

# Easton goes green with commitment to reduce emissions

By CHRISTINA TATU

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Nurture Nature Center on Northampton Street in Easton has developed a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for the city. The goal is to reduce Easton's emissions by 80 percent by 2050. (NURTURE NATURE CENTER / CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

Easton officials this week committed to going green by adopting a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

City Council on Wednesday voted unanimously to work toward reducing Easton's emissions by 80 percent by 2050 under an outline put together by Easton's Nurture Nature Center, a group dedicated to educating the public on environmental issues.

The city has already reduced its emissions by nearly 2 percent since 2016, thanks to a variety of measures, according to the Nurture Nature Center. They include converting streetlights to LED fixtures, planting more trees, promoting a culture of biking and walking, implementing a carshare program

and installing charging stations for electric vehicles in the intermodal parking garage on South Third Street.

City officials have also committed to purchasing electricity for municipal operations that has been generated by renewable resources like wind.

“If we were to assume that we could continue that decrease every year, we would have a 60 percent reduction [in greenhouse gas emissions] by 2050, which is most of the way toward our goal,” said Kate Semmons, director of science at Nature Nurture Center.

By making the commitment Wednesday, the city joins the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, an international alliance of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision of promoting and supporting voluntary action to combat climate change and move to a low-emission society.

Semmons said joining the covenant could help Easton become more competitive when applying for grants to help reduce its emissions.

[Last year, Bethlehem](#) committed to reducing its carbon footprint with the organization.

According to the Global Covenant of Mayors website, there are more than 9,000 member cities representing more than 771.3 million people.

The next step for Easton is to either set up a task force or hire a consultant to develop an action plan crafted specifically for the city.

Some ideas the city could use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions include changing traffic patterns to encourage more efficient movement, retrofitting older buildings with more energy-efficient fixtures and starting an education campaign to inform the public about how residents can reduce their carbon footprint, Semmons said.

Another potential idea in Easton’s future is [harnessing hydroelectric power](#) created by the Delaware and Lehigh rivers, Semmons said.

Several developers have come forward over the years with proposals to generate hydro-electric power at the Easton dam, but so far none of those ideas have taken off. The most recent proposal was in 2015.

Lafayette College, one of Easton's biggest institutions, is undergoing a similar study to reduce its carbon footprint, according to Nurture Nature Center. The college hired Stone House, an outside environmental consulting group to perform an energy audit and assist with the creation of a climate action plan. Using 2008 as the base year, Lafayette wants to reduce emissions by 15 percent by 2027; 35 percent by 2031; 55 percent by 2035 and 60 percent by 2039, according to Nurture Nature Center.

For private citizens who are interested in reducing their footprint, Nurture Nature Center suggests walking and biking whenever possible instead of driving; asking your electric provider whether it's possible to purchase your electricity from a renewable resource; making energy-efficient upgrades to your home such as using LED lights; and planting more trees on your property.