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Cultural Resources Survey for the Village of Vinton Wastewater Pipeline Systems, El Paso County, Texas

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Cultural Resources Survey for the Village of Vinton Wastewater Pipeline Systems, El Paso County, Texas

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**Cultural Resources Survey for the Village of Vinton
Wastewater Pipeline Systems, El Paso County, Texas**

TAC #7890

Prepared for
Parkhill, Smith & Cooper
501 W. San Antonio
El Paso, Texas 79901

Prepared by
Elia Perez

Submitted by



Report No. 271029

2017

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Abstract

TRC conducted an intensive, linear pedestrian survey of a proposed route for a sanitary sewer gravity line that will convey flows from the City of Vinton to a regional lift station. The regional lift station will be constructed by El Paso Water Utilities on their property. The sewer gravity line will range between 12 and 18 feet in diameter with a total length of more than 5,000 feet. Of the 5,000 feet, only 700 feet will cross the Rio Grande. The project area is located within El Paso County, Texas. The proposed line will cross Doniphan Rd, railroad tracks and easement, and the Rio Grande. The project area is within the floodplain of the Rio Grande.

Several modern trash dumping episodes were noted within the project area. The trash dumps consisted of modern ceramic tile fragments, roofing material, concrete fragments, wind-blown trash, miscellaneous milled wood, aluminum cans, and furniture fragments. No significant cultural materials were located or identified. The archeological pedestrian survey was conducted under TAC #7890. No further work is recommended for the project area.

Project Description

TRC has been contracted by Parkhill, Smith & Cooper (PSC) of El Paso, Texas to conduct a 100-percent intensive, pedestrian survey of approximately 9.76 total acres. The project entails a proposed route for a sanitary sewer gravity line that will convey flows from the City of Vinton to a regional lift station. The regional lift station will be constructed by El Paso Water Utilities on their property. The sewer gravity line will range between 12 and 18 feet in diameter with a total length of more than 5,000 feet. Of the 5,000 feet, only 700 feet will cross the Rio Grande.

The project area is within El Paso County, Texas, U.S. Geological Survey Topographic Map, Canutillo Quadrangle (1968), 7.5-minute series, 31106-HS (Figure 1). The survey was conducted in order to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470, NHPA), 36 CFR 800, and all other federal and state regulations. The archeological pedestrian survey was conducted on January 17, 2017 by Elia Perez (TRC-Principal Investigator) and Adriana Romero (TRC-Crew Member).

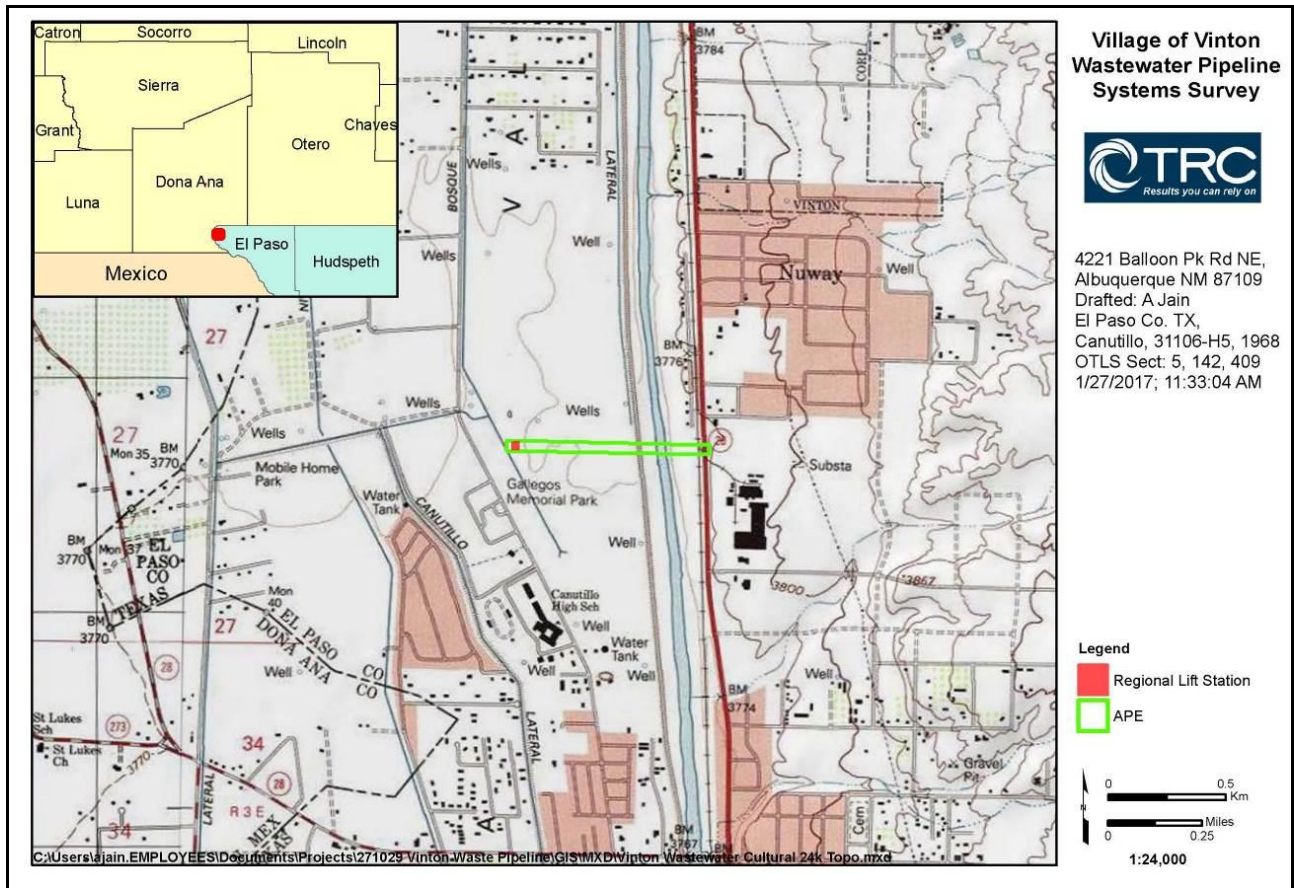


Figure 1. Project Area on Topographic Map.

Environment

The proposed project area is within the Delnorte-Canutio soil series. The Delnorte-Canutio Association are soils “nearly level to steep and range from shallow to very shallow over caliche” (Jaco 1971:07). The

soils are mainly on and near foot slopes of the Franklin Mountains and occur in or near arroyos and alluvial fans below the Franklins (Jaco 1971: 7). The soils are within the Rio Grande floodplain. Vegetation is characterized as desert scrub consisting of mesquite, sage brush, and various grasses (Figure 2). Wildlife consists of jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, coyote, mourning dove, blue quail, road runner, and various species of lizards and small rodents. Portions of the project area have been impacted by the construction and pavement of Doniphan Road, the railroad easement, and canalization by the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC).

The soils consisted of light brown, coarse to fine-grained loamy sand and river sand with few to high densities of surface gravels and river cobbles. Portions of the project area have been impacted by the construction and pavement of Doniphan Road, railroad and easement, walking paths along the river bank, and canalization by IBWC.

Further impacts included localized dumping of modern ceramic tile fragments, roofing material, concrete fragments, wind-blown trash, miscellaneous milled wood, aluminum cans, and furniture fragments (Figure 3). Ground surface visibility ranged between 70 and 80 percent (Figure 4).



Figure 2. Rio Grande floodplain cleared of saltbush. Photo facing west.



Figure 3. Miscellaneous debris within the Area of Potential Effect. Photo facing west.

Cultural History

The region has a long and varied history from pre-contact to recent historic. Although no prehistoric or historic artifacts were encountered during the pedestrian survey, a brief summary is presented below.

Paleoindian Period (9500 to 6000 B.C.)

The Paleoindian culture dates to the Late Pleistocene period, about 11,500 to 7,000 years ago. The climate was most likely wetter and cooler than in the present day and likely supported a large savanna or open woodlands with more heavily forested areas in the nearby Organ Mountains. Available water in the area supported large game animals. Early Paleoindian populations seemed to be specialized hunters who focused on now-extinct mammals, including mammoth and large bison. The Paleoindian tool assemblages contain finely made spear points, which are comparable over large areas. The earliest accepted complex for this period is referred to as the Clovis (9500 to 9050 B.C.), which is characterized by a relatively large, lanceolate projectile point with a short, wide flute. This spear point was used to hunt now-extinct forms of elephants and other Pleistocene megafauna. The succeeding Folsom complex (9050 to 8150 B.C.) is distinguished by a somewhat smaller point. The Folsom point is also fluted and was used to hunt an extinct form of bison. This complex is followed by the Plano cultural manifestation, which encompasses a series of complexes including Milnesand (8200 to 7200 B.C.), Scottsbluff (7120 to 6650

B.C.), and Firstview (6700 to 5500 B.C.) (Broilo 1973; Everitt and Davis 1974; Carmichael 1983, 1986; Kauffman 1984).



Figure 4. Rio Grande floodplain area with little to no vegetation. Photo facing west.

Archaic Period (6000 B.C. to A.D. 200)

The presence of distinct projectile point styles and the absence of ceramic technology define the Archaic period. The Archaic period has traditionally included three divisions: Early (6000 to 4300 B.C.), Middle (4300 to 900 B.C.), and Late (900 B.C. to A.D. 200). Work by MacNeish (1993) suggests that locally, the Archaic period may be better divided into four phases. Because MacNeish's (1993) discussion of the local Archaic period includes details not presented elsewhere, much of the following discussion paraphrases his report and includes his subdivisions: Gardner Springs (6000 to 4300 B.C.), Keystone (4300 to 2600 B.C.), Fresno (2600 to 900 B.C.), and Hueco (900 B.C. to A.D. 200).

The earliest Archaic phase, Gardner Springs, is the least understood of the four Archaic stages. Jay, Abasolo, and Bajada projectile point styles are identified within this early assemblage (MacNeish 1993; Beckett and MacNeish 1994). MacNeish (1993) also included end scrapers, flake graters, denticulates, prismatic blades, choppers, mullers, pebble cleavers, milling stones, and pestles in the assemblage.

Preliminary settlement pattern data suggest small bands exploited a variety of microenvironmental zones in the late spring and early summer when seasonal resources became available. During the fall, small groups used a variety of habitats including riverine, basin floors, and mountain terrains. Winter sites tended to be associated with basin floor playas. Because acorns and pinyon nuts could be stored in the

winter, some sites tended to be in higher elevations in the fall (MacNeish 1993; Beckett and MacNeish 1994). Consequently, it is possible that mountain rock shelters were occupied during the fall and winter.

Settlement patterns remained fairly static throughout the Gardner Springs phase and into the subsequent Keystone phase. Winter sites are found on the basin floors and along the river, and a variety of habitats were exploited the remainder of the year. For example, the Keystone Dam Site contains a structure tentatively dated to the later part of this phase and may reflect a winter occupation (O’Laughlin 1980). The presence of habitational units may indicate an increase in population, social stress, climatic changes, or a combination of these influences. The Keystone phase is associated with projectile point styles such as Bat Cave, Pelona, Shumla, Gypsum-Almagre, Amargosa, and Todsén.

More archeological data are available for the Fresno phase than for the previous two phases. During this phase, settlement patterns shifted from a seasonal to a semi-base camp strategy. Short-term or specialized task groups exploited a variety of resources from a central base camp (Binford 1980). The earliest radiocarbon dates on corn for the region indicate that cultigens had been introduced during the Fresno phase (Tagg 1996). The large number of identified Fresno phase sites suggests a significant population increase. The projectile points affiliated with this phase include Fresno, San José, Todsén, Augustin, and Chiricahua (MacNeish 1993; Beckett and MacNeish 1994).

The succeeding Hueco phase population may have utilized an increasingly mixed economy. Seasonal, short-term base camps appeared to be associated with specialized task groups exploiting a variety of habitats. The addition of squash and beans to the list of documented cultigens implies expanding horticultural pursuits and may reflect a shift towards more semi-permanent occupations. In addition, large numbers of Hueco sites, found in a variety of habitats, indicate expanded land-use patterns. Projectile point styles identified with this Late Archaic phase include Hueco, San Pedro, Armijo, and Hatch (Beckett and MacNeish 1994). The Hueco phase people may have set the foundation for strategies employed by later Mesilla phase groups.

Formative Period (A.D. 200 to 1450)

The Formative period is marked by the presence of ceramics and, locally, has been divided into three phases: Mesilla, Doña Ana, and El Paso (Lehmer 1948). The adoption of ceramics played a major role in gradually increasing sedentism and the use of cultigens by providing a secure means of storing cached foodstuffs. In the archeological record, the sedentary— or perhaps more appropriately the semi-sedentary—Formative period adaptation is reflected by villages that frequently include comparably large, communal/socio-religious structures (Whalen 1994). The more mobile aspects of Formative period subsistence practices are represented by artifact scatters that predominantly include thermal features and are inferred to reflect foraging and/or logistical subsistence activities.

Mesilla Phase (A.D. 200 to 1100)

The early Mesilla phase (A.D. 200 to 750) appears to represent a continuation of the Hueco phase subsistence pattern, with the addition of undecorated brownware ceramics referred to as El Paso Brown (Whalen 1994). The early brownware typically exhibits a distinctive tapering of vessel rims or lips, commonly referred to as pinched rims. Brush huts and pit structures comprise the documented habitation structure types, and large pit structures suspected to have served communal functions typically occur on more intensively occupied sites. Subsistence evidently remained focused on hunting and gathering, with horticultural activities constituting a secondary resource (Carmichael 1981, 1985, 1990).

Most early Mesilla phase sites reflect high levels of mobility, with even the structural examples indicating only brief (i.e., seasonal) periods of sedentism (Church and Sale 2003). Mesilla phase habitation sites, however, demonstrate increased occupational intensity (or duration) over the Late Archaic period predecessors (Whalen 1994).

The late Mesilla phase (A.D. 750 to 1100) is seen as a time of population increase, more semi-permanent habitations, and increased use of cultigens (Hard 1983; Whalen 1994). The most readily detectable changes in ceramic assemblages associated with the late Mesilla phase include a decrease in brownware jar rim taper, along with the addition of Mimbres Black-on-white and, occasionally, San Francisco Red ware types. Although the examples are extremely limited, the first appearance of paint decorations on the local brownware (i.e., El Paso Bichrome) is reported for the late Mesilla phase.

Doña Ana Phase (A.D. 1100 to 1200)

The Doña Ana phase began around A.D. 1100 and continued until about A.D. 1200. Rectangular pit structures become common during the Doña Ana phase, although Lehmer's (1948) excavations at Los Tules suggest that similar examples may have been present during the late Mesilla phase. Paint decorations become prominent on the local brownware, resulting in assemblages dominated by El Paso Bichrome and El Paso Polychrome. In addition, Mimbres Black-on-white, Chupadero Black-on-white, Three Rivers Red-on-terracotta, and St. Johns Polychrome are included on the list of intrusive ceramics. Meanwhile, the use of cultigens continues to increase during the Doña Ana phase, but groups probably continued to employ several land-use strategies.

El Paso Phase (A.D. 1200 to 1450)

The El Paso phase (A.D. 1200 to 1450) represents the culmination of the Formative period in the Jornada culture region and includes evidence for several large aggregated population centers near permanent water sources (Lehmer 1948; Sale and Laumbach 1989; Bentley 1993). In the Hueco Bolson and Tularosa Basin (and presumably in the nearby Mesilla Bolson), architecture during the El Paso phase is exemplified by linear, contiguous puddled adobe pueblo room blocks. Although a few large plaza-style pueblos have been reported, most of the pueblos include fewer than 20 rooms (Moore 1947). El Paso phase adobe field houses, as well as both round and rectangular pit structures, are also reported (Browning et al. 1992).

Ceramic assemblages during this phase reflect increasing contacts with the western Mogollon region of southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico, northwest Chihuahua, east central Arizona, northwest New Mexico, and the northern frontiers of the Jornada Mogollon area. Ceramic types such as Gila Polychrome, Lincoln Black-on-red, Ramos Polychrome, Playas Red, and Seco Corrugated comprise the dominant intrusive wares. The locally produced El Paso Polychrome developed everted rims and completely replaced undecorated brownware during the El Paso phase. It also began to appear in contexts well beyond the Jornada culture area. The widespread distribution of El Paso Polychrome, along with the array of intrusive ceramic types, a noted increase in imported shell, and evidence of Mesoamerican influences reflected in rock art, indicate that extra-regional interaction increased markedly during the El Paso phase (Carmichael 1986).

The ubiquity of corn, along with mounting evidence of beans and squash identified in El Paso phase habitation sites, indicates that the use of cultigens had reached an all-time high. Although agriculture may have provided an important subsistence resource, wild plants continued to play a major dietary role (Bradley 1983).

The pueblos of the Jornada region are abandoned around A.D. 1450, but the cause of this collapse is presently not well understood. The local inhabitants encountered during De Vaca's expedition in 1535 were hunter-gatherers, living in huts along the Rio Grande River. The relationship of these to the earlier sedentary occupants (descendants or unrelated, etc.) has not been determined (Abbott et al. 1996).

After the Civil War, expansion of the railroad became a priority. Access to the west was now available through the various railroad lines in search of opportunities in commerce and development. On May 9, 1881, the railroad reached El Paso. Two railroad lines passed through El Paso; Southern Pacific and the Texas Pacific. Rail lines linked El Paso with northern Mexico and tracks through the Tularosa Basin connected El Paso with the Rock Island Railroad and, eventually, Chicago (Thomas et al. 2007: 10).

Methodology

A 100-percent pedestrian, intensive survey with 15-m interval transects was conducted along areas not previously disturbed by existing water lines, petroleum lines, and development (commercial, industrial, urban, and/or rural). The fieldwork consisted of the documentation of all surface cultural artifacts, features, and sites; none were found. Identified features were to be fully recorded to include size, type, and results of trowel testing; none were found. As per the Archeological Survey Standards for Texas guidelines, shovel testing is required if the ground surface visibility is less than 70 percent. The proposed project area has more than 70 percent ground surface visibility. Therefore, shovel testing was not conducted. The project area appeared to be routinely maintained through mowing, canalization, and periodic flooding.

Based on the known density of sites near the proposed project area, the pedestrian survey was conducted to determine the presence of any new sites within, especially since no previous archeological survey had been conducted. If a new site was identified, it would have been fully recorded and an evaluation of significance and eligibility for listing to the NRHP provided; none were identified. Because some of the areas appeared to be highly impacted by previous development, TRC did not anticipate new sites. Collections were not made.

Overview photographs of the project area were taken. The survey was conducted in order to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470, NHPA), 36 CFR 800, and other federal and state regulations.

The **Area of Potential Effect** (APE) was limited to the construction easement, about 30 feet in width and at least 12 to 16 feet in depth. The proposed project entails the construction of a sanitary sewer gravity line that will convey flows from the Vinton Service area to a regional lift station, which will be constructed by El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) on EPWU property. The proposed regional lift station will be within a 100-foot by 100-foot area. No significant cultural artifacts were identified or located within this area.

A detailed archival search was conducted prior to the beginning of the fieldwork in order to determine the potential for significant cultural deposits. A preliminary archival search identified four archeological sites (41EP876, 41EP4849, 41EP5201, and 41EP5430) within the 1.0-mile radius of the proposed project area. In addition, the proposed project area is within the Historic Elephant Butte Irrigation District and bisects the U.S. International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) canalization project (Stinchcomb 2009).

Site 41EP876 was recorded in 1994 and revisited in 1995 (State Forms, accessed January 11, 2017). The site was identified as prehistoric and left undetermined for listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The site is located approximately 0.88 miles south of the beginning point (Doniphan Road) and consisted of at least three burned rock concentrations with carbon staining. Site 41EP4849 was recorded as a prehistoric site in 1994 and revisited in 1995. Both visits determined the site not eligible for listing to the NRHP. The site consisted of a lithic scatter with burned rock concentrations. The site is located approximately 0.74 miles southeast of the proposed beginning point. The site was recorded under TAC #1351 (1994) and TAC #1513 (Whitsett 1996). It should be noted that TAC #1351 has eight (8) reports in association (State Forms, accessed January 11, 2017). Site 41EP5201 was a prehistoric site recorded in 1995 and revisited in 1996. Both visits left the site undetermined for listing to the NRHP. No other data was available (State Forms, accessed January 11, 2017). The site is located approximately 0.95 miles southeast of the end point (Regional Lift Station). Site 41EP5430 was a prehistoric/historic site recorded in 1999. The site was determined not eligible for listing to the NRHP (State Forms, accessed January 11, 2017). The site is approximately 0.96 miles north of the beginning point (Doniphan Road). None of the previously recorded sites will be affected by the proposed undertaking.

Results and Recommendations

The pedestrian survey was conducted from on January 17, 2017 by Elia Perez (TRC-Principal Investigator) and Adriana Romero (TRC-Crew Member). The intensive pedestrian survey was conducted using 15-m interval transects. The soils consisted of light brown, coarse to fine-grained loamy sand and river sand with few to high densities of surface gravels and river cobbles. Portions of the project area have been impacted by the construction and pavement of Doniphan Road, railroad and easement, walking paths along the river bank, and canalization by IBWC. Ground surface visibility ranged between 70 and 80 percent (see Figures 2-4).

No cultural features or artifacts were located during the archeological survey. Impacts included localized dumping of modern ceramic tile fragments, roofing material, concrete fragments, wind-blown trash, miscellaneous milled wood, aluminum cans, and furniture fragments. The area is routinely maintained by periodic mowing of grasses, especially along the River Trail that follows the Rio Grande from the Upper Valley to the Texas/New Mexico state line (<http://geobetty.com/rides/el-paso-tx/3/river-trail>, accessed January 29, 2017).

No further work is warranted. In the event that human remains or burial furniture are encountered during the construction of the sanitary sewer gravity line, the contractor must cease all work and contact all pertinent agencies.

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TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

March 3, 2017

Elia Perez
TRC Consultants
505 East Huntland Drive
Suite 250
Austin, TX 78752

Re: *Project review under the Antiquities Code of Texas*
Proposed Wastewater Pipeline Systems, Village of Vinton, El Paso County
(THC Track #201704303)

Dear Ms. Perez:

Thank you for providing your correspondence regarding the above referenced project which we received on February 13, 2017. This letter presents the comments of the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission, the state agency responsible for administering the Antiquities Code of Texas.

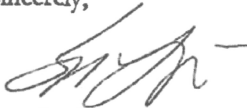
The Historic Programs review staff, led by Linda Henderson, has completed its review of the project documentation provided. The proposed pipeline is located within the Elephant Butte Irrigation District, which is **listed** in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Archeology Division review staff, led by David Camarena, has completed its review of the project documentation provided and finds that the proposed pipeline will have no effect on archeological resources and that surveys conducted have been negative.

The Division of Architecture review staff, led by Sara Ludueña, has completed its review of the project documentation provided. It is our understanding that the proposed pipeline will cross a primary canal in the Elephant Butte Irrigation District to carry wastewater to a new lift station. Given the location of the proposed pipeline within a historic district, we would like to **request additional project information**. Please provide a description and drawings, if available, of the proposed canal crossing as well as the lift station and associated construction.

We look forward to further consultation with your office and hope to maintain a partnership that will foster effective historic preservation. Thank you for your cooperation in this state review process, and for your efforts to preserve the irreplaceable heritage of Texas. **If you have any questions concerning our review or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Sara Ludueña at 512/463-8952.**

Sincerely,



Sara Ludueña, Project Reviewer
for: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Veronica Escobar, El Paso County Historical Commission
Joe Nebhan, El Paso County Historical Commission

MW/sl



7/18/2017

RE: THC Track #201704303-Proposed Wastewater Pipeline Systems, Village of Vinton, El Paso County

To: Perez, Elia

Subject: RE: THC Track #201704303-Proposed Wastewater Pipeline Systems, Village of Vinton, El Paso County

Good morning,

Thank you for following up on this and clarifying that the lift station is outside of the scope your client is responsible for. In terms of the canal crossing, my main question was whether the crossing would impact the canal at all. Will any piers be placed in the canal? Or will any modifications to existing side walls be required? If you can just speak to those issues, I should be able to complete my review. Feel free to call me if that is easier: 512-463-8952.

Thanks,
Sara

From: Perez, Elia [mailto:EPerez@trcsolutions.com]

Sent: Friday, March 31, 2017 12:32 AM

To: Sara Luduena <Sara.Luduena@thc.texas.gov>

Subject: THC Track #201704303-Proposed Wastewater Pipeline Systems, Village of Vinton, El Paso County

Hola Ms. Luduena:

Received a copy of your review letter for the above referenced project. Hopefully I can clarify some of your questions/concerns.

The archeological report provided a description of the proposed project. It is to provide water and wastewater lines to the Village of Vinton. The proposed undertaking is to go OVER the river and canal. Also, you were requesting drawings of the lift station but our project does not cover the lift station nor is the Village of Vinton responsible for it. El Paso Water Utilities is supposed to be doing the construction of that since it is their line and property. Our client would not have the drawings for that phase of the project. EPWU has not provided a date of when that construction will be done. I had touched base with EPWU about this proposed lift station and Valerie Provencio mentioned that the footprint was tentatively a 100-ft by 100-ft area. But that is all she could provide. She, also, didn't know when it would be constructed.

I wanted to give you some information and hopefully can speak with you tomorrow.

Thank you for your time and questions. Hopefully we can clarify each other's concerns and my client can move forward.

RE: THC Track #201704303-Proposed Wastewater Pipeline Systems, Village of Vinton, El Paso County

SL

Sara Luduena <Sara.Luduena@thc.texas.gov>

Wed 4/5, 3:03 PM

Perez, Elia ✓

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Elia,

Thanks for the clarification. With this information, I am comfortable stating that the proposed project will have no adverse effect on historic resources and can proceed. Of course, if the scope changes, please let us know.

Thanks,
Sara

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From: Perez, Elia [mailto:EPerez@trcsolutions.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 4, 2017 9:54 PM

To: Sara Luduena <Sara.Luduena@thc.texas.gov>

Subject: Re: THC Track #201704303-Proposed Wastewater Pipeline Systems, Village of Vinton, El Paso County

Hola Ms. Sara:

My client has confirmed now that they will be boring under the canal. No piers or modifications to the side walls. This should ensure no direct impacts to the canal.

If you need additional information, please let me know.

Gracias!!!

Elia