



# OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY FACT SHEET

1. The City of South Bend is committed to becoming carbon neutral (eliminating air pollutants that contribute to global warming) by the year 2050. To this end, the city developed an initial Climate Action Plan in 2019 as a community roadmap.
2. "Greenhouse gases" (GHGs) are heat-trapping air pollutants that cause global temperatures to rise. 62% of South Bend's GHG emissions come from the energy we use to power, heat, and cool our buildings. 32% is from oil-powered transportation (e.g., combustion-engine vehicles).
3. Locally, flooding is increasing in both frequency and intensity due to climate change. For example, South Bend was inundated with a 1000-year flood in 2016 and, shortly thereafter, a 500-year flood in 2018.
4. Without significant intervention, the number of days with extreme heat events in South Bend is expected to increase from 22 to 70 days by 2050. Extreme heat is more dangerous to vulnerable populations including people who are poor, elderly, homeless, or have prior health conditions.
5. According to the City's permitting data, there were at least 213 solar energy installations between 2020 and 2022. Compared to all prior installations (93 total), that is a 230% increase in just the past two years. The Office of Sustainability encourages solar installations in South Bend by coordinating City efforts, promoting local group purchasing solar co-ops, and leading the Energy Assistance and Solar Savings Initiative (EASSI) for non-profits.
6. Transitioning to a low-carbon economy presents "green" job opportunities such as energy conservation, alternative energy solutions, and recycling. Career prospects in solar and wind energy in Indiana are growing faster than average; from 2020 to 2030, employment of solar and wind installation technicians is projected to grow by 52% and 68% percent, respectively.
7. South Bend receives more annual sunlight than Germany, a global leader in solar energy production!
8. Sustainability is profitable for South Bend: Cost savings from reduced energy and fuel usage benefits residents and businesses. Some research has shown that every dollar invested in energy efficiency often returns a benefit of \$2 or more.
9. Climate change is a health and equity issue: Decreased fuel use reduces air pollution and improves local air quality. Transportation alternatives that encourage active lifestyles can improve health outcomes for residents.
10. Trees absorb and filter air pollutants, leading to better air quality for SB residents. They also provide shade to keep neighborhoods cooler on hot days. At least 40% of the city should be covered by tree canopy to help meet our carbon-neutrality goal, but the current average is 26%. In neighborhoods impacted by historically racist policies as well as current health and social issues, the average tree canopy cover is just 17%.



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## References

- <sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Delta Institute and the City of South Bend. 2019. [Carbon Neutral 2050](#). Web access July 5, 2022.
- <sup>4</sup> Indiana University. [Climate Vulnerability: Hoosier Resilience Index Part of the Prepared for Environmental Change Grand Challenge](#). Web access July 5, 2022.
- <sup>5</sup> South Bend Office of Sustainability. Permit Data. June 2022.
- <sup>6</sup> Multiple sources: (1) [SEIA](#) (2) [Green Buildings Career Map](#) (3) [IREC Solar Career Map](#) (4) [HVAC Career Map](#). Web access July 5, 2022.
- <sup>7</sup> NREL. Calculated using [Data Tools](#).
- <sup>8a, 9</sup> United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Sustainable Development Brief. 2016. [The co-benefits of climate change mitigation](#). Web access July 5, 2022.
- <sup>8b</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures. 2019. [Promoting Cost-Effective Utility Investment in Energy Efficiency](#). Web access July 5, 2022.
- <sup>10</sup> Davey Resource Group. 2010. [Assessing and Addressing Indiana Urban Tree Canopy in South Bend, Indiana](#). Web access July 5, 2022.