

York University

Canada's Greenest Employer
2025 Application

Schedule 2



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About York University	3
A. Employee and Senior-Level Involvement	5
• Formal employee "green team"	5
• Informal employee-led green initiatives	6
• Senior Executive position responsible for overseeing environmental initiatives	7
• Formal green strategy/policy	8
B. Environmental Management Program	9
• In-house waste reduction and recycling programs	9
• Green Procurement policy for Product and Services purchased	11
• Partner with community organizations	13
• “Line-of-Business” Initiatives	15
• Monitoring/environmental management system (EMS)	17
1. Ecological Footprint	17
2. Sustainable Investing’	17
3. Energy Management	18
4. Food Service	19
5. Transportation	20
6. NetZero Commitment	21
C. Building Footprint	22
• Building Feature	23
Contact	24

ABOUT YORK UNIVERSITY

York University is a leading international teaching and research university and a driving force for positive change, with multiple campuses locally, including Keele and bilingual Glendon campuses in Toronto, Markham and globally in India and Costa Rica. Empowered by a welcoming and diverse community with a uniquely global perspective, we are preparing our students for their long-term career and personal success.

Founded in 1959, York is now home to one of the largest and most diverse student bodies in Canada, our 54,000 students, 8,500 international students, and leading professors are working with 500+ university, industry and NGO partners to tackle pressing issues. With more than 370,000 alumni, York prepares its students for a meaningful career, long-term success, and the critical knowledge to work toward a better future through leading programs, innovative course design, and experiential opportunities.

York University's academic plan [Building a Better Future: York University Academic Plan \(UAP\) 2020-2025](#) is about coming together to make positive change for our students, our campuses, and our local and global communities. As a core value of the University, sustainability is embedded in the UAP's six priorities for action, which are based on the University's enduring commitment to critical inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge that comes from many different perspectives and ways of knowing. The plan responds with a challenge to elevate York's contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). York University's new UAP serves as a rallying call for students, faculty and staff – a call to bring their expertise from across disciplines to work together to build new tools, develop strategies and solutions to global challenges.



York has a whole-institution approach to sustainability, embedding sustainable principles in every aspect of university life and generating knowledge that integrates the social, cultural, economic and environmental dimensions of complex sustainability challenges at scales ranging from local to the global. As a comprehensive research-institution, York has a proud tradition of interdisciplinary scholarship and the pursuit of discovery and innovation. Its commitment to excellence brings together a rich diversity of perspectives with a strong sense of social responsibility that is making a difference to the world around us.

In 2023, York University built on its ambition to become one of the most sustainable institutions in Canada by announcing that it would be accelerating its timeline and aiming to achieve net-zero emissions by 2040, a decade sooner than its previous commitment.

York continues to strengthen its position as a leader in creating a sustainable inclusive world and was proud to be named one of Canada's Greenest Employers for the 12th consecutive year. In addition to be recognized among the Top 40 in the [2023 Times Higher Education Impact Ranking](#), among 1,500+ universities as a global leader in sustainability and maintaining our position among the top 6 per cent of universities worldwide for the fourth year in a row. A key driver of this recognition is the extensive work York has done to unify the university community towards elevating our collective contributions to the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



A. EMPLOYEE AND SENIOR-LEVEL INVOLVEMENT

FORMAL EMPLOYEE "GREEN TEAM"

Since 2008, York University's 'green team' was the President's Sustainability Council (PSC), an advisory body to the President and senior administration.

To foster greater interdisciplinary synergy and to have greater positive impact, in 2023, a new action-oriented Sustainability Framework was introduced to replace the PSC. The new framework consists of three levels

Level 1 – Working Groups: Thematic working groups which includes: Biodiversity, Energy & Buildings, Sustainable Procurement, Teaching & Learning, Transportation, Water and Zero Waste. These working groups are developing action plans, through major initiatives that advance research, align operations and help to coordinate initiatives.

Level 2 – Sustainability Taskforce: The purpose of this group is to help advance the vision, implement, and shape institution-wide plans; make recommendations on new policy and resources and make recommendations for the award the Sustainability Innovation Fund.

Level 3 – Steering Committee: Senior administration leading on the long-term sustainability vision, oversight and resource approval.

Sustainability Framework

Level 1 – Working groups

- > Action Plans
- > Major initiatives
- > Advance research, align operations, coordinate initiatives



Level 2 – Taskforce

- > Vision/Implement/Shape institution-wide plan
- > Make recommendations on new policy and resources
- > Award Innovation fund



Level 3 – Steering Committee

- > Lead long-term sustainability vision
- > Oversight
- > Resource approval



INFORMAL EMPLOYEE-LED GREEN INITIATIVE

Sustainability is an integral part of the York University community, and we continuously strive to embed sustainable principles in every aspect of university life. York University has various informal engagement programs such as:

- The [Office of Sustainability](#) has a number of engagement programs such as the Sustainable Office and Sustainable Events certification to engage sustainability champions across the University.
- Sustainability events and awareness initiatives are conducted both virtually and in-person, such as: [Fair Trade](#), Earth Hour, [SDG Week Canada](#), [Earth Month](#) tree planting and campus cleanup, along with other events.
- The Office of Sustainability and Human Resources have developed a sustainability orientation module for York employees
- A Sustainability Champions Network – a peer mentoring program to engage the York University community for awareness and action
- [Sustainable Campus Tours](#)
- Social media engagements and campaigns



SENIOR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



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There is no more pressing global priority than the need to embrace a more sustainable way of living. Through our teaching, our research and our own practices, York University has contributed substantially to our understand of sustainability best practices which are as much about what we do as what we are purposefully choosing not to do.

— Rhonda Lenton, President and Vice-Chancellor

In 2023, York University hired Mike Layton as the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), a former Toronto City Councillor, York alum and a long-time champion of Sustainability. Mike is leading the advancement of York’s institutional sustainability efforts and the Office of Sustainability, which also consist of Nicole Arsenault, the Program Director, in addition to work study and placement students. The past year, the priorities for the Office of Sustainability has been community consultation for the renewal of the Sustainability Strategy and the development of the new action-orientated Sustainability Framework.



A CAMPUS VISION: LIVING WELL TOGETHER

York University's Keele Campus is where university and city, academia and industry, people and culture meet and thrive. That energy will soon extend from Keele's historic academic core into four new neighbourhoods, nurturing a dynamic, flourishing, and complete community, and modeling the university's best and most innovative thinking. The results will demonstrate York's commitment to community well-being and environmental stewardship - to living well together. The [Campus Vision](#) lays out a plan to develop our lands in a way that most enhances the lives and capacities of those around us, including spaces for experiential learning and living labs.



FORMAL GREEN STRATEGY/POLICY

Sustainability Policy

York University's Board of Governors approved a revised [Sustainability Policy](#) in Summer 2023. The policy aims to foster environmental protection, sustainable development, and responsible stewardship within the university community. It establishes requirements for the development of a comprehensive sustainability strategy and framework to get York University to Net-zero on Scope 1 and 2 and to significantly reduce Scope 3 emissions by 2040.

This policy reaffirms York University's commitment to address complex environmental, social, and economic issues. By adhering to applicable environmental laws, allocating responsibilities to various stakeholders, and providing a platform for sustainable development efforts, this policy aims to create a holistic approach to sustainability that integrates seamlessly into all aspects of university operations, thereby fostering a culture of sustainability and contributing to a more sustainable future.

Sustainability Strategy

A priority for the Office of Sustainability in the 2023-2024 academic year, is an extensive community consultation for the [renewal of the sustainability strategy](#), with the aim of completion in Spring 2024. The original strategy was approved in 2017, which had 17 goals with the three pillars of People, Knowledge and Place.



B. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

IN HOUSE WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PROGRAMS

In-house waste reduction and recycling programs beyond municipal minimums (e.g. e-waste collection, waste diversion rates). *(describe in Supplement)*

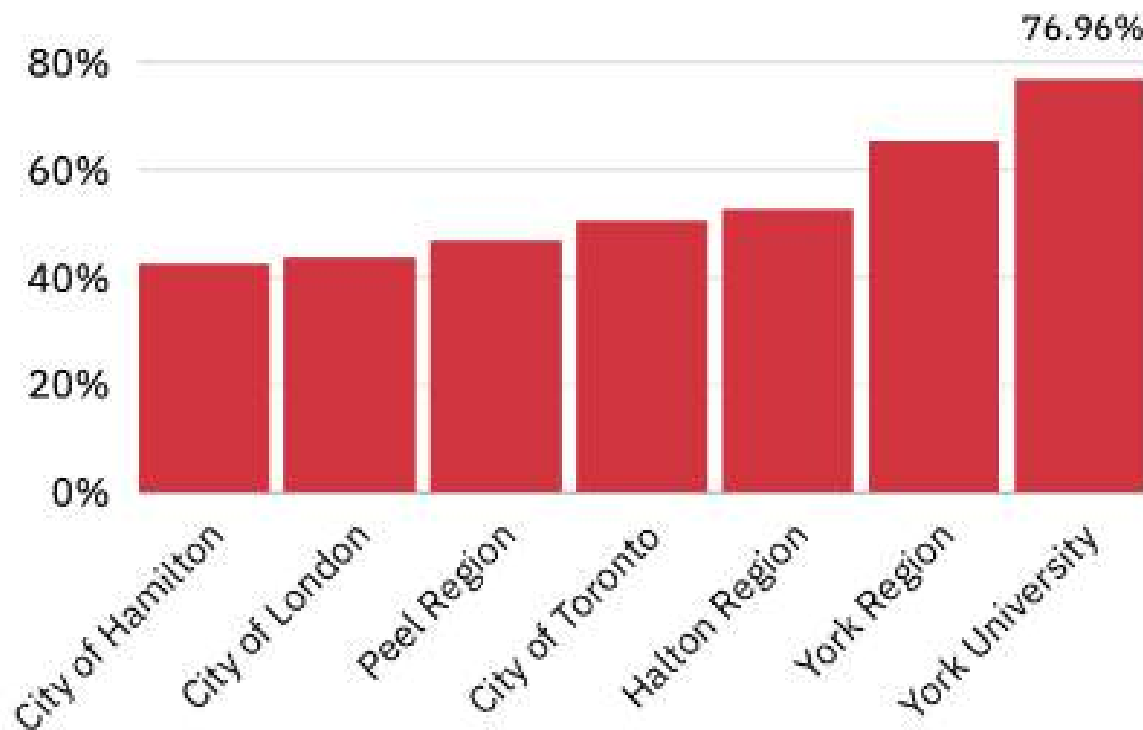
York has successfully diverted 77 per cent of waste from landfill. This is due to the **Zero Waste program**, York's comprehensive, multi-faceted waste management program. The program was first established in 1990 and has been expanding for over three decades as it continuously surpasses its targets. Success of this program was due to both operational improvements and educational components designed to improve waste reduction and recycling amongst community members, including equipping kitchenettes with compost containers and replacing standalone garbage bins with tri-bins for recycling with appropriate informational signage. York's new Sustainability Framework includes a Working Group specific to Zero Waste to help further accelerate efforts towards a zero-waste campus, this group is a transdisciplinary and includes academic researchers, staff and students.

OTHER FACTS:

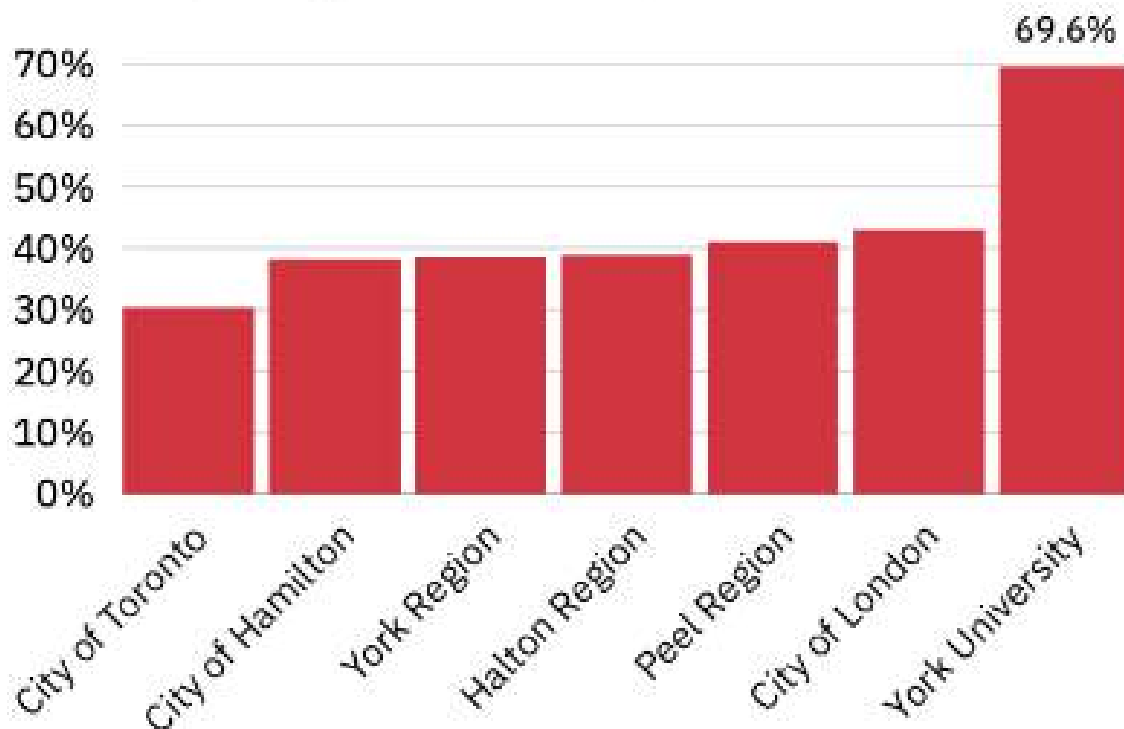
- Over the past decade, the York University community has reduced the amount of waste being sent to landfill by **over 50 per cent**.
- York University's **diversion efforts have resulted in 26,273 metric tons of carbon abated**, which is the equivalent of planting more than 1.2 million trees, removing 5,900 cars from the road, or eliminating 61,800 barrels of oil.
- The Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (EUC) is home to the "Waste Wiki" a university run/operated project that attempts to bridge the gap between academic, industry and government in issues surrounding waste. Learn more [here](#).

ZERO WASTE

Waste Diversion Rate Comparison (2021)



Recycling Rate Comparison (2021)



GREEN PROCUREMENT POLICY FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PURCHASED

Pursuant to our policies on sustainability, procurement and social procurement, purchases at York are evaluated in part on their ability to advance York's sustainability and social procurement policy. This includes acquiring green products, promoting local workforce development and ensuring equity-deserving businesses and businesses who champion those ideals can participate in York's procurement processes. York now requires applicable procurements to demonstrate how their business champions the SDGs. Prior to publishing the tender, York's Strategic Procurement Services assesses how the procurement may engage with one or more of the SDGs.

In addition to responding to the SDGs, York has mandated minimum green standards of practice into its public tenders. Where appropriate, the University requires proponents' details on the handling and use of products while fulfilling the contract. Proponents are required to promote: the reusability of any product, minimize packaging wherever possible, promote life-cycle product extension and to use products using a Green Seal or Eco Logo certification.

York is spearheading a transition to a more rigorous adoption of sustainable practices across its campuses. York's new Sustainability Framework includes a Procurement Working Group to enact change. The Working Group combines academic faculty, administrative staff and students and together, is working on a procurement guide to ensure all purchasers at York are equipped with the tools and expertise to make sustainable purchases. York also participates provincially and nationally on sustainable purchasing working groups. York has played a key role in developing a sustainable RFx guideline for universities and is co-authoring a supplier code of conduct for eventual adoption for universities province wide.





In April 2022, Strategic Procurement launched its [Social Procurement Vendor Portal](#). By actively identifying and contracting with diverse-owned businesses and social enterprises, the University is helping to advance economic growth for diverse-owned businesses and social enterprises by reducing barriers to commerce. Diverse-owned businesses and social enterprises can register on York's Social Procurement Vendor Portal based on eligibility. A diverse-owned business is one that is more than 51% owned by people belonging to equity-deserving groups, including Indigenous Peoples, Black people, people of colour, women, and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. A social enterprise is a business that sells goods and/or services while embedding a social, cultural, or environmental purpose into the business, and reinvests most of its profits into a social mission. To date, York has spent over \$9,000,000 with qualifying vendors across its construction and renovation projects.

In 2023, in an effort to be accountable to its community, York University launched a public facing dashboard which provides real-time information on the impact that York's social procurement objectives are delivering. To date, York has seen 63-deserving apprentices hired across our capital and renovation projects totaling over 50,000 hours logged. York has also signed Memorandums Of Understanding with community agencies representing businesses from the equity-deserving communities. These MOUs enable a dynamic partnership to address historical and systemic barriers and ensure York's tendering opportunities are accessible and foster inclusion from diverse vendors.

PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

York's holistic understanding of sustainability includes human well-being and social dimensions, and recognizes the social, economic and environmental roles of York University in and with our local neighbourhoods. A goal within the Sustainability Strategy is for "each of York University's campuses be an anchor institution with their surrounding communities. They proactively engage to promote sustainable economic, cultural, social, and environmental opportunities and innovation."

The strategies of Anchor Institutions offer an opportunity to leverage existing public funds and assets to address these ambitious objectives to benefit communities; especially low- income neighbourhoods or historically disadvantaged groups. Coupled with our core mission of education and research, the Anchor Institution has significant potential to strengthen our community.

As an Anchor Institution, York is focusing on addressing economic disadvantage, discrimination, and/or barriers to equal opportunity experienced by people across the Greater Toronto Area. This includes those distant or isolated from the labour market (such as youth experiencing vulnerabilities) and those from equity-deserving communities and neighbourhoods (i.e., Jane and Finch) who have historically faced discrimination that prevents equitable access to economic opportunities. The following were identified as the four target areas which we believe can have the most impact over the next 10 years: 1) Employment, 2) Engagement, 3) Neighbourhood-building through infrastructure and 4) Social procurement.

York is continuously seeking partnerships to advance shared goals and demonstrate commitment to positive change. In 2024 York U and United Way Greater Toronto partnered to create positive change as communities recover from pandemic, weather high inflation, and cost-of-living crisis. Another example, is the recent announcement of the New School of Medicine partnership to develop sustainable, equitable and prosperous opportunities to enhance and enrich our communities in positive change.





The [York University-TD Community Engagement Centre \(CEC\)](#), located in the York Gate Mall, is a satellite office of York University. The CEC strives for academic innovation through community building and experiential learning, post- secondary attainment for Black Creek Community, and fosters collaborative research and partnerships. Our local approach informs our thinking more broadly about community engagement and the role of the university in strengthening communities and addressing societal issues.



[CIFAL York](#) is part of UNITAR's global network of training centers across Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean, for knowledge- sharing, training, and capacity-building for public and private leaders, local authorities, and civil society. CIFAL Centers are local and regional hubs for innovative, participatory and co-creative knowledge exchange opportunities to support decision-making processes, build capacity, and accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. Established in 2020 as a partnership between UNITAR, York University and York Region, CIFAL York commenced operations in June 2021 as the first CIFAL Centre in Canada.

“LINE-OF-BUSINESS” GREEN INITIATIVES

York’s new [Strategic Research Plan 2023-2028: Knowledge for the Future: From Creation and Discovery to Application](#) lays out a vision for accelerating the growth and supporting the development of our research, scholarship and creative activity over the next five years. This plan seeks to advance York’s research vision – to better understand the human condition and the world around us, and to employ the knowledge we gain in service of society and the health of the planet. It is also guided by York’s sustainability goals, drawing on the strengths of our diverse and inclusive community to approach justice, equity and sustainability through a holistic lens of collaboration, innovation and knowledge mobilization. York has a number of Organized Research Units related to sustainability including the Centre for Bee Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation at York University (BEEc).



York University’s growing area of strength in water research, strong local and global relationships, and commitment to positive change has resulted in the University being named academic lead in the UN's new [Water Academy](#). The first-of- its-kind, Water Academy brings together public and private sector partners from around the world to establish an innovative water training and education resource. Announced by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) at the UN 2023 Water Conference, the Water Academy is a global multi-sector collaboration.



The [Sustainability Innovation Fund \(SIF\)](#) supports projects that advance climate action and York’s net-zero goal. To advance York’s ambitious plans for sustainability, the SIF was accepting applications for projects on the York University campuses. This round of the Sustainability Innovation Fund was specifically to support projects that can advance climate action at the University, support our goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving net-zero by 2040.

Applications were welcome from all faculty, staff and students and proposed projects should take place on one of York’s campuses. .



Other prominent highlights include:

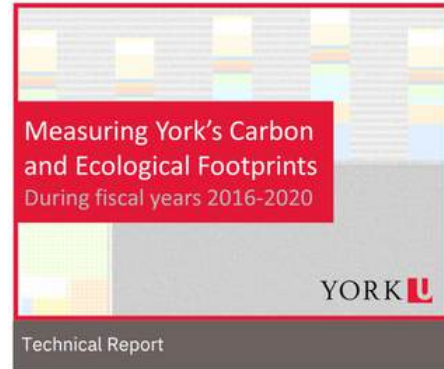
- Over 500 course offerings across several faculties that focus on sustainability and the environment. These courses are offered through Environmental Studies, Science (Biology, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Conservation Ecology, Earth and Atmospheric Science), Education, School of Arts, Media, Performance & Design, Geography, Lassonde School of Engineering, Osgoode Hall Law School, Schulich School of Business and Urban Studies.
- The Lillian Meighen Wright Centre, York's [Eco Campus in Costa Rica](#) is located next to the 400- acre Las Nubes Forest Reserve, which is part of one of the largest rainforest ecosystems in Central America. The Centre includes indoor classrooms and laboratories, an outdoor Indigenous classroom, an arboretum, and botanical gardens. The Centre operates as a local, national and international hub dedicated to education and research on Neotropical conservation, eco-health, community well-being and sustainable livelihoods of those who live and work in the area.
- York recently updated its Office of Sustainability website to include a new [Fairtrade webpage](#) which features information and resources on the meaning of “Fairtrade”, where to find Fairtrade products at York, and a new podcast hosted by a York undergraduate student.
- From May 27 to June 2, 2023, York University hosted the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, the largest academic gathering in Canada, in partnership with the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences. It brought together more than 10,000 scholars, graduate students and practitioners and approximately 70 academic associations from a wide spectrum of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including literature, history, theatre, film studies, education, music, sociology, geography, social work and many others. The theme of Congress was “Reckonings and Re-imaginings,” to guide the direction of discussions and knowledge sharing at the first in-person Congress since 2019. The theme reflected the vision of Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies Professor Andrea Davis, who is serving as academic convener for Congress 2023 and served as special advisor on York University’s Anti-Black Racism Strategy.



MONITORING/ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (EMS)

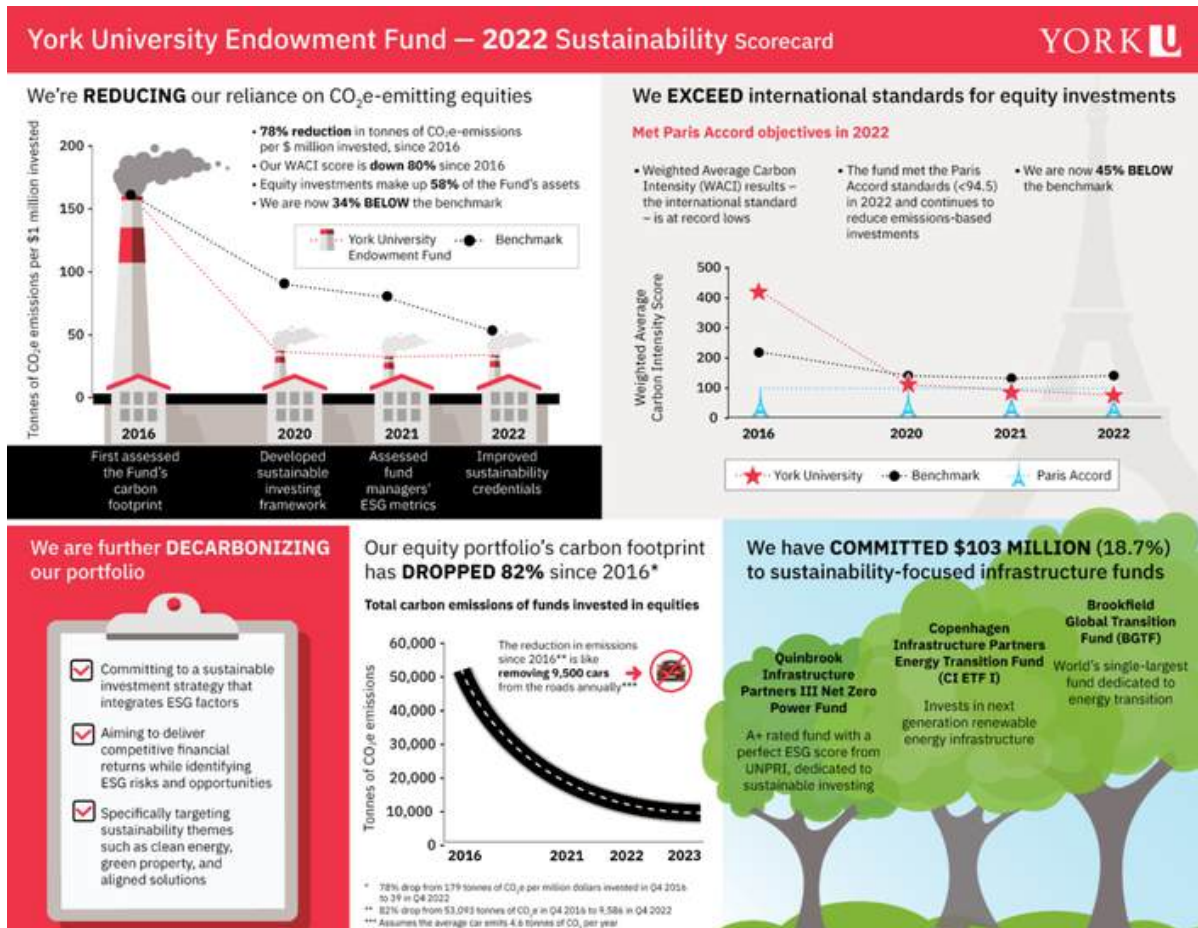
Ecological Footprint

York recently released its own comprehensive emissions data and ecological footprint assessment from the [Ecological Footprint Initiative](#) – a group of York’s scholars, students, researchers and collaborating organizations working together to advance the measurement of ecological footprint and biocapacity – making it the first Canadian institution to do so. This new [report](#) provides York with information to identify opportunities to reduce its emissions and develop innovative solutions to support a more sustainable future.



Sustainable Investing

The [Sustainable Investing 2022 Progress Report](#) highlights the strong performance of York’s endowment fund – exceeding national sector and international sustainability benchmarks while generating positive returns. The new report on sustainable investing outlines York’s leadership in the space and how the York University Endowment Fund employs a decarbonization strategy that integrates environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors in the overall financial management of its [portfolio](#).



York University has undertaken a variety of energy management programs over the past decade to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and is currently developing a robust plan to decarbonize and achieve our goal to net zero.

Energy Management

The Energy Management team provides heating, cooling and power to all academic, administrative, retail, and residences on campus. In order to accomplish this, we generate high pressure steam for heating and chilled water for cooling and deliver these by way of underground service tunnels to mechanical rooms of each building for distribution to the various heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) units within the building. They also generate and distribute power through our 10- megawatt co-generation plant and associated high voltage electrical distribution system.



York currently produces approximately 62k tonnes/year of CO2 in Scope 1 emissions. Facilities is now working on a plan to decarbonize central utilities to reach our goal to reduce emissions to achieve net zero before 2040. Over the last few decades, York has completed significant energy management projects that contribute to the University's near-term 2030 target and provide a strong foundation to build upon. Since the 1990s, the University has been optimizing current infrastructure, transitioning away from fossil fuels, converting electric supply from coal to natural gas, completing capital projects for energy and emission reduction and designing new buildings to minimize the need for energy and carbon.

In December 2023 York signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Noventa Energy Partners Inc. to investigate implementing its revolutionary Wastewater Energy Transfer System (WET) at the Glendon campus. The WET technology uses city-owned underground sanitary lines as a heat source, creating thermal energy from wastewater – from sources such as showers, dishwashers and hot tubs. This cutting-edge technology could position Glendon as York's first net-zero campus in advance of the University's 2040 goal.



FOOD SERVICES

Food Services in partnership with Chartwells provides the following sustainability initiatives which include:

- Teaching Kitchen
- Fair Trade
- Value Meals
- Waste Tracking System
- Friendlier – Resusable container program
- A menu software for production planning & inventory management to prevent food waste and manage volumes and demand.
- A partnership with Vision Greens to provide sustainable produce.
- A partnership with Second Harvest’s FoodRescue.ca platform to donate food that would otherwise be unused/unavailable
- Lug-a-mug discount



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Services encourages commuting to the University through the use of public transit, carpooling, biking and walking. The goal is to reduce the demand for parking and increase awareness of alternative sustainable methods of transportation. The commuter modal split has been dramatically altered in the past 10 years from the use of predominantly single-occupant vehicles to alternative, sustainable modes of travel. Over 80% of commuters travel to York daily using sustainable means of travel. The arrival of the Toronto-York Spadina Subway extension in 2017 has improved transit to and from the Keele campus and has re-distributed both TTC buses to several nodes along the subway route, resulting in significantly reduced bus traffic on the campus. Transportation Services also offers free shuttle services between Glendon and Keele campuses, in the Village and an accessible mobility service. To support these sustainable transportation efforts, Parking & Transportation renewed its membership and partnership with Smart Commute / Point A in 2023.

York University to earn Canada's first Best Universities for Commuters designation – a designation received by both their Keele and Glendon campuses! Just a few of the commuter benefits they offer include:

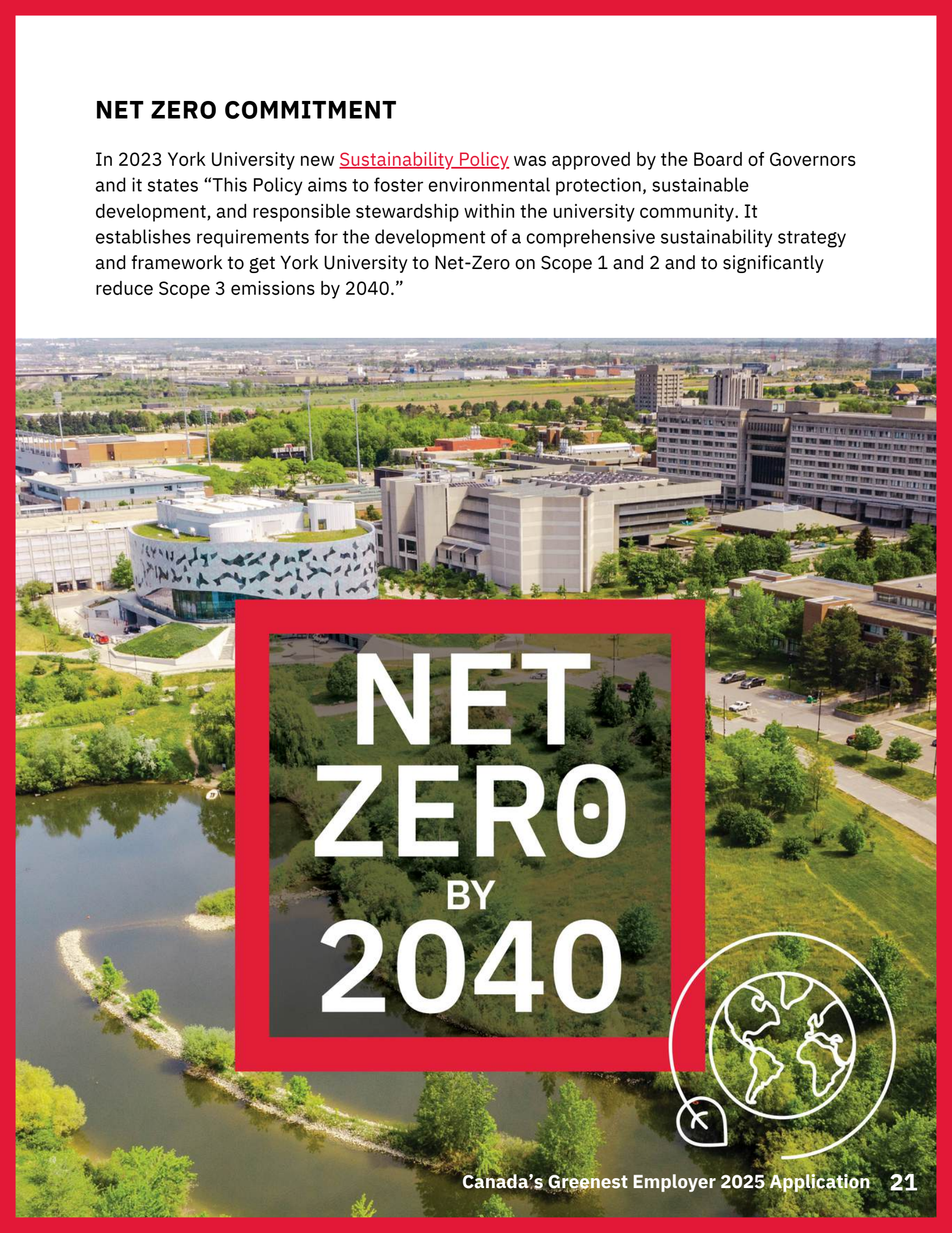
- Shuttle service between campuses
- Extensive cycling infrastructure on campus, such as bike lanes, bike racks and posts, secure storage areas, and shower facilities
- A remote work arrangement for employees that is consistent with Canada's top 100 employers
- Emergency Ride Home assistance for sustainable commuters.
- More information can be found [here](#).

As part of the new Sustainability Framework, there is a Transportation Working Group specifically developing actions related to corporate business travel and micro-mobility.



NET ZERO COMMITMENT

In 2023 York University new [Sustainability Policy](#) was approved by the Board of Governors and it states “This Policy aims to foster environmental protection, sustainable development, and responsible stewardship within the university community. It establishes requirements for the development of a comprehensive sustainability strategy and framework to get York University to Net-Zero on Scope 1 and 2 and to significantly reduce Scope 3 emissions by 2040.”



NET
ZERO
BY
2040



C. BUILDING FOOTPRINT

York University has constructed or renovated many campus buildings to LEED standards and ensured others include sustainability features, including:

- Markham Campus Building (LEED Gold target)
- School of Continuous Studies (LEED Gold)
- The Rob & Cheryl McEwan Graduate Study & Research Building (Schulich School of Business) – (LEED Gold; NET Zero ready)
- The Second Student Centre (LEED Gold)
- Bergeron Centre for Engineering Excellence (LEED Gold)
- York Lions Stadium (LEED Silver)
- Life Sciences Building (LEED Silver)
- Kaneff Tower (LEED Silver)
- Ignat Kaneff Building, Osgoode Hall Law School (LEED Silver CI)
- Osgoode Professional Development (LEED Silver CI, target)
- Glendon Centre of Excellence (LEED Silver)
- Neuroscience Building (design to LEED)
- Farquharson Life Sciences (sustainable feature, but not LEED certified)
- Central Square Podium (Green roof, received \$100,000k credit from the City of Toronto for transforming a concrete desolate roof to an active bio-diverse roof)
- Pond Road Residence (Green roof)
- Lassonde Building (an award-winning design that was one of the first green buildings built in Ontario; considered the most sustainable building in the world for a cold climate, 2003)
- Sherman Health Sciences and Research Center [Adaptive reuse, LID (low impact development)]
- Technology Enhanced Learning Building



BUILDING FEATURE

School of Continuing Studies

In February 2024, York’s School of Continuing Studies Building achieved LEED Gold certification from the Canadian Green Building Council. LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design, is the global building industry’s premier benchmark for sustainability.

The six-story, 9,012-square-metre, 50-classroom building, [which opened last spring](#) at 68 The Pond Road on York’s Keele Campus, was designed by global architecture firm Perkins&Will, led by architects Safdar Abidi and Andrew Frontini. Its twisted design is said to symbolize the school’s twist on the traditional mission of continuing studies – that is, to solve Canada’s most pressing labour challenges by connecting employers to a highly skilled talent pool through innovative program offerings.

Some of the building’s most notable environmental features include: a self-generating heat recovery system; an infrastructure-ready, solar-powered water heater; a high-performing façade system for weather resistance; and daylight harvesting to offset electric lighting requirements. The building is believed to be well positioned to achieve net-zero emissions in the future due to its low energy consumption and ability to accommodate solar photovoltaic panels that convert sunlight into electricity.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Reports

- Office of Sustainability Reports
- UN Sustainable Development Goals Report

Websites

- York University - Homepage
- Office of Sustainability
- York University Academic Plan
- Division of People, Equity and Culture
- Sustainable Development Goals at York U

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