

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Location and Description**

The US 9 Intersection Improvement Project consists of proposed improvements to three separate intersections along U.S. Route 9, between Georgetown and Lewes, in Sussex County, Delaware (Figure 1). The intersections involved include US 9 and SR 30 (Gravel Hill Road) in Georgetown Hundred, US 9 and Fisher/Hudson Roads in Broadkilm Hundred, and US 9 and Sweetbriar/Dairy Farm Roads in Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred. Each project area is generally flat in topography. Gravel Hill Road is generally suburban in nature with strip development surrounding its projected improvements as well as a large active maintenance yard facility and former borrow supply area for the State Highway Department. Fisher and Hudson Roads with US 9 is rural in nature with surrounding woodlands and nearby agricultural fields. A new residential/subdivision community is currently under site construction at the northwest intersection corner. Sweetbriar and Dairy Farm Roads is a mix of strip residential development as well as agricultural in nature. Both Gravel Hill Road and Sweetbriar and Dairy Farm Road have commercial ventures at one intersection corner and are signalized.

Throughout the project areas, US 9 is currently a two-lane roadway with fully paved shoulders. Proposed improvements (subject to change or be modified) would widen the roadway at each intersection to include two 12-foot-wide travel lanes with a central left turn lane, a 5-foot-wide bike lane, and 10-foot-wide shoulders. The roadside drainage swales would be improved as well. Similar improvements would be made to Gravel Hill Road, Hudson/Fisher Road, and Sweetbriar/Dairy Farm Road, including the addition of a central left turn lane in each direction, a bike lane, and wider shoulders. Additionally, storm water management facilities would be constructed at each of the three intersections, with the facility at the Gravel Hill Road intersection being on the southwest corner, the one at Hudson/Fisher Road being on the northeast corner, and the one at Sweetbriar/Dairy Farm Road also being on the northwest corner and adjacent to Log Cabin Road. Because of its unsafe proximity near the intersection, Log Cabin Road connecting into Sweetbriar Road will be rerouted towards the north.

### **1.2 Purpose and Need with Historic Compliance Background**

US 9 is a very heavily traveled east-west corridor in Sussex County and in particular during the summer resort season. Currently, the heavy volume of traffic that utilizes this road results in congestion and dangerous left-turn movements at each intersection. Several accidents have occurred as a result. The proposed intersection improvements, which include the addition of left-turn lanes timed for signalization, will improve highway safety at each location. The addition of bike lanes will improve safety conditions for cyclists.

The architectural assessments are designed to assure compliance with applicable state and federal legislation, including the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 36 CFR 800, and Executive Order 11593, as amended.

After conducting or collecting background research, an architectural survey and assessment of the project area based on current construction plans was carried out to:

- 1) identify the range of resources 50 years of age, or older, within each current study area that would experience a direct impact (i.e. take of property) and indirect impact (i.e. negative visual intrusion);
- 2) locate other individual properties in the APE that could be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and
- 3) field check those properties that were previously listed or determined eligible or not eligible for listing in the National Register.

In order to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, a resource (e.g., building, site, structure, object, or district) must meet the 50-year age criterion, or meet the criteria consideration for properties achieving significance within the last 50 years. Because the actual undertaking would be resources 50-years of age or older, located within the APE, were documented for this project. In addition, resources must also meet the Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR § 60.4) as stated in *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*: The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to history or prehistory (NPS 1997).

A property must also retain sufficient integrity from its period of significance. Expected resources or property types and guidelines for National Register evaluation are elaborated within this remaining chapter section and are briefly covered within each of the historic contexts of this study report.

This report describes the results of a combined identification-level and evaluation-level historic architectural resource survey conducted by Archaeological and Historic Consultants, Inc. as well as limited efforts undertaken by DelDOT Environmental Studies staff.

### **1.3 Area of Potential Effects**

As part of the identification of historic architectural properties, the Department, in consultation with the FHWA and DE SHPO, considered an APE, as defined in 36 CFR 800.16.

Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, a project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) is defined as "...the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist. The APE is influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking" (36 CFR 800.16[d]). For architectural resources, the APE includes all areas where physical or significant visual effects may occur that could negatively impact and involve a historic property.

For purposes of the architectural report and as offered by DelDOT for guidance, the APE was delineated and prepared by the consultant to take into account areas of direct construction impacts, as well as visual and other secondary effects. The majority of the US 9 intersection improvements will occur at grade and along the existing alignment. The APE is initially drawn to encompass a finite area (approximately 100 feet) from the limits of proposed or anticipated construction (Figures 2-4). This area was not necessarily expanded to fully include the proposed storm water management facilities at each intersection because architectural resources were not evident. However, properties meeting the initial minimum age requirement (1962 cut off) within or adjacent to the APE and near stormwater were adequately identified and evaluated for the National Register. They are included in this report. Thus, the level of effort to identify and evaluate potential historic properties in the APE should be suffice for report purposes and for Section 106 consultation needs. The study area includes a cumulative area of 48.5 acres. The ultimate APE for project purposes will be confirmed and iterated by the agency, DelDOT, on behalf the Federal Highway Administration, during the effects finding (or prior) to satisfy Section 106 consultation and NEPA requirements for the Federal Highway Administration.

Cultural Resource Survey (CRS) forms were prepared for all historic architectural resources, or land associated with them, that lie within the defined APE for the project. All CRS forms and original materials lie within the DE SHPO or at DelDOT. Both agencies are located in Dover, Delaware.

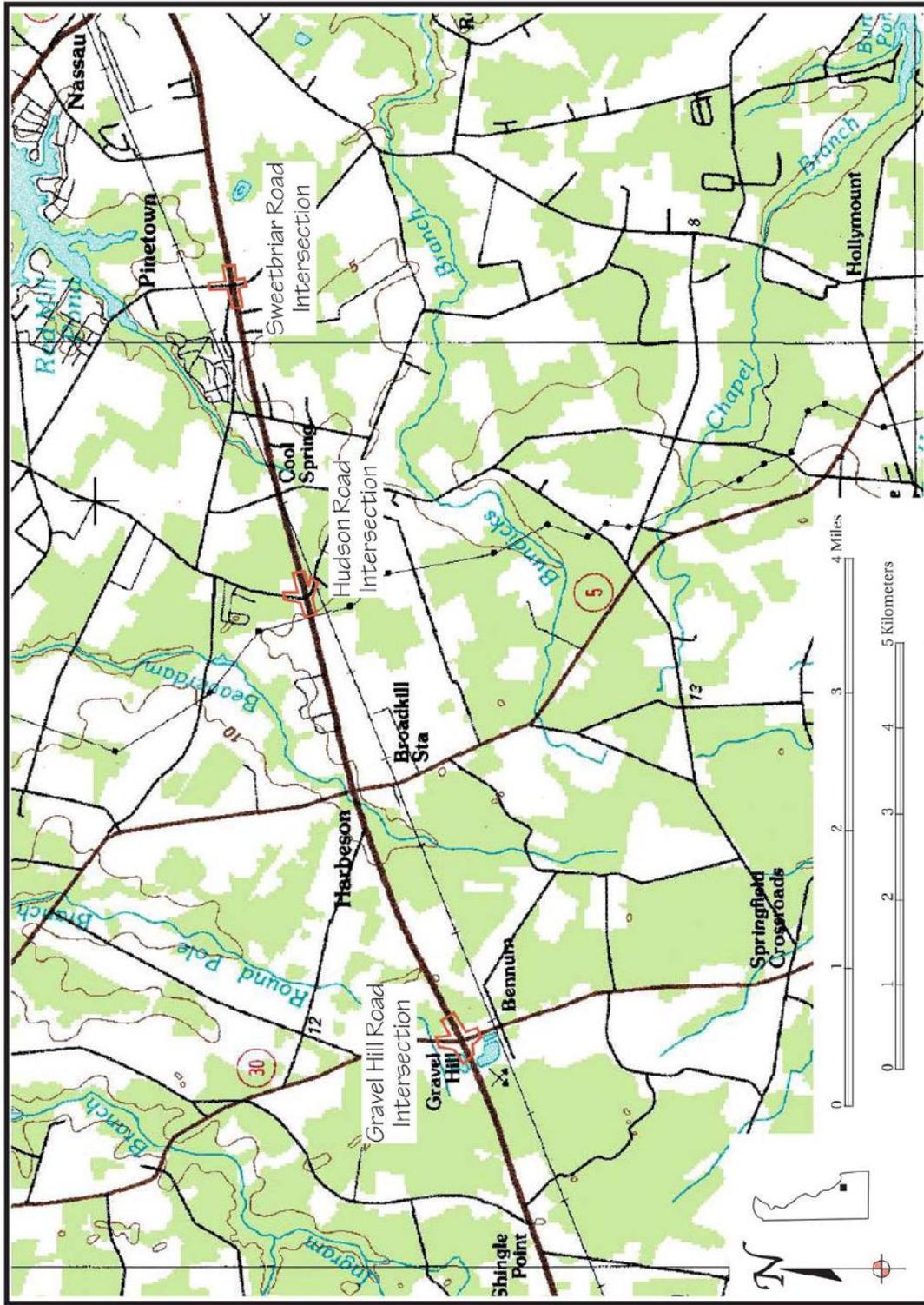


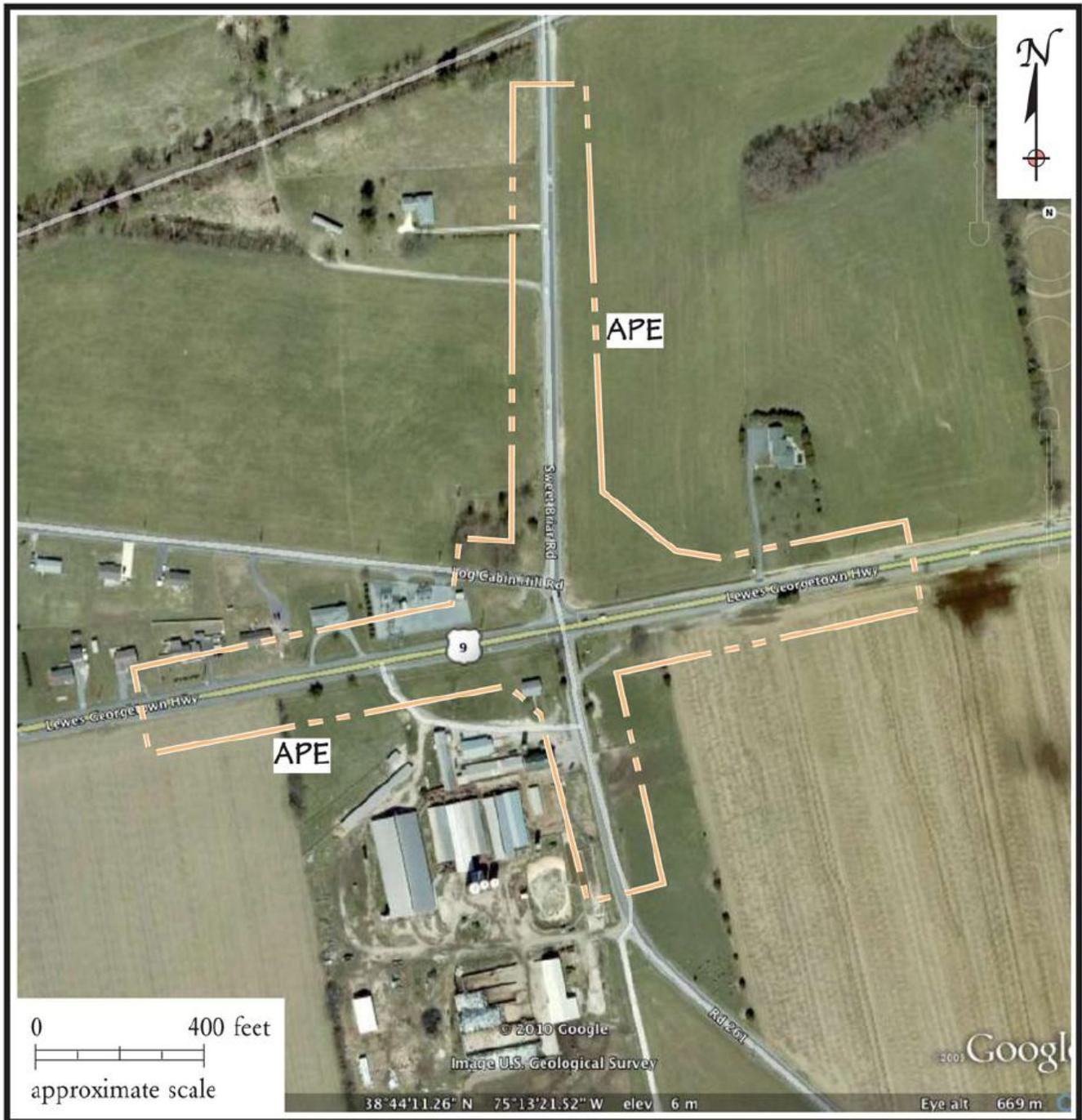
Figure 1: Vicinity of the US 9 Intersection Improvement Project



*Figure 2: APE for the US 9-Gravel Hill Road (SR 30) Intersection*



*Figure 3: APE for the US 9-Hudson/Fisher Road (SR 30) Intersection*



*Figure 4: APE for the US 9-Sweetbriar/Dairy Farm Road (SR 30) Intersection*