



# 2023

SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT



ADAMS COUNTY  
COLORADO



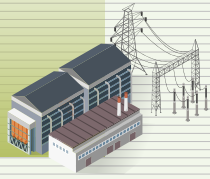


# 2023 SUSTAINABILITY ANNUAL REPORT

2023 marked the second year of implementation for the Sustainable Adams County 2030 Plan. Our sustainability plan seeks to advance sustainability for county operations and for our community members across eight core topic areas. Read on to see a few highlights of implementation in 2023.



# ENERGY



## ENERGIZING OUR COMMUNITY AND OPERATIONS, RENEWABLY



In 2023, the Facilities & Fleet Management Department kicked off the implementation of their facilities-focused Energy Action Plan, developed in collaboration with Xcel Energy's Partners in Energy. The county took immediate action to improve the energy efficiency of buildings, kicking off with two lighting efficiency upgrade projects at the Justice Center and District Attorney's buildings. Adams County will leverage utility rebates to lower the upfront cost of lighting upgrades, improving the overall return on investment. In 2024, the county will pursue Energy Performance Contracting to holistically address the priority energy improvements identified in the Energy Action Plan.

■ *Energy Performance Contracting is a fiscally sustainable financing mechanism that uses energy savings from implemented projects to fund future energy efficiency projects.*

The county also completed an analysis to prioritize five locations to install on-site solar. In 2023, 41% of facility electricity use was provided by renewable energy. The county is expected to exceed their goal of 50% by 2026 and is planning to adopt a 100% renewable energy by 2030 goal in 2024. Adams County is also committed to expanding clean energy opportunities to community members. In 2023, Adams County expanded their successful solar co-op program, adding a second solar co-op in partnership with Thornton.

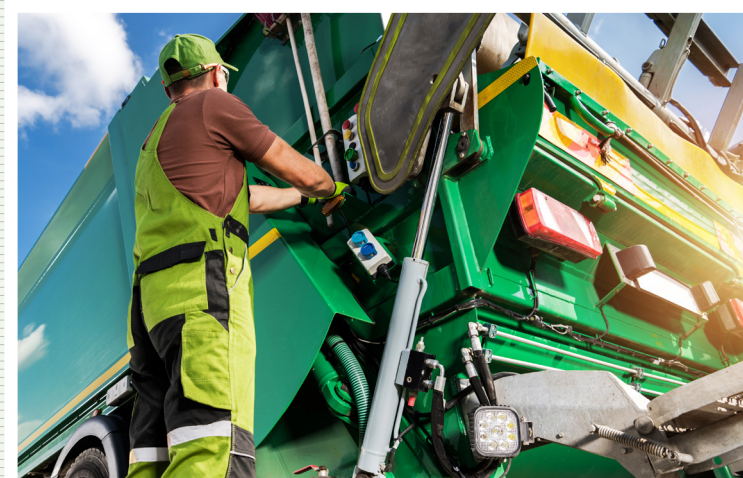
2023 was a great year for waste diversion efforts in Adams County! The Board of County Commissioners directed staff to initiate a solid waste hauler licensing ordinance. Ordinance No. 17, adopted in January 2024, requires solid waste haulers to obtain a license and those that provide trash collection services to offer curbside recycling collection to existing and new customers. The ordinance also establishes reporting requirements to help the county better understand how much waste we are producing, and how much of that waste we are keeping out of the landfill through recycling.

Additionally, Community & Economic Development (CED) continued to offer waste events to keep electronics and hazardous waste materials out of landfills. Over the course of 25 days, 170,812 lbs. of combined e-waste and household hazardous waste were collected for recycling and safe disposal!



# WASTE

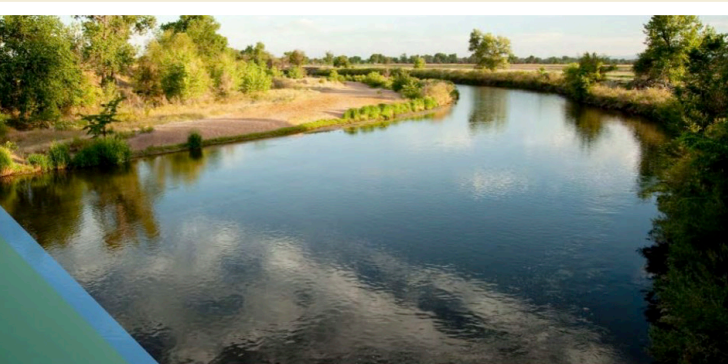
## RECYCLING SERVICE FOR ALL



# WATER



## WORKING WITH OUR WATER PROVIDERS



### Adams County Community Water Baseline Report

SEPTEMBER 2023



Water is one of Colorado’s most valuable resources, and Sustainable Adams County 2030 seeks to promote the efficient use of our water resources. While Adams County is not a water provider, the county recognizes water supply issues need to be prioritized to advance a sustainable future. In 2023, Adams County took the first step toward understanding the existing state of water supply and demand in the county, by completing the [Adams County Community Water Baseline Report](#). This report provides a snapshot of current and future water supply for the county and aims to identify ways for the county to support water providers and the community in water-related issues. In 2023, the county received \$397,500 in grant funding to build on the report and develop a countywide water master plan that guides sustainable growth and identifies implementation strategies that will enable the county to support water efficiency throughout the community.

Cover of the Adams County Community Water Baseline Report  
Credit: Community & Economic Development

In 2023, Adams County began implementing the Parks, Open Space, and Trails master plan in earnest. Partnership was the name of the game. Adams County partnered with local municipalities, private land owners, local nonprofits, and more to implement key strategies from our plan. A few implementation highlights include partnering with:

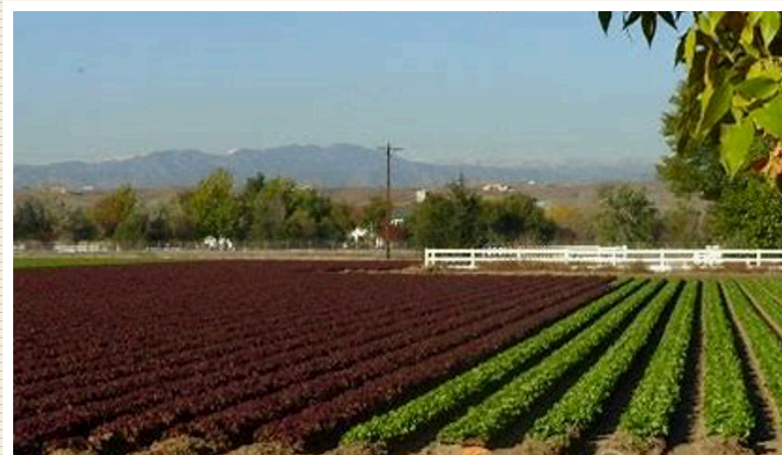
- *The City of Brighton to secure additional conservation easements to protect the Historic Splendid Valley*
- *Mile High Flood District and several municipalities to complete projects to improve the health of the South Platte River and Clear Creek*
- *Ditch companies to find more sustainable water sources for our parks, including Twin Lakes Park, Rotella Park, and Elaine T. Valente Open Space*
- *The City of Thornton and Anythink Library staff to coordinate nature center and naturalist planning activities*

By 2023, the county increased our acres of county-owned conservation easements to 11,337 compared to 6,000 in 2019.



# LAND

## PROTECT AND PRESERVE: PARTNERING FOR MORE OPEN SPACE



Farmland preservation area in Adams County  
Credit: Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts



# SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE



## INCREASE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO FLOODING



*BEFORE:*



*AFTER:*

*Before photo of a critically clogged pond outlet structure at City Horizon Apartments. After photo of the same outlet structure at City Horizon Apartments with years of sediment accumulation and overgrown turf removed to enhance pond function.*

*Credit: Public Works Department*

Adams County is committed to improving our community's resilience to natural hazards, like flooding. The [FEMA Community Rating System](#) is one way to measure how well we are managing our floodplain. Communities who participate are provided a floodplain management score on a scale of 1-10. The lower our score, the more flood insurance premium rates are discounted for our community. Adams County's CRS score is 8 (10% discount on flood insurance premiums), and our goal is to have a score of 7 (15% discount on flood insurance premiums) by 2030. In 2023, Public Works inspected 430 private and public ponds countywide to make progress toward reducing our community rating.

In 2023, Adams County adopted an electric vehicle (EV) readiness plan that takes a three-pronged approach to supporting EV adoption: supporting the installation of public charging; educating and engaging the community; and electrifying Adams County's fleet. The EV readiness plan supports six strategies and two targets, across two of the Sustainable Adams County 2030 plan's guiding goals. As of 2023, there were 230 publicly available Level 2 charging ports and 75 publicly available DC fast charging ports in Adams County. Of these 230 Level 2 charging ports, the county has installed 36 ports across seven locations, and an additional 8 ports exclusively for county fleet charging.

- *Level 2 charging stations can add about 25-50 miles of driving range to an EV per hour of charging. These stations are great for places where drivers want to stop and stay a while. DC fast chargers can add about 100 to 200 miles of range per 30 minutes of charging and are ideal for charging en-route.*



## TRANSPORTATION

### RECYCLING SERVICE FOR ALL



*Electric vehicle charging station at Adams County facility.*

*Credit: Facilities & Fleet Management Department*



# HEALTHY AND RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOODS

## BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTION



2023 marked the Adams County Tool Shed program's third year of operation, offering free access to yard and gardening tools to residents. Dedicated In 2023, the Tool Shed program in Adams County marked its third year of operation, offering free access to yard and gardening tools to residents. Dedicated to supporting property maintenance and community assistance, the program expanded to include two sheds in 2023: one for individual use and one for neighborhood clean-ups. This expansion led to significant growth, with 203 rentals recorded for the season. To enhance the resident experience, the program partnered with the Information Technology & Innovation Department to develop an automated and more comprehensive reservation system.

The Block Party program, launched in 2023, offers a complimentary block party trailer to residents of unincorporated Adams County. This initiative aims to build and strengthen neighborhoods by encouraging neighborhood block parties. In its pilot year, the program recorded 13 reservations, demonstrating its potential to foster community connections and neighborhood unity.



*Adams County Neighborhoods Block Party trailer.*  
**Credit: Community Safety & Well-Being Department**

As the saying goes, teamwork makes the dream work! In 2023, Public Works; Parks, Open Space & Cultural Arts; and Community Safety & Well-Being joined forces to pilot their tree-planting program. This program is focused on improving environmental quality in neighborhoods with environmental quality concerns. Together, the three departments distributed 39 trees to residents in Berkley Gardens in 2023, and planted 100 trees at Monaco Elementary School in 2024. As these trees mature, they will help cool the area during hot summer days and help contribute to better air quality.



## AIR QUALITY

### A "COOL" PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

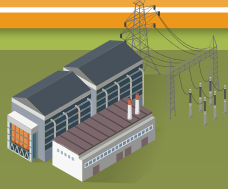


*Adams County staff getting ready to plant trees at Monaco Elementary School.*  
**Credit: Public Works Department**



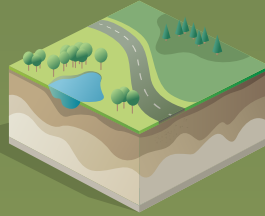
# ADAMS COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY IN 2023

41%

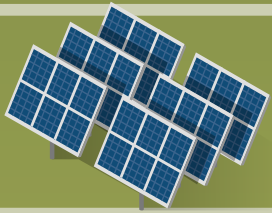


of Adams County's facility electricity use powered with renewable energy

11,337



acres of land in county conservation easements



1

new solar co-op created



430

stormwater ponds inspected

1,845



total solar permits issued since 2016



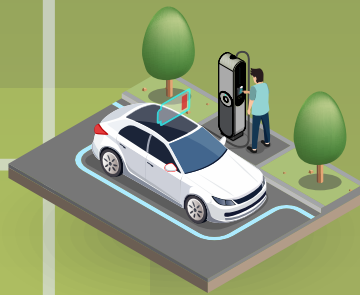
13

stormwater education activities

170,812 lbs.



of e-waste and household hazardous waste collected



305

publicly available EV charging ports in Adams County

\$397,500

grant funding awarded to develop a countywide water master plan



1



new air quality monitor installed

203

tool shed rentals



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