

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Green infrastructure lacking

Last week, we discussed the 2017 book, *Drawdown*, which lists 80 specific initiatives people can take to reduce greenhouse emissions and make our world more pleasant at the same time.

They range from wind and solar power, to plant-based diets, to bike infrastructure, to recycling.

There are plenty of initiatives we can take in Pottstown.

For example, the borough has installed LED (light-emitting diodes) street lamps on the 100 and 200 blocks of High Street. They will soon be extended to the 300 and 400 blocks. LED lights use 90 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs and half as much energy as fluorescent bulbs, and they last far longer.

The borough plans to extend LEDs to all street lights.

The Pottstown School District is currently replacing two aging chillers at the high school. Interestingly, traditional air conditioning refrigerants like CFCs and HCFCs are potent

greenhouse gases. Buying new chillers with substitute refrigerants that don't negatively impact the atmosphere is one of the ways new technology can protect the environment.

But the biggest contribution the borough and school district can make toward a greener planet is simply planting more vegetation, especially trees. It's called afforestation. Trees reduce ambient temperatures in the summer, lowering energy consumption. They cleanse the air and absorb carbon dioxide.

Trees have also been shown to calm people down, reducing aggression and violence.

Unfortunately, there's still a common mentality that trees are a frill.

As the chart below shows, Pottstown has spent \$78 million on bricks and mortar projects and practically nothing on green infrastructure.



Commentary by
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Pottstown School District infrastructure spending			
		Bricks and mortar	Green infrastructure
1999-2001	Renovate and enlarge High School and Middle School.	\$40,000,000	
2001	Purchase Irene Boyer Home.	\$400,000	
2002	Renovate Boyer home into administration offices (now Early Learning Center).	\$1,300,000	
2011-2016	Renovate four elementary schools and enlarge three of them.	\$31,308,436	
2017-	High and Middle School roof repairs.	\$1,454,484	
2019	High School, Early Learning Center roof repairs, Edgewood exterior work	\$821,870	
2020	High School and Lincoln School roof repairs.	\$684,700	
2020	Edgewood asbestos removal.	\$109,000	
2021	Edgewood general renovations.	\$1,500,000	
2021	High School and Franklin School roof repairs.	\$500,000	\$22,000*
	TOTAL	\$78,078,490	\$22,000

* Pay half the cost of planting high school and elementary school meadows