

Methodist Health System

Five-Year Sustainability Update

January 2023



IMPROVING THE
HEALTH OF OUR
COMMUNITIES BY
THE WAY WE

CARE, EDUCATION
& INNOVATION



METHODIST

Introduction

The Lancet has called climate change the [“defining narrative of human health”](#), reporting that its effects are [“undermining every dimension of global health monitored”](#). The changing climate has a wide range of impacts on health outcomes, from increased severity and frequency of weather-related hazards - such as droughts, floods, wildfires, and storms - to subsequent impacts on food systems, infectious disease, and migration patterns.

In order to take on the challenge that climate change poses to Nebraska Methodist Health System and our communities, we have updated our 2018 Sustainability Plan. Data from all locations across the system were integrated to revise goals and set a path forward for Methodist to address the evolving realities of the climate crisis. Ultimately, the updated plan will make us more resilient and better able to care for our community. This document outlines key changes and accomplishments from the past five years, and highlights some of the exciting actions we'll take in the years to come.

Highlights

Expanded Data Collection: Utility and waste data were previously collected from Methodist Hospital, Methodist Women’s Hospital, Methodist Jennie Edmundson Hospital, and the 825 Building. Over the past few years, we collected data from clinics, Nebraska Methodist College, and Methodist Fremont Health in order to re-establish key indicator baselines for the entire system.

Revised Goals: Based on the new system-wide key indicator baselines, we set new goals for three of our focus areas: emissions, transportation, and engagement. We are now aiming for a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, up from our previous 25% reduction goal. We are also amending our employee active commuting goal from 12% (by 2026) to 30% by 2030, and aligning our engagement goal with the 2030 timeline.

Net Zero Pathway: In order to achieve our 50% emissions reduction goal, we completed a decarbonization analysis in partnership with Verdis Group. This data-driven process includes identifying key strategies that will bring down our emissions and determining timelines and action plans for each strategy.

Onsite Solar Analysis: One of our opportunities to reduce emissions is to install solar panels on site. We have completed a study to identify optimal locations for solar energy installations across the system.

Commute with Care: This benefits program was launched in September 2022 to support employees commuting sustainably to work.

Employee Engagement: Updates to leadership and structure in 2023 will help engage existing sustainability Ambassadors and others across all locations.

Expanded Recycling & Composting: One of our earliest investments over the past five years was to improve processes and equipment in order to divert more of our waste from the landfill, including ongoing composting programs at the 825 Building and Methodist Hospital.

ESG & Climate Risk: We are in the early stages of streamlining our reporting efforts for ESG requests and are beginning to explore where climate change is creating risk for our stakeholders.



Greenhouse gas emissions for the four buildings included in the original baseline are down 24%, from their peak in 2018.



Photo: Unsplash, American Public Power Association

Emissions

Health care as an industry is responsible for 8.5% of GHG emissions in the U.S. GHG emissions contribute to a variety of health issues, such as heat stroke, asthma, mental health conditions, and fatalities. We are dedicated to mitigating our emissions in alignment with our core mission to improve the health of our communities.

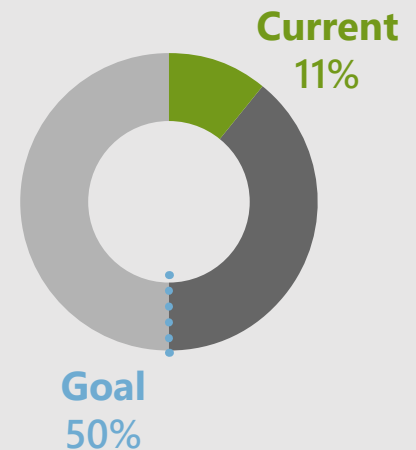
Goal Update & Progress

Our emissions reduction target is increasing from 25% to a 50% reduction by 2030 to align with the [Science Based Targets Initiative](#), an internationally recognized framework on emission reduction. The baseline and goal now encompass all sources of Scope 1 and 2 emissions across all locations, per guidance from the [Greenhouse Gas Protocol](#).

System-Wide Baseline (2020): 72,812 MtCO₂e

Current: 64,447 MtCO₂e (11% reduction)

Goal (2030): 50% reduction



Recent Accomplishments

Net Zero Pathway: The development of our pathway to achieve our carbon reduction goals was completed in 2022. Key strategies that will bring down our emissions include energy efficiency and conservation, onsite solar, fleet electrification and much more.

Onsite Solar Analysis: The study to identify optimal locations for solar energy installations revealed several opportunities on existing buildings, and we are exploring ways to incorporate onsite solar into new construction as well.

Energy Efficiency Upgrades: Based on an outside assessment of all system facilities, a targeted list of key infrastructure improvements has been identified. This includes equipment upgrades and replacements that will deliver new energy efficiencies and reduce emissions in the coming years.

Sustainable Design Guidelines: In 2021, we developed a set of Sustainability Design Guidelines to help drive our new construction and renovation efforts. These guidelines include ambitious recommendations for reducing energy use intensity and considerations of renewable energy generation such as onsite solar and geothermal.

Priority Strategies

Efficiency Improvements: Additional efficiency improvements in our facilities - including mechanical upgrades, LED retrofits, state of the art building controls and energy monitoring, and retro-commissioning - will reduce the amount of energy we consume.

Renewable Energy: We will explore options for onsite and offsite renewable energy.

Electrification: Electrifying buildings reduces our reliance on natural gas and allows us to move toward fully renewable energy sources.

Electric Vehicles: We continue to explore opportunities to add electric vehicles to our health system fleet where it makes sense. In 2023 we will finalize plans to help guide operational and funding opportunities.



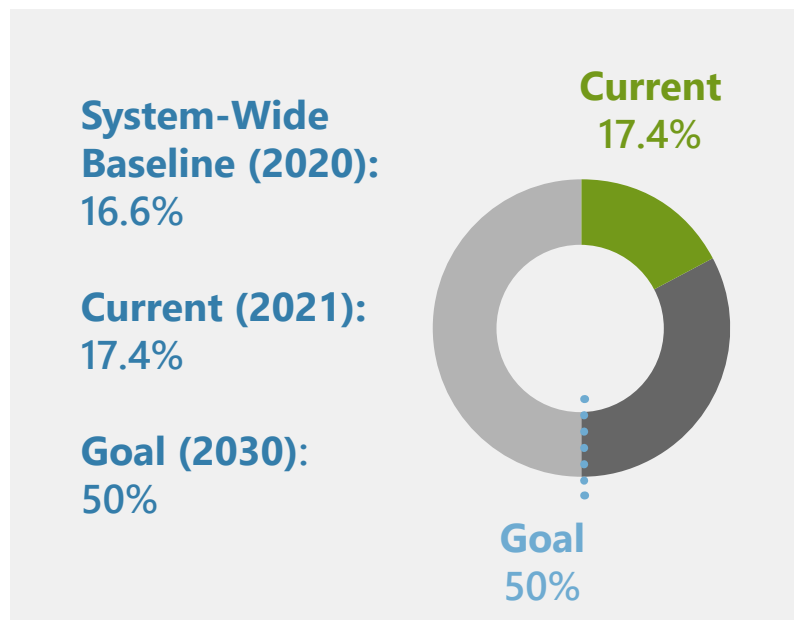
Materials

Waste sent to a landfill releases greenhouse gas emissions, including [methane](#), which is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere. Landfill waste also has an impact on biodiversity and can cause water pollution. By diverting our waste to more environmentally-friendly solutions like recycling and composting, we are able to mitigate our impact in the local community and beyond.

Goal Update & Progress

Our goal to achieve a 50% diversion rate by 2030 remains unchanged, but now applies to the entire system.

Diversion rate refers to the percentage of material that is not going to the landfill, but is diverted through reduction, reuse, recycling, or composting.



Recent Accomplishments

Expanded Recycling: Recycling streams have been extended to most clinics across the system and Methodist Fremont Health. To learn more about what's recyclable, visit [\[link\]](#).

Composting: Composting is still available in back-of-house areas at Methodist Hospital and in the cafeteria and restrooms at the 825 Building. Methodist Hospital and the 825 Building both offer composting of food scraps, napkins, and other cafeteria compostables, and the 825 Building also has paper towel composting in restrooms.

Priority Strategies

Recycling & Composting Expansion: We will continually evaluate our waste management systems to ensure they are effectively increasing our diversion rate. Where possible and practical, we will continue to expand recycling and composting services.

Centralized Trash Collection: When we moved into the new 825 Building in 2018, trash collection was centralized in order to minimize custodial time and place a higher priority on recycling and shredded paper. In the coming years, we intend to explore opportunities to expand this system to other locations.

Education & Outreach: Every employee and our visitors have a role to play in achieving our diversion rate goal. Continued education and outreach will be critical.

High-Volume Streams: We will seek to identify our high-volume waste streams and determine ways to reduce consumption at the source, so as to minimize what needs to be disposed of in the end.

Nebraska Methodist College: NMC received a grant from the Nebraska Recycling Council in 2020 to purchase color-coded bins for recycling, landfill, and compost. Staff created activities and materials to educate students and staff about how to properly sort their items, including a video shown on community monitors, a sorting game for cafeteria-goers, effective signage, and email campaigns.

Increased Diversion Rates: The diversion rate at the 825 Building is up to 69% in 2021 because of the availability of multiple waste streams, including paper shredding, plastic recycling, and composting.





Engagement

In order to create lasting change, Methodist seeks to build employee engagement related to our sustainability efforts, which is measured by our Sustainability Engagement Score. This score is calculated based on responses to a survey conducted every two years, which asks about employee awareness, knowledge, and behavior related to sustainability.

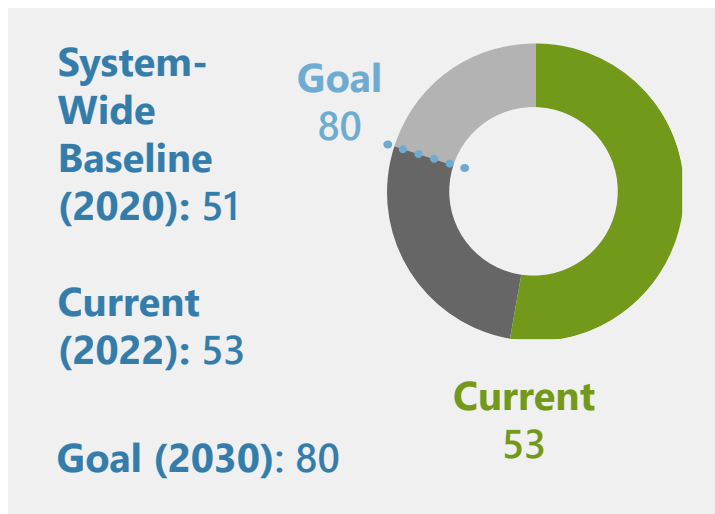
To learn more about how this score is calculated, visit the Dashboard at mhs.verdisdashboard.com.

Goal Update & Progress

The timeline for our goal to achieve a Sustainability Engagement Score of 80 by 2026 has been updated to 2030, to align with other goals.

Recent Accomplishments

SHIP Ambassadors: Over the past year, we have reengaged and recruited new Sustainable Health Implementation Plan (SHIP) Ambassadors, who help promote sustainability and communicate with their peers. We now have over 60 Ambassadors committed to helping make change throughout the organization.



Earth Month: Various activities are organized to celebrate Earth Month each April. In 2022, individuals across the organization posted about their sustainability actions on an online bulletin board tool. We have also hosted webinars with guest speakers from the community, such as City Sprouts.

Priority Strategies

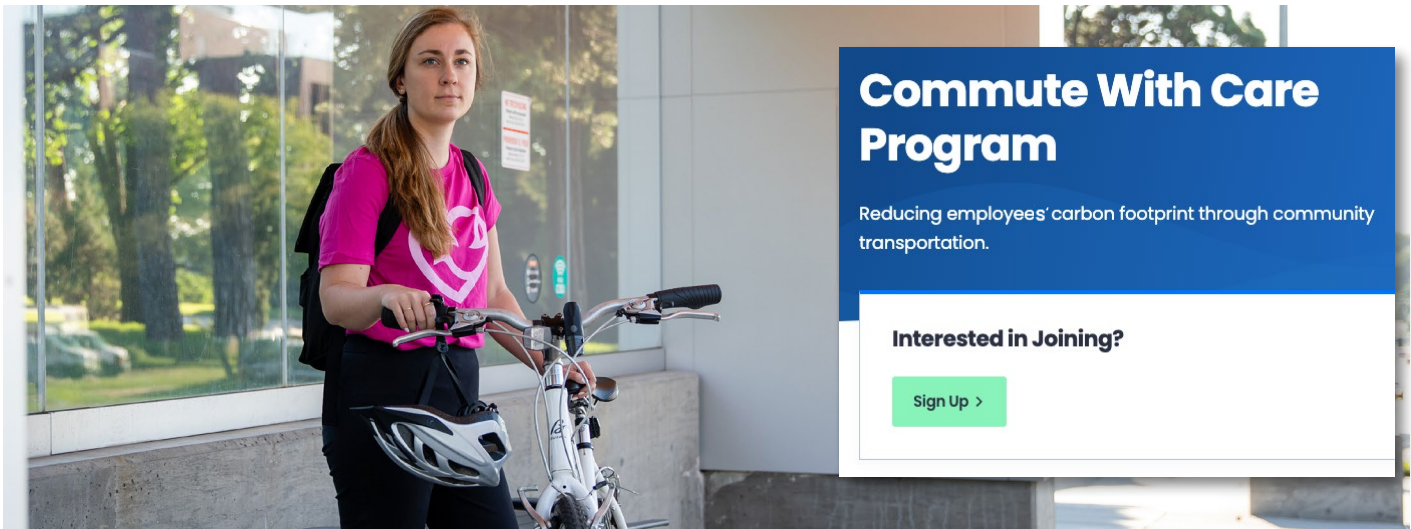
Sustainability Ambassador Leadership Teams

(SALTs): In order to make ongoing efforts as specific and successful as possible for all locations, we will be creating Sustainability Ambassador Leadership Teams at many locations. These Teams will be responsible for leading initiatives to engage employees around sustainability. They will be provided resources from the system level and will be able to implement engagement strategies that suit the people and situation at their location.

Ambassadors can join these teams and work closely with them to distribute information and to engage their peers.

Quarterly State of Sustainability Meetings:

Each quarter, we will hold an hour-long meeting to share updates and information, highlight successes across locations, and plan for upcoming activities. All Methodist employees are invited to attend, with a particular emphasis on engaging with SALTs and Ambassadors.

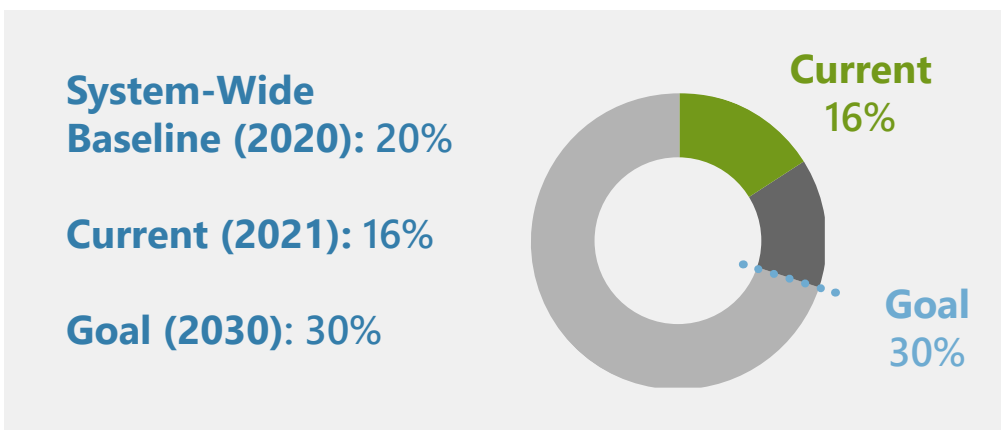


Transportation

Methodist understands the connections between everyday commuting, our community, and our health. Sustainable commuting (using public transit, biking, walking, and carpooling) promotes public health by reducing air pollution from single-occupancy vehicle trips. It also improves cardiovascular and pulmonary health while encouraging a sense of community.

Goal Update & Progress

Our employee commuting goal is increasing from a mode split of 12% (by 2026) to 30% by 2030. The original goal was based on a baseline mode split of 8% at the first four buildings.



Mode split, the metric used to measure employee commuting, is the percentage of employees not driving alone in a vehicle to work. It is calculated based on survey responses.

Recent Accomplishments

Achieved Original Mode Split Goal: Largely due to the pandemic, we achieved our goal of a 12% mode split several years early. Lessons learned from our experience during the pandemic are being applied to our new reality in an effort to maintain this progress.

Commute with Care: In order to understand how we could better support employees in sustainably commuting to work, we participated in MAPA's ConnectGo employee survey program.

We used the data from this survey to design a benefits program called Commute with Care that supports employees who commute sustainably. So far, nearly 100 employees are participating in the program, which was launched in September 2022.

Benefits include:

- A free Metro bus pass
- Free emergency rides home
- Free online access to Methodist's Metro Rideshare carpool matching portal
- Improved bicycle infrastructure

Priority Strategies

Commute with Care Expansion: We will continue to expand employee participation in this program by communicating about benefits and offering education about sustainable commuting. To sign up, go to <https://staff.bestcare.org/commute-with-care-program>.

Water

By 2071, [nearly half of the freshwater basins](#) in the U.S. may not be able to meet monthly water demand. Nebraska is no stranger to this issue, with record droughts in recent years that have impacted local communities and farmers. We recognize the importance of reducing our water use in order to protect our resources now and in the future. With more than half of our water dedicated to irrigation, we are focusing efforts on conserving water through landscaping and smart technology.

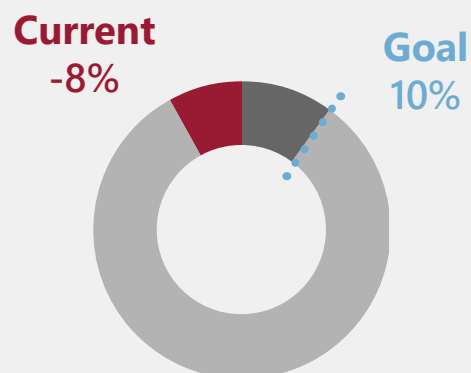
Goal Update & Progress

Our original goal of 10% reduction in gallons per square foot by 2030 remains unchanged, but now applies to the entire System.

System-Wide Baseline (2020):
45.31 gal/sq ft

Current (2021):
48.74 gal/sq ft (8% increase)

Goal (2030): 10% reduction



Recent Accomplishments

Smart Irrigation Systems: Smart irrigation systems have been installed at some key locations across the system, allowing for irrigation to be scheduled according to weather conditions. This helps us avoid running sprinklers while it's raining, conserving water and energy.

Priority Strategies

Smart Irrigation Systems: We will continue to deploy smart irrigation technologies across locations.

Chiller Upgrades: Mechanical upgrades will include more efficient chillers, which should also result in a decrease in water needed to cool our spaces.

Native Landscaping: Investing in landscaping that incorporates native and drought-tolerant plant varieties reduces the need for irrigation and provides other environmental benefits, such as pollinator habitat and carbon sequestration.



Photo: Unsplash, Caleb Minear



For more information about sustainability at Methodist, check out the Sustainability page on the intranet, or visit the Dashboard at mhs.verdisdashboard.com.