



Lehigh Valley Planning Commission

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Plainfield Township is Our 2019 Community of Distinction

Plainfield Township's part in the first ever 10-community Slate Belt regional plan, its integral role in starting the Slate Belt Regional Police department and its purchasing agreements with neighboring communities are prime examples of municipal cooperation in action.

But where Plainfield has really put its partnerships to work is in its efforts to protect the environment. The Township has partnered with Northampton County to expand the Two Rivers Trail, established its own Appalachian Trail Conservation Overlay District designed to protect the Mountain, adopted new conservation by design policies and put a focus on farmland preservation.

For these reasons, and many more, Plainfield Township was named the LVPC's 2019 Community of Distinction October 16, during the 6th Annual Lehigh Valley Gala + Awards at DeSales University. The award is given each year to one community that's practiced a long-term commitment to planning excellence, innovation and municipal cooperation.

Honorees in the Community of Distinction Category were Bath Borough, Coopersburg Borough, and Whitehall Township.

"Plainfield Township has proven how community partnerships can provide better services and save taxpayer dollars. But where Plainfield has really distinguished itself is its attention to protecting the environment," said Northampton County Executive Lamont McClure, as he presented the award Oct. 16 during an event attended by more than 240 municipal, government and community leaders. "Through its thoughtful, measured approach and its willingness to collaborate with neighboring communities, Plainfield Township has consistently showed municipal leadership. These are just a few reasons why Northampton County, Lehigh County and the LVPC are honoring Plainfield Township as the 2019 Community of Distinction."

While Plainfield Township leaders have done just about everything right in managing Township growth and development while protecting its identity, residents can take some of the credit for making that happen. They've agreed, by referendum, to commit .25 % of their earned income for farmland preservation, raising about \$350,000 a year. That has helped the township preserve nearly 3,100 acres of farmland – or the equivalent of more than 2,300 football fields.

"The majority of our residents have made it clear that they wanted to maintain our rural character," said Township Manager Tom Petrucci. "We took the steps to honor those wishes."

In addition to recognition at the Awards Gala, Plainfield will receive street signs to be placed in the community to mark the achievement and celebrate the accomplishment publically for years to come, and of course, bragging rights among an inner circle of Community of Distinction winners. Past winners were Bethlehem in 2014, Bushkill Township in 2015, South Whitehall Township in 2016, Catasauqua Borough in 2017 and Macungie Borough in 2018.

The award was among 158 given during a ceremony that recognized 22 projects in eight categories for excellence in planning, innovation and cooperation.

Here's a rundown of the winners and honorees in each category:

- **Community of Distinction – Plainfield Township.** Honorees are Bath Borough, Coopersburg Borough and Whitehall Township.
- **Revitalization – Bangor Borough Streetscape Enhancements** by Bangor Borough, Community Action Committee of The Lehigh Valley, Essa Bank and Trust, Fulton Bank, Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, Merchant's Bank of Bangor, Northampton County, Slate Belt Rising and Waste Management.

Honoree is Slate Belt Community Gardens.

- **Open Space – Lower Macungie Official Map Implementation** by partners Lower Macungie Township, Barn Swallow Farm, Kirby Family, Shepherd Hills Golf Course, Sterling Raber Architectural Land Preservation Board, Weiner Family Trust and Wildlands Conservancy.
- **Outdoor Recreation – Dimmick Park Playground Improvements Project** by partners Hellertown Borough, Barry Isett & Associates, E.F. Possinger & Sons Inc., Northampton County, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Commonwealth Finance Authority,

The Honoree is the Jordan Creek Greenway Trail.

- **Environmental Project – Little Bushkill Creek Watershed Management Plan** by partners Plainfield Township, Hanover Engineering Associates, Inc., Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Tetra Tech

Honorees are Minsi Lake Habitat Improvement Project and Old Allentown Street Tree Program.

- **Land Development – Factory, LLC** with partners City of Bethlehem, Cerminara Architects and J.G. Petrucci Company Inc.

Honorees are Five10 Flats, Vault 634 and Klein Building-Ruozzi Brothers Project.

- **Transportation – Pedestrian Crosswalk Enforcement Program** by partners City of Bethlehem, City of Bethlehem Health Bureau, City of Bethlehem Police Department, Coalition for Appropriate Transportation, Lehigh Valley Health Network, Northampton County Highway Safety Project and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

- **Plan, Planning Policy or Ordinance – West Ward Neighborhood Plan** by City of Easton, Greater Easton Development Partnership, Northampton County, Camiros, Ltd., Pennsylvania Humanities Council: Heart and Soul Program and Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development.

Honorees are Delaware Canal Vision Study, Northern Tier Trail Feasibility Study, Northside 2027 Neighborhood Plan, Portland Neighborhood and Redevelopment Plan Upper Macungie Farmland and Open Space Initiative and Vision for Lehigh Valley Catalyst for the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor.

- **Multi-Municipal Cooperation – Slate Belt Rising** with partners Bank of Bangor, Bangor Borough, Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, Essa Bank and Trust, Fulton Bank, Merchant's Bank of Bangor, Northampton County, Pen Argyl Borough, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Portland Borough, Waste Management, Wind Gap Borough and US Department Health and Human Services.

The Honoree is the Bethlehem-Easton-Northampton County Lead Coalition.

All the winners and photos can be found at <https://www.lvpc.org/lv-awards.html>