








SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Office of Sustainability



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Introduction

Climate change is here. As the earth continues to warm, risks to our society and financial markets will continue to intensify. These risks are primarily and most severely impacting those who are already systemically disadvantaged. Bentley University has the opportunity and duty to prepare our students to be transformative leaders in this changing world, while also focusing on climate change mitigation and adaptation for our campus.

Bentley's first sustainability and climate action plan, developed in 2010, provided an important foundation for the university's sustainability work over the past 11 years. In that time, the university has achieved a 70% reduction in annual greenhouse gas emissions (compared to a 2008 baseline). Since 2010, the university's approach to carbon neutrality and sustainability has evolved. The urgency for meeting our 2030 carbon neutrality goal remains the same, but today we have a commitment to do so in an inclusive and equitable way; with solutions rooted in social justice, that enhance Bentley students' education and preparedness and strengthen the university's resilience.

Bentley's 2021 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan is the result of a twelve-month planning process that engaged over 300 Bentley students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The plan consists of five focus areas, each with five-year goals and strategies that align with the university's mission. Three of the five focus areas specifically address the university's greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) through sustainable campus operations and resource use. The remaining focus areas enhance Bentley's impact as an educational institution, with goals to develop organizational leaders who think critically about the broad range of sustainability issues in society and business.

Bentley's Mission

Bentley University changes the world with a transformative business education, integrated with arts and sciences, that inspires and prepares ethical leaders who will confront the challenges of today and shape the opportunities of tomorrow.

Bentley's Sustainability and Climate Action Vision

Bentley is a model for sustainability in higher education, developing organizational leaders committed to making their institutions, communities, and the world more sustainable.

Our operations and education reflect a commitment to sustainability and climate justice by students, faculty, and staff. Our community is equitable and resilient, promoting innovative thinking to solve the sustainability issues of today and tomorrow.

Letter from the President

As a distinguished business university, Bentley's mission is to provide a transformative business education, integrated with arts and sciences, that inspires and prepares ethical leaders who will confront the challenges of today and shape the opportunities of tomorrow. Toward this end, it is imperative that we prepare Bentley students to address climate change - one of society's most consequential challenges - using just and equitable, market-based solutions. In this effort, Bentley must lead by example; adapting our campus infrastructure and operations to both minimize our university's greenhouse gas emissions and increase our resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

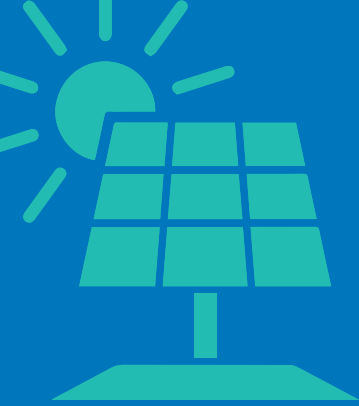
We are at a critical inflection period. Our society is in particular need of organizational leadership with the courage and prescience necessary to address the climate crisis and its disproportionately negative impact on historically underserved communities. The 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change laid out the challenge before us: current global pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions most likely will not stop the planet from warming in excess of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). Though the global commitments are laudable, we need bold action by 2030 to avoid the most severe impacts of climate change. Bentley's aggressive 2030 carbon-neutrality date embodies this commitment, and the Bentley community is ready and eager to take on this challenge.

This Sustainability and Climate Action Plan is Bentley's roadmap to address these daunting challenges. Resulting from the efforts of hundreds of dedicated faculty, staff and students across the university, this plan highlights the power of cross-departmental leadership and of a community ready to create change. The goals and strategies outlined in this plan lay out our incremental steps toward our pledge to being a carbon-neutral university that develops organizational leaders committed to making their institutions, communities, and the world more sustainable.

Most Sincerely,



E. LaBrent Chrite
President, Bentley University



Energy and Building Systems

In 2010, Bentley University pledged to be carbon neutral by 2030. Over half of the university's carbon footprint (the total amount of greenhouse gases emitted each year from the university's operations) results from energy consumption. Most of these emissions are a direct result of operating Bentley's 41 campus buildings encompassing 2.2 million gross square feet of built space. Therefore, in addition to resource use, this plan outlines strategies focused on building maintenance and the process in which buildings are upgraded and utilized.

Bentley's energy use, water use and buildings are managed by the university's Facilities Management Department, a team that has had a long-standing commitment to sustainability. This commitment has resulted in a 17% decrease in electricity use and a 6% decrease in natural gas use compared to 2008 baselines. Campus water use has remained flat since 2010 despite an increase in campus population and building square footage.

The plan's Energy and Building Systems goals and strategies are focused on continued energy and water efficiency projects and investment in renewable energy.



Reduction in energy and water consumption, while meeting the needs of the Bentley community, is a challenge, but always a driving design consideration when Facilities Management looks at upgrading and/or improving the campus infrastructure. This committee focused on setting strategies and milestones over the next five years, looking at current and emerging technologies, including renewable options, to meet the ultimate goal of a robust, reliable, efficient infrastructure that reduces our carbon footprint.

Jon Nattinville

Director of Construction & Planning



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 - Decarbonize: By 2026, Bentley will have continued to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels, remaining on track to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2030, using the following strategies:

- 1. Procure:** Purchase 100% renewable electricity to power Bentley's campus.
- 2. Plan:** Develop a utility energy and resiliency plan, including assessments of onsite renewable energy production potential and the electrification of campus energy systems.
- 3. Pilot:** Explore campus electrification by converting a system(s) within a building to be powered by electricity instead of fossil fuels.
- 4. Install:** Install renewable power generation infrastructure on campus.
- 5. Target:** Set a target date for the university to become fossil fuel free.

Goal 2 - Energy Use: By 2026, Bentley will have decreased its campus energy use intensity (energy use per square foot) using the following strategies:

- 1. Target:** By the end of fiscal year 2022, set a target for a decrease in energy use intensity by building type.
- 2. Standardize:** Create construction standards for new buildings and major renovation projects focused on improved building efficiency to meet targeted energy use intensity goals and enhance climate resilience.
- 3. Reduce:** Implement targeted energy efficiency projects on campus with the goal of reducing usage, funded as standalone projects or supplemented by the deferred maintenance plan.

Goal 3 - Water Use: By 2026, Bentley will have improved water efficiency across its natural and built environments using the following strategies:

- 1. Plan:** Create a five-year indoor and outdoor water management and use reduction plan with a focus on efficiency and climate resiliency.
- 2. Target:** By the end of fiscal year 2023, set a target for a decrease in campus water use.
- 3. Upgrade:** Upgrade the existing irrigation system to one that is higher in efficiency and includes active monitoring.
- 4. Update:** Update existing plumbing fixtures that do not meet current low-flow standards.



Transportation and Mobility

Bentley's carbon neutrality and campus resiliency goals necessitate a critical examination of commuting methods, airline travel, campus mobility and existing support for sustainable methods of travel. Greenhouse gas emissions from airline and car commuting account for almost 25% of the university's carbon footprint.

On average, 20% of Bentley's commuting population utilize "low-carbon" modes of transportation some of the time to commute to campus. These alternative modes of transportation, which reduce emissions from car travel, include walking, biking, carpooling, taking public transportation or utilizing Bentley's shuttle services. Expansion of convenient and accessible "low carbon" forms of transportation supports Bentley's greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts and increases campus equity by creating affordable and reliable access to our campus for those who do not or cannot own cars. To mitigate emissions from airline travel, the university has been purchasing verified emission reduction certificates (carbon offsets) since 2016. These actions combined have resulted in a 47% decrease in travel emissions.

The plan's Transportation and Mobility goals and strategies are focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from commuting and air travel and enhancing the campus' sustainable transportation infrastructure.



Influencing transportation and mobility from a sustainability perspective is difficult because it is largely based on personal choice. Our committee focused on supporting more sustainable mobility choices while continuing to focus on the safety and security of our community.

Francis Bourgeois
Chief of Police



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 - Commuting: By 2026, Bentley will have reduced greenhouse gas emissions from commuting by 10% and increased use of sustainable, low-carbon modes of commuting to and from campus using the following strategies:

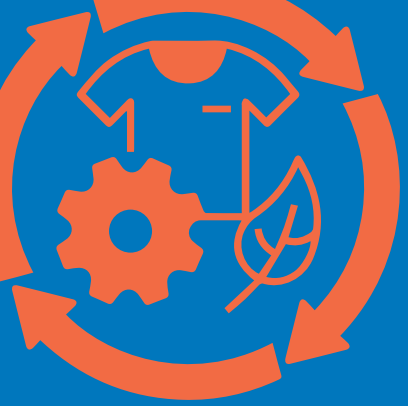
- 1. Incentivize:** Provide incentives and programs for students, faculty and staff to choose sustainable commuting modes (ex: subsidized MBTA passes and bike share memberships).
- 2. Connect:** Identify and increase reliable sustainable commuting access to key locations in the Waltham area (ex: Commuter Rail, Moody Street).
- 3. Be Flexible:** Maintain workplace flexibility and opportunities to work remotely as defined in the university's Flexible Work Arrangements policy.
- 4. Engage:** Increase communications about sustainable commuting options to raise student, faculty and staff awareness and engagement in sustainable commuting programs.

Goal 2 - Infrastructure: By 2026, Bentley will have improved infrastructure to support zero-carbon modes of transportation within and around campus using the following strategies:

- 1. Achieve:** Improve campus biking infrastructure per the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly University guidelines.
- 2. Improve:** Improve walking infrastructure on campus.
- 3. Partner:** Partner with the City of Waltham to encourage improved walking and biking infrastructure in surrounding neighborhoods.

Goal 3 - Travel: By 2026, Bentley will have reduced emissions from business and academic air travel using the following strategies:

- 1. Guide:** Create a low-emissions guide for air travel, including information on how Bentley offsets greenhouse gas emissions from travel and how to effectively self-manage efficient travel.
- 2. Publicize:** Publicize annual greenhouse gas emissions from travel to increase awareness of the connection between air travel and climate change.



Materials Management

Bentley recognizes the responsibility to not only participate in sustainable procurement, consumption and waste management practices, but to also support the communities that are negatively affected by our consumption and disposal. Enhancing the university's sustainable purchasing and material disposal programs requires Bentley to examine its practices and advocate for sustainable operations more broadly.

Through efforts spearheaded by the Office of Sustainability, Facilities Management, Casella Waste Systems, Bentley Dining and a team of pertinent stakeholders, the university currently diverts 35% of its waste from landfills through recycling, composting and donation. Additionally, there are multiple sustainability focused procurement policies already in place at Bentley including: the ban of Styrofoam products in campus dining and retail spaces, preference for Energy Star certified appliances, use of organic chemicals and ground amendments on campus lawns and flower beds, and limits on student printing. In 2020, Bentley's Procurement and Campus Services team assessed the diversity of the university's current supplier base and is actively working to build a plan to meaningfully improve sourcing from women and BIPOC-owned businesses. The effort to improve supplier diversity will be used as a template for examining and enhancing sustainable procurement practices.

The plan's Materials Management goals and strategies are focused on the reduction of the total waste produced on campus and an increase in sustainable purchasing and contracting.



The Sustainability and Climate Action planning process was an important opportunity to come together with thought and intentionality on many issues, specifically, in the areas of materials management and transportation. These discussions will change our landscape, impact how we view campus, inform our purchasing strategy, and allow us to align our work collaboratively ultimately resulting in continued growth within our sustainability practices.

Maria Monks Serrao

Assistant Vice President, Procurement and Campus Services



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 - Material Disposal: By 2026, Bentley will have reduced the total volume of materials disposed of across campus operations by 10% as compared to fiscal year 2019 using the following strategies:

- 1. Create:** Create a materials management policy for Bentley using the Zero Waste Alliance's Zero-Waste Hierarchy as a guide.
- 2. Reduce:** Create a waste reduction plan for dining service operations including: Bentley's main dining hall the 921, the LaCava Café, the Dana Center Food Court, Einstein's Bros Bagels and campus-wide catering operations.
- 3. Engage:** Increase student, faculty and staff engagement in reuse, recycling and compost programs across campus operations.

Goal 2 – Sustainable Purchasing: By 2026, Bentley will have increased sustainable purchasing and contracting at the university using the following strategies:

- 1. Baseline:** Create a baseline assessment of key products and services purchased using sustainability and diversity criteria.
- 2. Collaborate:** Collaborate with other institutions through consortiums and membership organizations to improve sustainable purchasing practices.
- 3. Guide:** Create sustainable purchasing guidelines that incorporate sustainability reporting requirements into service and vendor contracts when appropriate, including greenhouse gas emissions and sustainability metrics for products and services.
- 4. Vendor Support:** Support and promote the sustainability work of vendors and partners.



Lifelong Learning and Engagement

The ability for the Bentley community and its graduates to thrive in a fast-changing world requires lifelong learning and engagement in climate change, environmental justice and sustainability issues—some of society’s most consequential challenges. The continuity of sustainable campus operations and the ability to attract, retain and graduate students who are competitive in the job market requires the Bentley community to have competencies in addressing the risks of climate change and the environmental justice crisis.

Currently, Bentley offers both formal and co-curricular education on climate change and sustainability topics. These opportunities include academic degree programs, the Office of Sustainability’s Student Sustainability Leadership program and several sustainability-focused student groups. Additionally, Bentley staff and faculty serve on committees progressing sustainability initiatives at the university.

The plan’s Lifelong Learning and Engagement goals and strategies focus on engaging students, alumni, faculty and staff in sustainability, climate justice and climate resiliency action and supporting the Waltham community in these same efforts.



While a 21st-century definition of “sustainability” remains elusive, our understanding of complex problems has improved in the last few decades. The challenges of sustainability are wicked problems, inherently difficult to describe, much less solve. It’s clear that the transdisciplinary nature of these problems will require lifelong learning and engagement among all leaders in business and society.

Dave Szymanski

Associate Professor of Natural and Applied Sciences



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 - Students: By 2026, all interested students will be presented with guidance for integrating sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency into their careers using the following strategies:

- 1. Support:** Map opportunities for integrating sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency into career paths by major.
- 2. Build Capacity:** Provide professional development in sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency by increasing experiential learning and co-curricular education programs.
- 3. Connect:** Increase university recruitment connections with organizations, nonprofits and public sector functions that are institutionalizing sustainability.

Goal 2 – Alumni: By 2026, at least 50 Bentley alumni will be engaged and connected to sustainability at Bentley using the following strategies:

- 1. Track:** Create a process for tracking alumni who are working in sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency fields.
- 2. Engage:** Hold alumni-specific programs on sustainability topics to both provide educational opportunities and to connect alumni to campus.
- 3. Mentor:** Create new and expand existing alumni programs to provide students with opportunities to connect with alumni working in sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency fields.

Goal 3 - Waltham Community: By 2026, Bentley will support sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency work in the Waltham community using the following strategies:

- 1. Expand:** Expand our partnership with the City of Waltham on sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency efforts by meeting with the City of Waltham’s Director of Planning four times per year to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- 2. Support:** Partner with two or more organizations focusing on sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency, supporting traditionally underserved populations in the City of Waltham.

Goal 4 - Faculty and Staff: By 2026, Bentley faculty and staff will be engaged in sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency education and action using the following strategies:

- 1. Institutionalize:** Outline sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency alignment within each Bentley division, encouraging measurable divisional commitments to the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.
- 2. Engage:** Create a sustainability working group that oversees and hosts a bi-annual workshop to educate and inspire faculty and staff to take action on sustainability, climate action, climate justice and/or climate resiliency.
- 3. Research and Teaching:** Support interdisciplinary sustainability research and teaching by creating sustainability research networking opportunities for Bentley faculty.



Outreach and Communication

Bentley's mission of preparing ethical leaders who will "confront the challenges of today and shape the opportunities of tomorrow" requires students to have a foundation of understanding the relevance of sustainability issues in their lives and careers. This plan's sustainability and climate action goals rely on effective outreach and education on the opportunities and challenges of the climate crisis, Bentley's sustainability achievements and how community members can take action.

The Sustainability and Climate Action Plan was originally designed around the four focus areas previously outlined in the original plan. During the planning process, however, each of the committees recognized that communication was the most important element to amplifying the impact of sustainability work at Bentley. With this feedback, the Outreach and Communications goals were created using ideas and suggestions generated in all four committees.

Institutionally, Bentley has effective outreach and communication channels with broad engagement across the community. Bentley's sustainability accomplishments and programs are currently promoted solely through the Office of Sustainability, and thus there are opportunities for sustainability outreach to be further aligned with the overall flow of university communications.

The plan's Outreach and Communication goals and strategies focus on encouraging sustainability action by informing community members on specific, relevant sustainability practices and celebrating the university's sustainability accomplishments.



One of my favorite quotes about sustainability is that 'it doesn't take a hundred people doing things perfectly to achieve sustainability, it takes a million people imperfectly trying'. The work done to reach out, call in and inform the Bentley community means creating sustainable business leaders in the future. These goals strive to make sustainability a tangible goal for every student, faculty, staff and organization on campus.

Gia Hoa Lam
Class of 2022



Goals and Strategies

Goal 1 - Inform: By 2026, the Bentley community will be consistently informed about the university's sustainability efforts and achievements.

- 1. Define:** Define sustainability, climate justice and climate resiliency as a university.
- 2. Kick Off:** Create a first-year student communications and engagement program to support an affirmative approach to sustainable and inclusive behavior and culture at Bentley.
- 3. Measure:** Measure, publish and promote sustainability metrics at an institutional level annually.
- 4. Create:** Create an annual communications strategy targeting both internal and external audiences.
- 5. Celebrate:** Coordinate an annual event to celebrate community-wide sustainability accomplishments.

Goal 2 – Global Context: By 2026, the Bentley community will understand the university's sustainability efforts in a global context.

- 1. Assess:** Annually assess student, faculty and staff awareness of global sustainability issues.
- 2. Address:** Create co-curricular and faculty/staff education programs to address gaps in knowledge.

Acknowledgments

We would like to formally thank all the faculty, staff and students who served on our four committees and helped to actively develop the goals and strategies that are the core of our Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. Without their dedication and engagement, we would not have been able to build such a robust visionary plan for the next five years of sustainability at Bentley.

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Glossary

Carbon Offset: an action or activity (such as the planting of trees or carbon sequestration) that compensates for the emission of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

Carbon neutrality: achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by balancing those emissions so they are equal (or less than) the emissions that get removed through the planet’s natural absorption; in basic terms it means we reduce our emissions through climate action. (“A Beginners Guide to Climate Neutrality”, UNCC)

Climate Justice: “Climate justice” is a term, and more than that a movement, that acknowledges climate change can have differing social, economic, public health, and other adverse impacts on underprivileged populations. Advocates for climate justice are striving to have these inequities addressed head-on through long-term mitigation and adaptation strategies. (“What is ‘Climate Justice?’” Yale Climate Connections)

Climate Resilience: the capacity of a community, business, or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption caused by climate change. (U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit)

Traditionally Underserved Population: populations that face health, financial, educational, and/or housing disparities, such as “facing barriers that make it difficult to get health coverage and basic health care services.” Underserved and vulnerable populations include minority populations such as Hispanic, African American, American Indian and Alaska Native populations. (US Department of Health and Human Services)

Zero Waste Hierarchy: describes a progression of policies and strategies to support the Zero Waste system, from the highest and best to lowest use of materials. It is designed to be applicable to all audiences, from policymakers to industry and the individual. It aims to provide more depth to the internationally recognized 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle); to encourage policy, activity and investment at the top of the hierarchy; and to provide a guide for those who wish to develop systems or products that move us closer to Zero Waste. (Zero Waste International Alliance)

Zero Waste: a holistic approach to addressing the problem of unsustainable resource flows. Zero Waste encompasses waste eliminated at the source through product design and producer responsibility, and waste reduction strategies further down the supply chain such as recycling, reuse and composting. (US Environmental Protection Agency)

Zero Carbon: zero carbon means that no carbon emissions are being produced from a process, operation or service.

Onsite Renewable Energy: renewable energy generation (such as solar, wind or geothermal) generated on an organization’s property.

Deferred Maintenance: the postponement of building and equipment maintenance/upgrades from an entity’s normal operating budget cycle.

Discover more resources and find updates on our website:
[**bentley.edu/sustainability**](https://bentley.edu/sustainability)

