



SickKids[®]

**Environmental
Sustainability Strategy
Progress Update**

2025

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Meet the Team

Our team works across The Hospital for Sick Children's (SickKids) campus to develop solutions that support our Environmental Sustainability Strategy.



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Introduction

**A Greener SickKids.
Healthier Children.
A Better World.**

SickKids is committed to improving the health of children in every sense of the word. We aim to drive environmental sustainability throughout the organization by leveraging this common goal and building a culture that contributes to making the world a better place where children can thrive.



The Canadian health-care industry is responsible for 33 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every year (which is more than the entire country of Denmark!). Knowing the large impact that a health-care organization like SickKids can have on the planet, we released our Environmental Sustainability Strategy in 2022 to guide our actions and track our progress towards a more sustainable future. We need to create long-lasting change, integrating sustainability into every aspect of our operations.

Sustainability is a long-term commitment, not a one-time project. Here's how we plan to build a sustainable SickKids for the future:

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Like health, we believe that sustainability requires a multi-faceted approach. Our strategy has three strategic directions:

- 1. Advocate for Climate Action**
- 2. Operate for Tomorrow, Today**
- 3. Foster an Environmentally Responsible Culture**

We consider how our actions and initiatives contribute to each of these pillars, ensuring that we carry sustainability forwards in everything that we do.

Sustainability Data at SickKids: An Overview

Good data is one of the keys to approaching sustainability in a responsible, impactful way. We focus on the following figures to track our progress and assess our impacts:

Greenhouse Gas Intensity (GHG)

Measures our total GHG emissions against area:

$\text{kg CO}_2 \text{e/m}^2$



Energy Use Intensity (EUI)

Measures our total energy use against area:

GJ/m^2



Water Use Intensity (WUI)

Measures our total water use against area:

m^3/m^2



Waste Diversion

Measures how much waste we generate is diverted from landfill through recycling, composting, or reusing.

% diverted



[See page 8 for GHG intensity performance](#)

[See page 11 for EUI, WUI, and waste diversion performance](#)

Advocate for Climate Action

This first strategic direction is all about understanding, addressing, and responding to climate change. At SickKids, we have to take responsibility for our role in shaping a climate-friendly future within and beyond health care, for the health of our planet and patients.

Here's what we've done so far:

GOAL

PROJECTS + IMPACTS

Advocate for action on climate change as a social determinant of health



- Participated in Ride for their Lives, an international health-care movement to protect the planet for children
- Longstanding member of Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare; received Top Performer Awards in 2022 and 2023
- Joined TAHSN's Sustainable Health System CoP
- Member of Greening Healthcare, a coalition of health-care industry players working towards decarbonization
- **Awarded Advocate Level of Toronto's Green Will Initiative**



Build climate resiliency and mitigate risk

- Conducted consultant-led climate resiliency studies during PSC design and construction

Embed environmental sustainability in campus redevelopment


- Implementation of nine sustainability-focused policies and plans across the campus
- Sustainability integrated into **PSC design and construction**:
 - Lighting consumes **30% less energy than mandated** by Ontario Energy Code
 - 40% less water consumption than standard buildings
 - 90% of construction waste diverted from landfill
 - Deep-lake cooling (DLC) technology provided by Enwave reduces reliance on energy-intensive chillers

GOAL

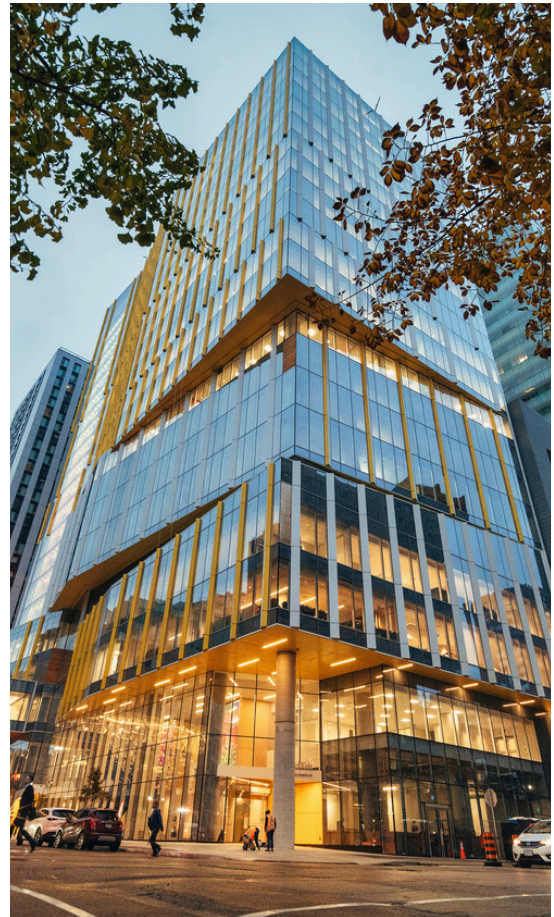
PROJECTS + IMPACTS

Reduce GHG emissions

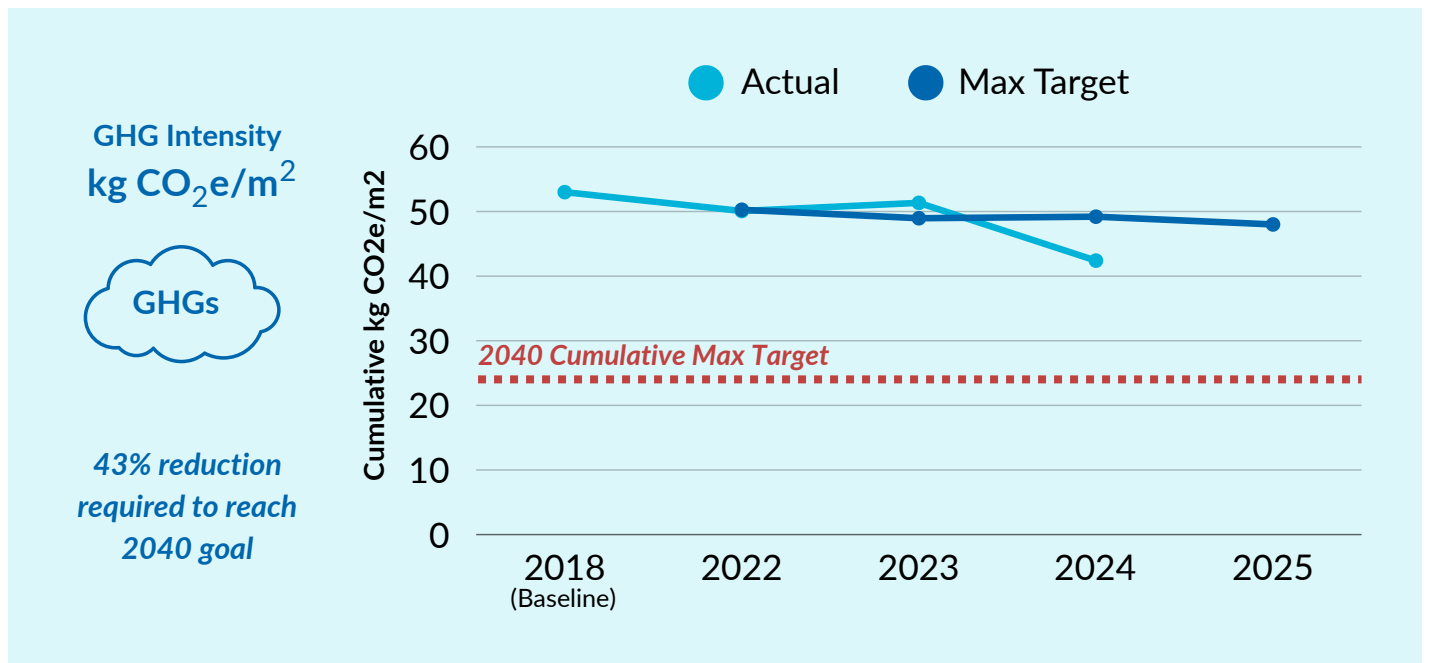
- Energy Conservation & Demand Management Plan (ECDM) created in 2024 to guide transition to a net-zero future through phased goals until 2050
- Process chiller at PGCRL upgraded to save 5,500,000 kilograms of steam annually
 - **GHG reduction over 1,000 tonnes annually**
- Ongoing heating system electrification
 - Potential to save 34,000,000 kilograms of steam annually (6,000 tonne GHG reduction)
 - Currently at 5% of potential
- **Retrocommissioning old mechanical equipment where possible reduces energy use and GHG emissions by 5-15%**
- Eliminating desflurane, a high global warming potential anaesthetic, from our operating rooms
 - Reduces GHG emissions by 11 tonnes annually



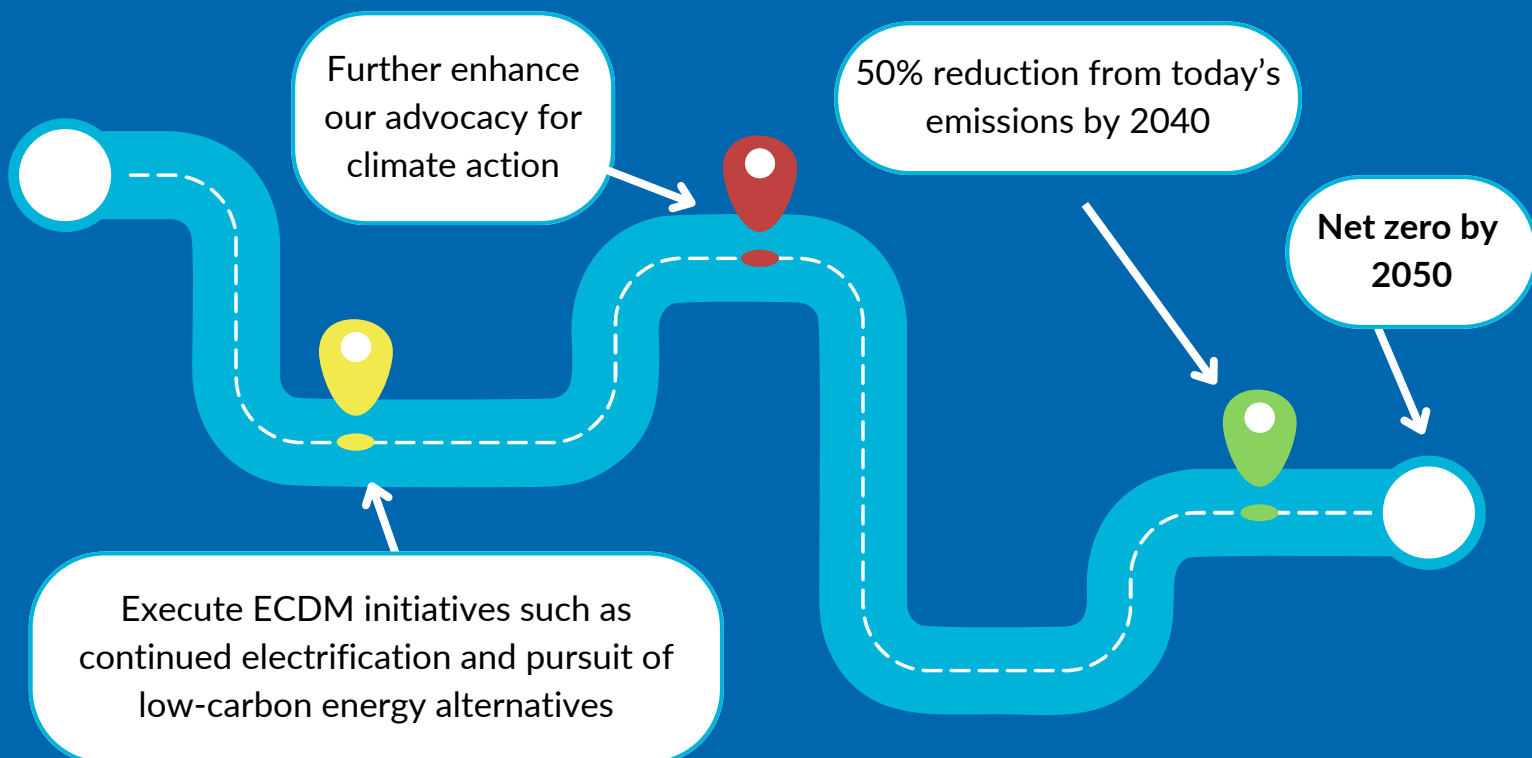
These changes are equal to removing about 300 cars from the road annually.



Our Progress in Numbers: KPI Update for Strategic Direction #1



Moving Forward: Our Next Steps for Strategic Direction #1



Operate for Tomorrow, Today

OUR GOAL:
Increase efficiency,
decrease waste

This strategic direction is about making real-time change within our operations. The changes and decisions we make today will impact tomorrow and beyond. By maximizing efficiency and minimizing waste within the organization, we're ensuring that our current actions support a sustainable future.

Here's what we've done so far:

GOAL

PROJECTS + IMPACTS

Minimize waste within the organization

- Execute annual third-party waste audits across the campus
 - Track progress and provide insights to improve waste diversion

Since 2022, SickKids has diverted

2,729 tonnes

of waste from landfill.

That's the equivalent of over **500 ambulances!**



- Reduce unnecessary biomedical waste
 - Education program throughout operating rooms reduced contamination from 70% to 23%
 - **43 tonnes diverted from unnecessary autoclaving annually**
- Expansion of organics program
 - Rollout of organics bins in staff areas anticipated to capture 32 tonnes annually
- Ongoing waste diversion education
 - Mandatory waste sorting iLearn for Patient Support Services staff
 - Waste education segments given at huddles and staff meetings
 - Waste sorting posters, guides, and badges available



GOAL

PROJECTS + IMPACTS



Pursue sustainable energy and smart water

- PGCRL recertified for LEED® Gold Operations & Maintenance in 2024
- Installation of water-efficient fixtures and devices
 - PGCRL upgrades save 6,000 m3 annually
- Rainwater harvesting at PSC
 - 35,000 litre cistern captures rainwater for watering plants
- Installation of real-time energy and water dashboards at PSC and PGCRL to monitor usage and efficiency
- See energy efficiency implementations under Strategic Direction #1

Advance a green and sustainable supply chain

- Recyclers screened for sustainable practices
- Integrating sustainability criteria into procurement practices
 - LEED-based **Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy**
 - Currently developing criteria for sustainable procurement and vendor assessment with Mohawk MedBuy ESG Council
- Sustainability criteria and review applied to all capital requests by sustainability team

➔ **Paving the way for sustainable cold shipments**

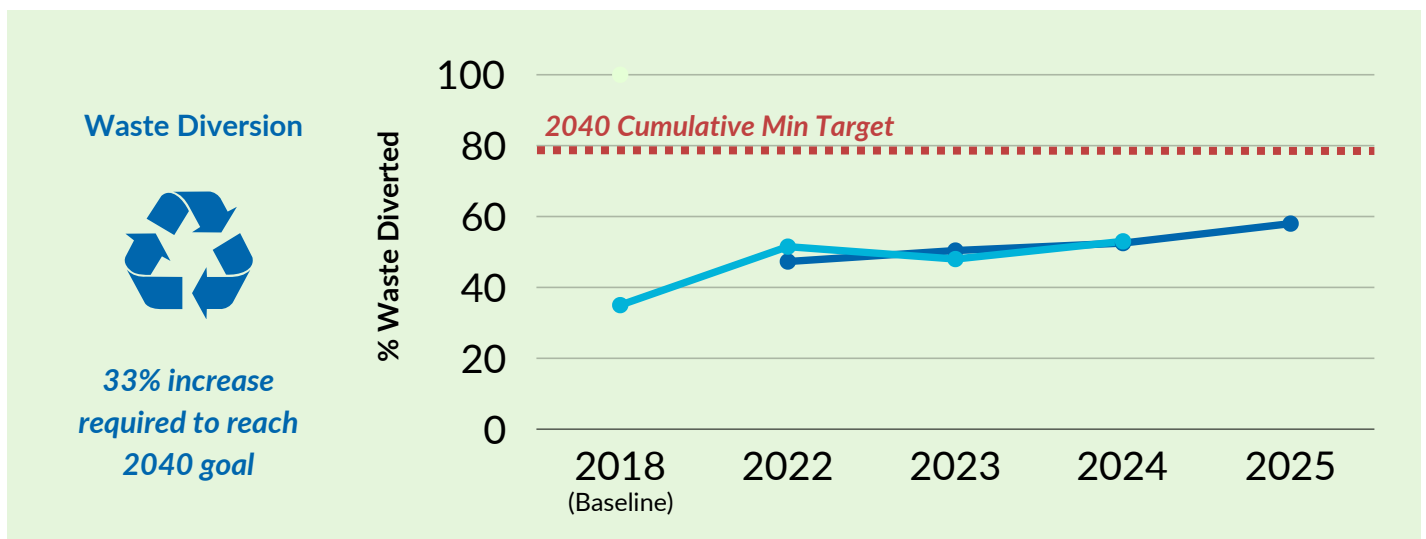
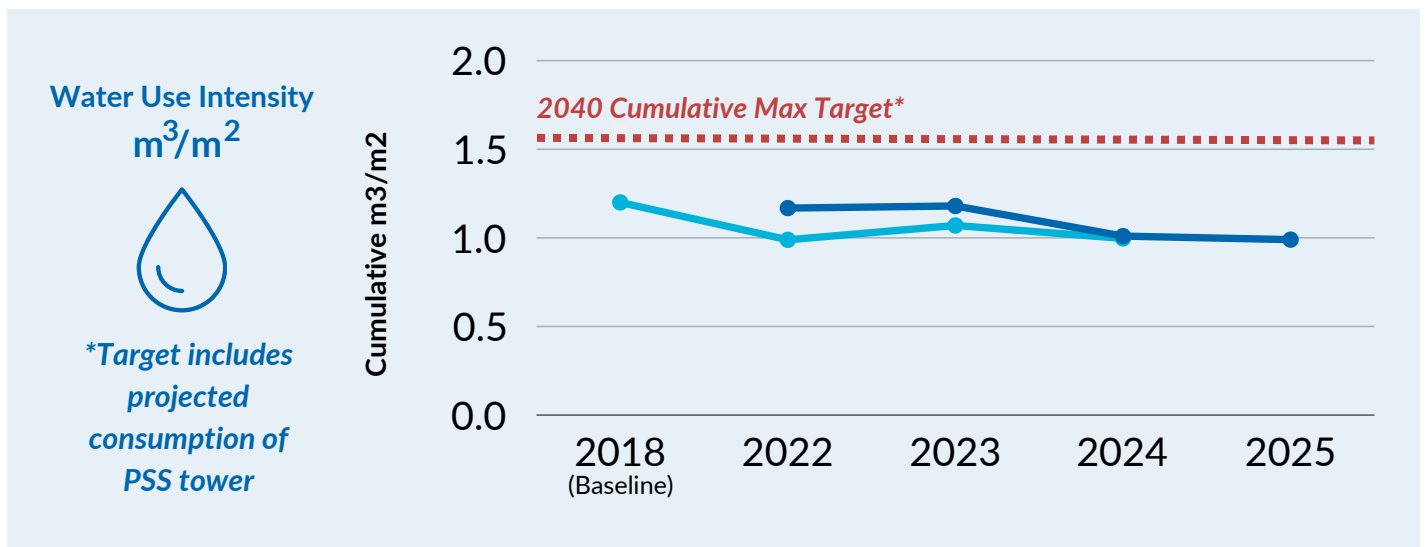
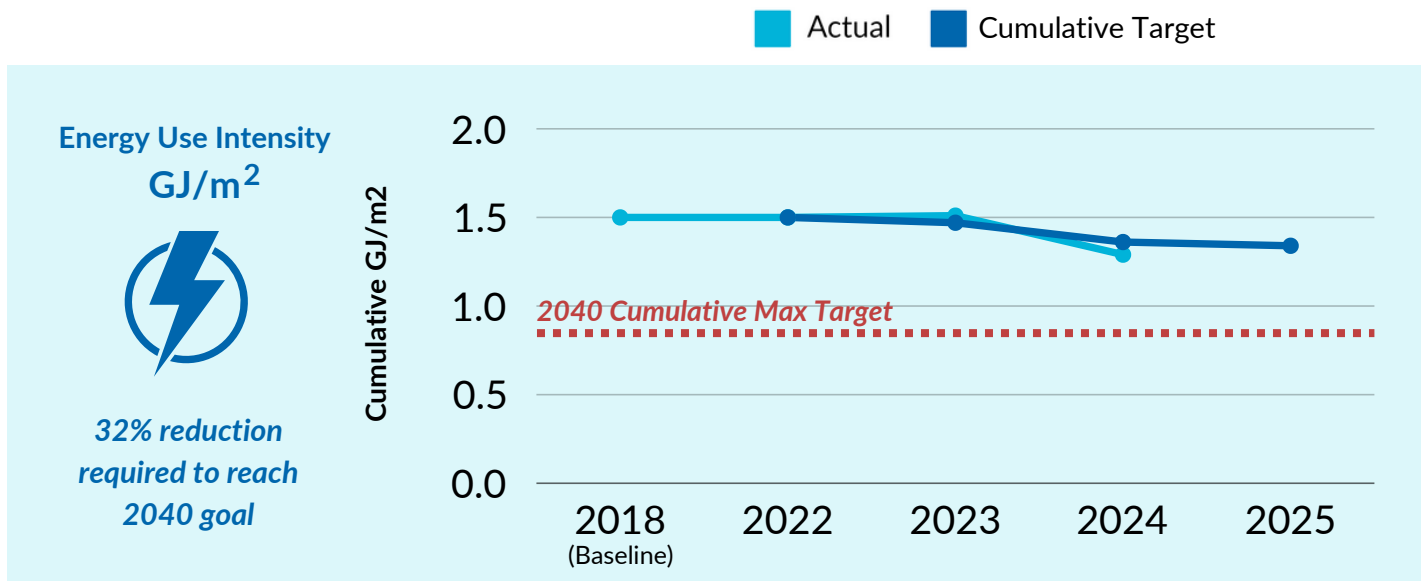
SickKids is leading a partnership between Sunnybrook Research Institute, UHN, Unity Health, Sinai Health, Toronto Metropolitan University, and University of Toronto to engage 6+ national and international vendors in order to:

- Transition away from Styrofoam use in shipping temperature-sensitive materials
- Increase re-use of shipping materials to reduce waste
 - 90% of ice packs found to be reusable at least once in vendor study
- Verify recyclability of vendor packaging designs

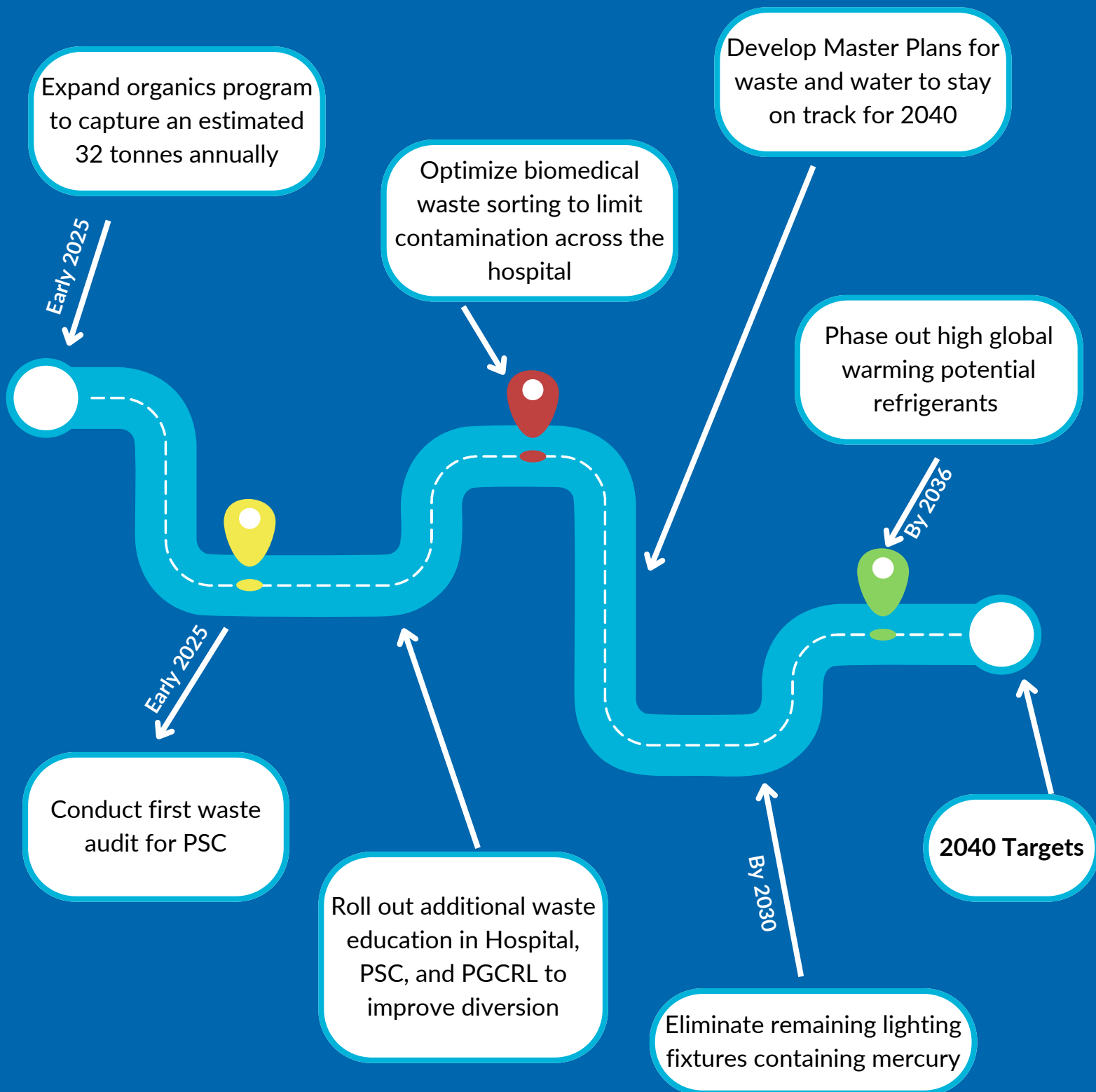
Promote active and clean transportation

- SickKids Cycling group, Bike Mentor Program, and Learn to Bike Programs foster a culture of sustainable transportation
 - **90%+ of staff use sustainable transportation to get to work**
- Bike storage across campus
 - **661 bike storage slots available to staff**
- Campus-wide celebration of Smart Commute Month, Winter Commute Month, Bike Month

Our Progress in Numbers: KPI Update for Strategic Direction #2



Moving Forward: Our Next Steps for Strategic Direction #2



Foster an Environmentally Responsible Culture

This strategic direction aims to position environmental sustainability as a core pillar of our culture here at SickKids. When sustainability is ingrained in everything we do, it's easier to make decisions with positive impacts for both the planet and people.

Here's what we've done so far:

GOAL

PROJECTS + IMPACTS

Establish an environmental sustainability office (ESO)

- ESO established in 2024 to support sustainability initiatives across the campus
- KidsGoGreen brand maintained as face of sustainability at SickKids

Increase staff learning and engagement on environmental sustainability initiatives

- **Intranet site launched in early 2024 makes sustainability resources accessible to staff**
- 100+ staff huddles attended, 500+ staff participating in events, waste iLearn taken by 1000+ staff



Pictured above: KidsGoGreen Earth Week booth

- Campaigns engage staff year-round through events and challenges:
 - Earth Hour, Earth Week, Bike Month, Waste Reduction Week, Smart Commute Month, Circular Economy Month
- Staff committees dedicated to sustainability:
 - Hospital Green Team, PGCR Green Committee, POCU Green Committee



GOAL

PROJECTS + IMPACTS

Drive transparency and accountability through reporting

- Internal reporting on a regular basis
 - Quarterly KPI updates on energy, water, and GHGs
 - Waste, water, wastewater, and energy audit results posted
 - First installation of Sustainability Progress Update
- External reporting
 - Annual water and energy report to the City of Toronto and BPS
 - Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan renewed on a five-year basis
 - Pollution Prevention (P2) Plan updated on a 3-year basis
 - **2024 P2 Plan showed significant reduction in subject pollutant discharge**

Implement benchmarking and best practices

- Annual submission of TAHSN Sustainable OR Scorecard to benchmark sustainability performance against other academic hospitals in Toronto
- Sustainability team attends conferences to stay up to date on innovations and emerging best practices across the health care industry

Our Progress in Numbers: KPI Update for Strategic Direction #3

TARGET	STATUS
Develop ESO and resource centre	 On track: Sustainability intranet site published, ESO established
Publish annual sustainability report	 On track: First Strategy Progress Update published 2025 and full sustainability report planned for 2026

1000+

Staff taken waste sorting training

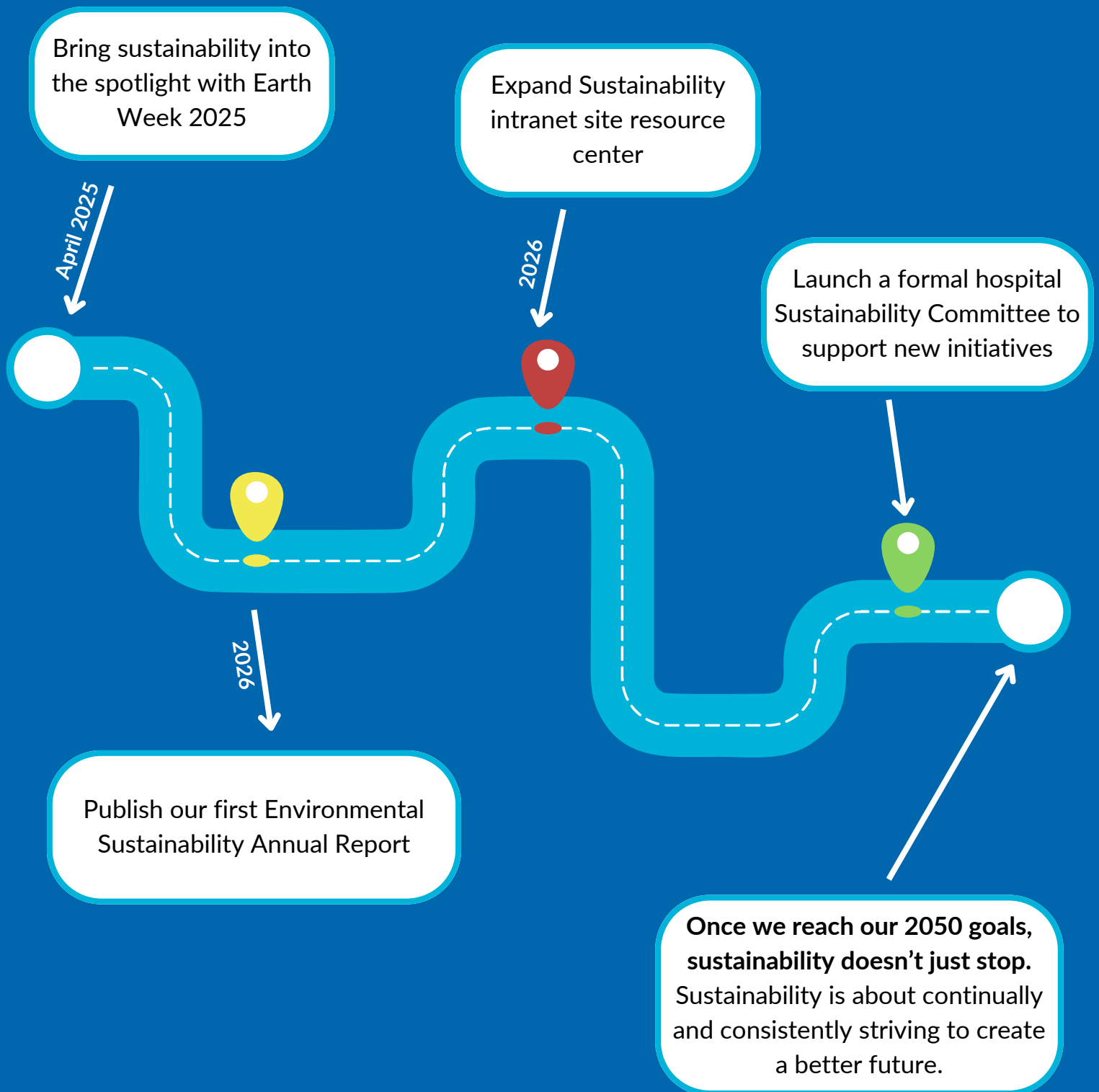
500+

Staff participated in sustainability events

100+

Staff huddles attended by sustainability team

Moving Forward: Our Next Steps for Strategic Direction #3



Toward a Greener Future

We are proud of the inroads we have made along our sustainability journey. The achievements outlined in this progress update are contributing to a healthier environment and, ultimately, healthier children.

However, this is just the beginning. Sustainability is an ongoing requirement, not a project with an end date.

Even upon meeting our 2040 and 2050 targets, **sustainability will remain embedded in our culture and daily processes.**

Climate change and environmental degradation continue to pose health risks to communities worldwide. All humans rely on the environment to lead healthy lives: our water, air, food, and shelter are all impacted by the rapidly changing climate. The risks to each and every member of the SickKids community, from patients to staff, are already evident. Rising respiratory illness and more frequent extreme weather events will not only impact patient and staff health, but also our ability to provide consistent, high-quality health care.

Environmental factors play a key role in children's health, which speaks to our vision of "**A Greener SickKids. Healthier Children. A Better World.**" By ensuring we weave sustainability through the organization, in line with the goals of the Hospital's overall strategy, we can collectively push the Hospital's Precision Child Health vision forward.

In the coming years and beyond, we will continue to embed sustainability into every aspect of our operations and culture. We will push for greater energy efficiency, pursue innovative waste reduction strategies, and strengthen sustainability policies to ensure uninterrupted and fortified patient care. **Most importantly, we will integrate sustainability into our daily decisions—because caring for the environment is caring for our patients too.**

Our work is not finished. Together, we will build a SickKids that not only heals the children of today but also protects the health of future generations. Sustainability is our responsibility, now and for years to come.

A Greener SickKids. Healthier Children. A Better World.