TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ANTIQUITIES PERMIT APPLICATION FORM ARCHEOLOGY

GENERAL INFORMATION

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Project Name (and/or Site Trinomial) <u>Intensive Archeological Survey for Proposed Ronald Reagan Extension Project</u>
Williamson County, Texas
County (ies) Williamson County
USGS Quadrangle Name and Number <u>Cobbs Cavern (3097-342), Georgetown (3097-313), Jarrell (3097-341), Weir</u>
(3097-314), Bartlett (3097-432), Granger (3097-423)
UTM Coordinates (approximate) Zone <u>14 E 631018-649486</u> N <u>3405239-3403409</u>
Location North-central Williamson County, between IH 35 and SH 95 near Bartlett, Williamson County, Texas
Federal Involvement Yes No
Name of Federal Agency
Agency Representatives
II. OWNER (OR CONTROLLING AGENCY)
Controlling Agency Williamson County
Representative Bill Gravell, Jr., County Judge
Address 710 South Main Street, Suite 101
City/State/Zip Georgetown, Texas, 78626
Telephone (include area code) 512-943-1550 Email Address ctyjudge@wilco.org
III. PROJECT SPONSOR (IF DIFFERENT FROM OWNER) Sponsor
Representative
Address
City/State/Zip
Telephone (include area code) Email Address
PROJECT INFORMATION
I. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (ARCHEOLOGIST)
Name John E. Dockall, PhD, RPA
Affiliation Cox McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc.
Address 2401 Donley Drive., Ste. 400
City/State/Zip_ Austin, Texas 78757
Telephone (include area code) (512) 217-4790 Email Address JohnD@coxmclain.com

ANTIQUITIES PERMIT APPLICATION FORM (CONTINUED)

Signature	Date ON Incipal Investigator employed by Cox McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc. I execute this project according to the submitted plans and research design, and will ce of a permit by the Texas Historical Commission. Furthermore, I understand that stigative Firm), as well as the Owner and Sponsor, are responsible for completing Date May 6, 2021 arch design, a copy of the USGS quadrangle showing project boundaries, and any alum vitae must be on file with the Division of Antiquities Protection. FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY Date Permit Issues
Signature	on acipal Investigator employed by <u>Cox McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc.</u> lexecute this project according to the submitted plans and research design, and will ce of a permit by the Texas Historical Commission. Furthermore, I understand that stigative Firm), as well as the Owner and Sponsor, are responsible for completing Date <u>May 6, 2021</u> arch design, a copy of the USGS quadrangle showing project boundaries, and any
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Signature VI. INVESTIGATOR'S CERTIFICATION I, John Dockall , as Prince , as Prince	ON ncipal Investigator employed by <u>Cox McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc.</u>
Signature VI. INVESTIGATOR'S CERTIFICATION	ON
Signature	
	Date
1 0	
have reviewed the plans and research de	al representative of the Sponsor,, do certify that I sign, and that no investigations will be performed prior to the issuance of a permit urthermore, I understand that the Owner, Sponsor, and Principal Investigator are the permit.
V. SPONSOR'S CERTIFICATION	Date
Signature	Date
have reviewed the plans and research de by the Texas Historical Commission. Fu responsible for completing the terms of t	sign, and that no investigations will be performed prior to the issuance of a permit urthermore, I understand that the Owner, Co-owner, and Principal Investigator are this permit.
	al representative of the Owner, Williamson County, do certify that I
IV. OWNER'S CERTIFICATION	
Permanent Curatorial Facility	Center for Archeological Studies (CAS) at Texas State University
	ility CaylMoL ain Environmental Consulting Inc
III. CURATION & REPORT	
research design)	
Scope of Work (Provided an Outline of)	Proposed Work) survey with shovel testing and backhoe trenching (see attached
Scope of Work (Provided an Outline of)	

Type of Permit _____ Date Received for Data Entry _____

Texas Historical Commission Archeology Division P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276 Phone 512/463-6096 www.thc.state.tx.us



ARCHEOLOGICAL INTENSIVE SURVEY SCOPE

Ronald Reagan Extension Project, Williamson County, Texas

Project Description

The purpose of the investigation described in this document is to identify cultural resources within the construction footprint of proposed transportation improvements. Williamson County proposes the expansion of Ronald Reagan Boulevard between Interstate Highway (IH) 35 and State Highway (SH) 95. The proposed project is located within Williamson County, with the western terminus located near IH 35 just south of Jarrell, Texas. From IH 35 the proposed project crosses undeveloped land before paralleling Farm to Market (FM) 1105 for 1.16 miles (1.86 kilometers), veering south again until it parallels FM 972 for 2.65 miles (4.27 kilometers) before intersecting with SH 95. The entirety of the road expansion is approximately 12 miles (19.31 km) long (**Figure 1**).

The purpose of the proposed project is to increase transportation mobility and safety within northeastern Williamson County to accommodate the area's projected population and economic growth. The proposed facility would satisfy current roadway design standards, thereby improving vehicular safety while facilitating economic development within the region. The expansion will primarily cross through predominantly undeveloped or agricultural land. Between IH 35 and SH 95, existing county roads exist, but there is no east-west through facility. State Farm-to-Market roads exist within the proposed facility that may also be partially utilized for the Reagan Extension. The proposed right-of-way dimensions are unknown, but improvements will likely take place where the proposed facility intersects the following roadways: County Roads (CR) 145, 311, 355, 382, 388, FM 972, FM 1105, Sta (SH) 95, Rae Lane, and Rundberg Drive. The project corridor also intersects the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) paralleling SH 95.

The proposed final project would include two-lane mainlanes in each direction and three-lane frontage roads in each direction. The anticipated right-of-way width is 350 feet but could be less at locations where constraints exist to minimize impacts to the natural, cultural, and human environment and more at interchanges with other facilities. This accounts for an ultimate freeway or expressway section that includes two 12-foot mainlanes in each direction with shoulders, three 12-foot frontage roads, and entrance and exit ramps for access. As needed, additional right-of-way will be required to account for detention and drainage facilities, mitigating floodplain impacts, and at intersections with other arterial or access-controlled corridors to accommodate the ultimate buildout footprint. A grade separation is also proposed at SH 95 and the UPRR crossing.

The archeological area of potential effects (APE) is defined as the entire area of the maximal footprint for the project as designed, which covers approximately 532.12 acres. This project would largely be constructed on new right-of-way but also includes some areas of existing roadway right-of-way although the proportions are not known at this time. The typical depth of impacts from this project is unknown at this time, but deep impacts may extend beyond 1 meter (3.28 feet) below ground surface at the proposed stream crossings at Long Branch, Willis Creek, and Opossum Creek.

The project is owned by Williamson County, a political subdivision of the State of Texas, rendering the project subject to the Antiquities Code of Texas. At present, Williamson County is the sole source of project funding. No federal funding or permitting has been identified for the project at this time; however, it is possible that federal funding could be identified at a later date, as the project could become subject to oversight by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), or the project may require United States Army Corps of Engineers permits related to Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. Either of these circumstances would render the project subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

Background Information

The APE ranges in elevation from 177 to 292 meters (581 to 961 feet) above mean sea level along the 12-mile proposed alignment in northeast Williamson County, Texas (**Figure 2**). The area is primarily surrounded by undeveloped or agricultural lands, but some areas of the APE are located near residential or infrastructure development. The APE crosses over two mapped drainages: Opossum Creek near the western edge of the proposed road extension and Willis Creek toward the center of the project area where the APE parallels FM 1105.

Geologically the APE is underlain (west to east) by: Cretaceous-age Austin Chalk and Cretaceous-age Navarro and Taylor Groups (U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 2021). Austin Chalk consists of interbeds and partings of calcareous clay, thin-bedded marl with interbeds of massive chalk, hard lime mudstone and soft chalk. Navarro and Taylor Groups, undivided consists of mostly silty calcareous clay with sandstone beds and concretionary masses, underlain by fine-grained quartz sand with concretions in discontinuous beds and marine megafossils. High gravel deposits are commonly composed of an upper silty clay unit, which is good for crop production and a lower coarse unit that yields some water; these deposits often contain caliche-cemented cobbles of chert as large as 5 inches in size, pebbles of variegated quartzite, limestone, chert, and quartz (USGS 2021).

The project area is located within the Texas Blackland Prairies and the Northern Blackland Prairies Ecoregion (Griffith et al. 2004). The Texas Blackland Prairie is distinguished from surrounding regions by the dominance of fine-textured clayey soils and prairie adapted vegetation. A predominance of vertisols, alfisols, and mollisols in the region is associated with soil formation processes within Cretaceous-age shales, chalks, and marls. Vegetation is dominated by grasses such as little bluestem, big bluestem, yellow Indiangrass and switchgrass. Typical game species include mourning dove and bobwhite in uplands and eastern fox squirrel along stream bottomlands. Deer are present throughout. The Northern Blackland Prairie ecoregion coincides with the subsurface distribution of Upper Cretaceous limestones, chalks, marls, and shales and the ecoregion boundaries are defined by this close overlay of soil types, vegetation, and geology. The Northern Blackland Prairie was distinctive for its broad regional expanse of tallgrass prairie habitat and abundant clayey soils. Vertisols develop atop Cretaceous deposits and are characterized by a high potential for shrink/swell and deep vertical cracks; alfisols develop atop bedrock that is higher in sand and lower in calcium carbonates; mollisols occur above bedrock associated with the Austin Group where bedrock is just below the surface yielding shallow soils with limited root depth (University of Idaho 2021).

According to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) data, there are 18 soil types from 14 soil series mapped within the APE (Soil Survey Staff 2021). These soil series include:

- Altoga silty clay loam on 5 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded
- Austin silty clay loam on 0 to 1 percent slopes
- Austin silty clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes
- Austin-Whitewright complex on 2 to 6 percent slopes, eroded
- Branyon clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes
- Castephen silty clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes
- Castephen silty clay on 3 to 5 percent slopes
- Eddy very gravelly clay loam on 0 to 3 percent slopes
- Ferris-Heiden complex on 5 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded
- Heiden clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes
- Heiden clay on 2 to 5 percent slopes, moderately eroded
- Houston Black clay on 0 to 1 percent slopes
- Houston Black clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes

- Krum silty clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes
- Lewisville-Altoga complex on 2 to 5 percent slopes
- Lewisville-Krum complex on 1 to 3 percent slopes
- Lott silty clay on 1 to 5 percent slopes
- Tinn clay on 0-1 percent slopes, frequently flooded

More than 77.4 percent of the APE contains soils from one of the following series, each of which cover between 4.8 percent and 34.5 percent 12 percent of the APE: Austin silty clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes, Castephen silty clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes, Ferris-Heiden complex on 5 to 15 percent slopes (moderately eroded), Heiden clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes, Houston Black clay on 1 to 3 percent slopes, or Whitewright silty clay loam on 1 to 5 percent slopes. Austin silty clay developed from calcareous clayey residuum weathered from chalk. Castephen silty clay forms from calcareous loamy residuum weathered from chalk. Ferris-Heiden complex soils form from clayey residuum weathered from mudstone. Houston Black clay formed from clayey residuum weathered from Upper Cretaceous mudstones. Whitewright silty clay loam developed from residuum weathered from the Austin Chalk. Each of these soil series are often found on interfluve ridges and summit settings. Ferris-Heiden complex soils occur on ridges and backslopes with linear gilgai features (Ferris component) and interfluve ridges with some linear gilgai (Heiden component) (Soil Survey Staff 2021; Texas Parks and Wildlife Department [TPWD] 2021). Each of these major soil series vary from moderately well-drained to well-drained.

A review of the Austin Hybrid Potential Archeological Liability Mapping (HPALM) dataset reveals that 98.82 percent of the APE (525.83 acres) falls within Map Units 1, 4, and 5 (Abbott and Pletka 2016, see **Table 1** and **Figures 3a-r**). These map units are considered to have low potential to moderate shallow and moderate potential for archeological resources. A total of 105.79 acres of the project APE has some moderate to high shallow to deep potential for archeological deposits. Much of the APE is almost entirely located within existing rural settings dominated by active farmland situated between the IH 35 corridor and SH 95 midway between Bartlett and Granger, Texas.

Table 1: HPALM Map Units (values) by Acreage									
Map Unit	Description of Potential	Acreage	Percentage						
0	Negligible Potential	0.76	0.15						
1	Low Potential	425.57	79.98						
2	Low Shallow Potential, Moderate Deep Potential	1.19	0.22						
4	Moderate Shallow Potential, Low Deep Potential	30.16	5.67						
5	Moderate Potential	73.71	13.85						
7	Moderate Shallow Potential, High Deep Potential	0.55	0.10						
9	High Potential	0.18	0.03						

A search of the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) maintained by the THC and the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) was conducted in order to identify archeological sites, Official Texas Historical Markers (OTHMs), properties or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), State

Antiquities Landmarks (SALs), cemeteries, and previous archeological investigations undertaken within one kilometer (0.6 miles) of the APE (**Figures 2a-e**).

According to Atlas survey coverage data, much of the APE has not been previously surveyed. Several surveys are located adjacent to or intersect with the APE, including:

- A linear survey paralleling the western side of IH 35. No other information listed.
- 2015 linear survey conducted by Antiquities Planning and Consulting for Williamson County/Lone Star Water Authority: and
- 2009 linear survey conducted by PBS&J (now Atkins Global) for Oncor Electric Delivery Company (THC 2021).

One archeological resource is mapped close to the APE. This is site 41WM1232, an historic surface artifact scatter, which is located approximately 200 meters (656 feet) north of the APE (see **Figure 2c**). One cemetery is also located within the 1-kilometer buffer; the Holy Trinity Cemetery located in the Theon community approximately 800 meters (2,624 feet) south of the APE (see **Figure 2b**). Neither of these resources will be impacted by the current project Four previously recorded sites and two cemeteries are mapped beyond but adjacent to the 1-kilometer buffer surrounding the APE (Tipton 2021) (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Resources within or near the 1-Kilometer Buffer Area Surrounding the APE								
Resource Designation	Trinomial and/or Name	Description/Additional Information	Eligibility Determination	Within APE/1-Km Buffer				
Cemetery	WM-C132, Holy Trinity Cemetery	In Theon Community, vicinity of Holy Trinity Catholic Church on FM 1105	Undetermined	Yes				
Cemetery	WM-C133, Knauth Family Cemetery	Vicinity of Knauth Farm. At least two children graves	Undetermined	Buffer				
Cemetery	WM-C219, Ake Family Cemetery	Vicinity of the City of Walburg. Ake Family Cemetery	Undetermined	Buffer				
Archeological site (Prehistoric Campsite)	41WM937	Lithic Scatter	Not Eligible	No				
19 th -20 th Century stream crossing	41WM1344	Documented with Windshield Survey Only	Not Eligible	No				
Early 20 th Century Farmhouse	41WM1345	Deposits related to historical structure	Undetermined	No				
Historic Structure	41WM1241	Light Scatter of Historic Artifacts	Undetermined	No				
Historic Surface Scatter	41WM1232	Surface Scatter of Historic Artifacts	Undetermined	Yes				

A review of available historic aerial photographs (years 1963, 1981, 1995, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2016) and topographic maps (years 1925, 1928, 1945, 1951, 1966, 1967, 1974, 1982, 1986, 1987, 1995, 2012, 2013, 2016) on the Nationwide Environmental Title Research (NETR) website was also undertaken to determine how the corridor has been utilized over time (NETR 2021). The earliest topographic maps reviewed from 1893 shows no significant development in the area save the presence of the Corn Hill community south and Jarrell north of the APE (USGS 2021). Although the map scale is too coarse to show small detail. The next earliest maps are from 1954. These maps again are again at a large scale and do not depict fine detail. The highway and county roads appear in the same alignments as today. More recent maps and aerial imagery show that that APE is in a largely

rural and agricultural setting (USGS 2021). The only detail worth noting is that in the 1893 map, Willis Creek was labeled as Williamson Creek. It was renamed at some point between the creation of the two maps (USGS 2021). The project area crosses Willis Creek approximately 13 kilometers (8.1 miles) west of the eastern terminus at SH 95 between Bartlett and Granger.

The earliest available historic aerial imagery (from 1963) shows the APE and surrounding area as very similar to later imagery. IH 35 and SH 95 are both present in the photographs as well as the network of county roads between. The dominant land use is rural residential and agricultural. The 1995 photos show the two relatively larger developments with the addition of structures just east of IH 35 and a small housing development south of CR 311 near the bend in FM 1105. All maps after 1995 show no major developments. The most recent image reviewed was from 2016 (NETR 2021).

Research Design

Cox|McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc. (CMEC), will conduct intensive survey of the APE per Category 7 under 13 TAC 26.15 and using the definitions in 13 TAC 26.3. Field methods and strategies will comply with the requirements of 13 TAC 26.15, as established by the Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA) and approved by the THC in April 2020.

The archeological survey would include the pedestrian survey of all areas of proposed new right-of-way, including excavation of shovel tests in areas where local conditions (soil, slope, etc.) and roadway, utility, and developmental disturbances allow. The bulk of the APE will consist of new right-of-way extending across agricultural and undeveloped lands that are not known to have been surveyed in the past. CMEC will also examine the existing right-of-way and conduct pedestrian survey with judgmental shovel testing in areas of existing right-of-way that appear to have undergone relatively little disturbance (e.g., along the margins of minor county roads).

Nearly all the APE (99.04 percent) falls within HPALM Map Units 1, 2, 4 and 5 which are considered to have low to moderate potential to contain shallow archeological sites and deep archeological deposits.

Shovel tests will be placed in areas where soils appear to be of sufficient depth to contain subsurface cultural materials, historic maps indicate high potential for historic archaeological sites, and/or previous disturbances appear to have been minimal. All shovel tests will be excavated in natural levels to subsoil or 60 centimeters (24 inches), whichever is encountered first. Excavated matrix will be screened through 0.635-centimeter (0.25-inch) hardware cloth as allowed by moisture and clay content, which may require that the removed sediment be crumbled/sorted by hand, trowel, and/or shovel point. Deposits will be described using conventional texture classifications and Munsell color designations. Radial shovel tests will be placed at 5-meter (16-foot) intervals around each shovel test containing cultural material until two negative units have been established in each cardinal direction, as allowed by project limits, observed disturbance, and other constraints. Deviations from THC and CTA standards will be explicitly justified.

Mechanical trenching may be required around the various drainage crossings in the APE and would only be conducted if field observations and/or THC coordination warrant. All mechanical trenching deemed necessary will be conducted following completion of the initial pedestrian survey and shovel testing. For any necessary trenching, CMEC will endeavor to conduct backhoe trenching where HPALM, topography, and soil data indicate deep impacts are anticipated. CMEC expects to perform such trenching (as allowed by access restrictions) within the portions of the APE nearest to Opossum Creek, Willis Creek, and any HPALM map units with high potential to contain deeply buried archeological deposits (HPALM map unit 9). The actual placement and extent of any trenches may be affected by factors such as property access, vegetation, soil moisture content, and other conditions and safety factors.

All trenches will be a minimum length of 4 meters (13 feet) and a minimum depth of 2.0 meters (6.56 feet) using a backhoe with a flat-bladed bucket 61 centimeters (24 inches) wide. Trenches will be excavated in 5-centimeter

(1.97-inch) increments; sediment will then be placed in piles to be observed and documented by professional archeologists. At least one five-gallon bucket's worth of matrix from every third excavated bucket load will be screened through 0.635-centimeter (0.25-inch) hardware cloth as allowed by moisture and clay content, which may require that the removed sediment be crumbled/sorted by hand, trowel, and/or shovel point. Trench side walls will be scraped and analyzed by professional archeologists; profiles will be photographed and described using conventional texture, consistency, and color designations. Following the completion of analysis, trenches will be backfilled and compacted.

The project has a low probability of encountering human burials; however, if burials are found, Williamson County and the THC will be notified, and all requirements of 8 THSC 711 will be followed.

The APE is located on both public land and privately-owned land anticipated for acquisition. Artifacts identified in shovel tests and surface contexts will be noted, described, photographed, and returned to their original contexts, except in the case of significant diagnostic artifacts. At this time, landowner permission is being coordinated by the engineering consultant team. If for any reason access is not available at the time of the survey, a reasonable and good-faith effort will be made to document inaccessible areas from accessible areas for the purposes of the present permit. This permit would then be closed (assuming all work products and submittals meet THC/CTA requirements) and, if necessary, an additional permit application would be submitted at a future date when any remaining land becomes accessible.

Any site recorded during the investigation will be identified by a temporary marker placed on the site. The marker will have an identifying number in the form of the initials of the CMEC employee who recorded the site, followed by a consecutively assigned number that will indicate the order in which the sites were discovered (e.g., XX-01, XX-02, etc.). This number is a temporary field number to be superseded by a formal site trinomial obtained following the completion of fieldwork (see below). Site designations will be applied only to features (whether surface or subsurface) that appear to represent occupation or activity areas and/or to clusters of artifacts (whether surface or subsurface) with the minimum threshold of two contiguous positive shovel test units.

CMEC personnel will keep a complete record of field notes with observations including (but not limited to) identified sites, cultural materials, location markers, contextual integrity, estimated time periods of occupations, vegetation, topography, hydrology, land use, soil exposures, general conditions at the time of the survey, and field techniques employed. The field notes will be supplemented by digital photographs.

Reporting and Curation

Relevant field observations for any new sites discovered or previously recorded sites revisited during these investigations will be transferred to TexSite forms and submitted to TARL for official recording and integration into the trinomial system. An analysis of recorded materials and site characteristics will be performed, and the results will be presented in a clear and concise manner. These data will be used to formulate a preliminary evaluation of the NRHP and/or SAL eligibility of each site, as well as a recommendation for further work or no further work, supported by explicit justifications (13 TAC 26.3; 13 TAC 26.10; 13 TAC 26.16). Data, sites recorded, and NRHP/SAL eligibility assessments will be presented in a standard draft survey report to be submitted to the County and THC for review and comment. Comments on the draft report will be incorporated into a final version to be submitted (with the number and format of copies to be determined based on client preferences) to the County and THC. Per 13 TAC 26.16, the final permit closure submittal will include a transmittal letter, abstract form, project area shapefile, tagged PDF files of the report in both restricted (with site locations) and public (without site locations) versions, as applicable.

Upon completion of the fieldwork and reporting, CMEC will make all materials and forms generated by this project available to future researchers through curation at the Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS) at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas per 13 TAC 26.16 and 26.17. A curation form filed at both CAS and THC will accompany the collections.

References

Abbott, J. T. and S. Pletka

2016 Hybrid Potential Archeological Liability Map for the Texas Department of Transportation Austin District. Available at http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/environmental/compliance-toolkits/toolkit/archeological-map.html.

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Historic Aerial Imagery viewed through Google Earth Pro Viewer. Available at http://www.google.com/earth/index.html. Accessed February 9, 2021.

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2021 Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database. Natural Resources Conservation Service. Available at http://casoilresource.lawr.ucdavis.edu/soilweb/. Accessed February 9, 2021.

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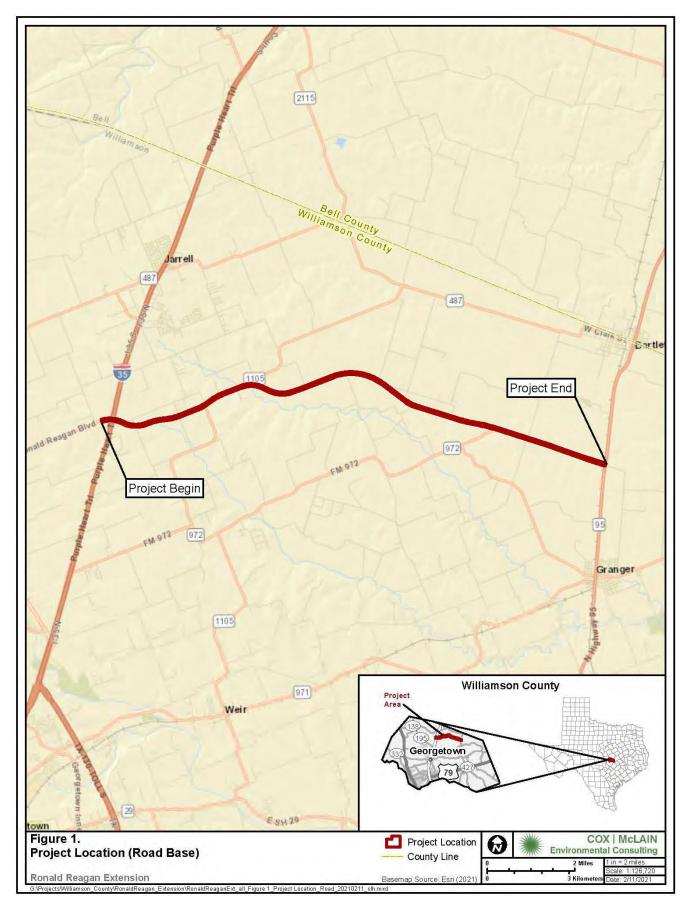
Texas Geology Map Viewer. United States Geological Survey Available at http://txpub.usgs.gov/dss/texasgeology/. Accessed February 9, 2021.

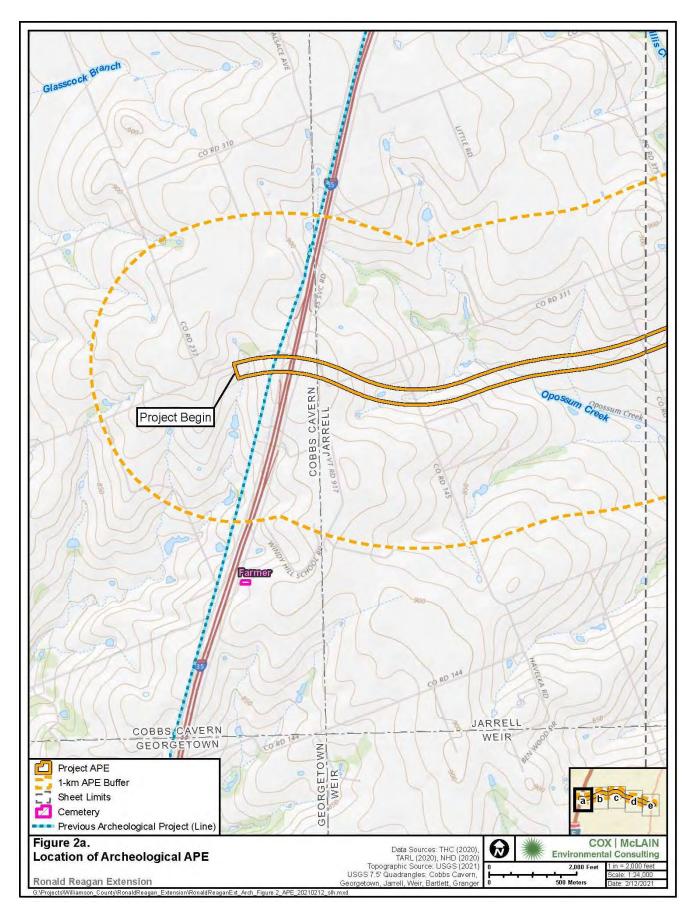
List of Figures:

Figure 1: Project Location (Road Base)

Figures 2a-e: Location of Archeological APE

Figures 3a-r: HPALM Map





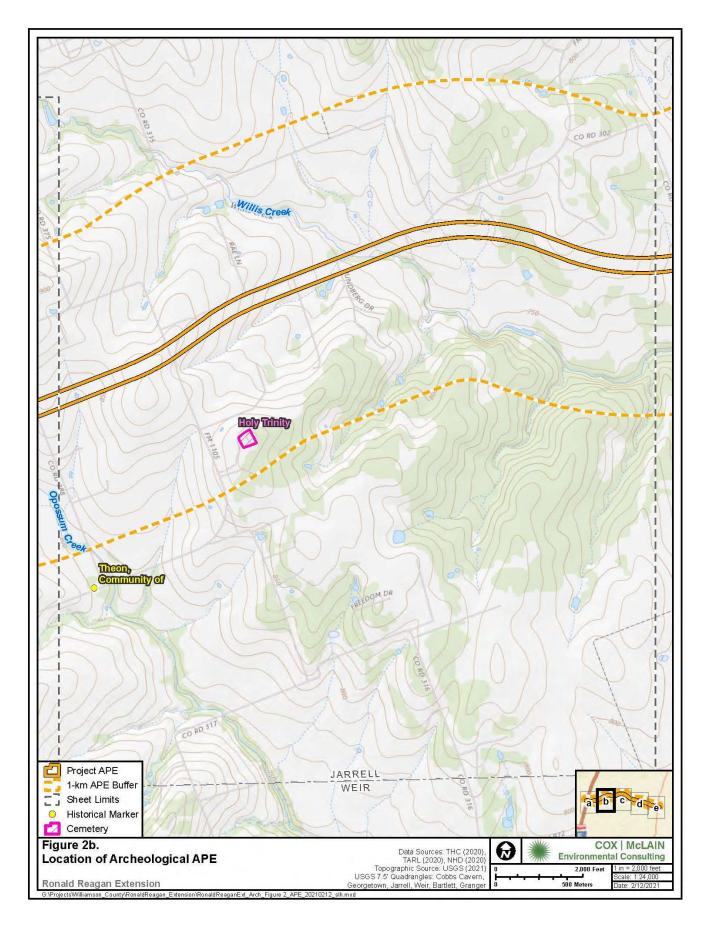


FIGURE 2c REDACTED

