



January 22, 2024

Darlene L. Heller, Director of Planning and Zoning
Craig Peiffer, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning
City of Bethlehem
10 E. Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Dear Ms. Heller and Mr. Peiffer,

The EAC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed redevelopment of the Walnut Street Garage. Our recommendations are in support of Bethlehem City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), which aims to reduce our carbon footprint, increase sustainability, utilize alternative energy sources and promote resilience to changing climate conditions.

New construction projects provide opportunities to employ energy saving strategies that will lower energy costs and at the same time reduce pollution from traditional energy sources. The EAC is aware that the Bethlehem Parking Authority (BPA) received the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence and used a sustainable design for the Polk Street Garage. We commend the BPA for these efforts and strongly support the continuation of sustainable building materials and energy efficiency measures beyond the building code, such as advanced lighting controls, in the Walnut Street Garage.

Furthermore, we recommend the inclusion of solar panels. If solar is feasible now or in the future, the garage can be constructed with adequate structural capacity and electrical rough-ins to support a solar energy system.

We appreciate the inclusion of bicycle parking and EV charging stations, which are both strategies in the CAP. In the Land Development Plan submitted to the Department of Planning & Zoning, the number of spaces for bicycle parking is not identified. According to code, the number of spaces should be 5% of the total number of automobile parking spaces. The Land Development Plan submission to the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) shows 23 more EV charging spots than are identified on the submission to the Department of Planning & Zoning. We support the larger number and suggest additional electrical rough-in wiring to easily provide more EV parking spaces in the future.

Landscaping is important and the selection of native species for street trees should be approved by the City Forester. This is especially important since the changing climate and other factors may impact the optimum selection. Additional landscaping around the garage will aid in stormwater management and make the area more inviting.

During demolition and construction, we recommend that sediment and erosion plans be strictly monitored in order to protect the Monocacy Creek.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Rothman

Lynn Rothman, Chair

On behalf of the Bethlehem EAC:

Ben Felzer, Vice Chair

Ben Guthrie, Secretary

Vibhur Kumar

Mandy Tolino

Mike Topping

Katie Trembler

cc: Bethlehem City Council

Mayor J. William Reynolds