COMMONWEALTH
HERITAGE GROUP

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January 20, 2021
W-1923/WR-1841

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

RE: Cultural Resources Investigations
Lower Yahara River Pedestrian Bridge Project
City of Stoughton, Wisconsin

Dear Mr. Glynn,

On December 11, 2020, Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc. (Commonwealth) conducted cultural resources investigations on behalf of the Stoughton Department of Parks and Recreation for the proposed Lower Yahara River Trail Pedestrian Bridge 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 construction of a pedestrian bridge over the Yahara River in the City of Stoughton. The bridge will connect Mandt Park on the south side of the river with a proposed regional trail on the north bank. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the Project was defined to include areas of potential ground disturbance at the abutments of the proposed pedestrian bridge, which are anticipated to encompass less than 1 acre (ac) (0.4 hectare [ha]). Due to the lack of buildings within the Project APE, an architectural/history survey was not conducted, and the cultural resource investigations were limited to archaeological survey.

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 2020)

Field investigations of the Project APE consisted of visual inspection and subsurface testing at the proposed locations of the bridge abutments (Figure 2). Visual inspection of the proposed location of the south bridge abutment in Mandt Park found the narrow grassy area between Riverside Drive and the Yahara River to be underlain by riprap just below the surface of the ground (Figure 3). A soil probe used to assess the depth of the topsoil encountered riprap at, or immediately below, the surface of the ground (Figure 4). Additional subsurface testing was not conducted at the south bridge abutment due to the presence of the riprap. Visual

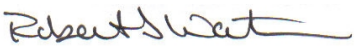
inspection of the proposed location of the north bridge abutment found this portion of the APE heavily disturbed and covered with gravel (Figures 5 and 6). A review of historic aerial photographs indicates that a large industrial building formerly located at the site were demolished in 2018, accounting for the observed disturbances. Subsurface testing was not conducted at the north bridge abutment due to these previous disturbances.

Summary and Recommendations

In December 2020, Commonwealth conducted cultural resources investigations on behalf of the Stoughton Department of Parks and Recreation for the proposed Lower Yahara River Trail Pedestrian Bridge 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 at the locations of both bridge abutments. 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

Dudzik, Mark J., Joseph A. Tiffany, and Katherine P. Stevenson
2012 *Guide for Public Archeology in Wisconsin*. Wisconsin Archeological Survey, Madison.

Wisconsin Historical Society
2020 Wisconsin Historic Preservation Database, https://www.wisahrd.org/, December 2020.

Yahara River Trail Improvements
Dane County, Wisconsin

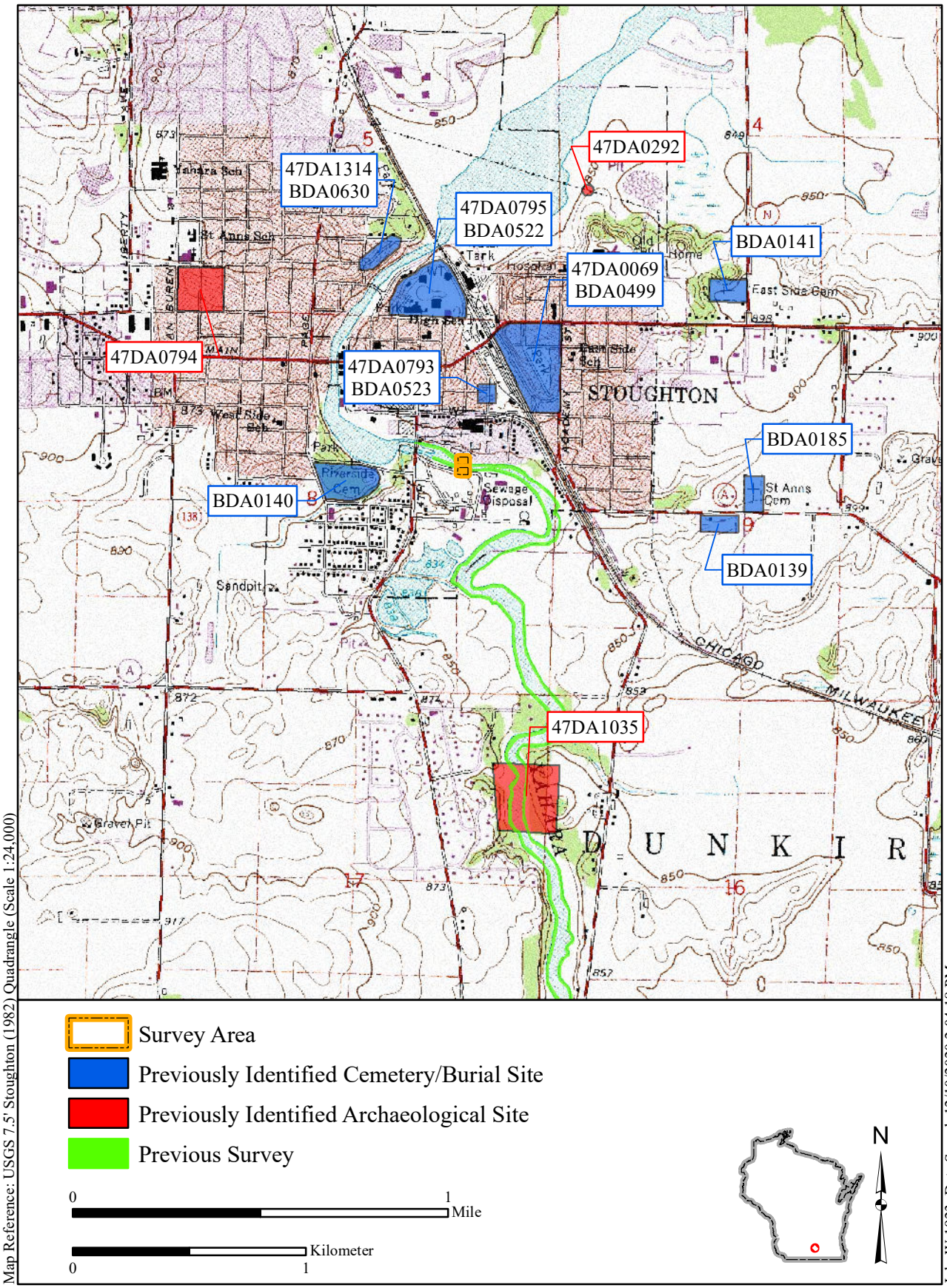


Figure 1. Project Area Location and Previously Identified Archaeological and Cemetery/Burial Sites within One Mile

Yahara River Trail Improvements
Dane County, Wisconsin

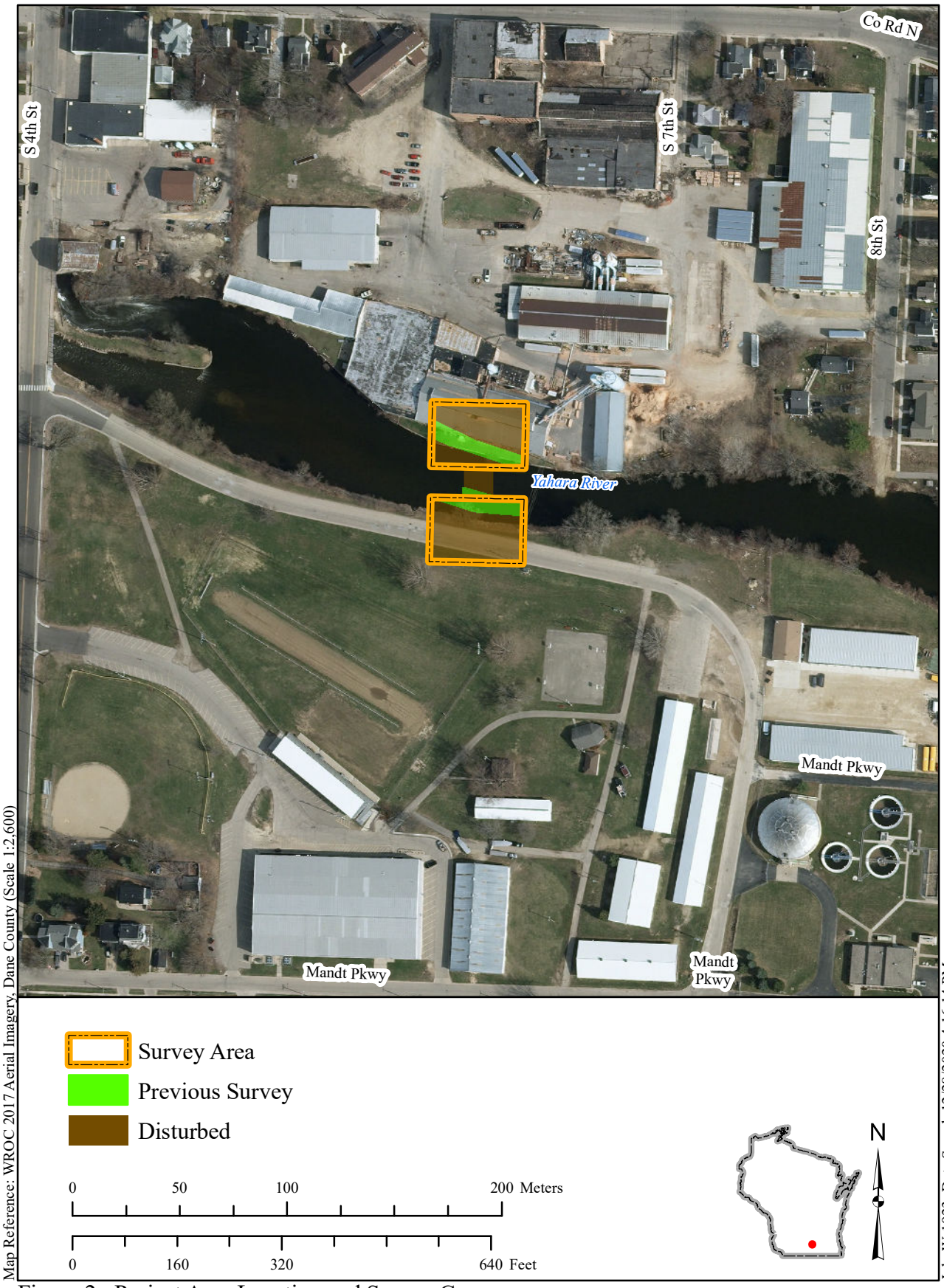


Figure 2. Project Area Location and Survey Coverage

Figure 3. South Bank of Lower Yahara River within Project Area of Potential Effects, View East.

Figure 4. Riprap at Surface on South Bank of Lower Yahara River

Figure 5. Previously Disturbed Location of North Bridge Abutment, View North.

Figure 6. Heavily Graveled Surface at Location of North Bridge Abutment, View East.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT INVENTORY FORM

WHS/SHSW #_____ COUNTY Dane

AUTHORS: Watson, Robert J.

REPORT TITLE: Cultural Resources Investigations, Lower Yahara River Pedestrian Bridge Project, City of Stoughton, Wisconsin

DATE OF REPORT (MONTH AND YEAR): January 2021

SERIES/NUMBER: Commonwealth Heritage Group WR-1841

PLACE OF PUBLICATION: Milwaukee, WI

LOCATIONAL INFORMATION [LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY AREA (T-R-S)] T5N, R11E, Section 8

U.S.G.S. QUAD MAP(S): Stoughton 7.5' (1982)

SITE(S) INVESTIGATED: _____

ACRES INVESTIGATED: less than 1 AGENCY # ____

INVESTIGATION TECHNIQUES COMPLETED (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Avocational Survey
- ☐ Faunal Analysis
- ☒ Literature Background Research
- ☐ Monitoring
- ☐ Records/Background
- ☐ Remote Sensing
- ☐ Test Excavation/Phase II
- ☐ Underwater
- ☐ Chance Encounter
- ☐ Floral Analysis
- ☐ Major Excavation/Phase III
- ☐ Osteological Analysis
- ☐ Surface Survey
- ☐ Shovel Testing/Probing
- ☐ Traditional Knowledge
- ☒ Walk Over /Visual Inspection
- ☐ Historical Research
- ☐ Interview/Informant
- ☐ Mechanical Stripping
- ☐ Geomorphology
- ☒ Soil Core

ABSTRACT: ☐ Included in report ☒ Written in space below

In December 2020, Commonwealth conducted archaeological investigations on behalf of Stoughton Utilities for the Stoughton Department of Parks and Recreation for the proposed Lower Yahara River Trail Pedestrian Bridge Project in the City of Stoughton. Archaeological investigations for consisted of background research and field investigations. No additional investigations or monitoring during construction within the boundaries of these sites are recommended. 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; no cultural materials were identified. 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.