WISCONSIN OFFICE
8669 N. Deerwood Dr.
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53209
P: 414.446.4121 | F:414.446.4325

November 24, 2021
W-2128/WR-1978

Dan Glynn, CPRP
Parks and Recreation Director
City of Stoughton, WI

RE: Cultural Resources Investigations
Yahara Riverfront Development Project
City of Stoughton, Dane County, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Glynn,

On November 12, 2021, Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc. (Commonwealth) conducted cultural resources investigations on behalf of the Stoughton Department of Parks and Recreation for the proposed Yahara Riverfront Development Project (Project) in the City of Stoughton, Dane County, Wisconsin. It is Commonwealth's understanding that the City of Stoughton will be awarded a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Land Water Conservation Fund Grant (LWCFG) for the Project. As a condition of the LWCFG award, grant recipients are required to conduct cultural resources investigations pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations. The City of Stoughton contracted with Commonwealth to identify and assess historic properties and archaeological sites coincident with areas of potential ground disturbance associated with the Project.

As currently designed, the Project will consist of the reconstruction of the Stoughton dam on the Yahara River into a whitewater park paddling feature, construction of other whitewater park paddling features, river access improvements compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), development of additional trails within the project area, an underpass, and pedestrian plazas. The conversion of the existing Stoughton dam into a paddling feature includes filling in the head and tail races to create pedestrian plazas, seating areas, and additional river access. The purpose and goals of the project include improving recreational use of the Yahara River, which is part of the Rock River National Water Trail.

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the Project was defined to include areas of potential ground disturbance, which are anticipated to encompass less than 2 acres (ac) (0.8 hectares [ha]). Commonwealth also conducted a desktop-level architecture/history review of the project area to assess potential effects to above-ground resources.

Archaeological investigations for the Project consisted of background research and field investigations. These investigations were conducted in accordance with the standards promulgated in the *Guide for Public Archaeology in Wisconsin* (Dudzik, et al. 2012) and were consistent with the requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA. Commonwealth's review of the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database (WHPD) found that although there are several previously recorded archaeological or cemetery/burial sites within one mile of the Project APE, no sites have been identified within the APE (Figure 1). The APE has been the focus of previous archaeological surveys, the most recent of which was conducted in 1997 (Wisconsin Historical Society 2021).

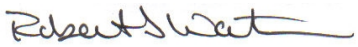
Field investigations of the Project APE consisted of visual inspection and subsurface testing (Figure 2). Visual inspection of the portions of the APE in Riverside Park found these areas crisscrossed by graveled paths (Figure 3). Shovel tests placed in Riverside Park documented disturbed gravel fill directly below the surface (Figure 4). Shovel tests placed in other areas of APE in Riverside Park confirmed similar previous disturbance and fill near the surface (Figures 5 and 6). Visual inspection of other areas of the APE found these to consist of graveled slopes adjacent to the Yahara River, and rip-rapped and grassed areas adjacent to the headrace and tailrace of the Stoughton Dam (Figures 7 and 8). Subsurface testing conducted in these areas due to the presence of the riprap and their obvious artificial construction.

Summary and Recommendations

In November 2021, Commonwealth conducted cultural resources investigations on behalf of the Stoughton Department of Parks and Recreation for the proposed Yahara Riverfront Development Project in the City of Stoughton. These investigations were conducted in accordance with the conditions of the WDNR LWCFG, which requires program participants to identify and assess potential project effects to historic properties and archaeological sites coincident with the Project APE pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations. Commonwealth's review of the WHPD determined that no archaeological or cemetery/burial sites have been previously reported within the APE. Field investigations consisting of visual inspection and subsurface testing within the APE documented heavy previous disturbance and substantial fill within the APE. No cultural materials were identified within the APE. Based on the results of investigations, it is Commonwealth's opinion that the Project will have no effect on historic properties, and no additional investigations are recommended.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 414-446-4121 ext. 104 or at rwatson@chg-inc.com.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Watson, PhD
Regional Director

References Cited

Dudzik, Mark, Joseph A. Tiffany, and Katherine P. Stevenson
2012 *Guide for Public Archaeology in Wisconsin*. The Wisconsin Archaeological Survey, Madison, Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Historical Society
2021 Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database, https://www.wisahrd.org/, accessed November 2021.

Yahara Riverfront Development Project
City of Stoughton, Dane County, Wisconsin

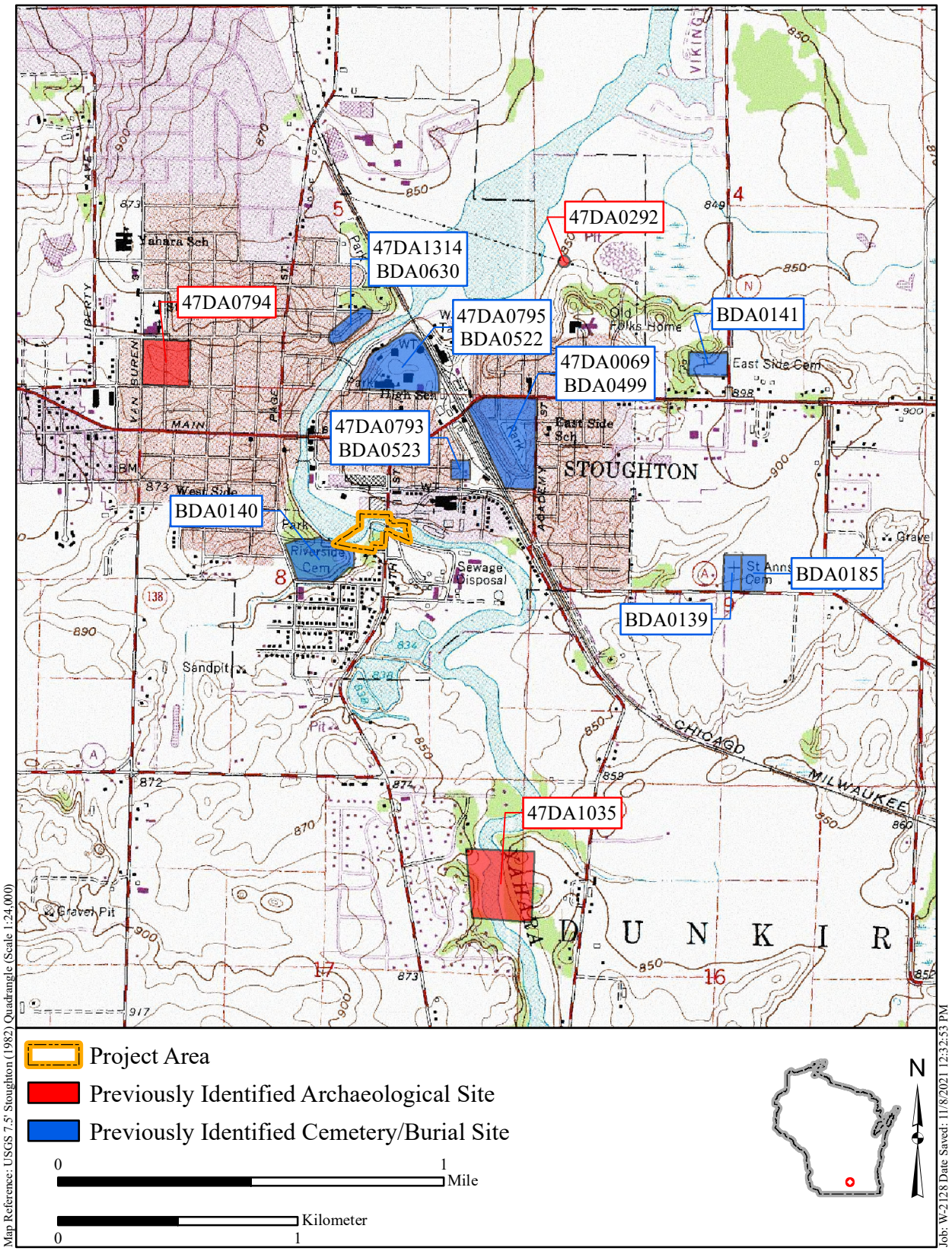


Figure 1. Project Area Location and Previously Identified Archaeological and Cemetery/Burial Sites within One Mile

Yahara Riverfront Development Project
City of Stoughton, Dane County, Wisconsin

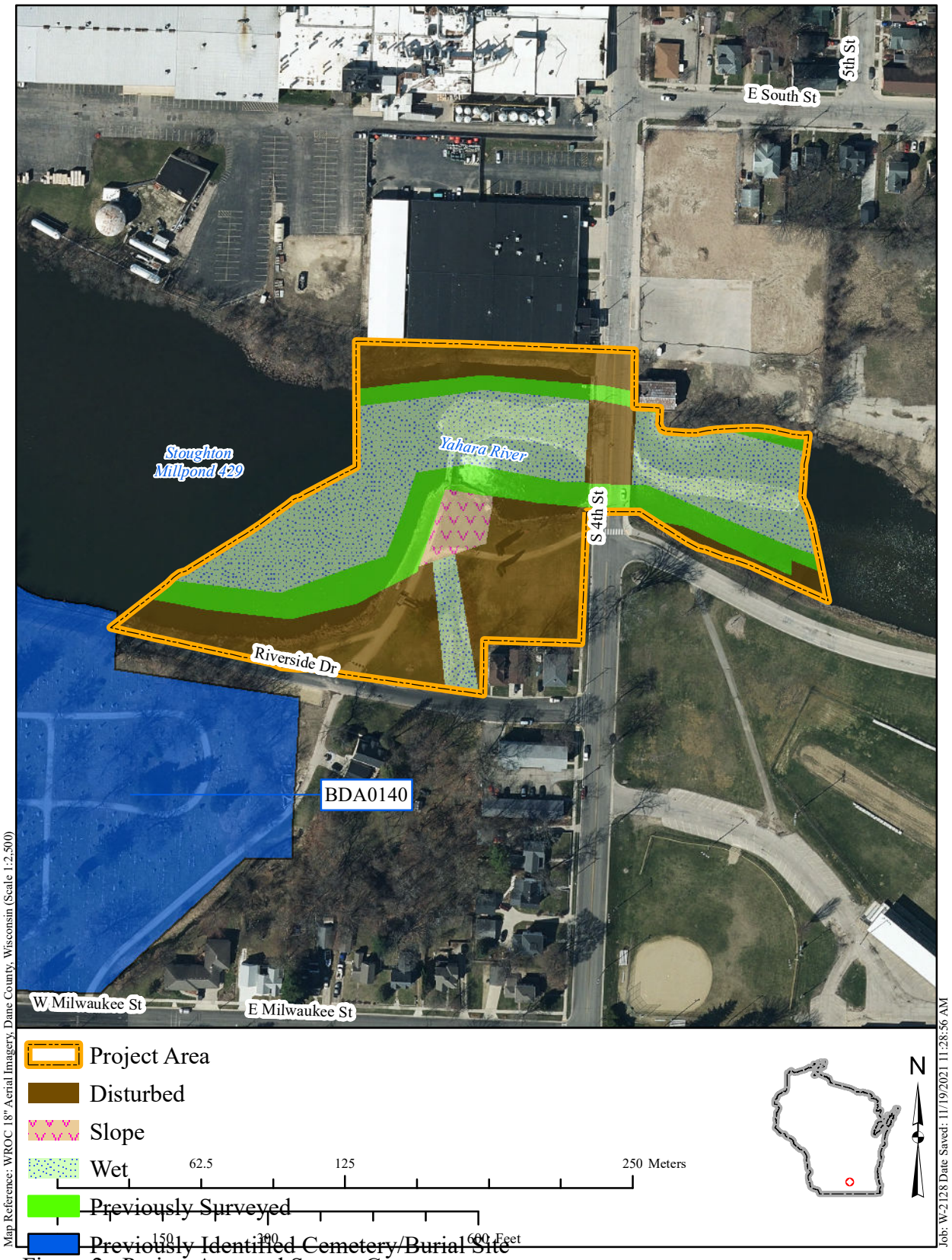


Figure 2. Project Area and Survey Coverage

Figure 3. Graveled Paths in Riverside Park, View Northeast

Figure 4. Shovel Test with Disturbed Gravel Fill at Surface between Riverside Park Gravel Paths

Figure 5. Disturbed Gravel Fill at Surface in Riverside Park Shovel Test North of Riverside Drive

Figure 6. Disturbed Soils in Riverside Park Shovel West of South Fourth Street

Figure 7. Rip-rapped Grassed Area between Stoughton Dam and Headrace, View West

Figure 8. Rip-rapped Grassed Area along Stoughton Dam Tailrace, View Northwest