

SustainableBreck Plan

Sustainability and Environmental Planning Honor Award

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Forging an innovative alliance with a team of sustainability experts to revitalize their outdated 2011 SustainableBreck Plan, the Town of Breckenridge will usher in a new era of environmental leadership. The SustainableBreck Plan Update, completed in six months, has new goals, targets, and strategies to address how our world has changed and continue our sustainability efforts for the next decade and beyond. There are now five main topic areas — Energy, Water, Material Management, Climate Action, and Mobility.

The scope of the project went beyond the typical sustainable planning process and included:

- Extensive, bi-lingual community outreach and Breckenridge Town Council engagement;
- Data collection, analysis, and modeling to understand the current and future conditions relating to the five main topic areas;
- Review and synthesis of pertinent peer sustainability and climate action plans;
- Development of sustainability, decarbonization, and resiliency strategies tailored to Breckenridge, but that also align with regional goals;
- Integration with existing Breckenridge efforts related to community livability, specifically on the topics of housing, childcare, land use, and food systems;
- Cost-benefit analysis of key strategies to inform implementation;
- Creation of an actionable, implementation plan identifying the lead agency, time horizon, and rough cost to implement each strategy;
- Compelling and approachable visual documentation; and
- Development of a public-facing [online dashboard](#) for Breckenridge to transparently report sustainability metrics.

The plan was guided by extensive, thoughtful community outreach. In recognition of the housing affordability challenges that often prevent workers from living in the communities they serve, all members of the local workforce were treated as equal participants in the planning process. Community engagement efforts were conducted in Spanish and English, and open house events provided food and childcare to allow for diverse participation. Additionally, our planning team conducted numerous one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders around Breckenridge, including the local tourism board, the local electric utility company, and the manager of the local supermarket. As a town with a tourism-based economy, it was critical to obtain buy-in from key organizations in the tourism industry. Our team reached out to national and regional stakeholders, including Vail Resorts and Airbnb.

The result of the planning process was a robust and actionable sustainability and climate plan with an [online reporting dashboard](#). The plan identifies co-benefits for every strategy to ensure widespread support for implementation. The plan also challenges Breckenridge to increase its ambitions by outlining stretch targets in each topic area. The [online reporting dashboard](#) was designed to be easy for Breckenridge staff to update as new data becomes available. It provides a robust reporting and accountability system in addition to a “one-stop-shop” for sustainability information and resources.

Since the passage of SustainableBreck, Breckenridge has effectively implemented strategies from the plan including boldly [banning single-use plastics](#), [expanding shared electric car and eBike programs](#), and working with staff to eliminate diesel-powered equipment for landscaping. By addressing the unique sustainability and climate challenges

facing a historic, tourism-based, mountain town, SustainableBreck and the [online dashboard](#) have become a blueprint for mountain communities across Colorado and the country.