

# **Community Visions for Redevelopment of the Former Bethlehem Steel Site**

Comprehensive report from  
*Friends of the Steel Community Input Forums*  
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## **Introduction:**

*Friends of the Steel* (“FOS”), is a coalition of public and private organizations and individuals dedicated to assisting in the long-term stewardship of the former Bethlehem Steel site in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In order to help ensure that the redevelopment serves the current and future citizens of Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley, FOS organized a series of open public forums where local citizens voiced their visions regarding the Steel redevelopment and its impact on their community. All comments were recorded and are presented in this report.

FOS has organized and interpreted comments from the forums in the “Principle Issues and Concerns” section, below. This section enumerates the most frequent and overarching themes and goals, supported by a range of concrete suggestions from attendees for how to achieve them. Appendix A lists the raw responses organized in general categories, while Appendix B lists the same responses but in the original format from each forum. Appendix C details the date, location, and attendance information. FOS submits this report to the public, developers and government officials so that they can draw upon community opinion to balance the many redevelopment possibilities offered by the site.

## **Purpose:**

FOS designed the forums to assist all residents, public officials and private developers concerned with the site. The 124-acre historic area is centrally located, so redevelopment will significantly shape the future of not only the Southside but also the entire City of Bethlehem. The new development will need to draw users from the adjacent community to achieve maximum success, so this summary of community needs and visions will provide essential and timely guidance to public and private decision-makers. Finally, community input from the forums may also help city leaders and planners understand how the people of Bethlehem see their community growing, developing and changing. FOS hopes that the information contained in this report will help create a smooth transition for the Bethlehem Steel property from an isolated private domain to an open, beneficial and thriving resource for the community.

## **Forum Process:**

A total of six input forums were held during the final three months of 2004. FOS attempted to organize forums in various locations throughout Bethlehem to encourage participation by a wide a range of citizens with varying ages, income levels and ethnic backgrounds. Each forum was advertised in a variety of media, including local public radio, newspapers, websites, e-mails and fliers posted in public places. At each meeting, after a brief introduction to the site and its present circumstances, attendees divided into groups of approximately eight people to brainstorm possible ideas. Members of FOS and trained facilitators answered questions and assisted in keeping the discussion moving. The forums concluded with a brief presentation by each group covering the highlights of its discussion. FOS collected the working notes from each small group discussion as well as their summary reports, attendance sheets and evaluation forms for use in creating this report.

## **Principal Issues and Concerns:**

Forum participants addressed every major element of the redevelopment. Analysis of the results identified several common issues and concerns, along with a range of practical and creative ideas. The most prominent themes, expressed throughout the forums, include:

1. **Preserving the structures to maintain the look and feel of the site**  
*"The whole ambience of the place is important."*
2. **Integrating the redeveloped areas with the community**  
*"Integrate with the community- the two should flow together."*
3. **Creating mixed uses so the site is populated night and day**  
*"Make it a vibrant 24-hour place."*
4. **Making room for open space, recreation and pedestrian access**  
*"Look to Germany for examples."*
5. **Creating a means to learn from the site**  
*"Make the entire site a learning environment."*
6. **Providing innovative transportation facilities**  
*"Transportation: public, trains, trolley - model on Sydney, Australia."*
7. **Welcoming sustained community involvement**  
*"Listen to us!"*
8. **Determining the role of gambling in the redevelopment**  
*"Pro is funding, con is that its incompatible with community."*

## **1. The redevelopment should honor workers' accomplishments by maintaining the industrial look and feel of the site through the rehabilitation of the existing structures for new uses.**

While forum participants varied in their passion and in the specific buildings they wanted to see saved, all felt that the legacy of such a significant contributor to local, national and international history should be preserved in some manner, and that the hard-working individuals who labored there should also be remembered. The historic buildings that remain represent the only surviving first generation fully integrated steel mill in the United States. The massive structures have dominated the skyline of Bethlehem for more than 130 years, while the Steel touched the lives of everyone in the community by providing good jobs and creating and supporting numerous civic and cultural entities that still define the city. Bethlehem's steelworkers helped shape the growth of the nation by making our bridges, skyscrapers and the ships of the modern US Navy. For these reasons, almost all participants expressed the desire that future generations have the opportunity to experience "the Steel" as they knew it.

Virtually everyone agreed that, if rehabilitated for new uses, the historic structures would provide a unique identity certain to heighten the appeal of any residential, commercial or entertainment developments at the site. Several participants referred to the blast furnace complex as "**America's Pyramids**". These comments indicate a powerful dual incentive for preserving the look and feel of the Steel. First, quantitative financial benefits could be realized for both the property owners and the citizens of Bethlehem in the form of greater commercial revenues, property values and municipal tax income. Second, additional benefits such as increased civic pride and the establishment of a reputation as an interesting and unique place to live and work could translate into the continuing attraction of investment in the city and region.

Suggestions for how to accomplish this goal included rehabilitating the existing buildings for new uses, designing infill construction in a complimentary manner and preserving the furnaces as symbolic icons that define the city. Every participant expressed the importance of preserving the furnaces, with some feeling that "saving at least one is vital" and many believing that all five should be kept because of their uniqueness. Several people suggested **recreating the sights, sounds and smells of the working plant**- for example, by simulating flames rising from the stacks. Comments regarding the preservation of individual buildings demonstrate the passion members of the community hold for the structures on the site. They see architectural beauty in the historic structures and do not want them replaced by "large square boxes", as one participant called them. Instead, historically informed decisions should guide planning and construction, maintaining the exteriors of existing buildings while refitting the interiors for modern uses. New construction should follow an integrated industrial theme so that the environment remains unique and rewarding to visitors and residents. Regardless of the specific usage, a majority of the attendees believe that the heritage, look and feel of the site should be respected in the redevelopment.

## **2. The development process and final outcome must be compatible with and integrated into the existing community.**

A majority of attendees expressed a desire to freely access the site. Bethlehem has developed a rich cultural heritage creating a diverse and interesting fabric of ethnic neighborhoods. Bethlehem Steel flourished in the midst of this culture but remained a separate, fenced off area. The current redevelopment project is the first opportunity to make the site an active area for use by the citizens, adding a vibrant new element to strengthen and improve the community. Many participants feel that bringing the site into the city could **transform it from a wall that divides the north and south sides into a bridge that unites them**.

Many elements contribute to integrating the site and ensuring its compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Planners must keep in mind that redevelopment will affect the whole community.

Comments such as, “**Diversity- everyone should feel welcome**” indicate the need to avoid creating an incompatible zone in the center of a diverse city. It is also vital to avoid damaging the growing Southside Renaissance. “Needs to be compatible with 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Streets,” said one participant, expressing the importance of avoiding the problems created by “The Waterfront,” a huge retail center on the site of the former US Steel’s Homestead Works near Pittsburgh that has contributed to a decline of the downtown business district. Bethlehem should also heed the lessons of other old industrial communities where redevelopment raised local property values, damaging the unique fabric of established neighborhoods. Thoughtful new property tax laws and other policies could enhance the rich ethnic diversity of Bethlehem’s neighborhoods rather than pushing out these peoples and their cultures.

Methods of achieving continuity include integrating the site with the community structurally by linking roads, sharing utilities and utilizing municipal police and fire services. Biking and walking paths should connect to the city, **fencing and gating should be strenuously avoided**, and any new buildings constructed should match the quality and flavor of the surrounding community. Finally, a new public waterfront could include a pedestrian bridge (repeatedly requested by participants) to foster unity between the north and south sides.

### **3. The redevelopment should incorporate mixed uses that will support daytime and nighttime activity.**

The site is large enough to allow for a multitude of different uses, and virtually all participants advocated striving for the diversity of a vibrant “24-hour neighborhood”. Instead of another large single entity dominating the riverfront, the community would like to see a multitude of functional and/or entertaining opportunities. Many people noted that security would be enhanced with the space being populated around the clock. Participants proposed various uses, including living spaces, retail, restaurants, recreation, entertainment, museums and places of employment that could be combined in various proportions to fill the site.

**Apartments or hotels** in the old office buildings, along with new construction and mixed-income housing, would ensure 24-hour usage of the site. Many people suggested that providing housing for a wide range of incomes would foster welcome diversity and help reduce existing housing costs.

Forum participants had divided opinions about what kind of **retail** to introduce on the site. Most were interested in preserving the character and uniqueness of the community and so opposed bringing in chain stores. Others, particularly college students, wanted at least a few chains to increase the amount of conveniently-located shopping. Restaurants also created a mix of feelings. Everyone embraced the opportunity for expanding the range of dining options, but some preferred encouraging independent local operators while others desired attracting national chains.

Participants also embraced the possibility of **recreation and entertainment** on the site. Many people agreed that there are few activities for young people or seniors in Bethlehem. A whole range of venues were discussed, from playing fields and biking trails to a climbing wall, theaters and youth and senior centers. There are many young people living in the adjacent neighborhoods that would benefit from nearby entertainment venues.

Finally, many participants felt it most important that the reuse includes manufacturing, technology or industrial career opportunities providing **jobs with a living wage**. No one wanted to see the site offering primarily the minimum wage positions offered by retail and restaurant work.

#### **4. Any redevelopment plan should include open space, outdoor recreational activities and be welcoming to all including pedestrian access.**

The former Bethlehem Steel property is the only opportunity to secure new open or green space in town, due to the Southside's high density. Giving local citizens, especially children, a place to play and exercise in the fresh air would greatly improve the quality of life for residents and enhance a visitor's experience. Many participants expressed a desire to incorporate parks, sports fields or bike/hike trails that are open to everyone. This would create a safe place for people to meet and play as well as a chance to beautify the city. Development of the site also allows the chance to satisfy the often-repeated request for public access to the river. One student, for example, pointed out that this portion of **the river could provide an almost perfect rowing course**, perhaps with collegiate boathouses and public viewing areas. This venue could be used to host amateur and professional races and would likely generate a demand for public recreational river use as well.

#### **5. Plans and methods for visitors to learn from the site should be included.**

Most participants requested the means to enrich their lives through culture and learning. An overwhelming majority felt that a **museum** was essential, and many stressed the need for experiential learning within it. Instead of simply viewing objects, forum participants wanted to experience and participate in exhibits so they can better understand the processes and work involved in steelmaking and other industrial pursuits. Just as importantly, many wish to see the interpretation of the steelworking experience expanded to pervade the whole site, beyond simply a single museum building. Suggestions offered to accomplish this included a **historic walk** or the re-creation of experiences where visitors could see, touch, hear and smell the realities of an active steel mill. Many people also expressed a desire for the site to offer new opportunities **for arts and cultural venues**, suggesting industrial sculpture studios, performing arts centers and indoor and outdoor galleries. The combination of high-quality exhibit space and the Smithsonian Institution affiliation of several local organizations could allow, for the first time, the display of major exhibits in the Lehigh Valley. Also, several participants were interested in traditional learning opportunities through research archives, a library, and academic institutions such as a community college or technical school.

#### **6. The site contains the key to an innovative transportation hub for the Lehigh Valley.**

Bethlehem has an active mass transit system in place, however, some elements are lacking. Like many eastern cities, there is too little parking to meet the needs of the city. Also, although Bethlehem is within two hours of both New York and Philadelphia, there are no easy transportation connections to these destinations. Moreover, to successfully develop this huge site would require creating some sort of internal transportation system to facilitate maximum access.

Forum participants suggested creating a transportation hub on the site. The hub would include a larger bus station with easier highway access and more parking. The railroad tracks already in place along the river could be used for a passenger system connecting New York, Bethlehem and Philadelphia. Having such a hub would make Bethlehem the **focal point of the Lehigh Valley and a vital transportation center for the larger region**. Finally, a transportation system to move people around the huge site could be developed using the existing plant railways, such as the elevated ore car tracks on the Hoover-Mason trestle. Several participants suggested converting the **ore cars into people movers**, stating that "rail fans would come just to ride the unique 6 foot gauge line". This system could eventually link the downtown areas, increasing community and visitor access to various segments within the site and to the local business districts beyond it.

**7. The community wants to continue to be involved in the redevelopment process through all its steps and beyond.**

Research indicates that any significant change process benefits from the input of those who will be directly impacted by the change. Participation creates buy-in and commitment to the change process. Bethlehem's citizens are ready and excited to share their views and continue to be involved. Because it will be such a large component of the city, people want to have input in its continuing development. Some suggested that the younger generations should be made responsible because they will be the ones who live with and utilize the site for years. They will be the ones who will help the project succeed or regret any missteps. Those who attended the forums expressed a **need for the community to be educated** on what is taking place at the site. The new ownership makes this involvement more possible in the future, and FOS hopes the call by one participant for "More Forums!" is heeded.

**8. The reaction to the possibility of gambling is mixed, with strong opinions both "for" and "against" it.**

The citizens of Bethlehem appear to be torn over the possibility of gambling coming to the former Steel site. Gambling was a controversial topic at all the forums. People against it spoke out vehemently, but those for it were equally convinced. Much of the conversation focused on the revenue gambling could bring to the city as well as how it would affect the community.

Those who spoke in support of gambling emphasized the revenue and tax base a casino would create, noting that the incoming cash may help pay for the development of the rest of the site, making the process move more swiftly. It may also give seniors and other adults entertainment and a place to meet. Those against gambling argued that the promised income is just a quick fix and will end up destroying the community. Many of them suggested that the money brought in by the casino would be kept in-house rather than spreading throughout the community, as gamblers will patronize only the casino restaurants and shops. They also argued that a casino might attract people and activities that would not help the city but rather create social problems. Finally, opponents felt that gambling did not fit with the character of Bethlehem as the Christmas City and a college town.

Everyone in attendance had strong beliefs about the question of gambling, but, like Pennsylvania in general, that **opinion is divided**. Refreshingly, some comments of compromise were offered, such as "keep gambling in ONE location and make sure the money is used for preservation!"

## **Conclusion:**

The people of Bethlehem and the Lehigh Valley are very excited and generally optimistic about the future of the Steel site. Their primary concern, present in all the discussions, is that the community has a say in what happens there so that the end result is beautiful, respectful of the history of the site and the city and supportive of a thriving future for their neighborhoods, community and region.

Forum participants ranged widely in their vision, seeing the redevelopment's impact on everything from property values, the daily business of child-rearing and the need for jobs to transportation and the importance of conveying the significance of the Steel to regional, national and international visitors and scholars. *Friends of the Steel* strongly urges public officials and private developers to embrace the energy and imagination of the local community, and to make expanding and continuing communication with local citizens a cornerstone of their planning. It is now Bethlehem's turn to take charge of "the Steel," and make sure in its new incarnation that it still brings pride and prosperity to the whole community.

***For more information, please contact Friends of the Steel by email at  
"info@friendsofthesteel.org"***

# Appendix A

## Compilation of All Forum Comments (organized by similarity)

### **Community:**

- Architecture – Neighborhoods
- Southside – Ethnic Churches
- Forums are good—need to know what the people say
- Integration w/ Community
- Roads Open
- No Borders / Fences
- Local Emphasis
- Link events to existing community events
- Uphold Standards – New Buildings should fit demands for preserving history
- Help the whole community
- Strict design criteria (regulate noise, flashing lights, etc.)
- Needs to be compatible with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> street
- Cultural, industrial, religious and historical heritage should be incorporated into the site
- Diversity on the site – everyone should feel welcome
- Pedestrian friendly
- Pedestrian bridge to link north and south sides, bringing together the split community
- All development subject to Master Plan, which in turn is subject to community input
- Integrate with the community—the two should flow together
- Bring Southside together
- Anything but a shopping mall—keep the quality and flavor of the city
- Extend historic / religious / cultural feel and quality of the city
- Celebrate diversity
- Keep up already existing neighborhoods
- Everything works together—local and national
- All changes affect the community, be careful
- Maintain the integrity of the Southside—keep community intact
- Get local people involved in everything
- Do not care what goes there as long as something is developed to help community
- Can't be worse than the Steel, with its pollution and working conditions
- More access to the site
- Bethlehem is a very special town
- Space should be open and welcoming to all people

### **Preserve the “look and feel”:**

- Buildings – Reuse when possible
- RR tracks / PBNE
- #2 Machine Shop – Must Be Saved!
- Protect the Plant Site/ Blast Furnaces
- Capture Sights, Sounds, Smells
- Recreate the “Steel Experience”
- Use Welfare Room
- Create a Steel Festival
- Celebrate Heritage

- Do NOT tear down the buildings!
- Reuse buildings for: Housing, Senior housing, Apartments – (1 family + 2) in main office, Hotel(s)
- Retain & Restore – Historical focus
- Blast Furnaces – Keep All 5 & Illuminate
- #2 Machine Shop
- Iron Foundry
- National Museum – Industrial History
- Smithsonian? Funding? Donate Items?
- Possibly demolish buildings closest to Minsi Trail Bridge
- Catwalk near ore cars should be saved – steelworker’s names & initials in treads
- Don’t do anything with the historic buildings that can not be undone.
- Consider modular development of interiors
- Museum – preservation of site; save buildings
- Preserve site, especially Machine Shop #2
- Preserve Power House (steam turbines if they exist)
- Keep part of the history of the steel
- Keep the old buildings and reuse the insides
- Save the Steel
- Keep integrity and restore buildings—respect what we have on the Southside
- The whole ambience of the place is important
- Keep existing buildings
- Keep blast furnaces for memories
- Make it lasting for future generations
- Restore at least one blast furnace for tours—historic attraction
- Most want to keep the feel of steel mill—in future try to replicate the feel of working mill—show how hard people worked
- While in operation it affected everyone—memories of noise, soot, etc.
- Save buildings—impossible to replace once taken down
- Whoever gets the blast furnaces needs to consider the context of the site
- Save it all
- Preserve as much as possible
- Former employees need recognition—leave something standing as a museum
- Preserve all 5 blast furnaces—unique to Bethlehem and among themselves
- Blast furnaces really stand out—turn into a museum
- It was an integrated mill, so “Out of justice, we should keep it integrated”—keep the shells of the buildings
- Europe keeps the past, “I feel like we’re tearing down history”—it’s a travesty and we’re “destroying America”
- Maybe we shouldn’t make it about drawing people—consider the history and contribution and character of city first
- Large park including historical things
- Open to public before changing anything so people can see and document the site—always fenced off before
- Must save all 5 furnaces
- One furnace o.k. as representative
- One furnace should be restored & interpreted, others just painted
- Should be listed as National Landmark
- Preservation tax should be enacted to pay for maintaining the ambience of historic area – it is why people come to Bethlehem
- People will come to a preserved industrial site – they will want to take their friends & families
- People will come for the heritage, history, to relax, bring families
- Preserve overall flavor of industrial site
- Reuse buildings to keep sense of the mill
- Continue the momentum of Bethlehem’s trade in history
- The “big deal” will be the Bethlehem Steel park

- Retention of some steelmaking equipment important
- Historic & Economic use of the buildings
- Save as many buildings as possible
- Essential to save Blast Furnaces
- Preserve as much history as possible – use Welfare Room
- Blast Furnaces on par with pyramids, ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia
- Historical development of remaining steel site
- Tours of historic buildings
- Retain structures that were instrumental in the economy of the Lehigh Valley
- Historic element would attract visitors from all over
- Here is a great part of what makes this country strong. It should be revered. We need to pay attention to that.
- Use theme of Steel & Industry
- Bethlehem Police should wear old gear, ride horses
- Need significant area to keep history—don't push it into the background
- Keep the industrial feel / look and put in new stuff—unique and more rewarding than mall
- Convert, not replace, buildings with malls
- Divide the larger buildings into smaller stores so they don't knock down the great architecture and replace it with “large square boxes”

### **Learn from site:**

- NMIH ( all industry)
- Steel – Interactive exhibits
- Show how to make steel
- IMAX Theatre
- Steelworkers' Archives – Education
- Youth Emphasis
- Museum is key
- Education is key
- National Museum / Industry
- Colleges
- Interpretation of history
- School Visits
- Research Facility
- Archives
- Museum: Education, Education, Education!
- Interactive learning
- Living exhibits
- Remember the Steel
- Remember the People
- Education – Community College
- Use stories from Steelworkers
- Museum!
- Tours, tactile/experiential – turning ore into iron
- Collect stories
- Art museum to Smithsonian specs / artists
- Cultural museum to remember all the groups who came, lived and worked here
- National audience—integrate history into all aspects of site
- Make museum experiential and hands on—very important
- Museum is great if they can pull it off—make it interactive so can touch artifacts and have films in theater at museum

- Maybe a dome theater like at planetarium to show IMAX movies
- Huge museum that shows the scale of what went on there
- History museum would generate visitation
- Museum should operate like the Smithsonian
- Use actors to make “living museum” – show steel working
- Show history of steelmaking in general and Bethlehem Steel in particular, and work of producing steel
- Modern public library
- Library
- Need museum to work with community
- Make entire site a learning environment

### **Recreation/entertainment:**

- Playground
- Fishing – boat rides
- Band Shell
- Water Park
- Children’s Park
- Recreation – indoor & out
- Provide new uses – e.g., light show
- Skate Park
- Foundry – climbing walls
- Ride Iron Ore Cars
- Elevated track – turn into a ride/people mover
- Rail fans would come to ride 6 foot gauge
- Preserve sights & sounds of steel
- Boat Rides
- Beach
- Bowling
- Swimming
- Inline Skate Park – (perhaps under elevated track)
- Bike Trails
- Swimming / skating / bowling—other recreation to attract families
- Recreation—bowling alley
- Baseball fields
- No amusement park!
- Sports courts / fields
- Balloon rides
- Get something lit up and active down there
- Boat rides on the river
- LU Crew team would like to see the river opened up so they could actually host competitions- having a boat house on the river would open up a new form of recreation for the city
- Bicycle along the river
- Docks on river for canoeing
- Outdoor park – connect to river (like Rodale park)
- Trails should connect and go somewhere
- Walking paths - encourage outdoor physical activity
- Planted gardens – flowers
- Greenhouses – hothouses
- Walking paths
- Bike paths
- Playground for teenagers

- Citizen Center for everyone
- River Entertainment / Activities
- More open park area
- Tourism
- Walking tours of site
- Convention / Conference Center
- Use active RR as part of attraction
- Rail excursions for tourists
- Water for recreation
- The longest rowing track in America could be created if the waterfront was opened up—huge draw because it is something not many places can physically have—bring in lots of people.
- Need to bring in a blend of activities to appeal to a broad audience
- If get things in there the students will use it
- Great if could make it draw internationally
- Light up blast furnaces (might disturb residents)
- Combination of uses
- Sports Center
- Convention Center:
- Hotel
- Arena

### **Living spaces:**

- Residential Areas
- Hotel
- Housing: Mixed – Multi-Income
- Multi-use site—integrate housing and shops
- Mixed use—housing will make the area safer because people will be around all the time
- Hotels necessary
- Compatibility of uses important
- Maintain housing—don't push out low and middle income people
- If plan ahead we can get mix—affordable housing and upper class as well
- “Any affordable student housing or parking would be good—at the least it would help bring other prices down”
- Living spaces—better options on Southside and tax breaks for residential
- Maybe hotels need to come after some development begins
- Better hotel—more upscale
- Residential lofts in historic buildings
- Affordable housing needed
- Low-Cost housing vital
- Small condos
- Apartments
- Senior citizens housing
- Homeless Shelter

### **Open community areas:**

- Bicycle Friendly
- Safe Environment
- Parks!
- Open Fields – “don't hit a kid, give them a place to play”
- Bike & Hike Trails

- Lehigh University land exchange? (we'll share)
- Green Space – not on flood plain
- Perhaps a lateral park or greenway
- Keep green areas and walking space
- Public Access to Waterfront
- More fields and tennis courts for everyone so kids can go and goof around
- Do something with the open spaces—empty spaces and RR tracks
- Look to Germany for examples
- walking trail – with animals allowed
- Recreation / Parks for Family, friends
- Fountains

### **Gambling:**

- Pro: Funding
- Con: Not Compatible with community
- NO SLOTS!!
- Pros – means to an end - \$ to preserve historic fabric of site
- Cons – just doesn't fit
- Casinos don't fit with the culture of a college town and would be a drain on our resource by creating social problems.
- Gambling will only hurt the community and push people out
- We're promoted as a Christmas city—keep that culture and heritage intact, gambling contradicts the image
- Gambling might be ok somewhere else, but not on that site or in South Bethlehem.
- Bethlehem is a destination city and could be more, being the Christmas city and incorporating gambling
- Fight gaming—appeal to younger kids—give alternatives to drugs and alcohol
- Gambling barge to keep it out of city?
- Gambling favorable to most
- Non-gated community, but don't want Bethlehem police spread too thin—Casino would need to be gated with its own security
- Casino may help jumpstart process, creating funds to work with so whatever plan can be implemented quicker
- No dining in the Casino so people have to go into community to eat
- Gambling / entertainment / shopping—whole package
- Casino—all money kept in house so it will not help community businesses
- Disney better than gaming
- Gaming o.k.
- Keep in one area & make sure the \$ goes into preservation
- No Gambling!
- No Slots!
- Oppose Gaming
- Gaming is exploitative
- Once gambling takes root, the money takes over
- Casinos attract a certain type of people that won't necessarily help the community

### **Jobs & Economy:**

- Build Industry
- Manufacturing wages (\$8/hr & ↑)
- No Minimum Wage
- Employment – other than museum ticket takers
- Create jobs where people can walk to work

- Good paying jobs so people don't travel so far
- Increase tax base so our taxes go down
- Improve the economy, trickle down to help all
- Things that bring in jobs through all shifts—solid jobs, not just park areas
- Inner harbor helped Baltimore out of its economic problems—need convention center and educational space like aquarium or science center
- Promote economic growth in the city and particularly the South side
- Vital to economic rejuvenation
- Consider professional sport team as something to bring in money
- Southside needs economic development
- Need a convention center—big economic draw, possibly even from NYC and help some trickle down economics
- Dam the river for hydroelectric power for city or campus
- Tourism types of service businesses to support people who come to the museum
- Free parking zones
- Community not have enough money to support it—need to have something that brings people in—national and international
- Ice skating helped to pull in whole region, do more with that
- Appeal to college kids—bring money into community
- Convention center—not many around here

- **Arts & Culture:**

- Major entertainment center – quality shows
- Jazz/blues music venues
- Music Facility
- MusikFest
- Incorporate MusikFest and ArtsQuest
- Theaters / shows very upper class, might not help the community if people just come to go to them and then go home
- Many opposed to moving MusikFest down there
- Big art museum
- Venue for industrial art – steel sculpture
- Follow the strong movement for art/culture that has started in town
- School for artists
- Venue for large outdoor sculpture
- Working studios & galleries
- Theatre – like State Theatre in Easton
- Performing Arts Center
- Need year round entertainment
- Possible memorial to 9/11—since Beth Steel designed WTC

- **Commercial:**

- Restaurants
- Shopping (unique preferred over chains)
- Independent vendors preferred- keep \$ in Bethlehem
- Shopping – complement N & S side
- Partially retail
- Make it unique from standard shopping centers
- Barnes and Noble type stores ok
- Branch of the Moravian Book Store?

- Farmer's market enlarged
  - Students want easy / useful retail within walking distance—Target/Wal-Mart
  - New possibilities like movie theater / retail / restaurants
  - There is no modern part of the Southside, bring in more chain restaurants and stores
  - Controlled commercialism ok
  - No Chain Stores – Enough Malls!
  - No Malls!
  - “Local” shops best
  - Privately owned businesses
  - Limited national retail chains
  - Eliminate retail chains
  - Eating places within confines of original structures
  - Outlet center
  - Each retail venue should have unique identity
  - Do NOT ruin the retail on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sts.
  - Hotel is needed
  - Restaurants along river
  - No McDonald's – “You don't want to go to a goddamn McDonald's”
  - “Steelworkers' Diner”
  - Students want “chains” for convenience
  - Skate Zone is great—more attractions like that
  - Night clubs
  - Combo buildings—stores / restaurants / parking
  - Variety of shopping, hotels and restaurants—quality shops so not have to go to the mall
  - Media center—TV / radio / newspaper
  - Students want to see movie theater on Southside
  - Expanded restaurant selection including sit down and nicer restaurants
  - Something for kids and seniors—bingo / slots, electronic boutique, space for performances, skate park
  - Community has nothing to offer Lehigh students for entertainment besides bars
  - Mix of uses that are integrated
  - Tourism: Use Steel Bldg. as visitors' center
  - Theme Restaurants – Inside Steel Bldgs
  - Hotel / Convention Center
  - Retail / Restaurants
  - Farmers Market/gardens/access to river/connection between north and south sides/quiet areas
  - Conference center
  - Hotel (full service)
  - Cyber café
  - Peddler's Village concept
  - Remember the kids/teens – green space; arcades; skating; rollerblading, etc.
- 
- **Transportation:**
  - Transportation Center – (buses, parking)
  - Pedestrian bridge across the river
  - Train to Philly and NYC
  - Transportation – public; trains; mass transit; trolley year-round (Sydney, Australia is a good model for this)
  - Transportation center with RR to NY & Philadelphia
  - Possibly passenger rail to NYC or Philly
  - Monorail / transportation system – connect outside the site
  - Desperate need of parking facilities—garages or lots, but not want everything paved over

- Is there space for parking down there?
- Trolley line from one bridge to another

- **Other:**

- Priority of Use: #1 = Local, #2 = Regional, #3 = International
- Evaluate long-term viability of plans
- Listen to Us!
- More Forums!
- Audience: world wide / families / students
- Need safe school environment
- Create a vibrant 24 hour space—night clubs and hotels
- Hurry up and do something!
- Tell Perruci we have faith that he will choose the best developer
- People are apathetic and complacent
- Need to educate the community so they are not taken advantage of
- Make young people responsible—dynamic with new ideas—consequences will be long term so be careful
- If we have a positive stable plan, anything would be better than rusty ruins
- College kids could stay in train cars / study
- **NO:** Daycare, Schools, Elderly housing, Prisons, Chain Stores that Stand Alone, horseracing

# Appendix B

## Community Input Comments (organized by forum)

### FORUM 1

#### **Table 1**

- Historic Preservation:
  - Buildings – Reuse when possible
  - RR tracks / PBNE
  - #2 Machine Shop – Must Be Saved
- Tourism:
  - Use Steel Bldg. as visitors' center
  - Transportation Center – (buses, parking)
  - Restaurants –
  - Themed
  - Inside Steel Bldgs
- Museum:
  - NMIH ( all industry)
  - Steel – Interactive
  - Show how to make steel
  - IMAX Theatre
- Entertainment & Retail:
  - Shopping – complement N & S side
  - Use Bldgs
  - Band Shell
  - Water Park
  - Children's Park
- Bicycle Friendly
- Residential Areas
- Hotel
- Safe Environment

#### **Table 2**

- Protect the Plant Site/ Blast Furnaces
- Provide new uses – e.g., light show
- Historic Preservation
- Steelworkers' Archives – Education
- National Museum / Industry
- Architecture – Neighborhoods
- Southside – Ethnic Churches
- Uphold Standards – New Bldgs fit demands for preserving history
- Marketing:
  - Hotel / Convention Center
  - Retail / Restaurants
  - Recreation / Parks
  - Family, friends
  - Sports Center

### Table 3

- Youth Emphasis:
- Museum
- Education
- Recreation – indoor & out
- Integration w/ Community:
- Roads Open
- No Borders – Fences
- Local Emphasis
- Education:
- Colleges
- Interpretation
- School Visits
- Research Facility
- Archives
- Housing
- Mixed – Multi-Income
- Capture Sites, Sounds, Smells
- Steel Experience
- Use Welfare Room
- Steel Festival
- Celebrate Heritage
- Convention Center:
- Hotel
- Arena
- Arts & Culture
- Public Access to Waterfront
- Gambling:
- Pros & Cons
- Funding
- Not Compatible
- Priority of Use:
  - #1 = Local
  - #2 = Regional
  - #3 = International
- **NO:**
  - Daycare
  - Schools
  - Elderly
  - Prison
  - Chain Stores that Stand Alone

### Table 4

- Do NOT Tear Down the Buildings
  - Reuse them
- Use them for:
  - Housing
  - Senior housing
  - Apartments – (1 family + 2) – main office
  - Hotel(s)

- Museum: Education, Education, Education!
  - Interactive
  - Living
  - Remember the Steel
  - Remember the People
- Build Industry:
  - Manufacturing (8- ↑)
  - No Min Wage
- Recreation:
  - Skate Park
  - Foundry – climbing walls
- NO SLOTS!!
- Retail:
  - Invite Retail
  - Evaluate long-term viability
- Parks:
  - Open Fields – don't hit a kid, give them a place to play
  - Bike & Hike Trails
  - Lehigh Land Exchange – we'll share
- Listen to Us
- More Forums

### **Table 5**

- Retain & Restore – Historic al:
  - Blast Furnaces – All 5 & Illuminate
  - #2 Machine Shop
  - Iron Foundry
- National Museum – Industrial History
- Smithsonian? Funding? Donate Items?
- Possibly demolish bldgs closest to Minsi Trail Bridge
- Farmer's Market
- Music Facility
- MusikFest
- Baseball Stadium
- Iron Ore Cars
- Elevated track – turn into a ride/people mover
  - Rail fans would come to ride 6 foot gauge
- Preserve sights & sounds of steel
- Catwalk near ore cars should be saved – name & initial in treads
- Green Space – not on flood plain
- Employment – other than museum ticket takers
- Boat Rides
- Beach
- Recreation:
  - Bowling
  - Swimming
  - Skate Park – (perhaps under elevated track)
  - Bike Trails
- Retail – Specialty shops
- Education – Community College is already coming
- Use stories from Steelworkers
- Preserve Power House if they exist (steam turbines)

- Trolley line from one bridge to another

## FORUM 2

### **Table 3**

- Museum – preservation of site; save buildings
- Preserve site, especially Machine Shop 2
- Strict design criteria (regulate noise, flashing lights, etc.)
- Don't do anything with the historic buildings that can not be undone. Consider modular development of interiors
- Mixed-use (residential, retail, etc.)
- Gambling:
  - Pros – means to an end - \$ to preserve historic fabric of site
  - Cons – just doesn't fit
- Cultural, industrial, religious and historical heritage should be incorporated into the site
- Diversity on the site – everyone should feel welcome
- Pedestrian friendly
- Farmers Market/gardens/access to river/connection between north and south sides/quiet areas
- Transportation – public; trains; mass transit; trolley year-round (Sydney, Australia is a good model for this)
- Remember the kids/teens – green space; arcades; skating; rollerblading, etc.
- Fountains
- Major entertainment center – quality shows
- Jazz/blues music venues
- Hotel
- All development subject to Master Plan, which in turn is subject to community input
- Restaurants
- Shopping (unique preferred over chains)
- Independent vendors

### **Table 4**

- Audience:
  - world wide / families / students
  - learning environment
- Museum:
  - tours, tactile/experiential – turning ore into iron
- monorail / transportation system – connect outside the site
- collect stories
- art museum to Smithsonian specs / artists
- Community:
  - walking trail – animals allowed
  - playground
  - fishing – boat rides
  - link events to existing community events
  - college kids stay in train cars / study
- Revenue:
  - conference center
  - hotel (full service)
  - cyber café
  - Peddler's Village concept
  - retail & restaurant

## Table 5

- Integrate with the community—the two should flow together
- Bring Southside together
- Anything but a shopping mall—keep the quality and flavor of the city
- Save the Steel
- Partially retail
- Recreation—bowling alley
- Keep the old buildings and reuse the inside
- Extend historic / religious / cultural feel and quality of the city
- Keep part of the history and the steel
- The whole ambience of the place is important
- Keep integrity and restore—respect what we have on the Southside
- Celebrate diversity
- Cultural museum to remember all the groups who came, lived and worked here
- Casinos don't fit with the culture of a college town and would be a drain on our resource by creating social problems.
- Create jobs where people can walk to work
- Gambling will only hurt the community and push people out
- We're promoted as a Christmas city—keep that culture and heritage intact, gambling contradicts the image
- Gambling might be ok somewhere else, but not on that site or in South Bethlehem.
- Bethlehem is a destination city and could be more being the Christmas city and incorporating gambling
- National audience—integrate history into all aspects of site
- Make museum experiential and hands on—very important
- Maintain the integrity of the Southside—keep community intact
- Maintain housing—don't push out low and middle income people
- Multi-use site—integrate housing and shops
- Perhaps a lateral park or greenway
- Keep up already existing neighborhoods
- Everything works together—local and national
- All changes affect the community, be careful
- Need safe school environment
- Swimming / skating / bowling—other recreation to attract families
- Keep green areas and walking space
- Baseball field
- No horseracing
- Ice skating helped to pull in whole region, do more with that
- Appeal to college kids—bring money into community
- Fight gaming—appeal to younger kids—give alternatives to drugs and alcohol
- Sports courts / fields
- Incorporate MusicFest and ArtsQuest
- Keep existing buildings
- Compatibility of uses
- Convention center—not many around here
- Mixed use—housing will make the area safer because people will be around all the time
- Hotels necessary
- Museum is great if can pull it off—make it interactive so can touch artifacts and have films in theater at museum
- Maybe a dome theater like at planetarium to show IMAX movies
- Keep buildings—need to preserve and feel where the steel was and keep the atmosphere
- Pedestrian bridge across the river
- Balloon rides
- Gambling barge to keep it out of city?
- Get local people involved in everything

- Unique from shopping centers
- Barnes and Nobel type stores ok
- Branch of the Moravian Book Store?
- Combo buildings—stores / restaurants / parking
- Farmer's market enlarged
- Media center—TV / radio / newspaper
- Train to Philly and NYC

### FORUM 3

- Do not care what goes there as long as something is developed to help community
- Good paying jobs so people don't travel so far
- Increase tax base so our taxes go down
- Can't be worse than the Steel with pollution and working conditions
- Gambling favorable to most
- Get something lit up and active down there
- Non-gated community, but don't want Bethlehem police spread too thin—Casino would need to be gated with its own security
- Improve the economy, trickle down to help all
- Something for kids and seniors—bingo / slots, electronic boutique, space for performances, skate park
- Keep blast furnaces for memories
- Make young people responsible—dynamic with new ideas—consequences will be long term so be careful
- Help the whole community
- Make it lasting for future generations
- If we have a positive stable plan, anything would be better
- Restore to tourable at least one blast furnace—historic attraction
- Most want to keep the feel of steel mill—in future try to replicate the feel of working mill—show how hard people worked
- While in operation it affected everyone—memories of noise, soot, etc.
- Variety of shopping, hotels and restaurants—quality shops so not have to go to the mall
- Things that bring in jobs through all shifts—solid jobs, not just park areas
- Create a vibrant 24 hour space—night clubs and hotels
- Boat rides on the river
- Pedestrian bridge to link north and south sides, brining together the split community
- More access to the site
- Save buildings—impossible to replace once taken down
- Advertise forums more
- Casino may help jumpstart process, creating funds to work with so whatever plan can be implemented quicker
- Whoever gets the blast furnaces needs to consider the context of the site
- Hurry up and do something!
- Community has nothing to offer Lehigh students for entertainment besides bars
- Need year round entertainment
- Community not have enough money to support it—need to have something that brings people in—national and international
- Theaters / shows very upper class, might not help the community if people just come to go to them and then left
- People are apathetic and complacent
- Tell Perruci we have faith that he will choose the best developer
- Gambling / entertainment / shopping—whole package
- If plan ahead can get mix—affordable housing and upper class as well
- Need to educate the community so they are not taken advantage of

## FORUM 4

- Museum:
  - Show history of steelmaking in general and Bethlehem Steel in particular, and work of producing steel
- Preservation:
  - Retention of some steelmaking equipment
  - Historic & Economic use of the buildings
  - Save as many buildings as possible
  - Essential to save Blast Furnaces
  - Preserve as much history as possible – use Welfare Room
  - Blast Furnaces on par with pyramids, ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia
  - Historical development of remaining steel site
  - Tours of historic buildings
  - Retain structures that were instrumental in the economy of the Lehigh Valley
  - Historic element would attract visitors from all over
- Retail & Restaurants:
  - Controlled commercialism
  - No Chain Stores – Enough Malls
  - No Malls!
  - “Local” shops
  - Privately owned businesses
  - Limited national retail chains
  - Eliminate retail chains
  - Eating places within confines of original structures
- Tourism:
  - Tourism types of service businesses to support people who come to the museum
  - Free parking zones
  - Walking tours of site
  - Convention / Conference Center
- Housing:
  - Low-Cost Housing
  - Small condos
  - Apartments
  - Senior citizens housing
  - Homeless Shelter
- Gambling:
  - No Gambling!
  - No Slots!
- Recreation & Riverfront:
  - Walking path
  - Bike path
  - Playground for teenagers
  - Citizen Center for everyone
  - River Entertainment / Activities
  - More park area
  - Theatre – like State Theatre in Easton
  - Performing Arts Center
- Transportation:
  - Transportation center with RR to NY & Philadelphia
- Education:
  - Modern public library

## FORUM 5

- Many opposed to moving MusicFest down there
- Casino—all money kept in house so not help community businesses
- Needs to be compatible with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> street
- No dining in the Casino so people have to go outside to eat
- Students want to see movie theater on Southside
- Expanded restaurant selection including sit down and nicer restaurants
- Students want easy / useful retail within walking distance—Target/Wal-Mart
- Inner harbor helped Baltimore out of its economic problems—need convention center and educational space like aquarium or science center
- New possibilities like movie theater / retail / restaurants
- Promote economic growth in the city and particularly the South side
- Vital to economic rejuvenation
- Former employees need recognition—leave something standing or a museum
- Blast furnaces really stand out—turn into a museum
- Consider professional sport team as something to bring in money
- Is space for parking down there
- Is an integrated mill “Almost out of justice, we should keep it integrated”—keep the shells of the buildings
- Preserve all 5 blast furnaces—unique to Bethlehem and among themselves
- Europe keeps the past “I feel like we’re tearing down history” it’s a travesty and we’re “destroying America”
- Maybe we shouldn’t make it about drawing people—consider the history and contribution and character of city first
- Save it all
- Preserve as much as possible
- Do something with the open spaces—empty spaces and RR tracks
- Southside needs economic development
- Need to bring in a blend of activities to appeal to a broad audience
- There is no modern part of the Southside, bring in more chain restaurants and stores
- Crew team would like to see the river opened up so they could actually host competitions and having a boat house on the river would open up a new form of recreation for the city
- More fields and tennis courts for everyone so kids can go and goof around
- Large park including historical things
- Look to Germany for examples
- Night clubs
- Light up blast furnaces, might disturb residents
- Possibly passenger rail to NYC or Philly
- Great if could make it draw internationally
- Open to public before change anything so people can see and document the site—always fenced off before
- Skate Zone is great—more attractions like that
- Need museum to work with
- If get things in there the students can use they will use it
- Combination of uses
- Living spaces—better options on Southside and tax breaks for residential
- Better hotel—more upscale
- Maybe hotels need to come after some development begins
- Possible memorial to 9/11—Beth Steel created the plans
- Desperate need of parking facilities—garages or lots, but not want everything paved over
- “Any affordable student housing or parking would be good”—at the least it would help bring other prices down
- Need a convention center—big economic draw, possibly even from NYC and help some trickle down economics
- Need significant area to keep history—don’t push it into the background

- Convert not replace buildings with malls
- Divide the larger buildings into smaller stores so they don't knock down the great architecture and replace it with "large square boxes"
- Keep the industrial feel / look and put in new stuff—unique and more rewarding than mall
- Students want "chains" for convenience
- Casino attract a certain type of people that won't necessarily help the community
- Forums are good—need to know what the people say
- Dam the river for hydroelectric power for city or campus
- Water for recreation
- The longest rowing track in America could be created if the waterfront was opened up—huge draw because it is something not many places can physically have—bring in lots of people

## FORUM 6

- Oppose Gaming:
  - Gaming is Exploitive
  - Once gambling takes root, the money takes over
  - Disney better than gaming
- Gaming o.k.:
  - Keep in one area & make sure the \$ goes into preservation
- Museum:
  - Huge museum that shows the scale of what went on there
  - History museum would generate visitation
  - Museum should operate like the Smithsonian
  - Use actors to make "living museum" – show steel working
- Arts & Culture:
  - Big art museum
  - Venue for industrial art – steel sculpture
  - Follow the strong movement for art/culture
  - School for artists
  - Venue for large outdoor sculpture
  - Working studios & galleries
- Preservation:
  - Must save all 5 furnaces
  - One furnace o.k. as representative
  - One furnace should be restored & interpreted, others just painted
  - Should be listed as National Landmark
  - Preservation tax should be enacted to pay for maintaining the ambience of a historic area – it is why people come
  - People will come to a preserved industrial site – they will want to take their friends & families
  - People will come for the heritage, history, to relax, bring families
  - Preserve overall flavor of industrial site
  - Reuse buildings to keep sense of the mill
  - Continue the momentum of Bethlehem's trade in history
  - The "big deal" will be the Bethlehem Steel park
- Restaurants:
  - Along river
  - No McDonald's – "You don't want to go to a goddamn McDonald's"
  - "Steelworkers' Diner"
- Retail:
  - Outlet shopping

- Each retail should have unique identity
- Do NOT ruin the retail on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sts.
- Hotel is needed
- Housing:
  - Residential lofts in historic buildings
  - Affordable housing
- RR:
  - Use active RR as part of attraction
  - Rail excursions for tourists
- Recreation, Waterfront & Outdoor Areas:
  - Bicycle along the river
  - Docks on river for canoeing
  - Outdoor park – connect to river (like Rodale park)
  - Trails should connect and go somewhere
  - Walking paths - encourage outdoor physical activity
  - Planted gardens – flowers
  - Greenhouses – hothouses

Bethlehem is a very special town

Here is a great part of what makes this country strong. It should be revered. We need to pay attention to that.

Use theme of Steel & Industry

Mix of uses that are integrated

Library

Space should be open and welcoming to all people

Bethlehem Police should wear old gear, ride horses

No amusement park

# Appendix C

## Summary of Forums

### **Forum 1:**

Trinity UCC Church  
Center & North Streets, Bethlehem  
October 13, 2004  
Attendance: 30

### **Forum 2:**

Cathedral Church of the Nativity  
321 Wyandotte Street, Bethlehem  
November 9, 2004  
Attendance: 16

### **Forum 3:**

Concordia Lutheran Church  
1240 E 4th Street, Bethlehem  
November 18, 2004  
Attendance: 6

### **Forum 4:**

Northampton Community College “Update Program”  
3835 Green Pond Road, Bethlehem  
November 23, 2004  
Attendance: 13

*NOTE: This was a presentation as part of NCC’s adult education program. It was not a formal forum, however, written responses to the question “What would you like to see on the former Bethlehem Steel site?” were solicited. Thirteen responses were received and included as part of the forum input.*

### **Forum5:**

Lehigh University  
27 Memorial Drive West, Bethlehem  
November 30, 2004  
Attendance: 16

### **Forum 6:**

Calypso Elementary School  
1021 Calypso Avenue, Bethlehem  
December 6, 2004  
Attendance: 3

***For more information, please contact Friends of the Steel by email at  
“info@friendsofthesteel.org”***