



THRIVE INDIANAPOLIS

Annual Report 2020



Photo Courtesy of Indianapolis Cultural Trail Inc.



CONTENTS

Letter from the Director 1

Annual Report Introduction 2

Tracking Our Progress 3

Annual Report

Built Environment 4

Economy 6

Energy 7

Food and Urban Agriculture 7

Natural Resources 8

Public Health & Safety 10

Transportation & Land Use 11

Waste and Recycling 12

Be a Part of the Solution 13

References 14

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2019, the City of Indianapolis adopted Thrive Indianapolis, the first sustainability and resilience action plan in our city's history. The development of this plan was no small task; it involved coordination between 20 city and county departments, 27 community organizations, multiple task forces, extensive expert consultation, and many public engagement opportunities. The efforts resulted in a roadmap to help create a more equitable and healthy Indianapolis through 16 key objectives and 59 ambitious action items. When this plan was created, we did not fully foresee what the future had in store.

The year 2020 brought a global pandemic that upended our way of life and laser-focused our attention on the racism and inequality still prevalent in our society. While COVID-19 impacted everyone, the most vulnerable communities were disproportionately affected. The importance of access to quality, affordable healthcare and reliable employment became apparent indicators of a community's resilience to the pandemic. This closely mirrors how climate change disproportionately burdens these communities and serves as a stark reminder that equitable action is more urgent than ever.

Despite the hardship and heartache that 2020 brought, the dedicated staff in the Office of Sustainability worked diligently on numerous action items while collaborating with organizations focused on the same end goals. This report is an update on our community's progress to date, measured against the metrics outlined in Thrive.

As the new director of the Office of Sustainability, I will look to Thrive as a roadmap to determine new areas of growth, while championing existing efforts. While this office may own the day-to-day implementation of Thrive, we cannot achieve these goals on our own. I encourage all Indy residents to bring forward new opportunities to collaborate and form partnerships that will contribute to a stronger, more resilient Indianapolis.

Best Regards,



Morgan Mickelson
Director, Office of Sustainability
City of Indianapolis



MaCie Moore



Matt Mosier



Morgan Mickelson



Abbey Brands



Francie Wilson



Mo McReynolds



Lindsay Trameri

ANNUAL REPORT

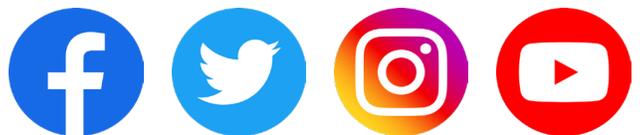
Thrive Indianapolis is an intersectional, thorough, and high-stakes plan. Indy residents, Thrive stakeholders, and our city-county partners deserve analyzed metrics that are updated each year. This annual report serves as the inaugural communication celebrating the notable progress that's been made as well as detailing where improvements could and should be implemented.

The Office of Sustainability, a division of the Department of Public Works, remains dedicated in its mission to enhance the quality of life for all residents in Indianapolis and Marion County. One of the many ways our team hopes to achieve this mission is by providing transparent information in this report and each report to follow.

The 59 ambitious action items included in Thrive are further identified by **nine output metrics**, reported annually, and **20 performance metrics**, reported every three years. Many metrics include targets for the year 2025, though the work will not end. Included in this annual report are these nine output metrics, **plus nineteen related data points and stories** demonstrating collective progress toward sustainability and resiliency under the eight original plan elements: Built Environment; Economy; Energy; Food & Agriculture; Natural Resources; Public Health & Safety; Transportation & Land Use; and Waste & Recycling.

Since January 2019, Indianapolis has participated in the two-year Bloomberg Philanthropies' American Cities Climate Challenge (ACCC), the engagement was granted a six-month extension period in response to pandemic-related obstacles. Thrive action items have been significantly advanced as a result of this prestigious opportunity's funding and expert resources.

Additional updates on Thrive and related partnerships including ACCC, local air quality initiative Knozone, and electric vehicle marketing campaign Highly EVolved, can be found by following us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube or by visiting: sustain.indy.gov; thriveindianapolis.com; knozone.com; and behighlyevolved.com.



@SustainIndy

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

Output Metrics from Thrive Indianapolis

	Baseline	Baseline Year	2025 Target
# of green buildings (i.e., LEED certified or Energy Star Rated) ¹	259*	2018	498
# of buildings disclosing energy use annually ²	--	--	1000
# of publicly available EV charging stations	170	2018	300
% of large corporations committing to pay a family-sustaining wage to all employees**	--	--	100%
# of youth participating in summer and after school recreational programs ³	210,322	2018	213,932
% of residents with health insurance ⁴	86.1%	2016	100%
Miles of bike lanes ⁵	104	2017	200
# of EVs registered in Indianapolis ⁶	760	2017	3,040
Total tons of material recycled ⁷	13,336	2017	16,696

*Baseline increased by 10 buildings from the originally reported figure after optimizing the data collection process.

**The City of Indianapolis, in partnership with Develop Indy, is re-positioning its existing economic development incentive programs to advance equitable economic opportunity.



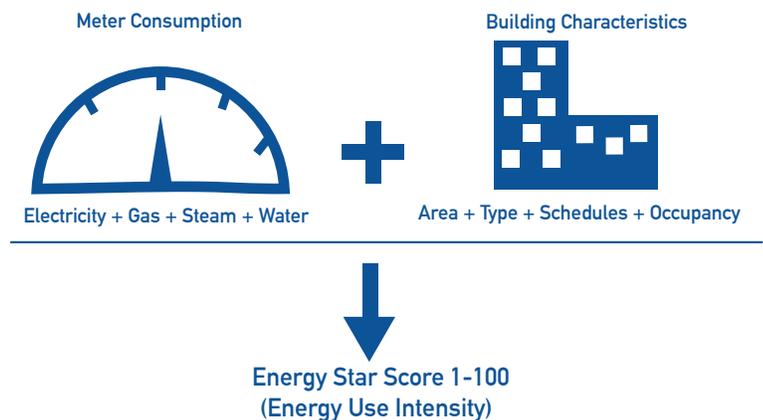
Green Buildings



The number of certified green buildings in Marion County increased from the Thrive baseline of 259 to **295 in 2020**; the Thrive 2025 target figure is 498 green buildings county-wide. Examples of green buildings that celebrated their grand opening between 2018 and 2020 include the Eagle Branch of the Indianapolis Public Library and three buildings on Butler University’s campus.

Benchmarking Utility Consumption

The City’s Office of Sustainability, utilizing resources and support from the Bloomberg Philanthropies American Cities Climate Challenge, convened a Building Efficiency Advisory Committee five times over the course of 2020 to help develop a Benchmarking and Transparency Ordinance draft. If passed, this ordinance has the potential to catalyze **\$16 million in utility bill savings** per year, the creation of **1,400 related green jobs**, a **27% reduction in CO₂ emissions** within the built environment, and **\$77 million in public health savings** due to improved air quality. It’s important to note there will be a one-year period between the time of energy use reporting from building owners and the public disclosure of the building scores.





Publicly Available EV Charging Stations



Photo Courtesy of AES Indiana

Due to typical market fluctuation, the number of publicly available electric vehicle (EV) charging stations decreased from the Thrive baseline of 170 to **152 as of 2020**. The Thrive 2025 target is 300 publicly available EV charging stations.

In the spring of 2021, the Office of Sustainability's Knozone air quality initiative launched an EV education and adoption campaign called Highly EVolved. The campaign includes advertisements, billboards, and an interactive website featuring a dinosaur, an EV advocate. The campaign will also include virtual webinars aimed at helping consumers and employers in the Indianapolis market learn how to get started with EV charging by breaking down the barriers, providing resources, and offering firsthand advice from industry experts and early EV adopters.

Spotlight | Stormwater

The revived street sweeping program and rain gardens in the public spaces are both ways the City preserves the lifespan of public infrastructure and stormwater management system.

Street Sweeping		Summer 2019 - Jan. 2021
Lane Miles Swept ⁸		19,399.71
Tonnage Debris Removed ⁹		5,706.27

Rain Gardens		2016	2020
Square Footage ¹⁰		83,975	148,574





ECONOMY

6

Spotlight | Pathway to Employment

The Pathway to Employment program provides people experiencing homelessness with the resources and skills necessary to find stable employment. Participants are identified by IMPD’s Homeless Unit and are connected with employment, transportation, and support services by staffing agency Keys to Work. Participants then make \$10/hour by completing tasks like picking up litter or cleaning graffiti, with the ultimate goal of transitioning participants to full-time employment as a bridge to stability.

Since the program’s inception in 2019, **132 of the 246 total participants have transitioned into full-time jobs** and removed roughly **100 tons of litter** from Indianapolis streets.¹¹

	2019	2020
Participants who transitioned into a full-time job	52	80

Project Indy



EmployIndy supports Mayor Hogsett’s youth jobs initiative by offering a location-based mobile app and web portal for young adults to search and apply for local jobs. Project Indy can also integrate results from the Job Ready Indy badging employability skills curriculum, identifiers that set participants apart from other young job seekers. More information can be found at projectindy.net and jobreadyindy.com.

In 2019, over 200 jobs listed were with environmental organizations or Indy Parks.¹² More information can be found at projectindy.net and jobreadyindy.com.



ENERGY

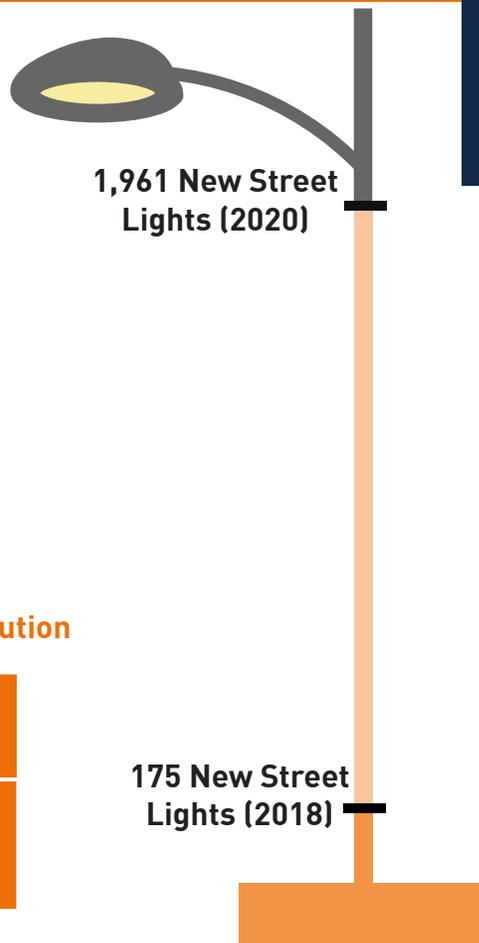
Operation Night Light

Operation Night Light is Mayor Joe Hogsett’s initiative to install up to 4,000 new streetlights in Indianapolis by investing the savings generated from converting city-funded streetlights to more efficient LED technology. Residents will benefit from the lower maintenance costs and energy usage that results from LED technology, seeing a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the installation of additional lights in areas of Indianapolis that need them most. From overall program savings, **1,961 new streetlights** have been added in public right-of-way since 2018.¹³

The city expects to see the following benefits from the conversion to energy-efficient LED technology:

- Increased safety
- Lower maintenance Costs
- Cleaner environment
- Reduced light pollution

	2018	2020
Reduced energy consumption due to LED conversions (kWh) ¹⁴	805,240	17,292,478



FOOD AND URBAN AGRICULTURE

SNAP & Fresh Bucks + Community Farms & Gardens



The number of SNAP and WIC certified grocers coalition stores increased from 2 to **4 in 2020**. The number of active urban farms and community gardens in Marion County increased from 103 to **129 in 2020**.¹⁶

These graphs depict dollars spent at local farmers markets and grocers coalition stores.¹⁵



FOOD AND URBAN AGRICULTURE

8

Community Nutrition and Food Policy

In January 2021, City-County Council passed Proposal 337, creating the **Division of Community Nutrition and Food Policy, the Indianapolis Community Food Access Coalition, and the Indianapolis Food Access Advisory Commission (CNFP)**. The CNFP division, which is a part of the Office of Public Health and Safety, expands the city’s efforts around food access and equity. The division will inform city policy relating to food insecurity, food access, and food equity at all levels; serve as a coordinating entity for food-related initiatives by the City-County government; and continue to administer OPHS’s food programming, including the Indy Food Fund grants program, the Neighborhood Food Champions program, and technical support to small and independent grocers. Over the past year, the city has unveiled a number of food access initiatives, including the Community Compass app, the Indy Food Fund, and the Food|Comida|Rawl 317 initiative.



NATURAL RESOURCES



Indy Parks Youth Programs

In 2020, people across the planet turned to their local parks, trails, and greenspaces in record numbers, seeking a haven, a safe routine, and familiarity with nature. The Department of Parks and Recreation recognized the ways, old and new, our community needed to lean on their services and talented staff.

Despite significant obstacles, **209,199 children and young adults** between the ages of 2 and 18 participated in Indy Parks’ summer and after school recreational programs in 2020. This figure does not include the many 16-, 17-, and 18-year-olds employed by the department as lifeguards, camp counselors, or other important roles. This total is not far from the Thrive baseline of 210,322 participants, which demonstrates the great ability of the Indy Parks team to achieve their mission, even when faced with the logistics and stress of a global pandemic. They continue with confidence toward the Thrive 2025 target of 213,932 total youth participants.



Parks and Greenways

The Office of Land Stewardship manages **1,918¹⁸ acres of natural area** across 37 park properties and more than 100,000 square feet of city rain gardens that assist in filtering stormwater runoff. Land Stewardship holds a leadership role by preserving critical wildlife habitats, providing passive recreational opportunities, protecting air quality and addressing stormwater issues. Efforts like these helped Indianapolis earn a Top 10 City for Wildlife designation from the National Wildlife Federation in 2015, 2018 and 2019. The Office of Land Stewardship was honored with an Outstanding Institution Advancing Sustainability award by the City of Indianapolis in 2019.



30,000 Trees Planted by 2025



Our natural resources are one of Indianapolis’s greatest assets. Aside from the understood value of clean air and water, natural spaces offer several benefits: help lower energy use, reduce urban heat island, minimize impacts of flooding, promote safe neighborhoods, and support mental and physical health.

Indianapolis is a certified “Tree City USA.” The Arbor Day Foundation recognized the city for meeting the standards found on its website. Further, Indianapolis has received the Tree City USA Growth Award 14 times—an award that highlights innovative urban forestry programs and projects. Since then, the bar was reset to plant 30,000 trees in the public right-of-way before 2025. As of 2020, **16,445 trees have been planted toward that goal.**¹⁷



Spotlight | #MaskUpIndy

In May of 2020, the City of Indianapolis launched indy.gov/masks, which gave residents access to a free, re-useable, Indy-branded face covering. City departments and partner organizations distributed more than **825,000 Indy masks** during the pandemic, improving the public's health and resilience in the face of COVID-19.

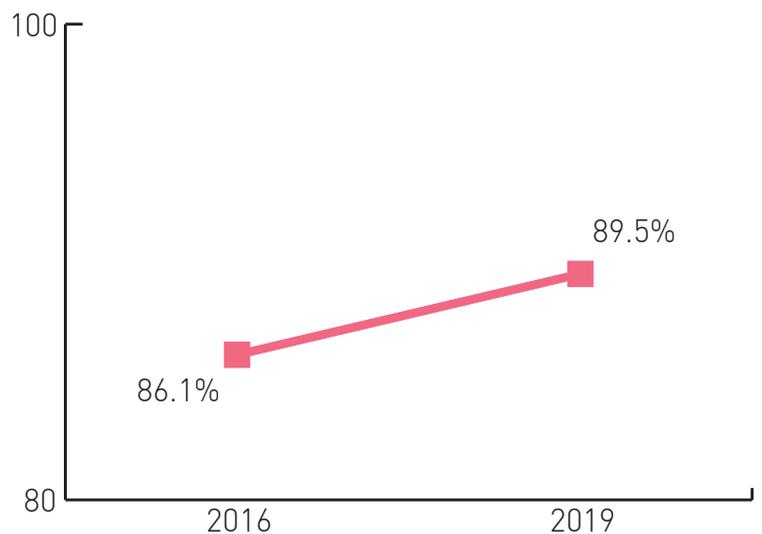
As part of a related city-wide COVID-19 public health campaign, six Indianapolis artists created original artworks to encourage people to wear face coverings. These #MaskUpIndy posters were the result of a partnership between the Arts Council and the City of Indianapolis.



Percent of Residents with Health Insurance

Widespread access to quality affordable healthcare is one indicator of a community's sustainability and resiliency in the face of climate change due to factors like natural disasters, poor air quality, and contagious diseases. The spread of COVID-19 proved that health insurance is a lifesaving safety net, especially as studies showed vulnerable communities and people of color suffered at higher rates nationally and right here in Indianapolis.

The percentage of Marion County residents with health insurance increased from the Thrive baseline of 86.1% to **89.5% in 2020**. The increase can be at least partially explained by the continued rollout of the Affordable Care Act. The increase is notable, but the Thrive 2025 Target is 100%.





Miles of Bike Lanes

When Indy Moves was published in 2018, Indianapolis had 104 miles of bike lanes, 99 miles of trails and greenways (including multi-use paths), the eight-mile Cultural Trail, and 251 Indiana Pacers Bikeshare bikes distributed across 29 docking stations.

Two years later, Indianapolis has **115 miles of bike lanes, 110 miles of trails and greenways** (including multi-use paths), **525 Indiana Pacers Bikeshare bikes** distributed across **50 docking stations**. Additionally, the Indianapolis Cultural Trail: A Legacy of Gene and Marilyn Glick announced its **first expansion** since its grand opening in 2013.



Photo Courtesy of Indianapolis Cultural Trail Inc.

Number of Electric Vehicles Registered

The number of electric vehicles (EVs) registered in Indianapolis increased from 378 in 2017 to **1,058 at the end of 2020**. The Thrive 2025 target figure is 3,040 EVs, and coordinated efforts are well under way to get us there.

In the spring of 2021, the Office of Sustainability's Knozone air quality initiative launched an EV education and adoption campaign called Highly EVolved. The campaign includes advertisements, billboards, and an interactive website. The website also features a "Find an EV" section where residents interested purchasing an EV can view available makes, models, and price estimates at local dealerships. Visitors can also learn all about charging, performance, affordability, and cleaner fuel.



	2017	2020
Number of EV Registered in Indianapolis	378	1,058



WASTE & RECYCLING

12

Total Tons of Material Recycled

In Indy, residents who opt not to subscribe to current curbside recycling options can bring their recyclable materials to one of 16 different community recycling drop-off sites located around the county. In 2020, the total tonnage of material deposited at these sites combined with the total tonnage from residential curbside recycling (through Republic Services and Ray's Trash Service) was **16,345 tons**. This is significantly increased from the Thrive baseline of 13,336 tons and only a short distance from the Thrive 2025 Target of 16,696.



COMMUNITY DROP OFF RECYCLING LOCATIONS
CLEAN | DRY | LOOSE | DON'T BAG IT

ALL COLORS OF GLASS
 #1 & #2 PLASTIC
(NO STYROFOAM OR PLASTIC BAGS)
 ALUMINUM, TIN & STEEL
 BEVERAGE & FOOD CANS
 NEWSPAPERS, CARDBOARD, & MAGAZINES
(CARDBOARD BOXES MUST BE FLATTENED)



Students Impacted by Indianapolis Thriving Schools Challenge



The Indianapolis Thriving Schools Challenge is a green schools certification program in Marion County for grades K-12. Schools may reach certification either by starting new projects or demonstrating their existing initiatives. Participating schools are eligible for three levels of certification based on the number of new or existing sustainability projects: Thriving Schools Certified, Excelling, and Masters.

Project funding is available to schools in need of financial support, maximizing the opportunity for all schools in our community to become leaders on sustainability. Selected schools are eligible for up to \$5,000 in funding for implementing new projects and expanding or improving upon existing projects. The dedicated teachers and staff who champion the implementation of new projects at selected schools receive a total stipend of up to \$1,000. For the program's third year, Earth Charter Indiana is administering the Indianapolis Thriving Schools Challenge. Since its inception, the program has certified 82 green schools, granted 51 schools funding to complete **113 unique sustainability projects**¹⁹, and **impacted 71, 843 students** from all corners of Marion County²⁰.

BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION

For even more ways to get involved, please visit thriveindianapolis.com.

- Become a Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Adopt-a-Block captain by committing to keep your street clean of litter.
- Take advantage of rebates offered by AES Indiana and weatherize your home to protect the interior from the elements (as well as reducing your energy bills!).
- Turn off lights and electronics when not in use - or even better, unplug them. Some electronics continue to use power, even when turned off.
- Switch your lightbulbs to more energy efficient LED lights.
- Enroll in AES Indiana's Green Power Option to support Midwest wind farms for an average increase of only \$2.50 on your electric bill.
- Talk to your children about sustainability and how we can all be more sustainable in our daily lives.
- Encourage the young people in your life to gain job experience and skills development through EmployIndy's initiatives and programs including Project Indy and Job Ready Indy.
- Purchase locally-grown food, supporting local agriculture and minimizing energy spent transporting products.
- Support restaurants and grocery stores that use and sell locally-grown food.
- Support your local farmers markets and community gardens.
- Trade your shower heads and faucets for low flow, water-efficient options.
- Collect rainwater in rain barrels to water your lawn and/or plants.
- Help keep our parks beautiful by volunteering with Indy Parks.
- Utilize Pacers Bikeshare when traveling short distances.
- Ride the IndyGo bus to work or school once a week - or even better, every day.
- Drive an electric, hybrid or low-emission vehicle. Visit behighlyevolved.com to learn more about making the switch.
- Join FEMA's local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to make Indianapolis more prepared during emergencies.
- Put together an emergency preparedness kit for your household by visiting Ready.Gov.
- Check in on the people in your life, especially the elderly and those experiencing mental health problems.
- Bring your own reusable produce and tote bags when grocery shopping to avoid using plastic bags.
- Never throw hazardous household waste, like batteries and chemicals, in the trash. Dispose of them in an environmentally responsible way, like through the City's ToxDrop program.
- Make sure to wash and wipe dry your recyclable goods, so as to lower contamination in recycling streams.

REFERENCES

- ¹U.S. EPA & U.S. DOE, 2018; U.S. Green Buildings Council, 2018
- ²ChargeHub, 2018
- ³Indy Parks, 2018
- ⁴U.S. Census Bureau, 2016
- ⁵City of Indianapolis & Marion County, 2018
- ⁶Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles, 2017
- ⁷City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2017
- ⁸City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2020
- ⁹City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2020
- ¹⁰City of Indianapolis, Office of Land Stewardship 2020; Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc., 2020; Citizens Energy Group 2020
- ¹¹City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2020; City of Indianapolis, Office of Public Health & Safety, 2020
- ¹²EmployIndy, Project Indy, 2020
- ¹³AES Indiana (formerly Indianapolis Power & Light), 2021
- ¹⁴AES Indiana (formerly Indianapolis Power & Light), 2021
- ¹⁵City of Indianapolis, Office of Public Health & Safety, 2021; Marion County Public Health Department, 2021
- ¹⁶City of Indianapolis, Office of Public Health & Safety, 2021
- ¹⁷City of Indianapolis, Department of Public Works, 2020; Tree City USA, 2020
- ¹⁸City of Indianapolis, Office of Land Stewardship, 2020
- ¹⁹City of Indianapolis, Office of Sustainability, 2020; Earth Charter Indiana, 2020
- ²⁰City of Indianapolis, Office of Sustainability, 2020; Earth Charter Indiana, 2020

