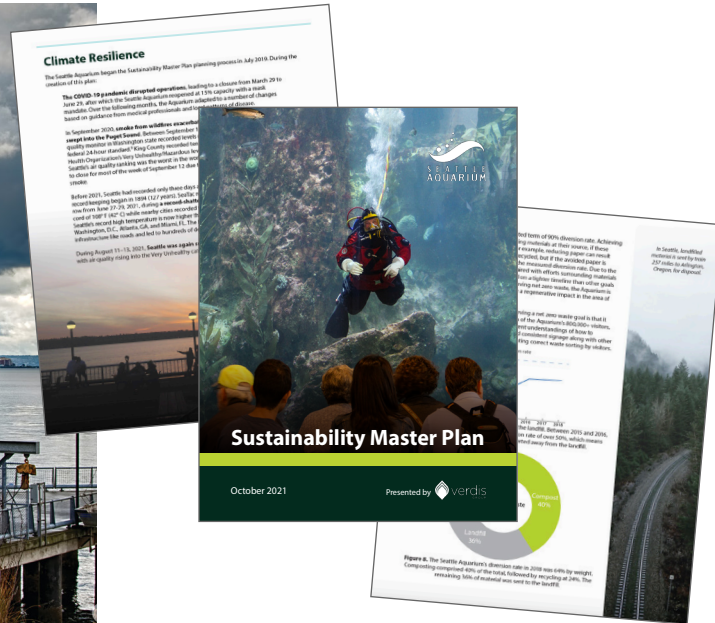




Photo credit: Seattle Aquarium



# Seattle Aquarium

SEATTLE, WA

REGENERATIVE VISION INSPIRES PLAN  
TO BE CLIMATE POSITIVE BY 2030



## Project Summary

Seattle Aquarium's Sustainability Master Plan, completed in October 2021, builds on their significant efforts made to date and positions the Aquarium as a sustainability leader in both the Pacific Northwest region and the Zoo and Aquarium industry. During our planning process, the Aquarium formed an exciting vision to become regenerative — producing more environmental benefits than harm.

We kicked off this project by establishing baselines and benchmarking against peer organizations. We gathered information from a diverse process team of staff and leadership, who formed the plan's overall vision and chose five broad goal areas: energy and emissions, water and effluents, waste, materials, and engagement. Focus teams then formed more specific targets and strategies for each goal area. More than 25 percent of Aquarium employees were involved in the process.

The completed Sustainability Master Plan, set to be made public in 2022, lays out 160 actionable strategies to help the Aquarium meet its goals. In developing these strategies, we ensured they supported the Aquarium's diversity, equity, and inclusion work, aligned with the Aquarium's conservation mission and values, and did not negatively impact animal health and well-being.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

- Sustainability Master Planning
- Greenhouse Gas Inventory
- Greenhouse Gas Verification
- Greenhouse Gas Wedge Analysis
- Sustainability Engagement Survey
- Implementation Planning
- Dashboard

## PROJECT DETAILS

**Date:** 11/2019 – 10/2021  
(The project paused for a year at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.)

**Relevant Links:** [Sustainability Master Plan Summary](#)

## Challenges

- The project paused for a year at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and team composition had shifted by the time we resumed.
- The project was not originally designed to be virtual, but travel and in-person meetings were no longer realistic due to the pandemic.
- Verdis reviewed an internally-conducted greenhouse gas inventory, and a gap analysis indicated several opportunities for a more robust inventory.
- Two of the Aquarium's goals deviate from our typical goal framework because they were not technically measurable.

## Solutions

- During the year-long hiatus of this project, we continued to meet virtually with project liaisons at the Aquarium to ensure we stayed in sync despite not having an active contract.
- We implemented innovative technical solutions that allowed us to efficiently and effectively continue the project in a virtual setting.
- Verdis identified and corrected overly broad assumptions that led to a reduction in emissions. We also created a wedge analysis to ascertain how different strategies impacted their goal to be climate-positive in Scope 1, 2, and measured Scope 3 emissions.
- We helped define the Aquarium's goal to be climate positive and how to communicate it as an opportunity.

*// In writing down this plan, staff members see a path to help them hold leadership accountable. People are saying, 'Finally, we're really going to do this.'*

*- Jesse Phillips-Kress, Director of Facilities at Seattle Aquarium*

## Impact

As a result of the process, Seattle Aquarium's level of commitment to sustainability among all levels of staff has evolved and improved. Our support formed new channels of communication, resulting in a positive and proactive culture shift embracing their sustainability strategies. These improvements were measured by our proprietary Sustainability Engagement Surveys.

Staff members were already aligned in wanting the Aquarium to have a regenerative impact, but we helped the team define and understand what that means and what it will take to get there. The finished product is driving conversation within the industry, and the Aquarium is a clear sustainability leader among the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Aquarium Conservation Partnership (ACP) membership.

## Our Expertise in the Zoo and Aquarium Industry

Zoos and aquariums are adopting sustainability goals at a record pace. Verdis is committed to guiding inclusive processes that accelerate climate action at zoos and aquariums, as we have done for over a decade. Our clients include Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium, Dallas Zoo, St. Louis Zoo, Seattle Aquarium, National Aquarium, and more. Verdis is a commercial member of the AZA, with Steering Committee representation on the Green Scientific Advisory Group.

The strategic tools we provide to zoos and aquariums include executive outreach, baselining, benchmarking, planning, implementation, and our Net Zero Pathway. We also partner with the ACP to offer sustainability services to its members.

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