

# COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE REPORT



*ISSUE #019*



One of the core principles of the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC) is to serve as the leading source of economic data and market intelligence on the Lehigh Valley's economic assets and resources to serve our economic strategies, marketing efforts, and the needs of our stakeholders. To that end, LVEDC prepares a series of quarterly reports about the real estate climate in the Lehigh Valley. This report focuses on the region's office, industrial, and flex markets.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

### Corporate M&A Activity Is Having an Impact on Lehigh Valley's Industrial Market

By this point, everyone knows that Lehigh Valley is an in-demand market for industrial development and manufacturing space, but recent headlines make it clear just how important the region has become. The news of Prologis acquiring Liberty Property Trust continues a trend of institutional investors entering and is another sign of the strategic importance of the Lehigh Valley.

Prologis owns 752,000 square meters of industrial space in the Lehigh Valley and announced in July an agreement to acquire the assets of Black Creek Group, which include 242,000 square meters in the region. When that deal closes, Prologis would become the second largest owner of industrial space in this market after Liberty Property Trust. With the announced agreement to acquire Liberty's 1.6 million square meters, Prologis would own more industrial space than any other company in the market.

That market has grown to 11.5 million square meters of as of the third quarter of 2019, with a vacancy rate of 5.1%. Developers have delivered 185,000 square meters of space through the first three quarters of the year, with another 598,000 square meters currently under construction.

The overall average asking rent for industrial space in the Lehigh Valley is \$59.42 per square meter as of Q3 2019. The average asking rent for buildings over 28,000 square meters is \$53.82 and is \$61.68 for buildings under 14,000 square meters.

On the office side, the Lehigh Valley office market currently includes 2.7 million square meters, with another 58,000 square meters currently under construction. Excluding owner-occupied and medical office space, the regional office market encompasses 1.6 million square meters of space, with another 10,000 square meters under construction.

The Lehigh Valley office market has an overall vacancy rate of 8%, and a 10.1% vacancy rate excluding owner-occupied and medical office space. The addition of the 27,000 square meter Five City Center building in Allentown is the biggest addition to the regional office market so far this year.

## BROKER PERSPECTIVE

"From an industrial standpoint, we continue to see high demand from both users and institutional capital. The Lehigh Valley is well positioned to capitalize on the ever-changing supply chain landscape as user strategies are adjusting to facilitate consumer demand. E-commerce, manufacturing, and consumer product distribution will continue to drive the market for the foreseeable future. Large users and institutional landlords alike see the Lehigh Valley and Eastern PA as a top tier global market."

**Sean Bleiler**, Senior Vice President, CBRE



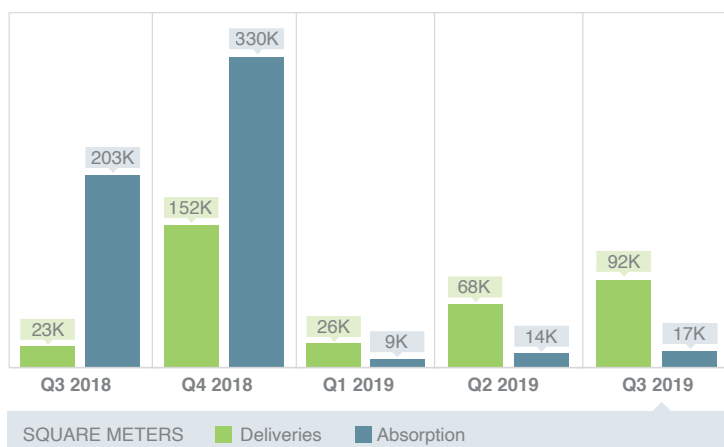
# Lehigh Valley SNAPSHOT: INDUSTRIAL SPACE

## MARKET SUMMARY

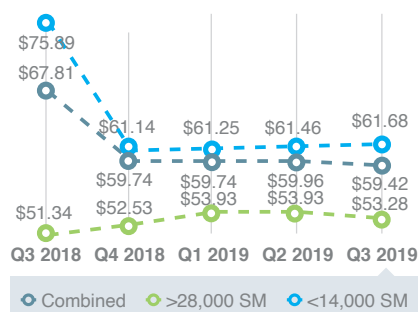
The region added 92,000 square meters of industrial space in Q3.

<b>11.5 Million</b> Total Space (SM)	<b>17K</b> Q3 Net Absorption (SM)	<b>\$59.42</b> Average Asking Rent (NNN)	<b>598K</b> Total Under Construction (SM)
<b>5.1%</b> Total Vacancy	<b>41K</b> 2019 Net Absorption (SM)	<b>-12.4%</b> YOY Rent Growth	<b>185K</b> 2019 Deliveries (SM)

## SUPPLY & DEMAND (SM)



## ASKING RATE (PER SM)



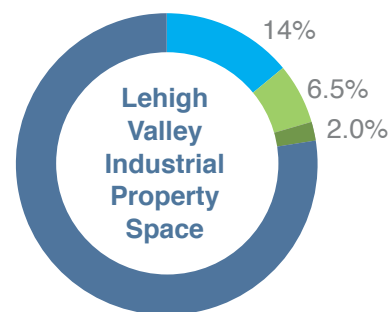
Industrial rents overall have been steady for the first three quarters of 2019.

## PROLOGIS & LIBERTY MERGER

Prologis Inc. and Liberty Property Trust announced that the two companies have entered into a definitive merger agreement by which Prologis will acquire Liberty. When the deal closes, the combined companies will own 2.6 million square meters of industrial space in the Lehigh Valley, including holdings of Black Creek Group, which Prologis had previously announced it was acquiring. This combination of properties would give Prologis a 23% share of the region's industrial/flex market.

	LPT	Prologis	BCG <sup>1</sup>	Lehigh Valley
<b>Buildings</b>	37	22	12	1,898
<b>Space</b>	1.6 Million SM	752,000 SM	242,000 SM	11.5 Million SM
<b>Market Share</b>	14%	6.5%	2%	

<sup>1</sup>Industrial real estate holdings of Black Creek Group. The Prologis acquisition of Black Creek Group is expected to close by the end of Q1 2020.



Sources: CoStar, LVEDC Research







## Lehigh Valley SNAPSHOT: OFFICE SPACE

### MARKET SUMMARY

One office building totaling 27,000 square meters has been added in 2019.



<b>2.7 Million</b> Total Space (SM)	<b>13K</b> Q3 Net Absorption (SM)	<b>\$168.78</b> Average Asking Rent (NNN)	<b>58K</b> Total Under Construction (SM)
<b>8.0%</b> Total Vacancy	<b>-50K</b> 2019 Net Absorption (SM)	<b>5.2%</b> YOY Rent Growth	<b>27K</b> YTD Deliveries (SM)

The office market, excluding owner-occupied and medical offices, totals 152,000 square feet.

<b>1.6 Million</b> Office Space (SM)	<b>12K</b> Q3 Net Absorption (SM)	<b>\$169.43</b> Average Asking Rent (NNN)	<b>10K</b> Total Under Construction (SM)
<b>10.1%</b> Total Vacancy	<b>-47K</b> 2019 Net Absorption (SM)	<b>5.2%</b> YOY Rent Growth	<b>27K</b> YTD Deliveries (SM)

### ASKING RATE (PER SM)



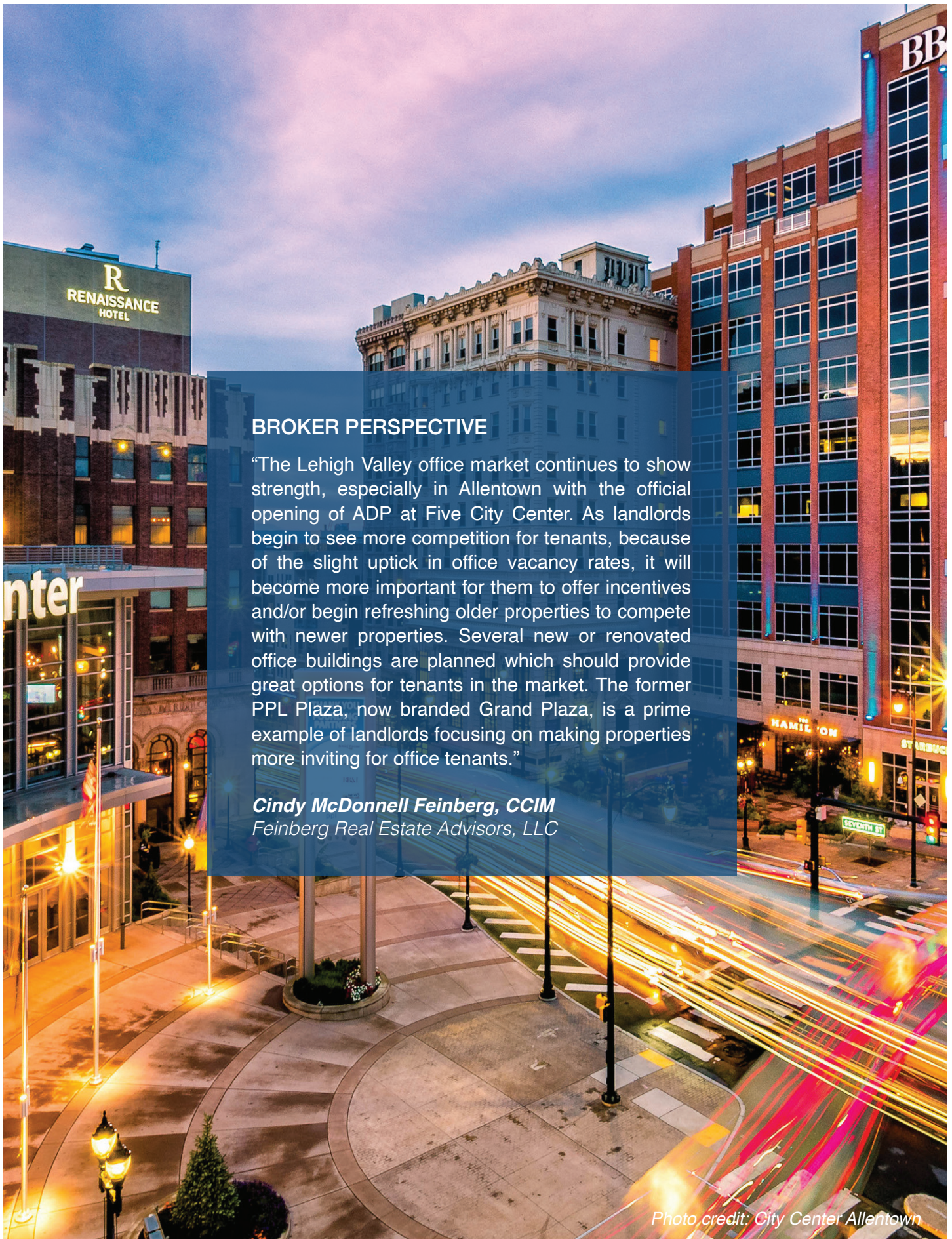
Asking rents for office space, excluding owner-occupied and medical offices, have increased 5.2% year-over-year.

### VACANCY RATE



The vacancy rate for office space, excluding owner-occupied and medical offices, increased to 10.1% in Q3.





## BROKER PERSPECTIVE

“The Lehigh Valley office market continues to show strength, especially in Allentown with the official opening of ADP at Five City Center. As landlords begin to see more competition for tenants, because of the slight uptick in office vacancy rates, it will become more important for them to offer incentives and/or begin refreshing older properties to compete with newer properties. Several new or renovated office buildings are planned which should provide great options for tenants in the market. The former PPL Plaza, now branded Grand Plaza, is a prime example of landlords focusing on making properties more inviting for office tenants.”

**Cindy McDonnell Feinberg, CCIM**  
*Feinberg Real Estate Advisors, LLC*

*Photo credit: City Center Allentown*





## Q3 2019 COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS



### NOTABLE SALES

PROPERTY	BUYER	SELLER	SALE PRICE	MUNICIPALITY	CLASS
9775 Commerce Circle	Brookfield Asset Management	GRE Lehigh LLC	\$21,150,000	Weisenberg Twp.	Industrial
River Road (26 parcels)	River Pointe Logistics Center LLC	Sithe Pennsylvania Holdings LLC	\$17,050,000	Upper Mount Bethel Twp.	Industrial
2860 Bath Pike	Airlite Plastics Co.	EREG 2860 Bath LP	\$11,000,000	Upper Nazareth	Industrial
1621 E. Race St.	Dosdarbs LLC	Bomboy Inc.	\$1,525,000	Hanover Twp. (Lehigh)	Industrial
1026 MacArthur Rd.	Elias Property Group	LVD Realty Inc.	\$1,350,000	Whitehall	Industrial
1240 Win Dr.	Winn Drive LLC	6380 Brackbill Associates	\$1,350,000	Bethlehem	Industrial
6695 Sullivan Trail	Wind Gap Investors LLC	Wind Gap Professional Building LLC	\$1,300,000	Plainfield Twp.	Office
302 S. 4th St.	Ridgewood Group Emmaus LLC	Fourth Furnace Center LLC	\$1,130,000	Emmaus	Industrial
1300 Sherman St.	Meals on Wheels	Semper Properties LLC	\$1,060,000	Allentown	Industrial

### NOTABLE LEASES

PROPERTY	SM	LANDLORD REPRESENTATIVE	TENANT	MUNICIPALITY	CLASS
7352 Industrial Blvd.	143,190	CBRE	Keurig Dr. Pepper	Upper Macungie Twp.	Industrial
2595 Brodhead Road	6,660	Cushman & Wakefield	Not Disclosed	Bethlehem Twp.	Industrial
6370 Hedgewood Dr.	3,900	Liberty Property Trust	Tri-Dim Filter	Upper Macungie Twp.	Industrial

Source: Lehigh and Northampton County Real Estate Tax Records, LVEDC Research, CoStar



“The recently-announced acquisition of Liberty Property Trust by Prologis is very significant for the Lehigh Valley. Liberty has long been the largest owner of industrial real estate in the region and Prologis has had a large presence here as well. The combined companies will become an even more significant entity in our market. The purchase shows the strategic importance of the Lehigh Valley in the industrial and manufacturing sectors.”

**Don Cunningham**

*President & CEO, Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC)*

## LEHIGH VALLEY ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

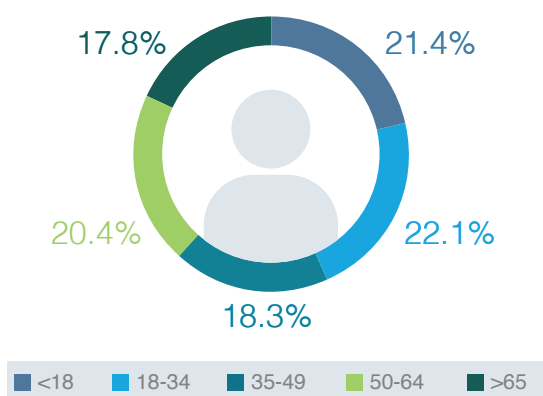
### LEHIGH VALLEY POPULATION



672,907

Population among the 18-to-34 age group has increased by 5% in the last five years; this age group is now the largest segment of the region's population.

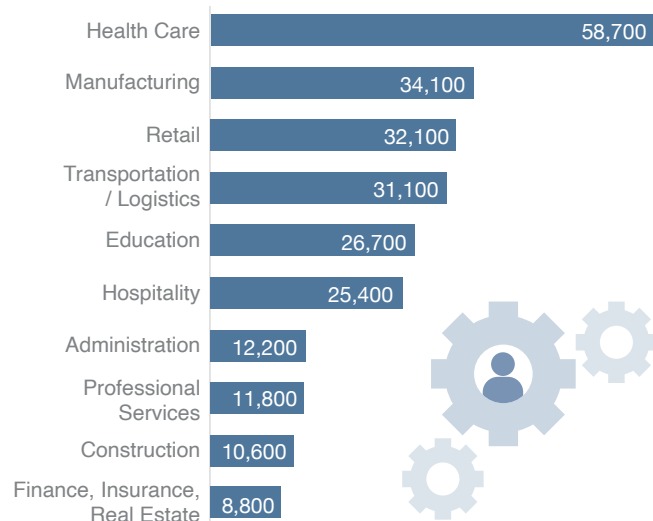
### POPULATION BY AGE GROUP



### POPULATION AGE 18-34

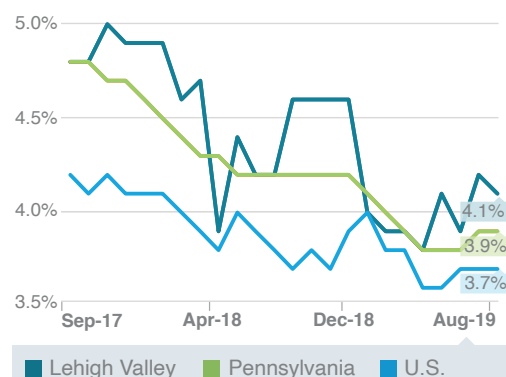


### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Seasonally Adjusted



Over the last 24 months, Lehigh Valley unemployment has dropped from 4.8% to 4.1%.

Sources: Census Bureau 2018 Population Estimates, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Q1 2019





## Our Mission

The mission of the Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation is to market the economic assets of the Lehigh Valley and to create partnerships to lead the recruitment, growth, and retention of employers.

## Our Vision

Our vision is of a diverse Lehigh Valley economy that provides economic growth and opportunity for people of all skills and education and strengthens all our cities, boroughs, and townships.

## Our Priorities

- Market the economic assets of the Lehigh Valley
- Recruit companies in targeted economic sectors
- Support the growth and retention of new and existing employers
- Promote and coordinate a skilled and prepared workforce
- Provide intelligence and data on the Lehigh Valley economy
- Expand public and private LVEDC investment and build partnerships for economic growth

2158 Avenue C, Suite 200 Bethlehem, PA 18017  
Phone: 610-266-6775 • Fax: 610-266-7623

[www.lehighvalley.org](http://www.lehighvalley.org)

**Lehigh Valley**

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