

NCDOT PROGRAMMATIC CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (PCE)
ACTION CLASSIFICATION FORM

For use by a Local Government Agency

TIP Project No. _____
WBS Element _____
Federal Project No. _____

A. Project Description: **(Include project scope and location, including Municipality and County. Refer to the attached project location map and photos.)**

B. Purpose and Need:

C. Proposed Improvements – Select ALL Activities that apply to the Project, regardless of TYPE

Circle one or more of the following Type I activities:

1. Non-construction activities (program activities).
2. Approval of utility installations along or across a transportation facility.
3. Construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities.
4. Activities included in the State’s “highway safety plan” under 23 USC 402 (programs administered by the Division of Motor Vehicles).
5. Transfer of Federal lands pursuant to 23 USC 317 when the subsequent action is not a FHWA action.
6. The installation of noise barriers or alterations to existing publicly owned buildings to provide for noise reduction.
7. Landscaping.
8. Installation of fencing, signs, pavement markings, small passenger shelters, traffic signals, and railroad warning devices.
9. Emergency repairs under 23 USC 125 (Governor Declared Emergency).
10. Acquisition of scenic easements.
11. Determination of payback under 23 CFR Part 480 for property previously acquired with federal-aid participation.
12. Improvements to existing rest areas and truck weigh stations.
13. Ridesharing activities.
14. Bus and Rail car rehabilitation.

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15. Alterations to facilities or vehicles in order to make them accessible for elderly and handicapped persons.
16. Program administration, technical assistance activities, and operating assistance to transit authorities to continue existing service or increase service to meet changes in routine demand.
17. The purchase of vehicles by the applicant where the use of these vehicles can be accommodated by existing facilities or by new facilities which themselves are within a CE.
18. Track and rail bed maintenance and improvements when carried out within the existing right of way.
19. Purchase and installation of operating or maintenance equipment to be located within the transit facility and with no significant impacts off the site.
20. Promulgation of rules, regulations and directives.
21. Replacement of guardrail.

Circle one or more of the following Type II activities:

1. Modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding auxiliary lanes (e.g., parking, weaving, turning, climbing).
 - a. Restoring, Resurfacing, Rehabilitating, and Reconstructing pavement (3R and 4R improvements)
 - b. Widening roadway and shoulders without adding through lanes
 - c. Modernizing gore treatments
 - d. Constructing lane improvements (merge, auxiliary, and turn lanes)
 - e. Adding shoulder drains
 - f. Replacing and rehabilitating culverts, inlets, and drainage pipes, including safety treatments
 - g. Providing driveway pipes
 - h. Performing minor bridge widening (less than one through lane)
 - i. Slide Stabilization
 - j. Structural BMP's for water quality improvement
2. Highway safety or traffic operations improvement projects including the installation of ramp metering control devices and lighting.
 - a. Installing ramp metering devices
 - b. Installing lights
 - c. Adding or upgrading guardrail
 - d. Installing safety barriers including Jersey type barriers and pier protection
 - e. Installing or replacing impact attenuators
 - f. Upgrading medians including adding or upgrading median barriers
 - g. Improving intersections including relocation and/or realignment
 - h. Making minor roadway realignment

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- i. Channelizing traffic
 - j. Performing clear zone safety improvements including removing hazards and flattening slopes
 - k. Implementing traffic aid systems, signals, and motorist aid
 - l. Installing bridge safety hardware including bridge rail retrofit
3. Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction, or replacement or the construction of grade separation to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings.
 - a. Rehabilitating, reconstructing, or replacing bridge approach slabs
 - b. Rehabilitating or replacing bridge decks
 - c. Rehabilitating bridges including painting (no red lead paint), scour repair, fender systems, and minor structural improvements
 - d. Replacing a bridge (structure and/or fill)
 4. Transportation corridor fringe parking facilities.
 5. Construction of new truck weigh stations or rest areas.
 6. Approvals for disposal of excess right-of-way or for joint or limited use of right-of-way, where the proposed use does not have significant adverse impacts.
 7. Approvals for changes in access control.
 8. Construction of new bus storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and located on or near a street with adequate capacity to handle anticipated bus and support vehicle traffic.
 9. Rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing rail and bus buildings and ancillary facilities where only minor amounts of additional land are required and there is not a substantial increase in the number of users.
 10. Construction of bus transfer facilities (an open area consisting of passenger shelters, boarding areas, kiosks and related street improvements) when located in a commercial area or other high activity center in which there is adequate street capacity for projected bus traffic.
 11. Construction of rail storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and where there is no significant noise impact on the surrounding community.
 12. Acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes, advance land acquisition loans under section 3(b) of the UMT Act. Hardship and protective buying will be permitted only for a particular parcel or a limited number of parcels. These types of land acquisition qualify for a CE only where the acquisition will not limit the evaluation of alternatives, including shifts in alignment for planned construction projects, which may be required in the NEPA process. No project development on such land may proceed until the NEPA process has been completed.

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13. Acquisition and construction of wetland, stream and endangered species mitigation sites.
 14. Remedial activities involving the removal, treatment or monitoring of soil or groundwater contamination pursuant to state or federal remediation guidelines.
- D. Special Project Information: (Provide a description of investigations and findings concerning Threatened and Endangered Species, National Historic Preservation Act, Right of Way/Easements, Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) as described in the *Local Programs Management Handbook*. Also include Environmental Commitments and Permits Required)

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E. Threshold Criteria

The following evaluation of threshold criteria must be completed. See *Local Programs Management Handbook* for more guidance on how to answer these questions.

<u>ECOLOGICAL</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
(1) Will the project have a substantial impact on any unique or important natural resource?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(2) Does the project involve habitat where federally listed endangered or threatened species may occur?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(3) Will the project affect anadromous fish?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(4) If the project involves wetlands, is the amount of permanent and/or temporary wetland taking less than one-tenth (1/10) of an acre and have all practicable measures to avoid and minimize wetland takings been evaluated?	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) Will the project require the use of U. S. Forest Service lands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(6) Will the quality of adjacent water resources be adversely impacted by proposed construction activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(7) Does the project involve waters classified as Outstanding Water Resources (OWR) and/or High Quality Waters (HQW)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(8) Will the project require fill in waters of the United States in any of the designated mountain trout counties?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(9) Does the project involve any known underground storage tanks (UST's) or hazardous materials sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
 <u>PERMITS AND COORDINATION</u>		
(10) If the project is located within a CAMA county, will the project significantly affect the coastal zone and/or any "Area of Environmental Concern" (AEC)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(11) Does the project involve Coastal Barrier Resources Act resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(12) Will a U. S. Coast Guard permit be required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
(13) Will the project result in the modification of any existing regulatory floodway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

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(14) Will the project require any stream relocations or channel changes? _____

SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

YES NO

(15) Will the project induce substantial impacts to planned growth or land use for the area? _____

(16) Will the project require the relocation of any family or business? _____

(17) Will the project have a disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effect on any minority or low-income population? _____

(18) If the project involves the acquisition of right of way, is the amount of right of way acquisition considered minor? _____

(19) Will the project involve any changes in access control? _____

(20) Will the project substantially alter the usefulness and/or land use of adjacent property? _____

(21) Will the project have an adverse effect on permanent local traffic patterns or community cohesiveness? _____

(22) Is the project included in an approved thoroughfare plan and/or Transportation Improvement Program (and is, therefore, in conformance with the Clean Air Act of 1990)? _____

(23) Is the project anticipated to cause an increase in traffic volumes? _____

(24) Will traffic be maintained during construction using existing roads, staged construction, or on-site detours? _____

(25) If the project is a bridge replacement project, will the bridge be replaced at its existing location (along the existing facility) and will all construction proposed in association with the bridge replacement project be contained on the existing facility? _____

(26) Is there substantial controversy on social, economic, or environmental grounds concerning the project? _____

(27) Is the project consistent with all Federal, State, and local laws relating to the environmental aspects of the project? _____

(28) Will the project have an "effect" on structures/properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places? _____

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- (29) Will the project affect any archaeological remains which are important to history or pre-history? _____
- (30) Will the project require the use of Section 4(f) resources (public parks, recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, historic sites, or historic bridges, as defined in Section 4(f) of the U. S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966)? _____
- (31) Will the project result in any conversion of assisted public recreation sites or facilities to non-recreation uses, as defined by Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965, as amended? _____
- (32) Will the project involve construction in, across, or adjacent to a river designated as a component of or proposed for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers? _____

F. Additional Documentation Required for Unfavorable Responses in Part E
(Discussion regarding all unfavorable responses in Part E should be provided below. Additional supporting documentation may be attached, as necessary.)

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G. PCE Approval

TIP Project No. _____
WBS Element _____
Federal-Aid Project No. _____

Project Description: (Repeat all information from Page 1)

Categorical Exclusion Action Classification: (Check one)

_____	TYPE I (A)	NO BOXES Checked	} refer to Section E
_____	TYPE I (B)	ANY BOX Checked	
_____	TYPE II(A)	NO BOXES Checked	
_____	TYPE II(B)	ANY BOX is Checked	

Prepared By:

_____ Date _____ Name, Title
_____ Company/Agency, Telephone #

NOTE: Form needs to be completed by either a Professional Engineer (PE),
Biologist, Planner, or AICP

Prepared For:

_____ Local Government Agency

Reviewed:

_____ Date _____ Project Dev. Unit Head / Division Representative
NCDOT - PDEA / NCDOT Division _____

NOTE: NCDOT Review may occur at either PDEA or the Division Office.
Mark through non-applicable position.

Approved: For Type I(B) or II(B) projects only:

_____ Date _____ Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

An environmental document ensures that the project has been reviewed for potential impacts to the natural, cultural, and human environment.

POLICY: All federally-funded projects must be in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for ROW or construction funds to be authorized.

The National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, is applicable to all federally-funded projects. Many projects that are locally administered can often qualify for the lowest level of NEPA analysis, which is a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion (PCE).

NOTE: This guidance does not address preparation of a Categorical Exclusion (narrative document), Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement. Contact your NCDOT Program Manager for more information on these types of documents.

Local Government Agencies are responsible for undertaking environmental review, obtaining appropriate clearances or approvals, and submitting documentation to NCDOT for final review and signatures.

PROCEDURE:

1. Complete the *Programmatic Categorical Exclusion Action Classification Form* (for Local Government Agency). Please include maps, photos (tied to a photo key), and any pertinent information as directed to assist in review.

Project Numbers - all relevant project numbers can be found on the front of your Local Project Agreement.

- A. Project Description - provide a full and complete project description to include Local Government Agency and County name. Reference maps, photos, or any other detail. Use cardinal directions (north, south, etc.), beginning and end points, street names.
- B. Purpose and Need - Identify both the purpose of the project (e.g. to facilitate pedestrian access) and the need (e.g. lack of pedestrian accommodations). Include a discussion of compliance with approved plans, i.e. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), City or County Comprehensive Plan, Greenway Plan, Park Master Plan, Bike and Pedestrian Plan, etc. as applicable.

- C. Proposed Improvements – Identify all activities the project may include, regardless of whether the activity is “Type I” or “Type II.”

NOTE: Projects funded with Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding may comply with the Programmatic Categorical Exclusion for the Safe Routes to School Program, which has identified all activities as Type I.

- D. Special Project Information – include any commitments made to Resource Agencies; also include listing of permits that will be required/have been acquired. Also include a description of the investigations and findings for the environmental issues listed below.

E. Threshold Criteria

The following guidance questions will assist the preparer in answering the Threshold Criteria. Many of these questions may require the use of a professional biologist, engineer, planner or cultural resources specialist. Areas of focus should be:

Threatened and Endangered Species (Question #2)

- Are there threatened and endangered species in the County of the Project?

See http://www.fws.gov/raleigh/species/cntylist/nc_counties.html

- If NO, then document your findings on Section D of the PCE.
END OF T&E EVALUATION
- If YES, then is there suitable habitat for these species? Requires evaluation by a qualified professional to survey and identify suitable habitat.

NOTE: If you need assistance locating a qualified professional, contact your PROGRAM MANAGER or DIVISION PROJECT MANAGER for more information.

- If the LGA and their qualified professional can document a finding of “no effect” with supporting information, then no concurrence from US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is necessary.
- If the LGA and their qualified professional render a conclusion of “may affect,” then NCDOT/FHWA will need to be involved. Contact your PROGRAM MANAGER or DIVISION PROJECT MANAGER for more information.

LGAs should not need to contact USFWS directly for this step.

Right of Way/Easements (#18)

- Is the Project contained in the existing right of way or easements?
- If not, how much property is to be acquired, either through right of way or by easement (temporary or permanent)? The quantity of proposed/additional right of way and/or permanent easement will help determine if the amount is minor or not.

National Historic Preservation Act (Questions #28, 29)

- Identify historic properties within the project area and whether these properties could potentially be affected by the project.
- Visit the State Historic Preservation Office website at http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/er/er_email_submittal.html for more information and submittal requirements.
- Correspondence with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) should be included to document their comments on identification of historic properties.
- A finding of historic properties present and/or the potential to affect historic properties will require consultation between the SHPO, NCDOT, and possible FHWA. Contact your PROGRAM MANAGER or DIVISION PROJECT MANAGER for more information.

Section 4(f) (Question #30) – this includes Public Parks, Recreation Areas (including school facilities with recreation space open to the public), wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites of national, state, or local significance (publicly or privately owned).

- Is the project near or does it use land from any 4(f) resource?
 - If no, check appropriate box on question #30.
 - If yes, contact NCDOT for more guidance prior to submitting form. More documentation and approval from FHWA will be needed.

F. Additional Documentation Required for Unfavorable Responses – if any boxes have been checked, then provide explanation, documentation, or justification for those answers.

G. PCE Approval

- a. Repeat Project Numbers and Description from page 1.
- b. Classify your project as Type I or Type II, depending on the activity(ies) circled in Section C.
- c. If any boxes have been checked in section E, then your project is either a Type I (B) or Type II (B).

- d. If project contains activities classified as Type I and Type II, then project will be considered a Type II activity.
 - e. Preparer should sign form and provide qualifications.
2. Submit completed, signed form and documentation to the appropriate PROGRAM MANAGER or DIVISION PROJECT MANAGER (see [CONTACTS](#) for more info). Allow at least two weeks for the initial review.
3. The LGA will be notified in writing as to approval or if more documentation is required. Approved documents should be maintained in the Project file by the LGA.

RESOURCES:

[23 CFR 771](#) – See Section 117 for more information on Categorical Exclusions.

IMPORTANT: An approved Environmental Document is required before NCDOT can request ROW or Construction Authorization.