

FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

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Welcome back to College Bound Notre Dame Admissions Podcast. This is Maria Finan. I'm one of the assistant directors in the office and we're super excited to dive into South Bend this week talking all about where is Notre Dame? But before we do that, I'll have Zach introduce himself.

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Hey, everyone. My name is Zach Klonsinski. I'm an assistant director with Maria in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Super excited to share South Bend and our greater metro area with all of you. Share some recommendations and tips that we have also just a little bit more information about about this great little area that we're in. So Notre Dame is located in South Bend, Indiana. Well, technically we're in Notre Dame, Indiana. We have our own zip code, but we're surrounded by South Bend, Indiana, which is part of the Michigan area, as we call it. So South Bend itself is a major city here, as well as our twin city of Mishawaka.

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You can't tell where one begins and the other ends with some other cities like Granger, Elkhart, Niles, Michigan, the Michigan area, which is the St. Joseph County, Indiana, as well as Cass County, Michigan area, has a metro population of about 320,000 people. So lots of great resources, lots of great stores here. It is a major metro area in the United States. South Bend itself is about 90 minutes east of Chicago on Interstate 80/90, so very accessible from the city. Driving wise, there's also three great airports that most of our students will use.

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You can fly into the lovely South Bend International Airport. It is about 10 to 15 minutes from campus, a very easy Uber ride. Or you can have friends pick you up, anything like that. A lot of our students will also actually fly into O'Hare or Midway over in Chicago. There actually are direct buses from campus and from the airport during the peak times of the semester. So, you know, beginning of semester, end of semester, around any fall break, spring break, around Thanksgiving. So there is great direct access to campus as well.

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And then you can also take there is what's called the South Shoreline Train from South Bend International Airport, directly to Millennium Station in downtown Chicago and vice versa. So it's very easy. I think it's like fourteen dollars one way. It's about two and a half to three hours, depending on the train you catch. It's a very, very easy to get to this great Michiana area here in South Bend.

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Whenever I describe kind of like, where is Notre Dame? What is the city like? I always describe it as a small kind of college town feel. So we are technically a city. We definitely have amenities that would match that. But in terms of kind of what the area feels like, I always describe it small college town. That being said, there are a lot of different fun things to do in the area. So during kind of the summer and warmer months, we do have a minor league baseball team, the South Bend Cubs. They are the Chicago Cubs affiliate, so it could be a lot of fun to just catch a minor league baseball game.

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And oftentimes students will go to at least one before they go home for the school year, and it's a really great kind of opportunity over the summer. We have a performing arts center downtown. We do have one of those on campus, but some great opportunities to get some more nationally touring productions. If you are somebody who is kind of familiar with your car history, the Studebaker factory used to be located in South Bend, so we have their national museum now. Great opportunity to see some beautiful classic cars and to learn about the emergence of the city.

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A couple of different neighborhoods in South Bend have different amenities as well, so the East Bank neighborhood is part of the area along the St. Joseph River. During the summer, you can go whitewater rafting. They have a manmade whitewater rafting course, so kind of a unique claim to fame. Howard Park area has one of the beautiful kind of city parks that you can go hang out at. Lots of great opportunities to spend some time outdoors or go eat. We also have a lot of great county parks.

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St. Patrick's Park, I think, is a favorite kind of among the staff. Maybe you go tubing during the winter. There are opportunities to get on to the St. Joseph River to go for a walk through the woods. We're not far from the Indiana Dunes, national and state parks. So beautiful beach front there and also the dunes. But maybe bring us a little bit more back to the South Bend area. I think this episode would be completely remiss if we didn't talk a little bit about kind of the food scene in South Bend.

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Much like last week, when we would have had a whole series or a whole season on Father Hesburgh, I think we could have had a whole season on just our favorite eateries around Michiana. Absolutely, Maria and I are very much foodies. We love to go to all the little local restaurants, no matter what you're looking for, you know, South Bend is going to have some great options for you. I think the main one I'd be remiss to not mention is that campus dining is fantastic in the dining halls here will absolutely be great for you. Our staff enjoys going to them still sometimes when we can, but also right across the street from campus is a development called Eddy Street Commons.

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It's a couple of blocks long. That's where you'll find a lot of great kind of college staples like Five Guys, Chipotle, going to Blaze Pizza or Burger Bar. There's O'Rourke's, kind of like an Irish-themed pub. There's also Brother's Bar and Grill that's right across the street from campus, very accessible. There's also a Trader Joe's like two blocks down from campus that's very accessible for students as well. But all across South Bend, there's a lot of great restaurants. If you're looking for something Latin, the West Side especially has some great Latin and Hispanic food.

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Taqueria Chicago is a great place, La Rosita, Chimichurries, an Argentinean empanada stand, which is very fun. I'm a big brunch guy. So like Earlybird downtown, Uptown Kitchen, my personal favorite Yellow Cat Cafe, though I know Maria has her own thoughts on that as absolutely some great, great opportunities. And those are just some of my favorites in South Bend that you can go and take a look at. Maria, what are some restaurants that you really love here in the area?

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Yeah, I mean, you already named so many great ones. Lauber is definitely one of my favorite and kind of an old converted building. Great option if you're looking for salads, pizza sandwiches, I hear the rigatoni

is amazing as well. Fiddler's Hearth is kind of the classic Irish pub was definitely one of my favorites as a student, especially when I got back from studying abroad. So it really does kind of feel like you're back in Europe. I love all of the Asian food in South Bend, so whether it's Cre-Asian for Vietnamese food, J.W.

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Chens for Chinese food, Sunny's Korean, NOM NOM for ramen or pho, there's so many great things. I also am a little bit of a coffee snob, admittedly, so I will say kind of two local favorite coffee shops that I have here are Zen Coffee, which is kind of on your way downtown. And then Cloud Walking is just across the street from the South Bend farmers market. So didn't mention that as kind of an entertainment piece. But as we're thinking about food and things you can do in South Bend, getting some really fresh produce or great baked goods, all of that can be a really fun way to spend a Saturday morning.

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Thinking though kind of beyond food, we should talk a little bit more about kind of what is the makeup like of South Bend. So we are in an incredibly diverse community here, and there's a really strong Hispanic and Latino population on the west side. Many of our students will get involved with volunteering with La Casa de Amistad, which is a great opportunity for students to use Spanish language skills. We also have students who will help individuals on their path to citizenship, so really impactful work there.

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We happen to have one of the largest concentrations of Malawians outside of Malawi, so that's another kind of fun fact for you. We talked last episode about the Pokagen Potawatomi being headquartered in Mishawaka. So really important Native American group very close to campus. The South Bend population is about twenty seven percent Black. So we also have a really strong Black community here. And as I noted, a lot of times students get out into the community not just to eat or to go shopping, but to do service.

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And our Center for Social Concerns, I think, does a really amazing job making sure that students have the ability to give back to the South Bend community. I think it's really important not just to think about the University, but also the greater community that we're part of. Robinson Community Learning Center is one another one of those kind of great organizations, especially for students who are really passionate about helping local youth, whether it's helping with tutoring, running after-school programs. One of my roommates helped direct their Shakespeare performances.

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That group eventually went and performed at the Globe Theatre in London. So really amazing things just happening kind of in the South Bend community. Zach, do you maybe want to talk about something that I don't think people necessarily associate with South Bend, but maybe some of the ways that like innovation, entrepreneurship is thriving in the community?

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Absolutely, absolutely. In South Bend, for many years, maybe had this, had this reputation as as a Rust Belt city, and especially when Studebaker shut down back in the 60s, you know, it did affect the local economy. I think, though, that that description of the city is no longer relevant or really accurate. Even the last, you know, 10 to 12 years, the city of South Bend has become really a hub of innovation. Some of it is

through kind of your partnerships with Notre Dame, so absolutely Notre Dame is involved in the community and helping lead this innovation.

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Some examples of that, you know, Notre Dame is actually helping just complete a hydroelectric power plant on the dam at the St. Joseph River in downtown South Bend. Point a lot of power from the University for that, but it's also getting dispersed to other places in the region. Notre Dame has been in part of a solar farm, the St. Joseph County Solar Farm. That's generating a lot of power there, some geothermal kind of innovation as well on our campus, and Notre Dame actually ceased burning coal in 2020 completely. We've had a coal-fired power plant on our, on our campus for,

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I don't even know how long, but we actually ceased burning coal in 2020, which was a whole couple of years ahead of schedule. Just really exciting. And then South Bend itself is also a great hub of innovation. I think right across the street from Notre Dame is Innovation Park and our IDEA Center. That's basically a hub for entrepreneurship. Yes, Notre Dame students will take advantage of that. But it's not just for Notre Dame students. They've started many, many companies and startup companies that have come out of the IDEA Center, some great partnerships with the University, but also just some great maker space.

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They connect students and even locals with great other mentors in different industries and other startups. So it's a really great hub of entrepreneurship, you know, kind of with Notre Dame. There's another one that's that's South Bend Focus, it's called and focus and focus. It's an entrepreneurship leadership program, an organization, and they take some of the brightest young entrepreneurs from the South Bend area and help get them seed funding and help with mentors and opportunities for resources.

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There's also the great, Ignition Park, which is kind of just little bit west of South Bend downtown area again, another place for, for companies to come and focus on that startup side. South Bend itself is also on the major fiber optic internet corridor between Chicago and the East Coast, so there's actually a lot of really great tech companies working in data, working in anything that will be traveling kind of through the fiber optic world. South Bend and Notre Dame are very, very well-positioned to take advantage of that, and a lot of our kind of great companies that are springing up in the last 10 years or so are due to, you know, this great fiber optic connection that we do have.

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And then finally, even, you know, many of our other organizations, some of which that we've talked with already are very innovative. I definitely want to highlight the South Bend Center for the Homeless. They have some really great programs for people who are you know, a little bit down on their luck or just need a little bit of extra assistance for a bit. And their programming has actually been replicated in a lot of other homeless shelters across the, across the country. So very innovative, very kind of, entrepreneurial focused environment here, not just at Notre Dame, but in the South Bend area itself.

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And because you're at Notre Dame and because you're in this, you know, large city, but not a major metro area, you know, you're going to have great access to all of these programs as well because either Notre Dame is involved with them or Notre Dame knows who's involved with them, and they can help connect

you. Not to say that our students don't have great internship opportunities across the world, but certainly South Bend itself as an asset for Notre Dame as well.

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Well, thanks so much for joining us all on this episode of College Bound. It's been great to tell you just a couple of the things that we really love about South Bend. Maybe as one like last kind of fun fact ending Zach, if you had kind of one favorite spot to highlight in South Bend, where would you, where would you send someone? [It] could be food-related, could be entertainment-related.

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It's not really fair. I don't think we ever talked about Elia's Mediterranean Grill that has been, I mean, my wife and I go there for every Valentine's Day. It's super great. It's run by a great Lebanese family and definitely, Elia's Mediterranean Grill. Fantastic. My wife and I got married in January and actually a rehearsal dinner was from them. They were, they catered it. So that was really fun too. So very important to us and also just delicious food. How about you, Maria?

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That is a great pick. So I think one of my favorite places in South Bend, I guess I'm also going to pick a food location.

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I really love going to Earlybird. I know we already mentioned this, but great brunch location and I really love there's a little shop inside called Pink Lemonade. So if you want some pastries or macarons, lots of great opportunities to do that and would highly just recommend walking around downtown while you're there. If you have room for hot chocolate, the South Bend Chocolate Cafe is just across the street, so I think just being in that part of South Bend is a lot of fun, but thanks for joining us.

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Hopefully, it's been helpful to learn a little bit more about kind of where Notre Dame is, and we wish you all the best of luck as you are working on your application.