



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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October 12, 2022

Tad J. Miller, City Clerk
City of Bethlehem
10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

**RE: Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Solar Energy Devices
City of Bethlehem
Northampton and Lehigh Counties**

Dear Mr. Colon:

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
 - October 25, 2022 at 12:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting
 - October 27, 2022 at 7:00 PM
 - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>

The subject application proposes to revise and update Section 1318.29 of the City's Zoning Ordinance, regulating Solar Energy Collection Systems. While the proposed updates are essentially a matter of local concern, the LVPC notes several revisions that align with the intent of *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* and are worthy of commendation:

- The addition of a Definitions section specific to Solar Energy Collection Systems – this is a best practice for clear communication and improving usability of the ordinance (of Policy 1.4)
- A provision stating the applicant has the burden of proving that any glare produced does not have significant adverse impact on neighboring or adjacent uses – this supports community health and wellness (of Policy 5.3) and serves to minimize development impacts (of Policy 3.2)

- A provision stating that solar energy systems shall be located so that the removal of living trees is not required to the extent practical – this supports preserving natural resources in the land development process (of Policy 3.1).

Overall, the proposed amendments support renewable energy and diversification of sources to reduce climate change impacts (of Policy 3.4). The LVPC supports the City of Bethlehem's goal of a sustainable and climate resilient community, and thanks the City for continuing to demonstrate 'evolution and adaptability of government' (of Policy 1.1) through zoning ordinance amendments.

Municipalities, when considering ordinance 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', written in a cursive style.

Jillian Seitz
Senior Community Planner

CC: Darlene Heller, Planning and Zoning Director, City of Bethlehem