

# Climate Action Plan Progress Report



Plan Range 2021-2027



CITY of LINCOLN

# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Powering Lincoln with Cleaner Energy</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Moving Lincoln with Cleaner Transportation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Preparing Lincoln for Floods, Heat, and Drought</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Growing Food Closer to Home</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Making a Climate-Smart Economy</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Growing a Greener Lincoln</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Turning Waste into Opportunity</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Working Together for a Resilient Lincoln</b>	<b>11</b>

# BUILDING A MORE RESILIENT LINCOLN

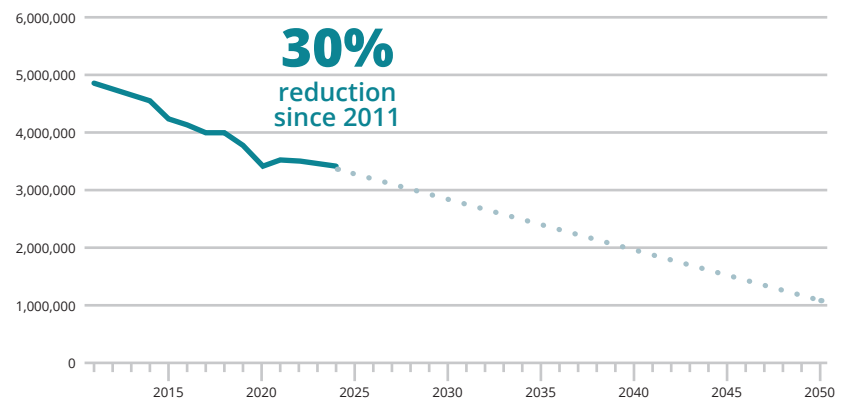
**At the heart of the Resilient Lincoln initiative is the belief that our community can thrive while also protecting our environment and adapting to changing weather conditions.**

With the Resilient Lincoln initiative, Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird set a vision for a climate-smart future for our community. Clean air, clean energy, convenient transportation, green spaces, thriving neighborhoods and successful businesses are central to that vision. Since the adoption of the 2021-2027 Climate Action Plan, Lincoln has taken meaningful steps to address the most significant climate challenges we face – including flooding, drought, extreme heat, and associated public health impacts – while also reducing harmful emissions and improving efficiencies.

Since adopting the Climate Action Plan in 2021, the City and its partners have made measurable progress across our eight action areas: **energy, transportation, resilience, natural solutions, economic development, food, waste, and community engagement**. As we look ahead to the next phase, we are proud to highlight the following key accomplishments towards building a more sustainable and resilient Lincoln, starting with these milestones.



**76%** of the Climate Action Plan action items are in progress or are completed



**Our goal is to reduce Lincoln's greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050**

## POWERING LINCOLN WITH CLEANER ENERGY

### Transition to Low-Carbon Energy

Lincoln is investing in programs that reduce emissions, lower utility costs, and modernize public infrastructure while expanding access to energy efficiency.



### Highlights include:

- Creation of a 10-year Rental Rehabilitation Program in partnership with NeighborWorks and LES. To date, 326 rental units have been rehabilitated or are in progress in the South of Downtown neighborhood, reducing energy costs and emissions and preserving affordability.<sup>14</sup>
- The Heat Pump Incentive Program, launched in 2024, distributed over \$600,000 to help 477 Lincoln residents purchase and install high-efficiency heat pumps.<sup>2</sup>
- Completion of a 2024 analysis of the highest-impact greenhouse gas reduction measures and development of a greenhouse gas modeling tool to guide future decision-making.<sup>6</sup>
- Completion of the Bluff Road Landfill gas alternatives analysis. In November 2024, the City announced a new landfill biogas project to convert methane into renewable natural gas, with operations beginning in fall 2026.<sup>7</sup>
- The City secured a \$300,000 federal grant to develop the Municipal Buildings Energy Management Plan, which was completed in March 2025. The plan assesses all City facilities and establishes energy efficiency targets for each building.<sup>11</sup>
- Relaunch of the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program which helps Lincolniters make energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements to their properties, such as solar panels, high-efficiency HVAC systems, EV charging stations, and water-saving upgrades.<sup>2</sup>

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**570** metric tons of GHGs saved each year from the Heat Pump Incentive program

\*Numbers refer to corresponding action item within the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

## MOVING LINCOLN WITH CLEANER TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

### Build a Decarbonized and Efficient Transportation System

Transportation is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Lincoln is expanding active transportation infrastructure, investing in a sustainable fleet, and prioritizing transit improvements.



### Highlights include:

- The addition of over 5 miles of on-street bike infrastructure and over 6 miles of trails to expand active transportation infrastructure.<sup>21</sup>
- Adoption of the Safe Streets Lincoln Vision Zero Action Plan to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers.<sup>22</sup>
- Adoption of Administrative Regulation 46 in September 2021, directing City departments to procure electric or low-emission vehicles whenever feasible.<sup>29</sup>
- Transitioning of the City fleet to electric and hybrid vehicles; 41% of the light fleet and 64% of the StarTran fleet is now alternatively fueled, keeping Lincoln on track to reach 100% electric/renewable vehicles by 2040.<sup>29</sup>
- The City secured a contract to transition its compressed natural gas fueling station to renewable natural gas – positioning the entire StarTran fixed route bus fleet to run on 100% alternative fuel while creating an additional revenue stream for the transit system.
- Hiring of a Fleet Manager in 2022 and completed an analysis of centralized fleet services in 2023. Development of a comprehensive fleet asset management plan is currently underway.<sup>29</sup>
- Awarded a \$23.6 million grant to construct a new multi-modal transportation center to strengthen public transit. Planning is complete, and construction is scheduled to begin in late 2026.<sup>30</sup>

# 41%

of City's light  
vehicle fleet is  
alternatively fueled

## PREPARING LINCOLN FOR FLOODS, HEAT, AND DROUGHT

### Improve Protections for and with Lincoln Residents

Lincoln is preparing for climate-related risks, including water scarcity, flooding, and extreme heat, through long-term infrastructure planning and public health coordination.



### Highlights include:

- Initiating work on Water 2.0, a project to ensure Lincoln's resiliency for generations to come by constructing a direct connection to the Missouri River as Lincoln's secondary water source. This long-term project is underway and expected to be completed by 2048.<sup>43</sup>
- Progress on flood resilience efforts in the Salt Creek floodplain by adopting new floodplain protection measures, approving a Flood Mitigation Master Plan, initiating floodplain re-mapping with FEMA, studying structural mitigation options, and conducting outreach with residents living in flood-prone areas.<sup>52</sup>
- Release of the Heat Response Plan in May 2025, developed by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department in partnership with dozens of community partners. The plan provides extreme heat public health warnings, identifies public cooling centers, and enhances protections for vulnerable residents.<sup>65, 66, 67, 70</sup>
- The City awarded \$36,240 through 22 rebates in 2025 through the Sustainable Landscapes Cost Share Program, supporting resident-installed rainscaping projects that improve water quality, reduce runoff and enhance infiltration.<sup>49</sup>

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**40,000,000**  
gallons of water per day are expected to be withdrawn from the future Water 2.0 project wellfield through 2075

\*Numbers refer to corresponding action item within the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

## GROWING FOOD CLOSER TO HOME

### Build a Resilient Local Food System

Lincoln is strengthening local food access and supporting community-based agriculture to improve health, sustainability, and economic opportunity.



### Highlights include:

- Adoption of the Local Food System Plan in 2023, establishing goals to expand access to healthy food, strengthen the local food and farm economy, protect soil and water resources, and reduce food waste.<sup>81</sup>
- Creation of the Mayor's Community Committee on Local Food, convening a broad stakeholder group to guide implementation of the Local Food System Plan.<sup>118</sup>
- Launch of the Mayor's Local Food Challenge in July 2025, which invites Lincoln businesses, schools, and organizations to source fresh, local food through partnerships that connect small farms with trusted distributors. The challenge resulted in 21 participating institutions, 38 farmers and producers supplying products, 289 orders placed, and \$595,009 spent on local food.
- Adoption of the Urban Ag Policy in spring 2025, which encourages residents to grow and sell produce from their homes or gardeners, turning yards in sources of fresh and healthy food.

# \$595,009

spent by local organizations in the  
2025 Mayor's Local Food Challenge

\*Numbers refer to corresponding action item within the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

## MAKING A CLIMATE-SMART ECONOMY

### Align Economic Development Goals with Climate Realities to Ensure a Thriving Economy

Lincoln is investing in workforce pathways that support clean energy, electrification, and sustainable industries while also encouraging sustainable growth through strategic codes and standards updates.



### Highlights include:

- Launch of the Future-Ready Workforce Initiative with several community partners. The initiative allocates \$1.3 million in scholarships and wraparound support to assist 75 residents in training for careers as HVAC technicians, electricians, and automotive technicians with EV specialization.<sup>46</sup>
- Adoption of the Historic Preservation Design Standards in 2024, which provide standards for the maintenance, preservation, and rehabilitation of locally landmarked buildings. Sustainability elements are incorporated throughout such as historically appropriate solar installations, sustainable landscaping, weatherization, and maintenance and rehabilitation over demolition.
- Adoption of code changes that make it easier for residents to establish accessory dwelling units (ADUs), expanding affordable housing while increasing density and reducing transportation miles.<sup>56</sup>

11%

projected increase in demand for HVAC techs by 2030 in Nebraska

15%

projected increase in demand for electricians by 2030 in Nebraska

\*Numbers refer to corresponding action item within the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

## GROWING A GREENER LINCOLN

### Maximize Natural Climate Solutions

Lincoln is restoring ecosystems, expanding tree canopy, and preserving prairie landscapes to strengthen climate resilience and community wellbeing.

### Highlights include:

- Planting of more than 2,200 trees since 2021 to replace public ash trees removed due to Emerald Ash Borer, advancing the City's 1:1 tree replacement goal.<sup>90</sup>
- Support for the creation and development of the Solidago Conservancy, a land trust initiative partnering with landowners to preserve native prairie and expand urban greenways.<sup>99, 105</sup>
- Support for land conservation through the Prairie Corridor project, a tallgrass prairie passage and trail that will connect Pioneers Park and the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center and support future tourism.<sup>99, 105</sup>

**600** acres of land protected  
by Solidago Conservancy  
and their partners

**\$13.9M**

stormwater bond approved by voters  
in 2024 to prevent and manage flooding,  
reduce pollution, and prevent erosion

\*Numbers refer to corresponding action item within the Climate Action Plan (CAP).



## TURNING WASTE INTO OPPORTUNITY

### Reduce Waste

Lincoln is advancing sustainable materials management practices across municipal operations and multi-family housing.



### Highlights include:

- Creation of the Municipal Green Team program in 2024, establishing sustainability ambassadors in every City department who meet regularly to improve environmental performance across municipal operations.<sup>115</sup>
- Initiation of a project to expand recycling education and outreach and assess waste diversion programs in multi-family housing, supported by a \$1.74 million EPA grant.<sup>117</sup>
- Opening of the City's new GoodToGo Reuse store, where residents can find gently used or unopened products that have been dropped off at HazToGo, but are still good to use. HazToGo and GoodToGo work in tandem to reduce waste and promote sustainability.
- Installation of standardized recycling and trash bins across all City and County buildings, making it easier to effectively dispose of waste and contribute to waste reduction goals.

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**22K** pounds of reusable goods distributed at the GoodToGo facility

**1,008** GoodToGo customer visits since opening

\*GoodToGo opened in November 2025

\*Numbers refer to corresponding action item within the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

# WORKING TOGETHER FOR A RESILIENT LINCOLN

## Engage Residents in Co-Creating a Climate Smart Future

Lincoln is building strong partnerships and empowering residents to participate in climate solutions.

### Highlights include:

- Formation of the Climate-Smart Collaborative with UNL, LPS, Lancaster County, and LES to coordinate efforts that reduce emissions and increase community resilience.<sup>118</sup>
- Development of the City of Lincoln Community Engagement Guidebook and launched a new, more inclusive approach to public engagement.<sup>118</sup>



Every Lincoln resident can play a part in helping to create a more climate smart community. **Here's what you can do!**

**Transportation:** Use active transportation. Electrify your commute. Reduce driving trips.

**Climate Resilience:** Know your flood risk. Conserve water. Create sustainable landscapes. Stay aware.

**Waste:** Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. Buy smarter.

**Economic Development:** Support local businesses.

**Energy:** Go electric. Improve energy efficiency.

**Natural Climate Solutions:** Nurture trees. Plant a rain garden. Use natural fertilizers.

**Local food:** Buy Local. Start a garden. Donate produce. Reduce food waste.

\*Numbers refer to corresponding action item within the Climate Action Plan (CAP).



CITY *of* LINCOLN

For more information, please visit: [lincoln.ne.gov/resilient](http://lincoln.ne.gov/resilient)