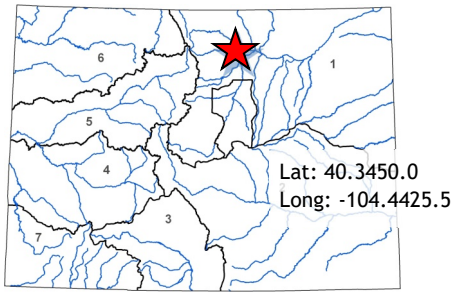
COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

Water Plan Grant Application

City of Thornton
Thornton Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

March 2021 Board Meeting



LOCATION	
County/Counties:	Larimer, Weld
Drainage Basin:	South Platte

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	$400,000
Water Plan Grant Request:	$100,000
Recommended Amount:	$100,000
Other CWCB Funding:	$100,000
Other Funding Amount:	$125,000
Applicant Match:	$75,000
Project Type(s): Study	
Project Category(Categories): Conservation and Land Use Planning	
Measurable Result:	

In 1985 and 1986, the City of Thornton purchased farmland in Larimer and Weld Counties and the water rights associated with the farms. The water rights will provide Thornton's long-range supply of municipal water. As of 2018, Thornton owns 18,751 acres in Larimer and Weld Counties. In Weld County, Thornton owns one hundred four farms on 17,161 acres, and in Larimer County, Thornton owns eight farms on 1,590 acres. While the City of Thornton has been working to meet the Water Court decree requirements, the city is raising funds to support a voluntary, community-driven effort that is not required by the decree or county permitting processes.

Thornton is seeking Colorado Water Plan Grant funds to establish a collaborative, community-driven effort to (a) advance a land-use planning process that bridges social, economic, environmental, water, and land use silos; and (b) explore ways the continued irrigation provision in Thornton's decree can help agriculture continue to thrive. Thornton will accomplish this through the development of two products: A Regional Land Use Assessment and a Water Optimization Study. The purpose of these studies will be to consider how to optimize limited water supplies, retain a resilient agricultural base, and thoughtfully transition irrigated lands to non-irrigated agricultural or environmental purposes with significant community input.

This project furthers many Colorado Water Plan objectives, including encouraging collaborative processes to address multiple water supply challenges while sustaining agriculture and rural communities. Furthermore, this project will provide a working framework for other planned, large-scale agriculture to municipal transfers in Colorado. Traditionally, water rights changes do not consider the long-term economic viability of area of origin communities or seek to design a process to mitigate public externalities such as declines in businesses. Through Thornton's approach, local input will help guide the gradual removal of water from irrigated agriculture in a process that maximizes benefits for the local community. These possibilities include utilizing alternative water sources to maintain irrigation of prime farmland and identifying opportunities for using dried-up land to generate ecosystem and community benefits such as open space and climate mitigation.

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Last Updated: June 2020

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Water Plan Grant Application

Instructions

To receive funding for a Water Plan Grant, applicant must demonstrate how the project, activity, or process (collectively referred to as "project") funded by the CWCB will help meet the measurable objectives and critical actions in the Water Plan. Grant guidelines are available on the CWCB website.

If you have questions, please contact CWCB at (303) 866-3441 or email the following staff to assist you with applications in the following areas:

Water Storage Projects	Matthew.Stearns@state.co.us
Conservation, Land Use Planning	Kevin.Reidy@state.co.us
Engagement & Innovation Activities	Ben.Wade@state.co.us
Agricultural Projects	Alexander.Funk@state.co.us
Environmental & Recreation Projects	Chris.Sturm@state.co.us

FINAL SUBMISSION: Submit all application materials in one email to *waterplan.grants@state.co.us*
in the original file formats [Application (word); Statement of Work (word); Budget/Schedule (excel)]. Please do not combine documents. In the subject line, please include the funding category and name of the project.

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	City of Thornton
Name of Water Project	Thornton Northern Properties Stewardship Plan (NPSP): Land Use and Water Optimization Study

CWP Grant Request Amount	$ 100,000
Other Funding Sources CWCB – WSRF South Platte	$ 25,000
Other Funding Sources CWCB – WSRF Metro	$ 25,000
Other Funding Sources CWCB – WSRF Statewide	$ 50,000
Other Funding Sources Department of Local Affairs	$125,000
Applicant Funding Contribution	$ 75,000
Total Project Cost	$ 400,000

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Applicant & Grantee Information	
Name of Grantee(s)	**City of Thornton**
Mailing Address	**9500 Civic Center Drive, Thornton, CO 80229**
FEIN	**846009903**
Organization Contact	
Position/Title	**Emily Hunt / Deputy Infrastructure Director**
Email	**Emily.hunt@thorntonco.gov**
Phone	**(720)977-6504**
Grant Management Contact	**Pia Gerstle**
Position/Title	**Water Resources Analyst II**
Email	**Pia.Gerstle@thorntonco.gov**
Phone	**(720)977-6506**
Name of Applicant (if different than grantee)	
Mailing Address	
Position/Title	
Email	
Phone	

Description of Grantee/Applicant
Provide a brief description of the grantee's organization (100 words or less).
Located 10 miles north of downtown Denver and adjacent to Interstate 25, Thornton is a diverse community with a strong commitment to quality of life and environmental issues. With a 2020 population of 143,890, it is the 6th largest city in Colorado. Thornton is currently growing at a rate of 1.57% annually and its population has increased by 21.15% since the 2010 census. Within the city's organization is the Water Resources Division, which ensures water supply for Thornton, and the Agricultural Stewardship Office, which manages the city's agricultural property. The Water Resources Division and Agricultural Stewardship Office will lead this effort.

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Type of Eligible Entity (check one)	
X	**Public (Government):** Municipalities, enterprises, counties, and State of Colorado agencies. Federal agencies are encouraged to work with local entities. Federal agencies are eligible, but only if they can make a compelling case for why a local partner cannot be the grant recipient.
	Public (Districts): Authorities, Title 32/special districts (conservancy, conservation, and irrigation districts), and water activity enterprises.
	Private Incorporated: Mutual ditch companies, homeowners associations, corporations.
	Private Individuals, Partnerships, and Sole Proprietors: Private parties may be eligible for funding.
	Non-governmental organizations (NGO): Organization that is not part of the government and is non-profit in nature.
	Covered Entity: As defined in Section 37-60-126 Colorado Revised Statutes.

Type of Water Project (check all that apply)	
X	Study
	Construction
	Identified Projects and Processes (IPP)
	Other

Category of Water Project (check the primary category that applies and include relevant tasks)	
	Water Storage - Projects that facilitate the development of additional storage, artificial aquifer recharge, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore the reservoirs' full decreed capacity and Multi-beneficial projects and those projects identified in basin implementation plans to address the water supply and demand gap.. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*
X	Conservation and Land Use Planning - Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*
X	Engagement & Innovation - Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*
X	Agricultural - Projects that provide technical assistance and improve agricultural efficiency. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*
X	Environmental & Recreation - Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*

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	Other	Explain:

Location of Water Project	
Please provide the general county and coordinates of the proposed project below in **decimal degrees**. The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit C, a site map if applicable.	
County/Counties	Larimer County, Weld County
Latitude	40°34'50.0"
Longitude	104°44'25.5”

Water Project Overview
Please provide a summary of the proposed water project (200 words or less). Include a description of the project and what the CWP Grant funding will be used for specifically (e.g., studies, permitting process, construction). Provide a description of the water supply source to be utilized or the water body affected by the project, where applicable. Include details such as acres under irrigation, types of crops irrigated, number of residential and commercial taps, length of ditch improvements, length of pipe installed, and area of habitat improvements, where applicable. If this project addresses multiple purposes or spans multiple basins, please explain. The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit A, a detailed Statement of Work, Budget, Other Funding Sources/Amounts and Schedule.

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In 1985 and 1986 the City of Thornton purchased farmland in Larimer and Weld Counties and the water rights associated with the farms. The water rights will provide Thornton's long-range supply of municipal water. As of 2018, Thornton owns 18,751 acres in Larimer and Weld Counties. In Weld County Thornton owns one hundred four (104) farms on 17,161 acres and in Larimer County Thornton owns eight (8) farms on 1,590 acres. While the City of Thornton has been working to meet requirements imposed by the Water Court decree, the city is raising funds to support a voluntary, community-driven effort that is not required by the decree or county permitting processes.

Thornton is seeking WPG funds to establish a collaborative, community-driven effort to: (a) advance a land-use planning process that bridges social, economic, environmental, water, and land use silos; and (b) explore ways the continued irrigation provision in Thornton's decree can help agriculture continue to thrive.

Thornton will accomplish this through the development of two products: A Regional Land Use Assessment and a Water Optimization Study.

Measurable Results

To catalog measurable results achieved with the CWP Grant funds, please provide any of the following values as applicable:

	New Storage Created (acre-feet)	
	New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive	
	Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)	
	Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)	
	Efficiency Savings (indicate acre-feet/year OR dollars/year)	
	Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)	
	Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms	
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning	
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity	
18,751 acres	Other	Explain: Total area of study for both Land Use and Water Optimization Study

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Water Project Justification

Provide a description of how this water project supports the goals of Colorado's Water Plan, the most recent Statewide Water Supply Initiative, and the applicable Roundtable Basin Implementation Plan and Education Action Plan. The Applicant is required to reference specific needs, goals, themes, or Identified Projects and Processes (IPPs), including citations (e.g. document, chapters, sections, or page numbers).

The proposed water project shall be evaluated based upon how well the proposal conforms to Colorado's Water Plan Framework for State of Colorado Support for a Water Project (CWP, Section 9.4, pp. 9-43 to 9-44;)

Colorado's Water Plan (CWP)

Thornton's NPSP will address several measures outline in the CWP:

Chapter 6: Water Supply Management —Section 6.1: Scenario Planning and Developing an Adaptive Water Strategy, Page 6-8

No and Low Regret Strategies:
In this context, a "regret" is an action in which Colorado enters a future where there are:
1. Water shortages due to an insufficient number of implemented necessary projects and methods;
2. Significant consequences to Colorado's agriculture, environment, or economy because Colorado's water community did not implement
projects and methods consistent with Colorado's water values; or
3. Too many unneeded and costly projects.

Chapter 6: Water Supply Management — Section 6.1: Scenario Planning and Developing an Adaptive Water Strategy Page, 6-10

- Minimize the transfer of statewide agricultural acres and implement agricultural sharing projects
- Establish low to medium conservation strategies
- Implement projects and methods that support environmental and recreational uses
- Strive for high success rates for projects and methods that are already planned

Chapter 6: Water Supply Management — Section 6.1: Scenario Planning and Developing an Adaptive Water Strategy 6-14

"Support the implementation of the No and-Low-Regrets strategy: The CWCB, in partnership with other state agencies, will commit state financial, technical, and regulatory resources to the near-term implementation of prioritized water management projects as specified in the No and-Low-Regrets actions. As part of this work, and in partnership with the basin roundtables, the CWCB will evaluate progress toward
achieving the No-and-Low-Regrets actions."

The conversion of water from agricultural to municipal use will have varying effects on current land uses for the Thornton Northern Properties. However, the purpose of the Water Optimization Study is to consider how to optimize limited water supplies, retain a resilient agricultural base, and thoughtfully transition irrigated lands to non-irrigated agricultural or environmental purposes by exploring how the continued irrigation provision in Thornton's decree can help farmers, conservation groups, and other interested parties restore irrigation on prime farmlands with non-Thornton water and acquire that ground. This will be accomplished by:

A. Assemble Baseline Datasets
1. Determining the trajectory of dry-up on the WSSC system given the high percentage of municipal ownership

2. Identifying agricultural land preservation priority areas independent of dry-up trajectories
3. Assessing land, water, and conservation values through a WSSC-specific market-data report
4. Assimilating dry-up, agricultural land preservation priority, and market data

B. Assess Optimization Alternatives
1. Exploring application of the continued-irrigation provision
2. Identifying conservation markets that could support optimization

C. Develop Financial Models and Case Studies for Preferred Alternative

In addition, Thornton's NPSP plan addresses the CWP criteria for state support by meeting the following objectives:

Chapter 9: Alignment of State Resources and Policies — Section 9.4: Framework for A More Efficient Permitting Process, Page 9-43/44
Does the project proponent demonstrate a commitment to collaboration?
Does the project proponent demonstrate sustainability?
Does the project proponent establish the fiscal and technical feasibility of the project?

Both the Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study will utilize a comprehensive outreach effort. In fact, the plans are designed to be led by a stakeholder committee that is comprised of the local municipalities, conservation groups, agricultural groups, land owners, and residents of the effected properties and communities. This committee will:

1. Establish project goals, objectives, and milestones
2. Agree to planning strategies
3. Develop measures of success and metrics for evaluation
4. Agree to communication, decision-making, and confidentiality protocols

Focus Area groups that are formed from the stakeholder committee will give detailed and specific input into sections of each plan including agricultural, conservation, recreation and water rights topics.

The stakeholder and focus groups will be provided with additional resources from the Land Use Plan and Water Optimization Study to help make informed decisions on sustainable development alternatives. This information will include:

1. Land-Use Market Analysis (Residential, Commercial, Agricultural, Conservation, Industrial, Government demand/values)
2. Landscape Analysis
3. Associated plans and historical documents

South Platte Basin/Metro Basin Implementation Plan

S.4.2 Strategic Overview, Page S-10

The three major guidelines the basin Roundtables have utilized in determining solutions to meeting the projected municipal and industrial water supply shortfall are:

1. Minimize adverse impacts to agricultural economies
2. Develop new multipurpose projects that either offset transfers from agricultural uses or provide additional water to reduce current agricultural shortages
3. Proactively identify and implement methods to protect and enhance environmental and recreational water uses

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Thornton's NPSP Land Use Study has several elements that are designed specifically to ensure that the agricultural and economic impacts for different land use recommendations are considered. Specifically, the plan will:

1. Assimilate market information with issue-specific information by developing a range of preferred land uses for specific geographies
2. Using the site data and issue-specific working group findings, develop multiple regional land use vision alternatives
3. Develop a set of preferred regional land use alternatives after refining alternatives with the steering committee

In this way, both empirical data and community specific needs are used to determine which land uses will minimize adverse impacts to the local agricultural economy. The Land Use Plan will also utilize the Water Optimization Study to develop alternatives that preserve prime agricultural lands while transferring water away from properties that can be utilized for other highest and best uses.

Related Studies

Please provide a list of any related studies, including if the water project is complementary to or assists in the implementation of other CWCB programs.

Weld County Comprehensive Plan – Sept. 2020

Weld County is finalizing an update to their Comprehensive Plan. Specific to water rights and land use, the Comp Plan outlines the following goals that directly reflect the need for Thornton's NPSP Land Use and Water Optimization Studies.

Sec. 22-4-30. – Water Goals and Policies

A.WA.Goal 1. Support the development of water that is put to beneficial use, along with associated infrastructure.

4.WA.Policy 1.4. Land use regulations should not interfere with the transfer of water rights and/or their associated uses.
a.Recommended Strategy WA.1.4.a. Develop land use policies that increase the productivity of the lands dried up as a result of water transfers.

5.WA.Policy 1.5. Encourage alternatives to the "dry-up" (or fallowing) of agricultural land, a practice that otherwise takes agricultural land out of production, often permanently.
a.Recommended Strategy WA.1.5.a. Develop policies for dried-up lands so that they are managed to prevent dust, erosion and the prevalence of weeds.

6.WA.Policy 1.6. Encourage "dry-up agreements" that allow the use of alternate water sources to keep the land in production.

8.WA.Policy 1.8. Foster formal, regular communication with water suppliers throughout the County.
a.Recommended Strategy WA.1.8.a. Maintain a solid understanding of the long-term water supplies available for County residents, farmers and industry. Monitor any plans for significant transfers of water out

of the County, and describe the amount of land that is planned to be taken out of agricultural production due to water transfers.
b.Recommended Strategy WA.1.8.b. Host a yearly meeting with water suppliers.

Larimer County Comprehensive Plan – July 2019

Similar to Weld County, Larimer County just recently completed an update to their Comp Plan. The plan specifically refers to Thornton's northern properties. An entire goal was created in the Watersheds and Natural Resource Snapshot Chapter: #5 Competition for water between agricultural, industry, riparian, and residential use and development is pronounced, resulting in the loss of cultivated farmland and affordable housing. In that Chapter it states "Furthermore, the role of local governments in contributing to solutions that protect agricultural water use is limited and other agencies including the Colorado Water Conservation Board and local water districts have more clearly defined roles. Nevertheless, Larimer County has a role to play. In particular, a fundamental role of the county is to assist in the protection of important farmlands." Once again, Thornton's NPSP Land Use and Water Optimization Studies will provide Larimer County an opportunity to be a part of the planning as water is redirected for municipal use.

City of Thornton Northern Properties Stewardship Plan Land Use Analysis – Oct. 2020

In preparation for the larger Land Use and Water Optimization Studies, the City of Thornton is currently finalizing a land use analysis document. Between August 2019, when the NPSP was launched, and October 2020, consultant-led efforts included: (1) internal planning with Thornton representatives, (2) interviews with Larimer and Weld County subject matter experts (SMEs), (3) preliminary landscape analyses, and (4) meetings with individuals and small groups.

Previous CWCB Grants, Loans or Other Funding

List all previous or current CWCB grants (including WSRF) awarded to both the Applicant and Grantee. Include: 1) Applicant name; 2) Water activity name; 3) Approving RT(s); 4) CWCB board meeting date; 5) Contract number or purchase order; 6) Percentage of other CWCB funding for your overall project.

1. City of Thornton
2. Drought Management Planning Grant
3. N/A
4. N/A
5. POGG1 2018-955 or POGGI PDAA 201800000955
6. $30,000, or 28% of the project cost

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

The Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) may limit the amount of grant money an entity can receive. Please describe any relevant TABOR issues that may affect your application.

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None

Submittal Checklist	
X	I acknowledge the Grantee will be able to contract with CWCB using the Standard Contract.
Exhibit A	
X	Statement of Work(1)
X	Budget & Schedule(1)
X	Engineer's statement of probable cost (projects over $100,000)
X	Letters of Matching and/or Pending 3rd Party Commitments(1)
Exhibit C	
X	Map (if applicable)(1)
X	Photos/Drawings/Reports
X	Letters of Support (Optional)
X	Certificate of Insurance (General, Auto, & Workers' Comp.) (2)
X	Certificate of Good Standing with Colorado Secretary of State(2)
X	W-9(2)
	Independent Contractor Form(2) (If applicant is individual, not company/organization)
Engagement & Innovation Grant Applicants ONLY	
X	Engagement & Innovation Supplemental Application(1)

(1) Required with application.
(2) Required for contracting. While optional at the time of this application, submission can expedite contracting upon CWCB Board approval.

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ENGAGEMENT & INNOVATION GRANT FUND SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION

Introduction & Purpose

Colorado's Water Plan calls for an outreach, education, public engagement, and innovation grant fund in Chapter 9.5.

The overall goal of the Engagement & Innovation Grant Fund is to enhance Colorado's water communication, outreach, education, and public engagement efforts; advance Colorado's water supply planning process; and support a statewide water innovation ecosystem.

The grant fund aims to engage the public to promote well-informed community discourse regarding balanced water solutions statewide. The grant fund aims to support water innovation in Colorado. The grant fund prioritizes measuring and evaluating the success of programs, projects, and initiatives. The grant fund prioritizes efforts designed using research, data, and best practices. The grant fund prioritizes a commitment to collaboration and community engagement. The grant fund will support local and statewide efforts.

The grant fund is divided into two tracks: engagement and innovation. The Engagement Track supports education, outreach, communication, and public participation efforts related to water. The Innovation Track supports efforts that advance the water innovation ecosystem in Colorado.

Application Questions

*The grant fund request is referred to as "project" in this application.

Overview (answer for both tracks)
In a few sentences, what is the overall goal of this project? How does it achieve the stated purpose of this grant fund (above)?
The overall goal of the project is to: (a) advance a land-use planning process that bridges social, economic, environmental, water, and land use silos; and (b) explore ways the continued irrigation provision in Thornton's decree can help agriculture continue to thrive.
Who is/are the target audience(s)? How will you reach them? How will you involve the community?
Thornton believes that development of the Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study needs to be guided by Larimer and Weld County stakeholders. Stakeholders can benefit from Thornton engagement, but the product-development process should be locally driven. Approached in this manner, Thornton will have a clearer idea of how to thoughtfully balance obligations to its residents with the needs of Larimer and Weld County communities, where the impacts of water removal will be experienced. Thornton originally engaged Weld County about leading a planning and land-use study to similar to the one proposed in this grant. However, Weld County's preferred approach is to let local municipalities decide their own land uses and only engaging when something is brought forward. And while many of the municipalities in the area are very interested in the project, none are large enough to manage the endeavor. Therefore, the Thornton will act as the fiscal agent for the project and assemble a diverse group of stakeholders that will lead the project. There will also be smaller issue specific workgroups that will be assembled to discuss specific land uses such as agriculture, conservation, economic development, etc.

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Overview (answer for both tracks)
Outreach has already begun and a preliminary list of stakeholders has been assembled but still needs to be supplemented. Outreach to date includes Weld County, Larimer County, Greeley, Ault and others. Additionally, a series of public meetings will be held (virtually for now, in-person when allowed) periodically throughout the process.
Describe how the project is collaborative or engages a diverse group of stakeholders. Who are the partners in the project? Do you have other funding partners or sources?
The project's success is contingent on stakeholder engagement, which is why the project will be stakeholder led with a consult team providing project management and the City of Thornton acting as the fiscal agent. Outside of the municipal entities, project partners may include The Nature Conservancy, Colorado Open Lands, Poudre Runs Through It, Colorado Water Center, Great Outdoors Colorado, Department of Local Affairs, Colorado Corn Growers Association and several others. Some of these partners may provide additional funding to this project as well implementation projects that are identified through the planning process. The City has already engaged some of these potential partners in preliminary discussions about their interest and desires for the project.
Describe how you plan to measure and evaluate the success and impact of the project?
The success of the plan will be based off the final land use and water optimization alternatives. The plan will use market research and case studies to help determine the highest and best uses of the properties. Doing this at a regional level will allow development projects to be prioritized and implemented based on economic development potential and as funding becomes available. Additionally, the City will measure the success of the stakeholder engagement process by evaluating the diversity of its membership and will allow further measures of success to be defined by the stakeholders and project partners/funders as the project evolves.
What research, evidence, and data support your project?
There are many examples of "buy and dry" projects throughout Colorado and the Midwest that can show both desirable and undesirable outcomes. Thornton is modeling its approach to this project on the Bessemer Ditch Project in southern Colorado. That project provides a great template for how to optimize limited water resources, retain prime lands in irrigated agriculture, and advance more strategic dry-up for better environmental outcomes; it has yielded positive results.
Describe potential short- and long-term challenges with this project.
Short term challenges include assembling and meeting with stakeholders and others in a fully virtual environment. Thornton has included a public engagement facilitation firm as one of the project consultants to assist with this effort. Long term challenges include: 1. Maintaining stakeholder continuity throughout the process to ensure that information does not have to be rehashed. 2. Identifying funding for implementation and assisting smaller communities with implementation measures

Please fill out the applicable questions for either the Engagement Track or Innovation Track, unless your project contains elements in both tracks. If a question does not relate to your project, just leave it blank. Please answer each question that relates to your project. Please reference the relevant documents and use chapters and page numbers (Colorado's Water Plan, Basin Implementation Plan, PEPO Education Action Plan, etc.).

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Engagement Track
Describe how the project achieves the education, outreach, and public engagement measurable objective set forth in Colorado's Water Plan to "significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide by 2020, as determined by water awareness surveys."
Describe how the project achieves the other measurable objectives and critical goals and actions laid out in Colorado's Water Plan around the supply and demand gap; conservation; land use; agriculture; storage; watershed health, environment, and recreation; funding; and additional.
Describe how the project achieves the education, outreach, and public engagement goals set forth in the applicable Basin Implementation Plan(s).
Describe how the project achieves the basin roundtable's PEPO Education Action Plans.

Innovation Track
Describe how the project enhances water innovation efforts and supports a water innovation ecosystem in Colorado.
The project will consider how to optimize limited water supplies, retain a resilient agricultural base, and thoughtfully transition irrigated lands to non-irrigated agricultural or environmental purposes by exploring how the continued irrigation provision in Thornton's decree can help farmers, conservation groups, and other interested parties restore irrigation on Prime Farmlands with non-Thornton water and acquire that ground.

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Innovation Track
Describe how the project engages/leverages Colorado's innovation community to help solve our state's water challenges.
As described above, the project will seek to engage not just stakeholders, but subject matter experts (SME) to help develop land use strategies based off innovated and emerging technologies. Many of these SME's were already engaged and help develop the process that is outlined in this grant. SME's will be pulled from every sector of Colorado's agricultural, conservation, recreation and economic development fields.
Describe how the project helps advance or develop a solution to a water need identified through TAP-IN and other water innovation challenges. What is the problem/need/challenge?
The overall problem is determining how to responsibly redevelop properties that are being dried up because municipal water use continues to grow. This is especially challenging when the study area is almost 19,000 acres, requiring a diverse set of solutions. While actual land uses have not yet been identified, it is safe to assume that several of the land uses that will be proposed will develop a solution to several of the needs identified through TAP-IN. There will likely be land uses that address innovated dry agricultural solutions, conservation areas, recreation opportunities and more.
Describe how this project impacts current or emerging trends; technologies; clusters, sectors, or groups in water innovation.
This project may provide several opportunities for Colorado and the local communities to implement both proven and emerging agricultural technologies. Partnering with local and regional SME's, this plan will help identify areas where farmers can reduce risk and maximize crop yields, wildlife and wetlands can be conserved for habitat and migration purposes, and recreation can be implemented.

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Colorado Water Conservation Board
Water Plan Grant - Exhibit A

Statement Of Work	
Date:	12/1/20
Name of Grantee:	City of Thornton
Name of Water Project:	Thornton Northern Properties Stewardship Plan (NPSP): Land Use and Water Optimization Study
Funding Source:	Water Plan Grant

Water Project Overview:

In 1985 and 1986 the City of Thornton purchased farmland in Larimer and Weld Counties and the water rights associated with the farms. The water rights will provide Thornton's long-range supply of municipal water. As of 2018, Thornton owns 18,751 acres in Larimer and Weld Counties. In Weld County Thornton owns one hundred four (104) farms on 17,161 acres and in Larimer County Thornton owns eight (8) farms on 1,590 acres. While the City of Thornton has been working to meet requirements imposed by the Water Court decree, the City is raising funds to support a voluntary, community-driven effort that is not required by the decree or county permitting processes.

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Thornton will accomplish this through the development of two products: A Regional Land Use Assessment and a Water Optimization Study.

Project Objectives:

1. A Regional Land Use Assessment. The City of Thornton will engage Larimer and Weld county communities and stakeholders to identify and document regional land use objectives.
2. Optimal Property Use Determinations. The City of Thornton will utilize the Land Use Assessment—in combination with local stakeholder input—to inform prospective future uses of its properties.
3. Property Management and Divestiture Strategies. The City of Thornton will explore land management and divestiture strategies that enable it to be effective stewards of city assets while meeting the present and future needs of local communities. It will explore five thematic opportunities raised by subject matter Experts (SMEs), in addition to other opportunities that evolve through the planning process:
   i. sustaining irrigation on key properties using alternative, non-Thornton, water sources
   ii. building partnerships to support innovative property transitions;
   iii. advancing conservation planning and financing efforts;
   iv. strategically siting development and industry; and
   v. implementing crop and cover transition BMPs.

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Tasks
Task 1 –Steering Committee Formation with Issue Specific Sub -Groups
Description of Task:
Establish a Regional Planning Partnership – This task will consist of creating a steering committee that encompasses all of the affected municipal, conservation, agricultural, land owners and other partners. This committee will be in place for the duration of the project and will help guide alternatives development and final land use assessments for the plan. Other sub-groups will be identified (particularly for the Water Optimization Study) that will help address issue specific planning items. A Chairperson for the steering committee will be chosen and will NOT be a representative of Thornton.
Method/Procedure:
Establish Outreach & Engagement Structure a) Identify the range of interested parties/participants b) Outline the specific issues to be explored c) Establish project goals, objectives, and milestones d) Agree to planning strategies e) Develop measures of success and metrics for evaluation f) Agree to communication, decision-making, and confidentiality protocols
Deliverable:
The planning team will produce a stakeholder engagement summary as part of the final document that will list steering committee members, meetings and outcomes.

Last Updated: June 2020

Tasks
Task 2 – Review Existing Plans & Assemble Baseline Data Sets
Description of Task:
Assemble Baseline Datasets – Much of this task will be identifying and incorporating all necessary background and technical data to be utilized for the land use plan and water optimization study.
Method/Procedure:
Review Existing Plans and Assemble Data a) Define project planning area b) Collect applicable plans and reports c) Consider preliminary landscape analysis findings Conduct Land-Use Market Analysis to examine: a) Agricultural demand/values b) Residential demand/values c) Commercial demand/values d) Industrial demand/values e) Government demand/values f) Conservation demand/values Assemble Baseline Datasets a) Determine the trajectory of dry-up on the WSSC system given the high percentage of municipal ownership i) Research historic conditions (all land historically WSSC irrigated) ii) Map existing dry-up (all land dried to date on WSSC) iii) Identify prospective future dry-up (all non-agricultural ownership of irrigation water) iv) Document findings in geospatial format b) Identify agricultural land preservation priority areas independent of dry-up trajectories i) Establish variables to consider, which may include: (1) Soil data (2) Water quality data (3) Industry clusters (4) Land continuity (5) Land tenure

Last Updated: June 2020

Tasks
(6) Other ii) Document findings in geospatial format c) Assess land, water, and conservation values through a WSSC-specific market-data report i) Assemble an appropriate range of property sales data (e.g., 5-10 years, 20+ acres, etc.) ii) Examine the range of agricultural and non-agricultural land and water values iii) Assess conservation easement (and, if applicable, ecosystem service/mitigation market) values in WSSC and proximal geographies iv) Produce a narrated report with tabular results and summaries d) Assimilate dry-up, agricultural land preservation priority, and market data.
Deliverable:
Thornton will provide the data summary to the CWCB once it is completed. It will also be included in the final Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study.

Tasks
Task 3 – Engage Issue Specific Work Groups
Description of Task:
Using the issue specific work groups identified in Task 1, the planning team will meet with individual groups to discuss specific land and water use issues. These groups could include agriculture, conservation, economic development, etc.
Method/Procedure:

Last Updated: June 2020

Tasks
Engage Issue-Specific Working Groups a) Form subcommittee working groups to explore land use alternatives and examine specific issues b) Develop communication strategy to inform interested parties about working groups' activities, findings, progress, and consensus decisions c) Conduct targeted public engagement with working groups d) Document desires and needs of each issue specific working groups
Deliverable:
The planning team will summarize the results of each work groups input provide them to CWCB. The summaries will also be included in the final land use report.

Tasks
Task 4 – Alternatives Development
Description of Task:
The planning team will utilize the market information and input from the steering committee to start to develop land use alternatives. Concurrently, the planning team will look at water optimization alternatives and create case studies that will be used to help develop land use alternatives.
Method/Procedure:

Last Updated: June 2020

Tasks
Assimilate Market Information with Issue-Specific Information a) Develop a range of preferred land uses for specific geographies b) Present findings to the project steering committee c) Present findings in a targeted public workshop for review, input, and discussion Water Optimization Alternatives a) Explore application of the continued-irrigation provision i) Determine the legal extents and limitations of the provision ii) Determine court/administrative provision enactment process/cost iii) Identify WSSC and non-WSSC water sources that could enable continued irrigation b) Identify conservation markets that could support optimization, which may include: i) Conservation easement payments ii) Wetland/habitat mitigation dollars iii) Water quality trading markets iv) Carbon markets v) NRCS EQIP Develop Financial Models and Case Studies for Preferred Water Optimization Alternatives a) Identify 2-4 case study scenarios b) Develop case study scenario models c) Vet models with advisory committee and others as appropriate d) Assess feasibility of different models/approaches e) Determine implementation obstacles and conditions/requirements to overcome obstacles Develop Regional Land Use Vision Alternatives a) Using the site data and issue-specific working group findings, develop multiple regional land use vision alternatives b) Convene the issue specific working groups to help formulate alternatives c) Present the alternatives to the public in an at-large public workshop for review and comment
Deliverable:
The planning team will provide CWCB with a report that will include the land use alternatives and case studies. The alternatives will also be compiled into the final land use plan.

Tasks
Task 5 – Refine Land Use Alternatives
Description of Task:

Last Updated: June 2020

Tasks
The planning team will refine the land use alternatives after receiving input from the steering committee.
Method/Procedure:
Refine Land Use Alternatives a) Present the information to the steering committee in a workshop format b) Develop a set of preferred regional land use alternatives that should inform the NPSP c) Graphicly and in report form describe the preferred alternative
Deliverable:
The planning team will provide a summary of the final alternatives to the CWCB and will include the final alternatives in the final land use report.

Tasks
Task 6 – Develop and Issue Final Report
Description of Task:

Last Updated: June 2020

Tasks
The planning team will compile all final data into a final report that can be utilized by the CWCB and the affected municipalities and organizations.
Method/Procedure:
Develop and Issue Final Report a) Meet with the steering committee to assimilate all the information and provide direction for the preparation of the final Regional Land Use Assessment Document b) Make all written and graphic revisions to the final Assessment Document c) Conduct final public engagement to present the final Assessment Document (this could be done multiple times in each municipality)
Deliverable:
The planning team will provide CWCB with a final report that will detail all of the outreach and studies completed, alternatives developed, and final land use plan.

Repeat for Task 3, Task 4, Task 5, etc.

Budget and Schedule
This Statement of Work shall be accompanied by a combined Budget and Schedule that reflects the Tasks identified in the Statement of Work and shall be submitted to CWCB in excel format.

Last Updated: June 2020

Reporting Requirements

Progress Reports: The applicant shall provide the CWCB a progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of issuance of a purchase order, or the execution of a contract. The progress report shall describe the status of the tasks identified in the statement of work, including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues.

Final Report: At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a Final Report on the applicant's letterhead that:

- Summarizes the project and how the project was completed.
- Describes any obstacles encountered, and how these obstacles were overcome.
- Confirms that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.
- Includes photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs.

The CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.

Payment

Payment will be made based on actual expenditures and must include invoices for all work completed. The request for payment must include a description of the work accomplished by task, an estimate of the percent completion for individual tasks and the entire Project in relation to the percentage of budget spent, identification of any major issues, and proposed or implemented corrective actions.

Costs incurred prior to the effective date of this contract are not reimbursable. The last 10% of the entire grant will be paid out when the final deliverable has been received. All products, data and information developed as a result of this contract must be provided to CWCB in hard copy and electronic format as part of the project documentation.

Performance Measures

Performance measures for this contract shall include the following:
(a) Performance standards and evaluation: Grantee will produce detailed deliverables for each task as specified. Grantee shall maintain receipts for all project expenses and documentation of the minimum in-kind contributions (if applicable) per the budget in Exhibit B. Per Water Plan Grant Guidelines, the CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.
(b) Accountability: Per Water Plan Grant Guidelines full documentation of project progress must be submitted with each invoice for reimbursement. Grantee must confirm that all grant conditions have been complied with on each invoice. In addition, per Water Plan Grant Guidelines, Progress Reports must be submitted at least once every 6 months. A Final Report must be submitted and approved before final project payment.
(c) Monitoring Requirements: Grantee is responsible for ongoing monitoring of project progress per Exhibit A. Progress shall be detailed in each invoice and in each Progress Report, as detailed above. Additional inspections or field consultations will be arranged as may be necessary.

Performance Measures
(d) Noncompliance Resolution: Payment will be withheld if grantee is not current on all grant conditions. Flagrant disregard for grant conditions will result in a stop work order and cancellation of the Grant Agreement.

COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan Grant - Detailed Budget Estimate
Fair and Reasonable Estimate

Prepared Date: 12/1/2020
Name of Applicant: City of Thornton
Name of Water Project: Thornton Northern Properties Stewardship Plan (NPSP): Land Use and Water Optimization Study

Task 1 - Steering Committee Formation with Issue Specific Sub -Groups

	Water Consultants											Subcontracts						
Sub-task	Project Manager	Senior Economist	Market Analyst	Land Planner	GIS Tech	Facilitation Principal	Facilitator	Lead Facilitator	Conservation Specialist	Clerical		Spacial Analyst	Land and Water Valuation	Water Attorney		Project Total	CWCB Funds	Matching Funds
	$ 150	$ 150	$ 110	$ 110	$ 95	$ 210	$ 175	$ 150	$ 240	$ 70	Subtotal	Lump sum	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	Subtotal			
	Estimated Hours											Cost per						
Establish a Regional Planning Partnership	17					2	16	19	12		$ 11,500				$ -	$11,500	$5,000	$6,500
Establish Outreach & Engagement Structure	8					2	14	20	16		$ 10,910			$ 1,200	$ 1,200	$12,110		$12,110

Task 2 - Review Existing Plans & Assemble Baseline Data Sets

Sub-task	Project Manager	Senior Economist	Market Analyst	Land Planner	GIS Tech	Facilitation Principal	Facilitator	Lead Facilitator	Conservation Specialist	Clerical		Spacial Analyst	Land and Water Valuation	Water Attorney		Project Total	CWCB Funds	Matching Funds
	$ 150	$ 150	$ 110	$ 110	$ 95	$ 210	$ 175	$ 150	$ 240	$ 70	Subtotal	Lump sum	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	Subtotal			
	Estimated Hours											Cost per						
Review Existing Plans and Assemble Data	12			24	40	2	2	2	10	4	$ 11,990					$11,990	$5,000	$6,990
Conduct Land-Use Market Analysis	8	48	80	12			3	3	4		$ 20,455					$20,455	$10,000	$10,455
Assemble Baseline Datasets	24			12		6	19	37	108		$ 40,975	$ 27,000	$ 32,400	$ 4,800	$ 64,200	$105,175	$10,000	$95,175

Task 3 - Engage Issue Specific Work Groups

Sub-task	Project Manager	Senior Economist	Market Analyst	Land Planner	GIS Tech	Facilitation Principal	Facilitator	Lead Facilitator	Conservation Specialist	Clerical		Spacial Analyst	Land and Water Valuation	Water Attorney		Project Total	CWCB Funds	Matching Funds
	$ 150	$ 150	$ 110	$ 110	$ 95	$ 210	$ 175	$ 150	$ 240	$ 70	Subtotal	Lump sum	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	Subtotal			
	Estimated Hours											Cost per						
Engage Issue-Specific Working Groups	20	6		10		4	27	34			$ 15,665					$15,665		$15,665

Task 4 - Alternatives Development

Sub-task	Project Manager	Senior Economist	Market Analyst	Land Planner	GIS Tech	Facilitation Principal	Facilitator	Lead Facilitator	Conservation Specialist	Clerical		Spacial Analyst	Land and Water Valuation	Water Attorney		Project Total	CWCB Funds	Matching Funds
	$ 150	$ 150	$ 110	$ 110	$ 95	$ 210	$ 175	$ 150	$ 240	$ 70	Subtotal	Lump sum	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	Subtotal			
	Estimated Hours											Cost per						
Assimilate Market Information with Issue-Specific Informatio	46			28	72		14	16	8	4	$ 23,870					$46,270	$10,000	$36,270
Water Optimization Alternatives	26			8			18	36	84		$ 33,490		$ 800	$ 21,600	$ 22,400	$33,490	$20,000	$13,490
Develop Financial Models and Case Studies for Preferred Water Optimization Alternatives	26					2	9	15	108		$ 34,065					$34,065	$20,000	$14,065
Develop Regional Land Use Vision Alternatives	34			32	40		22	27	12	4	$ 23,480					$23,480	$10,000	$13,480

Task 5 – Refine Land Use Alternatives

Sub-task	Project Manager	Senior Economist	Market Analyst	Land Planner	GIS Tech	Facilitation Principal	Facilitator	Lead Facilitator	Conservation Specialist	Clerical		Spacial Analyst	Land and Water Valuation	Water Attorney		Project Total	CWCB Funds	Matching Funds
	$ 150	$ 150	$ 110	$ 110	$ 95	$ 210	$ 175	$ 150	$ 240	$ 70	Subtotal	Lump sum	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	Subtotal			
	Estimated Hours											Cost per						
Refine Land Use Alternatives	36			24	40		13	24	8	20	$ 21,035					$21,035	$5,000	$16,035

Task 6 – Develop and Issue Final Report

Sub-task	Project Manager	Senior Economist	Market Analyst	Land Planner	GIS Tech	Facilitation Principal	Facilitator	Lead Facilitator	Conservation Specialist	Clerical		Spacial Analyst	Land and Water Valuation	Water Attorney		Project Total	CWCB Funds	Matching Funds
	$ 150	$ 150	$ 110	$ 110	$ 95	$ 210	$ 175	$ 150	$ 240	$ 70	Subtotal	Lump sum	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	Subtotal			
	Estimated Hours											Cost per						
Develop and Issue Final Report	24			24	30		12	14	70	10	$ 30,790	$ 1,000	$ 800	$ 2,400	$ 4,200	$34,990	$5,000	$29,990

Task 7 - Project Management

Sub-task	Project Manager	Senior Economist	Market Analyst	Land Planner	GIS Tech	Facilitation Principal	Facilitator	Lead Facilitator	Conservation Specialist	Clerical		Spacial Analyst	Land and Water Valuation	Water Attorney		Project Total	CWCB Funds	Matching Funds
	$ 150	$ 150	$ 110	$ 110	$ 95	$ 210	$ 175	$ 150	$ 240	$ 70	Subtotal	Lump sum	Lump Sum	Lump Sum	Subtotal			
	Estimated Hours											Cost per						
Bi-Weekly Consultant Team Meetings	15			4					15		$ 6,290	$ 800	$ 640	$ 960	$ 2,400	$8,690		$8,690
Monthly Client Meetings	15			4					15		$ 6,290	$ 400	$ 640	$ 1,920	$ 2,960	$9,250		$9,250
Steering Committee Meetings									20		$ 4,800	$ 625	$ 1,000	$ 1,500	$ 3,125	$7,925		$7,925
Coordination with Client (Email/Telephone)	20			8							$ 3,880					$3,880		$3,880
TOTAL																**$399,970**	**$100,000**	**$299,970**

$399,970

		2021										2022					
Task	**Description**	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1	Steering Comm. Formation & Meetings																
2	Review Existing Plans & Assemble Data																
3	Engage Issue Specific Work Groups																
4	Alternatives Development																
5	Refine Land Use Alternatives																
6	Develop and Issue Final Report																
7	Project Management																

City of Greeley Colorado

November 24, 2020

Colorado Water Conservation Board:

The City of Greeley is writing to express our support for the City of Thornton's efforts to conduct a Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study related to the agricultural land owned by Thornton in Larimer and Weld Counties.

The City of Greeley is a regional hub for agriculture in northeast Colorado. Agricultural production from irrigated lands fuels Greeley's economy, and the future sustainability of irrigated agriculture in Weld County is of paramount importance to our community. Greeley also continues to grow. The preservation of open space and agricultural heritage areas is of great interest to Greeley's residents. Greeley's Water & Sewer Department is also a large owner of farmland and irrigation water, including many of the same areas as Thornton's farms. For these reasons, it is with great interest that Greeley supports Thornton's willingness to study land and water use in northern Weld County.

The Regional Land Use Assessment will identify potential future land uses on Thornton properties by exploring the local land use context. The Water Optimization Study will explore how Thornton, farmers, conservation groups, and other interested parties could restore irrigation on prime farmlands using non-Thornton owned water. The intent is to examine methods to retain a resilient base of prime irrigated lands, advance a more strategic approach to restoration and reclamation, and thoughtfully transition irrigated lands to non-irrigated agricultural, environmental or other purposes. As Thornton begins to physically convey its water out of the Poudre River Basin to the city for municipal uses in Thornton, this project aims to offer innovative and creative solutions to an on-going challenge being faced around the state of Colorado, while satisfying different and unique interests in the region.

The City of Thornton has already engaged us about its proposed planning efforts and how supporting this grant application will allow them to complete a study that is comprehensive, inclusive and provides optimum outcomes for everyone involved in the planning area.

Thank you for your consideration of Thornton's project.

DocuSigned by:
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Sean Chambers
Director of Water and Sewer Department

Kevin Reidy and Ben Wade
Colorado Water Conservation Board
1313 Sherman St., Room 721
Denver, CO 80203
November 16, 2020

Dear Kevin and Ben:

At the November 12, 2020 meeting of the Metro Roundtable (MRT), the MRT voted to approve a Metro WSRF Basin Grant of $25,000, to support a Statewide WSRF Grant of $50,000, and to support a Water Plan Grant for the City of Thornton's Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study.

This project will identify potential future land uses on Thornton's agricultural properties in Larimer and Weld Counties by exploring the local land use context and community and stakeholder goals. As Thornton begins to physically convey its water out of the Poudre River Basin to the city for municipal uses in Thornton, this project aims to offer innovative and creative solutions to an on-going challenge being faced around the state of Colorado, while satisfying different and unique interests in the region.

Thornton's WSRF application meets the MRT WSRF Guidelines and WSRF Grant Program Criteria. The project fits with the MRT's Implementation of Identified Projects and Processes. Thornton's Northern Project is an IPP, and the study proposed will allow Thornton to elevate what could be a typical buy and dry / pipeline IPP into a project that aligns with MRT's vision. The project will also help advance the following Measurable Outcomes in the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan: Agricultural MO#1: Support strategies that reduce traditional permanent dry-up of irrigated acreage; Agricultural MO#4: Develop local tools and political/community support for tools to sustain irrigated farmland; IPP Implementation MO#1: Maximize implementation of the updated IPP list. Finally, the project is consistent with Colorado's Water Plan grant criteria the Statewide Long-term Goal of Meet Colorado's Agricultural Needs by … 1) Ensuring that irrigated agriculture remains a viable statewide economic driver and supports food security, jobs and rural communities and protects private property rights.

Upon review and consideration of Thornton's proposal, the MRT unanimously voted to approve the full $25,000 of MRT Basin WSRF grant, and to support Thornton's Statewide $50,000 WSRF grant application and its Water Plan Grant application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Biggs, Chair
Metro Roundtable

Northern Water
Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
220 Water Avenue • Berthoud, Colorado 80513
800-369-7246 • www.northernwater.org

November 23, 2020

To the Colorado Water Conservation Board:

We are writing to express our support for the City of Thornton's efforts to conduct a Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study related to the agricultural land owned by Thornton in Larimer and Weld Counties.

Northern Water staff actively participates in Basin Implementation Plan and Water Plan development efforts and other projects and processes that seek to address future municipal water supply gaps while maintaining the continued viability of agriculture in Northern Colorado. We know meeting water supply needs are inextricably tied to efficient use of water supplies and wise land use planning. We believe Thornton's Study will be valuable to meet these goals in this region.

The Regional Land Use Assessment will identify potential future land uses on Thornton properties by exploring the local land use context. The Water Optimization Study will explore how Thornton, farmers, conservation groups, and other interested parties could restore irrigation on prime farmlands using non-Thornton owned water. The intent is to examine methods to retain a resilient base of prime irrigated lands, advance a more strategic approach to restoration and reclamation, and thoughtfully transition irrigated lands to non-irrigated agricultural, environmental or other purposes. As Thornton begins to physically convey its water out of the Poudre River Basin to the city for municipal uses in Thornton, this project aims to offer innovative and creative solutions to an on-going challenge being faced around the state of Colorado, while satisfying different and unique interests in the region.

The City of Thornton has already engaged us about its proposed planning efforts and how supporting this grant application will allow them to complete a study that is comprehensive, inclusive and provides optimum outcomes for everyone involved in the planning area.

Thank you for your consideration of Thornton's project.

Sincerely,

Jim Hall

Jim Hall, P.E.
Senior Project Engineer

Ben Wade
Colorado Water Conservation Board
1313 Sherman St., Room 721
Denver, CO 80203

November 23, 2020

Dear Ben:

At the November 10, 2020 meeting of the South Platte Basin Roundtable (SPBRT), the SPBRT voted to approve a South Platte WSRF Basin Grant of $25,000 and to support a Statewide WSRF Grant of $50,000 for the City of Thornton's Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study.

This project will identify potential future land uses on Thornton's agricultural properties in Larimer and Weld Counties by exploring the local land use context and community and stakeholder goals. As Thornton begins to physically convey its water out of the Poudre River Basin to the city for municipal uses in Thornton, this project aims to offer innovative and creative solutions to an on-going challenge being faced around the state of Colorado, while satisfying different and unique interests in the region.

Thornton's WSRF application meets the SPBRT WSRF Guidelines and WSRF Grant Program Criteria. The project will help advance the following Measurable Outcomes in the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan: Agricultural MO#1: Support strategies that reduce traditional permanent dry-up of irrigated acreage; Agricultural MO#4: Develop local tools and political/community support for tools to sustain irrigated farmland; IPP Implementation MO#1: Maximize implementation of the updated IPP list. Finally, the project is consistent with Colorado's Water Plan grant criteria the Statewide Long-term Goal of Meet Colorado's Agricultural Needs by ensuring that irrigated agriculture remains a viable statewide economic driver and supports food security, jobs and rural communities and protects private property rights.

Upon review and consideration of Thornton's proposal at the November 10, 2020 Roundtable meeting, the SPBRT unanimously voted to approve the full $25,000 of SPBRT Basin WSRF grant, and to support Thornton's Statewide $50,000 WSRF grant application.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Garrett Varra, Chair
South Platte Basin Roundtable

COLORADO
OPEN LANDS

November 19, 2020

To the Colorado Water Conservation Board:

We are writing to express our support for the City of Thornton's efforts to conduct a Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study related to the agricultural land owned by Thornton in Larimer and Weld Counties.

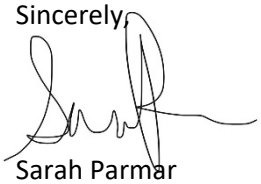
Colorado Open Lands (COL) is a statewide land trust that has protected more than 500,000 acres across Colorado. The Northern Front Range and Lower South Platte region is a priority conservation landscape for COL with its nexus of prime farmland, senior water rights, and unique shortgrass prairie habitat. COL recognizes that the scale of land owned by the City of Thornton is incredibly rare in Larimer and Weld Counties and that the decisions made by the City will have significant socioeconomic and ecological impacts to the region. COL applauds the City for its investments to date in understanding the context and community vision to minimize impacts of its eventual water conversion. We believe that these next steps will be critical for a deeper understanding of that context from which the City and partners can explore opportunities.

The Regional Land Use Assessment will identify potential future land uses on Thornton properties by exploring the local land use context. The Water Optimization Study will explore how Thornton, farmers, conservation groups, local community members/stakeholders and other interested parties could restore irrigation on prime farmlands using non-Thornton owned water. The intent is to examine methods to retain a resilient base of prime irrigated lands, advance a more strategic approach to restoration and reclamation, and thoughtfully transition irrigated lands to non-irrigated agricultural, environmental or other purposes. As Thornton begins to physically convey its water out of the Poudre River Basin to the city for municipal uses in Thornton, this project aims to offer innovative and creative solutions to an on-going challenge being faced around the state of Colorado, while satisfying different and unique interests in the region.

The City of Thornton has already engaged us about its proposed planning efforts and how supporting this grant application will allow them to complete a study that is comprehensive, inclusive and provides optimum outcomes for everyone involved in the planning area. COL looks forward to continued participation in the City's process. As a committed partner, we believe there are opportunities to increase resiliency of remaining agricultural producers and to create ecological benefits and we hope that the City's work can become an example for municipal providers across the state.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



Sarah Parmar
Director of Conservation, Colorado Open Lands

November 24, 2020

To the Colorado Water Conservation Board:

I am writing to express my support for the City of Thornton's efforts to obtain funding to conduct a Regional Land Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study related to the agricultural land owned by Thornton in Larimer and Weld Counties.

We farm north of Fort Collins and have been involved in trying to minimize the loss of ag land and water for a number of years. We have placed a conservation easement on a portion of our farm and helped others with that process. I served on the Larimer County Planning Commission for 9 years and on the Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) since its inception in 1998. I am currently the Vice Chair of the AAB. My wife Nancy is currently a Planning Commissioner and is on the Open Lands Advisory Board. Through a variety of initiatives taken by these boards and commissions in collaboration with producers themselves, a considerable block of irrigated farmland has been protected over time in the area between Fort Collins and Wellington and in the Waverly Buckeye areas as well as a combination of rangelands and irrigated lands in the Larimie foothills ranching areas. The parcels currently owned by Thornton as a result of their water acquisition strategy, if conserved, could contribute greatly to efforts to protect and avoid the further fragmentation of the remaining, largely contiguous blocks of ag land, particularly north of Fort Collins in the area where Thornton's properties are located.

The specific details of how each parcel could contribute to the goals of Larimer County (and mitigate impacts from the Thornton pipeline and water conveyance) would likely be laid out during their proposed Regional Land Use Assessment. Such a study will not only examine potential future land uses on Thornton properties and how they could be integrated with the local land use planning and ag land conservation but the Water Optimization component will explore how Thornton, farmers, conservation groups, and other interested parties could restore irrigation on prime farmlands using non-Thornton owned water.

The study is described as an examination of methods to retain a resilient base of prime irrigated lands, advance a more strategic approach to restoration and reclamation, and thoughtfully transition irrigated lands to non-irrigated agricultural, environmental or other purposes. As Thornton begins to physically convey its water out of the Poudre River Basin to the city for municipal uses in Thornton, this project aims to offer innovative and creative solutions to an on-going challenge being faced around the state of Colorado, while satisfying different and unique interests in the region. It could help our efforts in Larimer County.

The City of Thornton has already engaged our Agricultural Advisory Board about a variety of matters and while the AAB itself cannot officially comment while the County is in litigation with Thornton, a number

of us , our family included, support this study as individuals. In sum, we hope you will give every consideration to helping Thornton obtain the needed resources for this study.

Thank you for your consideration,

George and Nancy Wallace,

Soldias Farms 1824 West County Road 66, Fort Collins, CO 80524