



Work on Lehigh Valley's newest Sheetz rapidly progressing with opening set for spring

- Ryan Kneller / Jan 17, 2024



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BETHLEHEM, Pa. - A popular chain offering gas, custom food and drinks and various convenience items is expanding its footprint in the Lehigh Valley.

Sheetz, the Blair County-based chain with more than 700 locations across six states, is planning to open its eighth Lehigh Valley location this spring on East Fourth Street, just west of Emery Street, in south Bethlehem.

The fueling station canopy has already been erected and construction is underway on the convenience store. The new Sheetz location will operate about a mile north of its rival Wawa's newest Lehigh Valley gas station and convenience store, which opened in December at 770 Hellertown Road in Bethlehem, near Saucon Park. "The store is scheduled to open to the public in early May," said Harry Hammel, spokesperson for Sheetz.

Sheetz is known for its made-to-order food, including burgers, chicken sandwiches, burritos and appetizers, and specialty drinks such as cold-brew coffee, lattes, smoothies, and milkshakes.

The company operates more than 700 locations across Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, and Maryland, with all locations open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Sheetz also has plans to expand into Michigan within the next year. Sheetz's newest Lehigh Valley location opened in August at 2901 Lehigh St. in Allentown.

Other Lehigh Valley locations are on Schoenersville Road in Bethlehem, MacArthur Road in Whitehall Township, Trexlertown Road in Upper Macungie Township, Nazareth Road in Palmer Township, Trolley Line Drive in Palmer Township, and Golden Key Road in Weisenberg Township.

In October 2022, the Bethlehem Zoning Hearing Board approved the Sheetz convenience store and gas station on East Fourth Street. The new location will include a 6,139-square-foot store with 12 fueling positions and 55 parking spaces. It will also have a drive-thru.

Attorney Julie Wagner Burkart, representing Sheetz, said the project would not alter the neighborhood's character nor impact adversely neighboring properties, and will have no negative community impact. The site was previously vacant.

David Smith, a senior real estate site selector with Sheetz, testified the business would operate similarly to other Lehigh Valley Sheetz locations. The business will feature made-to-order food and roughly 30 seats for dining. Retail sales will include snacks, coffee, sodas, teas, and other beverages, along with some automobile products.

Sheetz, founded by Bob Sheetz in 1952 in Altoona, Blair County, aims to offer "kicked-up convenience while being more than just a convenience store," according to a company description.

"Sheetz is a mecca for people on the go," the description continues. "If you need to refuel your car or refresh your body, we have what you need to keep you moving on to whatever comes next."

"Road warriors. Construction workers. Soccer moms. They all have a special place at Sheetz. We know you don't have time to run all over town for the things

you need. Sheetz has what you need when you need it. And, we're here 24/7/365. Even on Christmas day."

Sheetz also has plans for an existing Bethlehem location. In May, the Bethlehem Planning Commission approved a land redevelopment plan that calls for the demolition of a store at 3201 Schoenersville Road, on the west side of the road just north of Route 22, and subsequent construction of a new Sheetz with a drive-thru at the same 2.2-acre site.

Terri Delo, project manager with Cumberland County-based Integrated Consulting, presented the final land redevelopment plan for the rebuild of the Sheetz store at the intersection of Schoenersville Road and City Line Road. The updated Sheetz will feature 12 fueling stations under a canopy along with a roughly 6,100-square-foot store - about 300 square feet larger than its current store.

Delo noted that the updated Sheetz store will still feature an on-site car wash, and it also will feature a drive-thru - something the current store does not offer. Demolition and construction work is expected to begin in early 2024.