OUR COMMITMENT

Draft last revised July 2018

Our planet and all life on Earth face unprecedented changes of immense scales and rapid climate change. It is both urgent and necessary that colleges and universities take action. At Cornell, our community and leadership has chosen to embrace a role of active leadership – serving as both architect and supporter of necessary change on a massive scale. We have already committed to reaching carbon neutrality by 2035. Now, we undertake goals to achieve progress in other critical areas.

In doing so, we embrace the idea that we can create systems which better serve our people, our long-term prosperity, the planet, by enriching and fully utilizing our own institutional purpose and land-grant mission.

Every person, of every major and title, must be empowered change agents, advocates, and creators of the path forward. We must learn to partner in new and more meaningful ways for greater impact. Radically disrupt our energy and operational systems. Boldly reconfigure our systems of knowledge, and confront the challenges and necessity of creating truly inclusive and accessible communities.

We will be brave, and we will strive to learn, live, and lead in ways we have never done before.

OUR ASPIRATIONS

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Our plan requires the creation of a powerful living laboratory for sustainable solutions, harnessing people, partnerships, and systems for research, innovation, learning, and demonstration on our campus and beyond.

We aspire to progress and model sustainability through three interwoven areas of aspiration, supported by goals to drive meaningful progress in each: Climate Leadership, Sustainable Campus & Beyond, and Empowered Community.

- Climate Leadership
  Exemplify necessary climate leadership through our living laboratory’s discovery and demonstration of bold solutions for a low-carbon and climate adapted future.

- Sustainable Campus & Beyond
  Partner with our local, state, and global communities to equitably advance human, environmental, and economic health and wellbeing by operating sustainably within the means of our planetary resources.

- Empowered Community
  Thrive as a living laboratory that cultivates personal leadership and inclusion in sustainability for every person, every study, and every position throughout the Cornell community.
ABOUT THIS PLAN

Scope of the Plan

The 2018 Sustainability Plan for Campus & Community covers the Ithaca, NY campus operations and community and partnerships. The plan was created as a 6-year roadmap, though some goals extend beyond this timeline. The Sustainability Plan compliments the Climate Action Plan by confirming our commitment to carbon neutrality for the Ithaca campus by 2035 and extending our public commitment to climate leadership in new ways. The Climate Action Plan will continue to be the guiding document for reaching neutrality, while this document serves as a starting point for new, more detailed action plans to achieve campus-specific goals.

Alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The 2018 Sustainability Plan goals were designed explicitly as indicators for reaching the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015. This plan outlines meaningful and appropriate ways our University – and other higher education institutions – can contribute to the UN targets by 2030.

Authors and Contributions

The Sustainability Plan Steering Committee helped guide the process, ensure cross-campus input, and solidify innovative practices. The President’s Sustainable Campus Executive Committee ensured alignment with regional, national, and international frameworks, and the Focus Teams adapted deep expertise to create and revise goals which met both aspirational and achievable targets. The Campus Sustainability Office facilitated and supported the governance, participation, and inclusion of related committees, groups, and the campus community in this process.

The Sustainability Plan requires every member of the Cornell community – from the President and her leadership team to students just starting their Cornell journey – to embrace and work towards these goals.
Climate Leadership

Exemplify necessary climate leadership through our living laboratory’s discovery and demonstration of bold solutions for a low-carbon and climate adapted future.

Climate Mitigation

1. **CL 7** - Fulfill our commitment to creating a carbon neutral campus by 2035 using the existing Climate Action Plan, and continue to fulfill and expand our role in supporting the achievement of other regional climate mitigation targets.

2. **BE 1** - Meet 100% of campus energy needs with renewable energy by 2035 through implementation of Earth Source Heat, development and maintenance of renewable electricity resources, and strong energy conservation efforts.

Climate Resiliency

3. **CL 3** - Develop a climate adaptation plan for Cornell’s people, systems, and resources by 2023 to prepare for and model resiliency in the face of climate change impacts in the Finger Lakes region and beyond.
Sustainable Campus & Beyond

Partner with our local, state, and global communities to equitably advance human, environmental, and economic health and wellbeing by operating sustainably within the means of our planetary resources.

Buildings & Energy

1. **BE 4** – Build 100% of new and renovated buildings to 30% below AASHRAE code for energy efficiency, and LEED Silver certification, and strive for 50% below code and LEED Gold for all capital projects over $5 million.

2. **BE 6** – Implement cutting-edge facilities operations and maintenance practices by 2020 to ensure low-impact, healthy, comfortable, and productive indoor and outdoor spaces.

3. **BE 7** – Avoid 26,000 tons of annual additional CO2 emissions by limiting unnecessary campus building construction through the full implementation of the Space Optimization Plan, for use and allocation of existing campus space by 2020.

Food

4. **F 2** - Ensure 100% of Cornell community members have equitable access to nutritious, affordable, holistic, and culturally appropriate food on campus by 2019.

5. **F 4** - Increase partnerships with local food suppliers which support regional job development, maintenance of a diverse small business economy, and sustainable food sourcing - including from campus sources, 20% by 2025.

6. **F 6** - Reduce food-related waste in all campus dining and retail locations to less than 20% by 2025.
   - **Key Tactic:** Adopt standard policies across all Cornell-owned and affiliate dining services on campus by 2020 which streamline packaging, waste disposal, and signage (F 7)

Land & Water

7. **LW 27** - Create and implement a comprehensive sustainable landscape and water plan by 2023, including:
   - **Key Tactic:** At least one campus-wide soil and vegetation management standard from each of the following areas: protect critical resources; reduce erosion and natural systems loss; emphasize use of resilient campus ecological design; encourage biodiversity; measure ecosystem services; advocate accessibility and exploration for campus community and visitors (LW 25)
• Key Tactic: SITES standards for design and management of vegetation, soils, water, materials, and human health and wellbeing (LW 26)
• Key Tactic: Stormwater management plan (LW 28)
• Key Tactic: Mapping to help show how and where Cornell lands protect and enrich ecosystem services (LW 24)

Purchasing & Waste

8. PW 5 – Expand and implement the Cornell sustainable purchasing guidelines by 2020, increasing the proportion of sustainable purchasing made throughout campus 50% by 2025.
   • Key tactic: Increase percentage of purchases made from historically underrepresented business, social enterprises, or local community-based businesses to 25% or more of all purchases by 2025 (PW 7)

9. PW 15 - 75% of preferred Cornell Vendors adopt Cornell’s sustainability standards by 2025.

Transportation

10. T 1 - Transition 75% of campus fleet vehicles to alternative fuels by 2020.

11. T4 - Reduce vehicular traffic XX% on central campus by developing a more robust and efficient campus circulator and implementing central delivery and distribution by 2030.

Just & Equitable Community

12. CC 19 - Create a universally accessible campus which empowers all Cornell community members to take advantage of the full technological, physical, transportation, and natural resources of our campus by integrating and supporting the existing strategic plans in these areas or as they emerge.

13. CC 4 - By 2020, represent campus compositional diversity, including, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity, political views, socioeconomic and academic status, within campus sustainability governance structures.

14. CC 14 - Recognizing the importance of individual happiness, health, and social integration in creating a sustainable community, fully integrate the 7 dimensions of human well-being into sustainability and human resource evaluation programs by 2020.
Empowered Community

Thrive as a living laboratory that cultivates personal leadership and inclusion in sustainability for every person, every study, and every position throughout the Cornell community.

**Literacy & Education**

2. LL 10 - 100% of all students, staff and faculty, will demonstrate literacy in climate change and sustainability systems, issues, and approaches, by 2030.
   - Key tactic: Incorporate sustainability competency into training/onboarding procedures and annual performance reviews for all employees by 2023 leading to a two-way dialogue on sustainability in the workplace (CC 9)
   - Key tactic: 100% of all programs of study have explicit sustainability or climate change related learning outcomes integrated into core requirements by 2025 (LL 12)

3. LL 7 – Increase the number of participants in living laboratory projects for sustainable and climate advancement 25% by 2025, with representation from each major college and unit.
   - Key tactic: By 2020, establish priority living laboratory focus areas which strengthen our mission, help achieve our campus goals, and provide necessary interdisciplinary sustainability for our campus, region and beyond. (LL 9)
   - Key tactic: By 2020, identify the program pathways & funding opportunities for innovation and interdisciplinary research focused on active learning and community partnerships for sustainability living laboratory work. (LL 3)

4. LL 13 – Ensure place-based learning and experiences by increasing the percentage of students participating in engaged learning, community research, and place-based partnership work with city, country, and regional partners 25% by 2035.

5. CC 17 - Create a culture of awareness for our campus sustainability efforts, bioregional, and natural landscapes by launching a comprehensive signage campaign for community engagement, learning, and place-making by 2020.

**Culture of Sustainability**

6. PW 12 - Reduce overall waste generation by 20% including recycling, compost, and landfill, and achieve a 30% per capita reduction in landfill waste, by 2020.

7. PW 13 – Double the volume of materials reclaimed and reused by Cornell community and projects, utilizing both campus and community programs, by 2020.
8. T 2 – Advance available choices, communication, and adoption of ridesharing, walking, biking, riding the bus and other sustainable transportation methods such that 75% of employees and 99% of students to use these modes as their primary method of commuting by 2020.

9. T6 - Increase adoption of flexible work arrangements, remote meeting participation, and other tools to reduce unnecessary business travel & commuting emissions 30% by 2025.

10. T 5 – Enable mission-linked offsets for air travel by all employees by 2020, and achieve a 25% voluntary adoption rate within three years of successful implementation.

11. CC 15 - Ensure all employees have access to sustainable investment opportunities for personal retirement portfolios by 2019.

Leadership

12. CC 1 - By 2023, a Sustainability Team in each college and every unit will actively promote opportunities to integrate sustainability into the culture and operations of its members business and personal choices, creating metrics of success by which to measure their unique culture change and needs.

- Key tactic: Through Green Office, Lab, and other certification programs, ensure 100% of Cornell’s campus spaces are sustainably certified by 2025 and empowered building occupants are aware of and accountable for their contributions to the success of high-performance buildings (BE 10)