U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Washington DC 20420

February 6, 2025

SUBJECT: Scoping Notice for Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement and Consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act for the Proposed Relocation of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas (EISX-029-15-VHA-1734563688)

Dear Valued Stakeholder,

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is issuing this scoping notice to solicit comment and advise the public, agencies, and stakeholders of the proposed construction and operation of an approximately 1,600,000 gross square foot facility to replace the current Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital (the Proposed Action). The South Texas region is undergoing a substantial increase in Veteran population, placing additional demands on already stressed health care infrastructure. The purpose of this Proposed Action is to provide exceptional health care services to the growing Veteran population in the South Texas region.

The Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital was constructed in 1972. The configuration of this facility cannot accommodate modern health care delivery models and lacks sufficient parking to accommodate the current and projected Veteran population. Thus, the Proposed Action is needed to address critical infrastructure, functional, and space limitations in the existing VAMC.

The Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital is located at 7400 Merton Minter Boulevard in San Antonio, Texas (Figure 1). VA is preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S. Code §4321-4370H). This letter is part of the EIS scoping process and VA invites you to identify potential issues, concerns, or reasonable alternatives that should be considered in the EIS.

VA will incorporate National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) consultation as outlined in 36 CFR §§ 800.3 – 800.6 and 54 U.S.C. 306108 (generally referred to as "Section 106,") into the NEPA analysis. The incorporation of NHPA into the NEPA analysis will follow the substitution process outlined in 36 CFR § 800.8(c). Additional information about this process is available online at: https://www.achp.gov/integrating_nepa_106.

As part of this effort, VA intends to identify historic properties and cultural resources inside the proposed project's area of potential effects (APE) and assess any potential adverse effects from this proposed action to those historic properties and cultural resources. VA requests your input and assistance with delineation of the APE and with identification of any historic, religious, cultural, or archaeological resources that may be affected by the proposed project.

VA has identified two alternatives to replace the existing VAMC - either to build a new VAMC at a nearby location (Alternative 1) or redevelop the existing VAMC (Alternative 2). Both alternative sites are located within Bexar County, Texas (Figure 3). The EIS will also evaluate the No Action Alternative.

Alternative 1 would replace the existing VAMC by acquiring land, constructing, and operating a new VAMC at a nearby location within the San Antonio medical district. The potential location is an approximately 59-acre, undeveloped area, owned by the San Antonio Medical Foundation. The property is located east of Floyd Curl Drive, north of Hamilton Wolfe, and south of Fawn Meadow Circle (Figure 4). The project area for Alternative 1 will also include utility connection corridors leading to the property from nearby utility points of connection.

Alternative 2 consists of redeveloping the existing approximately 32-acre VAMC by demolishing the existing VAMC and constructing a new VAMC.

The alternatives will go through a screening process as part of the EIS analysis, which will also be informed by the public and agency input through scoping. VA will consider agency and public comments received during the EIS scoping period. Thus, these alternatives are subject to change.

The EIS will identify and evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action. VA seeks input on the proposed action and alternatives, environmental impacts that should be evaluated, and possible mitigation measures to be considered. The EIS will describe and evaluate the potential impacts from construction and operations under each alternative.

VA invites you to share your comments at either of the two in-person public scoping meetings or via www.regulations.gov. VA will hold two public scoping meetings in March 2025. The meetings will be held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. and on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, from 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. Both meetings will be held in the Building 5 auditorium at the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital (7400 Merton Minter Boulevard in San Antonio, Texas).

The scoping meetings will provide an opportunity to learn about the project and provide input on the environmental analysis process. Both meetings will cover the same material. During the scoping meetings, VA will provide an overview of the project and details regarding the EIS and NEPA process. VA will post the scoping presentation and other project information on VA's publicly accessible website https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/. VA will also post meeting directions and instructions at the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital and on the website.

To submit your comments electronically, go to www.regulations.gov. Type "San Antonio VAMC EIS" in the search bar then click on the "comment" button underneath the first search result, which will be the Federal Register scoping notice for this project. Then follow the prompts to submit your comment. Comments must be received on or before April 7th, 2025.

VA anticipates releasing the Draft EIS for a 45-day public review and comment period in late 2025/early 2026. VA will notify stakeholders via email and publish a notice of availability of the Draft EIS in the Federal Register and in widely circulated local newspapers. The Draft EIS will be available for review via the VA website: https://www.cfm.va.gov/environmental/ and at local libraries.

For further information, contact Mr. Bruce Mack, Environmental Engineer, Office of Construction and Facilities Management (003C2), Department of Veterans Affairs, at vacoenvironment@va.gov. Include "***San Antonio VAMC EIS***" as the subject in your correspondence.

Respectfully,

GLENN ELLIOTT
Digitally signed by GLENN ELLIOTT
Date: 2025.02.06 12:55:43 -05'00'

Glenn Elliott
Director, Project Development Services Division
Office of Facilities Planning

Attachments:

Figure 1 – Regional Location of Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital
Figure 2 – Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital
Figure 3 – Existing and Potential New VAMC Locations
Figure 4 – Potential New VAMC Location (Alternative 1)

Figure 1. Regional Location of Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital

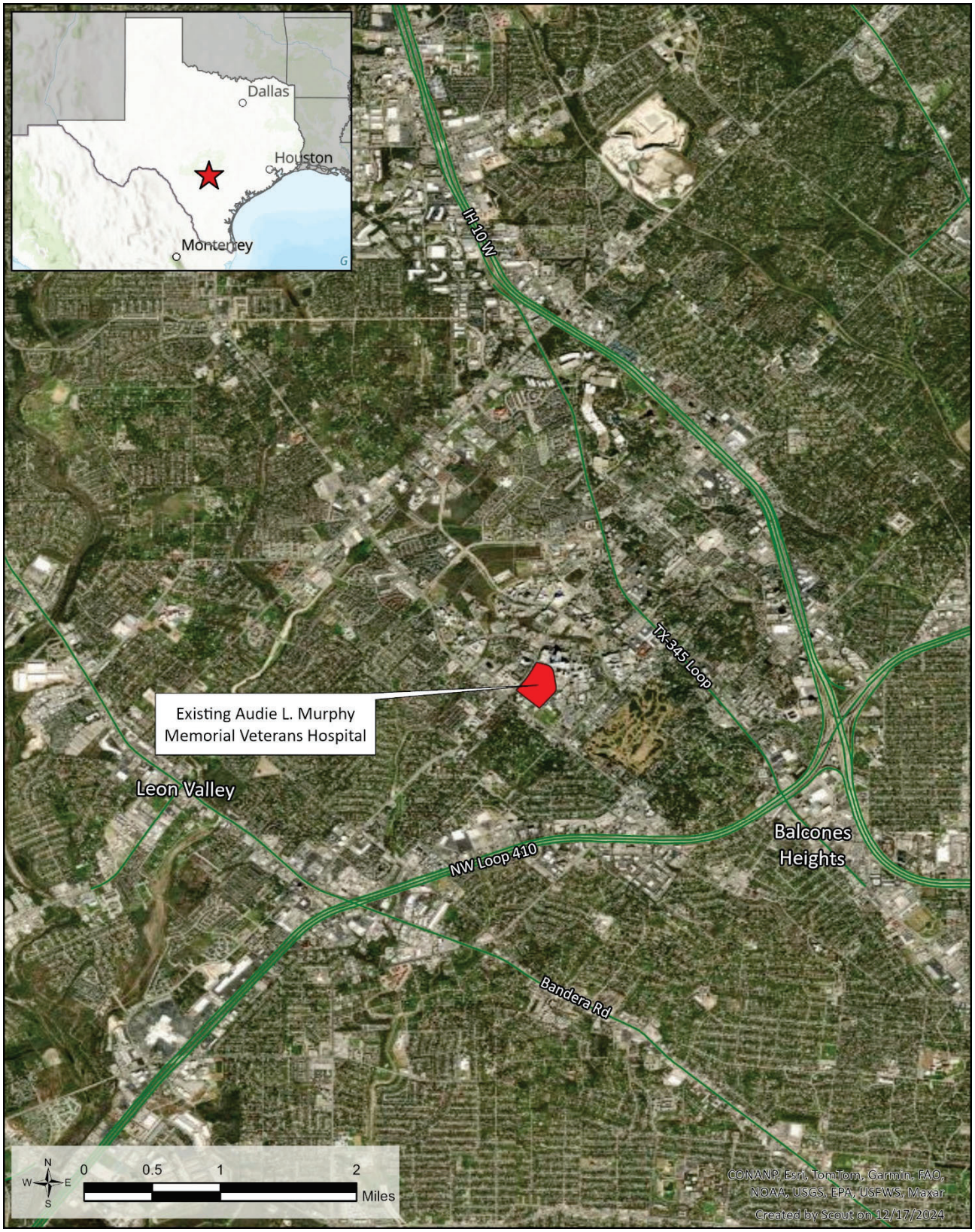

Figure 2. Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital

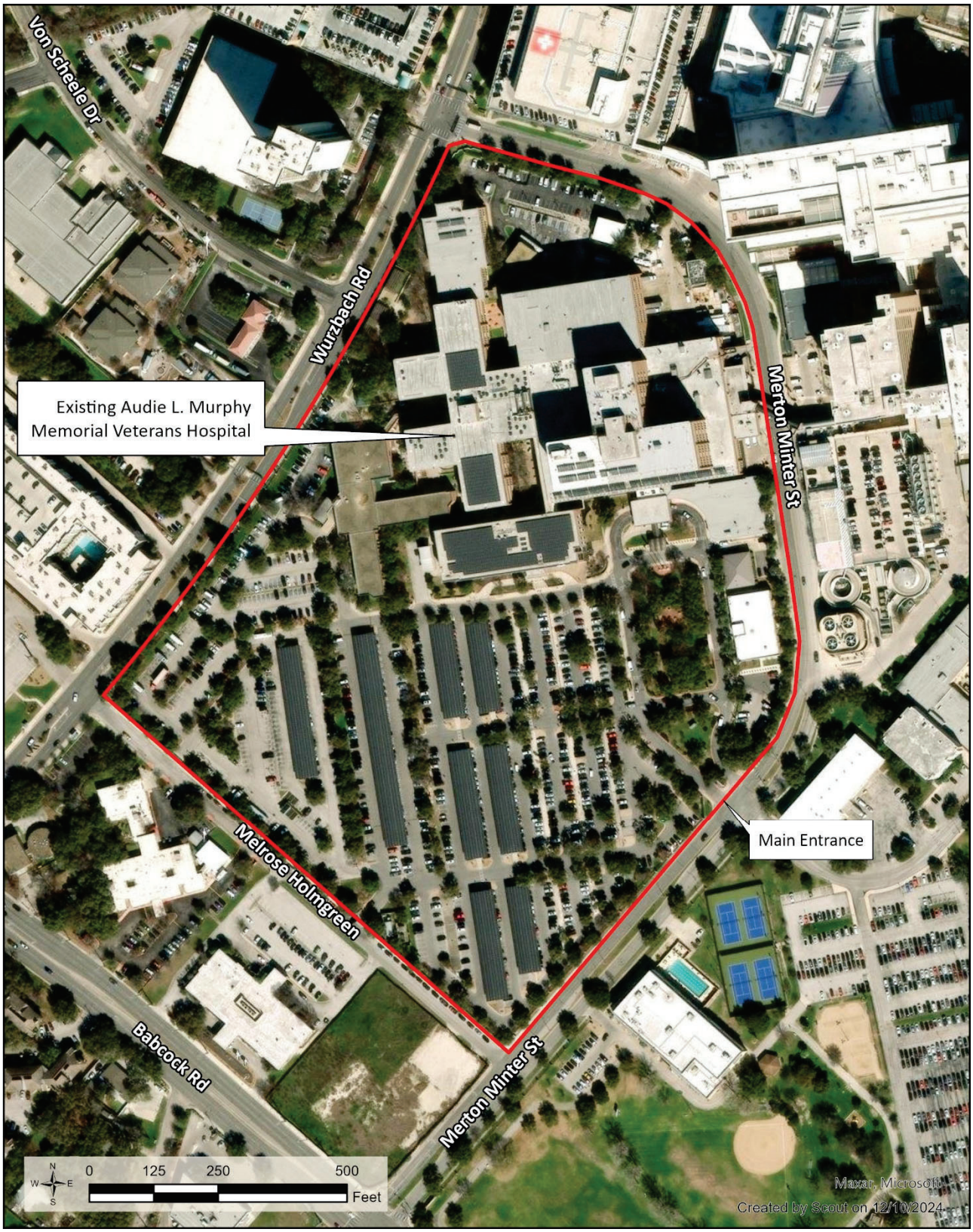

Figure 3. Existing and Potential New VAMC Locations

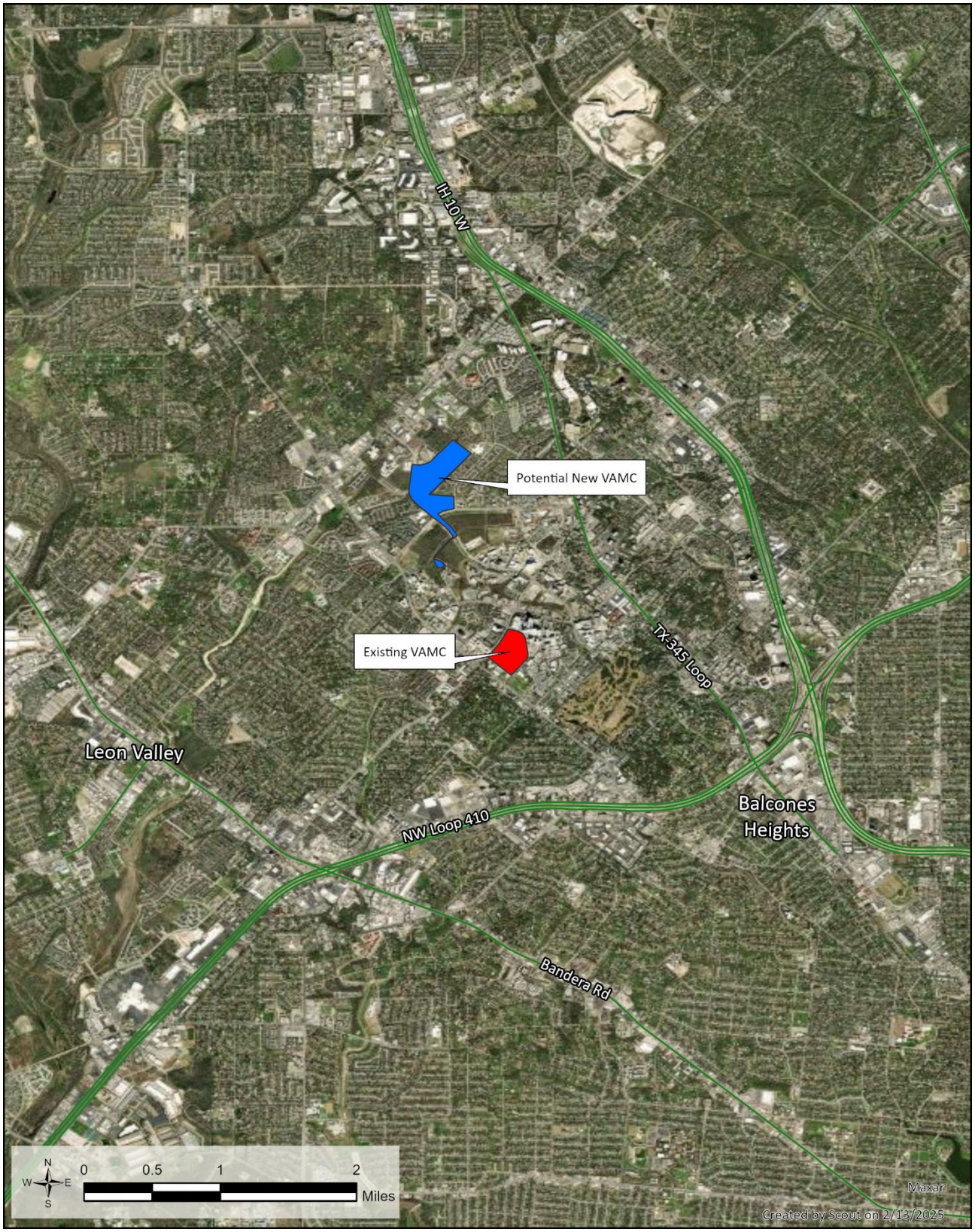
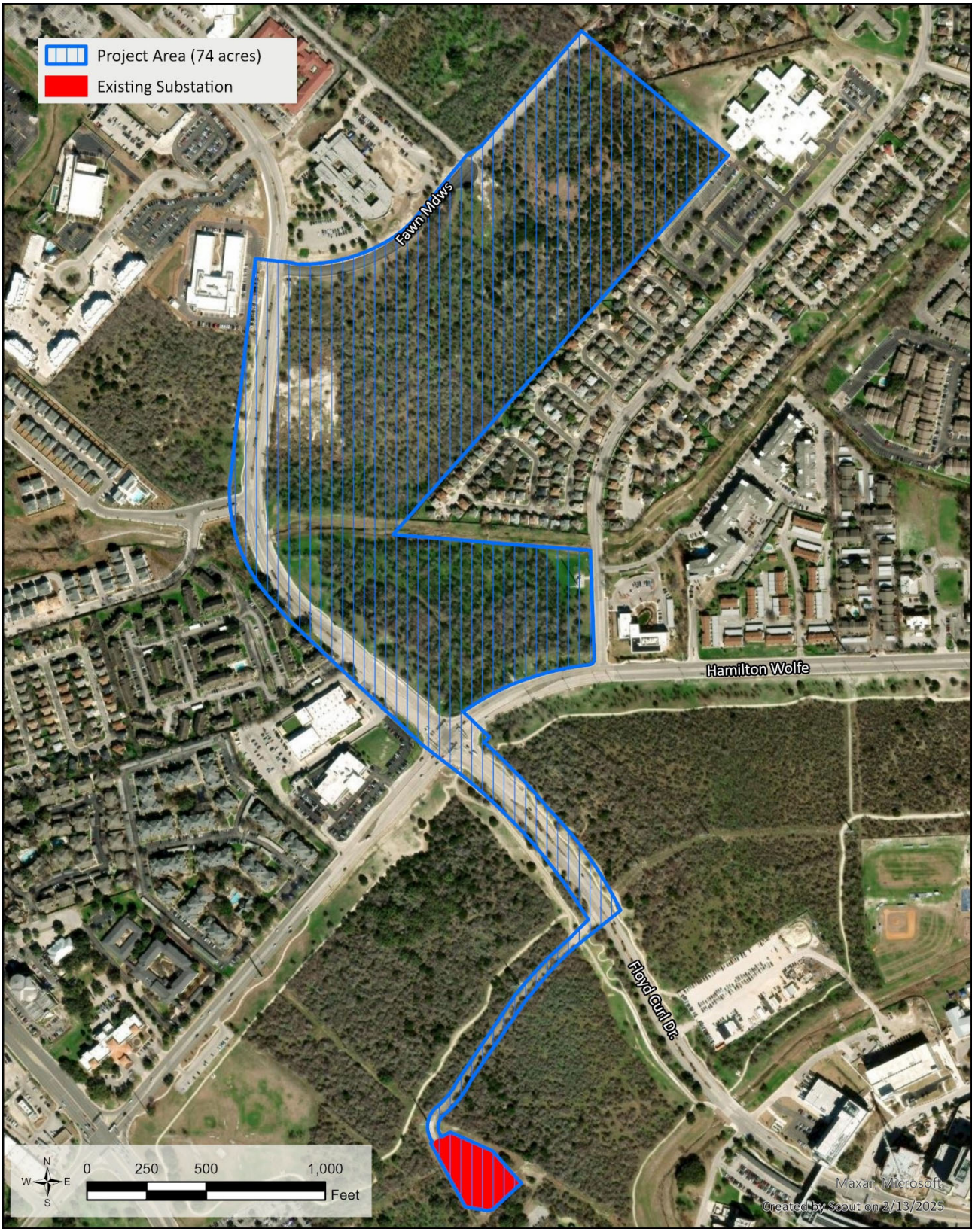
Figure 4. Potential New VAMC Location (Alternative 1)