

All Phases Archaeology



AUGUST 3, 2023

A PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY FOR THE CHICKASAW RAILROAD LEAD LINE, MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

Prepared for:
Volkert
1680 West 2nd Street, Suite B
Gulf Shores, Alabama 36542

Prepared by:
All Phases Archaeology, LLC
257 Pinehill Drive
Mobile, Alabama 36606

All Phases Archaeology, LLC
www.allphasesarchaeology.com

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CHICKASAW RAILROAD LEAD LINE,
MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

BY
AMY CARRUTH
AND CURRY WEBER

PREPARED BY
ALL PHASES ARCHAEOLOGY, LLC
257 PINEHILL DRIVE
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36606

PREPARED FOR
VOLKERT
1680 WEST 2ND STREET, SUITE B
GULF SHORES, ALABAMA 36542

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR



WILLIAM J. GLASS, RPA

LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY: FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION
APA REPORT No. 2022.247

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INTRODUCTION

All Phases Archaeology, LLC (APA) of Mobile, Alabama was contracted by Volkert of Gulf Shores, Alabama to conduct a cultural resources survey for the Chickasaw Railroad Lead Line in Mobile County, Alabama. The survey was conducted on March 22-24 and April 14, 2023. William J. Glass served as Principal Investigator and was assisted by Jennifer Perreault and Dale Pate. Amy Carruth and Curry Weber authored the report. The purpose of this study was to determine if any cultural resources exist within the limits of the project area, and if so to document and assess each based on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) criteria. All work was conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, and with standards set by the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC). The lead federal agency is the Federal Railroad Administration.

The archaeological survey area is limited to the area of ground-disturbing activities. This totals 22.7 acres (9.2 hectares) and is located west of Chickasaw Creek and the Mobile River, east of U.S. Highway 43, in Plateau, Mobile County, Alabama (Figure 1). Africatown Boulevard/Bay Bridge Road crosses the southern portion of the linear project. The project area is located in Townships 3 and 4 South, Range 1 West on the 1953 (photorevised 1982) Mobile, Alabama 7.5' series USGS topographic quadrangle (Figure 2). The proposed siding track will parallel the existing track serviced by Terminal Railway Alabama State Docks. This will connect in the south just north of the railroad bridge over Three Mile Creek and run parallel to the existing track, ending at Berg Spiral Pipe Road. The new railroad will be constructed within existing right-of-way (ROW) and approximately 0.57 acres of temporary construction easements will be needed due to grading constraints. The area of potential effects (APE) is the same as the limits of disturbance (LOD). Photographs depicting the present state of the project area are provided (Figures 3-14).

The rail traffic is not anticipated to change as a result of the proposed project. According to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, there would be no moderate impact or severe impacts to residential or industrial land uses due to noise. FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual indicates that the vibration would not exceed the standard vibration criteria, so the proposed project is anticipated to have no impact on vibration. According to the results of the general assessment for construction noise and construction vibration, no impacts from construction noise or vibration will occur as a result of the proposed project. The cultural resources survey was limited to the LOD.

PROJECT AREA ENVIRONMENT

The project area is within the Gulf Barrier Islands and Coastal Marshes area of the Southern Coastal Plain ecoregion. The Southern Coastal Plain contains barrier islands, coastal lagoons, marshes, and swampy lowlands. Native vegetation included longleaf pine, slash pine, pond pine, beech, sweetgum, southern magnolia, white oak, and laurel oak. This has largely been replaced by slash and loblolly pine with oak-gum-cypress forest in some low-lying areas, pasture for beef cattle, and urban uses. The Gulf Barrier Islands and Coastal Marshes region contains salt and brackish marshes, dunes, beaches, and barrier islands around Mobile Bay. Cordgrass and saltgrass are found in the intertidal zone, with pine scrub vegetation on portions of the dunes, spits, and barrier islands (Griffith et al. 2001).

The Web Soil Survey (2023) lists three soil types within the LOD. Most of the LOD (66 percent) is classified as Urban land - anthropotic udorthents complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes, industrial. Thirty percent of the

2 - Chickasaw Railroad Lead Line

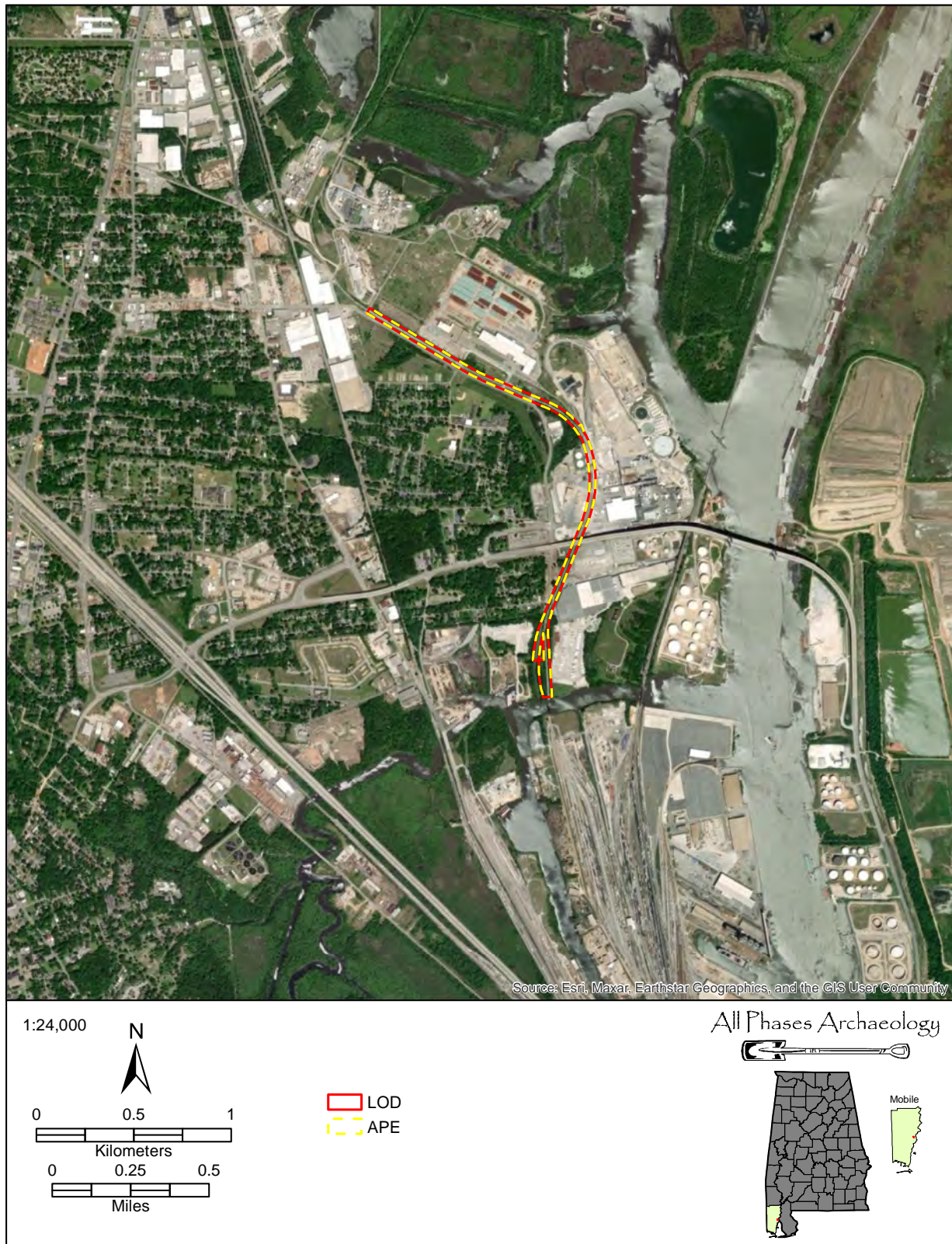


Figure 1. Aerial image showing the LOD and APE.

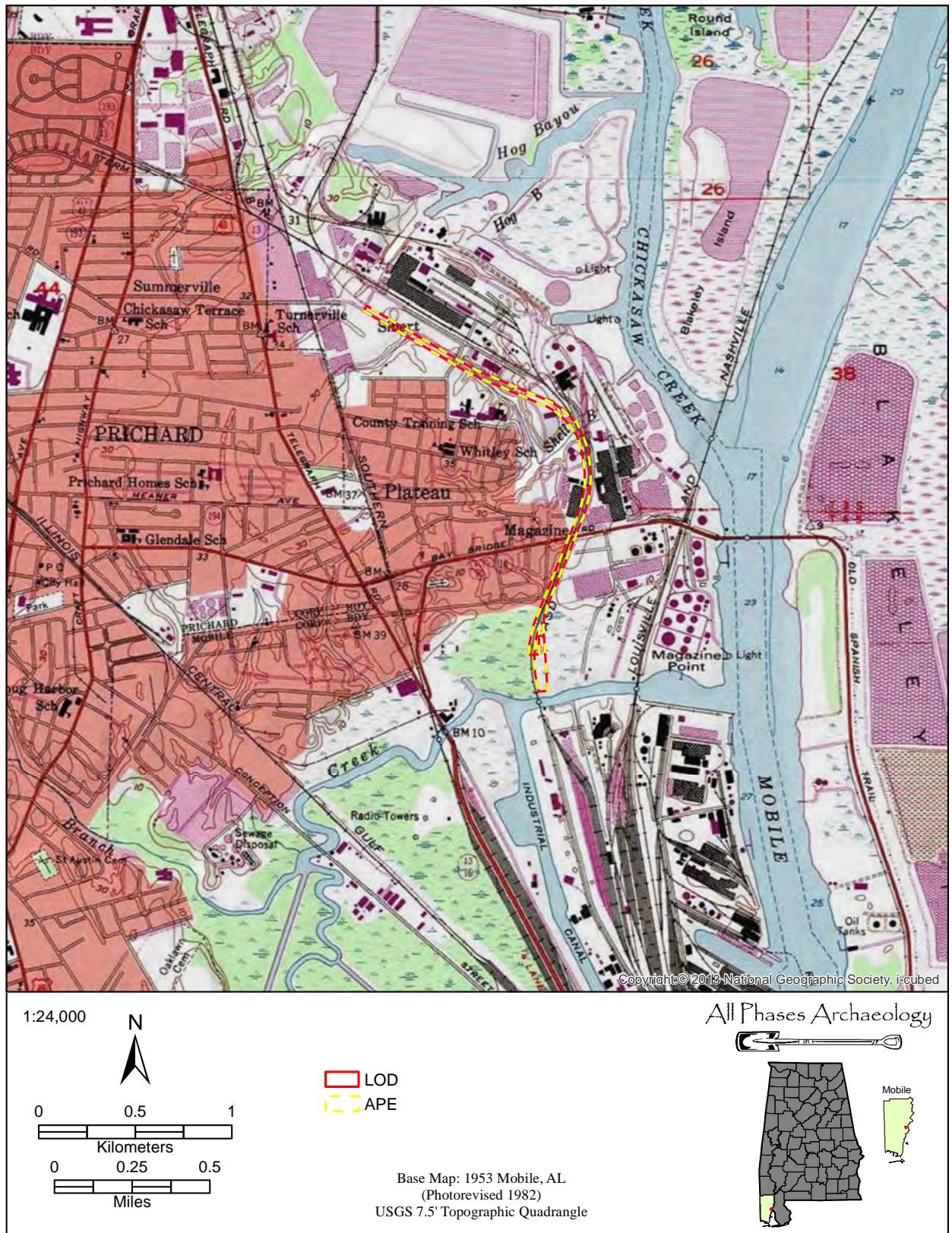


Figure 2. Map showing the LOD and APE.

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Figure 3. View from northern terminus along center line of the LOD, facing east-southeast.



Figure 4. View from McKinley Street towards northern terminus of the LOD, facing west-northwest.



Figure 5. View of tracks adjacent to Kimberly-Clark facility in central portion of LOD, facing north-northeast.



Figure 6. View of railroad bridge passing under Africatown Boulevard, facing east.

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Figure 7. View towards Africatown Boulevard, facing north-northeast.



Figure 8. View of southern portion of the LOD, facing south.



Figure 9. View of small creek in the south-central LOD, facing north-northeast.



Figure 10. View of second small creek in the south-central LOD, facing south.



Figure 11. View of buried utility postings in the central LOD, facing east.



Figure 12. View of central LOD from Berg Spiral Pipe facility, facing southeast.



Figure 13. View of marsh vegetation in the southern LOD, facing north.



Figure 14. View from southern terminus of LOD, facing north.

project area is listed as Urban land, 0 to 8 percent slopes, with the remaining four percent categorized as Benndale-Urban land complex, 0 to 8 percent slopes. Urban land is within extensively built-up areas that have been covered by structures, streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and other structures that obscure the soil; disturbed by cutting and filling; or covered with fill material. These soils have been so altered or covered that they cannot be otherwise classified. Benndale soils are well drained and used for building sites, lawns, gardens, and parks (Hickman and Owens 1980).

LITERATURE AND DOCUMENT SEARCH

Before conducting the fieldwork, APA performed a literature and document search in order to gather pertinent background information regarding the LOD and the surroundings. This research included inspections of the Alabama State Archaeological Site File (ASASF) (Office of Archaeological Research [OAR] 2023), the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage (ARLH) (Alabama Historical Commission [AHC] 2023), and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) (National Park Service 2023).

Research of the ASASF revealed three previously recorded archaeological sites and six previously conducted cultural resources surveys within a mile of the LOD (Figure 15). Background research of the ARLH and AHC historic property files revealed 32 previously recorded historic resources (Table 1) and one cemetery within a mile of the LOD. Two NRHP properties were found within the one mile search radius (see Figure 15).

Site 1Mb34 is just south of the LOD. Recorded by University of South Alabama archaeologists in 1985, this large (3250-x-1500 m) site contained cultural material up to 2.5 m deep. The site consists of an eighteenth and nineteenth century dump for rubble and trash to raise the surface elevation. Dating mainly to the nineteenth century, the artifacts include brick, wood, ballast stones, animal bone, numerous bottles, ceramics, and leather. Researchers believed the site may be eligible for the NRHP, but no federal agency or the SHPO have evaluated it.

Site 1Mb568 is the location of the Peter Lee house, one of the survivors from the last slave ship, the *Clotilda*. Only the chimney remained at the time of the 2019 survey. Close interval shovel testing at 5-m intervals revealed architectural material and household domestic items dating from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. This is within the Africatown Historic District. The site was recommended as eligible by the Alabama Historical Commission.

Site 1Mb576 is the Josephine Allen Housing Project (Happy Hills), built in 1965 as part of urban renewal. Survey work by TerraXplorations, Inc. (TerraX) determined the site lacked significance and integrity to the level necessary to be considered for the NRHP. There were originally 433 dwelling units, but at the time of the 2019 survey, only 292 remained as several buildings were torn down in 2001. Subsequent building demolition was monitored by TerraX. There may be one or two cemeteries on the property, but neither were found during the survey (Glass and Anderson 2019).

4054966. *A Cultural Resources Survey of a Proposed 2,000 ft Pipeline Reroute Located in Chickasaw, Mobile County, Alabama.* This survey was performed by the University of Alabama in 1994. Due to past extensive industrial disturbance, no shovel tests were excavated. A pedestrian walkover was accomplished with no cultural material being observed (Watkins 1994).

4063183. *A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of the Proposed Bay Bridge Road Cellular Tower and Visual Impact Area, Mobile County, Alabama.* This report was done by Archaeological Services, Inc. in 2000. No shovel testing was accomplished due to the disturbed area and only a limited visual effects survey was performed. It was determined there would be no adverse effect to any structure more than 50 years old due to vegetation and other visual impacts already in the area (Stowe and Stowe 2000).

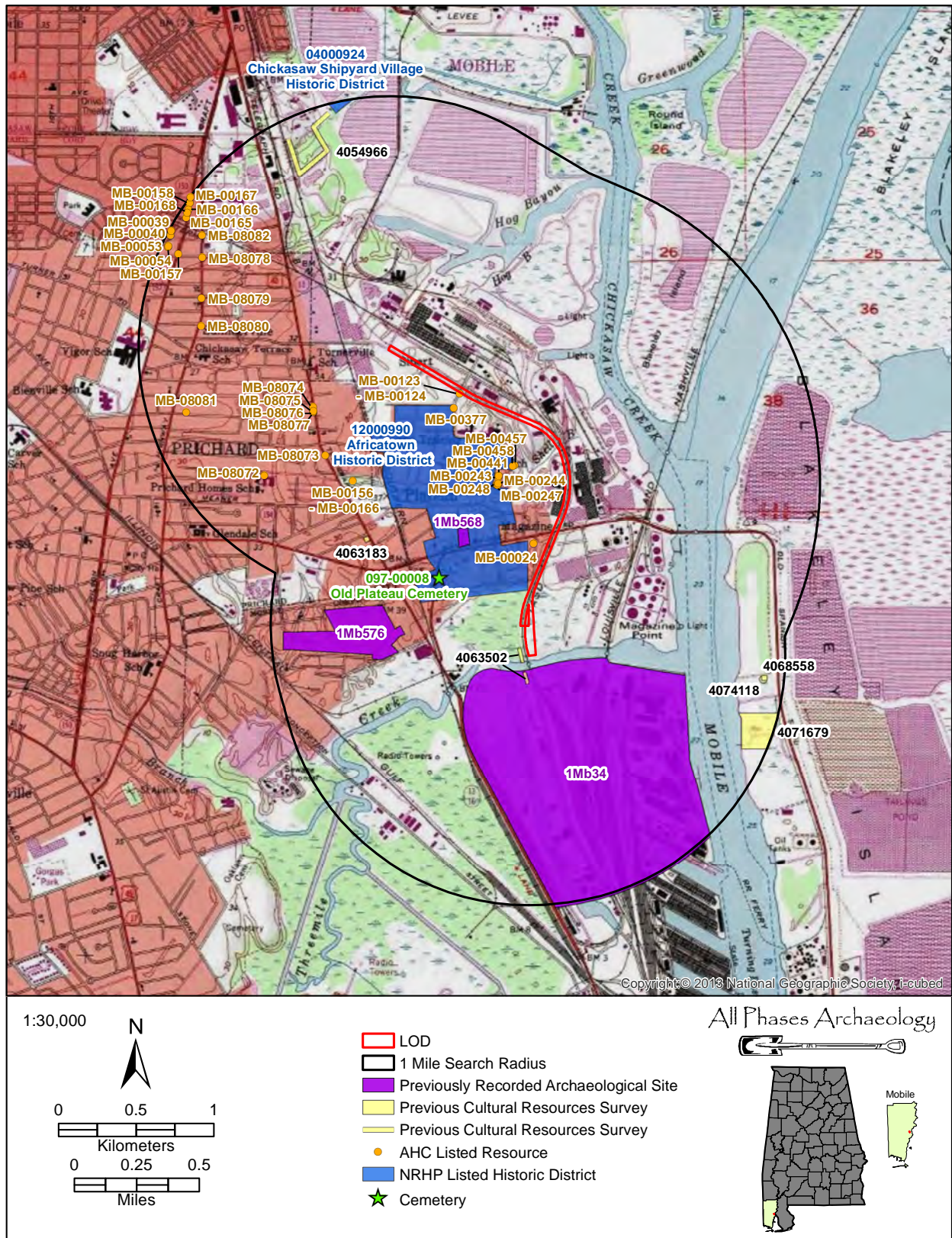


Figure 15. Map showing previously recorded sites and historic resources, previous surveys, and NRHP-listed properties within one mile of the LOD.

Table 1. Previously recorded historic resources within one mile of the project area.

AHC Number	Resource Type	Street Address	Year Built
MB-00024	House	310 Chin Street, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1965
MB-00039	Four-plex	108 Blount Drive, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00040	Four-plex	115 Blount Drive, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00053	Duplex	1003 Coffee Avenue, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00054	Duplex	1008 Coffee Avenue, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00123	House	2029 Par Mill Road Ext., Mobile, AL 36610	c.1930
MB-00124	House	2041 Par Mill Road Ext., Mobile, AL 36610	unknown
MB-00157	Duplex	1601 Wilson Avenue, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00158	Commercial	1731 Wilson Avenue, Mobile, AL 36610	unknown
MB-00165	Residential	1713 Wilson, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00166	Residential	1719 Wilson, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00167	Residential	1739 Wilson, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00168	Residential	1743 Wilson, Mobile, AL 36610	1942
MB-00243	House	2317 Best Street, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1930
MB-00244	House	2305 Best Street, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1930
MB-00247	House	2304 Best Street, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1930
MB-00248	House	2308 Best Street, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1930
MB-00377	House	2557 Kinley Street, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1970
MB-00441	House	650 Edwards Street, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1955
MB-00457	House	625 Wiley Lane, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1930
MB-00458	House	624 Wiley Lane, Mobile, AL 36610	c.1930
MB-08072	School	528 Sipsey St, Prichard, AL 36610	1916-1930
MB-08073	Residence	404 Telegraph Road, Prichard, AL 36610	1916-1930
MB-08074	Residence	615 Telegraph Road, Prichard, AL 36610	1916-1930
MB-08075	Residence	621 Telegraph Road, Prichard, AL 36610	1916-1930
MB-08076	Residence	631 Telegraph Road, Prichard, AL 36610	1916-1930
MB-08077	Residence	637 Telegraph Road, Prichard, AL 36610	1916-1930
MB-08078	Residence	Craft Hwy & Foche, Prichard, AL 36610	1931-1945
MB-08079	Genel Retail Store	Craft Hwy & E Ring St, Prichard, AL 36610	unknown
MB-08080	Gas Station/Paint Shop	Craft Hwy & Joffre St, Prichard, AL 36610	1931-1945
MB-08081	Residence/Retail Store	E side Craft Hwy, N of Elm	1931-1945
MB-08082	Ice House	Craft Hwy, S of RR tracks	1916-1930

4063502. *A Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey of a Directional Boring under Threemile Creek near the Alabama State Docks in Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.* This survey by the University of Alabama for Alabama Power consisted of two small areas on the north and south banks of Threemile Creek. Soils were noted as very disturbed and no significant cultural material was found. The southern survey area was within previously recorded site 1Mb34 but no evidence of the site was found (Jones 2001).

4068558 and 4074118. *A Phase I Cultural Resources Survey of the Proposed Polecat Bay Cellular-Tower Location, Mobile County, Alabama.* This survey was conducted by Panamerican Consultants, Inc., with #4068558 being the archaeological report and #4074118 being the FCC 620 form. No resources were found (Glass 2006).

4071679. *A Phase I Cultural Resources Assessment of the 14-Acre Dunhill Entities Blakeley Island Site Located on Blakeley Island, Mobile County, Alabama.* This survey by the University of South Alabama found no significant cultural resources (Seacat 2007).

97-00008. The Old Plateau Cemetery was entered into the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register in 2008. Established in 1876, there are over 800 documented graves and other unmarked burials, including survivors and their descendents of the last slave ship, the *Clotilda*.

NRHP 04000924. The Chickasaw Shipyard Village Historic District contains 427 contributing resources. It began in 1918 by the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company with four areas: two residential villages (East Village and West Village); a municipal, recreational, and educational zone; and the shipyard. This planned company town was given high marks for a good standard of living. It was listed under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development, Industry, Social History: Women, and Ethnic Heritage: African American. It was also listed for Architecture under Criterion C. Its Period of Significance is 1918 to 1952.

NRHP 12000990. The Africatown Historic District has 253 contributing resources. The community was started by survivors of the last slave ship, the *Clotilda*, following the end of the Civil War. It is a rare example of Africans creating their own community with their own land. In the early years, they kept their African culture alive, but intermarriage with African Americans who had been born into slavery, coupled with the necessity of hiring school teachers from outside the community and the cautious acceptance of Christianity, watered down their traditions over time. It is listed under Criterion A for Ethnic Heritage: Black and Criterion D for Archaeology. There is also Criteria Consideration D for the Old Plateau Cemetery, discussed earlier. The Period of Significance is 1866 to 1973.

Historic maps were reviewed for structures within the LOD. No structures can be seen on the 1903 and 1911 Mobile County soil survey maps, the 1930 Mobile County (North) soil survey map, the 1922, 1940, and 1944 Mobile 15' series, or the 1953 and 1967 photorevised 7.5' series topographic maps.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CITY OF MOBILE

Mobile is one of the oldest permanent settlements in the original Colony of French Louisiana and was its first capitol. The following sketch of Mobile's founding and development is excerpted from a presentation given by local historian Michael P. Feore (2023). It is provided to summarize the history of the city which has shaped the events and personalities associated with the current APE.

“The French established a permanent presence in the Bay Area in 1702 and by 1711 there were at least four permanently established sites on Mobile Bay/River: Dauphin Island, Dog River, Fort Louis de la Louisiane, and the current site of the City of Mobile. The early years of the settlement were accompanied by the establishment of a robust fur trade with the Indians that spread throughout the colony. After the death of King Louis XIV, the Capitol of French Louisiana was moved to the newly established settlement of New Orleans by order of the French Regent, the Duc d'Orléans, in 1722. However, the French still valued Mobile. It was a bulwark against Spanish incursions from Florida and English incursions from Georgia. It was also a well-established and populated port and trading center for the second largest river system in what is now the United States.

Mobile continued to prosper under the French rule, but disaster struck in 1763 when the French lost the French and Indian War. Mobile, along with all the other French Territory east of the Mississippi was ceded to England. Spain ceded their part of Florida to England,

but in return, Spain received all the Louisiana Province west of the Mississippi, including New Orleans. This transfer of control resulted with the British requiring all citizens of their newly acquired territories, as a requisite for owning property, to pledge allegiance to the King and Church of England. A large part of the population therefore moved to now neutral and welcoming Spanish-owned Louisiana. By the end of English rule in 1780, much of the property and plantations lay abandoned and Mobile was ruled by the British from Pensacola.

The Spanish Governor Galvez in New Orleans captured Mobile in 1780 from the British during the Revolutionary War resulting in a more accommodating rule of the multi-ethnic population, including the remaining French population. Spanish rule continued until 1813 when the town was captured by the United States under General Wilkinson. This action was taken because of the unresolved issue surrounding the eastern boundary along the Gulf Coast of the Louisiana Purchase made ten years earlier and the heightened Creek Indian unrest and bloodshed in the area brought on in part by conflicts surrounding the War of 1812 and Spain's suspected duplicity with Britain and the Indians.

In 1821 a treaty was ratified completing the sale of Spanish Florida to the United States, thus removing any lingering European claims to Mobile. During this time Mobile received another infusion of French influence in 1815 by way of the arrival of the Napoleonic exiles that settled in and around Mobile.” (Feore 2023).

Now open as an American Port on the second largest river system in the country, Mobile was poised to take advantage of the profound changes occurring which affected global commerce. As the industrial revolution was getting into full swing, the invention of the cotton gin and the introduction of steam power for river and rail transportation were changing the world. Additionally, steam driven machines were transforming lumber and textile mills. Soon the rich river bottom and black belt farmlands were open for settlement and cultivation. This brought an influx of industrious merchants and tradesmen, mainly from New England, South Carolina and Europe, into the city creating a dynamic mix that resulted in Mobile not only becoming the third largest seaport in the US for exports by the time of the Civil War, it also became the third largest city in the south.

“The ravages of the Civil War, followed immediately by the Great Magazine Explosion in the downtown portion of the city that destroyed close to half the commercial district, brought Mobile its darkest hour. The climb back to prosperity was slow and difficult. The doubling of import duties to 45 percent just prior to the Civil War and thereafter all but eliminated the lucrative trade with Europe. The City's decline was finally arrested by the beginning of the southern lumber boom in the late 1880s followed by the modernization of the river system to support the export of steel and coal production in Birmingham and related harbor deepening and improvements at Mobile.

Adding to this prosperity was the birth of the first locally owned and operated shipping fleets in the South. These fleets began as three masted lumber schooners at the turn of the century, progressed to steel hulled square-rigged vessels through the World War I period and continued with the largest fleet of steamships to sail under the US flag during WW II. Out of this steamship enterprise and here in Mobile, came the company that launched the worldwide containership industry including the construction of their first two container vessels here in Mobile. The impetus from these shipping achievements is carried on even today with several international shipping and support firms still owned and operated out of Mobile.

Recent times have seen an economy that still enjoys healthy growth of its traditional businesses: shipping, port facilities, shipbuilding and repair, forest products, chemicals, oil and gas production and exploration, seafood industry and water-oriented tourism and recreation. Mobile is also enjoying robust growth of its more recent arrivals: aircraft production and the repair and production of steel and steel products.” (Feore 2023).

FIELD METHODS

The Phase I survey was guided by procedural standards created by the Alabama Council of Professional Archaeologists in accordance with the Alabama Historical Commission’s (2002) specifications as outlined in the Policy for Archaeological Surveying and Testing in Alabama. Land coverage requirements were achieved by walking and visually inspecting the entire LOD. Any exposed surfaces were carefully examined for cultural material. Shovel tests are generally excavated at 30 m intervals within 30-m interval transects. Standard shovel tests consist of 30 centimeter (cm) diameter cylindrical holes excavated to 80 cm or until subsoil or an obstruction/water is reached. Soils from each test are screened through 1/4-inch hardware cloth for the purpose of recovering any cultural material that may exist at that location. When cultural material is encountered, the material is sorted by provenience and placed into bags labeled with the pertinent excavation information before being transported to APA’s laboratory.

LABORATORY METHODS AND COLLECTION CURATION

Any cultural materials recovered during field surveys are delivered to APA’s laboratory in Mobile, Alabama for processing. Here, materials are sorted by provenience, cleaned, and analyzed. Along with any cultural material, all project records, photographs, and maps produced while conducting the investigation are transported for curation at the Troy University Archaeological Research Center in Troy, Alabama. A copy of the curation agreement can be found in Appendix A.

RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD INVESTIGATION

The LOD follows an existing railroad. On the northern end, a small ravine parallels the tracks and the surrounding areas are largely industrial. Going south, the LOD includes wetlands that are heavily disturbed and littered with trash. Mature hardwoods are reclaiming the highly disturbed areas adjacent to the tracks on the north-northwestern portion of the LOD. In the wetlands to the south, river cane, mulberry, and blackberry are the dominant vegetation. The northern terminus is Berg Spiral Pipe Road with Papermill Road paralleling the northern LOD to the west. McKinley Street crosses the north-central project route, while Africatown Boulevard crosses further south. There are numerous pipelines and buried utilities along the route, particularly around Africatown Boulevard. Nearby industrial complexes include the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Shapiro Metals, and Scott Paper Company. Modern trash was encountered both on the surface and subsurface. The entire LOD shows signs of heavy disturbance. The Africatown Historic District as well as each of the historic structures within the one-mile radius are located beyond the project LOD.

A total of 102 shovel tests were attempted within the LOD. Of these, none were positive and 84 were negative for cultural material (Figure 16). The remaining 18 could not be excavated due to water or gravel. Shovel test profiles were varied. One example consisted of 10 cm of brown (10YR 4/3) fine sandy silt over yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) silty sand to 30 cmbs over dark red (2.5YR 3/6) sand to 60 cmbs over yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) silty sand mottled with dark red (2.5YR 3/6) silty sand to 80 cmbs (Figure 17). Another example consisted of 15 cm of pale brown (2.5Y 7/4) loamy sand over dark gray (5YR 5/1) loamy sand to 40 cmbs before impacting the water table (Figure 18). Within the Figure 18 photo can be seen a pair of men’s boxer shorts found subsurface. This was not collected.

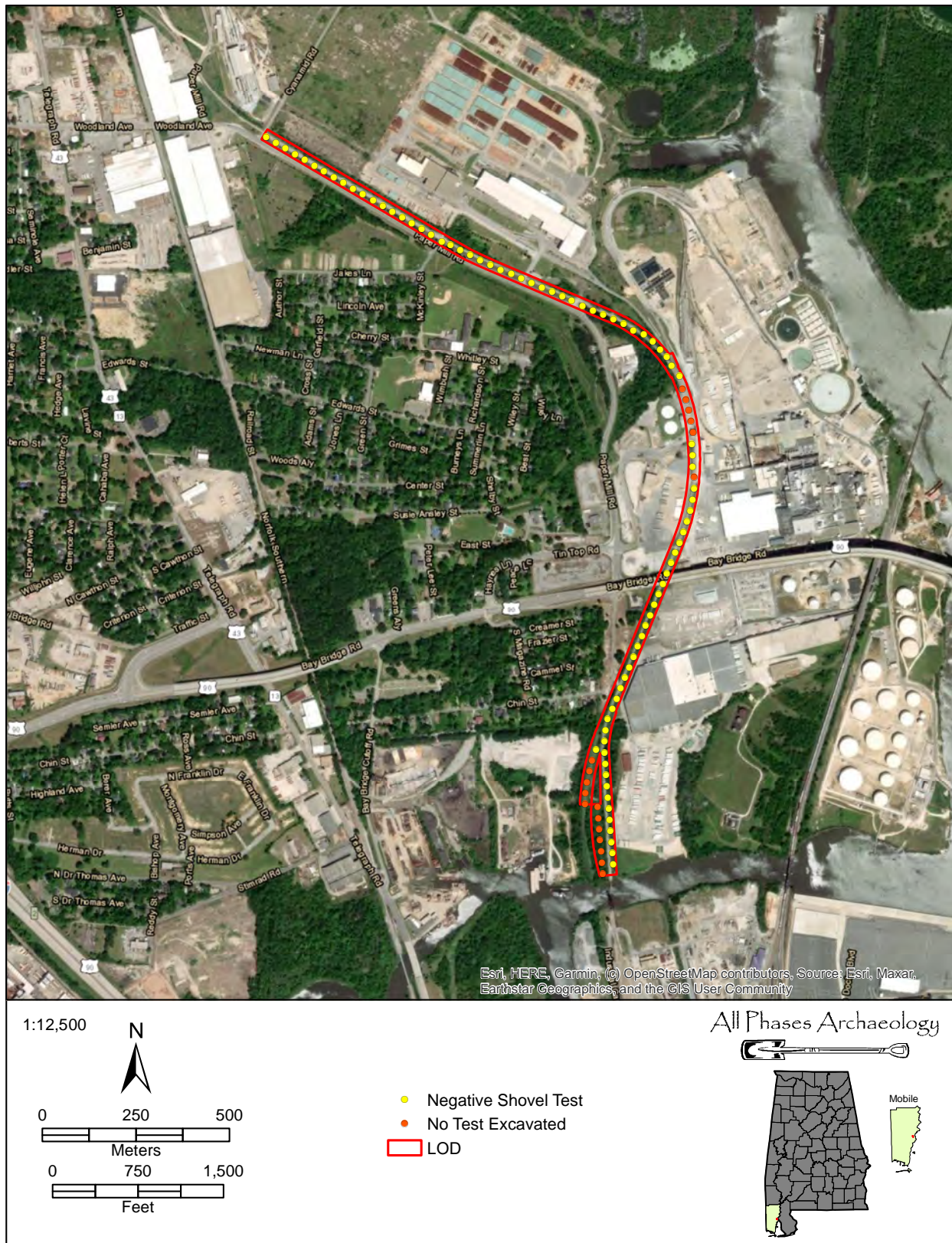


Figure 16. Aerial image showing shovel tests within the LOD.



Figure 17. Example of shovel test in the LOD.



Figure 18. Example of shovel test in the LOD.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APA, under contract with Volkert of Gulf Shores, Alabama, performed the Phase I cultural resources survey of approximately 22.7 acres in Mobile, Alabama. The archaeological survey found that the land is heavily disturbed from industrial and commercial enterprises, roads, bridges, and the railroad. No cultural resources were encountered and there are no historic properties within the LOD/APE.

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Web Soil Survey

2023 Online survey, <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>, accessed February 2023.

APPENDIX A
CURATION AGREEMENT

TROY UNIVERSITY



**Archaeological
Research Center**

Date: October 21, 2022

Jon Glass
All Phases Archaeology
257 Pinehill Drive
Mobile, AL 36606

Dear Jon,

Per your request, this letter is to confirm our standing agreement to provide curation services for archaeological collections to All Phases Archaeology on an as-needed basis. As you know, we are recognized by a variety of Federal agencies as a repository meeting the standards in 36 CFR Part 79 and have formal agreements to provide curation under these guidelines to multiple federal agencies such as the Army National Guard and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Please be advised that once a year we must be notified of all reports in which we were named as the repository. Project collections must be submitted within one calendar year of completion. Small projects may be complied for periodic submission. The AHC survey policy specifies which materials must be curated (Administrative Code of Alabama, Chapter 460-X-9). Renewal of this agreement is contingent upon compliance.

We appreciate this opportunity to be of assistance and look forward to working with you in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Carmody', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Carmody
Director
Archaeological Research Center
Troy University