

Insights into Community Climate Work: A Survey of Pennsylvania Environmental Advisory Councils

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Executive Summary

While large cities have many resources offering roadmaps for reducing their residents' carbon footprint, smaller communities often seem to feel lost and alone. Noticing this lack of guidance for smaller cities and towns, the Association for Climate Health decided to survey communities engaged in climate mitigation efforts and pull together their experiences on:

- What works or doesn't work to get their areas moving forward
- What groups help with the effort
- What potholes they find on the road ahead
- What advice they can offer others

When the nonprofit coordinating the 150 Environmental Advisory Councils across the state of Pennsylvania agreed to distribute our survey, we began this effort. A 10-question survey was distributed and 29 councils responded. Their responses present keen insight into the experience of small cities and towns seeking to create more sustainable communities. Readers interested in finding resources, encouragement, tips and tricks will be well rewarded by looking over these hard-won lessons from the trenches.

Some quick take-aways:

1. Allies from outside your EAC can help enormously – nonprofits like the Sierra Club may have created programs exactly like what you want in your community; regional planning agencies or utility companies may have useful data for baseline measurement.
2. Cultivate harmony within your EAC and among the council or staff you report to – this may be a better use of your time than researching and creating more reports and presentations. A divided EAC will be less effective; a unified EAC working with a committed mayor or board president can make great strides towards a sustainable future.
3. Reaching out to other EACs and communities can allow you to pool financial and staffing resources on green projects like developing solar or wind projects, negotiating group rates for renewable power or green vehicles for township use or public transit.



Why This Survey?

Over the past decade the resources available to help individuals, institutions and cities reduce their contribution to global warming have risen astronomically. Yet many local communities feel lost and alone, lacking direction and support.

While large cities with the will to reduce their carbon footprint can turn to sources such as Rocky Mountain Institute, NRDC, UN, the World Bank and others for guidance, and may have full-time staff and consultants to design and implement programs, millions of people live in smaller cities, towns and suburbs where the way forward is less well mapped. Yet smaller communities also contribute to global warming, and diminishing greenhouse gas emissions from these areas would be every bit as helpful.

Thus, this effort by the Association for Climate Health (ACH) to explore the experiences, success stories, risks and roadblocks of local communities working to reduce their climate impact. The ACH survey was distributed by the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association (PALTA), which administers the Environmental Advisory Council Network, the loose confederation of 150 local community environmental councils spread throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania in many ways offers a good snapshot of America. It is a state with large urban centers and deeply rural regions, a “purple” state with a majority Republican legislature, federal Senators from both major political parties, and a Democratic governor, a state which contributed the 4th largest state share of greenhouse gas emissions in the country. Pennsylvania also has a network of local environmental councils spread across the state, offering a periscope on climate mitigation efforts going on at the local level.

Who are the Pennsylvania Environmental Advisory Councils?

In 1973, the Pennsylvania legislature voted to establish Environmental Advisory Councils, appointing small advisory groups for any municipality or group of municipalities which wanted them. These councils consist of 3-7 volunteers serving 3-year terms who advise their local governments on environmental issues. Some of the EACs were established decades ago, while a few were organized or revitalized very recently. Local governments cover administrative overhead costs but are not required to provide additional funding.

The EAC Network was created in 1990, linking these EACs so they could share ideas and solve problems together. PALTA sponsors an annual day-long conference of EACs, generally in the late Spring.

The Survey Instrument

The ACH survey was created on the Survey Monkey platform for fast distribution and ease of analysis. The document was designed to be completed in 3-4 minutes on average. Some respondents spent under 2 minutes while a few spent over an hour, adding significant thoughtful commentary and in one case including many links to help others.

PALTA facilitated this survey by sending out email invitations on Thursday March 26, 2020 with a reminder email sent on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The survey was closed on Friday, April 10, 2020.

Survey Response

The survey resulted in 29 EACs responding and completing the survey. While this number is just under 20% of the 150 EACs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it may in fact represent a majority of the actively working EACs. Several EAC members commented that the EACs were formed decades ago and many of them are no longer active in pursuing their mission. At the annual EAC Network Conferences, attendance typically includes around 20-25 EACs. If so, 29 EAC responses seems quite respectable.

Indeed, a 30th EAC representative responded to the survey with only the comment, “Our township is not really doing anything so I felt that I could not give accurate answers from the choices provided so I did not complete the survey.” This response was not included in the 29 responses otherwise analyzed. Yet that thinking may be representative of other EACs which did not respond.

Geographically, 72% of the responses come from the four counties surrounding Philadelphia (Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware and Chester Counties), with 52% from Chester and Montgomery Counties alone. 24% come from the Allentown, Harrisburg and Lancaster regions, with one respondent declining to provide identifying information.

Respondents reported a variety of conditions within their EACs, some enjoying coherence of purpose in dealing with climate health and sustainable communities, while others experience division among their fellow members. Such internal division was cited as a pothole on the road to progress by several respondents.

Our responders describe a variety of political environments in their communities as well. Some areas note resistance from climate deniers. Many EACs report apathy or inconsistent focus due to a variety of competing priorities. A few benefit from strong local government leadership, citizen groups, active nonprofit assistance and/or general political support which significantly helps move their areas forward with solid programs to reduce fossil fuels use and other climate-positive measures.

Many EACs are supported by good data and groundwork from local, county or regional organizations which they can piggyback on. Often this results in great synergy. Some EACs have been able to obtain baseline data on energy use from local utility companies. A few have drawn on skills and unpaid labor from local nonprofits, colleges or universities. Other councils are on their own.

We Open Up the Survey

Each community faces its own unique set of circumstances. Yet no matter where your own community is located, or what degree of political acceptance you face, you can look to other communities working under similar circumstances. In the pages following, read the experiences of people who have been there. They generously shared ideas, resources and strategies that helped, what they learned in the process so far, and advice you can put to good use. Our 29 respondents offered their hard-learned experiences to help each other and you.

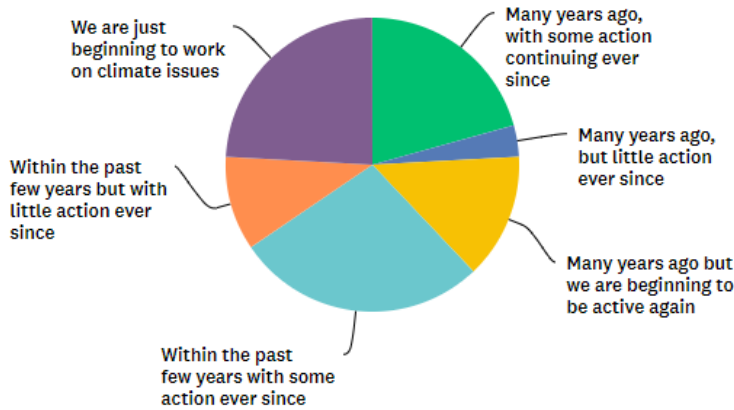
We thank Pennsylvania Land Trust Association and the 29 EAC respondents for helping with this survey.

Please note that identifying information has been redacted throughout this report to maintain confidentiality as promised.

Question 1:

When did your EAC begin working on climate issues?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| ▼ Many years ago, with some action continuing ever since | 20.69% | 6 |
| ▼ Many years ago, but little action ever since | 3.45% | 1 |
| ▼ Many years ago but we are beginning to be active again | 13.79% | 4 |
| ▼ Within the past few years with some action ever since | 27.59% | 8 |
| ▼ Within the past few years but with little action ever since | 10.34% | 3 |
| ▼ We are just beginning to work on climate issues | 24.14% | 7 |
| TOTAL | | 29 |

Of the 29 EAC respondents, almost one quarter are just beginning to work on climate issues. 38% began working on climate issues many years ago, and another 38% began working on climate issues within the past few years.

Of the 29 EAC respondents, 14% have done little on climate issues since they began working on them, 14% experienced a lag but are beginning to be active again, and 72% have been working consistently on climate issues since they began to consider them.

Some spoke to the frustrations of being an advisory board with power to recommend but no power to create or enforce policies:

- “While we work on climate issues, it is challenging and frustrating when it comes to municipal leadership implementing climate change for a sustainable future, or holding our community responsible through appropriate ordinances.”
- “EAC’s can be (and often are) challenged in working on/towards environmental initiatives by municipal leadership. Municipal leadership doesn’t always recognize the value of EAC’s or allow them to work within the full scope of their structure.”

- “I am the Chair of our EAC. At the behest of a citizen we began approx. 1.5 years ago to evaluate whether to recommend the Sierra Club RF100 program to our Commissioners. We voted to do so, and did. Their response was to refrain from joining the collaborative program being attempted in our county and rather to go it alone. There has been no progress since.”

Others expressed satisfaction with their actions and discussed where they are currently at:

- “Recently adopted a township resolution to implement conversion to 100% renewable energy”
- “Our township recently agreed to a resolution committing to the goals of Ready For 100. Took about 16 months.”
- “Our recently invigorated EAC is currently seeking township action.”
- “Our township has been climate conscious in the past by purchasing natural gas vehicles, reducing consumption, recycling, etc. but now embarking on next level: green energy, solar power, etc.”
- “Our EAC had a climate plan since 2008.”
- “We are/were doing surveys to determine greenhouse emissions etc.”
- “We are a new EAC in our township and passed the Ready for 100 resolution.”
- “We are just starting an EAC. We will make climate action a priority.”
- “The EAC has been working on it, focusing though more on energy use and recycling as aspects of climate change.”
- “Our EAC aims for the Sierra Club's RF100 to be adopted by Council. We are starting to coordinate with other local environmental groups regarding mitigation & adaptation.”
- “Our city moved to create a climate action plan, EAC working closely with consultant on forming the plan.”
- One community cited their township’s success in reducing library and traffic signal energy use through sustainability measures, their certification as one of PA’s two cities to have achieved a 3-star designation under the STAR Communities Rating System for sustainability (also known as LEED for Cities) and their Board’s commitment to purchase 100% renewable energy.

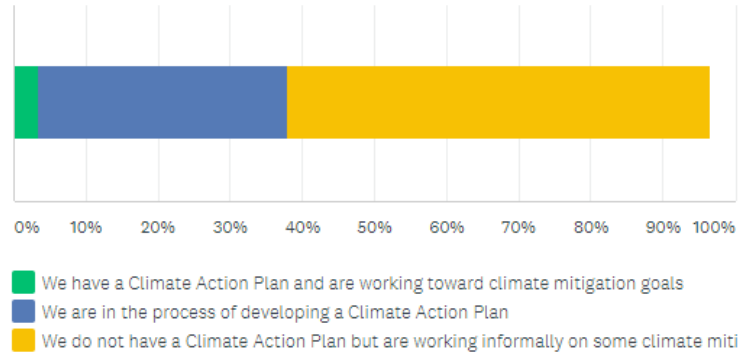
One respondent frankly cited other local priorities:

- “Our focus has been on several state and federal superfund sites. We have not addressed this issue since a public energy forum about 9 years ago”

Question 2

Does your community have a climate action plan?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|--|-----------|
| ▼ We have a Climate Action Plan and are working toward climate mitigation goals | 3.45% 1 |
| ▼ We are in the process of developing a Climate Action Plan | 34.48% 10 |
| ▼ We do not have a Climate Action Plan but are working informally on some climate mitigation actions | 58.62% 17 |
| TOTAL | 29 |

Eleven (38%) of the respondents either have a Climate Action Plan or are in the process of developing one. A majority (59%) are working on climate mitigation actions without developing a formal plan. One respondent was not sure (*Included in the total above though not in any of the three answers provided because the response came through the Comments section.*)

One wry comment was offered:

- “Very very early days”

Along with several positive statements:

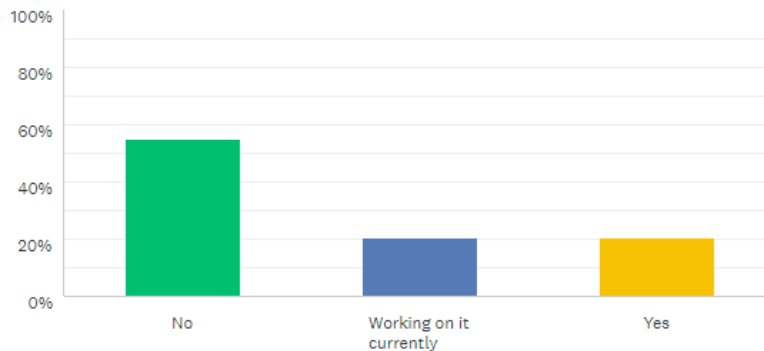
- “The municipality has worked on a renewable energy plan brought forth and championed by the EAC.”
- “In 2018 our EAC adopted a climate resolution consistent with the Paris Accords and Sierra Club Ready for 100 campaign.”
- “Our township is participating in a multi-municipal plan in our County.”
- “There are some guidelines in our Comprehensive Plan, which is also being reviewed.”
- “Our municipality is working to collaborate with neighboring municipalities to create a clean energy transition plan. We expect to be coordinating with our county as well which has a new Environmental and Energy board.”
- “We are working toward a CAP via Sierra Club's RF100 goals but still have a way to go before completing a comprehensive CAP.”
- “Our County is working with all local municipalities on a climate risk assessment. This will serve as the basis for a County-wide Climate Action Plan. Our Township EAC annually prepares and

discloses environmental data as the Township has been a CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project) participating city since 2016. We are also actively participating with our county's Ready For 100 organization, and in particular with a subgroup tasked with creating an Energy Transition Plan template that will be available for communities to use in developing their own energy transition plans."

Question 3

Has your community worked to estimate baseline greenhouse gas emissions?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| ▼ No | 55.17% 16 |
| ▼ Working on it currently | 20.69% 6 |
| ▼ Yes | 20.69% 6 |
| TOTAL | 29 |

41% of the respondents have created a baseline for greenhouse gas emissions or are currently working on one while 55% are not working on estimating greenhouse gas emissions. One respondent did not answer except in the comments section.

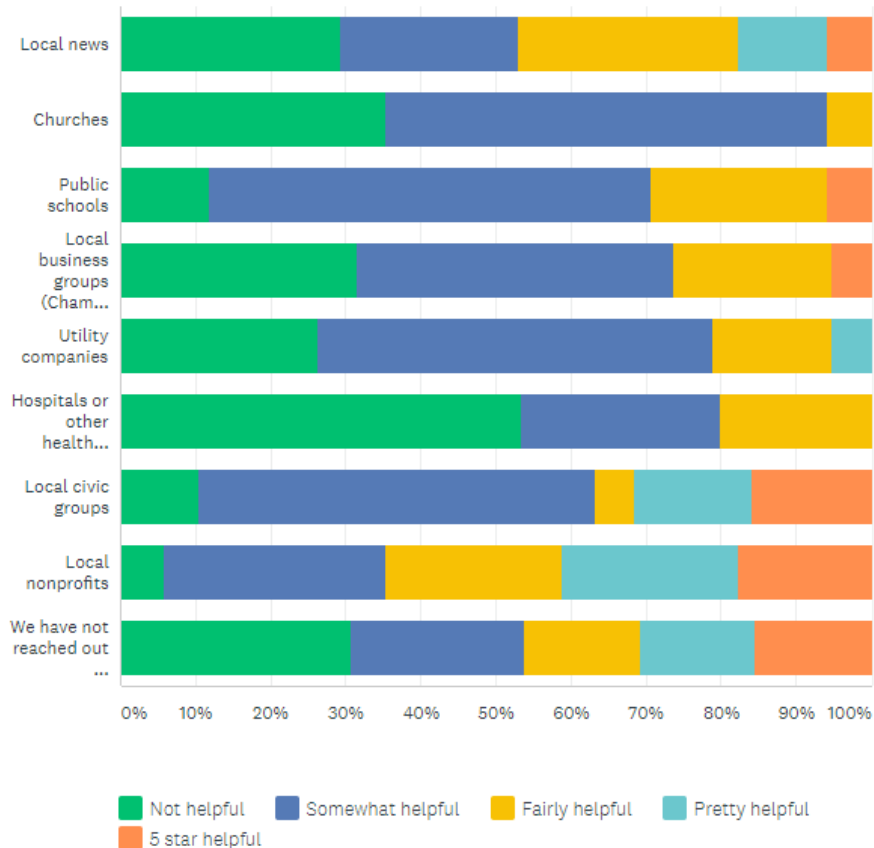
Based on the comments, respondents pointed to a variety of leaders for this work:

- EAC (2 respondents)
- The city, aided by a consultant (1 respondent)
- Regional government (6 respondents, 5 of which identified the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, plus an additional respondent who mentioned they had access to DVRPC data but were not using it to establish a baseline)
- EAC + Township using DVRPC data
- “EAC, municipal staff and utility (through rebates)”
- “The city collected a partial set of data last year and is anticipating working with the EAC, a local college and PA DEP to conduct a more thorough assessment this year.”
- “A local community person with experience in energy put together some estimates and our township manager has expressed interested in measuring our energy use.”

Question 4

Which groups have been helpful to gain support for local climate action?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 3



(Numerical versions of the next two charts can be found in Appendix II.)

13 out of the 29 respondents (45%) stated they have not reached out to any local groups yet.

Local non-profits stood out among respondents who had reached out to local groups, with 94% who responded to that part of the question finding them at least somewhat helpful. Specifically cited by many respondents was the Sierra Club (5 respondents)

- “Sierra Club has been instrumental in educating, training and planning the Ready for 100 municipalities move to clean energy. They are helping us in the planning and implementation process.”
- “COG, committee members doing specific work on plastic waste and energy consumption”
- “USGBC LEED for Cities assessment. We have also worked with Penn State Abington, Temple Ambler, and are currently in discussions with Drexel University. In addition, our EAC collaborates with local, state, and elected officials.”

Also considered helpful were local civic groups and the public schools. The local utility company was frequently cited as moderately helpful. Less widely cited were local news and local business groups but

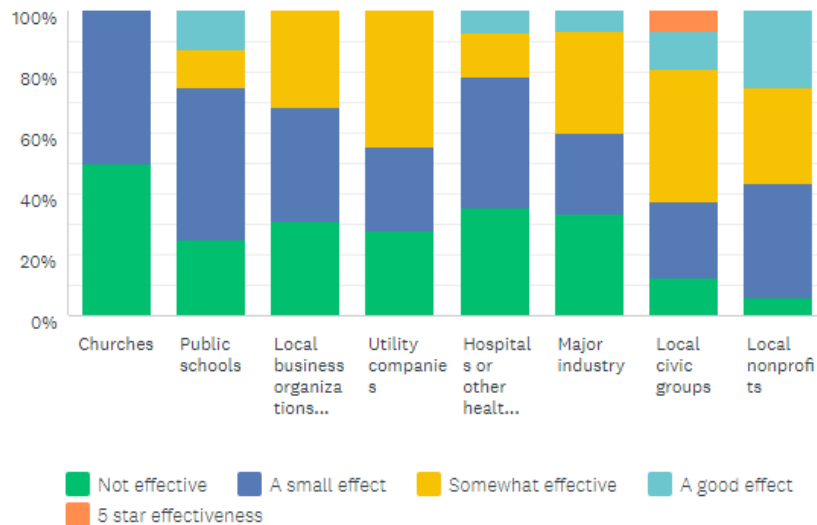
each of these two sources were found by one community to be “5 star helpful”. Faith-based organizations and health care organizations may be indirectly helpful in gaining support, but were only mentioned as even moderately helpful by a few respondents.

Overall, this chart indicates some of the best routes to attain public support. You may want to reach out to these first with your limited attention and resources. Still, there is no need to ignore any group which may turn out to be an ally. This would include the above-mentioned groups which did not score well overall, as well as other groups not included in the survey, including private schools, colleges and universities, and other groups in your area.

Question 5

Which groups are already helping achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in your area (the "low-hanging fruit")?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 9



As in Question 4 above, local nonprofits have led the way in already working to achieve reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, followed by local civic groups and the public schools. To a lesser extent, the utility companies and local business groups are seen as already contributing to achieving reductions. Major industry and health care organizations have played a role in a few communities, with the smallest role played by local churches.

While this question was intended to elicit impressions, often it elicited frustration about the lack of knowledge instead. Several cited the need to survey local organizations, that they were just getting started, or that they simply did not know.

Some additional comments from respondents:

- "Sierra Club and Audubon have been very helpful locally."
- "Aqua and PECO do some good things."
- "Our consumer society is mostly focused on taking care of their needs for today. It is challenging to get the majority of consumers in our municipality to look at planning for 30 years from now. However, it is noted that with public outreach and education, we have been able to get more people activated to think about what they can do."
- "It's difficult to ascertain what specific sectors, let alone individual organizations with each sector, are doing. Some are leading the way while others are thwarting the way. Thus, the above scores reflect a publicly available average."

Question 6

What advice do you have for other areas just starting to work on local climate action?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 5



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|--|-----------|
| ▼ Have one or more community meetings early on to establish goals and encourage outreach | 66.67% 16 |
| ▼ involve community groups early in the process | 70.83% 17 |
| ▼ involve utility company to establish baseline energy use and leakages | 62.50% 15 |
| ▼ Involve local colleges/universities for their expertise and student help | 54.17% 13 |
| Total Respondents: 24 | |

Of the four suggested choices, most respondents agreed that community outreach was important, with 17 out of 24 (74%) checking “Involve community groups early in the process” and 16 out of 24 (70%) checking “Have one or more community meetings early on to establish goals and encourage outreach”.

15 out of 24 (62%) checked “Involve utility company to establish baseline energy use and leakages”, while 13 out of 24 (54%) checked “Involve local colleges/universities for their expertise and student help”.

Much additional advice came in the comments section, including:

- “Build consensus over time. Don't make everything about "climate change" and "greenhouse gases" if that will not resonate with local officials. Instead, emphasize other values like "energy independence", "local control", and "national security" as well as economic benefits.”
- “We have not started the community outreach yet, but know how important it is. Township council has not been open to supporting a public outreach effort at this time.”
- “Partner with groups in nearby communities. It is undesirable for each community to have to reinvent the wheel.”
- “Work with Sierra Club, Penn Environment, Clean Air Council, Clean Water Action, local environmental groups such as the Chester County Environmental Alliance, the Uwchlan Safety Coalition (anti fracked pipeline grassroots org), our elected representatives, schools, and citizens. PECO has been very slow in responding to an energy audit they promised to do. We

need financial support and other regional townships' support to develop a clean energy and climate action plan.”

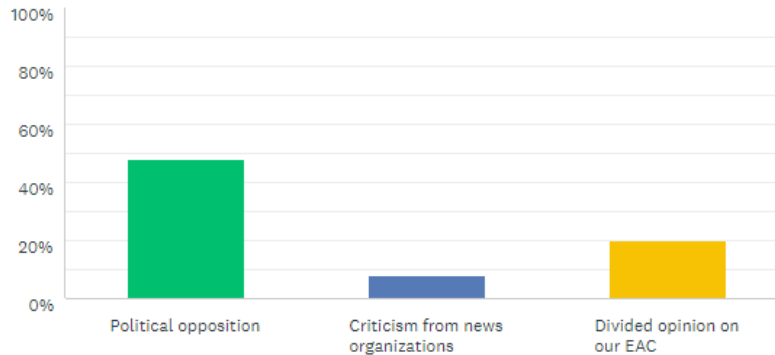
- “Collaborate with other EACs. Involve the regional planning commission, involve community and economic development coordinators, involve the water authority.”
- “One of the missing pieces is community involvement. Other municipalities should entice community members to come out and actively engage their constituents in being a part of the process. Much like the DVRPC engages community members in their public participation task force. Their public involvement in work groups helps to bring forth ideas others may not have thought about, and gives buy-in to the process. Engaging the community from the beginning gives them ownership of the implementation. It is frustrating to see time and again in our municipality a lack of trust in allowing the community to get more involved.”
- “Good luck getting utility engagement. PECO has great energy efficiency programs but otherwise is an unhelpful partner.”
- “We are looking to include students to collect and analyze the data.”
- One respondent suggested these additional items:
 - Build coalitions throughout governmental agencies, residents, and local organizations/businesses.
 - Grants benefit municipal capabilities and frequently contribute toward broader/regional objectives.
 - Conduct research and become familiar with the benefits, costs, and related impacts.
 - Be creative in thinking & action - not every CAP will look alike - draw upon your strengths.
- Another EAC had this to say:
 - 1. Use an assessment tool to guide actions such as the former STAR Communities program (link at <http://www.starcommunities.org/>), or the PA Municipal League’s Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification program (link at <https://www.sustainablepacommunitycertification.org/pages/about>)
 - 2. Collaborate, share or learn from local best practices, such as”
 - Narberth Single Use Plastic Bag/Straw Ordinance,
 - Doylestown EAC’s green building Green Points incentive program (link at <https://storage.googleapis.com/dtown/Pages/GREEN-POINTS-20172.pdf?mtime=20181201101443>),
 - West Chester Sustainable Certification Program (link at <https://westchester.com/DocumentCenter/View/5244/SG-WC-Sustainable-Certification-Overview?bidId=>),
 - Regional and national organizations to develop best practices such SEPA Ready for 100 (link at <https://www.sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/southeastern/ready-for-100>), the USGBC LEED for Cities and Communities Tools and Resources webpage (link at <https://www.usgbc.org/resources/tools-and-resources-leed-cities-and-communities>), USGBC Policy Library (link at <https://public-policies.usgbc.org/policy-index>), the Montgomery County Planning Commission Model Ordinances webpage (link at <https://www.montcopa.org/1443/Model-Ordinances>), and the PA Environmental Council.
 - 3. Our township’s Energy Transition Plan is expected to incorporate all of these aspects as major components.

- “No real advice, we are moving forward in a deliberate fashion, trying to build on education efforts and help illuminate facts.”
- “I think it is important to lean on the international/science based goals and timelines, take advantage of the materials and track record of the Ready for 100 Campaign, use existing models of best practices, distinguish between leading by example at the local government level, passing enabling ordinances and seriously urging voluntary action on the part of businesses and residents and schools. Setting a target - net zero emissions or 100% renewal is important to guide local policy, especially when new buildings (schools, housing developments) are concerned. SO important to have a standard we share to judge proposals by. Also important to look at how to improve building code standards and be sure those in each township appointed to vote in the annual and bi-annual elections which determine standards are registered and participate.”

Question 7

What major risks or potholes did you find?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 4



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Political opposition | 48.00% 12 |
| Criticism from news organizations | 8.00% 2 |
| Divided opinion on our EAC | 20.00% 5 |
| Total Respondents: 25 | |

Twelve of the 25 respondents to this question found political opposition to be a major risk (48%). Twenty percent found divided opinion on their EAC to be a pothole. Only 2 (8%) felt that criticism from news organizations was a factor.

Quite possibly these risk factors would be experienced by an even higher percent of the EAC respondents if our survey results were more representative of the Commonwealth as a whole. These responses, as discussed above, may be largely or entirely drawn from the most active EACs, which may correspond with communities more in sympathy with climate mitigation than in many of the communities in the Commonwealth.

Some additional risks or potholes mentioned in the Comments section range from apathy among the general public (3 respondents), lack of commitment and competing priorities from local government (3 respondents), the difficulty getting people together to do anything (2 respondents), and fear (“Some residents think the EAC will force them to make changes”). One respondent, on a brighter note, said “None so far.” Other comments which might be illuminating:

- “Our community is in a bad fiscal situation. It is hard to get traction for anything that doesn’t instantly add to the bottom line or could be perceived as putting business development at risk.”
- “Since our town currently has no designated sustainability director or energy manager, the EAC has an opportunity to become directly engaged in or provide advocacy for climate mitigation and action planning. However, as a volunteer council, the EAC also has capacity limitations.”
- “We haven’t experienced resistance (yet) because we haven’t had much outreach to the greater community. Our township supervisors and the EAC are very supportive of a clean energy

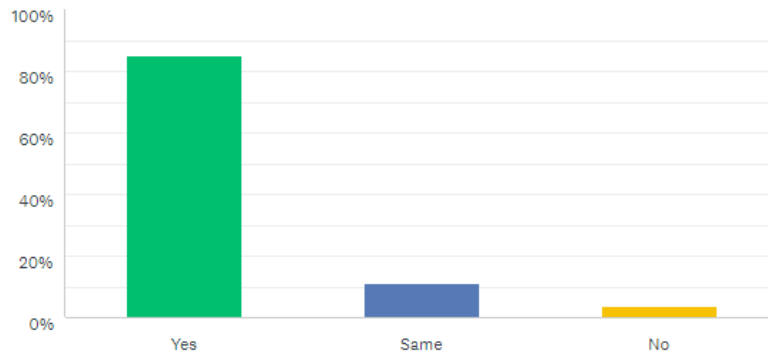
resolution. Now we need to take the more difficult steps of making a plan, outreach and implementation.”

- “Getting the municipality on board with creating a Ready for 100% renewable plan was probably the easiest thing we have ever done. We look forward to working on public education and outreach. Working towards getting the municipality to implement ordinances that protect our rights to clean air, clean water, and the preservation of the environment is frustrating. Often, it seems that they don't always know what they don't know or become defensive about why something can't happen, cost, don't want to tell people what to do with their property, fear of lawsuits. In doing homeowner assessments for stormwater, there is example after example of where homeowners seeking to put on additions could have implemented small, inexpensive BMP's if we only had ordinances in place that held people accountable.”
- “Difficulty getting started - we do not know where to start”
- “Shockingly, there is still denial about climate disruption. We have to move forward, be respectful, but not be deterred.”
- “More just lethargy than opposition, also that to move ahead takes time. Time is not something we have a lot of, but in the political process (say, amending land use regulations, zoning, etc.) big change cannot happen overnight. We work in concert with the rest of the Township. As our local COG group reports its energy findings, we will be reviewing those and recommending action. Up-front costs are and will be an issue.”
- “I personally didn't experience many potholes, but I worked to plant the seeds for a resolution for over 6 months. Other EACs are finding opposition, thus my suggestion for building consensus over time and finding themes that work with the local officials.
- “Budget constraints, Lack of resources and personnel, Lack of commitment from city leadership”
- “Learning curve, developing capacity, procuring partners”

Question 8

Does there seem to be more support for climate action today than when your EAC first began its climate efforts?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 2



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|-----------|
| ▼ Yes | 85.19% 23 |
| ▼ Same | 11.11% 3 |
| ▼ No | 3.70% 1 |
| TOTAL | 27 |

The majority (85%) of respondents felt there was more support today than when their EAC first began its climate efforts; 11% said the level of support was the same. Only one respondent felt there was not more support than in the past.

Comments:

- “I think there is much more awareness of climate impacts based on the national and international events - fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, etc.”
- “More media attention to the issue and the efforts of the regional Sierra Club Ready for 100 clean energy leaders have made a big difference. Also, Penn Environment and League of Conservation Voters, Chester County Environmental Alliance, Green teams have a strong local presence.”
- “Yes, we are gaining momentum. One of the best things an EAC can do is for their members to attend as many workshops and education seminars as they can. We build this into our budget. Working together as a team with the Montgomery County RF100 is an avenue that only costs you time. Education is knowledge, knowledge is power. Knowledge builds value in your EAC. Of course having EAC members that are already part of nonprofits that work on climate change, or work in the field is quite helpful too.”
- “Yes. For one, public awareness & sentiment are increasing while denial is decreasing. In Nov 2019, the township council flipped political parties to one in which the majority appears to be more receptive to environmental policies.”
- One member was specific about the gains in support:

- “1. Policy success: Our EAC have been able to garner unanimous support from the Board of Commissioners (BOC) in passing the 2018 commitment to purchase 100% renewable electricity through RECs for all Township operations as well as for the 2019 Ready for 100 Resolution. This would not have happened without advocacy from the Township Manager.
 - 2. Township Management Leadership: For the past two years, the BOC and Township Manager have prioritized sustainability planning through funding of initiatives such as the updating of the Comprehensive Plan that will provide a vision for our community; a parks and facilities master plan that will evaluate Township green space and facilities; a strategic plan with the Board of Commissioners to identify priorities that will guide our township into the future; and the integration of geographic information systems (GIS) that will allow the Township to visualize, quantify, analyze and manage our assets and communicate with the public more effectively. The Township Manager has provided committed sustainability leadership support including direct staff assistance through the Township’s Communications Manager as an integral liaison to the EAC. In addition, the current Township BOC President quickly and successfully reached out and lobbied on the EAC’s behalf, for our Congressperson to co-sponsor the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019.”
- Still, said one who agreed with this question, “We have a long way to go.”

One of the “samers” commented wryly:

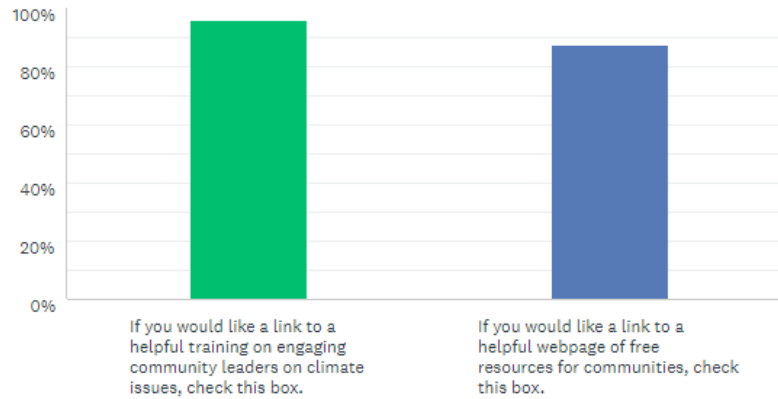
- “Not much progress in council support - about the same, if someone else does the work.”

Question 9 requested identifying information, which most respondents provided.

Question 10

Thank you for your time. Your answers will be collected and added to others to be shared with all the EACs in Pennsylvania. This will help many in their efforts to move forward.

Answered: 24 Skipped: 5



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|---|-----------|
| ▼ If you would like a link to a helpful training on engaging community leaders on climate issues, check this box. | 95.83% 23 |
| ▼ If you would like a link to a helpful webpage of free resources for communities, check this box. | 87.50% 21 |
| Total Respondents: 24 | |

Final comments included 6 thank yous along with the following responses:

- “It would be great if local EACs could work together on climate action plans and other mutual concerns. We need to have an established regional network of EACs. Could you see if there is interest for this and help with this please?”
- “Bringing together all EACs via a virtual meeting on this topic would be an excellent and needed next step. I have spoken with several EACs over the last two years about adopting a renewable energy goal. Of the 22 I've spoken to, 9 have taken action to promote the resolution for renewable energy. Others are hesitant or state that their township is resistant or has already made efficiency improvements.”
- “Multi-municipal planning will be very valuable -we are mostly small communities and our local governments' energy use is relatively low. Working together to make aggregated purchases and participating in solar or wind Power Purchase Agreements will be essential. Let's work together and keep each community from having to re-invent the wheel.”
- “There is an effort underway in the Lehigh Valley to develop a network of EACs and others to help drive climate action on a regional basis. We are trying to see if the LVPC would be willing to lead that effort.”

If you are interested in any of the above follow-up suggestions, contact nboxer@a4ch.org to discuss.

Appendix I

A list of links referred to by various respondents:

Audubon Society – <https://www.audubon.org/>

CDP - <https://www.cdp.net/en/cities>

Chester County Environmental Alliance- <https://chescoenvt.org/>

Clean Air Council - <https://cleanair.org/>

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission - <https://www.dvrpc.org/>

How one township reduced its power consumption for traffic lights by 90% -
https://www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate/Profiles/pdf/2011-01-21_LED_Traffic_Signal_Retrofit-Abington_Township.pdf

How one township substantially reduced electric and gas use at its two libraries -
https://www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate/Profiles/pdf/2011-01-21_Abington_Free_Library.pdf

League of Conservation Voters - <https://www.lcv.org/>

LEED for Cities assessment guide download - <https://build.usgbc.org/lfcexistingbeta41>

Lehigh Valley Regional Planning Commission - <https://www.lvpc.org/>

Montgomery County Planning Commission Model Ordinances webpage -
<https://www.montcopa.org/1443/Model-Ordinances>

PennEnvironment - <https://pennenvironment.org/>

Sierra Club Ready for 100 - <https://www.sierraclub.org/ready-for-100>

STAR Communities – LEED for Cities - <http://www.starcommunities.org/>

Sustainable PA Community Certification -
<https://www.sustainablepacommunitycertification.org/pages/about>

Uwchlan Safety Coalition - <https://uwchlansafetycoalition.org/>

US Green Building Council’s Library on Public Policies <https://public-policies.usgbc.org/policy-index>

Additionally, we would like to introduce readers to these two excellent resources:

A helpful, low-cost training on engaging community leaders and creating allies for your climate action:
<https://climateofficers.org/store/governance-101>

A helpful webpage of free resources for communities interested in climate mitigation:
<https://www.a4ch.org/climate-resources-for-communities>

Appendix II

Additional numeric data from the more complex questions

Question 4. Which groups have been helpful to gain support for local climate action?

| | NOT HELPFUL | SOMEWHAT HELPFUL | FAIRLY HELPFUL | PRETTY HELPFUL | 5 STAR HELPFUL | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|-------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------|------------------|
| Local news | 29.41% 5 | 23.53% 4 | 29.41% 5 | 11.76% 2 | 5.88% 1 | 17 | 2.41 |
| Churches | 35.29% 6 | 58.82% 10 | 5.88% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 17 | 1.71 |
| Public schools | 11.76% 2 | 58.82% 10 | 23.53% 4 | 0.00% 0 | 5.88% 1 | 17 | 2.29 |
| Local business groups (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, etc) | 31.58% 6 | 42.11% 8 | 21.05% 4 | 0.00% 0 | 5.26% 1 | 19 | 2.05 |
| Utility companies | 26.32% 5 | 52.63% 10 | 15.79% 3 | 5.26% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 19 | 2.00 |
| Hospitals or other health care organizations | 53.33% 8 | 26.67% 4 | 20.00% 3 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 15 | 1.67 |
| Local civic groups | 10.53% 2 | 52.63% 10 | 5.26% 1 | 15.79% 3 | 15.79% 3 | 19 | 2.74 |
| Local nonprofits | 5.88% 1 | 29.41% 5 | 23.53% 4 | 23.53% 4 | 17.65% 3 | 17 | 3.18 |
| We have not reached out to any groups yet | 30.77% 4 | 23.08% 3 | 15.38% 2 | 15.38% 2 | 15.38% 2 | 13 | 2.62 |

Question 5. Which groups are already helping achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in your area (“the low-hanging fruit”)?

| | NOT EFFECTIVE | A SMALL EFFECT | SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE | A GOOD EFFECT | 5 STAR EFFECTIVENESS | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|---------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|-------|------------------|
| Churches | 50.00% 7 | 50.00% 7 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 14 | 1.50 |
| Public schools | 25.00% 4 | 50.00% 8 | 12.50% 2 | 12.50% 2 | 0.00% 0 | 16 | 2.13 |
| Local business organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, etc) | 31.25% 5 | 37.50% 6 | 31.25% 5 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 16 | 2.00 |
| Utility companies | 27.78% 5 | 27.78% 5 | 44.44% 8 | 0.00% 0 | 0.00% 0 | 18 | 2.17 |
| Hospitals or other health care organizations | 35.71% 5 | 42.86% 6 | 14.29% 2 | 7.14% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 14 | 1.93 |
| Major industry | 33.33% 5 | 26.67% 4 | 33.33% 5 | 6.67% 1 | 0.00% 0 | 15 | 2.13 |
| Local civic groups | 12.50% 2 | 25.00% 4 | 43.75% 7 | 12.50% 2 | 6.25% 1 | 16 | 2.75 |
| Local nonprofits | 6.25% 1 | 37.50% 6 | 31.25% 5 | 25.00% 4 | 0.00% 0 | 16 | 2.75 |