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February 8, 2021

Darlene Heller, AICP
Director of Planning and Zoning
10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

**RE: Zoning Map Amendment – Institutional Overlay (I-O) Zoning District
City of Bethlehem
Northampton County**

Dear Ms. Heller:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). 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 23, 2021 at 12:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - February 25, 2021 at 7:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>

The proposed zoning map amendment considers the addition of an Institutional Overlay (I-O) Zoning District to the zoning map at 1838 Center Street and 200 Dewberry Avenue. The petitioner requested the proposed amendment in conjunction with the possible future construction of a grocery store at the same location.

The City's zoning ordinance states the I-O Overlay District is intended to 'serve as a transitional area between a college or university campus and a CB [Central Business] District' and further indicates that '...each building and use shall be designed as part of the college/university and intended to serve the college/university community including students, employees and visitors'.

The subject property is not in close proximity to a college or university and the referenced proposed use does not appear to expressly serve the college/university community. As such, the proposal is generally inconsistent with the County Comprehensive Plan, *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, because it fails to 'guide the location and intensity of development' (of Policy 1.1) or 'encourage an efficient development process that is responsive to regional needs' (Policy 1.4), as intended by the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Introduction of changes to overlay zoning districts, when proposed, should be carefully assessed as to whether such changes 'promote use of cost-benefit analysis in planning,

development and infrastructure decisions' (of Policy 4.6) and 'context-specific design solutions' (of Policy 5.4)

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 regarding the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Samantha Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Samantha Smith
Chief Community Planner

cc: Robert Vidoni, Esq., City Clerk
Judy Kelechava, Assistant City Clerk