



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

DANIEL H. JOHNSON
SECRETARY

10/13/2025

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Field Office
151 Patton Avenue, Room 208
Asheville, NC 28805

NC Division of Water Resources
Transportation Permitting Branch
2090 U.S. 70 Highway
Swannanoa, NC 28778-8211

ATTN: Ms. Lori Beckwith,
NCDOT Coordinator

Ms. Amy Annino,
NCDOT Coordinator

Subject: **Request for Extension of Section 404 Individual Permit and Section 401 Individual Water Quality Certification** for the proposed US 321 Widening from north of US 70 interchange to Southwest Blvd. (SR 1933) interchange in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties, Division 12, 13, and 11, WBS 35993.1.7, TIP No. U-4700.

Dear Madams:

The purpose of this letter is to request an extension of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Section 404 Individual Permit and North Carolina Division of Water Resources Section 401 Certification for the above referenced project. The original 2018 permit application presented final impacts for the CA, CB, and CC sections of this project, and preliminary impacts for sections A, B, and C. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) hereby requests an extension/renewal of the current December 31, 2025 permit expiration date.

Previous Authorization Information

USACE Action ID	SAW-2006-20748	NCDWR Project No.	20190061
		Individual Certification No.	004182
Date Issued	July 29, 2020	Date Issued	April 3, 2019

The previous permit application and authorization can be found here:
[U-4700 Catawba Burke Caldwell US 321](#)

Lead Federal Agency:

☒ FHWA ☐ USACE

Mailing Address:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT
1598 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH NC 27699-1598

Telephone: (919) 707-6000
Customer Service: 1-877-368-4968
Website: www.ncdot.gov

Location:
1000 BIRCH RIDGE DRIVE
RALEIGH NC 27610

Current Project phasing schedule for US 321 Widening (U-4700)

Section	Approximate Section Limits	Approximate Length	Construction Letting
U-4700CA	SR 1160 (Mount Herman Road) Intersection Upgrade	N/A	Jul 2026
U-4700CB	SR 1809/1952 (Pine Mountain Road) Intersection Upgrade	N/A	Jul 2026
U-4700CC	SR 1108 (Mission Road) Intersection Upgrade	N/A	Oct 2025
U-4700A	US 70 to US 321A	3.5 miles	Aug 2027
U-4700B	US 321A to SR 1108 (Mission Road)	7.2 miles	Jan 2040
U-4700C	SR 1108 (Mission Road) to SR 1933 (Southwest Blvd.)	3.3 miles	Jan 2040
TOTAL:		14 miles	

Supporting Documentation of Previous Permitting Decision

Topic	Notes / Changes
Permit Drawings	No Change
Impact Summary	No Change
Mitigation	No Change
Endangered Species Act	See table below
Archaeology	No Change (2019 Addendum findings identified no additional sites. Included in tribal coordination)
Historic Architecture and Landscapes	No Change (2019 Addendum findings identified no additional significant resources – attached)
Tribal Coordination	Letters sent September 12, 2025 (attached)

Endangered Species Act

Protected Species listed from IPaC¹ as of the date of this request:

Common Name	Habitat Present	Survey Dates	Proposed Biological Conclusion	FWS Concurrence Remarks
Bog turtle	No	n/a	Not Required	n/a
Gray Bat	Yes	TBD 2025	MA-LAA ²	PBO Eligible
Tricolored bat	Yes	TBD 2025	MA-LAA ²	PBO Eligible
Virginia big-eared bat	Yes	TBD 2025	MA-LAA ²	PBO Eligible
Small whorled pogonia	Yes ³	7/12/13, 6/26/18 5/14/25	No Effect	n/a
Monarch butterfly P ⁴	n/a	n/a	Not Required	n/a

1 IPaC – Information for Planning and Consultation (US Fish and Wildlife Service)

2 MA-LAA = May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect, USFWS PBO Review completed July 7, 2025 (attached)

3 Only in range within the small Burke County section

4 P = Proposed: Monarch butterfly was proposed for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). However, no regulatory protections will take effect until the listing is finalized. Until that time, proposed species do not receive formal ESA protections.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Erin Cheely at ekcheely@ncdot.gov or (919)707-6108.

Sincerely,



Erin K. Cheely

ECAP Western Team Lead

Project Submittal Interim Form

Updated December 4, 2023



*Please note: fields marked with a red asterisk * below are required. You will not be able to submit the form until all mandatory questions are answered.*

Project Type: *

- ☐ For the Record Only (Courtesy Copy)
- ☐ New Project
- ☐ Modification/New Project with Existing ID
- ☐ More Information Response
- ☐ Other Agency Comments
- ☐ Pre-Application Submittal
- ☒ Re-Issuance/Renewal Request
- ☐ Stream or Buffer Appeal

Project Contact Information

Name: Erin Cheely
Who is submitting the information?

Email Address: * ekcheely@ncdot.gov

Project Information

Existing ID #: *

20190061
20170001 (no dashes)

Existing Version: *

1
1

Project Name: * U-4700 - US 321 Widening

Is this a public transportation project? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Is this a DOT project? *

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Is the project located within a NC DCM Area of Environmental Concern (AEC)? *

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Unknown

Does this project involve maintenance dredging funded by the Shallow Draft Navigation Channel Dredging and Aquatic Weed Fund, electric generation projects located at an existing or former electric generating facility, or involve the distribution or transmission of energy or fuel, including natural gas, diesel, petroleum, or electricity? *

☐ Yes ☒ No

Is this project connected with ARPA funding? *

☐ Yes ☒ No

TIP#:

U-4700

WBS#:

35993.1.7

(Applies to DOT projects only)

County (ies) *

Catawba

Burke

Caldwell

Please upload all files that need to be submitted.

[Click the upload button or drag and drop files here to attach document](#)

U-4700 2025-10-13 Renewal Request.pdf

7.61MB

[Only pdf or kmz files are accepted.](#)

Describe the attachments or add comments:

The current phased Individual 404/401 permits for this project expire 12/31/25. This request is for an extension/renewal. No changes to the project have been made since the original permit and Section 7 and Tribal Coordination have been brought up to date.

* ☒ By checking the box and signing box below, I certify that:

- I, the project proponent, hereby certifies that all information contained herein is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.
- I, the project proponent, hereby requests that the certifying authority review and take action on this CWA 401 certification request within the applicable reasonable period of time.
- I agree that submission of this online form is a "transaction" subject to Chapter 66, Article 40 of the NC General Statutes (the "Uniform Electronic Transactions Act");
- I agree to conduct this transaction by electronic means pursuant to Chapter 66, Article 40 of the NC General Statutes (the "Uniform Electronic Transactions Act");
- I understand that an electronic signature has the same legal effect and can be enforced in the same way as a written signature; AND
- I intend to electronically sign and submit the online form.

Signature: *



Submittal Date:



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

J.R. "JOEY" HOPKINS
SECRETARY

September 12, 2025

Dr. Wenonah Haire
Catawba Indian Nation
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
1536 Tom Steven Road
Rock Hill SC 29730

Dear Dr. Haire,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is continuing the project development, environmental, and engineering studies for the US 321 Widening from north of US 70 interchange to Southwest Blvd. (SR 1933) interchange in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties as project U-4700. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead federal agency for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and a Permit is anticipated under the Section 404 Process with the USACE. The project vicinity map is attached as well as the info regarding the archaeological screenings/surveys that were conducted. The coordinates of this project are approximately 35.722245, -81.356542 to 35.871540, -81.500337 from south to north.

We would appreciate any information you might have that would be helpful in evaluating potential environmental impacts of the project including recommendation of alternates to be studied. Your comments may be used in the environmental review.

In accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, we also request that you inform us of any historic properties of traditional religious or cultural importance that you are aware of that may be affected by the proposed project. Be assured that, in accordance with confidentiality and disclosure stipulations in Section 304 of the NHPA, we will maintain strict confidentiality about certain types of information regarding historic properties.

Please respond by October 15th so that your comments can be used in the environmental review of this project. If you have any questions concerning this project, or would like any additional information, please contact me at ekcheely@ncdot.gov or (919) 707-6108.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Erin K. Cheely".

Erin K. Cheely
Environmental Coordination and Permitting

cc: Matt Wilkerson, NCDOT Archaeology Group Leader



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

J.R. "JOEY" HOPKINS
SECRETARY

September 12, 2025

Ms. Elizabeth Toombs
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
PO BOX 948
Tahlequah OK 74465

Dear Ms. Toombs,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is continuing the project development, environmental, and engineering studies for the US 321 Widening from north of US 70 interchange to Southwest Blvd. (SR 1933) interchange in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties as project U-4700. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead federal agency for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and a Permit is anticipated under the Section 404 Process with the USACE. The project vicinity map is attached as well as the info regarding the archaeological screenings/surveys that were conducted. The coordinates of this project are approximately 35.722245, -81.356542 to 35.871540, -81.500337 from south to north.

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Erin K. Cheely
Environmental Coordination and Permitting

cc: Matt Wilkerson, NCDOT Archaeology Group Leader



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

J.R. "JOEY" HOPKINS
SECRETARY

September 12, 2025

Mr. Russell Townsend
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
2077 Governors Island Road
Bryson City NC 28713

Dear Mr. Townsend,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is continuing the project development, environmental, and engineering studies for the US 321 Widening from north of US 70 interchange to Southwest Blvd. (SR 1933) interchange in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties as project U-4700. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead federal agency for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and a Permit is anticipated under the Section 404 Process with the USACE. The project vicinity map is attached as well as the info regarding the archaeological screenings/surveys that were conducted. The coordinates of this project are approximately 35.722245, -81.356542 to 35.871540, -81.500337 from south to north.

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Thank you,

Erin K. Cheely
Environmental Coordination and Permitting

cc: Matt Wilkerson, NCDOT Archaeology Group Leader



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

J.R. "JOEY" HOPKINS
SECRETARY

September 12, 2025

Mr. Roger Cain
Section 106 Coordinator
PO BOX 746
Tahlequah OK 74465

Dear Mr. Cain,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is continuing the project development, environmental, and engineering studies for the US 321 Widening from north of US 70 interchange to Southwest Blvd. (SR 1933) interchange in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties as project U-4700. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead federal agency for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and a Permit is anticipated under the Section 404 Process with the USACE. The project vicinity map is attached as well as the info regarding the archaeological screenings/surveys that were conducted. The coordinates of this project are approximately 35.722245, -81.356542 to 35.871540, -81.500337 from south to north.

We would appreciate any information you might have that would be helpful in evaluating potential environmental impacts of the project including recommendation of alternates to be studied. Your comments may be used in the environmental review.

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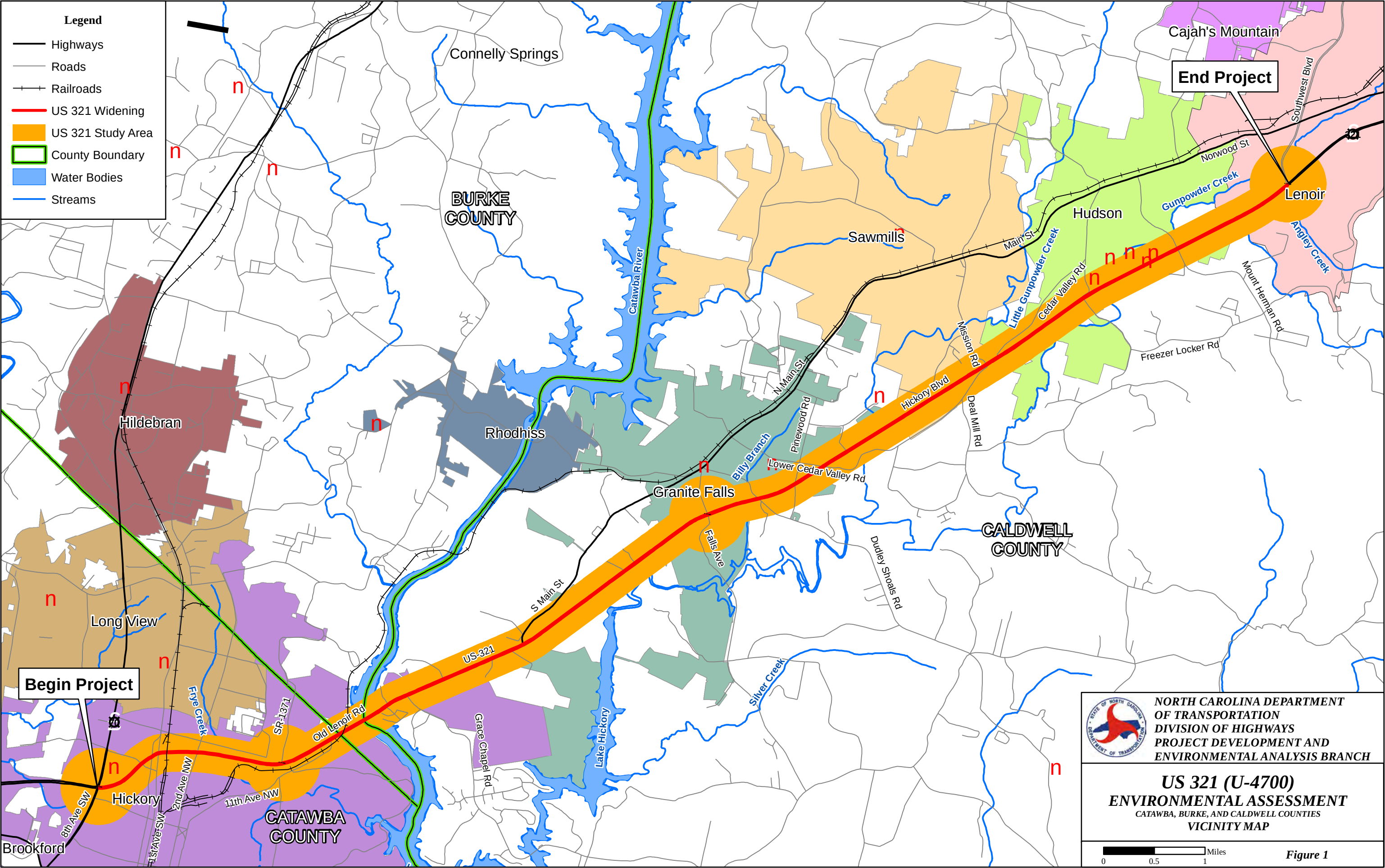
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Thank you,

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Erin K. Cheely
Environmental Coordination and Permitting

cc: Matt Wilkerson, NCDOT Archaeology Group Leader





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

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

December 22, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Matt Wilkerson
Office of Human Environment
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Ramona M. Bartos *RMB for Ramona M. Bartos*

SUBJECT: Intensive Archaeological Survey and Evaluation for US 321 Improvements
from US 70 in Hickory to US64/NC18 in Lenoir, U-4700,
Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties, ER 06-0885

Thank you for your letter of November 24, 2015, transmitting the archaeological survey report by Bruce Idol and Matt Pare, TRC Environmental Corporation (TRC). The report meets our guidelines and those of the Secretary of the Interior.

During the course of the survey, seven sites and eight isolated finds were located within the project area. For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that archaeological sites 31CT259, 31CW464-31CW471, 31CW473-31CW475, and 31CW477 are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These sites do not retain sufficient subsurface integrity or artifact density to yield information important to history or prehistory. The portions of 31CW472 and 31CW476 within the APE also lack significant cultural deposits; however, the portions of these sites outside the project area have not been evaluated. Additional survey and evaluation at these locations will be necessary if project modifications expand the APE in these locations.

TRC has recommended that no further archaeological investigation be conducted in connection with this project. We concur with this recommendation since the project will not involve significant archaeological resources.

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.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-807-6579 or environmental.review@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

17-07-0039
Addendum

**NO NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
ELIGIBLE OR LISTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
PRESENT FORM**



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

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No: **U-4700** County: **Caldwell and Catawba**
 WBS No: 35993.1.2 Document: **EA**
 F.A. No: **NHF-321(18)** Funding: ☐ State ☒ Federal

Federal Permit Required? ☒ Yes ☐ No Permit Type: **NWP# 3 or 14**

Project Description:

The project calls for the improvement of US 321 (TIP U-4700) in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties. The archaeological Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project during the initial survey was defined as a 17.2-mile (26.78 km) long corridor running along US 321 from US 70 in Hickory to US 64/NC 18 in Lenoir. The corridor varied in width from 200 feet (60.96 m) to 500 feet (152.4 m) with a typical width of 200 to 250 feet (60.96 to 76.2 m), extending 100 to 125 feet (30.48 to 38.10 m) on either side of the proposed US 321 centerline. The APE also included new alignments and/or road improvements on adjacent roads in Catawba and Caldwell County that varied in size. In all, the APE covered approximately 721 acres.

The addendum APE for U-4700 includes the following road and intersection improvements along US 321 that were recently added to the project:

- The first section is along 2nd Street in Hickory with improvements to its intersection with US 321 and access to 1st Street. The APE in this section runs for approximately 4,300 feet (1,310.64 m) mostly east to west along 2nd and 1st Streets and is roughly 150 to 160 feet (45.72 to 48.77 m) wide.
- The second section is improvements along 12th Street in Hickory to the east of US 321. The APE in this section runs for approximately 1,200 feet (365.76 m) north to south and is roughly 130 feet (39.62 m) wide.
- The third section is improvements along Corbin Street north of the Catawba River and west of US 321. The APE in this section runs for approximately 540 feet (164.59 m) from the northwest to southeast and is roughly 70 to 220 feet (21.34 to 67.06 m) wide.
- The fourth section is a new road location joining US 321 and SR 1782 (Midway Sand Road). The APE in this section runs for approximately 1,300 feet (396.24 m) from the northwest to southeast and is roughly 150 to 200 feet (45.72 to 60.96 m) wide.
- The fifth section is a new interchange for US 321 and Alex Lee Road. The APE in this section is broken into two parts. The first is on the westside of US 321. It runs for approximately 1,000 feet (304.80 m) parallel with US 321 and extends approximately 510 feet (155.45 m) southwest from original APE. The second half is to the east. It runs from 950 feet (289.56 m) along Alex Lee Road and 1,000 feet (304.80 m) along new location for a ramp. It is 150 to 850 feet (45.72 to 259.08 m) wide.

- The sixth section is a new interchange for US 321 and SR 1002 (Dudley Shoals Road) on new location. This new location is on the westside of US 321 and runs for 1,100 feet (335.28 m) north to south. It also extends 300 feet (91.44 m) east and 500 feet (152.40 m) west along Dudley Shoals Road from the newly proposed intersection. The APE is approximately 300 feet (91.44 m) wide along the new road and 200 feet (60.96 m) wide along Dudley Shoals Road.

In all, the addendum APE encompasses 59 additional acres.

SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

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

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

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

NC DOT sponsored an archaeological survey and evaluation for the original U-4700 project area in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina in July 2015. This work was conducted by TRC Environmental Corporation (Idol and Parè 2015). The subsequent addendum for additional work outside of the original APE was submitted for review in August 2017. This included six separate APE sections plotted on the Hickory and Granite Falls USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangle in Catawba and Caldwell Counties (Figure 1).

Background Research

A map review and site files search for the expanded APE was conducted at the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) on August 23, 2017. No previously recorded archaeological sites were identified.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office online data base (HPOWEB 2017) was also reviewed for the expanded APE with no historic architectural resources identified that could yield intact archaeological deposits.

A map review and history of the project area can be found in the previous archaeological survey report (Idol and Parè 2015).

Soil data from the USDA soil survey shows that ten soil types are within the expanded APE (USDA Web Soil Survey 2017). In Catawba County, these soils include Clifford sandy loam (CfB; CfC), Fairview gravelly fine sandy loam (FcC), Fairview soils (FdE2), and Udorthents soils (Ud), while Codorus loam (CaA), Danripple sandy clay loam (DaB2), Fairview sandy clay loam (FaB2; FaC2; FaD2), Fairview-Urban land complex (FeB; FeC), Rhodhiss sandy loam (RhE), and Udorthents-Urban lands (UeC) are in Caldwell County. The soil surveys for each county appear to have been conducted prior to modern urban development as many disturbed areas are not reported. Soils that have experienced modern development often are shown as Ud or UeC soils. Also, soil erosion is more severe due to farming practices and exposed surfaces from construction activities. Nearly all the soils are well drained except for the Codorus series, which is somewhat poorly drained. Slope is also moderated and under 15 percent over most of the project area. The exception is found on the FdE2 and FaD2 variant of the Fairview series and the Rhodhiss series, which exceeds 15 percent. Overall, it is not expected that significant archaeological resources would be found on wet soils, landforms with a slope of 15 percent or more, or soils that display obvious ground disturbance either from erosion or urban development. As a result, subsurface testing was not carried out on these soils.

Fieldwork Results

The archaeological field survey was carried out on August 30 and 31, 2017. A total of six separate sections extending from the original APE were surveyed and/or evaluated.

Section 1 is situated east to west mostly along 2nd Street in Hickory (Figures 2 and 3). This section is for a new interchange with US 321 and to provide improved access to 1st Street. The APE is entirely within urban development with Geitner Branch located at the eastern end. Geitner Branch has been previously modified to collect and drain storm water quickly. The stream banks are severely eroded and drop steeply into the deep channel (Figure 4). Properties adjacent to 2nd Street consist of disturbance from buried utilities, grading, and soil erosion. Other portions of the APE are covered over with impervious material such as pavement, concrete, or existing structures. Subsurface test from the previous survey confirmed the presence of disturbed soils (Idol and Parè 2015). Although this investigation identified one nearby archaeological site (31CT259), it was determined ineligible for the National Register due to a lack of

integrity cause by ground disturbance. Any new sites in this section would display the same qualities. It was determined that no subsurface testing was needed for this section since it was very unlikely for significant and intact archaeological resources to be present.

Section 2 is located about 4,500 feet to the north and is found east of US 321 along 12th Street (Figure 5). This road is to be improved with reduced access to US 321. As with Section 1, this area is highly disturbed from urban development. Impervious surface covered most of the APE. No subsurface testing is required.

Section 3 is found on the north shore of the Catawba River along Corbin Road to the west of US 321 (Figure 6). This road is to be improved and extended, joining with Limbaugh Road to the east of US 321. The landform contains a layer of thick fill along the proposed extension (Figures 7 and 8), while the shoreline is eroded to subsoil. A surface inspection along the shoreline failed to identify any significant cultural material. Due to disturbance, no subsurface testing was needed.

Section 4 is 2,300 feet to the northwest on the westside of US 321 (Figure 9). This is a proposed new road location that would join US 321 with Midway Sand Road. The landforms consist of two drainages and a ridge. Both drainages have been modified. Three shovel test placements (STPs) were excavated along the northern drainage at 30-m intervals. This area was open and used as a vegetable garden (Figure 10). Soils were moderately disturbed in this area with a 15 cm thick upper layer of brown (7.5YR 5/4) clay loam followed by subsoil of yellowish red (5YR 4/6) clay. All three were negative for cultural material. The stream channel had been moved slightly to the west along the slope and joins with a manmade drainage ditch that parallels Sage Meadow Road. The ridge in the south has been used as a borrow pit (Figure 11). No intact upper soil layers are present. Therefore, no STPs were excavated on this landform. The southern drainage drops steeply from the ridge. A house is situated in the center of the drainage. The landform has been graded to accommodate the structure.

Section 5 is only approximately 300 feet to the northwest and covers both sides of US 321 (Figure 12). This section is for a new interchange with Alex Lee Road. The westside of US 321 consists of a ridge top with steeply sloping sides. The northern half is forested (Figure 13), while the southern half is open with a scatter of pine trees (Figure 14). A total of 12 STPs were excavated on the ridge. Those in the forest displayed two soil layers. The upper is 25 cm thick light yellowish brown (10YR 6/4) loam. Below this is a strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) clay subsoil. Those STPs in the open area to the south are missing the upper layer with only subsoil at the surface. All STPs were negative. The APE to the east of US 321 contains a high ridge and a deep drainage. The ridge has been graded and landscape for the nearby structures and access roads. It appears that a portion of the ridge consists of fill having once been part of the adjacent drainage. A deeply buried culvert was found leading from the ridge to the drainage (Figure 15). Soils from the ridge have also been pushed into the drainage making the side slopes very steep (Figure 16). Ground disturbance is very high in this area making it unlikely for intact deposits.

Lastly, Section 6 is situated just over 3 miles to the northwest from the previous section (Figure 17). This section is for a new road to join US 321 and Dudley Shoals Road. The APE covers a ridge top and its side slopes. Four STPs were excavated along the crest of the ridge, while no STPs were dug along the side slopes. Slope was in excess of 15 percent. The section was almost entirely under cultivation with soybeans at the time of the investigation reducing surface visibility almost to zero percent (Figure 18). The stratigraphy is made up of two layers. The surface layer is a brown (7.5YR 4/4) clay loam that is roughly 10 cm thick. The second is a yellowish red (5YR 4/6) clay subsoil. No cultural material was identified.

Summary and Recommendations

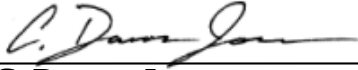
The completed archeological survey for the proposed APE expansion to U-4700 in Catawba and Caldwell Counties identified no archaeological resources. Most of the expanded APE is disturbed from soil erosion or development making it unlikely for significant and intact archaeological deposits to be present. No

17-07-0039 Addendum

further archaeological work is recommended for U-4700. However, if design plans change to impact areas outside of the APE, then further archaeological work will be required.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

See attached: ☒ Map(s) ☐ Previous Survey Info ☒ Photos ☐ Correspondence
Signed:



C. Damon Jones
NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

9/12/17

Date

REFERENCES CITED**HPOWEB**

2017 North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office GIS Web Service.
<http://gisNCDCR.gov/hpoweb/>. Accessed June 16, 2017.

Idol, Bruce and Matt Parè

2015 *Intensive Archaeological Survey and Evaluation for US 321 Improvements from US 70 in Hickory to US 64/NC 18 in Lenoir, TIP U-4700, Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina*. TRC Environmental Corporation, Chapel Hill. Submitted to NCDOT, Raleigh.

USDA Web Soil Survey

2017 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Web Soil Survey.
<https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>. Accessed August 24, 2017.

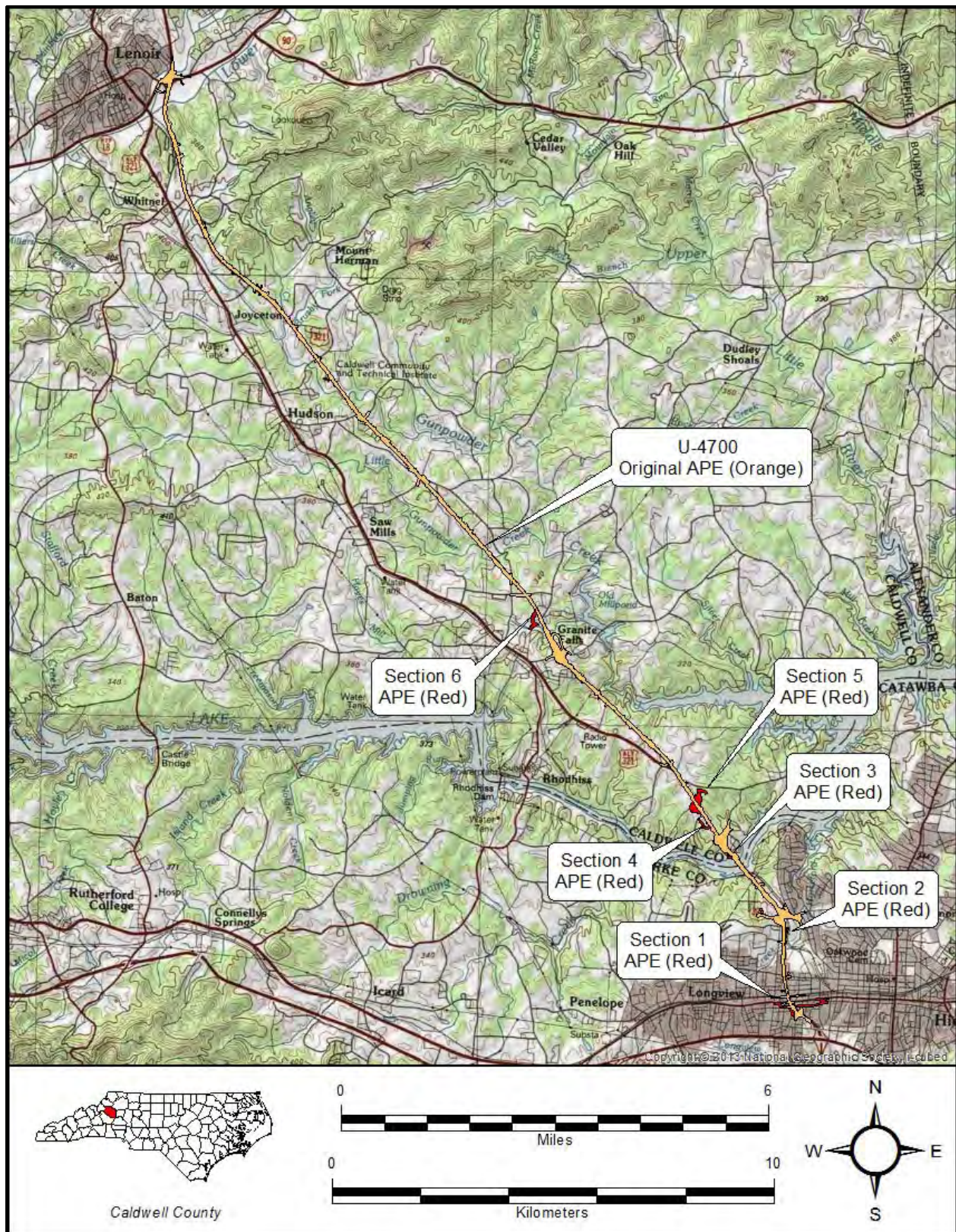


Figure 1. Topographic Setting of the Project Area, 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed. Original



Figure 2. Aerial View of Section 1 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.



Figure 3. General View of the APE along 2nd Street, looking east.



Figure 4. General View of Geitner Branch showing the showing the eroded stream bank.

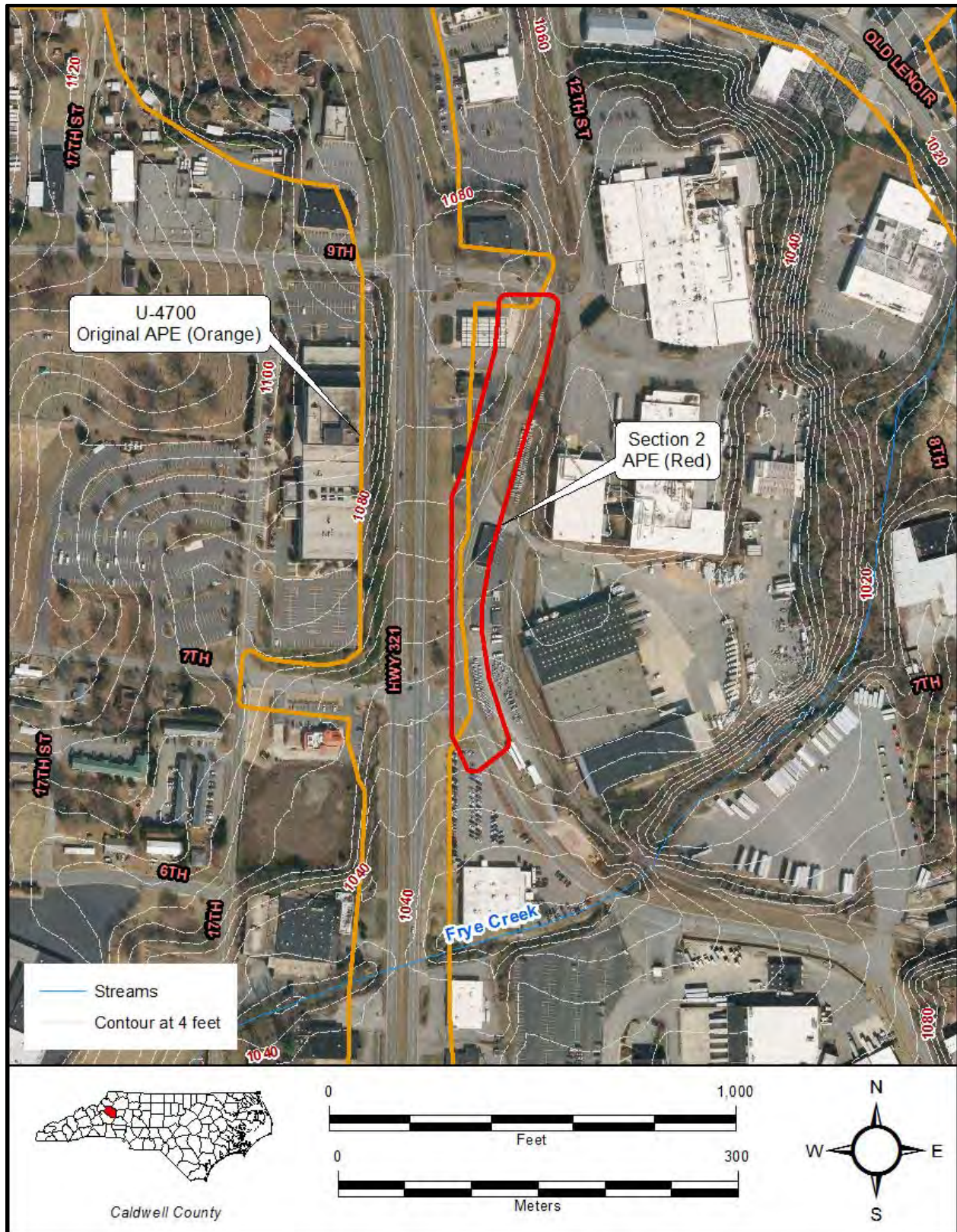


Figure 5. Aerial View of Section 2 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.



Figure 6. Aerial View of Section 3 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.



Figure 7. General View of the northern shoreline showing the fill layer, looking north.



Figure 8. General View of the fill layer, looking east.

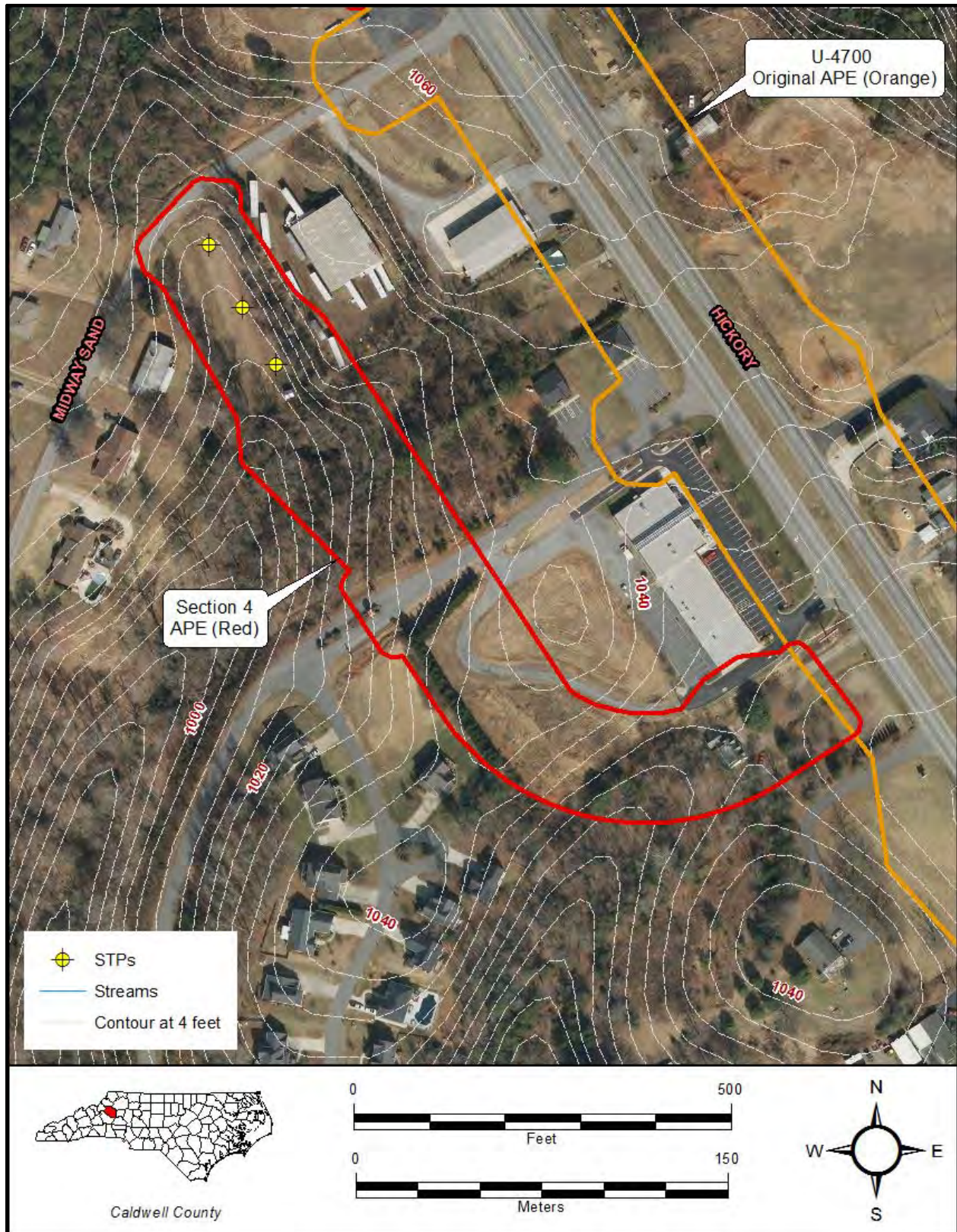


Figure 9. Aerial View of Section 4 showing development, contours, and STPs within the expanded APE.



Figure 10. General view of the garden and northern drainage in Section 4, looking south.



Figure 11. General View of the ridge top in Section 4 borrow pit, looking south.

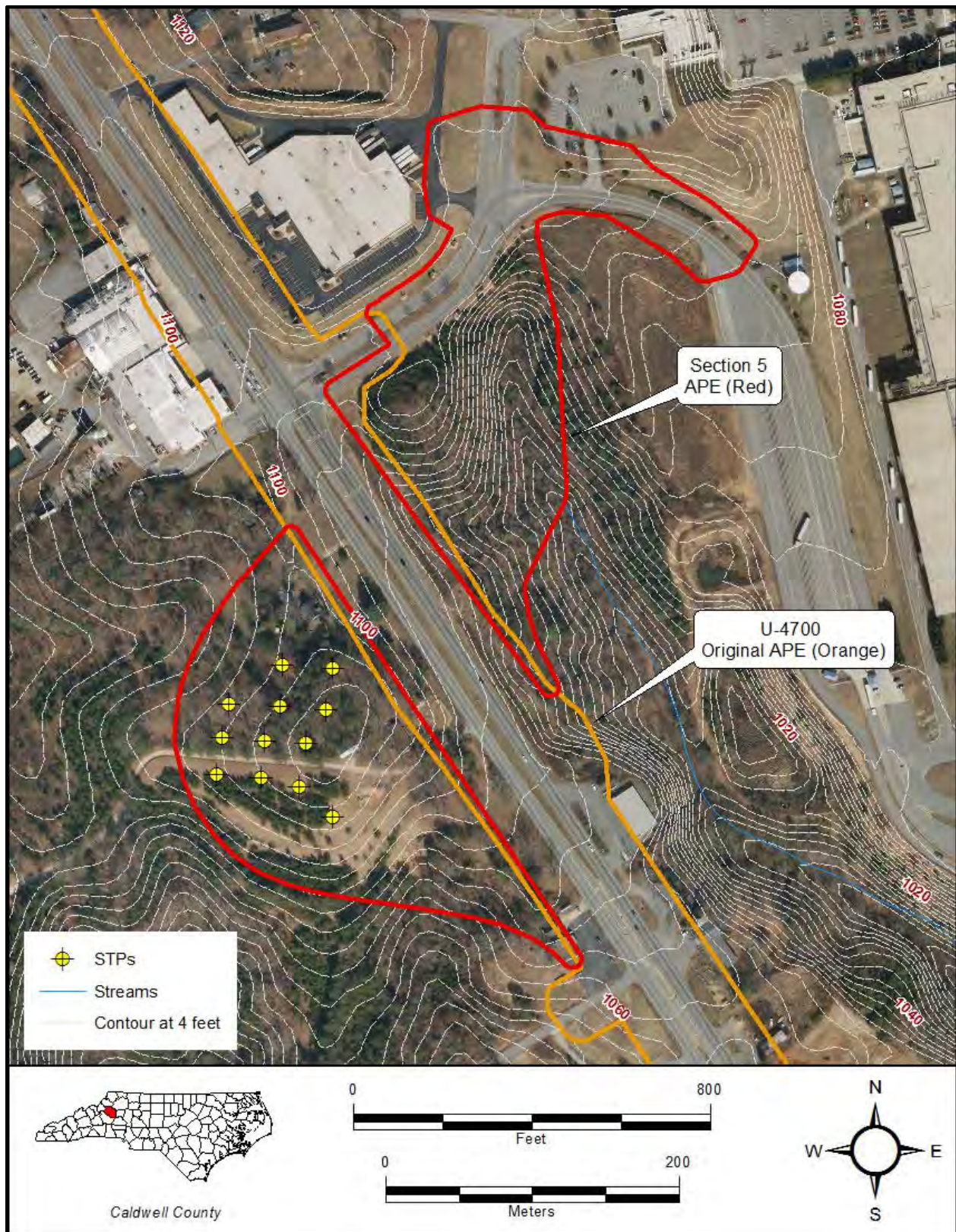


Figure 12. Aerial View of Section 5 showing development, contours, and STPs within the expanded APE.



Figure 13. General View of the forested portion of the ridge top in Section 5 on the westside of US 321, looking east.



Figure 14. General View of the open portion of the ridgetop in Section 5 on the westside of US 321, looking south.



Figure 15. View of the culvert going into the ridge, looking north.



Figure 16. General View of the slope in Section 5 leading to the drainage on the eastside of US 321, looking southwest.



Figure 17. Aerial View of Section 6 showing development, contours, and STPs within the expanded APE.



Figure 18. General View of the soybean field in Section 6, looking south.



**NO NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
ELIGIBLE OR LISTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
PRESENT FORM**



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

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No:	U-4700	County:	Burke, Caldwell, Catawba
WBS No:	35993.1.1	Document:	EA
F.A. No:	NHF-321(18)	Funding:	☐ State ☒ Federal
Federal Permit Required?	☒ Yes ☐ No	Permit Type:	FHWA and USACE

Project Description:

The project calls for the improvement of US 321 (TIP U-4700) in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties. The archaeological Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project during the initial survey was defined as a 17.2-mile (26.78 km) long corridor running along US 321 from US 70 in Hickory to US 64/NC 18 in Lenoir. The corridor varied in width from 200 feet (60.96 m) to 500 feet (152.4 m) with a typical width of 200 to 250 feet (60.96 to 76.2 m), extending 100 to 125 feet (30.48 to 38.10 m) on either side of the proposed US 321 centerline. The APE also included new alignments and/or road improvements on adjacent roads in Catawba and Caldwell County that varied in size. In all, the APE covered approximately 721 acres. An archaeological survey report was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on November 24, 2015. No identified archaeological sites were recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). SHPO concurred with the results of the report in a letter dated December 22, 2015.

The addendum for U-4700 was submitted on September 12, 2017 under the Programmatic Agreement (PA# 17-07-0039 Addendum). This addendum covered an expanded APE that consisted of an additional 59 acres at six locations along US 321.

The current second addendum covers further expansion of the APE. This includes the following road and intersection improvements along US 321 that were added to the project:

- The first section consists of 30 separate parcels of various sizes south of the Catawba River in the town of Hickory, Catawba County. These parcels run along US 321, the railroad, and several side streets (Figure 2a–e).
- The second section consists of 17 separate parcels of various sizes north of the Catawba River in Caldwell County. These are for improvements along US 321, Grace Chapel Road, the Alex Lee Road intersection, and side streets (Figure 2f–j).
- The third section consists of 5 separate parcels of various sizes north of Gunpowder Creek in Caldwell County. These parcels are situated along US 321 (Figure 2k–l).

In all, the second addendum APE encompasses 48 additional acres.

SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS

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

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

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW

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

NCDOT sponsored an archaeological survey and evaluation for the original U-4700 project area in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina in July 2015. This work was conducted by TRC Environmental Corporation (Idol and Parè 2015). They identified 15 archaeological resources (31CT259 and 31CW464–31CW477), of which none within the APE were determined eligible for the NRHP. A subsequent addendum for additional work outside of the original APE was submitted for review in August 2017 with a “No National Register of Historic Places Eligible or Listed Archaeological Sites Present” PA form submitted on September 12, 2017. No archaeological resources were identified during this investigation. The second addendum was submitted in June 2019 for review of additional properties that fall outside of the two previous investigations. These included 52 separate APE parcels plotted on the Hickory and Granite Falls USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangle in Catawba and Caldwell Counties (Figure 1a–c).

Background Research

A map review and site files search for the second addendum APE was conducted at the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) on July 8, 2019. No previously recorded archaeological sites were identified.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office online data base (HPOWEB 2019) was also reviewed for the new parcels with no significant historic architectural resources identified that could yield intact archaeological deposits.

A map review and history of the project area can be found in the previous archaeological survey report (Idol and Parè 2015).

Soil data from the USDA soil survey shows that 11 soil types are within the APE's second addendum (USDA NRCS 2019). These soils include Clifford sandy loam (CfB; CfC), Fairview gravelly fine sandy loam (FcB; FcC), Fairview soils (FdE2), and Udorthents soils (Ud) in Catwba County and Fairview sandy clay loam (FaB2; FaC2; FaD2), Fairview-Urban land complex (FeB; FeC2 FeD2), Hibriten-Woolwine land complex (HwF), Rhodhiss sandy loam (RhE), Udorthents-Urban lands (UeC), Urban lands (UrC), and Woolwine-Fairview-Urban land complex (WuC) in Caldwell County. The soil surveys for each county appear to have been conducted prior to modern urban development as many disturbed areas are not reported. Soils that have experienced modern development are typically shown as Ud, UeC, or UrC soils. Also, soil erosion is more severe than reported due to farming practices and exposed surfaces from

construction activities. All the soils are well drained. Slope is moderated and under 15 percent over most of the project area. Nearly a third of the APE has a slope of 15 percent or more. The steep soils are found on the FaE, FdE2, FeD2, HwF, and RhE soil types. In general, it is not expected that significant archaeological resources would be found on landforms with a slope of 15 percent or more or properties that display obvious ground disturbance either from erosion or urban development. As a result, subsurface testing was not carried out on these soils.

Fieldwork Results

The current archaeological field investigations for the second addendum were carried out on July 15, 2019. All 52 separate parcels extending from the original APE and/or the first addendum APE were surveyed and/or evaluated.

The first section includes 30 separate parcels in the town of Hickory and south of the Catawba River (Figure 2a–e). Previous surveys such as the 2015 investigations (Idol and Parè 2015) suggest severe urban disturbance in these parcels. Many of the properties are covered with impervious material such as pavement or existing structures. Areas not covered have been subjected to earth moving activities that have altered the natural characteristics of the soils. Significant archaeological resources are not likely to be present, and no subsurface testing is required in these areas. A visual inspection identified no archaeological resources on the surface.

The second section is north of the Catawba River in Caldwell County and consists of 17 separate parcels (Figure 2f–j). These parcels are a mix of developed commercial and residential properties and forested lots. No subsurface testing was carried out in areas of obvious disturbance (e.g. earth moving activities, existing structures, pavement, and soil erosion), along landforms with steep slope of 15 percent or more, or on wet soils. Wet soils were identified at only two locations, along an unnamed stream crossing under Grace Chapel Road and in a large depression west of the US 321 and Alex Lee Road intersection. Also, shovel tests (STs) were not excavated on parcels that extended less than 15 m from the two previous APEs, since past investigations did not reveal any known sites near these locations. The results from past investigations strongly suggest that it is unlikely for new significant resources to be present particularly in areas that only cover a minimal extent outside of the previously surveyed APEs.

Five STs were placed on a ridge north of the US 321 and Grace Chapel intersection (see Figure 2f). The parcel is forested with the only evidence of disturbance from a road trace, possibly associated with timber harvesting (Figure 3). Shovel tests were excavated at 30-m intervals to cover the level ridge crest. Three soil layers were observed in the profile. The surface layer is a very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2) sandy loam that is approximately 10 to 15 cm thick. This is followed by a yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) sandy loam that reaches a depth of around 25 cm below the surface. Finally, subsoil appears to be a compacted brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) sandy clay that extends at least 40 cm below the surface. Attempt to reach a greater depth failed due to soil compaction. All five STs were negative for cultural materials. Another nine STs were excavated on a ridge and its gradual slope west of the US 321 and Alex Lee Road intersection (see Figure 2g). This area was a mix of open and forested spaces with no clear signs of disturbance except near a house at the northeastern end (Figure 4–6). Shovel tests were placed along the center of the APE at 30-m intervals. Soils were generally constant with greater disturbance in the surface layer in those test pits towards the northeast. The surface layer is a dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) clay that is approximately 5 to 15 cm thick. Below this is a yellowish red (5YR 5/8) clay subsoil. All STs were again negative for cultural materials.

The third section is situated north of Gunpowder Creek in Caldwell County and made up of 5 separate parcels (Figure 2k–l). These are small areas located adjacent US 321 that extend less than 15 m from the previous APEs. The landforms are either covered with pavement or consist of disturbed soils from cut hillside slopes or soil erosion. Due to the limited extent of the APE, lack of known sites from the previous

17-07-0039 Addendum II

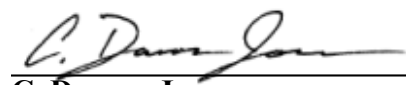
investigations, and soil disturbance, these five parcels are not likely yield significant resources. As a result, no subsurface testing was carried out, while a visual inspection failed to identify any above ground resources.

Summary and Recommendations

The current archeological investigations for the second addendum to the U-4700 APE in Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties identified no archaeological resources. Most of the newly expanded APE is situated on disturbed soils or steep slopes. Other parcels are small extending less than 15 m from the previously investigated APEs with no known sites report near these locations. Subsurface testing did occur at two of the larger parcels where landforms appeared intact; however, all tests were negative. As result, it is very unlikely for significant and intact archaeological deposits to be present. No further archaeological work is recommended for second addendum to U-4700. However, if design plans change to impact areas outside of the APE, then further archaeological work might be required.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

See attached: ☒ Map(s) ☐ Previous Survey Info ☒ Photos ☐ Correspondence
Signed:



C. Damon Jones
NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

7/23/19

Date

REFERENCES CITED

HPOWEB

2019 North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office GIS Web Service.
<http://gisNCDCR.gov/hpoweb/>. Accessed July 8, 2019.

Idol, Bruce and Matt Parè

2015 *Intensive Archaeological Survey and Evaluation for US 321 Improvements from US 70 in Hickory to US 64/NC 18 in Lenoir, TIP U-4700, Catawba, Burke, and Caldwell Counties, North Carolina*. TRC Environmental Corporation, Chapel Hill. Submitted to NCDOT, Raleigh.

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services (USDA NRCS)

2019 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Web Soil Survey.
<https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>. Accessed July 8, 2019.

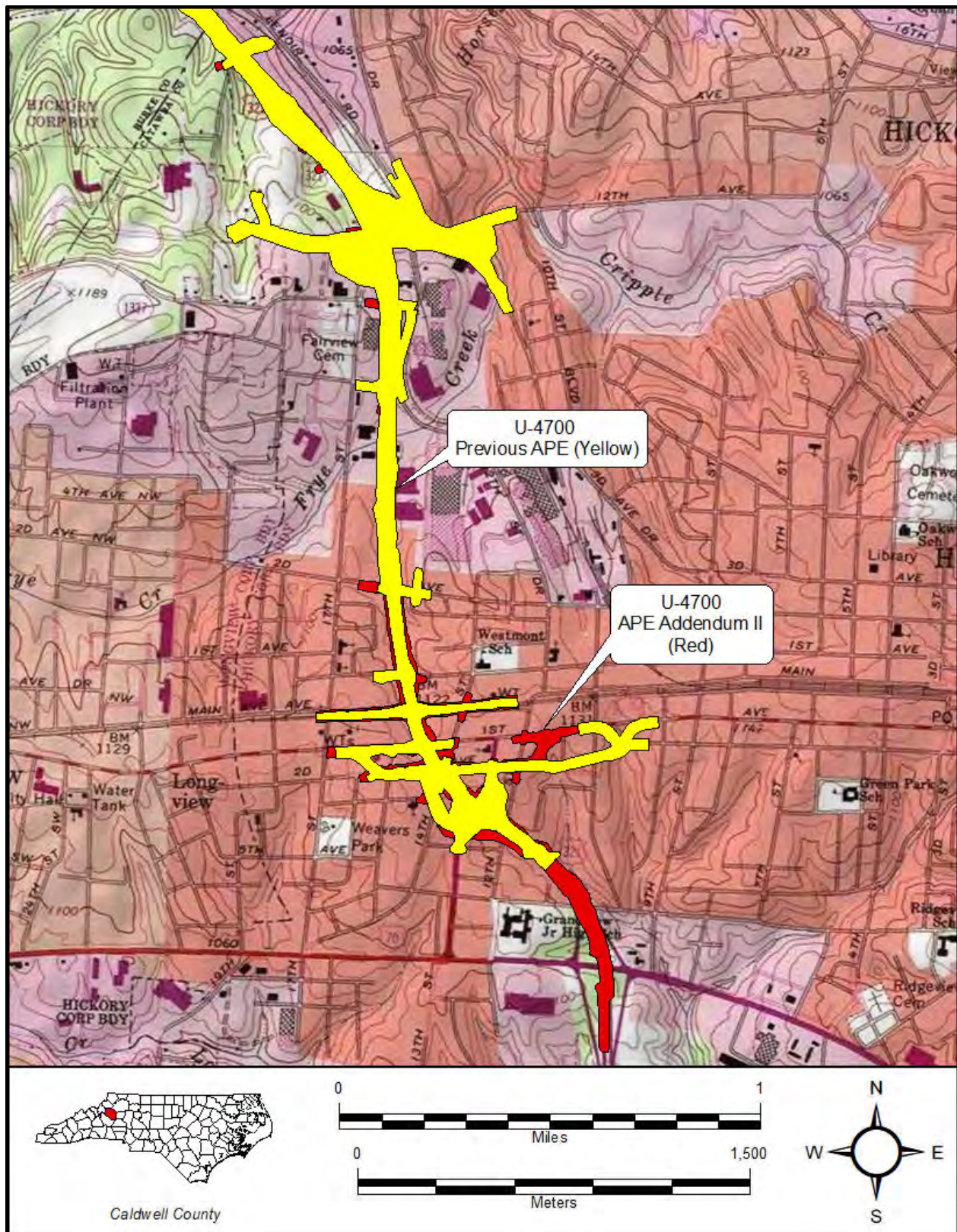
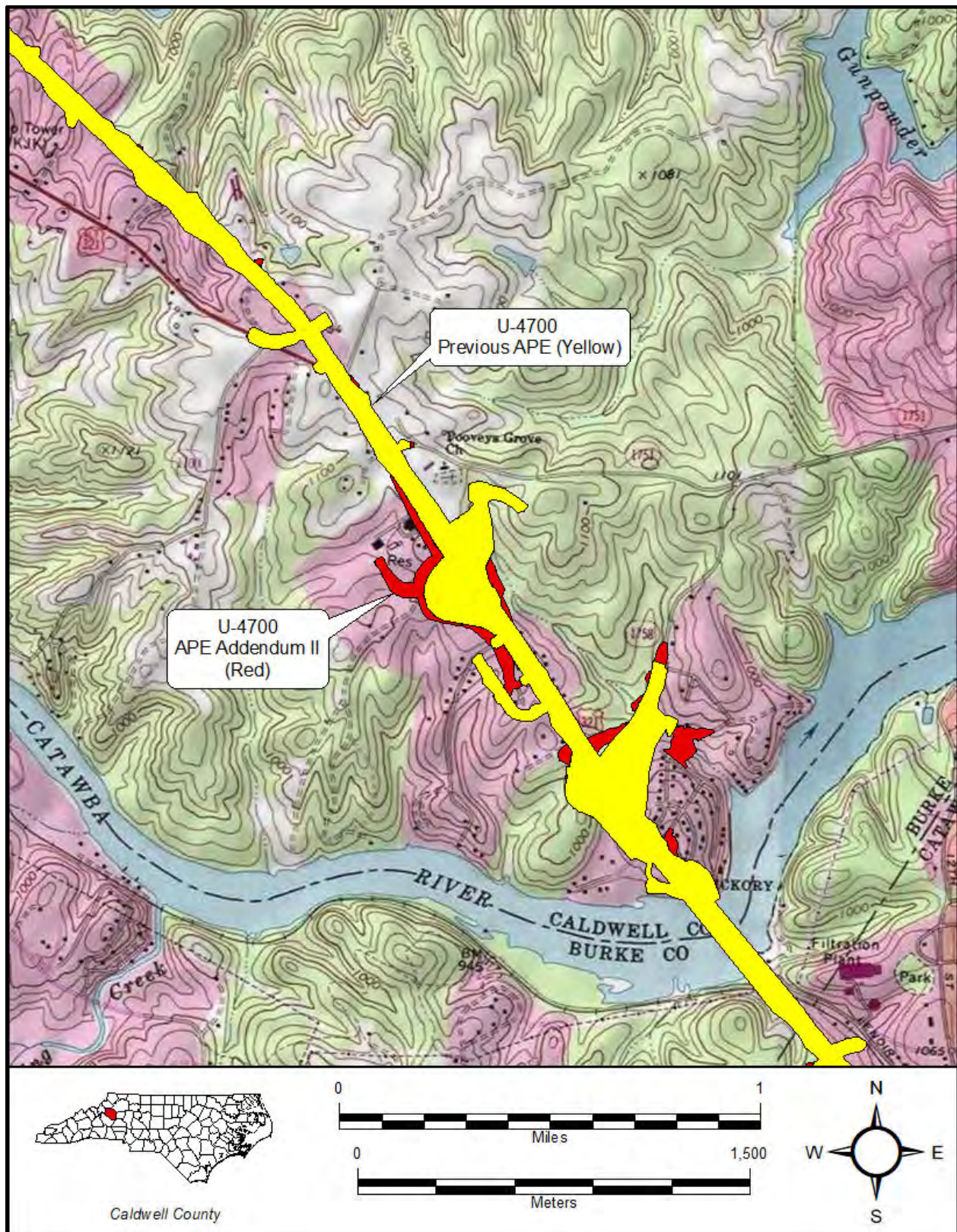


Figure 1a. Topographic Setting of Section 1 of the Project Area, USGS Hickory, 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed.



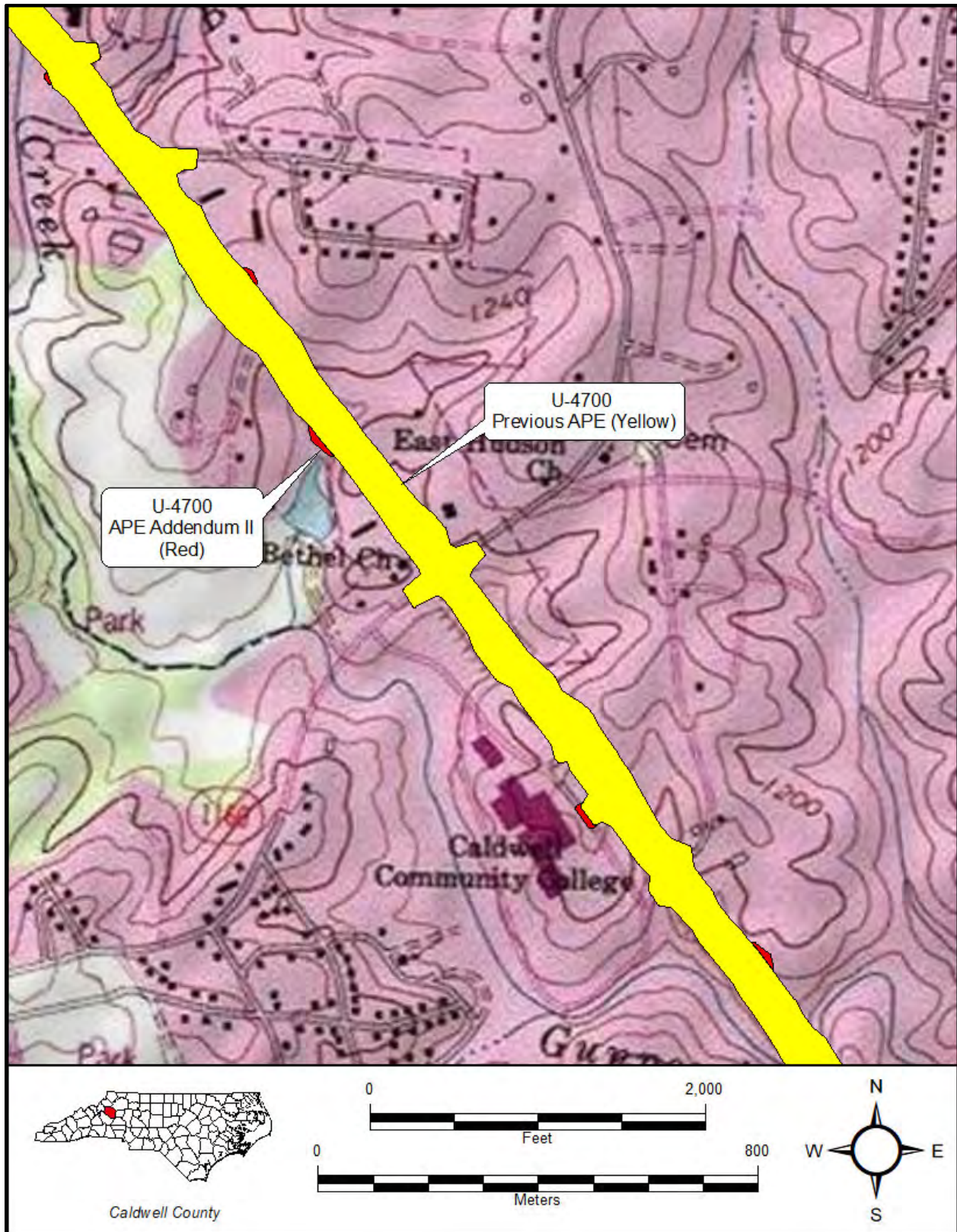


Figure 1c. Topographic Setting of Section 2 of the Project Area, USGS Granite Falls, 2013 National Geographic Society, i-cubed.

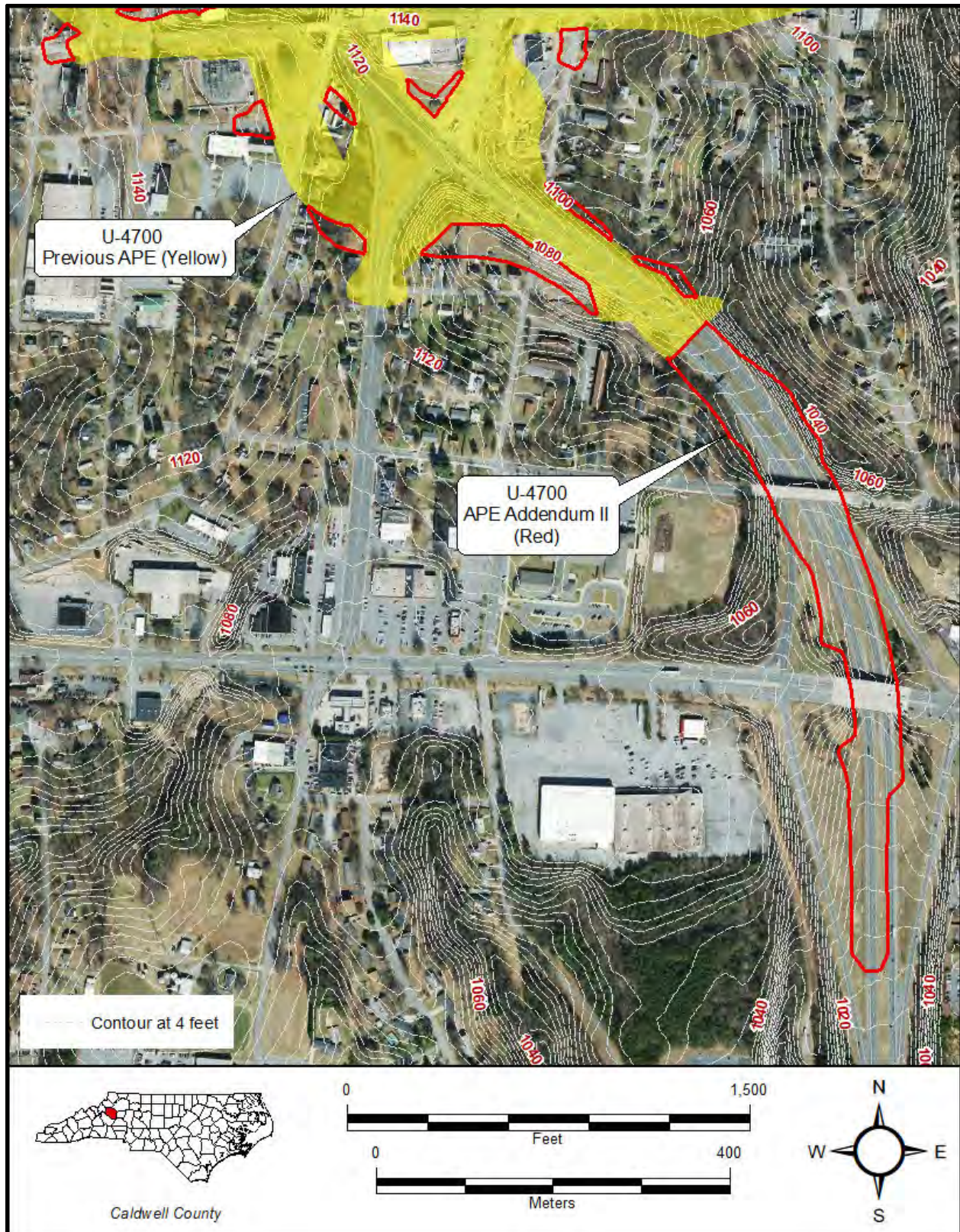


Figure 2a. Aerial View of Section 1 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.



Figure 2b. Aerial View of Section 1 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

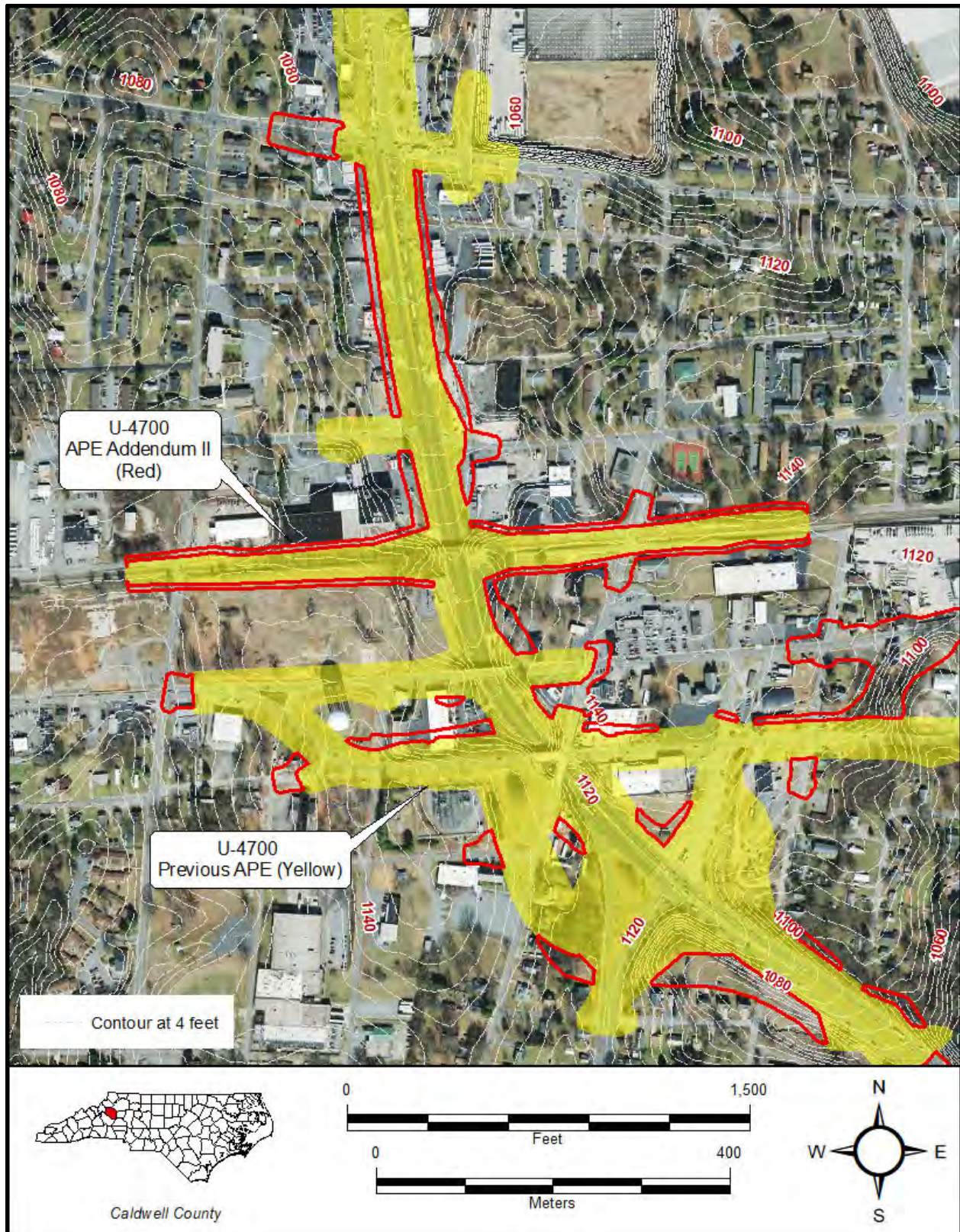


Figure 2c. Aerial View of Section 1 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

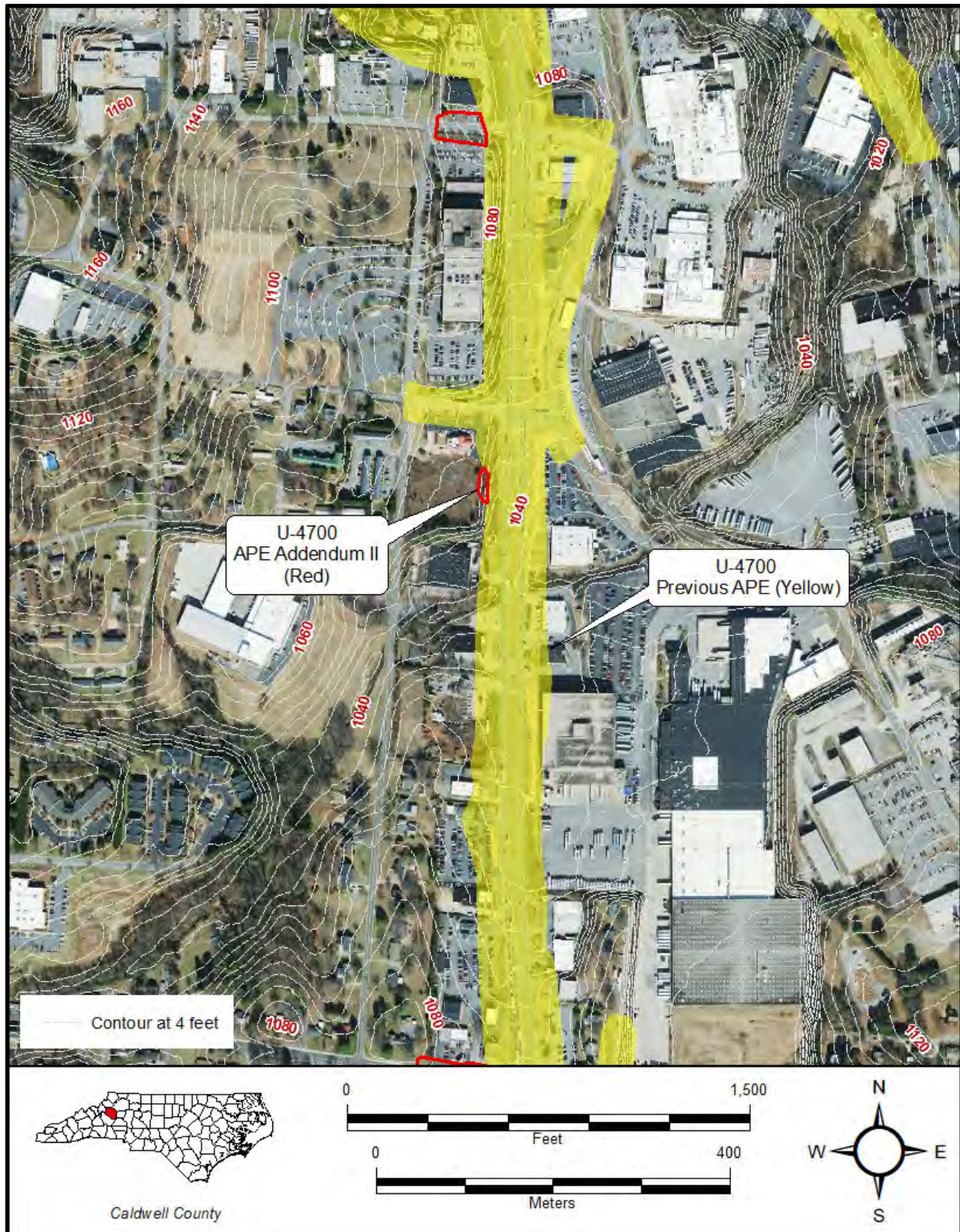


Figure 2d. Aerial View of Section 1 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

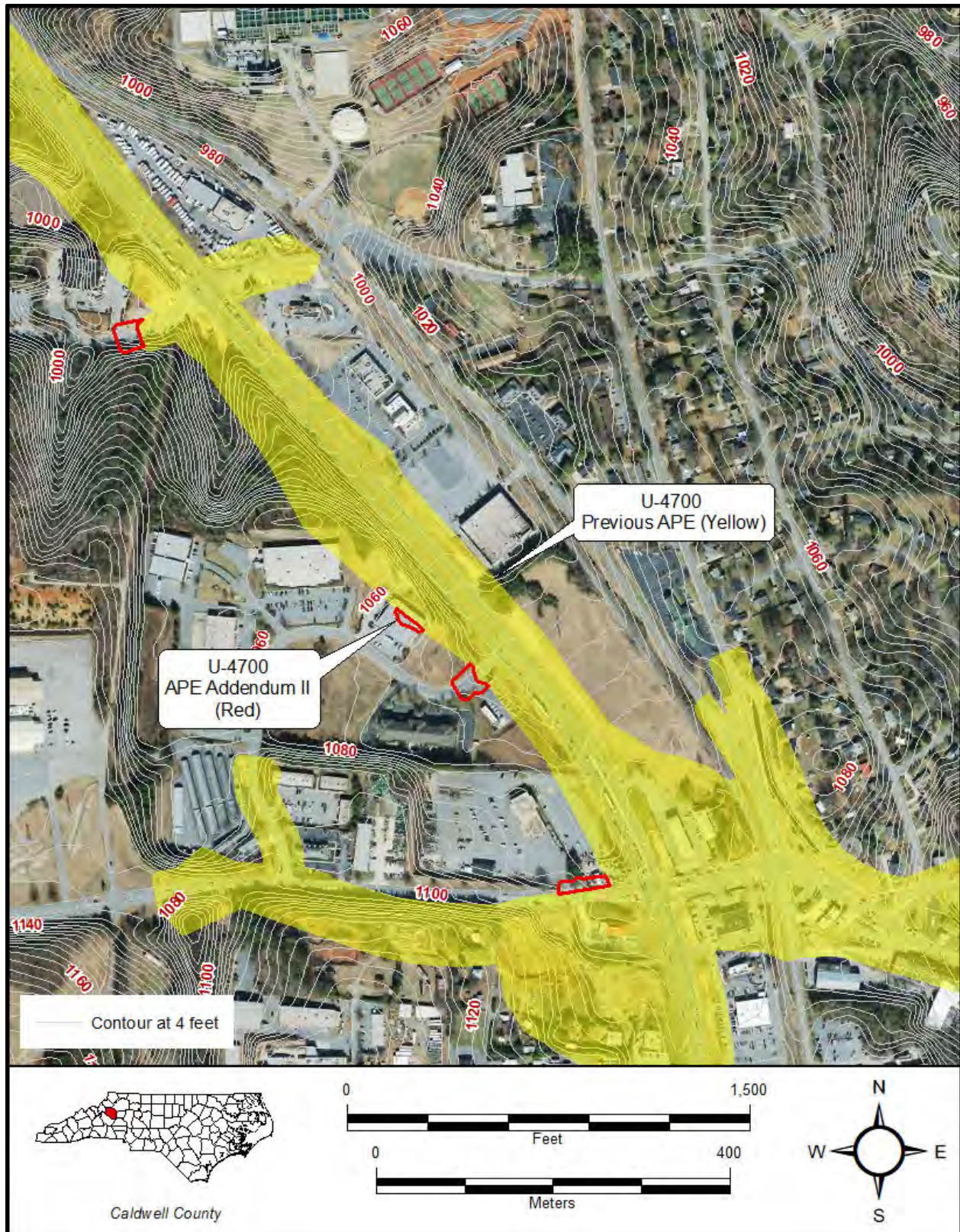


Figure 2e. Aerial View of Section 1 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

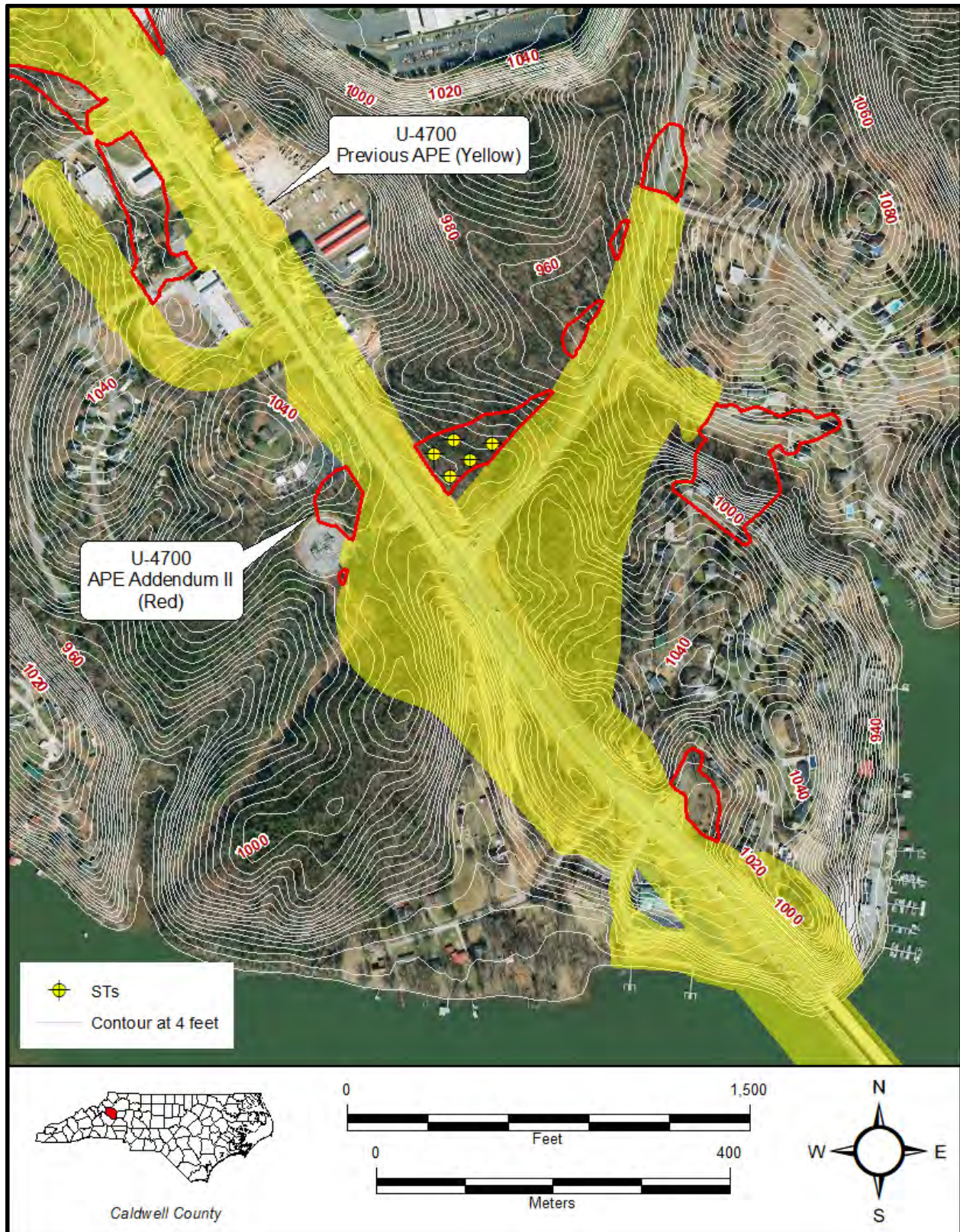


Figure 2f. Aerial View of Section 2 showing development, contours, and STs within the expanded APE.

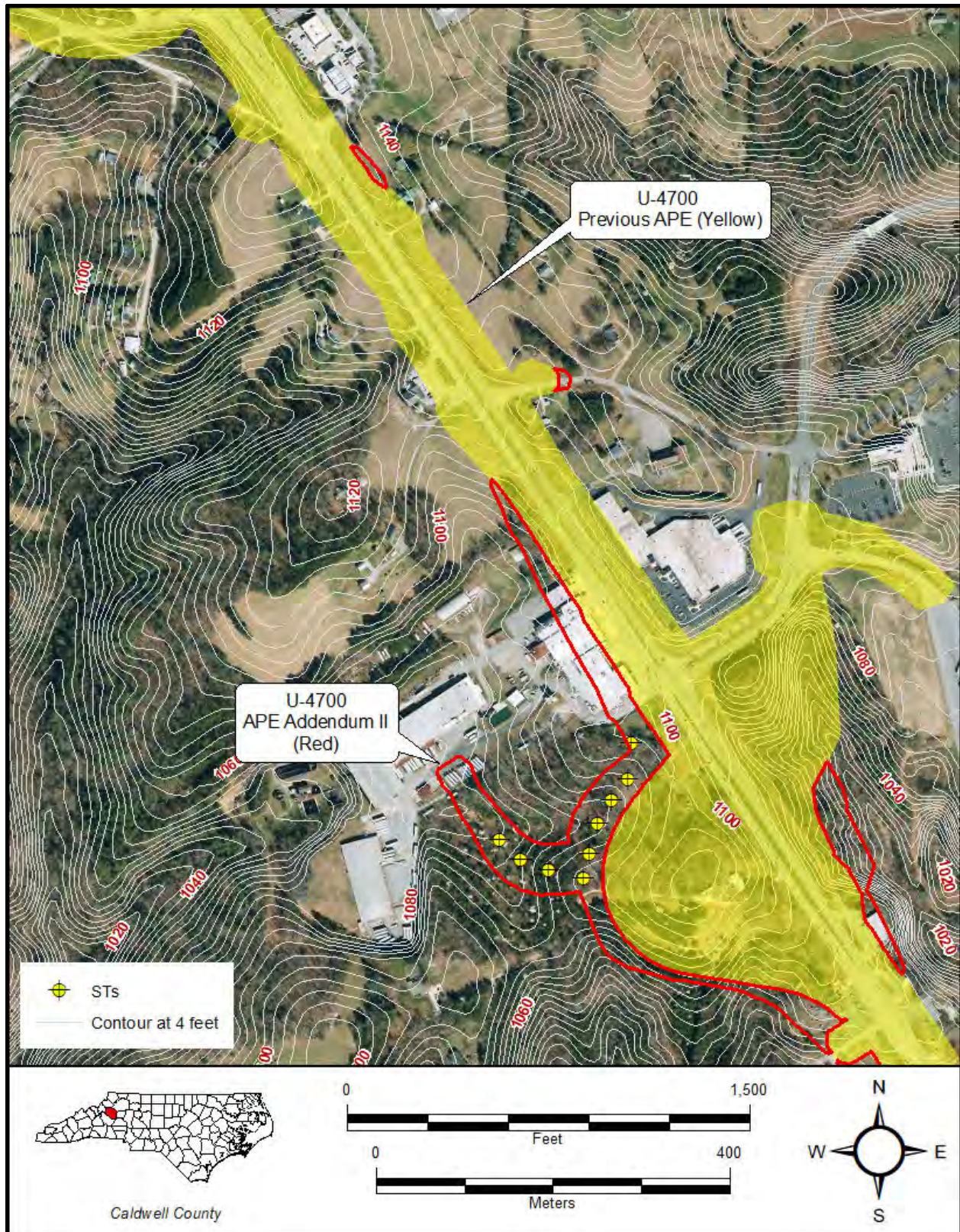


Figure 2g. Aerial View of Section 2 showing development, contours, and STs within the expanded APE.

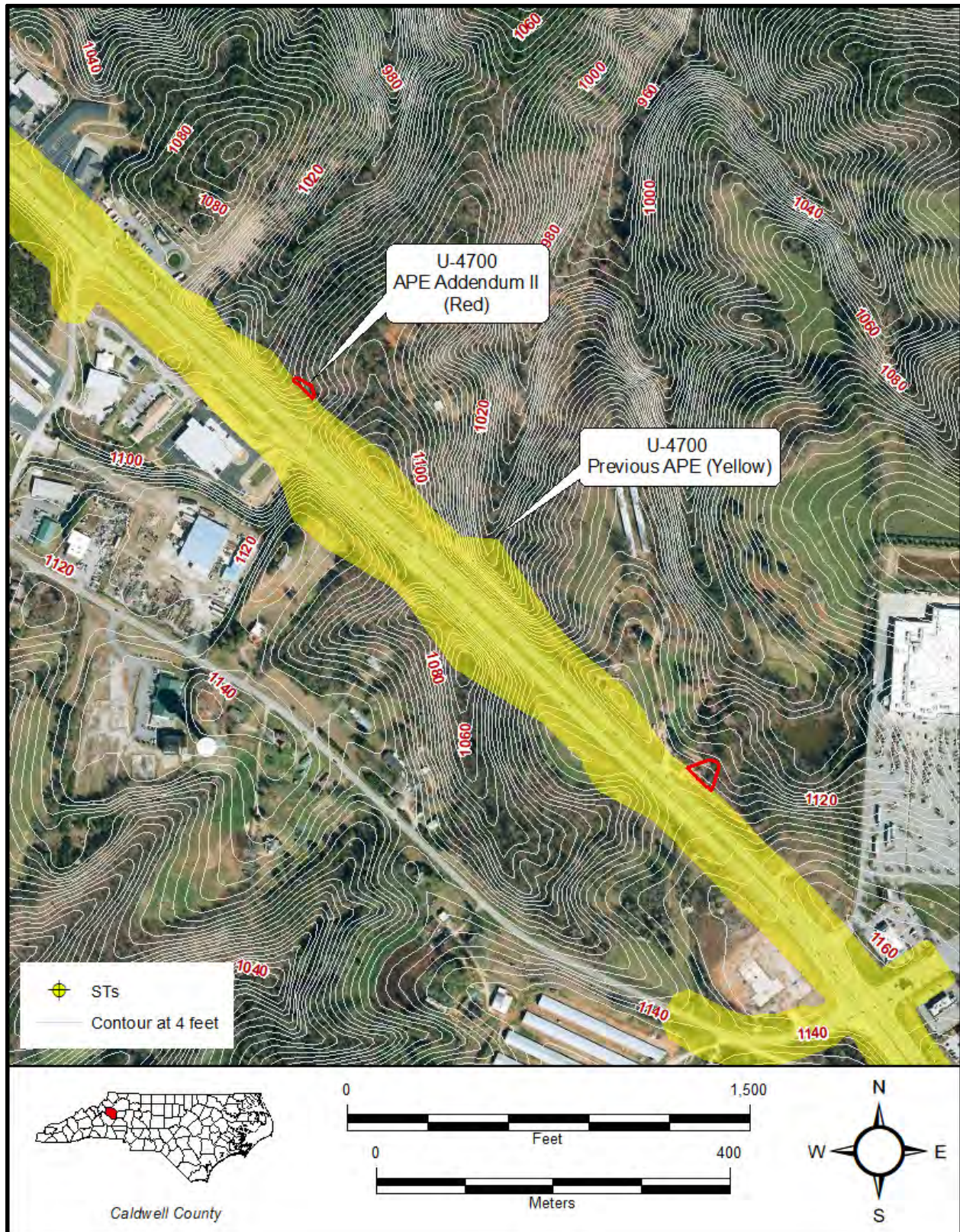


Figure 2h. Aerial View of Section 2 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

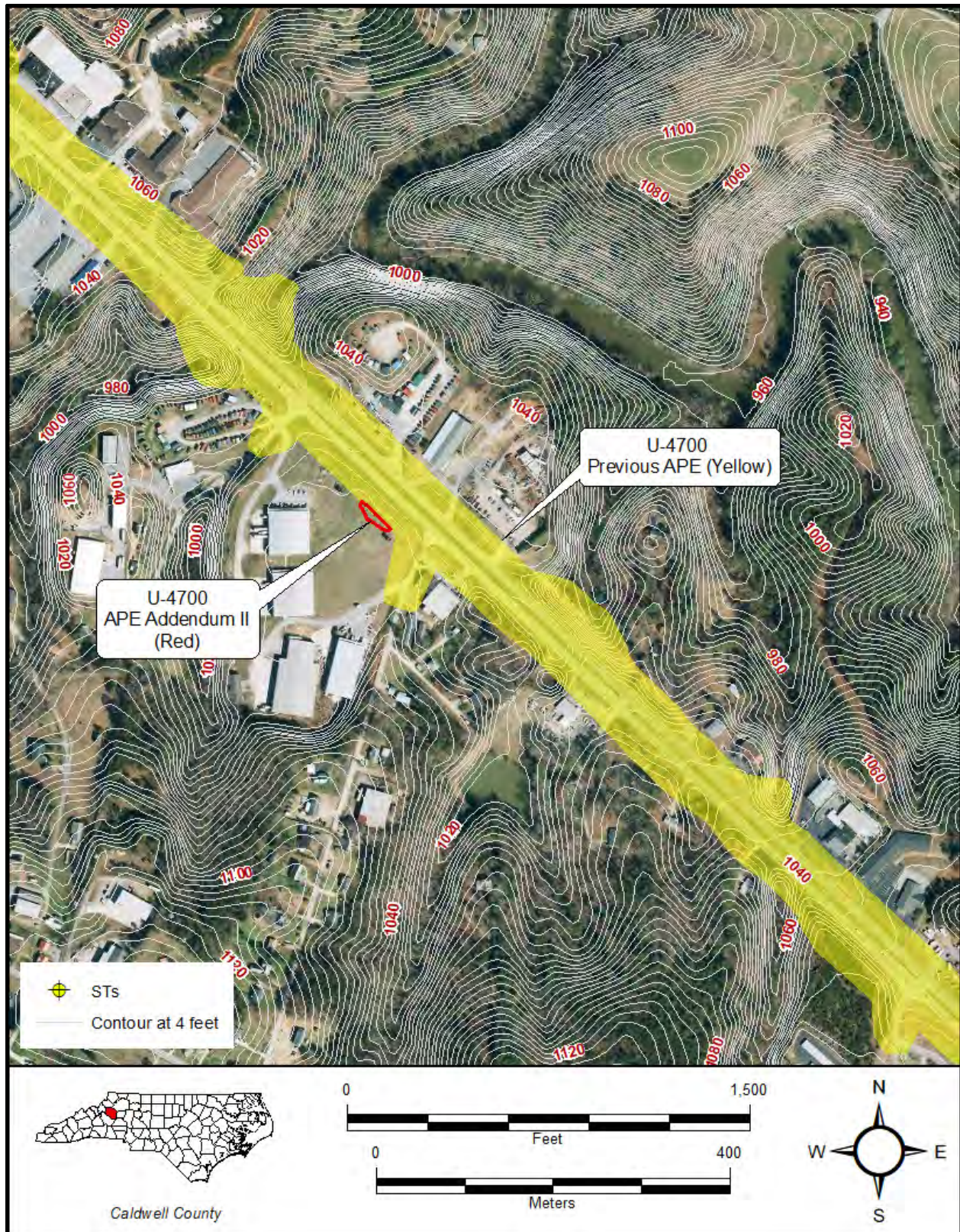


Figure 2i. Aerial View of Section 2 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

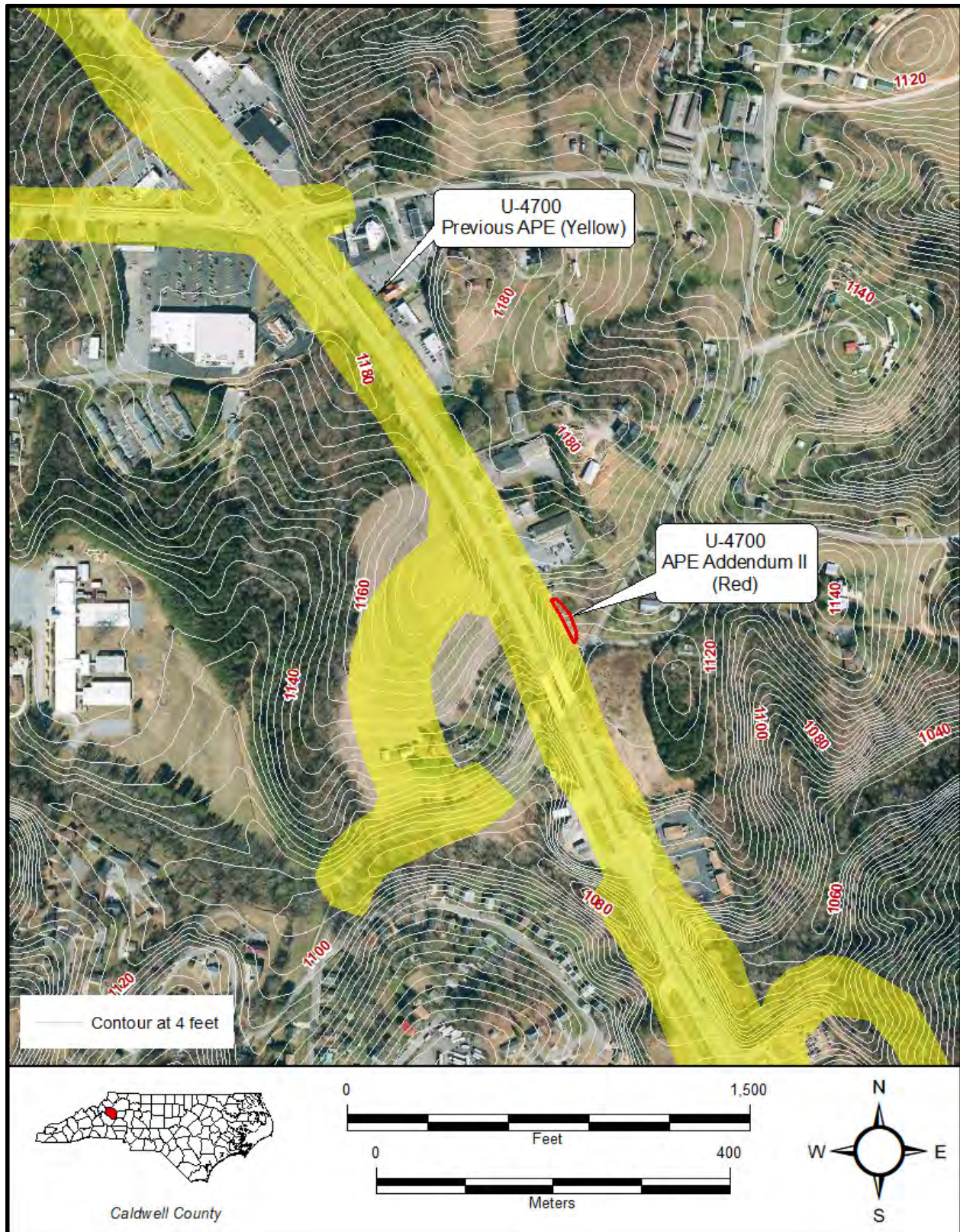


Figure 2j. Aerial View of Section 2 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

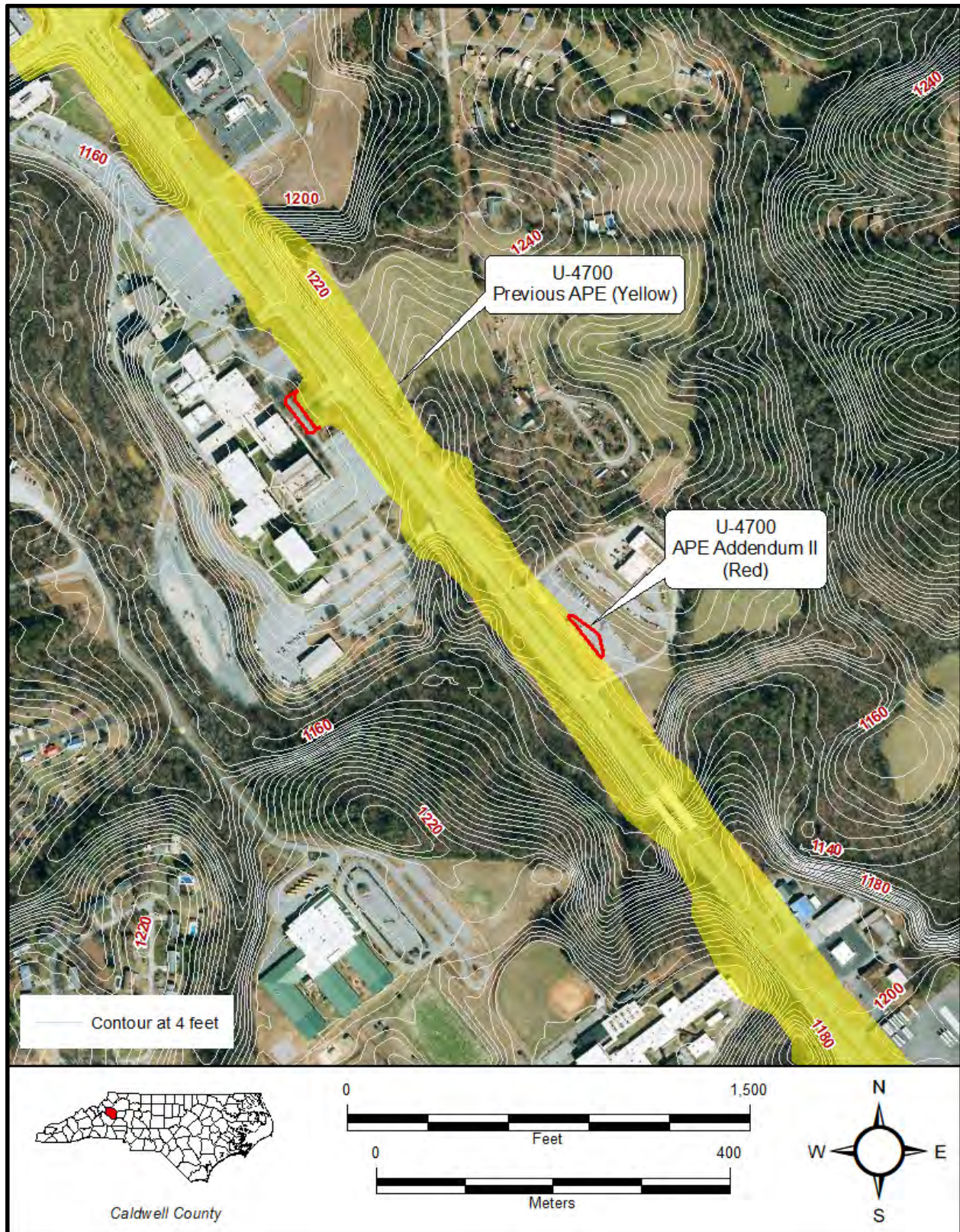


Figure 2k. Aerial View of Section 3 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.

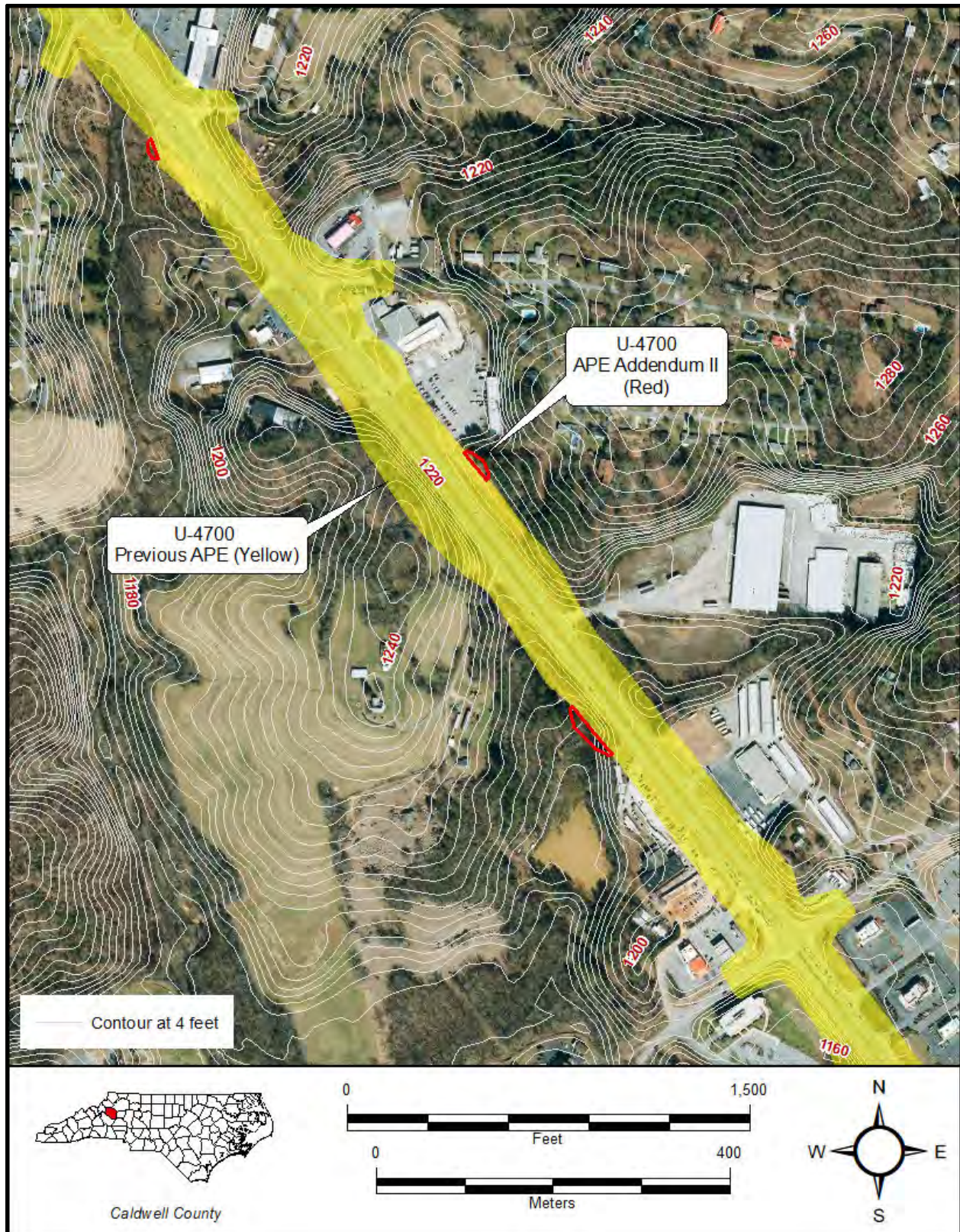


Figure 21. Aerial View of Section 3 showing development and contours within the expanded APE.



Figure 3. General View of the forested ridge north of the US 321 and Grace Chapel Road intersection, looking north.



Figure 4. General View of the open space in the parcel west of the US 321 and Alex Lee Road intersection, looking northwest.



Figure 5. General View of the open space in the parcel west of the US 321 and Alex Lee Road intersection, looking northeast.



Figure 6. General View of the house at the northwestern end of the parcel west of the US 321 and Alex Lee Road intersection, looking north.

Patrick, Vanessa E

From: Patrick, Vanessa E
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2019 5:40 PM
To: Frosch, Colin
Cc: 'tad.hardy@kimley-horn.com'; Teresa Gresham; Sowell, Bryan K
Subject: U-4700, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties -- Historic Architecture

Hi Colin: I've reviewed the expanded study area, received last month, and found no additional architectural resources of likely or established significance. The majority of the additions intersect properties already investigated or otherwise eliminated from concern by our earlier investigations of the project area (2010-11, 2015, and 2017). Several others contain undeveloped land or post-1970 buildings and structures. The two bridges located in the addition at the southernmost end of the project are both date to 1980 and are not NR-eligible (Bridge No. 35 on US 70 over US 321 and Bridge No. 110 on 7th Avenue over US 321). I'm sure the cemetery at Poovey's Grove Baptist Church (CW-0197) is noted on the design plans, but as part of the property is contained within one of the added areas I thought it worth a mention (#4865 Poovey's Grove Church Road, PIN: 2794059007); neither the church nor the cemetery is NR-eligible. For the record, the areas screened for historic architecture are represented on the maps created by Damon Jones' for his recent review of archaeological resources in the study area expansion.

The new design in the vicinity of Houck's Chapel creates no new effect on the property, so the finding recorded in the revised effects concurrence form (10 March 2015, revised 20 March 2018) remains valid. The supplemental review form, also dated 20 March 2018, addresses one NR-eligible property located in the previous expansion of the study area in 2017.

I'll add a copy of this e-mail to the Connect NCDOT site to document review of the most recent expansion of the study area. No additional properties require investigation and effects consultations are complete for the one NR-listed and three NR-eligible properties, so the U-4700 project may be considered in compliance with both GS 121-12(a) and Section 106 for historic architecture.

Thank you for alerting us to the study area expansion. Should questions arise or if I can help in any way, please let me know. Vanessa

Vanessa E. Patrick

Architectural Historian
Environmental Analysis Unit
North Carolina Department of Transportation

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Asheville Field Office
160 Zillicoa Street Suite B
Asheville, North Carolina 28801



July 7, 2025

Subject: Review Response for Transportation Project(s) Covered by the Western North Carolina Bat Programmatic Biological Opinion

Greetings:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Asheville Ecological Services Field Office, has reviewed the project(s) submitted on May 15, 2025 for coverage under the Western North Carolina (WNC) Bat Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO), issued April 1, 2025. Based on the submitted materials and any supplemental information provided, we confirm the project(s) meet the criteria for coverage under this PBO in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531–1543) (ESA), thus concluding formal consultation for the project(s).

This correspondence conveys our review for listed/proposed bats covered by the WNC Bat PBO only. The lead federal agency (Federal Highway Administration or North Carolina Department of Transportation as their designee, or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) remains responsible for ensuring that any other listed or proposed species and/or designated critical habitat that occurs within the project action area are addressed in accordance with section 7 of the ESA. For other listed species potentially occurring in the action area, if suitable habitat is absent from the action area, “No Effect” determinations are appropriate. For plants, in instances where suitable habitat is present and botanical surveys conducted during the optimal survey window and within the past one or two years (depending on the species) have negative results, we would concur with a biological determination of “may affect, not likely to adversely affect”.

Review and concurrence under the WNC Bat PBO are considered complete for the following project(s):

Project Title	NCDOT STIP/ID #	USFWS Log #
Widen US 321 from US 70 to SR 1933	U-4700	25-179
Widen US 21 from SR 2136 to Holly Point Drive, and from Northcross Center Ct. to SR 2147	U-5771/U-5767	25-180
Bearwallow Mountain Rd./US74A in-kind repairs	DF18314.2045120 W03290	25-181
US74A Gerton from Bearwallow Mtn Rd to US64/74A/NC9	18314.1045999CMGC	25-182
US74A/Middle Fork Rd./ Tom Falls Rd. repairs	DF18314.2045207 W03292	25-183
Bald Rock Rd. – Gilliam Mtn Rd./Sugarloaf Mtn Rd. repairs	DF18314.2045060 W03289	25-184

NC9 from 74A to Buncombe Co. line repairs	18314.1045035 W0920	25-185
NC88 landslide repair	28DE NC88 landslide	25-186

We appreciate the opportunity for review and comment.

Sincerely,

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Asheville Field Office