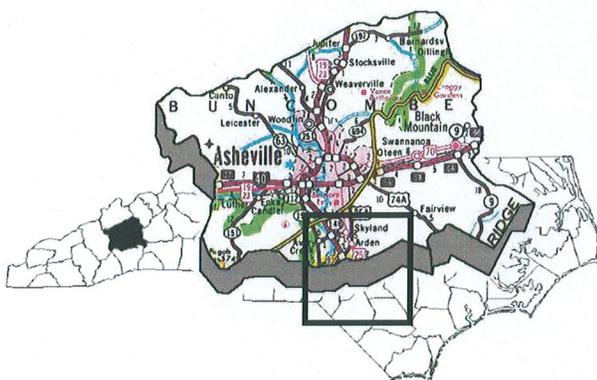
The Hydraulics Unit will coordinate with the NC Floodplain Mapping Program (FMP), to determine status of project with regard to applicability of NCDOT's Memorandum of Agreement, or approval of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and subsequent final Letter of Map Revision (LOMR).

### **Structure Design Unit – TVA**

The proposed project is located in the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) Land Management District. The project will require approval under Section 26a of the TVA Act.



● ● ● OFFSITE DETOUR



	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH
	<b>BUNCOMBE COUNTY</b> <b>REPLACE BRIDGE No. 363 ON SR 3197</b> <b>OVER ROBINSON CREEK</b> <b>B-5244</b>
Figure 1	



Robinson Creek

END TIP PROJECT B-5244

-L- STA. 13+50

BEGIN TIP PROJECT B-5244

-L- STA. 12+50

Lower Christ Church Rd.

Mills Gap Rd.

Allen Drive



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT &  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

BUNCOMBE COUNTY  
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 363 ON SR 3197  
OVER ROBINSON CREEK  
B-5244

Figure 2

11-01-0004

**NO SURVEY REQUIRED FORM****PROJECT INFORMATION**

Project No: B-5244 County: Buncombe  
 WBS No: 42846.1.1 Document: PCE  
 F.A. No: Funding:  State  Federal

Federal (USACE) Permit Required?  Yes  No Permit Type:

Project Description: Replace Bridge No. 363 over Robinson Creek on SR 3197 (Lower Christ Church School Rd) in Buncombe County.

**SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW***Brief description of review activities, results of review, and conclusions:*

Review of HPO quad maps, historic designations roster, and indexes was undertaken on 28 January 2011. Based on this review, there are no existing NR, SL, LD, DE, or SS properties in the Area of Potential Effects (APE). Google Maps "Street View" and current Buncombe County GIS Mapping and Tax Information indicate that there are several structures within the APE. A 1920s house is located at 915 Mills Gap Road. Analysis of "Street View" images and a photo provided with Buncombe County tax information conclude that the house does not meet the criteria for National Register Listing. A 1945 house (9 McDaniel Rd) and a 1940 house (942 Mills Gap Rd) are located within the APE. Analysis of "Street View" images and a photo provided with Buncombe County tax information conclude that the houses do not meet the criteria for National Register Listing. A mobile home is located directly east of the bridge and is not an historic structure, and other buildings within the APE are less than fifty years of age. No survey is required.

*Brief Explanation of why the available information provides a reliable basis for reasonably predicting that there are no unidentified historic properties in the APE:*

HPO quad maps recording NR, SL, LD, DE, and SS properties for the Buncombe County survey, Buncombe County GIS and tax information, and Google Maps "Street View" are considered valid for the purposes of determining the likelihood of historic resources being present. There are no historic resources present and no survey is required.

**SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION**

See attached: Maps, tax information

**FINDING BY NCDOT CULTURAL RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL NO SURVEY REQUIRED**

ARCHAEOLOGY

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

(CIRCLE ONE)

*Katherine L. Hubbard*  
 NCDOT Cultural Resources Specialist

28 January 2011  
 Date

11-01-0004

## NO PREHISTORIC OR HISTORIC PROPERTIES PRESENT/AFFECTED FORM

### PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No: **B-5244** County: **Buncombe**  
 WBS No: **42846.1.1** Document: **Minimum Criteria Sheet**  
 F.A. No: **n/a** Funding:  State  Federal  
 Federal (USACE) Permit Required?  Yes  No Permit Type: **Information not known as of yet**

#### Project Description:

The project calls for the replacement of Bridge No. 363 over Robinson Creek on SR 3197 (Lower Christ School Road). The archaeological Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project is defined as a 1,400-foot (426.72 m) long corridor running southwest along SR 3197 from its junction with SR 3116 (Mill Gap Road). The APE also includes a 1,000-foot (304.80 m) long corridor running north-south along SR 3116. This corridor extends 500 feet (152.40 m) north and 500 feet (152.40 m) south from its junction with SR 3197. Both corridors are approximately 200 feet (60.96 m) wide extending 100 feet (30.48 m) on either side of SR 3197 and SR 3116.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) reviewed the subject project and determined:

#### Archaeology

- There are no National Register-listed or Study Listed properties within the project's area of potential effects.
- No subsurface archaeological investigations are required for this project.
- Subsurface investigations did not reveal the presence of any archaeological resources.
- Subsurface investigations did not reveal the presence of any archaeological resources considered eligible for the National Register.
- All identified Archaeological sites located within the APE have been considered and all compliance for archaeological resources with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and GS 121-12(a) has been completed for this project.
- There are no historic properties present or affected by this project. (Attach any notes or documents as needed)