

USC  
Sustainability  
Progress  
Report

Fiscal Year **2022**



## Message from the President



Dear Trojan Community,

Across USC, we've been working together to integrate sustainability into everything we do – and the results are very encouraging. I hope you'll take time to review this FY22 Sustainability Progress Report, which offers a closer look into our progress. Here are a few key highlights I would like to share with you:

First, we earned a [Silver Rating](#) our first year participating in STARS – the [Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System](#), which is overseen by the Association for the [Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education](#) (AASHE). STARS is the industry standard, developed by our peers for comprehensively measuring higher education sustainability efforts. Earning Silver on our first attempt tells us that our plans and ambitions are on target.

Second, in April we conducted our first baseline [sustainability literacy, culture, and behavior survey](#). More than 5,000 students, faculty, and staff participated, and the take-aways are instructive. For example, the data show the literacy and behavior scores of our respondents are directly correlated with our sustainability education and engagement across USC. In other words: the more you know, the more you can – and want – to do.

Finally, we bolstered efforts across our campuses with the launch of [Assignment: Earth](#) – USC's framework for a more sustainable university and planet. Assignment: Earth articulates our commitment to addressing impacts of climate change and other challenges. This framework includes some of our most ambitious goals, such as climate neutrality by 2025 and zero waste by 2028.

This report was a collective effort by our [Office of Sustainability](#) and the [Presidential Working Group on Sustainability](#), as well as staff, faculty, and students at all of our schools, departments, and units. Thank you for your tireless work to make USC a model of sustainability.

We have a solid base, big ambitions, and an unflinching commitment to making USC and this planet we love healthy, green, and sustainable.

### Fight On!

**Carol L. Folt**  
*President*



## Working together for a sustainable future

During fiscal year 2022, the [USC Presidential Working Group \(PWG\) on Sustainability in Education, Research, and Operations](#) collaborated with teams across the university to develop [Assignment: Earth](#), USC's framework for a greener campus and planet. Assignment: Earth establishes our sustainability vision, aspirations, and goals across five domains:



Assignment: Earth formalizes USC's commitment to addressing climate change, restoring our planet, and creating a more sustainable future. It will guide the university's actions through 2028 and beyond, and enable us to adapt to emerging sustainability challenges and solutions.

President Folt announced the Assignment: Earth framework on Earth Day, 2022. Progress on achieving its ambitious goals will be reported in the fiscal year 2023 Annual Report.

\*Please note that data collected in this report during the 2021 fiscal year (July 2020 – June 2021) were impacted by operational changes due to COVID-19 restrictions and shutdowns.

# Energy

Reducing USC's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

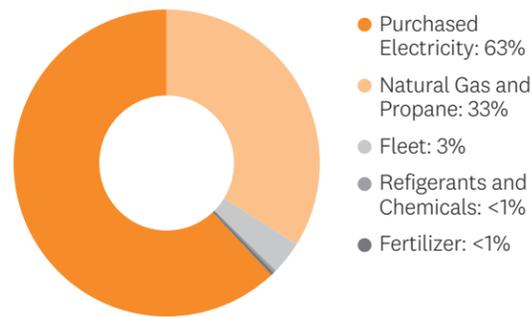


### Fiscal Year Highlights

- **42,000 kWh energy savings per month** resulting from centrally-managed Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Cooling (HVAC) automated scheduling programs
- **20 academic buildings upgraded** to energy-efficient LED lighting
- **60% lighting load reduction** after LED upgrades
- **USC Sustainability Design and Construction Guidelines** developed to support the university's commitment to sustainable construction for new capital planning projects, renovations, and asset renewal projects

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions Breakdown<sup>2-3</sup>

FY 22 Scope 1 + 2 Emissions

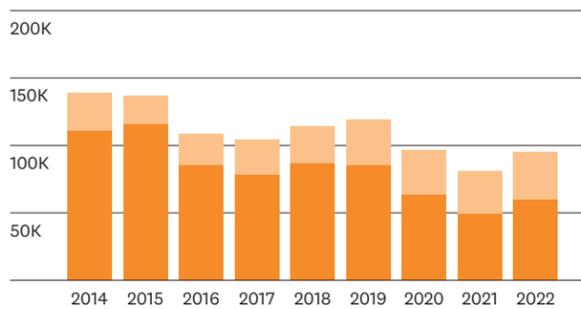


<sup>2</sup> Emissions from natural gas and propane, fleet, fertilizer, refrigerants, and chemicals (Scope 1)

<sup>3</sup> Emissions from LADWP purchased electricity (Scope 2)

### Total Absolute Scope 1 + 2 Emissions<sup>1</sup>

Metric tons eCO<sub>2</sub>



● Total scope 1 ● Total scope 2

<sup>1</sup> Includes data from University Park Campus (UPC), Health Sciences Campus (HSC; academic bldgs.), USC Wrigley Institute (Catalina Campus), USC Pacific Asia Museum, and USC Hotel

# Waste

Diverting Campus Waste from Landfills

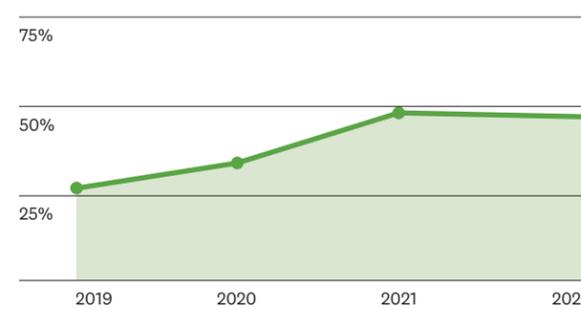


### Fiscal Year Highlights

- **72 new exterior multi-stream waste bins deployed** across UPC and HSC (103 waste bins total installed on both campuses to date)
- **Two waste auditors** hired to conduct campus waste audits to help inform waste diversion efforts
- **Over 200 hydration stations installed** to date across UPC and HSC to promote the use of refillable water bottles and reduce single-use plastic beverage containers
- **Collected over one ton of nonperishable food** for St. Francis Center during food donation drive as students moved out of residences

### Campus Waste Diversion Rate<sup>1</sup>

Percentage

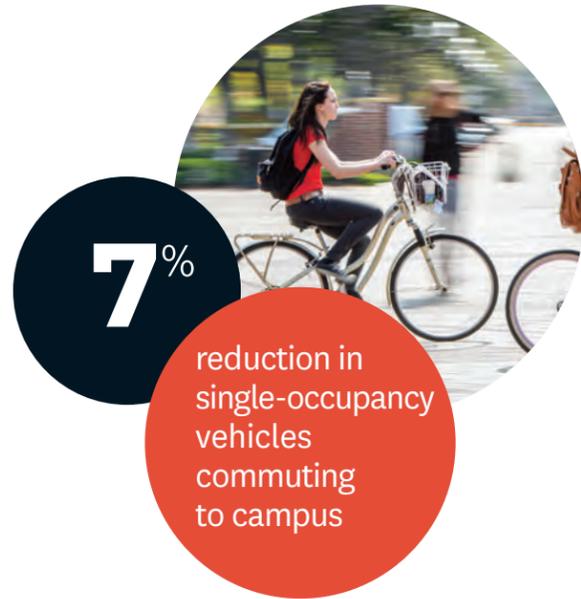


<sup>1</sup> Includes data from University Park Campus (UPC), Health Sciences Campus (HSC; academic bldgs.), USC Wrigley Institute (Catalina Campus), USC Pacific Asia Museum, and USC Hotel

### Waste Diversion Rates

FY 22

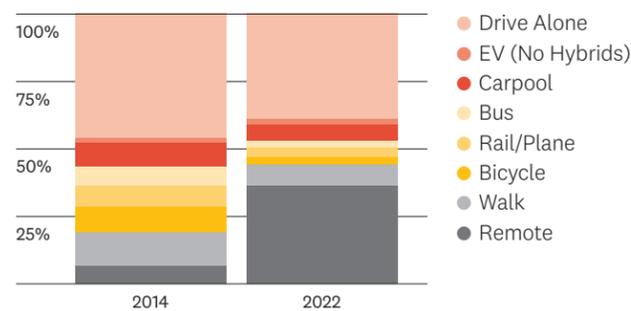
University Park Campus (UPC)	55%
Health Sciences Campus (HSC)	22%
USC Village	70%
USC Housing (off-campus)	36%
CAL Building (off-campus)	21%
USC Wrigley Institute (Catalina campus)	31%



**Fiscal Year Highlights**

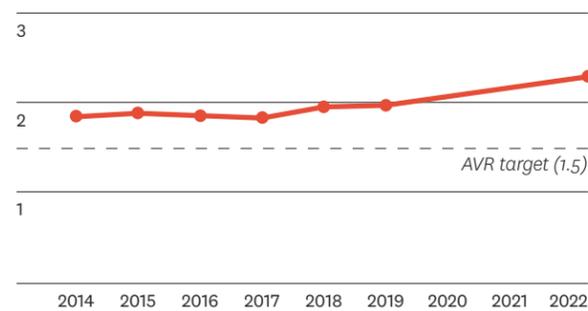
- **2.32 average riders per vehicle** commuting to our campuses, exceeding SCAQMD target of 1.5
- **23 bio-fuel buses** in operation
- **12 Zipcar car-sharing fleet** available 24/7
- **112 electric vehicle charging ports** installed across UPC and HSC (237 ports total installed on both campuses to date)

**Campus Modes of Transportation<sup>1</sup>**  
SCAQMD Survey Results

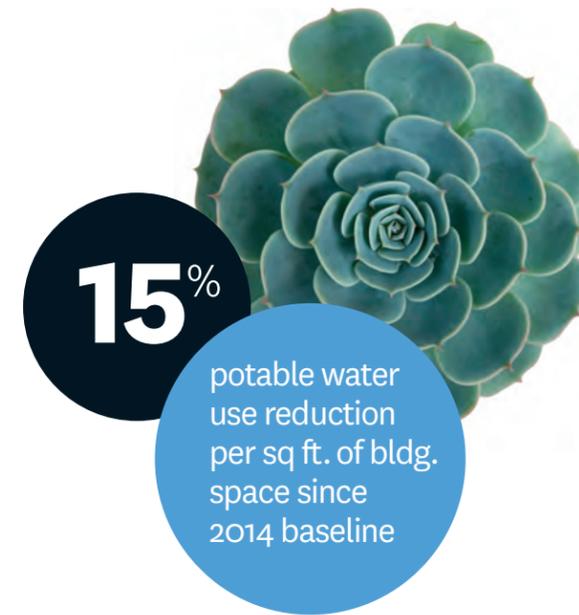


<sup>1</sup> Data from annual South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) survey responses from student workers, staff, faculty, and postdocs across all USC campuses

**Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR)<sup>2,3</sup>**  
Since 2014 Baseline



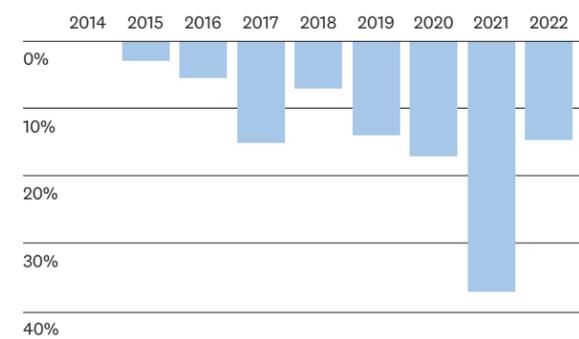
<sup>2</sup> AVR Requirement is 1.5 due to USC campuses' location in Zone 2  
<sup>3</sup> 2020 and 2021 data not available due to COVID shutdown and restrictions



**Fiscal Year Highlights**

- **40% estimated average water use savings** resulting from new native or climate adaptive landscaping
- **90% of UPC irrigation is centrally controlled** and employs weather-based sensors
- **36 additional sub-meter locations** for UPC water metering installed
- **80% of UPC buildings** now generate real-time water use data
- **USC Campus Master Landscape Plan** being developed to update landscaping, reduce water used for irrigation, eliminate turf, restore native plants and habitats, and increase biodiversity

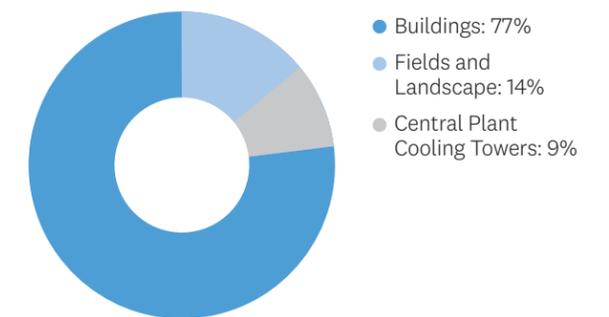
**Potable Water Use Reduction Per Square Foot of Building Space<sup>1,2</sup>**  
Percentage per Square Foot since 2014 Baseline



<sup>1</sup> Includes data from University Park Campus (UPC), Health Sciences Campus (HSC; academic bldgs.), USC Wrigley Institute (Catalina Campus), USC Pacific Asia Museum, and USC Hotel

<sup>2</sup> USC Village opened in August 2017, which added 1.2 million gross square feet to campus total

**Campus Water Usage Breakdown<sup>3</sup>**  
FY 22 Water Use by Type



<sup>3</sup> Fields and Landscapes data based on estimates



# Procurement

Increasing Sustainable Purchasing



# Auxiliary Services

LA Memorial Coliseum

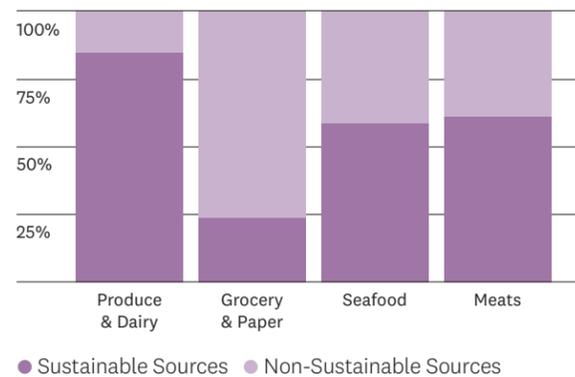


### Fiscal Year Highlights

- **Single-use plastic beverage bottle elimination plan developed** with Auxiliary Services, Athletics, and Procurement to help USC transition away from single-use plastics and improve waste reduction ([policy](#) effective July 2022)
- **Trojan Shop Local** helped 60 diverse, small businesses across Los Angeles share local services, merchandise, and products with the Trojan community
- **USC Procurement continued to work with preferred and recommended suppliers** to increase sustainable product spend in categories including Technology, Office and Breakroom, Lab Supplies, Janitorial, MRO, and Print and Promotional

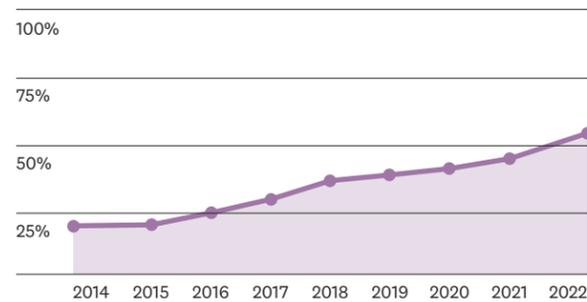
### USC Hospitality Sustainable Purchases

Broken out by category



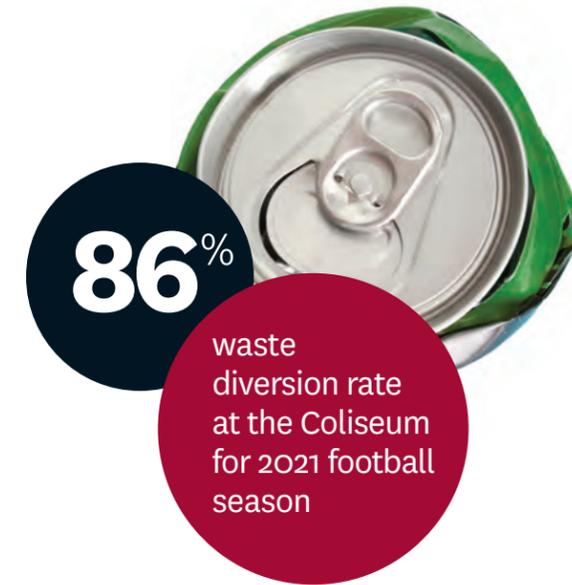
### USC Hospitality Food Purchases from Sustainable Sources<sup>1-2</sup>

Since 2014 Baseline



<sup>1</sup> Includes purchases from Residential Dining, Banquets, and Catering units

<sup>2</sup> Sustainable sources are approved suppliers pledged towards sustainable and responsible sourcing. Full list of category criteria: [green.usc.edu/programs/procurement/](https://green.usc.edu/programs/procurement/)

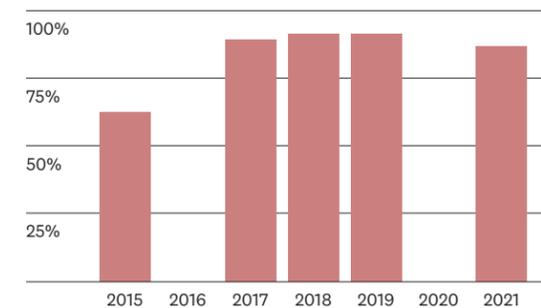


### Fiscal Year Highlights

- **Pac-12 Zero Waste Challenge Winner** for 2021 football season
- **90% waste diversion rate** for [2021 Zero Waste football game](#) at the Coliseum in October
- **More than 1,100 tons of Coliseum game day waste diverted from landfill** since 2015

### Coliseum 2021 Football Season Waste Diversion Rate<sup>1-2</sup>

Percentage



<sup>1</sup> Total waste generated not available to establish diversion rate in 2016; USC achieved Zero Waste for the first time at a Zero Waste game

<sup>2</sup> 2020 data not available due to COVID shutdown and restrictions

### Coliseum 2021 Football Season Waste Diversion in Tons

Broken out by Waste Stream

Compost	23.77 tons
Recycling	40.02 tons
Landfill	10.12 tons
Food Donation/Grease Collection	.46 tons
<b>Total Diverted</b>	<b>64.25 tons</b>
<b>Total Generated</b>	<b>74.37 tons</b>
<b>Diversion Rate</b>	<b>86.39%</b>

# Engaging the USC Community



  
**2,387**  
 Twitter followers  
[@greenusc](https://twitter.com/greenusc)



  
**1,692**  
 Instagram followers  
[@green.usc](https://www.instagram.com/green.usc)



### Spotlight on Sustainable Athletics

**Pac-12 Zero Waste Challenge Winner for 2021-22 basketball season**

**91.8% waste diversion rate for 2021 Zero Waste men's basketball game at Galen Center in January**

**Approximately 400 lbs. of surplus food donated to Second Spoon, a nonprofit organization founded by USC Trojans quarterback Mo Hasan, which collects and distributes surplus food to individuals in need**

### 2022 Highlights

**AASHE STARS Assessment:** Received a Silver Rating on USC's first Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), an assessment framework that measures sustainability progress and performance in higher education institutions.

**Sustainability, Literacy, Behavior, and Cultural Survey:** Administered the university's inaugural campus-wide sustainability survey to establish a baseline for measuring progress towards Assignment: Earth engagement goals. Over 5,000 USC students, postdocs, faculty, and staff completed the survey.

**Arts and Climate Collective (ACC):** Helped support students using the arts and media to address sustainability and environmental justice issues.

**Green Week:** Hosted the university's first week devoted to sustainability awareness and engagement in October 2021 with 27 events celebrating the steps USC is taking to achieve its sustainability goals.

**Earth Week:** Celebrated Earth Week in April 2022 with 32 sustainability-related events, including:

- **"Gangsta Gardener" Ron Finley** served as a keynote speaker for the university's marquee Earth Week celebration.
- **Drag queen Pattie Gonia** joined the Environmental Student Assembly (ESA) for a performance and talk on intersectional environmentalism.

**Social Media Campaigns:** Implemented new engagement campaigns highlighting zero waste efforts (Waste Ed Wednesdays) and campus sustainability champions (Sustainability Superstars).

**Peace Garden:** Supported the restoration of the University Park Peace Garden, a teaching garden for the campus and neighborhood community.

**Student Engagement:** Collaborated with student organizations throughout the year, including the Arts and Climate Collective, Environmental Student Assembly, PWG Student Sustainability Committee, and the SC Garden Club.

### Get Involved!

**Stay Connected:** Follow the Office of Sustainability on social media, visit our website, or subscribe to our monthly newsletter.

**Get the Supdate:** Join a student-curated forum of sustainability events, opportunities, and information posted by and for USC's green community on a regularly updated Slack space.

[sustainability.usc.edu](https://sustainability.usc.edu)



**Thank you to these partners whose hard work has been instrumental in advancing sustainable operations at USC:**

Presidential Working Group on Sustainability, Office of the Provost, Office of Sustainability, Academic Senate, Staff Assembly, Facilities Planning and Management, Auxiliary Services, Procurement, Athletics, Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Government, Environmental Student Assembly, and other student groups.

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