



# Fighting an Uphill Battle in Pottstown

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# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

- Project Background

- 4-acre parcel
- Vacant 2 story, 46,500 sq. ft. building in state of disrepair
- Pottstown Plating Works operated from 1950-2009; metal electroplating
- Went into bankruptcy and was abandoned in 2009
- Former owner was delinquent on taxes, fees, variety of past financial obligations
- Environmental impacts suspected



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Project Background

- Building posed a significant health and safety risk
- Lien holders had no hope of recovering losses
- Current owner began working with the Borough, Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority (RDA), Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED), and the former owner in 2015
- Montgomery County Commissioners unanimously approved forgiveness of delinquent taxes in August 2018
- Property was purchased from former owner in May 2020



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Environmental Challenges and Timeline

- Phase I ESA – October 2017
- Funded through RDA's US EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant
- 7 RECs, 2 hRECs, 2 Data Gaps associated with subject property
- 3 off-site RECs
- 15 areas-of-concern to be investigated



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Environmental Challenges and Timeline

- Phase II ESA activities – January 2019 – December 2020
- Multiple assessment funding sources including:
  - RDA's US EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant
  - PA DCED Industrial Sites Reuse Program (ISRP) Assessment Grant
  - Private capital
- Soil, groundwater, and soil gas investigations conducted.
- Soil and groundwater impacted with chlorinated VOCs and several metals above the non-residential medium-specific concentrations (MSCs)
- Vapor intrusion identified as a potential exposure pathway



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Environmental Challenges and Timeline

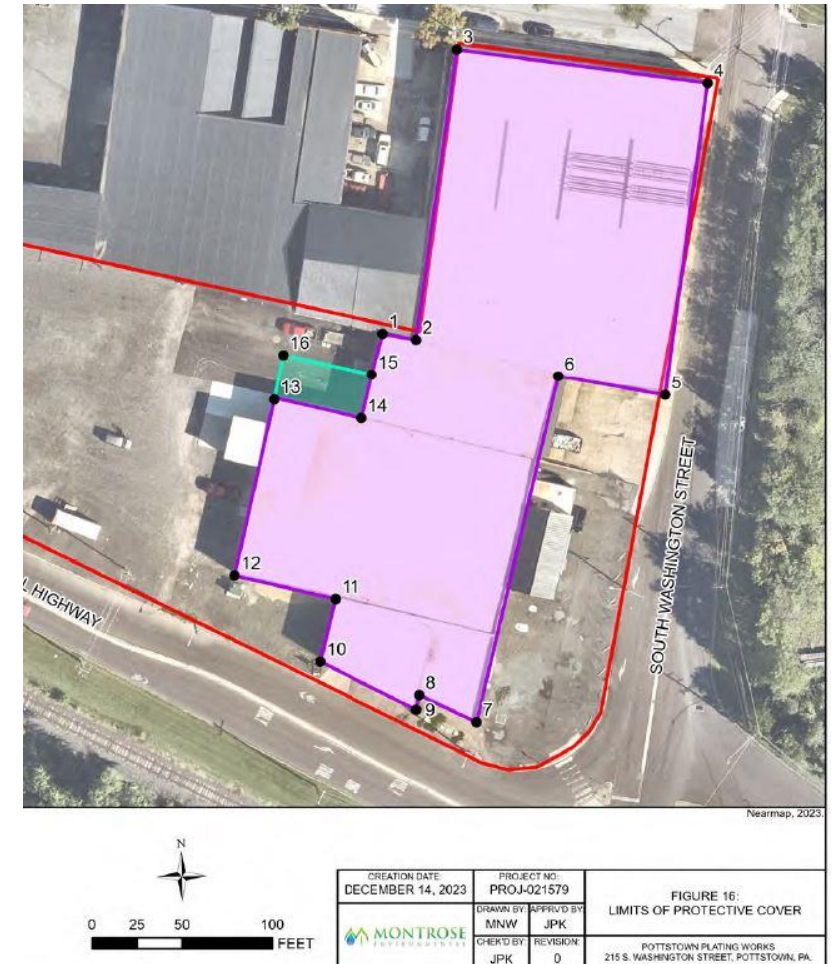
- Act 2 Remedial Investigation Report, Risk Assessment, and Cleanup Plan approved by PA DEP in February 2021
- Proposed remedy included:
  - Soil – eliminate direct-contact pathway through capping
  - Groundwater – prohibit use of groundwater at the site and abandon the industrial supply well
  - Vapor Intrusion – fill pits, trenches, sumps and install a vapor barrier



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Environmental Challenges and Timeline

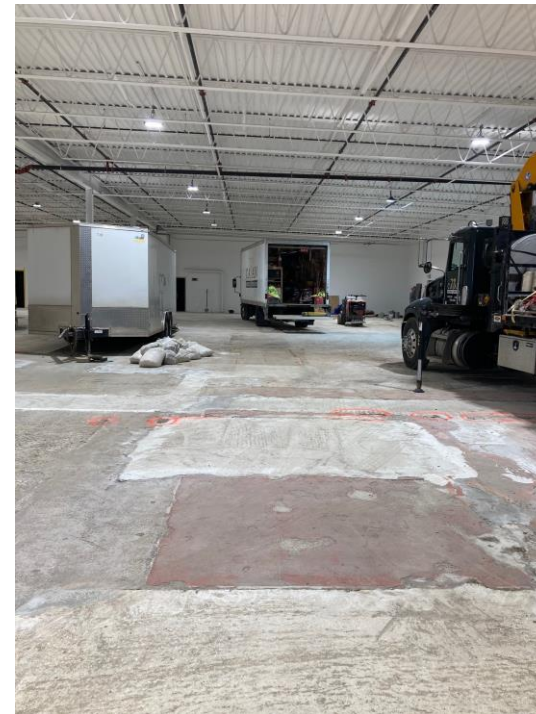
- Remedy implementation May 2021 through September 2023
- Act 2 Final Report submitted January 2024 (currently with PA DEP)
- Capping the Site



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Environmental Challenges and Timeline

- Abandonment of industrial supply well
- Filling and capping of pits, sumps, and trenches

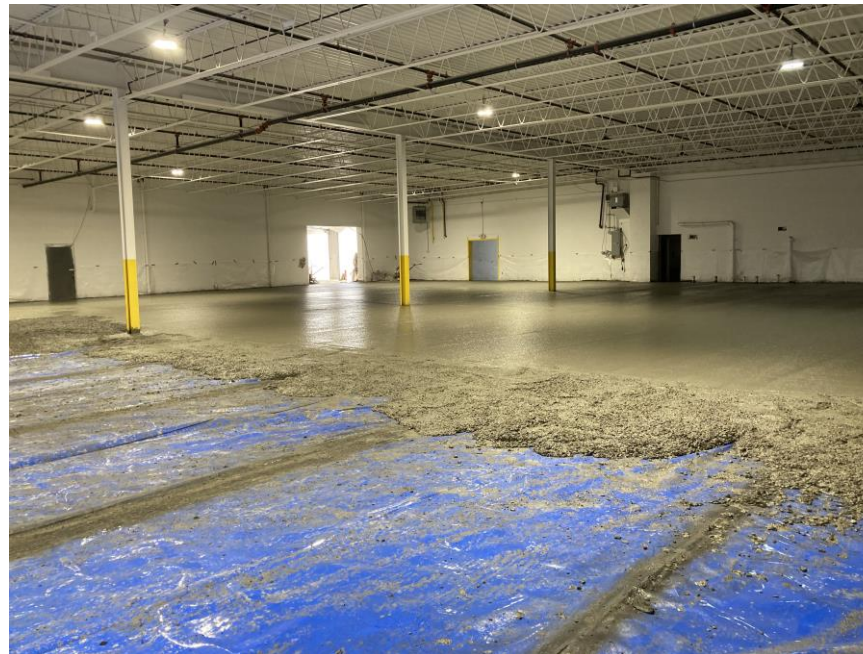




# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Environmental Challenges and Timeline

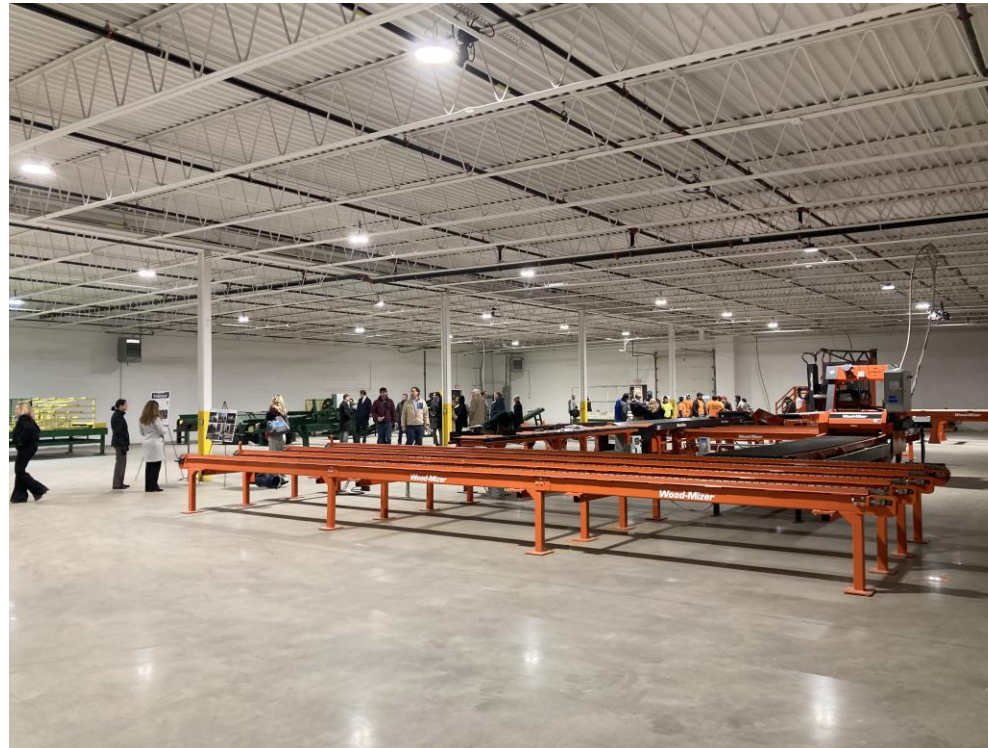
- Vapor barrier installation



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Environmental Challenges and Timeline

- Indoor air testing and occupancy



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Investments

### **Expenses Paid Through Public Funding** **\$524,660**

- \$123,115 US EPA assessment grants
- \$96,955 in ISRP assessment grant (grant + owner's match of \$26,439)
- \$304,590 ISRP grant for remediation

### **Expenses Paid By the Developer** **\$2MM**

- \$1,643,060 for environmental assessment and remediation including ISRP remediation grant cost share
- \$171,826 for demolition
- \$16,064 for insurance, legal fees, & permits
- \$110,625 for improvements – materials, equipment, electrical, labor, etc.
- \$509,404 for roof
- \$49,021 purchase of property



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Tax Revenue

April 2022:

- For the first time in over 10 years, the Borough of Pottstown received revenue from this property in the amount of \$14,733

July 2022 tax revenue:

- \$18,228 to the Borough
- \$33,860 to Pottstown School District
- \$79,860 to Pottstown School District

Other:

- \$4,198 Water/Sewer/Trash



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Clearing the Record

May 2022 – Pottstown Borough forgave the following encumbrances:

- Borough \$181,080.56 (Dates from 2008 through May 2020)
- Authority \$296,673.56 (Through calendar year 2021)

June 2022 – Pottstown School District forgave the following encumbrance:

- \$553,253.07



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Where We Are Today

- Remediation is complete and PA DEP is reviewing Act 2 Final Report
- Pottstown has a greatly improved property that no longer presents an environmental risk to the community
- Property is occupied by DJ Pallets, a manufacturing company that currently employs 20 with additional job growth expected



# 215 S. Washington Street Redevelopment

## Where We Are Today

- The total improvement investment outpaced the encumbrances which were nothing but numbers on paper that would never be recovered by the taxing bodies and the Authority
- Remediation and redevelopment would not have been possible without the public-private partnership
- Although significant public funding was utilized, without the current owner's investment this very visible building would have continued to decay, and the site would remain environmentally-impacted and abandoned



# Thank You!

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