



Local Climate Action and Energy Transition Planning

Bios for Expert Panelists



Forum Moderator

Liz Compitello is the Manager of Sustainable Energy at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Liz has been at DVRPC since 2009 where her work focuses on developing programs and technical resources to assist local governments with understanding and implementing best practices for energy management, renewable energy development, and responding to climate change. Liz received her Master's in Regional Planning from the State University of New York at Albany.



Presenter & Panelist

Rachael Griffith is the Sustainability Director at the Chester County Planning Commission. She provides leadership and coordination between county departments, municipalities and a host of community partners to implement the County's Climate Action Plan. She oversees the work of the Planning Commission's Sustainability Division and coordinates the activities of the County's Environmental and Energy Advisory Board. Additionally, Rachael leads planning efforts related to open space preservation in the county. Prior to serving in this role she worked as CCPC's Trails and Open Space Planner since 2016 where she led a number of regional trail feasibility studies and active transportation plans. Rachael is a registered landscape architect and certified planner. She holds a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Pennsylvania and a BS in Landscape Architecture from Temple University.



Presenter & Panelist

Will Williams joined the Borough of West Chester as the organization's first Sustainability Director in 2019, where he works on energy, environmental and stormwater initiatives, as well as capital planning and project execution. Prior to working for West Chester Will worked in energy and water conservation, capital projects, energy procurement, and sustainable development as the Director of Sustainability and Utility Management for Philadelphia-based Pennrose Properties, a multifamily/mixed-use developer, and as Energy and Sustainability Coordinator at Liberty Property Trust, a commercial and industrial REIT. Will received a BS in Environmental Science from the University of Colorado in Boulder, and currently studies Sustainable Engineering at Villanova University. Will is a LEED Green Associate and Certified Building Operator. He resides in the West Chester area with his wife Marika and a beagle mutt named Whiskey Boy.



Presenter & Panelist

Nick Valla was appointed as the Assistant Township Manager of Middletown Township in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, (population of 46,000) in January 2021. Nick began with Middletown Township in June 2018 as a Management Intern before being named Management Analyst in April 2019. In his time with the Township, Nick has played an instrumental role in several efforts, including sustainability, transportation, public information, collective bargaining, grant writing, and budgeting. Nick's efforts have resulted in securing hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant funding and the Pennsylvania Governor's Award for Excellence in Local Government for his efforts on sustainability. In addition to Nick's role with the Township, he currently serves as the Executive Director of the Middletown Community Foundation and as a member of the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Committee of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Originally from Central California, Nick graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and two minors in Business Administration and Communication Studies in 2017 from Fresno Pacific University in Fresno, CA. While in college, Nick earned his appreciation for local government while serving in the student government association for three and a half years, including two years as student body president. Upon receiving a full tuition scholarship to Villanova University, Nick earned his Master of Public Administration and a Graduate Certificate in City Management from Villanova University in 2019. During his time at Villanova, Nick led the ICMA student chapter for Villanova, connecting aspiring public servants to careers in municipal government.



Panelist

Leading the Bucks County Sustainability Team is **Neale Dougherty**. His role as Sustainability Director is an inaugural position designed to exemplify Bucks County's commitment to these important efforts. Born and raised in Bucks County, Neale is a lifelong resident who has been working for the County since 2017, where he served as the County Controller from 2018 to 2022. Neale knows Bucks County inside and out and is passionate about making Bucks a healthy, thriving community for generations to come.



Panelist

Collaborating with Neale in his efforts is **Cassandra Goodmansen**, who has come to the Bucks County all the way from Idaho! She joined the Sustainability Team as an Environmental Planner in July 2022. Cassandra has a deep understanding of the natural world with her undergraduate work in native pollinator ecology and her graduate work in natural resources and climate change. Cassandra worked with her local government, university, and indigenous tribe in Idaho to bring forth climate action policies and programs, improving the sustainability and resilience of these communities. She looks forward to doing even more for Bucks County. Cassandra says she loves Pennsylvania's ecology and looks forward to seeing an Eastern Box Turtle and learning to Kayak.



Panelist

Carol Stauffer, AICP, Assistant Director, Chester County Planning Commission has over 30 years of professional planning experience, with a focus on municipal planning assistance and environmental resource protection. Ms. Stauffer played a key role in the development and subsequent updates to the county's award winning comprehensive plan, Landscapes. In her current capacity as the Assistant Director, she served as project lead on the Chester County Climate Action Plan, adopted in 2021, working closely with the Commissioners' Environmental and Energy Advisory Board.



Panelist

Francine Locke is the Chief Operating Officer for Delaware County, Pennsylvania, where she leads the Office of Sustainability in overseeing the County's Planning Department, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Facilities Management, Fleet Management and the Conservation District. She is presently collaborating with stakeholders to develop the County's first sustainability plan. Francine comes from the School District of Philadelphia where she served as the Director of Sustainability and Green Schools, and prior to that, Environmental Director. Francine earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Master of Science in Environmental Health, both from Temple University.



Panelist

Jon Leshner, LEED Green Associate - Jon Leshner is the Environmental Planning Assistant Manager for the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Jon's duties include writing and reviewing ordinances, reviewing sewage and land use proposals, conducting planning related studies, and public outreach efforts. Jon is a project manager for the County's Energy, Resiliency & Sustainability (ERS) Program, wrote the Renewable Energy Series and leads the County Planning Commission's renewable energy and resiliency efforts. Jon is also involved in County-wide sustainability and resiliency initiatives. Before joining Montgomery County Jon has related experience working for the Brandywine Conservancy and in stormwater management. Jon earned his undergraduate degree from Ursinus College and a Master's in Regional and Community Planning from Temple University.