

SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.*

INDIGENOUS RESOURCES & WAYS TO SUPPORT

- The [Center for American Indian & Indigenous Studies \(CAIIS\)](#) at UW promotes Indigenous sovereignty and knowledge through research, teaching, and community partnerships.
- [wələbʔaltxw - Intellectual House](#) is a longhouse-style gathering space on the UW Seattle campus welcoming Native and non-Native students, faculty, and community.
- The [UW Office of Tribal Relations](#) coordinates UW's government-to-government relationships with tribal nations across Washington state.
- The [UW Tribal Resource Directory](#) highlights American Indian and Alaska Native programs and organizations at UW, as well as partnerships with Tribes and Tribal communities.
- [Native Land Digital](#) is an interactive map to explore whose lands, languages, and territories you live and work on.
- Consider [donating to one of the funds](#) that supports American Indian and Indigenous students at the UW.

*The UW's acknowledgement of the tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations comes from consultation and guidance by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and Federal regulations and policies. In this phrasing, we are adhering to tribal sovereignty.

LETTER FROM UW LEADERSHIP



The University of Washington has long had a deep commitment to sustainability. This Sustainability Action Plan provides the framework to ensure we continue to operate with an eye to future generations, along with a recognition that our actions reverberate in the waters, land and communities all around us.

The UW published its first Sustainability Action Plan in 2020, and made significant strides despite implementation obstacles associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. We also know there is much more to do. This new Sustainability Action Plan is more expansive, with an ambitious vision for the long-term while also setting out a road map of actions over the next few years, building on efforts already underway.

Climate change is an urgent issue and UW has a critical role to play. The University of Washington is a global leader in research on the impacts of climate change and other environmental challenges. Our students and researchers continue to develop cutting-edge innovation to address the world's most pressing sustainability issues. We've recently scaled-up our commitment to sustainability in campus operations. The UW is actively working to decarbonize campus operations and increase energy conservation across all of our facilities. Transitioning the Seattle campus steam plant off fossil fuels is a priority, as this facility is the UW's largest source of direct emissions across our campuses. In 2024, we adopted a new institutional Green Building Standard, ensuring that construction and

renovation across the University aligns with our sustainability goals.

Students, staff and faculty across the UW work each day to advance sustainability through learning and academics and through operational excellence. This Sustainability Action Plan scales-up existing work, while also helping to coordinate and align those efforts. With the global uncertainty and ongoing challenges that higher education institutions face, we know that this work will not be easy. Yet, we are committed to building a more sustainable world and I am energized by the passion and dedication our UW community brings to this vital work.

I look forward to seeing the impact we will make in the coming years as we implement UW's new Sustainability Action Plan.

ROBERT J. JONES
President, University of Washington

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Appendix

This University of Washington Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) provides a shared roadmap for advancing sustainability and climate action across the University. The SAP was developed through more than 12 months of extensive tri-campus engagement involving over 800 people, including faculty, staff, students, UW Medicine, UW Athletics and local government partners. The UW Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC) worked closely with the Faculty Council on Campus on Planning and Stewardship (FCCPS) on development and oversight of the new plan.

This new strategic plan helps translate UW’s sustainability values and commitments into coordinated action across the University, especially in our energy infrastructure, transportation, food systems, procurement, waste management, land stewardship, learning, and community engagement. This new SAP is not intended to capture every sustainability effort happening across the UW. Instead, it focuses on a set of shared priority actions with high potential for impact over the next five years.

UW’s first Sustainability Action Plan was published in 2020. The successes, challenges, and lessons learned helped shape the revised structure and scope of this new SAP. This Plan includes:

- **2050 Vision:** Establishing the UW community’s long-term 2050 vision of success for sustainability serves as a “North Star” providing common direction for the University as a whole.

- **Interim five-year actions:** Actions in this new plan are intended to be accomplished in five years or less and serve as steppingstones towards the long-term goals and targets.
- **Driven by data and science:** UW’s 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and current climate and sustainability science have informed the SAP’s goals, targets and actions.
- **SMART content:** During development of the new SAP, deliberate emphasis was placed on ensuring that goals, targets, and actions meet the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound).

Throughout the planning process, students and faculty called for a more ambitious SAP, urging the University to “go faster, do more” to move beyond incremental progress. There were and continue to be real challenges to incorporate this feedback into the plan and act on it. Development occurred during a time of unprecedented federal and global uncertainty, particularly with respect to budget cuts at the national and state level. As such, the Plan assumes no new staffing or funding. This Plan reflects a deliberate effort to manage expectations while developing actions that are ambitious, meaningful and achievable with existing resources. Five-year actions in this plan were developed with this on-going uncertainty as a key consideration. Long-term goals and targets, which stretch 25 years into the future, were less influenced by global uncertainty. They are aspirational and reflect our community’s vision for a sustainable UW by 2050.

Despite these challenges, the UW is committed to scaling up its impact as a sustainability leader and this Plan establishes a common direction and long-term goals for the entire organization. It enables academic and operational departments to better understand how their work contributes to broader institutional sustainability goals. It also strengthens coordination across campuses, operations and disciplines to advance sustainability as a shared responsibility.



A CENTURY OF SUSTAINABILITY

A timeline of University of Washington's achievements and milestones in sustainability and environmental stewardship.

1896

First UW farm grows food for students



1935

Washington Park Arboretum established



1911

Medicinal Herb Garden established

1970

UW celebrates first Earth Day

1971

Montlake Landfill converted to Union Bay Natural Area

1973

UW starts recycling



1978

Burke Gilman Trail dedicated

2009

Climate Action Plan developed and College of the Environment founded

2007

UW signs climate commitment

1996

Environmental Studies and Environmental Science programs founded

1995

Founding of Climate Impacts Group

1988

UW power plant moves from coal to natural gas



2008

Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability office (now UW Sustainability) is formed

2004

Environmental Stewardship Policy written

1998

Program on the Environment launched



1991

U-PASS implemented



2010

Campus Sustainability Fund launched

2011

UW named #1 greenest school by Sierra magazine

2015

UW Athletics wins national sustainability award

2012

UW Executive Order 13 on Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability approved



2020

UW's first Sustainability Action Plan adopted

2022

Board of Regents voted to divest from fossil fuel companies

2024

UW Green Building Standard adopted

2023

First comprehensive Greenhouse Gas inventory published

2026

Updated Sustainability Action Plan adopted

ALIGNMENT WITH SCIENCE & POLICY



The following section highlights scientific evidence, third-party sustainability frameworks, state and local policy, plans, and initiatives that informed this Sustainability Action Plan. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather a snapshot of those most influential in SAP development.

CLIMATE SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Climate change driven by human activity is one of the most pressing issues facing our global community today. The science is well-established and very clear: emissions such as carbon dioxide and methane from fossil fuel use are directly driving global temperature rise. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirms that human activities have warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land, with global surface temperatures now approximately 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels. To limit warming to 1.5°C and avoid the most severe climate impacts, global greenhouse gas emissions must decline rapidly this decade. The [IPCC Sixth Assessment Report \(2023\)](#) is a foundational document that synthesizes global climate science and identifies mitigation pathways to reduce emissions.

This warming is shaping the frequency and severity of climate-related disruptions already affecting Washington state and the communities we serve. Regional climate change impacts include increasing wildfires and wildfire smoke exposure, extreme heat events, shifting precipitation patterns and declining mountain snowpack. These changes affect ecosystems, water systems, infrastructure and public health across the region.

The UW's Climate Impacts Group (CIG) helps advance understanding and management of climate risk through science-based data and research. CIG builds climate resilience by advancing understanding of climate risks and enabling science-based action to manage those risks. Scientific research from the CIG and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (among others) documents regional impacts, such as:

- Declining snowpack in the Cascades, which has fallen by roughly 15–30% since the mid-20th century, affects regional water supplies and hydropower generation.
- Wildfire smoke exposure is increasing and is now a significant driver of summer air pollution in the Pacific Northwest.
- The 2021 Pacific Northwest heat dome brought record temperatures across Washington and Oregon, illustrating the region's growing vulnerability to extreme heat.

UW's contributions to understanding climate and environmental change also extend beyond the Pacific Northwest. Led by UW faculty, the [National Nature Assessment](#) is the first nationwide effort to evaluate the condition of U.S. ecosystems and examine how changes in nature affect people and communities. The assessment highlights the connections between healthy ecosystems and public health, economic wellbeing, national security, equity, climate resilience and culture.

SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORKS AND BENCHMARKING

Sustainability frameworks help benchmark institutional progress and connect UW's sustainability work to broader national and international goals. Specific examples of independent frameworks used to inform the SAP include:



[United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#): A global framework of 17 goals addressing interconnected challenges such as climate change, health, food systems, and social equity.



[AASHE Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System \(STARS\)](#): A higher education benchmarking system that measures institutional performance across academics, operations, engagement, planning, and innovation. The University of Washington has maintained a STARS Gold rating, reflecting strong performance across these categories.



[Practice Greenhealth](#): A national organization that supports and recognizes sustainability leadership in healthcare. Harborview Medical Center and UW Medical Center have been recognized as national leaders through the Environmental Excellence Awards for many years, including repeated receipt of Practice Greenhealth's highest honors. In 2026, Harborview received the Greenhealth Leader Award and was recognized in the Circles of Excellence for Chemicals & Transportation. Additionally, UW Medical Center – Montlake received the Greenhealth Champion Award, reflecting strong environmental performance across a range of sustainability programs.

history. These laws have financed projects across clean energy, building efficiency, electrification, and climate research.

- Washington Climate Commitment Act (CCA): Establishes a cap-and-invest program designed to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions 95% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Washington Clean Buildings Performance Standard (CBPS): Requires large commercial and institutional buildings to meet energy performance targets and reduce energy use intensity over time.
- Seattle Building Emissions Performance Standard (BEPS): Establishes emissions limits for large buildings and supports the city's goal of net-zero building emissions by 2050.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

The Sustainability Action Plan builds on a strong foundation of policy and leadership, including:

- [Executive Order No. 13 "Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability"](#) (adopted 2012)
- [Faculty Senate Resolution "Concerning Timetable for Climate Crisis Finance and Decarbonization"](#)
- [Environmental Stewardship Committee \(ESC\)](#)

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL CLIMATE POLICY

Public policy at multiple levels of government is accelerating climate action and shaping the context in which UW operates. The following federal, state and local policies played a central role in shaping the new SAP goals, targets, and actions:

- Federal Inflation Reduction Act (2022) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (2021): Two landmark federal laws that together represent the largest climate investment in U.S.

EQUITY COMMITMENT

This plan was created with a commitment to outcomes that are environmentally sound and advance equity.

The development of the Sustainability Action Plan aligns with the University of Washington's Diversity Blueprint, which establishes the UW's priorities for advancing equity, access and inclusion across the University. The primary Diversity Blueprint goals this new SAP aligns with include:

- **Goal 1:** Cultivate an accessible, inclusive and equitable climate
- **Goal 5:** Develop place-based education and engagement to advance access, inclusion and equity

Equity and inclusion were central to the year-long community outreach and engagement process, as well as development of plan content such as the vision, goals and actions. UW Sustainability facilitated plan development, including robust outreach intended to engage diverse groups across all UW campuses. Students, faculty, staff and operational leaders were invited to participate in visioning sessions, working groups, community events, virtual events and stakeholder discussions. The combination of these activities helped identify priorities of the UW community and informed the actions included in the plan.

Throughout the SAP development process, equity and inclusion were assessed through a variety of questions, such as:

- What can we do to make everyone feel welcome in the SAP development process?
- Who or what benefits from this action, and who or what does not?
- How will this action be implemented and by whom?
- Will implementation create a significant burden on specific people and/or departments?

Iterative assessment and discussion of these types of questions helped center equity in an authentic manner, enabling flexible thinking for a wide variety of actions ranging from operational changes, new policy, a green labs program, living lab learning programs and more. As the University begins SAP implementation, our success in integrating equity and inclusion will continue to be evaluated and measured to the best of our ability.



ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Development of the new Sustainability Action Plan kicked off in the fall of 2024, with a focus on broad and inclusive engagement across the tri-campus.

ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE: FALL 2024 – WINTER 2025

More than 450 students, faculty, staff, and community members participated in workshops and engagement sessions to help define a shared vision for sustainability at UW in 2050. Engagement sessions included:

- Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC) and SAP Executive Committee
- UW-wide kickoff event (in-person and virtual)
- Huskies for Equitable Sustainability student group
- UW Medicine community session
- UW Bothell community session
- UW Tacoma community session
- Campus tabling and pop-up engagement events

GOALS, TARGETS, AND ACTIONS: SPRING - FALL 2025

More than 150 faculty, students and staff participated in working groups to develop long-term goals, targets and actions for the new plan.

Seven working groups were convened to help translate the community vision into specific five-year actions for each of the following focus areas:

- Buildings, Energy & Climate
- Land & Ecological Systems
- Procurement & Finance
- Food Systems

- Transportation & Commuting
- Materials & Waste Management
- Community Building & Engagement

Each working group met three times and contributed additional input through an iterative feedback process. The work of these groups led to the actions under the seven topic areas in the final plan.

In total, more than 800 faculty, staff, students and members of the broader UW community engaged in the development of the Sustainability Action Plan. Their input helped align the shared 2050 sustainability vision with the goals, targets and actions outlined in this plan. Key themes that emerged from these conversations included:

- Students are eager for meaningful opportunities to contribute to sustainability work on campus.
- Sustainability efforts should address real needs across the UW's three campuses.
- Actions should prioritize impact in the context of budget and staffing constraints.
- Ensuring that goals and actions follow the SMART framework is critical for successful implementation.

REFINEMENT: WINTER 2025 – SPRING 2026

UW Sustainability gathered the input from working group sessions and engagement events and synthesized it into the final plan. An iterative process was used to write and refine the plan, with ongoing input and discussion with members of the working groups and Environmental Stewardship Committee before finalizing the SAP.

One component of developing the 2050 vision was asking students, faculty and staff to write a “Message to the future” on a postcard. These cards were collected and synthesized to help identify key themes and priorities that ultimately shaped SAP goals and actions.



SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN STRUCTURE

2050 VISION

We imagine a University of Washington where **sustainability is part of everyday campus life**, shaping how we learn, work, and care for our communities and environment. Together, **these elements illustrate the sustainable future** we are working toward.

GUIDING PRIORITIES

Core approaches that **extend beyond the SAP's 2025-2030** timeframe.

LONG-TERM GOALS

Long-term sustainability outcomes that UW is working to achieve.

DECARBONIZE OPERATIONS

- 1
Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2 by 2035
- 2
Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050

FOSTER A REGENERATIVE CAMPUS

- 3
Reduce **landfill disposal** and **increase material recovery** by 2050
- 4
Advance **ecological health** by 2050

EXPAND CAMPUS BASED LEARNING & LIVING LABS

- 5
Platinum STARS ranking by 2040
- 6
Establish a Changemaker Collaborative by 2035

FOCUS AREAS

Primary areas of sustainability work that support UW's long-term goals. Actions fall within a five-year timeline.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING

PROCUREMENT

FOOD SYSTEMS

BUILDINGS, ENERGY & CLIMATE

LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

MATERIALS & WASTE MANAGEMENT

LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

ACTIONS AT A GLANCE

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING

TC1 FLAGSHIP ACTION

Bolster U-PASS and other sustainable commuting modes through a coordinated campaign to meet the Seattle single-occupancy vehicle trip reduction goal of 12% by 2028.

TC2 Complete a safety assessment of vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian travel across all campuses to identify barriers to safe and sustainable commuting modes.

TC3 Improve access to bicycle, e-bike and micromobility commuting.

TC4 Develop tools and best practices to reduce air travel and mitigate flight-related emissions.

TC5 Create a University-wide fleet electrification plan.

FOOD SYSTEMS

FS1 FLAGSHIP ACTION

Establish a Food Systems Working Group with an initial focus on sustaining existing high-impact programs.

FS2 Join the Coolfood Pledge and work toward a 30% reduction in total food-related emissions.

MATERIALS & WASTE MANAGEMENT

MW1 FLAGSHIP ACTION

Form a University-wide materials and waste reduction working group.

MW2 Identify opportunities to replace single-use healthcare products with reusables or environmentally preferable alternatives.

MW3 Transition away from single-use products through UW's partnerships with major vendors and corporate sponsors.

PROCUREMENT

P1 FLAGSHIP ACTION

Launch a new sustainable procurement webpage and training for staff.

P2 Develop strategies with UW's high-impact suppliers to reduce the environmental impact of our purchases.

P3 Standardize and integrate sustainability criteria into supplier solicitation, evaluation and contracting.

LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

LES1 FLAGSHIP ACTION

Assess relevant landscape certifications to identify best practices that support healthy and resilient landscapes.

LES2 Develop an Adaptive Plant Guide as a resource for native and pollinator-friendly plantings to improve climate resilience across the tri-campus.

LES3 Build on existing urban forest planning efforts to enhance and expand tree canopy coverage across all UW campuses.

LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LCE1 FLAGSHIP ACTION

Launch an online platform of ready-to-implement sustainability engagement project opportunities.

LCE2 Develop the goals and framework needed to establish a UW Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative.

BUILDINGS, ENERGY, & CLIMATE

BEC1 FLAGSHIP ACTION

Scale-up the "Reinvest in Energy Efficiency Projects" program to reduce energy consumption, emissions, and electrical demand.

BEC2 Publish and share annual greenhouse gas emissions progress and performance summaries to UW leadership and community.

BEC3 Establish a working group focused on conserving water and reducing combined water and sewer costs.

BEC4 Launch a Green Labs program focused on conserving resources and cost while continuing to foster innovation.

BEC5 Develop a University-wide strategy to guide best practices and cost-effective decision-making for solar energy installations.

KEY TARGETS AT A GLANCE

LONG-TERM GOAL #1:
Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2
by 2035

KEY TARGETS

95% direct reduction in Scope 1 & 2 GHG emissions (2005 baseline) by 2035

LONG-TERM GOAL #2:
Carbon Neutral for Scope 3
by 2050

KEY TARGETS

35% reduction in emissions from purchased goods and services by 2040 (from a 2022 baseline)

50% reduction in travel-related emissions by 2040 (from a 2022 baseline)

LONG-TERM GOAL #3:
Reduce landfill disposal and
increase material recovery by
2050

KEY TARGETS

80% compostables capture rate by 2050

80% recyclables capture rate by 2050

Reduce total landfill disposal by 30% by 2050

Reduce landfill disposal from the top three highest-generating campus groups by 10% by 2035

LONG-TERM GOAL #4:
Advance Ecological Health
by 2050

KEY TARGETS

Each campus will update its respective landscape management plan, including priorities for enhanced ecological resilience, by 2040.

Convert 100% of irrigation to smart systems by 2040

Expand tree canopy coverage across the tri-campus by 2050

LONG-TERM GOAL #5:
Platinum STARS ranking
by 2040

KEY TARGETS

Achieve a STARS® score of 85+

LONG-TERM GOAL #6:
Establish a Changemaker
Collaborative by 2035

KEY TARGETS

Complete at least 25 projects through the project engagement portal by 2030

Increase participation in project-based sustainability opportunities by 5% annually

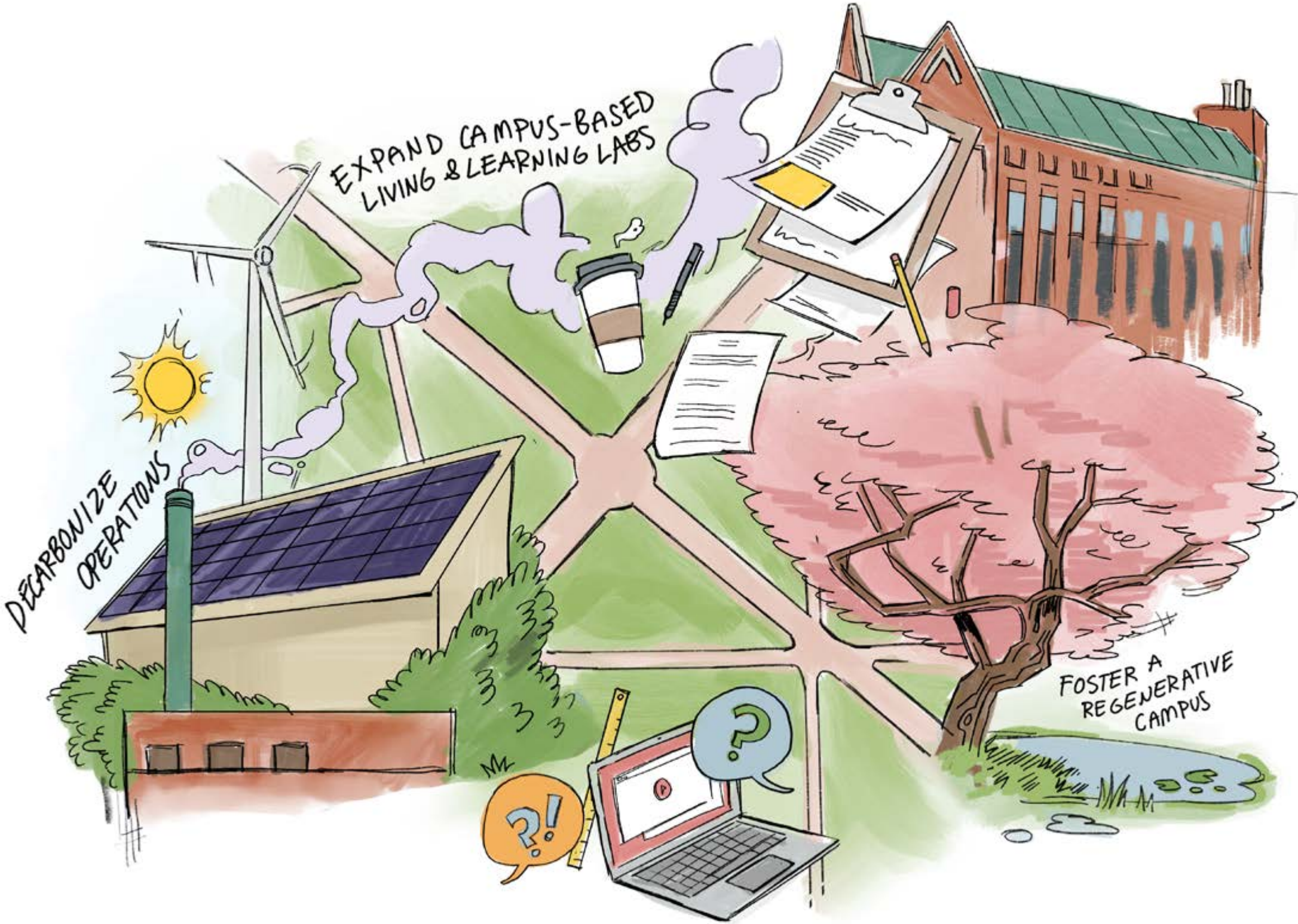


GUIDING PRIORITIES

The long-term vision for a sustainable UW in 2050 was developed based on community input during the SAP engagement process. The vision is a direct reflection of student, faculty, and staff priorities where sustainability is integral in every part of the University. The vision serves as a ‘North Star’ providing common direction for the organization.

The three Guiding Priorities for this SAP are Decarbonize Operations, Foster a Regenerative Campus, and Expand Campus Based Learning and Living Labs. The guiding priorities emerged as the three key themes from community visioning sessions, are core approaches that extend beyond the SAP’s 2025-2030 timeframe. These priorities help align near-term actions with long-term outcomes and guide decision making across diverse campuses and units.

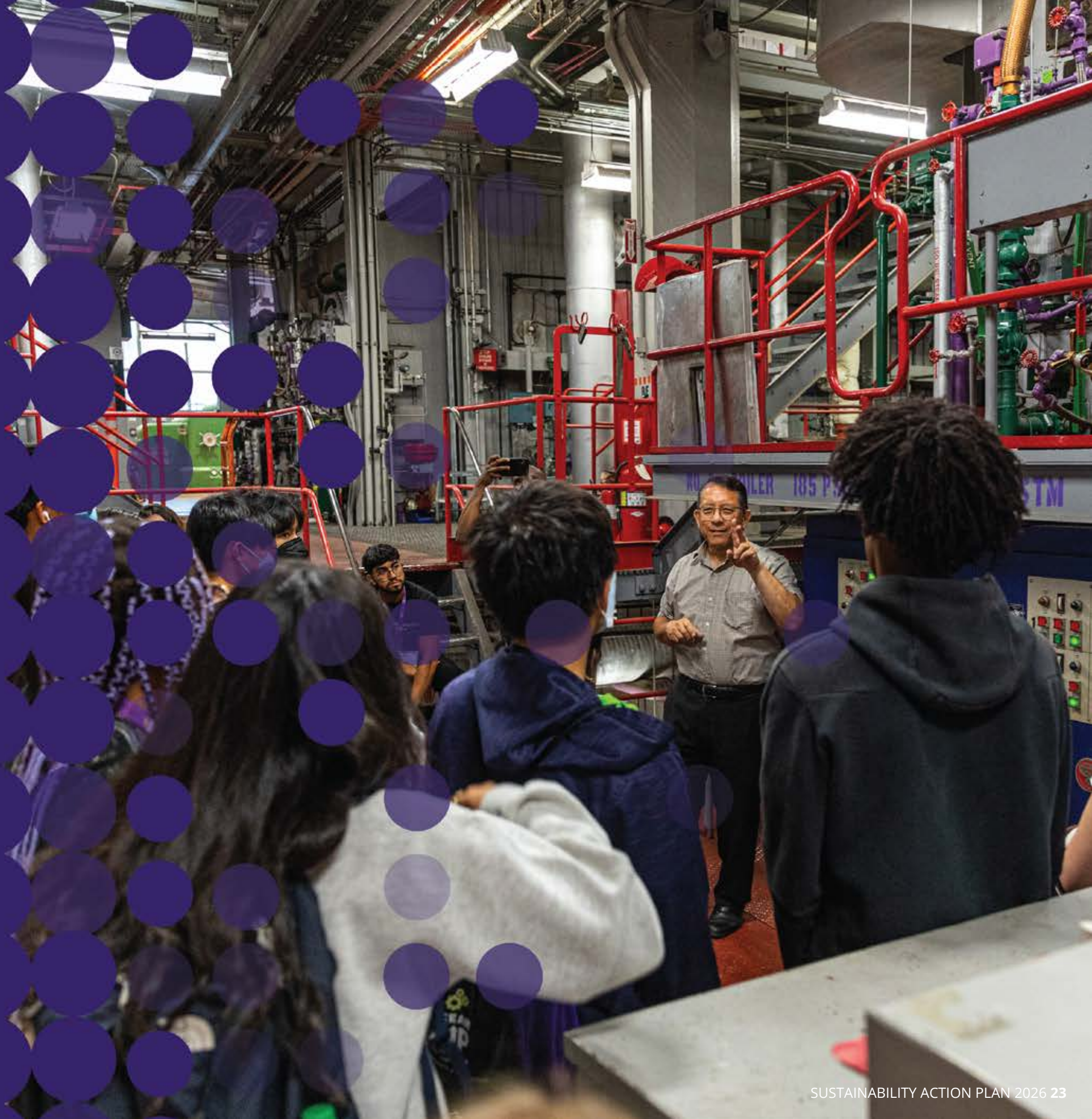
Together, the 2050 Vision and three guiding priorities, serve as key components of the SAP structure particularly for long-term direction. The long-term goals nested below the guiding priorities are specific outcomes that our community wants to see in the future, with the understanding that many of these goals will take several years or decades to accomplish. Each long-term goal has one or more corresponding target that is critical for measuring success and integral to the concept of SMART goals – a key change between the UW’s first sustainability action plan and this new SAP.



GUIDING PRIORITY 1

DECARBONIZE OPERATIONS

The UW’s greenhouse gas emissions footprint is significant and reflects the scale and complexity of University operations.



DECARBONIZE OPERATIONS

The [2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory](#) estimated total University emissions at 527,510 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e), an 11% increase over UW's 2005 baseline. Completing this inventory gave UW its most complete picture to date of where emissions come from across all campuses and UW Medicine, including buildings, travel, commuting, waste, food, and purchased goods and services.

UW's Scope 1 emissions are primarily driven by fossil fuels used to provide heating and hot water for campus buildings. In 2022, fossil fuel combustion accounted for 97,634 MtCO₂e, or 18.5% of UW's total emissions, making it the University's second-largest emissions source. Most of these emissions come from natural gas combustion in the Seattle campus' Power Plant which produces steam for heating, hot water and sterilization for campus buildings, including parts of UW Medical Center – Montlake. Reducing Scope 1 emissions will require continued investment in energy efficiency, electrification, and long-term transformation of campus energy systems.

The UW's Scope 2 emissions are currently a much smaller part of the University's footprint because the electric utilities serving UW campuses provide a relatively low-carbon fuel mix, with hydropower being a primary source for electricity in our region. Washington's Clean Energy Transformation Act will further reduce electricity-related emissions over time by requiring electric utilities to provide greenhouse gas-neutral electricity by 2030 and 100% renewable or non-emitting electricity by 2045.

Scope 3 emissions make up the largest part of UW's carbon footprint, and are associated with indirect sources such as travel, procured goods and services, construction and food purchasing. The UW's 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory was the first time the University quantified emissions associated with procurement of goods and services, revealing that this is the largest category of UW's Scope 3 emissions, accounting for 64% of our total emissions across all Scopes. As a result, this SAP is strategic in addressing emissions from goods and services across multiple focus area actions. Tackling this category of emissions is somewhat new territory, and SAP

actions are centered on identifying opportunities to move the needle around low-carbon and sustainable goods procured by the UW.

Because UW's emissions come from many different systems, decarbonization will require coordinated action across Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 sources. Many actions in this Plan are designed to reduce direct operational emissions while also building the UW's capacity to reduce or better manage indirect emissions over time. This includes work on building energy, electrification, sustainable procurement, lower-carbon materials, supplier engagement, commute trip reduction, air travel reduction, lower-impact food purchasing, reuse, compostables and waste prevention. Emerging policy and regulatory drivers also create opportunities for the UW to align operational decisions with broader state and local climate goals.

Decarbonizing University operations is both a climate imperative and an institutional responsibility that aligns with the UW's values. The new SAP establishes long-term goals to reduce both direct and indirect emissions across the University, while prioritizing near-term actions that are stepping stones toward long-term progress.

The financial and regulatory case for decarbonization is growing. The Seattle campus alone spends approximately \$9 million annually on natural gas to provide heat and hot water for the campus and UW Medical Center – Montlake. This does not include the allowances the UW must purchase as a covered entity under Washington's Climate Commitment Act (CCA). As a large emitter of greenhouse gases, the UW must purchase carbon allowances for its emissions, and these costs are expected to increase under the CCA as a cap-and-invest program. The State Clean Buildings Performance Standard (CBPS) also requires UW facilities to reduce energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels over time. These policies create opportunities for UW to accelerate building energy efficiency, electrification and emissions reduction across its campuses.

UNDERSTANDING UW'S EMISSION SCOPES

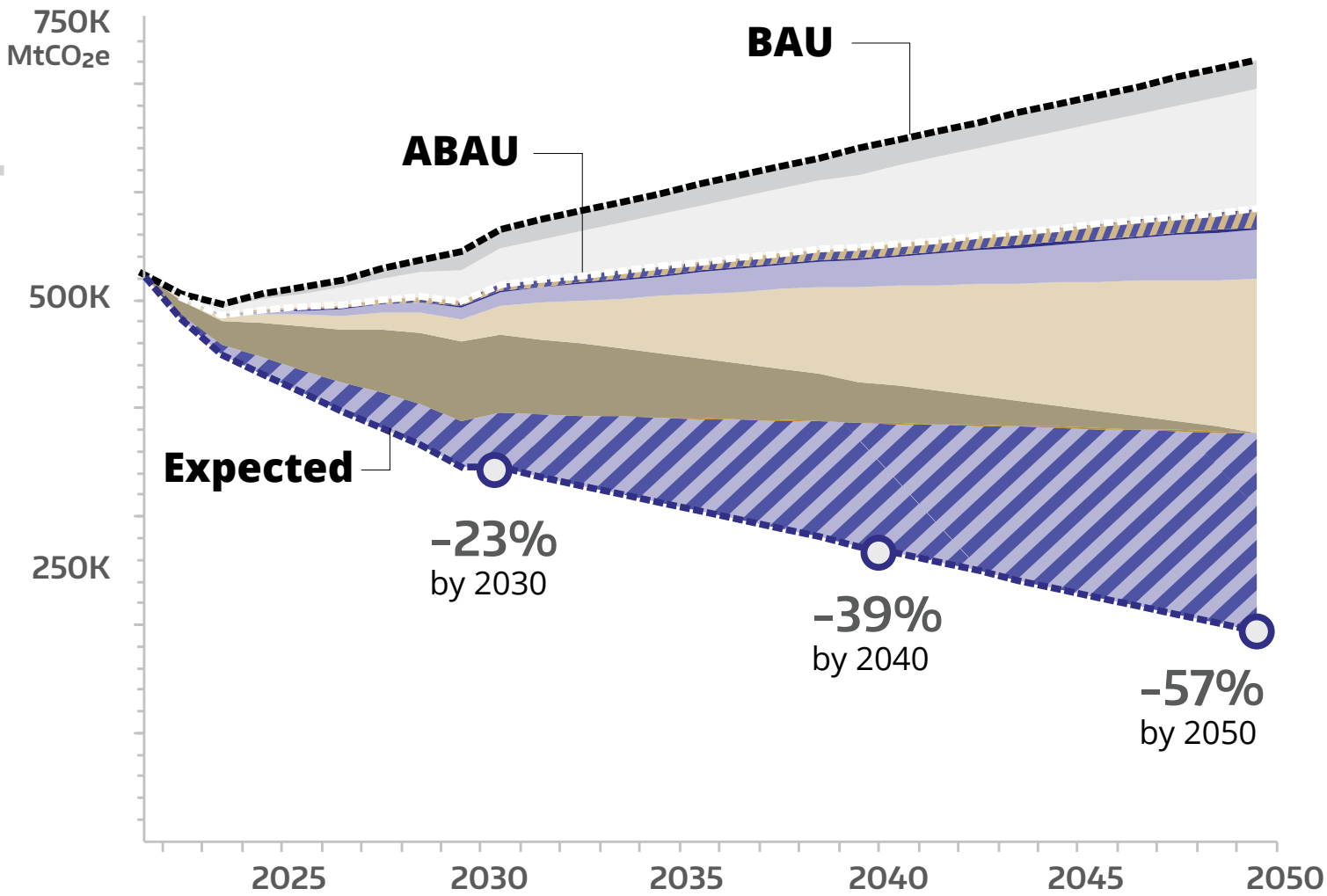
- SCOPE 1** Direct emissions from sources the UW owns or operates, such as fossil fuels burned in campus buildings, fuel for fleet vehicles, refrigerant and anesthetic gases.
- SCOPE 2** Indirect emissions from purchased electricity.
- SCOPE 3** Indirect emissions associated with University activities but not directly controlled by the UW. This includes purchased goods and services, air travel, commuting, waste, and other activities.



UNIVERSITY EMISSIONS REDUCTION FORECAST

This graph from the UW 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory shows the UW's projected future emissions under three different scenarios. The "Business-as-usual" (BAU) line shows where emissions are headed if the campus continues to grow and neither the UW nor the state take action to reduce emissions.

The Adjusted (ABAU) line indicates possible emissions when taking into account existing state policies, and the Expected line shows forecasted emissions as a result of state and UW actions.



LONG-TERM GOALS

LONG-TERM GOAL #1 Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2 by 2035

Direct emissions from fossil fuel combustion in buildings account for UW's second largest source of emissions, and 93% of these direct (Scope 1) emissions are a result of natural gas burned for heating across the Seattle campus. Achieving this goal by 2035 will require significant reductions in fossil fuel use through energy efficiency, electrification, and long-term transformation of campus energy systems. While UW has identified major pathways toward this goal, including implementation of the Energy Renewal Plan (ERP), the investment strategies needed to achieve the full level of reduction by 2035 are not yet fully funded or developed. Electricity-related emissions (Scope 2) are negligible due to the region's hydropower-dominated grid, combined with the State's CETA law requiring electricity providers to be fossil fuel free by 2045.

LONG-TERM TARGETS

- 95% direct reduction in Scope 1 & 2 GHG emissions (2005 baseline) by 2035.** This target is consistent with the [Faculty Senate Resolution "Concerning Timetable for Climate Crisis Finance and Decarbonization,"](#) which passed in 2024 and called for a 95% reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2035. Reaching this level of reduction will require a combination of strategies. Implementation of the ERP is the largest opportunity to reduce direct emissions from the Seattle campus energy system. The ERP calls for a phased transformation of the campus energy system, including reducing energy demand, converting the steam distribution system to hot water, centralizing cooling, expanding electrical infrastructure, and replacing natural-gas heating with electric heat pump technologies and recovered heat. Full implementation of the ERP will require significant additional funding, and the University is working to identify additional funding pathways to make progress toward the 2035 goal. Once ERP implementation is complete, any remaining emissions will likely be addressed through high-quality carbon removals or offsets.

LONG-TERM GOAL #2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050

Scope 3, or indirect, emissions represent nearly 80% of the University of Washington's total greenhouse gas footprint. Scope 3 emissions are associated with purchasing and supply chains, travel, commuting and solid waste. The following targets focus on the largest areas of indirect emissions, namely purchasing and travel, which make up 81% and 15% of the UW's Scope 3 emissions respectively.

LONG-TERM TARGETS

- 35% reduction in emissions from purchased goods and services by 2040 (from a 2022 baseline).** This target signals a shift toward lower carbon goods, services, and suppliers. Progress will be tracked through expanded sustainable procurement practices, supplier engagement, and more precise data collection of emissions from goods over time.
- 50% reduction in travel-related emissions by 2040 (from a 2022 baseline).** This target reflects the forecast reduction from the 2022 GHG Inventory and assumes implementation of strategies such as reducing emissions from air travel, increasing transit ridership and reducing single-occupancy vehicle commuting.

PLANNING FOR ELECTRIFICATION OF THE POWER PLANT

Electrifying the Seattle campus district energy system is one of the most impactful steps the UW can take to reduce direct greenhouse gas emissions. Implementation of the Energy Renewal Plan will require significant long-term investment, coordination, and phased infrastructure upgrades across the Seattle campus. As phased ERP projects move forward, they will reduce reliance on natural gas while supporting reliable and efficient heating and cooling for campus operations. UW Facilities will also continue education and engagement through Power Plant tours, webinars, and other learning opportunities that help students, faculty, and staff understand the history, complexity, and future of the campus energy system.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Implement projects that reduce energy consumption while maintaining or improving performance.



CONVERT TO HOT WATER

A first step to a shift off fossil fuels is to move to a lower temperature system. This enables us to electrify the heat pumps



CENTRAL COOLING

Cooling is energy intensive: a more efficient system will free up electrical capacity for decarbonizing.



ELECTRIFY HEATING

We can electrify the system by installing heat pumps to recover waste heat from multiple sources



FINAL PUSH (FULL DECARBONIZATION)

We will need an alternate way to produce steam needed to sterilize research and medical equipment.

UW GREEN BUILDING STANDARD (GBS)

Construction and renovation projects account for approximately 7% of all University emissions, which presents significant opportunity to reduce emissions and conserve resources across the UW's facilities. Launched in 2024, the new GBS includes requirements for new construction and renovation projects across all UW owned and operated facilities in Washington state. Requirements vary by project tier and scope, with a focus on energy efficiency, water conservation, embodied carbon, health and wellness, and ecology. The new GBS does not allow for new fossil fuels as a primary source of energy, only as back-up emergency fuel.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The Power Plant Reliability Project recently upgraded boilers at the Power Plant on the Seattle campus. By standardizing the boilers to produce a consistent level of steam, the project achieved a reduction of more than 10,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions a year. This project resulted in nearly a 12% reduction in the Power Plant's overall carbon footprint.



ENERGY AND EMISSIONS TRACKING SOFTWARE

In early 2024, the UW purchased EnergyCAP, an energy management and accounting software. This software will enhance the efficiency of tracking, reporting, and analyzing energy bills across all UW campuses. EnergyCAP's CarbonHub application will convert energy and utility data into greenhouse gas emissions metrics, providing detailed reports on Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions.

FLEET ELECTRIFICATION PLAN

Transportation Services is working to transition the UW vehicle fleet to electric vehicles as older vehicles are retired and suitable electric models become available. Fleet Services evaluates new and replacement vehicles for electrification and continues to expand the charging infrastructure needed to support the transition.

EXTENDED COMMUTE OPTIONS

The UW works with regional partners to expand transit service and improve transportation safety. Programs such as NightRide, Husky SafeTrip and Dial-A-Ride provide safe and reliable options for late night or unanticipated trips. Support for biking and micromobility - including e-bike charging, bike share and borrowing programs, safety education, and maintenance assistance - helps address barriers and expands access to low-carbon commute options.

GUIDING PRIORITY 2

FOSTER A REGENERATIVE CAMPUS

Fostering a regenerative campus means conducting university operations in a manner that stewards ecological health for plants, animals and our UW community.

FOSTER A REGENERATIVE CAMPUS

The UW identified these main strategies as opportunities to build more regenerative practices across our campuses: reducing the waste we generate, decreasing contamination in our recycling and composting streams, implementing leading practices in campus stewardship and supporting ecological health.

Across the UW's campuses and health system, the materials we use every day shape our environmental footprint. From academic and clinical operations to housing, dining, research and construction, the UW depends on a constant flow of products and materials. The UW's waste management work focuses on reducing landfill disposal while also shifting attention upstream toward waste prevention, reuse, improved material recovery and making more informed purchasing decisions. It's important not only to dispose of items correctly, but to reduce the amount of material used overall and encouraging reuse wherever possible.

Waste disposal impacts are much larger at UW Seattle and UW Medicine than at UW Bothell and UW Tacoma, largely reflecting the greater scale and operational complexity of the Seattle campus and health system. In 2022, UW Seattle's emissions associated with waste disposal were more than ten times greater than UW Bothell and UW Tacoma combined, and UW Medicine is similar in scale to the Seattle campus. This plan allows implementation strategies to reflect each campus's operations, infrastructure and reporting systems.

Our campuses all connect to the natural beauty of our region, while each has its own unique setting and environment. The University of Washington spans more than 746 acres, including urban streetscapes, natural wetlands and more traditional campus settings. All three campuses are adjacent to important bodies of water for species habitat, such as the Foss Waterway in Tacoma, Lake Washington in Seattle, and North Creek in Bothell.

Our goal of advancing ecological health includes implementing best practices from leading certification organizations, as well as ensuring our tree canopy thrives and expands. This area ensures our grounds and landscapes will continue to support the University's people and its mission long into the future.



LONG-TERM GOALS

LONG-TERM GOAL #3

Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

The UW's most recent waste characterization study, completed in 2018, focused on the Seattle campus and examined the waste generated in areas including academic buildings, residence halls, campus laboratories, health sciences and the medical center. It included the primary garbage, recycling and compost streams and did not include all specialty waste, such as separate collections for scrap metal, electronics, chemicals or other source-separated materials. The study found the campus generated more than 14 million pounds of waste. Spread across the campus population, that equals roughly 159 pounds per person each year, or about three pounds per person each week. While the UW already keeps some of this material out of the landfill through composting and recycling, the study found much more could be diverted through better sorting, collection systems, and waste prevention strategies.

Food and compostable paper are two significant opportunities for improvement. The study found that UW was capturing less than half of its compostable and soiled paper through compost, while food had a 52% capture rate. Capture rate refers to the amount of potentially recyclable or compostable materials that are successfully kept out of the landfill.

LONG-TERM TARGETS

- **80% compostables capture rate by 2050.** Composting of food waste and other compostable material mitigates climate change by reducing landfill emissions and building stable organic matter. Research shows compost-amended soils act as carbon sinks, with at least 20% of composted carbon remaining in the soil up to 15 years after application. The capture rate for compostables at the Seattle campus is approximately 46%. This can be improved through strategies such as education, signage and changes to bin infrastructure. Post-consumer or 'back-of-house' sorting may also be tested.
- **80% recyclables capture rate by 2050.** On the Seattle campus, the capture rate for recyclables is approximately 63%. Reaching this target will require consistent waste-sorting education, clearer signage, infrastructure improvements and testing innovative technologies. Because recycling data is tracked differently at UW Bothell and UW Tacoma, implementation on those campuses will reflect local collection systems.
- **Reduce total landfill waste 30% by 2050.** This target continues the UW's long-term progress in keeping materials out of the landfill. Between 2004 and 2018, UW reduced landfill disposal by 55% through additional composting and recycling pathways and reductions in overall waste generation. Continued progress will depend on reducing our overall waste and getting more compostable and recyclable materials into the correct streams. It will also mean making purchasing decisions that prioritize lower-waste products.
- **Reduce landfill disposal from the top three highest-generating campus groups by 10% by 2035.** UW Recycling data shows that some sectors across campus produce more waste than others. The largest waste-generating sectors are the hospital, residence halls and campus laboratories. These areas represent key opportunities for targeted waste reduction, expanded reuse and improved sorting.

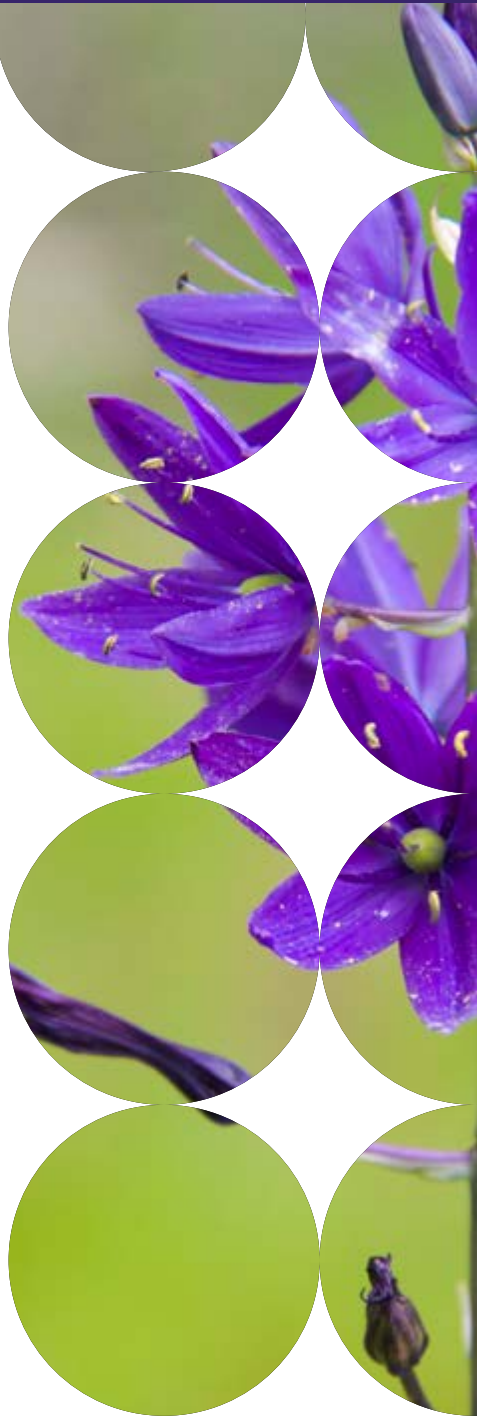
LONG-TERM GOAL #4

Advance Ecological Health by 2050

Our land management practices, including stewardship of landscapes, have an impact on species health and water quality across the region. This long-term goal and targets focus on scaling up existing best practices to enhance our stewardship of the land and aquatic environments.

LONG-TERM TARGETS

- **Each campus will update its respective landscape management plan, including priorities for enhanced ecological resilience, by 2040.** UW's campuses offer different opportunities to strengthen ecological health. Seattle's natural areas, Bothell's wetland and forest, and Tacoma's urban landscape each call for a locally informed approach. This target gives each campus a way to reflect locally appropriate opportunities to strengthen ecological health. This approach connects ecological resilience with ongoing campus planning and stewardship.
- **Convert 100% of irrigation to smart systems by 2040.** Many University facilities already have smart irrigation systems, which helps reduce over-watering, catch water leaks and adapt to changing climate conditions. Expanding smart irrigation systems can also help reduce the UW's utility costs.
- **Expand tree canopy coverage across the tri-campus by 2050.** Expanding tree canopy across the University will require campus-specific approaches that reflect different landscapes, land use patterns and future growth needs. The Seattle campus currently maintains approximately 24% canopy coverage and is working to maintain and grow the canopy even while accommodating campus growth, working toward 25% by 2037. UW Bothell and UW Tacoma will need to assess existing canopy coverage to determine appropriate long-term canopy goals.



SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS AT UW

FOSTER A REGENERATIVE CAMPUS

REDUCING SINGLE-USE PACKAGING

Instead of using disposable take-out containers, students across the UW can participate in Housing & Food Services’ [OZZI reusable container program](#). Each student living in residence halls is provided a token at the start of the school year which can be exchanged for an OZZI reusable container. HFS has also added a 50-cent charge for single-use containers and transitioned dining halls to durable dishware for dine-in meals, helping make reusables the default option and reducing overall waste generation.

PREVENTING FOOD WASTE UPSTREAM

[UW Dining](#) works to reduce food waste before it happens through staff training, production forecasting, menu planning and purchasing practices designed to avoid over-ordering. By improving how food demand is anticipated and meals are prepared, these efforts help reduce surplus food, lower disposal costs, and conserve the resources used to grow, transport and prepare food. When excess edible food is available, HFS partners with local food pantries for redistribution.

UW SURPLUS

[UW Surplus](#) takes unwanted items from all UW departments and medical facilities for resale. Their goal is to reuse, repurpose or recycle as many items as possible. UW Surplus plays a key role in reducing the University’s environmental and carbon footprint by diverting usable items from the landfill.

REUSABLE CUP PILOT PROGRAM AT ALASKA AIRLINES ARENA

UW Athletics and multiple partners piloted a reusable cup program during the 2025 and 2026 volleyball, basketball and gymnastics seasons. The program’s goal is to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions by replacing single-use compostable cups with a reusable cup for concessions. The reusable cups are washed and sterilized for reuse. A life-cycle analysis is currently underway to determine the full impacts of the reusable cups compared to compostable options.

THE BURKE MEADOW

The meadow near the Burke Museum includes over 50 native plant species of significance to Indigenous cultures and practices. The area provides essential habitat for local pollinators and functions as an interactive classroom for tens of thousands of visitors annually. A collaborative team of faculty, staff, and students manage the space, showing how Tribal land stewardship and Western science can coexist to support shared learning and care for place.



UW BOTHELL NORTH CREEK WETLAND RESTORATION PROJECT

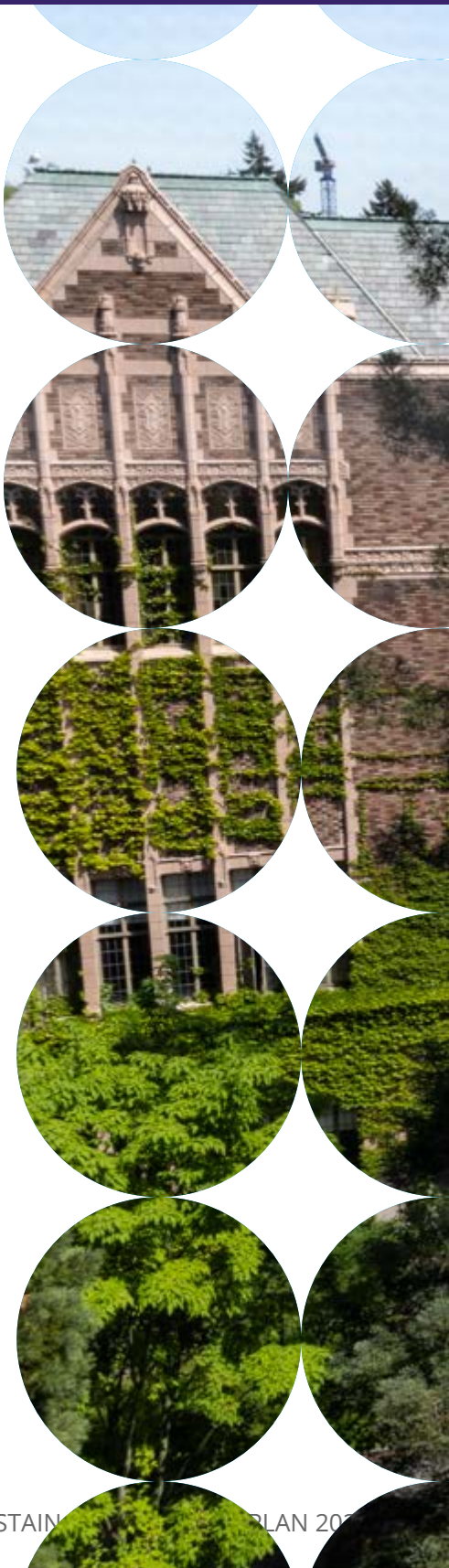
Since 1997, restoration of the 58-acre North Creek Wetland has transformed the site into a functioning floodplain ecosystem and a rich habitat for wildlife. UW Bothell continues to manage and monitor the wetland through organic land care, long-term stewardship, and hands-on learning opportunities for University classes and local K-12 students.

UW TACOMA MICRO-FOREST

At UW Tacoma, campus canopy work includes [the Miyawaki micro-forest project](#), where volunteers installed more than 600 plants in a single planting event. This event focused on planting small canopy and sub-canopy trees, shrubs and groundcover to increase vegetation, canopy coverage and biodiversity in the downtown core.

SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION (SER) – UW CHAPTER

[SER-UW](#) is a student-led organization that supports hands-on ecological restoration and stewardship. Through partnerships with campus units and local organizations, SER-UW engages students in habitat restoration, invasive species removal and applied learning. This work fosters ongoing ecological health on campus while building workforce skills in environmental restoration and management.



GUIDING PRIORITY 3

EXPAND CAMPUS-BASED LEARNING AND LIVING LABS

**The University of Washington
confers more than 15,000
degrees annually across its three
campuses.**

UW students, regardless of their field of study or where life takes them, have the opportunity to be changemakers after they graduate. This guiding priority focuses on embedding sustainability across disciplines and expanding campus as a living-learning platform where our community is empowered to address sustainability needs. The two long-term goals below move the University in that direction.

The first goal commits us to more effectively utilize the STARS framework to assess and expand sustainability best practices across academics and operations.

The second goal calls for the development of a new program to foster life-long sustainability changemakers through living-lab learning projects, support and assistance for faculty, mentorship for students, and much more.



LONG-TERM GOALS



SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS AT UW

LONG-TERM GOAL #5

Platinum STARS ranking by 2040

The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) program developed by the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) is a framework for higher education institutions to assess and benchmark progress in embedding sustainability across their operations, academics, and community partnerships. As of 2026, only 18 of the 416 institutions rated worldwide have earned a Platinum STARS rating, the highest level of achievement under the system

LONG-TERM TARGETS

- **Achieve a STARS score of 85+.** The UW has consistently achieved a Gold STARS rating, and this long-term target challenges us to scale up best practices, particularly with respect to sustainability learning across disciplines. Achieving this target will position the UW among the highest-performing institutions in the STARS community and demonstrate strong integration of sustainability into University operations, as well as research and learning. The 2025 STARS score for the Seattle campus was 67.89% (Gold), meaning we need to make considerable strides to reach Platinum at 85%. The emphasis for this long-term target is to identify STARS points not yet achieved that will be impactful in advancing SAP goals and enable students, faculty and staff to be changemakers. By contrast, there are STARS points that the UW Sustainability team has identified as either not feasible or less impactful, and those points will likely not be pursued.

LONG-TERM GOAL #6

Establish a Changemaker Collaborative by 2035

Through community engagement during the SAP development process, students expressed a clear desire for more accessible, meaningful opportunities to contribute to sustainability on our campuses. This long-term goal establishes a Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative to increase opportunities for hands-on sustainability projects for students and better integrate a sustainability lens in classroom teaching and learning. The targets below focus on a deliberate path to increase student engagement through a new sustainability project portal with a variety of “ready-to-go” opportunities, such as class and group projects, capstone projects, one-time volunteer events, and more.

LONG-TERM TARGETS

- **Complete at least 25 projects through the project engagement portal by 2030.** This target assumes roughly five new projects will be added to the portal each year, ensuring that the opportunities for students grow annually. The project portal also helps increase collaboration among faculty, staff and students while advancing SAP goals.
- **Increase participation in project-based sustainability opportunities by 5% annually.** This target reflects steady growth in student, faculty, and staff engagement over time, helping expand access to hands-on sustainability work and ensuring more members of the UW community can contribute to meaningful impact.

CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY FUND

The [Campus Sustainability Fund \(CSF\)](#) supports student-led sustainability projects that treat campus as a living lab. Through funding opportunities, project guidance, and campus partnerships, CSF helps students turn ideas into justice-centered projects that respond to real campus needs. These experiences give students practical skills while advancing sustainability on campus and beyond

HUSKIES FOR EQUITABLE SUSTAINABILITY

Huskies for Equitable Sustainability (HuES) is a student engagement program organized by UW Sustainability that connects students with real sustainability projects. Examples of HuES student opportunities include: engaging in the Sustainability Action Plan development and implementation, planning campus Earth Month events, supporting UW Athletics’ reusable cup program and volunteering at existing events or initiatives.



UW BOTHELL’S RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP LEARNING

UW Bothell’s campus has long served as a living laboratory for wetland restoration, ecological monitoring and sustainable land management. Faculty and students actively engage with North Creek and surrounding ecosystems through research, coursework and stewardship, generating long-term ecological data and learning opportunities.



UW MEDICINE AND THE SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN



Hospitals and clinics are among the most resource-intensive spaces at the UW, particularly in relation to energy use, purchasing and supply chains, and solid waste. For the purposes of greenhouse gas accounting and sustainability planning, UW Medicine includes UW Medical Center – Montlake, UW Medical Center – Northwest, and Harborview Medical Center. Together, these facilities make UW Medicine the second-highest source of greenhouse gas emissions compared to other UW units and campuses.

Healthcare is also a uniquely complex sector for decarbonization and sustainability implementation. Hospitals and clinics operate continuously and must meet distinct regulatory, clinical and operational requirements to protect patient safety and quality of care. As a result, sustainability strategies in healthcare settings often require different approaches than those used in academic, administrative or residential spaces.

UW Medicine is an essential partner in advancing UW’s sustainability goals, both through its healthcare operations and through its role in responding to climate-related health impacts such as extreme heat, wildfire smoke and air quality. The approach of UW Medicine in the implementation of the Sustainability Action Plan will reflect these unique needs and may differ in scope, scale and timeline compared to other institutional and academic units across the University. This Sustainability Action Plan provides a shared University-wide framework, while providing UW Medicine the flexibility to pursue healthcare-specific approaches that align with its mission and meet its operational needs.

UW MEDICINE AS A KEY SUSTAINABILITY PARTNER

UW Medicine will continue to help advance many priorities within this plan, such as:

- **Energy and emissions reduction:** UW Medicine is responsible for about 43% of UW’s total greenhouse gas emissions, making healthcare one of the University’s most significant opportunities for emissions reduction. Many hospitals and clinics operate continuously and

require significant energy for heating, cooling, ventilation, sterilization and backup power. Continued investments in building performance, energy efficiency, water conservation and decarbonization can directly support University-wide climate goals while saving utility costs.

- **Procurement and supply chain:** UW Medicine’s annual supply chain spend exceeds \$1.3 billion and comprises 78% of UW Medicine’s greenhouse gas footprint. These figures reflect the scale of purchasing across medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, surgical supplies, food and contracted services, making it one of the largest areas of opportunities for emissions reduction.
- **Materials, waste and circularity:** Healthcare settings generate complex waste streams with strict safety requirements, but they also present significant potential for material stewardship. The University’s 2018 Waste Characterization Study found that the UW Medical Center generated roughly 35-40% of the Seattle campus’ landfill-bound waste.
- **Climate-smart food systems:** UW Medicine operates hospital dining outlets as well as patient food service. These operations present opportunities to support lower-emissions food options.
- **Climate resilience and patient care:** UW Medicine plays a critical role in responding to heat events, wildfire smoke, poor air quality, severe weather and other emergencies that affect the health of our community and patients.

BUILDING ON EXISTING MOMENTUM

UW Medicine has already demonstrated meaningful leadership in sustainability through initiatives that reduce environmental impact, improve operational efficiency and support high-quality patient care. Its medical centers have been regularly recognized by [Practice Greenhealth](#) as national leaders in sustainability. The examples below highlight how healthcare-specific action is already underway and providing a strong foundation for continued progress across the Sustainability Action Plan.

- **Reducing Anesthetic Gas Emissions:** UW Medicine’s Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine developed a sustainability dashboard within Epic, the electronic health record system, to help clinicians better understand the greenhouse gas impact of anesthetic choices. Many anesthetic gases can contribute to climate change when released into the atmosphere. Combined with the phaseout of desflurane and improvements to nitrous oxide delivery systems, emissions dropped 25% in two years and overall hourly emissions fell 50%.
- **Medical Device Reprocessing:** Through medical device reprocessing, certain FDA-approved single-use devices can be safely collected, remanufactured and reused rather than discarded after one use. Between 2018 and 2024, UW Medicine’s program diverted more than 750,000 pounds of waste, recycled \$75,000 in metals, and generated environmental benefits equivalent to planting 1,350 trees.
- **A Strong National Network:** UW Medicine’s sustainability efforts have also been recognized through Practice Greenhealth, the leading sustainability network for hospitals and health systems in North America. Practice Greenhealth provides performance benchmarking, technical resources, peer learning, and one of the nation’s premier healthcare sustainability awards programs. Both Harborview Medical Center and UW Medical Center – Montlake have been recognized for sustainability leadership, including being named among the Top 25 hospitals for Environmental Excellence. Harborview has also received Circle of Excellence awards for areas such as climate, transportation, sustainable procurement, waste reduction, energy, and Greening the OR. UW Medical Center has also been recognized with the Emerald Award, which honors advanced environmental performance and strong results across multiple sustainability areas.
- **Research, Education, and Clinical Leadership:** As a leading academic health system, UW Medicine connects patient care, teaching and research to climate solutions. Through the School of Medicine, UW educates nearly 1,000 medical students across its four-year program

and supports more than 1,600 residents and fellows. This work is strengthened by initiatives like the [Center for Health and the Global Environment \(CHanGE\)](#), which advances climate and health research and training, and the annual [Symposium on Climate Change and Clinical Practice](#). UW Medicine’s leadership is also reflected in national recognition, including Dr. Stefan Wheat being named the Association of American Medical Colleges’ first [Climate Champion of the Year](#) in 2025.

LOOKING FORWARD

This plan creates a foundation for partnership across the University of Washington and UW Medicine. As implementation continues, lessons learned from UW Medicine can help inspire other healthcare institutions to scale up and share sustainability best practices.

UW GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION PROFILES IN MtCO₂e

258K	UW SEATTLE
226K	UW MEDICINE
22K	HOUSING & FOOD SERVICES
11K	INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS
6.1K	UW TACOMA
3.8K	UW BOTHELL
0.2K	OUTLYING
528K	UW TOTAL

FOCUS AREAS

Over the next five years, the UW will concentrate its efforts in these seven Focus Areas. Each Focus Area includes a flagship action, and additional actions, which will support our long-term goals. On the following pages we detail each Focus Area and the five-year actions we will take, including timelines and metrics to track success. Actions were developed through working groups that included faculty, staff, students, and other community stakeholders.



TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING



2050 VISION

We are seamlessly connected through a **network of low-carbon transportation options** that prioritize convenience, affordability, safety, and accessibility. More Huskies are commuting by transit, carpool, or bike than ever before. When it comes to air travel, our UW community is thoughtful about flying less and mitigating air travel’s carbon impacts. UW faculty, staff and students embrace **sustainable travel** to commute, serve our community and stay connected.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

TC1 Bolster U-PASS and other sustainable commuting modes through a coordinated campaign to meet the Seattle single-occupancy vehicle trip reduction goal of 12% by 2028.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- TC2 Complete a safety assessment of vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian travel across all campuses to identify barriers to safe and sustainable commuting modes.**
- TC3 Improve access to bicycle, e-bike and micromobility commuting.**
- TC4 Develop tools and best practices to reduce air travel and mitigate flight-related emissions.**
- TC5 Create a University-wide fleet electrification plan.**

OVERVIEW

Reducing transportation emissions is critical to meeting the UW’s climate goals and supporting community well-being. Transportation is the University’s third-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, including daily commuting as well as professional, research and athletic travel. How people move to, from and between campuses directly affects emissions, air quality, public health, affordability and access. The actions in this section focus on strengthening sustainable commuting, mobility options and thoughtful air travel.

In 2022 commuting accounted for about 5.7% of total University greenhouse gas emissions. The amount of emissions associated with commuting to and from campus has decreased by 46.5% since 2005, as the UW has made meaningful progress in reducing drive-alone commuting through long-standing investments in public transit.

A cornerstone of this work is the [U-PASS program](#), launched in the early 1990s and widely recognized as a national model. U-PASS has long covered students, providing unlimited rides on most regional public transit. In 2022, all employees paid by the University became eligible for a fully subsidized U-PASS, reinforcing transit as an affordable commuting option. Continued support for public

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

UW’s Universal Student U-PASS program includes a [formal advisory board](#) made up of student representatives. The board reviews program performance, evaluates costs and recommends fee levels and policy updates. Through this shared governance structure, students help shape how the U-PASS program operates and evolves each year.

transit, biking, walking, ridesharing and telecommuting remains essential to sustaining long-term emissions reductions.

Air travel accounts for approximately 6.3% of UW’s total emissions and presents significant opportunity for future reductions. Reducing emissions from air travel was included as one of the 10 targets in the [2020 Sustainability Action Plan](#). An air travel working group convened to address air travel emissions published a [white paper](#) with recommendations for the University. The working group partnered with the Faculty Council on Campus Planning and Stewardship (FCCPS) on a possible resolution on air travel, but ultimately this was not passed by the Faculty Senate. Air travel emissions are addressed in this SAP using a new approach informed by that working group’s efforts.

Fleet vehicles account for approximately 2% of our direct emissions and less than 0.5% of total University emissions (direct and indirect). Actions in this focus area bolster fleet electrification planning, which is already underway and consistent with state policy.



Jayce Blanchard
Board Chair, Universal Student U-PASS Advisory Board

“The U-PASS Program plays a crucial role in allowing students like me to move more sustainably. It makes public transportation affordable and accessible, allowing students to easily utilize more modes of transportation while helping UW become a more sustainable institution.”

EXPLORE MORE

- Find [biking and active transportation resources](#), including secure bike parking, route maps, safety guidance, and seasonal encouragement programs.
- Learn about [carpool and vanpool options](#) and access parking incentives that support shared commuting.
- Locate [electric vehicle charging stations](#) available across the Seattle, Bothell, and Tacoma campuses.



TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING



FLAGSHIP ACTION

TC1: Bolster U-PASS and other sustainable commuting modes through a coordinated campaign to meet the Seattle single-occupancy vehicle trip reduction goal of 12% by 2028.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

This action can be accomplished within existing Transportation and Commute Services budgets.

LEAD PARTNERS

Transportation Services

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- ② Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment

- **OP-14** Commute Modal Split



UN Sustainable Development Goals

- **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being
- **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities
- **SDG 13** Climate Action



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Transportation

ACTION OVERVIEW

This calls for an outreach campaign to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips by promoting public transit, biking, walking, and carpooling. This action builds on the UW's current [Your Move, UW](#) campaign, which highlights sustainable transportation options and connects the campus community to tools such as U-PASS, campus shuttles, biking infrastructure and ridesharing programs. Campaign messaging and outreach will support commuters in navigating the logistics of trying new alternatives.

Desired outcomes include a reduction in single-occupancy vehicle trips, increased use of transit and other sustainable transportation modes, reduced transportation-related emissions, and greater awareness of mobility options to start and end trips. Outcomes will be tracked through annual surveys in alignment with the Washington state-mandated [Commute Trip Reduction program](#).

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY29

APPROACH

- 2027** ○ Refine and implement campaign outreach strategies to promote transit, biking, walking, carpooling and other shared mobility options.
- 2028** ○ Scale campaign efforts across all campuses and evaluate outcomes through Commute Trip Reduction reporting.

TRACKED METRICS

- Single-occupancy vehicle commute rate
- Percent of UW community members utilizing U-PASS
- Percent of bike commuters

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Aligns with UW Bothell's 2026-2036 Sustainability Plan, which prioritizes reducing drive-alone commuting and expanding safe, accessible alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel.
- UW Tacoma will continue to partner with Pierce County's Ride Together Pierce program, including a vanpool option offered at no additional cost through U-PASS.



TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING



TC2: Complete a safety assessment of vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian travel across all campuses to identify barriers to safe and sustainable commuting modes.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Moderate investment in staff time, data analysis and community engagement including potential consulting support. Additional capital investment may be needed to implement the findings of the study.

LEAD PARTNERS

Transportation Services

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
• **OP-14** Commute Modal Split
-  • **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
• **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being
• **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities
• **SDG 13** Climate Action
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
Transportation

ACTION OVERVIEW

UW Transportation Services' Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) surveys show more than 80% of weekday commute trips to the Seattle campus are already made by modes other than driving alone. CTR results also indicate that increased safety along travel routes, at transit stops and in parking areas is among the most influential factors in motivating people to choose alternatives over driving alone. As campus populations grow and travel patterns continue to evolve, addressing safety concerns is critical to maintaining and expanding UW's high rate of sustainable commuting.

This action entails a coordinated assessment of vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, micromobility and transit travel conditions across all three UW campuses. The assessment will combine existing data (such as CTR results, collision and incident data, and campus plans) with on-the-ground evaluations to help identify barriers, infrastructure gaps and areas of elevated risk. Findings will be used to prioritize campus-specific improvements and to inform capital planning, operational changes and future investments.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY30

APPROACH

- 2027** Confirm scope, methodology, and data sources for safety assessments.
- 2028** Conduct assessment across campuses.
- 2029** Finalize and publish findings, and integrate priority recommendations into capital planning and campus operations.

TRACKED METRICS

- Safety assessments completed
- Number of identified safety concern areas
- Percent of concern areas with recommended improvements planned or in-progress

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The safety assessment will be conducted across all campuses.



TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING



TC3: Improve access to bicycle, e-bike and micromobility commuting.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Most improvements can be advanced through existing programs, data and staff capacity, with targeted upgrades and pilots implemented over time.

LEAD PARTNERS

Transportation Services

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment

- **OP-14** Commute Modal Split



UN Sustainable Development Goals

- **SDG 3** Good Health and Well-being
- **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities
- **SDG 13** Climate Action



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Transportation

ACTION OVERVIEW

The UW supports biking as a commuting option, providing more than 7,000 bicycle parking spaces across our campuses. Seattle campus commute surveys show that 6% of weekday commute trips are primarily bicycle trips and another 8% are partially completed by biking, accounting for more than 16,000 daily trips. Survey respondents identify infrastructure and security as key factors influencing biking frequency. While nearly half of bike commuters park at standard racks, satisfaction with bike parking security is low and respondents rate additional secure parking and more bike lanes as the most impactful improvements to encourage more frequent biking. Approximately 9% of survey respondents used a bike share program in the month prior to the survey, primarily for campus-related trips.

This action focuses on improving both the physical infrastructure and programmatic support needed to make biking, e-biking and micromobility options safer, more convenient and more accessible across campuses. Implementation will build on existing data to improve bicycle storage, advance e-bike charging and expand access through campus programs such as bike borrowing and micromobility pilots.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028** Assess cycling needs and priorities using existing data on bike storage demand, program use and commuting patterns.
- 2029** Advance targeted bike storage improvements, assess priority locations for e-bike charging and pilot expanded bike borrowing options.
- 2030** Track the success and challenges of program enhancements across campuses to better inform long-term mobility and capital planning.

TRACKED METRICS

- Percent utilization of secure bike and micromobility storage across campuses
- Participation and usage rates for bike and e-bike programs
- Changes in reported barriers to biking and micromobility
- Contribution to reductions in single-occupancy vehicle commuting as reflected in CTR data

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- All campuses will participate in expanding bicycle and micromobility programs, adapting infrastructure and support systems to local commuting contexts.
- Aligns with UW Bothell's 2026-2036 Sustainability Plan, which emphasizes expanded micromobility access, including bike borrowing and improved e-bike infrastructure.



TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING



TC4: Develop tools and best practices to reduce air travel and mitigate flight-related emissions.

ACTION OVERVIEW

Air travel is one of the University’s largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. It is also one of the most challenging sectors to decarbonize as low-carbon alternatives to jet fuel are still in development, and because of the important role that in-person gatherings play in research, athletics, professional development and relationship-building. Colleges and universities across the country and internationally are working to reduce emissions from air travel through a combination of education, policy, incentives and mitigation programs.

Recent efforts and lessons learned from the Air Travel Working Group demonstrated that our community cares about this complex issue. Feedback indicated that more education on this topic is needed, as well as a range of voluntary tools for individuals and units to develop their own approach. This action will result in more readily-accessible education, tools and resources which can help our UW community make informed decisions about air travel. Examples of tools at other institutions include more options and technical assistance for virtual meetings and conferences, voluntary carbon offset programs, and best practices guidance for colleges and units to develop their own approach to reduce emissions from travel.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY30

APPROACH

- 2027** Reconvene existing Air Travel Working Group.
- 2028** Develop, pilot and refine educational materials and a resource toolkit, including virtual engagement alternatives, guidelines for “fly less” planning and opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint from flights.
- 2029** Publish a comprehensive toolkit, and share through UW communications channels across academic, administrative, and operational units.

TRACKED METRICS

Metrics will evolve as UW’s air travel tracking and reporting systems mature. Initial performance metrics may include:

- Total emissions from UW-sponsored air travel
- Percent change in UW-sponsored air travel emissions relative to a baseline year
- Number of units utilizing air travel emissions tools and guidance (e.g., fly-less decision support, mitigation resources)

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Educational materials and a resource toolkit will be made available to all campuses and units across the organization.

LEAD PARTNERS

Air Travel Working Group, Environmental Stewardship Committee, Faculty Council on Campus Planning and Stewardship

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Implementation will require staff time and coordination across units to develop tools, deliver outreach and support pilot programs.

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - **OP-15** Air Travel
-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production
 - **SDG 13** Climate Action
 - **SDG 17** Partnerships for the Goals
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
 - Transportation



TRANSPORTATION
& COMMUTING



TC5: Create a University-wide fleet electrification plan.

ACTION OVERVIEW

Fleet vehicles represent about 2% of the UW's direct greenhouse gas emissions. While modest in scale, these emissions fall largely within the University's operational control, making fleet electrification a practical strategy for reducing Scope 1 emissions. As of 2023, electric and hybrid vehicles accounted for approximately 29% of the UW's fleet of more than 700 vehicles.

This action will support existing efforts by developing campus-specific fleet electrification plans that identify vehicle replacement schedules, charging needs, electrical infrastructure upgrades and funding requirements. UW Seattle expects to transition to a fully electric fleet by 2035 as internal combustion engine vehicles are retired and suitable electric models become available. UW Bothell and UW Tacoma will develop plans that reflect their distinct operational needs and may pursue longer-term electrification timelines.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028** Complete fleet and charging infrastructure inventory, electrical capacity and site assessments for each campus (include UW Medicine contracted vehicles).
- 2029** Finalize electrification plans and identify priority vehicle replacements, charging infrastructure and charging locations. Secure funding and begin infrastructure upgrades.
- 2030** Install campus-wide charging infrastructure and finalize procurement strategies for phased fleet transition.

TRACKED METRICS

- Fleet electrification campus plan complete
- Number of EVs purchased
- % fleet electrified

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Fleet electrification planning will be led centrally through UW Transportation Services and informed by the unique needs of Tacoma, Bothell and UW Medicine including fleet size and vehicle use.
- Aligns with UW Bothell's 2026-2036 sustainability goal to transition to a fully electric fleet by 2035, including development of a fleet electrification plan by 2028.

LEAD PARTNERS

Transportation Services

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Upfront investments in electric vehicles and charging infrastructure may be significant, requiring capital planning and external funding.

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 1 Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2 by 2035

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - **OP-6** Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - **OP-13** Vehicle Fleet
-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - **SDG 7** Affordable and Clean Energy
 - **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
 - **SDG 11** Sustainable Cities and Communities
 - **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production
 - **SDG 13** Climate Action
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
 - Transportation

PROCUREMENT



2050 VISION

Our supply chain is a powerful tool for **advancing environmental, social and economic sustainability**. We prioritize purchasing practices that are cost effective and reflect our values. Through strategic procurement, the UW **fosters a culture of responsible spending** while supporting small, minority- and women-owned businesses, human rights, environmental stewardship and local economies.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

P1 **Launch a new sustainable procurement webpage and training for staff.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- P2 Develop strategies with UW’s high-impact suppliers to reduce the environmental impact of our purchases.
- P3 Standardize and integrate sustainability criteria into supplier solicitation, evaluation and contracting.

OVERVIEW

The 2022 University of Washington Greenhouse Gas Inventory shows that purchased goods and services are by far the largest source of the UW’s overall carbon footprint, accounting for roughly 64% of total greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable procurement means balancing cost, quality and performance with environmental and social considerations. These considerations are especially important given the scale and diversity of the UW’s purchasing, which includes office supplies, laboratory equipment, food service, construction materials, information technology and healthcare goods, to name just a few.

The UW has sustainable purchasing practices in place through Procurement Services’ [Sustainable Green Purchasing Program](#), which integrates environmental and social considerations into purchasing guidance and contracts, and competitive solicitations. Purchasing

guidance also emphasizes life-cycle thinking and buying less whenever feasible. Within UW Medicine, environmentally preferable purchasing has delivered environmental and cost-saving benefits. Using data benchmarking and supplier evaluation tools from Vizient, a national healthcare group purchasing and performance improvement organization, UW Medicine has shifted toward products that reduce waste and emissions while maintaining clinical performance and controlling costs.

These efforts have created a strong foundation, but there is still significant opportunity to expand education, tools and training to more consistently integrate sustainability into purchasing processes. The actions in this focus area aim to strengthen supplier expectations and engagement, improve visibility into product life-cycle impacts, and increase education and assistance for unit-level purchasing decisions.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

UW Medicine improved its standing in Vizient’s environmentally preferred purchasing program from 21st to 12th in one year. This progress was driven by implementation of its first system-wide environmentally preferred purchasing policy, which integrates environmental criteria into product vetting and contract solicitation processes. As part of this shift, transitioning to environmentally preferred facial protection products reduced product variation from 30 items to 13, decreased waste and saved more than \$300,000.



Tara Biss,
Value Analysis Portfolio
Manager, UW Medicine

“Sustainable procurement is essential since our supply chain represents one of our greatest opportunities to reduce environmental impact. By integrating environmental criteria into our purchasing decisions, we’re reducing waste, influencing manufacturers and ensuring our operations align with UW Medicine’s mission to improve the health of our patients and our planet. It’s not just about what we buy, it’s about the future we help create through those decisions.”

EXPLORE MORE

- Explore [Sustainable Purchasing Guidance](#) to choose environmentally preferable products and contracts.
- Utilize [UW Surplus](#) to redistribute or purchase reusable items before buying new.



PROCUREMENT



FLAGSHIP ACTION

P1: Launch a new sustainable procurement webpage and training for staff.

ACTION OVERVIEW

Building on existing efforts led by Procurement Services, the UW will expand sustainable procurement resources through the development of an updated webpage and targeted training for staff involved in purchasing decisions. These resources will provide practical guidance and tools to help units incorporate sustainability considerations into everyday purchasing across the University and its healthcare system.

The updated webpage will serve as a central hub for sustainable purchasing guidance, including product category recommendations, supplier sustainability considerations and examples of lower-impact alternatives. Staff training will introduce key sustainability concepts and provide guidance on how to apply them within UW's procurement systems and processes. Alongside Procurement Services' central resources, UW Medicine has its own supply chain processes and will identify opportunities to integrate sustainability into their purchasing practices.

This action will help staff identify lower-impact products and leverage existing resources, such as [Washington state's Green Purchasing Guide](#), to support more consistent and responsible purchasing across the UW.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY29

APPROACH

- 2027** Review existing procurement training (both internal and external) and identify opportunities to incorporate sustainable purchasing content and/or where new information may be needed. Develop supplementary content for training and supporting materials for education and technical assistance.
- 2028** Launch training and centralized resources.

TRACKED METRICS

- Completion of website update
- Development of training
- Number of staff trained
- Number of trainings held
- Number of times digital resources accessed

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Procurement at the UW is managed through a centralized system that serves all campuses and the healthcare system.
- Aligns with UW Bothell's 2026–2036 sustainability goal to expand and update online purchasing resources and training.

LEAD PARTNERS

Procurement Services, Materials & Waste Management Working Group, UW Medicine

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

UW will utilize existing sustainable procurement training from national organizations such as the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council and the National Association of State Procurement Officials, helping reduce costs.

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2** Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 3** Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment

- **OP-9** Sustainable Procurement System
- **OP-10** Purchased Goods
- **EN-3** Staff Engagement and Training



UN Sustainable Development Goals

- **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Sustainable Procurement



PROCUREMENT



P2: Develop strategies with UW's high-impact suppliers to reduce the environmental footprint of our purchases.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires staff time from UW Procurement to engage with high-impact suppliers to explore sustainable opportunities and strategies.

LEAD PARTNERS

Procurement Services, UW Medicine, UW Athletics

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 3 Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment

- OP-9 Sustainable Procurement System
- OP-10 Purchased Goods



UN Sustainable Development Goals

- SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Sustainable Procurement

ACTION OVERVIEW

As a large research university and healthcare system, the UW works with vendors that operate at national and global scales. Strategic engagement has the potential to move the needle on product stewardship, as well as corporate environmental and social impact. Opportunities will vary by product and service, but may include lower carbon materials, reduced packaging, post-consumer recycled content, reuse or refurbishment options, and local and regional food sourcing where feasible.

The UW will identify high-impact suppliers by analyzing spend categories and contracts, as well as products with high purchasing volume, and the ability to influence upstream manufacturing and packaging. Product focus areas may include laboratory and medical supplies, food and beverage items, information technology and electronics, and other goods that contribute significantly to the UW's Scope 3 emissions and waste stream. Additional factors in the approach to this work include supplier readiness and existing reuse, take-back or recycling programs.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028 Conduct an assessment to determine high impact suppliers and outline an engagement approach. Initiate supplier outreach and early environmental, social, and governance (ESG) discussions to explore opportunities for collaboration.
- 2029-2030 Develop an approach for supplier data collection. Advance agreed upon strategies through contracts or supplier initiatives. Establish a regular meeting cadence to check-in and track progress.

TRACKED METRICS

- Number of meetings held and documentation of progress
- Annual spending on contracts that meet sustainability requirements

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The majority of this work will be led by Procurement Services, which serves all UW campuses. Bothell and Tacoma may support implementation by helping identify relevant high-impact suppliers and sharing campus-specific context, as needed.
- Aligns with UW Bothell's 2026-2036 sustainability goal of expanding sustainable and plant-based purchasing and increasing spending with social impact suppliers.



PROCUREMENT



P3: Standardize and integrate sustainability criteria into supplier solicitation, evaluation and contracting.

ACTION OVERVIEW

The UW already incorporates many sustainability considerations into procurement through guidance, preferred product standards, and select contract and solicitation language. However, these considerations are not yet applied consistently across the bid evaluation and scoring process. Sustainability information provided by suppliers is not always structured in a way that supports comparison for decision-making. This action will embed sustainability expectations and evaluation criteria into supplier-facing documents and purchasing terms. Standardizing how sustainability information is requested, evaluated and weighted within procurement processes will increase consistency across purchasing categories, and help staff make more informed purchasing decisions. For example, this work may include incorporating sustainability expectations into UW's Purchase Order General Terms and Conditions, which establish the standard terms governing most supplier transactions with the University.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028 Draft sustainability questionnaires and scoring criteria in select competitive solicitations and contract renewals, using feedback from procurement staff and suppliers.
- 2029-2030 Coordinate with Procurement Services and UW Sustainability on an approach to integrate new materials in purchasing processes.

TRACKED METRICS

- Percent of total spend covered by contracts that include sustainability requirements
- Percent of new bid documents that include standardized sustainability questionnaires

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- This action supports University-wide procurement via processes, tools, sustainability questionnaires and evaluation criteria through contracts and solicitation, where relevant.

LEAD PARTNERS

Procurement Services, UW Medicine

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

To the greatest extent feasible, the University of Washington will utilize existing sustainable purchasing resources developed by organizations such as the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council, the National Association of State Procurement Officials, and local government partners.

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 3 Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - OP-9 Sustainable Procurement System
 - OP-10 Purchased Goods
-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
 - Sustainable Procurement

MATERIALS & WASTE MANAGEMENT



2050 VISION

We are **minimizing waste** by buying less and optimizing the full life cycle of materials entering and leaving our campuses, such that recoverable material is not wasted. Through **education, collaboration and innovation** we lead by example ensuring responsible operation of our facilities to minimize our ecological footprint and maximize resource potential.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

MW1 **Form a University-wide materials and waste reduction working group.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- MW2 Identify opportunities to replace single-use healthcare products with reusables or environmentally preferable alternatives.
- MW3 Transition away from single-use products through UW’s partnerships with major vendors and corporate sponsors.

OVERVIEW

In the development of this new Sustainability Action Plan, stakeholder input highlighted the need to focus more on the sectors that generate large amounts of waste. Across the Seattle campus, UW Medicine accounts for approximately 35 to 40% of landfilled material; laboratories and the Magnuson Health Sciences Center account for about 22%; and residence halls about 16%. These areas are central to the UW’s mission but they also depend on high volumes of supplies, packaging, food service materials and specialized products that can be difficult to reduce, reuse or recover.

Waste reduction from these sectors requires a strategic approach and cannot rely on individual sorting as the sole strategy. It also requires changes to purchasing procedures, product assessment and selection, collection infrastructure, operational practices and vendor standards. The actions in this focus area aim to prevent waste at the source, improve

how recyclable and compostable materials are recovered, expand reuse and surplus pathways, and shift purchasing practices toward products and systems that create less waste.

While data from the Seattle campus provides the clearest picture of the UW’s largest landfill-generating areas, materials and waste management is a tri-campus effort. UW Bothell and UW Tacoma operate within their own collection systems, service agreements and reporting structures. As such, implementation will reflect the local context of each campus. Across all campuses, the goal is to reduce what UW sends to landfill by changing what materials come onto campus and how they are managed at the end of their useful life.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Some UW campuses have set up programs to allow students to donate unwanted items during spring move-out, along with ways to distribute items back to students to keep usable items in circulation. On the Seattle campus, UW Recycling organizes the annual Student Clean-up, Recycle and Move-out (SCRAM) event to collect items that are then donated to local organizations. Recently, they set up programs to redirect some of these items to students during fall move-in. UW Bothell’s Give & Go program also collects unwanted items during move out, which are then available for students in the fall.



Shahrzad Tehrani
*Sustainability Coordinator,
UW Bothell*

“UW Bothell’s Give & Go program highlights how sustainable practices can support community well-being. Since launching in 2024, the program has diverted more than three tons of goods from the landfill during student move-out. We redistribute these items through Free Market events, promoting a culture of reuse and thrifting while helping the campus community meet their needs at no cost.”

EXPLORE MORE

- [Access recycling resources](#) to improve sorting and reduce recycling and compost contamination on the Seattle campus.
- **Support and utilize** [zero-waste and reuse programs](#) providing a wide variety of materials for the UW community.
- **Explore the** [UW Surplus store](#), which makes items no longer wanted by UW departments available to the public.



MATERIALS & WASTE MANAGEMENT



FLAGSHIP ACTION

MW1: Form a University-wide materials and waste reduction working group.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Oversight for the formation and the continuous development of the working group will require staff time from UW Recycling.

ACTION OVERVIEW

Waste prevention, sorting challenges and infrastructure vary widely across campuses, buildings and operational units, making it difficult to achieve consistent progress without a coordinated approach. This working group will bring together representatives from across campuses and units to identify shared challenges and prioritize actions that reduce waste and improve capture of recyclable and compostable materials. Waste data will guide the group in prioritizing the highest-impact projects.

In addition to traditional waste streams such as recycling, compost and landfill, the working group will also explore opportunities to address nontraditional or event-based waste streams not typically captured in the standard three-stream (recycling, compost, landfill) waste infrastructure. Examples may include items such as graduation caps and gowns, promotional materials and UW branded swag, and other high-volume materials associated with campus events and programs.

TIMELINE

Launch working group by the end of FY29

APPROACH

- 2026-2027** Begin recruitment for the working group including waste and sustainability representatives from each campus, additional faculty, and student groups.
- 2028** Launch working group and develop priority actions to reduce waste across the University. Identify appropriate metrics to track progress.

TRACKED METRICS

- Status of working group formation

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The Working Group will include representatives from each campus.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Recycling, UW Medicine, Housing & Food Services, UW Bothell Grounds and Sustainability, UW Tacoma Custodial and Maintenance

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 3 Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

LINKAGES

- STARS Alignment**
 - OP-10 Purchased Goods
 - OP-11 Materials Management

- UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
 - SDG 13 Climate Action

- Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
 - Waste



MATERIALS & WASTE MANAGEMENT



MW2: Identify opportunities to replace single-use healthcare products with reusables or environmentally preferable alternatives.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires staff time from UW Medicine for the analysis and planning of waste reduction opportunities and strategies.

ACTION OVERVIEW

UW Medicine has a strong track record of reducing waste and costs through sustainable procurement and operational changes. Since 2018, its single-use medical device reprocessing program has generated more than \$27 million in savings and diverted over 750,000 pounds of material from the landfill. UW Medicine’s additional efforts include a transition to environmentally-preferred facial protection products, reusable sharps containers, and expanded composting and recycling. These combined efforts have saved more than \$430,000 annually, improved operational performance, and reduced the amount of waste sent to the landfill.

This action will support UW Medicine’s continued efforts to reduce waste and cost by increasing utilization of reusable products and environmentally-preferred products, where practical and feasible. By scaling-up this existing work, UW Medicine is on track to achieve meaningful reductions in product consumption, landfilled waste disposal and cost while maintaining excellence in patient care. Lessons learned through this targeted approach will help inform the potential for integration into standard practices.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY30

APPROACH

- 2027

Collect baseline information for selected items, including preliminary cost, waste and operational impacts. Engage UW Medicine purchasing staff and sustainability partners on an approach to identify alternatives and/or areas of opportunity.
- 2028

Pilot implementation for at least one priority item.
- 2029

Expand or refine implementation across remaining priority items and evaluate outcomes to inform future scaling or integration into standard practices.

TRACKED METRICS

- Number of high-impact single-use healthcare items identified for evaluation and reduction strategies
- Pounds of healthcare materials diverted from landfill through reprocessing, reuse or alternative product strategies
- Annual cost savings associated with waste reduction strategies for targeted healthcare items

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- While this action is focused on UW Medicine, lessons from product evaluations, pilots and procurement strategies may inform similar efforts to reduce single-use products across UW campuses, laboratories and clinical settings.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Medicine, Waste Reduction working group

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 3 Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

LINKAGES

- STARS Alignment**
 - **OP-10** Purchased Goods
 - **OP-11** Materials Management
 - **OP-12** Waste Generation and Recovery
- UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production
 - **SDG 13** Climate Action
- Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
Waste; Greening the OR



MATERIALS & WASTE MANAGEMENT



MW3: Transition away from single-use products through UW’s partnerships with major vendors and corporate sponsors.

ACTION OVERVIEW

The University has already shown that vendor collaboration can deliver results. In dining, Housing & Food Services expanded the [OZZI reusable container program](#) to all meal plan holders and added a 50-cent charge for single-use containers to encourage reuse. In athletics, the UW partnered with PepsiCo, Bold Reuse and Aramark to launch a [reusable cup program](#) at Alaska Airlines Arena, replacing single-use cups with durable reusables sanitized and returned to service locally. Building on these successes, this action fosters scalable solutions to reduce single-use materials sent to landfill.

In collaboration with key vendors and corporate partners, this action will identify, pilot and evaluate alternatives to specific single-use products that have significant potential for waste reduction. Branded single-use products and giveaways are present in a wide variety of University settings, including dining, athletics and University events. An evaluation of sponsorship agreements and contracts is an important first step to identify potential product swaps. Collaboration and partnership with vendors and sponsors provides a pathway to influence product standards, product selection, packaging and service models. Efforts to pilot new programs will include metrics to evaluate success and feasibility. These might include durability, operational feasibility, user behavior, cost implications and waste reduction.

TIMELINE

Complete initial single-use product pilots by the end of FY30.

APPROACH

- 2027** Meet with internal UW units, large vendors and sponsors to identify opportunities to reduce single-use products and event giveaways.
- 2028** Develop a phased plan to test and pilot alternative products.
- 2029** Track and document the successes and challenges of pilots. Evaluate potential to continue, expand or try different approach.

TRACKED METRICS

- Procurement data showing reductions in single-use items
- Number of pilot programs created to reduce single-use items (e.g., reusable cup programs, durables at special events or giveaway reuse programs)

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- UW Bothell and UW Tacoma will align with UW-wide vendor and sponsor contracts, standards, and guidance to reduce single-use products in dining, events, and campus programming.
- Aligns with UW Bothell’s 2026-2036 Sustainability Plan, which calls for eliminating non-essential, non-compostable single-use items at major events by 2036 and reducing plastics in dining and vending by identifying and transitioning single-use items to compostable or reusable alternatives.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires staff time from Housing & Food Services and University Marketing and Communications.

LEAD PARTNERS

Housing & Food Services, UW Strategic Partnerships, UW Procurement, UW Recycling, UW Athletics

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 3 Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - **OP-11** Materials Management
 - **OP-12** Waste Generation and Recovery
-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production
 - **SDG 13** Climate Action
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**

Chemicals; Procurement; Waste; Greening the OR

FOOD SYSTEMS



2050 VISION

Our dining practices emphasize food that is nutritious with a **low carbon impact**. We have a **socially responsible food system** that enhances food security for the UW community. Through strategic collaboration and improvements in our food procurement process, the UW’s food system is a leader in **socially and environmentally responsible food service**.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

FS1 **Establish a Food Systems Working Group with an initial focus on sustaining existing high-impact programs.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

FS2 **Join the Coolfood Pledge and work toward a 30% reduction in total food-related emissions.**

OVERVIEW

Across our campuses and healthcare facilities, food is sourced through complex global supply chains and distribution networks. Our food systems present an important opportunity to reduce emissions, prevent wasted food and increase food access across the University.

Food service on the Seattle campus represents roughly 4% of UW’s Scope 3 emissions. UW’s 2022 Greenhouse Gas Inventory found that protein, primarily meat and dairy, are much more emissions-intensive per dollar spent than other food categories. Those categories accounted for about 31% of Housing & Food Services’ food expenditures but were responsible for 65% of associated food emissions. This reflects the higher resource and emissions intensity of many animal-based foods, including emissions from

feed production, land use, energy use, and methane from livestock.

As part of this Sustainability Action Plan, the UW is committing to reduce food-related emissions by becoming a signatory to the Coolfood Pledge; a third-party framework with tools for decision-making and measuring progress. In order to better support this work at scale, this focus area establishes a University-wide Food Systems Working Group. The new working group will help prioritize and align actions across a range of topics, such as food access, purchasing, nutrition and waste. These actions will help move the needle on the SAP long-term goals and targets, particularly for the decarbonization and regenerative guiding priorities.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

UW students engage in hands-on food production at the [UW Farm](#), the [wəṭəbʔaltx̣w Native Garden](#), the [UW Tacoma Giving Garden](#), and the [UW Bothell Campus Farm](#). These spaces connect food production with experiential learning and partnerships that advance Indigenous food sovereignty and community food access.



Sarai Mayer (Washoe)
UW Farm Food Sovereignty Liaison (2022-2025)

“A strong campus food system is mandatory for the success of future UW students because student success hinges on their health. Mental faculty and the brain are frequently divorced from the body as a separate entity, but the mind must be fed to function properly. It is essential to establish a robust framework to minimize waste and maximize the number of students supported. A strong campus food system is accessible in its availability, inclusive in diverse diets, considerate of allergies, and truly affordable to all students. It is not built around the “average” student while omitting those who fall outside the median, who would benefit most from support.”

EXPLORE MORE

- **Explore** [food at UW](#) through academic courses, student organizations and volunteer opportunities.
- **Learn** how [UW Dining integrates sustainability](#) into menu planning, expands plant based and organic options, and operates reusable container programs such as OZZI.
- **Volunteer** at or utilize the food pantries on each UW campus supporting students and staff experiencing food insecurity. The [Any Hungry Husky UW Food Pantry](#), [UW Bothell Husky Pantry](#), and [UW Tacoma Pantry](#) provide free groceries and essential items.



FOOD SYSTEMS



FLAGSHIP ACTION

FS1: Establish a Food Systems Working Group with an initial focus on sustaining existing high-impact programs.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires staff time from HFS & faculty members for the management, oversight and participation of the working group.

LEAD PARTNERS

Housing & Food Services, Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health Program faculty, UW Medicine

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 3 Reduce landfill disposal and increase material recovery by 2050

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment

- **OP-7** Dining Service Procurement
- **OP-8** Food Recovery



UN Sustainable Development Goals

- **SDG 2** Zero Hunger
- **SDG 3** Good Health & Well Being
- **SDG 12** Responsible Consumption and Production



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Food

ACTION OVERVIEW

Across our campuses, many efforts already support food access, food production, applied learning and waste reduction but often operate with fragmented funding, limited staff capacity or minimal coordination. This working group creates a shared forum to better coordinate and strengthen UW's existing food system programs. The working group will be led by Housing & Food Services and faculty in the Food Systems, Nutrition & Health Program, with participation welcome from partners at UW Medicine, UW Bothell, UW Tacoma and other interested members.

Input gathered during the Sustainability Action Plan development process pointed to several priorities for future collaboration. These included improving food access, supporting campus food pantries and farms, reducing food waste and expanding recovery efforts, advancing sustainable dining and procurement practices, and creating more hands-on learning and research opportunities connected to the UW's food system. Feedback also highlighted the value of better data to inform decision-making, particularly since the last comprehensive assessment of student food insecurity was conducted in 2019. The intended outcome of this action extends beyond the formation of a working group to the progress it enables. This includes clarifying priorities across the UW's food system, advancing projects aligned with those priorities, and improving how outcomes are tracked and reported over time.

TIMELINE

Launch working group by the end of FY28

APPROACH

- 2026-2027** Establish a coordinated approach for engaging UW stakeholders and partners in advancing food systems priorities across campuses and programs.
- Late 2027** Launch UW Food Systems working group.
- 2028-2030** Develop shared food systems priorities and a portfolio of aligned projects, including applied learning opportunities, with outcomes tracked through existing SAP structures.

TRACKED METRICS

- Status of Working Group formation
 - Number of priority areas or actions identified by the working group
- Priority metrics for food systems may include:
- Utilization rates of campus food security programs (e.g., pantry visits, program participation)
 - Number of funded or staffed positions supporting food system initiatives
 - Volume or percentage of food procured from local or regional sources

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The Working Group will include representatives from each campus.



FOOD SYSTEMS



FS2: Join the Coolfood Pledge and work toward a 30% reduction in total food-related emissions.

ACTION OVERVIEW

This action focuses on reducing the environmental impact of UW's food purchasing through a Coolfood-aligned approach. The Coolfood framework establishes climate and health targets to meet by 2035, including a 30% reduction in absolute food-related greenhouse gas emissions and a 40% reduction in emissions per calorie from a 2025 baseline. The framework also incorporates targets for increasing purchases of vegetables and plant-based proteins, along with new tools for tracking water and land-use impacts.

Shifts toward plant-forward menus is one of the most effective ways to reduce food-related emissions while supporting healthy and varied dining options. Vegetarian and vegan items already account for approximately 40% of UW Dining's offerings. More detailed purchasing data can help identify opportunities to adjust recipes, expand lower-impact ingredients and increase plant-rich options over time.

The Coolfood framework supports flexible emissions reductions while balancing affordability, nutrition, and customer choice. It also provides a consistent methodology for tracking progress toward the reduction goal. Harborview Medical Center and UW's Athletics concessionaire Aramark are existing Coolfood signatories. Their experiences with the Coolfood program provide a strong foundation as this approach expands across UW-operated dining facilities. The data captured through this effort will inform menu and purchasing decisions that align with UW's broader climate and sustainability goals.

TIMELINE

Complete initial pilots by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028** Become a Coolfood signatory and work with Coolfood representatives, UW Dining and other participating food service units to establish a 2025 baseline and set targets for reducing absolute greenhouse gas emissions and emissions per calorie by 2035.
- 2029-2030** Pilot priority procurement, menu and engagement strategies. Track greenhouse gas emissions, plant-rich food purchasing and water-footprint information where feasible.
- 2031-2035** Expand successful strategies and report progress toward the Coolfood 2035 targets.

TRACKED METRICS

- Coolfood Pledge signatory status
- Food procurement emissions baseline and reduction goal
- Food procurement emissions progress data

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Each campus that procures food as part of a UW-operated dining service shall participate in the reduction planning and reporting requirements associated with the Pledge.
- Aligns with UW Bothell's sustainability goals which emphasizes sustainable food purchasing and increased spending with plant-based and social impact suppliers.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires staff time from HFS, Procurement Services and UW Sustainability for program startup, oversight, annual data management and reporting. Participation in the Pledge will incur a small annual fee.

LEAD PARTNERS

Housing & Food Services, UW Food Systems Working Group

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 2 Carbon Neutral for Scope 3 by 2050
- 4 Advance Ecological Health by 2050

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - OP-6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - OP-7 Dining Service Procurement
-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
 - SDG 13 Climate Action
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
 - Food

LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS



2050 VISION

Our campuses are **thriving ecosystems** that prioritize **biodiversity, ecological health and climate resilience**. Our land management practices encourage native and climate adaptive plants, enhance water quality and support a healthy tree canopy. We are **actively engaged in environmental stewardship** of University sites through responsible design, operation, maintenance and volunteer service.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

LES1 **Assess relevant landscape certifications to identify best practices that support healthy and resilient landscapes.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- LES2 Develop an Adaptive Plant Guide as a resource for native and pollinator-friendly plantings to improve climate resilience across the tri-campus.
- LES3 Build on existing urban forest planning efforts to enhance and expand tree canopy coverage across all UW campuses.

OVERVIEW

Protecting ecological health is core to the UW's values and identity. While the UW is already a leader in sustainable landscape management, there are opportunities across our campuses to scale up impact. Climate change increases the urgency of this work. More frequent drought, shifting precipitation patterns and rising temperatures require resilient landscapes that are designed to adapt over time.

The UW is one of the largest landowners in the region, with over 500 buildings totaling more than 20 million square feet across roughly 800 acres. This focus area recognizes sustainability must include the living systems that surround and connect UW's campuses. Strengthening these systems

will require a holistic approach to landscape planning and design, one that considers ecological health alongside campus growth, accessibility, operations and long-term resilience.

On the Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma campuses this work will look different based on each campus's landscape, ecology and built environment. The actions in this area build on the expertise of UW's grounds, planning and facilities teams to strengthen ecological stewardship across the University. They focus on expanding practices that support biodiversity, improving stormwater and irrigation strategies, and integrating ecological health more consistently into campus planning.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Up to 15,000 birds die on the University of Washington campus each year after colliding with windows. Through the student-led [Bird Friendly Campus initiative](#), researchers are documenting collision patterns and identifying the buildings and conditions that pose the greatest risk. This interdisciplinary effort connects architecture, environmental science and technology to advance bird-safe design strategies such as patterned glass and thoughtful lighting. The research is informing updates to UW's Green Building Standard so future campus buildings better protect wildlife and support surrounding ecosystems.



Judy Bowes,
*College of Built Environments
doctoral candidate, and Bird
Friendly Campus lead*

"Bird-friendly design guidelines are an important part of campus sustainability goals, supporting bird populations and protecting human health and well-being. Incorporating standards that benefit both wildlife and humans helps protect the ecosystems we're part of every day."

EXPLORE MORE

- **Visit** the [UW Botanic Gardens](#), [UW Tacoma's Micro Forest](#) or [UW Bothell's North Creek Wetlands](#) to learn how campus landscapes function as living ecological systems.
- **Volunteer** with the [UW chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration](#) on projects to restore the biodiversity of our campus landscape.
- **Learn** about research projects happening in campus centers and labs advancing [urban water quality](#), [freshwater ecosystem health](#), [urban green infrastructure](#), and [nature based solutions for landscape management](#).



LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS



FLAGSHIP ACTION

LES1: Assess relevant landscape certifications to identify best practices that support healthy and resilient landscapes.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Initial investments may be needed for staff time and technical support to assess certification criteria, train staff, and pilot selected practices. Additional resources may be needed for habitat restoration, infrastructure upgrades, or changes to land management practices.

ACTION OVERVIEW

UW campuses already have strong environmental stewardship practices, while their landscapes and management needs vary. This action will compare current practices with criteria from relevant third-party programs, including Salmon-Safe and Green Grounds Certification, to identify effective approaches UW could adopt or adapt.

The review will consider practices that improve stormwater management and water quality, support native and pollinator-friendly habitat, strengthen soil health, and reduce reliance on synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. It will also consider feasibility, maintenance needs, and fit with each campus's priorities. Formal certification may be considered for a project or landscape where appropriate.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028** ○ Pilot approaches across the tri-campus.
- 2029-2030** ○ Evaluate pilot results and refine best practices based on performance, feasibility and maintenance needs.

TRACKED METRICS

- Completion of the certification assessment
- Number of best practices identified and prioritized
- Number of selected practices piloted
- Number of stormwater and habitat restoration projects that apply selected practices

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- UW Bothell's established Green Grounds and Salmon-Safe practices may offer lessons learned that can help inform approaches and best practices across the UW system.
- Aligns with UW Bothell's 2026–2036 sustainability goals to advance campus land management standards for contracted spaces and protect at least 63.4 acres of green space during the master plan update.
- UW Tacoma can build on existing rain gardens, Prairie Line Trail stormwater treatment and native plantings by using Salmon-Safe and Green Grounds best practices to strengthen water quality, pollinator habitat and ecological function.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Facilities, UW Bothell Facilities Services and Campus Operations, UW Tacoma Campus Maintenance and Operations

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- ④ Advance Ecological Health by 2050
- ⑤ Platinum STARS Ranking by 2040

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment

- **OP-4** Ecologically Managed Grounds
- **EN-6** Community Partnerships



UN Sustainable Development Goals

- **SDG 6** Clean Water and Sanitation
- **SDG 14** Life Below Water
- **SDG 15** Life on Land



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Water, Chemicals

DID YOU KNOW?

The UW Bothell campus was the second campus in the nation to achieve Salmon-Safe certification, in 2008. In 2023, it received Platinum-level Green Grounds certification. The campus has been pesticide- and synthetic-fertilizer-free since 2006 and practices organic land care across its grounds, including at the 58-acre restored North Creek wetland. It also features a food forest with more than 30 fruit trees.



LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS



LES2: Develop an Adaptive Plant Guide as a resource for native and pollinator-friendly plantings to improve climate resilience across the tri-campus.

ACTION OVERVIEW

Plant selection plays an important role in supporting resilient campus landscapes in the midst of a changing climate. As the planet warms and weather patterns become less predictable, strategic plant selection can help sustain species, habitat biodiversity, provide shade for people and animals, and support the natural beauty that makes each UW campus so special. The UW already uses a mix of native, climate-appropriate and low-water plantings, but approaches vary by project and campus. Developing an adaptive plant guide as a shared resource across the University will help ensure new campus vegetation continues to thrive. This new resource is intended to support, not replace, professional expertise and site-specific decision-making.

This action will build on existing expertise across the UW, including facilities and grounds teams, faculty, researchers, students and external partners. The Adaptive Plant Guide will identify native and climate-resilient plants that can thrive in the region's wetter winters and drier summers. It will support plant choices that use less water, improve habitat and benefit native birds and pollinators. The guide can also create living-lab opportunities through pilot plantings and demonstration areas. These projects will help test what works in different campus settings and inform future recommendations around site conditions, maintenance, irrigation, pest management and habitat value.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028** Compile existing campus research and data to draft an initial climate-adaptive plant list. Pilot selected plantings in priority campus areas to evaluate performance and irrigation needs.
- 2029** Pilot selected plantings in priority campus areas to evaluate performance and irrigation needs.
- 2030** Evaluate pilot results and finalize an initial adaptive plant list to communicate with campus landscape design processes.

TRACKED METRICS

- Percent campus plantings using adaptive species list
- Percent campus landscaping area incorporating climate-adaptive plantings
- Number campus projects incorporating climate-adaptive landscaping
- Annual Landscape Water Requirement (LWR) for implemented projects after establishment period

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The Adaptive Plant Guide will serve as a shared framework across campuses, guiding plant selection, irrigation planning, and landscape design in ways that reflect each campus's ecological context.
- Aligns with UW Bothell 2026-2036 sustainability goals of protecting green spaces during the campus master plan update through targeted restoration efforts.
- At UW Tacoma, the Adaptive Plant Guide can build on the [campus's micro-forest](#) work by supporting native plantings that improve habitat, shade and climate resilience.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Initial research, stakeholder engagement and pilot implementation require time and funding.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Facilities, UW Bothell Facilities Services and Campus Operations, UW Tacoma Campus Maintenance and Operations, Society for Ecological Restoration

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 4 Advance Ecological Health by 2050
- 5 Platinum STARS Ranking by 2040

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - OP-3 Water Use
 - OP-4 Ecologically Managed Grounds

-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation
 - SDG 15 Life on Land



LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS



LES3: Build on existing urban forest planning efforts to enhance and expand tree canopy coverage across all UW campuses.

ACTION OVERVIEW

Tree canopy is essential to healthy, resilient campus landscapes. Trees provide shade, reduce heat, manage stormwater, limit erosion and support habitat. Each campus will evaluate its current approach to tree canopy management and identify where stronger planning, retention, expansion or maintenance may be needed. This action compliments LES2 with an eye toward species adaptability and resiliency in a changing climate.

The Seattle campus Urban Forest Management Plan provides a strong foundation for this work. The plan sets a goal of reaching 25% canopy cover by 2037, which exceeds the City of Seattle's goal of 20% canopy coverage on institutional land by 2037. UW's Urban Forest Management Plan notes that canopy cover declined from 27% in 2016 to approximately 24% in 2021. This loss shows how quickly campus canopy can change. Development has reduced mature tree cover in some areas and climate change is making tree health harder to sustain as warmer temperatures and more extreme seasonal conditions increase stress and pests on campus trees. The UW's policy of replacing every tree with two new plantings is an important tool for rebuilding canopy over time, but young trees need years of care before they provide the same benefits as mature trees. This action focuses on protecting existing canopy where possible and helping new trees survive and mature.

A key part of this action is making sure each campus has the information needed to guide tree-related decisions. At UW Bothell, that may mean building from prior tree inventory work to update baseline data and identify future planting opportunities. At UW Tacoma, where the Campus Master Plan envisions new green spaces and hundreds of additional trees, it may mean establishing clearer canopy data to guide expansion and maintenance. Across the tri-campus, this action will help make tree retention, planting and care a more consistent part of project review, site design and landscape management.

TIMELINE

Complete by end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028** Compile existing canopy data across the tricampus. Identify where additional assessment is needed to establish a baseline and a campus coverage target, as needed.
- 2029** Develop campus-specific recommendations, such as gaps and opportunities for retention, expansion and potential changes associated with care and maintenance.
- 2030** Begin integrating canopy considerations into existing campus planning, capital project review and landscape management processes.

TRACKED METRICS

- Assessment of existing data and related information. Campus-specific recommendations compiled
- Percent change in tree canopy coverage across each campus
- Number of trees retained and planted annually
- Tree survival rates (three-year post-planting)
- Percent of capital/renovation projects incorporating canopy guidance

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Collaborate with staff and subject matter experts across the all campuses to develop recommendations for incorporation into landscape planning and capital projects, ensuring alignment with shared goals and adapted to local context.
- Aligns with UW Bothell 2026-2036 sustainability goals to protect green spaces through master planning and targeted restoration efforts.
- UW Tacoma's campus master plan calls for new green spaces and hundreds of additional trees, creating a timely opportunity to establish baseline canopy data and expand shade in their urban campus setting.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Funding needed for canopy assessment and heat-vulnerability mapping; tree purchasing and planting; arborist and maintenance support; optional consultant services for climate-adapted species selection; and staff support for engagement and feedback.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Facilities, UW Bothell Facilities Services and Campus Operations, UW Tacoma Campus Maintenance and Operations

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

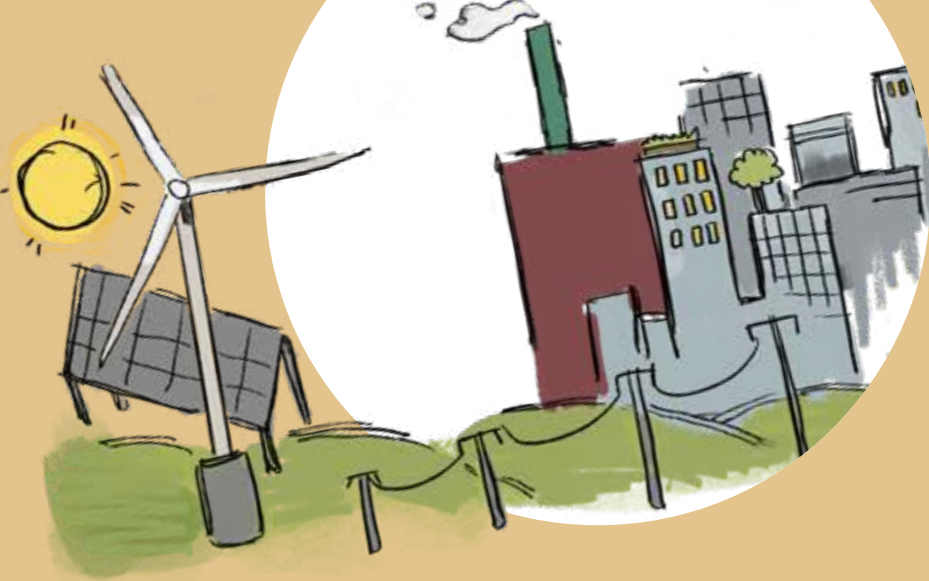
- 4 Advance Ecological Health by 2050

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - OP-4 Ecologically Managed Grounds

-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 3 Good Health & Well-Being
 - SDG 11 Sustainable Cities & Communities
 - SDG 13 Climate Action
 - SDG 15 Life on Land

BUILDINGS, ENERGY & CLIMATE



2050 VISION

Our campuses are **carbon neutral** and fossil fuels are no longer combusted at our facilities as a primary source of energy. Indirect greenhouse gas emissions are at an all-time low, particularly with respect to the goods and services the University purchases. The UW is world renowned not only for research innovation, but for lab practices that **minimize resource consumption** while maximizing **reuse and environmental stewardship**. Our community members are engaged and informed champions leading the way in achieving our conservation goals.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

BEC1 Scale-up the “Reinvest in Energy Efficiency Projects” program to reduce energy consumption, emissions, and electrical demand.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

- BEC2** Publish and share annual greenhouse gas emissions progress and performance summaries to UW leadership and community.
- BEC3** Establish a working group focused on conserving water and reducing combined water and sewer costs.
- BEC4** Launch a Green Labs program focused on conserving resources and cost while continuing to foster innovation.
- BEC5** Develop a University-wide strategy to guide best practices and cost-effective decision-making for solar energy installations.

OVERVIEW

The UW operates hundreds of buildings totaling more than 20 million square feet with ample opportunity to conserve energy and water resources. Reducing energy consumption and decarbonizing UW’s building portfolio is no small task. The challenge is particularly significant on the Seattle campus, where a major research and teaching hospital is co-located with the state’s largest concentration of high energy use intensity science and healthcare research facilities. Not coincidentally, the campus centralized energy infrastructure generates most the University’s direct emissions. A cross-functional team is working to advance financing strategies to implement the approximate \$1.6 billion Energy Renewal Plan, which aims to transition the Seattle campus district energy system off fossil fuels over an approximate ten-year timeframe.

Over the last few years, UW has successfully secured funding for several projects through state funds, including

\$47.5 million in Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funds awarded to the Seattle campus in the 2026 legislative session for installation of a new electric boiler and a hot water loop for the new Chemical Sciences Building – an important first step in electrifying the central plant. An additional \$14 million in state funds will connect several buildings to the central chilled water system. This transition away from decentralized cooling will improve efficiency and reduce electricity demand.

The UW’s other campuses are also working to reduce energy use. Both UW Bothell and UW Tacoma campuses have secured state funding (CCA funds) for energy conservation and emissions-reduction measures. UW Medicine secured state funds (CCA funds) for energy efficiency upgrades and central utility planning at UW Medical Center - Montlake and UW Medical Center - Northwest.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Green Building Standard adopted in 2024 ensures that all construction and renovation projects maximize energy and water efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and align with principles of equity, ecological harmony and health and well-being. Unlike many other institutional standards, the UW’s standard lays out requirements for different project tiers, including partial renovations and systems upgrades. For the first time, the UW Green Building Standard establishes embodied carbon target requirements for projects and for specific building materials.



Lisa Dulude
Director, UW Sustainability

“UW has been a long-time leader in sustainable building across our tri-campus. This new Green Building Standard scales-up our impact beyond new buildings to include renovations and additions. For the first time, we have clear requirements and practical tools to reduce UW’s environmental impact and measure the benefits achieved at the project level.”

EXPLORE MORE

- **Dig deeper** into UW’s [Green Building Standards](#) to learn how new construction and renovations incorporate energy performance, carbon reduction and healthy building practices.
- **Learn** about UW research centers and labs developing solutions in [clean energy](#), [sustainable construction](#), [circular materials systems](#), and [building performance](#).
- **Apply** for funding through the [Campus Sustainability Fund](#) or [UW Tacoma’s Husky Sustainability Fund](#) to help launch energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate action projects across UW’s campuses.



FLAGSHIP ACTION

BEC1: Scale-up the “Reinvest in Energy Efficiency Projects” program to reduce energy consumption, emissions, and electrical demand.

ACTION OVERVIEW

Energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve electricity and lower operating costs. A major benefit of energy conservation is that it lowers the cost of “PIVOT”, the UW’s phased effort to transition the Seattle campus from its existing steam-based heating system to a more efficient, electrified hot-water system. Reducing building energy demand will decrease the size and cost of the new infrastructure needed to support this transition, especially as electricity demand and utility costs continue to rise.

On the UW’s Seattle campus, the Reinvest in Energy Efficiency Projects (REEP) program provides an established structure for advancing this work. Led by Campus Energy, Utilities & Operations (CEUO), the program prioritizes projects based on energy conserved, emissions impact, financial return, operational benefit and facility needs. UW Bothell and UW Tacoma are also advancing campus-specific approaches, including building controls, load management, efficient equipment upgrades and planning to reduce reliance on natural gas heating.

These efforts are especially important as UW prepares for broader electrification. Using energy more efficiently can help preserve electrical capacity for future projects, support reliable operations and reduce exposure to rising utility costs. This action is integral to the Energy Renewal Plan, while supporting compliance with the state’s Clean Buildings Performance Standard and the UW’s broader energy and decarbonization goals.

TIMELINE

Annual/Ongoing

APPROACH

- 2026** Track and expand the list of priority energy conservation projects at each campus.
- 2027** Apply for and utilize all available funding sources for energy efficiency project implementation, such as capital budget requests, state Commerce grants, utility incentives, Climate Commitment Act funds and other partnerships.
- 2029-2030** Publicize the outcomes of REEP, including the avoided utility cost savings from projects and direct those savings to energy efficiency initiatives. Monitor implementation and refine guidance based on project outcomes and feedback. Report progress and update emissions reduction forecasts based on capital investments.

TRACKED METRICS

- Increase in amount (\$) invested annually into energy efficiency projects
- Percent decrease in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions
- Success of capital funding requests

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- This action is centered on the Seattle campus, where the central power plant and building energy systems represent the largest share of the University’s direct greenhouse gas emissions.
- At UW Tacoma, the [2025 Campus Master Plan](#) creates a framework for future growth that integrates building electrification, high-performance design and more resilient utility infrastructure.
- UW Bothell has already made progress through LED lighting, building controls, load management, solar energy and renewable electricity purchasing, creating a strong foundation for future efficiency and electrification projects.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

At the Seattle campus, action implementation will be led by the UW Facilities Campus Energy, Utilities & Operations team as part of the existing resource conservation program.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Facilities

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 1 Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2 by 2035

LINKAGES

STARS Alignment

- **OP-5** Energy Use
- **OP-6** Greenhouse Gas Emissions

UN Sustainable Development Goals

- **SDG 7** Affordable and Clean Energy
- **SDG 13** Climate Action

Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Energy; Climate



BUILDINGS, ENERGY & CLIMATE



BEC2: Publish and share annual greenhouse gas emissions progress and performance summaries to UW leadership and community.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires staff time, data infrastructure, and coordination across campuses.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Sustainability, UW Facilities

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- ① Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2 by 2035
- ⑤ Platinum STARS Ranking by 2040

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment
• **OP-6** Greenhouse Gas Emissions



UN Sustainable Development Goals
• **SDG 13** Climate Action
• **SDG 16** Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area
Energy; Climate

ACTION OVERVIEW

UW Sustainability will track, measure and publish Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions on the UW Sustainability website annually. Facilities recently invested in EnergyCap software for tracking utility data, and this new system will make annual reporting of total University emissions a more manageable task. This commitment to annual reporting of progress was identified as a priority during the SAP community engagement sessions, as it fosters transparency and accountability for UW achieving its goals.

Every five years, UW Sustainability will publish a comprehensive greenhouse gas inventory that includes Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. Scope 3 emissions are not tracked in a centralized system, and the data collection spans a broad range of categories including procurement, travel, commuting and waste systems. UW Sustainability plans to improve the granularity of Scope 3 emissions tracking where feasible. A full organizational inventory of all emissions will be completed on a five-year cycle, with the next comprehensive inventory scheduled for 2030.

TIMELINE

Scope 1 & 2: Annual – starting FY29

Scope 3: Every 5 years – starting FY31

APPROACH

- 2026-2027** Establish annual reporting scope and metrics aligned with the UW's emissions reduction goals.
- 2028** Publish progress on the UW Sustainability website. Adjust and refine reporting format as needed.

TRACKED METRICS

- Status of greenhouse gas emissions report published and shared.

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- Each campus will contribute to annual greenhouse gas reporting using a consistent methodology, enabling coordinated progress tracking across the University.



BEC3: Establish a working group focused on conserving water and reducing combined water and sewer costs.

ACTION OVERVIEW

A new water working group will help reduce water use and associated costs through expanded metering, monitoring, behavior change and proactive maintenance. The near-term focus is to launch a small pilot program on the Seattle campus that connects building water meters to the campus electronic data system. This will allow water use data to be tracked in real time and flagged for irregularities. Buildings with the highest water consumption will be prioritized to maximize cost savings and conservation impact.

Improving monitoring systems allows the University to identify issues such as leaks, malfunctioning fixtures and faulty sensors before they escalate into larger problems. This action serves as a stepping stone towards the long-term target of installing meters with a connection to backend data systems in high-use water buildings across all UW campuses.

TIMELINE

Working group established by the end of FY28; pilot implementation and evaluation ongoing.

APPROACH

- 2026-2027** Form the water conservation working group and identify priority buildings where metering connection to the back-end data system is needed.
- 2028-2029** Pilot meter connection and begin monitoring data and identify leaks, irregularities, faulty sensors, and maintenance needs.

TRACKED METRICS

- Status of Working Group formation.
- Number of buildings where water meter to data connection is completed through the pilot program.
- Reduced water use consumption and/or water use intensity.
- Number maintenance issues resolved proactively (vs. reactive repairs).
- Water and sewer cost savings from issues addressed through new monitoring.

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The initial pilot will focus on the Seattle campus due to the magnitude of water consumption. Lessons learned from pilot efforts will inform water conservation and monitoring practices across all campuses.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires investment in metering infrastructure, staff coordination, and outreach materials.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Facilities

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 4 Advance Ecological Health by 2050
- 5 Platinum STARS Ranking by 2040

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - OP-3 Water Use
-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation
 - SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
 - Water



BUILDINGS, ENERGY & CLIMATE



BEC4: Launch a Green Labs program focused on conserving resources and cost while continuing to foster innovation.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Anticipated additional staff time and lab engagement resources.

LEAD PARTNERS

Green Labs Working Group, UW Environmental Health & Safety, UW Facilities, UW Medicine

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 1 Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2 by 2035

LINKAGES



STARS Alignment

- OP-5 Energy Use
- OP-6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- IL-12 Green Laboratory Program



UN Sustainable Development Goals

- SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13 Climate Action



Practice Greenhealth Metric Area

Energy; Waste; Water; Chemicals

ACTION OVERVIEW

An assessment of Green Labs Programs at 28 peer research institutions revealed that these programs are moving the needle on conservation and cost savings.

Green labs Programs at other colleges and universities across the country typically provide resources and promote behavior change on the following topic areas: energy, water, waste, chemical management and purchasing. For example, at peer institutions, a Shut the Sash campaign has yielded savings of up to \$1 million a year; a significant cost savings from UW's annual cost of approximately \$3.7 million associated with running fume hoods in lab and class spaces.

The Green Labs working group will provide guidance and expertise to develop a successful UW program over time. This will likely include a phased roll-out of program offerings (such as preventative freezer maintenance or green chemical alternatives) to pilot, test and refine before scaling up to the University-wide level. In addition, the new Green Labs Program will provide tools, resources and guidance to help labs adopt more efficient practices, foster behavioral change and create a culture of conservation that is embedded in daily research operations.

TIMELINE

Launch by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2027** Develop a strategic, phased approach to build various aspects of the program over time (energy, water, waste, chemical management, purchasing).
- 2028** Pilot one program offering or focus area, such as preventative freezer maintenance or green chemical alternatives.
- 2029-2030** Evaluate pilot outcomes, refine program offerings, and develop tools and guidance to support a broader Green Labs program launch by 2030.

TRACKED METRICS

- Number and percent labs enrolled in the Green Labs program
- Annual energy and water savings from participating labs

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- UW Bothell and UW Tacoma will participate in the Green Labs Working Group and adapt program offerings to reflect the scale and research focus of their respective campuses.



BEC5: Develop a University-wide strategy to guide best practices and cost-effective decision-making for solar energy installations.

ACTION OVERVIEW

The UW has multiple solar installations on our campuses and at other University-owned facilities. These include rooftop systems, solar-integrated picnic and bike shelters, and most recently a pilot installation in the [Seattle campus' E18 parking lot](#). While these projects represent meaningful progress, questions remain about how to maximize the environmental, economic and community value of future solar investments. For example, the city of Seattle's Energy Code requires new buildings over a certain size to install a minimum amount of solar on the roof, which presents a variety of maintenance challenges at the Seattle campus. This action establishes a working group to evaluate existing installations, address obstacles and explore alternative compliance pathways that advance solar energy in a strategic, cost-effective manner.

The working group will also explore additional opportunities to invest in renewables, such as community solar and power purchase agreements. The goal is to develop a comprehensive, University-wide solar strategy with best practices to guide decision-making for new construction, renovation projects and future renewable energy investments.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2026-2029** Convene an internal working group to develop a solar strategy document that outlines preferred and alternative options for solar installation. Engage partners, especially private industry experts and UW Solar, to help advise on the strategy document.
- 2030** Edit, revise, and publish the solar strategy document.

TRACKED METRICS

- Status of Working Group formation
- Solar strategy document completed
- Gaps and issues related to solar installation are addressed and improved

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The solar strategy will provide shared guidance for renewable energy investments across the University.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☒ **ADDITIONAL FUNDING**
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Requires capital investment, permitting, and long-term maintenance planning.

LEAD PARTNERS

UW Solar, UW Facilities, Transportation Services

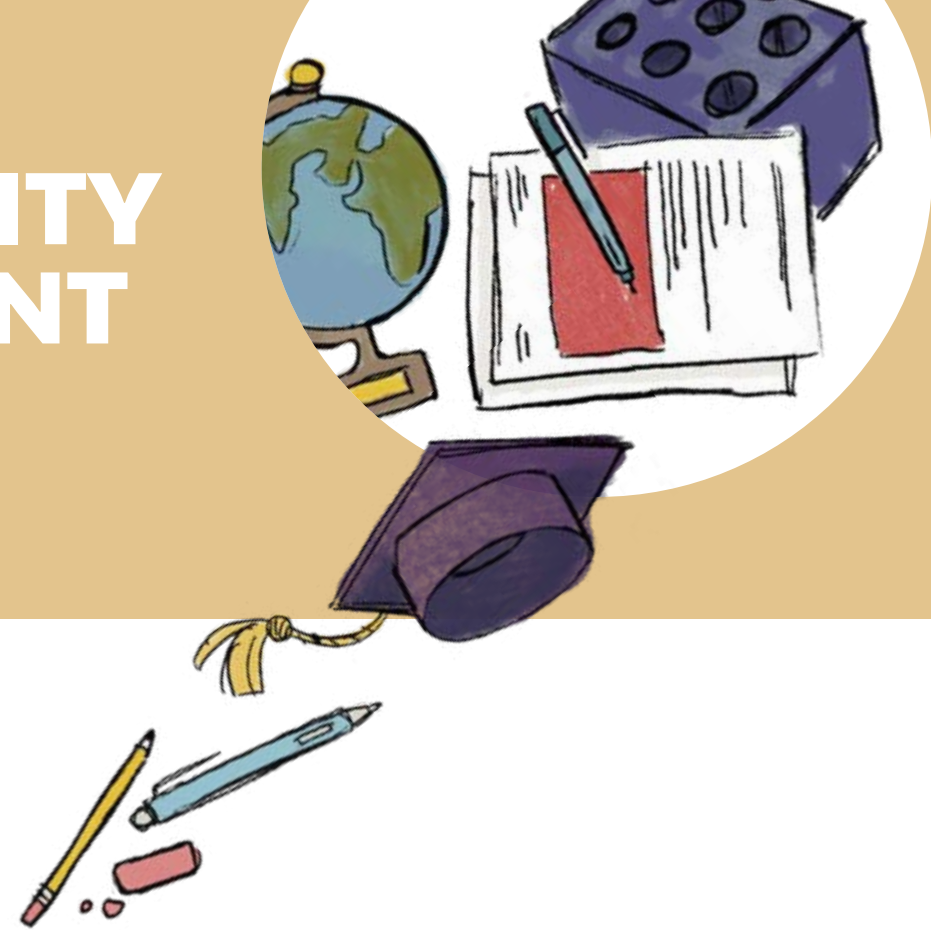
CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 1** Carbon Neutral for Scope 1 & 2 by 2035

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - OP-5** Energy Use
 - OP-6** Greenhouse Gas Emissions
-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 7** Affordable and Clean Energy
 - SDG 13** Climate Action
-  **Practice Greenhealth Metric Area**
Energy; Climate

LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



2050 VISION

A University where every student, across all disciplines, has opportunities to learn about sustainability and contribute directly to sustainability solutions through coursework, living lab projects and community partnerships. Students are empowered as collaborators, leaders and changemakers who help drive the UW’s progress toward its sustainability goals.

FLAGSHIP ACTION

LCE1 **Launch an online platform of ready-to-implement sustainability engagement project opportunities.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

LCE2 **Develop the goals and framework needed to establish a Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative.**

OVERVIEW

Sustainability learning emerges from interconnections between academic coursework, campus operations, student leadership and community collaboration. Across the University, students already engage in hands-on sustainability work through their classes, student-led projects and various Registered Student Organizations (RSOs). These efforts reflect a high level of interest from students and faculty in applying classroom learning to real campus needs. The actions in this focus area strengthen institutional structures that help students connect with hands-on sustainability opportunities. A new Sustainability

Changemaker Collaborative will serve as an umbrella program that provides a variety of pathways for students, faculty and staff to engage in interdisciplinary sustainability learning. A new centralized platform will include “ready-to-implement” student projects, capstone course project ideas and volunteer opportunities that elevate student leadership and align learning opportunities with a campus sustainability issue or need. The Changemaker Collaborative is intended to grow over time and elevate students as partners in advancing the UW’s goals.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

[UW Solar](#) students have led solar design and installation projects on residence halls and academic buildings, more recently a solar canopy pilot in the E18 parking lot. They have also assessed the solar potential of more than 300 buildings and 36 parking lots.



Gabriel Kennedy-Gibbens
UW Solar Student

“In UW Solar, students, faculty, and staff from multiple departments work together to design, fund, and install solar arrays on campus. Being involved has given me so much hope about what the future of sustainability work on campus can look like. This collaborative approach will be vital to meeting all of the UW’s sustainability goals, especially the monumental yet urgent task of transitioning our power plant away from burning fossil fuels.”

EXPLORE MORE

- **Explore** [sustainability courses](#) and academic programs such as the [Program on the Environment](#) that connect students to real world sustainability challenges.
- **Learn** about Community Engaged Research at UW through initiatives like the [Community Engagement Knowledge Hub](#).
- **Join** student groups such as [Huskies for Equitable Sustainability](#) or the [dozens of other sustainability-related RSOs](#) at UW.



LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



FLAGSHIP ACTION

LCE1: Launch an online platform of ready-to-implement sustainability engagement project opportunities.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☐ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS ☒ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Staff to maintain the Sustainability Engagement and Project Portal and any costs associated with the chosen platform. Recommend creating a staff position to support the Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative and this initiative.

ACTION OVERVIEW

This action is centered on the development and launch of a new Sustainability Engagement and Project Portal. This online platform will make it easier for students to find sustainability engagement opportunities on campus that match their interests.

Throughout the community engagement process, we heard that students want to make an impact around sustainability during their time on campus. Student feedback revealed the need for a centralized location to find volunteer opportunities, class project ideas and capstone projects that could help make an impact across the University. The Sustainability Engagement and Project Portal responds to this feedback through an organized and curated “clearing house” of opportunities, with project templates and guidance for faculty and staff to describe each new project or volunteer opportunity. Search and filtering tools will allow students to find opportunities aligned with their interests, skills, availability, and academic pursuits.

The Sustainability Project and Engagement Portal is intended to be a step toward the broader Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative action (LCE2).

TIMELINE

Launch by the end of FY29

APPROACH

- 2027** Develop the Sustainability Engagement and Project Portal, create submission templates and guidance, and curate an initial set of ready-to-implement opportunities.
- 2028** Pilot the portal with students, faculty, and staff, and refine based on feedback.
- On-going** Continue to add new opportunities, track participation, and connect portal activity to the broader Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative.

TRACKED METRICS

- Status of launch
- Number of sustainability engagement opportunities listed in the Project Portal
- Number of student participants using the platform
- Number of faculty, staff, or partner mentors contributing projects
- Percent of opportunities aligned with SAP goals or actions
- Repeat use or ongoing engagement by students and mentors

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- The Sustainability Engagement and Project Portal will serve all UW campuses, ensuring opportunities from Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma are visible and accessible through a shared platform.
- Aligns with UW Bothell’s 2026-2036 sustainability goal to expand structured community-based sustainability engagement opportunities, strengthen partnerships with local environmental and social justice organizations, and increase staff and faculty participation around campus-based sustainability.

LEAD PARTNERS

Partners for this action will span academic, operational and student-facing units across the University.

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 6 Establish a Changemaker Collaborative by 2035

LINKAGES

 **STARS Alignment**
• **AC-4** Applied Learning

 **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
• **SDG 4** Quality Education
• **SDG 9** Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure



LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



LCE2: Develop the goals and framework needed to establish a Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative.

ACTION OVERVIEW

The Changemaker Collaborative concept brings together students, faculty, staff and community committed to positive system change around sustainability and climate issues. It is intended to serve as a new umbrella program that increases practical and hands-on sustainability learning opportunities on campus.

Similar programs exist at many other higher education institutions, and examples of programmatic elements include: on-campus student fellowship positions in sustainability, developing a faculty cohort to support integration of sustainability into curriculum and learning, identifying living-lab learning projects that address a campus sustainability issue and more. UW’s Environmental Stewardship Committee is in the early stages of exploring frameworks and feasibility, but more work is needed to develop the concept into a program. This action is centered on the development of a program framework, including the desired goals and outcomes for a Changemaker Collaborative, and opportunities to build new program pathways over time.

TIMELINE

Complete by the end of FY31

APPROACH

- 2028 Map existing internal programs and potential partners. Develop goals, program pathways and governance structure to inform a Changemaker Collaborative model for review and endorsement by the Environmental Stewardship Committee.
- 2029 Ongoing program development; solidify funding, develop programmatic materials and processes in preparation for implementation.
- 2030 Begin program implementation of one or more program offerings.

TRACKED METRICS

- Status of goals and framework proposal

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

- This action will be implemented as a coordinated effort with all UW campuses and UW Medicine contributing to and benefiting from a shared structure for sustainability project engagement.
- Aligns with UW Bothell’s sustainability goal to expand sustainability internships and course-based projects, support faculty engagement in sustainability teaching, and elevate student and faculty sustainability research.

FUNDING NEEDS

- ☒ WITHIN EXISTING BUDGETS
- ☐ ADDITIONAL FUNDING
- ☐ SUBSTANTIAL NEW FUNDING REQUIRED

Staff participation time.

LEAD PARTNERS

Consult with UW resources and expertise, such as the Center for Teaching and Learning, Community Engagement and Leadership Education (CELE) Center and others.

CONNECTION TO LONG-TERM GOALS

- 5 Platinum STARS Ranking by 2040
- 6 Establish a Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative by 2035

LINKAGES

-  **STARS Alignment**
 - AC-4 Applied Learning
 - AC-2 Undergraduate Programmes
 - EN-1 Outreach and Communications

-  **UN Sustainable Development Goals**
 - SDG 4 Quality Education
 - SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
 - SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
 - SDG 13 Climate Action
 - SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals

LOOKING FORWARD

Delivering on the commitments we’ve set out to achieve in this Plan will require intentional collaboration across the University. UW Sustainability will serve as a central coordinator for implementation to lead tracking, convening, communications, and annual progress reporting.

Some actions will be advanced through existing units or programs, while others will benefit from broader coordination across campuses and departments through working groups. The Environmental Stewardship Committee will continue guide the implementation of the SAP, while receiving regular updates.

Annual reporting and clear metrics will help UW track progress and stay accountable. UW Sustainability will work with partners to develop a consistent framework for collecting data, tracking progress, and sharing updates through the Sustainability Plan website.

The UW's sustainability work will continue to evolve as new opportunities and challenges emerge. Areas such as artificial intelligence will raise new questions about energy use, data infrastructure, and responsible implementation. And as climate impacts continue to grow, UW will need to keep equity and resilience at the center of its work.

This Plan is not the end of the work. Faculty, staff, students and partners across the University will each play a role in moving its actions forward. By working together, we can build a more sustainable and resilient UW for generations to come.



APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

Biodiversity
The variety of life on Earth. Biodiversity can also refer to the variety of life supported in a specific ecosystem or area.

Capture Rate
The percentage of potentially recyclable or compostable materials that are successfully diverted from landfills, rather than being thrown in the regular trash. For recyclables, the capture rate is the total tons of recyclable materials in the recycling stream divided by the total tons of recyclables across the landfill, recycling and compost streams. For compost, the capture rate is the total tons of compostable materials divided by the total tons of compostables across the landfill, recycling and compost streams.

Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)
A measure of the impact of different greenhouse gases, expressed by converting the warming potential of an amount of gas to the amount of carbon dioxide that would be expected to contribute the same amount of warming. Greenhouse gases, in addition to CO₂, include methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases.

Carbon offsets
A mechanism that allows an entity to compensate for their GHG emissions by purchasing credits that represent a reduction or permanent removal of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.

Carbon neutral
Carbon neutrality is achieved when greenhouse gas emissions are reduced as much as feasible, with any remaining emissions balanced through high-quality carbon removals or offsets.

Circular economy
A circular economy keeps materials and products in circulation for as long as possible, by utilizing products which are no longer usable or wanted as a resource to create new materials or products, or by finding a new use for them.

Climate change
Long-term changes in average global temperatures as a direct result of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions generated from human activity.

Climate resilience
The ability of a community or institution to react to a changing climate. This includes measures to prevent, withstand, respond and recover from the negative impacts of changes in the climate, such as hotter summer days, lower snowpack and usable water resources, wildfires, and the many other ways a changing climate can impact operations and daily life.

Decarbonization
Decarbonization is the process of reducing or eliminating GHG emissions from human activities.

Electrification
Moving systems away from fossil fuels by utilizing electric-powered alternatives.

Emissions
See “Greenhouse gas”

ESG
Environmental, social and governance (ESG) is a term largely used in business or investing contexts to refer to sustainability efforts.

Food systems
A food system is the interconnected web of activities that includes multiple components of food supply chains, the food environment, consumer behaviors, and health outcomes.

Food sovereignty
Food sovereignty is a food system in which the people who produce, distribute, and consume food are in control of the mechanisms and policies. It centers communities within their own food systems and policies, and affirms the right of people to healthy and culturally-appropriate food.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG)
Greenhouse gases are gases which absorb and re-emit infrared radiation, trapping heat within the earth’s atmosphere. This mechanism is also called the greenhouse effect. Main greenhouse gases include:

- Carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- Methane (CH₄)
- Nitrous oxide (N₂O)
- Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)
- Perfluorocarbons (PFCs)
- Sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆)
- Nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃)

LEED
Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a green building rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Living Laboratory projects
Sustainability-related projects on campus that address operational, education, and research challenges and opportunities. The “campus as a living lab” approach is used by many universities to give students opportunities to research sustainability concepts through real-world projects on their own campus.

Regenerative campus
Regenerative refers to the ability of a built environment to restore and improve the health of the natural ecosystem it is a part of.

RSO
At the UW, Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) are independent student-run clubs that have registered with the Student Activities Office.

Scope 1 GHG Emissions
Direct emissions from operations that are owned or controlled by the reporting organization. For the UW, this is largely from burning natural gas on the Seattle campus for building heat. Other Scope 1 emissions include the gas used in UW fleet vehicles.

Scope 2 GHG Emissions
Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased or acquired electricity, as well as , steam, heating, or cooling consumed but not created by the reporting organization.

Scope 3 GHG Emissions
All indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the reporting organization, including both upstream and downstream emissions. This includes emissions from the creation and transportation of the goods and services purchased, as well as air travel and commuting.

SMART framework
Ensuring goals and targets are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART).

Sustainability
At the University of Washington, we define sustainability as the capacity to create and maintain healthy, equitable and diverse communities and ecosystems. That capacity comprises 1) an understanding and respect for the interdependence of the atmosphere, the waters, the land, and all life on Earth, 2) a full recognition of legacy and on-going impacts of human activity, and 3) a commitment to cultivate collective wisdom and to deliberately act out of that understanding, respect and recognition. Learn more at sustainability.uw.edu/definition

Waste contamination
Materials in the recycling or composting streams which prevent successful recovery. In recycling, this includes anything that cannot be recycled or that can degrade other materials or the recycling process. In composting, this is non-compostable waste.

Waste diversion
The percentage of waste diverted from landfill or incineration through compost, recycling, or reuse.

Working groups
Ongoing, multi-unit groups that provide coordination and drive progress on actions requiring broad, cross-campus collaboration. Formed as part of the SAP for actions that involve multiple departments, long-term culture change, or systemic challenges. Working groups meet quarterly (or as needed) to guide implementation, and report on progress bi-annually through UW Sustainability to the ESC.

APPENDIX B

ACTION TIMELINES

! IMPLEMENTATION

Primary period of work to advance the action, including forming working groups, scoping, engagement, development, piloting and execution.

★ MILESTONE

Completion or launch timeframe

↻ ONGOING

Annual or continuing work

PHASE	ACTION	PRIMARY FOCUS	JULY 2026 – JUNE 2027 (FY27)	JULY 2027 – JUNE 2028 (FY28)	JULY 2028 – JUNE 2029 (FY29)	JULY 2029 – JUNE 2030 (FY30)	JULY 2030 – JUNE 2031 (FY31)
1	TC1	Sustainable commuting campaign to reach 12% SOV	!	!	★		
1	FS1	Launch Food Systems Working Group	!	★	↻	↻	↻
1	MW1	Materials and waste reduction working group	!	!	★	↻	↻
1	BEC1	Annual energy-efficiency reinvestment	!	↻	↻	↻	↻
1	BEC2	Greenhouse gas progress reporting	!	!	↻	!	★
1	BEC3	Establish water conservation working group	!	★	↻	↻	↻
1	BEC4	Green Labs program development and pilot	!	!	!	!	★
1	BEC5	University-wide solar strategy	!	!	!	!	★
1	LCE1	Sustainability project portal	!	!	★	↻	↻
2	TC2	Tri-campus transportation safety assessment		!	!	★	
2	TC4	Air travel resource toolkit		!	!	★	
2	P1	Sustainable procurement training and resources		!	★		
2	MW2	Reusable/preferable healthcare product pilots		!	!	★	
2	MW3	Single-use reduction pilots with vendors/sponsors		!	!	★	
2	LES1	Assess landscape certification practices		!	!	!	★
2	LES3	Tri-campus tree canopy expansion and planning		!	!	!	★
3	TC3	Bike, e-bike and micromobility improvements			!	!	★
3	TC5	Tri-campus fleet electrification plan			!	!	★
3	P2	High-impact supplier strategies			!	!	★
3	P3	Sustainability criteria in supplier selection and contracts			!	!	★
3	FS2	Coolfood Pledge and 2035 targets			!	!	!
3	LES2	Adaptive Plant Guide			!	!	★
3	LCE2	Changemaker Collaborative framework			!	!	★

Timeframes are based on the University of Washington's fiscal year, which runs from July 1 through June 30. For example, FY28 starts July 1, 2027 and ends June 30, 2028.

APPENDIX C

STARS



The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) is administered by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). STARS is the most comprehensive rating system for sustainability in higher education, and more than 400 institutions worldwide have a current STARS rating.

STARS covers a wide range of topics, including Operations, Academics, Engagement and Administration, and gives the UW a comprehensive view of its sustainability performance while allowing for comparison to peer universities. It can also provide insight on areas where additional efforts might be needed. The UW's most recent STARS report was submitted in December 2025, and the UW earned a Gold rating. STARS reports are good for three years and are based on self-reported assessments. The UW has held a Gold rating from STARS since first participating in 2012.

One of the long-term goals in this Sustainability Action Plan is to reach a Platinum STARS ranking — the highest possible — by 2040. To receive Platinum, schools need to earn 85% or more of the possible credits. The UW earned 67.89% of the possible points in our 2025 submission (Gold is between 65% and 85% in the STARS rankings.)

There are some credit areas where the UW can earn more points by implementing relatively low-resource new projects or programs. For example, there are STARS credits available for surveying the campus population on sustainability literacy and culture. UW Sustainability is in the early stages of drafting surveys that would inform and support the UW's sustainability goals while also earning STARS points.

However, in order to reach the Platinum level, the UW will need to gain points in every subject area. Some of these will be easier than others — Academics is an area where there are many opportunities to gain points, but is also perhaps the most difficult area to make large changes, as departments, schools and colleges have oversight of their academic offerings and have many important priorities beyond sustainability.

Operations is the STARS area with the most points available, and there are opportunities for the UW to gain points in this area. Many of the actions and long-term targets laid out in this SAP will result in higher STARS scores when implemented, although making meaningful gains

in areas like energy use or greenhouse gas emissions will require funding and long-term commitment.

UW Sustainability is working with capstone students to better understand the path to achieve STARS Platinum, as well as evaluating high-achieving peer institutions to identify best practices we can utilize as we work toward this goal.

UW STARS PERFORMANCE

OPERATIONS

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

10.77/19

ENERGY & CLIMATE

14.41/26

FOOD & DINING

3.21/10

PROCUREMENT & WASTE

15.57/20

TRANSPORTATION

5.26/10

ACADEMICS

CURRICULUM

22.75/45

RESEARCH

19.45/23

ENGAGEMENT

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

15.50/25

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

19.65/25

PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

COORDINATION & PLANNING

10.50/11

INVESTMENT

5.72/10

SOCIAL EQUITY

10.25/14

WELLBEING & WORK

6/11

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH

TRANSPORTATION & COMMUTING				
SAP ACTION	PGH METRIC AREA	UW MEDICAL CENTER – MONTLAKE STATUS	HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER STATUS	HOW THIS SAP ACTION ADVANCES PGH PERFORMANCE
TC1 Flagship Action Bolster U-PASS and other sustainable commuting modes through a coordinated campaign to meet the Seattle single-occupancy vehicle trip reduction goal of 12% by 2028.	Transportation; Climate	UWMC – Montlake provides commuter support, including U-PASS, shuttle services, rideshare and carpool programs, emergency ride home options, paid parking, and preferred parking for carpools and electric vehicles. UWMC participates in UW Master Plan and Transportation Services surveys; the 2025 survey reported an SOV rate of 15.5%.	Harborview reports U-PASS, Guaranteed Ride Home, transit and rideshare supports, paid parking, preferred carpool/EV parking, and annual parking-rate review. The employee commute survey uses a 2014 SOV baseline of about 37.7%; the most recent entered survey value is about 36.9%.	Supports Practice Greenhealth transportation metrics by documenting transportation demand management, commute communications, and mode-shift strategies.
TC2 Complete a safety assessment of vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian travel across all campuses to identify barriers to safe and sustainable commuting modes.	Transportation	UWMC – Montlake leverages UW Transportation Services programs and infrastructure to support employee commute reduction efforts.	Harborview does have dedicated Parking & Commuter Services staff, which could provide a strong operational base for this action.	A safety assessment is not a direct Practice Greenhealth percentage metric, but it supports the planning infrastructure needed to shift trips away from drive-alone commuting and support walkers and bikers.
TC3 Improve access to bicycle, e-bike and micromobility commuting.	Transportation	UW Medicine supports active transportation through amenities and programs including bike racks, bike paths, pedestrian walkways, shower facilities, dockless bikeshare access, employee biking groups, and transportation benefits.	UW Medicine supports active transportation through amenities and programs including bike racks, bike paths, pedestrian walkways, shower facilities, dockless bikeshare access, employee biking groups, and transportation benefits.	Expands the infrastructure and incentives that make active commuting easier to choose. Access improvements will be reported through Practice Greenhealth.
TC4 Develop tools and best practices to reduce air travel and mitigate flight-related emissions.	Climate	Reports Scope 3 Emissions for Business Travel for all of UW Medicine. The 2019 baseline was 22,334 MTCO ₂ e.	Reports Scope 3 Emissions for Business Travel for all of UW Medicine. The 2019 baseline was 22,334 MTCO ₂ e.	Potential to reduce Scope 3 emissions from Business Travel.
TC5 Create a University-wide fleet electrification plan.	Transportation; Climate	UWMC – Montlake reports that 10 of its 14 fleet vehicles, or 71.4%, are alternative-fuel vehicles. Current fleet emissions are 54.22 MTCO ₂ e.	UWMC – Montlake reports that 10 of its 14 fleet vehicles, or 71.4%, are alternative-fuel vehicles. Current fleet emissions are 54.22 MTCO ₂ e.	Establishes a coordinated approach for transitioning UW fleets to zero-emission vehicles and tracking reductions in fuel combustion.

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH

Practice Greenhealth reporting allows UW Medical Center – Montlake and Harborview Medical Center to track sustainability performance and identify opportunities for continued improvement. This matrix connects the hospitals’ 2025 reported activities and data to UW’s Sustainability Action Plan (SAP), illustrating how the plan can build on existing efforts, address current gaps, and support measurable progress across UW Medicine. When the hospitals’ statuses are combined, the information reflects work occurring across UW Medicine rather than at a specific hospital.

PROCUREMENT			
SAP ACTION	PGH METRIC AREA	UW MEDICINE STATUS	HOW THIS SAP ACTION ADVANCES PGH PERFORMANCE
P1 Flagship Action Launch a new sustainable procurement webpage and training for staff.	Sustainable Procurement; Chemicals; Food	UW Medicine Supply Chain has developed the Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP) Policy and is training the UW Medicine Strategic Sourcing and Value Analysis teams.	Tracking participation in training will strengthen the identification, documentation, and reporting of sustainable purchases by providing staff with clearer guidance.
P2 Develop strategies with UW's high-impact suppliers to reduce the environmental footprint of our purchases.	Sustainable Procurement	UW Medicine has joined the Go Green Collaborative with executive sponsorship and identified opportunities related to facial protection and personal protection equipment (PPE). UW Medicine reports the use of environmental attributes in purchasing and value analysis.	Expands supplier-provided sustainability data and documentation, reduces uncategorized spend and helps target higher-impact purchasing categories.
P3 Standardize and integrate sustainability criteria into supplier solicitation, evaluation and contracting.	Sustainable Procurement; Green Building	UW Medicine reports system-level Environmentally Preferred Purchasing work, a published 2025 EPP policy, RFP/RFQ templates, a vendor sustainability questionnaire, and sustainability language in approximately 150 contracts. UW Medicine Strategic Sourcing integrates EPP specifications and criteria into solicitations and weighted scoring processes and applies sustainability considerations through contract calendar reviews, standard operating procedure and policy guidance, value analysis processes, and total-cost-of-ownership evaluations.	Improves consistency in how sustainability criteria are applied and documented across procurement and contracting, strengthening Practice Greenhealth reporting.

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH

MATERIALS & WASTE MANAGEMENT				
SAP ACTION	PGH METRIC AREA	UW MEDICAL CENTER – MONTLAKE STATUS	HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER STATUS	HOW THIS SAP ACTION ADVANCES PGH PERFORMANCE
MW1 Flagship Action Form a University-wide materials and waste reduction working group.	Waste; Greening the OR; Sustainable Procurement	UWMC – Montlake reports 3,494.6 tons of total waste in the current year, or 21.4 pounds per adjusted patient day. Current waste stream shares are 57.6% solid waste, 29.5% recycling, 10.4% regulated medical waste, and 2.5% hazardous waste. Recycling contamination remains a priority.	Harborview reports 3,499.8 tons of total waste in the current year, or 26.8 pounds per adjusted patient day. Current waste stream shares are 60.9% solid waste, 32.4% recycling, 4.9% regulated medical waste, and 1.9% hazardous waste. Recycling contamination remains a focus area.	Creates a University-wide structure to reduce total waste, improve diversion, and address regulated and hazardous waste streams more collaboratively.
MW2 Identify opportunities to replace single-use healthcare products with reusables or environmentally preferable alternatives.	Chemicals; Greening the OR; Sustainable Procurement	UW Medicine tracks surgeon preference cards and the use of reusable and disposable surgical items. In 2025, 292,913 reprocessed medical devices were purchased and collected. Harborview has reintroduced reusable dishware and utensils for patient and retail dining after a shift to disposables during the COVID-19 pandemic.	UW Medicine tracks surgeon preference cards and the use of reusable and disposable surgical items. In 2025, 292,913 reprocessed medical devices were purchased and collected. Harborview has reintroduced reusable dishware and utensils for patient and retail dining after a shift to disposables during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Directly reduces single-use product waste, purchasing impacts, and disposal costs while supporting Practice Greenhealth metrics.
MW3 Transition away from single-use products through UW's partnerships with major vendors and suppliers.	Waste; Sustainable Procurement	UW Medicine procurement data show that pathways for advancing sustainability through vendors and contracts are now in place. These include an Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy, contract language, and a vendor questionnaire.	UW Medicine procurement data show that pathways for advancing sustainability through vendors and contracts are now in place. These include an Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy, contract language, and a vendor questionnaire.	Moves sustainability vetting and the selection of single-use device manufacturers upstream into purchasing, vendor partnerships, and contract language rather than relying solely on downstream waste diversion.

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH

FOOD SYSTEMS				
SAP ACTION	PGH METRIC AREA	UW MEDICAL CENTER – MONTLAKE STATUS	HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER STATUS	HOW THIS SAP ACTION ADVANCES PGH PERFORMANCE
FS1 Flagship Action Establish a Food Systems Working Group with an initial focus on sustaining existing high-impact programs.	Food; Waste; Procurement	UWMC – Montlake reports 370,445 patient meals served and \$3.78 million in annual food and beverage expenditures. Of the total food and beverage spend, 14.7% was sourced locally and 3.4% met sustainable purchasing criteria.	Harborview reports 671,559 patient meals served and \$5.91 million in annual food and beverage expenditures. Of total food and beverage spend, 11.9% was sourced locally and 1.5% met sustainable purchasing criteria.	Creates a collaborative space for sustaining and coordinating food programs, improving data quality, and advancing procurement and food waste strategies across the University.
FS2 Join the Coolfood Pledge and work toward a 30% reduction in total food-related emissions.	Food; Climate	UWMC – Montlake participates in the Coolfood Pledge through Practice Greenhealth. In 2025, they reported 6,872.94 MTCO ₂ e associated with purchased animal products.	Harborview is a confirmed Coolfood Pledge signatory. In 2025, Harborview reported 12,151.55 MTCO ₂ e associated with purchased animal products.	Provides a University-wide framework for reducing food-related emissions while continuing to improve purchasing data and menus.

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH

LANDSCAPES & ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS				
SAP ACTION	PGH METRIC AREA	UW MEDICAL CENTER – MONTLAKE STATUS	HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER STATUS	HOW THIS SAP ACTION ADVANCES PGH PERFORMANCE
LES1 Flagship Action Assess relevant landscape certifications to identify best practices that support healthy and resilient landscapes.	N/A	UWMC–Montlake requires designers, builders, and engineers to have experience with green or healthier building standards, and uses a sustainability scorecard to track criteria in capital projects. It also maintains an Integrated Pest Management approach and reports 108,735 square feet of irrigated landscape area.	Harborview reports green site features, including View Park, a green-roof open space above the parking garage. It also maintains an Integrated Pest Management approach and reports 63,572 square feet of irrigated landscape area.	While Practice Greenhealth does not directly assess landscape certifications, this action will identify practices that could strengthen site stewardship across UW. Those practices may complement PGH reporting related to green buildings and climate resilience, including green space, stormwater management, and heat reduction.
LES2 Develop an Adaptive Plant Guide as a resource for native and pollinator-friendly plantings to improve climate resilience across the tri-campus.	N/A	UWMC – Montlake reports campus green spaces, including The Glade Sculpture space, and incorporates native plant species into landscaping where appropriate. Plant selections are reviewed by UW's arborist.	Harborview reports green site features that support ecological health and climate resilience, including View Park, a green roof and open space adjacent to the hospital.	While not a direct Practice Greenhealth reporting metric, this action provides guidance for lower-water, climate-adapted, native and pollinator-friendly plantings that can support future water and green space performance.
LES3 Build on existing urban forest planning efforts to enhance and expand tree canopy coverage across all UW campuses.	N/A	Practice Greenhealth does not include a specific metric for tree canopy baseline assessments or forest management planning.	Practice Greenhealth does not include a specific metric for tree canopy baseline assessments or forest management planning.	While not a direct Practice Greenhealth reporting metric, this action would strengthen future Practice Greenhealth reporting where tree canopy and landscape practices support green building, water, and climate resilience outcomes.

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH

BUILDINGS, ENERGY, & CLIMATE				
SAP ACTION	PGH METRIC AREA	UW MEDICAL CENTER – MONTLAKE STATUS	HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER STATUS	HOW THIS SAP ACTION ADVANCES PGH PERFORMANCE
BEC1 Flagship Action Invest annually in energy efficiency and reinvest cost savings into energy efficiency projects.	Energy; Climate	UWMC – Montlake reported 259.3 million kBtu of total energy use intensity (EUI) and a 160.50 kBtu/sq ft EUI in 2025. UWMC – Montlake uses the Metasys building automation system to schedule and monitor HVAC energy use. They are also implementing OpenBlue software to identify heating, cooling, and energy abnormalities.	Harborview's 2025 energy use intensity is pending confirmation of steam and electricity data and will be updated once verified. Harborview uses building automation systems to schedule and monitor HVAC energy use. They are also evaluating advanced energy management software to identify heating, cooling, and other energy-use abnormalities.	Directly supports lower utility costs and reductions in energy-related emissions.
BEC2 Publish and share annual greenhouse gas emissions progress and performance summaries to UW leadership and community.	Climate; Energy	UWMC – Montlake tracks annual GHG emissions through Practice Greenhealth using a 2019 climate baseline. In 2025, they reported 388.9 MTCO ₂ e Scope 1, 19,863.7 MTCO ₂ e Scope 2, and 7,966.2 MTCO ₂ e Scope 3 emissions (food and waste categories reported).	Harborview tracks annual GHG emissions through Practice Greenhealth using a 2019 climate baseline. In 2025, Harborview reported 2,798.5 MTCO ₂ e Scope 1, 13,503.4 MTCO ₂ e Scope 2, and 13,550.7 MTCO ₂ e Scope 3 emissions (food and waste categories reported). Scope 1 and 2 figures are being verified against steam and electricity data and will be updated once confirmed	Improves transparency and accountability by aligning UW reporting with Practice Greenhealth climate metrics and leadership-facing progress summaries.
BEC3 Establish a working group focused on conserving water and reducing combined water and sewer costs.	Water	UWMC – Montlake reports current water use of 62.6 million gallons or 38.75 gallons/sq ft. This represents an 11.4% increase from the 2019 baseline, but an 8.5% reduction from the previous year.	Harborview reports current water use of 72.9 million gallons or 37.38 gallons/sq ft. This represents an 11.5% increase from the 2019 baseline, but a 0.7% reduction from the previous year.	Creates a coordinated structure for water conservation, cost reduction, and tracking improvements against Practice Greenhealth water performance metrics.
BEC4 Launch a Green Labs program focused on conserving resources and cost while continuing to foster innovation.	N/A	Practice Greenhealth does not include a lab-specific metric.	Practice Greenhealth does not include a lab-specific metric.	While no lab-specific Practice Greenhealth reporting metric exists, this action creates a pathway to improve resource use in laboratories. It also connects to existing Practice Greenhealth metrics for Energy, Water, Waste, Chemicals, and Procurement.
BEC5 Develop a University-wide strategy to guide best practices and cost-effective decision-making for solar energy installations.	Energy	UWMC – Montlake does not currently operate an on-site solar array.	Harborview reports that solar panels were installed in 2017 and became operational in 2018.	Supports long-term solar energy planning.

APPENDIX D

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH

LEARNING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT				
SAP ACTION	PGH METRIC AREA	UW MEDICAL CENTER – MONTLAKE STATUS	HARBORVIEW MEDICAL CENTER STATUS	HOW THIS SAP ACTION ADVANCES PGH PERFORMANCE
LEC1 Flagship Action Launch an online platform of ready-to-implement sustainability engagement project opportunities.	N/A	Current UW Medicine sustainability engagement initiatives include the annual Symposium on Climate Change and Clinical Practice, integration of Planetary Health content into the UW School of Medicine curriculum, and partnerships with University of Washington Program on the Environment Capstone students on sustainability-focused projects. Past Capstone projects have supported initiatives such as recycling education, evaluation of reusable isolation gown feasibility, annual sustainability reporting, and review of UW Medicine's IV-to-PO conversion guidelines.	Current UW Medicine sustainability engagement initiatives include the annual Symposium on Climate Change and Clinical Practice, integration of Planetary Health content into the UW School of Medicine curriculum, and partnerships with University of Washington Program on the Environment Capstone students on sustainability-focused projects. Past Capstone projects have supported initiatives such as recycling education, evaluation of reusable isolation gown feasibility, annual sustainability reporting, and review of UW Medicine's IV-to-PO conversion guidelines.	While not a direct Practice Greenhealth reporting metric, this action creates a stronger pathway for implementing Practice Greenhealth-related projects. A shared project platform would help UWMC-Montlake and Harborview organize sustainability opportunities for students, interns, staff, faculty, and clinicians. It would also make it easier to document participation, project outcomes, and the Practice Greenhealth categories supported
LEC2 Develop the goals and framework needed to establish a UW Sustainability Changemaker Collaborative.	N/A	N/A	N/A	While not a direct Practice Greenhealth reporting metric, this action strengthens the governance, education, and engagement structures that support Practice Greenhealth work overtime. The Changemaker Collaborative would help UWMC and Harborview connect sustainability learning, project ownership, and staff participation across hospitals and campuses.

APPENDIX E

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**1 NO POVERTY**
End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

**2 ZERO HUNGER**
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

**3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

**4 QUALITY EDUCATION**
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

**5 GENDER EQUALITY**
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

**6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

**7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

**8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

**9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

**10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES**
Reduce inequality within and among countries.

**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

**12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

**13 CLIMATE ACTION**
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

**14 LIFE BELOW WATER**
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

**15 LIFE ON LAND**
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

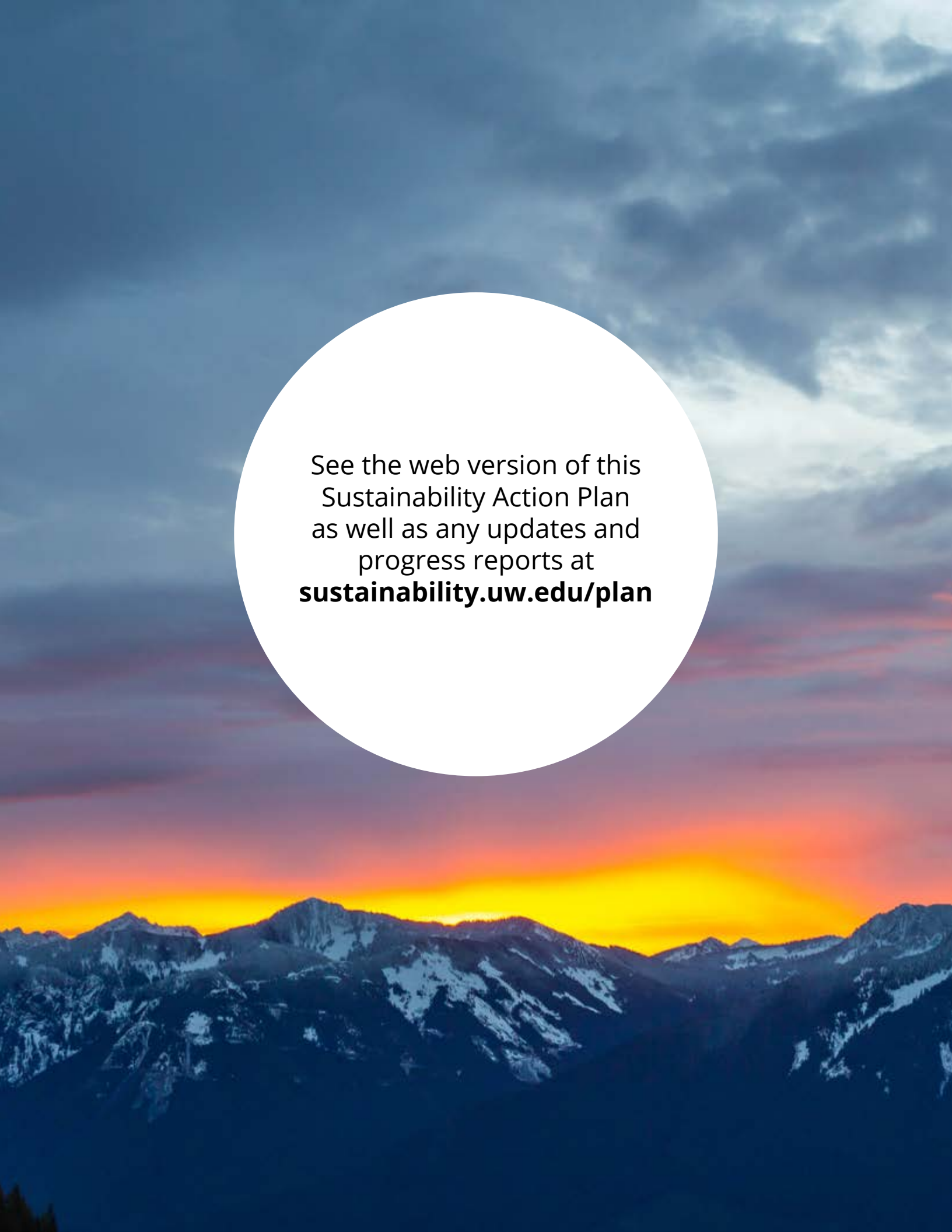
**16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.



This plan came to life through the expertise and enthusiasm of the UW community and our local partners.

On behalf of UW Sustainability and the Environmental Stewardship Committee, we extend a huge thank-you to everyone who shared their time and ideas. Your contributions helped create a plan grounded in our community's shared vision for a more sustainable UW.



See the web version of this
Sustainability Action Plan
as well as any updates and
progress reports at
sustainability.uw.edu/plan