

Discussion Notes

Larimer County Water Planning and Existing Conditions Discussion

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Date | March, 29, 2022; |
| Time | 12:30 – 2:00 pm |
| Location | In-Person at Lake Estes Conference Room; Larimer County Building, 200 W Oak St., Fort Collins, CO Online Participation Option via Zoom |

Agenda

| Time | Topic |
|--------------------|--|
| 12:00 – 12:30 p.m. | Gather & grab pizza (optional for in-person attendees) |
| 12:30 – 12:45 p.m. | Welcome and introductions |
| 12:45 – 1:00 p.m. | About this project |
| 1:00 – 1:15 p.m. | Regional existing conditions report |
| 1:15 – 1:50 p.m. | Input gathering |
| 1:55 – 2:00 p.m. | Wrap up and next steps |

Attachments

- PowerPoint Presentation
- Mentimeter Results

Participants

| Name | Department | How Does Your Job Relate to Water? |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Kerri Rollins | Extension | Education & Research |
| David Bragg | Facilities | Development |
| Ken Cooper | Facilities | Development (County) |
| Heidi Pruess | Climate & Sustainability | Climate Smart Larimer County |
| Daylan Figgs | Natural Resources | Protection, Agricultural Use |
| Victoria McKennan | Planning | Development |
| Justin Core | Natural Resources / Engineering | Land Conservation, Agriculture |
| Megan Flenniken | Natural Resources | Environmental, Agriculture, Water Conservation |
| Eric Tracy | Engineering | |
| Lea Schnieder | Health | Planning, Water Quality, Development |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Eric Fried | Community Development | Building Permits & Inspections, Plumbing Code |
| Laurie Kadrich | Community Planning, Infrastructure & Resources | Goal Steward for County Goals Around Water |
| Travis Rollins | Natural Resources | |
| Justin Hersh | Road & Bridge | |
| Chris Manley | Environmental Health | |
| Tawn Hillenbrand | Planning | |
| Tracy Hicks | Planning | |
| Don Threewitt | Planning | |
| Samantha Lasher | Planning | |
| Doug May | Planning | |
| Shelley Bayard de Volo | Engineering | |
| Todd Jeurgens | Road & Bridge | |
| Alyssa Martin | Planning | |

Summary Notes

About this Project

- Anchored in Larimer County goals
 - Strategic Objectives 1.3 & 1.4
 - Comprehensive Plan - land use planning, development review, water conservation & quality
- CO Communities are starting to develop Water Elements in Comprehensive Plans
 - Not required, but state does specify if you do create one, what's required
 - What tools does Larimer County have at its disposal to further the topic?
 - Has the Polis Administration been pushing this?
 - No, but starting to link to DOLA funding decisions
 - This project was funded with DOLA and Sonoran Institute dollars
 - Continued interest in understanding what Larimer County's role can and should be in the water space.
 - How can the County add value?
 - Don't want to be redundant and get in places where County doesn't belong, but also see some areas where the County might add value.
 - Anticipate continuing some work at some level on water planning - need to decide what those next steps are
 - Strategic plan - growth linkages to water and wastewater emerged as key areas to explore
 - Some areas of uncertainty in development review - e.g. recent moratoriums
 - Natural resources - looking at water for purposes other than development (e.g., environmental flows)
 - Lots of related regional efforts and conversations happening

- City of Fort Collins study
 - Regional Strat Op conversations
- Bulk of effort and focus to date has been exploring existing conditions
- Next phases are still to be determined - using today's meeting to vet preliminary information and explore what conversations need to be had
- Commissioner interest in expanding next phase to include more stakeholders - likely an in-person open house format with online option/questionnaire

Regional Existing Conditions Report

- Based on publicly available information
- Executive Summary Review - Key Metrics & Stats
 - Land use and development
 - Compilation of land use and water use metrics
 - Where is growth expected and how much growth is anticipated?
 - Water in Larimer County
 - 43% Colorado River water supplies - potential call on the Colorado River could impact Larimer County
 - Agricultural land is still declining, despite efforts to keep land in agriculture - more needs to happen in the water sharing space if ag land preservation is a priority
 - 124 centralized public water systems
 - Is this a lot or a few?
 - Compared to Denver (1) - this is a lot
 - Unsure about comparisons to other counties - seems like a lot to some participants
 - Includes 3 providers that also serve Weld County
 - Regulated by EPA & CDPHE to meet drinking water standards
 - What is the county's role for self-supplied users in a drought, fire, etc. - if they are cut off?
 - Population served water is larger than the county population - crossover across boundaries - water service boundaries and political boundaries
 - Water systems usually do not include visitors (unless a tourism-driven population like Estes Park) - most often permanent population estimates (Fort Collins Utilities does include CSU)
 - 47 non-potable count is additive to 124 central public water services
- Risks & Vulnerabilities
 - What we're seeing from the data analysis/County risks & vulnerabilities
 - Future curtailment of Colorado River water
 - Colorado-Big Thompson (C-BT) water cannot be reused
 - Data gaps
 - Not all water uses are metered
 - Centralized water systems
 - Lots of historical reliance on C-BT water - working to diversify
 - Need for more raw water storage to hedge against future water supply issues
 - Lots of interconnections - benefits and challenges
 - Of 124 public water systems - about 30 are community systems, only about 10 of them forecast out water demand; not a complete picture
 - How many counties does the C-BT project serve?
 - They do not publish their allottees and shares
 - Know their service area, irrigated acres

- Some communities are still upset about this
 - Larimer County has a pretty significant portion - unsure exact amount - flagged for Northern Water report review
- Greywater
 - State passed some legislation recently
 - State plumbing board adopted restrictive regs to implement this
 - 3 municipalities - Pitkin County/Aspen, Denver, Castle Rock - have incorporated into local codes
- Provider Summaries
 - ~12 profiles of major water providers; include those that have at least one publicly available plan or good information on website

Input Gathering

See attached Jamboard results for additional summary information

- Existing efforts
 - County's internal sustainability plan just getting underway can be a good driver for the County "leading the way"
 - Facilities - no overarching direction currently; operated under City of FC climate wise (program is now defunct)
 - Facilities tries to coordinate projects with applicable/relevant jurisdictions - generally more stringent code requirements than county
- Stakeholder Identification
 - Northern Water and CO Division of Water resources will be included in the next round of report review
 - Open Water Foundation - could help standardize and maintain water provider summaries
 - Power outages - if sustained, cannot treat water; having this data would be helpful for EOC
 - County's role could be the collector of the data for emergency purposes
- Water use breakdown? See report Figures 4 & 5
 - When multiple uses, we categorized as mixed use
- Does water use go up or down when converted from ag to development - depends on crop and development density
 - FCU, FCLWD, ELCO working to quantify the relationship between water use and land use/zoning categories

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Report next steps
 - Provider review - early April (DWR, Northern, providers)
 - Revisions by end of April
 - Post on website by end of April for open house
 - Lesli to post online before open house
- Open House
 - Lesli to send out to providers and other identified stakeholders
 - Station-based format with supporting online questionnaire

LARIMER COUNTY STAFF WORK SESSION



WATER PLANNING AND EXISTING CONDITIONS DISCUSSION

MARCH 29, 2022

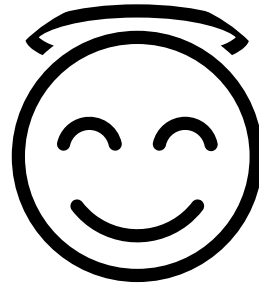


L O G A N S I M P S O N

PM TEAM INTRODUCTIONS



Lesli Ellis, AICP
Community Development



Daylan Figgs
Natural Resources



Eric Tracy, PE
Engineering



Amy Volckens, PE
Brendle Group



Shelby Sommer, AICP
Brendle Group



Miriam McGilvray, AICP
Logan Simpson

AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

| Time | Topic |
|---------------|---|
| 12:30 – 12:45 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and introductions |
| 12:45 – 1:00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• About this project |
| 1:00 – 1:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional existing conditions report |
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| 1:50 – 2:00 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrap up and next steps |

Meeting objectives

- **Anchor** the group in a common understanding of the current work
- **Brainstorm** the county's initial vision and goals for future work

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

Please tell us your

- Name
- Job title/role/organization
- How your job relates to water

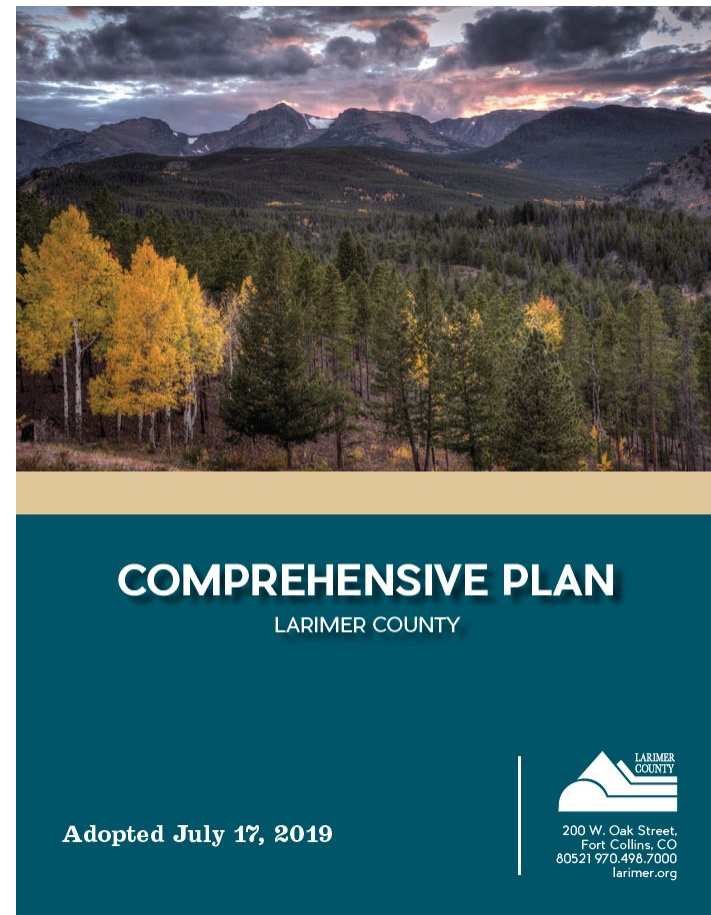
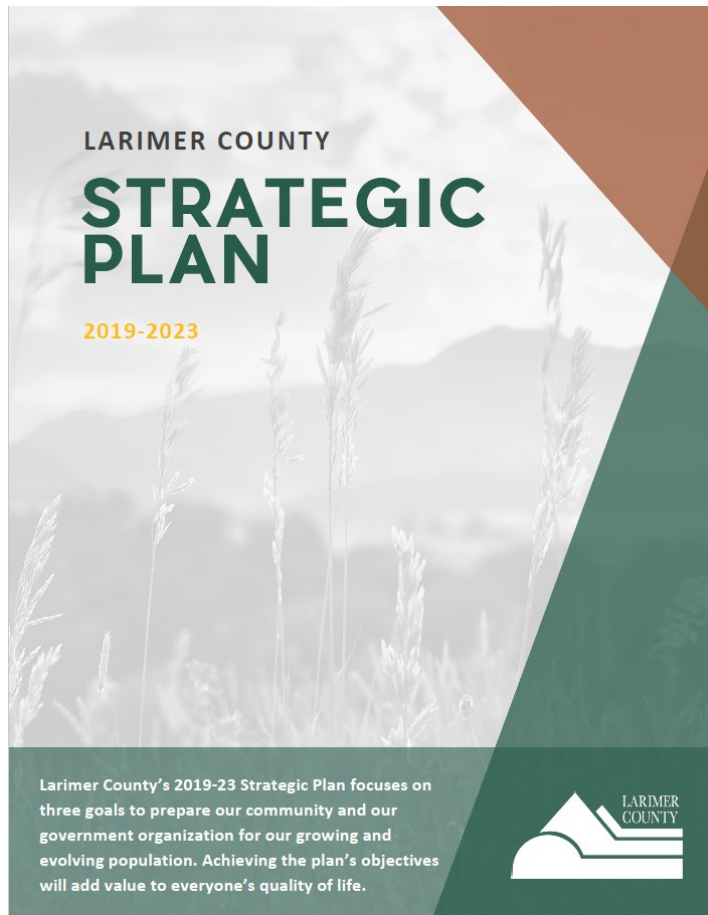
In-person: add to sign-in sheet

Virtual: drop information into chat



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

RELATED COUNTY PLANS



CRS §30-28-106 WATER ELEMENTS IN MASTER PLANS

Water elements are not required. If a community includes a water element, the community must:

Consult with the public water systems that supply water to ensure coordination on water supply and facility planning.

Identify water supplies and facilities sufficient to meet the needs of the public and private infrastructure reasonably anticipated or identified in the planning process.

Include water conservation policies, ideally tied to the Colorado Water Plan.

This law allows policies to be implemented that require water conservation to be a condition of development approvals, including subdivisions, planned unit developments, special use permits, and zoning changes.

FOUNDATIONAL PROJECT SCOPE

Task 1: Existing Conditions Assessment

- Scope: assess existing conditions related to water supplies and ag land and identify risks and vulnerabilities
- Deliverable: regional existing conditions report

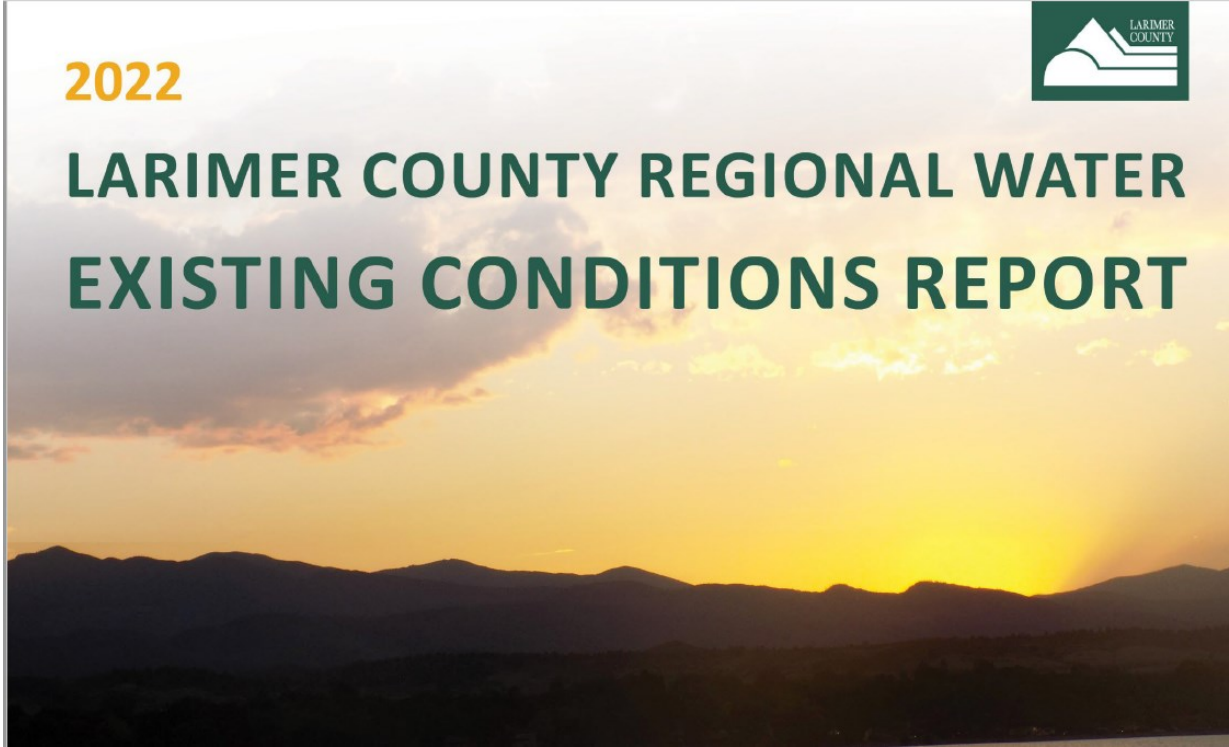
Task 2: Vision and Goal Setting

- Scope: County staff work session, stakeholder work session
- Deliverable: final report that documents outcomes, key findings, action items and recommendations for developing the water element

2022



LARIMER COUNTY REGIONAL WATER EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT



EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

GROWTH IN LARIMER COUNTY

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Population Growth | 56% | Projected growth in total population from 2017 to 2040 |
| | 343,853 | Total population in 2017 |
| | 535,756 | Projected total population in 2040 |
| | 12% | Projected growth in unincorporated areas from 2017 to 2040 |
| | 66,639 | Unincorporated population in 2017 |
| | 74,554 | Projected unincorporated population in 2040 |
| | 96% | Growth that will be absorbed by municipalities through 2040 |
| Development Units | 39,384 acres | Land designated as urban expansion areas ^[1] |
| | 23,245 acres | Land designated as urban/rural interface areas ^[2] |

^[1] Per the Larimer County Comprehensive Plan, Urban Expansion Areas are areas located within Growth Management Areas where municipal development and services are anticipated (Logan Simpson et. al., 2019).

^[2] Urban/Rural Interface areas are areas adjacent to municipal planning boundaries that could be incorporated into Growth Management Areas or developed in unincorporated Larimer County (Logan Simpson et. al., 2019).

WATER IN LARIMER COUNTY

| | | |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Water supplies | 43% | Colorado River water supplies |
| | 57% | Local water supplies |
| Water diversions ^[3] | 228% | Increase in water diversions between 1980 and 2020 |
| | 308 | Structures actively diverting water in 2020 |
| Agricultural land | 47% | Decline in irrigated agricultural land between 1987 and 2020 |
| | 8% 38% | Farmland irrigated by sprinkler technology in 1987 and 2020 |
| Water providers | 124 | Centralized public water systems that provide safe drinking water to residents and businesses |
| | 385,559 | People served by centralized public water systems ^[4] |
| | 10,589 | Homes reliant on groundwater wells |
| | 47 | Irrigation, ditch, and reservoir companies operating in the County that deliver non-potable (raw) water |
| | 25-90% | Projected growth in water demands at community buildout |

^[3] Data represent water rights and diversions at structures located in Larimer County, some of which transport water from the Colorado River and other sources.

^[4] Population estimate may include service areas outside of Larimer County.

COUNTY-WIDE RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

Reduced water availability and poor water quality from natural hazards

Curtailment of Colorado River water

Information gaps (e.g., non-tributary groundwater wells are generally not monitored and reported)

Development of additional water rights and diversions

Reduced water availability from climate change

Relatively low water reuse potential

Diminishing agricultural lands

Water delivery limitations by some providers

WATER SYSTEM RISKS AND VULNERABILITIES

Heavy reliance on Colorado-Big Thompson water

Need for more raw water storage

Community water systems are more connected than may be apparent, creating both system resiliencies and cascading risks

Aging and insufficient infrastructure

Information and planning gaps

PROVIDER SUMMARIES

APPENDIX D: WATER PROVIDER SUMMARIES

| |
|---|
| Town of Berthoud (Berthoud)..... |
| East Larimer County Water District (ELCO) |
| Town of Estes Park (Estes Park) |
| Fort Collins-Loveland Water District (FCLWD) |
| Fort Collins Utilities (FCU) |
| Little Thompson Water District (LTWD) |
| City of Loveland (Loveland)..... |
| North Weld County Water District (NWCWD) |
| Pinewood Springs Water District (Pinewood Springs) |
| Spring Canyon Water & Sanitation District (Spring Canyon WSD) |
| Town of Wellington (Wellington)..... |
| Town of Windsor (Windsor)..... |

- Water service map
- Land use authorities
- Large contractual users
- Service population
- Buildout estimates
- Water supplies and yields
- Water Sales
- Notable info about water treatment, storage, and distribution
- System reliability and vulnerability
- Planned capital projects
- Links to billing rates and development fees
- Connections to the ag sector

INPUT GATHERING

USING GOOGLE JAMBOARDS

There are several ways to contribute:



Open the
Jamboard on
your device and
add your ideas



Share your
ideas in the
Zoom chat



Raise your
hand and
share your
ideas out loud

Open the Jamboard
with this QR code!



JAMBOARD QUESTIONS

1. What related efforts are you working on in the County/region (add dept/name)?
2. Who should be invited to the stakeholder workshop to provide input on next steps? Why?
3. How should Larimer County engage in regional water planning and collaboration? What should the County be mindful of?
4. What other ideas do you have to inform next steps?

WRAP-UP AND NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

You

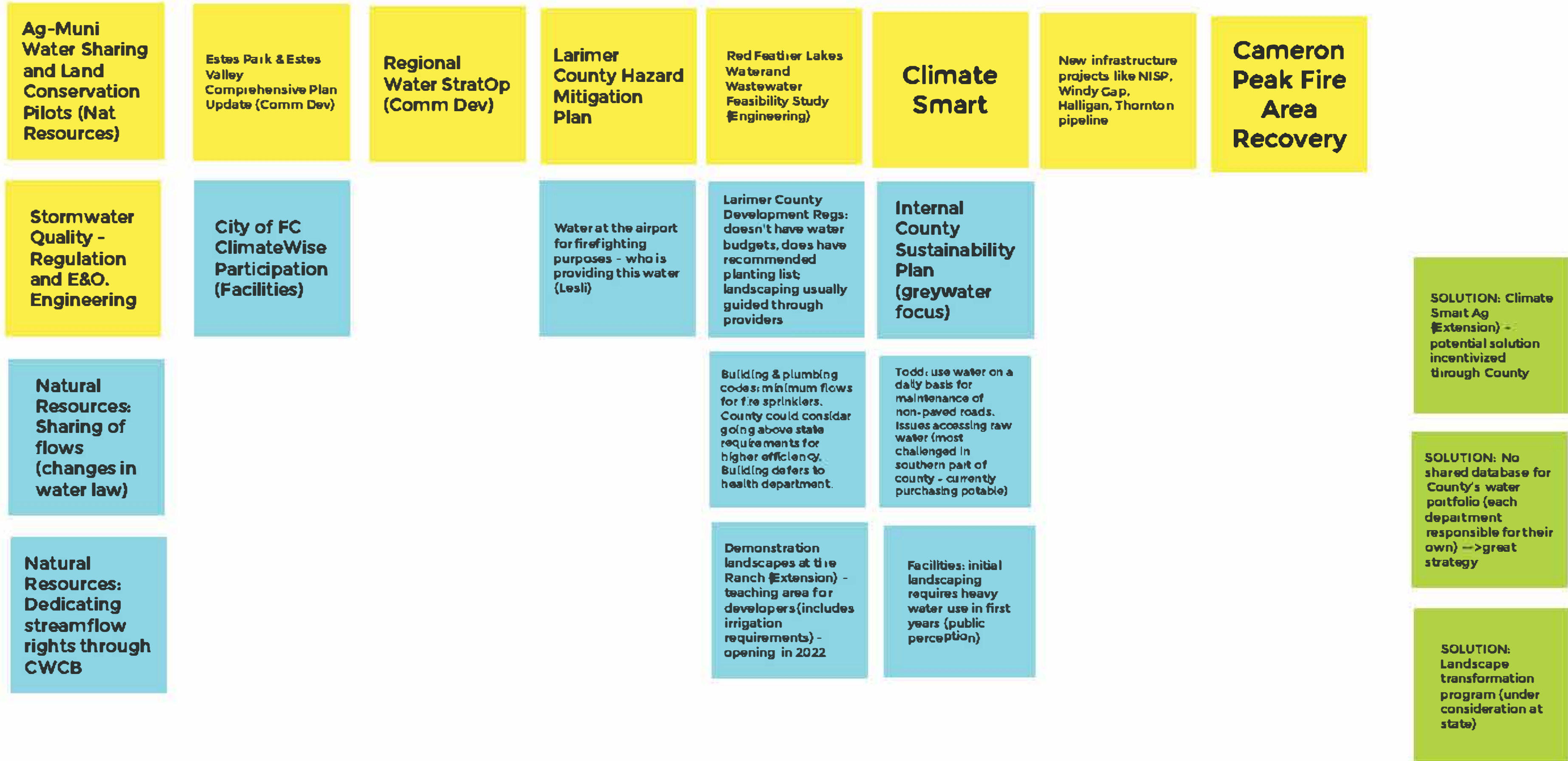
- Continue adding to the jamboards through the end of this week (end of day Fri)

PM Team

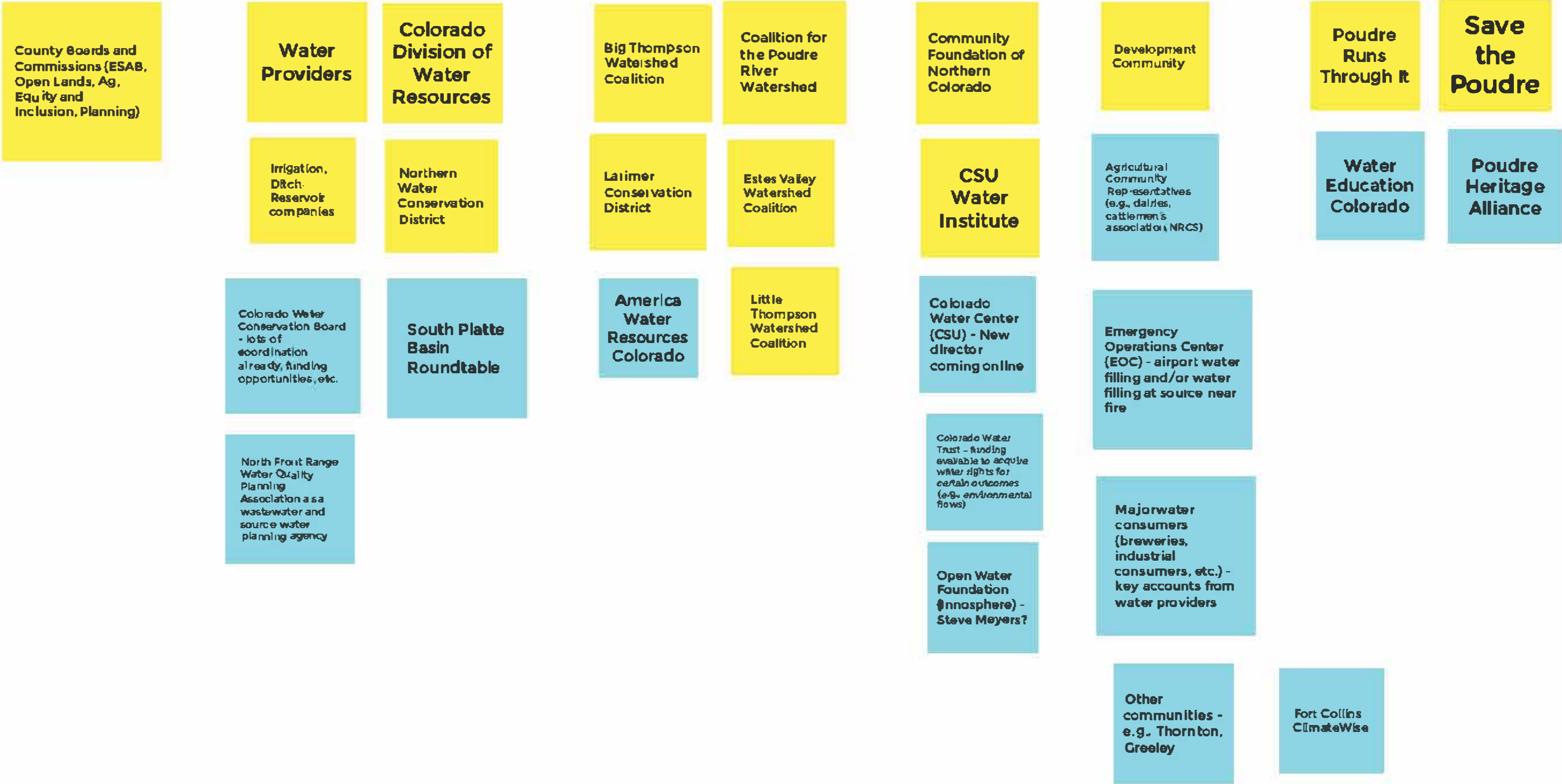
- Use your input to draft vision and goal concepts
- Share report with additional stakeholders
- Prep for stakeholder workshop in May

THANK YOU!

1. What related efforts are you working on in the County/region (add dept/name)?



2. Who should be invited to the stakeholder workshop to provide input on next steps? Why?



3. How should Larimer County engage in regional water planning and collaboration? What should the County be mindful of?

Things to do

- Be a regional convener
- Lead the way by using water efficiently in county buildings
- Use floodplain regulations & stormwater management as tools
- Promote public education of water issues
- Use land use, zoning, and development standards as tools
- Engage in watershed protection
- Use development reviews to achieve goals
- Become more familiar with new water funding streams (Prop DD, Water Plan grants, USBR WaterSmart grants)
- Coordination and inventory for emergency management purposes
- Education, incentives, information
- Partnering with water providers to look at creative environmental/agricultural/conservation purposes
- Conveyance infrastructure improvements (advocacy, support, etc.)
- Incentives for farmers and ranchers (or information about incentives)
- Water banking facilitation/conveners

Things to be mindful of

- The County is not a water provider but makes water-related decisions
- Don't rile people up unnecessarily
- County has limited authority over water providers or users
- Longstanding water law complexity and challenges (primacy)

4. What other ideas do you have to inform next steps?

Having baseline information helps inform follow-up conversations and can build on from here

development code -
shaping water use
through additional
land use
considerations
(protecting prime
soils, more intentional
conservation) -
revamp rural land use
approach, separator
agreements

Showing the
evolution
historically
(back further
in time)

Figure out
who else is
doing what;
form
coalitions and
partnerships

Identifying how
much water is
owned by entities
outside of County

Considering
aquifer water
resources -
Terry Ranch -
Greeley
example

Identifying
ditch
company
changes of
use - more
proactively

Determining
priorities and sense
of urgency
(collaboratively with
stakeholders)