

VISION 2020  
**CLIMATE AND  
SUSTAINABILITY**  
ACTION PLAN  
(2017- 2020)

**Final Report 2020**



# INTRODUCTION

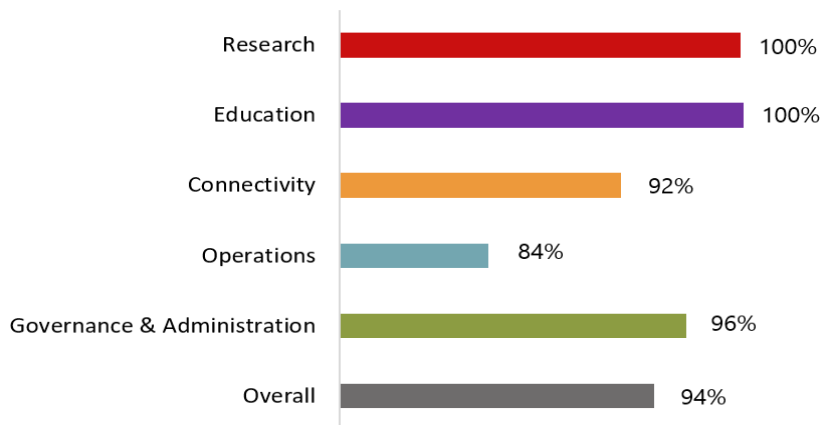
In December 2017, McGill released Vision 2020, the University's Climate and Sustainability Action Plan (2017-2020). The plan consisted of 22 priority actions, each with tangible deliverables. The priority actions spanned five categories: Research, Education, Connectivity, Operations, and Governance & Administration. The plan also identified two long-term targets for McGill: attain a [STARS®](#) Platinum sustainability rating by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2040.

This report illustrates the final progress towards the completion of each of the 22 priority actions, outlining the degree of completion and key facts. Progress on McGill's path to carbon neutrality is available in the annual [GHG inventory reports](#), and an updated sustainability rating will be recalculated at the beginning of 2021.

Average deliverable completion indicates that McGill accomplished **94% of the action plan**. Twenty-eight deliverables were completed, 6 continue to be in progress, and 11 are ongoing (meaning the deliverable is recurring and can never be 'achieved').

While much has been achieved under this action plan, major external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic inhibited the progression of certain deliverables. While this progress report elaborates on the advancements of the Vision 2020 Climate and Sustainability Action Plan, the momentum will be carried forward into the McGill University Climate & Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025.

## Progress by Category



## Methodology

The percentage of completion by category was calculated based on the level of progression of each deliverable. Deliverables categorized as "ongoing" were not assigned a percentage, and were therefore not considered when averaging the degree of completion for an action.

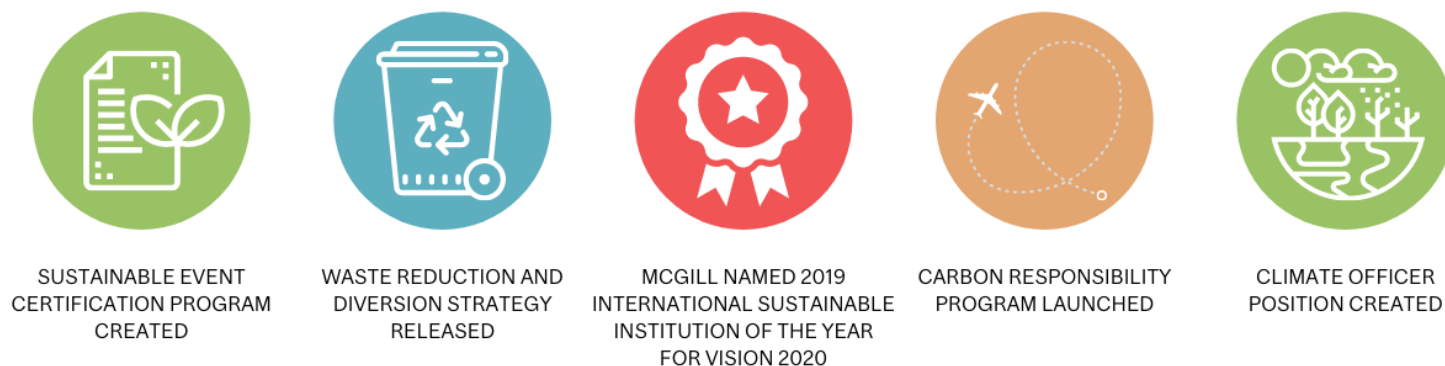
Status	Description
Ongoing	No percentage can be associated. Activities related to the deliverable are constantly maintained by the unit responsible for it.
Not started (0%)	There has been a decision to move forward with this deliverable but no steps have been initiated to date.
Between 10%-40%	Some steps have been initiated in order to achieve the deliverable. A few tangible outcomes have been achieved.
50%	Half of the steps related to the deliverable have been completed, many with tangible outcomes.
Between 60%-90%	Most of the key steps have been initiated, producing tangible outcomes.
Completed (100%)	The deliverable has been achieved.

# VISION 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

The accomplishments of the Vision 2020 Climate and Sustainability Action Plan are a result of the success of the 2014-2017 Sustainability Strategy and the participation of countless individuals from the McGill community. This section outlines the highlights of Vision 2020 that have emerged over a three-year period (2017-2020) in which over 500 McGill community members were engaged in over 20 consultation events. The achievements and progress outlined in this report will set the standards for the future of climate and sustainability action at McGill. While Vision 2020 has come to an end, a review of the plan's progress has informed the content of the McGill University Climate & Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025.

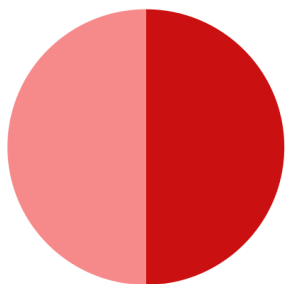


## Key Accomplishments



# RESEARCH

Deliverable  
status:



Completed - 6  
In Progress - 0  
Ongoing - 6  
Not Started - 0

Deliverables average degree of completion:

100%

## Action 1: Enhance the visibility of sustainability research at McGill.

### Deliverables

- Publish a regular column on sustainability research in McGill's newsletters or publications
- Host and support networking events to promote sustainability research

### Progress

The *McGill Reporter* added a "Sustainability" section to their website, regularly featuring research articles. The McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative hosted numerous events surrounding sustainability research.

2 ongoing

### Lead Unit(s)

- McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI)
- Office of Sustainability

## Action 2: Raise awareness about sustainable management of research projects.

### Deliverables

- Integrate sustainability information into Welcoming Sessions for new investigators
- Integrate sustainability information into investigator guides

### Progress

Sustainability content included in both the slide presentation for new faculty, and in the investigator resource guide published by the VP Research and Innovation.

2 completed

### Lead Unit(s)

- Office of the Vice Principal of Research and Innovation
- Office of Sustainability

## Action 3: Institutionalize McGill's sustainable labs practices.

### Deliverables

- Launch sustainable labs awards program
- Develop a sustainable labs design process

### Progress


The Sustainable Labs design process was finalized in June 2018. In September 2018, the first Sustainable Labs Award was granted to Ebrahim Noroozi's lab (Food Science and Agricultural Chemistry).

2 completed



### Lead Unit(s)

- Sustainable Labs Working Group

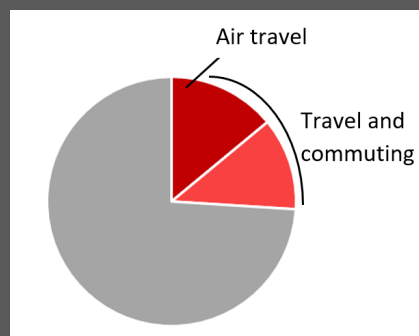
## Action 4: Create a hub of expertise and centre of excellence in sustainability systems.

Deliverables	Progress	Lead Unit(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate a small number of McGill research themes in sustainability systems</li> <li>Develop transdisciplinary projects based on the research themes in sustainability systems</li> <li>Seed-fund innovative and ambitious sustainability systems projects and ideas</li> </ul>	<p>The McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI) has inspired several transdisciplinary projects with the launch of four research themes: Sustaining Landscapes, Sustainable Materials, Adapting Urban Environments, and Sustainability Transitions. MSSI has provided just over two million dollars in funding through the Ideas and Innovation funds, as well as their Social Sciences and Humanities Ideas fund.</p> <p>1 completed  2 ongoing </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI)</li> </ul>

## Action 5: Address GHG emissions from air travel.

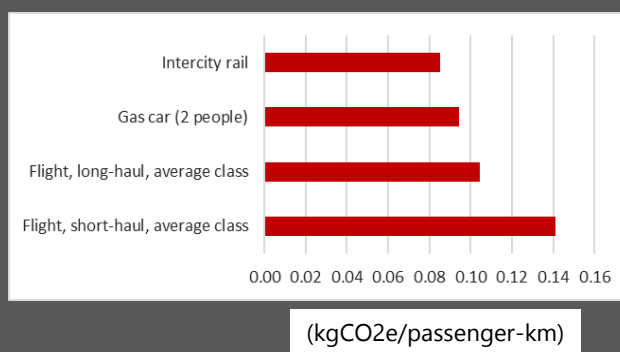
Deliverables	Progress	Lead Unit(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a "carbon responsibility" program to offset air travel emissions</li> <li>Quantify and communicate GHG emissions information to university travelers</li> <li>Raise awareness of teleconferencing</li> </ul>	<p>An Offset Selection Committee composed of students, faculty, and staff evaluated and selected a portfolio of offsetting projects that will be used to offset McGill's air travel emissions. The Sustainable Travel and Mobility Guide was produced to provide information on emissions intensities of different travel modes and teleconferencing. The global pandemic of COVID-19 has pushed all members of the McGill community to shift their conferences and daily operations online.</p> <p>1 completed  2 ongoing </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procurement Services</li> <li>Office of Sustainability</li> </ul>

## IMPACT OF TRAVEL ON EMISSIONS



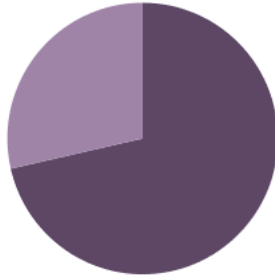
One way to reduce transportation emissions is to choose less emission-intensive modes of travel. For example, when travelling to Ottawa from McGill, choosing the intercity rail instead of driving alone.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from travel and mobility accounted for 26% of McGill's overall emissions in 2019 – over half of which was comprised of air travel financed by the university.



# EDUCATION

Deliverable status:



Completed - 5  
In Progress - 0  
Ongoing - 2  
Not Started - 0

Deliverables average degree of completion:

100%

## Action 1: Increase access to extra-curricular opportunities in sustainability to undergraduate students.

### Deliverables

- Embed sustainability in McGill's Skills 21 program
- Develop a sustainability leadership program

### Progress

Two sustainability workshops were offered through the Skills 21 program, one of them being the leadership-training program called Praxis: Training for Change Agents. The cohort-based program combined leadership theory, personal reflection and sustainability case studies.

2 completed

### Lead Unit(s)

- Teaching and Learning Services
- Office of Sustainability

## Action 2: Assess students' knowledge of sustainability.

### Deliverables

- Create and implement a Sustainability Literacy Test

### Progress

A sustainability literacy survey developed by the United Nations was used to compare results to global averages. Respondents demonstrated higher than average knowledge in 2/3 major themes.

1 completed

### Lead Unit(s)

- Student Life and Learning
- Office of Sustainability

## Action 3: Improve sustainability content in McGill orientation events.

### Deliverables

- Include a campus sustainability tour at orientation
- Increase the number of orientation events that are sustainable event certified
- Incorporate sustainability into orientation training materials

### Progress

Sustainability content has been embedded throughout Welcome Tours given to prospective undergraduate students. In 2019, 28 orientation and frosh events were certified as sustainable. Campus Life & Engagement released a Climate & Sustainability Unit Level Action Plan and created trainings to increase sustainability of orientation events.

2 completed  
1 ongoing

### Lead Unit(s)

- Student Associations
- Campus Life & Engagement
- Office of Sustainability

## Action 4: Create educational opportunities around carbon neutrality

### Deliverables

- Collaborate with professors across faculties to include the carbon neutrality challenge in their courses

### Progress

McGill's Climate Officer has partnered with professors and students in Management, Bioresource Engineering, Environment, and the Barbados Interdisciplinary Tropical Studies program on carbon neutrality-related research projects.

1 ongoing 

### Lead Unit(s)

- Office of Sustainability

## SUSTAINABILITY AT ORIENTATION

McGill made significant progress towards increasing sustainability at orientation events.

Purchased

**4,000**

fewer single-use plastic bottles in 2019.

**Campus Life & Engagement created trainings to increase sustainability of orientation events.**

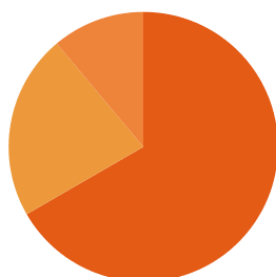
Reached

**34**

Sustainable Event Certifications for Frosh and Orientations (2019-2020)

# CONNECTIVITY

Deliverable status:



Completed - 6  
In Progress - 2  
Ongoing - 1  
Not Started - 0

Deliverables average degree of completion:

92%

## Action 1: Address GHG emissions from commuting activities.

### Deliverables



- Finalize a Transportation Master Plan
- Increase bike parking capacity across campus
- Develop a program to encourage the use of sustainable transportation

### Progress

The Transportation Master Plan was released in May 2019 as part of the McGill Master Plan. A bike parking inventory of Lower Campus was completed and will help identify areas where capacity can be increased.

### Lead Unit(s)

- Campus Planning & Development Office
- Parking & Transportation Services
- Office of Sustainability

1 completed   
2 in progress 

## Action 2: Engage and connect McGill staff members through sustainability-related programs and activities.

### Deliverables

- Establish a Sustainable Workplace Certification
- Launch a Staff Sustainability Network

### Progress

A multi-stakeholder group of staff and students developed the sustainable workplace certification. The Staff Sustainability Network launched shortly thereafter, and includes over 50 staff from across the downtown campus.

### Lead Unit(s)

- Office of Sustainability

2 completed 

## Action 3: Assess and improve physical accessibility on campus.

### Deliverables

- Update the McGill Design Standards to improve physical accessibility
- Complete an accessibility audit and integrate audit findings into the McGill Map

### Progress

The new accessibility standards have been posted on the McGill Design Standards webpage in November 2019. The Interactive Accessibility Network Map, which is intended to be integrated to the McGill Map, is in its final testing phase as of December 2020.

### Lead Unit(s)

- Design Services
- Campus Planning & Development Office
- Office for Students with Disabilities
- Geographic Information Center
- Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity

2 completed 



#### Action 4: Raise awareness of Indigenous issues and climate change on campus.

##### Deliverables

- Recruit an Indigenous scholar or artist-in-residence with the assistance of a representative Steering Committee

##### Progress

A hiring committee for the climate change artist-in-residence was established and recruitment was finalized in December 2020.

1 completed 

##### Lead Unit(s)

- Indigenous Representatives
- Office of Sustainability

#### Action 5: Increase Indigenous symbolism on McGill's campuses.

##### Deliverables

- Collaborate with campus and Indigenous partners to implement projects around Indigenous symbolism

##### Progress

Following the relocation of the Hochelaga Monument, the inaugural raising of the Hiawatha Wampum Belt flag now occurs bi-annually: once in June to commemorate National Indigenous Peoples Day, and once in September during the day of the annual McGill University Pow-Wow.

1 ongoing 

##### Lead Unit(s)

- Indigenous Representatives
- Office of Sustainability

## SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACE CERTIFICATION

As of August 2020, over 300 employees worked in certified Sustainable Workplaces.

34

Bronze level

7

Silver level

2

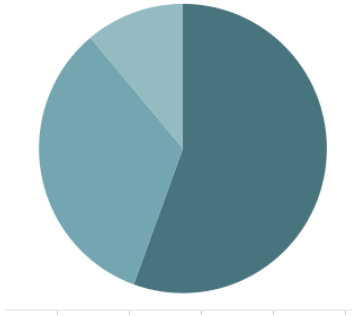
Gold level

Largest Office: Vice Principal Research and Innovation (86)

Smallest Office: Geography Advising Office (1)

# OPERATIONS

Deliverable status:



Completed - 5  
In Progress - 3  
Ongoing - 1  
Not Started - 0

Deliverables average degree of completion:

84%

## Action 1: Address GHG emissions from McGill's fleet of vehicles.

### Deliverables

- Develop a sustainable "Vehicle Management Program"
- Offer training to promote eco-driving techniques

### Progress

A Vehicle Asset Management procedure was developed. Electric and hybrid vehicles have been purchased across all three campuses. An eco-driving training was delivered to fleet managers.

2 completed

### Lead Unit(s)

- Office of Sustainability
- Procurement Services
- Transportation & Parking Services

## Action 2: Optimize the environmental performance of McGill's buildings.

### Deliverables

- Attain the LEED Operations & Maintenance certification for five buildings
- Have all new buildings and most major renovation projects be at least LEED Silver certified
- Implement the Energy Management Plan

### Progress

LEED Operation & Maintenance certification has not been pursued. Two completed Construction projects await LEED certification, seven construction projects, currently in design, are targeting LEED Gold certification. The Energy Management Plan is on track, showing significant reductions in both energy and greenhouse gas emissions.

2 in progress   
1 ongoing

### Lead Unit(s)

- Design Services
- Project Management
- Utilities & Energy Management

## Action 3: Develop a Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan.

### Deliverables

- Identify the primary challenges in McGill becoming zero-waste
- Create a waste reduction and diversion plan that addresses these specific challenges

### Progress

The Waste Reduction and Diversion Strategy was released in Spring 2018. A Zero-Waste Coordinator was hired to oversee and streamline waste reduction initiatives across campus.

2 completed

### Lead Unit(s)

- Waste Task Force



## Action 4: Develop and adopt McGill's first Licensee Code of Conduct.

### Deliverables

- Use Licensee Code of Conduct for all McGill branded products sold by Le JAMES bookstore
- Expand the use of the Licensee Code of Conduct to other university areas

### Progress

The existing Code of Conduct has been communicated to the LE JAMES bookstore suppliers and SHHS suppliers. An annex to the Code of Conduct is under development for suppliers of McGill branded merchandise.

1 completed   
1 in progress 

### Lead Unit(s)

- Procurement Services
- LE JAMES Bookstore

## ENERGY MANAGEMENT PLAN

McGill's Energy Management Plan spanned 2016-2020 and focused on deploying smart energy grids downtown, recovering heat from the Powerhouse, and demand-side management.

Significant progress has been made:

Goal:

**22%**

reduction in energy use intensity relative to 2012/2013

Progress:

**14%**

below baseline as of December 2020

Goal:

**64%**

reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 baseline.

Progress:

**36%**

below baseline as of December 2020

# GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION



## Action 1: Increase McGill's internal capacity on climate action.

Deliverables	Progress	Lead Unit(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint a Climate Officer tasked with reducing McGill's carbon footprint</li> <li>Assess the key climate-related risks for the university and define mitigation options</li> </ul>	<p>McGill's first Climate Officer was appointed in August 2017. Consultations on risk assessment are completed but a final report is needed.</p> <p>1 completed 1 in progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Sustainability</li> <li>Office of the Provost</li> </ul>

## Action 2: Facilitate and support planning of sustainable events across campus.

Deliverables	Progress	Lead Unit(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design a sustainable event certification process</li> <li>Create a sustainable events student team to assist organizers</li> <li>Train staff in sustainable event planning with an Organizational Development module</li> </ul>	<p>Over 300 events have been certified as sustainable events and 34 student volunteers and interns have been engaged to run this program. The certification process has been updated in order to certify virtual events. Three staff sustainable event training modules were created through OD.</p> <p>2 completed 1 ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Sustainability</li> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>

## Action 3: Encourage employees to adopt and promote sustainable behaviours.

Deliverables	Progress	Lead Unit(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed sustainability in the performance dialogue plan and appraisal form of employees</li> </ul>	<p>A guide to Incorporating Sustainability in Performance Dialogue, has been created and is hosted on the Organizational Development website. Additionally, a page was created on the Human Resources website and article was published in the Reporter.</p> <p>1 completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Sustainability</li> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>

## Action 4: Provide sustainability information to people in governance roles.

### Deliverables

- Include sustainability-related content in the Board of Governors and Senate orientation material
- Add sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs) to the Board of Governors' reporting framework

### Progress

Sustainability content is now embedded in the orientation package for Senate and Board members. Three sustainability KPIs are reported to the Board of Governors on a yearly basis: annual greenhouse gas emissions, sustainability rating, and sustainability strategy progress.

2 completed 

### Lead Unit(s)

- Office of Sustainability
- Secretariat
- Analysis, Planning, and Budget

## SUSTAINABLE EVENT CERTIFICATION

As of December 2020:

**309** events  
have been Sustainable Event  
certified.

**34** Bronze level

**125** Silver level

**120** Gold level

**30** Virtual Events

The certification process has been adapted to certify virtual events. The largest virtual event certified was the 2020 Spring Virtual Convocation with approximately

**7,500**  
participants.

# IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the goals and deliverables set forward in Vision 2020 required diverse tools to create tangible change on campus:

- **Communicating** sustainability efforts to the McGill community through articles, social media, newsletters and events. Beyond the Office of Sustainability's communication networks, key leaders and departments have integrated sustainability into their own communications. An exciting example of this is the new Sustainability section on the *McGill Reporter's* website and the *McGill Sustainability Dossier*.
- **Engagement** harnesses the motivation built through communications, by creating meaningful opportunities for direct involvement. Through initiatives such as the Sustainable Workplace Certification, Sustainable Event Certification, or the Staff Sustainability Network, there are now tangible opportunities for the McGill community to deepen their engagement in sustainability.
- The **Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF)** provides seed-funding to interdisciplinary projects. Since the launch of Vision 2020, the SPF funded 61 projects, valuing over \$2.5 million. Twenty of those projects were directly related to implementing Vision 2020 Climate & Sustainability Action Plan.

## Unit Level Climate & Sustainability Action Plans

Beyond the actions laid out in the campus-wide Climate & Sustainability Action Plan, a widespread effort from individual units is essential to advance the climate and sustainability agenda at McGill.

The following units and faculties have completed their Unit Level Climate & Sustainability Action Plans:

Unit	Progress
Athletics & Recreation	<div><div></div></div> 100%
Campus Life & Engagement	<div><div></div></div> 100%
Redpath Museum	<div><div></div></div> 100%
Post-Graduate Students' Society	<div><div></div></div> 100%
Faculty of Law	<div><div></div></div> 100%
Enrolment Services	<div><div></div></div> 100%