

Type I or II Categorical Exclusion Action Classification Form

STIP Project No.	HB-0042
WBS Element	50740.1.1
Federal Project No.	N/A

A. Project Description:

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Highway Division 4 proposes to replace Bridge No. 56 over Black Creek (Holt's Lake) on U.S. 301/N.C. 96 (S. Brightleaf Boulevard) in Johnston County, as State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project HB-0042. The project proposes to replace the existing bridge with a new structure on an eastern shifted alignment with a final typical section of two, 12-foot lanes with an 8-foot shoulder on the east side and a 14-foot shoulder on the west side to accommodate future multimodal features. South of the bridge, U.S. 301 (S. Brightleaf Boulevard)/N.C. 96 will be shifted to tie into the new bridge alignment and match the existing typical section consisting of a 3-lane typical section including two, 12-foot travel lanes with a central 12-foot two-way left turn lane and 12-foot shoulders with 4 feet paved on both sides. The current design proposes to relocate the driveway at the NCDOT Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) building to the south. The project utilizes staged construction to replace the bridge and maintain traffic, therefore, no off-site detour is anticipated.

B. Description of Need and Purpose:

The project is needed to replace the aging bridge. Bridge No. 56 has concrete elements dating back to 1954, and components of the concrete superstructure and substructure have experienced an increasing degree of deterioration and are no longer feasible to address through maintenance activities.

The purpose of the project is to replace the existing bridge with a new structure.

C. Categorical Exclusion Action Classification:

Type I(A) - Ground Disturbing Action

D. Proposed Improvements:

28. Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction, or replacement or the construction of grade separation to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings, if the actions meet the constraints in 23 CFR 771.117(e)(1-6).

*NOTE: The following Type I(C) Actions (NCDOT-FHWA 2019 CE Agreement, Appendix A) only require completion of Sections A through D to substantiate and document the CE classification: 1, 5, 8 (signs and pavement markings only), 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20; or several other Type I Action subcategories identified in past NCDOT-FHWA CE Programmatic Agreements (see Appendix D). **Pre-approval as a CE does not exempt activities from compliance with other federal environmental laws.***

E. Special Project Information:

Alternatives:

NCDOT analyzed a No Build and Build Alternative for the subject project. The No Build Alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project but was retained for baseline purposes. The Build Alternative proposes to replace Bridge No. 56 with a new structure on a partial realignment to the east.

Additional improvements include the relocation of the DMV driveway on the south side of the bridge to provide greater distance between vehicles exiting the bridge and making a left-turn into the parking lot. The typical section on U.S. 301/N.C. 97 (S. Brightleaf Boulevard) will remain a three-lane, undivided road with a center two-way left turn lane. This Alternative utilizes staged construction to replace the bridge and maintain traffic throughout construction.

Cost:

Table 1. Estimated Cost

Right-of-Way Acquisition	\$1,188,000
Construction	\$5,200,000
Total	\$6,388,000

Cost estimates are preliminary and subject to change.

Estimated Traffic Data:

Table 2. Average Daily Traffic (ADT)

Let Year (2026)	10,300 vpd
Future Year 2046	12,600 vpd
TTST	2%
Duals	4%
Design Speed (miles per hour (mph))	50

Source: HB-0042 Design Criteria (5/2024).

Natural Resources:

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list the following federally protected species ranges within the study area, under the Endangered Species Act.

Potential habitat for red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*) (Endangered (E)) does not occur within the study area. There are no suitable pine stands in the study area meeting the necessary age class and size to support red-cockaded woodpecker nesting and foraging. Therefore, the Biological Conclusion is **No Effect**.

Potential habitat for Neuse River waterdog (*Necturus lewisi*) (Threatened (T)), Carolina madtom (*Norutius furiosus*) (E), and the Atlantic Pigtoe (*Fusconaia masoni*) (T) does not occur within the project area. The impounded conditions of Holt's Lake do not provide the low to moderate grade stream habitat necessary for these species. Therefore, the Biological Conclusion is **No Effect**.

STIP Project HB-0042 is within NCDOT Division 4. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has revised the previous programmatic biological opinion (PBO) in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and NCDOT for the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) (*Myotis septentrionalis*) in eastern North Carolina. The PBO covers the entire NCDOT program in Divisions 1-8, including all NCDOT projects and activities. Although this programmatic opinion covers Divisions 1-8, NLEBs are currently only known in 22 counties, but may potentially occur in eight additional counties within Divisions 1-8. NCDOT, FHWA, and USACE have agreed to two conservation measures which will avoid/minimize mortality of NLEBs. These conservation measures only apply to the 30 current known/potential counties shown on Figure 2 of the PBO at this time. Johnston County is not included in this list of 30 counties. The programmatic determination for NLEB for the NCDOT program is **May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect**. The PBO will ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for ten years (effective through December 31, 2030) for all NCDOT projects with a federal nexus in Divisions 1-8, which includes Johnston County, where STIP Project HB-0042 is located.

Suitable habitat was identified for the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*) (Proposed Endangered (PE)) in the study area. The USFWS has issued a programmatic conference opinion (PCO) in conjunction with the FHWA, USACE, and NCDOT for the tricolored bat (TCB) in eastern North

Carolina. The PCO covers the entire NCDOT program in Divisions 1-8, including all NCDOT projects and activities. NCDOT, FHWA, and USACE have agreed to three conservation measures (listed in the PCO) which will avoid/minimize take to TCBs. These conservation measures apply to all counties in Divisions 1-8. The programmatic determination for TCB for the NCDOT program is **May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect**. Once the TCB is officially listed, the PCO will become the programmatic biological opinion (PBO) by formal request from FHWA and USACE. The PBO will ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for approximately five years (effective through December 31, 2028) for all NCDOT projects with a federal nexus in Divisions 1-8, which includes Johnston County, where STIP Project HB-0042 is located.

Water Resources:

Streams and wetlands in the project area were identified in the Natural Resources Technical Report (NRTR). While the USACE will make the final determination as to the permit required, at this time it is anticipated that an Individual Permit will not be required and that the project would qualify as a Nationwide Permit 3 and corresponding Section 401 Water Quality General Certification.

The NRTR identified two wetlands and one stream, Black Creek (Holt's Lake), in the study area (see Figure 3). Black Creek (Holt's Lake) is classified as a Class B and Nutrient Sensitive Water (NSW) and is protected under the Neuse River Basin Buffer Rules. Black Creek (Holt's Lake) is a FEMA Detailed Study Stream and therefore is subject to NCDOT's State Floodplain Compliance (SFC) regulations.

Potential impacts to streams and wetlands were calculated based on slope stake limits of the design plus an additional 25 feet. The calculations resulted in less than 0.1 acre of impacts to wetlands and approximately 26 linear feet of impacts to Black Creek (Holt's Lake).

Cultural Resources:

NCDOT Archaeology determined that "No Survey [is] Required" on March 11, 2024.

NCDOT Historic Architecture determined that "No Survey [is] Required" on March 28, 2024.

Tribal coordination letters were mailed to the Catawba Indian Nation and the Tuscarora Indian Nation on November 15, 2023. A response was received from the Catawba Indian Nation on December 19, 2023. A response has not been provided by the Tuscarora Indian Nation.

Public Involvement:

A newsletter with information about the project was sent to landowners in the surrounding area on July 8th, 2024. A public website with information about the project was created and the link provided in the newsletter.

One public comment was received that inquired about the addition of a noise wall as part of the project. This project does not meet the requirement of a Type I Project, which would constitute a Noise Study, because the project will replace the existing bridge with a new structure on an eastern shifted alignment that ties into the existing typical section of U.S. 301/N.C. 96 (S. Brightleaf Boulevard).

Agency Comments:

In addition to standard comments for bridge replacement projects, N.C. Division of Water Resources (NCDWR) provided the following project-specific comments in an email dated November 27, 2024:

- Holt's Lake (Black Creek) is a Class B; NSW water of the State. NCDWR is very concerned with sediment and erosion impacts that could result from this project. NCDWR recommends that highly protective sediment and erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs) be implemented to reduce the risk of nutrient runoff to Holt's Lake. Post-construction stormwater BMPs should, to the minimum extent practicable (MEP), be selected and designed to reduce nutrients.

- To meet the requirements of NCDOT's NPDES permit NCS000250, the road design plans shall provide treatment of the stormwater runoff through BMPs as detailed in the most recent version of the NCDOT Stormwater Best Management Practices Toolbox manual. The BMPs should, to the MEP, be selected and designed to reduce impacts of the target pollutants of concern (POCs) for the receiving waters.
- This project is within the Neuse River Basin. Riparian buffer impacts shall be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent possible pursuant to 15A NCAC 2B.0714. New development activities located in the protected 50-foot wide riparian areas within the basin shall be limited to "uses" identified within and constructed in accordance with 15A NCAC 2B .0295. Buffer mitigation may be required for buffer impacts resulting from activities classified as "allowable with mitigation" within the "Table of Uses" section of the Buffer Rules or require a variance under the Buffer Rules. A buffer mitigation plan, including use of the North Carolina Division of Mitigation Services, must be provided to the NCDWR prior to approval of the Water Quality Certification. Buffer mitigation may be required for buffer impacts resulting from activities classified as "allowable with mitigation" within the "Table of Uses" section of the Buffer Rules or require a variance under the Buffer Rules. A buffer mitigation plan, coordinated with the North Carolina Division of Mitigation Services, must be provided to the NCDWR prior to approval of the Water Quality Certification.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) provided the following comments in an email dated December 15, 2024:

- Anadromous species are found in this portion of Black Creek. NCDOT should follow all stream crossing guidelines for anadromous fish passage, including an in-water work moratorium from February 15 to June 30. We recommend replacing this bridge with a bridge. Standard recommendations apply.

F. Project Impact Criteria Checklists:

F2. Ground Disturbing Actions – Type I (Appendix A) & Type II (Appendix B)				
<p>Proposed improvement(s) that fit Type I Actions (NCDOT-FHWA CE Programmatic Agreement, Appendix A) including 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 18, 21, 22 (ground disturbing), 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, &/or 30; &/or Type II Actions (NCDOT-FHWA CE Programmatic Agreement, Appendix B) answer the project impact threshold questions (below) and questions 8 – 31.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If any question 1-7 is checked “Yes” then NCDOT certification for FHWA approval is required.</i> <i>If any question 1-31 is checked “Yes” then additional information will be required for those questions in Section G.</i> 				
<u>PROJECT IMPACT THRESHOLDS</u> (FHWA signature required if any of the questions 1-7 are marked “Yes”.)			Yes	No
1	Does the project require formal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2	Does the project result in impacts subject to the conditions of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3	Does the project generate substantial controversy or public opposition, for any reason, following appropriate public involvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	Does the project cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts relative to low-income and/or minority populations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	Does the project involve a residential or commercial displacement, or a substantial amount of right of way acquisition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6	Does the project require an Individual Section 4(f) approval?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	Does the project include adverse effects that cannot be resolved with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) or have an adverse effect on a National Historic Landmark (NHL)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If any question 8-31 is checked “Yes” then additional information will be required for those questions in Section G.				
<u>Other Considerations</u>			Yes	No
8	Is an Endangered Species Act (ESA) determination unresolved or is the project covered by a Programmatic Agreement under Section 7?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Is the project located in anadromous fish spawning waters?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Does the project impact waters classified as Outstanding Resource Water (ORW), High Quality Water (HQW), Water Supply Watershed Critical Areas, 303(d) listed impaired water bodies, buffer rules, or Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	Does the project impact Waters of the United States in any of the designated mountain trout streams?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
12	Does the project require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Individual Section 404 Permit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
13	Will the project require an easement from a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensed facility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

<u>Other Considerations for Type I and II Ground Disturbing Actions (continued)</u>		Yes	No
14	Does the project include a Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) effects determination other than a No Effect, including archaeological remains?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
15	Does the project involve GeoEnvironmental Sites of Concerns such as gas stations, dry cleaners, landfills, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16	Does the project require work encroaching and adversely affecting a regulatory floodway or work affecting the base floodplain (100-year flood) elevations of a water course or lake, pursuant to Executive Order 11988 and 23 CFR 650 subpart A?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
17	Is the project in a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) county and substantially affects the coastal zone and/or any Area of Environmental Concern (AEC)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18	Does the project require a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) permit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19	Does the project involve construction activities in, across, or adjacent to a designated Wild and Scenic River present within the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20	Does the project involve Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
21	Does the project impact federal lands (e.g. U.S. Forest Service (USFS), USFWS, etc.) or Tribal Lands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
22	Does the project involve any changes in access control or the modification or construction of an interchange on an interstate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
23	Does the project have a permanent adverse effect on local traffic patterns or community cohesiveness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
24	Will maintenance of traffic cause substantial disruption?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
25	Is the project inconsistent with the STIP, and where applicable, the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
26	Does the project require the acquisition of lands under the protection of Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act, the Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Act, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Tribal Lands, or other unique areas or special lands that were acquired in fee or easement with public-use money and have deed restrictions or covenants on the property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
27	Does the project involve Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) buyout properties under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
28	Does the project include a <i>de minimis</i> or programmatic Section 4(f)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
29	Is the project considered a Type I under the NCDOT Noise Policy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
30	Is there prime or important farmland soil impacted by this project as defined by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
31	Are there other issues that arose during the project development process that affected the project decision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

G. Additional Documentation as Required from Section F (ONLY for questions marked 'Yes'):**Question 8:**

STIP Project HB-0042 is within NCDOT Division 4. The USFWS has revised the previous PBO in conjunction with FHWA, USACE, and NCDOT for the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) (*Myotis septentrionalis*) in eastern North Carolina. The PBO covers the entire NCDOT program in Divisions 1-8, including all NCDOT projects and activities. Although this programmatic opinion covers Divisions 1-8, NLEBs are currently only known in 22 counties, but may potentially occur in 8 additional counties within Divisions 1-8. NCDOT, FHWA, and USACE have agreed to two conservation measures which will avoid/minimize mortality of NLEBs. These conservation measures only apply to the 30 current known/potential counties shown on Figure 2 of the PBO at this time. Johnston County is not included in this list of 30 counties. The programmatic determination for NLEB for the NCDOT program is **May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect**. The PBO will ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for ten years (effective through December 31, 2030) for all NCDOT projects with a federal nexus in Divisions 1-8, which includes Johnston County, where STIP Project HB-0042 is located.

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Question 9:

Anadromous species are found in this portion of Black Creek (Holt's Lake). No direct impacts to anadromous fish spawning waters are anticipated. NCWRC has requested an in-water work moratorium from February 15 – June 30.

Question 10:

The Neuse River Riparian Buffer Regulations apply to Black Creek (Holt's Lake).

PROJECT COMMITMENTS

COMMITMENTS FROM PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

Division Environmental Staff - Anadromous Fish Passage

NCDOT Division 4 should follow all stream crossing guidelines for anadromous fish passage, including an in-water work moratorium from February 15 to June 30, due to the presence of a fish ladder.

Hydraulics - Construction in FEMA Floodplain

This project involves construction activities on or adjacent to a FEMA-regulated stream. Therefore, the Division shall: (1) construct all vertical and horizontal elements within the floodplain as designed; and (2) consult with the Hydraulics Unit of any planned deviation of these elements within the floodplain prior to commencing any such changes; and (3) submit sealed as-built construction plans to the Hydraulics Unit upon completion of project construction. The Hydraulics Unit will then verify either: (1) the drainage structure(s) and roadway embankment located within the 100-year floodplain were built as shown in the construction plans, both horizontally and vertically; or (2) any changes made to the plans were reviewed and approved to meet FEMA SFHA compliance; or (3) appropriate mitigation measures will be achieved prior to project close-out.

Roadside Environmental Unit - Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds

Black Creek is classified as a Class B and Nutrient Sensitive Water (NSW) and is protected under the Neuse River Basin Buffer Rules. NCDOT will implement Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds.

COMMITMENTS FROM PERMITTING

No commitments developed during project permitting.

*******END OF PROJECT COMMITMENTS*******

I. Categorical Exclusion Approval:

STIP Project No.	HB-0042
WBS Element	50740.1.1
Federal Project No.	N/A

Prepared By:

8/9/2024
Date

DocuSigned by:
Clara Meier
32CCB5C631FC4C5
Clara Meier, Planner II
HNTB

Prepared For: Russell Broadwell, PE, Division 4 Bridge Program Engineer

Reviewed By:

8/13/2024
Date

DocuSigned by:
Garry Wright
2AD40FD14D754BF
Garry Wright, Division Environmental Officer
NCDOT Highway Division 4



Approved

- If NO grey boxes are checked in Section F (pages 2 and 3), NCDOT approves the Type I or Type II Categorical Exclusion.



Certified

- If ANY grey boxes are checked in Section F (pages 2 and 3), NCDOT certifies the Type I or Type II Categorical Exclusion for FHWA approval.
- If classified as Type III Categorical Exclusion.

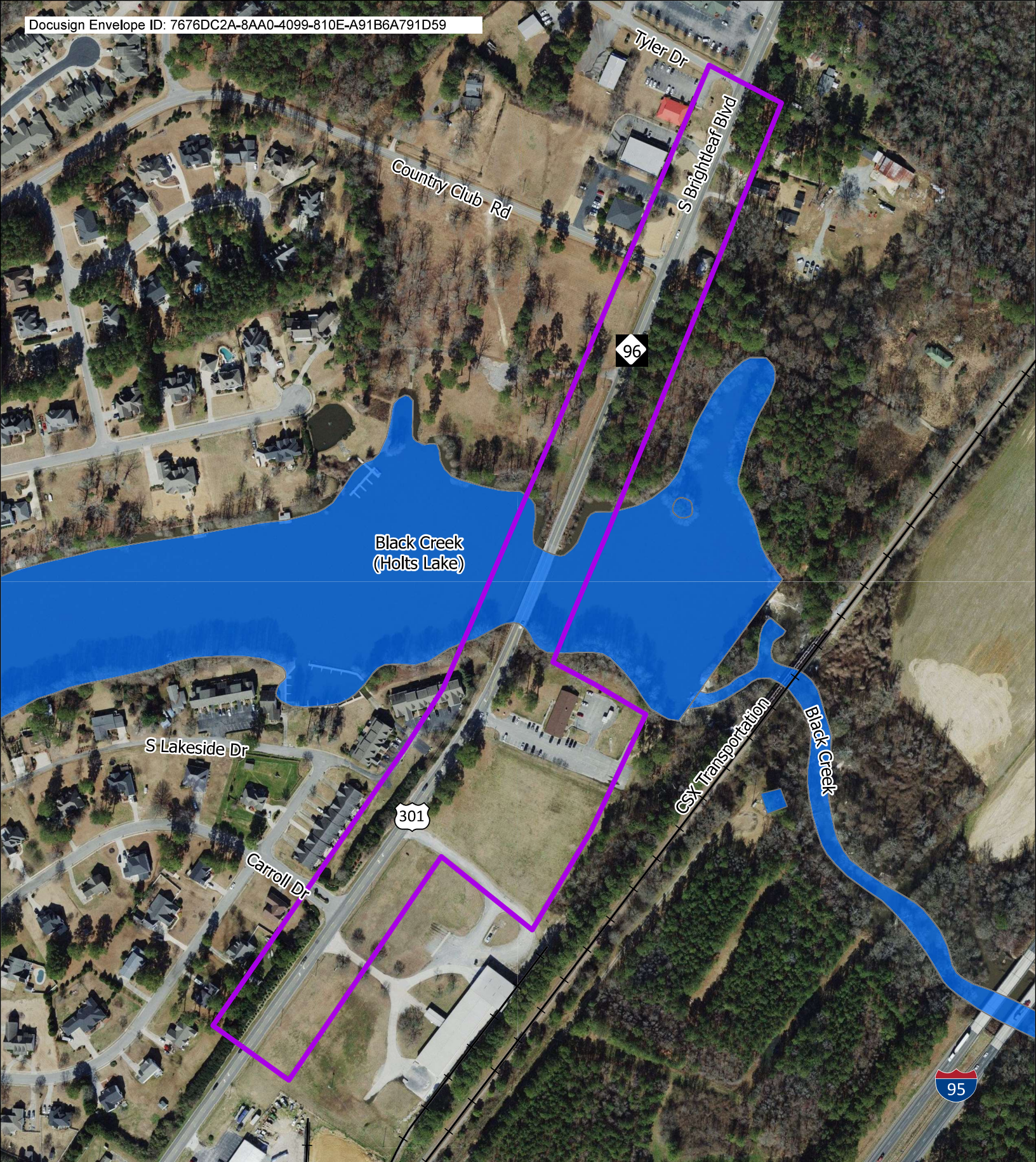
8/9/2024
Date

DocuSigned by:
Morgan Weatherford
D8ED306C6CEB44E
Morgan Weatherford, Eastern Regional Team Lead
NCDOT Environmental Policy Unit




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

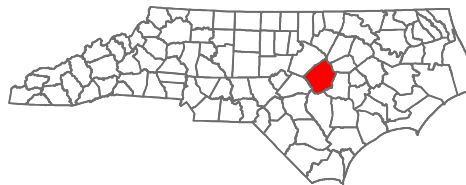
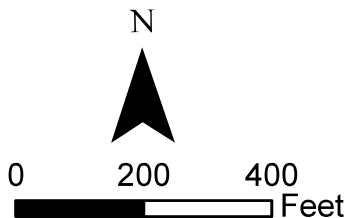
Date for Yolonda K. Jordan, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

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

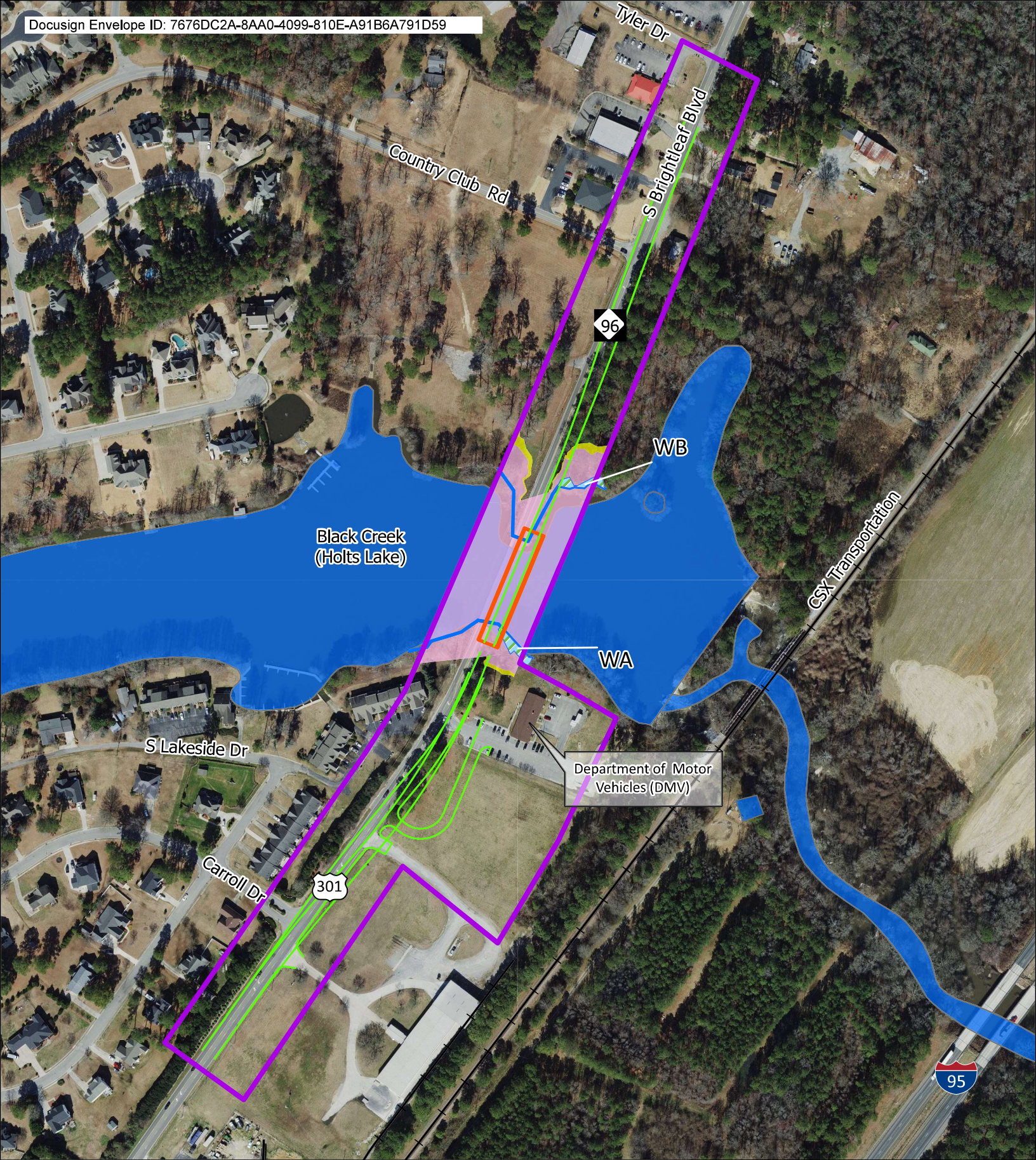


Legend

-  Study Area
-  Open Water
-  Railroad

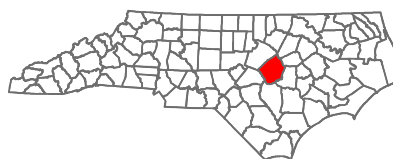


STIP HB-0042
Study Area Map
Replacement of Bridge
No. 56 over Black Creek
(Holt's Lake) on US 301/NC 96
Johnston County, NC



Legend

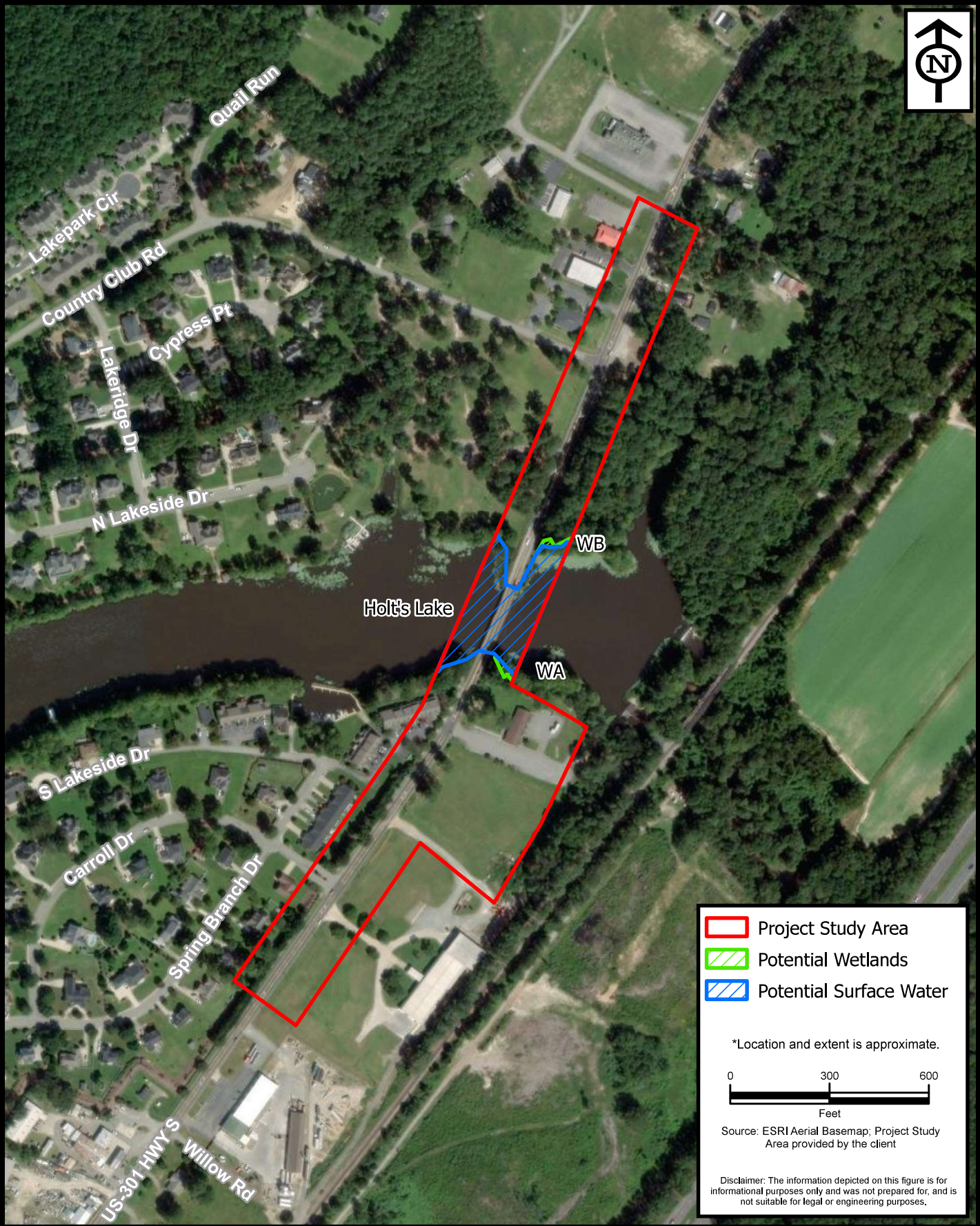
- Study Area
- Open Water
- Wetland
- Railroad
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Proposed Edge of Travel
- Proposed Roadway
- 500-Year Floodplain
- Stream; Class B; Nutrient Sensitive Waters
- Bridge



0 200 400 US Feet

STIP HB-0042
Environmental Features Map
Replacement of Bridge
No. 56 over Black Creek
(Holt's Lake) on US 301/NC 96
Johnston County, NC

Sources: NC OneMap, NCDOT. 2024.



Water Resources Map
HB-0042
Johnston County, North Carolina

Project:	70237251
Date:	March 2024
Drwn/Chkd:	NR/JH
Figure:	3

11-08-0087

Revised #2



HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES NO SURVEY REQUIRED FORM

**This form supercedes those dated 21 September 2011
and 14 November 2023**

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

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No:	HB-0042	County:	Johnston
WBS No.:	50740.1.1 (previously 17BP.4.R.26)	Document Type:	Federal CE
Fed. Aid No:		Funding:	State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal
Federal Permit(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Permit Type(s):	USACE

Project Description: Replace Bridge No. 56 (Holt's Lake Bridge) on US 301/NC 96 (Brightleaf Boulevard) over Black Creek/Holt's Lake (no off-site detour specified in review request). **Updated study areas received October 2023 and March 2024.**

SUMMARY OF HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES REVIEW

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW ACTIVITIES, RESULTS, AND CONCLUSIONS: HPOWeb reviewed on 19 September 2011, 3 November 2023, and 28 March 2024 and yielded no NR, SL, LD, DE, or SS properties in the Area of Potential Effects (APE). Johnston County current GIS mapping, aerial photography, and tax information indicated a partly developed APE with mostly post-1970 commercial and residential resources (viewed 19 September 2011, 3 November 2023, and 28 March 2024). Several resources dating from the early 1940s to the early 1960s are unexceptional, altered examples of their types. The APE intersects the western edge of a large parcel containing resources dating to the 1920s (with 1960s renovations), located outside the APE beyond possible project impacts, well to the northeast of the existing bridge and screened from it by intervening woodland. Constructed in 1926 and partly rebuilt in 1954, Bridge No. 56 is not eligible for listing in the National Register as it is neither aesthetically nor technologically significant according to the NCDOT Historic Bridge Inventory. No significant above-ground architectural or landscape resources appear in the original (2011) or the updated (2023 and 2024) APE.

No architectural survey is required for the project as currently defined.

WHY THE AVAILABLE INFORMATION PROVIDES A RELIABLE BASIS FOR REASONABLY PREDICTING THAT THERE ARE NO UNIDENTIFIED SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL OR LANDSCAPE RESOURCES IN THE PROJECT AREA: APE equates with the updated study area provided in the recent review request (see attached). The comprehensive county architectural survey and update (1980; 2003-2004), as well as later studies, record no resources in the APE. No National Register-listed or -eligible properties are located in the APE. Google Maps "Street View" and other graphics confirm the absence of architectural and landscape resources in the APE subject to GS 121-12(a) or Section 106 compliance.

**Should the project limits change, please notify
NCDOT Historic Architecture as additional review may be necessary.**

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

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

FINDING BY NCDOT ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Historic Architecture and Landscapes -- **NO SURVEY REQUIRED**



28 March 2024

NCDOT Architectural Historian

Date

HB-0042, Johnston County
Revised #2
PA Tracking No. 11-08-0087
March 2024

11-08-0087



NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REQUIRED FORM

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



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No: **Hb-0042, Holts Lake** *County:* **Johnston**
WBS No: **50740.1.1** *Document:* **CE**
F.A. No: **TBD** *Funding:* ☐ State ☒ Federal

Federal Permit Required? ☒ Yes ☐ No *Permit Type:* **USACE**

Project Description: NOTE, this is a revised review which updates the 12/11/2023 archaeological review, "no archaeological survey required form," by Brian Overton. The Area of Potential Effects has been expanded southeast of the project bridge.

NCDOT proposes to replace Bridge No. 56 (Holts Lake Bridge) on US 301/NC 96 (Bright Leaf Blvd.) over Holts Lake (Black Creek). The bridge is between Four Oaks and Smithfield on US 301 (see Figure 1). Project planning and design is ongoing, and no alternative has been selected. Therefore, a general Area of Potential Effects (APE) has been developed in cooperation with Division 4 staff and their project consultants which allows consideration of several conceptual design options (see Figure 2). Those alternatives may include replace in place construction with offsite detours, staged construction, and construction with on-site detours. The APE length is 2680 feet (0.50 miles) with a width of about 240 feet, generally centered and overlapping the existing facility. This includes all areas of project construction including any new ROW, easements, and cut and fill slope lines. Note, in March 2024, the APE was expanded to study access to a DMV facility southeast of the bridge. This is now a federally funded project and federal permitting is required from the USACE. Section 106 of the NHPA applies for cultural resources review.

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW

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

This bridge replacement spans an artificial lake, known as Holt's Lake, created from a nearby, downstream dam on Black Creek. The bridge was constructed in 1926 and partially rebuilt in 1954. The project overlaps the existing highway facility and construction would expand the footprint of soil disturbance. With a buffered expansion southeast of Br. No. 56 added in March 2024, the total APE increases from 13.5 acres to about 17.1 acres, much of which includes overlap with the existing roadway, parking lot, bridge, and lake. Massive earthmoving was required to construct the highway and bridge, therefore much of the current ROW is a disturbed archaeological context. The expanded area of APE was in agricultural use since before 1940 according to aerial photography. Soil disturbances generally reduce the quality of archaeological data that might be obtained through intensive survey and excavation.

As a named location, the history of Holt's Lake was researched and is briefly summarized here. The lake or pond was previously dammed half a mile upstream to the southwest. Later, in the first quarter century, a golf course was developed, and the dam moved downstream adjacent to the railroad. The new highway (currently US 301, this project) and bridge were in place by 1926. A recreational beach was established as a business, a popular local retreat for swimming, boating, fishing, and dancing for decades. The Smithfield Weekly Sun newspaper has published articles and interviews about Lake Holt, sharing history, details, stories and other memories from the 1930s onward. Piers, docks, a bathhouse, dance hall, picnic tables and a beach were maintained for use on the north shore of the lake west of US 301. In the water were several fixed and floating docks and platforms for resting or diving. A postcard shows the facility around the

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1940s, which appears located a short distance but nearby the bridge which is cited as being a popular diving off point (see Figure 5). Southwest of the bridge, there had been a restaurant and motel or motor lodge, the Brannan Tourist Court, which occupied the space until recent times when a housing development replaced the business (see Figure 6).

A unique source of background information was discovered that shows the bridge and surroundings in the second quarter of the 1900s. Several minutes of film recorded in 1937 by film maker, H. Lee Waters, depicts the recreational facilities in high detail. Buildings, outside seating, boats, and details of the swimming and diving platforms are seen in a series of scenes showing locals at Holt's Lake. Several views of Bridge No. 56 and its immediate surroundings are present. The bridge appears very similar to now, though the rail had been solid and is now more open, probably the refreshed work reportedly done in the 1950s. No structures were visible on US 301 close to the bridge on either approach.

Aerial mapping over several decades was examined, as were USGS topographic maps (Four Oaks), and virtual streetside views using Google/Bing maps. The modern aerials are useful to establish current conditions. Much of the southern half of the project has been developed, save a length of mowed field or lawn. Near the southern bridge launch, the elevated terrain now a recently new neighborhood on the southwest quadrant and a somewhat older NC DMV building and parking lot. The APE expansion includes some of the mowed, formally agricultural field and all of the DMV building including the parking lot. Close to the lake north of Bridge No. 56, the parcels are currently undeveloped. Further north towards the project's endpoint, there is moderate development and broad lawns or wooded lots. Virtual streetside views confirm conditions seen in aerials.

Early USGS mapping (1906-1944) does not show Holt's Lake or the highway, though records, published interviews, and other accounts suggest that the body of water had been expanded using a new dam just upstream from the nearby railroad tracks sometime around or after 1919. The bridge and highway were in place by 1926 when the bridge was constructed. The Four Oaks USGS map (1984) does show the lake's expansion to its current size and an assortment of buildings in the APE and nearby vicinity. Some are still present; others have been replaced or simply removed. There was nothing of interest illustrated on the early century USGS maps, only a hilly terrain leading to the creek. Likewise, the Johnston County Soils Map (1911 MC.056.911h) depicts no structures present at the APE in the early, first quarter of the 20th century.

Aerial maps, especially high-resolution scans of historic images, prove to be useful at certain scales. Early aerials from 1940 and 1956 show an unchanged landscape with the same arrangement of buildings and businesses near the project area. The main building of the restaurant is seen on the 1940 aerial though without any lodging present yet, only the beginnings of the large, triangular court (See Figure 4). By 1956, the aerial shows the series of small lodging accommodations. In the lake, docks and platforms are very clear on the earliest 1940 aerial and 1956, also. A sandy or swept beach is present on the north shore west of the highway. Half a dozen assorted buildings are present at this once popular recreation spot. Later aerials show the restaurant removed and replaced. A building and parking lot is still present as the NC DMV southeast of the bridge. The smaller structures at the beach eventually could no longer be seen though a larger structure remains until after March 2006. By July 2006 the building and surroundings appear to have been cleared, likely bulldozed and graded.

Soils, for the most part, are favorable, useful farmlands north and south of the bridge. There are landforms where human activities of a type and duration substantial enough to leave an archaeological signature may have existed. The recreational beach area, which appears to be adjacent to the APE on the west, is shown as being in a potential flood hazard area. LIDAR imagery confirms the presence of low terrain on the north side of the bridge (see Figure 3). Otherwise, towards either end of the project the narrowing construction would encounter road construction disturbances and plowed soils.

Records at the NC Office of State Archaeology indicated that there are no archaeological sites present within or immediately adjacent to the APE, including NRHP listed or eligible archaeological sites or properties. Few archaeological sites or reviews are present in the nearby vicinity. NCDOT maintained cemetery data shows no known cemeteries at the project location.

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For this undertaking, the APE overlaps the current highway and bridge. The existing ROW, driveways, modern development and extensively plowed fields which have diminished the probability of encountering intact, significant archaeological resources. A twentieth century restaurant and lodging had existing partially within the APE though it has since been dozed for new development now present. A 1920s or 1930s era, beach-themed recreation destination appears to be west and outside of the APE and no longer existed in recent decades. Aerial photography documents clearing activities of on portions of this parcel in 2006, perhaps removing a large building.

Expansions to the roadway construction footprint are possible to accommodate a wider deck, shoulders or multi-use lane, or for necessary fill and grading for any necessary on-site detour if required by the chosen design. There are no documented archaeological sites within the APE or the nearby vicinity. For purposes of Section 106, no archaeological survey is recommended for this bridge replacement project.

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

The scale and nature of the project involves replacing a long bridge spanning a human-made, twentieth century lake. Development nearby began in the early 20th century and historic maps show no buildings and nothing of interest before that period. Properties developed and used for recreation and dining no longer serve that purpose and the landscape has been altered in part or in total. In addition to extensive plowing for agricultural use, modern development has occurred over segments of the APE, deteriorating the probability of intact resources. There are no known archaeological resources within or adjacent to the APE. Based on the scale of the bridge replacement project which overlaps a modern roadway, examination of historic maps, early aerials and other sources, and the observable extent of modification adjacent to the roadway, no archaeological survey is recommended.

Please note that the Catawba Indian Nation and Tuscarora Nation have expressed interest in Johnston County. Both should be notified if archaeological sites or human remains are identified during archaeological surveys or construction activities.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

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

FINDING BY NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

NO ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY REQUIRED



NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

03/11/2024

Date