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LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes from the Thursday May 25, 2023, Meeting

The LVPC held a virtual public meeting on Thursday, May 25, 2023. The meeting was advertised in the Lehigh Valley Press on December 28, 2022.

Mr. Glickman chaired the meeting.

Ms. Griffin Rivera took Roll Call.

Members in Attendance:

Lehigh County

Geoff Brace, Percy Dougherty, Michael Drabenstott, Bob Elbich, Philip Ginder, Steven Glickman, Kent Herman, Rick Molchany, Joyce Moore, Christina Morgan, Owen O'Neil, Santo Napoli, David Petrik, Kathy Rader, and Stephen Repasch.

Northampton County

Christopher Amato, Andrew Elliott, Charles Elliott, John Gallagher, Judy Haldeman, Darlene Heller, Rachel Leon, Carl Manges, John McGorry, Stephen Melnick, Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Taiba Sultana and Tara Zrinski.

Members Absent:

Lehigh County

Phillips Armstrong, Jamie Johnson, Dennis Klusaritz, Kevin Schmidt and Matthew Tuerk.

Northampton County

Jessica Cope, Dan Engle, Lamont McClure, William McGee, Scott Minnich, Edward Nelson, Salvatore Panto, William Reynolds, Tina Smith.

Staff Present: Matt Assad, Becky Bradley, Bambi Griffin Rivera, Steve Neratko, Dean Severson, Brian Hite, Jill Seitz.

Public Present: Debra Soto, Gayle Howard, Jeff Ward, Lisa Pektor, Lou Pektor, Phil Gianficaro, Justin Coyle, Richard Wilford-Hunt, Dave Lobach

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Glickman noted that on May 3 the LVPC was invited to the Coalition for Appropriate Transportation's Annual meeting at the Bethlehem Library where CAT presented the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission with the "Planning for Our Valley in the Big Picture Award." CAT executive director Scott Slingerland explained the Award was for the way the LVPC seamlessly melds together transportation, land use, housing, economics and education together into a single cohesive plan that considers the transportation impacts in every aspect of planning. Other award winners included Easton for its Centre Square redesign, Bethlehem for its 2022 "Bike to Work" event and Allentown for its new Jordan Creek Greenway. Mr. Glickman noted it was a very uplifting event and he was honored to attend and to accept the award on behalf of the LVPC.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. McGorry questioned the Commission's vote on the move of the LVPC office. Mr. Glickman commented on the process used to decide on the office relocation. Dr. Amato commented on environmental problems in the Lehigh Valley including diminished air quality and the Lehigh River experiencing water quality degradation. He commented on the sheer volume of truck traffic. He called for temporarily ending tax abatements for warehouse development and a moratorium on further warehouse development.

Mr. Brace discussed House Bill 782 introduced by state Representative Schlossberg which would amend the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). He stated that the legislation would establish a process to provide a comprehensive, coordinated, and timely review process for developments of regional significance. It would also allow neighboring municipalities the opportunity to have their concerns addressed and provide for a mitigation plan which could take into consideration the costs of development.

Members of the Commission asked how the LVPC could support and advocate for the passage of this legislation. Ms. Bradley stated that staff can write a letter of support which is rooted in data and tied to Future LV. She noted that local planning commissions need additional tools and resources and support this legislation. She stated that this letter will be ready for the June LVPC meeting.

Mr. Moritz-Chapelliquen noted that the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) annual data has recently been recently. He noted that the United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley could provide a briefing for those who would be interested in learning about that data. Ms. Bradley noted that the LVPC will be announcing a regional housing initiative in the coming months and will wrap back to the ALICE data.

MINUTES

Mr. Glickman stated that the minutes of the Thursday, April 27, 2023, LVPC meeting are attached, and Ms. Griffin Rivera read the previously voted on agenda items. Mr. Glickman then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Molchany made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township- River Pointe Logistics Lot 1, Land Use of Regional Significance

Ms. Seitz presented the review of the subject application, which 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' land use category. The project is associated with the River Pointe Logistics planned industrial park development, consisting of 12 industrial buildings totaling 5,873,000 square feet on approximately 804 acres of land. The site of the larger industrial park is located approximately 600 feet southwest of the Township border with Portland Borough, bounded by River Road to the northeast, Pine Tree Lane to the southeast and Potomac Street to the southwest. The subject application submitted for review at this time proposes to construct a 610,000-square foot building on Lot 1 (67 acres). Lot 1 is the southeastern-most lot on the overall River Pointe site and is the first lot on the left side when entering River Point Drive off River Road.

Mr. Hite noted that no connection is provided between the interior sidewalks and those along River Pointe Drive, posing a safety concern for pedestrians of all abilities. Additionally, no sidewalk is provided along the River Road property frontage. The Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA) does not provide fixed-route transit service to the project site and vicinity. The nearest LANTA fixed-route

service ends in Bangor and Roseto boroughs, approximately nine miles west of the project site on River Road. LANTA has no plans to extend service to serve the project site in the near future, however given the proposed employment uses on the site, LANTA anticipates service requests in the vicinity. LANTA also recommends significant pedestrian connectivity and/or shuttle service to the nearby Portland Park and Ride to coordinate with other multimodal services. Additional bus stop details should be coordinated with LANTA directly.

Ms. Seitz stated that the LVPC strongly recommends connecting the proposed walking trail to a pedestrian network along River Road. Upper Mount Bethel Township was studied for trail feasibility in the Two Rivers Area Greenway Trails Implementation Study (2009). Implementing trails and multimodal connectivity at the time of this development can facilitate future trail connections that will ultimately lead to an interconnected Slate Belt region (of Policy 5.3). Extending the trail along the southeastern emergency access driveway is one potential way of connecting the trail to River Road.

The plans identify that Lot 1 will be served by central public water and central public sewer, and the overall site sketch plan conceptualizes an on-site wastewater treatment plant. The LVPC encourages continued coordination between the Township and developer to ensure the sewer system is ultimately overseen by a municipal authority. Privately owned systems historically have not been operated as well as public systems and are often neglected due to the high long-term costs of maintenance, leading to system failure. Municipalities are ultimately responsible for the proper functioning of all systems within their borders. In the event where a central sewage facility is approved by the municipality and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and remains private, the municipality should require significant assurances for proper long-term operation and maintenance (of Policy 3.2).

The LVPC commends the inclusion of an emergency access driveway provided on the east side of the building, connecting to River Road. The ability for first responders and emergency services to utilize this driveway for response and evacuation is a key element to response times.

Mr. Hite reported that the subject application includes an overall Master Transportation Impact Study (TIS) dated January 2022 for the entire River Pointe Planned Industrial Park. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual 11th Edition was utilized to estimate the number of trips generated by the overall River Pointe development across two phases. Phase One accounts for the cumulative development of Lots 1, 2 and 6 based on 75% as "Industrial Park" and 25% as "High Cube Fulfillment Warehouse – Non-Sort". The submitted plans for "Lot 1" do not specify the actual land use of the building. To determine the estimated trips generated by Lot 1, the LVPC utilized the same percentage split between land use codes for Phase 1. Based on these estimates, Lot 1 will generate an average of 1,853 total vehicle trips per day, which includes 296 commercial vehicles.

As noted earlier, the traffic impact study was last revised January 2022, and again it notes that as development is proposed revisions will occur. Development of an over 600,000 square foot building is certainly "*material*", especially given the land use and it's need for significant transportation infrastructure in order to operate. The proposed development, in totality, is mega-regional in nature, and the largest single development the Lehigh Valley has seen in recent memory.

At a minimum, as each lot is proposed for overall development is proposed, the Master TIS should be updated at the preliminary plan stage with trip generation estimates based on the resulting land use. Reflection of true operations of facilities and transportation impacts is critical to not only accommodating the needs of the site's ultimate users but, managing the local and broader impacts of development. Not providing basic, common traffic impact information is irresponsible and will lead to significant transportation safety and emergency management concerns. Therefore, the LVPC strongly advises the Township to require an updated TIS, in the clear, present and long-term interest of the public, health, safety and general welfare (*FutureLV* Policies 1.4, 2.4 and 2.6).

The Lot 1 site plans show 92 "truck" spaces, however the proposed length of 55 feet is more suitable for trailers because a connected tractor-trailer is typically 70 feet in length. Truck parking spaces, including

long-term spaces, are one essential element to provide drivers with a safe area to rest. Connected tractor-trailer parking is proposed in the medians of River Pointe Drive, though no driver accommodations are provided. Restrooms, garbage and recycling containers and lighting are essential supporting the health, safety and welfare of drivers while maintaining the environment and overall condition of the truck parking areas along River Pointe Drive. Snow removal equipment should be included in a safe and efficient area with the capacity to manage snow once on the ground. The removal of snow and ice from the tops of trailers and trucks is a transportation network safety process. The ability to remove snow prior to leaving the site can mitigate the impacts of accumulated snow falling or sliding off trucks and trailers and impeding vehicular traffic and visibility.

Ms. Seitz commented that the developer should consider incorporating sustainable systems and green building design. Sustainable utilities reduce overhead costs of operation and can provide greater return on investment while 'minimizing environmental impacts of development' (Policy 3.1). The roof of buildings should be strong enough to accommodate solar panels and enable renewable energy sources (of Policy 3.4). Incorporating sustainable systems and design supports the natural character and rural identity of the Township and offsets emissions generated by trucks to improve air quality (of Policy 3.4).

Additionally, the LVPC strongly recommends that the Township ensure the environmental impacts generated by the development are scrutinized, particularly impacts to critical habitats, to 'minimize environmental impacts of development' (Policy 3.2). Because of this proposal's proximity to the Delaware River, a comprehensive environmental impact study may be required by the Northampton County Conservation District, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and/or the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and municipal ordinances may require the same. A copy of any and all environmental impact assessments should be forwarded to LVPC at the same time as other regulatory bodies. This will ensure that county and regional planning and coordination occurs in conjunction with the development of the site in a nationally significant and environmentally sensitive area.

Mr. Hite noted that transportation infrastructure capacity is limited in the vicinity of the project site and was not built to withstand high traffic volumes or heavy industrial vehicles. Vehicle traffic impacts are made worse by the lack of alternative transportation options. Ensuring that freight mobility is matched with appropriate infrastructure to accommodate it should occur prior to approving land development plans (of Policy 2.4).

Another outstanding issue is the need for a development management plan for the facility. The development management plan must formally designate and provide perpetual routing, signage and enforcement to ensure that the impacts of the development do not exacerbate existing or incited transportation safety and congestion concerns. The potential for this development to pay for itself now or into the future is questionable and understanding that public subsidy is limited or non-existent is an important factor to manage long-term impacts on the development itself and the public. The potential for this development to pay for itself now or into the future is questionable and understanding that public subsidy is limited or non-existent is an important factor to manage long-term impacts on the development itself and the public.

Mr. Hite commented that a Norfolk Southern rail line bridge crosses above Delaware Avenue, State Route 1039 in Portland Borough located north of the project site. The current 13' 8" clearance beneath this rail trestle poses a severe safety and mobility concern. All trucks must be directed to travel in this direction from the site, as the main access to both State Route 611 and Interstate 80 in New Jersey. Trucks get caught underneath or scrape the overpass multiple times per year, especially when road repaving reduces the amount of clearance underneath. The overpass in its current condition is not ideal nor in line with current design standards, considering the current standard maximum height of a commercial vehicle is 13' 6" in Pennsylvania – a two-inch clearance. Ride height of the suspension of the chassis of trucks and trailers and road repaving with continual overlays can easily deviate three or more inches and would be detrimental to the integrity of the overpass if struck and compromise the safety of truck drivers.

The plans and TIS do not indicate how this site access and mobility challenge will be addressed. Additionally, the bridge opening is too narrow for two tractor-trailers to pass through safely at the posted speed, and with minimal margin for error at slower speeds. Because of the roadway's proximity to the Delaware River and changing weather patterns as a result of climate change, this area is severely prone to flooding, and lowering the roadway to address clearance is not recommended. The LVPC strongly encourages the developer to continue exploring solutions to this issue, as well as continued dialog and coordination with the Township, Borough of Portland and PennDOT as well as other applicable agencies to study and engineer design alternatives to increase the overpass clearance to promote roadway safety and limit environmental impacts of development (of Policy 2.2 and 3.2). The LVPC recognizes this overpass as an obstacle that will severely limit the viability of the development. This is a practical matter that must be addressed, or the development will not function at a sustainable level.

The overall project is reliant on regional connectivity which is challenged by the following routes and are provided here for context including truck routes to Interstate 80 should be established and signed appropriately to provide safe and efficient freight movements (of Policy 2.4). The most efficient and least impactful travel route would be for truck and freight movements to cross the Delaware River at the Portland-Columbia Toll Bridge and connect to Interstate 80 in New Jersey. However, it is likely that trucks will utilize other roadways in the vicinity of the project site, and potential impacts to these roadways should be planned and mitigated.

State Route 611 is listed in the Congestion Management Process as a 2040 future congested corridor. This designation was before the project was proposed, and congestion is a concern for the mobility of people and freight through the area and associated potential worsening of air quality. The proposed vehicle impacts from the overall development will accelerate the congested corridor sooner than anticipated. It is strongly recommended that the Developer work with PennDOT, The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission (DRJTBC), Upper Mount Bethel Township and Portland Borough on mitigation and mobility as well as any safety improvements along State Route 611 to offset the dramatic increase in vehicle traffic and resulting congestion. Proper planning, design and improvements to the network can mitigate the impacts to the mobility in the area and improve air quality issues that result from traffic congestion corridor (of Policies 1.4, 2.2 and 2.4).

State Route 512 off of State Route 611 traveling southwest towards Bangor and Pen Argyl boroughs is another likely route that trucks may utilize. Impacts to Route 512 should be identified and assessed to 'consider the global effects of new or expanded freight businesses' (of Policy 2.4) and minimize adverse impacts to these adjacent communities' infrastructure. State Route 1002 known as "Uhler Road" through Forks Township and "Main Street" in Tatamy Borough will be impacted if trucks opt to travel further south on Route 611 to access State Route 33. This is also a likely route for trucks traveling from the south to the development, by traveling from Route 22 to Route 33 and exiting at the Palmer/Tatamy interchange. Both state and locally owned roads in Lower Mount Bethel Township will also be affected.

River Road south of the project site, as well as any connecting local roads in Lower Mount Bethel Township, should also be studied for impacts, particularly in consideration that some trucks may not be able to travel north due to the low-clearance rail bridge over River Road.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Molchany made the motion; Mr. Melnick seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Mr. Melnick stated that the problem with the underpass on Delaware Avenue is paramount and that if this access issue isn't corrected all other concerns are moot. Mr. Moritz-Chapelliquen commended the staff's review and the inclusion of issues that need to be addressed as well as actionable next steps. Mr. Molchany asked if the review could recommend that the Township perform pre- and post-development monitoring of air quality and require environmental remediation. He also noted the potential problem if the sewage disposal system experiences problems or fails and stated that it would be unfair to require neighboring uses to hook up to the sewer and water systems. He also commented on the need to right-size infrastructure and the current inadequacy of Delaware Avenue, and the need for a long-term transportation plan for the development.

Mr. Melnick stated that the Township should commit to building the sewer plant or require the developer to obtain sewer service from Portland Borough. Mr. Charles Elliott asked if the plan is consistent with FutureLV. Ms. Bradley responded that in total the plan is inconsistent with FutureLV.

Mr. Charles Elliott also asked that the review letter be edited to read: "Taken as a whole, in consideration of the issues discussed in this letter, we conclude that it fails to align with the policies of FutureLV." The motion to accept the staff comments was amended to make this change.

Ms. Lisa Pektor asked if the review included any information on the Neighborhood Improvement District which she stated was created to fund services required by the development. Ms. Bradley commented that the LVPC review does not consider taxing issues, only land use issues. Mr. Moritz- Chappellequin asked if there was a set number of issues and deficiencies identified in a plan review to warrant a recommendation of inconsistency. Ms. Bradley stated that it is a matter of scale of the deficiencies and not a defined number.

The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township- River Pointe Logistics Lot 2, Land Use of Regional Significance

Ms. Seitz presented the review of the subject application, which 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' land use category.

The subject application submitted for review proposes to construct a 701,100-square foot building on Lot 2 (50 acres). Lot 2 is located on the eastern edge of the River Pointe site and is the first lot on the right side when entering River Point Drive off River Road. As with Lot 1, the proposed building and the larger planned industrial park development aligns with the Township's designated zoning, is in a LERTA and has the potential to provide numerous economic benefits. However, the size and scale of the project significantly surpasses any existing development and infrastructure in the surrounding area. The numerous issues related to the overall industrial park are outstanding or unresolved, and aspects of the Lot 2 site design can be improved for the Township to leverage this development opportunity while minimizing adverse impacts.

Mr. Hite noted that no sidewalk is provided along the River Road property frontage. While the area surrounding the project site lacks pedestrian infrastructure, taking the opportunity to install improvements at the time of land development supports the fiscal health and sustainability of the Township (of Policy 4.6). Additionally, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) spaces in the passenger vehicle parking lot are located offset from the building. The intent of ADA-compliant parking spaces is to have them located close to building entrances to minimize the effort required for a person with a disability to access the building. While building entrances are not shown on the plan, it is strongly recommended that the applicant ensure ADA parking spaces are located as close to the building entrances as possible. Bicycle storage racks should be installed in a convenient location; To facilitate the possibility of future transit service, LANTA strongly recommends including a comprehensive pedestrian network within the River Pointe complex, particularly along the main River Pointe Drive, and along the proposed entrance driveways from River Pointe Drive to the main employee entrances of the individual facilities. (of Policies 2.2 and 5.2).

Ms. Seitz commented that the LVPC commends the proposed trees along River Pointe Drive, and landscaping along the River Road side of the lot. The LVPC encourages retaining as many existing trees as possible, to 'conserve and manage natural lands' (Policy 3.1). Additional landscaping and expanding access to green spaces provides many benefits to mental and physical well-being, including reduced depression, anxiety and stress (of Policy 5.3). Sustainable systems and green building practices should be incorporated into the design of the building and site to reduce overhead costs of operation and mitigate climate change impacts (of Policy 3.4).

The plans identify that Lot 2 will also be served by central public water and central public sewer, and the overall site sketch plan conceptualizes an on-site wastewater treatment plant. The LVPC encourages continued coordination between the Township and developer to ensure the sewer system is ultimately overseen by a municipal authority for proper long-term operation and maintenance (of Policy 3.2).

The inclusion of two access points supports 'safe and secure community design and emergency management' (of Policy 5.1) by facilitating efficient emergency management response should an incident occur. As the project moves forward, it is paramount that the developer coordinate emergency access configurations with Upper Mount Bethel Township emergency services departments and providers to 'enhance planning and emergency response efforts among emergency management personnel' (of Policy 5.1).

As with the review of Lot 1, the submitted plans for "Lot 2" do not specify the actual land use of the building. The estimated number of trips generated by the development were calculated based on 75% as "Industrial Park" and 25% as "High Cube Fulfillment Warehouse – Non Sort" as outlined in the TIS. Based on these estimates, Lot 2 will generate an average of 2,039 total vehicle trips per day, which includes 340 commercial vehicles:

The Lot 2 site plans show 155 "truck" spaces, however these provided spaces are unable to accommodate a typical connected tractor-trailer, which is 70 feet in length. It is recommended that if these are intended to be tractor-trailer parking spaces that the pavement markings and layout be configured to park a 70-foot truck within the space provided (of *FutureLV* policies 2.4 and 5.4).

As with the Lot 1 review, numerous impediments to the success of the overall River Pointe Logistics project are outstanding and must be resolved, including the rail overpass across Delaware Avenue, State Route 1039 in Portland Borough. The current clearance beneath this rail trestle poses a severe safety and mobility concern. The LVPC strongly encourages the developer to continue exploring solutions to this issue, as an obstacle that will severely limit the viability of the development. This is a practical matter that must be addressed, or the development will not function at a sustainable level.

Transportation infrastructure capacity is limited in the vicinity of the project site and was not built to withstand high traffic volumes or heavy industrial vehicles. Impacts must be evaluated for Interstate 80, including the Portland-Columbia Toll Bridge, State Route 611 which is identified as a 2040 future congested corridor, Route 512 and Route 33, and River Road extending south to Lower Mount Bethel Township. If not addressed as the land development progresses, these threats will ultimately increase the burden to the States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the County of Northampton and surrounding municipalities and others in the form of road and bridge upgrades and improvements, safety enhancements and transit needs. Transportation maintenance and improvements are paid for by all of these governments through taxes, which will need to increase over time to address the burdens a development of this scale will have on public infrastructure such as the transportation system and emergency management services. The potential for this development to pay for itself now or into the future is questionable and understanding that public subsidy is limited or non-existent is an important factor to manage long-term impacts on the development itself and the public.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Dr. Amato made the motion; Mr. Elbich seconded the motion. Dr. Amato also asked the previous comment on the inconsistency of the plan Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. The motion to accept the staff comments was amended to make this change.

The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Upper Mount Bethel Township- River Pointe Logistics Lot 6, Land Use of Regional Significance

Ms. Seitz presented the review of the subject application, which 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' land use category.

The subject application proposes to construct a 600,750-square foot building on Lot 6 (41 acres). Lot 6 is located on the western side of the overall River Pointe site with two access roads connecting on an unnamed roadway stemming from the River Pointe Drive cul-de-sac towards the northwest. As with Lots 1 and 2, the proposed building and the larger planned industrial park development aligns with the Township's designated zoning, is in a LERTA and has the potential to provide numerous economic benefits. However, the size and scale of the project significantly surpasses any existing development and infrastructure in the surrounding area.

Having multimodal transportation options is imperative to the long-term success of the proposal. Thousands of employees are anticipated upon full build-out of the industrial park, and the vicinity lacks the housing needed to support so many workers, resulting in extended commutes from surrounding communities, including Monroe County to the north and Warren County (New Jersey) to the east.

No sidewalk is proposed on the unnamed roadway connecting to River Pointe Drive, posing a safety concern for pedestrians of all abilities. Taking the opportunity to install improvements at the time of land development supports the fiscal health and sustainability of the Township (of Policy 4.6). Bicycle storage racks should be installed in a convenient location. To facilitate the possibility of future transit service, LANTA strongly recommends including a comprehensive pedestrian network within the River Pointe complex, particularly along the main River Pointe Drive, and along the proposed entrance driveways from River Pointe Drive to the main employee entrances of the individual facilities. (of Policies 2.2 and 5.2). Minimal landscaping is included in the site design. The LVPC recommends additional landscaping (of Policy 5.3). The LVPC strongly encourages retaining as many existing trees as possible, to 'conserve and manage natural lands' (Policy 3.1).

Adequate sewer service is necessary to accommodate the scale of the proposal, especially to accommodate the intended various forms of industrial uses (of Policy 3.2). The LVPC encourages continued coordination between the Township and developer to ensure the sewer system is ultimately overseen by a municipal authority for proper long-term operation and maintenance (of Policy 3.2).

The inclusion of two access points supports 'safe and secure community design and emergency management' (of Policy 5.1) by facilitating efficient emergency management response should an incident occur. As the project moves forward, it is paramount that the developer coordinate Township emergency services departments to 'enhance planning and emergency response efforts' (of Policy 5.1), especially in consideration of budget requirements for emergency response personnel, training and proper equipment to serve the scale of the building and overall project (of Policies 2.2 and 4.6).

Mr. Hite commented that the submitted plans for "Lot 6" do not specify the actual land use of the building. The estimated number of trips generated by the development were calculated based on 75% as "Industrial Park" and 25% as "High Cube Fulfillment Warehouse – Non Sort" as outlined in the TIS. Based on these estimates, Lot 6 will generate an average of 1,790 total vehicle trips per day, which includes 292 commercial vehicles. LVPC strongly advises the Township to require an updated TIS, in the clear, present and long-term interest of the public, health, safety and general welfare. At a minimum, as each Lot is proposed for development, the Master TIS should be updated at the preliminary plan stage with trip generation estimates based on the resulting land use.

The Lot 6 site plans show 95 "truck" spaces, however these provided spaces are unable to accommodate a typical connected tractor-trailer, which is 70 feet in length. It is recommended that if these are intended to be tractor-trailer parking spaces that the pavement markings and layout be configured to park a 70-foot truck within the space provided (of *FutureLV* policies 2.4 and 5.4).

Numerous impediments to the success of the overall River Pointe Logistics project are outstanding and must be resolved, including the rail overpass over State Route 1039 Delaware Avenue. The current

clearance beneath this rail trestle poses a severe safety and mobility concern. The plans and TIS do not indicate how this site access and mobility challenge will be addressed. The LVPC strongly encourages the developer to continue exploring solutions to this issue, as an obstacle that will severely limit the viability of the development. This is a practical matter that must be addressed, or the development will not function at a sustainable level.

Transportation infrastructure capacity is limited in the vicinity of the project site and was not built to withstand high traffic volumes or heavy industrial vehicles. Vehicle traffic impacts are made worse by the lack of alternative transportation options. Ensuring that freight mobility is matched with appropriate infrastructure to accommodate it should occur prior to approving land development plans (of Policy 2.4). If not addressed as the land development progresses, these threats will ultimately increase the burden to Township, Commonwealth, State of New Jersey, Federal Government, County, surrounding municipalities and others in the form of road and bridge upgrades and improvements, safety enhancements and transit needs.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Ms. Moore made the motion and also asked that the previous comment on the inconsistency of the plan be added; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. Mr. Moritz-Chapelliquen asked if the internal access points have the capacity to accommodate the anticipated truck traffic. Mr. Hite noted that access to Lot 6 wraps back to Demme Road which connects to River Road. Mr. Glickman asked if the proposed roads and access drives will be dedicated to the public. Mr. Hite stated that River Pointe Drive will be public, and all other drives will be private. This was confirmed by Mr. Lou Pektor who also noted that there would be emergency access to Potomac Street, Marshfield Drive, Pine Tree Lane and Demi Road.

The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Forks Township- Legacy at Sullivan Trail, Land Use of Regional Significance

Ms. Griffin Rivera presented the review of the subject application, which is considered a Land Use of Regional Significance under *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* in the large Residential Development and Mixed-Use development categories.

The applicant proposes consolidation of four lots into one and the construction of 19 apartment and two mixed-use buildings for a total of 420 apartments, 14,000 square-feet of retail/commercial space, and 14,000 square-feet of office space with a recreational center located on Sullivan Trail north of the intersection with Uhler Road.

The proposal is within a Multimodal Accessibility Buffer. These areas are opportunities that the LVPC highly encourages homing for expansion, improvements, or connections to the mixed-transportation network during development or redevelopment activities (of Policy 2.1). The LVPC commends the developer for providing sidewalks and pavement marked crosswalks throughout the proposal. This 'promotes safe and secure community design' (Policy 5.1) and will help to create a pedestrian friendly community space that promotes physical and mental health (Policy 5.3).

The LVPC recommends that the developer and municipality engage with Norfolk Southern Corporation on coordination of pedestrian infrastructure across their rail line which is depicted on the plans. The municipality and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) should also engage with Norfolk Southern Corporation on any rail crossing upgrades or safety improvements that may be required at the existing rail crossing across State Route 2025 (Sullivan Trail) (of Policies 2.4 and 5.1).

The LVPC recommends that bicycle racks be incorporated into the vehicle parking lots, and in the parking lot of the recreation center as residents may choose to bike to the center rather than drive. LANTA provides public transportation in close proximity to the project site, with a northbound/southbound bus stop at the Sullivan Trail and Church Lane intersection 0.30 miles north of the project site, and a westbound/eastbound bus stop in front of the adjacent Wells Fargo Bank on Uhler Road 0.25 miles south

of the project site. Given the proposed mixed-use development planned, including several multi-unit apartment buildings, LANTA anticipates service requests at this location. The proposal includes a comprehensive pedestrian network within the Legacy at Sullivan Trail complex, and sidewalks along the property frontage on Sullivan Trail. This will be a heavily used bus stop for the Township and providing access to a proper bus stop will benefit all users. The Easton Area School District should also be consulted for school bus stop requirements to ensure safe waiting areas for students (Policy 5.2).

The proposal is anticipated to generate 3,745 trips per day. Sullivan Trail along the frontage of the project location and Uhler Road are both listed as Corridors in the Transportation plan of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. The Sullivan Trail Corridor links the emerging Center of Forks Center and the historic Center of Stockertown. The Uhler Road Corridor links the historic Center of Tatamy to the emerging Center of Forks. These Corridors are “Multimodal Accessibility Buffer Areas” from FutureLV.

The Traffic Impact Study Addendum Sensitivity Analysis provided to LVPC indicates a desire by the developer to delay construction of dedicated left turn lanes at the offsite intersection of Sullivan Trail and Uhler Road until 190 Apartments are occupied. The LVPC recommends that these off-site PennDOT improvements be constructed in a timeframe to mitigate impacts of increased traffic to the intersection. Crash data for 2022 from the public version of the Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool shows five crashes at this location. This recommendation supports both Policies 2.2 to ‘provide a safe, well-maintained transportation network’ and Policy 2.6 ‘to improve transportation performance measures.’ The emergency access proposed on “Brooke Drive” (Access Road B) should be maintained to be fully accessible at all times as winter weather events could diminish access due to snow and ice cover and immediate access for emergency response activities is critical to the health, safety, and welfare of the community (of Policy 5.1). The Township should encourage the addition of electric vehicle charging spaces, recognizing the advancement of electric vehicle technologies (of Policies 2.5 and 3.2).

To ensure housing is made available to residents at a variety of income levels, *FutureLV* advocates for communities to ‘promote mixed-income neighborhoods’ and ‘diversify price points of available housing’ (of Policy 4.5). The subject parcels are located within a Farmland Preservation Area. Farmland Preservation Areas are areas that are predominantly agriculture and are recommended to remain agriculture. Sections of these parcels are also located within Character Defining areas. These areas represent the natural and scenic character of the Lehigh Valley. The types of uses recommended for these areas include parks and open space, woodlands, agriculture, and low-intensity, limited-scale development to preserve these natural and scenic resources. The LVPC recommends that, if possible, some of the sections of these parcels be preserved in the development process to maintain green space within the development which would ‘preserve natural resources in the land development process’ and ‘minimize environmental impacts of development’ (Policies 3.1 and 3.2).

The southern most parcel on the left of the slide is located in a high-level Natural Resource Conservation Priority Area and has a high concentration of woodlands. High Conservation Priority Natural Resource areas should be used by conservation organizations and government agencies to prioritize conservation efforts. This same parcel is proposed to be used as an underground detention/capture and reuse basin and is located in floodplains and is in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year flood zone area. No housing development is proposed for this parcel and the LVPC recommends that the woodlands be maintained to support this Natural Resource Conservation Priority Area and as a mitigation measure for flooding. This would ‘incorporate resiliency into the planning and design in 100- year floodplains (of Policy 5.1) and ‘preserve natural resources in the land development process’ (of Policy 3.1).

Mapping indicates the extensive presence of karsts in the form of surface depressions on the site. The LVPC advises the applicant to ensure proper geotechnical testing prior to land development, to ‘minimize environmental impacts of development to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public’ (Policy 3.2)

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Elbich made the motion; Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Hanover Township (Northampton County)- Arcadia Development Corp,300 Gateway Drive, Land Use of Regional Significance

Ms. Griffin Rivera presented the review of the subject application, which 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' land use category.

The subject applicant proposes consolidation of two parcels into one and construction of a 250,290 square foot warehouse at 300 Gateway Drive .The proposal fulfills the intent of *FutureLV* the Regional Plan to 'encourage reuse and redevelopment within urban areas' (of Policy 1.1) by repurposing the existing development.

Hanover Township, Northampton County is listed as an emerging Center in the Transportation Plan of *FutureLV*. Centers are connected via Corridors. Centers and Corridors have been identified to encourage projects that expand, improve, or connect the mixed-transportation network. This proposed development utilizes Route 512, identified as one of these corridors. These Centers and Corridors are opportunities for creating denser, mixed-use, and transit-supported development. The LVPC commends the use of the Land Use Code 150 "Warehousing" from the Institute of Transportation Engineers Trip Generation Manual in the Traffic Impact Study. This provides a range of warehousing calculation formulas and is important for characterizing the proposed impacts without an identified end user.

Gateway Drive is currently a private access for two hotels and a bank adjacent to the project. The warehouse will use the same access driveway. Consideration for the compatibility of freight commercial vehicles and passenger vehicles should be considered and it is recommended that an access study from Route 512 to the project be completed with recommendations to providing a safe access for all businesses that use Gateway Drive. On-site truck route signage should be provided to communicate the safest and most efficient access to State Route 22, 33, 191 and 412, 987 (Airport Road), and Interstates 78, 80 and 476. (of policy 2.4). The LVPC recommends directional signage be added within the complex to assist navigating to correct routes since the western driveway for the Embassy Bank / Hampton Inn is proposed for removal.

Route 22 at this location is listed as a current and future priority congested corridor in the Congested Management Process. Projects that will increase traffic congestion along the corridor should mitigate these impacts. The municipality and developer should engage with PennDOT on mitigation recommendations and to improve traffic flow along Route 22 and Interchanges in the vicinity of the project. Route 22 and associated ramps for ingress and egress to Route 512 are under construction as a Lehigh Valley Transportation Study Transportation Improvement Program project. The LVPC recommends the developer coordinate with PennDOT and its project management consultants to avoid any negative impacts on the improvement project or the proposed development (of Policies 2.2 and 3.2).

The LVPC applauds the developer for integrating commercial truck amenities into the project plans including a truck driver lounge and amenities area within the building, truck parking spaces for the driver lounge, and snow removal area. The LVPC recommends that electrical hookup infrastructure for the tractor-trailer and trailer parking / dock spaces be considered to limit tractor-trailer idling and improve air quality. Truck parking and passenger vehicle parking lots should be prepared for the future of electric vehicles by providing the necessary charging infrastructure. Trailers with refrigeration units are emerging with hybrid-run operations that enable an electric hookup to not rely on diesel fuel. Incorporating these features on-site can 'reduce climate change impacts' by offsetting the air quality impacts generated by freight uses and tractor-trailer idling (Policies 2.5 and 3.4).

The LVPC strongly recommends that a pathway or sidewalk connection from the proposed development to the sidewalk that runs along Highland Avenue be incorporated into the plans. Near the project site, on Highland Avenue, one street north of the proposed development are bus stops. There are no sidewalks along Route 512 and the ingress/egress of Gateway Drive onto Bath Pike (Route 512) that connects these two roads are pedestrian prohibited. This will make it difficult for any employees who use public

transportation to access the location without illegally and dangerously walking along Route 512 from the bus stops on Highland Avenue.

LANTA currently does not provide public transportation to the project site on Gateway Drive, or along its nearest main corridor, Route 512. Given the proposed use of the facility, LANTA anticipates future employees needing transportation to the site. The LVPC strongly recommends coordinating with the adjacent property to allow for a pedestrian connection from the project site to the Highland Avenue sidewalk to access the existing bus stops. If a connection for pedestrians could be made through the private property between the project site and the bus stops on Highland Avenue, it would support enhancing transit connections to improve mobility and job access (of Policy 2.3) as well as promote 'safe and secure community design' (Policy 5.1), and work to 'increase economic access to daily needs for all people' (of Policy 5.2). This solution would deter transit riders from dangerously walking on Route 512 to access the project site on Gateway Drive.

The LVPC recommends a pedestrian circulation plan for employee movements within the eastern employee parking lot and into the building entrances. Appropriate pavement markings should be installed to communicate routes for vehicles and to alert drivers to potential pedestrians. The LVPC also suggests that sidewalks be incorporated along the perimeter of the warehouse to provide a safe location to walk and serve as a recreational trail for employees and truck drivers that would promote health and wellness onsite (Policy 5.3).

The LVPC recommends to 'enhance public transit service, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities along Corridors' that a bicycle rack be included in a safe location adequately illuminated by light be added for any employees who may use a bicycle for their commute either whole or in combination with public transportation. (of Policies 2.3, 5.2 and 5.3).

The undeveloped parcel is part of a Character-Defining Area. Character-Defining Areas represent the natural and scenic character of the Lehigh Valley. The types of uses recommended for these areas are parks and open space, woodlands, agriculture, and low-intensity, limited scale development that preserves natural and scenic resources. Mapping indicates the extensive presence of karsts in the form of surface depressions on the site.

Mr. Glickman called for a motion to accept the staff comments. Mr. Gallagher made the motion; Dr. Amato seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions.

Mr. Melnick questioned how, if the driveway to the bank is removed, access would be provided. He noted that Gateway Drive is a two-lane road and that there will be a huge problem accessing the hotel and bank. Mr. Hite agreed and noted that appropriate signage is necessary. Mr. Lobach, who identified himself as the chair of Embassy Bank at Gateway Drive, stated that if the entrance to the Hampton Suites hotel is closed it will significantly impact their business. He noted that there would be significant problems for his customers having to drive through their hotel's parking lot.

The motion passed.

ACTION ITEM: Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet

Mr. Melnick presented the Comprehensive Planning Committee Summary Sheet, which included a subdivision and land development amendment for Pen Argyl Borough, and a zoning amendment for Williams Township.

Ms. Moore made a motion to accept the Summary Sheet. Mr. Glickman asked for a second. Mr. Repasch seconded the motion. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none. The motion carried.

Environment Committee:

INFORMATION ITEM: Climate Action Initiatives

Mr. Repasch reported that Ms. Tracy Oscavich reported to the Environment Committee on various climate action initiatives that are currently underway.

Transportation Committee:

INFORMATION ITEMS:

Mr. Herman reported on an update of the PennDOT Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside or TASA projects and the statewide funding application cycle for 2023 as well as a report on the PennDOT multimodal Transportation Funded projects. He also reported on an update on the Passenger Rail analysis that was presented to the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study as well as a briefing of the draft Eastern PA Freight Alliance Freight Infrastructure Plan Freight Profile.

Old Business:

INFORMATION ITEMS: Activity Reports

Monthly Subdivision, Land Development, Stormwater and Municipal Ordinance/Plans Report

Mr. Neratko presented the plan and review activity for March which included 17 subdivisions, 24 development proposals, 19 reviews for Stormwater Management, and seven Municipal Ordinances and Maps for a total of 67 reviews. The reviews included 407 housing units and 551,542 square feet of non-residential development. Mr. Glickman asked for any comments or questions. There were none.

Highway Traffic Monitoring

Mr. Hite provided the details of the March traffic counts. He presented the vehicle counts for State Route 22, State Route 33, Interstate 78, and State Route 309, as well as the truck counts for Interstate-78 and State Route 22.

He also presented a special report concerning Tuesdays during the month of April 2023. There were two significant motor vehicle accidents in Lehigh County during the morning rush hours that changed traffic patterns significantly.

These are very interesting data points and demonstrate how important Route 22 and Interstate 78 are for the Lehigh Valley, especially in times of emergency incidents that can affect commuting patterns. Alternative routes and connectivity for our roads is important not only for the residents and pass through traffic but also emergency response personnel responding to these incidents.

Executive Director's Report:

Ms. Bradley provided an update on the progress of the four multi-municipal plans- NazPlan, Northern Lehigh, Slate Belt, and River Central. She also reported on recent partnership meetings with ULI, PennDot, and the Federal Reserve.

Communications and Public Engagement:

INFORMATION ITEM: Grants and Media Summary

Mr. Assad provided a summary of grants as an attachment in the meeting packets. There are two PennDOT grants, including a very important Transportation Alternative Set-Aside Program, as well as a Department of Community and Economic Development Multimodal Grant program. Also included in the packet are the links to Becky's Morning Call column about the Lehigh Valley being more powerful by working together, and the WDIY radio show about regionalism.

INFORMATION ITEM: Lehigh Valley Government Academy

Mr. Assad also reported on the ongoing Lehigh Valley Government Academy PMPEI classes, with Subdivision and Land development in September and Community Planning in October.

Finally, Mr. Hite announced that on June 28th from 11 am to 1 pm at Wayne Grube Park we will be holding our Local Government Appreciation Day to recognize and honor all the local government people who have participated in the Local Technical Assistance Program and the Lehigh Valley Government Academy in the past couple of years. These are public works and government boards and commissions people who attended the LTAP and LVGA courses to keep up to date on best practices so they can do the best job possible for their communities. LTAP Safety Consulting Engineer Pat Wright will be the special guest speaker.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Glickman stated that the next LVPC meeting is set to be virtual on June 22 at 7pm. Mr. Glickman then asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Molchany made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by:

Becky Bradley, AICP, Executive Director and Dean Severson, AICP, Director of Regional Planning.