



# Executive Summary

In the midst of the uncertainties of climate change, we do know this: meeting the challenges will take all of us. Fort Wayne's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) represents a collaborative and diverse effort on the part of local government to meet these challenges. The CAAP includes input from non-profit organizations, businesses, and academia.

*Sustaining Fort Wayne: For Today and Tomorrow's* data collection and analysis forms a solid foundation of science and achievable results. Small steps taken consistently will help bring about the changes that will benefit our entire community. We will monitor our progress and update the CAAP.

While there are no guarantees of a comfortable, healthy, and safe future, Fort Wayne is at the forefront of activities to position our community as an efficient energy consumer and implementor of programs to reduce our carbon footprint. Whether it's clean water, clear air, or sufficient resources, plans are already underway to protect all residents as much as possible.

Through the leadership and commitment of Mayor Tom Henry and others who created the CAAP, Fort Wayne is prepared to meet the global environmental changes scientists say will impact us locally more each year.

Climate change is a global phenomenon with local impact. Since all of humanity will be affected, it will take all of us

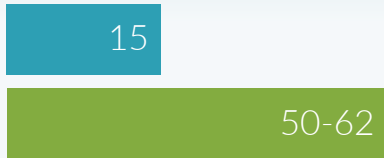
working together to dramatically reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades in order to prevent the most dangerous effects of climate change. Greenhouse gases have far-ranging environmental and health effects. They cause climate change by trapping heat, and they also contribute to respiratory disease from smog and air pollution. Extreme weather, food supply disruptions, and increased wildfires are other effects of climate change caused by greenhouse gases.

The City of Fort Wayne is in a unique position to respond to this threat, and intends to do so, using the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan as its guide. Implementing *Sustaining Fort Wayne: For Today and Tomorrow* will ultimately result in City operations achieving a net-zero energy consumption. Of course, City government can't do it alone: it will take every one of us.

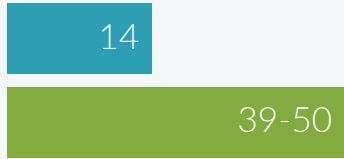
Committing to following the CAAP can improve Fort Wayne's air and water quality, preparing our community to meet the challenges of climate change. Those challenges will not be felt equally. The City will begin evaluating and analyzing data citywide to identify areas which need to be brought to parity to ensure environmental equity.

## Extreme Heat

Number of Extreme Heat Events in Fort Wayne



Average days per year above 90°F



Average nights per year above 68°F

Current 2050s (projected)

Annual Temperature  
125 years (1895-2019)



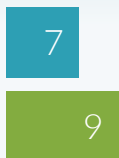
For example, higher temperatures and more drastic drought could disproportionately harm the elderly, the very young, and those without access to air conditioning or clean water. Imagine the impacts on Fort Wayne neighborhoods as average days per year above 90° will increase from 15 to more than 50. Average annual nights with a low temperature above 68° are expected to rise from 14 to nearly 40. At the same time, Fort Wayne is anticipating a rise in extreme precipitation events, during which more than 2" of precipitation falls in a 24-hour period.

Several of the tactical responses included in the CAAP are already underway; more are in development. Responses fall into three main categories: 1) mitigation, 2) adaptation, and 3) resilience. **Mitigation** actions aim to slow the rate of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions directly. **Adaptation** efforts consider what steps to take to live with the effects of climate change. **Resilience** actions prepare the City to withstand, avoid, or recover from the effects of climate change. Sometimes, all three actions overlap.

Planting trees is a combined strategy, as trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (mitigation), provide shade and natural cooling for urban environments (adaptation), and support a healthy water cycle (resilience).

## Extreme Precipitation\*

Number of Extreme Precipitation Events in Fort Wayne



Average extreme precipitation events per decade

Current 2050s (projected)

Annual Precipitation  
125 years (1895-2019)



\*Extreme precipitation events, during which more than 2" of precipitation falls in a 24-hour period.

**ADAPTATION**  
As average temperatures rise, trees will provide natural cooling and shade, allowing urban residents to adapt to changing conditions. Trees and vegetation lower surface and air temperature by up to 45 degrees.

**MITIGATION**  
Trees absorb and trap excess carbon dioxide, slowing the rate of climate change. A mature tree will capture up to 48 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

**RESILIENCE**  
Through the regulation of the water cycle, trees and their roots provide resilience from intensifying storm events. This includes reducing flooding and slowing runoff.

## Fort Wayne is ready for CLIMATE ACTION!

The timing is right for a CAAP that addresses resiliency and sustainability as it relates to the climate. Fort Wayne residents shared a few major takeaways from the Hoosier Life Survey, conducted between August and December of 2019, including:

68% OF RESIDENTS BELIEVE CLIMATE CHANGE IS HAPPENING

85% OF RESIDENTS WANT MORE TREES PLANTED TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FLOODING AND HEAT WAVES

56% OF HOMEOWNERS ARE INTERESTED IN SOLAR PANELS TO REDUCE CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS

*Sustaining Fort Wayne: For Today and Tomorrow* is a future-focused document, addressing climate change responses to allow the City of Fort Wayne to improve public health, stimulate and transform the local economy, conserve natural resources, and build a more sustainable, environmentally equitable, and resilient community. But climate change is already happening, now. And the City of Fort Wayne is proactively working toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, today. Many departments within the City have begun work on projects addressing energy- and cost-saving opportunities.

### Some efforts already underway include:



**The Resource Recovery Program** converts waste material from businesses into methane gas for electricity generation at the Water Pollution Control Plant, reducing the Plant's emissions equivalent

to what is produced by 4,630 vehicles driven for one year.

**City Vehicle Fleet and Electric Vehicle Charging Stations** The City has installed 17 of 37 already-approved level 2 public electric vehicle chargers. Additionally, City vehicles have an idle policy to shut down automatically after 10 minutes (except Police vehicles).



**Fort Wayne Area Trails Network** Over 134 miles of trails with more added each year. In 2022, infrared trail counters estimated over 724,000 trips were taken on the trails.

Alternative transportation reduces the greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.



**Fort Wayne's Tunnel Works Project (Three Rivers Protection and Overflow Reduction Tunnel – 3RPORT)**

The mammoth tunnel project will eventually collect and transport combined sewage into the City's wastewater treatment plant, reducing sewer overflows into the St. Marys River and the Maumee River by over 90%.



**Green infrastructure, stormwater, and neighborhood enhancement projects** in-progress include the Coldwater Road, Dupont Road, and Maysville projects,

which will provide residents with drainage improvement and light-emitting diode (LED) energy efficient streetlights for improved traffic flow and safety features to connect neighborhoods.

*This CAAP is not destined to be left on a shelf; it is a growing and evolving guide to assure a bright, healthy, secure future for all Fort Wayne residents. Whatever your reason for being concerned about climate change, there is reason for confidence, because the City is not waiting for the worst to happen. Mayor Henry and others are putting their resources and focus on making the best choices now to help ensure a future where everyone in Fort Wayne has clean water, clear air, and sufficient resources to live good lives.*

[The entire CAAP is available HERE.](#) If you have questions or want more information about how the CAAP was put together, please contact us at [sustainingfw@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:sustainingfw@cityoffortwayne.org).