



Norristown

Embrace the River

Riverfront
Redevelopment
Planning and
Feasibility Study
November 19, 2019

Produced by
LANGAN

Norristown
where you belong



Municipal Council

Sonya D. Sanders - President

Heather Lewis - Vice President

Valerie Scott Cooper- District 3

Hakim Jones - District 4

Olivia Brady - Councilmember At-Large

Derrick D. Perry - Councilmember At-Large

Rebecca Smith - Councilmember At-Large

**Crandall O. Jones - Municipal
Administrator**

Norristown Planning and Municipal Development

Jayne Musonye - Director

Betsy Helsel - Assistant Director

**This project was funded in part by a
Local Share Account Grant administered
through the Department of Community and
Economic Development**

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction

- 1 Project Overview
- 2 Goals and Objectives
- 3 Information Gathering and Process
- 3 Overview of Relevant Planning Documents

Chapter 2 - Inventory + Analysis

- 7 Regional Context
- 9 Study Area
- 9 Historical Inventory
- 13 Land Use and Notable Buildings
- 14 Property Ownership
- 16 Zoning Review
- 19 Opportunity Zone
- 19 Environment Assessments
- 20 Floodplain Analysis
- 21 Constraints and Opportunities

Chapter 3 - Redevelopment Plan

- 25 Process
- 25 Approach
- 25 Final Plan
- 26 Riverfront Redevelopment Plan
- 31 West of Dekalb
- 31 East of Dekalb
- 33 Private Realm and Yield Analysis
- 42 Public Realm

Chapter 4 - Design Guidelines

- 51 Design Guidelines
- 52 Private Realm Development Guidelines
- 54 Public Realm Development Guidelines

Chapter 5 - Appendix



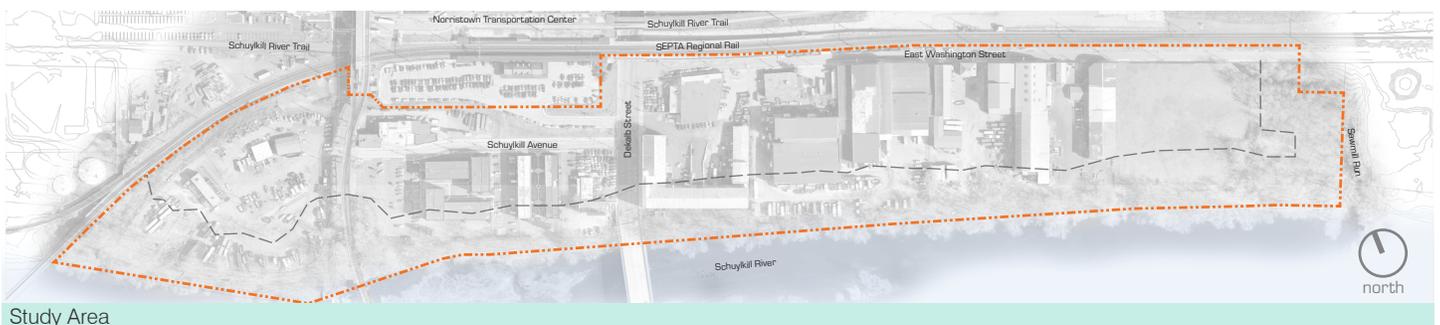
Introduction

Project Overview

The Municipality of Norristown (Norristown) commissioned Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. (Langan) to prepare this Redevelopment Planning and Feasibility Study to create a targeted and actionable plan for redevelopment along the riverfront that will help reconnect the community of Norristown to the Schuylkill River. Norristown has the unique ability to “Embrace the River” with its redevelopment plan, which other communities in the region do not or cannot fully utilize. This study is funded in part by a Local Share Account for Montgomery County as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development. Under this program, grants are made available for the redevelopment, reuse or revitalization of previously developed land, development of undeveloped land, and for projects which construct, expand, or improve water and wastewater infrastructure related to business development. Planning grants are available to fund predevelopment activities and feasibility studies such as this one.

The study area consists of approximately 30 acres bounded to the southeast by the Saw Mill Creek, the north by Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) railroad lines, and the south by the Schuylkill River. Current uses within the study area include a largely undeveloped site owned by Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO), medium density housing, and light and heavy industrial buildings comprised mostly of aging and underutilized warehouses and manufacturing buildings. Much of the land along the riverfront has been characterized as brownfields that are poised for redevelopment. The Norristown Riverfront Redevelopment Planning and Feasibility Study:

- Inventories existing conditions within a broader, regional context;
- Assesses economic conditions and opportunities;
- Develops a process by which an initial vision for the waterfront is formulated; and
- Establishes open space, urban design and architectural guidelines.



Study Area

Goals and Objectives

The following list of goals and objectives summarizes the points that were developed by the planning team, Norristown Planning Department staff and elected officials with input from property owners and citizens:



Vision

Develop a vision plan for the waterfront



Market

Overview the local real estate and business marketplace



Character

Define the character of new neighborhoods along the waterfront



Embrace the Schuylkill

Reconnect the downtown to the river and reinforce the connection with new neighborhoods



Attract businesses

Develop an implementable vision for the new neighborhoods that will attract commerce and development



Public space

Include improvements in the public realm to make the new riverfront neighborhoods welcoming, safe and inviting



Connect

Develop a vision plan that leverages existing infrastructure within the community



Prioritize

Develop an implementation plan and strategy for the public-realm improvements that will lay the groundwork for private development



Costs

Define order-of-magnitude costs for infrastructure and public realm improvements



Guidelines

Illustrate the anticipated look and feel of the new neighborhoods through graphics-based architectural guidelines



Engagement

Develop the vision for the new waterfront neighborhoods through engagement with the public, stakeholders and community officials

Information Gathering and Process

Data for the feasibility study was compiled from various sources, including: the Municipality of Norristown, Montgomery County, previous planning studies, field reconnaissance by the consultants, public input, and a market study completed for the project by 4Ward Planning.

Geographic Information System (GIS) base information and aerial drone photography were used to prepare base maps and three-dimensional models of existing conditions.

On-going environmental assessment work along the riverfront informed the potential for new development and the anticipated level of clean-up required to meet Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) standards.

Public meetings were held to gather input from the community. The first public meeting introduced the project area and initial thoughts and ideas for the study. The second public meeting presented a concept plan to the public and solicited feedback. The third public meeting presented the final plan.



Community Meeting - January 31, 2019

The feasibility study was also guided by local and regional stakeholders and Norristown Planning Department staff. Local stakeholders included property owners along the Riverfront. Regional stakeholders included SEPTA, PADEP, and Montgomery County.

Overview of Relevant Planning Documents

Downtown Norristown Parking Study

Chance Management Advisors, Inc. (2009)

The Downtown Norristown Parking Study provided insight into current and projected parking conditions. One of the goals of this study is to attract more development to the waterfront, which in turn will result in higher parking demands.

Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy

Urban Partners (2009)

The Norristown Economic Revitalization Strategy is the outcome of a historic partnership between Montgomery County and Norristown. The strategy recognizes that the future development of the Norristown is hindered by its poor image and large concentration of the county's low income population. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 17% of Norristown families live below the poverty level, compared to just 3% of the families in Montgomery County.

Redevelopment Area Plan for the Riverfront Redevelopment Area

Mullin and Lonergan Associates (2002)

The study provides a comprehensive vision for Norristown's riverfront by investigating both redevelopment opportunities and existing constraints to development by integrating results of related redevelopment and revitalization studies. This will eventually connect downtown Norristown to the riverfront and trail system. The study develops initial design options.

Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study

Edwards and Kelcey / AD Marble and Company (2006)

The purpose of this Lafayette Street Land Use Access Study is to examine the land use and access issues facing Norristown and Plymouth Township along the Schuylkill River. Due to the changes happening under the Lafayette Street Transportation Improvements Project, redevelopment and revitalization of the project area will be needed to foster the successful development of Norristown. The critical access points for efficient and effective movement of vehicular traffic to and from the redevelopment area were identified as the Dannehower Bridge at Lafayette Street, direct access to the Pennsylvania turnpike via slip-ramps, and the extension of Lafayette Street to the Conshohocken Road/Pennsylvania Turnpike slip ramp.

Municipal Open Space Plan

Montgomery County Planning Commission (2005)

The plan was developed as a reference for Norristown in obtaining new open space and creating connections between existing open spaces. This plan also fulfills a requirement to be eligible to apply for funding through the Green Fields/Green Towns program. Under this new program, Norristown is eligible to received \$1,897,926 for the open space plan. Norristown has changed slightly since the last Open Space Plan in 1994. This is shown through the increase in preserved open

space (43%), the decrease of undeveloped parcels (55%), the increase in single-family detached units (33%), and an increase in units in smaller multi-family buildings (23%). The municipality thinks that parks and open space contribute greatly to the quality of life of its residents, and that a "Green Town" is what Norristown strives to be.

Shaping Our Future: A Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County

Montgomery County Planning Commission (2004)

The Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County provides a vision for the County through 2025. By 2025, Montgomery County will be shaped by high-quality homes, beautiful neighborhoods, offices, high-tech companies, highway interchanges, and parks/trails. The county will experience an increase in population, and this plan will prepare for future development.

MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision

Montgomery County Planning Commission (2015)

The MONTCO 2040 plan provides an overview of the county's vision and objectives including transportation, land use, and other changes. The plan was informed by citizens, officials, and stakeholders.

Municipality of Norristown – Zoning Ordinance

Municipality of Norristown (2016)

The Norristown Zoning Ordinance promotes the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the municipality. The ordinance provides standards to reduce congestion in the streets and highways, provide proper lighting, prevent overcrowding, and aid schools, parks, and other public spaces. This guides the future development of the municipality, while preserving the character of Norristown.

The study area falls within Norristown's Downtown Riverfront District (DR) and Recreation District (RE). The goal of the DR is to encourage and permit a mix of uses that are compatible and complementary

with the historic character of the community and its' downtown, to assist in its revitalization, and to create accessible public areas along the riverfront for year-round outdoor recreation. In addition, the purpose is to implement the goals and objectives of the Redevelopment Plan, the Norristown Economic Redevelopment Strategy, the Lafayette Street Land Use and Access Study, and other applicable policies. Pedestrian-oriented uses with an urban character are encouraged, while automobile-related uses that promote a suburban mall or strip commercial appearance are restricted. New construction should utilize traditional building materials and accepted principles of urban design, while preserving the existing streetscape by placing new buildings at or close to the edge of the public sidewalk that promotes a variety of uses.

The DR District permits retail establishments, multifamily residential uses, business and professional offices, institutional and educational facilities, hotels, sports and recreational facilities, parking garages and parking lots along with parks, urban plazas, and other active and passive open space and other uses within the zoning district.

The Recreation District is intended to provide Norristown with active and passive recreational opportunities. This district is located west of the Norristown High Speed Line and is currently owned by PECO.

Municipality of Norristown – Subdivision / Land Development Ordinance

Municipality of Norristown (2012)

The Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance establishes development requirements and standards for the municipality for new construction. Standards are provided for flooding, landscape, noise, traffic, trash disposal, design standards, construction, and fees/administration.

Washington/Markley Corridor Redevelopment Area – Municipality of Norristown Montgomery County, PA

(2002)

This report was completed in 2002 and was a reference for this redevelopment plan. Washington Street is located within the study area. Ideas from this report that were applicable, were used in the Norristown Redevelopment Plan.

Real Estate Valuation Report

Binswanger (August 2019)

Norristown commissioned a real estate study for properties within the study area during the time this study was being developed. Langan has not been provided with a copy of this Report at the time this plan was published.

The Times Herald

Community forum held on Norristown waterfront redevelopment



A 3D rendering of the riverfront area slated for redevelopment in Norristown.
By Oscar Gamble, The Times Herald. Posted: 11/29/17, 5:41 PM EST | Updated: 1 day ago



Michael Sauns of Langan Engineering and Environmental Services talks to Norristown residents and property owners about proposed redevelopment along the municipality's downtown waterfront. Oscar Gamble — Digital First Media

NORRISTOWN - Some envisioned a hotel on a bustling tree-lined boulevard surrounded by restaurants. Some pictured a casino or entertainment complex bolstered by new residential housing and offices, while others thought of community centers, event spaces and small business incubators on well-lit streets with plenty of parking.

Almost all of the 30 or so residents, business owners and local officials at municipal hall Tuesday night had unique ideas of what the downtown waterfront should look like.

<http://www.timesherald.com/general-news/20171129/community-forum-held-on-norristown-waterfront-redevelopment>

Community Forum - November 29, 2017

2

Inventory + Analysis

Regional Context

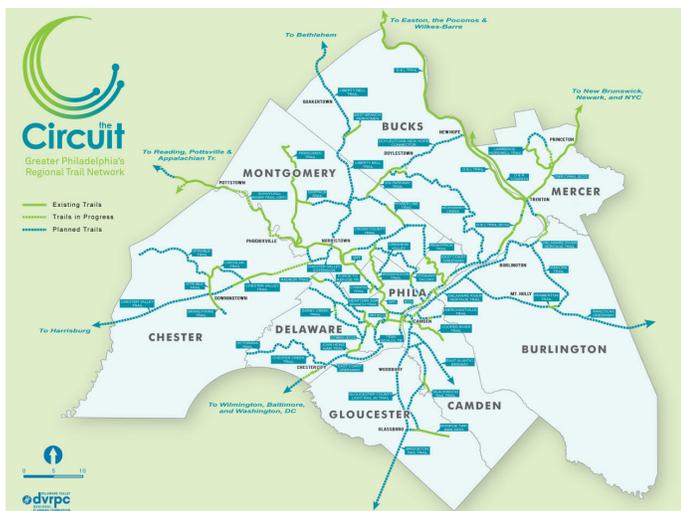
The Municipality of Norristown is located along the Schuylkill River in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. Norristown is 3 miles northeast of King of Prussia, 3 miles northwest of Conshohocken, 9 miles east of Phoenixville, 9.5 miles south of Lansdale, 8.5 miles northwest of Manayunk, and about 14.5 miles northwest of center city Philadelphia.

Norristown is the county seat for Montgomery County. This results in an influx of law firms and other judicial support businesses around the County Courthouse. The courthouse is also slated for renovations to the parking garage and exterior spaces in the next couple years. This will create temporary construction jobs and permanent new jobs throughout the Borough.

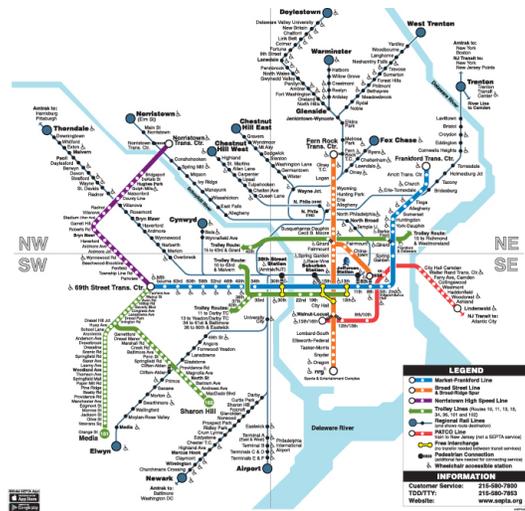
Vehicular access to the Borough is gained primarily through a network of local north-south streets like

Swede Road, Arch Street and New Hope Street with higher volume roadways like US 202 running north-south and bisecting the Municipality. Ridge Pike (Main Street within Norristown's limits) runs east-west through Norristown along with East Airy Street. Both US-202 and Ridge Pike are subject to high congestion during peak rush hour times. Interstate 276 (the Pennsylvania Turnpike) is just east of the Municipality. Future plans by the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission include a new interchange at the eastern terminus of Lafayette Street. This would provide easy vehicular access to the center of Norristown and help stimulate development.

The Norristown Transportation Center, owned by SEPTA, has multiple mass transit routes that connect regionally. The Norristown/Manayunk regional rail line connects to center city Philadelphia. The

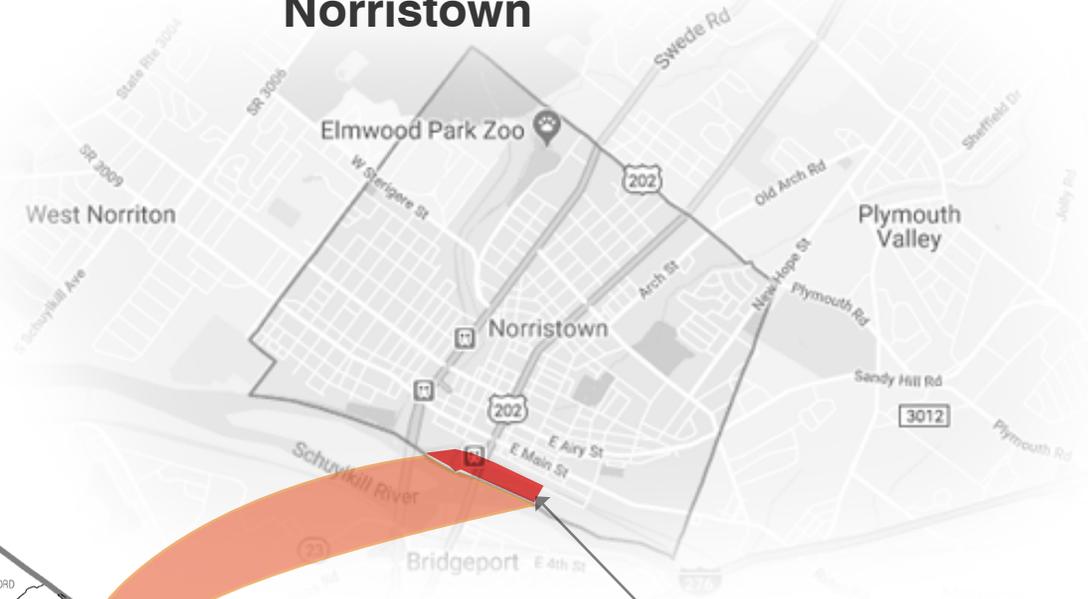


The Circuit - Regional Trail Network Map

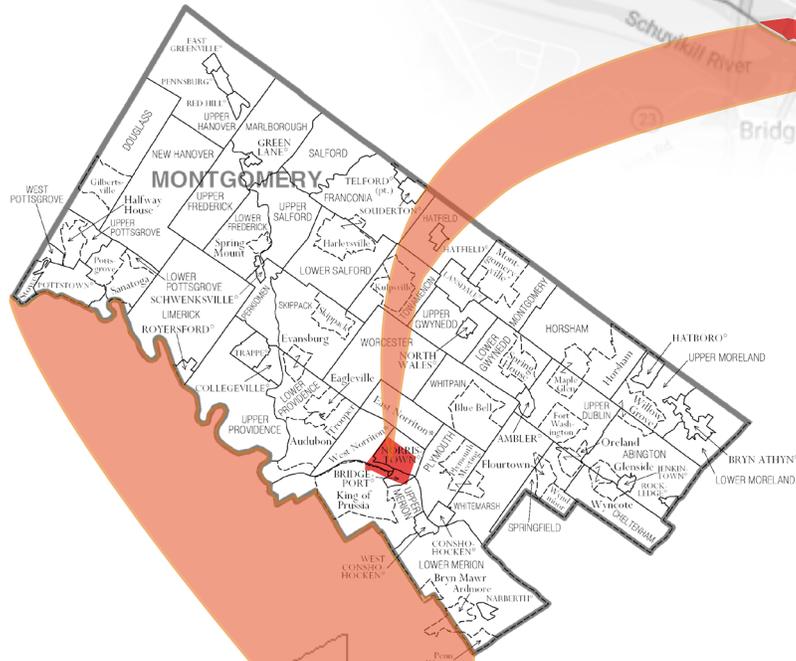


SEPTA Regional Rail and Rail Transit Map

Norristown

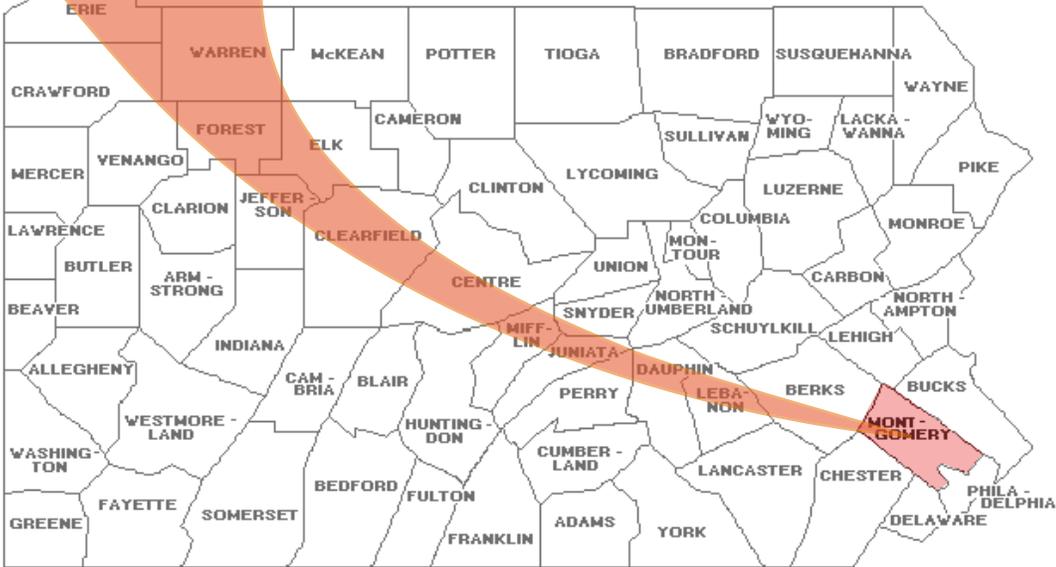


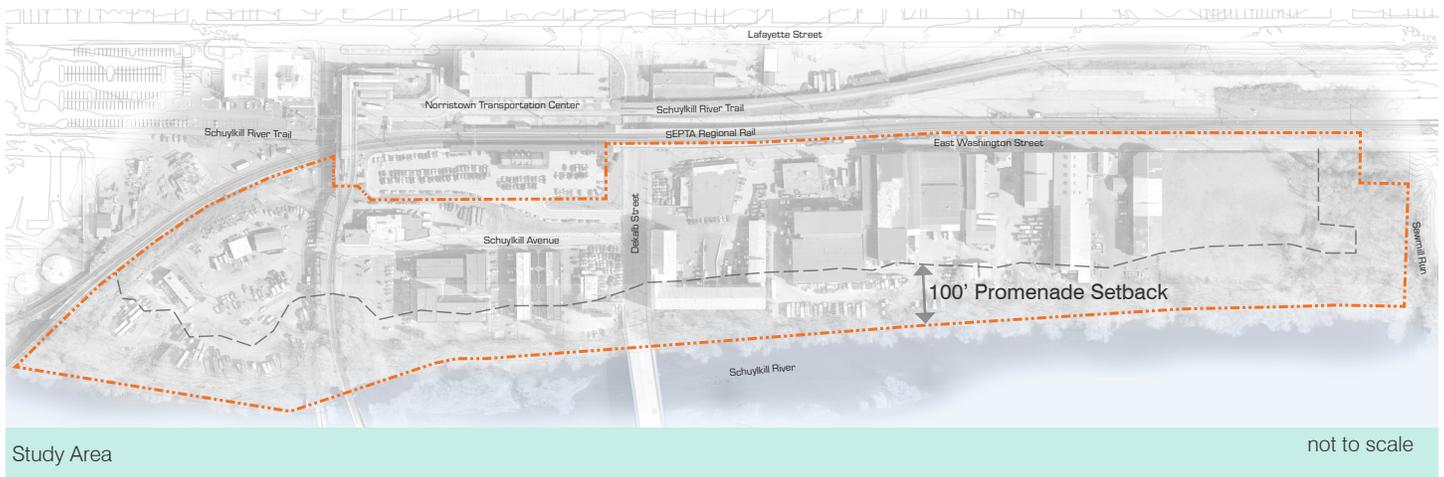
County



Study Area

State





Norristown High Speed Line (formally known as the Route 100 line) connects to 69th Street station in Upper Darby, Delaware County. From here connections can be made to the Market Frankford line, which runs to center city Philadelphia. Future Plans by SEPTA expand the Norristown High Speed Line to King of Prussia. Regional bus routes also run out of the Norristown Transportation Center, making connections to places such as Plymouth Meeting, Pottstown, Chestnut Hill, Lansdale and Phoenixville.

The Schuylkill River Trail, which extends from Philadelphia to Reading along the Schuylkill River, connects through Norristown. The Schuylkill River Trail was rated the number one best urban trail in America by US Today in 2015. Future plans by Montgomery County show the expansion of the Chester Valley Trail from its current terminus in King of Prussia to an intersection with the Schuylkill River Trail in Norristown. These trails are part of a large network of regional trails throughout the Philadelphia metropolitan region known as the Circuit.

Study Area

The Norristown Riverfront Redevelopment Planning and Feasibility Study area encompasses approximate 30 acres. The Norristown High Speed rail is elevated above the study area west of US 202, and runs south across the Schuylkill River and into Bridgeport.

US 202 bisects the project area and crosses the Schuylkill River via the Dekalb Street Bridge, which connects to Bridgeport and south to King of Prussia. Washington Street intersects US 202 and runs east through the study area. Washington Street provides a connection across the SEPTA rail tracks to Lafayette Street and Main Street via Ford Street. Schuylkill Avenue intersects US 202 and runs west through the study area. The intersections of Washington and Schuylkill Avenue are offset along US 202 by approximate 180', creating traffic congestion concerns for any future riverfront development.

Historical Inventory

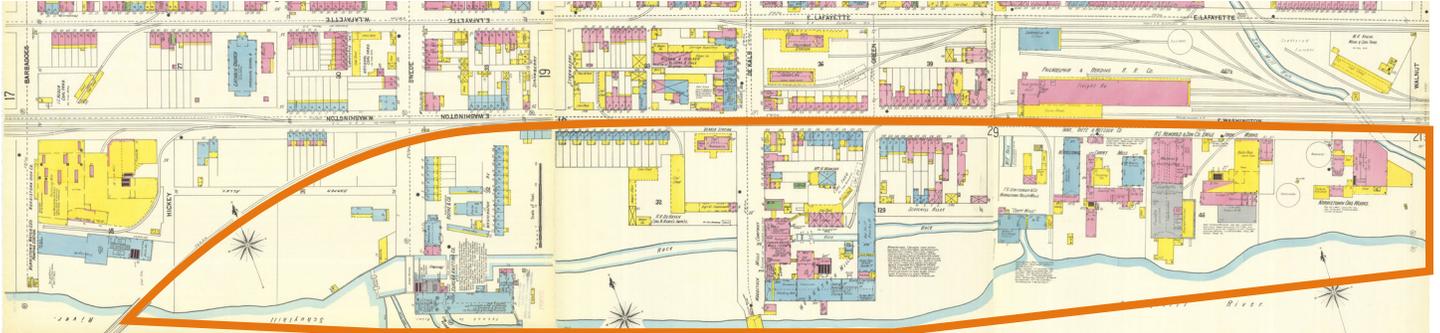
History of Norristown

The community of Norristown began in 1712 when Issac Norris purchased land from William Penn Jr., the son of the William Penn, and founder of Pennsylvania. The land was well-situated along the navigable Schuylkill River, and would quickly grow into a prominent industrial and commercial center for the greater Philadelphia Region.

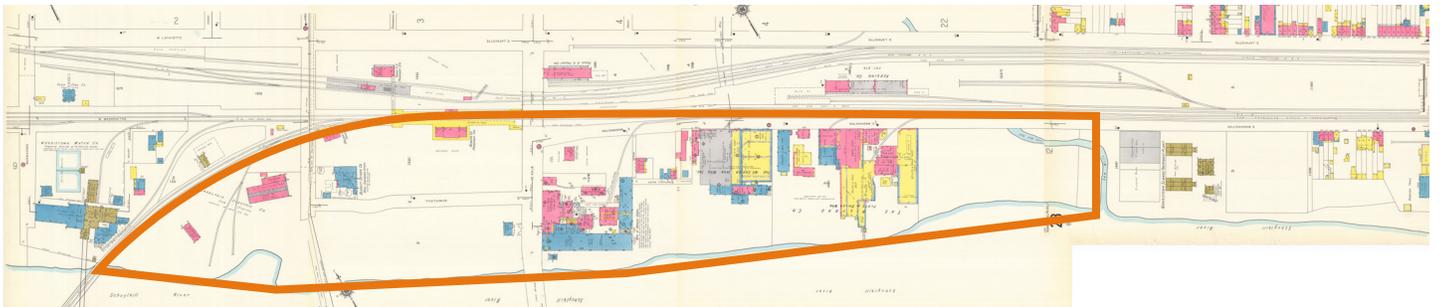
The Town of Norris, as it was originally known, became the county seat of Montgomery County, when it was carved out of Philadelphia County in 1784. The Town became the Borough of Norristown in 1812. Throughout the 19th and early 20th century, Norristown prospered with industrial development,



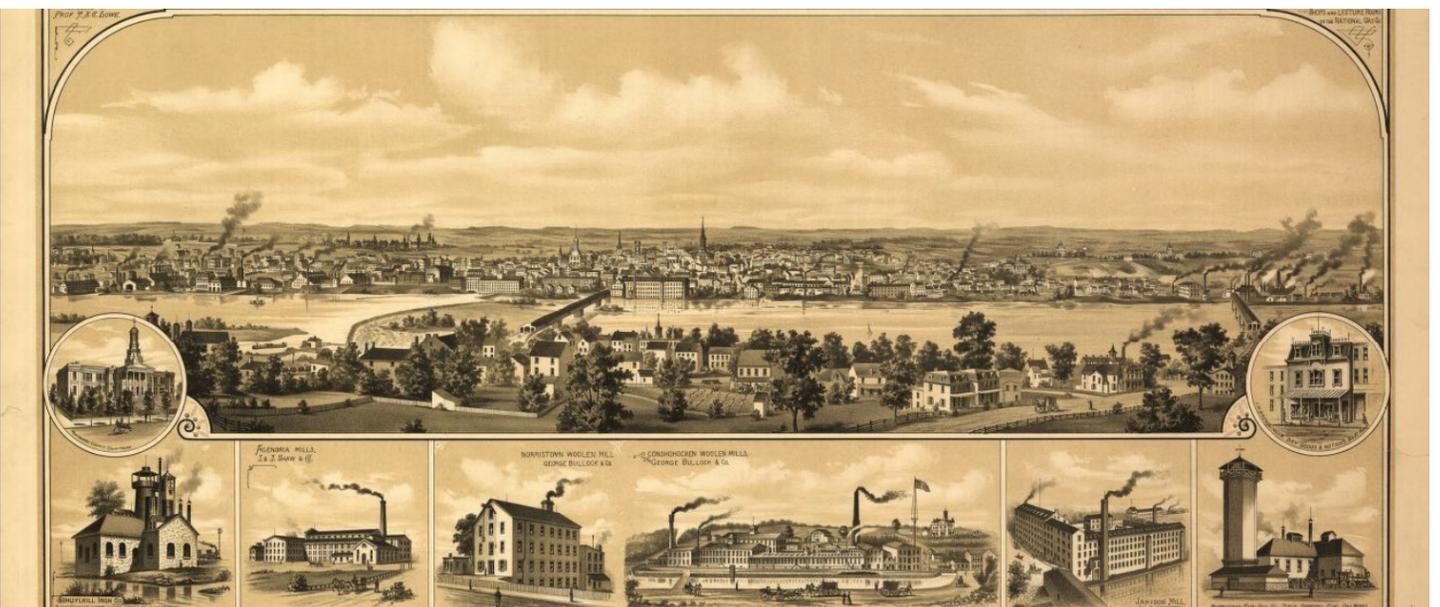
1886 Sanborn Map



1902 Sanborn Map



1942 Sanborn Map



1881 Norristown imagery - Library of Congress



made possible in-part by the abundant water resources harnessed from the Schuylkill River, Saw Mill Run, and Stony Creek to power the various manufacturing mills in town. The Borough became the county's legal center and a major marketplace and entertainment destination with department stores, shops, and theaters.

Along the riverfront, goods were transported by a series of canals along the Schuylkill River. This canal system ran from Port Carbon in Schuylkill County to Philadelphia. Regional rail service started in the mid-1800s, trolleys were introduced in the 1880s, and the Norristown High Speed Rail began service in 1912.

Norristown continued to prosper economically and as an entertainment center until the mid-twentieth century. As highways were constructed throughout the entire United States, Norristown lost its transportation advantage along the Schuylkill River. The Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-276), the Blue Route (I-476), the Schuylkill Expressway (I-76), and US 422 all

lacked direct highway access to Norristown. Regional shopping malls in the suburbs, such as the nearby King of Prussia Mall and Plymouth Meeting Mall, drew consumers away from downtown Norristown. Industry also moved on to other parts of the country.

Schaffer, Michael. (2016). Norristown, Pennsylvania. The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia. < <https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/norristown-pennsylvania/>>.

The hardships that impacted Norristown were also felt in other Schuylkill River manufacturing communities, such as Conshohocken, Phoenixville, Reading, and Pottstown. Several of these towns, including Conshohocken and Phoenixville, have recovered back to thriving and attractive town centers. Conshohocken has seen an influx of residential and office development along the Schuylkill River with regional rail connections to Center City Philadelphia. Phoenixville has redeveloped its main street (Bridge Street) into an attractive restaurant, brewery, and distillery scene for millennials.

Development along the Norristown riverfront could spur the Municipality to be the next riverfront community to make a significant economic and entertainment center turnaround.

Sanborn Maps

These detailed maps were created by insurance companies to assess potential liability risks for properties they insured. Today these maps provide a glimpse into the past for many towns and cities across the United States. Sanborn maps of Norristown from 1886, 1902, and 1942 were used to understand the history and document change along the riverfront.

The 1886 and 1902 maps show a mill race that ran through the center of the riverfront area from the Norristown dam to just downstream of the Dekalb Street Bridge. The mill race powered the Jamison Mill. The Jamison mill is pictured in an 1881 photograph of Norristown from the Library of Congress as indicated on pp 10 of this report, and still stands today.

The Sanborn maps also show numerous railroad spurs that connected to the various mills and factories along the riverfront. The 1942 Sanborn map indicates fewer industrial uses along the riverfront, as these businesses began to move out of Norristown, marking the beginning of its decline as a regional manufacturing center.

Historic Aerial Photography

Aerial photographs from 1942, 1958, and 1971 from Penn State's Penn Pilot Program, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Geological survey were also analyzed. A review of this photography begins to highlight the declining years of Norristown, as factories were replaced with warehouses and the mill race was filled in, paved over and forgotten.

Aerial photography from 2002 is taken from Google Earth and indicates land use very similar to current conditions showing that development along the riverfront has been stagnant for at least 17 years.

3D Existing Land Use Model





Washington Street looking west

Land Use and Notable Buildings

Current land uses within the study area range from property owned by PECO, to medium density residential, to light and heavy industrial with some parcels that are underutilized, to vacant land. Many of the parcels are considered to be brownfields and preliminary environmental investigations were ongoing for several parcels during this feasibility study.

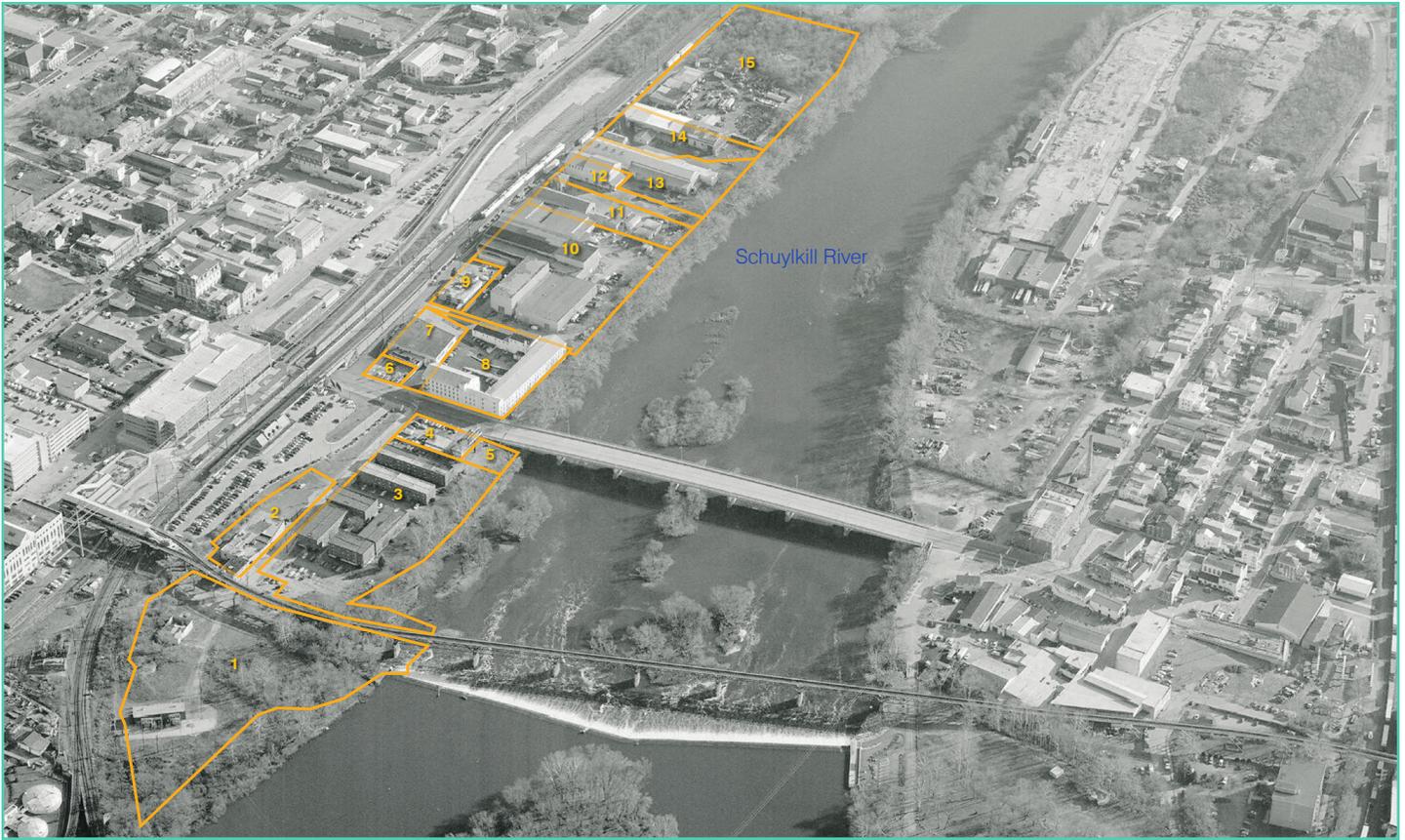
The western most extents of the study area, northwest of the Norristown High Speed Rail, is land owned by PECO. This land is currently zoned as Recreational, or Zone RE, based on the Norristown Zoning Code. The rest of the Riverfront Redevelopment Study Area is zoned as Downtown Riverfront, or Zone DR.

The current use along the riverside of Schuylkill Avenue is (low income) medium density rental housing. We understand that these units are leasing around \$810 for studio units, \$880 for 620 square foot one bedroom units, \$905 for 660 square foot one bedroom units, and \$1080 for 750 square foot

two bedroom units a month (according to Riverside Apartments website as of January 2019). North of Schuylkill Avenue and adjacent to the elevated high speed line is an industrial use. SEPTA's Norristown Transportation Center is north of the study. Access to a surface parking lot for the transportation center is from US 202, approximately 50 feet north of the Schuylkill Avenue intersection.

Jamison's Mill (labeled as buildings A and B later in this report), which is sited on the east side of Route 202 adjacent to the Schuylkill River, is eligible for the National Register (historic designation) status and could be adapted to residential and/or mixed use. The mill race that powered the mill operation formerly ran through the center of the study area parallel to the Schuylkill River and passed through this building.

East of Jamison's Mill and US 202 along Washington Street are a number of industrial properties. About halfway between US 202 and Sawmill Run, sits an old 2 story brick structure (labeled building C later in this report) that could be preserved and adapted for use as a welcome center or other use within the redevelopment plan.



Property Ownership Map

not to scale

Property Ownership

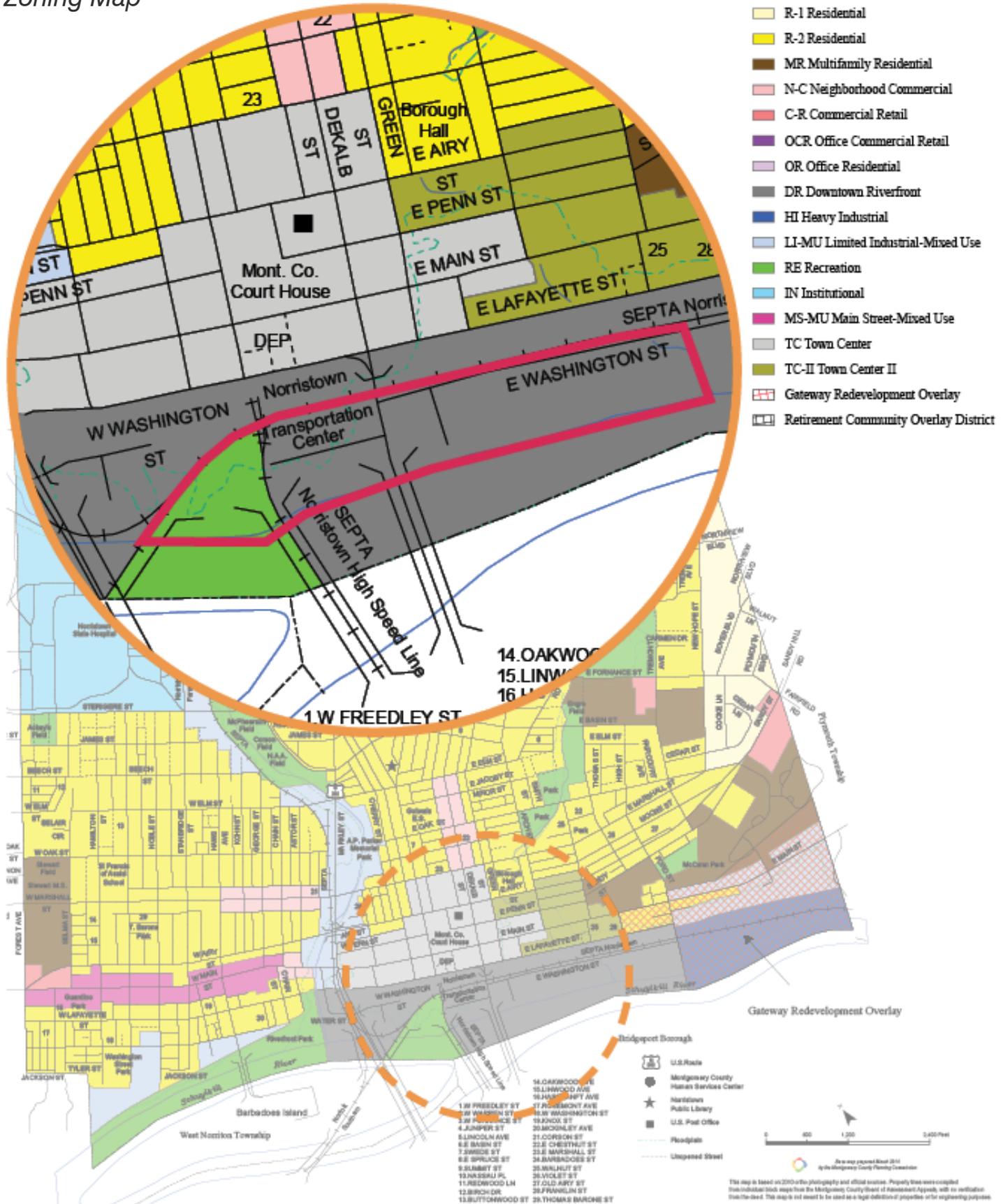
Property ownership along the riverfront is distributed between a number of different entities and PECO. Based on our assessment of the current configuration of the properties in the study area in conjunction with our review of the current zoning code, it seems clear that aggregating the parcels is key to a sensible redevelopment. Many of the properties are irregularly shaped and several are very small, making them more challenging to redevelop. These factors, coupled with the riverfront setback stipulations in the zoning code, further reinforces this point.

We suggest that the Municipality of Norristown continue to engage in more detailed and ongoing conversations with property owners as the riverfront redevelopment process continues.

Property Owner Key

1	PECO	3.3 AC
2	Ratoskey & Trainer	0.7 AC
3	Michael Karp	3.2 AC
4	Hargest	0.3 AC
5	Jar Investments	0.2 AC
6	Catagnus	0.2 AC
7	DPR Associates	0.5 AC
8	Schwartz	1.5 AC
9	Accord Mechanical	0.4 AC
10	220 East Washington St.	3.7 AC
11	260 East Washington St. Assoc.	1.1 AC
12	Washington Street Property	0.5 AC
13	Capow Inc.	1.7 AC
14	Capow Inc.	1.0 AC
15	T Lowe	5.1 AC

Zoning Map



ZONING DISTRICT: DR DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT DISTRICT : ARTICLE XII		
ITEM	PERMITTED / REQUIRED	ORDINANCE SECTION (PAGE)
Min. Lot Area:	No Minimum	Article XII:320-117.A.
Min. Lot Width	20 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Min. Building Setbacks from the curb line of the adjacent street:		
Buildings up to three stories	10 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Buildings from four to six stories	20 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Maximum building setback from the ground floor level	20 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Principal Building Horizontal length:		
Unless the building wraps a garage structure	350 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Garage structures Max	350 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Principal buildings and parking garage structures	500 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Minimum Building Separation Set Back:		
Portion sharing a party wall	0 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Portion not sharing a party wall and up to four stories	10 feet	Article XII:320-117.A.
Portion not sharing a party wall and up to five to 15 stories	30 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Min Building Height:	2 Stories or 25 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Max Building Height (No FAR bonus)	4 Stories or 60 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Max Building Height: (FAR bonus)	10 Stories or 150 ft	Article XII:320-117.A.
Building Coverage:		
Max. Impervious Coverage:	90%	Article XII:320-117.A.
Minimum Green space area:	10%	Article XII:320-117.A.
Parking:		
Parking Setbacks:		
Minimum Building:	5 ft	Article XII: 320-119 B
Min. Collector Street Right-of-way Line:	5 ft	Article XII: 320-119 B
Minimum Side Lot Line:	5 ft	Article XII: 320-119 B
Minimum Rear Lot Line:	5 ft	Article XII: 320-119 B

Zoning Review

A review of the Norristown Ordinance was completed to understand current design standards and permitted uses. Most of the study area falls within the Downtown Riverfront Zone (DR). The PECO site at the western end of the study area is currently zoned as Recreational (RE). The chart above outlines design constraints for development within these zones.

Riverfront Building Setback

Norristown Ordinance calls for a 100' promenade setback from the top of bank for the Schuylkill River. The intent of this setback is to provide public space for trails and other recreation uses while protecting the riparian zone along the river. This 100' setback is to be void of buildings, structures, parking lots or garages, loading or storage areas, roadways, driveways, or other non-pedestrian open space uses. Refer to the latest version of the Norristown Ordinance for additional details.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Bonus

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) bonuses are provided once proposed developments meet certain design criteria. A FAR is defined as the ratio of a buildings total floor area to the size of the property. By meeting certain criteria, an increase in FAR is permitted, allowing for larger buildings to be developed. Refer to the latest version of the Norristown Ordinance for additional details.

Pinnacle Building

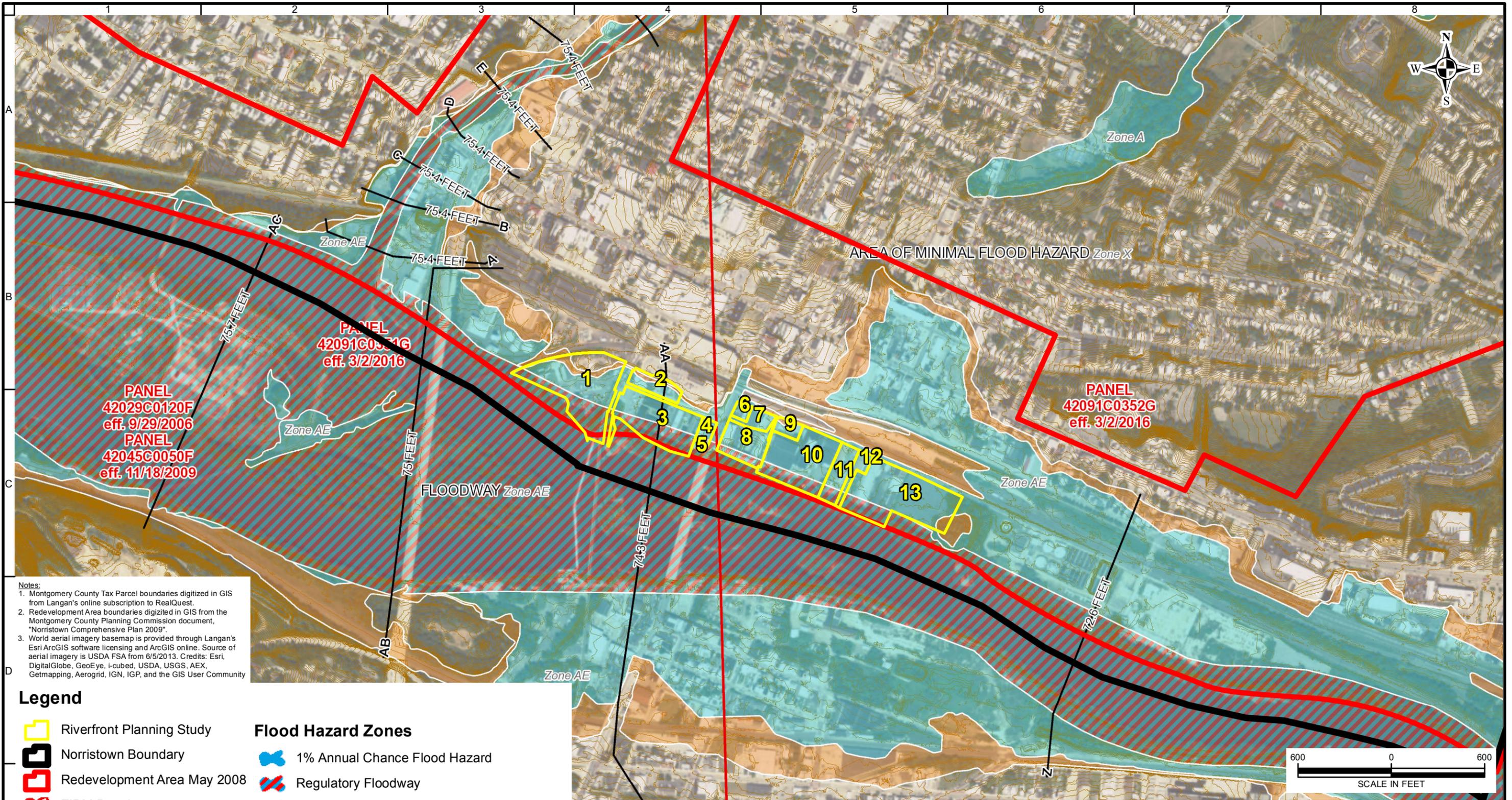
Within 1000' feet of the Norristown Regional Rail Station, Norristown Ordinance permits 4 buildings of 15 stories / 225' max height, which exceeds the permitted max building height of 10 stories. A portion of the riverfront study area falls within this 1000' radius as seen on pp 17 of this report. Refer to the latest version of the Norristown Ordinance for additional details.

Zoning Building Height Allowance



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | FEMA-DESIGNATED FLOODWAY |  | 0-3 STORY BUILDING FOOTPRINT |
|  | 500-YEAR FLOOD |  | 6-15 STORY BUILDING FOOTPRINT |
|  | 100-YEAR FLOOD |  | 100' PROMENADE SETBACK |



Notes:
 1. Montgomery County Tax Parcel boundaries digitized in GIS from Langan's online subscription to RealQuest.
 2. Redevelopment Area boundaries digitized in GIS from the Montgomery County Planning Commission document, "Norristown Comprehensive Plan 2009".
 3. World aerial imagery basemap is provided through Langan's Esri ArcGIS software licensing and ArcGIS online. Source of aerial imagery is USDA FSA from 6/5/2013. Credits: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community

Legend

- Riverfront Planning Study
- Norristown Boundary
- Redevelopment Area May 2008
- FIRM Panels
- Topographic Contour

- Flood Hazard Zones**
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 - Regulatory Floodway
 - Special Floodway
 - Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard
 - 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 - Future Conditions 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
 - Area with Reduced Risk Due to Levee

LANGAN

Stone Manor Corporate Center, 2700 Kelly Road, Suite 200
 Warrington, PA 18976
 T: 215.491.6500 F: 215.491.6501 www.langan.com

Langan Engineering & Environmental Services, Inc.
 Langan Engineering, Environmental, Surveying and
 Landscape Architecture, D.P.C.
 Langan International LLC

Collectively known as Langan

Project
**LOCAL SHARE ACCOUNT -
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY**
 NORRISTOWN
 MONTGOMERY COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

Drawing Title
**FEMA MAP FOR
 PROPOSED PLANNING
 STUDY AREA**

Project No.	200094801	Figure	1
Date	5/4/2017		
Scale	1"=600'		
Drawn By	MMK		
Submission Date	5/11/2017		



Drone imagery of the riverfront study area looking north

Opportunity Zone

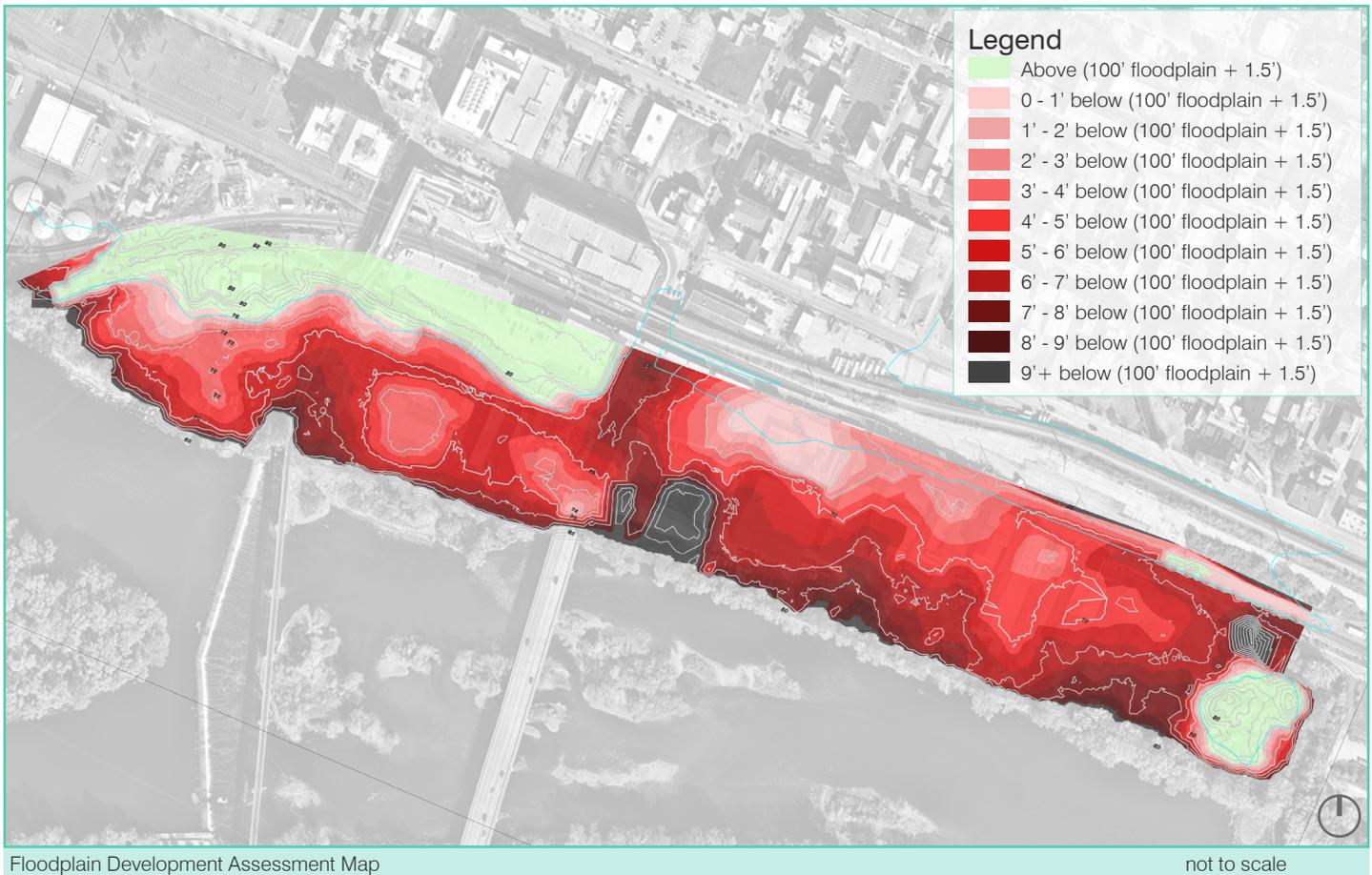
The study area falls within the Norristown Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones (OZ) were established by the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act to spur economic development in distressed communities. The Opportunity Zone provides tax benefits to investors who invest capital within the OZ. Given that redevelopment within the Norristown Riverfront will be driven by the private sector, this designation will incentivize more developers to invest in the riverfront.

For additional information on Opportunity Zones, visit the IRS website: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions>

Environment Assessments

On-going environmental assessments are being conducted on several properties along the riverfront. These studies include preliminary Phase 1 environmental assessments, which include a review historic documents and data for each site. Depending on the findings of these assessments, additional work, in the form of Phase 2 environmental assessments, may be warranted on some or all of the properties within the study area.

Various grants are available to help fund environmental assessments and clean-up efforts.



Floodplain Analysis

The study area falls within three different categories on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel 42091C0351G (effective dated 3/2/2016) for the Borough of Norristown. The three categories include the following: Regulatory Floodway; 100-year floodplain (Zone AE); and 500-year floodplain.

The Regulatory Floodway represents the channel of a watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation by more than one foot at any point. Within any floodway area, no encroachments, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements, or other development shall be permitted unless it has been demonstrated through hydrologic and hydraulic analysis performed in accordance with

20

standard engineering practice that the proposed encroachment would not result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge. No new construction or development shall be allowed within a Regulatory Floodway area unless a permit is obtained from the Department of Environmental Protection Regional Office.

The 100-year floodplain (Zone AE) is an area for which base flood elevations (BFE) have been provided and a floodway has been delineated. No permit shall be granted for any construction, development, use, or activity within any 100-year floodplain (Zone AE) unless it is demonstrated that the cumulative effect of the proposed development would not, together with all other existing and anticipated development, increase the BFE more than one foot at any point.

The following activities and facilities are specifically prohibited, except for as part of a redevelopment project:

- No new construction, alteration, or improvement of buildings and any other type of permanent structure, including fences shall be permitted in the floodway or the one-hundred-year floodplain;
- New construction of buildings or placement of fill within the one-hundred-year floodplain is prohibited.

As per section 320-334 of the Norristown Floodplain Regulations, a redevelopment project is defined as development of elevated and flood-proofed buildings on brownfield sites in redevelopment areas encouraging economic revitalization. The base floor elevation of elevated and flood-proofed buildings shall be one foot six inches above the flood elevation. The finished elevation of all new streets shall be no more than one foot below the regulatory flood elevation.

The map pictured on page 20 shows the difference in elevation between existing grades and the FEMA 100-year floodplain, plus 1.5 feet of additional 'freeboard'. The additional 1.5 feet of freeboard is provided to account for rising waters associated with several factors, including global climate change. The lighter red to green shaded areas will require less fill to redevelop than the darker red to black shaded areas on the map.

The Municipality of Norristown will require technical or scientific data to be submitted to FEMA for a letter of map revision (LOMR) within six months of the completion of any new construction, development, or other activity resulting in changes in the BFE. A LOMR or conditional letter of map revision (CLOMR) is required for:

- Any development that causes a rise in the base flood elevations within the floodway; or

- Any development occurring in Zone AE, which will cause a rise of more than one foot in the base flood elevation; or

- Alteration or relocation of a stream (including but not limited to installing culverts and bridges).

The permitting effort associated with proposed development within the Regulatory Floodway and/or 100-year floodplain (Zone AE) will need to be coordinated with the municipality of Norristown, Montgomery County Conservation District, FEMA, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Project and the Army Corp of Engineers.

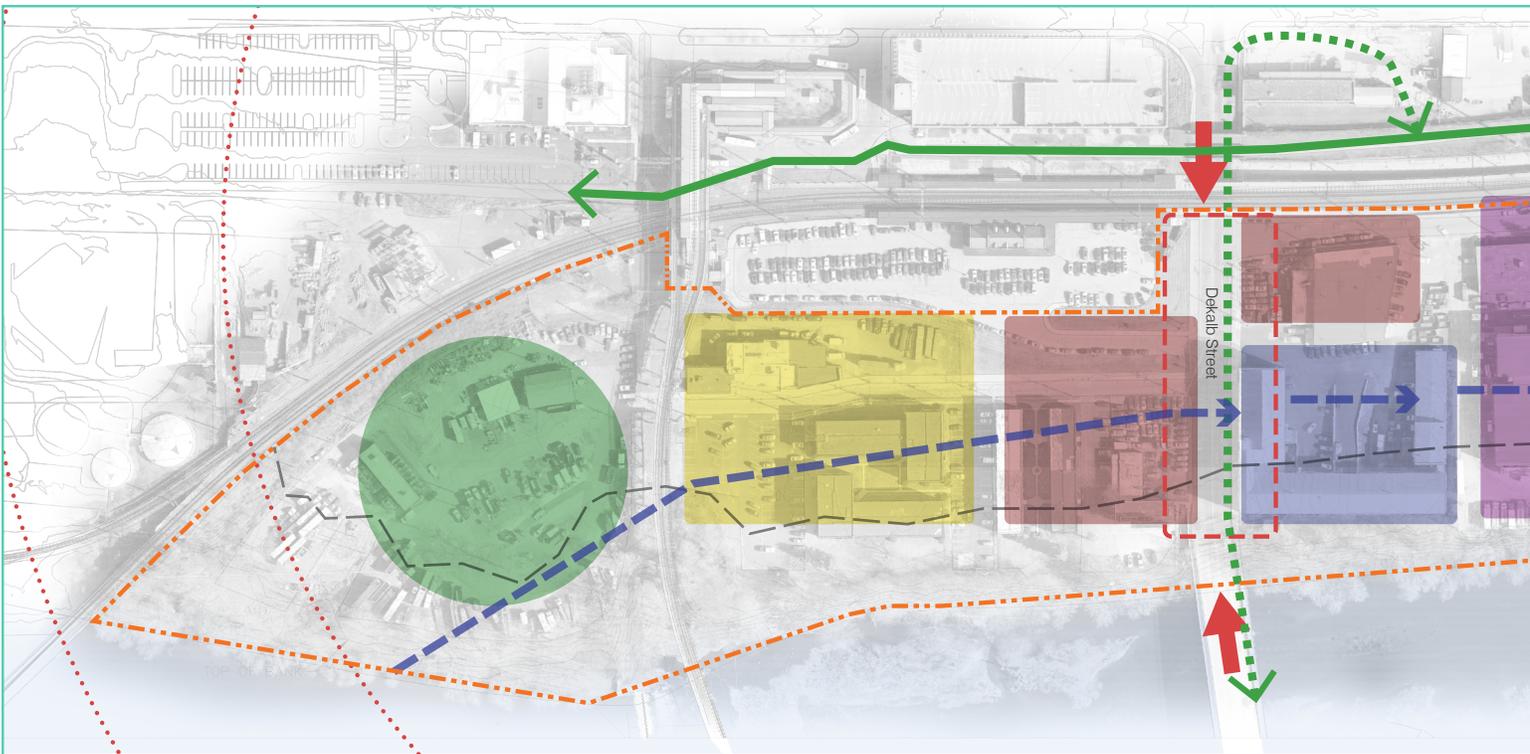
Constraints and Opportunities

The redevelopment of the Norristown riverfront holds numerous opportunities for beneficial re-use in the community. Common to redeveloping any formerly-developed waterfront areas, there are several constraints that will need to be addressed as part of the process. The following is a summary of those constraints and opportunities.

Constraints

Development along any riverfront will be shaped by a range of physical, environmental, and jurisdictional constraints. The major environmental constraint for the Norristown riverfront is that the study area is within the 100 year floodplain. This restricts development, unless the finished floor elevations of proposed buildings are raised above the floodplain elevation. This would involve filling within the floodplain, as discussed earlier in this chapter. This process is fairly common and achievable, but will require additional design and permitting work.

Connectivity between the riverfront and downtown Norristown is constrained by an approximately eight foot high railroad embankment that runs almost the entire length of the study area's northern boundary.



Study Area Analysis Map - West

not to scale

Existing vehicular and pedestrian connections are limited to crossings at Dekalb Street and Washington Street and at the pedestrian bridge via the Norristown Transportation Center. Since the river edge of the Schuylkill exists as very steep embankment along much of the Redevelopment Area, the plan will need to take advantage of areas with more gentle slopes in order to get people down to the river and find other ways to allow people to get closer to the water's edge.

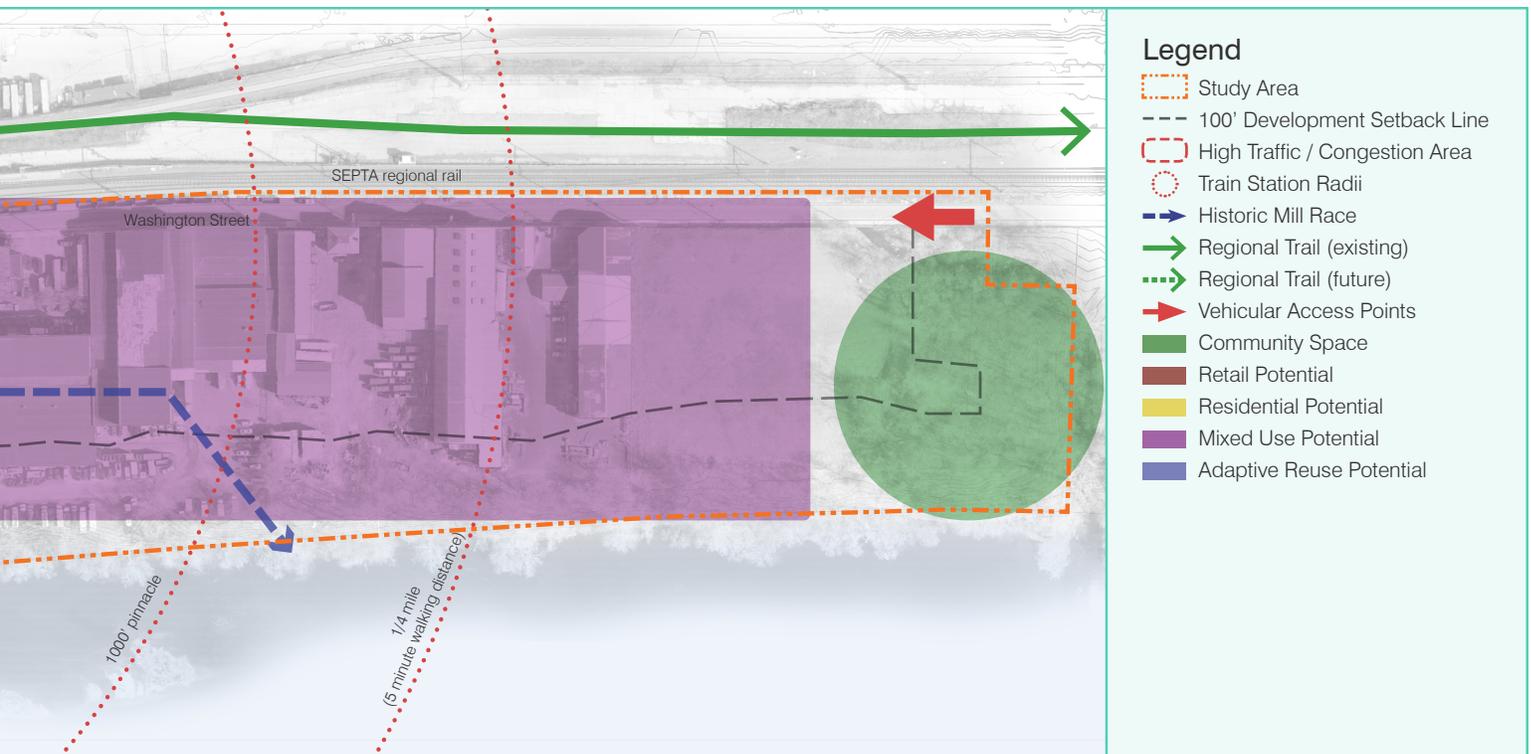
To support the development of a new neighborhood, several upgrades to existing infrastructure will be required, including the relocation and modernization of sewer, gas, water, electric, telephone, and stormwater facilities serving the Redevelopment Area. These changes, along with improvements to the street intersection at Dekalb Street/Schuylkill Avenue and the proposed River Street, are also needed to support the proposed development. Additional studies should be undertaken by Norristown to facilitate the redevelopment process.

While several of the properties have been the subject of preliminary environmental review and investigation, the study team recommends that this work be advanced as required to facilitate the redevelopment process.

Opportunities

The overarching opportunity for Norristown in the redevelopment process is the ability to “Embrace the River” in a very significant way.

As referenced in the Property Ownership section of this study, the fact that there are a number of parcels of various sizes and configurations within the study area makes a strong case for a comprehensive approach to redevelopment. Redeveloping these properties as a coordinated effort is likely to increase the overall value gained by each owner in transacting the property and will help ensure a coherent and consistent execution of the Redevelopment Plan.



Study Area Analysis Map - East

not to scale

The project area falls within a short walking distance to the Norristown Transportation Center. This provides residents with easy transportation options to Philadelphia and other regional destinations. US Route 202 provides a major vehicular route right through the center of the project area. This route receives lots of daily traffic, setting up great retail potential along the roadway corridor. The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission is also planning an EZ Pass slip-ramp exit just east of the study area along Lafayette Street. This will provide quick and easy highway access to the riverfront.

The riverfront has numerous recreational opportunities as well. The Schuylkill River Trail and future Chester Valley Trail extension pass through and adjacent to the study area, providing recreational assets for future riverfront residents as well as consumers for future retail development. The recreationally zoned land at the western end of the study area and the confluence of the Sawmill Run at the eastern end of

the study area provides opportunities for bookend community space that frames the riverfront and provides a range of recreational potential.

3

Redevelopment Plan

Process

The development of the final Riverfront Plan presented here, resulted from an inclusive public process that involved numerous meetings with the community, public stakeholders, private landowners, Norristown Borough Council, and Norristown Borough staff.

Norristown's Ordinance informed the conceptual footprints of the proposed private-realm development. These buildings were conceptualized first to maximize real estate values and redevelopment potential while supporting the establishment of civic spaces and connections to the riverfront. The required public infrastructure, roadways and public spaces were fitted to the building forms as a single, unified design. Three concept plans, each with different approaches to development, were developed through the planning process. The concepts were vetted through Norristown Council and staff and refined into the final plan found in this report.

Approach

"Embrace the River"

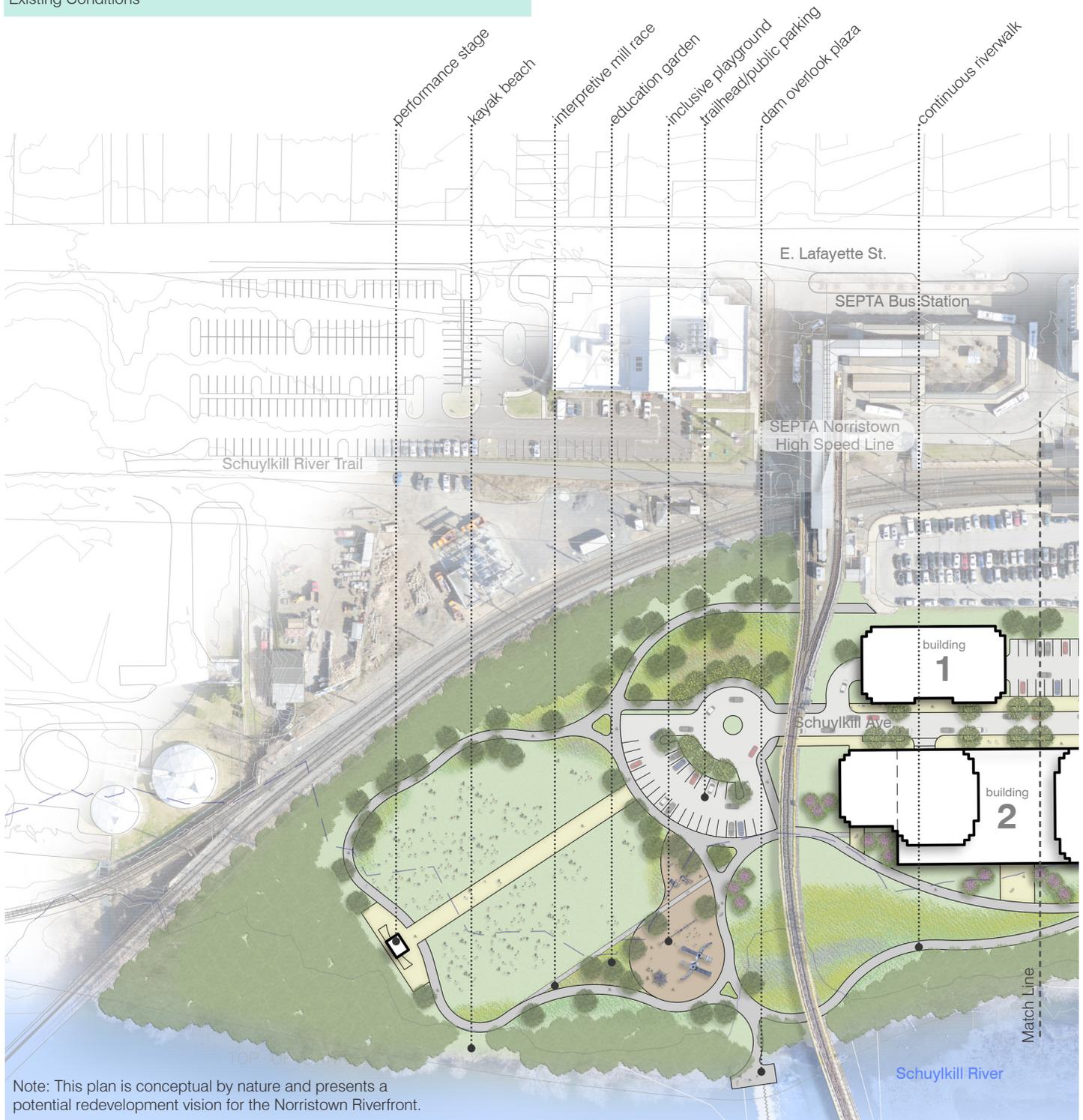
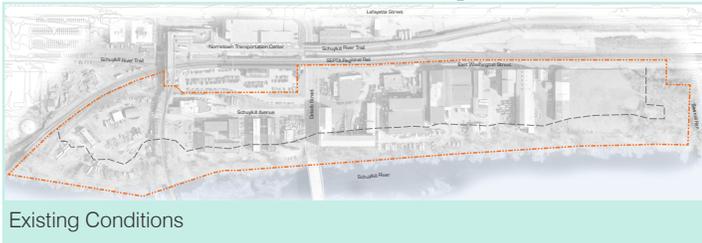
This has emerged as the primary goal of the Norristown Riverfront Study. By embracing the river, Norristown can establish its own unique Schuylkill River neighborhood that leverages the history while presenting an authentically-Norristown neighborhood, setting itself apart from Conshohocken, Phoenixville, Manayunk, and other regional river towns.

Final Plan

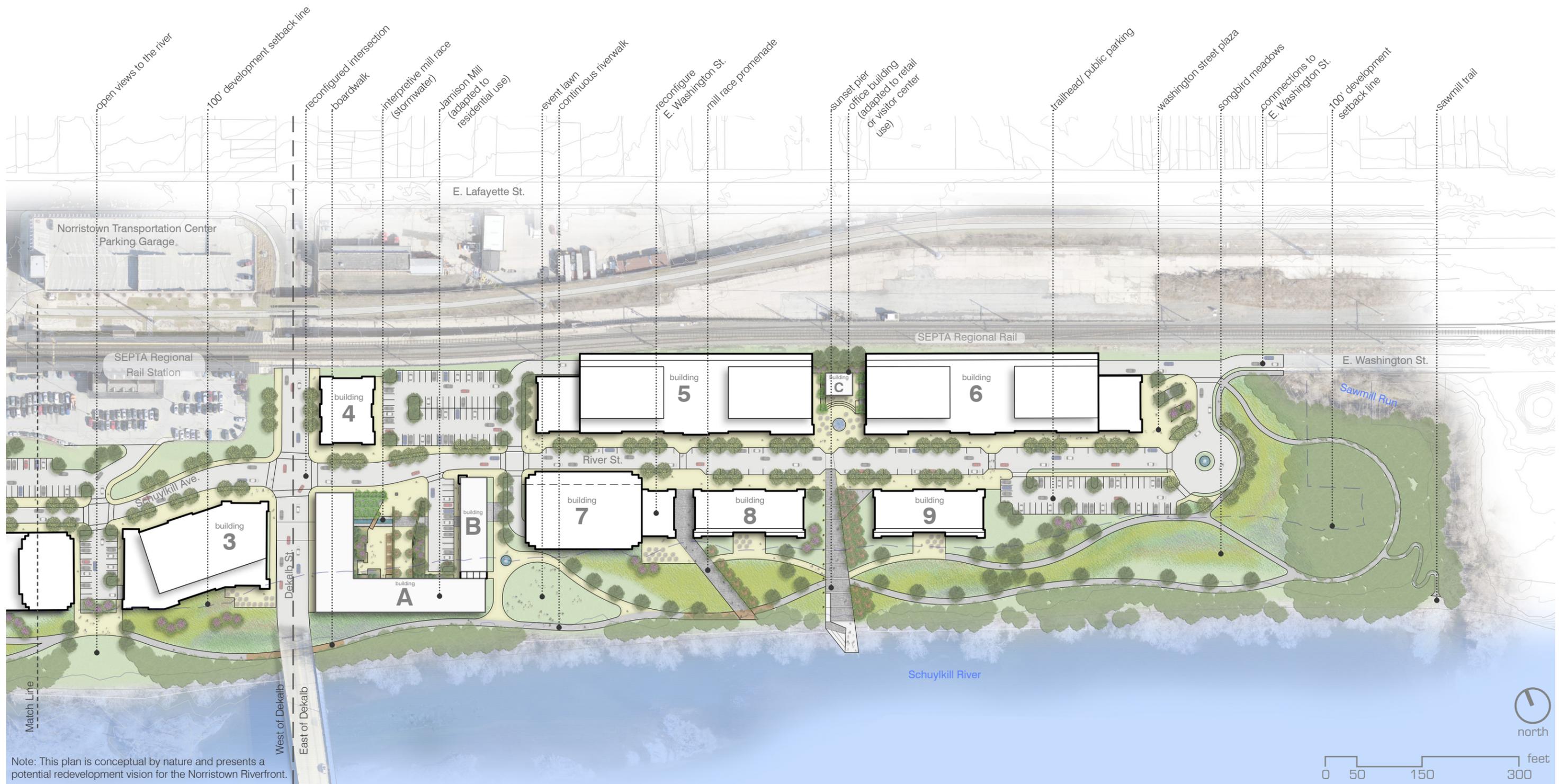
The proposed Riverfront Redevelopment Plan reshapes development along the banks of the Schuylkill by proposing a new central road (designated as River Street) that transects the entire length of the study area. This establishes an improved four-way intersection at Dekalb Street for enhanced pedestrian and motorist safety while addressing the additional traffic demand that will come with redevelopment. The new River Street creates a two-sided streetscape that is anchored by public parks on the east and west ends of development. This two-sided streetscape and supporting development parcels, creates greater opportunity for development and increases real estate values for the development parcels that are not present with the current configuration of Washington Street adjacent to the railroad embankment.

A 100' wide public space corridor runs the length of the riverfront providing connections and recreation opportunities such as public trails, civic spaces, and natural open space restoration areas. The plan makes reference to the historic mill race that once transected the study area, as well as the railroad track spurs that once served the manufacturers and other businesses along the riverfront. Environmental factors, such as riparian zones and rising water levels due to climate change, are all considered.

Riverfront Redevelopment Plan

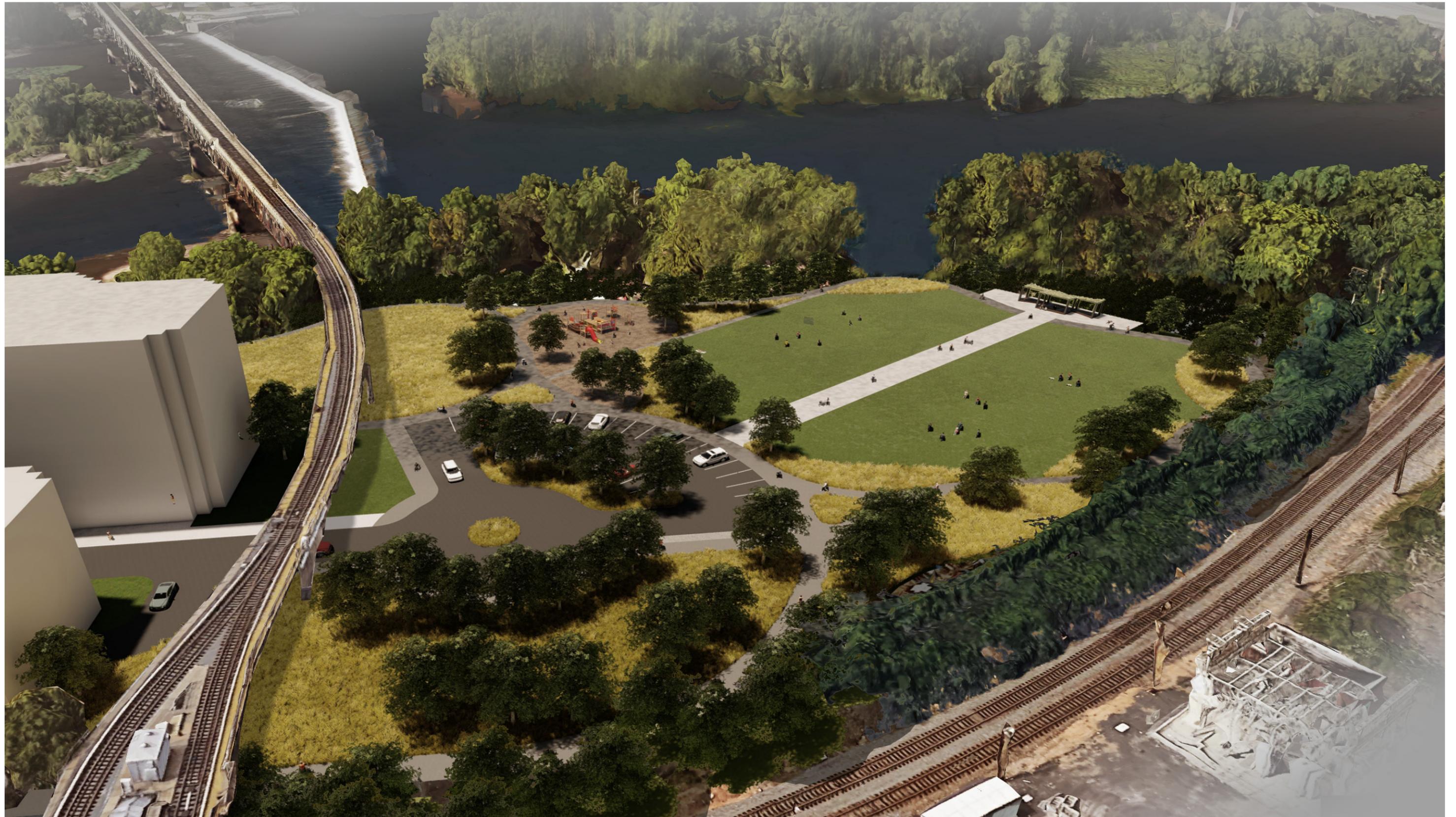


Note: This plan is conceptual by nature and presents a potential redevelopment vision for the Norristown Riverfront.





3D Perspective of proposed improvements



3D Perspective of the western park



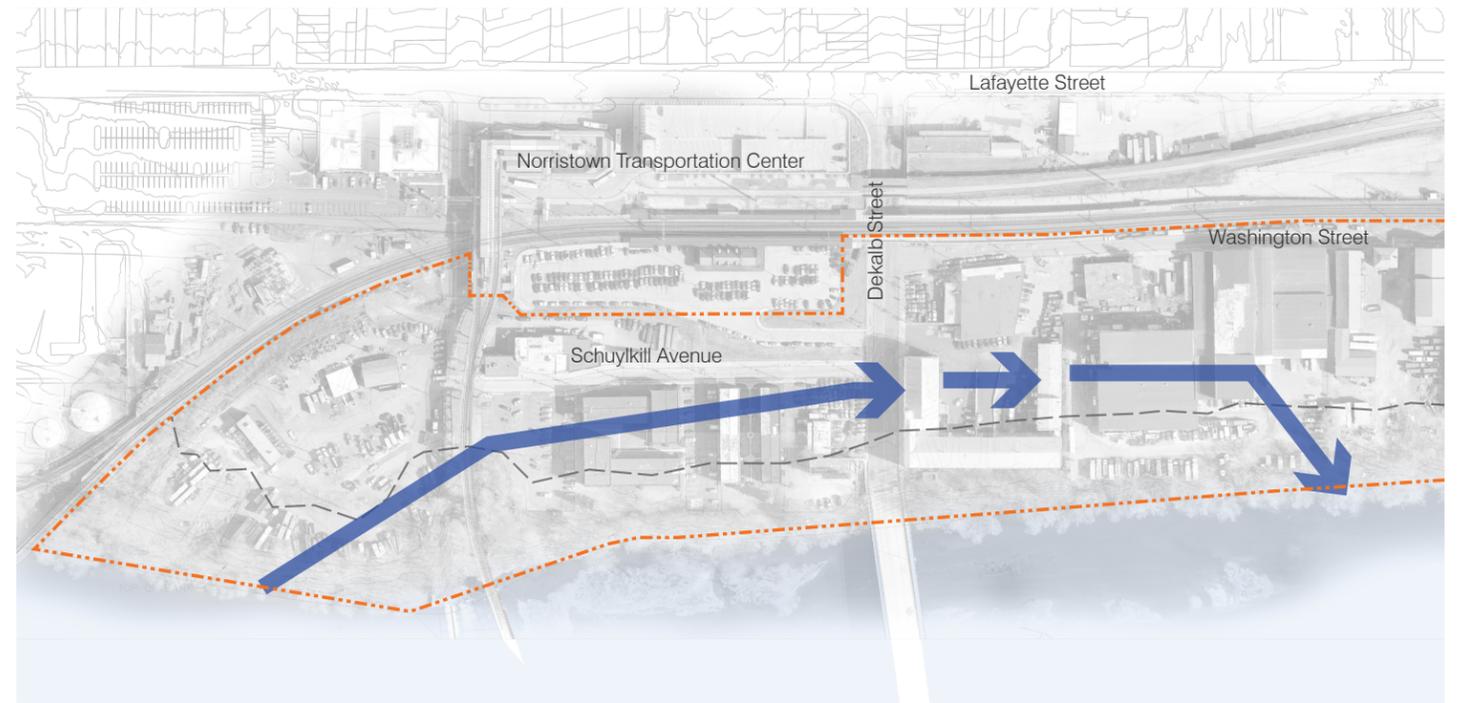
2017 Jamison Mill imagery



1881 Jamison Mill imagery - Library of Congress



Jamison Mill - Plaza Concept



Approximate location of historic mill race, based on overlays from Sanborn Maps and aerial photography

West of Dekalb

In the area west of Dekalb Street the proposed redevelopment plan starts with a reconfiguration of Schuylkill Avenue as a 4-way intersection at Dekalb Street. This road realignment will require cooperation with SEPTA and may involve some redesign of the SEPTA Norristown Transportation Center parking lot driveway. While not within our study area, this surface parking lot could also be a potential redevelopment site that could be incorporated into the Redevelopment Plan at a later date. Three private sector development buildings are proposed, as well as a new 6.2 acre passive and active recreation park.

Private sector development west of Dekalb Street will benefit from easy connections to the Norristown Transportation Center. Buildings 1 and 2 are proposed as residential developments due to this proximity and are within an easy walk of the west park. Building 3's location at the new intersection of Schuylkill Avenue and Dekalb Street make the ground-floor prime for retail development with high visibility from passing motorists and pedestrians. Upper floors could be residential units with tremendous views of the river and surrounding landscape.

East of Dekalb

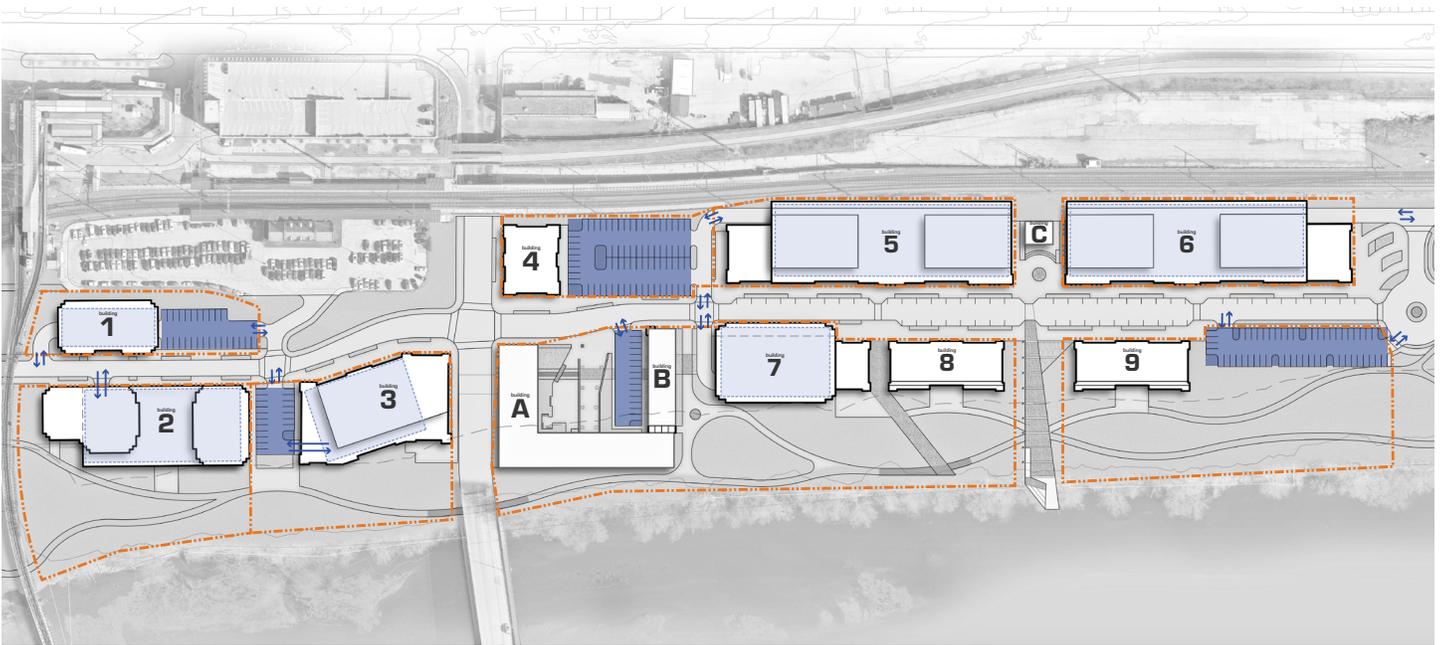
A majority of the proposed improvements in the Redevelopment Plan lay east of Dekalb Street. Here Washington Street is rerouted down the center of the riverfront study area from the new four-way intersection at Dekalb Street to the roundabout at the eastern most end of the study area. This roundabout will slow traffic and provides a focal point for art or other installations on axis with River Street in the central landscaped island.

Jamison Mill, a national historic register eligible building, (Building A and B) has potential for reuse as a residential redevelopment. The central courtyard of the building could serve as a plaza space for residents.

The easternmost mill building is detached from the main building and offers opportunities for additional residential units or amenity space or as a restaurant. Per the market study completed in conjunction with the Redevelopment Plan, restaurants were shown to be in demand. Across the street from the mill, (Building 4) is proposed to support retail on the ground floor, with residential uses on upper floors. Ground floor retail will be highly visible from Dekalb Street. A surface parking lot to the east services the building.

Farther east along River Street is a proposed parking garage and retail building (Building 7) adjacent to Jamison Mill. We suggest that the first floor of this building include some retail, as a 'wrapper' to maintain an attractive streetscape for businesses and residents, while disguising the parking structure to the rear. The upper floors would serve as parking for Jamison Mill residents (assuming adaptive reuse as residential) and for Building 8 to the east of the parking garage.

Buildings 5, 6, 8, and 9 create a central plaza and public space that bisects the River Street streetscape. Buildings 5 and 6 can support large first floor retail space, with a parking garage and residential units above. Buildings 8 and 9 would include retail on the first floor with residential units above. Buildings 8 and 9 are shown as shorter, three-story buildings to allow river views from Buildings 5 and 6. These four buildings create a double sided streetscape with retail shops and services that wrap back into the civic space towards Building C and extend towards the river between Building 8 and 9. The eastern terminus of the Redevelopment Plan proposes a roundabout and east park at the Sawmill Run confluence.



Proposed Building Chart

Building	# of Floors	Use	Habitable Square Footage
A (existing)	4 floors	Jamison Mill - adaptive reuse to residential	~64,500 sf
B (existing)	1.5 floors	Jamison Mill - adaptive reuse to residential and/or restaurant	~6,000 sf
C (existing)	2 floors	Office Building - adaptive reuse to retail / visitor center	~1,450 sf
1	6 floors	residential	60,000 sf
2	10 floors	residential	179,200 sf
3	6 floors	mixed use - retail, office, residential	83,625 sf
4	6 floors	mixed use - retail and residential	48,000 sf
5 + 6	6 floors	mixed use - retail, office, residential	162,014 sf
7	6 floors	mixed use - retail and office	28,500 sf
8 + 9	3 floors	mixed use - retail / office and residential	32,760 sf

17%

retail

7%

mixed-use

76%

residential

Private Realm and Yield Analysis

The study team recognizes that private development proposals are likely to come with unique attributes and architectural character based on developer pro-forma and development goals. With that in mind, the proposed Riverfront Redevelopment Plan suggests a mix of uses that are well suited for redevelopment within Norristown, based on the economic assessment and market study developed done in conjunction with this plan.

The planning team sees the portfolio of residential to retail/mixed uses as key in maintaining a healthy and thriving micro-economy in this new neighborhood along the riverfront. The hope is that this balance will stimulate continued growth along Main Street in Norristown as complementary services and businesses develop.

The Redevelopment Plan hinges on a series of formulas to calculate yield along the riverfront. Retail and mixed use square footage, residential unit count, and parking demand per land use type based on the Norristown Ordinance were all used to determine building size and placement along the riverfront. The following guidelines were used in calculating development yield:

Parking Requirements:

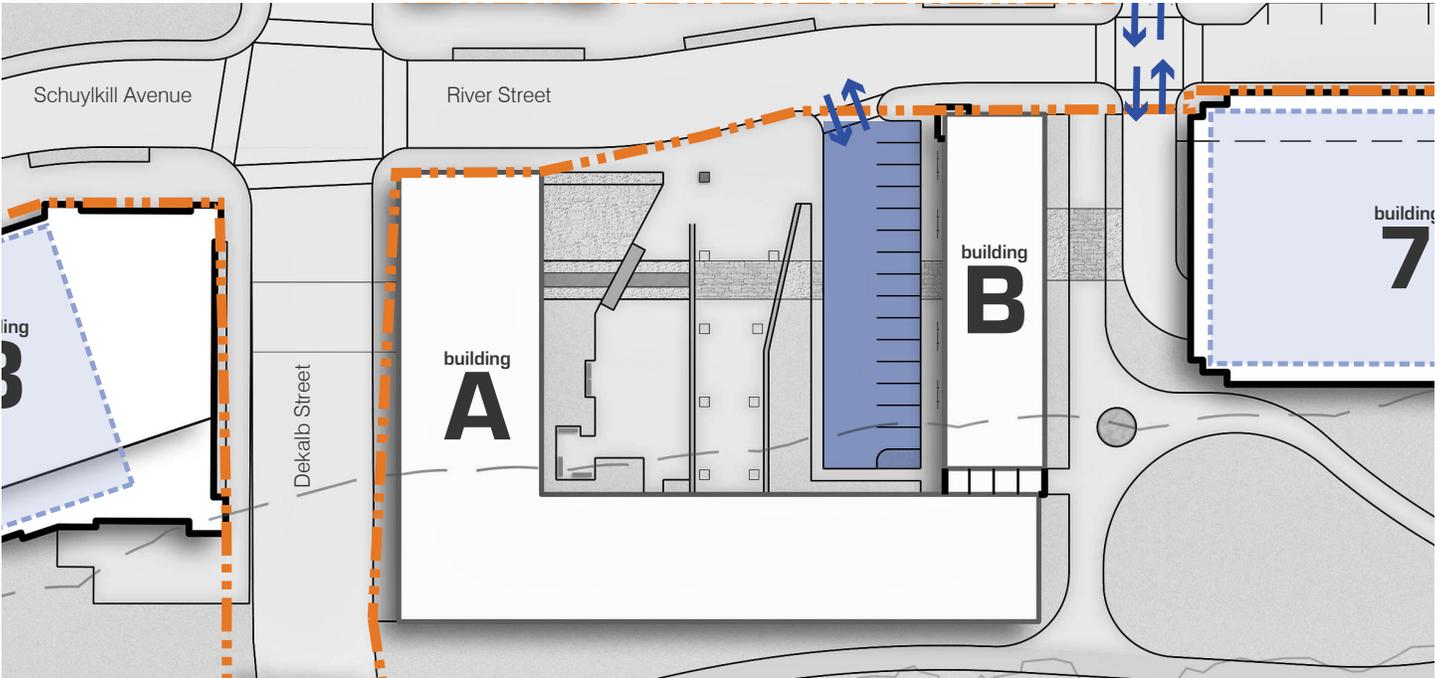
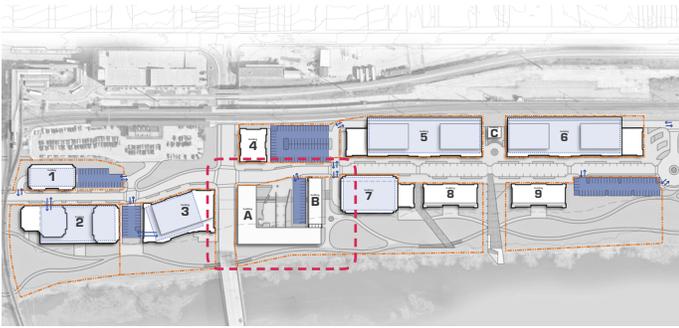
- Residential apartment – 1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% of gross building square footage and 1200 square foot rooms)
- Retail – 1 space per 250 square feet of floor space*
- Mixed Use – 1 space per 250 square feet of floor space**
- Restaurant – 1 space per 50 square feet of consumer space (assumed 60% of restaurants are consumer space)

Parking Space Dimensions:

- 90 degree parking stall – 9' x 18'
- Parallel parking stall – 9' x 22'
- Drive aisle width – 22'

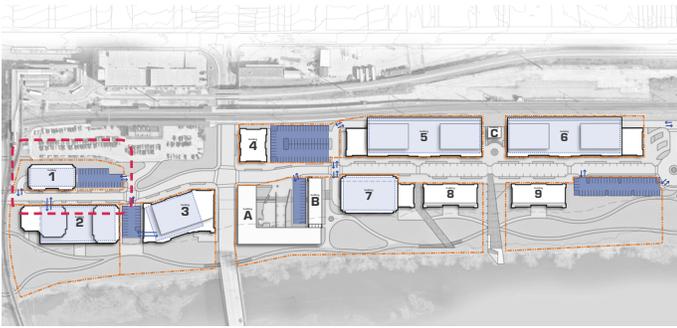
* commercial buildings are 1 space per 400 SF; shopping centers are 1 space per 250 SF per Norristown Ordinance (this plan uses 1 per 250 as a worst case scenario)

** no mixed use is specified in Norristown's Ordinance.



Existing Building A and Building B

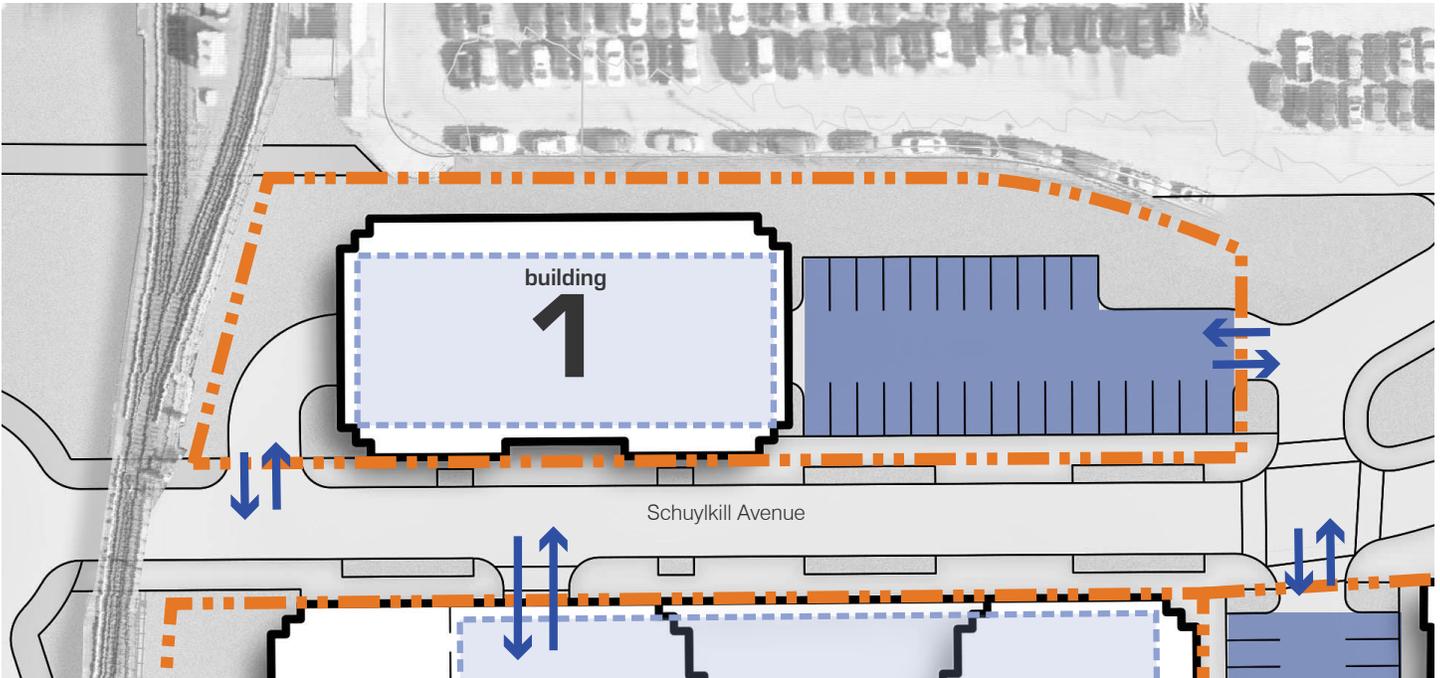
Building A and Building B are part of the Jamison Mill complex, which dates back to the 1800s. The buildings are probably best suited for adaptive reuse. Building A could potentially be redeveloped into residential units. Building B could be redeveloped into a restaurant. Additional studies and building assessments will be needed to understand the design constraints of adaptively redeveloping these buildings.



BUILDING 1 - Schuykill Ave (northwestern building)

	RETAIL	RESTAURANT	RESIDENTIAL	MIXED
TOTAL SF			60000	
REQUIRED PARKING	0	0	56.25	0
NOTES	1 per 250 SF	1 per 50 SF of consumer space (assumed 60% consumer)	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1 per 250 SF (nothing in code)

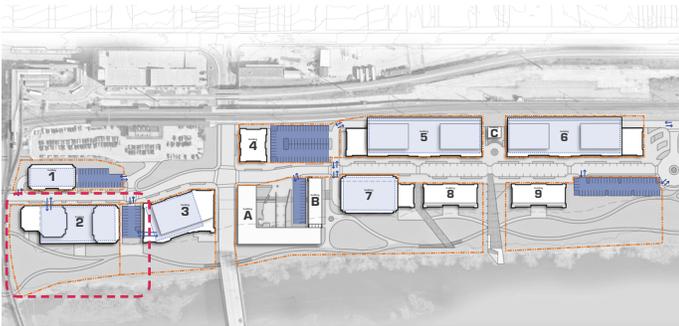
Required Parking : Provided Parking
 56.25 : 57



Building 1

Building 1 is proposed as a six story residential building. The bottom floor is proposed as parking, and extends as surface parking adjacent to the tower. The upper five floors are residential with connection opportunities to the Norristown Transportation Center.

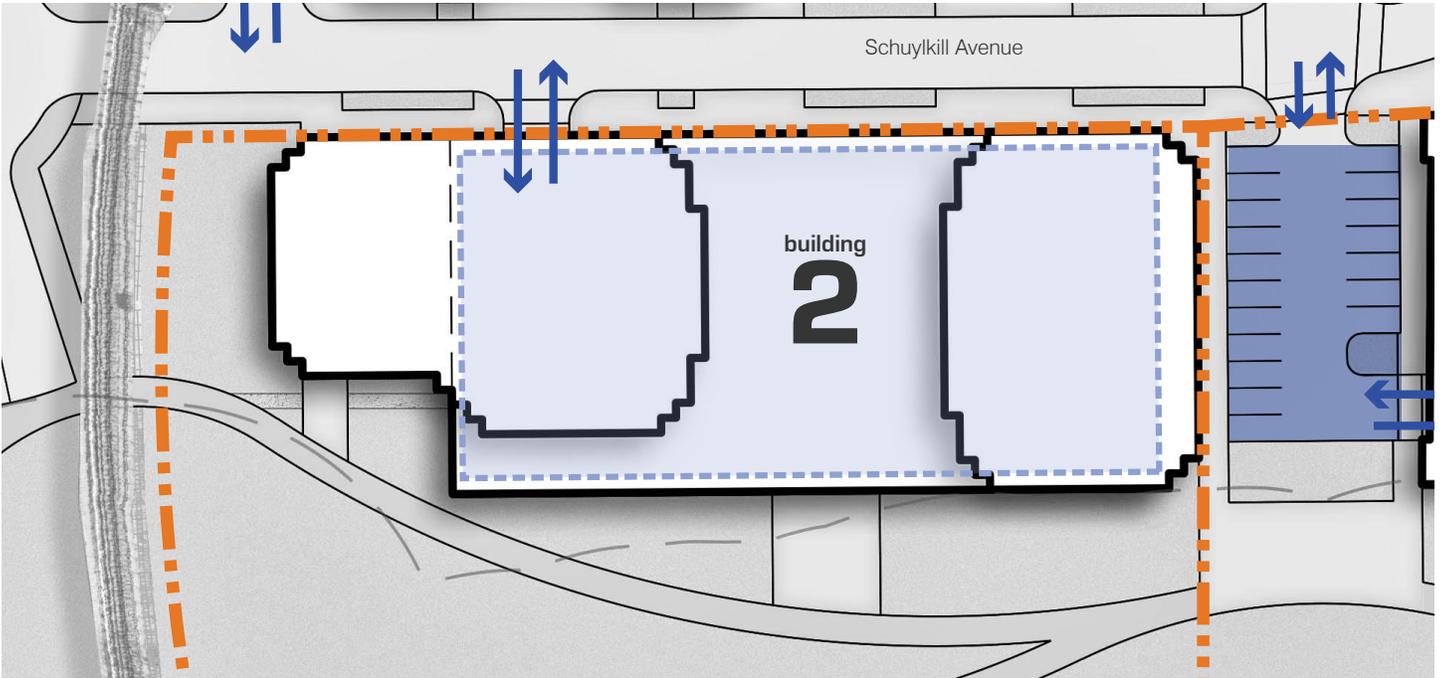




BUILDING 2 - Schuylkill Ave (western building)

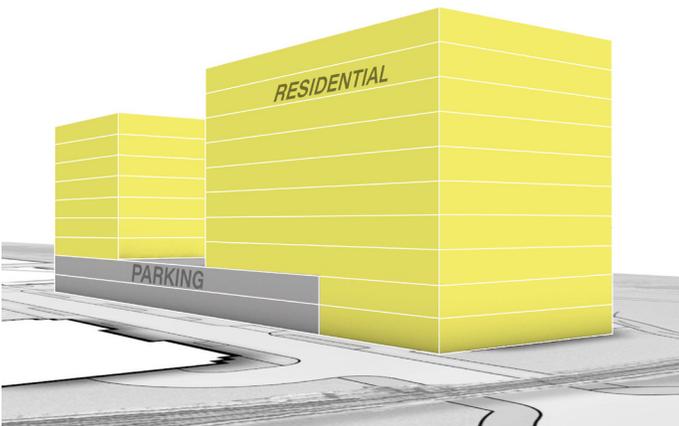
	RETAIL	RESIDENTIAL 1	RESIDENTIAL 2	MIXED
TOTAL SF		102400	76800	
REQUIRED PARKING	0	96	72	0
NOTES	1 per 250 SF	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1 per 250 SF (nothing in code)

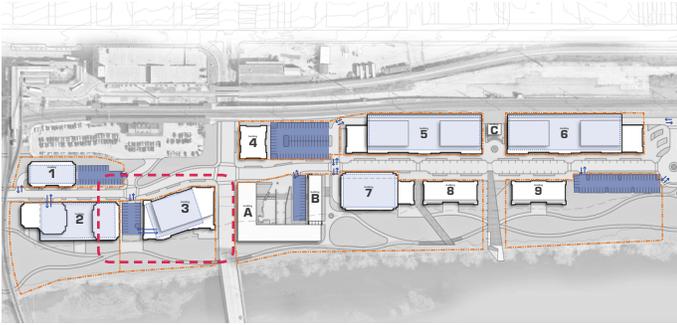
Required Parking: 168 Provided Parking: 168



Building 2

Building 2 is suggested to be a ten story residential building. The bottom two floors are proposed as a private parking garage for resident use only. The western most end of the building on the first two floors is shown as residential for amenity and lobby space. The building, as configured, proposes two residential towers with outdoor resident amenity space between the towers on top of the parking deck.

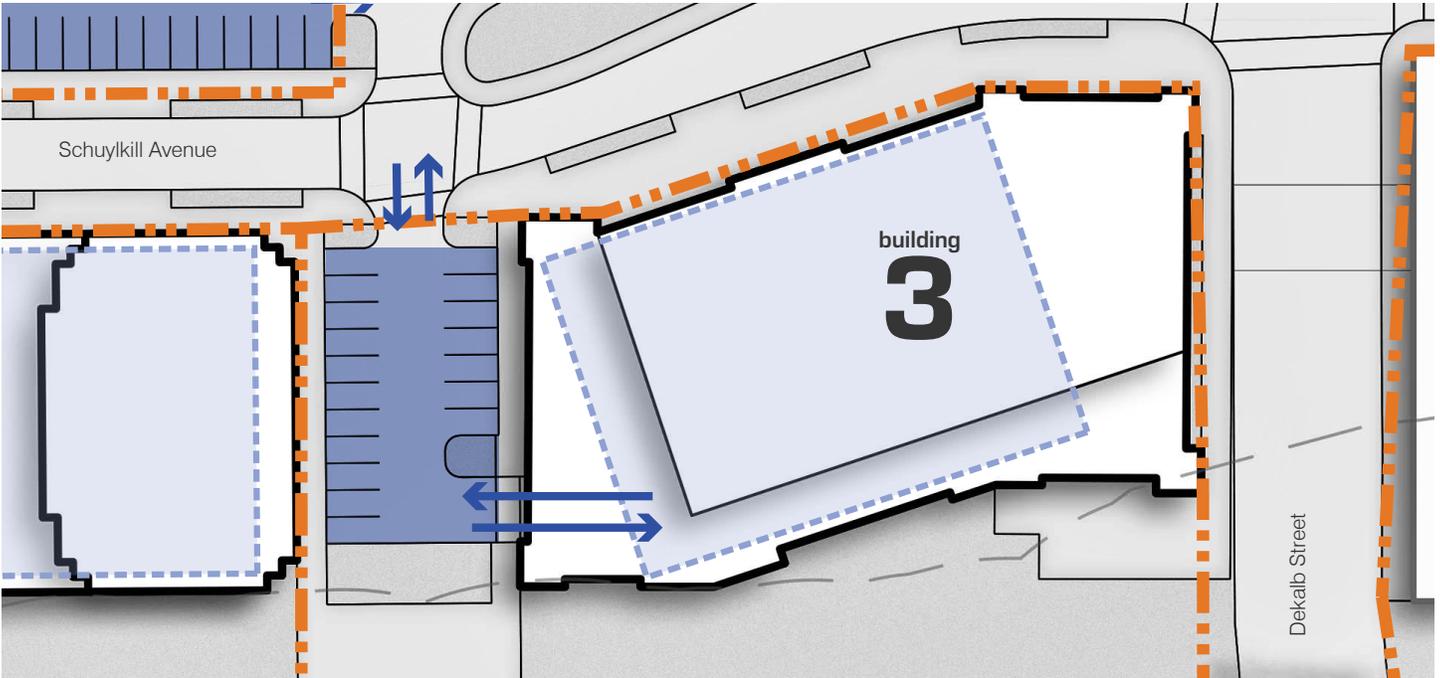




BUILDING 3 - Schuylkill Ave and Dekalb

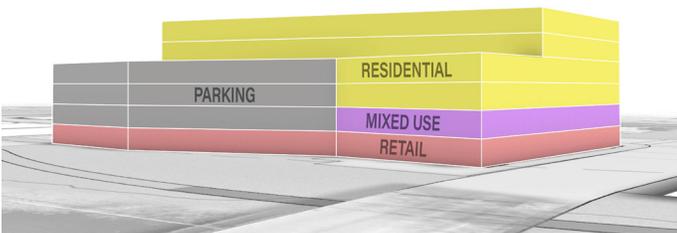
	RETAIL	RESTAURANT	RESIDENTIAL	MIXED
TOTAL SF	28185	0	49440	6000
REQUIRED PARKING	112.74	0	46.35	24
NOTES	1 per 250 SF	1 per 50 SF of consumer space (assumed 60% consumer)	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1 per 250 SF (nothing in code)

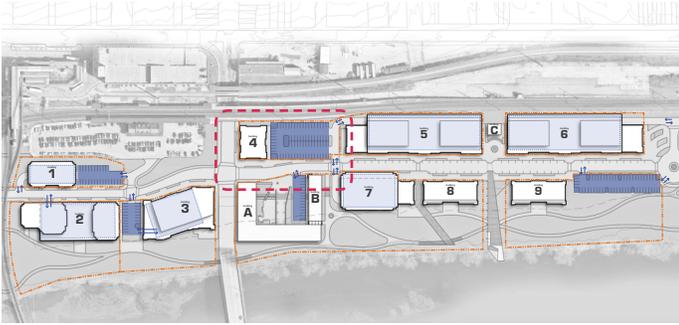
Required Parking	Provided Parking
183.09	184



Building 3

Building 3 is proposed as a six story mixed-use building. The first floor is a retail wrapper that extends to the intersection of Schuylkill Avenue and Dekalb Street. The second, third, and fourth floors in the western portion of the building are indicated as a parking garage for residents and retail patrons. The western portion of the second floor is proposed as a mixed use along Dekalb Street. This portion of the building is envisioned as a possible two story retail space. The upper floors are proposed as residential development. The residential floors step back at the upper most levels providing outdoor amenity space for residents facing the river.

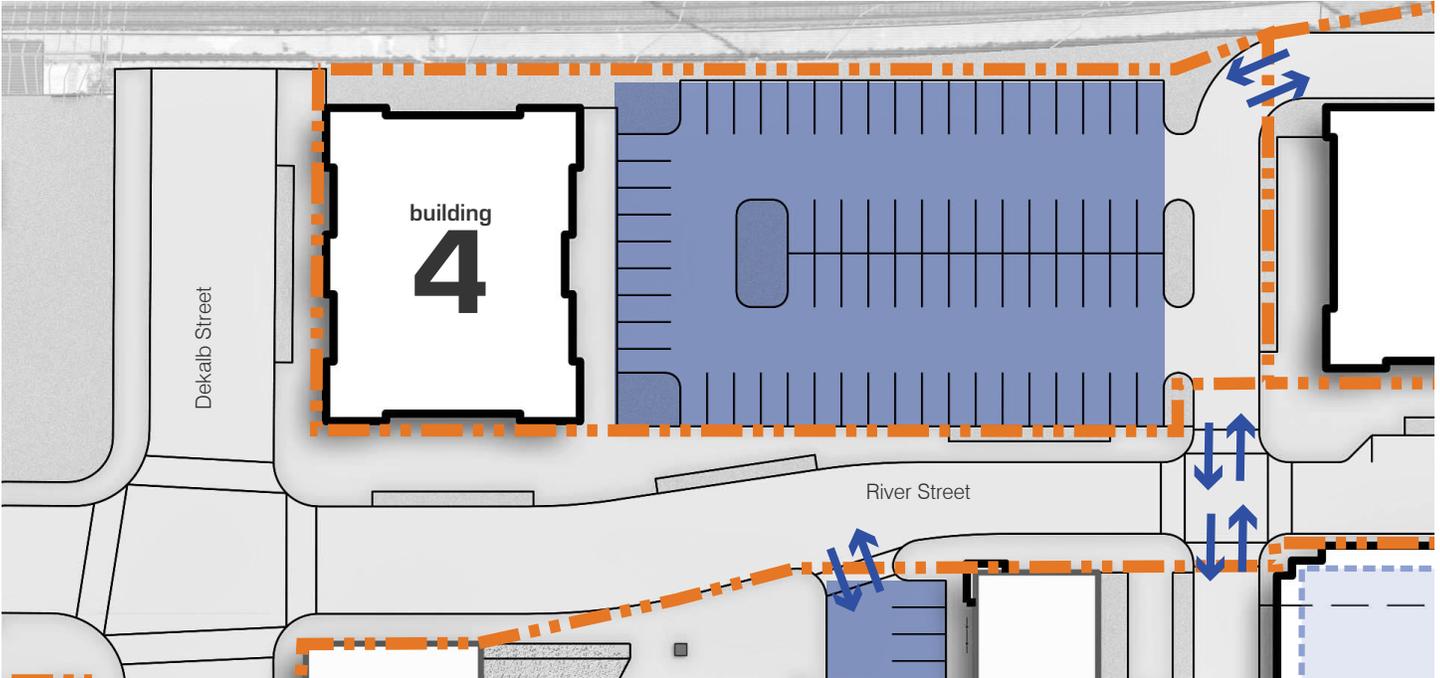




BUILDING 4 - East of Dekalb St.

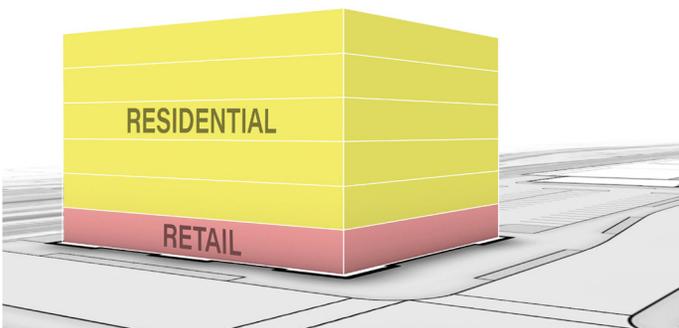
	RETAIL	RESTAURANT	RESIDENTIAL	MIXED
TOTAL SF	8000		40000	
REQUIRED PARKING	32	0	37.5	0
NOTES	1 per 250 SF	1 per 50 SF of consumer space (assumed 60% consumer)	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1 per 250 SF (nothing in code)

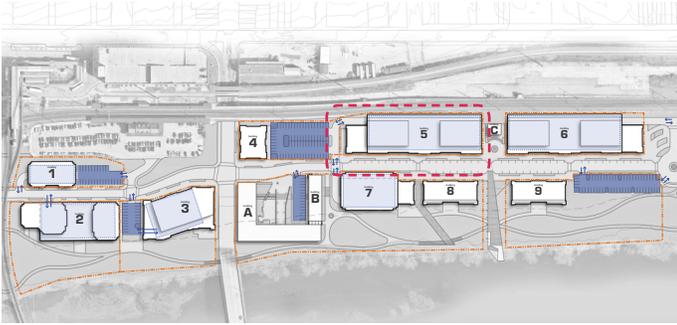
Required Parking	Provided Parking
69.5	72



Building 4

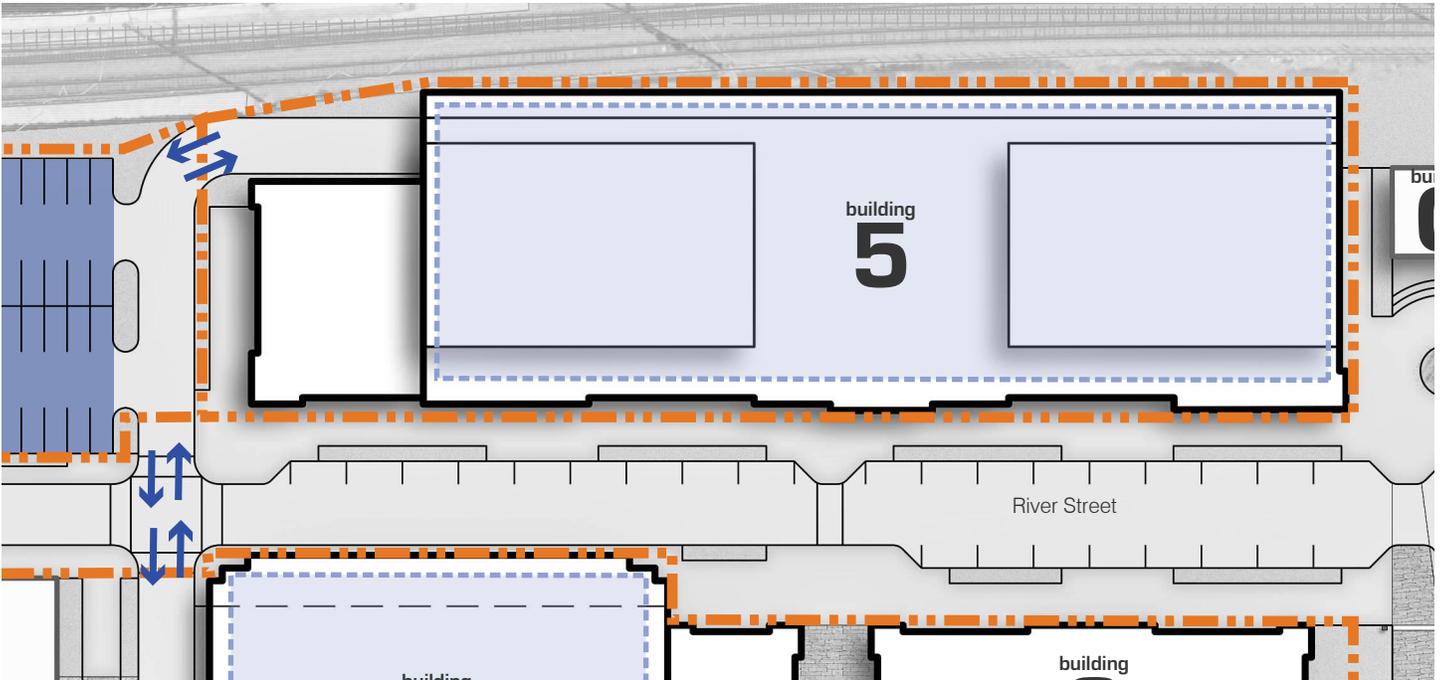
Building 4 is shown as a six story mixed-use building. The bottom floor would be a retail wrapper that extends to the intersection of River Street and Dekalb Street. The upper five floors are all residential units. Surface parking is provided to the east of the building.





BUILDING 5 - Inland Mixed Use (east of Dekalb)				
	RETAIL	RESTAURANT	RESIDENTIAL	MIXED
TOTAL SF	42164		108800	11050
REQUIRED PARKING	168.656		0	102
NOTES	1 per 250 SF	1 per 50 SF of consumer space (assumed 60% consumer)	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1 per 250 SF (nothing in code)

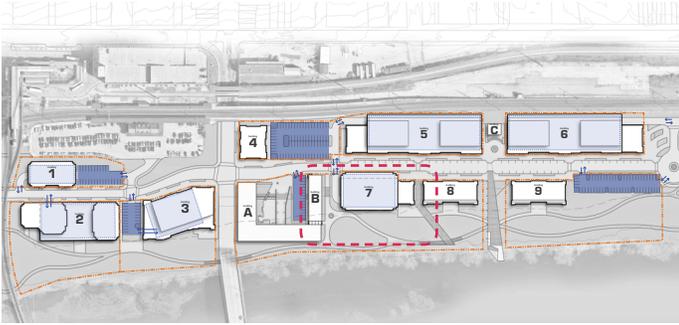
Required Parking	Provided Parking
314.856	319



Building 5 and Building 6

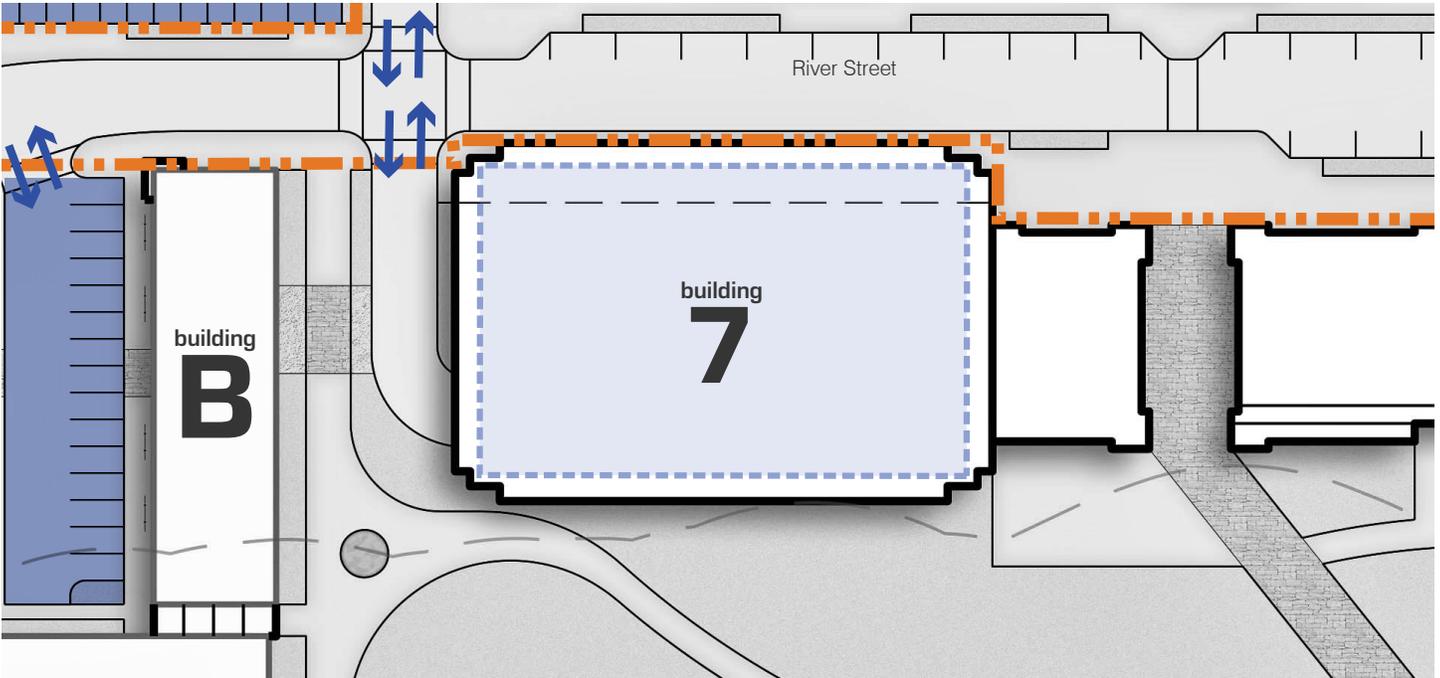
Buildings 5 and 6 are mirror images of each other and are suggested to be six story mixed -use buildings. The entire first floor is retail. The second and third floors are indicated as a parking garage with vehicular access via a ramp at the rear of the building. The upper three floors are residential units. The upper most levels of the building are tiered to provide outdoor amenity space for residents.





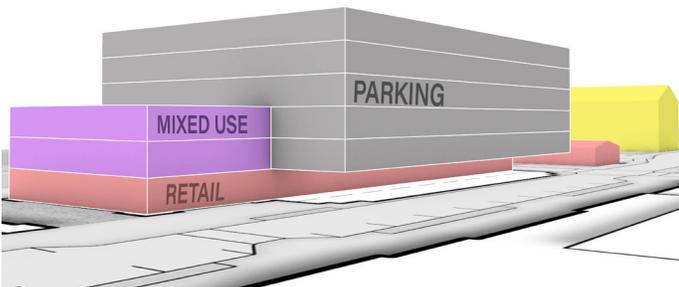
Building 7 - Riverfront Mixed and Parking Garage				
	RETAIL	RESTAURANT	RESIDENTIAL	MIXED
TOTAL SF	21500			7000
REQUIRED PARKING	86	0	0	28
NOTES	1 per 250 SF	1 per 50 SF of consumer space (assumed 60% consumer)	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1 per 250 SF (nothing in code)

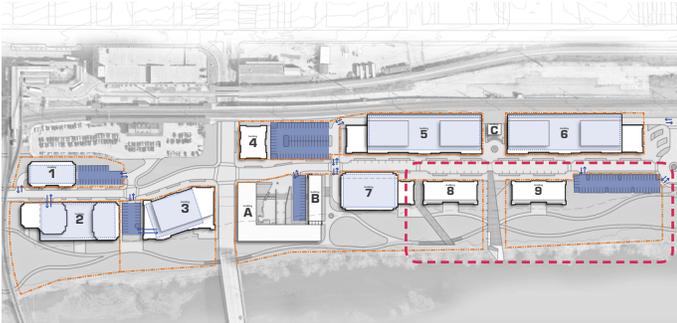
Required Parking : Provided Parking
 114 : 114



Building 7

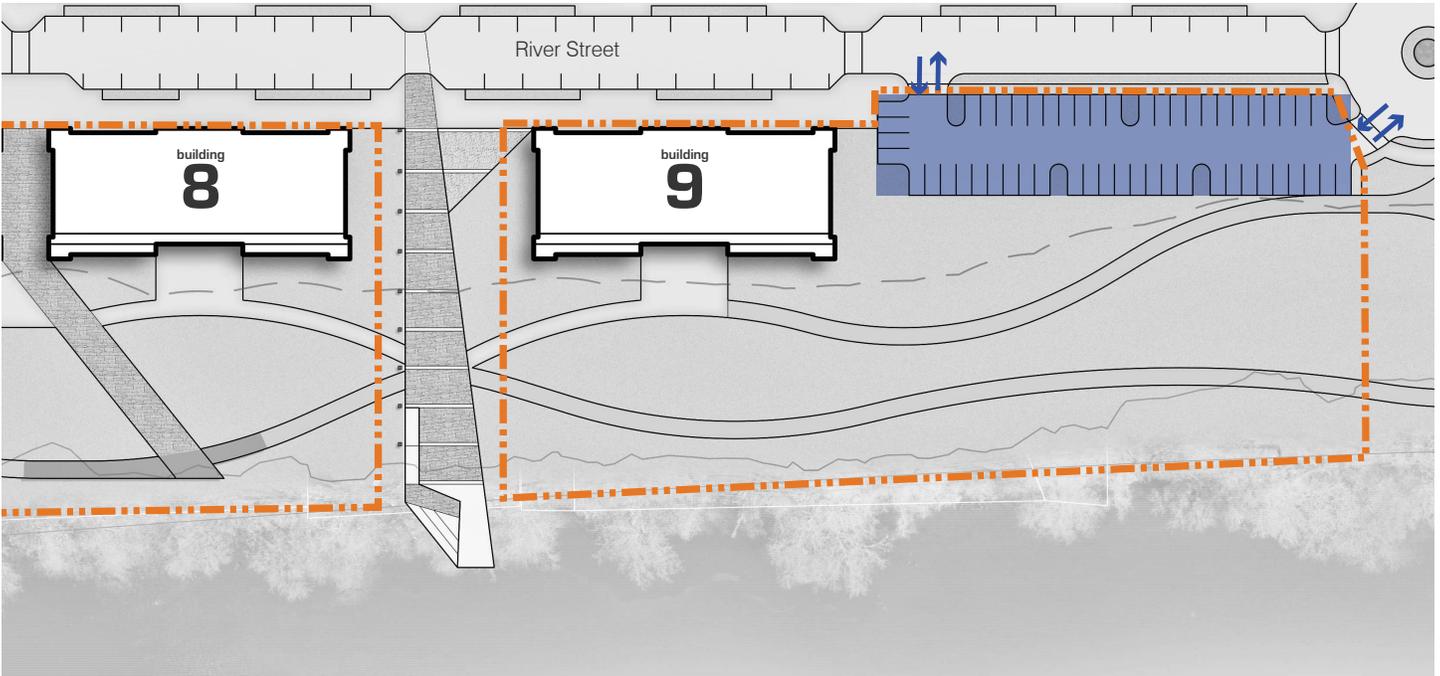
Building 7 is drawn as a parking garage that services the residential uses in Existing Building A, restaurant use in Existing Building B, mixed use development for Building 8, and retail on the ground floor of Building 7. The first floor retail of Building 7 maintains a retail centric shopping district along River Street.





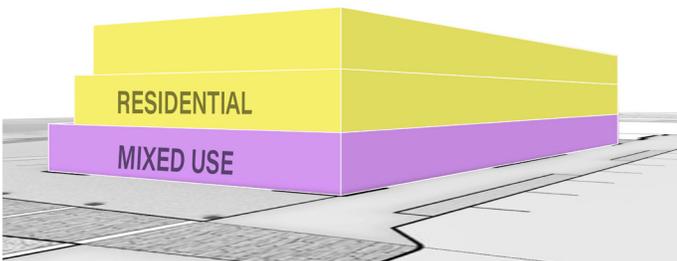
BUILDING 8 - Riverfront Mixed Use (east of Dekalb)				
	RETAIL	RESTAURANT	RESIDENTIAL	MIXED
TOTAL SF			21000	11760
REQUIRED PARKING		0	19.6875	47.04
NOTES	1 per 250 SF	1 per 50 SF of consumer space (assumed 60% consumer)	1.5 spaces per unit (assumed 75% units and 1200 SF rooms)	1 per 250 SF (nothing in code)

Required Parking: 66.7275
 Provided Parking: 67

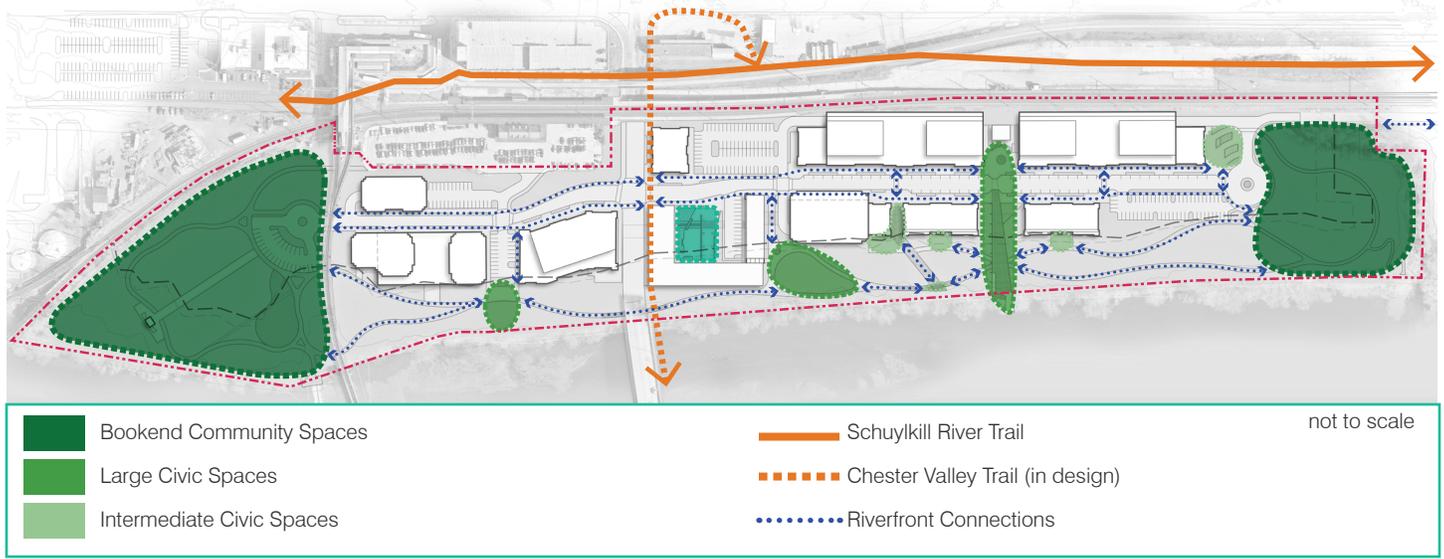


Building 8 and Building 9

Buildings 8 and 9 are both three story mixed use buildings. Parking for Building 8 is provided in the Building 7 parking garage and parking for Building 9 is provided as surface parking to the east of the building. The first floors of these buildings are retail with connections to both River Street and the riverfront promenade. The upper two floors of these buildings are residential units. The upper floors of the buildings are tiered to provide views of the Schuylkill River.



Public Space and Connections Diagram



Public Realm

The public realm and private realm work together in the Redevelopment Plan to create an attractive place to live, work, and play. The public realm ties the entire riverfront together with two bookend community parks at the western and eastern ends of the riverfront. The connection between the parks is via a 100' wide riverfront promenade, designed per Norristown's Zoning Ordinance. This creates ample recreation opportunities and car-free connections to the private realm. The promenade also embraces and brings people to the river. Supporting civic spaces are incorporated throughout the riverfront to provide people with a variety of areas to enjoy, ranging from small intimate spaces for a few people, intermediate-sized spaces for small groups of people and dining areas, to large plaza areas suitable for larger gatherings and events.

These public spaces should be planned, built, and maintained by the Municipality of Norristown. This gives Norristown the opportunity to help shape the waterfront vision and guide private development. Norristown could also work with private developers to encourage some public spaces to be constructed

during private sector development. This would allow private developers to invest in civic space programming and amenities offered to their tenants, while saving Norristown money on capital improvement projects. It is important for the Municipality of Norristown to maintain and enforce a unified vision for the riverfront.

Connectivity

Connections within the riverfront redevelopment area as well as connections to downtown Norristown and the adjacent region are provided and encouraged within the redevelopment area. The plan also connects to downtown Norristown to encourage the movement of pedestrians in and around the riverfront area. The existing railroad embankment along the northern boundary of the redevelopment area is a constraint that will need to be designed around. Along Dekalb Street, sidewalk improvements and railroad underpass enhancements would encourage pedestrian movement to and from downtown Norristown. These enhancements could include lighting, art, sculpture, and murals. The Race Street Connector and Spring Garden Connector under Interstate 95 in Philadelphia are great examples of this type of improvement.

At the western end of the Redevelopment Plan, easy walking connections can be made from the west park and Building 1, across the existing pedestrian bridge or via the Dekalb Street underpass.

Connections from the eastern ends of the Redevelopment Plan are more limited due to a lack of street connections and the existing railroad embankment. A pedestrian tunnel under the embankment could create an additional connection here. This connection could link up with the Schuylkill River Trail, and could continue into downtown Norristown along the proposed Saw Mill Run Greenway Trail, per the 2016 Stony Creek / Saw Mill Run Greenway Plan prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

The Schuylkill River Trail and the proposed extension of the Chester Valley Trail meet just a couple hundred feet north of the redevelopment area. The Chester Valley Trail extension will pass through the study area along Dekalb Street. These two trails provide strong recreational connections to Philadelphia, Reading, King of Prussia, Exton, and beyond. Regional trails like these can also bring economic growth to Norristown and can further stimulate development along the riverfront.

Streetscape Experience

The proposed streetscape east of Dekalb Street is 92' from building face to building face. The new, proposed River Street has a 24' cartway with 9'-wide parallel parking on either side. Each side of the street is 25' from the curbline to the building frontage, creating space for outdoor dining and window shopping. A 6' wide tree pit is proposed with a 3' wide paving edge behind the curb to allow easy access to and from parked cars. Trees are proposed in groupings of three in one large tree pit for improved growing conditions and for improved visibility of the first floor storefront retail tenants.



Study area - Looking East



Section through River Street (looking east)

Scale: 1"=20'

West Park

PECO currently owns the 6.2 acre parcel at the western end of the Redevelopment Area. This parcel is zoned as recreational per Norristown’s Zoning Ordinance. Norristown will need to work with PECO to acquire or lease the property in order to develop a public park. Environmental assessment work need to be performed to understand the level of potential contamination, and what measures might be required to make them safe for public recreational use.

A West Park Master Plan should be developed to advance the design of the western community park. This process would include an inventory and analysis, community involvement, design recommendations, and an implementation strategy. For this feasibility study, a park program was developed based on input from the community and Norristown staff.

Proposed improvements include:

- Kayak beach – The Schuylkill River is a water trail. A kayak beach allows water trail users a safe exit point from the river upstream of the Norristown dam.
- Amphitheater – A large lawn amphitheater provides a new, passive recreational facility that can support a large number of visitors for a variety of events.
- Playground – A playground provides active recreation opportunities for children. A range of play equipment for children of different ages is recommended.
- Dam Overlook – Plaza space overlooking the dam provides users with a space to fish or to relax and view the dam and river. Interpretive signage could provide historical information about the dam and mill race.



West Park Plan

NTS

- **Mill Race** – Evidence of the historic mill race from the early 1900s has been erased in the study area. The park provides an opportunity to highlight the historic alignment of the mill race and to provide interpretive signage about its history.
- **Natural Areas** – Naturalized meadows and reforestation provide beautiful edges to open program spaces, such as the amphitheater, can provide wildlife value and help reestablish a riparian buffer along the river.
- **Trails** – Trails are the number one most desired recreational amenity, according to the Pennsylvania Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Trails within the park should connect to the adjacent riverfront promenade trail and to the Norristown Transportation Center.

East Park

During the course of the Redevelopment Study, a concept plan for development at the eastern terminus of the study area near the Saw Mill Run was submitted to the Municipality of Norristown. Should that proposal not be developed, the municipality should move forward with developing East Park as a passive recreation area.

Portions of the site have recently been disturbed by construction and remediation activities and the balance of the site is currently forested with some steeper topography near the confluence of the Saw Mill Run and Schuylkill River. Maintaining existing vegetation provides a healthy riparian zone and stabilizes the steep slopes at this river confluence. A trail is proposed through the park that connects down to the Schuylkill River for a boat launch. This boat launch provides water trail users with a safe place to enter or re-enter the Schuylkill downstream of the dam. Trail connections are provided to the riverfront promenade trail and along Washington Street east of the redevelopment area.



East Park Plan

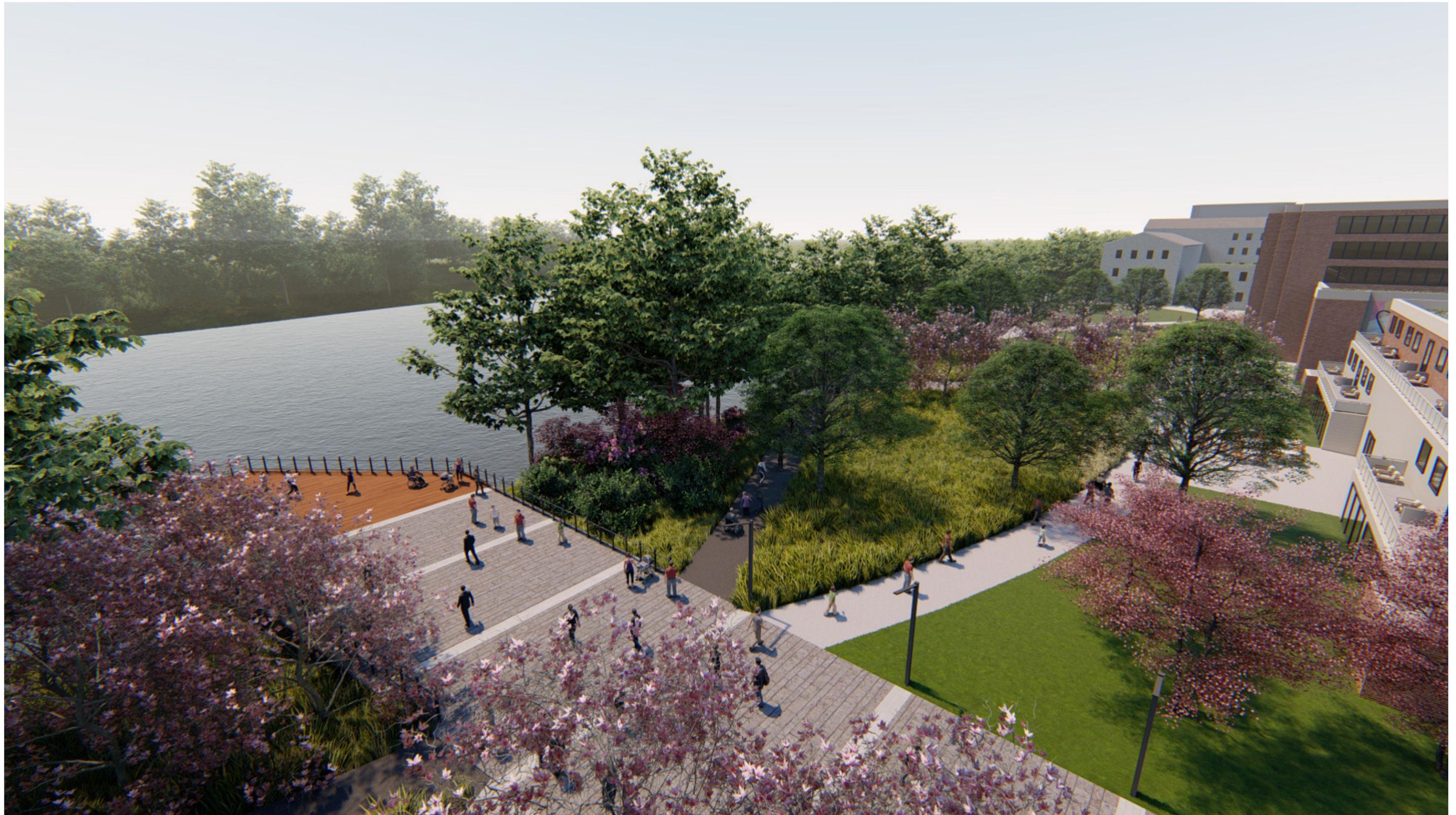
NTS



Birds-Eye Perspective - View Towards Sunset Pier



Birds-Eye Perspective - View Towards Norristown



Birds-Eye Perspective - Riverfront Promenade



Perspective - Central Civic Space Plaza



Perspective - River Street



Perspective - Mill Race Plaza

4

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines

This chapter suggests guidelines for various elements that will help to create a unified but authentic, attractive, and safe riverfront neighborhood. Key topics regarding development proposals within the private realm include:

- Building Form and Street Frontages
- Building Use
- Building Finish Floor Elevation
- Building Materials and Roof Forms

Key categories within the public realm include a brief discussion on preferred materials including:

- Streetscapes and Plazas
- Open Space and Parks

Private Realm Development Guidelines

Building Form and Street Frontages

Building form within the redevelopment area shall be designed to meet the Norristown Ordinance. Many of the buildings in the plan call for retail uses at street level and residential on upper levels, with most buildings being mixed-use buildings. Parking garages within mixed-use buildings are to be situated behind or above ground-floor retail to preserve street frontage retail or other appropriate business uses.

Street Frontages and Storefronts

Building frontages and storefronts shall be positioned adjacent to streets and plaza spaces to create a dense and vibrant streetscape environment. Surface parking lots shall not be placed between roads and building frontages, rather surface parking shall be placed to the rear or to the side of new development.

Building Use

Based on the Redevelopment Plan, the most viable buildings for 'high visibility' retail uses that thrive in high-traffic environments are those located closest to Dekalb Street. A number of buildings along River Street are also well-suited to other



Building Form



Street Frontages and Storefronts



Building Use Placement

not to scale



Building Materials and Roof Forms



Building Materials and Roof Forms

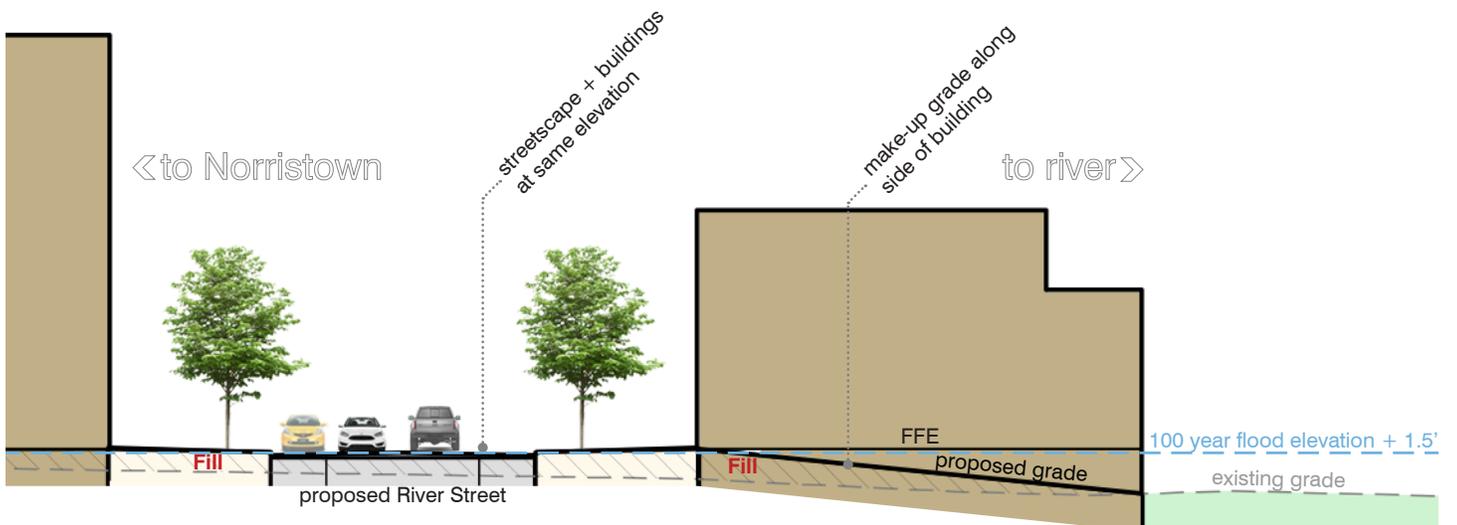
types or retail such as restaurants, coffee shops, and other establishments that thrive in ‘strolling environments’ with walk-in clientele, etc. Residential-only development should occur in close proximity to the Norristown Transportation Center for easy mass transit access to Philadelphia and King of Prussia (via the future High Speed Rail extension).

Building Finish Floor Elevation

Much of the redevelopment area falls within the 100 year floodplain elevation. Finish floor elevations shall be placed 1’-6” above the 100 year floodplain elevation (per Norristown’s Ordinance) to comply with current permitting requirements and to account for future climate change impacts.

Building Materials and Roof Forms

Building materials shall match the architectural style of Norristown, while incorporating a select use of industrial elements. The use of glass, brick, and stone are common building materials in Norristown and are encouraged within the redevelopment area. While both flat and peaked roof construction techniques are common in Norristown, based on the former industrial character of the waterfront, both are permitted but flat roofs are encouraged in proposed developments.



Building Finish Floor Elevation



concrete sidewalk



historic railroad tracks
(street)



historic railroad tracks
(public space)



brick sidewalk and
granite curb



brick bands



differing paving patterns

Public Realm Development Guidelines

Streetscapes and Plazas

Streetscape and plaza elements should be uniform throughout the design. These include street lights, benches, trash receptacles, planters, bollards, and other site furnishings and various paving materials. Establishing consistent standards will help create a clean and attractive streetscape. This plan recommends the following materials and elements:

Street Lights – These fixtures will be owned and operated by Norristown and as such, should be high-performance fixtures that provide adequate light output, shall be durable, energy efficient as well as an attractive addition to the new riverfront neighborhood.

Benches and Seating – These elements should be utilized in strategic locations within the Redevelopment. Neighborhood standards should be selected for cost and durability as well as comfort of users and should be selected, along with other public realm elements, to provide attractive and functional additions to the new neighborhood.

Trash and Recycling Receptacles – Trash and recycling receptacles should be placed at key points along pathways, civic gathering spaces, and outdoor dining areas. These elements should match neighborhood standards.

Planters – Planters add an attractive element and safety measure to the redevelopment. These elements can be placed along roadways to define pedestrian areas and within civic spaces as an aesthetic component. These elements will need to be maintained.



tree pits and rain gardens



light bollards



industrial benches



standard streetscape bench



trash receptacles



streetlights

Bollards and Other Site Furnishings – Bollards and other site furnishings should be used throughout the redevelopment and match neighborhood standards. Bollards provide safety for pedestrians and can define pedestrian and vehicular areas.

Paving Materials – Paving materials used in pedestrian areas shall be primarily cast-in-place concrete paving with alternate surfaces including stone, unit pavers and gravel surfaces permitted as appropriate. Materials should be durable, slip resistant, and light in color. The preferred material for use in vehicular areas is asphalt.

Open Space and Parks

Softscape is vegetation design. Within civic areas, softscape shall be used to screen views, shape program spaces, and provide visual attraction. Vegetation should not create low visibility areas that could attract crime. Along the 100' promenade setback, softscape design should create areas of open lawn for recreational use, and areas of natural meadow and reforestation as a riparian buffer. Open areas with low or no trees shall be designed periodically along the river bank to create views.



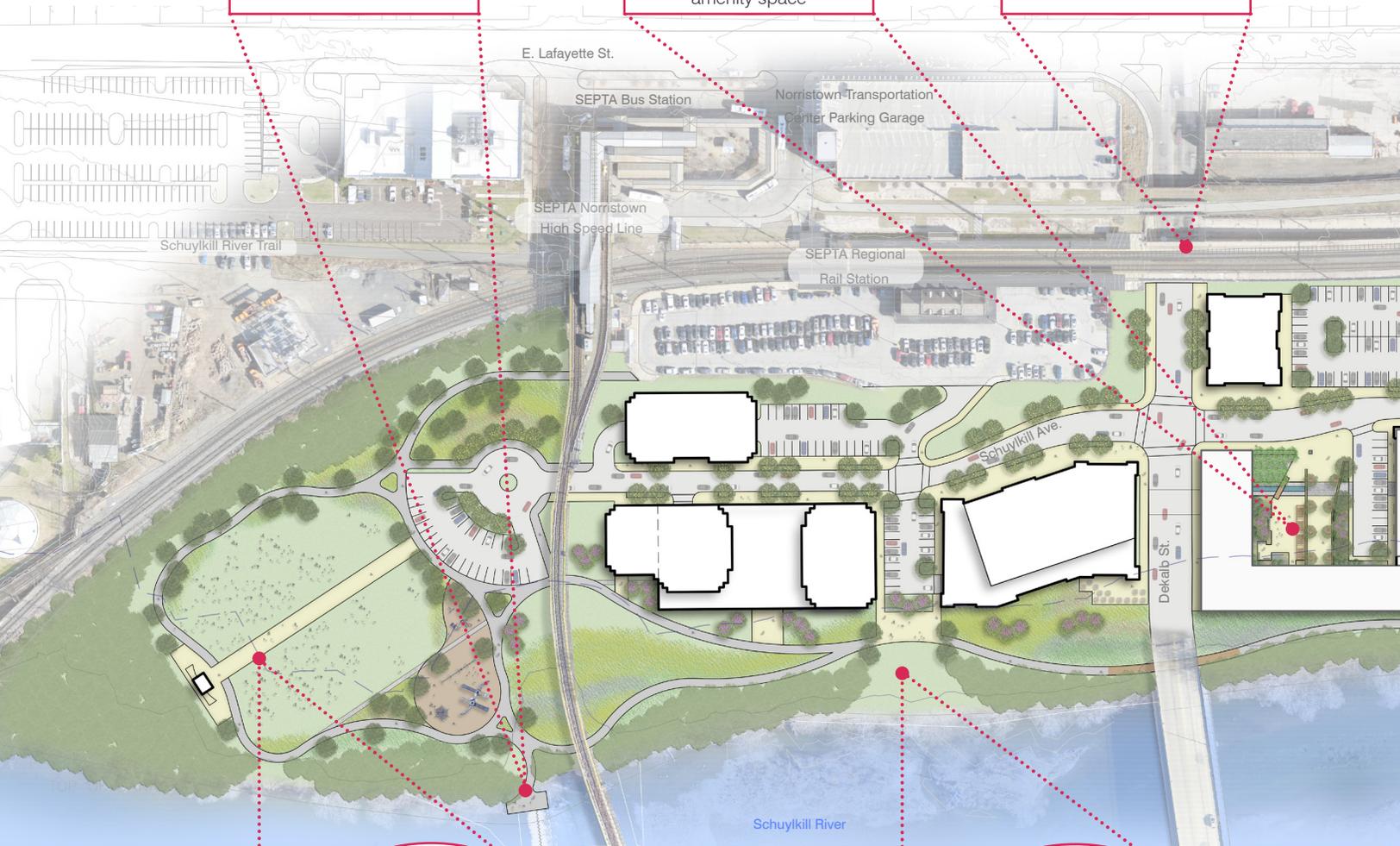
dam overlook



apartment outdoor amenity space



Dekalb Street underpass



amphitheater



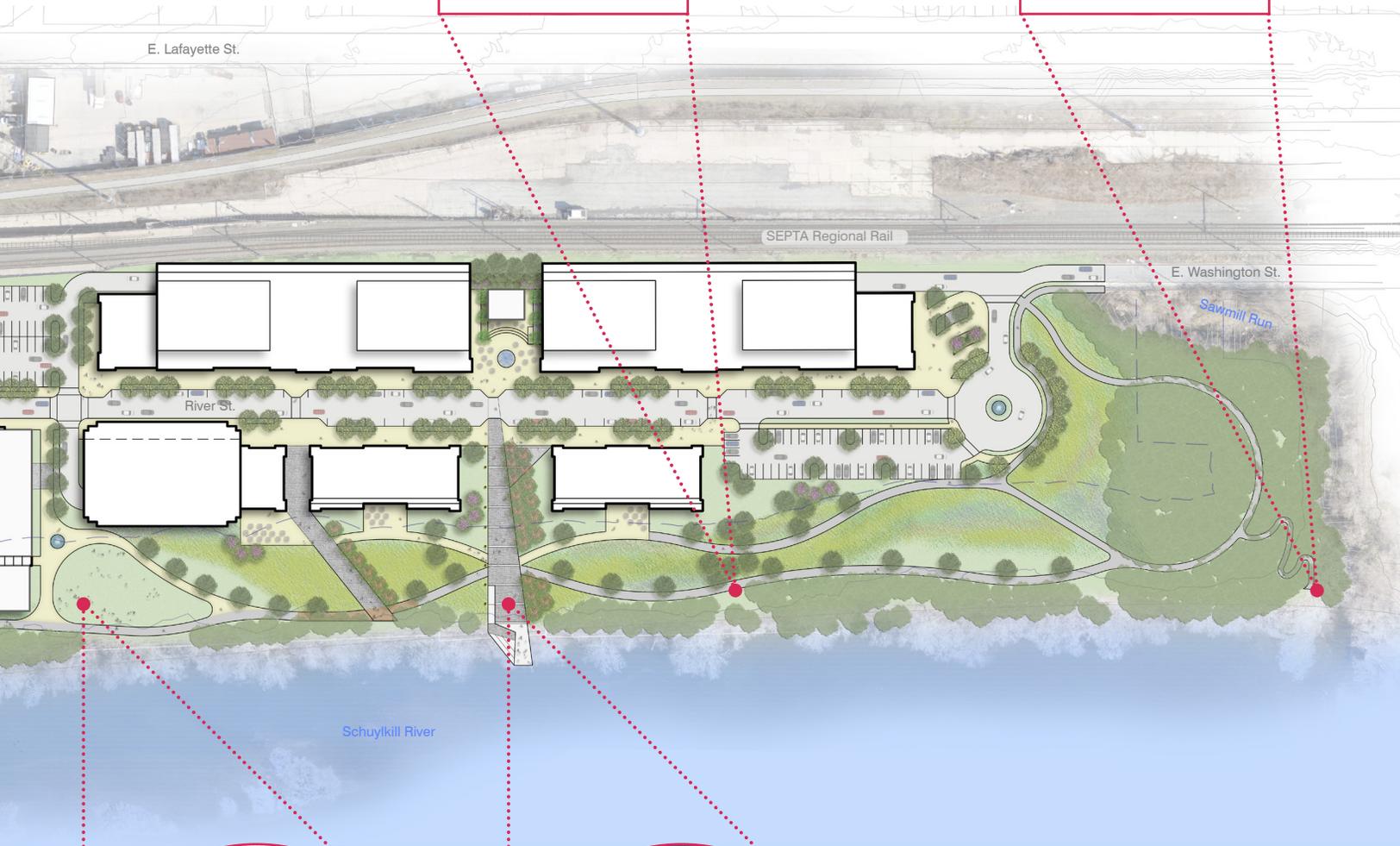
riverside open/public space



riverside trail



kayak / boat launch



event lawn



public recreational pier



north

not to scale

5

Appendix
