

2023 Growing Water Smart Action Plan

Commerce City and South Adams County Water & Sanitation District



Our Message to the Community

Commerce City is a vibrant, diverse, and thriving community with a rich history and promising opportunities for shaping our future.

But water quality and supply threats lie ahead. Because of emerging contaminants, water scarcity, and environmental injustices, collaboration and communication between the City and our water provider are more paramount than ever.

Therefore, it is imperative that Commerce City and South Adams County Water and Sanitation District come together to plan our future in a healthy and strategic manner to enjoy a quality community for a lifetime.

Our Defining Goals

1. Utilize water supply as a tool to incentivize development and growth that the Community and Council want and reduce water demand through policy
2. Maximize efficiency strategies to fit City buildout scenario into projected water supply
3. Commitment between City and SACWSD to plan for land use and water collaboratively

Growing Water Smart Action Plan Items

1. **Improve general collaboration and coordination between City and SACWSD**
 - Pass a joint resolution between City and SACWSD
 - a. Education will be provided for staff, the City Council (the “Council”) and SACWSD Board (the “Board”) to understand why increased collaboration and coordination is important
 - b. Establish a clear process for the City Manager and District Manager from both organizations can set policy expectations and to attend every joint meeting
 - c. Ensure operational processes are documented - identify the current state and talk about the future state of what both organizations want to accomplish to serve the community
 - Establish a new IGA between the City and SACWSD to formalize cooperation and collaboration; Require any planning or project efforts from City that will involve water be discussed with SACWSD and vice versa on land use issues
 - Establish a regular meeting schedule between the City Council and SACWSD Board and their respective leadership teams
 - a. Use the fifth Mondays of each month that will not have a Council/School District joint meeting. First meeting scheduled for July 31, 2023
 - **Long range planning coordination** – Ensure policymaking in regard to water supply, quality, and capacity are incorporated into the comprehensive plan and other relevant, long-term planning documents
 - d. Have robust conversation between the City, SACWSD, and consultant to ensure that all policies and regulations intrinsically link land use and water

including but not limited to character areas, pressure zones, water budgets, and the identification of existing infrastructure and pressure zones

- e. Comp Plan/long-term planning documents and the SACWSD Master Plan should cross-reference one another, or, at minimum, include either plan as a supporting attachment
- f. Update the 2020 Water and Wastewater Master Plan based on updated long-term planning documents
- g. Update the SACWSD the Sustainability Plan based on lessons learned from workshop and goals of City and District
- h. Continue to examine the City's Sustainability Plan in partnership with the Office for Energy, Equity, and Environment

2. **Analyze the Development Review and Approval Process**

- Hold Water 101 work session(s) for city planners and engineers focused on development review and approval process.
 - a. The first session was rooted in investigation and fact-finding. CFI was a part of this process.

3. ERU estimations need to be discussed earlier in the development review process

- a. SACWSD to create a general ERU table
- b. Need to schedule an internal meeting with Planning, SACWSD, and Andrea to review Adequate Water Supply criteria and process (include District and involve water commission)
- c. Horizon Planning: Economic Development training/establishment of priority zones where there is infrastructure

4. PZ41

- a. Establish an ERU Allocation Policy that will be applied to all new development and be a part of pre-application process along with the ERU estimate table
- b. Investigate existing vested interests and identify a gap, if any, in infrastructure payment proposal to ensure project can be fully funded by fairly dividing the cost between impacted developers
- c. Look into CO water adequacy rule 29-20-301

5. **Incorporate Xeriscape into City's Code**

- In collaboration/conjunction with updating SACWSD Sustainability plan
 - Supported by a new City position for a Landscape Specialist (title to be determined)
- Apply for federal and state funds (likely only need to budget for 25% of funds needed to do this as we are strong candidates for funding assistance)
- Develop an ordinance to identify landscape specific standards that provide flexibility to look at turf retrofit program and city public land/ROW Plan (non-functional turf analysis)
- Work on public engagement strategy to educate residents about benefits of xeriscaping and how to properly xeriscape

6. **Update the building/plumbing code**

- Look into the establishment of a fixture and appliance retrofit program, and consider retrofit on resale requirements