


Sector	CAP Strategies
 Economy	ECS1. Consume goods with lower embedded carbon emissions.
	ECS2. Develop green markets.
	ECS3. Expand base industries for regional self-reliance.
	ECS4. Enhance environmental sustainability efforts undertaken by business.

Highlighted boxes show which CAP Strategies are implemented by CAP recommended Action.

Economy Working Group Recommended Action #1:

Create and incentivize green purchasing programs/policies at government and commercial levels.

Description:

Local governments and institutions spend a lot of money, and their procurement and contracting policies can be important mechanisms for advancing other public aims, like climate action. Many cities, counties, and states across the U.S. give a preference to local businesses in their procurement decisions as a means of supporting and growing their local economies.

Giving preference to local suppliers, even if it means spending a little more, can actually benefit a municipality's finances. When local governments spend their money with locally owned firms, those firms in turn create an "economic multiplier" effect by employing local and investing dollars required to operate a business locally. Each additional dollar that circulates locally boosts local economic activity, employment, and, ultimately, tax revenue.

In addition to considering ways to reinvest back into the local economy, this recommendation is anchored on the goal to support and bolster practices and products that use low-emission processes and transportation. The Economy WG identified potential cost savings for bulk purchasing of goods, resources. Centralized procurement departments are well-suited to policy-level shifts; when procurement is distributed across different departments and can come





at an extra cost. It may ease implementation if a certain size of entity (whether government or institution) is benchmarked, or not required for smaller entities. Additional costs associated with selecting local and low-emission goods and services could be a barrier for some, the Working Group discussed the need to identify a fund or funding mechanism to support this.

Lead Implementer(s):

CAP governments (procurement departments) and other large/key entities - hospitals, schools, Ski Corp, Lodging associations, restaurants.

Partners:

Implementation Needs & Next Steps:

- 1) Review procurement policies, identify relevant staff of appropriate municipality size.
- 2) Hire local, buy local/contract local for gov't procurement policies (Chamber already has a buy local program, but could expand it to cover food).
- 3) When we bring in industry partners - conduct LCAs of goods used frequently in these places (e.g., cleaning materials, shampoo for hotels and lodging).
- 4) Educate local businesses/schools/entities about how to secure local government contracts (PTAC - Colorado Procurement Technical Assistance Center).
- 5) Educate about the benefits of green procurement.
- 6) Support bulk purchasing of green products (compostable wares/utensils, refill options for cleaning, laundering, bathing supplies).
- 7) Pitch night for what we would like to have locally-sourced, what's available and what's out there.
- 8) Identify higher impact procurement changes.
- 9) Establish a cooperative for businesses to jointly purchase eco-friendly packaging in bulk for cost savings/convenience (also ECS1).

Timeframe to Begin Implementation:

2024-2027.

Cost Estimate:

Low cost to draft/adopt policy (could be covered by existing budgets and staff).



Potential Funding Sources:

N/A


Assessment:

Greenhouse Gas Potential: Notes/Assumptions:
Co-benefits: Notes/Assumptions:
Implementation Cost: Notes/Assumptions:
Political Barriers: Notes/Assumptions:
Ease of Implementation: Notes/Assumptions:

CAP Strategy and Action:

ECS1 A1. Consume goods with lower embedded carbon emissions.



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Economy Working Group Recommended Action #2:

Develop and expand a buy local campaign that educates the public about and promotes businesses that use low-emission production and transportation practices.

Description:

Commercial Buying local goods and services supports locally owned businesses, employs local workers and builds relationships between consumer and producer. Buying local can increase regional self-reliance and reduce vulnerability to market disruptions. When dollars are spent locally, they can in turn be re-spent locally, raising the overall level of economic activity, paying more salaries, and building the local tax base. On average, 48-75% of funds spent at local businesses are reinvested back into the local economy in the form of wages, charitable donations, taxes which fund city services, and purchases of goods and services from other local businesses.

Buying local has many benefits, but buying local does not always mean lower emissions. Transporting produce 30 miles versus 3000 miles does lower emissions generated by transportation, or food miles, but food miles comprise less than 20% of the emissions generated in food systems. Food miles matter, but what matters more is how it was produced and how it gets to consumers. For example, local foods grown in a fossil-fuel-heated greenhouse in cold





climates create more emissions than products grown more efficiently outside seasonally. That's not to say buying local shouldn't be done: buying local lets people see where food comes from, meet producers, educate. But from an emissions perspective, there is an opportunity to align "buy local" campaigns with education and support to catalyze production practices and transportation that also lower emissions. This recommendation seeks to develop and expand a "buy local" campaign that educates the public about and promotes businesses that use low-emission production and transportation practices. Routt County has current organizational buy local campaigns and it's an idea that has regional value. Educating and tying practices that lower emissions with buy local campaigns could be challenging if/when lower carbon solutions are economically burdensome for local producers or prove to be market barriers for some producers and products.

Lead Implementer(s):

Community Agriculture Alliance (CAA), Steamboat Chamber, Routt County Economic Development Partnership (RCEDP) YVSC.

Partners:

NWCDC, CMC.

Implementation Needs & Next Steps:

- 1) Establish a steering committee of 6-11 local business owners and identified lead implementers to develop/implement the campaign.
- 2) Create and or expand a County-wide list of local businesses.
- 3) Consider creating a local business alliance, looking at American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA) models to identify the scope and benefits to business (e.g. centralizing marketing costs which are out of reach to small producers).
- 4) Consider developing a branding kit with the Colorado Green Business Network of the Yampa Valley (CGBN-YV) that local businesses can use/display.
- 5) Leverage CGBN-YV and partnerships for broad-based education and technical assistance support to businesses to catalyze emission reduction. Use luncheons as training opportunities.
- 6) Evaluate and promote City ordinances to drive more government spending to local businesses.





- 7) Expand Steamboat Chamber tourism marketing/tourist guides and buy local campaigns to promote local businesses that are reducing emissions successfully.
- 8) Leverage CAA county wide, get information about locally produced goods that are investing in lower-carbon practices to consumers.
- 9) Feature CAA under Economy newsletter (create space within CAP website), social media sites.
- 10) Support local food producers to get local food into grocery stores (underway through CAA).
- 11) Identify and pursue a funding mechanism to support local business efforts to reduce emissions via production and transportation.
- 12) Evaluate reuse/resource-share options (reusable bags, reusable wares) for consumers and businesses to reduce waste and trim costs.

Timeframe to Begin Implementation:

Immediately (0) to one (1) year.

Cost Estimate:

\$30,000.

Potential Funding Sources:

\$75 Business membership could pay for ongoing centralized marketing.

Assessment:

Greenhouse Gas Potential: M
Notes/Assumptions: The emissions reduction would increase with the number of participating businesses.
Co-benefits: H
Notes/Assumptions: Buy local campaign has many co-benefits, including regional economic self-reliance, resilience to market disruption, more reinvestment in local economy.
Implementation Cost: L



Notes/Assumptions: Initial costs would support the time of steering committee member participation to develop the program scope/campaign; marketing/branding of logo; materials and PT outreach coordinator to recruit/educate about the program. Ongoing centralized marketing/membership benefits could be covered by Business membership fees.

Political Barriers: L

Notes/Assumptions: Thriving local businesses makes political sense. The ordinances driving government purchasing to local businesses could be challenging as a new practices but templates/successes are available.


Ease of Implementation: H

Notes/Assumptions: The lead implementers are already working together. Evaluating and integrating reduced carbon emissions as metrics should be considered thoughtfully: the goal will be to advance climate action and local business in this recommendation, with the co-benefits of buying local being valued but not entirely sufficient in this program if practices increase emissions.

CAP Strategy and Action:

ECS1: Consume goods with lower embedded carbon emissions.



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Economy Working Group Recommended Action #3:

Perform a feasibility study that examines a regional circular economy.

Description:

A circular economy is an economic system based on business models which replaces the end-of-life concept with reducing, reusing, recycling, and recovering materials. When adopting a circular economy, the economic activity rebuilds itself over time. Rather than following the traditional and linear model which consists of the “take-make-dispose” process, circular economy focuses on preserving resources and providing the already existing economy with additional business and economic opportunities in addition to environmental and societal benefits. There are generally two cycles of consumption that are evaluated in circular economy studies. The first one is the biological cycle in which food and other biologically-based waste are meant to be re-injected into the system through processes such as composting and anaerobic digestion. The second, the technical cycle, recovers and restores products and components through the reuse, the remanufacture and the recycling of such materials.

The DOLA Roadmap (2022) identifies Light Manufacturing as a key strategy for economic diversification, and identifying manufacturing niches that are best suited and/or exist in the region and promote the growth of these types of businesses. The Roadmap proposes to use the cluster analysis performed to identify sub-industries of strength that can be successful in the region, which could include coal-to-products manufacturing, food manufacturing, natural





health/beauty product manufacturing, and outdoor recreation product manufacturing. Another important way to assess light manufacturing opportunities is to look at ways to utilize and add value to already-produced waste products, which would cut down on the cost of raw materials and reinvest economically in the region. For example, coal ash is considered a waste product of burning coal for fuel generation. With a significant stockpile of coal ash, Routt County and the region could use what is considered waste for one industry as feedstock for another industry. Coal-to-products manufacturing can use coal ash in concrete manufacturing.

There are several waste streams in Routt County that are disposed of in the landfill, often at high costs to producers. For example, the overall volume of construction and demolition waste that is landfilled each year is unknown but industry could benefit from improved access to detailed information regarding the lifecycle of buildings, the materials used, and their environmental impacts. The development of new Light manufacturing industries could be developed to recover, reuse, remanufacture and/or recycle materials to bolster economic diversification and practices that reduce wasted material. Increasing waste diversion is a CAP Waste Sector strategy. This recommendation aims to study the feasibility of implementing a circular economy in Routt County, identifying which waste products could be grounds for business and light manufacturing development in the future.

Lead Implementer(s):

RCEDP, YVSC.

Partners:

NWCDC, CAA, YVSC.

Implementation Needs & Next Steps:

- 1) Work with NWCDC to identify key regional industry partners/leaders to serve as project management team for the feasibility study.
- 2) Identify key Working Group sector experts to serve as technical stakeholders in the feasibility study. Potential waste streams that have been identified by the Economy Working Group are: coal ash from Hayden Station for use in building materials; construction and demolition materials; clothing waste or other material waste (e.g., Big Agnes, Moots Cycles); feed stocks for clean energy (biomass burning at Hayden station); end markets for current compost operations (use for ag and landscaping).





- 3) Present feasibility study findings to RCEDP, local businesses and CMC to educate about opportunities and garner entrepreneurial interest.
- 4) Collaborate with RCEDP to incubate and support entrepreneurial business growth building the circular economy.

Timeframe to Begin Implementation:

Immediately (0) to one (1) year.

Cost Estimate:

\$60,000.

Potential Funding Sources:

CO Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

Assessment:

Greenhouse Gas Potential: L Notes/Assumptions: The immediate results of the feasibility study will not reduce emissions, but the longer-term economic and climate benefits are high.
Co-benefits: M Notes/Assumptions: Lower benefits to current producers and moderate-high potential economic co-benefits for future entrepreneurs and lower-waste systems. In time, production costs could be lower for some industries who can source materials locally.
Implementation Cost: M Notes/Assumptions: Feasibility study will be initial cost.
Political Barriers: L Notes/Assumptions: Feasibility study should not have any political barriers. Implementation of the feasibility plan recommendations do not have foreseeable barriers other than those pertaining to measuring, tracking and reporting waste streams from industries who may not



wish to disclose.


Ease of Implementation: H

Notes/Assumptions: Ease of implementing the feasibility study should be very high.

CAP Strategy and Action:

ECS2: Develop green markets.



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Economy Working Group Recommended Action #4:

Support and incentivize sustainability and carbon neutral/low emission zones in Industrial Parks and Industrial Zones.

Description:

DOLA Roadmap (2022) identifies supporting the growth of Light Manufacturing industry important for economic diversification needed after the energy transition away from coal. Recommendations are to: (i) work to expand the availability of industrial space in the region to support the growth of new and expanding manufacturing businesses; (ii) identify lands best suited for industrial uses in land use plans; and (iii) identify and fund infrastructure improvements that can make industrial sites more development ready.

The production phases of manufacturing account for the majority of GHG, many emissions of which can be reduced by increasing energy efficiency in buildings, using low/no-carbon energy sources for heating, cooling and processing, etc.

There is a need for economic development pursuits to bolster light manufacturing through the creation and development of industrial parks and zones, but industrial zones themselves need to support and advance the lowering of embedded carbon in goods/services that are produced there. The Economy Working Group sees a need and opportunity to engage the Energy,





Transportation, Waste and Land Use Working Groups to develop implementation steps that make industrial parks and zones low-carbon energy, transportation and waste systems.

Lead Implementer(s):

CAP governments, green development consultants.

Partners:

Implementation Needs & Next Steps:

* Engage Waste, Transportation, Energy and Land Use WG for implementation

- 1) Develop a permit-related process that commits industrial zone development planning to energy planning.
- 2) Formalize a call-list for energy consultants who can design and scale non-fossil fuel energy-source energy systems for industrial needs.
- 3) Research opportunities for carbon sequestration and drought tolerant landscaping, going full electrification or natural gas (lots of cost questions there), soft surface trails instead of sidewalks, enhance riparian area surrounding for wildlife habitat.
- 4) Connect with Brown Ranch Energy Plan contact to explore cost savings of geothermal over the longer-term.
- 5) Develop a structure and protocol (or call list) of energy consultations, economic diversification, job creation).

Timeframe to Begin Implementation:

2024.

Cost Estimate:

\$60,000 - \$120,000.

Potential Funding Sources:

DOE just launched a program to support micro-grids (possible solar funding source?).




Assessment:

Greenhouse Gas Potential: Notes/Assumptions:
Co-benefits: Notes/Assumptions:
Implementation Cost: Notes/Assumptions:
Political Barriers: Notes/Assumptions:
Ease of Implementation: Notes/Assumptions:

CAP Strategy and Action:

ECS3 A2. Develop green markets.



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Economy Working Group Recommended Action #5:

Identify and pursue initiatives that support clean economy workforce development.

Description:

According to the recent DOLA Roadmap (2022), the occupations that have experienced the most job growth in recent years are health practitioners and technical occupations had the largest job growth in the region. This is followed by healthcare support jobs. Jobs in community/social services, installation/maintenance/repair, and personal care services occupations also are experiencing growth.

Wage levels and the cost of living in Northwest Colorado is a major concern. Tourism is a major economic driver for the region and there is opportunity to grow this industry. However, the average wage levels in the tourism industry are low and the cost of living in Northwest Colorado is rising. Furthermore, the loss of extraction industry and energy jobs from the power plant closures will also impact wage levels.

As the region transitions away from coal, workers employed by the power plants will need assistance to locate new positions or reskill to fill other positions. The recent DOLA Roadmap identifies Workforce Development as a priority for facilitating economic recovery and resilience, which was organized into four categories:





- 1. Workforce Transition** – These strategies focus on supporting the transition of the coal mining and power generation workforce.
- 2. Entrepreneurship Support** – These strategies focus on supporting the growth of new and small businesses within the region.
- 3. Education/Skill Training** – These strategies focus on aligning and expanding workforce resources in the region in coordination with the school districts and two community colleges (Colorado Mountain College and Colorado Northwest Community College).
- 4. Workforce Support** – These strategies focus on nontraditional issues related to supporting the workforces' quality of life and ability to remain employed.

The Economy Working Group sees a need to focus on the latter three categories for the purpose of training a workforce to support new industry, business, energy and service-industry positions. A challenge is how to couple reskilling/retraining with education and career coaching services that position job training and employment growth to advance climate action. Both the Economy and Energy Working Groups identify value in having all CAP governments establish a county-wide funding mechanism to support countywide annual trainings and recruiting efforts for skilled contractors and design professionals focused on energy efficiency, renewable energy and electrification practices and technologies that support CAP carbon reduction goals. There is a need to develop a process and structure to align DOLA Roadmap implementation with CAP implementation to ensure that workforce development is supporting the clean economy. Connecting new industry opportunities and workforce gaps with resident students and professionals will be key for overcoming the high cost of living barrier (they already live here), so supporting technical training and education programs, along with internships and apprenticeship programs, will be an important focus for the coming years.

Lead Implementer(s):

Colorado Northwest Community College, Colorado Mountain College, RCEDP.

Partners:

YVSC.

Implementation Needs & Next Steps:

- 1) Formalize a procedure to align the implementation of the NWCDC Roadmap with implementation of the Routt County CAP priorities. For example, if NWCDC fills a





director and administrative role to support Roadmap implementation, they should serve on the Economy WG to leverage shared resources to drive climate action.

- 2) Provide support to help immigrant, differently abled, undocumented workers, and workers for whom English is their second language to obtain business support services, professional licensing, and ability to operate as independent contractors. Explore how existing programs and services can be expanded to be more inclusive of groups that have traditionally lacked access to resources to support professional growth and business support services. Specifically, work with Colorado Northwest Community College and Colorado Mountain College to provide education offerings to support workers for whom English is a second language.
- 3) Support the expansion of the RCEDP Entrepreneurship Center as a physical and digital location for access to resources and information on clean economy job and training opportunities. Expand access to entrepreneurship training courses/curriculum by expanding regional community college programs to create a workforce pipeline to employers.
- 4) Support the development of a Yampa Valley Internship and Apprenticeship Program, to connect regional students and/or reskilling professionals with on-the-job training and professional development opportunities that students aspire to participate in and employers look to for filling workforce gaps.
- 5) Support and partner with Yampa Valley Partnership for Students, Sustainability and Stewardship (S3) to connect K-12 curriculum and students with experiential learning, community college courses (CTE Programming) and Internship/Apprenticeship opportunities with career pathways and career training opportunities that advance regional climate action.
- 6) Create a Local Commercial Driver's License Training and Certification Program. Identify funding and a host for the program. Identify ways to involve local employers to provide real life training opportunities. Explore partnerships to build an inventory of vehicles that can be used for training purposes, especially for vehicles that are not being used in down periods/off-season reasons. Targeting disproportionately impacted/underrepresented groups for training and certification could be a successful strategy for increasing employment opportunities for these populations. Outreach and engagement are needed to underrepresented groups to increase awareness of the benefits of the certification, training opportunities, and career pathways.



Timeframe to Begin Implementation:

2024.

Cost Estimate:

\$150,000.

Potential Funding Sources:

Just Transitions Fund, OEDIT Opportunity Now, OEDIT, Coal Transition Community Grants with OEDIT OJT.


Assessment:

Greenhouse Gas Potential: Notes/Assumptions:
Co-benefits: Notes/Assumptions:
Implementation Cost: Notes/Assumptions:
Political Barriers: Notes/Assumptions:
Ease of Implementation: Notes/Assumptions:

CAP Strategy and Action:

ECS3: Expand base industries for regional self-reliance.



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Highlighted boxes show which CAP Strategies are implemented by CAP recommended Action.

Economy Working Group Recommended Action #6:

Expand Colorado Green Business Network of the Yampa Valley in order to educate, provide technical assistance and recognize more businesses to grow a clean economy

Description:

There is a rising opportunity and need for businesses to lead system-wide reductions of carbon emissions by using more sustainable materials, increasing the efficiency of energy use, developing new climate-friendly products or services, and more. According to the recent NWDC Roadmap (2022), agriculture, tourism, outdoor recreation, and power generation are economic anchors in the region. Accommodation and Food Services is the largest industry in the region, which reflects the importance of tourism to the regional economy. Health Care is the second largest industry and has grown into a major contributor to the regional economy. Other larger industries, based on employment, include Retail Trade, Construction, Public Administration, Arts and Recreation, and Education. These industries should be empowered to lead emissions reduction.

The Colorado Green Business Network of the Yampa Valley (CGBN-YV) was launched the summer of 2022 as a free, technical assistance and environmental recognition program. The program is run by the Yampa Valley Sustainability Council (YVSC), a regional partner of the





Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Green Business Network (CGBN). The goal of the program is to connect businesses who want to distinguish their processes and products by environmental and sustainability performance with technical resources and tracking platform to do so. CGBN-YV works with local businesses in the Yampa Valley area to assess their environmental performance and identify actions to take to reduce emissions, earning them state-recognized bronze, silver and gold-level certifications based on performance and improvement. CGBN certified businesses receive priority CDPHE permitting, support with regulatory assistance and letters of recommendation when applying to grants and programs. Guidance is often needed for businesses to take advantage of existing and upcoming state and federal funding opportunities, such as the Inflation Reduction Act and other climate/clean energy tax credits, and this program helps provide that guidance.

This recommendation seeks to expand the CDPHE-based platform and current CGBN-YV offerings to develop a robust partnership-based program that increases reach, recruitment, education opportunities, technical support and networking benefits in order to enhance the overall economic and climate benefits of the program. The Economy Working Group has identified partners in the Yampa Valley to lead the scaling up: YVSC and RCEDP, with Steamboat Chamber supporting. YVSC currently funds part-time administration of the CGBN-YV program, but additional funds are needed to expand staff and entrepreneurial training and operational opportunities.

Lead Implementer(s):

YVSC, Routt County Economic Development Partnership (RCEDP).

Partners:

Colorado Green Business Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment, Steamboat Chamber, Integrated Community.

Implementation Needs & Next Steps:

- 1) Perform a needs assessment to identify current assets and gaps for scaling up CGBN-YV programming across YVSC, RCEDP and Steamboat Chamber.
- 2) Formalize MOU between YVSC, Steamboat Chamber and Routt County Economic Development Program to support long-term CGBN-YV operations and connections to businesses.





- 3) Support and amplify RCEDP Entrepreneurship Center business planning opportunities focused on sustainability and climate-aligned practices/processes.
- 4) Identify and leverage County-wide business development initiatives to foster and support green business practices growth (e.g. Town of Hayden - Business Pitch Day and RCEDP Entrepreneurship Business Plan Competition).
- 5) Launch an ongoing series of Green Business luncheons with lead implementers.
- 6) Develop means of rewarding businesses for sustainability action (e.g. newsletter, Green Business tourism/commerce map, success story in the paper that encourages other businesses to participate).
- 7) Increase CGBN-YV marketing and communications.
- 8) Create a sustainability toolkit for businesses (best practices, resources, funding opportunities, include a carbon offset option) that includes a database/resource site for funding that supports green practices.
- 9) Explore and develop programs that enable businesses to use less packaging or recyclable packaging.
- 10) Research and communicate resources and funding to businesses that encourage eco-friendly practices.
- 11) Reward sustainable practices by highlighting businesses.
- 12) Create a Green Business Team - voluntary CAP technical and green business experts.

Timeframe to Begin Implementation:

Immediately (0).

Cost Estimate:

\$100,000.

Potential Funding Sources:

USDA, CO/federal grants.

Assessment:

Greenhouse Gas Potential: H

Notes/Assumptions: Green businesses use cleaner, more renewable energy sources, divert waste from landfill, support sustainability policies that reduce overall carbon emissions.



Co-benefits: H

Notes/Assumptions: Reduction in operational, input and dispersal costs, minimization of risk and liability, increase in performance, reputation, customer preference and worker satisfaction. Economic diversification, equity, workforce development. Healthier work environment.

Implementation Cost: L

Notes/Assumptions: The Colorado Green Business Network of the Yampa Valley is already up and running and partnerships are established. YVSC currently funds PT administration of CGBN-YV, but program growth will require more staff capacity.

Political Barriers: L

Notes/Assumptions: Supporting local business development is a political win.

Ease of Implementation: L

Notes/Assumptions: Partners have been identified. Program is in place, but time and resources are needed to implement programs suggested under needs and next steps.

CAP Strategy and Action:

ECS4. Enhance environmental sustainability efforts undertaken by business.

ACS4 A1. Create a business environmental sustainability program.

