

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ANTIQUITIES PERMIT APPLICATION FORM
ARCHEOLOGY

GENERAL INFORMATION

I. PROPERTY TYPE AND LOCATION

Project Name (and/or Site Trinomial) Intensive Cultural Resources Survey of an Approximate 1.2-Liberty Hill Bypass Project, Williamson County, TX
County (ies) Williamson County
USGS Quadrangle Name and Number Liberty Hill, TX USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle map (2900-231)
UTM Coordinates Zone 14 E 603124 N 3392024
Location 0.55 mile south of CR 279 and FM 1869 intersection near Liberty Hill, Texas.
Federal Involvement ☐ Yes ☒ No
Name of Federal Agency Potential USACE involvement (TBD)
Agency Representative _____

II. OWNER (OR CONTROLLING AGENCY)

Owner Williamson County
Representative Bill Gravell Jr. (County Judge)
Address 710 South Main Street, Suite 101
City/State/Zip Georgetown, TX 78626
Telephone (include area code) 512-943-1150 Email Address _____

III. PROJECT SPONSOR (IF DIFFERENT FROM OWNER)

Sponsor (Same as Above)
Representative _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Telephone (include area code) _____ Email Address _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

I. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (ARCHEOLOGIST)

Name Chris Shelton
Affiliation SWCA Environmental Consultants
Address 4407 Monterey Oaks Blvd. Bldg 1, Ste 110
City/State/Zip Austin, TX 78748
Telephone (include area code) 512-476-0891 Email Address cshelton@swca.com

ANTIQUITIES PERMIT APPLICATION FORM (CONTINUED)

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposed Starting Date of Fieldwork 9/3/2020
Requested Permit Duration 5 Years 0 Months (1 year minimum)
Scope of Work (Provided an Outline of Proposed Work) See attached

III. CURATION & REPORT

Temporary Curatorial or Laboratory Facility SWCA (Austin) lab
Permanent Curatorial Facility CAR at UTSA

IV. LAND OWNER'S CERTIFICATION

I, Bill Gravell Jr., as legal representative of the Land Owner,

Williamson County, do certify that I have reviewed the plans and research design, and that no investigations will be performed prior to the issuance of a permit by the Texas Historical Commission. Furthermore, I understand that the Owner, Sponsor, and Principal Investigator are responsible for completing the terms of the permit.

Signature Bill Gravell Jr. Date November 17, 2020

V. SPONSOR'S CERTIFICATION

I, (Same as Above), as legal representative of the Sponsor, do certify that I have review the plans and research design, and that no investigations will be performed prior to the issuance of a permit by the Texas Historical Commission. Furthermore, I understand that the Sponsor, Owner, and Principal Investigator are responsible for completing the terms of this permit.

Signature _____ Date _____

VI. INVESTIGATOR'S CERTIFICATION

I, Chris Shelton, as Principal Investigator employed by SWCA Environmental Consultants (Investigative Firm), do certify that I will execute this project according to the submitted plans and research design, and will not conduct any work prior to the issuance of a permit by the Texas Historical Commission. Furthermore, I understand that the Principal Investigator (and the Investigative Firm), as well as the Owner and Sponsor, are responsible for completing the terms of this permit.

Signature Chris Shelton Date 08/26/2020

Principal Investigator must attach a research design, a copy of the USGS quadrangle showing project boundaries, and any additional pertinent information. Curriculum vita must be on file with the Archeology Division.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Reviewer _____ Date Permit Issues _____
Permit Number _____ Permit Expiration Date _____
Type of Permit _____ Date Received for Data Entry _____

***TEXAS ANTIQUITIES PERMIT APPLICATION
PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK FOR LIBERTY HILL BYPASS PROJECT,
WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS***

Project Landowners – Williamson County

Project Sponsor – LJA Engineering, Inc. (LJA)

Project Consultant – SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA)

Principal Investigator – Chris Shelton, M.A., RPA

Date – August 26, 2020

On behalf of Williamson County, and under contract through LJA Engineering, Inc. (LJA), SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) will conduct a cultural resources survey of an approximately 58.08-acre (23.5-hectare [ha]) proposed right-of-way (ROW) for the Liberty Hill Bypass Project (project). The proposed project would create a bypass for State Highway 29 (SH 29) south of Liberty City. The proposed project area is located between Farm-to-Market Road 1869 (FM 1869) and County Road 279 (CR 279), approximately 0.98 kilometers (km) (0.6 mile) south of the intersection of FM 1869 and CR 279 in the City of Liberty Hill, Williamson County, Texas (Figures 1 and 2). The project area is located on the *Liberty Hill, Texas*, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map (USGS 2019).

The project is proposed to occur on largely undeveloped land either currently owned by Williamson County, or expected to be purchased by Williamson County. Williamson County is a political subdivision of the state of Texas, and as such the project will require review under the Antiquities Code of Texas (ACT). There is also the possibility that the project could impact jurisdictional waters of the United States, which would also trigger compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) through its connection to the Clean Water Act, as regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). To comply with requirements of the ACT, and in anticipation of the requirements of the NHPA, SWCA is proposing an intensive cultural resources survey with shovel testing of the project area. This scope of work presents information on the project area; potential effects, known resources; and methods of the proposed survey, reporting, and curation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The Liberty Hill (SH 29) Bypass Project is part of Williamson County's 2019 Road Bond Program. The new location roadway is aligned south of the City of Liberty Hill from RM 1869 to CR 279/Bagdad Road for a length of approximately 1.2 miles (1.93 km) and a total footprint encompassing approximately 60 acres (24.3 ha). The project is derived from an existing ultimate schematic previously designed by others, which consists of main lanes and frontage roads through the proposed corridor. The current Liberty Hill (SH 29) Bypass Project includes construction of an interim two-lane roadway to serve as a future frontage road in the ultimate condition. The proposed Liberty Hill Bypass typical section includes 2–12-foot lanes, 10-foot shoulders, and turn lanes at intersections with FM 1869 and CR 279. Roadway improvements on FM 1869 include a northbound right turn lane as well as a southbound left turn lane. Depths of impact are expected the range between two feet (61 centimeters [cm]) and eight feet (2.4 m). Aerial imagery shows the project area is currently largely undeveloped with residential areas, and is depicted on the *Liberty Hill, Texas* USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map (USGS 2019) (Figures 1 and 2).

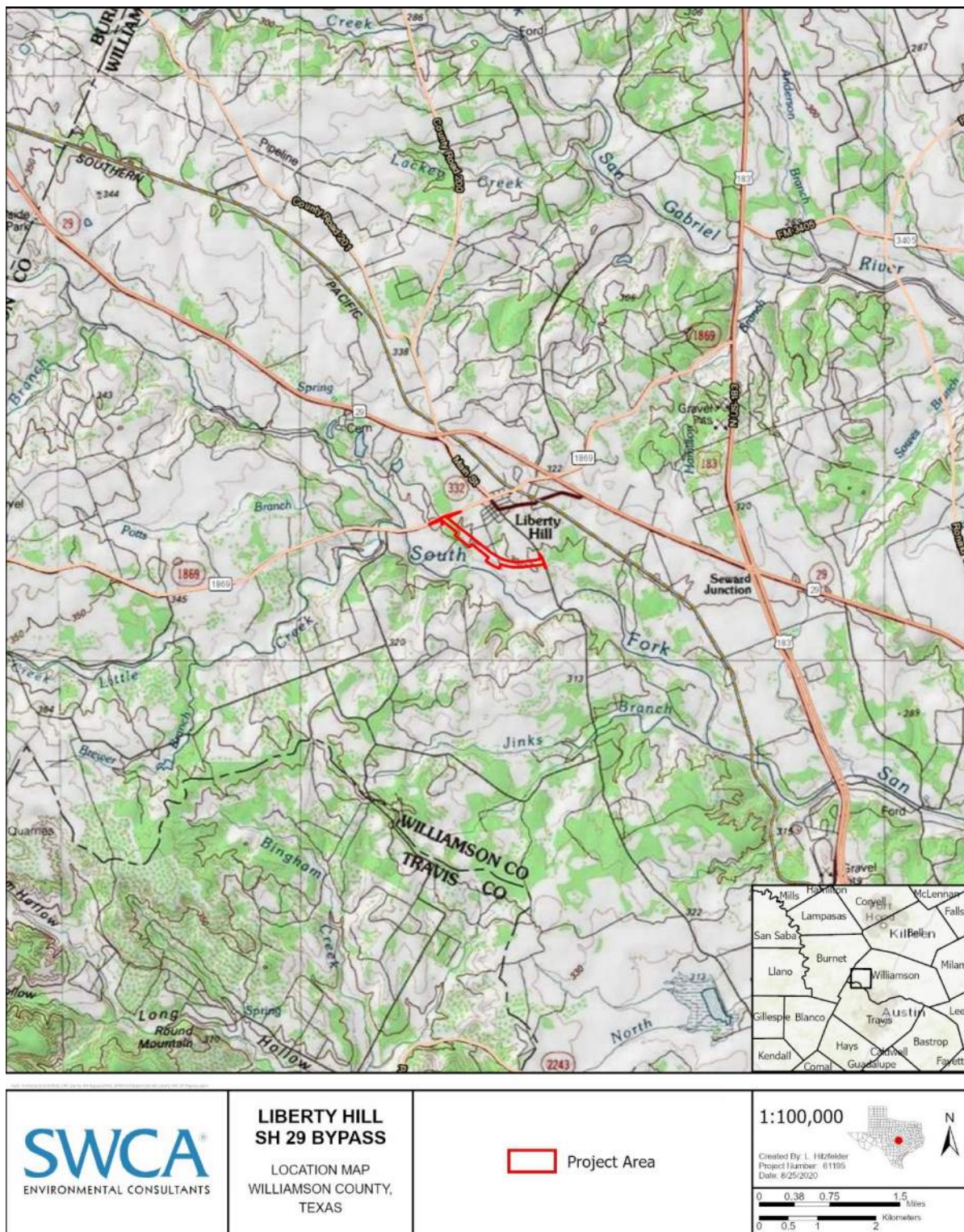


Figure 1. Project location map. (Background Imagery: USGS 2020a).

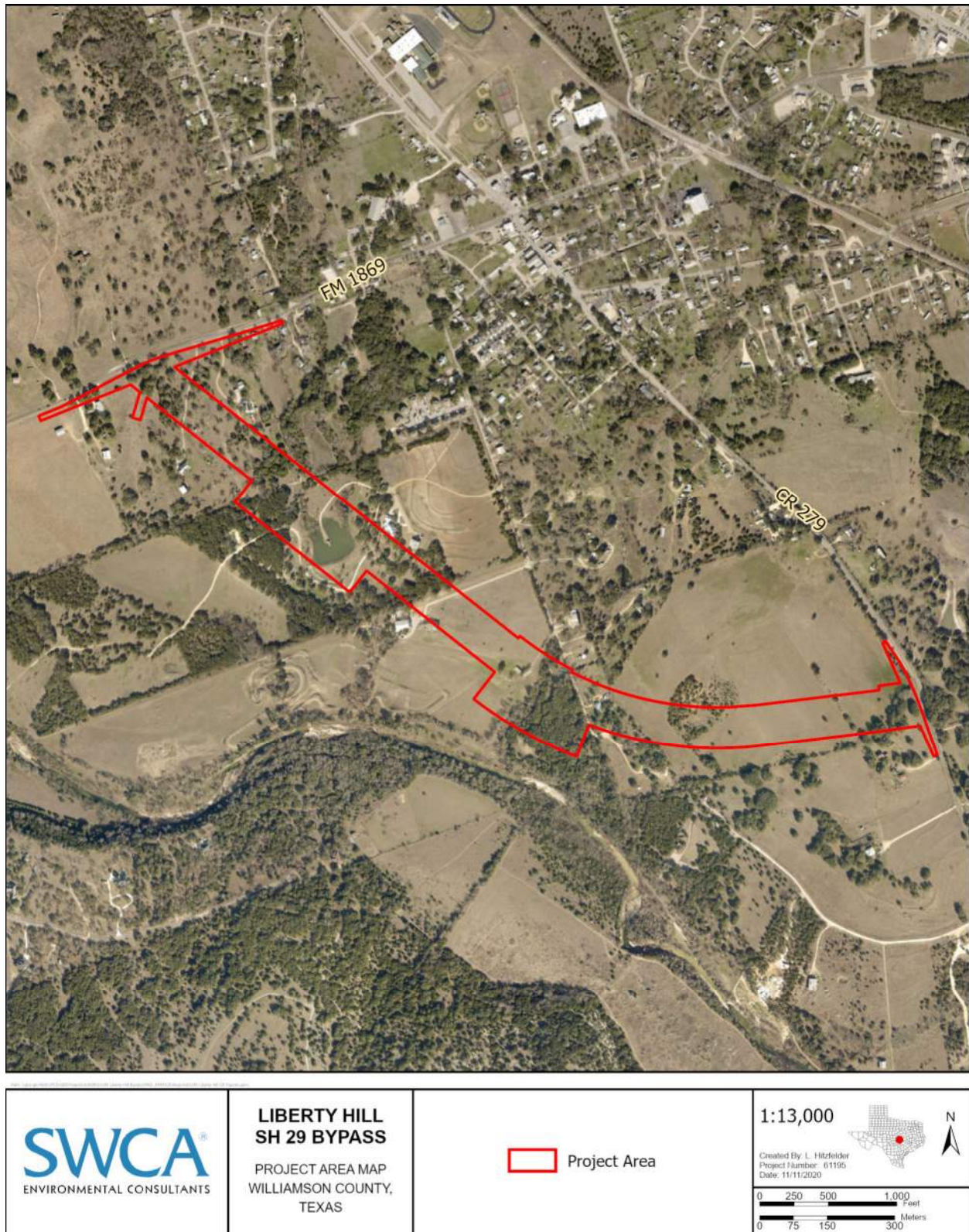


Figure 2. Project aerial location map (Background Imagery: ESRI 2018).

The surface geology within the project area consists entirely of early Cretaceous-age Glen Rose Limestone deposits, which consists of relatively thick limestone deposits with thin beds of silt and sand (USGS 2020b). Eight soil types were identified as underlying the proposed project area (NRCS 2020) (Table 1; Figure 3). The most prevalent soils mapped within the project area include the Eckrant cobbly clay series, the Georgetown stony clay loam series, and the Fairlie clay series. The Eckrant cobbly clay series consists of well-drained soils that are shallow to very shallow overlying indurated limestone bedrock and is formed from residuum derived from ridges and dissected plateaus (NRCS 2020). The Georgetown series soils consist of moderately deep, well-drained soils formed from Cretaceous-aged indurated limestone. The Georgetown soils are formed on level to gently sloping dissected plateaus (NRCS 2020). The Fairlie soil series consists of deep, moderately well-drained soils formed on nearly level to gently sloping uplands (NRCS 2020).

Table 1. Soils within the Project Area

Soil Name	Acreage	Percent of Project Area
Eckrant cobbly clay, 1 to 8 percent slopes	18.62	32.1%
Georgetown stony clay loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	9.16	15.8%
Fairlie clay, 1 to 2 percent slopes	7.79	13.4%
Doss silty clay, moist, 1 to 5 percent slopes	6.74	11.6%
Eckrant extremely stony clay, 0 to 3 percent slopes	5.44	9.4%
Sunev silty clay loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	4.03	6.9%
Denton silty clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes	3.97	6.8%
Denton silty clay, 3 to 5 percent slopes	2.33	4.0%
Total	58.08	100.0%

Source: NRCS 2020

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AND KNOWN RESOURCES

On August 24, 2020, SWCA completed desktop reviews of the project. The study area includes an approximately 58.08-acre (23.5-ha) project area and an additional 0.6-mile (1-km) radius around the project components (Figure 4). The review used the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas online database (Texas Historical Commission [THC 2020]) to identify previously conducted surveys and known sites within the study area. The review also consulted historical topographic maps available through the USGS Historical Topographic Map Explorer (USGS 2020c), the Texas Historic Overlay (Foster et al. 2006), and modern aerial imagery to identify land use practices that may indicate the potential for or presence of cultural resources within the project area.

The file search and literature review identified three previously recorded cultural resources surveys, two previously recorded archaeological sites, and two Texas Historic Markers within the study area. Only one of the previous surveys intersects with the project area (THC 2020) (see Figure 4). No National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties, State Antiquities Landmarks (SAL), cemeteries, or local neighborhood surveys were identified within the project area or the study area. Additionally, the historic map review identified a total of 254 potential historic standing structures and a historic railroad within the 0.6-mile (1-km) study area; of those potentially historic structures, only five are depicted within the project area and an additional 17 are depicted within 328 feet (100 meters [m]) of the project area (Foster et al., 2006; USGS 2020c) (see Figure 4).

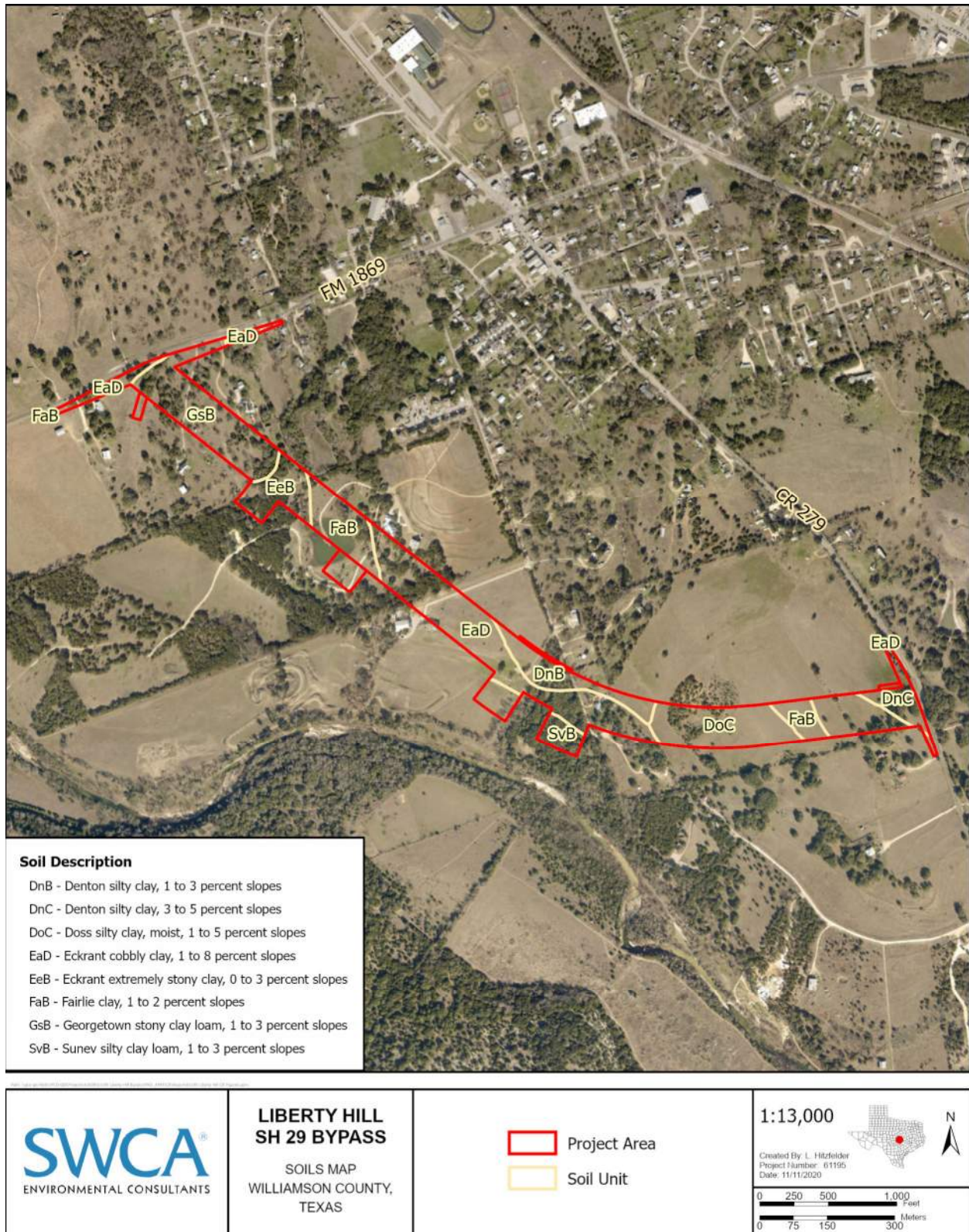


Figure 3. Soils Map (Background Imagery: ESRI 2018).

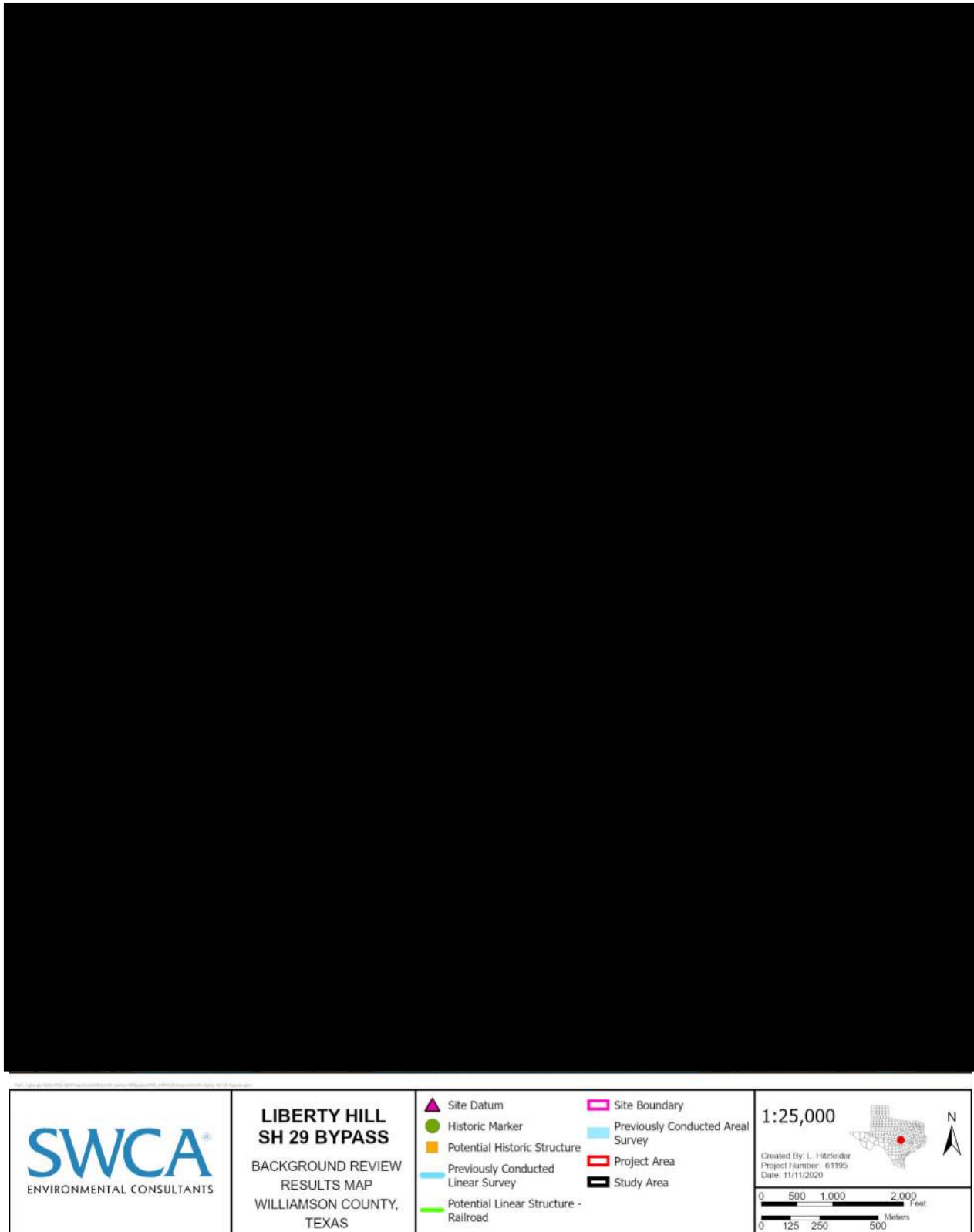


Figure 4. Background review results map (Background Imagery: ESRI 2018).

REDACTED

METHODS

SWCA will implement field survey methods that comply with technical standards and requirements established by the THC, Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA), and the USACE. Two SWCA professional archaeologists will conduct a pedestrian survey of the project area using systematic transects spaced no more than 98.4 feet (30 m) apart. This procedure will examine visible ground surfaces for cultural materials and aboveground features. Visual examination will be supplemented through shovel tests hand-excavated within the property. Shovel testing will be conducted in areas that hold potential for intact, subsurface archaeological resources. Shovel tests will not be conducted and/or will be limited in areas within pre-existing utility ROWs, disturbed by modern homestead development, or in upland settings lacking soils or displaying bedrock exposures. Shovel tests will be excavated according to THC standards. Linear projects require at least one survey transect for every 98 feet (30 m) of corridor width, with at least one shovel test excavated per 328 linear feet (100 linear meters) on each transect. The main corridor of the currently proposed project is approximately 295 feet (90 m) wide and 1.24 miles (2 km) long, which would require at least 60 shovel tests. Additions to the corridor footprint, including turn lanes and workspaces, will require a further 31 shovel tests, bringing the total minimum proposed shovel tests to 91. SWCA will excavate shovel tests in 8 inch (20-centimeter [cm]) arbitrary levels to 31.5 inches (80 cm) in depth, impervious surfaces, groundwater, or to culturally sterile deposits, whichever comes first. The matrix will be screened through ¼-inch mesh. Archaeologists will plot each shovel test using a global positioning system (GPS) receiver and will record each test on appropriate project field forms. Areas with cultural resources will require additional shovel testing at closer spacing to delineate the boundaries of buried cultural materials.

The potential for deeply buried cultural deposits is currently deemed low based on the previously discussed soils and geology information. The majority of the soils mapped within the project area consist of shallow indurated limestone with a low potential to contain deeply buried cultural deposits. The field assessment will further define the potential of a site and methods will be adjusted accordingly.

Previously identified resources as well as any newly identified archaeological sites will be explored as much as possible with consideration to the boundaries of the project. All discovered sites will be assessed regarding their potential significance, so that recommendations can be made for proper management (i.e., avoidance, non-avoidance, or further work), and will be assessed for SAL and NRHP eligibility. Shovel tests will be excavated per THC/CTA standards to define horizontal and vertical site boundaries.

SWCA will complete appropriate State of Texas Archaeological Site Data Forms for each site discovered during the investigations. SWCA will produce a detailed plan map of each site and plot locations on USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles and relevant project maps. Unless otherwise required by the THC or USACE, SWCA will conduct a non-collection survey, where artifacts will be tabulated, analyzed, photographed, and documented in the field. Field notes will be kept at the SWCA Austin location. If the survey data allows, SWCA archaeologists will make a significance determination using the criteria listed in 36 CFR 60.4. If determined to be potentially significant and eligible for listing on the NRHP or as an SAL, additional work may be required to study or mitigate the resource prior to any construction.

During the survey, the field team will also plot, record, and photograph any buildings or structures within or directly adjacent to the area of potential effect that appear to be more than 45 years in age. These potential historic features will be evaluated by a U.S. Secretary of the Interior-qualified architectural historian to identify if they are potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP and will be reported separately under the same antiquities permit. The architectural evaluation will use standard industry-recognized methods in the analysis, including National Park Service National Register Bulletins 15 and 39. The report will include an evaluation of the resources using the NRHP criteria of evaluation (36 CFR 60.4).

REPORTING AND CURATION

Once the cultural resources survey has been completed, SWCA will prepare a report for review by Williamson County, LJA, THC, and potentially USACE. The report of the investigations will conform to the CTA and THC standards and guidelines. The report will include the results of the background review and the field survey. Specifically, the report will provide the methodology used in the investigations, the presence and condition of previously recorded sites located in the project area, photographs illustrating the environment and setting, a description of cultural resources encountered during the survey, recommendations for management of those cultural resources, and recommendations for additional investigations, if warranted. The architectural review will be submitted in a separate report. SWCA will submit a draft digital copy of the report to Williamson County and LJA for review and comment. SWCA will address all comments and concerns, and at the request of Williamson County, the revised draft will be submitted to the THC for review. SWCA will address any comments or concerns and produce a final report to complete requirements of the Antiquities Permit. SWCA is proposing a no-collection survey; however, documentation will be curated at The University of Texas San Antonio, Center for Archaeological Research.

UNANTICIPATED DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS

In the event of unexpected discovery of human remains or funerary objects/contexts during the survey, SWCA will comply with all applicable state laws (Texas Health and Safety Code Section 711 and the Texas Administrative Code Title 13, Chapter 22, Sections 22.1 through 22.6.), as well as taking into account the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's 2007 Policy Statement on the Treatment of Burial Sites. Any

human skeletal remains that may be discovered will, at all times, be treated with dignity and respect. If human remains are uncovered during investigations, the following steps will be taken:

- SWCA will halt excavation of the remains and shall notify the Williamson County sheriff and the THC. The sheriff will be requested to contact the coroner/medical examiner. After examining the human remains, if the sheriff and coroner determine the remains are modern, then the sheriff or coroner will assume responsibility for the remains.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that the remains are protected and not disturbed prior to the conclusion of investigation by law enforcement and consultation with appropriate groups to determine next steps (if needed).
- Excavations (e.g., shovel testing) within 328 feet (100 m) of the find will be halted until the THC authorizes continued work in those areas.
- Surveys will continue elsewhere in the project area.
- If the county sheriff and coroner determine that the remains are not modern or a crime scene, thereby relinquishing their jurisdiction over the remains, SWCA will coordinate with the project and THC to determine the appropriate course of action and file *Notice of the Existence of a Cemetery*.

REFERENCES

ESRI

- 2018 *World Imagery by ESRI*. Online database available at https://services.arcgisonline.com/ArcGIS/rest/services/World_Imagery/MapServer. Accessed November 2020.

Foster, T. R., T. Summerville, and T. Brown

- 2006 *The Texas Historic Overlay: A Geographic Information System of Historic Map Images for Planning Transportation Projects in Texas*. Prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation by PBS&J, Austin.

Natural Resources Soil Service (NRCS)

- 2020 Web Soil Survey. Online database available at <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>. Accessed August 2020.

Texas Historical Commission

- 2020 Texas Archeological Sites Atlas restricted database, Texas Historical Commission. Available at: <http://atlas.thc.texas.gov>. Accessed August 2020.

U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

- 2019 *Liberty Hill, TX* [map]. 1:24,000, 7.5-Minute Series topographic quadrangle. U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geologic Survey, Washington D.C.
- 2020a ArcGIS USGS Topographic Map (Large). Available at: <http://services.nationalmap.gov/arcgis/rest/services/USGSTopoLarge/MapServer>. Accessed November 2020.
- 2020b Texas Geology Web Map Viewer. Available at: <https://txpub.usgs.gov/txgeology/>. Accessed August 2020.

2020c The National Geologic Map Database (TopoView). Historical topographic map collection.
Available at: <http://ngmdb.usgs.gov/maps/TopoView/>. Accessed August 2020.