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# Intensive Cultural Resources Survey of the Proposed Rivas Street Improvement Project in Bexar County, Texas

**Environmental Project Code: 05-615B2-058CIPI  
WBS: 40-00033-04-02**

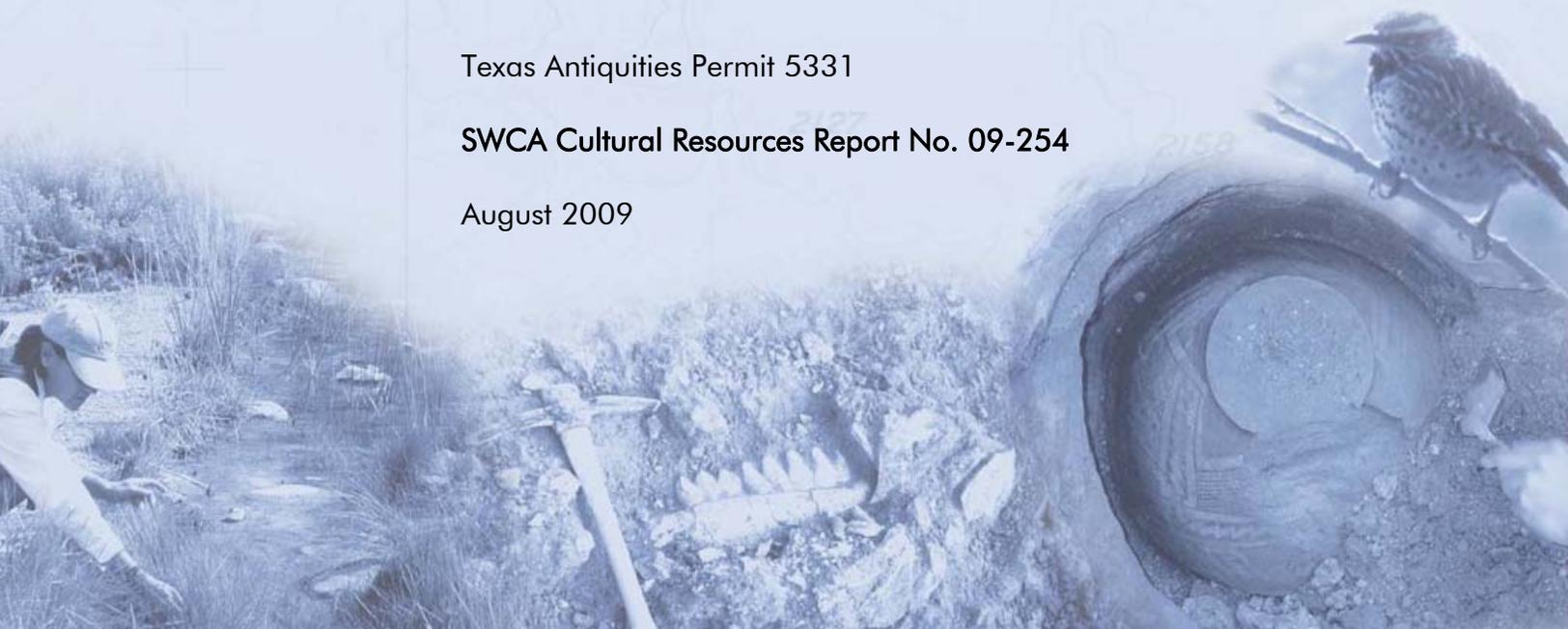
Prepared for  
**Adams Environmental, Inc.**

Prepared by  
**Mary Jo Galindo**

Texas Antiquities Permit 5331

SWCA Cultural Resources Report No. 09-254

August 2009



**INTENSIVE CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED RIVAS  
STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS**

Environmental Project Code: 05-615B2-058CIPI  
WBS: 40-00033-04-02

Prepared for

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## ABSTRACT

On behalf of the City of San Antonio (COSA), in coordination with Adams Environmental, Inc., SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the Rivas Street Improvement Project area in central Bexar County, Texas. The area of potential effects (APE) is located along Rivas Street from Rosabell Street to N. General McMullen Drive. The proposed project would be contained entirely within the existing right-of-way (ROW) of Rivas Street. The APE is 1.8 miles north of the intersection of N. General McMullen Drive and U.S. Highway 90 in west central San Antonio, Texas. The exact depth of impacts has not been determined, but is not expected to exceed four feet. Overall, the APE totals 0.75 miles in length and the existing ROW is approximately 65 feet wide, for a total project area of 5.9 acres. The APE is depicted on a portion of the San Antonio West (2998-244), United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. Cultural resource investigations were conducted to satisfy the requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634) and the Antiquities Code of Texas (Permit No. 5251). These investigations included a background and archival review and a pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations.

The purpose of the work was to locate and identify all prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in the project area, establish vertical and horizontal site boundaries as appropriate with regard to the project area, and evaluate the significance and eligibility of any site recorded within the property for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or for designation as a State Archaeological Landmark (SAL). SWCA archaeologists Mary Jo Galindo and Josh Haefner conducted the fieldwork on July 21, 2009.

Much of the project area is within a developed area and contains various buried and overhead utilities. The impacts within APE include vegetation clearing, road, driveway, and sidewalk construction, and the installation of buried and overhead utilities. These disturbances have eliminated the potential for encountering cultural resources across most of the APE, as impacts have altered subsurface setting and landscape. Three vacant lots located at the curve in Rivas Street (midway along the APE), near the eastern project terminus, and within the ROW opposite this lot appeared to be intact and were targeted for subsurface investigations. A total of three shovel tests were excavated in the APE in areas believed to contain intact deposits. Besides modern trash, no cultural materials were encountered in these shovel tests, or elsewhere in the APE. Accordingly, no intact significant cultural resources will be affected by any construction activities within the project area, and SWCA recommends no further archeological investigations.



## **INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of the City of San Antonio (COSA), in coordination with Adams Environmental, Inc., SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the Rivas Street Improvement Project area in southern Bexar County, Texas (Figure 1). Cultural resource investigations were conducted to satisfy the requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634) and the Antiquities Code of Texas (Permit No. 5251). These investigations included a background review and a pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations.

The purpose of the work was to locate and identify all prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in the area of potential effects (APE), establish vertical and horizontal site boundaries as appropriate with regard to the project area, and evaluate the significance and eligibility of any site recorded within the property for eligibility for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or for designation as a State Archaeological Landmark (SAL). The APE is defined as the entire Rivas Street Improvement Project area, which totals 0.75 miles in length and contains approximately 5.9 acres. SWCA archaeologists Mary Jo Galindo and Josh Haefner conducted the fieldwork on July, 21, 2009.

## **DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA**

The APE is located along Rivas Street from Rosabell Street to N. General McMullen Drive. The proposed project would be contained entirely within the existing 65-foot right-of-way (ROW) of Rivas Street. The APE is 1.8 miles north of the intersection of N. General McMullen Drive and U.S. Highway 90 in west central San Antonio, Texas. The

exact depth of impacts has not been determined, but is not expected to exceed four feet. Overall, the APE totals 0.75 miles in length for a total project area of 5.9 acres. The APE is depicted on a portion of the San Antonio West (2998-244), United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle (Figure 2). The purpose of the project is to reconstruct, widen, and improve Rivas Street, including constructing new sidewalks and stormwater drainage facilities. The project area is located primarily in a developed residential area, with a community center near the eastern terminus. Additional disturbances within the project area include vegetation clearing, road, driveway, and sidewalk construction, and the installation of buried and overhead utilities.

The geology of the project area is exclusively mapped as Cretaceous-age Navarro Group and Marlbrook Marl undivided (Barnes 1992). This formation consists of marl, clay, sandstone, and siltstone with a thickness of up to 580 feet.

The soils for the project area are mapped as the Lewisville-Houston Black, terrace association (Taylor et al. 1991: Map Sheet 44). These soils generally consist of moderately deep and silty clay soils in calcareous alluvium. Specifically, soils mapped within the project area from west to east consist of Houston Black gravelly clay with 1 to 3 percent slopes (30 percent of the APE), Houston Black gravelly clay with 3 to 5 percent slopes (29 percent), and the remainder is Houston Black clay with 1 to 3 percent slopes (Taylor et al. 1991:20-22).

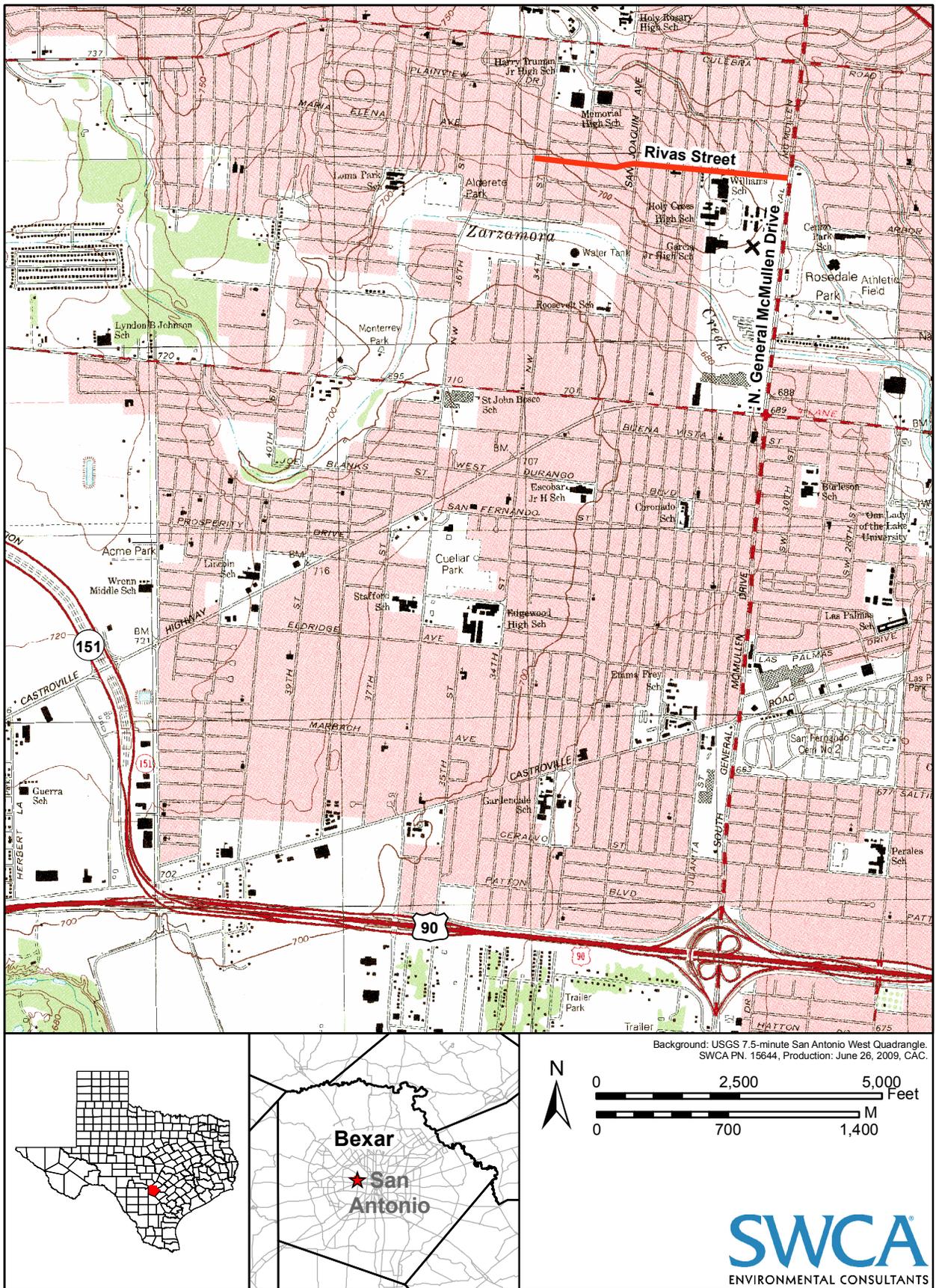


Figure 1. Project Location Map.

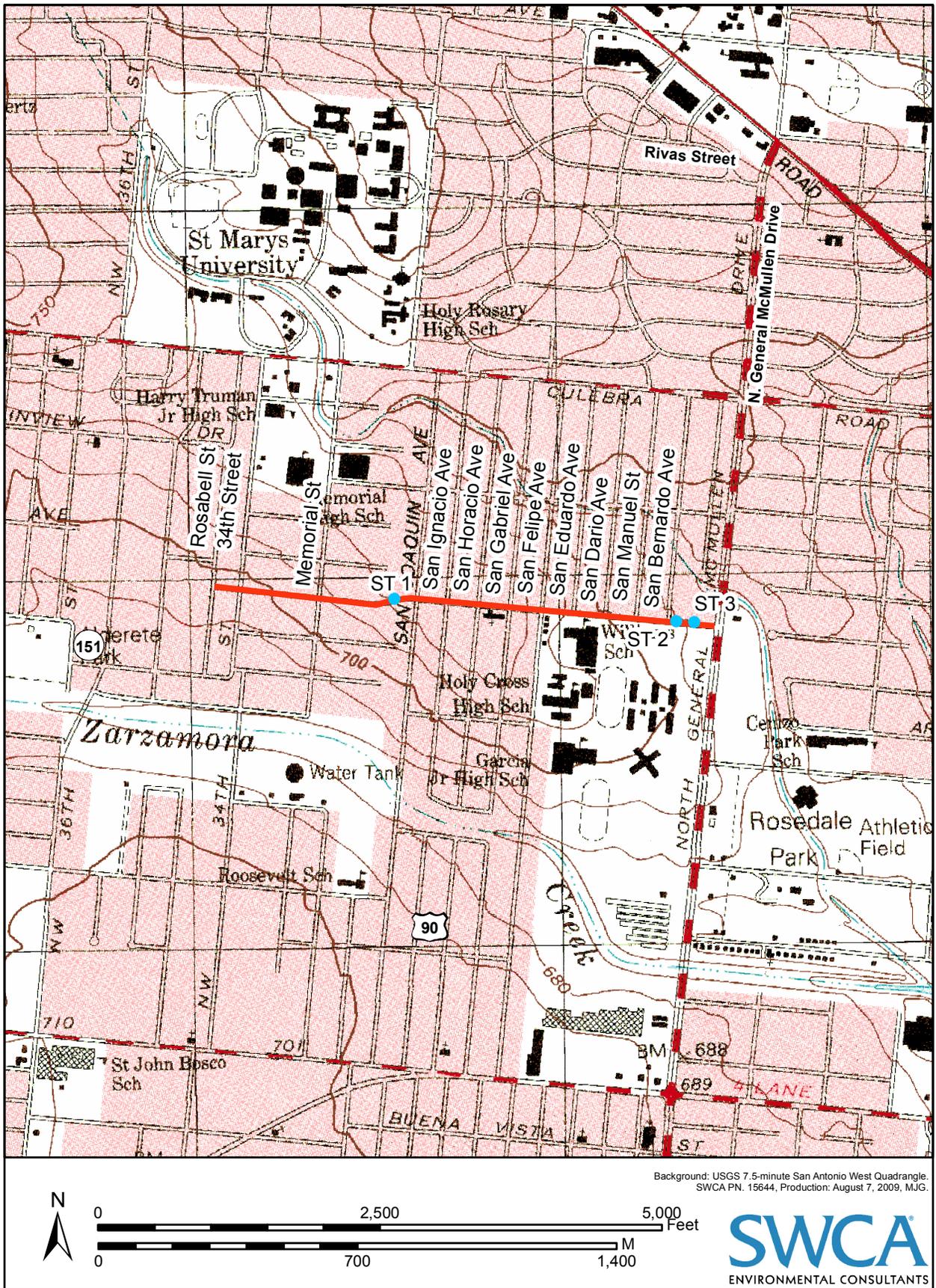


Figure 2. Shovel Tests Location Map.

## **METHODS**

### ***BACKGROUND REVIEW***

SWCA conducted a thorough background cultural resources and environmental literature search of the project area. An SWCA archaeologist reviewed the San Antonio West, USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) and searched the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (Atlas) online database for any previously recorded surveys and historic or prehistoric archaeological sites located in or near the project area. In addition to identifying recorded archaeological sites, the review included information on the following types of cultural resources: NRHP properties, SALs, Official Texas Historical Markers (OTHM), Registered Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), cemeteries, and local neighborhood surveys. The archaeologist also examined the *Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas* (Taylor et al. 1991) and the *Geologic Atlas of Texas, San Antonio Sheet* (Barnes 1992). Aerial photographs were reviewed to assist in identifying any disturbances.

### ***FIELD METHODS***

SWCA's investigations consisted of an intensive pedestrian survey with subsurface investigations within the project area. Archaeologists examined the ground surface and exposures for cultural resources. Subsurface investigations involved shovel testing in settings with the potential to contain buried cultural materials. The shovel tests were approximately 30 cm in diameter and excavated to culturally sterile deposits or impassible basal clay, whichever came first. The matrix from each shovel test was screened through ¼-inch mesh, and the location of each excavation was plotted using a hand-held GPS receiver. Each shovel test was recorded on a standardized

form to document the excavations. The THC's survey standards for linear projects mandate 16 shovel tests per mile for a 100-foot wide ROW, meaning 12 shovel tests for the 0.75-mile-long project area.

## **RESULTS**

### ***BACKGROUND REVIEW***

The background review revealed that the project area has not been surveyed for archaeological resources and no cultural resource sites have been identified within the project area. The background research also determined that two previous archeological surveys, a cemetery, two neighborhood surveys, and two historic markers are within one mile of the project area.

A survey was performed along Culebra Road on behalf of the Texas Department of Transportation (formally Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation) approximately 0.44 mi north of the project area. The remaining previous investigation was conducted by the University of Texas at San Antonio on behalf of the City of San Antonio in 1979 adjacent to Monterrey Park and located 0.84 mi southwest of the project area. Neither investigation encountered cultural resource sites within a 1-mile radius of the project area. The closest previously recorded archaeological site is site 41BX511, which is 2.4 miles southeast of the APE. Site 41BX511 consisted of small frame structures with buried historic artifacts, including ceramics, nails, and glass, when it was first recorded in 1983 by Anne Fox. Site 41BX511 was revisited in 1999, at which time the site was assessed as either destroyed or covered up by the modern structures (a pharmacy and a dentist office) that now occupy the location (Atlas).

The Marianist Society of Mary Cemetery (BX-C184) is on the St. Mary's University

campus, one mile northwest of the APE. Within the cemetery is a Texas Historic Marker commemorating the International Goodwill Program. Nothing beyond locational data is recorded in the Atlas for either the cemetery or the historical marker.

The second Texas Historic Marker (No. 3959) commemorates the Wesley Peacock House, which is one mile northeast of the APE (Atlas). The text of the marker reads:

“Erected as a two-story home in 1890, this structure was the original building of Peacock School for boys, founded in 1894 by Wesley Peacock (1865-1941). Military training was initiated in 1900. Chartered in 1904, it became a distinguished school with High Academic standards. Peacock's two sons, Wesley, Jr., and Donald, took charge in 1926 of the Peacock Military Academy. A fire in 1931 on the second floor of the house prompted major remodeling. After educating 15,000 students, the 20-acre facility was deeded in 1973 to the Salvation Army to be known as ‘Peacock Center.’”

One of the two neighborhood surveys within a mile of the APE focused on the Peacock Military Academy, which is one mile northeast of the APE. The other neighborhood survey assessed Elmendorf Lake, which is one mile southeast of the APE (Atlas).

### ***FIELD SURVEY***

On July 21, 2009 two SWCA archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the Rivas Street Improvement Project. The APE was subjected to a 100 percent pedestrian survey with shovel testing in areas with potential for intact buried cultural resources. Sub-surface investigations were conducted in three

areas: two vacant lots and the ROW near N. General McMullin Drive (Figure 2; Table 1).

The majority of the project area is in an urban setting bordered by extensive residential development with driveways, sidewalks, and various buried and overhead utilities located within the ROW (Figures 3–6). Numerous fences line the ROW and only a small strip of grass remains between the fence lines and sidewalks (see Figure 5). A church and its parking lot occupy much of the block between San Horatio and San Gabriel Avenues (see Figure 6). A community center is along Rivas Street between San Felipe and San Eduardo Avenues. Parked cars lined either side of the ROW in this area (Figure 7). The first vacant lot where shovel tests were excavated is along the curve in Rivas Street, east of San Joaquin Avenue. One shovel test was excavated amid mowed grass cover with modern trash scattered on the surface (Figure 8). The lot did not appear to have had any prior structure and was cluttered with assorted items that were probably dumped illegally. The clay was tightly packed and the investigation terminated at 10 centimeters below surface (cmbs) when a lens of compact clay and gravel were encountered.

The next two shovel tests (STs) were placed on opposite sides of Rivas Street near N. General McMullin Drive. ST2 was excavated along the south side ROW of Rivas Street, while ST3 was excavated along the north side of the street closer to San Bernardo Avenue (Figures 9 and 10). Based on the presence of ornamental plants, the vacant lot appeared to have contained a structure in the past, but no structure or structural remains were identified during the current field effort. Both of these shovel tests were excavated through clay or clay loam to 15 cmbs, when compact clay was encountered. Modern refuse was evident on the surface and in both excavations. No historic cultural materials were encountered

**Table 1.** Shovel Test Data

Shovel Test #	Depth (cmbs)	Munsell	Soil Color	Soil Texture Description	Inclusions	Comments
1	0-10	10YR2/1	black	clay	limestone gravel	terminated at compact clay and gravel; north side ROW along vacant lot near San Joaquin Ave.
2	0-15	10YR2/1	black	clay	modern refuse	terminated at compact clay; south side ROW near Gen McMullin Blvd.
3	0-15	10YR4/4	dark yellowish brown	clay loam	modern refuse	terminated at compact clay; north side ROW along vacant lot near San Bernardo Ave.



**Figure 3.** South side ROW of Rivas and Rosabell Streets' intersection, facing east.



**Figure 4.** North side ROW of Rivas and Memorial Streets' intersection, facing west.



**Figure 5.** South side ROW of Rivas and Memorial Streets' intersection, facing east.



**Figure 6.** South side ROW of the intersection of Rivas Street and San Horatio Avenue, facing east.



**Figure 7.** North side ROW of Rivas Street between San Felipe and San Eduardo Avenues, facing east.



**Figure 8.** North side ROW of Rivas Street at the location of ST1, facing east.



**Figure 9.** ST 2 was placed within the south side ROW of Rivas Street near its intersection with N. General McMullin Drive, facing east.



**Figure 10.** ST 3 was placed within the north side ROW of Rivas Street near its intersection with San Bernardo Avenue, facing west.

on the surface or in any subsurface investigations undertaken during this survey. The THC's survey standards for linear projects mandate 16 shovel tests per mile for a 100-foot wide ROW, translating into 12 shovel tests for the 0.75-mile-long project area. The three shovel tests excavated during the intensive survey do not meet this standard; however the large areas of previous disturbances precluded the need for shovel testing across much of the APE. SWCA has made a reasonable and good faith effort to identify archeological and historic properties within the APE.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

SWCA conducted an intensive cultural resources survey of the Rivas Street Improvement Project in Bexar County, Texas. Cultural resource investigations were conducted to satisfy the requirements of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (HPO) per the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634) and the Antiquities Code of Texas (Permit No. 5331).

The background literature review determined that the project area has not been surveyed for archaeological resources and no cultural resource sites have been identified within the project area.

Overall, the project area is mainly within an urban setting bordered by extensive residential development and various utilities. The nature of the disturbances has eliminated the potential for encountering significant cultural resources across most of the project area. Shovel testing in areas believed to be intact did not encounter any cultural materials. Accordingly, no intact significant cultural resources will be affected by any construction activities within the project area and SWCA recommends no further archaeological investigations.

## REFERENCES

Barnes, V. E.

1992 *Geologic Atlas of Texas, San Antonio Sheet*. The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology.

Taylor, F. B., R. B. Hailey, and D. L. Richmond

1991 *Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas*. National Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture.