



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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Executive Director

LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION Minutes from Thursday, July 24, 2025, Meeting

The LVPC held a public meeting on Thursday, July 24, 2025. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on January 8th, 2025.

LVPC Chair Dr. Chris Amato chaired the meeting.

Mr. Joey Dotta took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Ron Beitler, Bob Elbich, Sunny Ghai, Philip Ginder, Jennifer Gomez, Kent Herman, John Inglis, Richard Molchany, Christina Morgan, Santo Napoli, Stephen Repasch and Kevin Schmidt.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, Carl Manges, John McGorry, Steve Melnick, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Tina Smith and Basel Yandem.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Percy Dougherty, Michael Drabenstott, Steve Glickman, Diane Kelly, Dennis Klusaritz, Owen O'Neil and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Jessica Cope, John Gallagher, Judith Haldeman, Ken Kraft, Rachel Leon, Lamont McClure, Scott Minnich, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, Jr., J. William Reynolds and Jean Versteeg

Staff Present: Becky Bradley, Joey Dotta, Jill Seitz, Matt Assad, Susan Myerov, Enzo Fantozzi, Gio Rizkallah, Subham Kharel, Faria Umy, David Cohen and Jacob Engbert

Public Present: Amy Unger, Phil Gianficaro, Alan and Patti Shukaitis, Craig Beavers, Adrienne Fors, Debra, Brian, Lisa Rodger, Paul, Mary K. Riegel, Heather W., Robin Zmoda, Shelley, Jane Mellert, Jack Kmetz, Steve, Robert C Rute and Joseph Colosi.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

None

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Amato introduced three new members of the LVPC staff Jacob Engbert, Enzo Fantozzi, and David Cohen, AICP.

MINUTES

Chair Amato stated that the minutes of the Thursday, June 26, 2025, LVPC meeting are attached. Chair Amato asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Repasch made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Melnick seconded the motion.

Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed. Commissioners Andrew Elliott and Bob Elbich abstained.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Northampton Borough – Land Use of Regional Significance – Atlas Industrial

Mr. Dotta presented a proposal to construct a 350,400-square-foot industrial building with 307 parking spaces including loading dock and trailer storage spaces at 799 Smith Lane.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the staff review. Commissioner Ginder made the motion, and Commissioner Molchany seconded the motion. Chair Amato asked for any comments or questions. There was a brief discussion about further strengthening the recommendation in the letter to specify an end user for the site.

Commissioner Melnick made a motion to amend the letter to strengthen the language about identifying an end user. Commissioner Elbich seconded the amended motion. It was commented that the existing plastic recycling facility on the site can produce an odor that may be a nuisance to neighbors.

The motion with the amended language passed.

ACTION ITEM: Plainfield Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Solid Waste Rezoning

Ms. Seitz and Ms. Myerov presented a review for a trio of solid waste zoning ordinance amendments for Plainfield Township. The application proposed to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map pertaining to sanitary landfill facilities. The zoning ordinance amendments and zoning map amendment proposed to expand waste disposal land uses from the current zoned area and to regulating landfill land uses differently than current zoning allows, including review procedures and application requirements. Different aspects of the proposal aligned and conflicted with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*.

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

Several members of the public spoke about their concerns about whether the landfill is to be expanded. Quality of life factors like air quality, odor and truck traffic were discussed. Several Commissioners commented to commend the LVPC staff on their thorough review and for incorporating many of the concerns brought up during Tuesday's Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting.

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

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Comprehensive Planning Committee Chair Melnick briefed the Commission on the Comprehensive Committee Summary Sheet that featured zoning ordinance amendments for Heidelberg Township, East Allen Township, and Lower Saucon Township, and an official map proposal for Bath Borough.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the summary sheet. Commissioner Molchany 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.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEM: Environment Committee Summary Sheet

Commissioner Repasch briefed the Commission on Environment Committee's business that included a wastewater treatment plant and discharge renewal for the Li'l Wolf Mobile Home Park wastewater treatment plant in North Whitehall Township.

Chair Amato called for a motion to accept the summary sheet. Commissioner Repasch 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.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

INFORMATION ITEM: Priority Climate Action Plan for Transportation

Decarbonization Implementation

Ms. Bradley introduced the Priority Climate Action Plan for Transportation Decarbonization Implementation which lays out a roadmap to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions from Lehigh Valley's transportation system. Ms. Urmey highlighted the allocations by federal fiscal year, the project selection process, and some previous projects that were selected to receive funding.

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

INFORMATION ITEM: Walk/Roll LV: Active Transportation Plan & Future LV: The Regional Plan Implementation

Ms. Bradley briefed the Commission on the *Walk/Roll LV Plan* and project funding updates. Ms. Urmey explained the project selection process and the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) funding details. The final project list was adopted by the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS) Coordinating Committee on June 18th, 2025. Community Bike Works and Coalition for Appropriate Transportation both received TASA funding for the 2025 federal fiscal year. The Cities of Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton all received TASA funding for 2026 federal fiscal year. The Commission was then invited to grant presentation events for the remainder of TASA funding recipients.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

INFORMATION ITEM: It's Regional Plan Update Time Again! Preparations Underway and What to Expect Next

Ms. Bradley updated the Commission on progress being made to prepare to update the regional comprehensive plan. Data updates and determining the overall project selection process for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan are both in the works. Ms. Bradley then briefly went over the schedule for updates throughout the rest of 2025.

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

MID-YEAR REPORTS

INFORMATION ITEM: Mid-Year Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinances/Plans Report

Ms. Seitz briefed the Commission on the activity LVPC saw in the first half of 2025. There was 75 subdivisions, 163 development plans, 77 stormwater management reviews and 26 municipal ordinances and maps for a total of 341 reviews. Ms. Myerov noted that stormwater management reviews have leveled compared to this time last year. There is also a trend in decades-old stormwater projects being modified or redeveloped and moving forward in the review process. Additionally, there were more solar array projects as stormwater management measures for these uses are continuing to evolve.

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

INFORMATION ITEM: Mid-Year Industrial Market Report

Dr. Kharel presented an analysis of industrial market trends through the first half of 2025. Data going back to quarter one of 2023 was used to contextualize the analysis and additional research was used to ground the report. Overall, both net absorption and new construction declined in the Lehigh Valley. This trend reflects a broader market realignment following the surge in activity during the pandemic and a subsequent cooling period as the market moves toward equilibrium.

Mr. Dotta provided a national perspective and noted that nationwide trends reflect some of the changes the Lehigh Valley is experiencing.

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

INFORMATION ITEM: Mid-Year Traffic Monitoring Report

Mr. Fantozzi presented a six-month traffic volume update for four of the Lehigh Valley's major roads based on Pennsylvania Department of Transportation data. The six-month trend and year-over-year comparison was reported for Route 33 between Newburg Road and State Route 248, Route 309 just south of Route 378, Route 22 between Airport Road and Lehigh River Bridge, Route 22 east of the 33 and 22 Interchange. Truck traffic was included for Route 33 and Route 22.

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Bradley updated the Commission on the expected timeline for the LVPC Strategic Plan.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Chair Amato notified the Commission that items for communications and public engagement are featured in the meeting packet.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Amato stated that the next LVPC meeting will be on Thursday, August 28th at 7 pm. 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