



City of Littleton
Next Generation Advisory Committee
January 2022

Environmental Stewardship Packet for Council Retreat

Contents

1. Letter of Support for Environmental Stewardship as a Council Goal
2. Climate Change Prevention Ideas for the City
3. Narratives Regarding Environmental Stewardship

City of Littleton’s Environmental Stewardship Working Definition

Environmental Stewardship is pursuing a balanced approach for a vibrant community today and tomorrow through the efficient delivery of services and resilient infrastructure in an environmentally, economically, and socially responsible way. Recognizing the community as a series of interconnected systems, including natural and local, that function together to provide the quality-of-life citizens desire and acknowledge that the whole operates as a dynamic interconnected system – a change to one part of the system will affect other parts of the system.

**While the NGAC sustainability subcommittee has been using the word sustainability often in verbiage throughout the last few years, we’ll be transitioning to “environmental stewardship” more often to be in-line with council goals.*

Letter of Support for Environmental Stewardship as a Council Goal

Dear Littleton City Council Members,

The Sustainability Subcommittee of the Next Generation Advisory Committee (NGAC) would like to express our sincere appreciation to Council for unanimously voting in 2021 to make Environmental Stewardship a standalone council goal. This is now an opportunity the city has never had before to systemize the approach to environmental stewardship and **we encourage Council to expedite making it the topic of a master plan (full scale plan as recommended by staff during the 9/14/2021 study session)**. For the sake of future generations, Littleton must be a leader amongst cities and cannot wait any longer to create and implement comprehensive environmental initiatives to preserve our community.

It was reported in the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report in August 2021 - "It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land" and climate change is "already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe." This is seen in extremes such as "heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts" and more.

Locally, the Denver metropolitan area was ranked as having some of the worst air quality *in the world* through the summer and fall of 2021, southwestern states are facing historic water cutbacks from the Colorado River as water levels continue to decrease, and Colorado has seen record-breaking wildfires in recent years - including the recent devastating Marshall Fire just 30 miles from Littleton.

The NGAC unanimously agrees that the climate crisis **is one of the most important topics of our generation and our city is simply not doing enough**. There was consensus that this crisis impacts our daily lives (e.g., fires, a holiday season without any snow) and we encourage you to read through the attached narratives. The most resounding point we to communicate is that, as stated by one member, **"we want the City Council and staff to think about environmental stewardship in every decision they make."** It should be ingrained in the city's systems and decision-making processes.

We understand that this is a complicated topic that will not be addressed with one easy solution, but every decision should be reviewed through an environmental lens. There could be at least one knowledgeable environmental advocate on staff or, the most preferred option, is to set up a **standalone environmental stewardship oversight committee or board**. We suggest this committee have authority, not one that serves in an advisory capacity.

As the next generation of Littleton residents, we will be the members of the community who will be living with the choices of current policy decisions and we thank the council for their continued efforts on this matter.

Thank you,

Next Generation Advisory Committee
Sustainability Subcommittee
Hannah Kight, Emily Przekwas, Molli Luke

NGAC SUSTAINABILITY SUB-COMMITTEE PRESENTS

CLIMATE CHANGE PREVENTION

Simple Steps for Council with Huge Impact



REDUCE WASTE

Make it a habit to Recycle/Compost too

Compile trash services into a single solid waste company and educate community about waste reduction, composting, reuse, etc.



LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Be Conscientious of Your Impact

Requirements for sustainable building practices both for the community & city buildings. Allow/encourage homeowners to have more sustainable practices (e.g., home gardens, beekeeping, rainwater collection)



WALK AND TRAVEL GREEN

Less Pollution, More Benefits

Prioritize low emitting vehicles for city and vendors, make improvements to walkability including wider sidewalks and bike lanes. Introduce a bikeshare program



GOVERNING GREEN

Study the Science

Create a Sustainability Advisory Committee and integrate sustainability into every decision. Prioritize a Comprehensive Environmental Stewardship plan and report city data around meaningful targets (e.g., carbon use).



GET OUTSIDE

Enjoy Nature Responsibly

Restore vegetation and native plants in parks and public spaces. Increase open spaces to account for wildlife habitats

SUGGESTIONS FROM LITTLETON NEXT GENERATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND
COMPILED BY NGAC SUSTAINABILITY SUB-COMMITTEE
HANNAH KIGHT, MOLLI LUKE AND EMILY PRZEKVAS

NGAC SUSTAINABILITY SUB-COMMITTEE PRESENTS

CLIMATE CHANGE NARRATIVES

Stories from Littleton Residents

I have lived in the Littleton – Unincorporated Jefferson County area for the majority of my life. Within the first week of 2022, two large fires broke out in the metro area. One along the Deer Creek Canyon foothills area, less than a mile from my home.

To me, caring for the environment is always something in the back of my mind (e.g., could I reuse this plastic bag? Should I use paper towels when I can use something reuseable, etc.), and I know even simple changes in people's thinking like this could make a difference.

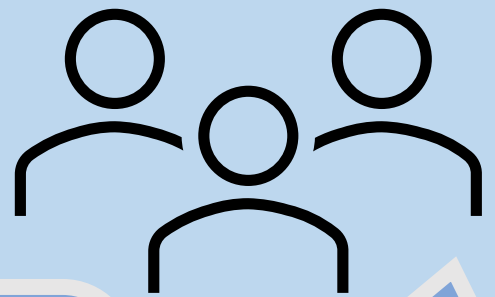
Environmental Sustainability starts local and grows when positive practices are put into place.

I have always struggled to understand why people have a hard time agreeing that we should do as much as we can to take care of our planet and work toward a common goal of offsetting pollution and emissions as well as aim for carbon neutrality.

I think that increased density and walkability, communal and intergenerational lifestyle configurations and a revaluation of the capitalist model are necessary to move us forward in the next 30 years.

With two young kids, I think about the climate crisis daily and fear for what their future will hold. In fact, I worry for them already with the air quality in Colorado. One of the very reasons that I love Colorado is the outdoors and we don't get to experience that during the summer. Every summer I vigilantly monitor the air quality and keep our kids indoors to reduce their exposure to unhealthy air to avoid a lifetime of lung and health issues for them.

I feel bad that the hope is always placed on the next generation to fix this problem that they are inheriting.



SUGGESTIONS FROM LITTLETON NEXT GENERATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND
COMPILED BY NGAC SUSTAINABILITY SUB-COMMITTEE
HANNAH KIGHT, MOLLI LUKE AND EMILY PRZEKVAS

NGAC Narratives Regarding Environmental Stewardship

January 2022

Alyssa Campbell

I have lived in the Littleton – Unincorporated Jefferson County area for the majority of my life. The world's climate crisis cannot be ignored or pushed aside any longer. The City of Littleton needs to address the ongoing crisis with more sustainable practices that will influence and lead in the Denver Metro area, which will eventually create a larger impact. These past two years have provided very stark and devastating consequences due to the lack of action from nations, states, and municipalities. Within the first week of 2022, two large fires broke out in the metro area. One along the Deer Creek Canyon foothills area, less than a mile from my home, and the Marshall Fire in Superior which devastated close to a thousand homes and families. The fall and winter season in 2021 was one of the most dry and warm on record, and this is purely due to the climate crisis which has not been properly addressed.

Environmental Sustainability starts local and grows when positive practices are put into place. I believe that environmental sustainability and stewardship should be one of the top, if not the number one, priority for the city looking into 2022 and ahead. The mixed-use development and incentive based affordable housing conversations should prioritize sustainable practices in these discussions. Policies that require builders to use concrete made of recycled materials, use of insulation and design that will conserve and efficiently utilize energy over the life of a building, cool or green roofs, and other industry best practices need to be a focus in these conversations as the City addresses affordable housing. Other housing development policy examples include encouraging the preservation of existing trees, addition of new native tree species and plants, walkability, ease of access to public transit, and conservancy efforts for stormwater and energy.

The City of Littleton has an obligation to model sustainable stewardship behavior for its citizens. An example of this could include creating a public-private partnership with a trash removal company that will streamline services for the citizens, but also reduce carbon emissions from trucks in the city. The partnered company could also be required to provide vehicles with better engines that emit lower levels of gas emissions. When landscaping public parks and areas, Littleton can focus on the use of native plant material and restoring native vegetation which can then encourage citizens to do the same. The city should also focus efforts on educating citizens and businesses about waste reduction, home composting, reuse, the benefits of zero-waste standards and policies. While simultaneously allowing for homeowners to create home gardens, bring in small livestock like chickens and goats, beekeeping, allowing rainwater collection, etc.

All of these are a small scratching of the surface of what the city can do to be better stewards of the environment, but a place to start. I would encourage that there is a sustainability focus on all conversations happening regarding all policies before City Council and Staff this year.

Lauren Geber

This feels like such a divisive, partisan issue, and I have always struggled to understand why people have a hard time agreeing that we should do as much as we can to take care of our planet and work toward a common goal of offsetting pollution and emissions as well as aim for carbon neutrality.

I'll admit that fixing these issues can often feel hopeless to me, especially in a smaller government conversation as we know this is a global issue. However, I do feel it's important for Littleton to take their

NGAC Narratives Regarding Environmental Stewardship

January 2022

own initiatives in not only prioritizing environmental stewardship issues, but to implement practical things that we as Littleton residents can start doing to help offset this issue.

Walkability is so important to me for many reasons. I urge the city to not only focus on but prioritize walkability as they move into redeveloping the "mid-mod mile" in the next year. The addition of Bird scooters was met with mixed reviews, but I do think it's a good start. I'd like to see a bikeshare program as well, as bikes are often more practical for people. Many bikeshare bikes have a basket in the front that allows folks to take them for errands or to work easier than a scooter.

It is asinine that we have so many trash pickup services throughout the City of Littleton. I'd love to see them put some of that increased tax revenue go toward a streamlined trash service. Perhaps link up with a company that prioritizes environmental stewardship as well? I spend extra money a year to recycle, and I notice many of my neighbors don't because of the added cost - could the city set up an incentive program to those who choose to recycle?

The city can, at the very least, start educating its citizens on environmental stewardship. This is a low-cost initiative that they could start doing today. I'd love to see the city launch a social media campaign educating the public on what they can do to create a cleaner world. Perhaps an incentive program for walking to work? I'd love to see Bemis library host a class on this. I'd love to see education in how to grow organic vegetables and how to compost (tbh, I want to learn this myself and have no idea where to begin!)

To me, caring for the environment is always something in the back of my mind (e.g., could I reuse this plastic bag? Should I use paper towels when I can use something reuseable, etc.), and I know even simple changes in people's thinking like this could make a difference. I would love to think bigger though, and would love to hear your ideas on what the City of Littleton can do specifically.

Emily Przekwas

For me environmental stewardship requires lifestyle changes. Capitalism is an inherently unsustainable economic system that relies on unabated growth and the continued exploitation of both people and the planet. We simply consume too much and the materialism of our lifestyle needs to be combatted by significant changes in our lifestyle. I have personally committed to this in my life cutting down consumption by living in shared environments, not having kids, not driving or working for companies that contribute negatively to the environment.

I think that cultivating a better understanding of indigenous practices will be a powerful tool in fighting materialism and consumerism in our society. Unfortunately, many in our community directly benefit from the exploitation of the planet and people across the globe. Littleton and the surrounding community is home to weapons manufactures and tech companies that rely on exploitation for profit and to support the local economy. Being serious about sustainability and environmental stewardship will require each person in our community to take personal inventory.

In my life I have personally committed to a lifestyle of less consumption by not driving or having a car for about 10 years. This was when I lived in downtown Denver where public transportation and density facilitated a more walkable lifestyle. Now that I am spending more time in Littleton, this pedestrian

NGAC Narratives Regarding Environmental Stewardship

January 2022

lifestyle is no longer possible. I am consuming more gasoline for my car and with wear and tear on my car I'm having to make repairs and consume parts that require manufacturing.

I think that increased density and walkability, communal and intergenerational lifestyle configurations and a revaluation of the capitalist model are necessary to move us forward in the next 30 years.

Molli Luke

With two young kids, I think about the climate crisis *daily* and fear for what their future will hold. In fact, I worry for them already with the air quality in Colorado. One of the very reasons that I love Colorado is the outdoors and we don't get to experience that during the summer. Every summer I vigilantly monitor the air quality and keep our kids indoors to reduce their exposure to unhealthy air to avoid a lifetime of lung and health issues for them. We have multiple air purifiers in our home in attempts to mitigate the effects, but I worry for their health having to stay indoors and for those who do not have the financial ability to have air purifiers or need to leave the windows open to cool their home.

We personally try to find ways to have a lifestyle that has less of an impact on the environment. One way is by reducing use of cars. In many ways, we appreciate that in Littleton we are able access most of what we need within the city, resulting in little driving. However, there is still a heavy focus on automobiles over pedestrians or bicycles (e.g., narrow and missing sidewalks, limited bike lanes) which makes this difficult and can add barriers and even safety concerns. This is to say that the community we live in plays a huge role in encouraging me as a community member to be a better steward of the environment and of my community, so I hope that the city knows how big of a part they can play in this crisis.

I feel bad that the hope is always placed on the next generation to fix this problem that they are inheriting. It is everyone's role and obligation to identify how they can make a change in their part of their world whether that be as a parent, a leader, an employee, a community member, a city council member, etc. With that in mind, I would like to see the City of Littleton leaders, staff, and City Council be innovative and genuinely approach *every* decision from the perspective of its long-term impact on not only our community and environment now, but what it will mean for us in 10, 50, or 100 years. For instance, when hiring a new City Manager, choose a leader whose values and experience align with the goal of environmental stewardship. Integrate staff training, staff professional development, discussions with other cities, etc. around initiatives and approaches Littleton can take to create a more environmentally sustainable city. Ideally, hire or train an in-house expert or have an environmental sustainability advisory committee to City Council.

Hannah Kight

I moved to Colorado in 2019 for the opportunity of a great career move and a closer connection with the outdoors. I felt lucky that my job was in Littleton and soon after moving to Colorado I found a house within 3 miles of my workplace, also within the Littleton city limits. This was done intentionally to limit commute time and give me the opportunity to bike or walk to work as often as possible. I was also thrilled to work with a company, Breckenridge Brewery, who was committed on many levels to

NGAC Narratives Regarding Environmental Stewardship

January 2022

offsetting their impacts on the environment. I am proud to be part of the team that sets goals for the company that include reductions in utilities usage (water, CO2, natural gas, electricity), committing to renewable energy, diverting our waste away from landfill, and more. We're constantly looking for new projects and initiatives that can decrease our carbon footprint and impact on environment.

When I started researching what the City of Littleton was doing for environmental stewardship, I was disappointed to see there have been no concrete environmental goals set for the city or our community as a whole. If a company can set targets for the things listed above, why can't Littleton? This is not a new or novel concept. Going back to 2008, Eugene, OR city council voted to create their first Community Climate and Energy Action Plan. In 2020 the City of Denver created a Climate Action Plan and Fund with goals for greenhouse gas reduction timeline through 2030. And not just that, but the city of Denver has an entire office dedicated to Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency (CASR).

I want to continue to live in a community that leads by example. And while climate change is a complex matter that is not confined within a city's limits, we must recognize that it is a *crisis* that must be addressed at every level of society. We as citizens can do our part by making personal choices that lessen our impact, businesses can set targets to decrease the footprint of their operations – but the city has a chance to influence both and make lasting impacts for future generations to come.

I am eager to see the City of Littleton implement ambitious goals for things such as:

1. Percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions with a timeline
2. Percentage of clean energy and a reduction of fossil fuels by city managed resources and functions
3. Water efficiency and decreasing usage

Eugene, OR Community Climate and Energy Action Plan:

<https://www.eugene-or.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/80>

Denver, CO Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency (CASR)

<https://denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Climate-Action-Sustainability-Resiliency>