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Cultural Resources Survey for the 1.17-Mile New Hope Road Extension, Williamson County, Texas

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Cultural Resources Survey for the 1.17-Mile New Hope Road Extension, Williamson County, Texas

Final Report
December 2018

TAC Permit # 7738

Prepared for:
City of Cedar Park
550 Cypress Creek Road
Cedar Park, Texas 78613

Prepared by:
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1001 Mopac Circle
Austin, Texas 78746

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Julie Shipp

aci Project No.: 31-16-053

Abstract

On August 4 and October 16, 2016, archeologists from aci consulting conducted a cultural resources survey for the proposed 1.17-mile New Hope Road Extension in Williamson County, Texas. Located in the City of Cedar Park, the proposed project lies along portions of the existing New Hope Road. The New Hope Road Extension will lengthen New Hope Road from its existing eastern terminus to Ronald Regan Boulevard.

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Antiquities Permit consists of the 98-acre proposed road extension. The survey, conducted in accordance with Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA) and Texas Historical Commission (THC) guidelines, did not result in the location of any new archeological sites, historic structures, or any historic properties. This work was conducted in compliance with Texas Administrative Code (13 TAC 26) under Permit #7738. Julie Shipp served as Principal Investigator.

Based on these results, no further archeological work is recommended. Records from this investigation will be curated at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory.

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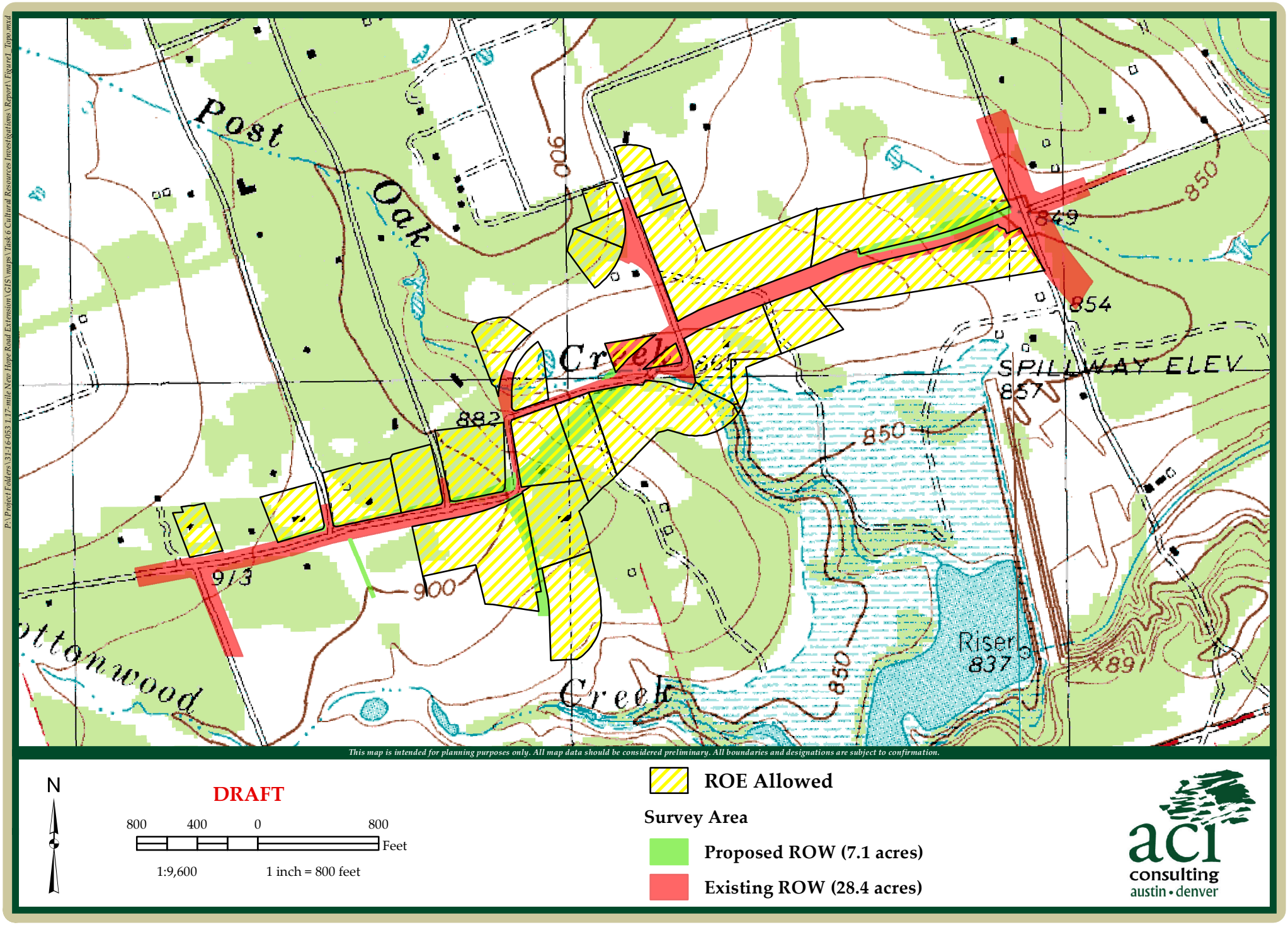
1.0 INTRODUCTION

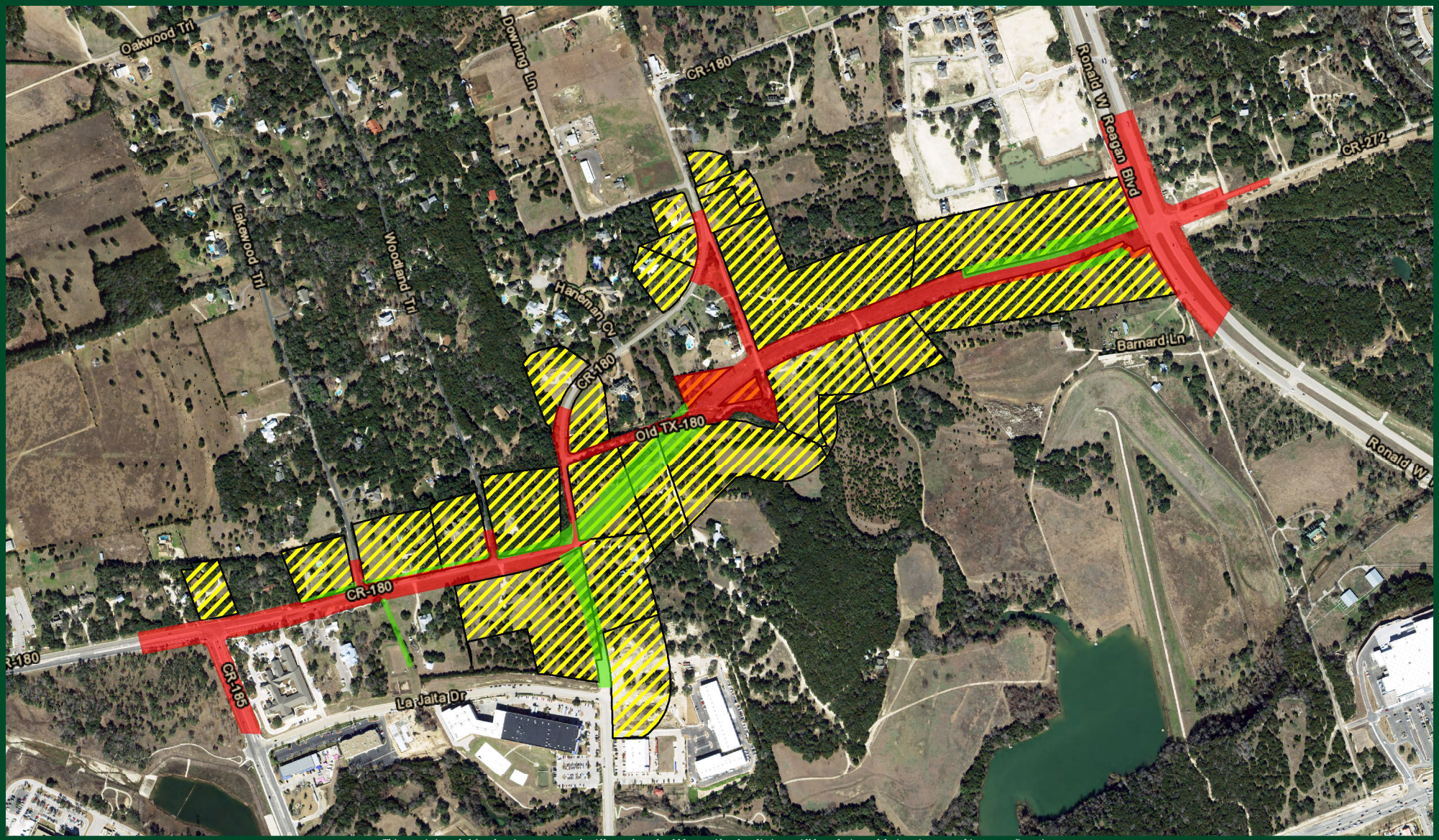
In August and October of 2016, archeologists from aci consulting conducted a cultural resources survey for the proposed 1.17-mile New Hope Road Extension in Williamson County, Texas. Located in the City of Cedar Park, the proposed project lies along portions of the existing New Hope Road. The Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the Antiquities Permit consists of the approximate 35.5-acre proposed road extension along County Road (CR) 272 from Ronald W Reagan Boulevard to CR-185 in Round Rock, Texas (Figures 1 and 2). The existing Right-of-Way (ROW) consists of 28.4 acres and the proposed ROW consists of 7.1 acres). The existing ROW ranges from 70.5 feet to 120 feet and the proposed ROW, and the proposed ROW ranges from 130 to 180 feet. The New Hope Road Extension will lengthen New Hope Road from its existing eastern terminus to Ronald W Regan Boulevard.

The project will be funded through the City of Cedar Park, thus the project is conducted in compliance with the Texas Antiquities Code as well as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, for any additional compliance for impacts to US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulated waters. The investigation consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey and reporting in accordance with THC and Council of Texas Archaeologists (CTA) standards.



1.17-mile New Hope Drive Extension **aci Project No.: 31-16-053**

Figure 1: Project area on *Leander* USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. **December 2018**



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1.17-mile New Hope Drive Extension **aci Project No.: 31-16-053**

Figure 2: Project area on aerial photograph background. **December 2018**

2.0 BACKGROUND REVIEW

A literature review of the THC Archeological Sites Database (Atlas) revealed that no archeological sites have been previously recorded within the APE, and sixteen archeological sites have been previously recorded within one kilometer of the APE (Table 1; Figure 3). The majority of the sites are lithic scatters, relegated to surficial cultural deposits as there were shallow Holocene alluvial sediments overlying bedrock, as mentioned on site forms. Most sites lacked integrity due to heavily disturbed soils from artificial disturbances including bulldozing, plowing, and looting.

Table 1. Previously Recorded Archeological Sites within 1 km of the APE.

Site	Site Type	NRHP Eligibility	Recommendations	Report
41WM145	Midden	Ineligible within ROW	None	Barnes and Scott 2013
41WM233	Burned rock and lithic scatter	Undetermined	Unknown	Unknown
41WM234	Burned rock midden	Eligible	None	Stotts et al 2007 Barnes and Scott 2013
41WM636	Lithic scatter	Ineligible within ROW	None	Unknown
41WM645	Lithic scatter	Undetermined	None	Feit 2006
41WM646	Lithic scatter	Ineligible within ROW	NRHP testing	Unknown
41WM648	Historic structure	Undetermined	NRHP testing	Unknown
41WM701	Burial; Burned rock midden	Undetermined	NRHP testing	Unknown
41WM945	Lithic scatter; Historic debris scatter	Ineligible	None	Unknown
41WM1031	Lithic scatter; Historic chimney	Ineligible	None	Unknown
41WM1032	Historic concreate feature	Ineligible	None	Unknown
41WM1033	Historic concreate feature	Eligible	None	Unknown
41WM1042	Burned rock midden	Ineligible	None	Unknown
41WM1163	Lithic scatter	Ineligible within ROW	None	Unknown
41WM1164	Camp site	Ineligible within ROW	None	Unknown
41WM1182	Lithic scatter	Ineligible	None	Unknown

Site 41WM145 was recorded in 1970 by Dr. Steelman of Southwestern University and was revisited in 2012 by aci consulting as part of a cultural resource survey for a proposed 4,000-linear-foot wastewater line. No intact deposits were discovered and the site was determined ineligible within the ROW (Atlas).

Site 41WM233 and 41WM234 were originally recorded by Frank Weir in 1973. Site 41WM234, which contains burned rock middens from possible Early Archaic and Middle Archaic periods, was revisited in 2000 by Horizon Environmental Services, Inc., in 2007 by Hicks & Company, and again in 2013 by aci consulting for a City of Cedar Park wastewater collection system project. 41WM234 is located adjacent to Spanish Oak Creek and a majority of the site has been buried by fill prior to commercial construction, further disturbed by looting. As reported in 2007, 41WM234 Extension was determined eligible for SAL and NRHP (Atlas). This northern, lower portion of the site has potential for subsurface cultural deposits but has not yet been explored as the extension of the site has repeatedly been outside of the ROW during follow-up investigations. 41WM234 will not be revisited as part of this investigation as it is almost a kilometer (.6 miles) to the southeast of the APE.

Sites 41WM636, 41WM645, and 41WM646 were recorded in 1984 by Espey, Houston, & Associates, all generally light lithic scatters. Site 41WM645 was revisited in 2006 by Hicks and Company who recommended no further research or investigation due to lack of features, artifact clusters, and sediment deposits. Site 41WM648, also recorded in 1984 by Espey, Houston, & Associates, was a historic site marked by remains of a small barn. None of the four sites will be revisited as part of this investigation.

Site 41WM701, originally recorded in 1985 by Power Engineering, Inc., consists of an Early to Late Archaic burial, burned rock middens, and recovered identifiable lithic tools (Ensor, Frio, and Bell). The burial had been previously disturbed by looting. Site 41WM701 will not be revisited as part of this investigation as it is half a kilometer (.3 miles) to the south of the APE and will not be disturbed.

Site 41WM945 was originally recorded in 1994 by Hicks & Company for a City of Cedar Park Cottonwood Creek project. Containing a prehistoric component of a surficial lithic scatter and a historic component of cut limestone blocks and debris scatter, the site was found lacking integrity due to bulldozing and artificial disturbances and was determined ineligible for listing on the NRHP.

Sites 41WM1031, 41WM1032, and 41WM1033 were recorded by Archaeological and Cultural Sciences Group in 2002. Site 41WM1031 contained one chimney constructed of dressed limestone block, possibly 19th century and a small surficial lithic scatter was observed. As noted, both components were probably less than 10% intact due to heavy erosion and agricultural practices. Site 41WM1032 contains a concrete feature most likely related to the gravel quarry adjacent to the site, of unknown function and date. Both sites were determined ineligible for listing on the NRHP. Site 41WM1033, which rests on the one kilometer buffer of the ROW, contains a concrete canal possibly used for livestock practices. The site was determined eligible for NRHP, but will not be revisited as part of this investigation.

Additionally, site 41WM1042 was recorded by Archaeological and Cultural Sciences Group in 2002 as a prehistoric burned rock midden. The site lacked diagnostic artifacts and evidenced heavy looting and further disruption from modern refuse and construction activities. The site was determined ineligible.

Sites 41WM1163 and 41WM1164 were recorded by Horizon Environmental Services, Inc. in 2007. Site 41WM1163 consists of low-density artifact scatter situated in a formerly plowed field on the broad western terrace of Brushy Creek and several large fragments of burned rock, though no evidence of cultural features was identified. Site 41WM1164 consists of a low-density lithic artifact scatter, with a few isolated higher-density areas, however primarily observed on modern ground surface. Both sites lacked integrity as a function of its surficial context and the agricultural land use and both were determined ineligible in ROW.

Site 41WM1182 was recorded by GTI Environmental, Inc. in 2007. Burned rock fragments, debitage, bifacial fragments, and an undetermined basal projectile point fragment were observed on the surface. The site was disturbed by

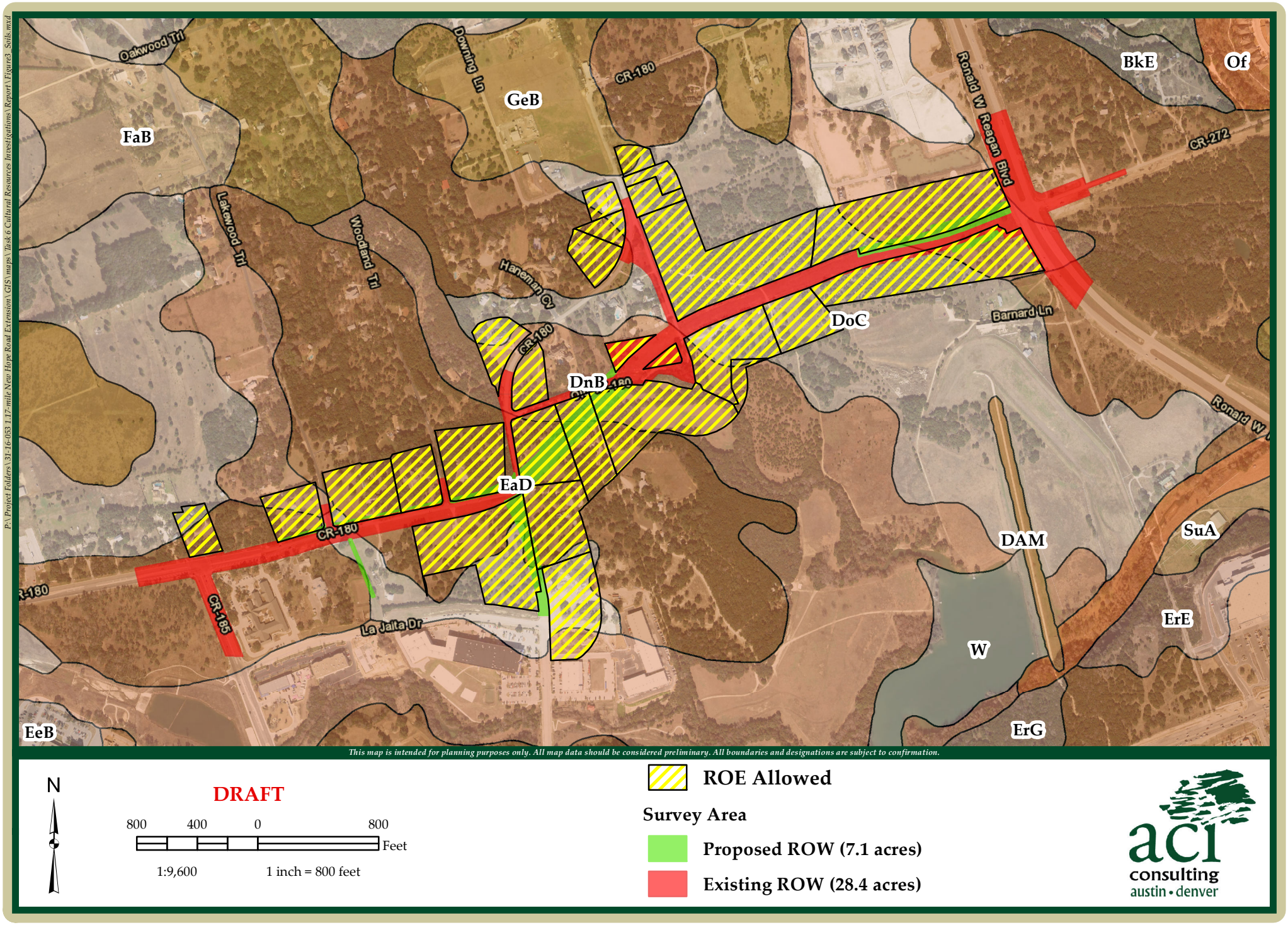
agricultural practices with bedrock near the surface. The site was determined ineligible for listing on the NRHP.

The soils mapped within the APE are Eckrant cobbly clay, Doss silty clay, Denton silty clay, and Georgetown clay loam (NRCS 2016). The Eckrant series consists of well drained very shallow and shallow to indurated limestone bedrock and interbedded cryptocrystalline quartz, chert, marl, and chalk, formed in residuum derived from limestone. These nearly level to very steep soils are on summits, shoulders, and backslopes of ridges on dissected plateaus. The Doss series consists of shallow to weakly cemented limestone, well drained, moderately slow permeable soils that formed in calcareous loamy and clayey residuum derived from marls and limestone. These very gently to moderately sloping soils occur on hill slopes on dissected plateaus. The Denton series consists of deep, well drained, slowly permeable soils that formed in clayey materials over residuum weathered from limestone bedrock. These nearly level or gently sloping soils are on uplands. The Georgetown series consists of moderately deep, well drained, very slowly permeable soils that have formed over indurated limestone of Cretaceous age. These soils occur on nearly level to very gently sloping dissected plateaus (Figure 4).

The project area is located in central Texas in the Edwards Plateau region, which is characterized by largely dissected limestone plateaus and hills covered by juniper-oak savanna and mesquite-oak savanna, containing a sparse network of perennial streams with shallow to moderately deep soils. The project area is within the "Live Oak-Ashe Juniper Woods" and "Oak-Mesquite-Juniper Parks/Woods" designations, as noted on Texas Parks and Wildlife "Vegetation Types of Texas" map (McMahan et al. 1984).

The majority of the APE is mapped as the Cedar Park, Bee Cave, and Bull Creek Members, undivided, of Walnut Formation. Limestone, argillaceous limestone, and marl. Individual members are roughly 30 to 50 feet thick. Walnut Formation consists of six members that include, from oldest to youngest, the Bull Creek, Bee Cave, Cedar Park, Whitestone, Keys Valley, and the upper marl member. The eastern end of the APE is mapped as Comanche Peak Limestone of the Fredericksburg Group, fine to very fine grained, fairly hard, nodular, light gray, weathers white, extensively burrowed, burrow filings slightly coarser and

darker, typically crops out in the scarp face beneath Edwards Limestone; thickness up to 80 feet (Moore 1964).



1.17-mile New Hope Drive Extension **aci Project No.: 31-16-053**

Figure 3: Project area soils. **December 2018**

3.0 FIELD METHODS

A pedestrian survey of the APE was conducted to locate any archeological sites or other historical properties that may be adversely affected by construction. The pedestrian survey was conducted within the entire APE. Shovel testing was not required due to good ground surface visibility (ranging from approximately 30-50 percent), shallow and eroded soils at the surface, and prior disturbance from water, gas, and phone lines, in addition to road construction (Figures 5-10).

4.0 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

The survey was conducted under pleasant conditions in the morning, sunny and warm. The high point within the subject area is located at the western extent near Tx-183A Toll. From this point the elevation slopes down towards the east, following the contours of the drainages throughout the subject area, the elevation within the subject area ranges from 850 feet above mean sea level (MSL) to 920 feet above MSL (City of Round Rock 2012; USGS 1987). The vegetation within the APE consisted primarily of live oak, ashe juniper, cedar elm, and other native and non-native grasses. Ground surface visibility was generally good and at a minimum of 30% at any point with limestone subsoils and bedrock frequently at the surface.

The new ROW along existing New Hope Road has been disturbed by the installation of water, gas, electric, and phone lines, in addition to road construction (Figure 5 and 6). An approximate 0.7-mile section does not run along an existing roadway, but runs along a transmission line corridor has also been disturbed by utility construction. This section is from the eastern end of the existing New Hope Road to Ronald Reagan Boulevard. The proposed road crosses Post Oak Creek in this section of currently unimproved roadway (Figure 7). On the west bank of Post Oak Creek are six water mains (Figure 8) and an erosion control feature (Figure 9) created with gabion baskets to prevent sheetwash into the creek. The main channel of Post Oak Creek is incised into bedrock (Figure 10) and is a small but substantial stream that, along with Cottonwood and Spanish Oak Creeks, feeds into a Soil Conservation Service Reservoir that in turns feeds Brushy Creek. Although in theory this confluence of streams is likely to contain an archeological site, the project area is disturbed and

highly eroded. Furthermore, the soils within the project area are upland soils, weathered *in situ* and are not alluvial or terrace soils, further decreasing the chances of buried cultural remains. Thus, because of the numerous disturbances, severe erosion, soils mapped within the project area, and good ground surface visibility, no subsurface testing was conducted in an area that is between two drainage where numerous sites have been recorded.

Figure 5. Overview of existing ROW of CR187, facing west.

Figure 6. Overview of existing ROW of CR187 near western terminus, facing east

Figure 7. Overview of new ROW, facing northeast.

Figure 8. Four of six water mains on west bank of Post Oak Creek, facing east.

Figure 9. Man-made erosion control feature, facing northeast.

Figure 10. Post Oak Creek, facing southeast.

Figure 11: Cleared transmission line corridor, facing southeast.

Figure 12: Cleared transmission line corridor, facing east.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Archeologists from aci consulting conducted a cultural resources survey for the proposed 1.17-mile New Hope Road Extension in Williamson County, Texas. Located in the City of Cedar Park, the proposed project lies along portions of the existing New Hope Road. The New Hope Road Extension will lengthen New Hope Road from its existing eastern terminus to Ronald W Regan Boulevard.

No archaeological sites were recorded during the survey and no previously recorded archaeological sites, cemeteries, NRHP properties, SALs, or RTHLs were identified during the background review. Based on these results, no further archeological work is recommended. If any cultural resources are observed during the course of construction for this project, the City of Cedar Park is advised to contact a professional archeologist.

6.0 REFERENCES CITED

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