



**Lehigh Valley Planning Commission**

**STEPHEN REPASCH**  
Chair

**JOHN DIACOIANIS**  
Vice Chair

**STEVEN GLICKMAN**  
Treasurer

**BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP**  
Executive Director

January, 2018

## **Airport Area Study to Measure Warehouse Impact**

Hundreds of acres of land that not long ago were farmed for corn, soybean and wheat just north of the Lehigh Valley International Airport (LVIA) will soon be sprouting warehouses the size of a dozen football fields. Gone are the tractors that once tilled the fields, soon to be replaced by tractor-trailers delivering goods and cars driven by hundreds of new warehouse and distribution center workers.

The impact of all that change in the communities near LVIA is about to be put under a microscope during a six-month Airport Area Transportation Study being shepherded by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study.

To begin in February, the study will look at transportation, freight and land use changes in an area stretching from Route 512 in the east to the Lehigh River in the west, and from Route 22 in the south to well north of Route 329, said LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley.

To be performed by Michael Baker International, and supervised by PennDOT and the LVPC, the study will determine the impacts of the new truck and car traffic and determine the kind of road and land improvements needed to handle all that new industrial development. It will also devise a freight transportation planning model, identify new truck routes, and explore opportunities to reuse buildings and potentially increase density in the existing industrial parks in the study area.

The purpose of the study will be to produce a plan for measured growth and improvements before demand outstrips the local infrastructure's ability to handle it, while considering the impact it will have on local residents and businesses.

"This is the first and only time PennDOT has funded a freight study for a specific area," Bradley said. "This is that important. We are the first out of the gate."

The study comes, in part, in response to plans for more than 7 million square feet of new warehouses just north of LVIA in Allen and East Allen townships. A new \$335 million FedEx Ground hub is already under construction along Willowbrook Road in Allen Township, and developers have filed plans for more warehouses along Route 329 at Howertown Road.

"It's not only going to look at freight, but also how this area has the potential to evolve," said Gene Clater, an LVPC board member who chairs Allen Township's Planning Commission. "We expect the study to begin in February."

Study area municipalities that will provide input include the townships of Allen, East Allen, Hanover in Lehigh County, Hanover in Northampton County, Lower Nazareth and Whitehall; the

boroughs of Bath, Catsauqua, North Catsauqua and Northampton; and the City of Bethlehem.

The final report is scheduled to be delivered by December.