



HAMLIN CHURCH
UNITED METHODIST

October 3, 2019

Mayor Melvin Carter III
City of St. Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mayor Carter:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed Climate Action and Resiliency Plan. While we were disheartened to see some weakening of the plan from the original draft, we applaud the continued focus on protecting vulnerable communities and engaging the community. Our question to you is: how is St. Paul meaningfully planning to do this? How does this Plan inspire residents of St. Paul to engage – as a community – in climate change mitigation? How does this Plan enable us to chart our progress and gain momentum – as a city – to do even more?

As part of Hamline Church's social justice ministry and mission to be Sanctuary for the City, we seek to live out our sacred responsibility to God's creation by providing meaningful opportunities for our church and community to engage with, learn from, and care for God's creation. As such, the climate crisis is a core issue. Hamline Church has installed solar panels, joined the Race to Reduce program, and we compost, recycle and have reduced our waste. But these actions, while laudable, are insufficient. We agree that systemic and individual actions are important, but we believe that collective actions that involve and inspire our neighbors and congregants to work together will be vital to success.

The Climate Action and Resiliency Plan does not include such collective actions. The goals are vague, and we see little commitment to make them happen in a timely fashion. There is little attention to "What can **WE** do to make a difference?"

Two examples:

The Plan states the City will "accelerate tree replacement". How quickly and thoroughly this acceleration will occur is not stated. Your Forestry professionals have stated that St. Paul has about 15,000 viable tree planting sites identified today, and estimate there are another 5,000 viable but not yet identified locations. We assume that similar numbers could be planted in back yards which have lost trees due to storms and disease, and on corporate properties with vast tree-less parking lots. We ask that you do more than "accelerate tree replacement". We

ask that you engage with faith, civic and citizen groups to partner with the City to Plant 20,000 Public Trees / Plant 20,000 Private Trees in 2020.

The Ready & Resilient Guide, and the grant programs in support of it, were a laudable effort several years ago. But the Emergency Preparedness steps identified at that time have not been acted on. We are pleased to see them repeated in the Plan, but what steps will be taken in the coming months if nothing has happened in the past several years? Again, we ask that you engage with faith, civic and citizen groups to partner with the City to Design & Implement Emergency Preparedness Options for Residents in 2020.

Too often, well-intentioned plans are written, approved, and designated to sit on the shelf. We are in a climate crisis. We cannot let that happen with the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan. We cannot let well-intentioned plans falter for lack of time, funds or staff. We need to work together, collectively and creatively, inspiring each other by what we can do together today to make a difference in our City's climate crisis.

We ask that you restore the targeted 2030 emission reductions to the 52% figure outlined in the first draft of the plan.

We ask that you establish (or support) specific initiatives and with specific timelines and outcomes to implement the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan that strongly engage faith, civic and citizen groups to create a public movement to address the climate crisis in St. Paul.

We ask that you ensure that the proposed Environmental Justice Advisory Committee of community leaders that will guide implementation of the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan include at least one member from a creation care, environmental or earthkeeper faith organization.

Hamline Church stands ready to support and participate in climate crisis initiatives.

Hamline Church Council

Hamline Church Earthkeepers

Gil Young, Chair

Trudy Dunham, Chair

Cc: Chief Resiliency Officer Russ Stark, City Council Members Dai Thao Ward 1, Rebecca Noecker Ward 2, Chris Tolbert Ward 3, Mitra Nelson Ward 4, Amy Brendmoen Ward 5 and President, Kassim Busuri Ward 6, Jane Prince Ward 7,