

# Good news! There are groups like the Southside Vision Housing Committee working on affordable housing

The Bethlehem Gadfly Affordable Housing, Neighborhoods, Serious Issues, Southside July 2, 2019

*(The latest in a series of posts on the Southside and Neighborhoods)*

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Thanks for the clarification, Olga! Some more background on the project (which does not have a catchy name, alas—just a piece of CACLV’s new housing rehab program):

CACLV received a \$500,000 grant from Project Reinvest: Neighborhoods, which was originally designated for the first stage of the development of 36 twin homes at Edwards, Sixth and Seventh streets in south Bethlehem. The project was deemed financially infeasible, and these funds were instead used to purchase 5 homes in south Bethlehem for full rehabilitation and resale to low- to moderate-income families through the Lehigh Valley Community Land Trust (a subsidiary of CACLV).

Three of the homes are nearing completion and will be on the market soon, and two homes will be on the market this fall. These are older homes that require a significant investment in rehabilitation if they are

to be sold to low- to moderate-income families—no one wants to stick a family with a major repair expense in the first few years of homeownership, so the rehab is fairly extensive and includes weatherization.

The rehab costs were funded by the City of Bethlehem and the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA). Once the homes are sold, the proceeds will be invested in the purchase of additional homes for rehab and resale, creating a revolving fund devoted to affordable housing development on the Southside. However, the program will be dependent on additional subsidies for the rehab component, which is where the City of Bethlehem comes in. Thanks to support from the City's department of community and economic development, CACLV receives CDBG and HOME funds that pay for rehab.

This program is a significant investment in affordable housing in south Bethlehem, but it is far from a solution to the affordable housing pressures on our community. As I mentioned previously, we need multiple, coordinated strategies if we're really going to tackle this issue at scale. The good news is, there are groups out there working together to come up with ideas. On the Southside, the Southside Vision Housing Committee is working to implement a variety of different strategies and dream up new ones, and we welcome anyone who is interested in getting involved!

Anna