

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT PLANNING AND ZONING BUREAU

The following describes the activities of the Planning and Zoning Bureau in 2018.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission held eleven (11) meetings to review:

- ten (10) major land development plans  
one (1) was denied
- five (5) combined major land development and subdivisions
- four (4) amendments to the Zoning Ordinance
- one (1) street vacation request
- six (6) vacant property review cases
- one (1) site plan review
- two (2) curb and sidewalk deferral requests
- two (2) deferral requests
- one (1) zoning map amendment

The most significant of the Land Development reviews include:

1. **BETHLEHEM LNG -1475 and 1525 Easton Road** – proposes to construct an LNG Storage Tank, associated buildings and equipment, an access drive, on-site pavement, utilities, stormwater management infrastructure and associated drainage improvements on Lot 55 and Lot 56 of Lehigh Valley Industrial Park (LVIP) property. The applicant's intent is to maintain the existing lots as separate individual parcels. Lot 55 will serve as a construction laydown area and access drive. Lot 56 will consist of the storage facility and an emergency access drive.
2. **LVIP VII, Lot 13** – 2010 Spillman Drive – proposes the construction of a 195,000 sq. ft. office/manufacturing facility and associated parking and site improvements on a 12.39 acre lot.
3. **LVIP VII, Lot 12** – 1920 Spillman Drive – proposed to construct a 40,000 sq. ft. office/manufacturing building and associated parking and site improvements on a 5.17 acre lot.
4. **13 W. MORTON STREET** – proposes to construct a 4 story building with 1st floor restaurant and 6 apartments on a 2600 sq. ft. lot.
5. **LEHIGH UNIVERSITY BRIDGE WEST** – 68 University Drive – proposes to demolish existing buildings and construct two residence halls along University Drive on a 10.68 acre site. The south cluster includes approximately 406 beds and the north cluster includes approximately 316 beds. The number of stories varies but generally ranges from three to five floors.

6. **546-548 N. NEW STREET APARTMENTS** – proposes to demolish a brick structure and erect a 6 story structure with retail on the first floor and 33 apartments above on a .1593 acre lot.
7. **LEHIGH UNIVERSITY HEALTH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BUILDING** - 124 E. Morton Street – proposes to construct a 5 story Health Science Technology Building containing 192,000 sq. ft. on a 3.45 acre lot. Also proposed is an overhead walkway connecting the proposed building to the Whitaker Building.
8. **LVIP VII Lots 83 & 85** - 1145 Hellertown Road, 1198 and 2020 Feather Way – proposes to subdivide Lot 3 in LVIP VII, Phase 5 subdivision into 3 lots and construct 2 warehouse buildings – a 189,721 sq. ft. building on Lot 83 and a 295,415 sq. ft. warehouse building on Lot 85. Lot 89 will be undeveloped at this time.

The Planning Bureau also reviewed an additional three (3) minor land development plans, five (5) minor subdivision plans, and four (4) site plan reviews.

### **Zoning Hearing Board**

The Zoning Hearing Board held 14 meetings in 2018 and heard 36 appeals. Two (2) appeals necessitated additional or special meetings because of the volume of testimony and/or the number of objectors. Significant Zoning Hearing Board appeals include:

1. 231 Union Station Plaza

Appeal of Adams Outdoor Advertising for a Dimensional Variance to allow a digital off-premises sign (billboard) with a sign area of 616 Sq. Ft. The ordinance allows a digital off-premises sign (billboard) with a maximum size of 100 Sq. Ft. In the alternative, the Applicant is challenging the validity of Article 1320.09.b.3.ii: the maximum size of 100 Sq. Ft. for an off-premises sign is unreasonable and not substantially related to a legitimate purpose. The applicants are also requesting dimensional variances to the following: height of the sign: required: no more than 25' above grade of the roadway; proposed is 40' above the grade of SR 378; separation distance to a residential district. Required: 300'; proposed: 82'. Separation to another off-premises digital sign: required: 1,000'; proposed: 566'.

Record Lot: 25.12 Acres

CB – Commercial Zoning District

1. 1838 Center Street

PA Venture Capital, Inc. and Bethlehem Manor Village, LLC Appeals the Determination of the Zoning Officer, dated, July 20, 2018, for the Use on the premises. The Applicants requested a Zoning Permit to construct a free-standing, private inpatient acute hospital, "Valley Behavioral Health Hospital" on the premises. The Zoning Officer determined the proposed use would be a Treatment Facility.

Record Lot: 5 Acres

I – Institutional Zoning District

There were three (3) use variances and eleven (11) Special Exceptions granted during 2018. The remaining hearings were for dimensional variances, with 20 being approved and two (2) being denied.

## **Historic Review Boards**

There were 57 appeals before the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) and 47 appeals before the Historic Conservation Commission – South Bethlehem and Mount Airy (HCC) in 2018.

The Planning Bureau applied for a Certified Local Government grant to assist with historic preservation planning in the local historic districts. The downtown areas are experiencing development pressures that sometime bring proposed demolitions or infill development that present challenging reviews for the historic commissions. If approved, the grant will allow some research into ordinance and/or policy decisions to balance development and historic preservation.

## **Special Projects**

**South Bethlehem Greenway** – In 2018, design and engineering work for Phase 5 of the Greenway was completed. Phase 5 creates a connection between the newly constructed Phase 4 of the Greenway trail and the ball fields at the northern end of Saucon Park off of Millside Drive. Construction of Phases 5 of the Greenway Trail will occur in 2019. A prior DCNR grant covering construction of a Playground behind the Holy Infancy School will also be constructed this year.

**South Side Vision 2020** – The Bureau continues to work with the Community Action Development Corporation (CADCB) to provide staff support for the South Side Vision 2020 plan. The Bureau assists in project implementation through the Development subcommittee. A significant Tree Planting Project on Hayes Street was completed in 2018. The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside grant to improve lighting and walkability for the North/South streets is now in the design phase. The committee is also moving forward with a Lighting Plan in South Bethlehem to coordinate all the lighting initiatives. Requests for proposals will be requested in February.

**Wayfinding/Signage Project** – The City contracted with a sign manufacturer in 2016 to implement the signage design and location plans. Phases 1 of the signs were installed in 2017. The City is now working with PennDot for the release of permits to install later phases of the sign program. The City continues to pursue additional funds for this project. Northampton County granted the City funds for the installation of “gateway signage” in 2018. Our office will work with ArtsQuest for the installation of this artwork in 2019.

**Monocacy Way** – A Northampton County Open Space grant and a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) grant will be consolidated to enhance the Monocacy Way trail. The improvements will start north of Schoenersville and continue around the Monocacy Park Complex on Illick’s Mill Road. Design and engineering for this project are just beginning.

**Streetlights on West Broad Street** – The City was awarded \$225,000 in Multimodal Transportation Funds for the extension of pedestrian streetlights along West Broad Street. Acorn-style pedestrian lights were previously installed from the Route 378 on-ramp to West Broad Street and from downtown to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on West Broad Street as a part of the prior Elm Street program. This funding will extend the pedestrian lights from 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These lights will be installed in 2019.

**Housing** – The Planning Bureau is participating in housing discussions with the Southside Vision 2020 subcommittee. The committee is particularly interested in housing affordability and student housing impacts in South Bethlehem.

**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, South Side Vision 2020, South Side Arts District, Lehigh Valley Greenways, Lehigh Valley Section of the Pennsylvania Planning Association and others.

**Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance** - The Bureau has been drafting updates to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) over the last few years. Funds have been allocated in the 2018 budget to update the (SALDO) with the assistance of a consulting firm. All relevant bureaus have been meeting with the Planning Bureau to revise relevant draft sections. The first half of the SALDO is completed and the second half will be finished by summer 2019.

**Northside 2027** – The City is working with community representatives, Moravian College and BASD to establish a neighborhood plan in the Northside 2027 neighborhood. The neighborhood is generally bordered by Broad Street to the south, Main Street to the west, Laurel Street to the north and Maple Street to the east. In 2017, WRT was selected as the Planning consultant and successful public meetings were held. Led by the Community Development Department, the plan will be finalized in 2019, working groups will be established and initial projects will move forward at Friendship Park.

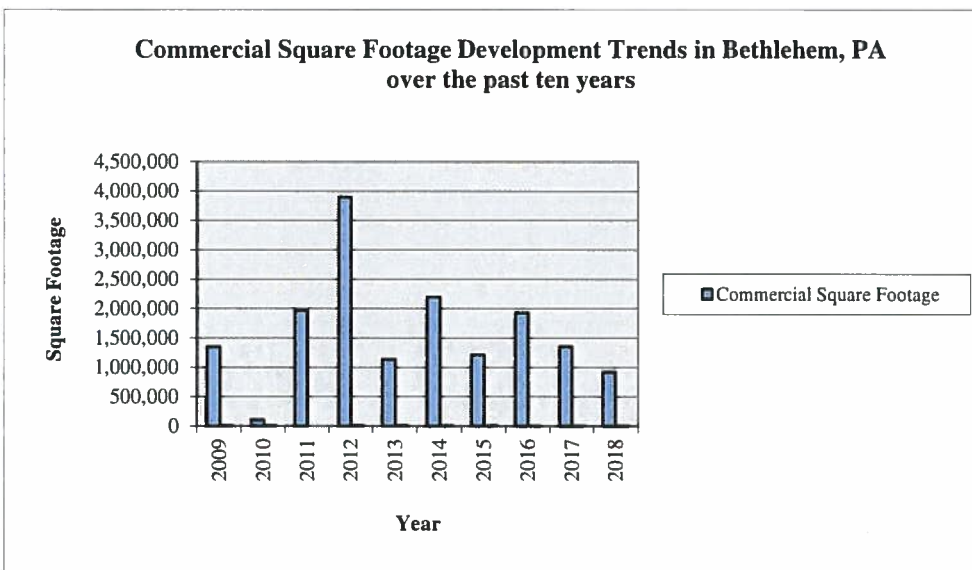
## Development Trends

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.

Commercial Square Footage totals over the past 10 years.

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1,347,481	102,342	1,967,900	3,892,217	1,132,254	2,195,142	1,210,854	1,924,765	1,351,335,	916,286

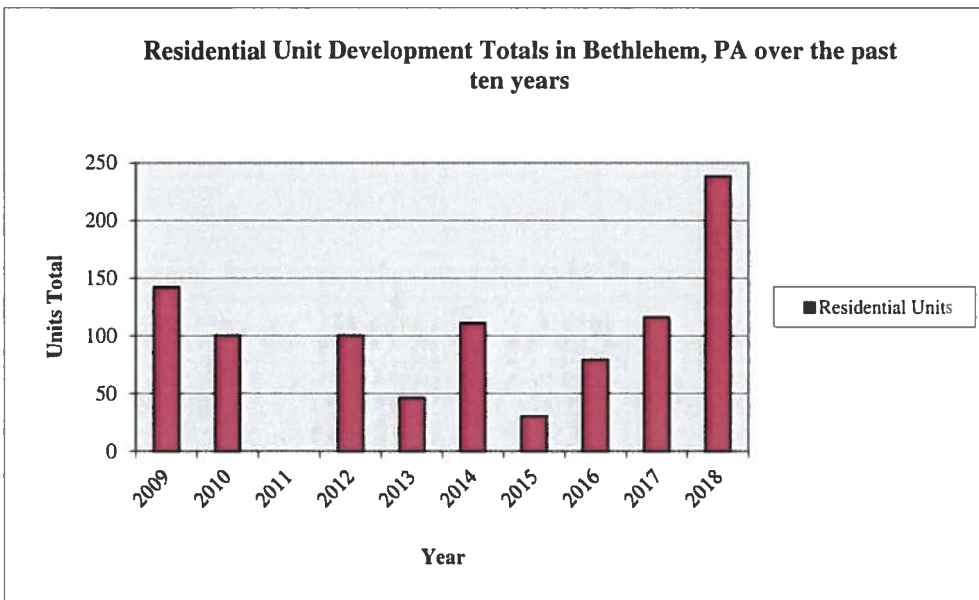


\*2012 includes the Majestic Bethlehem Center

Over the last several years, the demand for new housing has transitioned from condominium type development to market rate rental apartment units. This trend is confirmed through the recent proposals for market rate rental units, such as Greenway Commons, Chelsea Commons, the Wilbur Mansion Development, the Sterling Apartments, and the 546-548 N. New Street Apartments.

Number of residential dwelling units approved by year

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
142	100	0	100	46	111	30	79	116	238



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

**Total number of subdivision and land development projects**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Land Development	13	8	4	13	10	11	8	8	9	12
Subdivision	3	3	1	2	1	0	1	5	6	4
Minor Land Development	7	9	2	4	2	0	7	2	3	2
Minor Subdivision	7	9	2	8	7	2	8	7	5	7

