



# **LEHIGH VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION**

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August 27, 2010

Ms. Sara Pandl, AICP/RLA  
Director of Planning/Community Development  
Lower Macungie Township  
3400 Brookside Road  
Macungie, PA 18062

Re: Proposed "Quick Fix" Zoning Ordinance Amendments,  
Rezoning and SALDO Amendments  
Summer 2010 Version

Dear Ms. Pandl:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission considered the above referenced draft ordinance at the August 26 meeting pursuant to the requirements of the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). The Commission voted to return the follow comments for the Township's use.

The letter addresses the proposed rezonings in eleven areas of the Township. The letter concludes with commentary about the proposed text changes. Overall, the "Quick Fix" amendments are a mixed bag relative to the County Comprehensive Plan. Parts are consistent. Other parts are either inconsistent or need further thought. Some parts are matters of local concern only meriting no comment relative to the County Comprehensive Plan.

## **PROPOSED REZONINGS**

### Industrial to ORLIC – East of Brookside Road & South of Norfolk Southern Main Line

The ORLIC district is a better choice for this area than the Suburban Residential proposed in previous versions of the "quick fix" amendments. Specifically, the ORLIC district provides a better transition from the Buckeye Tank Farm. The choice between the Industrial and ORLIC districts is a matter of local choice.

### Suburban Residential to ORLIC – West of Brookside Road, South of Norfolk Southern Main Line

The district is occupied by a school and a church. Both uses are allowed in the SR and ORLIC districts. The choice of districts is not consequential. This is a matter of local concern only.

### Suburban Residential to Urban Residential – West of Brookside Road, North of Norfolk Southern Main Line

We continue to hold that this area should be rezoned to a non-residential district. The area is occupied by commercial and industrial uses. It borders the Norfolk Southern railroad mainline. The abutting part of Macungie is used and designated for industrial purposes. Neither the existing or proposed residential districts are recommended.

Suburban to Urban – West of Willow Lane

This rezoning is a matter of local concern only. No comments are offered.

Agriculture to ORLIC – East of Quarry Road

The following comments from our June 27, 2008 letter remain relevant. The letter concluded “Given this background, the proposed rezoning seems to be a local administrative matter rather than a planning issue. We offer no recommendations.”

Agriculture to Highway Industrial Spring Creek – East of Smith Lane

The exclusion of this property and other similarly situated properties from the rezoning enacted by the Township as Ordinance number 2010-6 exemplifies the spot zoning concerns raised in our May 28, 2010 review. Nevertheless, we find this proposed rezoning to be contrary to the County Comprehensive Plan as well as the Southwestern Lehigh Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plan. The two plans envision this property as part of the area designated for farmland preservation. We recommend that the property maintain its current zoning designation.

Commercial to Semi-Rural – West of Trexlertown Road

Commercial to Suburban – East of Trexlertown Road

These proposed rezonings are matters of local concern only. No comments are offered.

Suburban Residential to Urban Residential – North and South of Lower Macungie Road

We support the proposed rezoning and offer a recommendation. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan because it increases higher density development opportunities. In our November 20, 1998 review of the Urban to Suburban rezoning proposal, we expressed concern that “the proposed rezoning could limit the opportunity for future higher density development. This would reduce the availability of additional affordable housing opportunities in the future.” The current proposal undoes that rezoning.

Also, the rezoning is intended to reduce the number of variances needed by property owners in this area. The variances are needed because of the repeal of the cluster provisions under which the properties were developed, thus rendering many of the properties as non-conforming. With regard to this aspect of the rezoning, we recommend that a better solution would be to repeal the zoning ordinance amendment that removed the cluster zoning provisions from the zoning ordinance. We had opposed that removal. Alternately, the inclusion of this area into the Cluster Overlay district as proposed in the “quick fix” zoning amendments would be more workable than trying to fit the Urban Residential district provisions over the former cluster zoning provisions.

Rural to Commercial – East of Krocks Road, North of Route 222 Bypass

The proposed Commercial district is more compatible with the site characteristics cited in our August 28, 2009 letter than the Suburban Residential designation proposed in earlier “quick fix” zoning ordinance amendments.

Rezonings Rural to Suburban Residential and to Urban Residential – West of Krocks Road

This area is designated for Urban Development in the County Comprehensive Plan. The S and U districts are more compatible than the Rural district with the County Comprehensive Plan. We support these rezonings.

Industrial to Highway Industrial – East of PA Turnpike  
Rural to Commercial – West of Krocks Road

The following comments from our August 28, 2009 letter are relevant to these rezonings. “These changes involve uses that can generate significant amounts of traffic. The County Comprehensive Plan recommends that these uses only be sited in areas where affected nearby roads have adequate capacity to handle the traffic. We recommend that the Township undertake a study of land use and transportation along the [Hamilton Boulevard] corridor. That study will allow the Township to adopt a zoning scheme that links land use and transportation capacity, also giving consideration to the Township’s land use goals. Undertaking a rezoning scheme in the absence of such a study is premature.”

**PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS**

Zoning Ordinance Amendments

According to article XXXIV, the maximum permitted density for Active Adult Residential communities is 2.5 units per acre in the Semi-Rural district. Most of the district is in areas recommended for urban development by the County Comprehensive Plan. The density of development is well below the recommended density ranges for areas recommended for urban development. The permitted density of development should be increased to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The following comments contained in our August 28, 2009 review remain relevant to the current version of the “quick fix” amendments.

“The proposed amendments add new conditional uses while deleting others. The MPC states that conditional and special exception uses are to be considered on the basis of specific criteria. Criteria have not been provided for some of the conditional uses. Specific criteria should be provided for all special exception and conditional uses.

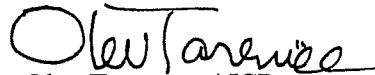
The draft zoning map depicts the Hills at Lock Ridge Overlay District. Neither the zoning ordinance nor the draft amendments include provisions for this district. Lacking provisions, no review is possible. Should such a district be created, the ordinance should include provisions.”

SALDO Amendments

The proposed amendments are a matter of local concern only. No comments are offered.

Feel free to call me if you have any questions about this review. Should these amendments be adopted, kindly send us a certified copy within 30 days as required by the MPC.

Sincerely yours,

  
Olev Taremäe, AICP  
Chief Planner

Cc: Peter Nelson, Grim, Biehn & Thatcher  
Lower Macungie Township Commissioners  
Lower Macungie Township Planning Commission