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March 18, 2025

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

**Re: Zoning Map Amendment – 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Martin Court  
City of Bethlehem  
Lehigh and Northampton Counties**

Dear Mr. Miller:

The Lehigh Valley Planning Commission (LVPC) will consider the subject application at its Comprehensive Planning Committee and Full Commission meetings, pursuant to the requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC). Discussion on agenda items largely happens during the Committee meeting. The LVPC will issue a follow-up letter after the Commission meeting if Commission members have any additional comments. Meeting participation details are below:

- LVPC Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting (Virtual)
  - March 25, 2025, at 12:00 PM
  - <https://lvpc.org/meetings.html>
- LVPC Full Commission Meeting (In Person)
  - March 27, 2025, at 7:00 PM
  - 615 Waterfront Drive, Suite 201, Allentown, PA

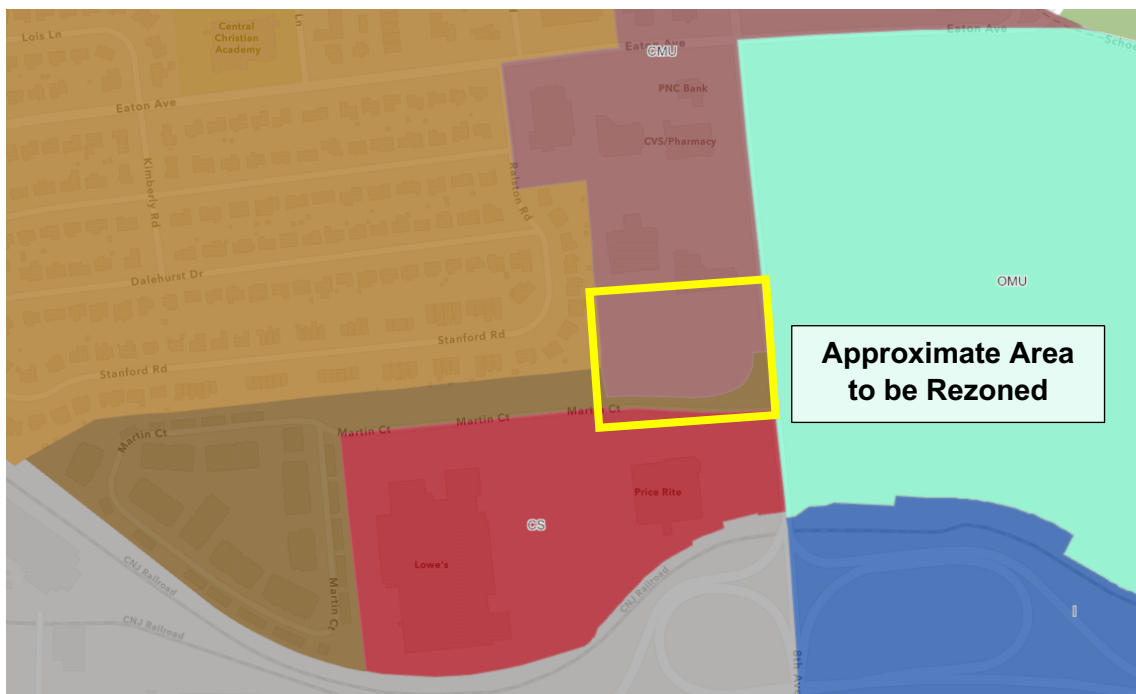
The application, submitted by a private petitioner, proposes to amend the City of Bethlehem Zoning Map by rezoning a four-acre portion of an 11-acre parcel from Mixed Use Commercial Zoning District (CMU) to Shopping Center Zoning District (CS). A small portion of the adjacent parcel is also proposed to be rezoned from High Density Residential Zoning District (RT) to CS District. The parcels are located at the northwest corner of Martin Court and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue (parcel number 642811698449 and 642811001173).



*Google Aerial Imagery*

## Background

The site proposed to be rezoned is currently undeveloped. Existing commercial and medical office developments are to the north and south of the site, and a residential neighborhood is to the west. The former Martin Tower site is to the east, where medical facilities are under construction and commercial and residential uses are anticipated in the future. The area to be rezoned CS is located adjacent to the existing CS Zoning District to the south across Martin Court.



*City of Bethlehem Zoning Map*

### **Site Suitability**

Rezoning the site to CS is a logical extension of the existing CS District. The shopping center to the south is accessed via Martin Court, and the project site is physically separated from existing development in the CMU District to the north due to the sloping topography, and retaining walls were constructed to facilitate the existing development. The CS District permits a wider range of commercial land uses that increase opportunities for development of the site. The site's location near access points to Route 22 also supports facilitating development opportunities on the site.

The proposal to rezone the subject properties aligns with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan* by creating new development opportunities in areas where additional development can be accommodated. The project serves to 'match development intensity with sustainable infrastructure capacity' (of *FutureLV* Policy 1.1) and increases social and economic access to daily needs for all people (of Policies 4.5, 4.6 and 5.2).

The LVPC strongly recommends requiring a subdivision of the primary property and a lot line adjustment with the adjacent parcel to avoid split zoning. Determining property lines should occur prior to approving a zoning district change. Ensuring that parcel boundaries conform to individual zoning districts is a best practice in efficient land use regulation and better supports the land development process, administering the City Zoning Ordinance in the future, and supports a clear and consistent property tax assessment process (of Policy 1.4).

Municipalities, when considering ordinance and map amendments, should reasonably attempt to be consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*, as required by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) [Article I§105, Article III§303, §304 & §306(a), Article VI§603(j)]. Please send a copy of any final amendments that are adopted per the requirements of the MPC, and feel free to reach out if there are any questions about this review.

Sincerely,



Jill Seitz

Chief Community and Regional Planner

cc: Bettina Bubba, Assistant City Clerk