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On Earth Day, Vanderbilt announced a [comprehensive long-term strategy](#) to significantly reduce our environmental footprint by powering campus entirely through renewable energy, putting the university on track to be carbon neutral by 2050. In fact, the plan is to go a step further and produce *more* renewable energy than consumed. SUPER EXCITING!!! You can read more below or on the new FutureVU Sustainability [website](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) page. Please reach out to us if you would like to get involved or have any questions. A very happy Earth Day indeed!

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Vanderbilt outlines major plans to reduce environmental footprint

Nashville Commuter Challenge – April 27-May 3

Join team Vanderbilt for the Nashville Commuter Challenge this week! As part of Transit Month, the VU community is invited to try one new transportation mode. More information and participation details [here](#).

“I Would Rather Bike in the Rain Than Sit in Traffic!”: Exploring the Experiences of Urban Cyclists in Nashville-May 1

OUR GOAL: Vanderbilt will power its campus entirely through **renewable energy** and commits to **carbon neutrality** by 2050.

Vanderbilt University has unveiled a [comprehensive long-term strategy](#) to significantly reduce its environmental footprint in part by powering its campus entirely through renewable energy, putting the university on track to be carbon neutral by 2050.

While achieving the balance of carbon neutrality has become a sustainability standard at many American universities, Vanderbilt leaders today said they plan to go a step further and produce *more* renewable energy than consumed. Considerations for the renewable energy surplus include feeding energy back to the power grid or storing for use during high-demand seasons or emergencies.



The university plans to meet its 2050 commitment by:

- Investing in on-site clean energy
- Investing in off-site large-scale renewable energy
- Increasing green spaces across campus such as more pedestrian-friendly walkways and parks
- Reducing energy consumption and waste
- Decreasing the university's carbon footprint from transportation and commuting
- Investing in sustainable infrastructure

“Investing in our shared future matters. These efforts will ensure a vibrant, healthy, and welcoming campus for years to come. It is our responsibility to do our part to preserve the environment for our campus community and set a strong example for how to care for our shared home, our planet,” [Chancellor Nicholas S. Zeppos](#) said.

“With this commitment, we aim to better protect our environment and improve quality of life in Middle Tennessee, and to be a proving ground for innovative

Learn more about what motivates and sustains individuals' bicycle commuting habits and to discuss the implications of this study on the number of trips taken by bicycle in Music City. This event will be held from 11:30am-12:30pm at the Davidson County Planning Department. More information [here](#).

Vandy Cooks: “Cooking Unfamiliar Vegetables from the CSA Box”- May 1

Join Vandy Cooks from 5-6pm in the VRWC's demonstration kitchen. John Compton will showcase the advantages of Community Supported Agriculture boxes, as well as prepare tasty dishes using a variety of vegetables that may be unfamiliar. More information [here](#).

Sustainability Tour: Metro Water Treatment Plant- May 2

Join the a walking tour of the water treatment plant and see how Metro Water Services provides over 200,000 customers with clean, safe drinking water every day. This event will

technologies and strategies that ensure a more sustainable future for all.”

The university’s sustainability goals, a collaborative effort among administrators, faculty, staff and students, will fall under [FutureVU](#), Vanderbilt’s holistic planning process for developing spaces on campus and investing in initiatives that support the people who live, work and learn in them. The university comprises over 330 acres of real estate and as one of the largest employers in the region, has more than 10,000 commuters daily.

The sustainability efforts also align with the university’s core missions of teaching, research and discovery through the [Academic Strategic Plan](#).

“We are transforming how we think about our campus – not only the land, but also the people living and working on it,” said [Eric Kopstain, vice chancellor for administration](#). “This requires a holistic approach to sustainability that permeates throughout campus and beyond.”



To achieve its goal, the university commissioned multiple comprehensive operational studies to better understand and develop the solutions needed to address the university’s environmental impact:

- The [BlueSky Energy Vision Study](#), a 10-month study carried out by the BlueSky Vision Executive and Advisory Committees, a mix of diverse stakeholders across campus, studied the implementation of a comprehensive renewable energy plan through energy conservation, production of on-site clean (without combustion) and renewable energy, procurement of off-site renewable energy to mitigate campus greenhouse gas emissions, and sufficient storage of clean energy to provide the campus with energy resilience.
- The [Large-Scale Renewable Energy Study](#), conducted with input from the Large-Scale Renewable Energy Study Advisory Committee, a

be held from 6-6:45pm at K. R. Harrington Water Treatment Plant. More information [here](#).

Bike to Work Day- May 3

Celebrate Bike to Work Day! Walk Bike Nashville and Nashville Connector invite bike commuters to meet up at several locations around town and ride in with a crew of fellow cyclists. Breakfast will be served at Public Square Park from 7:45-8:30am. More information [here](#).

Servier Park Fest- May 3-4

Celebrate the artists, makers, and musicians of the Belmont/Hillsboro and 12South neighborhood communities! Money raised is used to enhance and support Servier Park’s planned renewal. More information [here](#).

Bike to School Day – May 8

International Bike to School Day is Wednesday, May 8th. Pull out your family bikes, check out a safe bike route to school, and challenge your family to bike to school. More information [here](#).

mix of diverse stakeholders on campus, explored potential options for off-campus, large-scale renewable energy sources, including solar and/or wind projects.

- [MoveVU](#), the university’s mobility and transportation strategy, developed with engagement from across the campus community, will help prioritize the best use of Vanderbilt’s limited land. The transportation and mobility strategy calls for a comprehensive, layered and connected ecosystem that serves the Vanderbilt and wider Nashville communities. It recommends a decrease from around 68 percent to 47 percent in drive-alone commuters and an increase in use of more sustainable modes of transportation, resulting in a reduction in carbon emissions.
- The [Zero Waste Study](#), currently underway by a diverse group of campus stakeholders including many students, has been charged with developing a plan to reduce consumption and landfill waste across campus. Priorities include addressing food waste through Campus Dining and eliminating single-use plastic water bottles across campus.

“Reaching this goal is going to take the collective effort of our campus community,” Kopstain said. “We need all of the puzzle pieces to align, but once they do, we will improve the social, environmental and economic impact of this university’s land and human capital.”

The university, [named one of the most environmentally responsible colleges](#) in 2018 by *The Princeton Review*, has already made significant strides.

In 2014, Vanderbilt completed a \$29 million conversion of its campus power plant to all-natural gas fuel, eliminating coal use on campus and reducing power plant greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent in two years.

In 2016 and 2018, the university was given the TN Sustainable Transportation Award by the Tennessee

Tour de Nash- May 11

The 15th annual Tour de Nash presented by AAA is Nashville’s largest urban bike ride. Join 1,500 riders and discover the city with rider check-in at 7:30am. More information [here](#).

May Urban Design Forum: 2019 Student Showcase- May 17

Throughout this school year, middle school students in Metro Nashville Public Schools have been working on civic design projects through the NCDC’s Design Your Neighborhood curriculum. NCDC is hosting a showcase that will include a student work exhibit and discussion about youth civic engagement. This event will be held from 10:30am–12pm at Cumberland River Compact. More information [here](#).

Car Free Natchez Trace Day- May 19

The Natchez Trace Parkway will hold a biannual “Car Free Parkway Experience” day for bicyclists and pedestrians between mile markers 429 and 440.

Department of Environment and Conservation, and in 2018 was awarded a \$4.5 million, three-year federal [Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality \(CMAQ\) Improvement Program grant](#).

During the [2017-18 fiscal year](#), the university invested in a suite of projects making a positive environmental impact, including a food-waste composting program; a dockless bikeshare program; the addition and expansion of the School of Nursing building, the first WELL building in Nashville; one new LEED building; one new green roof; eight BigBelly recycling containers; and three solar picnic tables.

For more information about Vanderbilt's sustainability efforts, visit the [FutureVU Sustainability website](#).

Closure times will be from 8–11am. During these events, there will be no vehicle traffic allowed in this area. More information [here](#).

For more information on any of these stories, events and more, visit vanderbilt.edu/sustainability or contact the Sustainability and Environmental Management Office at futurevusustainability@vanderbilt.edu or 615-322-4551.

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