

**\*PLEASE NOTE:** The language used within the yellow highlighted sections is a placeholder; at this time, the name of CADCB’s Neighborhood Partnership Program 2021-2027 has yet to be decided.

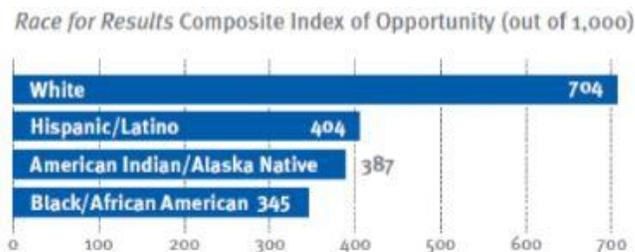
### Part III: Vision, Goals and Strategies

#### Background

The Southside Neighborhood Partnership Program 2021-2027 is a unifying community empowerment effort that will enhance the quality of life, further equity, change the power dynamic, and build a meaningful relationship between the community and south Bethlehem’s continued development through four interrelated areas – housing affordability and quality, youth engagement and programming, public and green spaces, and communication and connectivity. All four of these areas will act as avenues that engage, connect, and welcome residents to participate in the flourishing of their community and increase feelings of self-efficacy through community organizing activities that help residents understand and harness the power of their voice and collective action. This approach seeks to provide south Bethlehem residents and business owners with a renewed sense of belonging and, with it, create a unified identity and voice that enhances and sustains south Bethlehem’s unique assets: inclusivity, diversity, economic vibrance, and small-town closeness with big city energy. By honing the community’s assets and building the capacities of residents’ and business owners’, they can, therefore, broaden their networks. This will embolden residents and business owners, alike, to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives and ensure long term sustainable solutions that both modernize and preserve the integrity of the Southside community.

As Jane Jacobs stated nearly six decades ago, *“In our American cities, we need all kinds of diversity, intricately mingled in mutual support. We need this so city life can work decently and constructively, and so the people of cities can sustain (and further develop) their society and civilization.”* South Bethlehem is a community rich with natural, social, and organization resources. Since its incorporation as a borough in 1865, it has retained and grown its diverse population of largely Hispanic/Latino/Latina residents, which is unmatched in other neighborhoods and communities throughout the City of Bethlehem.

According to the McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research, people of color are disproportionately economically disadvantaged; boys of color achieve the poorest educational outcomes and Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino men experience the highest rates of unemployment and underemployment. The odds of success for children of color are currently roughly half those for white children. The Annie E Casey Foundation’s Face for Results Index combines 12 predictors of future success, including birth weight, preschool participation, academic proficiency score, graduation rates, and family poverty levels, and creates a single composite score between 0 and 1,000 for each racial or ethnic group – the higher the score, the greater the likelihood of success. In 2016, the composite score for white children was 704 out of 1,000 while the score for Hispanic/Latino/Latina children was 404, for Native American children it was 387, and for Black/African American children it was 345.



As private individuals and developers invest in building renovations, infrastructure and new construction previously not seen in south Bethlehem, these changes begin to result in an influx of new residents and business owners who are better resourced and are often white. They also result in higher property values, taxes, rental prices, and leasing costs, which poses increasing pressures on the housing affordability of existing residents and less financially advantaged residents may become increasingly unable to afford to live in the neighborhood, giving them no choice but to move out.

Policies and programs that emphasize community empowerment and revitalize the duties, functions, and roles of community residents, increase self-efficacy and one's feelings of ownership within their community. This ensures that residents are not just present and participatory where decisions are made that affect the fabric of their community, but that their collective power is affirmed and respected. After all, sustainable development depends on the existence of a capable civic body, whose determined involvement in the social life requires community empowerment.

By providing opportunities to build community empowerment through housing affordability and quality, youth engagement and programming, public and green spaces, and communication and connectivity, it is the goal of CADCB's next Neighborhood Partnership Program to enhance the progress made in the last twenty years through Southside Vision; through the various plans, research, and studies conducted; and through ordinances passed decades ago, as well as recently. This will require CADCB to be a key actor in creating opportunities and spaces that promote a culture which encourages and welcomes residents to feel safe and allows them to be honest about their hopes and fears while participating in the decisions that affect their lives and community. By ensuring that community empowerment and self-efficacy are central in improving housing affordability and quality, youth engagement and programming, public and green spaces, and communication and connectivity, it is this plan's hope that south Bethlehem is able to maintain and build on its unique assets of inclusivity and diversity to modernize and preserve the integrity of the south Bethlehem community in an equitable manner.

## **Vision**

South Bethlehem's residents are empowered with a renewed sense of self-efficacy and belonging which bolsters collective action to ensure neighborhoods reflect the mixed-use, mixed-income identity that has shaped the community and builds on the community's sense of inclusivity, diversity, opportunity, hopefulness, and energy. South Bethlehem's neighborhoods have the resources to ensure all residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, have the opportunity to thrive and become successful, productive, and engaged citizens.

**The Southside Neighborhood Partnership Program 2021-2027** is:

- An effort to support residents, both current and new, in recognizing and utilizing the power of their voice and collective action;
- A sustainable effort that unites residents, both current and new, across all socio-economic boundaries;
- A continual, emergent process for energizing and realizing the dreams of community stakeholders;
- An advocate with and for south Bethlehem and its residents;
- A united, thriving community where all people are viewed as valuable assets to the community's future; and
- A means of facilitating effective cross-sector collaboration that mobilizes and integrates social, political, institutional, intellectual, environmental, cultural, and financial resources to achieve community goals.

## Goals and Strategies

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND QUALITY

**Goal:** South Bethlehem will have a variety of quality, affordable renter- and owner-occupied housing options and encourage development that meet the needs and wants of current and new residents, alike.

**Strategy:** Provide opportunities to engage and empower the community to have a voice in the decisions regarding new development and accessibility of affordable housing.

*Activities: Hire a Southside Neighborhood Organizer to support neighborhood community development by working to expand residents' capacity to collectively represent themselves as they seek incentives and resources to strengthen their neighborhoods;*

*Form a tenant association to organize a collective voice on behalf of the vast majority of renters in south Bethlehem;*

*Develop and implement Community Benefit Agreements (CBA) between developers and a broad community coalition (CADCB?) that details the project's contributions to the community and ensures community support for the project.*

**Strategy:** Provide opportunities for mixed-use, adaptive reuse development to increase quality, affordable rental housing.

*Activities: Establish partnerships to purchase buildings and create local landlords who are invested in preserving south Bethlehem's neighborhoods;*

*Partner with Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley's (CACLV) Community Action Better Homes program (CABH) to rehabilitate empty second floor apartments over commercial storefronts for low- to moderate-income renters.*

**Strategy:** Provide opportunities for adaptive reuse development and rehabilitation to increase and maintain quality, affordable owner-occupied housing.

*Activities: Partner with CACLV's CABH program to acquire, rehabilitate, and resell homes to low- to moderate-income potential homebuyers.*

*Partner with CACLV's CABH program to rehabilitate low- to moderate-income owner-occupied housing.*

## **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND PROGRAMMING**

**Goal:** Youth are centered in community engagement efforts and initiatives in order to foster a sense of meaningful belonging through opportunities of workforce development, environmental initiatives, artistic projects, and other enrichment activities.

**Strategy:** Provide youth with entrepreneurial training and workforce development opportunities through collaborations with local businesses and organizations to develop workforce, employability, and life skills.

**Activities:** *Partner with Bethlehem Employment and Training Center (PA CareerLink) on the Southside to provide a clearinghouse of resources, employment opportunities, training, and educational services to successfully transition youth to adult roles and responsibilities.*

*Collaborate with Southside businesses to promote and provide entrepreneurial opportunities to high school students to learn more about different industries and gain workforce experience.*

*Engage local students with opportunities to participate in environmental activities within their community, such as South Bethlehem Greenway programming, park enhancements, and urban farming/gardening activities.*

**Strategy:** Provide outlets to connect youth to decision-making processes in their communities to increase efficacy and develop leadership skills.

**Activities:** *Create a Youth Advisory Council within CADCB's Neighborhood Partnership Program committees where youth have a voice in the decisions being made on their behalf and create programming that aligns with their interests and needs.*

*Explore programming and opportunities to connect youth with local artists to create projects that enhance and build on the existing artistic characteristics of the Southside community, such as murals, graffiti walls, sculpture gardens, youth art galleries, etc.*

## **PUBLIC AND GREEN SPACES**

**Goal:** Preserve the integrity of existing public and green spaces while investing in practical and creative utilization of those spaces to foster community engagement while addresses community concerns.

**Strategy:** Implement neighborhood programs in communal spaces that connect residents with opportunities that build a sense of creative placemaking and community pride.

**Activities:** *Expand/enhance opportunities for residents to “adopt” or become a “guardian” of a local park or segment of the South Bethlehem Greenway.*

*Identify methods to enhance and maintain parks to include more green space, such as gardens, native plants, and trees.*

**Strategy:** Utilize green spaces to address concerns of food insecurity and neighborhood access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Activities:** *Support, expand, and promote the Farmers Market along the South Bethlehem Greenway.*

*Partner and collaborate with local organizations, such as the Kellyn Foundation and Second Harvest Food Bank, to provide educational opportunities for residents to learn more about agriculture and nutrition.*

*Establish and/or maintain community vegetable and flower gardens in neighborhoods without walkable access to markets that provide fresh produce.*

*Explore the concept of establishing rooftop gardens on new and existing buildings, in collaboration with developers and building managers; hire/recruit local residents to care and maintain said gardens.*

**Strategy:** Invest in community image by improving upon avenues for cleanliness and appearance.

**Activities:** *Expand Southside Ambassadors program to neighborhoods outside the initial program area as well as authority to address littering issues within the community*

*Install additional branded flags on the north-south streets to incorporate all aspects of the community into south Bethlehem’s “sense of place.”*

*Improve streetscaping by planting of native trees and flowers along pedestrian routes.*

*Improve and increase walkability and lighting of pedestrian routes, such as the South Bethlehem Greenway, by providing additional amenities such as benches, picnic tables, bike repair stations, pet waste stations, and wayfinding signs to commercial districts.*

## COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTIVITY

**Goal:** Build a sense of collective community identity through modernized initiatives that enhance residents' belonging, pride, and fellowship.

**Strategy:** Create, maintain, and build on existing initiatives that enhance community connectivity and unification.

**Activities:** *Evolve marketing campaign that builds on the success of "Southside Proud!" to build a collective, empowered community identity by identifying and unifying different Southside neighborhoods.*

*Explore and implement modernized forms of communication through social media that brings neighborhood connectivity into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Strategy:** Foster neighborhood connectedness through community building events and celebratory gatherings.

**Activities:** *Host/support local Southside business-sponsored events to showcase local entrepreneurs and retailers.*

*Organize family-friendly, low-cost or free festivals and events along the South Bethlehem Greenway and other public areas.*