



# Policy Sprint

Environment

# Environmental Protection Policy

- Meet and, where reasonably possible, exceed compliance with applicable federal, provincial and local environmental regulations and other requirements to which the University subscribes
- Operate so as to minimize negative impacts on the environment
- Adopt practices that reflect the conservation and wise use of natural resources
- Respect biodiversity



# King's College Circle Development

- University of Toronto's Landmark Project, which will revitalize the historic core of the St. George campus and accelerate the university's ambitious climate action goals
- a significant step in reducing our carbon emissions and meeting the goal we have set for ourselves by 2030, as well as more ambitious goals beyond that up to the year 2050 to be as close to carbon neutral as possible
- The system can absorb heat when there is an excess and use it in cold weather instead of directly releasing it into the atmosphere



# Prompt

The University of Toronto is very dedicated to fighting against climate change and protecting its environment. They have a Climate-Positive campus target that will reduce their emissions to net-zero and make the university a carbon sink. The Environmental Protection policy encourages people to protect the environment through teaching, research, and administrative operations. Construct a policy brief critiquing the existing policy on the inclusion of biodiversity and environmental concerns in planning and landscape decisions to minimize negative impacts. How will the redesign of the King's College Circle meet the targets of the policy? You must recommend ways the U of T community members can aid the university in meeting these goals.

# Executive Summary

The University of Toronto is very dedicated to fighting against climate change and protecting its environment. The Environmental Protection policy encourages people to protect the environment through teaching, research, and administrative operations. One such commitment is protecting and preserving biodiversity on campus. The University of Toronto's Environmental Protection Policy echoes this sentiment in its commitment to "include biodiversity and environmental concerns in planning decisions." The recent remodeling of King's College Circle will overhaul one of the University's largest green spaces. Much of the campaign for this remodel has been focused on the walkability of the new design, with little mention of how the University plans to improve the quality of green space. The University of Toronto must commit to the inclusion of biodiversity-bolstering provisions in its remodel of King's College Circle to improve its on-campus biodiversity and provide quality green space for its students.

# Introduction

In 2010, University of Toronto introduced its very first environmental protection policy. In the policy, the university committed to follow several principles including: exceeding compliance with applicable federal, provincial and local regulations, minimizing every activities that would negatively impact the environment, adapting practices that reflect conservation and knowledgeable use of natural resources, and lastly respecting biodiversity. Aside from these fundamental principles, University of Toronto committed to take ethical principles such as, minimizing the use of energy through creating efficient designs, and practices, minimizing wastes and pollutants, and managing the use of chemical and toxic substances used for scientific research practices.

Although these policies and principles were implemented in 2010, the university, as a community, plays an important role in becoming more conscious of our climate as we are experiencing more severe effects of climate change.

Just a few weeks ago, on October 27th of 2021, President Gertler wrote a letter to the community highlighting new plans towards a net zero and climate positive campus. President Gertler mentioned, " University of Toronto's Asset Management Corporation will divest from investments in fossil fuel companies in the endowment fund beginning immediately. Within the next 12 months, it will divest from all direct investments in fossil fuel companies. Second, UTAM will commit to achieving net zero carbon emissions associated with the endowment portfolio by no later than 2050. Third, UTAM will allocate 10 percent of the endowment portfolio to sustainable and low-carbon investments by 2025." University of Toronto's St. George campus is committed to reach net-zero by 2050. U of T will be expanding its renewable energy generation both on and off campus. However, U of T's plans goes beyond the community level, and is expanded to national and international engagements.

U of T sees these initiatives as both substantive and symbolic impacts which will accelerate our transition to low carbon economy. U of T hopes to encourage other government actors both in Canada and other parts of the world to tackle climate change.