



Jeremy P. Stutsman, Mayor
CITY OF GOSHEN

202 South Fifth Street, Suite 1 • Goshen, IN 46528-3714

Phone (574) 533-9322 • Fax (574) 533-3074
mayor@goshencity.com • www.goshenindiana.org

August 15, 2019

Council President Weddell and Council Members,

I am excited to present to the Goshen City Council an idea that has been in the works for several months with City staff, the Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) and other members of the community. With the backing of those mentioned, we are now ready to ask for your support to create a **Department of Environmental Resilience**.

This new department will help connect the existing ones and streamline our efficiency efforts without significantly adding to the size of City government. In this letter I will explain how and why this proposal came about, the benefits it will bring to the Maple City and how it will fit into our current budget.

Goshen has an exemplary track record of proactively preparing for the future. Long before bike and pedestrian paths were popular, Goshen was building them. The City established idle management policies for City vehicles and has worked to upgrade facilities. Such projects have helped us reduce our use of utilities and fuel. These also are choices that have helped our natural environment and our budgets, benefiting both businesses and residents.

For many years Goshen has been a leading community, not because we have all the answers but because we are bold and have the foresight to take the long view. We now need to find additional ways to better our physical environment and make our budgets more efficient. Our budget lines for energy continue to rise; we currently spend nearly \$875,000 a year on energy expenses.

We have learned that the quality-of-life projects that used to be considered luxuries are now essential building blocks for economic development. Many of these projects also help the environment as we build bike and pedestrian paths and offer more activities nearby so our residents do not have to drive far for entertainment. Green projects use to be hard to justify in our budgets; now they are saving us money in the long run and they are also becoming the next piece of economic development. Green communities are attracting both residents and businesses.

Goshen has become a leader in green initiatives, and the City has been recognized for our work. In 2017 Goshen received the Indiana Community of the Year award and the SolSmart Gold Level designation. In 2018 we received the Green Project of the Year award, and City Forester Aaron Sawatsky-Kingsley was the recipient of the Gold Leaf award. This year I was invited to be the keynote speaker for the Indiana University Environmental Law Summit.

We can continue to be leaders by creating a department that brings all our green efforts front and center. We can create a new space that allows us to push forward on a much more consistent and informed basis, instead of waiting to work on projects when we have time. The last department to be created was Central Garage in 2006. At the time, the City employed three mechanics in the Street Department and one mechanic for each of the Police, Fire and Utility departments. These six mechanics were able to complete 50–60% of all repairs needed. In recent years, however, through the leadership of Carl Gaines, Central Garage has delivered incredible savings to the City of Goshen. Central Garage now completes about 95% of all repairs and maintenance for all departments, manages all purchases to make sure the equipment is appropriate for the need and is working hard to keep our

fleet on a rotation for replacement. This type of attention to the fleet helps keep our employees safer, department budgets more efficient and future needs are reviewed annually.

The new Department of Environmental Resilience will allow us to accomplish many of the same goals and be focused on forestry, data collection, education, and efficiencies both environmental and financial. The department also will help to relieve needs of other departments. As you may recall, Resolution 2019-19 calls for City government (not the community as a whole) to work toward carbon neutrality by 2035. It also calls for a plan (Climate Action Plan) to achieve this by 2021. The Department of Environmental Resilience will be responsible for creating this plan and finding ways to implement the ideas set forth in it.

The Climate Action Plan will take the work of staff, consultants, and members of our community, Council members and MEAC. This will need to be a plan that we can get behind and is achievable. To create this plan we will need to be realistic about time available and budgets.

The new department can be created with minimal additional funds to our budget. However, I am suggesting a few changes, including one added employee, which will require additional funding.

I am proposing that we take our City Forester position and administrative assistant position out of the Parks & Recreation Department and place these positions in the Department of Environmental Resilience. The City Forester duties would follow to the new department, as well as any expense lines that are currently utilized. The City Forester would become a department head and thus receive a slight pay increase to match the responsibilities that will come with this position.

Over the years we have shifted some of our property tax levy to the Parks & Recreation Department to help keep the budgets solid. To shift the money from the Parks & Recreation Department fund back to the general fund all we need to do is bring that amount of the levy back to the general fund. The amount shifted for the two current positions, including all budget lines that go with City Forestry, comes to \$373,927. The new-money proposal will be presented and explained presently.

The increase to the current budget would be created through the following changes. First, we would increase the salary of the City Forester by creating the department head position. Second, we will need some money to be able to hire consultants and possibly implement ideas. Third, we would like to create a new employment position.

The money needed for consultants is still being investigated, and I will include some additional money that Forestry has needed for some time; this could add as much as \$150,000 to the budget. This is a rough estimate, and we will drill down on this more when we submit the official budget request to the City Council meeting in October.

The new employee will offer support in three areas: help the City Forester keep up with the new workload and existing forestry duties, offer environment-related assistance to other departments and be Goshen's first in-house grant writer. Any one of these items alone would not require a full-time position, but together we would need a 40-hours-a-week employee.

Following is a brief description of these three areas:

1. **New workload.** While we propose combining City Forestry with the new duties of the Department of Environmental Resilience, we will need extra hands to help keep existing tree programs moving properly, work to expand these programs and help with the need for education to our departments and the public/businesses. This would likely take about half of the new employee's time.

2. **Support other departments.** The new position would have the versatility to fill in where other departments may need help. For example, we recently became aware that the inter-local agreement for stormwater education we have with Elkhart city, Elkhart County and Bristol is ending. The county has been helping with the education piece that is required to maintain our stormwater permit. We need to fill this gap. The Engineering Department does not have room for another employee, and the need to fulfill this education piece takes up about a quarter of the time of a full-time position.
3. **Grants.** These can be very cumbersome and time-consuming to prepare. Due to the lack of time, departments look for grants available and apply for the ones we believe we have a good chance of winning. There is a lot of money we may have access to but have not tried for. In some cases we have no idea what is available. If we hire someone who can help write grant applications, we can expect to see some pressure taken off the City budget, and this would allow other departments to spend more time on their day-to-day workload. This is not intended to be a full-time position, but if successful it could become full-time.

Together, those three needs can be fulfilled by one full-time person. I know this will help tremendously with our education needs, plus I am optimistic that the grant writing will be successful and this position could end up more than paying for itself.

Possible budget numbers:

This new forestry/education/grant writing position would pay in the range of \$50,000–\$55,000 a year. Once you add in the benefits and other employee costs, this position could total as much as \$80,000 a year. Taking into account the existing dollars of \$373,927 plus the new position of \$80,000 plus the rough estimate of (consultants and project dollars) \$150,000 = (rounded down) \$600,000 budget, of which approximately \$230,000 would be new money.

Possible projects the Department of Environmental Resilience (in cooperation with the Mayor) would focus on over the first 3–4 years (no specific order):

1. Create and implement the Climate Action Plan (Resolution 2019-19)
2. Engage with business leaders, faith leaders, youth leaders and other community leaders from a diverse population to ensure that all voices are included in a long-term sustainability plan (Resolution 2019-19)
3. Pursue the 45% tree-canopy goal, create plan and implement (Resolution 2019-19)
4. Continue data collection to help set goals; update the Indiana University Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHG) when necessary
5. Offer environmental education to our business and residential communities
6. Work on possible energy efficiency partnerships, possibly with NIPSCO
7. Continue with Solarize, which helped bring 98 solar projects in Goshen to fruition in the first year
8. Work with our Indiana officials to bring back remote net metering for municipalities—and possibly for everyone
9. Find other areas we can participate in procuring best costs for residential/commercial/industrial projects (similar to Solarize), i.e., high-efficiency heating and cooling, LED switchovers, hybrid vehicles and/or insulation
10. Work with the Planning & Zoning Department to have discussions around land use and zoning laws
11. Help guide mobility/transportation discussions
12. Lead discussions about complete-streets policy
13. Work with MEAC

14. Provide leadership to help find possible remediation for future flooding by reviewing and deciphering our Great Lakes Integrated Sciences & Assessments stormwater study (not completed yet), as well as reviewing and deciphering our GHG and education materials (not completed yet)
15. Work to ensure that our environmental goals in the City of Goshen's Comprehensive Plan are moving forward.

We also will learn much throughout the first year as other projects may arise and take precedence.

Questions/concerns I have received to date:

1. **Will this cost the City more money?** Yes, if we implement as I am suggesting. It is possible to establish the Department of Environmental Resilience and only shift money currently being spent, but I believe that we need to make the additional investment to make this work well.
2. **By starting this department will it be easier to institute regulations on businesses in the future?** I am not asking for this department in order to start phasing in regulations. I can issue executive orders, but those speak just to City Government. Only the Goshen City Council (and state/federal governments) can set regulations on the business/residential community. If the City Council wanted to do institute regulations, it could do so—with or without this department. I believe it is far better for us to lead by example and not go down the road of more regulations.
3. **Will this department take over other positions or departments' duties in the City?** No. The Department of Environmental Resilience will collaborate with other departments to offer additional resources and help where most needed.
4. **How does this department serve the public?** We will be offering education resources to the public. The first phase of education is in development through a partnership with Goshen Chamber of Commerce, Goshen College, Goshen Community Schools, Goshen Hospital, Everence Financial and Goshen City administration. We want to help our residents know the best practices that can save them money *and* care for the environment. If we are successful in procurement projects, we also can help save money in other projects as well. This will also help us utilize tax dollars more efficiently.
5. **Will the potential list of projects be too long and diverse?** No, we have a great deal of information coming at us right now and a full year of planning ahead of us. We need to be ready to allow this department to fill the gap appropriately and not try to shove it in a direction that may not fit our community's needs.

I firmly believe that this department will contribute greatly to Goshen's growth as a community—and, by the way, help us stay at the top of the recognition lists! This will allow the City to bring more money in and cut back on our expenses over time. I am grateful that the Goshen City Council has joined me in budgeting the way we have the past 3½ years. We have added greatly to our cash balances. We have helped to build our Police, Fire and several other departments due to our strong and careful budgeting. We have placed Goshen in a position of being prepared for the future and still have money to work with regarding this new department. I am also grateful for the investment changes City Clerk-Treasurer Angie McKee has made that are now providing us with nearly \$1 million of interest per year.

The new department may be funded from a number of areas within our budget. I would like to consider our interest being the primary funding source for the additional \$230,000 needed. This still leaves us over \$750,000 a year going back to our coffers. However, if the City Council prefers we could simply take this money from our unappropriated balance in the General Fund.



Jeremy P. Stutsman, Mayor
CITY OF GOSHEN
 202 South Fifth Street, Suite 1 • Goshen, IN 46528-3714

Phone (574) 533-9322 • Fax (574) 533-3074
 mayor@goshencity.com • www.goshenindiana.org

This project offers people on all sides a positive effort to get behind. If you want to see the City build our financial efficiencies, reduce our environmental footprint, help save our business and residential communities' money, and even help put us on better footing with site selectors, then this project is for you. Indeed, it's for all of us!

I would like to ask for the support of the council and community to help us continue to show the "Good of Goshen"—and truly build a stronger more vibrant future for our children, grandchildren and future community leaders.

With great respect and excitement,

Mayor Jeremy P. Stutsman

We the undersigned support and value the creation of the proposed Department of Environmental Resilience: City of Goshen Department Heads

 Mark Brinson – Planning/Building/Redevelopment	 Larry Barkes – Legal
 Burt Matteson – Cemeteries	 Tanya Heyde – Parks & Recreation
 Carl Gaines – Central Garage	 Chief Jose Miller – Police
 Leslie Biek – Engineering	 David Gibbs – Streets
 Dustin Sailor – Engineering	 Kelly Saenz – Utility Business
 Chief Dan Sink – Fire	 Jim Kerezman – Wastewater
 Randy Sharkey – Goshen Municipal Airport	 Kent Holdren – Water & Sewer