LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, October 28, 2021, at 7:00 PM
Via Microsoft Teams

AGENDA


Roll Call

Courtesy of Floor

Chairman’s Report

1. New Staff
   a. Heather Ferguson, Senior Advisor
2. City of Bethlehem recognition by the American Planning Association - Pennsylvania Chapter

Minutes

1. ACTION ITEM: Minutes and Review of Roll Call Actions of the September 23, 2021, Commission Meeting (J B)

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

County Planning Review as Municipal Planners

1. INFORMATION ITEM: PennStro Leasing – Glendon Borough (BB, J S)
2. INFORMATION ITEM: Chrin Maintenance Building – Glendon Borough (BB, J S)

County Planning Review as County Planners (FutureLV)

1. ACTION ITEM: Palmer Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – First Park 33 (J S)
2. ACTION ITEM: Upper Macungie Township - Land Use of Regional Significance – LRE Allentown Industrial Expansion (J S)
3. ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet (J S)

Environment Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Committee Summary Report (GR)

Transportation Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – Common Ridge Development, City of Allentown (PC)
2. ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – Howe Street, City of Allentown (PC)
3. ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation – Portion of Chestnut Street, City of Allentown (PC)
4. INFORMATION ITEM: PennDOT 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan and Freight Movement Plan Comments (PC)

Old Business:
1. INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports:
   a. Quarterly and Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Reports (BB)
   b. Highway Traffic Monitoring (PC)
   c. Update on Proposed Industrial Developments (BB)

New Business:
1. INFORMATION ITEM: Changes to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Working Group (BB)
2. INFORMATION ITEM: General Assembly, November 30th at 7 PM, Virtual (BB)

Executive Director’s Report
Covered in Old and New Business

Communications, Public Engagement and Participation:
1. INFORMATION ITEM: Morning Call Business Cycle Column (MA)
2. INFORMATION ITEM: Monthly, Plan Lehigh Valley Talk Show on WDIY, Lehigh Valley Public Radio, 88.1! (MA)
3. INFORMATION ITEM: WFMZ Business Matters (MA)
   a. Senior Community Planner Jill Seitz Appearing as an expert on Equity and Inclusion during the 7:30 pm, November 1 show.
4. INFORMATION ITEMS: Engagement and Participation (MA)
   a. The Chamber’s 2021 Annual Meeting, November 10, 10am to 1pm (MA)
   b. Local Technical Assistance Programs (MA)
      i. Common Issues in Alleys, November 4, 11am To noon.
   c. Lehigh Valley Gala + Awards (MA)
      i. Tickets Available at https://lvpc.org/lv-awards.html

Next Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Meeting:
***Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 7:00 pm
LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, September 23, 2021 Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday September 23, 2021. The meeting was advertised in the Morning Call on Thursday July 8th, 2021.

Mr. Zebrowski chaired the meeting.

Ms. Benco took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

**Lehigh County**
Geoff Brace, Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Steven Glickman, Michael Harakal, Kent Herman, Jamie Johnson, David Jones, Leonard Lightner, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore, Kathy Rader and Stephen Repasch.

**Northampton County**
Christopher Amato, Liesel Dreisbach, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, Susan Lawless, Kevin Lott, William McGee, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, David O’Connell, Pamela Pearson, Tina Smith and Greg Zebrowski.

Members Absent:

**Lehigh County**
Phillips Armstrong, Mike Gibson, Christina Morgan, Ray O’Connell, Owen O’Neil, Joshua Seigel and Kevin Schmidt.

**Northampton County**
Janell Connolly, Malissa Davis, Robert Donchez, Darlene Heller, Carl Manges, Lamont McClure, Salvatore Panto, Spirit Rutzler and Gerald Yob.

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Julie Benco, Becky Bradley, Paul Carafides, Geoff Reese, Jill Seitz and Brad Stewart.

Public Present: Victor Grande, Jordan Griffith, Claudia Shank, Barb Wagner and Jeff Ward.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR
Mr. Amato shared a story about a young man who came into his office, that was found to have a collapsed lung. He referenced the World Health Organization’s air quality guidelines, and acknowledged a possible connection between rising air pollution, asthma rates, mortality, and loss of quality of life for vulnerable populations. He commended the Commission for their work towards making a positive difference in the community. Mr. Zebrowski acknowledged Mr. Amato’s statements and reinforced the Commission’s mission to improve air quality in the region.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT
Mr. Zebrowski welcomed new Commissioner: Mr. David Jones. Mr. Jones shared his remarks and his gratification towards working with the Commission in the future. Mr. Zebrowski welcomed new Team
Members: Mr. Brad Stewart, Senior Transportation Planner and Ms. Julie Benco, Regional Planner. Mr. Stewart and Ms. Benco introduced themselves and provided a summary of their experience and qualifications, as well as their gratitude to be a part of LVPC. Mr. Zebrowski asked if anyone on the LVPC Commission had any questions for Brad or Julie. No Commission members had questions.

MINUTES
Mr. Zebrowski stated that the minutes of the Thursday August 26th, 2021 LVPC meeting are attached, and he then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Dougherty made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. The motion passed with no abstentions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

**DISCUSSION ITEM: PennStro Leasing – Glendon Borough**
Ms. Bradley informed the Commission of their role in reviewing plans for municipalities that do not have their own adopted Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. She stated that the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission acts as the municipal planner, which is a very different process than the review as county planners. She explained the full timeline of the review process, including the overview of the preliminary plan, in which Commissioners can make any comments or ask any questions, and the technical review that will be presented at the October 28th Full Commission meeting. Ms. Claudia Shank, a representative from the PennStro Leasing project, acknowledged their presence in the meeting. Ms. Seitz presented an overview of the proposed project that is bounded by Interstate 78 and plans to consolidate two existing lots into one lot (5.6 acres) and develop it into a truck trailer storage and rental facility. The existing conditions are currently made up of two vacant gravel lots. Ms. Seitz presented the layout plan and the stormwater drainage for the project. Ms. Bradley explained that the staff will continue to assess the proposal and take any questions to the relevant parties so an informed review can occur.

Mr. Zebrowski vocalized his comments on the project regarding the location's accessibility to appropriate infrastructure, sustainable construction of the project and community opinion.

**ACTION ITEM: Southmoore Business Center – Land Use of Regional Significance – Moore Township**
Mr. Melnick commended the staff for their review letter regarding the Southmoore Business Center presented at the Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting. Ms. Bradley reviewed a Land Use of Regional Significance in Moore Township proposing to construct two warehouses (347,750 and 140,000 square feet). The proposal is inconsistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because the proposed location lacks the necessary criteria to support the long-term success of the project and fails to ‘match development intensity with sustainable infrastructure capacity’ (of Policy 1.1). The project site is proposed in an area designated for Farmland Preservation in the General Land Use Plan and located over six miles away from the nearest Route 22 interchange and over nine miles away from the nearest Route 33 interchange. The development poses a risk to the region’s workforce, transportation system, quality of life and environment (Policy 4.6). Ms. Bradley commended the Township for a quick legislative response to these types of development and encouraged them to utilize the Nazareth Area 2030 Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. Multiple existing residential properties will be significantly affected by this development. The rural location of the project creates a lack of alternative transportation options that reinforces dependency on automobiles and increases traffic. Data on the site plan anticipates 305 employees during a peak shift, and the ability for workers to access the site efficiently affects its marketability and occupancy. The project is anticipated to generate an average of 849 vehicle trips per day, of which 293 would be trucks, and the project site is located between two segments of Route 512 that are identified as congested corridors. The LVPC commends the proposed left turn lane with 150 feet of storage length and the southbound right turn lane with 355 feet of storage length, as these lanes will assist in queue mitigation at the new four-way intersection created by the proposed development. However, the southbound left turn lane to Fairway Avenue has been removed and may cause issues, therefore a traffic signal should be studied by the developer to ‘enhance incident management strategies’ (of Policy 2.2). The LVPC strongly recommends providing overnight tractor-trailer parking areas to ‘expand truck parking options and amenities’ (of Policy 2.4). The LVPC recommends installing multimodal infrastructure components that ‘promote safe and secure community design’ (Policy 5.1) at the time of land...
development. While the LVPC commends the comprehensive inclusion of natural landscaping along the site perimeter, areas of additional landscaping should be designed to ‘improve access to green spaces’ (of Policy 5.3). The proposal can be substantially improved by incorporating sustainable systems into the functionality and design of the facility to ‘minimize environmental impacts of development’ (Policy 3.1). Ms. Bradley stated that the LVPC encourages continued conversations between the Township, nearby communities and project partners to ‘expand collaboration on planning and development’ (of Policy 4.6).

Mr. McGorry vocalized issues regarding trucking concerns and Mr. McGee commended the township’s response and asked a question of the LVPC staff. Ms. Bradley provided a response on the Township’s review process. Mr. Dougherty complimented the staff on their comprehensive review. Mr. Zebrowski made comments regarding the project and called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Glickman made the motion; Ms. Moore seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**ACTION ITEM: Seven Generations Charter School Building Addition – Land Use of Regional Significance – Emmaus Borough**

Ms. Seitz reviewed a Land Use of Regional Significance in Emmaus Borough proposing to construct a 4,345-square-foot addition to the existing school building. Ms. Seitz stated that the project generally exhibits consistency with FutureLV because it is located in the Development area of the General Land Use Plan, enhances the long-term viability of assets (of Policy 1.3) and ‘expands access to education’ (of Policy 4.1). The project site contains opportunities to ‘connect assets to diverse transportation options’ (of Policy 1.3). The LVPC strongly recommends that the existing sidewalk be extended, which would close a gap in the Borough’s sidewalk network and ‘promote safe routes to schools and playgrounds’ (of Policy 5.2). The project site is adjacent to a trailhead for the Robert Rodale South Mountain Gateway Trail, an Existing Regional Land Trail that facilitates north-south connections between the City of Allentown and Emmaus Borough. This trail is also identified as an alternative route for the Mack Boulevard/Emmaus Avenue bicycle commuting corridor in the Walk/Roll LV: Active Transportation Plan and provides access to the active recreation trails of the Wildlands Conservancy South Mountain Preserve. Trails in this area are also conceptualized in the Draft Borough of Emmaus Greenways & Trails Plan, currently open for public comment. Constructing sidewalk along Klines Lane would better ‘encourage alternative travel options’ (Policy 2.1) and support active lifestyles that ‘promote physical and mental health’ (Policy 5.3).

Mr. Zebrowski commented on sustainable building practices and called for a motion to accept the staff comments. A motion was made by Ms. Moore and seconded by Ms. Pearson and carried with no abstentions.

**ACTION ITEM: Liberty Bell Elementary School – Land Use of Regional Significance – Coopersburg Borough and Upper Saucon Township**

Ms. Seitz reviewed a Land Use of Regional Significance in Coopersburg Borough and Upper Saucon Township proposing to construct four separate building additions to an existing elementary school totaling 12,462 square feet and a soft play area. This proposal exhibits consistency with FutureLV because the expansion of the existing school enhances the long-term viability of assets (of Policy 1.3) and ‘expands access to education’ (of Policy 4.1). The LVPC commends the included sidewalk extensions and improvements within the parking area that connect the building to the external sidewalk network and ‘promote safe routes to schools and playgrounds’ (of Policy 5.2). The LVPC recommends that educational institutions incorporate environmentally sensitive building design and renewable energy sources such as solar or geothermal. These enhancements further academic endeavors related to sustainable technologies, demonstrate environmental leadership within the region and ‘reduce climate change impacts’ (Policy 3.4).

Mr. Zebrowski asked the Commission to make a motion to accept staff comments. Ms. Dreisbach made the motion, seconded by Mr. Glickman and the motion passed with no abstentions.

**ACTION ITEM: Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. Hangar – Land Use of Regional Significance – Hanover Township (LC)**

Mr. Carafides reviewed a Land Use of Regional Significance in Hanover Township proposing to construct a 36,000-square-foot hangar, an office building and a service facility. This proposal generally exhibits consistency with FutureLV because it is located in the Development area of the General Land Use Plan and
serves to 'provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently, while capitalizing on existing infrastructure' (of Policy 2.2). The LVPC commends the proposal because it supports interregional transportation services (of Policy 2.2) and the expansion of local business operations that diversify the regional economy and strengthen economic resilience (of Policy 4.2). This infill project involves the removal of a garage, a trailer and other associated features on the northeast corner of the 792.45-acre Lehigh Valley International Airport lot. The LVPC commends the proposed Fire Truck/Emergency Services turn plan through the internal site of the project to 'enhance incident management strategies' (of Policy 2.2). Mr. Carafides noted that the crash history for the Airport main entrance at Airport Road/Postal Road intersection has steadily decreased over the last five years. However, in 2020, five non-fatal car accidents occurred at the intersection which still qualifies as a level of concern under PennDOT standards. The site location will be fully fenced in with a swing access gate and the hangar will be used for smaller planes which will have little to no impact to the current traffic patterns in the adjacent Airport Road corridor.

Mr. Zebrowski asked the Commission to make a motion to accept staff comments. Mr. Elbich made the motion, seconded by Mr. Melnick and the motion passed with no abstentions.

**ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet**

Mr. Melnick presented the September Comprehensive Committee items. Mr. Zebrowski called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Pearson made the motion, seconded by Mr. O'Connell. Motion passed.

**Environment Committee:**

**INFORMATION ITEM: 2020 Pennsylvania Forest Action Plan**

Mr. Reese told the Commission about the 2020 Pennsylvania Forest Action Plan, that was released on August 24, 2021, as an update to the 2010 plan. He stated that the Plan assesses the current conditions and trends of Pennsylvania's forests across all ownership types and provides broad strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of Pennsylvania's forests. Implementation of the strategies will involve coordination with landowners, forest industry, natural resource professionals, conservation organizations, community leaders and policymakers. He explained that 18 sustainability meters were developed as part of the 2010 Plan and were used to assess current forest conditions and trends. The evaluation of many of the indicators resulted in sustainability meter readings on the sustainable side, but with many causes for concern about the future sustainability of Pennsylvania's forests. Challenges and threats include land use change and development, forest health concerns, ownership demographics, detrimental management decisions and uncertainties of shale gas development and climate change. Mr. Reese went into greater detail on four indicators and 11 priority issues from the Plan. He highlighted a Land Use Change issue and discussed the related long-term strategies. Mr. Repasch concluded the statements made by Mr. Reese and reinforced the importance of forested land in the Lehigh Valley. Mr. Zebrowski asked if Pennsylvania has taken a step back because of disease in forests or poor forest practices. Mr. Repasch and Mr. Reese answered, stating that both are the reason.

**Transportation Committee:**

**Committee Report: Summary**

Mr. Carafides presented an update on three discussion items from this month’s Transportation Committee. First, he summarized a presentation regarding LANTA’s current operations and the importance of transit to the Region. Mr. Carafides noted the rapid job growth in the Region currently and how transit service is impacted by this growth, as well as LANTA’s fiscal needs. Mr. Carafides’ second item was the PennDOT 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan and Draft Freight Movement Plan that are out for public comment. He notes that the staff has received both Draft Reports and are preparing comments. The website can be found at https://www.penndot.gov/ProjectAndPrograms/Planning/Pages/index.html or google PennDOT 2045 LRTP. All comments are due by October 19th. Mr. Carafides went over the last item: the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance Freight Plan. He explained that we are at the beginning stages of developing a new freight plan and it will take a multi-regional view of freight. A group of 5 MPOs came together to form the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance, consisting of Lackawanna/Luzerne Metropolitan Planning Organization (LLTS), Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO), Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVPC/LVTS),
Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA MPO), and Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS). Currently, the group is working to create a Memorandum of Understanding and funding agreement, while gathering information and ideas from each partner agency and preparing a scope of work to create a Request for Proposals. Mr. Carafides expressed that as the project moves forward, we will work with the Transportation Committee to ensure it moves in a direction that will best serve the Lehigh Valley. Mr. Herman asked for any questions or comments. There were none.

Old Business:

**INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports**

*Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Report*
Ms. Bradley presented plan and review activity for August, which included 23 Subdivisions, 29 Development proposals, 13 reviews for Stormwater Management, and 3 Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 68 reviews. Mr. Zebrowski asked for questions hearing none, the agenda progressed.

*Highway Traffic Monitoring*
Mr. Carafides presented the Highway Traffic Monitoring report for August. This month's traffic report continued to show that we are at traffic volumes greater than pre-pandemic numbers at all except for one of the continuous counter locations. Route 33 shows up at 81,216 vehicles on the last Tuesday of August, an increase of 4,024 vehicles since the pandemic began. Interstate 78 east of 309 has us at 72,543, an increase of 6,130 vehicles since March of 2020. Interstate 78 east of 33 in Northampton County recorded 72,397 vehicles, equating to a 7,990 vehicle increase. The Route 309 counter just north of Coopersburg in Lehigh County has us at 36,067, a decrease of 1,773 vehicles. Trucks along I-78 show a consistent trend of differences between the counter on I-78 east of 33 shown in the orange compared to I-78 east of 309 shown in the Green. Trucks are up 3,296 in Northampton County at 33, and Lehigh County by 309 has us at an increase of 2,889 trucks. While the volume on overall vehicles is steady and similar across the I-78 corridor, the greater influx of more trucks east of 33 shows the critical connection that route 33 has for our area freight movements and the connection between I-78 and I-80 to our north. Mr. Zebrowski asked for questions or comments. No questions were asked.

New Business:
None.

Executive Director's Report:
**Municipal Outreach and Support Update**

*Lehigh Valley Government Academy*
Ms. Bradley announced that the Lehigh Valley Government Academy restarted in September. She said that the first Community Planning class began on September 13th. It was the first in-person training of the year and was sold out at a max of 18 students. The next two classes in the course are on consecutive Mondays, September 20 and 27. The Zoning Administration class, which has two seats left, runs on three consecutive Wednesdays: October 13, 20 and 27. Ms. Bradley explained that it trains zoning hearing board members on their role and responsibilities under the state law. All the classes tend to run from 5:30 pm to 9 pm, each evening. Anyone can sign up online at LVPC.org.

*General Assembly, November 30th at 7 PM, Virtual*
Ms. Bradley announced that the Lehigh Valley General Assembly on Tips and Tools for Growth Management will occur on November 30th at 7 PM virtually. At the meeting, any representatives from governmental entities within the Lehigh Valley come together to work on broad planning issues and interrelationships between them. Attendees will receive education about changes in Pennsylvania law and the Municipalities Planning Code.

*Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans*
Ms. Bradley reported on the status of active Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans and the direct technical assistance that is being provided to municipalities. She also reported that by the end of 2022, 32 municipalities within the Lehigh Valley will be a part of Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plans. Ms. Bradley
informed the Commission that there are working drafts for updates to the Nazareth Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan and the Northern Lehigh Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. She reported that issues roundtables were completed, and a community survey is underway for the Slate Belt Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. She also announced that the River Central Multi-Municipal Comprehensive planning effort was started in January, with their Community Survey complete and overarching principles/goals draft underway.

Other Requests: Growing Needs & Support
Ms. Bradley explained that there is a lot of growing need in local government given population increase and development pressure that has risen since the start of the pandemic. Ms. Bradley reported that the LVPC receives many requests for zoning and subdivision ordinances analysis and amendment support, questions about impact assessments, more data requests & interpretation, more education and grant writing support. The roll of the Commission and need for additional resources is paramount. Ms. Bradley emphasized that the LVPC must review every plan that comes in the door and there is only 30 days to complete the review. Commission members vocalized their agreement with Ms. Bradley’s statements.

Communications:
INFORMATION ITEM: Business Cycle Column
Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Morning Call Business Cycle column that ran Sunday, Aug. 29. He explained that in the column, Becky wrote about a very busy first half of the year with housing and development. He stated that the next column was scheduled to publish October 3rd. Ms. Bradley will be writing about the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, as well as the opportunities and challenges it provides to communities.

INFORMATION ITEM: Plan Lehigh Valley radio show on WDIY NPR 88.1FM
Mr. Assad summarized the most recent Plan Lehigh Valley 30-minute radio show, hosted by Becky and Mr. Assad, where they were joined by developers J.B. Reilly and Mark Mulligan. They discussed reuse and redevelopment projects in Allentown and Easton, as well as how the pandemic has shifted redevelopment projects. He stated that the next show is scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, October 4, and will include Lehigh and Northampton County executives. They will talk about the pandemic and how it has changed how we provide services. Mr. Assaad informed that all past shows are streaming at wdiy.org.

Public Engagement:
INFORMATION ITEM: 8th Annual LVPC Gala and Awards
Mr. Assad announced that the 8th Annual Gala + Awards will be a 60th Anniversary celebration and is moved from its original date in October, to the evening of December 9th. It will be a one-hour video on YouTube, including an appearance by Mr. Zebrowski and a panel of experts who specialize in looking into the future and the 2021 FutureLV Heroes Award. He asked everyone to stay tuned for tickets and more details becoming available at lvpc.org.

INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Program
Mr. Assad announced that the Local Technical Assistance Program has a schedule of virtual classes in October and November. The first is on October 14th, 11am to noon, and will cover Analyzing Crash Data at Intersections. The next are on October 19th, covering Asphalt Road Common Maintenance Problems, and November 4th, covering Common Issues in Alleys. He explained that the classes are free and limited to 40 students, but anyone can still sign up at lvpc.org/ltap or contact Brian Hite.

ADJOURNMENT:
Mr. Zebrowski stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on October 28. Mr. Zebrowski then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:
Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director
Julie Benco, Regional Planner
October xx, 2021

Ms. Cynthia Carman Kramer
Palmer Township Planning Director
3 Weller Place
Palmer, Pennsylvania 18045

RE: First Park 33 – Land Use of Regional Significance
Palmer Township
Northampton County

Dear Ms. Kramer:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, and we encourage your participation. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting if Commission members have any additional comments. Meeting participation details are below:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - October 26, 2021 at 12:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - October 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)

The subject application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under FutureLV: The Regional Plan in the Warehouse, Logistics and Storage Facilities category, and proposes to consolidate three lots into one lot and construct four warehouse buildings for a total of 781,800 square feet. The project is located at the southwest corner of Newlins Mill and Tatamy roads (parcel numbers K8-12-10A-0324, K8-12-5-0324 and K8-12-4-0324).

While the general concept of the proposal is suitable for its location in the Development area of the General Land Use Plan, where there are similar industrial uses and appropriate infrastructure is available (of Policy 1.1), the LVPC notes several opportunities to improve this project and support the long-term interests of the Township, developer and community:
Traffic Impacts
The LVPC reviewed a Transportation Impact Study (TIS) for the subject application, dated September 21, 2021. Based on the combined square footage of the four buildings proposed, the development is anticipated to generate an average of 1,337 vehicle trips per day, of which 469 are trucks (Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual, 10th Edition).

The LVPC strongly recommends the Township to pursue implementation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Tatamy Road (State Route 2017) and Newlins Mill Road. This intersection has a substantial history of crash incidents, with 23 occurring in the last five years and nine in 2020. The TIS states that the applicant is willing to discuss improvements at this intersection, however the cost of the construction referenced in the TIS ($200,000) should be evaluated to ensure proper funding that will ‘enhance incident management strategies’ (of Policy 2.3) and ‘reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities towards zero’ (of Policy 5.1).

From page 24 of the Transportation Impact Study prepared by LANGAN Engineering, September 21, 2021:

As part of this development, the applicant proposes the following improvements:

- The applicant will widen Newlins Mill Road along the site frontage, as necessary, to provide an exclusive westbound left-turn lane at Site Drive 1 and Site Drive 2. The left-turn lanes will provide approximately 100 feet of storage in addition to the applicable taper lengths.

- The applicant is willing to discuss improvements at the intersection of Tatamy Road (SR 2017) and Newlins Mill Road to address the existing history of crashes at this location. Utilizing the same Fair Share contribution calculation as the Werner Enterprises Facility project, the applicant offers to provide funding in the amount of $5,400 (2.70% of $200,000) for the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Tatamy Road (SR 2017) and Newlins Mill Road. The 2.70% represents the percentage of new site generated traffic calculated for the 2024 Build condition at the intersection of Tatamy Road (SR 2017) and Newlins Mill Road.

- As part of this project, we suggest minor additional signal timing modifications beyond what is already being proposed at the intersections of Van Buren Road and Hollo Road (AM and PM peak hours), and SR 0248 and Prologis Parkway (PM peak hour only), in order to maximize efficiency and capacity.
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Crash History at Tatamy Road and Newlins Mill Road:

**Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool**

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Tractor-Trailer Accommodations

The project is located in an area with access to a Route 33 interchange, serving to minimize adverse impacts to nearby roadways generated by truck traffic. The LVPC recommends ensuring that truck routes are planned for and communicated to drivers via signage.

No tractor-trailer parking spots are provided on the plans outside of the loading dock areas. The parking spaces included are sized for trailers only. The Lehigh Valley has seen increasing numbers of tractor-trailers parking on roadways and in residential neighborhoods. To minimize the impact of freight on residents’ quality of life (Policy 2.4), the LVPC strongly recommends providing on-site tractor-trailer staging and parking areas, especially in consideration of those that may not be legally allowed to leave the facility due to hours of service limitations or other regulatory requirements as dictated by state and federal laws. Additionally, spaces should be provided to accommodate overnight parking, with sufficient amenities such as driver facilities and electrification of truck parking stalls that limit tractor-trailer idling for emission reduction to ensure compliance with the 2008 Pennsylvania Diesel Idling Law and support the improvement of air quality (of Policy 3.2).

The accumulation of snow and ice on top of tractor-trailers poses a safety hazard to other vehicles on the roadway, potentially resulting in serious injury and death. The 2006 Pennsylvania Snow/Ice Removal Law requires the removal of snow and ice from all vehicles prior to leaving the site. Violators of this law are subject to state-related fines and penalties (Title 75 §3720, amended by Senate Bill 114). A snow-clearing tool should be installed at the site to easily allow for truck drivers to clean off tractor-trailers and ‘provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network’ (Policy 2.2).
The LVPC recommends gating any proposed gravel access to Met-Ed transmission towers to eliminate the possibility that the area will be used for overnight truck parking and ensure that the towers are accessible (of Policy 2.5).

There appears to be shared trailer parking between buildings A and B. The authorized use of these spaces should be clarified in the parking calculations for these buildings. Both buildings indicate 22 trailer spaces, however only 41 trailer spaces are shown.

The width of the tractor trailer travel aisles should be represented as if a trailer was hooked to a tractor in order to properly plan for the safe freight movements within the area. Typically, tractors are attached to trailers at the dock at some point in their placement or retrieval from the loading area. The standard largest tractor trailer is 80 feet in length, which includes a 53-foot trailer with a 17-foot sleeper tractor attached.

**Multimodal Accessibility**

Comprehensive inclusion of a variety of travel modes is critical to support the Lehigh Valley’s workforce by ‘providing transportation options that are cost-effective and sustainable’ (of Policy 1.1). Providing alternative travel options also supports optimizing roadway capacity by decreasing traffic on roads (of Policy 2.1).

The LVPC commends the comprehensive inclusion of sidewalks along Newlins Mill Road and Tatamy Road property frontages, access drives and connecting throughout the site to each proposed building. However, the site contains opportunities for improved linkages:

- Sidewalk should be provided along the Corriere Road property frontage. Existing sidewalk has been constructed along the north side of Corriere Road less than 1000 feet to the west of the project site. Extending sidewalk along Corriere Road will facilitate future closures in the Township’s sidewalk network and support a well-connected pedestrian network.
- Additional pedestrian walkways should be provided along the perimeter of the parking lot south of building C to minimize interactions between pedestrians and vehicles.
- The Palmer Bikeway trail is located approximately 2,500 feet to the east of the project site along Newlins Mill Road. Appropriate multimodal amenities such as bicycle racks should be provided on site in multiple convenient locations to encourage bicycle usage as an alternative transportation option and ‘strengthen sidewalk, bicycle and trail infrastructure’ (of Policy 5.3).

The project site is served directly by the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), with a bus stop currently located at the southeast intersection of Newlins Mill and Tatamy roads. The proposed pedestrian infrastructure supports ‘enhanced transit connections to improve mobility and job access’ (Policy 2.3) for employees who may wish to utilize this transit opportunity. Additional sidewalk expansions, as mentioned above, would further ‘improve connections between mass transit and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure’ (of Policy 2.3).
Emergency Access
The LVPC recommends including a secondary emergency-only site access point along Corriere Road. In the event of an emergency evacuation, or Newlins Mill Road access is blocked due to emergency vehicle staging and/or employee and freight vehicles on site, a secondary access point would enable safe and secure emergency management and enhance emergency response efforts (of Policy 5.1).

Environmental Considerations
The LVPC applauds the comprehensive inclusion of landscaping along the property boundary and throughout the site within parking areas and along detention basins. Landscaping makes for a more attractive development and can significantly reduce the visual impact of large-scale buildings for the community. Landscaping benefits to employees also include access to green spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities when considering the proposed sidewalks, ultimately ‘creating community spaces that promote physical and mental health’ (Policy 5.3).

Furthermore, the LVPC encourages the applicant to consider the benefits of incorporating sustainable building, design and operations practices, including sustainable energy sources such as solar or geothermal, green roofs, and capturing greywater to be recycled in building functions. These practices ‘minimize environmental impacts of development’ (Policy 3.2) and ‘reduce climate change impacts’ (Policy 3.4) while reducing overhead operational costs.

The project site is located within the Bushkill Creek Watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments relative to our review of the project’s stormwater management plan are included as Attachment 1.

The LVPC has copied appropriate representatives from neighboring municipalities to ‘coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries’ (Policy 1.4) and to ‘expand collaboration on planning and development between neighboring municipalities’ (of Policy 4.6).

Our review does not include an in-depth examination of the plan relative to subdivision design standards or ordinance requirements since these items are covered in the municipal review.

Feel free to call me if you have any questions about this review.

Sincerely,

Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner

cc: Robert Williams, Palmer Township Manager; Brian Dillman, PE, Palmer Township Engineer; Keith Ottes, Langan Engineering; FR Newlins Logistics Park, LLC, Applicant; Strausser Enterprises, Inc., Property Owner; Jill Garcia, Wilson Borough Manager; John Cornell, Forks Township Manager; Robert Hayes, Tatamy Borough Council Chair; Sean Dooley, Stockertown Borough Planning Commission Chair; Anita Caughy, Stockertown Borough Secretary; Lisa Klem, Upper Nazareth Township Manager; Lori Seese, Lower Nazareth Township Planning Director; Lori Stauffer, Lower Nazareth Township Manager;
Amanda Raudenbush, Bethlehem Township Planning Director; Leslie Huhn, Lower Saucon Township Manager; Mikal Sabatine, Williams Township Manager; Donald Young, Glendon Borough Council President; Molly Wood, LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist; Daniel Ahn, Northampton County Conservation District Engineer; Geoff Reese, LVPC Director of Environmental Planning; Paul Carafides, LVPC Director of Transportation Planning and Data
October 8, 2021

Mr. Charles Deprill, Chairman
Upper Macungie Planning Commission
8330 Schantz Road
Breinigsville, PA 18031

RE: LRE Allentown – Industrial Expansion – Land Use of Regional Significance
Upper Macungie Township
Lehigh County

Dear Mr. Deprill:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, and we encourage your participation. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting if Commission members have any additional comments. Meeting participation details are below:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - October 26, 2021 at 12:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - October 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)

The project proposes to construct a phased expansion of an existing distribution center, with Phase I to consist of an expanded trailer parking area and supporting stormwater management facilities, and Phase II consisting of a 129,816-square-foot addition to the existing building. The project site is located at 8001 Industrial Boulevard (parcel number 546505065701). The proposal is located near Route 100 and is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under FutureLV: The Regional Plan as a Warehouse, Logistics and Storage Facility.
The project generally exhibits consistency with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because it is located in the Development area of the General Land Use Plan, in an area with compatible existing development and infrastructure able to accommodate the expansion. Expanding existing development in this location supports preserving natural areas and farmland by alleviating growth pressures in other areas of the Township and region (Policy 1.1). The LVPC offers the following comments:

**Multimodal Access**
The proposed site is directly served by the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority, with a bus stop located approximately 400 feet east of the automobile access driveway along Industrial Boulevard. The LVPC recommends the developer install pedestrian improvements along the property frontage and entrance driveway to ensure safe and secure access between the building and bus stop (of Policy 5.2). Bicycle racks should be provided in a secure and convenient location to ‘improve connections between mass transit and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure’ (of Policy 2.3). These recommendations help ‘provide transportation options that are cost-effective and sustainable’ (of Policy 1.1) and ‘improve mixed-transportation access to areas with high or growing employment opportunities’ (of Policy 4.3).

**Tractor-Trailer Accommodations**
The LVPC commends the provided driver amenities and additional off-street truck parking and staging spaces, as required by the Township’s zoning ordinance, that help keep truck drivers safe and minimize quality of life impacts freight facilities have on residents (of Policy 2.4). Truck parking stalls and layover spaces should be electrified to limit idling and reduce emissions, ensure compliance with the 2008 Pennsylvania Diesel Idling Law and support the advancement of alternative fueled vehicles (Policy 2.5), as the freight industry in particular is rapidly moving towards alternative fueling technologies over the next few years. Additionally, a snow-clearing tool should be installed to easily allow for truck drivers to clean off tractor-trailers to meet the Pennsylvania Snow/Ice Removal Law (2006) and ‘provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network’ (Policy 2.2).

**Sustainability**
The LVPC encourages the developer to consider opportunities for incorporating sustainable
energy systems that reduce overhead operational costs and ‘minimize environmental impacts of development’ (Policy 3.1), such as geothermal energy systems, solar panels and greywater reuse for irrigation and plumbing. Incorporating sustainable practices also helps to ‘reduce climate change impacts’ (Policy 3.4) by offsetting the air quality impacts generated by freight uses and tractor-trailer idling.

**Stormwater**

The project site is located within the Little Lehigh Creek Watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments relative to our review of the project’s stormwater management plan are included as Attachment 1.

The LVPC has copied appropriate representatives from adjacent municipalities to further ‘coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries’ (of Policy 1.4).

Municipalities, when considering subdivision/land developments, should reasonably attempt to be consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, as required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) [Article 1§105, Article III§303, §304 & §306(a), Article VI§603(j)]. The LVPC review does not include an in-depth examination of plans relative to subdivision design standards or ordinance requirements since these items are covered in the municipal review.

If this proposal moves forward for approval, please call or email me or another Community Planning staff person for information on how to obtain LVPC signatures on the final plans.

Feel free to call me if you have any questions about this review.

Sincerely,

Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner

cc: Robert Ibach, Jr., Township Manager; Daren Martocci, Township Director of Community Development; David Alban, Jr., PE, Township Engineer; Brian Werrell, NFI Real Estate, LLC, Applicant Seth Gahman, Bohler Engineering; Brian Carl, Weisenberg and Lowhill Township; David Manhardt, South Whitehall Township; Thomas Beil, Lower Macungie Township; Molly Wood, LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist; Garrett Cook, Lehigh County Conservation District; Geoff Reese, LVPC Director of Environmental Planning; Paul Carafides, LVPC Director of Transportation Planning and Data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Brief Statement of Purpose</th>
<th>LVPC Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>Upper Saucon Township</td>
<td><em>Warehousing and Truck Terminal Regulations</em> – amends the regulations for Warehousing and Wholesale Trade Establishments and Truck or Motor Freight Terminals, both of which are conditional uses in the Township’s Industrial (I) Zoning District.</td>
<td>Exhibits consistency with <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</em> – the proposed standards reduce impacts of freight-based businesses to ‘protect the health, safety and welfare of the public’ (Policy 3.2) and demonstrate a commitment to municipal consideration of the global effects of new or expanded freight businesses (of Policy 2.4).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>Bath Borough</td>
<td><em>Garden Apartments</em> – amends the definition for “Garden Apartment” and minor amendments to the general provisions of garden apartments that do not substantially alter the existing provisions.</td>
<td>Exhibits consistency with <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</em> – the LVPC commends the Borough for removing the requirement that a Garden Apartment not be served by an elevator, increasing the accessibility for persons of all abilities (of Policy 5.2). The LVPC recognizes the Borough’s continued effort to diversify types of available housing (of Policy 4.5) and ‘promote context-specific design solutions’ (of Policy 5.4).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Brief Statement of Purpose</td>
<td>LVPC Comment</td>
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<td>Application to Renew Approval of Existing Groundwater Withdrawal (DRBC Review)</td>
<td>Washington Township, Northampton County</td>
<td>Application by BlueTriton Brands (formerly Nestle Waters North America)/Green Waltz Water Company to renew approval of existing groundwater withdrawal of up to 17.05 million gallons per month (mgm) from applicant’s boreholes. The project will continue to supply the applicant’s bottled water facilities in Upper Macungie Township. Applicant will continue an ongoing, long-term groundwater and surface water monitoring program and maintain a specific pass-by flow in Greenwalk Creek. Ten-year renewal cycle.</td>
<td>Exhibits consistency with <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan:</em> Protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater. Per DRBC documentation, no substantial adverse impacts are anticipated with continued operation. In addition, under the permit, DRBC may modify or suspend its approval or any permit condition to mitigate adverse impacts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
October XX, 2021

Michael P. Hanlon
435 West Hamilton Street
Allentown PA 18101
Michael.Hanlon@AllentownPA.gov

RE: Street Vacations – “Common Ridge”
City of Allentown
Lehigh County

1. North Halstead from East Turner to East Webster
2. North Hart from Court Street to midpoint between Turner and Webster
3. North Fenwick from East Turner to East Linden
4. North Folk from East Turner to Court Street
5. North Gilmore from East Turner to Court Street
6. North Glynn from East Turner to Court Street
7. East Newton from North Glynn to North Grape
8. East Webster from North Glynn to North Hart
9. North Grape from East Turner to East Webster
10. East Linden from North Folk to North Hart
11. North Grape from East Linden to Court Street
12. North Hancock from Court Street to midpoint between East Webster and East Turner
13. East Turner from North Fenwick to North Halstead
14. North side East Linden from center of North Fenwick to North Folk Street
15. East Linden Street from Hart Street to North Irving Street

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject street vacation petition at its Transportation Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, please see the meeting details below to attend. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting should the Commission have any additional comments.

- LVPC Transportation Planning Committee Meeting
  o October 28, 2021 at 5:30 PM
  o [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  o October 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM
  o [https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm](https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm)
Mr. Hanlon,

The proposed street vacations were submitted by the City of Allentown on behalf of B. Land Co., LLC of 2005 City Line Rd, Bethlehem PA 18017.

The petition, submitted for recommendations under Section 304 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, was reviewed for general consistency with the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

Pursuant to a settlement agreement with the City of Allentown dated May 13, 2010, to redesign the development known as Common Ridge to rezone the capacity from 134 apartments to 50 units. The applicant requests vacation to portions of 15 streets for good and marketable title.

The transportation review reveals that the street vacations are generally consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, to encourage reuse of vacant and underutilized properties as well as to promote context-specific design solutions of Policy 5.4.

We appreciate the City’s consideration of these policies in as much as it relates to the street vacation petition for portions of 15 streets referenced as “Common Ridge”

Sincerely,

Brian Hite
Transportation Planner
October XX, 2021

Michael P. Hanlon
435 West Hamilton Street
Allentown PA 18101
Michael.Hanlon@AllentownPA.gov

RE: Street Vacation
West Howe Street from 8th Street to its Terminus
City of Allentown
Lehigh County

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject street vacation petition at its Transportation Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, please see the meeting details below to attend. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting should the Commission have any additional comments.

- LVPC Transportation Planning Committee Meeting
  - October 28, 2021 at 5:30 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)

- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - October 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm](https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm)

Mr. Hanlon,

The proposed street vacation was submitted by the City of Allentown on behalf of Da Vinci Science City, LLC (equitable owner of 18-28 N. 8th Street) for West Howe Street from 8th Street to its Terminus.

The proposed street vacation, submitted for recommendations under Section 304 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, was reviewed for general consistency with the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

Howe Street is a “dead end” street due to a previous street vacation in 2001 to facilitate the construction of the “Grand Plaza” (formerly the PPL Plaza building) at 835 West Hamilton Street, Allentown PA 18101.

Howe Street is only ten feet wide in width between existing building walls and less than nine feet in width at its entrance off 8th Street. No buildings abutting Howe Street have any loading docks, cargo doors, or wide entrances for deliveries only single pedestrian doorways. The
utilization of Howe Street is for storage of trash and recycling containers that are rolled out to 8th Street for collection by refuse and recycling haulers.

The petition did not list any adjoining property owners for their concurrence, it is strongly recommended that the petition acquire their representative signatures for concurrence of vacating Howe Street.

Access should be maintained for residents, businesses and utility infrastructure of adjoining buildings via a multimodal sidewalk type corridor for mobility and the continued storage of trash and recycling containers for the area of the proposed vacation. Policy 5.4 of Future LV: The Regional Plan promotes context-specific design solutions.

Additionally, the area should be maintained for emergency response purposes to the adjoining buildings and the continued access to fire escape ladders attached to the rear of 801 West Hamilton Street. Policy 5.1 of FutureLV: The Regional Plan recommends promoting safe and secure community design and emergency management.

We appreciate the City's consideration of these Policies of FutureLV: The Regional Plan in as much as it relates to the street vacation petition of a Howe Street.

Sincerely,

Brian Hite
Transportation Planner
October XX, 2021

Michael P. Hanlon
435 West Hamilton Street
Allentown PA 18101
Michael.Hanlon@AllentownPA.gov

RE: Street Vacation
Chestnut Street from American parkway to the East side of Race Street
City of Allentown
Lehigh County

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject street vacation petition at its Transportation Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, please see the meeting details below to attend. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting should the Commission have any additional comments.

- LVPC Transportation Planning Committee Meeting
  o October 28, 2021 at 5:30 PM
  o https://lvpc.org/meetings.html

- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  o October 28, 2021 at 7:00 PM
  o https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm

Mr. Hanlon,

The proposed street vacation was submitted by the City of Allentown on behalf of Mr. William G, Malkames, Attorney representing 315 W. Linden Street, LLC, for a Chestnut Street from American Parkway to the East side of Race Street.

Chestnut Street is an unmaintained road adjacent to the building at 315 W. Linden Street, consisting of residential apartments with no immediate access to American Parkway. The petition states that "Race Street serves no public purpose and terminates without access to American Parkway".

The proposed plan, submitted for recommendations under Section 304 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, was reviewed for general consistency with the intent of FutureLV: The Regional Plan.
Mr. Malkames contacted all the adjacent landowners to sign off the street vacation petition. The adjacent property on this portion of Chestnut Street, RJ Corman Railroad Company of Nicholasville KY and their representative, Deborah Hawley signed off the street vacation petition letter as of receipt of the request for Street vacation requests which require the petitioner, all property owners and the City of Allentown to agree to the vacation.

Access of the proposed vacation of Chestnut Street should be maintained for emergency response purposes to the apartment building. Policy 5.1 of FutureLV: The Regional Plan recommends promoting safe and secure community design and emergency management.

We appreciate the City’s consideration of this goal in as much as it relates to the street vacation petition of a portion of Chestnut Street.
Sincerely,

Brian Hite
Transportation Planner
October 13, 2021

RE: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Long Range Transportation Plan and Freight Movement Plan comments

Long Range Transportation Plan Comments

The LRTP, as expected, is a high level general long range transportation plan for the State of Pennsylvania. The Goals and Objectives do align with the Lehigh Valley outlook for transportation planning.

Goals and Objectives:

- **Safety** - Enhance safety and security for both motorized and non-motorized modes throughout Pennsylvania’s transportation system.
- **Mobility** - Strengthen transportation mobility to meet the increasingly dynamic needs of Pennsylvania residents, businesses, and visitors.
- **Equity** - Improve transportation access and equity throughout Pennsylvania.
- **Resilience** - Strengthen Pennsylvania transportation’s resilience to climate change and other risks and reduce transportation’s environmental impacts.
- **Performance** - Improve the condition and performance of transportation assets.
- **Resources** - Structure transportation funding and finance approaches that allocate sufficient resources for system safety, maintenance, preservation, and improvement.

A component that will greatly affect the Lehigh Valley will be the Resources Goals and Objectives. This is a new goal, as compared to the previous plan, and it is set forth due to the need for new sources of transportation funding and new allocation strategies for the funding. This includes the strategies that have emerged from the Transportation Revenue Options Committee report and how those strategies move forward to become funding sources for State and Local projects. There needs to be a stronger focus on allocation of funds to regions, especially growing ones such as the Lehigh Valley. Due to growth in both population and industry, there is a corresponding growth in traffic and not all traffic goes to interstates. Traffic and infrastructure needs is a concern on all roads including three-digit State Routes, four-digit state routes, local roads and State and Local Bridges. Focus needs to be rebalanced from the interstate system back to a well-designed and well-maintained transportation network as a whole.

The plan takes all modes of travel into consideration – Truck, passenger vehicles, public transportation, active transportation, and aviation. All are issues and opportunities for the Lehigh Valley and strengthened guidance from the State will help to move Regional (County & Local) projects forward.

Two aspects that were touched on, Broadband access and Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAV), are areas where the Lehigh Valley will continue discussions with the Commonwealth to
move forward with the emerging technologies associated with both. Broadband access in rural communities is an issue and not only effects residents but also the transportation network. Broadband access improves information flow which helps with roadway operations from traffic signal performance to traveler information (VMS & DMS) signs. With the growth of warehouses and freight in rural regions of the Lehigh Valley these connections are necessary to reduce congestion and manage traffic.

Finally, something not discussed in the plan, but that will have real impact on the Long Range Transportation needs of not only the Lehigh Valley but Pennsylvania will be the Federal Infrastructure Bill. A tie in with possible new funding types and sources should be acknowledged to some degree.

**Freight Movement Plan Comments**

The State Freight Movement Plan (FMP) comes at an opportune time as we begin the Eastern PA Freight Plan. As the LRTP did, the Freight Movement Plan begins with a set of goals and objectives.

Goals and Objectives:

- **Land Use** – Align freight mobility with economic development and land use.
- **Mobility** – Advance project investments that enhance freight mobility.
- **Analytical Tools and Processes** – Provide planning data, and analytical tools for improved decision-making.
- **Operations/Safety** – Improve multimodal freight transportation operations and safety.

The core ideas of the PennDOT Freight Movement Plan align well with what has been discussed for the Eastern PA Freight Plan Scope of work. The PennDOT FMP, discusses all modes of freight – truck, rail, air, maritime and even pipelines. The multi-modal view of freight is more important now more than ever as the amount of freight is increasing exponentially not only in Pennsylvania as a whole, but especially in the Lehigh Valley. Discussing and understanding the role all modes of freight movement play is critical to the continued economic success of the Lehigh Valley. From 2016 through the third quarter of this year 3,138,872 square feet of new manufacturing/mineral extraction/general industrial has been added in under six years and 26,446,041 square feet of warehouse/logistics/e-commerce during the same time period in the Lehigh Valley. A stronger investment in the newly emerged industrial markets is needed as they are not necessarily occurring in the traditional urban settings of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Through this great industrial expansion new multimodal freight investment needs and opportunities have emerged and require commensurate infrastructure funding growth across all modes including transit as well as staffing at the MPO and District Office level. The States funding strategy is required to be more in line with the new industrial markets in order for the Lehigh Valley and the Commonwealth to succeed. The new industrial markets add billions of dollars to the Commonwealth and an investment in corresponding infrastructure should match that economic growth.

The PennDOT FMP provides good guidance for local/regional freight plans. It is a good starting point for these plans, including the EPFA Freight Plan, as it provides a sort of template to setting up a freight plan. Current conditions for all modes of freight, the role they play in the freight
planning process and key goals and objectives. This certainly helps us in the Lehigh Valley as we prepare the scope for the EPFA plan and shows the commitment PennDOT has in creating an efficient and safe freight network.

A key aspect which can be pulled from the EPFA freight plan at its conclusion, is how it can provide data to make decisions on roadways in the region and their inclusion in the critical urban freight corridors (CUFCs) and the critical rural freight corridors (CRFCs) (p.42 PennDOT FMP). The data driven approach to identifying these corridors can significantly influence freight transportation infrastructure needs in the EPFA Region and especially in the Lehigh Valley as it continues to grow.

The comment periods for both Plans end on October 19, 2021. The Lehigh Valley Transportation Study meets on October 20, 2021 and the bi-county Lehigh Valley Planning Commission meets on October 28, 2021, both past the comment period. All additional and edited comments from these meetings will be forward to the Department after the October 20 and October 28 Meetings.

Sincerely,

Paul Carafides
Director of Transportation Planning and Data

cc: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
Plan Activity

Lehigh County

- Reviews: 43
- Acres: 360.4

Northampton County

- Reviews: 26
- Acres: 77.5

Regional Totals*

- 8 Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustments
- 31 Development
- 25 Stormwater Management
- 5 Municipal Ordinances and Maps
- 437.9 Acres

* Includes preliminary and final plans

Types of New Development

Housing: 486 Total Units

- Single-Family Detached: 167
- Townhouses: 0
- Apartments: 293
- Planned Residential: 0
- Twins: 26
- Assisted-Living: 0
- Manufactured Homes: 0
- Condos: 0

Non-Residential: 877,080 Total Square Feet

- Commercial: 258,956
- Retail: 4,500
- Public/Quasi-Public: 31,945
- Industrial (Warehouse)*: 570,479 (W: 488,150)
- Office: 11,200
- Transportation: 0
- Agriculture: 0
- Recreational: 0

* Warehouse number is a subset of industrial total square footage

Location of Development

- Plan Activity

Year to Date

- Residential Units
- Non-Residential Square Footage

Plan Details and Previous Reports at lvpc.org/subdivisionreport.html
* August 4 was impacted by Hurricane Isaias

** February 2 was impacted by Winter Storm Orlena
You are invited

Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Changes Working Group

Multiple local and county government officials, planners and professional organizations have been discussing the limitations of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and how its provisions are limiting adequate growth management across the region. Several Township Managers, County officials and the LVPC had been actively discussing advocating for a modernization of the over 50-year-old code. We are bringing together the conversations into action through this Working Group.

At the meeting we will:

1. Outline the challenges of the MPC
2. Develop a single legislative platform so all levels and types of governments can advocate in a coordinated manner
3. Develop an advocacy strategy that will help grab the attention of State Legislators in our region and beyond

Friday, October 29th at 10 am at:
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
961 Marcon Boulevard, Suite 310
Allentown, PA 18109

We expect the Working Group to meet two to three times and will provide an update at Lehigh Valley General Assembly on November 30th.

RSVP to Heather Ferguson, Senior Advisor, hferguson@lvpc.org or 610-264-4544

*Masks will be required*
Talking Business with Becky Bradley: Pennsylvania’s Land Use Law is Crazy

By Becky Bradley
For The Morning Call
Oct. 1, 2021 at 9:20 AM

Pennsylvania land use law is compound, complex, convoluted, confusing — and a little crazy. More and more it’s not “crazy good,” especially when addressing rapid growth in the Lehigh Valley. The entire region is in the middle of boom, all types of development, all the time. But with growth comes a series of choices about quality of life, economy, environment, utilities, transportation, parks, farmland preservation, short-term gains versus long-term gains, and sometimes no gains at all.

Let’s unpack the development review and approvals process, and net effect of lot-by-lot decision-making. First, the decision-makers. Under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) — the law that governs planning, zoning and how communities develop — the local government has final decision-making authority on all approvals. In the Lehigh Valley, that’s 62 separate municipalities. As the planning agency for Lehigh and Northampton counties, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) sees plans early and provides advisory guidance on how a proposal is consistent or not or any shade in-between, with the goals, policies and actions of “FutureLV: The Regional Plan.”

The local government reviews the proposal to determine its consistency with municipal zoning, the local comprehensive plan and, in some cases, the subdivision and land development regulations. The municipality incorporates the LVPC’s review into its land development review and is required to make reasonable attempts to conform with the regional plan. Most communities do this and, in a perfect world, the back and forth between county and local planning protects the local, county and regional public, health, safety and welfare indefinitely.
Of course, the world is not perfect. A big part of this imperfection concerns the flaws in a confusing state law that allows development of all types, good and bad, to flourish, especially during times of great growth.

County planning agencies have 30 days to issue a review; local governments have 90 days. Sounds efficient right? With simple lot line adjustments and minor actions, the timeline is perfect.

However, when you are looking at the development of eight industrial buildings that are 500,000 square feet or greater, and the developer has not yet chosen an end user and therefore doesn't know what the traffic, transit, workforce, utility, emergency services or other needs will be, the state-mandated timeline puts the community at a massive disadvantage. There is little time to ask questions, perform traffic analysis, vet the public’s concerns and ultimately protect the public.

Buildings transcend a single lifetime in most cases, so local governments are forced to decide on developments that will affect our grandchildren's grandchildren, without all the details or reasonable levels of certainty. In some cases, this has the opposite effect the law intends and jeopardizes the public, environment, economy and everything in between.

With few exceptions, no one marries after the first blind date. But in Pennsylvania, you might as well take the minister with you to the construction trailer when it comes to development. It’s a gamble I don’t believe most community leaders or the public want to take on big, complicated community-changing plans. State-mandated timelines dictate otherwise.

And no one has the option to slow walk a project review, or not acknowledge its arrival.

The MPC is clear that if no decision is made, the “failure of the governing body or agency to render a decision … shall be a deemed approval of the application as presented.”

So, county planning must review and issue guidance within a month and municipalities must act within 90 days or abdicate responsibility.

No county planning agency or local government in the Lehigh Valley rolls over and plays dead. No one fails here and everyone takes land use and development rolls extremely seriously. That’s why we have managed to maintain much of our quality of community and life so far, though nearly everyone recognizes that it has become more and more difficult. Reviews are completed, letters are issued, and follow-up is done to achieve the best outcomes, even if those are unknown or uncertain, according to the deadlines the state gives.
So, what if the community doesn’t want the development in the first place? Can’t it just be stopped? Not according to the MPC.

In a nutshell, all communities must find a way to accommodate all types of development within their municipal boundaries even if it makes little sense. Pennsylvania law is essentially a “right to develop” treatise that entertains balance, but in the end makes it very hard, and in some cases impossible, for municipalities to say no.

All communities are also required in their local comprehensive plans to accommodate growth. Our cities and many of our boroughs are near 100% built out, having little to no developable land left. Generally, these communities need to find areas for reuse and redevelopment and plan for density in the form of taller buildings and less green space.

In most of the region’s townships, areas marked for new development are almost always farmlands, open spaces, floodplains, steep slopes and places that for a whole host of reasons — from preservation of the agricultural economy to managing tax burden to ensuring people are safe during storms — should not be built on. Again, the requirement for accommodating everything from houses to landfills and schools to warehouses is real, embedded in the state law and difficult or impossible for local governments to navigate around.

It’s a giant Catch-22, where all the good intentions of managed communities with beautiful parks, scenic vistas, clean air and water, easily traveled roads, low student enrollment, low taxes, and a balanced economy are trapped in a cycle of rock, paper, scissors. Or as Wikipedia aptly notes, a “simultaneous, zero-sum game that has only two possible outcomes: a draw, or a win for one player and a loss for the other”.

More often, communities must agree to uses and developments that don’t make sense. This isn’t what any county or local government wants and I don’t believe it’s what the state Legislature intended when the MPC was adopted in 1968.

Now, don’t overact. That gets us nowhere, especially when phenomenal collaborations and community supportive advancements by Northampton County, Lehigh County, all 62 municipalities and the LVPC are in place and largely effective. These protect everyone and everything to the greatest extent possible, and in the next column, we’ll get into these details.

But right now, it’s time for statewide reform. It’s time for high growth areas to be authorized to say “no” when more cannot be accommodated, to be enabled to zone out incompatible uses based on the public health and safety, and to be trusted to slow down decision-making when developments outsize the ability of the transportation, water, sewer, or emergency management capacity. It’s time to call your state representative and your senator and urge them to build managed growth tools into the community
decision-making process, and make them easily accessible and useable by local and county governments.

Complex series of plans, years of analysis and the formation of additional boards should not have to happen before a community can request traffic impact fees to offset the new impacts of development. The system today is inefficient for governments, the public and rigged towards developers. The quality and resiliency of the Lehigh Valley today and tomorrow depends on a modern land use code that recognizes the challenges of the 2020s and beyond.

We need a Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code that leads, really plans, allows communities to determine where development can reasonably be accommodated, and protects us now and generations into the future.

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