

Summary of Community Feedback

ROUND 1

In October 2024, the Office of Campus Sustainability gathered input from students, faculty, and staff about Scope 3 emissions awareness and interests.

Round 1 Community Engagement Activities

- 4 open houses: Central Campus, North Campus, Dearborn, and Flint
- 2 listening sessions (Student Carbon Neutrality Network and the President's Advisory Committee on Labor Standards and Human Rights)
- Survey



Key Themes

Purchasing and Waste Reduction

- Make sustainable options the standard
- Continue enhancing circular economy efforts, including reuse programs and avoiding single-use items
- Construct a waste sort facility to better manage and control reuse, sorting, and downstream processes
- More resources needed at Flint and Dearborn, especially sustainability staff and waste reduction infrastructure and programming

Commuting and University Travel

- Most conversation around business and academic travel focused on finding alternative fuels or modes of transportation, rather than reducing trips
- Encourage train travel, such as by adjusting SPG language to allow the university to reimburse the cost of train fare
- Work with the city and county to expand public transit options and bike lanes (especially at Flint and Dearborn)
- Increase covered bike parking and electric vehicle chargers
- Look into requiring the purchase of offsets for transportation-related emissions and creating a green travel fund to support units choosing low-carbon travel options
- Address increased athletic travel emissions from the Big Ten expansion

Food

- Seen as a highly successful area on the Ann Arbor campus, with lessons that can be adapted to other campuses
- Prioritize food waste reduction
- Make sustainable options the default choice
- emissions mitigated, 2) equity, and 3) confidence the strategies will work
- Examine the energy needs of AI applications and develop strategies to reduce its climate footprint
- Join or form consortia with other universities to amplify change in specific industries

Culture and Communication

- Increase awareness and transparency about Scope 3 emissions
- Establish sustainability-focused norms and behaviors that students can carry forward after graduation
- Implement a system and incentives for departments to establish goals and share data, actions, and best practices

Environmental Justice

- Consider implementing equitable carbon pricing that incentivizes low-carbon choices while addressing financial disparities
- Identify areas where U-M can have the greatest impact and focus on a few priorities at a time
- Establish metrics for human rights, labor relations, etc. to measure alongside emissions

Other

- Prioritize strategies based on 1) amount of carbon emissions mitigated, 2) equity, and 3) confidence the strategies will work
- Examine the energy needs of AI applications and develop strategies to reduce its climate footprint
- Join or form consortia with other universities to amplify change in specific industries



Summary of Community Feedback

ROUND 2

In November-December 2024, the Office of Campus Sustainability hosted two town halls and a survey to gather input from students, faculty, and staff about Scope 3 priorities and how to implement strategies.

Key Themes and Recommendations

Leadership and Policy

- Strong leadership buy-in and clear mandates are essential to drive action.
- Centrally driven initiatives should complement localized efforts to ensure equitable solutions.

Infrastructure and Tools

- Invest in physical infrastructure to support sustainable choices (e.g., bike parking, compost bins).
- Create centralized systems for tracking emissions, waste, and procurement.

Education and Collaboration

- Embed sustainability into academic curricula and expand engagement with student groups.
- Build partnerships between departments, suppliers, and local communities.

Behavior Change

- Use incentives and visible success stories to motivate participation.
- Roll out changes gradually to reduce resistance and foster acceptance.



Prioritization

Leadership and Policy

Participants identified where U-M has momentum and where to show leadership based on a list of 8 potential focus areas.

WHERE DOES U-M HAVE MOMENTUM?

1. Sustainable food systems
2. Renewable energy shift
3. Circular economy and zero waste

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE U-M SHOW LEADERSHIP?

1. Low-carbon commuting
2. Low-carbon, local economy
3. Tackling embodied carbon & Decarbonizing IT



Implementation Planning

Town hall participants had robust discussions about how U-M can create the best chance of successful implementation.

	BIGGEST HURDLES	WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY	TOOLS AND RESOURCES	VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS
COMMUTING AND TRAVEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination challenges with local communities (e.g., bus routes, park-and-ride options). • Leadership focus on internal solutions with limited regional consideration. • High upfront costs for electrification. • Infrastructure prioritizing convenience over sustainability. • Departmental resistance to travel policy changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption higher with cost-effective and convenient options. • Resistance when alternatives increase time, cost, or effort. • Leadership influence crucial for adoption of eco-friendly policies.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real-time bus tracking systems and improved infrastructure (e.g., heated/covered stops). • Facilities for bikers (e.g., parking, showers).* • Transparent commuting emissions data. • Sustainable travel prioritization in booking systems.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight personal and environmental benefits. • Address game-day travel emissions.* • Use competitions and partnerships for engagement.*
PURCHASING AND WASTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented departmental systems limit centralized sustainable purchasing. • Few vendors meet scale and sustainability standards. • Higher initial costs for sustainable options. • Contamination in recycling and composting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership mandates encourage compliance.* • Cost savings motivate departmental participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear purchasing guidelines and centralized monitoring platforms.* • Emergency bulk storage systems. • Dedicated staff for auditing sustainability.* • Tailored training programs for departments.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use departmental champions. • Engage students via programs like Planet Blue.** • Share success stories on waste reduction and reuse.
FOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented stakeholders like MDining and Michigan Medicine.** • Disparate sustainability standards across vendors. • Challenges with small/local vendors (volume or certifications). • Consumer behavior issues (e.g. improper sorting).* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement higher with visible sustainability impacts. • Vendors prefer clear incentives or support from the university.* • Students respond positively to tangible demonstrations, such as on-campus composting stations or waste-reduction challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align procurement practices via audits. • Introduce composting and waste management in student orientations. • Centralized tracking for food service sustainability metrics.* • Provide grants or subsidies to encourage local vendor participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote composting and food waste education with signage/resources.** • Highlight campus gardens, local sourcing, and energy-efficient dining. • Use storytelling to emphasize impact. • Feature success metrics on accessible dashboards for transparency.**

* MENTIONED MORE THAN ONCE