

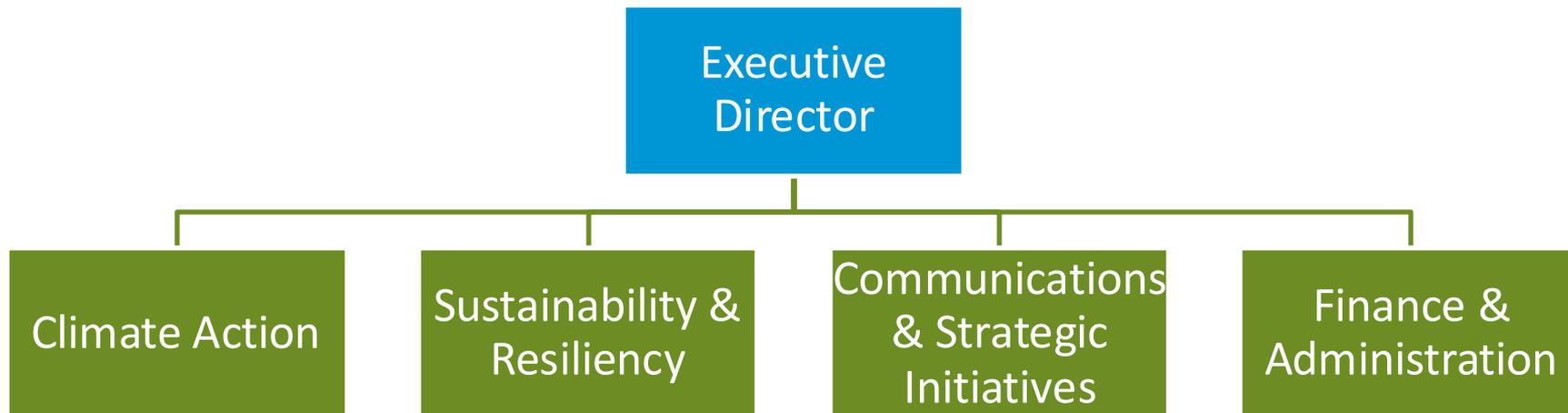


Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency

2026 Budget: City Council Presentation
Friday, September 26, 2025

CASR works to build a carbon pollution-free, sustainable, and climate-resilient city in collaboration with city departments, other government jurisdictions, and community partners.

Agency Structure



Agency Overview

Mission and Vision:

Mission: In Denver, we believe that the climate crisis is solvable. Together, we are the ones to solve it.

Vision: Together we build a carbon pollution-free, sustainable and climate-resilient Denver for all.

Direct Services We Protected:

- E-bike rebates
- Electrification rebates
- EV charging rebates
- Tree planting in low canopy neighborhoods
- And more

Agency Overview Continued

Changes to Increase Efficiency & Effectiveness:

- Contract with APTIM streamlines most rebates, incentives and mini-grants, easing internal and external admin burden
- Program redesign launching in 2026 will simplify the application process for residents, businesses, and nonprofits to access all CASR programs

Reductions and Changes to Services:

- Programs that have not yet launched will be delayed by several months while we update our staff workplans and complete our organizational restructure. This includes the food and climate justice program and the climate ambassadors program.

Strategic Priorities for 2026

Top Priorities

Carbon pollution – cut pollution by implementing energy efficiency programs, policies, and initiatives that support electrifying buildings and transportation; creating clean mobility options like public transit, biking, and walking.

Climate adaptation – adapt to climate change by planting trees and creating green spaces to reduce urban heat islands; implement nature-based solutions and sustainable land use policy; identify and plan for climate vulnerabilities; and create programs to meet the needs of people and communities most affected by climate change impacts.

Zero waste – increase recycling and composting to reduce landfill waste through implementation of Waste No More; implement policies and programs to reduce single-use items and promote sustainable packaging; and tracking and reporting on material use and consumption-based emissions.

Equity and climate justice – create climate resilient food systems; advance clean energy and natural resource workforce development in partnership with DEDO; ensure program accessibility; develop tailored programs to lower carbon pollution and energy bills for climate vulnerable households and neighborhoods.

Communications and Strategic Initiatives - increase language access; lead behavior change campaign; develop strategic engagement efforts for priority projects in neighborhoods, such as full neighborhood electrification; develop community climate ambassadors.

2026 Budget Philosophy



Maximize carbon pollution reduction potential

- Increase funding going directly to carbon reduction efforts
- City should lead by example



Streamline programs for community access

- Simplify application process and contracting
- Remove administrative burdens



Increase co-benefits

- Ensure carbon pollution reduction programs include resilience, cost savings, and other co-benefits
- Partner with other agencies (e.g. DEDO) to maximize job potential from clean energy investments

Equity Considerations

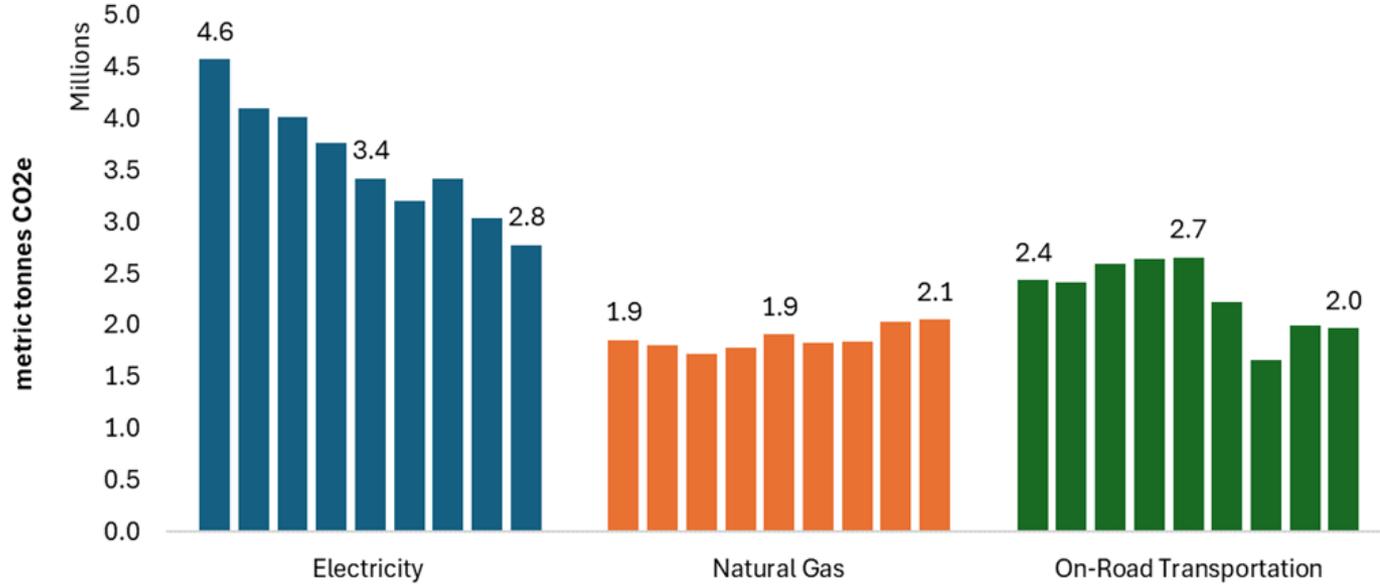
Equity Strategy

Per CASR's mission in ordinance, equity, access and inclusion are integrated as a core value in all our work. Each staff member is required to have an equity performance goal, and we encourage professional development in equity. Our EDI committee is very active and currently has several key focus areas: data, program accessibility, and EDI training resources. We focus on communities that are vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Equity Example

For multifamily, commercial and nonprofit building owners with buildings over 25,000 sq ft that meet equity criteria (in a NEST neighborhood, affordable housing, serves climate vulnerable people etc.), we offer enhanced services to support energy efficiency. That includes energy benchmarking assistance, onsite ASHRAE Level 2 Energy Audit, navigation services, and higher value rebates.

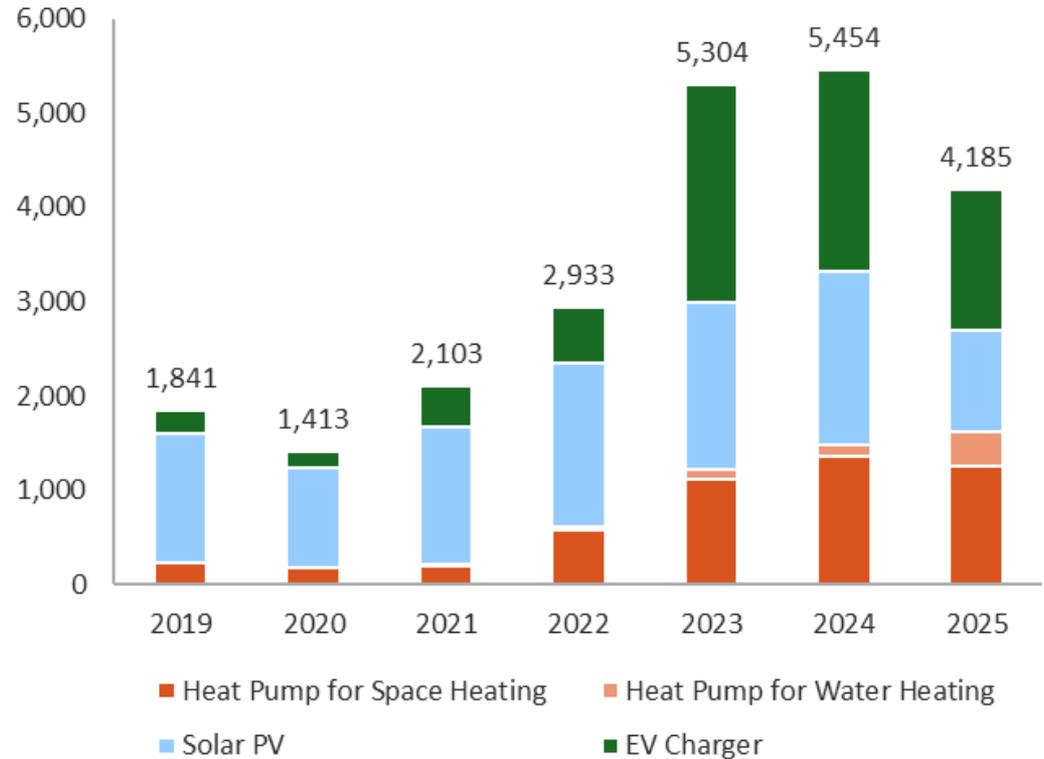
Denver's GHG Emissions 2015-2023



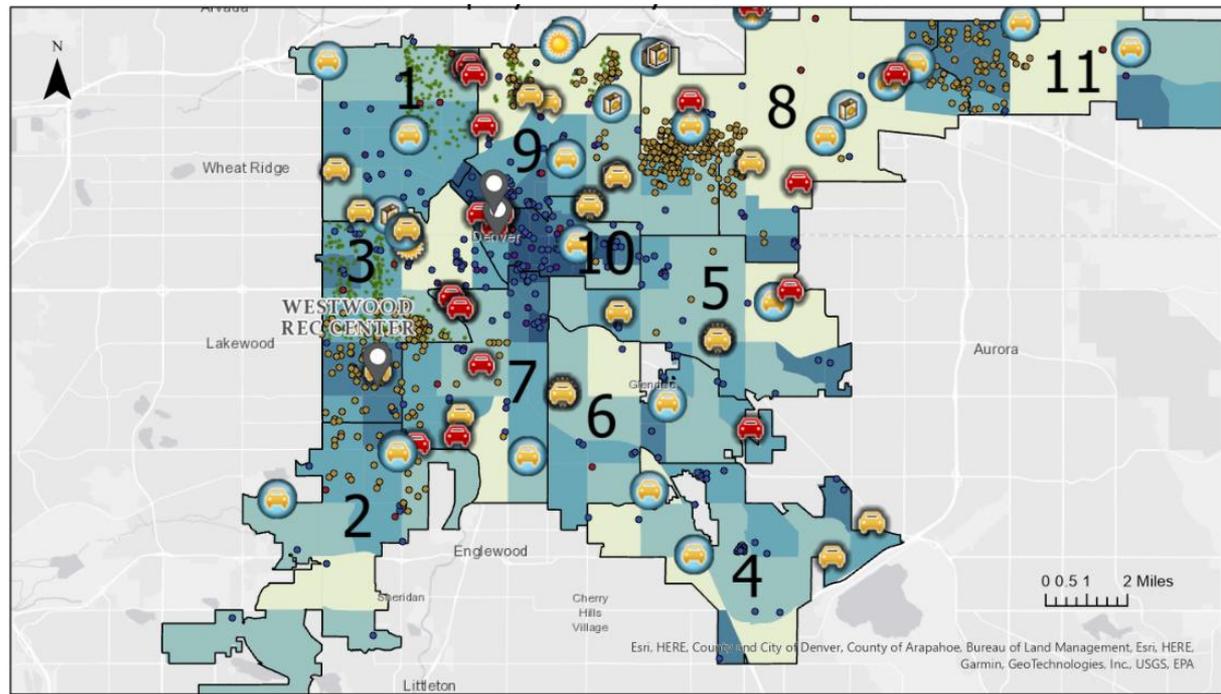
CASR rebates
increased
adoption of
clean energy
technology

Clean Energy System Permit Trends

(Data from CPD, refinement-in-progress)



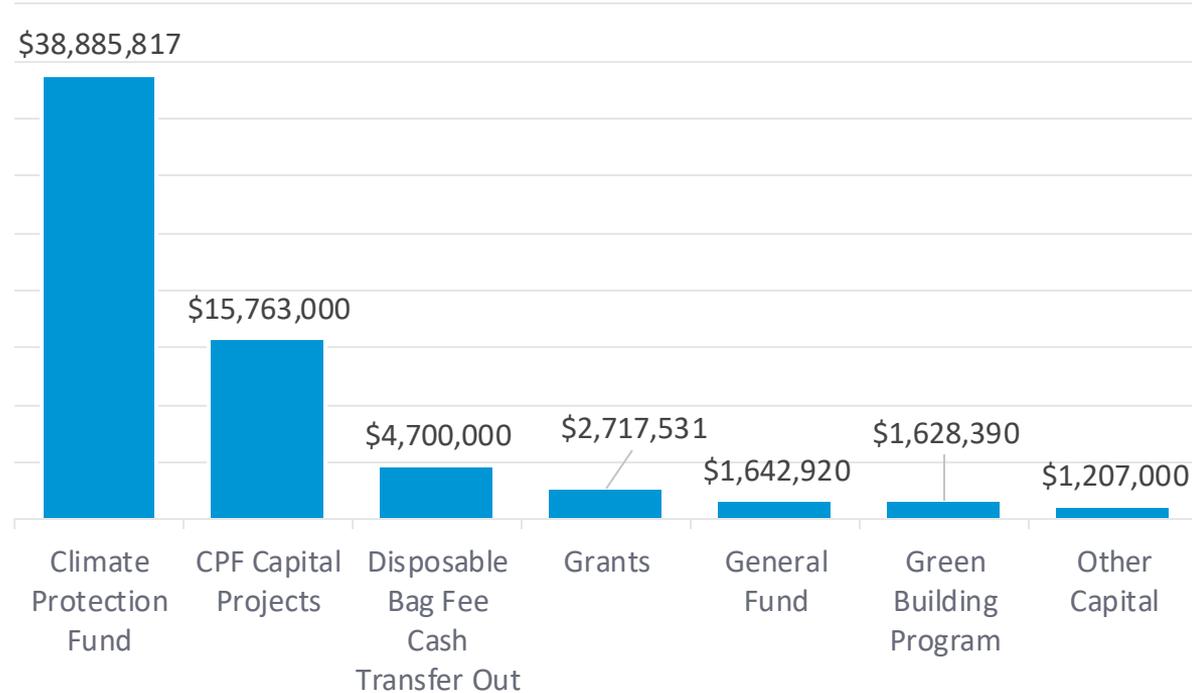
CASR's Equity-Focused and Catalytic Investments across Denver



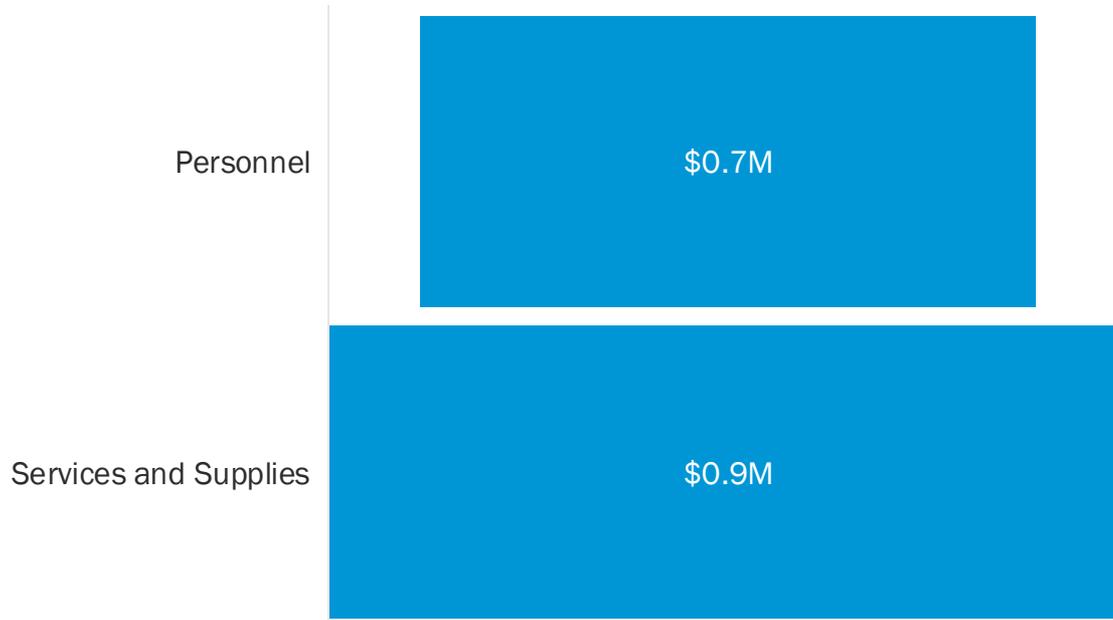
2026 Budget by Funding Source

CPF Operating: \$33.8M
CPF Capital: \$15.7M
Disposable Bag Fee Transfer: \$4.7M
Grants: \$2.7M
General Fund: \$1.64M
Green Building Program: \$1.63M
Other Capital: \$1.2M

TOTAL 2026 Budget:
\$66,786,645



2026 Budget by Expenditure Type (General Fund)



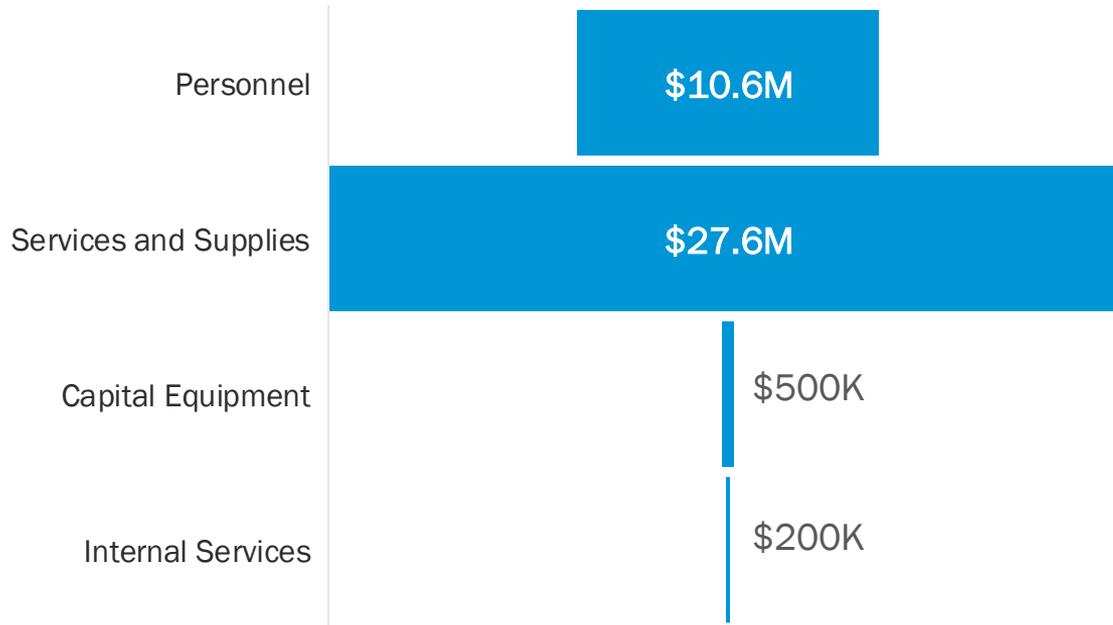
Personnel Changes

- Reduction of Vacant Positions: 7.25*
- Reduction of Filled Positions: 3.5

Total General Fund Reduction
(4,697,500) (74.09%)

*17.2 GF positions were moved to CPF.

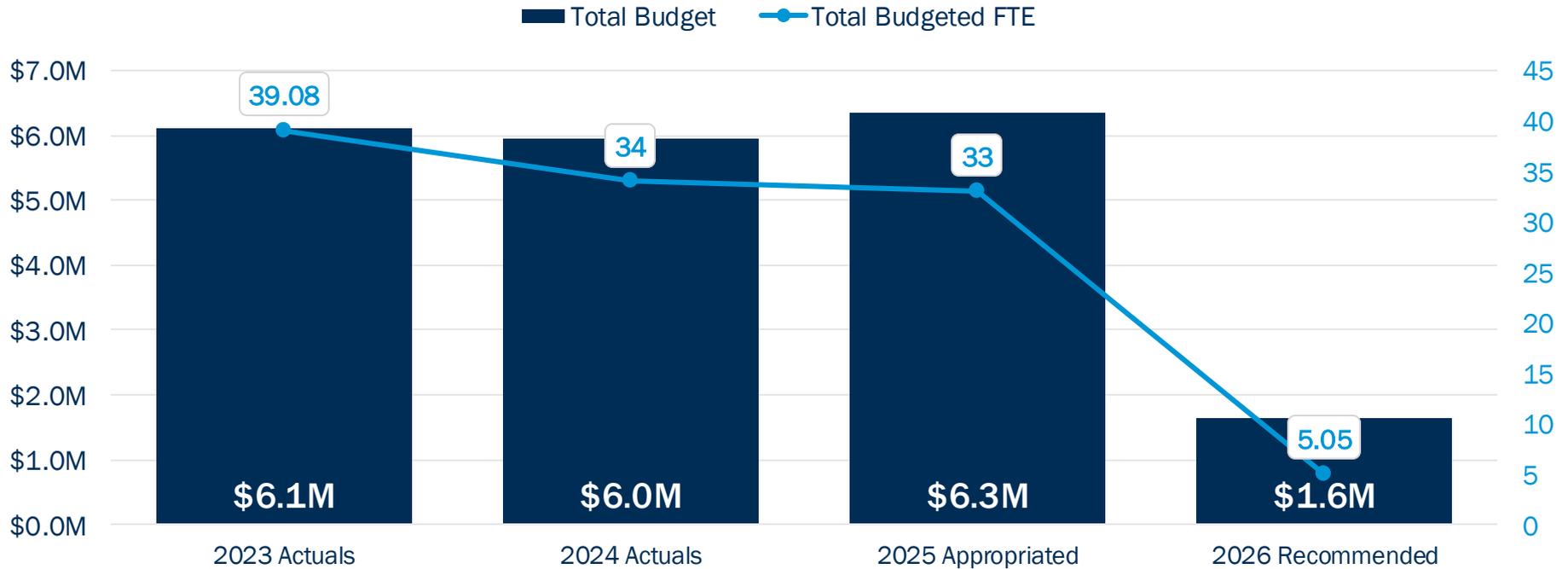
2026 Budget by Expenditure Type (CPF)



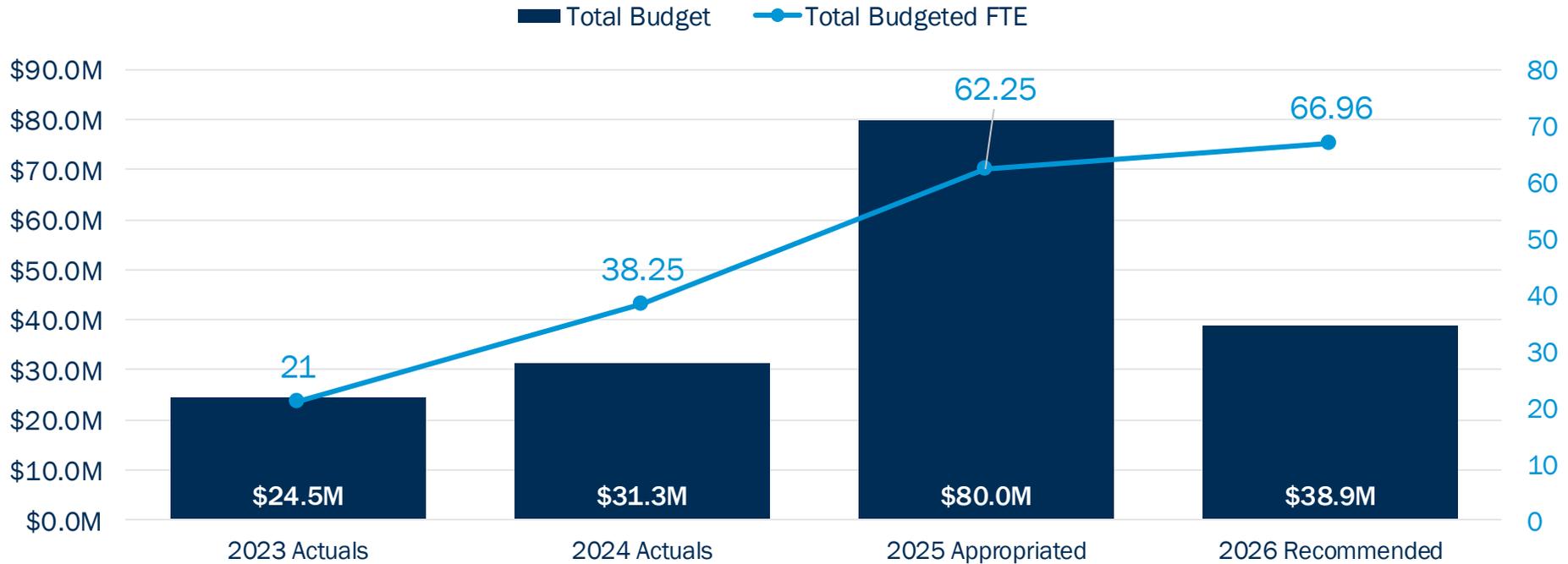
Personnel Changes

- Reduction of Filled Positions: 1.5
- Reduction of Vacant Positions: 13

Operating Budget and Staffing Over Time (General Fund)



Operating Budget and Staffing Over Time (CPF)



2026 Investments

Allowable Use	2026 Signature Investments
Renewable Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community solar and battery storage• Microgrid grant implementation• Solar Group Purchase Program (Enable Denverites to Act)
Net Zero Emissions Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal efficiency; electrification; Ambient loop proof-of-concept• Energize Denver helpdesk and equity building support• Invest & Incubate: Building electrification; Heat Pump Group Purchase
Sustainable Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fleet & public charging infrastructure; Streamline EVSE Permitting• Fleet Vehicle electrification (Solid Waste focus w/Highland Fleets)• Invest & Incubate: E-Bike Rebates; Multifamily EV charging; Mode-Shift
Adaptation & Resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate vulnerability and risk programs and policy• Nature based climate solutions (heat mitigation, flood regulation etc.)• Resilience hubs; Cooling and air quality programs
Green Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electrification, renewables and natural resources job training (DEDO partnership)
Environmental Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate resilient food systems• Increase equity and access to climate solutions
*Zero Waste & Circularity (not Climate Protection Fund)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waste-No-More Implementation (Admin, outreach, resources, enforcement)• Restaurant and commercial waste prevention• Embodied carbon; End markets and circularity

Key Agency Contracts

Contractor	Amount Remaining	2026 Spend	Scope	Term Ends
APTIM	\$23.1M	~\$8M	CASR Wide Incentive Program Administrator	June 2028
Michaels Energy	\$10.8M	~\$4.5M	Electrification and decarbonization work in the commercial and multifamily sectors	June 2026
McKinstry	\$9.6M	~\$3.2M	Master operator agreement for design, development, construction, operation and maintenance of the community solar projects	November 2046
APTIM	\$7.1M	~\$200K	Climate action rebate administrator services (transitioning to new contract)	March 2026
Touchstone	\$6.9M	~\$6.2M	Administration of the benchmarking and building performance policy through the Energize Denver Resource hub	December 2026
McKinstry	\$6.2M	~\$700K	To construct, operate, maintain, and manage subscriptions for community solar gardens on property owned and leased by the City	November 2046
Spark	\$2.7M	~\$1.6M	Development, design, and installation of DER solar	July 2027
Energy Outreach Colorado	\$1.8M	~\$700K	To electrify, weatherize and conduct health and safety improvements to single-family income-qualified homes in Denver, primarily targeting families with respiratory conditions (in process to extend time)	August 2025

Addressing City Council Priorities

City Council Priority	Agency Program/Service	Budget
Prioritize Climate Response	Green corridors, tree planting in low canopy neighborhoods	\$480K
Prioritize Climate Response	Ambient loop	\$4.2M
Prioritize Climate Response	Resilience hubs	\$200K
Prioritize Climate Response	Workforce development in clean energy and natural resources for priority populations which includes veterans, youth, older workers, newcomers, individuals experiencing homelessness, low-income families, justice-involved individuals, and individuals living with a disability. This is a partnership with DEDO.	\$1M

General Fund Reduction

Type	Amount	FTE	Description
Reduction	-\$1.2M	-10.75	To meet General Fund goals, all but core Zero Waste and Circular Economy staff and professional services (+ base-level administrative support services for finance, admin, communications, etc.) were reduced.
Move	\$2.7M	17.2	Move positions from General Fund to CPF

General Fund reductions were required to meet citywide targets. Shifting key positions to the CPF, eliminating vacancies and minimizing layoffs assured core program levels were maintained for 2026.

Equity Impact

CASR's focus on equity permeates all positions and programs. Reductions for 2026 minimized impacts to equity by assuring coverage in the new staffing model.

Key Capital Projects and Allocations

Program Title	Amount	Description
Electrified Mobility Improvements	\$2.7M	New public charging facilities and charging solutions to accelerate electric vehicle adoption in the City's fleet.
Energy Conservation Improvements	\$8.45M	Energy efficiency and building electrification projects across a range of municipal facilities to immediately reduce energy consumption and utility costs.
Solar Infrastructure Improvements	\$3.55M	Continued investment in our successful Renewable Denver Community Solar program and dispatchable energy storage.
Energize Denver Implementation	\$1.6M	Funding will be used to support the implementation of citywide Energize Denver compliance efforts.

Major Agency Grants

Grant	Amount	Scope	Term End
DOLA Climate Resilience Hub	\$1.7M	State capital grant fund for climate resilience through community solar	January 2026
USDA IRA Urban Forestry	\$1.0M	Community tree planting initiative	April 2029



APPENDIX

CASR Ord. passed November 2019, opened July 2020

Sec. 2-403. - Mission.

- (a) The office's mission is to:
- (1) Act with urgency to proactively mitigate climate change by advancing science-based strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a scale and timeline that align with the recommendations from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;
 - (2) Cultivate resiliency in the face of potential climate change-related emergencies;
 - (3) Secure an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable city for generations to come;
and
 - (4) Ensure that the setting of goals and metrics and monitoring of results considers equity.
- (b) The office must pursue its mission while ensuring that equity, access and inclusion are integrated as a core value.
- (c) The office must coordinate with other agencies as appropriate to assist in developing and transitioning a local skilled workforce to implement low-carbon or zero-carbon solutions.

CASR Ord. passed November 2019, opened July 2020

Sec. 2-404. - Powers and duties.

The office has the following powers and duties:

- (a) Develop, administer, and oversee contracts with vendors and technical consultants;
- (b) Establish relationships with city agencies and private-sector stakeholders to ensure a coordinated, citywide approach to addressing climate change;
- (c) Coordinate with regional and state stakeholders to ensure consistency and scale for various climate mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- (d) Implement the energize Denver commercial building benchmarking ordinance or any successor ordinance;
- (e) Assist in implementation of Denver's green buildings ordinance or any successor ordinance;
- (f) Develop and implement programs and policies to reduce energy consumption in commercial and residential buildings while also reducing greenhouse gases;
- (g) Establish and evaluate building strategies that lead to significant reductions in climate-forcing emissions;

CASR Ord. passed November 2019, opened July 2020

Sec. 2-404. - Powers and duties.

- (h) Actively coordinate with city leadership and utility companies to further goals established in the energy future collaborative or any successor program;
- (i) Actively represent the city in front of the public utilities commission to achieve Denver's renewable electricity goals;
- (j) Coordinate with city agencies and private-sector stakeholders to prepare for rapidly increasing electric vehicle registrations and the associated electric vehicle charging networks throughout Denver;
- (k) Implement Denver's **climate** action plan or any successor plan;
 - (l) Coordinate with city agencies to establish and track progress towards Denver's sustainability goals;
- (m) Oversee updates to and implementation of Denver's executive order 123 or any successor executive order;
- (n) Implement the certifiably green Denver small business assistance program or any successor program;
- (o) Implement sustainable neighborhoods program or any successor program;

CASR Ord. passed November 2019, opened July 2020

Sec. 2-404. - Powers and duties.

- (p) Oversee the energy efficiency in commercial and multi-family buildings program described in Article V of [Chapter 4](#), D.R.M.C., or any successor program.
- (q) Coordinate with city agencies to develop, implement, and track progress towards Denver's **climate** adaptation plan or any successor plan;
- (r) Regulate citywide waste reduction and disposal to protect the **climate** and to promote energy efficiency and environmental sustainability; and
- (s) Promulgate any rules and regulations necessary to achieve the powers and duties specified in this section.

Climate Protection Fund Ballot Measure Passed Nov 2020 w 62% of the vote

Sec. 2-405. Legislative declaration.

(a) The city council finds, determines, and declares:

- (1) For nearly twenty (20) years, the city has endeavored to reduce its impact on the environment, conserve natural resources, and protect its residents and thriving business community from the perils of climate change;
- (2) The damage to people, business continuity, and the natural systems that sustain life caused by climate change demands swift and meaningful action, including steep reductions in fossil fuel consumption and significant improvements in air and water quality;
- (3) The disproportionate health, social, and economic impacts of climate change is falling on under-resourced communities;
- (4) The lack of leadership at the national level leaves cities to combat climate change on their own. The city's sustainability accomplishments to date have garnered national attention and respect and with this act the city will propel to the highest ranks of cities developing innovative solutions that address not only climate change, but also improve public health and dismantle racist systems;
- (5) Dedicated funding for climate action, sustainability, and resiliency will help ensure that future generations will be able to live, work, and thrive in the city without an omnipresent climate crisis;
- (6) This dedicated funding should maximize investments in under resourced communities, and communities most vulnerable to climate change effects to ensure equity and help these communities prepare for a changing climate through innovative mechanisms such as community-based grants and partnerships with community-based environmental and climate justice organizations;

Climate Protection Fund Ballot Measure Passed Nov 2020 w 62% of the vote

(7) Funds should be expended on the permitted uses listed below while allowing for the flexibility to take advantage of one-time opportunities and catalytic projects but should, over the long term, endeavor to invest fifty (50) percent of the dedicated funds directly in the community with a strong lens toward equity, race and social justice.

(b) Therefore, the city council has determined that the question of whether the city shall be authorized to impose a 0.25 percent sales tax for the purposes and in the manner set forth in this ordinance should be submitted to the registered electors of the city at the special municipal election to be conducted in coordination with the state general election on November 3, 2020.

Sec. 2-406. Permitted uses of revenue in the climate protection fund.

(a) All monies derived from the sales and use taxes in the climate protection fund ("fund") must be expended on:

- (1) Job creation through local workforce training and new careers for under-resourced individuals in renewable and clean energy technology and management of natural resources;
- (2) Increased investments in solar power, battery storage and other renewable energy technology;
- (3) Neighborhood-based environmental and climate justice programs;
- (4) Adaptation and resiliency programs that help vulnerable communities prepare for a changing climate;
- (5) Programs and services that provide affordable, clean, safe and reliable transportation choices, like walking, biking, transit, electric vehicles, and neighborhood-scale transit; and
- (6) Upgrade the energy efficiency of homes, offices and industry to reduce their carbon footprint, utility bills, and indoor air pollution.

Climate Protection Fund Ballot Measure Passed Nov 2020 w 62% of the vote

- (b) *Cap on administrative costs.* Monies in the fund may be expended to pay the costs incurred by the city associated directly with the administration of the funds; except that, in no event may the amount expended from the funds for administrative expenses in any year exceed eight (8) percent of the amount of revenue received in the fund in that year.
- (c) *Fund earnings.* Any interest earned on the balance of the fund accrues to the fund.
- (d) *Administration of funds.* The executive director of the office of climate action, sustainability, and resiliency will manage the fund.
- (e) *Permanency.* If the monies in the fund are not expended at the end of the fiscal year, such monies must remain in the fund to be expended in subsequent fiscal years.
- (f) *Maintenance of effort.* All monies in the fund must be used in accordance with this section and may not replace nor supplant any general fund appropriations allocated each year to the office of climate action, sustainability, and resiliency.
- (g) *Rulemaking.* The executive director of the office of climate action, sustainability, and resiliency may promulgate any rules necessary for the proper administration of the climate action program.
- (h) *Reporting.* A report of fund expenditures and performance plan must be submitted annually to the mayor, city council, city auditor, and the sustainability advisory council, or any successor body.
- (i) *Planning.* Within one (1) year of the adoption of this division 2 and every five (5) years thereafter, the executive director of the office of climate action, sustainability, and resiliency shall submit a five-year plan to the city council and the sustainability advisory council on the planned revenue uses in the climate protection fund.