



South Bethlehem Historic District Planning Study



May 4, 2021



South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District Planning Study

Prepared under the Direction of the City of Bethlehem Bureau of Planning and Zoning

This project was partially funded by a grant from the Bureau of Historic Preservation
of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

May 4, 2021

Consultants

Urban Research and Development Corporation
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

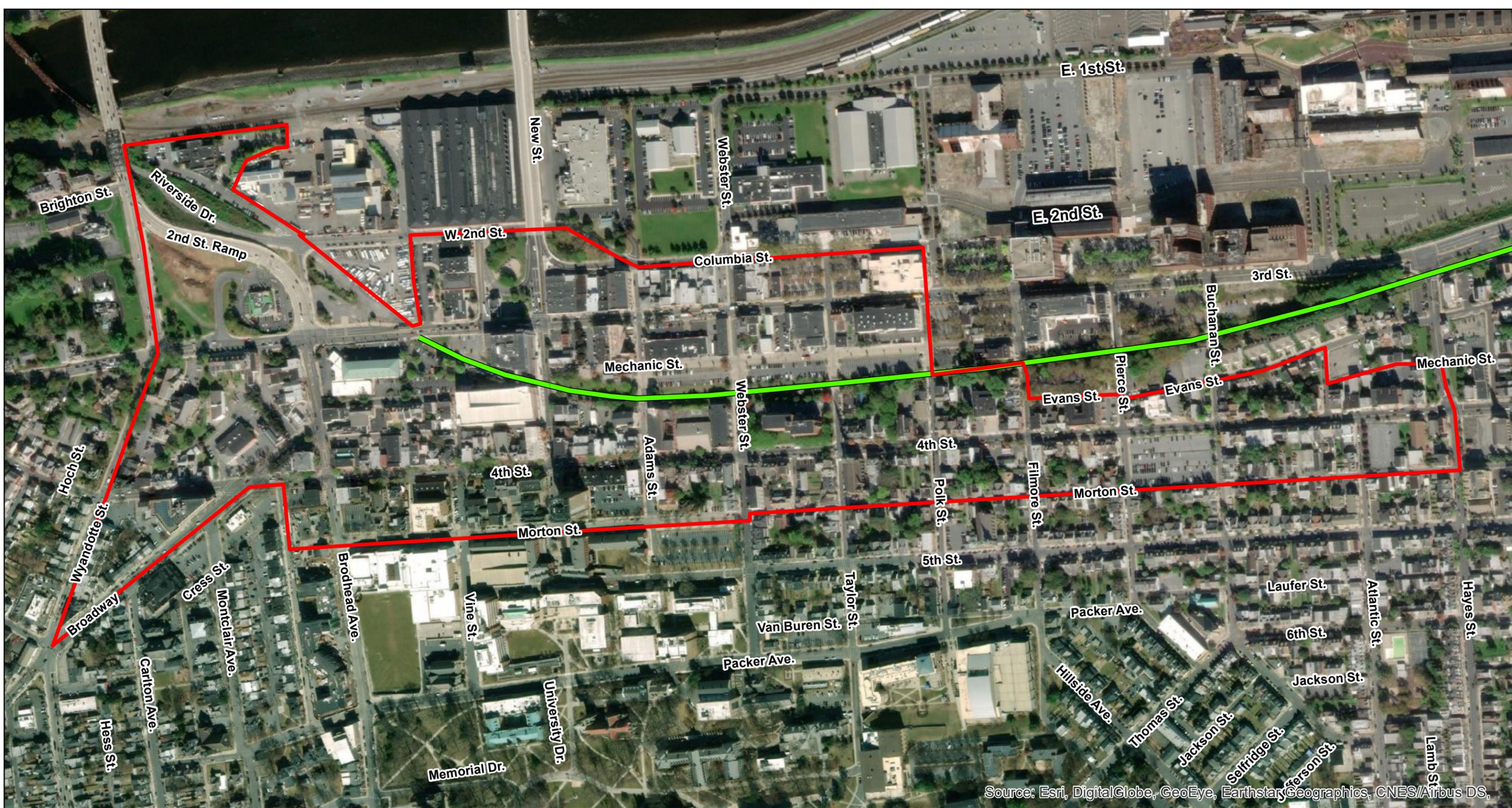
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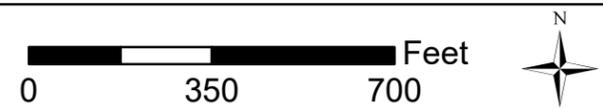
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Source: ESRI and PASDA.



- South Bethlehem Greenway Trail
- Historic Conservation District

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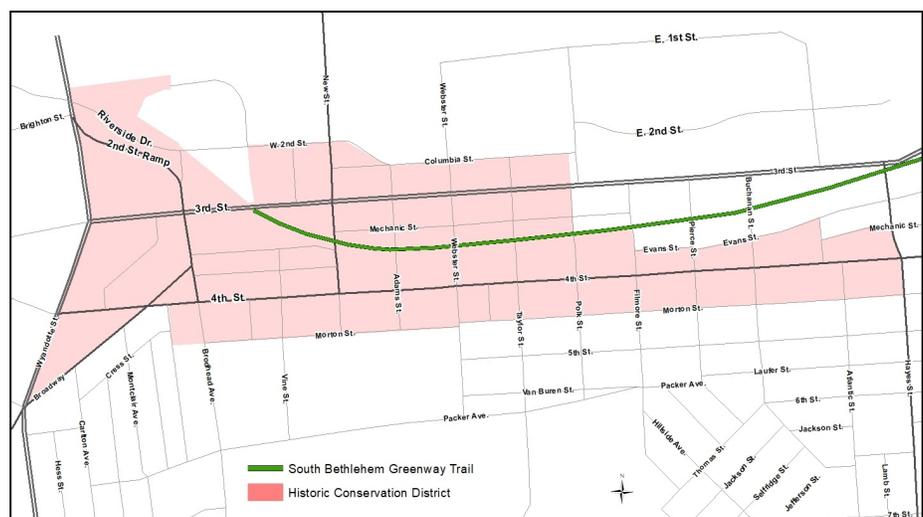
Introduction

The South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District primarily includes lands east of Wyandotte Street and the Hill-to-Hill Bridge, and then extending along the 3rd Street corridor east to Polk Street, and areas along the 4th Street corridor continuing east to Hayes Street. The southern boundary of the district generally runs along Broadway and Morton Streets.

Within the Historic District, the exterior appearance of new construction, building additions and renovations are regulated. Any proposed partial or complete demolition also needs approval, as well as any removal, replacement or covering of architectural features. The appearance of signs are also regulated. The Historical Conservation Commission (HCC) works with applicants to help them adjust their applications as needed to comply with the Ordinance and a set of Design Guidelines. The HCC then recommends to the City Council whether the application should be approved.

The District is experiencing much more development pressure than occurred when the Historic District was first established, particularly for new mid-rise apartment development.

This study is intended to achieve consistency between the intent of the historic preservation regulations in the district and the City's zoning ordinance. The most prominent controversy involves recommending a new maximum building height in portions of the Historic District where buildings are currently allowed to have a height of up to 150 feet. An additional set of Design



Guidelines were also prepared as part of this project to recommend appropriate ways to incorporate new buildings and major building additions into the historic fabric of the District.

This study also is intended to offer recommendations that may be useful in other older parts of Bethlehem.

As described in a following section, an extensive public engagement process was used to seek public input. A summary of the public comments is included in the Appendix, as well as comments received within an online Citizen Survey.

Maps of the Generalized Existing Land Uses and the Topography of the area are included in the Appendices.

Current Regulations Regarding Historic Preservation

This report is not intended to provide legal advice. The City needs to consult the City Solicitor regarding important legal matters.

This section summarizes current historic preservation regulations that are in place within the South Bethlehem Historic District, as of April 2021.

As described in the current South Bethlehem Design Guidelines, the current South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District was originally intended to be less restrictive in application than the Historic District Ordinance that is in effect in Center City Bethlehem. The original goal was to promote a more eclectic, colorful and arts-oriented environment. This eclectic intent is seen in the colorful murals and creative streetscape features that have been added over the years. The South Bethlehem district includes architecture from many different time periods and styles. The Historic District Ordinance was also originally intended to prevent a wave of suburban-style one-story commercial development that could have resulted in large-scale demolition.

Moreover, at the time the District was first established, there was not a strong market for building rehabilitation in the District, and it was felt that it would be counter-productive to have overly restrictive preservation regulations. A Historic District Ordinance does not require that changes be made to a building, but instead regulates changes that are proposed. If a Historic District Ordinance would become too restrictive, it may cause a building owner to avoid making any improvements.

The District was established under the Pennsylvania Historic District Act, with certification by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The South Bethlehem district provisions are administered by a nine member Historic Conservation Commission (HCC). The HCC reviews applications and makes recommendations for approval or disapproval to City Council, which has the final approval power. The approval is in the form of a Certificate of Appropriateness. The Ordinance addresses exterior architectural features which can be seen from a public street or “way” (which includes sidewalks).

The HCC and staff work with applicants to encourage revisions to applications to be consistent with a set of Design Guidelines. The result is that almost all applications are recommended for approval before they reach City Council. The goal is that only the most controversial applications should need to be debated by City Council.

A few changes are exempt from needing approval, such as demolition of an accessory building of less than 100 square feet and construction of customary accessory structures in a rear or side yard. The installation of HVAC units, lighting fixtures, gutters and flags are not regulated by the Ordinance. The HCC may provide advisory recommendations to an applicant in regards to matters such as light

fixtures, but light fixtures cannot be regulated under the Historic District. The spillover and direction of lighting is controlled by the City's Zoning Ordinance, and flashing signs are prohibited.

The current South Bethlehem Ordinance includes a set of standards, such as requirements that the spacing of windows and doors, the building setbacks and the exterior building materials must be similar to those features present on older buildings in the District. In addition, there are a set of illustrated Design Guidelines and Sign Guidelines to provide advice to the HCC and applicants, but those Guidelines are not actual regulations.

The Guidelines address issues such as requiring consistent front yard setbacks, maintaining a spacing of windows similar to nearby older buildings, and placing new additions and modern features to the rear of a building when feasible. The intent is to maintain and repair original features whenever possible, instead of covering, removing or replacing them.

If an applicant seeks to avoid compliance because of a financial hardship, they are required to submit information to document the hardship, such as an appraisal or market study.

The Historic District Ordinance includes a requirement that applicants must properly maintain a building. An owner cannot allow a building to deteriorate and then claim that it needs to be demolished. This is known as Demolition by Neglect.

Current Zoning Provisions Within and Adjacent to the Historic District

The Existing Zoning Map on page 8 shows the current boundaries of the Historic Conservation District and the Zoning Districts.

The Historic Conservation District functions as an "overlay" to the zoning districts. The zoning districts mainly regulate the allowed uses and intensities and heights of development, while the Conservation District addresses preservation of existing buildings and the exterior design of new buildings and additions. Therefore, the Historic District process is not intended to regulate the use of a building.

The zoning ordinance also requires approval by City Council before certain designated historic buildings could be demolished. These regulations address scattered important buildings that are outside of regulated historic districts, including several buildings on the Southside.

The western part of the Historic District is in the CB Central Business zoning district. This district extends west of Polk Street north of the Greenway and west of Webster Street south of the Greenway Trail, down to Morton Street. The CB district is designed to allow for intensive development, with few dimensional or density limitations. The CB district allows a height of up to 150 feet.

The CB district does not require that any off-street parking be provided, unlike all of the other zoning districts. Where parking is required, the zoning ordinance allows it to be provided off-site within a specified distance.

The portion of the Conservation District south of the Greenway and east of Webster Street is zoned CL Commercial Limited. This district is mainly intended to provide for restaurants, retail stores, personal services, day care and similar types of businesses. Retail stores are limited to a maximum of 10,000 square feet of floor area per business. The CL district allows a maximum height of 5 stories or 60 feet, whichever is more restrictive.

In the CL district, the business uses within an existing building may change without requiring additional parking. That provision makes it easier for a retail store to change to a restaurant, for example, without needing a variance for parking.

Both the Central Business and the Commercial Limited districts only allow apartments if there is a first floor commercial use along the street. In the CB district, the first floor street frontage must be occupied by a restaurant, retail or personal service use, and cannot be occupied by an office. In the CL district, a commercial use is required on the street frontage, but it could be additional uses such as an office, theater, entertainment use or fitness center. This restriction upon first floor uses does not apply along minor/local streets (such as Mechanic Street and many lower-traffic north-south streets).

Both the CB and the CL districts do not allow intensive types of auto-related uses, such as new vehicle sales, vehicle repair, gas station or restaurant drive-through uses. The intent is to promote pedestrian-oriented businesses and to maintain a consistent streetscape. Auto-related uses can cause major breaks in the streetscape, can have driveways that interfere with sidewalks, and can spur demolition of older buildings.

The zoning ordinance includes site design standards for the CB, CL and RT districts. Among other provisions, these standards prohibit the development of new parking spaces between a building and the front sidewalk. Instead, parking is required to be located to the side or rear of the main building on the lot. The City Planning Commission has the lead role in reviewing conformance with these standards.

Most of the residential neighborhoods that surround the Conservation District are zoned RT High Density Residential. This district allows for a variety of housing types, including townhouses and apartment buildings. A number of additional uses are allowed with Zoning Hearing Board approval, including bed and breakfast inns, funeral homes, nursing homes, personal care homes and day care centers. Most uses in the RT district are limited to 3 stories, except the current provisions allow new apartments up to 5 stories.

Outside of the Historic District, in areas south of Morton Street and west of Webster Street, an I Institutional zoning district exists. The Institutional district includes most lands occupied by Lehigh University, as well as Broughal Middle School. It mainly allows for student housing (without density limitations), academic buildings, laboratories, offices, recreational facilities, places of worship and senior housing facilities. The I district starts out with a 35 feet maximum building height, but it can be increased 3 feet for every one foot of additional setback. The net result is that taller buildings can be built towards the center of the Lehigh University campus, while a 35 feet height applies where there is little room for additional setbacks on smaller lots and at the edges of the campus.

Outside of the Historic District, the former Bethlehem Steel lands north of Columbia Street on both sides of Webster Street are zoned IR Industrial Redevelopment. This district allows for a very wide range of business uses, including many commercial and industrial uses.

Outside of the Historic District in areas east of Polk Street and north of the Greenway, the land is zoned IR-R Industrial Redevelopment-Residential option. That district allows for a wide range of business uses, but allows fewer types of industries than the IR district. The IR-R district also allows apartments. There is a 200 feet maximum height in both the IR and IR-R districts.

Summary of Citizen Survey Results

To provide public input, an online community survey was distributed in English and Spanish. More complete survey results are provided in the Appendix.

When asked which types of businesses should be most emphasized in the Historic District, the top answers in order were: 1. small retail stores and services, 2. restaurants, 3. arts and entertainment, 4. research and technology, 5. offices, 6. day care, 7. large retail stores, 8. hotels/motels.

When asked which of the following is the more important goal, 56% of persons responding said to emphasize preservation of older buildings and features, while 44% said to promote variety of architectural styles, including modern and artistic.

When asked to decide which action should receive the most emphasis, 55% of persons responded said to attract more businesses, while 47% said it should be to attract more housing.

When asked how important is it to control building heights, 41% of persons responding said it was extremely important, while 37% said it was moderately important.

When asked how important is it to control the exterior appearance of new buildings, 54% said very important, and 35% said moderately important.

When asked how important is it to control the exterior appearance of changes to existing buildings, 50% said very important, and 39% said moderately important.

When asked how important is it to control the demolition of older buildings in the Historic District, 55% said very important, and 27% said moderately important.

When asked an open ended question about what people liked most about the Historic District, the most common answers involved: Walkable, community, greenway, variety of styles, cultural diversity, older charm, and historic character.

When asked an open ended question about what people like least about the Historic District, the most common answers involved: Traffic congestion, new development that does not fit in, disrepair of buildings, and empty storefronts.

Summary of Public Engagement

A Task Force of persons with varied interests was set up to provide policy feedback on this process. A section in the Appendix summarizes comments received at Task Force meetings, key person interviews, and two online public meetings. Each of the public meetings attracted over 50 participants, most of whom spoke during the meeting. The key person interviews included persons with varied perspectives. Among the persons interviewed were two developers, the City's Retail Marketing Consultant, an operator of an organization that provides housing and employment for persons with disabilities, three members of City Council, and a local businessperson. Two meetings were also held with members of the Historic Conservation Commission. There also will be future public meetings before the City Planning Commission and City Council.

Recommendations

It is important to keep in mind that historic preservation matters affect many other aspects of the community, and that a balance is needed. While important issues of housing affordability are being addressed by a separate City committee, they also need to be fully considered in preservation and zoning regulations. Housing prices have been rapidly increasing throughout Bethlehem and the surrounding region. Opportunities are needed for new housing construction, possibly with incentives for inclusion of affordable moderately priced "workforce" housing. Anchor projects are needed that will generate customers for nearby businesses. The City and School District need development that will generate new tax revenues, and additional employment opportunities are needed, including jobs that are within walking distance for South Bethlehem residents.

This project is primarily intended to address compatibility of new development with older buildings in the South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District. The most prominent issue involves appropriate building heights in various parts of the Historic District. The main goal is to find a balance between historic preservation and economic development. This can be best achieved by directing taller new buildings to portions of the Historic District that do not have many significant buildings that contribute to the historic integrity of the Historic District or that include parking lots or vacant lots. There also are opportunities for substantial new development on nearby former Bethlehem Steel parking lots and other properties that are not within the Historic District.

A draft set of ordinance revisions to carry out these recommendations is included in the Appendices.

There also is a goal of recommending ways to streamline the Historic District approval process for routine types of changes to existing buildings and minor improvements to properties.

Under a separate cover, a draft set of Design Guidelines has been prepared for new construction, including infill development or building additions. These Guidelines are intended to supplement the current South Bethlehem Design Guidelines.

The Design Guidelines include a map showing areas with the most significant historic buildings and blocks in the Historic District, versus areas where there are mainly non-contributing buildings. Buildings are categorized as Class 1 which are the most significant and deserve the most careful protection, Class 2 which are contributing to the Historic District but are less significant, and Class 3 which are non-contributing to the District.

Issues of student housing have been addressed through a separate recent zoning amendment.

Maximum Building Heights

Based upon the mapping of the most significant buildings and the areas with fewer buildings that contribute to the Historic District, a draft map has been prepared that proposes maximum building heights. The intent is that maximum building heights would be implemented through an amendment to the zoning ordinance, using overlay zoning districts. The draft Design Guidelines have also been revised to be consistent with these proposed building heights.

The current CB Central Business District includes most of the western portions of the Historic District. It currently allows a maximum height of 150 feet, which could include up to 14 stories. The eastern part of the district is primarily zoned CL Commercial Limited, and allows a maximum height of 60 feet,

except it is currently reduced to 45 feet within 50 feet of a residential district (such as the backs of lots along the narrow E. Morton St.).

In areas currently zoned CB that have the fewest concentrations of significant historic buildings, a maximum height is proposed of 90 feet (which typically involves 7 to 8 stories). Alternatives have also been discussed that would provide a maximum building height incentive if a certain minimum percentage of affordable housing units would be included in a building.

In other portions of the Historic District, a maximum height is proposed of 60 feet (which typically involves 5 stories).

Where a 90 feet maximum height would apply, the proposal is to require that any area over 80 feet in height be setback a minimum of 12 feet from the right-of-way of 3rd, 4th, Wyandotte and New Streets. The goal is to reduce the visual prominence of the top stories from the sidewalk, and to increase the amount of sunlight that reaches the main streets. This is known as a "step back" in the building. A similar 12 feet step back may be appropriate for buildings over 50 feet in height in areas where a 60 feet maximum height is allowed. This step back area can be used for outdoor restaurant dining or outdoor areas for residents or employees in a building.

A 12 feet step back from 3rd Street was part of the original approval for the Greenway office building at 3rd and New Streets, but it was only partly implemented.

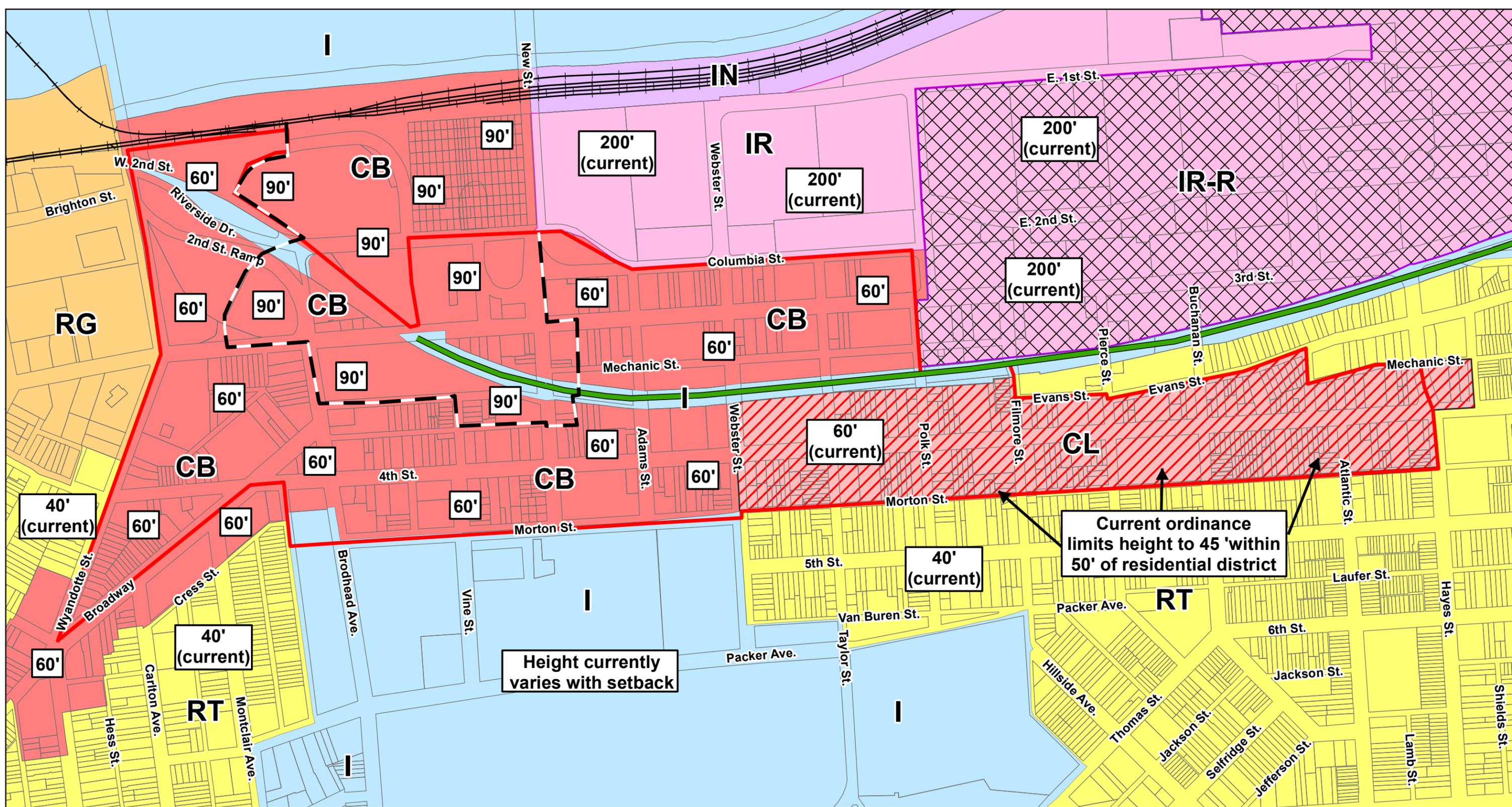
Architectural Variations

It is recommended that the Historic District Ordinance include some additional regulations to require variations in design features of a facade for new buildings with a large mass, over a certain width (over 100 feet) and over a certain height (over 45 feet). These types of variations should include changes in roof lines, balconies, materials, and other fenestration. The intent is to make a wide building appear to be two or more buildings, and to emphasize "human scale" features along the sidewalk.

The City Planning Commission should carefully review the locations and designs of any truck loading docks, dumpster location and any parking entrances within a building to minimize the visual impact along the front of the building. It will not always be feasible to place a truck loading dock and dumpster in the rear of a building, but that location should be used when practical. Loading docks can be designed to be mostly internal, with a truck trailer entering into a building.

Streamlining of the Historic District Approval Process

There is an intent to streamline the historic district approval process for routine types of projects that have little impact upon the preservation of historic buildings. Part of the goal is to allow the HCC to concentrate their attention upon the projects that will have the greatest lasting impact upon the district. Another goal is to encourage property-owners to make improvements that will increase the compatibility of their buildings with the Historic District, by making it easy to quickly make those improvements. Certain routine improvements should be exempt from the ordinance, while other routine improvements should be able to be approved by the City Staff.



Height currently varies with setback

Current ordinance limits height to 45' within 50' of residential district

Source: ESRI and PASDA.

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Zoning Districts

RT Residential District	IR Industrial Redevelopment District	South Bethlehem Greenway Trail
RG Residential District	IR-R Industrial Redevelopment Residential Option District	Historic Conservation District
CB Central Business District	I Institutional District	
CL Limited Commercial District	IN Industrial District	

Revised January 2021

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EXISTING ZONING with Potential Maximum Heights

Staff Approvals of Routine Changes

Certain routine types of changes to properties could be authorized to be approved by the City Staff, without needing HCC and Council approval. This approach could include a process of having the HCC and City Council pre-approve a set of designs, such as certain types of fencing, and certain types of window replacements that are not on the primary facade and that have a similar appearance. This staff approval process could also be used for certain types of roof repairs, particularly since roof repairs often need to be done quickly. If the applicant is only proposing a “like for like” replacement, it could be approved by the City staff, such as replacing an existing window with modern materials with a new window with modern materials. This type of staff approval is regularly used in Philadelphia, Allentown, Reading, Raleigh and other cities. Specific recommendations are included in the recommended ordinance revisions text in the Appendices.

Certain types of changes could be subject to staff or HCC review, but not be required to obtain approval. These are matters where advice should be provided, but the change is not significant enough to require a delay for City Council approval. For example, proposed sandblasting of masonry could be required to be reviewed by the City staff, but not need approval by City Council.

Signs

The design and locations of signs should continue to be reviewed by the HCC and approved by Council. However, to comply with numerous recent federal court cases, the content of the signs should not be regulated. By not regulating the words on each sign, it also allows approved signs to be reworded without needing another approval, such as if “Jimmy's Barber Shop” is renamed “Juan's Barber Shop.”

A specific prohibition of new internally lit plastic faced signs should apply within the Historic District. However, an existing sign face should be able to be replaced as a “like for like” replacement.

Alleys

Changes to existing buildings that are only visible from certain specified minor rear alleys should not need Historic District approval. That type of change, for example, would allow the addition of a sun room, rear deck, back porch roof or wheelchair ramp where it will not be visible from a street.

Submission Requirements and Concept Reviews for Major Projects

The submission requirements for HCC review should involve one set of requirements for routine types of submittals. Then the submission requirements should be enhanced for major proposed projects, such as any building demolition, new buildings or building additions. The major projects should be required to include illustrations of how the project will appear within the context, from various viewpoints.

A major project should also be expected to have a concept review early in the process with City staff, the consulting Historic Officer, and one or more HCC members before a more detailed submittal is made. This concept review is intended to function similar to a sketch plan review for a proposed land development. The intent is that an applicant is more likely to accept recommendations if they are provided early in the process, before detailed architectural work has been completed.

Fees for Historic District Applications

Currently, applicants are not required to pay fees for submittals under the Historic District. It is important to avoid substantial fees for most types of submittals to encourage cooperation among property-owners who are making routine improvements to their property. However, City Council should consider establishing a set of review fees for larger projects that require substantial staff time to review, including large new buildings or demolitions of buildings. A nominal fee may also be appropriate for all applications to the HCC, to help cover administrative costs. For reference, Allentown charges a \$25 application fee for all applications, except the fee increases to \$300 if the matter involves work that was done without an approval or if the work did not comply with an approval. The intent is to discourage persons from seeking retroactive approval. Easton requires a \$25 application fee.

Parking

There has been a growing awareness in many cities that strict parking requirements have discouraged the development of affordable housing and can make it more difficult to cost-effectively rehabilitate older buildings for new uses. Particularly in areas where there is a good access to public transit or where many persons are likely to walk or use bus service or ride-sharing services, there has been a national movement to reduce off-street parking requirements.

The Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance currently includes provisions that allow flexibility in meeting parking requirements, including allowing parking to be provided off-site, but within a maximum distance of a project. The Zoning Hearing Board also currently has authority to reduce parking requirements if necessary to allow a reasonable adaptive reuse of an older non-residential building.

The Zoning Ordinance could allow new on-street spaces that are created as part of a development to be counted towards off-street parking requirements. That is particularly desirable because on-street parking with time limits can provide convenient spaces to support street level retail and services. New on-street spaces can be created by widening a street for parking spaces, while narrowing the street at crosswalks.

Currently, parking is not required for any uses in the Central Business zoning district. In other zoning districts, the current requirement is 1.75 parking spaces for 2 or fewer bedrooms and 2 spaces for other units. There have been a number of variance approved for reduced parking for multi-family projects in Bethlehem.

Any reductions in parking requirements should not apply for off-campus college student housing.

One option would to reduce the parking requirement to 1 space for 1 bedroom or studio/efficiency units and 1.5 for a 2 bedroom unit in CL Limited Commercial and IR-R Industrial Redevelopment districts, as well as portions of the RT Residential district that are within 500 feet from the CB Central Business district. This reduction could be limited to projects that include a significant affordable housing component or that involve the rehabilitation of an existing historic building. These areas are within walking distance of major employers, colleges, stores, bus stops and other destinations, so there is less need for 2 vehicles per apartment. Moreover, many of these areas are near public on-street or off-street parking areas.

Affordable Housing Incentives

A separate City committee is working on affordable housing initiatives within Bethlehem. Historic preservation requirements need to be balanced with impacts upon housing affordability, particularly when a developer legally commits to including a minimum number of affordable units. A variety of initiatives are needed to promote housing affordability, including financial incentives, real estate tax incentives, and density incentives. The City should promote the availability of programs, such as the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit and the Federal Affordable Housing Tax Credit. As of 2021, a number of new federal programs were being proposed to increase the supply of affordable housing, including an expansion of Federal Affordable Housing Tax Credits.

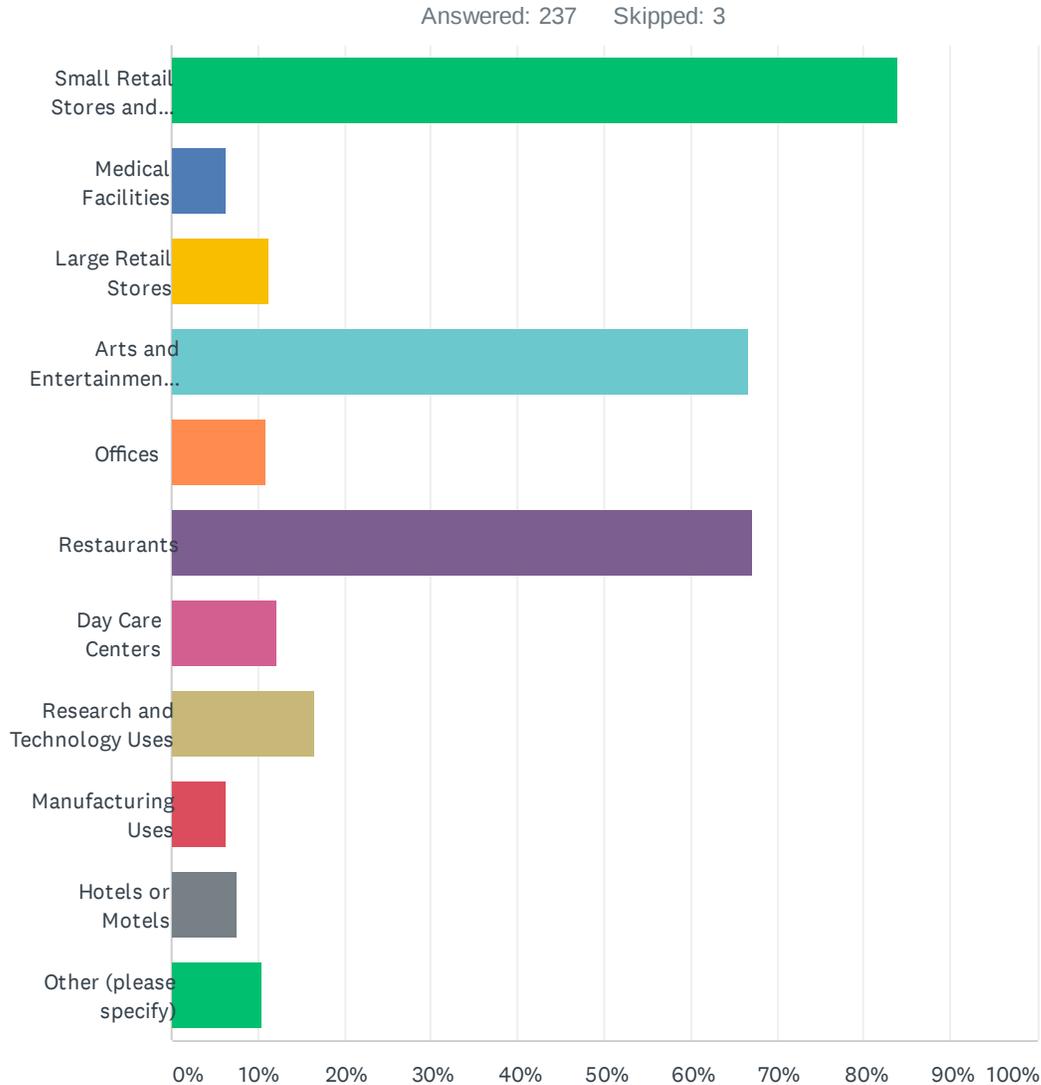
Many cities offer density incentives for affordable housing. The Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance includes density incentives for the construction of affordable “workforce” housing in the CB Central Business, IR-R Industrial Redevelopment-Residential and RT Residential zoning districts. Currently, an extra 0.5 housing unit of market-rate housing is allowed for every one unit of affordable housing. One potential approach would be to offer these same types of density incentives in the CL Limited Commercial district within the South Side Historic District.

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Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey - SurveyMonkey. *The following are results of an online survey that was conducted during the first four months of 2021. There was also a Spanish language version, the results of which are listed in the numeric totals and written responses for each question.*

Q1 Please check the top three types of businesses you would most like to see emphasized in new development in the Southside Bethlehem Historic District.



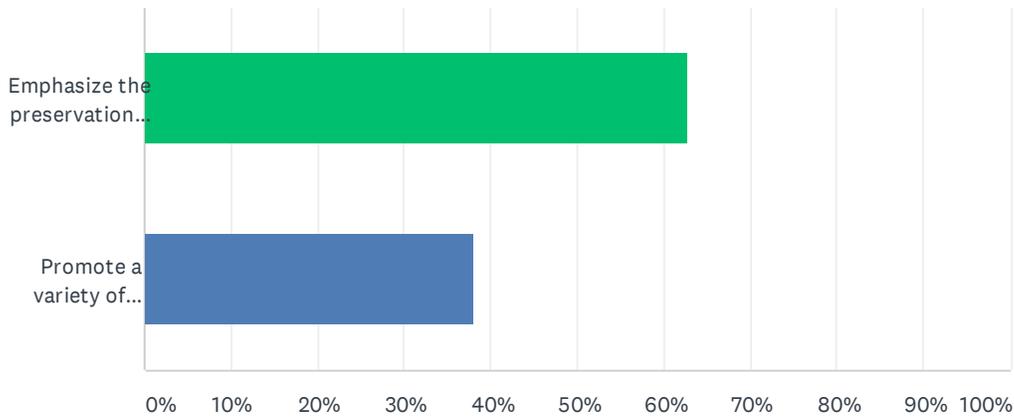
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	SPANISH	ENGLISH
Small Retail Stores and Services	83.97%	3	199
Medical Facilities	6.33%	0	15
Large Retail Stores	11.39%	0	27
Arts and Entertainment Uses	66.67%	5	158
Offices	10.97%	3	26
Restaurants	67.09%	4	159
Day Care Centers	12.24%	3	29
Research and Technology Uses	16.46%	3	39
Manufacturing Uses	6.33%	0	15
Hotels or Motels	7.59%	1	18
Other (please specify)	10.55%	0	25
Total Respondents: 237			

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	
1	Food stores	
2	Grocery store	
3	Affordable/Low Cost Apartments	
4	Grocery stores	
5	Grocery store	
6	Low income senior housing	
7	Railroad buildings and depots	
8	Supermarket	
9	Grocery store like Aldi	
10	Parking	
11	reliable affordable producer market	
12	Grocery stores	
13	Deer	
14	Somewhere on the south side you need a good grocery store	
15	Upgrade the LVCHSA with sports fields and the Bethlehem Steel Ice Rink	
16	Churches	
17	Comprehensive social services	
18	Services for the homeless, mental health, elderly	
19	Immigration/ Citizenship offices	
20	rental buildings	
21	Open space	
22	schools	

23	Learning venue such as Discovery-Science Museum. It can be small but interesting.
24	Bars/Pubs
25	Brewing and distilling

Q2 When planning for the Southside Historic District, which one of the following goals do you think are most important?

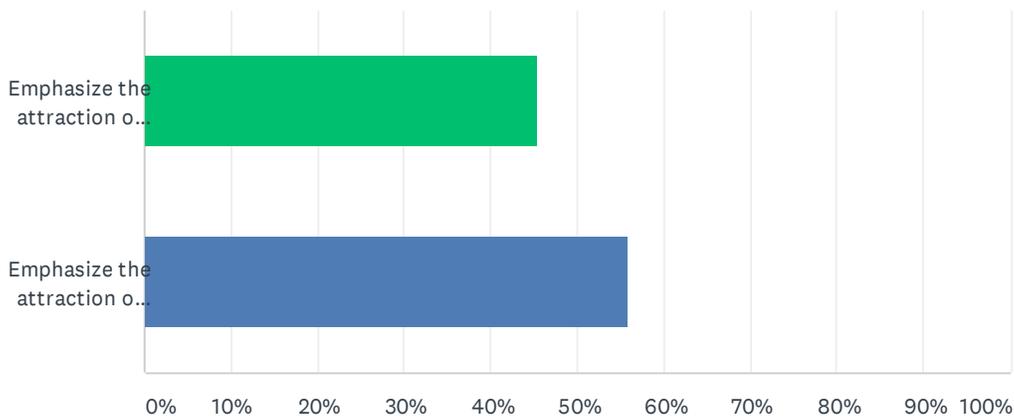
Answered: 239 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	SPANISH	RESPONSES	ENGLISH
Emphasize the preservation of older buildings and older architectural features	4	62.76%	150
Promote a variety of architectural styles, including more modern and artistic designs	2	38.08%	91
Total Respondents: 239			

Q3 In the Southside Historic District, which one of the following do you believe is most important?

Answered: 229 Skipped: 11

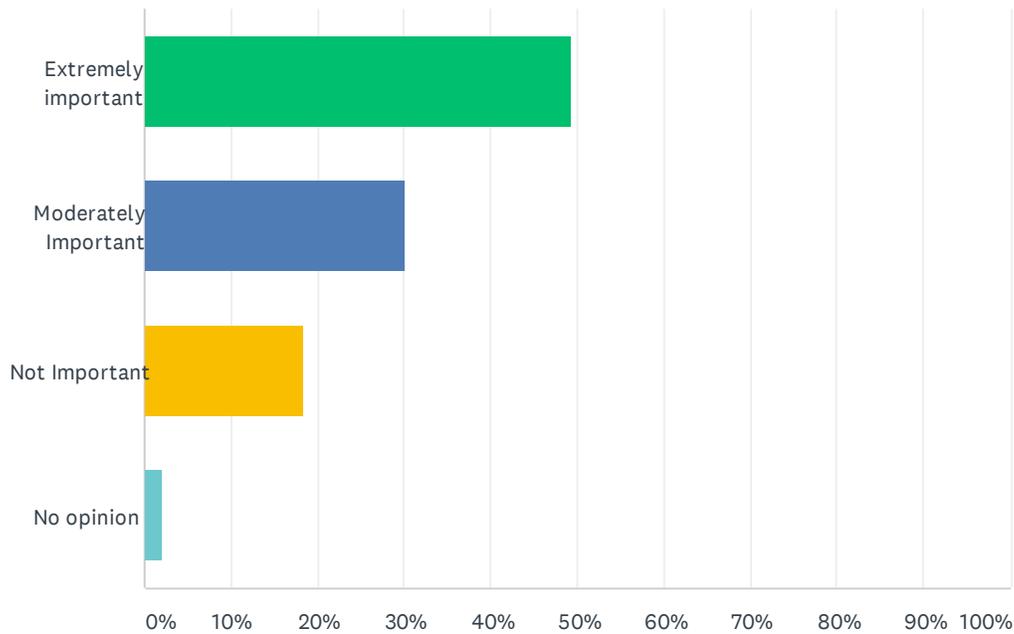


Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	SPANISH	RESPONSES	ENGLISH
Emphasize the attraction of more housing, including new construction	5	45.41%	104
Emphasize the attraction of more businesses, including new construction	1	55.90%	128
Total Respondents: 229			

Q4 How important do you believe it is to control the heights of new buildings within the Southside Historic District (such as limiting buildings to 5 or fewer stories where taller buildings are not common)?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 1

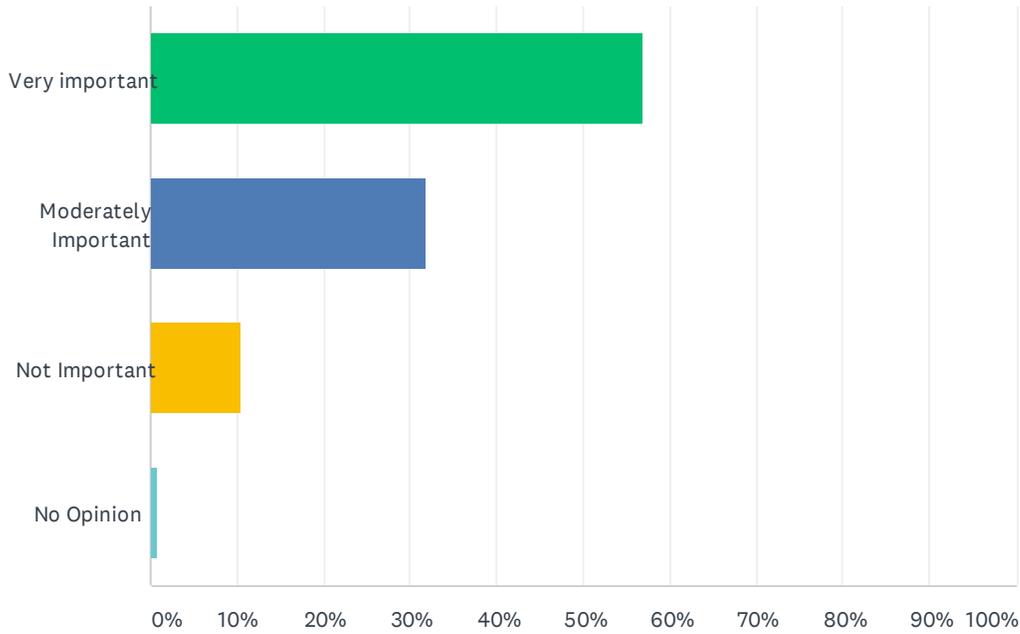


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	SPANISH	ENGLISH
Extremely important	49.37%	4	118
Moderately Important	30.13%	2	72
Not Important	18.41%	0	44
No opinion	2.09%	0	5
TOTAL			239

Q5 How important do you believe it is to control the exterior appearance of new buildings in the Southside Historic District?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 1

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

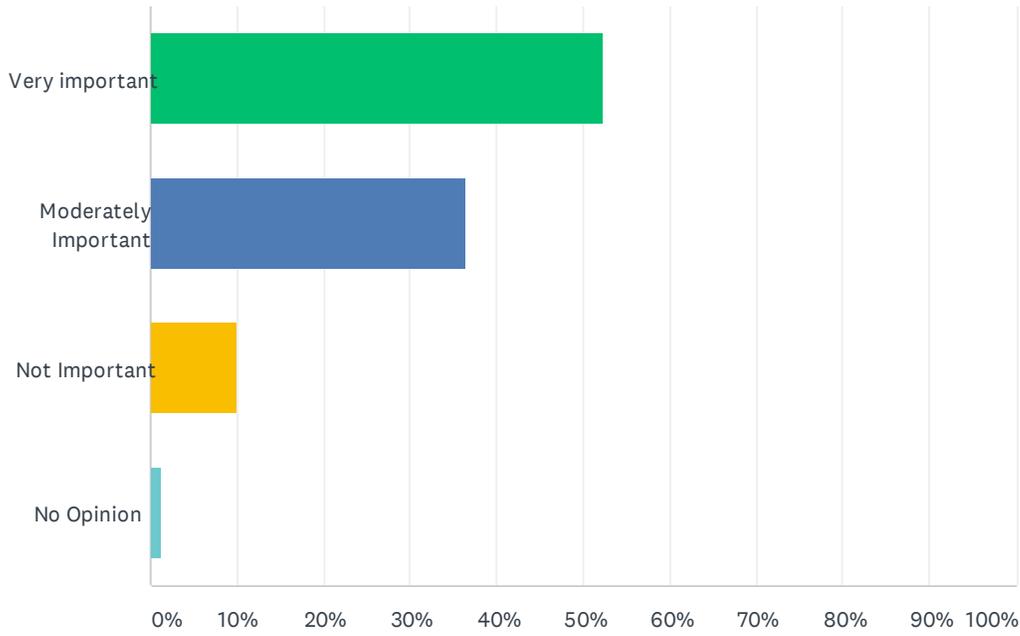


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	SPANISH	ENGLISH
Very important	56.90%	5	136
Moderately Important	31.80%	0	76
Not Important	10.46%	1	25
No Opinion	0.84%	0	2
TOTAL			239

Q6 How important do you believe it is to control the exterior appearance of changes to existing buildings in the Southside Historic District?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 1

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

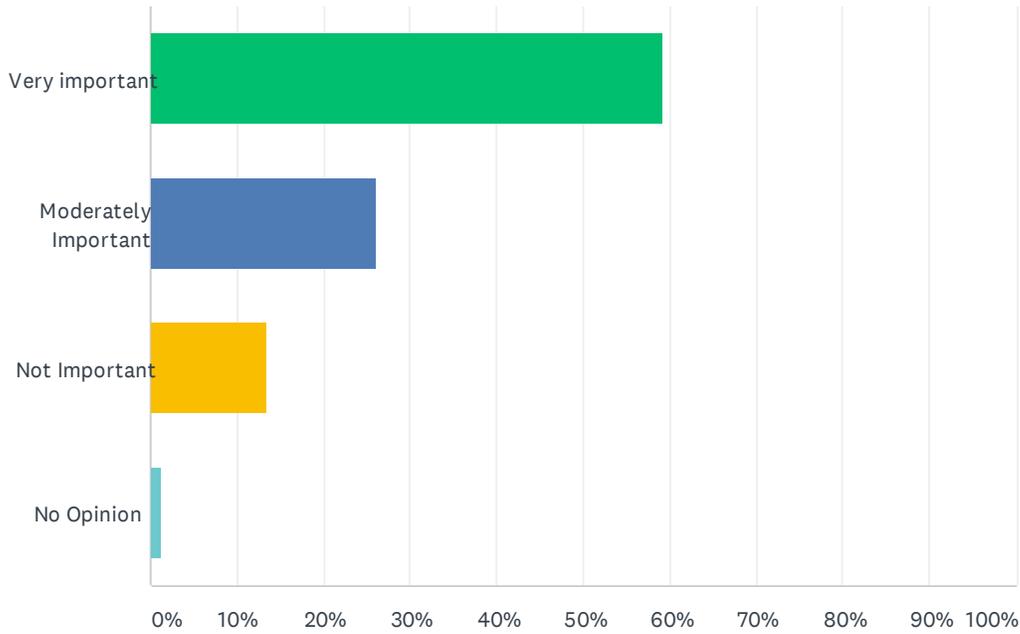


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	SPANISH	ENGLISH
Very important	52.30%	4	125
Moderately Important	36.40%	1	87
Not Important	10.04%	1	24
No Opinion	1.26%	0	3
TOTAL			239

Q7 How important do you believe it is to control the proposed demolitions of older buildings in the Southside Historic District?

Answered: 238 Skipped: 2

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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	SPANISH	ENGLISH
Very important	59.24%	4	141
Moderately Important	26.05%	1	62
Not Important	13.45%	1	32
No Opinion	1.26%		3
TOTAL			238

Q8 What do you like most about the buildings, housing and businesses in the Southside Business District?

Answered: 182 Skipped: 58

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The historical aspect.	4/8/2021 6:56 PM
2	I like the old town feel and the friendly customer service from business owners.	4/8/2021 7:21 AM
3	Love the old architecture and the diversity of small businesses	4/8/2021 2:14 AM
4	It has a small town feel.	4/7/2021 11:45 PM
5	Quaintness, history	4/7/2021 7:08 PM
6	Neat mixture. I feel safe on Southside.	4/7/2021 5:06 PM
7	The charm	4/7/2021 9:24 AM
8	The variety of restaurants available	4/7/2021 7:26 AM
9	The old look	4/7/2021 6:39 AM
10	I really like the history behind all the buildings in the southside	4/6/2021 9:36 PM
11	The mixture of businesses	4/6/2021 9:07 PM

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12	The variety of styles and ages of larger buildings	
13	Interesting architecture, variety. Love that an old Bethlehem Steel building was renovated into beautiful condominiums.	4/6/2021 4:38 PM
14	The character of a lot of the older buildings. But when new places are constructed they are tastefully done to blend with older buildings.	4/6/2021 3:12 PM
15	Affordable, convenient.	4/6/2021 1:54 PM
16	Walkable from parking garage.	4/6/2021 1:30 PM
17	Thje variety	4/6/2021 1:29 PM
18	Love the workmanship of the historic buildings.	4/6/2021 1:09 PM
19	There is a combination of buildings from different time periods	4/6/2021 10:56 AM
20	History	4/6/2021 9:20 AM
21	older facades	4/6/2021 9:08 AM
22	Unique architecture and facades of a bygone era	4/6/2021 8:49 AM
23	I love the old, beautiful buildings.	4/6/2021 8:42 AM
24	Diversity of businesses	4/6/2021 8:02 AM
25	I'm a big fan of the density of the buildings on the south side—everything is close together, and it really makes the area feel unique.	4/6/2021 7:38 AM
26	Cool older architecture & eclectic businesses.	4/6/2021 7:25 AM
27	I still like the fact that there is still mom and pop shops with architectural embellishments on the buildings	4/6/2021 2:06 AM
28	4th St architecture	4/6/2021 12:43 AM
29	The historic and architectural beauty.	4/5/2021 11:44 PM
30	Keep as much as possible of the older buildings and merge them easily with where new construction is needed because of the empty lots!	4/5/2021 10:51 PM
31	Lots of amazing original features are still intact on old buildings.	4/5/2021 10:37 PM
32	The historical look and architectural design.	4/5/2021 10:29 PM
33	Reuse and upgrades to existing buildings	4/5/2021 9:31 PM
34	Already gridlock traffic..stop already	4/5/2021 9:23 PM
35	Older archetctural touches, details. Only a couple stories tall.	4/5/2021 8:55 PM
36	Uniqueness	4/5/2021 8:27 PM
37	The variety	4/5/2021 7:25 PM
38	Aesthetically a big improvement from say 16 or 20 years ago due to revitalization efforts	4/5/2021 7:19 PM
39	The charm and beauty of our beautiful south side !!!	4/5/2021 6:23 PM
40	Unique period architecture	4/5/2021 5:34 PM
41	The fact that buildings from 130 years ago to 150 years ago are still in use. I like that these buildings still have the features that made them unique and beautiful during that time period.	4/5/2021 4:54 PM
42	Individuality	4/5/2021 4:37 PM
43	HISTORIC CHARACTER	4/5/2021 4:19 PM
44	The history	4/5/2021 4:19 PM
45	Older architecture. Artistic small businesses that care about the town	4/5/2021 4:16 PM
46	They're unique architecture.	4/5/2021 4:01 PM

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

47	variety of styles.	4/5/2021 3:48 PM
48	the intimacy of a smaller city feeling	4/5/2021 3:45 PM
49	The old architecture maintained for buildings.	4/5/2021 3:44 PM
50	Historic architecture	4/5/2021 3:43 PM
51	the architectural character, look, and history	4/5/2021 3:43 PM
52	Historic features. Reuse of derelict property.	4/5/2021 3:39 PM
53	Maintaining the original integrity of the structures	4/5/2021 3:35 PM
54	I like the characted and diversity of the styles.. If your committee does not, consider incentives for homeowners like Allentown did. We are a diverse community on the SS and would like to remain that way!	4/5/2021 12:46 PM
55	Old time charm	4/5/2021 12:09 PM
56	I like not living in a canyon-like environment. I like the small city feel and human scale and hope it doesn't disappear.	4/5/2021 11:27 AM
57	Very convenient and walkable with the greenway.	4/5/2021 11:16 AM
58	the out door space, new restaurants,	4/5/2021 9:40 AM
59	The eclectic vibe	4/5/2021 8:32 AM
60	variety of style	4/5/2021 8:30 AM
61	Diversity	4/5/2021 5:52 AM
62	Architecture	4/5/2021 2:10 AM
63	The blending of the old and the new	4/4/2021 11:02 PM
64	When preserved and maintained they remind one of this area's past. The businesses are the present and future.	4/4/2021 9:58 PM
65	preserving the village/town center, walking neighborhoods	4/4/2021 5:01 PM
66	It's a lovely community full of diversity	4/4/2021 4:32 PM
67	preserve the heritage of the city	4/4/2021 4:05 PM
68	Historic buildings. Very enthusiastic about preserving green space and creating arts/music activities open to the community.	4/4/2021 2:00 PM
69	History	4/4/2021 1:56 PM
70	Maintaining the character of the South side.	4/4/2021 1:07 PM
71	historic value	4/4/2021 12:57 PM
72	The variety of historic structures	4/4/2021 12:22 PM
73	Eclectic with a lot of historic buildings and the arts district	4/4/2021 11:42 AM
74	the eclectic mix of architecture as well as the plethora of small independent businesses instead of chain store development	4/4/2021 11:23 AM
75	I like the detailed architecture of the old buildings.	4/4/2021 10:36 AM
76	Historical features	4/4/2021 9:52 AM
77	Character and historic context	4/4/2021 8:44 AM
78	The newer construction looks good, preservation of old steel mill structures is important.	4/4/2021 8:44 AM
79	Historic facades.	4/4/2021 8:39 AM
80	I don't like anything about these buildings	4/4/2021 8:32 AM
81	It's a nice place to visit for a day out.	4/4/2021 8:22 AM

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

82	The old buildings that reflect the historical nature to South Bethlehem.	3/13/2021 1:23 PM
83	Many beautiful historic buildings, and the Greenway	3/13/2021 12:16 PM
84	I like seeing new apartments being constructed, with additional new housing businesses will follow ie retail and restaurants.	3/13/2021 12:10 PM
85	Architectural variety.	3/11/2021 4:25 PM
86	The historical architecture	3/11/2021 2:12 PM
87	I like the old buildings put to good use. It is important to have walkable sidewalks, clear signage for transportation, clean spaces, and well-maintained buildings. New construction with both traditional and modern styles should be welcomed, as long as it serves the community well. Tall buildings should be welcomed as long as they are thoughtfully designed. the Southside Ambassadors are incredibly important.	2/27/2021 1:15 PM
88	The updates to the Steel Stacks and beautiful landscape of the Main Street area	2/26/2021 2:38 PM
89	Styles	2/22/2021 8:35 AM
90	The availability of local businesses	2/19/2021 6:37 PM
91	History	2/13/2021 7:24 PM
92	Throughout the city of Bethlehem, there is an inviting and welcoming appearance through art and innovative businesses with unique offerings.	2/11/2021 3:06 PM
93	sustainable walkability should be promoted by concentrating / intensifying non-residential uses in the core and allowing for more intensive residential on periphery.	2/5/2021 10:25 AM
94	I like the ethnic food restaurants that can be found, the convenient stores, and that spirit of "neighborhood" it has in the South side, combined with the presence of the Generation Z from the Lehigh University and NCC, students coming from all over the USA and the world.	2/4/2021 11:55 AM
95	density	2/3/2021 5:16 PM
96	I know that keeping a general semblance of history is important - but not to an extreme	2/2/2021 9:41 PM
97	varied	2/2/2021 9:27 PM
98	historic characteristics	2/2/2021 9:01 PM
99	I like the mix of the old and the new.	2/2/2021 7:43 PM
100	The historic look and the neighborhood feel of shorter and smaller buildings that don't overwhelm the infrastructure.	2/2/2021 7:30 PM
101	That sense of tradition and coziness.	2/2/2021 7:00 PM
102	character, including style and colors	2/2/2021 6:16 PM
103	Older interesting buildings. Mixed use of residential and commercial. I did not like question #3 in this survey because it asked us to choose one over the other. You should be striving for a blend of both uses	2/2/2021 5:43 PM
104	Historic charm	2/2/2021 3:56 PM
105	Historic and quaint	2/2/2021 12:14 PM
106	historical look with delicious restaurants	2/2/2021 12:06 PM
107	Older buildings, diverse restaurants	2/2/2021 11:35 AM
108	the old look, brick etc	2/2/2021 11:32 AM
109	They can help to tell the story of the community and carry the pulse of it.	2/2/2021 9:49 AM
110	Keep the businesses on ground level maybe sec floor too and living space 3rd and 4th floors.	2/2/2021 9:41 AM
111	I like new construction. South Bethlehem needs to change for the future.	2/2/2021 9:08 AM
112	The location	2/2/2021 9:08 AM

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

113	LOVE THE HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS	
114	The diversity of styles and character	2/2/2021 8:34 AM
115	The architecture	2/2/2021 2:14 AM
116	Cultural diversity. Small local businesses. Sense of history combined with forward thinking energy.	2/1/2021 7:40 PM
117	The streets reflect the humble, well kepp , hardworking roots that have always been the southside. No Brass. no glass. I detest the hideous new grey boxes at Lehigh and the box ay 3nd and new - both from another planet.	2/1/2021 5:49 PM
118	that they will bring more people and business	2/1/2021 3:46 PM
119	Diversity	2/1/2021 3:40 PM
120	the eclectic mix of both the architecture and interior uses	2/1/2021 3:36 PM
121	Some unique architectural motifs	2/1/2021 3:25 PM
122	There is a variety, which could be increased.	2/1/2021 3:01 PM
123	historical appearance	2/1/2021 1:42 PM
124	The beautiful structure and decor	2/1/2021 1:32 PM
125	The fact that they're eclectic.	2/1/2021 12:58 PM
126	Potential to be beautiful buildings	2/1/2021 12:55 PM
127	small town feel	2/1/2021 12:53 PM
128	Historical feel to the buildings	2/1/2021 12:42 PM
129	the diversity, the blend of old and new, young and old,	2/1/2021 12:42 PM
130	It feels cohesive. It's a place.	2/1/2021 12:37 PM
131	It's quaint and an expression of various architectures.	2/1/2021 12:35 PM
132	I like how the buildings show the true feeling of the history of the city.	2/1/2021 12:29 PM
133	Family oriented environment	2/1/2021 12:29 PM
134	There is a diverse mix of structures that reflect the varied historical foundation of SouthSide.	2/1/2021 12:20 PM
135	They have a family feel.	2/1/2021 12:19 PM
136	They represent an era of America, completely different than the North Side, indicative of the rise of industry and ethnic heritage during America's industrial revolution.	2/1/2021 11:37 AM
137	Improving the look of the neighborhood	2/1/2021 12:51 AM
138	Nice old buildings, but lack of modern buildings.	1/31/2021 9:53 PM
139	Architectural designs. Diversity	1/31/2021 4:55 PM
140	Feels like a community	1/31/2021 1:55 PM
141	They have a sense of history and time, they are not historically or physically sterile	1/31/2021 11:29 AM
142	They are attractive and related to the history of the city while looking as some planning has been given into the development.	1/31/2021 10:39 AM
143	Brick	1/31/2021 10:34 AM
144	Variety	1/31/2021 10:34 AM
145	The growth and development of new properties.	1/31/2021 9:18 AM
146	Historic brick, tile, and painting on buildings.	1/31/2021 8:47 AM
147	Proximity to greenway (which ought get extended) NCC Fowler Center Connection to community (Hispanic Center, Library, Cantelmis, Lopes, Cutters, barbers, Lit, Cafe Lodge, etc.	1/31/2021 6:39 AM

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

	etc.) Close to schools, shops, work (LU and NCC)	
148	old architecture	1/31/2021 4:32 AM
149	It's walkable!	1/30/2021 8:43 PM
150	I like when the buildings are well kept, using colors that are soothing and facades that fit in with surrounding buildings. Love the artwork and murals! Don't mind building height at all.	1/30/2021 11:24 AM
151	only a few SS buildings are attractive	1/30/2021 11:07 AM
152	The architecture, history, colors and size/mass.	1/30/2021 11:03 AM
153	It feels like a community	1/30/2021 9:40 AM
154	Variety of traditional styles creates welcoming atmosphere.	1/30/2021 9:09 AM
155	The human scale and historic quality (where it hasn't already been destroyed).	1/30/2021 9:08 AM
156	How can all this be accomplished when South Bethlehem can't even influence the maintenance of the St. Michael's cemetery, which in itself is historic, with all those elements already inherently there in place?? And so close to Lehigh U and Lehigh U owned land??	1/30/2021 9:06 AM
157	The diversity of the types of buildings.	1/29/2021 9:52 PM
158	For the ones in good condition, the historical aesthetics.	1/29/2021 4:35 PM
159	Diversity of businesses and when owners show pride in the restoration of their buildings	1/29/2021 4:31 PM
160	eclectic mixture of old and new... But PARKING will become more and more important as the buildout continues The Parking Garage planned for Polk Street is a MUST. The development of the old Main Office is a must.	1/29/2021 3:56 PM
161	Walkable area with variety.	1/29/2021 2:00 PM
162	Southside is starting to feel more alive and safe!	1/29/2021 11:42 AM
163	The eclectic, diverse, historic feel of the Southside is what makes it an interesting, vibrant community. Beautiful architecture, small and affordable storefronts for local businesses that cater to our diverse community. Small town feel--still get sunlight on the streets, have green spaces adjacent to downtown areas. In areas that haven't been taken over by out of scale new development, there is a consistency of size and shape despite a diversity of building types and business types. Small, interesting storefronts make walking more fun! More to look at. Businesses that integrate outdoor spaces into their footprint--The Lodge garden seating, parklet at Roasted Adaptive reuse of historic structures--Riverport complex, Banana Factory, Lehigh's old service building, St. Stanislaus church, NCC Fowler campus--keeps neighborhood feel while adding truly unique places that attract visitors and make our community different from anywhere else! Variety of small businesses that is made possible due to affordability of retail spaces and diversity of sizes/shapes.	1/29/2021 10:15 AM
164	The vast potential that this district holds, if it were given serious attention with comprehensive urban planning, from a team of outside planners and designers with real experience in planning and adaptive reuse in other comparably sized cities. The enormous public of potential consumers and audiences that Lehigh University presents, as an opportunity for businesses, if we could bring small businesses and food concessions closer to the campus, within true walking distance.	1/29/2021 9:19 AM
165	Variety	1/28/2021 8:45 PM
166	The industrial feel of the Southside is uniquely Bethlehem and a callback to a Era of Bethlehem's identity. The steel and industrial feel of the Southside with its arts modernization offers a different and complementary look to Bethlehem's Northside Moravian roots.	1/28/2021 7:49 PM
167	History.	1/28/2021 4:51 PM
168	variety of styles and ages. new mixed with old	1/28/2021 3:49 PM
169	The concentration of historic buildings	1/28/2021 3:25 PM
170	The variety of businesses, building types, and urban energy that come with mixing different building use types.	1/28/2021 3:23 PM

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171	Historical character
172	Uniqueness
173	Architectural design and beauty
174	The large number of historic structures
175	Authentically preserved buildings that correctly meet the public sidewalk and offer business opportunities for small, local businesses; city support should be directed rehabilitation of existing structures to entice locally-owned small businesses rather than supporting developers for new construction that is not interested in local businesses and tries (unsuccessfully) to attract larger-scale tenants and national chains.
176	variety, though they sort of go together
177	The historic buildings, where a block looks like it belongs
178	Eclectic mix of styles and moderate heights confirming "small-town" feel
179	I have recently noticed that there has been more multi unit structures with residences on the upper floors and commercial on the first/ground floor. I think this type of use is a great addition to the South Side
180	I like the historical character of the area. It's definitely a draw. In the interest of progress, we should consider different or more eclectic types of buildings.
181	Historic appearance of the buildings
182	it is eclectic

Spanish

- 183 The architecture; the architectural harmony
 184 Everything is accessible and the historical touch makes the place nostalgic, making it frequently visited.
 185 The older, the more history, the more authentic

Q9 What do you like least about the buildings, housing and businesses in the Southside Historic District? Answered: 172 Skipped: 68

#	RESPONSES
1	A lot of the buildings look run down, it looks like the city just forgot about Southside.
2	Not enough affordable housing and gentrification
3	The Benner building specifically. But in general it feels like the new constructions and focus on luxury apartments are pushing those of us who live here out.
4	They have not been kept up
5	We need a grocery store. We have no options to shop for decent, fresh, affordable groceries.
6	Lack of affordable quality or housing
7	Too much high end housing without enough of a draw to keep people there and without enough affordable housing in the area.
8	The new look
9	Poorly kept. No cohesion
10	I don't really like the new businesses trying to change this part of the city
11	The feel of overcrowdedness
12	The residential areas have less nice buildings and features, very drab with little in the way of more modern amenities. Need to encourage building of new affordable housing
13	Seeing the older buildings with broken windows, and in disrepair.
14	Sometimes you come across houses that are not maintained. They look dirty and some in

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need of repairs. Who is controlling that? Property owners should have to maintain their places just the same as you making a new construction project abide by all your rules.

15	Sidewalks and curbs disintegrating.
16	Congested
17	Need more affordable apartments. People who are low income, homeless, etc..
18	That some need a lot of repairs.
19	Some are run down and not cared for very well
20	The south side is becoming too population dense
21	The new ones
22	demolishing older buildings
23	Dirty looking rundown bad night lighting. No charm or unity
24	The super modern buildings. They stand out in a bad way. They look out of place.
25	One problem is that many of the buildings need serious renovation, and either because of guidelines, it is hard for the residents/owners of the buildings to afford them.
26	Some aren't kept up. Housing prices skyrocketing b/c of Lehigh students. Difficultly parking.
27	Don't like all the new construction that is popping up on the south side
28	Not cohesive
29	The lack of any beauty in new construction. Cold, institutional and totally unwelcoming.
30	Too many row homes owned by distant landlords that lead to trash and noise. This should be controlled with the help of the university. Need that grocery store for those that live there!
31	Poorly redeveloped land, renovations that have destroyed original features of old buildings. New development (appts on 3rd, for example) generally seems to be well done.
32	Some look rundown and rents are getting out of control. Elderly have no where to move in apartments. Everything is high priced and leaning towards the younger generation. Do not forget the elderly
33	Parking
34	Too congested. Stop gentrification
35	New 5 story buildings. Modern architecture is out of place.
36	Many need attention and upgrades.
37	The inconsistency of conditions
38	A lot of older townhouses are run down especially across from the casino
39	The modernization and disregard for our beautiful south side.
40	False facades
41	The lack of attention or maintenance given to these older structures.
42	Lack of upkeep
43	NEW ALLOWED BUILDING HEIGHTS - TOO TALL
44	The hideous new buildings
45	They are falling apart and need to be kept up.
46	Lehigh's ugly modern buildings
47	The newer architecture that doesn't fit in with the surrounding buildings.
48	Past modifications to historic architecture

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49	Many are in new construction. Old buildings are not kept or maintained as well as they should be
50	Hi rise apartments.
51	Allowing many of the buildings to become run down
52	Let us retain a residential community. We have PLENTY of big budsiness and tsll buildings here (Many of them ugly. There is very little green space left and the traffic conjestion is awful. We know that there are not a lot of Southsise residents on the board or council.
53	Too modern
54	I think the new construction, especially by Lehigh University is quite unattractive. The large scale of the buildings is spiritually alienating.
55	Need more owners, less rentals. need parking solution for all these proposed apartments. More restaurants would help as well.
56	most businesses are concentrated near Lehigh University,
57	Looks rundown, forgotten in a lot of areas
58	many are rundown and in need of repair
59	Some are run down
60	Modern glass buildings
61	Most citizens do not recognize the revitalization of the Southside. Diminish student houding
62	Lack of cohesiveness in exteriors. Poor maintenance, especially student housing. Need more commercial businesses.
63	blight
64	some need repair desperately
65	Lack of food stores
66	Dirtiness
67	The South side has been slowly but irrevocably destroyed over the past decades. It now has buildings that have destroyed housing, were built without any consideration of communal architecture, and without consideration of the needs of the community itself.
68	lack of parking
69	1) Blight conditions affecting certain buildings. Conditions of disinvestment and disrepair that do not quite rise to the level of blight on a more widespread level. 2) Overly strict / dogmatic historic regulations that limit the neighborhood's evolution. Regulations should encourage context sensitive development. This includes modern styles that are complementary to historic buildings and reflect the evolution of the urban environment over time. Regulations should not prescriptively attempt to "keep the neighborhood in the early 1900s" or impose the aesthetic preferences of certain "experts" on the whole neighborhood.
70	Very crowded, could use more green space/trees
71	I dont like the ultra modern architecture of the newer development buildings. Especially along third Street. New construction can accomodate modern features while maintaining some semblance of historic propoportion and lkook.
72	The condition of the exterior of the buildings
73	The empty ones! Fill the vacancies!
74	That residents don't care
75	Other than the steel mill structures, most of south side looks run down.
76	Too few places that are worth stopping at, and interiors are dark and uninviting.
77	The buildings are old and poorly maintained. It is time to bring south Bethlehem into the 21st

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	centuy	
78	Parking	
79	Parking is hard	
80	The addition of modern, high rise buildings that do not fit in with the existing buildings. There appears to be a trend toward hideous buildings that are not in style or scale with the existing neighborhoods. Examples off such buildings are the new Lehigh University buildings and the latest development on New St. between 3rd and 4th.	
81	Lehigh University's hideous new construction both on and off campus. The buildings on Rte 378 between the five points and New Bethany Ministries. New construction between New St and East 4th.	
82	Having a historical oversight. The South Side is becoming an arts district allow modern, artsy style buildings. The north side has the historical buildings allow the south side to become modern/artsy.	
83	Congestion	
84	The modern style buildings that don't belong in a "historic" district. If you take away the historic facade what else is there that's historic - only the Bethlehem Steel down at the other end. If you're going to call it "historic south side" then let's at least keep to the architectural facade of that time period.	
85	Empty storefronts and abandoned buildings. The city should place a priority on filling empty spaces. Years-long unused buildings (like the first reformed church, and the building at 30 W 4th street) are damaging to the neighborhood. The city should either demolish or renovate them, even if we lose architecturally significant buildings. Historic preservation should be pursued, but the priority must be on active use of all properties and parcels.	
86	The buildings that are closed and run down (not the historic buildings)	
87	New construction that does not fit	
88	Blighted	
89	under utilization and lack of synergy among existing buildings	
90	The sidewalks definitely need to be upgraded, they are all broken, with holes of all the sizes. I admire to see the cleaning team in yellow uniforms sweeping the floors in the mornings, but a real CAMPAIGN has to be started in schools, colleges, universities, companies, neighborhoods. They clean the main streets, but you see LOTS OF GARBAGE on the secondary streets. Shame of the neighbors who live on them, because they themeelves do not keep them clean.	
91	buildings in disrepair, whether occupied or not	
92	That if for example an owner does not have the money to keep up an older building that you cannot demolish for parking or other needs of the owner	
93	not taken care of/painted/run-down	
94	blighted buildings	
95	The amount of vacant store fronts that are allowed to deteriorate.	
96	The newer looking buildings seem out of scale and the facade does not fit in. New construction can look ok if it is the right scale, but the monolithic building on the corner of 4th and New has destroyed the historic feel. Now we have two historic districts, with a big ugly building and parking lot in the middle. The size and scale is truly unfortunate. The amount of glass and steel is also pretty ugly.	
97	Some of the look really old and forgotten.	
98	some are falling apart	
99	Buildings with modern looking exteriors with internal activities that shut down at 5PM. Anything that takes activities and people off the street and forms glass and metal wall boundaries.	
100	Surrounded by garbage	

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101	Empty buildings
102	do not like tall buildings blocking the historical look of Bethlehem
103	Mis-matched types of architecture.
104	they don't always look safe and up to date
105	Getting too tall. Housing options are not affordable to those who are from here. There are business and services holes in the business make up.
106	To many places with slum landlords. Easy to know who they are but this is not addressed
107	Run down buildings that are not being maintained or utilized.
108	Some of them look deteriorated, no parking accessible most of the time
109	The run down places and soulless new construction
110	Not enough tiny homes
111	Vacant buildings, gentrification, affordability of housing.
112	Some need a coat of paint and facade facelifts that are reflective of the period when they were built
113	nothing
114	Unkept
115	some key buildings have been vacant and underutilized for many, many years. It's like demolition by neglect. The blight process takes so long to do anything about them.
116	some are so run down and not pleasing to the eye
117	Many appear to be run down and not well kept. It distracts from the up-and-coming feel for the area.
118	Traffic
119	Properties owned by prominent individuals that are rotting and overlooked by the City.
120	Not kept up by landlords
121	run down
122	They are not kept up. Painting and facade upkeep should be enforced.
123	over valuing buildings and facades just because they are old. Old and historic is not always better. Old can be ugly and obsolete as well as beautiful and useful.
124	They're getting run down.
125	Many buildings are vacant and so run down replacing them with similar architecture would be a major improvement in attracting customers for the businesses.
126	Many need to be updated
127	Over population of Lehigh University housing. This is destroying the family environment of the area.
128	Right now, so many are in disrepair or are empty.
129	A significant increase in student housing instead of family housing.
130	Their hodgepodge architectural nature. I think the high rise senior housing is an abomination.
131	Not being kept up
132	Way too many parking lots on third street that ruin any vibrancy
133	Dislike the new shiny buildings with corporate businesses
134	Too many buildings have had their historical facades modernized or covered up in

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

	architecturally ugly ways	
135	Too much of the South Side is still looking old and depressed. Facelift and more attractive businesses to attract foot traffic and shopping.	
136	vinyl siding, fake materials + poor design	
137	Too many run down and not used	
138	Dilapidated buildings, empty storefronts, and cheap random stores. Also, bad /cheap signage.	
139	Boarded buildings/store fronts —some have been this way for almost a decade. Expensive apartments catering to LU students. Lack of bike infrastructure. No concerted effort to diminish traffic. Lack of reliable and efficient public transport (city/region wide) Noise — esp. from cars and trucks on 3rd street	
140	need fixing / updating	
141	Missing bike paths	
142	Messy new construction with parking in front.	
143	Properties that are not maintained. Some of the houses on West and East Fourth Street are looking crusty. Also, too many residents NOT ENOUGH PARKING!	
144	So many of the buildings seem old and tired, not historic. Community better off with new modern, high functioning buildings	
145	The newer buildings' size and in some cases exterior appearance.	
146	Housing people can afford being replaced by housing they cannot. Lehigh's brick wall shutting off the community.	
147	Owners allow buildings to deteriorate, creating an unappealing environment. (Sometimes to justify demolition.)	
148	The Rooney building and the one-story strip in front of it on 4th, the (inexplicably) fort-like building opposite that (housing La Lupita), the strip including Rite Aid - all newer additions to the district that didn't even attempt to integrate in to the look and feel of the area.	
149	Only the ones that aren't in good condition.	
150	when building owners are not held accountable for essentially abandoning buildings	
151	It is very important that the city carefully plans for the development along the Greenway as more apartments and condos begin to fill in. The	
152	Ugly parking garages	
153	Owners not maintaining them.	
154	Poorly planned new development looks terrible and creates character-less stretches in our downtown that are unpleasant to walk past --eg. Urban Renewal era projects (Rooney building and shopping center, Litzenger house), Rite Aid shopping center, Benner building at 3rd and New. Also, properties that are abandoned/not kept up by landlords/developers that purchase them and leave them empty and deteriorating. Eg. All of the properties Benner owns on Fourth Street (next to Roasted, church across the street, Boys and Girls Club), 401-405 E. 4th, Abbe Hall building... etc. Student housing properties have ugly signs, garbage, many student housing landlords do not invest in upkeep of historic facades along 4th St. So many vacant storefronts in new development-- build-out and rent is far too expensive for most local businesses, so they sit empty. Many local businesses were evicted when original properties were knocked down, and now storefronts sit empty...a net loss to community. Eg. 306 S. New, Polk St building, 510 Flats... takes years to fill, and then businesses tend to end up leaving. Occupancy of businesses has decreased since new development (I know because I kept the stats for years).	
155	The use of 3rd and 4th street as a thoroughfare for drivers, because the city has never given transportation planning due attention. The traffic that results, and the challenges it poses to pedestrians trying to cross the two streets. Lehigh's switch from open-air parking lots to enclosed ones, which further slows down traffic moving in and out of the lots. The lack of an easy bus link to the north side of town. The elimination of the bus terminal servicing New York	1/29/2021 9:19 AM

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey

and New Jersey. Transportation is for me the make-or-break issue for the district. The area cannot prosper and sustainably evolve without a radical rethink of its transportation planning.

156	Poorly maintained
157	Areas of disrepair and non-use are discouraging. The old steel office buildings that lay vacant and the unused lots offer an opportunity for growth. Living in a historic house and appreciate an industrial look, the thing that bothers me most is not appreciating the spaces that are there and not reusing them to maintain the character of the Southside and further develop Bethlehem.
158	Decrepit.
159	vacancies in spaces that are in good locations not enough good businesses to visit and shop at many buildings are not maintained well and are dilapidated and vacant. and have been that way for decades.
160	The out of character garage on Vine St and Comfort Inn Hotel
161	The comfort suites hotel and the Perkins restaurant. These are suburban building types placed awkwardly in an urban environment.
162	Decrepitude
163	No green roofs, both from an environmental standpoint and health standpoint
164	The gaps: parking lots, gas stations, structures that sit back from the street
165	Tall and/or modern buildings with no connection to scale, style, materials, etc. of historical buildings within the District ... especially if they are set back from the sidewalk. Surface parking lots and parking lots in front of setback structure are inappropriate and unattractive. New development projects (previous 5+ years) that benefitted greatly from city support and made promises of economic growth but remain empty ... at least at street level.
166	NOT CLEAN
167	There's a lot of empty buildings. New buildings are hideous and look out of place
168	Poorly executed "improvements"
169	While I think it is important to keep the historical integrity of the South Side, I do think some modernization and new products should be permitted when appropriate for new and existing construction.
170	Some look very run down or are poorly maintained. They are an eyesore. The SouthSide would look better if some of them are renovated and/or occupied
171	Giant new construction that isn't blended well into the community. Like the parking garage.
172	not always maintained well.

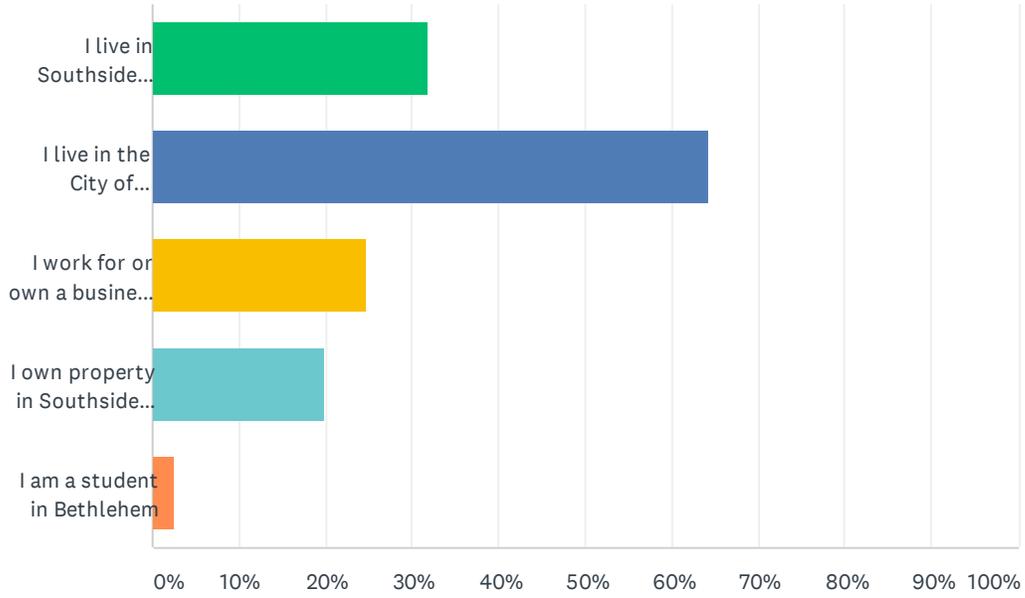
SPANISH:

- 173 Insufficient directional signs
- 174 Buildings that are not well preserved
- 175 Buildings that are left abandoned, that they do not use them or keep them clean
- 176 There must have more maintenance.
- 177 New homes are too expensive, not for the workforce.
- 178 Minority-owned businesses are not given the attention and support they need.

Q10 Please check all that apply.

Answered: 207 Skipped: 33

Historic Southside Bethlehem Citizen Survey



ANSWER CHOICES	SPANISH	RESPONSES	ENGLISH
I live in Southside Bethlehem	1	31.88%	66
I live in the City of Bethlehem	5	64.25%	133
I work for or own a business in Southside Bethlehem	1	24.64%	51
I own property in Southside Bethlehem	0	19.81%	41
I am a student in Bethlehem	0	2.42%	5
Total Respondents: 207			

Summary of Public Comments

Inclusion of a comment in this section does not necessarily mean that any suggestion is endorsed by the City.

- There are concerns about the mass of large tall buildings that are allowed under the zoning ordinance in the Historic Conservation District, particularly where a 150 feet height is currently allowed. There are questions about how much power exists under the Historic District regulations to require a reduced height. A comment was made that the public does not understand that the Historic Commission cannot directly control building height. There is greater market pressure for demolition of historic buildings if a tall height is allowed.
- A number of persons said that the maximum height in the Historic District should be limited to somewhere in the range of 5 or 6 stories and 75 feet. There was discussion about possibly allowing an extra story as an incentive if a building included affordable housing.
- There are some locations that are more suitable for taller buildings than other locations. For instance, a comment was made that Morton St. is suitable for less tall buildings than New St.
- An emphasis on historic preservation can be compatible with an eclectic, colorful and artsy environment, provided that the preservation regulations are not excessively strict. Paint colors are temporary, and therefore do not need excessive regulation. Murals and street art have added much interest to the streetscape, and can be complementary to the original architecture.
- Excessively ultramodern architecture (such as buildings with large expanses of glass and metal facades) is difficult to make compatible with a historic district. However, there is still room for interesting eclectic designs, with interesting contrasts with older architecture. A comment was made that modern designs can be compatible if they have appropriate massing, scale and fenestration that respects older designs. The South Side district was intended to be more artsy, eclectic and flexible than the North Side historic district. Overly rigid historic regulations can interfere with creative designs.
- Some demolition of older buildings is justified, particularly when the building was not significant or has been extensively altered from its original design. Excessive prohibitions on all demolition can conflict with other community objectives and can make desirable projects cost-prohibitive. There should be a more thorough inventory of the significance of various buildings and blocks, so that the loss of the building can be considered in balance with the public benefit of the proposed project.
- One comment was that they did not want a prohibition against making a new building look old. Another comment was that original materials should not be required when modern materials can be used with a closely similar appearance.
- There was discussion about what should happen with the site west of the Greenway Building along the south side of W. 3rd St. One option would be to allow a building similar in height to the Greenway Building, but with the facades of the existing buildings required to be preserved. The existing buildings have structural problems. It was noted that the blocks on the south side of W. 3rd St. west of New St. are much less intact than many other blocks, where preservation and height controls therefore should be more important.

- There was discussion about what should happen on the open parcel at 3rd and Wyandote Sts., west of the Perkins Restaurant. The site is sloped. An earlier proposal of the site would have involved substantial amounts of surface parking. A major project is proposed for the Hill to Hill Bridge, which may use a portion of the land for a widened approach.
- Comments were made that the truck parking west of the Banana Factory on W. 3rd St. should be encouraged to be moved to allow a major new redevelopment site. The intent is to allow the former railroad right-of-way to be included in a redevelopment, with the Greenway Trail running along the streets.
- The Federal Opportunity Zone program offers new ways to raise financing for development projects. There also are federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits, but they provide less of an incentive than was available in the past.
- The timing of approvals by the Planning Commission, Zoning Hearing Board and the Historic Commission/City Council are sometimes unclear. Should the Historic Commission review occur earlier in the process, or after the size of the building has been approved?
- The Southside is seeing an increase in Asian-American residents. The immigrant and minority population includes many small business entrepreneurs.
- A 2019 market study of the Southside found strong demand for additional retail and restaurant development. While the Pandemic has created great disruption, there still have been some new restaurants opening in Bethlehem.
- The City has completed a Climate Action Plan that includes recommended local actions to help mitigate global climate change.
- A number of people commented about the critical importance of the historic storefronts along 3rd and 4th Streets. Tall portions of buildings could be setback further from the sidewalk particularly where it would allow sunlight to reach the street. A comment was made that the first floor storefronts have the greatest impact upon the pedestrian environment of the district, and that therefore they should be emphasized in historic district approvals.
- Buildings of 3 to 5 stories have more of a human scale, which is lost with tall buildings. A certain amount of density is desirable to provide enough customers to support local businesses.
- One person noted the importance of the block west of the Comfort Suites, which was the original home of many of the first African-American owned businesses in Bethlehem.
- Some people feel there has been “mission creep” that has caused decreased flexibility in the way the South Side Historic Conservation District has been applied. The regulations were not intended to be as restrictive as the North Side District. The South Side is a highly varied mixture of styles and different periods of construction. Consideration should be given to adding a list of features that are not regulated.
- Care is needed to make sure that rigid requirements do not obstruct desirable types of development. For example, a non-residential building may need larger windows to be suitable for housing. A comment was received that the Historic District creates too many uncertainties

among developers who are considering the financial feasibility of a project, and threatens to cause unexpected delays. A developer has to expend large amounts of money on architectural designs that may go through multiple changes. A comment was made that a developer should be allowed to build new buildings with traditional designs, instead of being forced to maintain old buildings.

- While the South Side has attracted substantial investment, it still faces a great amount of difficult competition with Center City Allentown's tax incentives, downtown Easton and other areas. New development is needed to bring in new customers to support local stores, services and restaurants. It was noted that the Greenway Building on 3rd Street brought 300 office workers close to local businesses.
- The market is still uncertain about whether large office employers will be willing to move from New York City and other large cities to smaller cities. There is less need for most employees to be based in high cost cities. Those location decisions will be influenced by the speed of the vaccination process.
- It was also noted that the Five 10 Flats building attracted many professionals to the area who may not have moved to the South Side if that type of housing was not available.
- Historic preservation needs to be balanced with market realities and the need for additional tax revenue for the City. It was noted that projects such as the Gateway at the Greenway Building have generated many times more tax revenue than were generated by the previous buildings, and that tax revenue is needed to cover increasing costs and to avoid tax increases. A City needs to provide a positive business climate to attract investment, which includes avoiding unnecessary delays in gaining approvals. A comment was made that some new construction adds interest to the community.
- The market for housing is very strong in South Side. However, local residents have a difficult time competing with college students, particularly if a family with one wage-owner is competing against several students who each pay rent. South Side has a large percentage of Latino and African-American residents who provide valuable diversity to the population.
- There are fears that long-time residents will be displaced by increasing housing prices. Many landlords are offering lease terms that are specifically designed for students.
- The current programs to house and serve persons with disabilities cannot serve enough persons, and are finding that they are being priced out of the market for rental apartments. Many lower income persons reportedly can only afford a room in a rooming house, and those facilities are full. Persons in need of services are being pushed further away from the services. One person commented that there are many homeless persons living along the Lehigh Canal and in temporary shelters, and that a permanent homeless shelter is needed.
- The strong current housing market, as well as property speculation, makes it difficult to provide or maintain affordable housing, including housing for long-term residents and housing for persons with disabilities. Where a taller building is appropriate, the taller height could be tied to incentives to provide affordable housing.
- The college students and staff are an important part of the market for businesses and housing,

and small businesses should be encouraged to make more of an effort to market towards them. However, the students should be integrated into the neighborhood, and “not overtake” the area.

- The areas occupied by college students has been extended further and further eastward. The South Side also is apparently attracting students from other colleges, such as DeSales, who seek a college-town environment.
- Mixed income neighborhoods with a mix of students and long-term residents are desirable, but students are overtaking some blocks. The City recently enacted a zoning amendment that varies the numbers of college students who can live together in various parts of the City. The goal is to encourage most college student housing to be concentrated in blocks where it is already common, particularly in areas within a convenient walking distance of a university.
- College students should be encouraged to explore additional blocks for local businesses and activities. Some blocks of 4th Street (such as between New and Fillmore Sts.) are in need of brighter street lights for safety and security. Some of the north-south streets also do not have enough security lighting, which discourages foot traffic. The Greenway needs additional lighting and new trees.
- An emphasis needs to be placed upon encouraging a safe and interesting pedestrian experience, with greenery and a mix of employment, shopping, residential and entertainment uses. By improving the pedestrian experience, more people will be willing to walk further to reach sites that have excess parking. Offering a trolley-type bus would make it easier for persons to reach the existing underused parking areas. It is important to avoid interruptions to an interesting walking experience, such as parking lots in front of buildings.
- The City could consider offering reduced parking requirements as an incentive if a historic building is rehabilitated or if affordable housing is provided. Reduced parking requirements could also make sense within walking distance of Lehigh University, or if the developer commits to provide affordable housing. It can be very hard for a developer to prove a legal hardship before the Zoning Hearing Board to get a parking variance, so an incentive system should be attractive.
- There is a need for additional flexibility in parking requirements. Excessive parking requirements consume too much of a lot and result in more suburban style development. Particularly where a project would be within walking distance of a parking deck, reduced parking should be considered. However, one resident said that a development project resulted in parking problems for neighbors along a narrow street.
- It is particularly important to make sure there are first floor businesses as part of any parking deck. Parking decks should be placed in locations where they are not a prominent part of the streetscape, such as being behind a set of apartments.
- If the City is too restrictive on the types of first floor street frontage uses that are allowed, it could result in lower quality stores occupying prominent spaces. A number of first floor commercial spaces are vacant, including in new buildings. Also, some office uses may generate pedestrian traffic, such as an eye doctor. Some offices want a first floor presence, and many offices do not want to be in an upper story in a building without an elevator. A first floor office can be designed to have an interesting streetscape, with display windows and flowers. Office

workers provide an important market for nearby stores and restaurants. A full mix of uses is critical to have eyes on the street and evening activity.

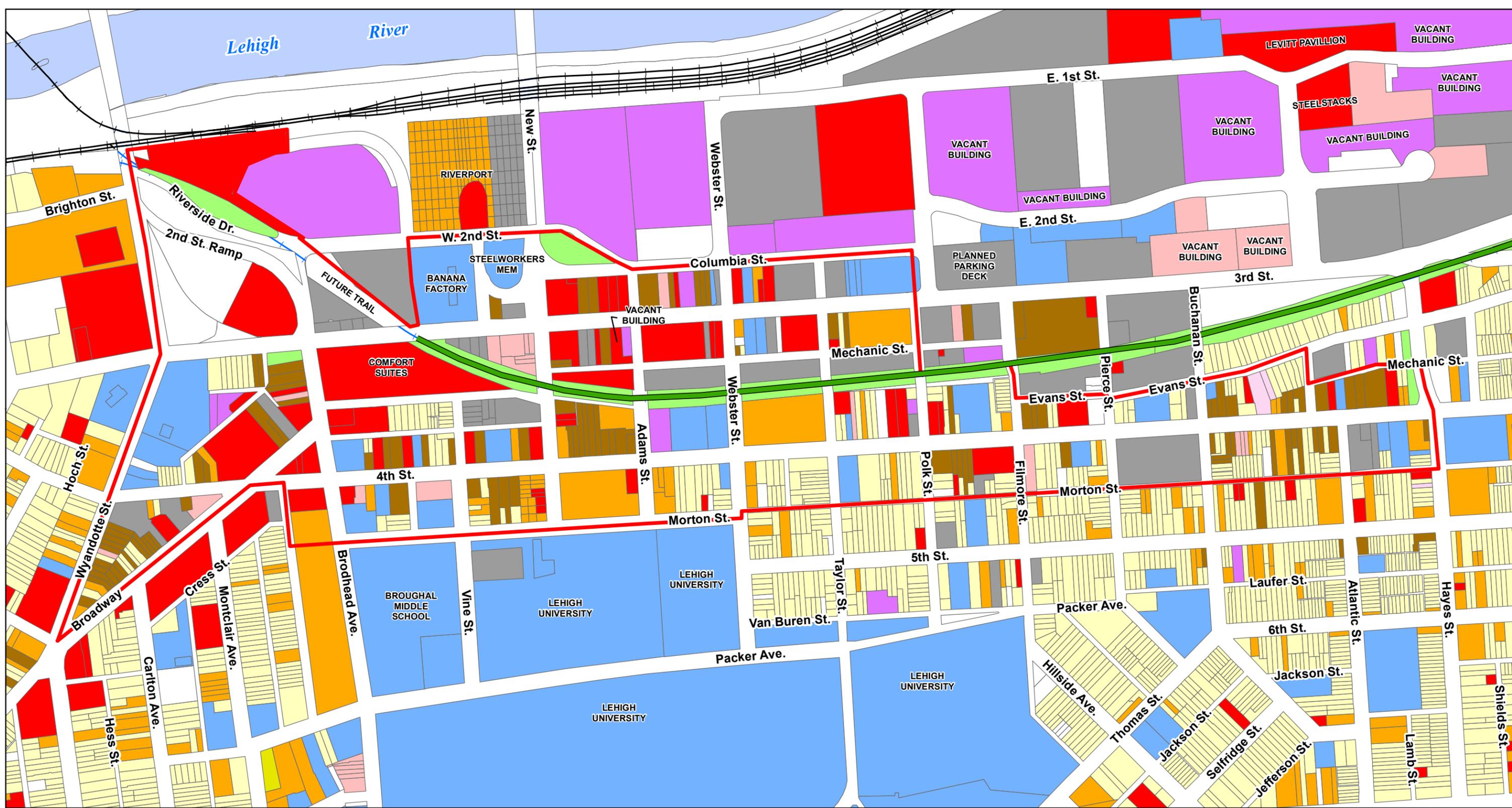
- There is a need for additional businesses to serve the everyday needs of local residents, including clothing stores and dry cleaners. There is a need for additional youth recreation, particularly since the Boys and Girls Club closed.
- It is important to maintain vistas of the mountain, the church steeples and the historic Lehigh University buildings. A strong sense of place and sense of identity needs to be emphasized, while also maintaining a connection with the history of the area. The area needs to build upon the heritage and what makes the South Side unique, and amplify it, and help young people to appreciate it.
- The re-purposing existing smaller buildings helps to serve smaller independent businesses that serve local needs. These types of independent businesses may not be able to afford space in a new building. Some businesses that moved into new buildings could not survive because of the high rents.
- Interesting shops and restaurants are needed, as opposed to franchised chain businesses that are common in many other areas. Ethnically diverse businesses are important to attract visitors and customers, and to make South Side distinctive from suburban businesses. Arts and cultural activities are a critical part of the mix. One phrase was “Southside Pride.” Another popular phrase was “Keep Southside Funky.”
- The City should instead be marketing towards certain national brands of restaurants and stores that will help to bring more students into the commercial areas.
- Because of construction code requirements, it is often more cost-efficient and quicker to build 5 or 6 story buildings than taller buildings. A large amount of new construction across Pennsylvania involves a masonry first floor podium with 4 or 5 stories of wood-frame construction above it. Taller buildings typically are not allowed to be wood-frame construction. Once a developer chooses to build 7 or more stories, they probably will propose a taller height (such as 8 stories) to make up for the more expensive construction code requirements.
- The current CB zoning district allows buildings of up to 150 feet tall, which many persons felt would be excessively tall and out of place. Some persons did not want to see taller buildings in the Historic District than the 6 story Gateway at Greenway Park building (at 3rd and New Sts). One person felt that taller buildings should be concentrated closer to the core of the Lehigh University campus.
- The Polk Street Parking Deck is seriously needed, and should not be further delayed. It is proposed to include 593 spaces. There are large privately-owned surface lots north of the Museum of Industrial History that are used for hundreds of cars, but at any time those sites could be developed with buildings or closed to the public. That parking is needed to serve new developments, the Charter School for the Arts and the Northampton Community College. Smaller neighborhood parking lots are valuable to address shortages.
- The former Boys and Girls Club and the adjacent former Holy Family School are available for new uses. The Boys and Girls Club is not a historically significant building, but the school is

significant. There was a proposal for a 14 story mostly residential building on the east side of New St. north of the Greenway, but the height was recently proposed to be reduced. The former Elek plumbing building is likely to be proposed as apartments. There is a vacant church and abutting properties west of 4th and New Streets. The site has been discussed for apartments, retail and possibly a small hotel. A past plan proposed to retain the facade of the church. A plan was approved to replace two existing vacant buildings on the north side of W. 4th St. west of Vine with a 9 story apartment building with a restaurant on the first floor. The Polk Street Parking Deck is also proposed to a wing of apartments and first floor commercial uses.

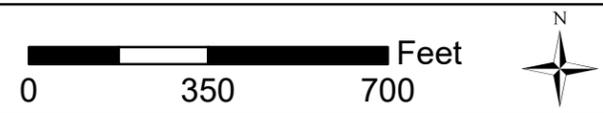
- There has been discussion about possibly relocating the existing inter-city bus terminal onto New St. One opinion was expressed that it would interfere with new development along New St. and cause the loss of on-street spaces.
- It would be desirable to redevelop the strip mall on 3rd St. that includes the Rite-Aid, to create a more urban development. However, that would require a taller height to be feasible.
- Questions have also been raised about whether the Parking Authority's surface lots along the Greenway should be developed. If so, a new parking deck would be needed to replace the lost spaces. In general, it is desirable to have surface lots in the back of commercial buildings and within the interior of blocks, where they do not interfere with pedestrian activity along the sidewalks.
- The redevelopment of the former Bethlehem Steel properties are critical to strengthen the adjacent commercial areas. The former Bethlehem Steel properties are not within the Historic District. The City used a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program for many years on former Bethlehem Steel lands. The program redirected real estate tax revenue from the casino to make public improvements on adjacent lands. That TIF program is expiring. One person suggested that a new TIF district be established to promote the rehabilitation of the most important buildings.
- The former Bethlehem Steel lands had been left out of the City's LERTA real estate tax abatement, which phases in real estate tax increases over 10 years for new and rehabilitated buildings and other improvements. Most of the rest of the South Side is covered by LERTA. A request was made to extend LERTA to the former Bethlehem Steel properties that still need investment, including the tall long-vacant General Office Building, which is near the Historic District, and the vacant Number 2 Machine Shop building, which is over 1,000 feet long but is not in good condition.
- Currently, all types of new investment are treated the same within the LERTA tax abatement zone. One option would be to make the LERTA incentives more generous if they are used for a historic building or affordable housing. Public subsidies or other strong incentives are necessary to create affordable housing, because of high land and construction costs.
- There are many important historic buildings located outside of the Historic District. A few individual buildings are protected under a zoning ordinance provision, but most do not have any legal protection against demolition.
- There have been proposals in the past for a Business Improvement District (BID), but there was opposition from property-owners. A BID involves an annual assessment upon the real estate

value of business properties. The funding is then typically used for projects approved by a local board, such as for sidewalk cleaning, marketing, special events and additional security.

- Some blocks need wider sidewalks to have room for outdoor dining. This may require the loss of some on-street parking spaces. Better pedestrian and bicycle connections are needed between the North Side and South Side business districts. There has been discussion about a bicycle lane along North and South New St.
- The potential permanent closure of Packer Av. could redirect more traffic to 4th St. and make it harder for pedestrian crossings. Some additional extensions of curbs at intersections would be desirable to make it easier to cross major streets. Many persons felt that traffic congestion is a serious problem in the Southside.
- A comment was made by a Historic Commission member that there needs to be more enforcement of the approval conditions. Also, too many people are seeking approvals after the work has been done.
- Proper code enforcement is needed to make sure that historic buildings are properly maintained, to prevent a property-owner from later claiming that it too expensive to rehabilitate a deteriorated building. This is known as “Demolition by Neglect.”
- Reflective or mirrored glass should not be allowed on the first floor. A minimum light transparency standard could be added. A person commented that a minimum percentage of the first floor along major street frontages should be required to be glass.
- Some of the street trees need to be trimmed to allow better visibility of business signs.
- New plastic internally lit box signs should not be permitted, or should be strongly discouraged. Also internally lit plastic-type awning signs should not be allowed.
- There was a suggestion to have pedestals on which a set of public sculptures could be displayed for a period of time and then replaced with changing exhibits. The owners would loan them for display in return for the exposure for the public. Prizes could be offered, with public voting. However, some program would be desirable to offer insurance for the persons loaning the sculpture.
- Additional directional signage was needed to direct visitors to the South Side and to major destinations.



Source: ESRI and PASDA.



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 81 Highland Ave. Suite 120 Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18017 610-865-0701
 URDC

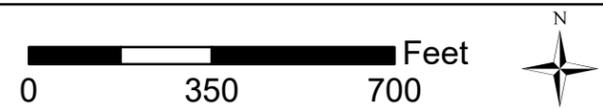
Undeveloped	Office	Industrial
Single Family Residential	Commercial	South Bethlehem Greenway Trail
Apartments/Condominiums	Institutional/Public/Semi-Public	Historic Conservation District
Townhouse	Parking	
Residential/Commercial	Recreation Facilities	

South Bethlehem Planning Study

EXISTING LAND USE
September 16, 2020



Source:
ESRI and PASDA.

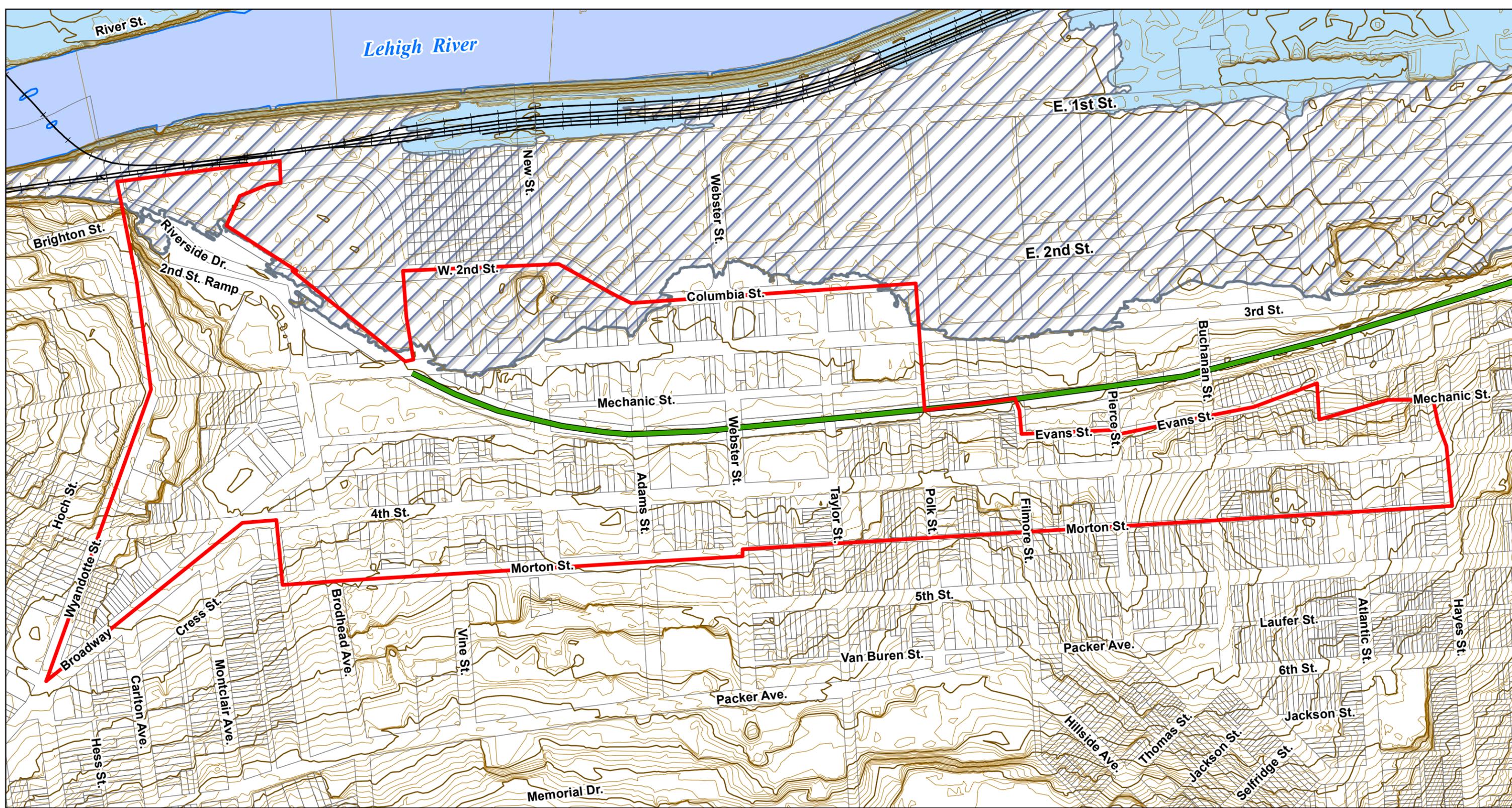


-  South Bethlehem Greenway Trail
-  Historic Conservation District
-  Structures

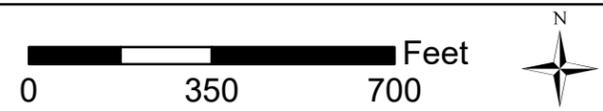
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South Bethlehem Planning Study

Structures - 2015



Source: ESRI and PASDA.



-  10' Contours
-  2' Contours
-  Lehigh River
-  Floodway
-  0.2 PCT Annual Chance Annual Flood Hazard

-  South Bethlehem Greenway Trail
-  Historic Conservation District

South Bethlehem Planning Study

NATURAL FEATURES

Best Practices in Other Cities Regarding Historic Preservation and Related Development Issues

When reviewing policies and ordinances in cities similar to Bethlehem, a common pattern emerged. Many had historic district ordinances in existence for many years that regulated in depth all demolition and exterior alterations, and the exterior design of new buildings and additions in designated districts. These districts were concentrated in areas that had many landmark historic buildings and that had often been at least partly gentrified over past decades.

Traditional Historic District Ordinances

In Pennsylvania, traditional types of Historic District Ordinances are regulated under the Pennsylvania Historic District Act. That Act requires that the Historic District first be certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), before the architecture can be regulated. That was the process used for the South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District. Using the Historic District Act makes sense if a community wishes to emphasize regulation of alterations and new construction, as opposed to mainly regulating demolition.

Many other traditional historic district ordinances in Pennsylvania follow the same process used in South Bethlehem. A Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) reviews applications and then makes recommendations to the Governing Body. In South Bethlehem, the Historic Conservation Commission serves as the HARB. The Governing Body then has the final decision on whether an application is approved or denied. The approval is known as a “Certificate of Appropriateness.” In most cases, a HARB is able to work out compromises with applicants so that there are very few recommendations for denials.

Historic Conservation Districts

To supplement the traditional historic districts, it is common in other areas of cities to apply a historic conservation district (which is sometimes called a historic overlay district). This method involves fewer restrictions than the traditional historic districts. The conservation districts are often used in areas where there is an important neighborhood urban fabric that the community wishes to protect, but where there may not be as much public support for strict regulations on alterations. The conservation district method has often been used in areas with mixed incomes, where it may have been financially difficult to restore historic buildings to their original condition using original types of materials.

In Pennsylvania, provisions that primarily control demolition of older buildings are usually adopted as part of the Zoning Ordinance, under authority granted by a 1991 amendment to the PA. Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). MPC Section 603(g)(2) states that municipal “zoning ordinances shall provide for protection of natural and historic features and resources.” That State Law requires municipalities to use zoning ordinances to preserve historic buildings, but does not specifically provide authority to regulate the design of new construction. Provisions enacted under the MPC do not need pre-approval by the PHMC, because the MPC provides the governing body (such as City Council) with the authority to determine which buildings are worthy of protection.

In Pennsylvania, the final approval for a zoning regulation must involve the Zoning Officer, the Governing Body or the Zoning Hearing Board, while any other board can only be advisory.

The goal of a conservation district is often to concentrate upon regulating the most important features.

Most ordinances require city approval of a partial or complete demolition of principal buildings.

Many of the conservation ordinances mandate a front yard setback that is similar to existing adjacent buildings. Many of the ordinances regulate the removal or enclosure of a front porch. Some ordinances regulate removal of architectural details (such as cornices). These conservation ordinances were often specifically written to avoid regulating routine window and door replacements, although some ordinances regulate changes to the sizes of window and door openings, and prevent enclosure of original windows.

Many conservation districts that stress demolition in Pennsylvania only regulate buildings that were built before 1940 or 1945.

Some communities (such as in commercial areas in Providence) only regulate the appearance of buildings that are determined to be “contributing” to the historic district. The intent is that a modern building or a building that has already been completely altered does not need to be regulated in terms of historic appearance and preservation. However, it is still desirable to have a process to at least review major changes to newer buildings because they have major impacts upon the urban fabric along the streetscape.

Traditional Neighborhood Development Provisions

A third tool in Pennsylvania involves the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) provisions in the MPC. Those provisions provide a municipality with the authority to require that new development in designated areas be built in patterns that reflect older development. This often involves requiring buildings to be placed close to the street, with most parking to the rear or side of the building. These provisions often require use of a rear or side alley or side street for vehicle access where it is available or can be feasibly extended. The goal is to maintain a front sidewalk that is safe for pedestrians with minimal driveway crossings. The intent is also to maintain an urban streetscape along the fronts of buildings, that is not consumed by driveways and garage doors. The TND provisions can either be used for “infill” development within an existing older area, or for brand new development that attempts to recreate the best features of an older neighborhood. These TND provisions can be incorporated into a regular zoning district or can be part of an overlay district that establishes additional or optional provisions in a certain geographic area.

Types of Provisions in Historic Area Regulations

A set of design standards or guidelines have been developed for many historic areas throughout the U.S., including in Bethlehem. The goal is to provide illustrated advice to governing bodies, review boards and building owners on the most appropriate ways to adapt older buildings for modern needs. The design guidelines also typically address building additions and new construction. It is important to distinguish design standards that are regulatory and are placed in ordinances, vs. design guidelines that are advisory.

A number of the ordinances also provide incentives for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Many communities allow additional uses to be approved in their zoning ordinance in a historic building, such as allowing an office or bed and breakfast inn in a district that normally does not allow the use. Many communities have zoning provisions allowing adaptive reuse of former churches, schools and convents into apartments, and allow older manufacturing buildings to be converted into apartments if the site is next to a residential area.

There has been a growing awareness in many cities that strict parking requirements have discouraged the development of affordable housing and can make it more difficult to rehabilitate older buildings for new uses. Particularly in areas where there is a good access to public transit or where many persons are likely to walk or use bus service or ride-sharing services, there has been a movement to reduce off-street parking requirements.

Philadelphia recently enacted reductions in minimum parking requirements when a historic building is reused. Lancaster City has provisions allowing the Zoning Hearing Board to modify parking requirements (as a special exception) for uses in existing buildings, without needing to prove a hardship. The applicant needs to meet standards to receive the parking modification, such as providing that the use will involve high levels of pedestrian traffic and use of public transit, or that there is excess on-street parking available nearby.

Some communities allow new on-street spaces that are created as part of a development to be counted towards off-street parking requirements. That is particularly desirable because on-street parking with time limits can provide convenient spaces to support street level retail and services.

Other communities allow the Zoning Hearing Board to modify dimensional requirements, such as percentages of the lot covered by impervious surfaces or apartment densities, if the applicant proves it is necessary to make reasonable use of a historic building.

Many of these provisions are designed to allow modifications as a special exception use by the Zoning Hearing Board, without requiring proof of a “hardship” under State law to justify obtaining a zoning variance. It is much harder for an opponent to successfully challenge a special exception approval in court than a zoning variance approval, because the special exception has a lower bar that must be met legally. That is particularly important because sometimes a business will use a court challenge to keep a new competitor out of an area.

A few communities limit certain uses to only be allowed within existing buildings. The intent is to provide a strong incentive to reuse existing buildings. For instance, offices may be allowed within older existing buildings within a certain set of blocks, but new construction of offices are not allowed that may spur demolition. However, in many situations, new construction may be more attractive than older existing buildings, and it may be more appropriate to make sure the new buildings are designed to fit within the blocks.

To streamline the process, some municipalities have pre-approved certain common types of historic district applications. This allows a permit to be issued by the municipal staff without delay if the application meets the conditions in the preapproval. For example, certain designs may be pre-approved for picket fences, metal fences, wood fences, sheds, decks, garage doors, certain storefront designs and window replacements. Note - fences in the rear yards and small sheds are not regulated by the Historic District Ordinance. These staff approvals can greatly streamline the process, and allow a Historic Commission to concentrate their attention on the more important matters. This process is popular with property-owners because they can start a minor project without having to wait for approval at a meeting.

A number of historic regulations specifically list items that are not regulated, such as colors, window replacements that do not change the size of the window, and roof material replacements that do not change the shape of the roof. These provisions are designed to streamline the process for routine improvements to buildings, and avoid unnecessary costs and delays. These types of exclusions also can be very helpful to gain public support for the regulations and to avoid public opposition once the regulations are being enforced. Most property-owners have no reason to oppose demolition controls, but they do worry about additional costs if they want to replace windows.

Also, some routine changes never come to the attention of municipal staffs because they do not need building permits, which makes them hard to regulate. For example, when a person changes paint colors they do not need permits.

Many historic ordinances only regulate features that can be seen from a street or the sidewalk along the street. Some ordinances also regulate features than can be seen from an alley. However, that can be problematic, because the intent is that modern additions such as decks and sunrooms should be placed on the rear of a building in order to maintain the historic appearance along the street.

The following sections describe a variety of historic preservation practices in various cities.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia regulates the demolition and alteration of “contributing buildings” within Historic Districts, as well as scattered individual buildings that have been designated as historically significant. In Philadelphia’s historic districts, the Historical Commission cannot regulate new construction or changes to non-contributing buildings. A City Task Force Report recommended that the Commission be provided with some authority regarding new construction and substantial changes to non-contributing buildings because they provide important context for the contributing buildings. The intent is for the Historic Commission to become involved in massing, fenestration, setbacks and materials of new construction, but without regulating traditional zoning matters such as density. The Task Force identified Pittsburgh as a city with a much better set of design standards for historic buildings than are in place in Philadelphia.

The Historical Commission staff is given authority to approve many types of routine applications, which make up 90 percent of all applications. This approach allows much quicker approvals for minor applications than if the applicant needs to wait for a commission meeting. Their most controversial applications have involved demolitions, including proposed demolitions of storefronts or homes to allow much taller buildings, or proposed demolitions of churches.

Philadelphia also has a separate set of six Conservation Districts, but they are limited in scope. Their Conservation Districts mainly focus on new construction and parking, subject to simple guidelines. Only one district has guidelines that address building alterations, and none of the conservation districts regulate demolition.

The Task Force Report recommended adopting a less restrictive form of Historic District for selected areas that would allow use of alternative materials. The current application requirements for a demolition would be reduced in these areas. It is extremely difficult and costly for applicants to prove a financial hardship under the current Historic District provisions.

The Task Force Report then recommended establishing a type of Conservation District that has more

teeth. In these areas, the City would have the authority to deny or delay demolition, after receiving public input. The Report noted that Chicago has a program to allow a 90 day delay of demolition for many older buildings that are not otherwise legally protected against demolition. The goal is to allow time to convince the building owner of alternatives or to connect the owner with a new buyer who is willing to rehabilitate the building.

Philadelphia recently adopted zoning amendments that are intended to spur historic preservation. One amendment eliminates minimum parking requirements for designated historic buildings when they are redeveloped for new uses. In many cases, the conversion of a building to a new use (such as apartments) would otherwise require additional parking, particularly if the new use is more intensive in parking demand than the old use. Parking requirements can add significant costs to redevelopment, and can limit the size of a development project. Philadelphia also reduces parking requirements by 50% when a developer puts an expansion on a historic building.

Another amendment makes it easier for historic “special-use” properties (such as churches, schools and theaters) to be approved by the Zoning Board for redevelopment for uses that otherwise would not be allowed, without needing a variance. In order to receive the use approval, the developer would need to commit to sensitively rehabilitate the building. One of the goals is reduce the chances that a desirable project will be delayed by an appeal of a variance. There was a great deal of public concern when a historic church was approved by the Zoning Board for a sensitive conversion into apartments, but a neighbor delayed the projects for years through appeals of the variance. During that time, the developer had not yet taken possession of the church, and the condition of the church seriously deteriorated. The developer has discussed abandoning the project.

Philadelphia currently offers building floor area bonuses if a project includes affordable housing, green building certifications, or a landscaped urban plaza. For example, if the zoning normally would have allowed 30,000 square feet of floor area, an increase to 40,000 square feet could be allowed. The Task Force Report recommended that zoning bonuses also be offered if a historic building is rehabilitated. For example, there could be a floor area bonus for a sensitive addition or a higher density could be allowed on the site.

Some other cities, such as Austin, allow the bonus density to be used on a second site. That process is also used in New York City, and is known as Transfer of Development Rights.

The City Task Force also recommended that the Zoning Code be revised so that a vacant lot can be redeveloped in a manner that is consistent with existing older buildings on the block, without needing a variance. Often, setbacks, lot size, parking and coverage requirements make it difficult to recreate older building styles such as rowhouses.

The City Task Force also recommended that the Zoning Code be revised to not allow excessive heights and densities in areas where there is a concentration of significant historic buildings. For example, on Jeweler’s Row on a narrow street in Center City Philadelphia, several significant three story buildings were demolished because the zoning allowed an apartment building of over 25 stories. The goal is to limit pressure to demolish those buildings that could result if the new construction could allow substantial additional floor area and many more dwelling units.

Chester County

A number of zoning ordinances in place in Chester County divide historic buildings into Classes. Class 1 buildings receive the highest level of protection against demolition and have the more restrictive provisions for alterations. Class 2 buildings have a more permissive set of standards for demolition and alterations. Class 3 buildings are less significant, and may mainly involve a review process. This tiered approach is also used in a number of cities, such as San Francisco. The intent is to prioritize efforts on the most important buildings, while encouraging flexibility in alterations to less significant buildings.

Lancaster

Lancaster started out with a set of Historic Districts regulated using a HARB. Lancaster then established a design review program for business development in the older parts of the City, but it was mainly a persuasive effort.

Then, Lancaster established a Heritage Conservation District for all of the older areas of the City that were not regulated by the regular Historic Districts. The Conservation District is less restrictive than the regular Historic Districts, but was still established under the PA. Historic District Act. It requires approval of any demolition in the district. (Note - Other municipalities in Lancaster County, such as Ephrata, have typically chosen to use a date of 1940 or 1945 for buildings that need approval of demolition.) The Lancaster Conservation District also requires approval of removal or alteration of “character defining elements” of buildings, including porches, cornices and dormers. It does not regulate routine window replacements, fences of four feet or less in height, flags, signs or gutters. The Conservation District also regulates the exterior design of a new building, building addition or a new porch.

The Lancaster Heritage Conservation District was established during the same time period as the South Bethlehem Conservation District, and influenced the approach in Bethlehem.

Stroudsburg

Stroudsburg has a historic district ordinance that covers much of the Downtown and adjacent older residential neighborhoods. The ordinance includes a series of exclusions of matters that are not regulated, in order to streamline the process, such as colors and many types of air conditioners. Painting is not regulated, except for the painting of brick that was not previously painted. Paint colors are considered to be a temporary matter that does not affect long-term preservation, and most people would not think of getting a permit before painting their house. An in-kind replacement of a feature that has the same appearance as viewed from the street or sidewalk is allowed to be approved by the staff, without having to use original materials.

The downtown zoning normally has a 4 story maximum. A fifth story is allowed if the top story is setback from the front of the building so it will not be visible from the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. This provision is intended to result in a step back in height similar to what was established in Manhattan in the 1930s. These types of provisions are partly designed to allow more sunlight to reach the sidewalks. This height provision was challenged by a Stroudsburg developer before the Zoning Hearing Board and the ordinance was upheld. In Stroudsburg, apartments are only allowed in many areas if there is a street-frontage commercial use, but some people believe the ordinance is not restrictive enough on what constitutes a commercial use.

Coopersburg

Coopersburg recently adopted a new zoning ordinance with a map of significant historic buildings that was prepared by a historic preservation consultant. If a principal building shown on that map is proposed for partial or complete demolition, it needs approval of Borough Council as a conditional use. The applicant needs to provide that the demolition would meet at least one of the standards in the ordinance for demolition. Those standards include proving that the building cannot feasibly be used for any allowed use, or that the new building would have a substantial public benefit that would outweigh the loss of the building. Council approval is also needed for removal or enclosure of a front porch, enclosure of windows, or removal of architectural details.

A set of advisory design guidelines was also prepared to provide advice on the proper ways to preserve, rehabilitate and maintain historic buildings.

Charlottesville

Charlottesville has a traditional restrictive historic district ordinance that covers the downtown and adjacent office and residential areas.

There also are three areas covered by Conservation Overlay Districts that are less restrictive than the traditional historic district. The Conservation Districts require approval of demolition of contributing buildings or portions of buildings visible from a street, new buildings, and building additions. Additions to the rear of a building that are not visible from a street are not regulated. Window replacements are not regulated.

The City has also adopted various sets of Design Guidelines that cover historic areas, as well as major entrance corridors and areas proposed for redevelopment. These Design Guidelines address street trees, bike routes, parking design, signs, pedestrian routes, lighting and other features.

Richmond

Richmond has a mix of traditional historic districts and less restrictive neighborhood conservation overlay districts.

The zoning ordinance offers density and building size bonuses for affordable housing and for certain amenities, such as landscaped plazas at least 20 feet wide and 20 feet long, covered arcade walkways with a minimum width of 15 feet, and public art. For example, for every square foot of outdoor plaza area, 10 square feet of additional building floor area is allowed. For every square foot of improved roof area (such as for rooftop recreation areas or rooftop dining), an additional 2 square feet of building floor area is allowed. There also is a building floor area incentive for the construction of indoor parking that serves the occupants of the building.

For a parking structure, each parking level counts towards the maximum number of stories, except one additional parking level shall be allowed.

There are standards to require that new buildings be built close to the corner of two streets to “hold the corner.” Main entrances to buildings must face onto the primary street. A stepback in setback for upper stories is encouraged. Ground floors are encouraged to have architectural fenestration to provide visual interest. Where surface parking is allowed, it is required to be separated from the sidewalk by

landscaping. Any parking entrance must provide space for at least vehicle waiting to enter that is off of the right-of-way.

Along main commercial streets, the first 20 feet of depth of buildings along primary streets must be comprised of commercial uses, except that a residential lobby is allowed. (Note - Most other communities require a deeper area of commercial uses, such as 35 or 40 feet.) Sixty percent of the ground floor of non-residential uses that is between two and eight feet in height above the sidewalk must be transparent windows or doors (instead of reflective glass). Parking is not allowed between the main building on the lot and the sidewalk.

In certain historic areas, a three story maximum building height is established, which can be increased to four stories if there are existing nearby buildings of four or more stories. There is a minimum building height of two stories, except for porches and porticos.

Outdoor seating areas for restaurants or bars must be at least 100 feet from a residential district boundary. Music must be contained to the premises.

Alexandria

Alexandria has a set of traditional historic districts that covers most of the older parts of the City. The City has also adopted various sets of Design Guidelines that cover historic and non-historic areas of the City. For example, the Design Guidelines in some areas recommend variations in the front yard setbacks to allow for public art displays, courtyards, and wider areas of landscaping. In certain areas, the upper stories of taller buildings are encouraged to have a wider setback from the sidewalk in order to allow more sunlight to reach the sidewalk and the street. Larger buildings are encouraged to have variations in building heights with varying rooflines, to provide architectural variety.

Alexandria promotes the first 35 feet of depth of the street level of a building along main streets to be used for retail and restaurant uses. A 50 feet depth is considered preferable. Mostly transparent windows are required along the street level of main streets. Blank walls without windows, doors and architectural articulation are prohibited along most streets. Where a blank building wall already exists, the guidelines encourage use of public murals or public art displays.

In designated commercial blocks where there is an emphasis upon promoting pedestrian activity, certain uses are prohibited along the street level that otherwise would be allowed. These include funeral homes, primary and secondary schools, medical laboratories, rooming houses, check cashing businesses, payday loan businesses, pawnshops, vehicle title loan shops, and vehicle storage. Parking lots in these areas require a special approval process. Instead, the emphasis in these street frontage areas is upon retail stores, restaurants, personal service businesses, amusement businesses, arts and crafts studios. Offices and residential uses are directed to upper stories. (Note - Bethlehem has similar provisions along portions of the street frontage in the Central Business zoning district, but it only allows retail stores, restaurants and personal services, and there has been some discussion of allowing additional uses to provide a wider market for business spaces.)

Baltimore

Baltimore has Historical and Architectural Preservation Districts that regulate demolition and the exterior appearance of new construction, additions and alterations. Their districts regulate both contributing and non-contributing buildings. For minor projects that comply with the Design Guidelines, the staff can approve the application in an expedited manner. Minor projects involves repair of existing historic building features, including painting and small-scale alterations that do not change the overall appearance and integrity of a structure. Minor projects also includes changes that are not visible from a street.

For major projects, the application also must go to a Commission. Major work includes alterations that may change the character, appearance, and integrity of the structure, such as changes to roof shape or window patterns or removal of significant architectural features. Substantial building alterations, demolitions, additions, and new construction are all considered major work.

There are parking provisions designed to promote new uses of older buildings. A neighborhood commercial business is not required to provide parking if it includes less than 2,500 square feet in gross floor area. Structures over 50 years old are exempt from the parking requirements if they have not historically provided parking and they lack sufficient space on the lot to accommodate parking. The exception is that a conversion of a rowhouse into two units must provide additional parking.

Providence

Providence has eight historic districts. There are very extensive requirements that an applicant must meet to prove an economic hardship if a demolition is proposed.

Providence has a list of exclusions that are not regulated by their Historic District Commission, including awnings (except back-lit plastic or vinyl awnings are prohibited), storm windows, window air conditioners, alterations that are “reversible”, demolition of non-contributing structures, window and door replacements, in-kind replacement, storage sheds, dumpsters, flags, ramps for wheelchairs, light fixtures and hardware. Buildings that are not visible from the street or that are not contributing to the district are not regulated. Parking lots as the principal use of the lot are typically not allowed in the historic districts, and accessory parking lots need a special approval process. Any parking area must be separated from the sidewalk by a landscaped strip that includes low shrubs and shade trees.

In the historic districts, mechanical equipment on the ground or roof must be screened so that it is not visible to a pedestrian along a main street. There are standards for security gates on the fronts of buildings, including a prohibition on solid roll-down security gates.

Build-to lines are established, such as requiring that a building on a certain block have its front facade between 0 and 8 feet from the public sidewalk. Front loaded residential garage doors are prohibited in historic areas.

On primary retail streets, the first 20 feet of depth of the ground floor of buildings and parking structures cannot be used for residential units, except for lobbies and common spaces. There are minimum percentages of the first floor that must be comprised of transparent windows or doors.

In commercial areas, driveways are not allowed to enter onto certain pedestrian-oriented streets. Chain link fences and light poles taller than 18 feet are prohibited. A pedestrian entrance must be provided

along a primary street.

Parking structures need a 20 feet setback from the sidewalk and are required to be designed with facades so that the actual parked vehicles cannot be seen from the main sidewalks. Loading areas cannot be located along certain streets, unless the applicant can prove there are no alternatives. In one location, a midblock pedestrian connection is required as part of any new development.

Providence also has a Transit Oriented Development Overlay District where certain auto-related uses and outdoor storage yards are prohibited, in order to promote pedestrian activity and transit use. There are reduced parking requirements in urban areas where there is expected to be a high level of pedestrian activity and transit use. No parking is required for the first 5,000 square feet of business space, which exempts many business spaces as they change use over time.

There is a 20 feet minimum building height in the historic zoning district, and a 3 story minimum height in the downtown. A building height bonus is provided for building that incorporates accessory indoor or underground parking. A 10 feet additional setback is required for the top stories of a building, which in many cases is used for balconies for upper story apartments. A building height bonus is also offered based upon the percentage of the ground floor that will be occupied by certain active uses along street frontages, including restaurants, performance spaces, art galleries, retail stores or community event space. That bonus is offered because in some cases these uses provide less rental income per square foot than apartments or office space.

If a flat building roof is used, it must include a decorative cornice, parapet or similar feature.

Draft Historic District and Zoning Ordinance Revisions

The following is an initial draft of recommended revisions to the South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District Ordinance and the City's Zoning Ordinance to implement the recommendations of this Plan.

Historic Conservation District Draft Revisions

New Definitions

Alley, Minor - A public vehicle right-of-way that primarily provides secondary rear or side access to properties. For the purposes of this Ordinance, the following rights-of-way shall be defined as Minor Alleys: Shawnee Street, Rink Street, Brewer Street, Railroad Street, Mechanic Street east of Polk Street, and Mechanic Street east of Monroe Street.

Major Project - An application under this Ordinance that proposes one or more of the following:

1. A partial or complete demolition of a principal building, other than features that are only visible from a Minor Alley, and other than a building that has been classified as a Non-Contributing Structure.
2. The removal of a porch, cornice or architectural details, or the enclosure or removal of windows or doors.
3. The construction of a new principal building or addition, other than additions that are only visible from an Alley.

Minor Project - An application that is required to be approved under this Ordinance, but which does not meet the definition of a Major Project. Examples include the installation of signs, addition of a deck or porch in the rear yard, construction of a wheelchair ramp, demolition of an accessory building, or replacement of window or door materials that do not involve an enclosure of the window or door opening or a change to the sizes of a window or door opening.”

Submission Requirements

Add the following to Section 1714.09.b.(2) regarding submission requirements: “(a) In addition, an application for a Major Project shall also include an accurate photo-illustration showing the proposed resulting design from at least two vantage points along a public street, and that shows context with the adjacent buildings. A 3-dimensional video showing multiple vantage points is encouraged to be provided.”

Additional Requirements

A new Section 1714.09.c. is added as follows:

- “c. Additional Requirements for New Principal Building Construction or Additions.
- (1) The building shall include at least one pedestrian door and windows along the front of the building, and windows along other sides of the building that face onto a street.

- (2) Windows shall be separated from each other by solid building material, as opposed to being a continuous horizontal band of windows.
- (3) Mirrored or reflective glass or glass that is so darkly tinted that it is not transparent shall not be allowed for exterior doors and windows along the street level. Low E glass may be used, provided it is transparent along the street level.
- (4) Any off-street truck loading dock shall be designed to minimize its visibility from a public street along the front of the building, to the maximum extent feasible.
- (5) If a new building or addition will result in a building with a length of greater than 100 feet along the front of the building along a public street, the building shall be designed to have the appearance of two or more buildings.”

Concept Review

Add the following to Section 1714.11.a:

- “(1) For a Major Project, the applicant is strongly encouraged to contact the Bureau of Planning and Zoning for an informal meeting to discuss the project at a conceptual level, before detailed plans are prepared.”

Improvements that are Exempt from the Historic Ordinance

Section 1714.09.b.(1) of the Historic District Ordinance exempts certain improvements from needing approval, including rear storage sheds, dog houses, light fixtures and mailboxes. Add the following:

- “(c) If an alteration to an existing building or addition onto an existing building is not visible from a Public Street, a sidewalk along a Public Street, or an Alley (not including a Minor Alley), then the alteration or addition is not required to be approved under this Ordinance. As a result, if an alteration or addition is only visible from a Minor Alley, it is not required to be approved under this Ordinance. Vegetation by itself shall not be considered to have made an alteration or addition to not be visible from a street, sidewalk or alley.
- (d) To comply with Federal court decisions, the content of signs shall not be regulated under this Ordinance. However, the shapes, sizes, materials and locations of signs are subject to approval under this Ordinance. A simple change of the content of a sign may occur without needing approval under this Ordinance, provided that no other aspects of the sign that are regulated by this Ordinance are changed.
- (e) The colors and painting of previously painted surfaces is not regulated by this Ordinance.
- (f) The repointing of brick or stone is not regulated by this Ordinance. Applicants should carefully avoid a mortar mix that is stronger than the brick.
- (g) The installation, repair or replacement of ground level sidewalks and walkways are not regulated by this Ordinance.
- (h) The construction or placement of a swimming pool, hot tub, children’s play set, unroofed patio or unroofed deck in a rear yard behind a building is not regulated by this Ordinance.
- (i) Gas or other utility meters are not regulated by this Ordinance, provided that such meters should not be placed along the front facade of a building when there is a feasible alternative.
- (j) Satellite dishes with a maximum diameter of 3 feet are not regulated by this Ordinance, provided that any satellite dish(es) and accompanying wiring shall be removed after they are no longer in use, and provided that any installation shall not involve drilling into brick.”

Staff Approvals of Routine and Minor Changes

Add the following to Section 1719.09.b(1):

- “(d) The City Codes Administrator or his/her designee shall have the authority to approve specific types of applications, without needing a recommendation by the HCC or issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by City Council under this Ordinance, if one or more of the following requirements are met:
- (1) The application must meet a set of pre-approved designs, improvements and/or materials that have been previously reviewed by the HCC and previously granted a Certificate of Appropriateness by City Council. For example, City Council may approve in advance a certain type of fence, certain designs of signs, a certain type of window replacement, or a certain type of roof material replacement.
 - (2) The application only involves a “like for like” replacement in which existing materials are replaced with materials of the same dimensions, materials, pattern and appearance. Substitute materials may be approved under this section if the new materials would have the same appearance as viewed from a public sidewalk. Adjustments may be approved by the City staff if necessary to meet Uniform Construction Code requirements, such as regarding the spacing and height of replacement porch balusters, or the construction of a replacement fire escape. The City Staff may also approve adjustments to a “like for like” replacement if the replacement materials would have a more historically original appearance than the replacement materials.
 - (3) The application only involves the removal of features that clearly were installed after 1945, such as a modern awning or a modern sign.
 - (4) The application only involves a roofing repair that will have the same appearance or a more original appearance as viewed from a public sidewalk, or involves a necessary temporary emergency repair that will not destroy original features. Any original metal finials shall be reinstalled or replaced with finials with a closely similar appearance. Replacement shingles may be changed to a gray color, and a gray color is encouraged.
 - (5) The application only involves replacement of window materials on a side or rear of a building that does not face onto a street. In such case, the type of window materials are not regulated. Any double-hung window shall be replaced with a new double-hung window. The size of the window opening shall not be changed, as opposed to blocking in part of the window opening. However, if the original window opening size had been reduced over time, the window opening may be increased to its original size. Any historic trim and sill shall not be changed or capped in aluminum, unless it was already capped with aluminum.
 - (6) The application only involves replacement of a door a side or rear of a building that does not face onto a street. In such case, the type of door materials are not regulated. A door that includes 25 percent or more of glass area shall not be replaced with a solid door. The size of the door opening shall not be changed, as opposed to blocking in part of the window opening, except as necessary to adjust the door jamb. However, if the original door opening size had been changed over time, the door opening may be restored to its original size. Any historic trim and sill shall not be changed or capped in aluminum, unless it was already capped with aluminum. An existing transom shall not be removed or covered up.

- (7) If a fence is proposed between the principal building and a public street, the application only involves a traditional-style wrought iron fence or wood picket fence that: a) primarily has vertical posts, b) has a maximum total height of 4 feet, and c) has a ratio of at least 50 percent of open to solid areas. Aluminum may be substituted for wrought iron if it will have the same appearance and style as a traditional-style wrought iron fence. This staff approval shall only be allowed if a historic fence or gate will not be removed as part of the application.
- (8) If a fence is proposed in a location that is not between the principal building and a public street, the application only involves: a) a type of fence described in subsection (7) above of up to 6 feet in height, or b) a wood board or wood lattice fence of up to 6 feet in height.”

Deadline for Approval

We talked about whether to have a longer time line for a major project vs. a minor project. The HCC is current given 60 days to make its recommendation to Council, but there is no deadline for Council action. The normal rule in Pennsylvania is a maximum of 90 days for a permit to be decided upon after a complete submission, unless the applicant grants a written extension. However, the State Historic District Act does not include a deadline. The following text is suggested in Section 1714.11(d): “The 60 day period for HCC review shall be extended to 90 days for a Major Project. City Council should issue a Certificate of Appropriateness or a denial within 60 days after receiving a written recommendation from the HCC. The time period for HCC review may be extended in writing by the applicant or the applicant’s representative.”

Draft Zoning Ordinance Revisions

Overlay District

In Section 1303.02 regarding the establishment of zoning districts, the following new districts are added:

- “CB1 Central Business District - Overlay 1
- CB2 Central Business District - Overlay 2”

Building Height

In Section 1306.01(b), the following new text is added to the column for maximum height in the rows for both the CB Central Business District and the CL Limited Commercial District: “Within the South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District, see additional height regulations in Section 1306.02(h).”

Add the following new provisions to Section 1306.02 “Additional Height Restrictions.”

- “(h) The following additional regulations shall apply within the South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District:
 1. Within the CB district, the maximum building heights shall apply as shown on the attached Historic Conservation District Height Map, which divides the CB district into

a CB1 Overlay District and CB2 Overlay District. Within CB1, a maximum height of 90 feet shall apply. Within CB2, a maximum height of 60 feet shall apply. Within CB1, any portion of the building that exceeds 80 feet in height shall be setback a minimum of 12 feet from the right-of-way of any of the following streets: New Street, 4th Street, 3rd Street or Wyandotte Street. Within CB2, any portion of the building that exceeds 50 feet in height shall be setback a minimum of 12 feet from the right-of-way of any of the following streets: New Street, 4th Street, 3rd Street or Wyandotte Street.

2. Within the CL district, any portion of the building that exceeds 50 feet in height shall be setback a minimum of 12 feet from the right-of-way of any of the following streets: New Street, 4th Street, 3rd Street or Wyandotte Street.
 3. This subsection 3. applies to a corner lot. For the sole purpose of determining whether a step-back in height is required along an adjacent street, the building height exceeding 80 feet or exceeding 50 feet may be measured along the right-of-way of New Street, 4th Street, 3rd Street or Wyandotte Street, instead of being measured along the front of the building.
 4. A safety barrier or parapet wall designed to provide safety to users of a step back area or rooftop use may exceed the maximum height by 4 feet. The step back area shall not be covered by a roof or awning.
 5. See Section 1318.20 for height exceptions. Mechanical equipment shall only be allowed to exceed the maximum height requirements of this Section (h) if the mechanical equipment is not visible from a sidewalk on an abutting public street. However, elevator shafts and stairwells exceeding the maximum height may be visible from a sidewalk if they are architecturally integrated into the building design.
- (i) An unenclosed rooftop area used only for recreation or dining purposes shall not be considered to be a floor for the purposes of regulating height. Such rooftop area may include unenclosed seasonal canopies or similar structures that are purely designed to provide shade during hot weather or protection from rain.
 - (j) For the purposes of measuring maximum height in feet, a parking structure shall be regulated in the same manner as a building. However, a parking structure shall not be regulated by the maximum number of stories. A building level or parking level that is mostly or entirely below ground level shall not be regulated by the maximum number of stories.”

Affordable Housing

In Section 1307.1, which provides density incentives for affordable “Workforce Housing,” add the following: “The density incentives of this Article 1307 may also be used within portions of the CL district that are also within the South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District.”

Signs

In Section 1320.07 regarding general sign regulations, add the following new subsection: “(t) A new internally-illuminated sign with a plastic sign face(s) shall not be allowed within a Historic District that is regulated by a City Historic District or Historic Conservation District ordinance. However, the existing sign face of an existing lawful internally-illuminated sign may be replaced, provided no new nonconformity is created.”

Parking

The following addition is made to Section 1319.02(b):

- “(8) The reduction in parking in this subsection (8) shall only apply if a primarily residential building has 10 percent or more of its dwelling units that meet the standards for “Workforce Housing,” as provided in Section 1307. In such case, the required parking for dwelling units shall be reduced in the CL district within the South Bethlehem Historic Conservation District to a minimum of one parking space for a one bedroom apartment unit or a studio/efficient apartment unit, and to 1.5 parking space for a two bedroom apartment unit. No reduction in parking shall apply for an apartment unit of 3 or more bedrooms. This reduction in parking shall not apply to “Student homes” for college students.”

Sketch-up Illustrations

As part of this project, a three-dimensional computer model was prepared of the South Bethlehem Historic District, using the Sketch-Up program.

The model is intended to be open-source, so it can be used by anyone who obtains a regular Sketch-Up program subscription. This means that applicants can obtain a copy from the City Bureau of Planning and Zoning to add their own proposed alternatives, in order to illustrate how new buildings will fit within surrounding areas. The model can also be used to show sun shadowing during various times of the day and year from buildings of different heights. The model was mainly designed to show height, mass and setback, but details could be added to various buildings.

The following are example still images pulled from the model, although the program can operate in the form of a video.

View from the Hill to Hill Bridge – Current, and with a new building on a current truck parking area on W. 3rd Street, east of the Perkins Restaurant



View from the Hill-to-Hill Bridge on W. 3rd Street looking east – current view,
and with a potential new building



View from the Banana Factory - Current view, and with a potential new building on W. Third Street

