



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

DR. CHRISTOPHER R. AMATO
Chair

CHRISTINA V. MORGAN
Vice Chair

ARMANDO MORITZ-CHAPELLIQUEN
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, May 23, 2024, at 7:00 PM

Via Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED AT <https://tinyurl.com/LVPC2024> OR VIA PHONE 610-477-5793 Conf ID: 928 251 831#.

Roll Call

Courtesy of Floor

Chairman's Report

1. Report on the Spring Lehigh Valley General Assembly
2. Priority Climate Action Plan Implementation Grant

Minutes

1. *ACTION ITEM:* Minutes and Review of Roll Call Actions of the April 25, 2024, Commission Meeting (JD)

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

1. *ACTION ITEM:* Whitehall Township and City of Allentown – Land Use of Regional Significance – Riverside Drive (JS, EG)
2. *ACTION ITEM:* Wilson Borough – Land Use of Regional Significance – 1921 Dixie Avenue (JS, BH)
3. *ACTION ITEM:* North Whitehall Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Nexus 78 (JD, JS, BH)
4. *ACTION ITEM:* Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet (SM)

Environment Committee:

1. *ACTION ITEM:* Upper Saucon Township – Comprehensive Recreation & Open Space Plan Update Amendment (SR)

Transportation Committee:

1. *INFORMATION ITEM:* Transportation Committee Summary (KH)

Old Business:

1. *INFORMATION ITEMS:* Activity Reports:

- a. Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Report (JD)
- b. Highway Traffic Monitoring (BH)
- c. Industrial Market Report (JD)

New Business:

1. None.

Executive Director's Report:

1. *INFORMATION ITEM*: 2024 Work Program Update

Communications and Engagement:

1. *INFORMATION ITEM*: Morning Call Business Cycle Column (MA)
 - a. Published May 19: "Help the Region Win a \$115 Million Grant"
 - b. Next column: June 23
2. *INFORMATION ITEM*: Monthly, Plan Lehigh Valley Talk Show on WDIY, Lehigh Valley Public Radio, 88.1 (MA)
 - a. Air Date: May 6 – "A Complex Improvement Program with Chris Kufro and Rick Molchany"
 - b. Next show – June 3
3. *INFORMATION ITEM*: Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute Courses (PMPEI) (MA)
 - a. Subdivision and Land Development: September 9, 16, and 23, from 5:30-9:00 PM
 - b. Community Planning: October 9, 16, and 23, from 5:30-9:00 PM
Registration and more information at www.lvpc.org/lvga

Next Lehigh Valley Planning Commission Meeting:

Thursday, June 27, 2024, at 7:00 pm, Virtual

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 April 25, 2024, Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, April 25, 2024. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on Wednesday, February 14th, 2024.

LVPC Chair Dr. Chris Amato chaired the meeting.

Mr. Joey Dotta took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Michael Drabenstott, Sunny Ghai, Philip Ginder, Steve Glickman, Kent Herman, John Inglis, Richard Molchany, Christina Morgan, Santo Napoli, and Stephen Repasch

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, John Gallagher, Judith Haldeman, Darlene Heller, Carl Manges, John McGorry, Steve Melnick, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Tina Smith and Jean Versteeg

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Ron Beitler, Percy Dougherty, Bob Elbich, Jennifer Gomez, Diane Kelly, Dennis Klusaritz, Owen O'Neil, Kevin Schmidt and Matthew Tuerk

Northampton County

Jessica Cope, Ken Kraft, Rachel Leon, Lamont McClure, Scott Minnich, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, Jr., J. William Reynolds and Grace Crampsie Smith

Staff Present: Joey Dotta, Jill Seitz, Becky Bradley, Hannah Milagio, Bambi Griffin Rivera and Brian Hite.

Public Present: Jeff Ward (WFMZ), Jason, Phil Gianficaro (Lehighvalleynews.com), Monica Beaky

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Monica Beaky brought to the Commission's attention the amount of trash and litter beside roads in the Lehigh Valley and how it relates to the recent highway interchange greening project. Ms. Beaky offered any help or information that may alleviate the litter problem in the Lehigh Valley.

Ms. Bradley thanked Ms. Beaky for the volunteering and further provided information that the project application was submitted with PennDOT as a partner. Ms. Bradley said that the LVTS is hoping to start project planning soon but it is still too early in the process right now.

Commissioner Morgan thanked Ms. Beaky for her work and echoed Ms. Bradley's point that as of right now it is still just an application. Commissioner Morgan stressed the importance of the litter problem and the information that Ms. Beaky knows may be able to help in the planning process.

Commissioner Molchany urged Ms. Beaky to bring this information to a LVTS meeting since the grant application is an LVTS initiative. Commissioner Molchany asked Ms. Beaky to come to one of the next few meetings to express concerns about litter, especially how it relates to PennDOT.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Amato updated the Commission of the upcoming General Assembly meeting on May 14, 2024, at 7 PM at the new LVPC office.

MINUTES

Chair Amato stated that the minutes of the Thursday, March 28, 2024, LVPC meeting are attached, and Mr. Dotta presented the previously voted on agenda items. Chair Amato then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner McGorry made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Molchany seconded the motion.

Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed. Commissioner Drabenstott, Commissioner Elbich, and Commissioner Leon abstained.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: South Whitehall Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Parkland School District New Operations Center

Ms. Rivera presented a proposal for modifications to a project originally reviewed by the LVPC on December 16, 2022. The proposed modifications are to add a 12,832-square-foot addition to the second floor. No building footprint modification or site improvement changes are proposed at 2619 Stadium Road.

Ms. Rivera said that the LVPC recommends communication with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to ensure that impacts to the Pennsylvania Turnpike rights-of-way are addressed. The review also recommends that the school district verify there will be enough onsite parking spaces to accommodate the expansion compared to the previous review provided by LVPC on December 16, 2022.

Ms. Rivera recommended signage and a pavement-marked crosswalk be added on Stadium Drive to communicate to drivers that vulnerable road users cross the roadway and other multi-modal transportation accessibility improvements.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Gallagher made the motion, and Commissioner Melnick seconded the motion. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions.

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

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet:

Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair Steve Melnick presented a summary of the Committee meeting that occurred on Tuesday. The meeting included a total of eight zoning ordinance amendments featuring three in Lower Nazareth Township and one in Macungie Borough. The other zoning ordinances were in Moore Township, two in Plainfield Township and Hanover Township.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Ginder made the motion, and Commissioner Repasch seconded the motion. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Amato called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed. Commissioner Versteeg abstained from the Hanover Township vote.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet:

Environment Committee Chair Steve Repasch presented a summary of the Committee meeting that occurred on Tuesday. The meeting included four Delaware River Basin Commission reviews involving treatment plant and water withdrawal renewals in Slatington Borough, Lehigh Township, Washington Township (NC) and Lower Nazareth Township.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Melnick made the motion, and Commissioner Morgan seconded the motion. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Chair Amato called for affirmative votes to accept the staff comments. The motion passed. Commissioner Ghai abstained from the Washington Township (NC) vote.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Street Vacation Petition Review, portion of North Elizabeth Street, City of Allentown

Transportation Committee Chair Kent Herman summarized the Committee meeting that occurred hours before.

Mr. Hite presented the proposed street vacation application submitted by the City of Allentown on behalf of Diane C. Schmidt of 323 North Ott Street. The proposed street vacation requests to vacate a portion of North Elizabeth Street from previously vacated Wayne Street to Monroe Street and was reviewed for recommendations under Section 304 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, and for general consistency with the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

Mr. Hite recommended utilities that are above or below ground remain accessible as they are today in the event of maintenance or repair that may be required to maintain the essential power and telecommunications utilities as well as any City of Allentown or Lehigh County utilities and infrastructure. It is recommended that the petitioner acquire concurrence signatures for the street vacation petition by all affected property owners.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Commissioner Herman made the motion, and Commissioner Repasch seconded the motion. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports

Ms. Seitz presented the Monthly Subdivision Report that featured 12 Subdivisions, 23 Development proposals, 9 Stormwater Management reviews, and 5 Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 49 reviews over 169 acres. 18 of those reviews were in Lehigh County and 31 were in Northampton County. Ms. Seitz added that the LVPC reviewed 389 total residential units, consisting of 28 single-family detached, 335 apartments and 26 twins.

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

Mr. Dotta presented the Quarterly Subdivision Report that summarized 160 reviews over 1,382 acres, consisting of 31 lot line adjustments, 74 development proposals, 48 stormwater management proposals, and seven municipal ordinance, map and plan reviews. There was a total of 1,401 residential units reviewed in the first quarter of 2024. Apartments made up a majority of that with 905 units reviewed, followed by 451 single-family detached, 40 twins, and five townhouse units. Commercial proposal square footage was up by 23% over the first quarter of 2024 at 2,483,942 total square feet.

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

Mr. Hite presented the Monthly Traffic Report, which featured a counter on Route 22 between Airport Road and the Lehigh River Bridge, logging 106,588 vehicles per day. Interstate 78, just east of Route 309, recorded 74,515 and Route 309 near Coopersburg logged 37,518 vehicles.

Next, Mr. Hite presented commercial truck traffic. Interstate 78 east of 309 recorded 23,512 trucks. Route 22, just east of the Lehigh River Bridge, recorded 11,101 trucks.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEM/DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM: We Have Moved

INFORMATION ITEM: LVPC'S new office at 615 Waterfront Drive, Suite 201, Allentown, PA, 18102

Chair Amato updated the Commission that the LVPC has officially moved into the new office and proposed eventual in-person or hybrid meetings so that the Commissioners can see the new space.

Ms. Bradley noted the amount of work that went into the move and the extra work that was needed to move all the files and furniture. The new office space was summarized, and the executive committee was thanked for their help, specifically Commissioner Glickman.

Commissioner Morgan added that the Waterfront Property won an award for green buildings for large businesses at the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Energy and Environment Committee.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM: Keeping Meetings Virtual? Or Move to Hybrid or In-Person?

Chair Amato asked the Commission whether they would like to make a motion to alter the setting of next month's Full Commission meeting to either hybrid or in person.

Commissioner Ghai made a motion to make the meeting hybrid and Commissioner Melnick seconded that motion. Commissioner Molchany added that the staff should verify their audio and video capabilities for a hybrid meeting. Ms. Bradley added that all committees chose to remain hybrid and the full setup of hybrid meeting equipment will not be functional until the next week. Ms. Bradley added information about the new building's security features and the logistics that would need to be prepared for in-person meetings. More information was estimated to come in the middle of May. Costs relating to readvertising and extra staffing.

Commissioner Melnick asked if there will be any time after working hours that Commissioners will be able to access without the need for a staff member to open the door. Ms. Bradley responded not at this time and that the extra security measures in place are necessary due to threats that staff members have received in the past. The intent is to test the hybrid video capabilities and staffing relating to security at the General Assembly on May 14.

Commissioner Ghai amended the motion to remain virtual and Commissioner Molchany added that if the meeting remains virtual there is no need for a motion or vote. Commissioner Molchany asked Ms. Bradley if her idea is an update of the success of the General Assembly and the opportunity for the Commission to vote on the structure of the June meeting. Ms. Bradley noted that the LVPC will do whatever the Commission decides and suggested informing Commissioners after the General Assembly.

Commissioner Tina Smith asked if hybrid would be possible without the need to hire four additional security personnel. Ms. Bradley clarified that no additional costs relating to hiring security personnel would occur, but rather that an additional LVPC staff person would need to be there to open the front door. There would be some additional costs relating to having to readvertise the meeting from virtual to hybrid if the Commission decides to change formats.

Commissioner Repasch asked if the General Assembly was the best meeting to test the new system. Ms. Bradley agreed but added that renting a space was not in the budget and the LVPC staff is taking extra steps to make sure the meeting runs smoothly. Commissioner Melnick added that any future issues will likely be solved easily.

Commissioner Molchany added that there is no action if the Commission stays virtual, but action may be taken at May's meeting for the format of June's meeting. Chair Amato asked if the LVPC should consider preemptively consider readvertising the June meeting to virtual. It was decided to move on to the next agenda item.

No vote was taken.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

INFORMATION ITEM: Quarterly Work Plan Update

Ms. Bradley presented an overview of work program accomplishments in quarter one. These projects included the Lehigh Valley Priority Climate Action Plan and the Implementation Grant Application, the Effectiveness of the City of Allentown Neighborhood Improvement Zone Development Authority Report, the Passenger Rail Analysis, 2023 Annual Report, and many more projects.

Ms. Bradley went over several of the many presentations that the LVPC made or contributed to. The primary results for a Municipal Farmland/Open Space Referendum was shared by Ms. Bradley that had a slim vote in Whitehall Township and Heidelberg Township.

Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. Chair Amato added that the close margin of both votes was surprising.

Commissioner Ginder added that the referendum was based on real estate taxes rather than earned income tax vote to distribute effect more evenly.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

INFORMATION ITEM: Morning Call Business Cycle Column

Ms. Milagio spoke about the most recent Morning Call column under a headline "The Data-Driven Effort for Safer Roads," where Becky explains the several big-ticket projects designed specifically to improve safety and save lives in the draft Transportation Improvement Program. That column can be found at lvpc.org/news/v or at mcall.com. The next column will look at our recently filed Lehigh Valley Green Transportation Infrastructure Grant, and that will run May 19.

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

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

Ms. Milagio summarized the most recent Plan Lehigh Valley radio show that aired April 1, and it covered the recently released Lehigh Valley Passenger Rail Analysis, and we were fortunately to have as our guest Angela Watson, who is PennDOT's Director of Rail, Freight, Ports & Waterways. That show is streaming at lvpc.org/news/v and at WDIY.org. Ms. Milagio also announced that new WDIY Executive Director Margaret McConnell will be joining Becky and Matt for all future shows.

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

INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Program Virtual Classes

Ms. Milagio summarized the PA Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) being offered in PA land use and planning. In 2024, the three courses offered are Zoning Administration in May, Subdivision and Land Development in September, and Community Planning in October.

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

INFORMATION ITEM: Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

Mr. Hite presented an upcoming LTAP class on May 2, 2024, from 11 am to noon called “Nighttime Visibility for Safety.”

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

INFORMATION ITEM: PennDOT Connects 2024 Municipal Outreach Meeting (BH)

Mr. Hite presented an event on May 16th where PennDOT Connects provides an opportunity to interact with PennDOT, Planning Partners, and other municipalities in the area at the PennDOT District offices or virtually from 1 to 3 pm.

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

INFORMATION ITEM: Grants

Ms. Milagio presented grant opportunities coming up that many of municipal partners can take advantage of, starting with the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Safe Streets for All and the Multimodal Transportation fund through the Department of Community and Economic Development. Another one presented is the state Department of Environmental Protection Municipal Recycling Program Grant, and the application for that one is May 10.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Amato stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on April 25 at 7pm. Chair Amato then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Molchany made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and Joey Dotta, Regional Planner



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Planning for the Future of Lehigh and Northampton Counties at 615 Waterfront Drive, Suite 201, Allentown, PA 18102 ■ (610) 264-4544 ■ lvpc@lvpc.org ■ www.lvpc.org

May XX, 2024

Lee Rackus, Planning, Zoning & Development Bureau Chief
Whitehall Township
3219 MacArthur Road
Whitehall, PA 18052

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

**RE: Riverside Drive Raise Grant – Land Use of Regional Significance
City of Allentown
Lehigh County**

Dear Ms. Rackus and Ms. Gomez:

The application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Major Redevelopment category. 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
 - May 21, 2024 at 12:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - May 23, 2024, at 7:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

The application proposes to construct a new local road and multi-use trail along former railroad right-of-way between Furnace Street in the City of Allentown and Wood Street/Lehigh Avenue in Whitehall Township, approximately 2.3 miles (parcel numbers 640746335876, 640747104161, 640738706988, 640739333753, 640820766814, 640821390309, 640823417857, 640824645120, 640815791987 and 640806671365).

The proposal extends motor vehicle access from Furnace Street to Wood Street, providing connections to the Route 22 interchange at Fullerton Avenue. Connections between Riverside

Drive and both Jordan Drive and Kimmet Avenue are also proposed. The roadway is to be 28 feet wide curb-to-curb for most its length in Whitehall Township, expanding to 36 feet wide at Furnace Street and the Jordan Drive connection in Allentown to accommodate a center left turn lane. The road is to be posted with a 25-mile-per-hour posted speed limit. The proposal extends the completed Phase 1 of the project, which includes the construction of Riverside Drive from Hamilton Street north to Furnace Street.

A 12-foot-wide paved shared use path for walking and bicycling will be constructed parallel to Riverside Drive, and a five-foot wide landscaped buffer with streetlights and street trees will be located between Riverside and the shared use path. Where Riverside Drive terminates and connects to Wood Street at Route 22, the path continues using gravel material, extending north past Bridge Street/Race Street with a connection to Lehigh Avenue. The trail extension beyond Bridge Street provides an opportunity to connect to the Ironton Rail Trail at Water Street. The gravel path is also designated as an emergency access road.

The proposal aligns with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because it establishes a mixed-transportation corridor and enhances multimodal connections (of Policy 2.1). The project is located in the Development area of the *FutureLV* General Land Use Plan and serves to ‘increase the social, economic and environmental well-being of the region’ (of Policy 1.1) by increasing access to critical needs such as jobs, active recreation opportunities that improve public health, supporting emergency management and safety operations, creating safe routes to schools, parks and community facilities, preserving historical and natural resources and re-establishing neighborhood access to the Lehigh River. Reusing vacant and underutilized properties by redeveloping existing rail right-of-way serves to improve efficiency of existing infrastructure (of Policies 5.4 and 2.2).

In addition, the project closes Pennsylvania’s highest priority trail gap along the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (D&L), is part of the September 11th National Memorial Trail and improves connections to the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) new bus rapid transit network, which serves to ‘connect regional trails to centers, corridors and historic assets’ (of Policy 4.4).

Realizing Community Vision

The project supports the vision outlined in the Whitehall Township Comprehensive Plan, which identifies that ‘The Delaware and Lehigh Trail is a large trail scheme that will eventually connect Wilkes-Barre with Philadelphia via abandoned canal towpaths and rail lines’ (Page 2-16). Closing this gap in the D & L Trail network improves Township resident access to the Township’s existing recreation facilities, including the Ironton Rail Trail.

The project also supports the vision outlined in Allentown Vision 2030, where a north-south proposed trail is identified from south of Union Boulevard to north of Route 22 (Chapter 4 Center Allentown), supporting both Center and East Allentown neighborhoods.

The project is also supported by several regional plans and initiatives, such as the *Lehigh County Livable Landscapes Plan* – with this project entitled ‘Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Trail’ – and is listed as one of the Commonwealth’s high priority trail gaps. The corridor’s place as an integral part of the Lehigh Valley’s pedestrian network is further underscored by its inclusion in *WalkRollLV: Active Transportation Plan* among the Top 20 Sidewalk Gaps. The proposal serves to fulfill strategies included in all three plans.

Additionally, in the grant application process when applying for a U.S. Rebuilding American

Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant for the project, numerous regional entities including the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation, Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, St. Luke's University Health Network, Wildlands Conservancy and others provided letters of support outlining the ways in which the Riverside Drive project supports each organization's goals and missions.

Job Access

1,184 employees working in Whitehall Township commute from the City of Allentown (10.5% of Whitehall Township workers), and 1,749 Township residents commute to the City of Allentown for work (12.4% of Township residents). Providing multimodal transportation options for nearly 3,000 workers traveling back and forth between Whitehall and Allentown serves to increase access to employment opportunities while alleviating vehicular traffic on other connecting roadways, such as MacArthur Road / 7th Street (Route 145).

The proposal will improve the ability for the workforce to get to and from places of employment, increase economic success of the community and region and remove barriers to employment (of Policy 4.3). This phase of the Riverside Drive project provides critical connections to an area with low access to opportunity and serves nearby areas with similar or very low access to opportunity. Implementation of this multimodal corridor will improve job access and mobility for residents – 19% of whom do not have access to a vehicle based upon analysis included in the LVPC Equity Analysis. The transportation options offered through this project will 'increase the social, economic and environmental well-being of the region' (of Policy 1.1), create public spaces in underserved areas and 'ensure transportation accessibility for all persons' (of Policy 5.2).

Traffic and Network Mobility

The construction of Riverside Drive serves to increase safe and accessible transportation options (of Policy 2.1). Currently there are few connections between the City and Township, and those roadways lack sufficient infrastructure to safely accommodate multimodal transportation users alongside motor vehicles. Constructing Riverside Drive resolves these legacy issues and provides 'a safe, well-maintained transportation network to move people and goods efficiently, while capitalizing on existing infrastructure' (Policy 2.2) through a 'right-sized transportation infrastructure project' (of Policy 2.2).

The proposed portion of Riverside Drive increases the mobility of a variety of transportation uses. Riverside Drive creates a connection between several roads, including Hamilton Street, West Court Street, Linden Street, North Front Street, West Gordon Street, West Allen Street, Waterfront Drive, Furnace Street and Jordan Drive in the City of Allentown, as well as Kimmet Avenue and Wood Street in Whitehall Township. The shared-use trail will also connect to Lehigh Avenue, and Riverside Drive also creates a new route to the Route 22 interchange at Fullerton Avenue.

Riverside Drive will also support the traffic generated by new and/or proposed developments in the vicinity, including the Waterfront Development and the Neuweiler Redevelopment:

Waterfront Development

AM Peak – 1,117 Total Trips

PM Peak – 1,919 Total Trips

Neuweiler Development

AM Peak – 182 Total Trips

PM Peak – 252 Total Trips

Four bridges in the vicinity may see increased traffic flows in the future. PennDOT's OneMap software indicates the Route 22 bridge over the Lehigh River is in Good condition, as well as the American Parkway bridge over the Lehigh River. While OneMap indicates the Tilghman Street Bridge as in fair condition, the bridge has recently undergone a multi-year rehabilitation project. Hamilton Street bridge is also identified as Fair condition. Due to the number of estimated trips from the Waterfront and Neuweiler developments, it is important to monitor the effects the new traffic may have on the bridges.

Emergency Management and Response

The creation of Riverside Drive allows for north-south connectivity and increased response rates for police, fire and emergency medical services through improved access. The design of the northernmost portion of the trail extending from Wood Street to Lehigh Avenue also allows for the trail to be used by emergency vehicles. At completion, the corridor will 'promote safe and secure community design and emergency management' (Policy 5.1).

The LVPC commends the inclusion of a redistribution of existing traffic section within the plan. The redistribution shows significant use of the proposed Riverside Drive and how it will positively impact the flow of traffic throughout the site and surrounding areas. With the greater connection, emergency access for the surrounding neighborhoods and Route 22 is also improved.

Multimodal Accessibility

The LVPC commends the paved shared-use path along the length of Riverside Drive, as well as the continuation of the path beyond the end of Riverside Drive. The proposed multi-use trail supports mobility, transportation accessibility, air quality, safety and economic competitiveness, all things that are essential to quality of life for residents and visitors. The LVPC commends the proposal for providing D&L Trail connections that strengthen 'sidewalk, bike route and trail infrastructure' (of Policy 5.3). The proposal invests in the community by promoting a healthy environment through active transportation opportunities.

Lighting is proposed along Riverside Drive and the paved portion of the multi-use trail. The LVPC commends the use of streetlight poles that provide both traffic and pedestrian lighting (of Policy 5.3) as well as banner arms that can be used to identify the corridor and establish a sense of place (of Policy 5.4).

The LVPC also commends the inclusion of enhanced crosswalk markings and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible curb cuts, which increase access to daily needs for all people (Policy 5.2).

Multimodal connectivity in urban settings require ample room for accommodating all modes of transportation. Dedicating a separation of higher speed bicycles and pedestrian traffic will enhance safety along the corridor. The LVPC commends the project vision that includes pavement/trail markings and/or signage to support bicycle use to 'ensure transportation accessibility for all persons' (of Policy 5.2).

The LVPC encourages further considerations to include additional amenities supporting alternative transportation modes along the Riverside Drive trail. Bicycle racks should be included in well-lit locations. Benches should also be considered along the paved portion of the shared-use path to provide resting areas.

Transit Connections

The LVPC supports and encourages continued coordination with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) as project development continues. LANTA currently provides public transportation near the proposed new portion of Riverside Drive, with northbound/southbound stops along Front Street in Allentown and Fullerton Avenue in Whitehall Township. LANTA does not have immediate service plans along Riverside Drive, but does anticipate expanding service via Riverside Drive between Linden Street in Allentown and Wood Street in Whitehall Township following the completion of the new roadway.

The proposed plan includes ADA curb ramps at the intersections of Furnace Street, Jordan Drive, and Kimmett Street. LANTA appreciates providing access to the crosswalks from the curb ramps. Fully accessible concrete bus stop landing pads at a raised curb height, at each crosswalk and roadway connection, will facilitate proper boarding/alighting at the anticipated northbound and southbound bus stop locations at the three intersections. For continued early engagement and discussion, please contact LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist Molly Wood at mwood@lantabus-pa.gov.

Maximizing transit and trail connections serves to ‘improve connections between bus stops and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure’ (of Policy 5.2). Continued coordination with LANTA regarding future bus services needs will ensure that development of the roadway includes pull-off lanes and modern bus shelters, especially as the entire Riverside Drive Multimodal Revitalization Corridor is constructed, to strengthen mixed-transportation access to regional centers (of Policy 2.3).

Short- and Long-Term Funding

A policy of *FutureLV* is to ensure the highest and best use of transportation funds to maximize available financial resources (Policy 2.6). The proposed project is financed by private, state and federal funding, is part of an overall regional transportation project, and is being incrementally funded using best practices and available funding in order to facilitate an efficient construction and implementation schedule.

As a vital emergency management and congestion management corridor, Riverside Drive is anticipated to be eligible for ‘Local Federal Aid Route’, providing additional future maintenance funding opportunities to Whitehall Township and the City of Allentown. This will ensure a legacy of good roadway maintenance and repair, promoting the fiscal health and sustainability of municipalities (Policy 4.6) and providing transportation options that are cost-effective and sustainable (of Policy 1.1).

Stormwater Review

The project site is located within the Catasauqua and Little Lehigh Creek Watersheds. These watersheds have fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments related to our review of the project’s stormwater management plan are included as Attachment 1.

Overall, the design of this proposal is exemplary of sustainable transportation investments, fulfilling numerous goals and policies of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

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.

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

Sincerely,



Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner



Evan Gardi
Transportation Planner

- cc:
- Christine Frey, Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Applicant
 - Chris Stanford, Michael Baker International, Project Engineer
 - Trestle Redevelopment Partners, Record Property Owner
 - Frank Clark, Whitehall Township Engineer
 - David Petrik, City of Allentown Deputy Director of Public Works
 - Priscilla Reyes, City of Allentown Assistant Planner
 - Jesse Sadiua, City of Allentown Chief Planner
 - Brandon Jones, City of Allentown Planner
 - Rick Molchany, Lehigh County Director of General Services
 - Molly Wood, LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist
 - Garrett Cook, Lehigh County Conservation District
 - Claire Sadler, Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Executive Director
 - Darlene Heller, City of Bethlehem Planning Director
 - Kerry Rabold, Salisbury Township Administrative Assistant
 - Shane Pepe, Emmaus Borough Manager
 - David Manhardt, South Whitehall Township Director of Community Development
 - Melissa Wehr, Hanover Township Manager
 - Glenn Eckhart, Catasauqua Borough Manager
 - Peter Paone, President, North Catasauqua Borough Council
 - LeRoy E. Brobst, Manager, Northampton Borough
 - Tiffany Benson, Coplay Borough Secretary/Treasurer
 - Randy Cope, North Whitehall Township Manager



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

Planning for the Future of Lehigh and Northampton Counties at 615 Waterfront Drive, Suite 201, Allentown, PA 18102 ■ (610) 264-4544 ■ lvpc@lvpc.org ■ www.lvpc.org

May XX, 2024

Eric Flowers, Manager
Wilson Borough
2040 Hay Terrace
Wilson Borough, PA 18042

**RE: 1921 Dixie Avenue – Land Use of Regional Significance
Wilson Borough
Northampton County**

Dear Mr. Flowers:

The application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Large Residential Development category. 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
 - May 21, 2024 at 12:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - May 23, 2024, at 7:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

The application proposes an adaptive reuse of the existing building into 405 apartment units with a separate 3,373-square-foot commercial building for a dog lounge and spa. The proposal is located at 315 South 24th Street (parcel number L9-40-1A).

The property is within an area identified in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* as a Development Area. Areas designated for Development have infrastructure to accommodate future growth, or redevelopment in the case of the proposed project, and this project serves to ‘increase density of residential and mixed-use development’ (of Policy 1.2).

Environmental Remediation

As a brownfield site, substantial testing and remediation is required to make the redevelopment suitable for residential use. The LVPC commends the applicant for undertaking the necessary steps to initiate the process, and encourages the continuation of due diligence to minimize environmental impacts and protect the health, safety and welfare of the public (Policy 3.2).

Cultural Resources

The site was previously the Dixie Cup Factory, and while it has been vacant for decades, the building holds considerable local cultural and historical value. The LVPC commends the proposed retention of the existing building as it is adapted to a new use, which promotes development that complements the unique history, environment, culture and needs of the Valley (Policy 5.4). It is of note, that the property is likely eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and B, for association with persons and events significant in American history. Any state or federal incentives that the property would receive would need to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and its associated laws. This also, opens an opportunity to receive federal historic tax credits (up to 20% of investment), which can assist in the preservation, reuse and rehabilitation of the site. It is recommended that the developer contact the Pennsylvania Historical and Museums Commission prior to any construction, including removal of windows, relocation of the iconic rooftop Dixie Cup, or any demolition. John Wood, Preservation Services Division Manager, maybe reached at jpwood@pa.gov, (717) 214-8650.

Housing Attainability and Job Access

The proposed development is aligned with efforts supported by the LVPC to ‘encourage reuse of vacant and underutilized properties’ (of Policy 5.4). The Lehigh Valley has a substantial housing shortage, including a 34,000-unit deficit in units priced for higher income levels. The LVPC commends the redevelopment of an existing urban site for new housing opportunities within the community. This development will increase residential density in an existing center and expand housing options near employment areas (of Policy 1.2 and 5.4).

The location of the proposed residential development close to employment areas serves to maximize social and economic opportunities, though this requires a ‘local balance between housing and jobs’ that enables residents to live near where they work (also of Policy 4.5). The LVPC encourages the Borough to work with the developer to explore housing opportunities accessible for a variety of income levels. *FutureLV* advocates for communities to ‘promote mixed-income neighborhoods’, and this location provides an opportunity to ‘expand housing options near employment areas’ (of Policy 4.5). Providing housing at a variety of price points reduces the need for workers at local establishments to travel further for work, thereby reducing traffic congestion on roadways (of Policy 2.1).

Landscaping and Outdoor Recreation

The project includes substantial landscaping throughout the site on both the residential redevelopment lot and nearby proposed parking lot. The LVPC commends the proposed landscape islands which help manage stormwater runoff, reduce heat island and climate change impacts, and aesthetically improve the sites by breaking up monotonous expanse of paved parking area (of Policies 3.4 and 5.3).

The site has been intentionally designed to incorporate the existing Wilson Bike Path. A public courtyard/plaza area adjacent to the trail serves to create public spaces that reflect and enhance local culture (of Policy 5.4). A proposed path connects from the Wilson Bike Path to the proposed dog park, which improves access to green spaces (of Policy 5.3). The LVPC recommends the developer consider the potential for a second connection to Wilson Bike Path closer to the northern part of the building to further increase trail access and mobility.

Transportation, Access and Accessibility

An estimated number of trips generated by the redevelopment was calculated using the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) 11th edition Trip Generation Manual. The residential component of the project (Land Use Code 221 – Multifamily Housing) is anticipated to generate

an average of 174 new trips during the morning peak hour period, and 165 trips during the evening peak hour period. The proposed restaurant is anticipated to generate an average of 354 trips over the course of the day. Trip generation estimates are provided to support right-sizing transportation infrastructure projects and to improve network efficiency (of Policy 2.2).

The LVPC reviewed the submitted Transportation Impact Study (TIS) created by Traffic Planning and Design dated February 27, 2024.

Access to the project site will be provided by two driveways along 24th Street. One driveway will be gated to serve the residents of the apartments, and the other will be for the proposed restaurant. An auxiliary parking lot serving the redevelopment is also proposed to the northeast of the project between Washington Boulevard and Lehigh Street, east of 24th Street. This auxiliary area is controlled by one gated full access driveway to Lehigh Street and one gated right-in right-out driveway to Washington Boulevard.

The operation of parking area gates and people who may have access to which parking spaces at various times of day should be specified. Gated access can cause transportation network mobility impediments when a vehicle is unable to gain access while others are queuing behind them. Gated access points should provide ample queuing areas with room for vehicles to reverse. Proper planning and operation of gated access points are a critical element for the continued mobility of the transportation network (of Policy 2.2).

The parking lots for the project should be prepared for the future of electric-powered and hybrid chargeable cars. It is recommended that the developer construct the essential infrastructure charging stations in the parking lots to accommodate residents who may wish to charge their vehicles, as alternative-fueled vehicles become increasingly prevalent (of Policies 2.2 and 2.5).

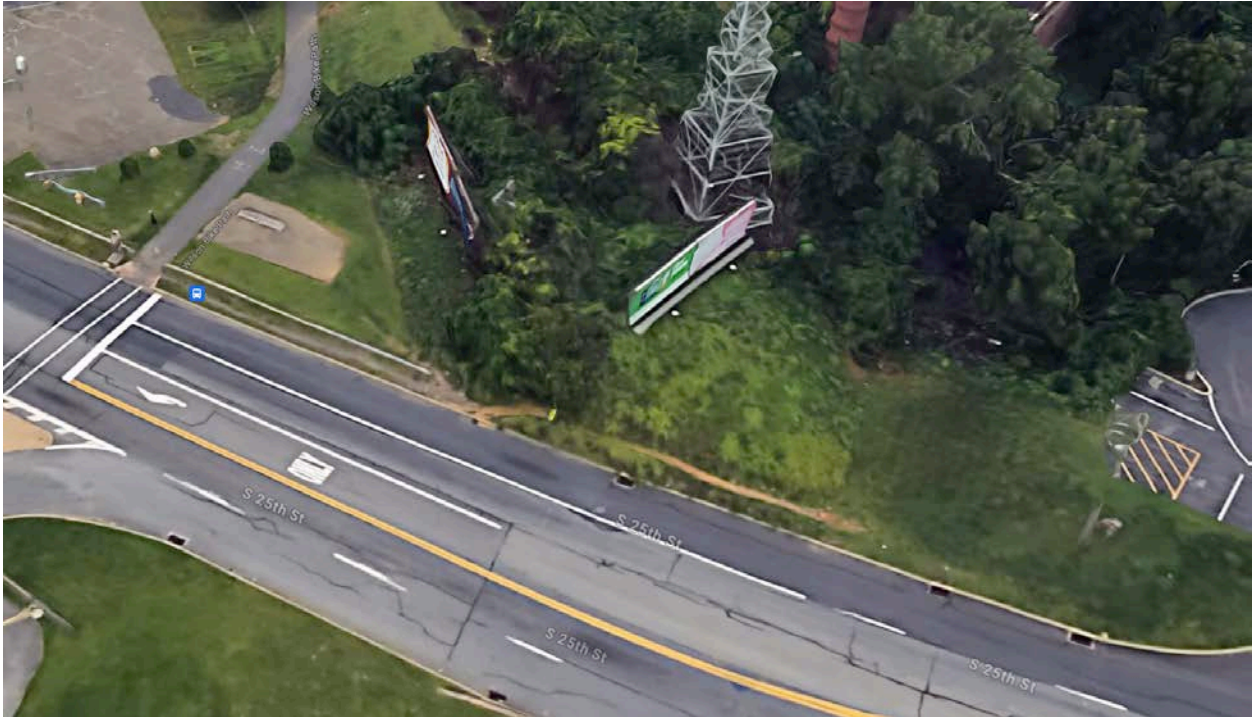
The LVPC recommends providing designated spaces near an accessible building entrance to accommodate vehicles for rideshare services, on-demand delivery services and other needs to 'adapt to the contemporary retail economy' (of Policy 4.2).

An additional gated access on the north side of the apartment complex is identified in the TIS as an emergency gated access, however this access driveway is not identified for emergency vehicles only on the plans and should be clarified. Emergency service providers for Wilson Borough should be included in plan review, and emergency access coordinated with those departments, to 'enhance planning and emergency response efforts among emergency management personnel' (of Policy 5.1).

25th Street is identified as a Corridor in the *FutureLV* Transportation plan, connecting the Post War Center of Palmer Center and Palmer Park Mall. Corridors present opportunities for linear mixed-use districts that connect centers with high quality roads, trails and mass transit lines. The location of this project adjacent to 25th Street in proximity to the Wilson Bike Path and transit bus stops provides an excellent opportunity for the Borough to increase multimodal corridor connections in the area.

Sidewalk is provided throughout the site, along parking areas and connecting the building and recreation areas to the external sidewalk network. The LVPC strongly recommends constructing sidewalks along 25th Street property frontage to facilitate multimodal access between businesses northwest and southeast of the site and the Wilson Bike Path trailhead. Aerial imagery and Google Street Views show a sustained history of foot traffic in an unimproved shoulder area of 25th street and the connection to the Wilson Bike Path. Existing sidewalk along

Butler Street to the south terminates at the 25th Street intersection. Providing sidewalk along the 25th Street property frontage would close more than half of the gap between the terminating sidewalk and Wilson Bike Path trailhead and crosswalk. Development proposals should meet the current needs of pedestrians to ensure safe and secure community design (Policy 5.1) and 'ensure transportation accessibility for all persons' (of Policy 5.2).



*Area of frontage of the project site along 25th Street showing worn foot path on shoulder
Google Aerial Imagery and StreetView*

It is recommended that the project incorporate bicycle racks in safe and well-lit locations to further encourage the utilization of the Wilson Bike Path and the connections to other trails and locations from the path (of Policy 5.3).

LANTA provides public transportation directly to the project site, with a northbound bus stop (Bus Stop ID 6628) on 25th Street along the rear frontage of the property, near the intersection

with the Wilson Bike Path. Given the proposed use of the project site for mixed-use and multi-family residential housing, LANTA anticipates growing ridership at this location. LANTA recommends the property owner/developer include an accessible 5-foot by 8-foot bus stop landing pad at the existing bus stop location, with an additional accessible 10-foot by 6-foot concrete pad for a future bus shelter. From here, LANTA recommends an accessible 5-foot pedestrian path connecting the recommended bus stop improvements to the existing Wilson Bike Path. The bike path entrance at the bus stop location can directly lead transit riders and pedestrians to the main site where a full pedestrian network is proposed on the adaptive reuse site.

For follow up, please contact me at mwood@lantabus-pa.gov for continued early engagement and discussion on bus stop details and transit infrastructure.

Ensuring adequate connections between bus stops and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is essential to the success and marketability of the proposed project (of Policy 5.2) and is necessary for proper community design and public safety (of Policy 5.3).

Stormwater Review

The project site is located within the Catasauqua and Little Lehigh Creek Watersheds. These watersheds have fully implemented Act 167 Stormwater Management Ordinance. Comments related to our review of the project’s stormwater management plan are included as Attachment 1.

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.

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

Sincerely,



Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner



Becky A. Bradley, AICP
Executive Director



Brian Hite
Transportation Planner



Joey Dotta
Regional Planner

cc:

Skyline Investment Group Easton LLC, Applicant;

Ryan Veasy, Project Engineer;

Joseph Reibman, Record Property Owner;

Monica Wall, Borough Engineer;

Kent Baird, Palmer Township Planning Director;

Carl Manges, City of Easton Planning Administrator;

Joan Heebner, West Easton Borough Manager;

Molly Wood, LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist;

Tina Smith, Northampton County Director of Community and Economic Development;

Dion Campbell, Northampton County Conservation District Director



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

May XX, 2024

Mr. Randy Cope
North Whitehall Manager
3256 Levans Road
Coplay, PA, 18037

**Re: Nexus 78 – Land Use of Regional Significance
North Whitehall Township
Lehigh County**

Dear Mr. Cope:

The application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Warehouse, Logistics and Storage Facilities, Freight Facility Local Freight Generator category. 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
 - May 21, 2024, at 12:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - May 23, 2024, at 7:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/lvpc-meetings>

The application proposes to construct a 547,500-square-foot warehouse at 3121 PA-309 and consolidate four parcels (parcel numbers 546893400322, 547802057486, 547802315657 and 546892310028). A portion of the property not proposed for development is also located in South Whitehall Township. The 71.1-acre site is largely undeveloped, containing an existing residence, agricultural land and woodlands.

The LVPC offers the following comments and recommendations:

Site Suitability

A portion of the site is located in the Farmland Preservation Area of the *FutureLV* General Land Use Plan, and the entire site is within the Preservation Buffer. Areas within the Preservation Buffer may have factors available to accommodate development, and while these areas are recommended to remain agriculture, additional

scrutiny is warranted in determining the appropriateness of growth. The property is zoned Light Industrial (LI), reflecting the Township's intent for development to occur in this location. However, the scale of development must be aligned with the context of the surrounding area. The stated intent of the LI District is 'to meet current and anticipated future regional needs for light industries, offices and limited types of related commercial development' (Township Zoning Ordinance Section 440-31 D. (11)).

The size of the proposed building, over 500,000 square feet and 50 feet high, greatly surpasses the scale of surrounding developments. The roadways were not built to withstand the impact of tractor-trailers, public sewer and water are not available, and overall, the site is not served by adequate infrastructure to accommodate the proposal. Additionally, the proposal is located adjacent to incompatible land uses, including residential neighborhoods and educational facilities, and the site contains High Preservation Priority Natural Resources. The subject property is better suited for smaller-scale low-impact commercial and industrial land uses that support local businesses and residents and can provide a transition between residential and industrial developments.

Due to incompatible neighboring land uses, lack of transportation and utility infrastructure, and topography concerns, the proposed development is found to be generally inconsistent with the goals and policies outlined in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

Natural Features

The project site contains a variety of natural features, including woodlands, hydrographic features with riparian buffers, and steep slopes of 15%-25%. While these features are primarily located in the northern area of the property and the proposed building is situated towards the south to minimize disturbance, a more appropriate form of development would utilize smaller building footprints and increase the buffer between development and natural resources, including avoiding developing over the hydrographic features and riparian buffers, to 'maximize preservation of woodlands, critical habitats and natural resources in the land development process' (of Policy 3.1) and 'protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater' (of Policy 3.2).

Karst

Mapping provided by the Bureau of Topographic and Geologic Survey at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources indicates the presence of karsts in the form of surface mines on the site. Human influence can further lead to sinkholes through soil disturbance ([Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection](#)).

FutureLV: The Regional Plan discourages development in hazard-prone areas. If this project moves forward, the LVPC urges proper geotechnical testing **prior** to any land development, to 'minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public' (*Policy 3.2*).

Traffic Impacts / Truck Routing

The LVPC reviewed the submitted Transportation Impact Study prepared by Traffic, Planning and Design, last revised August 28, 2023. Freight land uses can have profound impacts on the quality and operation of the transportation network. These impacts can be mitigated and improved by proper planning and being proactive during this review part of the project.

Trip generation estimates for the proposal were calculated utilizing the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual, 11th edition and Land Use Code (LUC) 150 Warehousing, defined by ITE as “a warehouse is primarily devoted to the storage of materials, but it may also include office and maintenance areas.” The proposed 547,500-square-foot warehouse project is estimated to generate an average of 903 total vehicle trips per day, of which 600 are passenger vehicles and 303 are trucks.

Access of the facility by commercial trucks should be adequately prepared for by formalizing a truck routing plan by the developer, and potentially the operator of the facility, in coordination with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the municipality to ensure proper truck navigation to serve the site and the best possible routes to Route 22, Route 100, Route 873, Route 33, Interstate 78, and Interstate 476 (PA Turnpike). These routes can help mitigate impact to the community by proper communication of preferred truck routes.

The Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), for Lehigh and Northampton Counties, has a Transportation improvement Program (TIP) project along the frontage of the project identified as Project ID 102312 “PA 309 Resurfacing”. The current project and TIP project may have conflicting areas along the frontage of Route 309. Coordination is strongly recommended, if not already occurring, to ensure the impacts of the proposed warehouse and engineering that has already occurred for the Route 309 project may be able to help the warehouse to incorporate mitigation strategies that may help in the safe and efficient movements of freight and people to and from the project, as well as to the community.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission should be informed and coordinated, if needed, with regard to their bridge on State Route 4003 over the Pennsylvania Turnpike, just east of the project location. Coordination and notification in the change of traffic volumes as well as commercial truck traffic utilizing the bridge would enable proper planning for routine maintenance and other activities to better prepare the bridge to accommodate the growth in traffic, including freight vehicles utilizing Orefield Road east of the project (of *FutureLV* Policies 2.2, 2.4 and 2.6).

The right-out configuration of the driveway on Orefield Road and the impacts to turning movements at Route 309 should be studied as the current and proposed improvements to Orefield Road at Route 309 may not be able to accommodate queuing of vehicles turning to proceed southbound on Route 309 from Orefield Road. Appropriate signage should be provided in the location of Route 309 and Orefield Road intersection as to indicate that commercial vehicles would not be able to access the site from Orefield Road and should utilize the entrance along the frontage Route 309.

It is also of note that Orefield Road becomes Kernville Road west of Route 309. This east west corridor is a key component of community mobility, and it also has a fire department located just west of Route 309 on Kernville Road. The impacts of possible freight vehicle queuing along Orefield and Kernville Roads and the response of volunteers who staff the fire department should be scrutinized as to allow emergency response to not be impacted in the efforts of the fire department. With no dedicated turn lanes on Orefield and Kernville Roads, the queuing of freight vehicles as well as the adjacent Parkland School District, school bus garages located to the south of the project at Orefield Middle School may result in unintended delays of transportation mobility of the intersection already in the phasing engineering and design of the project that may not have been studied in the TIS (of *FutureLV* Policies 1.1 and 2.4).

Site Freight and Emergency Access

Turn movements from the full access driveway area are a concern, as there is an elevation change south of the access driveway, with a posted speed limit of 45. The developer should confirm with the municipality and PennDOT the adequacy of safe and efficient turn movements of freight tractor-trailers at this location and any improvements that could be implemented to improve turn movements for tractor-trailers and passenger vehicles of employees and visitors. It is recommended that a warehouse entrance or “truck entrance ahead” sign be erected to communicate to motorists the possibility of trucks turning in contingent on PennDOT approvals.

The gate operations for the high security fenced area should be clarified to enable appropriate access when tractor-trailers need to access a secure location. One guard shack location is shown on the submitted plans, while the other three gate locations do not have a guard shack associated with them. Adequate control of these gates is critical as to not having queuing of freight vehicles in access aisles on site or along roadways in the vicinity of the project.

Gated access is always a concern as far as queuing for tractor-trailers waiting or receiving gate access. There are trailer storage and staging area spaces shown outside of the security area which would enable tractor-trailers to park while waiting for access (of *FutureLV* Policy 2.4).

Truck Parking

The LVPC appreciates the right-sized approach to the staging area parking spaces, by providing the appropriate sizing of seven tractor-trailer 'staging' spaces of 12' x 75' in dimension outside of the security fenced area. It should be made clear whether these spaces are available for tractor-trailer drivers to park overnight long-term making freight movements would be able to park their long term to comply with federal laws regulating the hours of operation for commercial driver license holders. It should be made clear whether these spaces are available for tractor-trailer drivers to park long-term to comply with federal laws regulating the hours of operation for commercial driver license holders. It is strongly recommended that onsite entry signage be provided to communicate the direction to trucks making deliveries to the facility to get authorization to wait in the provided staging parking spaces. The location of these staging area spaces should also incorporate electric hookup amenities to enable the cab portion and potentially refrigerated trailers to operate on electric power rather than diesel fueled engines, while the truck is parked (of *FutureLV* Policy 2.4).

Snow Removal Law

It is recommended that the project incorporate snow removal equipment onsite for the removal of snow and ice from the tops of trucks and trailers as required by Pennsylvania State Law. Truck drivers are required to remove snow and ice hazards but need the appropriate equipment in which to remove the hazard in a safe and efficient manner. Snow removal equipment is becoming more commonplace at freight centric facilities. Having this equipment helps ensure a safe transportation network free of snow and ice that may slide off the tops of trucks and trailers and cause disruptions on the roadway and to other vehicles and multimodal users (of *FutureLV* Policy 1.4).

Freight Facility Amenities

Freight-centric facilities are reliant on tractor-trailers and commercial vehicles to operate and should play a part in accommodating the needs of the vehicles and drivers. Inclusion of a driver lounge with an area for drivers to plan their day, route themselves to their next destination as well as have restrooms and an appropriate place to eat is strongly recommended. A driver lounge can be an area to also communicate area transportation issues such as construction or available fuel locations and repair or maintenance services for their vehicles (of *FutureLV* Policy 2.4).

Air Quality and Congestion Management

It is recommended that parking lots proposed be constructed with the necessary infrastructure to support and integrate electric vehicle charging on site. Electric vehicles are commonplace and most large vehicle manufactures will eliminate fossil fuel vehicles in the next decade or so. The air quality improvements as a result of, decarbonization efforts from the private and public sectors, such as deployment of electric vehicles, are essential to improving air quality in the Lehigh Valley. Convenient charging stations may facilitate more employees who may travel long distances to utilize electric vehicles. In

addition, heavy vehicles and equipment are increasingly electric and alternative fueled, which supports addition, of charging as well.

State Route 309 is listed in the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) Congestion Management Process as a current 2017 (from Walbert to Levans Roads) and future 2040 (from Walbert to Route 873) congested corridor. It is recommended that the developer and municipality engage with PennDOT on strategies to improve congestion along the corridor.

The current TIP project for the Route 309 Resurfacing project may have conflicting areas along the frontage of Route 309, coordination is strongly recommended of the impacts of the proposed warehouse and engineering that has already occurred in may be able to help improve the impacts of the warehouse address mitigation strategies that may help in the safe and efficient movements of freight and people as well as to the community (of *FutureLV Policies 2.2 and 3.2*).

Multimodal Transportation

Route 309 is listed as a corridor connecting the post war centers of Orefield and Schnecksville in the Transportation Plan within *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. This corridor also contains a “Multimodal Accessibility Buffer”. Post-war Centers were largely developed after the automobile became central to American culture. Designed during and after the inception of the national highway network, they are auto-oriented, generally low-density districts that are difficult to access with anything but a car. Though often near residential neighborhoods and businesses, bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit connections are often limited.

A Multimodal Accessibility boundary along the frontage of the project is an excellent opportunity to incorporate elements of multimodal accessibility transportation options. Coordination with the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) to site or re-site bus stop locations to provide service to employees of the facility.

In the case of this proposal transit service routes are available along Route 309 and should be an important consideration for the development of this employment center and the ability for anyone working there to have access to transportation. It is also recommended that bicycle racks be located at convenient locations near employee entrances to facilitate utilization of alternative to engine powered vehicle modes of transportation (of *FutureLV Policy 5.2*).

It is strongly recommended that sidewalks be provided along the frontage of Route 309 and Orefield Road. It is also recommended that sidewalks also be constructed along both access driveways to the warehouse building itself. This infrastructure is critical to the health and wellbeing of employees and visitors to the warehouse who may wish to utilize sidewalks instead of walking or rolling in the cartways of aisles intended for

motorized vehicles. The pedestrian connectivity of employee access points to available transit at Route 309 is a critical component to providing fair and equitable transportation options for persons of all abilities (of *FutureLV* Policy 5.3).

Currently, there is proposed limited sidewalks and enhanced crosswalks proposed at Orefield/Kernville Road intersection of Route 309 as part of the TIP Project ID102312 Route 309 Resurfacing, which is a project along the Route 309 corridor from Walbert Avenue to Levans Road. The ability to install sidewalk infrastructure now during the construction of this warehouse would enable future connectivity for multimodal users of alternative transportation to have the ability to be in a safe and adequate area. Anytime you can remove vulnerable road users from the cartway of roads and put them in pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks is a forward-thinking planning process (of Policy 5.1).

Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA)

The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) currently provides public transportation in close proximity to the project site, with an existing northbound bus stop (Bus Stop ID 5975) located on Route 309, nearside of the Orefield Road intersection. There are no sidewalks along the project property frontage on Route 309 or Orefield Road, respectively, nor is there pedestrian connectivity proposed within the project site. Given the proposed warehouse use of the project, LANTA anticipates growing ridership at this location. LANTA recommends the property owner/developer to provide pedestrian improvements from the main entrance of the facility to the main corridors of the project site to access the existing bus stop location.

For follow up, please contact LANTA Planner/Land Use Specialist Molly Wood at mwood@lantabus-pa.gov for continued early engagement and discussion.

Sustainable Energy

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).

Stormwater Review

The project site is located within the Jordan 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 as attachment 1.

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

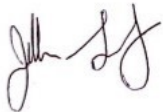
examination of plans relative to subdivision design standards or ordinance requirements since these items are covered in the municipal review.

Representatives of adjacent municipalities have been copied on this letter to 'coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries' (of Policy 1.4). Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Joseph Dotta
Regional Planner



Jill Seitz
Senior Community Planner



Brian Hite
Transportation Planner

cc:

Barry Henry, Applicant;
Fidel Gonzalez, Project Engineer/Surveyor;
Steve Gitch, North Whitehall Township Engineer;
Dave Manhardt, South Whitehall Township Director of Community Development;
Lee Rackus, Whitehall Township Bureau Chief of Planning, Zoning and Development;
Kal Sostarecz, Upper Macungie Township Director of Community Development;
Jill Seymour, Lowhill Township Municipal Secretary;
Dawn Didra, Heidelberg Township Administrator/Secretary;
Wade Marlatt, Washington Township Manager



Project Review Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Date: May 2024

Project	Municipality	Brief Statement of Purpose	LVPC Comment
Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Amendment	Whitehall Township	<i>Plan Submission Requirements</i> – Revises requirements for submitting sketch, preliminary and final plans, including a requirement that all plans and documents be submitted in a digital or electronic format.	This proposal aligns with <i>FutureLV: The Regional Plan</i> because reducing or eliminating the number of required paper plan sets serves to conserve natural resources (Policy 3.1) and demonstrates evolution and adaptability of government by integrating modern technologies (of Policies 1.1 and 1.4). This amendment also improves efficiency in plan review processes and supports the fiscal health and sustainability of both the Township and applicants (Policy 4.6).



DR. CHRISTOPHER R. AMATO
Chair

CHRISTINA V. MORGAN
Vice Chair

ARMANDO MORITZ-CHAPELLIQUEN
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

May xx, 2024

Ms. Trisha Lang, AICP
Director of Community Development
Upper Saucon Township
5500 Camp Meeting Road
Center Valley, PA 18034

RE: Proposed Amendment to the 2020 Upper Saucon Township Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan

Dear Ms. Lang:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the above referenced amendment at its Environment Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Both meetings were virtual, and occurred on:

- LVPC Environment Committee Meeting
 - May 21, 2024, at 10:30 AM
 - <http://www.tinyurl.com/LVPC2024>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - May 23, 2024, at 7:00 PM
 - <http://www.tinyurl.com/LVPC2024>

The Plan’s goal is to “Create a sustainable plan for parks, recreation and open space that will provide equitable access and opportunities to all residents while preserving the cherished rural, agricultural and suburban characteristics and valued natural resources that make Upper Saucon Township a unique community.” This goal is consistent with Policy 3.1 of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, ‘Preserve the natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic assets and Policy 5.3 ‘Improve access to green space.’ The current amendment identifies and ranks 2 additional sites that may become available for use as public open space. Based upon our review, we offer the following comments:

The LVPC commends the Township on continuing to plan for and increase open space and recreation opportunities (*Lehigh County Livable Landscapes*, Goal 1). Additionally, LVPC commends the Township on the following aspects of the plan amendment:

- Identifying Parcel 34 and its connection to Parcel 32, and therefore expanding upon the largest contiguous forested area in the Township (*Livable Landscapes*, Goal 1)

Ms. Trisha Lang, AICP
May xx, 2024

- Identifying Parcel 35 as an opportunity to be used as both a park and trailhead (*Livable Landscapes*, Goal 2)
- Utilizing open space acquisition as a tool to expand the Township's trail network (*Livable Landscapes*, Goal 2)
- Recognizing Parcel 35 for its potential as a segment of the Liberty Bell Trail. This intersects with Visionary Bicycle Network Map ID #1, from *Walk/Roll LV*, the Lehigh Valley's region-wide active transportation plan

The LVPC also offers the following recommendations upon review of the amendment:

- Expanding the Preservation Priorities scoring matrix to include location within or adjacent to a Natural Heritage Area, scenic viewshed or corridor, and conservation priority area of the Natural Resources Plan from *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*
- Indicating the potential trailhead at Parcel 35 on maps, such as on page 51.

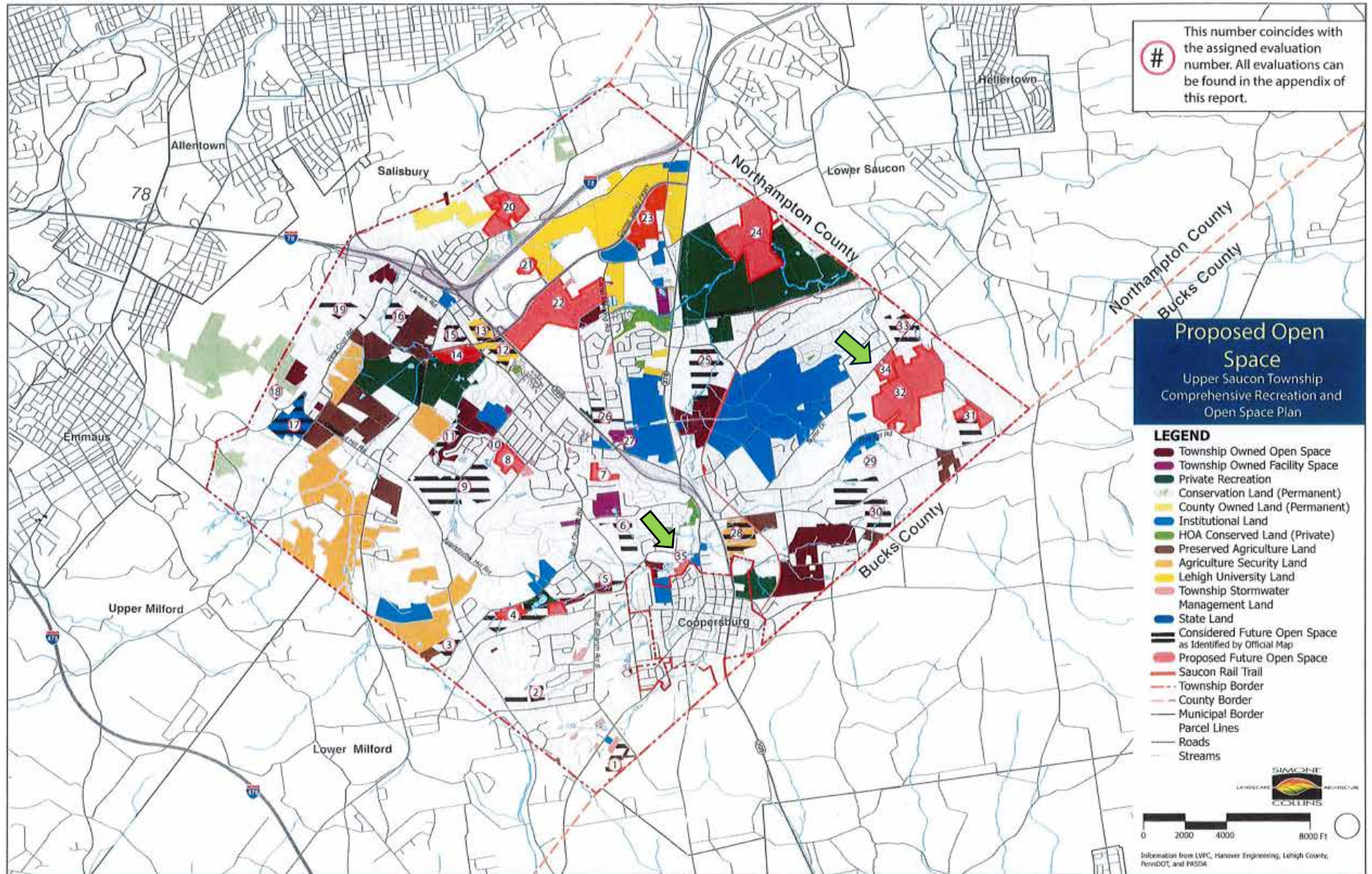
The LVPC provided a review of the Upper Saucon Township Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan in its entirety in June 2022. The LVPC asks the Township to consider the comments in that review as well during the amendment process. The LVPC is supportive of the Township as it looks to implement its updated Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan and is available as a resource if Township staff would like to discuss plan revisions or implementation strategies.

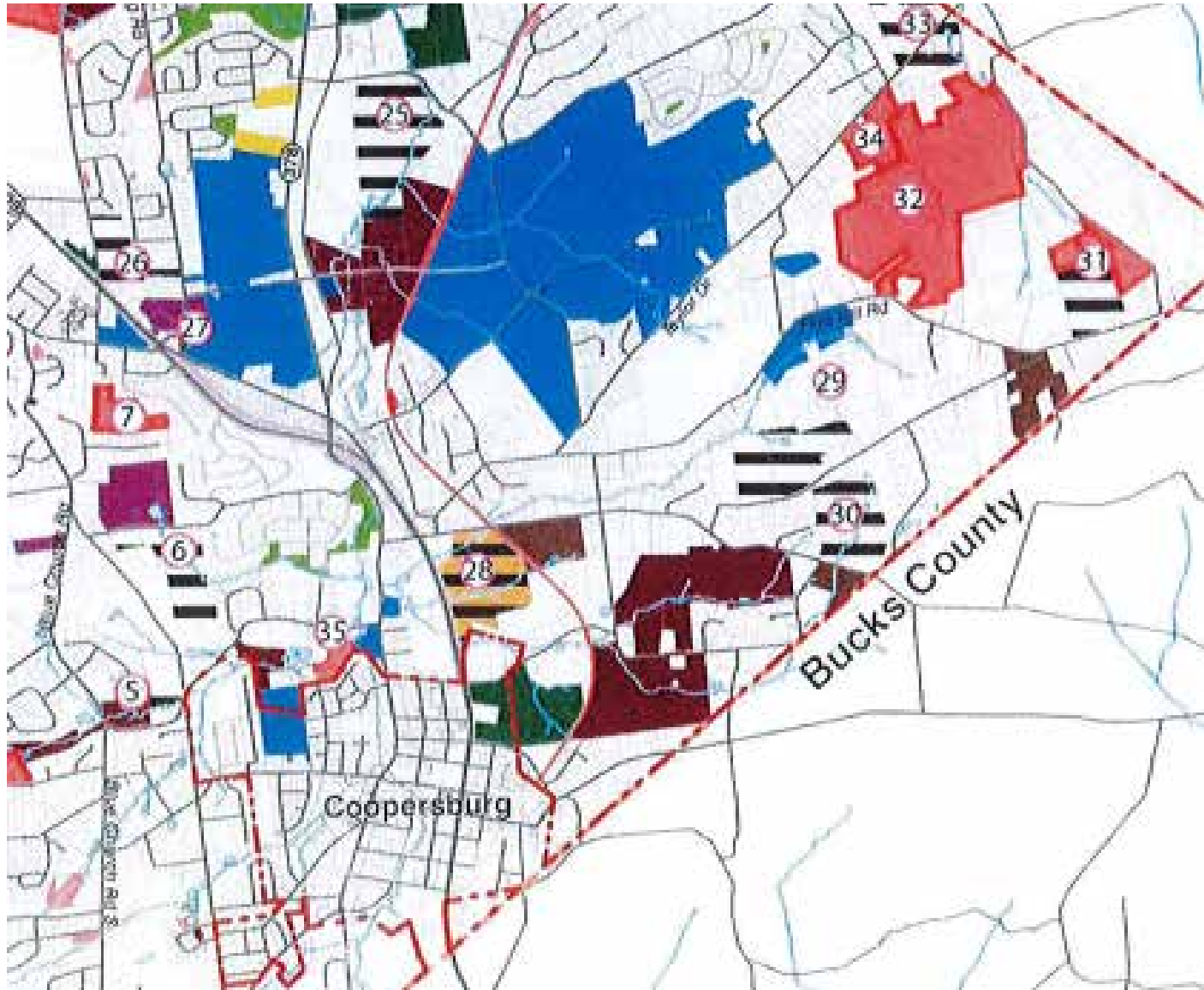
If you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Susan Myerov, AICP
Director of Environmental Planning

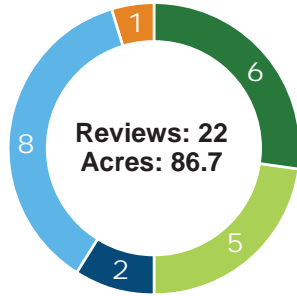
Christian Martinez
Environmental Planner



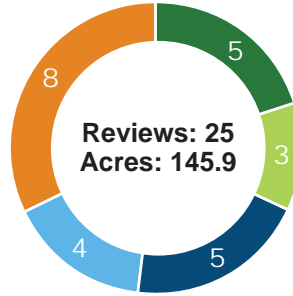


Plan Activity

Lehigh County



Northampton County



- Residential
- Non-Residential
- Subdivisions and Lot Line Adjustments
- Stormwater Management
- Municipal Ordinances, Maps and Plans

Regional Totals*

7
Subdivision/Lot Line Adjustments

19
Development

12
Stormwater Management

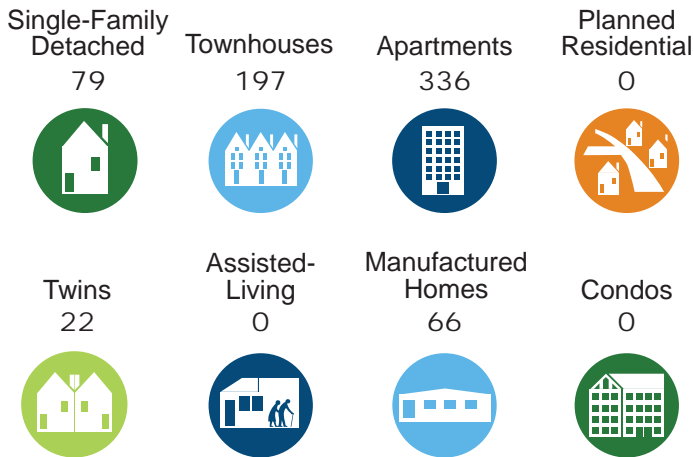
9
Municipal Ordinances, Maps and Plans

232.6
Acres

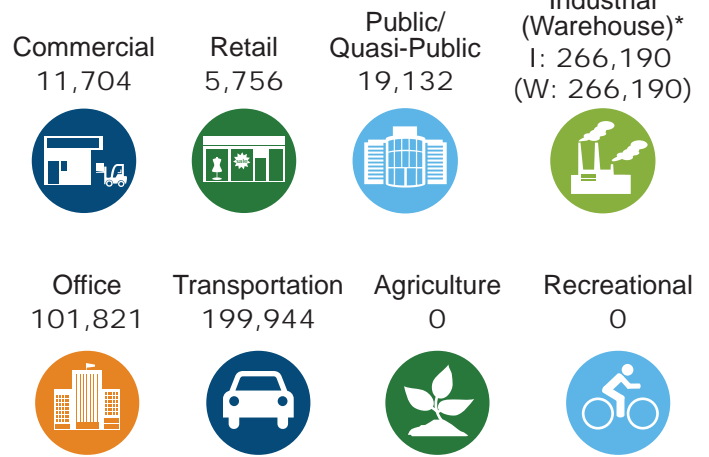
*Includes preliminary and final plans

Types of New Development

Residential: 700 Total Units

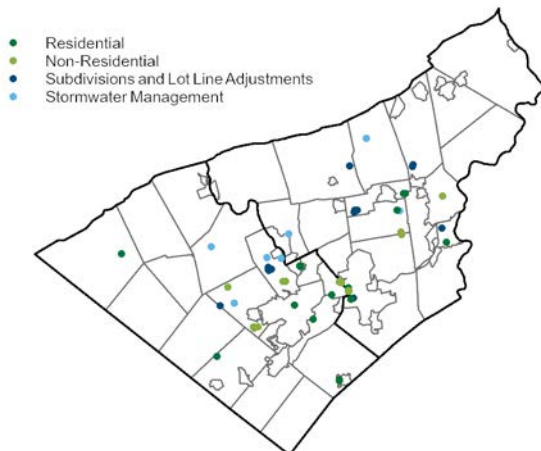


Non-Residential: 604,547 Total Square Feet

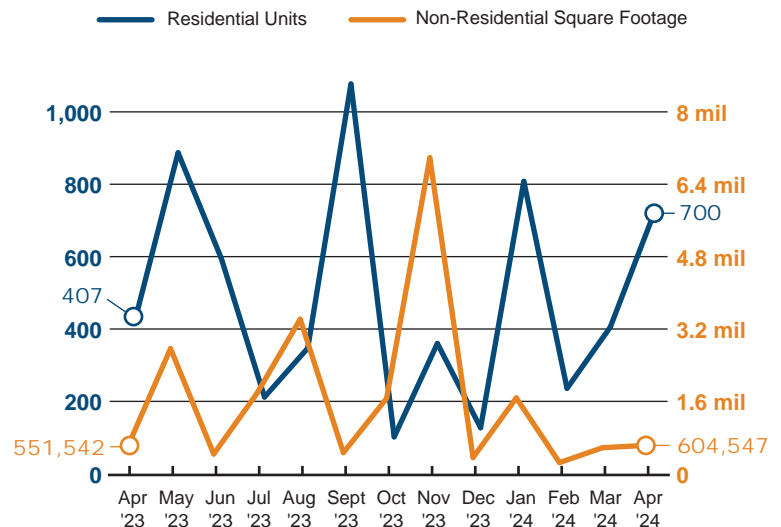


* Warehouse number is a subset of industrial total square footage.

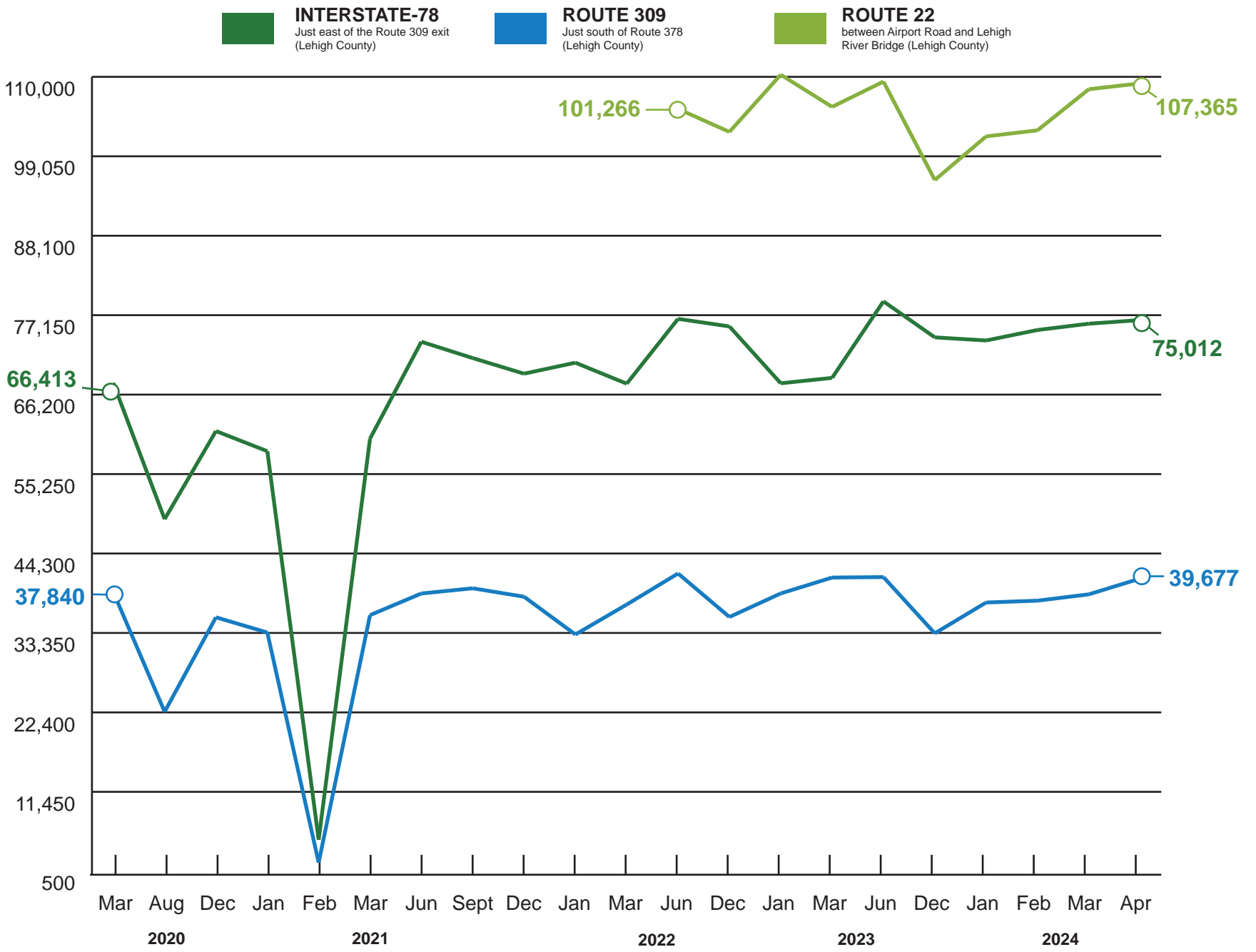
Location of Development



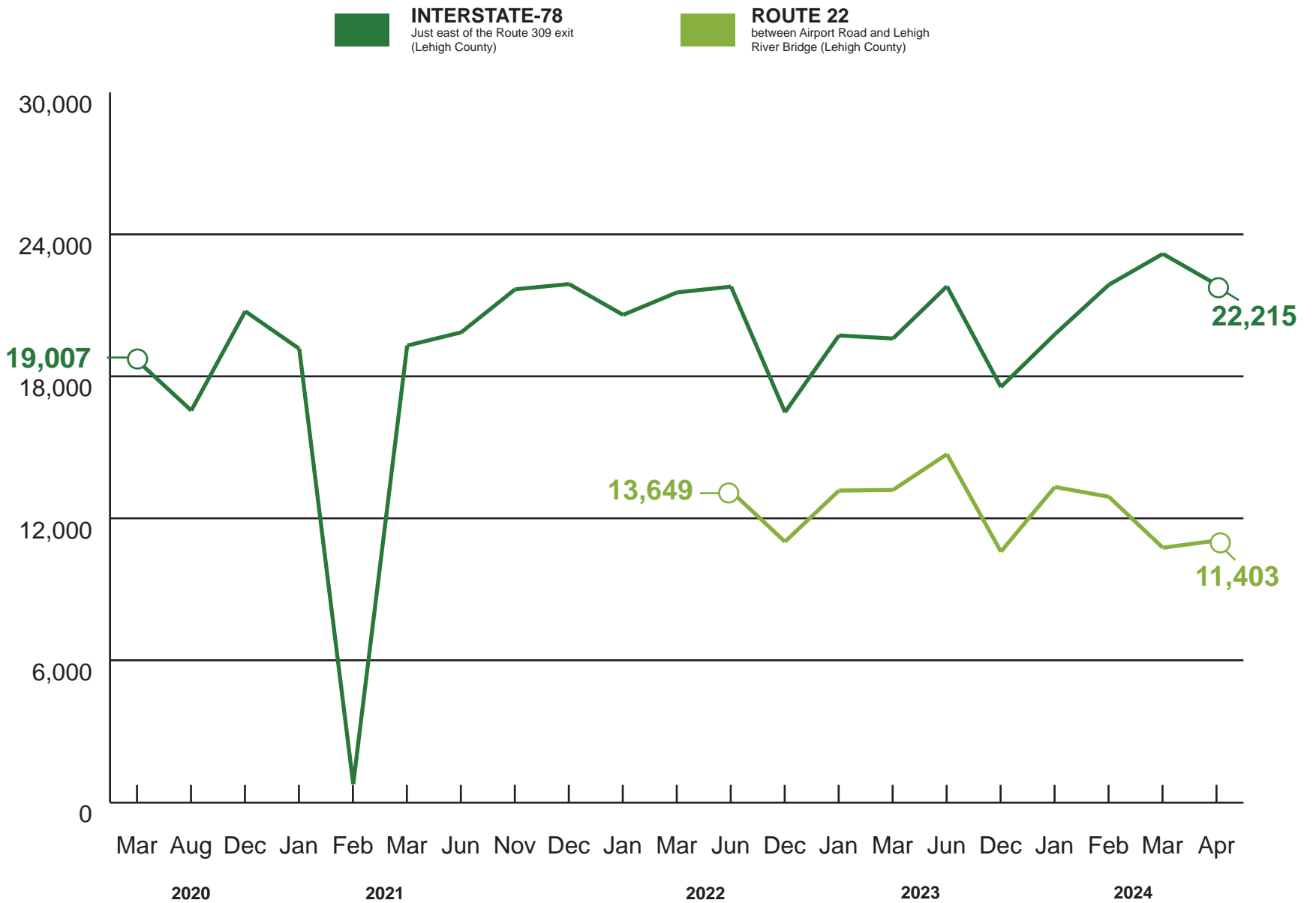
Year to Date (Year to Year)



TOTAL VEHICLE TRAFFIC



TOTAL TRUCK TRAFFIC



THE MORNING CALL

Talking Business with Becky Bradley: Help Lehigh Valley win a \$115 million federal grant



By Becky Bradley

For The Morning Call

May 19, 2024 at 8:30 AM

More people pass through the interchange of Routes 22 and 33 than almost any place in the Lehigh Valley. Drivers who gander out the window to the right-of-way are greeted with 99 acres of lawn-mowing majesty, dotted with trash tumbleweeds and a few halloweenish trees.

Now, imagine that space filled with colorful meadows of wildflowers and carbon-sequestering trees, leading to a pollinator corridor running up the median of Route 33. Suddenly, a public wasteland would be transformed into a climate action tool giving drivers and visitors the unmistakable sense that they are entering a Green Region that cares about future generations.

That vision would become a reality as early as 2027 under the Lehigh Valley Green Transportation Infrastructure Project. The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission on April 1 applied for a \$115 million grant through the Environmental Protection Agency to fund the project as part of the agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program.

The Lehigh Valley Green Transportation Infrastructure Project would add green infrastructure on 522 acres along Routes 22, 33 and 378, at 16 interchanges, two linear corridors and the park-and-ride lot in Bethlehem Township. The project would include planting 123 acres of deciduous trees and 166 acres of meadows, many of which would serve as pollinator corridors. Another 12 acres of bioswales would be installed, and where applicable, the sites would be fitted with LED, state-of-the art traffic controls and, in the case of the park-and-ride lot, electric charging stations.

In the more than two decades I've been involved in community and regional planning, through billions of dollars of transportation and community investments, this is one of the most exciting projects I've had the opportunity to be part of. It has so many benefits I can't cover them all here, but topping the list is that it is designed to sequester carbon emissions where they are highest – right where they are being created. We've projected that it would reduce emissions by 8,035 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030 and 51,835 MTCO_{2e} by 2050. This is especially important here because our high quality of life has made the Lehigh Valley one of Pennsylvania's fastest-growing regions, and all those additional people and businesses mean more carbon emissions.

On top of the carbon reduction, it would create pollinator corridors for insects and birds, while installing best stormwater management practices along the region's busiest highways.

In addition, it will beautify the region, giving it the look of green sustainability. I believe that all those drivers who have been tossing litter and cigarettes out the window into those right-of-way wastelands would think twice if that space was a gorgeous mosaic of nature.

The LVPC in 2022 was awarded \$1 million by EPA under the CPRG program. Funded by the Inflation Reduction Act, the CPRG was created to funnel grants to each state and the nation's roughly 70 largest regions to develop and implement climate action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The LVPC delivered the region's first-ever priority climate action plan in February, aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by transportation. We're now working on a comprehensive climate action plan that will reduce emissions for all sectors.

Being accepted into the CPRG program gives the Lehigh Valley access to \$4.6 billion in competitive Inflation Reduction Act-funded grant money for projects that are part of priority climate action plans filed across the nation in February. It means the region is competing with the likes of New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle and Philadelphia. But it also means it is competing only with CPRG program members – of which there are

fewer than 120 – and the pool of money available is among the largest ever offered for climate action.

So yes, it's true that we're swinging for the fences on this one, but the way I see it, this one is a fastball over the heart of the plate. And that's where everyone in the Lehigh Valley can play a role. The EPA needs to know how much we want this, and how much this means to a region growing as fast as we are. We're asking anyone who would like to show their support for the grant to go to lvpc.org/lv-green-transportation, where you can read the grant application and use the "Show Your Support" button to send a letter directly to the EPA. To put this in a little context, hundreds of you sent letters this way to Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg in 2021, and the result was a \$21.2 million federal grant to fund the soon-to-become reality Riverside Drive multimodal commuter road and trail from Allentown through Whitehall Township.

For this Green Transportation Infrastructure Project, the EPA is expected to make its grant decision in July. With your help, we can knock this out of the park.

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