



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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April 19, 2023

Michael Hanlon, City Clerk
Allentown City
435 West Hamilton Street
Allentown, PA 18101

**RE: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Elementary Schools in I2 and I3 Districts
Allentown City
Lehigh County**

Dear Mr. Hanlon:

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
 - April 25, 2023 at 12:00 PM
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - April 27, 2023 at 7:00 PM

The subject application proposes to amend the City's Zoning Ordinance by allowing Elementary or Secondary Schools as a special exception use in the I2 and I3 zoning districts. The proposal includes limitations such as, the property must be immediately adjacent to a residential zoning district and another institutional use, and a buffer strip must be provided to separate the school from existing or potential industrial uses. The amendment was submitted through a rezoning request petition intended to facilitate reuse of a property containing an existing office building as an educational facility.

The proposed amendment aligns with numerous objectives outlined in *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. As land use patterns and trends continue to shift, it is important for local governments to evolve and adapt by enabling reuse and redevelopment within urban areas and encouraging reinvestment in commercial areas (of Policies 1.1 and 4.6). Increasing opportunities to locate elementary or secondary schools supports expanding access to education and job training (or Policies 4.1 and 4.3) and increases social and economic access to daily needs for all people (Policy 5.2). Procedurally, permitting schools as a special exception in industrial zones is a best practice that allows the zoning hearing board to consider projects on a case-by-case basis to ensure they are in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare (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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jillian Seitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner

cc: Jennifer Gomez, Planning Director