

Indianapolis Documenters

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Environmental Sustainability Committee

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Summary

Summarize the 3 most important outcomes or takeaways from your notes....

- Indianapolis International Airport is among the nation's leaders in sustainability efforts, even though they are not financially incentivized to do so.
- Concrete can be used to sequester carbon in amounts equivalent to millions of trees.
- The White River Watershed is about average among the nation's watersheds in terms of environmental quality and sustainability.

Follow-Up Questions

What are you left wondering? Ask up to 3 of your own follow-up questions...

- Will the price of recycling and solid waste disposal increase or decrease with the new Request for Proposals, set to be completed by January 2026?
- What new ideas will Indianapolis International Airport managers come up with for environmental sustainability? They're already among the nation's leaders.

Notes

Airport Sustainability Efforts presented by Mario Rodriguez, Todd Cavender

Timeline Update on Recycling and Solid Waste RFP presented by- Morgan Mickelson Indianapolis International Airport

Mario Rodriguez, executive director of the Indianapolis International Airport, and Todd Cavender, director of Environmental Sustainability at Indianapolis Airport Authority, outlined the airport's sustainability efforts.

Indianapolis International Airport is among the world's most environmentally friendly airports, Cavender said.

The airport received a [\\$22.5 million grant](#) from the Federal Aviation Administration for renewable energy and storage and is expanding its bank of solar panels, Cavender said.

Two projects were approved for carbon sequestration, each involving concrete runways, making the airport the nation's first to earn Federal Aviation Administration approval for a [carbon sequestration](#) project. The carbon stored in concrete is the equivalent of more than one million trees, Cavender said. Rodriguez added that the most recently built runway contains enough concrete and steel to build a road from Indianapolis to Terre Haute.

By making the concrete thicker, the runways last almost twice as long. That means the carbon stored there will not be released into the atmosphere, Rodriguez said.

Net Zero by 2050

The Indianapolis International Airport system operates six General Aviation airports in the region. All six are at level three for Airport Carbon Accreditation, Cavender said, the highest level an airport operator can practically achieve. Level four deals with buying carbon credits. The goal is to be at net zero carbon emissions by 2050, Cavender said.

Stormwater Management

The airport expanded its stormwater storage capacity and is storing 95 million gallons. The total storage capacity is 160 million gallons. .

Sustainability Management Plan

Rodriguez said this is a test program and Indianapolis International Airport is the first U.S. airport to start down this path. Among the steps along that path: They applied for a federal grant to pursue sustainable aviation fuels and received approval to test hydrogen

to fuel airport vehicles. Hydrogen throws off the goal of no carbon emissions.

“All this creates one of the best, most economically vibrant airports in the United States,” Rodriguez said. “If we keep building on the successes, we’ll get there we want to go.”

“I’m proud of the strides we’ve made, especially since it’s not incentivized,” council member Chris Brown said.

[White River Report Card](#) and DPW Stormwater Climate Resilience Update presented by-
Jill Hoffmann, Shannon Killion

The White River Watershed is comprised of 1.7 million acres over 16 counties, and includes four major reservoirs, 15 tributaries, and is home to 33 percent of Indiana’s population, said Jill Hoffman, director of the White River Alliance for the past 17 years.

Hoffman said irrigating lawns in the summer consumes the most water throughout the year.

The White River Watershed gets average grades – a C, said Kelly Brown, also with the White River Alliance. Hoffman explained that they rate the watershed on 18 indicators broken into three categories – six each in Land, Water, and Community.



Wildlife diversity and education earned a B. In other categories not so much. Bacteria and environmental burden both get a D, and wetland change – destroying wetlands for development and other reasons, gets an F. From 2005 to 2019, 9.7 percent of wetlands were lost in downtown Indianapolis, and 3.1% in the Eagle Creek area, Hoffmann said.

Wetlands can be restored, which is fine, but their primary goal is to preserve wetlands in the first place, Hoffman said.

Hoffman said the report card took a year and a half to compile.

Stormwater Climate Resilience Update

During April so far, Indianapolis has been hit with multiple rain events, said Shannon Killion, stormwater engineering administrator with Indy’s Department of Public Works.

Between April 1 and 17, the Department of Public Works, invested more than 300 hours to clean more than 460 storm structures. A forestry crew spent more than 400 hours removing tree hazards and, clearing 22,500 square feet of open channel, Killion said.

Also, between April 11 and 12, the Department of Public Works received 140 flooding notices, some of which required a VACTOR truck to clear. That’s sort of like a massive

truck-mounted vacuum that sucks debris out of a clogged storm drain. They also cleared 31 underpasses and another 130 inlets.

You can help by cleaning the inlet on your block. It's their Adopt-A-Drain program, Killion said. If you do, please don't just pile the debris near the drain where it will run back down and clog it again, Killion said.

They get data from the National Weather Service to determine what actions to take to mitigate rainfall and potential flooding.

Last Friday, for example, the rain in Indianapolis stopped in the morning but the river kept rising until mid-afternoon because it was also raining upstream, Killion said.

DPW engineering thinks about flooding, Killion said. They calculate how much water is coming into reservoirs, the reservoir elevation and how much needs to go out – determining how many gates at Eagle Creek Dam need to be open and how wide.

Federal Solar Program

Morgan Michelson with the Department of Public Works said that a federal program announced this week could pour \$156 million into Indiana to help provide solar panels on homes for low and moderate-income families.

If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@mirrorindy.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.