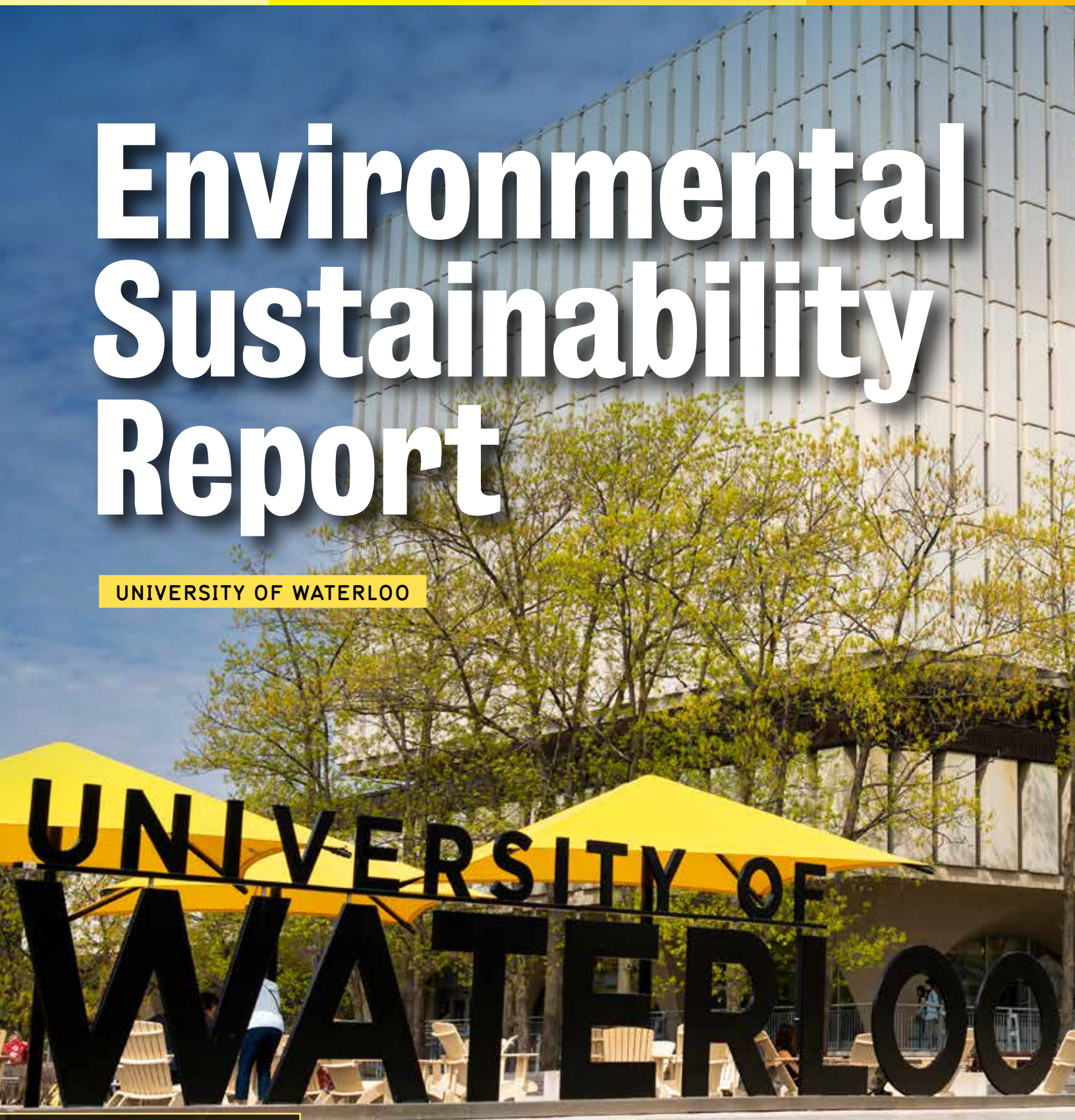
Environmental Sustainability Report

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

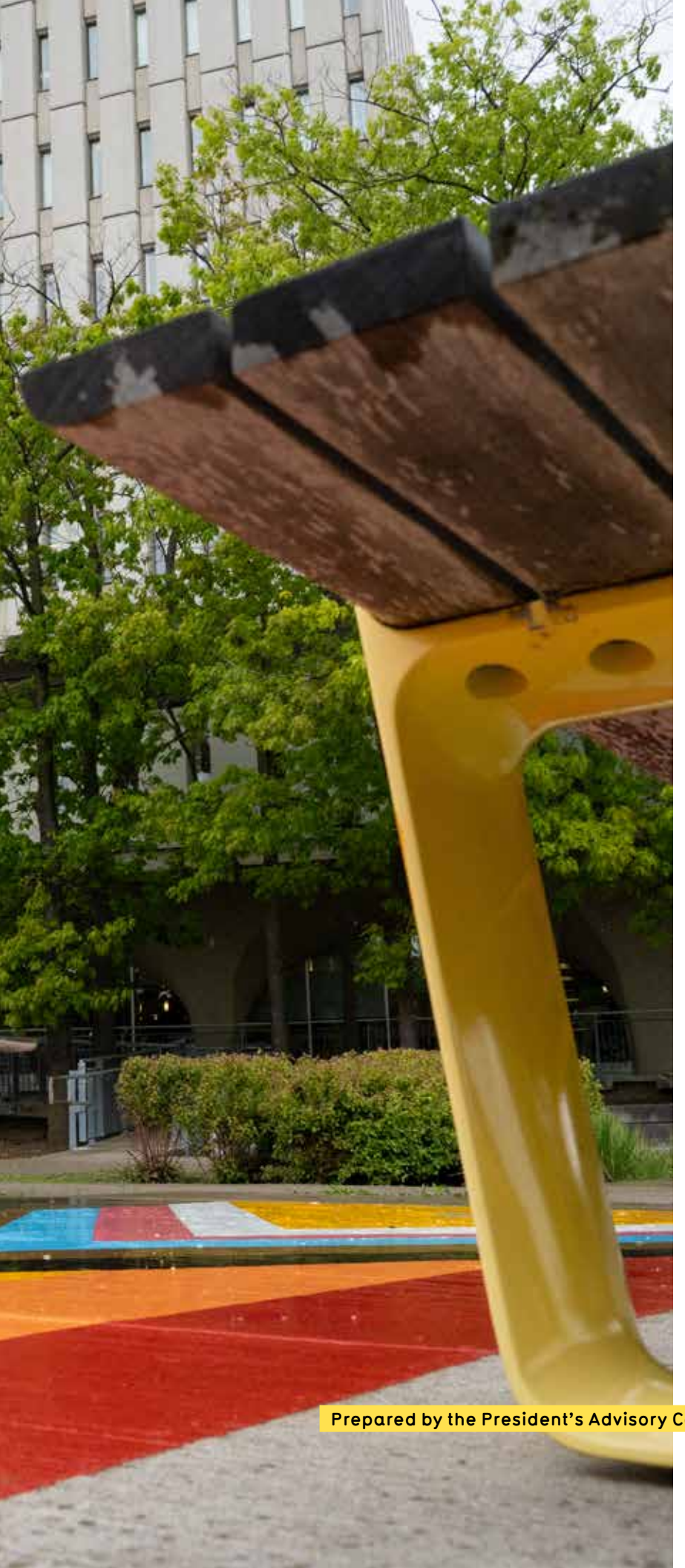


2025

RELEASED OCTOBER 2025

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Prepared by the President's Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

About the Report

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

The University of Waterloo acknowledges that it operates on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations.

Overview: This report highlights examples of action towards each of the 27 objectives that were established in 2017 through Waterloo's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. The report has sections on Academics, Operations, and Engagement, and describes relevant projects and initiatives that have occurred at the University of Waterloo since the Strategy's launch in 2017, up to and including June 2025.

For each objective, a summary of progress and details on specific indicators are provided.

For full data and details on each objective and indicator, consult the interactive data dashboards and methodologies, available at ***uwaterloo.ca/sustainability/report*****.**

Definitions: Sustainability refers to maintaining the integrated health of the environment, society, and economy for today and into the future. While this report focuses primarily on environmental indicators, it recognizes that there are mutually reinforcing connections with financial and social sustainability. For brevity, the term "sustainability" refers to environmental sustainability throughout this report.

Framework: To provide a consistent benchmark for reporting progress, the University of Waterloo aligns action areas and indicators within this report and within its Environmental Sustainability Strategy to those of the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) developed by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).*

Sustainable Development Goals: Within the report, the University of Waterloo also maps its actions towards advancement of the global United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Additional detail on pan-University efforts related to the SDGs can be found at ***uwaterloo.ca/sustainable-development-goals***.

Reporting Boundary: This report covers all University of Waterloo campuses, unless otherwise noted. The report data and indicators do not include information from Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIWs), although information from the AFIWs is included as separate disclosures in the interactive data tables.

Contact: Please address any questions about this report to the Sustainability Office (*sustainability@uwaterloo.ca*).

*For full details on STARS, see Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. stars.aashe.org

INTRODUCTION

Message From the President

The University of Waterloo's first Environmental Sustainability Strategy has reached a successful conclusion, marking a significant milestone on our journey to a more sustainable future for our institution. This achievement is a testament to the creativity, collaboration, and determination of our students, faculty, staff, and partners. Together, we completed or made significant progress on 22 of the Strategy's 27 objectives.

Sustainability continues to shape how we plan, build, and operate. Through our climate action plan *Shift:Neutral*, we are integrating sustainability into campus planning prioritizing design, investment, and decarbonization. We are also advancing a five-year Sustainable Transportation Plan to reduce our impact and promote sustainable travel. This work aligns with the forthcoming Campus Plan to ensure coordinated progress and reflect our commitment to treating campus as a living system – where natural spaces, built environments, and community well-being are interconnected.

We are also deepening our understanding of sustainability through Indigenous perspectives. The new Indigenous outdoor gathering space, ceremonial fire grounds, and medicine gardens honour relationships with the land and reflect a holistic approach to stewardship.

Our academic mission remains central to our sustainability work. Programs like Sustainability and Financial Management, and research institutes such as the Waterloo Climate Institute and Future Cities Institute, prepare our community to tackle global challenges at the intersection of science, technology, and society.

Our collective efforts helped Waterloo earn STARS Gold designation in 2025 and place among the top 100 universities in the world for sustainability in the QS rankings. While we celebrate these successes, we remain mindful of the challenges ahead – from climate change to economic and geopolitical uncertainty. Meeting them will require steady leadership and continued collective action.

As we look to the decade ahead, sustainability will remain central to our long-term vision, guided by Waterloo at 100 and the Global Futures. It will also guide how we live our values: thinking differently, acting with purpose, and working together to create a sustainable future for generations to come.

Thank you to everyone in our community for your commitment, creativity, and support. Your efforts are helping Waterloo lead with purpose and impact.

I am pleased to present Waterloo's 2025 Environmental Sustainability Report, marking the successful conclusion of our first institution-wide Sustainability Strategy.

Sincerely,

VIVEK GOEL

PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

PROGRESS

Summary of Progress

At a Glance

22/27
Sustainability strategy objectives complete or mostly complete

>900
courses with likely connections to the UN SDGs

40%
of food purchased by Food Services is locally sourced or sustainably certified

2.9% CO_2
decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from 2015 base year (Scope 1 & 2)

>360
faculty members conducting research related to the UN SDGs

3.6%
decrease in energy intensity since 2015

FAIR TRADE
Campus designation since 2019

87%
of commuting trips to campus made using a sustainable mode of travel

>230
students participating in the Sustainability Leadership Certificate

>20%
of all University departments certified to at least Green Office Bronze

60th
Globally in the QS Sustainability Ranking (2025)

stars a program of aashe **GOLD** through AASHE (2025)


PETER RUSSELL ROCK GARDEN

OVERVIEW OF 2017-2025 ESS

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) launched in 2017 as Waterloo's inaugural effort to strategically define areas of importance for campus sustainability and encourage action and impact.

The ESS included 27 objectives that covered academics, operations, and engagement, and was designed to achieve three major outcomes:

› **Align members of the campus community around key directions** – this included establishing long term targets such as zero waste and carbon neutrality to ensure all other planning efforts and projects could orient themselves around campus goals.

› **Set up systems and processes** – this included establishing new standards, guidelines, operating procedures, data collection, oversight of the Sustainability Office, and basic management systems.

› **Catalyze new actions to make progress** – this included launching new funding streams and encouraging work from many departments to strive toward campus goals, through projects, events, programs, and subsequent plans.

KEY SUCCESSES

Waterloo has made strong progress since 2017, going from having few institutional sustainability commitments or management processes to being recognized globally for leadership in key areas. As this is the last report under the 2017-2025 ESS, each section summarizes the successes achieved and further opportunities in each individual objective.

Overall, several key successes for the campus stand out:

› **Academic innovation** – Waterloo has clearly deepened efforts in its core mission to support new research and educational opportunities related to sustainability, and has anchored Sustainability among five Global Futures.

› **Planning** – Waterloo has built stronger planning processes and foundations within campus operations, including climate and energy, waste, transportation, and grounds.

› **Projects and actions** – Waterloo has launched new actions and investments across all operational areas linked to strategic objectives.

› **Capacity** – Waterloo has expanded its internal capacity for action in key areas, such as Plant Operations and the Sustainability Office.

› **Engagement** – Waterloo has created numerous opportunities for student and employee engagement and training through Green Office, Labs, and Residence programs.

› **Reputation** – Waterloo has strengthened its scoring and rankings in third-party frameworks, including the THE Impact Ranking and QS Sustainability Ranking, and received the Gold rating through the STARS program.

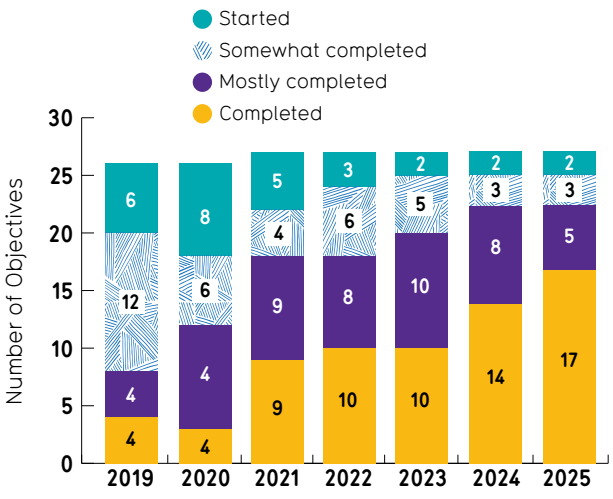
› **Integration** – Sustainability has been much more deeply connected to other institutional planning efforts, including the Strategic Plan, Waterloo at 100, and the forthcoming Campus Plan, moving sustainability from a "standalone" to an important part of campus development.

These successes can be a foundation for additional action as part of the 2026-2030 Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

PROGRESS TOWARD OBJECTIVES

The figures below summarize the number of Environmental Sustainability Strategy objectives by various stages of completion, including those with tentative/temporary fluctuations, as of June 2025.

Figure 1: Overall Objective Status over Time



The table below summarizes the status of each objective under the sections:

A – ACADEMICS **O** – OPERATIONS **E** – ENGAGEMENT **G** – GOVERNANCE

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE	STATUS
TEACHING & LEARNING	
A1: By 2019, ensure undergraduate students from any program of study will have the opportunity to learn about sustainability in their courses.	 Complete
A2: By 2025, identify and implement flexible strategies for five programs of study to more deeply integrate sustainability within the curriculum.	 Complete
A3: By 2025, every startup emerging from supporting programs at Waterloo will have access to tools and training to embed sustainability into their emerging business plans and models.	 Started
RESEARCH	
A4: By 2020, celebrate sustainability research as a core thematic strength of Waterloo's reputation and identity.	 Complete
A5: By 2025, become a world leader for research excellence in five sustainability related themes.	 Somewhat complete
A6: By 2025, establish Waterloo as a "go-to" hub for knowledge and expertise on sustainability challenges.	 Mostly complete
A7: By 2018, implement three new sustainability-related projects annually on campus using faculty and student expertise; by 2025, implement at least eight new projects annually.	 Complete ('18)  Complete ('25)
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY	
O1: By 2019, develop a long-term Climate and Energy Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, with interim milestones for 2025 and 2035; achieve a 17.5 per cent reduction in GHG emissions by 2025 from a 2015 baseline.	 Complete ('19)  Somewhat complete ('25)
O2: Implement cost-effective and practical strategies to reduce or minimize growth in energy use on campus.	 Mostly complete
WASTE	
O3: By 2025, achieve a 60 per cent diversion rate; by 2035, become a zero-waste (90 per cent diversion rate) campus.	 Started

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE	STATUS
WATER	
O4: By 2025, reduce water intensity by five per cent per square metre from a 2015 baseline.	 Somewhat complete
O5: By 2025, expand the deployment of stormwater management technologies to targeted areas.	 Complete
TRANSPORTATION	
O6: By 2025, increase to 90 per cent the proportion of sustainable commuting trips from a 2016 baseline of 85 per cent.	 Mostly complete
O7: By 2020, increase electric and alternative-fuel vehicle use on campus.	 Complete
O8: By 2025, reduce fossil fuel consumption across the campus fleet by 25 per cent from a 2015 baseline.	 Complete
GROUNDS	
O9: By 2025, all University grounds will be maintained according to sustainable landscaping standards, and plans developed for remediation and preservation of specific natural areas of concern.	 Mostly complete
FOOD SYSTEMS	
O10: By 2025, 40 per cent of all Food Services food and beverage purchases are produced on-site, locally, or are third-party certified for sustainability.	 Complete
O11: By 2018, achieve and maintain a Fair Trade Campus designation.	 Complete
O12: By 2020, deliver multifaceted programming to grow student and employee awareness about healthy and sustainable food choices.	 Complete
PROCUREMENT	
O13: By 2020, evaluate life cycle cost and require sustainability disclosure from suppliers for all purchasing decisions over $100,000.	 Complete
O14: By 2018, establish baseline data and targets to improve the percent of campus-wide purchases that meet third-party standards for paper, electronic equipment, and cleaning supplies.	 Complete

SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVE	STATUS
COMMUNICATIONS	
E1: By 2020, Waterloo broadly distributes timely and audience-relevant information about sustainability initiatives and opportunities within the campus community.	 Complete
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT	
E2: By 2020, additional programming is developed for incoming students during orientation and in residences to encourage sustainable living on campus.	 Complete
E3: By 2018, establish a sustainability leaders program in partnership with students from residences, clubs and societies, student government, and for students in off-campus housing.	 Complete
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	
E4: By 2025, increase from five per cent to 25 per cent the proportion of university departments that are Green Office certified.	 Mostly complete
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
E5: By 2020, Waterloo is recognized as a sustainability leader in Waterloo Region.	 Complete
GOVERNANCE AND BENCH-MARKING	
G1: By 2025, achieve and maintain a STARS Gold designation through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.	 Complete

KEY CHALLENGES

While Waterloo has taken large steps, internal and external contexts continue to shift rapidly, accelerating issues that were well understood and bringing forward new challenges that were unforeseen when the ESS was originally developed.

Key challenges that Waterloo has faced throughout the ESS include:

› **Financial constraints** – A series of changes to funding models for higher education in Ontario, including tuition freezes, grant restrictions, and international student enrollment caps, have reduced the financial capacity at Waterloo and across the higher education sector.

› **Shifting public interest** – Public opinion has oscillated multiple times around sustainability topics, from enthusiasm during the global youth climate strikes in 2019 and concern around extreme weather events such as hurricanes and wildfires, to increasing polarization and politicization of climate policies and a resurgence of climate denialism and misinformation.

› **Policy uncertainty** – Tightly tied to public interest, Waterloo faces continuously shifting external compliance requirements and policy changes, including on-and-off-again incentives for energy efficiency and decarbonization, two separate carbon pricing regimes that were both retracted, complex waste and plastics reduction regulations, improvements and deteriorations in the provincial electricity grid, and unclear trajectories for everything from climate disclosures in financial reporting to supply chain accountability.

› **"Polycrisis"** – The world has grappled with an accelerating series of real, urgent, and highly interconnected issues, including affordability and cost of living, uncertain geopolitics including trade and hot wars, major equity and justice advances and setbacks, the rise of new technologies like AI, the proliferation of misinformation and related reductions in social and institutional trust, democratic declines, and the enormous disruption and lingering impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic and other persistent health issues.

› **Climate and biodiversity crisis** – The lack of global progress on environmental issues such as climate change and biodiversity collapse has created new discrete risks, while accelerating almost all other aspects of the polycrisis that society faces. 2024 was the hottest year ever recorded, surpassing 2023, and the top 10 hottest years ever recorded are all from 2015 to 2024. This has directly translated into rising food and commodity prices globally and locally, increasing pressure on Waterloo's aging energy and building infrastructure, and changing climate patterns that pose both acute and long-term health and safety risks to the campus community, including freezing rain, air quality, new disease transmission vectors, supply chain uncertainty, energy security, and extreme heat risks, among others.

In a time of rapid change, it is expected that each of the above challenges will continue. Going forward, this means that Waterloo will need to be much more integrated in its planning work, ensuring that sustainability efforts are closely aligned with institutional priorities and opportunities. While there will be many constraints, it reinforces the need for proactive investment in operational efficiency, long-term infrastructure planning and future-proofing, risk management, brand and reputational advancement, global impact, and strategic differentiation, all of which are critical sustainability value-adds.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION

In May 2021, the University of Waterloo declared a climate emergency, recognizing the urgency and importance of acting upon the climate crisis. The declaration included 10 commitments, including to report annually on progress. Action on climate change is woven throughout this longer report. For clarity, the section below also provides a non-exhaustive summary of actions and progress to date against the climate emergency declaration.

10 commitments from the climate emergency declaration

1. Mobilizing and enabling climate research

- Key research institutes whose work relates to climate include the Waterloo Climate Institute, Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy, Water Institute, Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics, Future Cities Institute, and Waterloo Institute for Nanotechnology
- Success in Climate Action and Awareness funding
- Six Waterloo authors on IPCC sixth assessment report, the most of any Canadian university

2. Engaging in meaningful partnerships around sustainability and climate

- Founding member of University Global Coalition
- Inaugural Host and ongoing member of Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada
- Signatory to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Race to Zero

3. Integrating sustainability and climate in the curriculum

- Launch of Climate and Environmental Change program
- Launch of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Diploma in Climate Change
- Launch of Sustainability and Financial Management program
- Initiation of Integrating Sustainability Across the Curriculum project
- Launch of the Sustainability Living Labs program
- NRCAN grant for Canada-wide effort to integrate climate within professional programs

4. Working toward carbon neutrality in operations through the *Shift*:Neutral climate action plan

- Over $15M in preliminary investments directly in energy and climate action projects, plus integration in other capital projects
- Decrease of 2.9 per cent in emissions from 2015 base year

5. Aligning investments with climate risks and opportunities

- Signatory to UN Principles of Responsible Investment
- Development of ESG Policy for investment portfolios
- Commitment in 2021 to measure and reduce carbon intensity of investment portfolios, reaching carbon neutral by 2040

6. Engaging employees and students as agents of change

- Launch of Green Labs program
- Continued support and growth of Green Residence and Green Office programs
- Hosting of campaigns and events to provide opportunities for involvement
- Evolving ongoing training opportunities for employees
- Launch of Sustainability Leadership Certificate

7. Demonstrating leadership and spurring change within the local community

- Founding member of the Region of Waterloo's TravelWise program
- Steward of Energize community decarbonisation simulation and board game resources
- Membership on local advisory boards and committees, including TransformWR, the climate action plan for Region of Waterloo

8. Making sustainability and climate action a strategic lens for all University decisions

- Publication of new building design guidelines and lifecycle costing guidelines, and stronger integration within the President's Advisory Committee on Design
- Integration of climate into Strategic Plan reporting framework
- Launch of the Sustainability Playbook

9. Approaching climate action efforts alongside considerations of equity, diversity, inclusion and Indigenization

- Preliminary discussions and collaborations have occurred between the EDI-R, Indigenous Relations, Campus Wellness, Campus Support and Accessibility, and Sustainability teams
- Joint panel discussion as part of SDG Week 2023 including EDI-R, Indigenous Relations, Campus Wellness, and the Sustainability Office

10. Reporting annually on progress, and providing opportunities for community input

- Inclusion in this annual report
- Integration of climate-related metrics in Strategic Plan KPIs

ACADEMICS

Teaching and Learning

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE A1: By 2019, ensure undergraduate students from any program of study will have the opportunity to learn about sustainability in their courses

Complete

INDICATORS:

>900 Total courses with likely connections to UN Sustainable Development Goals (2025)

OBJECTIVE A2: By 2025, identify and implement flexible strategies for five programs of study to more deeply integrate sustainability within the curriculum

Complete

INDICATORS:

6 New programs of study considering or integrating sustainability topics

OBJECTIVE A3: By 2025, every startup emerging from supporting programs at Waterloo will have access to tools and training to embed sustainability into their emerging business plans and models

Started

INDICATORS:

4 Resources and/or programs supporting integration of sustainability in entrepreneurship

Waterloo has a proud history of delivering leading environmental education, offering programs that span from building foundational understanding of environmental sciences through application of social, technological, economic, business, and governance approaches to addressing sustainability challenges. The Faculty of Environment has demonstrated longstanding leadership through its programs, and, over the past several years, sustainability learning opportunities have been woven through programs in all six faculties.

Since the launch of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, significant efforts to deepen sustainability learning opportunities for students have included:

› Launching new first-of-a-kind graduate programs to build specialist knowledge, including the Collaborative Water Program and Master of Climate Change

› Introducing new targeted undergraduate degree programs such as Sustainability and Financial Management as well as Climate and Environmental Change

› Creating learning opportunities that students from any program of study can weave into their learning journey, such as the Sustainability Diploma

› Implementing incentives for capstone courses in Engineering to integrate sustainability thinking in their final year projects, through the Capstone Sustainable Design award

› Launching a Sustainability Living Lab program to facilitate opportunities for hands-on learning about sustainability on campus, in partnership with operational partners

› Creating processes and systems to identify existing courses and curriculum that include important connections to sustainability topics and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

› Supporting the Integrating Sustainability in Curriculum project through the Teaching Innovation Incubator, bringing together cross-campus academic partners to plan and implement new opportunities to support instructors and program developers

› Creating co-curricular opportunities to recognize sustainability efforts of students within and beyond the classroom, through the Sustainability Leadership Certificate

› Funding the Sustainability Integration in Curriculum Grants to provide resources for programs to research, collaborate, and implement sustainability learning opportunities

› Initiating the Accelerating Climate Education project, a Canada-wide collaboration with NRCAN and industry partners to integrate climate adaptation competencies within professional degree programs

With impacts from global sustainability issues increasing, students also recognize the importance for their future career success. As more organizations are forced to deal with the cascading challenges of climate change and biodiversity collapse as well as navigate solutions to a more sustainable future, sustainability skills and competencies will be of increasing importance. The increasing number of external accreditation bodies for professional programs requiring sustainability competencies is a testament to the need for proactive integration.

Looking forward, Waterloo can continue implementation of recommendations that were developed during the Integrating Sustainability in the Curriculum project. Important areas still in development include:

› Strengthening communication of sustainability learning opportunities in existing curriculum

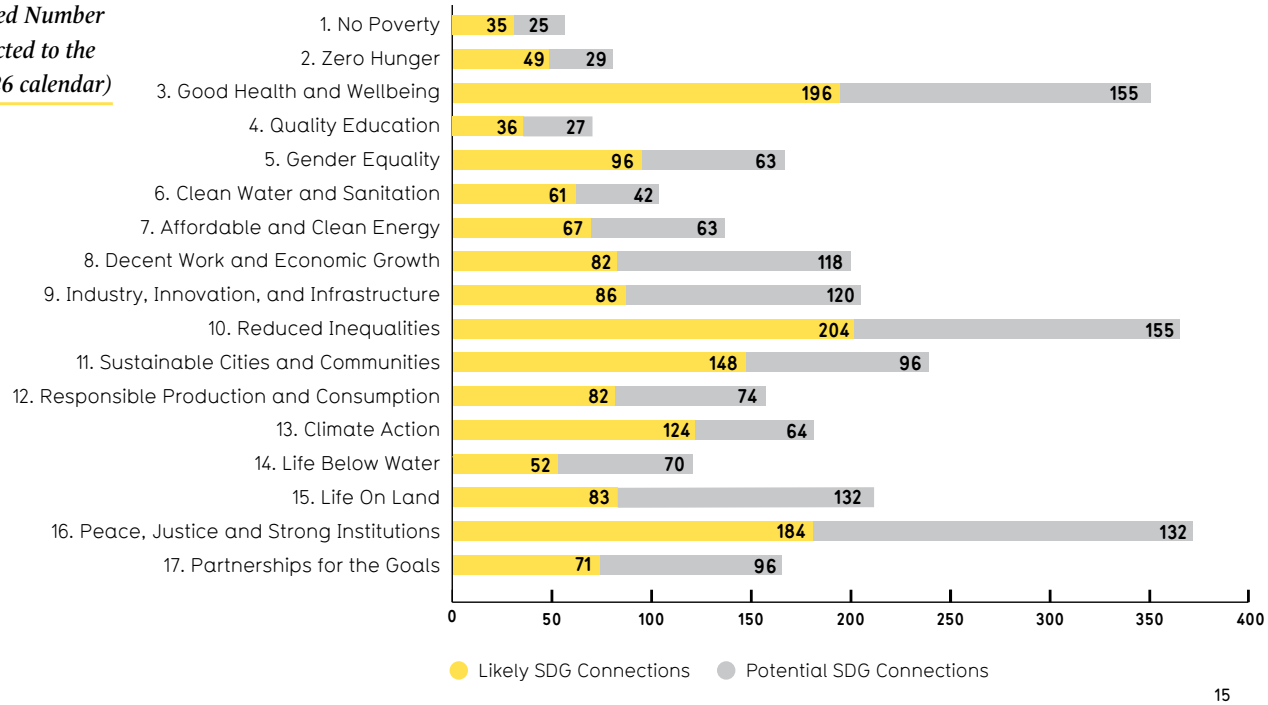
› Expanding resources to support departmental implementation

› Deepening integration with Indigenization and decolonization efforts

› Facilitating interdisciplinary sharing of resources and expertise beyond course units

› Reinforcing the importance of sustainability in curriculum, including embedding in student learning outcomes

Figure 2: Estimated Number of Courses Connected to the UN SDGs (2025-26 calendar)



Research

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE A4: By 2020, celebrate sustainability research as a core thematic strength of Waterloo's reputation and identity

Complete

INDICATORS:

28% Central news releases and research-focused Waterloo stories highlighting scholarship related to environmental sustainability

OBJECTIVE A5: By 2025, become a world leader for research excellence in five sustainability related themes

Somewhat complete

INDICATORS:

362 Faculty members conducting research advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2024)

40 Canada Research Chairs conducting research connected to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (out of 71)

24th Globally for Water Resources research from the Shanghai Ranking

OBJECTIVE A6: By 2025, establish Waterloo as a "go-to" hub for knowledge and expertise on sustainability challenges

Mostly complete

INDICATORS:

60th Overall ranking in QS Sustainability Ranking, globally

TOP 100 Globally for impact on 10 of the 17 UN SDGs, from the THE Impact Ranking

81 Number of countries from which research collaborators jointly published with UW researchers on topics related to the UN SDGs

OBJECTIVE A7: By 2018, implement three new sustainability-related projects annually on campus using faculty and student expertise; by 2025, implement at least eight new projects annually

Complete '18

Complete '25

INDICATORS:

17 Sustainability Living Lab project topics explored through class projects and capstones in 2024-25

Supporting UN SDGs:

Waterloo has also demonstrated global leadership in the creation and dissemination of sustainability knowledge through its research activities. It hosts interdisciplinary research centres and institutes focused on sustainability challenges, including climate change, sustainable energy, water, automotive transportation, nanotechnology and materials, aeronautics, and cities.

These strengths are evident in Waterloo's traditional academic rankings, breadth of publication output, and prominent citations and field-weighted impact scores. It is also evident in the range of local and global partnerships with other academic institutions, civil society, government, and industry to mobilize research findings into new commercial, policy, governance, and social impacts.

Over the past several years, examples of prominent sustainability-related research efforts have included:

› Prioritizing Sustainable Futures as a key theme and focal point of Waterloo's long-term strategic vision

› Launching new research institutes, including the Future Cities Institute founded by CAIVAN, and the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics

› Supporting Canada's national and municipal readiness for climate adaptation, through the Intact Centre for Climate Adaptation and Partners for Action

› Gaining significant media and public policy coverage through expert advice on major sustainability topics, particularly on impacts of climate change on the Canadian public

› Building Canadian municipalities' capacity to monitor, measure, and achieve net-zero climate action goal through the Municipal Net-Zero Research Partnership

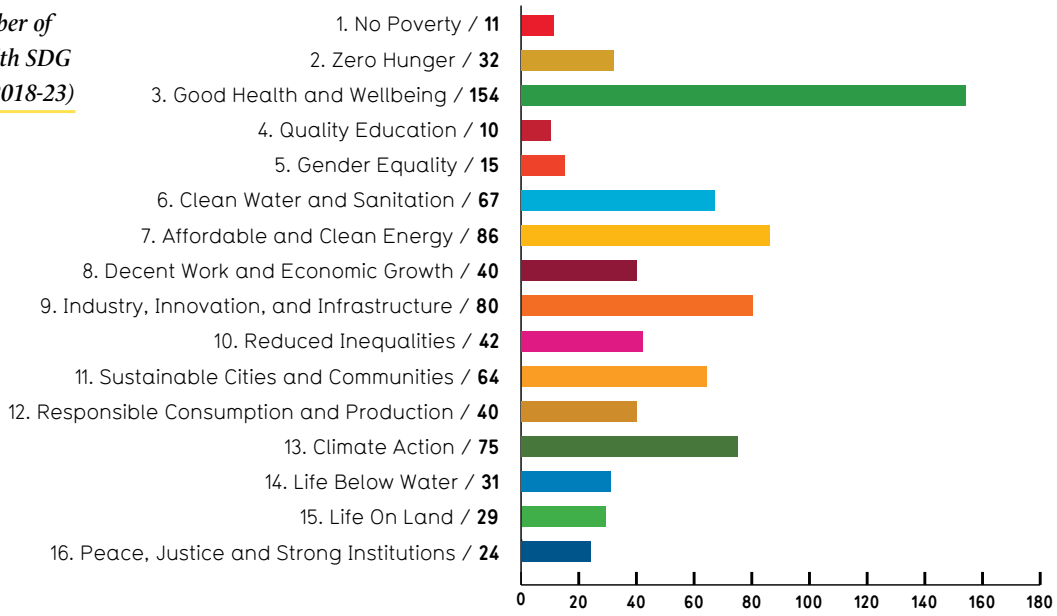
› Mobilizing cross-country academic and public sector partnerships to influence national progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as the inaugural host of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canadian chapter

› Advancing technology development and application in important areas ranging from advanced battery chemistries to water treatment for forever chemicals, from improved recycling in a circular economy to next generation nuclear reactors, and from remote sensing and satellites that monitor climate impacts on glaciers to using solar power to desalinize seawater, to name some examples

› Demonstrating leadership as a key partner in one of the largest university-led water research programs in the world, through Global Water Futures

› Participation of key experts in development of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's sixth assessment report, where Waterloo had the highest number of authors of any Canadian institution

Figure 3: Number of Researchers with SDG Publications (2018-23)



OPERATIONS

Climate Change and Energy

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE 01: By 2019, develop a long-term Climate and Energy Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, with interim milestones for 2025 and 2035; achieve a 17.5 per cent reduction in GHG emissions by 2025 from a 2015 baseline

Complete '19

Somewhat complete '25

INDICATORS:

COMPLETE Development of *Shift*:Neutral Climate Action Plan

2.9% Reduction in emissions from 2015

36,378 Tonnes of GHG emissions (Scope 1 and 2)

OBJECTIVE 02: Implement cost-effective and practical strategies to reduce or minimize growth in energy use on campus

Mostly complete

INDICATORS:

400 (NekWh/m^2) Weather-normalized energy intensity**

3.6% Reduction in energy intensity from 2015 (weather-normalized)

**Energy intensities are presented in both raw/unadjusted terms as well as post-2015 normalized to the 2015 heating degree day average to better compare the influence of outdoor air temperature. Years for which the raw intensity is less than the normalized intensity is typically due to a milder winter, whereas years for which raw intensity is higher than normalized intensity is typically due to a colder than average winter.

Supporting UN SDGs:

Waterloo uses energy across the campus for many purposes, including space and water heating, cooling, lighting, ventilation, appliances, equipment, and more. Of these uses, space heating accounts for around half of all energy consumption and is the largest source of emissions.

The campus has reduced its total energy intensity by 3.6 per cent since 2015, adjusting for weather conditions, and 5.2 per cent since its peak in 2019, net of external temperature shifts. This has been achieved over the past three years through initiation of key improvements, including:

› Repairing steam traps within the central plant, avoiding wasted heat and improving plant efficiency

› Upgrading mechanical and HVAC systems with more efficient equipment

› Recommissioning building controls to optimize performance and reduce energy consumption while maintaining comfort

› Replacing inefficient fluorescent lights with modern LED lighting

› Launching a $1million utility revolving fund, to support new energy efficiency projects and reinvesting savings into new projects

Similarly, Waterloo's combined Scope 1 and 2 emissions have decreased by 2.9 per cent from the 2015 base year. It is important to note why and how emissions have changed. Waterloo's Scope 1 (direct) emissions from heating reduced by 9.4 per cent in 2024, and over 19.5 per cent from their peak in 2019, thanks to both milder winters and the above investments and improvements. However, Scope 2 (indirect) emissions from electricity supplied from the provincial energy grid has increased by over 42 per cent from 2015 to 2024, offsetting many of the Scope 1 emissions savings. Waterloo's total electricity consumption increased by less than 8 per cent over the same period. The increase in emissions is almost entirely due to the sharp increase in gas use within Ontario's power grid.

In the design of Waterloo's 2020-2025 climate action plan, it was forecasted that there would be slight increases in the emissions intensity of the electricity grid. Throughout the early 2020s, gas-fired electricity generation increased faster than expected. As of 2023, electricity emission factors already exceeded the projected levels that Ontario indicated would come in 2027, as gas is used to substitute baseload power during refurbishment of the province's nuclear fleet. Higher-than-projected electricity demand due to advanced manufacturing, data centres, and electrification have all increased the need for power, which is almost completely being marginally supplied by gas.

This means that, in the short to medium-term, it will be difficult for Waterloo to reach emission reduction targets that include Scope 2 emissions. Waterloo will need to re-evaluate its 2030 target and provide nuance on the targeted reductions across different Scopes to ensure clarity for stakeholders. It will also mean that projects which reduce electricity consumption, such as lighting, cooling, equipment, and solar photovoltaic systems, will also have more important roles to play in decarbonization strategies than they did previously.

Projects currently in progress, which will continue to reduce emissions, include:

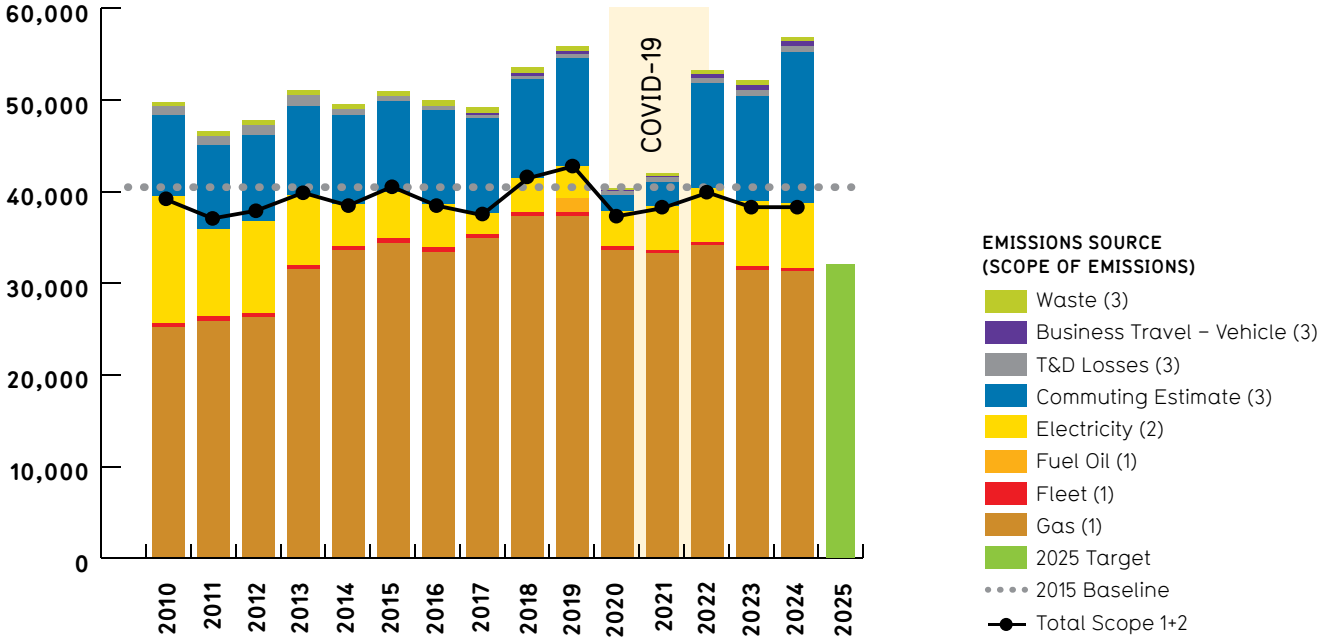
› **QNC/MC Heat Recovery:** Entering into service in 2025, this project captures waste heat from the Graham Data Centre and uses it in QNC, which has year-round heating needs. It is expected to reduce emissions by 5 per cent.

› **Central Plant Recommissioning:** This project is currently being evaluated to recommission the heat recovery system in the Central Plant. It is expected to reduce emissions between 3-5 per cent.

› **Building Recommissioning:** This is an ongoing project for all buildings to have tune-ups to their controls and ensure proper sequencing of operations. Savings from existing projects have ranged between 5-30 per cent depending on the building.

› **CIF Heat Pumps and Solar:** This project is upgrading the aging boiler systems in CIF for space and water heating, replacing with air-source heat pumps and adding a large solar photovoltaic system to the Field House roof.

*Figure 4: Total Emissions (t CO_2-e)**



*To ensure accountability, transparency, and holism, the University of Waterloo follows the Greenhouse Gas Protocol guidance for accounting of greenhouse gas emissions. The Protocol defines emissions as follows:

Scope 1 - Emissions directly from combustion at the University

Scope 2 - Indirect emissions from energy

Scope 3 - Other indirect emissions from upstream or downstream supply chain or services

Scope 3 can include many sources of emissions. Other material sources which are not included above, but for which ongoing quantification is in progress, include emissions from the following sources (order-of-magnitude estimates are noted where available):

› Employee air travel for University activities, such as conferences and research (estimated 3,600 tCO2-e)

› Student air travel for University activities, such as Co-op, field work, etc. (estimated 3,300 tCO2-e)

› The supply chain for food purchased and sold on campus (estimated 4,900 tCO2-e)

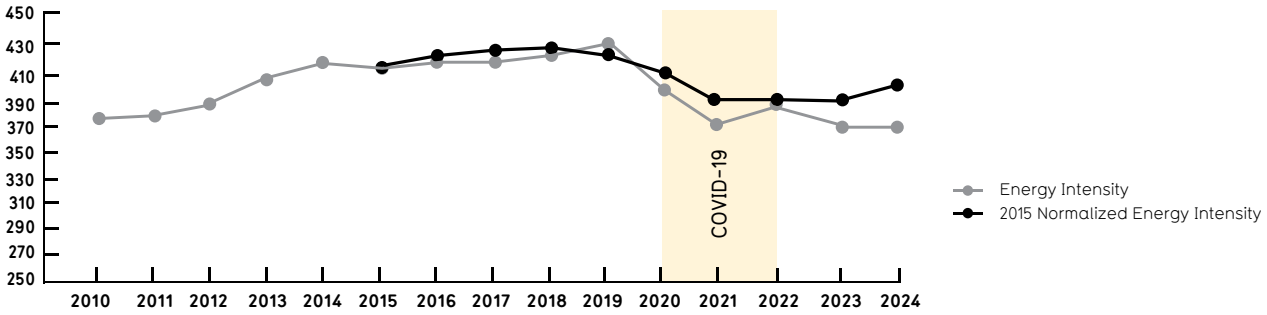
› The supply chain for other products and commodities used on campus (estimates forthcoming)

› Embodied carbon in construction materials (estimates forthcoming)

› Transportation of goods and services to the campus (estimates forthcoming)

› Investments in the University's pension and endowment funds (estimated 118,000 tCO2-e as of 2023)

*Figure 5: Energy Intensity (Normalized ekWh/m²)**



*Energy intensities are presented in both raw/unadjusted terms as well as post-2015 normalized to the 2015 heating degree day average to better compare the influence of outdoor air temperature. Years for which the raw intensity is less than the normalized intensity is typically due to a milder winter, whereas years for which raw intensity is higher than normalized intensity is typically due to a colder than average winter.

Waste

Supporting UN SDGs:

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE 03: By 2025, achieve a 60 per cent diversion rate; by 2035, become a zero-waste campus (90 per cent diversion rate)

Started

INDICATORS:

28.4%
Waste diverted from landfill

2,645
Tonnes of waste sent to landfill

Since the launch of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy in 2017, Waterloo has made major improvements to its waste systems on campus. While the University has had longstanding waste management programs, many of the core services were not fully contracted and there was limited information available about waste system performance. Investments over the past eight years have included:

- Launching a new waste hauling contract in 2018 for landfill, recycling, cardboard, and organics
- Developing a waste receptacle standard to ensure consistency in design, layout, and colour
- Expanding organics collection in food service areas and lunchrooms
- Standardizing signage with photo descriptions
- Initiating programs for large item recycling, including furniture and equipment
- Piloting a waste sorting digital application and gamification tool
- Starting new waste reduction programs such as the Eco Container and Eco Mug
- Transitioning many materials from single-use to reusable options, or from plastics to paper-based options
- Expanding reuse options through the Free Store, Campus Housing move-out program, UW Repair workshops, and swap events
- Expanding student and employee training and awareness around waste sorting and waste reduction
- Formalizing a concrete recycling program with Civil and Environmental Engineering for heavy lab waste
- Focusing efforts to pilot strategic interventions in some of the worst-performing buildings, particularly in Campus Housing

As a result of these programs, Waterloo's core waste diversion rate – the amount of materials effectively reduced, reused, composted, or recycled divided by the total amount of waste generated – was steadily increasing, rising from 18 per cent in 2015 and reaching 35 per cent by 2019.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the diversion rate has fluctuated slightly up and down but has not increased. As of 2024, the diversion rate of 28.4 per cent remains low by industry standards, although it is difficult to compare with peer universities due to measurement differences. Nonetheless, annual waste audits consistently demonstrate that between 70-80 per cent of what is currently sent to landfill could otherwise be captured in an existing recycling or organics program. There are also areas of campus that generate very heavy materials, such as in warehouse space, labs that work with concrete and steel, residence buildings, and food services areas, which can disproportionately impact overall campus performance.

Waste reduction is consistently raised as a priority among many campus partners and groups, and further effort will be needed to better manage waste reduction efforts. Stronger emphasis on reducing waste – rather than primarily managing its recycling – needs to be more deeply integrated across all units and woven into campus culture, processes, and procedures.

Figure 6: Diversion Rate (%) and Landfill Weight (t)

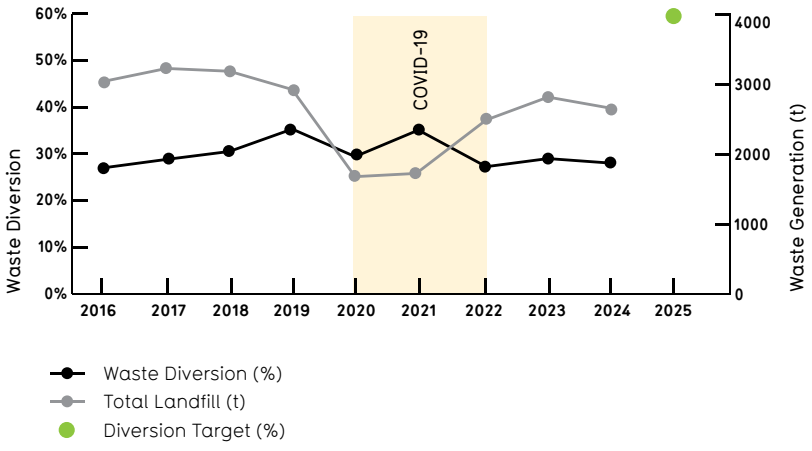
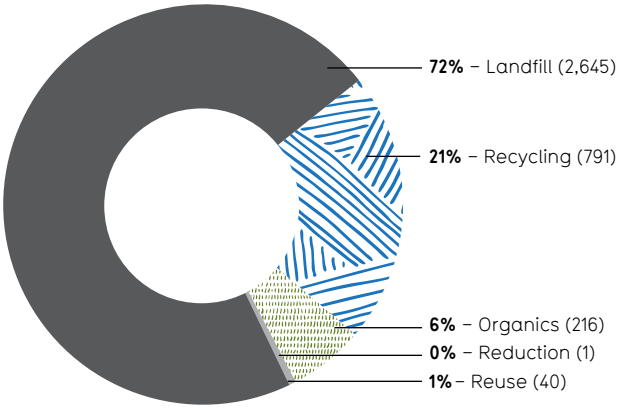


Figure 7: 2024 Waste Composition (tonnes in brackets)



Water

Supporting UN SDGs:

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE 04: By 2025, reduce water intensity by 5 per cent per square metre from a 2015 baseline

Somewhat complete

INDICATORS:

0%* Reduction in water use intensity since 2015

0.76 Metres cubed water use per square metre

OBJECTIVE 05: By 2025, expand the deployment of stormwater management technologies to targeted areas

Complete

INDICATORS:

4 New stormwater management features on campus

15 Stormwater features implemented on campus

*Subject to review. Previous years had seen a decline and 2024 had several anomalies that may be one-time.

University of Waterloo uses water across campus for many different purposes, including bathrooms, kitchens, heating and cooling, and laboratories. Southwestern Ontario is blessed with large amounts of freshwater, which puts less pressure on conservation measures compared to many other jurisdictions. However, over the past five years, Waterloo has made investments to prioritize efficiency in water use, including:

› A large investment in more than 1,500 water-efficient showerheads and over 3,500 low-flow faucets

› Upgrades to lab equipment to reduce water consumption

› Outreach and engagement activities with residence students, labs, and offices to encourage water reduction strategies

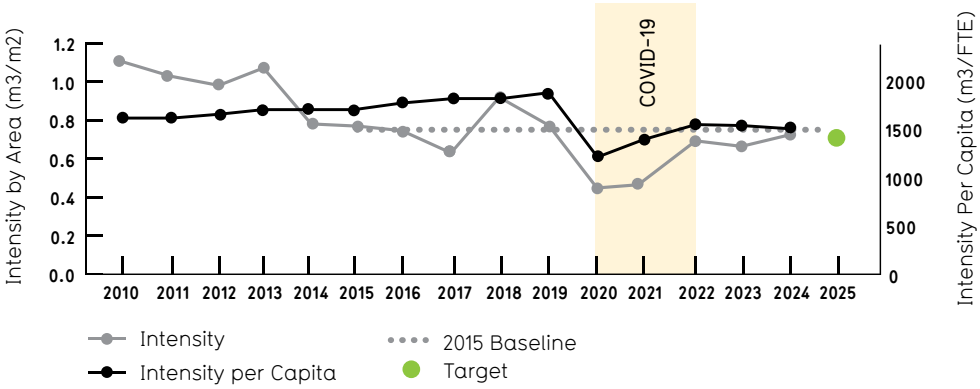
› Adding an additional green roof to the SLC/PAC expansion

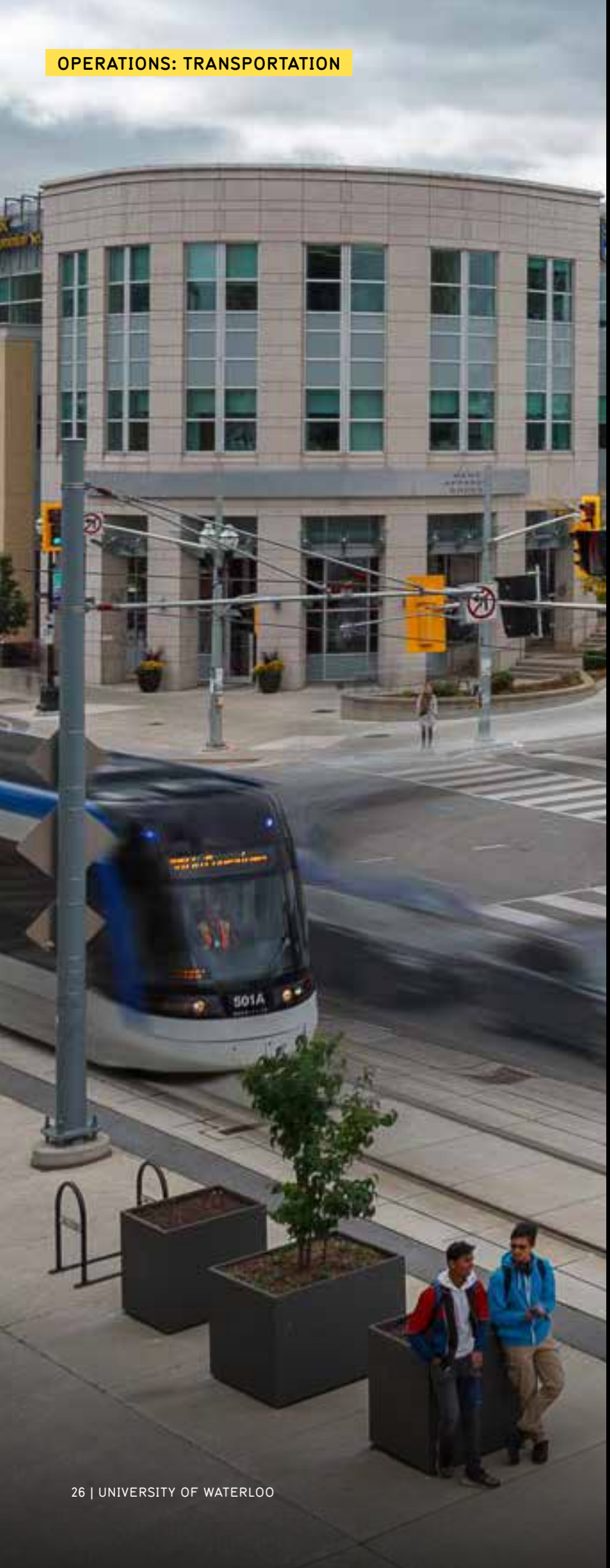
For its efforts to install more water-efficient fixtures, University of Waterloo received the Water Efficient Technology award from the Region of Waterloo in 2024.

There was a slight increase in overall consumption in 2024 that will need to be monitored, but in 2022 and 2023, Waterloo had met its target of reducing water consumption by 5 per cent per square meter since 2015. The campus has also achieved a 10.7 per cent reduction in per-capita water consumption since 2015.

Water efficiency requirements are being integrated into the updated sustainable building standard, and further efforts to introduce low-flow and efficient fixtures in laboratories are being reviewed. Efforts to prioritize equipment and appliances that reduce water consumption should also be prioritized in the future.

Figure 8: Water Intensity by Area and Per Capita





Transportation

Supporting UN SDGs:

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE 06: By 2025, increase to 90 per cent the proportion of sustainable commuting trips from a 2016 baseline of 85 per cent

Mostly Complete

INDICATORS:

87% Combined student and employee trips* to campus using a sustainable mode (2024)

92% Student trips* by walking, cycling, carpooling, transit, or online learning (2024)

54% Employee commuting trips* by walking, cycling, carpooling, transit, or telework (2024)

OBJECTIVE 07: By 2020, increase electric and alternative-fuel vehicle use on campus

Complete

INDICATORS:

8% Of vehicles used to commute to campus are electric or plug-in hybrid electric (2024)

OBJECTIVE 08: By 2025, reduce fossil fuel consumption across the campus fleet by 25 per cent from a 2015 baseline

Complete

INDICATORS:

25% Reduction in fleet fuel use since 2015

164,859 Litres fuel consumption

Waterloo moves more than 40,000 people to, from, and around the campus daily. The University has supported a growing suite of services and programs to encourage sustainable transportation options among employees and students, including:

› Launching 18 electric vehicle charging stations for fleet and commuter use

› Building two secure bike parking shelters for almost 100 bikes

› Collaborating with Region of Waterloo for integration of ION light rail transit and development of a new transit hub on East Campus

› Increasing promotion of TravelWise services for employees, including carpool matching, discounted transit passes, and an emergency ride home program

› Rapidly expanding use of remote working during COVID-19

› Piloting and partnering on three bikeshare programs with the Region of Waterloo and City of Waterloo, including Neuron e-bike and e-scooter program since 2023

› Developing engagement programming through Bike Month to encourage active transportation

› Expanding EV purchases through incentives and grants, with over 10 per cent of the fleet now electric

› Hiring a Sustainable Transportation Specialist and initiating development of Waterloo's first Sustainable Transportation Plan

As a result, Waterloo has slightly increased the amount of sustainable travel to campus since the mid-2010s, and the shift to remote working or learning during the pandemic remains the single largest transportation change the University has seen, with effects persisting through 2025. Transit ridership also dropped steeply in the early years of the pandemic but has since mostly recovered. Commuter preferences for carpooling have declined sharply, as shown in Waterloo's own survey data, with students and employees preferring the flexibility of active transportation or public transit wherever possible. A mix of remote working and housing affordability have encouraged or pushed employees and students to live further away from campus. Public policy support for electric vehicles has also increased use of EVs, from almost nothing in 2015 to approximately 8 per cent of reported vehicle use from commuters, tracking alongside trends in vehicle sales across Canada.

In addition, continued procurement of electric, hybrid, and more fuel-efficient right-sized vehicles has led to a decline of 25 per cent in fuel consumption from campus-owned fleet vehicles, reaching the University's 2025 target.

These rapid shifts are reflected in forthcoming planning about the future of Waterloo's support for sustainable transportation.

Figure 9: Sustainable Trips to Campus (% of Total)*

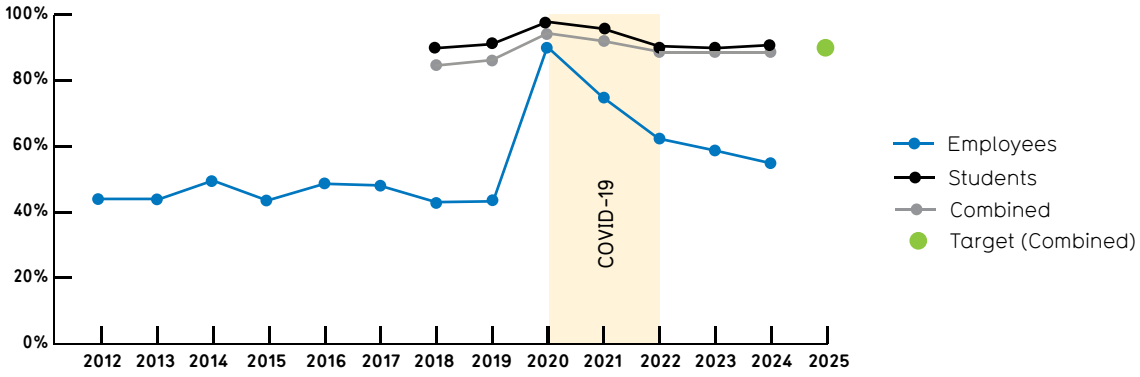
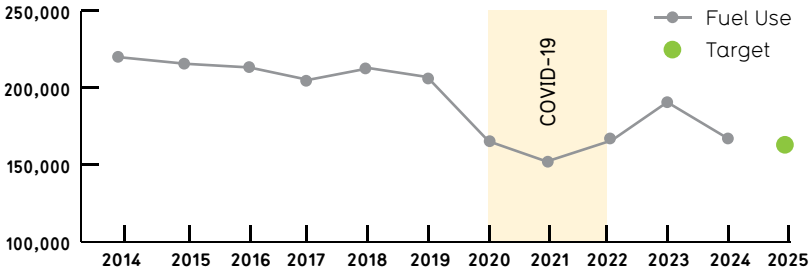


Figure 10: Fleet Fuel Use (L)



*"Trips" is used generically to refer to how students and employees move to a place of work or study from their place of residence. This includes, for example, trips from students living in residences as they travel to academic buildings, as well as "avoided trips" from remote learning or work-from-home activity. Sustainable trips include those by walking, cycling, transit, carpooling, or remote working/learning.

Grounds

Supporting UN SDGs:

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE 09: By 2025, all University grounds will be maintained according to sustainable landscaping standards, and plans developed for remediation and preservation of specific natural areas of concern

Mostly complete

INDICATORS:

100% Grounds managed to integrated pest management principles

IN PROGRESS

Implementation of the Sustainable Land Care Standard

Waterloo is home to large areas of urban greenspace, supporting more than 1,900 species of plants, animals, insects, fish, fungi and more on the main campus. The University has established areas such as the Environmental Reserve, the Healing Forest, and the Laurel Creek corridor as areas to be protected and emphasizes the preservation of remaining green spaces within the main campus in its campus planning. Since the launch of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Waterloo has taken additional efforts to naturalize and restore parts of the campus, including:

› Establishing a new Sustainable Land Care Standard, to prioritize operational practices that protect biodiversity, soil, and water systems

› Managing invasive species in targeted areas, including buckthorn in the campus woodlot, and areas where garlic mustard has overgrown other plants

› Planting over 1,000 trees since 2023, drawing on student and employee volunteer support to expand urban forestry

› Crowdsourcing species identification and creating opportunities for the campus community to learn about nature through BioBlitz events

› Creating systems to directly support wildlife on campus, including installing bird-friendly decals on the MC-SLC bridge to prevent collisions, and adding bird and bat nesting boxes in the Environmental Reserve to create suitable habitats

› Expanding the Arts-Environment Gardens to create naturalized spaces for relaxation and community building

› Electrifying grounds maintenance equipment, including cutters and mowers, to reduce emissions, noise, and air pollution, while improving health and safety for operators

› Improving salt management practices through piloting of a brine system for campus walkways, and managing salt application in sensitive areas

Going forward, Waterloo can continue implementation of standard operating procedures to support the Sustainable Land Care standard, and identifying additional opportunities to protect and re-naturalize greenspaces on campus will be a major theme for the forthcoming Campus Plan.

Food

Supporting UN SDGs:

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE 010: By 2025, 40 per cent of all Food Services food and beverage purchases are produced on-site, locally, or are third-party certified for sustainability

Complete

INDICATORS:

40% Of all food and beverage purchases are local, produced on-site, or third-party certified for sustainability

OBJECTIVE 011: By 2018, achieve and maintain a Fair Trade Campus designation

Complete

INDICATORS:

COMPLETE Fair Trade Campus designation received May 2019

OBJECTIVE 012: By 2020, deliver multifaceted programming to grow student and employee awareness about healthy and sustainable food choices

Complete

INDICATORS:

19 Projects or initiatives to increase awareness of healthy and sustainable food

Waterloo serves tens of thousands of meals across campus each day. In residence dining halls, main campus outlets, student-run coffee and donut shops, and conferences and events, food and drinks are important parts of campus life to build individual health, strengthen community, and sustain the work of a vibrant University. Food also comes with a large environmental impact globally, responsible for more than a quarter of greenhouse emissions, occupying nearly half of the habitable land area, and acting as the leading cause of deforestation and top consumer of freshwater.

On campus, Waterloo has strengthened its approach to sustainable food systems over the past decade, including through the following initiatives:

› Increasing the percentage of local and sustainably certified food in campus menus, achieving the campus' ambitious 40 per cent target

› Partnering with local beekeepers and supporting the Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative to procure within the community

› Receiving the Fair Trade Campus designation since 2019 for efforts to procure Fair Trade Certified coffee, tea, and chocolate in University and student-run food service areas

› Supporting the toonie picnic, Fairtrade promotional events, plant-based and zero-waste themed cooking shows, and other community events to build awareness and sustainable food skills

› Hosting the Farm Market to bring locally grown produce directly to students and employees

› Increasing plant-based options on campus menus, including multiple full-protein options in residence dining halls and piloting plant-based food outlets

› Expanding community gardens to provide opportunities for students and employees to grow food directly on campus

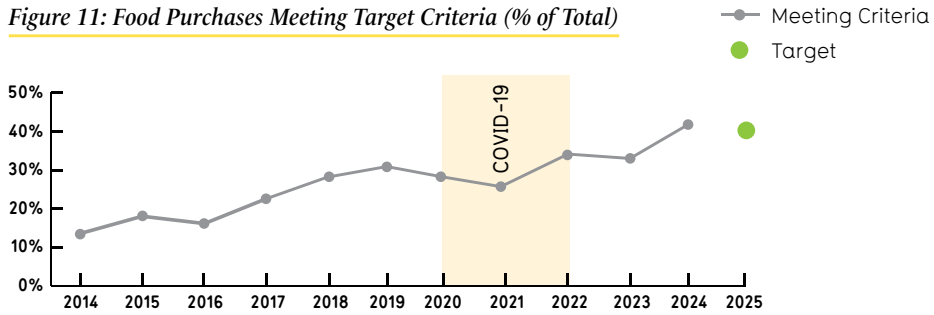
› Introducing a pay-by-weight approach in residence dining halls to reduce food waste

› Exploring options for including environmental impacts on food labelling

› Developing preliminary estimates for the upstream greenhouse gas impacts of food served on campus

These efforts can continue to expand, and will need to account for emerging pressures, including the rising impacts of climate change on global food systems and the resulting price and food affordability risks. Students and employees at Waterloo already face food security challenges that will require careful support and planning. Supporting plant-based meal options, further reducing food waste, and supporting local food producers will remain important strategies to build food system resiliency and support healthy, sustainable, and affordable choices.

Figure 11: Food Purchases Meeting Target Criteria (% of Total)



Procurement

Supporting UN SDGs:

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE 013: By 2020, evaluate life cycle cost and require sustainability disclosure from suppliers for all purchasing decisions over $100,000

Complete

INDICATORS:

COMPLETE Development of lifecycle costing guideline and calculator

OBJECTIVE 014: By 2018, establish baseline data and targets to improve the percent of campus-wide purchases that meet third-party standards for paper, electronic equipment, and cleaning supplies

Complete

INDICATORS:

90% Of all paper purchases have FSC certification and/or recycled content

87% Of all major electronics purchased are certified to EPEAT Bronze or higher

71% Of all janitorial cleaning and paper products have an environmental certification

Waterloo has extensive supply chains to meet the learning, research, living, and working needs of the campus. Office supplies, furniture, paper, building materials, technology, appliances, research equipment, and cleaning products are just some of the major categories of goods and materials regularly delivered to campus. These purchases represent large "upstream" environmental impacts. Every item requires materials to be harvested from nature, energy and water in manufacturing and production, and transportation.

Through the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Waterloo has integrated sustainability into its procurement efforts through:

› Developing tracking systems for paper, IT, and cleaning supply categories, with substantial increases in sustainably certified product purchasing in paper and IT

› Launching a lifecycle costing guideline and calculator for large energy-consuming capital projects and building systems

› Creating a new Sustainable IT Procurement Guideline to set requirements for new IT hardware and software purchases

› Publishing a sustainable procurement guide on the Sustainability website to provide information to the campus community on credible sustainable procurement approaches and certifications

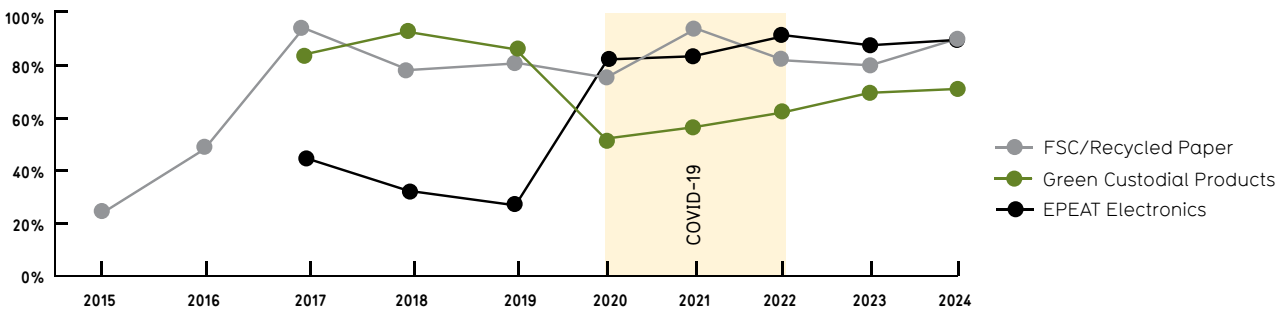
› Requiring calculations of embodied carbon in building materials as part of construction for new buildings

› Piloting a sustainability disclosure project with major suppliers to understand corporate sustainability commitments and actions

› Initiating a new supplier code of conduct

In the coming years, it will be important to deepen integration of sustainability within procurement processes. This can include more proactively establishing sustainability requirements for specific purchasing categories, integrating sustainability within RFP scoring, and establishing more robust mechanisms to monitor sustainability performance of vendors during the duration of their contracts with University of Waterloo.

Figure 12: Purchases Meeting Sustainability Criteria (% of Total)



ENGAGEMENT

Communications

Supporting UN SDGs:

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE E1: By 2020, Waterloo broadly distributes timely and audience-relevant information about sustainability initiatives and opportunities within the campus community

Complete

INDICATORS:

71,000	Visitors on the sustainability website
3,338	Total followers on social media
5	Campus-wide engagement campaigns

Waterloo has expanded its communication to reach students, employees, and broader members of the community with information about sustainability efforts and opportunities on campus. Since launching the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, communication growth has included:

› Building out the Sustainability website and other key channels to convey campus-wide information on sustainability directions, programs, services, news, and activities

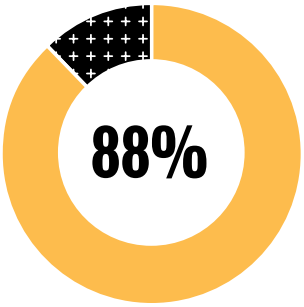
› Growing social media channels to engage students and employees

› Hosting annual campaigns and events to create opportunities for participation across the campus community, including Earth Month, BioBlitz, Bike Month, Waste Month, and Eco Summit

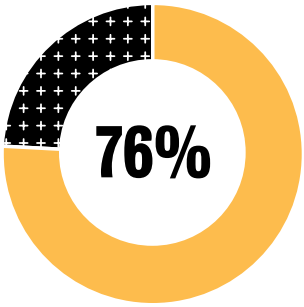
› Delivering guest lectures to dozens of undergraduate and graduate classes, reflecting on global and campus sustainability topics, reaching over 850 students in 2024/25

› Developing tools to integrate campus feedback, including the 2024 Sustainability Survey, which had over 1,500 respondents

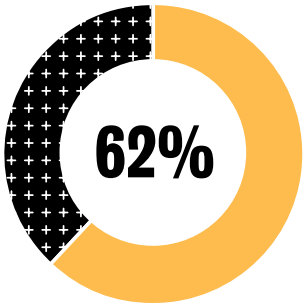
Going forward, Waterloo will continue to utilize these channels and expand partnerships with other major communication channels, such as the UWaterloo Life social media feeds and the Daily Bulletin. Waterloo will also shift its sustainability surveying to a greater frequency, reflecting on feedback received during the 2024 survey:



Students and employees think it is important that Waterloo take meaningful action to address sustainability on campus



Students and employees would like to learn more about sustainability while studying or working at Waterloo



Students and employees would like to be more involved with sustainability efforts and initiatives on campus

Students

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE E2: By 2020, additional programming is developed for incoming students during orientation and in residences to encourage sustainable living on campus

Complete

INDICATORS:

45 Ambassadors and student leaders engaged in sustainability leadership training

5 Number of sustainability programs/activities during orientation for first year students

OBJECTIVE E3: By 2018, establish a sustainability leaders program in partnership with students from residences, clubs and societies, student government, and for students in off-campus housings

Complete

INDICATORS:

11 Distinct pathways for student leadership, including through Green Residence, Living Planet @ Campus, Changemaker Labs, Climate Leaders, student groups, O-Week coordinators, SDG Student Hub, Sustainability Office volunteers, and formal advisory committees or working groups

Students are Waterloo's largest constituent group and a key partner on campus sustainability. The University has directly and indirectly supported numerous efforts to create opportunities for students to learn about sustainability and be involved in action beyond their coursework. These co-curricular approaches facilitate effective learning, behaviour change, leadership development, competition and collaboration, community building, and more.

Examples of student-focused initiatives since 2017 include:

› Educating and supporting peer-to-peer leadership in Campus Housing through the Green Residence Program, creating dozens of ambassadors and volunteers since its launch in 2019

› Facilitating leadership and peer learning opportunities connected to sustainability topics, including through the Student Climate Action and WaterLeadership programs

› Connecting with and promoting over 20 student clubs, design teams, and societies related to sustainability, with topics ranging from ecology to technology

› Participating as a founding partner in the WWF Canada Living Planet @ Campus program, which created opportunities for student engagement in hackathons, knowledge-sharing, and the Living Planet Leader certification

› Supporting hackathons, SDG conferences, climate conferences, and design programs such as Changemaker Labs to give students a chance to apply sustainability challenges alongside peer teams

› Recognizing student efforts in and beyond the classroom through the Sustainability Leadership Certificate program

› Ensuring student representation on the President's Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability and its various subcommittees

Employees

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE E4: By 2025, increase from five per cent to 25 per cent the proportion of university departments that are Green Office certified

Mostly complete

INDICATORS:

>20% University departments achieving at least Green Office Bronze

8 Certified Green Labs

>475 Employees have completed Sustainability Certificate

>610 Employees have completed at least one module in Sustainability Certificate

Waterloo's long-term sustainability objectives will succeed largely through the skills, knowledge, and engagement of its employees. Both staff and faculty are crucial to Waterloo's ability integrate sustainability into its education and research missions, as well as in its operational practices. Since developing the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, Waterloo has created important pathways for employee training, leadership development, and engagement, including:

› Launching employee learning and development opportunities, with a multi-part training series, department-specific offerings, and digital asynchronous sessions during the pandemic, reaching over 580 employee participants

› Compiling and developing resources for instructors and educators to learn about sustainability and connect sustainability to classroom learning and student competencies, through the Framework for Sustainability Curriculum Integration

› Expanding the Green Office program, engaging dozens of departments representing over 2,700 employees in developing sustainability practices in their units

› Initiating the Green Labs program and developing services and resources such as PPE recycling, power monitoring, and lab training to encourage sustainable lab practices

› Creating a Sustainability Playbook to help employees make more explicit connections from broad institutional goals to day-to-day activities they can do to support

CERTIFIED DEPARTMENTS INCLUDE, AS OF JUNE 2025:

GREENOFFICE PLATINUM CERTIFIED

Green Office Platinum
Centre for Career Development
Centre for Teaching Excellence
Centre for Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)
Co-operative and Experiential Education - Strategic Enablement Team
Dean of Environment Office
Library
Safety Office

GREENOFFICE GOLD CERTIFIED

Green Office Gold
Food Services
Information Systems & Technology
Legal and Immigration Services
Renison University College
School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability
School of Pharmacy
St. Jerome's University
Water Institute
Waterloo Climate Institute

GREENOFFICE SILVER CERTIFIED

Green Office Silver
Dean of Health Office
Finance
Geography and Environmental Management
Institutional Analysis and Planning
Office of Indigenous Relations
Recreation and Leisure Studies
Registrar's Office
Student Success Office
United College

GREENOFFICE BRONZE CERTIFIED

Green Office Bronze
Arts Undergrad Office
Campus Wellness
Office of the President
Psychology
Sustainable Transportation

GREEN LABS

› **Gold:**
- Chemical Engineering Undergraduate Teaching Lab
- Ecology Lab
- Health Services
- Organic Chemistry Undergraduate Teaching Lab
- Quantum-Nano Fabrication and Characterization Facility

› **Silver:**
- Innovation Arena
- Pharmacy Flexible Teaching Lab

› **Bronze:**
- School of Anatomy

Thanks to the Sustainability Action Fund, the Sustainability Office has been able to support other lab-related sustainability initiatives such as:

› Kinesiology lab coat rental program
› Biology growth chamber renovations and retrofits
› Chemical Engineering deionized water system
› Chemistry helium recovery system
› Green Labs PPE zero waste program

Community

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE E5: By 2020, Waterloo is recognized as a sustainability leader in Waterloo Region

Complete

INDICATORS:

5 Local sustainability awards since 2016

21 Local non-academic community partnerships, memberships, board roles, or advisory involvement related to sustainability since 2016

Waterloo is an anchor institution in the local community. While the campus has had global success and increasingly engages in international partnerships with wide-ranging impact, the University has equally important impacts and deep roots in Waterloo Region. The University comprises nearly 7 per cent of the local population, is one of the largest employers, is one of the largest users of energy and water, occupies a large amount of land, and has networks of alumni, relationships, and partnerships that connect to almost all other parts of the community.

Other organizations continually look to Waterloo for leadership on many issues, with sustainability being no exception. The University's reputation for innovation and wide-ranging expertise can support community progress in local climate and sustainability objectives and mutually reinforce the campus' efforts. Important areas of sustainability leadership in Waterloo Region include:

› Enabling staff participation from the Sustainability Office and Community Relations and Events in Climate Action WR Steering Committee and Community Leadership Table, and previous sectoral leadership committees

› Encouraging multiple faculty members and staff to serve on governance boards for prominent local environmental non-profit organizations, including Sustainable Waterloo Region and Reep Green Solutions

› Creating opportunities for elementary and high school learning about local decarbonization actions through the Energize Sustainable City Challenge game and simulation, reaching over 2,000 students

› Receiving 5 local awards for sustainability, including on stormwater (Reep Green Solutions), climate action planning (Sustainable Waterloo Region), transportation (TravelWise), and water efficiency (Region of Waterloo)

› Supporting events and competitions to engage youth in applied sustainability learning, including through the Envirothon competition, Waterloo Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival, Electric Vehicle challenge, and Engineering Science Quest summer camps

› Delivering workshops that cover various curriculum-connected sustainability topics to elementary and high school students through Science Outreach and Engineering Outreach programming

› Participating in local reporting and sustainability programming initiatives, including through the Impact Network from Sustainable Waterloo Region through 2025, and the TravelWise program through the Region of Waterloo

Going forward, Waterloo can continue to leverage its unique local role to bring together partners from across the community to make progress against local and global sustainability challenges.

GOVERNANCE AND BENCHMARKING

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT

OBJECTIVE G1: By 2025, achieve and maintain a STARS Gold designation through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

Complete

INDICATORS:

GOLD STARS Gold Designation updated in January 2025

FORMAL POLICIES, MEMBERSHIPS, PRACTICES, AND COMMITMENTS

The following are a list of key internal and external guidelines and commitments made by the University of Waterloo to support its sustainability efforts.

Internal:

› Adoption of Responsible Investment Advisory Group recommendations for carbon reduction measures and climate change considerations in investment activity (2021)
› Lifecycle Costing Guideline (2021)
› Net Neutral New Building Guideline (2021)
› Adoption of Responsible Investment Working Group recommendations for integration of ESG considerations in investment decisions (2018)
› Policy 53: Environmental Sustainability (2017)
› Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2017)
› Waste and recycling standard (2017)
› Centralized office printers defaulted to double-sided printing
› Campus Master Plan includes sustainability aspects as defining features of campus development (2009)
› High efficiency lighting retrofits mandated during renovations
› Eliminated use of chemical pesticides (1998)

External:

› Signatory to UN Race to Zero (2021)
› Member of the Impact Network, managed by Sustainable Waterloo Region, and Bronze Pledging Partner for Waste (2017) and climate change (2021)
› Founding Member of University Global Coalition (2020)
› Signatory to Investing in Climate Change Charter (2020)
› Signatory to UN PRI (2020)
› Member and host institution for Sustainable Development Solutions Network Canada (2018)
› Signatory to 2017 Council of Ontario Universities commitment to design a roadmap to a low-carbon campus (2017)
› Member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (2015)
› Member of TravelWise, managed by the Region of Waterloo and Sustainable Waterloo Region (2012)
› Signatory to Council of Ontario Universities Pledge, *Ontario Universities, Committed to a Greener World* (2009)

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
200 UNIVERSITY AVE. W., WATERLOO, ON, CANADA N2L 3G1

uwaterloo.ca/sustainability

sustainability@uwaterloo.ca

@uwsustainable

FP3667