

Advisory Council on Sustainability
McGill University, Zoom Online Meeting
May 6th, 2020 (9:00 AM – 10:30 AM)

Present: E. Bennett, K. Cook, R. Couvrette, A. DeSousa, B. Harvey, H. Lauzon, B. Lennox, C. Manfredi, F. Miller, A. Moreau, S. Osiecki, A. Porlier, L. Rathmell

Absent with regrets: Y. Beauchamp, M. Bergen, B. Buraga, D. Dutton, D. Mondou, J. Nicell,

1. Welcome & Roundtable

Prof. Manfredi welcomes the group to the very first online meeting held under unprecedented circumstances. He thanks everyone for their virtual presence and continued efforts in advancing sustainability at McGill.

2. Approval of minutes from the last meeting and today's agenda

Prof. Manfredi confirms that the minutes from the last meeting were approved and that there are no additions to today's agenda. The meeting will last 1 ½ hour and the main topic will be McGill's next Climate & Sustainability Strategy.

3. Latest news related to sustainability

F. Miller presents recent sustainability news, including:

- The Sustainability Projects Fund reached 1M\$
- [The 2018 Green House Gas Inventory](#) was published online and features visual representation of the progress made to date.
- McGill wins [International Sustainable Campus Network award for Vision 2020](#) action plan. A virtual award ceremony will be held on May 14th, 2020.
- A new position of Executive Director, Sustainability was created. Francois Miller was appointed.

4. Overview of McGill's next Climate & Sustainability Strategy

F. Miller and A. Moreau present the first draft of the Climate & Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025:

4.1 Context

McGill is currently in the process of crafting the next Climate & Sustainability Strategy. This strategy will cover a 5-year span and will address different key climate and sustainability areas. Vision 2020 strategy covered the 2014 – 2016 period followed by Vision 2020 Action Plan from 2017-2020.

4.2 Consultation Process

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person targeted consultations were held. A total of 18 units/groups were met accounting for 89 stakeholders and over 50 hours. In order to adjust to the pandemic, open

consultations were moved [online](#). In just over a month, 65 responses were received mainly from students, followed by staff and faculty.

4.3 Long-term Targets

McGill sustainability long-term targets are: achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2040 and attaining a Platinum sustainability rating by 2030. A potential 3rd long-term goal was presented: becoming a Zero-Waste campus by 2035.

Members suggested:

- To be mindful about the way our target to attain a platinum rating is communicated; this may not speak to everyone in our community and outside of our community.
- An alternative way to communication about the long-term goal would be that we aim to be one of the universities with the highest sustainability ranking (e.g. in the top 10). It would also be important to contextualize STARS and mention that over 500 university and colleges use this rating system for sustainability.
- Contextualize where our carbon emissions come from and what carbon neutrality means to McGill.

4.4 Category Content

The content of the strategy will be articulated and organized around 8 categories: Research & Education, Buildings & Utilities, Waste Management, Travel & Commuting, Food Systems, Procurement, Landscapes & Ecosystems and Community Building. Members of the Council were presented the high-level overarching goals for these 8 categories.

Members suggested:

- Reframe some goals to be more specific. Some language may seem too aspirational.
- The COVID-19 pandemic could create momentum for reduction strategies in the Travel & Commuting section.
- An idea is to incentivize less air travel: grant an extra credit on faculty annual report for every talk given via videoconference.
- Mention the new upcoming course “Climate Change and Action” in the “Research and Education” category.
- Urban agriculture initiatives need to be carefully listed as the contribution to food production is marginal. These kinds of initiatives could be listed under Landscapes & Ecosystems or Community Building.
- Renaming the transversal category: “Climate Mitigation & Adaptation” to “Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation” and renaming the section “Help us implement the strategy” to “Empower students, staff and faculty be part of the solution”.

4.5 Tracking & Implementation

Tracking, reporting and implementation mechanisms will be put in place. These mechanisms include but are not limited to: Reporting KPIs to the Board, publishing progress reports, establishing an internal responsibility system, etc.

Members suggestions/comments:

- Integrate an online dashboard to measure the progress and for the community to see their contributions reflected in real time.

6. Next Steps and Closing Remarks

The next Advisory Council meeting will take in September the date is to be determined. The Catalyst Awards on Sustainability are postponed to September or October.