

RESOLUTION NO. R-12-25

**A RESOLUTION TO CREATE A CLIMATE-RESILIENT CITY OF ELKHART THAT
WILL PROTECT THE COMMUNITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

WHEREAS: the City of Elkhart has a history of investing in environmental education and stewardship, including maintaining a municipal recycling system for over 35 years, and creating the Elkhart Environmental Center in 1991 which provided education and remediation to thousands of youths and residents; and

WHEREAS: the City of Elkhart has sought to purchase homes located in flood plains to reduce environmental impacts on low-income communities; and has been an Arbor Day Foundation “Tree City USA” since 1991; and has given away and planted thousands of trees throughout the city; and

WHEREAS: the City of Elkhart has progressed towards a sustainable future through its participation in Indiana University Environmental Resilience Institute’s 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory (ERI), to establish a Climate Action Plan for Elkhart in the Summer of 2020; and

WHEREAS: the Purdue Climate Change Action Center states, through an estimated climate research index based on current trends of greenhouse gas emissions, that by the year 2050, the City of Elkhart will be subjected to extreme weather and environmental threats; and

WHEREAS: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified that the leading contributor to climate change is industrial, commercial, and residential fossil fuel use and emissions, and according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, a total of 163,186,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide (MTCO₂) was emitted in 2022 in the State of Indiana; and

WHEREAS: a detailed step-by-step plan, established by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and the Environmental Resilience Institute (ERI), describes the process of making the City of Elkhart a more environmentally resilient city by

conducting an emission inventory and forecast, setting emission reduction targets, developing a local climate action plan, implementing a Climate Action Plan, and monitoring and verifying emission reductions; and

WHEREAS: a completed Climate Action Plan will help Elkhart citizens and officials understand the current environmental condition of the City while allowing for an established progression of improved public health and safety, new economic development, and increased community engagement and civic pride; and

WHEREAS: a climate-resilient city will protect communities most affected by climate change through a secured urban development plan intended to bring sustainable infrastructure to all areas in Elkhart; and

WHEREAS: a completed plan to make Elkhart a more climate-resilient city will protect physical assets and will allow for decreased local government spending on natural disaster recovery, public health costs, and non-renewable energy sources to power urban infrastructure; and

WHEREAS: numerous Indiana communities have adopted similar youth-led resolutions that have activated climate action planning processes, including nearby cities like South Bend and Goshen;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ELKHART, INDIANA, THAT:

Section 1. The City of Elkhart acknowledges the current threat of climate change and will work to identify steps toward mitigation, hereby taking the first step to creating a more sustainable future for the City and reducing certain climate change impacts.

Section 2. Utilizing the results of the greenhouse gas inventory, the City of Elkhart will write and adopt a Climate Action Plan as an official guide for the City to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, implement climate-related programs and policies, and prepare for the impacts of climate change on the local communities. The Climate Action Plan should be completed in no more than three years from the date of this Resolution and should include an overview of potential costs and general timelines of the project.

Section 3. The City of Elkhart will identify a Sustainability Officer, with responsibilities to include, coordinating with residents and community partners, and exploring grant opportunities through various local, state, and federal programs. The Sustainability Officer position will be a current city employee in a relevant department who is selected by the Mayor for their interest, knowledge, and concern for environmental issues.

Section 4. The City of Elkhart will actively engage and educate the youth of Elkhart about the importance of environmental sustainability and resilience at both the local and national level, as well as the role they play in these issues.

Section 5. The City of Elkhart will work in cooperation with community partners, students, residents, and local stakeholders to implement services and structures within the City, such as green infrastructure, reduced energy consumption in city facilities, and continued natural resource and land conservation.

Section 6. This Resolution shall be in effect from and after its passage by the Common Council and approval by the Mayor, according to law.

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SO RESOLVED, this 21st day of April, 2025.



Arvis L. Dawson

President of the Elkhart Common Council

ATTEST:


Debra D. Barrett, Elkhart City Clerk

PRESENTED to the Mayor by me this 22ND day of April, 2025, at 9:17 (a.m./p.m.).


Debra D. Barrett, Elkhart City Clerk

APPROVED by me this 23RD day of April, 2025.


Rod Roberson, Mayor for the City of Elkhart

ATTEST:


Debra D. Barrett, Elkhart City Clerk



M E M O R A N D U M

Date: April 21, 2025
To: Common Council
From: Megan Erwin, Chief of Staff
RE: Sustainability Resolution

For your consideration is a resolution titled "A Resolution to Create a Climate-Resilient City of Elkhart That Will Protect the Community and Future Generations." This resolution recognizes Elkhart's longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship and outlines a framework for creating a Climate Action Plan that will help our community mitigate and prepare for the impacts of climate change. Building on the city's participation in Indiana University's 2020 Greenhouse Gas Inventory and our ongoing investments, this resolution marks an important step in advancing climate resilience and promoting public health, economic development, and environmental equity across the city.

This initiative was brought to the City by a group of passionate and engaged local students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and civic responsibility. Over the course of many months, City administration worked closely with these students to refine the resolution, ensuring it aligns with Elkhart's goals, capabilities, and ongoing sustainability efforts. Their commitment to shaping a better future for our community is commendable, and we are proud to support this youth-led vision for a more climate-resilient Elkhart.

We respectfully request your thoughtful review and support of this resolution.