



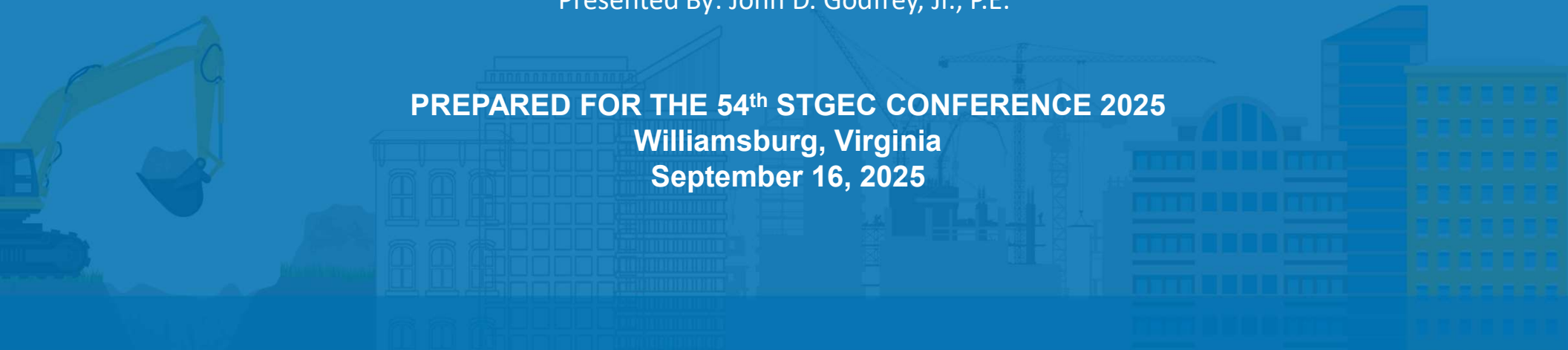
ENGINEERING CONSULTING SERVICES

“One Firm. One Mission.”

HISTORIC ROCK / SOIL WALL STABILIZATION CASE STUDY – TENNESSEE CAPITAL HILL, NASHVILLE, TN

Presented By: John D. Godfrey, Jr., P.E.

PREPARED FOR THE 54th STGEC CONFERENCE 2025
Williamsburg, Virginia
September 16, 2025

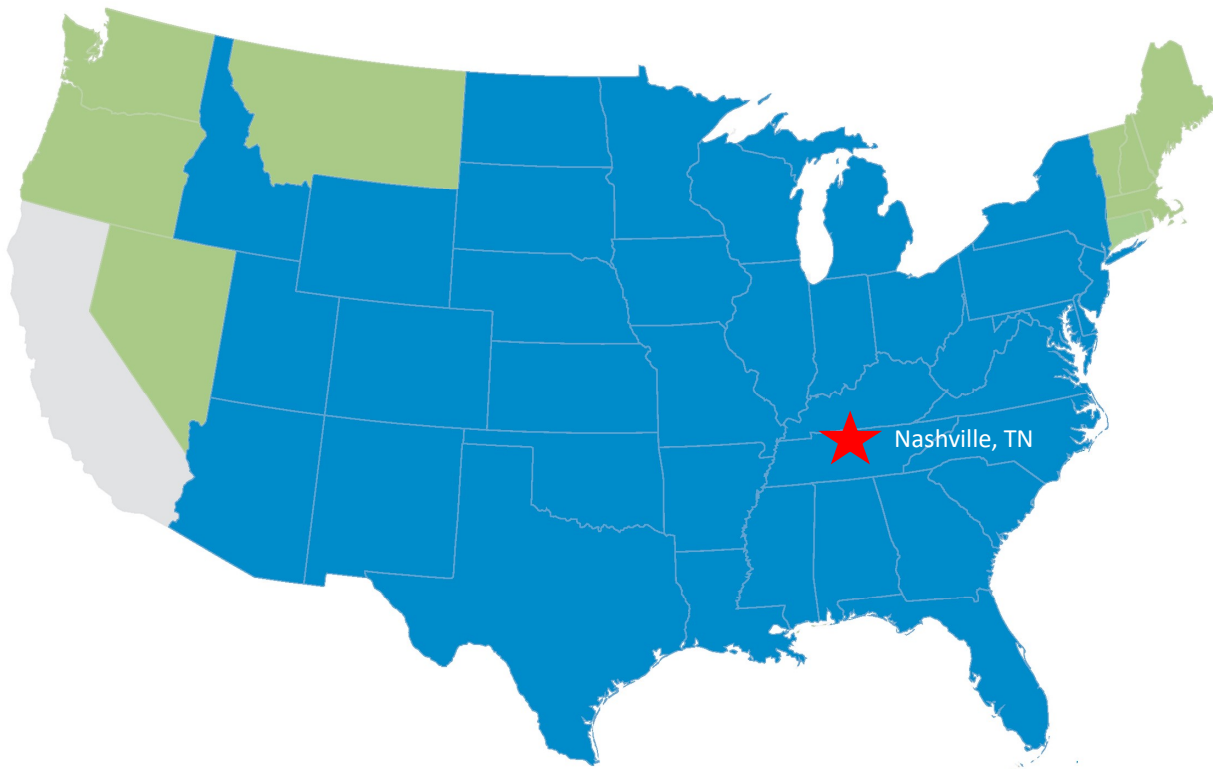


OUTLINE

- Location and History
- Team
- Geotechnical Exploration
- Design 2014
- Design 2020
- RFI's
- Soil Nail Construction
- Slope Failure
- Performance and Proof Testing
- Wall Photos 2025
- Questions



LOCATION



LOCATION



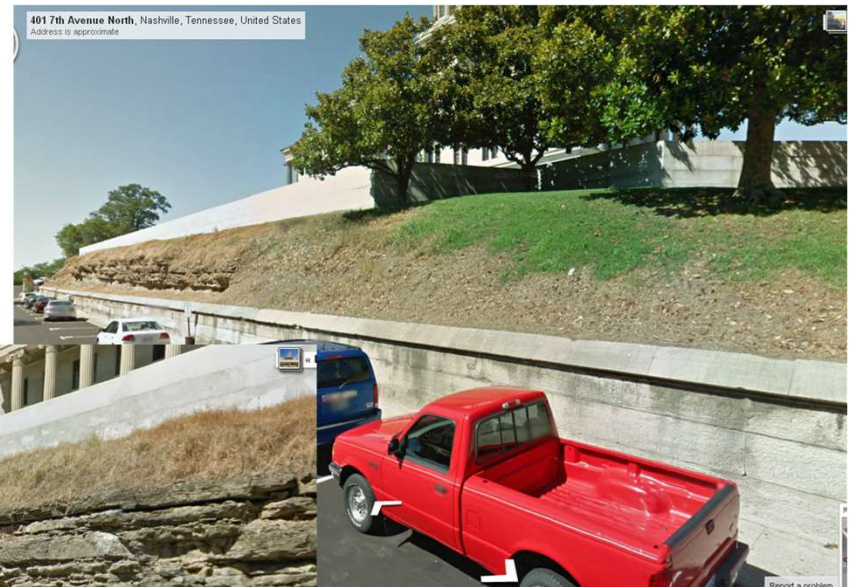
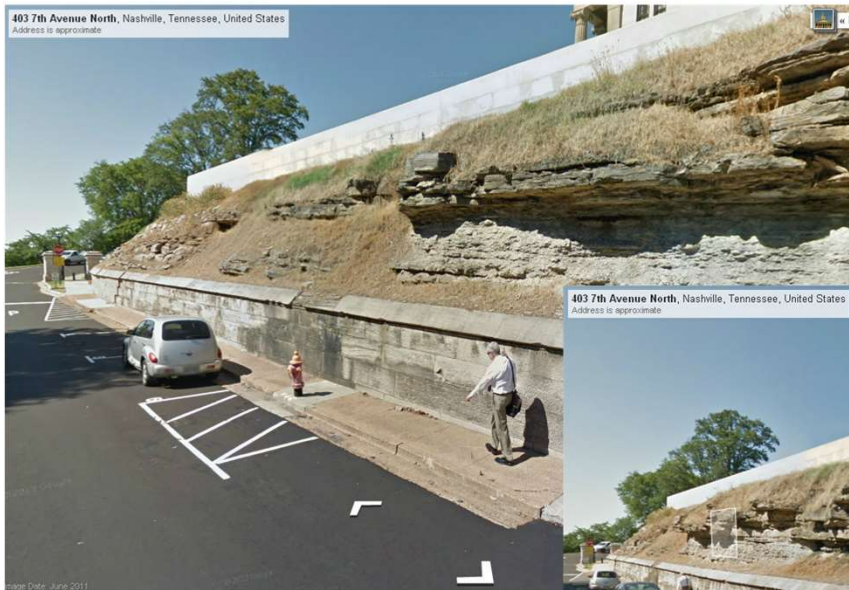
LOCATION



LOCATION – DISTRESSED PORTION (2014)



LOCATION – STREET LEVEL WALL VIEW (2014)



HISTORY



1864 PHOTO

The State Capitol was constructed between 1845 and 1859. It was designed in Greek Revival style by architect William Strickland (1788-1854). Strickland died before construction was completed and was interred in the walls of the north portico. His son, Francis W. Strickland, oversaw the completion of the project. The building was constructed of Tennessee Limestone and underwent major restoration from 1956-1960. The original capitol location was to be in the geographical center of the State, Murfreesboro, but some wealthy Nashvillian's bought the current capitol property for \$30,000 dollars and then sold it to the State for \$1 dollar if they build in Nashville.

HISTORY

Primary Goal: Maintain the Historical Components of the Existing Wall and Stabilize the Rock Slope



TEAM



Owner



Geotechnical and
Soil Nail Wall Designer



Soil Nail Contractor



Hodgson Douglas
Landscape Architect



GEOTECHNICAL EXPLORATION

PROJECT INFORMATION:

- Site Location: 7th Avenue N. & Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee
- Project Scope: Landscape Upgrades (New Construction):
 - (6) sets of sidewalks/stairs
 - (3) sets along the NW slope of Capitol Hill
 - (3) sets along the SE slope of Capitol Hill
 - Belvedere feature (NW of the State Capitol Building)
- Retaining Wall (To be repaired)
 - Gravity retaining wall (runs along the NE edge of 7th Ave N)
 - 85 feet long distressed section of wall (NW end of wall)
 - Maximum wall height of approximately 6 feet
 - Apparent sliding and/or rotation
 - Repair/reconstruction of distressed wall is required
- Site Conditions: Grassed slopes, rock outcrops, exposed boulders in fill slope

GEOTECHNICAL EXPLORATION

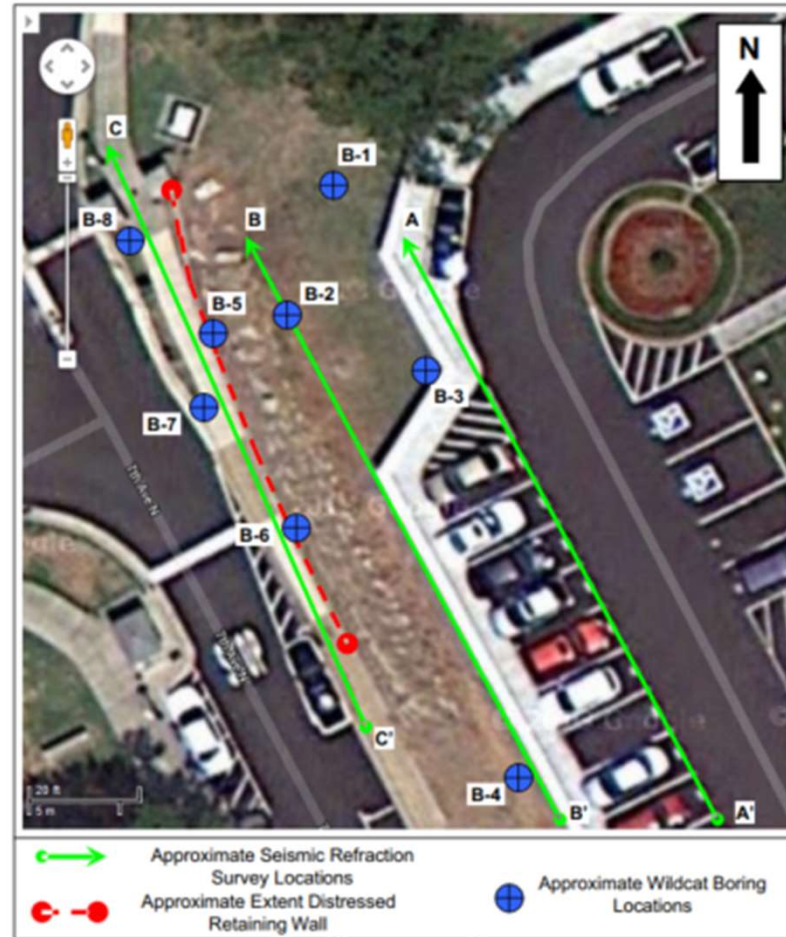
SUBSURFACE CONDITIONS:

- Field Exploration: (16) Wildcat™ penetrometer borings (to penetration refusal)
(16) Hand augers (to auger refusal)
- Surface Material: Topsoil = 3 to 12 inches (at areas of our exploration)
- Existing Fill: Approximate depths ranging from 1 to at least 10.5 feet
Some augers refused due to apparent cobbles and gravel in fill
CLAY (CL), with varying amounts of sand
- Natural Soils: CLAY (CL), with varying amounts of sand and gravel
- Hand Auger Refusal: Encountered from approximately 0.3 to 6 feet
- Wildcat Refusal: Encountered from approximately 1 to 10.5 feet
- Groundwater: Not encountered during this exploration

POTENTIAL GEOTECHNICAL CONCERNS:

- Presence of existing man-placed fill at the site (with oversized rock material)
- Presence of shallow irregular rock profile
- Gravity retaining wall distress/instability

GEOTECHNICAL EXPLORATION



GEOTECHNICAL EXPLORATION

CLIENT Hodgson & Douglas, LLC		JOB # 26-2476	BORING # B-2	SHEET 1 OF 1	
PROJECT NAME Tennessee State Capitol - Landscape Upgrades & Retaining Wall Repairs		ARCHITECT/ENGINEER WSEngineers			
Bore Location 7th Ave N & Charlotte Ave, Nashville, Tennessee					
NORTHING		EASTING		STATION	
DEPTH (FT)		DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL		ENGLISH UNITS	
SAMPLE NO.		SAMPLE TYPE		SAMPLE DIST. (IN)	
RECOVERY (IN)		LOSS OF CIRCULATION (%)		WATER LEVELS (ELEVATION (FT))	
SURFACE ELEVATION		ROCK QUALITY DESIGNATION & RECOVERY		ROQ% --- REC% ---	
Topsoil Depth (ft)		FILL, Sandy CLAY, Brown, Moist (CL FILL)		15.7	
S-1 12		FILL, CLAY, With Sand, Light, Moist (CL FILL)		20.5	
S-2 12		HAND AUGER REFUSAL @ 6'			
		AUGER REFUSAL ENCOUNTERED IN POTENTIAL SOIL/ROCK FILL MATERIALS			
THE STRATIFICATION LINES REPRESENT THE APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY LINES BETWEEN SOIL TYPES. IN-SITU THE TRANSITION MAY BE GRADUAL.					
WIL DRY		WIL		BORING STARTED 05/20/14	
WIL(BOR)		WIL(JACR)		BORING COMPLETED 05/20/14	
WIL		RIG		FOREMAN	
				DRILLING METHOD: HAND AUGER SAMPLING	

WILDCAT DYNAMIC CONE LOG

Page 1 of 1

ECS Central, PLLC
318 Seaboard Lane #208
Franklin, TN 37067

PROJECT NUMBER: 26-2476
DATE STARTED: 05-20-2014
DATE COMPLETED: 05-20-2014

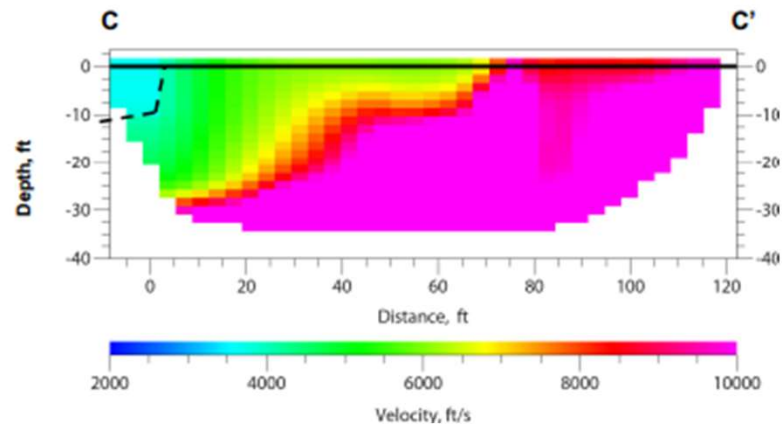
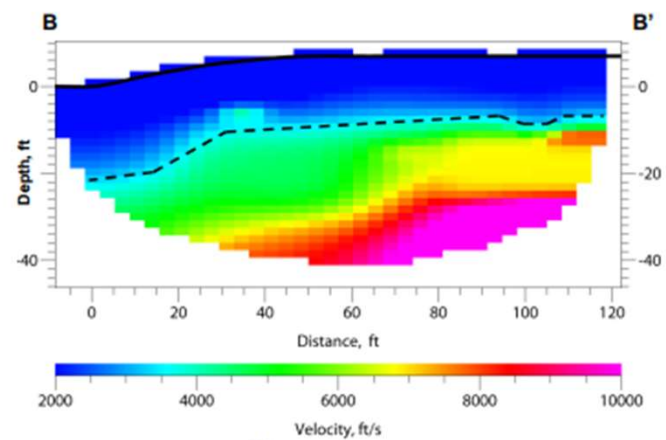
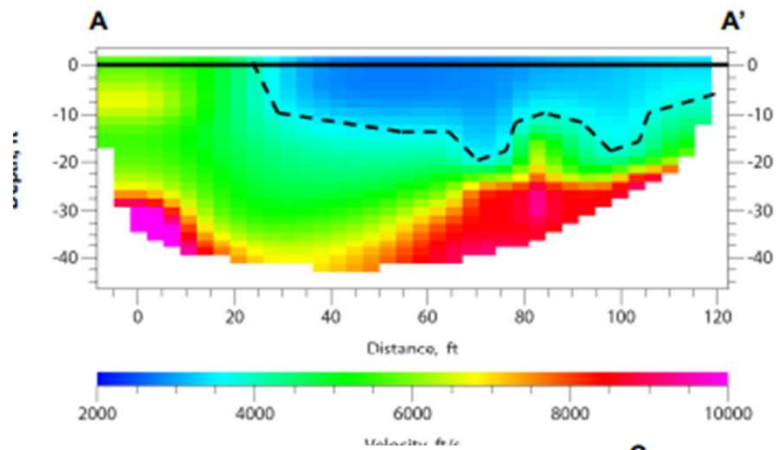
HOLE #: B-2
CREW: B. Nguyen/C. Hills
PROJECT: TN State Capital - Landscape Upgrades & Ret. Wall Repairs
ADDRESS: 7th Ave N & Charlotte Ave
LOCATION: Nashville, Tennessee

SURFACE ELEVATION: -
WATER ON COMPLETION: DRY
HAMMER WEIGHT: 35 lbs.
CONE AREA: 10 sq. cm

DEPTH	BLOWS PER 10 cm	RESISTANCE Kg/cm ²	GRAPH OF CONE RESISTANCE 0 50 100 150	N°	TESTED CONSISTENCY	
					NON-COHESIVE	COHESIVE
0	4	17.8	*****	5	LOOSE	MEDIUM STIFF
1 ft	1	4.4	*	1	VERY LOOSE	VERY SOFT
	2	8.9	**	2	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
	2	8.9	**	2	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
	2	8.9	**	2	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
2 ft	2	8.9	**	2	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
	2	8.9	**	2	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
	2	8.9	**	2	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
3 ft	3	13.3	***	3	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
1 m	23	102.1	*****	25+	MEDIUM DENSE	VERY STIFF
	9	34.7	*****	9	LOOSE	STIFF
4 ft	4	15.4	****	4	VERY LOOSE	SOFT
	5	19.3	*****	5	LOOSE	MEDIUM STIFF
	8	30.9	*****	8	LOOSE	MEDIUM STIFF
5 ft	10	38.6	*****	11	MEDIUM DENSE	STIFF
	11	42.5	*****	12	MEDIUM DENSE	STIFF
	16	61.8	*****	17	MEDIUM DENSE	VERY STIFF
6 ft	19	73.3	*****	20	MEDIUM DENSE	VERY STIFF
	10	38.6	*****	11	MEDIUM DENSE	STIFF
2 m	20	77.2	*****	22	MEDIUM DENSE	VERY STIFF
7 ft	21	71.8	*****	20	MEDIUM DENSE	VERY STIFF
	50	171.0	*****	25+	DENSE	HARD
8 ft						
9 ft						
3 m 10 ft						
11 ft						
12 ft						
4 m 13 ft						



GEOTECHNICAL EXPLORATION



GEOTECHNICAL EXPLORATION

Retaining Wall Repairs:

- Existing limestone block gravity retaining wall along the NE edge of 7th Ave N.
- 85 foot long distressed section of wall (NW end of 7th Ave N)
- Maximum wall height of approximately 6 feet



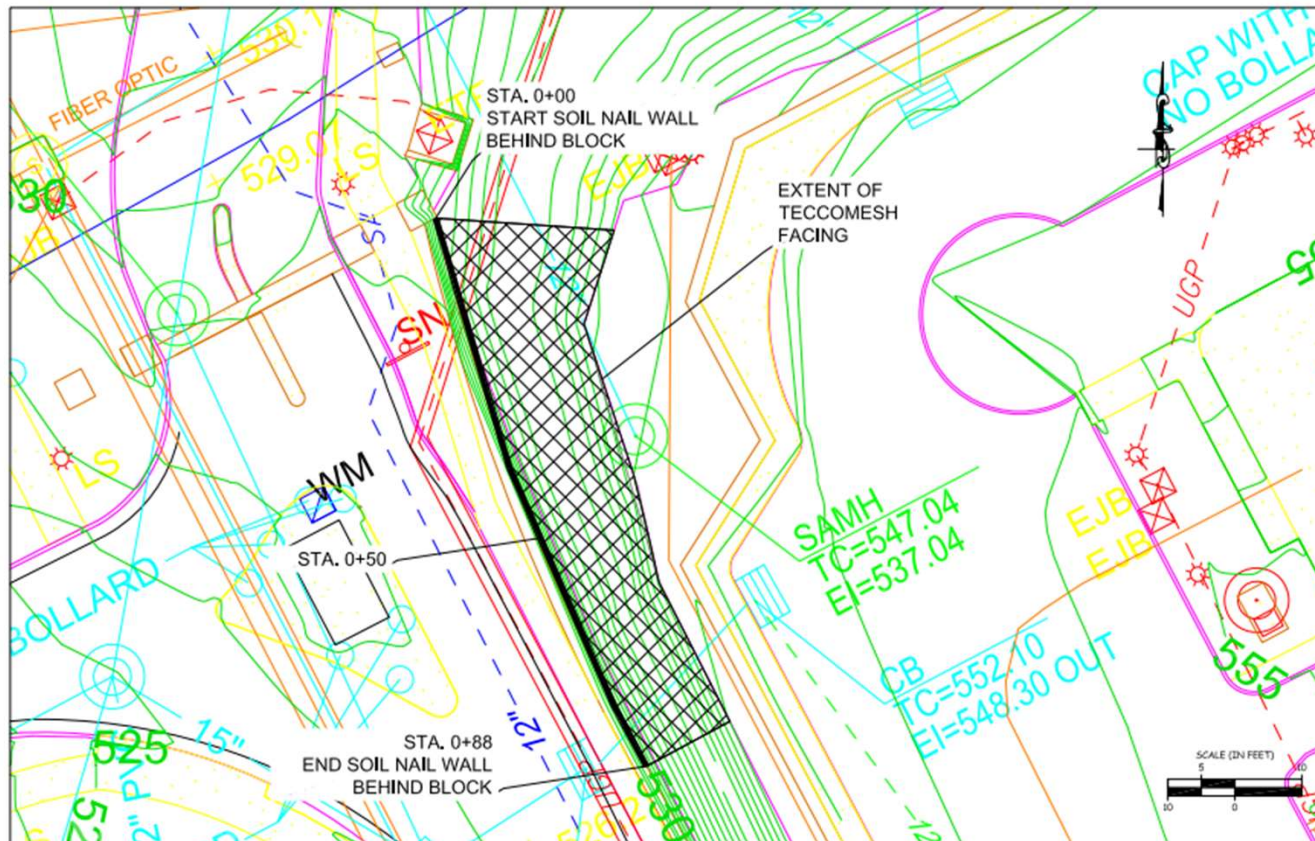
Photo 3: Distressed wall conditions (Source – Right Photo: Google Maps, 2014)

GEOTECHNICAL EXPLORATION

GEOTECHNICAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

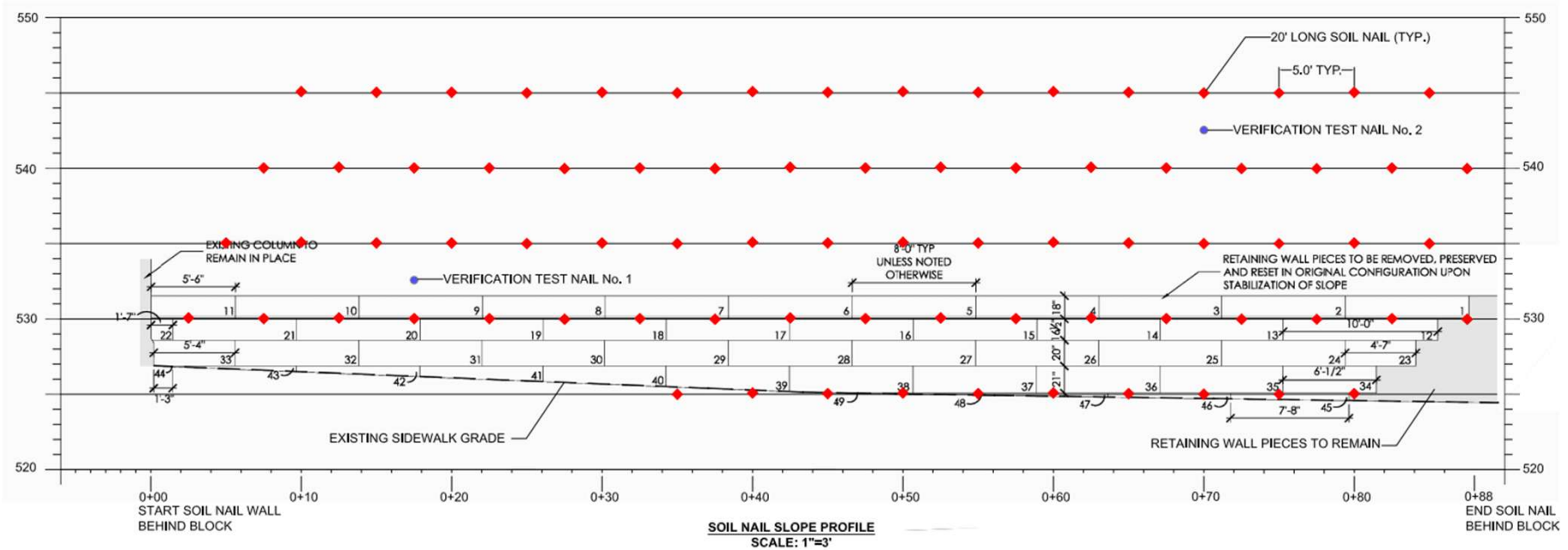
- The increase in lateral pressure could have resulted from the settlement/movement of fill behind the wall due to self-weight settlement or the raveling of soil into voids associated with boulder laden fill.
- Hydrostatic pressure buildup behind the wall could have attributed to the failure.
- The existing instability can be adequately remedied using a technique known as soil nailing.
- The limestone blocks can be strategically removed as the soil nailing progresses in a top-down manner.
- Based on the composition of the slope materials and the steep existing slope geometry, it is our opinion that these conditions indicate a high potential for long term instability of the slope.

2014 SOIL NAIL DESIGN

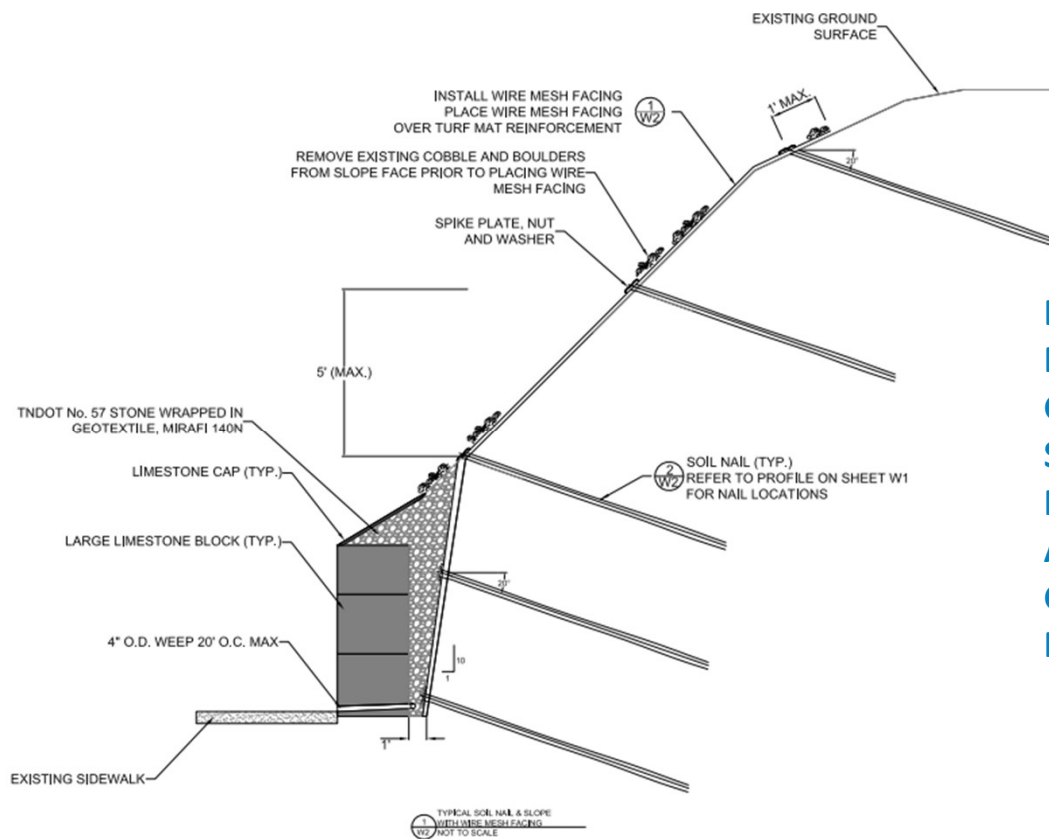


SITE PLAN

2014 SOIL NAIL DESIGN



2014 SOIL NAIL DESIGN



DESIGN:

NAIL – NO. 9 GR. 75 ALL THREAD

GROUT-ROCK BOND – 75 PSI (F.S. 2.0)

SOIL NAIL SPACING – 5 X 5 FT

NAIL LENGTH – 20 FT

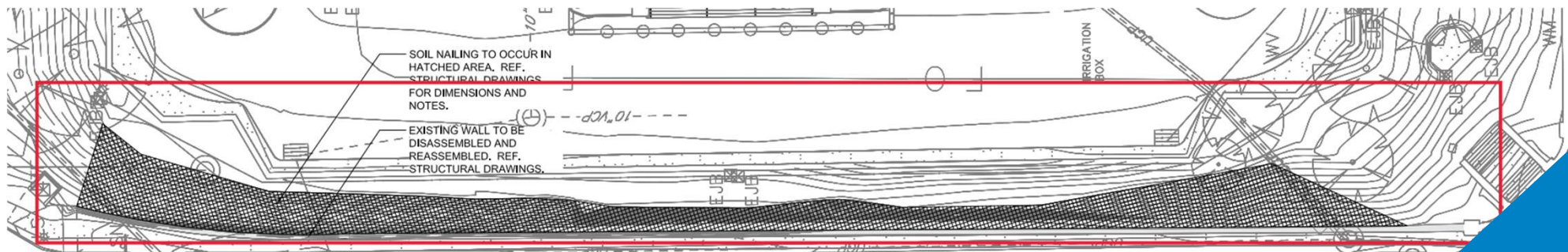
ANGLE FROM HORIZONTAL – 20 DEGREES

GROUT - 2,500 PSI

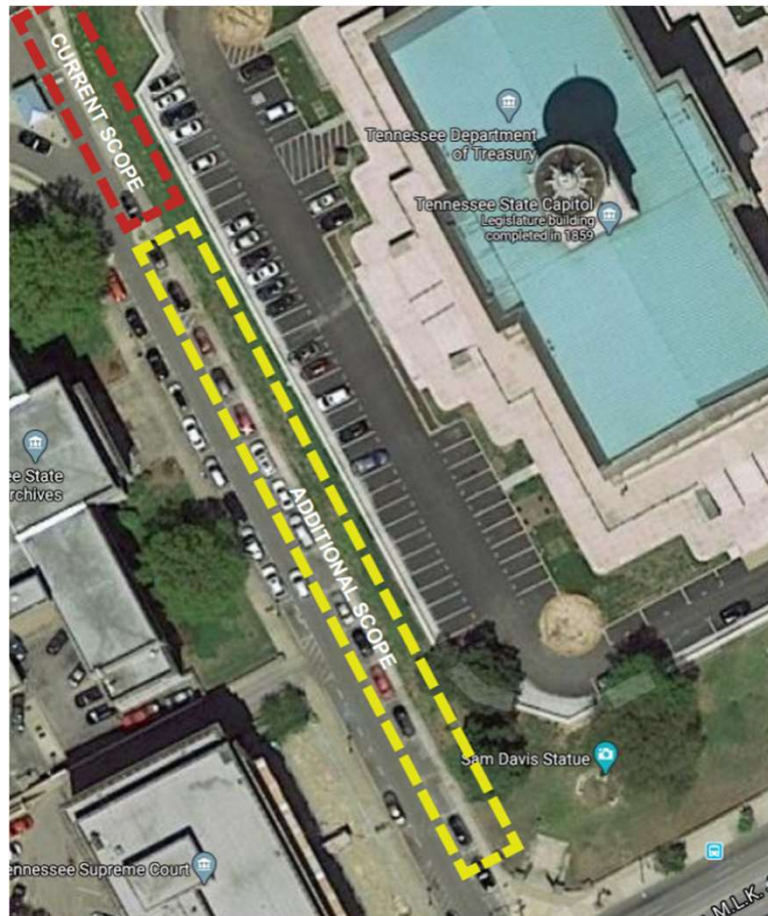
FACING – TECCO WIRE MESH OVER TURF MAT

SOIL NAIL DESIGN – FAST FORWARD TO FEBRUARY 2020

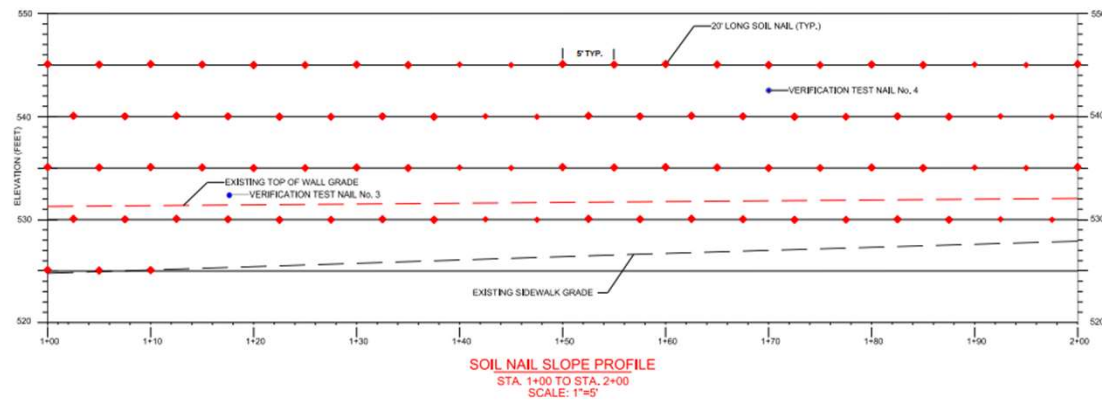
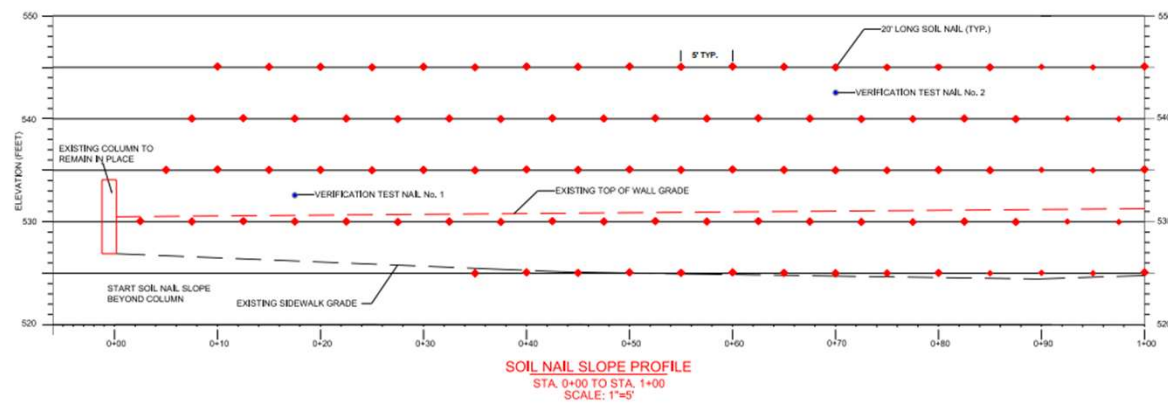
- ECS contacted in February 2020 by Hodgson Douglas (HDLA) to provide a proposal to increase the wall design length from 88 feet to 440 feet due to additional slope and block wall movement. New maximum wall height 20 feet.
- A new plan of the extended wall and area of soil nail stabilization was provided for ECS to complete the new design.



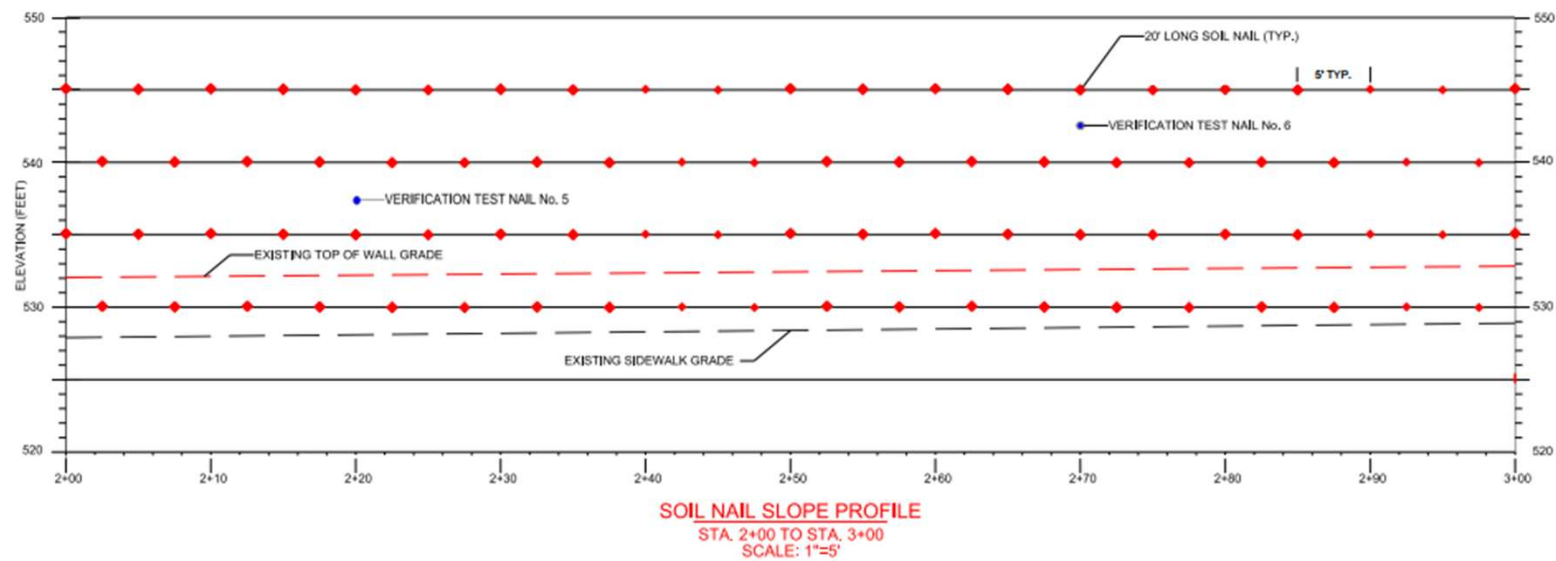
SOIL NAIL DESIGN – FAST FORWARD TO FEBRUARY 2020



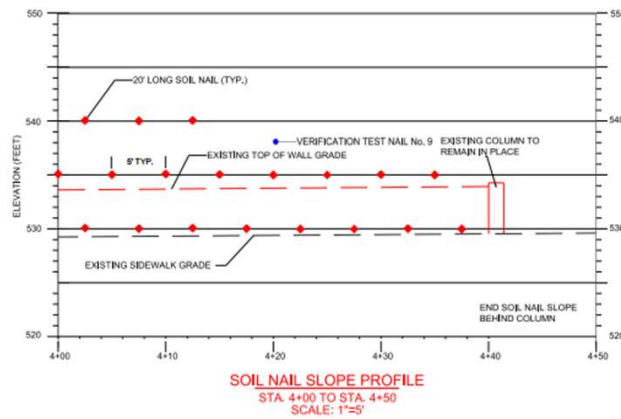
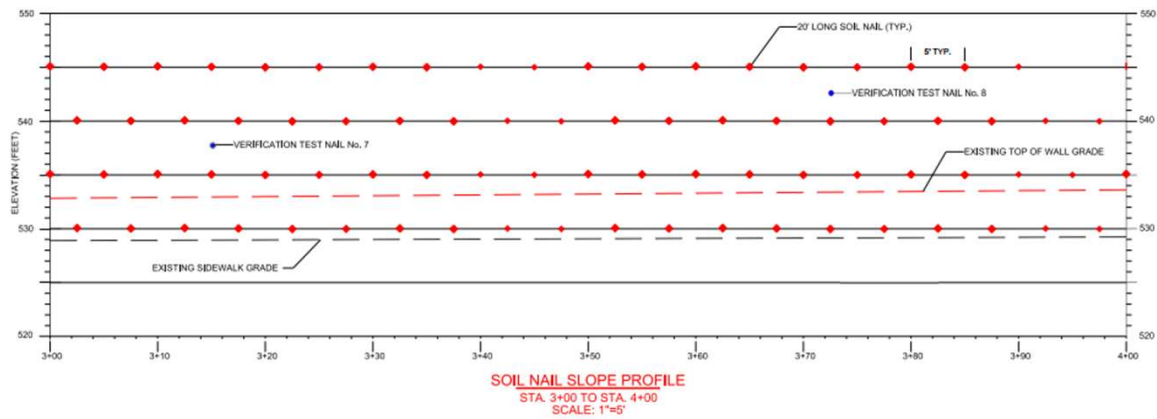
SOIL NAIL DESIGN – JULY 2020



SOIL NAIL DESIGN – JULY 2020

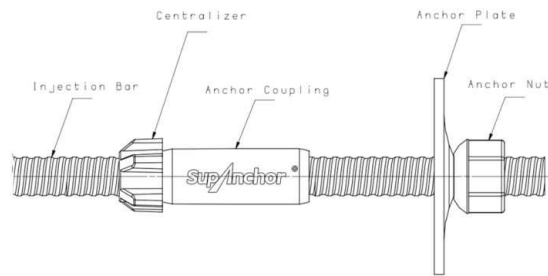


SOIL NAIL DESIGN – JULY 2020



SOIL NAIL DESIGN – JULY 2020 SUBMITTALS

SupAnchor® T40 Self Drilling Injection Anchor Systems



CE European Technical Approval CTA-17/0118

GEOBRUGG
BRUGG
Safety is our nature

TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

High-tensile steel wire mesh **TECCO® G65/3**

TECCO® high-performance steel wire mesh	TECCO® steel wire
Mesh shape: rhomboid	Wire diameter: d = 3.0 mm
Diagonal: x - y = 83 - 143 mm (+/- 3%)	Tensile strength: f _t > 1770 N/mm ²
Mesh width: D ₀ = 65 mm (+/- 3%)	Material: High-tensile steel wire
Angle of mesh: α = 49°	Tensile resistance of a wire: Z _w = 12.5 kN
Total height of mesh: h ₀ = 11.0 mm (+/- 1 mm)	
Clearance of mesh: h ₁ = 5.0 mm (+/- 1 mm)	
Number of meshes longitudinal: n = 7 pcs/m	
Number of meshes transversal: n ₀ = 12 pcs/m	

TECCO® stainless protection (*)
Corrosion protection: GCOBRUGG SUPERCORATING®
Compound: 55% Zn / 5% Al
Coating: min. 150 g/m ²
< 5% dark brown rust in salt spray test according to EN ISO 9227
1700 hours (CTA-17/0118)

Load capacity (standard version)	TECCO® mesh roll
Tensile strength of mesh: Z ₀ > 150 kN/m ² *)	Roll width: b ₀ = 3.5 m
Bearing resistance against punching: D ₀ > 180 kN / 240 kN *)	Roll length: L ₀ = 30 m
Bearing resistance against shearing off: P ₀ > 90 kN / 120 kN *)	Total surface per roll: A ₀ = 105 m ²
Bearing resistance against slope-parallel tensile stress: Z ₀ > 30 kN / 45 kN *)	Weight per m ² : g = 1.65 kg/m ²
Elongation in longitudinal tensile strength test: δ < 4.0 % *)	Weight per mesh roll: G ₀ = 175 kg
Classification according to CAD 230225-00-0108	Mesh edge: mesh ends knotted
As in CAD 230225-00-0108 and referring to TÜV Rheinland LGA test report 01/2014 using splices P33 / P68	

*) Not to the standard version with Zn/Al coating, the high-tensile steel wire mesh is also available in stainless steel (INOX) in 1.4462 (AISI 316) sea water resistant quality.

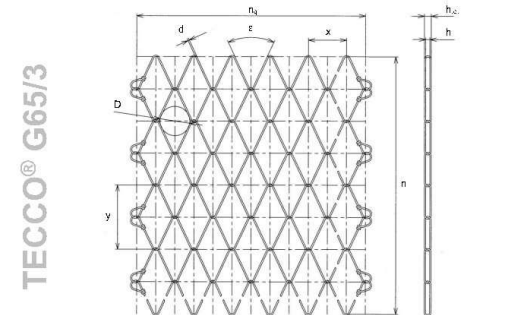


Table 1: Dimensions and load capacity of the mesh and wire mesh. The table shows the dimensions of the mesh and wire mesh, and the load capacity of the mesh and wire mesh. The table is subject to change without notice.



Specification Sheet – EroNet™ SC150* Erosion Control Blanket

DESCRIPTION

The extended-term double net erosion control blanket shall be a machine-produced mat of 70% agricultural straw and 30% coconut fiber with a functional longevity of up to 24 months. (NOTE: functional longevity may vary depending upon climatic conditions, soil, geographical location, and elevation). The blanket shall be of consistent thickness with the straw and coconut evenly distributed over the entire area of the mat. The blanket shall be covered on the top side with a heavy-weight photodegradable polypropylene netting having ultraviolet additives to delay breakdown and an approximate 0.63 x 0.63 in (1.59 x 1.59 cm) mesh, and on the bottom side with a light-weight photodegradable polypropylene netting with an approximate 0.50 x 0.50 (1.27 x 1.27 cm) mesh. The blanket shall be sewn together on 1.50 inch (3.81 cm) centers with degradable thread. The blanket shall be manufactured with a colored thread stitched along both outer edges (approximately 2-5 inches (5-12.5 cm) from the edge) as an overlap guide for adjacent mats.

The SC150 shall meet Type 3-B specification requirements established by the Erosion Control Technology Council (ECTC) and Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) FP-03 Section 713.17.

Material Content
Matrix: 70% Straw Fiber, 30% Coconut Fiber
Top: Heavyweight photodegradable with UV additives
Bottom: lightweight photodegradable
Thread: Degradable
Standard Roll Sizes
Width: 6.07 ft (2.03 m), 11.2 ft (3.4 m), 16.0 ft (4.87 m)
Length: 100 ft (30.92 m), 112 ft (34.4 m), 120 ft (36.58 m)
Weight ± 10%: 44 lbs (19.95 kg), 55 lbs (24.95 kg), 105.6 lbs (47.9 kg)
Area: 60 sq yd (66.9 sq m), 120 sq yd (133.8 sq m), 192 sq yd (216.5 sq m)



North American Green
5401 St. Wendel-Synthline Road
Piquette, Indiana 47333
nagreen.com
800-772-7340

Index Property	Test Method	Typical
Thickness	ASTM D6525	0.35 in (8.9 mm)
Resiliency	ECTC Guidelines	75%
Water Absorbency	ASTM D1117	342%
Mass/Unit Area	ASTM D6475	7.87 oz/sy (230 g/gsm)
Swell	ECTC Guidelines	30%
Smolder Resistance	ECTC Guidelines	Yes
Stiffness	ASTM D1388	1.11 oz-in
Light Penetration	ASTM D5667	6.2%
Tensile Strength - MD	ASTM D6818	362.4 lbs/ft (5.37 kN/m)
Elongation - MD	ASTM D6818	29.4%
Tensile Strength - TD	ASTM D6818	19.6 lbs/ft (2.83 kN/m)
Elongation - TD	ASTM D6818	27.6%
Biomass Improvement	ASTM D7322	481%

Design Permissible Shear Stress
Unvegetated Shear Stress: 2.05 psf (96 Pa)
Unvegetated Velocity: 8.0 fps (2.44 m/s)

Slope Design Data: C Factors			
	Slope Gradients (S)		
Slope Length (L)	≤ 3:1	3:1 - 2:1	≥ 2:1
≤ 20 ft (6 m)	0.001	0.048	0.100
20-50 ft	0.051	0.079	0.145
≥ 50 ft (15.2 m)	0.10	0.110	0.190
NTPEP Large-Scale Slope			

ASTM D6459 - C-factor = 0.031

Roughness Coefficients - Unveg.	
Flow Depth	Manning's n
≤ 0.50 ft (0.15 m)	0.050
0.50 - 2.0 ft	0.050-0.060
≥ 2.0 ft (0.60 m)	0.060-0.070

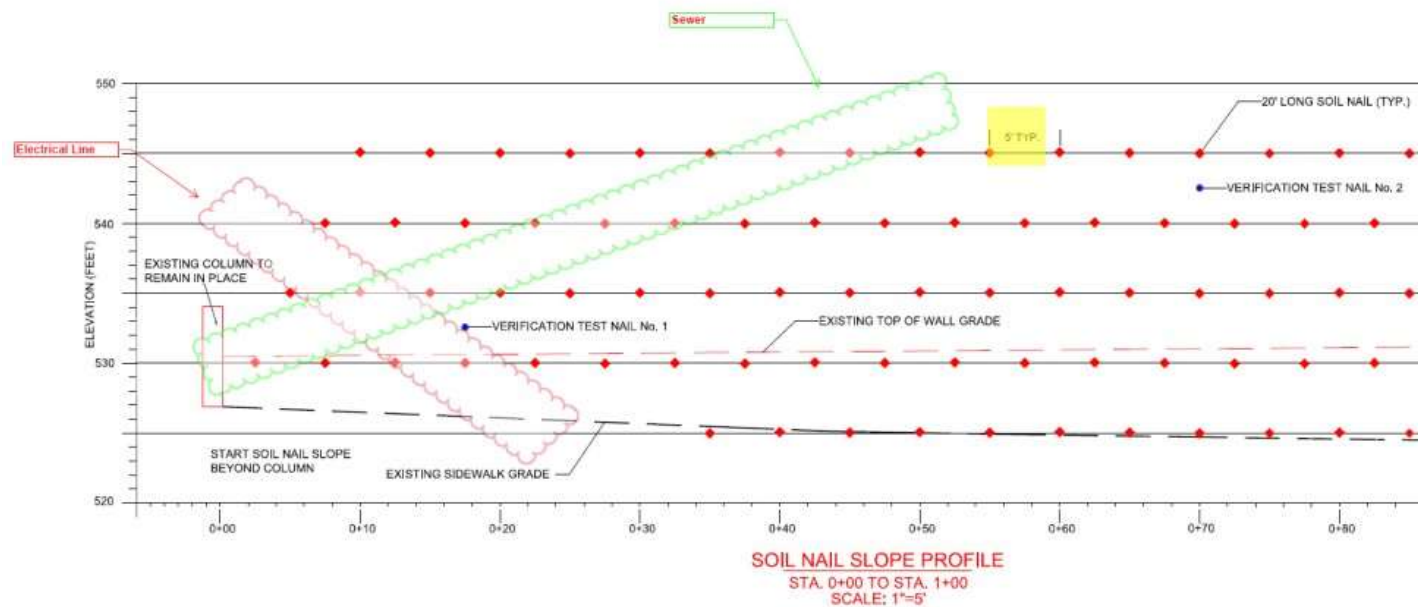


SITE – BEGIN CONSTRUCTION MAY 2021



RFI'S TO NAIL LAYOUT PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

- Review existing utility conflicts with design nail locations per drawing.
- Storm line identified behind stacked stone wall section may be damaged and leaking.
- ECS Response: Adjust nail spacing as necessary to clear utilities.



RFI'S TO NAIL LAYOUT PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

- Stack Stone Wall discovered between approximate Stations 0+00 to 1+80.
- Stacked Stone Wall should be stabilized prior to removing additional rows of milled stone wall.
- ECS approved adjustment of nails to move vertical as needed to clear bottom limestone wall section.
- Remove overhanging rock outcroppings.
- Change 6-inch tolerance of nail spacing to 2 feet tolerance due to boulder spacing.
- Verification and proof test locations can be moved.



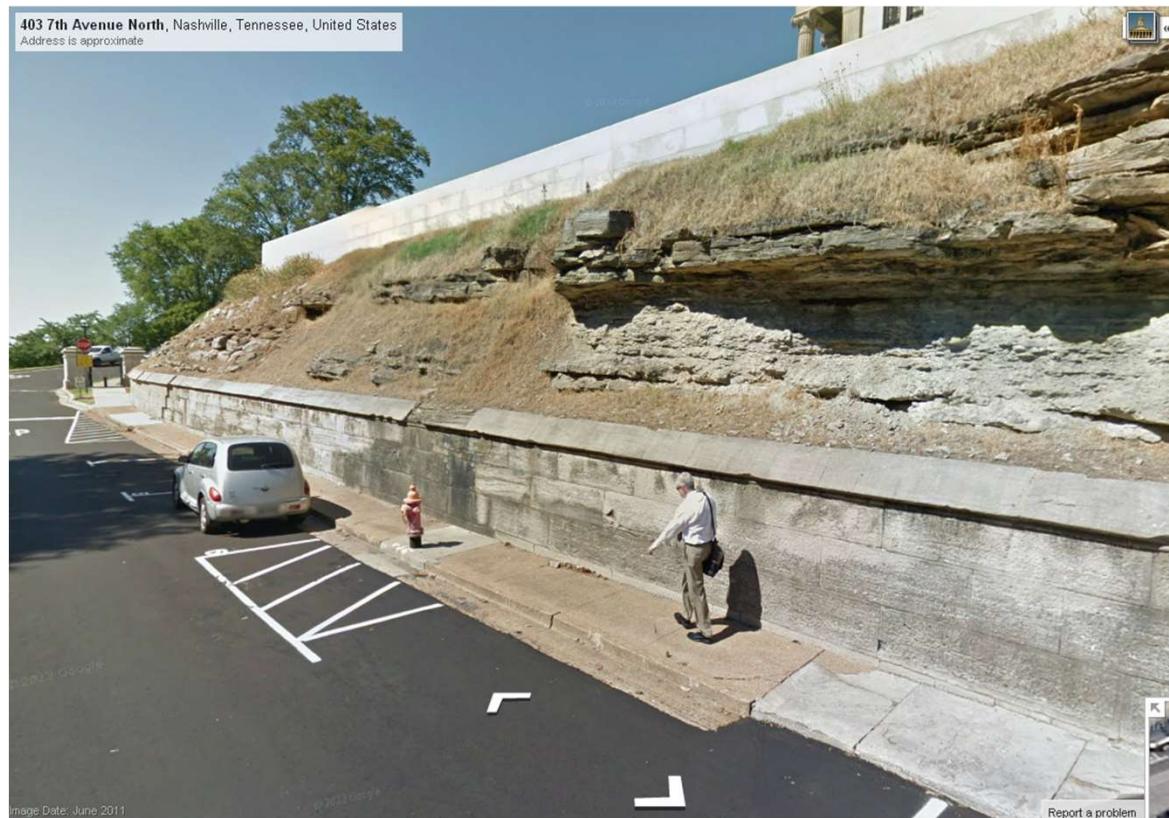
RFI'S TO NAIL LAYOUT PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

STACKED STONE WALL



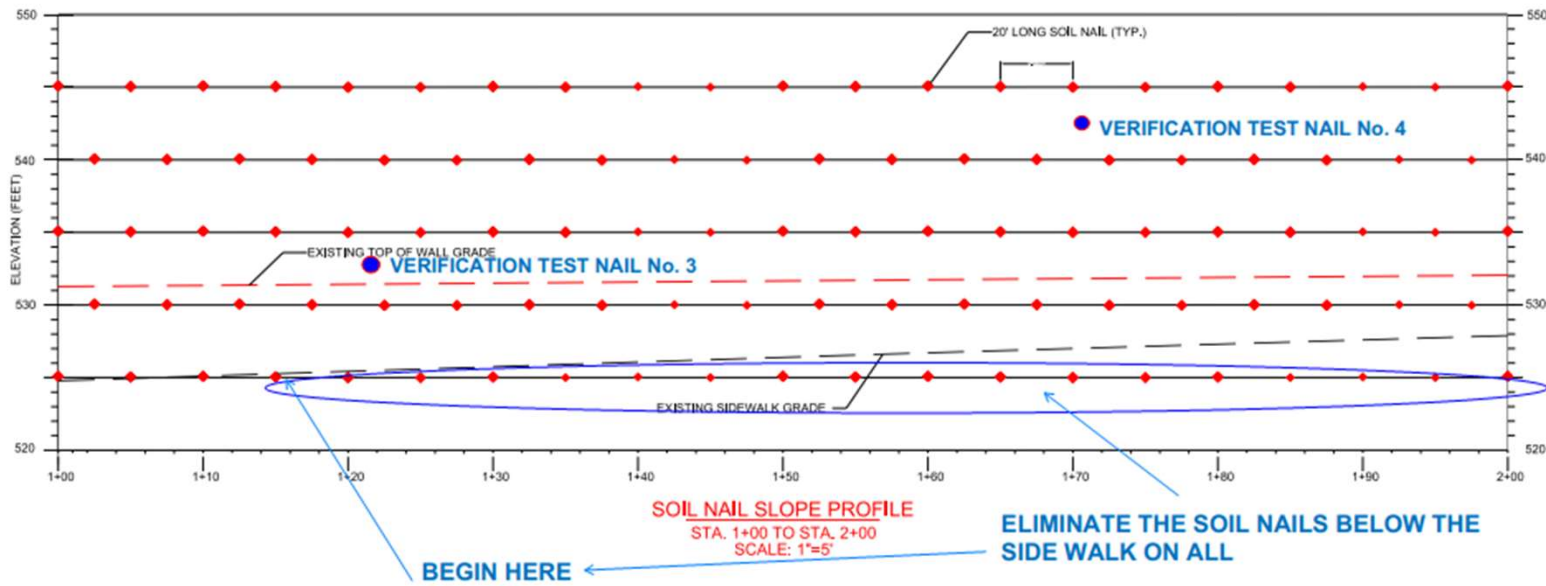
RFI'S TO NAIL LAYOUT PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

ROCK OVERHANG



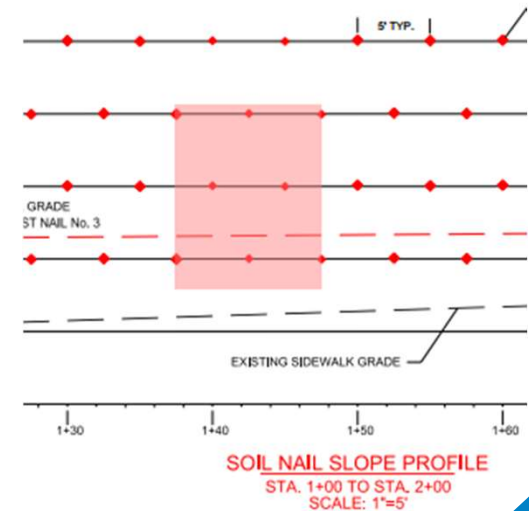
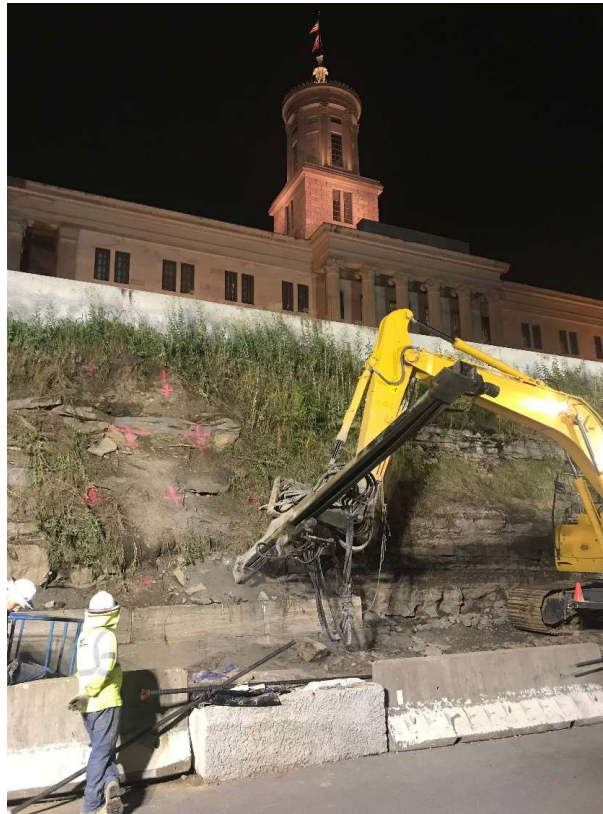
RFI'S TO NAIL LAYOUT PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION

- Eliminate soil nails indicated below side wall along entire length.



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

Soil nail wall construction begins July 7, 2021.



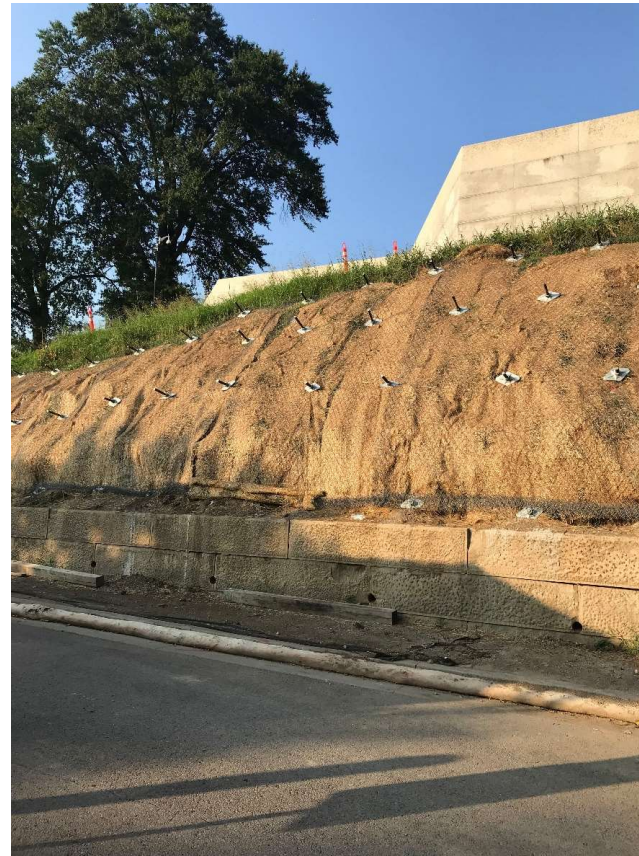
SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

SLOPE FAILURE 8-1-2021

During the Sunday night work (8-1), it was observed that an area of the stacked boulder wall had failed, possibly the result of the heavy rainfall on Saturday night (7-31). Some of the boulders had dropped behind the netting and a few of the nails showed evidence of bending as a result of boulder(s) dropping on the exposed nail length. Also noticed was that the contractor had removed most of the bottom rows of stacked, milled stone last week (7-25 thru 7-30) to provide access for installation of the bottom row of nails. There was evidence behind the netting that runoff was coming down the slope or possibly out from between the boulders and washing away support soils.

SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

SLOPE FAILURE



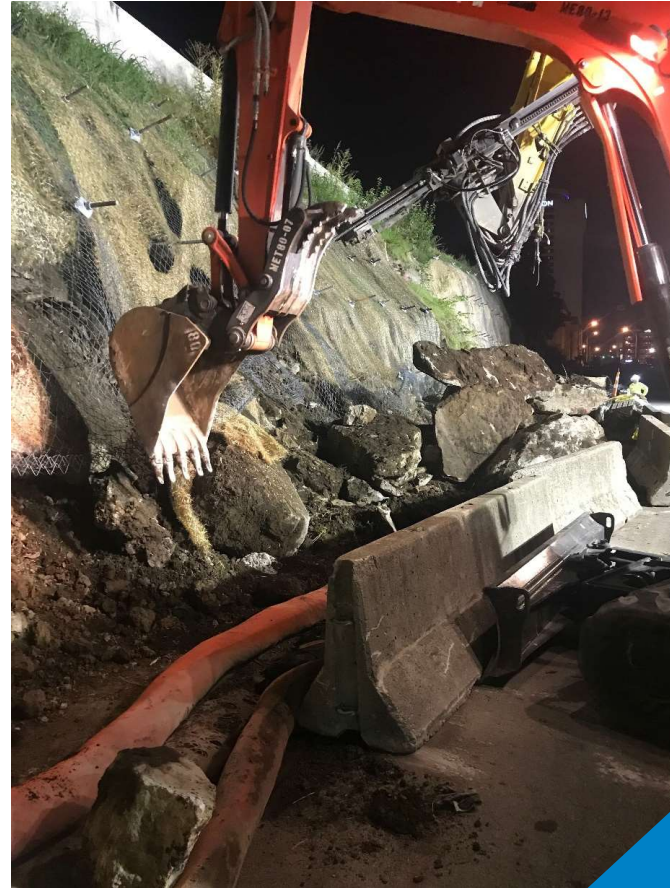
SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

SLOPE FAILURE



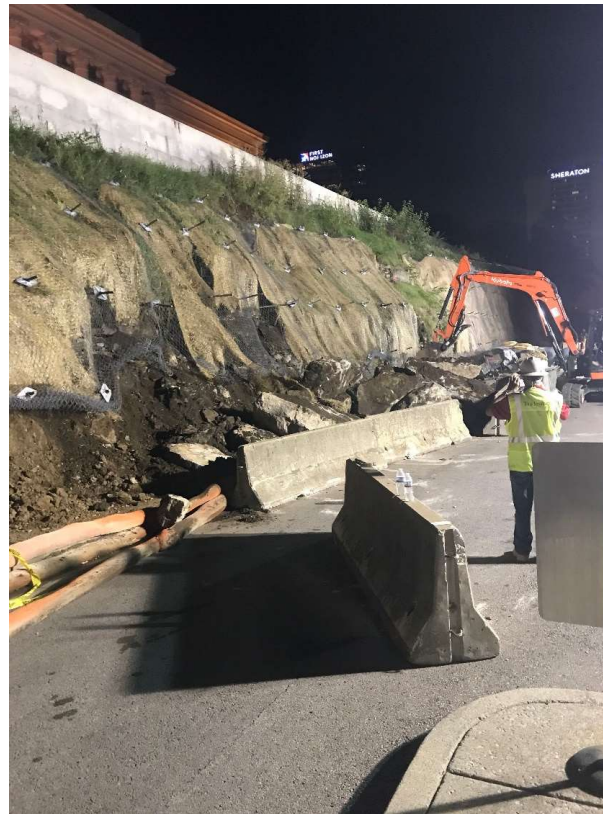
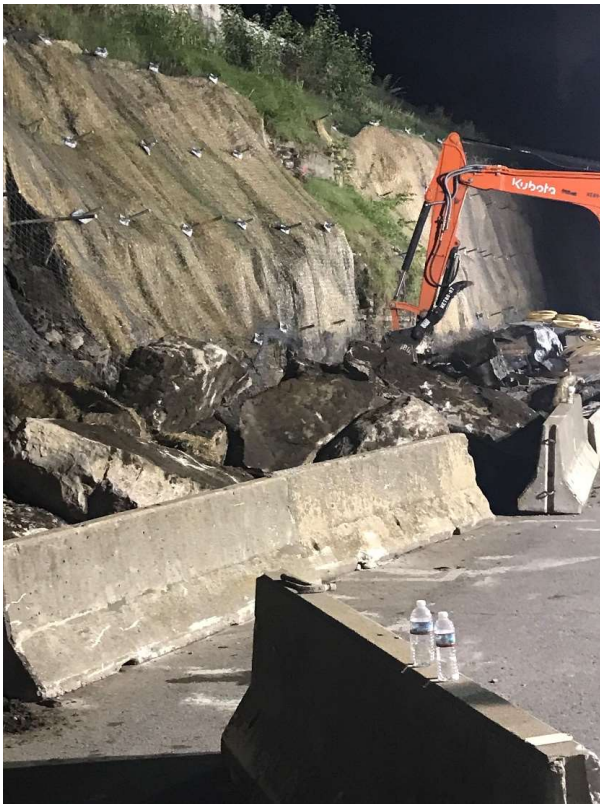
SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

SLOPE FAILURE



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

SLOPE FAILURE – BOULDER FIELD



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

SLOPE FAILURE – AFTER BOULDER REMOVAL



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

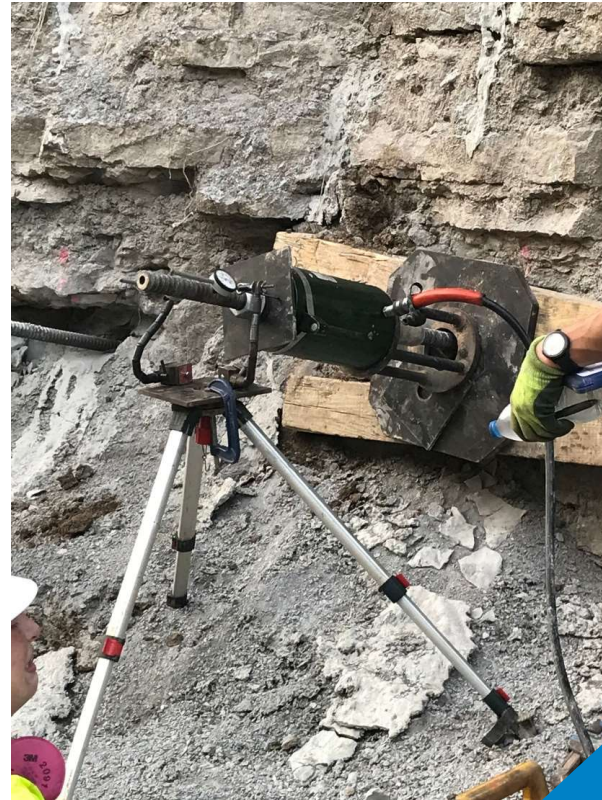
SLOPE FAILURE – REPAIRED



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

VERIFICATION AND PROOF TESTING

15 Proof Tests
8 Verification Tests



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

VERIFICATION AND PROOF TESTING



SOIL NAIL WALL CONSTRUCTION

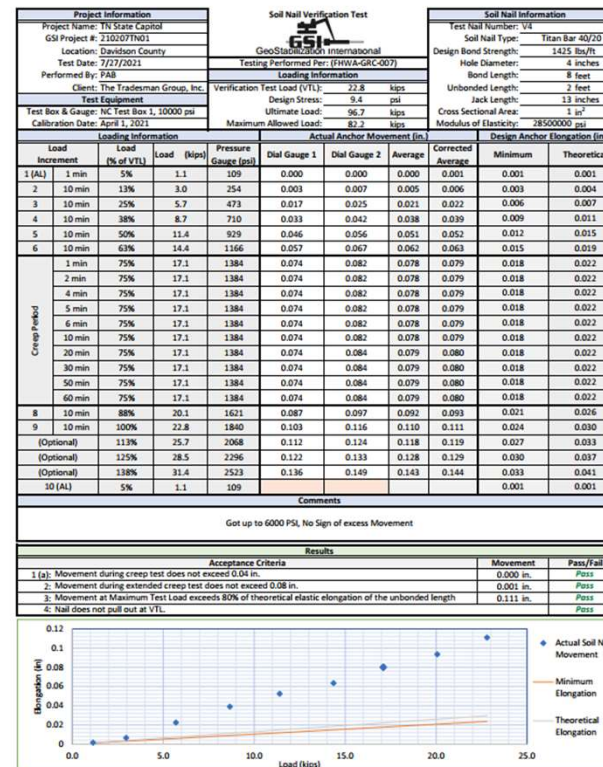
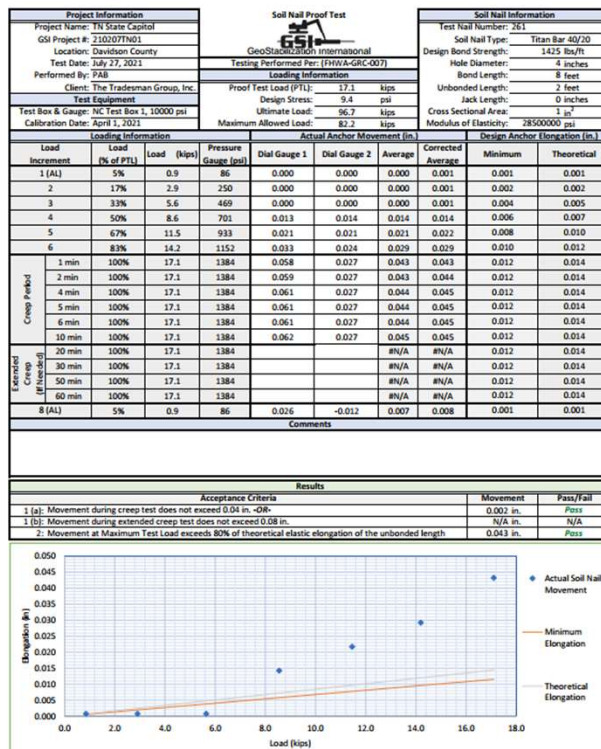
VERIFICATION AND PROOF TESTING

Proof Test Load – 17.1 kips

Verification Test Load – 22.8 kips

All Acceptance Criteria

PASS



WALL PHOTOS 2025



WALL PHOTOS 2025



QUESTIONS

