LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, June 22, 2023, at 7:00 PM
Via Microsoft Teams
AGENDA


Roll Call

Courtesy of Floor

Chairman’s Report
1. National Association of Regional Councils Tom Bradley Leadership Award (SG)

Minutes
1. ACTION ITEM: Minutes and Review of Roll Call Actions of the May 25, 2023, Commission Meeting (SN)

Comprehensive Planning Committee:
1. ACTION ITEM: Catasauqua, North Catasauqua and Northampton Boroughs and East Allen and Hanover (LC) Townships – River Central Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan (DS, JD)
2. ACTION ITEM: Plainfield Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Warehouse and Wholesale Establishments (SN)
3. ACTION ITEM: North Whitehall Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Open Space and Recreation Areas (SN)
4. ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet (SM)

Environment Committee:
1. INFORMATION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary (SR)

Transportation Committee:
1. ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation Dodge Street from S. Muhlenberg Street to S. 24th Street City of Allentown, Lehigh County
2. INFORMATION ITEM: Long-Range Transportation Plan Updates to FutureLV: The Regional Plan (BB)
Old Business:
1. INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports:
   b. Highway Traffic Monitoring (BH)

New Business:
1. INFORMATION ITEM: Local Government Appreciation Day
   a. June 28: 11 am-1 pm, Wayne A. Grube Memorial Park

Executive Director’s Report:
1. INFORMATION ITEM: US Environmental Protection Agency Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant Project Update (BB)
2. INFORMATION ITEM: Eastern Transportation Corridor Coalition Freight Academy (BB)

Communications, Engagement and Grants (MA):
1. INFORMATION ITEM: Morning Call Business Cycle Column
   a. Published June 4: “A Giant Leap Forward on Climate Change”
   b. Next column: July 9, Focusing on The Transportation Needs Survey
2. INFORMATION ITEM: Monthly, Plan Lehigh Valley Talk Show on WDIY, Lehigh Valley Public Radio, 88.1. Streaming at WDIY.org
   b. Next show: July 3, Focusing on The Transportation Needs Survey
3. INFORMATION ITEM: Grants
   a. Statewide Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Funding Opportunity
      i. Deadline: July 17
   b. PA Dept. of Economic and Community Development Multimodal Grants
      i. Deadline: July 31
4. INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Government Academy Classes (MA)
   a. Subdivision and Land Development – Wednesdays, Sept. 6, 13, 20
   b. Community Planning – Mondays, October 9, 16, 23
      All classes 5:30-9 pm. Register at lvpc.org/lvga

Next Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Meeting:
    Thursday, July 27, 2023, at 7:00 pm, Virtual
The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, May 25, 2023. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on December 28, 2022.

Mr. Glickman chaired the meeting.

Ms. Griffin Rivera took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County
Geoff Brace, Percy Dougherty, Michael Drabenstott, Bob Elbich, Philip Ginder, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore, Christina Morgan, Owen O’Neil, Santo Napoli, David Petrik, Kathy Rader, and Stephen Repasch.

Northampton County

Members Absent:

Lehigh County
Phillips Armstrong, Jamie Johnson, Dennis Klusaritz, Kevin Schmidt and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Becky Bradley, Bambi Griffin Rivera, Steve Neratko, Dean Severson, Brian Hite, Jill Seitz.

Public Present: Debra Soto, Gayle Howard, Jeff Ward, Lisa Pektor, Lou Pektor, Phil Gianficaro, Justin Coyle, Richard Wilford-Hunt, Dave Lobach

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Mr. Glickman noted that on May 3 the LVPC was invited to the Coalition for Appropriate Transportation’s Annual meeting at the Bethlehem Library where CAT presented the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission with the “Planning for Our Valley in the Big Picture Award.” CAT executive director Scott Slingerland explained the Award was for the way the LVPC seamlessly melds together transportation, land use, housing, economics and education together into a single cohesive plan that considers the transportation impacts in every aspect of planning. Other award winners included Easton for its Centre Square redesign, Bethlehem for its 2022 “Bike to Work” event and Allentown for its new Jordan Creek Greenway. Mr. Glickman noted it was a very uplifting event and he was honored to attend and to accept the award on behalf of the LVPC.
COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. McGorry questioned the Commission’s vote on the move of the LVPC office. Mr. Glickman commented on the process used to decide on the office relocation. Dr. Amato commented on environmental problems in the Lehigh Valley including diminished air quality and the Lehigh River experiencing water quality degradation. He commented on the sheer volume of truck traffic. He called for temporarily ending tax abatements for warehouse development and a moratorium on further warehouse development.

Mr. Brace discussed House Bill 782 introduced by state Representative Schlossberg which would amend the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). He stated that the legislation would establish a process to provide a comprehensive, coordinated, and timely review process for developments of regional significance. It would also allow neighboring municipalities the opportunity to have their concerns addressed and provide for a mitigation plan which could take into consideration the costs of development.

Members of the Commission asked how the LVPC could support and advocate for the passage of this legislation. Ms. Bradley stated that staff can write a letter of support which is rooted in data and tied to Future LV. She noted that local planning commissions need additional tools and resources and support this legislation. She stated that this letter will be ready for the June LVPC meeting.

Mr. Moritz-Chapelliquen noted that the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) annual data has recently been recently. He noted that the United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley could provide a briefing for those who would be interested in learning about that data. Ms. Bradley noted that the LVPC will be announcing a regional housing initiative in the coming months and will wrap back to the ALICE data.

MINUTES

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, April 27, 2023, LVPC meeting are attached, and Ms. Griffin Rivera read the previously voted on agenda items. Mr. Glickman then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township- River Pointe Logistics Lot 1, Land Use of Regional Significance

Ms. Seitz 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’ land use category. The project is associated with the River Pointe Logistics planned industrial park development, consisting of 12 industrial buildings totaling 5,873,000 square feet on approximately 804 acres of land. The site of the larger industrial park is located approximately 600 feet southwest of the Township border with Portland Borough, bounded by River Road to the northeast, Pine Tree Lane to the southeast and Potomac Street to the southwest. The subject application submitted for review at this time proposes to construct a 610,000-square foot building on Lot 1 (67 acres). Lot 1 is the southeastern-most lot on the overall River Pointe site and is the first lot on the left side when entering River Point Drive off River Road.

Mr. Hite noted that no connection is provided between the interior sidewalks and those along River Pointe Drive, posing a safety concern for pedestrians of all abilities. Additionally, no sidewalk is provided along the River Road property frontage. The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) does not provide fixed-route transit service to the project site and vicinity. The nearest LANTA fixed-route
service ends in Bangor and Roseto boroughs, approximately nine miles west of the project site on River Road. LANTA has no plans to extend service to serve the project site in the near future, however given the proposed employment uses on the site, LANTA anticipates service requests in the vicinity. LANTA also recommends significant pedestrian connectivity and/or shuttle service to the nearby Portland Park and Ride to coordinate with other multimodal services. Additional bus stop details should be coordinated with LANTA directly.

Ms. Seitz stated that the LVPC strongly recommends connecting the proposed walking trail to a pedestrian network along River Road. Upper Mount Bethel Township was studied for trail feasibility in the Two Rivers Area Greenway Trails Implementation Study (2009). Implementing trails and multimodal connectivity at the time of this development can facilitate future trail connections that will ultimately lead to an interconnected Slate Belt region (of Policy 5.3). Extending the trail along the southeastern emergency access driveway is one potential way of connecting the trail to River Road.

The plans identify that Lot 1 will be served by central public water and central public sewer, and the overall site sketch plan conceptualizes an on-site wastewater treatment plant. The LVPC encourages continued coordination between the Township and developer to ensure the sewer system is ultimately overseen by a municipal authority. Privately owned systems historically have not been operated as well as public systems and are often neglected due to the high long-term costs of maintenance, leading to system failure. Municipalities are ultimately responsible for the proper functioning of all systems within their borders. In the event where a central sewage facility is approved by the municipality and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and remains private, the municipality should require significant assurances for proper long-term operation and maintenance (of Policy 3.2).

The LVPC commends the inclusion of an emergency access driveway provided on the east side of the building, connecting to River Road. The ability for first responders and emergency services to utilize this driveway for response and evacuation is a key element to response times.

Mr. Hite reported that the subject application includes an overall Master Transportation Impact Study (TIS) dated January 2022 for the entire River Pointe Planned Industrial Park. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual 11th Edition was utilized to estimate the number of trips generated by the overall River Pointe development across two phases. Phase One accounts for the cumulative development of Lots 1, 2 and 6 based on 75% as “Industrial Park” and 25% as “High Cube Fulfillment Warehouse – Non-Sort”. The submitted plans for “Lot 1” do not specify the actual land use of the building. To determine the estimated trips generated by Lot 1, the LVPC utilized the same percentage split between land use codes for Phase 1. Based on these estimates, Lot 1 will generate an average of 1,853 total vehicle trips per day, which includes 296 commercial vehicles.

As noted earlier, the traffic impact study was last revised January 2022, and again it notes that as development is proposed revisions will occur. Development of an over 600,000 square foot building is certainly "material", especially given the land use and it’s need for significant transportation infrastructure in order to operate. The proposed development, in totality, is mega-regional in nature, and the largest single development the Lehigh Valley has seen in recent memory.

At a minimum, as each lot is proposed for overall development is proposed, the Master TIS should be updated at the preliminary plan stage with trip generation estimates based on the resulting land use. Reflection of true operations of facilities and transportation impacts is critical to not only accommodating the needs of the site’s ultimate users but, managing the local and broader impacts of development. Not providing basic, common traffic impact information is irresponsible and will lead to significant transportation safety and emergency management concerns. Therefore, the LVPC strongly advises the Township to require an updated TIS, in the clear, present and long-term interest of the public, health, safety and general welfare (FutureLV Policies 1.4, 2.4 and 2.6).

The Lot 1 site plans show 92 “truck” spaces, however the proposed length of 55 feet is more suitable for trailers because a connected tractor-trailer is typically 70 feet in length. Truck parking spaces, including
long-term spaces, are one essential element to provide drivers with a safe area to rest. Connected tractor-trailer parking is proposed in the medians of River Pointe Drive, though no driver accommodations are provided. Restrooms, garbage and recycling containers and lighting are essential supporting the health, safety and welfare of drivers while maintaining the environment and overall condition of the truck parking areas along River Pointe Drive. Snow removal equipment should be included in a safe and efficient area with the capacity to manage snow once on the ground. The removal of snow and ice from the tops of trailers and trucks is a transportation network safety process. The ability to remove snow prior to leaving the site can mitigate the impacts of accumulated snow falling or sliding off trucks and trailers and impeding vehicular traffic and visibility.

Ms. Seitz commented that the developer should consider incorporating sustainable systems and green building design. Sustainable utilities reduce overhead costs of operation and can provide greater return on investment while ‘minimizing environmental impacts of development’ (Policy 3.1). The roof of buildings should be strong enough to accommodate solar panels and enable renewable energy sources (of Policy 3.4). Incorporating sustainable systems and design supports the natural character and rural identity of the Township and offsets emissions generated by trucks to improve air quality (of Policy 3.4).

Additionally, the LVPC strongly recommends that the Township ensure the environmental impacts generated by the development are scrutinized, particularly impacts to critical habitats, to ‘minimize environmental impacts of development’ (Policy 3.2). Because of this proposal’s proximity to the Delaware River, a comprehensive environmental impact study may be required by the Northampton County Conservation District, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and/or the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and municipal ordinances may require the same. A copy of any and all environmental impact assessments should be forwarded to LVPC at the same time as other regulatory bodies. This will ensure that county and regional planning and coordination occurs in conjunction with the development of the site in a nationally significant and environmentally sensitive area.

Mr. Hite noted that transportation infrastructure capacity is limited in the vicinity of the project site and was not built to withstand high traffic volumes or heavy industrial vehicles. Vehicle traffic impacts are made worse by the lack of alternative transportation options. Ensuring that freight mobility is matched with appropriate infrastructure to accommodate it should occur prior to approving land development plans (of Policy 2.4).

Another outstanding issue is the need for a development management plan for the facility. The development management plan must formally designate and provide perpetual routing, signage and enforcement to ensure that the impacts of the development do not exacerbate existing or incited transportation safety and congestion concerns. The potential for this development to pay for itself now or into the future is questionable and understanding that public subsidy is limited or non-existent is an important factor to manage long-term impacts on the development itself and the public. The potential for this development to pay for itself now or into the future is questionable and understanding that public subsidy is limited or non-existent is an important factor to manage long-term impacts on the development itself and the public.

Mr. Hite commented that a Norfolk Southern rail line bridge crosses above Delaware Avenue, State Route 1039 in Portland Borough located north of the project site. The current 13’ 8” clearance beneath this rail trestle poses a severe safety and mobility concern. All trucks must be directed to travel in this direction from the site, as the main access to both State Route 611 and Interstate 80 in New Jersey. Trucks get caught underneath or scrape the overpass multiple times per year, especially when road repaving reduces the amount of clearance underneath. The overpass in its current condition is not ideal nor in line with current design standards, considering the current standard maximum height of a commercial vehicle is 13’ 6” in Pennsylvania – a two-inch clearance. Ride height of the suspension of the chassis of trucks and trailers and road repaving with continual overlays can easily deviate three or more inches and would be detrimental to the integrity of the overpass if struck and compromise the safety of truck drivers.
The plans and TIS do not indicate how this site access and mobility challenge will be addressed. Additionally, the bridge opening is too narrow for two tractor-trailers to pass through safely at the posted speed, and with minimal margin for error at slower speeds. Because of the roadway's proximity to the Delaware River and changing weather patterns as a result of climate change, this area is severely prone to flooding, and lowering the roadway to address clearance is not recommended. The LVPC strongly encourages the developer to continue exploring solutions to this issue, as well as continued dialog and coordination with the Township, Borough of Portland and PennDOT as well as other applicable agencies to study and engineer design alternatives to increase the overpass clearance to promote roadway safety and limit environmental impacts of development (of Policy 2.2 and 3.2). The LVPC recognizes this overpass as an obstacle that will severely limit the viability of the development. This is a practical matter that must be addressed, or the development will not function at a sustainable level.

The overall project is reliant on regional connectivity which is challenged by the following routes and are provided here for context including truck routes to Interstate 80 should be established and signed appropriately to provide safe and efficient freight movements (of Policy 2.4). The most efficient and least impactful travel route would be for truck and freight movements to cross the Delaware River at the Portland-Columbia Toll Bridge and connect to Interstate 80 in New Jersey. However, it is likely that trucks will utilize other roadways in the vicinity of the project site, and potential impacts to these roadways should be planned and mitigated.

State Route 611 is listed in the Congestion Management Process as a 2040 future congested corridor. This designation was before the project was proposed, and congestion is a concern for the mobility of people and freight through the area and associated potential worsening of air quality. The proposed vehicle impacts from the overall development will accelerate the congested corridor sooner than anticipated. It is strongly recommended that the Developer work with PennDOT, The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission (DRJTBC), Upper Mount Bethel Township and Portland Borough on mitigation and mobility as well as any safety improvements along State Route 611 to offset the dramatic increase in vehicle traffic and resulting congestion. Proper planning, design and improvements to the network can mitigate the impacts to the mobility in the area and improve air quality issues that result from traffic congestion corridor (of Policies 1.4, 2.2 and 2.4).

State Route 512 off of State Route 611 traveling southwest towards Bangor and Pen Argyl boroughs is another likely route that trucks may utilize. Impacts to Route 512 should be identified and assessed to ‘consider the global effects of new or expanded freight businesses’ (of Policy 2.4) and minimize adverse impacts to these adjacent communities’ infrastructure. State Route 1002 known as “Uhler Road” through Forks Township and “Main Street” in Tatamy Borough will be impacted if trucks opt to travel further south on Route 611 to access State Route 33. This is also a likely route for trucks traveling from the south to the development, by traveling from Route 22 to Route 33 and exiting at the Palmer/Tatamy interchange. Both state and locally owned roads in Lower Mount Bethel Township will also be affected.

River Road south of the project site, as well as any connecting local roads in Lower Mount Bethel Township, should also be studied for impacts, particularly in consideration that some trucks may not be able to travel north due to the low-clearance rail bridge over River Road.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Molchany made the motion; Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Mr. Melnick stated that the problem with the underpass on Delaware Avenue is paramount and that if this access issue isn’t corrected all other concerns are moot. Mr. Moritz-Chapelliquen commended the staff’s review and the inclusion of issues that need to be addressed as well as actionable next steps. Mr. Molchany asked if the review could recommend that the Township perform pre- and post-development monitoring of air quality and require environmental remediation. He also noted the potential problem if the sewage disposal system experiences problems or fails and stated that it would be unfair to require neighboring uses to hook up to the sewer and water systems. He also commented on the need to right-size infrastructure and the current inadequacy of Delaware Avenue, and the need for a long-term transportation plan for the development.
Mr. Melnick stated that the Township should commit to building the sewer plant or require the developer to obtain sewer service from Portland Borough. Mr. Charles Elliott asked if the plan is consistent with FutureLV. Ms. Bradley responded that in total the plan is inconsistent with FutureLV. Mr. Charles Elliott also asked that the review letter be edited to read: “Taken as a whole, in consideration of the issues discussed in this letter, we conclude that it fails to align with the policies of FutureLV.” The motion to accept the staff comments was amended to make this change.

Ms. Lisa Pektor asked if the review included any information on the Neighborhood Improvement District which she stated was created to fund services required by the development. Ms. Bradley commented that the LVPC review does not consider taxing issues, only land use issues. Mr. Moritz-Chapellequin asked if there was a set number of issues and deficiencies identified in a plan review to warrant a recommendation of inconsistency. Ms. Bradley stated that it is a matter of scale of the deficiencies and not a defined number.

The motion passed.

**ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township- River Pointe Logistics Lot 2, Land Use of Regional Significance**

Ms. Seitz 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’ land use category.

The subject application submitted for review proposes to construct a 701,100-square foot building on Lot 2 (50 acres). Lot 2 is located on the eastern edge of the River Pointe site and is the first lot on the right side when entering River Point Drive off River Road. As with Lot 1, the proposed building and the larger planned industrial park development aligns with the Township’s designated zoning, is in a LERTA and has the potential to provide numerous economic benefits. However, the size and scale of the project significantly surpasses any existing development and infrastructure in the surrounding area. The numerous issues related to the overall industrial park are outstanding or unresolved, and aspects of the Lot 2 site design can be improved for the Township to leverage this development opportunity while minimizing adverse impacts.

Mr. Hite noted that no sidewalk is provided along the River Road property frontage. While the area surrounding the project site lacks pedestrian infrastructure, taking the opportunity to install improvements at the time of land development supports the fiscal health and sustainability of the Township (of Policy 4.6). Additionally, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) spaces in the passenger vehicle parking lot are located offset from the building. The intent of ADA-compliant parking spaces is to have them located close to building entrances to minimize the effort required for a person with a disability to access the building. While building entrances are not shown on the plan, it is strongly recommended that the applicant ensure ADA parking spaces are located as close to the building entrances as possible. Bicycle storage racks should be installed in a convenient location; To facilitate the possibility of future transit service, LANTA strongly recommends including a comprehensive pedestrian network within the River Pointe complex, particularly along the main River Pointe Drive, and along the proposed entrance driveways from River Pointe Drive to the main employee entrances of the individual facilities. (of Policies 2.2 and 5.2).

Ms. Seitz commented that the LVPC commends the proposed trees along River Pointe Drive, and landscaping along the River Road side of the lot. The LVPC encourages retaining as many existing trees as possible, to ‘conserve and manage natural lands’ (Policy 3.1). Additional landscaping and expanding access to green spaces provides many benefits to mental and physical well-being, including reduced depression, anxiety and stress (of Policy 5.3). Sustainable systems and green building practices should be incorporated into the design of the building and site to reduce overhead costs of operation and mitigate climate change impacts (of Policy 3.4).
The plans identify that Lot 2 will also be served by central public water and central public sewer, and the overall site sketch plan conceptualizes an on-site wastewater treatment plant. The LVPC encourages continued coordination between the Township and developer to ensure the sewer system is ultimately overseen by a municipal authority for proper long-term operation and maintenance (of Policy 3.2).

The inclusion of two access points supports ‘safe and secure community design and emergency management’ (of Policy 5.1) by facilitating efficient emergency management response should an incident occur. As the project moves forward, it is paramount that the developer coordinate emergency access configurations with Upper Mount Bethel Township emergency services departments and providers to ‘enhance planning and emergency response efforts among emergency management personnel’ (of Policy 5.1).

As with the review of Lot 1, the submitted plans for “Lot 2” do not specify the actual land use of the building. The estimated number of trips generated by the development were calculated based on 75% as “Industrial Park” and 25% as “High Cube Fulfillment Warehouse – Non Sort” as outlined in the TIS. Based on these estimates, Lot 2 will generate an average of 2,039 total vehicle trips per day, which includes 340 commercial vehicles:

The Lot 2 site plans show 155 “truck” spaces, however these provided spaces are unable to accommodate a typical connected tractor-trailer, which is 70 feet in length. It is recommended that if these are intended to be tractor-trailer parking spaces that the pavement markings and layout be configured to park a 70-foot truck within the space provided (of FutureLV policies 2.4 and 5.4).

As with the Lot 1 review, numerous impediments to the success of the overall River Pointe Logistics project are outstanding and must be resolved, including the rail overpass across Delaware Avenue, State Route 1039 in Portland Borough. The current clearance beneath this rail trestle poses a severe safety and mobility concern. The LVPC strongly encourages the developer to continue exploring solutions to this issue, as an obstacle that will severely limit the viability of the development. This is a practical matter that must be addressed, or the development will not function at a sustainable level.

Transportation infrastructure capacity is limited in the vicinity of the project site and was not built to withstand high traffic volumes or heavy industrial vehicles. Impacts must be evaluated for Interstate 80, including the Portland-Columbia Toll Bridge, State Route 611 which is identified as a 2040 future congested corridor, Route 512 and Route 33, and River Road extending south to Lower Mount Bethel Township. If not addressed as the land development progresses, these threats will ultimately increase the burden to the States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the County of Northampton and surrounding municipalities and others in the form of road and bridge upgrades and improvements, safety enhancements and transit needs. Transportation maintenance and improvements are paid for by all of these governments through taxes, which will need to increase over time to address the burdens a development of this scale will have on public infrastructure such as the transportation system and emergency management services. The potential for this development to pay for itself now or into the future is questionable and understanding that public subsidy is limited or non-existent is an important factor to manage long-term impacts on the development itself and the public.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Dr. Amato made the motion; Mr. Elbich seconded the motion. Dr. Amato also asked the previous comment on the inconsistency of the plan Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. The motion to accept the staff comments was amended to make this change.

The motion passed.

**ACTION ITEM:** Upper Mount Bethel Township- River Pointe Logistics Lot 6, Land Use of Regional Significance
Ms. Seitz 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' land use category.

The subject application proposes to construct a 600,750-square foot building on Lot 6 (41 acres). Lot 6 is located on the western side of the overall River Pointe site with two access roads connecting on an unnamed roadway stemming from the River Pointe Drive cul-de-sac towards the northwest. As with Lots 1 and 2, the proposed building and the larger planned industrial park development aligns with the Township’s designated zoning, is in a LERTA and has the potential to provide numerous economic benefits. However, the size and scale of the project significantly surpasses any existing development and infrastructure in the surrounding area.

Having multimodal transportation options is imperative to the long-term success of the proposal. Thousands of employees are anticipated upon full build-out of the industrial park, and the vicinity lacks the housing needed to support so many workers, resulting in extended commutes from surrounding communities, including Monroe County to the north and Warren County (New Jersey) to the east.

No sidewalk is proposed on the unnamed roadway connecting to River Pointe Drive, posing a safety concern for pedestrians of all abilities. Taking the opportunity to install improvements at the time of land development supports the fiscal health and sustainability of the Township (of Policy 4.6). Bicycle storage racks should be installed in a convenient location. To facilitate the possibility of future transit service, LANTA strongly recommends including a comprehensive pedestrian network within the River Pointe complex, particularly along the main River Pointe Drive, and along the proposed entrance driveways from River Pointe Drive to the main employee entrances of the individual facilities. (of Policies 2.2 and 5.2). Minimal landscaping is included in the site design. The LVPC recommends additional landscaping (of Policy 5.3). The LVPC strongly encourages retaining as many existing trees as possible, to ‘conserve and manage natural lands’ (Policy 3.1).

Adequate sewer service is necessary to accommodate the scale of the proposal, especially to accommodate the intended various forms of industrial uses (of Policy 3.2). The LVPC encourages continued coordination between the Township and developer to ensure the sewer system is ultimately overseen by a municipal authority for proper long-term operation and maintenance (of Policy 3.2).

The inclusion of two access points supports ‘safe and secure community design and emergency management’ (of Policy 5.1) by facilitating efficient emergency management response should an incident occur. As the project moves forward, it is paramount that the developer coordinate Township emergency services departments to ‘enhance planning and emergency response efforts’ (of Policy 5.1), especially in consideration of budget requirements for emergency response personnel, training and proper equipment to serve the scale of the building and overall project (of Policies 2.2 and 4.6).

Mr. Hite commented that the submitted plans for “Lot 6” do not specify the actual land use of the building. The estimated number of trips generated by the development were calculated based on 75% as “Industrial Park” and 25% as “High Cube Fulfillment Warehouse – Non Sort” as outlined in the TIS. Based on these estimates, Lot 6 will generate an average of 1,790 total vehicle trips per day, which includes 292 commercial vehicles. LVPC strongly advises the Township to require an updated TIS, in the clear, present and long-term interest of the public, health, safety and general welfare. At a minimum, as each Lot is proposed for development, the Master TIS should be updated at the preliminary plan stage with trip generation estimates based on the resulting land use.

The Lot 6 site plans show 95 “truck” spaces, however these provided spaces are unable to accommodate a typical connected tractor-trailer, which is 70 feet in length. It is recommended that if these are intended to be tractor-trailer parking spaces that the pavement markings and layout be configured to park a 70-foot truck within the space provided (of *FutureLV* policies 2.4 and 5.4).

Numerous impediments to the success of the overall River Pointe Logistics project are outstanding and must be resolved, including the rail overpass over State Route 1039 Delaware Avenue. The current
clearance beneath this rail trestle poses a severe safety and mobility concern. The plans and TIS do not indicate how this site access and mobility challenge will be addressed. The LVPC strongly encourages the developer to continue exploring solutions to this issue, as an obstacle that will severely limit the viability of the development. This is a practical matter that must be addressed, or the development will not function at a sustainable level.

Transportation infrastructure capacity is limited in the vicinity of the project site and was not built to withstand high traffic volumes or heavy industrial vehicles. Vehicle traffic impacts are made worse by the lack of alternative transportation options. Ensuring that freight mobility is matched with appropriate infrastructure to accommodate it should occur prior to approving land development plans (of Policy 2.4). If not addressed as the land development progresses, these threats will ultimately increase the burden to Township, Commonwealth, State of New Jersey, Federal Government, County, surrounding municipalities and others in the form of road and bridge upgrades and improvements, safety enhancements and transit needs.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Moore made the motion and also asked that the previous comment on the inconsistency of the plan be added; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Moritz-Chapelliquen asked if the internal access points have the capacity to accommodate the anticipated truck traffic. Mr. Hite noted that access to Lot 6 wraps back to Demme Road which connects to River Road. Mr. Glickman asked if the proposed roads and access drives will be dedicated to the public. Mr. Hite stated that River Pointe Drive will be public, and all other drives will be private. This was confirmed by Mr. Lou Pektor who also noted that there would be emergency access to Potomac Street, Marshfield Drive, Pine Tree Lane and Demi Road.

The motion passed.

**ACTION ITEM: Forks Township- Legacy at Sullivan Trail, Land Use of Regional Significance**

Ms. Griffin Rivera presented the review of the subject application, which is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the large Residential Development and Mixed-Use development categories.

The applicant proposes consolidation of four lots into one and the construction of 19 apartment and two mixed-use buildings for a total of 420 apartments, 14,000 square-feet of retail/commercial space, and 14,000 square-feet of office space with a recreational center located on Sullivan Trail north of the intersection with Uhler Road.

The proposal is within a Multimodal Accessibility Buffer. These areas are opportunities that the LVPC highly encourages homing for expansion, improvements, or connections to the mixed-transportation network during development or redevelopment activities (of Policy 2.1). The LVPC commends the developer for providing sidewalks and pavement marked crosswalks throughout the proposal. This ‘promotes safe and secure community design’ (Policy 5.1) and will help to create a pedestrian friendly community space that promotes physical and mental health (Policy 5.3).

The LVPC recommends that the developer and municipality engage with Norfolk Southern Corporation on coordination of pedestrian infrastructure across their rail line which is depicted on the plans. The municipality and the Pennsylvanian Department of Transportation (PennDOT) should also engage with Norfolk Southern Corporation on any rail crossing upgrades or safety improvements that may be required at the existing rail crossing across State Route 2025 (Sullivan Trail) (of Policies 2.4 and 5.1).

The LVPC recommends that bicycle racks be incorporated into the vehicle parking lots, and in the parking lot of the recreation center as residents may choose to bike to the center rather than drive. LANTA) provides public transportation in close proximity to the project site, with a northbound/southbound bus stop at the Sullivan Trail and Church Lane intersection 0.30 miles north of the project site, and a westbound/eastbound bus stop in front of the adjacent Wells Fargo Bank on Uhler Road 0.25 miles south
of the project site. Given the proposed mixed-use development planned, including several multi-unit apartment buildings, LANTA anticipates service requests at this location. The proposal includes a comprehensive pedestrian network within the Legacy at Sullivan Trail complex, and sidewalks along the property frontage on Sullivan Trail. This will be a heavily used bus stop for the Township and providing access to a proper bus stop will benefit all users. The Easton Area School District should also be consulted for school bus stop requirements to ensure safe waiting areas for students (Policy 5.2).

The proposal is anticipated to generate 3,745 trips per day. Sullivan Trail along the frontage of the project location and Uhler Road are both listed as Corridors in the Transportation plan of FutureLV: The Regional Plan. The Sullivan Trail Corridor links the emerging Center of Forks Center and the historic Center of Stockertown. The Uhler Road Corridor links the historic Center of Tatamy to the emerging Center of Forks. These Corridors are "Multimodal Accessibility Buffer Areas" from FutureLV.

The Traffic Impact Study Addendum Sensitivity Analysis provided to LVPC indicates a desire by the developer to delay construction of dedicated left turn lanes at the offsite intersection of Sullivan Trail and Uhler Road until 190 Apartments are occupied. The LVPC recommends that these off-site PennDOT improvements be constructed in a timeframe to mitigate impacts of increased traffic to the intersection. Crash data for 2022 from the public version of the Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool shows five crashes at this location. This recommendation supports both Policies 2.2 to 'provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network' and Policy 2.6 'to improve transportation performance measures.' The emergency access proposed on "Brooke Drive" (Access Road B) should be maintained to be fully accessible at all times as winter weather events could diminish access due to snow and ice cover and immediate access for emergency response activities is critical to the health, safety, and welfare of the community (of Policy 5.1). The Township should encourage the addition of electric vehicle charging spaces, recognizing the advancement of electric vehicle technologies (of Policies 2.5 and 3.2).

To ensure housing is made available to residents at a variety of income levels, FutureLV advocates for communities to ‘promote mixed-income neighborhoods’ and ‘diversify price points of available housing’ (of Policy 4.5). The subject parcels are located within a Farmland Preservation Area. Farmland Preservation Areas are areas that are predominantly agriculture and are recommended to remain agriculture. Sections of these parcels are also located within Character Defining areas. These areas represent the natural and scenic character of the Lehigh Valley. The types of uses recommended for these areas include parks and open space, woodlands, agriculture, and low-intensity, limited-scale development to preserve these natural and scenic resources. The LVPC recommends that, if possible, some of the sections of these parcels be preserved in the development process to maintain green space within the development which would ‘preserve natural resources in the land development process’ and ‘minimize environmental impacts of development’ (Policies 3.1 and 3.2).

The southern most parcel on the left of the slide is located in a high-level Natural Resource Conservation Priority Area and has a high concentration of woodlands. High Conservation Priority Natural Resource areas should be used by conservation organizations and government agencies to prioritize conservation efforts. This same parcel is proposed to be used as an underground detention/capture and reuse basin and is located in floodplains and is in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year flood zone area. No housing development is proposed for this parcel and the LVPC recommends that the woodlands be maintained to support this Natural Resource Conservation Priority Area and as a mitigation measure for flooding. This would ‘incorporate resiliency into the planning and design in 100-year floodplains’ (of Policy 5.1) and ‘preserve natural resources in the land development process’ (of Policy 3.1).

Mapping indicates the extensive presence of karsts in the form of surface depressions on the site. The LVPC advises the applicant to ensure proper geotechnical testing prior to land development, to ‘minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public’ (Policy 3.2)

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Elbich made the motion; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. The motion passed.
**ACTION ITEM: Hanover Township (Northampton County)- Arcadia Development Corp, 300 Gateway Drive, Land Use of Regional Significance**

Ms. Griffin Rivera 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’ land use category.

The subject applicant proposes consolidation of two parcels into one and construction of a 250,290 square foot warehouse at 300 Gateway Drive. The proposal fulfills the intent of *FutureLV* the Regional Plan to ‘encourage reuse and redevelopment within urban areas’ (of Policy 1.1) by repurposing the existing development.

Hanover Township, Northampton County is listed as an emerging Center in the Transportation Plan of *FutureLV*. Centers are connected via Corridors. Centers and Corridors have been identified to encourage projects that expand, improve, or connect the mixed-transportation network. This proposed development utilizes Route 512, identified as one of these corridors. These Centers and Corridors are opportunities for creating denser, mixed-use, and transit-supported development. The LVPC commends the use of the Land Use Code 150 “Warehousing” from the Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual in the Traffic Impact Study. This provides a range of warehousing calculation formulas and is important for characterizing the proposed impacts without an identified end user.

Gateway Drive is currently a private access for two hotels and a bank adjacent to the project. The warehouse will use the same access driveway. Consideration for the compatibility of freight commercial vehicles and passenger vehicles should be considered and it is recommended that an access study from Route 512 to the project be completed with recommendations to providing a safe access for all businesses that use Gateway Drive. On-site truck route signage should be provided to communicate the safest and most efficient access to State Route 22, 33, 191 and 412, 987 (Airport Road), and Interstates 78, 80 and 476. (of policy 2.4). The LVPC recommends directional signage be added within the complex to assist navigating to correct routes since the western driveway for the Embassy Bank / Hampton Inn is proposed for removal.

Route 22 at this location is listed as a current and future priority congested corridor in the Congested Management Process. Projects that will increase traffic congestion along the corridor should mitigate these impacts. The municipality and developer should engage with PennDOT on mitigation recommendations and to improve traffic flow along Route 22 and Interchanges in the vicinity of the project. Route 22 and associated ramps for ingress and egress to Route 512 are under construction as a Lehigh Valley Transportation Study Transportation Improvement Program project. The LVPC recommends the developer coordinate with PennDOT and its project management consultants to avoid any negative impacts on the improvement project or the proposed development (of Policies 2.2 and 3.2).

The LVPC applauds the developer for integrating commercial truck amenities into the project plans including a truck driver lounge and amenities area within the building, truck parking spaces for the driver lounge, and snow removal area. The LVPC recommends that electrical hookup infrastructure for the tractor-trailer and trailer parking / dock spaces be considered to limit tractor-trailer idling and improve air quality. Truck parking and passenger vehicle parking lots should be prepared for the future of electric vehicles by providing the necessary charging infrastructure. Trailers with refrigeration units are emerging with hybrid-run operations that enable an electric hookup to not rely on diesel fuel. Incorporating these features on-site can ‘reduce climate change impacts’ by offsetting the air quality impacts generated by freight uses and tractor-trailer idling (Policies 2.5 and 3.4).

The LVPC strongly recommends that a pathway or sidewalk connection from the proposed development to the sidewalk that runs along Highland Avenue be incorporated into the plans. Near the project site, on Highland Avenue, one street north of the proposed development are bus stops. There are no sidewalks along Route 512 and the ingress/egress of Gateway Drive onto Bath Pike (Route 512) that connects these two roads are pedestrian prohibited. This will make it difficult for any employees who use public
transportation to access the location without illegally and dangerously walking along Route 512 from the bus stops on Highland Avenue.

LANTA currently does not provide public transportation to the project site on Gateway Drive, or along its nearest main corridor, Route 512. Given the proposed use of the facility, LANTA anticipates future employees needing transportation to the site. The LVPC strongly recommends coordinating with the adjacent property to allow for a pedestrian connection from the project site to the Highland Avenue sidewalk to access the existing bus stops. If a connection for pedestrians could be made through the private property between the project site and the bus stops on Highland Avenue, it would support enhancing transit connections to improve mobility and job access (of Policy 2.3) as well as promote ‘safe and secure community design’ (Policy 5.1), and work to ‘increase economic access to daily needs for all people’ (of Policy 5.2). This solution would deter transit riders from dangerously walking on Route 512 to access the project site on Gateway Drive.

The LVPC recommends a pedestrian circulation plan for employee movements within the eastern employee parking lot and into the building entrances. Appropriate pavement markings should be installed to communicate routes for vehicles and to alert drivers to potential pedestrians. The LVPC also suggests that sidewalks be incorporated along the perimeter of the warehouse to provide a safe location to walk and serve as a recreational trail for employees and truck drivers that would promote health and wellness onsite (Policy 5.3).

The LVPC recommends to ‘enhance public transit service, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities along Corridors’ that a bicycle rack be included in a safe location adequately illuminated by light be added for any employees who may use a bicycle for their commute either whole or in combination with public transportation. (of Polices 2.3, 5.2 and 5.3).

The undeveloped parcel is part of a Character-Defining Area. Character-Defining Areas represent the natural and scenic character of the Lehigh Valley. The types of uses recommended for these areas are parks and open space, woodlands, agriculture, and low-intensity, limited scale development that preserves natural and scenic resources. Mapping indicates the extensive presence of karsts in the form of surface depressions on the site.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Gallagher made the motion; Dr. Amato seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Mr. Melnick questioned how, if the driveway to the bank is removed, access would be provided. He noted that Gateway Drive is a two-lane road and that there will be a huge problem accessing the hotel and bank. Mr. Hite agreed and noted that appropriate signage is necessary. Mr. Lobach, who identified himself as the chair of Embassy Bank at Gateway Drive, stated that if the entrance to the Hampton Suites hotel is closed it will significantly impact their business. He noted that there would be significant problems for his customers having to drive through the hotel’s parking lot.

The motion passed.

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

Mr. Melnick presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet, which included a subdivision and land development amendment for Pen Argyl Borough, and a zoning amendment for Williams Township.

Ms. Moore made a motion to accept the Summary Sheet. Mr. Glickman asked for a second. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion carried.

**Environment Committee:**
INFORMATION ITEM: Climate Action Initiatives

Mr. Repasch reported that Ms. Tracy Oscavich reported to the Environment Committee on various climate action initiatives that are currently underway.

Transportation Committee:

INFORMATION ITEMS:

Mr. Herman reported on an update of the PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside or TASA projects and the statewide funding application cycle for 2023 as well as a report on the PennDOT multimodal Transportation Funded projects. He also reported on an update on the Passenger Rail analysis that was presented to the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study as well as a briefing of the draft Eastern PA Freight Alliance Freight Infrastructure Plan Freight Profile.

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 March which included 17 subdivisions, 24 development proposals, 19 reviews for Stormwater Management, and seven Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 67 reviews. The reviews included 407 housing units and 551,542 square feet of non-residential development. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Highway Traffic Monitoring
Mr. Hite provided the details of the March traffic counts. He presented the vehicle counts for State Route 22, State Route 33, Interstate 78, and State Route 309, as well as the truck counts for Interstate-78 and State Route 22.

He also presented a special report concerning Tuesdays during the month of April 2023. There were two significant motor vehicle accidents in Lehigh County during the morning rush hours that changed traffic patterns significantly.

These are very interesting data points and demonstrate how important Route 22 and Interstate 78 are for the Lehigh Valley, especially in times of emergency incidents that can affect commuting patterns. Alternative routes and connectivity for our roads is important not only for the residents and pass through traffic but also emergency response personnel responding to these incidents.

Executive Director’s Report:

Ms. Bradley provided an update on the progress of the four multi-municipal plans- NazPlan, Northern Lehigh, Slate Belt, and River Central. She also reported on recent partnership meetings with ULI, PennDot, and the Federal Reserve.

Communications and Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: Grants and Media Summary

Mr. Assad provided a summary of grants as an attachment in the meeting packets. There are two PennDOT grants, including a very important Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Program, as well as a Department of Community and Economic Development Multimodal Grant program. Also included in the packet are the links to Becky’s Morning Call column about the Lehigh Valley being more powerful by working together, and the WDIY radio show about regionalism.

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Government Academy
Mr. Assad also reported on the ongoing Lehigh Valley Government Academy PMPEI classes, with Subdivision and Land development in September and Community Planning in October.

Finally, Mr. Hite announced that on June 28th from 11 am to 1 pm at Wayne Grube Park we will be holding our Local Government Appreciation Day to recognize and honor all the local government people who have participated in the Local Technical Assistance Program and the Lehigh Valley Government Academy in the past couple of years. These are public works and government boards and commissions people who attended the LTAP and LVGA courses to keep up to date on best practices so they can do the best job possible for their communities. LTAP Safety Consulting Engineer Pat Wright will be the special guest speaker.

ADJOURNMENT:
Mr. Glickman stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on June 22 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.
June XX, 2023

River Central Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee  
961 Marcon Boulevard - Suite 310  
Allentown, PA 18109

RE: River Central Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan – Final Draft  
Boroughs of Catasauqua, North Catasauqua, and Northampton Boroughs,  
and Townships of East Allen and Hanover (Lehigh County)

Dear Steering Committee Members:

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

- **LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting**  
  - June 20, 2023, at 12:00 PM  
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)

- **LVPC Full Commission Meeting**  
  - June 22, 2023 at 7:00 PM  
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)

The Draft River Central Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan (Plan) serves to  
promote several goals and policies outlined in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

The Draft Plan’s major goals include: balancing preservation and development;  
promoting and coordinating a mixed-use transportation region; protecting and  
enhancing farmland and the farming community; preserving and expanding natural,  
recreation, cultural and historic resources; enhancing housing opportunities; and  
strengthening safe, healthy, creative inclusive and livable communities. Additionally, the  
plan meets all legally required criteria outlined in the Pennsylvania Municipalities  
Planning Code for Comprehensive Plans.

The Plan provides a strong vision for the area’s future with thorough, in-depth, and well-  
researched plan content. In addition to outlining the vision for future growth, the LVPC  
commends the inclusion of innovative tools and practices that address the modern-day
needs of the region, as well as future forces, demonstrating the use of best practices in development patterns and community growth (Policy 1.4 FutureLV).

The LVPC offers the following additional comments and recommendations:

The Plan offers a variety of tools to coordinate new development with natural resources and open space, farmland, and the historic heritage prevalent throughout the region. Examples include conservation design consistent with the LVPC’s Conservation Guide and Model Regulation. Other recommended tools include transfer of development rights, sustainable housing methods such as cottage housing and conservation design, green infrastructure techniques. All of these are supportive of FutureLV Policy 1.1.

The LVPC commends the inclusion of Goal 1: “Balance preservation and development aligned with appropriate infrastructure.” This objective aligns with the overall goal of FutureLV, which emphasizes sustainable growth and development while preserving the region's natural and open spaces. The plan aims to strike a balance between development and preservation by promoting efficient land use, infrastructure investment, and responsible environmental stewardship.

Policy 1.1, “Promote compact development and redevelopment with a mix of uses in designated growth areas” aligns with FutureLV’s focus on creating vibrant, walkable communities. The plan encourages directing growth to designated centers and corridors, promoting mixed-use development that combines residential, commercial, and recreational uses. The goal is to reduce sprawl, enhance transportation options, and foster sustainable and livable communities.

Policy 1.2, “Coordinate industrial development with available road capacity, transit service, and utility infrastructure” supports FutureLV’s emphasis, in Goal 1, to create an “…efficient and coordinated development pattern.” The plan recognizes the importance of aligning industrial development with existing road capacity, transit service, and utility infrastructure to ensure efficient transportation and utility systems.

The LVPC commends the inclusion of Policy 1.4, “Collaborate land use decision-making across public, private, and governmental entities.” This objective aligns with FutureLV’s Policy 2.2 which is to provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently, while capitalizing on existing infrastructure. The policy emphasizes the need for cooperation and coordination among public, private, and governmental entities to ensure that land use decisions are well-informed, transparent, and reflect the shared vision for the region's future. It aims to bridge understanding, foster partnerships, and increase the resilience and quality of life in the River Central region.

Policies 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 recommend aligning development with sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure. These policies reinforce FutureLV’s policy 3.2. which is to minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.
The strategic management and minimization of impacts on infrastructure outlined in the plan for the River Central area is commendable. By reviewing zoning and subdivision ordinances, matching land use scales with available sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure capacities, and directing infrastructure-intensive land uses to appropriate areas, the plan addresses the need for balanced growth. Additionally, limiting public sewer and water system expansions to designated development areas and accommodating low-intensity development in exurban areas with on-lot sewage disposal and water supply help ensure efficient use of existing infrastructure.

The plan's emphasis on discouraging infrastructure-intensive land uses in areas served by on-lot sewage disposal or privately owned central sewage facilities is crucial for maintaining the capacity and functionality of these systems. The inclusion of capital improvement programs that prioritize utility infrastructure needs and address drainage problems aligns well with responsible planning and Act 167 stormwater management plans. Moreover, providing adequate service to areas experiencing problems with existing on-lot sewer or water systems or central water supply systems demonstrates a commitment to addressing infrastructure challenges and ensuring the well-being of the community.

To further enhance the plan, it could consider integrating sustainable infrastructure practices and climate change resilience strategies. Collaboration with utility providers and public engagement and education initiatives would also promote transparency, inclusivity, and community understanding. Overall, the plan provides a solid foundation for long-term sustainability, growth, and infrastructure management in the River Central area.

Goal 2, “Promote and coordinate a mixed-transportation region that works for everyone” aligns well with FutureLV plan's goal 2, Connected Mixed-Transportation Region. It emphasizes the importance of promoting transportation options that cater to diverse user needs, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists.

The LVPC commends the inclusion of the Plan’s Policy 2.2 which is to “Support the expansion of technology, communications, and utilities to reduce travel demands, optimize traffic flow, and prepare for the next generation of jobs. This policy aligns with FutureLV's Policy 2.5 and recognizes the importance of leveraging advancements in technology, communications, and utility infrastructure to enhance transportation efficiency, reduce congestion, and prepare for future job opportunities.

Plan Policies 2.3 “Mitigate the impacts of freight-based facilities” and 2.4 “Accommodate passenger and freight air travel,” recognize the significance of accommodating passenger and freight air travel to connect the Lehigh Valley region to national and global markets, fostering economic growth and mobility.

The LVPC commends the focus on preserving and enhancing farmland through Goal 3, “Protect and enhance farmland and the farming economy” (Policy 3.3 FutureLV). Economically supporting local farmers and encouraging local business is
an advancing initiative that will spur economic activity while maintaining the River Central culture.

The LVPC supports Goal 4 of the Draft Plan, “Preserve and expand natural, recreation, cultural and historic resources as essential to quality of life”. The LVPC encourages the conservation and management of natural resources (Policy 3.2 FutureLV) and the maintaining of an accessible trail system (of FutureLV Goal 5.3) with implementation of recommendations from the Walk/RollLV: Active Transportation Plan Catalytic Project. Preserving and enhancing historic/cultural resources is a commendable initiative within the Draft Plan's goals (of Policy 3.1 and 5.4 FutureLV).

Goal 5, “Enhance housing opportunities for all”, is supportive of Policy 4.5 of FutureLV which encourages a wide variety of housing types at diverse and attainable price points to spur social and economic opportunities. The Draft Plan involved community engagement (of Policy 1.4 FutureLV) that revealed residents' concern to age in place. The Plan's strategies align with FutureLV Policy 5.2 by promoting universal design standards and adapting older housing units to align with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

The LVPC supports the Draft Plan for the inclusion of Goal 6: “Strengthen safe, healthy, creative, inclusive and livable communities.” The LVPC commends the participating municipalities for advocating for sustainability and an enhanced focus on combating climate change (Policy 3.4, 5.4 FutureLV).

The Draft Plan's goals to grow the River Central economy aligns with several policies in FutureLV that promote sustainability of municipalities (Policy 4.6 FutureLV) and strengthen economic resilience and growth (Policy 4.1 and 4.2 FutureLV). The special focus of preserving and fortifying arts into the River Central community increases social and cultural opportunities (of Policy 4.2 FutureLV) by integrating community arts into public space (of Policy 5.4 FutureLV). The LVPC commends the Plan's goal to enhance equity and inclusivity for lower income individuals or marginalized populations through employment and housing opportunities (Policy 4.3 and 4.5 FutureLV) and an expansion of access to resources (Policy 5.2 FutureLV).

Policy 4.5 and the inset focusing on Trail Towns emphasize the importance of trails to the River Central region and the opportunities for economic development. A regional trail network anchored by the Delaware and Lehigh, September 11 National Memorial, and Nor-Bath Trail, among others, would provide many benefits including greater access to recreational opportunities, fostering community identity, and expanding local economies.

Goal 6.1 of the Plan is to “Promote efficiencies in emergency management.” The Plan notes the difficulties individual emergency service providers face in personnel, funding, equipment and training. The Plan recommends increased coordination between emergency service providers, a regionwide response plan for community emergencies, and collaboration for cost-sharing opportunities for training recruits as well as facilities
and equipment. This is an exemplary example of regional collaboration efforts recommended in FutureLV.

The LVPC is supportive of the municipalities in the River Central Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan as they look to implement this Plan. The LVPC is available as a resource if Borough or Township staff would like to discuss implementing planning topics or the LVPC’s guidance documents.

Municipalities, when considering comprehensive plans and updates, 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 the final Multi-Municipal comprehensive plan that is adopted by the Municipalities, per requirements of the MPC.

If you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Dean Severson
Director of Regional Planning

Patrick Osei
Director of Transportation Planning and Data

Joseph Dotta
Community Fellow

cc: Steve Travers, Catasauqua Borough Manager
    Robert Nolter, Catasauqua Borough Planning Commission, Chair
    Brent M. Green, East Allen Township Manager
    Robert Mills, East Allen Township Planning Commission, Chair
    Melissa Wehr, Hanover Township Manager
    Mark Thomas, Hanover Township, Planning Commission, Chair
    Peter Paone, North Catasaqua Borough Council President and Planning Commission Chair
    LeRoy Brobst, Northampton Borough Manager
    Nicholas Politi, Jr., Northampton Borough Planning Commission, Chair
June XX, 2023

Mr. Paul Levits, Chairman
Plainfield Township Planning Commission
Municipal Building, 6292 Sullivan Trail
Nazareth, Pennsylvania 18064

RE: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Warehouse and Wholesale Establishments
Plainfield Township
Northampton County

Dear Mr. Levits:

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). Both meetings were virtual, and occurred on:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - June 20, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - June 22, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject application proposes to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance pertaining to warehouses and wholesale establishments, including revised definitions, changing permitted uses in commercial and industrial zoning districts and additional regulations and provisions.

The new definitions for ‘Warehouse’ and ‘Wholesale Establishment’ create subcategories for small and large developments based on square footage, using a threshold of 50,000 square feet. The LVPC applauds the Township for establishing multiple categories of freight uses, which is a recommended best practice for strategically managing growth and development (of Policy 1.4). This approach will enable the Township to ensure freight facility proposals, which can have a tremendous impact on traffic conditions and residents’ quality of life, are scaled and located appropriately to cause the least impact on the community (of Policy 2.4).

Additionally, the amendment proposes to permit small warehouses and small wholesale establishments by right in commercial and industrial zoning districts. Large warehouses and large wholesale establishments are proposed to be permitted as special exception uses. The designation of large warehouses and large wholesale establishments as a special exception rather than permitted by right in certain districts allows consideration of proposals on a case-by-case basis to determine context-specific reasonable conditions to meet the goals of the Township, the Township’s Comprehensive Plan and the near-completion Slate Belt Multi-municipal Comprehensive Plan.
Freight is a continually evolving and growing industry, and by 2040 the flow of freight is projected to increase by 96% (FutureLV Freight Special Section). The proposed amendments align with best practices and recommendations included in the Northampton County Freight-Based Land Use Management Guide and serve to minimize freight impacts on residents (of Policy 2.4). The LVPC offers the following commendations on specific ordinance provisions proposed:

**Transportation Requirements**
The LVPC commends requirement for a traffic impact study, including a truck routing map and identifying necessary signage, which serves to ‘improve the efficiency of infrastructure and avoid traffic incidents’ (of Policy 2.2). The requirement for sufficient off-street queueing space to prevent on-street queueing and requiring site access from an arterial street ensure that development intensity is matched to sustainable infrastructure capacity (of Policy 1.1).

**Environmental and Community Design Requirements**
The LVPC commends the proposed requirements that ‘minimize environmental impacts of development’ (Policy 3.2), including buffer yard and planting requirements and 100-foot setbacks appropriate for sites abutting residential uses. These requirements mitigate the visual impacts of large-scale buildings that can affect community character and property values, and overall support the physical and mental health of the community (of Policy 5.3).

The proposal includes a maximum building height of 35 feet. For large warehouses, a height of 50 feet is permitted if the proposal includes an exterior access stair tower meeting all Uniform Construction Code and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. The LVPC commends this provision for promoting safe and secure emergency management (of Policy 5.1).

As the Township continues to evaluate its ordinances to ensure the best possible growth outcomes for the community, the LVPC recommends the following additional provisions that will enhance the quality of freight developments and further ‘support evolution and adaptability of government’ (of Policy 1.1):

**Transportation Recommendations:**
- Requiring two site access points, especially for large facilities, improves traffic circulation and safety (of Policy 2.2);
- Requiring snow removal equipment to clear off tractor-trailers ensures operators are compliant with the 2006 Pennsylvania Snow/Ice Removal Law and improves safety for other drivers on the road (of Policy 3.2);
- On-site amenities such as driver lounges support driver health and safety (of Policy 5.3);
- Requiring electric charging stations for employees, freight vehicles and trailers ensures that freight-based facilities remain economically viable today and into the future, as the freight industry, in particular, rapidly moves towards alternative fueling technologies over the next few years (Policy 2.5);
- Transit stops and carpool drop-off areas ‘improve mobility and job access’ (Policy 2.3);
- Provisions should be in place that require sidewalk construction along property frontages and connect proposed buildings to parking areas and external sidewalk networks (of Policy 5.1). Bicycle racks also facilitate the ‘last mile’ of commuting workers (of Policy 2.3).

**Environmental, Community and Quality of Life Recommendations**
- Requiring that buildings be designed with architectural variety breaks up continuous façade and improves development aesthetics (of Policy 5.4);
- Requiring electrical hookups ‘reduce greenhouse gas emissions’ (of Policy 3.4) and support compliance with the 2008 Pennsylvania Diesel Idling Law;
- On-site public address systems should be limited to not be audible outside of the site (of Policy 5.3);
- As the Township considers the lasting impacts of warehouse uses, the LVPC recommends examining opportunities to incentivize further incorporating sustainable principles into project design to ‘minimizing environmental impacts of development’ (Policy 3.1).

The LVPC commends North Whitehall Township for taking the initiative to address a regionwide issue and promote best practices in establishing efficient development processes responsive to regional needs (of Policy 1.4) through a well-written and thoughtful zoning ordinance amendment proposal.

Municipalities, when considering ordinance 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 regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner

cc: Thomas R. Petrucci, Plainfield Township Manager
David Backenstoe, Esq., Plainfield Township Solicitor
John Lezoche, Plainfield Township Zoning Officer
Brooke Kerzner, Bangor Borough Mayor
Nathaniel Dysard, Bangor Borough Manager
John Couch, East Bangor Borough Council
Jennifer Smethers, Lower Mount Bethel Township Manager
Robin Zmoda, Pen Argyl Borough Manager
Dan Wilkins, Portland Borough Planning Commission Chair
Cathy Martino, Roseto Borough Manager
Robert Teel, Upper Mount Bethel Planning Commission Chair
Ed Nelson, Upper Mount Bethel Manager
Charles Dertinger, Washington Township Planning Commission
Louise Firestone, Wind Gap Borough Administrator
June 9, 2023

Mr. Brian Horwith, Chair
North Whitehall Planning Commission
3256 Levans Road
Coplay, PA 18037

Re: Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance – 2023-1
North Whitehall Township
Lehigh County

Dear Mr. Horwith:

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

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - June 20, 2023, at 12:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)

- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - June 22, 2023, at 7:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)

The subject application proposes an amendment to its SALDO Ordinance titled. *Ordinance 2023-1* to amend Section 375-72 of the North Whitehall Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance titled “Open Space and Recreation Areas” to amend the amount of recreational land required to be dedicated, and amending Section 204-1 of the North Whitehall Township code of ordinances titled “Fee Established” to update the amount of recreation fees to be paid in lieu of dedication, and amending Section 375-61 of the North Whitehall Township SALDO ordinance titled “Pathways and Bikeways” to require the construction 61 of the North Whitehall Township SALDO ordinance titled “Pathways and Bikeways” to require the construction of walking trails along the perimeter of all subdivisions and land developments where sidewalks are not required.
The LVPC commends the Township for updating its ordinances, which demonstrates ‘evolution and adaptability of government’ (FutureLV the Regional Plan Policy 1.1) and offers the following comments.

The LVPC recommends that, under “Section 375-72. Open Space and Recreation Areas, D. Suitability of Land Proposed for Dedication, subsection (n) ‘Whether the land is within a ‘100 Year Floodplain’ as defined by official federal floodplain maps,’ that the regulation be expanded to include areas that fall within the 500-year floodplain.

In addition, the LVPC recommends that the Township consider including the following additional factors for the suitability of land proposed for dedication:

1. If the land is part of a Medium or High-Level Natural Resource Conservation Priority Areas based on the Natural Resource Plan. High and Medium Conservation Priority Areas should be used by government agencies to prioritize conservation areas. (FutureLV the Regional Plan Page 48), and

2. If the land is in, or part of an area that has ‘Natural Heritage Inventory Supporting Landscapes’ based on the Natural Heritage Inventory of Lehigh and Northampton Countries, Pennsylvania- Update 2013.

3. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) enables municipalities to accept land or impose fees when they have an adopted recreation plan (§503.11.(iv)). The LVPC recommends ensuring that all provisions of the MPC for adoption of a dedication or fee-in-lieu ordinance have been met.

4. The LVPC encourages the inclusion of American with Disability Act compliant sidewalks with curb cuts for all new subdivisions and land developments as this supports the ‘strengthening of sidewalks’ of Policy 5.3.

The LVPC commends the Pathways and Bikeways Ordinance to require the construction of walking trails along the perimeter of all subdivisions and land developments where sidewalks are not required as a step toward creating community spaces that promote physical and mental health of Policy 5.3. The LVPC also encourages requiring sidewalks for all new subdivisions and land developments.

4. The LVPS applauds Section 375-61. B Pathways and Bikeways (2) ‘Pathways or Bikeways may be required, in addition to a sidewalk.’ The inclusion of this Amendment will ‘promote safe routes to school’, ensure transportation for all persons’, and ‘strengthen sidewalk, bike route and trail infrastructure’ (of Polices 5.1 and 5.3).

5. The LVPC recommends that the Township clearly distinguish between a bikeway and sharrows. A bikeway is a general term for any trail, path, part of a roadway, surfaced or smooth shoulder or any other travel way that in some manner is specifically designated for bicycle travel; it may be designated for the exclusive use of bicycles, or it may be shared with other transportation modes. Sharrows are pavement markings of a
representation of a bicycle with two chevrons above it, marked on a roadway as a symbol to indicate that motor vehicles and bicycles are to share the lane that improve cycling safety and are often used on streets that are too narrow for traditional bike lanes.

Section C. Construction (5) states that “Pathways and Bikeways may be located within the street right-of-way'. This could be interpreted to include a sharrow within a right-of-way to meet this requirement, which would not be equally accessible for pedestrians and may not meet the intension of the proposed ordinance amendment.

6. The LVPC suggests that Section 375-61. C. (4) be altered to include a list of ADA accessible materials. Mulch is not ADA accessible, although some natural materials such as crushed, washed gravel that are packed and tamped can provide a satisfactory material to work with when creating a pathway that is accessible to pedestrians, including those using a mobility device or tool such as a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or a White Cane which allow people who are blind, DeafBlind, or visually impaired to navigate. Resin-bound gravels are the most accessible because they are durable and have traction sufficient to prevent falls and do not collect water on their surface. Self-binding rocks also keep together much like resin-coated options, adhering to one another as they are rolled over and are a good option to create a natural yet accessible pathway as the rocks are small enough to be easily navigated by people both walking, and rolling as well as using other mobility devises. Insuring that the materials used in such a pathway would ‘incorporate universal design and ensure accessibility for all persons’ (of Policy 5.2).

7. The LVPC recommends that the grade that the Township would consider inaccessible be included within Section 375.61. C. (4). This additional wording should state that 'if the slope meets or exceeds the listed grade the Board of Supervisors may determine that the slope could be reasonably overcome by using a switchback pathway to rectify the limitations of the landform and create an accessible pathway if safe and reasonable for the intended purpose and location.’

8. The LVPC commends the inclusion within Section 375.61. C. (6) that pathways and bikeways located away from street shall be adequately lighted which supports the ‘promotion of pedestrian scale lighting’ (of Policy 5.3).

9. The LVPC suggests that the Township consider additional wording to include when the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) provide transportation to any site of a future or proposed path/bikeway that would allow the Township to use the opportunity to incorporate any improvements to increase accessibility such as 10x6 concrete pads fronting any paths or 5’ concert pads between any walkways and curbs for bus stop landing pads as recommended by LANTA.

Municipalities, when considering ordinance 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 regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Bambi Griffin Rivera
Senior Community and Regional Planner

cc: Jessica Koenig, North Whitehall Secretary/Treasurer
    Jane Kelly, Planning Secretary
    Jeffery Mouer, Zoning Officer/Codes Administer
## Project Review Summary Sheet

**Comprehensive Planning Committee**  
**Date:** June 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Brief Statement of Purpose</th>
<th>LVPC Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>Wind Gap Borough</td>
<td><em>Keeping of Chickens</em> – Proposes a Zoning Ordinance Amendment to permit the keeping of chickens.</td>
<td>Updating Township ordinances demonstrates ‘evolution and adaptability of government’ (<em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan Policy 1.1</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>City of Bethlehem</td>
<td><em>Environmental Education Centers</em> – Adds definitions for Community Recreation Center, Environmental Education Center and Nature Preserve, and allows Day Care Centers as an accessory use to Environmental Education Centers.</td>
<td>This proposal supports numerous actions on <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</em>, including ‘promote sustainable stewardship of natural lands’ (of Policy 3.1) and to educate on the benefits of conservation and preservation, green infrastructure and climate change (of Policies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>Williams Township</td>
<td><em>Timber Harvesting</em> – Proposes definitions and regulations for forestry and timber harvesting.</td>
<td>The proposed amendments align with MPC requirements to permit timber harvesting in all zoning districts, the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General’s memorandum pertaining to forestry and promotes sustainable stewardship of natural lands (of Policy 3.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>Allen Township</td>
<td><em>Agricultural District</em> – Adds Banquet Facilities as a permitted accessory use to farming, vineyard and winery uses.</td>
<td>This proposal aligns with <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</em> because it provides economic opportunities for farmers, promotes agritainment and agritourism and ‘supports agriculture as an essential component of the regional economy and identity’ (Policy 4.4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoning Ordinance Amendment</td>
<td>South Whitehall Township</td>
<td><em>Addition of Zoning Certificate of Use</em> – Proposes to create a Zoning Certificate of Use to certify that a project or building/structure complies with the municipal zoning ordinance.</td>
<td>The proposed amendments support <em>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</em> by demonstrating ‘evolution and adaptability of government’ (of Policy 1.1).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May 30, 2023

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

RE: Street Vacation Petition
Dodge Street from S. Muhlenberg Street to S. 24th Street
City of Allentown, Lehigh County

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

- LVPC Transportation Planning Committee Meeting
  - June 22, 2023 at 5:30 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.html](https://lvpc.org/meetings.html)
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - June 22, 2023 at 7:00 PM
  - [https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm](https://lvpc.org/meetings.htm)

Mr. Hanlon,

The proposed street vacation application was submitted by the City of Allentown on behalf of Irene Librach, equitable owner of 427 S. Muhlenberg Street, Allentown, PA 18104. The proposed street vacation requests vacating a portion of Dodge Street from S. Muhlenberg Street to S. 24th Street in the City of Allentown without utility easements.

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

Dodge Street, the proposed location to have its rights-of-way vacated by the city, is a mostly unimproved street that was never constructed and consists of lawn area and some overhead utilities. However, there are some properties that have constructed driveway access along the western portion of Dodge Street beginning at 24th Street to their properties.

One adjacent property owner, Terry Eagan of 419 S. Muhlenberg Street, signed the submitted street vacation petition. However, the length of Dodge Street petitioned to be vacated includes several impacts properties at 420 S. 24th Street, 2415 W. South Street and 428 S. 24th Street.
It is strongly recommended that the adjacent property owners sign the petition to memorialize their concurrence for the vacating of the entirety of Dodge Street from S. Muhlenberg Street to S. 14 Street.

The submitted application indicates that the petitioner wishes to construct a driveway for their residence. All affected property owners should be made aware of the ramifications of vacating a portion of Dodge Street including private property boundaries that may affect the ability to locate proposed driveways solely on their private property without easement or other conveyances between adjoining private property owners.

If the street vacation is approved, it is recommended that the property owners be aware that driveway access curb cuts and Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) compliant improvements along S. Muhlenberg Street should be maintained or constructed to enable continued pedestrian connectivity (of FutureLV: The Regional Plan Policy 5.2)

The vacating of rights of way by the City of Allentown for the described portion of Dodge Street would not negatively affect current traffic circulation. It is strongly recommended utilities that are above or below ground remain accessible as they are today in the event of maintenance or repair that may be required to maintain the essential power and telecommunications infrastructure. (of FutureLV: The Regional Plan Policy 5.4)

The LVPC appreciates the City of Allentown's consideration of the goals and policies of FutureLV: The Regional Plan in as much as it relates to the street vacation petition of a portion of Dodge Street from S. Muhlenberg Street to S. 24th Street.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have regarding the LVPC review.

Brian Hite
Transportation Planner

Cc: Tawana Whitehead, City of Allentown
    Mark Shada, City of Allentown
    Jennifer Gomez, City of Allentown
    Brandon Jones, City of Allentown
    file
Area of Dodge Street to be Vacated

View Looking West from S. 24th Street
May 2023

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

Subdivision + Land Development Monthly Report

Plan Activity

Lehigh County
- Reviews: 26
- Acres: 138.2

Northampton County
- Reviews: 39
- Acres: 336.85

Types of New Development

Residential: 871 Total Units
- Single-Family Detached: 128
- Townhouses: 83
- Apartments: 650
- Planned Residential: 0
- Twins: 10
- Assisted-Living: 0
- Manufactured Homes: 0
- Condos: 0

Non-Residential: 2,744,424 Total Square Feet
- Commercial: 204,611
- Retail: 23,385
- Public/Quasi-Public: 35,665
- Industrial (Warehouse)*: I: 2,442,050 (W: 2,171,140)
- Office: 38,713
- Transportation: 0
- Agriculture: 0
- Recreational: 0

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

Location of Development

Regional Totals*
- 16 Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustments
- 29 Development
- 18 Stormwater Management
- 2 Municipal Ordinances and Maps
- 475.05 Acres

* Includes preliminary and final plans.

Year to Date (Year to Year)

- Residential Units
- Non-Residential Square Footage

Previous Reports at lvpc.org/subdivision---development.html
I take a great deal of pride at the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission that when faced with even the most difficult planning issues, we roll up our sleeves and run at it unflinchingly, confident we will find a way to make a meaningful impact. Compound-complex problems are the commission’s specialty.

Yet, I confess that for a long time, when someone brought up climate change, one thought often came to mind — big, really big. A larger set of interconnected issues that transcends any one person, region, or nation. Ya, that big. I often think about how the LVPC, counties, municipalities, businesses, nonprofits and citizens can address the depth, breadth, and wickedness of the results of climate change. I pose this: the Lehigh Valley is poised to sprint full speed at this global crisis, with a lot of help from our local, county, state and federal partners at a minimum. You may have heard that the LVPC was awarded a $1 million grant, through the Federal Inflation Reduction Act. While that’s not pocket change, I consider it just a down payment on a multi-year plan to reduce emissions and make the Lehigh Valley more resilient to the effects of climate change. It’s an unprecedented opportunity for climate action now and beyond the four-year period of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Carbon Pollution Reduction Program funding if we are thoughtful and strategic.

And this is about a lot more than just dealing with the tailpipe emissions on Route 22. As I look just a few years into the future, I envision trees, wildflowers and green infrastructure along our highway medians, rights-of way and cloverleafs, that will reduce stormwater runoff, improve air and water quality, enhance pollination and identify for every driver entering the Lehigh Valley this is a green region. Without swimming too far into the end of the pool, a comprehensive green infrastructure, utilizing existing public transportation rights-of-way along Route 22 alone would not only protect the infrastructure itself but ensure mobility for everyone, including our emergency responders. Our back of envelope shows a landscape solution could uptake 200 to 1,300 tons of carbon annually depending on how much green infrastructure is added. Think about how this supports the improvement of our declining air and water quality. Add in all major highway corridors and we will make a larger difference. But, let’s not stop there. Remember we have an epic challenge, requiring a series of epic solutions.
I envision a regionwide electric and alternative fuel strategy that includes charging stations along our most traveled routes that will help reduce emissions and congestion.

I envision a permanent plan for air and water monitoring, enabling us to know the quality of these resources and how it’s changing so we can respond and adjust accordingly.

I envision widespread deployment and usage of LANTA’s Bus Rapid Transit system that provides frequent and convenient bus service that turns transit from an option of last resort to a viable opportunity people choose over driving.

I envision a connected road, trail and sidewalk network that enables anyone to get anywhere in the Lehigh Valley, even if they don’t have a car. This includes closing sidewalk gaps, enhancing the safety of intersections and trail crossings, expanding bikeways and even a regionwide bike or scooter share program.

Clearly, I envision a lot – and could keep writing. The point is many of these things that seemed so far away are now right there for the taking. It will take a lot of work, and a lot of time, but new federal and state commitments to climate action – and particularly the money that comes with those commitments – puts it all within reach. We know we already have lots of local buy-in. Bethlehem, Easton, and colleges across the region have already adopted ambitious climate actions plans, while Lehigh and Northampton counties are also investing in climate actions, particularly around hazard mitigation. The LVPC recently completed the region’s first-ever greenhouse gas assessment, in partnership with Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Moravian University, and it was both concerning and encouraging. The concern comes with the revelation that this region is emitting nearly 10 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year — that’s 14.6 metric tons of CO2 each year for every resident in the Valley — and our growing population means that will only rise in the coming decades unless we take dramatic measures.

The encouraging part is that the $1 million Carbon Pollution Reduction Program grant gives us a great jumping off point to get started on industrial decarbonization — which our assessment showed accounts for more than one-third of all emissions in the Lehigh Valley.

We almost got closed out of this opportunity because the Inflation Reduction Act grants were lined up to go to each state, and the top 67 regions. The Lehigh Valley is the 69th largest, but the LVPC was able to work with the EPA to be part of the original pool, and despite initially being outside of the target, filed a letter to participate in the program. So, when Florida, Kentucky, South Dakota, and Iowa failed to file letters to participate by the March 31 deadline, the Lehigh Valley moved into the program. The EPA has structured the program to span federal, state, and local partners, so $3 million went to Pennsylvania, and $1 million each to the LVPC, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Commission.

The best part is that this initial entrance into the Carbon Pollution Reduction Program now makes the region eligible to apply for additional funding later from the $4.6 billion set aside in the Inflation Reduction Act. Though we’re still working out what it will look like, our specific
plan to reduce industrial carbon emissions is due in the spring of 2024, and that will be followed by a regionwide climate action plan, due in 2025.

If this all sounds like a lot of work, that’s because it is, and we’ll need everyone’s help to accomplish our goals. It matters that corporations make changes and municipalities retrofit their public buildings and change out their fossil-fueled fleets. That initial leadership is a large step forward. But to tackle the scale of climate change every one of this region’s nearly 700,000 people will have to pitch in. We’ll all need to change our habits, but that’s another encouraging aspect. In my experience, adapting to change is what this region does best.

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