Residential Non-Functional Turf Replacement Incentive Program Implementation Roadmap

Prepared For:

The City of Commerce City and South Adams County Water & Sanitation District

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Executive Summary

WaterNow Alliance (WaterNow), in partnership with South Adams County Water & Sanitation District (SACWSD) and the City of Commerce City (C3), developed this *Residential Non-Functional Turf (NFT) Replacement Incentive Program Implementation Roadmap* to offer guidance on the design, launch, and long-term success of a collaborative, community-oriented turf transformation initiative.[1] The roadmap outlines a flexible four-year implementation strategy that SACWSD and C3 may use to inform future discussions and decisions regarding residential turf replacement incentives, water-efficient landscaping, and broader regional sustainability goals.

The roadmap reflects input from stakeholder engagement, collaborative planning sessions, and research into local policy alignment, program models, and available funding opportunities. It provides non-binding, actionable recommendations in the following areas:

- **Formalizing Collaboration**: Establishing a structured partnership between SACWSD and C3 through an IGA and joint decision-making processes to ensure program alignment and shared ownership.
- **Education & Outreach**: Launching coordinated marketing and outreach strategies, with a focus on bilingual communication, tailored messaging, and ongoing community engagement.
- **Secure External Funding**: Pursuing state and federal funding sources and aligning cost-sharing strategies to support long-term program viability.
- **Launch Initial Offerings Through Resource Central**: Collaborating on the rollout of Garden In A Box (GAIB) kits and other third-party offerings, while ensuring joint planning, marketing, and reporting efforts.
- **Design & Launch an In-House Residential NFT Incentive Program**: Developing a custom program structure with flexible incentive options, clear eligibility and design requirements, and centralized tracking systems.
- **Track Metrics & Evaluate Program Performance**: Collecting data on water use, program participation, and outreach effectiveness to inform continuous improvement and ensure measurable impact.
- **Expand Offerings Over Time**: Scaling up both the Resource Central partnership and the in-house program, exploring future commercial and city-owned property initiatives, and using data visualization and reporting to demonstrate success.

This roadmap is not prescriptive. It is intended to serve as a shared reference and strategic resource that SACWSD and C3 can adapt based on evolving needs, capacity, and local priorities. With thoughtful planning, collaboration, and investment, the program may not

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[1] *This roadmap was developed by WaterNow Alliance as a set of voluntary recommendations and planning tools. SACWSD and C3 are under no obligation to adopt or implement any specific element. The content is intended to guide internal discussions, inform future decisions, and support local priorities at a pace that works for each entity.*

only generate meaningful water savings but also serve as a model for regional conservation leadership.

Introduction

In winter 2024, South Adams County Water & Sanitation District (SACWSD) and Commerce City (C3) applied for and were selected to participate in WaterNow Alliance's Project Accelerator Program, receiving 250-hours of pro-bono technical assistance to explore strategies for aligning water management and turf replacement incentives. Through this initiative, WaterNow (project team) has worked with SACWSD and C3 to develop a roadmap for a potential residential non-functional turf (NFT) replacement incentive program, outlining opportunities for collaboration, program design, and implementation strategies.

Over the course of the project, WaterNow worked with SACWSD and C3 to evaluate existing water efficiency programs, land development codes, and policies, identifying opportunities for alignment. The project team researched turf replacement programs across Colorado and the western U.S. and supported stakeholder engagement efforts to gather input on program design. This included a presentation to the Commerce City Environmental Policy and Innovation Commission (EPIC) and a public engagement poster at the City's annual holiday event to solicit resident feedback on landscape preferences. Input from both forums reinforced community interest in turf replacement incentives and helped inform program priorities and outreach strategies.

Through a series of collaborative discussions with the Project Accelerator core team, SACWSD and C3 staff defined program goals, explored funding opportunities, identified potential roles and responsibilities, and developed strategies for outreach and education. This roadmap summarizes the key insights from that process and provides recommendations for SACWSD and C3 as they consider opportunities to implement a residential NFT replacement incentive program. It outlines a phased approach to implementation, beginning with foundational development in 2025, program expansion in 2026 and 2027, and long-term sustainability planning in 2028 and beyond – but that specific timeline and actions described herein are for planning purposes only and not binding.

By following or adapting these recommendations, SACWSD and C3 may establish a well-structured, financially sustainable, and community-oriented turf replacement program that advances regional water conservation goals while offering residents accessible options for transitioning to water-efficient landscapes.

A complete set of materials developed throughout the course of this project— including background research and memos, stakeholder engagement presentations and outreach materials, collaborative meeting notes, and related resources—are available in a shared One Drive Folder.

Phased Implementation Approach

Year 1: Foundational Development & Implementation (2025)

Formalize Collaborative Partnership

A successful residential NFT replacement incentive program will require a well-coordinated partnership between SACWSD and C3. Both entities bring unique strengths to the initiative, and formalizing their collaboration could provide the structure needed for effective program implementation and long-term success.

To support this effort, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 establish an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) as an initial step in defining roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing arrangements (see **Appendix I: Template**). This agreement would clarify how each organization contributes to program administration, outreach, and financial management.

A key component of this partnership will be securing buy-in from decision-makers within both organizations. C3's City Council and the SACWSD Board of Directors will play a crucial role in approving funding commitments and supporting program goals. Establishing leadership alignment early on could streamline decision-making and provide greater program stability.

While program details will continue to evolve, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 clearly define their respective roles within the IGA to ensure clarity moving forward. SACWSD could serve as the lead organization for water efficiency programming, overseeing technical coordination, financial management, and data tracking. This may include administering financial transactions for the Resource Central partnership and maintaining records on program participation, water savings, and other key performance indicators. C3, meanwhile, may take the lead in community engagement and outreach efforts, ensuring that program information reaches residents through accessible and bilingual communication channels. The City's role could also include managing marketing efforts, strengthening partnerships with local organizations and businesses, and exploring additional funding opportunities to expand the program. While these roles provide a general framework, ongoing coordination will be essential. Regular communication and joint decision-making could help adjust responsibilities as the program develops.

Maintaining alignment between SACWSD and C3 throughout the implementation process will be key to the program's success. WaterNow recommends that the two organizations establish a structured approach to collaboration, beginning with identifying program leads within SACWSD and C3. Once program leads are established, they should hold quarterly check-ins to track progress, review funding updates, and address emerging challenges. As the program evolves, SACWSD and C3 may also consider forming a joint working group

with representatives from both organizations and key stakeholders to help guide program adjustments, long-term planning, and coordination with external partners such as Resource Central.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To formalize this partnership, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:

- Finalize and adopt the IGA by the end of Q2 2025, outlining key aspects of collaboration.
- Secure funding approval from C3's City Council and the SACWSD Board of Directors to confirm program commitments.
- Convene the first quarterly partnership meeting by Fall 2025 to align on implementation efforts.

By taking these steps, SACWSD and C3 can establish a strong foundation for long-term collaboration that advances regional water conservation goals while providing tangible benefits to residents through an accessible and well-supported turf replacement program.

Launch Initial Offerings Through Resource Central

As an initial step in offering residential NFT replacement incentives, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 continue leveraging and expand program offerings through Resource Central, a well-established regional partner for water efficiency programs. In 2025, SACWSD will maintain it's existing membership with Resource Central, which includes offing Slow the Flow and WaterWise Seminars. Simultaneously, C3 will establish their own partnership with Resource Central and offer Garden In A Box (GAIB), providing residents with accessible, ready-to-implement solutions for reducing outdoor water use. While the programs will be administered separately in this first year, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 consider the potential for consolidating all Resource Central offerings under a single, jointly managed membership in future years. This approach could enhance program efficiency, simplify communications, and support a more cohesive regional water efficiency strategy.[2]

To ensure a coordinated and equitable approach, SACWSD and C3 can work together to determine program structure, cost-sharing agreements, and outreach strategies before implementation begins. While both SACWSD's and C3's existing memberships with Resource Central provides a starting point, both organizations should jointly establish a cost-sharing framework, set participation goals, and align on financial contributions. SACWSD and C3 should also agree on the type and number of services to be offered each year based on anticipated demand and available budget. This collaboration will ensure that both entities play an active role in shaping the program.

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[2] Resource Central also offers Lawn Removal services for residential properties. SACWSD and C3 have discussed this additional offering and may explore a partnership for these services starting in 2026 (see **Years 2 and 3: Program Expansion (2026** - 2027), below).

Additionally, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 reference the Resource Central Price Guide (**Appendix II: Resource Central Materials**) and supplementary price tool to help structure their program offerings. This [excel tool](#)[3], developed by WaterNow, allows the organizations to set service targets based on available budgets and estimate how many GAIB kits, lawn replacement, slow the flow, or waterwise seminars can be provided each year.

Once program details have been jointly established, SACWSD and C3 should work together to coordinate communication and administrative responsibilities with Resource Central. WaterNow recommends that SACWSD take the lead in facilitating logistics and financial transactions due to its existing membership, while C3 plays an equal role in decision-making, program oversight, and education, communications, and outreach support. To ensure full transparency and partnership, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:

- Hold regular coordination meetings to discuss program implementation, budget tracking, and service adjustments.
- Jointly determine final service offerings and funding allocations (through IGAs) before communicating with Resource Central.
- Be equally involved in all communications with Resource Central, with both organizations copied on emails and invited to all program-related meetings.
- Ensure both organizations retain access to financial records related to program costs, invoices, and service agreements.

In parallel with program administration, SACWSD and C3 will need to ensure that marketing and outreach efforts are well coordinated. Resource Central provides an outreach toolkit that includes standard promotional materials for all program offerings. However, it is the responsibility of SACWSD and C3 to customize these materials, to ensure the messaging is aligned with community needs, and distribute through local outreach networks. To support this effort WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 hold quarterly communications meetings to review the Resource Central outreach toolkit, agree on any necessary communications, and align on broader outreach strategies. Once both organizations finalize messaging, SACWSD and C3 will be responsible for distributing materials through their respective channels, including, but not limited to, City/District newsletters, social media, and community events. WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 continue to send out materials in both English and Spanish.

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[3] Through 2026, Resource Central's CWCB Water Plan Grant provides a matching benefit, effectively doubling the number of GAIB kits and Lawn Removal services a partner funds. For example, if a partner commits to 25 GAIB kits and all are sold in a spring sale, Resource Central will provide an additional 25 kits for a fall sale at no extra cost to the partner. SACWSD and C3 should factor in this temporary matching contributions when planning initial offerings and long-term program sustainability with Resource Central programming.

Key Considerations and Next Steps

To successfully launch initial program offerings through Resource Central, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 work together to:

- Determine the type and number of services to be offered for each Resource Central program (e.g., GAIB kits (regular and income-qualified), Slow the Flow audits, and WaterWise Seminars).
- Establish a cost-sharing agreement that reflects equitable financial contributions from both organizations.
- Finalize service offerings and budget allocations before jointly communicating with Resource Central.
- Schedule regular coordination meetings (e.g., quarterly) to track implementation and discuss necessary program adjustments.
- Align on outreach and marketing strategies, ensuring that all materials are developed in both English and Spanish.

Align Education, Outreach, and Communication Efforts

A well-coordinated education and outreach strategy will be important to the success of a residential NFT replacement incentive program, ensuring that residents are aware of the program and understand how to participate. To maximize engagement, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 continue to take a targeted and collaborative approach to outreach, focusing on inclusive communication strategies that reach diverse communities, particularly Spanish-speaking residents, renters, and income-qualified households.

Given that nearly 50% of Commerce City residents speak Spanish, bilingual communication will remain essential to program accessibility. SACWSD and C3 already produce bilingual program materials, and the project team recommends they continue providing key outreach content -- including program applications, marketing materials, and educational resources-- in both English and Spanish. Coordination with La Ciudad and other local Spanish-language media outlets may further expand the program's reach via community radio, newspapers, and digital channels. In addition, partnering with trusted community organizations may help reach historically underserved residents – particularly those less likely to engage with traditional government channels – receive timely and accessible program information.

Collaboration between SACWSD and C3 will also be necessary to ensure consistent messaging across both organizations. The project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 establish joint communications meetings on a quarterly basis to align on outreach efforts, messaging, and key program updates. These meetings could ensure that all promotional materials reflect a unified voice and clearly explain program details, eligibility requirements, and available incentives. While Resource Central may provide marketing support for the initial program offerings, SACWSD and C3 will need to determine long-term roles and responsibilities for program branding and outreach, particularly if program

expands beyond third-party partnerships (see **Design & Develop an In-House Residential NFT Replacement Incentive Program**).

Another key outreach strategy involves highlighting real-life success stories to encourage participation. Showcasing residential properties that have successfully transitioned to water-efficient landscapes—particularly in neighborhoods where participation is a priority—could serve as a powerful engagement tool. The project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 create case studies, before-and-after photos, and video testimonials featuring residents who have benefited from similar programs (e.g. Northern Water's successful project videos and Resource Central's Inspiration Hub). These materials could be shared through social media, newsletters, community events, and local business partnerships, such as garden centers and home improvement stores.

In addition to external outreach, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 coordinate on website updates to provide a central location for program information. C3's website could host a dedicated program page with details on available incentives, application steps, and educational materials, while SACWSD's website could serve as an additional hub for program announcements and water conservation resources. The Beyond Lawn website is a good example of how to communicate a multi-organization administered NFT incentive program, as Beyond Lawn is a partnership between the Eagle County Conservation District, Eagle River Coalition, and Colorado State University Extension.

SACWSD and C3 may also find it helpful to reference WaterNow's Turf Conversion Database, which includes examples of communication and marketing materials, outreach strategies, and documented benefits from other turf replacement programs. These resources could serve as a foundation for developing tailored materials that align with the unique needs of this program. In addition, WaterNow has developed a report and fact sheet on engaging homeowners' associations (HOAs) in waterwise landscaping and turf replacement efforts. These materials provide guidance on overcoming common barriers, working with HOA regulations, and promoting sustainable landscaping practices in HOA-managed communities. SACWSD and C3 could utilize these resources to strengthen outreach and encourage broader participation among residents that live in HOAs.

Finally, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 leverage their Colorado WaterWise membership to customize and share outreach materials from the *Live Like You Love It Toolkit*. This includes the newly published, *DIY Lawn Conversion Guide for Homeowners*, which can support education and engagement efforts within the community.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To strengthen program outreach and engagement, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:

- Continue producing bilingual outreach materials and expand partnerships with Spanish-language media outlets to enhance accessibility.

- Host joint communication meetings quarterly to align on messaging and outreach strategies.
- Highlight program success stories through case studies, social media, and community partnerships.
- Create a dedicated program page on the C3 and SACWSD websites with application details and educational resources.

By implementing these strategies, SACWSD and C3 could ensure that the residential NFT replacement incentive program is widely known, accessible, and effectively promoted across diverse communities, increasing participation and maximizing water conservation benefits

Secure External Funding

Once SACWSD and C3 identify their internal budget and cost-sharing opportunities, securing external funding will be essential to support the long-term sustainability of the residential NFT program offerings. Leveraging state and federal grant programs could provide additional resources to expand program offerings and participation.

WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 pursue funding through a combination of state-administered grants and/or loans, and federal funding opportunities to maximize financial support. The following funding sources could help support program implementation:

State Grant Opportunities:
Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) Water Plan Grants support projects that advance Colorado's Water Plan objectives, including water efficiency and conservation.
- Eligibility: Open to governmental entities (municipalities, water districts, and counties), as well as nonprofits and private water providers.
- Funding Amount: No maximum budget request, but projects require a 25–50% match depending on the project type (e.g., planning vs construction).
- Application Cycle: Accepted twice per year (July 1 and December 1).

CWCB Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) Grants fund projects that help reduce the water supply gap and support conservation, efficiency, and public education efforts.
- Eligibility: Open to municipalities, water districts, and eligible nonprofits.
- Funding Amount: Varies based on available basin funds, with grant sizes ranging from $10,000 to $1 million. A 25% match is required.
- Application Cycle: Applications submitted through basin roundtables and reviewed semi-annually.

Federal Grant Opportunities:

[US Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grants](#)[4] provides funding for projects that improve water efficiency, including outdoor conservation measures such as turf replacement programs and projects.

- Eligibility: Open to states, water districts, and municipalities with water or power delivery authority.
- Funding Amount: Historically, funding has been available through:
  - [Water and Energy Efficiency Grants (WEEG)](#): Up to $5 million for large-scale efficiency projects.
  - [Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects (SWEP)](#): Up to $100,000 for on-the-ground conservation efforts.
- Application Cycle: Typically accepted once or twice per year (*however, the program is not currently accepting applications).*

To maximize funding opportunities, SACWSD and C3 should align their grant applications with broader water conservation and climate resilience objectives, emphasizing the program's potential to reduce outdoor water use, improve soil health, and support long-term landscape sustainability. Establishing clear program metrics—such as anticipated water savings and projected turf conversion goals—will be critical for demonstrating impact and securing financial support.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To secure external funding, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:

- Apply for either a CWCB Water Plan Grant or Water Supply Reserve Fund Grant to support program expansion and align program offerings with regional basin priorities.
- Monitor updates on the WaterSMART program and evaluate potential opportunities if funding resumes.

By proactively pursuing external funding, SACWSD and C3 could enhance the financial sustainability of the Residential NFT Replacement Incentive Program, ensuring that more residents have access to incentives and resources for transitioning to water-efficient landscapes.

Define Metrics and Evaluation Criteria

Establishing clear metrics and evaluation criteria will be important to understanding how well the residential NFT replacement incentive program is performing—and to inform program improvement. WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 track both quantitative metrics (e.g., participation rates, square feet of turf removed, etc.) and qualitative data (e.g., participant feedback, outreach effectiveness) to assess impact and identify areas for adjustment.

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[4] **The USBR WaterSMART grants are currently paused and under review until further notice.**

To support this, the project team recommends creating a centralized tracking system, such as a master spreadsheet, that compiles key data points from both internal systems and external partners into a central location (see **Example Metrics Tracking Spreadsheet**) .

Community Engagement Metrics
Continuing to track community engagement will help SACWSD and C3 understand which outreach strategies are most effective—and where gaps may exist. The project team recommends prioritizing outreach channels that allow for measurable feedback to better assess what messaging resonates with different segments of the community.

Key engagement metrics to continue tracking may include:
- Social media analytics, such as impressions, shares, and comments, to understand which posts generate the most interest and interaction.
- Email campaign performance, using SACWSD and C3 standards through Constant Contact, including open and click-through rates, which can help identify which subject lines, content types, and calls-to-action are most effective. A typical target might be a 30–40% open rate with a 2.5%+ click rate.
- Event participation, such as attendance at workshops, information booths, or community events, which offers insight into resident interest and real-time feedback.

While broader awareness tools like bill inserts or community signage can be valuable, they are more difficult to evaluate. SACWSD and C3 may choose to use these tools strategically—while focusing evaluation efforts on channels that provide trackable data.

In addition to measuring effectiveness, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 use engagement data to identify communities or neighborhoods with lower awareness or participation. This can inform targeted outreach to ensure the program is reaching a diverse cross-section of residents and achieving equitable access.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To support effective program evaluation and continuous improvement, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:
- Develop a centralized tracking system to compile key data, including program participation, water use (baseline and post-installation), and outreach metrics, in one accessible location.
- Continue monitoring engagement across outreach channels—including social media, email, events, and other tactics—to identify which approaches are most effective and where adjustments may be needed.
- Use outreach and participation data to identify gaps in program reach and inform targeted engagement strategies to promote equitable access. This may include

coordinating with internal teams and/or Resource Central to continuing to offer materials in both Spanish and English.

- Track participation rates across different program offerings to evaluate demand and inform future program adjustments.

By integrating these data collection practices from the outset, SACWSD and C3 could build a strong foundation for measuring success, adapting over time, and making the case for sustained program investment.

Years 2 and 3: Program Expansion (2026 - 2027)

Expand Resource Central Offerings

In Year 2, SACWSD and C3 could jointly expand their partnership with Resource Central by offering the Lawn Removal services. This service would build upon and complement the Garden In A Box (GAIB) offerings already available to residents, creating a more comprehensive set of options to support waterwise landscaping.

As part of this expansion, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 explore establishing a joint Resource Central membership, consolidating administration of all Resource Central programs under one partnership agreement. This approach could streamline logistics, reduce administrative costs, and provide a unified platform for coordinating service offerings, marketing, and budget allocations. To ensure these expanded offerings are well calibrated to community needs, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 evaluate anticipated customer demand alongside their internal budget capacity. Estimating how many residents may participate—and how many service slots each organization can realistically support—will help ensure an efficient and equitable rollout of Resource Central programs.

WaterNow also recommends reviewing how Resource Central's offerings align with SACWSD and C3's broader program goals. If the in-house residential NFT incentive program (see below) includes specific landscape design requirements or plant standards, the organizations may wish to coordinate with Resource Central to ensure consistency in guidance and implementation.

As the suite of services grows, SACWSD and C3 can continue to coordinate closely with Resource Central and one another to ensure that outreach, messaging, and service delivery remain aligned.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To support a successful expansion of Resource Central offerings, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:

- Assess community demand for lawn removal services and estimate participation levels to inform how many service slots to offer.
- Evaluate internal budget capacity to ensure the number of services committed to aligns with available funding.
- Coordinate with Resource Central to ensure that lawn removal services and GAIB kits align with any in-house program requirements.
- Continue quarterly coordination between communications teams to align messaging and promote available offerings effectively.

By taking these steps, SACWSD and C3 can ensure that Resource Central offerings continue to meet community needs and complement the broader goals of the turf replacement initiative.

Design & Develop an In-House Residential NFT Replacement Incentive Program

Developing an in-house residential NFT replacement incentive program offers SACWSD and C3 the opportunity to tailor program design to meet community needs, expand access to turf replacement offerings, and align with local sustainability and water conservation goals. The project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 start planning and designing the program in 2026 and launch the program in 2028.

In-house residential NFT replacement incentive programs provide flexibility, allowing utilities and cities to structure incentives, eligibility, and outreach to reflect their unique priorities. To guide development, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 first establish clear goals for the program – whether focused on removing participation barriers, promoting pollinator-friendly landscaping, enhancing equity, or maximizing water savings. These objectives will inform decisions about incentive structures, design requirements, and outreach strategies.

Once SACWSD and C3 identify program goals, they can begin designing the core elements of the in-house residential NFT incentive program. Recommended components include:
- **Program Structure**: SACWSD and C3 may consider multiple incentive types:
  - Rebate programs—where residents receive a check or bill credit after completing their project (e.g., $ per square foot amount) are common.
  - Direct installation programs, in which the agency manages design and installation, may be offered to income-qualified households or for specific landscape types (e.g., parkways; see West Basin Municipal Water District's Parkway Beautification Program for an example planting strip direct installation program).
  - Additional incentives, such as tree planting bonuses or free tree giveaways could further align the program with broader sustainability goals (see

[Southern Nevada Water Authority's Tree Canopy Enhancement Program](#) as an example).

- **Program Requirements**: Clearly defined eligibility criteria will streamline program administration. These may include, but are not limited to:
  - Applicant eligibility requirements.
  - Existing landscaping requirements.
  - Replacement landscaping requirements, such as an approved plant list (C3 has an [Approved Plant List](#) that could be tailored to this program).
  - Irrigation system requirements.
  - Non-living materials requirements (e.g. hardscape and artificial turf requirements)
  - Turf removal requirements (SACWSD and C3 may wish to prohibit certain turf removal methods to avoid adverse impacts on tree health, stormwater quality, erosion control, and pollinator health. See the Colorado Water Conservation Board's [DIY Landscape Transformation Guide](#) and the Colorado WaterWise [DIY Lawn Conversion Guide for Homeowners](#) for considerations when using common turf removal methods).
  - Integrating stormwater capture and filtration elements into replacement landscaping design (See the [Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's SoCal WaterSmart Turf Replacement Program](#) as an example).
- **Program Materials:** SACWSD and C3 may jointly develop shared program materials to ensure consistent and standardized materials between both organizations. Materials to develop include, but are not limited to:
  - Website content.
  - Application forms (SACWSD and C3 may require applicants to include information about their property, proposed project, before photos, landscape and irrigation plans, etc.).
  - Follow up email templates for application approval and rebate distribution (unless this is automatically managed through an online portal).
  - Site visit evaluation form (if applicable).
  - Landscape professionals contact list (e.g., potentially reference the [EPA Water Sense Find a Pro Tool](#)).
  - Free professional landscape designs (e.g., [Aurora Water's Landscape Design Program](#)).
  - Landscape plan and irrigation plan templates (See [Fort Collins Xeriscape Incentive Program](#)).
- **Application Process and Timeline:** The project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 determine a consistent annual timeline for promoting and accepting applications for the in-house incentive program. While many communities open applications in late winter or early spring to align with planting seasons, the ideal timing will depend on factors such as outreach schedules, internal capacity, and climate considerations. SACWSD and C3 may also wish to build in time for residents to complete any required steps prior to installation, such as attending a training,

preparing a design plan, or scheduling a pre-installation inspection. Regardless of when the application period opens, WaterNow recommends selecting a firm deadline for landscape installation and final documentation submission—typically before the first frost—to help ensure project success. If the program follows a rebate model, a sample application process may include:

- o Applicant submits an application.
- o Pre installation site visit (optional, based on SACWSD and C3 staff capacity) or review "before" photos.
- o Application approval and notice to proceed with turf removal and landscape installation.
- o Post installation site visit (option) or review "after" photos.
- o Submission of required documents (e.g., receipts/invoices, rebate form, W-9).
- o Disburse rebate to participant.
- o Follow-up survey to gather feedback from participant.

- **Internal Program Processes**: To ensure smooth implementation, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 define clear internal processes for conducting outreach, application tracking, participant communication, and disbursing rebates. Selecting a shared management system – such as a cloud-based spreadsheet or collaborative portal platform – could help both organizations monitor participant progress, track documentation, and ensure timely communication. SACWSD and C3 will also need to determine how participants will submit required program forms and documentation. Online survey platforms or existing customer portals may serve this purpose efficiently. In tandem, SACWSD and C3 should clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities for each step in the program administration process, based on existing organizational infrastructure and staff expertise. For example, if the incentive is applied as a credit to water bills, SACWSD may be best positioned to manage fund distribution; C3 may be better suited to track and review landscaping and irrigation plans for compliance with city code and permitting requirements through the City's application review portal, ETrakit. The project team recommends assigning roles accordingly to streamline administration.

The exact structure, requirements, and materials SACWSD and C3 develop will depend on the final program goals and selected incentive type (e.g., rebate and/or direct installation). To guide this process, the organizations may find it helpful to refer to the Phase 2 Residential Non-functional Turf Replacement Program Research spreadsheet for examples of program design from other Colorado communities.

Additional resources such as the California Water Efficiency Partnership's Landscape Conversion Criteria Tool offers a range of potential specifications for landscape design, irrigation systems, and hardscape requirements. Additionally, the Alliance for Water Efficiency is actively researching best practices for designing and implementing landscape

and irrigation programs and plans. The results from this project, [Best in Class: Smart Practices for Residential Landscape and Irrigation Programs](#), are expected to be published in Spring 2025.

The project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 begin planning for funding and staffing needs ahead of the 2027 budget cycle. This includes identifying funding sources, confirming collaborative cost-sharing strategies, and assessing resource limitations. SACWSD and C3 may want to discuss how cost-sharing for the in-house program will mirror or differ from existing arrangements for Resource Central offerings. To prepare, SACWSD and C3 may aim to determine preliminary program budgets and cost-share percentages in advance of submitting their 2027 budget requests.

Because in-house programs often require more administrative time and staff capacity than third-party offerings (e.g., Resource Central's programs), SACWSD and C3 may also need to consider temporary staffing or seasonal support to meet program goals. If additional resources are required, this should be addressed as part of the budgeting process.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To lay the foundation for a successful in-house residential NFT turf replacement inventive program, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:
- Define core goals and desired outcomes to guide program design.
- Conduct a community interest survey to gauge program interest and ensure alignment with community needs (see **Appendix III: Community Interest Survey** for sample questions). This survey could be an initial step that happens alongside internal conversations around goals and outcomes to ensure community priorities are included in these decisions.
- Collaboratively develop the program structure, eligibility criteria, and required materials.
- Evaluate staffing and budget needs, aligning with 2027 budget planning.
- Develop a centralized system for tracking applications, projects, and communications.
- Some residents may need additional support navigating design and installation requirements, particularly if they are new to waterwise landscaping or cannot afford professional assistance. SACWSD and C3 may consider offering accessible guidance and educational materials to ensure that all interested residents are able to participate successfully.
- In-house programs may encounter barriers, such as limited plant supply at local nurseries and concerns about neighborhood aesthetics. The [Colorado Waterwise Best Practices Guidebook](#) outlines strategies to address these challenges, which SACWSD and C3 could draw on when finalizing program requirements and outreach materials.

By taking these steps, SACWSD and C3 can lay a strong foundation for a successful in-house Residential NFT Replacement Incentive Program that reflects community needs, supports water conservation goals, and complements existing offerings through Resource Central.

Expand and Enhance Education and Outreach Efforts

As the program offerings move into its second year, SACWSD and C3 will have an opportunity to expand and refine their education and outreach efforts to further increase program participation and engagement. While initial outreach will focus on building awareness and laying the foundation for collaboration, years 2 and beyond should shift toward scaling participation, strengthening community partnerships, and increasing accessibility.

One key strategy for broadening engagement is to showcase real-world examples of successful turf conversions within the community. Seeing tangible transformations can inspire residents to participate and provide them with a clearer vision of what's possible. WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 document and share case studies featuring participants from the first year of the program. These success stories could include before-and-after photos, homeowner testimonials, and water savings data, which could be distributed through social media campaigns, city newsletters, and local news features. Community demonstration sites, such as public parks, medians, or civic buildings, could also serve as educational tools to illustrate the benefits of turf conversion.

To broaden access and improve inclusivity, SACWSD and C3 could expand their bilingual communication efforts and ensure outreach materials are designed for a diverse audience. The project team recommends working with La Ciudad and other Spanish-language media outlets to promote the program through radio, newspapers, and digital platforms. Additionally, SACWSD and C3 could partner with community organizations, neighborhood associations, and local schools to distribute educational materials and reach historically underserved populations of the city.

Building strong partnerships with local businesses and industry professionals could also play a role in expanding outreach. Home improvement stores, garden centers, and landscape professionals can act as trusted messengers, encouraging residents to take advantage of available incentives. WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 explore partnerships with businesses like ACE Hardware and A1 Organics to provide program-related promotions or discounts on water-efficient landscaping materials. Offering incentives or rebates on waterwise landscape trainings for certified landscape professionals who assist residents with turf replacement projects could also help ensure quality installations and increase participation.

As part of this expanded effort, SACWSD and C3 may also want to incorporate educational workshops and hands-on learning opportunities to help residents feel confident in transitioning to water-wise landscapes. WaterNow recommends hosting waterwise seminars, composting workshops, and irrigation efficiency trainings in collaboration with Resource Central or other local conservation organizations. These events could be held in community centers, libraries, or through virtual platforms to ensure broad accessibility.

Finally, maintaining a centralized and easily accessible source of program information will be important as participation grows. WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 continue updating a dedicated program page on their websites, ensuring that residents can easily find details on available incentives, application processes, and upcoming workshops. Regular updates via social media, email newsletters, and direct mail could also keep the community engaged and informed about key program milestones and deadlines.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To expand and enhance education and outreach efforts in years 2 and 3, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:

- Develop and promote case studies highlighting successful turf conversions to inspire new participants.
- Expand bilingual communication efforts by leveraging Spanish-language media outlets and partnering with trusted community organizations.
- Strengthen partnerships with local businesses such as ACE Hardware and A1 Organics to increase program visibility and offer potential discounts on water-efficient landscaping materials.
- Host educational workshops and hands-on learning sessions to provide guidance on sustainable landscaping practices.
- Maintain and regularly update a centralized program webpage to provide easy access to information and ensure ongoing community engagement.

By scaling outreach efforts and strengthening community partnerships, SACWSD and C3 could build long-term program momentum, ensuring that turf replacement becomes a well-supported and widely adopted conservation strategy in the region.

Evaluate Program Metrics and Performance

To demonstrate the program's value and build momentum for future funding, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 synthesize findings into a summary memo or presentation for City and Board leadership, highlighting lessons learned and any recommended adjustments for the following year. The project team recommends presenting program success stories, as well as metrics, to the City and Board.

Water Use and Savings Estimates
A foundational step in evaluating program success is establishing a clear baseline for outdoor water use and measuring reductions following turf replacement. The project team

recommends that SACWSD and C3 track both system-wide outdoor water use trends and property-level data for participating sites.

To begin, SACWSD and C3 could analyze water use data to estimate baseline irrigation demand across residential properties. This may include distinguishing between indoor and outdoor use where possible, based on monthly water use trends and available meter data. For program participants, the project team recommends monitoring water use before project installation and for up to three years after landscape establishment to assess the long-term impact of turf conversions. SACWSD could be responsible for pulling relevant water use data on participating properties.

In many cases, turf replacement projects may result in a 30–50% reduction in outdoor water use. Tracking these trends over time will allow SACWSD and C3 to quantify savings, refine program targets, and build a strong case for continued investment in water-efficient landscaping.

SACWSD and C3 may distribute a brief post-participation survey to continue collecting resident feedback on the program experience, satisfaction, and service quality across each offering. Collecting this feedback will allow SACWSD and C3 to pinpoint strengths, identify potential improvements, and refine future program offerings based on participant experience. The survey could include general questions about ease of access, likelihood to participate again or recommend to a neighbor, and satisfaction, as well as targeted questions specific to each service. For example:

- Lawn Removal Service participants could be asked whether the service was timely, professional, and made turf transformation easier.
- GAIB users may provide feedback on plant quality, clarity of planting instructions, and overall satisfaction with the kit.
- WaterWise Seminar attendees could reflect on whether the content was useful and understandable.
- Slow the Flow audit recipients may evaluate whether the irrigation audit provided actionable recommendations for improving water efficiency.

By embedding feedback mechanisms into the program implementation, SACWSD and C3 can ensure that program offerings are meeting the needs of residents, chart future growth or program expansion, and identify success stories to share.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To evaluate program metrics and demonstrate successes, SACWSD and C3 could:
- Distribute a post-participation customer survey to determine customer's satisfaction with program offerings.
- Continue to identify success stories to share with the public, City Council, and District Board.
- Continue tracking program metrics using the tracking mechanism developed during years 1 and 2.

- Continue tracking outdoor water use at both the system-wide and individual property level to estimate baseline irrigation demand and quantify water savings for up to three years following landscape conversion using the methodology developed in year 2.

Year 4: Long Term Sustainability and Growth (2028 and Beyond)

Launch & Implement an In-House Residential NFT Replacement Incentive Program

In 2028, SACWSD and C3 could move from planning to full implementation of the in-house residential NFT replacement incentive program. With core program elements developed and funding allocated during Years 2 and 3, the focus will shift to coordinating outreach, processing applications, conducting site visits (as applicable), and distributing incentives.

WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 follow the roles, application process, and internal workflows established during the program design phase. A shared tracking system, clear staff responsibilities, and consistent communication between both organizations will help ensure a smooth launch. SACWSD and C3 could participate in external trainings and certification programs to ensure all staff have a comprehensive understanding of landscaping and irrigation best practices. Colorado WaterWise recommends several landscape certification trainings that SACWSD and C3 could consider, including Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper, Irrigation Association, and Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado trainings.

During this first year of implementation, SACWSD and C3 may also find it valuable to:
- Monitor applicant feedback and adjust workflows as needed to streamline the process.
- Track participation rates and compare them against initial projections.
- Identify and resolve any administrative or communication challenges early in the rollout.
- Coordinate program outreach with the expansion of Resource Central offerings, ensuring that residents are aware of both program tracks and understand which option best fits their needs.

The pilot launch year offers an opportunity to test assumptions, refine internal systems, and gather lessons that will inform future program years.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To support a successful program launch, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:

- Coordinate closely on application processing, communications, and documentation review.
- Provide staff with training and support on internal program processes to ensure consistent program delivery.
- Monitor program metrics regularly and flag opportunities for early improvements.
- Continue community outreach and education to drive interest and equitable participation.
- Begin collecting feedback from program participants to inform evaluation and Year 3 improvements.

By establishing strong program guidelines in years 2 and 3, SACWSD and C3 can position the in-house residential NFT replacement incentive program for long-term success and impact.

Explore Offering a Commercial NFT Replacement Incentive Program

While the primary focus of this roadmap is residential turf replacement, SACWSD and C3 may also consider expanding their efforts to include commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties in future years. Commercial turf replacement programs can offer significant water savings, particularly for high-use properties with large non-functional landscapes such as business parks, schools, HOAs, and retail centers.

WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 begin exploring the feasibility of offering a CII NFT replacement incentive program by evaluating potential demand, program structure, and administrative capacity. As with the residential program, flexibility in design will be key to ensuring the program is well-suited to local conditions and stakeholder needs.

Initial planning efforts may include:
- Engaging potential commercial participants to understand interest levels, common landscape challenges, and barriers to participation.
- Evaluating water use data to identify high-consumption properties or sectors that may benefit most from turf conversion. SACWSD could use their internal tools to identify high tier water users.
- Assessing capacity and staffing to determine whether the existing program infrastructure can accommodate additional program offerings.
- Researching examples from peer communities, such as Colorado Springs Utilities' Commercial Turf Replacement Program, to help guide incentive structure, eligibility criteria, and landscape requirements.

Incentive designs for commercial properties often differ from residential models. For example, some utilities offer tiered rebates based on the size of the landscape area converted, provide technical assistance or design consultation, or structure incentives to align with stormwater or energy efficiency goals. Many utilities place a cap on the total allowable rebate or incentive amount or limit the amount of turf that is eligible to receive a

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rebate or incentive. SACWSD and C3 may choose to phase in commercial offerings once the residential program is well-established, allowing staff to apply early lessons learned and streamline processes.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To begin laying the groundwork for a potential commercial offering, the project team recommends SACWSD and C3:

- Review water use data to identify CII properties with large areas of non-functional turf.
- Conduct informal outreach or surveys to assess commercial stakeholder interest and capacity.
- Research existing commercial turf replacement programs across Colorado and the western U.S.
- Determine whether current staffing and tracking systems could support a scaled-up or parallel program.

By exploring the potential for a Commercial NFT Replacement Incentive Program, SACWSD and C3 can continue building momentum around landscape transformation and maximize regional water savings over time.

Ensure Financial Stability for Long-Term Success

A financially sustainable residential NFT replacement incentive program will require long-term investment and diversified funding sources. While SACWSD and C3 will have established an initial collaboration and cost-sharing approach through an IGA at this point, maintaining financial stability will require periodic assessment and adaptation of these agreements to ensure they remain feasible as the program evolves.

By the time the program reaches full implementation in 2028, SACWSD and C3 will have launched both the in-house residential NFT replacement program and offerings through Resource Central, providing multiple pathways for resident participation. To sustain these initiatives, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 continue coordinating financial planning efforts by regularly reviewing and updating their cost-sharing agreements to align with program needs and available resources.

To support long-term financial stability, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 maintain annual funding requests to the C3 Council and the SACWSD Board, ensuring that turf replacement remains a budgeted conservation priority. Regularly demonstrating the program's impact—including participation rates, water savings, and community benefits—could help justify continued funding allocations and potential budget increases.

Securing additional external funding will also play an important role in long-term financial viability. SACWSD and C3 may pursue additional state and federal grants to supplement

their budget allocations. As outlined in the **Secure External Funding** section, opportunities such as CWCB Water Plan Grants and Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) Grants could provide financial support for program expansion. Additionally, SACWSD and C3 could explore applying for a Colorado State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan to further support program implementation. WaterNow recommends that both organizations monitor evolving funding opportunities and adjust financial strategies accordingly.

In addition to the residential program, SACWSD and C3 could continue exploring funding opportunities to replace NFT on city-owned properties, such as medians, municipal buildings, and parks. Expanding conservation efforts to public spaces could serve as high-visibility demonstration projects, showcasing the benefits of water-efficient landscaping while reinforcing community engagement. These efforts could build upon the design and replacement work both SACWSD and C3 are already undertaking. The project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 evaluate the feasibility of securing external funding for this broader initiative while continuing to prioritize the success of the residential program.

Additionally, SACWSD may explore utility rate adjustments or alternative funding mechanisms to establish a dedicated revenue stream for long-term conservation efforts. Options could include modest water efficiency surcharges or adjustments to tiered rate structures. Evaluating these alternatives could help diversify funding sources and provide financial stability beyond grant cycles and budget allocations.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To support financial stability over the long term, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3:
- Maintain annual funding requests to C3's City Council and the SACWSD Board of Directors to secure ongoing program support.
- Periodically review and update cost-sharing agreements within the established MOU and IGA to ensure feasibility.
- Monitor and pursue external funding opportunities, including CWCB Water Plan Grants, WSRF Grants, and potential WaterSMART funding.
- Assess the feasibility of applying for a Colorado SRF loan to support program implementation.
- Develop strategies for maintaining both the in-house residential NFT incentive program and Resource Central offerings as funding availability evolves.
- Explore potential utility rate adjustments or a conservation surcharge to diversify financial resources.
- Pursue funding opportunities to remove NFT from city-owned properties, expanding conservation efforts beyond residential landscapes.
- Conduct annual financial reviews to evaluate program costs, funding needs, and potential adjustments for long-term sustainability.

By taking a proactive and adaptable approach to financial planning, SACWSD and C3 could ensure the program remains financially sustainable, expands conservation efforts, and continues delivering long-term benefits to the community.

Evaluate Program Metrics and Long-Term Performance

With the in-house residential NFT replacement incentive program launched, year 4 offers an important opportunity for SACWSD and C3 to assess program outcomes and refine implementation. Using the tracking systems and evaluation strategies utilized in years 2-3, both organizations can analyze whether the program is meeting its goals—and make timely adjustments to improve efficiency, participation, and impact.

WaterNow recommends SACWSD and C3 analyze a mix of quantitative data (e.g., water savings, participation rates, geographic distribution) and qualitative feedback (e.g., participant satisfaction, staff observations, outreach performance).

Evaluation efforts may focus on the following:

- **Water Savings:** SACWSD could provide outdoor water use data on participating properties pre- and post-installation. Where possible, compare actual savings against projections to assess landscape performance and long-term impact. Because native and waterwise landscapes typically take one to two years to establish, tracking usage over a multi-year period will yield more accurate insights into actual savings. Using data on square footage removed and corresponding billing information, SACWSD and C3 could calculate a per-square-foot water savings estimate, helping quantify the program's impact across the service area.
- **Participation Trends:** Track the number and type of program applications received, approval and completion rates, and participation across neighborhoods. These metrics can help identify underserved areas and guide targeted outreach.
- **Community Engagement:** Continue measuring engagement across key outreach channels—such as social media, email campaigns, and community events—to understand which messages and formats are most effective.
- **Internal Program Functionality:** Evaluate internal operations, including staff workload, application processing time, and communication systems. SACWSD and C3 may use this data to refine roles, streamline workflows, or address capacity needs.
- **Participant Feedback:** Continue the post-participation feedback survey for participants, expanding the questions to include the in-house residential NFT replacement incentive program.

By year 4, SACWSD and C3 will have collected several seasons worth of data from both the Resource Central offerings and the in-house residential NFT replacement incentive program. This stage of implementation presents a valuable opportunity to evaluate long-

term water savings, showcase program outcomes, and inform the future direction of turf replacement efforts.

In addition to quantitative and qualitative analysis, visualizing the program reach and outcomes may offer another compelling way to communicate success. The project team recommends that SACWSD and C3 use C3's GIS staff and data provided by SACWSD to map turf conversions throughout the community, highlighting square footage removed per property, estimated water savings, and participation density by neighborhood. These maps could also identify areas with remaining high turf coverage—including large CII properties—which may help prioritize future outreach or expansion into commercial offerings.

To increase transparency and public awareness, WaterNow recommends that SACWSD and C3 compile evaluation findings into a public-facing program report. This report could include:
- Maps and graphics illustrating where turf transformations have occurred.
- Photos and highlights from successful residential projects.
- Cumulative water savings estimates.
- Participation data and trends across different program offerings.
- Key insights from participant surveys and community engagement efforts.

A well-designed report could help SACWSD and C3 demonstrate program effectiveness to C3 Council, the SACWSD Board, and the broader community—supporting continued funding and stakeholder buy-in. As an example, the Southern Nevada Water Authority's Water Conservation Plan (Chapter 5, page 29) provides a strong model for summarizing program achievements in a clear and engaging way.

Key Considerations and Next Steps
To evaluate long-term performance and communicate program outcomes, the project team recommends that SACWSD and C3:
- Continue tracking participation, square footage removed, and engagement across all program offerings.
- Analyze post-installation water use among participants to estimate per-square-foot and total water savings.
- Use GIS software to map program reach, identify gaps, and highlight high-impact conversion areas.
- Develop a public report summarizing key outcomes, visual materials, and participant feedback. Consider sharing these takeaways during the annual June SACWSD sustainability plan update meeting.

By highlighting measurable outcomes and sharing success stories, SACWSD and C3 can build momentum for long-term investment in landscape transformation while reinforcing the community benefits of waterwise practices.

Conclusion

This roadmap provides SACWSD and C3 with a clear and actionable path forward over the next four years to implement successful residential NFT replacement incentive program offerings. While strategies outlined herein are not prescriptive, they are intended to support internal decision-making and serve as a planning resource that the two organizations can draw from at their own pace. By coordinating efforts, investing in long-term sustainability, and centering community needs, SACWSD and C3 can help shape a resilient, water-efficient future for residents while achieving regional conservation goals on terms that reflect local priorities and capacity.
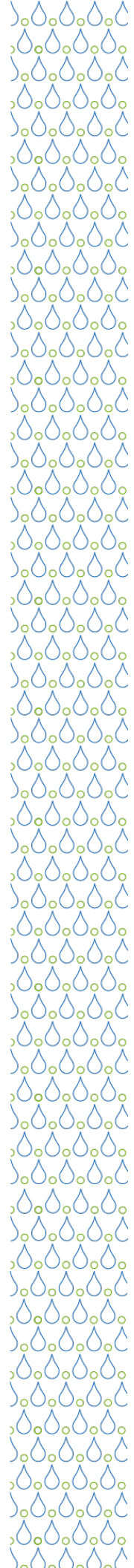
Appendix I: Template IGA

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT

Between The

SOUTH ADAMS COUNTY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT

And The

CITY OF COMMERCE CITY

I. INTRODUCTION

This Intergovernmental Agreement ("IGA" or "Agreement") is made effective as of this [__] day of [MONTH], [YEAR] between the South Adams County Water and Sanitation District, a quasi-municipal corporation and political subdivision of the State of Colorado ("District"), and the City of Commerce City, a Colorado home rule municipality ("City"), at times, individually referred to as a "Party" and are collectively referred to as the "Parties." This Agreement is made pursuant to the authority granted in C.R.S. §29-1-203, which permits Colorado government entities to contract with one another to provide functions or services, including the sharing of resources. The purpose of this IGA is to establish a collaborative and strategic partnership to develop and implement non-functional turfgrass replacement incentive program offerings for residential customers. This initiative promotes water conservation, efficiency, and sustainable landscaping practices within the District and City.

II. BACKGROUND

The South Adams County Water and Sanitation District provides potable, irrigation, and wastewater treatment services to over 68,000 customers within the City of Commerce City and parts of unincorporated Adams County. The City is experiencing rapid population growth and has recently updated its Land Development Code's landscaping standards to encourage low water, xeric and native landscaping and updated the Commerce City Approved Plant List to encourage sustainable land use practices.

Recognizing that outdoor irrigation accounts for a significant portion of total water demand, the Parties are committed to reducing non-functional turf and promoting climate-appropriate landscaping as a long-term water conservation strategy. The District and City agree to collaboratively develop and implement incentive-based program offerings to encourage residents to replace non-functional turf with sustainable landscaping. Through

this partnership, the District and City will align resources, funding commitments, and outreach efforts to ensure effective implementation to maximize the programs' impact. This initiative will serve as a model for future water efficiency programs between the two entities.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Agreement is to:
 i. Establish a framework for collaboration between the District and City to develop and implement residential non-functional turf replacement incentive program offerings.
 ii. Align policies, resources, and strategies to promote water conservation and demand-side management.
 iii. Outline the roles, responsibilities, and funding commitments of each Party.
 iv. Establish a mechanism for ongoing communication, coordination, and program evaluation.
 v. Provided a structured approach for the development and implementation of the program.

IV. AUTHORITY

This Agreement is authorized pursuant to Article XIV, Section 18 of the Colorado Constitution and C.R.S. § 29-1-203, which permit Colorado governmental entities to cooperate and contract with one another to provide any function, service, or facility lawfully authorized to each. Each Party represents that it has the legal power and authority to enter into this Agreement.

V. RECITIALS

WHEREAS, the District provides essential water and wastewater services to the City and surrounding areas and is responsible for managing water resources efficiently; and

WHEREAS, the District seeks to reduce water demand per capita by approximately 30% by 2048; and

WHEREAS, the City of Commerce City has amended its Land Development Code to include landscaping standards that support climate-appropriate plantings and water conservation and efficiency standards; and

WHEREAS, the City has committed to developing policies and programs to help residents and businesses conserve water, including providing incentives to replace turf grass with waterwise landscaping; and
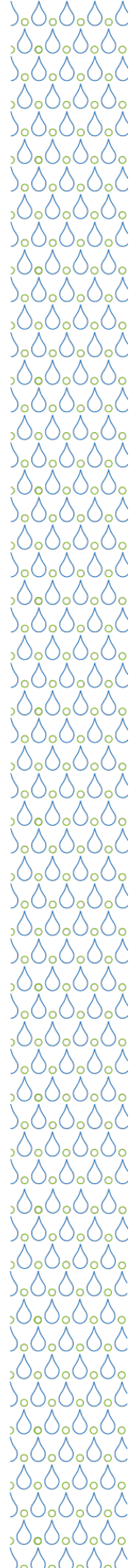
WHEREAS, replacing non-functional turf with waterwise landscaping is a key strategy for reducing outdoor water consumption, enhancing climate resilience, and ensuring long-term water supply reliability; and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize that a residential non-functional turf replacement incentive program will benefit the community by reducing water use, providing financial assistance to residents, and support sustainable landscaping; and

WHEREAS, the collaboration between the District and the City will ensure alignment between policies, financial incentives, and outreach efforts, improving program accessibility and efficiency; and

WHEREAS, the Parties desire to formalize their roles, responsibilities, and commitments through this IGA to advance water conservation and sustainable land use practices.

VI. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTERESTS

The District and the City share a common interest in promoting water conservation increasing community resilience and ensuring long-term sustainability. This partnership will:

i.   Enhance water supply reliability by reducing outdoor water demand.
ii.   Support the City's sustainability goals and the District's Water Efficiency Plan.
iii.   Provide direct financial benefits to residents through incentive programs, lowering the costs of landscape conversion.
iv.   Ensure policy alignment between local regulations, zoning requirements, and water conservation strategies.
v.   Reduce urban heat island effects, improving climate resilience in residential neighborhoods.
vi.   Expand public awareness of sustainable landscaping practices, encouraging a shift toward water-efficient outdoor spaces.
vii.   Strengthen inter-agency collaboration, creating a model for future joint conservation efforts.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES

The Parties will, to the best of their ability, work together to develop and implement residential non-functional turf replacement program offerings by collaborating on the following actions, subject to further refinement:
i.   Responsibilities of the District

1. Collaborate with the City to develop and administer the residential non-functional turf replacement incentive program including eligibility criteria, application processes, and funding allocation.
2. Coordinate with third-party organizations (e.g., Resource Central) to offer water conservation programs such as Garden In A Box, Slow the Flow, Lawn Removal, and Waterwise Seminars.
3. Provide guidance on water-efficient landscaping, irrigation practices, and best management strategies to customers.
4. Monitor program participation and track water savings data to evaluate effectiveness.

ii. Responsibilities of the City
1. Align the residential non-functional turf replacement initiative program guidelines with City policies, zoning codes, and landscape regulations.
2. Promote and publicize the incentive program offerings through the City's official communication channels including social media, newsletters, and community events.
3. Provide outreach and engagement support to ensure program accessibility, with a focus on Spanish-speaking and income-qualified customers.
4. Facilitate partnerships with local businesses, plant nurseries, and landscapers to encourage and streamline the uptake of non-functional turf replacement projects.
5. Support coordination with homeowner associations (HOAs), community organizations, and other stakeholders to expand program reach and effectiveness.

iii. Joint Responsibilities
1. Establish a regular communication process (e.g., quarterly check-ins) to review progress, discuss challenges, and refine strategies.
2. Develop and distribute outreach materials to educate residents about program benefits, application procedures, and available resources.
3. Collaborate on public education efforts, including workshops, webinars, and community engagement events.
4. Track program performance metrics, including the number and geographic spread of participants, square footage of turf replaced, and estimated water savings.
5. Pursue funding opportunities and evaluate long-term program sustainability options, including cost-sharing models, grants, and other financial mechanisms.

The specific actions and responsibilities outlined above are subject to ongoing discussion and will be finalized in a Scope of Work.

VIII. SCOPE OF WORK

The Parties agree to jointly develop and maintain a Scope of Work, attached hereto as Exhibit A, that outlines specific deliverables, timelines, and shared implementation responsibilities for the residential non-functional turf replacement incentive program. The Scope of Work may be amended from time to time upon mutual written agreement of the Parties.

IX. FUNDING AND FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

The Parties acknowledge that implementation of the program described in this Agreement requires financial resources, including but not limited to funding for incentives, outreach, and administration.

Each Party agrees to allocate funds as outlined in the Scope of Work (Exhibit A), subject to annual appropriations and budget approval by its governing body. The Parties shall collaborate in identifying and pursuing cost-sharing opportunities, grants, and other external funding sources to support the program.

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as obligating either Party to expend funds unless specifically appropriated and authorized in accordance with applicable laws and procedures.

X. LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND LIABILITY

Each Party is responsible for its own acts and omissions, and the acts and omissions of its employees, agents, and subcontractors. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as a waiver of the provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act (C.R.S. § 24-10-101 et seq.).

The Parties agree that no Party shall be responsible for the acts or omissions of the other Party or the employees, agents, or contractors of the other Party. Each Party shall be responsible for any liability, costs, or damages arising from its own performance of the obligations under this Agreement.

XI. GOVERNING LAW
This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Colorado. Venue for any dispute arising under this Agreement shall be in the County of Adams, Colorado.

XII. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS

Individuals listed below are authorized to act in their respective areas for matters related to this IGA.
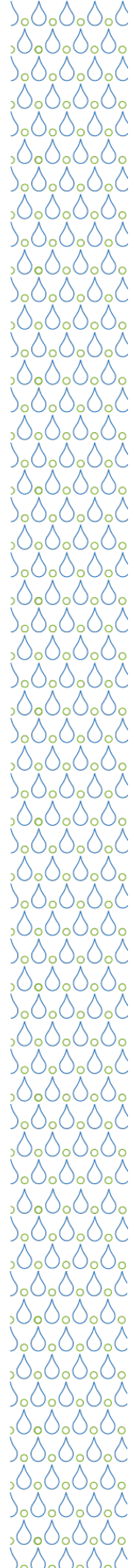
[NAME], [TITLE], South Adams County Water and Sanitation District

[NAME], [TITLE], South Adams County Water and Sanitation District

[NAME], [TITLE], City of Commerce City

[NAME], [TITLE], City of Commerce City

XIII. PARTICIPATION IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES

This IGA in no way restricts the District or City from entering into similar agreements or participation in separate water conservation initiatives with other agencies, municipalities, or organizations.

XIV. TERMINATION AND MODIFICATION

This IGA shall become effective upon full execution by both Parties and shall remain in effect unless terminated as provided herein. This IGA may be amended only by a written agreement signed and dated by authorized representatives of both Parties. Either Party may terminate this Agreement, in whole or in part, for any reason, upon ninety (90) days written notice to the other Party.

XV. SIGNATURES

By signing below, the Parties acknowledge their commitment to collaborate on the residential non-functional turf replacement incentive program offerings in accordance with the terms outlined in this IGA, effective on the date set forth above.
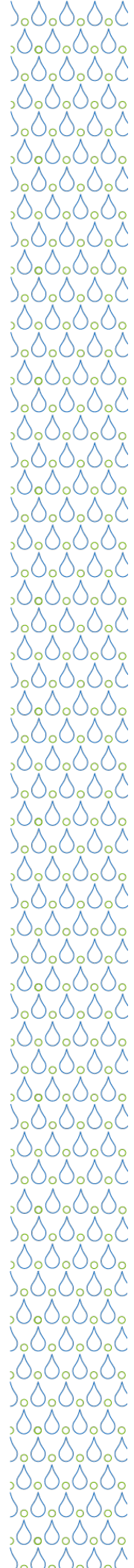
SOUTH ADAMS COUNTY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICT

By:

_____

Date

_____

[NAME], [TITLE],
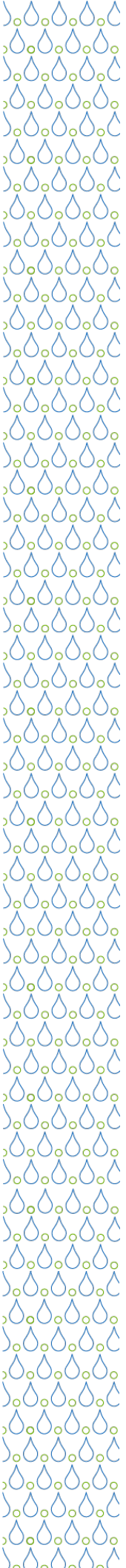South Adams County Water and Sanitation District

CITY OF COMMERCE CITY
By:

_____   _____
Date   [NAME], [TITLE], City of Commerce City

Appendix II: Resource Central Materials

2025 PRICE GUIDE
WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

RESOURCE central
CONSERVATION MADE EASY

GARDEN IN A BOX

Professionally designed, DIY low-water garden kits provided to residents with a $25 discount to incentivize waterwise landscape and inspire conservation. Our income-qualified program offers a $100 discount!
$80 / garden kit discount
$173 / income-qualified garden kit discount

SLOW THE FLOW*

Sprinkler evaluations where homeowners and property managers learn about their system and best practices for watering in Colorado. Includes customized watering schedule and report.
$155 / residential audit
$86 hour / non-residential properties
Include smart control clock and rain sensor installations for additional costs.

LAWN REPLACEMENT

Incentivize residents with a $750 discount to permanently replace traditional lawns with low-water alternatives like native and waterwise plants. Discount applies to lawn removal service OR garden kits.
$5,000 program fee; $750 / participant

WATERWISE YARD SEMINARS

Educational, virtual webinars taught by local landscape professionals with topics covering all aspects of waterwise landscaping and gardening. Free to the public; February through August.
$2,450 / 1st seminar; $1,975 / each additional

EACH TURNKEY PROGRAM INCLUDES

› **Professionally Designed Marketing Toolkits**
Program-specific photos, infographics, social media posts, customizable flyers, and a recommended marketing calendar.

› **User-Friendly Program Updates**
Regular program updates ensure you know exactly how your programs are performing throughout the season.

› **Excellent Customer Service**
Participants receive friendly, efficient, skilled customer service from start to finish from our highly trained water conservation team.

› **Comprehensive Annual Report**
At the end of the year, you get a report that summarizes the performance of each program, including customer survey data and quotes.

"I loved everything about the program. It was easy, communication was consistent and clear, and the results were exactly what I was hoping for. The Resource Central team was very professional, knowledgeable, friendly and quick." - Lawn Replacement Participant

WATER CONSERVATION PARTNERS

Arapahoe County Water and Wastewater Authority
City of Arvada
City of Aspen
City of Aurora
Bancroft-Clover WSD
Town of Berthoud
City of Boulder
City of Brighton
City & County of Broomfield
Castle Pines North Metropolitan District
Castle Rock Water
Centennial WSD
Cottonwood WSD
Denver Water
East Cherry Creek Valley WSD
East Larimer County WD
City of Edgewater
City of Englewood
Town of Erie
City of Evans
Town of Firestone
Fort Collins-Loveland WD
City of Fort Collins Utilities & Nature in the City
City of Fountain
Town of Frederick
City of Golden

City of Greeley
Town of Johnstown
City of Lafayette
City of Lakewood
Left Hand WD
Little Thompson WD
City of Littleton
Town of Lochbuie
City of Longmont
City of Louisville
Loveland Water and Power
Mancos CD
Northern Water
City of Northglenn
Parker WSD
Pinery WWD
Pueblo West Metro District
Roxborough WSD
Town of Severance
South Adams County WSD
South Metro Water Supply Authority
Town of Superior
City of Thornton
Town of Wellington
City of Westminster
City of Wheat Ridge
Willows WD
Town of Windsor

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WaterNow Alliance | Residential NFT Replacement Incentive Program Roadmap

Appendix III: Community Interest Survey

Help Shape a New Landscaping Incentive Program!

Commerce City and South Adams County Water & Sanitation District (SACWSD) are exploring the idea of offering financial incentives to residents who replace non-functional turfgrass (lawn areas not used for recreation) with low-water, sustainable landscaping.

Your input will help us design a program that works for your needs and priorities. This short survey will ask about your preferences for incentive amounts, program benefits, and how you'd like to stay informed.

Sample Survey Questions:

1. If a program paid you $2–3 per square foot to replace your grass with water-wise plants, would you be interested in participating?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Not sure

2. How would you prefer to receive your rebate or incentive?
    a. A check in the mail
    b. A credit on my water bill
    c. Other (please describe)

3. Would paying for the landscaping work upfront and being reimbursed later be a challenge for you?
    a. Yes, that would be a barrier
    b. No, I could cover the upfront cost
    c. Not sure

4. What would make this type of program most helpful or appealing to you? *(Select all that apply)*
    a. Easy-to-understand instructions
    b. Help choosing plants or designing my yard
    c. Help finding contractors or landscapers
    d. Clear rules about what qualifies for the incentive
    e. A higher dollar amount per square foot
    f. Other (please share your ideas)

5. Besides saving water, which of these benefits would you like to see from a lawn replacement program? *(Select all that apply)*

a. More trees or shade
b. Habitat for pollinators and birds
c. Lower water bills
d. Prettier, more colorful landscaping
e. Less yard maintenance
f. Helping the community prepare for drought
g. Reducing heat in my neighborhood
h. Other (please describe)

6. If tree planting incentives were available, would you be interested in adding a tree to your yard?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

7. How would you like to learn about this program in the future? *(Select all that apply)*
   a. Email
   b. A flyer or postcard in the mail
   c. My water bill
   d. Social media (e.g., Facebook or Instagram)
   e. Community events or workshops
   f. City or SACWSD websites
   g. Local newspaper or radio
   h. Other (please describe)