



Denver



Biannual Sustainability Update

October 2026

Hello Lynx Sustainability Community!



Pictured above: Members of the CU Denver Sustainable Business Advisory Council tour the green roof and bee hives on City Heights dormitory.

It's been a while since I've written, and boy do I have a lot of exciting news to share with you! The sustainability program here on the operations side of CU Denver has really picked up steam in the last few months. Read on to learn more!

Know a colleague or fellow student that would be interested in receiving this newsletter? Forward this along and have them fill out [this form](#) to be added to the distribution list. Would you no longer like to receive this newsletter? Shoot me an [email](#) to let me know and I will remove you (no hard feelings, I promise).



Check out CU Denver's [sustainability webpage](#)! Learn more about our sustainability efforts, focus areas, and [ways to get involved](#).

Updates

Off Site Agrovoltaics Contract: Signed!

CU Denver is joining the agrovoltaics scene! Agrovoltaics is the practice of using the same plot of land for both the production of solar energy and agricultural activities (like food production and livestock grazing). Operating under a Virtual Net Energy Metering (VNEM) agreement, CU Denver will be purchasing solar energy (at a 10% cost savings) from a solar array sited on Agricultural land in Weld County, which will also be used for sheep grazing.



CU Denver does not have the most enticing roofs for onsite solar due to our utility rate structure, roof footprint, and anticipated craning needed for construction. However, Colorado's virtual net metering program -- established by Colorado Senate Bill 21-261 in 2021 -- allows CU Denver to utilize solar power generated by a future 3.5 MW (dC) offsite solar array and receive on-bill credits from Xcel

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Energy to reduce electricity costs. It also provides CU Denver with the opportunity to support the generation of distributed-scale renewable energy and the future of agriculture in Weld County. The project is expected to be completed and operational in late 2027, and is expected to produce just under 7 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of solar energy annually, equivalent to powering more than 600 homes or taking 1,000 passenger cars off the road. We estimate annual savings of around \$40,000 in utility costs from this arrangement, with no up-front cost or operations & maintenance costs required. CU Denver has entered into this twenty-year VNEM agreement with Pivot Energy – a national renewable energy provider and independent power producer. Pivot is a Certified B-Corporation that proudly follows a corporate strategy aimed at positively impacting society as measured by Environmental stewardship, Social leadership, and responsible Governance (ESG) factors. We anticipate a larger press release once construction is underway.



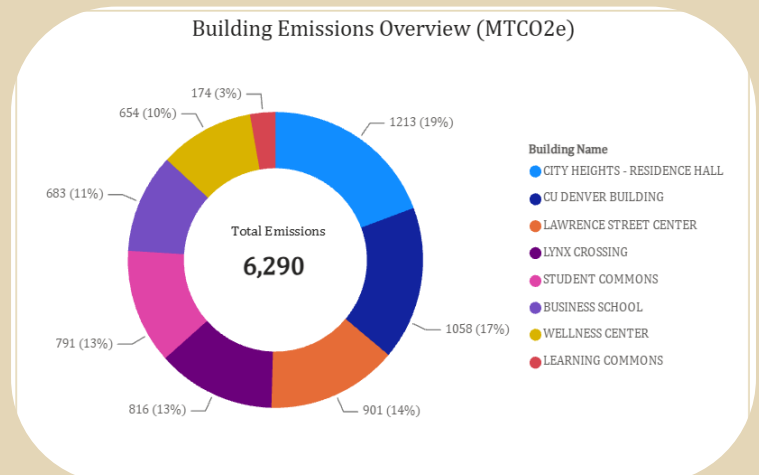
Building Decarbonization Feasibility Study

In May of this year, we were awarded a \$250,000 Building Electrification Showcase grant from Denver's Climate Action Sustainability and Resiliency Office (CASR) to explore decarbonization pathways for three downtown buildings. The grant will support two phases of work: 1) a Feasibility Study assessing pathways to transition heating and cooling equipment off of fossil fuels (and towards electrification and/or thermal energy networks) and 2)

schematic design and cost estimates for any decarbonization pathways that are deemed feasible. This work will help CU Denver integrate building decarbonization into our infrastructure and capital planning and chart a more informed path towards our climate action goals. Currently, we are in the process of selecting an engineering firm to complete this work, and we hope to complete the study and designs by the end of 2027.

CU Denver Sustainability Dashboards are Live!

Check out our new [CU Denver Sustainability Dashboards!](#) The dashboards track progress towards institutional sustainability goals and depict performance as it relates to building greenhouse gas emissions, energy, water and solar deployment. By making this information accessible, we aim to foster transparency, support action, and empower the community to be part of CU Denver's sustainability journey. The dashboards were developed by the very talented Pratik More, former Student Assistant and recent CU Denver Business School alum. They will be updated annually, and we plan to add in data for Independence Plaza and waste diversion metrics in the future.





ULT Freezer Subsidy Program

To promote energy efficiency, the ASCP is now offering subsidies of up to \$3,500 per ULT freezer to assist laboratories in purchasing qualifying high efficiency ULT freezers. These freezers can reduce energy consumption by up to 70% compared to conventional models, helping to lower costs while reducing campus emissions. The subsidy program is open to all institutions across campus.

Applications will be open through October 30th, and a second round of funding will be available January 18th – February 28th. To learn more about eligibility requirements, the application process, and qualifying equipment, please visit: <https://www.sustainableauraria.org/ult-freezer-subsidy-program>.

Auraria Waste Characterization Study

The Auraria Sustainable Campus Program just completed the second round of sorting and sampling for Auraria's comprehensive waste characterization study. Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from C3 (Circular Colorado Communities Enterprise), this study will help uncover opportunities for new recycling programs, strengthen outreach and education around waste diversion, and identify cost savings in waste hauling. Waste from Student Commons and Wellness Center were analyzed as a part of this study, along with several other buildings on the Auraria campus. We can't wait to hear what they learn and how we might improve waste diversion.



Engagement Opportunities



Sustainability Champion: This month's Sustainability Champion is Will Ross, CU Denver's Facility Manager. When our Eye on Water leak detection platform alerted us to a several hundred-gallon spike in water use at the Lawrence Street Center, Will scoured the building and found the culprit: a very leaky toilet. Did you know that a broken fill valve or stuck open flapper can waste over 200 gallons/hour? After fixing the toilet leak, water usage came back down within normal range. Without our leak

detection platform and Will's swift action, this leak could have gone undetected for months. If you find a leaky toilet, submit a work order to Facilities Management!

If you know someone working to advance sustainability on campus in some way – large or small – nominate them as a sustainability champion so we can celebrate our collective efforts. Simply send me [an email](#) with their name and a little information about their efforts.