



June 10, 2021

Mayor Robert J. Donchez
City of Bethlehem
10 E. Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Dear Mayor Donchez,

The Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) strongly supports the nomination of the Bethlehem City Climate Action Plan (CAP) for the PA Chapter of APA Planning Award.

The CAP was written in response to the climate crisis with goals and strategies for reducing the City's carbon footprint, increasing sustainability and preparing the City for the effects of climate change. The Plan was produced by a consultant in concert with an Environmental Justice Steering Committee, a Working Group comprised of numerous city and Lehigh Valley-wide institutions and nonprofits, and public input throughout the process.

The CAP identifies strategies for achieving each goal, including a range of timelines for each strategy and identification of responsible parties. Our EAC's comments on recently proposed developments are in align with and are now supported by the weight of the CAP. We are commencing work with the Department of Planning & Zoning to recommend changes to existing ordinances, as outlined in the Plan.

As the strategies are implemented, the City will be doing its part to mitigate climate change and a greener, more pedestrian/bike friendly city will make a positive difference in the lives of residents. For example, trees assist in reducing the heat island effect have been shown to reduce stress. Safer streets and the linking of existing trails encourages physical activity and offer an alternative to driving. In addition, the CAP commits to promoting equity for all residents and 40% of the overall spending benefits will go towards frontline communities.

Furthermore, a CAP is adaptable over time. It can be continually updated to allow incorporation of the latest climate science, technological developments, and financial situations.

Bethlehem City's initiative and prioritization of funds towards the CAP should serve as a model for other small to medium sized cities to take climate action to the benefit of their residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Rothman

Lynn Rothman, Chair

On behalf of the Bethlehem EAC:

Elizabeth Behrend	Ben Guthrie	Elisabeth Cichonski
Brian Nicas	Ben Felzer	Mike Topping