

**2022 ANNUAL REPORT  
PLANNING AND ZONING BUREAU  
1-12-2023**

The following describes the activities of the Planning and Zoning Bureau in 2022.

**Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission held twelve (12) meetings to review:

- twelve (12) major land development plans
- ten (10) combined major land development and subdivisions plans
- one (1) sketch plans
- three (3) site plan reviews
- two (2) text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance
- one (1) curb and sidewalk deferral request
- one (1) blighted properties reviews
- one (1) street vacation review
- one (1) façade review
- one (1) resident complaint review
- Non-Utility Capital Improvement Program review
- LERTA Boundary review
- SALDO ordinance review

Residential Apartment Unit construction decreased by a little over 300% in 2022 (674 units in 2021 versus 194 units in 2022), however 2021 reviews included the Boyd Theatre redevelopment.

The most significant of the Land Development reviews include:

1. **1170 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Tower Place, Land Development** - The applicant proposes to subdivide Lots 1 and 2 of the Master Plan from the overall 52 acre Martin Tower site. Lot 1 includes a 60,828 sf medical office building and Lot 2 includes a 38,393 building. They share 496 parking spaces.
2. **1810 Spillman Drive, Cigar's International, Land Development** - The applicant proposes to construct a 3-story building that contains a walk-in humidior in the office space, ventilated offices and conference rooms, lounge areas, open air work space and outdoor seating on a 4.4 acre lot.
3. **2854 Linden Street Land Development** - The applicant proposes to construct a 3-story building consisting of 36 multi-family dwelling units and a 72 car parking lot on a 2.5 acre lot.
4. **128 E 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Land Development** - The applicant proposes to construct a 6-story mixed use building with retail on the first floor and 55 dwelling units on the upper floors on a 0.26 acre lot.
5. **2897 Easton Avenue Site Plan** - The applicant proposes to construct two (2) multi-family apartment buildings with a total of 54 units and associated parking on a 2.7 acre lot.
6. **218 - 226 W Union Boulevard Site Plan** - The applicant proposes the demolition of the existing buildings, located at 218-226 W. Union Blvd., and construction of a new 3 story apartment building with 13 units per floor for a total of 39 total units. A surface parking area is proposed on the ground

floor of the apartment building. The first floor of the building includes lobby and amenity spaces, with a portion of office/retail space directly abutting the Union Blvd. right-of-way.

7. **3677 Commerce Center Boulevard** - The applicant proposes to construct a 195,494 SF warehouse and industrial or manufacturing facility on an 11.61 acre lot (Majestic Bethlehem Center/Bethlehem Commerce Center, LLC, Lot #4C).
8. **2680 Commerce Center Boulevard** - The applicant proposes to construct a 136,000 SF manufacturing warehouse facility on a 7.50 acre lot (LVIP VII Lot #63).

### **Zoning Hearing Board**

The Zoning Hearing Board had another extremely busy year. The Board held 18 meetings in 2022 and heard 58 appeals. Significant Zoning Hearing Board appeals include:

1. **258 East Market Street**  
Appeal of Mary Ellen Williams, on behalf of Doctor & Sir, LLC, and 258 E Market Street, LLC, from an Enforcement Notice, dated July 15, 2021, for using the above referenced property, all or in part, to provide housing for transient occupants contrary to the provisions of 1304.01(b) of the Zoning Ordinance. This case was continued from September 2021 to March 2023, when the Applicant withdrew their appeal. The use as short-term lodging has been discontinued.
2. **326 and 328 Pierce Street, 507-527 Evans Street**  
Appeal of Patrick Cantelmi for a Use Variance to construct a Distribution Facility for the e-commerce sales of products customary and incidental to a hardware store, and which also requires Dimensional Variances to exceed the maximum building coverage, to exceed the maximum building height, to decrease the minimum rear yard setback and to decrease the minimum side yard setback, and a Variance to eliminate nine parking spaces within a shared parking lot. The appeal was granted with conditions, including the applicant participate in the implementation of the lighting study in front of the property and the building design to be consistent with the Exhibits.
3. **2854 Linden Street**  
Appeal of Dino and Joanna Cantelmi to construct a three-story structure containing 36 multi-family dwellings, which requires Dimensional Variances to reduce the lot area per dwelling and to exceed the maximum building length. A previous appeal was denied in 2021. The appeal with revised site plan was granted as submitted.
4. **2897 Easton Avenue**  
Appeal of John Tallarico for a Use Variance to construct 54 Multi Family Dwellings within two three-story structures, which also requires Dimensional Variances to decrease lot area per dwelling, to exceed maximum building height, to exceed the maximum building length and to encroach upon the minimum front yard setback. The appeal was granted with conditions, including the applicant shall provide two parking spaces for each proposed unit, the number of units shall not exceed 54, install buffer plantings and fencing where possible to screen the adjacent residences, address all recommendations of the Planning Commission and construct the apartment buildings substantially similar to the renderings submitted into evidence.
5. **130 West Goepf Street & 911 Orchard Street**  
Appeal of Robert Smith on behalf of RJ Holdings, Inc., to construct a three-story structure containing 18 Multi-Family Dwellings, which requires a Variance to permit parking in the front yard and Dimensional Variances to exceed the maximum area for parking within the front yard

and to decrease the minimum separation distance between dwellings and parking. The appeal was granted with conditions, including the building design be consistent with the Exhibits and the alternate layout shall be reviewed and approved by the City's Planning Commission.

6. **251 East Church Street**

Appeal of Valerie Peters for a Variance to operate a Bed and Breakfast Inn within a Two-Family Detached Dwelling, or in the alternative, a Special Exception to operate a Bed and Breakfast Inn at the subject property. The request for both the variance and special exception were denied.

7. **329-337 South New Street**

Appeal of Paul Mingrino on behalf of Amicus PA Owner III, LLC, for an Interpretation of a decision by the Zoning Officer that East 4<sup>th</sup> Street is not on the front street level, or in the alternative, a Use Variance to permit an Office use, professional or otherwise, on the front street level. The Applicant's interpretation was denied, thereby upholding the City's interpretation and the request for a use variance was also denied.

8. **424 Center Street**

Appeal of Michael Bianco for a Use Variance to permit a Live Work Unit for the custom fabrication of Christmas décor. The appeal was granted with the condition that the Live-Work Unit shall function as per the given testimony and exhibits.

9. **218-226 West Union Boulevard**

Appeal of Plamen Ayvazov on behalf of Monocacy General Contracting, LLC, to construct a four-story structure containing 39 Multi-Family Dwellings, which requires Dimensional Variances for lot area per dwelling, minimum front yard setback, minimum rear yard setback, a Variance to decrease the minimum width of the buffer yards and a Special Exception to reduce them minimum off-street parking requirement. The appeal was granted with the condition that the applicant shall adhere to the recommendations within the Planning Commission Letter and Mayor's Letter.

10. **413 East Third Street**

Appeal of John Callahan on behalf of Peron Development, LLC to construct a five-story structure with first floor commercial and residential on the upper floors, which requires Dimensional Variances to reduce the front, side and rear yard setbacks and to reduce the lot area per dwelling. The Zoning Hearing Board accepted a modification to the application to increase the number of dwellings from 35 to 36, thereby modifying the relief for lot area per dwelling. The appeal was granted as modified.

11. **1720 & 1780 East Fourth Street**

Appeal of Steven Lyncha on behalf of Sheetz, Inc., to construct a Sheetz convenience store, which requires a Special Exception for the use of a gas station with retail store. The appeal was granted as submitted.

12. **405 Selfridge Street, 406 & 412 Jackson Street**

Appeal of Eray Donmez, on behalf of Lady Mohawk, LLC, for an Interpretation that the submission of a plan in August of 2020 should be considered a land development plan, and the zoning code as of the date of submission should be applicable to the plan, or in the alternative, a Use Variance to permit Student Housing in the proposed townhomes. The Applicant's interpretation was upheld, thereby reversing the City's interpretation; the case is pending appeal in the Court of Common Pleas.

13. **508-512 Selfridge Street**

Appeal of Dallas Basha on behalf of 2529 E 4<sup>th</sup> St, LLC, to construct four Multi-Family Dwellings, which requires Variances to permit a new principal building to be on a lot which has a width of less than is required and to reduce the minimum off-street parking, and Dimensional Variances to reduce the minimum tract size, minimum lot width and minimum side yard setback. The appeal was denied.

14. **143 West Broad Street**

Appeal of Jeffrey Parks on behalf of Skyline West, LLC. to construct a multi-family structure which requires Dimensional Variances to reduce side yard setbacks, buffer yard and tract size and to increase impervious coverage and exceed maximum building length; a Variance to eliminate the required commercial space on first floor front and a Special Exception to reduce off street parking. The appeal was granted with the condition that the building design be consistent with the Exhibits.

**Historic Review Boards**

There were 38 appeals before the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) and 35 appeals before the Historic Conservation Commission – South Bethlehem and Mount Airy (HCC) in 2022.

This year an 8-hour training session (CAMP) was coordinated with the historic review boards from both Allentown and Bethlehem. The training was led virtually by training experts from throughout the country. This is the second year that the City was able to provide such training for both of our review boards and other regional boards.

**Special Projects**

**South Bethlehem Greenway** – The construction of a connection between the Greenway and the existing ballfields at the north end of Saucon Park was completed this year. This project is supported by a substantial grant from DCNR. This is the last phase of construction proposed on the Greenway for the portion of the trail that the City already owns.

**SouthSide’s Tomorrow** – The Planning Bureau continues to work with the Community Action Development (CADB) to provide staff support for the SouthSide’s Tomorrow plan. Specifically, the Bureau works most directly with the Public & Green Spaces subcommittee. The committee continues to concentrate on activities and improvements in the Greenway, community gardens and improved sidewalks and street lighting.

**Wayfinding/Signage Project** –The Phase 2 of the wayfinding signs was bid and a contractor was selected in 2022. Phase 2 includes all of the remaining pedestrian-style wayfinding signs for the two downtown areas. These signs were manufactured in 2022 and will be installed in early 2023. Review by PennDOT is ongoing for the installation of the vehicle-style wayfinding signs.

**Monocacy Way** – Construction was finalized for the northern end of the Monocacy Way project. This section extends from the Burnside Plantation northward to Illick’s Mill Road and the Monocacy Park complex. The project was funded through a Northampton County Open Space grant and a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant. The City has also received funding from DCNR for the upgrade of the trail south of Schoenersville Road to connect to the D & L trail. Design of the trail will begin in 2023.

**Grant Submissions** – The Bureau has been actively pursuing additional grant funding to move various projects forward. In addition to the grant funding for the Broad Street Active Transportation Plan noted below, the Bureau applied for and was awarded funding related to park and recreation projects as well. PA DCNR funding was awarded for Fairview Park in west Bethlehem and also for redevelopment of the southern end of the Monocacy Way trail. An additional grant application was submitted to DCNR related to Friendship Park redevelopment but those grant announcements have not yet been made.

**Climate Action Plan Subcommittees** – The Planning Bureau leads two of the subcommittees created to implement the Climate Action Plan recommendations – Land Use & Greenspace and Transportation & Mobility. The Land Use subcommittee is reviewing a draft of an urban forestry master plan. They also will review the SALDO draft against the CAP recommendations. The Transportation subcommittee concentrated on review of “safe routes” to determine priorities for sidewalk and intersection improvements. The topic developing a program to accommodate charging stations for EV vehicles was also introduced.

**Zoning Amendments** – The Bureau continues to review the Zoning Ordinance for appropriate modifications and amendments. City Council adopted three new zoning amendments that were recommended by the Bureau and the Planning Commission. Sections of the ordinance that allowed review and approval by the Planning Commission were revised to require review and approval by the Zoning Hearing Board for all sections of the Zoning Ordinance. In addition, many sections of the Design Guidelines chapter were removed. These sections will be included in the draft SALDO that is near completion. A third amendment was forwarded to Council to revise and update several miscellaneous sections of the Ordinance for clarification and for compatibility with the PA Municipalities Planning Code.

**Boards and Committees** - Planning and Zoning Bureau staff continue to support and participate in a variety of regional and local boards and commissions, including Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, SouthSide’s Tommorrow, NorthSide Alive, South Side Arts District and others.

**Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance** - The Bureau has been updating the SALDO to create a more user-friendly ordinance, update sections to comply with current development requirements and to create an ordinance that reflects the goals and objectives of the Climate Action Plan. The draft SALDO was initially presented to the Planning Commission in December 2019. The Bureau has been working on the edits to the final drafts and plans to forward a final document to the Planning Commission in the first quarter of 2023..

**Northside Alive** –The committee structure for administration of the Northside Alive Neighborhood Plan was strengthened in 2022 with the inclusion of a newly hired community organizer specifically targeting outreach efforts in the Northside Alive neighborhood. The organizer works from the Community Development arm of the Department of Community and Economic Development. In 2022 a redesign of Friendship Park was completed with assistance of the Public Realm subcommittee and substantial community input. A DCNR grant has been applied for to assist with final design and construction, but awards have not yet been announced.

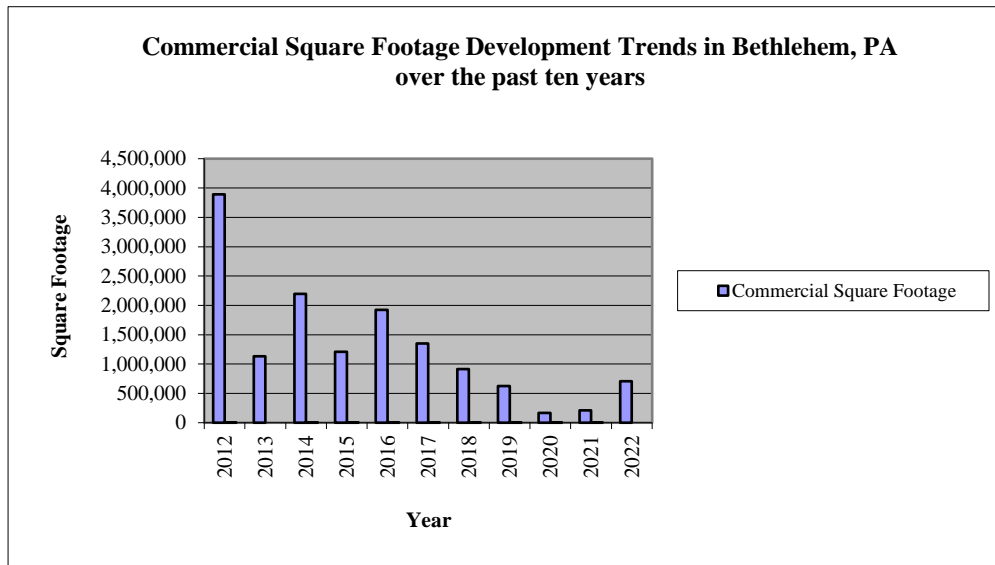
**Broad Street Active Transportation Plan** – The Broad Street Activation Transportation Plan was completed with WalkWorks grant funds in 2021. The Plan is an analysis of the entire Broad Street Corridor to address bicycle, pedestrian safety and transit improvements. The Plan includes a range of recommendations including bike lanes, enhanced pedestrian crossings, bump outs, painted markings, street trees and signage in various sections. The Bureau has led the submission of possible grant funds through MultiModal grants and federal Safe Streets 4 All grants. Award announcements are pending.

**Development Trends**

The following charts and graphs depict development trends in Bethlehem for the past 10 years.

The commercial square footage totals reflect mostly warehouse and medical office development, but these numbers also include some of the recent expansion of athletic facilities at Lehigh University.

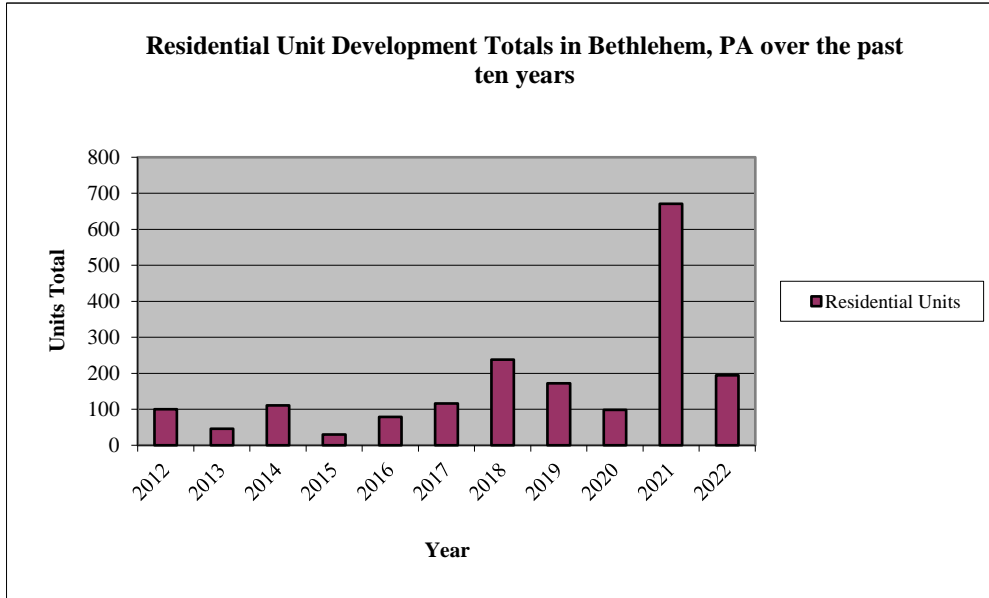
	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
Commercial Square Footage	3,892,217	1,132,254	2,195,142	1,210,854	1,924,765	1,351,335	916,286	622,763	165,160	213,238	707,147



**\*2012 includes the Majestic Bethlehem Center**

The following shows the number of residential dwelling units approved by year.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
100	46	111	30	79	116	238	172	98	671	194



The final chart shows the total number of plans submitted by year.

Total number of subdivision and land development projects

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Land Development	13	10	11	8	8	9	12	11	8	19	16
Subdivision	2	1	0	1	5	6	4	6	3	3	1
Minor Land Development	4	2	0	7	2	3	2	2	3	0	5
Minor Subdivision	8	7	2	8	7	5	7	5	6	7	4

