



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

STEVEN GLICKMAN
Chair

CHRISTOPHER AMATO
Vice Chair

KEVIN SCHMIDT
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, June 21st, 2022, at 11:00 am
AGENDA

**THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED AT <https://tinyurl.com/ENV2022mtgs> OR VIA PHONE
610-477-5793 Conf ID: 579 141 820#**

Roll Call

Committee Business:

1. *ACTION ITEM:* Draft Upper Saucon Township Comprehensive Recreation & Open Space Plan (TM)
2. *INFORMATION ITEM:* Lehigh Valley Environmental Advisory Councils Presentation Summary (JB, BB)
3. *INFORMATION ITEM:* Workshop on Utility Scale Solar partnered with the Penn State Solar Team (BB)

Next Environment Planning Committee Meeting:
July 26, 2022 at 11:00 am via Microsoft Teams



STEVEN GLICKMAN
Chair

CHRISTOPHER AMATO
Vice Chair

KEVIN SCHMIDT
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP
Executive Director

June XX, 2022

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

RE: Upper Saucon Township Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan

Dear Ms. Lang:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject plan 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
 - June 21, 2022, at 11:00 AM
 - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - June 23, 2022, at 7:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>

The Draft Upper Saucon Township Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan is an update to the Township's *Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan for the Saucon Region* adopted in 2006. The Saucon Region Plan included the participation of Lower Saucon Township, but the current update covers only Upper Saucon Township. 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." (*FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, of Policy 3.1 'Preserve the natural, recreational, cultural, historical and scenic assets' and Policy 5.3 'Improve access to green space') Based upon our review, we offer the following comments:

The LVPC commends the Township on preparing a thorough plan for its recreation and open space system (*Livable Landscapes*, Goal 2), including components not often provided in park and recreation plans, such as a summary of relevant Township Zoning and SALDO ordinances and a detailed evaluation and results of parcel prioritization for open space preservation. Additional commendation for the following aspects of the Plan:

- Including parks in adjacent municipalities on the Park Service Area map (page 52), which may serve residents who are not within the 3-mile service area for the Township's community parks.
- Two of the three multi-use fields at Hopewell Park are located on adjacent school district land and will be open to the public after normal school hours (page 54). This after hours use policy also exists at other school district properties. (*Lehigh County Livable Landscapes*, Goal 2)

- Local parks were evaluated for playground safety and ADA accessibility. Additionally, the Maintenance Department routinely inspects playgrounds for dangerous conditions and performs monthly audits of all structures. (*Lehigh County Livable Landscapes*, of Goal 2)
- Park acreage and recreational facilities were evaluated using two comparisons—Comparable Municipalities Summary and National Recreation and Park Association Metrics—and residents were surveyed to determine future park and recreational facility needs. (*Lehigh County Livable Landscapes*, Outdoor Recreation Acreage Guidelines, text and Action Plan)
- Two of the Proposed On- and Off-Road Trails on the Proposed Connections maps advance the *Walk/Roll LV Active Transportation Plan* (of Visionary Bicycle Network Map, #1 and #4).

The Summary of Existing Planning Documents states that the *One Lehigh Valley* “document serves as an update to the *Comprehensive Plan, The Lehigh Valley...2030* adopted in 2005.” *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, adopted in 2019, is the update to the *Comprehensive Plan, The Lehigh Valley...2030*.

According to the Summary of Relevant Township Zoning and SALDO Ordinances, the Township requires riparian buffers for any subdivision or land development. The LVPC recommends that in addition to the land development requirements, the Township preserves and restores riparian buffers on publicly owned land using native vegetation and encourages landowners to install riparian buffers on their own property (*Livable Landscapes*, of Goal 1). Additionally, the Township’s ordinances require sidewalks with new developments. The LVPC recommends that text be added to the Connections – Trails and Sidewalks Recommendations and an Action be added to the Implementation Schedule to update the ordinance requirements to require that new developments connect the required sidewalks to any nearby trails (*Livable Landscapes*, of Goal 2).

In the Natural Inventory, Streams section (page 40), the text states that all waterways in the Township are designated Cold-Water Fishes, but the Saucon Creek just west of Lanark Road is designated as High Quality-Cold Water Fishes (<https://gis.dep.pa.gov/emappa/>, Regulated Facilities and Related Information, Streams and Water Resources, Water Quality, Designated Use Streams).

The LVPC suggests adding a short text section to discuss scenic resources. Scattered references exist throughout the plan, but a separate section would summarize the information for scenic roadways, South Mountain, the Pennsylvania Highlands Greenway, etc.

In Chapter 3 Recommendations, Historic section, the text states that “...Upper Saucon Township should ...strengthen its partnership with the Coopersburg Historical Society and LVPC to identify all the historical sites and document their importance to the Township.” A subscription to the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission provides online access to PA-SHARE that would provide the most up-to-date information on historical sites that have been submitted for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

The LVPC suggests adding Natural Heritage Area sites, scenic viewshed or corridor, and the Natural Resources Plan from the *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* to the Parcel Preservation Priority Matrix (page 74).

Update the Financing and Funding section to include information about the earned income tax referendum that passed in November 2021. Additionally, remove the related action from the Implementation Schedule.

Ms. Trisha Lang, AICP
June XX, 2022

Mapping Suggestions:

Natural Resources—Consider only displaying the Natural Heritage Inventory data documented in the 2013 update; the other sites from earlier inventories (Mill Road Wetlands and Mest Marsh) were not identified in that update. Also, the large Saucon Creek/Limeport Wetlands site west of Coopersburg is the boundary from the 1999 Mill Road Wetlands site, but the two names are from 2013 sites—Saucon Creek is the name of a watershed-level site and Limeport Wetlands is a site located primarily in Lower Milford with a small area in Upper Saucon Township on Blue Church Road.

Existing and Proposed Township Connections and Proposed Connections Maps—Consider adding historic sites (*Livable Landscapes, of Goal 5*) and update the Saucon Rail Trail and Upper Bucks Rail Trail to be existing trails.

The LVPC is supportive of the Township as it looks to implement its updated Comprehensive Recreation & 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,

Teresa Mackey
Senior Environmental Planner