

Aligning Water Management and Non-Functional Turf Replacement: A Collaborative Framework

Commerce City Environmental Policy and Innovation Commission

Monthly Meeting

June 26, 2025

Agenda



Welcome & Introductions



Project Accelerator Program, Timeline, and Work to Date



Overview of the NFT Incentive Program Implementation Roadmap



Questions

Project Team



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WaterNow works to advance transformation in the urban water sector to accelerate the widespread adoption of equitable, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable strategies.

We do this as a national network for local water leaders and decision makers, empowering them with the technical assistance, resources, and tools they need to implement innovative One Water drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater solutions in their communities.





TIMELINE

Start of Work: Growing Water Smart Workshop

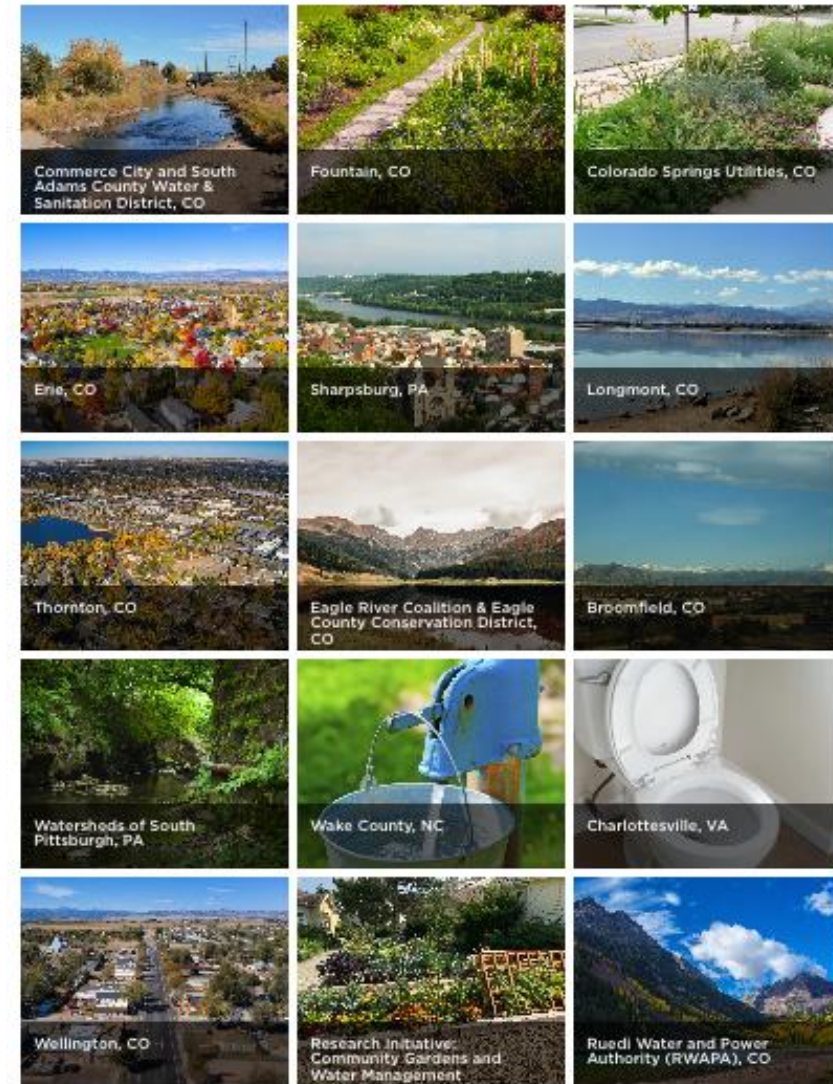
Interest and Approach for Project Accelerator Application

Awarded – Spring 2024!

PROJECT ACCELERATOR

- ✓ 250 hours of **pro bono technical assistance**
- ✓ Over a **6-12 month** period
- ✓ City/Agency identified project, driven by **local priorities**
- ✓ **Jump start** innovative water management initiatives

FEATURED PROJECTS



Project Accelerator Timeline

**Evaluate
Programs,
Policies, and
Plans**

**Collaborative
Strategy
Development**

June – July

August – December

December – February

March – May

**NFT Research &
Stakeholder
Engagement**

**Develop Residential NFT
Replacement Incentive
Program Implementation
Roadmap**

Evaluate Existing Water Efficiency Programs and Policies

Key Takeaways

Shared Goals

- Incentivize water wise landscaping
- Community involvement and education
- Inclusivity and environmental justice

Potential Gaps

- Monitoring and enforcement
- Co-benefits in landscaping initiatives



Non-Functional Turf Rebate Program Research

Researched **13 incentive programs**

- **Front Range:** 10 programs
- **West Slope:** 3 programs



Multiple program management and implementation options:

- **Option 1:** In partnership with Resource Central
- **Option 2:** By the municipality/ water utility
- **Option 3:** Combination of both

Commerce City Resident Engagement

The image displays three identical survey sheets titled "Choose Your Favorite Landscape! ¡Elija Su Paisaje Favorito!". Each sheet is a poll for residents to choose their favorite landscape option for converting a grass lawn to a low-water landscape. The surveys are held together by binder rings.

Survey Structure:

- Header:** "Choose Your Favorite Landscape! ¡Elija Su Paisaje Favorito!"
- Question:** "Would you be interested in converting your grass lawn to a low-water landscape? (Mark your answer below) ¿Le interesa a usted poder convertir su patio de césped en un paisajismo que requiera menos agua? (Marque su respuesta a continuación)"
- Response Options:** Yes (Sí), No, Need More Info (Necesita más información). Each option has a dot grid for marking votes.
- Benefits Section:** "Low Water Landscape Benefits Beneficios del Paisajismo de Bajo Consumo de Agua". It lists benefits like Drought Tolerant, Reduced Heat Island Effect, Cost Savings, Pollinator Habitat, Biodiversity, and Community Aesthetics, each with a corresponding icon.
- Options Section:** "Landscape Options/Opciones de Paisajismo". It lists four options: Xeriscape/ColoradoScape, Native Grass, Pollinator Garden, and Year Round Color. Each option has a dot grid for marking votes.
- Visuals:** Each option is accompanied by a photograph of the landscape. The "Just Planted" and "Mature" columns show the progression of the landscape.
- Footer:** Includes a QR code and a note about the survey being part of a larger project.

Visible Poll Results (from the three sheets):

Option	Yes (Sí)	No	Need More Info
Xeriscape/ColoradoScape	13	2	3
Native Grass	15	4	0
Pollinator Garden	57	24	9
Year Round Color	13	4	0

80% of respondents are interested in converting their lawn

Pollinator gardens (130 votes) were the most popular landscaping option, followed by **native grass** (55 votes)

Collaborative Strategy Development

Collaborative team meetings:

- Align on **priorities and approach** for an NFT program
- Define **roles and responsibilities**
- Discuss **collaboration** strategies
- Inform the development of the **implementation roadmap**



WaterWise Inspiration Hub, Denver

Residential NFT Replacement Incentive Program Implementation Roadmap

Phased Implementation Approach (*Flexible 2025-2028+*)

- Formalize Collaborative Partnership
- Resource Central Programs
- “In-House” Program Development and Launch
- Education & Outreach
- Funding, Financing, & Partnerships
- Program Metrics & Evaluation
- Additional Considerations & Next Steps

*Organizational collaboration to offer **accessible** residential turf replacement incentives, promote **water-efficient landscaping**, and support broader **sustainability goals***

Formalize Partnership

Establish a structured partnership through an IGA and joint-decision making process to ensure program alignment and shared ownership

- Define shared roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing agreement
- Ongoing coordination and shared decision-making



Resource Central Programs

Leverage a well-known third-party program to fast-track implementation



Residents indicated they were interested in pollinator friendly landscaping.

“Pollinator Playground” GAIB

- Slow the Flow and WaterWise Seminars (2025)
- Garden in a Box (2025) and Lawn Removal (2026)
- Set joint cost-sharing and service targets
- Remove barriers and increase program accessibility to **income-qualified residents**

“In-House” Residential Turf Replacement Incentive Program

Create additional program offerings beyond Resource Central, and tailor incentives to community needs

- Rebate and direct installation options
- Equity and accessibility considerations
- Enhance SACWSD and C3 collaboration



Program Design: 2026—2027 | Aim to Launch: 2028

Education & Outreach

Launch coordinated marketing and outreach strategies, with a focus on bilingual communications content, tailored messaging, and ongoing community engagement



- Build trust and increase awareness
- Develop bilingual outreach materials and partnerships
- Share success stories
- Host hands-on workshops

Funding, Financing, & Partnerships

Pursue state and federal funding opportunities and align cost-sharing strategies to support long-term program viability

- Diversify funding sources
- Apply for state and federal grants
- Annual budget requests



Program Metrics & Evaluation



Collect and track program data to continuously improve and measure impact

- Track program metrics
- Visualize program reach and equity gaps
- Survey participants for feedback

Additional Considerations & Next Steps

Scale up and expand programs for regional impact

- Scale-up residential program
- Program expansion opportunities
(Commercial, City-owned properties)
- **Showcase your success!**



Questions?

THANK YOU!

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WATERNOW ALLIANCE