City of Louisville
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CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION
AGENDA ITEM 2

SUBJECT: SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

DATE: JULY 15, 2025

PREPARED BY: HANNAH MILLER, SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

PRESENTED BY: HANNAH MILLER, SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

SUMMARY:
The Sustainability Division will present an update, summarizing key accomplishments from 2024 and early-mid 2025. This update reflects the Division's continued commitment to advancing Louisville's climate and sustainability goals and includes a request for City Council approval of two proposed programs that will further support this mission; Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program and Commercial Sustainability Rebate.

The Division operates with a clear purpose: to envision and create a carbon-neutral future by reducing greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2030 and achieving full carbon neutrality by 2050. This ambitious vision is grounded in community well-being, and the Division pursues it through public programming, engagement efforts, and municipal leadership that inspires collective climate action.

In 2024, the Division's work was anchored by Resolution 18-2024, which formally established science-based climate goals. These include a 60% reduction in community-wide emissions by 2030, using a 2016 baseline, and achieving carbon neutrality by mid-century. These goals now serve as the foundational framework for the Division's work plans and strategy. The Division also continued to align its efforts with several guiding documents and priorities, including the Internal Decarbonization Plan adopted in October 2023, the Sustainability Action Plan adopted in June 2020, the Community Decarbonization Plan, Comprehensive Plan and City Council's Work Plan.

BACKGROUND / PRIOR DISCUSSIONS:
In an effort to use City Council's time efficiently, the Division has combined the annual update with two programmatic requests that require Council approval.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL:
N/A.

ANALYSIS:
Staff respectfully requests that City Council provide clear direction on the two proposed programs: the Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program and the Commercial Sustainability Rebate. In considering these proposals, key factors include the anticipated programmatic costs and the availability of funding through the bag tax revenue.

Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program

The Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program is a program designed to replace the annual hard-to-recycle event. While the event has been popular, staff has found that the one-day/one-time approach requires residents to be ready and have viable transportation options at that point in time. There has also been a challenge with weather leading to the need to cancel or move the annual event (certain compounds cannot be recycled in wet or windy weather). The voucher approach was piloted last year when the event was cancelled due to weather and unable to be rescheduled due to timing conflicts. Staff received feedback from residents appreciating the new approach and flexibility it offered. For this reason, staff proposes continuing the voucher approach (replacing the annual event) and expanding the program utilizing bag tax funding. The proposal would allow for 1,320 vouchers at a $25 value for accepted materials, which staff anticipates increasing both access to the program and waste diversion. If the program and expansion continues to be successful (i.e. increases waste diversion) staff will look to future funding opportunities through bag tax or solid waste funding, which will be brought to City Council for direction and a decision.

Commercial Sustainability Rebate

The initial Bag Tax Programs contained a $1,000 Commercial Sustainability Grant/Rebate, which while popular, was burdensome for businesses and staff. Staff also received feedback from businesses that the $1,000 limit was not sufficient for the type of work they wanted to do. As a result, staff has paused the program to work with Economic Vitality to re-vamp. The proposal includes a tiered structure allowing for grants at $1,000, $5,000, and $10,000, which will enable both small and larger scale projects, a revamped process making it easier for all parties, and increased allocation to this program. Staff is seeking council direction and hopes to relaunch this program in Q1 2026.

2025 COUNCIL WORK PLAN:

While this item is not included in the 2025 Council Work Plan, Environmental Sustainability is a lens on Council's work plan and all of the division's work support this. Expansion and increased flexibility in the Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program also aligns with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion lens by providing the opportunity for more of the community to access this program. Additionally, one of the two proposed programs, the Commercial Sustainability Rebate, directly supports the City's goal of strengthening economic vitality by providing financial incentives to local businesses to invest in sustainability improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Budgeted?: **Yes**

Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program

Staff is requesting that $37,000 from bag tax funding be re-allocated from the waste reduction program, to support the Pilot program in 2025 in order to continue offering this service to residents while piloting a new, more flexible approach. There is sufficient budget to do this. Historically, the City's annual Hard-to-Recycle event has been funded through the Solid Waste Fund.

Commercial Sustainability Rebate Program

The Commercial Sustainability Rebate is also budgeted in bag tax and the current proposed 2026 budget has sufficient funding for this program. Staff will adjust based on guidance received from council here and through the 2026 budget process.

ALTERNATIVE(S):

If Council takes no action, the Commercial Sustainability Rebate program will remain unapproved and unavailable to the business community. If Council would like to see revisions to the Commercial Sustainability Rebate program structure, council could direct staff to explore alternatives to the tiered funding structure and/or direct staff to explore alternatives to the proposed program structure.

If the Hard-to-Recycle Pilot Voucher Program is unfunded, an alternative is to direct staff to host the annual Hard-to-Recycle event. If the Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program is unfunded, the service will not be available to the community.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Hard-to-Recycle Voucher Pilot Program and Commercial Sustainability Rebate programs to support increased waste diversion efforts within the City of Louisville.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Memorandum
2. Slide Deck

Memorandum

To: City Council
From: Hannah Miller, Sustainability Manager
Logan Johnson, Sustainability Specialist
CC: Diana Langley, City Manager
Samma Fox, Deputy City Manager
Date: July 15, 2025
Re: Sustainability Update

This memo provides an overview of the work completed by the Sustainability Division ("the Division") in 2024, and early 2025, and highlights how the Division's efforts align with and support Council-adopted initiatives, such as Resolution 18-2024. This resolution establishes formally adopted, science-based climate action goals, including:

- A 60% reduction in community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (based on a 2016 baseline)
- Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050

These goals serve as the overarching framework guiding the Division's work plans. In addition to the above climate action targets, the Division aligns its work with the following plans and strategies:

- The Internal Decarbonization Plan, adopted in October 2023
- The Sustainability Action Plan, adopted in June 2020
- The Community Decarbonization Plan
- The City Council Work Plan and Strategic Priorities
- The Comprehensive Plan

The year 2024 was both productive and transitional for the Division. The team celebrated meaningful progress while also navigating staffing changes, including the addition of a new Sustainability Specialist to the Louisville team.

Continuing in 2025, the Division is excited about incorporating a sustainability lens at the policy level and supporting several new initiatives led by both internal and external partners.

If there are any questions about this memo or if further details about the Division's work are desired, please contact Deputy City Manager Samma Fox.

The Sustainability Division sincerely thanks City Council for its continued support of sustainability programming and initiatives.

Decarbonization

Internal Decarbonization Plan Implementation

On January 21, 2025, City Council approved grant contracts from the Colorado Energy Office to fund decarbonization efforts. These grant funds will play a key role in advancing the City's climate and sustainability goals.

The Project Manager position that will oversee implementation of the City's Decarbonization Plan has been hired. They will lead drafting and publication of the various RFPs required for implementation.

Additionally, Public Works has spearheaded the transition of the city fleet to electric with the purchase of several new electric vehicles (EVs). At this time, the city has electrified 11% of the electrifiable fleet.

The Division plans to apply for Xcel rebates in late summer or early fall 2025 to support the installation of EV charging stations.

For a detailed fiscal overview of the Internal Decarbonization Plan, visit the City's [2025-2026 Budget Book](#) (see page 160 and multiple capital improvement project sheets).

Community Decarbonization Implementation

To help frame this portion of the memo, it is important to understand that community decarbonization is a multifaceted effort. At the foundation is the 2024 Community Decarbonization Plan, which—while not formally adopted by council—provides strategic guidance. Supporting this are a variety of programs that serve as "rungs on the ladder" toward the overarching Climate Action Goals: a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

Plan Implementation and Community Engagement

Implementation of the Community Decarbonization Plan is nearing completion, with support provided by Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy (PIE) consultants. The plan focuses on three primary areas: transportation, residents, and businesses.

Residential Engagement

For homeowners, the City partnered with the City of Lafayette and Town of Superior sustainability staff to launch the 1-2-3 Electrify! (see YouTube links in Event section) workshop series. This series guided single-family homeowners through the home electrification process.

For renters, staff have collaborated with Boulder County to engage owners of multi-family properties and develop resources that help renters improve energy efficiency.

Preliminary data analysis has identified multi-family housing stock that would be strong candidates for electrification. With additional funding and resources, staff could look to supporting electrification efforts at these properties in partnership with Boulder County.

Equity- Priority Engagement

The City has been engaging residents of Parco Dello Zingaro (PDZ), Louisville's mobile home park, through several initiatives, including equity-priority efforts and programming supported by Program 6 of the Bag Tax.

Bag Tax Program 6: Hard-to-Recycle Event is an equity-focused initiative that the City has partnered on with the PDZ community. This event is designed to provide recycling, trash disposal, and services for items that are typically difficult to dispose of—resources that have historically been less accessible in the PDZ area. Examples of these materials include appliances, mattresses, lawn equipment, etc.

In addition to facilitating the recycling of hard-to-dispose materials, the event builds on previous programming, including the collaboration with PIE, who supported the distribution of energy efficiency door hangers in 2024 (bilingual, English and Spanish, focused on energy efficiency, weatherization programs, and resources for low-to-moderate income households). Several organizations from across Boulder County will also participate, offering educational materials, information, and access to vital community resources.

Transportation

Staff have promoted existing rebate programs aimed at reducing the upfront cost of EVs. According to 2024 data, 10.43% of registered vehicles in Louisville are EVs, exceeding the target outlined in the Community Decarbonization Plan. In 2023, the EV adoption rate was 9.35%, showing a growing trend and favor towards EV adoption.

Charging Smart Certification

Staff are pursuing a Charging Smart Certification through the Interstate Renewable Energy Council and Drive Clean Colorado. This certification recognizes the adoption of electric vehicles in Louisville, supports future expansion of electric vehicle infrastructure, and has the potential to unlock new funding opportunities. Staff anticipates submitting for certification in 2026.

Business Engagement

Staff collaborated with Boulder County's Partners for a Clean Environment (PACE) to launch an electrification rebate pilot program to help local businesses decarbonize their buildings. According to the most recent greenhouse gas inventory, the commercial sector is the largest emitting sector in Louisville. Feedback from the business community has highlighted the high cost of decarbonization, and this pilot program demonstrates the City's commitment to supporting local businesses in their sustainability transitions. These rebates launched in 2024, and thus far in 2025 one business has utilized the rebates.

Staff completed its first year as Colorado Green Business Network (CGBN) regional partners and are now collaborating with CGBN as a regional partner in its second year of partnership. This partnership with CGBN has allowed staff to assist local business leaders with sustainability initiatives and collaborate with the Economic Vitality Division at a deeper level. In the first year, a local business to Louisville and Lafayette, Treehouse Learning, won the 24k carat gold trophy (the highest recognition award) at the annual state-level recognition event!

Additional Community Decarbonization Programs

Beyond the implementation support from PIE, staff have partnered with Boulder County to offer SwitchTogether, a residential solar co-op program designed to make solar energy more accessible and affordable for residents. To date, 24 homes have participated in the program, resulting in the installation of 156.28 kWh of solar energy capacity within the community. Compared to our neighboring communities, Louisville has a 41% close rate, being one of the highest in the County.

Additionally, the City has partnered with Boulder County's EnergySmart to offer home electrification and energy efficiency rebates to Louisville residents. While EnergySmart rebates have been available since 2010, the City began contributing additional funding in 2022. In 2024, funding provided by the city was expended by early October, the largest uptake of rebates seen since 2022 and now in 2025, the county processed $13,000 alone in May! Compared to this time last year, there has been an ~18% increase in rebate submissions from residents.

Bag Tax Funded Waste Reduction Pilot Programming

Below is a breakdown of the five Bag Tax-Funded Programs launched in 2024, along with details on the upcoming implementation of Program 6. Programs 1 through 5 were each allocated $1,000 per participating business, while Program 6 has been designated a larger budget due to its broader scope.

The Bag Tax, adopted by voters in 2020 and implemented in 2022, created a valuable funding stream that enabled the expansion of commercial sustainability programming. These programs were developed in partnership with the Economic Vitality Division, with the shared goal of supporting local businesses in advancing sustainable practices.

Staff are re-evaluating the program design with an increased focus on reducing administrative burden for both the City and businesses and improving overall efficiency. Program 3 remains active due to County level support.

As the City of Louisville moves to rebrand and restructure the Commercial Sustainability Rebate into a more impactful and accessible rebate program, staff is proposing a tiered model that supports a broad range of local business sustainability efforts. The new structure replaces the less effective Bag Tax-funded initiatives and introduces three distinct rebate levels, with an initial operating budget of $40,000: five $1,000 entry-level rebates, three $5,000 mid-tier competitive rebates, and two $10,000 high-impact awards. This model provides flexibility to fund both quick-win, small-scale projects and larger, transformative sustainability initiatives.

To promote a transparent and equitable process, an updated scoring rubric will be introduced, focusing on emissions reduction, waste diversion, feasibility, organizational capacity, and community and economic benefit. Rebates will be evaluated and awarded through a collaborative process involving the City's Sustainability and Economic Vitality teams. PACE will manage financial administration through an intergovernmental agreement.

To support the rollout, staff will update branding, a revised application submission process, and present a clearer online presence with all the relevant details laid out. Staff from both Sustainability and Economic Vitality would be involved in reviewing the larger grants to ensure alignment with both environmental and economic goals. This proposal takes into account business feedback and by improving the process and adding tiers, staff believes the program will have a greater impact for Louisville businesses. Overall, this updated model would build on the program's early success and better support local businesses in driving a holistic sustainability forward in Louisville.

See below for a report out on the previous program structure.

Program 1: Supply of Reusable Bags with EcoPromotional Products

Program 1 provided a supply of reusable bags to local businesses. A total of 17 businesses participated in this initiative.

Program 2: One Year Subscription to Ridwell for Hard to Recycle Services

Program 2 offered businesses the opportunity to opt into hosting a hard-to-recycle collection box at their location. No businesses participated in this program, as a result the program has been paused and staff is proposing to re-allocate resources.

Program 3: Commercial Recycling/ Composting Incentive with Boulder County Resource Conservation District (RCD)

While all programs were initially valued at $1,000, Program 3 received an additional $150 in support from Boulder County Resource Conservation Division (RCD). As a result, this program offered a total incentive value of $1,150 to be used toward establishing commercial recycling or composting services for one year. No businesses participated in 2024 or 2025, though the program remains available to businesses.

Program 4: Reuseable Takeout Containers with DeliverZero

Program 4 supported businesses in transitioning from traditional takeout and delivery containers to reusable alternatives, in partnership with DeliverZero. One business participated in this program with limited additional interest. As a result, the program has been paused and staff is proposing to re-allocate resources.

Program 5: Commercial Sustainability Grant

Program 5 allowed businesses to propose their own sustainability project ideas, each valued at $1,000, to be implemented upon staff review and approval. This program resulted in eight project implementations. Due to high interest staff is proposing to re-vamp and relaunch this program.

Program 6: Hard to Recycle Event with Parco Dello Zingaro

Program 6 is a collaborative effort involving multiple partners, including Ascent Church, a local resident in the community, Boulder County resources such as Wildfire Partners, Mobility for All, Eco-Cycle, and the Hazardous Materials Management Facility, as well as Freshly Laid Food Truck and Responsible Waste Removal.

The event was scheduled for April 5, 2025, but needed to be rescheduled (and has been) due to inclement weather. Overall, this event will offer hard-to-recycle and hazardous waste collection services to the community, including on-site support for residents with mobility challenges. Following the event, Responsible Waste Removal, Eco-Cycle, and Boulder County will collaborate to produce a waste diversion report detailing the amount and type of materials diverted from landfill.

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Bag Tax Funding Revenue and Projection

Since its implementation in 2022, the bag tax has generated a total of $509,584.68 in revenue. Of this amount, $97,110.10 has been spent on programming focused on both waste reduction and commercial-sector decarbonization. Additionally, the Sustainability Specialist position is partially funded through this revenue source.

Current projections indicate that Louisville has achieved approximately a 70% reduction in single-use bag usage. According to relevant scientific studies, most communities typically plateau between a 60–80% reduction—placing Louisville near the midpoint of that range.

Looking ahead, based on the current rate of bag use reduction, the bag tax is expected to generate approximately $100,000 in revenue annually. As a result, staff will be proposing re-allocations and seeking council guidance on priority programming.

Sector Specific Programming

Circular Economy/Waste

Resource Central – Building Materials Pick-Up Program

In July 2024, the Division launched a new partnership program with Resource Central, the Building Materials Pick-Up Program. This program helps residents divert building materials from the landfill—such as cabinets, tiles, and lumber. Since the launch, 53,574 lbs. of waste has been diverted from the landfill from this program alone!

Annual Hard-to-Recycle Event

Due to weather, the annual hard-to-recycle (HTR) event in the Spring of 2024 had to be cancelled. In its place, staff in Sustainability and Public Works collaborated with Eco-cycle to create a 'Spring Cleaning Voucher' program, that was a one-time use voucher with all expenses paid for by the city. The Spring Cleaning voucher program ended with lower-than-expected participation but with positive feedback from residents who preferred the flexibility of the voucher program. Staff are now working with Eco-Cycle to establish this as a permanent program rather than an annual event. This new program is pending City Council approval.

Hard-to-Recycle (HTR) Event: Transition to a Programmatic Structure

The HTR event has historically served approximately 500 residents in a single spring day, with estimated costs ranging from $15,000 to $20,000. Staff recommend transitioning from a one-day event to a year-round programmatic structure for several key reasons:

Scheduling Challenges - The event faces date conflicts, as all neighboring municipalities host similar events. Booking regional partners is increasingly difficult due to high demand and limited availability.

Weather-Related Cancellations- Past events have been canceled due to inclement weather. Rescheduling is nearly impossible, as regional vendors often require a year's lead time to coordinate with end-of-life material handlers.

Improved Access and Participation- A year-round program would provide residents with continuous access to HTR services, increasing awareness and comfort with Eco-Cycle and the CHaRM facility. According to Eco-Cycle, first-time visits are the most challenging; once residents are familiar, they are more likely to return, improving long-term diversion rates.

Expanded Materials and Impact- The current event offers limited collection options (e.g., e-waste, lawn equipment). A programmatic approach allows for the inclusion of both large items (e.g., mattresses, appliances) and smaller, non-event items (e.g., plastic bags), providing more comprehensive recycling opportunities.

This shift would not only improve service reliability and participation but also increase the overall environmental impact of the City's waste diversion efforts.

Resource Conservation Advisory Board (RCAB)

Sustainability Specialist, Logan Johnson, stepped in as Louisville's new Resource Conservation Advisory Board representative in December. This County-level board requires municipal engagement to provide guidance and input on waste-related strategies and policies. In addition to sitting on the board, he has been nominated as Vice-Chair for the board. Sustainability Manager, Hannah Miller, served on this board from 2023-2024, also as Vice Chair.

Nature Based Solutions

Community Forestry Youth Core

Staff supported the Community Forestry Youth Core last year and will continue this next year. The goal of this Boulder County program is to increase youth engagement in urban forestry efforts locally and continuing to foster a more sustainable urban tree canopy throughout Louisville and surrounding areas.

From the pilot program, 16 trees were planted within Louisville, 12 at the Louisville Sports Complex and 4 at Cleo Murdock Park. In addition to the tree planting, the youth corps provided initial tree care through the summer to help establish the trees.

In 2025, 25 new trees were planted at Washington Ave, Cleo Mudrock and South Boulder Rd. Initial tree care is also being provided throughout the summer.

PlanIt Geo Urban Tree Canopy Assessment

Boulder County's consultant, PlanIt Geo, presented the results of the 2024 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment to Sustainability and PROS staff. Louisville has an urban tree canopy that is 14% of its total acreage.

Nature-based Solutions Toolkit

Boulder County commissioned a nature-based solution toolkit to be created by consultant, Superbloom. This deliverable presents options, opportunities, and policy ideas for municipalities in Boulder County to adopt green and nature-based climate and resilience solutions.

Water Conservation

Rain barrel workshop

In coordination with the Keep It Clean Partnership, the Boulder County Resource Conservation District, and the City's Stormwater Division, staff supported the promotion and implementation of a rain barrel educational workshop. The event took place on May 10, 2025, and had a 62% attendance rate and of the purchased rain barrels from Boulder County, 48% were placed with Louisville residents.

While originally intended as a one-time event, the strong turnout and positive response have prompted staff to explore the development of an internal rain barrel rebate program in partnership with the Water Division.

Resource Central Waterwise Programming

Staff helps to support and implement waterwise programming, which includes the Turf Replacement Program, Garden in a box, Waterwise Seminar Series, and Slow the Flow programming. As of June 24, 2025, the programs had the following engagement and use: Waterwise Series had 598 applicants and 295 attendees, Garden in a Box had 100 discounts claimed, and 19 active applicants for the Turf Replacement program.

In addition to the residential programs, similar programs are offered to the City of Louisville for municipal use in public areas. In March of 2025, Parks and Recreation and Open Space coordinated with the Sustainability Division on a Transformative Landscape Challenge grant, of which was won, to transform a 1,600 sq foot area in the Arboretum to replace turf with a larger waterwise pollinator garden and grasses demonstration.

Resilience and Adaptation

Firewise Planting Event

In partnership with the Recovery and Resilience Division, Sustainability staff supported a public workshop focused on using native, low-flammability plants to enhance wildfire defensibility and landscape aesthetics.

Colorado Resilience Engine Intern

Sustainability staff, in partnership with the Recovery and Resilience Division have been selected for an internship placement. The City’s intern started at the end of April and will support a variety of projects such as communications for Disaster Preparedness month, creation of adaptation programming and coordination of a wildfire mitigation event to be hosted in Parco Dello Zingaro.

Municipal Sustainability

Reusable Kitchen Grant Implementation

The City of Louisville won a Circular Economy Grant through Boulder County’s Resource Conservation Board. This grant amounted to a total of $5,000 and allowed the Sustainability Division to collaborate with other divisions and departments to roll out reusable kitchen materials for most of the staff breakrooms.

Historically, staff breakrooms have had a lack of dishes and utensils accessible to staff that were not single use materials. Compostable single use dishes and utensils have been accessible to staff, but the closing of the Boulder County composting facility discontinued the ability to compost these materials.

The goal of this grant and implementation has been to decrease the overall usage of single use materials in staff kitchens.

Internal Departmental/Division Sustainability Collaboration

The Division regularly collaborates with divisions across the organization to meet goals, collaborate on new ideas, and support sustainability throughout Louisville. Some notable collaborations include the Louisville Museum on a certification, Arts and Events on waste diversion, Economic Vitality, the Recovery and Resilience Division on a CORE internship, communications, library on a Halloween costume exhange, as well as public works, community development, and parks, open space, and recreation on a variety of topics. The Division has also been a member of the staff team for the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Misc. Regional Engagement

Sustainability staff actively engage in a range of local, regional, and national organizations through memberships, working groups, partnerships, and collaborative initiatives. These engagements span from the local to national level, with a larger focus on regional and Front Range collaborations that support ongoing projects and initiatives.

Below is a comprehensive list of collaborative groups staff are involved in:

- ICLEI
- Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA)
- Boulder County Economy Group
- Regional Energy Code Cohort
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) implementation (This includes four subgroups, Building Policy Collaborative (BPC), Communications, Energy Advising and Incentives and Workforce Development with an additional commitment to the CPRG Steering Committee and to the DRCOG Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) Steering Committee)
- Nature based Solutions Boulder County
- Boulder County Solar Co-op/ Switch Together
- Boulder County Resource Conservation Advisory Board (RCAB)
- Colorado Green Business Network (CGBN)
- Partners in Energy (PIE)
- Boulder County Electric Vehicle Implementation Group
- Keep it Clean Partnership: Boulder County

Event Summary

- Ecotoberfest
- 1-2-3 Electrify workshop series
    - 1 2 3 Electrify Introduction
    - 1-2-3 Electrify Step 1: Plan

  - 1-2-3 Electrify Step 2: Purchase_ Electrification Expo event
  - 1-2-3 Electrify! Step 3: Perfect
- Rain Barrel Workshop: Keep it Clean Partnership
- Earth Day, Every Day (annual)
- Firewise Planting Seminar
- Tabling at Summer Fest
- Comprehensive Plan Engagement Sessions
- EV Business Round Tables
- Tree Tender Workshop
- Resource Central: Waterwise Seminar (annual)
- Electrification Expo in 2025
- CGBN Annual Breakfast (annual)
- PDZ Hard to Recycle Event
- Republic EV Waste Truck Unveiling
- Bike to Work Day (annual)
- Ford Lightening Unveiling with City Staff

Grants

Grant Name and Funding Agency	**Award Amount**	**Match Value**	**Project Application**
Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) EIAF 9756, Louisville Recreation and Senior Center Resiliency Funding	$2,500,000.0	70% match	Internal Decarbonization Plan
Colorado Energy Office (CEO) High Efficiency Electric Heating & Appliances	$1,592,000.0	50% match	Internal Decarbonization Plan
CEO Public Building Electrification Grant	$677,500.0	50% match	Internal Decarbonization Plan
Colorado Water Conservation Board Turf Replacement Grant	$23,875.0	In kind	Resource Central Waterwise programming
Boulder County Circular Economy	$5,000.0	$1,500.0 + in kind	Reusable Kitchen Transition
Resource Central Transformative Landscape Challenge	Removal of 1,600 sq. Ft from the Louisville Arboretum	In Kind	Turf removal at Arboretum, in partnership with PROS
Boulder County Sustainability Matching Grant	$40,102.0	$10,025.0	Sustainability Specialist salary support

Grants in Progress

The Division is actively exploring several grant opportunities:

- DRCOG Building Policy Collaborative – A potential $600,000 in funding to support energy and building code initiatives.
- CEO IMPACT Accelerator Program – This application would also directly benefit Community Development efforts.
- C3 Waste Diversion Support – Staff are collaborating with the Special Events team to explore an initiative that aligns with C3's funding for waste diversion projects.

These opportunities align with the Division's strategic goals and would significantly enhance our capacity to implement high-impact programs.

In summation, the Division supports $4.8 Million in grants to date.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

To frame this section, it's important to reference Resolution 18-2024, which formally adopted Louisville's Climate Action Goals. These goals commit the City to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

To meet these ambitious targets, the City must track annual emissions reductions and monitor key indicators that reflect behavior changes among both staff and residents. Accurate measurement of progress requires a consistent baseline. Louisville is using its 2016 community-wide greenhouse gas inventory as the foundation, in alignment with industry standards and best practices.

For context, greenhouse gas inventories are typically developed using standardized protocols and can be broken into two main scopes:

- Community-wide emissions
- Local government operations

Louisville follows the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories (GPC), the leading international standard for measuring and reporting city-level emissions, emissions are measured in CO_2e or Carbon Dioxide Equivalent. This factors in CO_2 as well as other greenhouse gases such as Methane and Nitrous Oxide.

To date, the City has completed two community-wide inventories—our baseline year (2016) and a second data point from 2021. Staff are now in the process of collecting 2024 data for both the community-wide and local government operations inventories. This will provide three key data points to help identify trends and guide future climate action.

Establishing this data foundation ensures that programming and projects are grounded in measurable outcomes and support data-driven decision-making. It is considered industry standard to conduct a full community-wide and local government operations inventory every 3–5 years, supplemented by an annual "mini" inventory that focuses on the highest-emitting sectors.

Notably, 2024 will be the first year Louisville collects emissions data specifically from local government operations. This will enable the City to track emissions reductions directly linked to the implementation of the Internal Decarbonization Plan.

In recent years, Louisville has made measurable progress in reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and advancing key sustainability goals. According to the City's Community-wide Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Louisville emitted 263,205 metric tons (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) in 2016. By 2021, that number had decreased to 224,952 MT CO_2e—a 14% reduction. At this time, preliminary data from the in progress 2024 inventory shows a 19% reduction in stationary energy (natural gas and electricity) emissions.

While a significant portion of this reduction is due to Xcel Energy's ongoing work to green the regional electricity grid, this outcome is the result of strong collaboration between the City, regional partners, and Xcel. These partnerships have made meaningful emission reductions possible, and they remain a cornerstone of Louisville's broader climate strategy.

Beyond overall emissions, several other data points help illustrate Louisville's progress and community engagement. One of these is electric vehicle (EV) adoption. In 2024, 10.43% of all new vehicle registrations in Louisville were EVs, an increase from the 2023 rate of 9.35%. With transportation being one of the City's largest sources of emissions, this trend reflects a positive shift toward cleaner mobility options. Continued growth in EV adoption will be necessary to support future climate goals.

Waste diversion is another area showing both improvement and consistency. The waste diversion rate measures how much material is kept out of landfills through recycling and composting. In 2024, Louisville's commercial sector achieved a 17% diversion rate, doubling the rate from the previous year.

Among residential properties, single-family homes maintained a 43% diversion rate, while multi-family properties led with an impressive 72%. These numbers highlight the City's ongoing efforts to reduce landfill waste and support a more circular economy.

These data points — emissions reductions, EV adoption, and waste diversion — represent meaningful progress in both policy and behavior. They also show where continued investment, education, and strategic partnerships can further accelerate impact. As we look ahead, maintaining a strong focus on measurable outcomes will help ensure that Louisville remains on track to meet its climate goals.

Looking Forward

In 2025, staff are evaluating and reimagining long-standing events and programs with the goal of increasing emission reductions and encouraging meaningful behavior change. A renewed focus is being placed on making data-driven decisions that deliver the greatest return on investment. This ensures that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently and effectively to maximize impact.

As part of this shift, staff are considering adjusting communications and outreach to support and empower residents along their sustainability journey. Clear and accessible information will be key to fostering deeper community engagement and participation in climate initiatives.

While building decarbonization continues to deliver the greatest emission reductions per dollar spent, it is equally important that other critical aspects of sustainability such as water conservation, resilience planning, and nature-based solutions are not overlooked. These areas contribute to a more comprehensive and equitable approach to climate action and community well-being.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2025 and beyond, staff recognize that 2030 is quickly approaching. This brings with it the urgency to meet the City's science-based climate targets, which are aligned with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This is the threshold identified by the international scientific community as necessary to avoid the most severe impacts of climate change.

To meet these ambitious targets, Louisville will need to continue advancing progressive policy and innovative programming. The Division wants to extend their deep gratitude for the leadership City Council has shown and the continued support provided for bold, forward-thinking climate solutions. As Louisville moves forward, the Division looks forward to continued leadership from City Council in prioritizing sustainability in City decisions, funding allocations, and planning.


Presented By:
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City of Louisville
COLORADO • SINCE 1878
SUSTAINABILITY
ANNUAL UPDATE

Agenda

Sustainability Division
- What We Do
- Year in Review
- Policy in Motion
- Strategic Priorities

Program Approval
- Hard-to-Recycle Voucher
- Commercial Sustainability Rebate

Sustainability Team

Hannah Miller
Sustainability Manager

Logan Johnson
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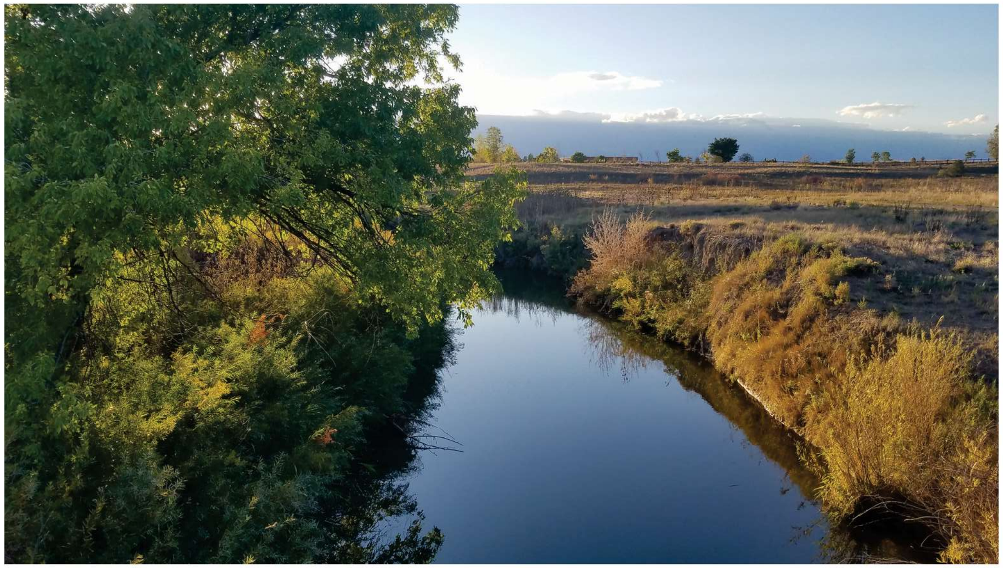
What We Do

We envision a carbon-neutral future, with a 60% reduction in emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. We will achieve this by creating programs and hosting events that enhance community well-being and by setting an example that motivates collective climate action.

Year in Review



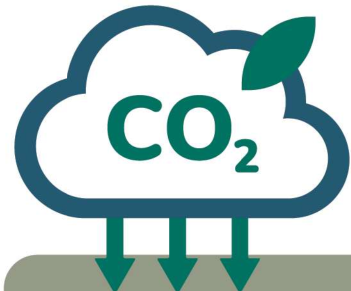
15
Programs
Ongoing programs available to residents and businesses

33
Events
Attended and/or hosted by Sustainability Staff

19
Regional Partnerships
Groups that staff attend on a regular basis

5
Projects
Inter-departmental and/or ad-hoc projects that are ongoing

Policy in Motion



14% emissions reduction

From 2016 to 2021, community- wide emissions reduced 14%.

43% residential waste diversion

Republic Services reports a 43% diversion rate from the residential sector.

10% Electric vehicle adoption rate

In 2024, 10.43% of Louisville vehicle registrations were EV.

Strategic Priorities

1. Drive Measurable Emissions Reductions: Commit to a carbon-neutral future by reducing greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2030 and achieving full carbon neutrality by 2050.

2. Advance Community Well-Being: Design programs and host events that enhance quality of life for all residents while supporting a more sustainable, resilient community.

3. Lead by Example: Model sustainable practices across City operations to encourage collective climate action and build community-wide momentum.

Strategic Priority 1: Drive Measurable Emissions Reductions

Objective: Achieve a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2050 through targeted, data-informed strategies.

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive greenhouse gas inventory to track progress and guide emissions-reduction planning across sectors.

- Prioritize high-impact actions in transportation, energy, and building electrification that yield measurable environmental benefits.

Strategic Priority 2: Advance Community Well-Being

Objective: Enhance the quality of life for all residents by delivering programs and events that foster equity, resilience, and sustainability.

- Design and implement inclusive programs and public events that promote sustainable behavior change and connect residents with climate resources.

- Collaborate with community partners, leaning into regional relationships to co-create initiatives that reflect local needs and build long-term resilience.

City of Louisville

Strategic Priority 3: Lead by Example

Objective: Demonstrate the City's commitment to climate action by embedding sustainability into municipal operations and encouraging broad community participation.

- Integrate sustainable practices into City facilities, fleets, and procurement policies to model responsible resource use.

- Share transparent updates and success stories that highlight City-led sustainability efforts and inspire residents to take part.

Hard-to- Recycle Voucher

This pilot program is designed to replace the City's annual Hard-to-Recycle event.

The total cost is $37,000, which will be fully covered by the Bag Tax. Of that amount, $33,000 will go directly toward programming, and $4,000 will cover the administrative fee charged by CHaRM.

Residents will sign up via Eventbrite and receive a $28 voucher—$3 covers the CHaRM entrance fee and $25 applies toward accepted materials. The voucher will be marketed as $25 to keep messaging clear, with the entrance fee waived at the time of use.

Looking ahead, ongoing funding for the program could come from either the Bag Tax or the Solid Waste Fund, depending on fiscal availability.

Hard-to- Recycle Voucher

Key Benefits

- Replaces the one-day event with flexible, year-round access, allowing residents to visit CHaRM when convenient.
- Expands service capacity from ~500 residents to up to 1,320, increasing participation and overall waste diversion.
- Reduces vulnerability to event cancellations due to weather or scheduling conflicts.



Commercial Sustainability Rebate

This program is funded by Louisville's Bag Tax.

Program Purpose

- Help local businesses implement sustainability projects that reduce waste.
- Consolidate previous Bag Tax efforts into a single, high-impact grant program.

Program History

- Launched as a pilot program, the Commercial Sustainability Grant provided funding to support business-led sustainability projects.
- 10 grants were distributed

Pilot Program Feedback

- The program was administratively intensive for City staff.
- The $1,000 grant amount was not sufficient to meaningfully support many projects.
- Businesses requested clearer guidance and expectations around eligible sustainability initiatives.

Commercial Sustainability Rebate

Tiered Grant Structure

- $1,000 Grants: Five available annually for businesses that meet basic eligibility criteria.
- $5,000 Grants: Three awarded annually through a competitive review process.
- $10,000 Grants: Two awarded annually through the same competitive process.

Funding & Budget

- Total Annual Budget: $40,000, including administrative costs in partnership with PACE.
- Designed with potential for scaling over time based on program impact and demand.

Key Benefits

- Broad access for small projects plus strong support for larger, high-impact ideas.
- Streamlined administration for staff and partners.
- Increased transparency and consistency through a revised scoring rubric.

Commercial Sustainability Rebate

Implementation Needs

- Develop updated program branding and outreach materials
- Redesign the application process for clarity and accessibility
- Create a dedicated online presence with eligibility criteria, application requirements, and an evaluation rubric
- Finalize administrative setup in partnership with PACE

Review Process

- Grant applications will be jointly reviewed by staff from Sustainability and Economic Vitality staff.

Projects will be evaluated based on

- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction
- Waste diversion potential
- Feasibility and organizational capacity
- Community and economic benefits

Thank You!