NOTES ON SECOND WARD CEMETERY

From the UWM-Cultural Resource Management Report – Prepared by Jeanne Dawson

The "Second Ward Cemetery" also known as the "German Protestant Cemetery" was a Euro-American cemetery located between W. Juneau & W. McKinley Ave., and between N. 12th Ln. & N. 14th St. in the King Park neighborhood of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

It was in active use between 1849 and 1861, after which several ordinances prohibited any additional burials. By 1870 the cemetery was auctioned by the Milwaukee County Sheriff for mortgage foreclosure. In 1874, the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee resolved to extend 13th St. through the former cemetery and anyone with an interest in the cemetery was warned to remove their dead within a thirty-day period. The land was subsequently turned into a subdivision and sold as residential lots.* After 1880, the cemetery was no longer denoted on area maps.

In July 2015, UWM's Cultural Resource Management (UWM-CRM) was monitoring the construction of an addition to the Guest House of Milwaukee at 1213 N. 13th Street when human bone was encountered.

UWM-CRM conducted excavations at the site from July-September 2015. A total of 80 individuals were recovered, including 52 adults and 28 juveniles. Material culture recovered from the site includes both personal effects, such as jewelry and coinage, and non-contemporary artifacts.

All burials and human remains in the project area were carefully excavated and were curated at the UWM's Archaeological Research Laboratory awaiting a final disposition decision (as of 2018).

Evidence of previous disturbance at the site included both utility installation and the construction and demolition of a house on the property.

It appears from this and other archaeological excavations at the site that around 4,138 graves remain intact within the cemetery boundaries.

*The idea of subdividing and reusing a cemetery lot maybe understood in the context of the German neighborhood of the Second Ward. In *The Social History of the European Cemetery* (2003) Mytum argues that German cemeteries in the nineteenth century tended to have a policy of limited tenure for plots, a tendency that continues into the present. The expectation was that burial plots were "rented" and could be reassigned at the end of the rental period. Only in some historical German cemeteries will you find the graves of people who died over a century or so ago (Mytum 2003: 802). In a typical German cemetery, usually owned by a government entity or a church, the oldest graves and headstones date back only 20 or 30 years. The demand for additional housing along with a tradition of reuse or repurposing of cemeteries makes the reuse of a cemetery clearly related to the community a natural process of community building.
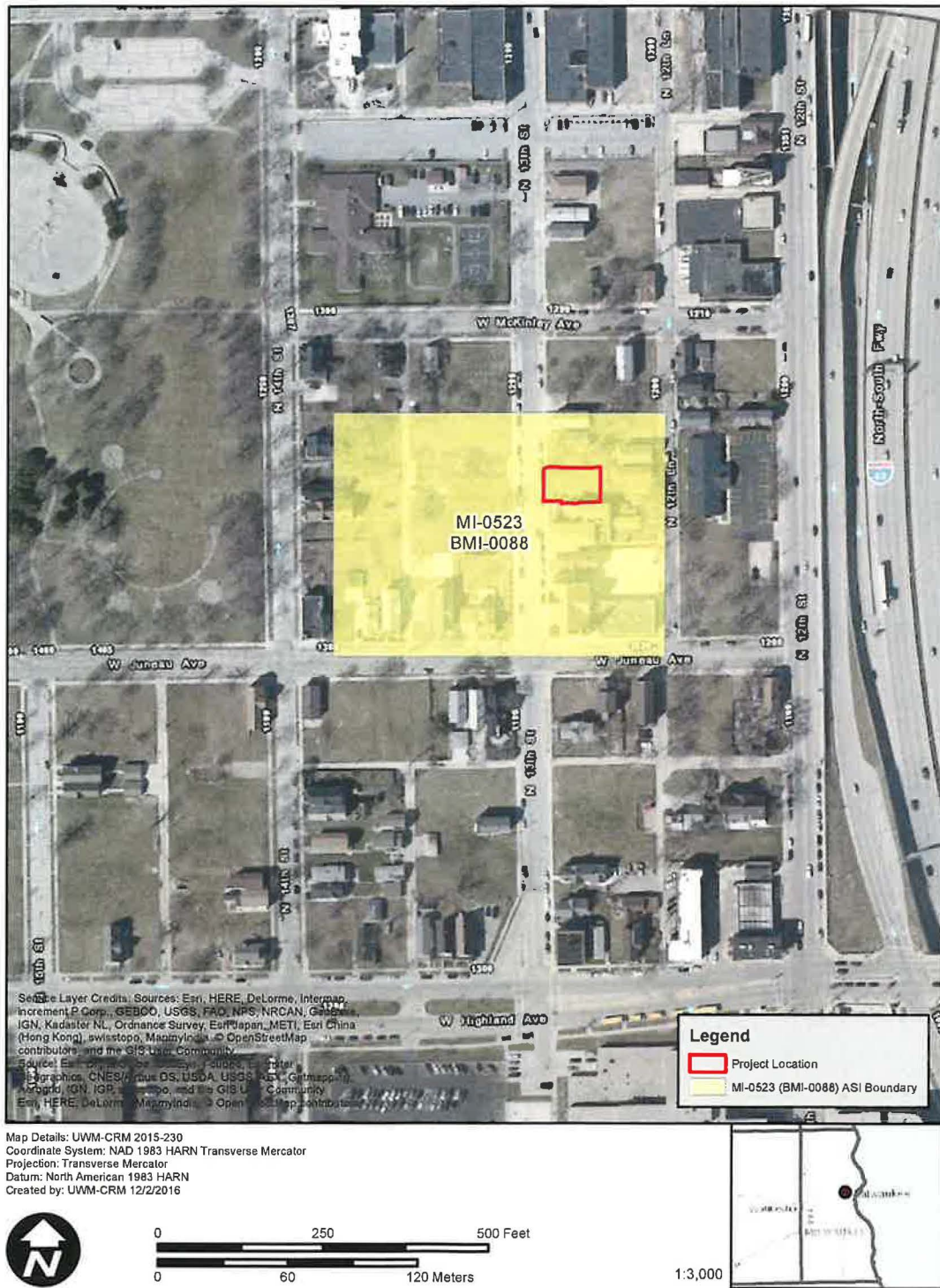
Figure 1.1. Project location.