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Scott France, AICP
Executive Director

October 30, 2026

SUBJECT: Tentative Sketch Plan Review – 501 Washington Street (MCPC #22-0175-003)

TO: Mr. Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

FROM: Tim Konetchy, AICP, Principal Community Planner I, Montgomery County Planning Comm.
Timothy.Konetchy@montgomerycountypa.gov - 610.292.4917

BACKGROUND

We have reviewed the above-referenced tentative sketch plan, as you requested on October 23, 2026. The applicant, 501 Washington Street 2026, LLC, has submitted a tentative sketch plan that provides for redevelopment of a 3.4-acre parcel in Whitemarsh Township and Conshohocken Borough. The majority of the lot is located in Whitemarsh Township; however, the northwest corner of the lot is located within the Borough of Conshohocken. The property is located within the HVY, Heavy Industrial District, and the TDO-1, Transit-Friendly Design Overlay District. The property is also located within the Floodplain Conservation Overlay District and Riparian Corridor Conservation Overlay District.

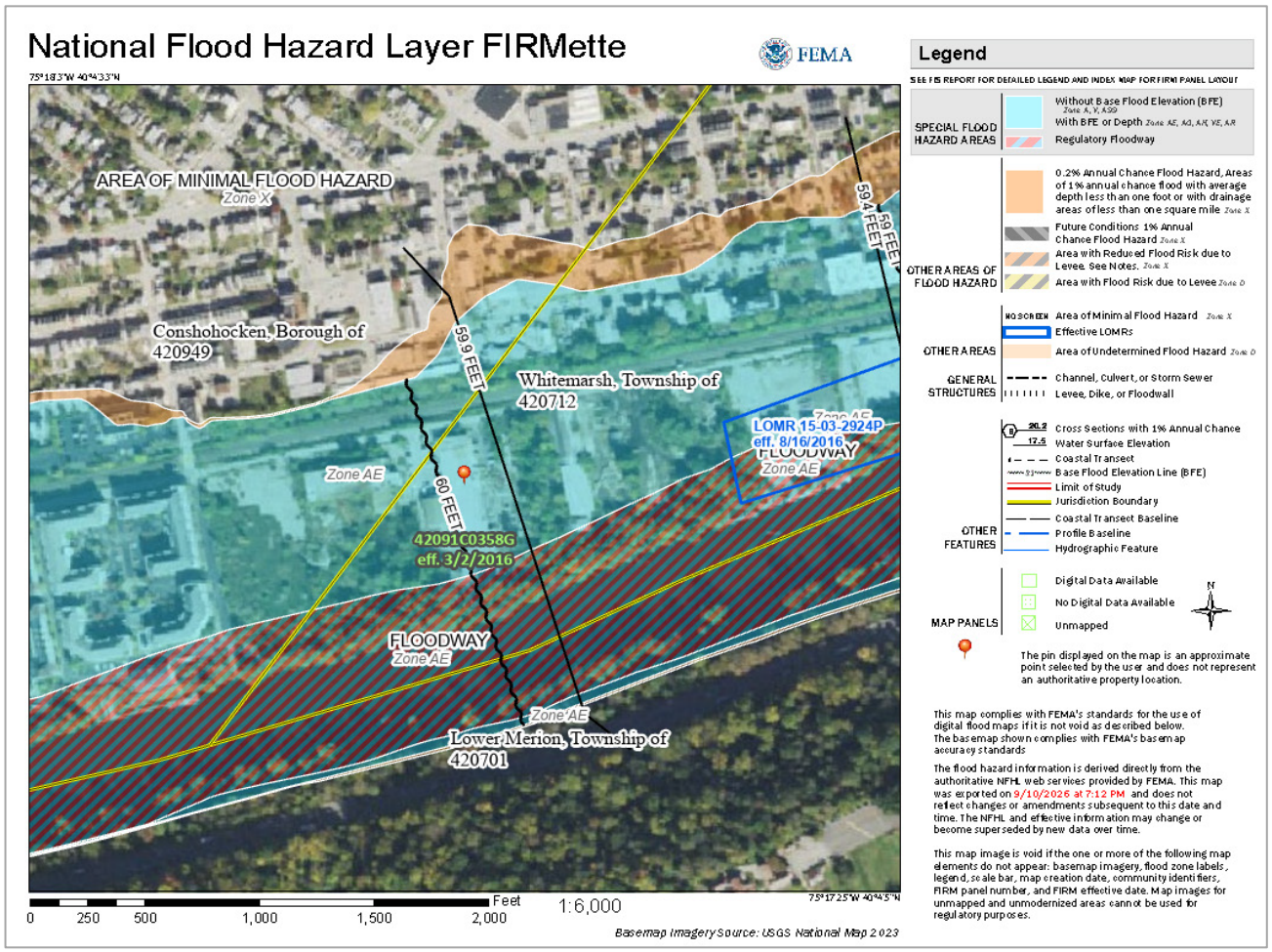
The tentative sketch plan provides for the construction of 64 dwelling units throughout four buildings, with 16 units per building. The four-story, 48-foot-tall buildings would be oriented perpendicular to the Schuylkill River, with substantial space between buildings. Access to Washington Street is proposed via what appears to be one-way entrance and exit driveways near the center of the site (though they are not noted as such), with internal circulation accessways providing access to rear-entry garages facing the eastern and western property boundaries. Additionally, two emergency access drives are proposed along the eastern and western property boundaries. Each dwelling unit would have one dedicated garage parking space, for a total of 64 spaces. Twelve additional parallel parking spaces are provided with three spaces provided in front of each of the four proposed buildings.

Please note that the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) reviewed a previous tentative sketch plan for this property under MCPC #22-0175-001 (letter dated August 8, 2022) and MCPC #22-0175-002 (letter dated September 24, 2026).

MCPC has reviewed the tentative sketch plan, and we present the following comments to serve as preliminary feedback based on the contents of that plan and the supporting documents provided at this time. We encourage the applicant to consider the following comments as the land development process progresses as we believe that they will lead to an improved preliminary plan which better achieves the Township's vision for Transit-Oriented Development. Please note that these comments are preliminary and are subject to change upon the submission of a preliminary plan. Our comments are as follows:

DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER'S FLOODWAY AND FLOODPLAIN

A. River Flooding and Public Safety. We have serious concerns regarding the redevelopment of the site as proposed in the plan due to the risk of flooding from the Schuylkill River. Based on a review of FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map #42091C0358G, effective 3/2/2016, the entire property is located within the 1% Annual Chance Flood Area and the regulatory floodway. Please refer to the National Flood Hazard Layer FIRMette (dated 9/10/2026) provided below.



The potential impacts on public health, safety, welfare, and the environment are significant factors in assessing the applicant's redevelopment proposal. A primary concern is that the development could place additional demands on local and county emergency services during Schuylkill River flooding events. The W*hitemarsh Township Selective Comprehensive Plan Update* (2020) recommends that "Any future development along the Riverfront, or flood zone within the township, must be cognizant of flood potential and identify mitigation strategies on-site to allow future uses to effectively address flood events" (p. 37). Given the history of severe flooding in this area, the Township must ensure that adequate safety measures are in place before considering development.

We recommend that the township require a flood emergency and evacuation plan prepared by a qualified professional be submitted alongside any future land development application(s). The plan should address emergency notification procedures, evacuation routes, alternative/emergency access during flood events, and the temporary relocation of residents, vehicles, and pets. In

addition, future residents should be provided with clear disclosures regarding flood risks, the potential need for evacuation, and the life and safety consequences of remaining on-site during a flood emergency. Given the substantial damage caused by flooding in recent years, we believe these measures are appropriate and necessary.

B. Proposed Trail within the Floodway. While we support the development of a riverfront trail, we also have serious concerns regarding the proposed development of a trail and scenic overlook within the floodway. Any improvements within the floodway are inevitably at risk of damage during flood events. No disturbance, other than restoration and enhancement of the floodway and associated riparian communities, should be pursued. The proposed trail should instead be relocated outside of the regulatory floodway and the applicant should provide detail on how such a trail may be designed to withstand future flood events.

C. PA DEP Chapter 105 Permit Applicability. As shown in the map provided above, a portion of the site is located within the FEMA-delineated floodway of the Schuylkill River. The applicant should provide additional information regarding whether the proposed improvements are subject to permitting requirements under PA DEP Chapter 105 (Water Obstructions and Encroachments). If required, evidence of all applicable permits or approvals should be provided to the township.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

A. Municipal Coordination. Because the proposed development site spans portions of Conshohocken Borough and Whitemarsh Township, the two municipalities must coordinate the review, approval, and enforcement processes. We recommend that the applicant meet jointly with both municipalities early in the process to clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities.

B. Washington Street. Washington Street and the surrounding roadway network raise significant concerns regarding vehicular access, particularly for emergency response and for potential impacts on nearby residential streets in Conshohocken Borough. The proposed 64 dwelling units are expected to generate new traffic that could further burden the constrained roadway system. Significant infrastructure improvements may be necessary to provide safe and efficient access. We recommend that the applicant consider these impacts and constraints and collaborate with both Conshohocken Borough and Whitemarsh Township to ensure the roadway network is able to support the proposed development.

C. Pedestrian Circulation Concerns:

1. Sidewalks should be extended to connect to the rear of each building, providing convenient pedestrian access between the front and rear of each building. Furthermore, sidewalk connections should be provided between the proposed trail riverfront trail along the eastern property line and along the river to ensure that future residents are afforded convenient access to this recreational amenity.

2. Crosswalks are not provided throughout the development site per the submitted tentative sketch plan, which may result in an unsafe pedestrian environment. Crosswalks should be provided wherever a pedestrian pathway will cross a vehicular accessway. Each such crossing should also be provided with a curb ramp and detectable warning surface.

D. Vehicular Circulation. Additional information on the proposed vehicular circulation system should be provided in future submissions. The tentative sketch plan appears to provide for one-way ingress and egress; however, this is not clearly stated. Furthermore, additional information on how the proposed emergency access driveways will be controlled (e.g., through) should be provided.

E. Building Setback. We suggest that the northeast building be located further from Washington Street. The proposed location within 5 feet of the sidewalk, combined with a street-facing side façade, could create an unattractive and potentially obtrusive condition. Landscaping between the sidewalk and building and an attractive streetscape treatment would improve the proposal.

F. Stormwater Management. Stormwater management facilities are not addressed in the submitted material. We encourage the applicant to consider where such facilities may be provided in order to avoid future revisions to the site layout.

ZONING ORDINANCE ARTICLE XXII, FLOODPLAIN CONSERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT

A. As previously noted, the entire site is located within the 1% Annual Chance Flood Area and the regulatory floodway and is therefore subject to the Floodplain Conservation Overlay District requirements of Section 116-159.A. Dwelling units are permitted within the floodway fringe per Section 116-165.A., provided that they are in compliance with the provisions of the underlying district; they cause no increase in the elevation of the one-hundred-year-frequency recurrent interval flood by more than one foot at any point; and are not prohibited by any other ordinances or regulations. The applicant must demonstrate compliance with these requirements.

B. Should the proposal advances to a preliminary land development plan, it must also address compliance with the following general restrictions as set forth in Section 116-164.:

   1. *No use, activity or development shall adversely affect the capacity of the channels or floodways of any watercourse, drainage course or any other drainage facility or system.*

   2. *Prior to undertaking any alteration or relocation of any stream or watercourse within the Township:*

      (a). A permit shall be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, Dams and Encroachment Division; and

      (b). Notification of the proposed alteration or relocation shall be given to all affected adjacent municipalities. Copies of such notifications shall be forwarded to both the Federal Insurance Administration and the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.

   3. *In the Floodplain Conservation District, no development shall be permitted except where the effect of such development on flood heights is fully offset by accompanying improvements which have been approved by all appropriate local, state and federal authorities as required above.*

C. Should the proposal advances to a preliminary land development plan, it must also address compliance with Section 116-165.B.(4). which allows only pervious parking and loading areas.

ZONING ORDINANCE ARTICLE XLI, TRANSIT-FRIENDLY DESIGN OVERLAY (TDO) DISTRICT

A. Article XLI - Transit-Friendly Design Overlay District. Please note that the following comments do not constitute an exhaustive evaluation of compliance with the requirements of the TDO, as additional information and documentation are required. Future submissions should demonstrate how applicable requirements will be satisfied.

B. Section 116-318. Use, Bulk, and Dimensional Regulations. The Whitemarsh Township Zoning Ordinance does not define stacked townhomes as a distinct use. However, Section 116-11. defines an "attached dwelling" as "A dwelling having one or more common walls and having independent and separate exterior access in a structure of two or more dwellings. Floors and ceilings shall be considered 'walls' hereunder."

Although the applicant has revised the proposed ground floor entrance floorplan, our previous concerns remain. Because each unit continues to appear to provide a garage providing an "independent and separate exterior access," the proposed use may be defined as an attached dwelling. Section 116-318.B. expressly prohibits single-family attached dwellings in the TDO-1 District. The Whitemarsh Township Zoning Officer should determine the appropriate use classification before the application advances beyond the tentative sketch plan stage.

C. Section 116-320. Off-Street Parking and Multi-Modal Connectivity:

1. Section 116-320.A. A note on the tentative sketch plan indicates that 64 parking spaces are allocated to the dwelling units, and the provided floor plans would indicate that each unit is provided with one internal garage parking space. Section 116-320.A. prohibits parking in excess of 110% of the minimum requirement. Based on the minimum requirement of one parking space per dwelling unit and the proposed 64 dwelling units, no more than 70 parking spaces may be permitted without additional justification. Because 74 parking spaces are proposed overall, a parking demand analysis is required pursuant to Section 116-320.G. to justify the additional spaces.

2. Section 116-320.I. Section 116-320.I. requires that bicycle parking be provided at a rate of at least 10% of the vehicle parking requirement. The submitted sketch plan does not appear to provide bicycle parking. Future submissions should address how compliance with this requirement will be met or, alternatively, relief may be sought via the conditional use process as provided for under Section 116-319.F.

D. Section 116-321. Building and Site Design:

1. Section 116-321.A.(4). Section 116-321.A.(4) requires that any building greater than three stories must provide a minimum façade step back of at least 10 feet beginning at the finished floor elevation of the fourth story. Given that the proposed buildings are four stories in height, a step back would be required. While this step back appears to be provided for in the submitted elevation/rendering, compliance with this requirement should be clarified on future submissions.

2. Section 116-321.H.(2). Section 116-321.H.(2) requires that benches, trash receptacles, and other street furniture be provided along all pedestrian accessways. The submitted material does

not demonstrate compliance with this requirement. Future submissions should address how this requirement will be met.

3. Other Requirements of the TDO District. Future submissions should provide additional information on how all applicable requirements of the TDO District, such as those relate to landscaping and screening, will be met.

ZONING ORDINANCE ARTICLE XXVI, OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING

Section 116-88.3. requires the provision of electric vehicle charging stations based on the total number of parking spaces provided within a parking area. Given the proposed 20 parking spaces, two electric vehicles charging spaces are required per the calculation provided under Section 116-188.3.D.(1).b. Future submissions should provide a revised plan that complies with the standards of this section.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE

The submitted materials do not contain enough information to evaluate compliance with the Township Floodplain Management Ordinance. We will defer this review until additional information is provided in future submissions.

RIPARIAN CORRIDOR CONSERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT ORDINANCE

The submitted materials do not contain enough information to evaluate compliance with the Township Riparian Corridor Conservation Overlay District. We will defer this review until additional information is provided in future submissions.

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

The submitted materials do not contain enough information to evaluate compliance with the Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. We will defer this review until additional information is provided in future submissions.

SPRING MILL MULTI-MODAL AND TRANSPORTATION STUDY (2022)

The proposed development site occupies a portion of the study area of the *Spring Mill Multi-Modal and Land Use Study*. The study identifies several issues and proposed improvements related to the property in question, which are summarized in the Action Plan (pages 73-76):

A. Objective1A: Provide Public Access for Washington Street through to Lee Street:

- Work with riverfront developers to encourage installation of Washington Street streetscape improvements as proposed in the typical cross section.

B. Objective 2A: Provide Public Access to the River and Spring Mill County Park:

- Require all current and future riverfront developers to install the riverwalk trail, per current plans.

C. Objective 2B: Develop a More Walkable, Flood-Resilient Waterfront, with a Distinct Sense of Place:

- Design and install wayfinding signage to complement Conshohocken's wayfinding signage for a cohesive waterfront.

- Install safe, ADA-compliant pedestrian infrastructure, where missing, throughout the study area.

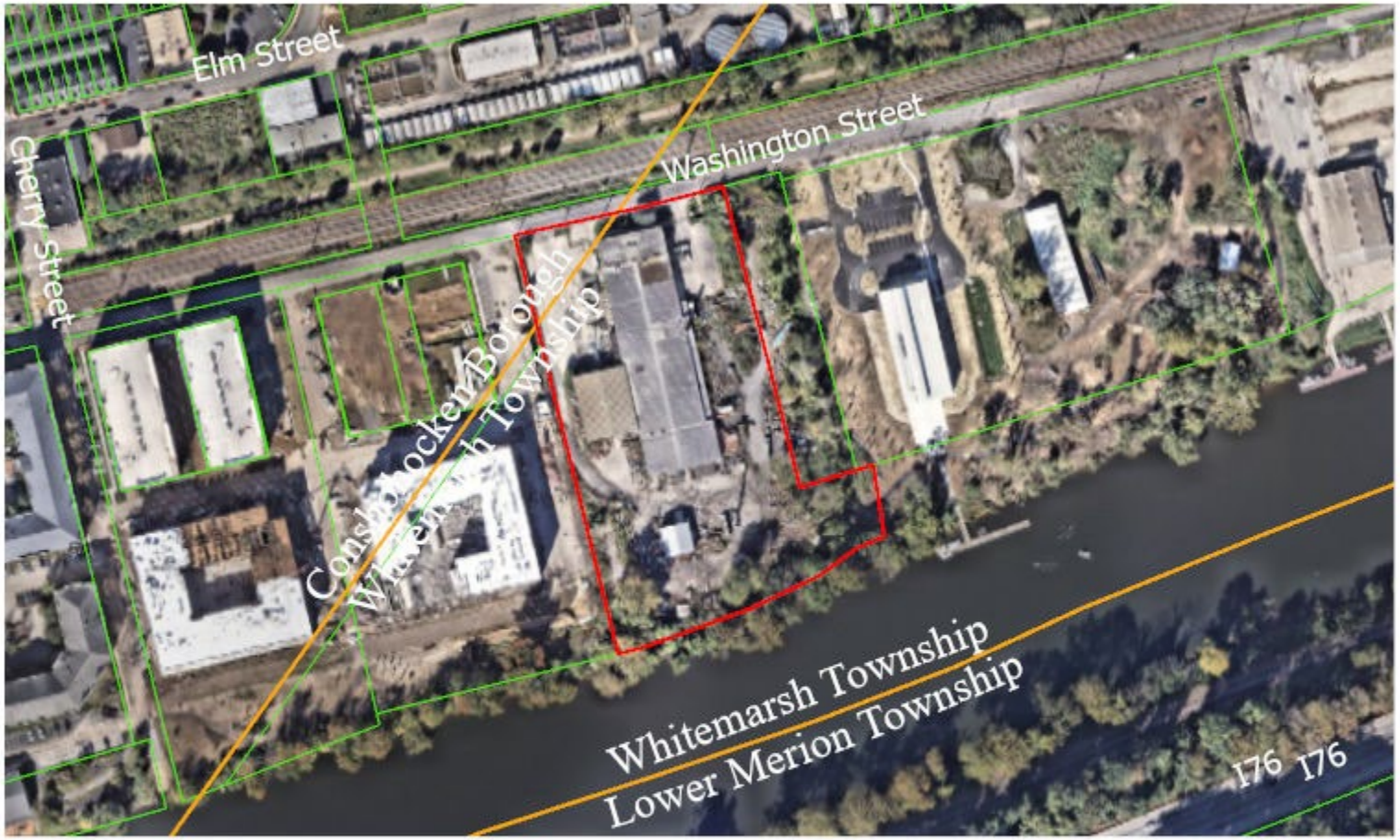
CONCLUSION

Although MCPC generally supports housing development near transit hubs such as Spring Mill Station, we have serious concerns about the development of new dwelling units within the floodplain as proposed in the tentative sketch plan.

We recommend the applicant work with the township to address the above-mentioned issues to its satisfaction. Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report are advisory to the municipality.

c: Craig McAnally, Township Manager
Aaron Kostyk, Chair, Township Planning Commission
Krista Heinrich, PE, Township Engineer
Sean Kilkenny, Esq., Township Solicitor
Jessica Buck, District Manager, MCCD
Greg Lingo, Applicant
Keith Lieberman, Applicant's Engineer
Craig R. Lewis, Esq., Applicant's Attorney

Attachments: A. Aerial Image of Site
B. Applicant's Provided Sketch Plan

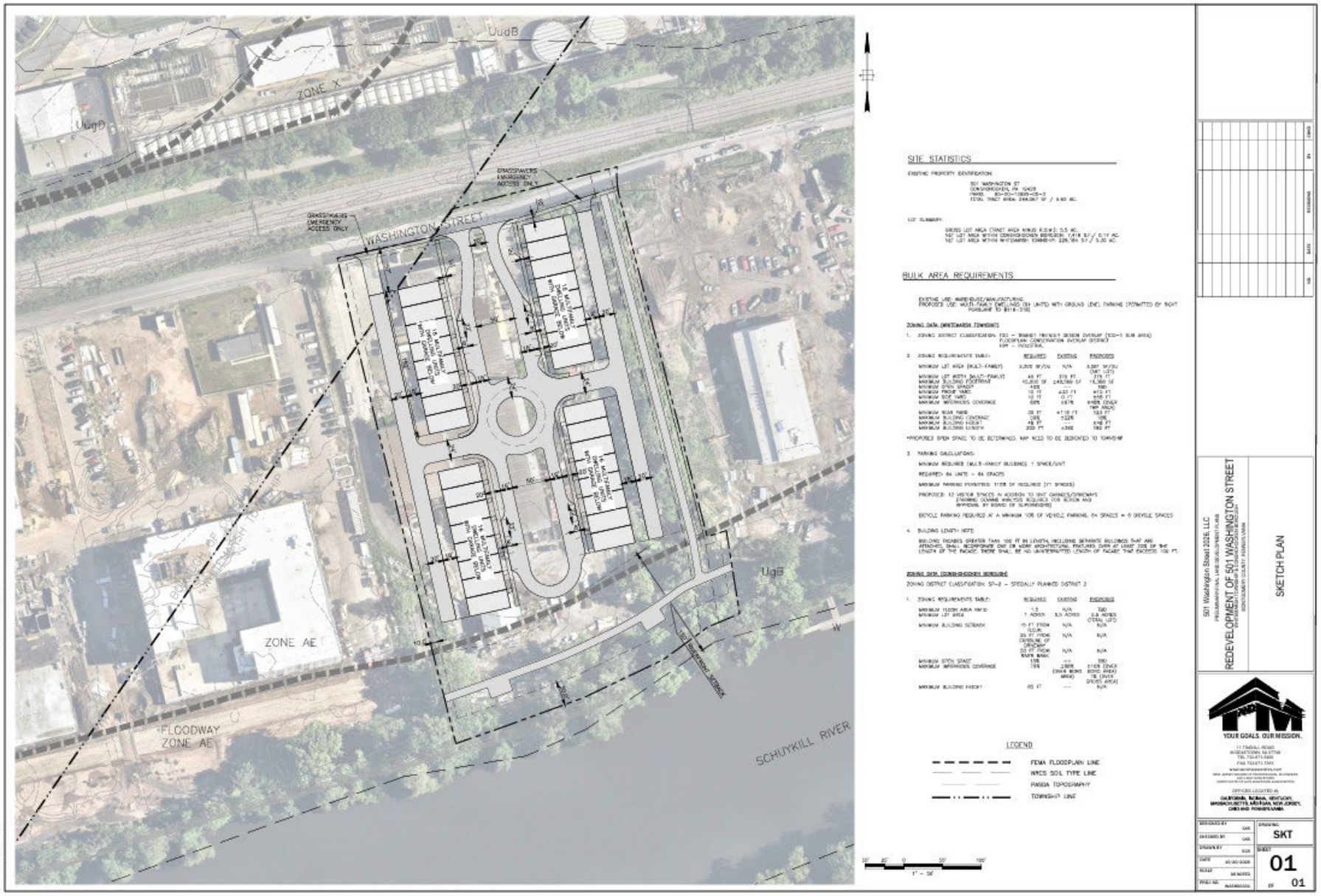


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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

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ZONE X
UugD
GRASSPAVERS EMERGENCY ACCESS ONLY
WASHINGTON STREET
UugB
ZONE AE
FLOODWAY ZONE AE
SCHUYLKILL RIVER
SITE STATISTICS
BULK AREA REQUIREMENTS
LEGEND
FEMA FLOODPLAIN LINE
NRCS SOIL TYPE LINE
PASDA TOPOGRAPHY
TOWNSHIP LINE
REDEVELOPMENT OF 501 WASHINGTON STREET
SKETCH PLAN
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