

**MINIMUM CRITERIA DETERMINATION CHECKLIST**

<b>TIP Project No.</b>	<u>U-6202</u>
<b>W.B.S. Project No.</b>	<u>48662.1.1</u>

**Project Location:**

The project proposes to widen SR 2048 (Gordon Road) from I-40 to U.S. 17 (Market Street) in New Hanover County (see attached Project Location Map).

**Project Description:**

The 2.5-mile project will widen Gordon Road to a four-lane divided roadway with a 17.5-foot raised median. The proposed typical section will use 11-foot travel lanes with curb and gutter. A 10-foot multi-use path will be added within the berm area on the north side and a 5-foot sidewalk will be included on the south side.

This project is included in the 2020-2029 NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and is scheduled to begin right-of-way acquisition in fiscal year 2022 and construction in fiscal year 2024.

**Purpose and Need:**

The project is needed because the capacity of Gordon Road between I-40 and U.S. 17 is inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes, resulting in increased congestion and reduced mobility. The purpose of the project is to improve capacity and reduce congestion along Gordon Road and is intended to aid in managing the growth that the Wilmington area has been experiencing. This project will also improve mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians through the corridor by providing multimodal facilities.

**Anticipated Permit or Consultation Requirements:**

A permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will be required for proposed impacts to "Waters of the United States".

In addition, a corresponding NCDWR Section 401 Water Quality General Certification (GC) will likely be required prior to the issuance of the Section 404 Permit. The USACE holds the final discretion as to what permit will be required for the construction of this project at the time of application.

**Environmental Commitments:**

The list of special project commitments (Green Sheet) is located at the end of the checklist.

**Special Project Information:****Stormwater Management:**

NCDOT received a response to the Start of Study letter from the NC Division of Water Resources (NCDWR) on February 12, 2021. In addition to standard scoping comments, NCDWR noted the following project specific comment:

“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 *North Carolina Department of Transportation Stormwater Best Management Practices Toolbox* manual. The BMPs should, to the maximum extent practical, be selected and designed to reduce impacts of the target pollutants of concern (POCs) for the receiving waters.”

**Estimated Cost (as of December 2021):**

Construction	\$28,000,000
Right-Of-Way	\$14,000,000
Utilities	\$4,500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$46,500,000</b>

**Estimated Traffic:**

Existing (2019):	22,000 to 24,400 VPD
Future (2045):	29,400 to 35,300 VPD
TT-ST:	1 percent
Dual:	3 percent

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

**Hazardous Materials:** The March 2, 2021 GeoEnvironmental Phase I Report identified six (6) sites of concern within the project study area. Three (3) sites of concern are within the current slope stake limits of preliminary design plus an additional 25 feet.

Sites of concern identified in this report will be reviewed by the GeoEnvironmental Section once the Final Right of Way plans are complete to determine if Phase II Investigations and Right of Way Recommendations are necessary prior to right of way being acquired. If necessary, contaminated soil, underground fuel storage tanks, and ground water monitoring wells in conflict with the project will be removed prior to construction or addressed in a Project Special Provision.

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations:** The majority of the project area lacks sidewalks, bicycle, or greenway facilities, with the exception of a small portion of sidewalk along the north side of Gordon Road near Vorils Lane.

A Complete Streets Project Sheet was submitted to the Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) and approved in July 2021. IMD scoping comments noted a shared use path along Gordon Road would provide safe accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians along this corridor. Based on IMD recommendations and public feedback received, a 10-foot multi-use path will be added within the

berm area on the north side and a 5-foot sidewalk is proposed on the south side. Crosswalks are proposed at signalized intersections.

Construction of sidewalks and crosswalks are contingent upon the completion of a cost-sharing municipal agreement between New Hanover County and NCDOT.

**Alternatives Discussion:** Express Design No. H171413 was completed by HNTB in 2019. The Express Design studied both a 4-lane and 6-lane widening. The 6-lane alternative was dismissed due to the amount of right-of-way required.

Table 1 summarizes the potential environmental effects of the project. Impacts are based on slope stake limits of preliminary design plus an additional 25 feet.

**Table 1. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Build Alternative**

Potentially Impacted Resource	4-lane Widening
Length <sup>1</sup> (miles)	2.5
Delineated Wetland Impacts (acres)	0.3
Delineated Stream Impacts (linear feet)	920
Delineated Pond Impacts (acres)	0
Residential Relocations	14
Business Relocations	0
Federal/State Threatened Endangered Species Habitat Present <sup>2</sup>	No
Natural Heritage Program SNHA, Managed Areas and Wetland Mitigations Sites (acres)	0
Prime Farmlands/Farmlands of Statewide Importance (acres)	0
100-Year Floodplain and Floodway Impacts (acres)	0.2
500-Year Floodplain and Floodway Impacts (acres)	0.3
Historic Properties (no.)	0
Recorded Archaeological Sites (no.)	0
Wildlife Refuge/Gamelands (acres)	0
Recreational Areas/Parks (no.)	0
High Quality Waters (HQW, ORW, WS Protected or Critical Areas) (acres)	0
Public Water Supply Wells (100' Buffer) (no.)	0
Cemeteries (no.)	0
Churches (no.)	0
Potential UST/Hazmat Sites (no.)	3

**Table 1. Potential Impacts of the Proposed Build Alternative**

Potentially Impacted Resource	4-lane Widening
Total Cost <sup>3</sup>	\$46,500,000
<sup>1</sup> The length of the proposed build alternative consists of the 4-lane widening option with required roadway work. <sup>2</sup> The Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) has a Biological Conclusion of May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect under a Programmatic Biological Opinion with USFWS, USACE, FHWA, and NCDOT (See Protected Species section). <sup>3</sup> Costs include proposed cost of right of way, utility relocation, and construction.	

**Other Agency Comments:** NCDOT received a response to the Start of Study letter from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) on March 1, 2021, which indicated NCWRC had no specific comments or concerns.

**Public Involvement:** Landowner notification letters were sent to notify area property owners about the project in February 2021. No comments were received during this stage of the project.

A postcard was sent to 5,281 area property owners in November 2021. The postcard informed the public of the upcoming 30-day public comment period and that a virtual public meeting would be held in December 2021.

The Gordon Road Widening Public Meeting was held virtually on December 7, 2021 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm via GoToWebinar. Approximately 113 people attended all or part of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project design. The meeting host presented project highlights such as costs, schedule, and impacts associated with the proposed design, The presentation also included 3D visualizations. Following the project information presentation, a Question & Answer (Q&A) session was facilitated for approximately one hour.

The public comment period ended on January 3, 2022, with a total of 126 comments received. The majority of the comments received were regarding bicycle/pedestrian facilities, design, and right-of-way impacts. Comments received during the comment period were taken into consideration.

**PART A: MINIMUM CRITERIA**

1. Is the proposed project listed as a type and class of activity which would qualify as a Non-Major Action under the Minimum Criteria rules?

If “yes”, under which category? Category 26

**PART B: MINIMUM CRITERIA EXCEPTIONS**

- |  | <b>YES</b>               | <b>NO</b>                           |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. Could the proposed activity cause significant changes in land use concentrations that would be expected to create adverse air quality impacts?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Will the proposed activity have secondary impacts or cumulative impacts that may result in a significant adverse impact to human health or the environment?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Is the proposed activity of such an unusual nature or does the proposed activity have such widespread implications, that an uncommon concern for its environmental effects has been expressed to the Department?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Does the proposed activity have a significant adverse effect on wetlands; surface waters such as rivers, streams, and estuaries; parklands; prime or unique agricultural lands; or areas of recognized scenic, recreational, archaeological, or historical value? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Will the proposed activity endanger the existence of a species on the Department of Interior's threatened and endangered species list?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Could the proposed activity cause significant changes in land use concentrations that would be expected to create adverse water quality or ground water impacts?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Is the proposed activity expected to have a significant adverse effect on long-term recreational benefits or shellfish, finfish, wildlife, or their natural habitats  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Note: If any of Questions 2 through 8 in part B are answered “YES”, the proposed project may not qualify as a Minimum Criteria project. A State Environmental Assessment (EA) may be required.

**PART C: COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS**Ecological Impacts

- |  | <b>YES</b>                          | <b>NO</b>                           |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9. Is a federally protected threatened or endangered species, or its habitat, likely to be impacted by the proposed action?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 10. Does the action require the placement of fill in waters of the United States?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 11. Does the project require the placement of a significant amount of fill in high quality or relatively rare wetland ecosystems, such as mountain bogs or pine savannahs? | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Does the project require stream relocation or channel changes?   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Is the proposed action located in an Area of Environmental Concern, as defined in the Coastal Area Management Act?   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

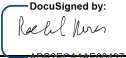
Cultural Resources

- |   |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 14. Will the project have an “effect” on a property or site listed on the National Register of Historic Places?                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Will the proposed action require acquisition of additional right of way from publicly owned parkland or recreational areas? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Additional Documentation as Required from Part C

**Question 9: Endangered Species.** As stated above, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has revised the previous programmatic biological opinion (PBO) in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the US 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. NCDOT, FHWA, and USACE have agreed to two conservation measures which will avoid/minimize mortality of NLEBs. 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 New Hanover County, where STIP Project U-6202 is located.

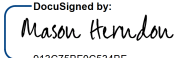
**Question 10: Stream and wetland impacts.** The project is anticipated to impact 0.2 acres of 100-year floodplain and 0.3 acre of 500-year floodplain. As shown in the NRTR, there are streams and wetlands within the project area. Using slope stake limits plus 25 feet, the project may impact less than 0.1 acre of Wetland WQ and 0.2 acre of Wetland WAE, for a total wetland impact of approximately 0.3 acre. The project is anticipated to impact 920 linear feet of stream. The USACE holds the final discretion as to what permit will be required to authorize project construction.

Prepared by:   
Rachel Nance  
HNTB Corporation

Date: 3/16/2022

Approved by:   
Brian Harding, PE  
Division 3 Division Design Construct (DDC)  
Design Engineer

Date: 3/21/2022

  
for Chad Kimes, PE  
Division 3  
Division Engineer

Date: 3/22/2022

# **PROJECT COMMITMENTS**

## **U-6202**

### **Gordon Road Widening**

#### **Division 3 Construction (NCDOT Hydraulics Unit)**

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

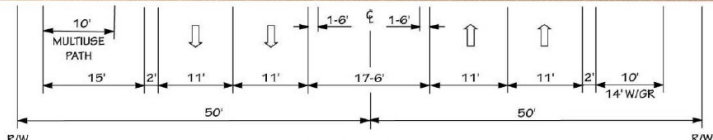
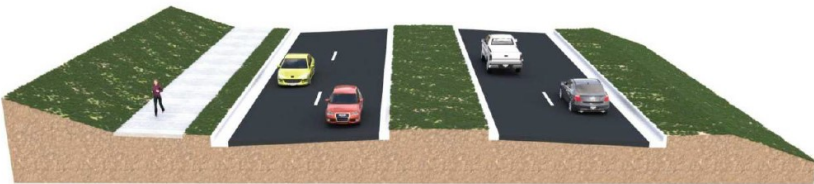
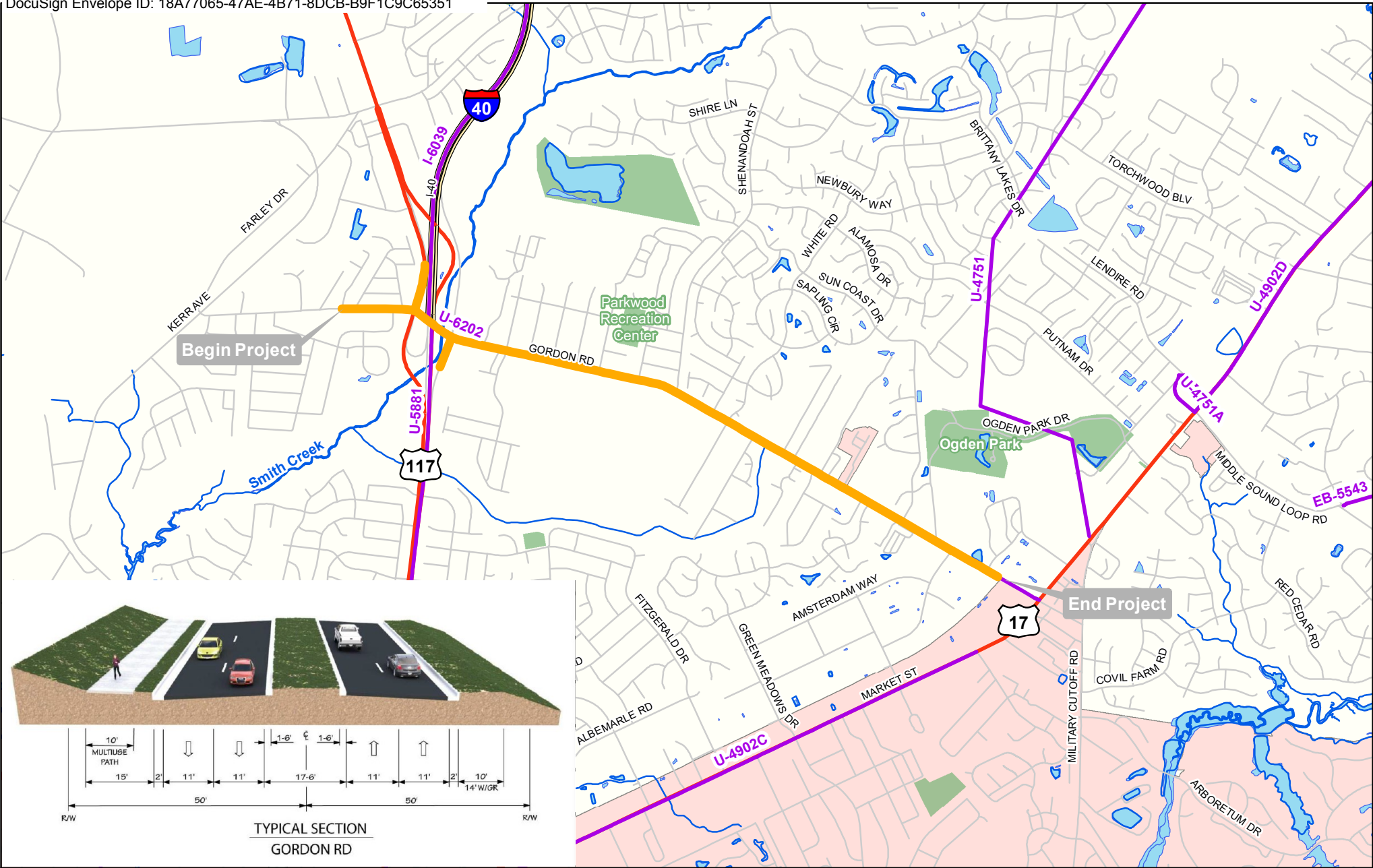
#### **Phase II GeoEnvironmental Investigation (NCDOT Division 3 Right of Way)**

Six (6) sites of concern were identified within the project study area as documented in the March 4, 2021 GeoEnvironmental Phase I Report. NCDOT's GeoEnvironmental Unit will conduct a Phase II GeoEnvironmental investigation for the sites of concern anticipated to be impacted by the project. Following the completion of the Phase II investigations, NCDOT GeoEnvironmental will prepare a Right of Way Acquisition Recommendations summary prior to new right of way being acquired. Contaminated soil, underground fuel storage tanks, and ground water monitoring wells in conflict with the project will be removed prior to construction or addressed in a Project Special Provision.

#### **NCDOT Division 3 – Roadway Design**

NCDOT will continue to coordinate with New Hanover County regarding the design of the project including landscaping and pedestrian accommodations, as well as a cost-sharing agreement for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

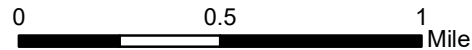




TYPICAL SECTION  
GORDON RD

**Legend**

- Gordon Road Widening
- STIP Points (2020-2029)
- STIP Project (2020-2029)
- Park
- City of Wilmington
- Open Water
- Stream
- Interstate
- US Route
- Road

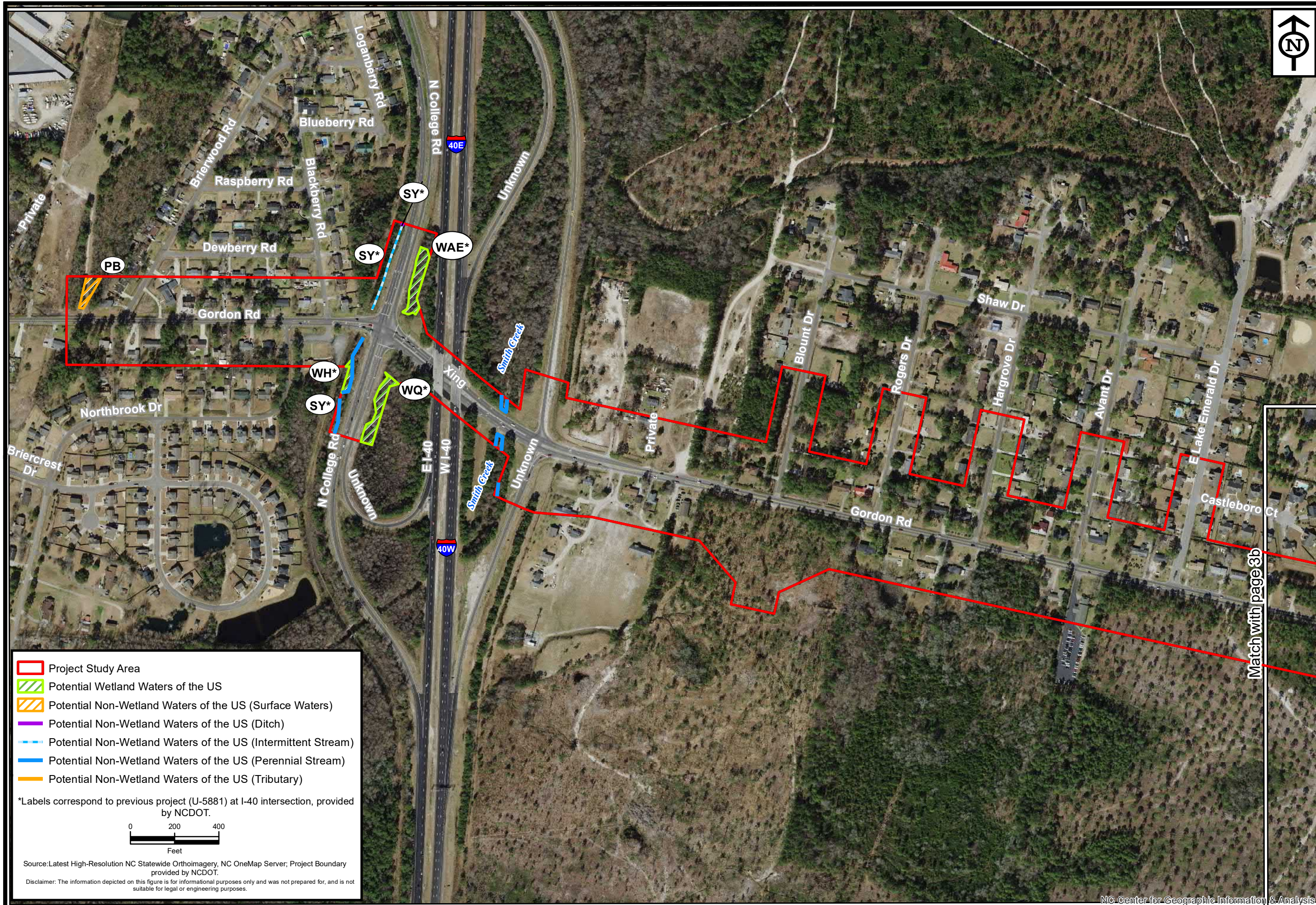


**Study Area Map**

STIP Project No. U-6202  
Widen SR 2048 (Gordon Road) from  
I-40 to US 17 (Market Street)  
Wilmington, New Hanover County

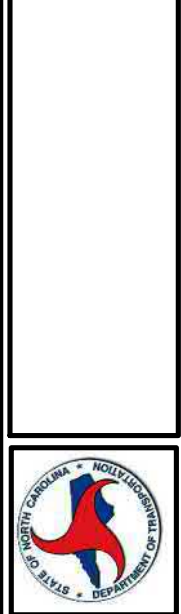
Sources: NCOneMap, ATLAS, City of Wilmington GIS. 2021.





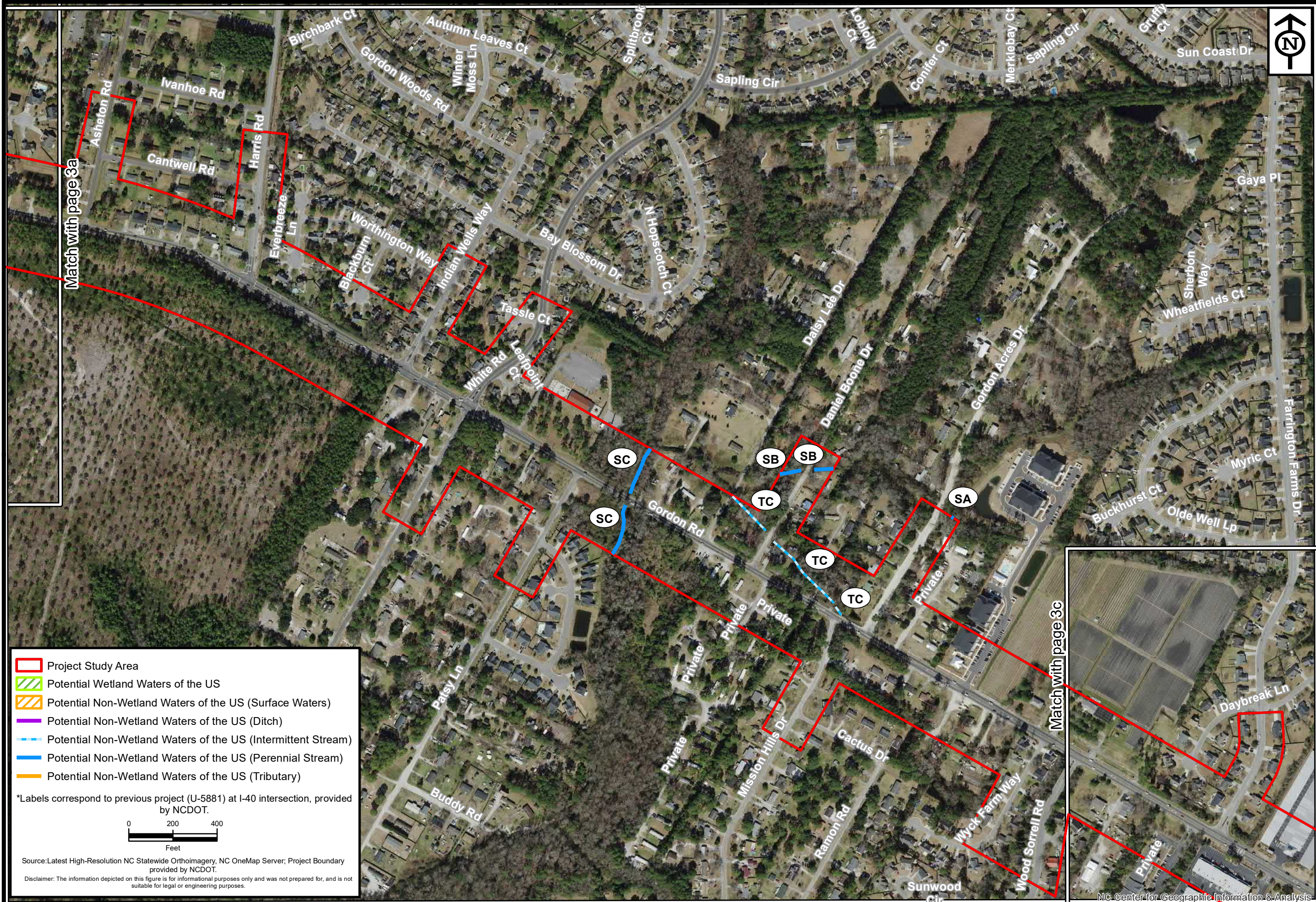
Project:	HL197035
Date:	Oct 2019
Drwn/Chkd:	CW/RT
Figure:	3a

Potential Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.  
**Gordon Road (SR 2048) Widening**  
 New Hanover County, North Carolina  
 STIP No. U-6202



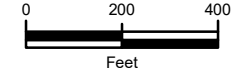
Match with page 3b





- Project Study Area
- Potential Wetland Waters of the US
- Potential Non-Wetland Waters of the US (Surface Waters)
- Potential Non-Wetland Waters of the US (Ditch)
- Potential Non-Wetland Waters of the US (Intermittent Stream)
- Potential Non-Wetland Waters of the US (Perennial Stream)
- Potential Non-Wetland Waters of the US (Tributary)

\*Labels correspond to previous project (U-5881) at I-40 intersection, provided by NCDOT.



Source: Latest High-Resolution NC Statewide Orthoimagery, NC OneMap Server; Project Boundary provided by NCDOT.  
 Disclaimer: The information depicted on this figure is for informational purposes only and was not prepared for, and is not suitable for legal or engineering purposes.

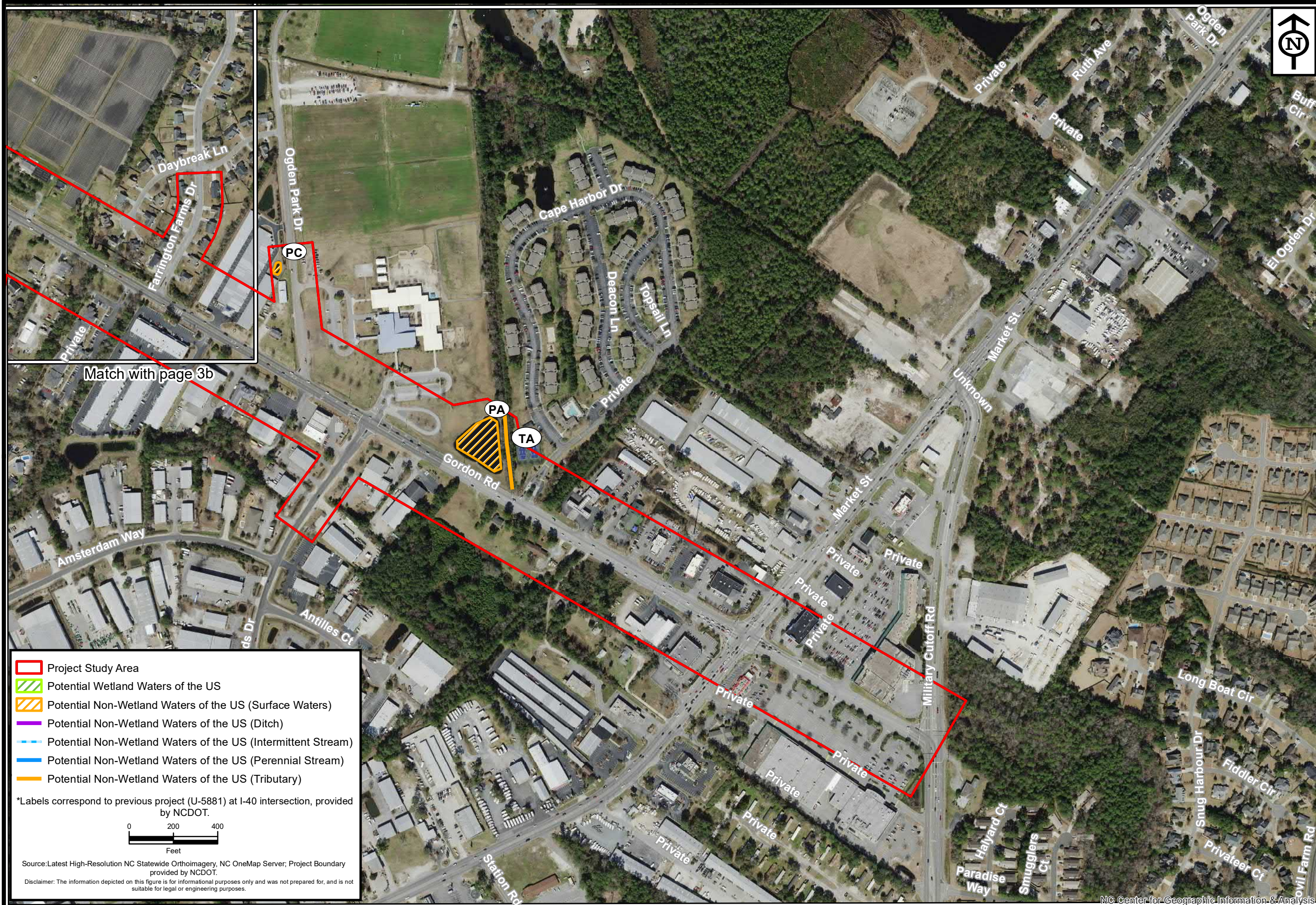


Project:	HL197035
Date:	Oct 2019
Drwn/Chkd:	CW/RT
Figure:	3b

Potential Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.  
**Gordon Road (SR 2048) Widening**  
 New Hanover County, North Carolina  
 STIP No. U-6202







Project:	HL197035
Date:	Oct 2019
Drwn/Chkd:	CW/RT
Figure:	3c

Potential Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.  
**Gordon Road (SR 2048) Widening**  
 New Hanover County, North Carolina  
 STIP No. U-6202



21-02-0010



## HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED FORM

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

### PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Project No:</b>	U-6202	<b>County:</b>	New Hanover
<b>WBS No.:</b>	48662.3.1	<b>Document Type:</b>	FCE
<b>Fed. Aid No:</b>		<b>Funding:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Federal
<b>Federal Permit(s):</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Permit Type(s):</b>	USACE
<b><u>Project Description:</u></b> Widen SR 2048 (Gordon Rd) from US 17 (Market St) to I-40. Road will widen to 4-lane with divided median from a 2-lane road.			

### **Description of review activities, field surveys, results, and conclusions:**

Review of HPOGIS web service was undertaken on February 22, 2021. Based on this review, there are no existing NR, DE, LL, SL or SS properties in the project area. There are a number of properties over 50 years of age in the APE. A windshield survey was conducted on February 24, 2021. Representative photographs were taken and presented to NCDOT Historic Architect staff on March 1, 2021. One neighborhood presented the highest likelihood for significance, Weaver Acres. This community appears to be a middle-class African American neighborhood built after the Civil Rights movement. 34 parcels are vacant or date from 1975 to 1993. The remaining 54 parcels date from 1964 to 1974. While this was found to be a very interesting neighborhood, there are not enough 50-year-old houses, even when the considering houses which will age in during the completion of this project, to warrant evaluation as a historic district. A second neighborhood in the APE is Parkwood Estates. It has a greater density of 50-year-old houses, but lacks the design, craftsmanship, and significance which would warrant evaluation for National Register evaluation. The remainder of the APE is populated with properties not yet 50-years-old and a number of mobile homes. No historic properties are present.

### SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

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

### FINDING BY NCDOT ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

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

Shelby Reap

March 4, 2021

NCDOT Architectural Historian

Date

Historic Architecture and Landscapes NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES PRESENT OR AFFECTED form for Minor Transportation Projects as Qualified in the 2007 Programmatic Agreement.



## 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 Team.



### PROJECT INFORMATION

**Project No:** U-6202                      **County:** New Hanover  
**WBS No:** 48662.3.1                      **Document:** Federal Categorical Exclusion  
**Federal Aid No:**                              **Funding:**  State                       Federal  
**Federal Permit Required?**  Yes                       No                      **Permit Type:** USACE

**Project Description:** Widen SR 2048 (Gordon Rd.) from US 17 Business (Market St.) to Interstate 40 in Wilmington in New Hanover County. The Area of Potential Effects (A.P.E.), based on the study area provided by the project manager, is approximately 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) long and 161 meters (527 ft.) wide. The project is state funded and will require federal permits, so this review is conducted pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

### SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW

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

The review included an examination of a topographic map, the New Hanover County soil survey, an aerial photograph, and an examination of records about previously recorded sites, previous archaeological surveys, and previous environmental reviews at the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology (OSA) in Raleigh. SR 2048 is oriented approximately east-west. US 17 Business is at the east end and Interstate 40 is at the west end.

The topographic map (Scotts Hill, N.C.) shows the A.P.E. is located in a developed part of the city of Wilmington. The landforms in the A.P.E. include an upland flat and two stream crossings. SR 2048 crosses a small tributary of Smith Creek near the middle of the study area, and crosses Smith Creek at the I-40 interchange near the west end of the study area. In this region, upland landforms have a low to moderate potential for archaeological sites. Edges of uplands overlooking streams have a higher potential, depending upon the distance from and elevation above the stream. The area on both sides of SR 2048 in the east half of the A.P.E. is shaded gray which indicates suburban development has altered the topography. In the west half of the A.P.E. a subdivision is shown on the north side of SR 2048. There are several structures widely scattered along the south side of SR 2048. The A.P.E. on the west side of I-40 is shaded gray.

The New Hanover County soil survey shows nine soil types in the A.P.E. Approximately 48% of the soil acreage in the A.P.E. is classified as well drained soil and 52% is classified as poorly drained. Land with well drained soil near streams has a moderate to high potential for prehistoric archaeological sites.

The aerial photograph shows both sides of SR 2048 in the east half of the A.P.E. are developed. In the west half of the A.P.E. the north side of SR 2048 is developed. There is an undeveloped section along the south side of SR 2048. The west end of the A.P.E. is occupied by the I-40 interchange.

A review of the web-based GIS data layers maintained by the OSA shows no previously recorded archaeological sites within or adjacent to the A.P.E. There are two projects that have been reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) within the A.P.E. ER 18-2290 ("Construct Smith Creek Village, 4645 Gordon Rd., Wilmington") is located at the west end of the A.P.E. on the north side of SR 2048. ER 90-7437 ("Weatherwood Subdivision, Phases II-V, #8490, Wilmington, 34.6 acres") is located on the south side of SR 2048 near the east end of the A.P.E. No survey was required for either project. The west end of the A.P.E. is within the limits of a previous archaeological survey for Interstate 40 (Loftfield 1979). The survey included the upland along the east side of Smith Creek and did not identify any archaeological sites.

Loftfield, Thomas C.

1979 A Prehistoric Archaeological Study of the X-3 Highway Corridor between Wilmington and Benson, North Carolina. Prepared for William S. Pollard Consultants, Inc., Memphis, Tennessee. Ocean Data Systems, Inc., Coastal Zone Resources Division, Wilmington, North Carolina.

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

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

The landform within the A.P.E. has a low to moderate potential for archaeological sites. Much of the land in the A.P.E. is developed.

**SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION**

See attached:  Map(s)     Previous Survey Info     Photos     Correspondence  
Other:

**FINDING BY NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST: NO ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY REQUIRED**

Caleb Smith

4/16/2021

NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST II

Date