

Please urge City action to replace Ahart's!

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Uncategorized](#) March 16, 2021

 *The latest in a series of posts on the Southside* 

ref: **“It’s a South Side thing. Everyone goes here,” but Ahart’s is closing –it’s time to act**

There will be a resolution at City Council tonight urging City action on retaining a grocery store on the Southside now that Ahart’s has announced its closing.

Gadfly urges you to sign this letter to the Mayor and Council now, before tonight’s meeting, to show our strong support.

Please realize that this is not just a “Southside thing.” We are one city and must support all neighborhoods.

We will all have issues about which we will depend on whole city concern and support.

[Sign letter here](#)

To: Bethlehem City Government: Secure a new grocery store for Southside Bethlehem

Mayor Donchez and Members of Bethlehem City Council:

We ask that you take swift action to secure a new grocery store for the western end of South Bethlehem at the current location of Ahart’s Market.

The impending closure of Ahart’s Market will impact thousands of South Bethlehem and Fountain Hill residents who depend on this store as their only source for a wide variety of fresh, healthy foods and other essentials within walking distance of their homes.

According to Census data, 25% of Southside residents currently live within a half-mile of Ahart's Market and live further than a half-mile from C-Town Supermarket. As of April 30, these residents will lose walkable access to a neighborhood grocery store and will be forced to travel outside their neighborhood to shop for food and other necessities. 19% of these residents lack access to a car, and 25% of these residents live below the poverty line. In addition to the residents of south Bethlehem, Ahart's Market also serves thousands of Lehigh University students who live on Lehigh's campus and in the surrounding neighborhoods, many of whom do not have access to cars.

Unlike many predominantly low-income neighborhoods throughout our country, south Bethlehem has historically benefitted from access to affordable, healthy food thanks to direct action by our City government to secure quality supermarkets to serve our community. The announcement of Ahart's closure threatens to put the quality of life in our neighborhoods at risk and place an unfair burden on our community.

We ask that you take immediate action to recruit a new grocery store for the location at 410 Montclair Avenue, and as former Mayor Don Cunningham did in 2001, offer all economic incentives at your disposal to ensure that Southside residents have access to fresh, quality, affordable food within walking distance of their homes.

[Sign letter here](#)