



CHRISTINA "TORI" MORGAN
Chair

ARMANDO MORITZ-CHAPELLIQUEN
Vice Chair

PHILLIPS ARMSTRONG
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 7:00 pm
In-Person Meeting

THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED AT <http://www.tinyurl.com/LVPC2026> OR VIA PHONE 610-477-5793 Conf ID: 947 550 319#

AGENDA

Roll Call

Courtesy of the Floor

Chair's Report

1. INFORMATION ITEM: Commissioner Changes and Recognition

Minutes

1. ACTION ITEM: Minutes and Review of Roll Call Actions of August 23, 2026, Commission Meeting

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Whitehall Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Allentown Central Catholic (JW)
2. ACTION ITEM: City of Allentown – Land Use of Regional Significance – ASD Bridgeview Additions (JW)
3. ACTION ITEM: Upper Nazareth Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Nazareth DAO & Athletic Fields (JW)
4. ACTION ITEM: City of Allentown – Land Development - 1024 North Bradford Street Data Center (JS)
5. ACTION ITEM: City of Bethlehem – Land Development - 2184 Industrial Drive Data Center (JS)
6. ACTION ITEM: Summary Sheet (Committee Chair)
7. INFORMATION ITEM: Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy Update (JS)
8. INFORMATION ITEM: WorkshopLV: Land Use, Data Centers, October 7th, 3-4:30 PM at LVPC (JS)

Environment Committee:

1. ACTION ITEM: Lehigh County Authority Preliminary Capital Plan – Allentown Division 2027-2031 (CR)
2. ACTION ITEM: Lehigh County Authority Preliminary Capital Plan – Suburban Division 2027-2031 (CR)
3. INFORMATION ITEM: Pathways to Resilient Greater Lehigh Valley (BB)

4. *INFORMATION ITEM: WorkshopLV: Water, Act 167 Stormwater Management Plan, October 29th, 9-10:30 AM @ LVPC (SM)*

Transportation Planning Committee:

1. *INFORMATION ITEM: National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Community Charging Program (SW, MA)*

Old Business:

1. *INFORMATION ITEM: FutureLV: The Regional Plan Joint LVPC/LVTS Workshops (BB,JS)*
 - a. Workshop #2, September 30th, 5:30-7:00 PM, In-person at the LVPC
 - i. Focusing on Goal 5 – Safe, Healthy, Inclusive and Livable Communities
 - b. Workshop #3, October 28th, 5:30-7:00 PM, In-person at the LVPC
 - i. Focusing on Goal 4 – Competitive, Creative and Sustainable Region
 - c. Workshop #4, November 18th, 5:30-7:00 PM, In-person at the LVPC
 - i. Focusing on Goal 3 – Protected and Vibrant Environment
 - d. Workshop #5, December 16th, 5:30-7:00 PM, In-person at the LVPC
 - i. Focusing on Goal 2 – Connected Mixed-Transportation Region
 - e. Workshop #6, January 20th, 5:30-7:00 PM, In-person at the LVPC
 - i. Focusing on Goal 1 – Efficient and Coordinated Development Pattern

New Business:

1. *ACTION ITEM: Election of New LVPC Vice Chair (TM)*
2. *ACTION ITEM: National Community Planning Month Resolution (BB)*
3. *INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Gala and Awards*
 - a. Awards Nominations Monday, September 21st – Monday, Oct 5th
 - b. Gala, Wednesday, December 2nd, 4-7:00 PM at the Hotel Bethlehem

Executive Director's Report:

1. *INFORMATION ITEM: LVPC in the Community*
 - a. Data centers, data centers and more data centers
 - b. Testimony on Pennsylvania Senate Bills 824 & 1008
 - c. Multimunicipal planning support
 - d. Lower Saucon Community Impact Assessment

Monthly Reports:

1. *INFORMATION ITEMS:*
 - a. August 2026 Review Activity Report
 - b. August_Highway Performance Monitoring System - Monthly Traffic Count Report

Communications and Engagement

1. *INFORMATION ITEM: Community Bike Works Mileage Challenge (MA)*
 - a. Support the LVPC Team!

2. *INFORMATION ITEM*: Lehigh Valley Government Academy (MA)
 - a. Local Technical Assistance Program: www.lvpc.org/transportation-training
 - o Speed Limits and Speed Management: 9/29, 8 AM – 12 PM
 - o Managing Utility Cuts: 10/7, 8 AM – 12 PM
 - o Local Road Safety Plans: 11/17, 8 AM – 12 PM
3. *INFORMATION ITEM*: American Planning Association-Pennsylvania Chapter Annual Conference
 - o Sunday October 18 – Tuesday October 20
 - o Wind Creek Conference Center - Bethlehem
 - o LVPC Primary Sponsor, Multiple Staff Presentations
4. *PACKET ITEM*: *Morning Call Business Cycle Column*
 - a. Published August 23 – Talking Business with Becky Bradley: “Data Centers: Separating Fact From Fear”, lvpc.org; mcall.com
 - b. Next Column: October 11th
5. *PACKET ITEM*: Monthly, Plan Lehigh Valley Talk Show on WDIY, Lehigh Valley Public Radio, 88.1
 - a. Aired September 7: “What does eliminating a housing shortage really look like? With Jill Seitz. lvpc.org; mcall.com
 - b. Next show: October 5, 6:30 pm

Next Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Meeting:

Thursday, October 29, 2026, at 7:00 pm

Virtual Meeting

The LVPC/LVTS website, www.lvpc.org, may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in non-English languages and alternative formats, if requested.



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LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday, August 27, 2026, Meeting

The LVPC held a public meeting on Thursday, August 27, 2026. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on January 7, 2026.

LVPC Chair Tori Morgan chaired the meeting.

Mr. Jacob Weinberg took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Craig Beavers, Gary Fedorcha, Sharon Fehlinger-Ricker, Philip Ginder, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, John Inglis, Ryan Mayberry, Santo Napoli, Samantha Pearson, Stephen Repasch and Kevin Schmidt.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Bryan Cope, Andrew Elliott, Anita Erdos Forrester, Cathy Fletcher, Judy Haldeman, Tung-To Lam, Samantha McLean, Jack McGorry, Victoria Opthof-Cordaro, Eric Shamis, Dean Turner, Jeff Warren and Brett Webber.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Ron Beitler, Michael Drabenstott, Sunny Ghai, Jennifer Gomez, Josh Siegel and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Justin Amann, Jo Daniels, Steve Melnick, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Salvatore Panto, Jr., J. William Reynolds and Tara Zrinski.

Staff Present: Becky A. Bradley, Beth Ritter-Guth, Jacob Engbert, Jillian Seitz, Jacob Weinberg, Matt Assad, Steven Weber, Susan Myerov and Corinne Ruggiero.

Public Present:

Bruce

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Morgan celebrated Becky Bradley and Commissioner Michael Drabenstott for being recognized in the Lehigh Valley Business's 300. The Lehigh Valley Business 300 recognizes the most influential business leaders shaping the Greater Lehigh Valley's economy. Each year, editors spotlight innovators and executives across the region's most vital industries. Ms. Bradley

was recognized among eight people under the category of Economic Development, and Commissioner Drabenstott was among 11 people cited in the Communications category.

Chair Morgan also congratulated Jill Seitz on being recognized as one of Lehigh Valley Business's Forty under 40, which recognizes the future leaders of the Lehigh Valley who are under the age of 40. These individuals are not only achieving success in their careers but also giving back in meaningful ways to the Lehigh Valley Community.

Commissioners congratulated Ms. Bradley, Commissioner Drabenstott and Ms. Seitz on their well-deserved accomplishments and thanked them for their work and dedication to the region.

MINUTES

Chair Morgan asked for a motion to approve the Thursday, July 23, 2026, LVPC meeting minutes. Commissioner Armstrong made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Repasch seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

LVPC's Review Role

Chair Morgan briefed Commissioners and members of the public of the LVPC's role in reviewing plans, documents and legislation and how it is a legal requirement under the Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code. Chair Morgan noted that it is the role of the LVPC to provide constructive, policy-based input on all reviews and any comments should stick to factual information and reflect the adopted regional vision, *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Land Use of Regional Significance (LURS) - Cedar Crest College Field House

Ms. Seitz presented the staff review for the proposed removal of two existing tennis courts and the construction of a 4,000-square-foot athletic facility at Cedar Crest College located at 100 Cedar Crest Boulevard. Ms. Seitz noted that this project is considered a land use of regional significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the 'Educational Facilities' category. The property is within an area identified for Development in the General Land Use Plan of *FutureLV* and supports 'reuse and redevelopment in urban areas' (of Policy 1.1) and 'invests in schools located along corridors' (of Policy 4.3). Ms. Seitz also noted that the improvement of the existing facilities 'encourages local institutions to invest in their surrounding communities' (of Policy 4.1) and 'supports cultural and social programs' (of Policy 5.2).

Commissioner Fedorcha made the motion to accept the staff comments and Commissioner Opthof-Cordaro seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Land Use of Regional Significance (LURS) – 1492 Van Buren Apartments

Mr. Weinberg presented the staff review of the proposed development of 320 apartment units across seven, four-story apartment buildings as well as three, 12 car garages, a clubhouse with associated amenities and two bridge crossings over the Schoeneck Creek, which also provides access to the site from Phase 1. Mr. Weinberg noted that the LVPC previously reviewed Phase 1 of this project in October 2025. Both phases of the project are located at 1492 Van Buren Road.

Ms. Myerov provided environmental comments from the staff review. First, the Schoeneck Creek, which is a Warm Water Fishes designated tributary to the Bushkill Creek that runs directly through the site and has several high-priority natural resources within its footprint and would be impacted by the addition of the two bridge crossings. Ms. Myerov noted that the LVPC recommends the preservation of these sensitive areas to ‘protect high-priority natural lands and water resources’ and ‘maximize preservation of woodlands and critical habitats’ (of *FutureLV* Policy 3.1). Ms. Myerov also noted the mapping of the project site indicated extensive presence of karst on the site and that a portion of the project is located in the 100-year floodplain and how mitigating both hazards are necessary to ‘minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public’ (of *FutureLV* Policy 3.2) and ‘reduce potential impacts of hazards to promote community resiliency’ (of *FutureLV* Policy 5.2). Ms. Myerov stated the review letter also included environmental comments regarding the proposed landscaping plan and impervious surface coverage to address site sustainability and to reduce the heat island effect, as well as comments on one section of the proposed open space. Additionally, the letter included environmental comments on green infrastructure and energy systems.

Mr. Engbert provided transportation comments from the staff review. Mr. Engbert noted that the LVPC received a Traffic Impact Study for the proposed project, which estimated 1,427 new trips per day would be generated by the proposed development. Transportation comments concerned on-site and emergency access regarding recommendations to provide clear wayfinding and truck signage, maintaining the Van Buren Road emergency entrance year-round and coordinating with local emergency services to educate responders and residents; transportation network mobility regarding electric vehicle charging stations to support electric vehicle transition as well as comments recommending that the developer identify safe, accessible school bus stops with proper turning radii to protect student pedestrians; and the proposed sidewalks and open space walking paths, encouraging expanding internal path connections and the addition of bicycle infrastructure to the site.

Mr. Weinberg concluded the summary of the staff review by noting that the project’s importance in helping alleviate the regional housing shortage, providing 320 units in a municipality experiencing significant growth was acknowledged in the staff review and aligns with *FutureLV* Policy 4.5. The staff review also expressed concern in placing that housing close to Route 33, where residents are likely to be affected by noise pollution and low air quality, especially diesel fumes, which is not advisable in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare of *FutureLV* Policy 3.2.

Commissioner Elliot made the motion to accept the staff comments and Commissioner Turner seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Beavers and Commissioner Lam abstained. The motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM: Communities Regulating Data Centers

Ms. Seitz provided a quick update on data center ordinances and the communities in the region that currently have adopted zoning regulations related to data centers or that are working on zoning regulations related to data centers as well as communities that are covered because they are a part of a multi-municipal plan with communities that are or have adopted regulations. Ms. Seitz noted that this month, two additional data center ordinances are in the works, specifically in Salisbury Township and Tatamy Borough. This means that in total, there are 28 municipalities currently that have adopted zoning regulations related to data centers or that are working on zoning regulations related to data centers and there are currently 27 communities that are covered because they are part of multi-municipal comprehensive plans with communities that are adopting regulations. So altogether, 55 of the 62 municipalities in the region are directing where data centers could possibly go and what standards they must follow.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee Vice Chair Amato briefed the Commission on the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet, which featured four zoning ordinance amendments: one in Whitehall Township to rezone and add regulations for health care campuses, one in Lower Saucon Township adjusting the Township's impervious surface requirements as well as two data center ordinances, one in Lower Mount Bethel Township and one in Salisbury Township.

Commissioner Haldeman made the motion to accept the staff comments and Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the summary sheet. Commissioner Opthof-Cordaro abstained. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy

Comprehensive Planning Committee Vice Chair Amato briefed the Commission that at Tuesday's Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting, the Committee approved a motion to forward the Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy to Full Commission for adoption. Comprehensive Planning Committee Vice Chair Amato noted that this plan represents a significant step in alleviating the regional housing shortage and aligns with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

Commissioner Beavers made the motion for resolution 8-27-26A to adopt the Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy and Commissioner Webber seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. Commissioners commended and congratulated staff for the housing event on August 26th and how the Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy was very well received and presented.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to adopt the Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy. The motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM: Unlocking Housing Solutions and Next Steps

Ms. Seitz briefed the Commissioners about the housing plan release event, Unlocking Housing Solutions, which was on August 26th at DeSales University. Ms. Seitz noted that it was attended by over 250 people and those who attended were given access to the plan that was over two years in the making and got to hear about its importance from both County Executives: Lehigh County Executive Josh Siegel and Northampton County Executive Tara Zrinski as well as Pennsylvania Deputy Secretary for Housing Kevin Bush. Attendees also got the opportunity to hear about many of the plan's recommendations from several of the industry professionals and community and business leaders who help create housing. Ms. Seitz thanked Commissioners for all their help and leadership but noted that this is just the beginning. This shortage took years to accumulate, and it will take years to implement this plan. Ms. Seitz also announced the continuing of the work on Housing after its adoption, which will be two WorkshopLV: Housing workshop meetings. The first one will be held from 11:30am-1:00pm on September 14th for municipal officials to discuss the plan and talk through implementation and the second one is open to the public and will be held on September 14th as well and will be from 6:00pm to 7:30pm.

Chair Morgan asked for any questions or comments. There were none.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**ACTION ITEM: Act 97 Review – Solid Waste Permit Renewal – Lehigh Valley Recycling Inc.**

Ms. Ruggiero presented the staff review for the proposed solid waste permit renewal application for Lehigh Valley Recycling, Inc. in North Whitehall Township, Lehigh County. Ms. Ruggiero provided a quick overview of Act 97, which is the PA Solid Waste Management Act of 1980. The Act provides for the review of permit applications by the county or county planning agency. Lehigh and Northampton counties have designated the LVPC to review applications on their behalf. Ms. Ruggiero then presented the review. Lehigh Valley Recycling, Inc. submitted a solid waste permit renewal application to the PA Department of Environmental Protection for its existing solid waste transfer station located at 3947 Portland Street. Ms. Ruggiero noted that there are no modifications to the facilities that are proposed. The facility is permitted to accept up to 4200 tons per day of municipal and residual waste as well as recyclable materials for transferring and processing. The transfer station is on a ten-year renewal cycle. Ms. Ruggiero also noted that the permit renewal application aligns with the *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* action to 'provide environmentally responsible and economical solid, electronic and hazardous waste disposal and recycling' (of Policy 3.2). The PA Department of Environmental Protection performs the technical review of this application.

Commissioner Fedorcha made the motion to accept the staff comments, and Commissioner Fehlinger-Ricker seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Pearson abstained. The motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Watersheds Assessment and Act 167 Model Ordinance Project Update

Ms. Myerov briefed the Commission on the progress that LVPC staff has been making to advance the work to update the 15 Act 167 Watershed Plans, including work to create a Lehigh Valley specific hydrologic model as well as revising the stormwater management ordinance

standards and criteria that are required as part of the State's Stormwater Management Regulations known as Act 167. Ms. Myerov noted that since last month's meeting, staff had a very productive meeting with the PA Department of Environmental Protection water staff to brief them on the work and clarify some questions about data. Ms. Myerov went on to announce that there is an upcoming WorkshopLV: Water workshop meeting coming up to reconvene municipal and stakeholder partners to share the overall progress with this effort including model calibration and stormwater management policy review as well as provide an opportunity for input and discussion. The meeting is scheduled to take place at the LVPC Conference Center on October 29th at 9am. Ms. Myerov noted that staff will be contacting municipal and partner organizations who attended the initial set of workshops for this work and will also be open to all interested parties.

Chair Morgan asked for any questions or comments. There were none.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Perkiomen Street Vacation

Transportation Committee Chair Schmidt briefed the Commission that at Transportation Committee, the Committee discussed the review of a Petition to Vacate Perkiomen Street in the Borough of Emmaus as well as reviewed the Monthly Traffic Reports. Transportation Committee Chair Schmidt then turned it over to Mr. Weber to present the staff review. Mr. Weber presented the staff review of the petition to vacate an unopened segment of Perkiomen Street in the Borough of Emmaus. The petitioner is CSW Furnace Street Emmaus, LP, who has developed and is looking to expand a multi-family complex adjacent to the unopened street. Mr. Weber notes the petitioner is seeking to vacate the street to build a new multi-family building and make associated improvements to their property. Mr. Weber also notes the 24,591-square-foot segment is entirely landlocked and located between South Second Street and South Mountain Street. Mr. Weber then went through the details of the unopened segment which included comments such as there being a permanent open space deed restriction on the petitioner's property immediately north of the unopened segment, which would restrict the ability of the Borough to connect the unopened street segment with South Second Street. The unopened segment is undeveloped woodland surrounded by the petitioner's multi-family complex and single-family residences. Mr. Weber noted that there do not appear to be any utilities on the unopened segment and the petitioner should coordinate with the Borough and any utilities known to exist in the area for confirmation. Mr. Weber also noted that LVPC's review of this petition only addresses the question of the street vacation. Any changes to the approved Iron Works Apartment development plan, including stormwater designs, will need to be resubmitted to the LVPC for review.

Mr. Weber also noted that after packets went out for the meeting, staff noticed a minor typographic error from the track changes and presented the sentence that should be edited.

Commissioner Repasch made the motion to accept the staff comments, and Commissioner Napoli seconded the motion.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Morgan called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEM: FutureLV: The Regional Plan Update

Ms. Bradley provided an update on *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* and upcoming steps in the process that Commissioners should be informed about. On September 30th at 5:30pm, there will be an in-person Joint LVPC/LVTS *FutureLV* Workshop #2 held at the LVPC Office located at 615 Waterfront Drive. Ms. Bradley noted that at this workshop meeting, there will be discussion regarding the transportation needs assessment survey results, strategy lab findings and a data presentation from the first workshop in relationship to the policy that is in the current plan.

Ms. Bradley also announced the Open Call for Infrastructure Projects for not only Transportation Infrastructure projects but for all other infrastructure projects such as sewer and water, gas, electricity, broadband, etc. The Open Call for Infrastructure Projects open next week and will be open for about a month. Ms. Bradley noted that the transportation project selection is handled by LVTS and tied to congressionally directed funds. Due to growth in the region, there have been many conversations with local governments, planners, engineers, authorities, developers, economic development community and business leaders about the growing concern about sewer and water capacity, the need in some areas for public facilities where they do not exist, concerns about how to address stormwater, increase resiliency, gas line replacements and upgrades, electric system upgrades/capacity expansion, broadband planning, etc. In turn, with the update to the regional plan, the LVPC will also evaluate all other infrastructure projects to include in the updated plan. Whereas this process is not handled by LVTS and is not tied to congressionally directed funds. Ms. Bradley also noted that a notice will go out to all local governments, counties, state agencies, utility services and the public next week. What the LVPC and LVTS hear and receive from this Open Call for Infrastructure projects will be compiled and be a part of the WorkshopLV #3 discussion in January 2027.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

NEW BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley General Assembly

Mr. Assad briefed the Commission on the upcoming Lehigh Valley General Assembly on September 10th at 7pm at the LVPC Office. The Lehigh Valley General Assembly is a bi-annual gathering of elected and appointed officials from all municipal governments, school districts, legislative districts, and water/sewer authorities in Lehigh and Northampton Counties to convene, coordinate and collaborate on the most pressing planning, preservation, development and redevelopment issues regionwide. Mr. Assad noted that at the General Assembly, discussions will be about the Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy, *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* update as well as give updates on a long list of environmental, transportation and community planning projects. Some of those projects include the Open Call for Infrastructure Projects, Route 22 and data centers.

Chair Morgan encouraged Commissioners to attend as this is a time to meet with so many of the region's partners on issues that the Commission addresses. Chair Morgan asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Bradley announced that the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) Conference will be coming to the Lehigh Valley in 2027. The NARC Conference will be held on October 3-6th of 2027 at the Allentown Renaissance and Tours. This conference is a major opportunity to showcase the Lehigh Valley to the country and has been in the works to secure the conference in the region for about four years. Executive Directors and Elected Officials from their Boards from Regions around the country attend. Ms. Bradley also announced that Commissioner Phil Armstrong will be the NARC Chair. Ms. Bradley also gave a special thanks to Discover Lehigh Valley, who has gone above and beyond with conference support.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Monthly BuildLV and Traffic Reports:

Chair Morgan notified the Commission that the monthly reports are featured in each Commissioner's packet on Page 29. Mr. Weinberg gave a brief overview of the July 2026 BuildLV report, specifically on plan activity by County for subdivision, land development, environmental, stormwater, municipal ordinance, transportation reviews as well as data requests and provided specific residential and non-residential development data within the Subdivision and Land Development Monthly Report.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Mr. Engbert gave a presentation on the Monthly Traffic Report, which included traffic volumes from the beginning of May to the end of July. Mr. Engbert noted that data is collected by the four continuous counters in the Lehigh Valley. Traffic and commuter patterns remain consistent over the last three months. A notable decline in traffic can be seen on both Memorial Day weekend and 4th of July weekend. Mr. Engbert also presented the monthly truck volumes and noted a decline in truck volumes on Route 33 over the course of July. Comparing to previous year's data, this is a seasonal trend. Mr. Engbert also noted that truck volumes on Route 22 remain consistent.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Government Academy

Mr. Assad presented information on the upcoming Lehigh Valley Government Academy training course. Mr. Assad briefed the Commission on how the LVPC's primary training program is offered in partnership with the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute and announced the Zoning Administration course, which will be held September 15, 22 and 29. This course is a 3-session in depth course for zoning hearing board members, zoning administrators, planning commissioners, elected officials and interested citizens, which will train them on the zoning hearing process, including hands on experience through a mock zoning hearing. Mr. Assad also noted this course is only offered once every two years so it is expected that it will sell out. Mr. Assad also provided information on the free courses through the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) that are offered and how these courses aim to help municipalities address infrastructure issues and ensure that their public works departments are up to date on the latest information on safety and maintenance. Mr. Assad noted that there will be five more classes offered in the second half of the year, in partnership with PennDOT, and all classes have been scheduled. Future classes include Trucks on Local Roads, Speed Limits and Management, Managing Utility Cuts and Local Road Safety Plans.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Fall Conferences in the Lehigh Valley

Ms. Myerov briefed the Commission on upcoming conferences that are coming to the Lehigh Valley this Fall. First, there is the 2026 Eastern Pennsylvania Greenways and Trails Summit, which will be held on September 16-18 at the Historic Hotel Bethlehem. Ms. Myerov also noted the second conference coming to the Lehigh Valley is the American Planning Association Pennsylvania Chapter's Annual State Conference taking place from October 18-20 at the Wind Creek Conference Center in Bethlehem.

Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Chair Morgan notified the Commission that items for communications and public engagement are featured in the meeting packet. Chair Morgan asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Morgan stated that the next LVPC meeting will be on Thursday, September 24, 2026 at 7 pm, and reminded the Commission that this will be one of the quarterly in-person meetings. Chair Morgan then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Armstrong made a motion to adjourn, and Commissioner Fedorcha seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and Corinne Ruggiero, Senior Environmental Planner



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September XX, 2026

Ms. Lee Rackus, Bureau Chief Planning, Zoning, and Development
Whitehall Township
3219 MacArthur Road
Whitehall, PA 18052

**Re: Allentown Central Catholic Athletics Facility
Whitehall Township
Lehigh County**

Dear Ms. Rackus,

The subject application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance, as 'All' Education Facilities are considered land uses of regional significance in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* (page 137). The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, per requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Meeting participation details are below, and we encourage your participation.

LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:	LVPC Full Commission Meeting:
September 22, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Virtual) https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings	September 24, 2026, at 7:00 PM (In-Person) 615 Waterfront Drive, Allentown https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings

The application proposes developing an athletic facility and associated parking improvements at 4249 Reliance St (PIN: 548935244151). The lot is located in the very low density residential (R-1) zone, surrounded by a former quarry site to the west, detached residential dwellings to the east with open space to the north and south, and will utilize public sewer and water. The property is within an area identified in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* as a Development Area. The development of an athletic facility helps 'create community spaces that promote physical and mental health' by 'diversifying park programming' (of Policy 5.3).

Mapping provided by the Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources indicates the extensive presence of karsts in the form of a surface mine on the site. The LVPC advises the applicant to ensure proper geotechnical testing prior to any land development, to 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public' (of Policy 3.2).

The lot is situated on a steep slope of 15%-25%. The LVPC recommends that large lots with low site coverage standards should be maintained, and special erosion and storm drainage controls enforced to 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health safety and welfare of the public' (of Policy 3.2). The site also contains a significant portion of woodlands in

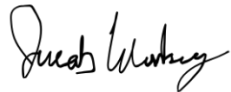
the center of the site that isn't marked for demolition where the discus, javelin, and shot put events are held. The LVPC recommends maintaining as much of the existing woodlands as is possible to 'protect high-priority natural lands and water resources' (Policy 3.1).

The LVPC encourages the developer to consider opportunities for incorporating sustainable energy systems that reduce overhead operational costs and 'reduce climate change impacts through mitigation and adaptation' (of Policy 3.4), such as geothermal energy systems, green roofs, solar panels and greywater reuse for irrigation and plumbing. We also strongly recommend that the developer seek LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for the project. Green Roof systems can also provide additional opportunity to 'manage the rate, volume and quality of storm runoff' and 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public' (of Policy 3.2)

The project site is located within the Coplay Creek watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments related to our review of the project's stormwater management plan are included with this review.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacob Weinberg', written in a cursive style.

Jacob Weinberg
Community and Regional Planner



CHRISTINA "TORI" MORGAN
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Vice Chair
PHILLIPS ARMSTRONG
Treasurer
BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

September XX, 2026

Jennifer Gomez, Director of Planning and Zoning
City of Allentown
435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101

**Re: ASD Bridgeview Additions – Land Use of Regional Significance
City of Allentown
Lehigh County**

Dear Ms. Gomez,

The application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance, as all Education Facilities are considered land uses of regional significance in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* (page 137). The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, per requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Meeting participation details are below, and we encourage your participation.

LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:	LVPC Full Commission Meeting:
September 22, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Virtual) https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings	September 24, 2026, at 7:00 PM (In-Person) 615 Waterfront Drive, Allentown https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings

The application proposes redeveloping 265 Lehigh Street, Bridgeview Academy, to renovate the existing building and add on a two-story addition and a new gymnasium with a pedestrian bridge connecting the facilities. The proposal would remove some existing parking lots and rearrange the access drives and add a basketball court at the bottom of the property. The lot is located in P2: Civic and Institutional Buildings and Infrastructure Zoning district and will be served by public sewer and water.

Site Suitability

The proposal supports a core strategy of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* to increase density in urban areas using infill development (Density Special Section, page 81). According to the General Land Use in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, this parcel is in a Development area and has most, or all the factors needed to support growth, such as sewer and transportation infrastructure capacity and contiguity to existing uses. The reuse of the existing site also 'encourages reuse and redevelopment in urban areas' (of Policy 1.1).

The expansion of the school facilities helps 'improve equity by encouraging the development of a well-trained workforce' (of Policy 4.3) as the expansion is anticipated to serve an additional

491 students. The improvements to the athletic facilities help 'create community spaces that promote physical and mental health' by 'diversifying park programming' (of Policy 5.3).

Transportation

The LVPC received a Transportation Impact Assessment which estimated a total of 1,798 trips daily with the completed build out, an increase of 1,025 trips from the proposed expansion. With the addition of the 491 students with the expansion, the reduction in parking spots and no new bus spaces could create traffic issues and the City and developer should explore the impacts to 'provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently' (of Policy 2.2).

The LVPC recommends extending the sidewalks within the site along the length of the parking lots to provide better access from the parking spaces to the proposed basketball courts and lawns for recreation. The LVPC commends the inclusion of crosswalks and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) infrastructure for 'ensuring transportation accessibility for all persons' (of Policy 5.2). Policy 5.2 can be furthered by 'integrating mixed transportation into public space design' with the inclusion of bicycle racks at the site. Finally, with the amount of bus, student and staff vehicles, adequate signage is necessary to avoid conflicts between the different vehicles around the drop off zones.

The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) has reviewed the submitted Site Development Plan for the proposed Allentown School District Bridgeview Academy Addition project located at 265 Lehigh Street in the City of Allentown, and offers the following comments:

LANTA provides fixed-route public transportation directly to the southern portion of project site, with Bus Stop ID 6376 located northbound on Lehigh Street, farside of the intersection at Martin Luther King Jr Drive, approximately .15 miles south of the main entrance. The existing topography along this portion of the Lehigh Street corridor is a substantial hill, and the existing bus stop is located at the base of the hill. While this bus stop serves many nearby residents to the south, a second bus stop closer to the northern entrance of the Bridgeview Academy facility will benefit many in the Lehigh Street and Union Street vicinity. Due to the quick turn routing from Lehigh Street to N 6th Street via Union Street, LANTA recommends a new northbound bus stop to be located at the location where the existing sidewalk meets the northern walkway to the facility, before the right turn onto Union Street. LANTA recommends a 5' concrete pad in between the existing sidewalk and curb for proper boarding and alighting. In addition, LANTA recommends a bench and concrete pad at the new bus stop location, similar to the existing bench located mid-block along the property frontage on Lehigh Street.

LANTA recommends follow up with Molly Wood at mwood@lantabus-pa.gov to discuss any additional bus stop details.

Environment

The LVPC encourages the developer to consider opportunities for incorporating sustainable energy systems that reduce overhead operational costs and 'reduce climate change impacts through mitigation and adaptation' (of Policy 3.4), such as geothermal energy systems, green roofs, solar panels and greywater reuse for irrigation and plumbing. We also strongly recommend that the developer seek LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for the project. Green Roof systems can also provide additional opportunity to 'manage the rate, volume and quality of storm runoff' and 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public' (of Policy 3.2)

The project site is located within the Little Lehigh Creek watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments related to our review of the project's stormwater management plan are included with this review.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob Weinberg", written in a cursive style.

Jacob Weinberg
Community and Regional Planner



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Chair

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Vice Chair

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Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

September XX, 2026

Lisa Klem, Manager
Upper Nazareth Township
1001 Newport Ave
Mt Bethel, PA 18343

**Re: Nazareth DAO & Athletic Fields – Land Use of Regional Significance
Upper Nazareth Township
Northampton County**

Dear Ms. Klem,

The subject application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance, as 'All' Education Facilities are considered land uses of regional significance in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* (page 137). The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, per requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Meeting participation details are below, and we encourage your participation.

LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:	LVPC Full Commission Meeting:
September 22, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Virtual) https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings	September 24, 2026, at 7:00 PM (In-Person) 615 Waterfront Drive, Allentown https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings

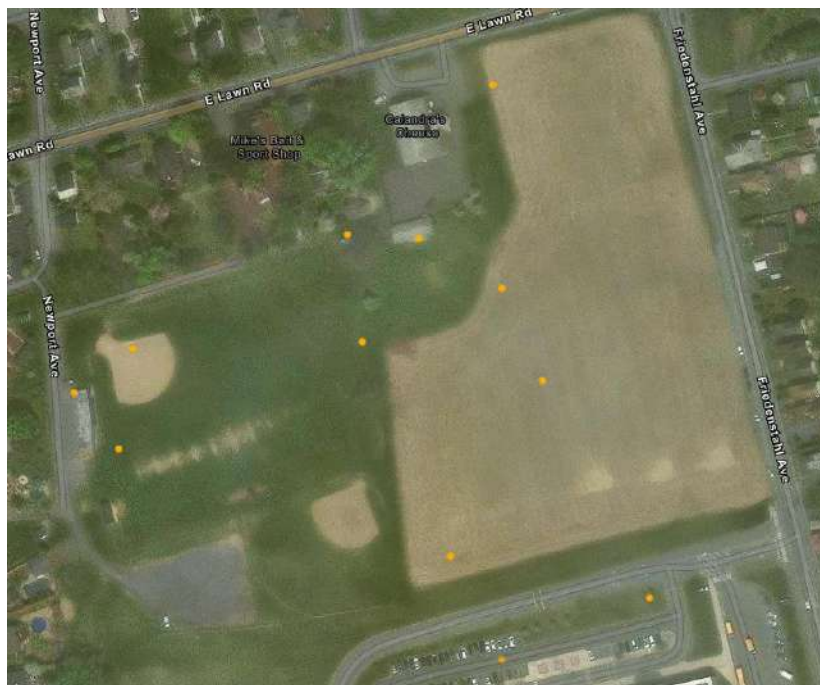
The application proposes redeveloping an existing restaurant into a 17,600 square foot school administration building with parking facility, with three new athletic fields with associated parking improvements by combining three lots at 350 East Lawn Avenue (PIN: J8 11 2A, J8 11 2A-1, J8 11 3A-1). The site is directly adjacent to the Nazareth Area Middle School and in the Village Residential (TD-4) and Village Mixed Use (TD-6) Zones.

The proposal supports a core strategy of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* to increase density in urban areas using infill development (Density Special Section, page 81). According to the General Land Use in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, this parcel is in a Development area and has most, or all the factors needed to support growth, such as sewer and transportation infrastructure capacity and contiguity to existing uses. The reuse of the existing site also 'encourages reuse and redevelopment in urban areas' (of Policy 1.1).

The expansion of the school facilities help 'improve equity by encouraging the development of a well-trained workforce' (of Policy 4.3). The improvements to the athletic facilities help 'create community spaces that promote physical and mental health' by 'diversifying park programming' (of Policy 5.3).

The LVPC recommends construction of sidewalks along the front and side of the sites. This would promote 'safe and secure community design' (of Policy 5.1) and would facilitate additional connections for future connections to the external sidewalk network, particularly any future development in the Village Mixed Use (TD-6) Zone. Policy 5.1 could be furthered by adding additional crosswalks both in the parking lot where pedestrians will cross, and at intersections where the road network connects with the proposed sidewalks. Together these would 'promote safe routes to schools and playgrounds' (of Policy 5.2). A bicycle rack should also be considered for students and residents who may bike to the new facilities and 'provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently while capitalizing on existing infrastructure' (of Policy 2.2). Finally, the LVPC recommends requesting the traffic impact study where the waiver was requested in order to 'match development intensity with sustainable infrastructure capacity' and 'improve utility and mobility infrastructure of the region' (of Policy 1.1).

Mapping provided by the Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources 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 any land development, to 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public' (of Policy 3.2).



Mapping provided by Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey and LVPC

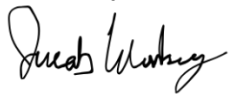
The LVPC encourages the developer to consider opportunities for incorporating sustainable energy systems that reduce overhead operational costs and 'reduce climate change impacts through mitigation and adaptation' (of Policy 3.4), such as geothermal energy systems, green roofs, solar panels and greywater reuse for irrigation and plumbing. We also strongly recommend that the developer seek LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for the project. Green Roof systems can also provide additional opportunity to 'manage the rate, volume and quality of storm runoff' and 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public' (of Policy 3.2)

The project site is located within the Bushkill Creek watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments related to our review of the project's stormwater management plan are included with this review.

The members of the Nazareth Area Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan are being included in this review letter to 'coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries' (of Policy 1.4).

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacob Weinberg', written in a cursive style.

Jacob Weinberg
Community and Regional Planner

cc:

Bradford Flynn, Bath Borough Manager; Belinda Roberts, Bushkill Township Manager; John Defassio, Chapman Borough Secretary; Stephen Nowroski, Moore Township Manager; Theresa Fedele, Nazareth Borough Clerk; Candace Keller, Stockertown Borough Secretary; Mark Saginario, Tatamy Borough Manager; Lori Seese, Lower Nazareth Township Planning and Zoning Administrator; Mark Hudson, Hanover Township Manager;



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Executive Director

September XX, 2026

Jennifer Gomez, Director of Planning and Zoning
City of Allentown
435 Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101

**Re: 1024 North Bradford Street Data Center – Land Development
City of Allentown
Lehigh County**

Dear Director Gomez:

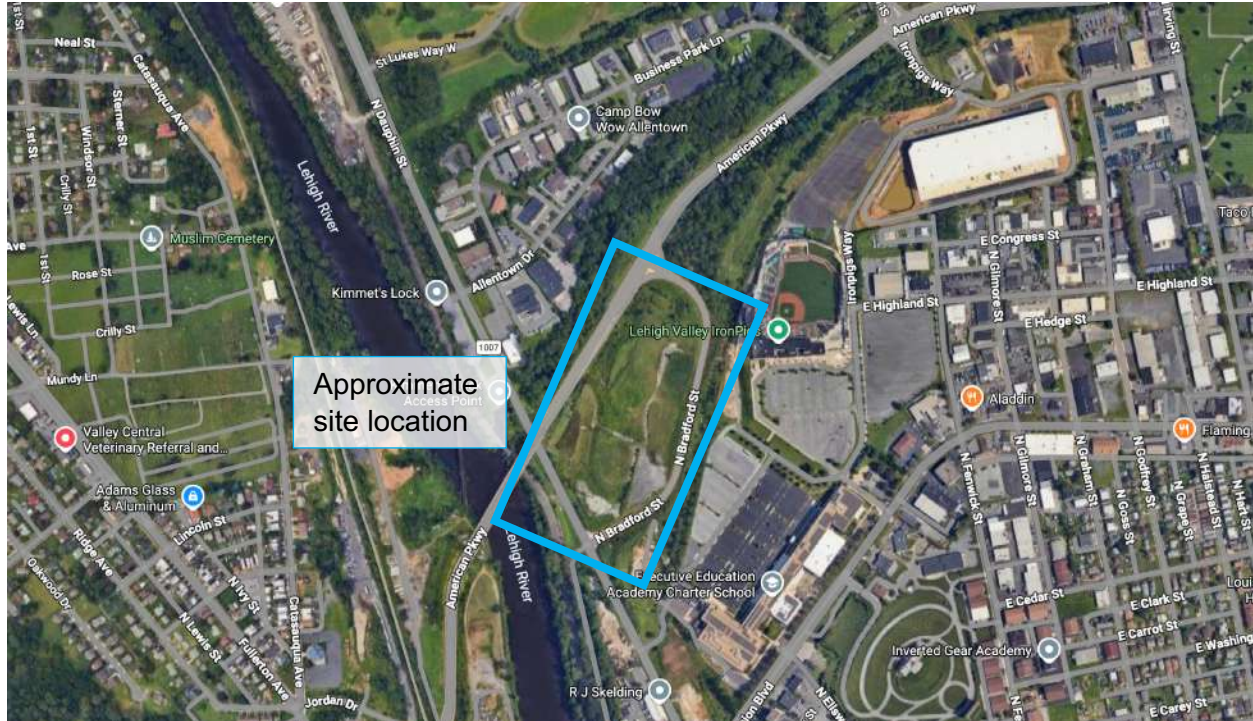
The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Meeting details are below, and we encourage any and all participation:

LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:	LVPC Full Commission Meeting:
September 22, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Virtual) https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings	September 24, 2026, at 7:00 PM (In- Person) https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings

Background

The project proposes to develop the site by constructing a 146,000-square-foot data center facility. The project includes an area for an electrical substation. The project site is located at 1024 North Bradford Street (parcel numbers 640758248221, 640759318024, 640758158799, and 640758206051).

The submission does not include project-specific information describing the proposed facility's operational characteristics. Information was not provided identifying the cooling system, anticipated water demand, total electrical demand, standby generation, whether battery energy storage or other energy storage systems are proposed, mechanical equipment locations, anticipated noise and vibration levels, or heat rejection characteristics. Because these design and operational characteristics determine many of the potential land use, environmental, utility and community impacts associated with a data center, the LVPC cannot fully evaluate those impacts based on the materials submitted.



Site Suitability and Land Use

The proposal is located in an area identified for Development in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. Development areas generally contain existing development and infrastructure in the area, and developing the site aligns with *FutureLV* by using vacant and underutilized properties (of *FutureLV* Policy 5.4).

The project site is bounded by Bradford Street to the east, American Parkway to the west, and Dauphin Street to the southwest. Nearby land uses include the Iron Pigs baseball stadium to the northeast, Executive Education Academy Charter School to the southeast as well as offices that include Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, and a commercial/industrial development to the north across American Parkway.

Topography of the area creates natural separation between this site and the existing land uses across North Bradford Street; however, data centers are industrial land uses that can pose health and quality of life impacts to neighboring land uses if not appropriately mitigated. The LVPC notes that no supplemental information was provided with the submitted plans that analyze potential land use impacts related to the development. Potential data center land use impacts to address include:

- A pre-construction professional noise study should be conducted for both perceived and low frequency noises to support community health (of Policy 5.3).

- Based on additional utility and development characteristics, a complete noise impact assessment with the potential use in full operation should be developed and provided to the City to better understand impacts (of Policy 5.3).
- The buildings should be aesthetically designed to minimize the visual impacts of the scale of buildings on nearby properties. Mechanical yards common with data center land uses are not specified on the plans. Once identified, these should be fully screened or enclosed to reduce visual impacts and ‘promote context-specific design solutions’ (of Policy 5.4).
- Nighttime lighting levels should be designed to minimize glare, prevent spillover onto adjacent properties and roadways, and minimize environmental impacts of development (of Policy 3.2).
- The applicant should also assess potential heat exhaust impacts from mechanical systems that may affect nearby land uses (of Policy 3.2).

These community impacts must be mitigated for the project to be suitable for the proposed location (of Policy 1.4). These impacts will also be discussed in greater detail in the following sections of this review.

This area is also identified in the Allentown Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan as a Strategic Planning Area in the Urban Systems and Areas of Allentown, which are future areas of economic growth, redevelopment, and/or community planning efforts. Because of the nearby Iron Pigs, Charter School and Workforce Board, an area of community-supporting services and land uses in this area would better ‘root economic development strategies in the unique competitive advantages of the region’ (of Policy 4.1) and ‘promote development that complements the unique history, environment, culture and needs of the Valley’ (of Policy 5.4).

Emergency Services

Given the unique electrical, mechanical, and security characteristics of data centers, the City and applicant should coordinate early and continuously with local emergency service providers to ensure adequate preparedness and response capabilities. The applicant should provide fire, emergency medical services, and police departments with detailed information on site access, security protocols, hazardous materials storage, backup power systems, and any specialized equipment such as battery energy storage systems. Emergency responders should be consulted on the adequacy of access points, turning radii, hydrant placement and fire suppression systems, and should receive appropriate training or orientation prior to occupancy. This coordination is essential to safeguard responders, protect critical infrastructure, and ensure that the facility can be safely and effectively served during both routine incidents and large-scale emergencies (of Policy 5.1).

Environment and Utility Infrastructure

The submission does not provide sufficient information to evaluate the project’s full electrical demand or its long-term impacts on the regional power grid. The applicant should clarify the total projected electrical load at full buildout and demonstrate coordination with PPL to confirm that the existing grid can reliably accommodate this

load without degrading service to current residential or commercial users. The applicant should obtain written confirmation from PPL that identifies whether grid upgrades will be required, such as substation expansion, new feeders, or transmission enhancements, and how these improvements will be funded to promote fiscal health and sustainability (of Policy 4.6).

Additional detail is needed on how the facility will align with industry energy efficiency standards, including anticipated Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) targets, energy management audits, and reporting practices. The applicant should also identify what proportion of its energy use will be met through renewable sources and whether it is willing to support new renewable energy generation, rather than relying solely on existing supply. Information on the developer's interest or capacity for onsite or offsite renewable energy production, such as solar, battery storage, or power purchase agreements, is necessary to understand the project's long-term sustainability and its alignment with regional clean energy goals (of Policy 3.4).

The site plans also do not specify the number or locations of backup generators. If generators are proposed, the applicant should identify their number, rated capacity, fuel type, location, anticipated emissions, enclosure or sound attenuation measures, fuel storage and spill containment provisions, and anticipated testing frequency and duration. The applicant should identify applicable state or federal air quality permitting requirements and evaluate lower emission alternatives where feasible to minimize air quality impacts (of Policy 3.2). The developer should provide a generator testing plan that outlines the frequency, duration, and timing of tests so the City can adequately evaluate potential noise, air quality, and neighborhood impacts in coordination with neighboring properties (of Policies 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4).

The application lacks essential information regarding the project's water demands and cooling system. The developer should identify the specific cooling technology proposed, whether air cooled, water cooled, evaporative, or hybrid, as each has significantly different implications for water use and infrastructure needs. The submission should also clarify whether the system incorporates water reuse or heat recovery measures that could reduce overall consumption. Given the region's current drought conditions, it is critical that the applicant model water use under drought stage or peak stress scenarios and demonstrate long-term reliability of the proposed water supply. If connection to the public water system is anticipated, immediate coordination with Lehigh County Authority is recommended to evaluate capacity needs and any potential infrastructure upgrades (of Policy 3.2).

Landscaping is proposed along the property frontages throughout the project site and along the property boundary. Adequate buffers, landscaping, berms, and architectural treatments are essential to ensure buildings fit in with community character and disrupt the visual impact of large building mass (of Policies 3.2 and 3.4).

The LVPC encourages the developer to consider opportunities for incorporating sustainable energy systems that reduce overhead operational costs and 'reduce climate

change impacts through mitigation and adaptation' (of Policy 3.4), such as geothermal energy systems, green roofs, solar panels and greywater reuse for irrigation and plumbing. The developer should also consider adding electrical vehicle charging spaces at the site to serve the residents and 'advance deployment of alternative fueling infrastructure' (of Policy 2.5). Green Roof systems can also provide additional opportunity to 'manage the rate, volume and quality of storm runoff' and 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public' (of Policy 3.2).

The project site is located within the Catasauqua Creek watershed. This watershed has a fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments related to our review of the project's stormwater management plan are included with this review.

Transportation

The LVPC previously reviewed another site plan at this location in a letter dated August 11, 2022. At the time, warehousing was the proposed land use. Data centers generally involve substantially less routine freight and employee traffic than comparably sized warehouse and distribution facilities. However, specific staffing, service, delivery and other operational trip information was not included in the submission therefore no assessment of traffic impacts could be assessed with this plan submission. The Iron Pigs stadium and Executive Education Academy Charter School developments are identified as Traffic Generators. Union Boulevard is also identified as a high crash corridor between Airport Road to the east and North 11th Street to the west.

Aspects of the site plan can be improved to better ensure adequate transportation access and movement. The submitted site plan appears to retain a transportation and parking layout characteristic of a more freight-intensive industrial use. The parking tabulation on the plan identifies 94 passenger spaces and 36 truck spaces are proposed. Because no operations narrative or project-specific transportation information was submitted, the applicant should provide the anticipated number of employees, shift patterns, service and delivery activity and other vehicle trips necessary to operate the data center, and revise the parking and loading layout accordingly. Once the appropriate amount of commercial truck parking spaces is determined, any resulting changes to the site plans should clearly separate these traffic movements to minimize conflicts. Electric vehicle charging capacity should be provided for both commercial and passenger vehicles (of Policy 2.5).

Sidewalks are proposed along all road frontages of the project site, connecting to the existing sidewalks on American Parkway, which supports pedestrian safety and reducing fatalities towards zero (of Policies 5.1 and 5.3). North Dauphin Street and North Bradford Street west of North Dauphin Street are in an area identified for trail and multimodal enhancements as part of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor trail network. However, no connections to trails or transit are provided. Bicycle racks should be included near building entrances to accommodate alternative transportation options and offer a seamless network for employees to safely ride to work (of Policies 2.2, 2.3 and 5.3).

Conclusion

Overall, given the lack of information submitted with the application as identified in this review letter, the LVPC is unable to reach a conclusion on this proposal's alignment with *FutureLV*. The LVPC strongly advises the City against approving land development plans without reviewing essential information about the operational conditions or impacts the project will generate. As this project moves forward and details are determined by the applicant, if the submitted plans substantially change, the plans must be resubmitted to LVPC for review prior to plan signing and recordation.

The LVPC has copied representatives from adjacent municipalities and review agencies to 'coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries' (of Policy 1.4).

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

Please let me know if there are any questions about this review.

Sincerely,



Jill Seitz
Chief Community and Regional Planner

cc: David Petrik, Deputy Director of Public Works; Melissa Velez, Senior Planner; Brandon Jones, Planner; Joseph Millick, City Engineer; Brian Hite, Assistant Planner; Samantha Pearson, Lehigh County Director of Community and Economic Development; Liesel Gross, Lehigh County Authority Chief Executive Officer; Garrett Cook, Lehigh County Conservation District Engineer; Fadia Halma, PA DCED Lehigh Valley Regional Director; Alicia Karner, PA DCED BusinessPA Lehigh Valley Regional Office Director; Dean Ritter, PA DEP Assistant Regional Director; Jane George, PPL Regional Affairs Director; Brian Boyer, PennDot District 5.



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Executive Director

September XX, 2026

Cathy Fletcher, Director of Planning and Zoning
City of Bethlehem
10 E Church St
Bethlehem, PA 18018

**Re: 2184 Industrial Drive Data Center – Land Development
City of Bethlehem
Lehigh and Northampton Counties**

Dear Director Fletcher,

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The meetings occurred on:

LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:	LVPC Full Commission Meeting:
September 22, 2026, at 12:00 PM (Virtual) https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings	September 24, 2026, at 7:00 PM (In-Person) https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings

Background

The project proposes to redevelop an approximately 6.8-acre industrial property at 2184 Industrial Drive with a 131,380-square-foot data center. The proposed building includes two floors, consisting of approximately 65,590 square feet per floor. The plans also identify substantial electrical infrastructure associated with the facility, including a proposed substation and medium-voltage equipment area.

The applicant has provided supplemental information explaining how the facility would be cooled and powered, how much water and electricity it may use, what may generate noise, and how potential impacts may be reduced. The applicant has indicated that several important design details are still being finalized, and that additional technical documentation will be provided as the design advances.

Site Suitability and Land Use

The proposal is in an area identified for Development in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. Development areas generally contain existing development and infrastructure in the area. Redevelopment of an existing industrial property for a new industrial use supports the efficient use of previously developed land and infrastructure and the aim of *FutureLV* to use vacant and underutilized properties (of Policy 5.4). The project site is bounded by Avenue B to the west, Industrial Drive and Route 22 to the south and east, and industrial land uses to the north and west.



The impacts of a data center depend heavily on how it is designed and operated, including how it is cooled, how much power and water it uses, whether it generates power onsite, and where mechanical equipment is located. The supplemental information submitted by the applicant provides considerably greater detail regarding these characteristics than the site plan alone. The proposed immersion cooling system is intended to transfer heat directly from computing equipment into dielectric fluid, reducing dependence on high-volume air movement and many of the internal server fans associated with conventional air-cooled facilities. The LVPC notes that while these design characteristics have the potential to reduce operational impacts, compatibility should ultimately be evaluated based on the site-specific analyses rather than general information about the technology.

The site is located within an established industrial area and is separated from nearby residential development by Route 22. The industrial setting and highway provide meaningful separation between the proposed facility and nearby homes, reducing the potential for direct land-use conflicts. However, the residential development remains close enough that it should be considered when evaluating noise, air emissions, lighting, heat discharge and the overall visibility of the project.

Existing highway traffic already contributes noise and air emissions in this area. The LVPC recommends that the applicant's impact analyses and the City's review distinguish between existing background conditions and the additional effects of the data center land use.

The project's industrial location is generally appropriate for the proposed use, but final equipment placement, enclosures, screening and other measures should be designed to limit

additional impacts on the residential area across Route 22. This approach supports minimizing the environmental and public health impacts of development and promoting compatibility between different land uses (of Policies 3.2 and 5.3).

Building Height, Scale and Community Character

The proposed building height is approximately 60 feet, which is permitted under the applicable zoning regulations, however it represents a substantial change from the approximately 29-foot height of the existing industrial building. At 60 feet, the proposed building would be about twice as tall as the existing industrial building. The taller building, large footprint and electrical equipment will make the redevelopment more visually prominent than what exists today. The applicant should provide building elevations and, where appropriate, visual simulations or line-of-sight information sufficient for the City to evaluate the appearance of the facility from Industrial Drive, Avenue B, other public rights-of-way and nearby properties.

Architectural articulation, variation in building materials and façades, landscaping and screening should be used to make the building appear less large and imposing from surrounding streets and properties and promote context-specific design solutions (of Policy 5.4). Mechanical and electrical equipment, whether on the roof or on the ground, should also be integrated into the overall site design and appropriately screened. Exterior lighting should be designed to prevent unnecessary glare and spillover onto surrounding properties and roadways to 'minimize environmental impacts of development' (of Policy 3.2).

Power Demand and Electric Infrastructure

The applicant identifies a peak electrical demand of approximately 120 megawatts and a facility-wide target Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) of approximately 1.24, where a value of 1.0 represents the theoretical ideal of zero wasted energy. According to the National Laboratory of the Rockies, the U.S. Department of Energy's primary national laboratory for energy systems, studies show that the PUE average for data centers tends to be 1.8, but industry leaders have been able to achieve PUE values of 1.2 or less. The LVPC encourages the applicant to continue pursuing a lower PUE value to 'promote energy conservation and efficiency' (of Policy 3.4). The proposed power strategy combines utility service with on-site natural-gas generation, with approximately 20% of normal facility demand anticipated to be provided by natural-gas generation and approximately 80% supplied by the electrical grid as part of the facility's normal power supply. A separate diesel backup system is proposed for significant power interruptions or emergencies.

The applicant reports that a PPL will-serve letter has been received indicating capacity is available to serve the site, and that approximately \$70.5 million in privately funded electrical and utility infrastructure improvements are anticipated. The applicant states that the electrical improvements will be privately funded and may create approximately 130 megawatts of electrical capacity available to other users within the industrial park. The final submission should include applicable PPL documentation describing the improvements necessary to serve the project, the anticipated implementation schedule and responsibility for infrastructure costs. This supports maintaining reliable infrastructure and promoting long-term fiscal sustainability (of Policy 4.6).

The applicant should identify how many generators are proposed (both diesel and natural gas), where they will be located, how often they are expected to operate, how much power they will produce, and their expected noise and air emissions. Continued coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and other applicable regulatory agencies regarding required environmental permitting is necessary to understand and minimize

environmental and public-health impacts of development (of Policy 3.2).

Cooling and Water Use

The proposed immersion cooling approach and closed-loop water-and-glycol system can substantially reduce ongoing water consumption compared with systems dependent on evaporative cooling after an initial system of approximately 3 million gallons of water and one million gallons of glycol, as estimated by the applicant. Once filled, the system is intended to recirculate that fluid, with additional water needed primarily for maintenance, cleaning and limited replenishment. Ordinary building water consumption is estimated by the applicant to be approximately 20,000 gallons annually. The applicant notes that the proposed generating equipment may require additional water for emissions control purposes, though final consumption for that process has not yet been established. The applicant should clarify whether the estimated annual water consumption includes domestic water use by employees on a daily basis, and document where the initial water will come from, how quickly the system will be filled, how much water the facility will use each year, how much may be needed for the generators, and whether the public water system can reliably meet that demand during dry periods.

The large initial fill should be evaluated separately from routine annual demand so that the City's review accurately reflects both the one-time and continuing effects on the public water system. These measures support conserving and managing water resources and minimizing environmental impacts of development (of Policies 3.1 and 3.2).

Heat Management

Immersion cooling captures heat from computing equipment more directly than conventional air cooling; however, the captured heat must ultimately be transferred from the facility. The applicant identifies heat rejection equipment among the facility's anticipated mechanical systems. The final design should specify where heat will be released, how much heat is expected when the facility is fully operating, and whether it could affect nearby properties, sidewalks, landscaping or equipment. Heat rejection equipment should be located and designed so that exhaust does not adversely affect adjacent properties, pedestrian areas, landscaping or other equipment and infrastructure. This information will allow the City to evaluate the project's final thermal impacts and supports minimizing environmental impacts of development (of Policy 3.2).

Fluid Management and Environmental Protection

The project will utilize substantial quantities of dielectric fluid, water and glycol. The applicant indicates that critical mechanical equipment will be in controlled building areas and that the final design will incorporate secondary containment, leak detection, isolation controls, spill-response procedures and separation between the closed cooling loop and the stormwater-management system. The LVPC recommends memorializing these protections or commitments into the final plans. Final documentation should identify the types and maximum quantities of fluids stored on-site; containment capacity; locations of tanks and piping systems; emergency shutoff and isolation procedures; and measures preventing releases from entering the stormwater system or surrounding environment. These measures support protecting public health, safety and natural resources (of Policy 3.2).

Noise and Vibration

The applicant indicates estimates an approximately 50-decibel acoustic benchmark due to the use of immersion-cooling and acknowledges that is a general comparison rather than a prediction of sound levels at this specific site. Exterior noise sources are expected to include natural gas generation, diesel backup generators, pumps, transformers, heat-rejection

equipment and other supporting mechanical systems. The applicant has indicated that a sound study has been conducted and that additional acoustic evaluation and mitigation design are underway.

The final noise study should show expected sound levels at the property lines and nearby properties during normal operations, generator testing and emergency conditions. It should also evaluate low-frequency and tonal noise, which can be more noticeable even when overall decibel levels are relatively low. Mechanical and generation equipment should be enclosed, oriented and attenuated as necessary based on the final study. The LVPC also recommends post-construction acoustic verification after the facility reaches normal operating conditions to confirm that the completed facility performs consistently with the assumptions used in the final study and to identify whether additional mitigation is necessary. These measures support community health and compatibility with surrounding development (of Policy 5.3).

Emergency Services

Because the facility would contain high-voltage electrical equipment, generators, cooling fluids and specialized mechanical systems, emergency responders should understand the site and its equipment before the facility opens. Early and continued coordination with the City Fire Department and emergency response personnel is therefore important.

The applicant indicates that the facility will include a fire protection system designed specifically for the final equipment configuration and selected dielectric fluid and that final suppression specifications will be coordinated with applicable fire codes and emergency responders. The final emergency response plan should identify emergency access, equipment shutoffs, utility isolation procedures, fire-suppression systems, hazardous or combustible material inventories and safety data, spill response procedures, emergency contacts and responder access to the substation and mechanical areas. Appropriate facility orientation and training should be provided to emergency responders prior to occupancy. This coordination supports effective emergency services and protection of critical infrastructure (of Policy 5.1).

Transportation

Redevelopment of the property as a data center is expected to involve substantially fewer routine employee, freight and delivery trips than many comparably sized warehouse, distribution or manufacturing uses. The applicant should document anticipated employment, shift schedules, routine deliveries and service vehicles so the City can evaluate normal operating conditions.

Construction of the facility and installation of major electrical equipment may also generate temporary truck and oversized equipment movements substantially different from routine operations. Construction access, staging and delivery routing should therefore be coordinated with the City and applicable transportation agencies to minimize conflicts with surrounding businesses and the regional transportation network (of Policy 2.2).

Community Engagement and Continued Reporting

The applicant has indicated an intent to maintain communication with the community and reviewing agencies through informational meetings and responses to public questions and is exploring an educational partnership with Lehigh University related to data-center research and possible internship opportunities. The LVPC supports continued community engagement as the technical design develops.

Because several of the most consequential operational characteristics remain subject to final engineering, the completed water-balance analysis, acoustic study, utility documentation, air-quality and emissions information, thermal-impact information and emergency-response materials should be made available to the City and reviewing agencies as they are completed. Where these analyses materially affect potential community impacts, the information should also be communicated in an accessible format to residents and other interested stakeholders.

Conclusion

The applicant has taken several steps to address common data center impacts, including redeveloping an existing industrial site, proposing closed-loop immersion cooling, enclosing major equipment and planning additional technical studies. The project location and redevelopment approach support several goals of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. However, important aspects of the facility are still being finalized. As the project proceeds, any commitments that are relied upon in determining the project's compatibility should be clearly documented and memorialized. If the submitted plans substantially change as this information is finalized, the plans must be resubmitted to LVPC for review prior to plan signing and recordation.

The LVPC has copied representatives from applicable review agencies to coordinate land-use decisions across municipal boundaries (of Policy 1.4).

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

Sincerely,



Jill Seitz
Chief Community and Regional Planner

cc: Samantha Pearson, Lehigh County Director of Community and Economic Development; Tina Smith, Northampton County Director of Community and Economic Development; Garrett Cook, Lehigh County Conservation District Engineer; Fadia Halma, PA DCED Lehigh Valley Regional Director; Alicia Karner, PA DCED BusinessPA Lehigh Valley Regional Office Director; Dean Ritter, PA DEP Assistant Regional Director; Jane George, PPL Regional Affairs Director; Brian Boyer, PennDot District 5; Molly Wood, LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist.

Project Review Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Date: September 2026

Project	Municipality	Brief Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Zoning Ordinance Amendment	Tatamy Borough	<i>Data Centers</i> – Adds regulations for Data Centers.	The LVPC supports Tatamy Borough's proactive effort to address an emerging land use, and offers recommendations to strengthen the amendment and ensure that its protections remain legally defensible under Pennsylvania law. Because several provisions implicate authority assigned by state law to other agencies or extend beyond customary performance standards, the LVPC strongly recommends that the Township Solicitor specifically review the proposed provisions.
Zoning Ordinance Amendment	City of Bethlehem	<i>Data Centers</i> – Adds regulations for Data Centers.	The proposal supports <i>FutureLV</i> by 'encouraging an efficient development process responsive to regional needs' (of Policy 1.4) and exemplifies the broader intent of <i>FutureLV</i> to prepare local regulations for essential digital infrastructure while protecting public health, environmental resources, infrastructure capacity and community context.
Zoning Ordinance Amendment	Lower Saucon Township	<i>Official Map Update</i> – Identifies Municipality-Owned Parcels, Roads and Bridges, trails, railroads, streams, water bodies, Floodplains, Parks, and both protected and preserved farmland.	The proposal supports numerous aspects of <i>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</i> such as Policies 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.2, and 5.3.

Project Review Summary Sheet

Environment Committee

Date: September 2026

Project	Municipality	Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Lehigh County Authority - Preliminary Capital Plan (2027-2031)	ALLENTOWN DIVISION	<u>Water</u> • WFP Wet Lab Renovations: Expansion of the existing wet lab area into the former HVAC room, which will occur once Phase 2 HVAC system upgrades are complete. The existing operator's wet lab at the Water Filtration Plant (WFP) is crowded with limited space for instrumentation. • City Leak Detection and Water Loss Program: The purchase and installation of leak loggers and pressure sensors in strategic locations throughout the City water system to improve leak detection monitoring capability. The data obtained through this effort will be used to target and prioritize system repairs and main replacements. A water loss study is to be performed in 2027 to identify and target areas of water loss. • City East Side Transmission Main Rehabilitation: Existing East Side Transmission Main conveys water from the WFP approximately 3 miles to the City's East Side Reservoir. The existing 36-inch and 30-inch cast iron lines were constructed about 70 years ago and exhibited areas of leakage in 2022 from a leak detection study and identified areas of severe external pipe corrosion and pitting at repair sites in 2026 during leak repair projects. This project includes a planning phase as well as design and construction of a pipeline rehabilitation project, consisting of pipe replacement, internal lining or a combination of both alternatives. • WFP Plate Settler Sludge Removal System Upgrade: Evaluation of the existing sludge removal operation is needed to determine if a system can be installed to facilitate sludge removal. Project is in the planning phase; scope of upgrades is to be determined. <u>Wastewater</u> • City Manhole Inspection and Sealing Program: The City's sanitary sewer system contains approx. 7,200 public manholes, which must be investigated and addressed to remove sources of wet weather inflow. A manhole inspection and rehab program is outlined in LCA's Act 537 Plan. In 2026, approximately 3,800 manholes have been inspected, and a pilot rehab project of 250 manholes was completed and informed future rehab projects. Trout Creek and East Side sewer basins have been targeted for this work in the near term due to high peaking factors. In 2026, approx. 450 manholes in Trout Creek basin will be rehabilitated. Rehab work in 2027 and 2028 will focus on Trout Creek Basin manholes, with East Side basin manholes to be addressed in 2028 and 2029. Temporary flow metering is planned in 2026 and 2027 to determine rehab effectiveness.	Evaluating/providing system improvements to provide safe, reliable and efficient service supports <i>FutureLV</i>: The Regional Plan actions to 'improve the utility and mobility infrastructure of the region' and 'integrate efficiency measures and emerging technologies' (of Policy 1.1) and 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).

Project Review Summary Sheet

Environment Committee

Date: September 2026

Project	Municipality	Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Lehigh County Authority - Preliminary Capital Plan (2027-2031)	ALLENTOWN DIVISION	<u>Wastewater Projects Continued:</u> • WWTP Primary Clarifier Rehabilitation: Upgrades to primary clarifiers; the overall scope of work to be determined. This capital plan includes the design of a project to install adequately sized access hatches in the existing domes due to the existing access hatches being small and difficult to navigate with ladders and equipment. • WWTP Stormwater Upgrades: Upgrades to the existing stormwater system at Kline's Island WWTP. Specifically, improvements to drainage lift station #2 are required as well as any improvements that may be necessary due to the NPDES permit upgrades. • City Interceptor Rehabilitation: LCA has started an inspection and condition assessment program for the sanitary interceptor sewers in Allentown. The interceptors inspected in 2024 were confined to the east side of the Lehigh River and included: Hanover Trunk Line, Eastside Interceptor, Albert Street Trunk Sewer, Hanover Avenue Trunk Line and the Siphon under the River. Two projects recommended to reduce the risk of failure: Eastside Interceptor (~2,000 linear feet of cured in place lining) and the Albert Street Trunk Line (~2,450 linear feet of cured in place lining).	Evaluating/providing system improvements to provide safe, reliable and efficient service supports <i>FutureLV</i> actions to 'improve the utility and mobility infrastructure of the region' and 'integrate efficiency measures and emerging technologies' (of Policy 1.1) and 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).

Project Review Summary Sheet

Environment Committee

Date: September 2026

Project	Municipality	Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Lehigh County Authority - Preliminary Capital Plan (2027-2031)	SUBURBAN DIVISION	<u>Water</u> • Central Lehigh System Supply Improvements: In 2024, a source water assessment study for the Central Lehigh Division identified vulnerabilities in emergency supply if the largest water source, Schantz Spring, be taken out of service. Re-establishing the Bortz interconnect with South Whitehall Township is one option to increase emergency supply. To address long-term projected demands due to industrial growth in the western Central Lehigh Division, there is an urgent need to develop new additional water sources and/or increase production from existing sources. Additional storage in the Upper System is also needed. • Small Systems Water Supply Improvements: This project includes planning and design work for small Suburban Division water systems supply and distribution systems with a focus on resiliency and redundancy, in particular, single point of failure components, single source systems and addressing supply limitations. • SD Green Hills Pump Station Upgrade: Replacement of two booster pumps and associated equipment at the Green Hills pump station to better serve current and future water demands in LCA's upper system due to existing pumps reaching the end of their useful life. • SD Automated Fill Station: Proposed automated filling station in the Central Lehigh Division in order to accurately account for water consumption and reduce theft of water by unauthorized operation of LCA fire hydrants. The station will consist of an unmanned remote bulk water dispensing facility, housed in a weather-proof enclosure with remote monitoring and control. <u>Wastewater</u> • Pretreatment Plant Long Term Planning: Long term major process modifications at the LCA pretreatment plant were evaluated in 2025 and 2026 in order to accommodate changes in flow and loading due to planned growth and projected wastewater flows and loads in Upper Macungie Township. Sewage conveyance options evaluated included bypassing all of a portion of the western Upper Macungie Township flow around the pretreatment plant, with conveyance of untreated or partially treated wastewater via existing sewer interceptor to Kline's Island WWTP. Long term pretreatment plant upgrade planning is required to accommodate changes inorganic loading due to industrial growth in Upper Macungie Township.	Evaluating/providing system improvements to provide safe, reliable and efficient service supports <i>FutureLV</i> actions to 'improve the utility and mobility infrastructure of the region' and 'integrate efficiency measures and emerging technologies' (of Policy 1.1) and 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).

Project Review Summary Sheet

Environment Committee

Date: September 2026

Project	Municipality	Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Lehigh County Authority - Preliminary Capital Plan (2027-2031)	SUBURBAN DIVISION	<u>Wastewater Projects Continued</u> • <i>Pretreatment Plant Solids Process Improvements:</i> Project involves replacement of sludge dewatering and conveyance equipment within the adjacent solids buildings. Replacement of two gravity belt thickeners which are used to thicken waste activated sludge prior to conveyance to the digesters is also proposed. The existing solids dewatering system at the PTP consists of equipment that is over 36 years old and is in need of replacement. Centrifuge utilization was effective in dewatering PTP sludge to a higher solids content when a centrifuge study was performed in 2025 and it would improve working conditions in the dewatering building. • <i>Pretreatment Plant Phase 1 Electrical System Improvements:</i> Replacement of two substations (Substation Nos. 2 and 4) due to a condition assessment of the electrical distribution system, substations and main switchgear performed in 2025 that considered the risk of failure for the various components and identified the need. Design phase commenced in 2026 for Phase 1. Equipment procurement to be bid in Q3 of 2026, and construction to occur in 2027 and 2028. • <i>Pretreatment Plant Phase 2 Electrical System Improvements:</i> Phase 2 electrical improvements will follow the Phase 1 Improvements at the PTP and consist of replacement of the 37-year-old main service entrance switchgear, Substation No. 3 and various motor control centers throughout the facility that are in poor condition. • <i>Pretreatment Plant Aeration Basin Conversion:</i> The current pure oxygen system of the cryogenic plant was designed to treat high strength industrial waste, and the existing process is very energy intensive. Retirement of the pure oxygen system and conversion of the aeration decks to utilize ambient air would represent significant energy savings, however, it is contingent upon the reduction of organic loading into the PTP. Project assumes future industrial loading conditions that will facilitate decommissioning the aging cryogenic system and converting aeration process to ambient air.	Evaluating/providing system improvements to provide safe, reliable and efficient service supports <i>FutureLV</i> actions to 'improve the utility and mobility infrastructure of the region' and 'integrate efficiency measures and emerging technologies' (of Policy 1.1) and 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).

Project Review Summary Sheet

Environment Committee

Date: September 2026

Project	Municipality	Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Lehigh County Authority - Preliminary Capital Plan (2027-2031)	SUBURBAN DIVISION	<u>Wastewater Projects Continued</u> • <i>Pretreatment Plant Waste Receiving Station Improvements:</i> Optimization of waste receiving and directing the majority of the waste into the anaerobic digesters would represent both operational and energy consumption improvements and possibly enable a future energy cogeneration system for beneficial use of the digester biogas. Project would include improvements to the existing dedicated Waste Receiving Station, which is currently not operated due to various issues and may require upsizing or complete replacement. Improvements also include a mechanical screen retrofit for the grease receiving station in order to reduce operation and maintenance issues and optimize grease acceptance, which may impact a decision regarding beneficial biogas use. • <i>Little Lehigh Interceptor Siphon Pit Upgrade:</i> Upgrade of four sanitary sewer siphon pits at four Western Lehigh Interceptor sewer line crossings of the Little Lehigh Creek. An asset management condition assessment revealed that the pits are in poor condition with inoperable drain lines, two valves per pit. The addition of odor control systems at each pit is also proposed. • <i>SD Relief Interceptor Projects:</i> Project involves the eventual construction of two relief interceptors identified during the 2020-2025 Act 537 Planning efforts. Two relief interceptors identified: the paralleling of the Western Lehigh Interceptor and the installation of the Kline's Island Relief Interceptor. Both interceptor projects have gone through preliminary engineering.	Evaluating/providing system improvements to provide safe, reliable and efficient service supports <i>FutureLV</i> actions to 'improve the utility and mobility infrastructure of the region' and 'integrate efficiency measures and emerging technologies' (of Policy 1.1) and 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).



CHRISTINA "TORI" MORGAN
Chair

ARMANDO MORITZ-CHAPELLIQUEN
Vice Chair

PHILLIPS ARMSTRONG
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 17, 2026
TO: LVPC Commissioners
FROM: Tori Morgan, Chair
REGARDING: Resignation of Armando Mortiz-Chapelliquen and Election of New Vice Chair

Armando Mortiz-Chapelliquen, LVPC Vice Chair has resigned for personal reasons. His resignation was accepted by the LVPC Executive Committee this afternoon. In accordance with the LVPC Bylaws, the Executive Committee discussed a successor and unanimously voted to nominate Judy Haldeman to fill the vacancy. Judy has served the LVPC as a Northampton County Elected Official from a Township or Borough since 2023 and on the Executive Committee since 2024. She is a Northampton Borough Councilmember and Council Pro Tem. Haldeman is a Northampton native with a 38-year career in county service. She has served the borough since 2021 and been an active community leader and member of the Northampton Borough Municipal Authority, Building, Land and Recreation Committee and Public Works and Sewer Committee. The Full Commission is anticipated to take formal action on this nomination at the Thursday, September 24th meeting.

Resolution 9-24-26A

RESOLUTION OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION

PROCLAIMING OCTOBER AS COMMUNITY PLANNING MONTH IN THE LEHIGH VALLEY

- WHEREAS,** change is constant and affects all cities, towns, suburbs, counties, boroughs, townships, rural areas, and other places; and
- WHEREAS,** planners help navigate this change with data-driven insights and expertise that provide better choices for how people work and live; and
- WHEREAS,** community planning and planners can help manage this change in a way that provides better choices for how people work, live, and play and, reinforces quality of life, equity and access, makes more resilient, sustainable and livable places; and
- WHEREAS,** community planning provides an opportunity for all residents to be involved in making choices that determine the shared vision of their communities and the Lehigh Valley, as a whole; and
- WHEREAS,** the full benefits of planning requires public officials and citizens who understand, support, and demand excellence in planning and plan implementation; and
- WHEREAS,** the month of October is designated as National Community Planning Month throughout the United States of America and its territories, and
- WHEREAS,** the American Planning Association and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, endorse National Community Planning Month as an opportunity to highlight the contributions sound planning and plan implementation make to the quality of our neighborhoods, communities and environment; and
- WHEREAS,** the celebration of National Community Planning Month gives us the opportunity to publicly recognize the participation and dedication of the members of planning commissions, zoning hearing boards, county, township, borough and city elected officials and other citizen planners who have contributed their time and expertise to the improvement of the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania; and
- WHEREAS,** the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission recognizes the many valuable contributions made by professional community and regional planners of the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania and extend our heartfelt thanks for the continued commitment to public service by these professionals.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the month of October 2026 is hereby designated as Community Planning Month in the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania in conjunction with the celebration of National Community Planning Month.

Adopted by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission on this 24th day of September 2026.

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION:

Christina “Tori” Morgan, Chair

Phillips Armstrong, Treasurer

ATTEST:

Becky A. Bradley, AICP, Executive Director

Testimony to

General Assembly of Pennsylvania

For the Hearing on Senate Bills 824 & 1008

September 1, 2026

Becky A. Bradley, AICP, Executive Director, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

Intro

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bills 824 & 1008, to create a clearer framework for micro-mobility and protected bike lanes in the Commonwealth.

As the regional planning commission and metropolitan planning organization of the Lehigh Valley, we must plan for new and changing transportation modes and technologies.

Our micro-mobility and pedestrian-level transportation work is supported through partnerships with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), LINK Trail Partners, and Lehigh Valley Greenways, a Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Conservation Landscape. We've convened and built consensus around key transportation issues, including with Lehigh and Northampton Counties, all 62 of our region's local governments, 16 school districts and community advocacy partners, from AARP and the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley to the Coalition for Appropriate Transportation and Community Bike Works. Together, we've collaborated on several plans that reference, or will be directly shaped by the related Senate Bills.

In 2021, we released *Walk/Roll/LV*, the Lehigh Valley's Active Transportation Plan, which serves as the foundation for many of our initiatives. In 2024, we adopted the *Priority Climate Action Plan for Transportation Decarbonization*, addressing climate impacts of our transportation system. Earlier this year, we published the *Lehigh Valley Trail Connection Strategy*, providing a comprehensive inventory of the region's trail infrastructure and identifying critical gaps that need to be addressed to create a seamless network. Looking ahead, our next major effort will be developing a *Safe Streets for All (SS4A)* plan to evaluate safety concerns across all transportation modes. All of these efforts are supported through our regional comprehensive plan *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. Throughout this work, pedestrian level transportation remains a key thread connecting our plans, partnerships, and ongoing stakeholder engagement. A strong legislative framework should be founded in potential benefits and general concerns that micro-mobility & pedestrian level infrastructure raises for the Commonwealth.

Protected Pedestrian Plazas and Pedalcycle Lanes – SB824

With the increase in active and pedestrian level transportation modes since the Covid-19 pandemic, planners have increased focus on the infrastructure that supports them. As more people walk, bike, use scooters or other mobility devices, it is necessary to provide safe, equitable, and sustainable options and infrastructure.

Protected bike lanes and pedestrian plazas are among the most effective tools for creating safer, equitable, and accessible transportation networks. As communities aim to improve mobility options, reduce crashes, and support climate and public-health goals, protected spaces offer a strong strategy. These facilities use buffers between pedestrians and cyclists, and moving traffic, creating an environment that encourages more people to walk or bike for everyday travel.

Parking-protected lanes, as noted specifically in SB824, are inherently safer when rights-of-way allow for implementation. By shifting parked cars away from the curb and placing cyclists in a protected space, the likelihood of crashes and other interactions with vehicles is reduced. They also improve comfort for riders who may be newer to biking or who feel unsafe in unprotected bike lanes or on roads with shared lane markings only. It is important to recognize that street widths, land use, traffic volumes, and curb use demands vary across corridors. Effective planning means choosing the right strategy for each location, mode, and infrastructure type.

In the short term, expanding protected bike lanes and pedestrian plazas can deliver immediate benefits. They reduce crash risk, provide spaces for users, and make walking and biking a more appealing option for trips to work, school, transit, or businesses. These infrastructure techniques are key for safer first and last mile connectivity, as well. Short-term planning should focus on corridors with high demand, safety concerns, and major amenity connections. Early implementation examples can help with comfort and trust in the network, encouraging more users and value in the community.

Long-term planning should envision a connected regionwide network of protected spaces and routes that allow users to travel without encountering gaps. A protected bike lane or pedestrian network that ends abruptly can force riders into traffic, risking safety and discouraging use. Networks prioritize continuous travel, linking homes, schools, workplaces, parks, commercial areas, and transit. As outlined in the *Lehigh Valley Trail Connection Strategy*, both on and off-road facilities are needed to create a comprehensive network; implementing protected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that connects to off-road facilities such as our trail network allows people to travel valley wide. Protected bike lanes and pedestrian facilities also support land-use strategies by making denser, mixed-use development more accessible.

Protected lanes and plazas are also a powerful tool for advancing equity. Research shows that some are more likely to ride in high-stress conditions, typically adult men, while women, children, older adults, and people with disabilities tend to avoid biking in environments that feel unsafe. Protected infrastructure reduces risk, inviting more of the community to walk and ride.

Safety remains central for protected infrastructure. These facilities reduce exposure to traffic and lower crash rates. They also simplify interactions at intersections, where design tools such

as curb extensions, turn restrictions and protected intersections can enhance safety. A study in Philadelphia on Parking Separated Bike lanes (PSBL) produced the following findings: a small decrease in crashes and fatalities, a 6% decrease in speeds and a 96% increase in riders where separated bike lanes were installed.

Protected bike lanes also support climate and sustainability goals by making low-emission travel more reliable and attractive. They encourage a shift from car trips to biking, reducing congestion, improving air quality, and lowering noise pollution. When paired with transit, especially LANTA's Bus-Rapid Transit system, protected lanes can increase access to stations and stops, strengthening first and last-mile connections and increasing overall choices.

It's important to note that SB 824 not only enables communities to provide protected bike lanes that cyclists are mandated to use, but it gives them the flexibility to tailor the parking and biking rules to fit their community. The defined buffer and parking rules directly support the protection of cyclists by distancing parked vehicles from the bike lanes. This is absolutely critical, as everything from development density to topography effect what happens within an individual community *and* across municipalities, counties and the Commonwealth.

Micro-Mobility – SB1008

Regarding SB 1008, micro-mobility has rapidly evolved from an emerging trend to a core component of modern transportation systems. As new devices, from e-bikes and e-scooters and other lightweight electric vehicles, enter the market, our planning frameworks must anticipate not only today's needs, but what we expect to see 10–20 years from now.

In the short term, micro-mobility provides travel options for people of all ages and backgrounds. These devices offer practical ways for residents to reach school, work, errands, recreation, medical services, and other daily needs. For many households, micro-mobility reduces barriers to opportunity and affordability. Micro-mobility offers a low-cost alternative that can be adopted quickly by individuals and supported cost-effectively by communities.

One of the most significant short-term benefits of micro-mobility is its role as a first and last-mile connector to public transit. Lack of access to bus stops or rail stations has limited transit ridership and forces people to rely on personal vehicles for short trips. Micro-mobility can close this gap by providing an option to travel beginning and final distances. When supported by infrastructure such as protected bike lanes, designated parking areas, and safe crossings, these devices make transit more feasible.

Long-term implications of micro-mobility extend beyond trip convenience. Lightweight autonomous devices, updated batteries, adaptive cargo systems, and evolving shared-mobility models will continue to reshape how people travel. To prepare for this future, we must focus on designing networks that are flexible, scalable, and resilient. Instead of planning for specific devices, planners should create infrastructure suited for a wide range of users.

Long-term planning also requires integrating micro-mobility into broader transportation and land-use strategies. Micro-mobility complements transit planning, pedestrian networks, and

complete-street policies by changing roadway design to accommodate multiple modes. In land-use planning, micro-mobility helps make compact, mixed-use development more viable. Communities with densely designed schools, parks, stores, and workplaces see the greatest benefits. As communities consider infill development, zoning reforms, and street redesigns, micro-mobility should be incorporated as an element that supports economic development, livability, and quality of life.

Education is essential for the safe and successful integration of micro-mobility. As new devices appear, people need clear, consistent guidance about how and where to ride. Educational initiatives can be delivered through schools, community centers, PennDOT, partnerships, and private operators. These programs should cover topics such as safe riding practices, regulations, interaction with transit, bicycles, pedestrians, people using other mobility devices, vehicles and maintenance; Not only for micro-mobility device users, but other roadway users. By creating predictable behavior and building confidence, education reduces conflicts and helps normalize micro-mobility as a mode of transportation.

Equity must also remain central. Micro-mobility has significant potential to expand access for communities historically underserved by traditional transportation planning and investment. Residents in areas without frequent transit service, safe sidewalks, or vehicle access can benefit greatly from micro-mobility. Devices must be available everywhere; Infrastructure investments should be distributed equitably to ensure safe riding conditions everywhere. Pricing must be affordable, and programs should reduce cost barriers for low-income residents. Equity also means engaging with communities during planning, ensuring that people have a voice in shaping strategies.

An example of an opportunity is with the Allentown School District, that does not operate school buses. Instead, this district relies on children utilizing Lanta's public bus service, walking, biking, scootering, and parent pick-up and drop-off. Growing number of children arrive at school on e-scooters and e-bikes. Training, rules and regulations about operating powered mobility devices safely and with proper safety equipment is an opportunity to support the City's children and build life-long habits that will help achieve broader equity, environmental, health and economic goals.

Safety is one of the most discussed aspects of micro-mobility. As the number of devices increases, so do interactions between riders, pedestrians, drivers, and transit. Many conflicts come from insufficient infrastructure, unclear rules, or inconsistent behavior. Long-term improvements should be driven by design rather than just enforcement. Protected lanes, improved crossings, traffic calming, and designated micro-mobility zones can significantly reduce crashes. Policy strategies, such as speed limits, geofencing, or device standards, should include strong coordination among agencies, health organizations, law enforcement, school districts, and operators. Long-term safety also requires data collection and analysis.

Micro-mobility also aligns with climate goals and resilience. Short vehicle trips are not very efficient in terms of fuel use and emissions, but they make up major part of urban and suburban travel. Shifting some of these trips to low-emission devices can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. Beyond emissions, micro-mobility helps reduce congestion,

roadway wear, noise pollution, and parking demand. When paired with transit policies that encourage walking and biking, micro-mobility becomes part of a comprehensive approach to meeting climate concerns. When traditional transportation systems are disrupted, micro-mobility devices can help maintain access to jobs, schools, and services. This resilience is increasingly important as climate impacts increase.

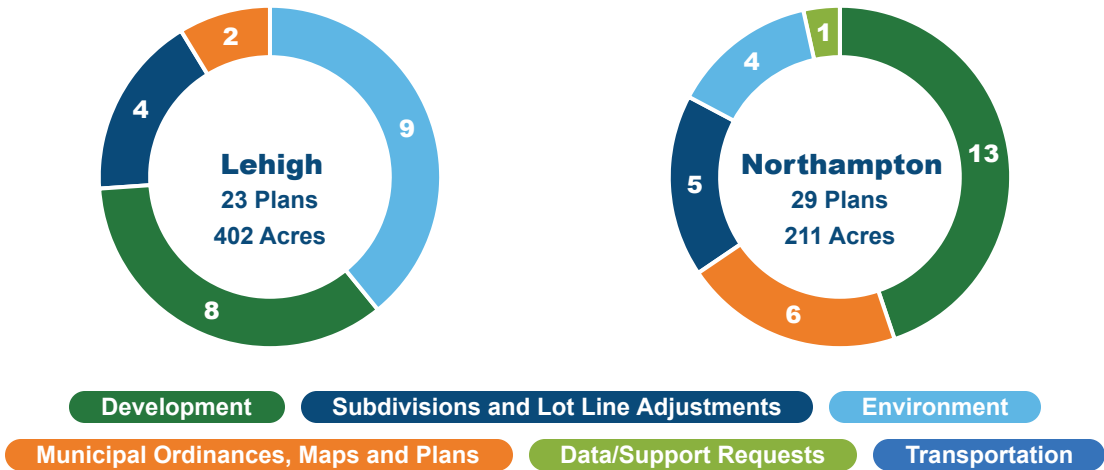
In clearly defining regulations for vehicle registrations, helmet regulations and community education, Senate Bill 1008 has the potential to integrate this important transportation mode into our evolving system of travel, expanding equitable, affordable and environmentally sound options that will promote safety, improve air quality and reduce congestion in our transportation network.

Conclusion

Senate Bill 824 and Senate Bill 1008 have the chance to help communities across the state with a better plan for rapidly evolving transportation modes and associated needs. Investing in protected bike lanes and micro-mobility is about creating streets where people feel safe and comfortable with choosing these modes as viable and efficient transportation options. By supporting these bills, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania would be contributing to thoughtful short-term actions and coordinated long-term planning, from which your communities can build networks and infrastructure that is safer, more equitable, more resilient and more economically successful now and into the future.

Testimony was researched and prepared by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, including Steven Weber, Director of Transportation Planning, Evan Gardi, Senior Transportation Planner, Matt Assad, Managing Editor and Becky Bradley, Executive Director.

Review Activity by County



Regional Totals*	
9	Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustments
21	Development
13	Environment
8	Municipal Ordinances, Maps and Plans
1	Data/Support Requests
0	Transportation

Residential Development

506 Total Units

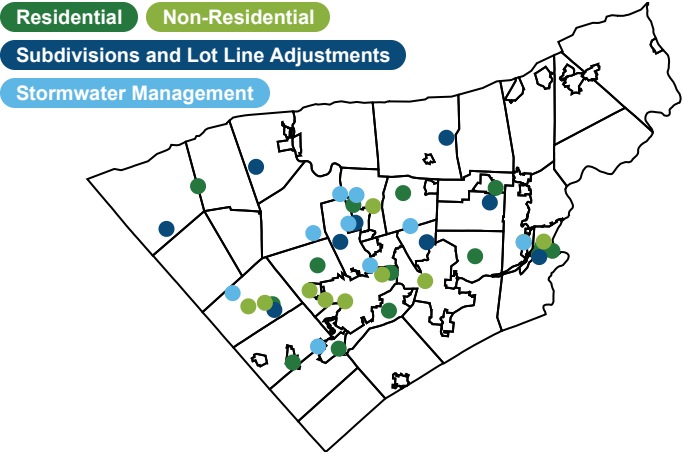


Non-Residential Development

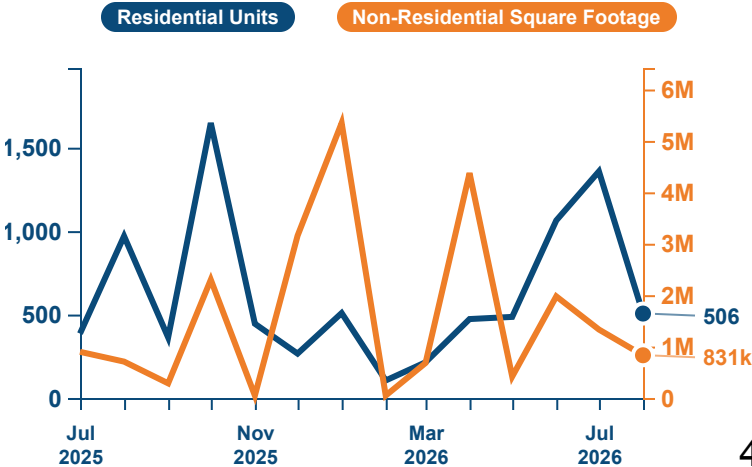
831,280 Total Square Feet



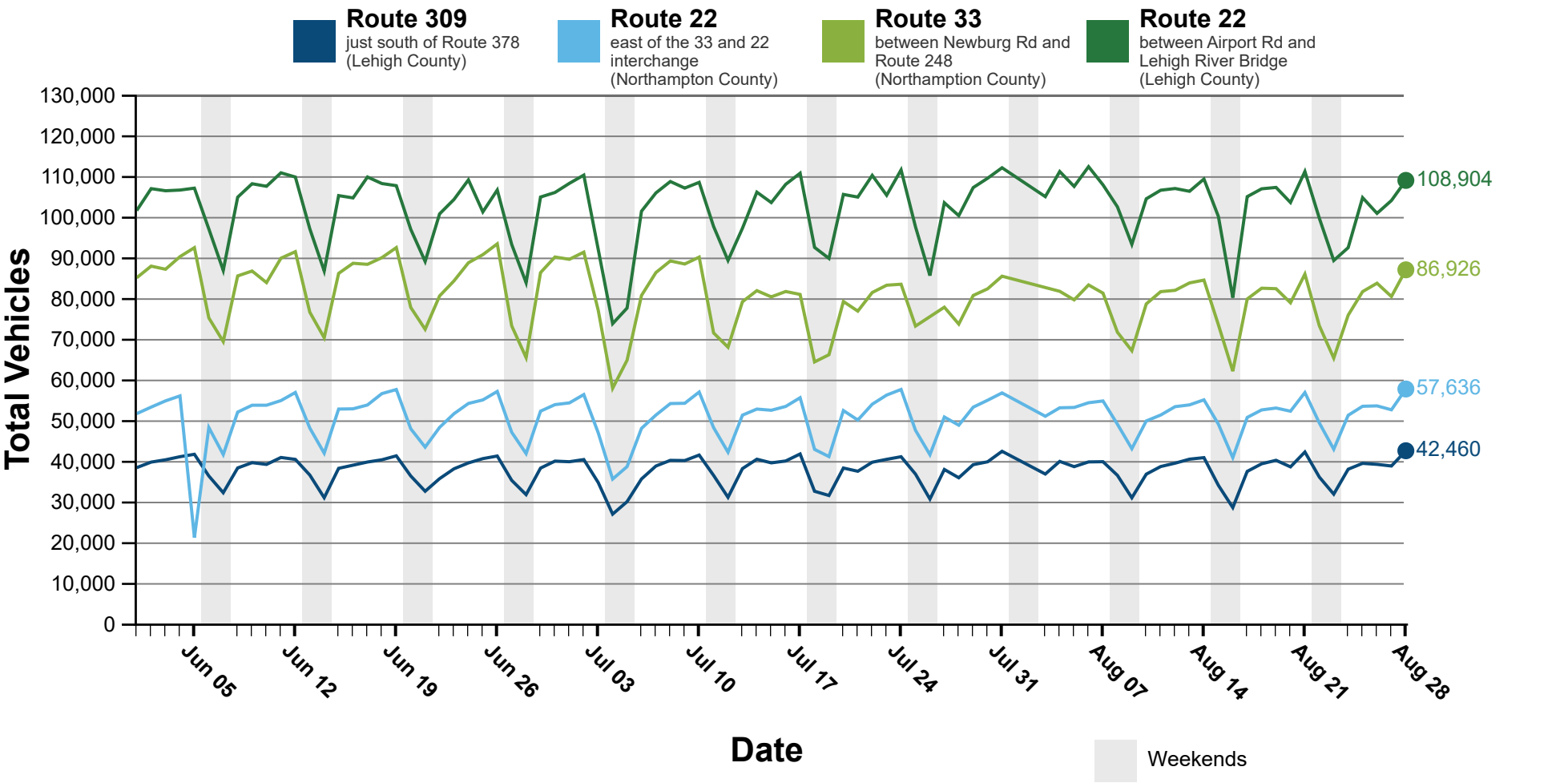
Location of Development



Development Trends

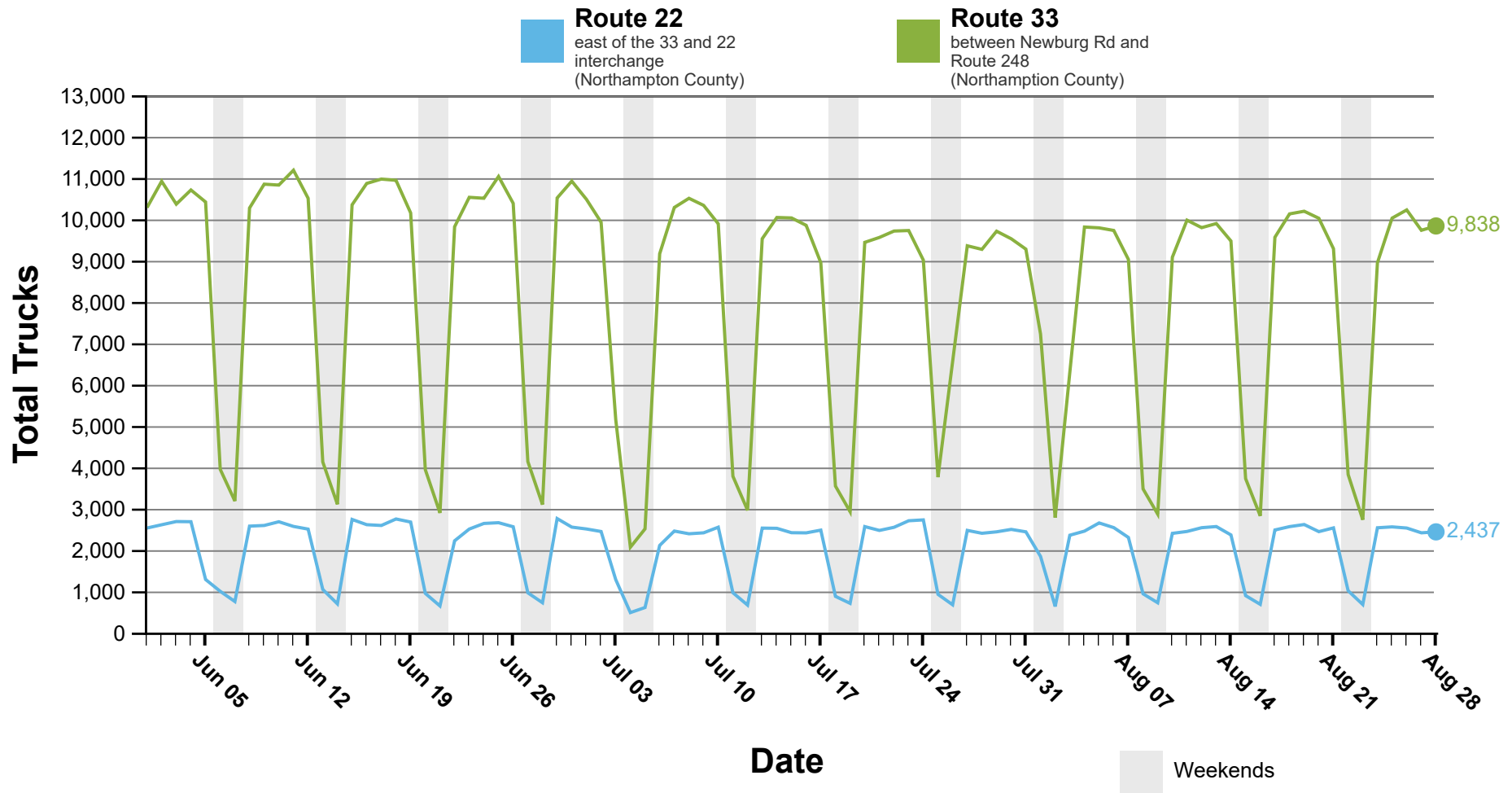


Traffic Volumes Throughout the Lehigh Valley



*Data from June/1/2026 - Aug/28/2026 at daily intervals

Truck Volumes Throughout the Lehigh Valley



*Data from June/1/2026 - Aug/28/2026 at daily intervals



CHRISTINA "TORI" MORGAN
Chair

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Vice Chair

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BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 18, 2026
TO: Lehigh Valley Planning Commission
FROM: Hannah Milagio, Regional Planner for Community Engagement
REGARDING: Public Engagement, Education and Grants

Public Engagement

The most recent **Plan Lehigh Valley National Public Radio** show, which aired at 6:30 pm, September 7 on WDIY radio 88.1 FM, focused on the recently released Lehigh Valley Housing Supply + Attainability Strategy. With guest Jill Seitz, LVPC's Chief Community and Regional Planner, the show focused on the regional housing shortage, the intentional process of developing the strategy, and the data behind it all. The podcast is now streaming at www.wdiy.org/show/plan-lehigh-valley and www.lvpc.org/newsly. The next Plan Lehigh Valley show will air Monday, October 5 at 6:30 pm.

The most recent **Morning Call Business Cycle Column** will be published Sunday, August 23 under the headline "Data Centers: Separating Fact From Fear." In the column, Becky explains that, like all industrial land uses, data centers are not one-size-fits-all. While today's digital demands require more physical space for data, Lehigh Valley communities are addressing concerns through ordinance updates to make sure that projects are located appropriately and built with minimal negative impact. The column will soon be available at www.lvpc.org/newsly and mcall.com. The next column in the Morning Call will publish on Sunday, October 11.

Educational Opportunities

The following Lehigh Valley Government Academy (LVGA) Classes will be held **in-person at the LVPC Office**. More information and registration for upcoming **Local Technical Assistance Program** classes, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, can be found at www.lvpc.org/transportation-training.

Trucks on Local Roads: Issues and Solutions

What: Truck traffic on local roads is a difficult balancing act for many municipalities in Pennsylvania. While trucks need access to pick up and deliver the goods that are necessary for everyday life and the economy, many local roads are not suitable for truck travel. Furthermore, recent changes to State Law in Act 31 of 2018 add more complications. This class will:

- Review current state laws and regulations on truck access and restrictions.
- Discuss the traffic study requirements and options for restricting truck traffic.
- Examine real local truck traffic issues, problems, and solutions.
- Explore planning approaches for trucks, including land use, the roadway network, and ordinances.

When: Tuesday, September 22, 8 AM – noon

How Much: Free – www.lvpc.org/transportation-training

Speed Limits and Speed Management

What: The half-day course will employ newly developed material, focusing on the investigation and decision-making processes associated with managing vehicular speed. The participants will: review speed safety statistics and how to identify problem areas, discuss how to study a roadway segment for speed issues and determine changes in speed limit postings, recognize common safety issues and learn to apply proven mitigation measures.

When: Tuesday, September 29, 8 AM – noon

How Much: Free – www.lvpc.org/transportation-training

Contact Hannah Milagio at hmilagio@lvpc.org or 610-264-4544 with any questions or for registration assistance.

Grant Opportunities

PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED): Local Share Account (LSA) – Northampton + Lehigh

LSA funds may be used for economic development, community development and public interest projects. Eligible applicants include municipalities, counties, economic development agencies and redevelopment authorities in Northampton and Lehigh Counties. Grant amounts will vary based on specific project requirements. The application period will close on September 30, 2026. For more information, go to <https://www.pa.gov/grants/search/grant-details/dced/42>.

THE MORNING CALL

Talking Business with Becky Bradley: Facts, fears and what you need to know about the data center debate

By Becky Bradley

For The Morning Call

Aug. 23, 2026 at 8:00 AM



Data centers. There I just ripped off the Band-aid. We can skip the dramatic pause and get right to talking about one of the largest public issues of the day.

Now that we've gotten that out of the way, let's talk about facts. Like most every proposed land use, there are right places to locate data centers and wrong places. There are right ways to build them and wrong ways. They are not inherently bad. And not inherently good, but without proper planning, they can have the kinds of impacts on

a community that warrant the passions [we've seen fill up municipal meetings across the Lehigh Valley](#), other regions and the nation.

So, let's break down one of today's most controversial issues.

Data centers are the physical expression of "the cloud." They are secure facilities that house the hardware that stores and process digital information. Simply, a data center is a server farm. Whenever we stream video, online bank, do telehealth, use our car's GPS, scroll Instagram or ask Alexa to give us the weather report, data centers are the physical space behind making those things happen.

They can be as small as your office AV closet and as big as 50 football fields. Some of the larger ones have a single tenant such as Amazon or a cryptomining company, but others are data hotels with multiple tenants. They can be in one-story warehouse-looking buildings or look like high-rise office buildings. Form and scale vary widely. They've been around for decades, but they're in the news now because our insatiable appetite to create and store information is causing a building boom.

Let me let you in on something that has been in plain sight for at least a handful of years: We already have them here. In fact, there are several hyperscale data centers, some medium-sized and smaller ones too. They also come in different forms, and most are in office and flex industrial parks in Upper Macungie Township, Hanover (Northampton County) Township, along the Route 33 corridor or in South Bethlehem. You probably have driven by and didn't even know. This is because the ones that are here look like any other office building or are part of a manufacturing facility with generally minimal impact on the surrounding community.

The fact is that we need these. Data is being stored right here in the Lehigh Valley, not only for Mack Trucks, Air Products and semi-conductor manufacturer Broadcom, but national entities like Microsoft. They also house data for St. Luke's Hospital and the Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania, 911 systems and key government agencies that support the public health and safety.

This article, a spreadsheet on transportation investments, a draft infrastructure survey, and the seven other files, programs and email that I have open on my computer right now are synching to a data center in Upper Macungie Township. They house your Facebook posts, TikTok videos, your Apple Wallet and pictures of your kids. If you sync anything it's in a data center — your little part of it anyway. Just like all of our online and in-app purchases fueled the warehouse boom, our individual decisions each and everyday fuel the data center boom.

But before your existential crisis begins, let's talk about the boom cycle or what some consider the doom cycle. Now that we understand our complicity in this modern life, let's break down the real controversy about data center development.

This is the most controversial land use of this era, and for valid reasons. People fear they'll consume too much water and energy or cause neighborhood noise and emissions problems. All are warranted concerns. Some that have sprouted in Virginia, Texas or California can alter a neighborhood skyline at more than 60 feet tall, use 450,000 gallons of water a day, consume enough energy to power a city the size of Allentown, and have a constant hum equivalent to your neighbor mowing the lawn next door 24/7, 365 days a week.

However, there are some that look like a typical office building, use closed-loop recycled water systems that consume very little water and have less sound than your neighbor's window box air conditioner. In general, like the high school gym-sized computers in the mid-1900s that became desktops, tablets and smart phones, the systems that allow a data center to function generally are becoming smaller and more efficient. That means over time, the buildings needed to handle hyperscale quantities of data and information will get smaller and the resources used by these facilities could decline.

There is no one-size-fits-all data center model. They're all different, and the landscape is changing so fast that we're learning new nuances every day. The data centers being proposed now are not like the ones that were built in Virginia a decade ago.

The point is, by all means, go to your municipal meeting when one is proposed. Find out what's being proposed and what impacts it will have on your community, but don't prejudge what it is because they're all different and — let me repeat — there are right ways and right places to site these and wrong ways and wrong places to build them.

One thing that is not in question is that we're in the midst of a data center boom and we are not alone. It's caused a land rush by developers trying to get approvals prior to local governments developing regulations to limit their location, scale and impact mitigation requirements. Land and building owners are also trying to increase the value of their real estate as data center users typically pay more per square foot than other industrial uses like e-commerce or even manufacturing. Where there are unleased industrial buildings some property owners are seeking rezoning and up-zoning to increase their profitability.

Some data center proposals have an end user defined and others don't. It's the same thing we saw during the big box industrial boom a few years ago. The ones that do not have an end user and intend to attract one with an approved development plan are harder for local governments to process. More difficult in the sense that communities don't really know what the impact will be and, per the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, only have 45 days to process the application without it becoming a "deemed approval."

That's pressure on municipal leaders, community members and utility providers in particular. Good questions allow for quality dialogue, productive development

negotiations and better outcomes. Your municipal leaders need you to support them when data center development meetings are happening because they are required to decide within a very tight legal framework that sometimes they don't even like.

For context, there are three proposed for Montgomery County to go along with at least one existing data center, one under construction in Bucks and five existing in Philadelphia. Lackawanna County has 16 proposed data centers and Luzerne County has 13, including two already under construction.

Here in the Lehigh Valley, three are proposed in Lehigh County, and three in Northampton County. We have heard rumors of more hyperscale proposals. You probably have too. Expect more developments and conversions.

Not all of these proposed centers will be built but let's be honest, we're all going to keep scrolling like it's an Olympic sport, which means a greater need. Pile on data hungry applications, including AI, and it's clear this is the beginning.

But let me end this on a positive note. I've been a professional planner for 25 years, and I've never seen our community respond so quickly and decisively. In January, we gave our 62 municipalities an Industrial Land Use guide that serves as a playbook for preparing for these emerging uses, and they've not only used the guide, but many have improved on its recommendations as the ground beneath our feet shifts quickly.

In just the past few months, 25 municipalities have adopted new or refined ordinances to better manage data centers. Another 25 are covered because they're multi-municipal planning partners of communities with new ordinances, and five more are in the process of revising or writing new ordinances.

The response by local government is amazing and inspiring. The Legislature and the governor are responding in various ways as well.

Today's controversy is about data centers. Tomorrow will be something else. Good, proactive planning never goes out of style.

This is a contributed opinion column. Becky Bradley is executive director of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. She can be reached at planning@lvpc.org.

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission has a full range of upcoming trainings and workshops designed to keep the community informed and connected to the many issues of this growing region.

Local Technical Assistance Program

These free classes, in partnership with PennDOT, help communities address infrastructure issues and ensure that their public works departments are up to date on the latest information on safety and maintenance.

Trucks on Local Roads



Sept. 22 | 8 am-noon

Speed Limits and Management



Sept. 29 | 8 am-noon

Managing Utility Cuts



Oct. 7 | 8 am-noon

Local Road Safety Plans



Nov. 17 | 8 am-noon

Register at www.gis.pennidot.gov/LTAP or contact Hannah Milagio at hmilagio@lvpc.org



Register

WORKSHOP^{LV} HOUSING

Sept. 14 | 6 pm – 7:30 pm

Community workshop to implement the policies of the Lehigh Valley Housing Supply and Attainability Strategy. For more information, Housing Plan and Data Dashboard visit lvpc.org/housing.



Register

WORKSHOP^{LV} LAND USE

DATA CENTERS

Oct. 7 | 3 pm - 4:30 pm

Hear updates on industry evolutions and best planning practices. Discuss experiences and approaches with other community representatives.



Register

WORKSHOP^{LV} WATER

Oct. 29 | 9 am - 10:30 am

This workshop will provide the status of the unprecedented effort to update the Lehigh Valley's 15 watershed management plans.