



Ensuring a better future for the Salish Sea

Our regenerative plan

Over the past two decades, Seattle Aquarium has taken action to create a positive impact on our planet and be a regional leader in sustainable practices. Even still, it has never been more crucial to continue planning ahead and establishing an ambitious vision to create a regenerative future for our community and the Salish Sea. After many months of work, we're proud to have developed a regenerative plan, which will help us lead other conservation organizations, our city and our region toward a regenerative future. Below are the highlights of this expansive project, which will be released in full in 2022.



"We don't pride ourselves in being the best, or the first, but rather the first of many."

— President & CEO
Robert W. Davidson

Inspiring Conservation of Our Marine Environment

Our vision for the future, and our goals to achieve it.

SMARTIE framework referenced for goal-setting and strategy development:



Specific

Clear and concrete. Not fuzzy. Can picture or imagine it.



Measurable

Can be marked as “done.”



Attainable

Realistic and within our control and scope.



Relevant

Not just a “pet project” but clearly linked to our vision and directions.



Time-bound

Can be put on a calendar.



Inclusive

Includes traditionally marginalized voices in a way that shares power.



Equitable

Includes elements that seek to address systemic injustices.

Our vision is to become a regenerative aquarium, producing more environmental benefits than harm to help ensure a climate-resilient, regenerative future for all by:

- Leading and influencing systemic change.
- Tending to a culture of sustainability.
- Cultivating facilities conducive to life.
- Fostering community connections.
- Creating regenerative opportunities.

We selected five topic areas and formulated seven goals to achieve this vision. To measure progress, the goals follow the SMARTIE framework: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive and equitable. We chose the year 2030 for most goals so that they’re ambitious and make scientifically meaningful contributions to halting the worst impacts of climate change, pollution and resource extraction to ensure a resilient future for all:

- Become a zero-waste (90% diversion rate) operating facility by 2025.
- Become climate positive by 2030.
 - We define “climate positive” as beyond net-positive carbon emissions through climate benefits that go beyond the operations of our facilities to regenerative environmental and social impacts.
- Reduce fresh- and seawater consumption by 25% from 2018 levels by 2030.
- Achieve a 90% score on our staff sustainability engagement survey by 2030.
- Become a regional leader in sustainability impact.
- Ensure 80% of purchased goods meet our sustainable procurement policy.

Forming teams and gathering data.



47 staff and partners participated in our regenerative plan.



“Process is equally as important as outcome—people participate in what they help create. Bringing together diverse voices ensures impactful outcomes.”

– Daniel Lawse,
Principal + Chief
Century Thinker,
Verdis Group

In partnership with Verdis Group, the process to create the regenerative plan began in 2019. We started by establishing baselines and benchmarking against peer organizations.

In early 2020, we established a process team of Aquarium staff with different levels of authority and experience from across the Aquarium. As part of our baselining efforts, we conducted an all-staff sustainability engagement survey (with an incredible 74% response rate), and Verdis Group gathered information from process team members and key leadership at the Aquarium. After that, planning had to be paused until April 2021 due to operational challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We held workshops in early summer 2021, which produced the overall vision and broad goal areas of the plan. We then formed focus teams for each goal area to craft specific goals and the strategies to achieve them. In October 2021, the regenerative plan was completed and ready for implementation to begin in 2022.



Visitors delight in our Underwater Dome habitat.

The official plan is new, but the work has been ongoing.



Our waste signage clearly shows how to dispose of different materials.

With sustainability as one of our core institutional values, we've already made significant strides toward becoming an environmentally regenerative Aquarium, long before creating this new, organization-wide plan. Our strengths and successes to date fall under all five of the goal areas we established during the formation of the regenerative plan. A few examples—out of many—include the following:



Energy and emissions:

- ▶ Achieving carbon-positive status for Scopes 1 and 2 by 2014 and including leased space by 2019.
- ▶ Partnering with Evergreen Carbon beginning in 2019 to ensure our carbon offset investments are third-party verified and align with our mission and values.
- ▶ Deciding to design and build the Ocean Pavilion as all electric.



Water and effluents:

- ▶ Modified management of salmon habitats to reduce freshwater consumption.
- ▶ Installed low-flow restroom fixtures.
- ▶ Clean habitats with seawater when possible.



Waste:

- ▶ Implemented animal food preparation composting in 2008.
- ▶ Implemented full composting in 2010 in partnership with Sodexo, our food, beverage and event partner.
- ▶ Updated waste-disposal signage in 2013 and 2019 to ensure clarity for both visitors and staff throughout the Aquarium.



Our café uses reusable dishes as part of our sustainability efforts.



Materials:

- ▶ Provided paper maps only upon request starting in 2020.
- ▶ Switched to reusable dishware for the café in partnership with Sodexo in 2020.
- ▶ Implemented many advances in the gift shop by 2018 with Event Network, the retail operator who runs the shop in partnership with the Aquarium, such as 70% of products free of single-use plastic and carrying plush toys made out of 100% recycled plastic.



Engagement:

- ▶ Achieved a 74% participation rate on the sustainability engagement survey in 2020.
- ▶ 99% of sustainability engagement survey respondents agreed that it was important for Seattle Aquarium to take active steps to be more sustainable.
- ▶ Distributing 18,751 complimentary admissions via the Seattle Public Library and King County Library museum pass programs and 84,232 complimentary tickets through the Connections program to ensure access to marginalized communities.



Our beach naturalists love sharing about the creatures you'll find at low tide.

Keeping up momentum and ensuring accountability.



Pinto abalone, a local endangered species that we're working to restore through our species recovery program. Photo courtesy of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The regenerative plan lays out 160 strategies to make progress toward the Aquarium's goals, with 10 priority strategies identified under each goal area. The Aquarium is committed to putting this plan into action, including ensuring sufficient staff and other resources are committed to advance this work. A newly formed regenerative steering committee, with representatives from across the Aquarium, will guide implementation of the plan starting in 2022. The regenerative steering committee will also be responsible in providing accountability on progress toward the Aquarium's goals and communicating results of sustainability efforts to staff.



Making changes to our facilities is one of the ways we've made strides toward becoming more sustainable.



"It is up to all of us to turn the tide. Crafted by staff members and external partners, the Seattle Aquarium is embracing a regenerative vision that will catalyze us along a path beyond climate positive, toward regeneration. Our regenerative vision seeks to give back to the ocean, human communities and the planet more than we take—and will do so in a just and equitable manner."

— President & CEO Robert W. Davidson



Advocating for policy changes is key to improving the health of our one world ocean.

The full regenerative plan will be released in 2022. In the meantime, for more information, please contact [Jesse Phillips-Kress](#) and [Dr. Erin Meyer](#).