

Tall building poor fit for south Bethlehem

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It is unfortunate that **Bethlehem City Council** voted 4-2 in favor of a nine-story apartment building at Fourth and (tiny) Vine streets on Southside Bethlehem. Many Bethlehem residents attended the council meeting last week, speaking of the historical inappropriateness and ridiculous scale of such a building in that location, as well as our existing dense population and traffic snarls on the Southside.

The sad part is that creating a more dense residential population is unlikely to generate the shopping and general renaissance that Bethlehem city leaders envision will happen when we have this giant structure. People who come to shop at nifty, unique shops and eat at cool restaurants are often visitors to an area, not residents. Residents will continue to drive out (as they must) for groceries, socks, jeans — the necessities of daily life. This is the tragedy of our present culture.

To attract more business and feet on the street, we can look to the success of Northside Bethlehem and restore our Southside corridor to let the interesting architectural features shine through. This, in turn, may attract more residents. Otherwise you are putting the cart before the horse.

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