

Type I or II Categorical Exclusion Action Classification Form

STIP Project No.	C-5703/C-5606
WBS Element	48320.1.1
Federal Project No.	CMAQ-1213(039)

A. Project Description:

This project proposes to upgrade the traffic signal system in The City of Gastonia, Gaston County. The project includes new fiber optic cables, an upgrade of signal cabinets and controllers, and the installation of new closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras.

The City of Gastonia currently has 24 CCTV camera assemblies. This project involves replacing the existing CCTV assemblies that currently use analog technologies, with new digital CCTV assemblies. Additionally, 14 new CCTV locations and assemblies will be added to the system. This project also includes upgrades to 141 signals, 132 which are NCDOT-owned. All signals are maintained by the City of Gastonia. An upgrade will be made in the communication system from serial to Ethernet between ITS devices. Emergency vehicle preemption (EVP) infrastructure will also be installed at multiple intersections in partnership with the Gastonia Fire Department with the primary goal of reducing emergency response time.

All proposed improvements would be within the existing right-of-way. No easements are anticipated. Proposed fiber would utilize existing underground conduit or be placed overhead on existing utility poles. Ground disturbance would generally be limited to replacing/relocating signal cabinets and new CCTV pole construction. Signal cabinets would be converted from pole to base mounts at the following intersections:

- Franklin Blvd at Weldon St; cabinet would be relocated from the southwest quadrant to northeast quadrant
- Franklin Blvd at Oakland St
- Franklin Blvd at Whitesides St
- Airline Ave at Highland St
- Franklin Blvd at York St
- Chester St at 3rd Ave
- York St at 2nd Ave
- Chester St at 2nd Ave
- New Hope Rd at Cramer Mountain Rd

Three new CCTV poles are proposed at the following locations:

- Hudson Blvd at Davis Park Rd, northeast corner
- Garrison Blvd at Union Rd, northeast corner
- Garrison Blvd at Burtonwood Dr, northeast corner

The project is currently scheduled to begin construction in fall of 2022 with a total cost estimate of \$11.4 million. Project intersections and fiber optic cable route locations are shown in **Figure 1**.

B. Description of Need and Purpose:

The need for the project is driven by traffic congestion and Gastonia's aging and inconsistent traffic signal timing system. The purpose of the project is to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and improve the efficiency of Gastonia's transportation network by providing more cohesiveness between signals within Gastonia and surrounding areas as well as reduce emergency response time.

C. Categorical Exclusion Action Classification:

Type I(A) - Ground Disturbing Action

D. Proposed Improvements:

8. Installation of fencing, signs, pavement markings, small passenger shelters, traffic signals, and railroad warning devices where no substantial land acquisition or traffic disruption will occur.

21. Deployment of electronics, photonics, communications, or information processing used singly or in combination, or as components of a fully integrated system to improve the efficiency or safety of a surface transportation system or to enhance security or passenger convenience. Examples include, but are not limited to, traffic control and detector devices, lane management systems, electronic payment equipment, automatic vehicle locations, automated passenger counters, computer-aided dispatching systems, radio communications systems, dynamic message signs, and security equipment including surveillance and detection cameras on roadways and in transit facilities and on buses.

E. Special Project Information:

Tribal Coordination: Tribal coordination letters were sent to the Catawba Indian Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the Cherokee Nation. The Catawba Indian Nation responded in a letter dated November 3, 2021 stating they have no immediate concerns regarding the project, and should be notified if Native American artifacts and/or human remains are located during the ground disturbance phase of the project. No other responses were received.

Historic Resources: NCDOT reviewed HPO quad maps, relevant background reports, historic designations roster, and indexes on September 16, 2021. Based on this review, a locally-listed historic district required a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City of Gastonia Planning Office. On October 8, 2021 the application was approved. No Historic Properties will be affected by this project.

F. Project Impact Criteria Checklists:

F2. Ground Disturbing Actions – Type I (Appendix A) & Type II (Appendix B)			
PROJECT IMPACT THRESHOLDS (FHWA signature required if any of the questions 1-7 are marked “Yes”.)		Yes	No
1	Does the project require formal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Does the project result in impacts subject to the conditions of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	Does the project generate substantial controversy or public opposition, for any reason, following appropriate public involvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Does the project cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts relative to low-income and/or minority populations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Does the project involve a residential or commercial displacement, or a substantial amount of right of way acquisition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	Does the project require an Individual Section 4(f) approval?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	Does the project include adverse effects that cannot be resolved with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) or have an adverse effect on a National Historic Landmark (NHL)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If any question 8-31 is checked “Yes” then additional information will be required for those questions in Section G.			
Other Considerations		Yes	No
8	Is an Endangered Species Act (ESA) determination unresolved or is the project covered by a Programmatic Agreement under Section 7?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	Is the project located in anadromous fish spawning waters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10	Does the project impact waters classified as Outstanding Resource Water (ORW), High Quality Water (HQW), Water Supply Watershed Critical Areas, 303(d) listed impaired water bodies, buffer rules, or Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11	Does the project impact Waters of the United States in any of the designated mountain trout streams?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12	Does the project require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Individual Section 404 Permit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13	Will the project require an easement from a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensed facility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14	Does the project include a Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) effects determination other than a No Effect, including archaeological remains?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15	Does the project involve GeoEnvironmental Sites of Concerns such as gas stations, dry cleaners, landfills, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<u>Other Considerations for Type I and II Ground Disturbing Actions (continued)</u>		Yes	No
16	Does the project require work encroaching and adversely affecting a regulatory floodway or work affecting the base floodplain (100-year flood) elevations of a water course or lake, pursuant to Executive Order 11988 and 23 CFR 650 subpart A?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
17	Is the project in a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) county and substantially affects the coastal zone and/or any Area of Environmental Concern (AEC)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18	Does the project require a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) permit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19	Does the project involve construction activities in, across, or adjacent to a designated Wild and Scenic River present within the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20	Does the project involve Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
21	Does the project impact federal lands (e.g. U.S. Forest Service (USFS), USFWS, etc.) or Tribal Lands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
22	Does the project involve any changes in access control or the modification or construction of an interchange on an interstate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
23	Does the project have a permanent adverse effect on local traffic patterns or community cohesiveness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
24	Will maintenance of traffic cause substantial disruption?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
25	Is the project inconsistent with the STIP, and where applicable, the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
26	Does the project require the acquisition of lands under the protection of Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act, the Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Act, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Tribal Lands, or other unique areas or special lands that were acquired in fee or easement with public-use money and have deed restrictions or covenants on the property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
27	Does the project involve Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) buyout properties under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
28	Does the project include a <i>de minimis</i> or programmatic Section 4(f)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
29	Is the project considered a Type I under the NCDOT Noise Policy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
30	Is there prime or important farmland soil impacted by this project as defined by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
31	Are there other issues that arose during the project development process that affected the project decision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

G. Additional Documentation as Required from Section F (ONLY for questions marked 'Yes'): N/A

H. Project Commitments:

NCDOT PROJECT COMMITMENTS

STIP Project No. **C-5703/C-5606**
Gastonia Signal System Improvements
Gaston County
Federal Aid Project No. CMAQ-1213(039)
WBS Element 48320.1.1

Cultural Resources (NCDOT Division 12 Construction)

If archaeological resources (Native American artifacts and/or human remains) are encountered during project construction, work will cease in that area and the NCDOT Archaeology Group and the Catawba Indian Nation will be notified immediately.


I. Categorical Exclusion Approval:

STIP Project No.	<u>C-5703/C-5606</u>
WBS Element	<u>48320.1.1</u>
Federal Project No.	<u>CMAQ-1213(039)</u>

Prepared By:

1/10/2022

 Date

DocuSigned by:

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 Brian Pownall, PE
 Kimley-Horn

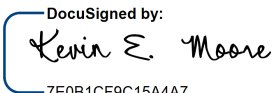
Prepared For:

NCDOT ITS & Signals Management Section

Reviewed By:

1/10/2022

 Date

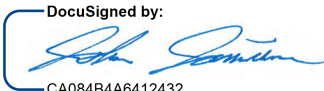
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 Kevin Moore, PE
 North Carolina Department of Transportation Project Management Unit

- Approved**
 - If NO grey boxes are checked in Section F (pages 2 and 3), NCDOT approves the Type I or Type II Categorical Exclusion.
- Certified**
 - If ANY grey boxes are checked in Section F (pages 2 and 3), NCDOT certifies the Type I or Type II Categorical Exclusion for FHWA approval.
 - If classified as Type III Categorical Exclusion.

1/10/2022

 Date

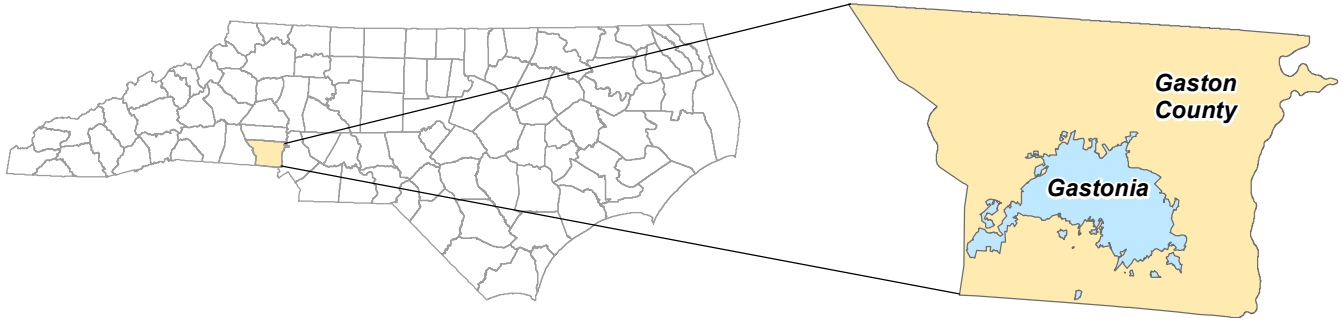
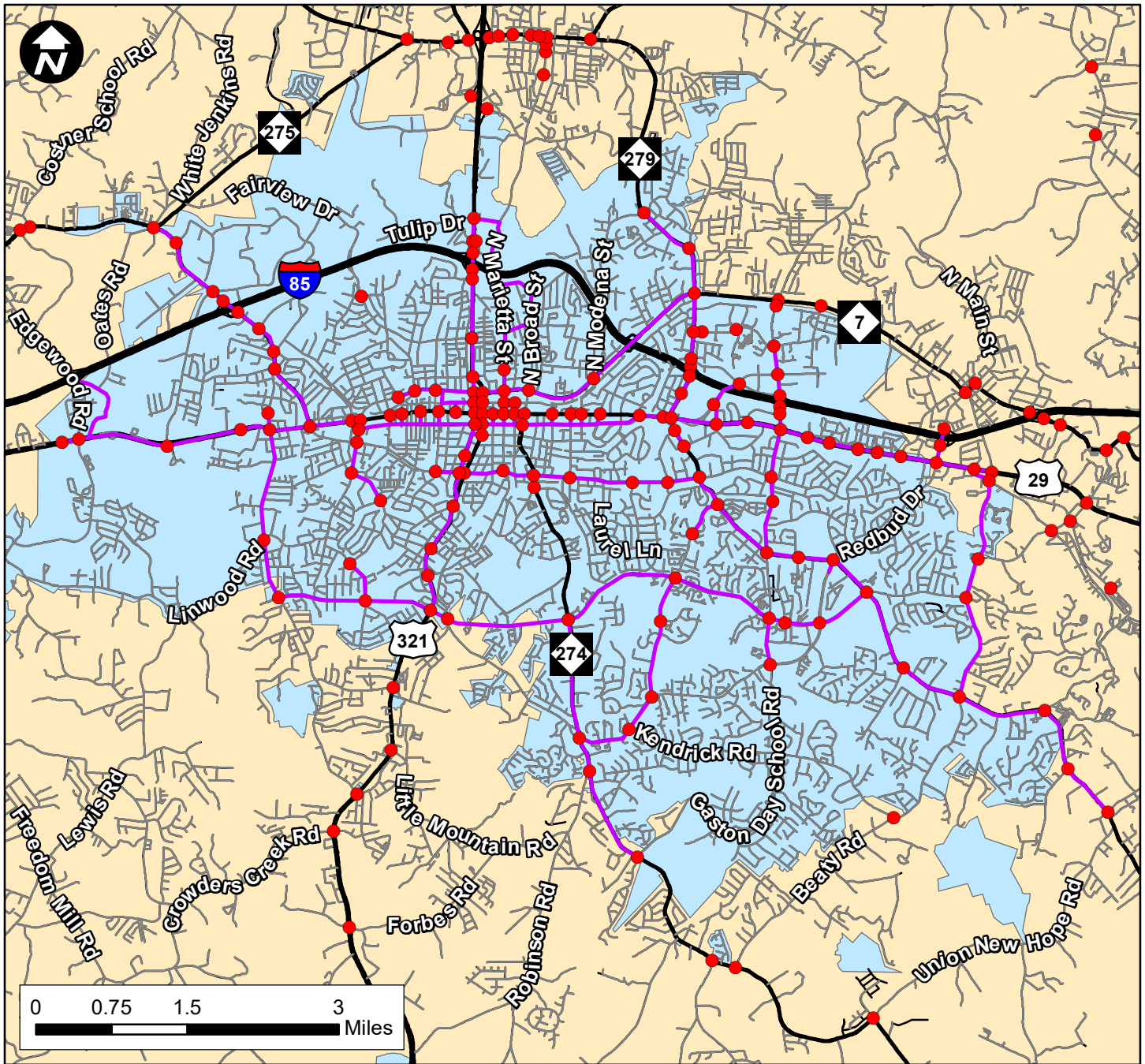
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 John Jamison, PWS, Western Team Lead
 North Carolina Department of Transportation Environmental Policy Unit

FHWA Approved: For Projects Certified by NCDOT (above), FHWA signature required.

_____ **N/A** _____
 Date for John F. Sullivan, III, PE, Division Administrator
 Federal Highway Administration

Note: Prior to ROW or Construction authorization, a consultation may be required (please see Section VII of the NCDOT-FHWA CE Programmatic Agreement for more details).



- Study Intersections
- Proposed Fiber
- Gaston County
- City of Gastonia

Figure 1:
Vicinity Map
C-5703/C-5606C
Gastonia Traffic Signal System
Gastonia, NC

21-09-0002



HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED FORM

This form only pertains to Historic Architecture and Landscapes for this project. It is not valid for Archaeological Resources. You must consult separately with the Archaeology Group.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No:	C-5703	County:	Gaston
WBS No.:	48302.1.1	Document Type:	FCE
Fed. Aid No:	CMAQ-1213(039)	Funding:	<input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal
Federal Permit(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Permit Type(s):	n/a
<u>Project Description:</u> City-wide signal system upgrade.			

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES REVIEW

Description of review activities, results, and conclusions:

Review of HPO quad maps, relevant background reports, historic designations roster, and indexes was undertaken on September 16, 2021. Based on this review, a locally-listed historic district required a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City of Gastonia Planning Office. On October 8, 2021 the application was approved. No Historic Properties will be affected by this project.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

Map(s) Previous Survey Info. Photos Correspondence Design Plans

FINDING BY NCDOT ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Historic Architecture and Landscapes – **NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED**

Shelby Reap

October 11, 2021

NCDOT Architectural Historian

Date



Planning Department

For office use only:
HD _____

Historic District Commission
Application for Certificate of Appropriateness
Minor Work (Section 17-96) - Short Form

This form must be completed and filed in the Planning Department Office pursuant to the Ordinance.

Property Location (Street Address) York-Chester Historic District

Property Owner's Name NCDOT ROW

Address _____

Telephone (W) _____

(H) _____

Name of Business (if applicable) _____

Minor work items require Certificate of Appropriateness but may be approved by an administrative official designated by the Commission if the work is consistent with the review criteria. Minor work consists of various minor projects where the exterior appearance of the structure or landscape is not significantly changed, including but not limited to the items listed below. *Please circle the item best suited to your request.*

- Side and rear yard fences and walls
- Landscaping project including removal of trees eight (8) inches or greater in diameter at the base
- New roof coverings involving a change in the material used or its color
- Installation of mechanical equipment
- Chimney and foundation repairs including vents and access doors
- Site improvements, including but not limited to satellite dishes, swimming pools, tennis and basketball courts and outdoor hot tubs
- Painting of new construction and repainting existing colors other than to white or the original colors
- Installation of artificial siding
- Exterior lighting fixtures
- Removal of asbestos or other artificial siding
- Replacement of exterior stairs, landings and steps
- Other: Replace signal boxes

Exterior Alteration of Existing Structure

Describe clearly and in detail all exterior architectural alterations to be made. Drawings, photographs, specifications **MUST** accompany this application, and any other graphic information deemed appropriate. Include information on materials, paint colors, and, if necessary, information on and location of significant, large trees on site, parking areas, etc.

****Applications without the abovementioned attachments or that do not provide a clear description will be considered incomplete and will not be processed until all pertinent information is provided.**

NCDOT proposes to replace 2 pole mounted
traffic signal boxes with stand alone units.
The signal boxes will be located near the
pole. Chester & 2nd Ave & 2nd Ave & York

Staff Recommendation:

Applicant Shelby Reap c/o NCDOT
Address 1000 Birch Ridge Rd.
Raleigh NC 27610
Telephone (H) _____ (B) 919-707-6088
Email sreap@ncdot.gov

I hereby give Planning staff and/or Historic District Commissioners permission to enter the property to collect information specific to this request.

9/28/21
Date Submitted

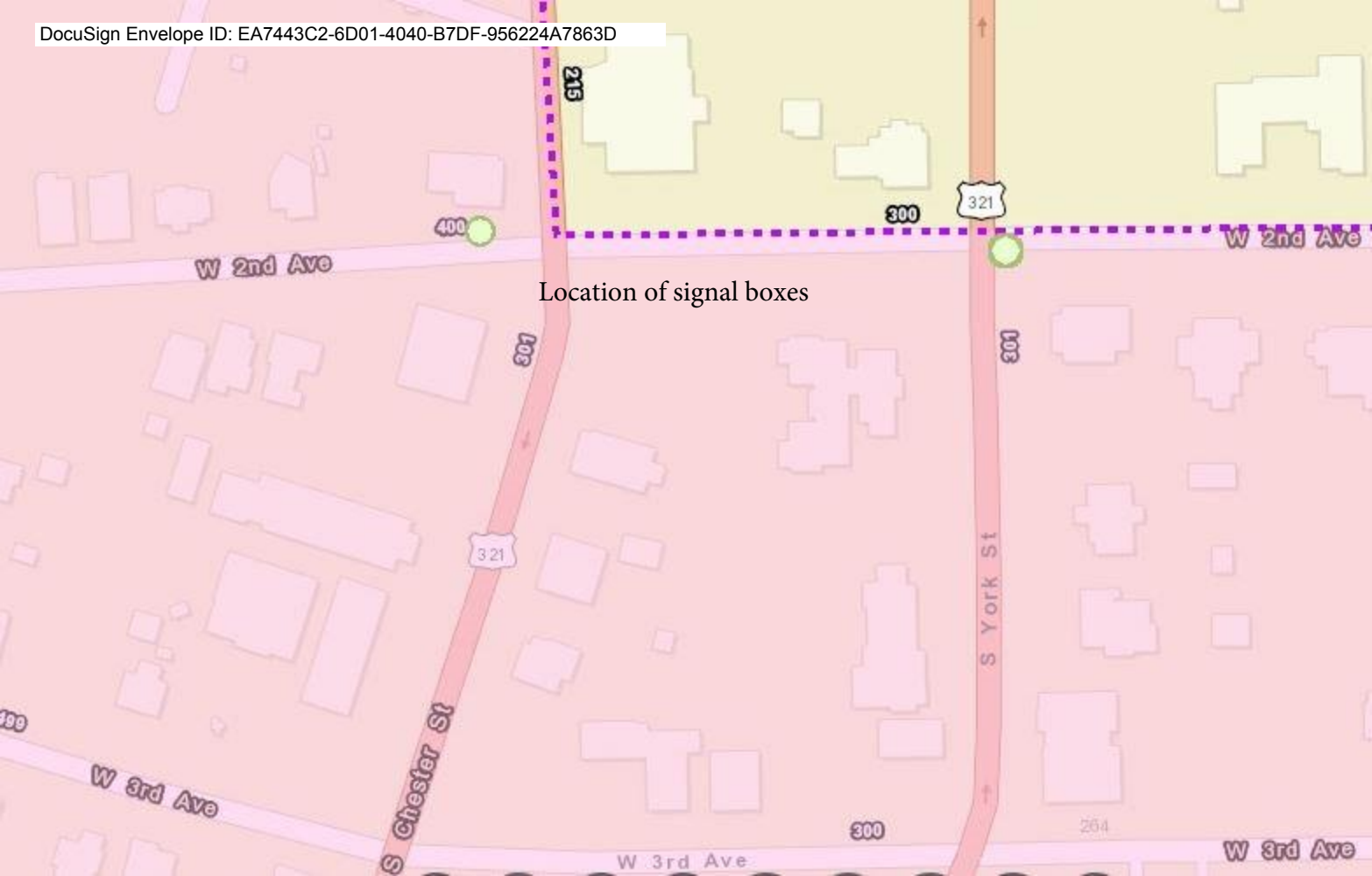
Shelby Reap
Signature of Applicant

Date Received

Signature (Secretary or Agent)
Gastonia Historic District Commission

Please return to: Historic District Commission
City of Gastonia Planning Department
PO Box 1748
Gastonia, NC 28053
planning@cityofgastonia.com

Applications to be heard by the full Historic District Commission must be received 14 days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting, which is the fourth Thursday of every month.



Location of signal boxes



York and 2nd



Chester and 2nd



October 8, 2021

Shelby Reap c/o NCDOT
1000 Birch Ridge Rd
Raleigh, NC 27610

Re: HD Project # PLCA202100399

Dear Ms. Reap,

This correspondence is in reference to your application for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted for the **NCDOT ROW located at the intersections of Chester Street and Second Avenue and Second Avenue and York Street in Gastonia, NC.**

On October 8, 2021, planning staff for the Gastonia Historic District Commission made the following decisions regarding your request for a Certificate of Appropriateness as follows:

- **Approved** your request to replace 2 silver pole-mounted traffic signal boxes with 2 silver stand-alone units. The signal boxes will be located near the pole.

This letter shall serve as a Certificate of Appropriateness in compliance with the guidelines set forth by the Historic District Commission and the City of Gastonia's Unified Development Ordinance. This letter should be kept for your records.

If you have any questions, please contact the Planning Department at 704-854-6652.

Sincerely,

Kim Wallis
Planner

21-09-0002



NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REQUIRED FORM

This form only pertains to ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES for this project. It is not valid for Historic Architecture and Landscapes. You must consult separately with the Historic Architecture and Landscapes Group.



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No: **C-5703** *County:* **Gaston**
WBS No: **48320.1.1** *Document:* **C E**
F.A. No: **CMAQ-1213(039)** *Funding:* State Federal

Federal Permit Required? Yes No *Permit Type:*

Project Description: NCDOT proposes to upgrade 145 traffic signals, install aerial fiber optic lines on existing utility poles, upgrade signal cabinets and install closed circuit cameras throughout the town of Gastonia in Gaston County. No new ROW is anticipated and ground disturbances will be very minimal. For purposes of this review, the Area of Potential Effects (APE) involves all signal improvement areas and also include narrow, linear aerial fiber optic lines which will use existing utility poles. The APE does indicate the areas considered, even if impacts will be very minor or none at certain portions, and is shown in the figures below.

The project is anticipated to be FHWA funded, therefore this federal undertaking is reviewed under Section 106 of the Nation Historic Preservation Act at it relates to archaeology. The need for a USACE permit is unknown at this time but unlikely based on the nature of the project.

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW

Brief description of review activities, results of review, and conclusions:

NCDOT proposes to upgrade several dozens of traffic signals and control boxes, install cameras and also connect systems using aerial fiber optics throughout the greater Gastonia area. While the physical footprint of the project on the ground is very minimal, the larger project does span ten miles across. The APE mapping provided here was generated from the 145 intersection locations for the planned signal upgrades and the many miles of fiber optic lines to be installed above ground on existing utility poles. With very small footprints and no new ROW, the APE has been buffered so that it is visible for the mapping scale.

A previous archaeological review for several ADA ramps in Gaston County was completed in 2019 that has some general overlap and strong relevance to the current project (PA 19-05-0019). For that project, no archaeological survey was recommended based on the small scale and nature of the ground disturbing activities within generally disturbed archaeological context. The current project has less or no new impacts.

To supplement already detailed and relevant mapping provided by the Division, data from the Historic Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology was examined. There are several study listed, determined eligible or National Register of Historic Places properties located in the general project area, some adjacent to or overlapping with the project. Notable for their size are the Downtown Gastonia Historic District, the Loray Mill Historic District (and expansion), and the York-Chester Historic District, all listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Others DOE or Study Listed properties include a variety of types, such as brick school houses, neighborhoods and portions of the railway. Cemeteries are nearby or adjacent to the APE. Archaeologically, no impacts to those resources are expected based on the very small or negligible expected ground disturbances within existing ROW.

There are several archaeological sites that have been recorded in the county near Gastonia. A relatively small number are in close proximity to the APE. Not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, two sites 31Gs232, 31Gs274 (a mill / dam) overlap with the APE, including one at a traffic signal and the other

21-09-0002

underneath the aerial fiber optic lines. Based on the nature and scale of the project, none of the archaeological sites will be affected by the project.

Much of the project APE is developed and includes urban shoulders of roads and intersections within town. These contexts have been generally disturbed several times by grading, sidewalks, utilities and roadway projects. Expectations are very low that intact portions of significant archaeological sites would be affected by the project.

USGS mapping (Bessemer City, Gastonia North, Gastonia South, Mount Holly Cramerton) and aerial photography was examined but, because of the large coverage, not studied in detail (see Figures 1 and 2).

According to GIS data compiled by NCDOT archaeologist, Paul Mohler, and as noted above, there are mapped cemeteries nearby or in close proximity to the APE though none are expected to be affected.

This project falls within a North Carolina County in which the following federally recognized tribes have expressed an interest: the Cherokee Nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Catawba Indian Nation. We recommend that you ensure that this documentation is forwarded to these tribes using the process described in the current NCDOT Tribal Protocol and PA Procedures Manual.

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

Upgrades for signalization at 145 locations in and around Gastonia, including installation of miles of aerial fiber optic lines, will result in only minimal impacts and no new ROW. The APE is within existing ROW and is generally considered to have disturbed soils due to road construction activities, utilities, and development. There are known historic properties, cemeteries, and archaeological sites nearby, adjacent and overlapping the APE, however, no impacts to archaeological sites are anticipated based on the scale and nature of the undertaking.

The modified, often disturbed ROW does not suggest a high probability for intact archaeological sites within the limited APE. It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains would be present and impacted by the installation of replacement traffic signals, cameras, control boxes and fiber optic lines using existing utility poles. No archaeological survey is recommended. For archaeological review, this undertaking should be considered compliant with Section 106.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

See attached: Map(s) Previous Survey Info Photos Correspondence
 Photocopy of County Survey Notes Other:

FINDING BY NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

NO ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY REQUIRED



NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

10/12/2021

Date

21-09-0002

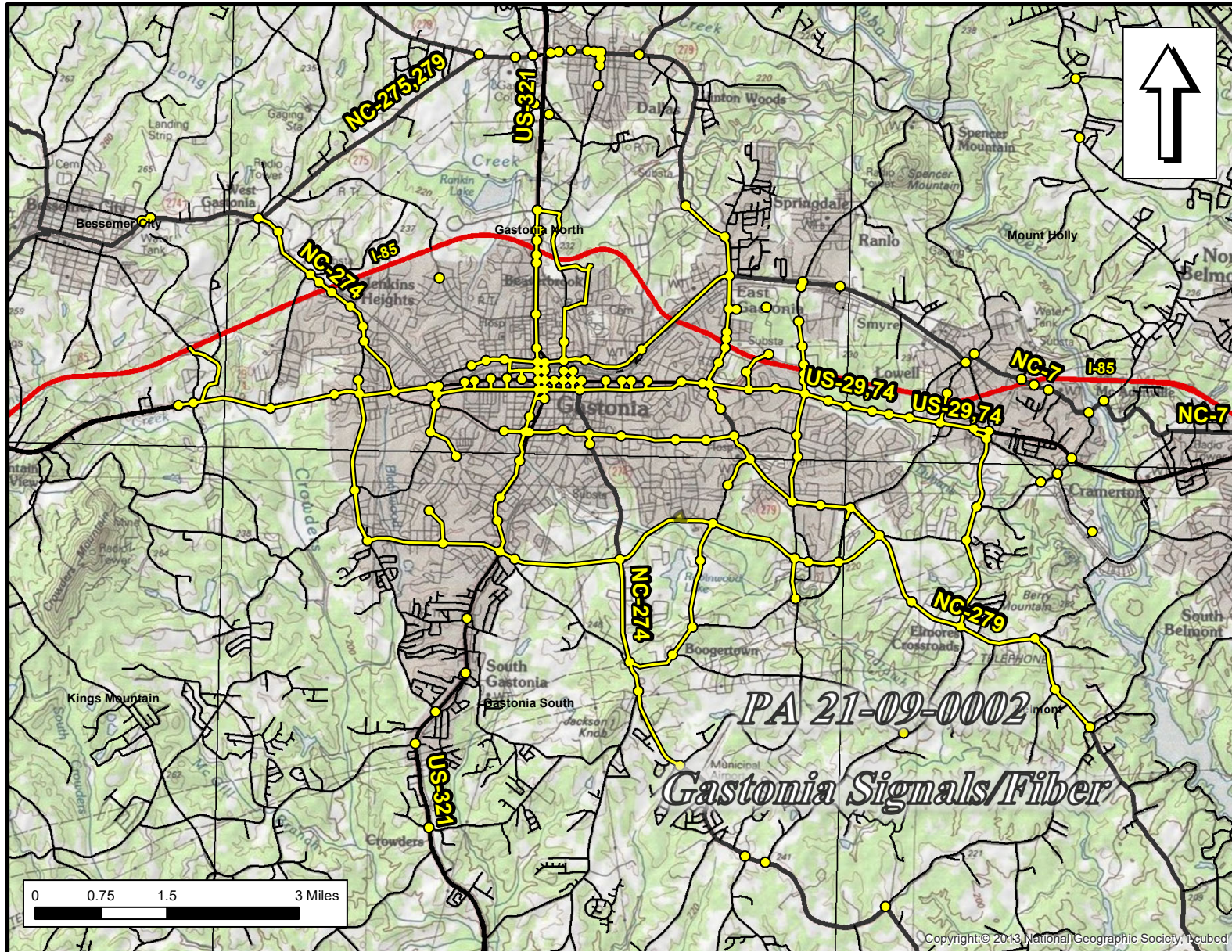


Figure 1. Vicinity of Gastonia showing the proposed upgrade of 145 traffic signals, locations shown as yellow dots, and aerial fiber optics (yellow lines) that, together represent a buffered APE. Planned within existing ROW, impacts will be minimal.

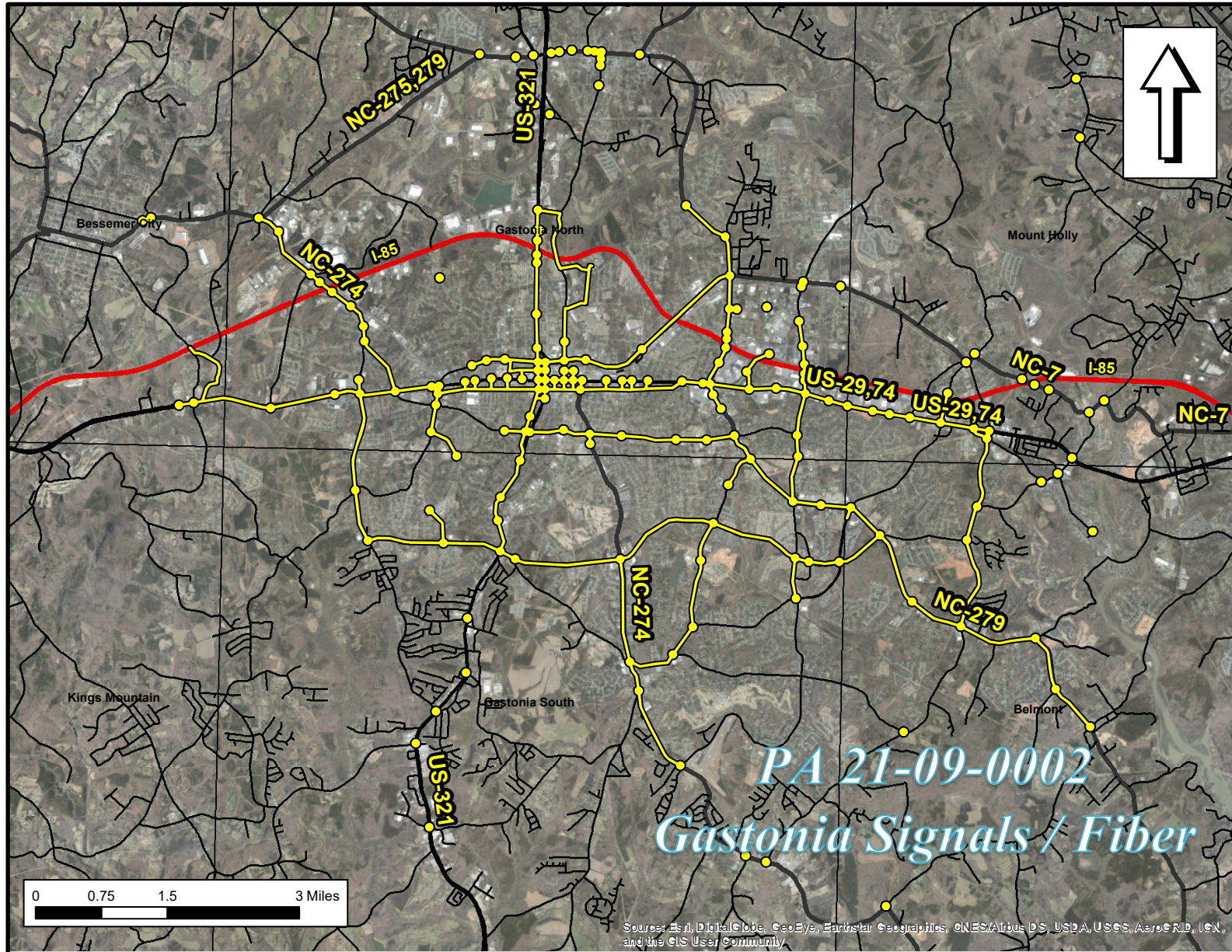


Figure 2. Aerial showing span of signal replacements and fiber optic routes in Gastonia, Gaston County with the APE shown in yellow. The roadside APE makes a poor archaeological context within existing ROW and which will only have minimal impacts.