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Intensive Cultural Resources Survey For The Proposed Farm-To-Market 1625 Realignment Project, Travis County, Texas

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INTENSIVE CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY FOR THE PROPOSED FARM-TO-MARKET 1625 REALIGNMENT PROJECT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

TEXAS ANTIQUITIES PERMIT NO. 7975
CSJ: 1535-01-012
MAY 2018

PREPARED FOR

Brookfield Residential

PREPARED BY

SWCA Environmental Consultants

REDACTED

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INTENSIVE CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY FOR THE PROPOSED FARM-TO-MARKET 1625 REALIGNMENT PROJECT, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

At the request of Brookfield Residential, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey for the proposed realignment of Farm-to-Market Road (FM) 1625 in southeast Austin, Travis County, Texas. Portions of the project area are located within road right-of-way (ROW) owned by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), a political subdivision of the State of Texas. As such, the proposed undertaking is subject to review under the Antiquities Code of Texas. Archaeological field investigations required a Texas Antiquities Permit issued by the Texas Historical Commission. SWCA conducted investigations under Antiquities Permit No. 7975 issued to Principal Investigator Ken Lawrence.

The proposed realignment of FM 1625 begins 0.15 mile (790 feet) south of the intersection of McKenzie Road and FM 1625. The alignment trends northeast for 0.3 mile (1,555 feet) until the intersection of McKenzie Road and U.S. Highway 183 (US 183), and continues for another 300 feet north along the west side of US 183. The project also involves the removal of existing pavement along McKenzie Road and FM 1625 between US 183 and McKenzie Road and the removal of the bridge spanning the North Fork Dry Creek. The depth of impacts are anticipated to not exceed five feet below ground surface. This represents the direct area of potential effects (APE) for this project.

Investigations included a background literature review and an intensive pedestrian survey with shovel testing of the 0.3-mile-long project corridor. The proposed pavement removal will be limited to previously disturbed portions of the project area and as such, no survey will be conducted in these areas. As for the bridge removal planned at the crossing of North Fork Dry Creek, the bridge was photo documented and examined to determine if it is historic. The background review revealed that no cultural resource surveys and no cultural resource sites are within the project area (Texas Historical Commission [THC] 2017). One cultural resources survey and two archaeological sites are located within a 1-mile radius of the APE. Additionally, a review of the TxDOT Historic Overlay maps revealed no potential historic-age structures within or adjacent to the current project area (Foster et al. 2006).

Overall, the intensive pedestrian survey revealed primarily agricultural lands with broad pastures and scattered residential housing within the upland Blackland Prairie environment. Previous impacts to the project area include agricultural and residential activity, vegetation clearing, and the construction and maintenance of FM 1625 and McKenzie Road, including drainage improvements. During the intensive survey investigations, which comprised visual inspection and the excavation of four shovel tests along the 0.3 mile of new ROW, SWCA identified no surface or subsurface cultural materials.

In accordance with 33 Code of Federal Regulations 800.4, SWCA has made a reasonable and good faith effort to identify cultural resources properties within the APE. The field investigation discovered neither significant historic properties nor cultural resources as defined in the respective legislation; therefore, SWCA recommends that a finding of “no historic properties affected” be made for the current undertaking.

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INTRODUCTION

At the request of Brookfield Residential, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey for the proposed Farm-to-Market Road (FM) 1625 realignment in southeast Austin, Travis County, Texas (Figure 1). The proposed realignment of FM 1625 begins 0.15 mile (790 feet) south of the intersection of McKenzie Road and FM 1625 and trends northeast for 0.3 mile (1,555 feet) until the intersection of McKenzie Road and U.S. Highway 183 (US 183), and continues for another 300 feet north on the west side of US 183 (Figure 2). The project also involves the removal of existing pavement along McKenzie Road and FM 1625 between US 183 and McKenzie Road and the removal of the bridge spanning the North Fork Dry Creek. The new right-of-way (ROW) is on lands currently owned by Brookfield Residential with portions of the project area located within road ROW owned by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), a political subdivision of the State of Texas. As such, the proposed undertaking is subject to review under the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT). Archaeological field investigations therefore required a Texas Antiquities Permit issued by the THC.

The purpose of this investigation was to identify and assess any cultural resources, such as historic and prehistoric archaeological sites and historic buildings, structures, objects, and sites (such as cemeteries) that might be located within the boundaries of the proposed undertaking. These investigations evaluated the significance and eligibility of these cultural resources for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or for designation as a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL). Investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey with shovel testing of the proposed project area. All investigations were conducted in accordance with the ACT and standards and guidelines established by the THC and Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA), as well as the guidelines provided in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (National Park Service 2000).

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Ken Lawrence, M.A., RPA, served as Principal Investigator for the duration of the project, overseeing overall logistics and organization, managing reporting, and agency consultation. The survey was conducted by archaeologists Christopher Shelton and Ashley Eyeington on April 11, 2017, and again on April 26, 2017, by Christopher Shelton and Mercedes Cody under Antiquities Permit No. 7975. Ashley Eyeington and Christopher Shelton prepared the report of investigations, while Carole Carpenter expertly produced all field and report maps for the project. Lauri Logan provided technical editing and document preparation.

PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION

The area of potential effects (APE) is in southeastern Travis County in a semi-rural setting surrounded by open pastures and scattered residential housing. The western terminus of the approximately 0.3-mile long proposed FM 1625 realignment begins 0.15 mile (790 feet) south of the intersection of McKenzie Road and FM 1625. The alignment then trends northeast for approximately 0.3 mile (1,555 feet) to its eastern terminus near the intersection of FM 1625 and US 183, and continues for another 300 feet on the west side of US 183. The majority of the ROW is approximately 60 feet in width; however, at the eastern terminus, the ROW widens to approximately 260 feet. The depths of impacts are not known at this time, but are expected not to exceed 5 feet below ground surface. In addition, portions of a 970-foot-long section (0.18 mile) of McKenzie Road, 2,270-foot-long section (0.42 mile) of FM 1625 pavement, and a bridge spanning the North Fork Dry Creek will be removed during the realignment efforts. The project area is defined as the 0.3-mile-long corridor (2.74 acres) and 0.6-mile-long (3,240 feet) potential pavement removal area (2.9 acres) along McKenzie and FM 1625, culminating in the 5.64 acre APE (see Figure 2).

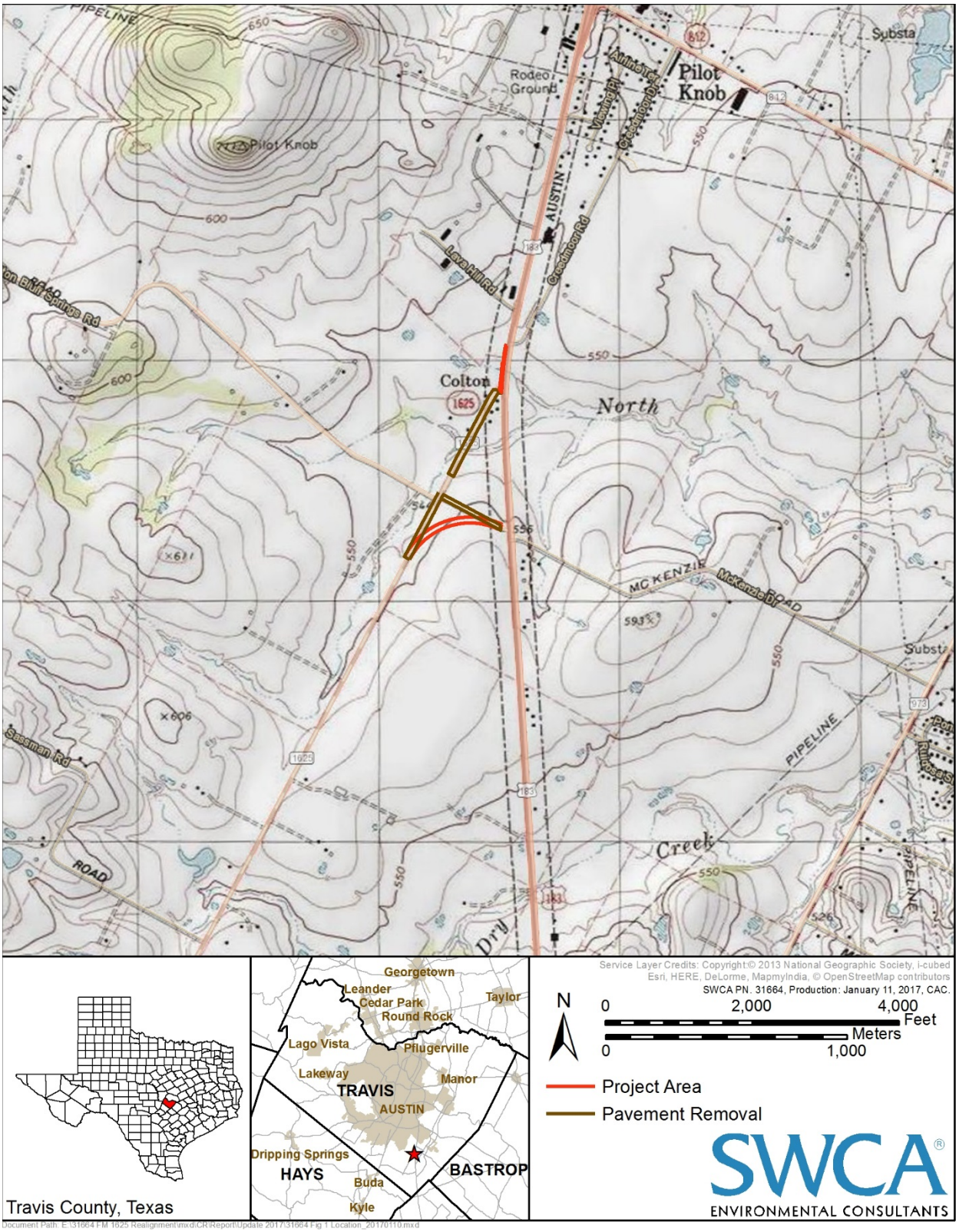

Figure 1. Project location.

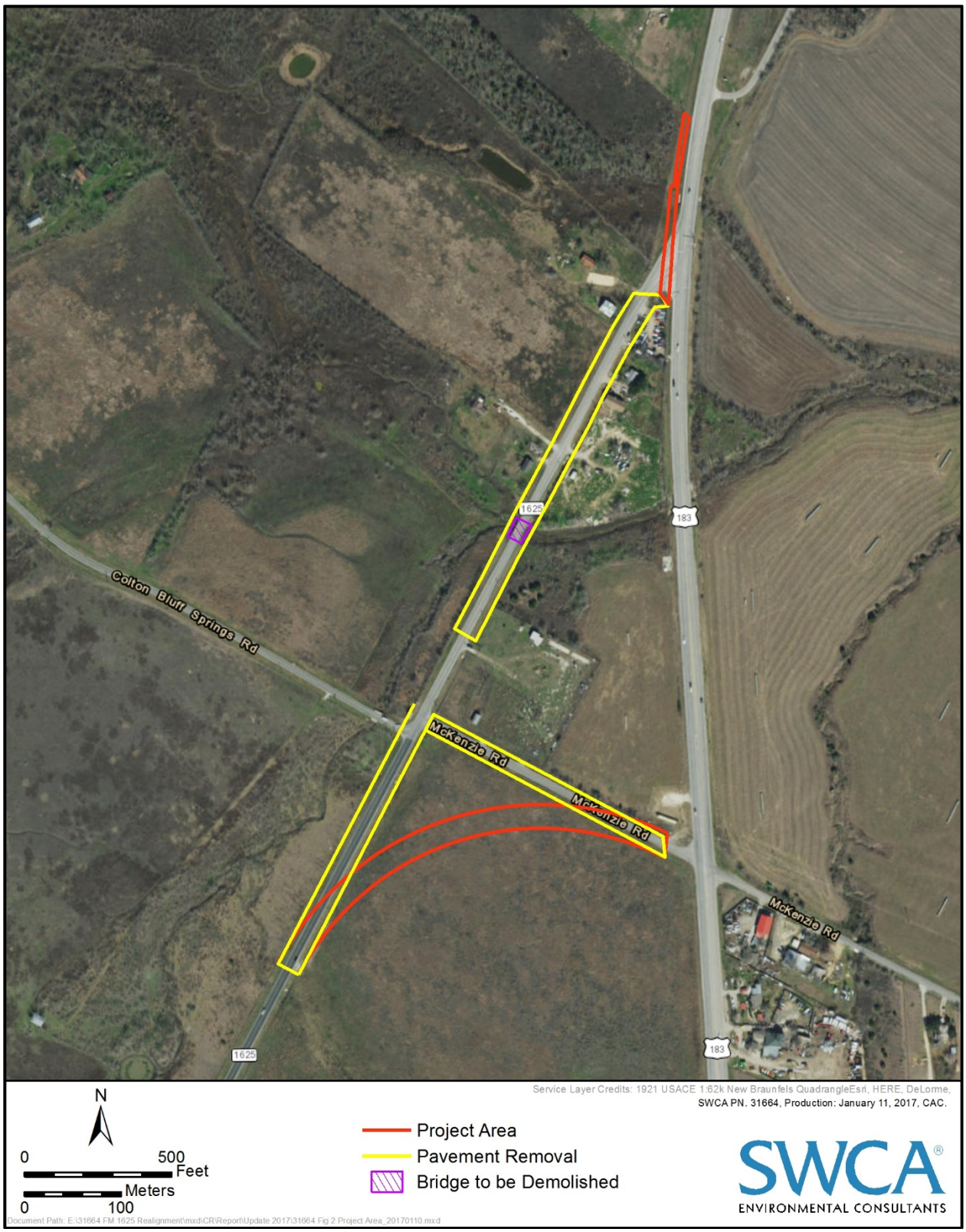

Figure 2. Project APE.

The intensive pedestrian survey revealed the APE to be located primarily within broad pastures of agricultural lands and scattered residential housing within the upland Blackland Prairie environment. Vegetation throughout the new ROW consisted of tall mixed grasses in an abandoned or undeveloped pasture. Areas along FM 1625 and McKenzie Road have been cleared and natural mixed grasses and wildflowers line the current roadways. Previous impacts to the project area include agricultural and residential activity, vegetation clearing, and the construction and maintenance of FM 1625 and McKenzie Road, including drainage improvements.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is located in the Northern Blackland Prairie Level IV ecoregion (Griffith et al. 2007). This region is characterized as level to gently rolling plains of dark, fine-textured, calcareous soils. Geologically it is underlain by Cretaceous-age interbedded chalks, marls, limestone, and shales. As the name suggests, the region is dominated by various species of grasses such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), yellow Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and tall dropseed (Sporobolus compositus) (Griffith et al. 2007). In recent times much of the region has become cropland and non-native pasture with areas of large urban growth.

GEOLOGY

The underlying geology throughout the project area is mapped as Upper Cretaceous-aged Navarro Group and Marlbrook Marl, undivided (Barnes 1995). The upper 250 feet of these deposits are characterized as mostly silty, calcareous clay with sandstone beds and concretionary masses near the top with some interbeds of sandstone near the base. The lower 200 feet consists of quartz sand, with light gray, fine grained, silty, locally calcareous concretions in discontinuous beds and marine megafossils. (Barnes 1995). Given the age and character of these deposits, they have limited potential to contain intact cultural materials.

SOILS

The project area is mapped as containing Houston black clay (1–3 percent slopes) and Tinn clay (0–1 percent slopes). Houston black soils are described as very deep, permeable soils that developed in place from Cretaceous-aged clayey residuum derived from calcareous mudstone; the soils occupy nearly level to sloping uplands (NRCS 2017). The Houston black clay deposits compose roughly 80 percent of the project area away from the North Fork Dry Creek drainage. The Tinn clay soils align the North Fork Dry Creek waterway. These deposits are characterized as calcareous clayey alluvium situated on floodplains and dissected plains of the Blackland Prairies (NRCS 2017).

Neither soil series is identified as having a high geoarchaeological potential for containing deeply buried cultural materials. Specifically, the hybrid potential archaeological liability map developed by Abbott and Pletka (2015) for this area, indicates that the Houston black clay soils have a value of 5 suggesting a moderate potential for shallow deposits (<1 meter [m]) and a low potential for deep deposits (>1 m). Similarly, the Tinn clay soils have a value of 9 indicating a high potential for shallow deposits and moderate potential for deep deposits (Abbott and Pletka 2015). Simply put, the deposits for the area have a moderate to high potential for containing cultural materials within 1 m of the ground surface, but a low to moderate potential for containing intact buried cultural materials deeper than 1 m.

BACKGROUND REVIEW

An SWCA archaeologist conducted a background review and environmental literature search of the project area to determine the locations and content of any previous archaeological surveys and recorded

archaeological sites in or near the APE. The review utilized the THC Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas), which provided information on the nature and location of previously conducted archaeological surveys, previously recorded cultural resource sites, locations of NRHP districts and properties, sites designated as SALs, Official Texas Historical Markers, Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, cemeteries, and local neighborhood surveys. However, the Atlas does not necessarily list all previous work conducted within a specific area. Previous cultural resources investigations listed on the Atlas are limited to projects under purview of the ACT or the NHPA, as amended. In addition, projects under these regulations may not be posted on Atlas due to a delay between the completion of fieldwork and the completion of reports. As a part of the review, an SWCA archaeologist reviewed the TxDOT Historic Overlay, a mapping/geographic information system (GIS) database with historic maps and resource information covering most portions of the state.

RESULTS

The background literature review determined that no cultural resources surveys are known to have been conducted within the current project area and no cultural resource sites are within the project area (THC 2017). One previously conducted cultural resources survey and two archaeological sites are within a 1-mile radius of the project area (Figure 3). The review of the TxDOT Historic Overlay and HistoricAerials.com maps revealed no possible historic-age structures within or adjacent to the current project area (Foster et al. 2006; Historic Aerials 2017).

In March 2014, SWCA conducted cultural resources investigation of the proposed Easton Park Development Project in southeast Austin, Texas, on behalf of Brookfield Residential (Stotts et al. 2014). The project involved the construction of a roughly 2.0-mile-long extension of William Cannon Drive between McKinney Falls Parkway and US 183 and the development of approximately 230 acres adjacent to the roadway extension for residential use. The investigations documented two cultural resource sites (41TV2456 and 41TV2457) within a 1-mile radius of the current project area.

Site 41TV2456 is a multi-component site consisting of a historic farmstead and a prehistoric lithic scatter. The site is located on a hilltop within a rolling prairie environment, 630 m due west of the intersection of US 183 and FM 1625 (see Figure 3). The site's historic component consists of a farmstead with stone structure and artifacts dating to the mid- to late-nineteenth century, a 1930s house that was occupied until the mid-2000s, and additional structures that were added to the farmstead through the 1960s. The prehistoric component consists of non-diagnostic lithic debitage diffusely scattered in the central portion of the site and extending into the open field to the southeast. Prehistoric artifacts were identified on the surface and within shovel tests to a maximum depth of 40 centimeters below surface (cmbs). This component is relatively sparse, with no diagnostic artifacts or features encountered (Stotts et al. 2014). Historic artifacts recovered within the shovel tests at 41TV2456 include whiteware, brown bottle glass, colorless bottle glass, cut nails, wire nails, miscellaneous metal, porcelain, metal wire, and one metal button (wire fastened). Additionally, an enormous amount of modern items (1960s to present) were documented in and around all structures on the site, including automotive/mechanical equipment, office cubicles, classroom desks, home furniture, a motor boat, and typical household items. Site 41TV2456 was evaluated according to NRHP and SAL criteria, and, based on the lack of historical associations, lack of distinctive architectural characteristics, and lack of integrity, the site is not likely to yield further information. Site 41TV2456 was recommended as not eligible for inclusion to the NRHP or for designation as an SAL. Accordingly, no further work was recommended (Stotts et al. 2014).

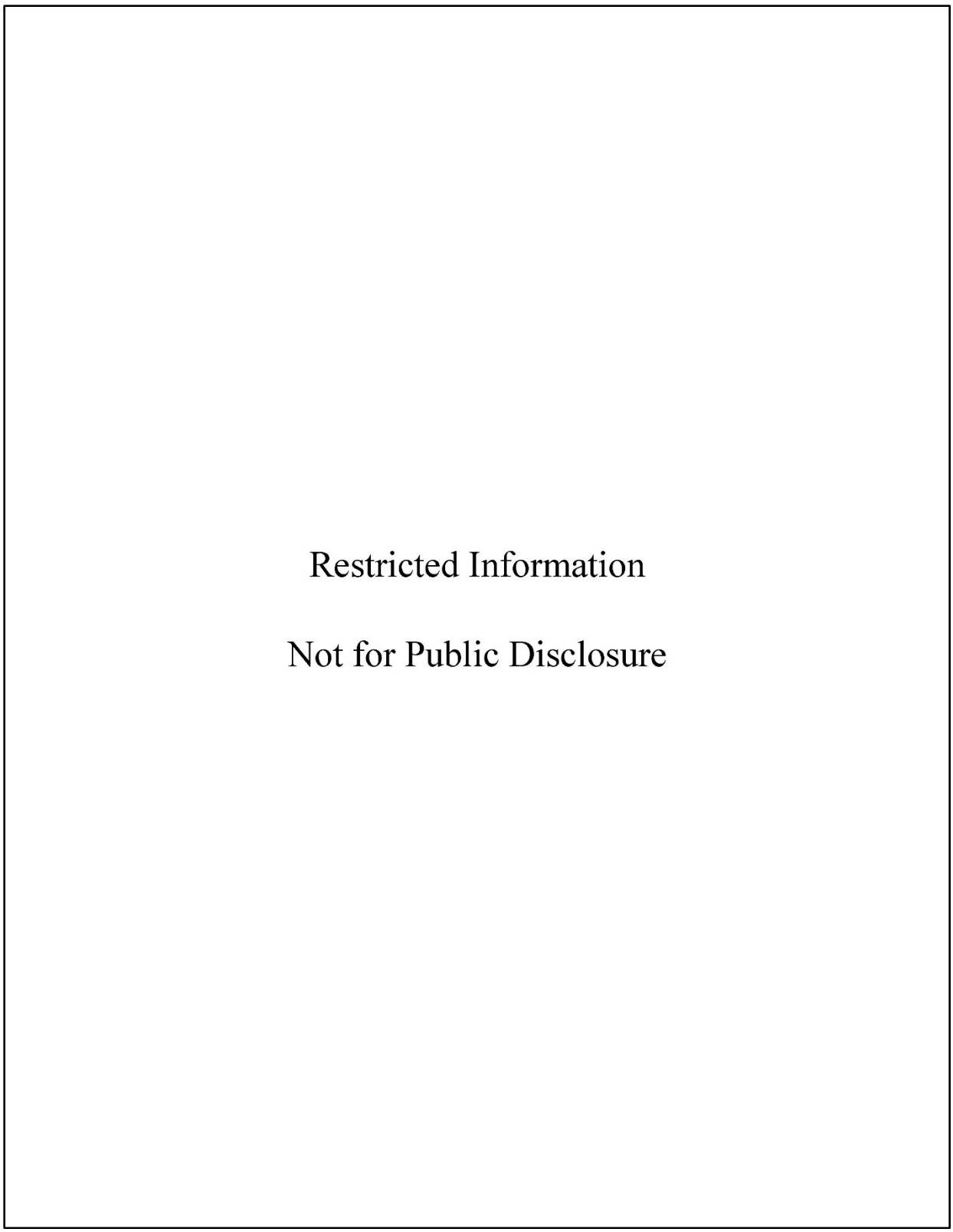

Figure 3. Previously recorded archaeological sites.

Site 41TV2457 is a historic mid-twentieth-century site containing several structures, ancillary features, and industrial foundation slabs surrounded by historic and recent debris. The site is situated in open, level prairie immediately southwest of the intersection of US 183/FM 1625 and located roughly 10 m west of the proposed project area (see Figure 3). The site contains seven historic resources and measures 105 m northwest to southeast by 85 m northeast to southwest. The 2014 survey excavated a total of seven shovel tests within the site boundaries, only one of which was positive for cultural material at a depth of 30 to 45 cmbs. The artifact assemblage present around the yard was mid- to late-twentieth century, comprising mostly industrial debris. Milled lumber, railroad timbers, 50-gallon barrels, concrete and plastic conduit sections, hog wire, barbed wire, and tires were all located near the west end of the site. One positive shovel test was located in this area containing one uncolored glass fragment, four miscellaneous metal fragments, and one painted concrete fragment (Stotts et al. 2014).

Site 41TV2457 was evaluated according to NRHP and SAL criteria. The residential structure at the site has been significantly altered and can no longer convey its historic characteristics. Further, the mid-twentieth-century site features are either dilapidated containing only foundations, or simple structures with significant alterations. Based on the lack of historical associations, lack of distinctive architectural characteristics, and lack of integrity, the site is not likely to yield further information. Site 41TV2457 was recommended as not eligible for inclusion to the NRHP or for designation as an SAL. Accordingly, no further work was recommended (Stotts et al. 2014).

The review of the TxDOT Historic Overlay maps revealed no possible historic-age structures within or immediately adjacent to the property (Foster et al. 2006). In addition, SWCA conducted a review of historic maps from HistoricAerials.com (Historic Aerials 2017) in order to determine if any historic-age built resources were located within the project area, and to develop an idea of land development over time. SWCA also conducted a review of aerial topographic maps dated from 1896–1992 and historic aerial maps dated from 1954–2004. None of the topographic maps or historic aerials reviewed indicated any historic-age built resources within the project area.

FIELD METHODS

SWCA conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the 0.3-mile-long project corridor. The investigations were of sufficient intensity to determine the nature, extent, and, if possible, potential significance of all cultural resources located within the proposed project area. The survey met the THC's minimum survey standards, which require 16 shovel tests per mile (i.e., five shovel tests for a project of this size), or thoroughly document any exceptions (e.g., disturbances). The proposed pavement removal would be limited to previously disturbed portions of the project area (e.g., within the existing roadway) and as such, no survey will be conducted in these areas. For the bridge removal planned at the crossing of the North Fork Dry Creek drainage, the drainage and surrounding area were assessed for the potential for intact, buried cultural deposits.

The field survey consisted of a team of SWCA archaeologists systematically walking the proposed project area and examining the ground surface and erosional profiles for cultural resources. The utilization of subsurface exploration (i.e., shovel testing) was keyed to the level of disturbance and the nature of the soils, geology, and topography. Specifically, shovel tests were concentrated in the seemingly undisturbed pasture lands as approximately 50 percent of the project area has been previously disturbed by road construction and subsurface utilities. All subsurface explorations were to a depth commensurate with the proposed level of subsurface impacts for the project or until pre-Holocene deposits were reached. Shovel tests were approximately 30 centimeters (cm) in diameter and excavated in arbitrary 20-cm levels to 100 cmbs or culturally sterile deposits, whichever came first. The matrix from each shovel test was screened through ¼-inch mesh, and the location of each excavation was plotted using a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver. Each shovel test was recorded on a standardized form to document the excavations.

If an archaeological site was encountered in the proposed project area during the investigations, it was to be explored as much as possible with consideration to land access constraints. Any discovered sites were to be assessed in regard to potential significance so that recommendations could be made for proper management (avoidance, non-avoidance, or further work). Additional shovel tests were to be conducted per THC standards at any discovered sites to define horizontal and vertical boundaries. Appropriate State of Texas Archaeological Site Data Forms would be completed for each site discovered during the investigations. A detailed plan map of each site was to be produced and locations were to be mapped with a Trimble GPS unit and plotted on U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic maps and relevant project maps. SWCA proposed a non-collection survey. When discovered, artifacts were to be documented in the field and replaced where they were recovered.

FIELD SURVEY RESULTS

On April 11, 2017, two SWCA archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey with shovel testing of the proposed approximately 1,555-foot-long (0.3-mile) alignment for the realignment of FM 1625. Additionally, archaeologists visually inspected the 970-foot-long section (0.18 mile) of McKenzie Road and the 2,270-foot-long sections (0.42 mile) of FM 1625 scheduled for pavement removal to ensure impacts from the pavement removal would be restricted to the previously disturbed areas. The bridge spanning North Fork Dry Creek, scheduled to be removed, was visually inspected to ensure the bridge is not of historic age construction and to assess the potential for the surrounding deposits to contain intact, buried cultural materials (Figure 4).

Visual examination of the project area revealed a primarily semi-rural setting surrounded with open pastures and scattered residential housing. Vegetation throughout the 0.3-mile FM 1625 realignment project area consists of tall, dense grasses and short scrub, which reduced the estimated surface visibility to a range between 0 and 10 percent (Figure 5). SWCA archaeologists excavated a total of six shovel tests within the project area (Table 1). The encountered soils consisted of a dark gray to very dark gray (10YR 4/1 to 10YR 3/1) dense clay at the surface. The density of the clay impeded manual excavation beyond a depth of 40 cmbs, and reduced the likelihood of deeply buried archaeological deposits. Neither the surface, nor the subsurface investigations identified any historic or prehistoric cultural material.

Table 1. Shovel Test Data

ST No.	Level	Depth	Munsell	Color	Texture	Inclusion	Comments
AE01	1	0-40	10YR 3/1	very dark gray	Clay	1%-5% Calcium Carbonate	No cultural materials encountered. Terminated at compact soil.
AE02	1	0-40	10YR 3/1	very dark gray	Clay	1%-5% Calcium Carbonate	No cultural materials encountered. Terminated at compact soil.
CS01	1	0-30	10YR 4/1	dark gray	Clay	1%-5% Calcium Carbonate	No cultural materials encountered. Terminated at compact soil.
CS02	1	0-30	10YR 4/1	dark gray	Clay	1%-5% Calcium Carbonate	No cultural materials encountered. Terminated at compact soil.
CS03	1	0-35	10YR 3/2	very dark grayish brown	Clay		No cultural materials encountered. Terminated at compact soil.
MCC01	1	0-40	10YR 4/1	dark gray	Clay	10%-20% gravels	No cultural materials encountered. Terminated at compact soil.

Figure 4. Survey results.

Figure 5. Overview of vegetation in project area from shovel test AE01, facing south.

An examination of the 970-foot-long section (0.18 mile) of McKenzie Road and the 2,270-foot-long sections (0.42 mile) of FM 1625 scheduled for pavement removal revealed that the area of impact would be entirely within a pre-existing paved road (Figures 6 and 7); the pavement removal would not generate any additional disturbance to potential cultural resources in the area. Additionally, the examination of the bridge spanning North Fork Dry Creek determined that the disturbance produced by the initial bridge construction was at such an extent that the removal of the bridge would not impact any potentially remaining, intact cultural features (Figures 8 and 9). Further, the drainage and surrounding soils are not conducive to the preservation of deeply buried, intact cultural deposits. Specifically, the North Fork Dry Creek at this crossing is a relatively shallow incised drainage with shallow (less than 4 feet) cut banks. The drainage is incised into the Tinn clay and bracketed by the Houston Black clay series that contribute to the Tinn clays (NRCS 2017). The dense clays at the crossing are derived from clayey residuum from calcareous mudstone of Cretaceous Age (Houston Black) or calcareous clayey alluvium from the Blackland Prairies (Tinn) and not typically associated with deeply buried stratified archaeological sites. Similarly, the floodplain at this crossing is slightly sloping within a narrow (about 100-m-wide) valley. Considered together, the crossing appears more erosive than depositional and does not have the potential for deeply buried, intact cultural deposits. Further, the presence of shallow calcium carbonate encountered in the shovel tests excavated approximately 750 feet from the bridge, suggest the deposits aligning the drainage may be of considerable age.

Figure 6. Intersection of US 183 and FM 1625, facing northwest.

Figure 7. Overview of proposed pavement removal area on FM 1625, facing north.

Figure 8. Overview of approach along FM 1625 to bridge spanning North Fork Dry Creek, facing northwest.

Figure 9. Overview of FM 1625 bridge at North Fork Dry Creek, drainage, and pilings; facing northwest.

The soils surrounding the bridge crossing at the North Fork Dry Creek have been significantly impacted by previous construction. The road bed approaching the bridge has been artificially raised about 3 feet, and road side ditches have been cut below grade roughly 3 to 4 feet on each side to channel runoff into the drainage. Concrete and steel pilings have been driven into the drainage for bridge support. Concrete retaining walls extend for approximately 12 feet at a diagonal angle from the bridge on both banks and on each side. Guard rails have been placed on both sides of the bridge in each direction and are held in place by a series of large, wood posts. The direct impacts from construction of the road leading to the bridge, as well as the indirect impacts from the heavy machinery used in construction, have significantly disturbed the deposits in and around the drainage. Further, roadside utilities, such as the telephone poles located on the east side of the bridge, will have further disturbed the surrounding area. Given the seemingly erosive nature of this setting and the low potential for buried cultural deposits, combined with the high degree of disturbance from previous construction and maintenance, any potential, intact cultural deposits will have already been destroyed and the removal of the bridge will not have any further impacts.

Additionally, SWCA evaluated a roughly 300-foot-long by 30-foot-wide area along the west side of US 183 (Figure 10). This area, within TxDOT ROW is situated north of the US 183 and FM 1625 intersection and crosses a small tributary of the North Fork Dry Creek. The soils within this small section and surrounding the drainage has been significantly impacted by previous construction (e.g., berm) and utilities. The road bed approaching the bridge on US 183 has been artificially raised approximately 2 feet, and the road side ditch has been cut roughly 2 feet below grade. The bridge spanning the drainage has been constructed with concrete pilings, a concrete floor, concrete retainer walls, and wooden guard rail posts that

have been driven into the ground. Utilities in the area include telephone poles, a buried gas pipeline, and a buried fiber optic cable. SWCA archaeologists excavated a total of two shovel tests within this area (CS03 and MCC01; see Table 1). The shovel tests contained dense clay at the surface, and appeared to be quite disturbed with road gravels in MCC01 and a mixture of soils in CS03.

Similar to the North Fork Dry Creek crossing, the tributary crossing US 183 is small (approximately 4 feet wide and 1 foot deep) and incised into Tinn Clay and is bracketed by Houston Black clay. The dense clays at the crossing are derived from clayey residuum from calcareous mudstone of Cretaceous Age (Houston Black) or calcareous clayey alluvium from the Blackland Prairies (Tinn) and not typically associated with deeply buried stratified archaeological sites. Considered together, the crossing appears more erosive than depositional and does not have the potential for deeply buried, intact cultural deposits. Further, shovel testing in the project area provides further evidence for the high degree of disturbance present in the project area and the lack of potential for intact cultural materials.

Figure 10. Overview of US 183 bridge at the tributary of North Fork Dry Creek and project area, facing south.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the request of Brookfield Residential, SWCA conducted an intensive cultural resources survey for the proposed realignment of FM 1625 in southeast Austin, Travis County, Texas. Portions of the project area are located within road ROW owned by TxDOT, a political subdivision of the State of Texas. As such, the proposed undertaking is subject to review under the ACT. Archaeological field investigations required a Texas Antiquities Permit issued by the THC. The investigations conducted under Antiquities Permit No. 7975 included a background literature review and an intensive pedestrian survey with shovel testing of the project area. The background review revealed that no cultural resources surveys or archaeological sites are located within the proposed project area, and one cultural resources survey and two archaeological sites (41TV2456 and 41TV2457) are located within a 1-mile buffer of the project area. Additionally, a review

of the TxDOT Historic Overlay maps and HistoricAerials.com revealed no structures of possible historic-age within or adjacent to the current project area.

During the recent pedestrian survey, SWCA discovered no cultural resource sites or cultural materials. The project area is in a semi-rural setting surrounded with open pastures and scattered residential housing. SWCA exceeded the THC's subsurface testing requirements through an extensive visual inspection for cultural materials and the excavation of six shovel tests throughout the direct APE. Shovel testing revealed very compact soils consisting of very dark gray to dark gray blocky clays containing 1 to 5 percent calcium carbonate, or soils disturbed from previous road and utility construction. Those areas within the project area being considered for pavement removal are previously constructed roads and associated artificial berms; therefore, the disturbance of pavement removal will not affect potential cultural resources. Additionally, the soils surrounding the bridge over the North Fork Dry Creek have a low potential for intact, buried cultural materials and have undergone a high degree of disturbance through the initial construction of the bridge, maintenance of the roadway, and the installation of utilities. These disturbances have removed any potential for intact cultural materials to be present. Finally, the approximately 300-foot by 30-foot area on the west side of US 183 located north of the US 183 and FM 1625 intersection was thoroughly inspected both visually and with shovel testing. Investigations demonstrate the high degree of disturbance within this project area, and the lack of potential for intact cultural materials.

In accordance with the ACT and 33 Code of Federal Regulations 800.4, SWCA has made a reasonable and good faith effort to identify cultural resources within the APE. As no properties were identified that meet the criteria for designation as an SAL, according to Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Chapter 26.12, SWCA recommends no further cultural resources investigations within the project APE are warranted.

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