



Minneapolis–Saint Paul International Airport via Unsplash



# Metropolitan Airports Commission

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

LIVING SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK ALIGNS SUSTAINABILITY ENTERPRISE-WIDE

## Project Summary

In 2019, we commenced a project with the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), which owns and operates the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, to align and integrate sustainability across their organization and with their existing Strategic Plan. We facilitated workshops and conducted interviews to set 2030 emissions, water, waste and engagement goals, supported organizational change management, identified strategies to achieve sustainability goals, and helped integrate sustainability across the MAC — all using a living systems framework.

Fundamental to our work with the MAC is supporting leadership to strategically align and integrate sustainability across the organization, helping them achieve their 2030 sustainability goals and mitigating risks. A key governance structure we facilitate is the Executive Sustainability Committee (ESC), which includes representatives from several leadership positions.

Complementary to the ESC are three working groups composed of subject matter experts at the MAC, who have the objective of developing and implementing action plans. While the MAC was briefly without a sustainability manager, we filled that role and participated in the process to screen, hire, and onboard a new manager. We continue to support efforts to build the MAC’s adaptive capacity through cultivating the energy and innovation that keeps the enterprise ahead of the curve.



## SERVICES PROVIDED

- Change Management
- Organizational Alignment
- Living Systems Framework
- Strategic Sustainability Planning
- Sustainability Implementation
- Sustainability Governance Facilitation
- Sustainability Office Support

## PROJECT DETAILS

Date: 02/2019 – present  
 Partners: [Kathleen Allen and Associates](#), [Carson+Co Global](#)  
 Relevant Links: [MAC Sustainability Website](#)

## Challenges

1. The pace and integration of sustainability efforts lacked alignment across the MAC.
2. The MAC set ambitious 2030 sustainability goals that necessitated a clear roadmap.

## Solutions

1. We guided the MAC through a process to compile a decades-long history of its environmental successes, which showed that sustainability was already central to its mission and also drove consensus around a definition of sustainability. Knowing that living systems evolve with feedback, we helped engage staff through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and workshops. Additionally, we work with the ESC to learn from natural living systems that exemplify resilience and adaptability. The ESC gives the MAC a structure to identify opportunities, remove barriers, and continue to innovate toward its 2030 sustainability goals.
2. We helped form three working groups tasked with developing action plans that will equip the MAC to continually progress toward its 2030 sustainability goals.

*Verdis Group helped us better align our sustainability efforts with our corporate strategy and set stretch goals at an enterprise level. With Verdis Group's help, we've made tremendous progress in a short period of time."*

*Brian Ryks, CEO, Metropolitan Airports Commission*

## Impact

The living systems framework provides a foundational language with which to communicate and reach consensus. Living systems are interdependent, filled with feedback loops, in a state of constant change, and become more diverse as they evolve. By examining the organization through a living systems lens, leaders are able to form new connections, innovate new ideas, and accelerate climate action.

At the MAC, staff are engaged in new ways that allow more people to participate in the progress toward its 2030 sustainability goals. There is measurably increased support for sustainability efforts with enterprise-wide benefits, thanks especially to the work of the ESC and the working groups.

## Sustainability in the Aviation Industry

Sustainability is not just a list of strategies to become energy efficient, conserve water, reduce pollution, and divert waste from landfills. Rather, it is a way of thinking and acting in ways that recognize and honor the interconnectedness and dynamic nature of life.

Given that aviation contributes to global greenhouse gas emissions, the aviation industry has ample opportunity to reframe and improve operations in ways that bring social, environmental, and economic benefits.

We look forward to combining our knowledge of the aviation industry with our deep expertise in sustainability and climate action planning to co-create purposeful change at your organization.

To learn more, visit [verdisgroup.com](https://verdisgroup.com) or connect with us at [info@verdisgroup.com](mailto:info@verdisgroup.com).