

Kansas State 2025 Sustainability Strategic Action Plan and Solar Powered Charging Stations

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The Kansas State 2025 Sustainability Strategic Action Plan was developed to help guide Kansas State in addressing sustainability goals over the coming decade. The plan includes goals for the university as well as ways that these goals can be reached and the expectations for the university in regards to the goals between 2015 and 2025. Solar powered charging stations (SPCS) are directly involved with some of the goals laid out in the action plan and can be indirectly incorporated into a number of other goals involving academics, campus and public engagement and campus operations.

Triple Bottom Line goals

An important concept in sustainability is the triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social goals. SPCS can provide a lot of triple bottom line benefits such as the potential for cheaper charging stations if brought to scale, environmental benefits of reduced emissions, and the benefits of shaded parking and better air quality.

Providing Renewable Energy while Reducing K State's Carbon Footprint

The most direct way that solar powered charging stations (SPCS) are incorporated into the Strategic Action Plan is within the goal of "widespread implementation of rooftop solar/parking lot solar if financially feasible" by 2020. Kansas State has already received a \$200,000 grant from Black and Veatch to perform research on SPCS so there are already efforts to research and implement SPCS on campus. Additionally, the Action Plan sets a goal of reducing the carbon footprint of the university by 80% by 2050 and reducing emissions to help combat climate change. SPCS provides a renewable source of energy that can help Kansas State achieve those goals.

Research and other Academic Opportunities

SPCS can help Kansas State achieve many of its academic goals. For example, Kansas State wants to include a sustainability component into the First Year Experience and the SPCS could be incorporated into this unit. The Action Plan also talks about offering bachelors, masters and PhD-programs in sustainability as well as additional research opportunities and applied research and teaching projects related to sustainability. As evidenced by the number of students working on research projects related to SPCS this summer with the Sustainable Energy Research Experience for Undergraduates, there are clearly many opportunities for research with SPCS.

Recruiting and Advertising Tool

Sustainability is a very popular buzzword now and it can be utilized as a key area of campus engagement. The SPCS can be used to "develop recruiting programming and information for prospective students" and to serve as a way to alert students to the opportunities in sustainability at Kansas State. The SPCS can also serve as a great opportunity for community engagement. As the research and implementation of the SPCS on campus continues, the implementation of SPCS at other facilities such as grocery store or mall parking lots would be a great future step. Kansas State could have the chance to work with the local community in implementing SPCS at local businesses. This could serve to both boost the local community as well as provide positive publicity for the university.