

Volume 2020

Article 154

2020

Intensive Archeological Survey Of Victoria Avenue Improvements City Of College Station, Brazos County, Texas

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Intensive Archeological Survey Of Victoria Avenue Improvements City Of College Station, Brazos County, Texas

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Cultural Resources Survey

INTENSIVE ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF VICTORIA AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS CITY OF COLLEGE STATION, BRAZOS COUNTY, TEXAS

January 9, 2020

Final Report – Public Copy

Terracon Project No. 96197506A

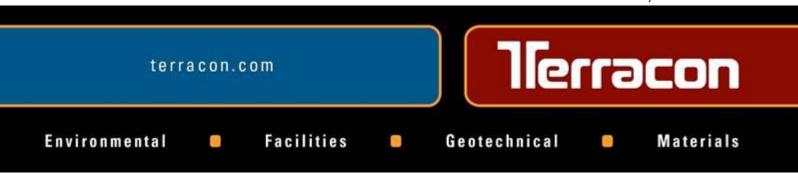
Antiquities Permit No. 9084

Caitlin Gulihur, MA, RPA, Principal Investigator



Prepared for: Jones & Carter, Inc. The Woodlands, Texas

Prepared by: Caitlin Gulihur, MA, RPA and Ann M. Scott, PhD, RPA Terracon Consultants, Inc. Austin, Texas



ABSTRACT

The City of College Station has proposed the Victoria Avenue Improvements project where roadway improvements will be constructed in southern College Station, Brazos County, Texas. The project engineer, Jones & Carter, Inc, retained Terracon Consultants, Inc. to conduct a systematic, intensive pedestrian survey of the approximate 6.2-acre project area. Because the City of College Station, a political subdivision of the State of Texas, sponsored the project, the proposed undertaking is subject to compliance with the Antiquities Code of Texas and oversight from the Texas Historical Commission. In addition, the survey meets the standards for compliance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, should federal funding or permitted be utilized for this project. The work described herein was performed under Texas Antiquities Permit Number 9084, issued to Caitlin Gulihur, MA, RPA Principal Investigator, and in adherence to Title 13, Chapter 26 of the Texas Administrative Code. Fieldwork was carried out by Caitlin Gulihur with assistance from Environmental Planning Group Manager Ann M. Scott. Records from the project will be curated at the Center for Archaeological Studies at Texas State University.

The approximate 6.2-acre parcel was considered the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the project. Survey of the APE consisted of systematic pedestrian coverage, including discretionary shovel testing and mechanical scraping. The work was carried out on September 23, 2019. One shovel test was excavated. In general, the ground surface within the APE was heavily disturbed by driveways, drainage ditches, buried utilities, and previous construction of the existing roadway. Shovel test excavation was devoid of cultural materials; prehistoric or historic-age cultural materials were not observed on the ground surface. No archaeological sites were recorded or revisited as a result of the survey. Therefore, there are no historic properties present within the project area. It is Terracon's recommendation that there are no historic properties eligible for National Register of Historic Places inclusion or State Antiquities Landmark designation that will be affected by future construction of the proposed roadway improvements. In the unlikely event that human remains or intact cultural features are discovered during construction, those activities should cease in the vicinity of the remains and Terracon, the Texas Historical Commission's Archeology Division, or other proper authorities should be contacted.

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INTENSIVE ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF VICTORIA AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS, CITY OF COLLEGE STATION, BRAZOS COUNTY, TEXAS

Terracon Project No. 96197506A Antiquities Permit No. 9084 January 9, 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from an intensive pedestrian survey of approximately 6.2 acres in which the City of College Station has proposed to construct the Victoria Avenue Improvements project in southern College Station, Brazos County, Texas (Appendix A, Exhibits 1 and 2). The proposed project consists of the construction of roadway improvements. The 6.2-acre survey was performed on behalf of the City of College Station, a political subdivision of the State of Texas. Therefore, the project is under the purview of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in compliance with the Antiquities Code of Texas. In addition, the survey meets the standards for compliance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, should federal funding or permitting be utilized for this project. The work described herein was performed under Texas Antiquities Permit Number 9084, issued to Caitlin Gulihur, MA, RPA Principal Investigator, and in adherence to Title 13, Chapter 26 of the Texas Administrative Code. The work was carried out on September 23, 2019, by Caitlin Gulihur with assistance from Environmental Planning Group Manager Ann M. Scott.

Abiding by standards set forth by the Council of Texas Archaeologists (CTA) for short reports, this negative findings report includes introduction and management summary, defining the area of potential effects, methods, results, and recommendations. The report was authored by Caitlin Gulihur, Principal Investigator, and Ann M. Scott, Environmental Planning Group Manager.

2.0 DEFINING THE AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The project area, which is the same as the area of potential effect (APE) for direct effects, consists of an approximate 3,800-linear-foot alignment with a width that ranges from 55 to 90 feet. The total acreage of the APE is approximately 6.2 acres. The project area is located along Greens Prairie Road W, also called Victoria Avenue, in southern College Station, Brazos County, Texas (see Appendix A, Exhibits 1 and 2). The proposed project will consist of the construction of roadway improvements. The alignment follows Greens Prairie Road W/Victoria Avenue, starting in the west at the intersection with Wellborn Road and ending in the east where Greens Prairie Road W and Victoria Avenue diverge. Greens Prairie Road W/Victoria Avenue is currently a paved, two-lane roadway with no shoulder or roadside curbs. The proposed roadway improvements include curb and gutter construction, bike lanes, sidewalks, and one lane for motor vehicle traffic in each direction. The impacts for the project will be mostly confined to the existing



road right-of-way (ROW); small areas of new ROW will be acquired for turn lanes and sidewalks. In total, less than 0.5 acre for new ROW will be taken for this project. The vertical depths of impact for the project is anticipated to be six feet or less. Originally, the project area was approximately 5.75 acres in size; as the project plans were updated, additional linear areas were added to the project, bringing the total APE to 6.2 acres (Appendix A, Exhibit 3).

3.0 RESEARCH AND SURVEY METHODS

The methods described below were employed to identify and characterize cultural resources present within the APE to the extent practicable. Desktop review focused on identifying previously known cultural materials and understanding the site setting, while fieldwork was used to both search for unknown cultural resources and gather more information based on the desktop review.

3.1 Desktop Review

Prior to fieldwork, and as part of the Antiquities Code of Texas permit application, background research and a literature search were conducted. This effort included desktop review of mapped geology and soils, search for previously recorded sites and investigations, a review of historic designations such as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), State Antiquities Landmarks (SALs), National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and historical markers, and an examination of historic maps and aerials for evidence that the APE may have exhibited buildings or other features that may be considered historic (at least 50 years old).

3.2 Intensive Pedestrian Survey

In order to examine the approximate 6.2-acre APE for previously unknown cultural resources, an intensive pedestrian survey was conducted. The ground surface in the APE was systematically inspected by archeologists walking transects spaced not more than 15 meters apart, for 100 percent coverage of the APE. The survey was augmented by shovel testing and mechanical scraping.

As a general method, shovel tests are excavated to varying depths that target Holocene-aged soils. Sediment was excavated in arbitrary 20-cm levels to depth and passed through ¼-inch hardware mesh. Characteristics and contents of shovel tests are recorded with photographs, forms and notes, and a hand-held global positioning system (GPS) unit; upon completion of excavation and documentation, the unit holes and artifacts, if present, are backfilled. Cultural materials encountered through the course of shovel test excavations are described and returned to their approximate origin.

In order to explore the potential for unmarked graves within the APE, an area adjacent to the Wellborn Cemetery was mechanically scraped. Using a straight edge bucket, the ground surface was scraped in approximately 15-centimeter increments, to a depth of approximately 70 centimeters. An archeologist with cemetery experience monitored the mechanical scraping for

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evidence of grave markers or soil stains indicating potential grave shafts as well as for potential grave goods or coffin hardware.

Archeological sites, if encountered, would be recorded with the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and be assessed for eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP or designation as a SAL as appropriate. This survey has a "no-collection" policy; therefore, diagnostic artifacts (if encountered) would be documented in the field and not collected. Records will be temporarily housed in Terracon's office in Austin and will be permanently curated by the Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS) at Texas State University upon completion of the project.

3.3 National Register of Historic Places and State Antiquities Landmark Criteria

For a historic resource to be deemed eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the resource must be at least 50 years old and must possess significance and integrity. The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- A. That are associated with the 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 our prehistory or history (36 CFR 60.4).

Additionally, the State of Texas affords important cultural resources a level of protection beyond that of NRHP status if the resource meets the criteria for listing as a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL). SAL criteria are divided into four categories based on the type of resource: archaeological site, shipwreck, cache and collection, and historic structure. The criteria for archaeological sites are:

- 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 interest 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; and
- 5) There is a high likelihood that vandalism and relic collecting has occurred or could occur, and official landmark designation is needed to ensure maximum legal protection, or

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alternatively, further investigations are needed to mitigate the effects of vandalism and relic collecting when the site cannot be protected (Title 13, Rule 26.10).

4.0 **RESULTS**

4.1 Desktop Review

Results of the Desktop Review are detailed below.

4.1.1 Mapped Geology and Soils

Two bedrock geological units are mapped in the project area. The bedrock geology of the western portion of the APE is mapped as Wellborn Formation (Eocene) (EOwb) consisting of sandstone, lignite, and claystone. The bedrock geology of the majority of the APE is mapped as Manning Formation (Eocene) (EOm) consisting of sandstone, mudstone, and lignite (Barnes 1992). Seven soils are mapped in the project area (Appendix A, Exhibit 4) (Chervenka 2003; USDA NRCS 2019).

Soil or Series Name	Drainage	Soil Depth	Associated Landform
Burlewash fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes (BwC)	Well-drained; very slow permeability	40 inches to bedrock	Ridges/Shoulder
Chazos loamy fine sand, 1 to 5 percent slopes (ChC)	Moderately well-drained; slow permeability	80 inches to bedrock	Stream Terraces
Gredge fine sandy loam, 1 to 5 percent slopes (GrC)	Well-drained; very slow permeability	68 inches to bedrock	Paleoterraces
Koether-Rock outcrop complex, 3 to 12 percent slopes (KrD)	Somewhat excessively drained; rapid permeability	16 inches to bedrock	Ridges/Backslope and Shoulder
Shiro loamy fine sand, 1 to 3 percent slopes (SkB)	Well-drained; slow permeability	40 inches to bedrock	Ridges/Summit and Shoulder
Singleton fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes (SnB)	Moderately well-drained; very slow permeability	60 inches to bedrock	Ridges/Summit, Shoulder, and Backslope
Tabor fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes (TaA)	Moderately well-drained; very slow permeability	80 inches to bedrock	Stream Terraces

Table 1. Soil Survey data in Area of Potential Effect.

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A review of the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas database with emphasis on a 0.5-mile buffer indicates that no previously recorded sites are located within the APE (Appendix A, Exhibit 5). No State Antiquities Landmarks (SALs), Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), or National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties are present in the buffer search. One previously recorded archaeological site, 41BZ177, is mapped within the search buffer. Site 41BZ177 was recorded in 2017 by Brazos Valley Research Associates as the remains of a historic-age jail structure. There is no NRHP eligibility determination from the THC for the site. In addition to 41BZ177, the Wellborn Cemetery is recorded immediately south of the project area (see Appendix A, Exhibit 4). According to a THC historical marker at the cemetery, the first documented burial dates to 1874.

One previous investigation has been conducted within the 0.5-mile search buffer. The investigation was conducted in 1994 for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT); no Antiquities Code Permit Number is associated with this project. None of the project area appears to have been previously surveyed.

4.1.3 Historic Imagery and Maps

Historic-period topographic maps dating back over 50 years cover the project area. Several years were examined including 1956, 1965, 1972, 1973, and 1980. In the topographic map from 1956, Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue is marked, along with several structures along the roadway and a symbol marking the Wellborn Cemetery. In the topographic maps from 1965 through 1980, an increasing amount of structures through time are marked near Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue. Historic aerials were also reviewed, the earliest of which was dated 1960. Others were dated 1971, 1981, 1995, 2004, and 2015. In the aerial photographs, Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue can be observed, with increasing development and increasing number of structures near the roadway through time.

4.2 Intensive Pedestrian Survey

The project area generally consisted of the existing Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue and the existing roadway ROW (Appendix A, Exhibit 6) (Appendix B, Photo 1). The vegetation of the project area was short to moderately tall grasses, some of which were mowed (Appendix B, Photos 2 and 3). In addition to the existing Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue roadway, the project area was heavily disturbed; shovel tests were not excavated in heavily disturbed areas.

On the eastern side of the road, the northern portion of the project area contained residential areas; the project APE was disturbed by drainage ditches and buried utilities (Appendix B, Photos 4 and 5). The central portion of the eastern side of the road contained disturbances from driveways, buried utilities, and drainage ditches (Appendix B, Photos 6 and 7). The southern portion of the project area contained drainage ditches and an overhead electric line (Appendix B, Photo 8).

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On the western side of Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue, the southern area was disturbed from drainage ditches (including ditches with standing water) and landscaped areas with sidewalks (Appendix B, Photos 9 and 10). The central portion of the APE west of Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue contained drainage ditches and buried utilities (Appendix B, Photos 11 and 12). The northern end of the project area, west of the roadway, contained drainage ditches, buried utilities, and shallow soils (Appendix B, Photos 13 and 14).

A portion of the APE closest to the Wellborn Cemetery was mechanically scraped to investigate the potential for unmarked graves within the project area (see Appendix A, Exhibit 6) (Appendix B, Photo 15). The scraped area was approximately 2.5 meters long, 1 meter wide, and 70 centimeters deep. Scraping was limited to a small area between marked utilities and the edge of the project APE (Appendix B, Photo 16). The scraping revealed disturbed sediments over apparent bedrock (Appendix B, Photo 17). Evidence of grave shafts was not observed during mechanical scraping. No artifacts or cultural features were observed in the scraped area.

One shovel test was placed in an area that appeared mostly undisturbed (see Appendix A, Exhibit 6) (Appendix B, Photo 18) (see Appendix C for shovel test log). The shovel test was negative for cultural materials. No historic-age or prehistoric-age cultural materials were noted on the ground surface. No archaeological sites were recorded or revisited during the course of the current survey.

After the original 5.75-acre project area was surveyed, the project boundary was revised (see Appendix A, Exhibit 3). These revisions added less than 0.5 acre to the APE; several portions of the alignment were widened by 25 feet or less. The total width of the alignment remained under 100 feet. Although these areas were not part of the APE when the pedestrian survey was conducted, they were observed when the survey was conducted, as both archeologists walked transects on both sides of Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue. In addition, the plans from the project engineer, which showed the updated project boundary, also contained the locations of existing buried utilities. These plans show the extent to which the areas surrounding Greens Prairie Road/Victoria Avenue, both within and outside of the existing road ROW, have been greatly disturbed by underground utilities. Given these factors, the small linear areas that were added to the project area were not subjected to additional intensive pedestrian survey.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Terracon archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of an approximate 6.2-acre APE in advance of the construction of the Victoria Avenue Improvements project by the City of College Station, in southern College Station, Brazos County, Texas. The project area was systematically surveyed, including shovel testing and mechanical scraping. No archeological sites were recorded or revisited.

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It is Terracon's opinion that there are no historic properties in the APE eligible for listing on the NRHP or designation as a SAL. Therefore, Terracon recommends that the project be allowed to proceed as future construction of the roadway improvements will not affect historic properties. In the unlikely event that human remains or intact cultural resources are discovered during construction, those activities should cease in the vicinity of the discovery and Terracon, the Texas Historical Commission's Archeology Division, or other proper authorities should be contacted.

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6.0 **REFERENCES CITED**

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1992 Geologic Map of the Texas. Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas at Austin.

Chervenka, Glen

2003 *Soil Survey of Brazos County, Texas.* Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

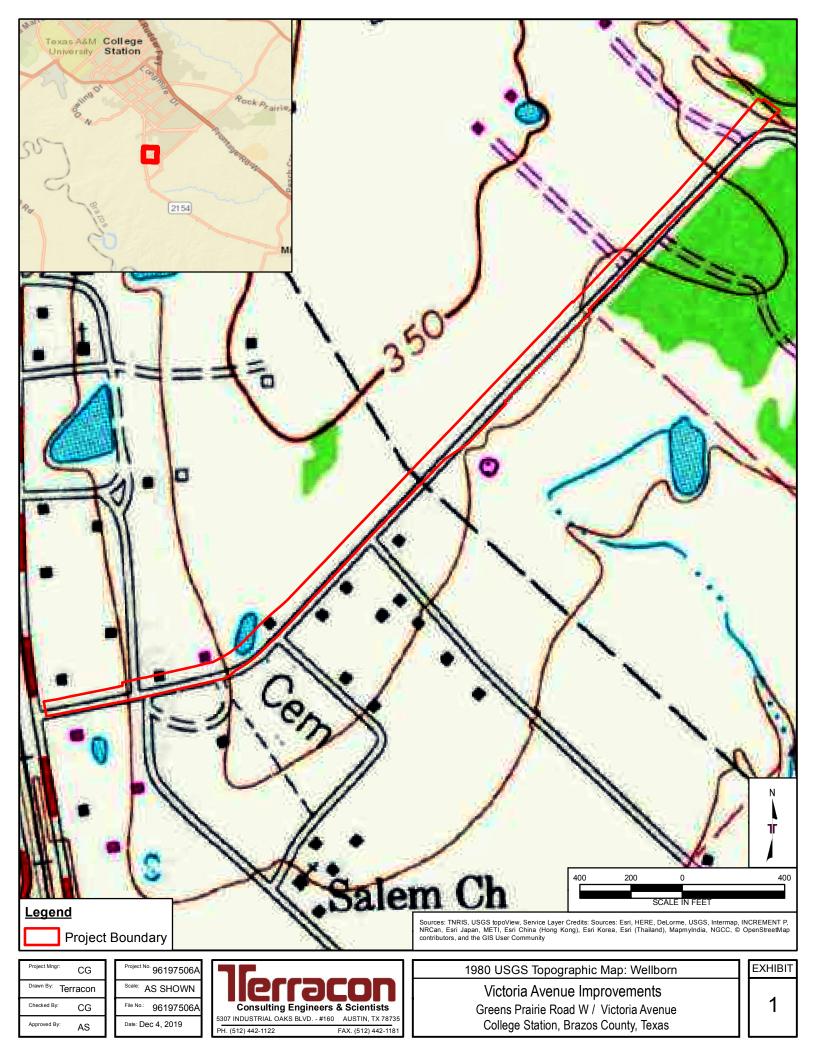
USDA NRCS, Soil Survey Staff

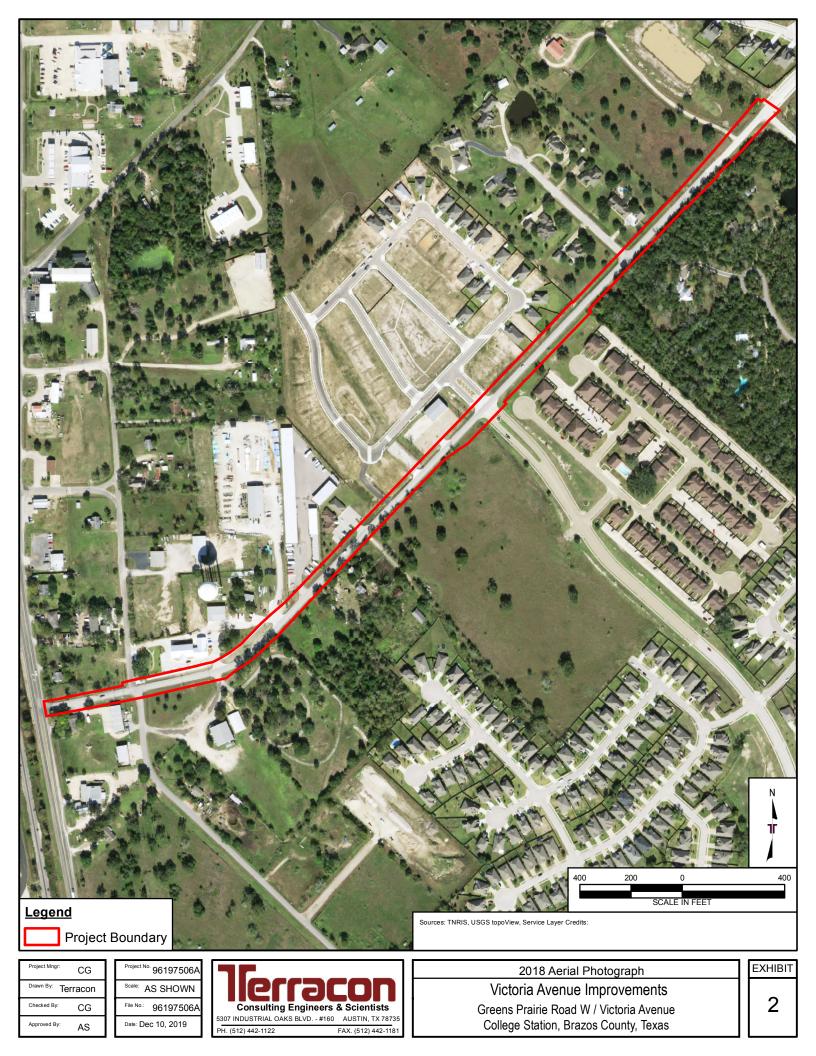
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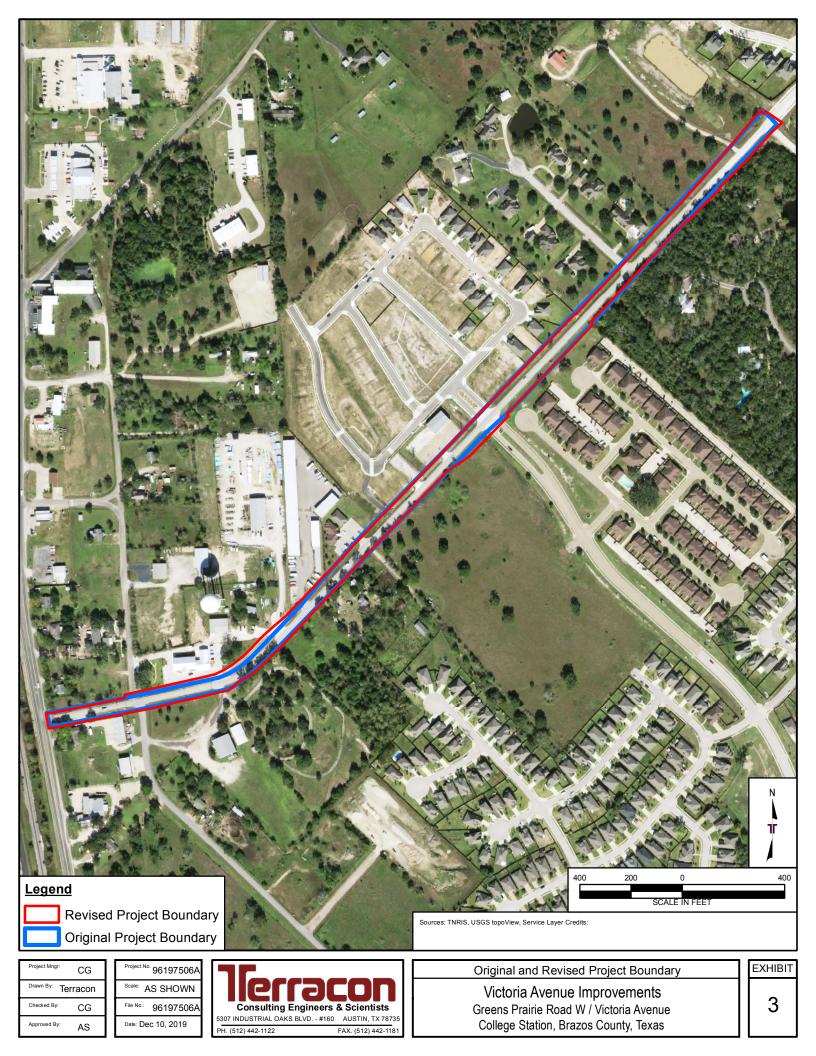
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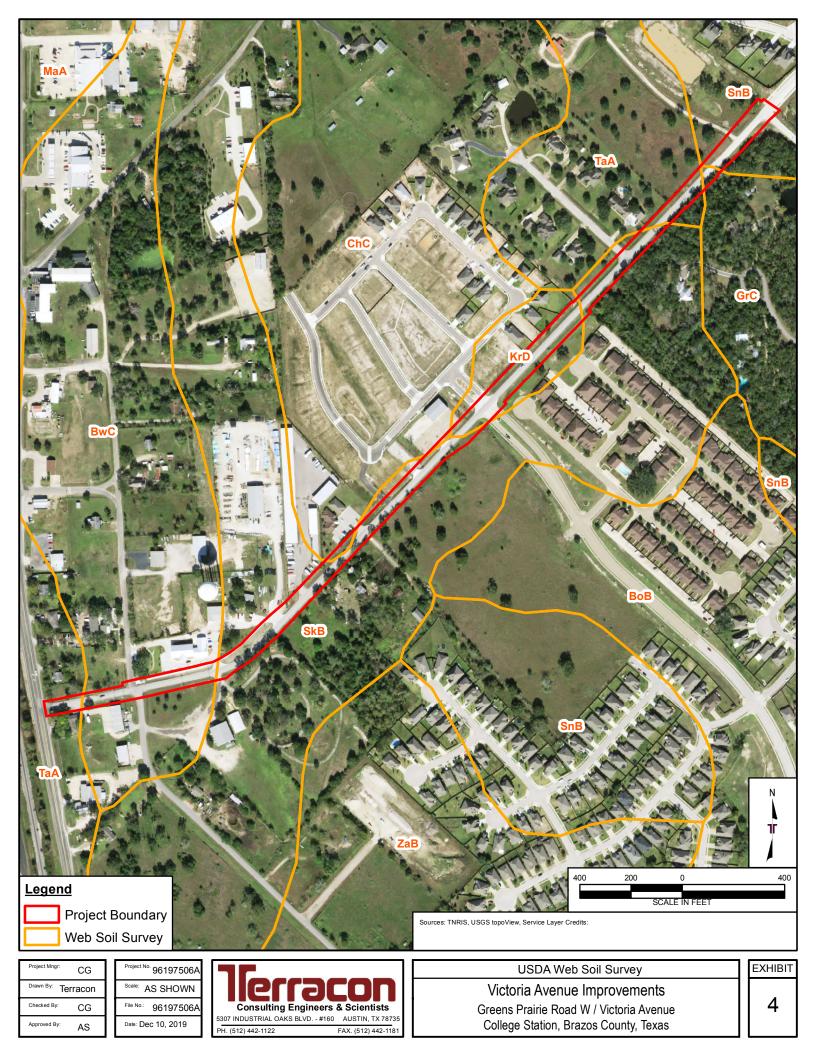
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APPENDIX A Exhibit Maps

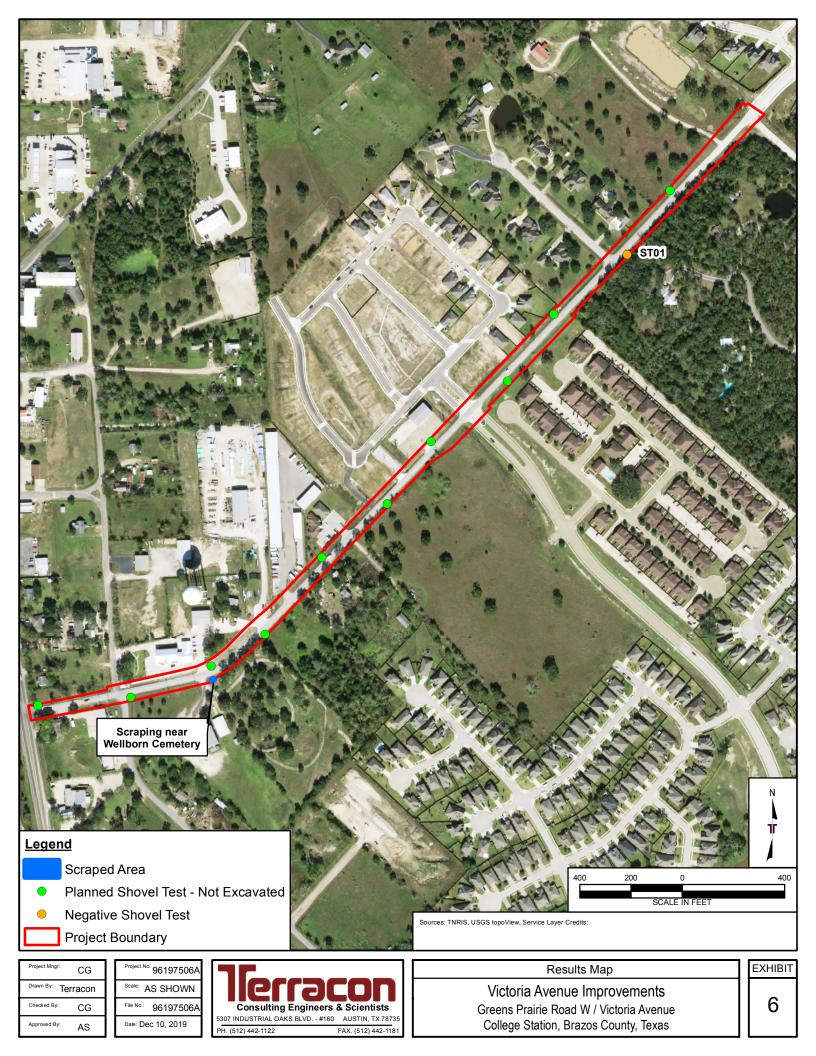








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APPENDIX B Photographs



Photo 1. General view of project area. Eastern side of road, near intersection with Victoria Avenue. View to the southwest.



Photo 2. Eastern side of road. View of mowed, short grasses. View to the southwest.



Photo 3. Eastern side of road. View of moderately tall grasses. View to the southwest.



Photo 4. Northern portion of project area, eastern side of road. Note drainage ditch. View to the southwest.



Photo 5. Northern portion of project area, eastern side of road. Note drainage ditches and buried utilities. View to the southwest.

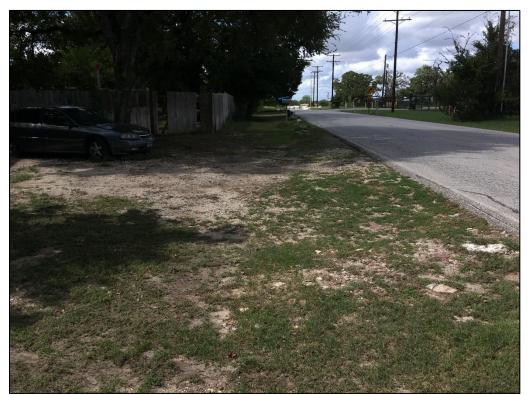


Photo 6. Central portion of project area, eastern side of road. Note driveway. View to the southwest.



Photo 7. Central portion of project area, eastern side of road. Note buried utility markers. View to the southwest.



Photo 8. Southern portion of project area, eastern side of road. At intersection with Wellborn Road. Note drainage ditch and overhead electric line. View to the west.



Photo 9. Southern portion of project area, western side of road. Note drainage ditch with standing water. View to the east.



Photo 10. Southern portion of project area, western side of road. Note drainage ditch, maintained right-of-way, and sidewalk. View to the east.

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Photos taken September 23, 2019



Photo 11. Central portion of project area, western side of road. Note buried utilities. View to the east.



Photo 12. Central portion of project area, western side of road. Note drainage ditch. View to the northeast.

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Photos taken September 23, 2019



Photo 13. Northern portion of project area, western side of road. Note utility marker. View to the northeast.



Photo 14. Northern portion of project area, western side of road. Note apparent shallow soils. View to the northeast.



Photo 15. Scraping near Wellborn Cemetery. Ann Scott in frame. View to the northeast.



Photo 16. Scraped area near cemetery. Note markers for buried utilities. View to the north.



Photo 17. Profile of scraped area. Disturbed sediments over bedrock.



Photo 18. Shovel Test 01.

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APPENDIX C Shovel Test Log

Appendix C. Shovel Test Log

Victoria Avenue Improvements
College Station, Brazos County, Texas Shovel Tests from September 23, 2019
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ST ID #	Depth (cmbs)	+/-	Ground cover	Munsell & Color	Texture	% Gravels	Comments
ST01	0-20	-	40-60%	7.5YR 7/2 Pinkish grey	Sand	2-20%	Fine sand. Appears to be sandy fill material. Disturbed, common fine gravels. Mottled with 10YR 5/3 Brown. Abrupt transition to lower layer.
ST01	20-35	-	-	10YR 3/2 Very dark greyish brown	Sandy clay	>20%	Dense sandy clay. Appears disturbed. Many subrounded gravels. Terminated due to disturbances and compactness.