

# Climate and Sustainability Action Plan

**2026-2031**



# Introduction

This Action Plan turns the University's Climate and Sustainability Strategy and its ten Big Moves into 26 clear actions that will guide progress over the next five years. Building on the vision set out in *Towards Western at 150*, the plan outlines short-term actions over the next one to two years that build early momentum and lay the groundwork for change, alongside medium-term actions over three to five years that advance deeper, sustained progress across education and research, campus operations, and community engagement.

Sustainability at Western is a shared responsibility. Meaningful progress depends on collaboration across departments, units, and faculties, with students, faculty, and staff all playing a role in advancing climate action and planetary health.

Two foundational commitments support every action in the plan:

- Consistent communication and engagement to build awareness and participation across the community.
- A unified approach to tracking and reporting progress to ensure accountability and alignment.

Together, these elements help Western move from commitment to coordinated action toward a more regenerative future.



1-2 years      3-5 years

# Education & Research

## Campus as a Living Lab

**1** Increase campus-wide awareness and faculty participation in the Campus as a Living Lab program through targeted outreach, streamlined processes, and inclusive engagement across academic units.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Faculties, Facilities Management

**2** Strengthen collaboration between Facilities Management, academic units, and the Campus as a Living Lab program to identify opportunities where operational needs and academic expertise intersect.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Faculties, Facilities Management

## Community Impact

**3** Expand student participation in sustainability-focused research and experiential learning (e.g., Community Engaged Learning, Campus as a Living Lab, MITACS, USRIs) by increasing access, visibility, and support for hands-on opportunities.



Key Facilitator:  
Student Experience

Collaborators:  
Western Sustainability

## Institute for Sustainability

**4** Establish a critical mass of researchers focused on climate and sustainability to set the foundation of an institute while collaborating with Western Advancement to create compelling pathways for donor support to fund the institute and sustain its growth.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Faculties, Western Research,  
University Advancement

**5** Continue to intentionally catalog, categorize, and promote Western’s sustainability research and courses to foster greater visibility, encouraging interdisciplinary connections across the university.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Research, Institutional  
Planning & Budgeting

Collaborators:  
Faculties, Institutes

# Regenerative Campus

1-2 years      3-5 years

## Ecological Assessment

**6** Conduct an ecological assessment of campus priority areas.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Facilities Management, Campus subject  
matter experts

**7** Adopt bird-friendly design standards within the Sustainable Design Guidelines and prioritize native planting across campus projects to enhance biodiversity and strengthen habitat connectivity.



Key Facilitator:  
Facilities Management

Collaborators:  
Western Sustainability

## 60% Waste Diversion by 2035

**8** Increase campus-wide awareness of recycling and waste diversion practices through a sustained education and engagement campaign.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Facilities Management, Campus  
Communicators, Student  
Sustainability Leaders

**9** Advance waste-reduction initiatives, including scalable reuse and redistribution programs for furniture, scientific equipment, and other durable goods.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Administrators, Facilities Management,  
Housing & Ancillary Services, Campus  
Communicators, Occupational Health & Safety

**10** Develop a Zero Waste Action Plan, and expand programs to phase out single-use plastics and broaden composting services across campus.



Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Building Services, Facilities Management,  
Housing & Ancillary Services, Occupational  
Health & Safety

# Regenerative Campus

1-2 years      3-5 years

## Scope 3 Emissions

- |           |   | 1-2 years | 3-5 years |
|-----------|---|-----------|-----------|
| <b>11</b> | Benchmark and measure sources of Scope 3 emissions to understand the greatest opportunities for reductions.   | ●         | ●         |
|           | Key Facilitator:<br>Western Sustainability  |           |           |
|           | Collaborators:<br>Procurement Services, Hospitality Services,<br>Parking Services   |           |           |
| <b>12</b> | Improve cycling experience to support cycling trips to and from campus, such as improved secure bike storage and campus cycling infrastructure.                                   | ●         | ●         |
|           | Key Facilitator:<br>Facilities Management   |           |           |
|           | Collaborators:<br>Parking Services, Western Sustainability  |           |           |
| <b>13</b> | Continue to advocate for greater access to public transportation for our campus community.  | ●         | ●         |
|           | Key Facilitator:<br>Facilities Management   |           |           |
|           | Collaborators:<br>University Students' Council, Society of<br>Graduate Students   |           |           |
| <b>14</b> | Develop, implement, and monitor programs, tools and resources aimed at reducing emissions from business travel.   |           | ●         |
|           | Key Facilitator:<br>Western Sustainability  |           |           |
|           | Collaborators:<br>Procurement Services, Faculties, Institutes,<br>Support Units   |           |           |
| <b>15</b> | Strengthen Western's sustainable procurement practices by integrating carbon and other environmental metrics into cost analyses and decision-making for major goods and services. |           | ●         |
|           | Key Facilitator:<br>Procurement Services  |           |           |
|           | Collaborators:<br>Faculties, Institutes, Support Units  |           |           |

# Regenerative Campus

1-2 years      3-5 years

## Net-Zero Emissions

- 16** Continue to develop the strategy for Western's Net-Zero Carbon Roadmap by decarbonizing energy systems, integrating renewables, and advancing priority projects. Advance projects to support the Roadmap consistent with the long range space plan.

Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Facilities Management



- 17** Identify sources of funding and implement programs that reduce operational emissions (such as the Deep Energy Retrofit Program); improve the long-term energy efficiency and climate resilience; and extend the life and functionality of Western's built assets.

Key Facilitator:  
Facilities Management

Collaborators:  
Western Sustainability



- 18** Update Western's Sustainable Design Guidelines for new construction and existing building upgrades to establish performance limits for energy use, operational carbon, ensuring that all new development and renovations align with Western's 2050 emission goals.

Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Facilities Management



- 19** Establish a campus-wide strategy to transition Western's vehicle and equipment fleet to zero-emission options, prioritizing zero-emission procurement for all new acquisitions where feasible operational solutions exist.

Key Facilitator:  
Procurement Services

Collaborators:  
Facilities Management



- 20** Educate building users on sustainable design features and foster a shared responsibility for sustainable building operations. Raise awareness of sustainable buildings on campus with the broader campus community.

Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Faculties, Institutes, Support Units



# Healthy & Connected Community

1-2 years      3-5 years

## Land-Based Learning and Experiences

- 21** Collaborate with Indigenous partners to further land-based learning opportunities that centre Indigenous voices, teachings, and perspectives.

Key Facilitator:  
Office of Indigenous Initiatives with Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Faculties, Institutes, Support Units

●      ●

- 22** Collaborate across the university to amplify the visibility and impact of sustainability related activities and events led by the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, strengthening campus engagement and awareness.

Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability with Office of Indigenous Initiatives

Collaborators:  
Campus Communicators

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- 23** Grow and promote nature based learning and engagement opportunities, strengthen connections with natural spaces on campus, and support mental health through restorative, community building experiences.

Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Student Experience, Residence Life, Employee Well-being, Faculties

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## Natural Spaces

- 24** Enhance the availability and functionality of outdoor work and study spaces, where feasible and in alignment with new campus projects.

Key Facilitator:  
Facilities Management

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- 25** Install educational signage in naturalized campus spaces to highlight ecosystem functions.

Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Facilities Management

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## Student Engagement Working Group

- 26** Develop new and expanded sustainability engagement and outreach programs, tools, and supports for student-led action to advance the priorities of the climate and sustainability strategy.

Key Facilitator:  
Western Sustainability

Collaborators:  
Student Sustainability Leaders

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Office of Sustainability

Support Services Building, Room 2301

London, Ontario, Canada N6G 1G9

Email: [sustainability@uwo.ca](mailto:sustainability@uwo.ca)

[www.sustainability.uwo.ca](http://www.sustainability.uwo.ca)

