LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, April 27, 2023, at 7:00 PM
Via Microsoft Teams
AGENDA


Roll Call

Courtesy of Floor

Chairman’s Report
1. Pennsylvania House Bill 782 - An Act amending the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, providing for developments of regional significance and impact; and, in zoning hearing board and other administrative proceedings, further providing for jurisdiction.

Minutes
1. ACTION ITEM: Minutes and Review of Roll Call Actions of the March 23, 2023, Commission Meeting (BGR)

Comprehensive Planning Committee:
1. ACTION ITEM: City of Bethlehem – Land Use of Regional Significance – ArtsQuest Southside Bethlehem Cultural Arts Center (BGR)
2. ACTION ITEM: Chapman Borough – Zoning Ordinance and Map (DS)
3. ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet (SM)

Environment Committee:
1. ACTION ITEM: Weisenberg Township – Stormwater Management Ordinance (DS)
2. ACTION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet (DS)

Transportation Committee:
1. INFORMATION ITEM: Walk Audit (SN, CM)
2. INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Passenger Rail Analysis (BB)

Old Business:
1. INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports:
   b. 1st Quarter Industrial Market Monitoring Report (JD, BB)
   c. Highway Traffic Monitoring (BB)
New Business:
1. **INFORMATION ITEM**: US Environmental Protection Agency – Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant for Climate Action Planning (BB)

Executive Director’s Report:
1. **INFORMATION ITEM**: Grant Availability
   a. USDOT:
      i. Charging and Fueling (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program
         1. May 30 Deadline
      ii. Safe Streets and Roads for All Funding Grant
         1. July 10 Deadline:
   b. PA WalkWorks Active Transportation Grants
      iii. May 26: Dep. of Health Grants Deadline
   c. National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Grants
      iv. May 5: PennDOT NEVI Grants Deadline
   d. Multimodal Transportation Fund Grants
      v. May 10 to July 17: PennDOT Transportation Set-Aside Program Grant Window.
   e. Automated Red Light Enforcement Funding Program
      vii. June 1 to June 30 Funding window.

Communications and Training:
1. **INFORMATION ITEM**: Morning Call Business Cycle Column (MA)
   f. Published March 26: “Knowledge is Power: The Region Craves It”
   g. Next column to publish: April 30
2. **INFORMATION ITEM**: Monthly, Plan Lehigh Valley Talk Show on WDIY, Lehigh Valley Public Radio, 88.1 (MA)
   a. Aired April 3: Education and Training Opportunities
   b. Next show – May 1 – Why Regionalism Is Critical to Our Success
3. **INFORMATION ITEM**: Lehigh Valley Government Academy Classes (MA)
   a. Community Planning – Tuesdays, May 9, 16, 23
   b. Subdivision and Land Development – Wednesdays, Sept. 6, 13, 20
   c. Community Planning – Mondays, October 9, 16, 23
      All classes 5:30-9 pm. Register at lvpc.org/lvga
4. **INFORMATION ITEM**: Local Technical Assistance Programs (MA)
   A. May 4: Speed Data Collection, 11 am to noon
   B. May 11: Temporary Traffic Control (Work Zones), 8 am to 3 pm **In-Person at the LVPC, 3rd class in the region!**
   C. June 6: Erosion and Sediment Control, 8 am to noon **In-Person at the LVPC**
   D. June 6: Bridge + Culvert Inspections for Municipalities, 8 am to noon
   E. June 13: Municipal Stormwater Facilities Program, 8 am to noon
   F. June 20: Stormwater Control Measures O+M, 8 am to noon

**Next Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Meeting:**
Thursday, May 25, 2023, at 7:00 pm
INTRODUCED BY SCHLOSSBERG, BRENNAN, BRIGGS, CIRESI, HILL-EVANS, KINSEY, MADDEN, OTTEN, PROBST, SANCHEZ AND SIEGEL, MARCH 30, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MARCH 30, 2023

AN ACT

Amending the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), entitled "An act to empower cities of the second class A, and third class, boroughs, incorporated towns, townships of the first and second classes including those within a county of the second class and counties of the second through eighth classes, individually or jointly, to plan their development and to govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances, planned residential development and other ordinances, by official maps, by the reservation of certain land for future public purpose and by the acquisition of such land; to promote the conservation of energy through the use of planning practices and to promote the effective utilization of renewable energy sources; providing for the establishment of planning commissions, planning departments, planning committees and zoning hearing boards, authorizing them to charge fees, make inspections and hold public hearings; providing for mediation; providing for transferable development rights; providing for appropriations, appeals to courts and penalties for violations; and repealing acts and parts of acts," providing for developments of regional significance and impact; and, in zoning hearing board and other administrative proceedings, further providing for jurisdiction.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), known as the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, is amended by adding an article to read:
ARTICLE VI-A

Developments of Regional Significance and Impact

Section 601-A. Purposes.

The purposes of this article are:

(1) To authorize a comprehensive and coordinated review by a municipality regarding a proposed development of regional significance and impact.

(2) To evaluate and mitigate potentially adverse impacts on community services, the economy, the environment, community character, transportation and infrastructure as a result of a development of regional significance and impact.

(3) To develop cost-effective and reasonable accountability measures regarding a development of regional significance and impact.

(4) To encourage timely, well-communicated and well-coordinated procedures to consider and authorize a development of regional significance and impact.

(5) To encourage planning consistent with section 27 of Article I of the Constitution of Pennsylvania.

Section 602-A. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this article shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Department." The Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth.

"Earth disturbance activity." A construction or other human activity, done for the purpose of land development, that disturbs the surface of land.

"Host municipality." A municipality in which a proposed land development will be located.
"Intermodal terminal." An area or building where the transportation mode for freight or passengers changes.

"Petroleum storage facility." A facility used to store gasoline, motor fuel or other petroleum products with a capacity of more than:

1. fifty thousand barrels, if the facility is within 1,000 feet of a water supply; or
2. two hundred thousand barrels.

"Quarry." An open excavation used for extracting minerals, rock, stone, sand, gravel or building materials.

"Truck stop facility." An establishment that provides fuel, parking and related goods and services to primarily support truck transportation with at least:

1. six diesel pumps;
2. five acres of truck parking; or
3. twenty truck parking spaces.

"Waste-handling facility." A structure or system designed for the collection, processing or disposal of solid waste, including hazardous wastes. The term includes a transfer station, processing plant, recycling plant and disposal system.

Section 603-A. Applicability of article.

Unless this article specifically provides to the contrary, this article supplements this act and does not supersede any other provision of this act or other law.

Section 604-A. Scope of article.

This article shall not apply to a person or legal entity that is regulated by any of the following acts:

1. The act of May 31, 1945 (P.L.1198, No.418), known as the Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act.
2. The act of April 27, 1966 (1st Sp.Sess., P.L.31,
Section 605-A. Compliance.

A municipal, multimunicipal or county comprehensive plan shall include provisions consistent with the provisions contained in this article. If a host municipality is not governed by a municipal or multimunicipal comprehensive plan, the provisions of the county comprehensive plan in which the host municipality is located shall govern and shall be consistent with respect to the provisions contained in this article.

Section 606-A. Impact analysis.

(a) General rule.--If a person submits to a host municipality an application for land development that involves a development specified in this section, the applicant shall also submit an impact analysis under section 607-A to the host municipality.

(b) Types of development.--An impact analysis under section 607-A is required if a proposed land development consists of any of the following:

   (1) an airport;
   (2) an intermodal terminal;
(3) a petroleum storage facility;

(4) a waste-handling facility or the cumulative expansion of an existing waste-handling facility that occurs during any three-year period and creates a significant degradation in the level of service with respect to traffic impact, as determined by regulations established by the department;

(5) a quarry or the cumulative expansion of an existing quarry that occurs during any three-year period and creates a significant degradation in the level of service with respect to traffic impact, as determined by regulations established by the department;

(6) a truck stop facility that creates a significant degradation in the level of service with respect to traffic impact, as determined by regulations established by the department;

(7) a land development in a watershed that is unstudied under the act of October 4, 1978 (P.L.864, No.167), known as the Storm Water Management Act, and involves at least 100 acres of contributory watershed that is upstream from the land development and at least 25 acres in total land area of earth disturbance activity associated with the land development;

(8) a land development in which the permittees of the receiving sewerage facilities for the development have submitted information that documents that the existing collection, conveyance and treatment system have an existing hydraulic or organic overload or five-year projected overload; or

(9) a land development in which the permittees of the
collection, conveyance and treatment system receiving facilities have certified to the host municipality that there is not capacity to receive and treat sewage flows from the development or that the additional wasteload from the development will create a hydraulic or organic overload or five-year projected overload.

(c) Municipalities with population of 10,000 or more.--An impact analysis under section 607-A is required if a proposed land development is within a host municipality with a population of 10,000 or more, as determined by the most current decennial census, and will result in:

(1) the generation of 3,000 or more average daily trips or 1,500 vehicles per day; or
(2) a significant impact on highway safety or traffic flow, as determined by standards established by the department.

(d) Municipalities with population of less than 10,000.--An impact analysis under section 607-A is required if a proposed land development is within a host municipality with a population of less than 10,000, as determined by the most current decennial census, and will result in:

(1) a significant impact on highway safety or traffic flow, as determined by standards established by the department;
(2) the generation of 3,000 or more average daily trips or 1,500 vehicles per day;
(3) the generation of 100 or more vehicle trips entering or exiting the development during any one-hour time period of any day of the week; or
(4) for an existing site being redeveloped,
generation of 100 or more additional vehicle trips entering or exiting the development during any one-hour time period of any day of the week.

(e) Comprehensive plan.--A host municipality may increase or decrease a numerical threshold in subsection (c) or (d) to apply to the municipality if:

(1) a revised numerical threshold is adopted in a county plan or multimunicipal comprehensive plan under Article XI; and

(2) the host municipality has:

   (i) adopted the county plan or multimunicipal comprehensive plan and conformed its local plans and ordinances to the county plan or multimunicipal comprehensive plan by implementing a cooperative agreement and adopting appropriate resolutions and ordinances; or

   (ii) entered into an implementation agreement to carry out the county plan or multimunicipal comprehensive plan.

Section 607-A. Contents of impact analysis.

(a) Submission.--An applicant shall submit an impact analysis to the host municipality as required by section 606-A.

(b) Costs.--An applicant shall be responsible for all costs involving the preparation and review of the impact analysis.

(c) Contents.--An impact analysis under this section shall analyze the effect of the proposed land development on the host municipality and other affected municipalities and shall address all of the following:

(1) The financial impact regarding any expanded emergency and infrastructure services, including services
regarding police, fire, ambulance, medical care, sewer, water, transportation and utilities.

(2) The disturbance of agricultural areas, forested areas and greenfields.

(3) The effect on natural resources, historic resources and tourism, including parks, open spaces, historic structures, ethnic heritage sites, the character of neighborhoods and areas, historic landscapes, scenic views and wildlife habitats.

(4) The effect on residential housing opportunities, including property values and the potential number and character of new housing units.

(5) The redevelopment of brownfields or greyfields.

(6) The likelihood that the proposed land development will spur other land development in the area.

(7) Subject to traffic impact guidelines developed by the department, the effect on transportation and transportation infrastructure. Consideration shall be given to trip generation, trip distribution and area municipalities.

(8) Any other matter that is required by an applicable provision in the municipal or multimunicipal ordinance that governs the host municipality or that is covered by an applicable provision in the municipal, multimunicipal or county comprehensive plan for the host municipality.

Section 608-A. Classification as development of regional significance and impact.

(a) Notice of public hearing.--The following shall apply to a notice of public hearing:

(1) In addition to any other notice requirement under
this act, a host municipality shall provide timely written notice of the public hearing under this section to:

(i) each contiguous municipality; and

(ii) each municipality that is potentially impacted by the proposed land development and identified in the impact analysis under section 607-A.

(2) The notice shall specify that the host municipality is considering whether to classify the proposed land development as a development of regional significance and impact.

(b) Public hearing.--The following shall apply to a public hearing:

(1) A host municipality shall conduct a public hearing to review the impact analysis under section 607-A and determine whether the proposed land development is a development of regional significance and impact.

(2) A representative from a municipality receiving notice under subsection (a) may provide public comment to the host municipality regarding the issue of whether to classify the proposed land development as a development of regional significance and impact.

(c) Determination.--The following shall apply to a process by which a host municipality determines whether to classify a proposed land development as a development of regional significance and impact:

(1) The host municipality shall specifically consider the potential direct impacts on other municipalities.

(2) The host municipality shall provide specific reasons supporting its determination.

(d) Effect.--Once a proposed land development is classified
as a development of regional significance and impact, the proposed land development shall be subject to the provisions of this article.

Section 609-A. Mitigation plan.

(a) Submission.--An applicant shall submit to the host municipality a written mitigation plan that explains the nature and extent of mitigation efforts to address any known or potential harm or negative effect cited by the host municipality in the classification of the proposed land development as a development of regional significance and impact under section 608-A.

(b) Professional review.--An applicant shall demonstrate that the mitigation plan submitted under this section has been reviewed and written comments have been prepared for the host municipality regarding the effect of the proposed mitigation measures on the public health, safety and welfare by:

(1) A traffic engineer.

(2) An individual who is:

(i) licensed in this Commonwealth to perform services or activities related to the provisions of this article; and

(ii) qualified by training and experience to perform such services or activities with technical competence.

(c) Costs.--An applicant shall be responsible for all costs involving the preparation and review of the mitigation plan.

Section 610-A. Coordinated and expedited review.

(a) Request.--An applicant may request a coordinated and expedited review of any aspect of a proposed development of regional significance and impact by the department, the Department of Environmental Protection or other governmental...
entity whose approval is required for the proposed development.

(b) Governmental cooperation.--The department, the Department of Environmental Protection or other governmental entity whose approval is required for the proposed land development shall ensure adequate communication and cooperation by and between the governmental entities.

(c) Submission of information.--In consultation with the department, the Department of Environmental Protection or other governmental entity whose approval is required for the proposed land development, an applicant shall submit to each governmental entity the necessary information for review of the proposed land development.

(d) Report.--Within 45 days after submission of all the necessary information under subsection (c) for a coordinated and expedited review, a governmental entity receiving the information shall prepare a written report of findings, comments and recommendations regarding the proposed land development and send the report to the applicant and host municipality.

(e) Discretion of governmental entity.--The following shall apply to the discretion of a governmental entity under this section:

(1) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the department, the Department of Environmental Protection or other governmental entity whose approval is required for the proposed land development to conduct a coordinated and expedited review.

(2) Upon the written consent of the applicant, the department, the Department of Environmental Protection or other governmental entity whose approval is required for the proposed land development may extend the time period under
subsection (d).

(f) Fees.--The following shall apply to fees under this section:

(1) An applicant shall be responsible for all fees involving coordinated and expedited review of a proposed development of regional significance and impact under this section.

(2) Unless the applicant agrees otherwise, if the department, the Department of Environmental Protection or other governmental entity whose approval is required for the proposed land development cannot complete the coordinated and expedited review and submit the report within the time period under subsection (d), the governmental entity shall return to the applicant the full amount of the fee collected under this section.

Section 611-A. Municipal review and determination.

(a) Hearing required.--The host municipality shall conduct a hearing to review a proposed development of regional significance and impact.

(b) Considerations.--At the hearing the host municipality shall consider all of the following:

(1) Subject to subsection (c), testimony and other information from:

(i) The department.

(ii) The Department of Environmental Protection.

(iii) Other governmental entities whose approval is required for the proposed land development.

(iv) The county in which the host municipality is located.

(v) Contiguous municipalities.
(vi) Municipalities that are potentially impacted by
the proposed land development.

(vii) Area school districts potentially impacted by
the proposed land development.

(viii) Concerned individuals, municipal and regional
planners, engineers, persons potentially impacted by the
proposed land development and other persons as determined
by the host municipality.

(2) The impact analysis under section 607-A and other
reports concerning the proposed land development.

(3) The mitigation plan under section 609-A.

(4) Whether the proposed land development is consistent
with an applicable provision in:

   (i) a municipal, multimunicipal or county
   comprehensive plan; and
   
   (ii) a municipal or multimunicipal ordinance or
   regulation.

(5) The totality of impacts regarding the proposed land
development and the cumulative effect of development on the
host municipality and affected municipalities.

(c) Testimony.--The host municipality may limit the
testimony to be presented at the hearing if the testimony is
repetitive.

(d) Determination.--Based on the testimony and other
information received with respect to a proposed development of
regional significance and impact, the host municipality may:

   (1) Approve the proposed development.
   
   (2) Approve the proposed development with conditions
attached. A condition shall be reasonable and necessary to
mitigate any impact or additional impact attributable to the
proposed development and shall bear a direct relationship to
the burden being imposed by the proposed development. A
c Condition may not involve any of the following:

  (i) The correction of an existing deficiency in the
environment or public infrastructure.
  (ii) A contribution or payment for the acquisition
of land or expansion of public facilities, unless the
host municipality's municipal ordinance contains the same
or a similar condition for development that is not
subject to this article.
  (iii) The contribution or payment associated with
the cost of a municipal improvement that exceeds the
proposed development's proportionate share of the cost
established under this article or any applicable
provision of this act or other law or ordinance. By
accepting the proposed development's proportionate share,
the host municipality assures that the municipal
improvement will be made without any additional
contribution or payment from the applicant for that
purpose.

(3) Disapprove the proposed development.

  (e) Reasons.--The host municipality shall provide specific
reasons supporting its determination under subsection (d).

Section 612-A. Additional standards and criteria.
Nothing in this article shall be construed to restrict a
municipality from establishing additional standards and criteria
under this article, in conformity with this act, including, but
not limited to:

  (1) thresholds under subsection 606-A;
  (2) the contents of an impact analysis under section
(3) the classification of a development of regional significance and impact under section 608-A; and

(4) considerations under section 611-A(b).

Section 613-A. Financial considerations.

(a) Applicant costs.--The host municipality or the county in which the host municipality is located may provide financial incentives to an applicant to mitigate the costs regarding an impact analysis, a mitigation plan or a coordinated and expedited review of a proposed development of regional significance and impact.

(b) Tax sharing.--The host municipality shall develop a tax sharing plan for contiguous municipalities adversely affected by an approved development of regional significance and impact as a result of additional expenses incurred for police and fire protection, medical services, road maintenance and infrastructure.

(c) Professional review.--If a host municipality lacks capacity regarding the professional review of the proposed land development plans, the impact analysis or the mitigation plan, the county in which the host municipality is located shall determine whether and the extent to which the county can assist the host municipality with the professional review.

Section 614-A. Notice generally.

Except as otherwise provided in this article, this act shall govern notice of a public hearing, hearing or determination. Written notice shall be given to the applicant, an owner of property that is contiguous to the proposed land development and other person requesting a copy of the notice. A municipality shall provide, as appropriate, timely written notification to a
contiguous municipality, municipality or area school district potentially impacted by the proposed land development.

Section 615-A. Appeals.

(a) Jurisdiction.--An appeal of a determination under section 611-A must be filed with the court of common pleas of the county in which the host municipality which made the determination is located.

(b) Parties.--An appeal under this section shall be limited to those parties that appeared before the host municipality at the hearing.

(c) Review.--The review of the determination under section 611-A shall be governed by Article X-A.

(d) Mediation.--Parties to a contested case may use mediation as an aid to a formal appeal, in which case the provisions of section 908.1 shall govern.

Section 2. Section 909.1(b) of the act is amended by adding a paragraph to read:

Section 909.1. Jurisdiction.--** * *

(b) The governing body or, except as to clauses (3), (4) and (5), the planning agency, if designated, shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and render final adjudications in the following matters:

** * *

(8) Applications for a proposed land development under Article VI-A.

Section 3. This act shall take effect in six months.
LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, March 23, 2023 Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, March 2023. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on December 28, 2022.

Mr. Glickman chaired the meeting.

Ms. Seitz took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

**Lehigh County**
Geoff Brace, Michael Drabenstott, Bob Elbich, Philip Ginder, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Dennis Klusaritz, Rick Molchany, Christina Morgan, Santo Napoli, Owen O'Neil, David Petrik, Stephen Repasch and Kevin Schmidt.

**Northampton County**

Members Absent:

**Lehigh County**
Phillips Armstrong, Percy Dougherty, Jamie Johnson, Joyce Moore, Kathy Rader, and Matthew Tuerk.

**Northampton County**

**Staff Present:** Matt Assad, Becky Bradley, Steve Neratko, Patrick Osei, Jillian Seitz, and Dean Severson.

**Public Present:** Jean Reinert, Gary Asteak, Brigitte Meyer, Kurt Bresswsein, Jedd Komlos, Karen Komlos, Robert Johnson, Jeanene Bauer, Lynn McMillan, Chip Richardson, Lori Richardson, C. Silva, Stephen Bonsall, Mike Siegel, Scott Cocherell, Mindy Kraky, Kim Weinberg, Debby Keba, Phil Gianficaro, Joann Mertz, Rick Dorney, Richard Shavik, Sue McGorry, Kurt Dietrich

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

**Welcome New LVPC Commissioners**
Mr. Glickman welcomed new member of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Taiba Sultana, elected member from the City of Easton

**Executive Committee Decision on Real Estate Matter**
Mr. Glickman discussed the process to locate a new office for the LVPC.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**
Mr. McGorry discussed the proposed move of the LVPC offices. Dr. Amato discussed the process used to decide the new office location. Ms. Smith asked if the information used by the Executive Committee is available to the Commission members. Ms. Weinberg discussed warehouse development in rural areas, especially in Lowhill Township. She stated a need to plan for warehouse development and a model ordinance to control warehouses in rural areas. Ms. Bradley stated that there is a model ordinance available on the Northampton County website and that the LVPC will be conducting a zoning inventory of Lehigh County municipalities. She also stated that the municipalities participating in the Northern Lehigh multi-municipal comprehensive plan will be working together to update their zoning ordinances. Bill also discussed warehouses in Lowhill Township and the transportation impacts they will create. Ms. Bradley said that the LVPC reviewed plans for the three warehouses and ruled that plans for all three warehouses were inconsistent with the plans and policies of the LVPC.

MINUTES
Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, February 2023, LVPC meeting are attached, and Ms. Seitz read the previously voted on agenda items. Mr. Glickman then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Melnick made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed, with Ms. Cope and Ms. Sultana abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

**ACTION ITEM:** Lower Nazareth Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – 523 Planned Business Park

Mr. Neratko presented the review of the subject application, which is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Warehouse, Logistics and Storage Facilities, Freight Facility, Local Freight Generator category. This project proposes consolidating two lots and developing 450,000 square foot warehouse and distribution center with associated utilities and parking at 523 Nazareth Pike.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Repasch made the motion; Mr. Molchany seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Melnick asked about the review letter’s recommendation to coordinate efforts with PennDOT to plan for this development. He questioned what this could lead to. He also noted that Lower Nazareth Township adopted an ordinance prohibiting this type of development at this location and that the developer submitted plans one day before this ordinance became effective. He commented that this plan is contrary to the will of the citizens.

Dr. Amato discussed the transportation impacts of this project and commented that the state needs to give local communities more regulatory powers. Ms. Bradley commented that a new statewide committee has been formed to update the Municipalities Planning Code. She also discussed upcoming training sessions offered by the LVPC on how development is regulated at the local level. Mr. Weinberg asked about past recommendations of the LVPC for other warehouse development plans. Mr. Brace discussed legislation proposed by Representative Schlossberg that would give more powers to local planning agencies. Mr. Siegel commented that infrastructure concurrency laws enacted in other states should be enacted in Pennsylvania. He also commented that a model ordinance should be created to control warehouse development, especially those moving into rural areas. The motion passed.

**ACTION ITEM:** Lower Nazareth Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – 4215 Lonat Drive Development
Mr. Neratko presented the review of the subject application, which is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Warehouse, Logistics and Storage Facilities, Freight Facility, Local Freight Generator category. This project proposes the construction of a business development for a 72,850-square-foot warehouse and distribution facility with associated utilities and parking at 4215 Lonat Drive.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Repasch made the motion; Mr. Elbich seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Melnick asked what happens if PennDOT and the local community can’t find suitable solutions for transportation concerns. Ms. Bradley commented that the LVPC’s Land Use of Regional Significance (LURS) process brings together representatives of the local municipality, PennDOT, the Conservation District and others to discuss impacts of specific projects. Mr. Obei discussed ITE codes 150 and 154 used to calculate traffic impacts of different types of warehouse development. Ms. Bradley noted that the LVPC advocates for changes in submitted development plans as well as the local ordinances that regulate those developments. The motion passed with Mr. Melnick voting nay.

**INFORMATION ITEM: Lower Macungie Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Mixed Use in the Highway Enterprise Zone (SN)**
Ms. Seitz presented the review of the subject zoning ordinance amendment which proposes to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance by permitting mixed-use development as a conditional use in the Highway Enterprise (HE) Zoning District, with related regulations. Per the proposed amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance, a mixed-use development would include two or more mixed-use structures consisting of residential units at a maximum density of 12 units per acre and non-residential buildings between 20,000 square feet and 75,000 square feet. At least two mixed-use structures must have commercial, dining or other permitted non-residential uses on the first floor.

**ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet**
Mr. Melnick presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet, which included Zoning Ordinance Amendments for Lehigh Township, Williams Township, City of Allentown, City of Bethlehem, and two zoning ordinance amendments for Upper Saucon Township.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments on the summary sheet. Mr. Elbich made the motion; Mr. Ginder seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Melnick expressed concern about the proposed rezoning in Bethlehem and the loss of land zoned and currently used for technology. The motion passed with Mr. Melnick voting nay on the City of Bethlehem rezoning.

**Environment Committee:**

**ACTION ITEM: Pennsylvania Post-Construction Stormwater Management Manual**
Mr. Severson presented a review of the Pennsylvania Post-Construction Stormwater Management Manual. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has created a manual for storm water control measures, including general information regarding their design, construction, and long-term operation and maintenance.

Mr. Repasch made a motion to accept the staff review. Mr. Glickman asked for a second. Mr. Drabenstott seconded the motion. Mr. Siegel commented that he had worked with DEP in the preparation of the last BMP manual and stressed the need for more green roofs and blue roofs with new warehouse development because we are running out of areas for groundwater infiltration. Ms. Bradley commented the LVPC will begin working next year with FEMA, PEMA, local conservation districts and others to update all of the Act 167 plans in the region and will create a BMP ordinance that will cover the entire Lehigh Valley. Motion passed.

**Transportation Committee:**

**INFORMATION ITEM: Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and Lehigh**
Valley Transportation Study- Lehigh Valley Passenger Rail Feasibility Analysis
Project Update

Mr. Herman provided a project update on the Lehigh Valley Passenger Rail Feasibility Analysis. PennDOT has contracted WSP for the study. WSP will provide the LVTS Technical Committee with a status report on May 17th.

Old Business:

**INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports**

*Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Report*
Mr. Neratko presented the plan and review activity for February, which included 21 subdivisions, 20 development proposals, 11 reviews for Stormwater Management, and 7 Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 59 reviews. The reviews include 146 housing units and 166,053 square feet of non-residential development. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

*Highway Traffic Monitoring*
Mr. Osei provided the details of the February traffic counts. He presented the vehicle counts for State Route 33, Interstate-78, State Route 309, and State Route 22, as well as the truck counts for Interstate-78 and State Route 22. Mr. Osei noted that the weather in the Lehigh Valley in February affected traffic volumes with very cold temperatures, five rainfalls and seven snowfall occurrences. As a result of February’s heavy precipitation and snowfall, all of the monitored traffic volumes decreased. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

New Business:

**INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) Revision to the Long-Range Transportation Plan Elements of FutureLV: The Regional Plan- Transportation Needs Assessment**

Mr. Osei commented that the subregional Transportation Needs Assessment provides communities and transportation partners an opportunity to be heard and involved in the process of the Long-Range Transportation Plan Update. This process is required by federal statute to be undertaken every four years by the LVTS. This will reevaluate the transportation components of FutureLV: The Regional Plan. Information is being gathered on transportation issues with a focus on subregional priorities, which will help the LVTS guide and select projects, programs and plans for funding and also help develop future plans to serve the public transportation needs. Input from the community is occurring through three avenues: 27 public meetings, a general transportation needs survey and through specific project requests. We have set a goal of hearing from at least a 1,000 people in the Lehigh Valley.

It is noted that the LVTS is the only metropolitan planning organization in the state to request input on specific projects. The LVPC and LVTS in 2018 developed the second regionwide equity analysis in the nation. As part of this work, the LVTS and LVPC committed to working towards equitable access for everyone in the region, regardless of the ability to hire a third-party consultant or speak or write English well, among other factors that affect access in the region. The staff, as a result, is available to assist anyone who requests it to complete a transportation needs assessment project form.

Executive Director’s Report:

**INFORMATION ITEM: US Department of Environmental Protection Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program – Formula Grants for Planning Notice of Intent**

The US Department of Environmental Protection (EPA) released a formula-based grant program for climate action planning of $1 million each for the top 67 largest metropolitan areas by population. The
Lehigh Valley is the 69th largest. A letter of intent for the formula grants is required to be received by the EPA by April 28, 2023, and no match is required.  
1. The funds are to be used over the course of a four-year period to: Create a Priority Climate Action Plan, due in early 2024.  
2. Develop a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan within two years of an award. and  
3. Monitor and develop status reporting by the close of the award period in 2027

The LVPC has completed a regional greenhouse gas inventory through the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Local Climate Action Program. They do not provide funding for the next step, a climate action plan. Lehigh County is providing some funding to help advance a portion of a regionwide plan but, Northampton County is not currently. The Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, because of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, is receiving formula funds for carbon reduction improvements to infrastructure. But we will be required to utilize the state’s plan as a measure to allocate those dollars without our own plan.

It is of note that the region will be required to utilize PENNDOT derived performance measures for the allocation of $10.8 million in carbon reduction funds over the next four years. With EPA planning funds we can develop Lehigh Valley-specific measures, which is required in their program, and be able to prioritize investment in the specific, local goals of FutureLV, like trails, crosswalks, sidewalks, and transit, among other priorities. The Commonwealth’s priorities tend to focus on vehicle movement, especially moving vehicles faster and reducing traffic signals along state-owned roadways. While also important, the needs of the local system, across travel modes could be better prioritized and invested as an outcome of EPA funding. In addition, enhanced support to the region’s local governments, which is often requested, could be advanced through this program. Because we are under-resourced on the planning side, prioritization of the Climate Action Plan is a struggle and will continue to be without additional planning support funding.

After coordination with Mayor Tuerk, primarily, and including Mayor Panto, Mayor Reynolds and copying Executives McClure and Armstrong, we have been encouraged by Dr. Richard Anderson, Energy Director at the US Conference of Mayors to submit a letter of intent even if we are slightly outside of the top 67 metro eligibility established by the EPA. This strategy would place the EPA on formal notice of the Lehigh Valley’s commitment to climate action and the need for planning support in order to achieve goals that have been placed on the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the need for a specific plan for the Lehigh Valley, desire to achieve the broader adopted goals of FutureLV: The Regional Plan, and need for the convening, coordination and collaboration with all 62 local governments in the region in accordance with the mission of the LVPC.

The latter point is one of the primary reasons that the first set of Climate and Energy goals was developed in 2013 by the Commission in partnership with the EPA and US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and why the LVPC has continued to pursue advancement and evolution of Climate Action regionwide. In fact, the region’s local governments and those with environmental advisory councils in the suburban and rural areas have requested, due to lack of capacity, that the LVPC lead a broad regional effort. Hence the greenhouse gas inventory and continued pursuit of additional specific planning around carbon reduction.

If one of the 67 eligible regions does not submit a letter of intent, it is possible for our region to become eligible. From work with the City Mayors Coalition, recently formed here, we are formally requesting to move forward with a letter of intent to the EPA, with the LVPC as the lead applicant, and in coordination with the region’s local governments per the formula program requirements. The City Mayors Coalition and I will be meeting in the next several weeks to advance this initiative upon your support of the letter of intent.

**INFORMATION ITEM:** LVPC to receive United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley’s Community Builder Award, April 4, 2023, 4:30 PM-7:30 PM, Arts Quest at Steel Stacks
The LVPC Team is being recognized with the Community Builder Award, the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley’s highest honor on April 4, 2023, at Arts Quest at SteelStacks. The award is for our dedication to improving the region over the last 62 years.

**INFORMATION ITEM:** Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Real Estate Outlook

Ms. Bradley stated that the LVPC will again have a major role at the upcoming Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Real Estate Outlook, during lunch on April 13 at the Delta Hotel by Marriott in Breinigsville. This is the annual opportunity to share what is happening and how the region is growing and why that matters to everyone with over 500 business leaders. She will be taking a look at an historically busy 2022 development year and taking a look at what that means for the future. There will also be a commercial real estate presentation and a live episode of Business Matters that will air on WFMZ. Given the evolving nature of the economy the event is also timely and the largest real estate event of the year. Ms. Bradley provided a preview of some of the content to be shared at the event.

Communications and Public Engagement:

**INFORMATION ITEM:** Plan Lehigh Valley radio show on WDIY NPR 88.1FM

Mr. Assad stated that the most recent Plan Lehigh Valley radio show aired on March 6 on WDIY FM 88.1, and it focused on our recent annual report and our newly set in-person training schedule through the Lehigh Valley Government Academy. Joining Becky and Matt was Brian Hite, who talked about the LTAP classes, and Hannah Milagio who talked about our upcoming in-person zoning, land development and community planning classes. We also talked a lot about a 2022 that saw more homes, more industrial and more growth in generally across the region than we’ve seen in more than a decade. That 30-minute show is now streaming at lvpc.org and wdiy.org. The next show is scheduled to air at 6:30 pm, April 3, when we'll be talking about making the region more walkable.

**INFORMATION ITEM:** Lehigh Valley Government Academy Classes

Mr. Assad announced that the Lehigh Valley Government Academy Classes are back with four courses spread throughout the year, each consisting of more than 10 hours of instruction on three consecutive weeknights from 5:30-9 pm. We have scheduled Zoning in April, Community Planning in May, Subdivision and Land Development in September and a second Community Planning course in October.

We'll also be offering a virtual class Thursday, March 30. That one is a 90-minute class called “Building A Strong Planning Commission” and it will be taught by Becky. It begins at 6:30 pm and will use hands-on activities and interactive discussions to explore the full range of a planning commission’s work, how it can be organized to accomplish more of its goals, and what is needed to prepare members to get involved in the group’s work.

Mr. Assad also that Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Classes are back in–person for 2023. After almost 3 years of virtual classes, our first in-person class also happens to be our most popular, on April 12th when we'll have Temporary Traffic Control in Work Zones. This will be followed by Erosion and Sediment Control on June 6. The April 12 class includes a light breakfast and lunch, and the June class includes light breakfast. The food and class are free.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mr. Glickman announced an upcoming forum, sponsored by Green Building United, entitled Sustainable Warehouse Forum Part 3, Storm water management and native landscaping. The event will be held on April 14th. Mr. Glickman stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on April 27 at 7pm. Mr. Glickman 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 and Dean Severson, AICP, Director of Regional Planning
April 28, 2023

Ms. Darlene Heller, Planning Director
City of Bethlehem
10 E. Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Re: ArtsQuest Southside Bethlehem Cultural Arts Center – REVISED
Land Use of Regional Significance
City of Bethlehem
Northampton County

Dear Ms. Heller:

The subject application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Educational Facilities category. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The following letter is a revised version based on discussion at the meetings, which occurred on:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - April 25, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - April 27, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject application proposes to redevelop the site by constructing a 78,855-square-foot cultural arts center. The project is located at 25 West Third Street (Parcel number P6SE1A-2-2).

**Community and Culture**
This project serves to support community arts and root economic development strategies in the unique competitive advantages of the region (of Policies 4.1 and 5.4). Expanding capacity and programs helps further strengthen cultural centers and complements the unique history, environment, culture and needs of the Valley (of Policy 5.4).

The project is located in an area identified as having Low Access to Opportunity in LVPC’s Equity Analysis. Investment and redevelopment can increase access to educational, social and cultural opportunities when the surrounding community is intentionally included, and *FutureLV* encourages local institutions to invest in their...
surrounding communities (of Policy 4.1). The LVPC encourages continued engagement with neighbors surrounding the site and in the Southside Bethlehem vicinity as the project progresses, to further 'increase social, cultural and artistic opportunities' (of Policy 4.2).

Reuse and Redevelopment in Urban Areas
The proposed development fulfills the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* to ‘encourage reuse and redevelopment within urban areas’ (Policy 1.1). The proposal also supports a core strategy of *FutureLV* to increase density in urban areas using infill development (Density Special Section, page 71).

Multimodal Accessibility
*FutureLV* aims to locate educational, civic and cultural institutions in Centers or along Corridors that make community facilities widely accessible via mixed transportation modes (of Policy 1.2).

Transit Access
The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) provides public transportation directly to the project site, with a westbound Bus Stop ID 5009 and bus shelter located along the property frontage, far side of the entrance driveway to the Banana Factory. This heavily used bus stop is served by Routes 108, 323, and 327, respectively, and LANTA riders value the existing unique sculptural bus shelter representing the current Banana Factory entrance.

The proposed plan shows a new five-story building along the property frontage on West Third Street, closing the curb cut of the existing entrance driveway. The plan includes a note “Proposed Bus Stop – Design By Others” in the same location of the current bus stop. LANTA requests full clarification and confirmation from the property owner if the existing shelter will be removed, and if so, LANTA strongly recommends a full replacement of the bus shelter to serve this location.
LANTA requests continued engagement and outreach with LANTA to discuss the existing bus stop details. For follow up, please contact LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist Molly Wood at mwood@lantabus-pa.gov for additional bus stop details and recommendations.

**Bicycle Access**
The LVPC strongly encourages the addition of bicycle racks in the parking area. The inclusion of a bicycle rack helps to ensure transportation accessibility for all persons, (of Policy 5.2), integrates mixed transportation into public space design (of Policy 5.2), and it ‘improves connections between bus stops and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (of Policy 5.2). This location is widely used by a variety of transportation and planning for those who use bicycles should be incorporated into the plan.

**Sustainable Development Practices**
The LVPC encourages community and educational institutions to incorporate environmentally sensitive building design, such as through greywater reuse, green roofs and solar panels. Exploring these amenities may increase the cost-effectiveness of building operations while ‘reducing climate change impacts through mitigation and adaptation’ (of Policy 3.4).

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.

Sincerely,

Bambi Griffin Rivera
Senior Community and Regional Planner

Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner

cc: Bethlehem Musikfest Association c/o Kassie Hilgert, Applicant; Bohler Engineering PA, LLC c/o
Justin Klee, Project Engineer/Surveyor; Michael Alkhal, City Engineer; Molly Wood, LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist; John Itlerly, Freemansburg Borough Manager; Amanda Raudenbush, AICP, Bethlehem Township (NC) Planning Director; John Finnigan, Hanover Township (NC) Manager; Christopher Bennick, Fountain Hill Borough Planning Commission Chair; Mark Thomas, Hanover Township (LC) Planning Commission Chair; Jennifer Gomez, Allentown Director of Planning & Zoning; Kerry Rabold, Salisbury Township Zoning Officer
April 11, 2023

John Defassio, Secretary/Treasurer
Chapman Borough
1400 Main Street
Bath, PA 18014

RE: Zoning Map and Ordinance
Chapman Borough
Northampton County

Dear Mr. Defassio:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, though 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
  - April 25, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - April 27, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject zoning ordinance and map is the first zoning ordinance adopted by Chapman Borough. The ordinance implements many of the recommendations of the recently adopted Nazareth Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan (NazPlan). Chapman was one of 10 municipalities to participate in and adopt the NazPlan. Two other municipalities, Upper Nazareth and Lower Nazareth Townships, are also updating their zoning ordinances in coordination with Chapman Borough. Although each of the three municipalities will adopt and administer their own zoning ordinances, these three municipalities will be able to share uses as allowed by Article VIII-A of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. This provision of the MPC means that municipalities do not have to provide for every land use as long as one of the other participating municipalities provides for that use. This is an exemplary example of regional collaboration and coordinates land use decisions across municipal boundaries (of Policy 1.4).

The proposed zoning map reflects both the historical development pattern of the Borough and the existing topographic constraints. Almost two-thirds of the Borough, or 157 acres, is proposed to be zoned TD1, Field and Wood. This land is heavily wooded with some steep slope limitations. The purpose of this district is to preserve the woodlands, encourage open space conservation, and to allow for low-density residential use. Approximately 20 acres of primarily undeveloped land is zoned TD2 Estate Residential. The two main developed portions of the Borough, located in the northwest along Main Street and in the south along Monocacy Avenue, are zoned TD4, Village Residential. These areas comprise 47 acres or approximately 20% of the Borough’s land area.
The T6 Village Mixed Use District, located at the intersection of Monocacy Avenue, Main Street and Route 987 in the southern portion of the Borough, is intended to accommodate medium-density clusters of low-impact, neighborhood-oriented residential and non-residential uses including a range of dwelling types and retail and service uses. Finally, the TD9 Contracting, Craftsman and Artisan District, is a single 14-acre parcel intended for low intensity uses that involve producing, repairing, and selling primarily handmade products. Examples include auto repair and contractors.

The zoning map appears to designate the quarry areas in the central part of the Borough as a separate land use category. However, these areas are not identified as one of the proposed transect zones. This should be clarified in the ordinance. Minimum lot sizes for specific uses in each of the proposed zoning districts should be added to Section 304, General Dimensional Standards.

Municipalities, when considering ordinance and map amendments, 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)]. Please send a copy of any final amendments that are adopted, per the requirements of the MPC. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Dean Severson, AICP
Director of Regional Planning

cc: Gary Asteak, Asteak Law Offices; Bradford T. Flynn, Bath Borough Manager; Jason Kocsis, Chair, Bushkill Township Planning Commission; John Finnigan, Hanover Township (NC) Manager; Lori Stauffer, Lower Nazareth Township Manager; John Becker, Moore Township Planning Commission Chair; Barbara Fischl, Nazareth Borough Planning Commission; Sean Dooley, Stockertown Borough Planning Commission Chair; Robert Hayes, Tatamy Borough Council Chair; Lisa Klem, Upper Nazareth Township Manager
### Comprehensive Planning Committee

**Date:** April 2023

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<tr>
<th><strong>Project</strong></th>
<th><strong>Municipality</strong></th>
<th><strong>Brief Statement of Purpose</strong></th>
<th><strong>LVPC Comment</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>Weisenberg Township</td>
<td><em>Miscellaneous</em> - Proposes various amendments including on-lot water supply systems and flag lots.</td>
<td>The intent of the amendments to provide safe and sufficient water supply to residents supports the <em>FutureLV</em> action to ‘protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater’ (of Policy 3.2), and prohibiting the creation of flag lots promotes safe and secure community design and emergency management (Policy 5.1).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>City of Allentown</td>
<td><em>Elementary Schools in I2 and I3 Districts</em> – proposes to allow Elementary or Secondary Schools as a special exception use in the I2 and I3 zoning districts with additional limitations and requirements.</td>
<td>The proposed amendment aligns with numerous objectives outlined in <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</em>, such as enabling reuse and redevelopment within urban areas and encouraging reinvestment in commercial areas (of Policies 1.1 and 4.6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment and Map Amendment</td>
<td>City of Allentown</td>
<td><em>Riverside Drive</em> - Proposes to rezone two properties at 115 Riverside Drive and 51 North Front Street from B/LI zoning district to B-5 district to match the zoning of surrounding properties.</td>
<td>The amendment demonstrates ‘the evolution and adaptability of government’ (of Policy 1.1) by matching zoning districts to adopted plans, as well as appropriate future uses. The amendment also, ‘directs growth by establishing a network of mixed-use centers’ (of Policy 1.2), and will ‘revitalize historic centers’ (of Policy 5.3).</td>
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<td>Comprehensive Planning Committee</td>
<td>Date: April 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Amendment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Upper Macungie Township</strong></td>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong> - Clarifies the definition of Accessory Structure and includes various revisions to plan submission procedures and requirements.</td>
<td>The LVPC commends the Township for demonstrating evolution and adaptability of government and efficient development processes by proactively updating its ordinances (of Policies 1.1 and 1.4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Upper Macungie Township</strong></td>
<td><strong>Convenience Stores</strong> - Updates several definitions, many of which pertain to convenience stores.</td>
<td>The proposed ordinance amendments exemplify evolution and adaptability of government. Revising ordinances to account for land uses as they evolve supports adapting to the contemporary retail economy (of Policy 4.2) and facilitates reinvestment in commercial areas (of Policy 4.6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lehigh Township</strong></td>
<td><strong>Landscaping Contractors</strong> - Revises a zoning ordinance amendment reviewed by LVPC (January 11, 2023) by adding definitions for work truck and work trailer.</td>
<td>While this minor proposal is a matter of local concern, the LVPC commends the requirement that the Fire Marshall shall review the facility which aligns with the intent of <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</em> to 'enhance planning and emergency response efforts among emergency management personnel' (of Policy 5.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Moore Township</strong></td>
<td><strong>Agritainment and Agritourism</strong> - Adds provisions related to agritainment and agritourism, including definitions and requirements, and adds both uses as an accessory use by special exception in all zoning districts.</td>
<td>This proposal 'supports agriculture as an essential component of the regional economy and identity' (Policy 4.4), and allowing these uses as a special exception enables the Township to ensure that proposals align with the community’s vision on a case-by-case basis, and exemplifies best practices in the land use regulatory process (of Policy 1.4).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
April 7, 2023

Mr. Brian Carl, Administrator
Weisenberg Township
2175 Seipstown Road
Fogelsville, Pennsylvania 18051

Re: Weisenberg Township Stormwater Management Ordinance

Dear Mr. Carl:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the above-referenced ordinance at its Environment Committee and Full Commission meetings as shown below, under the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Both meetings will be held virtually. Any revisions to the comments in this letter will be transmitted subsequent to the LVPC Full Commission Meeting.

- LVPC Environment Committee Meeting
  April 26, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  April 27, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission commends Weisenberg Township for proposing to consolidate the stormwater ordinances applicable to the Township from both Act 167 and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) / Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). We offer the following comments to assist in making the consolidated ordinance as effective as possible for regulating the impacts of stormwater with development, including providing the clearest standards to facilitate the design, review and Township actions for applicable proposals.

- It is not clear that the draft ordinance needs parts 1 and 2 that contain some unique standards, some duplicative standards, and some contradictory standards. One example is that two sets of definitions are used that are different. Another example is that Part 1 regulates proposals with greater than 5,000 square feet of impervious cover whereas Part 2 regulates proposals greater than 10,000 square feet. Another example is Part 1 Article IV that has specific requirements for the Little Lehigh, Jordan, Maiden and Sacoyn creek watersheds, yet Part 2 is titled for those four watersheds. It appears that a difference is that Part 2 is intended to meet the Township’s obligations under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) yet could readily be incorporated into Part 1.

- It is not clear what geographic area is meant by the General District referred to in Part 1 Section 26.C (2) outside of the Little Lehigh Creek, Jordan Creek, Maiden Creek and Sacoyn Creek watersheds, which fully cover the Township.
- The draft ordinance is a compilation of multiple Act 167 ordinances. The standards from the existing ordinances appear to be captured. A different option for the Township to consider would be to use the most recent Act 167 ordinance that applies to the Township (Maiden or Sacony), incorporate the Release Rate Districts from the four plans and add NPDES/MS4 provisions as needed. This would take advantage of the best practices included with the newest ordinances and streamline the ordinance to facilitate design and review.
- The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission should be referenced correctly throughout the ordinance as multiple variations are used.
- The ordinance should clarify that the Penn State Runoff Model was used for the Little Lehigh and Jordan creek watersheds, but the Hydrologic Engineering Center – Hydrograph Modeling System (HEC-HMS) was used for the Maiden and Sacony creek watersheds.
- Part 2, Section 34 Exemptions paragraph A (1) (b) should refer to the date of the original Act 167 Plan for the Little Lehigh Creek Watershed of March 1988 (or the Township’s adoption date).
- The LVPC commends the inclusion of Part 2 Section 42.J that specifies the use of green infrastructure practices wherever possible.
- Part 2 Section 53 A (4) refers to watersheds not present in Weisenberg Township.

Please call if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey A. Reese, PE
Master Planner and Engineer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Brief Statement of Purpose</th>
<th>LVPC Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application to Renew Approval of Existing Wastewater Treatment Plant and Discharge (DRBC Review)</td>
<td>Catasauqua Borough</td>
<td>Application by Catasauqua Borough to renew approval of existing 2.25 million gallons per day (mgd) wastewater treatment plant and discharge. The plant serves the boroughs of Catasauqua and North Catasauqua and portions of Allen, and Hanover townships (Lehigh and Northampton counties). The current average flow to the plant is 1.12 mgd. No modifications to the plant are proposed.</td>
<td>Aligns with FutureLV action to: ‘Protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater’ (under Policy 3.2). No substantial adverse impacts are anticipated with continued operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to Renew Approval of Existing Groundwater Withdrawal and Water Allocation (DRBC Review)</td>
<td>South Whitehall Township</td>
<td>Application by South Whitehall Township to renew approval of existing groundwater withdrawal of up to 60 million gallons per month to continue to supply its existing public water supply system from nine wells. Also, renew approval of existing subsidiary water allocation of up to 1.2 million gallons per day via an interconnection with Lehigh County Authority’s Allentown Division. No increase in total groundwater allocation proposed.</td>
<td>Aligns with FutureLV action to: ‘Protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater’ (under Policy 3.2). No substantial adverse impacts are anticipated with continued operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to Renew Approval of Existing Groundwater Withdrawal and Discharge (DRBC Review)</td>
<td>Forks Township</td>
<td>Application by Strausser Enterprises to renew approval of existing groundwater withdrawal of up to 9.31 million gallons per month to their Riverview Country Club golf course irrigation system from four well sources. A long-term groundwater monitoring program will continue to be implemented by the applicant to observe water level trends. No increase in groundwater allocation is proposed.</td>
<td>Aligns with FutureLV action to: ‘Protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater’ (under Policy 3.2). No substantial adverse impacts are anticipated with continued operation.</td>
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</table>
Lehigh County

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reviews: 25</th>
<th>Acres: 169.9</th>
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Northampton County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviews: 33</th>
<th>Acres: 204.8</th>
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</table>

Plan Activity

Regional Totals*
- 11 Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustments
- 25 Development
- 15 Stormwater Management
- 7 Municipal Ordinances and Maps
- 374.7 Acres

* Includes preliminary and final plans

Types of New Development

Residential: 410 Total Units
- Single-Family Detached: 11
- Townhouses: 260
- Apartments: 39
- Planned Residential: 0
- Twins: 80
- Assisted-Living: 0
- Manufactured Homes: 0
- Condos: 20

Non-Residential: 746,301 Total Square Feet
- Commercial: 83,159
- Retail: 2,006
- Public/Quasi-Public: 125,786
- Industrial (Warehouse)*: I: 535,350 (W: 522,850)

- Office: 0
- Transportation: 0
- Agriculture: 0
- Recreational: 0

* Warehouse number is a subset of industrial total square footage.

Location of Development

Year to Date (Year to Year)

- 8 mil
- 6.4 mil
- 4.8 mil
- 3.2 mil
- 1.6 mil
- 746,301

Previous Reports at lvpc.org/subdivision---development.html
TOTAL VEHICLE TRAFFIC

STATE ROUTE 33
between Newburg Road and State Route 246 (Northampton County)

INTERSTATE-78
just east of the State Route 309 exit (Lehigh County)

STATE ROUTE 309
just south of State Route 378 (Lehigh County)

STATE ROUTE 22
between Airport Road and Lehigh River Bridge (Lehigh County)

TOTAL TRUCK TRAFFIC

INTERSTATE-78
just east of the State Route 309 exit (Lehigh County)

STATE ROUTE 22
between Airport Road and Lehigh River Bridge (Lehigh County)
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 14, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT: Neil Shader, nshader@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Announces Commitment to Fight Climate Change Under New EPA Climate Grant Program

Harrisburg, PA – Today, The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Secretary Rich Negrin joined Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 3 Administrator Adam Ortiz, PENNVEST Chairman Dr. Brian Regli, and local government partners to celebrate Earth Month and highlight the partnership between federal, state, and local governments to fight climate change.

Earlier this month Pennsylvania opted into the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program, part of the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The program provides grants to state and local government entities to develop climate action plans and makes them eligible for grants from the $4.6 billion pool established by the IRA and administered by the EPA.

“We are here today to celebrate Earth Month but also acknowledge the great partnerships we have to protect Pennsylvania’s clean air and pure water. Rising to meet the climate challenge is more than just a state government problem, or a federal government problem, or a local government problem,” said Acting Secretary Negrin. “All climate change is local. It is an all of the above problem and needs an all of the above solution, and it is so important to have strong partners at the federal and local level all committing to fight climate change alongside us.”

“Climate change is not a problem that sprang up overnight and is surely not one that will be fixed in a day,” said Administrator Ortiz. “Addressing the climate crisis takes real plans, real dollars, real will, and real work – and Pennsylvania has all of the above.”

“PENNVEST is looking forward making investments into reducing climate change. Today is another step in the process -- helping communities across Pennsylvania implement their own climate plans to lower emissions and mitigate and adapt to climate change,” said Dr. Brian Regli. “Pennsylvania has always been an industrial leader, with smart investments we can again lead the way on climate change and carbon pollution reduction.”
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission have all opted into the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. Pennsylvania will receive up to a $3 million planning grant through the program; the regional planning commissions will receive up to $1 million planning grants.

“Greater Philadelphia is committed to attaining net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and preparing our communities for the impacts of climate change,” said Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Ariella Maron. “The Climate Pollution Reduction Grant will enable us to develop a plan that will guide future policy and investment decisions that are both equitable and sustainable. DVRPC is proud to lead this planning effort for our region.”

“We have a monumental opportunity to protect and improve our land, water and air. We must ensure that quality and availability of these resources is available now and into the future. Addressing our climate crisis is going to require the kind of planning and response that can only be accomplished through a multi-governmental partnership. It’s a practical, innovative path to the best possible outcomes,” said Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Executive Director Becky Bradley.

More information on the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants](#)

More information on DEP’s [Climate Change efforts in Pennsylvania](#)

For more information on the [Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, please visit the website](#) or follow DEP on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#)

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The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission has received a $1 million award to help complete work on its regional climate plan.

The state Department of Environmental Protection said Friday that the LVPC, along with similar agencies in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh regions, received grants as part of the federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program.

Pennsylvania this month opted into the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program, part of the federal Inflation Reduction Act, which provides funding to state and local governments to develop climate action plans and makes them eligible for grants from the $4.6 billion pool established by the act and administered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley said the money will be used to complete work on the Regional Climate Action Plan. Items in the plan include a regional green infrastructure program supporting clean water, flood mitigation, installation of air quality monitoring systems, electric vehicle charging stations, as well as advancing walking and biking.

“We’ll be able to do a lot more work than we could have ever dreamed of related to climate action,” Bradley said. The specific plan for the funding will have to be completed by April 28.

Initially, the LVPC wasn’t even eligible for this program. Bradley said some slots opened up when four states decided not to participate. The Lehigh Valley had just missed the initial cut because the top 67 metropolitan areas were initially included and the Valley is the 69th largest. The LVPC applied for funding on the chance it could move up.
Bradley didn’t know LVPC moved into eligibility until last week, and she had to hustle to Harrisburg for Friday’s announcement. It was accomplished, she said, through advocacy and luck.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission are also receiving $1 million, while the state will receive a $3 million planning grant through the program.

“Greater Philadelphia is committed to attaining net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and preparing our communities for the impacts of climate change,” Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission Executive Director Ariella Maron said in a statement. “The Climate Pollution Reduction Grant will enable us to develop a plan that will guide future policy and investment decisions that are both equitable and sustainable. DVRPC is proud to lead this planning effort for our region.”
Lehigh Valley Planning Commission gets $1M to develop ‘climate action plan’ with Pa.

By Glenn Epps | For lehighvalleylive.com

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission received $1 million in federal funding to continue its work developing a comprehensive climate action plan for the region, the state announced Friday.

The commission will work with Pennsylvania to update existing climate, energy, or sustainability plans, or to develop new plans, according to details about the grant published on the state’s website.

The money comes from federal dollars set aside in the Inflation Reduction Act passed last year by Congress, which allocates $250 million of non-competitive grants to states and local governments focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and harmful air pollutants.

Eligible agencies will later be enrolled in a second, competitive round for a $4.6 billion funding pool administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), according to a news release by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission was named among three Pennsylvania planning commissions to receive support from the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program. The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission also received $1 million each.

Pennsylvania will receive nearly $3 million in planning grant money through the program.

Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Executive Director Becky Bradley called the grant “a monumental opportunity” to protect and improve the region’s land, water and air resources for future generations.
The commission plans to use the dollars to complete the work on the new Regional Climate Action Plan and other objectives set up by FutureLV: The Regional Plan, Bradley said, including a regional green infrastructure program supporting clean water and flood mitigation; installation of permanent air quality monitoring systems; advancement of the electric vehicle charging network; and advancement of walking, biking and ADA accessibility in the region.

“Addressing our climate crisis is going to require the kind of planning and response that can only be accomplished through a multi-governmental partnership. It’s a practical, innovative path to the best possible outcomes,” Bradley said. “We have a monumental opportunity to protect and improve our land, water and air.”

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Secretary Rich Negrin joined Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 3 Administrator Adam Ortiz, PENNVEST Chairman Brian Regli and local government officials on Friday to celebrate the partnership between federal, state, and local governments in the fight against climate change.

“All climate change is local,” Negrin said. “It is an all of the above problem and needs an all of the above solution, and it is so important to have strong partners at the federal and local level all committing to fight climate change alongside us.”
‘We are a throwaway society’: Here’s how the Lehigh Valley’s mayors plan to tackle climate change – together

LehighValleyNews.com | By Molly Bilinski
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EASTON, Pa. — The home of the first disposable paper drinking cup, the Dixie Cup, the movement toward a “throwaway society” started in Easton, city Mayor Sal Panto Jr. said.

“From paper cups, we went to plastic,” Panto said. “It’s just easier when you’re done with a picnic, you just throw it away. Our parents didn’t do that. Our parents had plates and they washed them at the end of a picnic; they didn’t throw them away.

“We are a throwaway society — we use everything once and throw it away. And that has to stop. I mean, it really does have to stop.”

Easton Mayor Sal Panto Jr

From a proliferation of litter, an endangered river and more severe weather, exacerbated by climate change, the Lehigh Valley’s leaders have plenty of environmental issues to contend with. Over the past half-decade, officials and environmentalists in Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton have worked on climate action plans and reports with goals to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, echoing state and regional efforts. Most recently, a new coalition between the three cities’ leaders is trying a different approach, aiming to improve the region’s sustainability by working together.

Earlier this year, Panto, along with Allentown Mayor Matt Tuerk and Bethlehem Mayor J. William Reynolds, announced the formation of the 3 City Coalition, a formal partnership aiming to produce solutions to some of the region's most pressing issues — and sustainability is one of the areas they hope to improve.

“The idea is that we don't want it to be about the merits,” Reynolds said. “We want it to be about Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton — permanently. So the way that that works is that we are coming together, we're meeting regularly [for] three functions: advocate for issues that have to do with the three cities,
educate people on how things that occur in other cities and outside of our cities have an effect on things like our housing market, and then partner.”

It isn’t an entirely new concept, especially in the Lehigh Valley. Almost two decades ago, the majors of the three cities signed the “Three City Proclamation,” which endorsed the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement, setting goals to reduce carbon emissions in their cities below 1990 levels. Since then, both Easton and Bethlehem have published in-depth climate action plans, while Allentown’s Environmental Advisory Council has posted a climate action report with recommendations to create a city-wide plan.

“It was, I think, an important step in Lehigh Valley kind of collaboration,” Reynolds said. “So I think it is an outgrowth of that, and it’s how do we create that more formal partnership? And how do we advocate for each other on issues that we have shared interest in throughout the Lehigh Valley?”

The mayors said working together to address sustainability issues across the region will hopefully stem the impacts of climate change already present in the Lehigh Valley: more intense flooding, storms, rising temperatures and heatwaves.

**Regional, state plans**

Pennsylvania’s average statewide temperature is expected to increase by almost 6 degrees by mid-century, according to the state Department of Environmental Protection’s 2021 climate impacts assessment. There will be more frequent and intense extreme heat events, as well as more total average rainfall, due to less frequent but heavier rain events.

The state’s climate action plan, published after the assessment, set lofty goals, reducing greenhouse gasses by 26% by 2025 and 80% by 2050, both from 2005 levels.

Dave Althoff, director of the state DEP’s Energy Programs Office, which heads up the state climate action plan, said the data available looks promising so far.

“The last greenhouse gas inventory data that we did is actually 2019 data,” he said. “It takes almost three years, two years for EPA to get the data together
and then a year for us to evaluate the data – We have to get some other parts and pieces to put that together. So we're currently working on the 2020 data.

“…Ultimately, we're on our way there from the 2005 baseline, the 2019 said that we were at an 18% reduction.”

But it’s getting harder, he added.

“We need to do more. It's just not happening naturally,” Althoff said. “So the deployment of renewable energy, energy efficiency, electric vehicles in the transportation sector, working on decarbonizing the industrial sector, those are all things that we still need to lean into, which is what our climate action plan really tells us.”

Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Becky Bradley announces Pennsylvania’s commitment to fight climate change under a new EPA Climate Grant Program, in Harrisburg, PA on April 14, 2023.
Earlier this month, the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission received an infusion of federal funds to help fight climate change across the region. By opting into the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program, part of the federal Inflation Reduction Act, the LVPC will receive $1 million.

“We have a monumental opportunity to protect and improve our land, water and air,” said LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley in a news release announcing the funding. We must ensure that quality and availability of these resources is available now and into the future.

“Addressing our climate crisis is going to require the kind of planning and response that can only be accomplished through a multi-governmental partnership. It’s a practical, innovative path to the best possible outcomes.”

The money comes a little over a month after the LVPC published their greenhouse gas assessment. The study showed the Valley’s 2019 emissions made up just shy of 4% of the commonwealth’s total gross greenhouse gas emission.

About 35% of the Valley’s total emissions were attributed to industrial electricity and natural gas, while about 27% were from transportation and mobile sources, according to the study.

The LVPC has published a regional climate action assessment, which outlines local plans and their potential impacts on climate change.

“Under each of the plan’s broadly defined goals, 86% of FutureLV: The Regional Plan, 74% of Lehigh County’s Livable Landscapes Plan, 83% of Northampton County’s Livable Landscapes Plan and 100% of Walk/RollLV is associated with an [American Planning Association] Climate Change Policy,” according to the planning commission’s website. “In total, 525 goals, policies, actions and strategies from the four different plans relate to climate action.”

**Climate action in Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton**

**Bethlehem**

Bethlehem’s climate action plan was published in April 2021. Among other goals, it lays out a roadmap to achieve a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from municipal buildings and transportation by 2030. Officials also set a 33% reduction of community-wide emissions by 2025.
City officials are currently updating annual greenhouse gas inventories, a process that will take several months as it requires substantial data gathering, according to Katharine Gross of WSP, a professional services firm that consults with the city on their plan.

However, there are efforts moving forward. The city has developed the Bethlehem Climate Challenge, a voluntary leadership initiative between the
mayor’s office and the city’s private, public, non-for-profit organizations, institutions and businesses as well as students and residents to commit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“The Climate Challenge will include educational information on saving energy, purchasing renewable energy, choosing low-impact transit options, reducing waste and other individual actions Bethlehem residents and businesses can take,” Gross said.

Officials expect to launch the effort this fall.

Other initiatives include the city’s continued purchase of 100% renewable electricity for municipal operations; a waste reduction, reuse and recycling checklist for large events and festivals on public property; as well as the creation of a Climate and Environmental Justice Resident Council. Through that group, residents of the Southside can meet their neighbors and learn about ways to get involved in their community.

**Easton**

Easton’s climate action plan has similar objectives. Published in October 2021, goals include a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, increasing to 80% by 2050.
Easton Mayor Sal Panto Jr.

“Every director knows that the climate action report is important, and they do things within their own departments to comply with that climate action plan,” Panto said. “We're gonna shoot for 2030, probably more like 2035, but we're gonna shoot for 2030.”

The biggest obstacle, Panto said, is “the residential acceptance that climate is changing.”

“That is still the overall perception – that it’s not changing,” he said. “There's 62 municipalities in the Lehigh Valley, and we're all one community. We all breathe the same air, we drink the same water sources.

“We need to work on that as a region, not just individually.”
Allentown
Allentown does not have a published climate action plan. However, the city’s Environmental Advisory Council in July 2021 submitted to council a climate action report. Included are a 2018 greenhouse gas inventory, as well as sustainability efforts outlined in the Allentown Vision 2030 plan, of which “next steps” include creating a climate action plan that integrates with regional plans.

While Tuerk said Friday he couldn’t speak for previous administrations, he said the city has been dealing with other issues, like the conviction of former city Mayor Ed Pawlowski for his role in an extensive pay to play scheme, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The city EAC’s report “scratch[es] the surface,” but the city plans to develop its own climate action plan funded through a federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program.

“Other communities have put in more serious work when we had other priorities,” Tuerk said. “So we're really behind where we should be in Allentown. Part of why I'm so grateful for the CBG money [is] that will allow us to develop climate action plans that are consistent with the plans that are developed by our other communities and in the Lehigh Valley, in concert with the planning commission.”
Allentown Mayor Matt Tuerk

Officials will probably build climate action planning into the 2024 budget, he said.

But there has been movement towards sustainability without a climate action plan in place. Earlier this week, City Council unanimously approved a resolution committing to a “‘fair and equitable’ transition to clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency for municipal operations,” citing a 2018 greenhouse gas inventory that found non-transportation energy use accounts for almost 45% of the city’s carbon footprint.

‘Everybody leaves their ego at the door’
There are many advantages to the three-city approach, Tuerk said, including sharing knowledge and experience.

“We have their work to draw upon, so the work that has been completed by the city of Bethlehem, they will collaborate with us to help us produce these types of plans,” Tuerk said.

“We’ll be able to, as we develop our climate action plan here in the city of Allentown, do it in concert with the work that’s done at the planning commission to make sure that we are building our planning based on what else is happening in the Lehigh Valley with those other cities.”

The mayors have met a handful of times already to discuss regional issues, Panto said. So far, the collaboration is going well.

“Everybody leaves their ego at the door,” Panto said. “I think when the residents see three mayors talking about climate change, they say, ‘Hey, maybe this is something I should be paying attention to.’”

There aren’t physical barriers separating the cities, Reynolds said, making environmental issues Valley-wide problems that call for Valley-wide solutions.

“I would also say that the biggest value of the climate action plan is the awareness and education about what sustainability is and why it matters,” he said. “It’s not like we can say the people that believe in this go over here, ‘You get to breathe nice air,’ and the people that don’t believe it get to go over here and ‘You have to breathe polluted air.’

“That's not the way the environment works.”

While the 3 City Coalition is focused on issues related to housing, homelessness and sustainability, movement has already begun to confront climate change.

“Within the sustainability pillar, we have formed the Lehigh Valley Green Ribbon Commission to build a more sustainable region,” Gross said. “This commission enlists the support and leadership of civic leaders, institutions, non-profits and the business community to collectively address climate change.

“Everything else is secondary beyond that.”
Bethlehem Mayor J. William Reynolds

“By coming together to tackle this global issue through a coordinated effort in the Lehigh Valley, we can collaborate, use resources more efficiently and share best practices.”

That commission’s goal is to bring not only city leaders to the effort, but also the business community, said Angela Stein, Bethlehem’s director of mayor’s initiatives.

“The Green Ribbon Commission will be made up of a lot of those founding partners that you saw that helped create this plan, the largest organizations and businesses that exist in all three of our cities,” Stein said. “So it will really be pulling them in to have a seat at the table and take some ownership over their own outputs and making sure that they're working together.

“Are there projects that these businesses could partner on? Are there grants that they could get together?”

Engaging with all these stakeholders being partnerships and further movement towards achieving regional goals, Reynolds said.

“It's one thing if a mayor says something, it's one thing if a mayor and city council says something, it's another thing if a mayor, city council, citizens, healthcare institutions, educational institutions, everybody else says the same thing about why sustainability is important,” Reynolds said. “Everything else is secondary beyond that.”
There’s a mountain of polls out there that suggest that volunteerism has been falling for at least the past decade, and that decline was only accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. I don’t doubt any of those surveys in the least, but that’s not what we’ve been seeing here at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

Our Lehigh Valley Government Academy classes are aimed at training the next generation of community leaders, and the students walking through our doors are not only people committed to their community, but they come to us to learn how they can be more effective volunteers. And this instruction has never been more important because so much is changing as the region grows in people, business and development.

We partner with the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute to offer evening classes on zoning, subdivision and land development and community planning designed to help train members of municipal councils, zoning boards, planning commissions and boards of supervisors. It may not be widely known, but most of the seats on these boards are filled by unpaid community volunteers. They’re your neighbors, friends and family members, and it’s not uncommon for them to sit for hours during public meetings to field debates on important land use, planning, zoning, community and transportation issues. Even in a polarized political climate where these community leaders are weighing-in on increasingly complex issues, they persevere because they believe in their hometown and the future of region. For their service, we should collectively be grateful.

Still, they need tools and the skills to use them wisely, to deliver the best possible outcome for all of us. That’s why we offer the Lehigh Valley Government Academy. Each of our four core land use courses is 10.5 hours of instruction over three weeks, for classes that generally go from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Here again, you see that community commitment because most of our students come straight from their day jobs to class. Since we started these classes nine years ago, 359 people have completed courses. Among them are 87 who have been designated Certified Citizens Planners for taking at
least three courses, including 21 who have received statewide honor by PMPEI for taking all four classes – we also offer a zoning administration class every other year. We’ve had graduates from 50 of the Lehigh Valley’s 62 municipalities. I’m continually inspired by their dedication to their community.

Though most of them are appointed or elected board and commission members, many are just concerned citizens who want to know more about how government and land development work. Anyone can find more information about the courses and how to register and pay for classes, taught by two certified constructors, at lvpc.org/lvga. We generally have so many committed volunteers that these classes tend to fill up fast. It’s not the only training available from LVPC’s Government Academy.

We also partner with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to provide Local Technical Assistance Program classes designed to give municipal parks, public works and engineering staff best practices for everything from improving safety at intersections to road maintenance to Americans with Disabilities Act policies to the best way to deal with a snowstorm. These LTAP classes are more evidence of our region’s appetite for knowledge and education.

We’ve emphasized the value of this technical assistance to our municipal partners, and they have embraced it. LTAP classes are offered statewide, and promoted heavily by PennDOT, yet the highest class participation isn’t in Philadelphia or Pittsburgh, but right here in the Lehigh Valley. We take a great deal of pride in knowing that has been the case for years, and that input from our communities has led to new statewide courses. Perhaps the most amazing thing about those classes is that they’re free. Though other states charge for this instruction, PennDOT foots the entire bill for these because state leaders believe that the information gives municipalities the tools to be as efficient as possible with their local tax dollars. In other words, it’s an investment.

And that philosophy doesn’t end there. We also partner with PennDOT on what we call “Tech Assists.” These are sort of transportation house calls where a PennDOT engineer and an LVPC staffer meet municipal workers in the community to discuss how to improve safety or maintenance for things like trail crossings, intersections, dangerous pedestrian throughways and even truck routes. Roughly two weeks after the hands-on meeting in the field, the municipality gets a 20 or 30-page report on how to make improvements, and that report is often the first step in getting a state grant to help pay for it.

Amazingly, this is another free service, and the Lehigh Valley is again the statewide leader in taking advantage of this. That doesn’t surprise me in the least. Our public works crews have proven themselves to be among the most innovative in the state. PennDOT holds an annual called “Build A Better Mousetrap” competition honoring road crews who come up with the most innovative ideas for solving problems in the field. Our region has dominated that competition, finishing in the top two in five of the past 10 years.
On top of those training opportunities, we also have our twice-a-year General Assembly, when we meet with all municipalities to give them new data and update them on new issues, and our periodic Transformative Talk webinars on things like pandemic response, coordinated zoning, utility-scale solar and multi-municipal planning.

We are working on new Transformative Talks on population and employment changes, how to develop and implement a municipal transportation impact fee program, effective coordination between local planning commissions and zoning hearing boards and unlocking the housing needs. You’ll be hearing more about these new LVPC-developed courses soon. These Transformative Talks will be free and open to the public as a continuing commitment to supporting community as we jointly navigate the issues and opportunities of a rapidly changing region.

I urge anyone who wants to take a class, or any community interested in a Tech Assist to call our office and pay close attention to lvpc.org for upcoming Transformative Talks.

In my role, I get to talk with colleagues from regions from across the state and nation, and I’m always impressed by our region’s incredible thirst for doing things better, more efficiently and to rise to every challenge we face. That thirst is one of the Lehigh Valley’s superpowers and we have enough capes for everyone.

Becky Bradley is Executive Director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.