219 Meyersdale to Old Salisbury Rd

Reasonably Foreseeable Effects Report

April 2025

U.S. 6219, Section 050
Transportation Improvement Project
Meyersdale, PA to Old Salisbury Road, MD

pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MDOT MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the Reasonably Foreseeable Effects (RFE) Report is to analyze direct effects, reasonably foreseeable effects, and the potential for induced growth in the project area due to the potential construction of the proposed project. Also to assess the effects that future projects are likely to have on natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources in the project area.

The RFE report:

- Provides a brief description of the project history, study area description and location, project purpose and need, and the detailed alternatives under consideration;
- Describes the methodology used for the RFE analysis; and
- Documents the RFE analysis

1.2 Project History

The "US 219, I-68 (Maryland) to Somerset, Pennsylvania Needs Analysis", prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) in 1999, identified two projects with independent utility and logical termini on U.S. 219. These projects were: U.S. 219, Section 019 (currently Section 050) (from I-68 in Maryland to the southern terminus of the Meyersdale Bypass in Pennsylvania) and U.S. 219, Section 020 (from the northern terminus of the Meyersdale Bypass to Somerset, Pennsylvania).

Preliminary engineering and work towards a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for U.S. 219, Section 019, originally began in 2001 by PennDOT and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (SHA) but was put on hold in 2007 due to funding constraints. Since that time, PennDOT has completed construction of U.S. 219, Section 020, Meyersdale to Somerset, which opened to traffic in 2018.

The U.S. 219, Section 020 project involved construction of a new 11-mile, four-lane, limited access roadway extending from the northern end of the Meyersdale Bypass of U.S. 219 (a four-lane limited access roadway) to the southern end of the existing four-lane limited access U.S. 219, south of Somerset.

The U.S. 219 Section 050 project was re-started in 2014 as a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study. The study was completed in July 2016 and recommended two alignments that could move forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process: Alignments E and E-Shift. The PEL study also identified an independent, stand-alone breakout project within these two alignments in Maryland: from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road. The SHA advanced this 1.4-mile project and completed construction in 2021.

1.3 Study Area Description and Location

This project was re-started in 2020 and includes the proposed construction of an 8.0-mile (6 miles in Pennsylvania and 2 miles in Maryland) four-lane limited access facility on new alignment from the end of the Meyersdale Bypass in Somerset County, Pennsylvania to the newly constructed portion of U.S. 219 in Garrett County, Maryland.

The study area extends from the southern end of the Meyersdale Bypass in Somerset County, Pennsylvania south to U.S. 40 in Garrett County, Maryland. The study area encompasses portions of Elk Lick and Summit Townships in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and the northeastern corner of Garrett County, Maryland. The Borough of Salisbury, Pennsylvania is also located within the middle portion of the study area, as shown in **Figure 1-1**. The study area is mostly rural, with residential and small commercial facilities, as well as larger amounts of forested areas and farmland.

1.4 Project Purpose & Need

The purpose of the U.S. 219 Section 050 from Meyersdale to Old Salisbury Road Project is to complete Corridor N of the Appalachian Development Highway System, to improve the system linkage in the region, provide safe and efficient access for motorists traveling on U.S. 219, and provide transportation infrastructure to support economic opportunities in existing and planned communities and employment/ business centers and natural resource-based industries within the Appalachian Region.

The proposed project is needed for three identifiable reasons:

- Existing U.S. 219 does not provide efficient mobility for trucks and freight.
- There are numerous roadway and geometric deficiencies present along the existing U.S. 219 alignment.
- The existing roadway infrastructure is a limiting factor in economic development opportunities in the Appalachian Region.

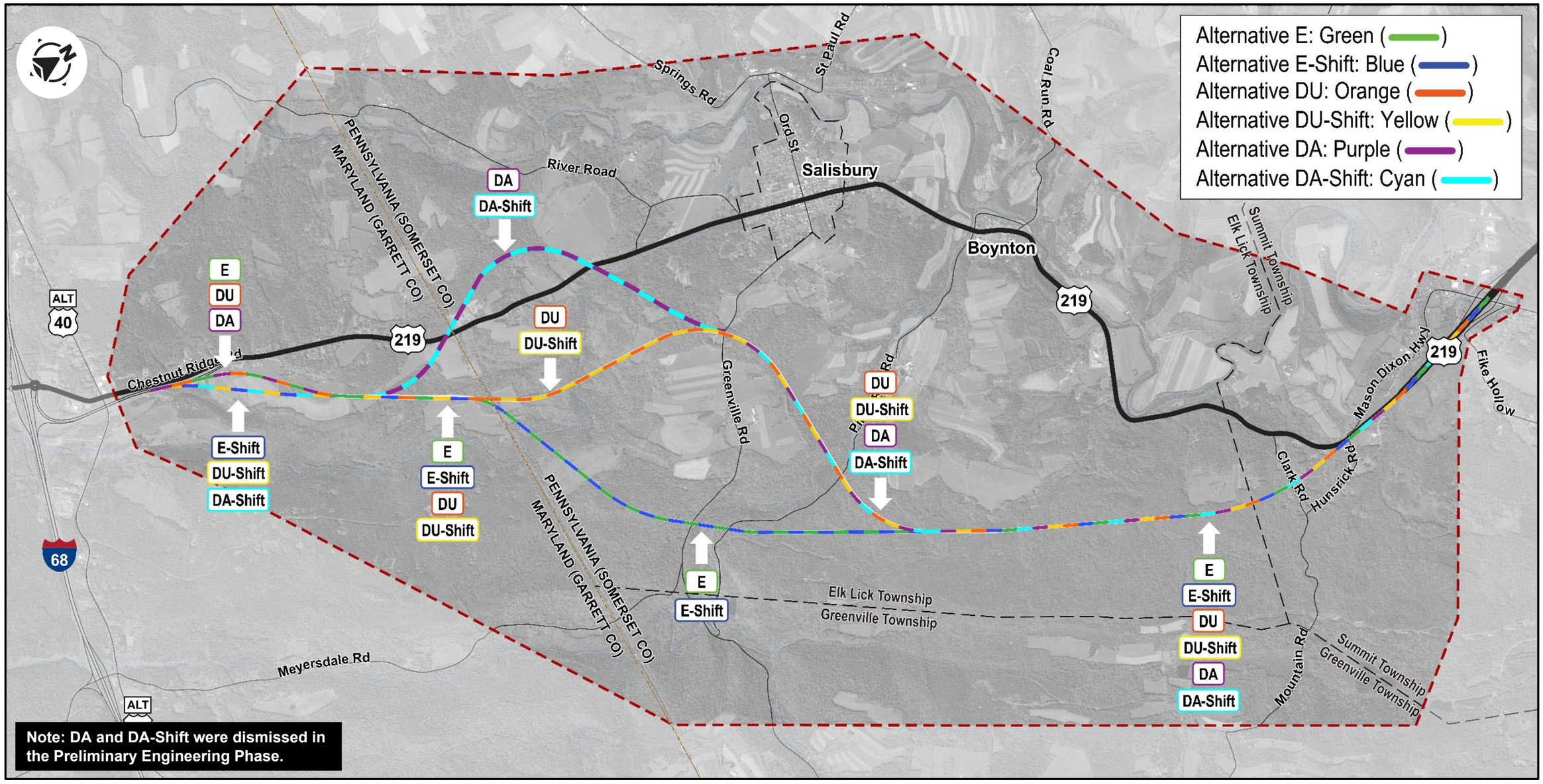


Figure 1-1: Project Study Area and Build Alternatives

2 DETAILED ALTERNATIVES

The proposed Build alternatives include the following:

- Alternative DU
- Alternative DU-Shift
- Alternative E
- Alternative E-Shift

Descriptions of the four Build alternatives including the No-Build alternative are presented below. The location of the four Build alternatives is presented in **Figure 1-1.**

2.1 No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative involves taking no action, except routine maintenance along U.S. 219. The existing two-lane roadway between Meyersdale, Pennsylvania and Garrett County, Maryland would remain. No new alternatives or additional roadway would be constructed.

2.2 Proposed Roadway Layout

The typical section for each construction alternative provides a four-lane divided limited access highway with 12-foot-wide travel lanes, 8-foot wide inside shoulders and 10-foot-wide outside shoulders. The width of the median between the inside edges of northbound and southbound travel lanes is between 36 to 60 feet. Most of the median within Pennsylvania would be 60 feet wide and would transition down to 36 feet wide in Maryland to match the current roadway typical section.

2.3 Common Segment Improvements

The northern three miles in Pennsylvania all follow the same alignment, starting from the existing Meyersdale interchange. In addition to the three miles being on the same alignment, other improvements described below are being proposed. These improvements include upgrades to portions of Mason-Dixon Highway, an extension of Mountain Road from its northern terminus to Fike Hollow Road on the east side of U.S. 219, in addition a cul-de-sac of Hunsrick Road, and cul-de-sacs on the bisected Clark Road are proposed. These improvements are intended to ensure that local traffic has continued access. These improvements are included with all alternatives being considered, other than the No Build Alternative. The scope of these proposed improvements is outlined below and depicted in **Figure 2-1**.

The numbers below correspond to the number on the figure, illustrating the location of the improvement. Stormwater management facilities, which would result in the need for additional right-of-way and environmental impacts have also been incorporated into the design, as shown in **Figure 2-1**.

2.3.1 Hunsrick Road

Improvements made to tie a new U.S. 219 alternative into existing U.S. 219 require the

removal of the existing Hunsrick Road Bridge (SR 2102). Due to geometric and intersection sight distance constraints at the intersection of Hunsrick Road (T -355) and Mason-Dixon Highway (T-355), it was determined that the Hunsrick Road Bridge would not be replaced and Hunsrick Road would terminate on the east side of U.S. 219.

Hunsrick Road currently extends northwest from the intersection with Mountain Road to the Hunsrick Road Bridge. With the removal of the Hunsrick Road Bridge and proposed improvements associated with the Mountain Road Extension, a cul-de-sac would be placed at the northern end of Hunsrick Road. The intersection of Mountain Road with Hunsrick Road would be realigned and maintained. Access to property along Chipmonk Lane would be maintained from Mason-Dixon Highway.

2.3.2 Clark Road

Clark Road (T-353) extends west from Mountain Road (T-824) to the existing U.S. 219. Due to topographical and geometric constraints, providing a grade separated crossing of a new U.S. 219 alternative proposed under this study was not practical. It was determined Clark Road should be bisected where it crosses a new alternative of U.S. 219 proposed under this study. A cul-de-sac would be placed at each end of the roadway where it intersects the U.S. 219 right-of-way. The eastern side of Clark Road would maintain access to U.S. Business 219 near the Meyersdale Interchange via Mountain Road, Mountain Road Extension, and Fike Hollow Road.

2.3.3 Mountain Road Extension

As a result of the Hunsrick Road Bridge removal, a new roadway would be constructed: the Mountain Road Extension. This new roadway would connect existing Mountain Road (T-824) with Fike Hollow Road (T-363) and would parallel new U.S. 219 alternative along the eastern side. This new connector roadway would provide access from Mountain Road to U.S. Business Route 219 (SR 2047) near the Meyersdale Interchange. The proposed typical section for the Mountain Road Extension includes two 9-foot travel lanes and with 2-foot outside shoulders. The design speed is anticipated to be 25 miles per hour.

2.3.4 Mason-Dixon Highway

The Mason-Dixon Highway (T-355) would be improved between Hunsrick Road and the U.S. 219 Meyersdale Interchange in accordance with PennDOT's Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation (3R) design criteria, using a design speed transition from 55 MPH to 35 MPH. The upgrades are roughly 1.3-miles in length, starting near Hunsrick Road and ending at the U.S. 219 Meyersdale Interchange.

Prior to the opening of the Meyersdale Bypass, Mason-Dixon Highway carried U.S. 219. After the Meyersdale Bypass opened, PennDOT transferred ownership and maintenance of Mason-Dixon Highway to Summit Township. Following completion of a new U.S. 219 alternative proposed under this study, ownership of Mason-Dixon Highway is to be transferred back to PennDOT as part of re-routed traffic patterns in the area.

2.3.5 Existing U.S. 219 Connection to be Removed

Existing U.S. 219 would be severed, and a local connection would be re-established immediately south of the existing Hunsrick Road bridge along the previously abandoned roadway alignment. This new roadway would become Business U.S. 219.

2.4 Alternative DU

The Alternative DU alignment was developed by combining suggestions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with an alternative identified during former 2001 NEPA efforts. USFWS suggested an alternative to avoid the mountain slope/ridge in Pennsylvania and reduce potential impacts to terrestrial wildlife.

2.5 Alternative DU-Shift

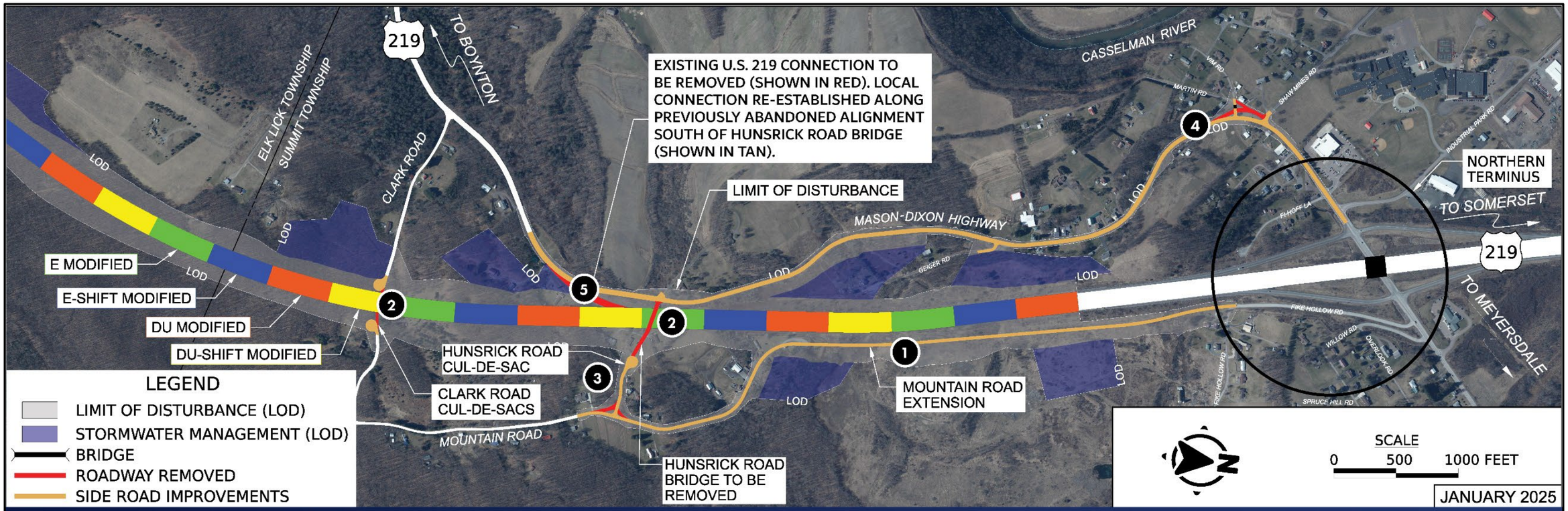
Alternative DU-Shift resulted from combining Alternative DU with Alternative E-Shift to move the alternative further away from residences along Old Salisbury Road. Alternative DU-Shift mimics the alternative of Alternative DU from Meyersdale until south of the Mason-Dixon Line, where the alternative is shifted eastward and away from Old Salisbury Road.

2.6 Alternative E

The Alternative E alignment was suggested during former 2001 NEPA efforts to avoid farmland in Pennsylvania and avoid residential areas along existing U.S. 219. Alternative E starts at the southern end of the Meyersdale Bypass and proceeds in a southerly direction along the face of Meadow Mountain. At the Pennsylvania/Maryland border, Alternative E would extend in a southwesterly direction, east of the existing U.S. 219.

2.7 Alternative E-Shift

The alignment for Alternative E-Shift was suggested by residents along Old Salisbury Road during the former 2001 NEPA efforts and involves moving Alternative E further away from the residences on Old Salisbury Road. Alternative E-Shift follows Alternative E, with the exception of a small shift in Maryland, slightly eastward, away from the homes along Old Salisbury Road. Alternative E does not directly impact the homes along Old Salisbury Road; however, residents requested an evaluation of a slightly eastward shift to move the alternative further from their homes. The trade-off is that Alternative E-Shift bisects a farm field that is only slightly impacted by Alternative E. This shifted section is the same as the shifted section Alternative DU-Shift



This figure presents five changes that will occur in the northern portion of this study area in addition to the new alignment. Those changes are represented by numbers 1 through 5 and the description contained to the right.

As the alignment in this area is the same for all four Build Alternatives being studied, colored dashes were used to represent each one. The corresponding color for each Build Alternative is shown to the right.

1. Extension of Mountain Road
2. Clark Road bisected and Hunsrick Road Bridge Eliminated
3. Cul-de-sac on Hunsrick Road
4. Upgrade Mason-Dixon Highway
5. Existing U.S. 219 Connection to be removed, local connection re-established along previously abandoned alignment

Alternative E Modified: Green ( )
Alternative E-Shift Modified: Blue ( )
Alternative DU Modified: Orange ( )
Alternative DU-Shift Modified: Yellow ( )

Figure 2-1: Additional Improvements in Northern Portion of Study Area

2.8 Section 4(f) and Section 106 Minimization Alternatives

Each Build Alternative has been modified to incorporate measures to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) and Section 106 resources listed below. The four modified alternatives were advanced in the FEIS. These alternatives include DU Modified, DU-Shift Modified, E Modified, and E-Shift Modified. Detailed descriptions of these alternatives are included in the FEIS. Avoidance and minimization of impacts to Section 4(f) and Section 106 resources are described below.

State Game Lands 231 (Section 4(f) and Section 2002 avoidance)

- A 300-foot-long varying 3.5-foot-high retaining wall was added on the east side of U.S. 219 to avoid cut slope impacts to State Game Lands 231.
- The Limit of Disturbance (LOD) in this area was additionally reduced from 100 feet to 45 feet beyond the top of cut.
- No impacts to State Game Lands will be incurred from any alternative.

Deal Farm (Section 4(f) avoidance and Section 106 minimization):

- The LOD along the west side of the Piney Run Bridge was reduced to avoid physical impact to the Deal Farm.
- The LOD now falls 100 feet from the western edge of the bridge versus its original location 100 feet beyond the assumed fill line.
- Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified would reduce physical impact from 16.4 acres to 16.2 acres.
- Alternatives E Modified and E-Shift Modified have no physical impact.
- Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified both result in an Adverse Effect determination.
- Alternatives E Modified and E-Shift Modified result in a determination of No Effect.

Mason Dixon Marker No. 191 (Section 4(f) avoidance and Section 106 minimization)

- The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) requested a 25-foot radius buffer around Mason Dixon Marker (Marker.)
- The alignment was generally shifted westward between 10 to 60 feet away from the Marker.
- A 55-mph speed limit and a 60-mph design speed were incorporated in the design of the Maryland portion of U.S. 219 consistent with the recently completed 1.4-mile SHA improvement of U.S. 219.
- North from the Maryland line, through the first curve in Pennsylvania, the design includes a transition to a 65-mph posted speed limit and 70-mph design speed north of the Meadow Run Bridge.
- The median width was reduced in this area from 60 feet to 44 feet.

- North of the Meadow Run Bridge the median width transitions to 60 feet.
- At the state line, the LOD was reduced from 100 to 50 feet in this area.
- No physical impacts will be incurred from any alternative.
- Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift result in a No Adverse Effect determination.
- Alternatives E Modified and E-Shift Modified result in a No Effect determination.

Tomlinson Inn and the Little Meadows (Section 4(f) avoidance and Section 106 minimization):

- The U.S. 219 tie-in location was adjusted north to avoid impacts to Tomlinson Inn and the Little Meadows historical boundary.
- The horizontal alignment was also shifted 60 feet to the west.
- The median width was reduced to 44 feet and 36 feet in tangent sections where practical.
- The LOD was generally reduced to 50 feet beyond the cut/fill lines in this area.
- In a few places, the LOD was reduced to approximately 20 feet beyond the cut/fill lines.
- No physical impact would be incurred by any of the alternatives.
- The determination of effect for all build alternatives is No Adverse Effect.

Miller Farm

- All build alternatives physically impact 0.6 acre of the Miller Farm.
- All build alternatives result in a No Adverse Effect determination.
- A determination of Section 4(f) De Minimis Use was made in consultation with FHWA.

Lowry Farm (Section 4(f) and Section 106 minimization)

- Alternative DU Modified and Alternative DU-Shift Modified each physically impact 23.4 acres, resulting in an Adverse Effect determination for both alternatives.
- Alternatives E Modified and E-Shift Modified each have no physical impact and result in No Effect determination for both alternatives.

3 METHODOLOGY

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) statute requires the examination of direct and reasonably foreseeable effects of a project. An analysis was conducted in accordance with NEPA, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) implementing regulations (23 CFR 771), Section 139 (23 USC 139) the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (Pub. L. No. 118-5, 137 Stat. 10). These documents require Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) projects to review reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the proposed agency action.

This analysis discusses the impacts and effects that must be addressed and considered during the project planning process to satisfy the NEPA guidelines. These impacts include both direct and reasonably foreseeable effects.

According to the FHWA guidance, determination or estimation of future impacts is essential to analyzing reasonably foreseeable effects. However, the focus must be on those actions that are likely to occur or probable, rather than those that are merely possible.

Publication No. 640 (2008), outlines the difference between direct and reasonably foreseeable effects. **Table 3-1** further describes the characteristics that define and differentiate the types of effects that are assessed in the NEPA environmental review process.

Table 3-1: Direct and Reasonably Foreseeable Effects

Type of Effect	Direct	Reasonably Foreseeable
Nature of Effect	Typical/Inevitable/ Predictable	Probable
Cause of Effect	Project	Project's direct and reasonably foreseeable effects
Timing of Effect	Project Construction and Implementation	At some future time after direct effects
Location of Effect	Within project impact area	Within boundaries of systems affected by project

4 REASONABLY FORESEEABLE EFFECTS ANALYSIS

4.1 Project's Potential for Reasonably Foreseeable Effects

As part of the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project understanding, it is necessary to determine whether the project would have the potential to cause effects and whether an analysis is even necessary. Even if the project does not appear to have a high potential for growth-related effects, the possibility of other non-growth-related effects are still considered as reasonably foreseeable.

Project Type:

- The project proposes a new transportation facility on new alignment providing increased capacity to better accommodate regional through traffic. However, the Build Alternatives are designated as "Limited Access" roadways, allowing no direct access to any project area parcels except at the existing access points (Meyersdale Interchange in Pennsylvania and I-68 Interchange in Maryland).

Project Location:

- The surrounding land is predominantly rural with primarily low density residential.

Growth Pressure:

- Based on review of the municipalities' comprehensive plans, development within the municipalities is moderate with the presence and location of land conservation easements that restrict land development activities and preserve agricultural and natural land resources. Completion of the U.S. 219 from I-68 to the Meyersdale Interchange project has the potential to induce and facilitate regional growth by improving system linkage and providing a transportation infrastructure that supports economic development within the region.

It is anticipated that the potential for the four Build Alternatives to induce growth or substantial land use changes in the surrounding area is moderate based on review of the comprehensive plans from the Southern Alleghenies Region, Grantsville, Maryland and Garrett County, Maryland. There is also moderate potential for the Build Alternatives to result in effects from encroachment alterations. These are defined as alteration of the behavior and functioning of the affected environment caused by study encroachment (physical, biological, socioeconomics) on the environment. The resources to be considered in the RFE are those that would be directly impacted by the Build Alternatives in addition to reasonably foreseeably impacted by natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources. **Table 4-1** summarizes the currently proposed direct impacts of the Build Alternatives retained for detailed study on environmental resources.

Table 4-1: Summary of Direct Impacts to Environmental Resources

Resource	No Build	DU Mod.	DU-Shift Mod.	E Mod.	E-Shift Mod.
Socioeconomic Resource Impacts					
Parcels Intersected by LOD (#)	0	124	121	113	110
Residential Displacements (#)	0	11	11	10	10
Commercial Displacements (#)	0	2	2	2	2
Impacted Noise Receptors	4	13	9	13	9
State Game Land (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural Resource Impacts					
Above Ground Historic Resources (#/ Effect)	0/ No Effect	3/ Adverse Effect	3/ Adverse Effect	1/No Adverse Effect	1/ No Adverse Effect
Areas of High Probability Pre-Contact Archaeology (acres)	0	50.2	50.2	48.8	48.8
Areas of High Probability Historic Archaeology (acres)	0	17.1	17.1	14.4	14.4
Section 4(f) Resources (#/ Type of Use)	0	3/ >De Minimis	3/ >De Minimis	1/ De Minimis	1/ De Minimis
Natural Resource Impacts					
Forestland	0	431.4	430.0	389.8	388.8
Active Farmland (acres)	0	76.1	76.3	37.4	37.6
Productive Farms (#)	0	9	9	6	6
Prime Farmland Soils (acres)	0	34.2	34.2	21.2	21.2
Soils of Statewide Importance (acres)	0	104.3	104.3	83.4	83.3
Preferential Tax Assessment (acres)	0	74.6	74.9	35.8	36.1
FEMA 100-Year Flood Zone (acres)	0	12.3	12.3	4.7	4.7
Potential Bat Hibernacula (#)	0	3	3	0	0
Wetland (acres)	0	11.38	11.25	10.15	10.02
Streams (linear feet)	0	24,997	25,012	23,148	23,141
Mining & Potential Hazardous Waste					
Surface Mining Boundaries (acres)	0	321	320.9	214	214
Deep Mine Boundaries (acres)	0	24.1	24.1	24.2	24.2
Area Of Concern Sites (#)	0	3	3	3	3
Engineering					
Length of Alternative (miles)	0	8.3	8.3	7.9	7.9
Limit of Disturbance (acres)	0	633.8	631.3	566	563.8
Preliminary Cost Estimate (Year 2030 Dollars)	$0	$483.0 M	$486.3 M	$307.0 M	$310.4 M

Notes: 1) Green shading represents the lowest impact per category by alternative (excluding the No Build, which does not carry any direct impacts other than Noise Receptors). 2) Four impacted Noise Receptors are associated with the No Build Alternative because of design year traffic projections. 3) Preliminary construction cost estimates are exclusive of Right of Way Acquisition, Utility Relocation, Mineral Rights, Wildlife Crossings, Intelligent Transportation Systems and Maintenance Facility Final Amenities.

4.2 Boundaries for Reasonably Foreseeable Effects

The geographical boundaries for effects on natural environmental resources, cultural resources, and socioeconomic resources are described below. These boundaries accommodate all the Build Alternatives and complement community land use goals that could interact with transportation facilities. The boundaries also include reasonably foreseeable actions in the vicinity. The RFE analysis boundaries are based on U.S. Census block groups, sub watershed boundaries, and transportation boundaries. **Table 4-2 summaries** the resources analyzed and their corresponding sub-boundaries.

Table 4-2: RFE Analysis Resource Effects

Resource	Incorporation into RFE	Rationale	Representative Sub-Boundary
Socioeconomic Resources			
Community Facilities and Services (cohesion, access, services)	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Parks and Recreational Facilities	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Land Use, Property, and Right-of-Way	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Population and Housing	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Noise	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Air Quality	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Economic Resources	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Visual and Aesthetic	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	U.S. Census Block Groups
Cultural Resources			
Historic Sites and Districts	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	Area of Potential Effects
Archaeology	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	Area of Potential Effects
Natural Environmental Resources			
Wetlands	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed

Streams	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed
Groundwater	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed
Floodplains	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed
Threatened and Endangered Species	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed
Forestland	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed
Prime and Statewide Important Farmland Soils	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed
Productive Agricultural Land	Yes	Reasonably foreseeable effects	HUC 12 Watershed

Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area:

U.S. Census block group (BG) boundaries were used to develop the socioeconomic resources RFE Study Area boundary to represent the socioeconomic resources potentially affected by the project. As shown on **Figure 4-1**, there are 10 BGs that comprise the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area. Eight of the BGs are located in Somerset County, Pennsylvania and two are located in Garrett County, Maryland.

Natural Resources RFE Study Area:

Hydrologic unit boundaries were used for assessing the scope of effects to natural environmental resources based on the watershed boundary dataset at the hydrologic unit code (HUC) 12 level provided by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). As shown in **Figure 4-2**, The Natural Resources RFE Study Area is comprised of the following six HUC 12 watersheds:

- Flag Run-Casselman River
- Tub Mill Run-Casselman River
- Red Run-Piney Creek
- Little Piney Creek-Piney Creek
- Miller Run-Casselman River
- Flaughtery Creek

The Natural Resources RFE Study Area is sized to capture potential direct effects of those transportation improvements evaluated with the study, and the reasonably foreseeable effects downstream which may occur.

Cultural Resources RFE Study Area:

The Cultural Resources RFE Study Area, as shown on **Figure 4-3**, includes the area of potential effects (APE) within which effects to cultural resources could occur from visual, audible, and atmospheric elements that could dimmish the integrity of

cultural resources. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act compliance considers reasonably foreseeable effects as well as direct effects to historic properties.

Area of Traffic Influence:

The Area of Traffic Influence (ATI) defines the geographic extent within which roadway traffic volumes are anticipated to undergo substantial alterations due to the implementation of the Build Alternatives. Based on the needs of the project and considering the regional type of traffic supported by U.S. 219, the ATI was not considered when establishing the geographic boundary. An initial review of the ATI revealed a large area considered too expansive for the analysis of reasonably foreseeable effects associated with this project. In addition, the ATI encompasses the other resource boundaries used in the RFE analysis.

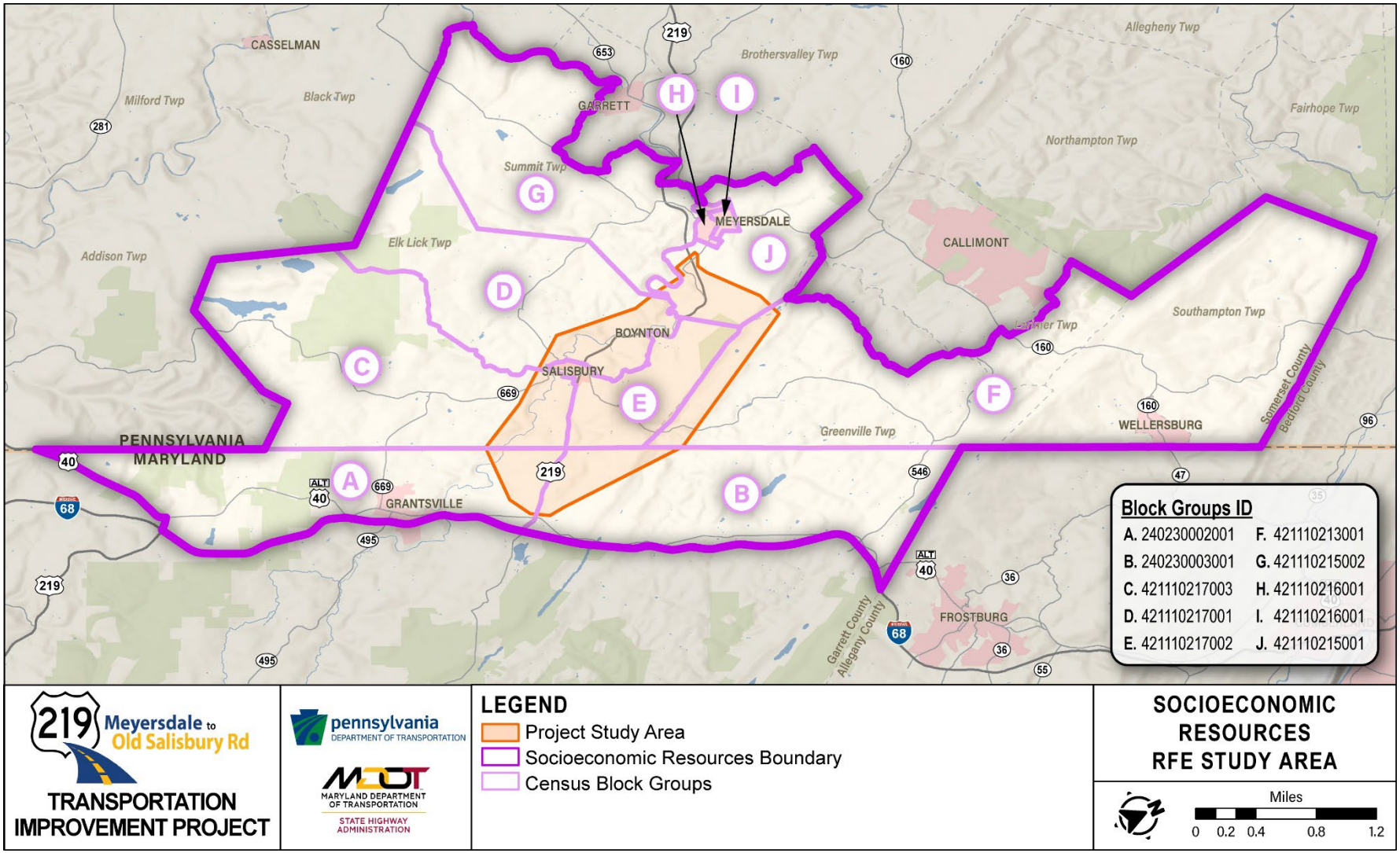


Figure 4-1: Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area

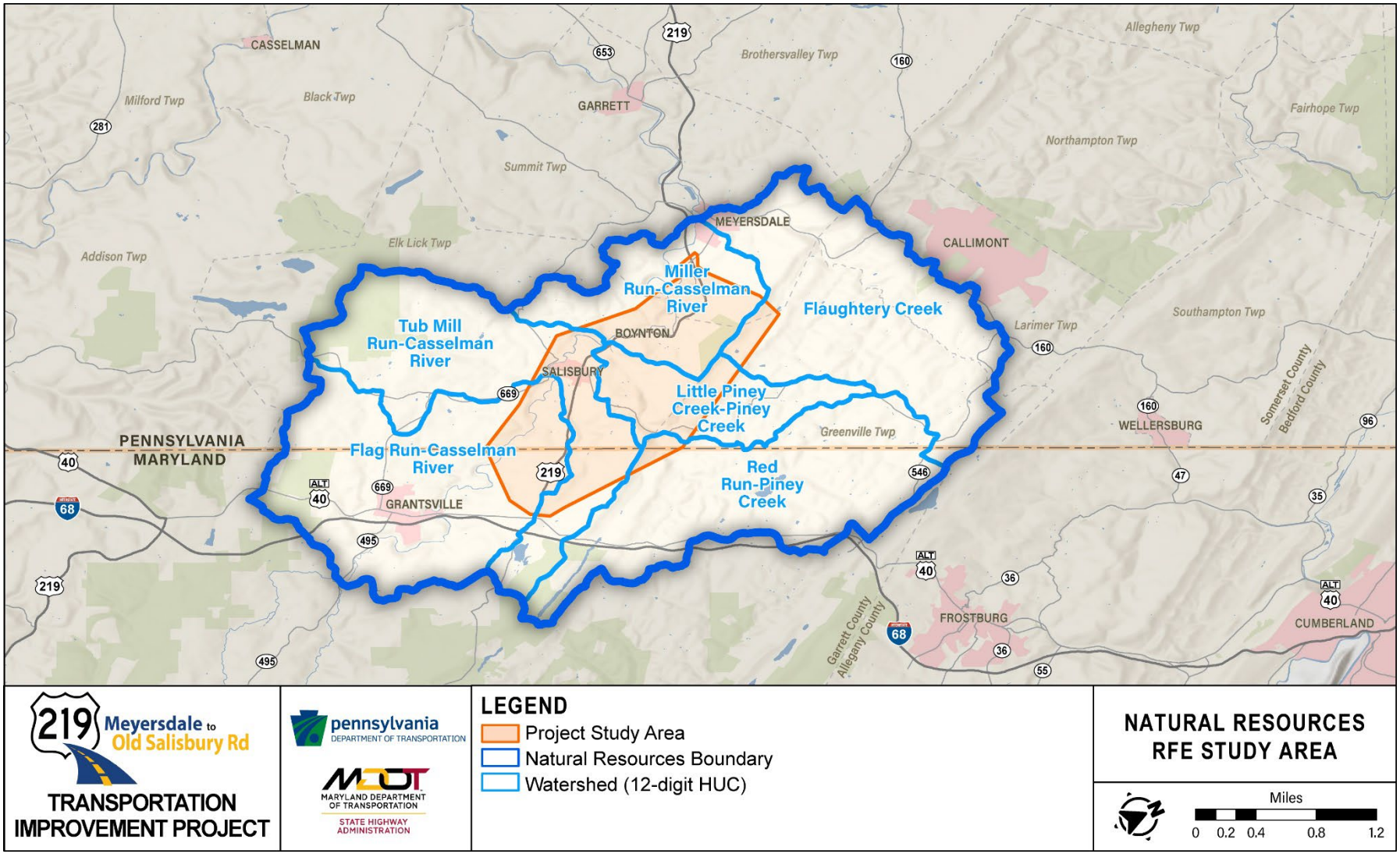


Figure 4-2: Natural Resources RFE Study Area

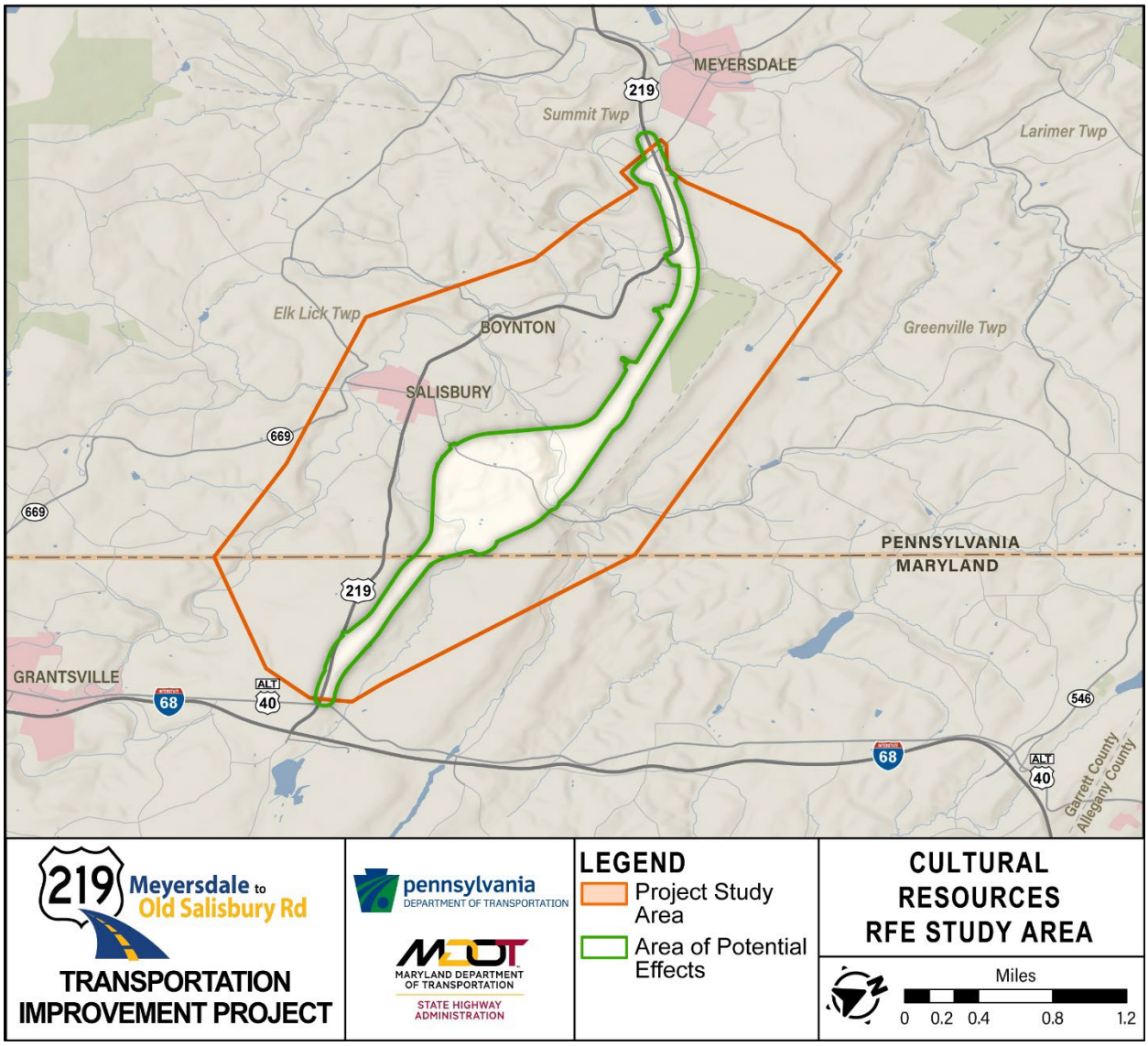


Figure 4-3: Cultural Resources RFE Study Area

4.3 Baseline Conditions

Baseline conditions tell the story of the resources by describing the current health, condition, or status of the resources within each RFE Study Area and describe the changes and trends that have occurred over time. This step includes identifying county and local planning initiatives, local development activity, natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources, and other issues.

4.3.1 Land Use

4.3.1.1 Present Land Use

Concentrated areas of development within the Somerset County portion of the study area include the area outside Meyersdale Borough, which contains residential neighborhoods of medium density and multiple commercial properties. The area between Meyersdale

and the unincorporated community of Boynton includes low density residential development.

Salisbury is fully within the RFE Study Area, and the municipality includes medium density neighborhoods and a population of approximately 605 residents. There are various businesses within Salisbury. A low-density residential area is between Salisbury and the Pennsylvania-Maryland border.

In Garrett County, the area surrounding U.S. 219 includes low to medium density residential development. The density of development increases as U.S. 219 travels south and approaches the I-68 interchange and the south end of the study area. Additionally, the south end of the study area includes commercial development, gas stations, convenience stores, restaurants, and a hotel.

Agricultural land is prevalent throughout the study area and is essential to the economy of both counties. Somerset County contains approximately 1,150 farms totaling over 200,000 acres. These farms account for over one-quarter of the land within Somerset County. The average farm size is roughly 190 acres. In Garrett County, there are about 700 farms totaling approximately 90,000 acres. This represents about one-fifth of the county's land. The average farm size in Garrett County is about 128 acres.

The purpose of this project involves encouraging economic development in the Appalachian Region which includes Garrett and Somerset Counties. Local, state, and federal governments have existing initiatives in place to encourage this economic growth, especially in Maryland. The Chestnut Ridge area in the southwest end of the study area was designated as a Potential Employment Area by Garrett County. The proposed 1.8-mile relocated portion of U.S. 219 from the Maryland-Pennsylvania state line to the northern terminus of the recently constructed roadway at Old Salisbury Road is not within a designated Priortiy Funding Area (PFA).

Table 4-3: Historic Population Size

Location	2010	2020	2022
Somerset County, PA	77,742	74,129	73,407
Growth %	-3%	-5%	-1%
Garrett County, MD	30,097	28,806	28,548
Growth %	1%	-4%	-1%

Sources: 1) Maryland Department of Planning, 2023. 2) Somerset County Government, 2016.

4.3.1.2 Land Use Plans and Policies

Garrett County has a county-wide comprehensive plan that was adopted in November 2022. This comprehensive plan places an emphasis on conserving farmland and natural resources. However, it also balances this with the County's desire to develop infrastructure that meets the future needs of residents and businesses, create employment opportunities, and encourage tourism. Consequently, the plan encourages growth in designated growth locations, while maintaining forested and agricultural land in more sensitive locations. The plan also states that the extension of U.S. 219 to Pennsylvania is a top transportation priority for the County, necessary to improve access, reduce travel time, and promote economic development in the area. Furthermore, the plan proposes future land uses for the study area within Maryland, including agricultural resources, suburban residential, town residential, and general commercial uses.

The Garrett County Comprehensive Plan considers areas that incorporated towns, including Grantsville, have identified for future annexation. These GFAs for Grantsville are primarily within the boundaries of Priority Funding Areas. The Town of Grantsville has its own comprehensive plan which was adopted in 2009 and its own zoning districts. Grantsville is located west of the U.S. 219 Improvement Project and is within the Socioeconomic and Natural Resources RFE Study Areas. The comprehensive plan of Grantsville still aligns with the Garrett County Comprehensive Plan as it seeks to encourage growth within appropriate areas while minimizing sprawl and natural resource impacts.

Maryland's "Smart Growth" policy was enacted into law prioritizing existing communities over sprawl and directing development to designated areas while revitalizing older neighborhoods. By focusing on these PFAs, locations approved for growth and redevelopment with state investment, Maryland aims to preserve farmland, open spaces, and natural resources. The Garrett County PFA is within the RFE Study Area mainly west of U.S. 219. Within this PFA is the Chestnut Ridge Development Corridor (CRDC) which is located east of Grantsville and runs mainly along U.S. 40 (between New Germany Road and U.S. 219) and U.S. 219 (between Old Salisbury Road and I-68). According to Garrett County's Comprehensive Plan, the vision for the corridor is to house a vibrant community merging residential, commercial, and industrial interests in a balanced environment that encourages economic development.

The Garrett County Water and Sewer Master Plan (revised in 2014 and amended in 2023), was prepared to support the continued development of water supply and sewage systems in Garrett County where designated growth areas and areas supporting economic development exists. According to the plan the CRDC and surrounding areas are designated for water service in the next ten years, meaning an amendment to the Plan would be required to extend service to the area. Areas east of U.S. 219 between Old Salisbury Road and the I-68 interchange are scheduled for service within ten years, thus requiring an amendment to construct sewer service. The 2014 Plan also states that public water and sewer service would not be available in certain land classifications including Agricultural Resource, Rural Resource, or Rural. These areas are permitted for shared septic systems supporting cluster development. With much of the land surrounding the

CRDC classified as Agricultural Resource, Rural Resource, or Rural, development outside of the CRDC would most likely not be designated.

Somerset County does not have a county-wide comprehensive plan. However, the Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Alleghenies Region was adopted by Somerset County in 2018. Within this plan, county priorities include business and workforce development. The completion of U.S. 219 between Meyersdale and Maryland is noted with the goal of encouraging new development along a future new alignment.

4.3.2 Natural Resources Trends

This section describes the natural resources trends within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area based on available data. These trends provide an overview of the natural resource conditions within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area. **Table 4-4** and **Figure 4-4** below show the natural resources land cover trends within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area from 2012 to 2022. Data was derived from the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium National Land Cover Database (MRLC NLCD).

Table 4-4: Natural Resources Land Cover Trends within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area

Land Cover Type	2012 (acres)	2022 (acres)	2012-2022 Change (acres)	2012-2022 % Change
Barren Land	818.9	462.1	-356.8	-44%
Forest	48,049.5	48,104.2	+54.7	0%
Shrub/Scrub	581.8	493.9	-87.9	-15%
Grassland/Herbaceous	1,071.1	1,438.9	+367.8	+34%
Agriculture	21,604.8	21,479.1	-125.7	-1%
Wetlands	538.2	612.9	+74.7	+14%
Open Water	270.4	246.4	-24	-9%

Sources: 1) Maryland Department of Planning, 2023. 2) Somerset County Government, 2016.

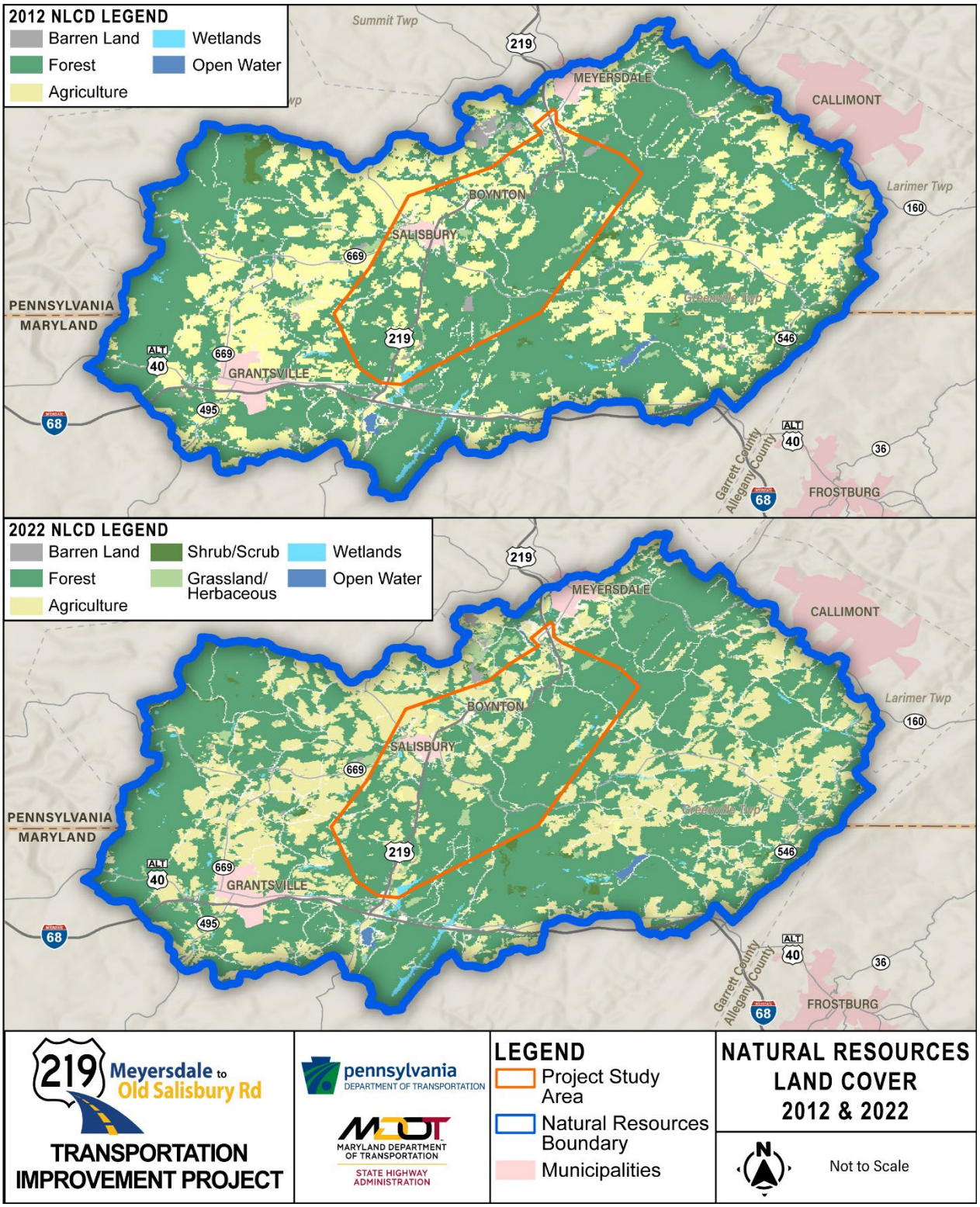


Figure 4-4: Natural Resources Land Cover within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area

4.3.2.1 Water Resources

The Casselman River Watershed encompasses the Natural Resources RFE Study Area and extends into both Somerset County and Garrett County. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) identifies the Casselman River Watershed as a restoration priority watershed meaning this watershed has a high number of impaired waterbodies. The impairment is to aquatic life with the source of impairment coming from abandoned mine drainage and the cause of impairment from metals and pH (DEP, 2020). The Garrett County portion of the Casselman River Watershed is experiencing the same pH impairment issues. The pH impairments are associated with acid mine drainage from abandoned mine lands or episodic atmospheric deposition (MDE, 2011).

Using fish and benthic IBI, the MBSS rated the overall condition of Garrett County streams as fair during 2000-2004.

In 2022, open water decreased to 246.4 acres from 270.4 acres in 2012. Open water within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area decreased by approximately 9 percent in comparison to 2012.

In 2022, wetland areas increased to 612.9 acres from 538.2 acres in 2012. Between 2012 and 2022 wetland areas within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area increased by approximately 14 percent.

4.3.2.2 Terrestrial Habitat

The Natural Resources RFE Study Area land cover largely consists of forested land. In 2022 forested land was 48,104 acres (approximately 60 percent of the Natural Resources RFE Study Area). In 2022 forested land in the Natural Resources RFE Study Area increased 54.7 acres from 2012.

The Maryland portion of the project area is located within the Casselman River watershed. Tributaries to Meadow Run and Casselman River cross the project area. Based on coordination with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR), the Maryland Surface Water Use Designation for streams within the project area is Use III, pursuant to which they are protected as “Nontidal Cold Water” suitable as natural trout streams (COMAR 26.08.02.08). According to the Maryland Tier II High Quality Waters map, the project area is not within a Tier II High Quality watershed (MDE, continuously updated). According to the Maryland 303(d) List of Impaired Waterways, the Casselman River watershed is listed as Category 4a – impaired, TMDL complete for pH (acid mine drainage) and Category 5 – impaired, TMDL needed for ions (Chlorides). The streams within the project area in Maryland are not trout waters.

4.3.2.3 Prime Farmland and Statewide Important Farmland Soils

Table 4-5 below displays county farmland trends from 2012 to 2017 for Somerset County and Garrett County. In 2017, there were 1,152 farms and 219,046 acres of farmland in Somerset County (USDA, 2017a). In 2017, Garrett County had 707 farms and 90,357 acres of farmland. Although both Counties have more farms in 2017 than in 2012, the acres of farmland decreased, and this can be associated with the increase in smaller farms in 2017. In addition, Pennsylvania has strict farmland laws that afford protection to

various types of farmlands.

Table 4-5: County Farmland Trends from 2017 to 2022

Item	2017	2022	2017-2022 Change	2017-2022 % Change
Somerset County				
Number of farms	1,152	998	-154	-13%
Land in farms (acres)	219,046	197,565	-21,481	-10%
Average size of farm (acres)	190	198	+8	+4
Garrett County				
Number of farms	707	680	-27	-4%
Land in farms (acres)	90,375	95,546	+5,171	+6%
Average size of farm (acres)	128	141	+13	+10%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2022

In Somerset County, the number of farms decreased from 1,152 in 2017 to 998 in 2022. Which is a 13 percent decrease in the total number of farms. In Garrett County the number of farms decreased from 707 in 2017 to 680 in 2022. Which is a 4 percent decrease in the total number of farms. These decreases in farmland can be attributable to an increase in developed land.

Important farmland includes prime and unique farmland and farmlands of statewide and local importance. Under the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), Federal agencies are required to evaluate the impacts of federally funded projects that may involve permanently converting prime and important farmlands to non-agricultural uses. When proposed by Federal agencies such conversions are reviewed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). In 2022, the NRCS reported that 125,068 acres of were proposed for conversion to non-agricultural uses. Of the acres reviewed, about 39 percent (48,610 acres) were identified as important farmland. Of that important farmland, 24,683 acres were prime or unique farmland, and 23,904 acres were State or locally important farmland. Although not Federal agency conversions, as shown above, the trend of converting agricultural land to non-agricultural use is likely occurring in both Garrett and Somerset Counties.

4.3.3 Socioeconomic Trends

This section describes the socioeconomic trends within the Natural Resources RFE Study based on available data. These trends provide an overview of the socioeconomic conditions within the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area in addition to identifying the potential influence on growth and land use.

4.3.3.1 Population

Somerset County and Garrett County both have demographic and economic concerns related to decreasing and aging populations. **Table 4-6** shows the projected population for Somerset County and Garrett County through 2045. Somerset County is projected to experience a decline in population from 2020 to 2045 with a growth rate of -2.7 percent. Garrett County is projected to experience a slight increase in population from 2020 to 2045 with a growth rate of 1.5 percent. These low to negative population projections

shown in **Table 4-6** could be a result of the aging population Somerset County and Garrett County are experiencing. Approximately 22 percent of the population in Garrett County is age 65 and over, compared to 15 percent in Maryland, and 22 percent of the population in Somerset County is age 65 or older, compared to 18 percent in Pennsylvania.

Table 4-6: Population Projection (2020 to 2045)

Location	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Somerset County, PA	77,020	72,772	71,573	70,187	68,632	67,079
Growth %	1.43%	-5.52%	-1.65%	-1.94%	-2.22%	-2.26%
Garrett County, MD	28,806	29,700	30,250	30,510	30,760	31,000
Growth %	-2.68%	3.10%	1.85%	0.86%	0.82%	0.78%

Sources: 1) Maryland Department of Planning, Projections and State Data Center, December 2020. 2) Pennsylvania State Data Center for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

Table 4-7: Age of Population

Age	Socioeconomic Resources Boundary	Somerset County, PA	Garrett County, MD	Pennsylvania	Maryland
Under 18	22%	18%	19%	21%	22%
18-64	58%	60%	59%	61%	62%
65 and over	20%	22%	22%	18%	15%
Median Age	43	46	47	41	39

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2020 Tables B01001 and B01002 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a)

4.3.3.2 Housing

Potential effects to population could occur from transportation projects that induce growth, involve many residential acquisitions, or make an area less desirable for residential land use. The amount of available housing within the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area Census BGs could indicate whether residents undergoing acquisitions could find replacement housing in the same area and thus reduce impacts to population. Housing in the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area Census BGs consist mainly of single-family homes. An estimated 5,518 housing units are in the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area Census BGs. Of those, 4,568 (approximately 83 percent) are occupied. Shown in **Table 4-8** below is a breakdown of occupied and vacant housing units within the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area in addition to Garrett County, Somerset County, and their respective states.

Table 4-8: Occupied and Vacant Housing Units

Housing Characteristics	Socioeconomic Resources Boundary	Somerset County, PA	Garrett County, MD	Pennsylvania	Maryland
Total Housing Units	5,518	38,523	19,428	5,713,345	2,459,650
Tenure Status					
Occupied Housing Units	4,568	29,518	12,745	5,106,601	2,230,527
Owner Occupied	77%	80%	79%	69%	67%
Rented	23%	20%	21%	31%	33%
Vacancy Status					
Percent of Units Vacant	17%	23%	34%	11%	9%
Percent of Vacant Units Seasonal	31%	61%	69%	28%	25%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2020 Tables B25001, B25003 and B25004 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020b)

4.3.3.3 Employment

Table 4-9 presents unemployment rates in Somerset County and Garrett County compared to statewide rates from 2010 to 2022. Unemployment rates within each county between 2010 and 2022 have been higher than their respective states. In 2020 unemployment rates grew again to the loss of jobs experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) total employment in Garrett County between 2020 and 2030 is expected to increase 6.2 percent. Somerset County is in the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Area (WDA) and according to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, a 2.8 percent growth in employment within Southern Alleghenies WDA is projected.

Table 4-9: Unemployment Rates (Annual Average)

Location	2010	2020	2022
Somerset County, PA	9.3%	9.3%	5.4%
Garrett County, MD	8.9%	6.4%	3.5%
Pennsylvania	8.2%	8.9%	4.4%
Maryland	7.7%	6.5%	3.2%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

The three largest industries in both counties and within the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area are educational services, health care, and social assistance (see **Table 4-10**). The next largest industries are construction in Garrett County and manufacturing in Somerset County. Employment in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining is also significant to the region, with a percentage multiple times larger in each county and the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Boundary than the respective percentages in Maryland or Pennsylvania.

Table 4-10: Industry Type for the Employed Population

Industry Type	Socioeconomic Resources RFE Boundary	Garrett County, MD	Somerset County, PA	Maryland	Pennsylvania
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	7.1%	3.7%	4.1%	0.5%	1.3%
Construction	8.8%	13.1%	7.7%	7.1%	6.0%
Manufacturing	18.1%	7.5%	14.5%	4.5%	11.6%
Wholesale Trade	1.2%	1.5%	2.1%	1.7%	2.6%
Retail Trade	8.1%	9.7%	10.5%	9.3%	11.0%
Transportation & Warehousing, Utilities	4.4%	6.0%	6.2%	4.8%	5.8%
Information	0.4%	1.8%	0.9%	1.9%	1.6%
Finance & Insurance, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	4.0%	5.8%	4.9%	6.1%	6.6%
Professional, Scientific, Mgmt., Administrative, Waste Mgmt. Services	5.1%	8.5%	7.9%	15.8%	10.6%
Educational Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	22.0%	21.1%	21.3%	23.7%	26.2%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	10.6%	8.9%	8.4%	8.1%	8.1%
Other Services, except Public Administration	5.4%	6.2%	5.9%	5.4%	4.7%
Public Administration	4.7%	6.0%	5.6%	10.9%	4.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2016-2020 Table C24030 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020c)

4.3.4 Environmental Justice

Since the issuance of the DEIS on November 15, 2024, and in compliance with new Executive Orders (EO), and policies, this section is no longer required for federal actions.

4.4 Potential Beneficial and Adverse Effects

Reasonably foreseeable effects can occur as induced growth effects or encroachment alternation effects. Herein the analysis identifies and analyzes the potential for project-influenced development and project encroachment impacts.

4.4.1 Potential for Project Related Growth Effects

Reasonably foreseeable impacts include project related induced growth impacts. Transportation alternatives may have the potential for changing or creating new land development patterns. For example, project related development could be the construction of a planned distribution warehouse in the vicinity of a new interstate highway interchange. Warehouse construction requires ease of access that would be provided by an interstate interchange.

The purpose of the U.S. 6219 Section 050 project is to complete Corridor N of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS), to improve regional system linkage, provide safe and efficient access for motorists, and to provide a transportation infrastructure that supports economic development within the Appalachian region.

As described in Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission Corridor N Completion Analysis and Impact Study Report (2020), the completion of Corridor N has the potential to induce and facilitate regional growth. The following describes the potential local development that may occur subsequent to the completion of improved U.S. 219 from I-68 to the Meyersdale interchange.

The Maryland Smart Growth Act directs state infrastructure investment to within locally designated Priority Funding Areas (PFA). Garrett County has included both Grantsville and the Chestnut Ridge Development Corridor (CRDC) within a PFA (see **Figure 4-5**). Both areas are highlighted in the Town of Grantsville 2009 Comprehensive Plan. Although not completed or approved, Grantsville is currently updating its Comprehensive Plan and has explored the feasibility of extending water service from Grantsville eastward toward the CRDC. Sewer service is already included in these areas.

At this time, the only known development is a park and ride lot proposed by SHA to be constructed at the northeast corner of U.S. 40 Alt., U.S. 219 and Business 219. The 35-space park and ride lot on 0.79 acres is situated north of U.S. 40 Alt. and between Business 219 northbound lanes and U.S. 219 Southbound lanes. Plans for this park and ride are included in Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

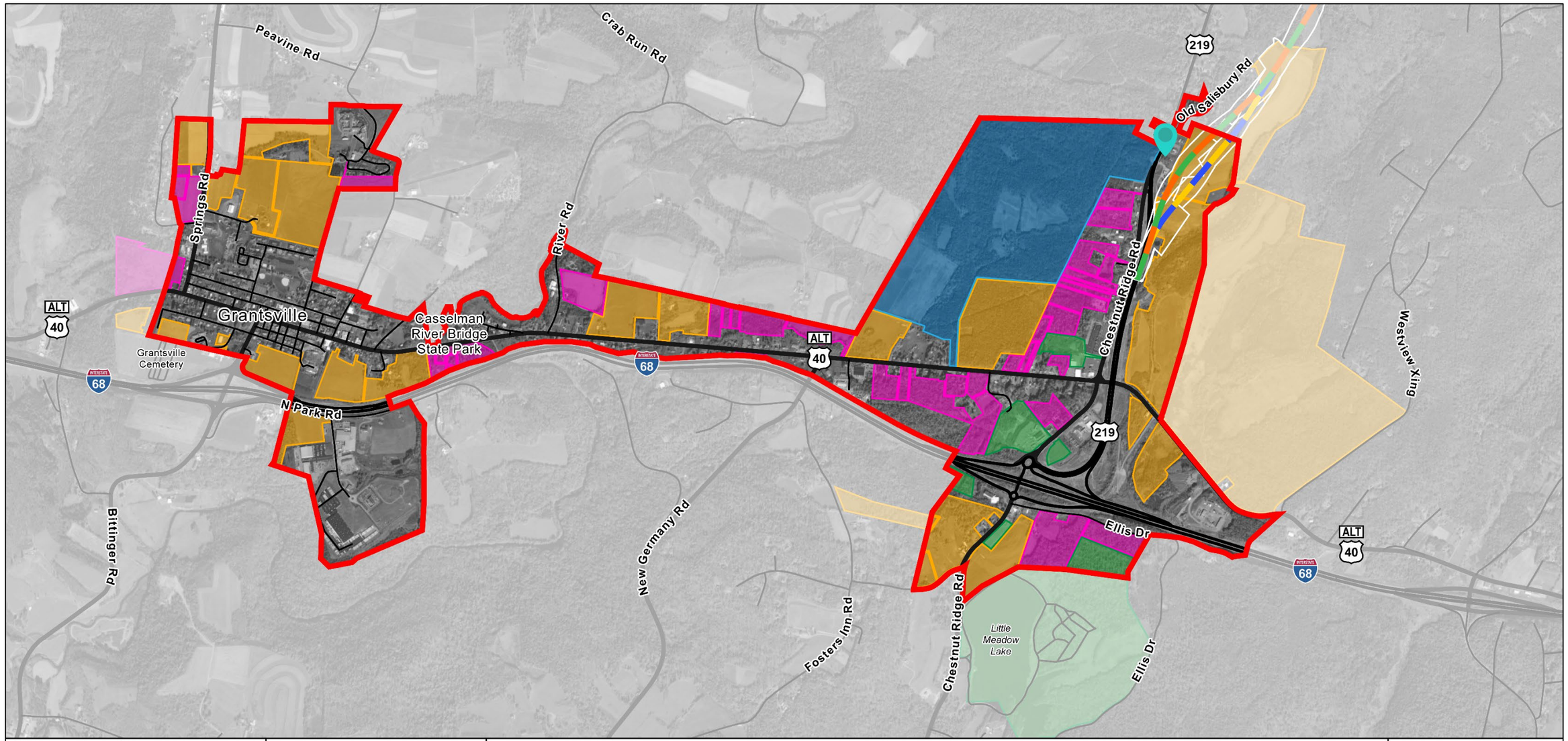


Figure 4-5: Map of Maryland PFA in Relation to Casselman Farm and the CRDC

This connection is however being evaluated as a potential future foreseeable impact that could possibly occur following the construction of improved U.S. 219. Based on its proximity to existing U.S. 219, Alternative DU Modified or E Modified construction would preclude future consideration of an interchange connection with existing U.S. 219 based on residential impacts. As a result, a conceptual at-grade intersection with existing U.S. 219 would likely be considered for Alternatives DU Modified and E Modified.

Alternatives DU-Shift Modified and E-Shift Modified would be further away from existing U.S. 219 and could provide opportunity for an interchange. An urban-type or compressed interchange has been recommended by FHWA to minimize future impacts. Any future interchange should consider impact avoidance and minimization measures to both the Tomlinson Inn and the Little Meadows historic property and the residences along existing U.S. 219.

Shown on **Figure 4-6** is an illustrative concept of what a future Alternative E Modified and DU Modified at-grade intersection could potentially look like. Also shown on **Figure 4-6** is a conceptual Alternative E-Shift Modified and DU-Shift Modified urban type/compressed interchange that could be considered should future development traffic warrant. Although only concepts are depicted, all four potential connections avoid Tomlinson Inn and the Little Meadows, but may impact a place of worship.

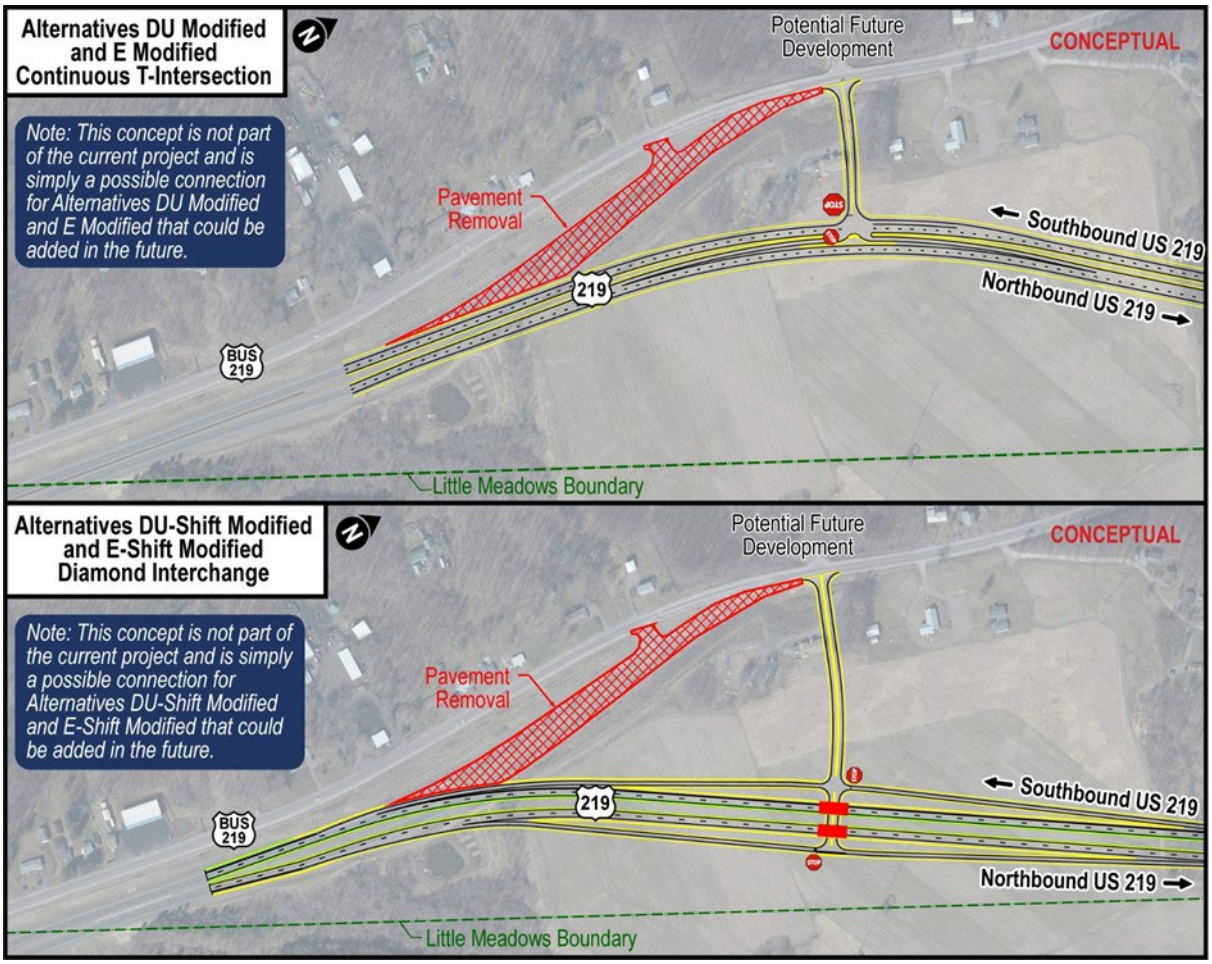


Figure 4-6: Conceptual Direct Connections in Maryland

As mentioned, completion of Corridor N has the potential to facilitate/induce development in the Study Area supported by improved travel times for potential employees working within the U.S. 219 Corridor. Construction of improved U.S. 219 between I-68 and the Meyersdale Interchange would provide both improved access and increased capacity to the CRDC. The following section addresses the potential for new development in this area and identifies the environmental resources located within currently undeveloped parcels that could potentially be developed in the future. It should be noted that development within these parcels is not imminent.

4.4.1.1 Impacts Related to Project Related Growth

The Grantsville CRDC and Garrett County identification of a PFA enveloping the development corridor indicates the desire to stimulate economic growth area in this area. Areas currently undeveloped have been highlighted as potential areas where future development has the possibility to be considered by property owners. These areas have been highlighted in attempt to identify potentially affected environmental resources within these parcels. For study purposes, a one-mile radius was drawn around the I-68 interchange as an indicator of land parcels most likely having the greatest development attraction. This one-mile radius is shown **Figure 4-7** in relation to:

- The Garrett County PFA
- Casselman Farm Development
- Current undeveloped land tracts within the one-mile radius surrounding the I-68 interchange
- Location of a potential future at-grade intersection connection to existing U.S. 219 with Alternatives DU Modified and E Modified
- Location of a potential future at-grade intersection or grade separated interchange to existing U.S. 219 associated with Alternatives DU-Shift Modified and E-Shift Modified

The historic Tomlinson Inn and the Little Meadows property and the Savage River State Forest are also contained within the 1-mile potential development radius around the I-68 interchange and have protections preventing or limiting future development.

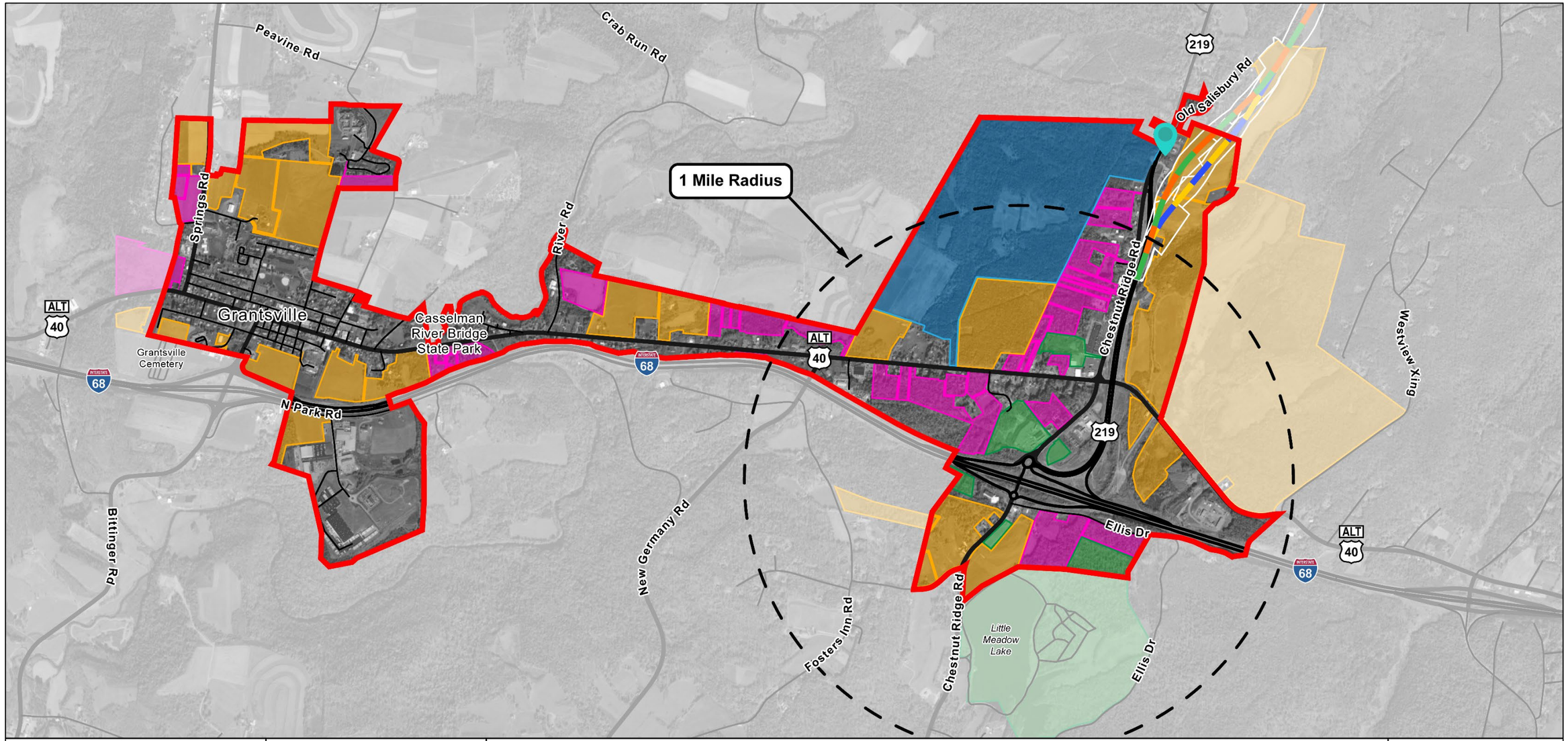


Figure 4-7: Parcels Around the I-68 Interchange with the Greatest Development Attraction

4.4.2 Potential for Encroachment Alteration Effects

Encroachment alteration effects are physical, chemical, or biological changes in the environment that occur as a result of the project but are removed in time or distance from the direct effects. The potential for the U.S. 219, Section 050 project to result in encroachment effects is discussed in the following sections. The resources considered for potential encroachment impacts are based on the direct impacts described in **Table 4-1** under **Section 4.1** and include:

- Socioeconomic Impacts
  - Community Facilities and Services
  - Parks and Recreational Facilities
  - Land Use, Property, and Right-of-Way
  - Population and Housing
  - Noise
  - Air Quality
  - Economic Resources
  - Visual and Aesthetic
- Natural Environmental Impacts
  - Water Resources
  - Floodplains
  - Terrestrial Habitat
  - Threatened and Endangered Species
  - Prime and Statewide Important Farmland Soils
  - Productive Agricultural Land
- Cultural Resources Impacts
  - Historic Sites and Districts
  - Archaeological Resources

4.4.2.1 Impacts Related to Potential Encroachment Alternative Effects

As mentioned previously, encroachment alteration effects are physical, chemical, or biological changes in the environment that occur as a result of the project but are removed in time or distance from the direct effects. The potential for the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project to result in encroachment effects is discussed below.

Socioeconomic Resources

With the No-Build Alternative, no new U.S. 219 connection from Meyersdale, Pennsylvania to Garrett County, Maryland would be constructed, and the existing two-lane alignment of U.S. 219 would remain. The No-Build Alternative would experience lower levels of service in the design year (2050) along the existing roadway compared to the four Build Alternatives. This increased congestion could result in more noise and air impacts. The lack of a new connection between Meyersdale, Pennsylvania and Garrett County, Maryland could have an adverse effect on the socioeconomic resources throughout the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area by not improving the system linkage in the region. These effects could include individuals and or businesses leaving the area to reduce transportation-related costs.

Community Facilities and Services

While there may be temporary disruptions to travel patterns during construction, there would be no long-term disruption to access as most of the community facilities and services within the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area are located in the towns of Grantsville, Salisbury and Meyersdale which are far removed from the four Build Alternatives.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

None of the modified Build Alternatives would impact Pennsylvania State Game Lands Number 321. The four modified Build Alternatives are not likely to change the use of the State Game Lands.

Land Use, Property, and Right-of-Way

Each Build Alternative would convert land used for residential and commercial uses to transportation right-of-way. It is anticipated that DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified would cause 11 residential and 2 commercial displacements. E Modified and E-Shift Modified would cause 10 residential and 2 commercial displacements. Proposed temporary and permanent right-of-way acquisition would not change overall land use in the area; therefore, direct impacts to socioeconomic resources would be limited. Each Build Alternative would also not divide any communities and while there may be temporary disruptions to travel patterns during construction, there would be no long-term disruption to access. The project is not anticipated to result in any encroachment alteration effects to the existing residential and commercial land uses.

Population and Housing

Each Build Alternative would result in residential relocations with DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified involving 11 residential displacements and E Modified and E-Shift Modified causing 10 residential displacements. The impacts to these residential displacements would likely be short-term as a great deal of vacant land is available for the use of potential relocation.

The U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project would result in increased economic opportunity and connectivity for all residents by providing improved access to labor markets in the region. The proposed new U.S. 219 highway would not be tolled, and all populations would have free and equal access along the roadway. Each Build Alternative would result in slight splitting of existing residential areas. The Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area largely consists of forested and agricultural land, with concentrated areas of low to medium density development outside Meyersdale, within Salisbury, within the unincorporated community of Boynton, and in northern Garrett County along the existing U.S. 219.

Noise

Each Build Alternative may impact noise levels for sensitive receptors to varying degrees depending on where the receptors are located. Reasonably foreseeable impacts of traffic noise would be assessed as part of future traffic noise modeling. Noise analysis uses traffic volumes that include the future users attracted to the proposed action. Receptors

would be identified for undeveloped land and undeveloped land permitted for development. Therefore, the noise levels predicted by traffic modeling already incorporate anticipated reasonably foreseeable traffic noise impacts and would be analyzed and mitigated for as a direct impact.

Air Quality

A conformity analysis demonstrates that the emissions projections in the Transportation Improvement Plan from on-road sources (cars, trucks, etc.) are within the emission limits established by the federal regulations as identified in the statewide transportation improvement program. Somerset County and Garrett County are in attainment for all transportation-related pollutants, regional and project-level conformity determination under the Clean Air Act is not required. Future air quality analyses would include anticipated future users of Alternatives DU Modified, DU-Shift Modified, E Modified, and E-Shift Modified. Therefore, the reasonably foreseeable effects of air quality are addressed in the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Air Quality Memorandum (PennDOT, 2023a).

Economic Resources

Each Build Alternative may potentially have a positive impact on local and regional business in the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area. The system linkage in the region will be improved, providing safe and efficient access for motorists, and a transportation infrastructure to support economic development within the Appalachian region. This benefit is anticipated to induce additional development within designated growth areas.

Short-term construction effects to businesses from temporary detours could occur, causing some customer losses and making deliveries more difficult. Such effects would be temporary and minimized by advanced notice of closures and directional signing. Additionally, increases in job opportunities could be expected due to short-term construction hiring and long-term maintenance of the new road.

Visual and Aesthetic

Each Build Alternative will likely result in visual and aesthetic impacts. The existing rural character of the landscape would be transformed by the proposed U.S. 219 alignment which includes a four-lane divided highway with 12 feet wide travel lanes, 8 feet wide inside shoulders, and 10 feet wide outside shoulders. Potential changes in vegetation patterns over time in areas cleared for road construction and areas of cut and fill slopes which could result in minimal to moderate impacts to the visual landscape.

Natural Environmental Resources

No construction or changes to the natural environment would occur with the implementation of the No-Build Alternative. Therefore, no project-related encroachment impacts to natural resources in the Natural Resources RFE Study Area would occur.

Water Resources

Each of the four Build Alternatives may potentially result in short and long term minor adverse degradation of water resources. Each Build Alternative would potentially directly

affect wetlands and streams. Alternative DU Modified would impact 11.38 acres of wetlands and DU-Shift Modified would impact approximately 11.25 acres of wetlands. Alternative E Modified would impact 10.15 acres of wetlands and E-Shift Modified would impact approximately 10.02 acres of wetlands. Alternative DU Modified would impact 24,997 linear feet of streams and Alternative DU-Shift Modified would impact 25,012 linear feet of streams. Alternative E Modified would impact 23,148 linear feet of stream and E-Shift Modified would have 23,141 linear feet of stream impacts.

Construction of the four Build Alternatives could result in runoff of pollutants from vehicle exhaust, brake pads, fuel spills, and hydraulic spills into streams located in and downstream of the direct impacts area, impacting water quality and aquatic habits. Roadway runoff can facilitate the degradation of nearby terrestrial and aquatic habitat through deposition of sediments or contamination from chemical pollutants. This can change the macro-benthic community structure and composition, which in turn may affect the fish and amphibian populations that rely on them as a food source, as well as the birds and aquatic mammals that prey on the fish and amphibians. Runoff could also pick up more sediment from disturbed soils during construction that could be deposited downstream, temporarily reducing water quality.

Potential reasonably foreseeable effects that may occur to wetlands in the Natural Resources RFE Study Area include influx of surface water and sediments, fragmentation of a wetland from a contiguous wetland complex, loss of recharge area, or changes in local drainage patterns. These reasonably foreseeable effects can alter wetland functions such as habitat, plant community, and carbon cycling. Direct impacts from filling, grading, removal of vegetation roadway construction, and changes in water levels and drainage patterns would result in loss of all wetland functions within the immediate footprint of the impact and contribute to habitat fragmentation effects described below. Reasonably foreseeable impacts are not anticipated to be substantial and wetland impacts are subject to federal and state mitigation requirements.

Culvert extensions would be designed to connect the waters located within the Natural Resources RFE Study Area to those running parallel to the outside of the roadway. All four Build Alternatives could alter upstream and downstream hydrologic flow, which sometimes subsequently may cause erosion and ecosystem-level disruptions. Reduced flow, clogged streams, and weakened habitat could affect aquatic life movement, breeding and nursery, and feeding. Reasonably foreseeable effects are not anticipated to be substantial as restoration efforts and proper-designed crossings will be implemented.

Less shade from trees due to a reduction in riparian canopy cover could raise water temperature, oxygen levels, and plant growth, affecting nutrients and aquatic life in and around the improvements potentially impacting sensitive species and habitat.

Construction activities could potentially lead to erosion, sedimentation, and accidental spills of hazardous materials from equipment likely impacting streams and wetlands outside the right-of-way limits and result in encroachment alteration effects. However, adhering to established spill prevention and Erosion and Sediment Control protocols would mitigate these risks and minimize potential impacts on natural resources.

Floodplains

Each Build Alternative could potentially impact the Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) designated 100-year floodplains for Meadow Run, Piney Creek and Meadow Run. Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified impact approximately 12.3 acres of 100-year floodplains and Alternatives E Modified, and E-Shift Modified impact approximately 4.7 acres of 100-year floodplains. Construction of the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project could result in an encroachment alteration effect if it alters existing drainage patterns and flood flows. However, in guidance with the Floodplain Management Executive Order 11988, the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Team will take actions to reduce the risk of flood loss and minimize the impacts of floods on human safety and preserving the natural and beneficial values of the floodplains. Four Build Alternatives were considered to avoid and minimize adverse effects on the floodplains.

Terrestrial Habitat

Forested land makes up the majority of the land use within the Socioeconomic Resources RFE Study Area. Each Build Alternative would directly impact forested habitat which could lead to some forest fragmentation. Alternative DU Modified would impact 431.4 acres of forest and DU-Shift Modified would impact approximately 430 acres of forest. Alternative E Modified would have 389.8 acres of forest impacts and Alternative E-Shift Modified would have the least forest impacts with 388.8 acres. Fragmentation creates more edge habitat and has the potential to create barriers to wildlife movement which could result in disruption of foraging, breeding/nesting, and migration, increased mortality due to roadway construction and operation, changes in wildlife behavior and reduced biological diversity. In addition, the inadvertent introduction of invasive species via construction machinery could lead to permanent vegetation, habitat, or wildlife composition changes. Project encroachment impacts to terrestrial habitat could result from U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project but are not anticipated to be substantial.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened and Endangered species face similar potential impacts as described for terrestrial habitat, but their unique life history traits make them less resilient to habitat changes and invasive competition. According to the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species Technical Memorandum (PennDOT, 2023b) there are six federal and state endangered bat species. The Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat are both federally listed species under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species Technical Memorandum states that USFWS indicated that federally listed, and proposed-listed bat species are known to occur in the project area, and based on their review of the proposed project, these bat species are likely to be adversely affected. Habitat loss could cause a reasonably foreseeable effect to these protected species through the fragmentation of suitable forage and summer roost habitat, and general habitat, respectively.

According to the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species Technical Memorandum there are no Maryland state listed threatened and

endangered species in the vicinity of the project area. In Pennsylvania, there are two state listed threatened and endangered species in the vicinity of the project area: Timber Rattlesnake and Long Nosed Sucker. Although the Timber Rattlesnake is threatened by habitat loss/alternation, wanton killing, and poaching, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) indicated there are no direct adverse impacts anticipated from the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project. The PFBC did not indicate if the Long-Nosed Sucker would be adversely affected by the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project but did provide avoidance measures. The water quality effects resulting from construction of impervious surface in the potential LOD of the four Build Alternatives could negatively affect the aquatic habitat present in the Natural Resources RFE Study Area. Increased runoff, carrying pollutants and sediment, can harm aquatic habitat through increased sedimentation and reduced water quality. Project encroachment impacts could result from habitat disturbances and losses that occur in wetlands, uplands, or waterways, but they are not anticipated to be substantial.

Productive Agricultural Land

According to the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Agricultural Resources Existing Conditions Memorandum (PennDOT, 2023c) there are thirteen active farmland and farm operations within or abutting the LOD of all four Build Alternatives. These active farmlands include lamb farming, maple trees used for maple syrup production, dairy farming, beef cattle, and crop production. Each Build Alternative would potentially directly affect productive agricultural land (any land used for production, for commercial purposes of livestock, and livestock products) by converting the farmland to transportation right-of-way. This conversion would involve the potential split of several active farmlands.

Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified would each impact approximately 76 acres of active farmland. Alternative E Modified would impact 37.4 acres and Alternative E-Shift Modified would impact 37.6 acres of active farmland. For maple sugar production, Alternatives DU Modified and DU Shift Modified would each impact 23.1 acres and Alternatives E Modified, and E-Shift Modified would each impact 0.1 acre. Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified would each impact 9 of the 13 productive farms while Alternatives E Modified, and E-Shift Modified would impact 6 of the 13 productive farms.

Although the conversion of productive agricultural land to transportation right-of-way is a one-time occurrence, encroachment impacts to productive agricultural land could include the way farmers need to farm the land later in time. For example, fragmentation from U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project could result in remnant sections outside the construction footprint that are no longer suitable for some agricultural uses. Typically, these remnant fields are difficult for farm equipment to access resulting in additional expenses. In addition, short-term dust and emissions from construction could temporarily hinder crop growth and livestock well-being.

Prime and Statewide Important Farmland Soils

Prime and statewide important farmland soils face similar impacts as described for productive agricultural land, but farmland soils are not required to be in active agricultural use to be protected under the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) which was enacted to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the conversion of

agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. According to the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Agricultural Resources Existing Conditions Memorandum (PennDOT, 2023c) there are a total of 237.9 acres of FPPA soils in the LOD for all four Build Alternatives.

In the project area there are 54.3 acres of prime farmland soils in Pennsylvania and 0 acres in Maryland. Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified would impact 34.2 acres of prime farmland soils and Alternatives E Modified and E-Shift Modified would impact 21.2 acres.

Within the project area, 101.8 acres of soils of statewide importance are in Pennsylvania and 75.5 acres in Maryland. Alternatives DU Modified DU-Shift Modified would impact 104 acres of soils of statewide importance, Alternatives E Modified, and E-Shift Modified would each impact approximately 83 acres of soils of statewide importance.

Similar to productive agricultural lands, the conversion of prime and statewide important farmland soils to transportation right-of-way is a one-time occurrence. Additionally, short-term fugitive dust from construction could temporarily diminish soil quality.

Cultural Resources

The No-Build Alternative would have no physical impact on archaeological resources or historic sites and districts as no construction would occur for the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project.

Historic Sites and Districts

The impacts of each Build Alternative to historic sites and districts will be considered under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Reasonably foreseeable effects considered in the Section 106 consultation include visual, audible, and atmospheric elements that could diminish the integrity of historic properties. There are eight aboveground historic resources identified for the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project which include the National Register Listed (NRL) Tomlinson Inn and the Little Meadows in Maryland, the NRL National Road, which is a linear resource in MD, one (NRL) Mason Dixon Marker at the PA/MD state border, and five potentially eligible historic resources in Pennsylvania.

The Build Alternatives would have no physical impact to the Tomlinson Inn and the Little Meadows, National Road, and the Mason Dixon Marker. An avoidance of the Deal Farm with Alternative DU Modified and DU-Shift was not achievable since the Deal Farm abuts another historic property, the Lowry Farm. Alternative E-Shift Modified requires use of 0.78 acres along the eastern boundary of the Miller Farm / Earnest and Carrie V. Miller Residence, a historic Section 4(f) resource. The historic boundary of the Miller Farm / Earnest and Carrie V. Miller Residence abuts the former Mason Dixon Highway (Old U.S. 219) right-of-way line. Old U.S. 219 in this area needs to be re-established. The Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) concurred with a no adverse effect determination to historic and architectural resources and Section 4(f) *de minimis* use finding for the impact.

Archaeological Resources

The impacts each Build Alternative to archaeological resources, will be considered under

Section 106 of the NHPA. Reasonably foreseeable effects considered in the Section 106 consultation include visual, audible, and atmospheric elements that could diminish the integrity of historic properties. A Phase IA Archaeological Reconnaissance and Predictive Modeling has been conducted for U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Area of Potential Effects (APE). The total preliminary archaeological APE for both Pennsylvania and Maryland totals 1,147.73 acres in size and these areas were then split into pre-contact and historic probability (PennDOT, 2023d). Build Alternatives DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified have the greatest impact to archaeology and E Modified and E-Shift Modified have the lowest.

A Programmatic Agreement for the project was executed to ensure compliance with Section 106 Process for archaeological resources. Detailed field investigations to identify intact archaeological properties will be conducted within the archaeological APE for E-Shift Modified. If National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible archaeological properties are identified, and it is determined the project would have an Adverse Effect to the properties, then PennDOT will identify mitigation measures in consultation with both Pennsylvania and Maryland State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), Federally Recognized Tribal Nations, and other consulting parties. The Programmatic Agreement will ensure that if the project needs any archaeological mitigation measures, they will be appropriately completed.

4.5 Determine the Significance of Reasonably Foreseeable Effects and Identify Solutions, Minimization or Mitigation

The No-Build Alternative would not result in any reasonably foreseeable effects to any resource. Therefore, the assessment to determine significance and mitigation is not required for the No-Build Alternative.

The following sections assess the significance of the reasonably foreseeable effects for the four Build Alternatives. It also identifies potential solutions or mitigation measures PennDOT, SHA, and other agencies could consider to minimize the effects. The discussion of significance will address how any potential effects would impede or help advance the local, county, regional, or state goals. The assessment will identify if the potential effect would be substantial enough to further impair or deteriorate the resource to irretrievable levels or to the point that mitigation is required.

4.5.1 Impacts Related to Project Related Growths

Each Build Alternative would complete ADHS Corridor N. This will potentially facilitate a reasonably foreseeable impact to development in the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Study Area by improving travel times for potential new employees working within the U.S. 219 Corridor. The construction of any of the Alternatives between I-68 and the Meyersdale Interchange would provide both improved access and increased capacity to the CRDC. Potential for new development in this area could impact environmental resources located within currently undeveloped parcels that could potentially be developed in the future. It should be noted that development within these parcels is not imminent.

Communities within the RFE Study Areas have agencies/staff and comprehensive

planning documents in place to direct the amount, type, and density of development. No mitigation is recommended.

4.5.2 Impacts Related to Potential Encroachment Alternative Effects

4.5.2.1 Socioeconomic Resources

Community Facilities and Services

The four Build Alternatives would likely increase accessibility to community facilities and services and therefore reasonably provide an opportunity for additional services to be established.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

The Build Alternatives would likely not have any significant reasonably foreseeable effects to parks and recreational facilities, or to Pennsylvania State Game Lands Number 321, other than potentially providing improved access. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act dictates that there must be no feasible and prudent alternative that avoids public parks and recreational facilities and that the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to these properties.

Land Use, Property, and Right-of-Way

Each Build Alternative would convert land currently in residential and commercial use to transportation right-of-way. Proposed temporary and permanent right-of-way acquisition would not change overall land use in the area; therefore, significant reasonably foreseeable effects to socioeconomic resources would be limited. Minimization efforts to residential and commercial uses could include use of retaining walls to minimize the LOD, shifting the new alignment, and other modifications to the preliminary design. Right-of-way impacts may be further reduced during later design phases when more detailed information is available.

Population and Housing

Each Build Alternative would result in residential relocations with DU Modified and DU-Shift Modified prompting 11 residential displacements and E Modified, and E-Shift Modified requiring 10 residential displacements. The significant reasonably foreseeable effect on residences would likely be short-term as a great deal of vacant land is available for the use of potential relocation. Relocations will be completed in accordance with the rules, policies, and procedures set forth in the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Fair market value will be provided to all property owners as compensation for land acquisition.

Noise

The Build Alternatives may impact noise levels for sensitive receptors to varying degrees depending on where they are located. Noise levels predicted by traffic modeling already incorporate anticipated reasonably foreseeable traffic noise impacts which will be analyzed and mitigated for as a direct impact. Noise is also regulated by local jurisdictions and local law enforcement agencies.

Air Quality

Significant reasonably foreseeable effects to air quality are not anticipated by the Build Alternatives. Any impact to air quality would be regulated by Pennsylvania and Maryland State Implementation Plans (SIPs), inventories, and other reports which document how the states will attain and maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and prevent significant deterioration of air quality in areas cleaner than the standards.

Economic Resources

Reasonably foreseeable effects could result from short-term/ temporary construction detours which may cause some customer losses and make deliveries more difficult. Temporary economic impacts associated with road closures and detours during construction will be minimized through advance notice to affected communities and businesses, flexible schedules, and alternative access routes. These measures aim to minimize economic inconveniences and ensure a smooth transition throughout the construction period, therefore, to not cause significant economic impacts.

Visual and Aesthetic

Each Build Alternative would likely result in visual and aesthetic impacts. Potential changes in vegetation patterns over time in areas cleared for road construction and areas of cut and fill slopes could result in effects on the visual landscape. To omit or minimize significant reasonably foreseeable effects to the visual and aesthetic values, mitigation efforts include adding contextual sensitive design elements that make disturbances to the landscape less noticeable and replacing or providing alternative resources to make up for any disturbances to nature.

4.5.2.2 Natural Environmental Resources

Water Resources

Construction of the four Build Alternatives may potentially result in short and long term minor adverse degradation of water resources due to roadway runoff of pollutants flowing into water bodies in the Natural Resources RFE Study Area. Water resources in the project area are regulated by the Maryland Department of the Environment, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mitigation consists of three components: avoidance, minimization, and compensation. Mitigation for significant reasonably foreseeable impacts to water resources will be discussed in greater detail in both the Section 404 and 401 Water Quality Certification permits and developed more as design progresses.

To minimize potential degradation of water quality the following mitigation efforts will be implemented:

- Temporary and permanent stormwater management, erosion, and sediment controls and best management practices (BMPs) during construction;
- Appropriate design of roadway and culverts to avoid or minimize impacts to flow regimes; and
- Compensatory mitigation for unavoidable stream and wetland impacts

Floodplains

Each Build Alternative could potentially impact the Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) designated 100-year floodplains. Construction of the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project could result in an encroachment alteration effect if it alters existing drainage patterns and flood flows. To minimize significant reasonably foreseeable effects to floodplains, a hydrologic and hydraulic analysis will be conducted during the Final Design stage to ensure adequate design of the hydraulic openings of culverts and bridges. Development near floodplains is subject to local floodplain management policies, such as zoning ordinances, subdivision and land development regulations, building and health codes, and special purpose ordinances.

Terrestrial Habitat

Each Build Alternative would potentially affect forested habitat which could lead to forest fragmentation, which reasonably could result in disruption of foraging, breeding/nesting, and migration, increased mortality due to roadway construction and operation, changes in wildlife behavior, and reduced biological diversity. All efforts will be made to first avoid these potential impacts, followed by minimization and compensation, in accordance with state and federal regulations. In addition, reasonably foreseeable temporary impacts would be reduced through proper location and minimization of construction staging areas and access roads in sensitive habitats.

To prevent the spread of invasive species during construction, contractors will adhere to PennDOT and SHA specifications and any applicable regulations.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Direct loss of threatened or endangered (T&E) species is not expected as a result of the four Build Alternatives. However, threatened and endangered species face similar potential impacts as described in the Terrestrial Habitat section, but their unique traits make them less resilient to habitat changes and invasive competition. Any significant reasonably foreseeable effect to T&E habitat by the four Build Alternatives will be reviewed and regulated by the Federal and/or State resource agency with jurisdiction over the species. Indiana bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat habitat, for example, are regulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and seasonal tree cutting restrictions and/or seasonal construction dates will be adhered to. Additionally, coordination with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Maryland Department of Natural Resources and USFWS prior to permit decisions for the four Build Alternatives will be completed.

Productive Agricultural Land

Although the conversion of productive agricultural land to transportation right-of-way is a one-time occurrence, encroachment impacts to productive agricultural land could include the way farmers need to farm the land later in time. For example, fragmentation from the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project could result in remnant sections outside the construction footprint that are no longer suitable for some agricultural uses. Coordination with owners of farmland during design can potentially help minimize impacts through the development of design solutions that allow the land to continue to be farmed effectively.

In addition, while there are no preserved farms in the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Study Area, each of the agricultural operations in both Pennsylvania and Maryland within the LOD have parcels enrolled in preferential tax assessment programs (type of tax protection) such as Act 319 or 515 in PA or Ag transfer tax program. Those parcels are taxed based on use, rather than prevailing market value.

Prime and Statewide Important Farmland Soils

Prime farmland soils and soils of statewide importance face similar impacts as described in the Productive Agricultural Land section, but farmland soils are not required to be in active agricultural use to be protected under the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) which was enacted to minimize the extent to which federal programs contribute to the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses.

The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form is required when converting important farmland (does not have to be currently used for cropland) to non-farm use and would be completed and coordinated with the local office of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or USDA Service Center. NRCS uses a land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) system to establish a farmland conversion impact rating score to be used as an indicator to consider alternative sites if the significant adverse impacts on the farmland exceed the recommended allowable level.

4.5.2.3 Cultural Resources

Through ground disturbance, the four Build Alternatives have the potential to directly impact archaeological resources. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act describes that the lead federal agency, FHWA, determines how historic properties might be affected by the project and whether any of those effects would be considered adverse. These effects include direct and significant reasonably foreseeable effects to historic properties would be regulated by state historic preservation offices, local planning agencies, and local historic preservation agencies.

A Programmatic Agreement for the project was executed to ensure compliance with Section 106 Process for archaeological resources. Detailed field investigations to identify intact archaeological properties will be conducted within the archaeological Area of Potential Effects (APE). If National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible archaeological properties are identified, and it is determined the project would have an Adverse Effect to the properties, then PennDOT will identify mitigation measures in consultation with both Pennsylvania and Maryland State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), Federally Recognized Tribal Nations, and other consulting parties. The Programmatic Agreement will ensure that if the project needs any archaeological mitigation measures, they will be appropriately completed.

Table 4-11 below provides a brief summary of the minimization and mitigation efforts used to limit the reasonably foreseeable effects from the four Build Alternatives to the surrounding human and natural environment.

Table 4-11: Mitigation/Minimization Efforts to Reasonably Foreseeable Effects

Resource	Mitigation/Minimization Efforts
Streams	The Section 404 Permit and Section 401 Water Quality Certifications will address avoidance and minimization to Waters of the US, along with the plan to mitigate unavoidable impacts. Additionally, Pennsylvania and Maryland have state regulations governing waterway encroachments and alterations, including Pa. Code Title 25, Chapter 105 in Pennsylvania and Title 5 in Maryland, that require project review by state environmental agencies. Efforts to minimize stream impacts include crossing streams at right angles and using retaining walls in areas of cut or fill. In-kind stream relocations will be constructed where practicable to reduce the total compensatory stream mitigation required.
Wetlands	PennDOT and SHA will avoid and minimize wetland impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Compensatory mitigation is required for unavoidable permanent impacts to wetlands. PennDOT will mitigate wetland impacts occurring in Pennsylvania and SHA will mitigate wetland impacts occurring in Maryland. Specific compensatory wetland mitigation will be coordinated and approved through the federal and state permitting processes.
Floodplains	PennDOT and SHA will minimize and avoid impacts to the FEMA 1% annual chance floodplains throughout the final design process. During final design and prior to construction, permitting procedures will be instituted in accordance with PA DEP, MDE, and USACE. All action taken with respect to construction will conform in compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management).
Farmland, Prime and Statewide Important Farmland Soils	Avoidance and minimization measures for the Preferred Build Alternative will be evaluated during the Final Design stage. This will include coordination with farm owners and operators to reduce farmland impacts, provide access to remnant parcels where possible, develop detours, and/or provide access during construction, etc.
Terrestrial & Wildlife Habitat	Mitigation efforts include, but are not limited to, following approved Erosion and Sediment Control Plans which include native seed mixes and plantings. The project team will utilize best management practices to avoid the introduction of invasive species. Wildlife crossings will be considered at locations to be determined along the Preferred Build Alternative in order to facilitate safe wildlife crossing and to prevent collisions. In accordance with the Maryland Reforestation Law, before in-kind forest replacement is considered, every reasonable effort will be made to minimize the cutting or clearing of trees in Maryland.
Threatened/ Endangered Species	All minimization and mitigation measures will be coordinated with the USFWS and PGC.

Resource	Mitigation/Minimization Efforts
	Removal of buildings and trees would occur between October 1 and March 31 to avoid harming roosting bats. To avoid harming or disturbing hibernating Indiana bats, northern long-eared bats and tricolored bats, all earth disturbance activities within 0.5 miles of any known hibernaculum will only occur from April 1 to November 15. Tree cutting, clearing, grubbing will not occur during the active season from April 1 – November 15. Where feasible, identified rocky habitats may be avoided. All blasting will be monitored with sound and seismographic equipment and monitoring points will be coordinated with the USFWS and PGC.
Residential/Commercial Displacements	Preliminary and final design will continue to minimize impacts to the residential and commercial properties and restore property access where feasible. Mitigation measures for displacements include relocating residences into available and comparable housing. If, under normal relocation procedures, available and comparable replacement housing cannot be identified, PennDOT and MD SHA shall provide "Housing of Last Resort" options to ensure that all displaced individuals are properly relocated. In accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (49 CFR 24) and PennDOT and SHA's Relocation Assistance Programs, all displaced residential and commercial establishments shall be eligible to receive replacement payments. This includes fair market value of real and personal property and moving expenses.

Please note, this table is only a summary of the minimization and mitigation efforts used to limit reasonably foreseeable effects.

4.6 Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

Reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFA) are probable, not merely possible. Currently there are no transportation or development actions occurring or approved development plans that would likely contribute to reasonably foreseeable future effects on resources directly affected by the project. A concept plan for the Casselman Farm development has been submitted to the Town of Grantsville (as discussed in **Section 4.4.1**). If officially approved, this development would have reasonably foreseeable effects on resources affected by the project. Additionally, per the Garrett County Water and Sewer Master Plan (amended 2023), the Chestnut Ridge Development Corridor (CRDC) and surrounding areas are designated for water service in the next ten years. Where readily available data exist, potential effect is quantified.

5 CONCLUSION

The four Build Alternatives, DU Modified, DU-Shift Modified, E Modified, and E-Shift Modified will have various levels of direct and reasonably foreseeable impacts on land use, socioeconomic, environmental and cultural resources within the RFE Study Area.

Currently there are no planned developments completely dependent on the completion of the improved U.S. 219 from I-68 to Meyersdale; however, the improvements to system linkage and reduced travel times would support potential future development in the U.S. 6219 Section 050 project area. The proposed improvements are not anticipated to immediately induce new unplanned development that would affect changes in the current or planned land use, or population growth rate. However, the construction of any of the four Build Alternatives could cause reasonably foreseeable effects including new elements affecting visual quality of the natural and cultural environments, right-of-way acquisitions of community or agricultural resources, commercial and residential displacements, increased runoff and sedimentation, altered hydrology, and introduction of non-native plant species.

Adherence to current regulatory requirements and planning practices will help minimize, mitigate, or avoid both direct and reasonably foreseeable effects from any of the four Build Alternatives to the U.S. 6219 Section 050 project area.

In summary, the No Build Alternative has the least direct and reasonably foreseeable effects to both the human and natural environment. However, in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) the U.S. 6219 Section 050 Project Team will select the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative and discuss the mitigation and minimization efforts that will occur during the Final Design phase of construction to reduce any direct or reasonably foreseeable effects.

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