

# SUSTAINABILITY MASTER PLAN

Update

FALL 2018



The University of Texas at Austin  
**Sustainability**

This 2016 Sustainability Master Plan reflects our determination to tackle one of the most pressing and complex problems of our time, as well as our confidence in the potential of the UT Austin community to change the world.

*President Greg Fenves*

The University of Texas at Austin met important benchmarks since adopting the Sustainability Master Plan two years ago. Consistent effort by members of the campus community has led to UT Austin's third STARS Silver rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (June 2018), and UT is on track for STARS Gold by 2020. The President's Sustainability Steering Committee is updating the campus sustainability policy and connecting staff and faculty to sustainability decision making on campus.

A fundamental aspect of sustainability is culture change, from the institution to the individual. UT is committed to integrate sustainability into the student experience as attested by a new Living Learning Community (Housing and Dining, 2017), graduate student networking around sustainability research (Sustainability on Tap, 2017), the development of curriculum linked to sustainability (funded by the Mitchell Foundation), and a renewed interest in campus as a living lab. The launch of Plant Texas 2050 illustrates the university's commitment to collaborative faculty research and grand challenges like large scale resiliency.

Conservation efforts continue across campus: UT met its 20% reduction in demand-side energy consumption two years early; zero waste efforts are growing with Athletics at the forefront (Green Sports Alliance Innovator of the Year, 2018); campus achieved SITESv2 Gold certification for the 16-acre Health District; and the Waller Creek Framework Plan should be finalized by the end of this year. UT surpassed 3.5 million square feet of LEED-certified green building space, and new building and purchasing standards are currently being developed for campus.

After spurring much of the sustainable change on campus with over three million distributed in awards, the Green Fund continues to be vital for launching environmental and broader sustainability projects and research. At the same time, UT is pursuing external corporate and foundation partners to diversify funding.

Any good plan—like this one—envision goals for a desired future that seem unattainable at the moment. Several goals require ongoing conversation. Examples are defining and incorporating sustainability deeper into academic life and—building on recent successes in conservation—maintaining our focus on water conservation, energy efficiency, zero waste, and food recovery. Perhaps the biggest aspiration in this plan is cultivating civil discourse across campus around what some see as a challenge to UT's traditional identity: the university's role and responsibility in the classroom, lab, and machine room relative to climate change.

To learn more and get involved, please check [sustainability.utexas.edu](http://sustainability.utexas.edu)



The addition of Dell Medical School to the University of Texas at Austin expanded the number of LEED Gold-certified buildings on campus and transformed 16 acres into a SITES-certified landscape that promotes well-being for patients, students, staff, and faculty.

UT Austin Sustainability Master Plan: 2018 Update				
Sustainability Master Plan 2016: sustainability.utexas.edu/leadership/masterplan				
Direction	Area	Achieved	On Target for 2020	Challenge
Leadership	Executive Commitment	Recharged President's Sustainability Steering Committee Campus Sustainability Policy (HOP 3-1010) update launched Fall 2018	Report on Living Lab programs	
	Culture of Excellence	Reported sustainability progress every two years (Master Plan Update Fall 2018)	Deepen integration of sustainability into facilities development process	Establish unit-level strategic plans to incorporate sustainability
	Model Institution	Achieved STARS Silver in 2018	Challenge to be STARS Gold by 2020 Deepen collaboration with UT Staff Council and Sustainability Staff Roundtable	Increase participation in national sustainability networks
Experience and Culture	Undergraduate	Sustainability Living Learning Community (Fall 2017) Green Fund continued	Support inclusion of sustainability topics into first-year interest group (FIGs) Introduce sustainability in orientation (pilot Summer 2018)	Include sustainability for all incoming students
	Graduate	Supported graduate professional networking opportunities (Sustainability on Tap since Fall 2017)	Increase the number of green jobs on campus Showcase students' contributions to campus and scholarship around sustainability	Increase visibility and convenience of sustainability infrastructure specific to graduate student facilities Expand co-curricular opportunities for graduate students to apply sustainability in their careers through professional study, internships and certifications
	Faculty		Create programs where faculty and their departments are incentivized to innovate on and with campus	
	Staff	Continued staff and faculty connection to sustainability decision-making via President's Sustainability Steering Committee and Faculty and Staff Councils	Develop new employee sustainability training programs Develop awards program recognizing exceptional contributions to a sustainable campus	Assess pursuit of a Baldrige Award (potentially by 2020)
	Community		Feature sustainability in publicity, messaging, websites, social media about events open to the public (Explore UT in 2018)	
Opportunity and Affordability	Wellness	Promoted and supported the tobacco-free campus policy	Support HealthPoint Wellness program Promote green spaces as opportunities for mental health	
	Livelihood	Expanded telecommute and flextime policies	Evaluate innovation in lowering employee cost of living	Expand communications on the university budget and benefits available to staff and faculty
	Food	Expanded access to sustainably grown produce (Farm Stand; Farm to Work) Continued student-run campus gardens (MicroFarm) Responded to food insecurity on campus (Food Pantry)	Increase availability of healthy and plant-based food Develop language for food vendor contracts emphasizing healthy foods and food recovery	Increase availability of healthy beverage options
	Mobility	Established bike sharing (B-Cycle, Spring 2018)	Implement media campaign to promote commuting options within five miles of campus Expand car sharing programs Improve bike/pedestrian interactions on and around campus Provide appropriate and convenient facilities on campus for people who bike or walk to work	Evaluate creative funding mechanisms for commuting alternatives Communicate alternatives to single occupant vehicle commutes greater than five miles Expand UT shuttle access to reduce crowding
Teaching and Research	Curriculum	Targeted course development awards to experiential learning and living lab methods		Develop a sustainability course flag Integrate professional certification preparation into course syllabi in existing programs
	Living Laboratory		Define and evaluate existing undergraduate programs that exemplify living lab experiences Create undergraduate research opportunities within university operations, facilities or administration	
	Research Impact	Promoted research in sustainability (Planet Texas 2050) Expanded Green Labs program	Cultivate media attention to non-traditional energy research Decrease chemical inventory through shifts in purchasing and culture	Evaluate conservation and mitigation strategies for field research
	Faculty Support		Cultivate media attention to faculty in sustainability fields	Develop funding pool for faculty innovation in sustainability teaching and research
	Civil Discourse		Develop seminar series on timely and challenging topics	
Conservation	Energy	Adopted new demand side strategic plan for energy and water conservation projects in existing buildings Early achievement of 2020 goal of 20% reduction in energy consumption per square foot	Adopt energy conservation and purchasing policies Expand lab equipment efficiency program	
	Water	Developed standards for design, installation and maintenance of cisterns on campus	Develop solar array installation standards Evaluate increasing non-potable water for irrigation	Explore green energy options with Austin Energy and other providers Update water fixture standards Evaluate reduction of once-through water use in labs
	Resource Recovery	Right size exterior solid waste and recycling infrastructure	Right size interior solid waste and recycling infrastructure Develop reuse/recycle programs for difficult materials Reduce hazardous waste generation in labs	Convert major campus events to zero waste Expand food waste avoidance, donation programs and organics diversion campus wide
	Purchasing	Supported use of the university's purchasing impacts in classrooms and other academic settings Made purchasing data available for research purposes	Evaluate standards for environmentally preferred products and vendor standards for waste minimization, material recyclability or compostability, takeback and reuse Evaluate adoption of requirements for laboratory, kitchen and office equipment	
	Fleet		Continue to inventory and measure consumption and carbon impact of fleet vehicles Support purchasing strategies for high efficiency vehicles	Adopt a no idling policy
	Buildings	Adopted LEED v4 Silver as new campus standard	Integrate LEED v4 and SITES pre-requisites into campus standards Establish a LEED Lab program in curriculum	Adopt LEED goal for major campus renovations Develop green custodial procedures
	Landscape	Achieved SITESv2 Gold for Health District (first in Texas) Tree Campus USA award for 10th year Waller Creek Framework Plan (anticipated Dec 2018)	Improve storm-water management practices to reduce erosion and improve water quality	
Partnerships	Internal	Continued Green Offices program Expanded Zero Waste Athletics events for football, baseball and softball	Develop incentives for collaboration between academic and non-academic departments Evaluate reducing water and electricity usage within Athletics facilities	
	External	Received challenge gift from BASF Continued support for the Texas Regional Alliance on Campus Sustainability	Leverage existing public and private partnerships to support sustainability initiatives and research Pursue new corporate and foundation partnerships	Expand UTeach programs focused on sustainability