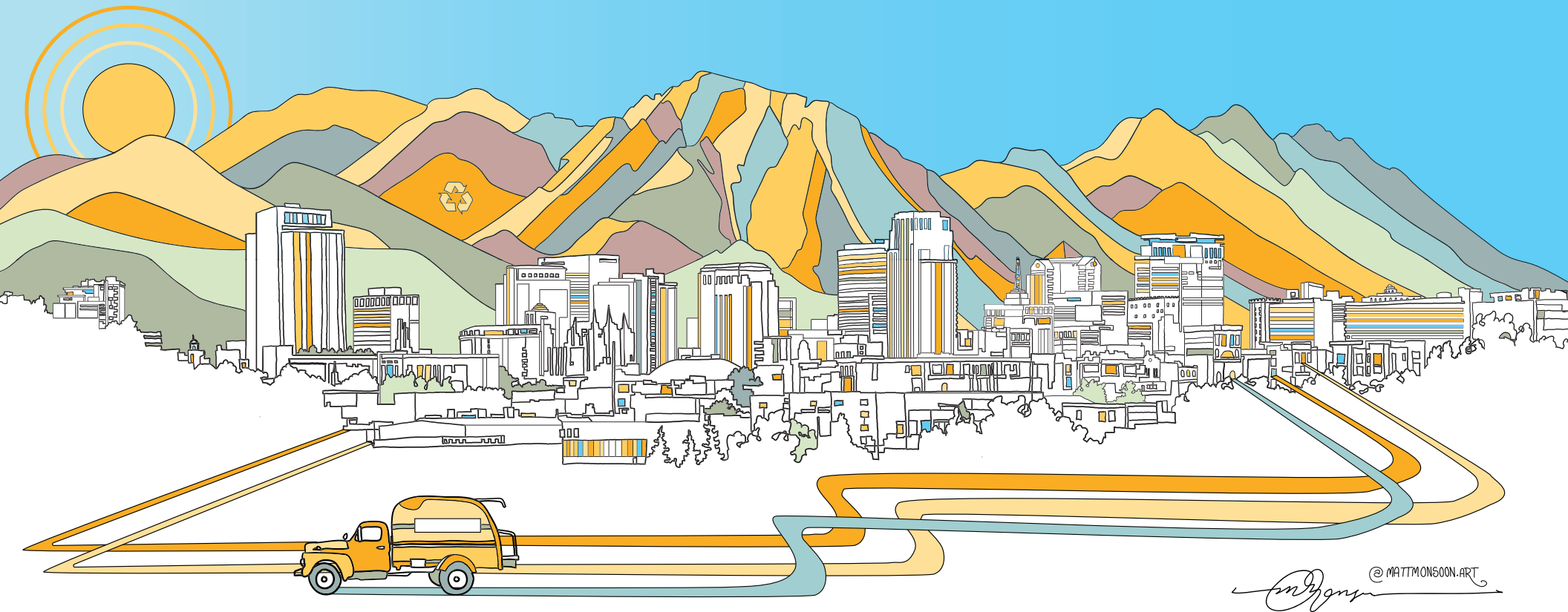


20  
23

# SLCgreen YEAR IN REVIEW



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**SUSTAINABILITY  
DEPARTMENT**

# DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Heading into 2023, I knew we'd be in for a busy year with a lot of exciting new opportunities coming out of the federal government's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). I am extremely proud of the Sustainability team for embracing these new opportunities with optimism and excitement while continuing to deliver amazing services for our community.



The Sustainability Department has long been assessing the impact of climate change and strategically implementing measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our Salt Lake City community. One opportunity that presented itself in 2023 through the IRA was a \$1 million formula grant we received to lead the development of the first regional Climate Pollution Reduction

plan for Salt Lake and Tooele counties. We look forward to the doors this will open for future grant opportunities and the relationships we build along the way with community and state partners.

Under the leadership and guidance from Mayor Mendenhall and City Council, we were able to grow our Air Quality program this year. We hired a full-time Air Quality Incentives Program Coordinator, Salvador Brown, in the fall, and our Air Quality team is busy working on the back-end program logistics and planning to help residents take action to reduce the impact of air pollution in their homes, yards, and neighborhoods. In 2024, we will be launching programs to fund an electric bike program and offering incentives to switch out gas-powered yard care equipment with electric tools.

In late 2023, we were notified that we would be receiving a grant of nearly \$1 million from the Environmental Protection Agency to reimagine and restructure our Recycling Education and Outreach

efforts—a project that will begin this year. Building on the strength of our existing efforts from our Recycling Education and Engagement team, we hope to work with more community partners to engage more deeply and effectively with residents.

With the ever-present issues of climate change and systemic inequity, on top of the increasing pace of life, it is important for all of us to plan with clear focus. Addressing climate change and poor air quality will require a careful balance to drive system-wide changes while providing tools and resources to improve lives right now.

I am looking forward to 2024 and the opportunities we have in front of us. We are committed to serving—and connecting with—our Salt Lake City community.

Warmly,

**DEBBIE LYONS**  
*Sustainability Director*

# OUR MISSION

The Salt Lake City Department of Sustainability aims to preserve and improve our built and natural environments and provide residents information on sustainability issues affecting Salt Lake City. The Department develops goals and strategies to reduce pollution, slow climate change, and establish a path toward greater resiliency and vitality for all aspects of our community.

Sustainability is one of 17 departments within Salt Lake City government and supports the vision of enhancing resilience and stewardship. The expense budget for Fiscal Year 2023–2024 is \$28.2 million and operates with 65 full-time equivalent

positions. Two programs make up the Department: The Sustainability Energy & Environment Division and the Waste & Recycling Division, both funded within the Refuse Fund Class.

The Sustainability Energy & Environment Division serves to ensure that Salt Lake City Corporation departments comply with all applicable environmental regulations and guides city-wide policy and practice to minimize the environmental impact of community and city operations. Focus areas include air quality, energy efficiency & electrification, renewable energy, climate change, food equity, sustainable business engagement, communications & outreach, and environmental compliance.



# WASTE + RECYCLING

The Waste and Recycling Division is dedicated to providing convenient, accessible, and outstanding service to all those who live, work, and play in the city, while providing a safe, inclusive work environment for employees and maintaining our core values of fiscal integrity, and sustainable waste diversion.

## 2024 PRIORITIES

- » Launch the Waste Characterization Study in the spring of 2024, an 18-month study to provide data-driven recommendations to increase recycling and diversion and achieve our Zero Waste goal.
- » Begin work on a three-year EPA Recycling Education & Outreach grant, which will be foundational in evolving our educational program to take a more equity centered approach in supporting the City's long-term waste reduction goals.

## 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Crafted a successful EPA Recycling Education & Outreach grant. Our proposal was one of only 25 proposals in the country awarded, receiving nearly \$1 million to support outreach, community engagement, and operations to increase recycling rates with a particular focus on the Westside.

- » Supported Emergency Management and Public Utilities, coordinating with Salt Lake County to develop consistent and clear messaging as well as two drop-off locations for safe disposal of used sandbags after the spring runoff season.

37

alternative-fueled vehicles operated in the fleet, including 30 compressed natural gas and 7 clean diesel packers

8,127

Call 2 Haul requests fulfilled as the bulk waste program continued to be well-utilized. Other highlights include:

- » **24 tons** of electronics, mattresses, appliances, metals, and tires recycled
- » **48 tons** of bulk green waste composted
- » Removed **1,213 illegal piles** from public spaces
- » Delivered & removed approximately **2,100 seasonal green waste carts**

36%

of waste stream diverted by composting and recycling, including:

- » **8,674 tons** of recycling
- » **15,597 tons** of green waste
- » **1,312 tons** of glass recycling through curbside pickup and drop-off Dumpsters

3.98 million

containers emptied and provided weekly collection for approximately 42,000 residential customers

66,163

tons of material collected

72,511 tons

of Construction & Demolition (C&D) material diverted from the landfills by the Education & Permits (E&P) team. E&P's goal is to improve recycling rates, reduce contamination, and answer questions about our services and recycling guidelines. Other highlights include:

- » Connected with **3,003 residents**
- » Audited **584,676 carts**
- » Provided waste services at **115 special events**
- » Hosted a successful Master Recycler cohort with **19 graduates** who completed **230 hours** of volunteer service
- » Reviewed **156 C&D Waste Diversion** plans and **38** post-project reports, achieving a **58%** average diversion rate for C&D materials
- » Assisted **26 businesses** and/or multi-family properties in developing recycling



Local artist Brooke Smart's truck wrap illustration, "Planting Trees," on the side of a SLC refuse hauler.

# AIR QUALITY

## 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Proposed an electric-vehicle readiness ordinance to City Council in early 2023, which was unanimously approved in April. The EV Ready Ordinance will support the expansion of electric vehicle ownership—and thereby reduce pollution—by requiring new multi-family developments to install conduit and wiring to support the future installation of EV chargers in 20% of parking stalls.
- » Applied for and received a \$123,869 award from Rocky Mountain Power to support electric vehicle charging infrastructure on 200 South, Day Riverside Library, the Regional Athletic Complex, Rosewood Park, and Riverside Park. Additional installations are planned for Glendale Regional Park in 2024–2025.
- » Partnered with the Utah Division of Air Quality to provide 16 Salt Lake City businesses with vouchers to electrify landscaping equipment.
- » Launched two electrified transportation studies: SLC's Electrified Fleet Transition Internal Study and a Community Electrified Transportation Study.
- » Recruited and hired an Air Quality Incentives Program Coordinator for the City's new Air Quality Incentives program, which will include residential vouchers for electric landscaping equipment, electric bikes, and indoor air quality tools.
- » Supported a petition to the EPA to conduct an Environmental Justice Assessment for the Inland Port. Provided input and feedback and promoted awareness of the results.
- » Hosted EPA Region 8 Administrator KC Becker and helped organize community meetings to support greater engagement with the EPA. City buildings will, when practicable, be constructed to use all-electric, combustion-free technologies.



New EV charging station at Fairmont Park.

## 2024 PRIORITIES

- » Launch residential electric yard care equipment incentive program that includes lawnmowers, leaf blowers, trimmers, and snow blowers.
- » Launch first year of electric bike incentive program with a focus on equity, affordability, and safety.
- » Launch program to improve indoor air quality through strategic partnerships with organizations to assess needs and distribute air purifiers, filters, monitors, and related educational materials.
- » Complete electrified transportation studies and develop policy recommendations.
- » Install publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations at City parks, libraries, and select road construction projects.



A new residential electric landscaping equipment exchange is coming in 2024.

# CLIMATE + ENERGY

## 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Continued navigating significant international trade headwinds, supply chain obstacles, and other challenges facing renewable energy development to ensure continued viability of the Elektron Solar Project. This 80-megawatt solar farm is expected to come online in 2024, providing Salt Lake City Corp with nearly net-100% renewable electricity for government operations.
- » Received a \$325,000 grant from a corporate sponsor to install rooftop solar on up to five Westside businesses in partnership with Utah Clean Energy.
- » Participated in a coalition to draft the Utah Office of Energy Development's "Solar For All" grant application, requesting \$100 million to establish low-income residential and community solar programs across the state. We expect to hear back on that application in March 2024.
- » Awarded a \$1 million EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) to launch the Greater Salt Lake Clean Energy & Air Roadmap project (SL-CLEAR). This 4-year grant entails leading a regional climate planning effort that will provide an eligibility pathway for future climate pollution implementation grants

available in 2024. This plan will allow the City to identify high-impact opportunities to reduce emissions and to apply for federal funds to implement projects. In 2023, as part of this grant, we:

- Worked with University Neighborhood Partners to create a new Environmental Justice resident committee focused on the Westside to give feedback and share their ideas.
  - Held multiple stakeholder meetings with representatives from jurisdictions in Salt Lake and Tooele Counties, community-based organizations, non-profit partners, and internal Salt Lake City staff to gather input on priority climate measures to include in the Priority Climate Action Plan.
  - Recruited and hired a new grant-funded Climate Engagement Coordinator to oversee the day-to-day activities of the grant.
- » Partnered with FUSE Corps to hire a 1-year Executive Fellow who is dedicated to studying and making recommendations on how the City can support a workforce to achieve our climate goals and provide high-road, green jobs for residents.

- » Continued a fifth year of partnership with the Building Electrification Institute to develop a workforce approach for efficient heat pump technology, including a practitioner engagement effort to identify existing workforce gaps and needs.
- » Continued to support Utah Renewable Communities (URC), also known as the Community Renewable Energy Agency, which represents a coalition of cities, counties, and other municipalities working to launch a default net-100% renewable electricity option for customers of Rocky Mountain Power in their respective communities.
  - This included communication efforts such as amplifying the URC rebrand and working with a consultant who conducted market research and intercept surveys to recommend messaging and visual strategies that we can use once the program is approved and being offered.
  - Additionally, the Department supported the URC chair and board by working with Rocky Mountain Power to complete portions of the application, including the utility agreement (approved by 17 communities so far), development of the required Plan for Low-Income Assistance (energy affordability plan), and approving the model participation ordinance. The program application is now expected to be submitted by Rocky Mountain Power in the first half of 2024.
- » Supported partner Utah Clean Energy's Equitable Electrification Collaborative to identify barriers and next steps to enable better access to electrification solutions for all Salt Lake residents.



Solar panels on the Sorenson MultiCultural Center.

# CLIMATE + ENERGY

## 2024 PRIORITIES

- » If awarded, launch grant-funded Solar For All pilot program in partnership with SLC Housing Stability Division and the State Office of Energy Development to install rooftop solar on up to 25 income-eligible homes participating in the City's home repair and rehab programs.
- » Establish an Energy Equity Fund that is funded by Renewable Energy Certificates generated by rooftop solar systems on municipal buildings to support community-based air quality, energy equity, and microgrant projects.
- » Submit one or more grant applications, requesting between \$20 to \$100 million from the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants competition to implement climate pollution reduction measures identified in the Priority Climate Action Plan.
- » Establish an internal process that will leverage direct pay tax incentive payments the City is eligible to receive under the Inflation Reduction Act to seed an internal revolving loan fund for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and electrified fleet.
- » Support the successful application of the Utah Renewables Communities program to state regulators. Once approved, lead



*Southwest Energy Efficiency Project Executive Director Elise Jones giving an award to SLCgreen Director Debbie Lyons, along with Salt Lake Council Members Dan Dugan and Alejandro Puy, and Kevin Emerson from Utah Clean Energy.*

program strategy through ordinance adoption, communications and outreach, and renewable energy procurement.

- » Celebrate the opening of the 80 MW Elektron solar project.



*Solar panels on the Sorenson MultiCultural Center.*

# CLIMATE RESILIENCY

## 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Supported the work of the Sustainable Infrastructure Committee towards successful adoption of the Sustainable Infrastructure Policy, which sets criteria for third-party certification for major capital projects funded by the City to conserve resources and support environmental justice.
- » Participated in one funding round as an observer city for the 4 Corners Carbon Coalition, which seeks to mobilize municipal support for cutting-edge carbon dioxide removal projects in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. The second round on “liability biomass” will be underway in early 2024.
- » Worked with a coalition of researchers and community partners to plan and execute a one-day citizen science heat mapping campaign to record Salt Lake



*SLCgreen interns volunteering for the heat mapping campaign in July.*

City's temperatures throughout the city on one of the hottest days of the year. Continued to work with the partners on community education to discuss the results, the impact of heat on people and neighborhoods, and what the City is doing to address it.

- » Hosted Western Adaptation Alliance member cities and partnering organizations from across the Intermountain West and Southwest

to collaborate on equitable climate resilience efforts in Salt Lake City in May. Over 60 attendees from 17 jurisdictions in seven Western states attended. Representatives from community-based organizations to learn about climate resilience, workforce development, and environmental justice-related grant opportunities from federal agency speakers (EPA, FEMA, Department of Labor and Department of Energy).

# COMMUNICATIONS + OUTREACH

## 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Ran a successful summer outreach program with five summer interns who attended over 20 community events, supported digital communications, and contributed important research to the department.
- » Maintained a robust online outreach presence through SLCgreen blog, email newsletter, and social media channels.
- » Hosted e2 Sustainable Business Program event with the Mayor in April, recognizing e2 program members and other local businesses that have made exemplary efforts towards energy efficiency and other sustainable best practices in their operations.
- » Guided the re-establishment of the Salt Lake City Green Drinks chapter and hosted the 8th annual e2 Green Drinks event for members and the community in October.

## 2024 PRIORITIES

- » Develop a strategy for communicating and assisting residents with available federal, state, and local programs that are designed to save energy costs and reduce pollution.
- » Using EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant funding:
  - Continue supporting the Environmental Justice Resident Committee in partnership with University Neighborhood Partners to center resident input and ideas in the City's pollution-reduction planning processes and support more federal funding, reaching all areas of our community to reduce pollution, improve quality of life, and provide high-quality green jobs for more people.
  - Engage the wider community of stakeholders in our metropolitan area to identify preferred strategies that will achieve significant emission reductions. Collaborate with community partners to pursue additional grant funding to implement solutions identified.

# FOOD EQUITY

## 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Completed the second cohort of the Resident Food Equity Advisors Program, a resident leadership and engagement initiative focused on creating an equitable community food system. The cohort divided into three working groups focused on Dignified Food Choices, Accessible & Inclusive Healthy Food Education Opportunities, and Expanding Opportunities to Grow Food in the City. They discussed and refined ideas in those categories to present to the Mayor's Office.
- » Undertook the Community Food Assessment, meeting with representatives from 11 City department to gather information on existing relationships and alignment with food system work and city priorities.
- » Launched the first Food Equity Microgrant Program to support resident- and community-led projects to advance food justice. Distributed over \$35,000 to individuals and community groups through 50+ grants. Celebrated grant recipients at an event in the summer.



*Priya Chidambaram at the Vanavil Community Garden she founded in the Ballpark neighborhood, which was a Food Equity Microgrant recipient.*

## 2024 PRIORITIES

- » Grow the Food Equity Microgrant Program to fund community- and resident-led projects, programs, and direct actions that facilitate food equity and access.
- » Pass a Food Equity Joint Resolution, formally recognizing food equity as a priority for the City and integral to the ability of residents to thrive.
- » Seek funding to develop and adopt a Food Equity Action General Plan, building on data and recommendations gathered for the Community Food Assessment and other relevant city plans and documents such as Thriving In Place.
- » Convene stakeholder groups, including internal city department representatives, resident advisors, and the Food Policy Council, to advance initiatives to increase food equity.
- » In partnership with the Public Lands Department, identify potential grants and propose a budget to create a Citywide Urban Agriculture Plan.
- » Support Public Lands Department in developing a plan to activate 2200 West "7" property for agriculture and wood reutilization.



*Food Equity Microgrant recipients New American Goat Club (top) and Wasatch Community Gardens/Artes de Mexico en Utah (bottom).*



# ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

## 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- » Supported the completion of regulatory and environmental compliance processes for a successful ribbon cutting of The Other Side Village. Developed an environmental conditions website to provide transparency for the public.
- » Identified remedial approach and conduct remediation at Glendale Urban Farm and Cannon Greens Community Garden to allow for community garden and farm development.
- » Developed an SOP to help staff and garden organizers navigate environmental requirements related to community garden development.
- » Supported the Mayor's Office and stakeholder groups to identify priorities

and propose a pathway for completing assessments of health, air quality, and community impacts of the Inland Port. Served on the Westside Enrichment Grants review committee.

- » Supported Public Lands to establish low-cost/low-risk methods for relocation of soil excavated from the Salt Lake City Cemetery.

## 2024 PRIORITIES

- » Continue supporting other city departments on high-priority projects involving environmental compliance or remediation, including The Other Side Village, Fleet Block, community gardens, and other development opportunities.




*A tiny home model at the groundbreaking of the Tiny Home Village.*



## SUSTAINABILITY DEPARTMENT

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