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## Nature in the City

Through the Community Capital Improvement Program, Nature in the City awards funds for community-driven projects that provide increased access and stewardship to high-quality natural spaces. If you have a creative idea for your neighborhood that improves natural spaces and wildlife habitat throughout Fort Collins, the City wants to help make it happen!



## About the Grants

We offer two types of grants, in alternating years:

**Dream It Up Planning Grant:** up to \$8,000 to help create professional designs and build community support

**Make It Happen Implementation Grant:** up to \$50,000 for projects ready to be built

For examples for past projects, please contact Natural Areas at [naturalareas@fortcollins.gov](mailto:naturalareas@fortcollins.gov) (<mailto:naturalareas@fortcollins.gov>).

**Grants not available in 2026 as staff work to update the Nature in the City Strategic Plan.**

## Background and Nature in the City Today

The Nature in the City program started when City Planners wondered how they could better integrate nature into development projects. Eventually, this led to the City Council adoption of the Nature in the City Strategic Plan in 2015.

Nature in the City works with various partners to implement innovative and creative projects. Locations for Nature in the City projects may include City parks, stormwater utility sites, open spaces in your neighborhood, community gardens and more. While not every site will provide every experience, **Nature in the City will ensure that residents have access to a variety of natural experiences close to where they live and work.**

## Vision, Goals and Strategic Plan

Our vision is a connected network of natural areas in Fort Collins where people, plants and wildlife can all flourish.

### Goals:

- **Connectivity:** Link natural areas across Fort Collins.
- **Access:** Bring nature closer to where people live and work.
- **Stewardship:** Support landscapes that benefit people and wildlife.

Want a copy of the full Strategic Plan? Email us at [naturalareas@fortcollins.gov](mailto:naturalareas@fortcollins.gov) (<mailto:naturalareas@fortcollins.gov?subject=NIC%20Strategic%20Plan%20Request>) to request it.

# Partnerships to Reach Goals

Some current partnerships that help reach Nature in the City goals:

- Participating in the City's Night Sky (<https://www.fortcollins.gov/Uncategorized-Content/Night-Sky>) team.
- Integrating Nature in the City principles into efforts such as the Water Efficiency Plan, Climate Action Plan and City Plan.
- Biodiversity monitoring volunteers are learning about urban wildlife and exploring Fort Collins' natural spaces as they conduct scientific surveys for birds and butterflies.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why Apply?

**Planning Grants** help build strong partnerships, solve early challenges and improve the final project design.

**Implementation Grants** help build lasting community spaces, create more wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

### Who Should Apply?

These types of groups have applied for Nature in the City grants:

- Home-Owner Associations
- Faith-based organizations
- Businesses
- Non-profits
- Affordable housing communities
- Mobile-home communities

- Schools
- Apartment Complexes
- Committed community members with creative project ideas

## What Types of Projects Qualify?

Nature in the City can fund a wide variety of on-the-ground projects. Get creative with it! Some ideas include:

- Native-habitat gardens
- Nature Play Areas
- Outdoor classrooms/gathering spaces
- Mini habitat/pollinator restorations with native plants
- Turf conversions to native habitat
- Habitat enhancements to your existing green space
- Native plants

## What is Eligible for Funding?

Eligible projects include:

- Projects within the Fort Collins growth management area
- Hiring a landscape company to install the project (implementation phase)
- Hiring a landscape designer to plan the project (planning phase)
- Up to 15% of your grant funds can go toward staff and outreach costs, collectively
- Completing a minor amendment through the City's Zoning Department for your project (planning or implementation phase)

- Projects with predominantly native plants

## What is NOT Eligible for Funding?

These are not eligible:

- Individual homeowner projects. Those are now funded through the Xeriscape Incentive Program.
- Programs and activities (environmental education, clean up days, research)
- Project maintenance
- Projects outside of the City of Fort Collins' growth management area
- Non-native plants

## What Materials Do I Need When Applying?

You'll need:

- Completed application
- A project team (including landowner)
- Budget worksheet
- Site photos
- Landscape plan
- Landowner permission

## Resources

- [Self-Guided Project Tour \(Story Map\)](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d0d0e04c6d7f490e93bc656990384735)  
(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d0d0e04c6d7f490e93bc656990384735>)
- [2024 Nature in the City Annual Report](/files/sharedassets/city/v/7/community-services/natural-areas/natural-areas-pdfs/plans-policies/2025-natural-areas-annual-report-web.pdf) (PDF, 6MB)  
(</files/sharedassets/city/v/7/community-services/natural-areas/natural-areas-pdfs/plans-policies/2025-natural-areas-annual-report-web.pdf>) – See what your community accomplished!
- [Landscape Design Guide](/files/sharedassets/city/v/2/community-services/natural-areas/natural-areas-pdfs/plans-policies/nature-in-the-city-design-guide-full-2025.pdf) (PDF, 8MB) (</files/sharedassets/city/v/2/community-services/natural-areas/natural-areas-pdfs/plans-policies/nature-in-the-city-design-guide-full-2025.pdf>) – Learn how to create sustainable landscapes.

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## More From Fort Collins Natural Areas

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