

# Campus Framework plans for reducing carbon footprint at Syracuse University in early stages

Nathan Prior, director of energy systems and sustainability management, said Syracuse University does not have specific plans for studying possible renovations of the steam station.

As part of Syracuse University's major Campus Framework plan, officials have said they want to reduce the university's carbon footprint and utilize more solar energy systems.



But those ideas are still in early planning stages, and it's unclear how long it will be there is concrete action in SU's efforts to bolster sustainability initiatives under the framework. More than a year after the first draft of the framework was released, SU still does not have specific plans on how or when it will conduct studies on possible renovations of the steam station, said Nathan Prior, director of energy systems and sustainability management.

The station, which heats the university's Main Campus and is near the Brewster/Boland/Brockway Complex, is included in the Campus Framework draft as a target for SU to reduce its carbon footprint. But there's no confirmed date for when those plans will be finalized.

"We're back to the drawing board reworking some of those," Prior said of framework plans regarding the steam station in the next 50 years.

The framework is Chancellor Kent Syverud's 20-year infrastructure document detailing short- and long-term campus development initiatives. It includes several major projects, including the ongoing National Veterans Resource Complex construction at the intersection of South Crouse and Waverly avenues.

Prior also said SU does not yet know how many solar panels the university will purchase as part of the plan. The second draft of the Campus Framework stated one of its "opportunities" was to install additional solar panels in campus buildings.

Because studies are still being conducted, the exact number of solar panels on new buildings is still unknown. But the panels are always considered when SU works on any project that requires the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, said Joe Alfieri, director of SU's Campus Planning, Design and Construction. According to the framework's second draft, "significant reductions in energy consumption from nonrenewable sources are expected" once the plan is implemented. The exact amount of money and energy that will be saved by the plan is currently unknown.

"A lot of that's going to depend on the new technologies that will be adopted as part of what's being constructed as part of the Campus Framework," Prior said. "Without knowing exactly what is going to be constructed when, it's very difficult to quantify." The framework also stated that SU could "use electric cars and buses for campus vehicles." But Prior said the university will decide whether those ideas could be used "a little further down the road."

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*Nathan Prior, director of energy systems and sustainability management*

SU can also "produce renewable energy using rooftop solar panels and purchase renewable wind energy," according to the plan's second draft. Twenty percent of the university's annual electricity spending is from state-generated wind power, "which creates virtually no greenhouse gases," per the document.

But Prior said SU will not buy more wind power in the future. It will, though, improve renewable energy usage on campus by generating more wind power, he said.

Because there is no exact timeline for the plan, officials can focus on energy reduction as a project-to-project basis, instead of all at once, Alfieri said.

Alfieri said that, as part of that effort, the university is focusing on LEED standards, a rating system designed by the United States Green Building Council to evaluate environmental performances of buildings. LEED buildings save energy, water and resources; generate less waste; and support human health, according to the USGBC's website.

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The second draft of the Campus Framework calls for all related projects that cost more than \$5 million to be LEED-certified. But Alfieri said that, as of now, any framework-associated project that costs more than \$10 million must meet the LEED standards.

"All of our buildings have to comply with the existing New York state energy code," Alfieri said. "And then applying LEED standards, on top of that, is making them more environmentally sustainable."

Two of the framework's biggest projects, the multimillion-dollar renovations at Archbold Gymnasium and \$62.5 million National Veterans Resource Complex, are both on track to meet LEED standards, Alfieri said. The NVRC is also going to have a "very high-performance building facade," he said. Temperatures can be maintained "within a comfortable range" using the least amount of energy possible, Alfieri said, with the building's facade.

"The priority at this point in time is to invest in campus facilities in order to make them more energy efficient, instead of just purchasing offsets," Prior said.