



CITY OF ARVADA



"We do not inherit the earth
from our ancestors.

We borrow it
from our children."

~Native American Proverb

February 2012

What is Sustain Arvada?

Sustain Arvada is a way of honoring Arvada's rich heritage and preserving our resources to foster economic prosperity, environmental stewardship and community vitality today and into the future. In Arvada, as in many places, both present and future generations will benefit from a more thoughtful approach to our use of water, energy, and other resources. Those resources will become in greater demand as populations grow even as we struggle to assess impacts to our air quality, atmosphere, and water resources from past and current practices. As well, growing global demand for fossil fuels is driving up prices, and our sources of foreign oil are insecure.

In Colorado and across the United States, many communities have responded to these and other concerns about food and water with sustainability plans. The goal of sustainability planning is to achieve wiser stewardship of our resources to enhance long-term environmental and economic health in ways that will allow current and future Arvada community members to lead healthy, productive, and prosperous lives. Economic and social vitality will be enhanced.

Elected officials and Arvada city management recognize the importance of sustainability to the health of its community and have made it a priority. The result has been the formation of Sustain Arvada, an effort to institutionalize and formalize vision, ownership, and a culture of sustainability within the municipal operations and the community. Officials and city management believe the plan will build the critical mass, intensity, and urgency needed to effect significant and lasting change within Arvada.

Purpose

Sustain Arvada was initiated for several reasons:

1. To recognize consequences of manmade impacts on the environment:
 - These consequences have real and potential impacts to Arvada's quality of life.
 - The environmental, economic, and social vitality of the community may suffer without action.

2. Local governments are in a unique position to have a direct and lasting impact on sustainability:
 - By changing how City government business and operations are conducted,
 - By leading, educating, and advocating throughout the community, and
 - By working with private business and institutions to ensure sustainable practices.

3. Many sustainable practices can have a direct positive impact on public, private, and

personal finances, now.

- Government, business, and personal actions can result in cost savings, increased revenue, increased efficiencies, and increased value in the eyes of customers, visitors, current residents and future residents.

Sustain Arvada Plan

The **Sustain Arvada Plan** has two primary components: The **Municipal Action Plan** and the **Community Plan**. While both plans strive to achieve a more sustainable community, the Municipal Action Plan, developed in 2010, defined and created a sustainable corporate identity for the City of Arvada. The plan's end goals are:

- To raise business practices within municipal operations to a “Best Practices” level,
- To lead by example, and
- To communicate and advocate our experiences within the Municipal Operations to the community.

The **Municipal Action Plan** focuses primarily on internal practices and external outreach, not community-wide goals. It should be noted, however, that community input and involvement was integral in developing a plan that works for the community and that reflects community values and ideals.

The **Community Plan** truly focuses on aspects of sustainability that relate to the entire Arvada population. Seeking to achieve the broad benefits to our environment, economy, and community, the Community Plan (Sustain Arvada) was developed by the Arvada Sustainability Working Group (2010-2011).

Success of this plan can be defined by several goals:

- Specific goals and measurable actions will be developed for the entire community,
- Implementation of actions will take place through programs and education, and
- An annual public accountability report will measure progress toward those goals.

Sustain Arvada includes the following six categories:

COMMUNITY VITALITY

This category strives to create opportunities for people to gather and self-govern, creating stronger bonds between neighbors and a sense of ownership and self sufficiency in the community. This can be accomplished through food production and distribution, recreation, public spaces, and community events. Other aspects of achieving a vital community are: a thriving economy, engagement in the community, a sense of belonging, access to the arts and culture, and essential community services that are readily functioning and available.

ENERGY

In Arvada, residential and commercial buildings consume more energy than all other energy users. As a result, conserving energy and making our structures more energy efficient are important components of community-wide sustainability efforts. Another aim is to encourage residents and businesses to produce more energy through renewable sources. More efficient use of our energy resources creates an economic advantage for the community as residents and business owners have more available income.

LAND USE

Arvada has historic housing stock mixed with more recent developments and housing. It is important to consider how land use is changing to fit the needs of our residents as well as the implications of these changes over time. If we want Arvada to become a more sustainable city, we must truly consider the long-term effects of allowing certain uses, introduce design guidelines which allow mixed uses and quality design alternatives, and increase housing options for residents. Taking a long-term and more comprehensive view, we will be able to produce an enjoyable, active, and convenient environment that encourages residents to engage and invest more in their community.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is the second largest user of energy in Arvada and directly affects air quality. The air we breathe is vital to maintaining good health in Arvada as well as preserving our scenic mountain views. Because air quality is a regional issue, partnering with other organizations will be important. In Arvada, we can focus on local and individual activities that each contribute to affect air quality. Educating citizens about more efficient transportation methods, and promoting and creating ways to get from place to place without using a car, are both important components of Sustain Arvada. Great opportunity exists with the four FasTracks stations serving Arvada, which will provide bus and commuter rail within walking distance of housing, jobs, and retail.

WASTE

The average U.S. resident generates four pounds of waste per day. With 108,000 people living in Arvada, that is a lot of material going to the landfill. Currently, only a small percentage of what we throw away is recycled. Programs and policies that encourage recycling and composting will help decrease the amount of trash going to the landfill. Recycling and remanufacturing materials not only creates jobs, but also saves energy as new raw materials do not have to be created to make new products. Educating businesses and citizens about stocking and purchasing products made with renewable materials or those products that contain less packaging is also important to sustainability.

WATER

Water is a scarce resource in the West, and Arvada embraces the importance of conservation. Many programs have been established to educate residents about water use inside and outside their homes. This plan strives to further educate households and businesses to reduce water consumption. A goal of this plan is to aim to determine local government actions that promote conservation and more efficient irrigation practices. In addition, Arvada treats its own water with one full-time plant and one summer-seasonal treatment plant. Both operations require power, so local efforts to conserve water on the citywide level will help conserve energy and reduce operating costs for the City.

Categories	Goals
Community Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more opportunities for residents to interact on local projects and events that enrich their lives and the community, such as community gardens, classes, art shows, festivals, and neighborhood improvement initiatives • Encourage more community based agriculture within the City of Arvada
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce energy consumption by increasing Arvada residents' awareness of their energy use and educating them about ways to minimize consumption • Increase energy efficiency in new and existing buildings by encouraging the use of sustainable materials and design as well as renewable energy
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accessible housing that accommodates diverse incomes, ages and abilities by working with the City to create walkable, mixed-use, zoning areas and increase options for neighborhoods to meet residents' needs with minimal travel
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve air quality and reduce the need for automobile travel by raising residents' awareness of transportation options including public transportation, carpools, cycling trails, telecommuting and trip planning
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of waste residents send to the landfill by encouraging recycling and composting in residences and businesses, and by promoting awareness about product stewardship/consumption
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce water consumption by educating citizens about water distribution, optimum watering schedules, conservation methods and restrictions, and indoor and outdoor water use management

Arvada Sustainability Advisory Committee

Appointed by City Council in spring of 2011 and consisting of eight residents, the Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Arvada, and two City Council members, the Arvada Sustainability Advisory Committee will be responsible for making recommendations to City Council to implement programs and policies. The Committee will prioritize and evaluate goals further to create an annual action plan for a minimum of four goals stated previously. A matrix will be used to create the annual action plan, which will include cost/benefit analysis, implementers, timeline, funding, and data needs. Arvada will release an annual progress report each year to report the status of the initiatives included in the annual action plan. Goals will be reviewed each year and as goals are achieved, new goals will be added as part of a community process.

The Future for Sustainability

Looking toward a future of more expensive and limited resources, Arvada will continue to consider the sustainability of the community. Sustainability initiatives can save money through energy and resource conservation, generate jobs in a new “green” economy focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy, and provide local food sources, while promoting community-wide economic development.