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## **Intensive Archeological Survey for the Proposed East Williamson County Events Center Access Road (Bill Pickett Trail), Williamson County, Texas**

Chris Dayton

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## Intensive Archeological Survey for the Proposed East Williamson County Events Center Access Road (Bill Pickett Trail), Williamson County, Texas

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INTENSIVE ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR  
THE PROPOSED EAST WILLIAMSON COUNTY EVENTS  
CENTER ACCESS ROAD (BILL PICKETT TRAIL),  
WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS

*Prepared by*  
Chris Dayton, PhD, RPA  
(Principal Investigator)  
Cox | McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc.  
6010 Balcones Drive  
Suite 210  
Austin, TX 78731

*For*  
Williamson County  
710 South Main Street  
Georgetown, TX 78626

*And*  
K. Friese + Associates  
1120 S. Capital of Texas Highway  
CityView 2, Suite 100  
Austin, TX 78746

*Under*  
Texas Antiquities Permit 7488

Cox | McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc. Archeological Report 115  
(CMEC-AR-115)



January 19, 2016

*This report contains archeological site location information (not for public disclosure).*

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## Management Summary

In December 2015, a pedestrian archeological survey was completed in order to inventory and evaluate any archeological resources on public and private land for 1.2 miles of proposed new-location roadway between Chandler Road and Northpark Boulevard in Taylor, Williamson County, Texas. The project is associated with the development of the East Williamson County Events Center (EWCEC), currently under construction near the south end of the project. The road will be owned and funded by Williamson County, rendering it subject to the Antiquities Code of Texas. No federal nexus is known.

The archeological area of potential effects (APE) consists of the 20-acre (8-hectare) footprint of the proposed roadway. Most of the APE consists of cultivated fields and had high ground surface visibility during the field visit. Nine shovel tests were excavated where ground visibility was limited and soils appeared to be intact. All were negative for cultural material. A single isolated non-diagnostic lithic artifact was found on the surface. No further work is recommended within the APE prior to the construction of the proposed roadway.

If any historic or prehistoric cultural material, features, or deposits are inadvertently uncovered during the proposed construction activities, construction should cease and Texas Historical Commission (THC) personnel should be notified immediately.

Notes, forms, and other project data will be made permanently available to future researchers at the Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS) at Texas State per TAC 26.16 and 26.17. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) concurred with the findings and recommendations of this report on December 28, 2015 (see Appendix A).

# INTENSIVE ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY FOR THE PROPOSED EAST WILLIAMSON COUNTY EVENTS CENTER ACCESS ROAD (BILL PICKETT TRAIL), WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Overview of the Project

Williamson County proposes to construct approximately 1.2 miles of new-location roadway between Chandler Road and Northpark Boulevard in order to provide access to the East Williamson County Events Center north of Taylor in Williamson County, Texas (**Figure 1**). The proposed right-of-way is typically 120 feet in width. Including tie-in work at the existing roads to the north and south, the project footprint, and therefore the archeological area of potential effects (APE), covers approximately 20 acres. Based on typical roadway construction practices and preliminary planning documents, impacts will likely extend to a maximum depth of two feet or less.

### Regulatory Context

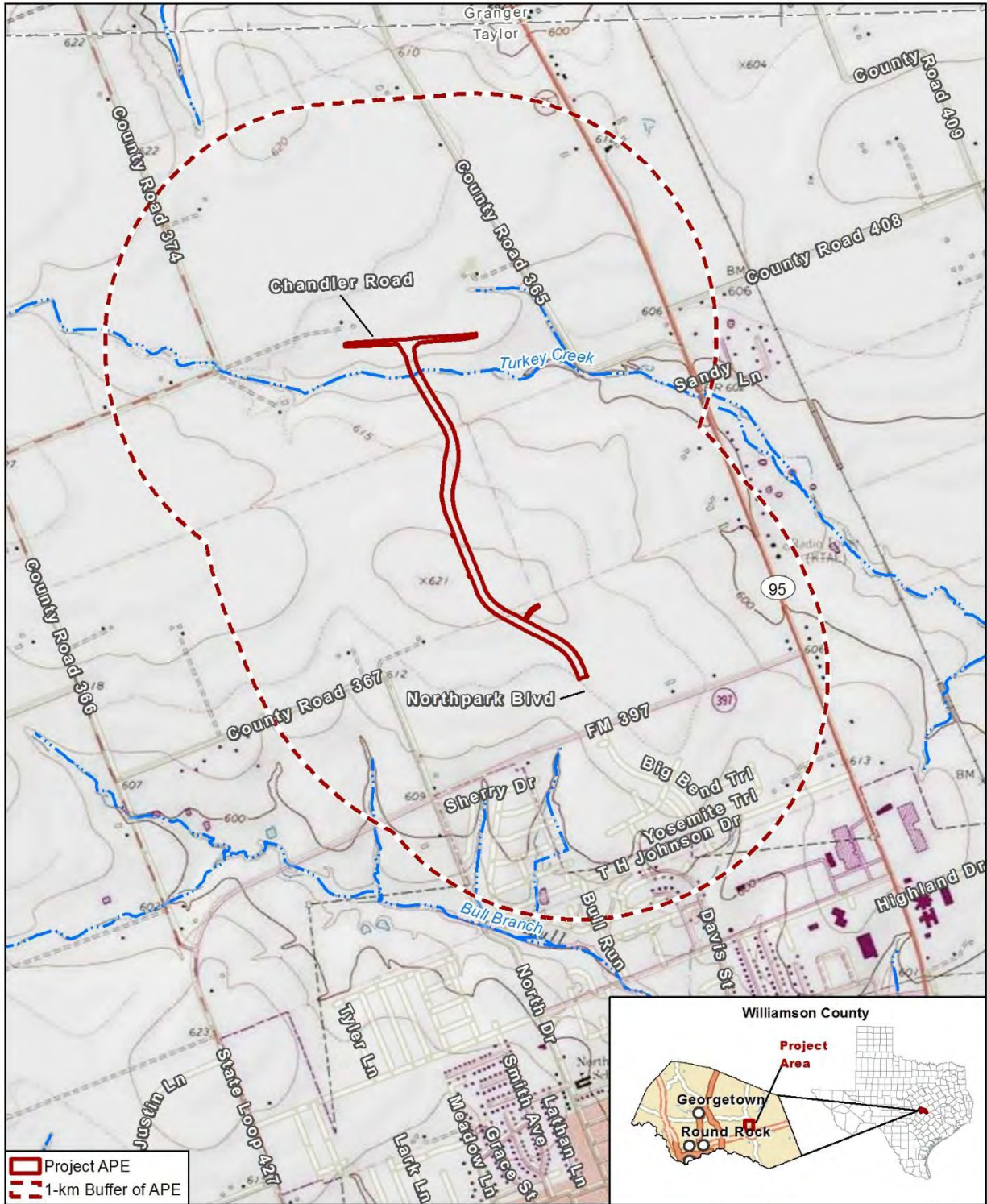
The project is subject to the Antiquities Code of Texas due to County ownership and funding (9TNRC 191). No federal nexus is currently known.

### Methodological and Logistical Considerations

Chris Dayton of Cox|McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc. (CMEC) performed the field work for this project in December 2015. The weather was cool and sunny. No access restrictions or other major logistical constraints were encountered.

### Structure of the Report

Following this introduction, Chapter Two presents environmental parameters and known cultural resources in the study area; Chapter Three discusses research goals, relevant methods, and the underlying regulatory considerations; and Chapter Four presents field results and recommendations. References are found in Chapter Five.



  Project APE  
  1-km Buffer of APE

**Figure 1**  
**Location of Archeological APE**  
**East Wilco Park Access Road**

Data Sources: THC (2015), TARL (2015), NHD (2014)  
 Basemap Source: USGS Taylor and Granger 7.5' Quadrangles (1989, 1988)

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                 |                          |
|                                 | 2,000 Feet<br>500 Meters |
| Prepared for: Williamson County | 1 in = 2,000 feet        |
| Prepared by: MCS                | Scale: 1:24,000          |
|                                 | Date: 1/6/2016           |

G:\Projects\Williamson\_County\E\_Wilco\_Park\_Access\_Rd\Arch\_Figure 1\_APE-revised\_20151113.mxd



## 2.0 Environmental and Cultural Background

### **Topography, Geology, Soils, and Land Use**

The APE is located at elevations of approximately 610-624 ft above mean sea level on level uplands approximately two miles south of the San Gabriel River. A minor, ephemeral drainage, Turkey Creek, crosses the north end of the APE, but does not have potential for significant alluvial floodplain/terrace deposits of interest for archeology. The APE is underlain by Burleson clay on 0-1 percent slopes on a geologic substrate of Pleistocene high gravels (NRCS 2015; USGS 2015). Land within the APE is currently used for agriculture, primarily corn production.

### **Previous Investigations and Previously Identified Cultural Resources**

A search of the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) maintained by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) was conducted in order to identify archeological sites, historical markers (Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks or RTHLs), properties or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), State Antiquities Landmarks (SALs), cemeteries, or other cultural resources that may have been previously recorded in or near the APE, as well as previous surveys undertaken in the area.

According to Atlas survey coverage data, one previous survey has intersected the APE, a 1985 Soil Conservation Service (SCS; now Natural Resources Conservation Service or NRCS) area study near the north end of the APE (THC 2015). There are no previously recorded archeological sites or other cultural resources within the APE. Within a one-mile radius of the APE, records for one previous survey were found, a linear project conducted along Mallard Lane in 1975 by the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation (TDHPT; now Texas Department of Transportation or TxDOT). The closest known site, 41WM753, is located just outside the one-mile radius and is a minor lithic scatter (THC 2015).



### 3.0 Research Goals and Methods

#### Purpose of the Research

The present study was carried out to accomplish three major goals:

1. To identify all historic and prehistoric archeological resources located within the APE defined in Chapter One;
2. To perform a preliminary evaluation of the identified resources' potential for inclusion in the NRHP and/or for designation as a SAL (typically performed concurrently); and
3. To make recommendations about the need for further research concerning the identified resources based on the preliminary NRHP/SAL evaluation and with guidance on methodology and ethics from the THC and the Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA).

#### Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

The project does not currently have a federal nexus and is therefore not subject to Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470; 36 CFR 800), under which federal agencies and entities using federal funds must “take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties” (36 CFR 800.1a), with “historic property” defined as “any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP maintained by the Secretary of the Interior” (36 CFR 800.16).

Despite the lack of a federal nexus for the present project, detailed discussion of Section 106 and the NRHP is still warranted; the THC's Rules of Practice and Procedure (13 TAC 26) for investigations carried out under the Antiquities Code of Texas (9 TNRC 191) make direct reference to NRHP eligibility as a component of state-level resource identifications and evaluations, which are discussed further in the next section.

In order to determine the presence of historic properties (with this phrase understood in its broader Section 106 sense), an APE is first delineated. The APE is the area in which direct impacts (and in a federal context, indirect impacts as well) to historic properties may occur. Within the APE, resources are evaluated to determine if they are eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, and to determine the presence of any properties that are already listed on the NRHP. To determine if a property is significant, cultural resource professionals and regulators evaluate the resource using these established criteria:

...The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling, and association and

- a. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- b. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- c. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

- d. that have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (36 CFR 60.4).

Note that significance and NRHP eligibility are determined by two primary components: integrity and one of the four types of association and data potential listed under 36 CFR 60.4(a-d). The criterion most often applied to archeological sites is the last—and arguably the broadest—of the four; its phrasing allows regulators to consider a broad range of research questions and analytical techniques that may be brought to bear (36 CFR 60.4[d]).

Although all seven aspects of integrity are considered during the Section 106 review process, not all seven need to be present for eligibility as long as the overall sense of a past time and place is evident and/or the potential for data addressing important research questions is present. The level of integrity required for NRHP eligibility is also different for each of the four NRHP significance criteria. For example, a property eligible under Criterion C should retain the aspects of integrity linked to physical qualities (design, materials, and workmanship) to a higher degree than one that is eligible for its historical associations (Criterion A or B). However, a property that is eligible for its historical associations (Criterion A or B) should still possess sufficient integrity to be recognizable to the time or era in which it attained significance. For archeological resources, most likely eligible under Criterion D, location and association are the aspects of integrity that most closely approximate the key concept of archeological context (i.e., in situ artifacts, deposits, and/or features in meaningful stratigraphic relationships).

Occasionally, certain resources fall into categories which require further evaluation using one or more of the following Criteria Considerations. If a resource is identified and falls into one of these categories, the Criteria Considerations listed below may be applied in conjunction with one or more of the four NRHP criteria listed above.

- a. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance, or
- b. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event, or
- c. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life, or
- d. A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or
- e. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived, or
- f. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance, or
- g. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance (36 CFR 60.4).

Resources that are listed in the NRHP or are recommended eligible are treated the same under Section 106, and are generally treated the same at the state level as well.

After cultural resources within the APE are identified and evaluated, effects evaluations are completed to determine if the proposed project has no effect, no adverse effect, or an adverse effect on these resources. Effects are determined by assessing the impacts that the proposed project will have on the characteristics that make the property eligible for listing in the NRHP as well as its integrity. Types of potential adverse effects considered include physical impacts, such as the destruction of all or part of a resource; property acquisitions that adversely impact the historic setting of a resource, even if built resources are not directly impacted; noise and vibration impacts evaluated according to accepted professional standards; changes to significant viewsheds; and cumulative effects that may occur later in time. If the project will have an adverse effect on cultural resources, measures can be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate this adverse effect. In some instances, changes to the proposed project can be made to avoid adverse effects. In other cases, adverse effects may be unavoidable, and mitigation to compensate for these impacts will be proposed and agreed upon by consulting parties.

### **The Antiquities Code of Texas**

Because the project is owned by Williamson County and will be constructed using County bond funds, it is subject to the Antiquities Code of Texas (9 TNRC 191), which requires consideration of effects on properties designated as—or eligible to be designated as—SALs, which are defined as:

...sites, objects, buildings, structures and historic shipwrecks, and locations of historical, archeological, educational, or scientific interest including, but not limited to, prehistoric American Indian or aboriginal campsites, dwellings, and habitation sites, aboriginal paintings, petroglyphs, and other marks or carvings on rock or elsewhere which pertain to early American Indian or other archeological sites of every character, treasure imbedded in the earth, sunken or abandoned ships and wrecks of the sea or any part of their contents, maps, records, documents, books, artifacts, and implements of culture in any way related to the inhabitants, prehistory, history, government, or culture in, on, or under any of the lands of the State of Texas, including the tidelands, submerged land, and the bed of the sea within the jurisdiction of the State of Texas. (13 TAC 26.2)

Guidelines for the evaluation of cultural resources as SALs and/or for listing on the NRHP, which is also explicitly referenced at the state level, are detailed in 13 TAC 26. An archeological site identified on lands owned or controlled by the State of Texas may be of sufficient significance to allow designation as a SAL if at least one of the following criteria applies:

1. the site has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of the prehistory and/or history of Texas by the addition of new and important information;
2. the site's archeological deposits and the artifacts within the site are preserved and intact, thereby supporting the research potential or preservation interests of the site;
3. the site possesses unique or rare attributes concerning Texas prehistory and/or history;
4. the study of the site offers the opportunity to test theories and methods of preservation, thereby contributing to new scientific knowledge;
5. the high likelihood that vandalism and relic collecting has occurred or could occur, and official landmark designation is needed to ensure maximum legal protection, or alternatively further investigations are needed to mitigate the effects of vandalism and relic collecting when the site cannot be protected (13 TAC 26.10).

For archeological resources, the state-level process requires securing and maintaining a valid Texas Antiquities Permit from the THC, the lead state agency for Antiquities Code compliance, throughout all stages of investigation, analysis, and reporting.

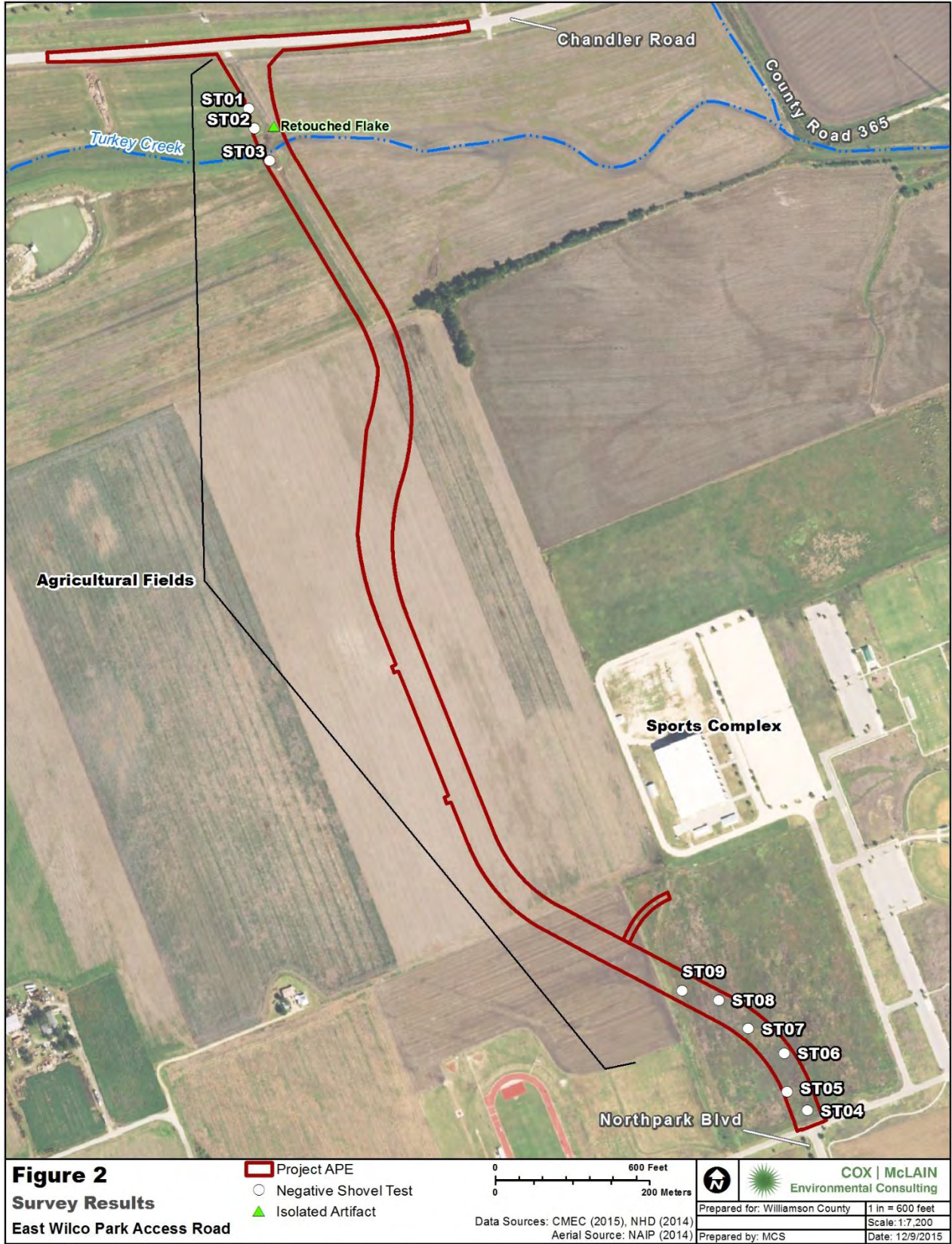
### **Survey Methods and Protocols**

With the goals and guidelines above in mind, CMEC personnel conducted a survey of the 20-acre APE in December 2015. Field methods were guided by THC/CTA standards and consisted of pedestrian inspection and judgmental shovel testing in undisturbed areas at the discretion of the Principal Investigator.

Nine shovel test units (see **Figure 2**) were placed where ground visibility was below 30 percent and disturbance appeared minimal. They were generally excavated to a terminal depth of 24 in (60 cm). Most of the excavated matrix was too moist and clay-rich to allow effective screening, so deposits were crumbled and separated by hand and shovel point. Deposits were described using conventional texture classifications and Munsell color designations. The approved scope for Texas Antiquities Permit 7488 included a provision for radial shovel tests at 16-ft (5-m) intervals around any units positive for cultural materials, but this protocol proved to be moot.

Because the investigation took place on private land, a mixed collection policy (i.e., field documentation only on private land, collections of diagnostics on public land) was in place during the survey, but no materials of archeological interest were found. Per 13 TAC 26.16 and 26.17, field forms and other project records will be curated at the Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS) at Texas State University in San Marcos.





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## 4.0 Results and Recommendations

### Field Observations

CMEC personnel conducted an intensive survey of the 20-acre APE in December 2015 (see **Figure 2**). Ground surface visibility was extremely high (90-100 percent) across most of the APE, facilitating effective pedestrian examination (see **Figures 3-5**). A single retouched flake tool was found on the surface in the northern part of the APE, near the north bank of Turkey Creek (see **Figures 2 and 6**). The surface within 100 m of the artifact was closely inspected, but no other intentionally modified lithics were found. Many pebbles and cobbles with mechanical strikes from plowing were observed (also shown in **Figure 6**). The area was too wet to allow productive shovel testing (**Figure 7**).

Nine shovel tests were excavated elsewhere along the project where ground surface visibility decreased (see **Figure 2**). The units generally revealed very dark (10YR 2/1-4/1), sticky, wet clays that could not be screened (see **Figure 8**). No cultural materials were found in any of the shovel tests.



Figure 3. View of high-visibility field along Chandler Road at north end of APE.





Figure 4. View north near center of APE.



Figure 5. View from APE to EWCEC under construction.





Figure 6. Retouched flake tool (left) and typical plow strike (right) found near Turkey Creek.



Figure 7. Flooded shovel test typical of attempted units on north and south ends of APE.





Figure 8. View of 20-pound lump of moist clay adhering to shovel blade at Shovel Test 5.

### **Recommendations**

No evidence was found of preserved cultural or archeologically relevant natural deposits with a high degree of integrity; associations with distinctive architectural and material culture styles; rare materials and assemblages; the potential to yield data important to the study of preservation techniques and the past in general; or potential attractiveness to relic hunters. Therefore, no further work is recommended prior to the construction of the proposed roadway within the APE as defined here.

If any archeological materials are inadvertently uncovered during the proposed construction activities, construction in the area of the find or finds should cease and THC personnel should be notified immediately.

No materials were collected during this investigation. Per 13 TAC 26.16 and 26.17, field forms and other project records will be curated at CAS at Texas State University in San Marcos.

## 5.0 References

### Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- 2015 NRCS SSURGO and STATSGO soil data viewed through SoilWeb KMZ interface for Google Earth, available at <http://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/soilweb/>. U.S. Department of Agriculture and California Soil Resource Laboratory, University of California, Davis. Accessed November 11, 2015.

### Texas Historical Commission (THC)

- 2015 *Texas Archeological Sites Atlas*. Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and the Texas Historical Commission. Available at <http://nueces.thc.state.tx.us>. Accessed November 11, 2015.

### U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

- 2015 *Texas Geology Map Viewer*. Available at <http://txpub.usgs.gov/dss/texasgeology/>, accessed November 11, 2015.

## Appendix A – Field Forms and Regulatory Correspondence

Project E. Wilk Events Access Rd. Project No. 012-011-001 County Washburn

Excavator(s) Chris Dayton Date 12/3/15

ST Unit Number: 1 2, 3 \*

| Depth (cmbs)              | Description                            | Contents |
|---------------------------|--|----------|
| 0-20<br>30                | 10YR 3/1<br>very moist,<br>sticky clay | —        |
| <del>20-40</del><br>30-60 | 10YR 3/1<br>saturated<br>clay          | —        |
| 40-60                     |  |          |
| 60-80                     |  |          |

ST Unit Number: 4 4, 5

| Depth (cmbs) | Description                     | Contents |
|--------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 0-20<br>60   | 10YR 2/1<br>wet, sticky<br>clay | —        |
| 20-40        |                                 |          |
| 40-60        |                                 |          |
| 60-80        |                                 |          |

ST Unit Number: 6, 7, 8, 9

| Depth (cmbs)            | Description                       | Contents |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 0-20                    | 10YR 4/1<br>wet clay;<br>shredded | —        |
| <del>20-40</del><br>20+ | water                             |          |
| 40-60                   |                                   |          |
| 60-80                   |                                   |          |

\* Dream (David Wolbrink)  
says used for fill rest  
in rd fill - mid-late 1920's c.?

**From:** reviews@thc.state.tx.us [mailto:reviews@thc.state.tx.us]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 28, 2015 2:06 PM  
**To:** Chris Dayton <chris@coxmcclain.com>; reviews@thc.state.tx.us  
**Subject:** Project Review: 201602694

Re: Project Review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and/or the Antiquities Code of Texas

**201602694**

East Wilco Events Center Access Road  
Bill Pickett Trail  
Taylor, TX 76574

Dear Chris Dayton:

Thank you for your submittal regarding the above-referenced project. This response represents the comments of the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission (THC), pursuant to review under the Antiquities Code of Texas.

The review staff led by Rebecca Shelton and Linda Henderson has completed its review and has made the following determinations based on the information submitted for review:

**Above-Ground Resources**

- No historic properties present or affected

**Archeology Comments**

- Draft report acceptable. Please submit another copy as a final report along with shapefiles showing the area where the archeological work was conducted. Shapefiles should be submitted electronically to [email].
- No effect on archeological sites

We look forward to further consultation with your office and hope to maintain a partnership that will foster effective historic preservation. Thank you for your cooperation in this review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas. If you have any questions concerning our review or if we can be of further assistance, please email the following reviewers: [rebecca.shelton@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:rebecca.shelton@thc.state.tx.us), [linda.henderson@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:linda.henderson@thc.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Executive Director, Texas Historical Commission