



# Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

STEVEN GLICKMAN  
Chair

CHRISTOPHER AMATO  
Vice Chair

KEVIN SCHMIDT  
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP  
Executive Director

## COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023, 12:00 noon AGENDA

THE MEETING CAN BE ACCESSED AT <https://tinyurl.com/LVPC2023> OR VIA PHONE 610-477-5793 Conf ID: 661 345 854#.

### Roll Call

### Ordinance/Plan Reviews and Information for February 2023:

1. *ACTION ITEM*: South Whitehall Township – Land Use of Regional Significance – Dorney Park (Project 2024) (JS)
2. *ACTION ITEM*: Fountain Hill Borough – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Reducing Minimum Lot Area (JS)
3. *ACTION ITEM*: Lower Saucon Township – Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendments – General Business District (JS)
4. *ACTION ITEM*: Whitehall Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Short Term Rentals (JS)
5. *ACTION ITEM*: Lower Macungie Township – Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Zoning Hearing Board Changes (SN)

### Other Business

1. *INFORMATION ITEM*: Density Analysis (JD)

Next Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting:  
March 21, 2023 at 12:00 pm



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BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP  
Executive Director

March XX, 2023

Mr. Gregg Adams, Planner  
South Whitehall Township  
4444 Walbert Avenue  
Allentown, PA 18104

**RE: Dorney Park (Project 2024) – Land Use of Regional Significance  
South Whitehall Township  
Lehigh County**

Dear Mr. Adams:

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

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - February 21, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - February 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject application is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the Regional Entertainment or Resort Complex category. Dorney Park is located at 3830 Dorney Park Road, and the proposed project area is located northwest of the main parking lot and adjacent to Dorney Park Road at the intersection with Lincoln Avenue (project area parcel number 548621956832).

The project proposes to reutilize the site of a former attraction by constructing features for a new attraction. The project site is located in an area designated for Development in the General Land Use Plan of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* and supports 'reuse and redevelopment in urban areas' (of Policy 1.1).

The project area is also in a High Conservation Priority Area of the Natural Resources Plan due to its location within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated 100-year flood plain. While the project site is within an area prone to hazard, the existing amusement park use and proposed improvements minimize the risk of hazard because the facility does not operate during adverse weather conditions, is not

open to the public 24 hours a day and does not operate out of season. Considering the impact of changing weather patterns on flooding as a result of climate change, the new attraction should be built to withstand the hydrostatic and hydrodynamic forces associated with floodwaters (of Policy 3.4).

The LVPC encourages review of potential noise and light pollution from the proposed attraction's location at the perimeter of the park area to avoid adverse impacts on the adjacent community and support 'the social, economic and environmental well-being of the region' (of Policy 1.1).

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.

The LVPC has copied appropriate representatives from all adjacent municipalities in order to further 'coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries' (of Policy 1.4).

Sincerely,

Jillian Seitz  
Senior Community Planner

cc: David Manhardt, South Whitehall Township Director of Communications; Scott Pidcock PE, South Whitehall Township Engineer; Adam Smith, PE, Barry Isett & Associates; Jesse Sadiua, City of Allentown Senior Planner; Thomas Beil, Lower Macungie Township Planning Commission Chair; Brian Horwith, North Whitehall Township Planning Commission Chair; Kerry Rabold, Salisbury Township Zoning Officer; Charles Deprill, Upper Macungie Township Planning Commission Chair; Lee Rackus, Whitehall Township Planning, Zoning & Development Bureau Chief



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February XX, 2023

Keith Zehner, Zoning Officer/Code Enforcement  
Borough of Fountain Hill  
941 Long Street  
Fountain Hill, Pennsylvania 18015

**RE: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Reducing Minimum Lot Area  
Borough of Fountain Hill  
Lehigh County**

Dear Mr. Zehner:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings. Both meetings were virtual, and occurred on:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - February 21, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - February 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject zoning ordinance amendment proposes to reduce the minimum lot area requirement for apartments in the Town Center (TC) Zoning District. The ordinance currently requires apartments to have a minimum lot area of 2,400 square feet, and the amendment proposes to reduce this area to 1,150 square feet.

The LVPC applauds this proposal for supporting numerous goals and policies of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. Reducing minimum lot area requirements for apartments in the TC District supports increasing density of residential and mixed-uses in an area with access to a variety of transportation modes available (of Policy 1.2), increases the diversity and price points of available housing (of Policy 4.5), and promotes adaptive reuse of historic buildings (of Policy 5.4). Decreasing minimum lot sizes is also a recommended best practice for improving equity by reducing barriers to housing in areas with access education and employment opportunities, and supports increasing social and economic access to daily needs for all people (of Policies 4.1, 4.3 and 5.2).

Increasing density adds value to neighborhoods and business districts, helps create a better transportation network, and is a key principle of *FutureLV* when development and land use intensity is matched with sustainable infrastructure capacity (Policy 1.1 and Density Special Section). The LVPC commends the Borough for its exemplary ordinance update, which reflects a best practice in efficient development and land use processes (of Policy 1.4).

**Discrepancy Note**

The LVPC notes a discrepancy between ordinance text and the attached Exhibit A Table of Dimensional Requirements to be amended, where the ordinance text refers to a 1,500-square-foot lot area requirement (introductory statement and in Section 1), while the Table of Dimensional Requirements refers to 1,150 square feet. This discrepancy should be rectified prior to adoption of the amendment.

Municipalities, when considering ordinance and map amendments, 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)]. Please send a copy of any final amendments that are adopted, per the requirements of the MPC.

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

Sincerely,

Jillian Seitz  
Senior Community Planner

cc: Eric Gratz, Borough Manager



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Executive Director

February XX, 2023

Mark Hudson, Manager  
Lower Saucon Township  
Town Hall, 3700 Old Philadelphia Pike  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18015

**RE: Zoning Ordinance and Map Amendments – General Business District  
Lower Saucon Township  
Northampton County**

Dear Mr. Hudson:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) considered the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings. Both meetings were virtual, and occurred on:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - February 21, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - February 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject application proposes substantive amendments to the Township Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map following the 2020 update to the Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan.

### **Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

The ordinance amendments propose to eliminate the current General Business District (GB1) and Limited General Business District (GB2) and establish a single General Business Commercial (GB) Zoning District with related regulations. The GB District is intended to provide locations for highway-oriented uses along the Township's major arterial roads, with permitted uses to include a mix of commercial, such as gas stations, banks and car washes; cultural uses such as libraries and community centers; and lodging, offices, restaurants and retail.

Reducing the number of zoning districts and consolidating similar zoning districts with minimal differences is a best practice that supports efficient development processes and aligns with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* (Policy 1.4). Allowing a wide range of business-oriented uses increases local development and economic opportunities and 'encourages reinvestment in commercial areas' (of Policy 4.6).

The proposed ordinance amendments also expand permitted uses in the Light Manufacturing (LM) Zoning District to include commercial and retail uses in addition to light manufacturing uses. The addition of permitted uses supports ‘diversification of the regional economy to strengthen economic resilience’ (Policy 4.2). The LVPC commends the inclusion of vertical/indoor farming as a permitted use, which supports diversified farming operations (Farming as a Business Special Section) and promotes next generation manufacturing and technology (of Policy 4.2).

## Zoning Map Amendments

The subject application proposes to rezone numerous properties, the majority of which are related to the newly created GB Zoning District. For each of the areas proposed to be rezoned, they are located in the Development area of the *FutureLV* General Land Use Plan, and support guiding the location and intensity of development to areas with sustainable infrastructure capacity, and encourage reuse and redevelopment (of Policy 1.1). The LVPC also reviewed the proposed zoning changes compared to the Township’s updated Comprehensive Plan, and offers the comments below:

- Along the State Route 412 area south of Hellertown Borough:
  - 19.6 acres are proposed to be rezoned from GB1 and GB2 districts to GB Zoning District; 32.1 acres to be rezoned from Rural Suburban District (R40) to GB; 18.51 acres to be rezoned from Semi-Urban Residential District (R12) to GB and 22.16 acres to be rezoned from Mobile Home District (MH) to R12. These proposals align with the Moderate Intensity Residential/Commercial Infill land use identified in the Township’s Comprehensive Plan Update.
  - Adjacent to the Hellertown Borough border, a 7.29-acre portion of the MH District is proposed to be rezoned from MH to GB, and a 2.45-acre area is proposed to be rezoned from Open Space Residential District (R80) to GB Zoning District. This area is identified as Higher Intensity Residential land use in the Comprehensive Plan Update. However, the LVPC notes that while the proposed rezoning varies from the general land use areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan Update, the proposed GB Zoning District is consistent with adjacent land uses to the north in Hellertown Borough (identified as General Commercial in the Comprehensive Plan Update). Both of these districts are located along Route 412 and align with the other GB rezonings proposed along Route 412.
  
- Along the State Route 378 area extending from the vicinity of Mountain Drive southwards to the Upper Saucon Township boundary line:
  - 75.37 acres are proposed to be rezoned from GB1 and GB2 to GB. This proposal aligns with the General Commercial land use identified in the Township’s Comprehensive Plan Update.

- Along Easton Road south of the City of Bethlehem and northwest of Interstate 78:
  - 86.2 acres are proposed to be rezoned from Rural Suburban Residential District (R40) to Light Manufacturing District (LM). In the Township's Comprehensive Plan Update, approximately half of this area is identified as Neighborhood Scale Mixed-Use and the remainder is identified as Low Intensity Residential as general land uses. However, this area's location adjacent to an industrial area to the north (City of Bethlehem) and Interstate 78 is suitable for the light industrial and business-oriented uses permitted in the LM District.

Municipalities, when considering zoning ordinance and map amendments, 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)]. Please send any final amendments that are adopted.

The LVPC has copied representatives of the Saucon Valley Multi-Municipal Plan to further 'coordinate land use decisions across municipal boundaries' (Policy 1.4). If you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Jillian Seitz  
Senior Community Planner

CC: Cathy Hartranft, Hellertown Borough Manager





STEVEN GLICKMAN  
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Vice Chair

KEVIN SCHMIDT  
Treasurer

BECKY A. BRADLEY, AICP  
Executive Director

February 15, 2023

Lee A. Rackus, Bureau Chief, Planning Zoning & Development  
Whitehall Township  
3219 Macarthur Road  
Whitehall, Pennsylvania 18052

**RE: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Short Term Rentals  
Whitehall Township  
Lehigh County**

Dear Ms. Rackus:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, though discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, and we encourage your participation. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting if Commission members have any additional comments. Meeting participation details are below:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - February 21, 2023 at 12:00 PM
  - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - February 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM
  - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>

The subject zoning ordinance amendment proposes to add regulations pertaining to short term rentals. Short term rentals shall be permitted in single family residences located in the Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) and Local Commercial (C-2A) zoning districts. The proposed regulations include a licensing/permitting requirement and standards for operation.

Short-term rentals have emerged as a nationwide trend and provide homeowners an opportunity to earn supplemental income while offering a lodging alternative for those visiting the area or seeking temporary living accommodations in situations such as moving residences. The zoning ordinance amendment aligns with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* because it supports local entrepreneurship (of Policy 4.2) and establishing an application process is a best practice when regulating short-term rentals (of Policy 1.4).

Additionally, the LVPC commends the life-safety standards included in the proposed regulations, such as smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguisher location, which serve to 'promote safe and secure community design and emergency management' (Policy 5.1) and support the safety of visitors, residents and emergency responders alike.

Municipalities, when considering ordinance and map amendments, 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)]. Please send a copy of any final amendments that are adopted, per the requirements of the MPC.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jillian Seitz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jillian Seitz  
Senior Community Planner

cc: Michael P. Harakal, Jr., Mayor



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Executive Director

February 14, 2023

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

**RE: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Zoning Hearing Board Composition  
Lower Macungie Township  
Lehigh County**

Dear Mr. Jones:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, though discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. Both meetings are virtual, and we encourage your participation. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting if Commission members have any additional comments. Meeting participation details are below:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting
  - February 21, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
  - February 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject zoning ordinance amendment proposes changes to zoning hearing board, including increasing the composition of the zoning hearing board from three to five members, to change the terms from 3 to 5 years, and to eliminate alternate members. While the composition of the board is largely a matter of local concern, the amendment is generally consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* as it demonstrates ‘the evolution and adaptability of government’ (of Policy 1.1). These changes will allow the board to continue to ‘serve as the regional expert on planning, zoning and development’ and ‘provide guidance on best practices’ (of Policy 1.4).

Municipalities, when considering ordinance and map amendments, 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)]. Please send a copy of any final amendments that are adopted, per the requirements of the MPC. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Steve Neratko  
Chief Community Planner

cc: David Brooman, Township Solicitor, Renea Flexer, Township Secretary