



# INTERLOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Cottonwood Heights - Holladay - Millcreek



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*The order of the core sections (Development, Energy Use, Landscaping, Transportation, and Waste Management) is alphabetical in nature and does not represent any ranking of topic priority.*

# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The cities of Cottonwood Heights, Holladay, and Millcreek are three neighboring municipalities located along Utah's Wasatch Front. These cities cover a combined area of over 30 square miles with a combined population of approximately 125,000 at the time of this document's writing in 2021. Despite each municipality's unique traits, they also share strong similarities, with one commonality being their proximity to world class outdoor recreation and open space areas.

This ready natural access is not only enjoyed as a lifestyle amenity for many community members, but also serves to benefit the cities in terms of revenue from tourism, local commerce, and real estate sales. In considering the advantageous geographical position of these communities, a sustainable mindset is critical in preserving the community values and outdoor heritage so precious to each municipality.

In 2019, Cottonwood Heights, Holladay, and Millcreek signed an interlocal agreement to collaborate on sustainability projects as a tri-city region. As part of this collaboration, these cities agreed to write a sustainability plan to guide future sustainability efforts. The Interlocal Sustainability Action Plan recommends best practices for sustainable development, energy use, landscaping, transportation, and waste management across the tri-city region.

## Cities and Climate Action

According to the US Census Bureau's 2011-2015 American Community Survey, 80% of Americans live in cities. Based on an estimate by the United Nations, cities contribute up to 75% of carbon dioxide emissions worldwide, presenting serious ramifications for global health in the form of climate change. Experts project that specific to the Southwest region, climate change will result in increased erosion, flooding, heat, drought, insect outbreaks, and wildfires, declining water supplies and agricultural yields, and health impacts in cities (U.S. Global Change Research Program). Given this increasingly urban population, its notable contributions to climate change, and the negative effects on urban areas themselves, cities have a unique opportunity to address planetary health. Sustainability efforts made at a local level have the power to not only improve the lives of community members, but to supplement other efforts worldwide for a global effect.

## Recommended Use of Plan

This action plan is intended to serve as a guiding document for elected and appointed officials, city staff, and community members of Cottonwood Heights, Holladay, and Millcreek. As decisions are made within each city, both administratively and legislatively, this document should be used as a guide for viewing the impact of these decisions through a lens of sustainability. It is anticipated that sustainability staff will utilize this document to make regular recommendations on specific sustainability priorities for each community.

## Community Engagement

Although some sustainability work can be achieved through the sole efforts of city staff and officials, other initiatives benefit from multi-stakeholder participation. In terms of municipalities, this entails community engagement with residents, business owners, service providers, and other community partners. Research has shown that projects which incorporate community engagement are more effective than those without. According to Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, community engagement "increase[s] the likelihood that projects or solutions will be widely accepted. Citizens who participate in these processes show significant commitment to help make the projects happen." When appropriate to the project, community engagement opportunities should be provided.





# CITY CONTEXT

Through the committed efforts of elected and appointed officials, city staff, and community members, each city has already completed multiple sustainability initiatives prior to the adoption of this action plan. This section is intended to recognize the sustainability work which has already been accomplished in order to assist each city in prioritizing future goals. It is anticipated that these efforts will be expanded upon through the sustainability goals outlined in this plan. As of Summer 2021, the following efforts have been completed or are underway:

## Cottonwood Heights

- Anti-Idling Ordinance
- Arbor Day Tree Planting Event
- City Hall Solar Grant Application
- Community Renewable Energy Program Governance Agreement
- Consideration of Sustainable Fleet Options & Utilization of Tier III Fuel for City Vehicles
- Electric Vehicle Chargers at City Hall
- Glass Recycling Depository Site
- Outdoor Lighting Ordinance
- Renewable Energy Resolution
- Seven Greenways Visioning Plan
- Tree and Park Strip Ordinance
- Tri-City Emissions Baseline Project

## Holladay

- Anti-Idling Ordinance
- Community Renewable Energy Program Governance Agreement
- Consideration of Sustainable Fleet Options
- Designation as a “Tree City”
- Electric Vehicle Chargers in Downtown Holladay
- Renewable Energy Resolution
- Seven Greenways Visioning Plan
- Tree Committee
- Tree Giveaway Event
- Tree Protection Ordinance
- Tri-City Emissions Baseline Project

## Millcreek

- Anti-Idling Ordinance
- Community Renewable Energy Program Governance Agreement - Anchor Community
- Consideration of Sustainable Fleet Options
- Designation as a “Monarch City”
- Electric Vehicle Chargers at City Hall
- Glass Recycling Depository Site
- Jordan River Connectivity and Water Quality Efforts
- Millcreek Business Council Sustainability Committee and Millcreek Recycling Committee
- Rain Harvest Barrel Incentive Program
- Recycling Market Development Zone Application
- Renewable Energy Resolution
- Seven Greenways Visioning Plan
- Sustainable Design for Millcreek City Hall
- Tree Planting Partnership with Tree Utah
- Tri-City Emissions Baseline Project



# DEVELOPMENT

Development is critical in helping communities adapt to growing populations, provide ample amenities for community members, and achieve city goals. To ensure high-quality development, communities often regulate the types of uses, architectural styles, and acceptable infrastructure that developers may implement. In addition to considering these criteria, communities can benefit from requiring sustainability measures during the development process. These measures not only reduce the impact of current development, but can also assist in building a thriving future community.

## Strategy: Encourage Sustainable Buildings

Policy: Encourage the use of quality construction techniques and durable materials, including recycled and sustainably-sourced materials when feasible.

Policy: Encourage salvage of existing materials during demolition, as well as sustainable construction waste management techniques.

Policy: Encourage the use of local building materials to reduce the transportation impact of imports.

Policy: Incentivize use of fixtures and systems which conserve water, exceed energy performance, or otherwise reduce environmental impacts.

Policy: Improve indoor air quality by requiring low-VOC paints, primers and adhesives, formaldehyde-free wood, smoke free building policies, and other standards which reduce indoor air pollution.

Policy: Educate community members on the utilization of building orientation for passive solar and shading benefits.

## Strategy: Develop Sustainable Sites

Policy: Require site connections to adjacent neighborhoods and amenities to encourage walkability.

Policy: Require bicycle infrastructure for multi-family and commercial sites.

Policy: Reduce parking requirements for projects which incorporate permeable paved parking.

Policy: Consider requiring amenities such as solar infrastructure and EV chargers during the development process, or rough-in connections for these amenities to be added in the future.

Policy: Encourage redevelopment of greyfield, brownfield, or adaptive reuse sites.

Policy: Standardize low-impact stormwater management techniques.

Policy: Discourage development of steep slope and hillside areas.

## Strategy: Mitigate Light Pollution

Policy: Develop local ordinances which discourage light pollution and light trespass through fixture and bulb specifications.

Policy: Enforce outdoor lighting standards during building permit review processes and code enforcement protocols.

Policy: Utilize dark-sky fixtures and low impact lamps when installing lighting for city facilities and street lamps.

## Strategy: Demonstrate Sustainability Benefits

Policy: Collaborate with local chambers of commerce or business associations to recognize those businesses which exemplify sustainability through their buildings, operations, or services.

Policy: Provide information for builders, design professionals, and business owners on the fiscal, environmental, and health benefits associated with sustainable development.



# ENERGY USE

In powering homes, civic services, businesses, and amenities, reliable energy is an undeniably critical resource. In addition to considering the reliability of systems, communities can benefit from considering the sustainability of their energy, at both the public and private scale. By implementing energy conservation measures, as well as renewable sourcing, communities can provide a higher quality of life for present and future generations.

## Strategy: Support Energy Programs

Policy: Continue to engage with Utah's Community Renewable Energy Program.

Policy: Consider participation in other energy programs and coalitions as is practicable.

Policy: Educate community members on energy programs and provide opportunities for engagement and feedback.

Policy: Educate community members on existing energy initiatives and consider city-initiated incentives to fill gaps as needed.

Policy: Support low-income participation in energy programs.

## Strategy: Conserve Energy at City Facilities

Policy: Complete auditing to determine the energy impact of city buildings, including electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems.

Policy: Coordinate with experts to understand options for updating inefficient systems.

Policy: Conserve energy through implementing strategies such as efficient appliances, gap sealing, weatherization techniques, efficient lighting, strategic heating and cooling, solar infrastructure, and electric vehicle chargers.

Policy: Consider energy efficiency when setting and prioritizing budget items.

## Strategy: Encourage Community-Wide Conservation

Policy: Provide permit submittal checklists for energy-saving projects such as solar infrastructure and electric vehicle chargers.

Policy: Consider expedited plan-review or other appropriate incentives for energy-saving projects such as solar infrastructure and electric vehicle chargers.

Policy: Dedicate outreach efforts to community members about energy efficiency and retrofit opportunities.

Policy: Consider increased permit fees to allow for stricter enforcement of energy code compliance.

Policy: Provide recognition to permit holders for solar infrastructure and electric vehicle charger projects.

Policy: Encourage benchmarking for homes and businesses, as well as publication of these rankings.

## Strategy: Coordinate Energy and Emergency Response

Policy: Determine strategies for reducing peak demands in order to prioritize energy availability for emergency response functions.

Policy: Consider opportunities to diversify energy supply in preparation for disaster events.

Policy: In energy procurement decisions, consider the effects of climate change on resource availability, as well as the effects of resources on climate change.



# LANDSCAPING

Beautiful landscaping helps establish communities as beloved hometowns and sought-after destinations. It can also contribute to higher community morale, boosted tourism, increased property values, and a greater sense of place. In addition to encouraging well-maintained landscapes, communities should support sustainable landscaping practices. Whether preserving existing landscaping amenities, providing tools for reduced water use, or curating habitats for local flora and fauna, communities have many options to implement landscapes that are beautiful, effective, and sustainable.

## Strategy: Support Trees and Foliage

Policy: Coordinate with partner agencies to document existing public trees, including their condition and any needed maintenance.

Policy: Consider adoption of tree preservation ordinances which include removal and replacement standards.

Policy: Determine landscaping requirements and approved species for public and private property.

Policy: Require landscaping plans during project review to ensure tree removal, as well as the addition of new trees is compliant.

Policy: Consider adoption of foliage impact fees to offset development impacts.

Policy: Support programs which highlight the importance of trees and provide resources for implementation.

Policy: Consider standardizing extra trees as a criterion for being awarded higher project density.

## Strategy: Protect Local Habitats

Policy: Develop an open space master plan to coordinate community-wide protection efforts.

Policy: Adopt standards to reduce development impact on riparian corridor areas.

Policy: Consider the effect on animal and plant habitats when developing management and user policies, and when adding infrastructure to open space areas.

Policy: Promote the use of native, non-invasive plant materials, and prioritize their use for city-initiated projects.

Policy: Promote the use of pollinator-friendly species and landscaping practices, and prioritize their use for city-initiated projects.

Policy: Educate community members on the importance of soil health as well as associated best practices.

## Strategy: Encourage Low-Impact Landscapes

Policy: Educate community members on the benefits of low water landscaping, as well as strategies for implementation.

Policy: Coordinate with agencies to educate the community on existing low-water incentive programs, and consider city-initiated incentives to fill gaps as needed.

Policy: Consider standards for efficient irrigation by addressing flow, frequency, and coverage.

Policy: Consider standards for low-impact storm water management, such as bioswales, rain gardens, rooftop plantings, tree grates, etc.

Policy: Recognize local examples of low-impact landscapes in newsletters, publications, business spotlights, and community beautification awards.

Policy: Serve as an example of low-impact landscaping through the use of xeriscaping and stormwater management solutions at city-owned properties.

Policy: Determine a standard for maximum allowable impervious surface coverage.



# TRANSPORTATION

Covering nearly 30 square miles in the heart of the Wasatch Front, the tri-city region is home to many destinations, including charming neighborhoods, thriving business communities, and world-class recreation opportunities. As community members bustle from place to place, their modes of transportation can have a major impact, either positive or negative, on sustainability. Prioritizing and providing a diverse array of transportation options can reduce local air pollution, improve public health, and even provide cost-savings.

## Strategy: Reduce Vehicular Idling

Policy: Educate community members on local anti-idling ordinances, enforce ordinance standards, and consider ordinance updates as necessary.

Policy: Distribute tips for ways to reduce idling via community newsletters and websites.

Policy: Conduct an idling audit to determine community hot spots for idling activity.

Policy: Install anti-idling signage and distribute other marketing materials to discourage idling.

Policy: Regularly consider traffic signal optimization efforts to maximize efficiency.

## Strategy: Green Fleets

Policy: Study the environmental impact of current city fleets.

Policy: Study the environmental impact of city employee commutes.

Policy: As is financially practicable, consider purchasing electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles, or other low-impact alternatives to traditional fuel models.

Policy: Encourage trip-chaining and carpooling when conducting off-site city business.

Policy: Consider telecommuting or adjusted work-week policies to reduce employee commute impacts.

## Strategy: Support Public Transportation

Policy: Coordinate with local agencies and neighboring municipalities to provide adequate public transportation community-wide, and to advocate for continual transit opportunities.

Policy: Provide community members with public transportation resources, including trip planning tools, route maps, route schedules, etc.

Policy: Support incentives and programs which encourage the use of public transportation, including infrastructure upgrades to improve public transportation stops.

## Strategy: Promote Active Transportation

Policy: Continually maintain existing pedestrian and cycling paths.

Policy: Provide new walking and biking paths, prioritizing those which meet currently underserved areas.

Policy: Install bike racks, wayfinding stations, benches, lighting, and other infrastructure and amenities to support safe and attractive active transportation.

Policy: Educate community members on the environmental, health, and fiscal benefits of active transportation.

Policy: Provide ample pedestrian crossings and other elements of walkable design in city projects, and require these elements in private projects.

Policy: Identify connectivity gaps and prioritize transportation connections in these areas.



# WASTE MANAGEMENT

Despite the “out of sight, out of mind” sensation that often occurs when items are thrown out, trash never completely goes away. Waste continues to impact communities even after it is discarded. Landfills and incinerators demand large areas of land, and often result in harmful emissions in the form of particulate matter, carbon dioxide, and methane. Trash can also degrade ecosystems in the form of litter, which contaminates waterways, endangers animals, and creates a visual nuisance. In terms of sustainability, mindfully managing a community’s waste can make a big difference.

## Strategy: Reduce Waste

Policy: Limit paper use for city communications when possible, including forms, reports, supplies, etc., and encourage local businesses to do the same.

Policy: Consider office printer updates to default all printing to double-sided or two sheets per page.

Policy: Educate community members on the realities of local food waste, and its environmental impact.

Policy: Support collaboration between food banks and businesses to redistribute excess food to those in need.

Policy: In providing meals for city meetings and events, purchase only what is necessary to limit potential waste from excess.

Policy: Consider ways to reduce water waste at city facilities, including appliance and system upgrades.

Policy: Educate community members on local drought conditions and ways to reduce water consumption, including utilization of conservation and drought plans from water providers.

Policy: Support initiatives which reduce the amount of litter and refuse within the community.

## Strategy: Reuse Products

Policy: Support programs which assist community members in donating and obtaining used items rather than exclusively purchasing them new.

Policy: Educate community members on methods to determine whether it is more sustainable to repair an old product versus purchasing it new.

Policy: In circumstances where repair is more sustainable, encourage use of local businesses to repair broken products and appliances.

Policy: Support and seek out initiatives which swap single-use products with reusable ones at both the public and private scale.

## Strategy: Recycle Materials

Policy: Provide community members with clear and consistent information regarding which items can and cannot be recycled in curbside bins.

Policy: Educate the community on the continued importance of recycling, and its role in the broader sustainability picture.

Policy: Provide community members with information on where to drop off items that cannot be processed via curbside service.

Policy: Offer recycling guidelines, such as how to properly clean items before adding them to curbside bins, any labels and caps that need to be removed prior to discarding, etc.

Policy: At city events, provide glass, mixed-recycling, and landfill containers to process a wider array of products.

Policy: Consider designating areas as Recycling Market Development Zones to allow eligible businesses to take advantage of recycling incentives.

# KEY TERMS

## Bioswale

A channel or trench that catches rainwater runoff, often using vegetation and organic matter to filter out pollutants

## Brownfield

Abandoned or underused sites which may contain environmental contamination

## Community Renewable Energy Program

Resulting from HB 411 (2019), this program creates a legal pathway for eligible Utah communities to partner with Rocky Mountain Power in providing the option of net-100% renewable electricity for their residents and businesses.

## Dark-Sky Fixtures

Light fixtures which minimize light pollution through properly shielding light

## Formaldehyde

A colorless, strong-smelling gas used in many construction materials, exposure to formaldehyde has been linked to health problems, including cancer.

## Greyfield

Economically outdated or underutilized properties which no longer attract investment or contribute vitality to a community

## Impact Fees

Fees which a community requires of developers in order to offset the financial impact of the new development on public infrastructure

## Impermeable

A substance which does not allow water to pass through

## Light Pollution

The inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light, often resulting in consequences for humans, wildlife, and climate

## Low-VOC Paints

“VOC” stands for “volatile organic compound,” which are unstable chemicals with harmful emissions. Many paints contain VOCs, which when used indoors, can contribute toward dangerous health conditions. Low-VOC paints have reduced levels of these compounds.

### Passive Solar

Passive solar design reduces heating and cooling requirements by taking advantage of the building's site, climate, materials, and orientation. Design considerations often include insulation, air sealing, window location, and building materials.

### Peak Demand

Relating to an electrical grid, the highest electrical power demand that has occurred over a specified time period

### Permeable

A substance which allows water to pass through

### Rain Garden

A garden typically comprised of native plants within a dip of a slope, designed to temporarily hold water runoff and eventually allow the water to soak back into the ground

### Riparian

Relating to or situated on the banks of a river, or relating to wetlands adjacent to rivers and streams

### Rough-In

The stage of construction in which mechanical, electrical, and plumbing lines are laid out

### Strategic Heating and Cooling

Basing heating and cooling based on time of day, time of year, building occupancy, and other factors which affect the temperature needed

### Tri-City Region Interlocal Agreement

A 2019 Interlocal Agreement which established sustainability collaboration between Cottonwood Heights, Holladay, and Millcreek

### Trip Chaining

Combining multiple vehicular trips or errands into a single trip as means of reducing vehicle emissions

### Weatherization

Efforts used to make a structure more efficient and better protected against weather

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Efforts used to make a structure more efficient and better protected against weather

### .Xeriscaping

A landscaping method often used in arid and semiarid climates that utilizes water conservation techniques such as drought-tolerant plants, mulch, and efficient irrigation.



# PLAN PARTNERS

## Elected Officials

Mike Peterson, Mayor, Cottonwood Heights  
Doug Petersen Councilmember, Cottonwood Heights  
Scott Bracken, Councilmember, Cottonwood Heights  
Tali Bruce, Councilmember, Cottonwood Heights  
Christine Mikell, Councilmember, Cottonwood Heights  
Rob Dahle, Mayor, Holladay  
Sabrina Petersen, Councilmember, Holladay  
Matt Durham, Councilmember, Holladay  
Paul Fotheringham, Councilmember, Holladay  
Drew Quinn, Councilmember, Holladay  
Dan Gibbons, Councilmember, Holladay  
Jeff Silvestrini, Mayor, Millcreek  
Silvia Catten, Councilmember, Millcreek  
Dwight Marchant, Councilmember, Millcreek  
Cheri Jackson, Councilmember, Millcreek  
Bev Uipi, Councilmember, Millcreek

## City Staff

Tim Tingey, City Manager, Cottonwood Heights  
Michael Johnson, Community & Economic Development Director, Cottonwood Heights  
Samantha DeSeelhorst, Associate Planner & Sustainability Analyst, Cottonwood Heights  
Andrew Hulka, Senior Planner, Cottonwood Heights  
Gina Chamness, City Manager, Holladay  
Holly Smith, Assistant to the City Manager, Holladay  
Paul Allred, Community Development Director, Holladay  
LaNiece Davenport, Community Development Director, Holladay  
Jonathan Teerlink, Planner I and GIS Specialist, Holladay  
Mike Winder, Assistant City Manager and Economic Development Director, Millcreek  
Kurt Hansen, Director of Facilities, Millcreek  
Rita Lund, Communications Director, Millcreek

## Community Partners

Dominion Energy  
Rocky Mountain Power  
Salt Lake Community College Energy Institute  
Tree Utah  
Utah Clean Air Partnership (UCAIR)  
Utah Clean Cities  
Utah Clean Energy  
Utah Rivers Council  
Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling District