



ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2023



VISIT DENVER'S
SUSTAINABILITY PARTNER



**HONEYCOMB
STRATEGIES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION	3
<hr/>	
ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT	
<hr/>	
ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT	4
<hr/>	
CERTIFICATIONS	9
<hr/>	
COMMUNICATIONS	10
<hr/>	
SUPPLIERS & PROCUREMENT	11
<hr/>	
COMMUNITY	13
<hr/>	
AIR QUALITY	14
<hr/>	
WASTE MANAGEMENT	15
<hr/>	
CONCLUSION	17



VISIT DENVER commits to actions that reduce our environmental impact, focus on conserving resources, and utilizing products, technologies, and methods that continually improve in these efforts. Our sustainable initiatives focus in the areas of: Waste Reduction and Diversion; Energy Conservation; Water Quality and Consumption; Air Quality; Procurement; Community and Human Resources.

This Annual Sustainability Report is intended to increase transparency, emphasize accountability and measure progress across sustainability initiatives. In partnership with [Honeycomb Strategies](#), this report has been published for the benefit of all interested stakeholders who may wish to understand, contribute to and be inspired by our actions to make the City of Denver and our organization a sustainable city to live, work, visit and conduct business.

Throughout this report, you will see icons indicating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These highly regarded goals for sustainable cities, organizations and communities help evaluate our sustainable choices against a global rubric for improvement. Read more about the U.N. Global Goals [here](#).

ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Written policies are transparent to the entire organization and clearly outline expectations, allowing for accountability across all stakeholder groups. They also serve as a guideline and decision-making tool when evaluating operations and planning. VISIT DENVER has developed several policies, endorsed by leadership and reviewed annually, that directly address sustainability generally, and certain programs specifically. These guide office actions and programming choices throughout the year.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

SUSTAINABILITY MISSION STATEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environmental and Corporate Social Responsibility Policy created in 2011 is annually reviewed and updated on website.
EMPLOYEE GREEN TEAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Green Team has been in place since 2012 and meets on a monthly basis.
STAFF EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual staff sustainability presentation/ review in April. Green Week in April centers around Earth Day and the Annual Sustainability Challenge in June centers around Denver's Bike To Work Day. Both events provide staff education and engagement in sustainability. Monthly sustainability tips provided on ADP. All new-hires receive a sustainability 101 overview.
STAFF DONATION AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 staff participated in a park clean up in July 2023.
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website resources page was updated in 2023. Signage on all waste bins. Sustainability folder in shared drive with all policies, etc.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

VISIT DENVER commits to actions that work to reduce our environmental impact, focus on conserving resources, and utilizing products, technologies, and methods which continually improve in these efforts. Our sustainable initiatives focus areas are: Waste Reduction and Diversion; Energy Conservation; Water Quality and Consumption; Air Quality; Procurement; Community, and Human Resources. Incorporated herein is the VISIT DENVER Environmental Purchasing Policy (EPP).

Waste Management: Reduce and Divert various waste created within the VISIT DENVER offices through reuse, repurposing, and recycling.

Energy Conservation: Optimize efficiencies in energy consumption within our offices. These efficiencies are a combination of equipment updates and procedural.

Water Conservation: Consider practices and equipment to reduce water consumption

Air Quality: Address impact of activities on air quality by taking direct flights, utilizing low emission vehicles and encouraging walking and carpooling when applicable.

Environmental Purchasing Policy (EPP): Develop a sustainable purchasing policy to address and consider environmental and ethical impacts and adhere to the stated goals of the Environmental Policy. This includes a focus on regional, organic, and sustainable materials, as well as vendors who consider their environmental impact and support the mission of VISIT DENVER.

Community: VISIT DENVER will act as a steward for the environment and local community. This includes creating opportunities for staff involvement, education of stakeholders, and participating in programs which contribute to the overall benefit of the city.

Human Resources Policy & Staff Training: Engage and educate employees as to their roles and responsibilities fulfilling the sustainable vision, objectives and goals of VISIT DENVER.

Corporate Social Responsibility: As part of VISIT DENVER's commitment to the community, the VISIT DENVER employee committee will partner with local community organizations to plan at least one corporate social responsibility program each year. All staff will be encouraged to attend.

1/4/24

1/4/24

Richard Scharf
President & CEO

Date

Tiffany Eck
Green Meeting Liaison

Date



The VISIT DENVER Green Team works to promote sustainability within our organization, as well as the community and stakeholders we serve. Aligned with our Environmental Policy, we focus on programs, systems and educational opportunities to reduce our impact on natural resources and the community.

GREEN WEEK CHALLENGE: APRIL

We hosted the following activities for the team during the week:

PARTICIPANTS	
TASTY TUESDAY MEATLESS POTLUCK	40
SUSTAINABILITY THEMED FAMILY FEUD	10
PLANT CUTTING SWAP	11

2023 Green Team members were: Tiffany Eck, Lauren Huffer, Jeremy Schwartz , Gina Gaytan, Sammy Bianchi, Angie Jasper

STAFF EDUCATION HIGHLIGHT: SUSTAINABILITY SPEED ROUNDS

In November 2023, VISIT DENVER launched a new sustainability initiative, 30 minute lunch-n-learn opportunities with the following topics:

- Garden In A Box
- Sustainable Food
- Pact Collective
- E Waste



Visiting the Farmer's Market during June's Sustainability Week.

SUSTAINABILITY WEEK: JUNE

We hosted some fun educational and wellness activities for the team during this week:

PARTICIPANTS	
BIKED TO WORK	16
STAFF WHO TOURED CSU SPUR HYDRO BUILDING	24
STAFF ATTENDED CCC SUSTAINABILITY TOUR	23
TOTAL STEPS WALKED	1,672,933



Visiting the CCC Blue Bear Farm and biking to work during June's Sustainability Week.



STAFF PARK CLEAN-UP



STAFF SUSTAINABILITY PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



KAYCEE POWELL

Our home garden has blossomed into a sustainable oasis, showcasing the following key features:

- **Organic Practices:** We eliminate harmful chemicals, by using ladybugs and praying mantis as a natural pesticide on our plants.
- **Water Conservation:** Through rainwater harvesting we minimize water waste and ensure efficient usage.
- **Local Produce:** By growing our own food, we reduce transportation emissions and support a sustainable local food system.



STEPHANIE KETTNER

Colorful Colorado. The alpine might look rugged and resilient, but the ecosystem above timberline is very sensitive and easily affected by the actions of humans... Hundreds of volunteers donate their time annually to cleaning up wild areas, creating and restoring sustainable trails, as well educating visitors on how to enjoy nature responsibly. By doing our best to leave every place we visit better than the way we found it, the public will be able to enjoy beautiful spaces like this for generations to come.



GINA GAYTAN

This is an organic, CS farm less than a mile from my home. They donate a portion of their crop to community food banks and non-profit organizations.

I cherish the fresh eggs and seasonal produce I get from their farm stand every week. The name "Grow Girl" also reminds me to thrive where I'm planted, and thoughtfully tend to what I want to grow in my own life.

CERTIFICATIONS & ACCREDITATIONS

Third-party assurance ensures that an organization is accurately operating and reporting. In 2023, VISIT DENVER was proud to be the first destination awarded Platinum level certification by the Events Industry Council, in addition to continuing certification with the Colorado Green Business Council at a Silver Level.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

Event Industry Council (EIC)
Sustainable Event Standard

- Certified Platinum in 2023

Colorado Green Business
Network

- Recertified Silver in 2023



EVENTS INDUSTRY COUNCIL (EIC)

The Events Industry Council (EIC) supports research and education to advance the meetings and event profession. The EIC Sustainable Event Standards are a collection of nine specific standards that assess events and industry suppliers on a wide range of sustainability criteria in support of environmental and social responsibility, comprised of 74 detailed criteria including organizational management, climate action, water management, supply chain management, DEI, accessibility and social impact.. A score of 90% or higher is needed to earn Platinum certification, the highest ranking possible verified by a third-party auditor. VISIT DENVER is honored to be the FIRST destination in the world to achieve Platinum Level Certification.

COLORADO GREEN BUSINESS NETWORK

Statewide environmental recognition of continual improvement and monitoring of key performance metrics, development and sharing of stated sustainability goals, identification of major environmental impacts, participation in environmental community programs, and providing educational environmental opportunities within the community.



COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

An effective sustainability strategy creates internal and external buy-in for programs, offers opportunity for education, delivers awareness and increases brand value. Communication is exhibited in many forms, such as engagement, signage, training and education, marketing and sponsorship assets, and should be strategized initially based on two broad audience categories: internal and external. VISIT DENVER maintains both internal sustainability communications such as annual trainings and intranet resources, as well as external resources through our user-friendly website.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

WEBSITE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public website on sustainability resources was updated in 2023: https://www.denver.org/denver-meetings-conventions/sustainability/
MARKETING MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All marketing collateral is updated to include sustainability metrics through 2023.
ANNUAL REPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report, the second VISIT DENVER Annual Report, includes statements on Green Achievements.

COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHT: CLIENT NEWSLETTERS

In 2023, VISIT DENVER included sustainability content in its quarterly client newsletters, promoting: the Downtown Hotel Sustainability Survey, Global Recycling Day on March 18th, the Venue Sustainability Survey and EIC Certification.



SUPPLIERS AND PROCUREMENT

Many of VISIT DENVER's partner businesses are leading the way towards a more sustainable city for our residents and visitors. To demonstrate their commitment and continually improve their practices, many have adopted and been certified to the leading standards in their industry. Our Green Vendor Directory and Hotel Survey allows visitors to sort businesses by certification type and practice. We are proud to support and promote our partners and their sustainable efforts.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

HOTEL PARTNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-annual hotel survey was completed and published online in 2022. • https://www.denver.org/denver-meetings-conventions/sustainability/hotel-sustainability/
VENUE SURVEY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach and engagement to venues with 500+ capacity occurred in 2023, findings will be published in 2024.
GREEN MEMBER DIRECTORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 annual audit completed in August. • https://www.denver.org/denver-meetings-conventions/sustainability/green-vendors/
VOLUNTOURISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023 Annual audit completed in July.
ENVIRONMENTAL PURCHASING POLICY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2023, staff training was conducted for all Coordinators to understand the EPP and how to track purchases appropriately. • Maintained policy in 2023.

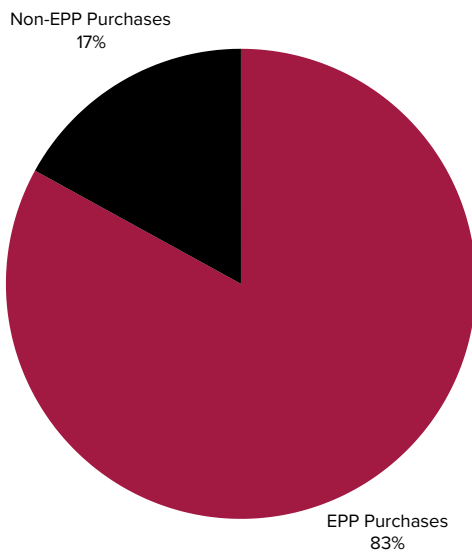
*SUPPLIER HIGHLIGHT:
GREEN VENDOR DIRECTORS*

Of the 14 different sustainable categories in our directory, the top 5 are:

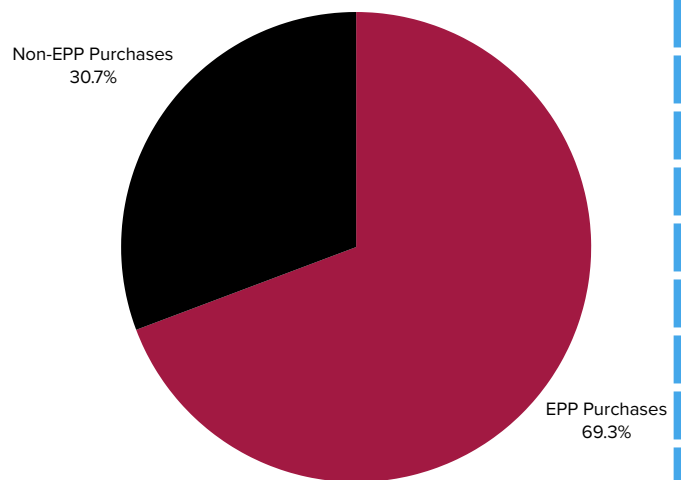
1. LEED Certified (30)
2. Colorado Green Business Network (27)
3. Certifiably Green Denver Business (26)
4. Energy Star Rated (26)
5. Green Seal Certified (18)

EPP PURCHASES 2023

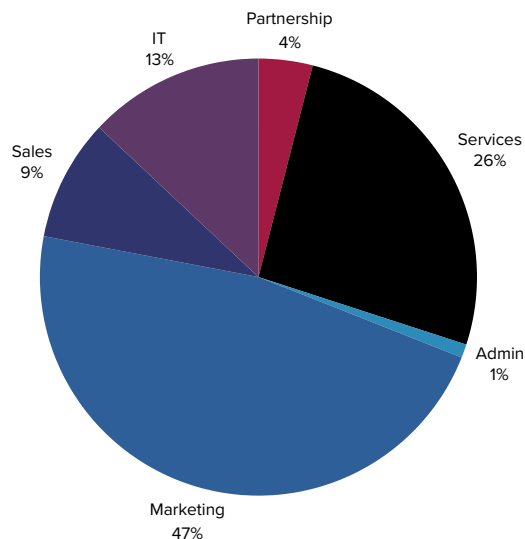
CONSUMABLE GOODS



PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS



EPP PURCHASES BY DEPARTMENT



VISIT DENVER encourages behaviors and activities that improve overall health and create a pleasant environment to live, visit and work. Wellness programs increase productivity, morale and retention, while inclusion measures create a sense of belonging, enhance innovation and increase efficiency and teamwork. VISIT DENVER has developed several programs to highlight the efforts of local charities and provide opportunities for visitors to engage with our community while exploring our vibrant city.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

VOLUNTOURISM

- VISIT DENVER publishes and maintains a Voluntourism website.
- Annual update and audit completed in April.
- <https://www.denver.org/denver-meetings-conventions/sustainability/voluntourism/>

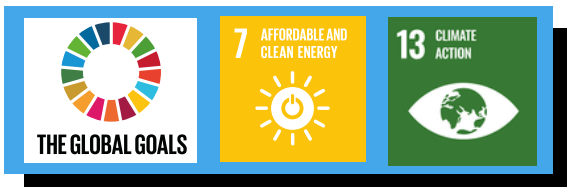
VOLUNTOURISM

The VISIT DENVER website lists 37 local organizations that welcome individual and group volunteers for community and environmental assistance programs. The online list includes details about the type of activity, cost and time commitment.

Areas of Interest	Domestic Violence	Educational	Employment	Environmental	Health	Homeless	Seniors	Youth	Take a Donation	
Organization										Grp. ind.
American Red Cross	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	Grp. ind.
A Precious Child	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Grp. ind.
Cancer League of Colorado	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Grp. ind.
Clean The World	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Grp.
Colorado Convention Center and Denver Parks & Recreation	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	Grp.
Colorado Feeding Kids...Meal Pack	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	Grp.
Colorado Fourtenthers Initiative	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	Grp. ind.
Continental Divide Trail Coalition	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	Grp. ind.

AIR QUALITY

Transportation has a significant impact on the carbon footprint of our organization’s day-to-day operations. Every mile driven in a single passenger gasoline vehicle typically emits one pound of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. This impact is significantly reduced when people choose to take public transportation, carpool, walk/bike or utilize an all-electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle. Integrating alternative transportation offerings not only reduces the impact of our organizational activities on the environment but also creates a better guest experience for visitors taking part in low-carbon travel through improved safety, decreased vehicular traffic, pollution and noise. In addition to implementing a week dedicated to encouraging staff to bike to work, VISIT DENVER also encourages healthy air quality through the following initiatives.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- VISIT DENVER publishes and maintains information about carbon reduced, or carbon-free travel.
- <https://www.denver.org/about-denver/transportation/get-around-without-a-car/>

STAFF TRAVEL

- Maintained Staff Travel Policy.

AIR TRAVEL

- VISIT DENVER has tracked air travel miles since 2017. In 2023, our staff tracked 634,773 air travel miles; over 491 one way trips/ legs.
- 2023 total MTCO2e= 160.22

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management is one of the most visible environmental elements of operations. VISIT DENVER prioritizes waste reduction and encourages reducing the total amount of waste generated from our activities. In addition, we have developed secondary programs for waste diversion, which encourages redirecting waste from the landfill stream to a higher and better use.



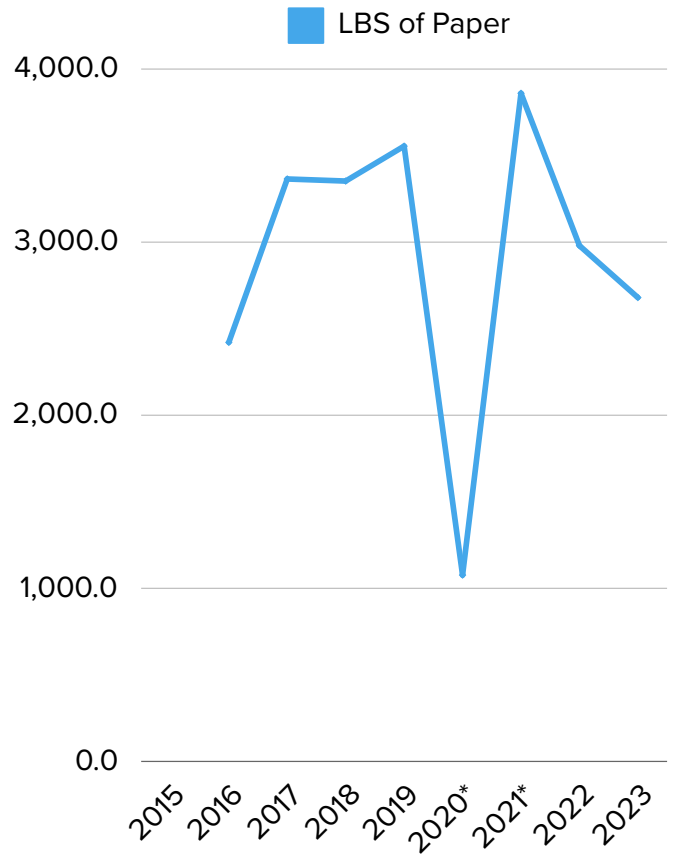
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR

<p>PAPER REDUCTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced paper consumption through the following strategies: (1) Purchasing post-consumer recycled content paper (minimum 30 % post-consumer content), (2) Providing marketing materials online (3) setting printers to default double-sided • Shredded 1.32 short tons of paper through Iron Mountain. • Paper reduction tips are provided to staff members during annual sustainability training.
<p>FOOD AND BEVERAGE WASTE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued office dishwashing system to encourage staff to use reusable cups instead of disposable. VISIT DENVER tracks disposable cup use on an annual basis. • Water bottle refill station in office with tracker.
<p>E-WASTE RECYCLING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented a new electronic recycling program for office e-waste through Iron Mountain. 1,332 lbs of eWaste were diverted from the landfill in 2023.

OFFICE PAPER USE

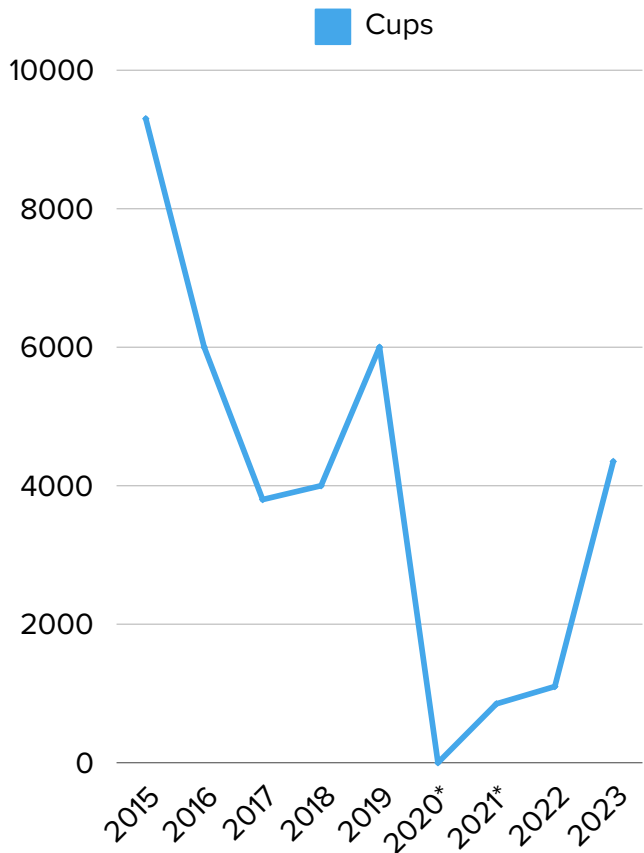


PAPER SHREDDING



*REDUCED USE DUE TO COVID-19

PAPER CUP USAGE





In 2023, VISIT DENVER's unwavering dedication to sustainability has set a commendable standard in the tourism industry. Through enhancements in corporate sustainability policies, active engagement of passionate staff members, initiatives such as electronics recycling and water conservation within our offices and the provision of eco-friendly resources to visitors, we have not only reduced our environmental footprint but have also inspired others to follow suit. These practices have been verified through accreditation with the Events Industry Council (EIC) at an unprecedented Platinum level of achievement. VISIT DENVER exemplifies how sustainable practices can be seamlessly integrated into every aspect of tourism, ensuring a brighter and greener future for all.



Questions or Comments?

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