



STIP # U-2801A Buncombe County

INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS SCREENING REPORT



LUSA NOT
WARRANTED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNER, FIRM: Diana Young-Paiva, Three Oaks Engineering	DIVISION: 13	ROUTE: US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road)	
PDEA ENGINEER: Ahmad Al-Sharawneh	WBS: 34859.1.FR3	AADT: 13,000 to 18,000 (2014)	
PDEA GROUP LEADER:	EXISTING NO. OF LANES: 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WIDENING	PROPOSED RIGHT-OF-WAY: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Control <input type="checkbox"/> Partial Control <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Control <input type="checkbox"/> Full Control
CS PROJECT COORDINATOR: Herman Huang	EXISTING MEDIAN: NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADDITION OF MEDIAN(S)	
CS GROUP LEADER APPROVAL: 	PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed improvements to US 25A (Sweeten Creek Road)		

Summary of Findings

Summary of proposed project modifications

- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Project U-2801A proposes to construct improvements to Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A) from Hendersonville Road (US 25) to Rock Hill Road (SR 3081), a distance of approximately 5.5 miles. It is anticipated that the project designs will include a four-lane, median-divided cross section; pedestrian and bicycle accommodations are also being evaluated for inclusion in the design.

Summary of the time horizon, study scope, and notable features

- Based on the range of time horizons assumed by local plans and population forecasts, a medium-range time horizon of 2035 was assumed for this analysis.
- The project will add one additional travel lane for each direction of travel to approximately 5.5 miles of Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A), an existing two lane facility. The project is on existing alignment, will not increase property exposure or create new land use nodes, and will not result in a change to control of access.
- Seven churches and a private school athletic complex represent the notable human environmental features in the Future Land Use Study Area (FLUSA). While there are several notable natural environmental features, they are afforded multiple protections under State and Federal laws and local ordinances. The natural environmental features include the Blue Ridge Parkway, a city park, a planned greenway, a protected ridge line, two creeks, and three targeted local watersheds (TLW).

Summary of the growth trends occurring/expected, development regulations

- Local planners reported that the study area has experienced growth in recent years and that growth is expected to continue. Buncombe County population grew at a 1.5% annualized rate of growth between 2000 and 2010, and State forecasts for Buncombe County reflect an anticipated 1.4% annualized rate of growth between 2010 and 2035.
- The overall market for development within the FLUSA is high. Asheville is experiencing a housing vacancy rate of less than one percent, and the greatest market for development will likely continue to be for residential use.



- Approximately 37% of the 2,166 acres of land in the FLUSA is available for development (811 acres). Much of the available land is found near the north end of the FLUSA; three large parcels contain the bulk of available land.
- Public water and sewer is available throughout the FLUSA, and there is existing capacity for future development, with plans in place to provide for additional capacity through the Time Horizon.
- Approximately half of the FLUSA is in unincorporated Buncombe County, and half is within the limits of the City of Asheville. Both Buncombe County and the City of Asheville have comprehensive plans and ordinances in place to effectively manage growth and development and protect natural resources.

Summary of the screening tool results

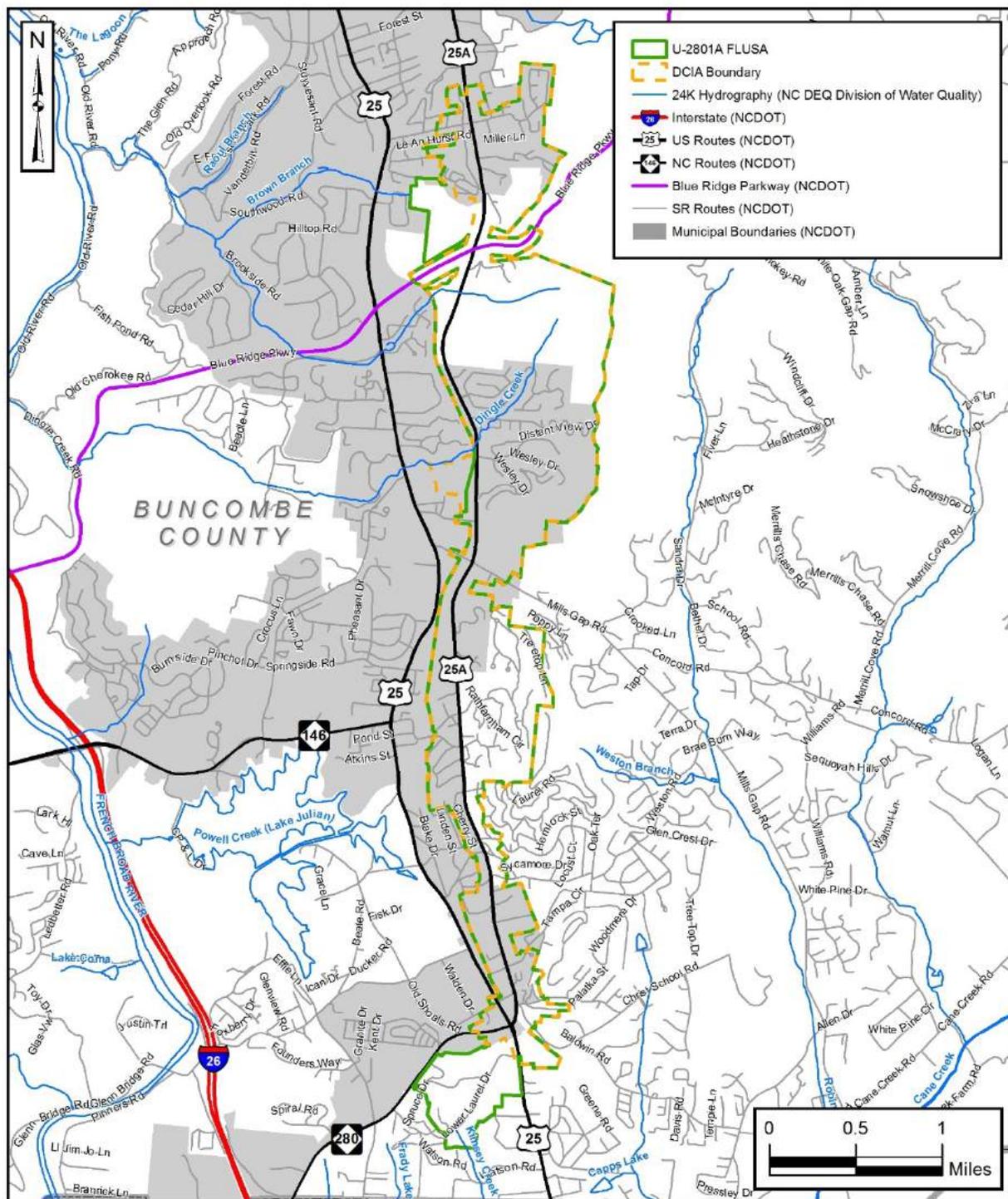
- The screening tool resulted in a total score of 16 points out of a total potential 46 points. Based on the information gathered from local plans and ordinances, interviews with local planners, field visit observations, mapping, and output from the screening tool below, a **Land Use Scenario Assessment is Not Likely to be warranted.**

Summary statement of findings in the screening report

- The screening-level analysis contained in this report found that overall, this project is expected to result in minor/no indirect land use effects. Furthermore, the screening analysis found that the project will not notably contribute to cumulative impacts to environmental resources in the FLUSA. Direct natural environmental impacts by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) projects will be addressed by avoidance, minimization, or mitigation consistent with programmatic agreements with the natural resource agencies during the Merger and Permitting processes. All developments will be required to follow local, state, and federal guidelines and permitting regulations.



FIGURE 1 - FLUSA



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

**FUTURE LAND USE STUDY AREA MAP
WIDEN SWEETEN CREEK ROAD (US 25A) FROM
HENDERSONVILLE ROAD (US 25)
TO SR 3801 (ROCK HILL RD)
BUNCOMBE COUNTY
STIP PROJECT U-2801A**

County: BUNCOMBE
Div: 13 STIP# U-2801A
WBS: 34859.1.FR3
Date: JUNE 2016

**Figure
1**



BASE SCREENING

PROJECT OVERVIEW

STIP project U-2801A proposes to construct improvements to Sweeten Creek Road (US 25 Alternate) from Hendersonville Road (US 25) to Rock Hill Road (SR 3081), a distance of approximately 5.5 miles. The project is located in south Asheville, in Buncombe County in the western Mountain Region of the state; the project study area includes land within the City of Asheville as well as unincorporated areas of Buncombe County. Sweeten Creek Road is a heavily used commuter corridor that connects South Asheville to the downtown core, and serves as an alternate to Hendersonville Road (US 25). Eighteen state-maintained roads intersect Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A) within the project study area; many provide a connection to Hendersonville Road. It is anticipated that the project designs will include a four-lane, median-divided cross section, and be designed for a posted speed limit of 45 mph, with a design speed of 50 mph. Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations will also be evaluated for inclusion in the designs. Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition is scheduled for 2020 and construction is scheduled for 2022.

For the purposes of complying with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared for this project. The project is intended to provide increased capacity and reduce the crash rate; however, the formal “Purpose and Need” for the EA has not yet been established. Based on project scoping, the project is not proposed to affect economic development in the area, or to serve a specific development objective.

The 2014 Annual Average Daily Travel (AADT) along Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A) ranges from 13,000 to 18,000. The volumes vary throughout the corridor, but the volume is highest at the north end of the project where there are 18,000 vehicles per day on Sweeten Creek Road between Mills Gap Road (SR 3116) and Rock Hill Road (SR 3081). The 2040 traffic forecast is not yet available at this stage of the planning process.

- NEW alignment
- EXISTING alignment

FUTURE LAND USE STUDY AREA

Map included (insert in Executive Summary)

The FLUSA is the area surrounding a construction project that could possibly be indirectly affected by the actions of others as a result of the completion of the project and combined projects. This study area encompasses all of the areas examined for potential increases in development pressure as a result of project construction. The area outlined in purple on Figure 1 has been chosen as the FLUSA. The FLUSA encompasses most of the Direct Community Impact Area (DCIA) studied in the Community Characteristics Report (CCR), but excludes a 27-acre parcel west of the project, separated from the project by the Blue Ridge Southern Railroad (BLU) W-line railroad. This land is already developed as a commercial property and is not expected to experience a change in use as a result of the project. The FLUSA extends beyond the DCIA to include a large parcel adjacent to the southwest corner of the DCIA, which is the site of a church-affiliated camp and year-round conference center, and a large un-developed parcel in the northwest quadrant of the Blue Ridge Parkway/Sweeten Creek Road intersection.

TIME HORIZON

The time horizon for pertinent local plans and state population forecasts vary. The City of Asheville’s current comprehensive plan, Asheville 2025, is in the process of being updated. The timeline for the update allows for an 18-month process, with a completion date in 2017. A 2030 population forecast is used as the basis for the Buncombe County Comprehensive Plan 2013 Update. The forecast date of state employment and population projections is 2035. The traffic forecast year is 2040. Based on the range of time horizons assumed by local plans and population forecasts, a **Medium** time horizon of 2035 was assumed for this analysis.

- Short Horizon; 5-10 years
- Medium Horizon; 11-20 years
- Long Horizon; 21-30 years



<p>OTHER TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS</p> <p><u>STIP U-5834</u> proposes to upgrade Mills Gap Road (SR 3116) from Hendersonville Road (US 25) to Weston Road (SR 3157), intersecting STIP U-2801A in the middle-section of the project. ROW is scheduled for 2018 and construction is scheduled for 2021. NCDOT will coordinate to ensure that STIP U-5834 accommodates the proposed improvements for STIP U-2801A.</p> <p><u>STIP U-5840</u> proposes to widen Old Airport Road (SR 1545) from US 25 to Mills Gap Road (SR 3116) in Henderson County, approximately one mile south of the southern terminus of STIP U-2801A. ROW is scheduled for 2017 and construction is scheduled for 2019.</p> <p><u>STIP I-5886</u> proposes to construct improvements to the Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A) interchange with I-40, which is located approximately one mile north of the project study area. ROW is scheduled for 2017 and construction is scheduled for 2018.</p> <p><u>STIP I-4700</u> proposes to add additional lanes on I-26 from NC 280 to I-40. Section A, the southern section, from NC 280 to NC 146 is unfunded. Section B, from NC 146 to I-40 is scheduled for ROW in 2018, and construction in 2020. I-26 roughly parallels Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A) two miles to the west.</p> <p><u>STIP I-5885</u> proposes to construct improvements to the I-40/Hendersonville Road (US 25) interchange. The project is located approximately two miles northwest. ROW is scheduled for 2017 and construction is scheduled for 2018.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Present within the FLUSA</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not present within the FLUSA</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map included <i>(insert in Appendix B)</i></p>
<p>POPULATION TRENDS / PROJECTIONS</p> <p>As reported in the CCR, Census data show that the population in Buncombe County grew from 206,330 in 2000 to 238,318 in 2010, from which a 1.5% annualized rate of growth is calculated. Census block group boundaries in the Demographic Study Area (DSA) used for the CCR changed substantially between 2000 and 2010; the boundary differences do not allow an accurate description of an annualized growth rate for the DSA. However, local planners reported that the study area has experienced growth in recent years, and that growth is expected to continue.</p> <p>The North Carolina State Office of Budget and Management (NCOBM) provides population projections for the state. The NCOBM anticipates that the population for the state will grow from 9,574,917 people in 2010 to 11,609,883 in 2030, which reflects a medium-to-low, 0.97% annualized growth rate. Buncombe County’s population is expected to grow at a somewhat higher, medium-level rate compared to the state as a whole. NCOBM projections are that Buncombe County will grow from 238,857 in 2010 to 315,714 by 2035. The numbers reflect projected overall growth rate of 32.18% and a 1.4% annualized growth rate.</p> <p>NCOBM population growth estimates for municipalities includes population estimates for the City of Asheville, which includes the majority of the population living in the FLUSA. A medium annualized growth rate of 1.71% is calculated from an estimated 83,393 people in April 1, 2010, and 89,248 in July 1, 2014.</p> <p>Based on Census data, State estimates and projections, and input for local planners, this analysis assumes that a Medium rate of growth (>1% - 2%) will occur annually to the 2035 Time Horizon.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>
<p>EMPLOYMENT TRENDS / PROJECTIONS</p> <p>The North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDOC) provides estimates of employment trends, as well as employment projections for cities, counties and Work Force Development Board (WDB) regions in the state. Data from NCDOC shows that City of Asheville employment grew from 40,846 in 2010 to 45,696 in 2015, a 2.27% annual rate of growth. The project, in Buncombe County, is within the Mountain Region WDB region. The NCDOC anticipates moderate employment growth in the Mountain Region WDB region in the near future, as expressed by 2010-2020 employment projections. The projections are based on an estimated 173,720 employed in 2010 and 203,350 projected in 2020, which can be expressed as a 1.59% annualized rate of growth.</p> <p>The N.C. Department of Commerce annually ranks the state’s 100 counties based on economic well-being, and assigns each a Tier designation. Employment trends are one of several factors</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>



<p>that are used to determine the ranking. Tier 3 counties are considered to be the least economically distressed counties. Buncombe County has been ranked a Tier 3 county since 2007.</p> <p>Based on State data on economic well-being, employment trends and near-term projections, this analysis assumes that a Medium rate of growth in employment (>1% - 2%) will occur annually to the medium term 2035 Time Horizon.</p>	
<p>NOTABLE FEATURES: HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES</p> <p>Notable human environmental features located within the FLUSA include the Asheville Day School Athletic Complex, located at 2351 Sweeten Creek Rd, and seven places of worship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith Church International, 15 Airport Road • Lutheran Church of the Nativity, 2425 Hendersonville Road • Arden First Baptist Church, 3839 Sweeten Creek Road • Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 3401 Sweeten Creek Road • New Hope Presbyterian Church, 3070 Sweeten Creek Road • Biltmore Church of God, 1390 Sweeten Creek Road • Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall, 25 Forest Lake Drive. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maps included</p>
<p>NOTABLE FEATURES: NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES</p> <p>The FLUSA includes several notable environmental features, as shown on Map B-3 in Appendix B. However, these features are afforded multiple protections under State and Federal laws and local ordinances as described below.</p> <p>The Blue Ridge Parkway, a 469-mile linear park that extends from Virginia through North Carolina, crosses over Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A) on a bridge. The Parkway is administered by the National Park Service, and thus afforded protections under Section 4(f).</p> <p>Jake Rusher Park, is a four-acre neighborhood park that includes a playground and open play areas. This City of Asheville park is located west of the project corridor, at 132 Peachtree Street, and is bounded by Sycamore Drive, Peachtree Street and Sycamore Terrace. As a public park, Jake Rusher Park is afforded protections under Section 4(f).</p> <p>Lake Julian Greenway, a potential Section 4(f) resource, is a City of Asheville and Buncombe County planned greenway that parallels the east side of Sweeten Creek Road in the middle section of the DCIA. The planned greenway also crosses Sweeten Creek Road near Azalea Terrace, and near Jake Rusher Park. As a planned recreational resource, the greenway may be afforded protections under Section 4(f) depending on its current ownership.</p> <p>A portion of a Protected Ridge Line as identified by the Mountain Ridge Protection Act of 1983 falls along the northeast FLUSA boundary, and is subject to special development regulations in addition to underlying zoning requirements.</p> <p>Portions of three Division of Mitigation Services targeted local watersheds (TLW) cover the entire FLUSA: TLW 06010105050010; TLW 06010105040010; and TLW 06010105070040. All three are in the French Broad River Basin.</p> <p>The project crosses two streams, Dingle Creek and Four Mile Branch, that flow into the French Broad River. The French Broad River is listed as impaired water under the provisions of Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act; however, Dingle Creek and Four Mile Branch are not impaired waters.</p> <p>Two small pockets of National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) wetlands are located in the FLUSA. Drainage and fill of jurisdictional wetlands is protected by Federal and State regulations.</p> <p>Based on protections afforded these natural resources, and the limited degree of notable human environmental features, the ranking for notable features is Medium.</p>	



ANALYTICAL SCREENING	IMPACT / PRESENCE ANTICIPATED	DEGREE OF IMPACT
<p>SCOPE OF PROJECT</p> <p>The project is intended to reduce the crash rate and provide increased capacity by constructing additional lanes on an existing road. Projected travel-time savings are not known at this stage of the planning process; however, the project is expected to result in travel-time savings that will exceed one minute. The project is on an existing alignment, and will not increase property exposure or create new land use nodes, and will not result in a change to control of access. Therefore, the project ranks Medium in this category.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Likely impacted; travel-time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not likely impacted; travel-time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likely impacted; travel patterns</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not likely impacted; travel patterns</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likely impacted; property access</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not likely impacted; property access</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likely impacted; property exposure</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not likely impacted; property exposure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Likely created; Likelihood that a transportation or land use node will be created as a result of the project.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not likely created; Likelihood that a transportation or land use node will not be created as a result of the project.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>
<p>WATER AND SEWER AVAILABILITY</p> <p>A map of existing water and sewer availability in the FLUSA is shown on Map B-4. The Metropolitan Sewerage District (MSD) of Buncombe County is a non-profit publicly-owned utility responsible for the treatment and disposal of sewage generated by municipalities and other political subdivisions in Buncombe County, including the City of Asheville. The District owns, operates and maintains a 40 million gallons per day (MGD) wastewater treatment plant to treat raw sewage and industrial wastewaters. Treated water is returned to the French Broad River. The current average daily discharge is between 17-23 MGD, well below the permitted 40 MGD. All the land in the FLUSA is within the MSD service area, and nearly all the developed land has sewage service. There is sufficient capacity for future development in the area, and current policies and plans provide a means for connections for future development.</p> <p>Public water is supplied to property in the FLUSA by the City of Asheville Water Services. The area is primarily served from the 16-year old Mills River Water Treatment Plant (WTP). The system also has the ability to provide water to the area from the two plants located in east Buncombe County that are older, but have been improved over the years: North Fork WTP, 61 years old; and, Wm. DeBruhl WTP, 31 years old. The current system capacity is 43.5 MGD and the current average system usage is 20.7 MGD. The system has sufficient capacity to provide water to new development as it occurs. The Master Plan specifies a new WTP in 2035. Prior to any tap or water line extension, a Water Availability Survey is completed. Typically, the developer supplies the infrastructure then deeds it to the city. While there may be a few properties in the FLUSA that rely on private wells, water lines are located nearby and connections are available.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FLUSA will have public water/sewer service.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> FLUSA will not have public water/sewer service.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map included <i>(insert in Appendix B)</i></p>



<p>Public water and sewer is available throughout the FLUSA, and there is existing capacity for future development, with plans in place to provide for additional capacity through the Time Horizon. Therefore, this category is ranked High.</p>		
<p>AVAILABLE LAND</p> <p>Approximately 37% of the 2,166 acres of land in the FLUSA is available for development (811 acres). Available land includes parcels without building structures and under-developed land; because parcel data did not include a value for improvements for all parcels in the FLUSA, the identification was based on aerial imagery. Available land excludes steeply sloped land (30% or greater), road and rail rights-of-way, protected lands such as public parks, NCDOT on-site mitigation properties, hazard mitigation properties, lands managed for conservation and open space, rivers and streams, and floodways.</p> <p>Figure B-5 shows that much of the available land is found near the north end of the FLUSA; three large parcels contain the bulk of available land. Biltmore Farms, Inc., owns a large undeveloped parcel in the northwest quadrant of the Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A)/Blue Ridge Parkway intersection. Biltmore Dairy Farms, Inc., a separate company, owns a larger undeveloped parcel in the southwest quadrant. The Givens Estates Retirement Community tract, 2360 Sweeten Creek Road, is under-developed in that a large amount of the property has not yet been built on, based on aerial imagery. The undeveloped portion of the tract was included in the amount of developable land. However, not apparent on aerial photography is the phased expansion of 260 apartments targeting senior and low-income housing. The first phase of 120 units is expected to open in 2016.</p> <p>Note that there is a large parcel of land in the southwest FLUSA that initially appeared to be underdeveloped based on aerial imagery. This parcel was outside the DCIA for the CCR, but added to the FLUSA to be included in the screening for indirect and cumulative effects. However, through further research and field visit observations, it has been determined that there is a well-established, church-affiliated camp and year-round conference center located on the tract. The land is zoned for Conference Center/Resort, and the use is not expected to change. Therefore, this parcel is not included in the available land calculation.</p> <p>Based on the amount of amount of land available for development, a Medium-High ranking is assumed for this category.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map included (<i>insert in Appendix B</i>)</p>
<p>MARKET FOR DEVELOPMENT: CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES</p> <p>The overall market for development within the FLUSA is ranked High. According to local officials, the area along the project corridor has been developing fairly rapidly, particularly with residential development. Both the City of Asheville and Buncombe County have seen an increase in the number of building permits compared to the years during the recent recession. The Asheville Planner reported that bigger apartments are being developed in the Sweeten Creek Road area.</p> <p>Recent/current development is described below:</p> <p><u>Givens Estates</u> at 2360 Sweeten Creek Road. This retirement community is located on the east side of Sweeten Creek Road between Gerber Road and Park Avenue. A phased expansion of 260 apartments targeting senior and low-income housing is planned. The first phase of 120 units expected to open in 2016.</p> <p><u>Avalon Apartments at Sweeten Creek</u>. Located on the west side of Sweeten Creek Road near the south end of the DCIA; construction of this 92-unit apartment complex was completed in 2015.</p> <p><u>Palisades Apartments</u> at 900 Palisades Circle off Mills Gap Rd; construction of 224-unit apartment complex was completed in 2015.</p> <p><u>Hawthorne at Mills Gap</u> is a planned apartment development for 272 apartments in the northeast quadrant of the Sweeten Creek Road/Mills Gap Road intersection. Two access points are proposed: a main entrance on Mills Gap Road, and secondary entrance on Sweeten Creek Road. A traffic impact study was prepared for the project in December, 2015.</p> <p><u>Duke Energy Progress, Inc.</u>, plans to construct an electrical substation on a 4.96-acre parcel owned by the company, in the southwest quadrant of the Sweeten Creek Road/Mills Gap Road intersection.</p>		<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>



<p>MARKET FOR DEVELOPMENT: DEVELOPMENT MARKET ASSUMPTIONS</p> <p>The project is not likely to change developmental patterns within the FLUSA; the greatest market for development will likely continue to be for residential use. Asheville currently is experiencing a housing vacancy rate of less than one percent. Additionally, there is a shortage of available affordable housing: 43% of renter households pay more than 30% of their income in rent, and 25% of owner households are considered cost burdened.</p> <p>Although the City has an existing policy to protect industrial land, market forces are creating pressure to relax that policy in order to meet the demand for increased housing. Some of the land within the FLUSA is currently zoned and used for industrial uses. The Asheville planner reported that some industrial businesses are switching over to residential development in response to market forces. The City is also interested in looking at ways to soften existing rules to allow infill development. Presumably, the comprehensive plan that is currently being updated will address these issues.</p> <p>The two large tracts of undeveloped land located near the Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A)/Blue Ridge Parkway intersection are in Buncombe County, and zoned for single-family residential development. Because much of the FLUSA to the south is already developed, these tracts present the largest opportunity for future development. The tract in the southeast quadrant is owned by the Biltmore Company; the tract in the northwest quadrant is owned by Biltmore Farms, Inc., a separate entity. Biltmore Farms has developed several planned communities in Asheville, including Biltmore Ramble, located near the project to the west. The Buncombe County planner reported that while there are no known development plans for either of the two tracts, it is assumed that they will be developed for residential communities in the future, with the timing based on market demands.</p> <p>Based on information from local planners about recent and current development, and current housing needs; and, taking into account the State's projected moderate rate of population growth for the area, the market for development is ranked High.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p>
<p>PUBLIC POLICY</p> <p>Approximately half of the FLUSA is in unincorporated Buncombe County, and half is within the limits of the City of Asheville. Asheville previously had planning jurisdiction for the land along Sweeten Creek Road in unincorporated Buncombe County; however, that changed three years ago. In 2013, the North Carolina legislature passed an amendment to §160A-360 of the General Statutes, with respect to Asheville, by which the authority to have any extraterritorial planning jurisdiction (ETJ) was eliminated for Asheville (S.L. 2013-30, H 224). Although the County had an existing comprehensive zoning plan for unincorporated areas outside municipality zoning jurisdictions, they had to respond quickly to establish new zoning districts for the areas in Asheville's former ETJ. Today, the zones generally align closely to the former zoning districts established by the City.</p> <p>A summary of the City of Asheville's public policy related to development is summarized below, followed by a summary of Buncombe County policy.</p> <p>The City of Asheville has an effective and implementable comprehensive plan; the Asheville Development Plan 2025 was adopted in 2003. The City is in the process of updating the plan to respond to demographic changes and population growth, and the new plan is expected to be completed in 2017. The new plan will focus on six facets of sustainability:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect land use planning with multimodal transportation planning 2. Mitigate impacts of climate change 3. Maintain a resilient and diversified economy 4. Promote community and housing equity 5. Encourage healthy communities 6. Enhance local and regional partnerships <p>The City is very interested in providing multi-modal transportation, and is looking for ways to better achieve that goal, particularly on state-maintained roads.</p> <p>The City of Asheville's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) as amended February 12, 2016, contains the ordinances and regulations related to the development and use of property within the City's jurisdiction. It serves to implement and enforce the policies and goals contained within the current comprehensive plan. The UDO sets forth requirements for an annual review of the comprehensive plan, and a process for amending the plan. Chapter 7 contains ordinances related to</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Med.-Low</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low</p>



development, some of which are described below; all are enforced through the building and zoning permitting process.

- Section 7-2-1 Official zoning maps identifies the City of Asheville North Carolina Official Zoning Maps that establish use districts with allowable densities for the ETJ.
- Section 7-12-1- Flood Protection provides standards that restrict or prohibit uses that result in damaging increases in erosion, flood heights, or velocities; control alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels and natural protective barriers; and, control filling, grading, dredging and all other development that may increase erosion or flood damage.
- Section 7-12-2. - Stormwater, soil erosion and sedimentation control, illicit discharge and connection ordinance establishes minimum requirements and procedures to control the potential adverse effects of increased stormwater runoff associated with both future development and existing developed land and non-point and point source pollution associated with new development and redevelopment as well as illicit discharges into municipal stormwater systems; regulates the clearing, grading, excavation, filling and manipulation of the earth and the moving and storing of waters in order to control and prevent accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation; and establishes decision-making processes for development that protect the integrity of watersheds and preserve the health of water resources. The City requires that some developments obtain stormwater permits. These developments must retain additional stormwater runoff on their property to reduce impact on adjacent properties.
- Sec. 7-12-4. - Steep slope and ridgetop development regulations have been adopted to address safety concerns related to the development of steeply sloped land, and protect the scenic beauty of the surrounding mountain area. Steep slopes are designated as those areas at or above 2,220 feet in elevation above mean sea level and having an existing grade of 15 percent or more. For the purpose of applying specific development standards, steep slope areas have been separated into different zones: Zone A - Areas between 2,220 and 2,349 feet in elevation and having an existing grade of 15 percent or more; Zone B - Areas at or above 2,350 feet in elevation.

In 2009, Buncombe County established a comprehensive zoning plan for properties located in Buncombe County outside the boundaries of incorporated municipalities and their zoning jurisdictions. The plan establishes largely undeveloped mountain ranges as priority areas for conservation, and directs denser development towards corridors with existing infrastructure.

The County's zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan are effective in managing growth in the county and within the FLUSA. Recently, the zoning ordinances were revised to include new text that is more clearly written. The ordinances are enforceable through zoning and the building permitting process; review and oversight is provided by the Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, and the Board of Commissioners.

Some of the pertinent ordinances include:

- The Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance regulates, through permitting, land disturbing activities to control accelerated erosion and sedimentation, in order to prevent the pollution of water and damage to lakes, water coursed and other public and private property by sedimentation.
- The Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance regulates development within the 100-year floodplain to promote public health and safety, and minimize public and private losses due to flooding in flood-prone areas. The ordinance meets the standards of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- The Stormwater Management Ordinance was adopted to establish minimum requirements for the control of adverse impacts due to stormwater runoff associated with new development in the county. Restrictions are placed on development properties to ensure that land use remains consistent with the designed stormwater system. The county ordinance has been given delegated authority by the NC Division of Water Quality to administer the NPDES Phase II rules.
- The Subdivision Ordinance establishes procedures and standards for the subdivision of land within the jurisdiction of the county, to provide for orderly growth in a manner and under



conditions that facilitate the adequate provision of streets, water, sewage disposal and other considerations essential to public health, safety, and the general welfare. It establishes the requirement for building permits, and penalties for violations.

- The Zoning Ordinance defines districts within which, certain uses are permitted, conditional, or not allowed. Any uses that are listed as conditional in a particular Zoning District require a Conditional Use Permit from the Board of Adjustment prior to construction or change in use. There are building setback and minimum lot size requirements in all zoning districts with the exception of the Open Use District. A
- The Protected Ridge Overlay District was established in recognition that the development of land in steep, mountainous areas involves special considerations and requires unique development standards. This section is intended to limit the density of development, preserve the viewshed and protect the natural resources of Buncombe County's protected mountain ridges, consistent with the recommendations of the 1998 Buncombe County Land Use Plan and supplemental to the provisions of the Mountain Ridge Protection Act of 1983.
- Hillside Development Standards provides additional standards for land that has an average slope of its natural terrain of 25 percent or greater, or has an average slope of its natural terrain of less than 25 percent, but 30 percent of the tract is greater than 35 percent slope.

Buncombe County has plans and ordinances in place to effectively manage growth and development. The City of Asheville also has effective plans and ordinances in place to manage growth and development, and the Comprehensive Plan is being updated. Therefore, this criterion is rated **Low** with regard to the indirect land use effects screening tool.

INDIRECT LAND USE EFFECTS SCREENING TOOL METHODOLOGY

SCREENING TOOL RESULTS

The screening tool resulted in a total score of 16 points out of a total potential 46 points. Based on the information gathered from local plans and ordinances, interviews with local planners, field visit observations, mapping, and output from the screening tool below, a **Land Use Scenario Assessment is Not Likely to be warranted.**

FIGURE 2 – INDIRECT LAND USE EFFECTS SCREENING TOOL

Indirect Land Use Effects Screening Tool - STIP U-2801A- Widen Sweeten Creek Road										
Rating	Scope of Project	Travel Time Savings	Forecasted Population Growth	Forecasted Employment Growth	Available Land	Water/Sewer Availability	Market for Development	Public Policy	Notable Environmental Features	Result
More Concern	Major New Location	> 10 minute travel time savings	> 3% annual population growth	Substantial # of New Jobs Expected	5000+ Acres of Land	All services existing / available	Development activity abundant	Less stringent; no growth management	Targeted or Threatened Resource	
↑						X	X			
↑					X					
↔	X		X	X					X	
↓		X								Land Use Scenario Assessment Not Likely
Less Concern	Very Limited Scope	No travel time savings	No population growth or decline	No new Jobs or Job Losses	Limited Land Available	No service available now or in future	Development activity lacking	More stringent; growth management	Features incorporated in local protection	
								X		



ANALYZE AND EVALUATE DATA

If the Screening Tool denotes that a Land Use Scenario Assessment is not warranted, then go to Procedure A. If the Screening Tool denotes that a Land Use Scenario Assessment is possible (yellow) or warranted, go to Procedure B.

PROCEDURE A

STEP 1: INDIRECT SUMMARY STATEMENT

The categories listed on the ICE screening tool above have been shown to influence land development decisions in numerous areas statewide and nationally. Each characteristic is assessed individually and the results of the table are looked at comprehensively to determine the indirect and cumulative effects potential of the proposed project. The scope of the project and change in accessibility categories are given extra weight to determine the indirect and cumulative effects potential of the proposed project. The scope of the project and change in accessibility categories are given extra weight to determine if future growth in the area is related to the project modification. The FLUSA shown on Figure 1 and the maps shown in Appendix B were used for this assessment. The ratings for each assessment category are shown in Figure 2 and the reasons for each rating are summarized below. **Overall, this project is expected to result in minor/no indirect land use effects.**

Scope of Project: The project will add two additional lanes to approximately 5.5 miles of Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A), an existing two lane facility. The project is on existing alignment and will not increase property exposure or create new land use nodes, and will not result in a change to control of access. Therefore, the project ranks **Medium** in this category.

Travel Time Savings: Projected travel-time savings are not known at this stage in the planning process; however, the project may result in travel-time savings that will exceed one minute. Therefore, the project ranks **Medium-Low** in this category.

Forecasted Population Growth: While it was not possible to calculate an accurate description of the annualized growth rate for the DSA, local planners reported that the study area has experienced growth in recent years and that growth is expected to continue. Buncombe County population grew at a 1.5% annualized rate of growth between 2000 and 2010; and, State forecasts for Buncombe County anticipate a 1.4% annualized rate of growth between 2010 and 2035. Therefore, a **Medium** rate of growth is assumed for this analysis.

Forecasted Employment Growth: Based on State data on economic well-being, employment trends and near-term projections, this analysis assumes that a **Medium** rate of growth in employment (>1% - 2%) will occur annually to the medium term 2035 Time Horizon.

Available Land: Approximately 37% of the 2,166 acres of land in the FLUSA is available for development (811 acres); this includes the under-developed acreage already planned for development as part of the Givens Estate Retirement Community phased expansion. The percentage of available land constitutes a **Medium-High** ranking in this category.

Water/Sewer Availability: Public water and sewer is available throughout the FLUSA, and there is existing capacity for future development, with plans in place to provide for additional capacity through the Time Horizon. Therefore, this category is ranked **High**.

Market for Development: Based on information from local planners about recent and current development, as well as current housing needs, and taking into account the State's projected moderate rate of population growth for the county, the market for development is ranked **High**. The project is not likely to change developmental patterns within the FLUSA; the greatest market for development will likely continue to be for residential use. Asheville currently is experiencing a housing vacancy rate of less than one percent.

Public Policy: Approximately half of the FLUSA is in unincorporated Buncombe County, and half is within the limits of the City of Asheville. Both Buncombe County and the City of Asheville have plans and ordinances in place to effectively manage growth and development, and protect natural resources. Therefore, this criterion is rated **Low**.

Notable Environmental Resources: Notable human environmental resources include seven churches and the Asheville Day School athletic complex. While there are several notable natural environmental features, they are afforded multiple protections under State and Federal laws and local ordinances. The natural environmental features include three potential Section 4(f) resources: the Blue Ridge Parkway, Jake Rusher Park, and the planned Lake Julian Greenway. A portion of a Protected Ridge Line as identified by the Mountain Ridge Protection Act of 1983 lies along the northeastern FLUSA boundary. Portions of three Division of Mitigation Services targeted local watersheds



(TLW) cover the entire FLUSA: TLW 06010105050010; TLW 06010105040010; and TLW 06010105070040. All three are in the French Broad River Basin. Two streams, Dingle Creek and Four Mile Branch, that flow into the French Broad River. The French Broad River is listed as impaired water under the provisions of Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act; however, Dingle Creek and Four Mile Branch are not impaired. Two small pockets of National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) wetlands are located in the FLUSA. Based on protections afforded these natural resources, and the limited degree of notable human environmental features, the ranking for project effects on notable features in the screening tool is **Medium**.

STEP 2: WATER QUALITY STATEMENT

This project will not notably contribute to cumulative impacts to environmental resources in the FLUSA. The potential for the degradation of water quality also exists through erosion and stream sedimentation. Yet, any direct natural environmental impacts by NCDOT projects would be addressed by avoidance and minimization consistent with programmatic agreements with the natural resource agencies during the Merger and Permitting processes. No further indirect and cumulative analysis is recommended.

STEP 3: CUMULATIVE EFFECTS SUMMARY STATEMENT

This project will not notably contribute to cumulative impacts to environmental resources in the FLUSA. Direct natural environmental impacts by NCDOT projects will be addressed by avoidance, minimization, or mitigation consistent with programmatic agreements with the natural resource agencies during the Merger and Permitting processes. All developments will be required to follow local, state, and federal guidelines and permitting regulations. Provided below is a summary of notable past public and private actions that have taken place in the FLUSA, including transportation projects, that were assessed for potential cumulative effects on environmental resources. The notable natural environmental resources found within the FLUSA, and the protective laws, ordinances and regulations that are currently in place are also summarized.

Past Projects: Avalon Apartments at Sweeten Creek, located on the west side of Sweeten Creek Road near the south end of the DCIA; construction of this 92-unit apartment complex was completed in 2015. Palisades Apartments at 900 Palisades Circle off Mills Gap Rd, construction of 224-unit apartment complex was completed in 2015.

Current Projects: Givens Estates at 2360 Sweeten Creek Road. This retirement community is located on the east side of Sweeten Creek Road between Gerber Road and Park Avenue. A phased expansion of 260 apartments targeting senior and low-income housing is planned. The first phase of 120 units expected to open in 2016.

Future Projects: Phase Two of the Givens Estates retirement community expansion. Hawthorne at Mills Gap is a planned apartment development for 272 apartments in the northeast quadrant of the Sweeten Creek Road/Mills Gap Road intersection. Two access points are proposed: a main entrance on Mills Gap Road, and secondary entrance on Sweeten Creek Road. A traffic impact study was prepared for the project in December, 2015. In addition, Duke Energy Progress, Inc. plans to construct an electrical substation on a 4.96-acre parcel owned by the company, in the southwest quadrant of the Sweeten Creek Road/Mills Gap Road intersection. One NCDOT project included in the current NCDOT STIP is located within the FLUSA. STIP U-5834 proposes to upgrade Mills Gap Road (SR 3116) from Hendersonville Road (US 25) to Weston Road (SR 3157), intersecting STIP U-2801A in the middle-section of the project. ROW is scheduled for 2018 and construction is scheduled for 2021. NCDOT will coordinate the two projects together to ensure that STIP U-5834 accommodates the proposed improvements for STIP U-2801A.

Notable Environmental Resources: The FLUSA includes several notable natural environmental features as shown on Map B-3 in Appendix B.

The Blue Ridge Parkway, a 469-mile linear park that extends from Virginia through North Carolina, crosses over Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A) on a bridge. The Parkway is administered by the National Park Service, and thus afforded protections under Section 4(f).

Jake Rusher Park, is a four-acre neighborhood park that includes a playground and open play areas. This City of Asheville park is located west of the project corridor, at 132 Peachtree Street, and is bounded by Sycamore Drive, Peachtree Street and Sycamore Terrace. As a public park, Jake Rusher Park is afforded protections under Section 4(f).

Lake Julian Greenway is a City of Asheville and Buncombe County planned greenway that parallels the east side of Sweeten Creek Road along the middle section of the project. The planned greenway also crosses Sweeten Creek Road near Azalea Terrace, and near Jake Rusher Park. As a planned recreational resource, the greenway may be afforded protections under Section 4(f) depending on its current ownership.



A portion of a Protected Ridge Line as identified by the Mountain Ridge Protection Act of 1983 falls along the northeast FLUSA boundary, and is subject to special development regulations in addition to underlying zoning requirements.

Portions of three Division of Mitigation Services targeted local watersheds (TLW) cover the entire FLUSA: TLW 06010105050010; TLW 06010105040010; and TLW 06010105070040. All three are in the French Broad River Basin.

Two small pockets of National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) wetlands are located in the FLUSA. Drainage and fill of jurisdictional wetlands is protected by Federal and State regulations.

Impacts on Environmental Resources: Approximately 37% of the 2,166 acres of land in the FLUSA is available for development (811 acres). Available land includes parcels without building structures and under-developed land. Available land excludes steeply sloped land (30% or greater), road and rail rights-of-way, protected lands such as public parks, NCDOT on-site mitigation properties, hazard mitigation properties, lands managed for conservation and open space, rivers and streams, and floodways.

The notable natural environmental features found within the FLUSA are provided multiple protections under State and Federal laws and local ordinances as described above. With these existing regulations and constraints to development including the topography of the area, the combination of past, current and future projects is expected to have a minor impact on notable environmental resources in the FLUSA.

STEP 4: DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Local governments have existing plans and ordinances in place to adequately manage anticipated growth; therefore, no specific recommendations for additional actions are provided in this screening.



SOURCES

Provide a list of sources used to develop the report. All sources shall include the information, including telephone numbers and web addresses, needed to return to the original source of the information if required.

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lcarreiro@ashevillenc.gov Phone: 828-271-6101. 06/09/2016.

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Satvika, Vaidila, Urban Planner. City of Asheville, Planning Department. Email: vsatvika@ashevillenc.gov Phone: 828.259.5798 (Appendix C Local Official Input Forms). 04/18/2016.

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APPENDIX ITEMS

- A. Interviews
- B. Maps



APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWS



INTERVIEW FORM: Indirect and Cumulative Effects Screening Report – Public Policy

Document and describe the policies and regulations that apply to the development of land within the Future Land Use Study Area (FLUSA) through an interview with the local planning department. Less restrictive policies and regulations are considered “high” in ranking, whereas more restrictive regulations and growth management policies are considered a “low” ranking.

Municipality name:	City of Asheville				
Date:	02/26/2016				
Local Planner:	Vaidila Satvika, City of Asheville				
Interviewer:	Diana Young-Paiva, Three Oaks Engineering				
Method of Contact:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-person meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email				
Overall assessment of policies (less/more restrictive policies)	High	Med-High	Medium	Med-Low	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Existing Public Policy	Describe in what ways local and state policies may be considered effective in the way they manage growth within the FLUSA (i.e. by the community, planning board and other policies and regulations).				
	<p>The City of Asheville has an effective and implementable comprehensive plan. The Asheville Development Plan 2025 was adopted in 2003. The City is in the process of updating the plan to respond to demographic changes and population growth, and the new plan is expected to be completed in 2017.</p> <p>The new plan will focus on six facets of sustainability:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect land use planning with multimodal transportation planning 2. Mitigate impacts of climate change 3. Maintain a resilient and diversified economy 4. Promote community and housing equity 5. Encourage healthy communities 6. Enhance local and regional partnerships <p>The City is very interested in providing multi-modal transportation, and is looking for ways to better achieve that goal, particularly on state-maintained roads.</p>				
	The City of Asheville’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) as amended February 12, 2016, contains the ordinances and regulations related to the development and use of property within the City’s jurisdiction. It serves to implement and enforce the policies and goals contained within the current comprehensive plan. The UDO sets forth requirements for an annual review of the comprehensive plan, and a process for amending the plan.				



	<p>Chapter 7 contains ordinances related to development, some of which are described below; all are enforced through the building and zoning permitting process.</p> <p>Section 7-2-1 Official zoning maps identifies the City of Asheville North Carolina Official Zoning Maps that establish use districts with allowable densities for the ETJ.</p> <p>Section 7-12-1- Flood Protection provides standards that restrict or prohibit uses that result in damaging increases in erosion, flood heights, or velocities; control alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels and natural protective barriers; and, control filling, grading, dredging and all other development that may increase erosion or flood damage.</p> <p>Section 7-12-2. - Stormwater, soil erosion and sedimentation control, illicit discharge and connection ordinance establishes minimum requirements and procedures to control the potential adverse effects of increased stormwater runoff associated with both future development and existing developed land and non-point and point source pollution associated with new development and redevelopment as well as illicit discharges into municipal stormwater systems; regulates the clearing, grading, excavation, filling and manipulation of the earth and the moving and storing of waters in order to control and prevent accelerated soil erosion and sedimentation; and establishes decision-making processes for development that protect the integrity of watersheds and preserve the health of water resources. The City requires that some developments obtain stormwater permits. These developments must retain additional stormwater runoff on their property to reduce impact on adjacent properties.</p> <p>Sec. 7-12-4. - Steep slope and ridgetop development regulations have been adopted to address safety concerns related to the development of steeply sloped land, and protect the scenic beauty of the surrounding mountain area. Steep slopes are designated as those areas at or above 2,220 feet in elevation above mean sea level and having an existing grade of 15 percent or more. For the purpose of applying specific development standards, steep slope areas have been separated into different zones: Zone A - Areas between 2,220 and 2,349 feet in elevation and having an existing grade of 15 percent or more; Zone B - Areas at or above 2,350 feet in elevation.</p>
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INTERVIEW FORM: Indirect and Cumulative Effects Screening Report – Market for Development



Document the current development pressures and trends in the Future Land Use Study Area (FLUSA). Document how these trends will likely project into the design year of the project. A “high” ranking describes abundant development activity and a “low” ranking describes when development activity is lacking.

Municipality name:	City of Asheville				
Date:	02/26/2016				
Local Planner:	Vaidila Satvika, City of Asheville				
Interviewer:	Diana Young-Paiva, Three Oaks Engineering				
Method of Contact:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In-person meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email				
Overall assessment of market for development (more/less development activity)	High	Med-High	Medium	Med-Low	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low

Current Development Pressures	Describe the current development activity within the FLUSA.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of development is taking place within the FLUSA and where is it located specifically? 	Mostly residential development. The City is seeing bigger apartments being developed along and near the corridor. Some industrial businesses are switching over to residential due to market forces.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the municipality/county currently processing comparable numbers of building permits and applications to historic levels? 	Numbers are up compared to a few years ago.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any development projects currently taking place within the FLUSA? (e.g. new manufacturing center, major subdivisions, Planned Unit Developments (PUD's)) 	Givens Estates retirement community. A phased expansion of 260 apartments targeting senior and low-income housing is planned. The first phase of 120 units expected to open in 2016.			



	Additional information:	
Development Market Assumptions	Describe the development (industry, business, residential, etc.) and growth patterns you expect for the FLUSA over the next 25 years.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any development projects planned for the future within the FLUSA? (e.g. new manufacturing center, major subdivisions, PUD's) 	<p>Currently, there are 600 units permitted within a mile of the Mills Gap Road intersection (outside the FLUSA), not including the 272 unit Hawthorne at Mills Gap, proposed for northeast quadrant of Mills Gap and Sweeten Creek Road.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would development patterns change if (a) the project does occur or (b) the project does not occur? 	<p>The project is not likely to change development patterns. Much of the land in the FLUSA that is within the City limits is already developed.</p>
	Additional information:	<p>Asheville is experiencing a housing shortage, both overall and affordable. Currently there is a less than 1% vacancy rate. 43% of renter households pay more than 30% of their income, and 25% of owner households are considered cost burdened.</p> <p>There is an older existing City policy to protect industrial land. But there is interest in revising/softening the policy to allow infill development and to help address the need for housing.</p> <p>The Comprehensive Plan is in the process of being updated but no substantial changes are anticipated for the Sweeten Creek Road area.</p>





INTERVIEW FORM: Indirect and Cumulative Effects Screening Report – Public Policy

Document and describe the policies and regulations that apply to the development of land within the Future Land Use Study Area (FLUSA) through an interview with the local planning department. Less restrictive policies and regulations are considered “high” in ranking, whereas more restrictive regulations and growth management policies are considered a “low” ranking.

Municipality name:	Buncombe County				
Date:	June 9, 2016				
Local Planner:	Nathan Pennington				
Interviewer:	Diana Young-Paiva, Three Oaks Engineering				
Method of Contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email				
Overall assessment of policies (less/more restrictive policies)	High	Med-High	Medium	Med-Low	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low



Existing Public Policy

Describe in what ways local and state policies may be considered effective in the way they manage growth within the FLUSA (i.e. by the community, planning board and other policies and regulations).

- Are the local policies enforceable with standards contained in local or state regulations and ordinances?
- How easily implementable are they (why/ why not, examples)?
- How consistently does the Planning Board/ Council follow the policies?
- How effectively are the policies being enforced?
- Do they document reasons when policies are not followed or exceptions are granted?

In 2009, Buncombe County established a comprehensive zoning plan for properties located in Buncombe County outside the boundaries of incorporated municipalities and their zoning jurisdictions. A lot of the land is zoned for open use, however zoning patterns align more closely to the City of Asheville's zoning ordinances in the areas near the city, including the areas along Sweeten Creek Road. This is especially true following the legislature's 2013 amendment to State laws governing local planning, which eliminated the City of Asheville's authority to have extraterritorial planning jurisdiction. The County had to act fairly quickly to establish zoning districts for these areas, which include the portion of the FLUSA that are outside the Asheville city limits.

The Comprehensive Plan establishes largely undeveloped mountain ranges as priority areas for conservation, and directs denser development towards corridors with existing infrastructure.

The County's zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan are effective in managing growth in the County and within the FLUSA. Recently, the zoning ordinances were revised to include new text that is more clearly written. The ordinances are enforceable through zoning and the building permitting process; review and oversight is provided by the Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, and the Board of Commissioners.

Some of the pertinent ordinances include:

Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance The ordinance regulates through permitting, land disturbing activities to control accelerated erosion and sedimentation, in order to prevent the pollution of water and damage to lakes, water coursed and other public and private property by sedimentation.

Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance regulates development within the 100-year floodplain to promote public health and safety, and minimize public and private losses due to flooding in flood-prone areas. The ordinance meets the standards of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

Stormwater Management Ordinance was adopted to establish minimum requirements for the control of adverse impacts due to stormwater runoff associated with new development in the county. Restrictions are placed on development properties to ensure that land use remains consistent with the designed stormwater system. The county ordinance has been given delegated authority by the NC Division of Water Quality to administer the NPDES Phase II rules.

Subdivision Ordinance establishes procedures and standards for the subdivision of land within the jurisdiction of the county, to provide for orderly growth in a manner and under conditions that facilitate the adequate provision of streets, water, sewage disposal and other considerations essential to public health, safety, and the general welfare. It establishes the requirement for building permits, and penalties for violations.



	<p><u>Zoning Ordinance</u> within each Zoning District, certain uses are permitted, conditional, or not allowed. Any uses that are listed as conditional in a particular Zoning District require a Conditional Use Permit from the Board of Adjustment prior to construction or change in use. There are building setback and minimum lot size requirements in all zoning districts with the exception of the Open Use District. A</p> <p><u>The Protected Ridge Overlay District</u> is established in recognition that the development of land in steep, mountainous areas involves special considerations and requires unique development standards. This section is intended to limit the density of development, preserve the viewshed and protect the natural resources of Buncombe County's protected mountain ridges, consistent with the recommendations of the 1998 Buncombe County Land Use Plan and supplemental to the provisions of the Mountain Ridge Protection Act of 1983.</p> <p><u>Hillside Development Standards</u> provides additional standards for land that has an average slope of its natural terrain of 25 percent or greater, or has an average slope of its natural terrain of less than 25 percent, but 30 percent of the tract is greater than 35 percent slope.</p>
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INTERVIEW FORM: Indirect and Cumulative Effects Screening Report – Market for Development



Document the current development pressures and trends in the Future Land Use Study Area (FLUSA). Document how these trends will likely project into the design year of the project. A “high” ranking describes abundant development activity and a “low” ranking describes when development activity is lacking.

Municipality name:	Buncombe County				
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Interviewer:	Diana Young-Paiva, Three Oaks Engineering				
Method of Contact:	<input type="checkbox"/> In-person meeting <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email				
Overall assessment of market for development (more/less development activity)	High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Med-High	Medium	Med-Low	Low

Current Development Pressures	Describe the current development activity within the FLUSA.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of development is taking place within the FLUSA and where is it located specifically? 	<p>Housing is dominant development. In the Asheville area, there is a near zero percent vacancy rate for housing.</p> <p>Palisades Apartments off Mills Gap Rd; construction of apartment complex was completed in 2015.</p> <p>Royal Pines residential development on 312 acres, is now completely built out. Most of this nearby development, which is east of Sweeten Creek Road outside Asheville limits, is outside the FLUSA.</p> <p>Givens Estates has a phased development plan for expansion,</p>			



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the municipality/county currently processing comparable numbers of building permits and applications to historic levels? 	The number of permits is up since the recession.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any development projects currently taking place within the FLUSA? (e.g. new manufacturing center, major subdivisions, Planned Unit Developments (PUD's)) 	None in the County currently under construction.
	Additional information:	This area is one of the top "gateway" communities, for newcomers outside the local area code. A lot of retirees are moving to the area.
Development Market	Describe the development (industry, business, residential, etc.) and growth patterns you expect for the FLUSA over the next 25 years.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any development projects planned for the future within the FLUSA? (e.g. new manufacturing center, major subdivisions, PUD's) 	Hawthorne at Mills Gap is a planned apartment development within Asheville- at the corner of Mills Gap Road and Sweeten Creek Road.

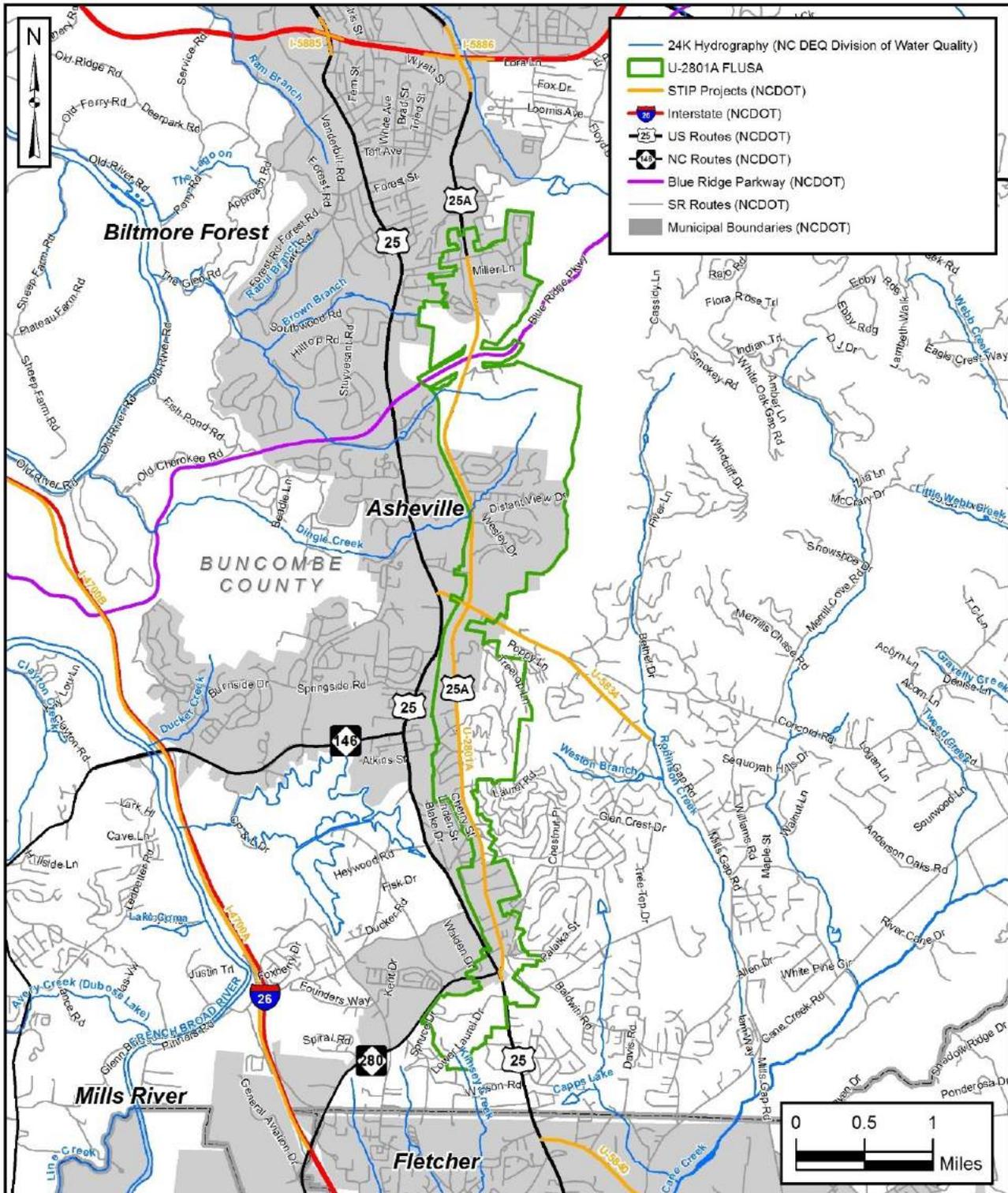


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would development patterns change if (a) the project does occur or (b) the project does not occur? 	<p>The development patterns are not expected to change if the project occurs, or doesn't occur.</p> <p>Because most of the area surrounding the project from the middle to the south end is already developed, the project is not likely to have an impact on development patterns in these areas.</p> <p>The largest tracts of undeveloped land are in Buncombe County, at the north end of the project near the Sweeten Creek Road (US 25A)/Blue Ridge Parkway intersection. The tract in the southeast quadrant is owned by the Biltmore Company. The tract in the northwest quadrant is owned by Biltmore Farms, Inc., a separate entity. Biltmore Farms has developed several planned communities in Asheville, including Biltmore Ramble, located near the project to the west. The County does not know what either of the property owners has planned, but it is assumed that they will be developed for residential communities in the future. The timing will be based on market demands. One of the tracts is zoned RLD, low-density single-family residential development. The other is split into RLD and R-2. which permits multi-family residential units of no more than eight units, and no more than four buildings.</p>
	<p>Additional information:</p>	



APPENDIX B: MAPS

APPENDIX B, MAP 1: PROJECT AREA TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS




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

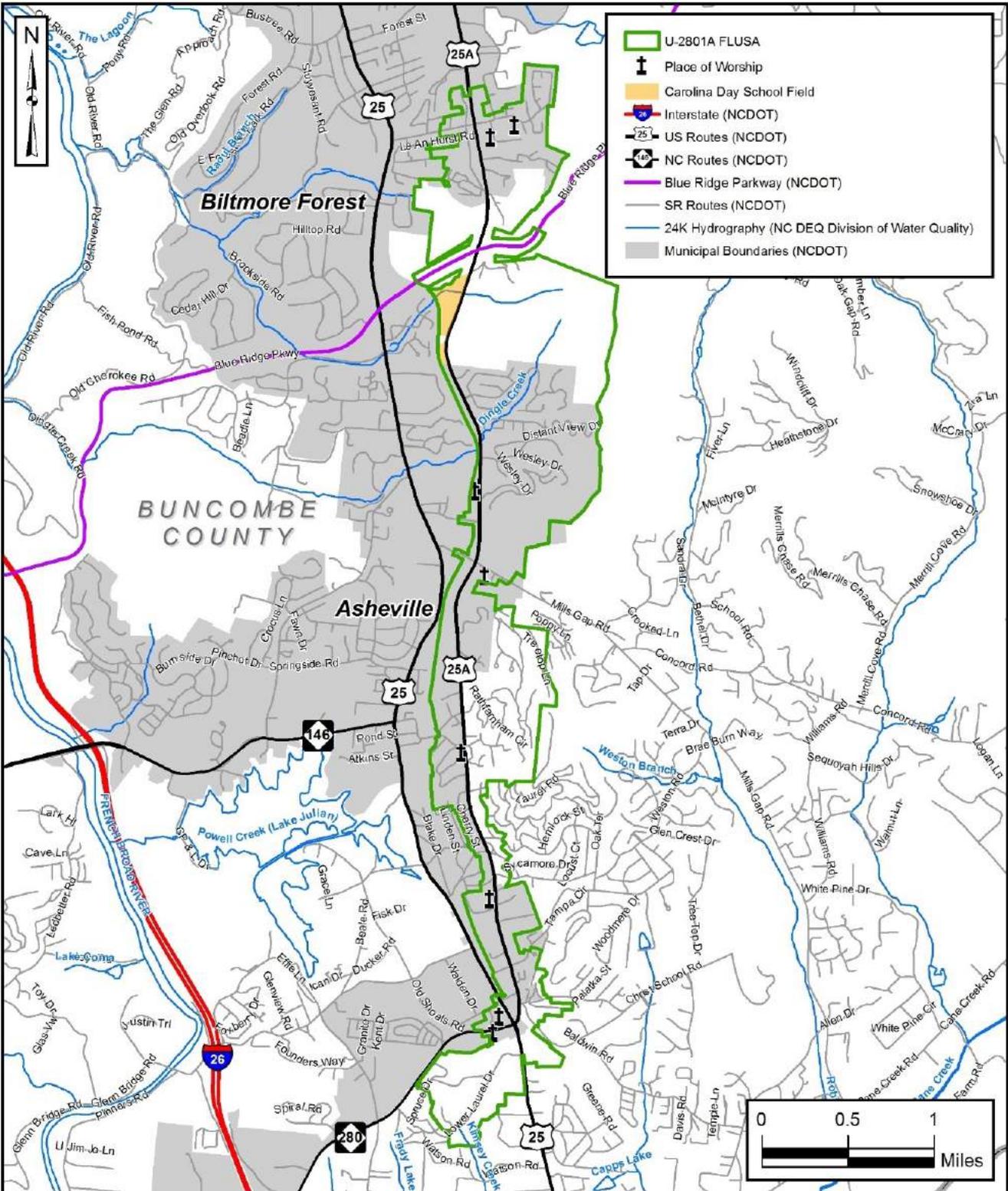
PROJECT AREA TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS
 WIDEN SWEETEN CREEK ROAD (US 25A) FROM HENDERSONVILLE ROAD (US 25) TO SR 3801 (ROCK HILL RD)
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY
 STIP PROJECT U-2801A

County: BUNCOMBE
 Div: 13 STIP# U-2801A
 WBS: 34859.1.FR3
 Date: JUNE 2016

Figure B-1



APPENDIX B, MAP 2: NOTABLE HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES MAP



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

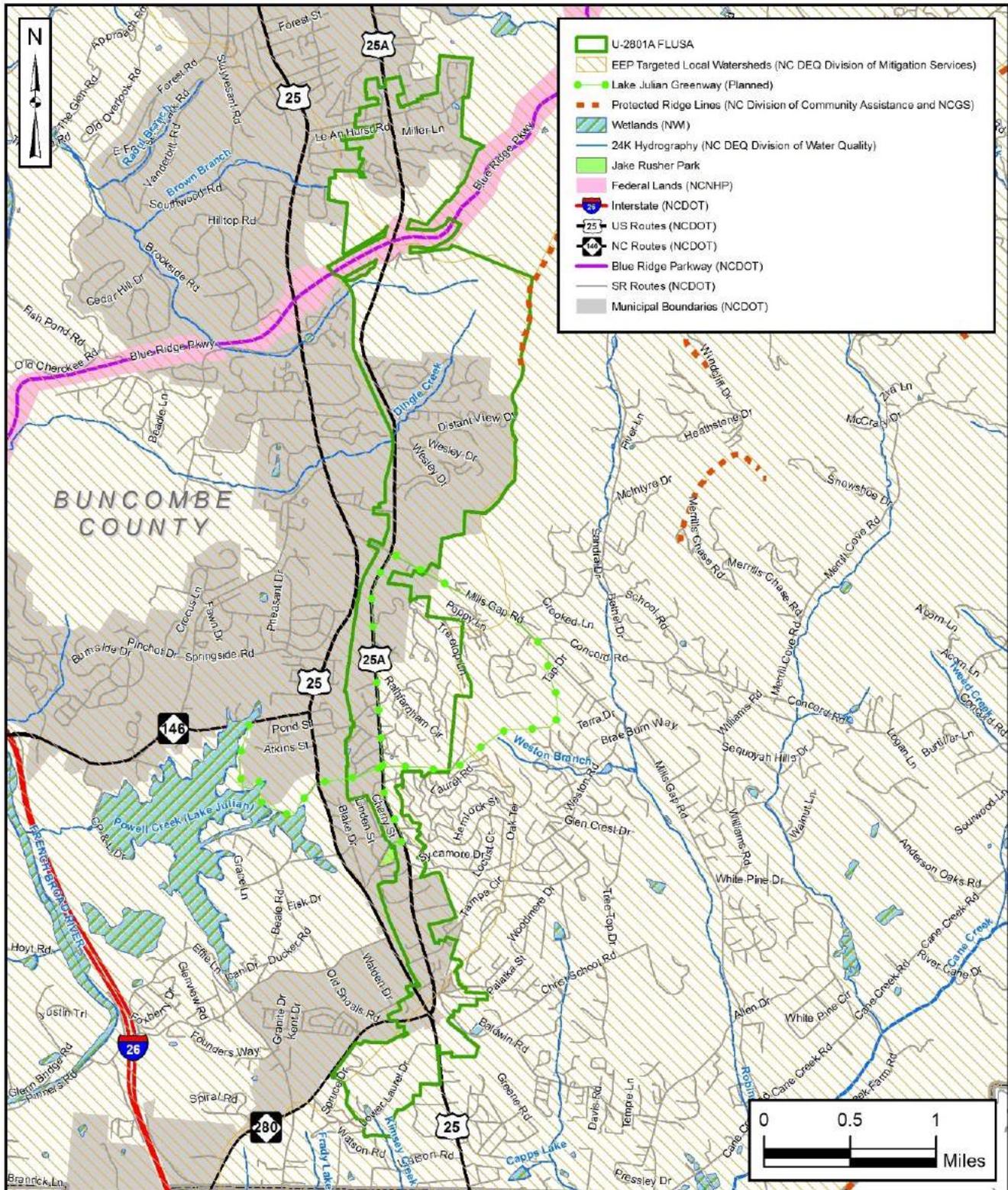
NOTABLE HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES MAP
 WIDEN SWEETEN CREEK ROAD (US 25A)
 FROM HENDERSONVILLE ROAD (US 25)
 TO SR 3801 (ROCK HILL RD)
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY
 STIP PROJECT U-2801A

County:	BUNCOMBE
Div.:	13
STIP#:	U-2801A
WBS:	34859.1.FR3
Date:	JUNE 2016

Figure B-2



APPENDIX B, MAP 3: NOTABLE NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES MAP



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

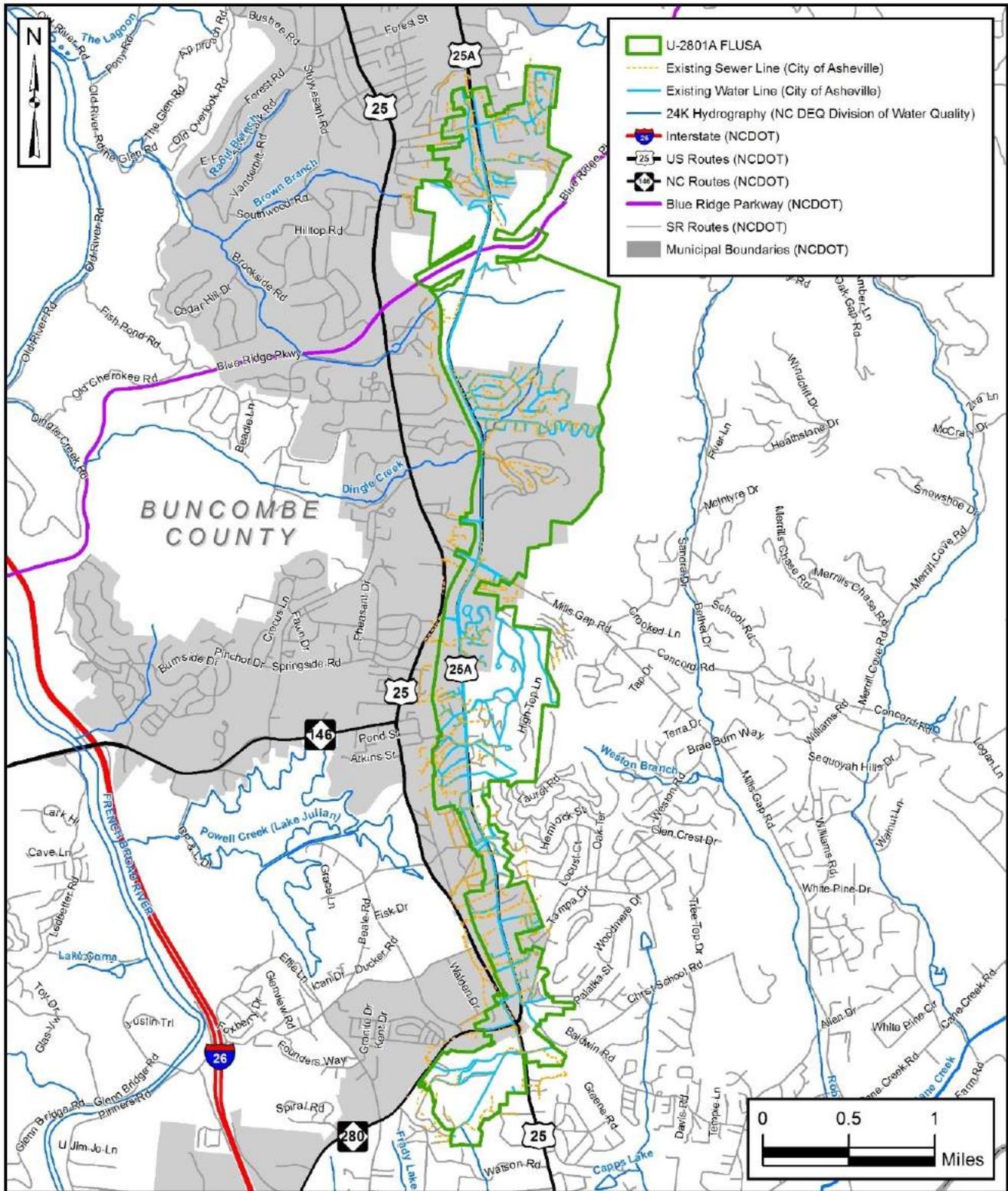
NOTABLE NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES MAP
WIDEN SWEETEN CREEK ROAD (US 25A) FROM HENDERSONVILLE ROAD (US 25) TO SR 3801 (ROCK HILL RD)
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY
 STIP PROJECT U-2801A

County:	BUNCOMBE
Div:	13
STIP#:	U-2801A
WBS:	34859.1.FR3
Date:	JUNE 2016

Figure B-3



APPENDIX B, MAP 4: WATER AND SEWER AVAILABILITY MAP



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

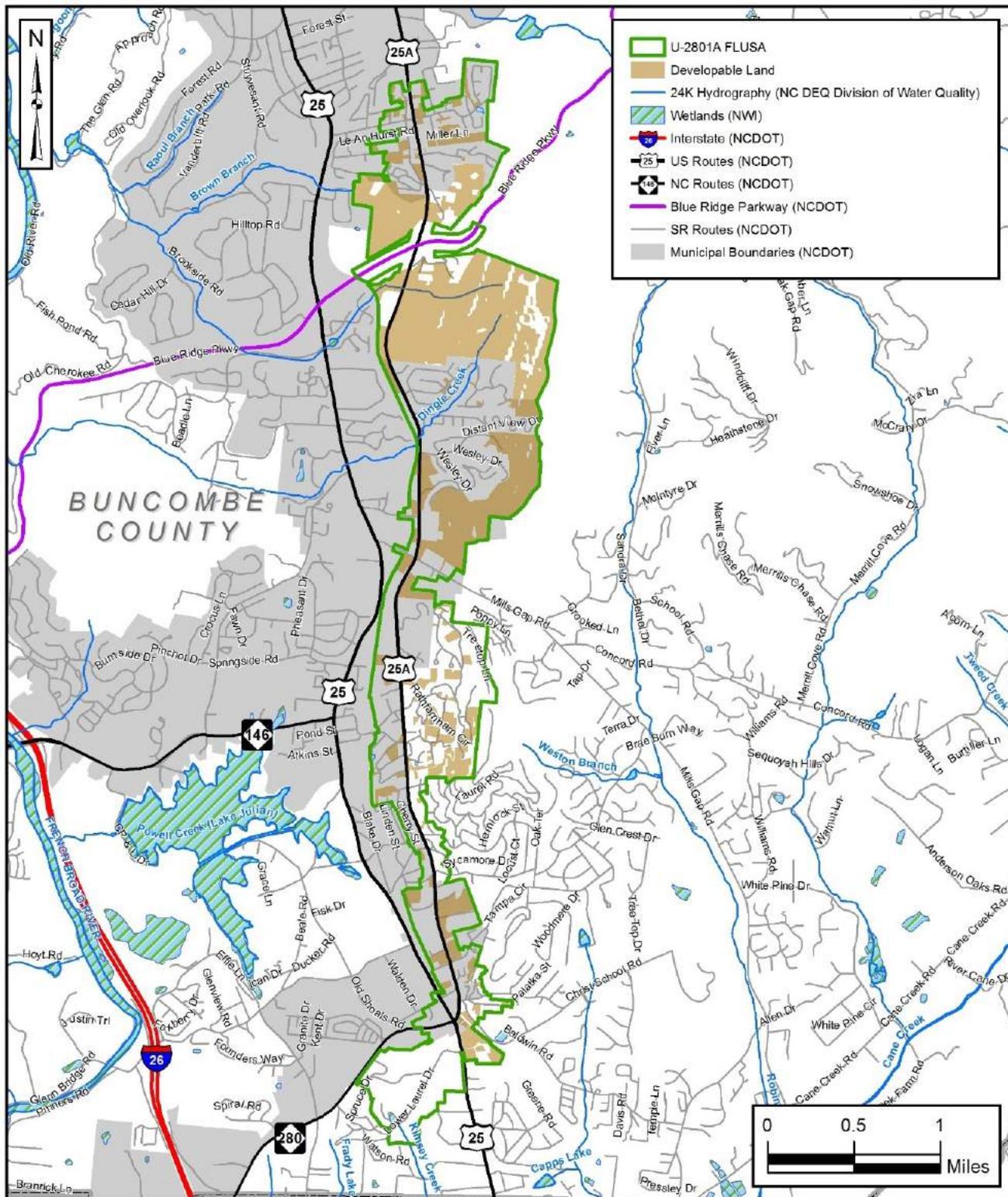
WATER AND SEWER AVAILABILITY MAP
 WIDEN SWEETEN CREEK ROAD (US 25A)
 FROM HENDERSONVILLE ROAD (US 25)
 TO SR 3801 (ROCK HILL RD)
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY
 STIP PROJECT U-2801A

County:	BUNCOMBE
Div:	13
STIP#:	U-2801A
WBS:	34859.1.FR3
Date:	JUNE 2016

Figure B-4



APPENDIX B, MAP 5: AVAILABLE LAND MAP



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

AVAILABLE LAND MAP
WIDEN SWEETEN CREEK ROAD (US 25A) FROM HENDERSONVILLE ROAD (US 25) TO SR 3801 (ROCK HILL RD)
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY
 STIP PROJECT U-2801A

County:	BUNCOMBE
Div:	13 STIP# U-2801A
WBS:	34859.1.FR3
Date:	JUNE 2016

Figure B-5

