

934-946 Evans Street & 1004 Evans Street Residential Multifamily Use Development

Evans & State / Ridge Streets, City of Bethlehem

Project Narrative for Land Development

July 10, 2025

The project site is located at the Southeast and Southwest corners of the Evans Street intersection with State Street in the High Density Residential (RT) Zoning District on the South Side of the City of Bethlehem. The project site consists of three (3) existing vacant lots located at 934-940, 942-944, and 946 Evans Street, with intent for consolidation of three parcels into one ~0.4461 acres or 19,434 SF parcel and one (1) lot at 1004 Evans Street ~0.2834 acres, or 12,347 SF, to be utilized for off-street parking facilities as a principal use of the lot providing the requirements in Articles 1319, 1321, and 1322. The parcel 1004 Evans Street shall not be separately conveyed and shall be maintained as off-street parking exclusively for the dwellings at 934-946 Evans Street, as long as 934-946 Evans Street contains multi-family dwellings. The combined total area of all four (4) existing lots is ~0.7299 acres (31,795 SF). The consolidated parcel at 934-946 Evans Street is bordered on the north by Evans Street, on the East by State Street, on the West by Ridge Street, and on the South by residential properties (located in the RT District).

The applicant proposes to construct a multi-family building on the consolidated parcel. The 3-story building, facing Evans Street, will include 37 apartments with associated amenities (washer and dryer for each apartment, central air conditioning, bicycle rack and landscaped green space for tenant enjoyment), along with a dedicated parking lot providing ten (10) parking spaces (including 2 ADA spaces) directly to the south of the building, and forty (40) parking spaces in a dedicated parking lot located at 1004 Evans Street (east of the building with pedestrian access across State Street). The proposed building will contain nine (9) two-bedroom apartments, twenty-nine (27) one-bedroom apartments and one (1) studio apartment. Seven of the nine two-bedroom apartment will be two levels, with a second level providing private outdoor balcony space. Additional green space is designated with landscaping in the front of the building along Evans Street and bicycle rack. The current landowner shall be responsible to ensure that the bicycle rack or locker continues to be available and is well maintained and is replaced if damaged or removed.

The proposed land development, a multi-family dwelling, is a permitted use in the RT Zoning District.

In order to implement the proposed site improvements, the applicant is seeking relief and variances from the City of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance. These variances are required in order to allow for the development of the property.

The Consolidated Lot ("Property" or "Lot") possess a number of physical circumstances or conditions unique to the Property that create an unnecessary hardship. The Property is irregular in shape, namely 1004 Evans is irregular with varying property line widths from the north to the south. The lot is also shaped with an angle from east to west along Evans Street, further impacting potential uses. The 1004 Evans Street Property was evaluated and deemed not feasible to adequately construct a suitable multi-family building that provides windows for living space and accommodating parking. In addition to the

irregular Lot shape, the Property also has an approximate grade of 16 feet along 107 feet, roughly a 15% grade, and the current existing structure is not feasible for conversion to living space due to the existing structure configuration and lot dimensions noted above. The Property at 934-946 Evans Street is also irregular in shape with a trapezoid shape, 150 feet of depth on the east side and 111 feet of depth on the west side. The lot is also landlocked by 3 streets to the east, north, and west not allowing for expansion or acquisition of property to increase the proposed lot are per dwelling unit. This lot also has an approximate grade of 23 feet grade along State Street frontage of 150 feet (15% grade), further restricting ability to develop the lots.

Due to the physical circumstances and/or conditions of the lots, it is not a possible to develop the land in full conformity with the applicable provision of the zoning ordinance. Strict application of the required setback and buffer yard regulations reduces the building envelope and would not provide adequate size for a livable unit count to make the project feasible. Due to the height restrictions in the RT Zoning Districts, a larger building footprint is required at the Property to enable use of the available land and achieve feasibility of the project due to the land improvements required from the existing condition of the Lots.

Section 910.2. (1) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code not only describes unique physical characteristics as including “irregularity, narrowness, or shallowness of lot size or shape”, it specifically includes “exceptional topographical or other physical conditions peculiar to the particular property”. The applicant submits that the physical condition of the Property being surrounded on three (3) sides by public streets, the irregular lot shape, and topographical characteristics present creates a hardship in the ability to assemble additional lands or construct an alternate building envelope to meet the lot area per dwelling unit requirement.

As a result of the aforementioned physical circumstances or conditions, there is no possibility that the property can be developed in strict conformity with the applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance and the authorization of the requested variances is necessary for the reasonable use of the Property. The unnecessary hardships have not been created by the Applicant and the variances, if authorized, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood, but will enhance the character of the neighborhood by removing currently vacant and abandoned land in poor condition. The requested variances represent the minimum variances that will afford relief and represent the least modification possible of the regulations at issues that enable the development project the highest potential to move forward.

For 1349.08 (c) Buffer Yards: please reference the attached the zoning decision (Exhibit A) granting relief sought. Please reference the summary of relief sought (Exhibit B) detailing variance and relief requested by owner.

For 1349.08(f)(2) Multi-Family, Townhouse, and PUD Developments shall have a minimum of ten (10%) percent of the area represented by approved plantings in addition to front and side foundation shrubs and any buffer planting which may be necessary to screen garbage collection or parking areas: Please also reference the attached zoning decision (Exhibit A) granting relief sought. Due to uncontrollable physical circumstances or conditions noted above and dimensional variances approved from the prior Zoning Hearing Board, fully meeting the 10% foundation plantings is not possible with the proposed setbacks, however plantings will be maximized in the space available.