

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

On March 12, 2021, at the request of Bridgefarmer & Associates, Inc. (Bridgefarmer), and on behalf of Williamson County, Hicks & Company conducted an intensive archeological survey of proposed improvements and realignment of County Road (CR) 245 that extends 1.10 miles between Farm-to-Market (FM) Road 2338 and Ronald Reagan Boulevard in northwest Williamson County, Texas. The proposed project will require additional right of way to accommodate an upgraded roadway with a two-lane design with shoulders and a center turn lane. Currently, the CR 245 right of way varies from 60 to 140 feet (ft) wide and contains a two-lane asphalt road. Planned improvements would result in a typical right of way width of 135 ft to allow two upgraded travel lanes, a center turn lane, and shoulders. Vertical impacts are anticipated to extend to one meter (m) (3.28 ft) below the existing grade for roadway improvements and greater than three m (10.0 ft) for a proposed bridge at the CR 245 crossing of Cowan Creek. Overall, the proposed project area encompasses approximately 18.50 acres; 12.00 acres of existing CR 245 right of way and 6.50 acres of proposed right of way on 15 parcels of private property. Because the project will occur within public right of way owned by Williamson County, a political subdivision of the State of Texas, the project is subject to the terms and conditions of the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT).

Investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian, non-collection archeological survey augmented with shovel testing of 6.38 acres of proposed right of way on 13 parcels where right of entry was obtained; right of entry was not obtained to two parcels containing 0.12 acres of proposed right of way. Given previous impacts from surface and subsurface utilities and roadway construction, Hicks & Company recommended to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) that survey within the existing CR 245 right of way was unwarranted. Surface investigations within the proposed right of way revealed largely undeveloped properties except for several scattered residences with associated yards frequently set back from the road beyond the limits of the project area, and a single parcel being developed for a residential subdivision. Prior disturbances noted within the project area include roadway construction, surface and subsurface utilities, erosion, and vegetation clearing. Surface examination of the project area observed no surficial archeological materials within or adjacent to the proposed right of way. Subsurface investigations involved the excavation of 24 shovel tests to assess the project area for its potential to contain intact buried archeological materials. Those excavations discovered no buried cultural materials, only thin and gravelly to rocky clayey soils overlying limestone gravel and/or bedrock.

Based on the above data, Hicks & Company recommends that the proposed project would not affect any archeological sites warranting State Antiquities Landmark (SAL) designation within the 6.38 acres of proposed right of way where right of entry was obtained, and no additional investigations are necessary. Hicks & Company also recommends that the 0.12 acres of proposed right of way where right of entry was not obtained are unlikely to contain archeological sites warranting SAL designation given geologic and soil conditions that are not conducive to the preservation of intact buried archeological deposits, as well a lack of surficial archeological materials (as observed from the existing CR 245 right of way), and survey is not warranted for those parcels.

All project-related notes, forms, and photographs will be permanently curated at the Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS) in San Marcos, Texas. Investigations were completed under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9792 issued to Principal Investigator Brandon S. Young.