

Proposed Project to Mitigate Climate Impacts along the Delaware River Corridor in Philadelphia and Delaware County:

An explanation and invitation to community groups and residents

Clean Air Council is undertaking a two-year project to understand and address the threats of climate change to communities near polluting industrial sites along the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers in South and Southwest Philadelphia as well as communities further south in Delaware County like Chester, Marcus Hook and Trainer, PA. This project seeks to encourage the safe and responsible redevelopment of flood-prone hazardous industrial sites through the creation and implementation of policies and projects that protect vulnerable communities. Additionally, the project seeks to address and mitigate potential gentrification impacts that are often associated with economic development and green infrastructure improvements such as parks, trails and other greenspace.

Climate change is already having a serious impact on residents in the Philadelphia region. Widespread flooding from major storms such as Isaias and Ida, and the threat of urban heat islands throughout the summer months are already impacting our communities. Our region needs new and innovative plans, policies, and projects that support thriving communities that are well-positioned to deal with increased flooding, extreme heat, and severe storms. Flood mitigation measures and policies could help communities become more resilient against storms and sea level rise while also contributing towards or promoting other potential community assets such as new parks and trails, more walkable neighborhoods, increased tree planting, community gardens, renewable energy resources, and the development of locally owned and operated “green” businesses.

The industrial lands along the Lower Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers are the Philadelphia region’s greatest opportunity to adapt to the threats climate change is having and will continue to have on the people and natural resources of the region while advancing a healthier, carbon free future and more thriving communities. The Council proposes to respond to the urgent threats of climate change by working with communities, planners, and landscape designers to assess, envision and advocate for measures, initiatives, and local projects that better protect communities and natural resources from the impacts of climate change.

This project will assess climate change risks and impacts, work with communities to envision their ideal future, propose concepts and policies to protect against the impacts of climate

change, and support local groups and residents in advancing local projects that address climate change threats and impacts.

The Council's proposed project includes four main parts:

- Coordinate with climate resiliency professionals and local stakeholders in identifying and assessing the environmental impacts of climate change on the region and develop recommendations for regulations, policies, projects and local initiatives to make the region more climate resilient.
- Advocate for and advance local and county policies and community efforts that mitigate against the impacts of climate change.
- Urge the Philadelphia and Delaware County Planning Commissions to update plans to include a focus on mitigating the impacts of climate change, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.
- Analyze remediation reports and plans for brownfield sites and submit extensive technical arguments for the most protective remediation standards and plans possible.

In order to effectively create and advocate for policies and plans that will improve health and living conditions in Philadelphia and Delaware County, Clean Air Council wants to hear from local residents and groups about how you and your communities are impacted by climate change and about your hopes for the future of your community. Potential community engagement opportunities could include community surveys, community discussions and/or focus groups, community workshops, and an advisory panel that will provide input on the project throughout the process.

Clean Air Council and the William Penn Foundation have allocated the following amounts of money to support groups and projects in three to four communities, depending on interest:

- \$16,000 for hiring local residents for getting the word out about ways to engage in this project (for example, knocking on doors to collect responses to surveys or to alert neighbors about an upcoming public hearing).
- \$48,000 for materials and supplies for community visioning and local projects (for example, enhancing trails, enhancing parks/greenspace, tree planting, community gardens, urban orchards, etc) and for gift cards to compensate project participants for their time and expertise in providing input on this project.

The two-year project began February 1, 2023. Clean Air Council is committed to using these funds to amplify the voices and concerns of impacted residents, advocate for environmental justice and climate justice through policy changes, and support local efforts to improve public health and quality of life.