FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Mission Strategy Conversation #2

May 7, 2023

Welcome & Overview

- These slides will be available in this week's newsletter!
  - Please be present and engaged without worrying about trying to note all the data or information shared

An Active Faith

- Love of neighbor; care for the most vulnerable
- Abundance and flourishing
- Creating beloved community here and now
  - Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
- Salt of the earth; light of the world; yeast to leaven bread

- This strategic, missional work isn't to save the church; it is to BE the church.

Outcomes for FPCB

- Missional fulfillment and identity!
- Public witness!
- Lasting community impact!
- Increased congregational vitality and growth!
- Financial sustainability!

Community Needs Assessments

- Reviewed 8 comprehensive studies (350+ pages)
  - St. Luke's Community Health Assessment
  - LVHN Community Health Needs Assessment
    - Northampton Co.
    - Lehigh Co.
  - Bethlehem Health Bureau Community Health Needs Assessment
  - City of Bethlehem's Homelessness Assessment
  - City of Bethlehem's Housing Assessment
  - City of Bethlehem's *We Build Bethlehem* Survey
  - Lehigh Valley News *Quality of Life* Survey

Social Issues

- Across all the assessments, these social issues emerged as significant needs to be addressed:
  - Housing insecurity
  - Childcare unaffordability
  - Food insecurity
  - Mental health care access
  - Transportation access
- Among these areas of need, there are obvious disparities and equity issues related to race and LGBTQ+ identity
- Significant impacts on quality of life for **families**

THE LEHIGH VALLEY'S FIRST SOURCE FOR NEWS

themorningcall.com

THE MORNING CALL

$4.00 APRIL 23, 2023 SUNDAY Cooler; times of clouds, sun 66°|42° Weather, Sports 12

ROOM FOR MORE

Housing crisis in Valley worsens

With fewer resources to tackle affordability at all levels, officials face limited options



Gracie Santana, in her neighborhood along North 10th Street in Allentown. AMY SHORTELL/THE MORNING CALL

By Lindsay Weber, Daniel Patrick Sheehan and Graysen Golter
The Morning Call

Gracie Santana, a lifelong Allentown resident, can't afford to rent an apartment in her home city.

Santana, a teacher at Lincoln Leadership Academy, which she attended growing up, has lived with her parents in Allentown's 8th Ward neighborhood ever since graduating from Temple University in 2019.

"My comfortability would be financially like $1,000, but they're not even offering studios for that much," Santana said. "One of my paychecks does not even cover a room."

Santana's story is not unique. Across the Lehigh Valley, families are struggling to put safe, stable roofs over their heads. Rapidly rising home prices and rental rates are pricing many out of the market — even those who would be considered middle-class

Turn to Housing, Page 2

ABOUT THIS SERIES

The Lehigh Valley is growing. Over the next 30 years, the population is expected to balloon by more than 100,000 people.

The question is, can they afford to live here?

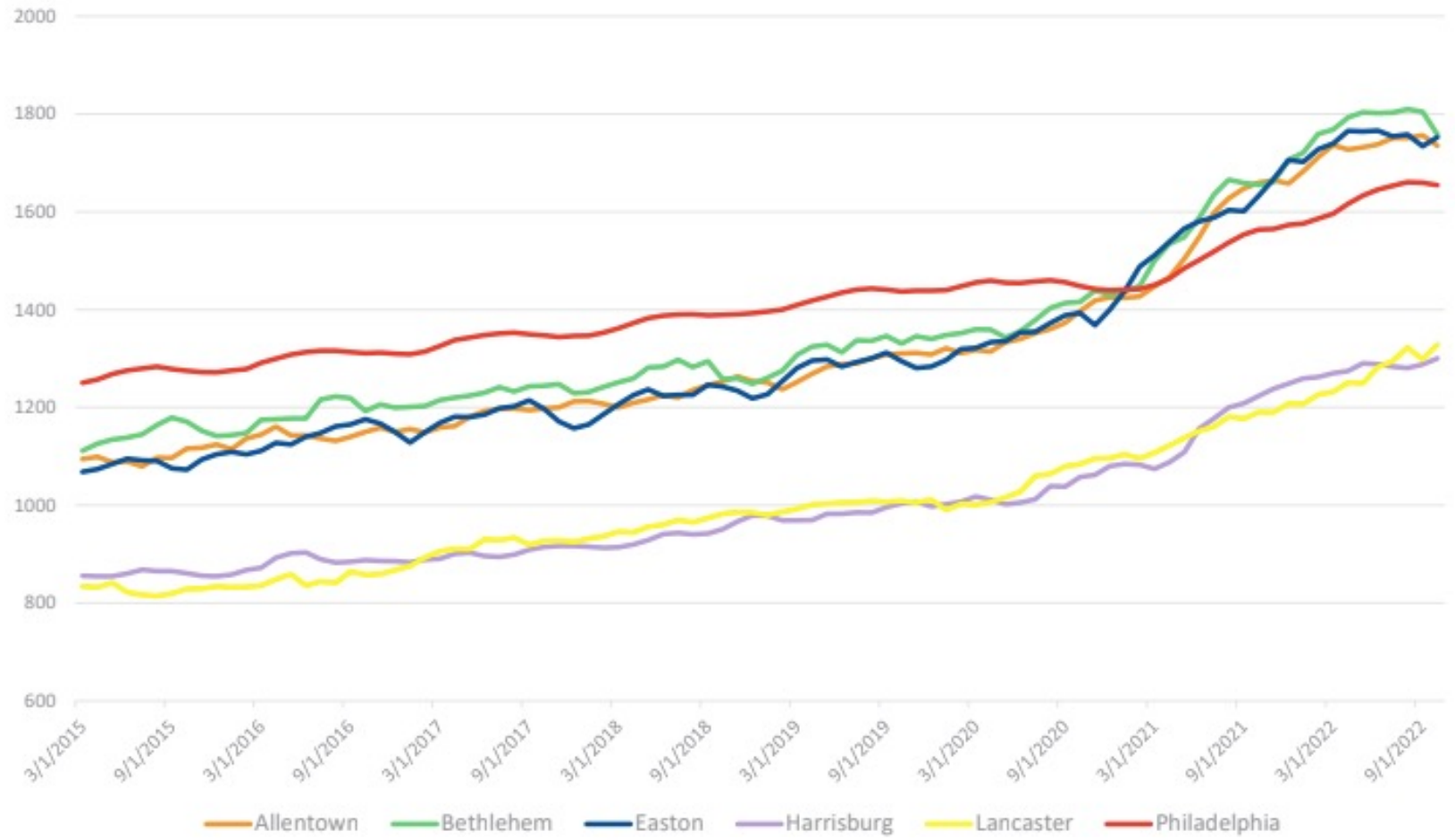
Rising home prices and rental rates are pricing many out of the market. Roughly a third of Lehigh Valley households spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs, a measurement of housing affordability set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

It's a problem many are trying to solve. But there are few easy answers.

Over the past several months, reporters at The Morning Call have talked to local officials, housing advocates and residents for a multipart series on the Lehigh Valley's housing crisis — and what's being done about it.

View our full coverage at mcall.com/roomformore.

The Lehigh Valley is expensive, particularly for renters…



Source: Zillow Observed Rent Index: ZORI is a repeat-rent index that is weighted to the rental housing stock to ensure representativeness across the entire market, not just those homes currently listed for-rent. The index is dollar-denominated by computing the mean of listed rents that fall into the 40th to 60th percentile range for all homes and apartments.

Who is impacted?

- Teachers, firefighters, frontline workers,
  young professionals, seniors on fixed incomes, etc.

- PEOPLE WE KNOW!
  - Afghan Family
  - Families of students in Donegan Elementary Mentoring Program
  - FPCB Preschool Families

What does “affordable housing” mean?

- What it doesn’t mean
  - Public housing, “slums,” “the projects,” “the ghetto”
    - Highly dense housing exclusively for very low income folks
  - Low quality government subsidized housing for “people who refuse to work”
  - Economic (and racial) segregation

- Defined as not spending more than 30% of your income on rent and utilities (HUD)
  - More than half of renters in our area are considered cost-burdened by housing, meaning they’re paying more than that 30% of income

How much can a household afford?

Annual Salary	Hourly Wage	Monthly Housing Costs (30% of Income)
Median Income $65,435	**$31.46/hour ($15.73/hour x 2 ppl)**	**$1,635**
Middle Income $52,348 - $65,434	$25.17-$31.46/hour	$1,309 - $1,635
Low Income $32,718 - $52,347	$15.73-$25.17/hour	$818 - $1,309
Very low income $19,631 - $32,717	$9.44-$15.73/hour	$491 - $818
Extremely low income $0 - $19,630	$9.44/hour or less	$1 - $491

*Nearly a quarter of Latinx people in the Lehigh Valley have a combined household income that is **less than $20,000 a year**.

Affordable vs. Actual Rental Rates

	30% of Income			Median Rent (Oct. 2022)
Median Income $65,435	$1,635		Studio	$1,168-$1,290
Middle Income $52,348 - $65,434	$1,309 - $1,635		1 Bedroom	$1,515-$1,638
Low Income $32,718 - $52,347	$818 - $1,309		2 Bedroom	$1,870-$1,924
Very low income $19,631 - $32,717	$491 - $818		3 Bedroom	$2,050-$2,130
Extremely low income $0 - $19,630	$1 - $491			

*Fair Market Rent increased $200 in each unit type from 2022 to 2023

Impact of Housing Crisis on Families

- With virtually no supply of rental units priced less than $1,000, working families are at risk of homelessness
  - Bethlehem Area School District reports 414 homeless students
  - City-wide, 53% increase in homeless families from 2020-2022
- Families with children are three times more likely to get evicted than those without children even after controlling for how much they owe a landlord. —Matthew Desmond, *Evicted*
- This is about systemic issues, NOT personal shortcomings

Housing Challenges We Face

- Insufficient land
- Zoning laws
- Not In My Backyard!
- Private developers; corporate greed
- Disproportionate impact on marginalized communities

Housing Resources We Have

- Available land
- Organizing and advocacy for zoning changes
  - Affordable housing overlay
  - Inclusionary zoning policies
- Yes, In God's Backyard!
- Church/developer/nonprofit partnerships
- Solidarity with marginalized communities

Opportunities for FPCB Community Impact: "A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats"

- Adaptive Reuse of Existing Facilities
  - Quality, affordable childcare
  - Transitional housing
  - Nonprofit partnerships for tenant coordination, support services, programming, etc.

- Land Development
  - Healthy, mixed-income housing
    - Focus on affordable housing for families

What We Know

- Affordable Housing
- Affordable Childcare
- Families are a priority!
  - Support services
- Partnership **will** be required
  - LOTS of interested potential partners! **See list→**
- We have many of the needed resources (facilities, land, people, etc.)
- Will need to be done in phases

- *Northampton County*
  - *CED*
  - *Human Services*
- *City of Bethlehem*
  - *CED*
  - *Zoning*
- *Community Action Lehigh Valley*
- *Valley Youth House*
- *Turning Point Lehigh Valley*
- *New Bethany Ministries*
- *Lehigh Conference of Churches*
- *Bethlehem Housing Authority*
- *Front Porch Co-Housing*

What We Don’t Know

- Exactly what this looks like
  - Thoughtfully planned with ample green space and architecturally appropriate infill for surroundings
- Exact funding sources
- Who the right partner(s) will be
- How long this will take
- How much income it might generate
- What level of ownership/control we will be able to maintain
  - Hopefully, retention of percentage of ownership for project input and guidance

Table Talk & Whole Group Feedback

- What are your thoughts?
  - What do you like? What do you not like?
- What other questions do you have?
- What else would be helpful for you to better understand?