

**US 21 (Sparta Western Loop)**  
From SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21  
New Location  
Alleghany County  
State Project 8.2692601  
**STIP Project Number R-4060**

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**N. C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS**

submitted pursuant to North Carolina State Environmental Policy Act



**APPROVED:**

8.4.2014

Date

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for

Richard W. Hancock, P.E., Manager

Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit, NCDOT

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July 2014

Documentation prepared in the Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit by:

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8-1-2014  
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## PROJECT COMMITMENTS

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The following special commitments have been agreed to by NCDOT

### **NCDOT Division 11**

- The Division 11 Office will ensure that no impacts are incurred to streams and/or wetlands with the design of this project. The wetland (W8) will be bridged to avoid impact to the jurisdictional feature.

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**SUMMARY**

1. Type of Action

This is a State Environmental Assessment/ Finding of No Significant Impact (SEA/FONSI).

2. Description of Proposed Action

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Division of Highways, proposes to construct a two lane facility on new location from SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21 in Alleghany County to provide a route for through traffic to bypass downtown Sparta. The estimated cost in the July 2014 North Carolina Board of Transportation Amended State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is \$9,239,000, which includes \$2,200,000 for right of way acquisition, \$6,000,000 for construction, \$200,000 for utilities and \$839,000 for prior costs.

3. Project Benefits

The proposed project will have a positive overall impact by improving traffic circulation in the downtown Sparta area allowing regional traffic that does not have a local destination to continue without going into the heart of Sparta. The project proposes to reduce the potential for accidents in the downtown vicinity by providing an alternate route for regional traffic and reducing turning movements for trucks within downtown Sparta. The improved traffic circulation in downtown Sparta should provide a more pedestrian friendly environment.

4. Summary of Environmental Effects

It is anticipated that one residence will be relocated due to the proposed improvements. No business relocations are anticipated. Land use in the area will not be adversely impacted. Two historic architectural sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be involved. No recreational facilities are involved. No adverse impacts to the community are expected. No substantial impacts to animal or plant life are expected. There are no wetland impacts as a result of the proposed improvements. Based on NCDOT noise analysis, noise abatement is not recommended and no abatement measures are proposed. The project's impact on air quality will not be significant.

5. Coordination

Several federal, state, and local agencies were consulted during the preparation of this document. Written comments were received from the following agencies:

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission  
N. C. Division of Water Quality  
N. C. Department of Cultural Resources – State Historic Preservation Office  
N. C. Division of Forest Resources  
Town of Sparta  
Alleghany County

6. Additional Information

Additional information concerning the proposal and assessment can be obtained by contacting:

Richard W. Hancock, P.E., Manager  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit  
N.C. Department of Transportation  
1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548  
Telephone: (919) 707-6000

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**I. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION**

A. General Description

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Division of Highways, proposes to construct a two lane facility on new location from SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21 in Alleghany County, to provide a route for through traffic to bypass downtown Sparta. The estimated cost in the July 2014 North Carolina Board of Transportation Amended State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is \$9,239,000, which includes \$2,200,000 for right of way acquisition, \$6,000,000 for construction, \$200,000 for utilities and \$839,000 for prior costs. A portion of the two lane facility will be constructed on NCDOT maintenance facility property. The proposed construction will provide 12 ft wide travel lanes with 2 ft paved shoulders. The length of the project is approximately 0.8 miles.

B. Transportation Plan

This project is included in the July 2014 North Carolina Board of Transportation Amended State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) with right-of-way acquisition scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2015 and construction in fiscal year 2016.

**II. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION**

A. Purpose of Project

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide a standard highway connection for US 21 around the southern perimeter of Sparta.

B. Anticipated Safety Benefits

The project will be designed to meet AASHTO standards for safe traffic operations. The project will improve the safety in the downtown area by reducing the amount of traffic traveling through downtown Sparta. Rerouting regional traffic that does not have a local destination will provide for a more pedestrian friendly downtown Sparta. Truck traffic will be able to bypass downtown, and in turn eliminate the need to navigate difficult turning movements through the downtown street network of Sparta.

### III. EXISTING CORRIDOR INVENTORY

#### A. Right-of-Way and Access Control

Current right-of-way exists upon NCDOT maintenance facility property. Additional right-of-way will be acquired for the portion of the project extending from the NCDOT Maintenance facility to the ending terminus at US 21. No control of access currently exists.

#### B. Intersection and Type of Control

There is one intersection at the beginning project terminus, SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) and the Sparta Parkway. A new intersection at US 21 will be created at the ending project terminus.

#### C. Railroad Crossings

There are no railroad crossings within the project area.

#### D. Structures

There are two structures within the project area, a culvert structure crossing Bledsoe Creek near the beginning project terminus and the Little River Bridge on US 21 near the ending project terminus.

#### E. Utilities

The Town of Sparta has water and sanitary sewer mains throughout the project corridor. There are 3-inch and 4-inch water lines along Grandview Drive as well as a 10-inch water main that feeds from an underground well along the west side of Grandview Drive. Sparta also has a 6-inch water main that crosses under Grandview Drive and parallels NCDOT's Alleghany County Maintenance Yard Complex main road along the north side.

The Town of Sparta has a 12-inch PVC sewer main interceptor that parallels the north side of Bledsoe Creek to an abandoned sewage treatment plant where it transitions to an 18-inch concrete sewer main interceptor east of the plant. The concrete sewer main crosses to the south side of Bledsoe Creek running parallel to the creek crossing back over to the north side again running between Bledsoe Creek and Ballpark Road until it flows into the Little River. The 12-inch PVC sewer main does cross under the South Sparta Parkway and Grandview Drive next to Bledsoe Creek.

There is a 6-inch water main and a 6-inch PVC sewer main along Ball Park Road. Two 8-inch V.C. sewer mains feed into the 18-inch sewer from Ball Park Road and also east of US 21. South of the US 21 bridge, Sparta has both a 12-inch D.I. water main and

an 8-inch PVC sewer main along the West side of US 21 until the sewer crosses to the east side.

Alleghany County has aerial cables with underground services on the project. Blue Ridge Electrical Membership Corporation has aerial power and underground service. Ferrell Gas and Blue Ridge Energy have above ground storage tanks throughout the project. Skyline Telephone Membership Corporation has aerial/buried fiber-optic/telephone cables.

F. Sidewalks

There are no sidewalks within the project area.

G. Bicycles

According to the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation there is one known bicycle route located within the project area. The NC 4 – North Line Trace bicycle route utilizes US 21 and NC 18 in Sparta.

H. School Bus Data

There are no schools in the Direct Community Impact Area, but school buses for area schools travel through the proposed intersections at the project limits.

#### IV. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A. “No-Build” Alternative

The “no-build” alternative does not provide an alternative route for through traffic to bypass downtown Sparta and therefore does not meet the purpose and need for this project. The “no-build” alternative provides a basis for comparison of other alternatives.

B. Build Alternatives

Three build alternatives were developed and are described below (See Appendix A Figure 3).

Alternate 1: Extend Sparta Parkway across state-owned property, south of Ballpark Road with a new US 21 intersection south of the Little River Bridge (# 30). A culvert may be needed at the Bledsoe Creek crossing. Alternate 1 will impact residential, commercial, and state-owned property.

Alternate 2 (Recommended): Extend Sparta Parkway across state-owned property, through a residential area on Ballpark Road with a new US 21 intersection north of the Little River Bridge. In addition to the State owned property, this alternative

will impact residential property along Ballpark Road. Ballpark Road will dead end on the north and the south side of Sparta Parkway (see Figure 2, Appendix A). Alternate 2 will impact residential and state-owned property.

*Alternate 3:* Extend Sparta Parkway across state-owned property through a residential and commercial area at Ballpark Road / US 21 and intersect US 21 across from Riverview Drive north of the Little River Bridge. Ballpark Road will dead end on the north and the south side of Sparta Parkway. Alternate 3 will impact residential, commercial, and state-owned property.

## **V. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT FOR THE RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE**

### **A. Length of Proposed Project**

The total length of the proposed project is approximately 0.8 miles connecting SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) with US 21 on a route south of downtown Sparta.

### **B. Traffic Volumes**

Current population and traffic volume trends were compared to an initial traffic forecast completed in June 2004. Based on current traffic count trends, and an annual growth rate of about 1%, updated future year volumes would very likely be less than volumes projected in the initial forecast. In addition, the State Demographer's office does not project the population within Allegheny County to increase between now and 2030.

Under the "no-build" alternative scenario, the 2030 traffic volumes are estimated to be 6,800 vehicles per day on Grandview Drive and 19,600 vehicles per day on US 21. For the build alternative, the 2030 traffic volumes are estimated to be 8,800 vehicles per day on the proposed facility, 4000 vehicles per day on Grandview Drive and 13,800 vehicles per day on US 21.

### **C. Proposed Cross-Section**

The proposed cross section includes a two lane facility of 12-foot wide travel lanes with 2-foot paved shoulders.

### **D. Right-of-Way**

The proposed right-of-way width within the project limits ranges between 60-80 feet.

E. Access Control

The proposed project does not plan to purchase access control along the project corridor.

F. Structures

There is one bridge structure planned in conjunction with the recommended alternative (Alternate 2). The bridge structure is proposed to avoid any impact to wetland 8, a jurisdictional feature located on the state-owned maintenance facility property (see Figure 2, Appendix A). The existing structures within the project study area will not be modified.

G. Sidewalks

Sidewalks are not proposed as part of this facility as it will serve as a vehicular bypass of the walkable downtown Sparta area.

H. Bicycle Facilities

The proposed alignment provides an improved alternative route partly on new location around the central business district of Sparta (as a bypass). There is a designated bike route, the NC 4 – North Line Trace, along US 21 and NC 18. Therefore, accommodations for bicycles are not recommended for the proposed project.

I. Special Permits Required

No permits will be required for association of waters of the United States and construction of this project.

J. Noise Barriers

No noise barriers are proposed as part of this project and no noise abatement measures are recommended.

K. Maintenance of Traffic

Traffic will be maintained at all times during project construction.

L. Intersection Roads and Type of Control

The project proposes to provide intersections at each of the current project limits. No change in intersection treatment is proposed. Ballpark Road will not intersect the new facility. The ability to turn around on Ballpark Road will be provided on both the north and south side of the proposed facility.

M. Estimated Project Cost

	<u>July 2014 S.T.I.P. Estimate</u>
Right-of-Way:	\$2,200,000
Construction:	\$6,000,000
Utilities:	\$ 200,000
Prior Year Planning:	<u>\$ 839,000</u>
Total Cost:	\$9,239,000

**VI. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

A. Land Use

1. Business Activity/Employment Centers

The Town of Sparta is located at the crossroads of Alleghany County's two main corridors, US 21 and NC 18. Sparta is the physical center as well as the focus of community life for predominately rural Alleghany County. Sparta serves as the financial, trade, and governmental hub of Alleghany County.

2. Existing/Future Land Uses and Present/Future Zoning

Existing land use along this corridor is a mixture of institutional, residential, commercial, and general manufacturing. The Town of Sparta has jurisdiction over those portions of US 21 that run through its town limits. In the study area, existing zoning classifications from the termination of the Sparta Parkway eastward to the Little River is primarily identified as light industrial and is comprised of the NCDOT parcel. A portion of the land area is zoned residential along Ballpark Road and Estep Street. A neighborhood Business classification is for parcels located on the south side of US 21 along the project's eastern terminus. Therefore, all alternatives converge on US 21 in an area designated as Neighborhood Business. At the present time there is no plan to change or modify the general zoning make-up of the area.

3. Local/Regional Land Use and/or Development Plans

There are currently no local or regional plans for development in the general vicinity of the proposed project. Discussion with local officials reveals that there are no apparent local or regional plans with which the proposed project would interfere, conflict or hinder.

4. Economic Development

Because of the existing pattern of development, redevelopment opportunities in the vicinity of the project will be limited. The proposed project alignment will provide access to a minor amount of new vacant property, with all other corners having existing

residences or businesses in place. However, as the market for development in Sparta is not particularly vigorous, the new road configuration by itself should not promote the development of business activity where there was none before.

## 5. Farmland Impacts

The Farmland Protection Policy Act requires all federal agencies or their representatives to consider the impact of land acquisition and construction projects on prime and important farmland soils. North Carolina Executive Order Number 96, Preservation of Prime Agricultural and Forest Lands, requires all state agencies to consider the impact of land acquisition and construction projects on prime farmland soils, as designated by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These soils are determined by the SCS based on criteria such as crop yield and level of input of economic resources. Land which is planned or zoned for urban development is not subject to the same level of preservation afforded other rural, agricultural areas. All State agencies, as defined in N.C.G.S. 143B-3, under the jurisdiction of the Governor shall ensure that actions taken by those agencies will minimize the loss of prime agricultural and forest lands..

The project is located well within the developed area of the Town Sparta. There is established commercial and residential development in the immediate vicinity, and these areas are zoned to remain this way. The project will not disturb or disrupt any active farming operations. Farmland mitigation or avoidance will not be necessary.

## B. Cultural Resources

This project is subject to NCGS 121-12(a) which directs the head of any state agency having direct or indirect jurisdiction over a proposed state or state-assisted undertaking, or the head of any State department, board, commission, or independent agency having authority to build, construct, operate, license, authorize, assist, or approve any state or state-assisted undertaking, shall, prior to the approval for the undertaking, take into account the effect of the undertaking on any property listed in the National Register of Historic Places established pursuant to Public Law 89-665, 16 U.S.C. 470. Where, in the judgment of the Historical Commission, an undertaking will have an effect upon any listed property, the head of the appropriate State agency shall afford the Commission a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking.

### 1. Historic Architecture

The State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) requested a historic structures survey for the project area in September 2004 when the project was federally funded. A NCDOT staff architectural historian conducted a field survey of the project area in 2006 and evaluated structures for eligibility on the National Register of Historic (NRHP). NCDOT submitted a report on historic structures to the HPO in September 2006 that recommended two properties as eligible for the NRHP – the D.C. Bledsoe House and Sparta Prison Camp. The HPO concurred with these findings, but since 2006 the

project's federal funds were removed and no federal permits are required. Therefore, since neither property is listed on the NRHP and the project does not require Federal funds, licenses, or permits, the properties are not provided special consideration under NCGS 121-12(a)

## 2. Archaeological Resources

Consultation with the NC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) revealed that no known archaeological sites are located within the proposed project area. The HPO also believes it is unlikely that any archaeological resources, which may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, will be affected by the project construction. The HPO recommended that no further archaeological investigation be conducted in connection with this project (see Appendix B, Letter from HPO).

## C. Community Impacts

### 1. Geographic and Political Location

Alleghany County is in the northwest section of North Carolina. County geography ranges from mountain peaks to more undulating terrain along the New and Little Rivers. It is bounded on the west by Ashe County, on the east by Surry County, on the south by Wilkes County, and on the north by the State of Virginia.

### 2. Direct Community Impact Area

The Direct Community Impact Area is the geographic area that contains any properties, neighborhoods, communities, and community resources that may be impacted by the project during and immediately following construction. The Direct Community Impact Area is also a tool used for identifying any direct impacts upon special populations within the community. The Direct Community Impact Area, designated by the pink outline on Figure 3, Appendix A, is bounded by parcels immediately west of Grandview Drive and follows Bledsoe Creek on the west and south. It crosses the Little River at US 21 and follows US 21 North to reconnect with parcels west of Grandview Drive.

### 3. Policies, Guidelines, and Goals

The proposed project is located within Sparta town limits. Sparta has zoning regulations although the county does not have formal classifications. On May 15, 2006, the Alleghany Board of Commissioners adopted a "Property Rights Protection Ordinance" that grandfathers all existing land uses in the county. The ordinance exempts residential and farming uses of land. New business use of land is governed, including businesses that drastically change size or purpose. The county is not divided into "zones" under the plan, but the entire county is regulated under one "open district." Sparta and its extra-territorial jurisdiction of one mile are governed by the town's zoning plan.

In the study area, land use from the termination of the Sparta Parkway eastward to the Little River primarily is identified as light industrial and is comprised of the NCDOT parcel. A portion of the land area is residential along Ballpark Road and Estep Street. A Neighborhood Business classification is for parcels located on the south side of US 21 along the project's eastern terminus. Therefore, all alternates converge on US 21 in an area designated as Neighborhood Business.

The Town of Sparta Hometown Revitalization Task Force Report dated June 1997 recommended an upgrade to the downtown area. Revitalization efforts include building preservation, streetscape improvements, pedestrian connections with a sidewalk plan, and burying overhead utility wires to preserve the historic character of the area.

4. Race, Ethnicity and Age

The demographic study area experienced 0.3% drop in population from 2000-2010. At the same time, Alleghany County experienced a moderate population growth of 11.3% - nearly half of that of North Carolina's 21.4% growth rate. Alleghany County is in close proximity to the population of the Piedmont area.

**Table 1. 2010 Population by Race (Alleghany Co.)**

	Alleghany County		North Carolina	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total Population (2010)	10,677	100	8,049,313	100
White	10,096	94.6	5,802,165	72.1
Black	121	1.13	1,734,154	21.5
American Indian	36	0.34	100,956	1.25
Asian/Pacific Islander	65	0.61	111,292	1.38
Hispanic	454	4.25	372,964	4.63
Other	141	1.32	111,908	1.39

**Table 2. 2000-2010 Percent Change in Population**

	Project Area	Alleghany County	North Carolina
	Number	Number	Number
Total Population (2010)	2499	10,677	8,049,313
Total Population (2000)	2507	9,590	6,628,637
Percent Change	-0.32%	11.33%	21.43%

5. Income and Poverty Status

The 2000 median household income for Alleghany County was \$29,244. Per capita income was \$17,691. Alleghany County had 1,562 persons living below the poverty level.

**Table 3. Income Measures**

	Project Area		Alleghany County		North Carolina	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Median H.H. Income	\$28,618		\$29,244		\$39,184	
Per Capita Income	\$16,664		\$17,691		\$20,307	
Persons below poverty level	394	36.5	1,562	33.9	739,085	23.6

**Table 4. Employment**

	Project Area	Alleghany County	North Carolina
In Civilian Labor Force	1,291	5,393	4,039,732
In Armed Forces	-	-	90,847
Not in Labor Force	819	3,507	2,160,039

6. Population Characteristics

The Demographic Study Area experienced a 0.32% drop in population from 1990-2000. The decrease in population could be attributed to deaths in the slightly larger older population surpassing births. Over 22% of residents in the Demographic Study Area are 65 years and over. This age distribution is similar to Alleghany County (19.32%).

The Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) has oversight of the Federal Government's compliance with Executive Order 12898, to insure that the TIP project is not disproportionately impacting or disproportionately denying benefits of the project. Based on CEQ guidance minority populations should be identified where either: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographical analysis.

In the Demographic Study Area 96.12% of the population identify themselves as White racially. In Alleghany County 94.56% identify themselves as White. The largest minority population in the Demographic Study Area is Hispanic or Latino at 6.08%. Compared to Alleghany County this is almost 50% higher than the county's 4.25%

Hispanic population. Block Group 4 has the highest Hispanic population with 8.62%, double Alleghany County's 4.25%. The possible low income or minority area identified around the Little River and Southside Drive area of the project is in Block Group 3. This block group has 6.14% of the county's Hispanic residents, almost 50% higher than the county's percentage. There are 47 Hispanic residents in Block Group 3 compared to 454 in Alleghany County.

According to Census Tract data, the minority population of the Demographic Study Area is very close to 50 percent and is meaningfully greater than the minority populations of Alleghany County.

Environmental Justice Guidelines call for enhanced public involvement when low income/minority populations are present in an area that will be potentially be impacted by the project.

#### 7. Housing Characteristics

The Demographic Study Area median home value of \$83,000 is below that of Alleghany County's \$89,700 and could be the result of over 50% of the houses built between 1960 and 1979. Fifty-one percent of the vacant homes in the Demographic Study Area are for seasonal or recreational use. In Alleghany County, the rate jumps to 74%.

#### 8. Economic Characteristics

According to the Employment Security Commission, Alleghany County has one of the lowest median household incomes in North Carolina, ranked 83<sup>rd</sup> out of 100 counties. The \$25,882 median household income within the Demographic Study Area in 2000 is less than Alleghany County's (\$29,244). Census data shows 12.89% of the residents in the Demographic Study Area have income below the poverty level compared to 16.90% in Alleghany County. The 2000 unemployment rate in the Demographic Study Area was 4.49%. Alleghany County's September 2012 unemployment rate was 8.8%.

The Department of Commerce annually ranks the state's 100 counties based on economic well-being and assigns a tier designation to each. The 40 most distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 40 Tier 2, and the 20 least distressed are Tier 3. This tier system is incorporated into various state programs to encourage economic activity in the less prosperous area of North Carolina. Alleghany County is identified as a Tier 1 County for 2007.

Alleghany is a rural Appalachian-region county where industrial growth has been slow to offset the decline in agricultural employment. Due to factors such as terrain and the unavailability of skilled labor, the area historically trailed much of North Carolina in manufacturing.

The largest manufacturers in Alleghany County include Par Dale Mills (100-249 employees) and Truline Truss (50-99 employees). The largest non-manufacturing companies are in education/health services - Alleghany County Board of Education (250-499 employees) and Alleghany Memorial Hospital (100-249 employees).

a. Bledsoe Creek Greenway

Bledsoe Creek Greenway is a proposed off-road trail along the main stem of Bledsoe Creek that would provide linkages to destinations in Sparta. Exact locations are not determined; rather, 300-foot wide corridors are identified for further study. The fourth and final section of the proposed greenway is from Grandview Drive to the Little River following the southern side of the NCDOT property. As greenway section locations are determined, the Town of Sparta will examine the feasibility of connections to the existing sidewalk network. Construction and completion dates for the greenway are not established.

b. Visual and Aesthetic Resources

The mountainside south of TIP R-4060 supports a Christmas tree farm and has a sizeable single family home that overlooks the corridor for the proposed roadway. Although not unique to the region, this rural viewshed is in an area of increased urbanism in downtown Sparta. Across the landfill area Ballpark Road also has dense vegetation and trees that buffer the NCDOT facility.



Viewshed south of DOT facility

c. Community Natural and Aesthetic Resources

Bledsoe Creek is a tributary of the Little River, in a subbasin of the New River. The New River is designated as a State Natural and Scenic River, a National Wild and Scenic River, and in 1998 was named 1 of 14 American Heritage Rivers. Bledsoe Creeks is one of the numerous trout streams; some stocked, located in the Sparta area.

9. Analysis of Direct Community Impacts

a. Economic and Business Resources

The Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell restaurants are two of three franchised restaurants in Sparta and Alleghany County. The other fast food restaurant is Burger King. All three serve different markets- chicken, Mexican cuisine and hamburgers. There is no anticipated loss or relocation of businesses associated with the recommended alternative. The same zoning is available in close proximity to the current location within Sparta. The proposed TIP project will make downtown Sparta more attractive for new business by diverting truck traffic from Main Street.

b. Community Social Resources

No community social resources would be impacted by the proposed project.

c. Community Infrastructure Resources

No community infrastructure resources would be impacted by the proposed project.

d. Mobility and Access

Extension of the Sparta Western Loop will reduce downtown traffic congestion and truck traffic leading to decreased delay and improved travel times. There will be no detrimental impacts to parking and availability. The project is consistent with the 2012 Allegheny County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

e. Safety

The project will potentially improve safety and mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, and the tourists in downtown Sparta by reducing through truck traffic and congestion.

10. Water Supply Watershed

The TIP R-4060 project corridor is not within a water supply watershed. The project should not directly affect Sparta's well system.

11. Title VI and Environmental Justice

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, protects individuals from discrimination on the grounds of race, age, color, religion, disability, sex, and national origin. Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations" provides that each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. Special populations may include the elderly, children, the disabled, low-income areas, American Indians and other minority groups. Executive Order 12898 requires that Environmental Justice principals be incorporated into all transportation studies, programs, policies and activities. The three environmental principles are: 1) to ensure the full and fair participation of all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process. 2) to avoid, minimize or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority or low income populations. 3) to fully evaluate the benefits and burdens of transportation programs, policies, and activities, upon low-income and minority populations.

The proposed improvements do not disproportionately or adversely impact low income and/or minority populations located in the project area. No evidence of, or indication of discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability is present. Benefits and burdens will be shared equitably among all study area populations.

## 12. Relocations

All property acquisitions are subject to the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. This Act provides for uniform and equitable treatment of persons displaced from their homes, businesses, non-profit associations, or farms by Federal and federally-assisted programs, and establishes uniform and equitable land acquisition policies.

Relocation assistance payments and counseling will be provided to persons and businesses in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act, as Amended, to ensure adequate relocation and a decent, safe, and sanitary home for displaced residents. All eligible displacees will be entitled to moving expenses. All benefits and services will be provided equitably to all residential and business relocatees without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origins and disability as specified under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

When relocation is necessary, it is the policy of NCDOT to ensure that comparable replacement housing will be available prior to construction of state and federally-assisted projects. Furthermore, the North Carolina Board of Transportation has the following three programs to minimize the inconvenience of relocation.

- \* Relocation Assistance,
- \* Relocation Moving Payments, and
- \* Relocation Replacement Housing Payments or Rent Supplement.

These regulations and programs help ensure that property owners are compensated fairly for the loss of value of their property.

The relocation program for the proposed action will be conducted in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646), and/or the North Carolina Relocation Assistance Act (GS 133-5 through 133-18). The program is designed to provide assistance to displaced persons in relocating to a replacement site in which to live or do business. At least one relocation officer is assigned to each highway project for this purpose.

It is anticipated that one residential relocation will occur along Ballpark Road as a result of the construction of the recommended alternative for the proposed facility. No business relocations are expected, but there are potential impacts to property lines of businesses in the Ballpark Road/ US 21 vicinity, namely, the Splash and Dash Carwash and Kentucky Fried Chicken/Taco Bell.

### 13. Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

Indirect impacts are caused by or result from the project, although these may be later in time or further removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Cumulative effects are the results of the incremental impacts of the project when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future activities, regardless of which entities undertake these other activities. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant activities taking place over a period of time.

One unintended consequence of roadway improvements can be - depending upon local land development regulations, development demand, water/sewer availability, and other factors - encouragement of unplanned development and sprawl<sup>1</sup>. Improvements to levels of service, better accommodation of merging and exiting traffic, and reductions in travel times can have land development impacts outside of the project area.

Many of the ultimate consequences of road improvement projects are dependent upon a variety of issues and decisions which are not part of the actual road construction process, but have much to do with a myriad of decisions made by the local government(s) at a later point in time. Many of these issues and decisions relate to such items as local land development regulations, planning and zoning, development demand, availability of utility infrastructure (water and sewer), local economic development efforts, as well as other factors which are part of a local economy. In addition, improvements to a particular road's level of service, better accommodation of merging and exiting traffic movements, and reductions in travel times can have impacts to surrounding land use which lie beyond the immediate project area.

The proposed project area has several factors that could induce growth or change land use – flat land in a mountainous area with an industrial zoning classification and municipal water and sewer services. Without the proposed project, the potential for growth would be modest, at best. With the implementation of the proposed project, the growth potential remains modest. There will not be a change in regional development. There are no anticipated cumulative effects from this project. The Indirect Land Use Effects Screening Tool indicates that indirect effects are not likely.

#### D. Natural Resources

##### 1. Physical Resources

The physical resources located within the project study area such as soil, water resources and distribution of natural communities directly influence management decisions during project construction. Descriptions of these physical resources in the project study area are included in the following sections.

## 2. Regional Characteristics

The project study area lies in the Blue Ridge Physiographic Province of North Carolina in Alleghany County. Alleghany County encompasses 233 square miles and contains several steep mountain ridges, intermontane basins and trench valleys that come together to create the rugged mountain disposition. Specific to Alleghany County, elevations range from 2,500 to 3,000 ft above mean sea level (msl) with the highest peaks of 4,000 ft above msl or more in the Peach Bottom Mountains in the central portion of the county. Elevations within the project vicinity range from approximately 2,770 to 3,275 ft above msl.

Alleghany County is located within the New River Basin. The New River Basin is the state's fourteenth largest river basin. The county is drained by the New River, which flows along the western and northern border, and its main tributary, the Little River, which runs through the central portion of the county. The North Carolina portion of the New River is designated as a **National Wild and Scenic River**. However, this project is located over 5 miles from the nearest section of the New River. The New River's watershed in North Carolina is approximately 765 square miles with land use practices in the watershed being comprised of approximately 53% forested, 25% pastureland, 8% cropland and 6% urban areas. Land uses within the project vicinity are comprised of agriculture, forests, and rural residential/commercial areas.

## 3. Soils

Soil series can differ in slope, texture, salinity, wetness, degree of erosion and other characteristics. On the basis of such differences, soil series are divided into soil phases and are depicted in the soil survey as mapping units. A description of each of the eight mapping units within the project study area is provided in the table below.

- Ashe series: The Ashe series consists of moderately deep, somewhat excessively drained soils on gently sloping to very steep ridges and side slopes of the Blue Ridge (MLRA 130). They formed in residuum that is affected by soil creep in the upper part, and weathered from felsic or mafic igneous and high-grade metamorphic rocks such as granite, hornblende gneiss, granodiorite, biotite gneiss, and high-grade metagraywacke. Slopes range from 10 to 45 percent. This series is located primarily on the steeper slopes in the southwest quadrant of the project study area.
- Chester series: The Chester series consists of very deep, well-drained, moderately permeable soils on uplands. They formed in materials weathered from micaceous schist. Slopes range from 6 to 45 percent. This series is located within the majority of the project study area.
- Codorus series: The Codorus series consists of very deep, moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained soils. These soils formed in recently deposited alluvial materials derived from upland soils materials

weathered from mostly metamorphic and crystalline rocks. They are on floodplains with smooth, nearly level slopes of 0 to 3 percent. Permeability is moderate. This series is located within the floodplains of the project study area.

- Tusquitee series: The Tusquitee series consists of very deep, well drained soils on gently sloping to very steep benches, foot slopes, toe slopes, and fans in coves in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. These soils formed in colluvium derived from materials weathered from igneous and metamorphic crystalline rocks such as granite, mica gneiss, hornblende gneiss, and schist. Slopes range from 6 to 10 percent. This series is only located in the northwest tip of the project study area.

#### 4. Biotic Resources

Biotic resources include terrestrial and aquatic communities. This section describes the biotic communities encountered in the project area, as well as the relationships between fauna and flora within these communities. The composition and distribution of biotic communities throughout the project area are reflective of topography, soils, hydrology, and past and present land uses. Descriptions of the terrestrial systems are presented in the context of plant community classifications. These classifications follow Schafale and Weakley (1990) where possible. Representative animal species that are likely to occur in these habitats (based on published range distributions) are also cited.

Scientific nomenclature and common names (when applicable) are provided for each animal and plant species described. Subsequent references to the same organism refer to the common name only. Fauna observed during the site visit are denoted in the text with an asterisk (\*).

##### a. Terrestrial Communities

There are six terrestrial communities located within the project study area. Community boundaries within the study area are generally well defined without a significant transition zone between them. The observed communities consist of: (1) Maintained/Disturbed Land, (2) Piedmont/Mountain Bottomland Forest, (3) Rich Cove Forest, (4) Pastureland, (5) White Pine Forest, and (6) Montane Oak – Hickory Forest.

##### b. Disturbed Roadside/Urban Community

Approximately 97 acres of disturbed land is located within the project study area, comprising 50% of the total project study area. Disturbed land includes areas such as maintained lawns, utility easements, right of ways, and various impervious surfaces. The majority of the disturbed land is located along US 21 in the northwest portion of the study area.

c. Piedmont/Mountain Bottomland Forest

Approximately 35 acres of this community type is located within the project study area comprising 18% of the project study area. It is located along portions of Bledsoe Creek and US 21 and is usually found in large drainage areas along floodplains of major stream systems. The dominant species found is red maple, tulip poplar, green ash and sugar maple.

d. Rich Cove Forest

There are 28 acres of Rich Cove Forest within the project study area making up about 15% of the project study area. The Rich Cove Forest is concentrated in the eastern portion of the project study area. Rich Cove Forest is distinguished from others by the dominance of mesophytic trees along with a well developed herbaceous layer.

e. Pastureland

Approximately 10% of the project study area is 19 acres of pastureland. These areas are scattered throughout the project area with actively housing livestock on the premises. The vegetation in the fallow fields consist of willow foxtail, goldenrod, little bluestem, fescue, and broomsedge.

f. White Pine Forest

There are 8 acres of White Pine Forest comprising 4% of the project area.

g. Montane Oak – Hickory Forest

Approximately 7 acres of Montane Oak – Hickory Forest is present comprising 3% of the project study area.

h. Terrestrial Fauna

Mammal Species that commonly exploit forested habitats and stream corridors found within the project study area include species such as eastern cottontail, raccoon, southeastern shrew, Virginia opossum\*, and white-tailed deer\*. Other mammal species that may exploit the forest edge include the gray fox and gray squirrel. Birds that commonly use these habitats range from the American crow, black and white warbler, wild turkey, eastern bluebird, eastern meadowlark, to the turkey vulture. A variety of reptile and amphibian species may use terrestrial communities located in the project study area. These animals include the corn snake, eastern box turtle, four-toed salamander, northern dusky salamander, eastern hellbender and the rat snake. Aquatic fauna expected within the project study area include the aquatic snail, crayfish\*, rainbow trout, brown trout, redbreast sunfish, upland chorus frog, and the spring peeper.

## 5. Summary of Anticipated Impacts

Construction of the proposed project will have various impacts on the biotic resources described. Any construction related activities in or near these resources have the potential to impact biological functions. This section quantifies and qualifies potential impacts to the natural communities within the project area in terms of the area impacted and the organisms affected. Temporary and permanent impacts are considered here as well, along with recommendations to minimize or eliminate impacts.

**Table 5. Terrestrial Community Types**

Common Name	Coverage Area (acres)	Percent of Total Area
Maintained/Disturbed Land	97	50
Piedmont/Mountain Bottomland Forest	35	18
Rich Cove Forest	28	15
Pastureland	19	10
White Pine Forest	8	4
Montane Oak – Hickory Forest	7	3
<b>TOTAL IMPACTS:</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100</b>

## 6. Waters of the United States

Surface waters and wetlands fall under the broad category of "Waters of the United States" (Waters of the U.S.), as defined in Section 33 of the Code of Federal Register (CRF) Part 328.3. Any action that proposes to dredge or place fill material into surface waters or wetlands falls under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Surface waters include all standing or flowing waters which have commercial or recreational value to the public. Wetlands are identified based on the presence of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and saturated or flooded conditions during all or part of the growing season.

## 7. Water Resources

Water resources within the project study area include Bledsoe Creek, the Little River, and five unnamed tributaries (UT) to Bledsoe Creek. These water resources are located in the New River Drainage basin. The water resources are designated as subbasin 05-07-03 according to the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) system for cataloging drainage basins and USGS Hydraulic Unit (HU) 05050001 according to the federal system for cataloging drainage basins. In addition, there are fourteen wetlands identified.

Bledsoe Creek and its unnamed tributaries are assigned a primary water resource classification of "CTr". The Little River is assigned a primary water resource classification of "C". Class "C" refers to freshwaters protected for secondary recreation,

fishing, aquatic life including propagation and survival, and wildlife. Secondary recreation includes wading, boating, and other uses involving human body contact with water where such activities take place in an infrequent, unorganized, or incidental manner. The supplemental classification of “Tr” has been assigned by the DWQ, and it refers to freshwaters protected for natural for natural trout propagation and survival of stocked trout. It should be noted that the DWQ’s classification of trout waters is not the same as the NC Wildlife Resources Commission’s (NCWRC) Designated Public Mountain Trout Waters Classification.

The NCWRC has identified the following trout waters: Bledsoe Creek and the Little River. Based on this designation, these streams may carry with them a mandatory High Quality Water (HQW) designation requiring more stringent design standards. Biologists have not found reproducing trout in Bledsoe Creek and do not expect reproduction in its tributaries. There is, however, trout reproduction in the Little River. Therefore, a trout moratorium on any in stream work on or in close proximity to the Little River (such as the mouth of Bledsoe Creek) will be present from October 15 to April 15.

There are no anadromous fish or essential fish habitat identified within the project study area. There are no stream systems included on the 2012 Final 303(d) list for impaired biological integrity located within the project study area (NCDENR 2004b). There are no surface waters classified as water supplies (WS-I or WS-II) or Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) located within the project study area. All streams within the project study area classified as “Cold”.

**Table 6. R-4060 Project Study Area Streams**

Stream	DWQ Index #	DWQ Primary Classification	Classification	Stream Width (ft)	Stream Length (ft)
Little River	10-9-(6)	C	Perennial	45	1,701
Bledsoe Creek	10-9-7	C, Tr	Perennial	15	4,738
UT1 (to Bledsoe Creek)	10-9-7	C, Tr	Intermittent	3	150
UT2 (to Bledsoe Creek)	10-9-7	C, Tr	Perennial	3	187
UT3 (to Bledsoe Creek)	10-9-7	C, Tr	Perennial	3	176
UT4 (to Bledsoe Creek)	10-9-7	C, Tr	Perennial	3	157
UT5 (to Bledsoe Creek)	10-9-7	C, Tr	Perennial	5	372
<b>TOTAL COVERAGE AREA:</b>					<b>7,481</b>

## 8. Characteristics of Wetlands

Criteria to delineate jurisdictional wetlands include evidence of hydric soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and hydrology. There are seven wetlands located in the project study area. These communities include emergent, scrub shrub, and forested wetland types. A description of the wetland vegetation, soil, and hydrology are provided below. The estimated wetland coverage areas are included in Table 7.

**Table 7. R-4060 Wetland Coverage Areas**

Wetland Name	Hydrologic Classification	Wetland Rating Score	Coverage Area (acres)
W1	Riparian	28	0.005
W2	Riparian	29	0.012
W3	Riparian	42	0.077
W4	Riparian	22	0.044
W5	Riparian	42	0.130
W6	Riparian	17	0.020
W7	Riparian	31	0.015
W8	Riparian	38	0.145
W9	Riparian	Unknown	0.003
W10	Riparian	Unknown	0.009
W11	Riparian	Unknown	0.008
W12	Riparian	Unknown	0.010
W13	Riparian	Unknown	0.008
W14	Riparian	Unknown	0.005
<b>TOTAL COVERAGE AREA:</b>			<b>0.491</b>

9. Permits

The project as proposed will not require a Nationwide Permit (NWP) nor will individual impacts exceed the NWP maximum threshold requiring an individual permit. This threshold includes cumulative impacts of streams and wetlands totaling up to 0.5 acres, and cumulative loss or degradation of up to 300 linear feet of jurisdictional stream.

Based on the recommended alternative, impacts to jurisdictional surface waters or wetlands will not occur from the construction of the proposed project. As a result, construction activities will not require permits and certifications from various regulatory agencies in charge of protecting the water quality of public water resources.

10. Rare and Protected Species

Some populations of fauna and flora have been in, or are in, the process of decline either due to natural forces or their inability to coexist with human development. Federal law (under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended) requires that any action, likely to adversely affect a species classified as federally-protected, be subject to review by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Other species may receive additional protection under separate state laws.

a. Federally-Protected Species

Plants and animals with federal classifications of Endangered (E), Threatened (T), Proposed Endangered (PE), and Proposed Threatened (PT) are protected under the

provisions of Section 7 and Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. As of September 22, 2010, the USFWS lists one federally protected species for Alleghany County.

**Table 8. Federally Protected Species for Alleghany County.**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Bog Turtle	<i>Glyptemys muhlenbergii</i>	T(S/A)

\* T(S/A) Threatened due to similarity of appearance: a species that is threatened due to similarity of appearance with other rare species and is listed for its protection. These species are not biologically endangered or threatened and are not subject to Section 7 consultation.

**Name:** Bog Turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*)

**Family:** Emydidae

**Federal Status:** Threatened Due to Similarity of Appearance (southern population)

**Listed:** November 4, 1997

**Characteristics:**

The Bog Turtle is a small semi-aquatic reptile, measuring 3.0 to 4.5 inches long, with a weakly keeled, dark brown carapace and a blackish plastron with lighter markings along the neckline. There is a conspicuous orange or yellow blotch on each side of the head. This species exhibits sexual dimorphism; the males have concave plastrons and longer, thicker tails, while females have flat plastrons and shorter tails.

**Distribution and Habitat:**

The Bog Turtle is found in the eastern United States, in two distinct regions. The northern population, in Massachusetts, Connecticut, southern New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware is listed as threatened and protected by the Endangered Species Act. The southern population, occurring in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia is listed as threatened due to similarity of appearance.

Preferred Bog Turtle habitat consists of fens, sphagnum bogs, swamps, marshy meadows and pastures. Areas with clear, slow-flowing water, soft mud substrate, and an open canopy are ideal. Clumps of vegetation such as tussock sedge and sphagnum moss are important for nesting and basking. This species hibernates from October to April, hiding just under the frozen surface of mud. The diet consists of beetles, moth and butterfly larvae, caddisfly larvae, snails, nematodes, millipedes, seeds, and carrion.

Mating takes place in May and June. The female deposits the clutch of 2 to 6 eggs approximately one month after mating in a sedge tussock, a clump of sphagnum moss, or loose soil. The eggs hatch in 42 to 56 days. A female may not nest every year and probably only produces one clutch per reproductive year.

## **Threats to Species:**

The primary threats to the bog turtle are loss of habitat (from increased residential and commercial development as well as draining, clearing, and filling wetlands) and illegal collecting for the pet trade. Nest predation and disease may also play a role in the population decrease.

## **Distinctive Characteristics:**

The Bog Turtle is distinguished from other turtles by its small size and the bright orange or yellow blotch on each side of its head.

## **BIOLOGICAL CONCLUSION:**

## **NO SURVEY REQUIRED**

A March 2, 2007 review of the NCNHP database of rare species and unique habitats revealed one known population of Bog Turtles just over a mile southwest of the project study area in Sparta Bog. However, the wetlands located within the project study area are mostly under canopy and lack the vegetative characteristics of bog turtle habitat. The biological conclusion for the bog turtle remains “No Survey Required”, however it is unlikely that this project will affect this 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 will become effective on or before April 2015. Furthermore, this species is included in USFWS’s current list of protected species for Alleghany 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.

## **E. Air Quality and Traffic Noise Analysis**

### **1. Air Quality Analysis**

This evaluation of air quality is completed in accordance with the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments and the NEPA process, and no additional reports are necessary. The project is located in Alleghany County, which has been determined to be in compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). 40 CFR part 51 is not applicable, because the proposed project is located in an attainment area. This project is not anticipated to create any adverse effects on the air quality of this attainment area. No air quality receptor location is expected to exceed the NAAQS. The project’s impact on air quality will not be significant. If vegetation is disposed of by burning, all burning shall be done in accordance with applicable local laws and regulations of the North Carolina State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality in compliance with 15 NCAC 2D.0520.

In addition to these main pollutants with ambient air quality standards, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified six Mobile Air Source Toxins (MSAT). These are benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, diesel particle matter/diesel exhaust organic gases, acrolein, and 1.3-butadiene. These toxins have been identified due to the increased concern of potential long-term health impacts from MSAT emissions associated with transportation projects. Air toxins analysis is a containing area of research. While much work has been done to assess the overall health risk or air toxins, many questions remain unanswered. No analysis for MSAT is required for this project due to no potential meaningful MSAT effects.

## 2. Highway Traffic Noise/Construction Noise Analysis

Based on this preliminary study, traffic noise abatement is not recommended and no noise abatement measures are proposed. The evaluation of highway traffic noise for this project is completed in accordance with Title 23 CFR Part 772. No additional noise analysis will be performed for this project unless warranted by a substantial change in the project's design concept or scope.

In accordance with NCDOT Traffic Noise Abatement Policy, the Federal/State governments are not responsible for providing noise abatement measures for new development for which building permits are issued after the Date of Public Knowledge. The Date of Public Knowledge of the proposed highway project will be the approval date of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). For development occurring after this date, local governing bodies are responsible to insure that noise compatible designs are utilized along the proposed facility.

### F. Hazardous Material Involvement

Based on field reconnaissance, Underground Storage Tank (UST) sites for gasoline and diesel fuel are located on the NCDOT Maintenance and Equipment facility property near the beginning project terminus at Grandview Drive. Site assessments will be conducted for soil and groundwater contamination prior to construction and relocation of the UST's and fuel pumps.

### G. Landfills and Other Potentially Contaminated Properties

Geographic Information System (GIS) data was consulted for the project corridor. The research shows that one landfill occurs within the project limits. The alternatives were developed to avoid or minimize impacts to the landfill boundaries to the maximum extent practicable. Based on the current design of the recommended alternative, there will be no impact to the landfill within the project area.

## **VII. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Comments were received from the following federal, state, and local agencies. Copies of comments received are included in Appendix B. These comments were taken into consideration in the planning of this project and the preparation of this document. (Note: an asterisk indicates the agencies that provided comments):

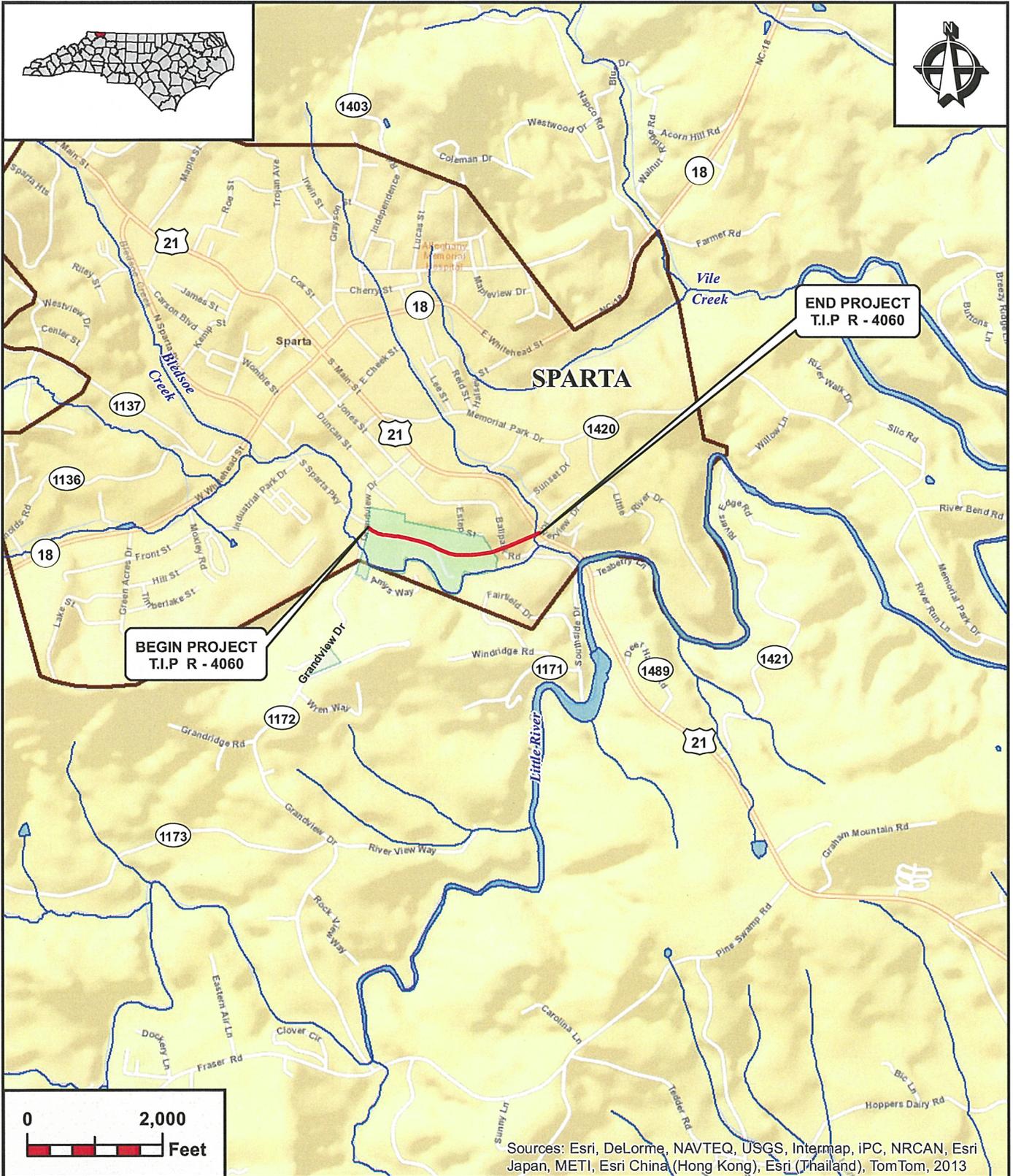
- \* U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- \* N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission
- \* N. C. Division of Water Quality
- \* N. C. Department of Cultural Resources – State Historic Preservation Office
- \* N. C. Department of Health and Natural Resources- Division of Water Quality
- \* N. C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- \* N. C. Division of Forest Resources
- \* Town of Sparta
- \* Alleghany County

Citizen comments and concerns have been taken into consideration during the planning stage of this project. A Citizens' Informational Workshop was held in Alleghany County by NCDOT representatives to present the proposed project to the public and obtain comments and/or suggestions about the anticipated improvement. The project was advertised in the local news media and informational flyers were sent to approximately 200 residences/businesses. The workshop was held on July 26, 2007 at Alleghany County High School. The meeting was conducted in the cafeteria from 4:00pm to 7:00pm. NCDOT representatives from the Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch, the Roadway Design Unit, and the Division 11 Office were available to explain the project, answer questions, and receive comments. Approximately 25 people attended this meeting to express their interest in the project. Comments and questions were primarily related to the anticipated construction schedule, property impacts and right of way acquisition, and desire to reroute truck traffic from Main Street.

## **VIII. BASIS FOR FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Based upon a study of the proposed project documented in this assessment and upon comments received from state agencies, local agencies, and the public, it is the finding of the North Carolina Department of Transportation that this project will not have a significant adverse impact upon the human or natural environment. The proposed project is consistent with local plans and will not disrupt communities. Per this evaluation, a Finding of No Significant Impact is applicable for this project. Therefore, no further environmental analysis will be required.

**APPENDIX A**  
**FIGURES**



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, Intermap, iPC, NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, 2013



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT

**VICINITY MAP  
US 21 (SPARTA WESTERN LOOP)  
NEW LOCATION FROM SR 1127  
(GRANDVIEW DRIVE) TO US 21**

ALLEGHANY COUNTY  
TIP PROJECT R - 4060

County: ALLEGHANY

Div: 11 TIP# R-4060

WBS: 34605.1.1

Date: December 2013

**Figure  
1**



**Legend**

- Edge of Pavement
- - - Construction Limits
- Delineated Streams and Wetlands
- - - Eligible for the NRHP
- Alleghany Parcel Lines
- State Owned Facilities
- + Sparta Municipal Boundaries



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT

AERIAL MAP  
US 21 (SPARTA WESTERN LOOP)  
NEW LOCATION FROM SR 1127  
(GRANDVIEW DRIVE) TO US 21  
ALLEGHANY COUNTY  
TIP PROJECT R - 4060



County:  
ALLEGHANY

Div: 11	TIP# R-4060
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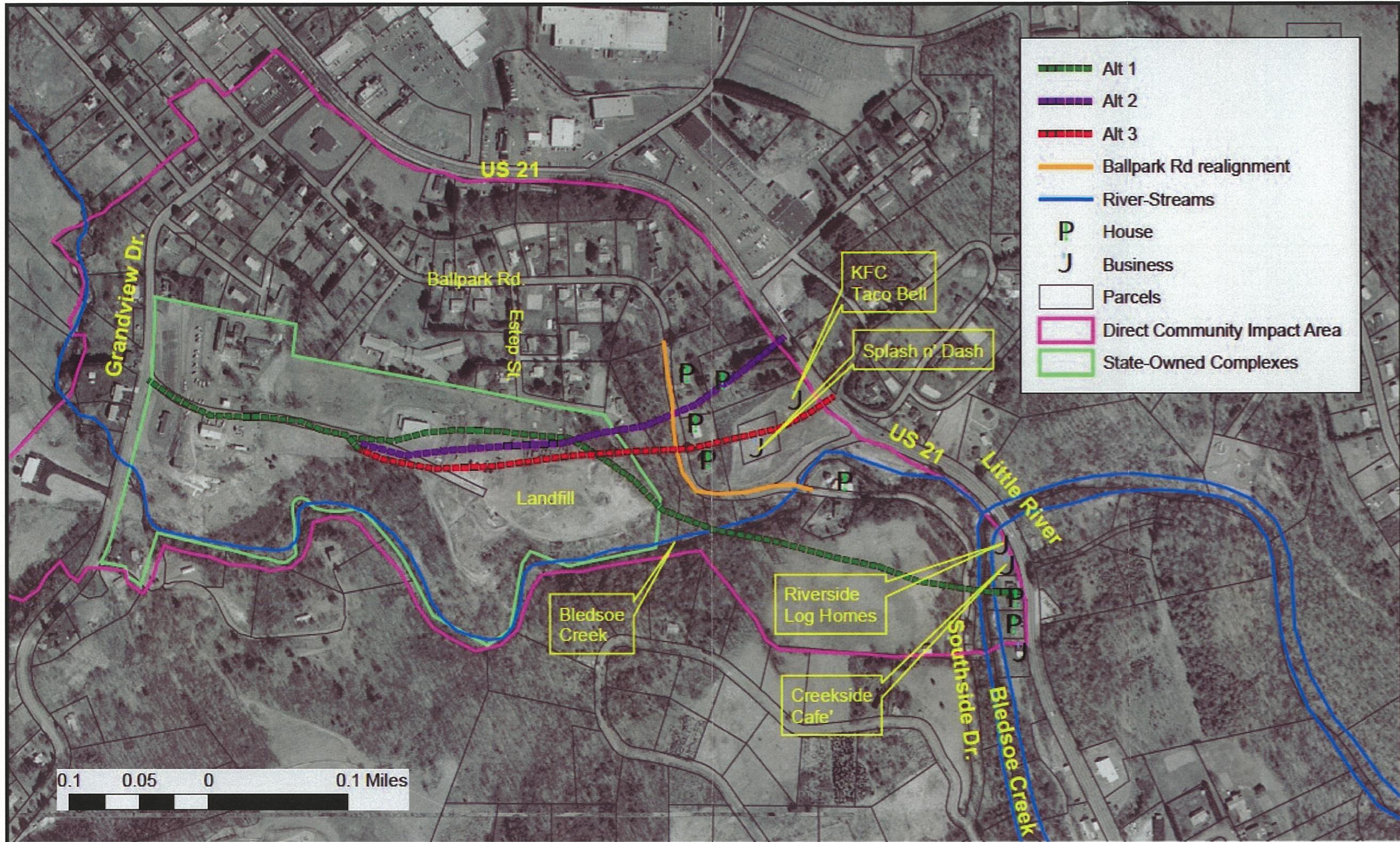
WBS:  
34605.1.1

Date:  
February 2014

**Figure**  
**2**

By: J.TORTORELLA

NC OneMap



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION  
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT

**STIP R-4060**  
US 21 (Sparta Western Loop)  
New Location from SR 1127  
Grandview Drive to US 21  
**DIRECT COMMUNITY IMPACT AREA**

County:	ALLEGHANY
Div:	11
TIP#	R-4060
WBS:	34605.1.1
Date:	December 2013

**Figure**  
**3**



**Legend**

- Project Study Area
- Jurisdictional Streams
- Jurisdictional Wetlands
- Jurisdictional Linear Wetlands



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT



US 21 (SPARTA WESTERN LOOP)  
 NEW LOCATION FROM SR 1127  
 (GRANDVIEW DRIVE) TO US 21

## STIP R-4060 JURISDICTIONAL FEATURES MAP

County:	ALLEGHANY
Div:	11
TIP#	R-4060
WBS:	34605.1.1
Date:	December 2013

**Figure**  
**4**

**APPENDIX B**  
**AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE**



North Carolina  
Department of Administration

Michael F. Easley, Governor

Gwynn T. Swinson, Secretary

January 9, 2004

Mr. Richard L. Brewer  
NC Department of Transportation  
Project Development - 1548 MSC  
Raleigh NC 27699-1548

Dear Mr. Brewer:

Subject: Scoping - Proposed project is for the right of way; US 21 Sparta, Western Loop from SR 1172 to US21, Alleghany County, WBS 34605.1.1., State Project 8.1701301, FAP STP-21(10), TIP R-4060.

The N. C. State Clearinghouse has received the above project for intergovernmental review. This project has been assigned State Application Number 04-E-4220-0179. Please use this number with all inquiries or correspondence with this office.

Review of this project should be completed on or before 02/09/2004. Should you have any questions, please call (919)807-2425.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chrys Baggett".

Ms. Chrys Baggett  
Environmental Policy Act Coordinator

*Mailing Address:*  
1301 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1301

*Telephone:* (919)807-2425  
Fax (919)733-9571  
State Courier #51-01-00  
e-mail: Chrys.Baggett@ncmail.net

*Location Address:*  
116 West Jones Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chrys Baggett  
State Clearinghouse

FROM: Melba McGee *MM*  
Project Review Coordinator

RE: 04-0179 Scoping Western Loop from Grandview Drive, Alleghany  
County

DATE: January 14, 2004

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has reviewed the proposed project. The attached comments are a result of this review. More specific comments will be provided during the environmental review process.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. If during the preparation of the environmental document, additional information is needed, the applicant is encouraged to notify our respective divisions.

Attachments

1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1601  
Phone: 919-733-4984 \ FAX: 919-715-3060 \ Internet: [www.enr.state.nc.us/ENR](http://www.enr.state.nc.us/ENR)

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January 26, 2004

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Richard L. Brewer, P.E., Project Development Engineer  
NCDOT Project Development & Environmental Analysis Branch

FROM: Cynthia F. Van Der Wiele, NCDOT Coordinator *cvdw*

SUBJECT: Review of Scoping Sheets for US 21, Sparta, Western Loop from SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21; Alleghany County, State Project 8.1701301, F.A. Project STP-21(10), TIP Project R-4060.

In reply to your correspondence dated December 29, 2003 (received January 7, 2004) in which you requested comments for the referenced project, preliminary analysis of the project indicates that the following water resources in Hydrologic Unit 050703 will be impacted:

<u>Stream (Index)</u>	<u>Water Quality Classification</u>
▪ Little River (10-9)	C trout
▪ Bledsoe Creek (10-9-7)	C trout

The project proposes a two-lane roadway on new location. The purpose and need for the project have not been disclosed. The length of the proposed project is unknown; it is also unknown how this project fits into local or state transportation planning.

NC Division of Water Quality believes this project should go through the Merger/Concurrence Process and has the following comments:

Environmental Documentation

- The environmental document should provide a detailed and itemized presentation of the proposed impacts to wetlands and streams with corresponding mapping. There should be a discussion on mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts. If mitigation is required, it is preferable to present a conceptual (if not finalized) mitigation plan with the environmental documentation. While the NCDWQ realizes that this may not always be practical, it should be noted that for projects requiring mitigation, appropriate mitigation plans will be required prior to issuance of a 401 Water Quality Certification.

Planning and Design Issues

- Flowing in a northeasterly direction, the Little River and its tributaries (including Brush Creek and Glade Creek) drain the Town of Sparta. The lower portion of the Little River is considered High Quality Waters (HQW). It has been recommended that *more* of the Little River be considered for reclassification as HQW. According to the *New River Basinwide Water Quality Plan* (DWQ 2000), the negative change in Bledsoe Creek from Good (1993) to the low end of Good-Fair (1998), is a reflection of increased impacts from urban development in and around the Town of Sparta.
- Increased development in and around the Town of Sparta and damage to riparian vegetation has degraded water quality in Bledsoe Creek. The stream receives very little shade and bank erosion and sedimentation impacts are evident. It is recommended that urban stormwater impacts to



Bledsoe Creek be addressed to prevent further degradation of water quality in the biologically viable portions of this stream.

- Growth management within the next five years will be necessary, especially along highway corridors, in order to protect or improve water quality in this sub-basin. Growth management can be defined as the application of strategies and practices that help achieve sustainable development in harmony with the conservation of environmental qualities and features of an area. On a local level, growth management often involves planning and development review requirements that are designed to maintain or improve water quality.
- The stormwater management plan should be designed to pre-treat runoff from the roadway before reaching the streams. Velocities at the outlets should be designed to prevent scour and streambank erosion.
- Onsite wetland delineation shall be performed prior to application for §401 Certification.
- Wetland and stream impacts should be avoided to the maximum extent practical. If this is not possible, alternatives that minimize wetland impacts should be chosen. In accordance with the NCDWQ Wetlands Rules {15A NCAC 2H.0506(b)(6)}, mitigation will be required for impacts of greater than 150 linear feet to any single perennial stream. In the event that mitigation becomes required, the mitigation plan should be designed to replace appropriate lost functions and values. In accordance with the NCDWQ Wetlands Rules {15A NCAC 2H.0506 (h)(3)}, the NC Wetland Restoration Program (NCWRP) may be available for use as stream mitigation.

#### Construction Issues

- It is recommended that the Department of Transportation, take special care when constructing and maintaining (including mowing) roads along streams in the New River basin. The lack of riparian vegetation and streambank erosion is well-documented and will lead to increased instream habitat degradation if these problems remain unchecked. Vegetation along streams should remain as undisturbed as possible when conducting these construction and maintenance activities.
- Sediment and erosion control measures should not be placed in wetlands. Sediment should be removed from any water pumped from behind a cofferdam before the water is returned to the stream.
- Borrow/waste areas should not be located in wetlands. It is likely that compensatory mitigation will be required if wetlands or waters are impacted by waste or borrow.
- Impacts due to utility relocations from the project may require compensatory mitigation.

Thank you for requesting our input at this time. The DOT is reminded that issuance of a 401 Water Quality Certification requires that appropriate measures be instituted to ensure that water quality standards are met and designated uses are not degraded or lost. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Cynthia Van Der Wiele at (919) 733.5715.

pc: Chris Militscher, USEPA  
Marella Buncick, USFWS  
Marla Chambers, NCWRC  
Gregory J. Thorpe, NCDOT PDEA  
File Copy



**TOWN OF SPARTA  
P.O. BOX 99  
SPARTA, NC 28675**

Phone: 336-372-4257  
Fax: 336-372-2051  
Email: [spri@skybest.com](mailto:spri@skybest.com)



**TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS:**  
Agnos Joines, Mayor Pro Tem  
Robert Andrews  
John Brady  
Mike Parlier  
Lois Sheets

January 23, 2004

John H. Miller, Mayor  
William Graham, Town Attorney  
Bryan Edwards, Town Manager  
Frank M. Sanders, Chief of Police  
Raymond Moxley, Supt. Maint.  
Kay Cox, Town Clerk

Mr. Gregory J. Thorpe, Ph.D., Director  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
State of North Carolina  
Department of Transportation  
1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

Dear Mr. Thorpe:

We were excited to learn that TIP Project R-4060 for Sparta has begun the environmental assessment phase. This is an important project for Sparta and Alleghany County.

Our Town Manager, Tom Douglas, met with Mr. Pat Tuttle of your staff on Thursday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>. They discussed specific issues regarding water/sewer service lines, along with cultural, historical, and environmental items.

One thing of note, an old landfill, abandoned in about 1968 is located on DOT property very near the proposed route. Mr. Tuttle was briefed thoroughly on this during his visit.

There are no permits or approvals necessary from the Town.

Please let us know when the public comment meetings will be held.

Sincerely,

John H. Miller, Mayor

# Alleghany County Board of Commissioners

90 South Main Street  
Post Office Box 366  
Sparta, North Carolina 28675  
Tel: (336) 372-4179  
Fax: (336) 372-5969

*County Commissioners*  
Eldon Edwards – Chairman  
Warren Taylor – Vice Chairman  
Graylen Blevins  
Sandy Carter  
Patrick N. Woodie

*County Manager*  
Don Adams

*County Attorney*  
Ed Woltz

January 28, 2004

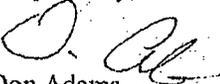
NC Department of Transportation  
Attn: Richard Brewer  
1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

RE: TIP Project R-4060

Dear Mr. Brewer,

I'm writing in reference to a letter written by Gregory Thorpe for TIP Project R-4060. According to the enclosed map, the Sparta Western Loop will cross the local Department of Transportation's property. It is our understanding that a closed landfill is on NCDOT's property near the proposed road. Our major concern is that the landfill needs to remain undisturbed during this project. Another concern of ours is that Bledsoe Creek may be eroding the river bank towards this closed landfill and possibly the new road. Is it possible to mitigate this erosion while the new road is being built? Thank you for allowing us to have input on this vital project. If I can be of further assistance, please contact me at (336) 372-4179.

Respectfully,

  
Don Adams  
County Manager



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

MEMORANDUM



TO: Chrys Baggett  
State Clearinghouse

FROM: Melba McGee *McGee*  
Project Review Coordinator

RE: 04-0179 Scoping US 21 Sparta, Western Loop in Alleghany  
County

DATE: February 13, 2004

The attached comments were received by this office after the response due date. These comments should be forwarded to the applicant and made a part of our previous comment package.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Attachment



☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

Charles R. Fullwood, Executive Director

TO: Melba McGee, Environmental Coordinator  
Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, DENR

FROM: Marla Chambers, Highway Projects Coordinator *Marla Chambers*  
Habitat Conservation Program, NCWRC

DATE: February 3, 2004

SUBJECT: Scoping review of NCDOT's proposed construction of a portion of the US 21 Sparta Western Loop, from SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21, Alleghany County. TIP No. R-4060.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is requesting comments from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) regarding impacts to fish and wildlife resources resulting from the subject project. Staff biologists have reviewed the information provided and have the following preliminary comments. These comments are provided in accordance with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661-667d).

The NCDOT proposes to construct a two-lane roadway, US 21, on new location from SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21 on the south side of Sparta. The project is of part of the Sparta Western Loop and will cross Little River, Class C Trout waters, and likely other waters of the state. Little River and several nearby streams are Hatchery Supported Designated Public Mountain Trout Waters. Several rare fish species have been found in the Little River, including the sharpnose darter (*Percina oxyrhynchus*), state Special Concern, Kanawha darter (*Etheostoma kanawhae*), state Significantly Rare (SR) and tonguetied minnow (*Exoglossum laurae*), state SR. There is also concern for the possible presence of the green floater (*Lasmigona subviridis*), a Federal Species of Concern and state Endangered mussel.

A moratorium prohibiting in-stream work and land disturbance within the 25-foot trout buffer is expected from October 15 to April 15. We recommend fish and mussel surveys for rare and listed species be conducted in the immediate project area and 200 m downstream, at a minimum.

In addition, to help facilitate document preparation and the review process, our general information needs are outlined below:

1. Description of fishery and wildlife resources within the project area, including a listing of federally or state designated threatened, endangered, or special concern species. Potential borrow areas to be used for project construction should be included in the inventories. A listing of designated plant species can be developed through consultation with the following programs:

The Natural Heritage Program  
N. C. Division of Parks and Recreation  
1615 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, N. C. 27699-1615  
(919) 733-7795

and,

NCDA Plant Conservation Program  
P. O. Box 27647  
Raleigh, N. C. 27611  
(919) 733-3610

2. Description of any streams or wetlands affected by the project. If applicable, include the linear feet of stream that will be channelized or relocated.
3. Cover type maps showing wetland acreage impacted by the project. Wetland acreage should include all project-related areas that may undergo hydrologic change as a result of ditching, other drainage, or filling for project construction. Wetland identification may be accomplished through coordination with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). If the USACE is not consulted, the person delineating wetlands should be identified and criteria listed.
4. Cover type maps showing acreage of upland wildlife habitat impacted by the proposed project. Potential borrow sites and waste areas should be included.
5. Show the extent to which the project will result in loss, degradation, or fragmentation of wildlife habitat (wetlands or uplands).
6. Include the mitigation plan for avoiding, minimizing or compensating for direct and indirect degradation in habitat quality as well as quantitative losses.
7. Address the overall environmental effects of the project construction and quantify the contribution of this individual project to environmental degradation.
8. Provide a discussion of the probable impacts on natural resources, which will result from secondary development, facilitated by the improved road access.

9. If construction of this facility is to be coordinated with other state, municipal, or private development projects, a description of these projects should be included in the environmental document, and all project sponsors should be identified.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in the early planning stages of this project. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (704) 485-2384.

cc: Marella Buncick, USFWS  
Cynthia Van Der Wiele, NCDWQ  
Sarah McRae, NCNHP



North Carolina  
Department of Environment and  
Natural Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
William G. Ross Jr., Secretary



North Carolina  
Division of Forest Resources

Stanford M. Adams, Director

2411 Old US 70 West  
Clayton, NC 27520  
February 10, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Melba McGee, Office of Legislative Affairs  
FROM: Bill Pickens, NC Division Forest Resources  
SUBJECT: DOT Scoping for US 21 Western Sparta Loop  
PROJECT #: 04-0179 and TIP # R-4060

*Bill Pickens*



The North Carolina Division of Forest Resources has reviewed the referenced scoping document and offers the following comments that should be addressed in the EA concerning impacts to woodlands.

1. Impacts to forest resources may occur as a result of this project. To help us evaluate the loss of timber production the EA should list the total forest land acreage by type that is removed by right of way construction. Efforts should be made to align corridors to minimize impacts to woodlands in the following order of priority:
  - Managed, high site index woodland
  - Productive forested woodlands
  - Managed, lower site index woodlands
  - Unique forest ecosystems
  - Unmanaged, fully stocked woodlands
  - Unmanaged, cutover woodlands
  - Urban woodlands
2. The productivity of the forest soils affected by the proposed project as indicated by the soil series.
3. The EA should state the provisions the contractor will take to utilize the merchantable timber removed during construction. Emphasis should be on selling all wood products. However, if the wood products cannot be sold then efforts should be made to haul off the material or turn it into mulch with a tub grinder. This practice will minimize the need for debris burning, and the risk of escaped fires and smoke management problems to residences, highways, schools, and towns.
4. If debris burning is needed, the contractor must comply with the laws and regulations of open burning as covered under G.S. 113-60.21 through G.S. 113-60.31. Allegheny County is classified as non-high hazard counties, and G.S. 113-60.24 requiring a regular burning permit would apply. Local DFR rangers or other agents are authorized to issue this permit.

5. The provisions that the contractor will take to prevent erosion and damage to forestland outside the right-of-way. Trees, particularly the root system, can be permanently damaged by heavy equipment. Efforts should be to avoid skinning of the tree trunk, compacting the soil, adding layers of fill, exposing the root system, or spilling petroleum or other substances.
6. The impact upon any existing greenways in the proposed project area should be addressed.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed project, and encourage the impact on our forestland be considered during the planning process.

cc: Barry New



February 16, 2004

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Gregory J. Thorpe, Ph.D., Director  
NCDOT Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch

FROM: Cynthia F. Van Der Wiele, NCDOT Coordinator *cudw*

SUBJECT: Review of Scoping Sheets for US 21, Sparta, Western Loop from SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21; Alleghany County, State Project 8.1701301, F.A. Project STP-21(10), TIP Project R-4060, State Clearinghouse Project 04-0179.

In reply to your correspondence dated January 13, 2004 (received January 20, 2004) in which you requested comments for the referenced project, preliminary analysis of the project indicates that the following water resources in Hydrologic Unit 050703 will be impacted:

<u>Stream (Index)</u>	<u>Water Quality Classification</u>
▪ Little River (10-9)	C trout
▪ Bledsoe Creek (10-9-7)	C trout

The project proposes a two-lane roadway on new location. The purpose and need for the project have not been disclosed. The length of the proposed project is unknown; it is also unknown how this project fits into local or state transportation planning.

NC Division of Water Quality believes this project should go through the Merger/Concurrence Process and has the following comments:

Environmental Documentation

- The environmental document should provide a detailed and itemized presentation of the proposed impacts to wetlands and streams with corresponding mapping. There should be a discussion on mitigation plans for unavoidable impacts. If mitigation is required, it is preferable to present a conceptual (if not finalized) mitigation plan with the environmental documentation. While the NCDWQ realizes that this may not always be practical, it should be noted that for projects requiring mitigation, appropriate mitigation plans will be required prior to issuance of a 401 Water Quality Certification.

Planning and Design Issues

- Flowing in a northeasterly direction, the Little River and its tributaries (including Brush Creek and Glade Creek) drain the Town of Sparta. The lower portion of the Little River is considered High Quality Waters (HQW). It has been recommended that *more* of the Little River be considered for reclassification as HQW. According to the *New River Basinwide Water Quality Plan* (DWQ 2000), the negative change in Bledsoe Creek from Good (1993) to the low end of Good-Fair (1998), is a reflection of increased impacts from urban development in and around the Town of Sparta.
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#### Construction Issues

- It is recommended that the Department of Transportation, take special care when constructing and maintaining (including mowing) roads along streams in the New River basin. The lack of riparian vegetation and streambank erosion is well-documented and will lead to increased instream habitat degradation if these problems remain unchecked. Vegetation along streams should remain as undisturbed as possible when conducting these construction and maintenance activities.
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- Borrow/waste areas should not be located in wetlands. It is likely that compensatory mitigation will be required if wetlands or waters are impacted by waste or borrow.
- Impacts due to utility relocations from the project may require compensatory mitigation.

Thank you for requesting our input at this time. The DOT is reminded that issuance of a 401 Water Quality Certification requires that appropriate measures be instituted to ensure that water quality standards are met and designated uses are not degraded or lost. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Cynthia Van Der Wiele at (919) 733.5715.

pc: Chris Militscher, USEPA  
Marella Buncick, USFWS  
Marla Chambers, NCWRC  
Richard Brewer, NCDOT PDEA  
File Copy



## United States Department of the Interior

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Asheville Field Office  
160 Zillicoa Street  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

March 3, 2004



Mr. Gregory J. Thorpe, Ph.D., Director  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

Dear Mr. Thorpe:

Subject: Western Loop from SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21, Sparta, Alleghany County, North Carolina, Federal Aid Project STP-21(10), State Project 8.1701301, TIP Project R-4060

As requested by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), we have reviewed the subject project. Our comments are provided in accordance section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) (Act).

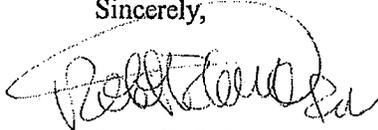
The NCDOT proposes to construct a portion of the Sparta Western Loop from Grandview Drive to US 21. According to your letter, this project would build a two-lane roadway on new location and would include placing at least one new culvert and a new bridge on the proposed alignment. At this time we will limit our comments primarily to listed species. We will provide comments on impacts to aquatic resources and terrestrial wildlife habitat when more detailed information is available, including wetland delineation, stream impacts, and overall project maps.

Enclosed is a list of species from Alleghany County that are on the *Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants*, as well as federal species of concern. Federal species of concern are not legally protected under the Act and are not subject to any of its provisions, including section 7, unless they are formally proposed or listed as endangered or threatened. We are including these species in our response to give you advance notification and to request your assistance in protecting them if any are found in the vicinity of this project. Our records indicate known locations near the project area of the bog turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*), which is threatened due to similarity of appearance, and Gray's lily (*Lilium grayi*), a federal species of concern. We recommend

surveying for these species prior to any further planning or on-the-ground activities to ensure that no adverse impacts occur.

If you have questions about these comments, please contact Ms. Marella Buncick of our staff at 828/258-3939, Ext. 237. In any future correspondence concerning this project, please reference our Log Number 4-2-04-117.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian P. Cole". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Brian P. Cole  
Field Supervisor

Enclosure

cc:

Mr. Chris Militscher, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Terry Sanford Federal Courthouse, 310 New Bern Avenue, Room 206, Raleigh, NC 27601

Ms. Marla J. Chambers, Highway Projects Coordinator, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, 12275 Swift Road, Oakboro, NC 28129

Ms. Cynthia Van Der Wiele, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Quality, Wetlands Section, 1621 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1621



### INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW - PROJECT COMMENTS

After review of this project it has been determined that the DENR permit(s) and/or approvals indicated may need to be obtained in order for this project to comply with North Carolina Law. Questions regarding these permits should be addressed to the Regional Office indicated on the reverse of this form. All applications, information and guidelines relative to these plans and permits are available from the same Regional Office.

PERMITS	SPECIAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES or REQUIREMENTS	Normal Process Time (Statutory Time Limit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permit to construct & operate wastewater treatment facilities, sewer system extensions & sewer systems not discharging into state surface waters.	Application 90 days before begin construction or award of construction contracts. On-site inspection. Post-application technical conference usual.	30 days (90 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> NPDES-permit to discharge into surface water and/or permit to operate and construct wastewater facilities discharging into state surface waters.	Application 180 days before begin activity. On-site inspection preapplication conference usual. Additionally, obtain permit to construct wastewater treatment facility-granted after NPDES. Reply time, 30 days after receipt of plans or issue of NPDES permit-whichever is later.	90 - 120 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Use Permit	Preapplication technical conference usually necessary	30 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Well Construction Permit	Complete application must be received and permit issued prior to the installation of a well.	7 days (15 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dredge and Fill Permit	Application copy must be served on each adjacent riparian property owner. On-site inspection. Preapplication conference usual. Filling may require Easement to Fill from N.C. Department of Administration and Federal Dredge and Fill Permit.	55 days (90 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permit to construct & operate Air Pollution Abatement facilities and/or Emission Sources as per 15 A NCAC (2Q.0100, 2Q.0300, 2H.0600)	N/A	60 days
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Any open burning associated with subject proposal must be in compliance with 15 A NCAC 2D.1900	N/A	60 days (90 days)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition or renovations of structures containing asbestos material must be in compliance with 15 A NCAC 2D.1110 (a) (1) which requires notification and removal prior to demolition. Contact Asbestos Control Group 919-733-0820.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Complex Source Permit required under 15 A NCAC 2D.0800		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 must be properly addressed for any land disturbing activity. An erosion & sedimentation control plan will be required if one or more acres to be disturbed. Plan filed with proper Regional Office (Land Quality Section) at least 30 days before beginning activity. A fee of \$40 for the first acre or any part of an acre.		20 days (30 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> The Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 must be addressed with respect to the referenced Local Ordinance.		30 days
<input type="checkbox"/> Mining Permit	On-site inspection usual. Surety bond filed with DENR. Bond amount varies with type mine and number of acres of affected land. Any are mined greater than one acre must be permitted. The appropriate bond must be received before the permit can be issued.	30 days (60 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina Burning permit	On-site inspection by N.C. Division of Forest Resources if permit exceeds 4 days	1 day (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Ground Clearance Burning Permit-22 counties in coastal N.C., with organic soils.	On-site inspection by N.C. Division of Forest Resources required "if more than five acres of ground clearing activities are involved. Inspections should be requested at least ten days before actual burn is planned."	1 day (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Oil Refining Facilities	N/A	90 - 120 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dam Safety Permit	If permit required, application 60 days before begin construction. Applicant must hire N.C. qualified engineer to: prepare plans, inspect construction, certify construction is according to DENR approved plans. May also require permit under mosquito control program, and a 404 permit from Corps of Engineers. An inspection of site is necessary to verify Hazard Classification. A minimum fee of \$200.00 must accompany the application. An additional processing fee based on a percentage or the total project cost will be required upon completion.	30 days (60 days)

PERMITS	SPECIAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES or REQUIREMENTS	Normal Process Time (Statutory Time Limit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permit to drill exploratory oil or gas well	File surety bond of \$5,000 with DENR running to State of N.C. conditional that any well opened by drill operator shall, upon abandonment, be plugged according to DENR rules and regulations.	10 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Exploration Permit	Application filed with DENR at least 10 days prior to issue of permit. Application by letter. No standard application form.	10 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> State Lakes Construction Permit	Application fees based on structure size is charged. Must include descriptions & drawings of structure & proof of ownership of riparian property.	15 - 20 days (N/A)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification	N/A	55 days (130 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> CAMA Permit for MAJOR development	\$250.00 fee must accompany application	60 days (130 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> CAMA Permit for MINOR development	\$50.00 fee must accompany application	22 days (25 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> Several geodetic monuments are located in or near the project area. If any monument needs to be moved or destroyed, please notify: N.C. Geodetic Survey, Box 27687 Raleigh, N.C. 27611		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abandonment of any wells, if required must be in accordance with Title 15A. Subchapter 2C.0100.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notification of the proper regional office is requested if "orphan" underground storage tanks (USTS) are discovered during any excavation operation.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance with 15A NCAC 2H 1000 (Coastal Stormwater Rules) is required.		45 days (N/A)
* Other comment: (attach additional pages as necessary, being certain to cite comment authority)		

### REGIONAL OFFICES

Questions regarding these permits should be addressed to the Regional Office marked below.

**Asheville Regional Office**  
59 Woodfin Place  
Asheville, N.C. 28801  
(828) 251-6208

**Mooresville Regional Office**  
919 North Main Street  
Mooresville, N.C. 28115  
(704) 663-1699

**Wilmington Regional Office**  
127 Cardinal Drive Extension  
Wilmington, N.C. 28405  
(910) 395-3900

**Fayetteville Regional Office**  
225 Green Street, Suite 714  
Fayetteville, N.C. 28301  
(910) 486-1541

**Raleigh Regional Office**  
3800 Barrett Drive, P.O. Box 27687  
Raleigh, N.C. 27611  
(919) 571-4700

**Winston-Salem Regional Office**  
585 Waughtown Street  
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27107  
(336) 771-4600

**Washington Regional Office**  
943 Washington Square Mall  
Washington, N.C. 27889  
(252) 946-6481

## ENDANGERED, THREATENED, AND CANDIDATE SPECIES AND FEDERAL SPECIES OF CONCERN, ALLEGHANY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

This list was adapted from the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program's County Species List. It is a listing, for Alleghany County, of North Carolina's federally listed and proposed endangered, threatened, and candidate species and Federal species of concern (for a complete list of rare species in the state, please contact the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program). The information in this list is compiled from a variety of sources, including field surveys, museums and herbaria, literature, and personal communications. The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program's database is dynamic, with new records being added and old records being revised as new information is received. Please note that this list cannot be considered a definitive record of listed species and Federal species of concern, and it should not be considered a substitute for field surveys.

**Critical habitat:** Critical habitat is noted, with a description, for the counties where it is designated or proposed.

**Aquatic species:** Fishes and aquatic invertebrates are noted for counties where they are known to occur. However, projects may have effects on downstream aquatic systems in adjacent counties.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	STATUS
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### ALLEGHANY COUNTY

#### Vertebrates

Bog turtle	<i>Clemmys muhlenbergii</i>	T(S/A) <sup>1</sup>
Hellbender	<i>Cryptobranchus alleganiensis</i>	FSC
Eastern small-footed myotis	<i>Myotis (=subulatus) leibii</i>	FSC
Kanawha minnow	<i>Phenacobius teretulus</i>	FSC

#### Invertebrates

Grayson crayfish ostracod	<i>Ascetocythere cosmeta</i>	FSC
Pygmy snaketail	<i>Ophiogomphus howei</i>	FSC
Diana fritillary butterfly	<i>Speyeria diana</i>	FSC
Regal fritillary butterfly	<i>Speyeria idalia</i>	FSC

#### Vascular Plants

"Fen" sedge	<i>Carex</i> sp. 2	FSC
Cuthbert's turtlehead	<i>Chelone cuthbertii</i>	FSC
Tall larkspur	<i>Delphinium exaltatum</i>	FSC*
Gray's lily	<i>Lilium grayi</i>	FSC
Sweet pinesap	<i>Monotropsis odorata</i>	FSC*
Carolina saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga caroliniana</i>	FSC

#### Nonvascular Plants

Keever's bristle-moss	<i>Orthotrichum keeverae</i>	FSC
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**KEY:**

Status	Definition
Endangered	A taxon "in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range."
Threatened	A taxon "likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range."
FSC	A Federal species of concern--a species that may or may not be listed in the future (formerly C2 candidate species or species under consideration for listing for which there is insufficient information to support listing).
T(S/A)	Threatened due to similarity of appearance (e.g., American alligator)--a species that is threatened due to similarity of appearance with other rare species and is listed for its protection. These species are not biologically endangered or threatened and are not subject to Section 7 consultation.

Species with 1, 2, 3, or 4 asterisks behind them indicate historic, obscure, or incidental records.

\*Historic record - the species was last observed in the county more than 50 years ago.

\*\*Obscure record - the date and/or location of observation is uncertain.

\*\*\*Incidental/migrant record - the species was observed outside of its normal range or habitat.

\*\*\*\*Historic record - obscure and incidental record.

<sup>1</sup>In the November 4, 1997, *Federal Register* (55822-55825), the northern population of the bog turtle (from New York south to Maryland) was listed as T (threatened), and the southern population (from Virginia south to Georgia) was listed as T(S/A) (threatened due to similarity of appearance). The T(S/A) designation bans the collection and interstate and international commercial trade of bog turtles from the southern population. The T(S/A) designation has no effect on land-management activities by private landowners in North Carolina, part of the southern population of the species. In addition to its official status as T(S/A), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers the southern population of the bog turtle as a Federal species of concern due to habitat loss.

Richard Brewer  
(Bridges)  
BZZ



**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**

Peter B. Sandbeck, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary  
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Office of Archives and History  
Division of Historical Resources  
David Brook, Director

September 2, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gregory Thorpe, Ph.D., Director  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Peter B. Sandbeck *PBS for Peter Sandbeck*

SUBJECT: Scoping, US 21 Western Loop from 1172 (Grandview Drive) to  
US 21, R-4060, Sparta, Alleghany County, GS 94-0030

Thank you for your letter of December 29, 2003, concerning the above project.

We have conducted a search of our maps and files and are aware of no structures of historical or architectural importance located within the planning area. However, since this area has not been surveyed in over twenty years, there may be structures of which we are unaware located within the planning area.

If there are structures more than fifty years old on or adjacent to the project site, please send us photographs of each structure. These photographs should be keyed to a map that clearly shows the site location. If there are no buildings over fifty years old on or adjacent to the project, please notify us in writing.

There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed project area. Based on our knowledge of the area, it is unlikely that any archaeological resources that may be eligible for conclusion in the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by the project. We, therefore, recommend that no archaeological investigation be conducted in connection with this project.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

	Location	Mailing Address	Telephone/Fax
ADMINISTRATION	507 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-4763/733-8653
RESTORATION	515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-6547/715-4801
SURVEY & PLANNING	515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-6545/715-4801

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

PBS:w

cc: Mary Pope Furr  
Matt Wilkerson

**APPENDIX C**  
**RELOCATION REPORT**

# EIS RELOCATION REPORT

North Carolina Department of Transportation  
RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

E.I.S.       CORRIDOR       DESIGN

WBS ELEMENT:	34605.2.1	COUNTY	Alleghany	Alternate	1	of	1	Alternate
T.I.P. No.:	R-4060							
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:	Sparta Bypass from SR-1172 (Grandview Dr.) to US-21 – New Location							

ESTIMATED DISPLACED					INCOME LEVEL				
Type of Displacees	Owners	Tenants	Total	Minorities	0-15M	15-25M	25-35M	35-50M	50 UP
Residential	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Businesses	1	0	1	0	VALUE OF DWELLING			DSS DWELLING AVAILABLE	
Farms	0	0	0	0	Owners	Tenants	For Sale	For Rent	
Non-Profit	0	0	0	0	0-20M	\$ 0-150	0-20M	\$ 0-150	0

ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS		
Yes	No	Explain all "YES" answers.
x		1. Will special relocation services be necessary?
	x	2. Will schools or churches be affected by displacement?
x		3. Will business services still be available after project?
	x	4. Will any business be displaced? If so, indicate size, type, estimated number of employees, minorities, etc.
	x	5. Will relocation cause a housing shortage?
	x	6. Source for available housing (list).
	x	7. Will additional housing programs be needed?
x		8. Should Last Resort Housing be considered?
	x	9. Are there large, disabled, elderly, etc. families?
	x	10. Will public housing be needed for project?
x		11. Is public housing available?
x		12. Is it felt there will be adequate DSS housing available during relocation period?
	x	13. Will there be a problem of housing within financial means?
X		14. Are suitable business sites available (list source).
		15. Number months estimated to complete RELOCATION? <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">18-24 months</span>

20-40M	0	150-250	0	20-40M	0	150-250	0
40-70M	0	250-400	0	40-70M	0	250-400	0
70-100M	1	400-600	0	70-100M	15+	400-600	0
100 UP	0	600 UP	0	100 UP	0	600 UP	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>15+</b>		<b>0</b>

**REMARKS (Respond by Number)**

1. This is a NCDOT owned parcel in which there will be a 3 bay salt storage bin and UST's within the proposed right of way acquisition.

3. Structures and UST's will be relocated for continued use.

6. Available housing list based on local real estate guide and local realtors.

8. As necessary in accordance with state laws.

11. Housing Authority in Alleghany County, Sparta, NC.

12. Adequate DSS housing is available based on local realty market and ongoing projects in close proximity is yielding positive results.

14. Available business sites list based on local realtors.

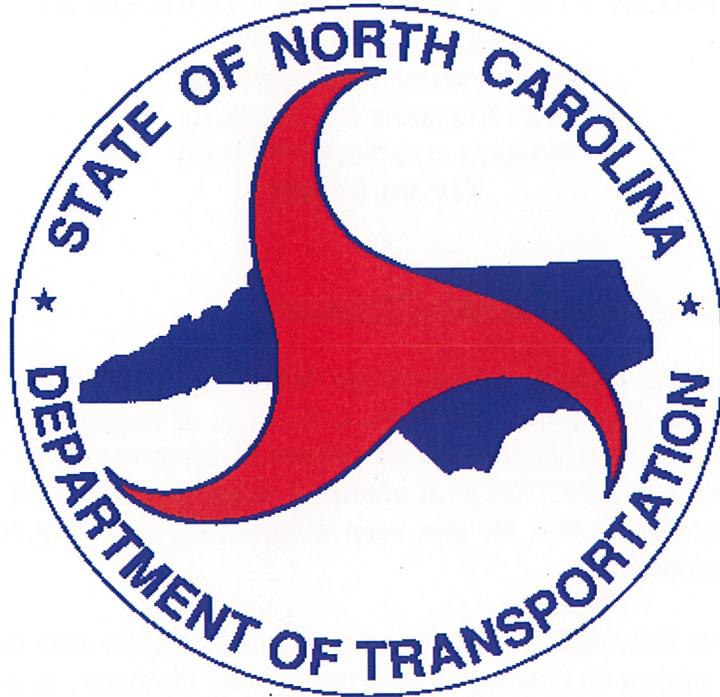
<i>Christopher J. Steele</i>	04/23/2014		4/29/14
Christopher J. Steele Right of Way Agent	Date	Relocation Coordinator	Date

FRM15-E

**APPENDIX D**  
**CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP**

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**North Carolina Department of Transportation**  
**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH**



US 21 (SPARTA WESTERN LOOP)  
FROM 1172 GRANDVIEW DRIVE US 21  
ALLEGHANY COUNTY  
TIP PROJECT R-4060

**JULY 26, 2007**

***CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP***

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# CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

US 21 (SPARTA WESTERN LOOP)  
FROM 1172 GRANDVIEW DRIVE US 21

ALLEGHANY COUNTY  
STATE PROJECT NO. 8.2692601  
WBS ELEMENT NO. 34605.1.1  
FEDERAL AID NO. STP-21(10)  
TIP NO. R-4060

## PURPOSE OF THE CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP

The purpose of the Citizens Informational Workshop is to involve the public in the project planning process. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions about the proposed improvements described in this handout, please inform a representative of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). A comment sheet is provided for you to write down your questions or concerns so that we can keep a record of, and fully consider your ideas, comments, and suggestions.

NCDOT realizes individuals living close to a proposed project want to be informed of the possible effects of the project on their homes and businesses. However, exact information is not available at this stage of the planning process. Additional design work is necessary before alternatives and actual right of way limits can be established. More detailed information will be available at a later date.

Written comments on this project may be left with NCDOT representatives at the Citizens Informational Workshop or submitted through the mail. If additional information is needed or you would like to submit comments after the Workshop, please address your requests and comments to:

**Write:** Dr. Gregory Thorpe, Manager  
Attn: Undrea Major.- Engineer  
Division of Highways  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1548 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

**Call:** Undrea Major, Project Planning Engineer  
(919)-733-7844 Extension 212

**Email:** [ujmajor@dot.state.nc.us](mailto:ujmajor@dot.state.nc.us)

# **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND THE PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS**

## **PROJECT PLANNING**

Planning and environmental studies for this highway project will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The type of document published will be an Environmental Assessment (EA). This document will fully discuss the purpose and need for the proposed improvements, evaluate alternatives, and analyze the project's impacts on both the human and natural environment. Some topics the document will address include:

- Efficiency and safety of travel
- Neighborhoods and communities
- Relocation of homes and businesses
- Economy of project area
- Historic properties and sites
- Wetlands
- Endangered species
- Wildlife and plant communities
- Water quality
- Floodplains
- Farmland and land use plans of project area
- Hazardous materials involvement
- Traffic noise and air quality

Following the completion of the EA, NCDOT will conduct a Public Hearing to review the proposed project design.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's 2007-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) proposes to construct a two lane facility on US 21 from the SR 1172 (Grandview Drive) to US 21, a length of approximately 1.4 miles. See the attached vicinity map.

## **PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of this project is to reduce congestion on US 21 through Sparta and improve the traffic flow by providing a bypass around the southern perimeter of town. Current traffic volumes consist of approximately 3,400 vehicles per day on Grandview Drive and 11,200 vehicles per day on US 21. The projected traffic volumes are 4,400 vehicle per day on Grandview Drive and 17,600 vehicles per day on US 21 by the year 2030.

## **PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<b>EA</b>	January 2009
<b>Public Hearing</b>	Spring 2009
<b>FONSI</b>	October 2009
<b>Right of Way</b>	FY 2011
<b>Construction</b>	Unfunded

\* Denotes Federal Fiscal Year

## **CURRENT STATUS**

Currently, planning and environmental studies are in progress. An Environmental Assessment (EA) is scheduled to be completed in January 2009. The EA will address impacts the proposed roadway widening may have on the human and natural environment.

After completion of the EA, a public hearing will be held at which the alternatives will be presented to the public. At that time, the public will have an opportunity to review a map with the proposed design(s). Factors that may affect the design of this project include engineering criteria and environmental factors such as relocation of homes or businesses, wetlands, historic sites, etc. A form is available from NCDOT representatives if you feel you have, or know of, a structure that has historical significance. The proposed project currently under investigation is described in the next paragraph.

## **ANTICIPATED RIGHT OF WAY IMPACTS**

Please note that the designated study corridor does not represent the proposed right of way needed to build the project. The study corridor represents an area large enough to accommodate the proposed project, while allowing the flexibility of altering the design to minimize impacts to existing development and the environment. Until both environmental studies and preliminary designs are completed, specific right of way impacts to individual properties cannot be determined. As planning for the project continues, we will include all comments and suggestions received at this workshop and afterwards to the extent possible. Anticipated impacts to individual properties will be presented at the public hearing, which is expected to be held in the spring 2009.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND DESIGN STUDIES

In the coming months NCDOT environmental specialists and survey crews will be studying the project area. During this period, these NCDOT personnel may be on citizens' properties in order to complete their studies. The purpose of these studies is to gather background information that will be used in making recommendations on the proposed project. No decisions on the final design of this project have been made.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

NCDOT provides a number of opportunities for citizen and interest group participation during project planning. Some of these opportunities are listed below:

SCOPING LETTER	Published in N.C. Environmental Bulletin. This letter notifies agencies and groups on the State Clearinghouse mailing list that a project study has been initiated and solicits comments from them.
CITIZENS INFORMATIONAL WORKSHOP	Informal meeting with the public. NCDOT staff conduct these workshops to speak one-on-one with citizens about projects. Comment sheets are provided for citizens to write down their questions, comments, and concerns. The number of workshops scheduled for a project depends on the scope and anticipated impact of the project.
DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION	Copies of environmental documents are submitted to the State Clearinghouse for distribution and a notice is published in the N.C. Environmental Bulletin. Upon request, NCDOT will provide copies of the document to the public. Copies are available for public viewing at NCDOT Raleigh and Division offices; the State Clearinghouse office; local government offices, including the local council of government office; and local public libraries.
PUBLIC HEARING	One or more formal public hearings for the public record are held. Format typically involves a short presentation followed by an opportunity for citizens to comment.
CITIZEN LETTER	Citizens are encouraged to write NCDOT and provide information and express concerns regarding proposed improvements. Correspondence from citizens and interest groups is considered during the course of the planning study and is included in the project file.

# Environmental Planning Process For Transportation Projects

**STEP 1** Describe the Transportation Need

Identify Existing and Future Transportation Needs, Define Study Area, Prepare a Purpose and Need Statement.

**WE ARE HERE**

**STEP 2** Identify Alternatives to Solving the Transportation Need

Prepare mapping. Hold a Citizens Informational Workshop to gather input from project stakeholders, Identify Preliminary Alternatives.

**STEP 3** Study the Alternatives that meet Purpose and Need (STEP 1) in detail.

Perform engineering studies and environmental studies.

**STEP 4** Publish the Environmental Assessment (EA) document.

The EA outlines STEPS 1 – 3.

**STEP 5** Hold a Public Hearing

Present alternatives to the public. This is an opportunity for citizens to comment on the proposed transportation improvements.

**STEP 6** Select a Preferred Alternative

Review comments from the public and federal, state, and local agencies on the EA (STEP 4) and transcript from the Public Hearing (STEP 5) select a preferred alternative.

**STEP 7** Prepare and publish the final environmental document, the Finding of No

Significant Impact (FONSI). The FONSI describes the selected alternative and summarizes the responses to comments received during the Public Hearing and the EA review period.

**FINAL STEPS:** Following publication of the FONSI, final engineering design plans are prepared for the selected alternative. The final steps are right of way acquisition and construction of the roadway.

Engineer: Major



**Citizens Informational Workshop  
Comment Sheet (Continued)  
TIP R-4060**

Was the project adequately explained to you? Yes  No

Were NCDOT representatives understandable and clear in their explanations? Yes  No   
Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Were NCDOT representatives courteous and helpful? Yes  No   
Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Were display maps and handouts easy to read and understand? Yes  No   
Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How might we better present proposed projects and address citizen's concerns in future informational workshops? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this meeting today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel that the workshop was adequately advertised? Yes  No   
Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Based on the information provided, were all substantial questions answered? Yes  No   
Please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the most helpful aspect about the workshop today? What was the least helpful aspect about it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate any additional comments or suggestions regarding our public involvement process: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for attending the workshop.  
Your comments are very important in the planning process.