

# Climate Smart Future Ready Cost-Benefit Analysis

*A return-on-investment review of County-supported climate, resilience, and economic initiatives (2023–2025)*

# Presenting Today

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# Overview

# Objectives of this CSFR Cost-Benefit Analysis



Capture the costs and the hidden longer-term social, health, and environmental benefits provided by CSFR projects along with the economic value



Identify limitations and areas of uncertainty



Aggregate the costs and benefits up to the portfolio level



Communicate the overall value clearly to leadership and the community

# CSFR as a community-led portfolio

- A coordinated set of community, partner, and County-supported initiatives
- County role often includes funding, staff support, coordination, and technical leadership
- Designed to reduce risk, leverage resources, and deliver long-term community value

Unifying Solutions

Built Environment

Circular Economy

Businesses and Jobs

Mobility of People, Goods,  
and Services

Natural Environment  
and Water

Agriculture and Local Food

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

# What was included in this study?

## In scope:

- Wildfire and flood mitigation
- Efficiency from building codes
- Solar energy support
- EV charging stations and support
- Mattress recycling
- Open lands

## Out of scope:

- Projects resulting in plans or analysis for later action: Water, Transportation, Community Food Assessment, etc.
- Workforce upskilling
- Soil Health Days, Food Van
- Business outreach
- Methane capture

# The CBA Process

# High-Level Approach

Reviewed County-supported CSFR investments across the full portfolio

Collected data on costs and outcomes from action teams, and identified longer-term benefits

Converted measurable benefits to monetary value where possible

Reported conservative estimates and ranges where uncertainty exists



## What could be included as a benefit?

- Cost avoidance
- Economic value
- Health and environmental benefits

### Not benefits:

- Activity data
- Outcomes that can't be linked to CSFR activities

# Calculation Methods



## Existing ROI factors

FEMA has studies on the average impact of their wildfire mitigation grants



## Impacts calculated in other studies

A large California study of recycled mattresses quantified benefits



## Best (conservative) estimates of impact

The 726 unique DC fast charger customers likely spent at least \$x locally.



## EPA standards

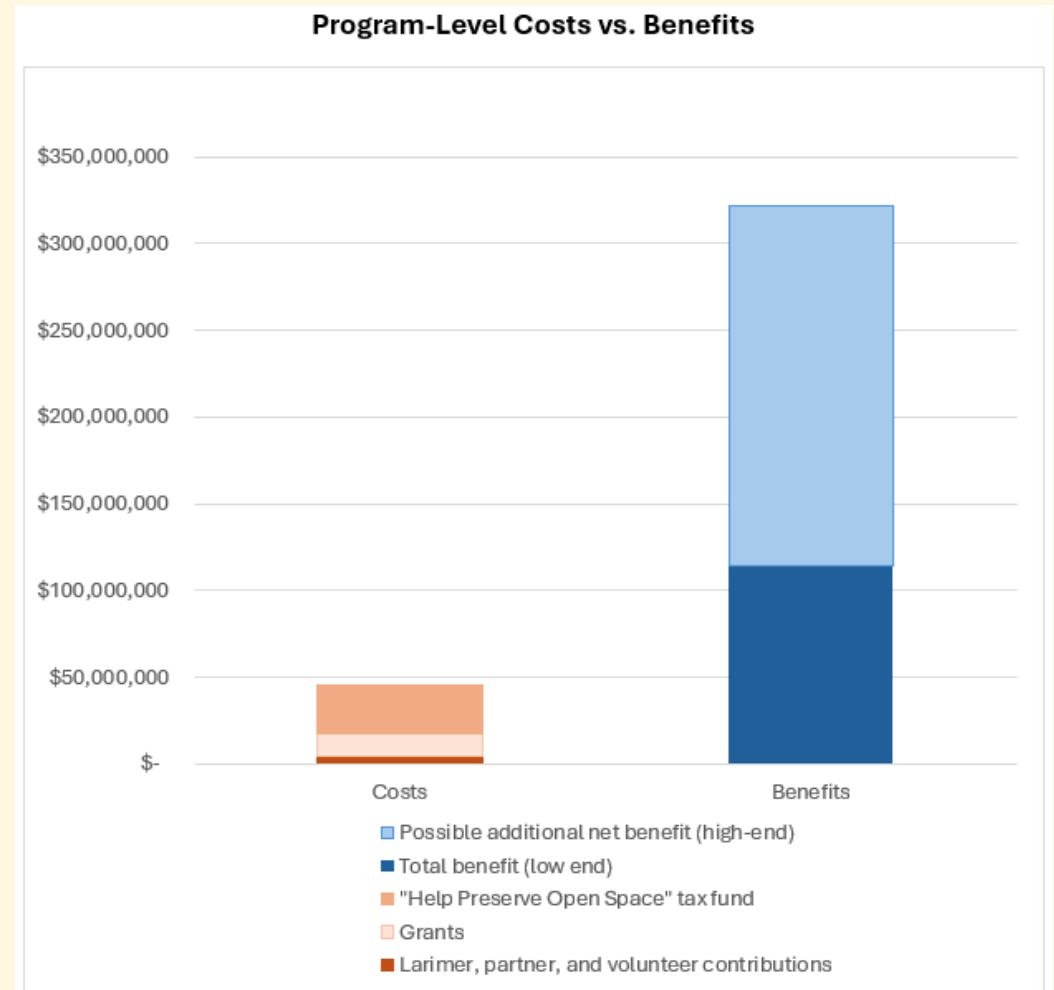
Value of avoided particulate matter, carbon dioxide, and methane

# Results

# Portfolio-Level Results

- **\$4.0M:** Larimer County, volunteers, and partner contributions
- **\$13M:** Grants
- **\$28M:** Open Space funds
- **\$114 to 321M:** Benefits

*Program costs produced benefits to the community of 2.5x to 7x the total investment.*



# Why are benefits reported as a range?

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Some benefits occur over long time horizons and are realized as avoided future costs.

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Not all community and environmental benefits can be precisely measured today.

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Conservative assumptions were used to avoid overstating results.

# Top 3 Projects

1

Building codes that support efficiency:  
up to 16:1

2

Preservation of open lands and natural resources:  
up to 8.6:1

3

Wildfire mitigation and forest restoration:  
up to 7:1

# Challenges and Solutions

# Metrics

A benefits analysis is looking for outcomes, which requires before-and-after data on what actually changed as the result of activities.

Action teams had varying levels of usable data for calculations.

## Usable:

- # Mattresses recycled
- kWh of solar panels installed
- Salary increases after training

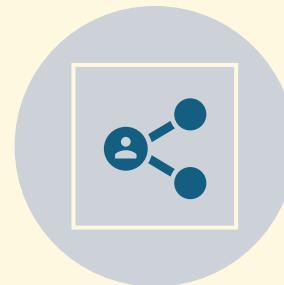
## Not convertible to impact:

- # businesses contacted
- # website visitors
- Any current average, without a baseline

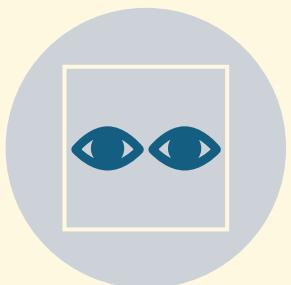
# Recommendations for Action Teams



Focus on tracking direct *outcomes* instead of *activities*.



Follow up with impacted community members.



Keep an eye out for new tools and research for calculating benefits.



Establish baseline metrics at the start of each project.

# Conclusion

# What this means for Larimer County

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CSFR investments are generating community value that clearly exceeds their costs, even under conservative assumptions.

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Many of the most important benefits take the form of avoided future risks and costs.

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Evaluating CSFR as a coordinated portfolio reflects how local governments deliver long-term, forward-thinking solutions, prioritizing resilience and public value over maximizing ROI for individual projects.

# Where to Go Next

- **Focus on overall value, not financial:**

These results are not a call to favor some projects over others!

- **Expect improvements in future cost-benefit analyses:**

As the tracking process matures for many action teams and plans become implementation projects, additional benefits will be seen even for analyzed projects.

- **Continue to build partnerships:**

Organizations with targeted expertise can both help inform project design as well as assess the actual impacts afterward.



# Questions?



**Thank You!**