

LARIMER COUNTY INTERNAL CLIMATE ACTION, RESILIENCE, AND EDUCATION (ICARE) REPORT Larimer County July 2024 Update



ABIDING BY LARIMER COUNTY'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES WHILE PROVIDING A CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY LENS TO OUR DAILY WORK.

SUMMARY

Larimer County initiated the Internal Climate Action, Resilience, and Education (ICARE) plan in 2022. Twelve County departments have been active over the past year in gathering data, setting baselines, and making progress toward the goals established in the initial plan. This report captures progress and continued opportunities since adoption in 2022. In addition to making progress toward the specific goals in this plan, the ICARE team explored integration of Social Equity and established the first evaluation tool for project funding priorities. With the solid baseline now created, the ICARE team will continue to work toward goals, provide opportunities for County leadership to further inform goals and initiatives, and will link ICARE plan projects to the efforts outlined in the Climate Smart and Future Ready community plan as appropriate.

OVERVIEW

1. Plan Background and Description

Larimer County is committed to demonstrating leadership on environmental sustainability that is reflective of the community's strong commitment to the environment while optimizing decisions that are inclusive of the economy and social equity. Larimer County, as a governmental body, has a unique role in building climate mitigation, adaptation, and overall sustainability capacity in our community through demonstrating how our internal operations and programs conserve our unique way of life as we confront our changing climate that is a significant contributing factor to extreme weather conditions such as drought, heat and wind.

This Internal Climate and Sustainability Action Plan reflects the [Climate Impacts to Larimer County](#) and the guiding principles of the County to be good stewards of public resources, promote innovation, adaptability, and committing to continuous improvement, and cultivating inclusive and collaborative partnerships, while we empower people to take responsibility.

The actions identified herein demonstrate the County's commitment regarding the community-wide priorities as identified in the Climate Smart and Future Ready initiative and benefit County staff and operations which in turn benefits our community. This plan was developed through the dedicated work of an ICARE Team comprising numerous County departments (see Appendix A).

2. Plan Focus and Implementation

This ICARE Plan focuses on immediate and long-term goals that improve:

- **Unifying Solutions** – Aligning policy and pursuing equitable resolutions, while also addressing climate health risks
- **Built Environment, Waste, and the Economy** - Reducing our impact on the environment while improving comfort and efficiency, while demonstrating the highest and best use of taxpayer dollars and improving the County’s economic sustainability.
- **Mobility of Goods, Services, and People** - Finding sustainable ways to improve how we move people and goods including considerations for the costs, accessibility, impact, and quality of our transportation options.
- **Natural Environment, Water, and Agriculture** - Improving how we care for and use nature and the land to positively impact our water quality, water availability and our natural resources. Prepare for natural disaster avoidance, mitigation, and response.

through concentration on the following desired conditions (terminology is defined in Appendix B):



Environmental Quality = A set of properties and characteristics of the environment, either generalized or local, as fundamental to a healthy community environment. It is a measure of the condition of an environment (e.g., varied characteristics such as air and water purity or pollution, noise, access to open space, built environment, etc.) relative to the requirements of one or more species physical and mental health.



Social Equity = Social equity, a concept also known as environmental justice, is the fair treatment and involvement of all people and communities—regardless of race, gender, national origin, or income level—in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.



Community Resiliency = The ability of a community to use its assets to strengthen systems and improve the community’s ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity.



Economic Sustainability = The practices that support long-term and diverse economic growth while enhancing social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community.

The ICARE team continues to evaluate all county climate initiatives to ensure equity, addressing the needs of vulnerable and underrepresented employees and community members. This evaluation includes workshops and a prioritization process to determine where funding is most needed for our goals and actions. Community Resiliency, Social Equity, and Environmental Quality are key factors the team considers when assessing project priorities for funding.

The first year of implementing this plan emphasized development of baseline conditions if no measures yet exist. Goals and measures were adjusted as necessary when baseline conditions were established. **Unless otherwise noted, all goals are tracked against a 2022 baseline.**

Larimer County Internal Climate and Sustainability Goals



Action Status

The actions within the goals of this plan are categorized to provide a clear understanding of their progress in 2024. The categories are as follows:

On Track:

- **Description:** Actions that are proceeding as planned and meeting their expected milestones and deadlines.
- **Indicators:** Consistent progress, timely achievement of milestones, and effective resource utilization.

Emerging:

- **Description:** Actions that are starting to show progress and potential but still face challenges or uncertainty.
- **Indicators:** Initial milestones achieved, ongoing development, but areas identified for improvement or refinement

Needs Attention:

- **Description:** Actions encountering obstacles, temporarily paused awaiting preliminary steps or necessary resources.
- **Indicators:** Opportunities for improvement, additional support required, and potential for re-evaluation to optimize progress.

By categorizing efforts in this manner, we aim to provide a transparent and actionable overview of our progress and areas requiring focus.

This plan will be reviewed annually to allow for adjustment and alignment with the “Climate Smart and Future Ready” Larimer County initiative as it unfolds and grows, as goals are realized, or actions require adjustments. The Board of County Commissioners will receive mid-year and annual reports on outcomes toward the goals identified and will have the opportunity to continually approve plan adjustments as required.

UNIFYING SOLUTIONS

GOAL

Implement all Climate, Environmental Stewardship, and Sustainability Policy areas by 2030.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Increase awareness of this Policy and update other County policies to align as needed.
 - ◆ Discussions started to possibility work with the PowerDMS team to consider these changes as they review policies already needing updates.

Needs
Attention

GOAL

Fund greater than 90% of all high priority projects ranked by ICARE annually.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Develop and evaluate potential projects, via the sustainability matrix, annually
 - ◆ In 2023, five of the five, or 100% of the proposed high-priority projects were approved for funding.

On Track

GOAL

By 2035 see a 10% reduction in the average ozone level measured at Larimer County monitoring stations.

Immediate Priority Actions

- The County is working to add two regulatory ozone monitors to the regional network.
 - ◆ The Timnath monitor is planned to be running in July and the west Loveland monitor is planned to be active by September.
 - ◆ EPA air toxics study has begun meeting with the community and selected a north Fort Collins site near the Hearthfire neighborhood.

On Track

- Increase participation in the County's commercial landscaping equipment program by 10% each year.
 - ◆ After two years of promoting the residential gas equipment swap program with RAQC, the state began a program, so the County's efforts have turned to commercial operators.
 - ◆ Intern working to develop 2024 pilot for the commercial program led by the County
 - ◆ Larimer County Department of Natural Resources (LCDNR) received a grant of \$23,749 from the Colorado Regional Air Quality Council to convert 19 pieces of electric equipment including mowers, chainsaws, pruners, and weed whips.

Additional Long-term Strategies

- Increase employee and resident resilience by informing and incentivizing actions that promote improved air quality
 - ◆ The county-wide and operational Greenhouse Gas Inventory will be updated every few years to compare against the 2022 baseline recently completed.

GOAL

Reduce County facility Greenhouse Gas emissions by 62% by 2030.

Immediate Priority Actions

- We are continuously working toward building energy efficiency improvements and installation of renewable energy sources.
 - ◆ Designers are being asked to include renewable infrastructure options on all new facilities projects.
 - ◆ The proposed Sherrif's Office Emergency Services building received options for both a fully electric mechanical system and traditional system for comparison and consideration.
- Investigate SolarApp and SolSmart role of the County.
 - ◆ Working towards a silver designation in the SolSmart program
 - ◆ SolarApp usage is paused due to County Information Technology updating online permitting process.

Emerging

Emerging

GOAL

Methane released from the landfill will be reduced 18% by 2026.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Increase the capture of current landfill gas emissions.
 - ◆ Calculations we completed in December 2023 showing current GHG emissions.
 - ◆ 30% of the landfill has a capture system in place allowing methane to be flared.
 - ◆ The County is working to retain the gas rights allowing expansion of the collection system to 90% of the landfill.
 - ◆ With more methane captured, the gas can be cleaned and used for renewable natural gas for large hauling trucks or connected to a gas line.

Emerging

- Explore options for waste material diversion facilities, programs and potential emerging technologies to convert, process or reuse discarded waste materials through the Climate Smart Future Ready Plan.
 - ◆ North landfill is currently developing infrastructure. The central transfer station site is currently being evaluated for design.
- Study Biochar technology and explore the possibility of completing a waste audit.
 - ◆ Solid Waste is involved in an advisory team for the woody biomass study & strategy



Additional Long-term Strategies

- Digitize old and new records to eliminate storage requirements

GOAL

Departments and offices will expand dollars spent on sustainable operating and office supplies to 30% by 2030 and increase the number of RFPs utilizing sustainable criteria annually.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Working closely with Amazon and Office Depot representatives to encourage employees to buy sustainable products.
 - ◆ An 'Organization Highlighted' bar was implemented on Amazon for Climate Pledge Friendly products in June 2023.
 - ◆ The GreenCart feature was established in Office Depot in August 2023 allowing employees to see ecofriendly alternatives to products in their carts.
- Developing and offering sustainable evaluation criteria to be included on County issued RFPs.
 - ◆ The ability for customers to add these criteria to RFPs was initiated in November 2023.
 - ◆ 13 out of 15 RFPs or 87% have opted to include sustainable criteria in their proposals.



GOAL

Increase the miles of regional paved trails in unincorporated Larimer County 30% by 2043 and widened shoulders by 20% by 2030 in Larimer County.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Implement bike lanes or widened shoulders as part of roadway improvement projects.
 - ◆ Last year, 4.4 miles of widened shoulders were added to the existing 63 miles.
- Achieve key, priority regional trail connections as outlined in various county plans
 - ◆ A 1.5 mile connector trail from River Bluffs to I-25 is being constructed.
 - ◆ A trail connecting Wellington to the Northeast Fort Collins region is under study.

On Track

On Track

GOAL

Install 4 DC Fast Chargers and 4 Level 2 Chargers for Electric Vehicles on County property by 2025.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Apply for funding to install both types of chargers on County property and continue to access priority locations for charging.
 - ◆ Charge Ahead Grant awarded in December 2023 totaling \$81,000. The County is moving forward with level two dual port stations at Carter Lake and Horsetooth Reservoir and a dual port fast charger at the Administration Building in Fort Collins.
 - ◆ Four additional chargers will be added to the Fleet campus this fall. The County is currently pursuing more funding.

On Track

GOAL

Increase avg miles per gallon (mpg) of County light-duty fleet by 20%.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Create awareness campaigns regarding emission reduction benefits from increase fuel economy and alternative fuels
 - ◆ Average mpg of fleet increased to 14.4 mpg in 2023, a 3.2% rise from the 2022 baseline.
 - ◆ Conversations are starting with departments about adding an EV to their fleet.
 - ◆ An EV Essentials training and an EV Ride and Drive were offered to employees.
 - ◆ New symbols added to the Fleet catalog to indicate which vehicles are hybrid or fully electric.
- Transition light-duty fleet vehicles to alternative fuel use 1.5% each year.
 - ◆ Acquired a Ford Lighting, the County's first electric vehicle (EV) in Spring 2024.
 - ◆ 2% rise in Alternative Fuel vehicles for 2023 with seven units added (6 hybrid, 1 electric).
 - ◆ Working to get additional EVs into the fleet with the new fleet campus.

Emerging

On Track

GOAL

Reduce vehicle miles traveled by employees 20%.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Create baseline for voluntary employee remote workers and impact to GHG.
 - ◆ Adjustments made to voluntary remote work application, but this action is currently paused until there is staff capacity to take next steps.

Needs
Attention

Additional Long-term Strategies

- Increase services that reduce resident and employee vehicle miles traveled.
 - ◆ Exploring opportunities for virtual services.

GOAL

Reduce average annual irrigation water 20% by 2027.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Implement the Landscape Water Reduction Plan by reducing turf, retrofitting sprinklers, planting native vegetation, and other restoration work at buildings facilities manages.
 - ◆ Five projects were completed in 2023 and four projects are underway for 2024.
 - ◆ Our baseline for irrigation water used at these facilities was calculated at 8,229,572 gallons averaging the years 2021-2023.

On Track

Additional Long-term Strategies

- Consider adopting ordinance allowing greywater reuse in unincorporated Larimer County.

GOAL

Ensure by 2024, and ongoing over time, that no more than a total of 5% of county open space lands are converted to hard infrastructure to ensure protection of existing intact native habitat and thus conserve the biodiversity of native plant & wildlife species on County conserved land and continue carbon sequestration where appropriate.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Assess conversion maximum plan and goals for County property to protect habitats and preserve the biodiversity of our native plants and animals
 - ◆ Chimney Hollow Open Space will be assessed in the coming year to determine development footprint.

On Track

GOAL

Conserve 74,108 acres of open space within Larimer County to protect habitats and preserve biodiversity by 2043.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Update Open Space Master Plan by 2026 to include climate and resilient ecosystem service considerations.
 - ◆ A Countywide survey was conducted via a consultant for Our Lands Our Future in the fall of 2023.

On Track

GOAL

Streamline incentives and encourage and lead proactive hazard mitigation and disaster avoidance by implementing 3 mitigation or resilience projects with at least 3 community partners annually.

Immediate Priority Actions

- Continue awarding grants to the community through the Office of Emergency Management Community Mitigation Grant.
 - ◆ \$100,000 awarded for the 2024 cycle and [projects](#) are underway
- Implement the 2024-2026 Equity and Inclusion Plan.
- Remove all County Structures from the 500-year floodplain.
 - ◆ The fleet campus will be moved by 2025 and Emergency Services will be moved by 2025-2026.
- Establish Larimer Connects Hub locations in all rural communities across the County and identify key citizens.
 - ◆ Four community hubs were established, making the total 21 in the County.

On Track

On Track

On Track

On Track

Additional Long-term Strategies

- Examine policies that would go above and beyond current codes for climate resilient infrastructure.

APPENDIX A: LARIMER COUNTY INTERNAL CLIMATE ACTION, RESILIENCE AND EDUCATION TEAM (ICARE) DURING THE 2023-2024 YEAR CYCLE

Department / Division	Representative
Community Development	Eric Fried, Danielle Reimanis
Economic and Workforce Development	Adam Crowe
Office of Emergency Management	Josh Roberts
Engineering	Shelly Bayard de Volo, Devin Traff
Health and Environment	Chris Manley, Nina Wickens-Bhowmik
Natural Resources	Casey Cisneros
Support Services	Matt Townsend, Chris Norrdin, Kaley Clift
Solid Waste Services	Alex Studee
Finance	Carol Block
Extension	Jessica Callen
Human Resources	Bridget Paris, Katie Lewis
Fleet	Heidi Vilhauer, Tony Garcia

Appendix B: ICARE Terminology

- ❖ Sustainability - Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, through the three main pillars: environmental, social, and economic.
- ❖ Resilience - The capacity to prepare for disruptions, to recover from shocks and stresses, and to adapt and grow from a disruptive experience.
- ❖ Mitigation -Efforts that people, communities and governments take to reduce or prevent the emission of greenhouse gasses.
- ❖ Climate Change - Any significant change in the metrics of climate lasting for an extended period. In other words, climate change includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, among others, that occur over several decades or longer.
- ❖ Adaptation - Altering our behavior, systems, and—in some cases—ways of life to protect our families, our economies, and the environment in which we live from the impacts of climate change.