

**COLORADO**Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan**Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	City of Commerce City
Name of Water Project	Commerce City Xeriscape Demonstration Gardens
Grant Request Amount	\$47,257.75
Primary Category	\$47,257.75
<i>Conservation & Land Use Planning</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$0.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$0.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$47,257.75
<i>City of Commerce City</i>	\$37,257.75
<i>Sonoran Institute</i>	\$10,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$94,515.50

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: City of Commerce City	
Mailing Address: 7887 E 60th Avenue Commerce City CO 80022	
Organization Contact: Jenny Penoncello	
Position/Title: Grants Manager	Email: grants@c3gov.com
Phone: 303-227-8832	
Organization Contact - Alternate: Elizabeth Tart	
Position/Title:	Email: etart@c3gov.com
Phone:	
Grant Management Contact: Jenny Penoncello	
Position/Title: Grants Manager	Email: grants@c3gov.com
Phone: 303-227-8832	
Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Matthew Hauther	
Position/Title:	Email: mhauther@c3gov.com
Phone:	

Description of Grantee/Applicant

Local Government in Colorado

Type of Eligible Entity

- ☐ Public (Government)
- ☐ Public (District)
- ☒ Public (Municipality)

- ☐ Ditch Company
- ☐ Private Incorporated
- ☐ Private Individual, Partnership, or Sole Proprietor
- ☐ Non-governmental Organization
- ☐ Covered Entity
- ☐ Other

Category of Water Project

- ☐ Agricultural Projects
Developing communications materials that specifically work with and educate the agricultural community on headwater restoration, identifying the state of the science of this type of work to assist agricultural users among others.
- ☒ Conservation & Land Use Planning
Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.
- ☐ Engagement & Innovation Activities
Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website.
- ☐ Watershed Restoration & Recreation
Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.
- ☐ Water Storage & Supply
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.

Location of Water Project

Latitude	39.806060
Longitude	-104.897217
Lat Long Flag	Default/Proponent headquarters: If the location cannot be defined with flags above, use location of project proponent headquarters
Water Source	South Adams County Water & Sewer District
Basins	South Platte
Counties	Adams
Districts	2-South Platte: Denver Gage to Greeley

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Municipal
Type of Water Project	Construction / Implementation
Scheduled Start Date - Design	
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	1/1/2026
Description	Through participating in the 2023 Estes Park Growing Water Smart Workshop, a joint program from the Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute's Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, Commerce City and South Adams County Water and Sanitation District (SACWSD) were eligible to apply for a \$10,000 grant for a water sustainability project. SACWSD and C3 staff determined that they should design up to two xeric demonstration gardens with the grant – one in the southern geography and one in the northern geography of Commerce City. The grant funding was awarded in 2024. C3 created a Request for Proposals and Scope of Work for the project and awarded the project to SAW in early Fall 2024. In June 2025, the design of two Xeriscape Demonstration

Gardens was completed utilizing community feedback. The two designs are for one garden at Bison Ridge Recreation Center in the northern range, and one garden at Monaco Park in the Core City. The next step in the project is to construct the gardens and subsequently begin education and community outreach. These gardens will not only convert city land to water efficient landscaping but also serve as educational hubs and inspiration to encourage residents to employ best practices in xeriscaping.

Measurable Results

	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
	New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive
	Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
	Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
	Length of Pipe, Canal Built or Improved (linear feet)
\$890	Efficiency Savings (dollars/year)
	Efficiency Savings (acre-feet/year)
	Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
	Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms or water sharing agreement (acre-feet)
68,000	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
68,000	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

The gardens themselves will convert 3,000 - 4,000 square feet back to native plants, which will save approximately 3,300 gallons of water per year. However, as a result of the garden's objective to inspire and encourage residents to convert their land to native and low water plants, the total water and financial savings will be compounded.

Water Project Justification

The first area in which the Xeriscape Demonstration Gardens Project aligns with the Colorado Water Plan is through the Vibrant Communities Action Area (pg. 176). The proposed project will directly align with the vision of "holistic water management is essential for creating vibrant communities that balance water supply and demand needs to create a sustainable urban landscape." The proposed project will complete the partner actions of Wise Water Use; Healthy Lands; and Engaged Partners by planting low-water, native, and attractive landscaping that promotes water efficiency and conservation, and through building landscapes that improve the quality of life by connecting residents to nature (pg. 180). This project ultimately invests in innovative strategies that address water-related challenges and builds future resilience that will allow for land to adapt to a warmer climate and reduced per capita water use (pg. 178). This project will not only educate community members but also provide an innovative demonstration on the importance of water efficiency and native landscaping. Ultimately, this project is aligned with the One Water Ethic and embodies managing water resources with "practical and bold ideas coming together in a collaborative way (pg. 178)."

A second action that our project promotes is Resilient Planning, specifically the partner actions of Wise Water Use; Healthy Lands; Engaged Partners; and Integration with Other Water Sectors (pg. 177). Providing demonstration gardens that educate and inspire residents to move to water-wise landscaping aims to implement a forward-thinking solution to create strong equitable communities that can proactively respond to water-related challenges. Furthermore, by locating one of the gardens in the Core City at Monaco Park, which is located in a disproportionately impacted community, it allows the City to reach residents who are not typically engaged in water issues by focusing on conservation-oriented outreach and education (pg. 218).

Lastly, specific to the South Platte and Metro Basin Roundtable Goals (pg. 122), this project aligns with maintain and promote municipal and industrial conservation and efficiency; encourage implementation of projects; protect and enhance recreational attributes; and broaden South Platte communications, outreach and education programs. Ultimately, our project implements a creative and collaborative initiative to encourage residents to utilize less water on turf irrigation through implementing xeriscape landscaping. This not only touches on municipal conservation and efficiency but will also provide a recreational amenity to connect residents to nature, and a communication channel to teach residents about water efficiency.

Related Studies

Commerce City and South Adams County Water and Sewer District (SACWSD) attended the Sonoran Institute/Babbitt Center's Growing Water Smart Workshop in May 2023 in Estes Park, Colorado. At the workshop, C3 and SACWSD developed an Action Plan with three defining goals and six action items. One of these action items is to "incorporate xeriscape into the City's code" by working on educating residents about the benefits of xeriscaping and how to properly xeriscape. Through this workshop, a xeriscape-focused partnership was developed between the two entities.

Additionally, Commerce City and SACWSD recently finished a year-long Project Accelerator technical assistance program to explore and align our water sustainability policies and documents. The project specifically recommends exploring a residential turf replacement program, to be funded and supported by both entities in 2026, and to support xeric landscaping with the program.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

No TABOR issues will effect our application.