



Sustainability Plan

Strategic Update – 2025

Sustainability Board Land Acknowledgement

The Edgewater Sustainability Board honors and acknowledges that the land on which we live and work is the ancestral home of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Peoples.

We recognize the 48+ tribal nations tied to Colorado and honor the Elders—past, present, and future—who have stewarded this land for generations.

We acknowledge that many institutions have been built on the exclusion and erasure of Indigenous Peoples.

As we work towards a more sustainable community, may this acknowledgment serve as a commitment to confronting those legacies, uplifting Indigenous voices, and honoring their ongoing contributions to our community and environment.

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A significant amount of work went into the creation of the City's first Sustainability Plan in 2019. The City is immensely thankful to all the community members who engaged during that process, providing such a solid foundation upon which to build during this Strategic Update process. Special thanks go out to the many stakeholders who gave so generously of their time during that initial process, including a volunteer Sustainability Committee convened at that time, along with tremendous support from community partners and neighboring communities, as well as City of Edgewater staff and elected officials.

Similarly, during this Strategic Update, we were graced with excellent support and participation from multiple stakeholders, key experts, and the community of Edgewater – including, in many cases, repeat participants from the creation of the 2019 Plan. It is with sincere gratitude that we acknowledge the following individuals and organizations:

City of Edgewater Staff:

- Dan Maples, *City Manager*
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- Lenore Pedroza, *City Clerk*
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- Lindsey Vander Fertgus, *Parks and Grounds Supervisor*
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- Brian Bartle
- Jeanette Papp
- Bruce Perry
- Jaclyn Poliseo, *Vice-Chair*
- Xerxes Steirer, *Chair*
- Andy Vieth
- Lilly Steirer, *City Council Liaison to the Board*

Community Partner Organizations:

- Marcella D'Orazio, *Edgewater Elementary School Principal*
- Tom Dodd, *Scraps Director of Sustainable Operations*
- Tori Bloom, *Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment - Climate and Health Coordinator*

Residents & Community Leaders:

Tim Johnson, *City of Edgewater Library Adult Librarian*

Laura Keegan, *former City of Edgewater Mayor and Council Member*

Rachel Durkan, *CSU Extension Horticulture Specialist*

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Joel Newton, *City of Edgewater Council Member and Edgewater Collective Executive Director*

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David Fleck, *City of Edgewater Planning and Zoning Commissioner*

Lee Stiffler-Myer, *City of Edgewater Resident*

Dominique Skeehan, *Former City of Edgewater HARP Advisory Board*

Sarah Cassidy, *City of Edgewater Resident and former City Council member*

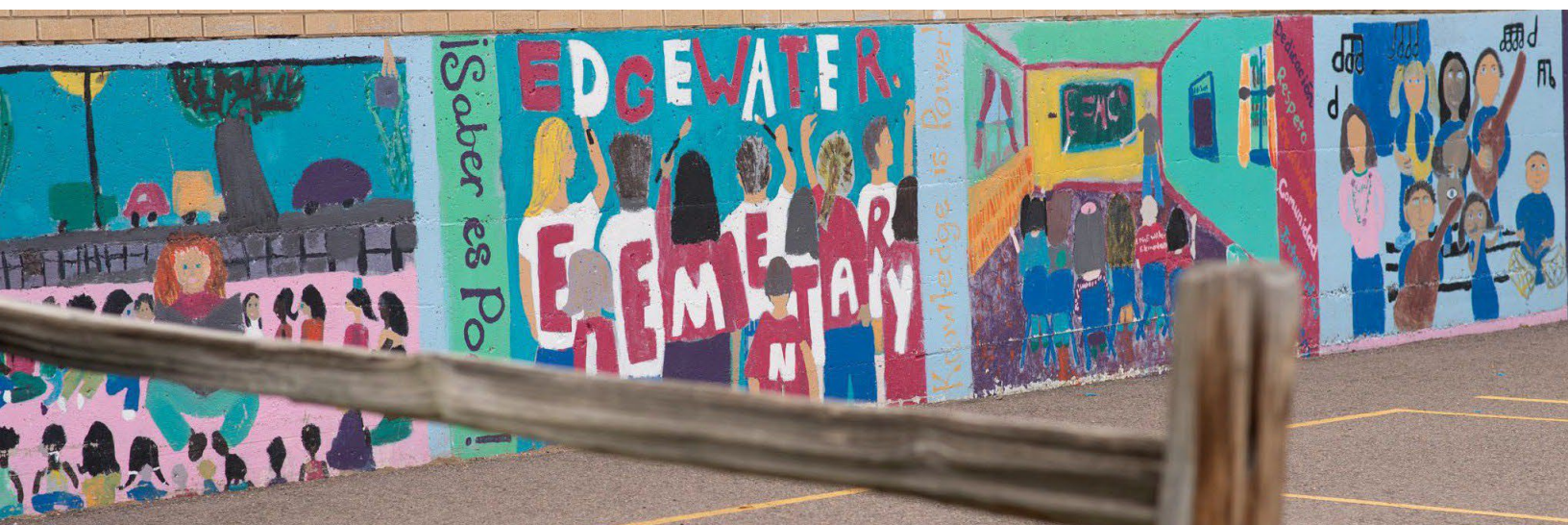
Strategic Update Consultant:

- Andy Rutz, *Crescendo Planning & Design*

Special thanks to all of the additional community members who shared their feedback by attending meetings online or in-person, filling out the survey, and participating in the Public Workshop. We are extremely grateful for your insights and support throughout this process, and hope you will continue to work toward implementing this Plan.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead



Executive Summary

2019 Plan

Adopted in 2019, as the first of its kind in Edgewater, the City's Sustainability Plan has provided a wealth of guidance to help establish Edgewater as a leader in sustainability. The amount of implementation since 2019 has been remarkable, especially for a community this size.



Complementary Plan Guidance & Policy Background

Since the adoption of the Plan, a number of other plans have been completed that work in concert with this Plan.

- Enviro. Footprint Report (2025)
- 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Urban Forest Plan (2024)
- Electric Vehicle Action Plan (2023)
- Parks & Rec Master Plan (2021)
- Energy Action Plan (2020)
- Traffic Calming Mobility Plan (2019 & 2023 Update)

Strategic Update

This Strategic Update of the Plan: assessed the progress made in implementing the Plan, engaged the Edgewater community in confirming the Vision & Goals, and asked the community to help prioritize action items for the short- and long-term.



The Four Categories



Land & Water

Enhances and preserves a resilient natural ecosystem within the community, protecting water, trees, plants, wildlife, and biodiversity to ensure environmental stability and long-term health.



Waste & Materials

Reduces consumption while expanding reuse, recycling, and composting of materials, including organics, to conserve resources, limit landfill waste, and promote sustainable material management across the community.



Energy

Improves energy efficiency while advancing renewable energy use to reduce toxic emissions, lower greenhouse gases, and support long-term climate resilience and sustainability for the community.



Social Vibrancy

Supports community engagement, safety, walkability, local resource access, and economic health, while fostering mental well-being, social connections, inclusivity, and environments that promote resilience and quality of life.

Goals & Actions

This Plan contains a wealth of Goals and prioritized Actions to guide implementation, with the Actions organized in a hierarchy of Priority Actions, On-Going Actions and Long-Term Actions. While the Priority Actions are those intended to be truly short-term implementation items, the community can, and should, implement Long-Term Actions in the short-term should opportunities present themselves. An example of a Priority Action for each category is shown below:

Measure and track the urban heat island effect and develop solutions (permeability, runoff, etc.)

Conduct a third-party waste audit annually to better understand what is in the residential waste stream

Offer homeowner training and consumer protections for solar systems and electric vehicle charge controllers

Reshape the volunteer Ambassadors Program to have a ... neighborhood emphasis and promote intergenerational collaborations

Implementation & Advocacy

It is clear from the short, five years that this Plan has existed, that the Edgewater community can accomplish a lot in terms of implementing sustainable practices. The Sustainability Board, as the primary advocacy body for sustainability in the City, and the Sustainability Coordinator are great resources for those who want to get involved to help implement. The Board and Sustainability Coordinator will be using this Plan's Goals & Actions in its meetings and retreats to make them even more SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) as the City works to implement them.

Sustainability in Edgewater

Incorporated as a city in 1904, Edgewater reflects a small town feel within an urban landscape. The town's colorful history has included a diverse, working-class population. In recent years, demographics have begun to change, but a desire to hold onto our roots, while considering future challenges, remains important to many residents.



Despite being one of the smallest cities in the Denver metro area, Edgewater has made early efforts to care for the environment and community. The development of a Sustainability Plan in 2019 to identify goals and actionable tasks was a natural next step towards valuing and serving residents, businesses and local organizations. By improving our efforts within the city, we continue to demonstrate support not only of Edgewater, but for the shared global society and planet. This Strategic Update of the Plan continues that commitment. It acknowledges the remarkable progress that has been made in the last five years, while looking ahead to the future to identify the community's implementation priorities in the short-term alongside longer-term goals and aspirations.



"Live local, think global" - 2018 Survey Respondent

Along with the establishment of Edgewater's first Sustainability Plan in 2019, a six-member Sustainability Board was created to be advocates of the Plan within the community. In addition to the creation of the Board, a Sustainability Coordinator position was established on City Staff, and with these new resources, Edgewater continues to make great strides toward accomplishing its sustainability goals. This Strategic Update to the Plan represents a "call to action" for interested community members to engage with those relatively new resources and see how they can help move the actions in this Plan forward.

Protecting the essential elements of life, including clean air, safe water, and healthy land, is the foundation of this Sustainability Plan. Our modern way of living depends on energy and material consumption, but this has led to rising levels of pollution, habitat loss, and a growing strain on our natural systems. Airborne pollutants like ground-level ozone, particulate matter, and vehicle emissions now threaten public health, especially for

vulnerable populations. Runoff from paved surfaces and degraded soils contributes to water contamination, while excessive material waste burdens landfills and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions.

Though climate change is a global challenge, its effects are increasingly visible here at home. Colorado is seeing a lower snowpack, persistent droughts, and longer fire seasons. Locally, Edgewater is experiencing more days with poor air quality, hotter and longer summers, destructive hailstorms, and more frequent extreme weather events that are all driven by changing climate conditions and rising emissions.

To “sustain” means to strengthen and support. Reducing the use of fossil fuels, conserving resources, and limiting pollutants not only lowers environmental impacts and City costs, but also protects community health and improves daily life. Investing in a thriving urban ecosystem within Edgewater will help absorb pollutants, reduce stormwater, mitigate the urban island heat effect, and improve air and soil quality. Having a sustainable environment helps people come together and interact as a community, and that act of coming together is necessary to foster a sustainable community.

A sustainable Edgewater depends on immediate action – modernizing infrastructure, supporting environmental education, reducing harmful emissions, and engaging the community. Together, we can build a healthier, more resilient city – for today and for future generations.

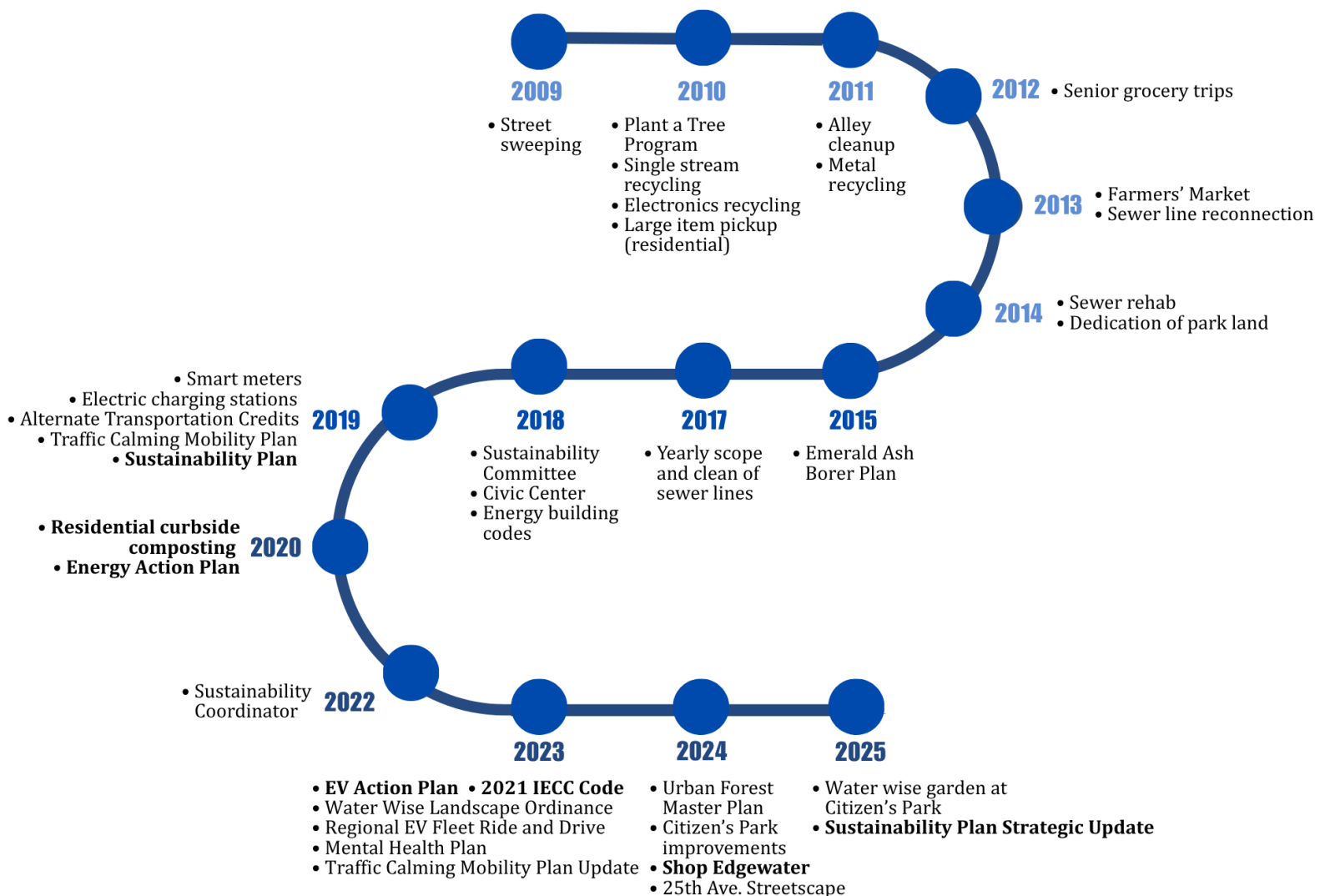


History

Edgewater has a strong history of sustainability leadership. In 2010, it became one of the first cities in the Denver metro area to have a single-hauler recycling program, allowing for improved waste tracking and recycling performance. That same year, the Plant-a-Tree Program was launched. The Healthy Tree Canopy Program – focused on the health of existing trees – has built on the Plant-a-Tree Program’s momentum in recent years. From 2013 – 2017, the sewer line was rehabilitated and improved.

In 2018, the city opened a new Civic Center built to high energy-efficiency standards, including infrastructure ready for a future solar panel installation. That spring, City Council passed a resolution to establish a Sustainability Committee, tasked with researching and drafting a formal plan. The resulting Sustainability Plan was adopted in 2019. Since that time, a series of additional topic-specific, sustainability-related plans have been developed (highlighted in the Complementary Plan Guidance & Policy Background section of this document).

The timeline below – calling out initiatives, projects, plans, and capacity building that have been tied to moving sustainability forward – shows Edgewater’s commitment to being a leader in Sustainability for over 15 years. **Bolded** items in the timeline demonstrate implementation of goals and actions articulated in the Sustainability Plan in 2019.



Plan Development Process

In establishing the Sustainability Plan, the City followed the ICLEI (originally the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives; now ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability) Model, completing the first three of the five milestones. A pre-milestone to make a commitment and organize a team was completed with the City Council's resolution to form a Sustainability Committee in May 2018.

The first of the five milestones was to conduct a sustainability assessment, which resulted in the four categories articulated in this Plan:

- **Land & Water:** Conserving natural resources through responsible land use and water management.
- **Waste & Materials:** Promoting sustainable waste disposal and material usage practices.
- **Energy:** Enhancing energy efficiency and increasing renewable energy production.
- **Social Vibrancy:** Fostering economic, social, and environmental success within the community.

Through the lens of these categories, an assessment process was conducted to engage the community and gather pertinent information to shape this Plan. The second and third milestones were accomplished through the creation of sustainability goals and the development – and adoption – of the Sustainability Plan.

The city has been making consistent progress on the fourth milestone in the last five years, and this Strategic Update represents progress toward the fifth milestone, and a bit of a microcosm of the entire model. On an annual basis, the best practice would be to evaluate the progress of goals and report to the community. This Strategic Update recommends that every five years the city pursues a similar update process, assessing its progress (Milestone 1), re-establishing Sustainability Goals (Milestone 2), updating the Sustainability Plan (Milestone 3), and reprioritizing Implementation Steps (Milestone 4).



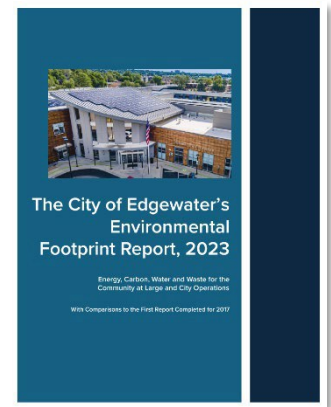
Complementary Plan Guidance & Policy Background

Since the adoption of the Sustainability Plan five years ago, the City has developed and adopted several complementary plans and policy documents that have informed this Strategic Update. While not all of these documents explicitly reference sustainability, each offers valuable guidance on how this Plan can align with broader efforts to efficiently and effectively support shared goals and initiatives. Some of the influential takeaways from these documents follow, along with links to the entirety of each document.

Environmental Footprint Report (2025)

Parallel to this Strategic Update, *Big Glasses Consulting* was engaged to provide an update to the Environmental Footprint Report that was produced for the City of Edgewater in 2019. That study was completed using data collected in 2017. This updated report gauges the City's progress from 2017 to 2023 and offers guidance on continuing the City's forward momentum. This **Environmental Footprint Report showed some encouraging trends, such as greenhouse gas emissions dropping 9.9%** for the community of Edgewater. The full report can be found at the following link:

[Environmental Footprint Report \[2025\]](#)



Edgewater 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2024)

[Link to Plan Document](#)

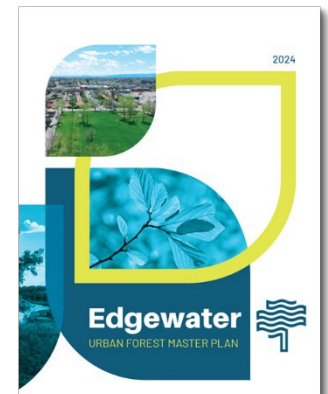
- Includes a Guiding Principle of “Promote Urban Greening & Climate Adaptability”
- Many Plan Recommendations have a co-beneficial relationship to Sustainability Plan Goals & Actions
- **Places** section – Community Character & Design – reinforces climate change effects, green infrastructure, environmental sustainability, biophilic community principles, and enhanced tree canopy emphasis
- **Systems** section – Parks, Trails and Green Amenities; and Mobility, Streetscapes & Infrastructure – promotes sustainability and resiliency in green infrastructure implementation, parks and open spaces, as well as in mobility options, street networks, and traffic calming prioritization



Urban Forest Plan (2024)

[Link to Plan Document](#)

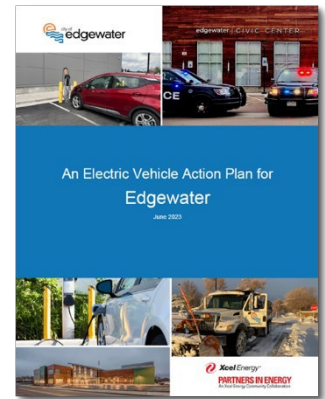
- Primarily focused on the Urban Forest, but centers its Framework around Mitigating the Effects of Climate Change
 - Improve water quality
 - Lower summer temperatures
 - Reduce stormwater runoff
 - Improve human health
 - Provide habitat for wildlife
- Recommendations take a policy, procedural, and data-driven approach to tackling goals
- “How Are We Doing” section tees up opportunities to track progress and set clear metrics
 - Includes a recommendation for 3–5-year reassessments of indicators



Electric Vehicle Action Plan (2023)

[Link to Plan Document](#)

- Topic-specific energy focused document that articulates Strategic Priorities for electric vehicle adaptation
- Elevates “Equity” as an overlay to many of the strategies in the Plan
- Each Strategic Priority identifies:
 - Audience
 - Target
 - Timeline
 - Roles & Responsibilities
 - Available Resources



Parks & Rec Master Plan (2021)

[Link to Plan Document](#)

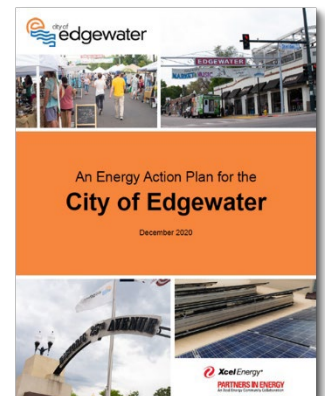
- Acknowledgement of Sustainability Plan and Traffic Calming Mobility Plan, and their guidance on the importance of natural systems
- Tees up emphasis of increased tree canopy that is carried through in the Urban Forest Plan, largely focused on existing park spaces
- Sustainability Plan-related priorities include increased trail connectivity, park maintenance, additional amenities, enhanced programming, etc.
- Primarily co-beneficial recommendations to Sustainability Plan Goals & Actions rather than explicit references



Energy Action Plan (2020)

[Link to Plan Document](#)

- Articulates Energy Strategic Priorities and includes quantifiable Action Plan Impact measures with Tiers (1-3) to phase implementation
- Each Strategic Priority identifies:
 - Target Audience
 - Desired Outcome
 - Timeline & Actions *[Articulated by Tier]*
 - Resources
 - Roles & Responsibilities



Traffic Calming Mobility Plan (2019 & 2023 Update)

[Link To Plan Documents](#)

- Focused on a sustainable built environment, specifically through the lens of sustainable public spaces and mobility
- Includes an explicit goal (Goal 4) to create “Streets that are sustainable and resilient”
 - Plant more trees and native vegetation
 - Reduce transportation related emissions
 - Improve air quality
- Recommends strategies and a series of tools/streetscape (and alley) design features that can incorporate planting(s) and green infrastructure into their DNA



Strategic Update Process

For a Plan to be positioned for implementation success, it is important for the Plan to be driven by, and for, the community. The development of the 2019 Sustainability Plan followed a multi-month process that included a public survey, a charrette-style open house, meetings with several key stakeholder groups, and presentations from neighboring cities and existing partners. These efforts generated hundreds of touchpoints of community feedback and fostered meaningful connections that laid the groundwork for successful implementation.

In preparing this Strategic Update, the City undertook a similarly comprehensive public engagement process to identify and refine the priorities outlined later in this document. This process began in October 2024 and built upon the recently adopted Edgewater 2040 Comprehensive Plan, along with several other supporting plans. Rather than writing an entirely new Plan, the City decided to perform a Strategic Update to the Sustainability Plan – acknowledging the wealth of information in the Plan that remained relevant, while creating space for the community to identify any priorities that may have emerged or evolved in the past five years. The overarching goal of the Strategic Update was to better position short-term implementation of the community’s priorities while preserving long-term aspirations. The update was carried out in three phases: Phase 1 – Plan Assessment; Phase 2 – Strategic Priority Identification; and Phase 3 – Draft Strategic Update and Final Plan (as shown in the timeline above).

Process Timeline

Plan Assessment - Oct. '24 - Jan. '25

- Sustainability Board Work Session
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Community Survey
- Environmental Footprint Report

Strategic Priority ID - Feb. '25 - April '25

- Plan Assessment Phase Report-Out
- Council Update
- Community Priorities Workshop
- Sustainability Board Work Session

Draft Strategic Update & Final Plan - May '25 - August '25

- Additional Board Work Session
- Sustainability Board Work Session
- Strategic Update Council Adoption

Phase 1: Plan Assessment



To begin Phase 1, the project team reviewed complementary plans and policy documents to identify areas of alignment between the Sustainability Plan and more recent policy guidance. A Kickoff Meeting and a Work Session were held with the Sustainability Board to gather first-hand insights into how the Plan is currently being used and to identify the Board’s goals and priorities for the Strategic Update.

Building on this input, a series of stakeholder interviews were conducted. These were organized by thematic groups: City of Edgewater staff, partner communities, community partner organizations, and

residents, community leaders, and business owners. Interview topics included participants' experience using the Plan, resilience best practices, implementation challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for aligning local efforts with citywide, regional, and statewide sustainability goals.

At the same time, a community survey was distributed both online and in hard-copy format, available in English and Spanish. The survey aimed to raise awareness about the Strategic Update and to gather broad-based feedback. More than 120 responses were received, with participants self-identifying across all demographic groups represented in Edgewater.



A key contribution during this phase was the updated Environmental Footprint Report, completed by Melissa Baldrige of Big Glasses Consulting. This report provided critical metrics and indicators to help the Board and the community assess areas of progress—and gaps—since the original Plan's adoption.

Phase 2: Strategic Priority Identification

Phase 2 began with a presentation of key findings from Phase 1 during a Work Session with the Sustainability Board and an update to City Council. Based on feedback from both groups, materials were developed for a Community Priorities Workshop, where residents were invited to share their input on what the city should prioritize in its sustainability efforts. Input from this well-attended workshop was later shared with the Board during another Work Session to help shape the direction of the Strategic Update.



Phase 3 – Draft Strategic Update and Final Plan

During Phase 3, the Board held a special Work Session to review Preliminary Draft Recommendations based on community input and to discuss the overall format and structure of the updated Plan. Drafts were then prepared for review by City staff, the Sustainability Board, and the public. The Board held one final Work Session to provide feedback on the Public Review Draft and to hear additional community input, prior to recommending the Plan for adoption to City Council.



Land & Water



Waste & Materials



Energy



Social Vibrancy

The Four Categories

To provide guidance on how to pursue Edgewater's greater goal of a sustainable community, this Plan is divided into four categories. Within each of these categories, goals are listed with actionable steps to achieve them. While breaking the goals into four categories is helpful to create actionable and measurable steps, many of Edgewater's greater environmental problems will only be solved by taking steps in all categories.

As a part of this Strategic Update to the Plan, the community was asked to provide feedback on these four categories – originally developed during the 2019 plan effort – to see if they still resonated with the community and identify if there was a need to revise any of them. Throughout the process, and across all formats of engagement, these four categories were largely reaffirmed and discussed as continuing to be essential for forward progress.

Land & Water encompasses the need to enhance and retain a robust natural ecosystem within and around the community including water, trees, plants, and animal health.

Waste & Materials examines the need to reduce consumption and increase recycling of materials including organics.

Energy focuses on increasing energy efficiency while supporting the energy transition to renewable resources that reduce toxic emissions and greenhouse gases.

Social Vibrancy supports the continuous engagement, safety, health, and vitality of community life – including walkability, access to local resources, and a thriving local economy. It also recognizes the importance of mental well-being, fostering social connections, inclusive spaces, and environments that support emotional health and overall quality of life.

In addition to the four categories, cross-cutting themes of improving air quality, reducing pollutants, and cultivating a more resilient community were frequently discussed during the Strategic Update process. The community will make significant progress across each of these themes by acting with intention to implement the goals and actions within each of the four categories. Examples of how each category is inextricably linked to these themes include:

- The air we breathe as a community is directly connected to pollution, ground ozone levels, and greenhouse gas output. Tracking these numbers is helpful, but finding our way to cleaner air and emissions requires actionable effort.
- By continuing to plant native species and trees for shade, air quality will also improve.
- Reducing our waste production, dependence on single-use products, and effectively reusing materials will put less greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.
- Reducing our dependence on fossil fuel energy and vehicle transportation is one step toward reducing pollutants. Improving the first and final mile to transit options could aid in taking more drivers and gas-vehicles off the road.

Each of these measures contribute heavily to the health, safety and vitality of community life within our built environment, allowing the community to be more resilient in its response to changing environmental impacts.

Outreach & Education

A key component of the 2019 Sustainability Plan was the community's strong desire for ongoing and expanded Outreach and Education, a theme that continued to emerge throughout the Strategic Update process. Edgewater residents are eager to participate, and engaging those who are already motivated will support successful implementation of this Plan. Equally important is engaging those who may be less familiar with Sustainability, or importantly, those who may not yet recognize how small, local actions can contribute to broader, citywide impact.

Several outreach methods span across all four categories, helping to both encourage and educate the community about sustainable opportunities – often with support from the City. Community volunteers, subject matter experts, partner organizations, neighboring jurisdictions, and the Sustainability Board will all play a vital role in implementing many of these efforts.



When asked how they would like to be engaged around sustainability during this Strategic Update process, community members most frequently identified the following methods:

- The Town Cryer / Newsletters
- How-To Guides / One-Page Flyers
- Booths and Tabling at Community Events
- In-Person Workshops and Tutorials
- Direct Mailings

While many respondents expressed a preference for in-person, community-building formats, there was



also considerable interest in online learning, skills development, and digital engagement opportunities. As the most public-facing champions of sustainability in Edgewater, the Sustainability Board and Sustainability Coordinator must continue to maintain a visible presence in the community, fostering both formal and informal engagement with residents.

The City’s sustainability website – already a strong resource for events and information – should evolve into a Community Sustainability Dashboard/resource, as recommended in one of the Ongoing Actions in the Social Vibrancy

category. This online platform can serve as a central hub for environmental data, current opportunities for resident involvement, and up-to-date information on City-led sustainability efforts. It can also host event listings and educational materials to stimulate community dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders.

To clearly connect the following Goals and Actions to the community’s desire for enhanced Outreach and Education, an icon (*shown at right*) has been added to highlight Actions—whether Priority, Ongoing, or Long-Term—that specifically emphasize this theme. By tagging relevant Actions in each category, this Plan provides a clear, visual reference to show how the city is actively responding to community requests and investing in sustainability education.



Goals & Actions

Over the five years leading up to this Strategic Update, significant progress has been made in advancing the goals of the 2019 Sustainability Plan. In that original Plan, the stated aim was to have the Goals be measurable and time bound. Some Action steps were ongoing, others were difficult or impossible to effectively track, and others did not have enough time to set a proper benchmark.

During the Strategic Update process, community members and stakeholders acknowledged clear progress – and in some cases, full completion – of many Actions. At the same time, as aspirational targets, the broader Goals of the Plan were seen as largely still relevant. With that understanding, this Strategic Update reaffirms the original Goals while also adding nuance and context that reflect the community’s evolving needs and priorities. In several cases, new Goals have been added within the Four Categories.

As for the Actions, a thorough quantitative and qualitative review was conducted – grounded in both data and public input – to assess each Action’s status. Actions from the 2019 Plan were categorized as:

- complete – and therefore removed from the Plan;
- still relevant – and retained with little or no change; or
- in need of reframing – with revisions made to clarify scope, improve implementation, or reflect community priorities.

Importantly, many new, actionable ideas emerged through community engagement and have been incorporated into the updated list of Actions.

Given Edgewater’s size and resource capacity, it was important to calibrate the updated Actions to be both ambitious and attainable. The intent is to foster measurable progress without placing undue strain on residents, staff, or City operations. As such, a streamlined, prioritized approach was taken – organizing Actions into three categories:

- **Priority Actions** – intended to be completed within the lifespan of this Plan (approximately 5 years)
- **Ongoing Actions** – efforts that require sustained integration into City operations
- **Long-Term Actions** – envisioned for implementation during or beyond the lifespan of this Plan

This structure allows the City and the Sustainability Board to focus resources strategically, while maintaining flexibility to adapt as conditions evolve. For example, if an opportunity to accomplish a Long-Term Action emerges sooner than anticipated, its categorization should not limit the ability to implement an Action. The Board can, and should, also further articulate how the Actions in this Plan can be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) through conversations at Board Retreats and monthly Board Meetings. The City’s Sustainability Coordinator position is a tremendous asset that can help keep the Plan relevant and actionable, and integrated into Staff workplans and budgets. When paired with regular Strategic Updates (recommended every five years, as outlined in the *Implementation & Advocacy* section), this framework ensures the Sustainability Plan remains both responsive and actionable – anchored in community values and grounded in impact.




Land & Water

Goals:

- Create, protect and sustain a robust urban ecosystem and tree canopy for a healthy community and its residents.
- Save and protect our water resources for our watershed, as well as current and future residents.
- Minimize pollutants and reduce the urban heat island effect through strategic landscape design, green infrastructure, and sustainable development practices.
- Improve land and water resilience by enhancing built environment permeability, managing runoff, and investing in nature-based solutions that respond to changing climate conditions.

Actions:

Priority Actions	On-Going Actions	Long-Term Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a healthy, thriving local food system and cottage services economy by educating and encouraging our residents to grow and make their own food and goods • Plant rain gardens in runoff areas in public spaces to use the rain in place and reduce runoff damage • Measure and track the urban heat island effect and develop solutions (permeability, runoff, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue offering the Sticks to Chips mulching program twice per year •  Once per year (on a quarterly cadence) produce a category-specific one-page flyer for the community, an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for City Staff, and pair with a training/educational event • Track the City's canopy cover, as well as the number of trees planted versus the number cut down to inform progress toward canopy expansion goals specified in the Urban Forest Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a water audit program for businesses and homes • Strategize a pathway to grey water adoption following state legislation • Implement green infrastructure solutions into future streetscape and public space designs (bioswales, curb-cutouts, bioretention soil, etc.)



Actions with this icon are intended to emphasize the community's desire for increased Outreach and Education.





Waste & Materials

Goals:

- Establish and maintain Edgewater as a leader by increasing residential waste diversion year over year.
- Reduce commercial and public sector waste.
- Reduce pollution through science-based material selection and infrastructure design.

Actions:

Priority Actions	On-Going Actions	Long-Term Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a third-party waste audit annually to better understand what is in the residential waste stream • Include a commitment to waste reduction in each annual business license renewal • Incentivize apartment buildings and businesses over 5,000 SF to develop recycling and composting programs that work • Increase resident participation in composting program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide recycling, composting and landfill disposal options at all permitted events  • Request GHG Emissions Reporting from every vendor who does business with COE; state that vendors who comply may be given preference in bidding • Once per year (on a quarterly cadence) produce a category-specific one-page flyer for the community, an SOP for City Staff, and pair with a training/educational event  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand composting opportunities for businesses, along with other waste reduction strategies • For City-funded infrastructure projects and operations, prioritize the selection of materials that reduce pollutants • Identify ways to decrease residential construction site waste, emphasizing the full, circular life cycle of buildings



Actions with this icon are intended to emphasize the community's desire for increased Outreach and Education.







Energy

Goals:

- Increase energy efficiency opportunities for homes, businesses, government and transportation.
- Commit to statewide goals ([HB19-1261](#)) to reduce 2030 greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors by at least 50%, and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90% of the statewide greenhouse gas emissions that existed in 2005.
- Increase the use of clean renewable electricity to 70% by 2030 and 100% by 2035.

Actions:

Priority Actions	On-Going Actions	Long-Term Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Offer homeowner training and consumer protections for photovoltaic systems and electric vehicle charge controllers • Implement EV Action Plan; particularly Level 2 charging stations  Ensure Businesses know about Energy Audits by including information in Business License applications, and using the Sustainability Coordinator as a liaison • Work with Xcel/power providers on a power purchase agreement for temporally matched, not-transmission-constrained renewable electricity to make up for any shortfall between the electricity available on the grid and the City's goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Publicize and report on Edgewater energy efficiency data and Xcel renewable energy progress through outreach channels  Once per year (on a quarterly cadence) produce a category-specific one-page flyer for the community, an SOP for City Staff, and pair with a training/educational event • Expand access to alternative modes of transportation • Identify more specific areas for City-led Solar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop benchmarks for all commercial properties • Expand Xcel's Partners in Energy program services to businesses • Provide local e-Bike rebates in addition to those available through the State, while expanding the City's e-Bike ecosystem • Incentivize alternate community modes for City Staff • Enact increased building performance standards



Actions with this icon are intended to emphasize the community's desire for increased Outreach and Education.













Social Vibrancy

Goals:

- Facilitate the expansion of small businesses – prioritizing a walkable environment – to foster a culture of economic, social and environmental resilience for all parties.
- Expand communication and outreach to better engage the community.
- Foster a community that enables active neighborhood engagement and intergenerational interactions to promote positive relationships and mental health for residents and visitors.

Actions:

Priority Actions	On-Going Actions	Long-Term Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Establish a Sustainable Business Program that offers optional resources such as composting and green infrastructure upgrades, and promotes sharing of sustainable business practices  Reshape the volunteer Ambassadors Program to have a more granular, neighborhood emphasis and promote intergenerational collaboration  Explore joining the Sustainable Neighborhoods Network  Create a Sustainable Edgewater Self-Guided tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Update the Sustainability webpage to function as a Community Sustainability Dashboard/resource  Once per year (on a quarterly cadence) produce a category-specific one-page flyer for the community, an SOP for City Staff, and pair with a training/educational event  Collaborate with library and Civic Center staff to curate exhibits and resources for the community  Table with Mental Health and collaborate with City departments/partner with outside communities; speak at community events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Develop a specific youth engagement plan centered around Sustainability to promote long-lasting community benefits  Evaluate the impact of shopping incentive programs (i.e. the “Shop Edgewater” Open Rewards App) to ensure robust patronage of the local business community



Actions with this icon are intended to emphasize the community's desire for increased Outreach and Education.



Implementation & Advocacy

This Sustainability Plan creates a framework for future success with community-led goals, identifying quick wins, and developing key partnerships. This requires the support and collaboration of existing and new stakeholder groups to be successful in each category. Stakeholders and collaborations change from category to category and project to project. The community will need to continue to leverage existing partnerships with the City Council, City staff, Edgewater schools, community members, non-profit groups, the Edgewater Business Association, and neighboring jurisdictions to continue to successfully implement the Plan. In addition to these collaborations, for the community to transition from this Plan into action, all community members, regardless of income level, ethnicity, political affiliation or group of identification, must be welcome and able to participate in reaching the goals.

Role of the Sustainability Board

The Sustainability Board plays a vital role in helping Edgewater achieve its sustainability goals. As outlined in Section 2-12-20 of the Municipal Code (https://library.municode.com/co/edgewater/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=EDMUCO_CH2AD_ART12S_UBO_S2-12-10SUBO), the Board serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council and City Manager on all matters related to sustainability. This includes responsibilities such as reviewing and updating the Sustainability Plan, supporting implementation, advocating for relevant legislation, collaborating with community groups and neighboring jurisdictions, and fostering greater public awareness around sustainability.

To be most effective, the Sustainability Board should serve as a trusted resource – both for City leadership and the broader community – helping residents understand how their individual actions can collectively support a more sustainable Edgewater. To strengthen the Board’s advisory role and its ability to advocate for sustainability priorities, the following approach is recommended for the Sustainability Coordinator and Board to follow annually:

Recommended Advocacy Framework

- Schedule the annual Sustainability Board Retreat at least one quarter prior to the City Council’s initial budget discussions.
 - At the retreat, review the Plan’s Priority Actions, assess progress from the past year, and identify emerging sustainability needs within the community.
 - Based on this assessment, establish Annual Advocacy Theme(s) that reflect focused priorities aligned with one or more of the four core Sustainability Categories.
- Present to the City Council, before the first budget discussion, a summary of:
 - Progress made over the past year in implementing the Plan.
 - The identified Annual Advocacy Theme(s), clearly connected to:
 - Specific Priority and Ongoing Actions that could advance with appropriate resources.
 - Long-Term Actions that may benefit from near-term investment or planning.
- Align the Advocacy Theme(s) with relevant budget requests for the upcoming year, ensuring a clear link between funding and the potential for meaningful sustainability outcomes.

Importance of Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration

Now that the City of Edgewater has established a Sustainability Coordinator position, it is essential to equip this role with the tools, connections, and support necessary to effectively implement the

Sustainability Plan. One critical area of support is the development of stronger cross-jurisdictional partnerships – including with nearby neighborhoods, adjacent municipalities, Jefferson County, and state-level agencies. As a smaller community, Edgewater has the advantage of being more agile in its approach to implementing sustainability strategies. However, valuable lessons can be learned by understanding how other jurisdictions organize their sustainability efforts.

Data access and collection can be significantly enhanced through collaboration. Neighboring or regional entities may have access to more current, robust, or comprehensive datasets. The Sustainability Coordinator is encouraged to regularly engage with peers in other jurisdictions to identify opportunities for shared resources, data exchange, and coordinated initiatives.

Because the field of sustainability is constantly evolving, it is also important to ensure that adequate resources are allocated for ongoing training and professional development. Staying informed about the latest trends, innovations, and best practices is essential for maintaining a high-impact sustainability program. Additionally, the Sustainability Coordinator should be provided with time and support to participate in regional events, conferences, and networking opportunities. These spaces foster valuable relationship-building and knowledge-sharing that directly enhance Edgewater’s sustainability outcomes.

Future Strategic Updates

To ensure continued progress and alignment with community priorities, it is recommended that this Sustainability Plan be updated on a regular five-year cycle. This timeline aligns with the expectations outlined in the Municipal Code (*Sec. 2-12-20. Powers and duties. (b)(1)*), which states the Board is to “review and update from time to time, and to submit to the City Council for its consideration for adoption, the sustainability plan for the City of Edgewater.”

Every five years, the city should conduct a Strategic Update similar in scope, at a minimum, to the process used in this update. As part of that effort, a comprehensive Plan Assessment should be conducted to:

- Evaluate the continued relevance of the Four Categories, allowing for community input and adapting them as needed.
- Assess progress toward existing Goals, using updated data and community feedback to refine or reframe them where necessary.
- Review Priority Actions to recognize achievements and identify barriers to completion.
 - For any incomplete Priority Actions, the community should reconsider whether they remain a priority or if they should be revised to better reflect current needs.
- Revisit On-going Actions to confirm their continued value and adjust them based on changes in community demand or City capacity.
- Reassess Long-Term Actions to determine if any should be elevated to Priority or On-going status, particularly if resources have shifted or priorities have evolved.

By maintaining this regular update cycle, the City of Edgewater can remain responsive, data-informed, and community-driven in its pursuit of a more sustainable future.

In Conclusion

As ecosystems degrade, climate patterns shift and our basic necessities, such as air quality, reach dangerous levels, the time to act is now. While individuals can change behavior voluntarily in their daily lives, when a community comes together, motivation to make small, consistent, and actionable changes accelerates. When the City leads by example, residents and businesses will proudly work to make our community more sustainable. *We are in this together.*

Appendix

Edgewater Environmental Footprint Report:

The full report can be found at the following link: [Environmental Footprint Report \[2025\]](#)

Community Sustainability Resources:

<https://www.edgewaterco.gov/living-here/sustainability>

ICLEI: <https://icleiusa.org/resources/>

Xcel reports and Republic Waste monthly waste diversion data are maintained by the Sustainability Coordinator

Neighboring Community Best Practices:

The following are a set of examples of sustainability initiatives that have been employed by neighboring communities to great success. These types of peer community strategies – shown as examples illustrative of each of this Plan’s Four Categories – could have similar impact in Edgewater as the City implements the Sustainability Plan.

Land & Water:

Use of nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and urban resilience, as modeled by the City of Boulder

Recognizing the growing impacts of climate change, such as wider temperature swings, more unpredictable weather, and increasing threats to native plant and animal species, the City of Boulder has embraced a nature-based approach to climate mitigation. By supporting and restoring living systems, Boulder is harnessing nature itself to slow these trends. Reversing harmful land-use practices that have degraded ecosystems and released millions of tons of carbon into the atmosphere allows the natural world to once again serve as a powerful carbon sink.

To support this vision, Boulder launched the [Cool Boulder](#) campaign, a community-driven initiative that empowers residents and organizations to take affordable, meaningful climate action. Recognizing that ecosystem restoration must extend beyond public land, the campaign builds a citywide network of climate stewards equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to regenerate soil, restore habitats, and revive local ecosystems through both individual and collective action. The Cool Boulder campaign centers on three key “Action Areas”: [Pollinator Pathways](#), [Connected Canopies](#), and [Absorbent Landscapes](#). Together, these strategies create a mosaic of healthy soils, native plants, and trees that boost biodiversity, cool urban areas, and improve the management of both carbon and water.

Edgewater, with its existing Urban Forest Master Plan aligned with the goals of Connected Canopies, is well-positioned to build on this foundation. By expanding policies that encourage regenerative practices and habitat diversity—core to the Pollinator Pathways and Absorbent Landscapes action areas—Edgewater can transform its parks and rights-of-way into resilient, carbon-sequestering landscapes that conserve water and support native species. Sustained community engagement is essential. By helping residents understand the importance and benefits of these practices, cities like Edgewater can ensure long-term support for climate-smart landscaping, restoration, and stewardship initiatives.

Land & Water:

Implementation of Green Infrastructure, as modeled by the City of Denver's Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines

Green infrastructure at both large and site-scales is a key tool for protecting the environment and improving communities in Denver. Large scale green infrastructure is the network of parks, open spaces, drainageways, and floodplains that use ecological process to offset the environmental impacts of hard, dirty, and hot urban surfaces like roads and buildings. Site-scale green infrastructure includes individual control measures that capture and filter stormwater runoff at its source. The road network is one of the largest urban pollution and runoff sources, so it among the best opportunities for site-scale green infrastructure when designed so its soil and vegetation remains healthy over time.

Denver's [Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines](#) is a document to aid design of site-scale green infrastructure, particularly in the public right-of-way where it is space-constrained and subject to high pollutant loads. It includes high level project considerations, example design drawings/details, and guidance for installation and maintenance. Each green infrastructure practice within the Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines has been chosen for its suitability in Denver's climate and dense, urban environment. It contains fact sheets for five types of green infrastructure: streetside stormwater planters, bumpout stormwater planters, green gutters, green alleys, and tree pit/tree trenches.

Denver has implemented hundreds of site-scale green infrastructure facilities in the public right-of-way designed using the Ultra-Urban Green Infrastructure Guidelines. The facilities successfully capture and reduce runoff from the street, remove trash and pollutants, and support a healthy urban tree canopy and understory.

Waste & Materials:

Green business practices enabled by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Colorado Green Business Network

The [Colorado Green Business Network](#) (CGBN), a free program offered by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, helps organizations operate more sustainably through a variety of tailored support services. Participating businesses and organizations gain access to technical assistance, networking opportunities, and expert guidance aimed at improving energy, water, and fuel efficiency—ultimately reducing waste and lowering operational costs.

Over a two-year engagement, CGBN staff provide ongoing coaching and conduct sustainability assessments to support long-term progress. Participants also benefit from workshops, educational events, and skill-building opportunities, along with recognition through awards and certifications that highlight their environmental achievements. A brief application process allows CGBN staff to understand each organization's goals, resources, and community context.

For Edgewater, joining the CGBN would offer a cost-effective way to access proven tools and strategies that support local sustainability and economic development.

Energy:

Internal monitoring and reporting of GHG emissions using ICLEI's ClearPath tool, currently used by Louisville, Superior, and Lafayette

[ICLEI](#) (originally the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives; now ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability) is a global association of local governments committed to addressing the world's sustainability challenges. One of its key support tools is ClearPath, an intuitive platform for emissions tracking and climate action management. ClearPath streamlines data collection and reporting, enabling local governments to monitor sustainability progress, run scenario modeling, and make data-driven decisions based on their own internal emissions inventories—rather than relying solely on regional or federal data.

The platform's Excel-based import feature and optional public dashboard enhance both efficiency and transparency, fostering cross-departmental collaboration. ClearPath also helps quantify the cost savings and co-benefits of sustainability initiatives – a capability already leveraged by several of Edgewater's neighboring municipalities. With its extensive customization options, Front Range communities could eventually develop a shared interface tailored to specific programs or initiatives, strengthening regional alignment and improving the quality of climate data analysis.

Social Vibrancy:

Sustainable Neighborhoods Network model, currently used in the cities of Lakewood, Denver, Fort Collins, and Wheat Ridge

The [Sustainable Neighborhoods Program](#) (SNP), developed by the neighboring City of Lakewood, is part of the broader Sustainable Neighborhoods Network – a coalition of cities mobilizing local passion for climate action and community resilience. The SNP model offers participating neighborhoods access to training materials, a tracking platform, and leadership conferences, giving cities a practical framework for integrating community-driven climate initiatives into existing municipal programs.

By leveraging residents' expertise, enthusiasm, and volunteer spirit, the program empowers communities to create and implement sustainability projects in key areas: energy, air, water, land, and people. Guided by city staff, residents organize workshops, events, and initiatives that directly support local sustainability goals. Participants become active partners in shaping vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods and are formally recognized through the Certified Sustainable Neighborhood designation. At a time when social isolation and political division can hinder civic engagement, the SNP helps “build connections, strengthen community pride, and provide ways for residents to engage productively in city government.”

By adopting the structured tools and technical support offered through the SNP, Edgewater can enhance the effectiveness of its city staff and Sustainability Board, while significantly boosting resident participation in local sustainability efforts.