

City of Boulder Utilities



Learn more at:
boulderwater.net



BARKER RESERVOIR

STATE OF THE UTILITY

The Utilities Department meets the needs of our community through the safe and effective delivery of water and transmission of wastewater and flood and stormwater. The city's three water utilities are funded by user rates, hydroelectric sales, biogas sales, occasional federal or state grants and other fees. The utility funds allow the city to address many needs including aging infrastructure which is our highest priority.

In 2022, the City of Boulder started several key projects critical to improving Boulder's infrastructure systems, including the 63rd Street Water Treatment Plant Campus Electrical and High Service Pump Station Project and the Albion Dam Rehabilitation Project. Additionally, the Utilities team completed updates to the [Comprehensive Flood and Stormwater Master Plan](#) and the [Drought Plan](#).

2023 priorities include a continued focus on infrastructure repair and replacement along with several significant projects in wastewater - the Main Sewer Interceptor Project and a treatment project for Phosphorus removal - and upgrades at the Betasso Water Treatment Facility.

What makes up the utility?

The city's Utilities Department is comprised of three separate utilities - **Water, Wastewater** and the **Stormwater & Flood Management Utility**.



WATER UTILITY

Water utility fees fund 14 reservoirs, 467 miles of water delivery and distribution pipelines, eight hydroelectric plants and Boulder's two water treatment plants which produce roughly 5,300 million gallons of clean drinking water each year. In addition to providing clean drinking water, the water utility supports critical fire protection and environmental stream flows within the city.



WASTEWATER UTILITY

Wastewater treatment is essential to public health and environmental protection. Wastewater utility fees support operation of 381 miles of sewer pipes some of which are over 60 years old, and treatment of wastewater at the city's Water Resource Recovery Facility.

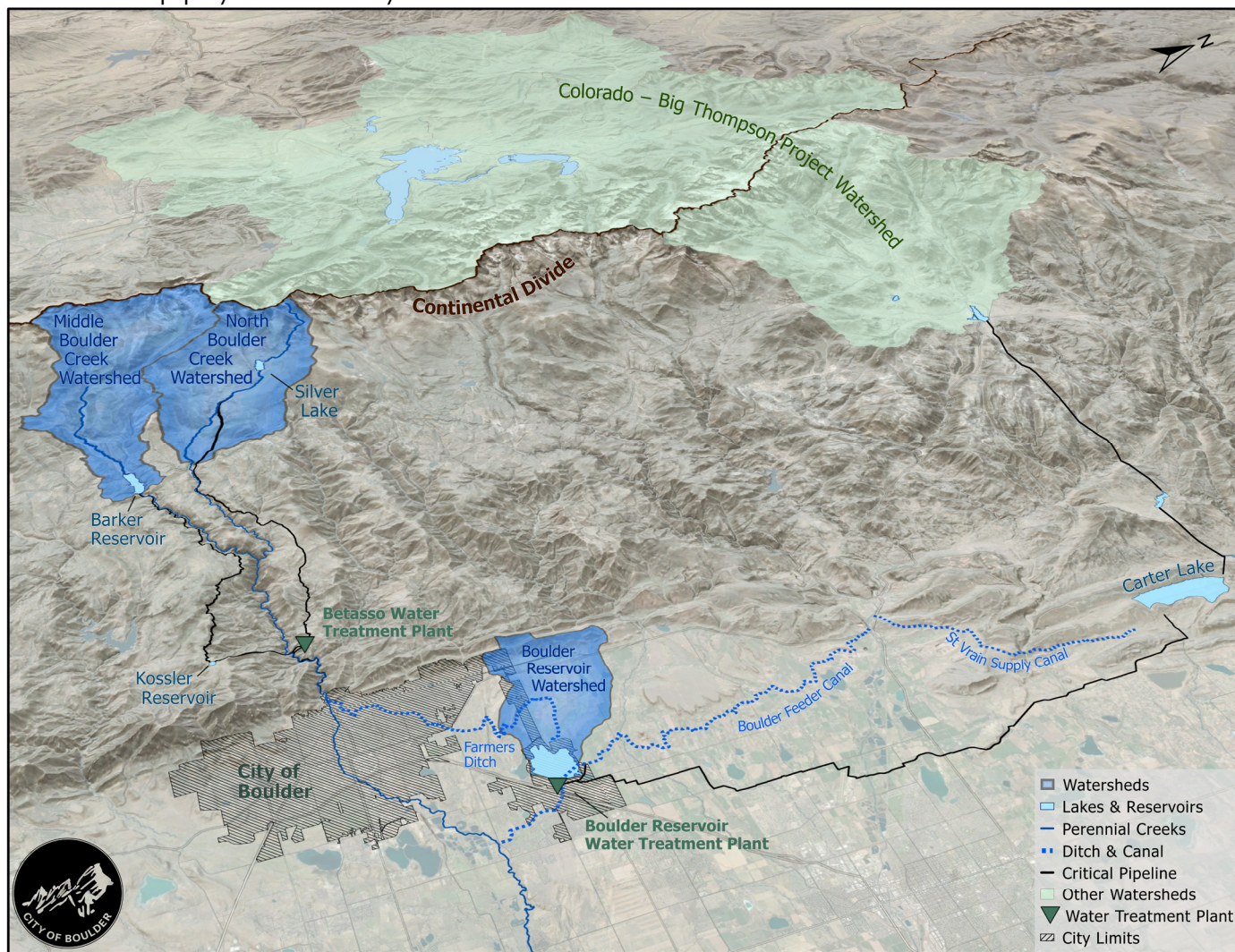


STORMWATER &
FLOOD MANAGEMENT
UTILITY

The City of Boulder is home to 16 major drainageways that span 37 miles. The city is the number one community at risk of flash flooding in the state. The storm and flood utility consists of 192 miles of pipes, 4,800 catch basins and 1,037 detention ponds.

Where does Boulder's water come from?

The City of Boulder sits at the base of the Rocky Mountain foothills and our water supply is fed by snow melt.



Boulder Creek Watershed

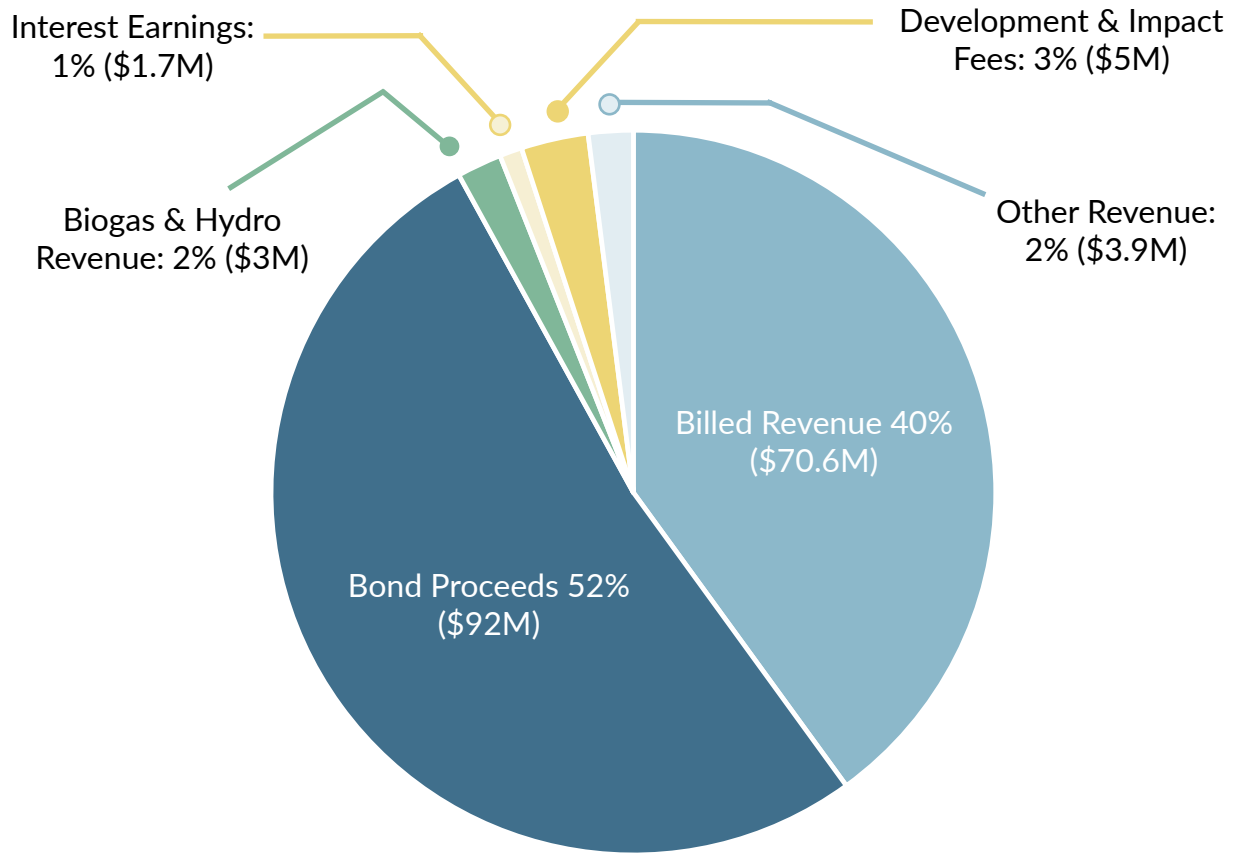
Melting snow pack during the spring and summer months is captured in reservoirs located in North Boulder Creek and Middle Boulder Creek. Boulder receives approximately two-thirds of its water supply from sources originating in the Boulder Creek watershed on an annual basis and varies from year-to-year depending on the level of snow pack in the surrounding mountains. Water collected and stored in the Boulder Creek watershed is treated at the Betasso Water Treatment Plant before entering Boulder's water distribution system.

Northern Water

Northern Water operates the Colorado-Big Thompson (CBT) and Windy Gap Projects. These two projects divert water from the upper Colorado River on the western slope and deliver it through a series of tunnels, canals, reservoirs and pipelines to the Boulder Reservoir Water Treatment Plant. Water in the Boulder Reservoir, most of which comes from the CBT and Windy Gap Projects via Carter Lake, can also be treated at the Boulder Reservoir Water Treatment Plant (63rd St. WTP).

2022 Source of Funds

The three utilities in the city are funded through various sources.



2022 Funding Sources

The majority of the Utilities Department's revenues come from rates and fees paid by customers.

Fee vs. Tax What's the Difference?

Fee: is a levy collected to provide a service that benefits the people from which the money is collected.

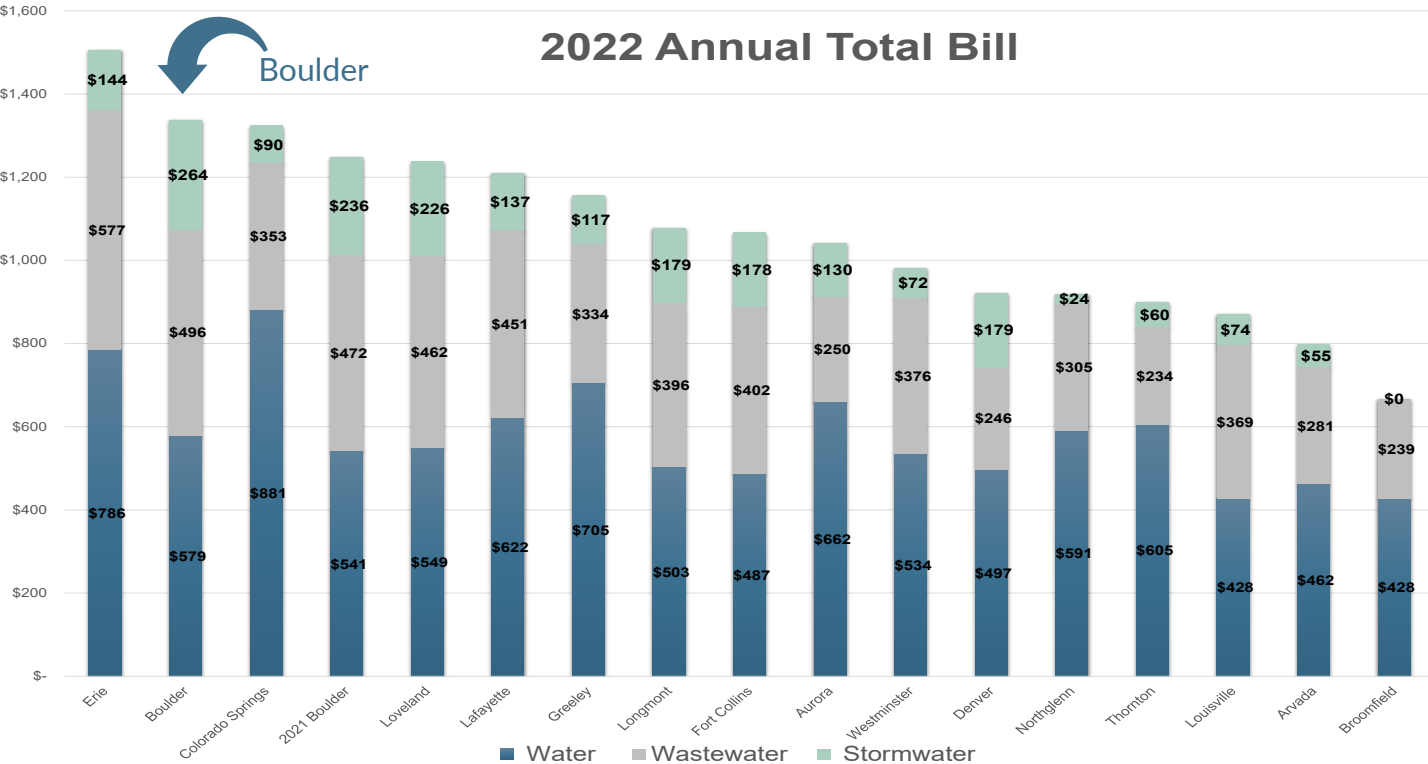
Tax: is a levy collected for general government services.

Municipal Bonds: The city utilizes municipal bonds to finance large infrastructure improvement projects. In May 2022, the city maintained a bond rating from the Standards & Poor's rating agency of AAA. This is the highest rating for municipal bonds. The strong rating provides a third-party perspective that indicates the utilities are managed effectively.



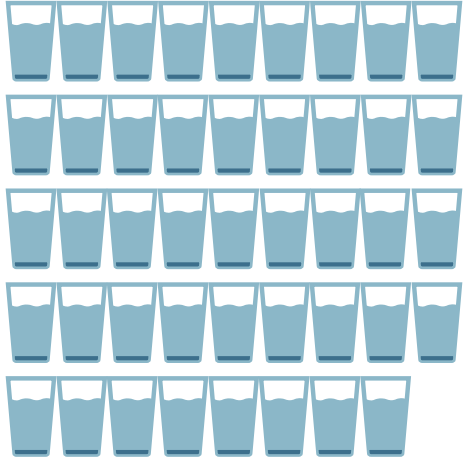
How does Boulder compare?

The city's average total annual water bill as compared to other Front Range communities.



Why do I pay a service charge even if I don't use any water?

Monthly service charges are billed so the utility has predictable income to operate and maintain the system even in times of low consumption, such as a drought. Service charges cover fixed costs that do not vary based on how much water is treated and distributed.



44 8-ounce glasses of Boulder's water costs a penny

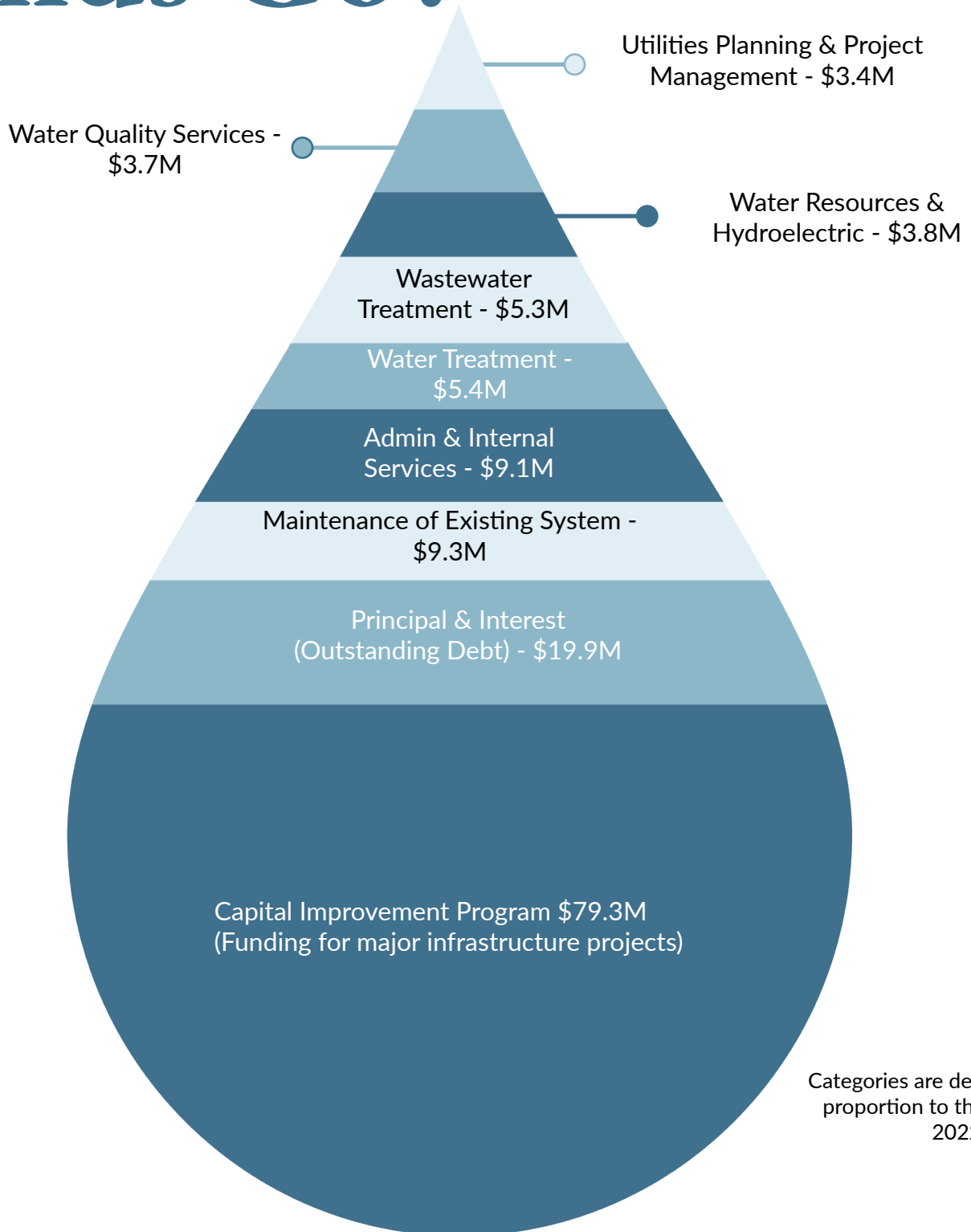
Wastewater Fee: Residential customers are billed based on average winter use from December through March, or actual use, whichever is less. The wastewater service charge is set at a fixed monthly rate based on your meter size.

Stormwater Fee: Customers inside city limits pay a stormwater & flood management fixed service fee. Single-family residential customers pay a fee based on their lot size. All other customer's fees are individually calculated based on the impervious (driveways, parking lots, etc.) square footage of their lot.

Need assistance with your bill?

Many organizations are directly helping our community by offering assistance to community members experiencing financial challenges. Visit bit.ly/UtilityBillAssistance to learn what support options are available or to offer a donation.

Where Utilities Funds Go?



Categories are depicted in proportion to the overall 2022 budget

Revenue from utility bills funds operations of the city's multi-billion dollar infrastructure system, including projects to maintain and improve the quality of life for our community members. Asset maintenance is critical for delivering safe and reliable services and is less costly than replacement. Utilities maintains water storage, water transmission and distribution, wastewater collection, water and wastewater treatment, metering, stormwater, flood and greenways infrastructure.

City Infrastructure

Like many Front Range communities, much of Boulder’s utilities infrastructure is nearing or exceeding the end of its expected lifespan in both the water and wastewater systems. Critical investments are needed to ensure the system remains resilient for generations to come.

2023 Rate Increases

Water
6%



Wastewater
5%



Stormwater & Flood
12%



The city approved an increase in each of the three utilities. The total combined increase for 2023 is **\$7.60/month** for the average single-family residential bill.

Current Pace of Improvements

Reinvestment at both of the city’s water treatment facilities is the current priority as it focuses on addressing aging infrastructure and enhancing reliability within the treated water system. In addition, 2023 marks the seventh year of the 12-year rehabilitation project of the Barker Gravity Pipeline which delivers water from Barker Reservoir to the Betasso Water Treatment Facility.



The city is seven years into a 20-year sanitary sewer lining project and is more than 50% complete as of 2022. In addition, the city is addressing capacity with the main sewer pipe and has completed two of five major sewer pipe projects.

In Sept. 2022, the city adopted its updated Comprehensive Flood and Stormwater Master Plan. The plan identified the need to increase the pace with which stormwater and flood management projects are implemented and recommended a 35-year time frame to complete the current backlog of projects.



Identified Project Needs

The department has identified numerous infrastructure needs throughout the three utilities.



WATER

\$450+ M

A recent study estimated that over the next 25 years the U.S. must invest more than \$1 trillion in underground water infrastructure. Boulder recently identified over 50 infrastructure projects to address aging infrastructure.

Other projects help to maintain water system service goals, resolve operational challenges and increase water supply resilience during planned and unplanned outages.



WASTEWATER

\$370+ M

In 2020, the city identified a backlog of \$215 million for the collection system (in today's dollars that number jumps to \$305 million) and another \$65 million for upgrades to the city's Water Resource Recovery Facility.



STORM & FLOOD

\$350+ M

Within the pages of the various Drainageway Master Plans completed for each creek, the city has identified over \$350 million in flood and storm improvements. The 2022 update to the Comprehensive Flood and Stormwater master plan will guide the prioritization of projects as part of the city's annual Capital Improvement Program budget process.

GET INVOLVED: The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a six-year budget planning process and the Water Resources Advisory Board (WRAB) makes a recommendation to city council each summer for projects to include in the CIP. You can share your feedback on projects during any of the monthly WRAB meetings.

Upcoming Capital Projects



63rd Water Treatment Facility

Improvements at the 63rd Water Treatment Facility including upgrades to the campus electrical system, replacement of aging equipment and adding emergency safeguards.



Albion Dam

The Albion Dam Rehabilitation Project was started in the summer of 2022 and is forecast to be completed over the next three years as part of the Source Water Capital Improvement Program. This project will fortify the dam structure as well as increase the storage capacity.

Main Sanitary Sewer Improvement Project (MSI)

Improvement to the city's main sanitary sewer pipeline which carries 80% of the city's wastewater collection to the Water Resource Recovery Facility. The MSI Project is vital to ensure the resilience of the system especially during significant rain events.



Fourmile Canyon Creek at 19th Flood Mitigation

The project on Fourmile Canyon Creek at 19th Street will create a new underpass and is intended to improve safety and accessibility to Crest View Elementary School as well as provide additional flood capacity under 19th Street. Construction is anticipated to begin in the second half of 2023.



Learn more about Boulder's utilities



Online

Utilities Homepage

boulderwater.net

Water Conservation Program

bouldersaveswater.net

Flood Preparedness

boulderfloodinfo.net



WRAB

The Water Resources Advisory Board meets monthly and is responsible for making recommendations to City Council on the capital improvement program and significant policy issues of the utilities.



Call

For questions or comments about your water bill call: 303.441.3260

For general questions about utilities call: 303.441.3200



Email

For questions or comments about the city's utilities go to: InquireBoulder.com > select "General Information" in the topics list > select "Contact Public Works"

View the Utility Billing Customer Quick Guide



English



Spanish

www.boulderwater.net

