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Executive Director

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, January 23th, 2024, 12:00 noon
AGENDA

THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED AT <https://tinyurl.com/LVPC2024> OR VIA PHONE 610-477-5793 Conf ID: 437 974 566#.

Roll Call

Courtesy of the Floor

Committee Administrative Business:

1. *ACTION ITEM:* Committee Chair and Vice Chair Selection (SN)

Ordinance/Plan Reviews and Information for January 2024:

1. *ACTION ITEM:* Lower Macungie Township – Land Use of Regional Significance - Krocks Road Mixed Use (BGR)
2. *ACTION ITEM:* City of Bethlehem – Zoning Map Amendment – 33 West Broad Street (JS)

Next Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:
February 20, 2024 at 12:00 pm



DR. CHRISTOPHER R. AMATO
Chair

CHRISTINA V. MORGAN
Vice Chair

ARMANDO MORITZ-CHAPELLIQUEN
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

January 12, 2024

Mr. Nathan Jones, Director of Planning/Community Development
Lower Macungie Township
3400 Brookside Road
Macungie, PA 18062

**Re: Krocks Road Mixed Use - Land Use of Regional Significance
Lower Macungie Township
Lehigh Township**

Dear Mr. Jones:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, under the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Both meetings will be on:

LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:

- January 23, 2024, at 12:00PM
- <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

LVPC Full Commission Meeting:

- January 25, 2024, at 7:00PM
- <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

The application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Mixed-Use Development category. The proposed development is for a mix-use land development to include 19,800 square feet of retail, 318 apartment units, and an 88,000-square-foot hotel at 617 North Krocks Road (PIN 547567692461).

The LVPC offers the following comments:

Multimodal Accessibility Buffer

This parcel falls into a Multimodal Accessibility Buffer (MAB) based on the Transportation Plan (*FutureLV: The Regional Plan* pages 60-61). These areas are opportunities that the LVPC highly encourages for expansion, improvements, or connections to the mixed-transportation network during development or redevelopment for all modes of transportation including, motorists, transit-riders, freight-carriers

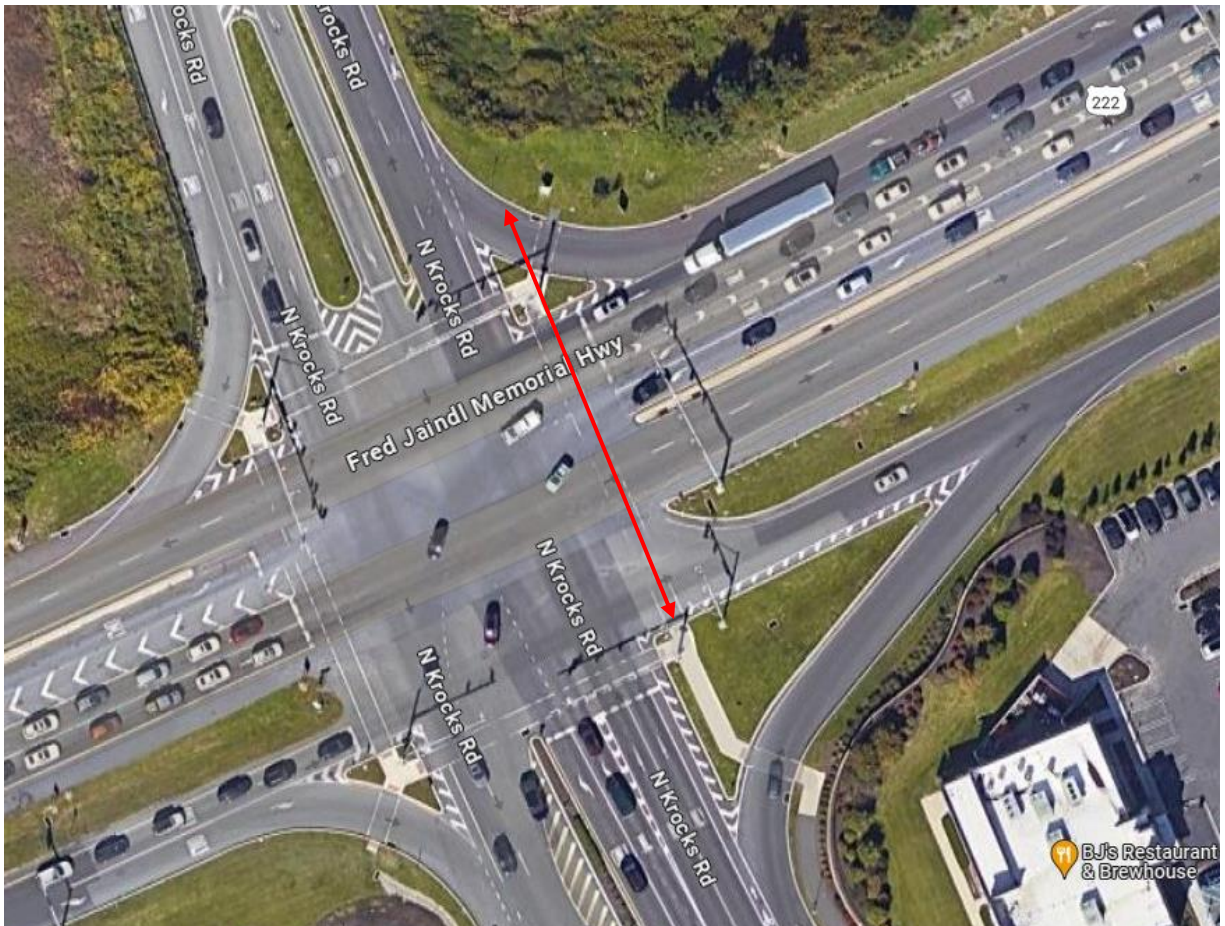
bicyclists, and pedestrians which supports Policy 2.2 to ‘provide a safe, well maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently while capitalizing on existing infrastructure’.

LANTA provides public transportation to several bus stop locations within Hamilton Crossings, approximately .3 miles south of the project site on the other side of the Route 222 Bypass/Fred Jaendl Memorial Highway.

The proposed mixed-use development plan within the Krocks Road Development complex includes a comprehensive pedestrian network, particularly along the main entrance driveway “Road B” from North Krocks Road. The proposed sidewalk also continues from the Road B and Krocks Road intersection down to the Krocks Road and Route 222 Bypass intersection, where it can connect with the existing crosswalk and pedestrian connections at the Route 222 Bypass signalized intersection with Hamilton Crossings. The LVPC commends this connectivity which supports ‘improving connections between mass transit and pedestrian infrastructure’ (of Policy 2.3).

The LVPC recommends that sidewalks be installed along both sides of Road “A” and Road “B” to further ‘strengthen sidewalk infrastructure’ (of Policy 5.3). This would also help mitigate the need for pedestrians to cross traffic lanes which is a safety concern for all pedestrians but especially for vulnerable road users such as those using a mobility device who must use and share the road with motor vehicles when there is no sidewalk available. Adding sidewalks on both sides promotes ‘safe and secure community design’ (of Policy 5.2) and creates a space that is accessible for all users supporting the ‘use of universal design’ (of Policy 5.2).

The LVPC strongly recommends that improvements be made at the intersection of 222 and Krocks Road. The apartment buildings and hotel will increase pedestrian traffic, adding to the numbers that already use public transportation and must cross this intersection, especially to reach Hamilton Crossings retail center on the south side of Route 222 from the development. Pedestrians must cross seven lanes of traffic.



The seven lanes that pedestrians must cross is indicated by the red arrow

The LVPC 'promotes context-specific design solutions' (of Policy 5.4) for 'safe and secure community design' (Policy 5.1) and strongly recommends that the pedestrian timed crossing light be time extended to allow sufficient time people of all ages and abilities to safely cross traffic including those people who use a mobility device or tool such as a wheelchair, walker, scooter, who are pushing a stroller or using a white cane. Inequalities in walking/rolling speeds based on age and ability impact people's capability to use crosswalks within the allotted time.

Additionally, the LVPC suggests additional safety measures such as refreshing the pedestrian cross walk marking and adding a pedestrian refuge island, which according to the Federal Highway Administration, protect pedestrians from traffic and can reduce crashes with pedestrians by 32%. These additions would increase pedestrian safety supporting Policy 5.1 to 'reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities toward zero'.

The LVPC strongly recommends that the municipality work with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and the developer to study possibilities at this intersection to maximize safety and mitigate congestion to 'provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently, while capitalizing on existing infrastructure (Policy 2.2). The LVPC also recommends

coordination with LANTA Land Use/Transportation Planner Molly Wood
mwood@lantabus-pa.gov.

Crosswalks

The LVPC commends the pavement marked crosswalks shown throughout this proposal which ‘promotes safe and secure community design’ (Policy 5.1) and recommends that crosswalks be added from the northwest and southwest corners of Building 10 to be connected to the sidewalk network.

The LVPC also suggests a crosswalk be added from the southeastern corner of Building 2 to the dog park and recreation area to further meet the accessibility needs for all future residents and guests which supports ‘universal design’ (of Policy 5.2).

Pedestrian-Scale Lighting

The LVPC applauds the walking paths included in the plans which integrate mixed transportation into public space design (of Policy 5.2). The LVPC recommends pedestrian scale lighting as a way to create community space that promotes physical and mental health (Policy 5.3), especially for the paths around basins three and four, ‘supporting safe and secure community design’ (of Policy 5.1).

Bicycle Racks

The LVPC applauds the inclusion of bicycle racks throughout the plans. For many people a bicycle is their primary mode of transport and including parking for bicycles supports a safe, healthy, inclusive, and livable community (*FutureLV* the Regional Plan Goal 5), integrates mixed-transportation into public space design (of Policy 5.2), and it ‘improves bicycle infrastructure’ (of Policy 5.2).

School Bus Stops

The LVPC recommends that the developer coordinate with the local school district to locate school bus stops for school children from the apartments planning ahead to ensure that the locations are in secure well-lit locations.

Transportation Impact Study (TIS)

The Figure 2 site plan, in the TIS submitted for review to the LVPC was drafted August 2022 and varies from the submitted plans drafted in May 2023. There are multiple differences including the clubhouse layout. The LVPC strongly recommends that, prior to approval, the plans be updated for consistency. The TIS will be used as a reference for future land developments in the vicinity and they should be consistent.

Emergency Access

The primary entrance for the project is also the entrance to Resurrection Cemetery at Krocks Road and St. John and St. Paol Avenue. The LVPC recommends that the municipality discuss with both the cemetery and local law enforcement any impacts that could occur during peak hours of use with respect to congestion or stopped traffic due to funeral processions. The LVPC also recommends advance coordination around traffic control for these infrequent events to plan for time of day and traffic directional needs in

such a highly trafficked area. This supports 'providing a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people' (Policy 2.2).

The LVPC strongly recommends coordination with PennDOT to study this location to determine if a traffic signal or a roundabout could be constructed at the entrance. Currently there are congestion issues at this location and adding 4,500+ daily trips will exasperate the congestion. The LVPC suggests consideration of a roundabout which would minimize maintenance, have higher rate of traffic flow since stopping is not required, and serve as a traffic calming measure which would improve safety for pedestrians.

If a traffic light is determined to be the most appropriate for this entrance, the LVPC suggests that turn movements and mobility for Reppert Lane be considered since the irregular angle of Reppert Lane and the existing turn movements could be compromised by traffic signal operations. The LVPC encourages that this be evaluated that pedestrian infrastructure be modernized to mitigate the impacts to vulnerable road users to 'reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities toward zero' (of Policy 5.1).

The locations of this entrance within the segment of road that narrows from two lanes to one northbound should be reviewed for protentional signage and/or pavement markings to minimize lane changes by drivers traveling through rather than entering the development (*FutureLV Policy 2.2*).

There is a proposed emergency access from the site to the Allentown Service Plaza and Cetronia Road. The LVPC recommends that the developer engage with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and Service Plaza operators about future gating and access as emergency access needs to be maintained and kept open during snow and other emergency events.

Upper Macungie Township should be involved with any planned installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Krocks Road and Cetronia Road. This is within the Upper Macungie Township jurisdiction and could incur maintenance and energy costs associated with operations. The LVPC recommends that the Jurisdiction of road, whether public or private, should be clarified and maintenance responsibilities memorialized during the planning process at the municipal level.

Planned Transportation Capacity

The LVPC suggests that over-sized parking spaces be planned for at the hotel and apartments allowing space accommodate delivery and moving trucks, vehicles used for landscaping, and semi-truck cabs not connected to a trailer which require 10' of space for parking. This LVPC makes these recommendations for future residents, hotel guests, and employees, movers and delivery vehicles and suggests that these be planned for both short and overnight parking. This would help to support parking options, which supports Policy 2.4.

Additionally, the LVPC recommends that the proposed dumpster locations be verified against the truck turning templates to ensure there is adequate access space for garbage trucks to access, empty receptacles, and turn around.

Electric Charging Spaces

The Township should encourage the addition of electric vehicle charging spaces, recognizing the rapidly expanding need for renewable energy sources and the advancement of autonomous and electric vehicle technologies (Policies 2.5 and 3.2).

United States Postal Service (USPS)

United States Postal Service should be consulted for delivery service to the project as a centralized delivery system will mostly likely require a cluster box post office delivery point. The LVPC recommends planning for these to be located in accessible and well-lighted locations that will allow safe access for both pedestrians and USPS employees. For large residential projects, the USPS guidance document on centralized mail delivery should be used as a guide <https://about.usps.com/what-we-are-doing/current-initiatives/delivery-growth-management/residential-delivery.htm>.

Affordable Housing

This proposal includes 372 residential units. To support ‘attainable housing in locations that maximize social and economic opportunities’ (Policy 4.5) the LVPC recommends that the cost of affordable housing for this area be taken into consideration when determining rents. This proposal is within Census Tract 63.05. According to the Census’s 2022, 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS), residents in this area earn a median yearly income of \$103,061 and pay a median rent of \$1,234 before utilities. The LVPC recommends that the affordable housing needs for future employees of the commercial area, as well as for the surrounding community, be considered when determining rents.

General Land Use Plan

The General Land Use Plan shows areas recommended for Development, Farmland Preservation, Preservation Buffer, and Exurban uses and should guide development and preservation efforts. *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, pages 48-49. Based on the General Land Use Plan, this parcel falls into both a development area and farmland preservation.

A large swath of this parcel is agricultural land that is part of a Farmland Preservation Area. These areas are predominantly agriculture and are recommended to remain agriculture based on the General Land Use Plan on pages 52 and 53 in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. The types of uses recommended include agriculture and related housing and businesses, parks and open space, and housing not related to agriculture on a very limited scale.

Although this parcel falls into Farmland Preservation, it also falls into a development area. Development areas have most, or all of the factors needed to support growth, such as sewer and transportation infrastructure capacity and contiguity to existing development and are capable of accommodating a substantial amount of additional development. Centers and Corridors located within Development areas are recommended for denser, mixed-use developments (*FutureLV* Plan Maps Pages 48-49).

Coordinate Land Use Decisions

Municipalities that are part of the Southwest Lehigh County Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan are being included in this review letter to 'coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries' as part of Policy 1.4.

Stormwater Review

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

The LVPC encourages the developer to consider opportunities for incorporating sustainable energy systems that reduce overhead operational costs and 'minimize environmental impacts of development' (Policy 3.1), such as geothermal energy systems, solar panels and greywater reuse for irrigation and plumbing. Incorporating sustainable practices to help to 'reduce climate change impacts' (Policy 3.4)."

Municipalities, when considering subdivision/land developments, should reasonably attempt to be consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, as required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) [Article 1§105, Article III§303, §304 & §306(a), Article VI§603(j)].

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

Sincerely,



Bambi Griffin Rivera
Senior Community and Regional Planner



Brian Hite
Transportation Planner



Joseph Dotta
Regional Planner

cc: Lower Macungie Mixed Use Development, LLC, Applicant;
Denis F. Keenan, Project Engineer/Surveyor;
Bryan McAdams, Township Engineer;
Denjam Khadka, LVPC Senior Civil/Environmental Engineer;
Steve Neratko, LVPC Chief Community and Regional Planner;
Geoffrey A. Reese, PE, LVPC Master Planner and Engineer;
Sharon Trexler, Alburtis Borough Manager;
Allen Crawford, Chair, Macungie Borough Planning Commission;
Michael Gibson, Emmaus Borough Planning Commission Chair;
Emily Fucci, Lower Milford Zoning and Planning Director;
Brian Miller, Upper Milford Planning Coordinator



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Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

January 16, 2024

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

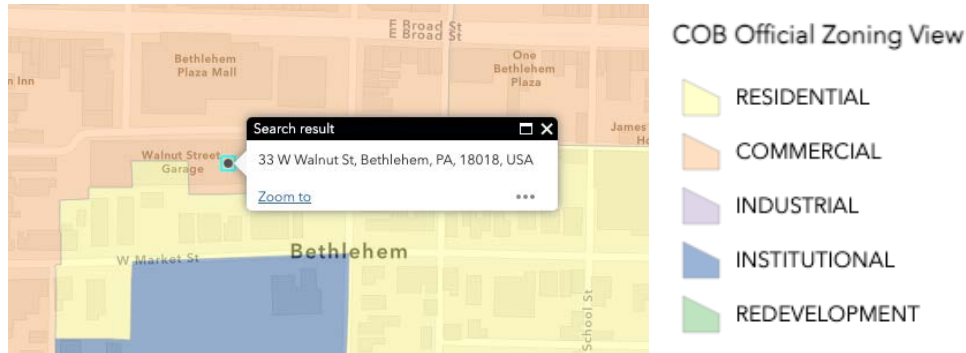
**RE: Zoning Map Amendment – 33 West Walnut Street
City of Bethlehem
Northampton County**

Dear Ms. Heller:

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 primarily takes place during the Committee meeting. Both meetings will be virtual and held on:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
 - o January 23, 2024 at 12:00 PM
 - o <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - o January 25, 2024, at 7:00 PM
 - o <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

The application proposes to rezone the parcel located at 33 West Walnut Street from High Density Residential District (RT) to Central Business Zoning District (CB). The site is currently developed with an existing parking garage (Walnut Street Parking Garage). The applicant anticipates future redevelopment of the site that retains the current commercial and parking garage use. The current zoning of RT on a portion of the site while the remainder is zoned CB prevents a lot consolidation that will facilitate the redevelopment.



The proposal aligns with the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* to support reuse and redevelopment within urban areas and encourage reinvestment in commercial areas (of Policies 1.1 and 4.6). Providing a single consolidated parcel for a development with uniform zoning that aligns with adjacent zoning districts is also a best practice in managing land use and development (of Policy 1.4).

Municipalities, when considering Zoning Ordinance Amendments, 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)].

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner

cc: Tad J. Miller, City Clerk