University of Colorado **Sustainability Report** 2025

BOULDER
SPRINGS
DENVER
ANSCHUTZ

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Letter from the President

I'm a lifelong Coloradan and proud of it. I feel incredibly lucky to live in our great state and have a deep appreciation of all it has to offer, including four glorious seasons, stunning vistas from the mountains to the plains, endless outdoor adventures, and cities rich in arts, culture and culinary delights.

Core to our mission at the University of Colorado is our service to the people of our state – and to the state itself. This means doing all we can to grow and strengthen the systems and resources that allow Coloradans to thrive, while working to reduce our impact on the environment and preserve our state's natural treasures. In doing both, we foster a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future for Colorado.

With a focus on sustainability in the built environment, this report highlights our continued efforts and progress toward our long-term goal of carbon neutrality through reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy and water consumption, and innovations in waste diversion and transportation.

We're doing good work in this area, and yet, we recognize that we can and must do more. To this end, I formed a systemwide working group last year to determine additional ways we can advance sustainability across the university and inform our strategic planning for the future. The group's efforts are complementing those at our campuses. Read on for a complete picture of our work.

2026 will mark the shared milestone of 150 years of both CU and the state of Colorado. Just as our pasts are inextricably linked, so are our futures. It's an honor to work in service to our great state and the people who live here and to do all we can to ensure that both flourish – now and for generations to come.

Todd Saliman
President

Executive Summary

The 2025 University of Colorado Sustainability Report documents systemwide progress toward the University's long-term commitment to carbon neutrality, with a focus on sustainability in the built environment across CU Boulder, UCCS, CU Denver, and CU Anschutz. Guided by the 2009 Sustainability Resolution and the 2021 Strategic Plan, the University has embedded sustainability into capital planning, facilities management, and operations, aligning institutional goals with those of local governments, utility providers, and the State of Colorado.

Overall, the University is achieving measurable reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy use intensity (EUI), despite continued campus growth. Three of the four campuses have already met or exceeded the State of Colorado's interim GHG reduction benchmarks when emissions are normalized by building area. Energy performance contracting and efficiency retrofits have driven sustained reductions in energy consumption. Major investments in renewable energy, particularly new on-site and off-site solar projects, will continue to substantially increase electricity supply.

In this report, each campus demonstrates leadership through targeted sustainability initiatives. CU Boulder advanced large-scale decarbonization planning, including geothermal feasibility studies and district energy plant modernization, while also launching the Buckley Center for Sustainability Education to embed sustainability across the curriculum. UCCS expanded its primarily student-led Office of Sustainability, strengthening programming through the UCCS Farm, Green Action Fund projects, and campuswide engagement initiatives that combine education, food security, and waste reduction. CU Denver hired its first dedicated sustainability professional in 2024 and established campus-specific carbon, energy, water, and waste targets, accelerating progress across the Auraria campus. CU Anschutz expanded its formal Green Labs and waste diversion programs, achieving reductions in energy, water, and material use within research-intensive facilities.

Systemwide, CU emphasizes renovation, space optimization, and deferred maintenance over new construction, having invested approximately $1 billion over the past decade to improve facility performance and reduce long-term emissions. Efforts in water conservation, waste diversion, sustainable procurement, and multimodal transportation further strengthen CU's sustainability profile.

Together, these initiatives position CU as a national leader in sustainability – underscoring the scale of continued investment and innovation required to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Introduction

The University of Colorado is committed to the long-term goal of carbon neutrality. This report addresses sustainability activities at the university, with particular focus on the built environment. The four campuses of the University of Colorado are united in their passion to create opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and transform campus energy systems. The University recognizes that it has an important part to play in combating climate change. The University further recognizes that the path to carbon neutrality is one of continuous improvement.

Recognizing both the urgency and importance of taking action to combat climate change, all four campuses began tracking energy use intensity, GHG emissions, and water consumption by 2006. Additionally, the Boulder and Colorado Springs campuses were pioneers in the development of the various sustainability measures reported through the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) program. STARS is a comprehensive self-reporting tool used to measure sustainability in higher education. CU Boulder and UCCS began voluntarily tracking through the program in 2010 and both campuses have current gold ratings. There are 383 institutions with current STARS ratings. Participating institutions receive reporter, bronze, silver, gold or platinum ratings.

2009 Sustainability Resolution

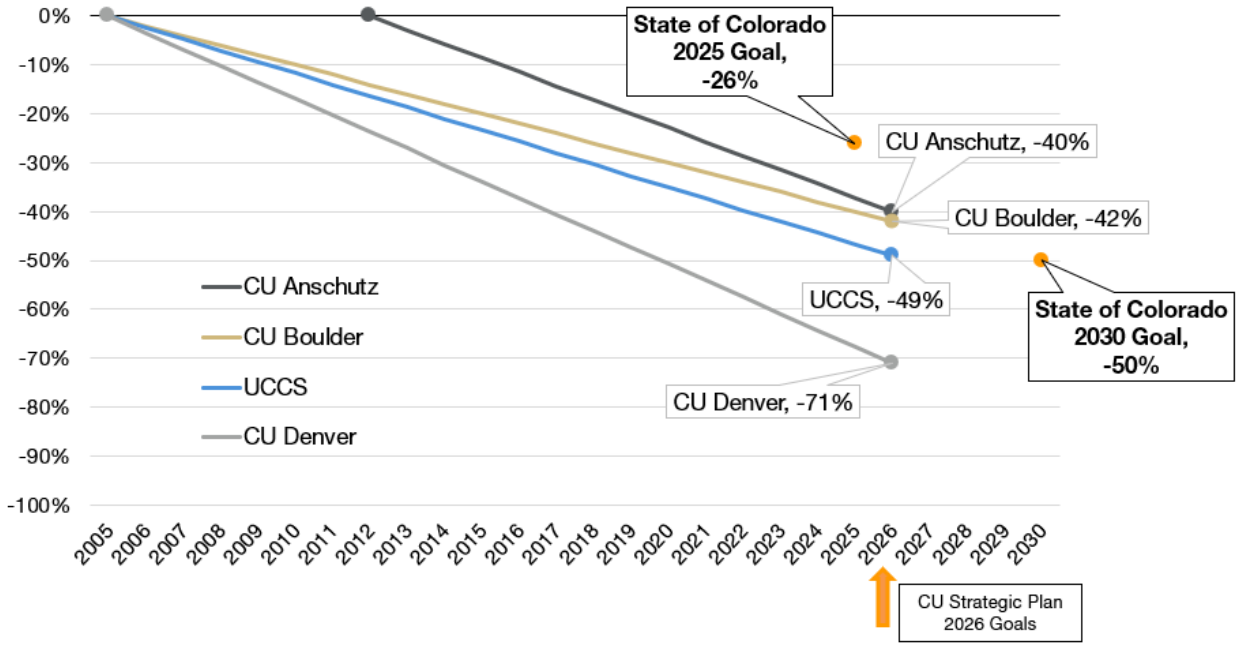
In 2009, the CU Board of Regents passed a resolution encouraging sustainability efforts system-wide. The resolution recognized a number of sustainability efforts that commenced in 2007 at the state and national levels. Specifically, the resolution directed the president and chancellors to:

- Incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards in campus construction projects wherever possible (Senate Bill 07-051);
- Develop comprehensive plans to reduce GHG emissions 80% below 2005 levels (as outlined in the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, which was signed by each campus chancellor in 2007); and
- Incorporate the Governor's Colorado Climate Action Plan which required an 80% reduction in GHG emissions below 2005 levels and the Greening of State Government Executive Orders into campus comprehensive plans to achieve climate neutrality.

2021 Strategic Plan

System-wide strategic planning efforts focused on sustainability began in 2019 and furthered the University's sustainability goals with near-term 2026 goals that reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions. The University's goals align with various efforts by local governments and the State of Colorado to address climate change. The University's near-term GHG emission reduction goals are illustrated in the figure below. Planning is underway for the next strategic plan.

University of Colorado 2026 Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Goals



Local Government Goals

The University recognizes the symbiotic relationship between the sustainability work and goals of its local government partners and its own path toward a more sustainable future. Local government goals may complement or challenge the University's goals. Or, as is the case with local utilities, goals play a key role in helping the University move toward carbon neutrality.

Aurora

In 2020, the City of Aurora partnered with Xcel Energy to develop an Energy Action Plan. The plan prioritizes energy efficiency and demand management, transportation electrification, and renewable energy.

Boulder

In 2006, the City of Boulder instituted the nation's first voter-approved tax dedicated to mitigating climate change. In 2018, Boulder County established community GHG emission reduction goals. In October 2021, the Boulder City Council adopted an updated framework for climate action. The new framework created more aggressive emissions reduction targets:

2030: Reduce emissions 70% (against a 2018 baseline)
2035: Net zero emissions
2040: Carbon (climate) positive

In 2024, the city revised its energy conservation code. The code sets minimum standards for energy conservation in new construction and major renovations for both commercial and residential buildings. The city is also in the process of updating its Climate Action Plan. According to the Boulder Reporting Lab, the city has cut its GHG emissions nearly in half since 2005.

Denver

The City and County of Denver established its Office of Sustainability in 2013. In July 2018, Denver published its 80 x 50 Climate Action Plan, which established GHG emission goals. In 2020, the city's Climate Action Task Force revised the 2018 goals with more aggressive targets and referred a ballot measure to the voters to increase the local sales and use tax to create the Climate Protection Fund. The ballot measure was approved and Denver is working toward the following GHG emission reduction targets:

2030: Reduce emissions 65% (against a 2019 baseline)
100% renewable electric system
2040: Net zero emissions

Colorado Springs

The city of Colorado Springs aligns itself with the State of Colorado goals.

Electric Utility Service Providers

The GHG emission reduction measures planned by local electric service providers directly benefit the University. So long as local providers emit GHG, so too will the University, since it uses the services of these providers.

The utilities that serve the four University campuses, Xcel Energy and Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU), have committed to resource plans that will gradually reduce GHG emissions between now and 2050.

2030: Xcel Energy - Reduce carbon emissions by 85%, retire all coal generated power, and pursue 80% renewable electricity

CSU – Reduce carbon emissions by 80% and retire all coal-generated power

2050: Xcel Energy – Produce 100% carbon-free electricity

CSU – Reduce carbon emissions by 90%

In addition to the power it purchases from Xcel Energy, the CU Boulder campus has three district energy plants that provide heating, cooling, and power to facilities primarily located on the Main Campus and at Williams Village. There are several projects underway on the Boulder campus to make improvements to existing energy plants and systems, including:

- The West District Energy Plant renewal project. The project increases the resilience of the campus energy system and supports the future transition to cleaner energy sources.

- Steam to hot water project at Williams Village. This multi-phase project is underway. Phase two is scheduled to begin in 2026.

- Geothermal energy feasibility studies. The campus received two grants from the Colorado Energy Office to conduct detailed design and feasibility studies of both shallow and deep geothermal energy technologies. These technologies – if viable – could help support future campus heating and power needs. The final reports from these studies will be available in early 2026 and will determine if there is a path to incorporate geothermal technology into the campus energy mix.

- Decarbonization of Main Campus energy plants. The campus is working with an engineering firm to assess how to transition buildings on the Main Campus from steam to hot water. This initiative, which could take 10-20 years to complete, would increase efficiency, open opportunities to incorporate electrified heating sources, and reduce the overall carbon footprint of the campus energy portfolio.

State Goals

In 2007, under Governor Bill Ritter, Colorado published its first Climate Action Plan, which set a goal of reducing GHG emissions by 20% below 2005 levels by 2020. In 2019, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 19-1261, Climate Action Plan to Reduce Pollution. The bill established mandated GHG emission minimum reduction goals, relative to 2005 levels, for 2025, 2030, and 2050.

Governor Jared Polis furthered the goals established in HB 19-1261 through Executive Order D 2019 016, Concerning the Greening of State Government, which amended a prior Executive Order. Among other changes, the executive order refined the State's GHG emission goals, encouraged an increase in the percentage of renewable electricity consumed or purchased by state facilities to 5% by the end of FY 2022-23, and required additional analysis of new construction and renovation projects with respect to renewable energy and utilities and the State's High Performance Certification Program. Institutions of higher education are encouraged to comply with certain provisions of the executive order.

In 2023, the Colorado General Assembly adopted Senate Bill 23-016, which added additional benchmarks and revised the overall GHG emission reduction goal from House Bill 19-1261 from 90% in 2050 to 100% in 2050. The state's GHG reduction goals are shown below. The new benchmarks added by SB 23-016 are shown in blue. The revised overall GHG emission goal is shown in green.

In 2025, CU Boulder opened a surplus store (shown at right) for CU and external customers.

The Buff Surplus Store sells second-hand items that the University of Colorado doesn't need anymore. It has a wide range of products, including office furniture, electronics, sports gear, and one-of-a-kind items at great prices. The store supports sustainability by encouraging reuse and cutting down on waste.

Additionally, the CU Boulder Transportation team created an on-demand transportation option that includes a stop at the surplus store free of charge.

Student Sustainability Work

CU students are active partners in reducing GHG emissions and promoting sustainability, whether through learning new behaviors after they come to campus, volunteering, or developing projects that make lasting positive environmental change.

CU Denver's Sustainability Office is actively developing opportunities for student engagement via partnership with the Student Government Association, internships, and the integration of a Living Learning Laboratory concept on campus. Students also have the opportunity to engage with the Auraria Sustainable Campus Program (ASCP), a tri-institutional sustainability program funded by student fees which spearheads programs that reduce AHEC campus energy consumption from non-renewable sources, promote alternative transportation, and divert waste. Students can play an active role in the ideation and proposal process for ASCP-funded sustainability initiatives by joining the ASCP Advisory Committee. The office also offers sustainability-related volunteer opportunities via an Eco-Rep program. Student Eco Reps can volunteer for activities such as trash clean-up along the Cherry Creek Trail or assisting with composting at campus events.

The UCCS Sustainability Office supports campus sustainability initiatives such as the Students for Environmental Awareness and Sustainability group and adding sustainable dining options at the Roaring Fork Dining Hall. The office also promotes student volunteerism with events such as tree planting and the annual Creek Week clean up event. Through the Green Action Fund, UCCS students have initiated and allocated more than $180,000 toward sustainability projects that advance campus environmental goals while providing hands-on learning opportunities. The academic year 2025-26 portfolio of student-led projects included installing a bulk refill station in the campus store to reduce single-use packaging; bringing global sustainability concepts from France and Italy to UCCS through a series of workshops, lectures, and experiential learning events; and

supporting the creation of a sustainable art installation to inspire campuswide dialogue on environmental stewardship. Students also expanded access to low-carbon commuting options by funding bus passes for their peers, and contributed to waste reduction by designing and constructing a biochar system that transforms campus organic waste into a valuable soil amendment. Collectively, these initiatives highlight the leadership, innovation, and commitment of UCCS students in shaping a more sustainable and resilient campus community.

The University of Colorado Environmental Center is housed within the CU Boulder Division of Student Affairs. The Center supports 17 student groups and more than 250 lab, office, and hall student Eco Leaders. It also employees 150 students annually. The center promotes peer-to-peer education on climate change and climate justice. Students are encouraged to take the Sustainable Buffs Challenge and use various tools to estimate their carbon footprint. Students can also sign up for a free Eco Kit and talk to an EcoBuffs student expert to learn how to live a more zero-waste lifestyle, use water more efficiently, and reduce energy bills.

Students at CU Anschutz are focused on the vital connection between human health and sustainability. Several schools have student groups dedicated to sustainability and climate action efforts, including the Climate & Health, Advocacy, Sustainability, and Education (CHASE) group within the School of Medicine. Students also participate in university sustainability benchmarking through the Planetary Health Report Card and sustainable clinical healthcare practices through Practice Greenhealth. Additionally, the School of Medicine Climate and Health Program offers a Diploma in Climate Medicine, a five-part continuing education program for healthcare professionals. The sustainable healthcare certificate teaches things such as GHG accounting for healthcare facilities, sustainable waste management practices, and the impact of pharmaceuticals on planetary health.

Sustainability Resources

In 2024, the Systemwide Sustainability Steering Committee was formed. The group meets regularly to discuss strategic plan goals and metrics, to share resources and campus successes, and to discuss possible systemwide initiatives to promote sustainability. Initially the group was comprised of sustainability professionals and facilities staff. In late 2025, the group was expanded to include faculty representatives from every campus.

CU Boulder

At CU Boulder, the goal is to fully integrate sustainability into the core mission of education, research, operations, and community engagement. Key initiatives and recent milestones include:

- New Leadership Structure: In early 2025, CU Boulder formally launched the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Sustainability to coordinate and accelerate sustainability efforts across campus.

- Educational Advancements: In August, 2025, CU Boulder launched the $10 million Buckley Center for Sustainability Education to embed sustainability throughout the curriculum and provide resources like faculty fellowships and student scholarships. CU Boulder also became the administrative and operational host for the new national Carnegie Elective Classification for Sustainability.

- Operational Progress: In 2024, the campus released an updated Climate Action Plan with ambitious goals:
    - 50% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030
    - 50% reduction in feasible Scope 3 emissions (indirect emissions from commuting, purchased goods, etc.) by 2030
    - Zero emissions by no later than 2050

- Research Catalyst: Launched in April of 2025, the new Sustainability Research Initiative is accelerating interdisciplinary research, applied solutions, and partnerships that translate innovation into impact.

- Community and Industry Partnerships: CU Boulder is fostering partnerships with companies like Ford (for a net-zero energy practice field) and Breakthrough Energy (to support student climate startups) to translate academic research into real-world solutions and attract investment. CU currently ranks #1 nationally for university startup innovations, with more than one-third of these startups focused on sustainability.

At CU Boulder, sustainability is a central, unifying vision for the university's future, aiming for national and global leadership in climate action and resilience.

UCCS

In 2025, the UCCS Office of Sustainability, which is primarily student-run, expanded its capacity with the hiring of a new Director of Sustainability Programming and UCCS Farm, strengthening coordination across campus initiatives. Several new programs were launched or

revitalized, including a Sustainable Speaker Miniseries and a monthly Sustainable Research Series. These programs highlight faculty, student, and community expertise while advancing interdisciplinary dialogue on climate and sustainability. The UCCS Infrastructure and Sustainability Department sends a monthly bulletin to faculty and staff providing information about upcoming sustainability events. In addition, cross-campus sustainability working groups developed actionable plans for Spring 2026 to enhance sustainability practices and performance campuswide.

To support waste reduction and education efforts, the UCCS Office of Sustainability is also developing a Recycle Coach mobile app, scheduled to launch in Spring 2026, which will provide students and employees with guidance on proper recycling, waste sorting, and sustainable habits. Together, these new hires and programs significantly strengthen UCCS's institutional capacity and student engagement in sustainability.

CU Denver

The CU Denver campus hired their first designated sustainability professional in November 2024. The Auraria campus has benefitted from an active and impactful student-fee-funded tri-institutional sustainability program since 2008, but adding a new full-time position within Facilities Management and Planning has allowed CU Denver to focus on building energy consumption in CU Denver-owned buildings and other areas not covered by the Auraria campus program. In early 2025, CU Denver established campus-specific sustainability goals and metrics, including a 2030 carbon reduction goal and key performance indicators and targets for energy, water, and waste. The Principal Sustainability Professional launched a webpage and a quarterly sustainability newsletter to help generate awareness and collaboration across campus sustainability efforts. CU Denver is exploring funding energy use reduction projects in CU Denver buildings while the Auraria campus program continues to serve as a vehicle for advancing and funding sustainability initiatives on shared areas of the campus.

CU Anschutz

The CU Anschutz campus has accelerated sustainability initiatives and climate action planning in recent years. The campus recently hired a Waste Diversion Coordinator and Green Labs Coordinator to manage specific, formalized programs. Both programs have grown quickly and are showing near-immediate reduction in resource use and increased efficiencies.

Campus-wide, two new sustainability groups have formed in order to advise and consult with campus leadership about sustainability and climate action efforts. The Sustainability Implementation team provides technical expertise on operational sustainability endeavors. The

Sustainability Council advises on campus sustainability planning, assists with communication efforts, and provides support to sustainability staff for specific projects.

Increased communications and outreach has also been a focus at CU Anschutz in recent years. The expansion of the CU Anschutz Sustainability website, and the associated Climate Action Plan Dashboard, provide a wealth of information to the campus community and beyond. The Sustainability Scoop Newsletter is produced monthly and is another outlet for sustainability staff to communicate successes and challenges, sustainability tips, and other news-worthy items to the campus community.

Highlighting Unique Academic Offerings

CU Boulder – Beginning in Fall 2023, the Environmental Center is offering a new micro-credential program: Foundations in Sustainable Leadership. The six-week program "introduces students to the foundational sustainability concepts needed to understand the challenges society faces while exploring the skills leaders working in sustainability need to tackle the challenges." In September 2025, CU Boulder launched two new master's degrees in sustainable business and engineering.

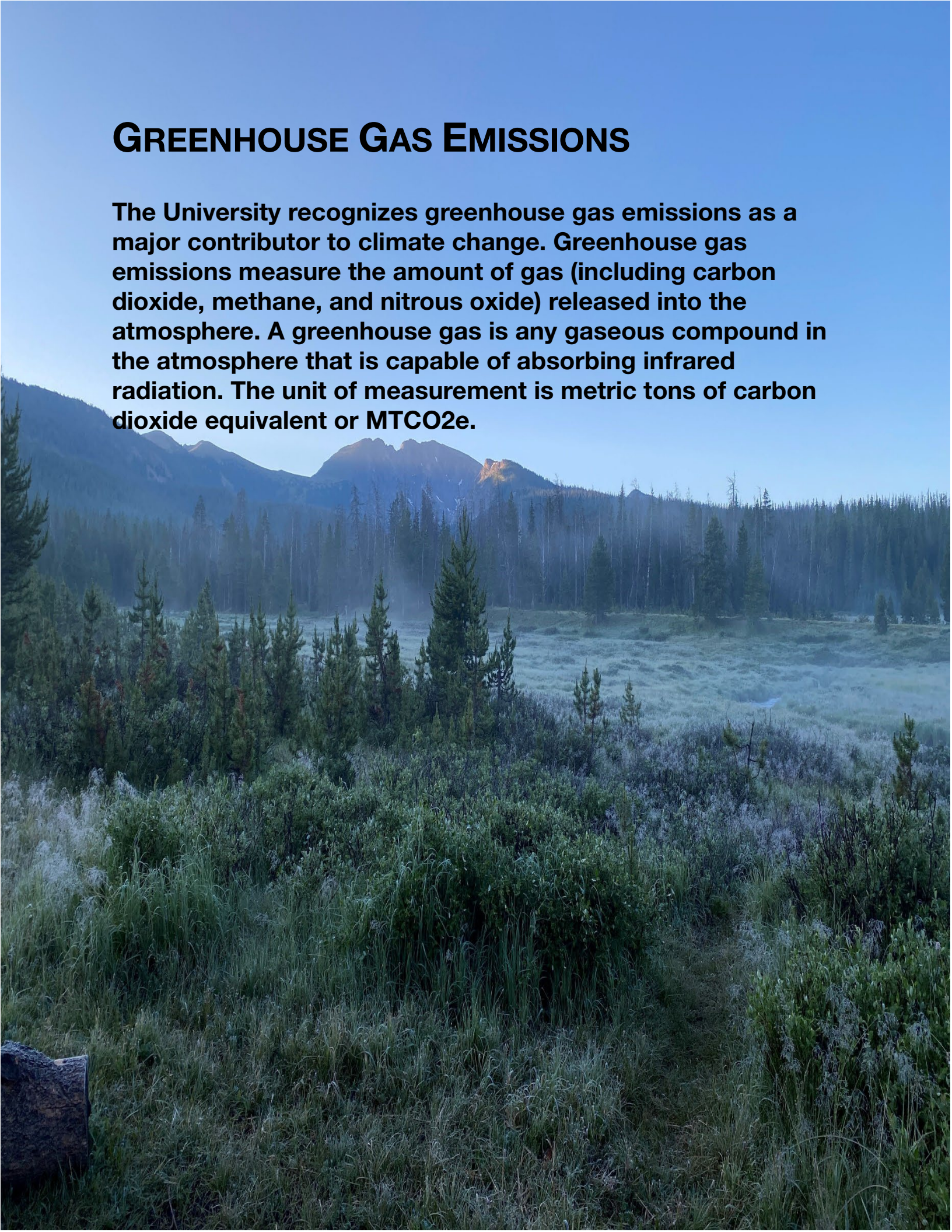
CU Denver - The Business School is launching a new Master of Science in Sustainable Business (MS SUSB) in academic year 2024-25. The new degree program builds on the success of an existing MBA specialization: Managing for Sustainability, which was established in 2007.

CU Anschutz - In Fall 2023, the Colorado School of Public Health launched a new PhD of Climate and Human Health. The program focuses on understanding the effects of the changing climate on human health, including the study of food insecurity and the potential for the new emergence of infectious diseases.

UCCS – As part of its Compass Curriculum, the campus-wide undergraduate general education program, UCCS students are required to take a sustainability course that explores the interaction between human development and the natural environment, specifically addressing ideas about social equity, economic development, and environmental impact. A total of 85% of academic departments offer sustainability courses and 46% of all departments that conduct research engage in sustainability.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The University recognizes greenhouse gas emissions as a major contributor to climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions measure the amount of gas (including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) released into the atmosphere. A greenhouse gas is any gaseous compound in the atmosphere that is capable of absorbing infrared radiation. The unit of measurement is metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent or MTCO2e.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions

As part of its 2021 strategic plan, CU set a goal of reducing Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions by the amount indicated in the table below.

	2024 Actuals ($MTCO_2e$)	2026 Goals ($MTCO_2e$)	
CU Boulder	121,704	78,653	42% Reduction from 2005
UCCS	17,636	8,634	49% Reduction from 2006
CU Denver	6,578	1,233	71% Reduction from 2006
CU Anschutz	64,091	31,433	40% Reduction from 2005

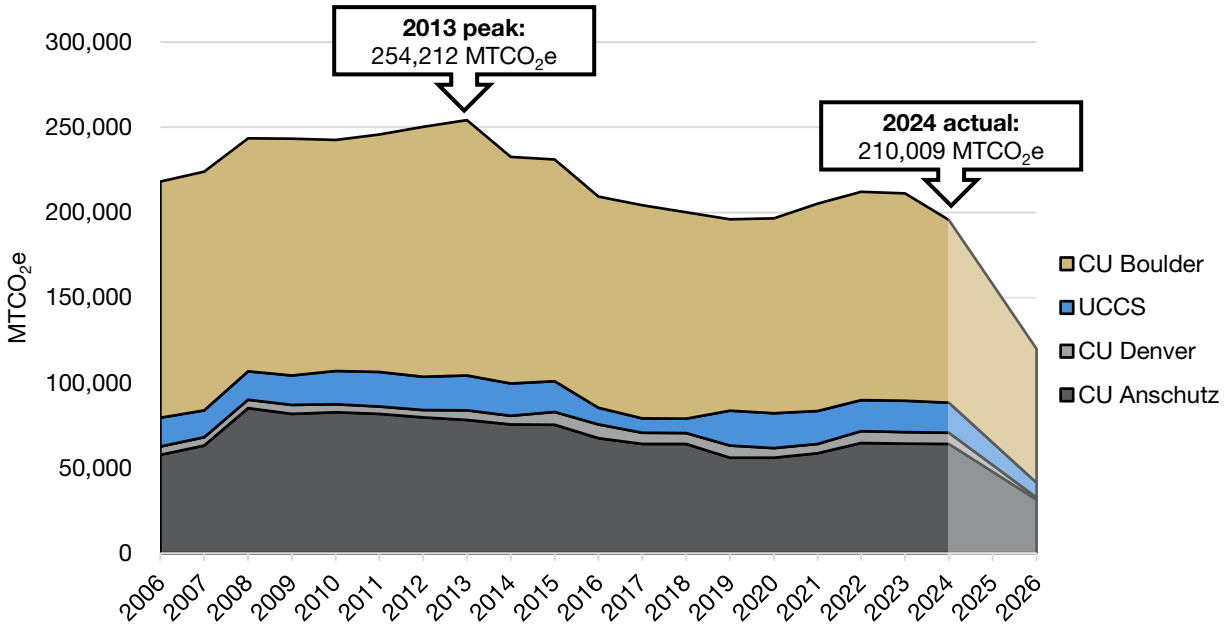
Notes:

UCCS, CU Denver, and CU Anschutz data through 2024. CU Boulder data through 2023.

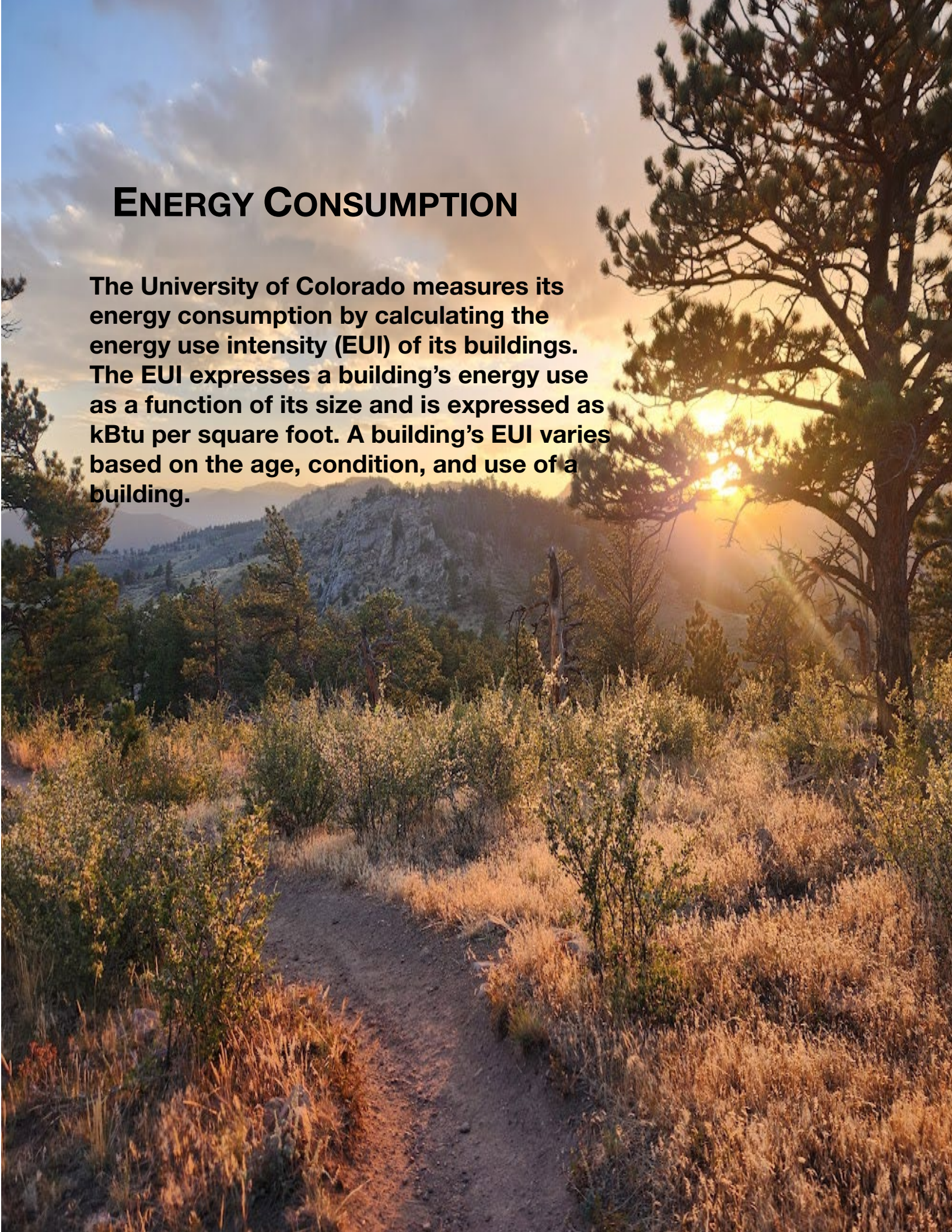
Data reflects Scope 1 and 2 emissions; does not include Scope 3.

The following chart illustrates the change in GHG emissions from each campus' baseline year through 2024. The chart also illustrates the 2026 GHG reduction goal selected by each campus through 2021 strategic planning. (Note that campus goals may have been revised since the adoption of the 2021 systemwide strategic plan.) When the data is normalized for square footage, three of the four campuses have already achieved the State's goal of a 26% reduction in GHG emissions over the 2005 baseline year by 2025.[1]

Greenhouse Gas Emissions per GSF ($MTCO_2e/GSF$)



[1] Note: The State's goal year (2025) and CU's 2021 Strategic Plan goal year (2026) differ. Also, the Denver and UCCS campuses use 2006 as the baseline year, rather than 2005; (data are unavailable for 2005).



Energy Consumption

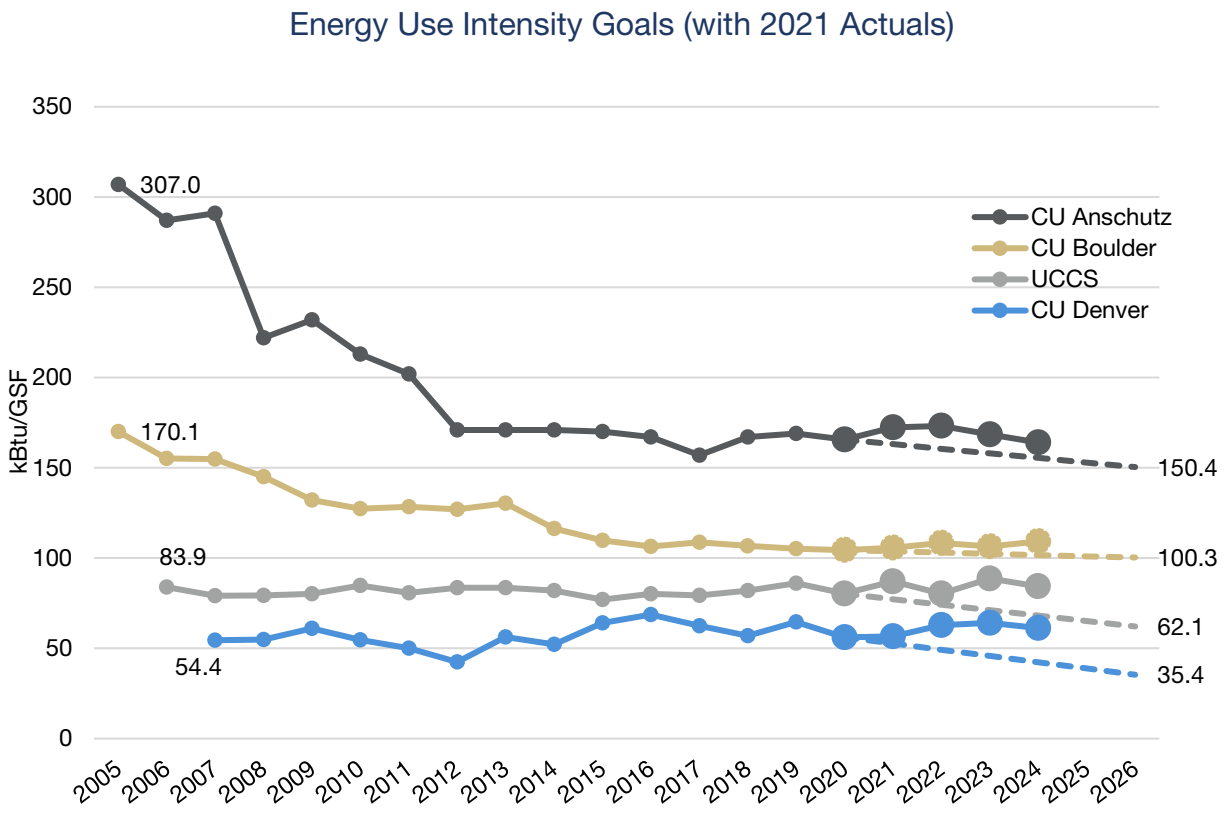
The University of Colorado measures its energy consumption by calculating the energy use intensity (EUI) of its buildings. The EUI expresses a building's energy use as a function of its size and is expressed as kBtu per square foot. A building's EUI varies based on the age, condition, and use of a building.

Energy Consumption

Through its 2021 strategic plan, the University set a goal of reducing its energy use consumption (EUI) in campus buildings by up to 10% from 2019 levels by 2026.

A building's EUI varies based on the age, condition, and use of a building. Older buildings and buildings that are poorly constructed or maintained may have higher EUIs than newer, well-constructed buildings with similar use. Different building use types also have different EUIs. For example, laboratories typically use more energy per square foot than office spaces and office spaces generally use more energy per square foot than residence halls.

The University began tracking and reporting its EUI in the mid-2000s. Through a concentrated effort to improve the energy efficiency of its existing and newly constructed buildings, all four campuses have seen a measurable decline in EUI since tracking began. The chart below shows the reduction in EUI from each campus' baseline year[2] through the 2026 EUI reduction goal established through the University's 2021 strategic plan.



[2] The baseline year is 2005, with the exception of the Denver and UCCS campuses, which began tracking in 2006.

Energy Performance Contracting

All four campuses periodically undertake building performance audits to identify and evaluate possible energy conservation measures. These audits inform building upgrades to be repaid from utility cost savings in the following years.

At CU Anschutz, a Bundled Energy Project is underway which focuses on energy conservation measures at Research 1, recommissioning several campus buildings, and developing a long-term GHG reduction plan. Funding from this project is also being used to add a heat pump to the Anschutz Health Sciences Building, which is the first recommended measure in the campus Energy Master Plan to support changes to steam delivery on campus.

What is Energy Performance Contracting?

Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) is a creative model for funding and implementing capital improvement upgrades, which allows entities to use future cost savings to fund projects.

Source: Colorado Energy Office

In 2025, UCCS Partnered with Colorado Springs Utilities on energy audits of the eight largest facilities on campus. The energy audits identified $276,425 in retro-commissioning energy conservation measures with an estimated simple payback of 2.15 years. Work will begin on these projects in 2026.

At CU Boulder energy efficiency improvements are currently underway in 18 buildings. The campus used the state's EPC program to initiate the project and will measure and verify energy efficiencies and controls optimization for three years after the project is completed.

CU Denver is participating in Xcel Energy's Strategic Energy Management Program to improve energy efficiency and building performance. In 2025, it also began an LED lighting retrofit of more than 10,000 lights, which is expected to increase efficiency by reducing electrical consumption by 5%.

Renewable Energy Production

There are challenges associated with meeting sustainability goals in concert with continued campus growth. One concern with measuring EUI is that some alternatives to new construction, like reconfiguring space in an existing building to increase space utilization, actually result in increased building EUI, but offset the increase in GHG

Renewable Energy Production and Purchase Goals

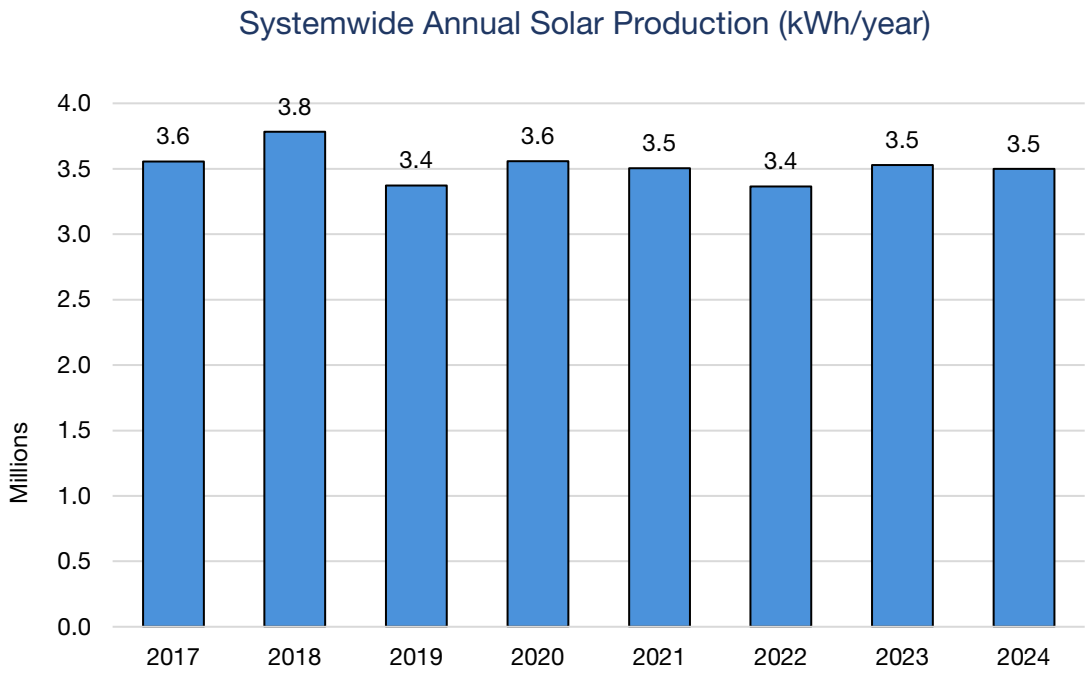
Campus	2019 Actual	2026 Commitment
CU Boulder	2.0% on-site	2.5% on-site and 14.2% off-site
CU Denver	1.5% on-site	3% on-site
CU Anschutz	0% on-site	5% on-site
UCCS	0.02% on-site and 34% through RECS	2% on-site and 40% through RECs
System Office	0	10% through RECs

emissions that would result from constructing a new building. Additionally, some efforts to eliminate GHG emissions, such as installing solar panels, do not correspondingly reduce EUI, even though the type of energy consumed is more sustainable. In order to further its sustainability goals, some campuses also seek to offset energy consumption through the production of renewable energy and the purchase of renewable energy credits.

CU Boulder and UCCS have both installed campus solar arrays. There is a solar array installed on the library on the Auraria Higher Education Center and CU Anschutz installed solar panels on a carport to power its net-zero energy Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness building.

In 2026, CU Boulder will expand its solar portfolio with two significant projects. The first project, the East Campus 1.1 megawatt (MW) ground-mounted solar array, is scheduled for completion in spring 2026, and will generate about 1.4 million kilowatt hours (kWh) annually—offsetting roughly 1.3% of campus electricity use. The second project, a 5 MW off-site solar array, was developed through a state-approved net metering program, and will be operational in mid-2026. The array will provide approximately 9.5 million kilowatt hours of renewable energy each year. This off-site array will supply enough power for several major campus buildings, with credits applied directly to CU Boulder's electricity bills. Both projects increase the university's access to clean energy and contribute to its sustainability efforts.

In the most recent year data were collected, CU's existing systems produced about 3.7 million kWh – enough to power 347 average American homes for a year.



Campus Sustainability Planning

Campus long-range planning is essential to meeting sustainability goals. Campus facility plans are undertaken every 10 years and imagine the future of a campus' built environment. In concert with facilities planning, climate action plans and energy plans lay out a path to a more sustainable future. In some instances, campus planning leads to goals that are more ambitious than systemwide goals set through strategic planning

CU Boulder adopted an Energy Master Plan in 2022 and revised its Climate Action Plan in 2024. The Boulder Energy Master Plan *"established the University's approach to realizing a financially sustainable energy program that focuses on energy efficiency, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions, and provides a reliable energy supply that enables and enhances the campus' mission of education and research."*

In April 2022, UCCS approved its 2030 Sustainability Strategic Plan. The four core strategies outlined in the plan as a response to the global climate crisis include, *"foster a culture of sustainability …; model sustainability, efficiency, and innovation in campus operations …; cultivate excellence in research and teaching related to sustainability, climate change, energy, and environmental justice and equity, and; engage UCCS students, faculty, staff, and members of the Colorado Springs community with events and programming related to sustainability."*

In March 2025, the Chancellor's Cabinet at CU Denver approved a goal of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030 among CU Denver-owned buildings. The Auraria Higher Education Center (including CU Denver) updated its Climate Action Plans in 2024. The plan was responsive to the first comprehensive greenhouse gas inventory for the Auraria campus since 2014 and set a 2030 goal of a 50% reduction in GHG emissions.

Through extensive stakeholder involvement, CU Anschutz completed an Energy Master Plan in 2024 and a Climate Action Plan in summer 2025. The plan *"lays a comprehensive foundation for achieving net zero emissions by 2050 while advancing health, access, and sustainability throughout campus operations and culture."*

4.4%

The anticipated percent change in employment for environmental scientists through 2034. This change is +1.1% higher than the average growth rate for all occupations.

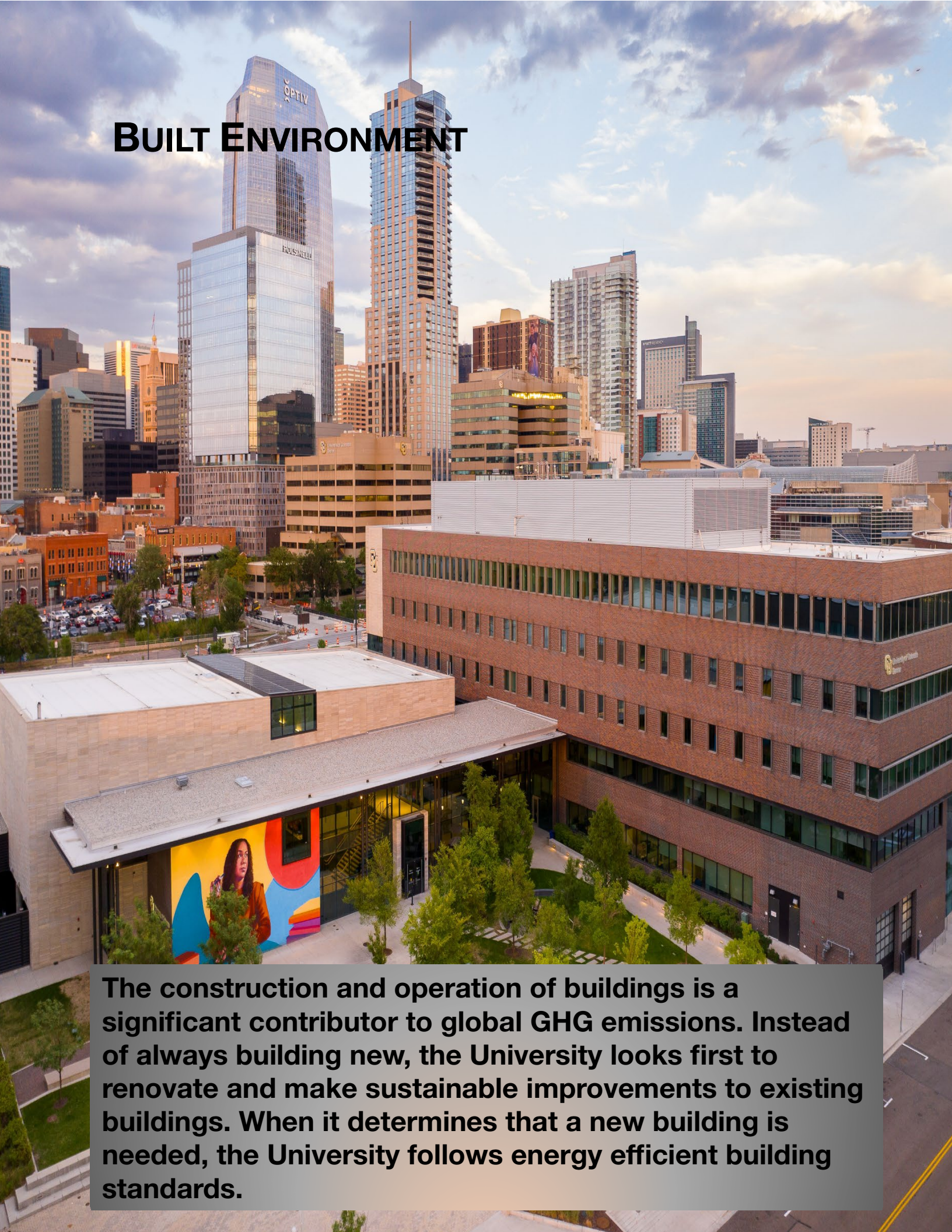
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024 data)

45%

The number of students surveyed who considered environmental sustainability in their college enrollment decision.

Source: Inside Higher Ed, 1/2023

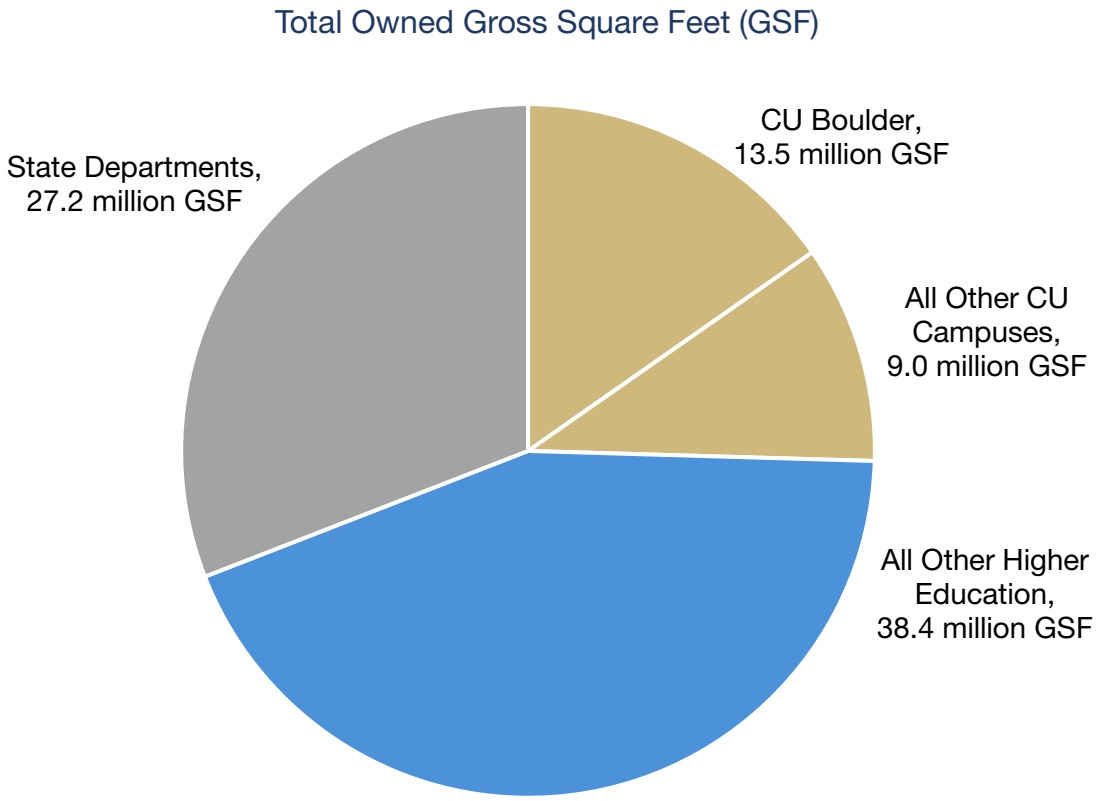
Built Environment



The construction and operation of buildings is a significant contributor to global GHG emissions. Instead of always building new, the University looks first to renovate and make sustainable improvements to existing buildings. When it determines that a new building is needed, the University follows energy efficient building standards.

Built Environment

The University of Colorado owns more than 400 buildings. All owned buildings constitute 22,429,289 gross square feet (GSF). The Boulder campus accounts for more than half of the University's total owned GSF. And the University of Colorado accounts for more than one-fourth of the state's total owned GSF.



Space Utilization

The University seeks a sustainable approach to growth. Rather than defaulting to new construction, it first considers opportunities to enhance the space utilization of existing buildings. It does so while creating attractive and healthy classrooms, laboratories, and workspaces for its students, faculty, and employees. Reconfiguring and reusing existing space presents opportunities to create efficiencies, improve the user experience, and increase collaboration. It also improves building performance.

All four campuses have adopted some form of space guidelines to more effectively and consistently utilize physical space resources.

The Boulder campus established a Space Optimization Office as part of its Planning, Design & Construction unit in 2017. The Office assists campus occupants by providing accurate space assignment and use data and reporting. The Office collaborates with other units to optimize space utilization and predict future space needs. Several recent projects have increased space utilization in existing buildings instead of building new. For example, a recent space optimization project converted 46 offices to 82 work spaces in the Fleming Building and the Engineering Center Administrative Wing, with $1.8 million cost avoidance through a more efficient use of space.

The Anschutz campus has initiated a number of space optimization projects on campus, including several in the old Fitzsimons Army Hospital. The ten-story building houses many campus offices and has undergone a series of small improvements in the last decade. These improvements have increased the number of building occupants by 33%. The projects also addressed deferred maintenance and occupant comfort.

In 2023, the Anschutz campus won the International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories (I2SL) award for Space Optimization. The award recognized campus efforts to identify underutilized or unused lab space to create space for new research and avoid the need to construct new lab spaces. The project also resulted in the disposal of 3,000 pounds of unused chemicals and the redistribution of over 4,000 consumable lab materials, such as pipettes and microscopes.

UCCS continues to advance efficient space utilization through the adoption of a new Academic and Office Space Assignment Policy, which guides the strategic use and consolidation of campus facilities. As part of this effort, the campus consolidated office space to create necessary swing space to support the renovation of the Engineering Building, reducing disruption while maximizing existing on-campus capacity. These actions also lead to a reduction in leased space at University Office Park, reducing off-campus lease space and improving operational efficiency while supporting long-term sustainability goals related to the built environment.

CU Denver recently implemented a space assignment process to align space management with strategic goals and improve campus efficiency. This is the first step in the adoption of a comprehensive Workplace Guidelines document. This process has led to the reassignment of vacant or under-utilized space on campus to growing or geographically mis-aligned programs in need of space. Additionally, in October 2025, CU Denver launched a Capital Governance group. One of the responsibilities of this group will be to review and make recommendations on space management policy.

Green Labs

The University has realized significant energy and other resource efficiencies in the operation of its campus laboratories. The Boulder campus started a Green Labs program in 2009. In the 15 years since the program's inception, there have been significant cumulative savings in electricity consumption (14.1 GWh) and water use (77 million gallons). Additionally, the program has fostered the creation and implementation of ongoing campus efforts that have diverted 540,000 pounds of laboratory-specific waste from the landfill, reused 3,520 gallons of solvent, and avoided $3.0 million in research equipment purchases through equipment sharing efforts. In 2025, CU Boulder campus leaders signed the Green Chemistry Commitment to practice and teach sustainable chemistry – encouraged and advanced by students.

The Auraria Sustainable Campus Program started a pilot of My Green Lab Certification 2.0 in 2025. CU Denver has two labs (the maximum allowed) participating in the pilot. The program is aimed at evaluating how behavior changes within the laboratory setting can help reduce campus emissions. The insights gained from this pilot program will inform the potential expansion of the My Green Labs Certification process. Several CU Denver lab coordinators are also participating in a new tri-institutional Sustainable Labs Committee.

The UCCS campuses is also focused on reducing consumption in campus laboratories. Current efforts target increasing the temperature of laboratory freezers, which correspondingly decreases energy consumption. UCCS is also preparing to modernize engineering laboratory space through the Engineering Renovation project.

The CU Boulder Green Labs Program serves as a source of inspiration and advice for other institutions that want to implement green labs programs and initiatives. An example of the program's positive impact beyond the Boulder campus is the Laboratory Freezer Challenge, which was co-created by CU Green Labs and UC-Davis. The challenge is now an international competition led by My Green Lab and the International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories, with worldwide participation from research and medical institutions, government laboratories, and scientific companies.

In 2025, 10 labs at CU Anschutz began the My Green Lab Certification process. Four of the 10 labs have received certification and the labs have saved the university over $30,000 in energy, water, and waste costs and reduced the campus carbon footprint by over 88 tCO2e/year. The combined efforts of these labs have reduced water use by over 40,000 gallons a year and saved enough energy to power 21 homes a year.

As part of its annual research awards, CU Anschutz added a new category in 2025 for research sustainability. This award recognizes honors an individual or laboratory at CU Anschutz that has creatively or impactfully integrated sustainability into their research operations. Recognized efforts may include significant reductions in waste, water consumption, or energy consumption, as well as advancing a culture of sustainable research at CU Anschutz. The winner will be announced in February 2026.

Prioritizing Renovations and Repairs

The university has collectively invested about $1.0 billion in renovation projects and repairs (deferred maintenance) over the last decade. Prioritizing renovation and repairs over new construction is just one way the University demonstrates its commitment to sustainability.

Buy Clean Colorado Act

Beginning in 2024, construction costing more than $500,000 must incorporate building materials that do not exceed global warming potential limits set by the Colorado Office of the State Architect (measured as embodied carbon). These materials include:

- ✓ Asphalt and asphalt mixes
- ✓ Cement and concrete mixes
- ✓ Glass
- ✓ Steel
- ✓ Wood structural elements

CU is committed to selecting building materials that reduce the volume of GHG emissions associated with construction.

Ahead of the implementation of the Buy Clean Colorado Act, the CU Boulder campus adopted a standard that all new projects are required to track embodied carbon.

Facility Condition Index and Deferred Maintenance

The University reports annually about the condition of its buildings using a metric called the Facility Condition Index score. The Facility Condition Index (FCI) measures the performance of a building and building systems as a percentage showing the ratio of "repair needs" to "replacement value." The target minimum FCI is 85%. The 2026 strategic plan set goals to slow the growth or improve the overall average FCI at each of the campuses through the reduction of the campus' deferred maintenance backlog. Buildings with a higher FCI score are typically more energy efficient than buildings with a larger backlog of deferred maintenance. Thus, a focus on addressing deferred maintenance has the added benefit of improving the overall sustainability of a campus' built environment.

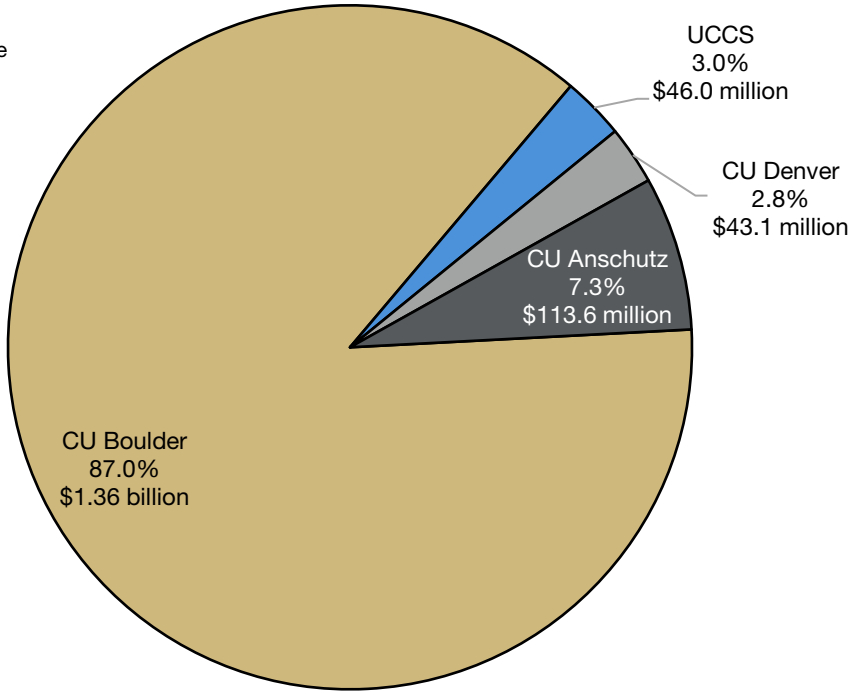
Average FCI Actual and Goal

Campus	2019 Actual	2026 Goal
CU Boulder	55.0	56.0
CU Denver	84.0	84.5
CU Anschutz	82.5	85.5
UCCS	83.0	86.5

The University's calculated backlog of deferred maintenance is $1.56 billion. Three of the four campuses are on track to raise the average campus FCI to the target minimum by 2026. CU Boulder, which has the largest and oldest building inventory, owns almost 100 buildings with an FCI below 85%. The Boulder campus prioritizes deferred maintenance improvements in its annual capital planning.

Total University of Colorado Deferred Maintenance Backlog

Note: Campus deferred maintenance backlog numbers reflect the cost to achieve a campus average Facilities Condition Index (FCI) score of 85%.



LEED Buildings

The University adopted a goal of building and renovating buildings to Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) Gold in 2009. LEED is a set of best practices established by the U.S. Green Building Council to promote sustainable building design and construction. The 2021 strategic planning process evaluated and upheld this goal.

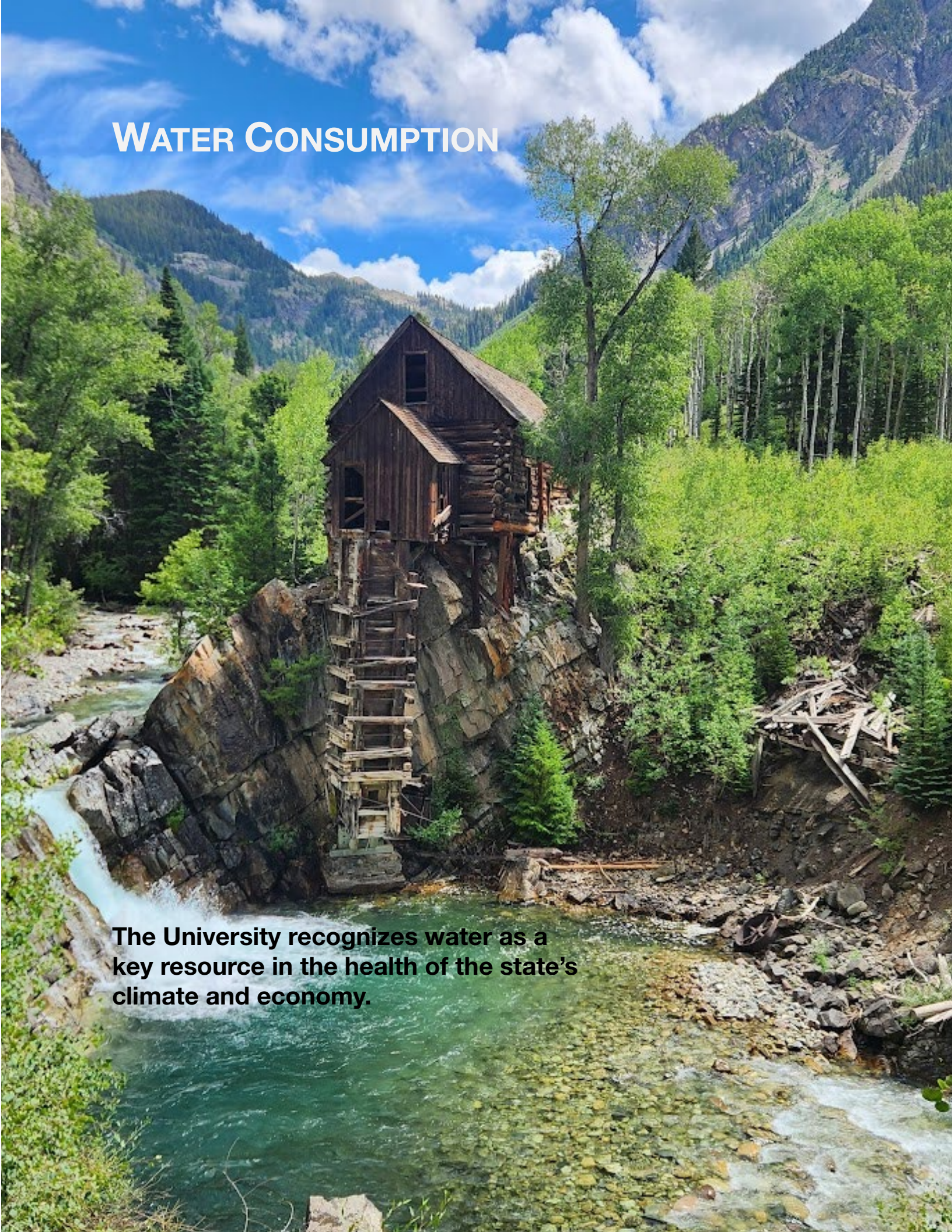
Since 2007, the State has constructed or renovated 189 LEED-certified buildings. About one-third of these LEED-certified buildings were built by CU.

What is a Net-Zero Energy Building?

In a net-zero energy building, the total amount of energy used by a building is equal to the amount of renewable energy created onsite annually.

To date, the University of Colorado has designed two net-zero buildings, the Indoor Practice Facility at CU Boulder, and the Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness Facility at CU Anschutz. Net zero operation is made possible, in part, through onsite solar energy production.

Water Consumption



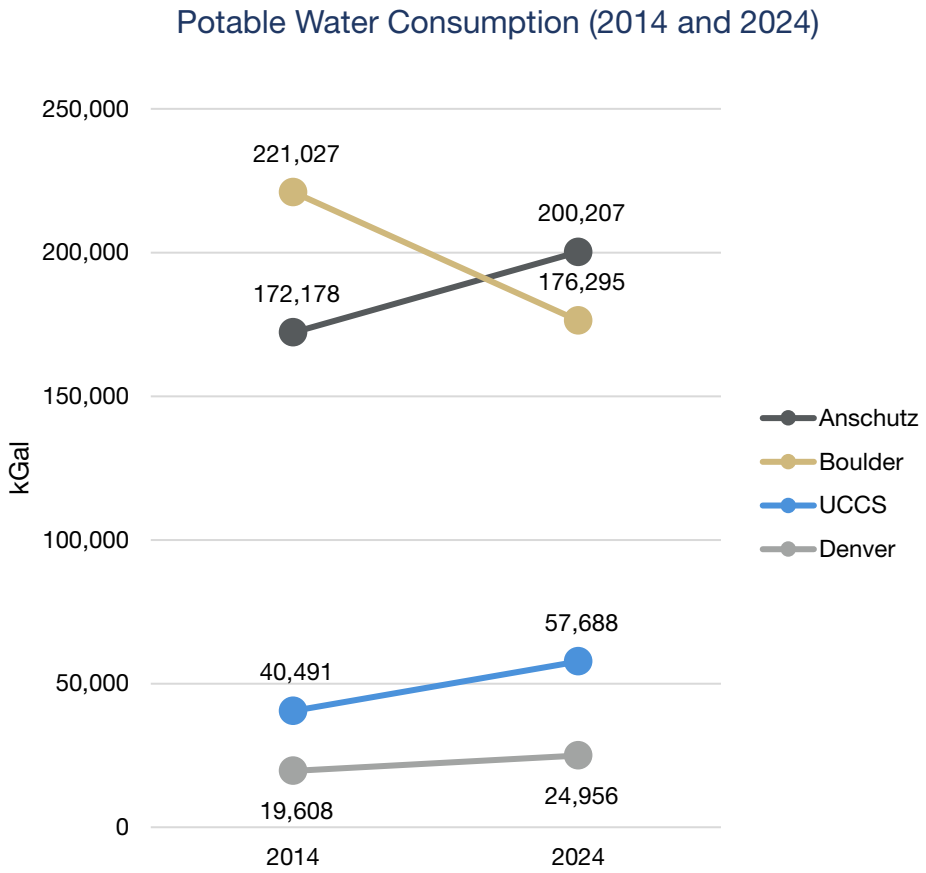
The University recognizes water as a key resource in the health of the state's climate and economy.

Water Consumption

Although Colorado only averages 17 inches of total precipitation annually, the state relies almost entirely on precipitation to supply its fresh water resources. While the 2021 strategic plan does not set water consumption goals, the four campuses recognize water as a finite resource and track and report on water use annually, with a common goal of limiting overall water consumption.

The campuses limit potable water consumption through conservation measures such as the installation of low-flow toilets and upgrading autoclaves and glass washers in labs. At UCCS, the Osborne Center for Science and Engineering building was designed to use 42% less water than a comparable baseline building. On the Boulder campus, the Green Labs program has saved 68 million gallons of water over the last decade.

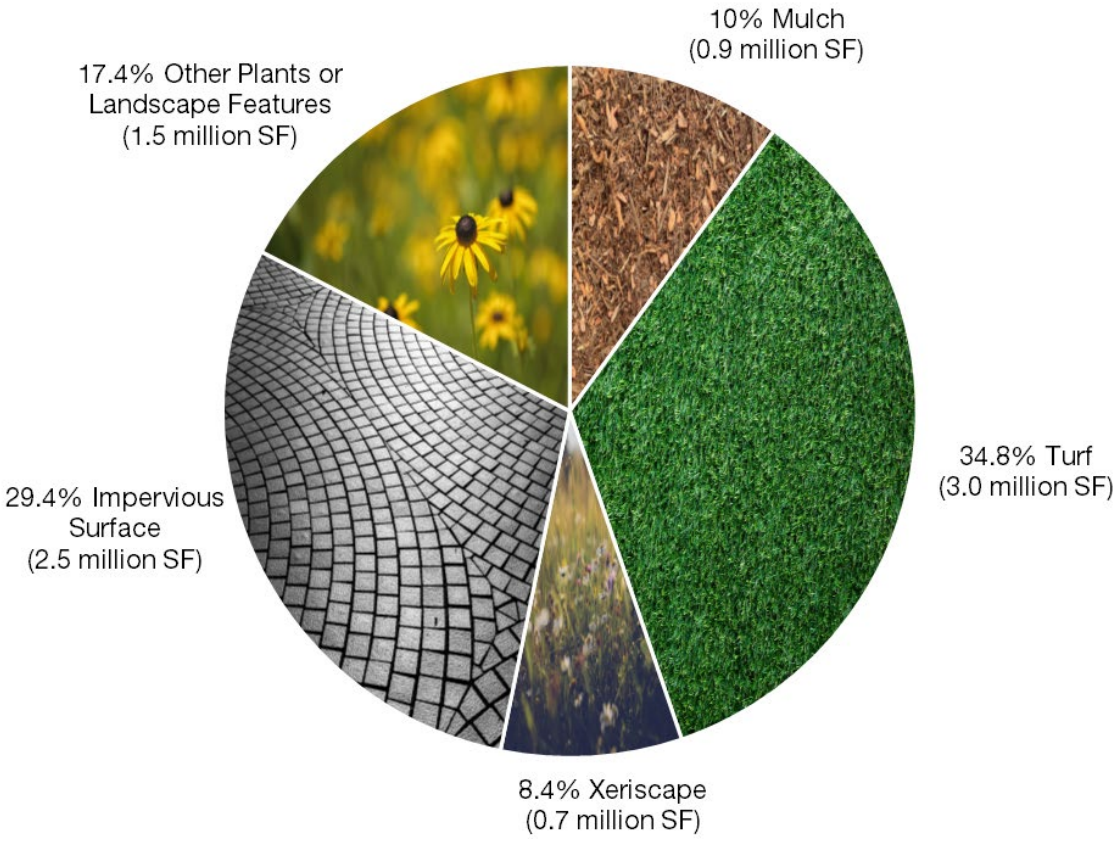
The chart below shows the amount of total potable water used by campus. Note that the CU Anschutz campus, which consumes the most potable water of the four campuses, supports research in a number of water-intensive wet laboratories. Also note that CU Boulder, which is the largest of the four campuses, has a source of non-potable water that supports almost all of the landscape watering needs on its main campus.



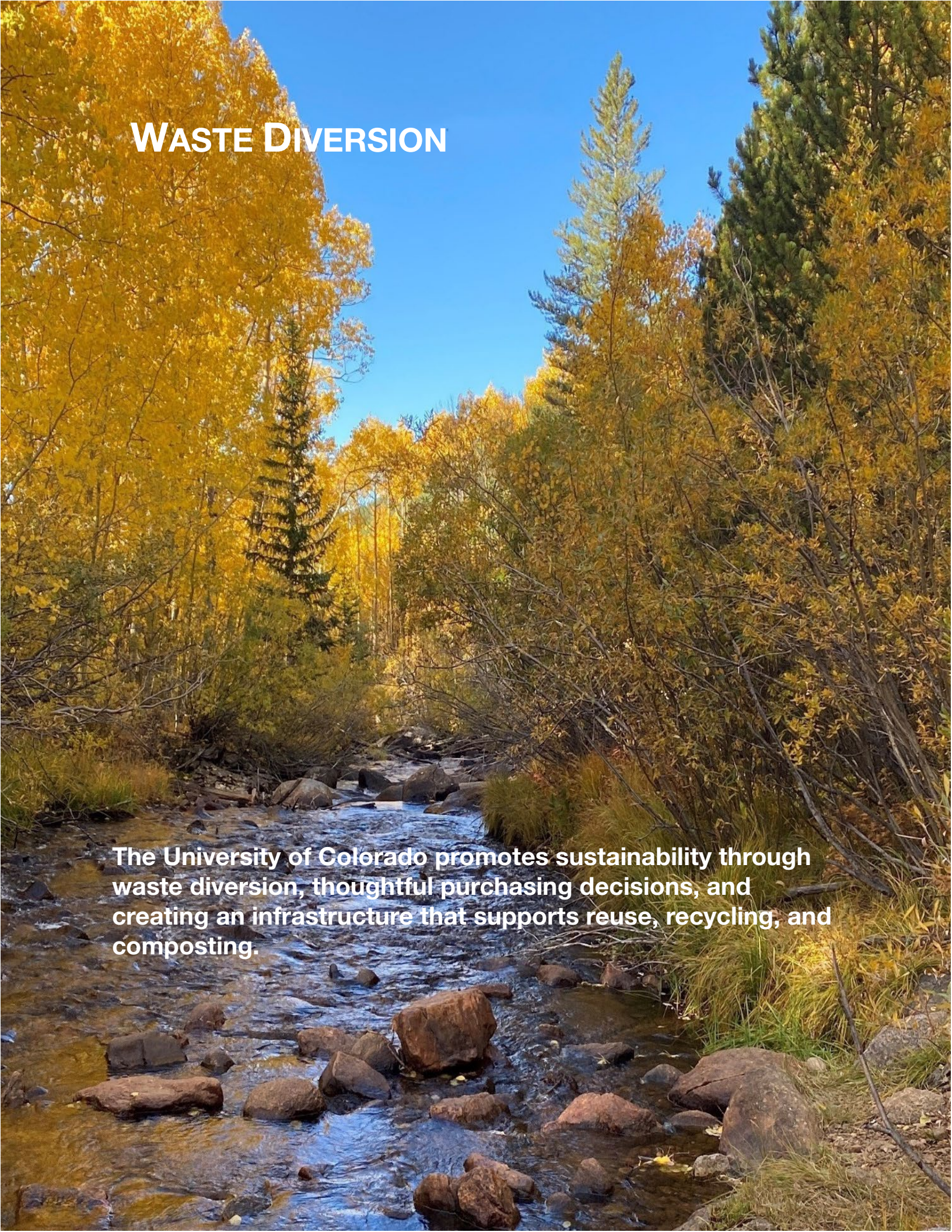
The campuses limit water use for landscaping by planting native plant species and installing irrigation controls and rain sensors. As a result, water consumption has declined both overall and at each campus during the last decade.

In total, the campuses maintain about 8.7 million square feet of area, or 199 acres, of landscaping and hardscape. The chart below illustrates the distribution across the 199 acres.

Total University of Colorado Landscaping and Hardscape, by Type



In order to limit water usage, the campuses strive to limit the amount of turf planted in open areas and focus on the inclusion of native plant materials.



Waste Diversion

The University of Colorado promotes sustainability through waste diversion, thoughtful purchasing decisions, and creating an infrastructure that supports reuse, recycling, and composting.

Waste Diversion

The University tracks the amount of waste that is diverted from the landfill through recycling and composting. It sponsors on-site recycling and composting programs and works with student groups to promote and increase compliance. It also provides online recycling and waste guidelines. The campus waste diversion goals are as follows:

- Boulder: 90% by 2025
- UCCS: 50% by 2030
- Auraria Campus: 50% by 2030
- Anschutz:
    - 20% by 2030
    - 60% by 2040
    - Zero waste by 2050

CU Boulder football, basketball, and volleyball games held at Folsom Field or the CU Events Center are zero waste events.

To support its waste diversion goal, in 2025 Boulder eliminated single use beverage plastic on campus through a first-of-its kind deal with PepsiCO Beverages. Additionally, the CU Athletics Department partners with other campus departments to operating Ralphie's Green Stampede, CU's sport sustainability program.

The UCCS Office of Sustainability is focused on strengthening campus waste diversion efforts through a combination of infrastructure improvements and student-led education. The campus installed Dyvert recycling lids in high-traffic areas to reduce contamination and improve proper sorting of waste streams, while also developing the Recycle Coach platform, scheduled to launch in spring 2026, to provide clear, accessible guidance on recycling, composting, and waste reduction practices. These efforts are complemented by peer-to-peer education sessions, where trained student sustainability leaders engage directly with students, staff, and campus partners to promote correct waste sorting, build awareness, and encourage behavior change that supports higher diversion rates campuswide.

Composting

The University supports composting as a means to reduce waste. All four campuses compost food waste from on-campus dining services. Boulder began composting in 2004, and by 2016 composting was in place in campus dining and conference facilities, as well as major sports venues.

At UCCS, composting efforts extend beyond dining operations through a robust, student-led composting program at the UCCS Farm. Student employees collect food scraps from campus partners, manage active compost systems, and produce nutrient-rich soil amendments used in food production and educational gardens. This hands-on program provides students with practical sustainability experience while closing the loop on campus food waste.

CU Denver participates in the Auraria campus' closed loop composting program, which utilizes e-tricycles and an in-vessel composter to process organics into compost soil for use in landscaping around campus. As of April 2025, Auraria campus policy now requires that all food vendors and events provide front and back-of-house composting and utilize compostable or recyclable to-go ware.

At Anschutz, compost collection is offered to customers at all the on-campus eateries, and process implementation is underway for restaurant back-of-house composting.

In 2023, several Front Range composting companies began excluding paper products from acceptable materials, which has reduced overall composting volumes across the University; however, decentralized programs like the in-vessel composter at Auraria and the UCCS Farm program continue to strengthen waste diversion and support a circular campus food system.

Purchasing

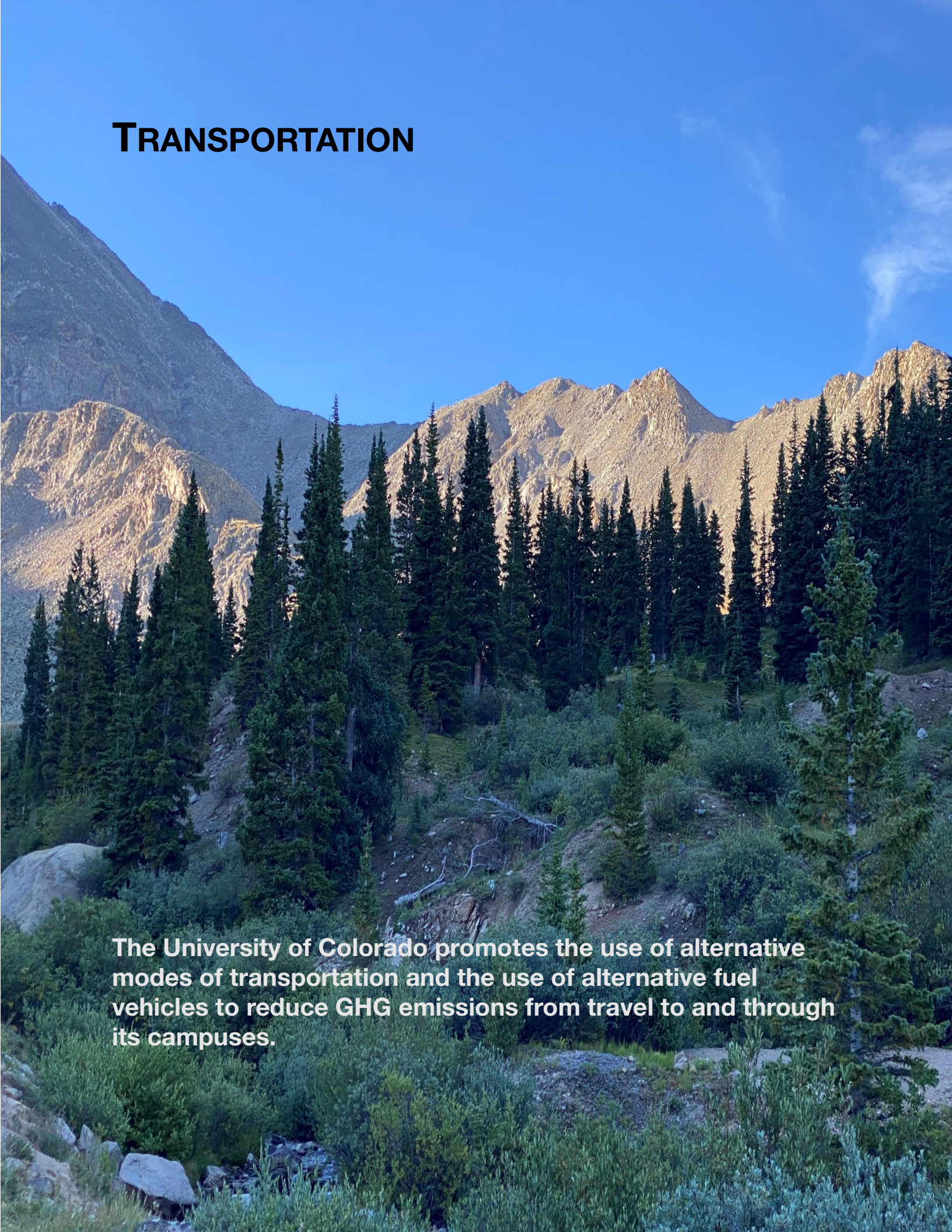
The Procurement Services Center (PSC) is actively supporting all CU campuses in advancing their sustainable procurement goals through several initiatives. These include expanding supplier engagement and reporting around Scope 3 emissions; developing and launching a supplier-focused Code of Conduct with cross-campus stakeholders; incorporating supplier sustainability metric reporting into solicitation guidelines; strengthening each campus's STARS reporting with targeted metric analytics; and facilitating a logistics mapping project with the Leeds School of Business to improve operational efficiency and reduce emissions on the Boulder and Anschutz campuses.

PSC is also convening focused last-mile conversations with key suppliers to identify practical steps for reducing delivery impacts on campus. In addition, PSC is holding continued capability-building sessions with strategic suppliers, covering data quality for Scope 3

reporting, product-level environmental disclosures, and alignment to the Code of Conduct, supported by regular check-ins and annual business reviews. PSC partnered with UCCS and a strategic supplier to bring a KeepStock program to the UCCS campus in order to reduce emissions and improve efficiency by consolidating orders, optimizing restocking frequency, decreasing small parcel shipments, cutting packaging waste, and lowering the number of purchase orders and invoices through vendor managed inventory with on-site secure stocking and automated reorder points.

UCCS conducts periodic building waste audits to learn about the habits of building occupants and to inspire new educational campaigns to encourage reduce, reuse, and recycling. For instance, as the result of past building waste audits, the campus developed a campaign to encourage its community members to bring their own cups to campus coffee shops. Participants receive a 10 cent discount on their beverage purchases.

Transportation



The University of Colorado promotes the use of alternative modes of transportation and the use of alternative fuel vehicles to reduce GHG emissions from travel to and through its campuses.

Transportation

The transportation sector is a major contributor to GHG emissions. In 2022, 28% of all GHG emissions in the United States were generated from burning fossil fuels for transportation vehicles, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Additionally, "the combustion of fossil fuels such as gasoline and diesel to transport people and goods was the largest source of CO_2 emissions… ." The University promotes sustainable practices in transportation in the commute to and travel on its campuses. It is continuously developing infrastructure that supports alternative fuel vehicles and multi-modal transportation. It also participates in community programs that support public transportation.

Electric Vehicles

As part of CU's 2021 strategic plan, the campuses committed to transitioning traditional fleet vehicles to alternative fuel vehicles. The chart at right illustrates the campus goals.

Electric Vehicle Goal

Campus	2026 Commitment
CU Boulder	Convert 17% of bus fleet to battery electric buses
CU Denver	Transition all vehicles to electric
CU Anschutz	Transition 20% of fleet vehicles to electric (excludes buses)
UCCS	Replace one diesel bus with an electric bus

The campuses and the System Administration Office all have electrical vehicle (EV) charging ports on site and study opportunities to add additional stations when planning for renovation or new construction.

CU Boulder has almost doubled the number of charging ports on campus in the last few years and continues to identify opportunities to add charging ports at underserved locations, such as graduate and family housing. By the end of 2025, CU Boulder had eight electric buses in operation on the campus. The campus had also ordered its first waste collection truck to replace one of the four in operation.

UCCS has installed five dual-port ChargePoint electric vehicle charging stations in key locations, increasing access to low-emission transportation options for students, employees, and visitors. Since November 2024, use of these charging stations has resulted in an estimated 28,145 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions avoided, equivalent to the carbon sequestration benefits of 722 trees grown for ten years.

Multimodal Transportation

The shift to prioritizing multi-modal transportation on University campuses can be seen in changes like the decision by UCCS to redesign its Parking & Transportation Services website to integrate parking information with information about alternative means of travel to and around campus. The University supports multi-modal transportation through campus shuttle operations, bike share programs, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The Boulder campus has more than 14,000 bike parking spaces and provides free access to the Boulder BCycle bikeshare system for short trips. It also provides access to rentable E-scooters at several campus locations. The city and campus also partner to build underpasses to support safer access between the campus and the surrounding neighborhoods, like the recently completed underpass at 30th Street and Colorado Avenue.

UCCS recently completed Phase 1 of the Campus Connection walking path, a project designed to improve walkability and bikeability from one end of campus to the other. Phase 2, currently in planning, will further enhance multimodal transportation by connecting the campus more fully to the city's regional trail system, improving access while reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

The Anschutz campus is connected by light rail and commuter bus service to the greater Denver Metro area. The Boulder, Denver, and Anschutz campuses, as well as the System Administration Office, provide discounted or free access to the RTD EcoPass. The EcoPass can be used for city and regional transit. Campus buses and shuttles are free to students, faculty, and staff at all four campuses. And for those who commute to campus by car, the University offers parking preferences for carpoolers and low emission fuel efficient vehicles and encourages participation in ride-share programs.

At UCCS, through a partnership with Mountain Metro, bus passes are now free for all on-campus students, with 700 additional passes available first-come, first-served for commuter students, plus 100 emergency passes through the Office of the Dean of Students. Funded by the student-led Green Action Fund, this program expands affordable, sustainable transportation access at UCCS.

UCCS Addresses Food Insecurity

Through a coordinated set of student-centered programs that increase access to free and affordable food on campus. The UCCS Farmstand provides fresh produce and eggs grown on campus, while Clyde's Cupboard offers shelf-stable groceries and essential items to students in need.

Acknowledgments

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