



TO: Distribution

FROM: Derek Howe, Senior Vice President for Operations 

RE: Climate Action Plan Update (CAP 1.2)

DATE: January 9th, 2025

The Boston University Climate Action Plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in 2017. This plan set a goal for the University to achieve net zero direct emissions for its operations by 2040. The Plan also recommended that the University reduce embodied carbon, emissions associated with building construction. We have made significant progress and have reduced operational emissions 65% from our 2006 base year. The University made significant progress on reducing embodied carbon when building the Center for Computing & Data Sciences. Additional progress has also come through strategic investments in BU Wind, geothermal, energy efficiency, solar, and other similar initiatives. These achievements have been incredible, and it is now time for us to update the plan so we can move forward most effectively.

The Climate Action Plan came with an expectation that our strategies for maintaining these commitments would naturally evolve over time. Technologies have improved, markets have matured, and our experience with decarbonization and embodied carbon has grown. Requirements for addressing our emissions have also changed. The City of Boston put a price on carbon emissions for existing buildings through the Building Emissions Reduction & Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO). For new construction, the new Specialized Stretch Energy Code and the Zero Net Carbon Zoning Initiative add more stringent requirements designed to decarbonize building operations and construction. As these regulations have been enacted, technology, incentives, and our growing expertise are making decarbonization more achievable. The Climate Action Plan 1.2 Working Group will be responsible for recommending new strategies for the plan moving forward.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 1.2 CHARGE

The Climate Action Plan 1.2 Working Group will be responsible for developing recommendations to more effectively reduce the University's operational and embodied emissions. These strategies will need to be thoughtfully integrated with the capital asset renewal program for projects large and small, and with the next iteration of our campus framework to develop the most effective approach for Boston University to achieve the goals of the Climate Action Plan. The lessons learned must integrate this work within the context of the cities of Boston and Brookline and utility decarbonization planning, grants, and incentives to achieve net zero direct emissions by 2040 and minimize the need to purchase offsets. Finally, the group will develop recommendations that address both operational and embodied carbon in a whole building life cycle assessment approach.

ACTIVITIES & DELIVERABLES

1. Create a strategic, actionable roadmap with interim goals that clearly define the path to achieve the Climate Action Plan commitments through 2040.
2. Integrate this work with the University's capital asset renewal program and campus framework plan.
3. Refine and develop strategies for implementing energy efficiency, decarbonization, and whole building life cycle emissions reductions.

4. Integrate lifecycle cost analysis into project prioritization and evaluation to include ROI, NPV, GHG, and energy savings of these recommendations.
5. Engage internal and external experts and consultants as needed.
6. Deliver an update to the Climate Action Plan in the form of an appendix referencing relevant sections of the Plan and include the associated economic analysis.

STRUCTURE

The Working Group will be responsible for the principal development of the strategies and recommendations. The Operations Climate Action Committee will oversee the development of these recommendations and tap internal and external experts and the engage the Campus Climate Lab as necessary to develop these strategies.

NEXT STEPS & TIMELINE

I have asked Dennis Carlberg and Bill Walter to co-chair the Climate Action Plan 1.2 Working Group and anticipate it will take nine to twelve months to develop a draft plan addressing the points described above. I expect a draft roadmap by July 1st and a presentation to the University Leadership Group at its meeting in September. The draft plan will be broadly distributed for review and comment by the BU community. A final draft incorporating community input will be prepared for discussion with the Board of Trustees. During the development phase, the Working Group will report to the Operations Climate Action Committee every six weeks and to me on a quarterly basis.

Thank you in advance for committing your time and energy to this important effort for the University.

Working Group:

Co-Chair: Dennis Carlberg, Chief Sustainability Officer & Associate Vice President for Climate Action

Co-Chair: Bill Walter, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Operations

Jennifer Bleecker, Assistant Director of Energy Programs, Engineering & Building Systems

Jonathan Buonocore, Assistant Professor, School of Public Health

Andrew Corson, Project Engineer, Annual Capital Projects

Stephen Ellis, Director of Data Analytics, BU Sustainability

Michael Gevelber, Research Associate Professor, College of Engineering - Mechanical Engineering and Director of Campus Climate Lab - with mechanical engineering students to be identified.

Joe Kajunski, Assistant Director, Engineering & Building Automation

Brian Raymond, Associate Vice President, Operations

Lisa Tornatore, Sustainability Director, BU Sustainability

Joani Valeriano, Tax Supervisor

Sarah Lillibridge, CAP 1.2 Administrator, MS student in Applied Business Analytics

Operations Climate Action Committee:

Chair: Brian Raymond, Associate Vice President for Operations

Dennis Carlberg, Chief Sustainability Officer & Associate Vice President for Climate Action

Elijah Ercolino, Executive Director of Planned Maintenance and Engineering

Kevin Gonzales, Assistant Vice President for Operations

Sonia Richards, Associate Vice President for Planning, Design, and Construction

Gregg Snyder, Vice President for Campus Planning & Operations

Bill Walter, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Operations

cc: Colleen McGinty, Assistant Vice President, Annual Capital Projects
 Dr. Elise Morgan, Dean, ad interim, College of Engineering
 Brian Donaldson, Associate Vice President & University Controller
 Dr. Jonathan Levy, Chair & Professor, Environmental Health