

# Memorandum

Office of the VP (Administration and Finance)  
James Administration Building, Room 531  
845 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal, QC, H3A 0G4  
Tel: 514-398-6037 | Fax: 514-398-5902

**TO:** Board of Governors  
**FROM:** Yves Beauchamp, Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance)  
**SUBJECT:** Annual Report on McGill Sustainability and Climate Initiatives  
**DATE:** October 3, 2019  
**DOCUMENT #:** GD19-15

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  INFORMATION  APPROVAL/DECISION

---

<b>ISSUE &amp; EXPECTED OUTCOME</b>	An annual overview of the University's current sustainability and climate-related activities is presented to the Board of Governors for information.
<b>BACKGROUND &amp; RATIONAL</b>	<p>In 2016, the Board of Governors' stewardship role was expanded to include sustainability, and the University administration reaffirmed its commitment to address climate change in a manner consistent with the University's mission.</p> <p>This commitment is entrenched in the new <i>McGill University Sustainability Policy</i> (2018) which also provides that the University must report annually to its community on its progress toward achieving its sustainability goals. In accordance with this provision, McGill's Office of Sustainability prepares a yearly summary of the community's sustainability and climate activities related to operations, governance, administration, and research and education.</p> <p>The annual report also highlights, among other things, student and staff involvement in the University's sustainability and climate-related initiatives.</p>
<b>ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</b>	The mission of McGill University is advanced responsibly by carrying out sustainability and climate activities in a manner that achieves a balance between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.
<b>COMPLIANCE WITH UNIVERSITY POLICY</b>	As well as assisting the Board of Governors in fulfilling its stewardship role with regard to sustainability, this report adheres to McGill's <i>Sustainability Policy</i> which states that the University will report annually on its progress toward achieving its sustainability goals.
<b>COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION/ EXTERNAL REGULATIONS</b>	There are no known legislation or external regulation requirements applicable to this matter.
<b>RISK FACTORS</b>	The University is committed to promoting activities and practices that advance solutions to sustainability and climate-related challenges.
<b>SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Sustainability is a central focus of the present report.

---

---

<b>IMPACT OF DECISION AND NEXT STEPS</b>	The discussion arising from this report will determine the development of sustainability- and climate-related actions on schedule for the coming year.
<b>MOTION OR RESOLUTION FOR APPROVAL</b>	N/A
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix A: Overview of current sustainability and climate-related activities

---

# Overview of sustainability and climate-related activities at McGill

Presented to the Board of Governors

Yves Beauchamp, Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance)

October 3, 2019



**McGill**

# Context

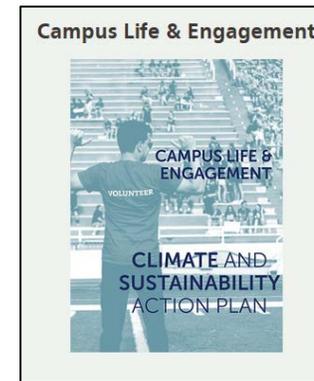
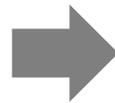
*“Addressing climate change in a manner consistent with the University’s mission is a McGill priority. This is an issue to which all members of the administration are committed, and one that the Board of Governors will now include in its stewardship role.”*

- Principal Fortier (2016)



# McGill's Sustainability Strategy – Vision 2020

- Climate & Sustainability Action Plan (2017-2020):
  - A Progress Report was finalized early 2019. It shows that 71% of the plan deliverables are implemented.
  - 4 units adopted a Unit-Level Climate & Sustainability Action Plan.



# Sustainability at McGill: Plans and Policies

In 2018-2019:

- McGill's *Sustainability Policy* was updated and consolidated with the former Environmental Policy.
- One of the seven Research Excellence Themes identified in McGill's Strategic Research Plan is "Design and create **sustainable** materials, technologies, landscapes, and communities".
- One of the nine guiding principles of McGill's recently-approved Master Plan is "Support **Sustainability** Through Governance"



# Sustainability at McGill: Students and Staff Involvement

In 2018-2019:

- A total of 195 staff and faculty members participated in the Staff Gardens program.
- Three hydroponic growth towers were installed in administrative offices to provide fresh produce year-round.
- 150 events (since May 2017) and 36 workplaces (since Jan. 2018) went through the certification programs ran by the McGill Office of Sustainability.



# Sustainability at McGill: Students and Staff Involvement



In 2018-2019:

- MealCare's student volunteers diverted close to 2,650 pounds of food waste from cafeterias and other vendors at McGill, representing 2,900 meals, which was donated to local shelters and soup kitchens.
- The student-led Desautels Sustainability Network (DSN) brought back the Desautels Business Conference on Sustainability, making it Montreal's largest student-led conference on sustainable business.
- Campus Life and Engagement trained 600 student leaders to increase the sustainability of orientation events.



# Sustainability at McGill: Research & Education



In 2018-2019:

- The Green Labs Initiative at the Neuro was launched and put in place lab material recycling programs, online resources, and organized culture change-focused events.
- The McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI) initiated its fourth research theme: Sustainability Transitions. MSSI also provided \$478,000 to 8 faculty and 7 student-led research projects.



# Sustainability at McGill: Research & Education



In 2018-2019:

- The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) provided \$5.5M to support a network for monitoring, modeling, and managing Canada's ecosystem services for sustainability and resilience.
- The Office of Sustainability and McGill's Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI) jointly organized a sustainability soirée, showcasing inspiring sustainability research and projects happening on campus.
- Students in multiple courses conducted research projects related to sustainability and carbon neutrality at McGill.



# Sustainability at McGill: Operations



In 2018-2019:

- The University secured a \$1.8M contribution from the Low Carbon Economy Fund to implement three projects that will have combined reductions of 9,900 tCO<sub>2</sub>e / year once they are online.
- McGill phased out the sale of single-use water bottles from retail locations. The following measures were also implemented:
  - 2 additional hydration stations were built (for a total of 5)
  - 23 water fountains were installed or upgraded to include a bottle filler
  - Discover McGill decreased the distribution of bottled water by 70% (7,000 less)
- McGill chose a new food service provider with a focus on nutrition, sustainable sourcing, and student engagement.



# Sustainability at McGill: Operations

In 2018-2019:

- The Sustainability Projects Fund provided \$250,000 to accelerate the greening of McGill's fleet of vehicles.
- Buildings, Grounds, and Events Support made visible improvements to the waste management system.
- McGill's Athletics & Recreation purchased two electric Gators to help reduce GHG emissions.
- McGill joined the City of Montreal and other partners in a commitment to reduce environmental impacts of air travel.
- A new trail was implemented to increase access and preserve ecosystems at the Gault Nature Reserve.

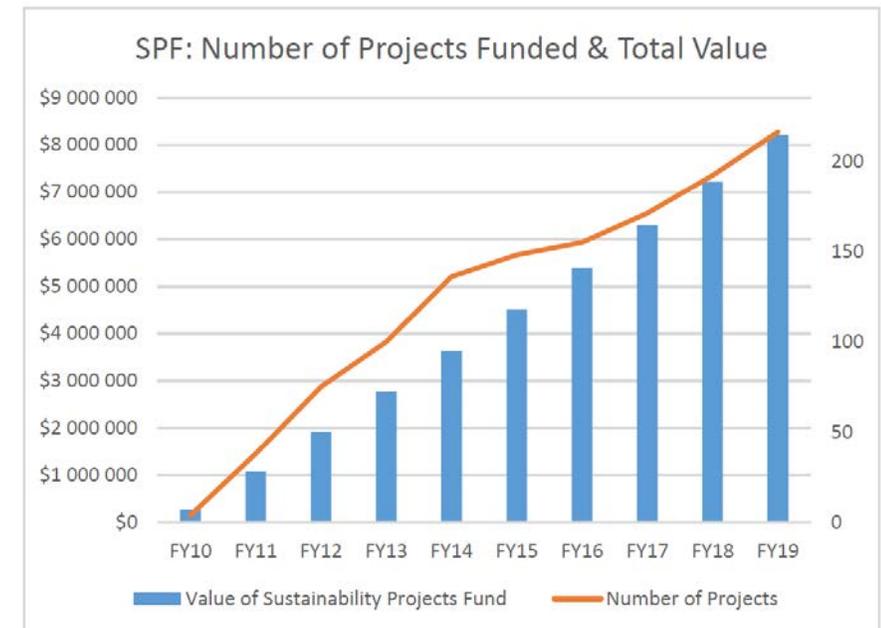


# Sustainability at McGill: Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF) - A tool for implementation



In 2018-2019:

- The SPF application experience was redesigned to improve efficiency, clarity and impact.
- Over 200 projects funded in the last 10 years, including 24 in FY 2019. For example:
  - Ecological improvement of the dairy cow pasture on the Macdonald Campus
  - Interactive Accessibility Network Map



# External Recognition

In 2018-2019, McGill received recognition from five external organizations for its overall sustainability performance:

## Awarded by:

**Sustainability Institution of the Year** for its ambitious yet realistic Vision 2020 Sustainability Strategy

International Green Gown Awards, endorsed by UN Environment

**Campus Sustainability Achievement Award** for its engagement programs to increase collective sustainability actions for staff, students, and faculty

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

One of Canada's **Top 100 Greenest Employers**

Mediacorp Canada

**Blue Community Designation**, and **Ecological Transition of the Campus Award** for phasing out the sale of single-use plastic water bottles

« Eau Secours » Coalition & Trophées des campus responsables



# Planning Forward

- Initiate a consultation process to develop McGill's next climate and sustainability strategy (2020-2025).
- The SPF will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in November 2019. A special event will be organized to mark the occasion.
- The process to improve waste management on campus will continue.

