

4. Energy and Climate

Boulder’s efforts to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy are essential to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and helping reduce the severity of future climate change, as are our efforts to promote alternative transportation options and a compact city form. The objective is to help address energy and climate goals and integrate them with other planning activities, such as decisions regarding development patterns, infrastructure, transportation, economic development, building and site design, and natural resources.

Changes in the dynamics of energy markets as well as the threat of climate change may profoundly affect our community both economically and physically. A number of factors are increasing uncertainty about future energy issues, but rapidly evolving technology and the economic benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy are providing Boulder and Boulder County with new opportunities to take charge of our energy future and make greater use of local and regional energy resources.

The policies in this section support the city and county’s goals of meeting energy needs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and adapting to climate changes:

- Climate Action and Greenhouse Gases
- Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy
- Land Use and Building Design
- Waste and Recycling
- Sustainable Purchasing

Climate Action and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

4.01 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The city and county will identify and implement innovative as well as cost-effective actions to dramatically reduce the community’s contribution to total global greenhouse gas emissions.

4.02 New Policy: Climate Adaptation Planning

The city and county will cooperatively develop and implement a climate change adaptation plan to identify current vulnerabilities and determine strategies to protect the community against the potential negative impacts associated with climate change. These challenges include droughts, flash flooding, communicable diseases, heat waves, fire mitigation and fire protection and increased road maintenance, among others. The city and county seek to improve the community’s ability to effectively and quickly respond to and recover from adversity and disruptions.

Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy

4.03 Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy

The city and county will implement innovative programs and opportunities for individuals, businesses and organizations to reduce energy consumption and develop local energy generation. The city will support private decisions to use renewable energy, develop local renewable energy resources and preserve options for developing renewable energy in the future. The city will

review and consider revisions to regulations to support on-site energy generation, including solar and wind.

The city and county will pursue an energy path that not only reduces carbon emissions, but also promotes innovation, competition and economic vitality, and will set goals to ensure that the community has access to reliable, competitively priced and increasingly clean energy.

Land Use and Building Design

4.04 Energy-Efficient Land Use

The city and county will encourage energy conservation through land use policies and regulations governing placement, orientation and clustering of development.

4.05 Energy-Efficient Building Design

The city and county will pursue efforts to improve the energy and resource efficiency of new and existing buildings. The city and county will improve regulations ensuring energy and resource efficiency in new construction, remodels and renovation projects and will establish energy efficiency requirements for existing buildings. Energy conservation programs will be sensitive to the unique situations that involve historic preservation and low-income homeowners and renters and will ensure that programs assisting these groups are continued.

Waste and Recycling

4.06 New Policy: Construction Waste Minimization

The city and county will encourage renovation of existing buildings over demolition and will develop policies and programs that promote the reuse of materials salvaged after deconstruction.

4.07 Waste Minimization and Recycling

The city and county will pursue and support programs and activities that reduce the amount of waste that must be landfilled and pursue Zero Waste as a long term goal. Policies, programs and regulations will emphasize waste prevention, reuse, composting, recycling and the use of materials with recycled content.

Sustainable Purchasing

4.08 Environmental Purchasing Policy

The city will maintain a robust Environmental Purchasing Policy for the city organization that promotes the purchase of recycled and compostable products and encourages consideration of materials, length of use, re-use and disposal options, as well as cost when procuring materials and products.

Relevant Links:

CAP and Community Guide

Waste Reduction MP

Built Environment Policies – energy efficient land use

Economy: sustainable business practices