



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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April 1, 2024

Ms. Darlene Heller, Planning Director
City of Bethlehem
10 E. Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

**Re: Walnut St. Parking Garage – Land Development
City of Bethlehem
Northampton County**

Dear Ms. Heller:

The subject application proposes demolishing an existing parking garage, consolidating parcels, and constructing a new 199,944 square-foot parking garage that will include 3,056 square-foot of retail. The addresses of the new development will be 33-61 W Walnut St. and 56 W. Market St. (PINS P6NE1D 14 13, P6NE1D 14 13B, P6NE1D 14 13A, P6NE1D 14 00, P6NE1D 14 2). The LVPC offers the following comments:

The modernized facility will be right sized with a 517-vehicle capacity and will permit an additional 33,398 square-foot area to the west of the completed parking garage to be ready for future redevelopment. The redevelopment will match development intensity with sustainable infrastructure capacity and improve the mobility infrastructure of the region (of Policy 1.1 and 2.2).

Character Defining Area

The site is located in the middle of historic Bethlehem and surrounded by historic residential and commercial structures. Much of the property to be redeveloped is designated a Character Defining Area. The LVPC recommends that any redevelopment should consider the historic nature of the neighborhood.

Lehigh and Northampton Transit Authority (LANTA)

The site is adjacent to a number of major Lehigh and Northampton Transit Authority routes, including Enhanced Bus Service routes which supports establishing mixed-transportation corridors (of Policy 2.1).

Centers and Corridors

While a small portion of both the current garage and future garage are in a residential zone, these are minimal. In an effort to mitigate any lost residential area, the LVPC recommends that development to the west of the site attempt to incorporate a mixed-use development, which would increase housing density in centers and along corridors (of Policy 4.5).

Bicycle Rack

The LVPC recommends that a bicycle rack be included into the development plans to support transportation accessibility for all persons, (of Policy 5.2) and integrate mixed transportation into public space design (of Policy 5.2).

Electric Charging Spaces

The LVPC recommends electric charging be planned for and integrated into the passenger vehicle parking to plan for the future of electric vehicles (of Policy 2.5).

The LVPC encourages the developer to consider opportunities for incorporating sustainable energy systems that reduce overhead operational costs and 'minimize environmental impacts of development' (Policy 3.1), such solar panels. Incorporating sustainable practices to help to 'reduce climate change impacts' (Policy 3.4)."

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.

Sincerely,



Steve Neratko
Chief Community Planner



Brian Hite
Transportation Planner



Bambi Griffin Rivera
Senior Community and Regional Planner

cc: Bethlehem Parking Authority, Applicant;
Richard Roseberry, Project Engineer/Surveyor;
Michael Alkhal, City Engineer