

Application to DHCD Submitted through CAMS

Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project FY2024

Application ID: 107411202023115220

Application Status: Pending

Program Name: Virginia Telecommunication Initiative 2024

Organization Name: Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

Organization Address:

Profile Manager Name: Robert Bridgham

Profile Manager Phone: (757) 414-0304

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Project Name: Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project
FY2024

Project Contact Name: Robert Bridgham

Project Contact Phone: (757) 414-0304

Project Contact Email: rbridgham@esvba.com

Project Location: 4174 LANKFORD HWY
EXMORE, VA 23350-2644

Project Service Area: Accomack County, Northampton County

Total Requested Amount: \$13,554,919.94

Required Annual Audit Status: Accepted

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Budget Information:

Cost/Activity Category	DHCD Request	Other Funding	Total
Telecommunications	\$13,554,919.94	\$3,451,229.98	\$17,006,149.92
Construction	\$10,536,203.30	\$801,229.98	\$11,337,433.28
Other: Contingency	\$67,486.66	\$2,200,000.00	\$2,267,486.66
Other: Special Construction	\$2,951,229.98	\$450,000.00	\$3,401,229.98
Total:	\$13,554,919.94	\$3,451,229.98	\$17,006,149.92

Budget Narrative:

The proposed project serves two main service areas in Accomack and Northampton counties. The total project cost is estimated at \$17,006,149.92 to build 314.5 miles covering 6,084 passings. The total fund requested from VATI is \$13,554,919.94, which is 79.71% of the total project cost. The cost includes 115 miles of underground construction. The total match is \$3,451,229.98 exceeding the required match of 20% at 20.29% of the total project cost. The counties and the ESVBA provided \$3,356,258.28 of current match and a prior expenditure match in the amount of \$94,971.70. The project is broken down by county as follows: In Accomack County, 255 miles covering 5,287 passings will be built. Of the 255 miles, 86 miles are underground. The total cost to complete construction has been estimated at \$13,684,800.80. To meet the match requirement, Accomack County has provided 1,839,470.00 of current match. A contingency fund in the amount of \$1,824,640.11 has been assessed and included. In Northampton County, 59.5 miles covering 797 passings will be built. Of the 59.5 miles, 29 miles are underground. The total cost to complete construction has been estimated at \$3,321,349.13. To meet the required match, Northampton County has provided \$664,269.83; of which \$569,298.13 is current match, and \$94,971.70 is prior expenditure match. The fund was expended to construct portions of a five-miles construction completed in the Vaucluse Shores community. A contingency fund in the amount of \$442,846.55 has been assessed and included.

Questions and Responses:

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1. Project Description and Need

Describe why and how the project area(s) was selected. Describe the proposed geographic area including specific boundaries of the project area (e.g. street names, local and regional boundaries, etc.). Attach a copy of the map of your project area(s). Label map: Attachment 1 – Project Area Map.

Answer:

The 2024 VATI project is designed to provide broadband coverage to areas that meet the definition of unserved and underserved areas in both Accomack County and Northampton County. The project will complete the 20% remaining areas to be built to achieve universal coverage on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The proposed project is broken down into 88 project segments. The remaining proposed area was complex and for the purpose of ensuring that no residents are left out, it was necessary to use accurate segments to plan. The map is presented in Attachment 1, with a list of the 88 segments with the corresponding passings per segment. There is a total of 6,084 passings in the proposed area; of which 4,690 are serviceable and 1,394 are special construction passings. The special construction passings are budgeted into the proposed budget. Vacluse Shores, in Northampton County, is a previously funded project that is allowable for previous expenditure per the VATI 2024 guidelines and was included in the proposed budget as match funds.

Of the total passings, 4,220 are aerial and 1,864 are underground. There is a total of 5,287 passings in Accomack County and 797 passings in Northampton County. All 6,084 planned passings are either unserved or underserved. They either have no service (less than 25/3) or the service is drastically lower than the 100/20 required by the DHCD's new requirements. Upon completion, the planned areas will have access to symmetric speeds exceeding the 100/20 standard. Individuals can obtain up to and above 200/200 symmetrical speed with the ESVBA's all-fiber network. The current network has the capacity to scale up bandwidth options as the community and telecommunications needs grow.

Before the 2023 & 2024 VATI guidelines, the proposed area could not be included in the application as it was federally funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In or around 2017, a wireless provider was granted funds through the USDA ReConnect program and has been serving some of the area with wireless speed of up to 25/3Mbps and often dramatically lower. The ESVBA has continued to receive much public feedback about the substandard services offered by the wireless provider with regards to reliability, total bandwidth, pricing, and availability. Meanwhile, residents' and businesses' needs and demands have grown over the last few years. With the COVID-19 pandemic, residents and counties made a notable push for broadband. The COVID-19 pandemic forced residents and entities to switch over to digital lifestyle for personal, professional, and socio-economic activities. The wireless provider's infrastructure did not provide the coverage across the USDA area and in many cases, never achieved 25/3Mbps. With the updated bandwidth definition heightened to 100/20, the wireless provider is far below capability to propose any salient alternative to meet the new DHCD requirement.

Upon construction of the VATI FY24 proposed project, 100% of the Eastern Shore of Virginia will have broadband coverage exceeding the new DHCD required bandwidth of 100/20. The ESVBA was awarded the 2022 VATI grant to take the infrastructure coverage from 60% to 80% by May 2024. If the 2024 VATI application is successful, the ESVBA will complete the remaining 20% of unserved and underserved areas identified and included in application by May 2026. The estimated timeline is based on the VATI typical 18-month deadline for implementing the project.

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2. List existing providers in the proposed project area and the speeds offered. Describe your outreach efforts to identify existing providers and how this information was compiled with source(s).

Answer:

There are five (5) major existing providers in the Eastern Shore of Virginia: Declaration Network Group (DNG) a/k/a NeuBeam, Spectrum, Verizon, Eastern Shore Communications, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority as the predominant operator. The information about the providers and their internet speeds were obtained from their website, press publications, and from the ESVBA's long years of experience operating alongside these providers on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Declaration Network Group (DNG) is a wireless internet provider that provides services in several areas in the Eastern Shore of Virginia. DNG offers services as low as 5Mbps up to 30/5Mbps. DNG was awarded the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) ReConnect funding to build portions of Northampton and Accomack counties. The USDA area was determined using the Telecommunications Program Funded Service Areas Map. DNG uses wireless technologies as its exclusive delivery mechanism to provide services to end-users. DNG uses the ESVBA nearly exclusively as its backbone and backhaul provider around the Eastern Shore.

Spectrum is one of the providers in the area. According to the Spectrum website, Spectrum provides internet speed at 100/10Mbps, 400/20Mbps or 940/35Mbps. Spectrum has services in pockets around the proposed areas however, with the use of the pole attachment data available, our proposed coverage will supplement Spectrum in providing 100% ubiquitous coverage here in the region.

Verizon offers digital subscriber line (DSL) internet service in communities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Currently, the highest internet speed offered by Verizon is below 15 Mbps/3. Verizon also has several pockets of service areas in the proposed project area but has nearly no capacity for new subscribers and is turning away end-users needing or wanting to subscribe.

Eastern Shore Communications (ESC) is the other internet provider on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Eastern Shore Communications provides fiber internet and prides itself as "...the first provider to utilize the fiber optic backbone built by the ESVBA (Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority) using taxpayer money and stimulus grants." ESC has sold nearly all of its residential services to the Declaration Network Group (DNG) and no longer offers residential broadband. ESC also uses the ESVBA nearly exclusively as its backbone and backhaul provider around the Eastern Shore. Lastly, ESC has ceased operating its residential services and only provides commercial services on the Eastern Shore.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) operates an open access backbone, provides wholesale services to new and incumbent private providers, and provides residential and non-residential services to households and commercial entities. In October 2021, the ESVBA board of directors moved to approve a 200/200 symmetric package. According to the BroadbandNow website, the ESBVA provides the fastest internet speed on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

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3. Describe if any areas near the project have received funding from federal grant programs, including but not limited to Connect America Funds II (CAF II), ACAM, ReConnect, Community Connect, and Rural Digital Opportunity Funds (RDOF). If there have been federal funds awarded near the project area(s), provide a map showing these areas, verifying the proposed project area does not conflict with these areas. Label Map: Attachment 2 – Documentation on Federal Funding Area.

Answer:

Areas near the proposed project area had received funding from the USDA Farm Bill in 2017 to complete construction. The wireless fund recipient has the capacity to provide only up to a 30/5 maximum speed, which is much lower than the current DHCD and FCC requirement for a 100/20. Therefore, per the FCC requirements, the areas are eligible for the VATI 2024 application. Furthermore, after seven (7) years since receiving the funds, the recipient has not provided coverage to much of its designated area and all services are below the 100/20 requirement. The presence of the recipient in the USDA-funded areas prevented the ESVBA from including the areas in the 2022 VATI application even though most of them were unserved and underserved. Under the 2024 guidelines, the area is eligible and is included in the ESVBA 2024 VATI application to receive 100/20 bandwidth.

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4. **Overlap:** To be eligible for VATI, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project area(s) is unserved. An unserved area is defined as an area with speeds below 100/20 Mbps and with less than 25% service overlap within the project area for wireless projects and 20% for wireline projects. Describe any anticipated service overlap with current providers within the project area. Provide a detailed explanation as to how you determined the percentage overlap. Label Attachment: Attachment 3 – Documentation Unserved Area VATI Criteria.

Answer:

The proposed project area is largely unserved and underserved with capacity below the 100/20. The area was previously funded by USDA but the wireless provider failed to provide coverage in the funded area. In addition, the provider does not have the infrastructure to meet the 100/20 requirement. With a maximum capacity of 30/5 across the whole project area, the provider can claim as low as zero percent overlap. This information is supported by the provider's own subscriber data. It is important to note that internet service providers (ISPs) and incumbents use the ESVBA open access network to provide end-user services. Therefore, it is in the interest of all providers that the broadband infrastructure is reinforced and empowered in the current proposed areas.

The other major provider on the Eastern Shore of Virginia is Spectrum. There is no overlap with Spectrum's coverage in the service area. The ESVBA was provided access to the pole attachment records by the local power cooperative. An analysis of the proposed project area was done leveraging the data for Spectrum's pole attachments. The analysis used GIS buffering to produce the reach of Spectrum's network within the project area. Buffered pole attachment data was used both inside and outside the project area to produce accurate results due to the possibility that Spectrum's network may reach inside of the project area from outside poles. The resultant areas are all under 20% coverage of Spectrum who is the only other provider on the Eastern Shore providing 100/20 Mbps of wireline services.

Of note, the data used to produce Spectrum's service coverage is an indication of all poles Spectrum is licensed to be operating on and include areas that Spectrum only has Cable television and not necessarily broadband services. This analysis thereby provided an overestimate of Spectrum's network. The ESVBA is aware many areas are licensed with the power cooperative however, an attachment may not exist. Additionally, in many of the areas, Spectrum may have a wire on the pole line but does not provide broadband as one of the services in those areas. We are confident that this provides a very conservative estimate of other providers which confirms the proposed areas have less than 20% coverage and ensures that the proposed areas are well justified to receive funding.

The ESVBA staff and GIS analyst took the following steps to produce the analysis:

a- The ESVBA staff, first-hand, visually evaluated 100% of the planned area by driving the area and going over the poles to identify the presence and absence of other providers in all areas including remote and hard-to-reach areas. They especially looked for Spectrum's responses since it is the major competitor in the area.

b- A buffer algorithm was used to place a 300-foot buffer around poles with pole point, producing Spectrum's maximum service access with no special install cost passings. Note: Spectrum's poles were not limited to the project area. All pole points were buffered to produce valid results due to the possibility that Spectrum's network could reach into the project area from poles outside the project area.

c- An intersection algorithm was then used, input layer set as passings within the project area and overlay layer set as buffered Spectrum's pole points.

5.

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Total Passings: Provide the number of total serviceable units in the project area. Applicants are encouraged to prioritize areas lacking 25 Megabits per second download and 3 Megabits per second upload speeds, as they will receive priority in application scoring. For projects with more than one service area, each service area must have delineated passing information. Label Attachment: Attachment 4 – Passings Form.

- a. Of the total number of VATI passings, provide the number of residential, business, non-residential, and community anchors in the proposed project area.
- b. If applicable, of the total number of RDOF passings, provide the number of residential, business, non-residential, and community anchors in the proposed project area.
- c. If applicable, provide the number of passings that will require special construction costs, defined as a one-time fee above normal service connection fees required to provide broadband access to a premise . Describe the methodology used for these projections.
- d. If applicable, provide the number of passings included in the application that will receive broadband access because special construction costs have been budgeted in the VATI application. Describe the methodology used for determining which passings with special construction costs were budgeted in the application.
- e. Provide the number of passings in the project area that have 25/3 Mbps or less. Describe the methodology used for these projections. (up to 15 points)

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- a. The project covers a total of 6,084 passings. All the passings are residential, and almost 100% are served with speed at 25/3 or none. No community anchor institutions are included because they were covered in previous construction projects. The coverage area will increase commercial opportunities however, there is no comprehensive records of commercial entities on the Eastern Shore to provide definitive coverage metrics.
- b. No RDOF passings are included as this is not applicable to the area.
- c. Of the total passings, there are 4,690 serviceable passings and 1,394 special construction passings.
- d. The 1,394 especial construction passings will have access to broadband due to special construction being budgeted into the VATI 2024 application. Any passings, both underground and aerial, within 250 feet of the attachment pole or the ESVBA backbone are considered serviceable. Passings longer than 250 feet are classified under the special construction category. See Attachment 4 – Passings Form. A list showing the breakdown of passings per segment is also included in the passing form for your reference.

To determine the number of passings, the ESVBA GIS Analyst analyzed pole attachment data and ran union algorithm, buffer algorithm, and intersection algorithm. The ESVBA staff, first-hand, visually evaluated 100% of the planned area to identify the presence and absence of other providers in all areas including remote and hard-to-reach areas. The data was used along with the GIS data from state and federal maps to accurately determine unserved and underserved areas. The ESVBA also used data from counties and review of reports and data from its 14 years' experience operating on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

- e. Based on our field verification, maps, public data, and internal analysis on internet access in rural America, we determined that almost 100% of the passings in the project area receive less than 25/3mbps. That is because the planning and determination were very specific and applied to smaller size area.

Furthermore, the area was federally protected to be built by a wireless provider to provide 25/3 bandwidth. This explains why much of the area was left unserved or served at the speed of 25/3.

6. Describe if any blocks awarded in Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) are included in the VATI application area. If RDOF areas are included in the VATI application, provide a map of these areas and include information on number of passings in RDOF awarded areas within the VATI application area, and Census Block Group ID number for each block group in the project area. Label Attachment: Attachment 5 – RDOF Awarded Areas Form in VATI Area

Answer:

There are no RDOF areas included in the application.

7. **For wireless projects only:** Please explain the ownership of the proposed wireless infrastructure. Please describe if the private co-applicant will own or lease the radio mast, tower, or other vertical structure onto which the wireless infrastructure will be installed.

Answer:

This does not apply.

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8. Network Design: Provide a description of the network system design used to deliver broadband service from the network's primary internet point(s) of presence to end users, including the network components that already exist and the ones that would be added by the proposed project. Provide a detailed explanation of how this information was determined with sources. Provide information on how capacity for scalability, or expansion, of how the network can adapt to future needs. If using a technology with shared bandwidth, describe how the equipment will handle capacity during peak intervals. For wireless projects, provide a propagation map for the proposed project area with a clearly defined legend for scale of map. Label Map: Attachment 6 – Propagation Map Wireless Project.

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The ESVBA network architecture is designed to allow the provision of highly reliable and scalable services to residents in the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The ESVBA backbone network infrastructure is currently designed at a level of performance to generally achieve a “four nines” (99.99%) availability. Four nines is less than one hour of downtime per year. The network elements are “five nines” (99.999%) capable and the ESVBA can provide network services to any customers or service providers requiring this level of service.

The ESVBA network, an all-fiber network design, calls for fiber to be built out to all areas that are unserved. The ESVBA will deploy XGS-PON technology to efficiently utilize the fiber infrastructure supporting up to 32 subscribers on a single fiber strand. The ESVBA has multiple network hubs as aggregation points to capitalize on the fiber asset. The ESVBA then operates a diverse and redundant 100 Gbps Ethernet backbone connecting the North end of the Shore to the South. This network can failover in a sub-second timeframe to provide reliability and dependability for the needs as simple as an end-user and as complex as operating the 911 network for the Eastern Shore. The ESVBA also operates SONET and DWDM networks overlaid on the Ethernet backbone to support a myriad of telecommunications needs for those on the Shore. Each hub location contains redundant power with generators and batteries to operate >24hrs without utility power.

The equipment is all ordered with redundant cards and optics to maintain operational status during component failure. The ESVBA network is the ONLY network that has diverse paths out of the Eastern Shore to ensure that if either of the paths North or South were to fail, the ESVBA can failover and continue operating where all other providers only have a single path off of the Shore. All backbone electronics are network equipment building system (NEBS) compliant and engineered to Telcordia standards. The ESVBA implements dual fully redundant diverse Internet POPs with Cisco 9K core routers as the core routing platform supporting multiple 100Gbps line cards and terabytes of data per second with many spare slots allowing growth with minimal effort and no need for a fork-lift upgrade.

The ESVBA also implements A10 Thunder Series networks core equipment for its IP-oversubscribed network that is monitored 24x7 by the network operations department for threshold alerts, capacity profiling, and utilization monitoring to ensure that oversubscribed utilization never exceeds 80% of the capacity of any network component. It is an expectation that a shared bandwidth product will contain some moments of congestion however, the ESVBA utilizes its data gathering systems to minimize and preemptively mitigate the risk and duration of congestion. Since the broadband services are all of equal priority, capacity is constrained with a FIFO queuing strategy and traffic shapers limiting the pain of congestion experiences. The types of hardware and underlying fiber infrastructure ensure that upgrades to keep pace with capacity needs have nearly zero impact and are readily implemented to provide the highest-quality network on the Shore and one of the best networks nationwide.

The ESVBA offers Ethernet ELAN & ELINE Services, SONET services, WISP Services, Dedicated Internet, and FTTH. It is an IPV6 enabled network providing massive capability (340 undecillion addresses - 3.4×10^{38}). The virtual and physical network is monitored 24/7/365 for threat and mitigation. The network provides speeds up to 100 Gbps and wavelength services.

With Fiber being the backbone component, the ESVBA can allocate additional fibers to increase capacities or implement additional DWDM carding to reuse existing fibers and support capacities dozens of times the current speeds.

The proposed project is an expansion of the open access backbone across the two counties. The project will expand the regionalized and community networks connecting unserved towns and communities to the backbone. With the proposed project, the backbone network will be expanded throughout the two counties. With the backbone and the community network expanded, several thousands of residents to low-income residents will have the network closer for greater accessibility. For over a decade, the ESVBA has committed to building a network that sustains the demand of the ISP and residents using the most sophisticated technological equipment.

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9. Speeds: Describe the internet service offerings, including download and upload speeds, to be provided after completion of the proposed project. Detail whether that speed is based on dedicated or shared bandwidth, and detail the technology that will be used. This description can be illustrated by a map or schematic diagram, as appropriate. List the private co-applicant's tiered price structure for all speed offerings in the proposed project area, including the lowest tiered speed offering at or above 100/20 Mbps. (up to 10 points)

Answer:

The ESVBA currently offers fiber to the home (FTTH) products that exceeds Virginia's current definition of broadband (100/20). Since October 2021, the ESVBA provides services that are 200/200 symmetric, which exceeds the DHCDs and the FCCs minimum speed requirements. The all-fiber network allows the ESVBA to scale-up bandwidth as needs increase without having to do a replacement of the infrastructure. Currently, the ESVBA offers speeds of 20Gbps to commercial and wholesale customers.

The ESVBA residential broadband product is a shared internet infrastructure whereby the ESVBA builds oversubscription into its residential and small business products but manages this to ensure the highest-quality services while limiting the actual congestion due to oversubscription. Because the ESVBA's network is all fiber, the ESVBA can scale its oversubscription infrastructure with minimal changes and nearly zero lead-time to contain any capacity issues encountered.

The ESVBA also offers dedicated non-oversubscribed internet (Dedicated Internet Access (DIA)) to commercial, enterprise and wholesale consumers to best fit the broadband needs of all consumers in the region. The ESVBA network far exceeds the capacity of any and all providers on the Eastern Shore of Virginia allowing it to not only solve the current broadband needs but also all bandwidth needs in the future.

Residential Rates and Speeds

Symmetrical Service Packages- Download/ Upload Speed

- 25/25 Mbps-\$39.99 (24 months); \$45.99 (12 months)
- 50/50 Mbps- \$59.99 (24 months); \$69.99 (12 months)
- 100/100 Mbps- \$85.99 (24 months); \$99.99 (12 months)
- 200/200 Mbps-\$149.99 (24 months); \$175.99 (12 months)

When the COVID-19 pandemic started to affect the Eastern Shore of Virginia, the ESVBA doubled its then current bandwidth levels at zero cost to all of its residential subscribers. In October 2021, the ESVBA board approved permanently doubling residential subscribers download speeds, increasing upload speeds to be symmetric with download speeds all at zero (no additional) cost to our subscribers. This benefit was for the good of the community and is part of our overall strategy to best serve the interest of the community.

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10. Explain how the proposed project achieves universal broadband coverage for the locality or fits into a larger plan to achieve universal broadband coverage for the locality. If applicable, explain the remaining areas of need in the locality and a brief description of the plan to achieve universal broadband coverage. (up to 50 points)

Answer:

The proposed project achieves universal broadband coverage as any remaining unserved or underserved area will be given access to broadband. The areas included in this application either lack service or are served with obsolete broadband at 25/3 or slightly above. The proposed project area is the only area in the region lacking broadband per the VATI definition of broadband at 100/20. The proposed project area is 314.5 miles long, which will be added to the current existing network.

As of December 2023, the ESVBA had already completed 74% of the 2022 VATI project, which is expected to be 100% complete before the May 2024 deadline. About 223 miles of the 269 miles planned for the VATI 2022 are currently built. Overall, as of December 2023, the ESVBA has constructed over 900 miles, with service levels of up to 200/200 with the ability to increase this limit as the market demands. In total, at the completion of the 2024 VATI project, the ESVBA would have completed 1,324.5 miles of fiber network with no area remaining to be built. The 2024 VATI project is expected to be completed by May 2026. By May 2026, VATI would have contributed 583.5 miles of network to the Eastern Shore of Virginia, were the ESVBA 2024 VATI application successful.

The 2024 VATI project fits in the counties' larger plan for achieving universal broadband coverage. Over the last 14 years, the counties provided various sorts of support including financial and strategic for the success of broadband expansion projects. The support aims at prioritizing micro-communities, strategic segments, and high-cost installations for low, and moderate-income individuals for broadband coverage. The Accomack County has a broadband assistance providing up to \$1000 per resident to residents to offset the installation cost. The ESVBA has a similar program providing up to \$1000 to low-income residents who cannot afford the installation cost.

In short, the counties work with the ESVBA in a global approach to ensure that every community and resident is served, whether through private funding, or through federal, state, or local grant or assistance program. The goal is to achieve broadband availability, accessibility, and affordability for all.

The next step after the 2024 VATI project is tackling broadband adoption, digital literacy, and digital equity initiatives.

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11. Project Readiness

Describe the current state of project development, including but not limited to: planning, preliminary engineering, identifying easements/permits, status of MOU or MOA, and final design. Prepare a detailed project timeline or construction schedule, identifying specific tasks, staff, contractor(s) responsible, collection of data, etc., and estimated start and completion dates. Applicants are encouraged to extensively discuss, where applicable, easements relating to railroad crossings, federally-owned lands and parks, partnerships with the Virginia Department of Transportation, and mobile home parks. Applicants must include Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) between applicants (drafts are allowable). Label Attachments: Attachment 7 – Timeline/Project Management Plan; Attachment 8 – MOU/MOA between Applicant/Co-Applicant; (up to 10 points)

Answer:

The planning and preliminary engineering of project areas, segments, and passings and associated costs have been finalized for both the Accomack County and Northampton County. A draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Accomack and Northampton counties and the ESVBA has been prepared and ready for signature. The MOU is included in Attachment 8-MOU/MOA between Applicant/Co-Applicant. A formal agreement will be signed between the Counties and the ESVBA when the grant is awarded. In terms of funding, the counties and the ESVBA have committed to providing match funds exceeding the 20% required match.

The construction manager has confirmed the construction schedule provided in Attachment 7. The project timeline is spread over the 18 months' timeline required for the project execution. See Attachment 7 for the Timeline/Project Management Plan.

The project management team is designated and is composed of staff and employees with several years of experience managing projects similar to the 2022 VATI grants. The ESVBA has got the experience and capabilities to successfully plan and execute large scale projects such as the VATI 2024 project. For the 2022 VATI grant application, the ESVBA anticipated and requested a prior authorization from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). With the authorization, the ESVBA purchased the materials on time and started construction on the day of the contract signature. As of December 2023, the ESVBA had built over 900 miles of fiber network, including 223 miles for VATI 2022. This shows the relevant experience available to execute the 2024 VATI project.

The ESVBA has also recruited a sufficient number of contractors with rich experience and advanced equipment that are currently working on the 2022 VATI project. The contractors are local and will work with the ESVBA during the entire VATI execution and beyond. In addition, the ESVBA internal construction team is skilled and always provides additional or complementary support to the crews when necessary.

Similar to previous projects completed in collaboration with counties, the role of the ESVBA is to implement the project according to the management plan. The ESVBA will report progress to DHCD and the counties and request any necessary assistance for the completion of work. The ESVBA will also submit remittances to DHCD as required by contractual agreements. When the construction of segments and project areas is complete and is available for use, the ESVBA will issue a notice of service availability to the counties no later than a month prior the service availability date.

In the past, the counties have responded to requests for payment in a timely manner, assisted with securing rights of ways and required permits, and contacted citizens for additional permissions. Their assistance was key for timely completion of projects. The counties and the ESVBA have a comprehensive knowledge of the project areas, the conditions of the areas, and eventual requirements for working together for 14 years. It is anticipated that the project will be completely executed within 18 months from the contract execution date. However, in case of extraordinary circumstances beyond control, the ESVBA will ask for extension to complete the project. The ESVBA understands that the ESVBA will send a request for extension before the expiration of the required 18-month period.

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12. Has the applicant or co-applicant received any VATI grants? If so, provide a list of these grants, with a detailed summary of the status of each.

Answer:

Yes, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) was awarded the 2022 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative grant (2022 VATI). The 2022 VATI award was the first VATI grant received by the ESVBA.

The construction of the project is underway, and it is expected to be completed by the May 31, 2024 deadline set by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

As of December 2023, the ESVBA has completed 74% of the project covering 7,068 homes, and constructed 223 miles out of the 269 miles planned. The project will be completed before the May 2024 deadline. It is highly cost-effective and is being executed under budget.

For long drop customers eligible for special construction, a total of 134 customers got access to broadband, saving them a total of \$456,570. The total VATI fund used in the special construction category is \$456,570. Note that some of the cost has not been billed to DHCD yet.

13. Matching funds: Complete the funding sources table indicating the cash match and in-kind resources from the applicant, co-applicant, and any other partners investing in the proposed project (VATI funding cannot exceed 80 percent of total project cost). In-kind resources include, but are not limited to: grant management, acquisition of rights of way or easements, waiving permit fees, force account labor, etc. Please note that a minimum 20% match is required to be eligible for VATI, the private sector provider must provide 10% of the required match. If the private co-applicant cash match is below 10% of total project cost, applicants must provide financial details demonstrating appropriate private investment. If applicants and co-applicants are seeking to include prior expended funds as matching funds, Attachment 11 must be completed. Label Attachments: Attachment 9 - Funding Sources Table; Attachment 10 – Documentation of Match Funding; Attachment 11 - Prior Expended Match Form

Answer:

The total cost to complete the project is \$17,006,149.92. The amount of VATI funds requested for the project is \$13,554,919.94, which represents 79.71% of the total project cost.

The two counties and the ESVBA are collectively contributing \$3,451,229.98, representing 20.29% of the required match. Prior expenditures in the amount of \$94,971.70 were included as match funds.

Please see Attachment 11 – Prior Expended Match Form. The breakdown of the funds and sources is included in Attachment 9-Funding Sources Table. The match fund is documented in Attachment 10-Documentation of Match Funding including three letters of funding commitment from the counties and the ESVBA.

14. Leverage: Describe any leverage being provided by the applicant, co-applicant, and partner(s) in support of the proposed project. (up to 10 points)

Answer:

This does not apply.

- 15.

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Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

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Communications Plan: Describe efforts to keep the public informed of project progress and the broadband adoption plan.

- a. Explain how you plan on communicating the project status to stakeholders, including but not limited to County leadership, project areas residents, etc. (Up to 10 points)
- b. Explain how you plan to promote customer take rate, including marketing activities, outreach plan, and other actions to reach the identified serviceable units within the project area. Provide the anticipated take rate and describe the basis for the estimate. (up to 10 points)
- c. Describe any digital literacy efforts to ensure residents and businesses in the proposed project area sufficiently utilize broadband. Please list any partnering organizations for digital literacy, such as the local library or cooperative extension office.

Answer:

- a. The ESVBA used several communications and marketing options to inform the public of project progress and broadband adoption in the project area. This includes newspaper ads, radio ads, social media, website pages, door hangers, mailers, referral programs, community events, yard signs, and A-frames. Service availability is also communicated through libraries, schools, regional chamber of commerce, social services, and major institutions. Availability of service in new areas is aired on local radios and published in newspapers. Below are the activities that will continue to be used to boost broadband adoption.
 1. The ESVBA communicates progress with the public through newspaper ads that runs for months.
 2. A webpage created on the ESVBA website provides useful information on a map and in text on built areas that are ready for quotes and service. The page also provides information on areas under construction. The update is provided on a monthly basis. The update will continue when the VATI 2024 starts.
 3. The progress is shared with board members and county officials during the board meeting or other media used to communicate with the general public.
 4. The monthly progress update of completed areas is also shared in the ESVBA social media, including Facebook and LinkedIn. A map is provided with specific indications of built areas and areas under construction. The ESVBA also provides a search option on the website to residents to check if their area is served.
 5. The ESBVA also runs radio ads that runs for months with the purpose of sharing progress and availability of service in different communities. This effort will grow as the 2024 project is implemented.
 6. The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), the Line Extension Customer Assistance Program (LECAP), and county level assistance programs are shared on the website and on the social media platforms as well as through marketing efforts mentioned above. The ESVBA plans to administer the programs through the 2024 VATI execution period and beyond.
 7. The ESBVA also uses direct mail to communicate with residents on service availability. For example, in 2022, the ESVBA sent out 5,000 mailers to various communities in the region. The ESVBA also sent out another 5,000 mailers as part of its referral program to incentivize people to pass on the information. These efforts will be repeated for the VATI 2024 project.
 8. The ESVBA marketing team and staff participate in local events or fairs in communities, schools, or organizations to connect and share about service availability and existing assistance programs. The team also participates in events organized by community organizations to discuss adoption strategies.
 9. The information is shared or published by counties on their website. The counties obtained timely information because officials of both counties serve on the board of directors of the ESVBA. To launch the 2022 VATI project construction, the ESVBA held a ribbon cutting event in June 2022. The public, community organizations, and county officials attended the event and were informed of the project scope and timeline. A similar event may be hosted to prepare the community for the upcoming coverage.
- b. Broadband adoption is very challenging in the rural areas of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. But for over 14 years, the ESVBA has worked closely with community-minded leaders and residents, which makes it easier and more effective to inform all residents of broadband options available to them. In addition, most ESBVA employees have strong local connections, which helps with information sharing and promotion. Word-of-mouth has been important in passing the information to residents and communities. The customer service representatives are trained to not only take customers' concerns but also inform customers of the availability of broadband in new areas or new service packages.

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The ESVBA has seven (7) years' experience in residential service provision. The ESVBA expects a take rate of 15% to 20% of the 6,084 units throughout the construction period. The estimate is based on the analysis of previous years' take rate. It is anticipated that retail and large providers that use the ESVBA open access network will expand their services to the newly-built areas, which will further increase the overall take rate.

c. The ESVBA 's residential and commercial services increased the capacity of residents to pursue digital literacy efforts. With the most reliable connectivity, more residents than ever before are relying on their home internet connection for news, information, education, healthcare, e-entrepreneurship, telework, and entertainment. The elderly, students, and business owners now connect to larger world of bigger opportunities including their education. With reliable speed, they can digitally self-educate, self-learn, or participate in digital literacy activities to get the level of proficiency needed to conduct online businesses of their choice. The ESVBA receives positive feedback from residents including the retiree populations who are satisfied with the quality of broadband to connect with their doctors and providers.

16. Project Management: Identify key individuals who will be responsible for the management of the project and provide a brief description of their role and responsibilities for the project. Present this information in table format. Provide a brief description of the applicant and co applicant's history and experience with managing grants and constructing broadband communication facilities.

Answer:

The key individuals that are responsible for the management of the VATI project include the Executive Director, the Geographical and Information Systems (GIS) Analyst, the Account/Sales and Marketing Manager, and Network Operations Director, and the Construction Manager. The management team is composed of experienced staff with several years of experience in the execution of similar projects including the ongoing 2022 VATI project. All the individuals work for the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA). Please see the table below for the responsibilities and background of the management team members.

The ESVBA director and staff have 14 years' experience implementing large scale projects in Accomack including Tangiers' Island, and Northampton counties. The work includes the construction of an all-fiber network that is more than 800 miles long of underground and aerial installations. The ESVBA has also seven years' experience connecting residential customers and providing direct service. Other experiences include the implementation of the Line Extension Customer Assistance Program (LECAP) and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The ESVBA has experience implementing county level initiative to assist low and middle income families with funding to offset the cost of installation.

Name

Title and Organization Responsibilities

Background

Robert Bridgham

Executive Director

Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

- All applicant activities including but not limited to project oversight, procurement, personnel management, vendor relations, network design and overall project deliverables.

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- Over 25 years in customer relations, Internet technologies, telecommunications, and ISP services as well as over two decades of experience in management of multiple teams, budgeting, collaboration as well as many engagements with local, regional, state and federal partners on projects and network deployments.

Matt Ertle

Network Operations Director

Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

- Network configuration and maintenance of core and customer equipment
- Troubleshoot and resolve customer and core network issues
- Manage maintenance, upgrades, repair of network support equipment
- Manage NOC, warehouse, inventory in/out, purchasing, annual audit, and three staff members

Nicole DeStefano

Analyst - Records and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

- Maintain all records of the network and all GIS data.
- Design digital maps and analyze geospatial data
- Over 5 years of experience in the telecommunications industry.
- Over 3 years of experience in operations with city utility services and event planning

Kyle Bundick

Construction Manager

Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

- Overseas jobs with internal and contract crews.
- Reviews the engineering, architectural and splicing drawings to ensure that all standards and specifications are being followed.
- Manages the ESVBA project management system to ensure jobs are tracked and progress communicated within the system.
- Over 10 years of engineering experience in multiple industries, including 6 years as engineer at electrical cooperative, 3 years as engineer at precast/prestressed concrete company, 3 years as engineer and crew leader for surveying firm.

Maria Stevens

Account Manager

Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

- Sales and marketing associated with customer acquisition.
- Over 10 years of experience in sales, marketing, and customer service, including over 3 years of experience in sales and marketing in the telecommunication industry

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17. Project Budget and Cost Appropriateness

Budget: Applicants must provide a detailed budget that outlines how the grant funds will be utilized, including an itemization of equipment, construction costs, and a justification of proposed expenses. If designating more than one service area in a single application, each service area must have delineated budget information. For wireless projects, please include delineated budget information by each tower. Expenses should be substantiated by clear cost estimates. Include copies of vendor quotes or documented cost estimates supporting the proposed budget. Label Attachments: Attachment 12 – Derivation of Costs; Attachment 13 - Documentation of Supporting Cost Estimates. (up to 10 points)

Answer:

The total project cost is \$17,006,149.92. The two counties and the ESVBA provided a total of \$3,451,229.98, exceeding the 20% match requirement at 20.29%. The 79.71% in the amount of \$13,554,919.94, is being requested from DHCD.

The cost for each service area has been specified. The total cost for the Accomack County area is \$13,684,800.80 to build 255 miles. The match fund is \$1,839,470.00, all of which is 100% current match. There was no prior expenditure cost.

The total cost for the Northampton County area is \$3,321,349.13. The match fund is \$664,269.83, of which \$569,298.13 is current match and \$94,971.70 is prior expenditure match. The cost covers 59.5 miles of construction. A total of \$94,971.70 from the Vaucluse Shores community was used as a prior expenditure match. The expense occurred between September 25, 2022-December 27, 2022.

The ESVBA has also committed \$947,490.16 towards the project as match funds.

The ESVBA has 14 years of experience planning projects on the Eastern Shore where it implemented dozens of projects. The estimates by the ESVBA have always been accurate and three times lower than the estimates of expert groups hired to provide estimates, including the CTC Technology and Energy.

18. The cost benefit index is comprised of state cost per unit passed. Individual cost benefit scores are calculated and averaged together to create a point scale for a composite score. Provide the following:
- Total VATI funding request

- Number of serviceable units
(up to 125 points)

Answer:

- Total VATI funding request: \$17,006,149.92 this includes match funds.

- Number of serviceable units: 6,084 units

19.

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Commonwealth Priorities (Up to 50 points)

Additional points will be awarded to proposed projects that reflect Commonwealth priorities. If applicable, describe the following:

- a. Businesses, community anchors, or other passings in the proposed project area that will have a significant impact on the locality or region because of access to broadband.
- b. Unique partnerships involved in the proposed project. Examples include electric utilities, universities, and federal/state agencies.
- c. Digital equity efforts to ensure low to moderate income households in the proposed project area will have affordable access to speeds at or above 100/20 mbps, include information regarding the internet service provider's participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program
- d. The co-applicant's efforts to mitigate supply chain constraints, including labor shortages and order-to-delivery delays on telecommunications materials required to construct broadband networks.
- e. The applicant's and co-applicant's efforts to promote broadband adoption, including, but not limited to: telehealth, smart farming, e-entrepreneurship, and distance learning.

Answer:

a. To date, the ESVBA has constructed over 900 miles of fiber infrastructure. With its several years of expansion and coverage, the ESVBA currently serves most community anchor institutions. The community anchor institutions served are broken down into 23 schools, 46 government agencies and offices, 35 medical and health facilities and sites, and many more including 911 buildings, sheriff offices, library facilities, NASA, NAVY, and NOAA. The 2022 VATI covered six (6) community anchor institutions. There are currently no unserved or underserved community anchor institutions left to be included in the 2024 VATI project.

The broadband network expansion continues to exert a significant impact and support for power companies because they are able to better monitor, maintain, and operate the power grid. In addition, there are numerous Cell Towers that can now gain access to the ESVBA's reliable, scalable, and affordable telecommunication service. The ESVBA also provides support to the 911 backbone network.

b. The ESVBA partners with the two counties which have provided match funding and strategic support. With the 2024 VATI grant, the two counties on the Eastern Shore of Virginia will be completely built. Broadband connectivity will be available to residential homes, businesses, and other entities. Remote, hard-to-reach, and poor communities and areas will have access as they are included in the 88 segments included in the application. About 1,394 residents will be covered by the special construction portion.

Furthermore, the ISPs that currently use the ESVBA network will expand their reach to end-users as ISPs can now onboard customers at a significantly low cost due to the expanded network. Before 2024, the areas could not be built because they were protected by the federal USDA grant under the obsolete requirement of 25/3. With this major obstacle removed per the VATI 2024 guidelines, the 2024 VATI project is set to have a larger and more targeted impact on communities and residents.

c. For the counties, the board of directors of the ESVBA, and the management of the ESVBA, digital equity is a priority. The ESBVA participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program which provides a \$30 discount to subscribers each month. Due to the program, many subscribers currently pay as low as \$9 a month for broadband. As of October 2023, there were 150 residents subscribed to the ACP program, collectively saving more than \$51,840 a year. This number is expected to increase in the next few months. For the purpose of achieving digital equity, the 2024 VATI project design included 1,394 especial construction as well as areas hard-to-reach to ensure no residents are left out.

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The current product rates are fixed with digital equity in mind to ensure that low to moderate households can afford the cost while accessing high speed connections. When COVID-19 hit, the ESVBA doubled the speed of all residential services from their base rates to help subscribers meet the needs of conducting personal and professional business online. Furthermore, the ESVBA currently operates and maintains 27 free-access Wi-Fi hotspots.

d. The ESVBA has acquired and maintained existing resources and experience to deal with supply chain constraints, labor shortages, and delivery delays. The ESVBA works in anticipation with stakeholders. For example, for the VATI 2022 project, the ESBVA requested and obtained a prior authorization from DHCD to purchase materials. This authorization allowed the ESVBA to order and received the materials on time. As a result, the project is set to be complete before the deadline. In addition, the ESVBA has an internal team with the experience similar to that of contractors working on the VATI project. This team will complement or assist the contractors when necessary. With the VATI 2022 being a success, and the experience acquired, the ESVBA is well equipped to anticipate and provide effective solutions to potential delays or shortages.

e. The ESVBA and counties work together proactively to ensure access to universal access and affordability for all residents to encourage adoption. Accomack County runs a broadband assistance program through the ESVBA that awards up to \$1,000 to low-income households to offset the installation costs. The ESVBA implements a similar program internally, providing up to \$1000 per low-income household. In addition, the ESVBA is actively promoting and onboarding customers in the ACP program, which is a cost saving program, currently saving customers about 51,840 a year. When the ESVBA visited the Tangier' Islands this year, residents and business owners shared their experiences with broadband. Business owners can now instantly take credit payments due to high speed internet. Healthcare workers can now process paperwork on the island. In the past, they had to take the paper work to cross the island to major cities for processing as the low internet speed did not allow them to do so on the island. In the two counties, retiree populations, public and non-profit organizations, and small business provide positive feedback with the ease of running personal and professional operations online. Several communication and advertisement through local radios, newspapers, community-based organizations, and events are conducted by the ESVBA. Progress on the current VATI 2022 project is monthly communicated to the community through the website, social medias and other media.

The proposed VATI 2024 project contributes to the goal of ensuring universal broadband coverage to all residents, organizations, and businesses regardless of economic status, size, and geographical location on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. At the state level, this means that the Commonwealth of Virginia will achieve universal broadband access (100%) by May 2026. The 2024 VATI grant application is a planned construction of 314.5 miles. When added to the 269 miles from the 2022 VATI project, the VATI program would have contributed 583.5 miles of fiber network to the two rural counties in the region. The open access network is vital for ensuring digital equity and opening rural Virginians to opportunities impacting every aspect of their lives.

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20. Additional Information

Please attach any letters of support from stakeholders. If the applicant is not a locality(s) in which the project will occur, please provide a letter of support from that locality.

Attachment 14 – Letters of Support.

Provide the two most recent Form 477 submitted to the FCC, or equivalent, as well as point, polygon, and, for wireless providers, RSSI shapefiles for the project area **in .zip file form**. With attachments 17 through 20, attach any other information that the applicant desires to include. Applicants are limited to four additional attachments.

Label Additional Attachments as:

- a. Attachment 15 – Two most recent Form 477 submitted to the FCC or equivalent
- b. Attachment 16 - Point and Polygon shapefiles, in.zip file form, showing proposed passings and project area
- c. Attachment 17 - For wireless applicants: shapefiles, in .zip file form, indicating RSSI projections in the application area
- d. Attachment 18 – XXXXXXXX
- e. Attachment 19 – XXXXXXXX
- f. Attachment 20 – XXXXXXXX

Answer:

All attachments are included in the attachments tab.

Attachments:

Map(s) of project area, including proposed infrastructure

Attachment1ProjectAreamap1214202343022.pdf

Documentation of Federal Funding (CAF/ACAM/USDA/RDOF, etc...) in and/or near proposed project area.

Attachment2DocumentationofFederalFundingArea1214202343033.pdf

Documentation that proposed project area is unserved based on VATI criteria

Attachment3DocumentationUnservedAreaVATICriteria1219202390638.pdf

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Propagation Map if Wireless Project

Attachment6PropagationMapWirelessProjectonly1214202343143.pdf

Timeline/Project Management Plan

Attachment7TimelineProjectManagementPlan1214202343158.pdf

MOU/MOA between applicant/co-applicant (can be in draft form)

Attachment8MOUMOAbetweenApplicantCoApplicant1214202343204.pdf

Documentation of Supporting Cost Estimates

Attachment13DocumentationofSupportingCostEstimates12192023121805.pdf

Letters of Support

Attachment14LettersofSupport1219202390843.pdf

Two most recent Form 477 submitted to the FCC or equivalent

Attachment15TwomostrecentForm4771214202343223.pdf

Point and Polygon shapefiles, in .zip file form, showing proposed passings and project area

Attachment16PointandPolygonShapefiles12192023110244.zip

For wireless applicants: shapefiles, in .zip file form, indicating RSSI projections in the application area

Attachment17RSSIProjectionShapefiles1219202391442.pdf

Optional

Attachment18FOIAExemption1219202391614.pdf

Documentation of Match Funding

Attachment10DocumentationofMatchFunding12192023105936.pdf

Derivation of Cost/Project Budget (Use template provided)

Attachment12DerivationofCosts1214202343242.pdf

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Funding Sources Table (Use template provided)

Attachment9FundingSourcesTable1218202315727.pdf

Prior Expended Match Form (use template provided)

Attachment11PriorExpendedMatchForm1214202343255.pdf

Passings Form (Use template provided)

Attachment4PassingsForm12152023124343.pdf

Documentation of RDOF awarded area in VATI project Area (Use template provided)

Attachment5RDOFAwardedAreasIncludedinVATIApplication1214202343321.pdf

Notes:

Dear Dr. Holmes: The Accomack County and the Northampton County and the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) are pleased with the opportunity to apply for the 2024 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) to complete the expansion of the open access fiber network on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Having been awarded the 2022 VATI grant which had taken the coverage rate to 80%, our 2024 VATI grant takes the coverage to 100%. The ESVBA application will cover areas that became eligible after the FCC adopted the 200/20 as the minimum speed requirement. With newly-eligible areas not meeting the requirements, our project meticulously identified the areas and communities that were still left out of the digital world because of obsolete and non-practical requirements. I have responded to the questions that applied to my agency and the counties and uploaded all applicable documentation. Should you need further clarifications while you are reviewing my application, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office. I appreciate your time and consideration of this application for the 2024 VATI grant.

Sincerely, Robert Bridgham Executive Director, Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA). Email: rbridgham@esvba.com Phone: 757 414-0304

VATI 2024

Supplemental Application Question

Applicant: Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

Project Name: Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project FY2024

The question below is question

e. from the Commonwealth Priorities section of the 2024 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Guidelines. Please answer the question using this form and email to VATI@dhcd.virginia.gov.

Commonwealth Priorities

20. Additional points will be awarded to proposed projects that reflect Commonwealth priorities. If applicable, describe the following:

e. The co-applicant's effort to mitigate costs and delays that may be associated with make-ready and other permitting requirements anticipated for network deployment.

The ESVBA is prepared to overcome challenges related to costs and delays in acquiring make-ready and permits. This is part of the ESVBA's preparedness and readiness to execute the project in a timely and cost-effective manner. The good practices learned from the VATI ongoing project are useful to the team to anticipate make-ready and permitting issues. The project is managed by the construction manager.

The ESVBA staff have driven the areas included in the application and checked them. With the steps, the ESBVA has compiled an inventory of segments and passings that need special attention. The ESVBA starts working on the best solutions early on.

With regards to VDOT permits, the requests are generally approved within 48 hours by the VDOT regional office. The staff have established contact with the VDOT regional office, which allows for quick and expedited approvals of the permits.

With regards to easements, in preparing for the VATI 2024 application, the ESVBA starts compiling easements that may be problematic. The construction manager works with home-owner associations to identify property owners or talks directly to property owners to request access to property. In cases where owners are not easily identifiable, the county tax maps are used and most of the time, the maps help identify the property owners. There are very few instances where access to easements slows down the process. For example, for the ongoing 2022 VATI project, only two private owners denied access to their property. Based on the lessons being learned throughout the project, these issues are being better addressed.

With regards to pole attachments, the ESVBA has not experienced any significant delays. However, some issues are caught during preliminary engineering. The pole company has generally responded quickly. On rare cases, significant issues may cause delays up to a few months. With that in mind, the ESVBA allow for some flexibility in the process to allow contractors to continue to work in non-problematic areas and returning to the areas when issues are solved.

The ESBVA works and communicates regularly with DHCD on issues in case DHCD can be of any assistance. As of December 2023, the ESVBA had built over 900 miles of fiber network, including 223 miles for VATI 2022. This shows the relevant experience available to execute the 2024 VATI project.

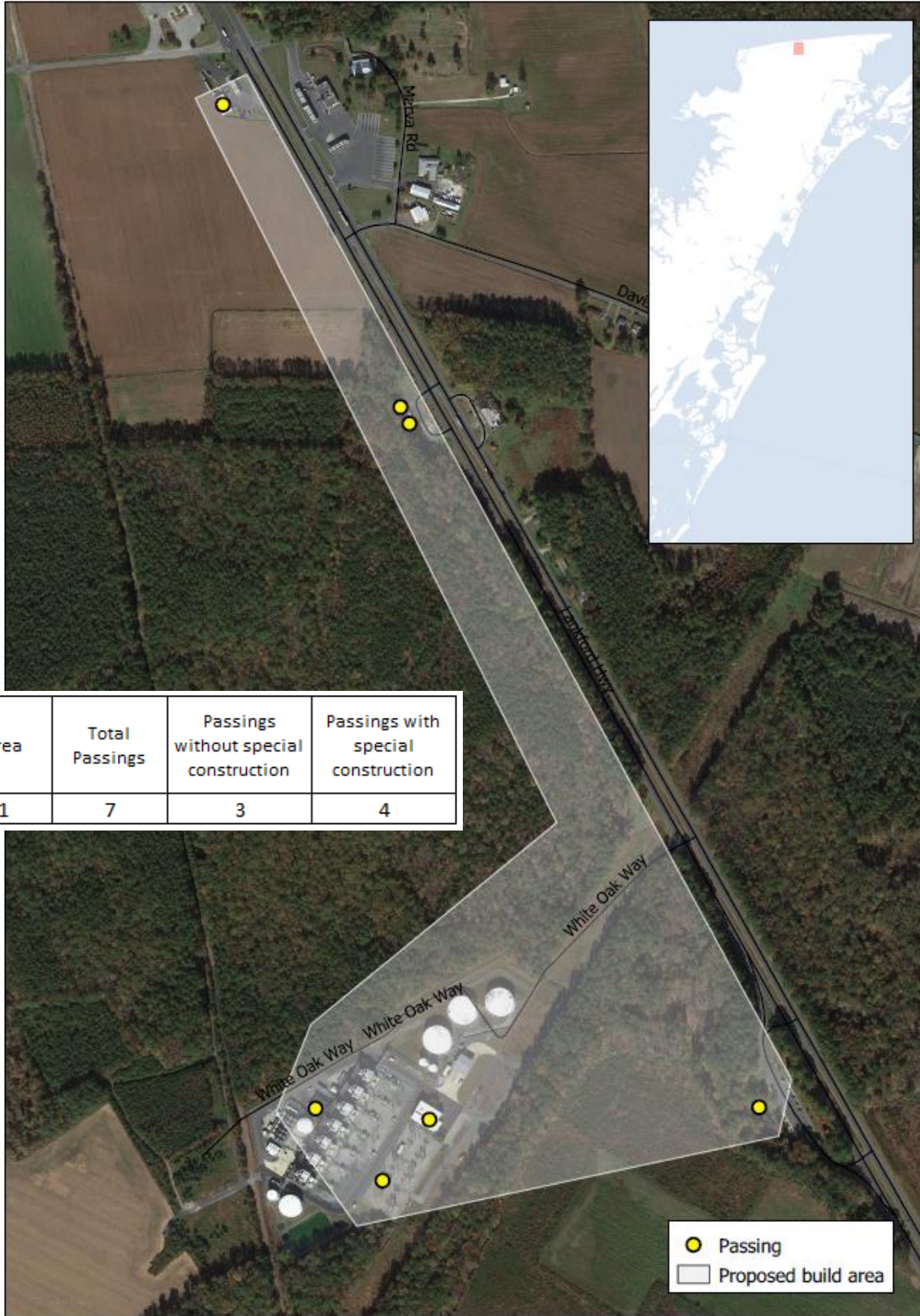
List of Segments

County Area	Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
Accomack	1	7	3	4
Accomack	2	16	12	4
Accomack	3	27	27	0
Accomack	4	186	179	7
Accomack	5	394	349	45
Accomack	6	56	47	9
Accomack	7	5	3	2
Accomack	8	44	43	1
Accomack	9	102	72	30
Accomack	10	24	23	1
Accomack	11	14	14	0
Accomack	12	86	76	10
Accomack	13	12	7	5
Accomack	14	272	195	77
Accomack	15	234	195	39
Accomack	16	125	79	46
Accomack	17	8	6	2
Accomack	18	70	59	11
Accomack	19	7	6	1
Accomack	20	166	123	43
Accomack	21	11	10	1
Accomack	22	18	17	1
Accomack	23	27	27	0
Accomack	24	296	208	88
Accomack	25	68	65	3
Accomack	26	163	129	34
Accomack	27	112	107	5
Accomack	28	68	56	12
Accomack	29	106	71	35
Accomack	30	554	421	133
Accomack	31	18	18	0
Accomack	32	7	5	2
Accomack	33	13	12	1
Accomack	34	15	15	0
Accomack	35	120	114	6
Accomack	36	8	6	2
Accomack	37	22	12	10
Accomack	38	75	57	18
Accomack	39	93	91	2
Accomack	40	21	19	2
Accomack	41	30	14	16
Accomack	42	73	51	22
Accomack	43	5	3	2
Accomack	44	237	162	75
Accomack	45	17	11	6
Accomack	46	88	67	21
Accomack	47	209	192	17
Accomack	48	75	67	8
Accomack	49	15	11	4
Accomack	50	23	12	11
Accomack	51	153	125	28

List of Segments

Accomack	52	62	25	37
Accomack	53	4	1	3
Accomack	54	45	30	15
Accomack	55	39	35	4
Accomack	56	12	5	7
Accomack	57	173	123	50
Accomack	58	8	4	4
Accomack	59	72	57	15
Accomack	60	45	38	7
Accomack	61	67	43	24
Accomack	62	70	38	32
Accomack	63	31	27	4
Accomack	64	5	2	3
Accomack	65	14	12	2
Accomack	66	14	12	2
Accomack	67	21	16	5
Northampton	68	35	25	10
Northampton	69	3	2	1
Northampton	70	2	2	0
Northampton	71	12	6	6
Northampton	72	38	13	25
Northampton	73	17	16	1
Northampton	74	19	18	1
Northampton	75	7	7	0
Northampton	76	84	58	26
Northampton	77	239	175	64
Northampton	78	32	13	19
Northampton	79	10	9	1
Northampton	80	59	14	45
Northampton	81	14	8	6
Northampton	82	14	14	0
Northampton	83	8	8	0
Northampton	84	45	44	1
Northampton	85	102	46	56
Northampton	86	4	4	0
Northampton	87	53	40	13
Accomack	88	10	7	3
TOTALS	<u>88</u>	<u>6084</u>	<u>4690</u>	<u>1394</u>

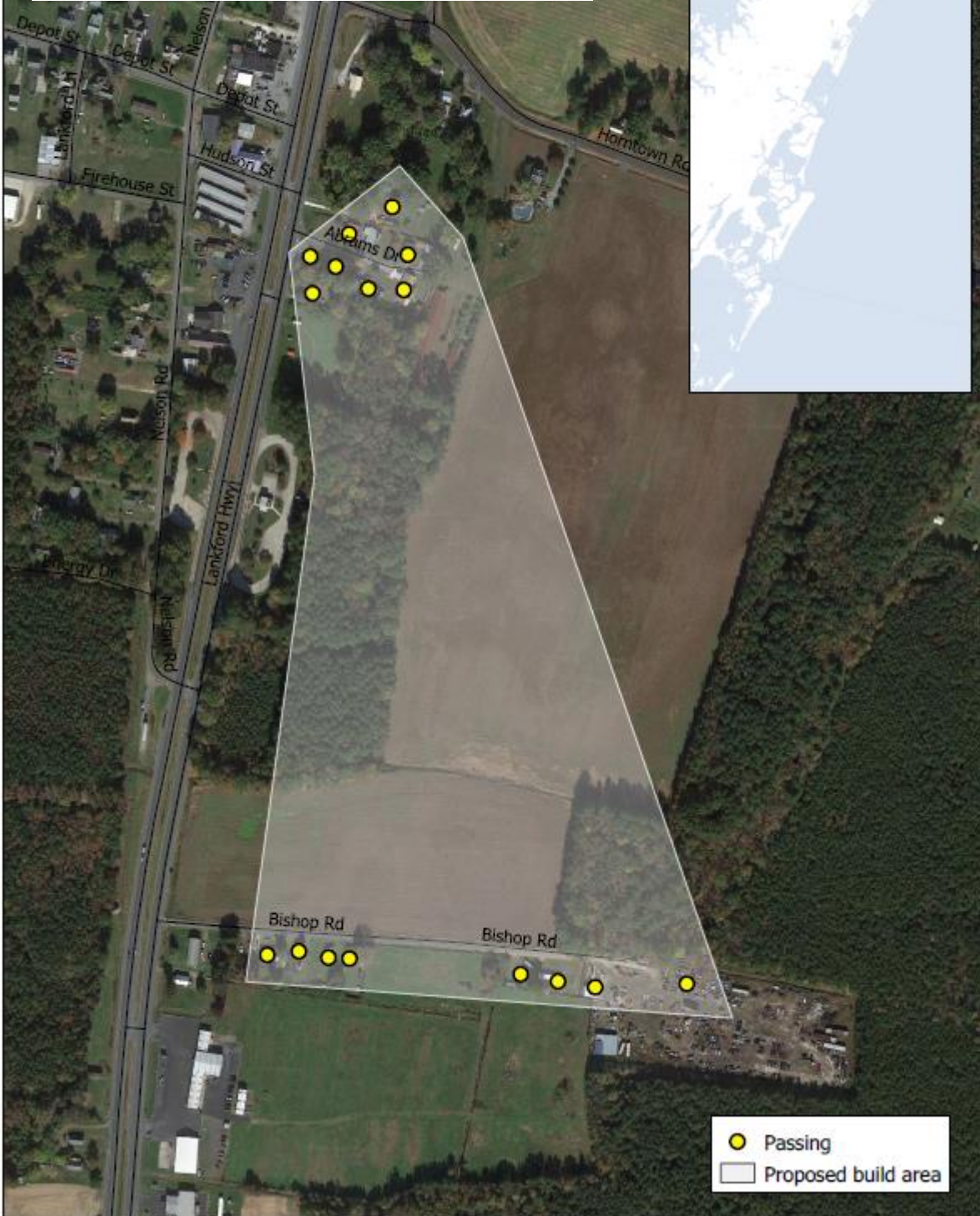
Area 1



Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
1	7	3	4

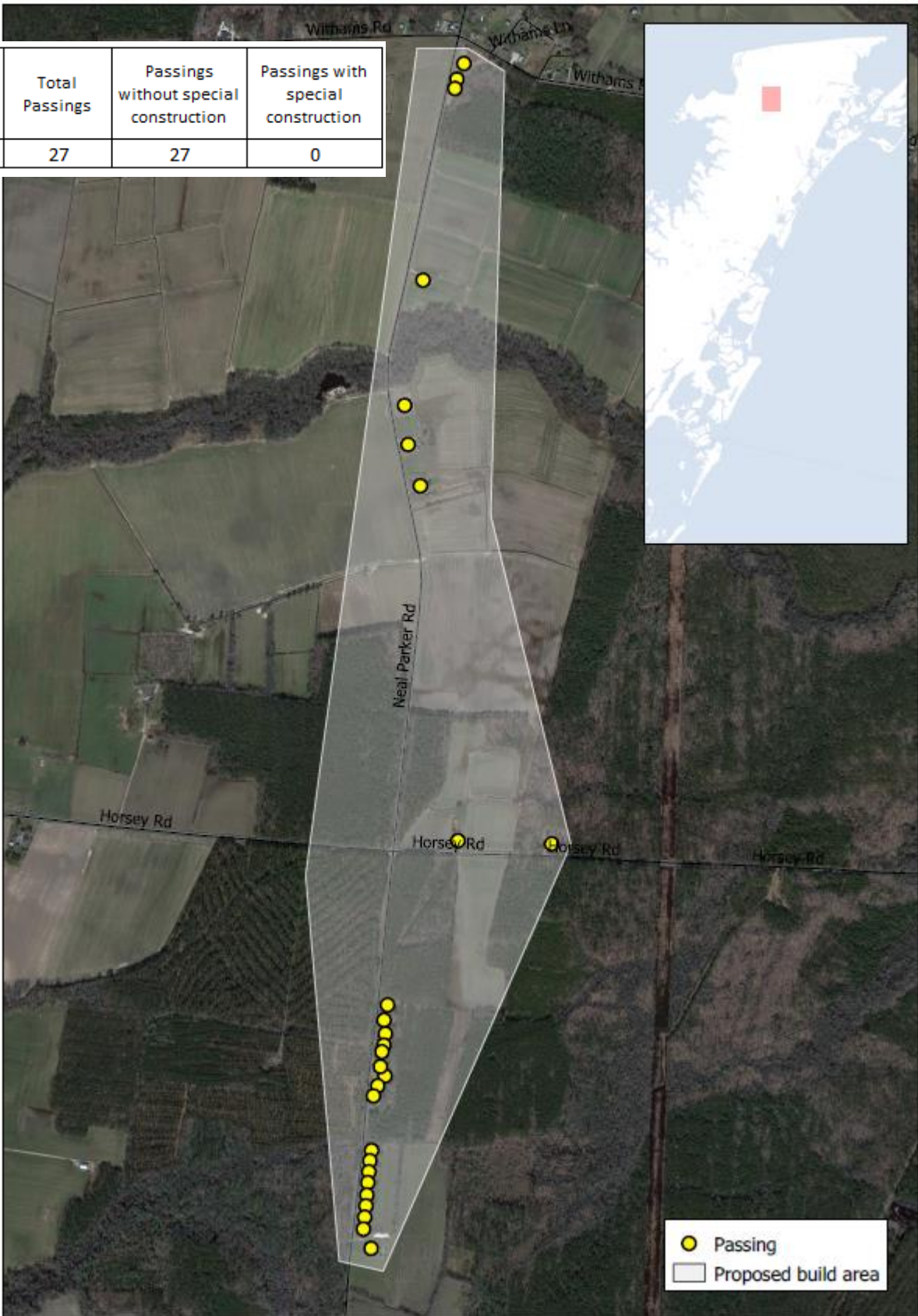
Area 2

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
2	16	12	4

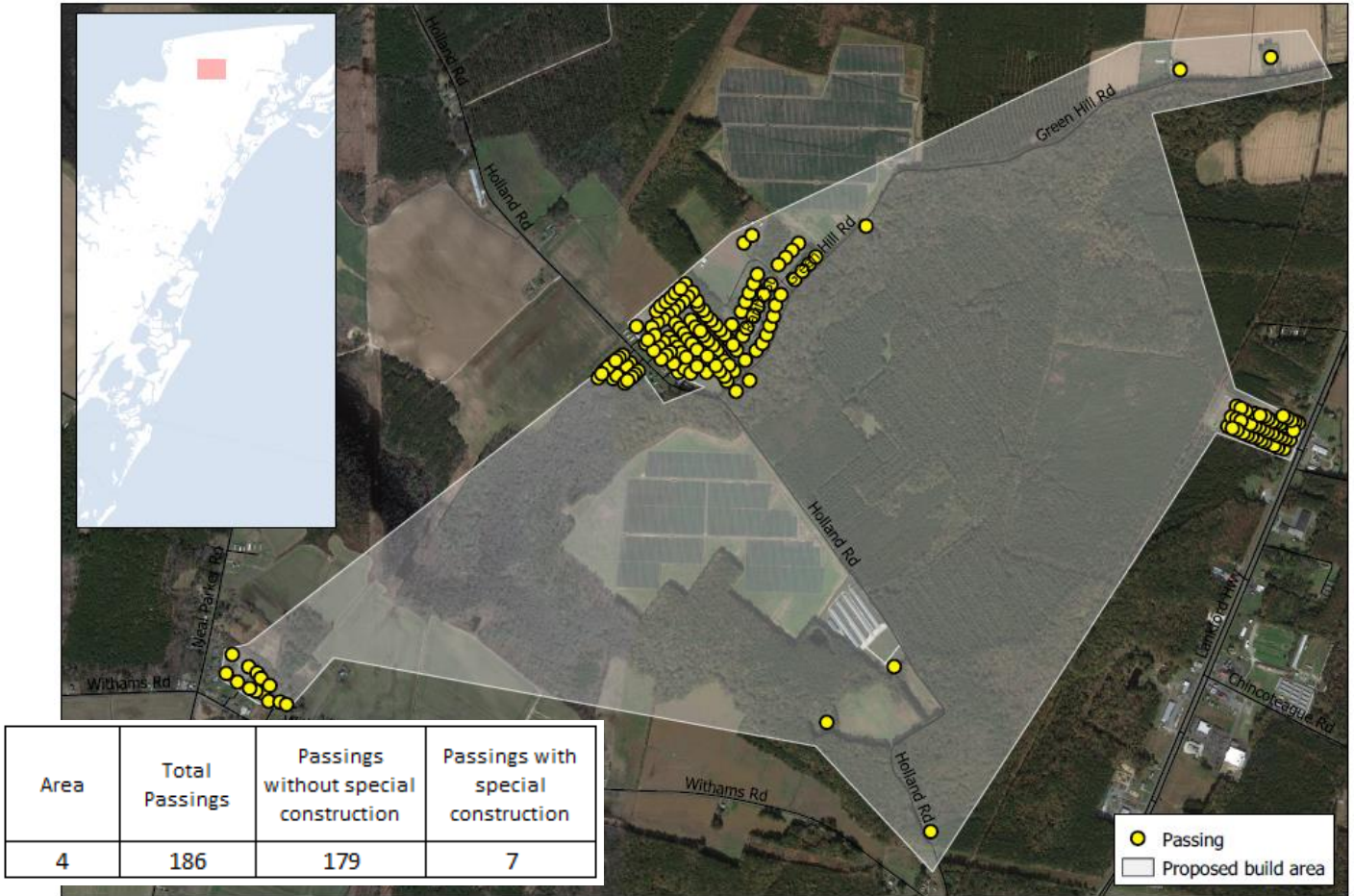


Area 3

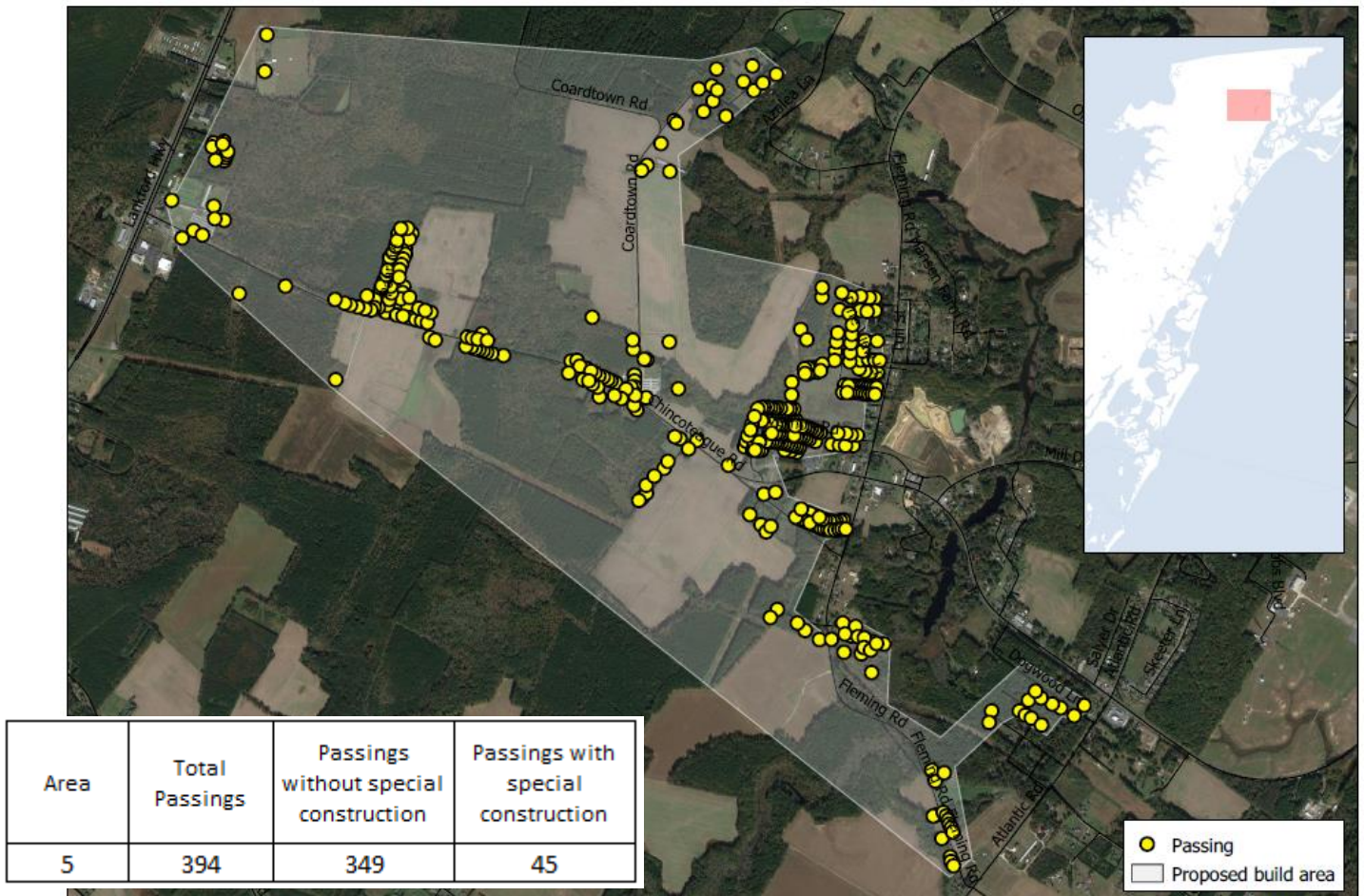
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
3	27	27	0



Area 4



Area 5

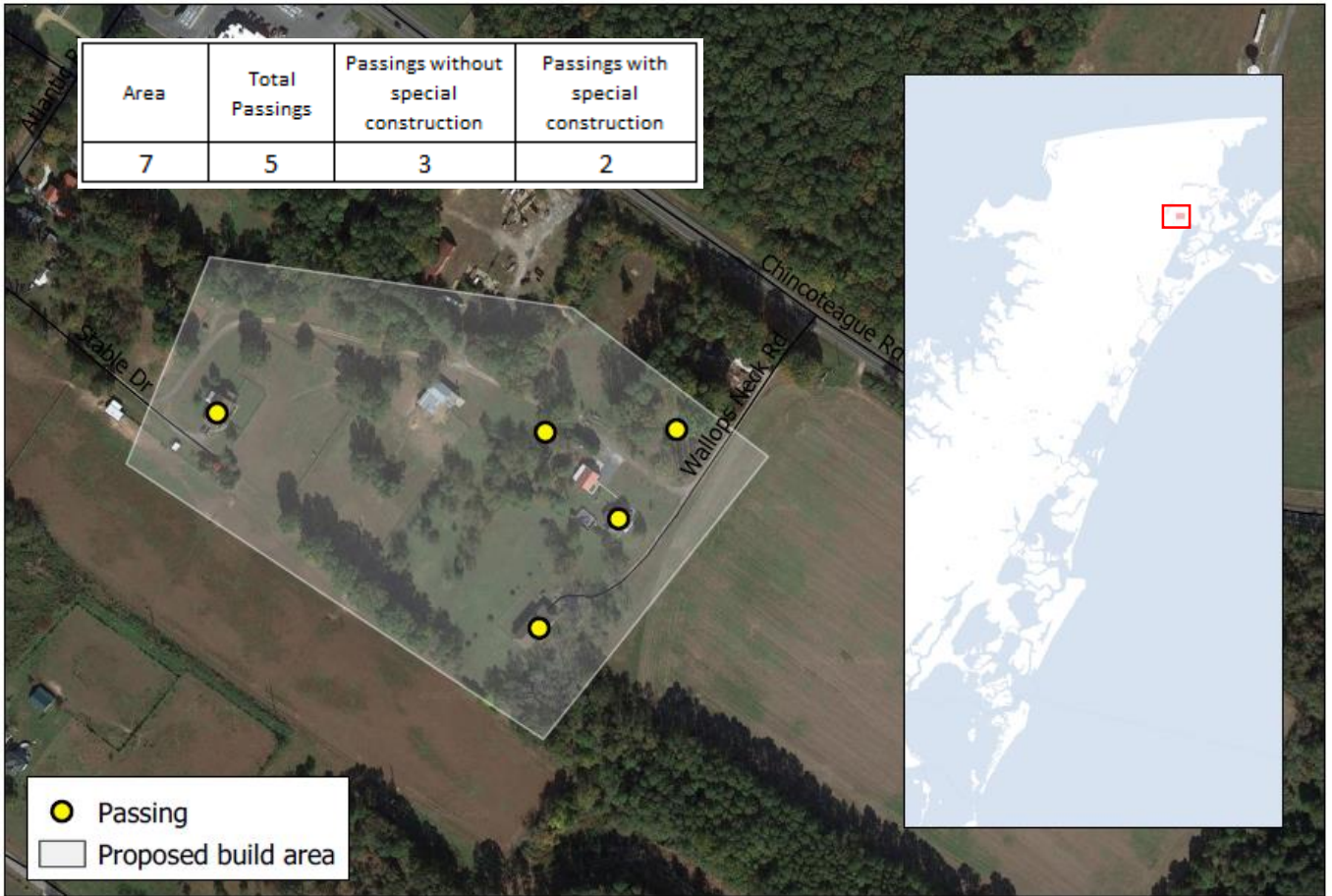


Area 6

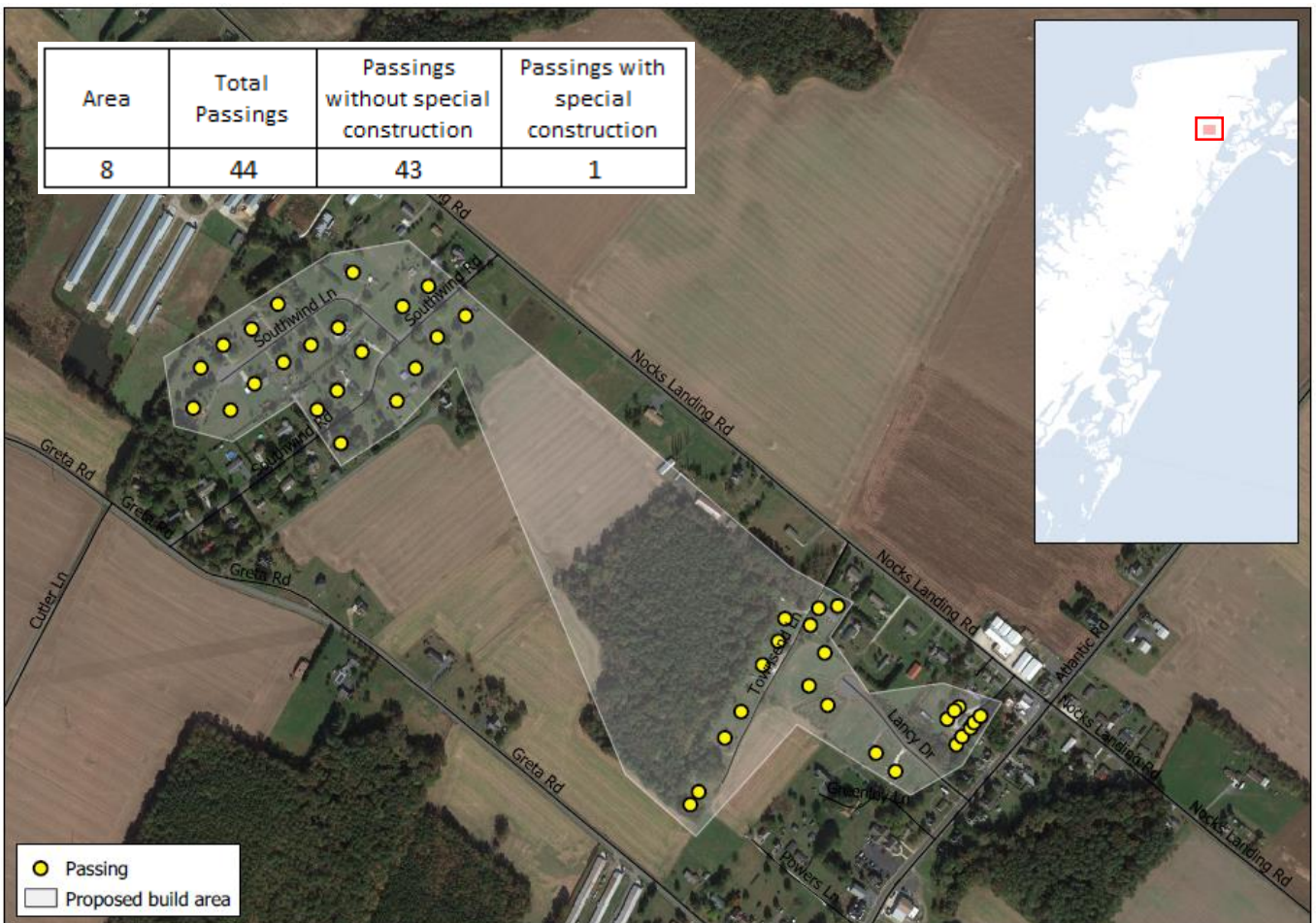
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
6	56	47	9



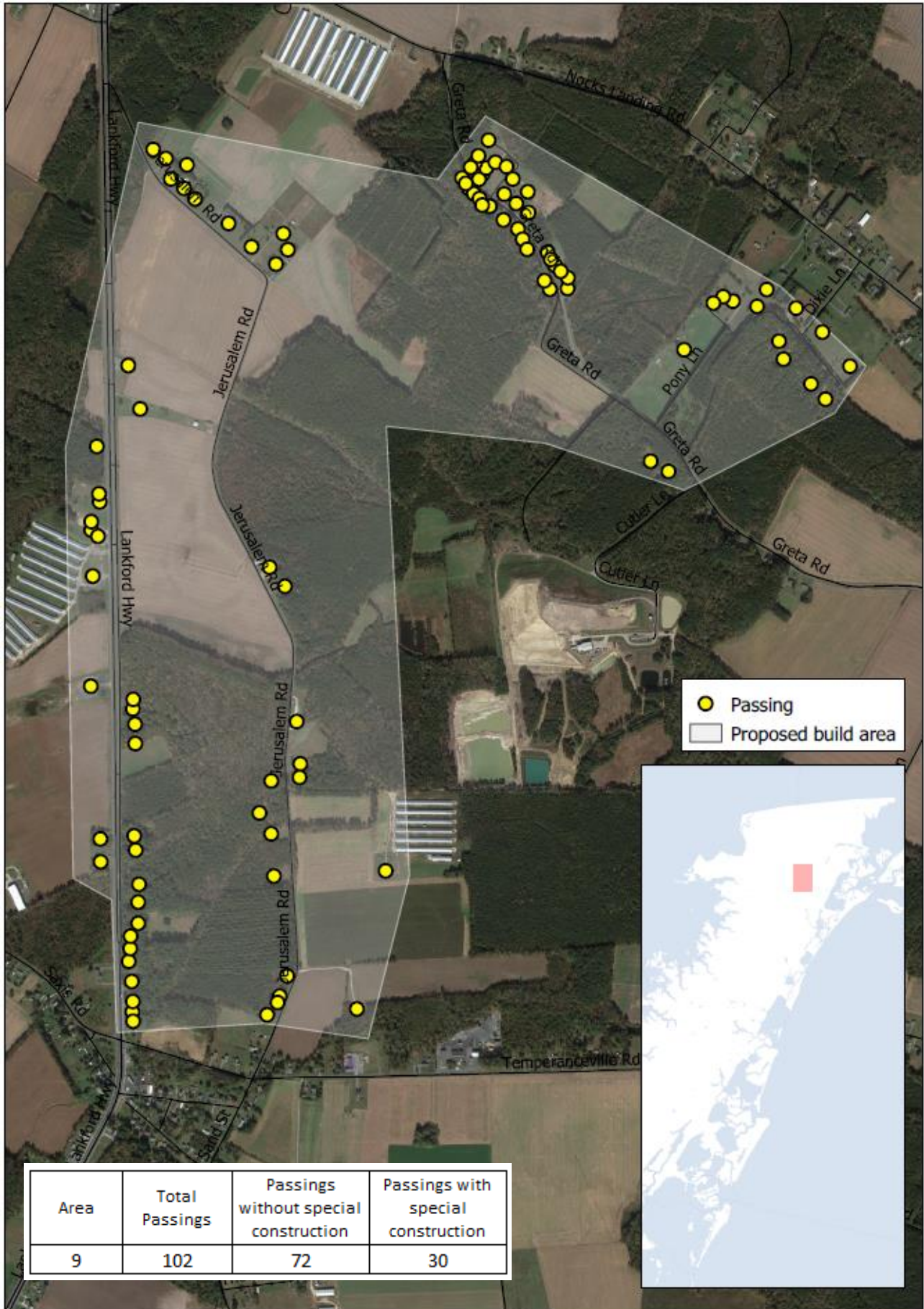
Area 7



Area 8

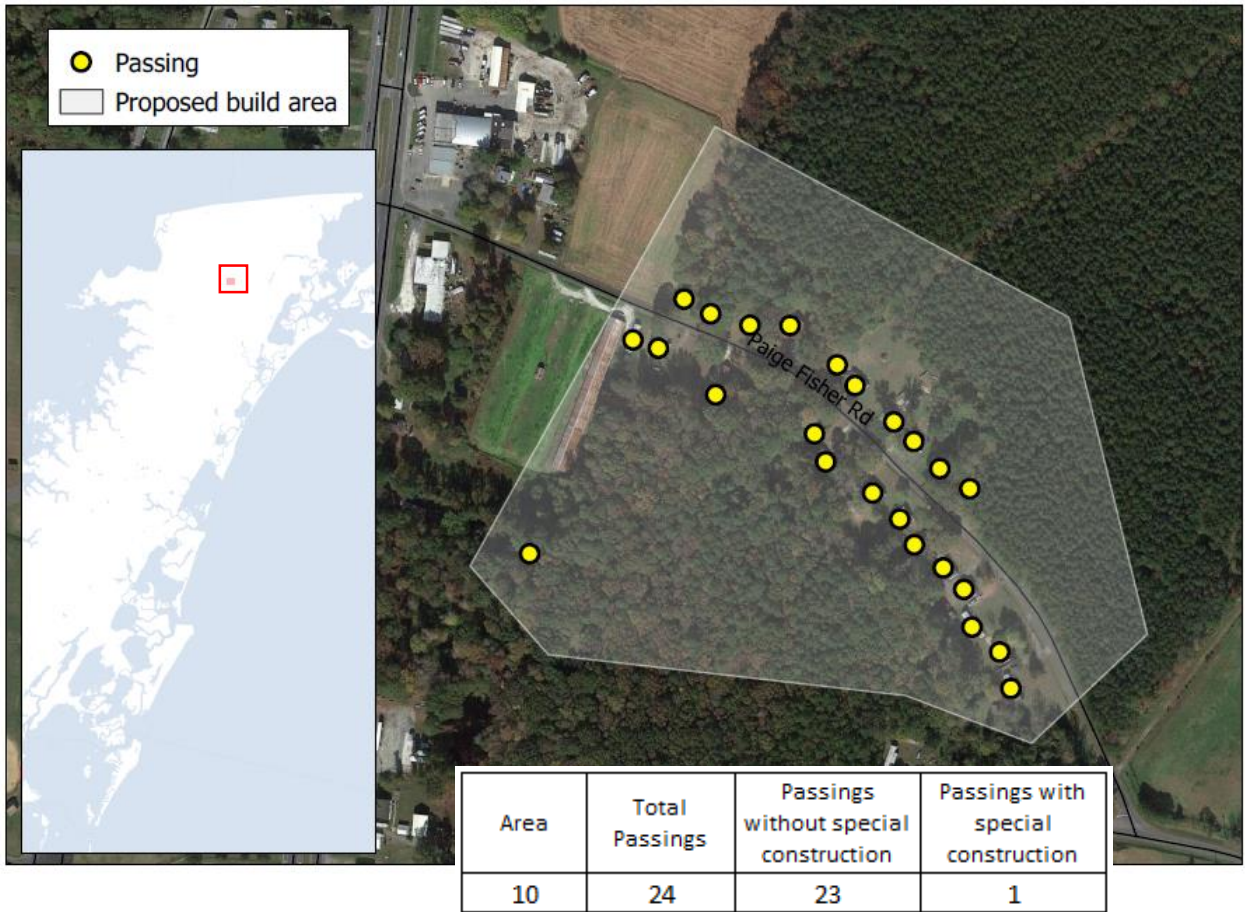


Area 9

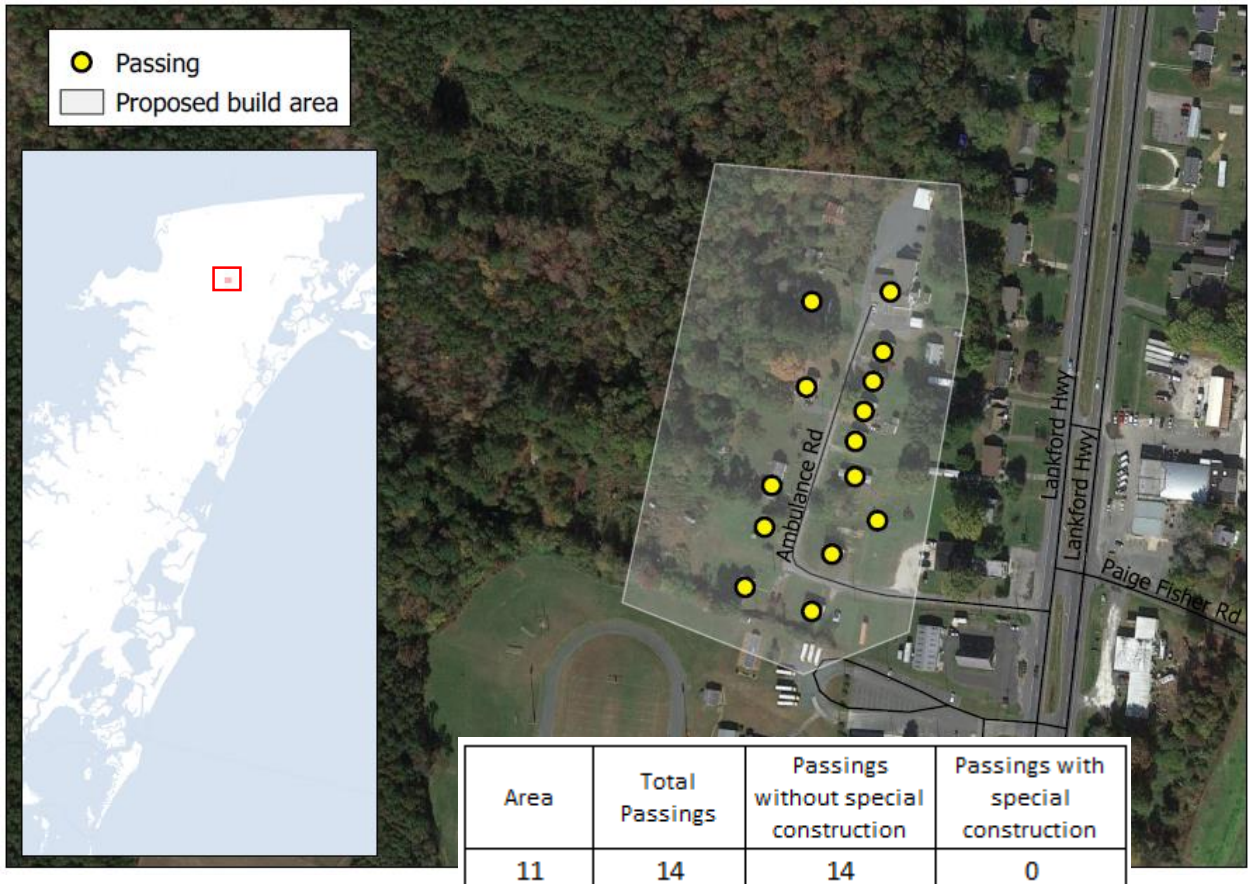


Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
9	102	72	30

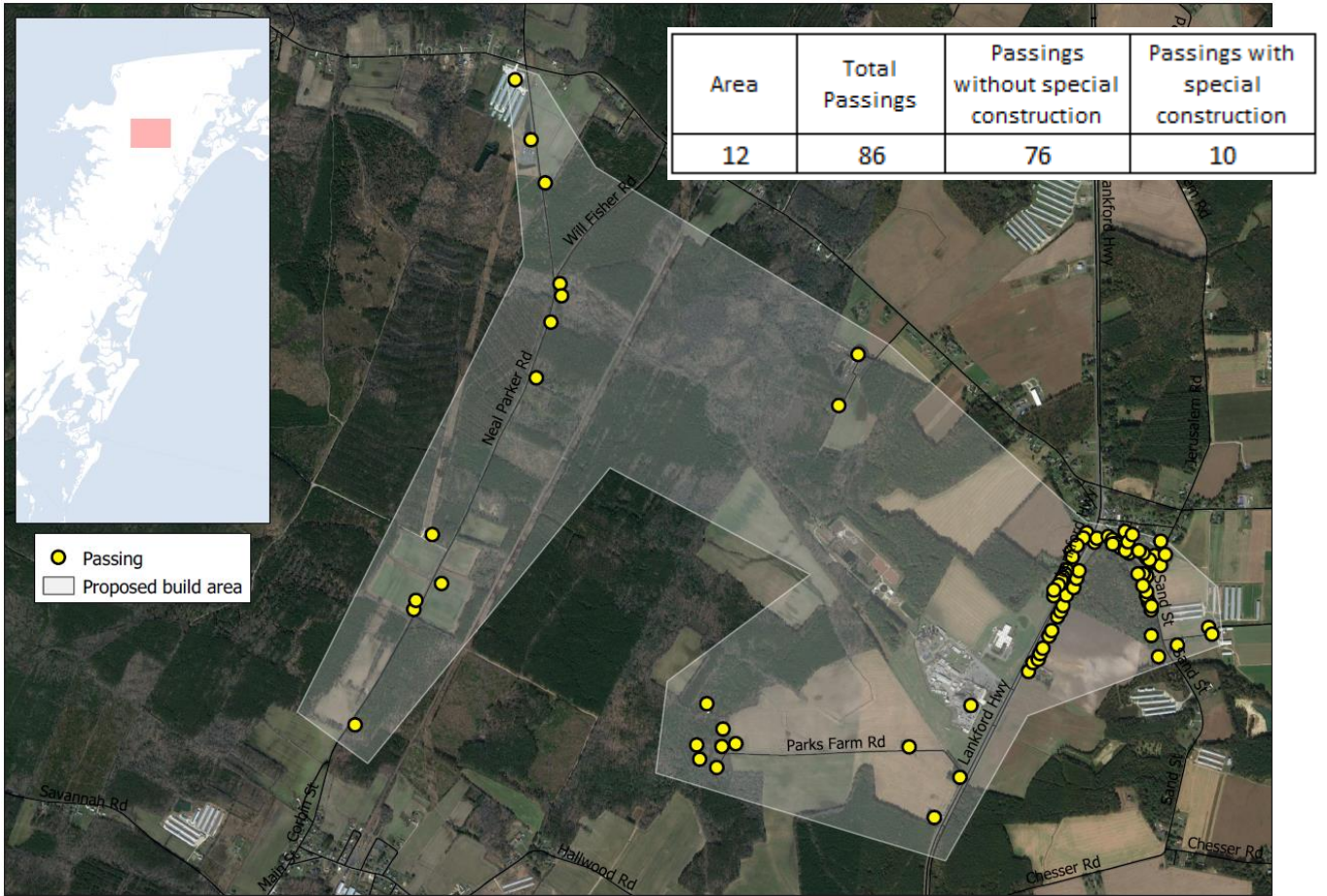
Area 10



Area 11



Area 12

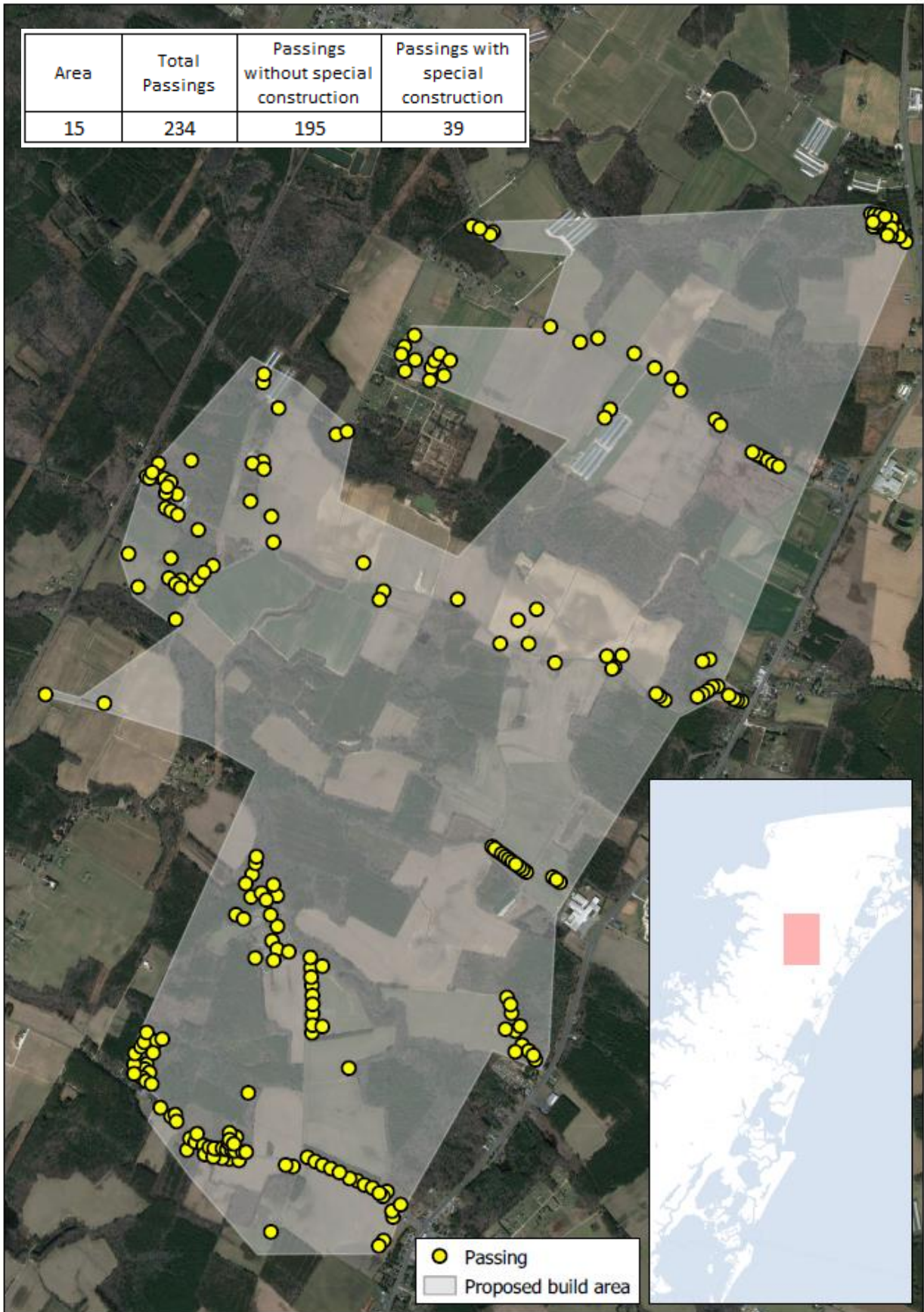


Area 13

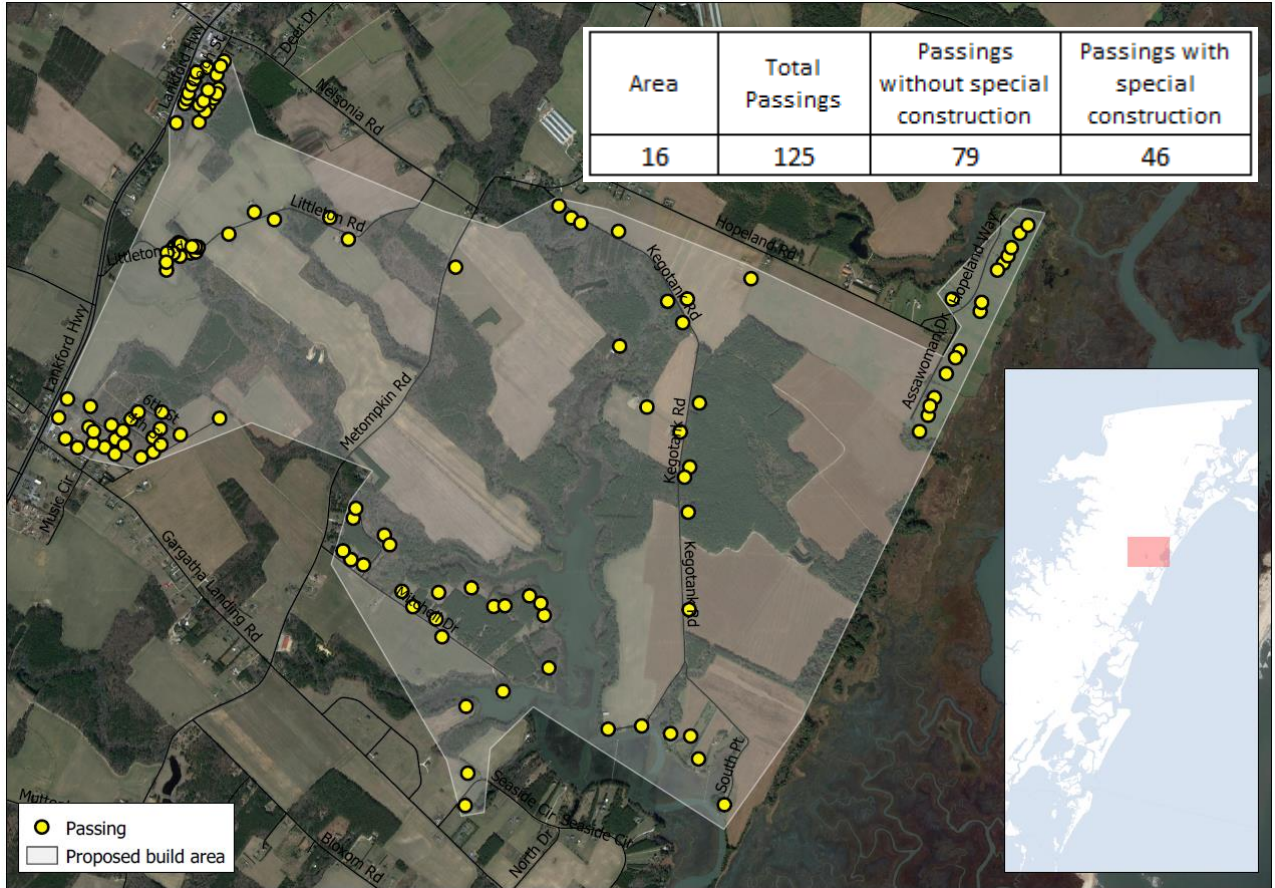


Area 15

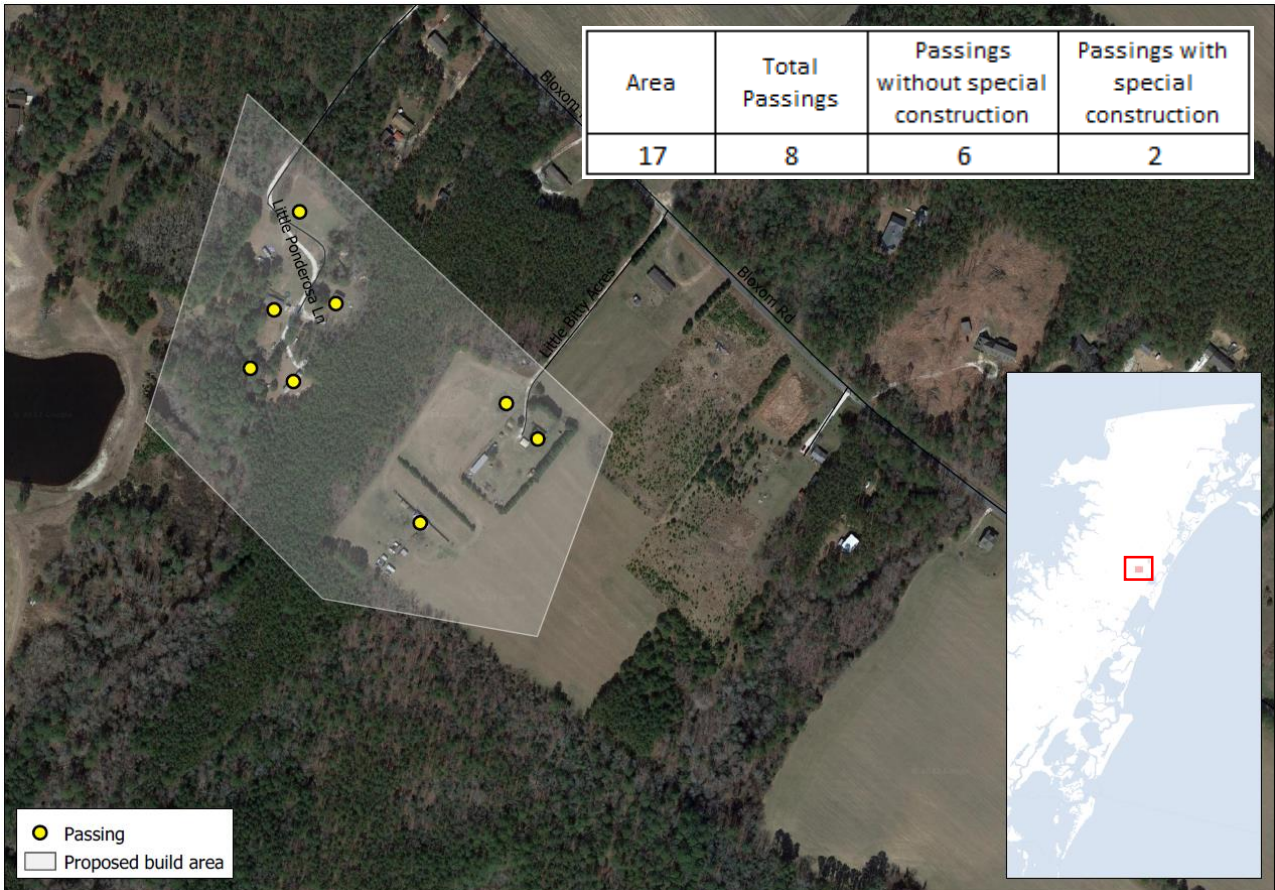
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
15	234	195	39



Area 16

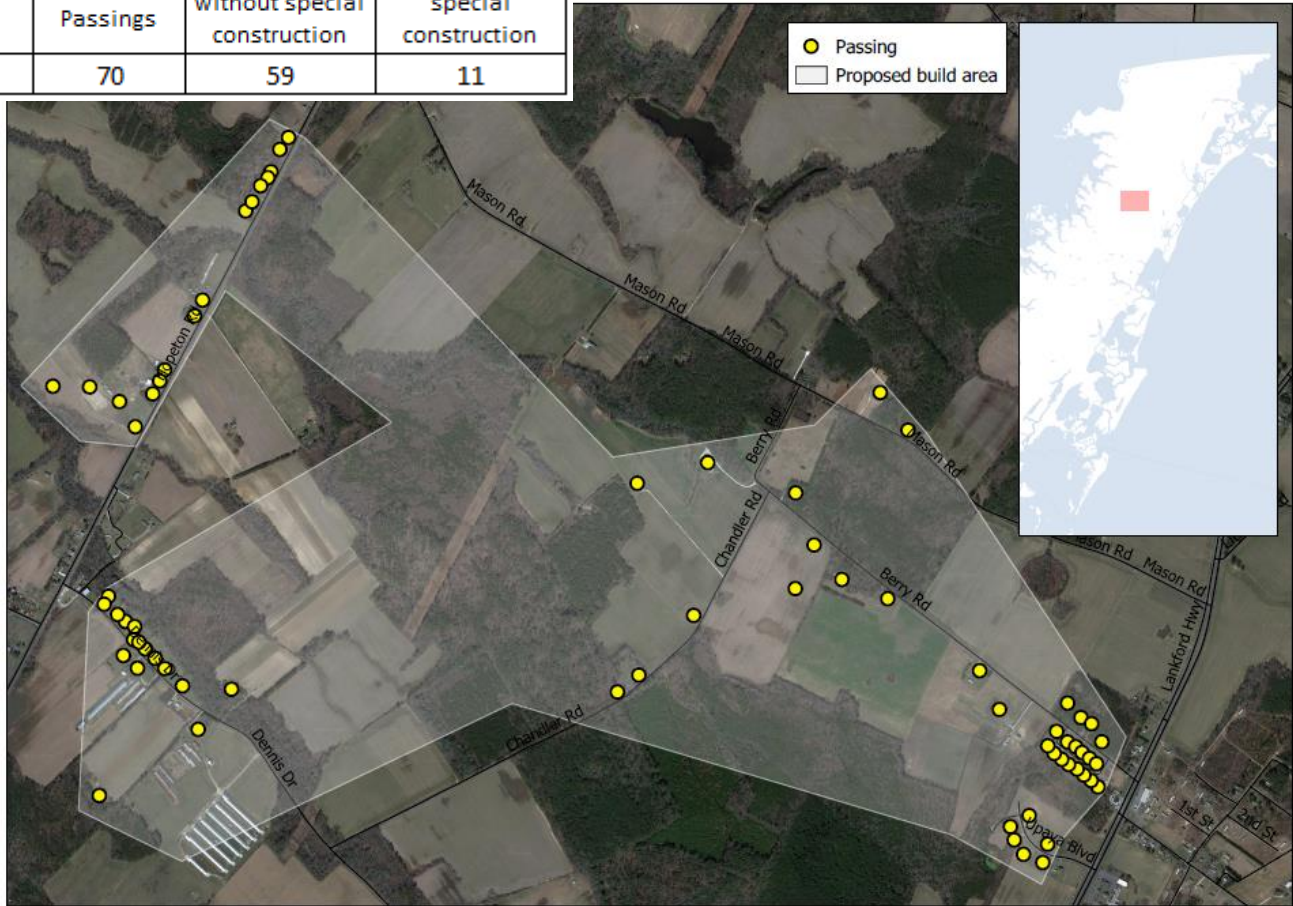


Area 17



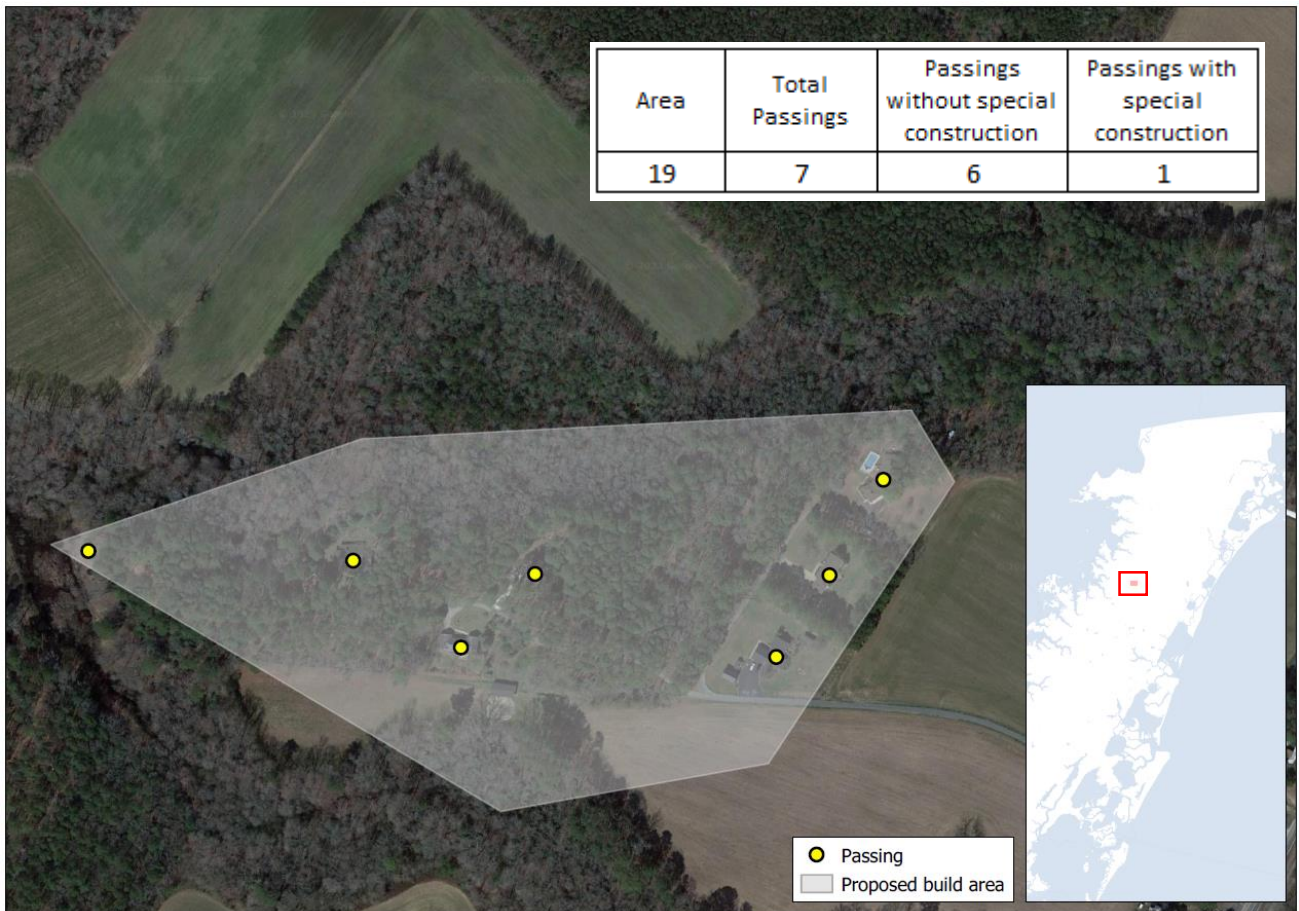
Area 18

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
18	70	59	11

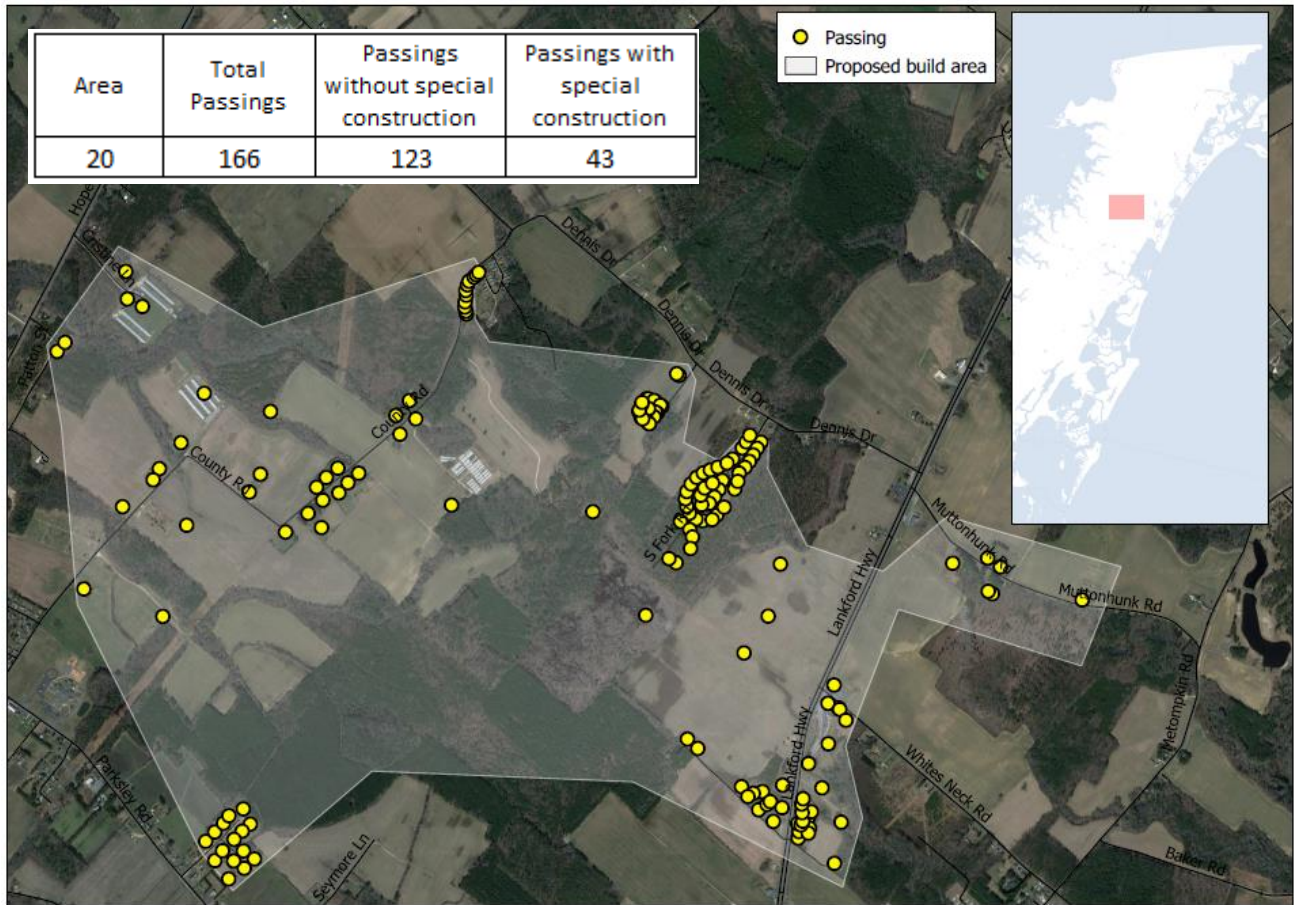


Area 19

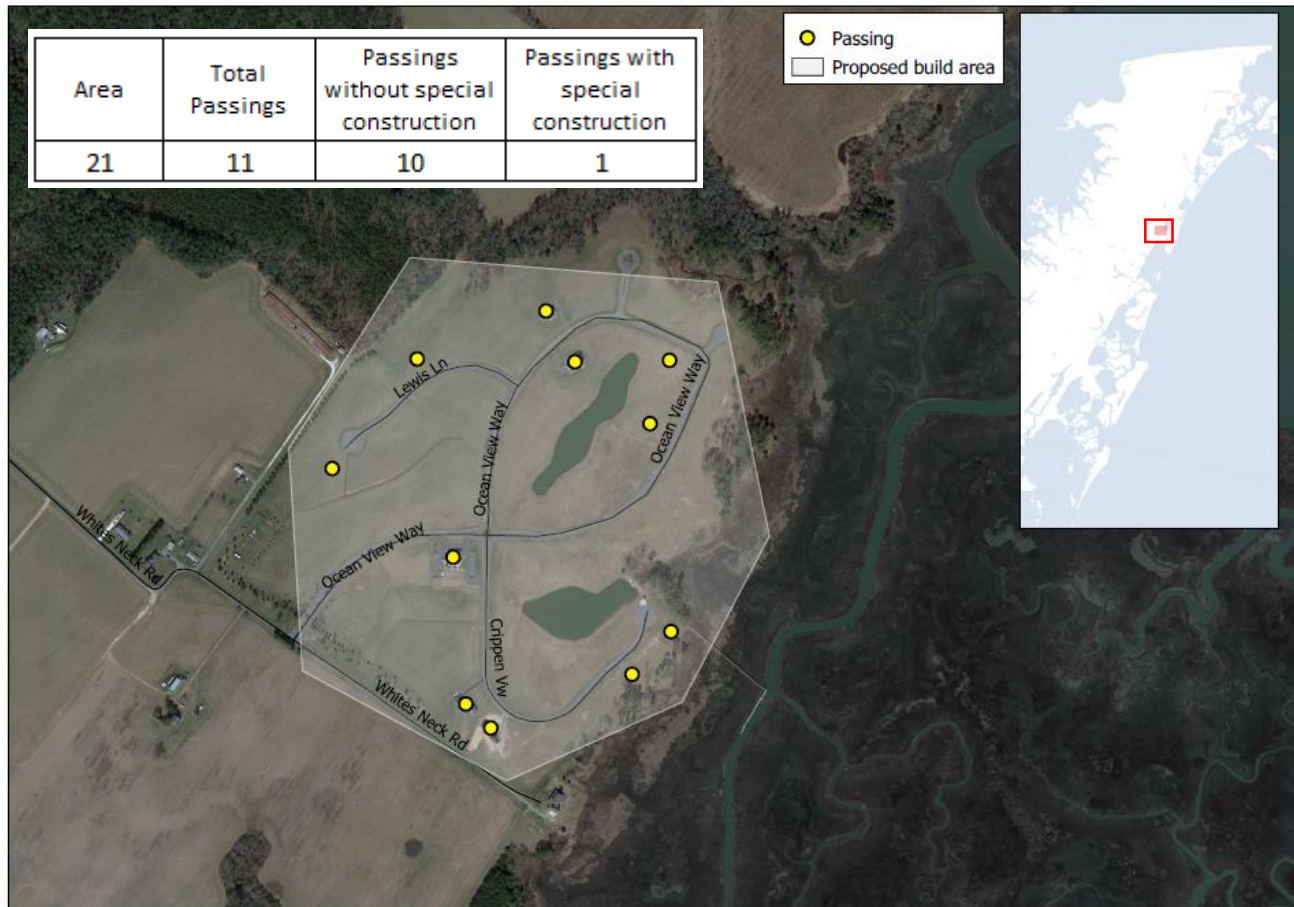
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
19	7	6	1



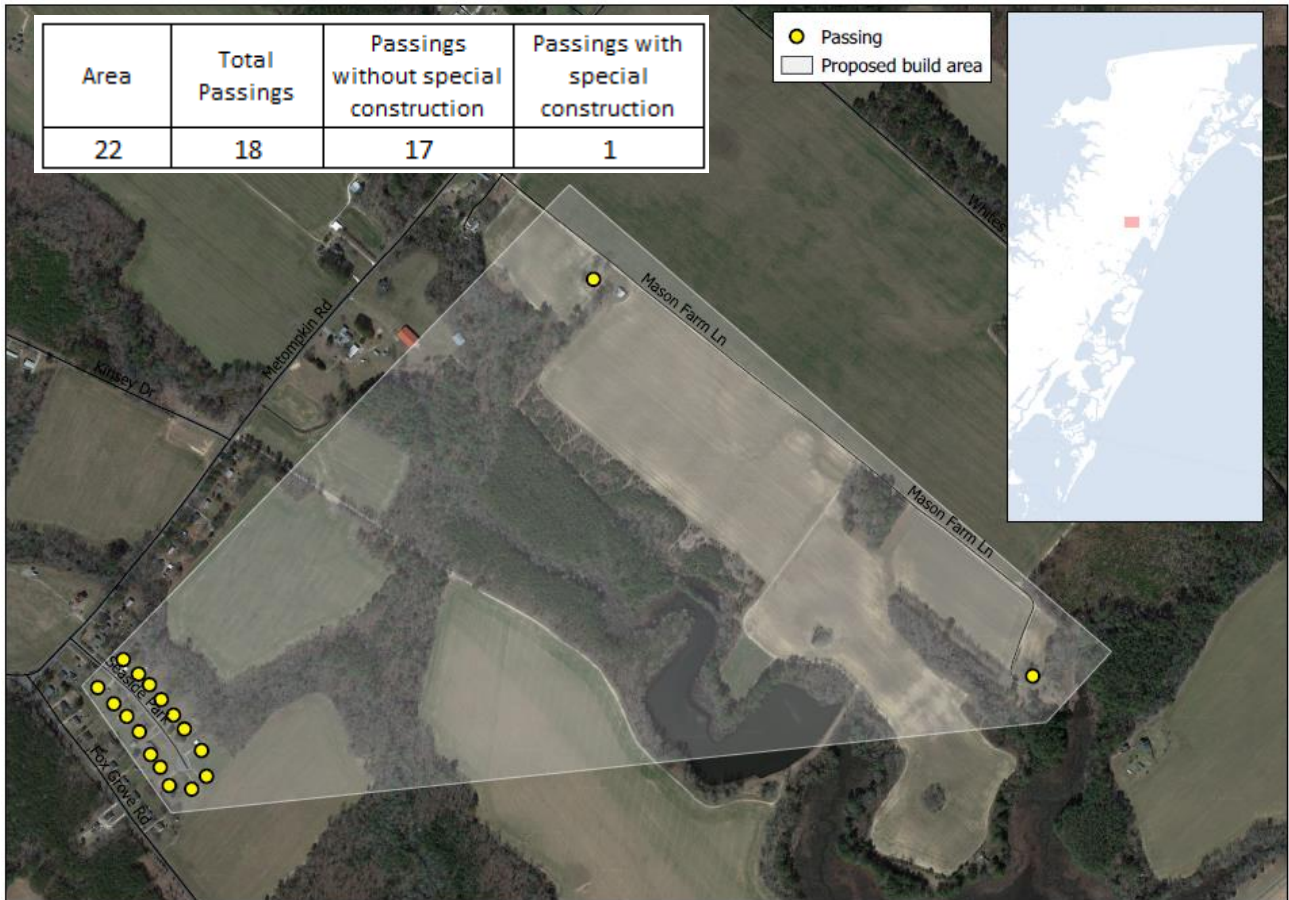
Area 20



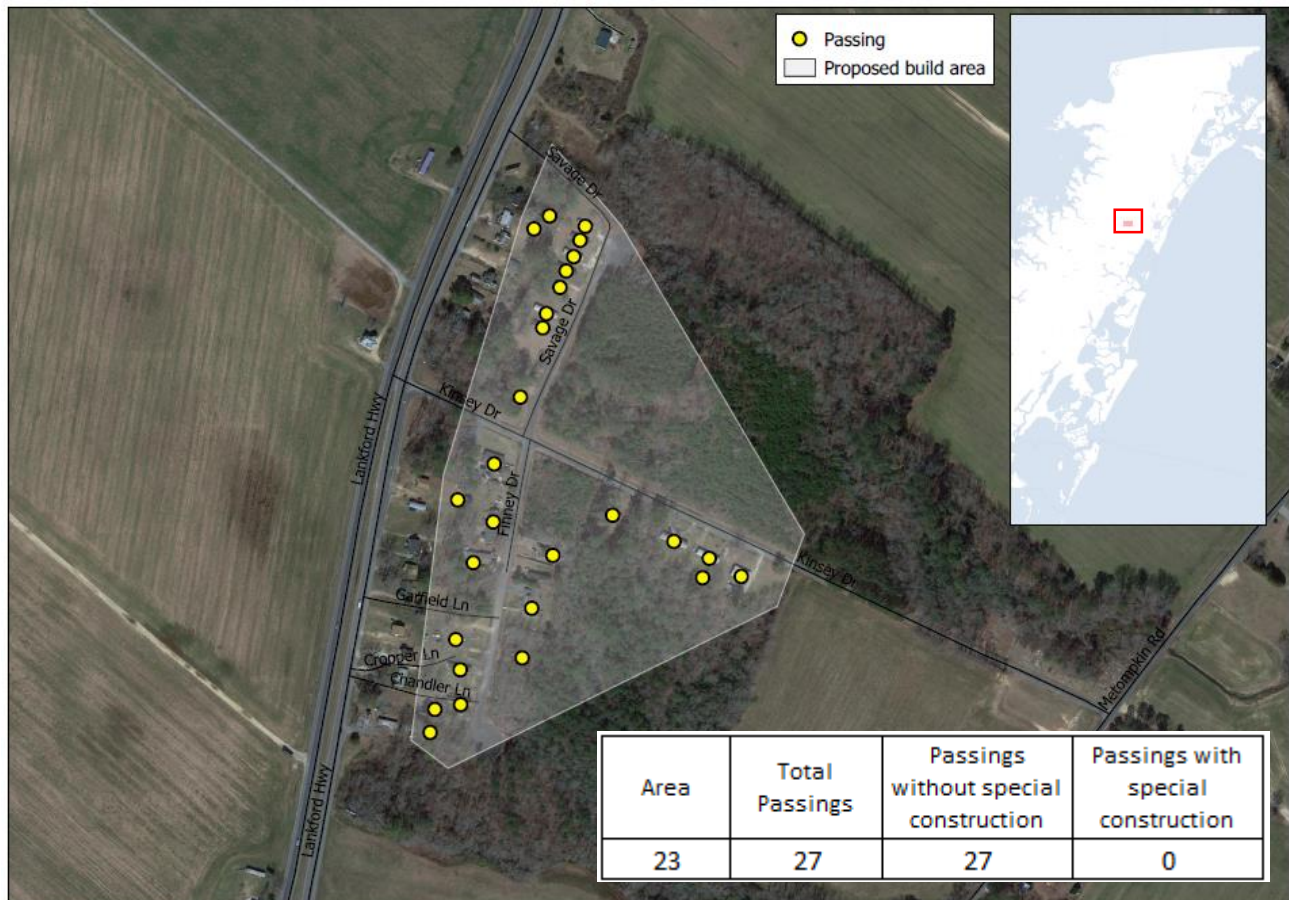
Area 21



Area 22

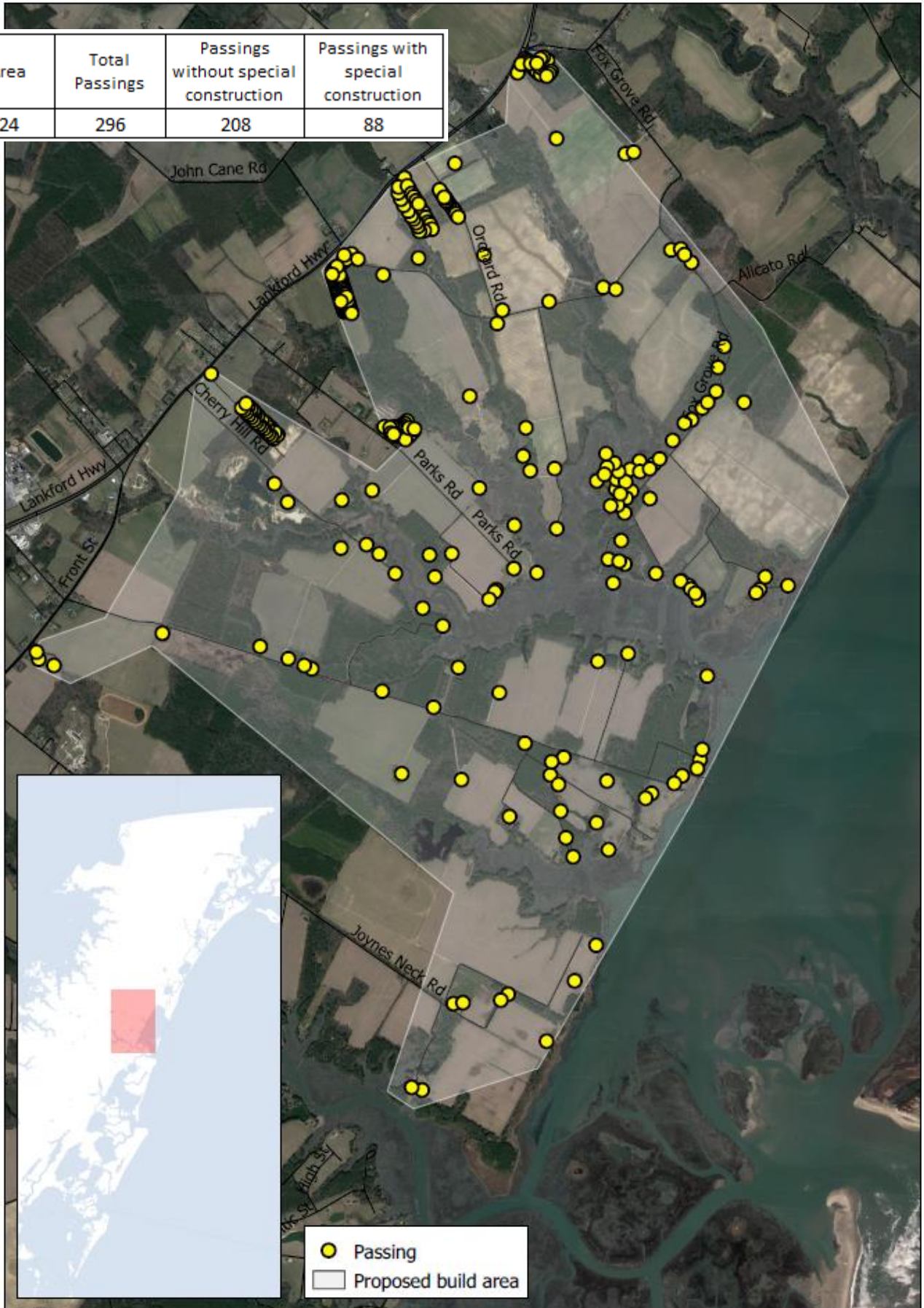


Area 23

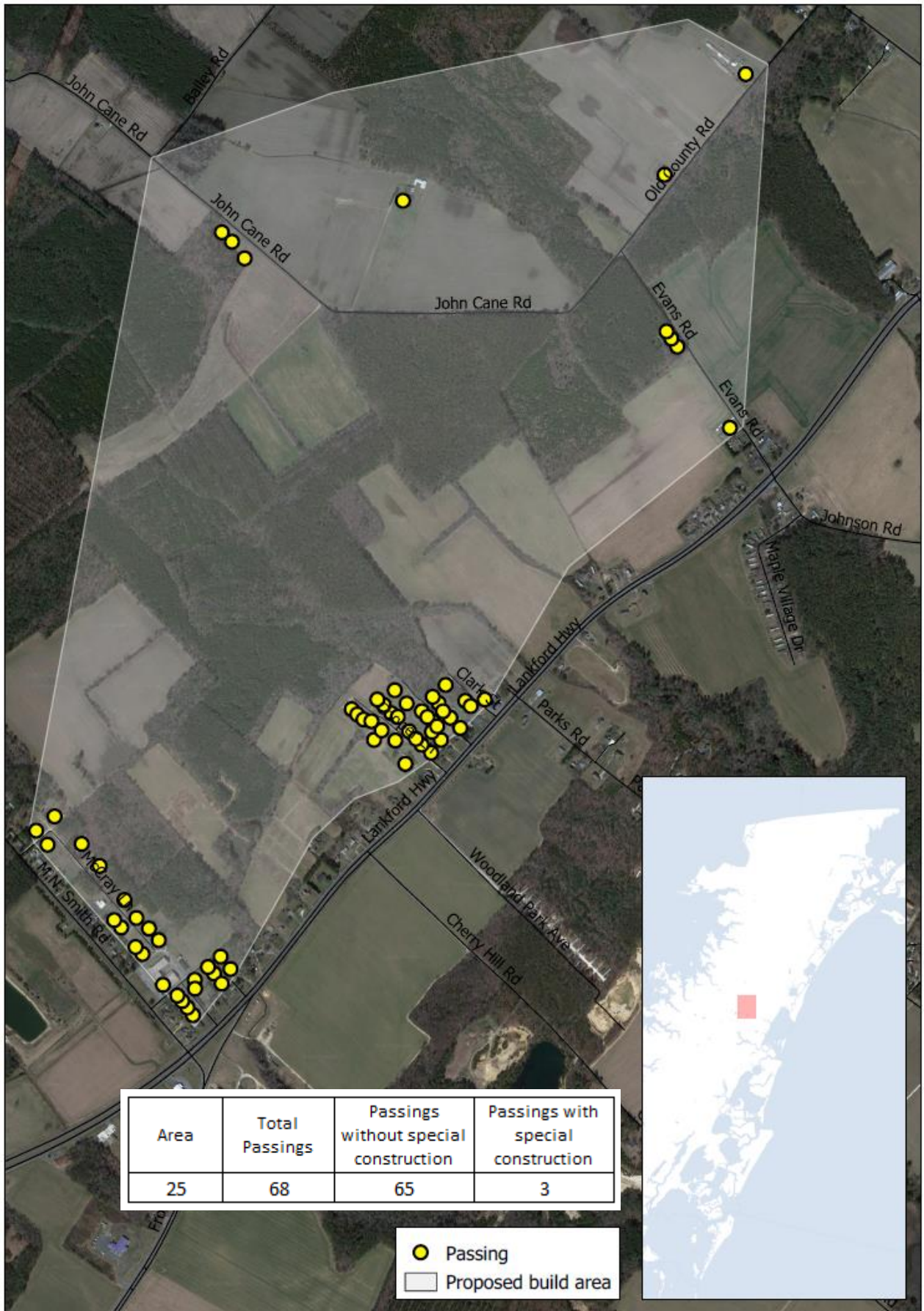


Area 24

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
24	296	208	88

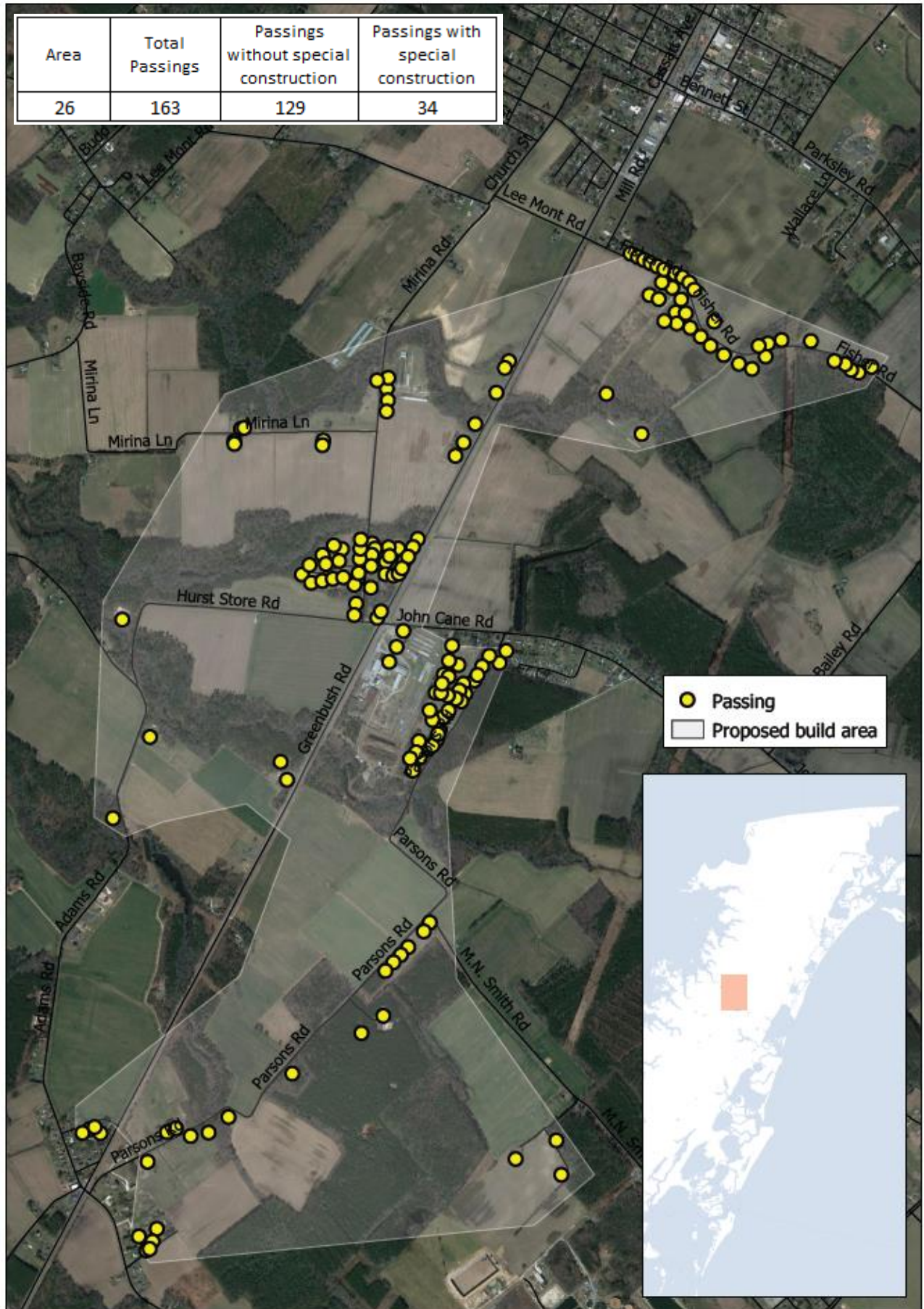


Area 25

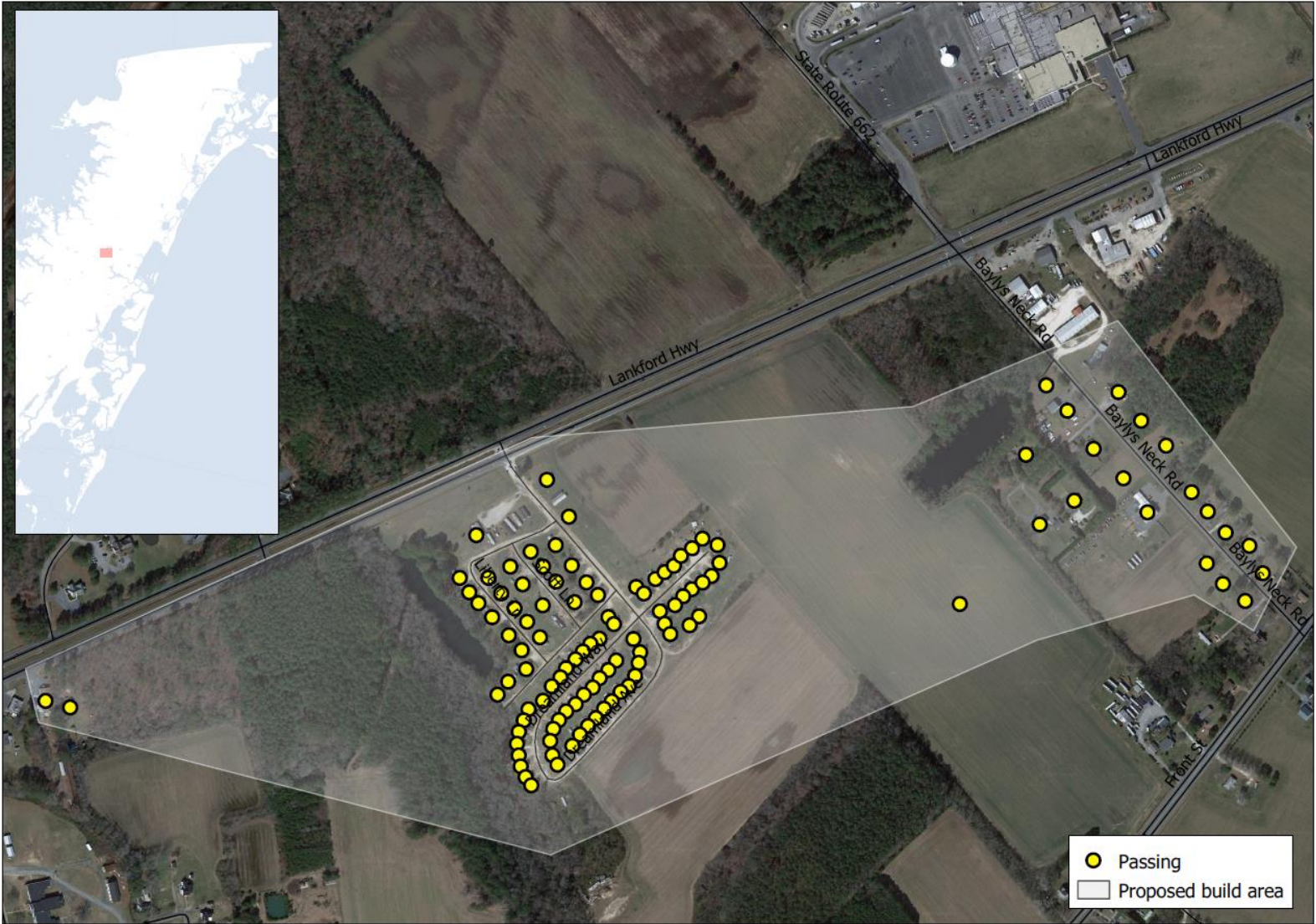


Area 26

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
26	163	129	34



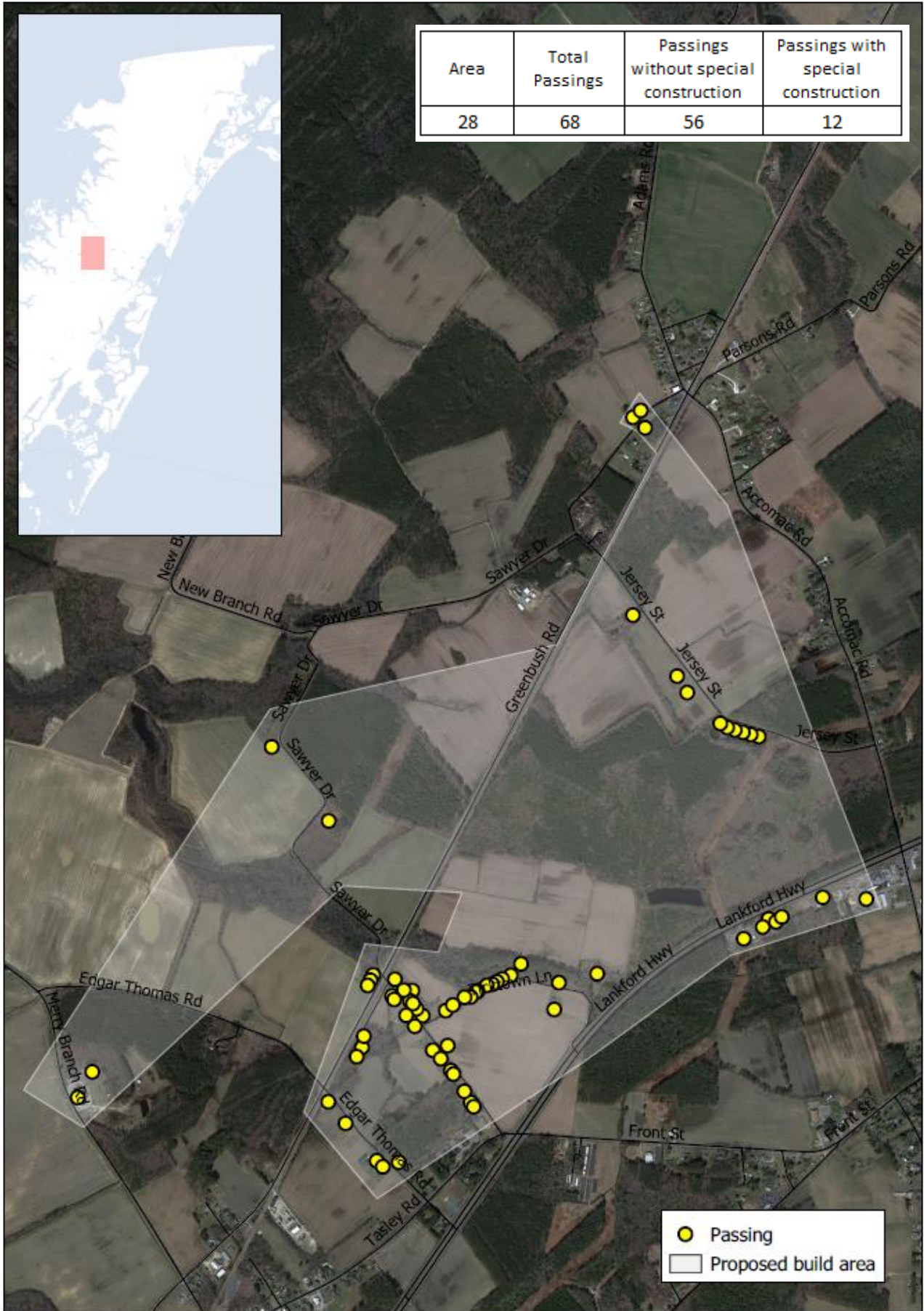
Area 27



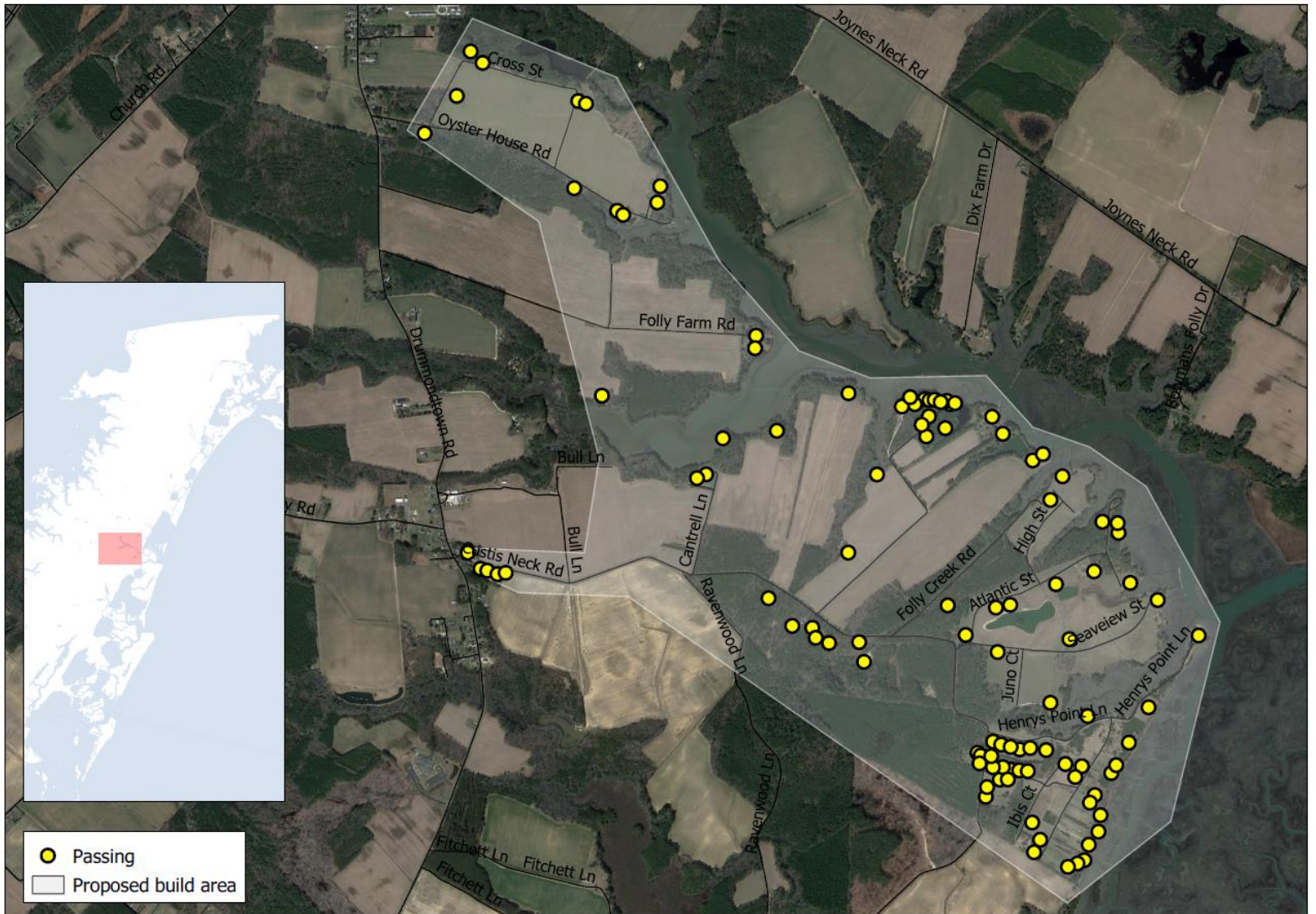
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
27	112	107	5

Area 28

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
28	68	56	12

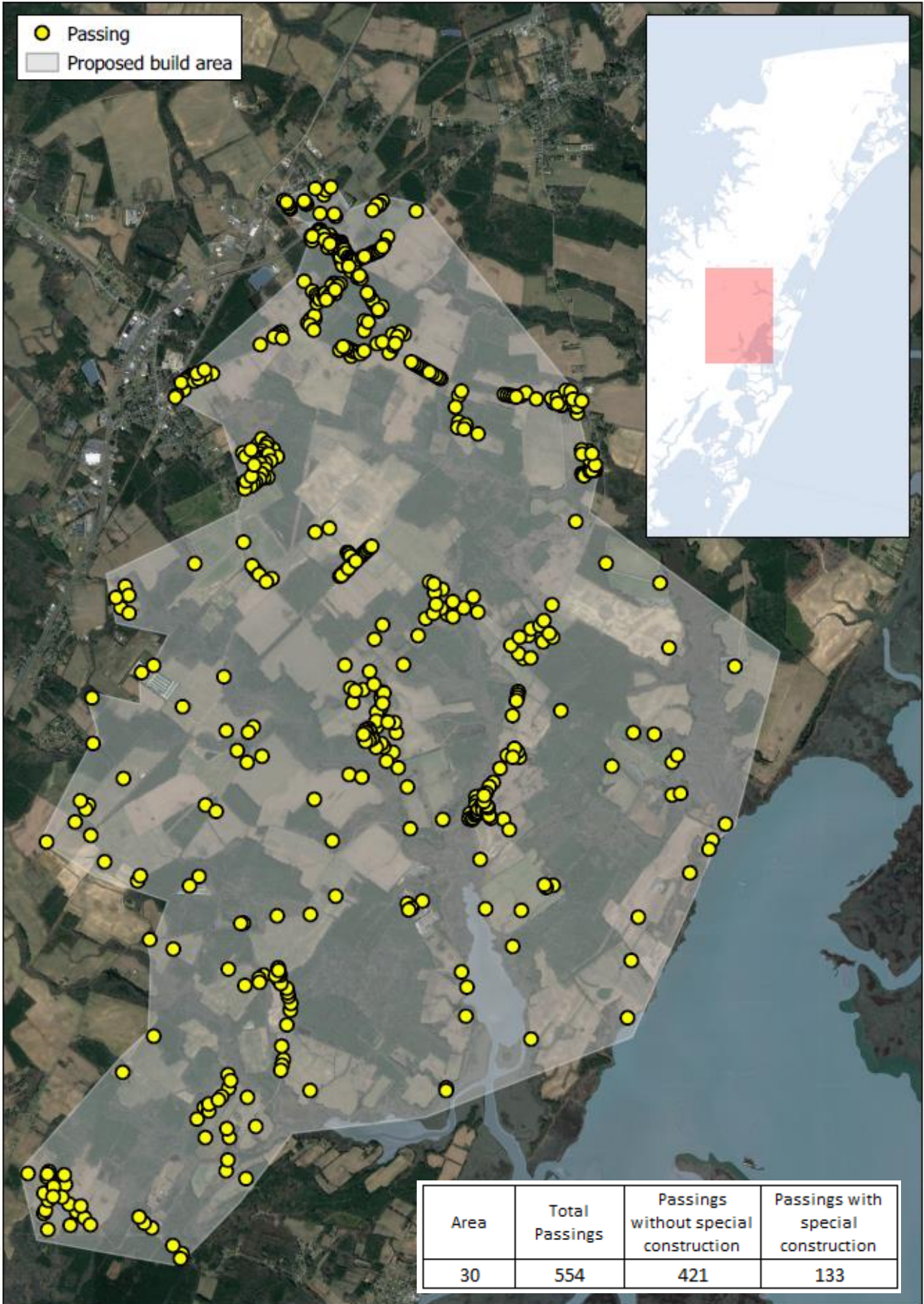


Area 29

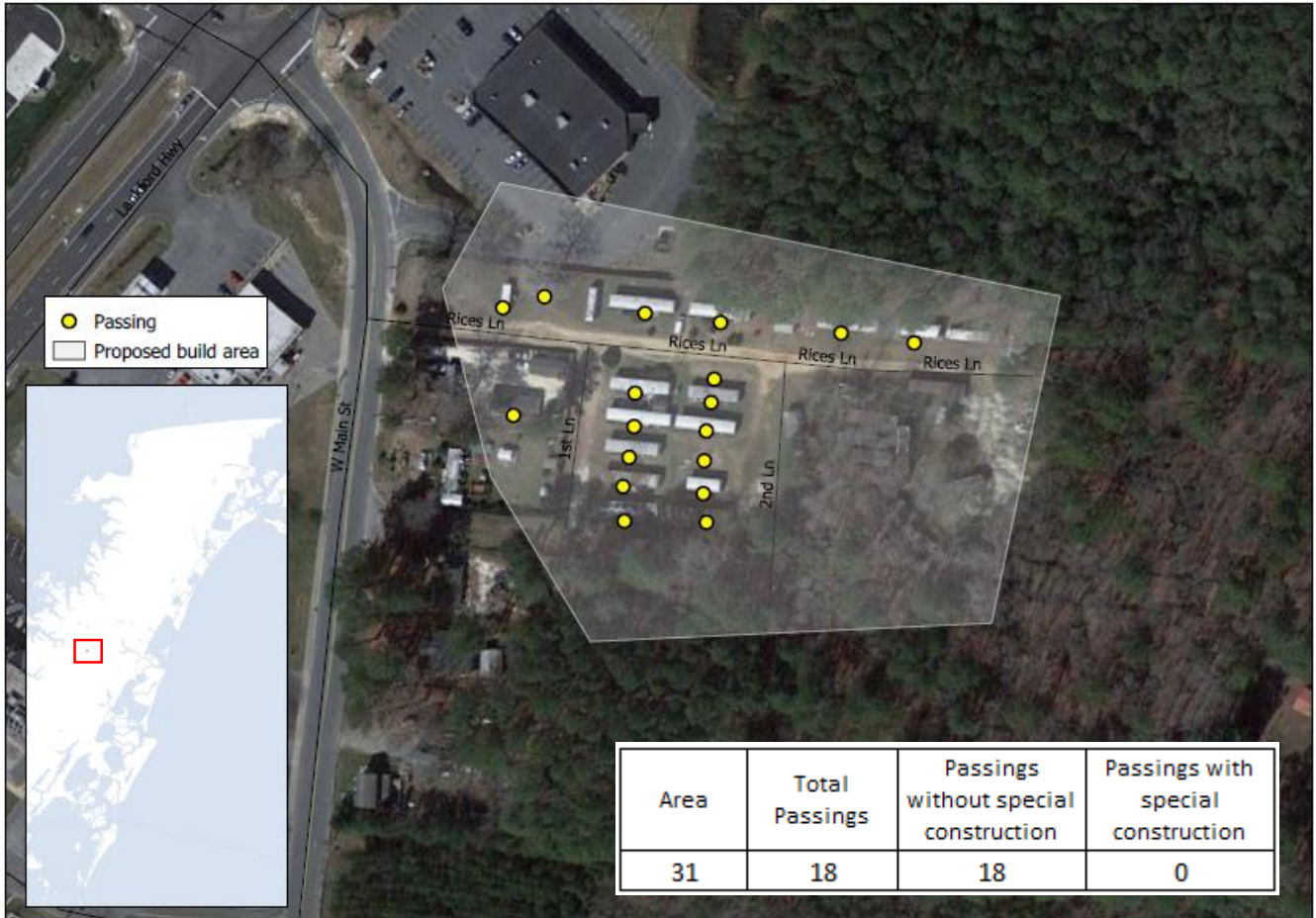


Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
29	106	71	35

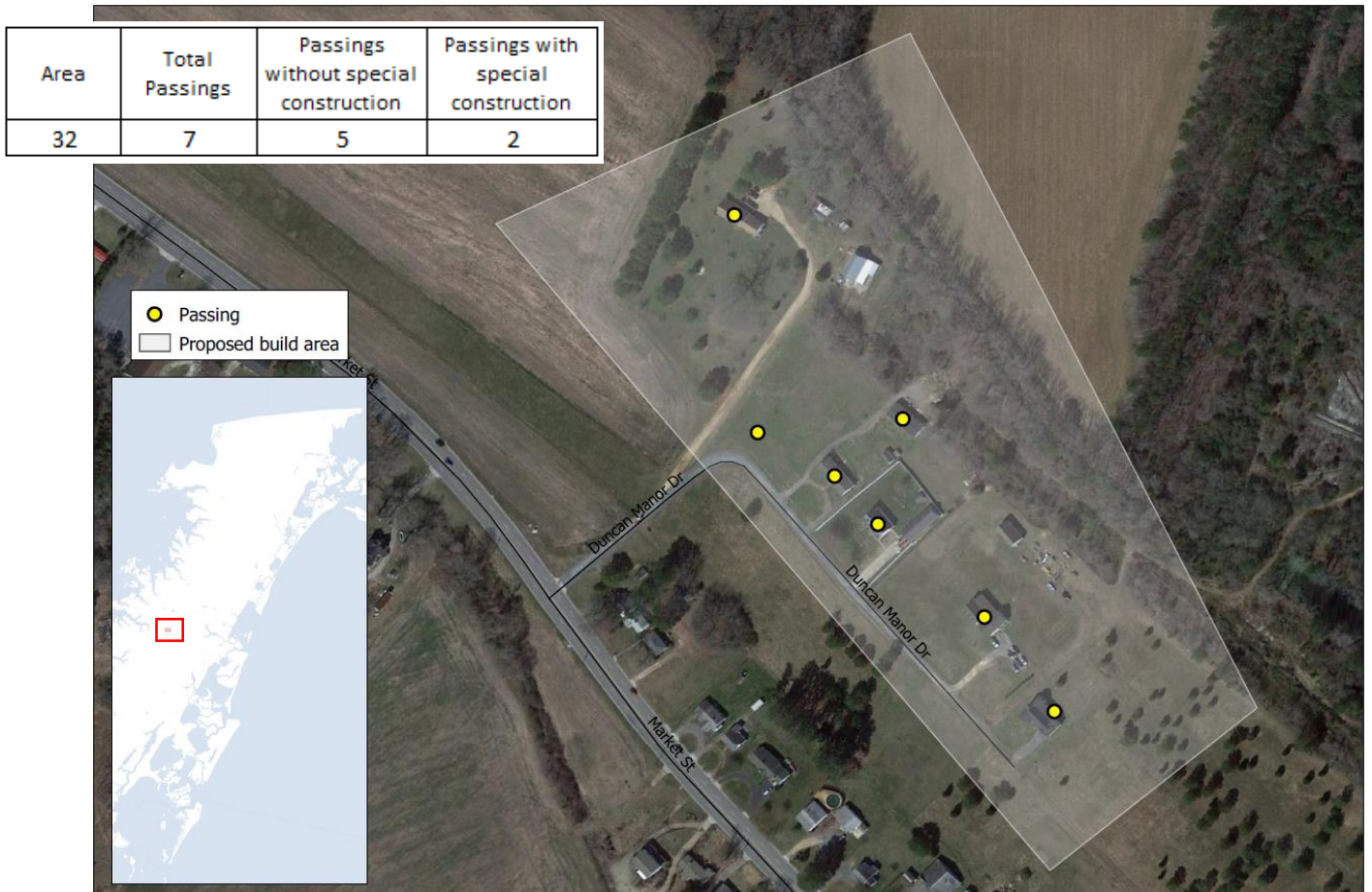
Area 30



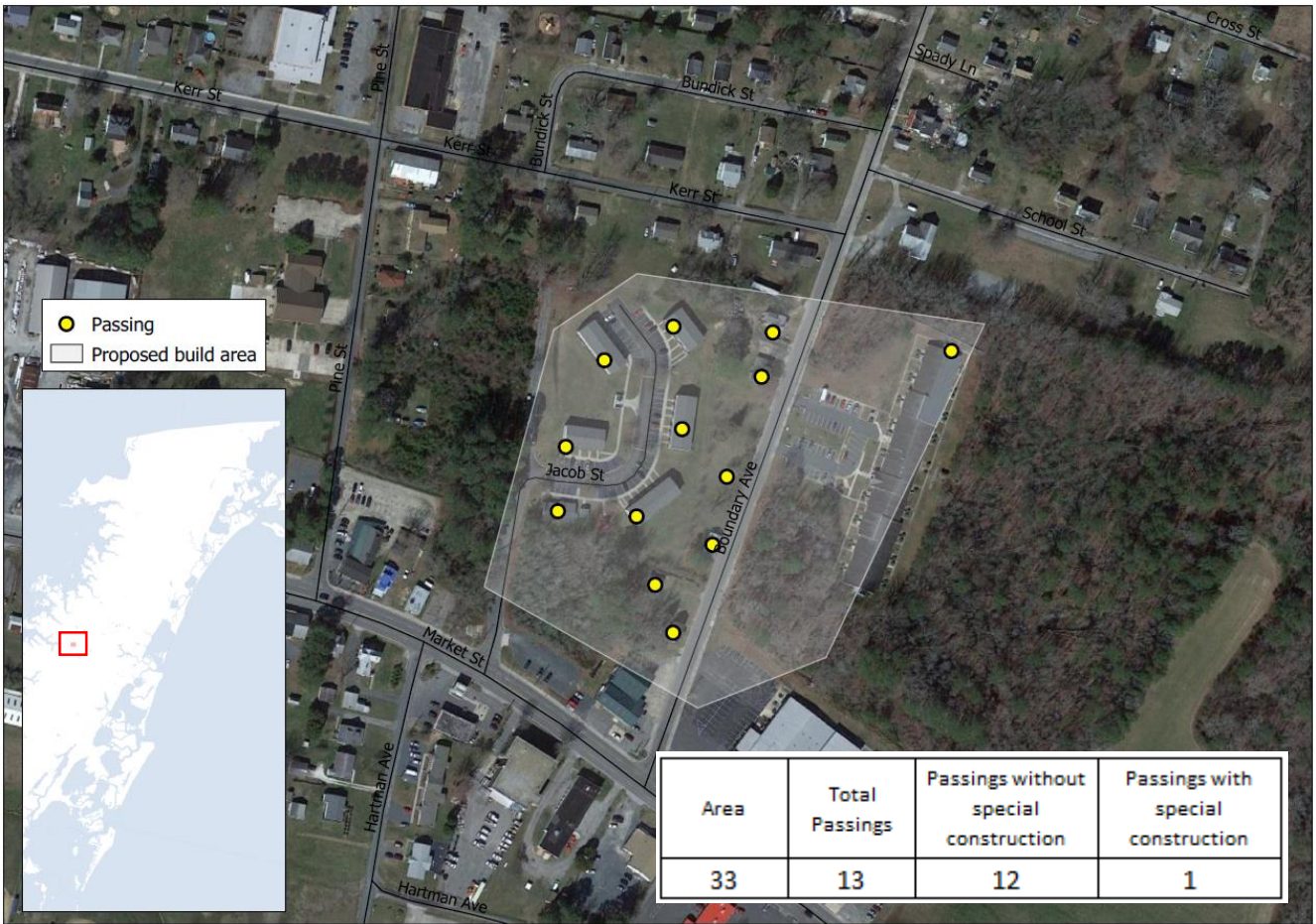
Area 31



Area 32



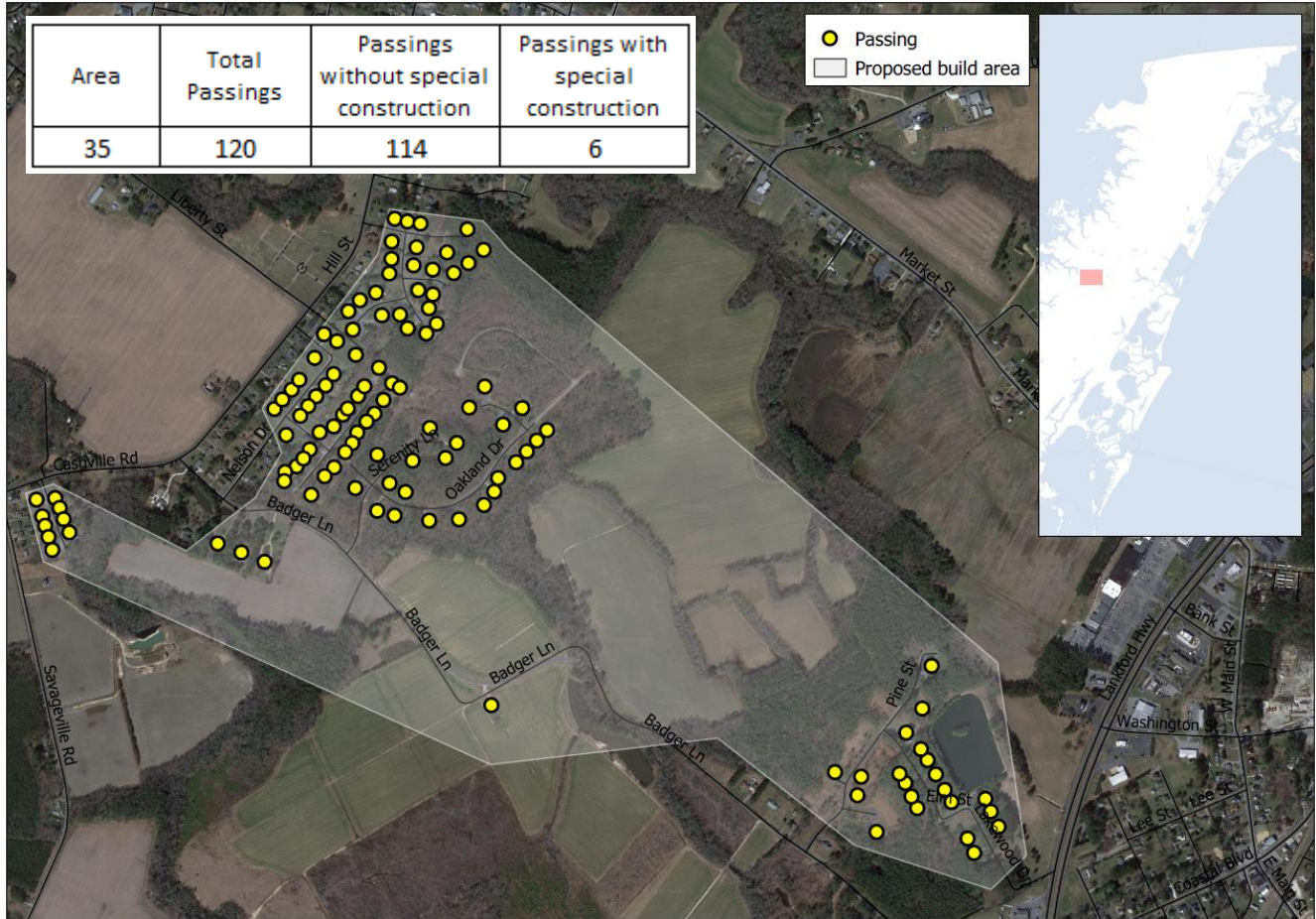
Area 33



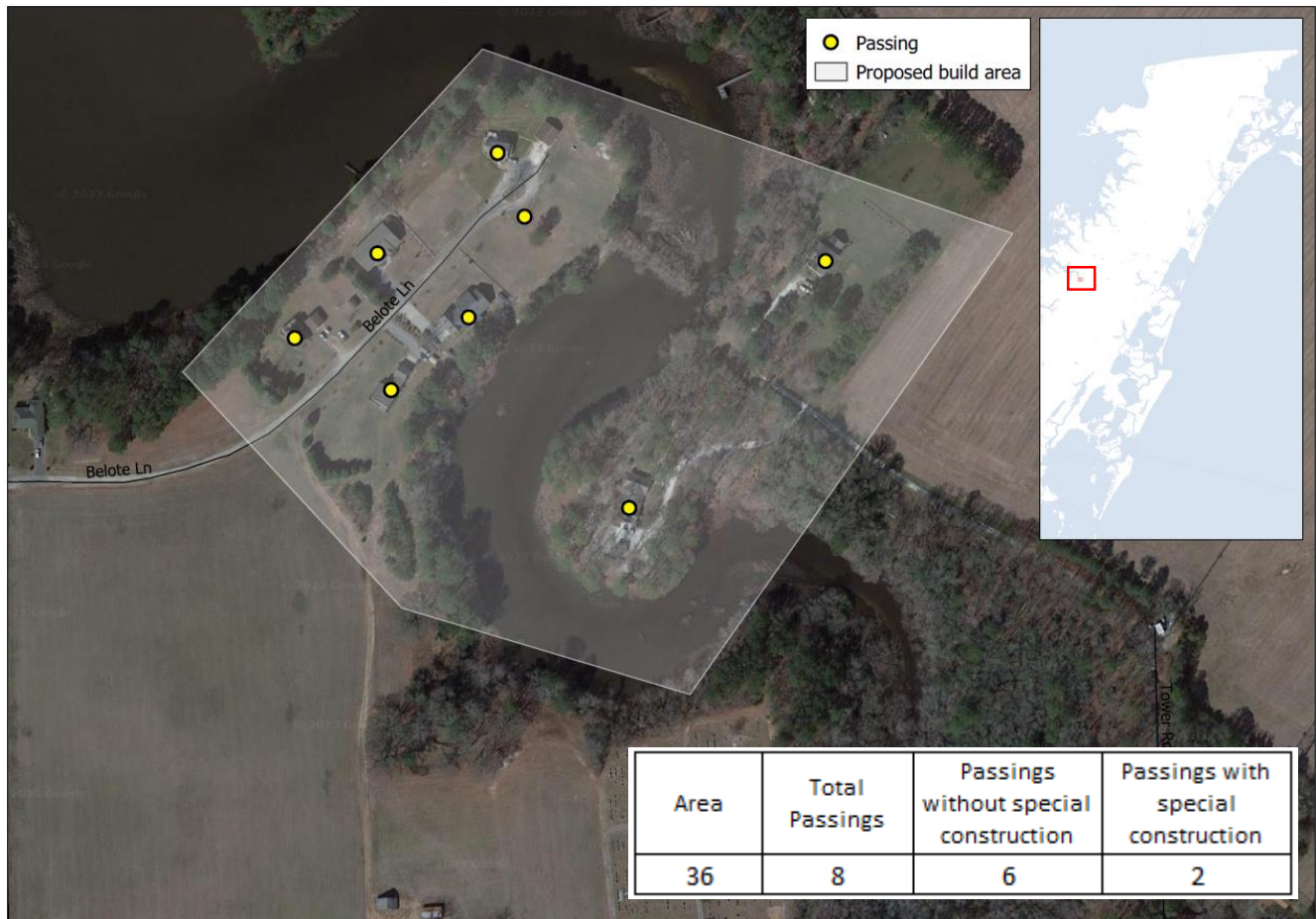
Area 34



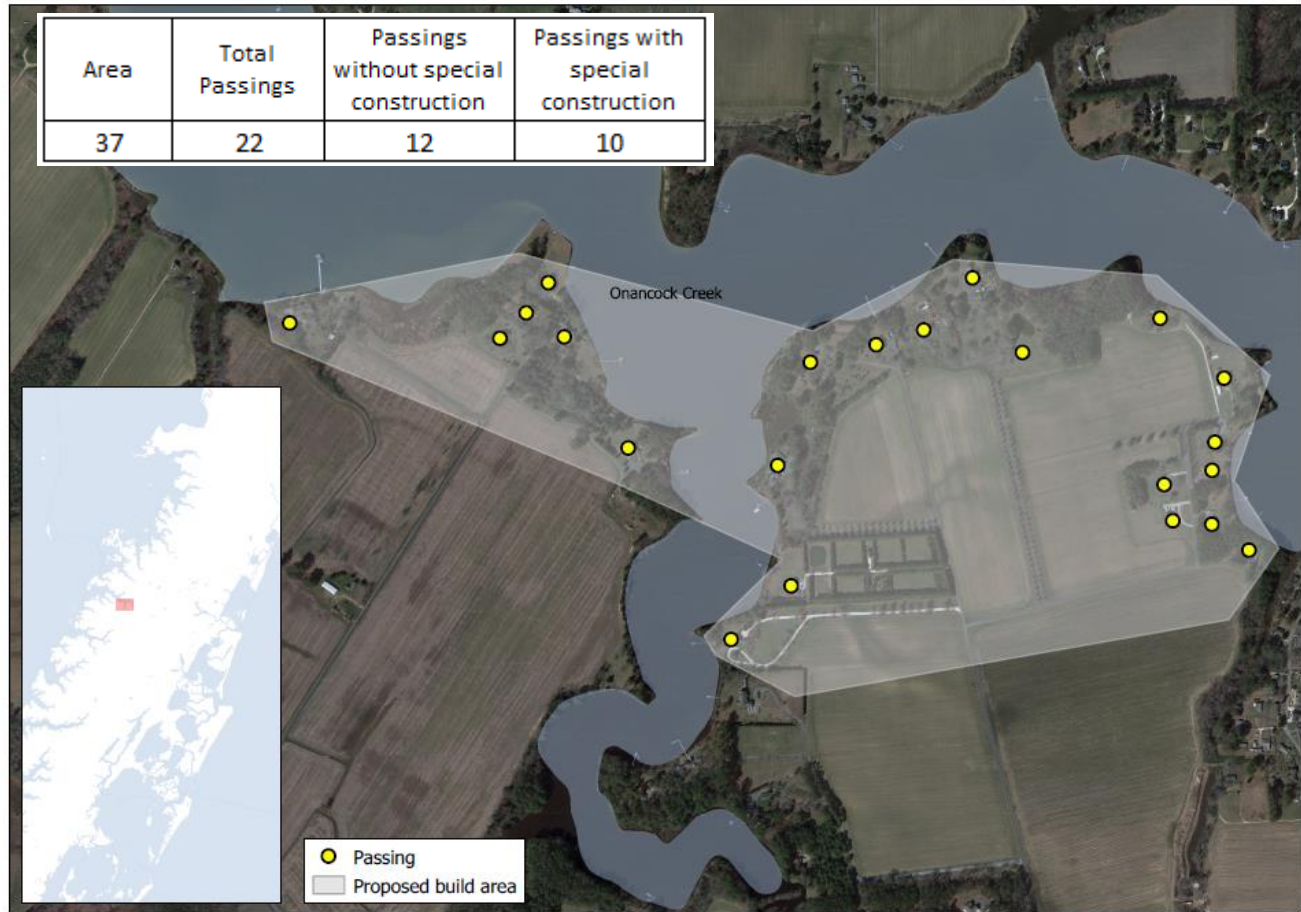
Area 35



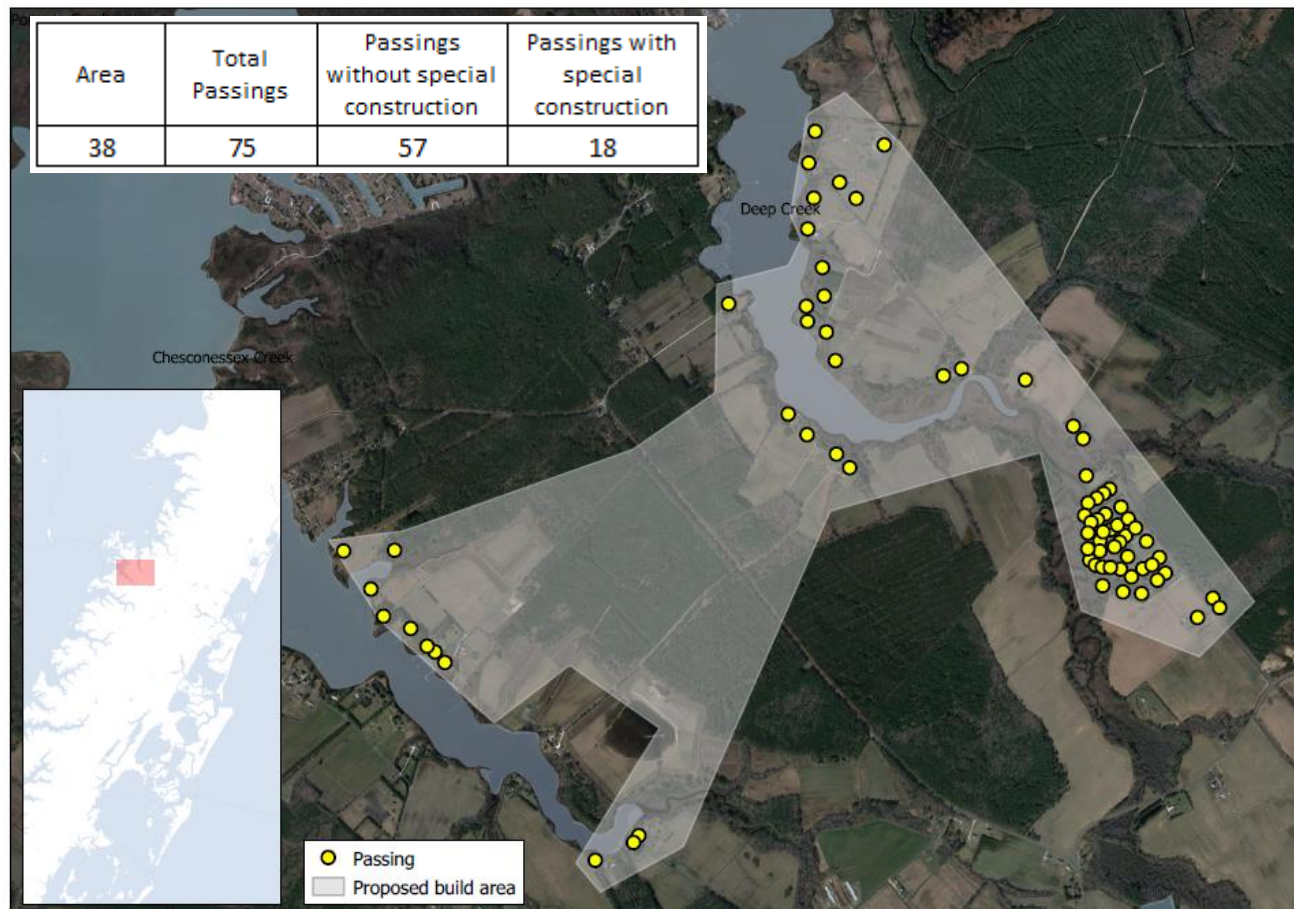
Area 36



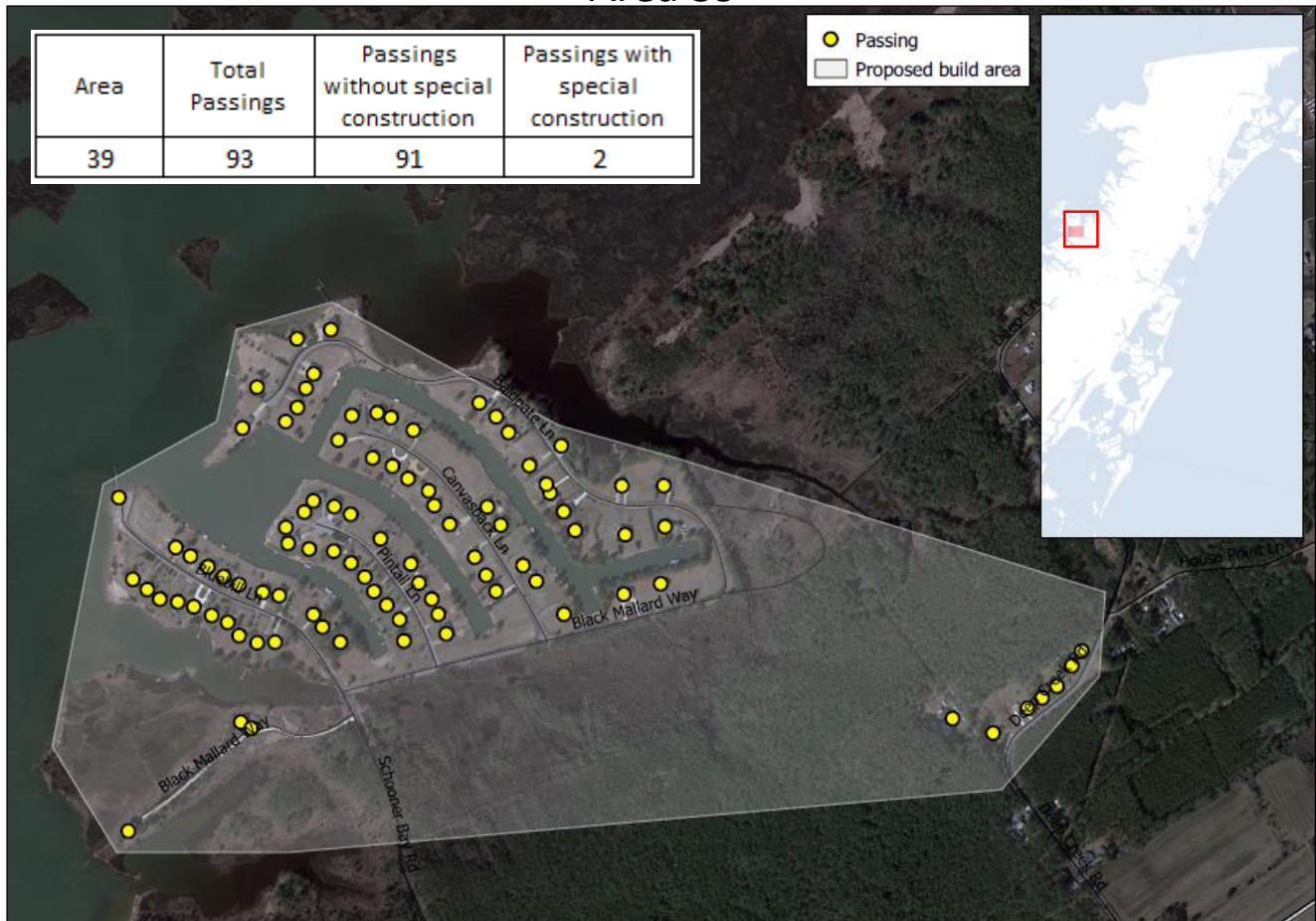
Area 37



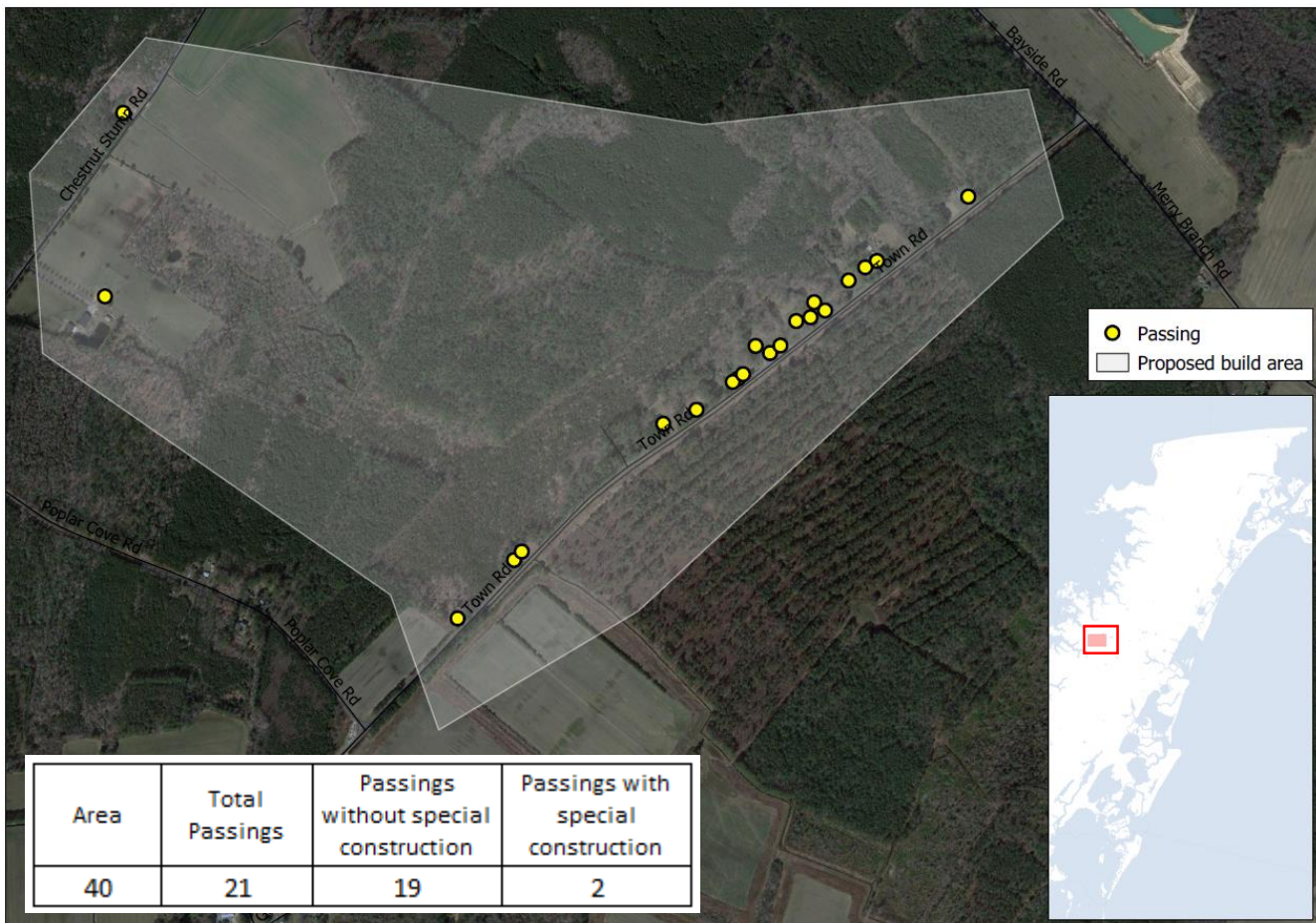
Area 38



Area 39



Area 40



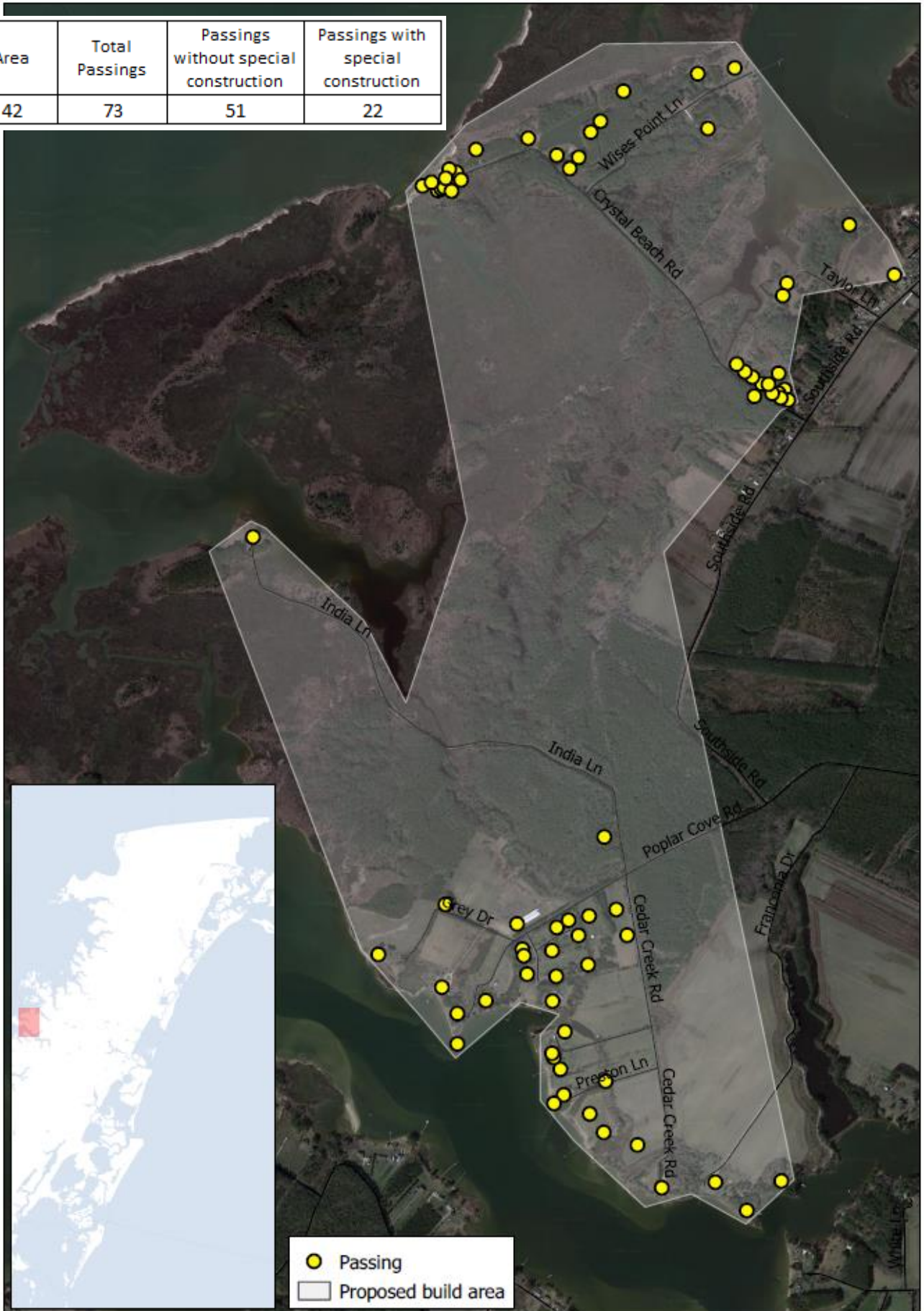
Area 41



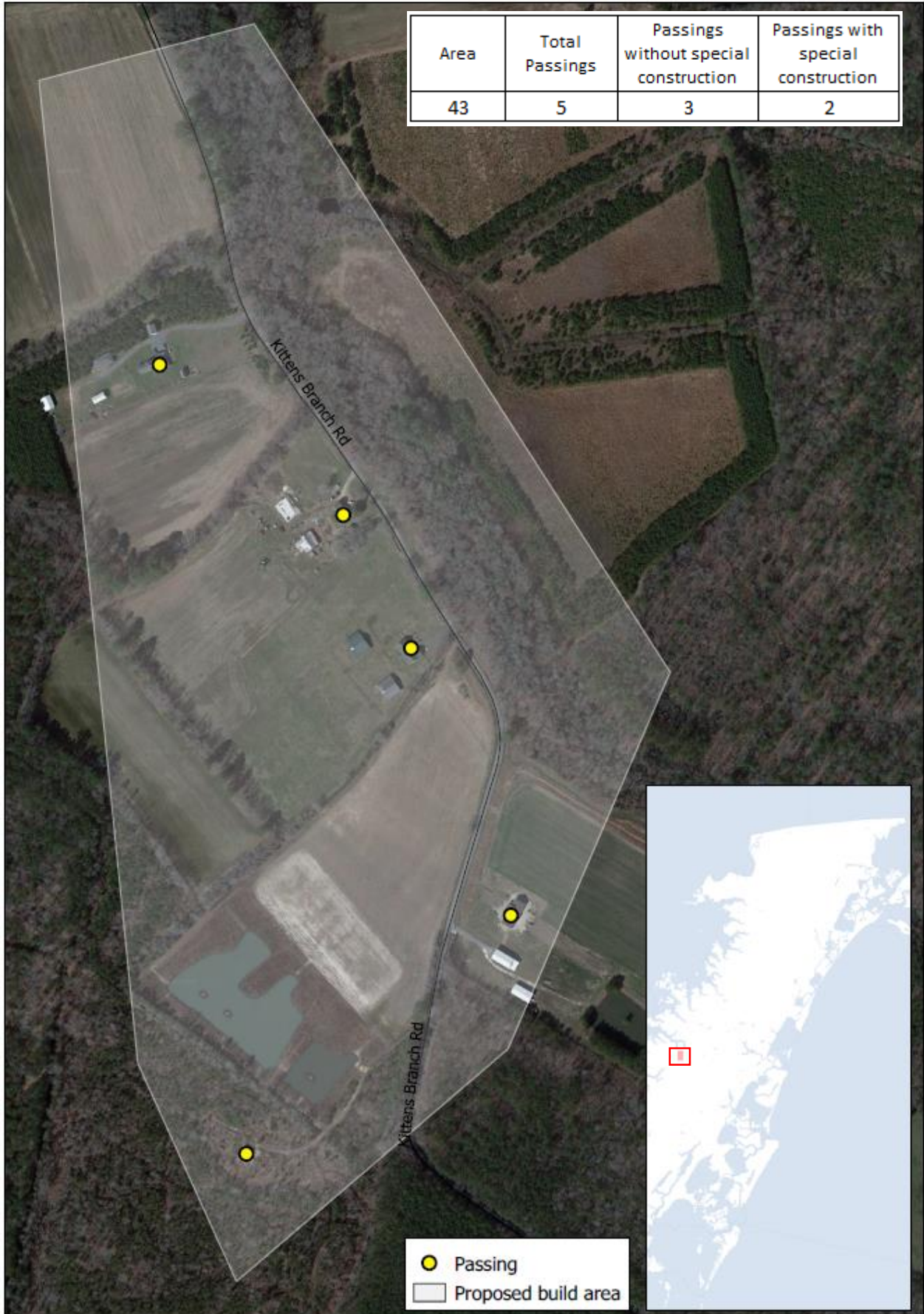
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
41	30	14	16

Area 42

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
42	73	51	22

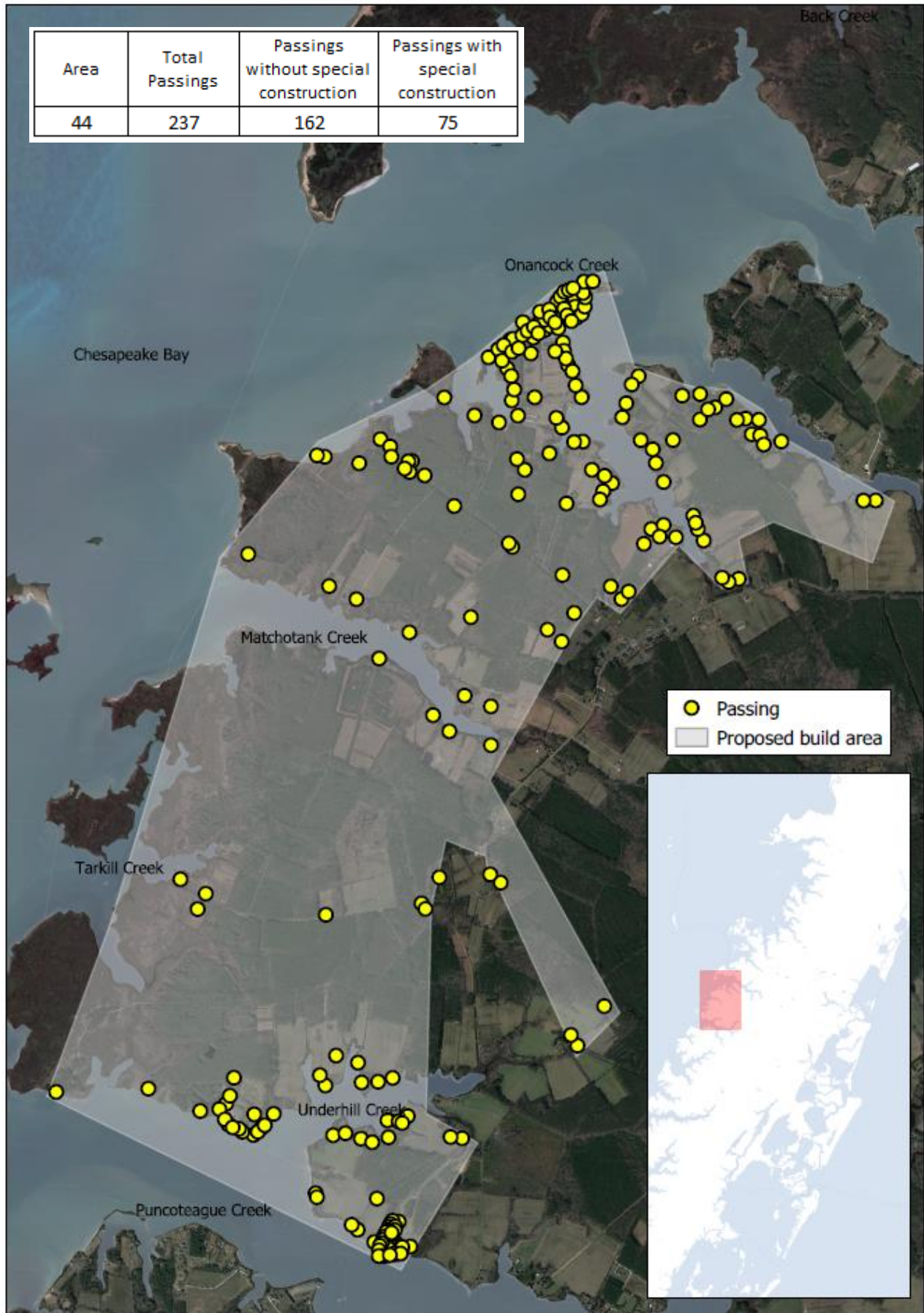


Area 43

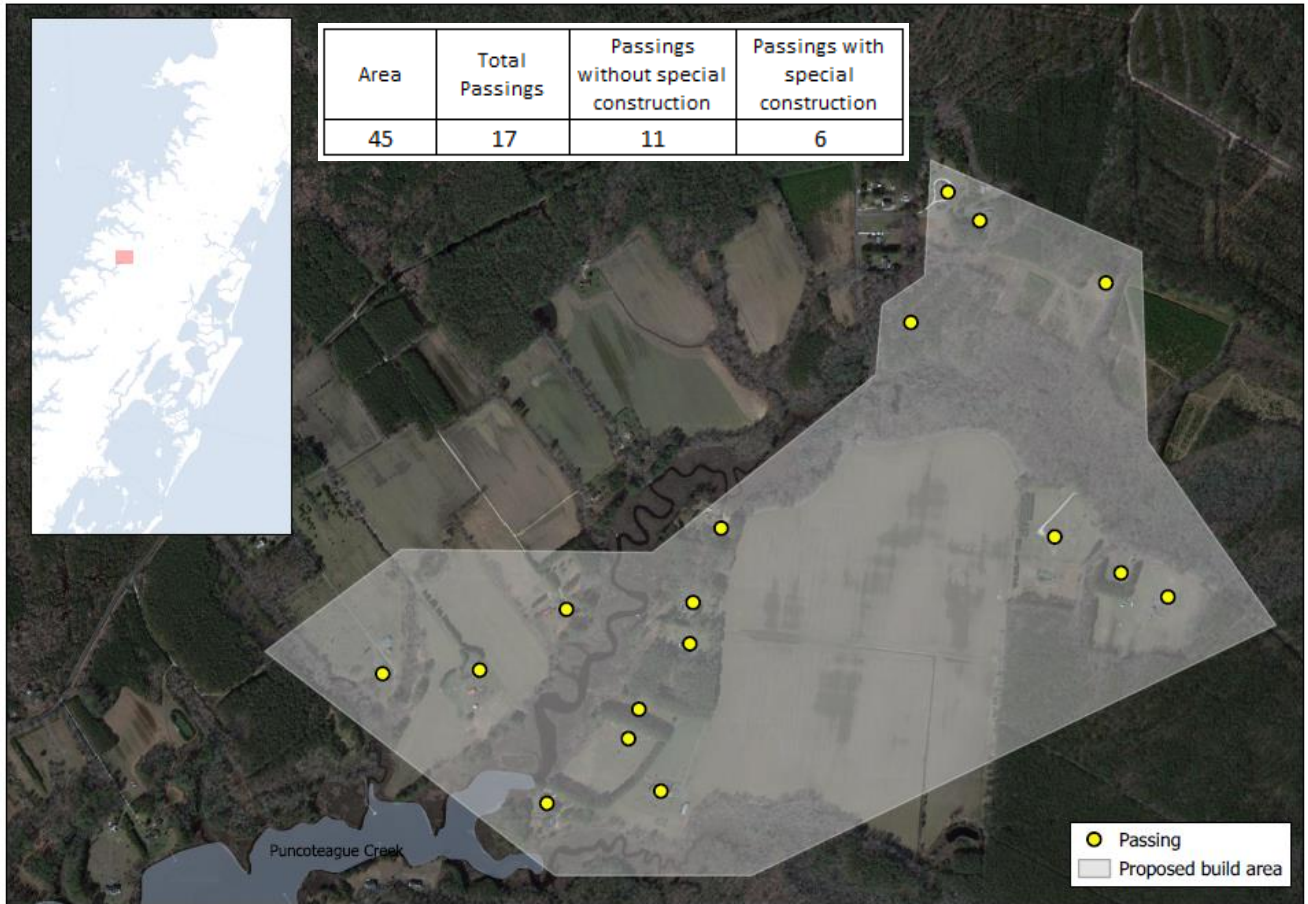


Area 44

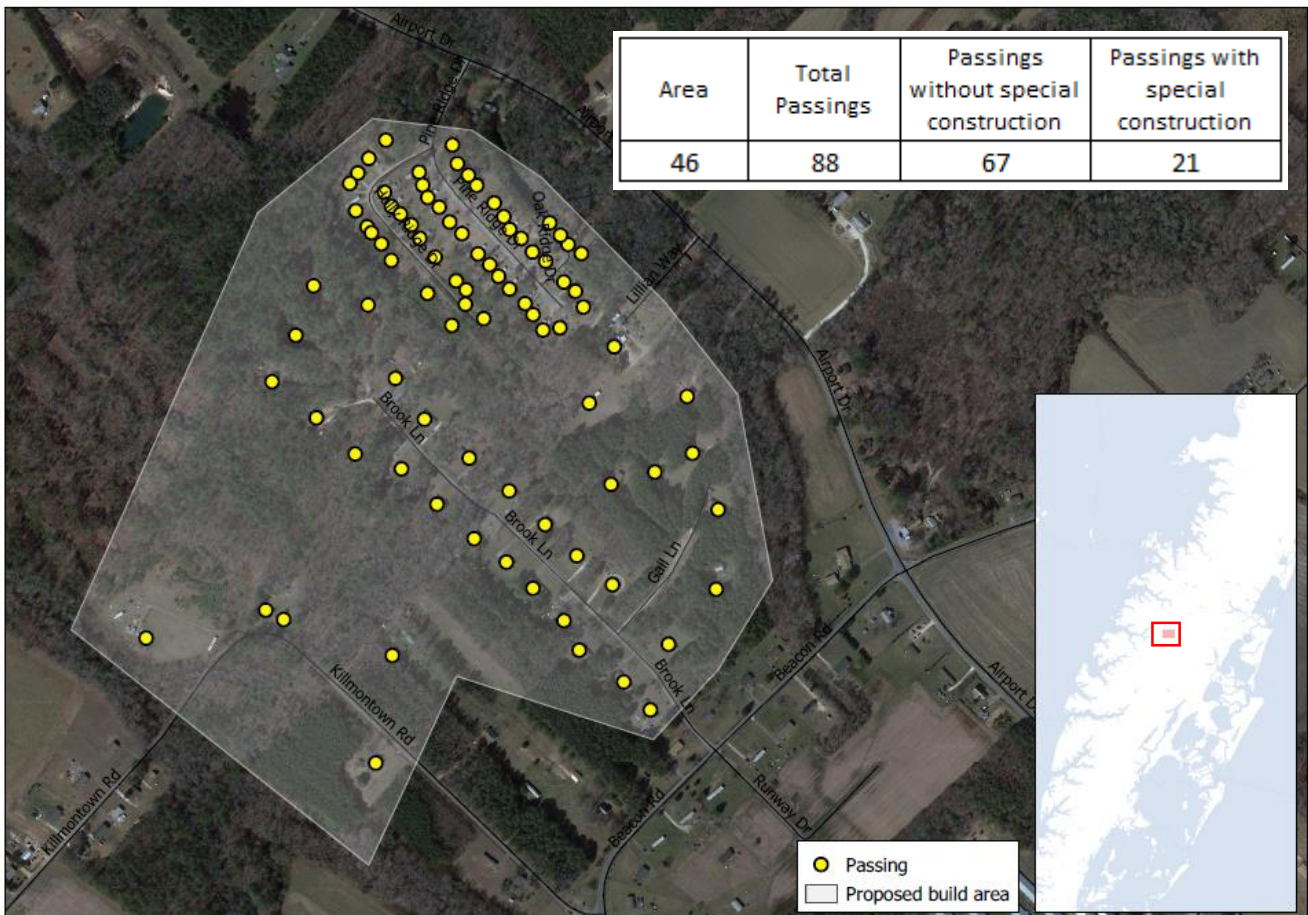
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
44	237	162	75



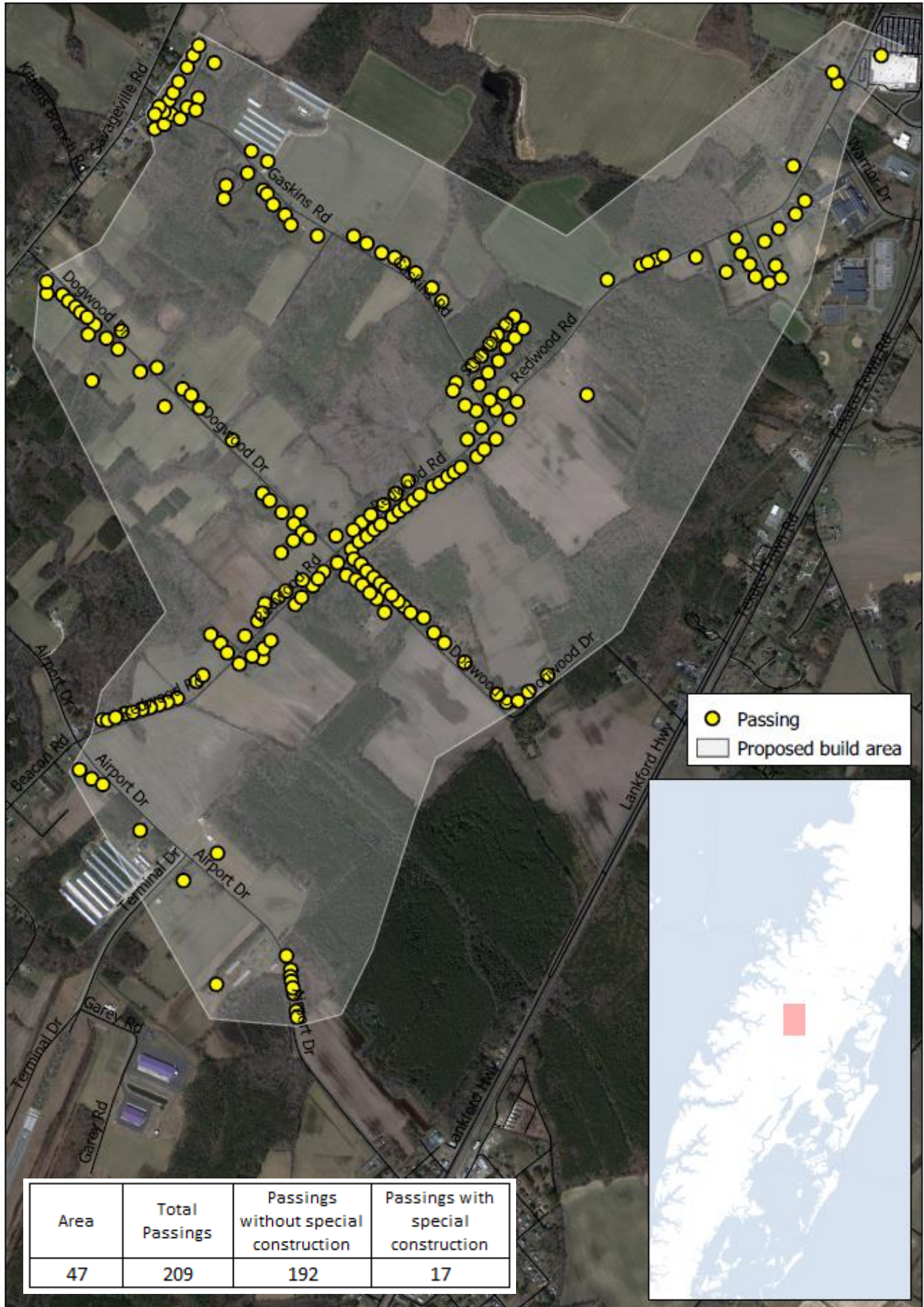
Area 45



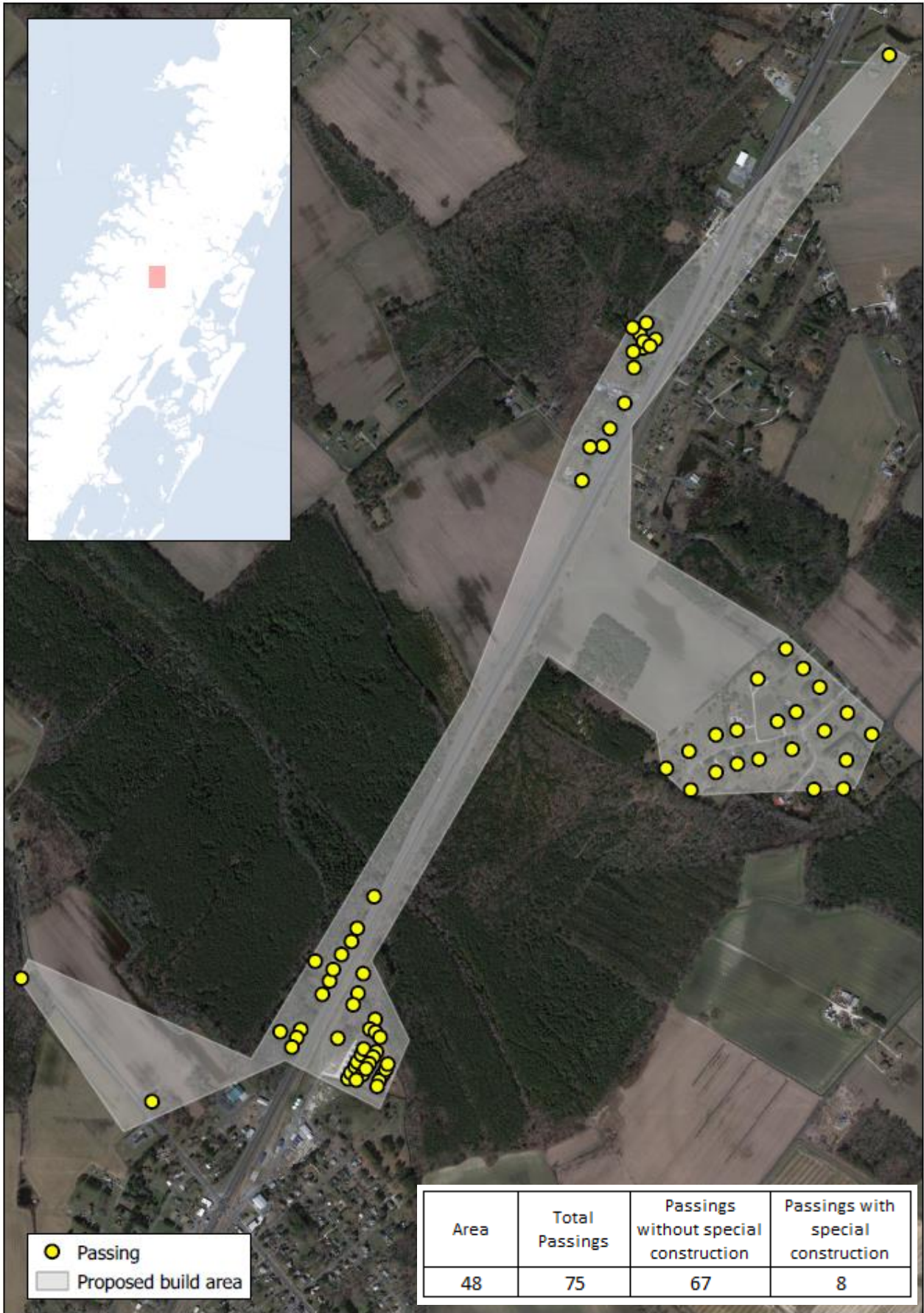
Area 46



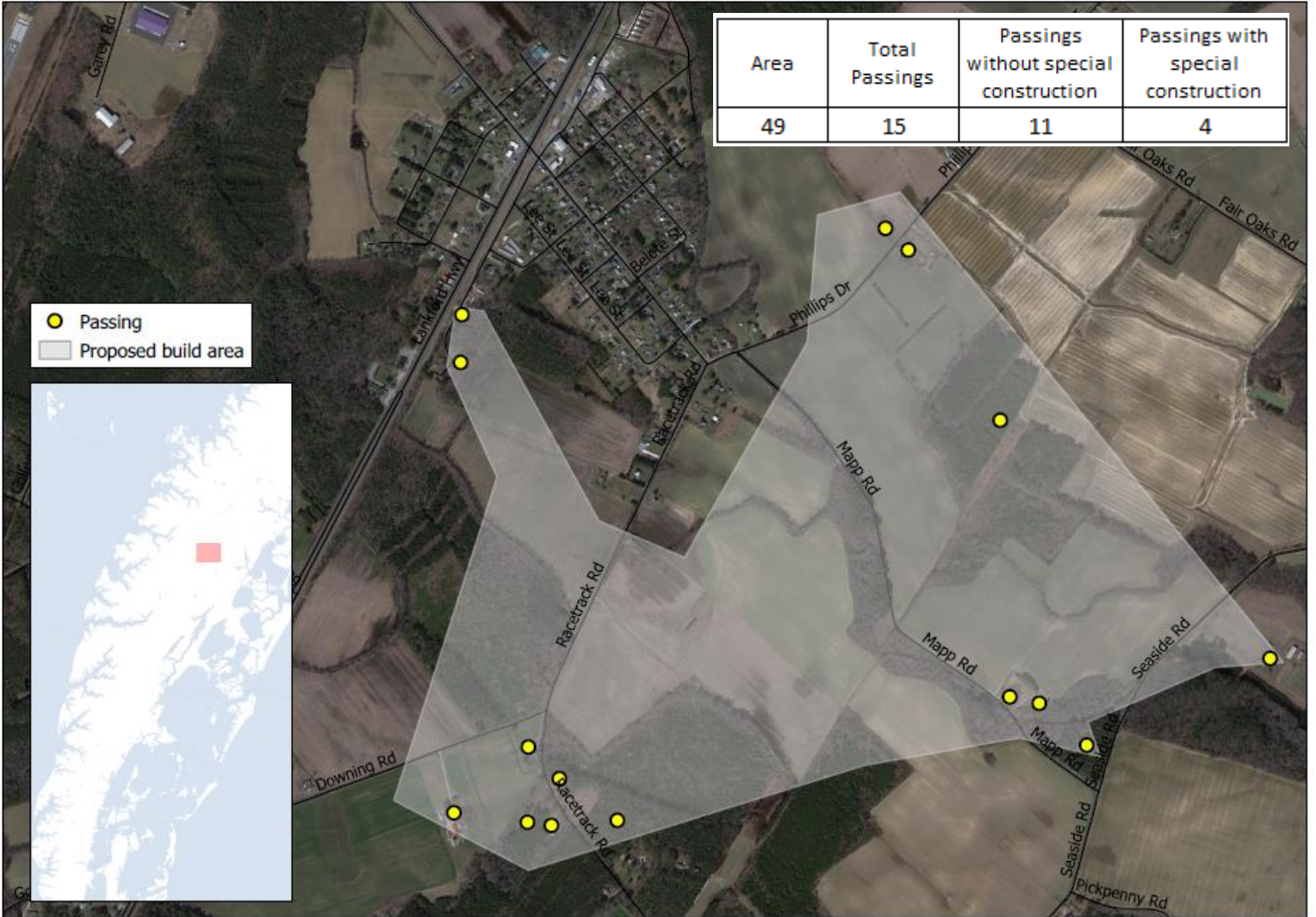
Area 47



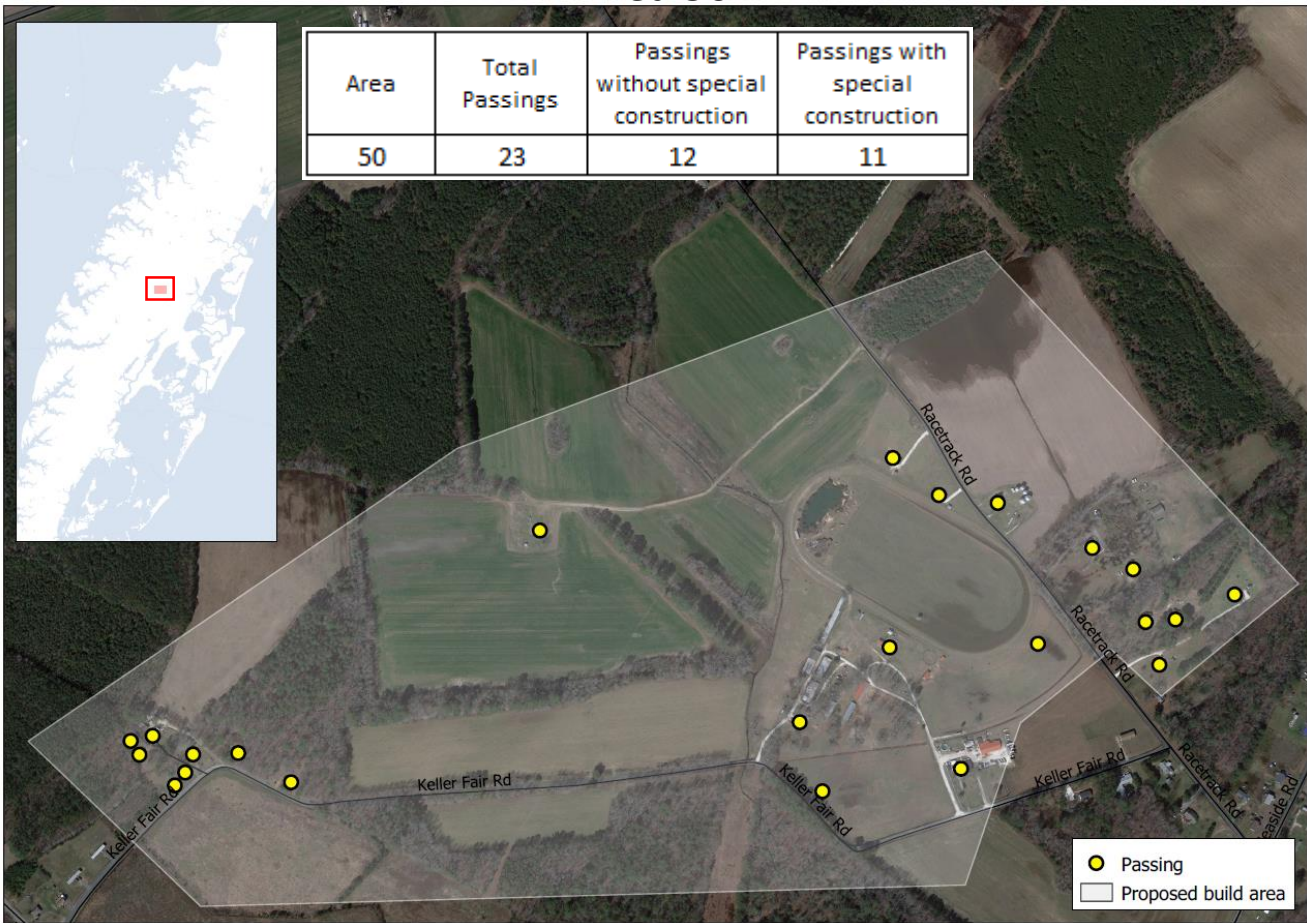
Area 48



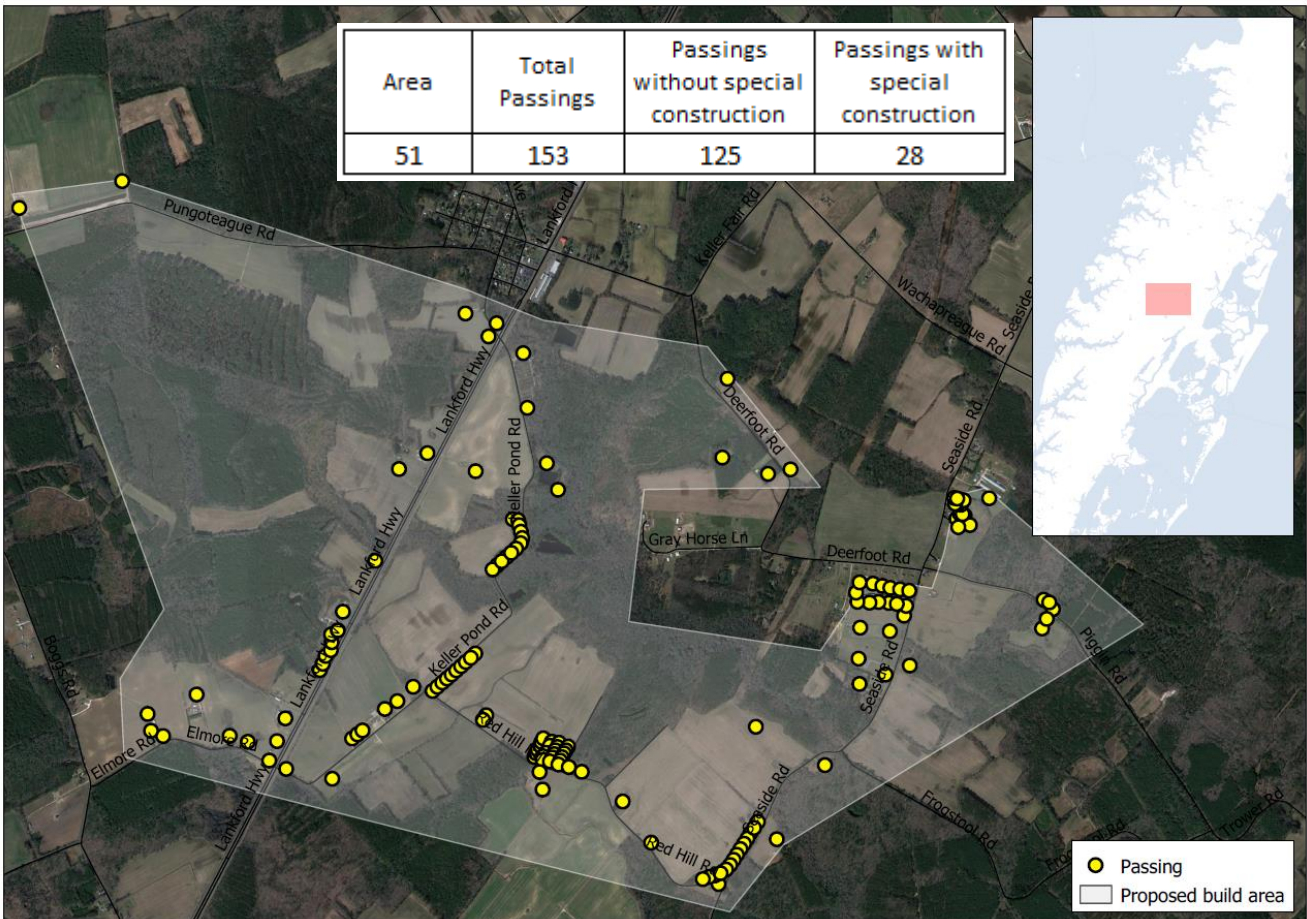
Area 49



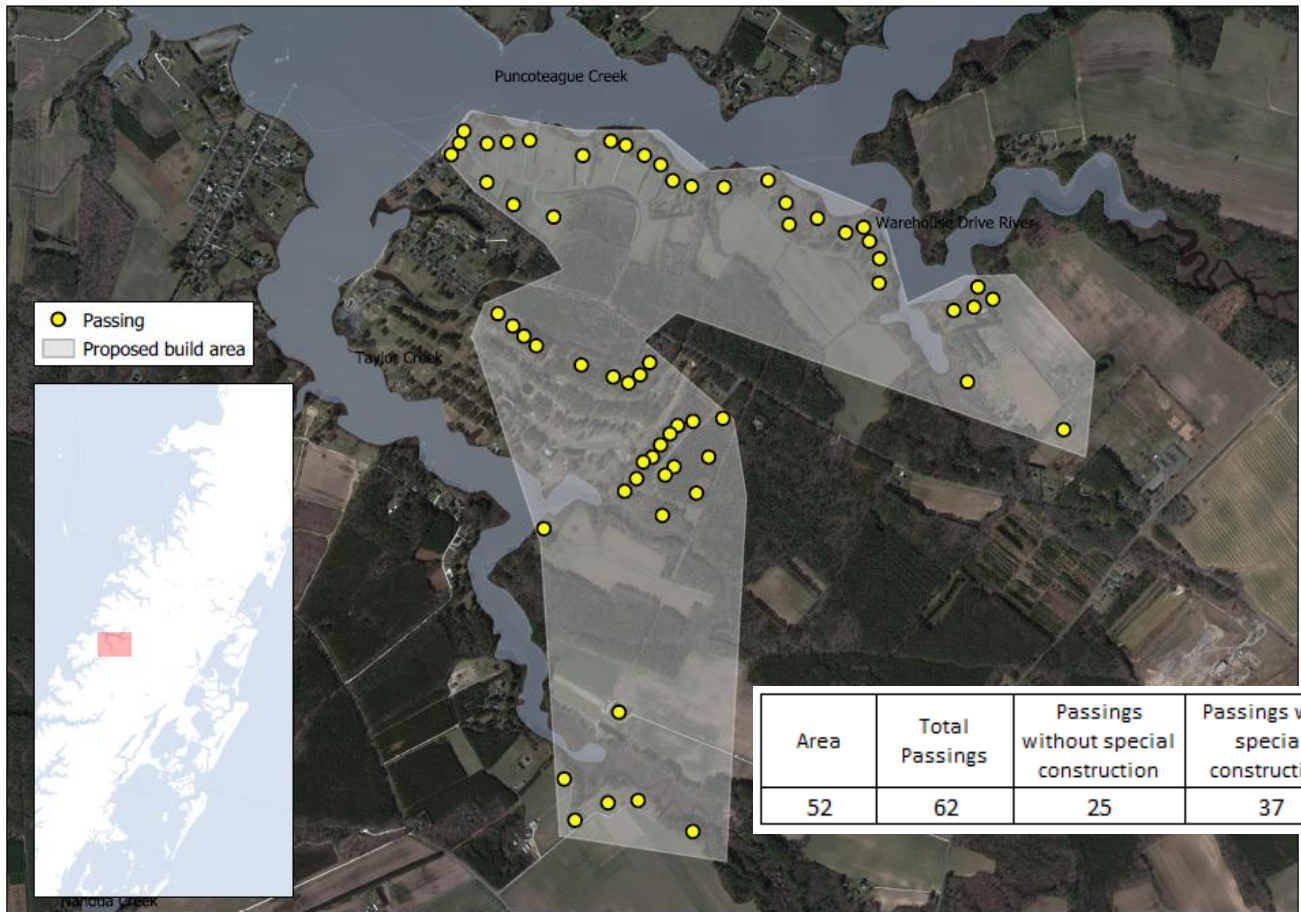
Area 50



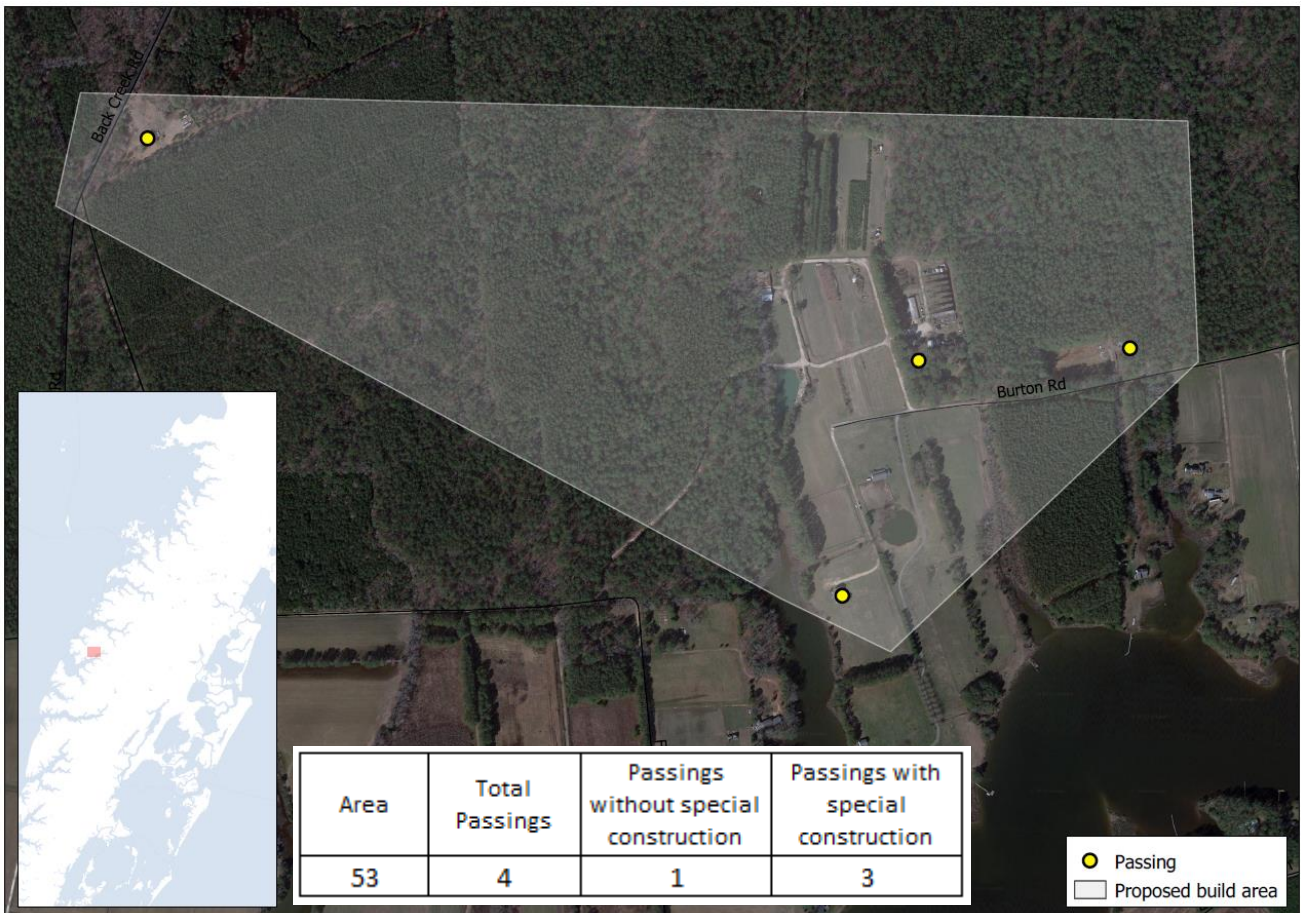
Area 51



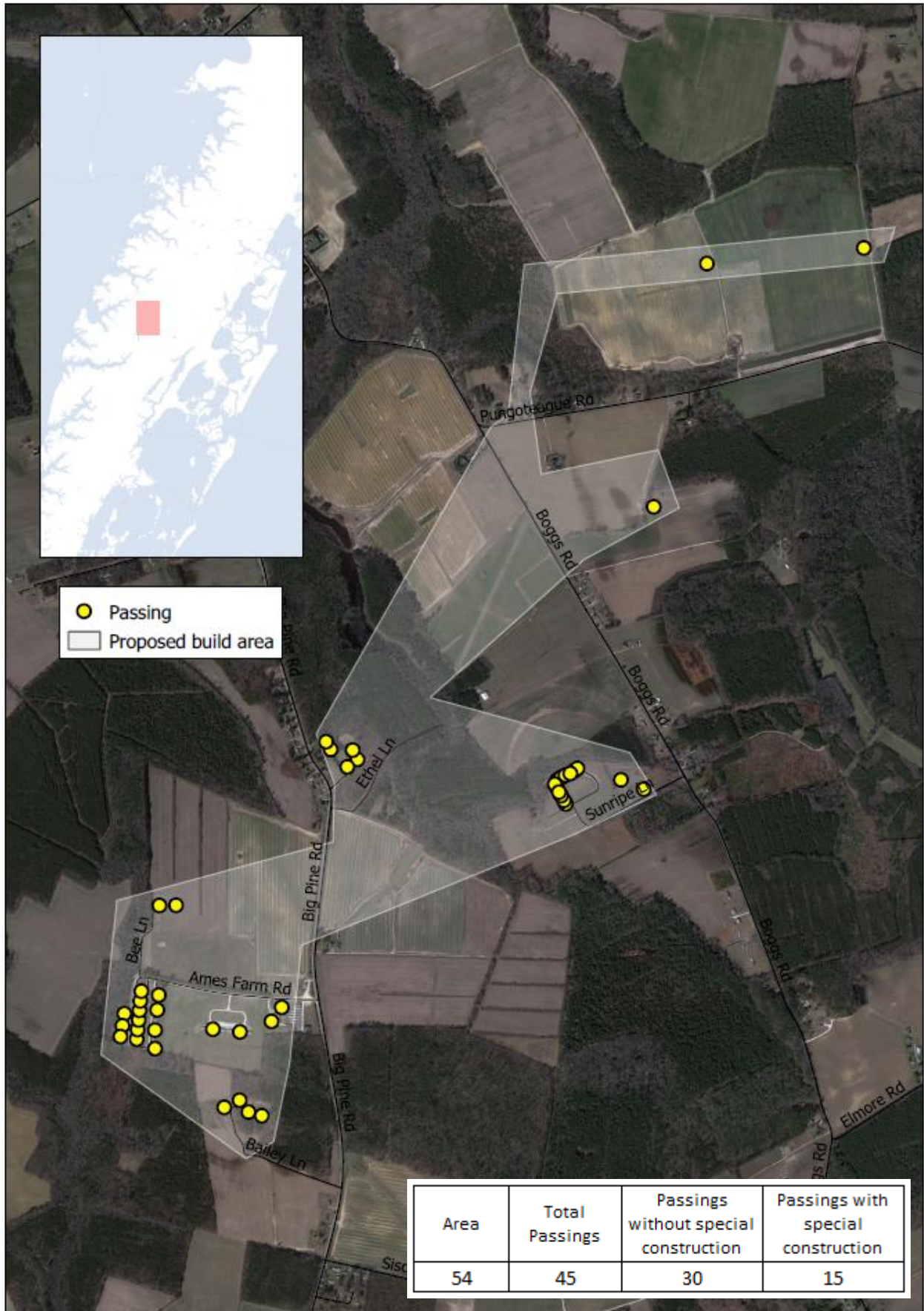
Area 52



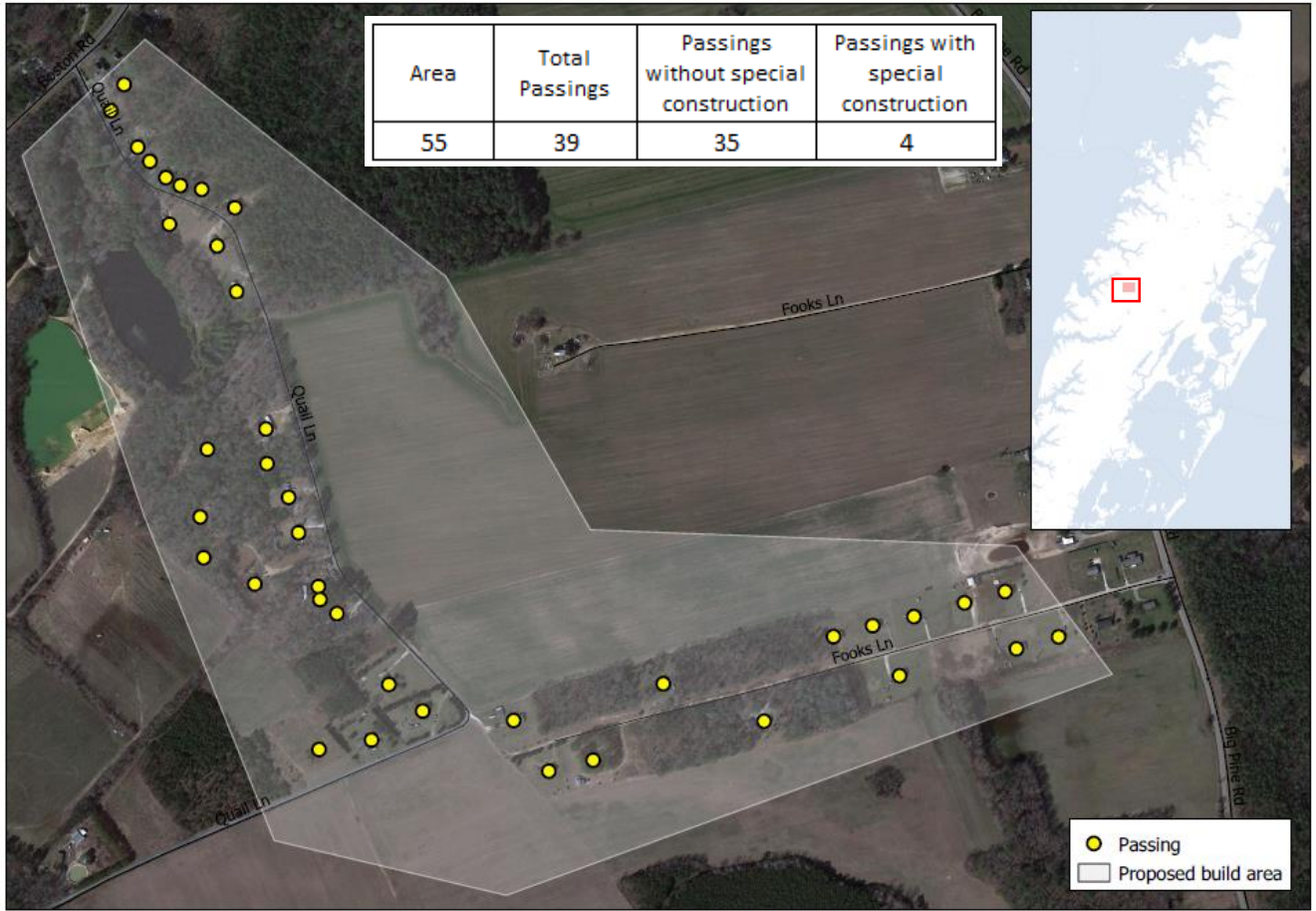
Area 53



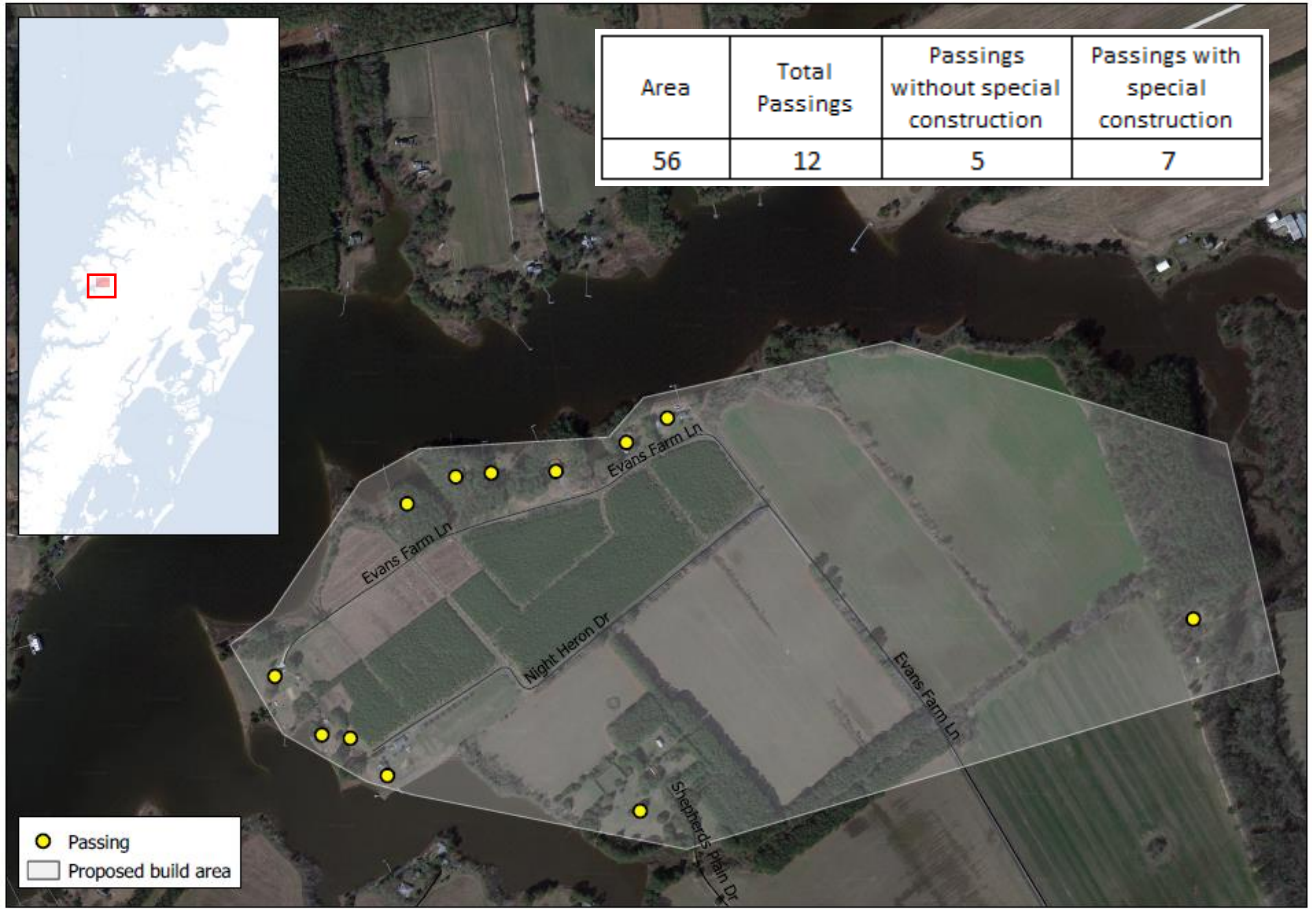
Area 54



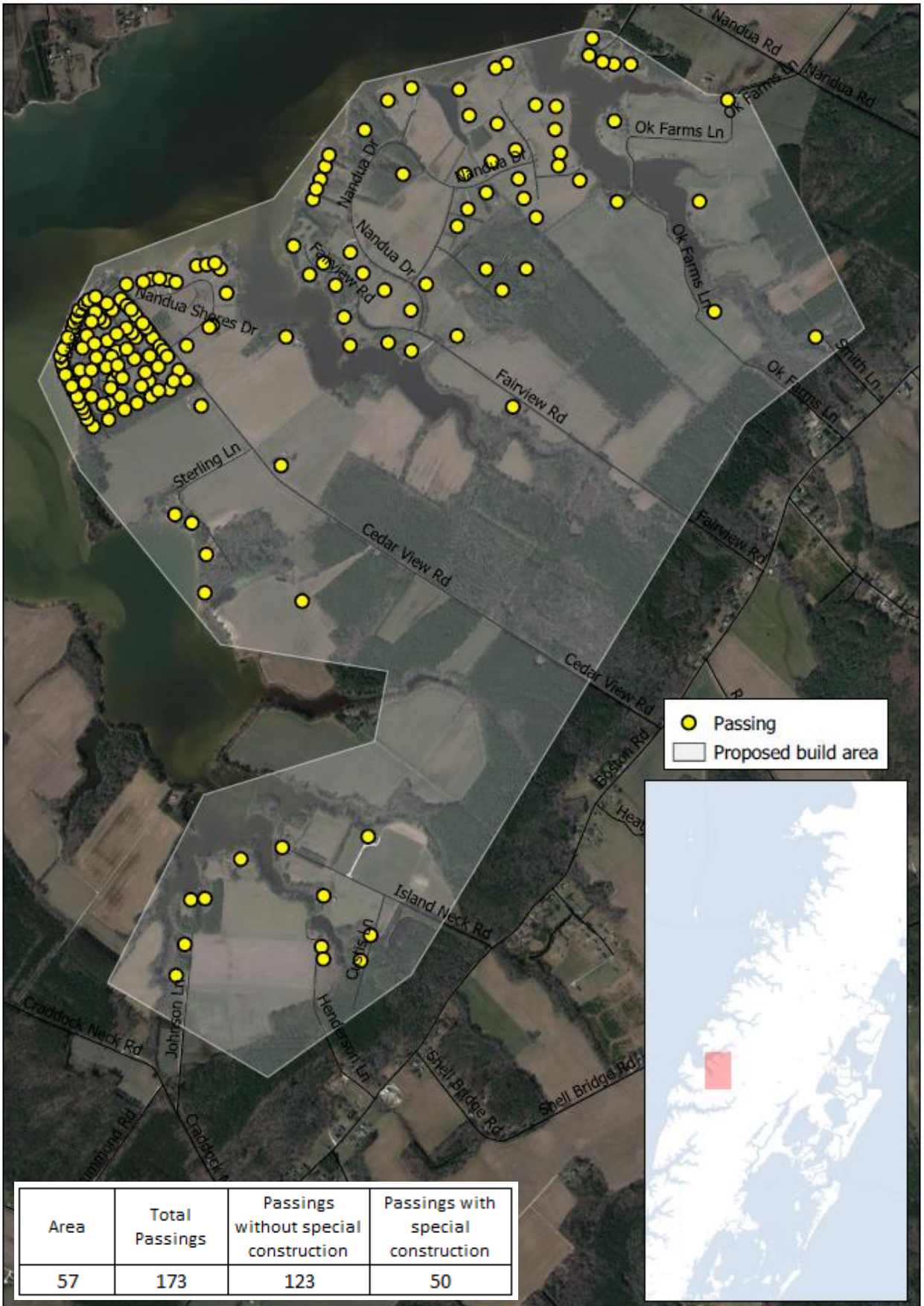
Area 55



Area 56



Area 57



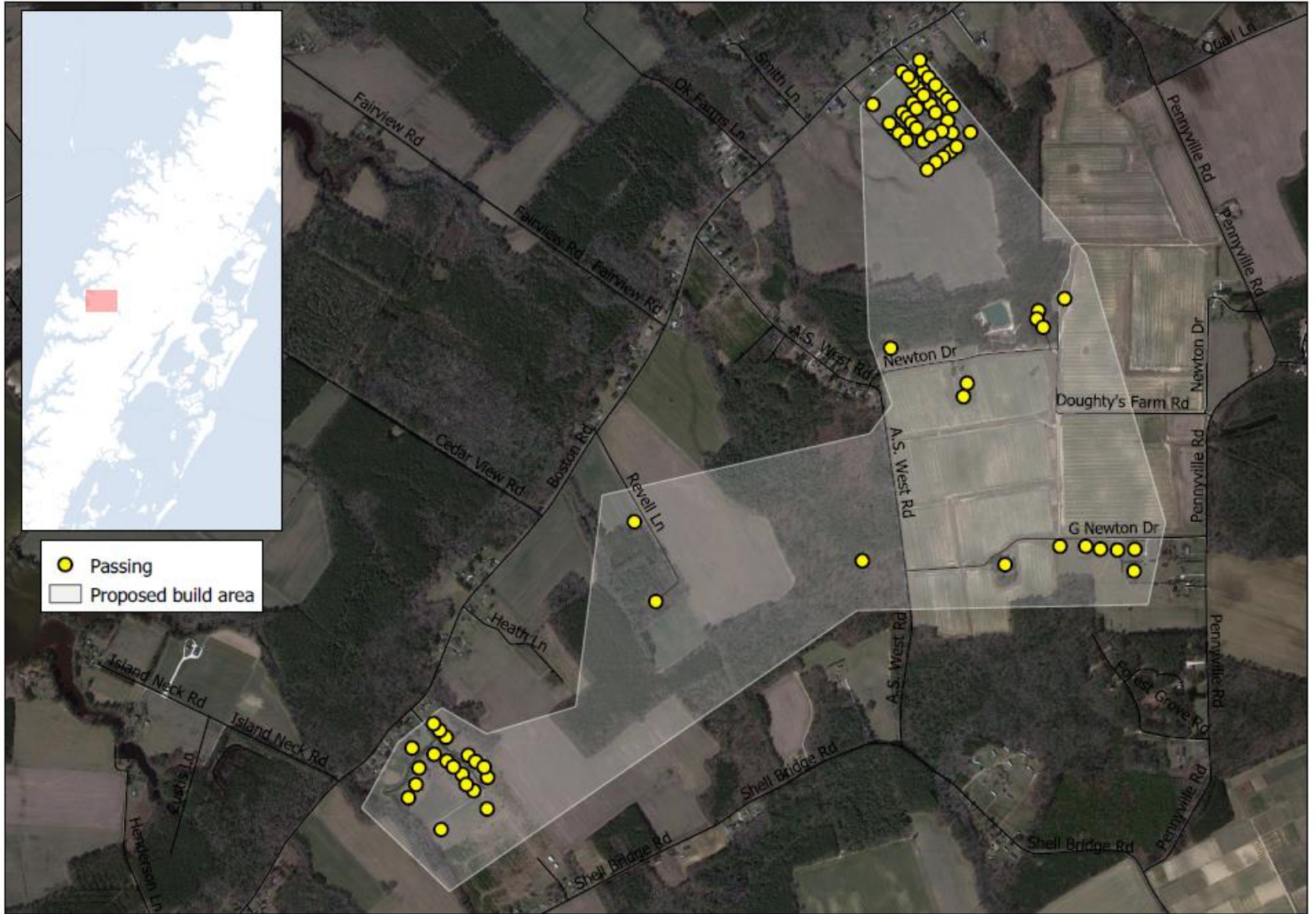
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
57	173	123	50

Area 58

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
58	8	4	4

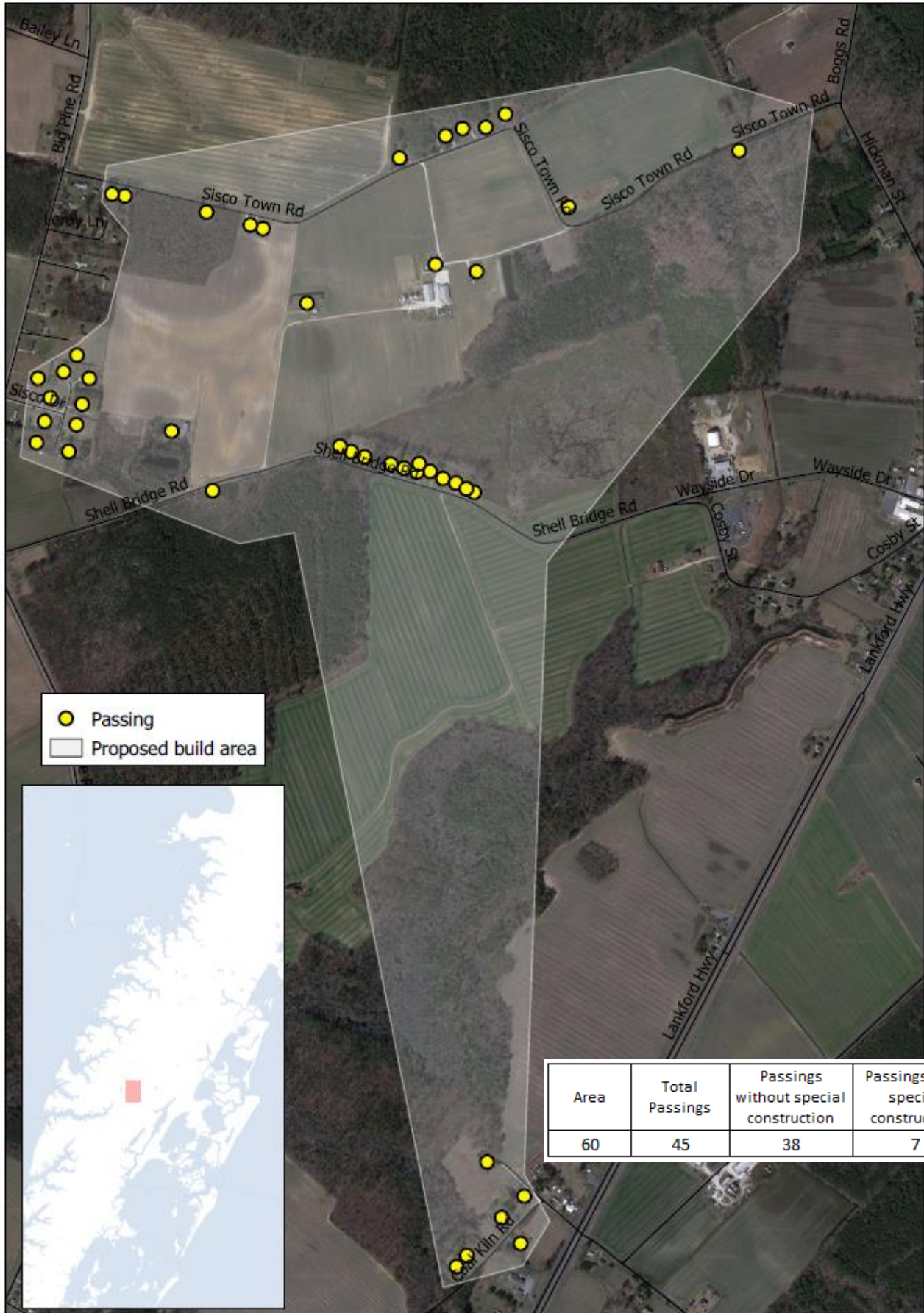


Area 59



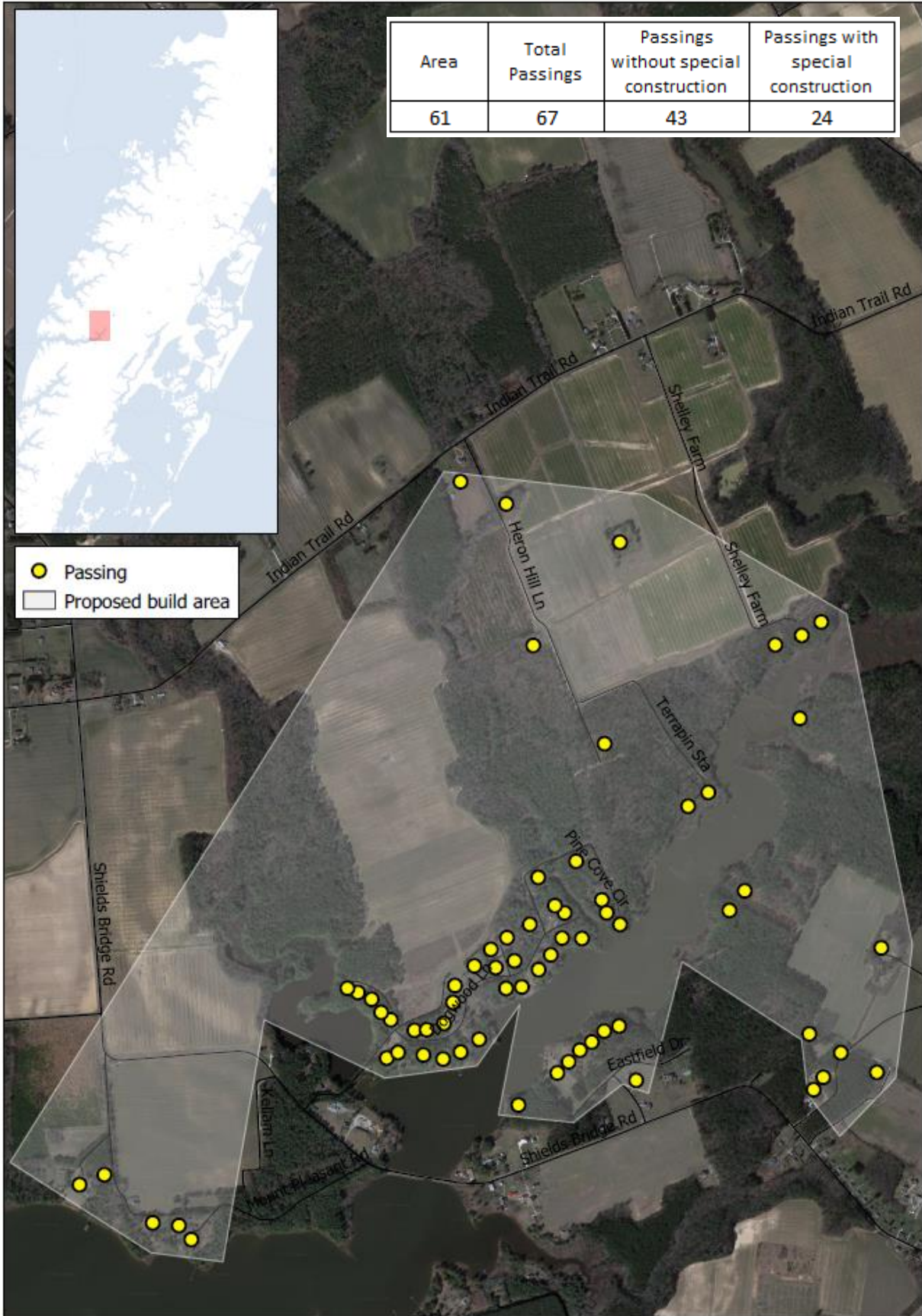
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
59	72	57	15

Area 60

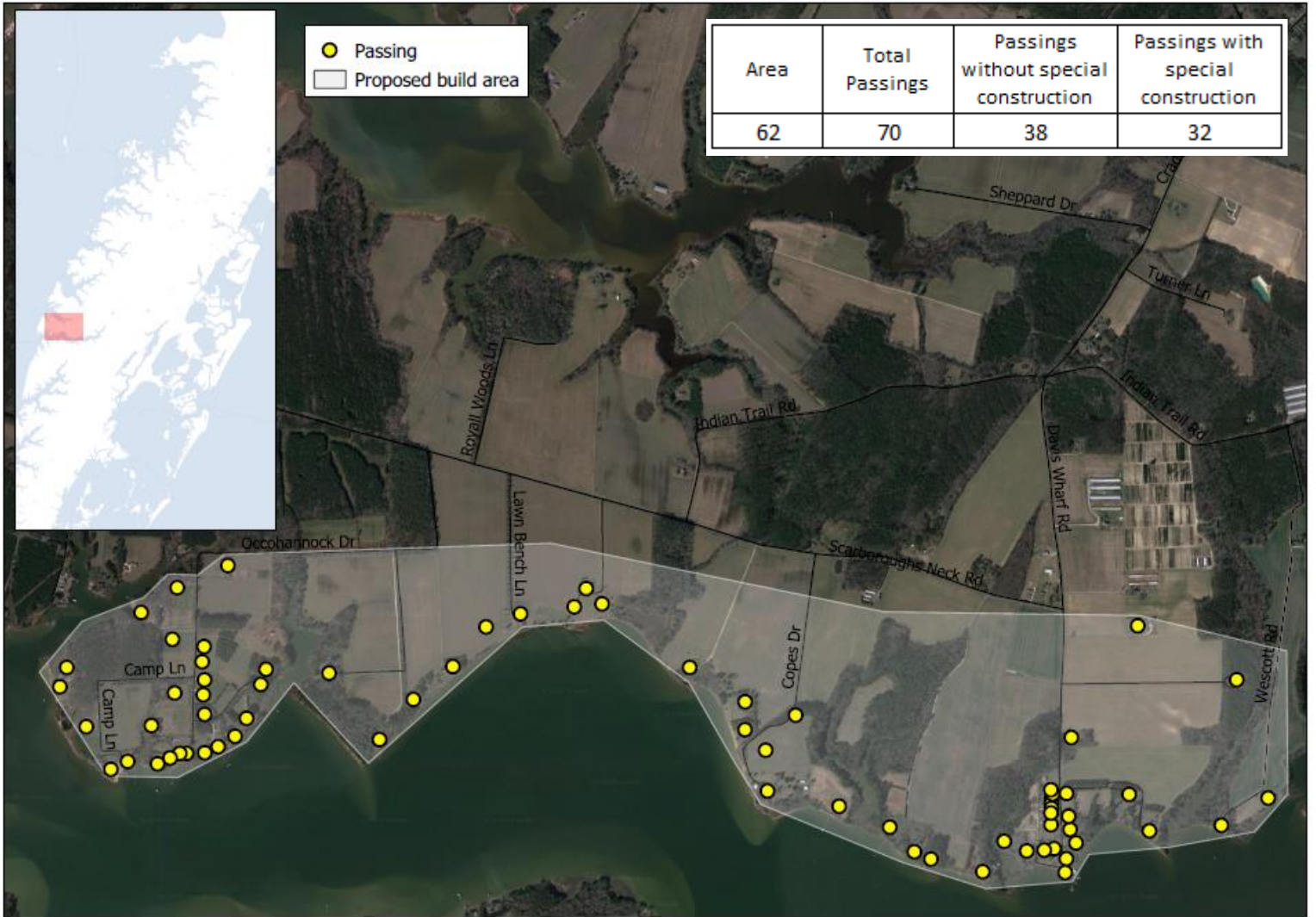


Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
60	45	38	7

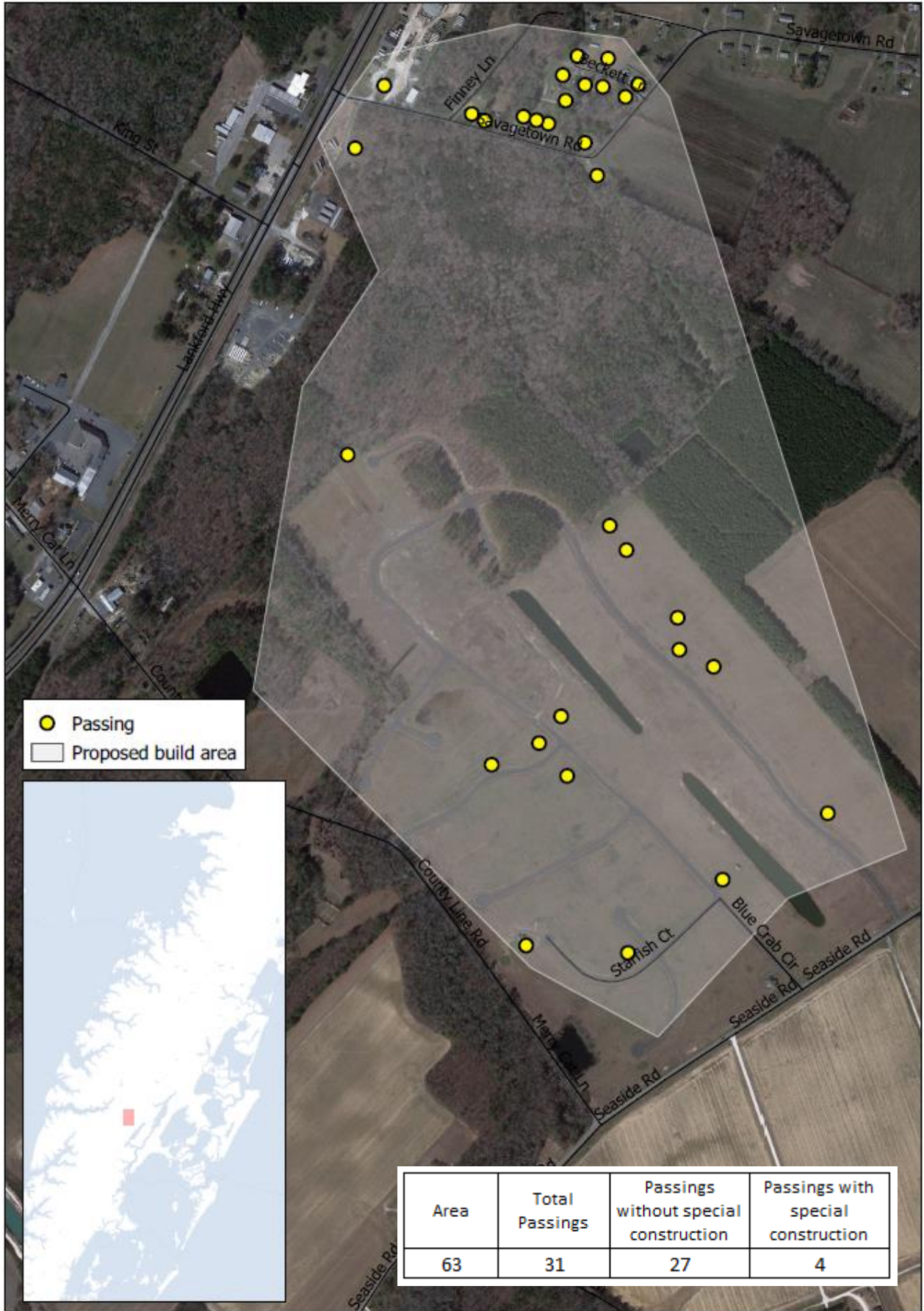
Area 61



Area 62



Area 63



Area 64

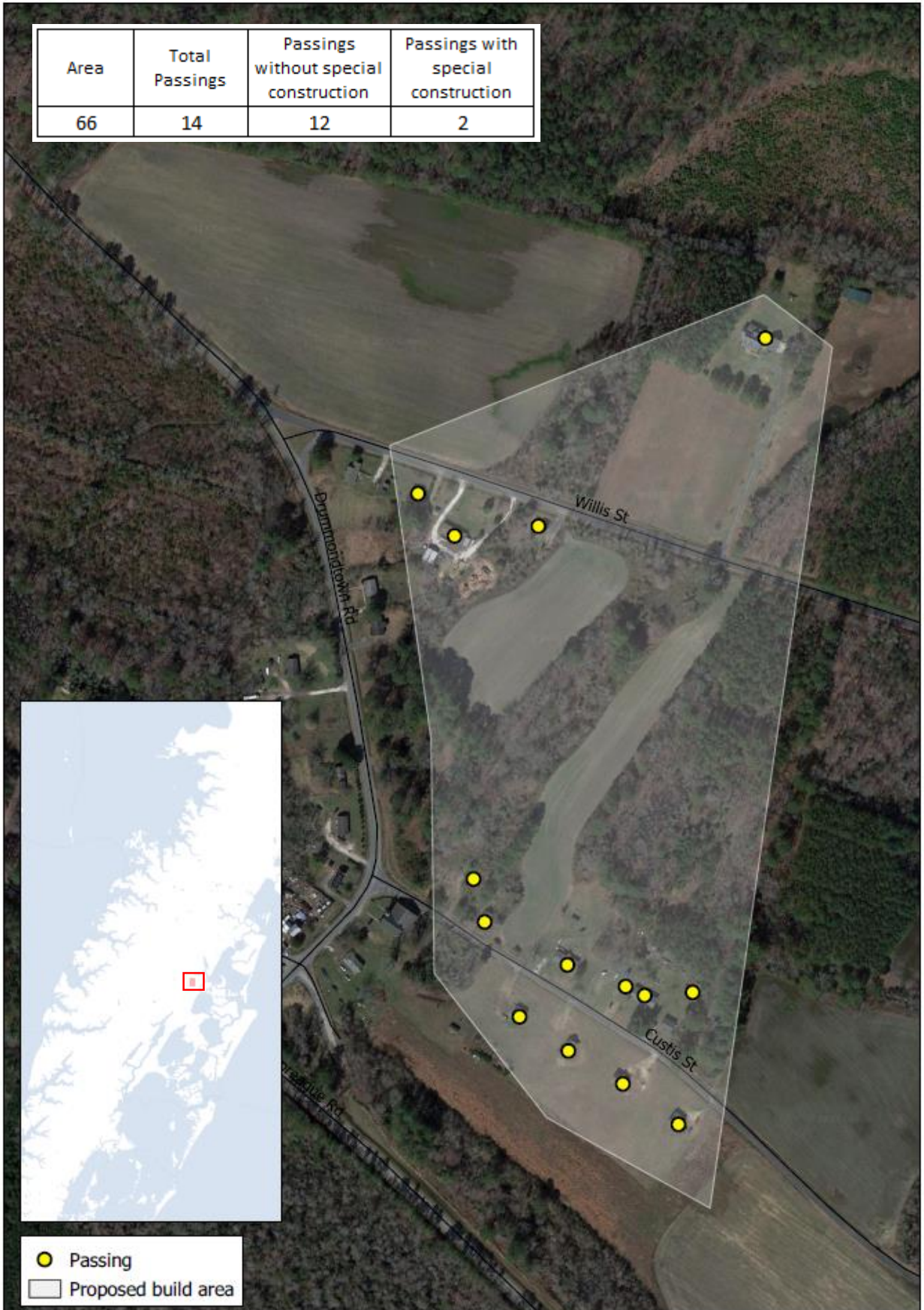


Area 65

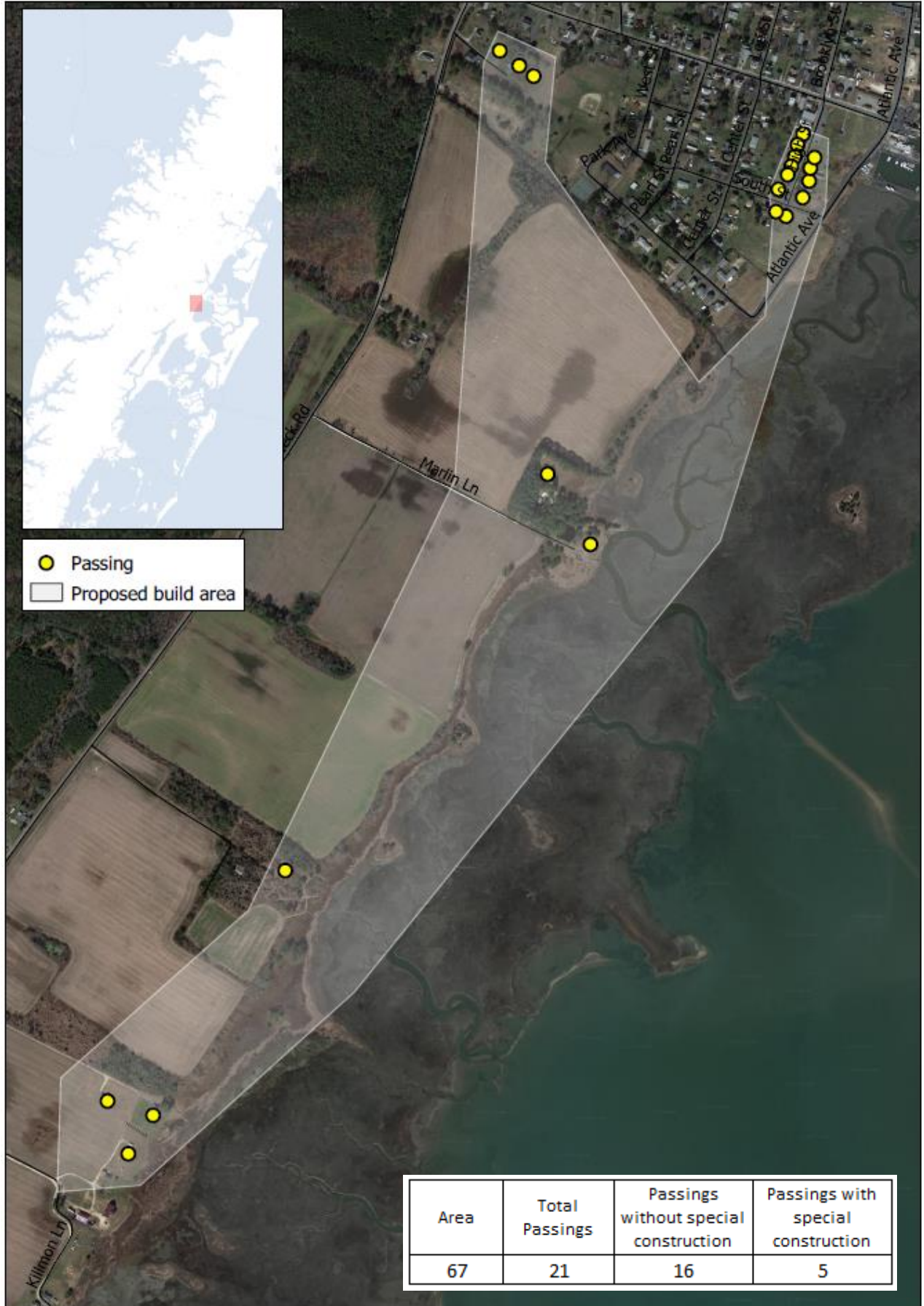


Area 66

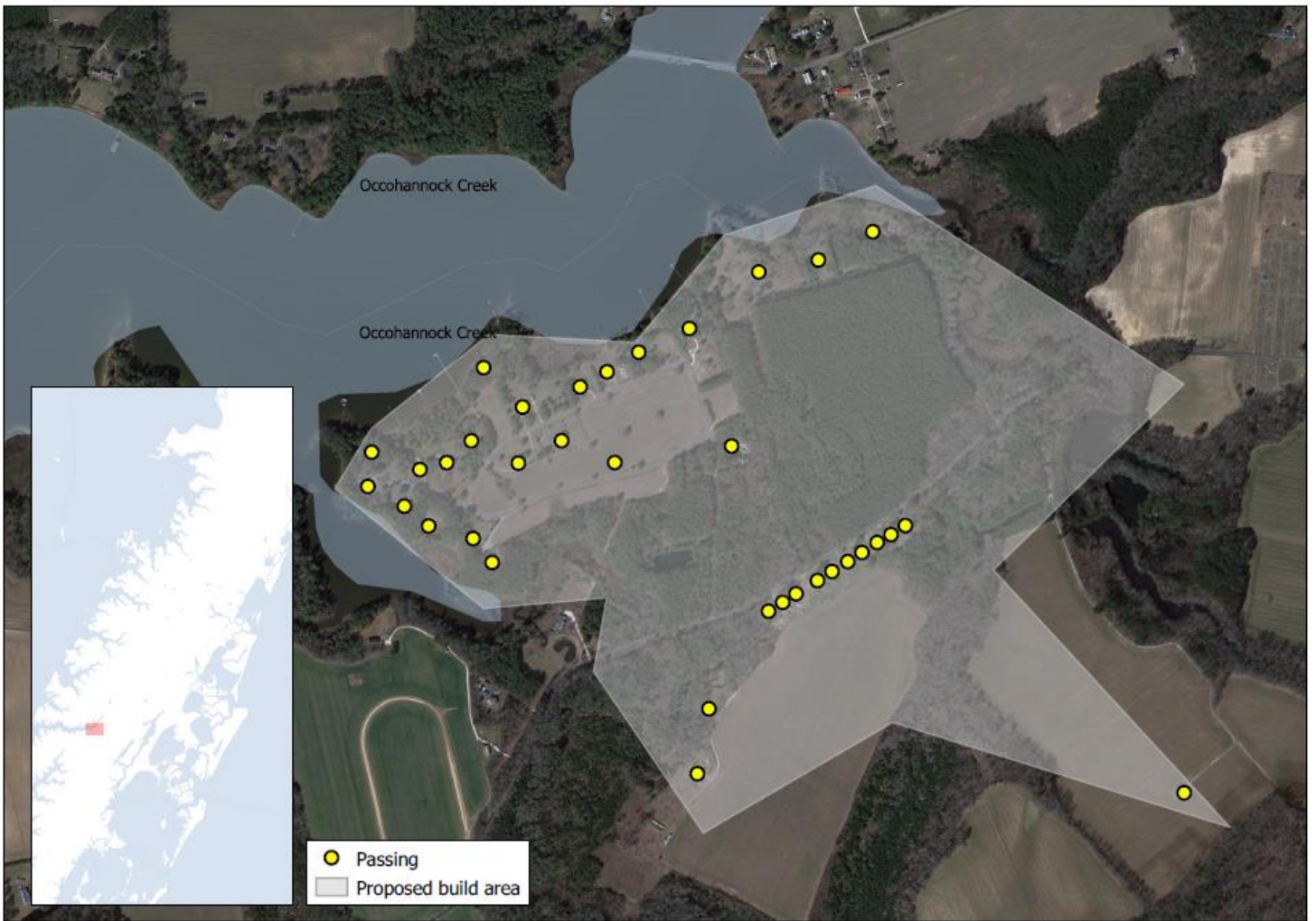
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
66	14	12	2



Area 67

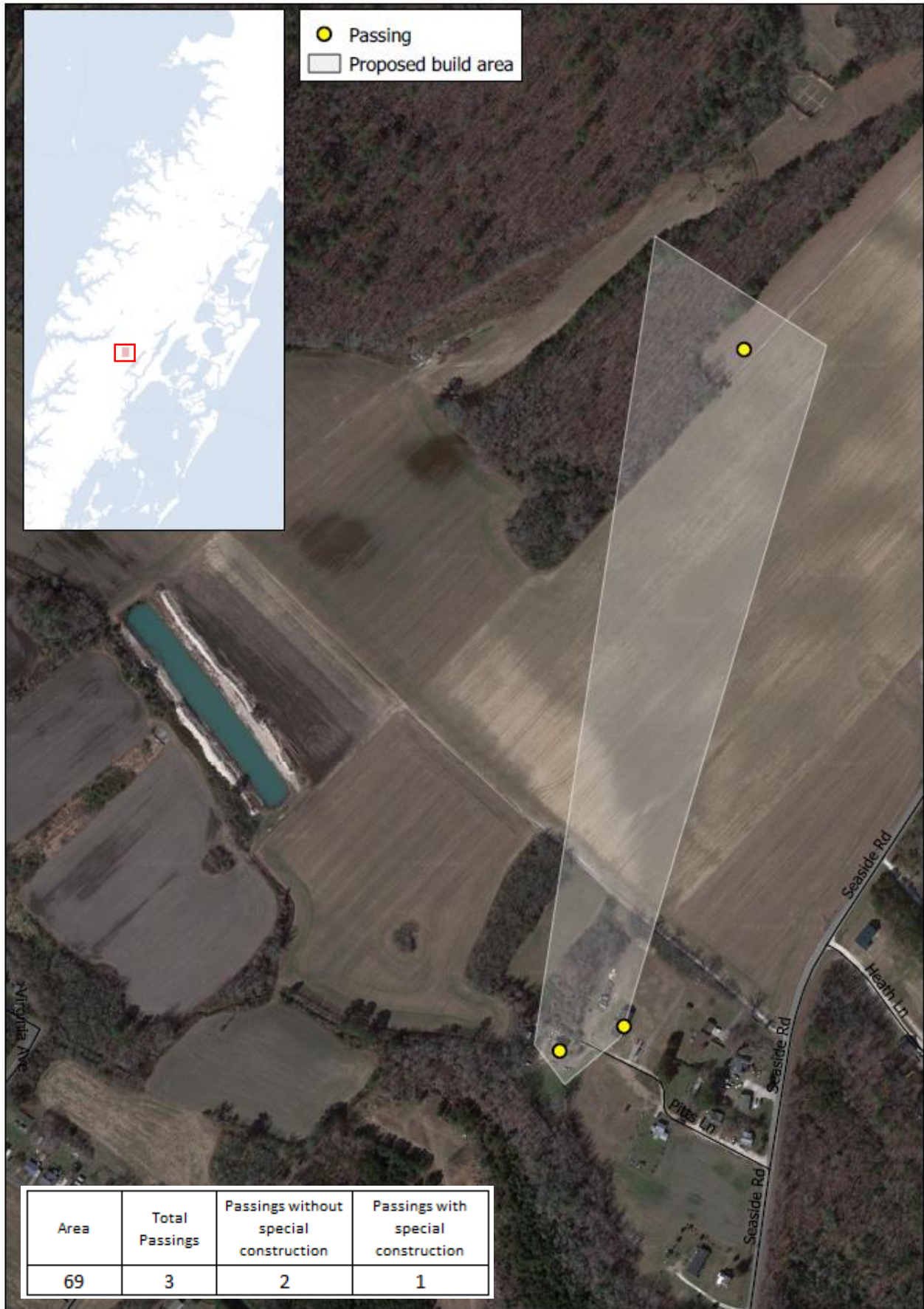


Area 68

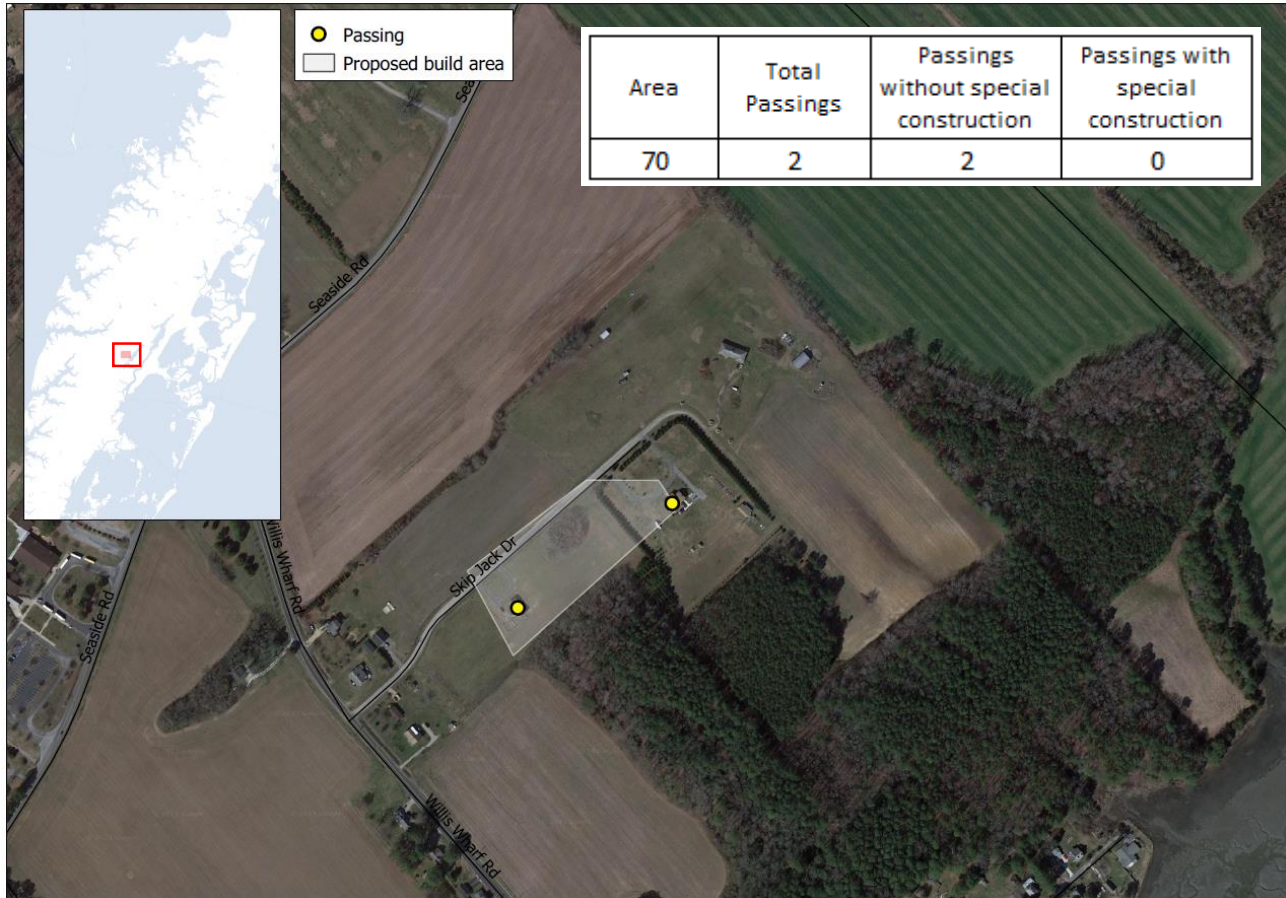


Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
68	35	25	10

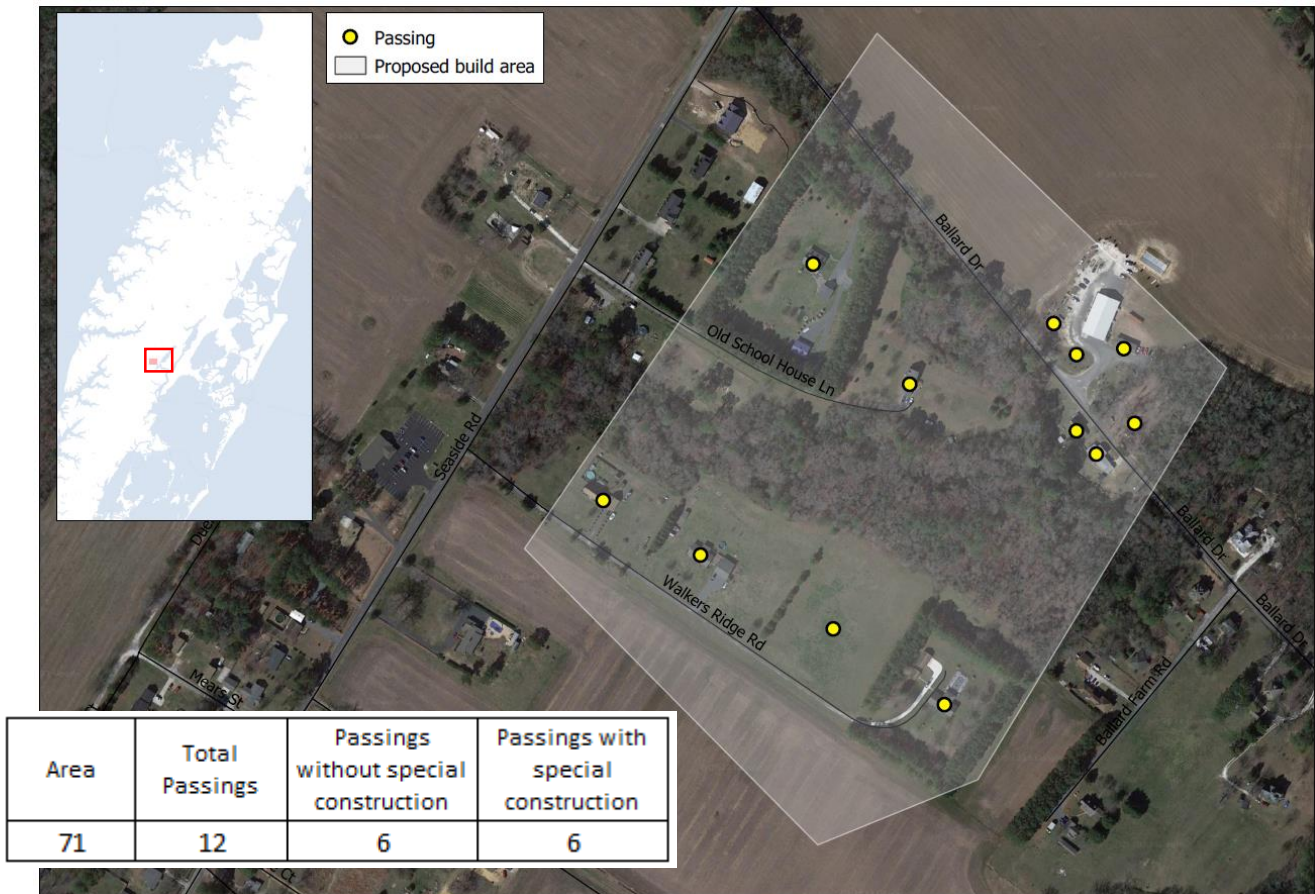
Area 69



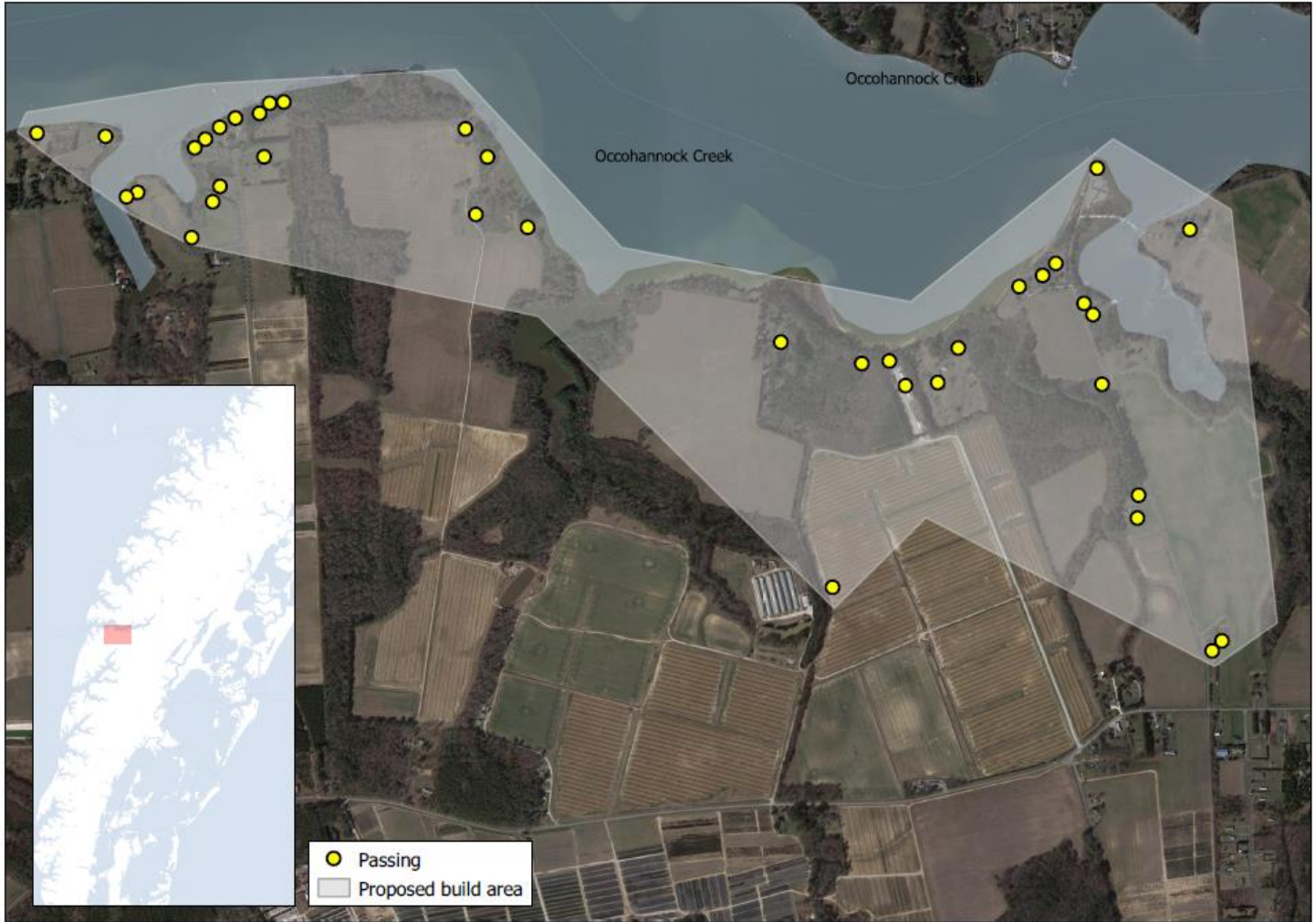
Area 70



Area 71



Area 72



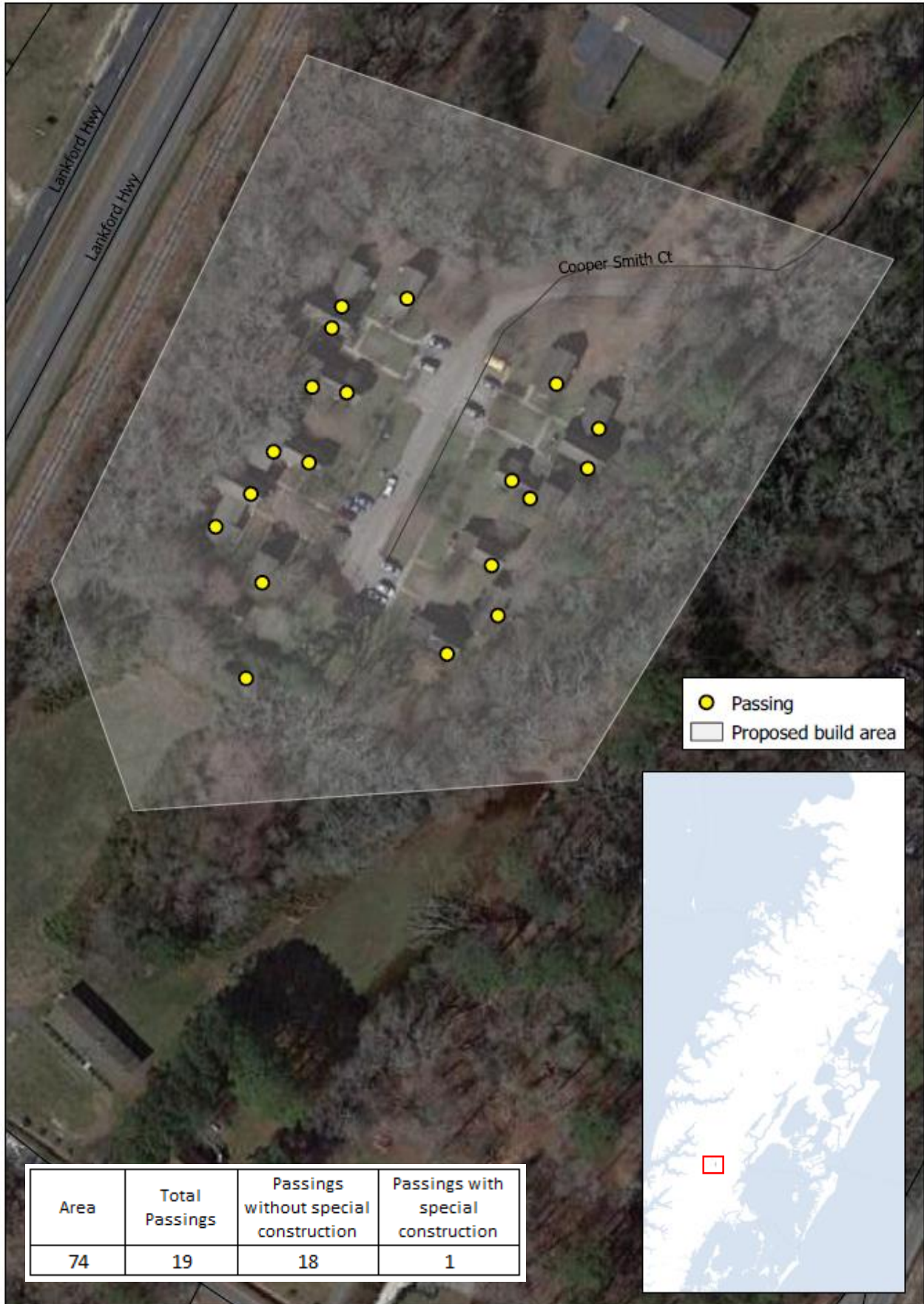
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
72	38	13	25

Area 73

Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
73	17	16	1



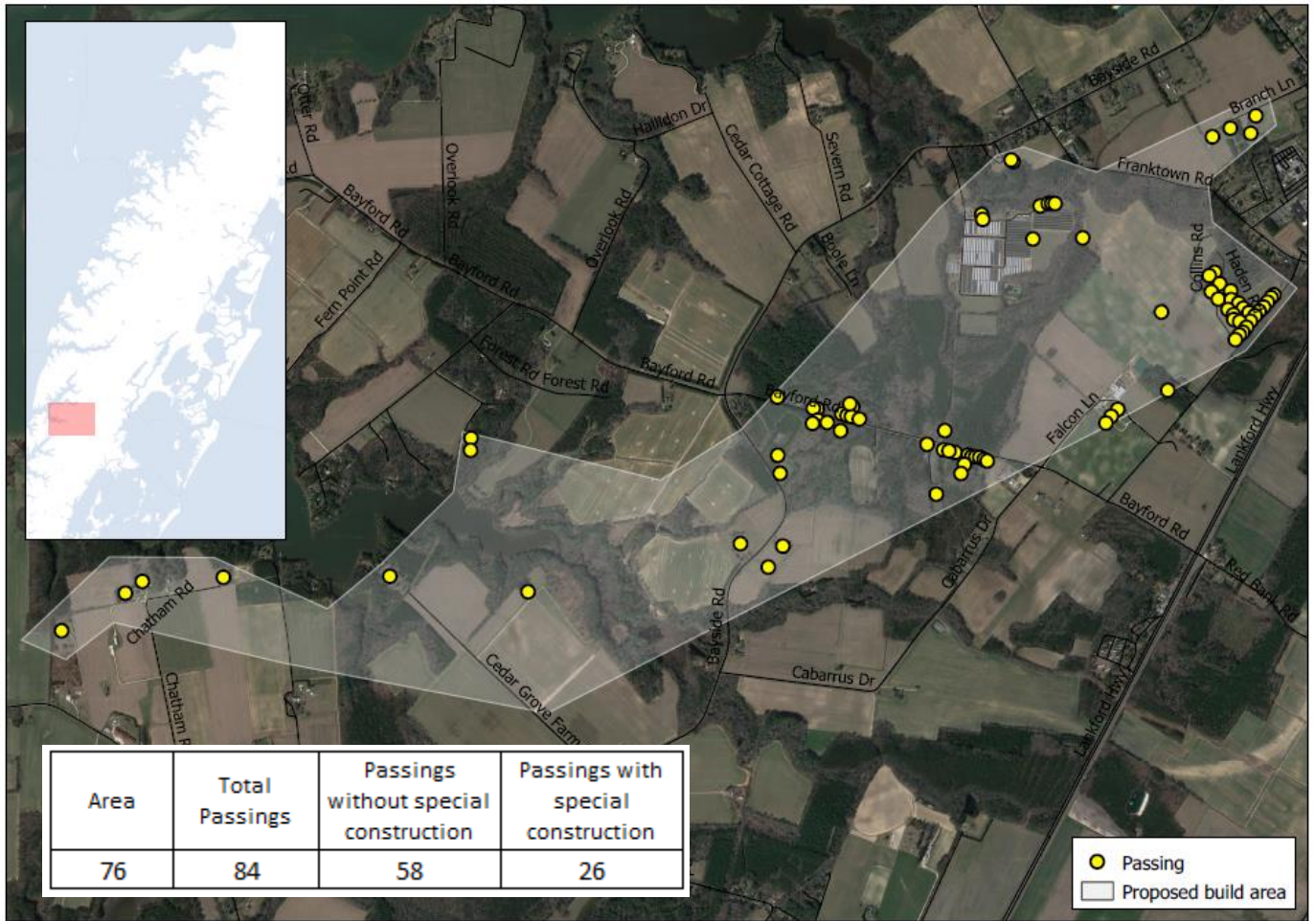
Area 74



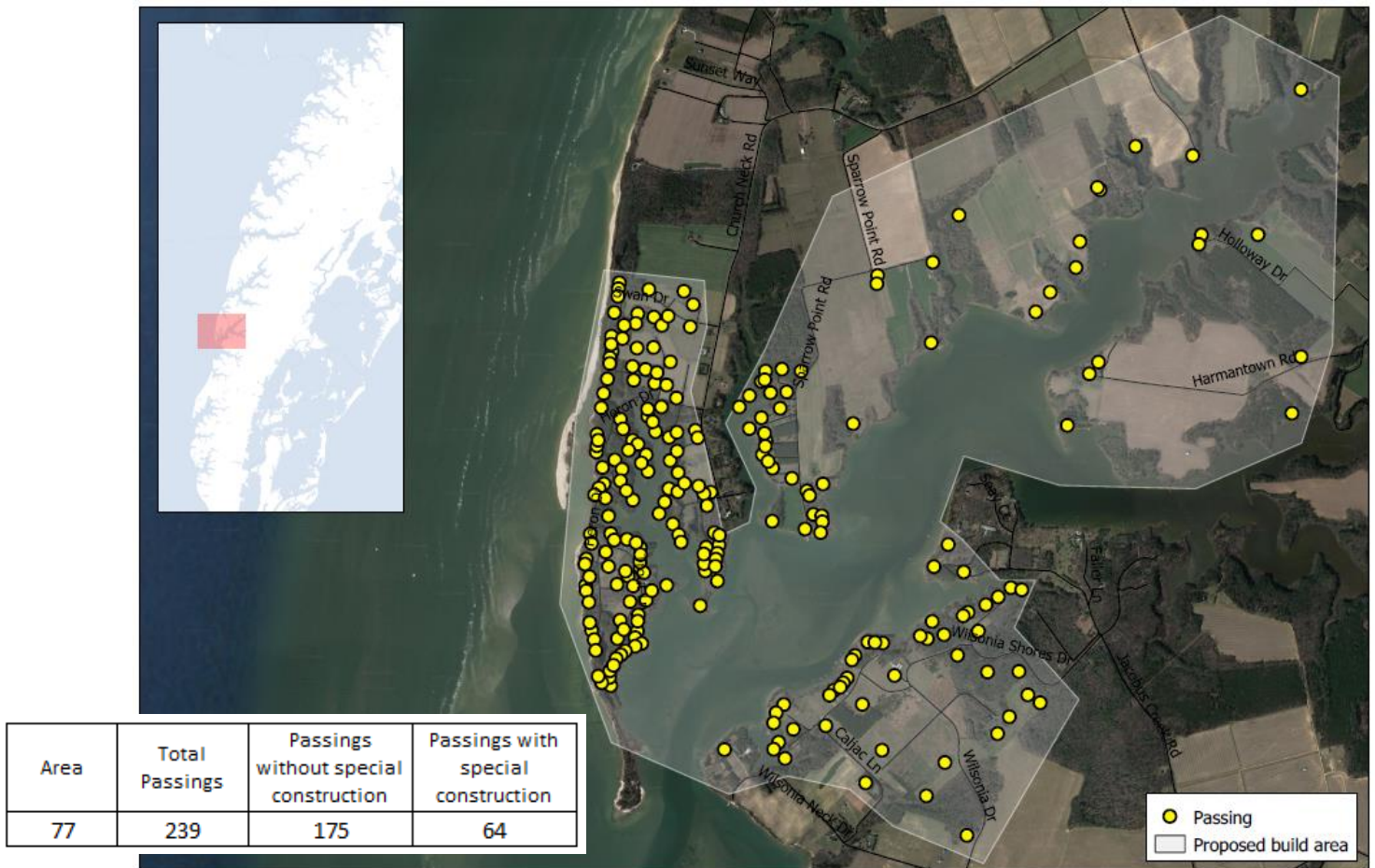
Area 75



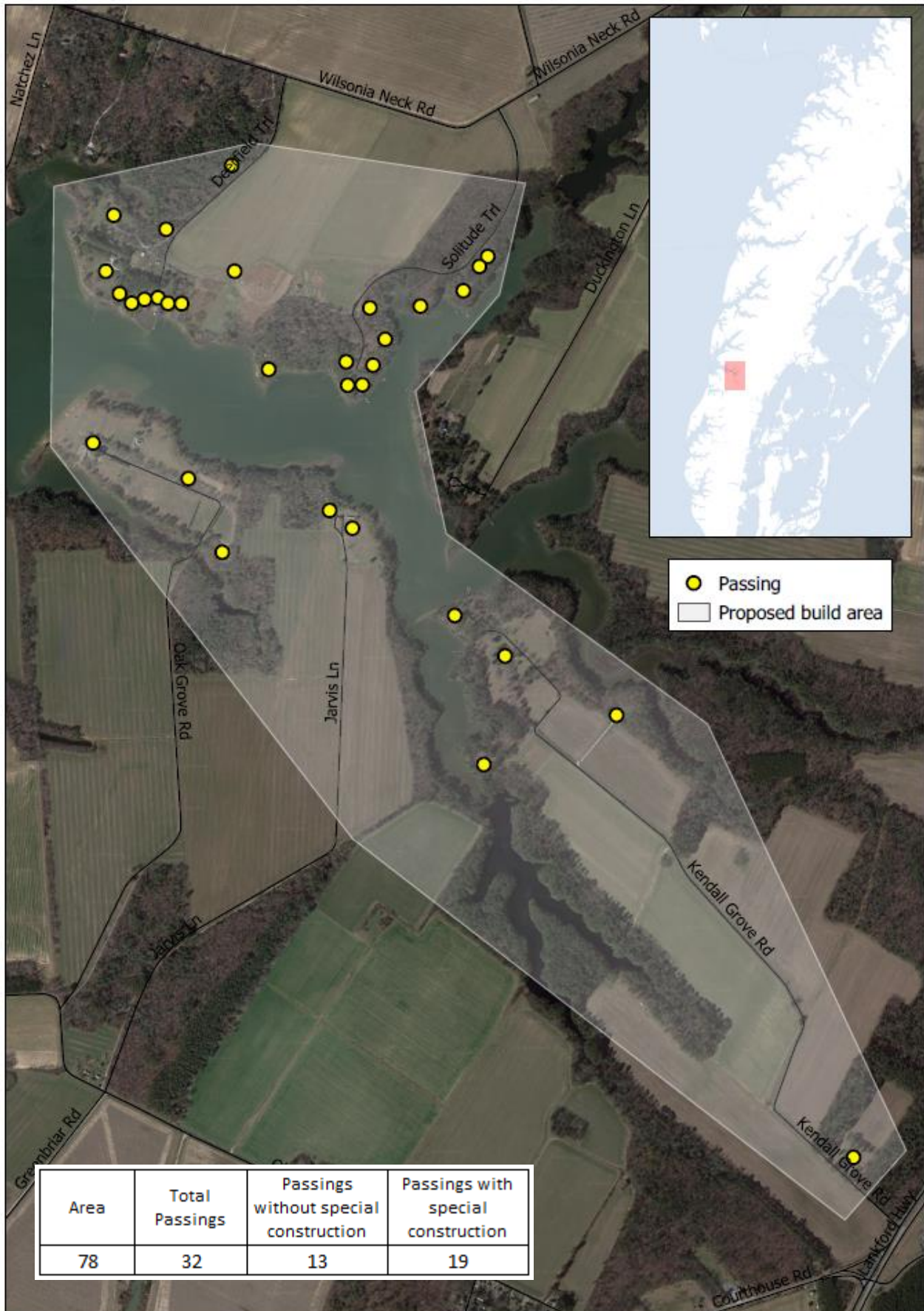
Area 76



Area 77



Area 78



Area 79

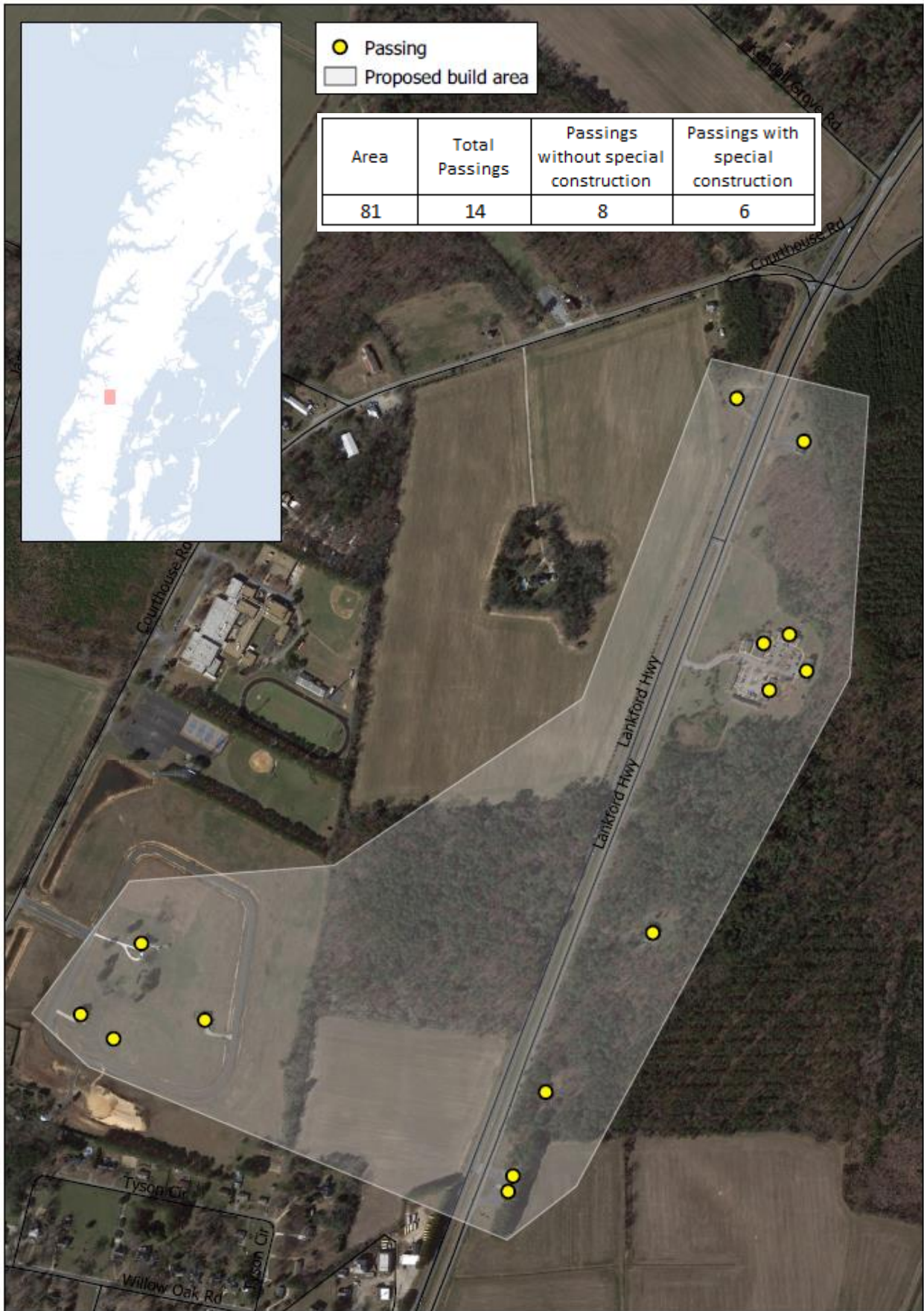


Area 80

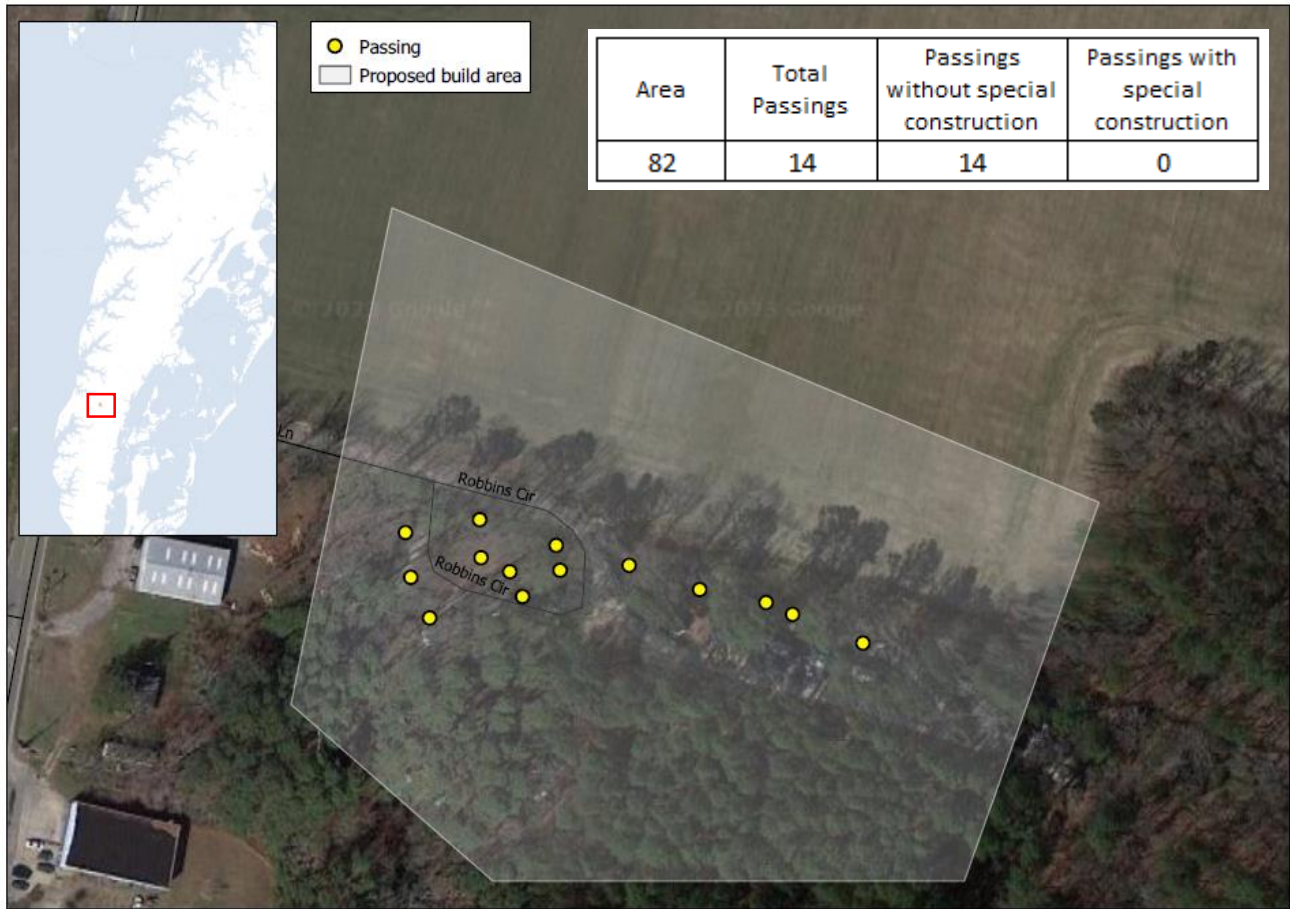
Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
80	59	14	45



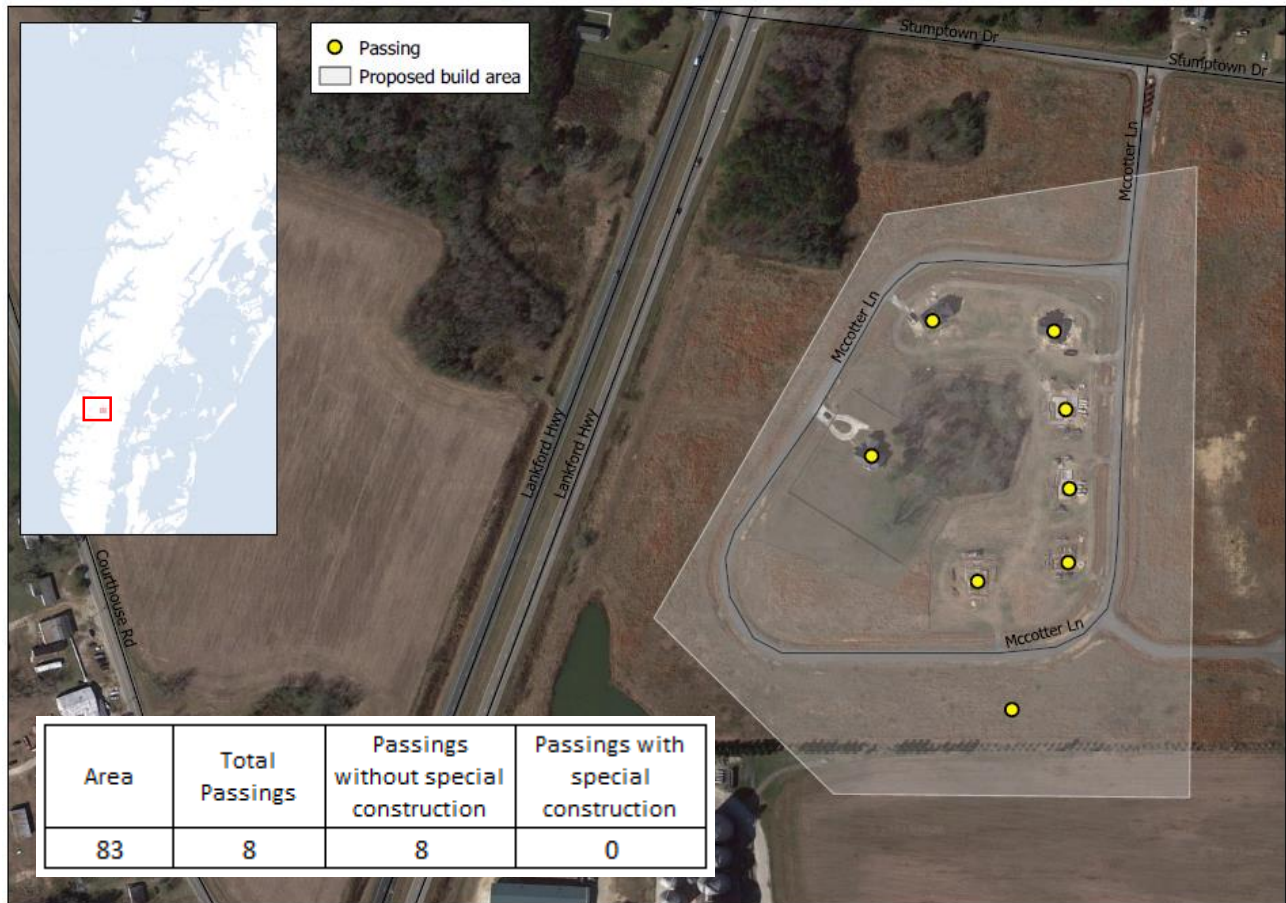
Area 81



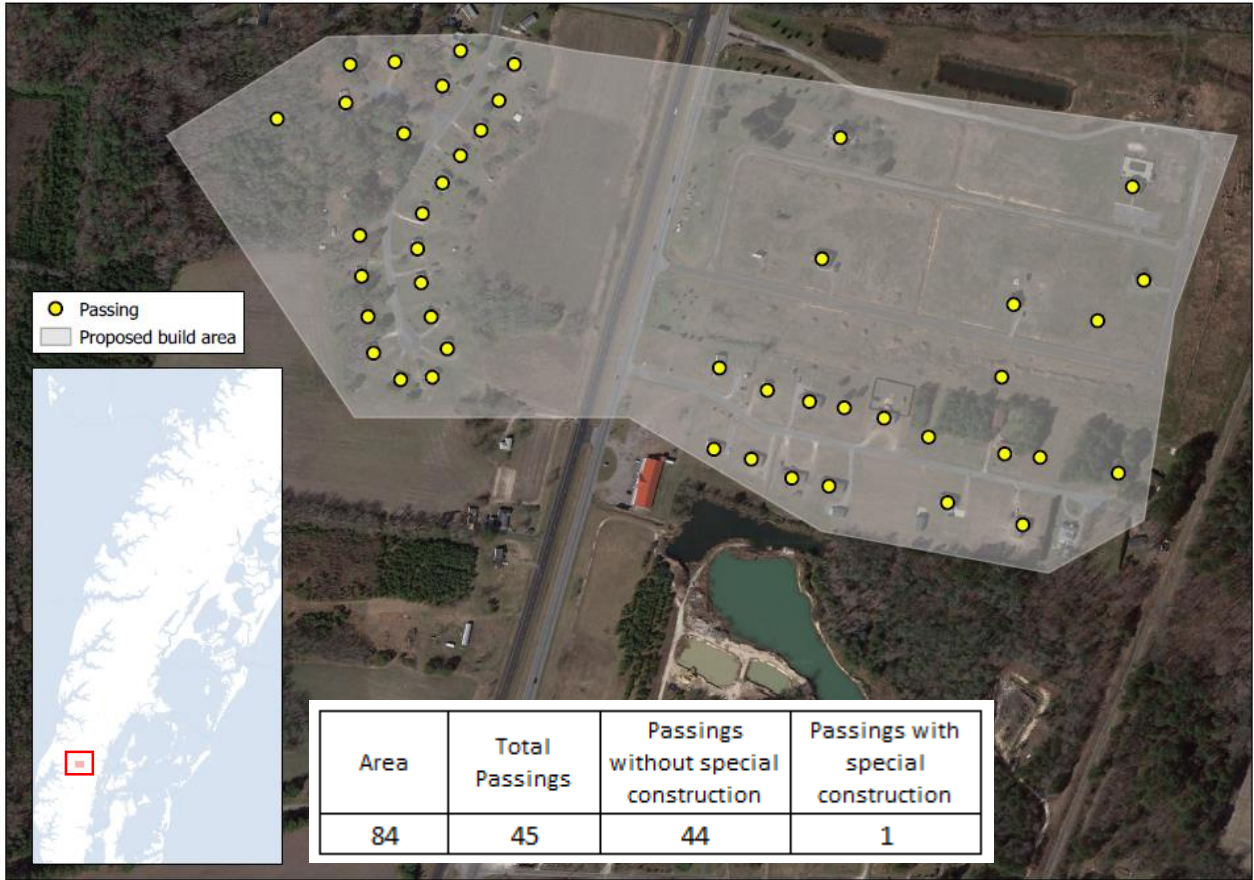
Area 82



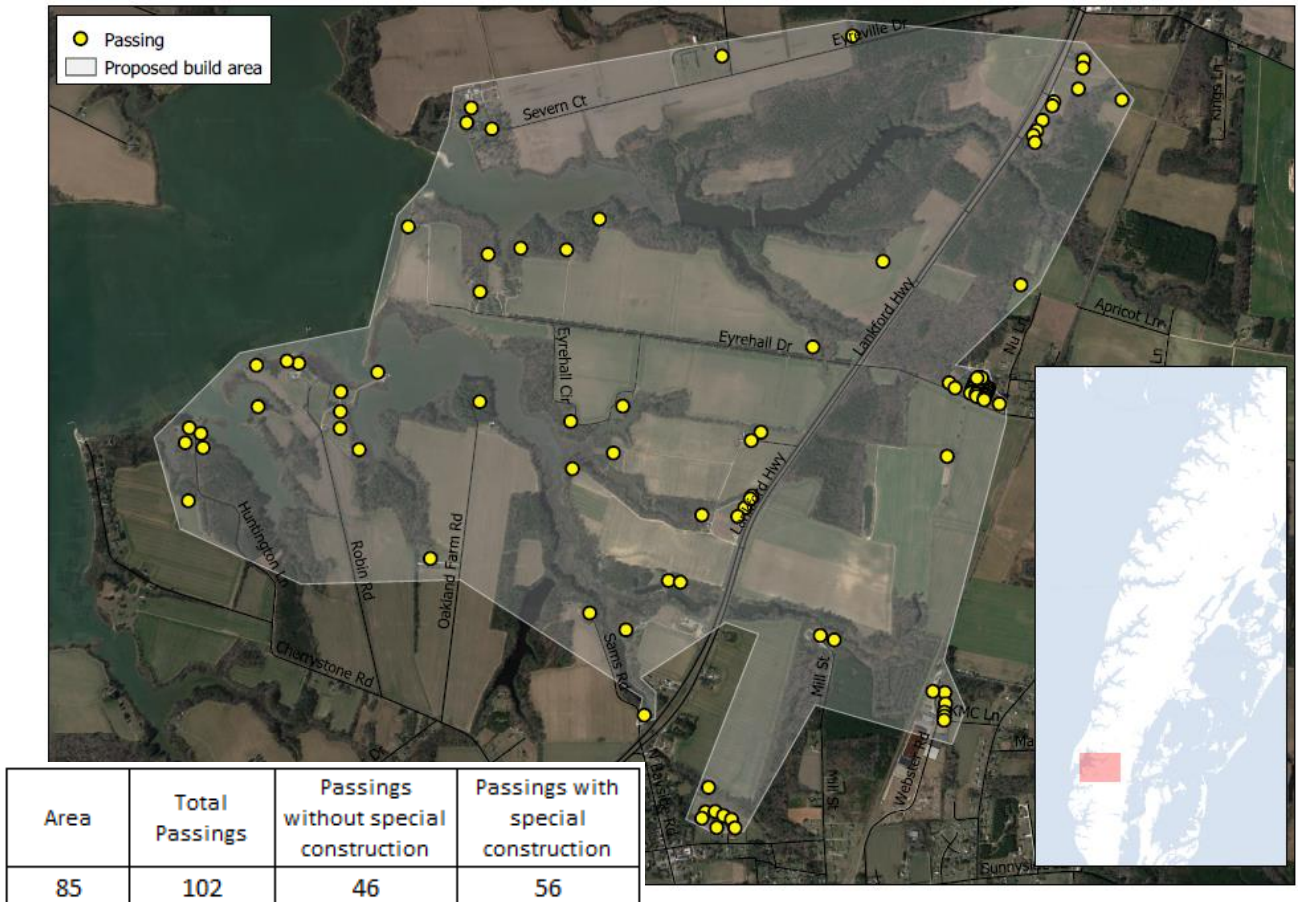
Area 83



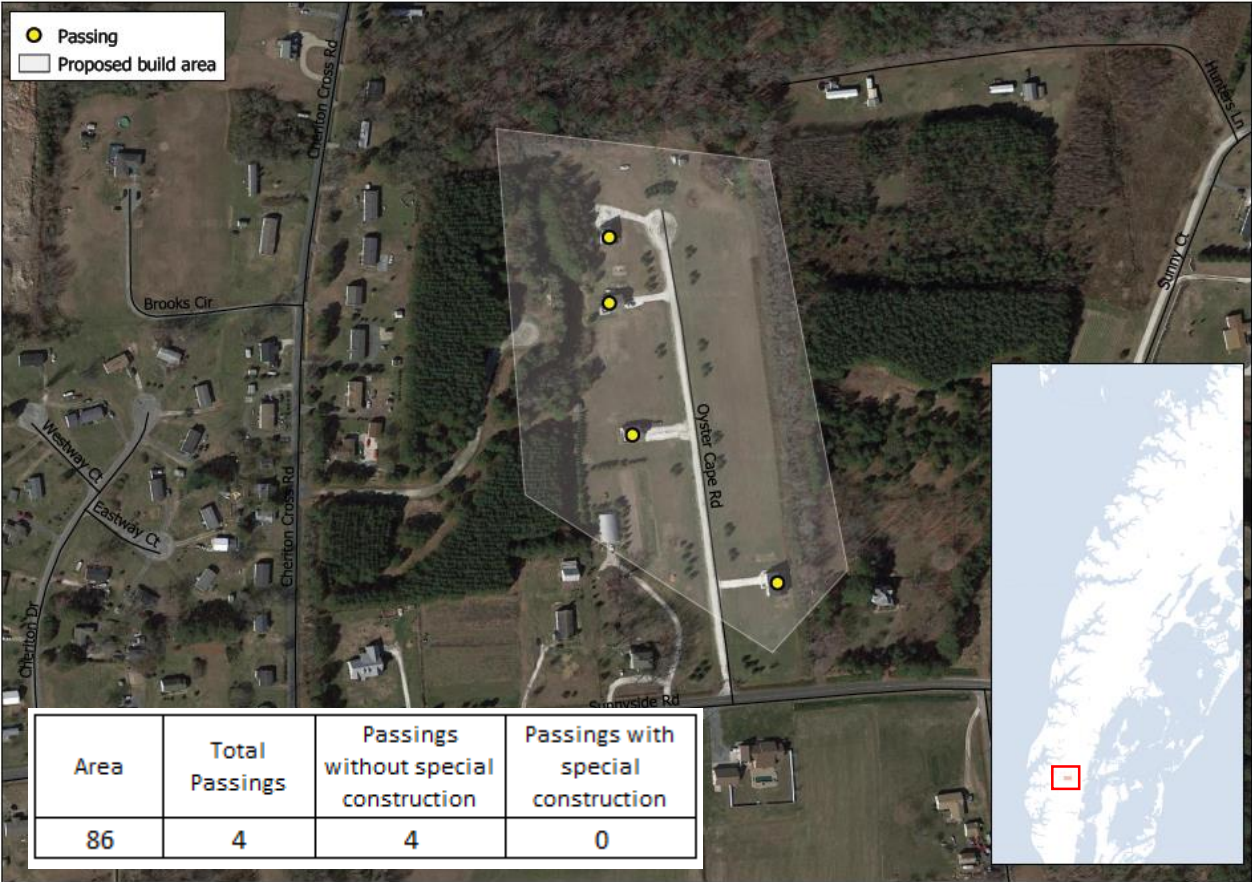
Area 84



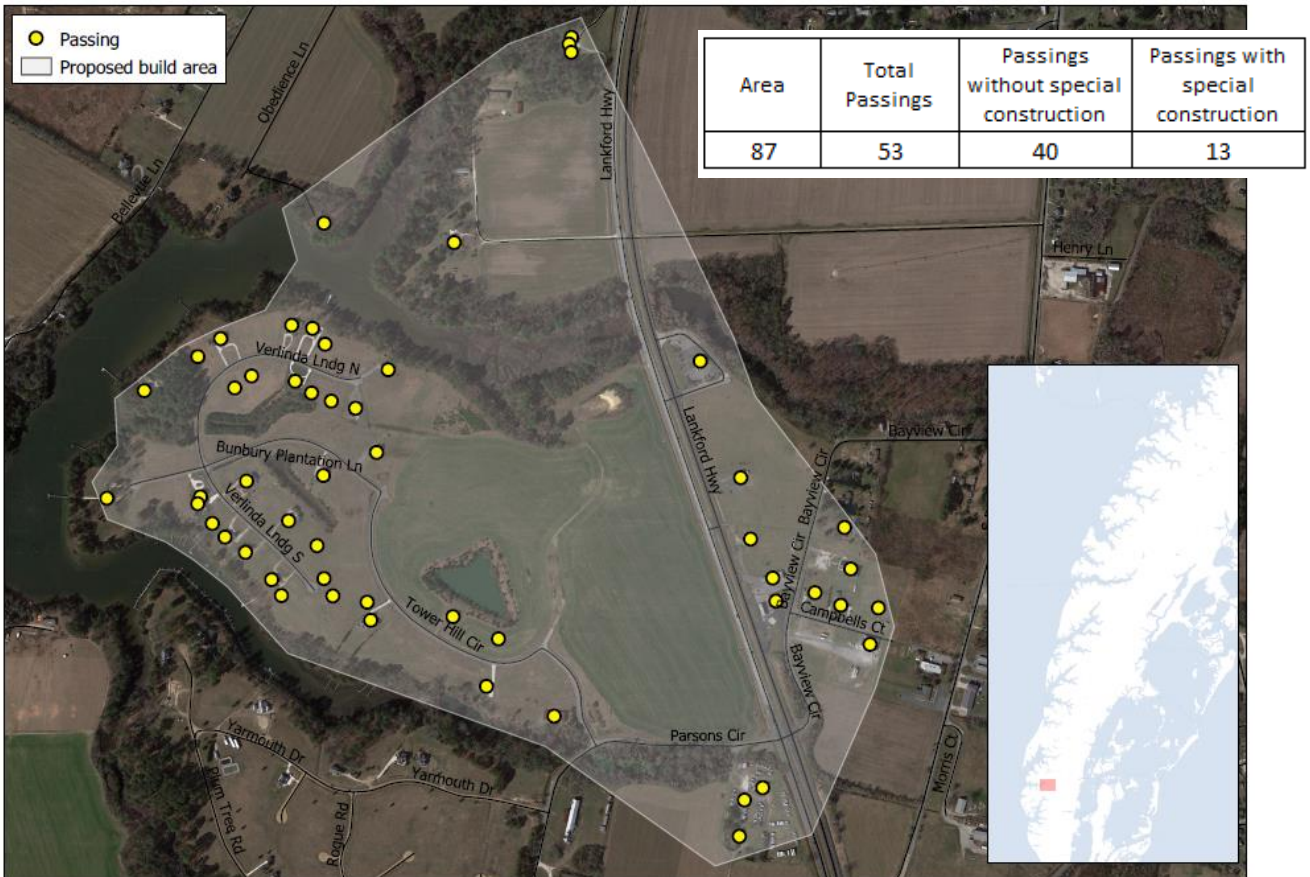
Area 85



Area 86



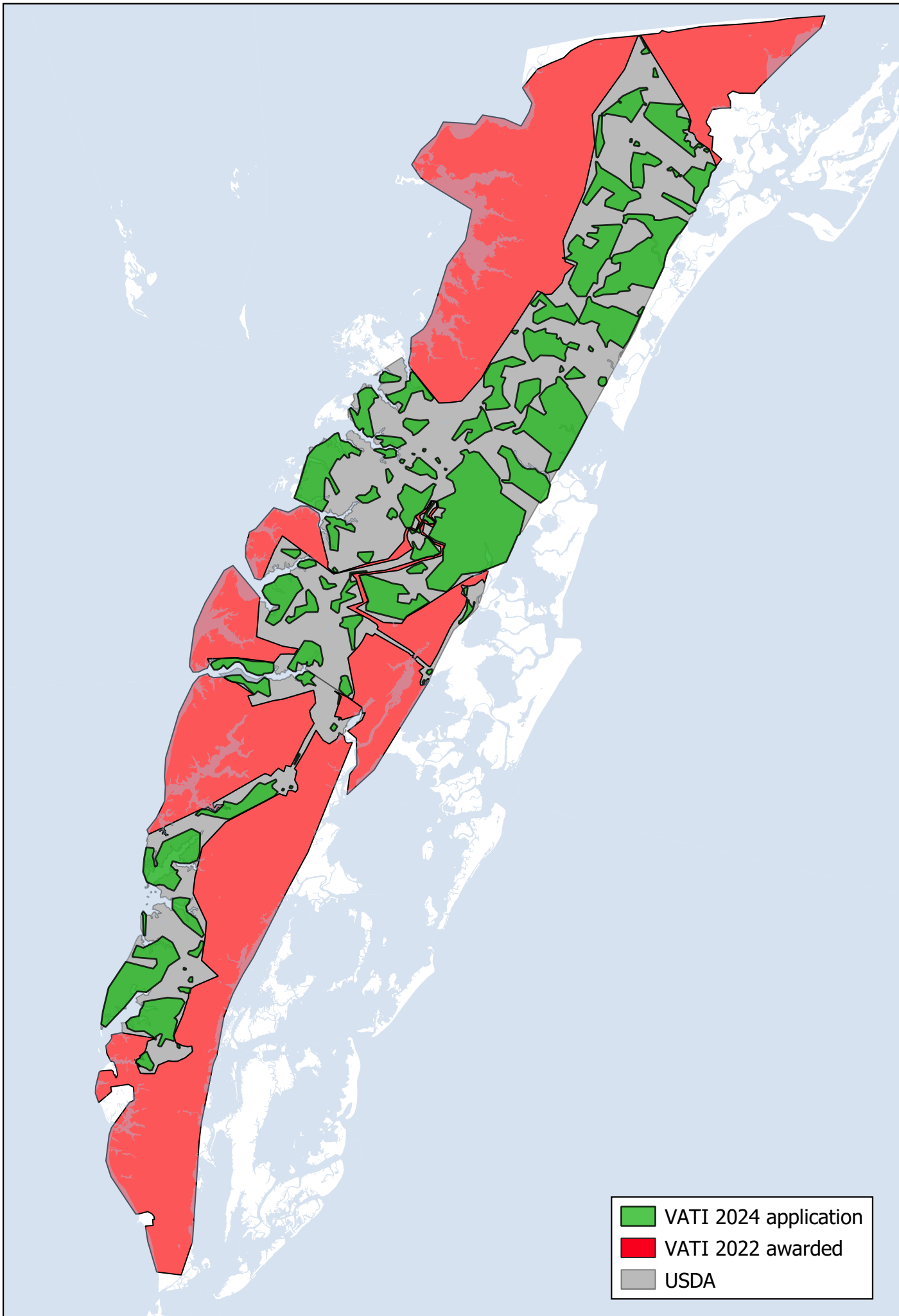
Area 87

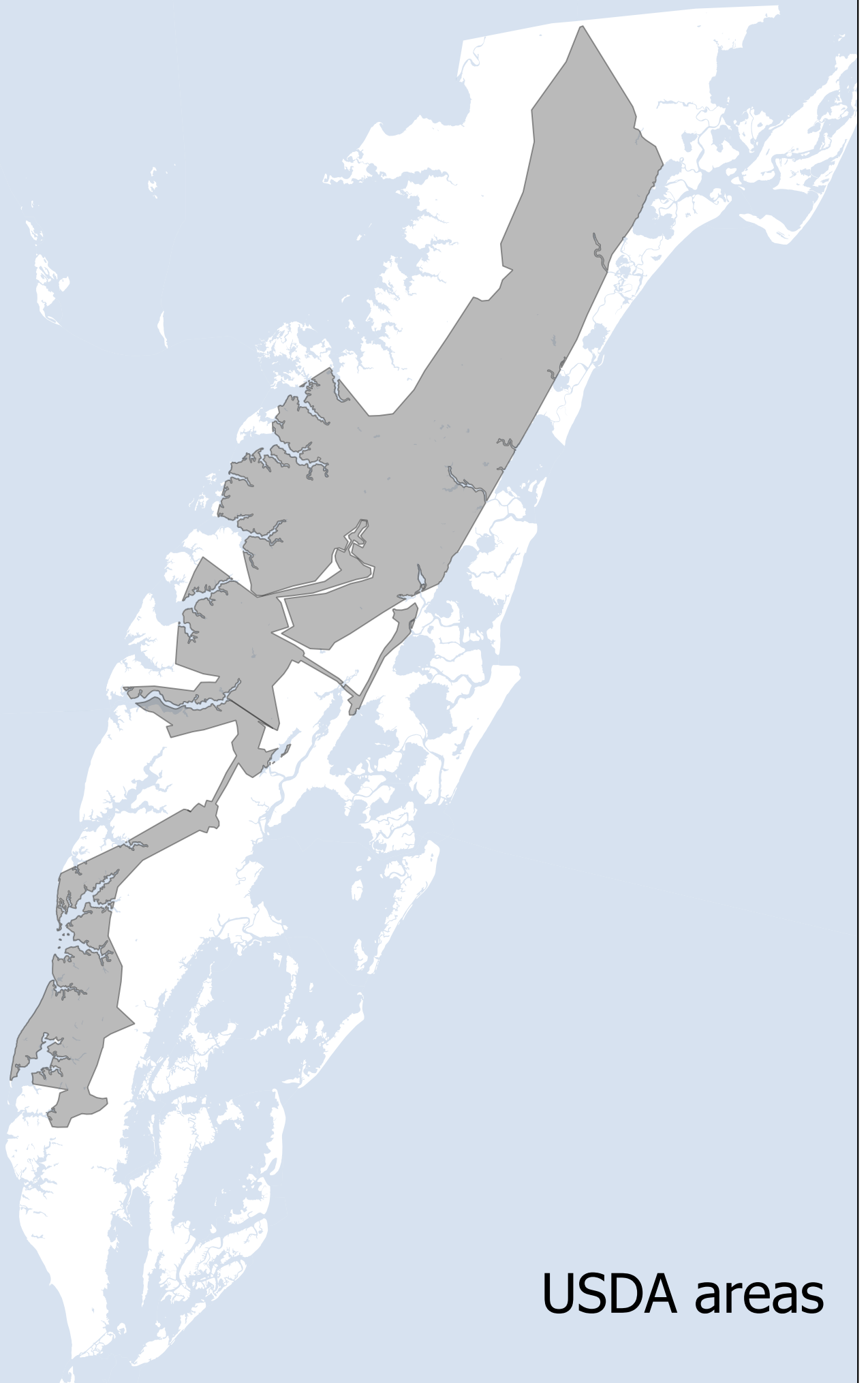


Area 88

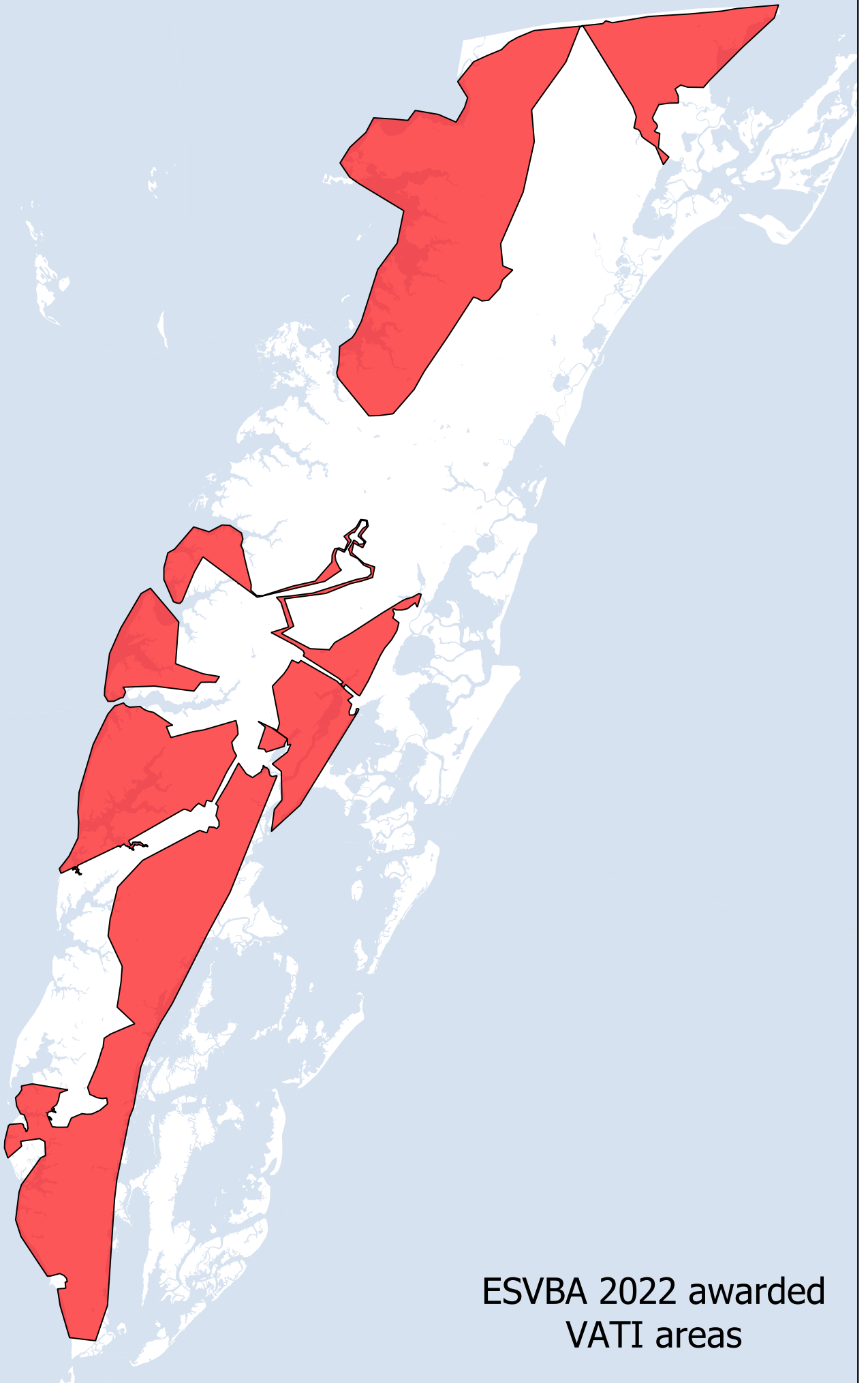


Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
88	10	7	3

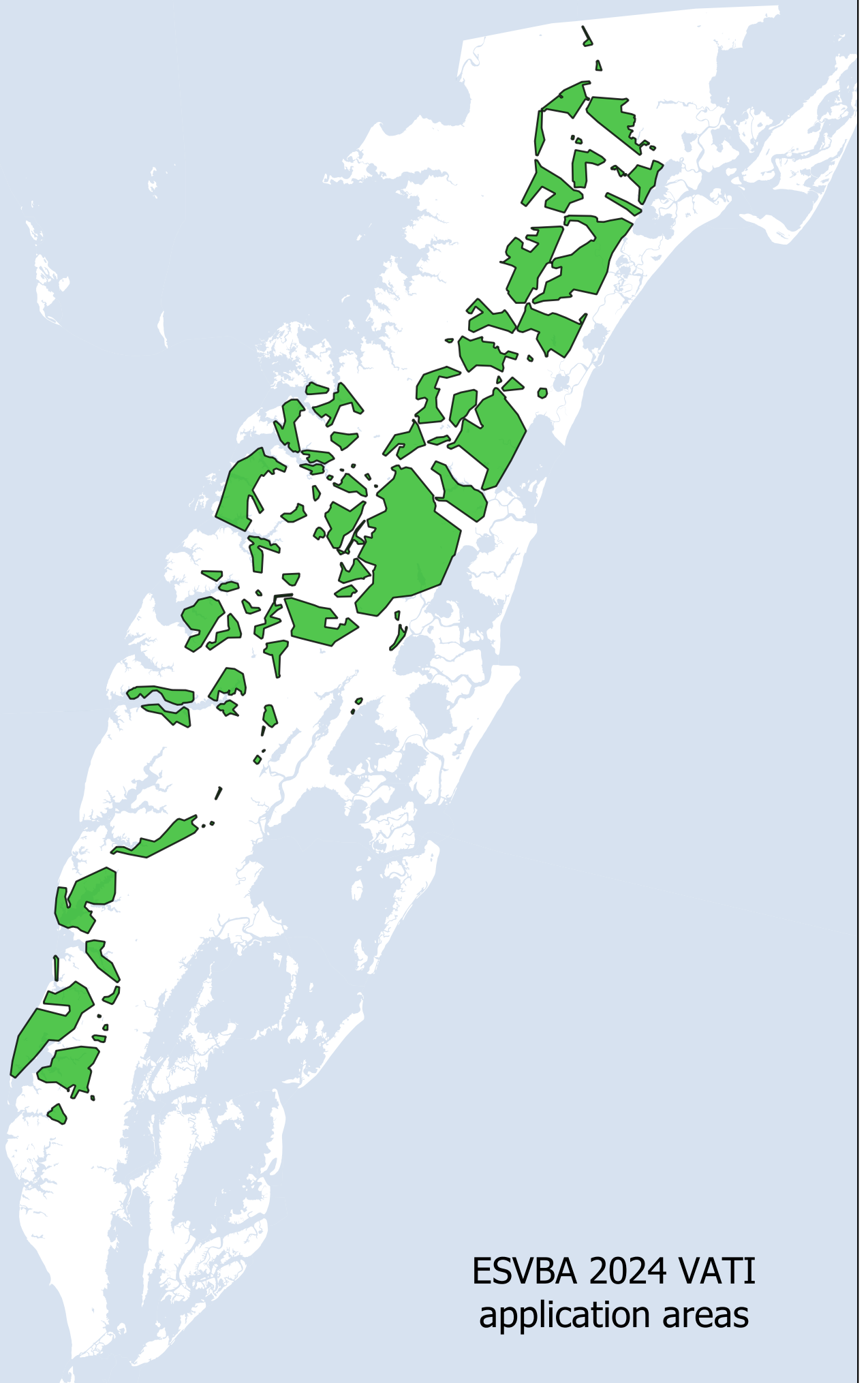




USDA areas



ESVBA 2022 awarded
VATI areas



ESVBA 2024 VATI
application areas

Documentation Unserved Area VATI Criteria

The proposed project area is largely unserved and underserved with capacity below the 100/20. The provider who had USDA fund to build the area has failed to provide complete coverage in the funded area. Being wireless, the provider does not have the infrastructure to meet the 100/20 requirement. With a maximum capacity of 30/5 across the whole project area, the provider can claim as low as zero percent overlap.

This information is supported by the provider's own subscriber data. It is important to note that internet service providers (ISPs) and incumbents use the ESVBA open access network to provide end-user services. Therefore, it is in the interest of all providers that the broadband infrastructure is reinforced and empowered in the current proposed areas.

The other major provider on the Eastern Shore of Virginia is Spectrum. As for Spectrum's coverage, the ESVBA was provided access to the pole attachment records by the local power cooperative. An analysis of the proposed project area was done leveraging the data for Spectrum's pole attachments. The analysis used GIS buffering to produce the reach of Spectrum's network within the project area. Buffered pole attachment data was used both inside and outside the project area to produce accurate results due to the possibility that Spectrum's network may reach inside of the project area from outside poles. The resultant areas are all under 20% coverage of Spectrum who is the only other provider on the Eastern Shore providing 100/20 Mbps of wireline services.

Of note, the data used to produce Spectrum's service coverage is an indication of all poles Spectrum is licensed to be operating on and include areas that Spectrum only has Cable television and not necessarily broadband services. This analysis thereby provided an overestimate of Spectrum's network. The ESVBA is aware many areas are licensed with the power cooperative however, an attachment may not exist. Additionally, in many of the areas, Spectrum may have a wire on the pole line but does not provide broadband as one of the services in those areas.

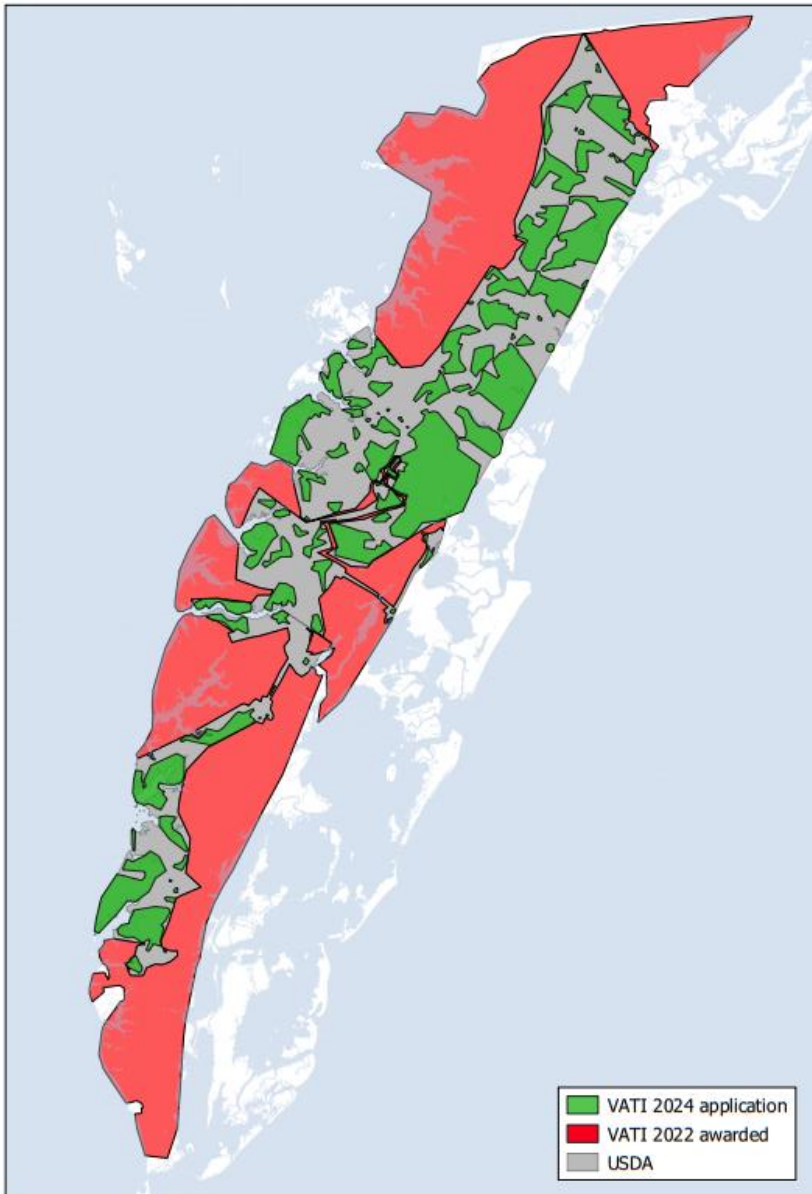
We are confident that this provides a very conservative estimate of other providers which confirms the proposed areas have less than 20% coverage and ensures that the proposed areas are well justified to receive funding. See Exhibit A for more details on the project area.

The ESVBA team took the following steps to produce the analysis:

- a. The ESVBA staff drove and surveyed the areas in person by going over poles to find attachments belonging to any competitors. They specially looked for Spectrum's responses since it is the major competitor in the area.
- b. A buffer algorithm was used to place a 300-foot buffer around poles with pole point, producing Spectrum's maximum service access with no special install cost passings. Note: Spectrum's poles were not limited to the project area. All pole points were buffered to produce valid results due to the possibility that Spectrum's network could reach into the project area from poles outside the project area.
- c. An intersection algorithm was then used, input layer set as passings within the project area and overlay layer set as buffered Spectrum's pole points.

Based on the analysis, the ESVBA produced 88 segments that are included in the application. See Attachment 1 for maps of each of the 88 segments. The goal was to be specific and include any area that otherwise will left out without any chance of coverage in the nearer future.

Exhibit A: Proposed Area Map



**2024 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI)
Passing Form****

Type of Passings	Total Number of Passings in the Project Area ¹	Passings in the Project Area, without Special Construction Costs Required ²	Passings with Special Construction Costs budgeted in the Application ³	Number of Passings with Speeds at 25/3 or below in Project Area ⁴
Residential	6,084	4,690	1,394	6,084
Businesses (non-home based)	0	0	0	0
Businesses (home-based)	0	0	0	0
Community Anchors	0	0	0	0
Non-residential	0	0	0	0
Total	6,084	4,690	1,394	6,084

Note: The Total Number of Passings **MUST** be equal to the Residential, Business (non-home based), Non-residential and Community Anchors sum.

Note: Do not include passings in RDOF awarded areas that were awarded to the co-applicant; these passings should be included in the RDOF Passings Form. Passings included in this application in RDOF awarded areas that were not awarded to the co-applicant, unless successfully challenged, are considered unserved and should be counted as passings in this form.

¹The total number of structures in the project area that can receive service. See definition of passing below for more detail.

²The number of structures in the project area that will not require special construction costs to provide service to. These passings fall within the broadband provider’s standard service connection drop length and do not require nonstandard equipment or any additional fees above normal service connection fees required to provide broadband access to a premise.

³The number of structures in the project area with all construction costs budgeted in the application. These passings will not require any additional special construction costs beyond those budgeted for in the VATI application.

⁴The number of structures in the project area that do not have access to internet at speeds of at least 25 mbps download and 3 mbps upload.

Definitions

Passing – any structure that can receive service. Multi-unit structures may be counted as more than 1 passing, provided individual connections and account are planned at that structure.

Business – An organization or entity that provides goods or services in order to generate profit. Businesses based in residential homes can count if they are a registered business (BPOL, LLC, etc.).

Community Anchor - schools, libraries, medical and health care providers, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income, unemployed, and the aged.

Non-Residential Passing – places of worship, federal, state, or local facilities or other potential customers that are neither a residence, business or a community anchor as defined above.

**List of Segments with Passings

County Area	Area	Total Passings	Passings without special construction	Passings with special construction
Accomack	1	7	3	4
Accomack	2	16	12	4
Accomack	3	27	27	0
Accomack	4	186	179	7
Accomack	5	394	349	45
Accomack	6	56	47	9
Accomack	7	5	3	2
Accomack	8	44	43	1
Accomack	9	102	72	30
Accomack	10	24	23	1
Accomack	11	14	14	0
Accomack	12	86	76	10
Accomack	13	12	7	5
Accomack	14	272	195	77
Accomack	15	234	195	39
Accomack	16	125	79	46
Accomack	17	8	6	2
Accomack	18	70	59	11
Accomack	19	7	6	1
Accomack	20	166	123	43

Accomack	21	11	10	1
Accomack	22	18	17	1
Accomack	23	27	27	0
Accomack	24	296	208	88
Accomack	25	68	65	3
Accomack	26	163	129	34
Accomack	27	112	107	5
Accomack	28	68	56	12
Accomack	29	106	71	35
Accomack	30	554	421	133
Accomack	31	18	18	0
Accomack	32	7	5	2
Accomack	33	13	12	1
Accomack	34	15	15	0
Accomack	35	120	114	6
Accomack	36	8	6	2
Accomack	37	22	12	10
Accomack	38	75	57	18
Accomack	39	93	91	2
Accomack	40	21	19	2
Accomack	41	30	14	16
Accomack	42	73	51	22
Accomack	43	5	3	2
Accomack	44	237	162	75
Accomack	45	17	11	6
Accomack	46	88	67	21
Accomack	47	209	192	17
Accomack	48	75	67	8
Accomack	49	15	11	4
Accomack	50	23	12	11
Accomack	51	153	125	28
Accomack	52	62	25	37
Accomack	53	4	1	3

Accomack	54	45	30	15
Accomack	55	39	35	4
Accomack	56	12	5	7
Accomack	57	173	123	50

Accomack	58	8	4	4
Accomack	59	72	57	15
Accomack	60	45	38	7
Accomack	61	67	43	24
Accomack	62	70	38	32
Accomack	63	31	27	4
Accomack	64	5	2	3
Accomack	65	14	12	2
Accomack	66	14	12	2
Accomack	67	21	16	5
Northampton	68	35	25	10
Northampton	69	3	2	1
Northampton	70	2	2	0
Northampton	71	12	6	6
Northampton	72	38	13	25
Northampton	73	17	16	1
Northampton	74	19	18	1
Northampton	75	7	7	0
Northampton	76	84	58	26
Northampton	77	239	175	64
Northampton	78	32	13	19
Northampton	79	10	9	1
Northampton	80	59	14	45
Northampton	81	14	8	6
Northampton	82	14	14	0
Northampton	83	8	8	0
Northampton	84	45	44	1
Northampton	85	102	46	56
Northampton	86	4	4	0
Northampton	87	53	40	13
Accomack	88	10	7	3
TOTALS	<u>88</u>	<u>6084</u>	<u>4690</u>	<u>1394</u>

2024 Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) RDOF Passings Form

Type of Passings	Total Number of Passings in the Project Area that lie within Preliminarily Awarded RDOF Areas ¹
Residential	0
Businesses (non-home based)	0
Businesses (home-based)	0
Community Anchors	0
Non-residential	0
Total Number of RDOF Passings	0

*Note: The Total Number of RDOF Passings **MUST** be equal to the Residential, Business (non-home based), Non-residential and Community Anchors sum.*

Definitions

Passing – any structure that can receive service. Multi-unit structures may be counted as more than 1 passing, provided individual connections and account are planned at that structure.

Business – An organization or entity that provides goods or services in order to generate profit. Businesses based in residential homes can count if they are a registered business (BPOL, LLC, etc.).

Community Anchor - schools, libraries, medical and health care providers, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income, unemployed, and the aged.

Non-Residential Passings – places of worship, federal, state, or local facilities or other potential customers that are neither a residence, business or a community anchor as defined above.

Attachment 6 – Propagation Map (Wireless Projects only)

Not applicable

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU ”) is made and entered into effective this December 14, 2023 (“Effective Date”) by and between County of Accomack, with office located at 23296 Courthouse Avenue, Suite 203, P.O. Box 388, Accomack, Virginia 23301; County of Northampton with office located at 6404 Courthouse Rd, Eastville, Virginia 23347; and Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA), with office located at 4174 Lankford Hwy, Exmore, VA 23350. Collectively, County of Accomack, County of Northampton, and Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) may be referred to below as the Parties and individually referred to as Party.

WHEREAS County of Accomack, County of Northampton, and Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) desire to cooperate with one another as co-applicants for a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (“VATI”) grant referred to herein as the Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project FY2024.

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of their mutual interests and desires, the Parties do hereby express their desire to agree to the following:

INTENT: The Parties will collaborate as co-applicants on a VATI grant to support the building of fiber in the area identified on the map attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference herein.

Upon grant award, County of Accomack and County of Northampton intend to act as the conduit of funds for the Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project FY2024. Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) intends to build and solely own the fiber installed for, provide the labor necessary for, and operate and maintain the fiber and customer base for the Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project FY2024.

This MOU is not intended to create a binding contractual relationship between the Parties. The Parties agree that it would be in their best interests to negotiate a binding agreement should a grant for the Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project FY2024 be awarded to the Parties by VATI.

EXPIRATION: This MOU expires upon the earlier occurrence of (i) two (2) years from the Effective Date above; (ii) execution by the Parties of a mutually agreed upon and fully negotiated binding agreement; (iii) an official announcement by VATI that the grant opportunity has been canceled; or (iv) the Parties do not receive a grant award from VATI.

ENTIRE AGREEMENT: The foregoing paragraphs and references contain the entire MOU between the Parties and supersede any previous understandings, commitments, or agreements (oral or written) with respect to the Accomack and Northampton Counties Broadband Network Expansion Project FY2024 referenced herein. Neither this MOU as a whole, or any single portion thereof, shall be deemed binding upon the Parties, unless and until incorporated into a

binding agreement properly executed by representatives of the Parties, each acting within the scope of a properly authorized delegation of authority. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the representatives of the Parties executing this document warrant by their signatures that they will act in good faith and diligence to achieve the intent manifested herein.

The Parties hereto have caused this MOU to be executed by their authorized representatives as set forth below.

County of Accomack _____

By:

Name:

Title:

Date:

County of Northampton _____

By:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA)

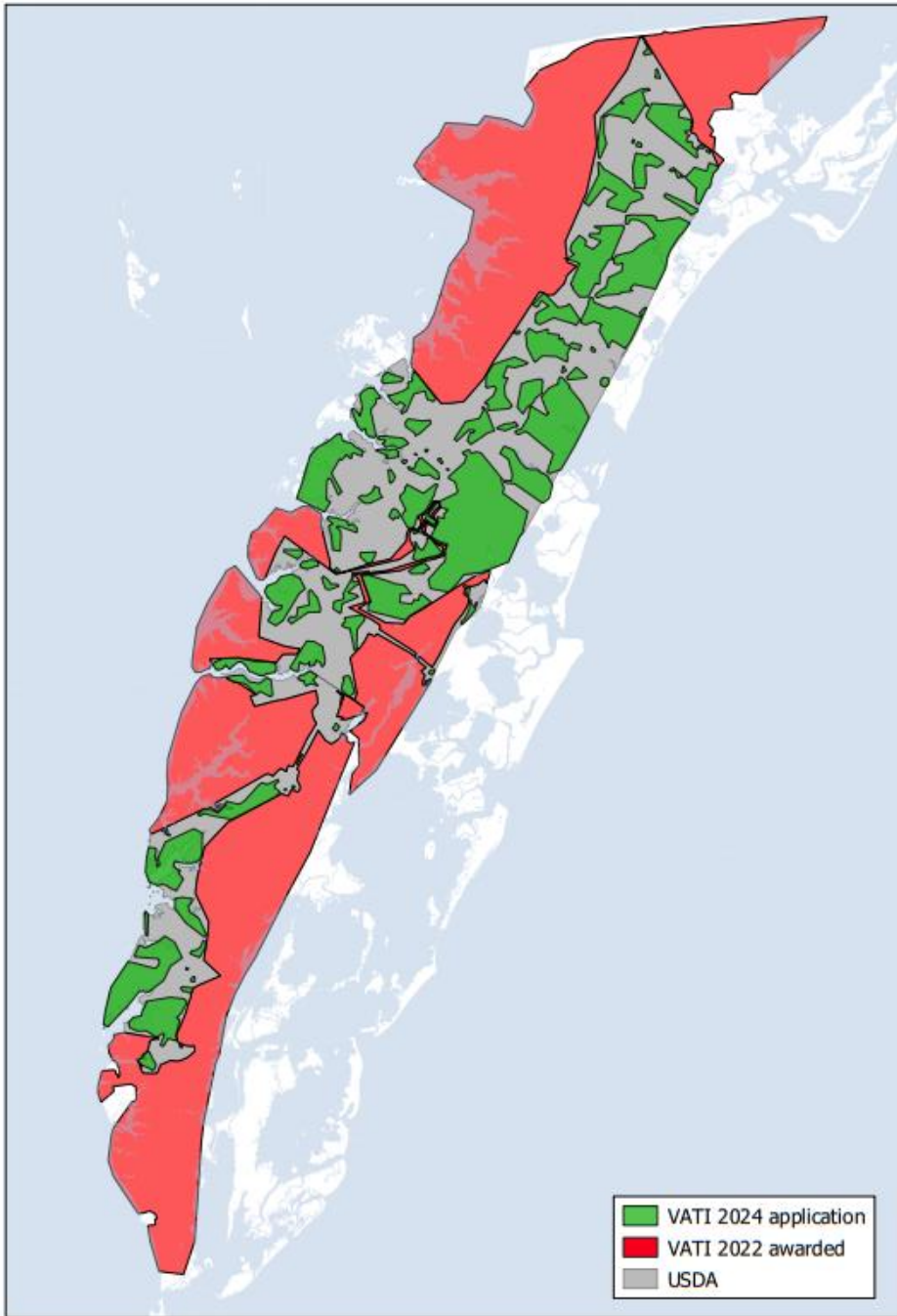
By:

Name:

Title:

Date

Exhibit A. VATI 2024 Build Areas



Funding Sources Table

Source of Funding	Amount	Percent %	Status
Requested VATI	\$ 13,554,919.94	79.71%	Pending
Accomack current match	\$ 1,839,470.00	10.82%	Pending
Northampton current match	\$ 569,298.13	3.35%	Pending
Accomack Prior Expend Match	\$ -	0.00%	Secured
Northampton Prior Expend Match	\$ 94,971.70	0.56%	Expended
ESVBA Match	\$ 947,490.16	5.57%	Secured
TOTAL	<u>\$ 17,006,149.93</u>	<u>100.00%</u>	<u>\$ 17,006,149.92</u>



COUNTY OF ACCOMACK
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

23296 Courthouse Ave – Room 203 | P.O. Box 388 | Accomack, Virginia 23301
(757) 787-5700 | administration@co.accomack.va.us
www.co.accomack.va.us

Michael T. Mason, CPA
County Administrator
December 15, 2023

Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D., Director
Department of Housing and Community Development
Office of Broadband
600 E Main St #300, Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Holmes:


Accomack County seeks assistance from the Department of Housing and Community Development to meet the critical need for broadband service in our rural community. Please accept this letter of support for a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant from Accomack County in partnership with the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA). This project is designed to expand broadband access by building 255 miles to 5,7287 serviceable units.

The Accomack Board of Supervisors recognizes the need for broadband in our community to support education, healthcare, and our economic base. To this end, the Board of Supervisors voted to provide a local match up to \$1,839,470 to support this project if the ESVBA is not able to raise the match capital in time for the VATI FY24 application.

As a community, Accomack County understands the importance of broadband in our daily lives at home and at work and seeks solutions for unserved and under-served areas in our county. The pandemic has significantly emphasized the need and the importance of broadband for our school system, telehealth, and economic activity to adapt to current and future crises and pandemics. The VATI support is important to reach universal coverage and ensure access to all residents and community support organizations.

Please let me know if I can provide any further support for this application. On behalf of the Board of Supervisors and the residents of Accomack County, I appreciate your assistance and your serious consideration of this application.

Sincerely yours,


Michael T. Mason, CPA
County Administrator



Board of Supervisors of Northampton County
P.O. Box 66 • Eastville, Virginia 23347

Charles Kolakowski
County Administrator

PHONE: 757-678-0440
FAX: 757-678-0483

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
John R. Coker, Chairman
Oliver H. Bennett, Vice Chairman
L. Dixon Leatherbury
M.E. "Betsy" Mapp
Ernest L. Smith, Jr.

December 1, 2023

Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D., Director
Department of Housing and Community Development
Office of Broadband
600 E Main St #300
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Dr. Holmes:

Northampton County seeks assistance from the Department of Housing and Community Development to meet the critical need for broadband service in our rural community. Please accept this letter of support for a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant from Northampton County in partnership with the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA). This project is designed to expand broadband access in Northampton by building 58 miles to 797 serviceable units.

The Northampton Board of Supervisors recognizes the need for broadband in our community to support education, healthcare, and our economic base. To this end, the Board of Supervisors voted to provide a local match up to \$569,298 to support this project if the ESVBA is not able to raise the match capital in time for the VATI FY24 application.

As a community, Northampton County understands the importance of broadband in our daily lives at home and at work and seeks solutions for unserved and under-served areas in our county. The pandemic has significantly emphasized the need and the importance of broadband for our school system, telehealth, and economic activity to adapt to current and future crises and pandemics. The VATI support is important to reach universal coverage and ensure access to all residents and community support organizations.

December 1, 2023

Page Two

Please let me know if I can provide any further support for this application. On behalf of the Board of Supervisors and the residents of Northampton County, I appreciate your assistance and your serious consideration of this application.

Sincerely yours,



CHARLES KOLAKOWSKI
County Administrator



December 14, 2023

Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D.
Director
Department of Housing and Community Development
Office of Broadband
600 E Main St #300, Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Dr. Holmes:

As part of the letters of match support, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority (ESVBA) is prepared to provide \$947,490.16 in funding towards the 2024 VATI project if awarded by DHCD; combined with the two County's support we will exceed the 20% minimum match of our grant.

The ESVBA understands the importance of broadband in the daily lives of residents at home and at work and seeks solutions for unserved and underserved areas. The pandemic has significantly emphasized the need and the importance of broadband for the school system, telehealth, and economic activity to adapt to current and future crises and pandemics. The VATI grant a critical component to reach universal coverage and ensure access to all residents and community support organizations in the Eastern Shore region.

I appreciate your commitment to universal coverage and your serious consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

x 

Robert Bridgham
Executive Director

Attachment 11 – Prior Expended Match Form

Local Government expenditures incurred after September 21, 2023, one year prior to the application open date, are eligible to be included in the application as match funds. Incurred expenses must be related to the proposed VATI project and meet VATI criteria. Expenditures incurred by internet service providers after May 11, 2023 are also eligible to be included in the application as match funds. For these match funds to be considered, the co-applicant internet service provider and local government applicant must have been unsuccessful in the FY22 round of VATI. Please complete the table below to explain any prior expended funds which have been considered as matching funds in this application. Incurred expenses must also be directly related to the proposed VATI project and meet VATI criteria. DHCD staff reserves the right to make administrative determinations on the validity of matching funds and accept a proportion of the funds when necessary.

Prior Expended Match Table				
Expense Incurred by: (Local Government or Internet Service Provider)	Source: (Local, State, Federal, Other, Loan, etc.) Please list fund source (i.e. Local Fiscal Recovery Fund)	Amount:	Brief Description: (Construction, Administration Expenses, or Other)	How is this expense directly related to the proposed VATI project? If more space is needed, please describe in detail below the table with numbered references in the cells below.
Northampton County	50% County Government; 50% Community Match	\$94,971.70	The fund was used to build five miles of fiber in the Vaucluse Shores community	The expense is related to the proposed project area because it was expended in the Vaucluse Shores area, an area that was underserved. The expense occurred between September 25, 2022-December 27, 2022.

DERIVATION OF COST VATI 2024

Product	Total FY24 Budget	VATI	Non-VATI	Source of Estimate	Date
OSP Const Labor	\$6,501,341.00	\$6,501,341.00	\$ -	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
Fiber Optics	\$1,117,086.00	\$852,816.18	\$264,269.82	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
OSP Hardware	\$855,358.00	\$318,397.84	\$536,960.16	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
Make Ready/Permitting	\$103,025.09	\$103,025.09	\$ -	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
OSP Field Eng	\$1,040,858.91	\$1,040,858.91	\$ -	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
Headend Elec	\$1,719,764.28	\$1,719,764.28	\$ -	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
Special Construction	\$3,401,229.98	\$2,951,229.98	\$450,000.00	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
Contingency	\$2,267,486.66	\$67,486.66	\$2,200,000.00	Internal engineering	12/14/2023
Total	<u>\$17,006,149.92</u>	<u>\$13,554,919.94</u>	<u>\$3,451,229.98</u>		

4206 GREENBRIAR RD.
EASTVILLE, VA 23347

August 8, 2022

Sen. Lynnwood Lewis
P.O. Box 760
Accomack, VA 23301

Dear Sen. Lewis,

I am writing regarding our telecommunications infrastructure here in our area of the Eastern Shore, a micro community known as Greenbriar Farm.

As per the USDA mapping for the **USDA's Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program**, we were wrongly **EXCLUDED** from the 2022 VATI Grant. We received no benefit or coverage from that program. The loan was apparently granted to the "Declarations Network Group," an entity we have never heard of. For some reason, when they implemented the program they left us out.

Our present terrestrial internet access is Verizon DSL. In best case scenarios, we download at a speed of 3 mb/second and upload at 1 mb/second. This very basic, very slow service costs approximately \$100/month. And, we have been informed that Verizon plans to phase out this service, and we will be left with no internet at that time.

Greenbriar Farm has been quoted a price for broadband access by ESVBA of \$50,550.00 to be shared by the 6 residences in our community. That price is far outside of what we are able to pay, and since we believe we were skipped in the Universal Coverage through the Infrastructure Loan Program, we are asking you to help in correcting the error and include our community in the 2023 VATI Grant.

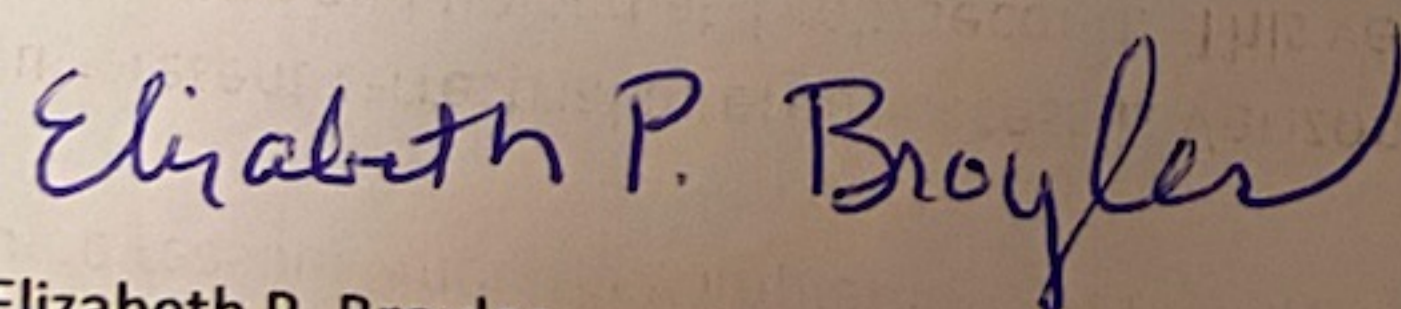
We know that time is of the essence and the deadline to apply for this grant is August 25, 2022. So, please consider our request quickly.

I would greatly appreciate a response from you regarding this matter. You can send your response to me at my mailing address which is:

Elizabeth P. Broyles
1300 N. Bay Shore Dr.
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Warm Regards,



Elizabeth P. Broyles,
Greenbriar Farm Resident

Senator Lynwood Lewis
Address: PO Box 760
Accomac, VA 23301

Dear Senator Lewis,

I am writing to make you aware of an issue regarding broadband access in my community and ask your help in solving the problem. Our community was deemed ineligible to receive any benefit from the 2022 VATI Grant moneys to assist with the extreme \$50,550.00 cost to provide broadband access to our micro-community. This \$50550.00 cost quoted by the Eastern Shore Broadband Authority would have to be shared between 6 present households. The reason given for the exclusion was that our community was in an area (see attached maps) that had already received broadband following a USDA program "Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan" given to "Declaration Network Group". I'm not sure but if this is the parent company to Nubeam we received no benefit from said program we do not have any Nubeam coverage.

Greenbriar Farm, our micro community, presently have no terrestrial options. We have a few legacy DSL serviced households and Verizon is in process of phasing them out. The present terrestrial service, if working have maximum speeds of 3Mbs/1Mbs.

Please help correct this "Universal Coverage" error and include Greenbriar Farm in the 2023 VATI Grant. Thank You for all of your work on our behalf. We are looking forward to your response.

Best Regards,

Michael and Suzanne Noseworthy

4282 Greenbriar Court

Eastville, VA 23347-1261

noseworthy@aol.com



Kouliga Koala <kkoala@esvba.com>

Fwd: Broadband Internet

2 messages

Kyle Bundick <kbundick@esvba.com>

Wed, Aug 24, 2022 at 7:10 PM

To: Robert Bridgham <rbridgham@esvba.com>, Kouliga Koala <kkoala@esvba.com>

Below is an email from an accomack county teacher and his wife who are in vati 23 area that is desperate for our internet.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Chad McGregor** <chad.mcgregor@accomack.k12.va.us>

Date: Wed, Aug 24, 2022, 6:33 PM

Subject: Broadband Internet

To: kbundick@esvba.com <kbundick@esvba.com>

My family is interested in getting broadband at our address: [24200 Folly Farm Rd. Accomac, VA 23301](#). We are not on a public road, therefore our internet options are very limited and inhibit us from having a reliable and consistent connection. Thank you!

Chad & Miranda McGregor

This is a staff email account managed by Accomack County Public Schools. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Kouliga Koala <kkoala@esvba.com>

Thu, Aug 25, 2022 at 12:06 PM

To: Kyle Bundick <kbundick@esvba.com>

Cc: Robert Bridgham <rbridgham@esvba.com>

Thank you, Kyle.

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Kouliga Koala, PhD**Business Development Manager, ESVBA**

Certified Public-Private Partnerships Professional, Foundation



Broadband Data Collection System

Help | Robert Bridgham ▾

[Submissions Dashboard](#) / [Submission Overview](#)

Submission Overview

SUBMISSION CERTIFIED

ERN: 0019703131 | Service Provider | Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

Data as of December 31, 2022

Biannual Filing Window

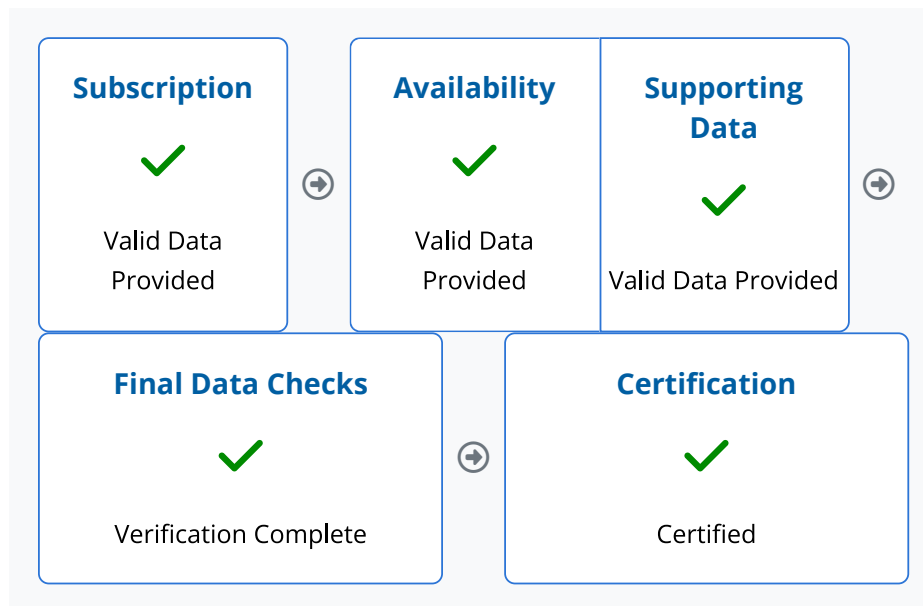
DATA AS-OF DATE	WINDOW OPEN
Dec 31, 2022	Jan 3, 2023
TODAY'S DATE	WINDOW CLOSE
Dec 12, 2023	Mar 1, 2023
WINDOW STATUS	
CLOSED	
FILING STATUS	
Original - Certified	

Fixed Data Requests

Fixed Challenges
0

Submission Steps

[Decertify Submission](#)



Fixed Submission Data

	Subscription Data Files Currently Processing (0)	Availability Data Files Currently Processing (0)	
Service	Subscribers	Locations	Supporting Data
Fixed Broadband	3,202	19,852	✓ 1 of 1
Fiber to the Premises	3,202	19,852	✓ 1 of 1

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Broadband Data Collection System

Help | Robert Bridgham ▾

Submissions Dashboard / Submission Overview

Submission Overview

SUBMISSION CERTIFIED

ERN: 0019703131 | Service Provider | Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority

Data as of June 30, 2023

Biannual Filing Window

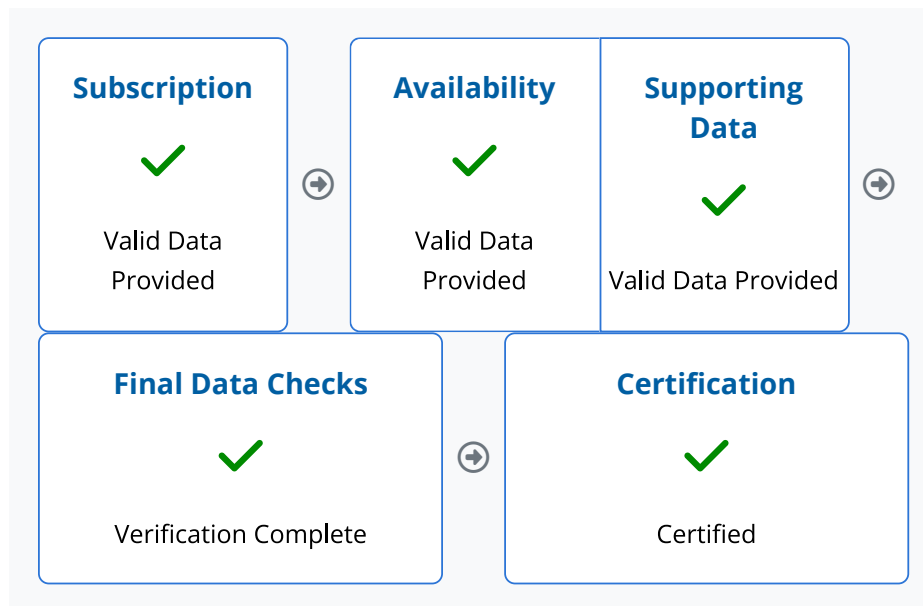
DATA AS-OF DATE	WINDOW OPEN
Jun 30, 2023	Jul 3, 2023
TODAY'S DATE	WINDOW CLOSE
Dec 12, 2023	Sep 15, 2023
WINDOW STATUS	
CLOSED	
FILING STATUS	
Original - Certified	

Fixed Data Requests

Fixed Challenges
0

Submission Steps

[Decertify Submission](#)



Fixed Submission Data

	Subscription Data Files Currently Processing (0)	Availability Data Files Currently Processing (0)	
Service	Subscribers	Locations	Supporting Data
Fixed Broadband	3,647	42,900	✓ 1 of 1
Fiber to the Premises	3,647	42,900	✓ 1 of 1

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Attachment 17 – RSSI Projection Shapefiles

Not applicable