

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VISION 2020

CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY
ACTION PLAN **2017-2020**



Executive Summary

Vision 2020 – McGill’s Sustainability Strategy – sets out a pathway for McGill to become a leading institution in the study and practice of sustainability. Vision 2020 was launched in 2014 following a two-year community engagement process, along with a 2014-2016 Sustainability Action Plan. The actions were structured around five categories: Research, Education, Connectivity, Operations, and Governance & Administration.

The Climate & Sustainability Action Plan (2017-2020), which covers the final phase of Vision 2020, is also the result of an extensive consultation process that engaged over 500 McGill community members. The Action Plan builds on past sustainability successes and focuses on another priority area: climate change.

As a result, the Climate & Sustainability Action Plan articulates a number of initiatives around the same five categories, aimed at reducing the University’s carbon footprint and at addressing broader sustainability issues. In addition to short-term actions, the plan includes two long-term targets that are meant to keep us on track to improve our sustainability performance and lower our greenhouse gas emissions well into the future:

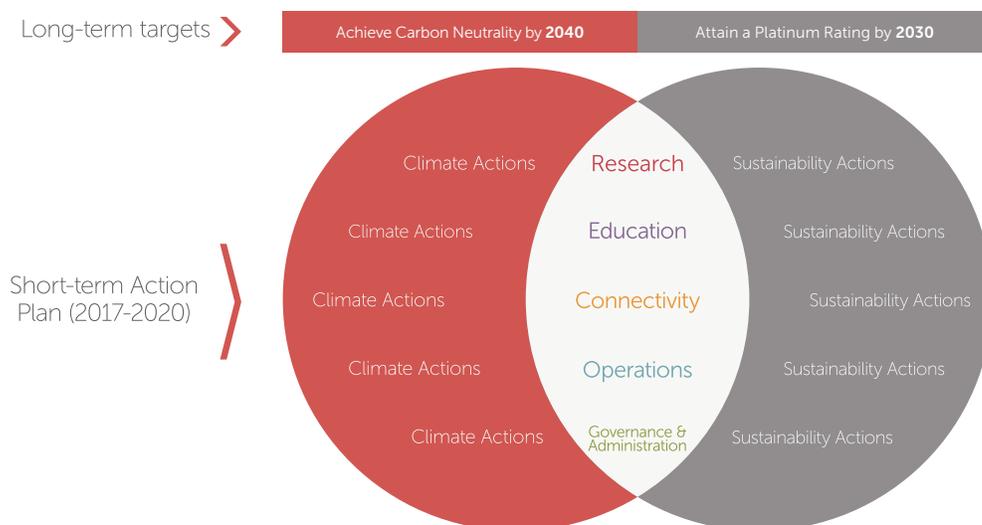
Achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2040

Carbon neutrality is achieved when the amount of greenhouse gases released is equivalent to the amount sequestered or offset. McGill’s own plan for carbon neutrality includes strategies for campus energy systems, air travel, and commuting policies, among other emissions sources.

Attain a Platinum Sustainability Rating by 2030

Using the sustainability rating system provided by AASHE, McGill aims to attain the highest level: Platinum. This demonstrates that McGill, as an institution and community, will keep improving and making strides in sustainability. Many of the actions in the Climate & Sustainability Action Plan will bring McGill closer to this goal.

Structure of the Climate & Sustainability Action Plan (2017-2020)



¹ Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

Research

- Enhance the visibility of sustainability research at McGill 
- Raise awareness about sustainable management of research projects 
- Institutionalize McGill's sustainable labs practices  
- Create a hub of expertise and centre of excellence in sustainability systems  
- Address GHG emissions from air travel 

Education

- Increase access to extra-curricular opportunities in sustainability for undergraduate students 
- Assess students' knowledge of sustainability 
- Improve sustainability content in McGill orientation events 
- Create educational opportunities around carbon neutrality 

Connectivity

- Address GHG emissions from commuting activities 
- Engage and connect McGill staff members through sustainability-related programs and activities 
- Assess and improve physical accessibility on campus 
- Raise awareness of Indigenous issues and climate change on campus  
- Increase Indigenous symbolism on McGill's campuses 

Operations

- Address GHG emissions from McGill's fleet of vehicles 
- Optimize the environmental performance of McGill's buildings  
- Develop a Waste Reduction and Diversion Plan  
- Develop and adopt McGill's first Licensee Code of Conduct 

Governance & Administration

- Increase McGill's internal capacity on climate action 
- Facilitate and support planning of sustainable events across campus 
- Encourage employees to adopt and promote sustainable behaviours 
- Provide sustainability information to people in governance roles  

The implementation of the Climate & Sustainability Action Plan relies on a few key elements, such as community engagement, effective communication, unit-level action plans and the Sustainability Projects Fund. Progress will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Two progress reports will be published – one at the mid-point (at the end of 2018), and one at the end of implementation (in 2020). Sustainability key performance indicators will also be provided for the Board of Governors.