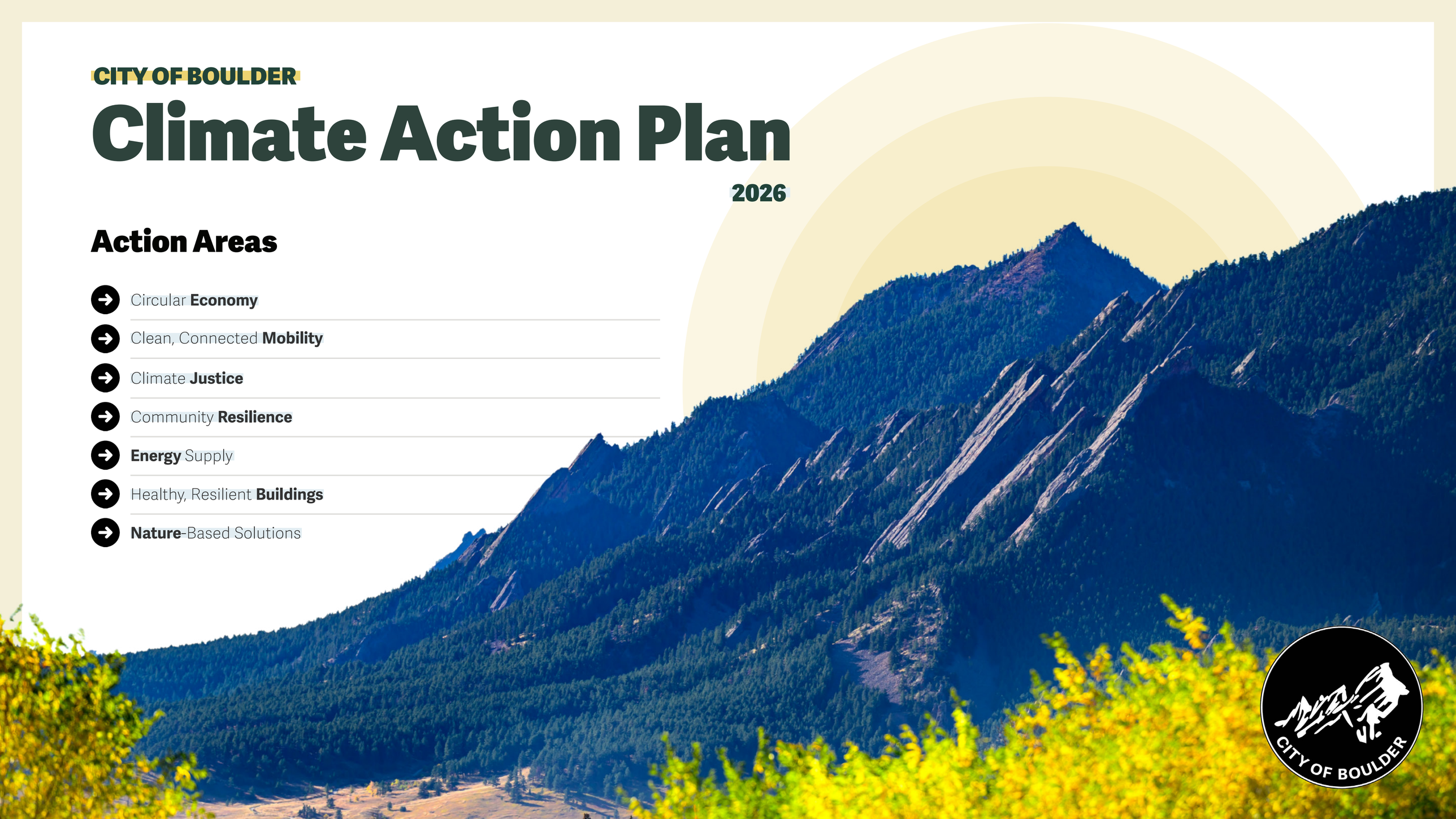
CITY OF BOULDER

Climate Action Plan

2026

Action Areas

- Circular **Economy**
- Clean, Connected **Mobility**
- Climate **Justice**
- Community **Resilience**
- **Energy** Supply
- Healthy, Resilient **Buildings**
- **Nature**-Based Solutions



A Note from the Mayor and City Manager

Dear neighbors,

Boulder has long been a community shaped by its relationship with the natural world. The Flatirons that frame our skyline, the open spaces that connect our neighborhoods and the seasons we experience together remind us daily what is at stake as our climate changes.

Today, those changes are no longer distant projections. We see them in longer wildfire seasons, smoke-filled summer days, extreme heat and the growing need to prepare for uncertainty. Climate change is affecting how we live, how we move through our city and how we care for one another. It is also challenging us to imagine what kind of community we want to be in the decades ahead.

At the same time, this moment holds real opportunity. The choices we make now can shape a future that is not only lower in emissions, but healthier, more affordable and more connected. Climate action can mean homes that are more comfortable and less costly to run, transportation options that are safe and convenient and more resilient neighborhoods. It is a chance to align our values with how we live every day. This is not only about avoiding what we stand to lose, but about building what we want to become.

With this plan, we are meeting the moment, building on decades of local leadership while recognizing that the work ahead requires something different from the past. Progress will not come from any single program or technology. It will come from shared effort, from community members, businesses, institutions and partners working together to reshape the systems that influence our daily lives.

Boulder's approach centers both climate action and community well-being. Reducing emissions and building resilience are inseparable goals. Cleaner energy, connected neighborhoods and stronger local systems can lower climate pollution while improving health, affordability and quality of life.

This plan does not present a finish line. It marks a transition, from planning, toward sustained implementation, learning and collaboration. The path forward will evolve as technology advances, partnerships deepen and community priorities continue to guide our work, recognizing that climate impacts are not experienced equally and that lasting solutions must be shaped by those most affected.

Throughout this report, you will see the voices of community members whose leadership already reflects Boulder's climate future. Their stories remind us that climate action is not abstract. It is happening in classrooms and congregations, on bike paths and in neighborhoods, through everyday choices and collective care.

The work ahead is ambitious, and it must be. But Boulder has never approached challenges alone. Our strength has always come from a willingness to work together, to innovate and to act with purpose.

Together, we can build a Boulder that is healthier, more resilient and prepared for the future, a community that responds to climate change not only with urgency, but with creativity, compassion and shared responsibility. Because the future is something we build together, through small decisions, shared efforts and a continued willingness to care.

Sincerely,



Aaron Brockett
Mayor



Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde
City Manager

Land Acknowledgment

The City of Boulder acknowledges the city is on the ancestral homelands and unceded territory of Indigenous Peoples who have traversed, lived in and stewarded lands in the Boulder Valley since time immemorial.

Those Indigenous Nations include the: Di De'i (Apache), Hinono'eiteen (Arapaho), Tsétsėhéstâhese (Cheyenne), Nʉmʉnʉʉ (Comanche), Caiugu (Kiowa), Čariks i Čariks (Pawnee), Sosonih (Shoshone), Oc'eti S'akowin (Sioux) and Núuchiu (Ute).*

We honor and respect the people of these Nations and their ancestors. We also recognize that Indigenous knowledge, oral histories, and languages handed down through generations have shaped profound cultural and spiritual connections with Boulder-area lands and ecosystems — connections that are sustained and celebrated to this day.

The City of Boulder recognizes that those now living and working on these ancestral lands have a responsibility to acknowledge and address the past. Read the full City of Boulder staff land acknowledgment.

**Names are based on discussions with Tribal Nation Representatives from June 2021 through May 2023.*

Other Acknowledgments

Boulder City Council
Taishya Adams, Matt Benjamin, Aaron Brockett (Mayor), Rob Kaplan, Tina Marquis, Ryan Schuchard, Nicole Speer, Mark Wallach and Tara Winer (Mayor Pro Tem)

City Departments & Programs
Several city departments and programs provided subject matter expertise, reviewed content and contributed to strategies and actions reflected in this plan, including: Climate Initiatives, City Manager's Office, Community Connectors-in-Residence, Community Vitality (now housed in the City Manager's Office), Facilities & Fleet, Housing & Human Services, Open Space & Mountain Parks, Parks & Recreation, Transportation & Mobility, Utilities and Youth Opportunities Advisory Board

Community Partners & Organizations
Local organizations and partners contributed expertise, implementation support and community connections that informed this plan: Classrooms for Climate Action, Climate Justice Collaborative, Climate Justice Hive, FLOWS (Foundations for Leaders Organizing for Water and Sustainability), Growing Gardens, Growing Up Boulder, Harvest of All First Nations, Once & Future Green and Roots to Sol

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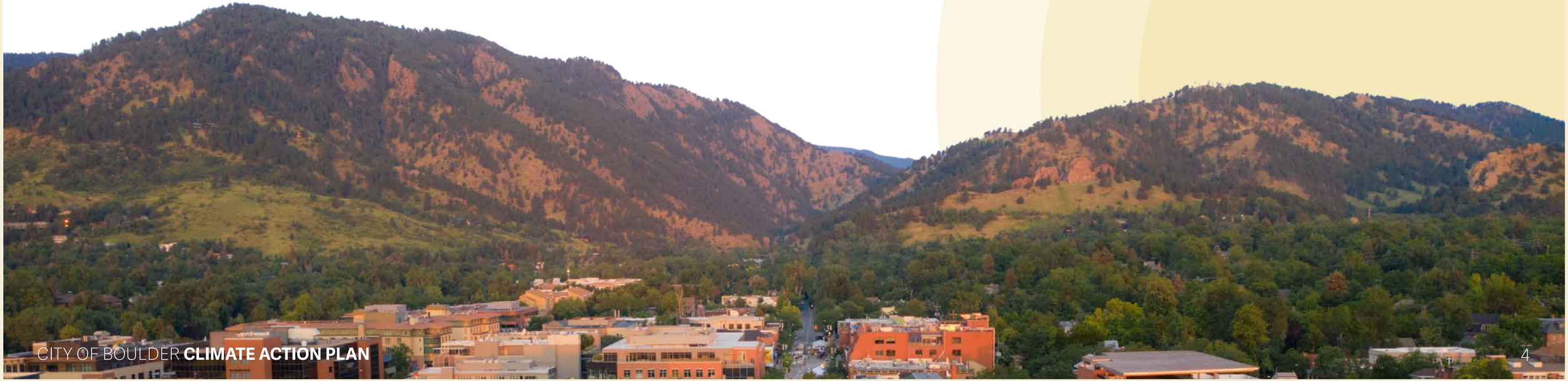
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Community members take part in a city-sponsored youth nature celebration.

Part I

This Plan at a Glance

Overview

This Climate Action Plan outlines how we aim to reduce emissions, strengthen infrastructure resilience and invest in communities most affected by climate change.

It connects long-term goals with practical strategies already in motion across the city.

We are already seeing more extreme heat, longer droughts, greater fire risk and rising energy burdens, especially for community members with the fewest resources.

These impacts are not future threats. They are here.

We are responding with clear targets, coordinated action and a focus on long-term public benefit.

Boulder's last Climate Action Plan was updated in 2021. This 2026 version builds upon the latest climate science, brings new tools and represents an evolution in a citywide approach that integrates climate goals across buildings, transportation, energy, land use and ecosystems.

It is organized into seven *Action Areas*, each with its own major strategies called *Big Moves*, that guide where we invest and why.

This plan is also driven by *OneBoulder*: an approach that makes climate action part of every city decision from infrastructure investments to community services. Much of this work is already underway; the aim is for this plan to keep future initiatives focused, measurable and ready for what's next.



Key Goals

Climate Mitigation



Reduce climate pollution from local activities and consumption.

Climate Equity

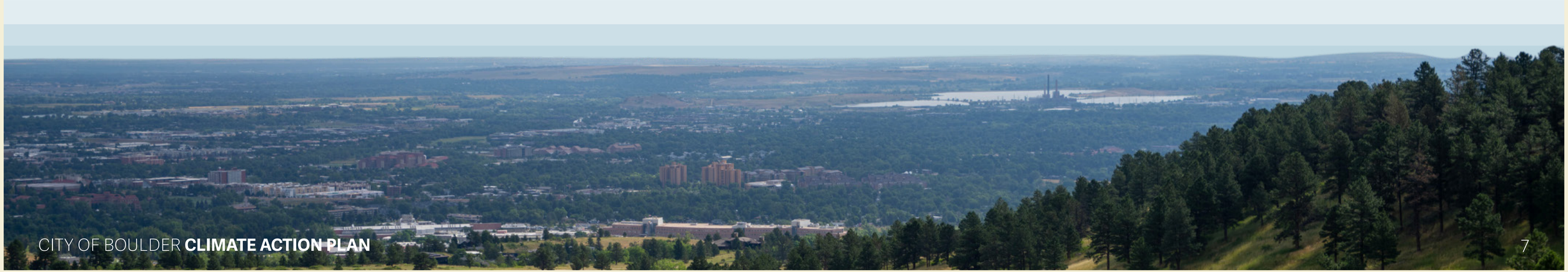


Ensure that the benefits and burdens of climate action are shared equitably and support a just transition that empowers those most affected.

Climate Resilience



Strengthen the community's ability to prepare for, withstand and recover from climate impacts.



Action Areas

Circular Economy
Reduce consumption, support reuse and repair, and divert waste and organics from landfills

Clean, Connected Mobility
Expand electric vehicle adoption and improve access to low-impact ways of getting around, including biking, transit and shared options

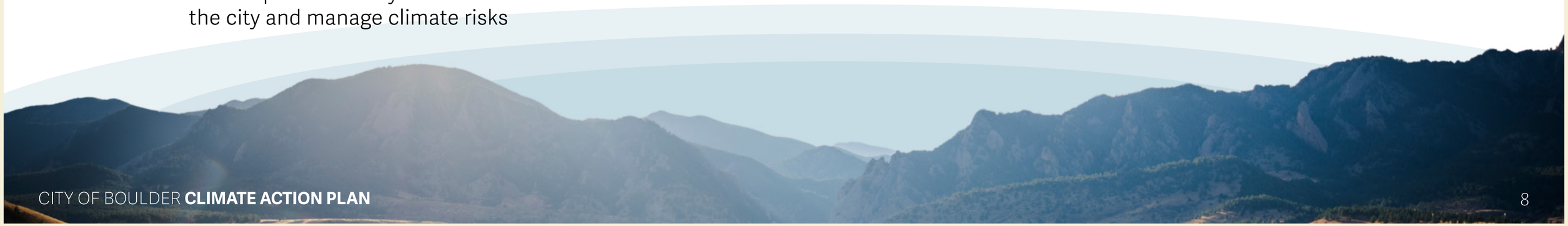
Climate Equity and Justice
Invest directly in the communities most affected by climate change and reduce energy burden

Community Resilience
Prepare our community for climate risks and impacts

Energy Supply
Clean the grid and improve affordability through local solar, battery storage and state-level utility reform

Healthy, Resilient Buildings
Support the transition from fossil fuels to cleaner, efficient electric systems, while improving indoor and outdoor air quality and stabilizing utility costs

Nature-Based Solutions
Support our urban forests, landscapes and ecosystems to cool the city and manage climate risks



Quick Facts

One of the first US cities to **mandate sustainable deconstruction for all residential and commercial structures**, regardless of building size, while requiring a minimum **75% diversion** of building materials from landfills.



The city has led by example by diverting 94% of materials during deconstruction of the Alpine Balsam site.

Electric vehicles make up **12%** of Boulder's registered cars as of 2025. This is **six times more than the national average.**



12%

Adopted in 2010, SmartRegs made Boulder the **first U.S. city to mandate that all rental properties meet a minimum energy efficiency score** to maintain a rental license.

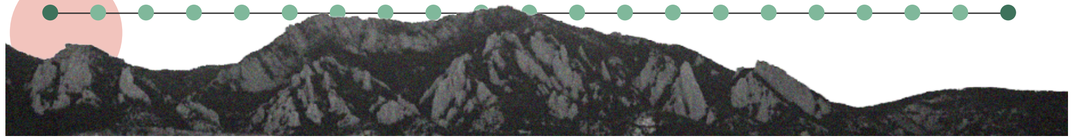


In 2023, Boulder **surpassed its 2030 goal** for local renewable energy generation, reaching 105 megawatts **seven years ahead of schedule.**

105 MW

2006
Boulder passed the nation's first local climate tax.

2026

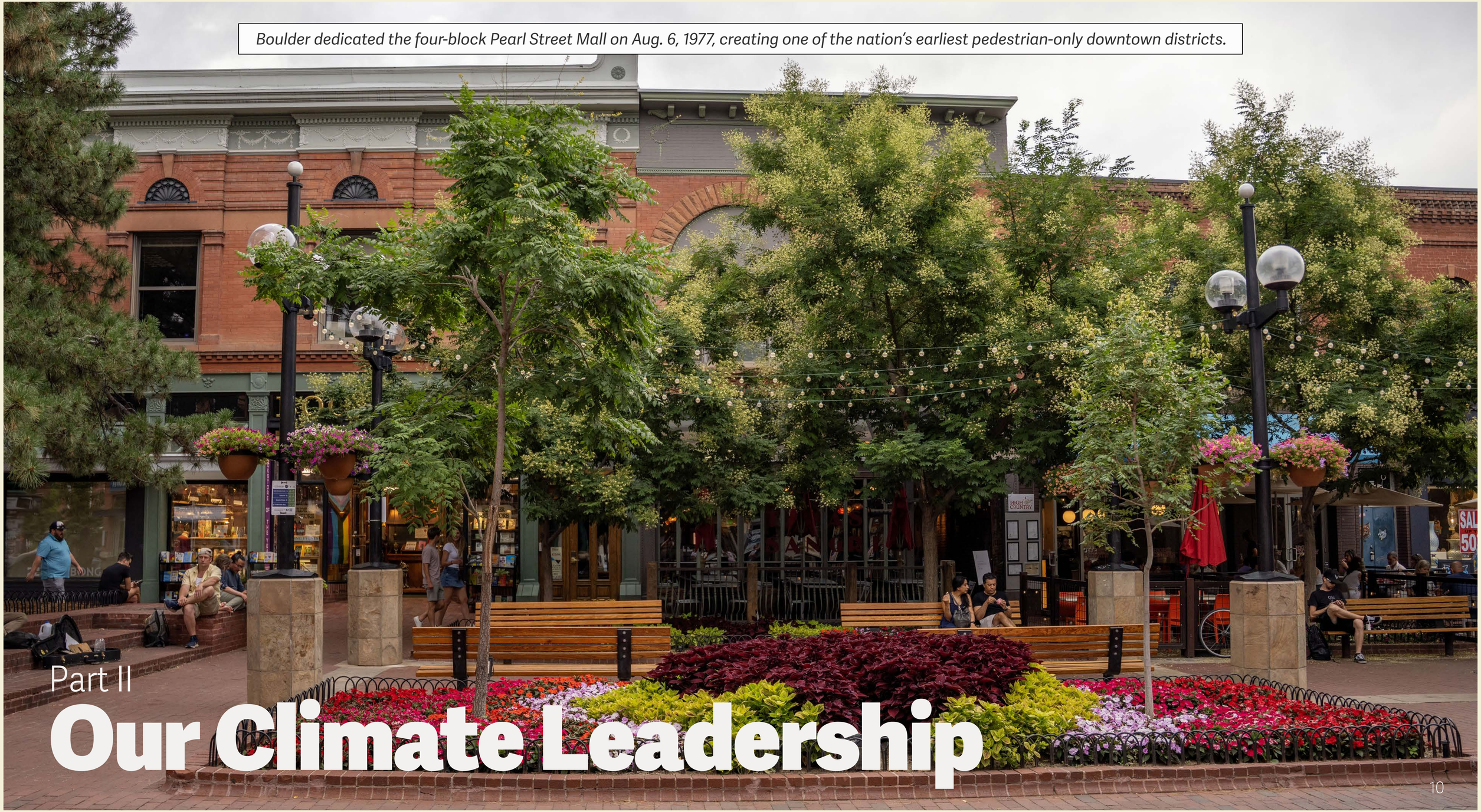




Boulder is suing ExxonMobil and Suncor, two of the world's largest oil and gas companies, to hold them accountable for the local costs of climate change.

Setting an aggressive new standard for building performance, Boulder's 2024 energy code update mandates that **all new residential and commercial projects be fully electrified**.





Boulder dedicated the four-block Pearl Street Mall on Aug. 6, 1977, creating one of the nation's earliest pedestrian-only downtown districts.

Part II

Our Climate Leadership

A History of Climate Action

Boulder has been a national and global leader in climate action for decades.

Boulder voters passed the country's first local climate tax in 1967 and the city has taken some of the world's largest polluters to court, all while protecting open space, cutting energy waste and setting ambitious goals to reduce climate pollution.

Even when national leadership has slowed, Boulder has kept moving.

Today, the city's climate action goes beyond cutting pollution.

These days, the work includes building resilience, advancing climate justice and restoring ecosystems through regenerative land management. This means strengthening the people and places most affected by climate change and unlocking their power as part of the solution.

Our work reflects the community's core values: local leadership, bold innovation and a commitment to protecting what matters.



Mayor Suzanne Jones announces the city's climate accountability lawsuit against Exxon Mobil and Suncor (2017).



Community members celebrate the opening of a bikeway (1970).



An Eco-Cycle volunteer sorts recyclables. Boulder was one of the first cities in the nation to offer curbside recycling (1977).

Timeline of Boulder's Climate Milestones

1967 — First Open Space Tax in the Nation
Boulder voters approved the nation's first municipal tax to purchase and preserve open space.

1976 — Residential Recycling Program Launches
Boulder became one of the first 20 cities in the nation to offer curbside recycling service to residents.

1984 — Tree City USA Recognition Begins
Recognition from the National Arbor Day Foundation for excellence in urban forest management.

1987 — Boulder Creek Path Opens
The city's first greenway expanded access to public spaces.

1994 — Trash Tax Approved
Voters pass a trash tax on residential and commercial waste.

2002 — Kyoto Goals Adopted
City adopts Kyoto Protocol goals, despite a lack of federal commitment.

2005 — First CAP Released
City publishes its first Climate Action Plan.

2006 — First CAP Tax Passed
Voters passed the nation's first Climate Action Plan tax on electricity use to reduce emissions.

2007 — First GHG Inventory Published
City releases its first greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

2010 — Utility Municipalization Pursuit Begins
The city began pursuing a localized electric utility after the Xcel franchise expired.

2015 — Universal Zero Waste Ordinance Adopted
Requires recycling and composting services for buildings citywide.

2016 — Resilience Strategy Released
Boulder publishes its citywide resilience strategy to address climate risks and strengthen community preparedness.

2017 — Boulder Sues Big Oil for Climate Damages
The city joined a lawsuit against ExxonMobil and Suncor, the first case of its kind brought by local governments in a non-coastal state.

2017 — Just Transition Added to CAP
The city updated its Climate Action Plan, introducing Just Transition principles.

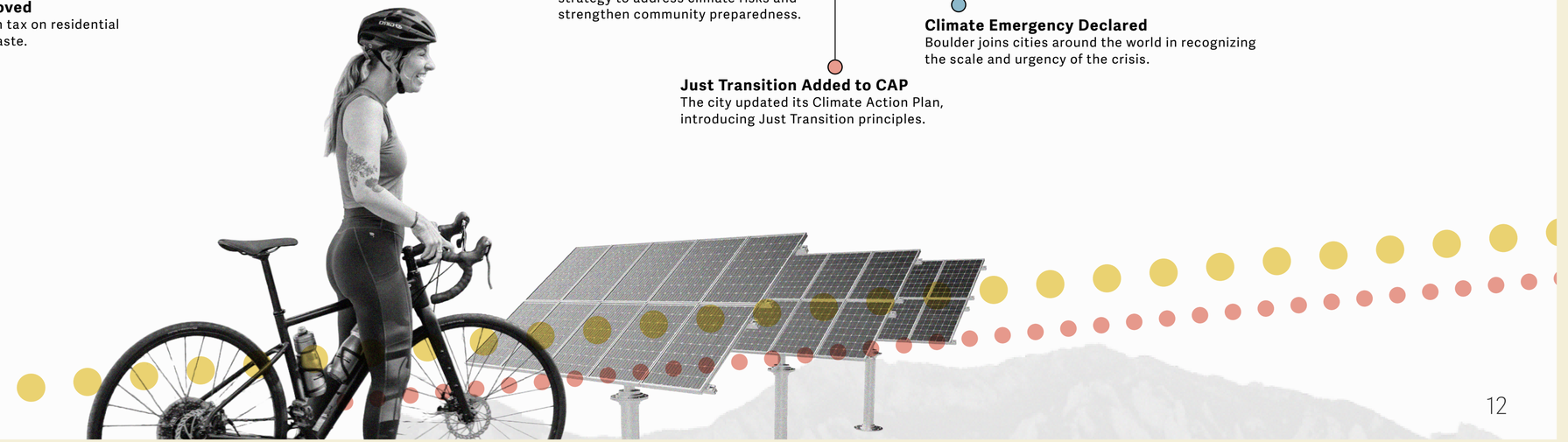
2019 — Climate Emergency Declared
Boulder joins cities around the world in recognizing the scale and urgency of the crisis.

2021 — CAP Updated for Systems Change
Climate Action Plan updated with new systems-change, equity, and resilience frameworks.

2021 — Pollution Targets Strengthened
The city committed to becoming a carbon neutral city by 2035 and carbon positive by 2040.

2023 — First Consumption-Based Inventory
The city publishes its first consumption-based emissions inventory.

- Policy and Civic Action
- Planning and Systems Change
- Targets and Tracking
- Impact and Recognition





Boulder Fire-Rescue staff monitor a prescribed burn.

Part III

Climate Change in Boulder

The Planet is Heating Up

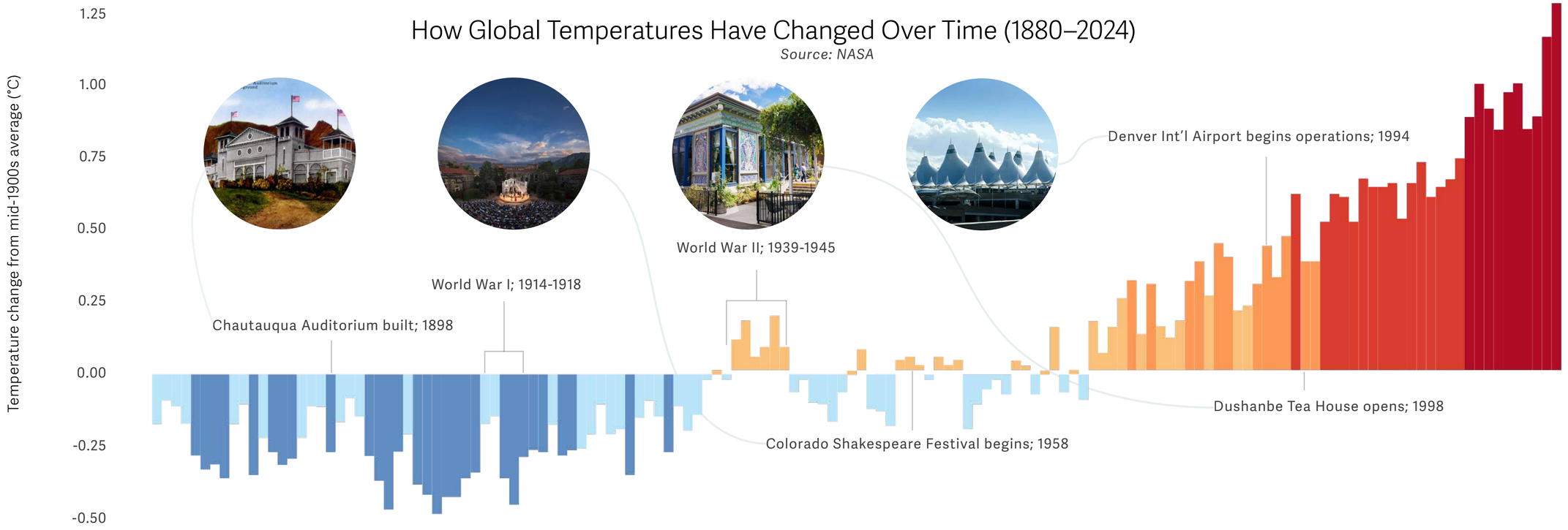
Global temperatures have already **risen more than 2.2°F since the 1800s.**

As the planet warms, wildfires, floods, droughts and extreme heat are becoming more frequent around the world and here in Boulder. Human activity continues to drive this shift, especially the burning of fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal for electricity, heat, transport and industry. However, recent science shows that fossil fuels are not the only contributors.

Climate-driven impacts such as drought and wildfire are causing once-stable ecosystems, including forests and grasslands, to release carbon and methane. As these landscapes degrade, they can shift from storing carbon to releasing it, adding to the greenhouse gases that warm the atmosphere.

Definition

CO_2e *or* **Carbon Dioxide Equivalent***: A way to measure all climate pollution on a common scale, based on how much each type of gas warms the planet compared to carbon dioxide.*

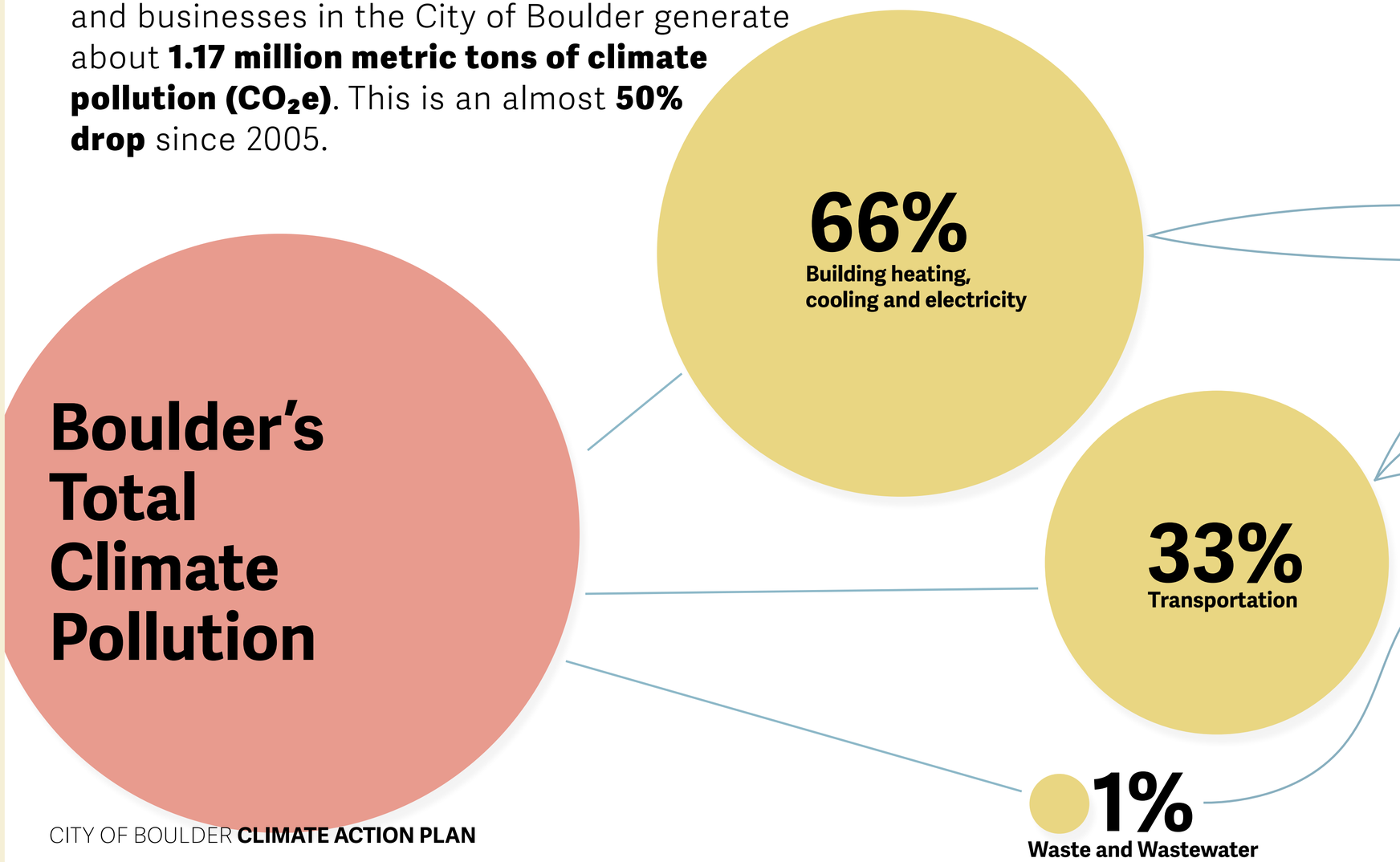


Understanding Our Emissions

Each year homes, buildings, transportation and businesses in the City of Boulder generate about **1.17 million metric tons of climate pollution (CO_2e)**. This is an almost **50% drop** since 2005.

Around 66% of Boulders emissions come from heating, cooling and electricity in buildings. 33% comes from transportation, mainly gas-powered cars and trucks. The remaining 1% comes from other local sources including waste and wastewater.

For more information, visit the Community GHG Emissions Data Dashboard.



Proportionate percentages of each sector

Stationary Fuels:	**42%**
Electricity:	**58%**
In-Boundary Transportation:	**12%**
Transboundary Vehicles:	**61%**
Transboundary Aviation:	**27%**
Waste and Wastewater:	**100%**

Each percentage is a proportion of the sector

Consumption-Based Emissions

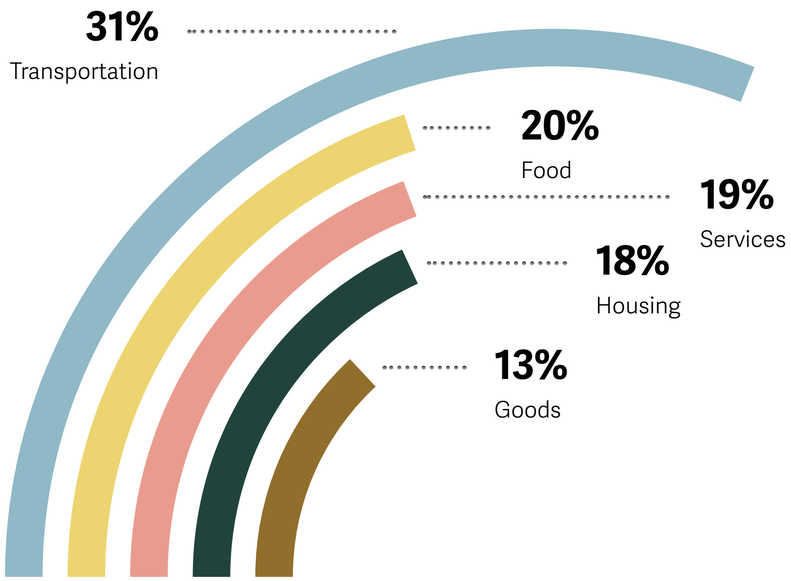
Typical greenhouse gas inventories, like the one on the previous page, don't account for the **emissions tied to the things we buy and consume,** like food, clothing, electronics and more.

The goods we consume create pollution off-site, often far beyond city limits. Because Boulder, like much of the rest of the U.S., consumes more goods and resources than the global average, these off-site emissions are meaningful and important to consider.

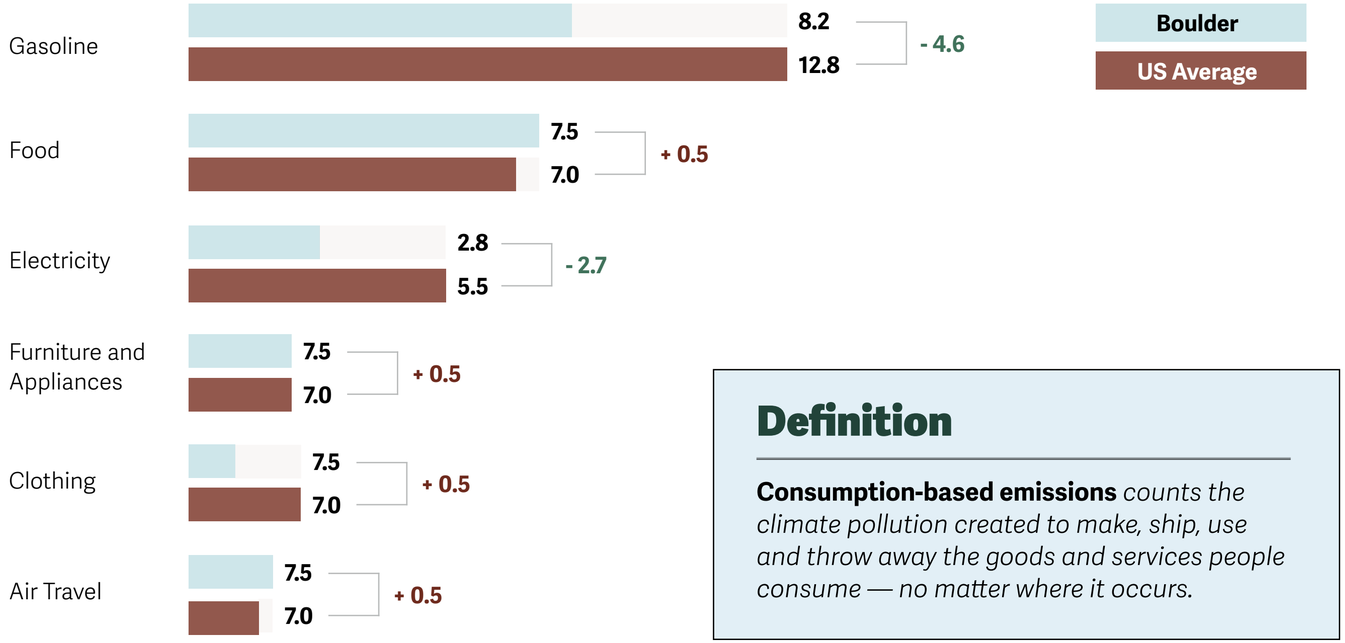
That's why, in 2023, Boulder completed its first-ever consumption-based emissions inventory, which includes emissions from goods and services produced elsewhere but consumed in Boulder. When accounting for these additional sources of pollution, our emissions more than double: jumping to 2.7 million metric tons for that year, meaning nearly 60% of our climate impact comes from goods and services produced elsewhere.

Explore the full breakdown in the Consumption-Based Emissions Inventory Dashboard.

Where Boulder's Consumption-Based Emissions Come From



Metric Tons of CO_2 per Household: *How Boulder Compares to the U.S. Average



Definition

Consumption-based emissions *counts the climate pollution created to make, ship, use and throw away the goods and services people consume — no matter where it occurs.*

*U.S. average values come from CoolClimate Calculator.

Natural systems also play a role in reducing climate pollution.

Boulder's forests, grasslands, open space and soils store about 2.7 million tons of carbon and can absorb about 13,000 tons of carbon each year.

However, they can release more carbon than they store when stressed by drought, wildfire or other disturbances. Protecting and restoring these ecosystems is as important as reducing emissions from energy, buildings and consumption.



Carbon Management on Open Space

Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) manages lands that store significant amounts of carbon and works to protect and strengthen that storage through restoration and land management. Efforts such as wetland and riparian restoration, beaver dam analogues, improved grazing management, grassland restoration and prescribed fire for grasslands help build healthier soils, retain moisture and reduce the risk of carbon loss from wildfire and drought. See OSMP's Climate Resilience StoryMap for more information.

Boulder is exploring use of *biochar* by converting wood from land management into a stable form of carbon that can be added to soils. The city has piloted its use in parks to reduce emissions and improve soil health while storing carbon long-term.



Boulder's Climate Future

Even *if* global emissions drop, Boulder can expect the following impacts **by 2050**:

We are already seeing more frequent and severe climate-related events in Boulder — from devastating wildfires and historic floods to longer droughts, hotter summers and ecosystem loss.

Climate disruptions beyond our region have also rippled through global supply chains and impacted our local economy.

As the planet warms, these impacts are intensifying. The burden isn't shared equally: those who consume the most drive emissions higher, while the greatest harm most often falls on those least responsible.

Hotter Temperatures

Boulder and the North Front Range are projected to see the highest temperature increases in Colorado, with median warming by 2050 estimated at 4.5°F compared to current conditions.

More Extreme Heat Days

Boulder currently sees about 10 days per year above 95°F. That number is projected to rise sharply by 2050 — reaching about 42 extreme heat days each year.

Greater Heat Health Risk

As extreme heat increases, so does the risk of heat-related illness and death. These impacts do not affect everyone equally: youth, older adults, outdoor workers and people without reliable access to cooling face the greatest risk.

More Intense Wildfires

Hotter, drier conditions are lengthening fire seasons and increasing the risk of destructive fires. Boulder and nearby communities have experienced major fires in recent years, including the 2021 Marshall Fire and 2022 NCAR Fire. High fire-risk days are projected to make up more than half the year by 2050.

Longer, More Frequent Droughts

Shrinking snowpack and shifting precipitation patterns are driving longer and more frequent dry periods. Drought days are projected to rise to about 168 per year, straining water supplies, ecosystems, and agriculture. These changes also threaten Colorado's winter recreation economy, from which Boulder benefits culturally and economically.

Greater Precipitation, Flood Risk

Even as overall conditions trend drier, warmer air can hold more moisture, increasing the intensity of extreme rainfall when it does occur. Combined with faster snowmelt, this can raise the risk of flash flooding. Boulder's steep terrain and built environment make some areas especially vulnerable.

Poorer Air Quality

Hotter, drier conditions and more frequent wildfires can increase ozone and particulate pollution. This worsens air quality and raises respiratory risks, especially for children, older adults, and people with pre-existing health conditions. Even without local fires, regional smoke can significantly degrade air quality in Boulder.

Tree Canopy Loss

Hotter, drier conditions and increased pest pressure have already contributed to the loss of mature trees across Boulder. Losing canopy reduces natural shade, worsens heat and weakens ecosystem resilience.

Extreme **heat days** per year.

YEAR	NUMBER OF DAYS PER YEAR
1986-2005	5
2018-2022	10
2030 (projected)	28
2050 (projected)	42

High **fire-risk days** per year.

YEAR	NUMBER OF DAYS PER YEAR
1986-2005	14
2018-2022	116
2030 (projected)	192
2050 (projected)	230

Projections modeled by Resilient Analytics using downscaled climate data. Historical and current values from high-resolution observations by CU Boulder researchers.

IN FOCUS

Climate Change and Emotional Resilience

Climate impacts aren't only physical.

They can also affect mental and emotional well-being. Grief, anxiety and uncertainty are common responses, especially for young people who will live with these impacts the longest. Building emotional resilience and offering tools to navigate these feelings are important parts of a complete climate action plan.



Drought days per year.

YEAR	NUMBER OF DAYS PER YEAR
1986-2005	**57**
2030 (projected)	**151**
2050 (projected)	**168**

Extreme **precipitation events** per 20-year period.

YEAR	EVENTS PER 20-YEAR PERIOD
1986-2005	**4**
2030 (projected)	**10**
2050 (projected)	**12**

Projections modeled by Resilient Analytics using downscaled climate data. Historical and current values from high-resolution observations by CU Boulder researchers.

IN FOCUS

Water and Climate Resilience

Water insecurity is one of Boulder's most pressing climate risks.

Rising temperatures, shrinking snowpack, and longer droughts threaten water supply and water quality. They can also raise energy demand for treatment and distribution.

This CAP strengthens water resilience through coordinated work across departments in the *Prepare Our Community for Climate Risks Big Move*. It aligns with the city's water efficiency plan, source water protection plan and other water-related plans.



Climate impacts are *not* felt equally.

Climate change does not impact all neighborhoods in the same way. Some areas of Boulder face higher risks from extreme heat, wildfire and flooding — often shaped by historic patterns of investment, land use and access to resources.

The city uses data and mapping tools to better understand these differences, prioritize resources and support communities most affected. The map on the right shows where extreme heat poses the greatest risk across Boulder. It combines temperature data with factors like tree canopy, land cover, and social vulnerability to identify neighborhoods that are more exposed and have fewer resources to adapt. Areas with higher scores face greater risks during heat events and are prioritized for cooling strategies like tree planting, shade, and community-based solutions.

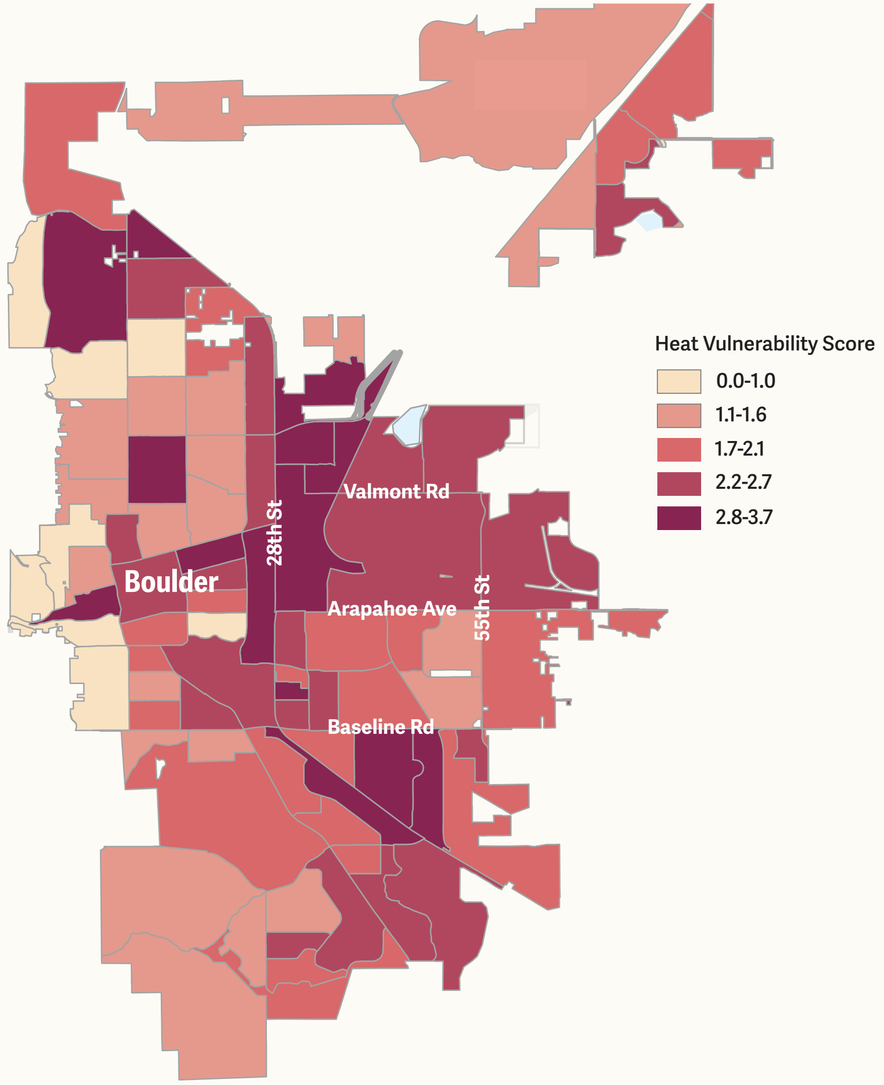
Explore Climate Risk and Vulnerability Maps:

Wildfire / Wildland-Urban Interface Map: Understand where wildfire risk is highest, particularly along the foothills.

Flood Plain Map: See areas at risk of flooding, including 100-year and 500-year floodplains.

Racial Equity Index Map: Identifies where communities in Boulder may face greater barriers due to systemic inequities.

Heat Vulnerability Map





Community members review a proposal for a park design before an outdoor concert at the Glen Huntington Bandshell.

Part IV

Our Approach

Key Goals

These are the **overarching goals** that organize and guide Boulder's climate work. Every strategy and program we design supports all three key goals. **All three goals are essential and mutually reinforcing**. Together, these goals reduce risk, strengthen our ability to adapt, and support a just and equitable transition.

GOAL 1

Climate Mitigation

Reduce climate pollution from local activities and consumption.

How we track progress:

- Emissions from what we buy and use, including impacts beyond Boulder
- Progress towards our emissions targets:

2030	2035	2040
↓70%	Net Zero	**Carbon Positive**



GOAL 2

Climate Equity

Ensure the benefits and burdens of climate action are shared equitably and support a just transition that empowers those most affected.

How we track progress:

- How climate investments are distributed
- Energy burden and affordability
- Access to programs and resources



GOAL 3

Climate Resilience

Prepare for and respond to climate impacts by strengthening the community's ability to adapt and recover.

How we track progress:

- Climate risks like heat, wildfire, and flooding
- Conditions that shape resilience, like tree canopy, water availability and grid reliability



How the Plan is Organized

This plan is organized into ***Action Areas*** that guide our work and connect climate action to daily life. Within each Action Area, ***Big Moves*** identify the most impactful actions to accelerate progress. Together, the goals, *Action Areas*, and *Big Moves* create a clear roadmap for action.

KEY GOALS → **Climate Mitigation** **Climate Equity** **Climate Resilience**

ACTION AREA

Circular Economy

BIG MOVES

- Design and deconstruct for low-carbon building
- Expand reuse, repair and sharing systems
- Reduce consumption

ACTION AREA

Clean, Connected Mobility

BIG MOVES

- Drive adoption of zero-emissions solutions to meet mobility needs
- Shift to lower impact modes of transportation

ACTION AREA

Climate Equity and Justice

BIG MOVES

- Empower youth voices and strengthen intergenerational climate leadership
- Center frontline leadership in climate solutions

ACTION AREA

Community Resilience

BIG MOVES

- Prepare our community for climate risks

ACTION AREA

Energy Supply

BIG MOVES

- Decarbonize the electricity grid and ensure it is safe, reliable and resilient
- Make energy accessible and affordable for all

ACTION AREA

Healthy, Resilient Buildings

BIG MOVES

- Construct and transform buildings to be healthy and resilient spaces

ACTION AREA

Nature-Based Solutions

BIG MOVES

- Cool the city with nature
- Restore and manage resilient landscapes
- Support healthy ecosystems

Guiding Principles

Our climate action strategy is grounded in crosscutting principles that guide every decision we make and every action we take.

1. Circularity and Regeneration



Design systems that reduce waste, keep materials in use and restore natural systems rather than depleting them.

2. Community-Driven Leadership



Work with and support community leadership, especially from those most affected, to shape solutions grounded in local knowledge and build community capacity.

3. Financial and Economic Systems



Direct investment and economic systems toward a just transition, prioritizing communities most affected and creating more equitable outcomes.

4. Land Use and Stewardship



Plan compact, connected neighborhoods and manage land to protect ecosystems, reduce emissions and support healthy, livable communities.

5. Local Recovery and Resilience



Prepare for and recover from climate impacts while supporting the health and well-being of people and communities.

6. Systems-Scale Change



Focus on the bigger systems that drive emissions and inequities, and make changes that last across sectors and over time.



By using reusable cups instead of single-use cups during Boulderthon, volunteers kept 893 pounds of waste out of landfills.

Part V

Action Areas

ACTION AREA

Circular Economy

Big Moves

- Design and Deconstruct for **Low-Carbon Building**
- Expand **Reuse, Repair and Sharing Systems**
- Reduce **Consumption**

How this supports our **key goals.**

MITIGATION

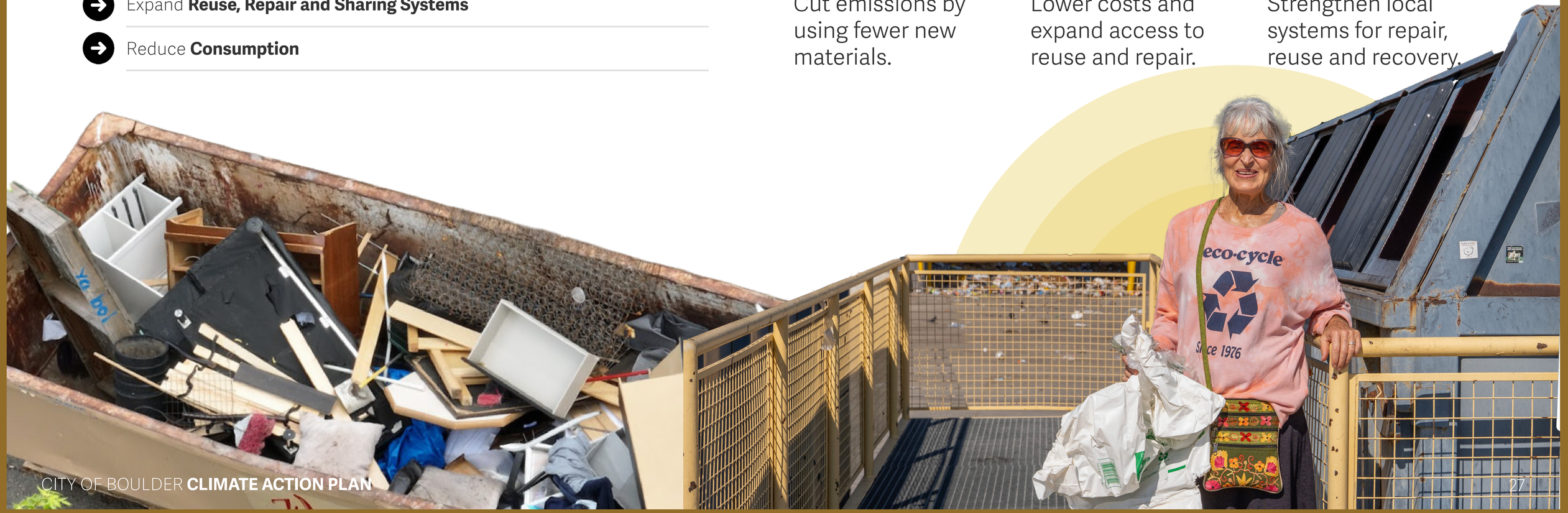
Cut emissions by using fewer new materials.

EQUITY

Lower costs and expand access to reuse and repair.

RESILIENCE

Strengthen local systems for repair, reuse and recovery.



ACTION AREA

Circular Economy

A circular economy **keeps materials in use** and **waste out of the landfill**.

It involves designing products to last, choosing reusable options and recovering materials after use so nothing goes to waste. By rethinking how our community produces, uses and reuses goods, we can reduce emissions and strengthen the local economy.

Our approach recognizes that local consumption has global impacts, and emphasizes accountability for producers and supply chains that shape the flow of materials beyond the city. Boulder invests in reuse infrastructure, promotes durable product design and makes it easier for everyone to participate in a circular system.



Work So Far

Zero Waste Leadership: Among the first cities in the U.S. to set a zero waste goal in 2006 and has expanded recycling and composting programs. The Universal Zero Waste Ordinance (UZWO) requires buildings to provide these services and helped drive an 18% increase in waste diversion between 2005 and 2024.

Plastics and Packaging Reform: Boulder advocated for Colorado's Plastic Pollution Reduction Act and the Producer Responsibility bill, which shifts the cost of recycling packaging materials from local communities to producers beginning in 2026.

***Circular Boulder* Materials Flow Analysis**: City-commissioned study mapping material flows and priority opportunities (e.g., C&D recycling, waste-wood byproducts, reuse/repair).

Building Material Reuse: Boulder passed a sustainable deconstruction ordinance requiring certain projects to use deconstruction instead of demolition and meet a minimum 75% material diversion requirement, with projects averaging 80% diversion since 2020. Leading by example, the city's Alpine-Balsam deconstruction project achieved 94% diversion.

Reuse Hub for Boulder and Beyond: Online tool launched with Eco-Cycle to help residents and businesses find local reuse, repair, refill and sharing options, keeping materials in use and reducing waste.

BIG MOVE

Design and Deconstruct for Low-Carbon Building

The community designs, builds and takes apart buildings using low-carbon, responsibly sourced materials and reuse-focused practices, keeping materials in use longer and cutting emissions across the building's lifecycle.

How We Will Get There

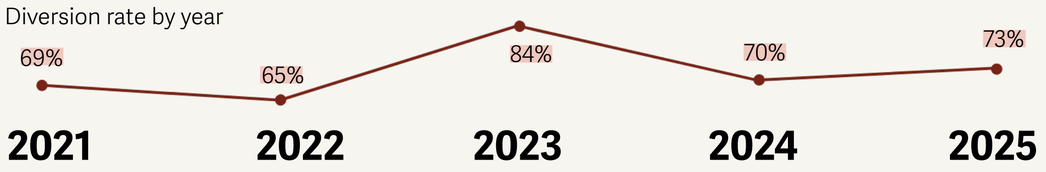
Deconstructing Existing Buildings Sustainably: Reuse and recycle materials from buildings which are at their end of life to reduce waste and preserve resources. The city's existing Sustainable Deconstruction Ordinance requires the diversion of building materials for reuse or recycling. Additional efforts include updating the ordinance to ensure it is preserving materials to the greatest extent possible and expanding local markets and building workforce capacity needed for high-value material recovery.

Designing and Constructing New Buildings for a Low-Carbon Future: Use responsibly sourced, low-embodied carbon materials and low-carbon building design through building codes, incentives and local policy.

Tracking Progress

Target: Achieve and maintain 80% average annual diversion from sustainable deconstruction by 2030.





Equity in Action

Deconstruction and low-carbon building practices can improve affordability, reduce pollution and protect workers' health. Key considerations include city financial support for small contractors in compliance and ensuring reclaimed materials are affordable and accessible.

By requiring materials to be recovered instead of demolished, Boulder's Sustainable Deconstruction Ordinance reduces waste and cuts climate pollution.



BIG MOVE

Expand Reuse, Repair and Sharing Systems

Markets and systems for reuse, repair and sharing grow, making it easier to keep materials in circulation, support small businesses and create local jobs in a circular economy.

How We Will Get There

Building Circular Markets: Bolster local policy, supportive programming, business recruitment and financial incentives to expand markets for reusable and shareable goods, including building materials that can be directly reused. These efforts include partnering with regional suppliers and producers to strengthen accountability within supply chains and promote circular business practices.

Organic Material Recovery: Expand material recovery systems, including composting and biochar, to keep organic and wood waste in productive use.

Supporting Small Businesses: Promote advising services and financial incentives to help small businesses move away from single-use materials toward more circular, resilient supply chains.

Growing Community Reuse and Skill-Sharing: Continue city programs that host container garden workshops, sewing and repair events and neighborhood waste reduction initiatives that make circular practices tangible and accessible while strengthening connections between reuse, food and community resilience.

Tracking Progress

Single-use containers avoided through partnerships with circular businesses in 2024 and 2025.

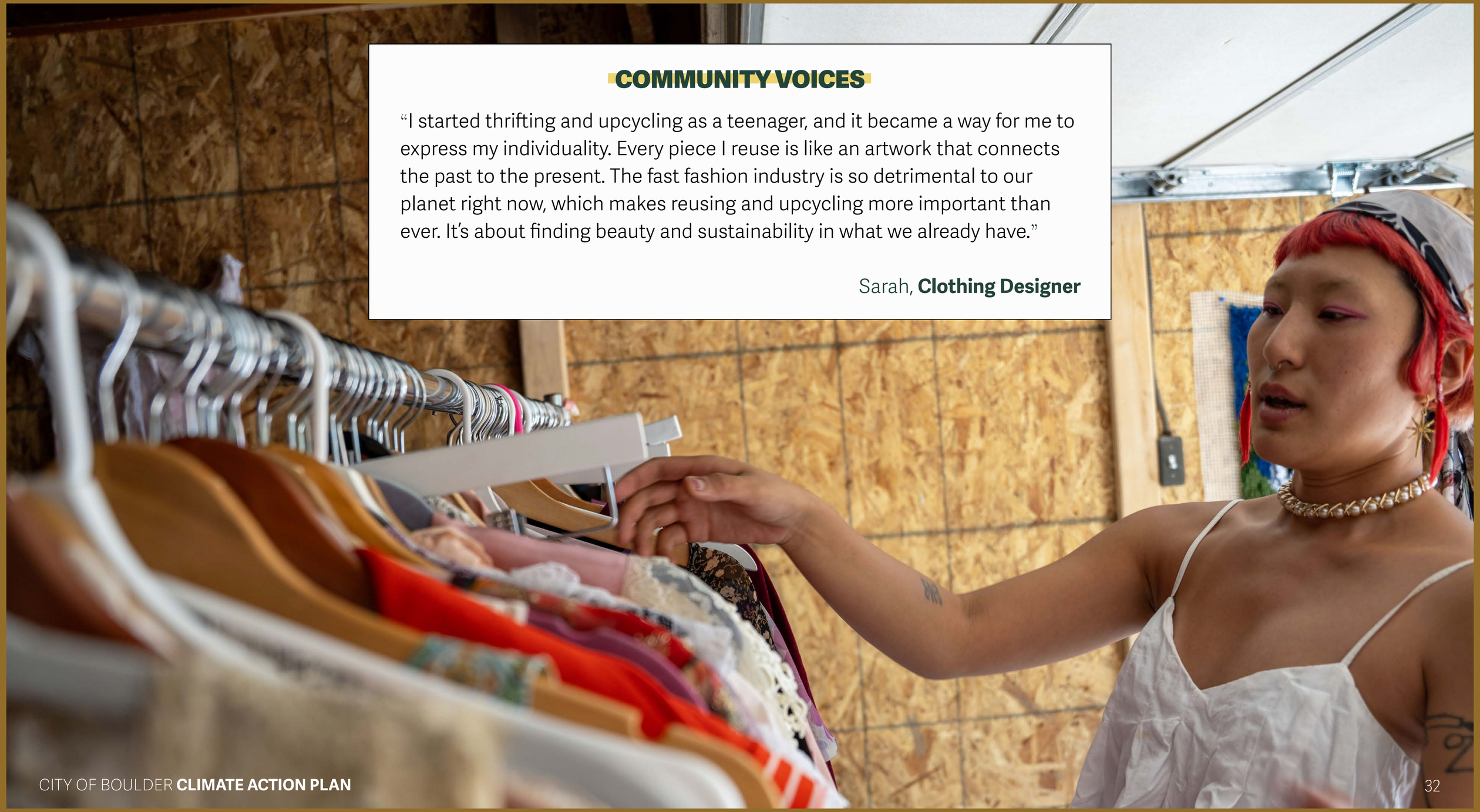
200,000+





Equity in Action

Expanding reuse and repair systems can lower costs for goods and create inclusive local jobs. Key considerations include ensuring small and minority-owned businesses can participate in designing programs that reach underserved communities.



COMMUNITY VOICES

“I started thrifting and upcycling as a teenager, and it became a way for me to express my individuality. Every piece I reuse is like an artwork that connects the past to the present. The fast fashion industry is so detrimental to our planet right now, which makes reusing and upcycling more important than ever. It’s about finding beauty and sustainability in what we already have.”

Sarah, **Clothing Designer**



COMMUNITY VOICES

Jasmine Barco

Assistant Director of Energy & Climate Justice, **CU Environmental Center**

"I manage C.U.'s Sustainable Buffs in the Neighborhood contract. During Move Out we set up five stations across the Hill and worked with zero waste partners to divert as much material as possible from the landfill.

The circular economy matters deeply to me because waste is something everyone produces. It's one of the most universal entry points to sustainability. Once I started learning more about Colorado's recycling infrastructure and its connection to the circular economy, I realized just how many opportunities there are to make a real impact."









BIG MOVE

Reduce Consumption

By consuming less and prioritizing reuse, materials stay in use longer and less waste ends up in landfills.

How We Will Get There

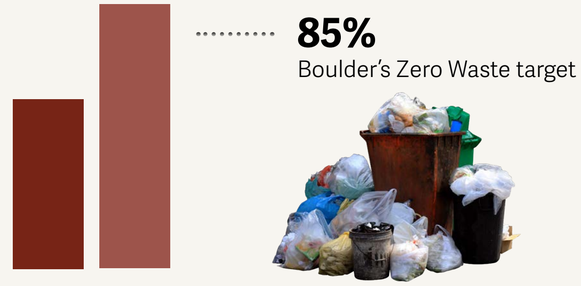
Education for Using Less: Provide clear, actionable guidance on reducing consumption, highlighting the benefits of using less and connecting the community to options through existing businesses and emerging circular models.

Measuring Our Impact: Continue to assess the regional and global impacts of Boulder's material consumption and supply chains to identify opportunities for emission and waste reduction beyond city boundaries.

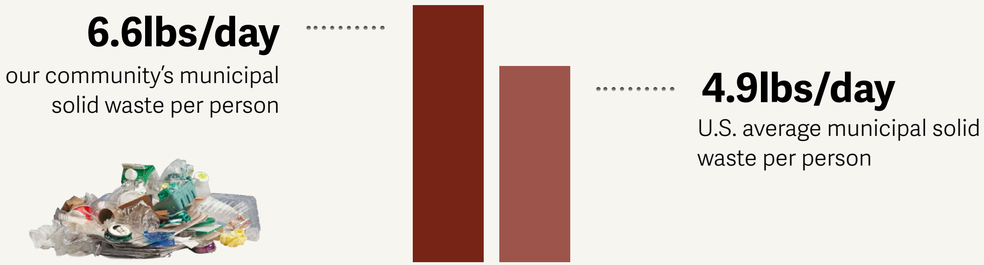
Policies and Incentives for Using Less: Advance local policies and incentives to reduce single-use items and support reusable, durable alternatives, while advocating for state-level policies that shift responsibility for materials from communities to producers.

Tracking Progress

Goal: Increase Boulder's waste diversion rate over time.



Goal: Monitor and reduce our community's waste generation per-person over time.



Equity in Action

Reducing consumption benefits communities disproportionately impacted by waste and pollution, including frontline workers. Key considerations include making sustainable consumption accessible, reducing financial or logistical barriers, and anticipating unintended burdens on small businesses.



A young community member uses a reusable cup from the city's reusable cup program at a summer concert.

ACTION AREA

Clean, Connected Mobility

Big Moves

- Drive Adoption of **Zero-Emissions Solutions** to Meet Mobility Needs
- Shift to **Lower Impact Modes** of Transportation

How this supports our **key goals.**

MITIGATION

Cut driving pollution with cleaner ways to travel.

EQUITY

Expand affordable, accessible ways to get around.

RESILIENCE

Build a safer, more connected transportation system.



ACTION AREA

Clean, Connected Mobility

A clean and connected transportation future provides **pollution-free**, **accessible options that work for everyone**, enabling **safer travel**, **better transit** and **biking infrastructure**, and neighborhoods where daily needs are close to home.

Boulder has a strong legacy of connecting neighborhoods with sidewalks, multi-use paths and transit, laying a solid foundation for getting around without a car. Clean mobility also requires electrification, including more electric vehicles (EVs), expanded charging infrastructure, and electrified transit fleets.

Transportation remains one of Boulder's largest sources of climate pollution, especially from people driving alone into and out of the city, including commuters and visitors. Many workers commute longer distances as people seek more affordable housing options further from Boulder. This makes compact, walkable and transit-connected neighborhoods an important part of Boulder's climate solution.

Progress in this area requires coordinated efforts: aligning land use and transportation planning, improving transit reliability, expanding safe walking and biking routes, supporting state and regional investments in clean mobility and increasing access to EVs and charging. Together, these efforts help us to create a system that is cleaner, more connected and easier to use.

Work So Far

Public Charging Leadership: The city was an early national leader in public EV charging and now has 39 public fast chargers.

EV-Ready Building Codes: Boulder requires new buildings include EV charging infrastructure through its energy code, becoming a model for similar standards across Colorado.

Strong EV Adoption: In 2025, EVs made up 12% of registered vehicles in the city, compared with 2% nationwide.

Electric HOP Fleet: Ten e-buses now allow HOP service to feature all zero emission buses on route, and spare diesel buses are on track to be replaced with e-buses by 2030.

Safer Bike Connections: Projects have expanded and improved the city's multi-use path system, including protected and separated bike lanes on several arterial roads.

E-Bike and Bike Share Incentives: Rebates for e-bike purchases and support for Boulder B-cycle help community members choose low-emission trips and reduce car travel.



BIG MOVE

Drive Adoption of Zero-Emissions Solutions to Meet Mobility Needs

Through infrastructure deployment and partnerships, expand EV (aircraft included) charging infrastructure so that charging is accessible for all. Advocate for financial incentives, programming and education to support statewide adoption of zero emission vehicles and aircraft. Advocate for incentives to encourage electric aircraft usage at Boulder Municipal Airport. Convert city fleet to be electric.

How We Will Get There

EV Charging Infrastructure: Expand access to EV charging through regional partnerships, closing gaps in infrastructure and increasing availability across the network.

Electrify City Fleet and Transit: Continue to support electrification of the city's fleet and buses.

EV Innovation: Develop innovative business models to use EVs as storage and bi-directional charging.

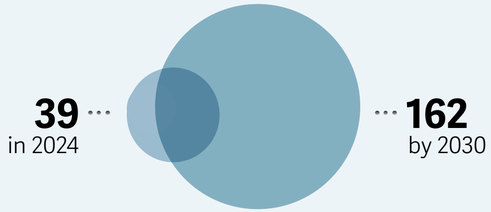
EV Incentives and Market Development: Advance state level policy to support financing, incentives and programming that reduce upfront costs to EV adoption and support resale markets.

Tracking Progress



Target: 30% of registered vehicles in Boulder are electric by 2030, adopted by the GoEV Resolution in 2020. 12% of registered vehicles in Boulder are electric in 2025.

Target: 162 publicly-accessible fast chargers installed citywide by 2030, compared to 39 fast chargers in 2024.



Target: 100% city fleet electrification by 2030. 20% of the city fleet is electric in 2025.

Equity in Action

Increasing access to charging infrastructure, especially in multi-family housing, expands clean mobility options to more neighborhoods, especially where people face barriers to owning or driving a car. Support incentive and resale markets to lower the upfront cost of EVs.



EV registrations grew from 863 in 2018 to over 10,000 by the end of 2025 in Boulder —a 1,070% increase.

BIG MOVE

Shift to Lower Impact Modes of Transportation

Create a transportation system that is sustainable and reduces negative impacts on Boulder's natural environment. Support walkable neighborhoods and build multimodal infrastructure to support transit-dependent populations. Make it easy and convenient to choose sustainable modes of travel, like walking, biking, transit, or carpooling. Work locally and through regional and state partnerships to expand access to public transition solutions. Promote transit-oriented development and 15-minute neighborhoods.

This work is guided by the city's Transportation Master Plan, which provides the policy framework for a safe, equitable, and sustainable multimodal transportation system that connects people with where they want to go.

How We Will Get There

Expand Sustainable Transit Options: Make transportation investments that connect the community through multi-modal infrastructure.

Climate-Smart Land Use: Support transit-oriented development through land-use planning, codes and regulations and economic development strategies.

Deliver Reliable, High Quality Transit: Provide public transit solutions locally and through regional and state partnerships.

Tracking Progress

Target: 80% of Boulder resident trips by sustainable modes of transport (transit, walking, biking or carpool) by 2030, compared to 65% in 2024.



65% sustainable modes of transport in 2024.

80% target for sustainable modes of transport by Boulder residents by 2030.





Target: Eliminate carbon pollution from commuter car travel within and around Boulder by 2035.

59% drop within Boulder's boundaries since 2018.

3% increase from regional commuting since 2018.

Equity in Action

Expanding multi-modal path access to historically underserved neighborhoods increases connectivity to and access to non-transit solutions. Supporting access to electric micro-mobility transportation increases accessibility of non-vehicle solutions.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Rachel Alba

Director of Religious Education,
Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder



"When I moved to Boulder, I was looking for a place where I would not need a car. I have not driven regularly since high school and I did not want to start again. Boulder's network of bike paths made that possible.

It feels different here because drivers expect and respect cyclists.

My commute is entirely on bike paths, door to door, so I am completely protected from cars. I often ride with my dog in a front basket, so I especially value the security of the paths. They are extensive enough that I can do most of my shopping and socializing with only a few blocks in bike lanes.

People always ask what biking here is like in winter. I tell them I have to get to work by 7:30 a.m. on Sundays, and even if it snows Saturday night, the bike paths are usually plowed by the time I leave Sunday morning. And that care is such a gift to cyclists.

I also love being able to ride just for the joy of it. As someone who is relatively new to biking and not especially skilled, I appreciate how well maintained the trails are.

Before moving to Boulder, I lived in Chicago, Boston and New York City, where winters often left me feeling less energized and more depressed. In Boulder, biking has had a positive impact on my mental health and my quality of life.

As someone who cares about the environment, I also see biking as a simple, enjoyable way to reduce my individual carbon emissions."







ACTION AREA

Climate Equity and Justice

Big Moves

- Center **Frontline Leadership** in Climate Solutions
- Empower **Youth Voices** and Strengthen **Intergenerational Climate Leadership**

How this supports our **key goals.**

MITIGATION

Shape climate solutions that cut emissions and meet community needs.

EQUITY

Focus support on those most harmed and excluded.

RESILIENCE

Build community power to prepare and adapt.



ACTION AREA

Climate Equity and Justice

Climate change **disproportionately harms those who contribute least to its causes** and are most vulnerable to its impacts.

We are committed to supporting historically underserved community members as we collectively confront the challenges of a changing climate.

We aim to center community leadership in our work and decision-making. We invest in strengthening community capacity (the ability for community members to make a difference over time and across different issues) to address climate injustice and ensure the fair distribution of climate burdens and benefits. To hold ourselves accountable, we will encourage, listen to and act on ideas and concerns from underserved community members, as well as collect and analyze data on climate risks and vulnerabilities to guide the design and funding of programs and policies that support those most impacted.

Work So Far

Racial Equity Plan: This living road map is used to guide the city's policies, programs and resource decisions by prioritizing goals, defining actions and assigning resources to address systemic inequities.

Healthy and Resilient Mobile Homes: Boulder supported owners of more than 200 damaged mobile homes through the the Healthy and Resilient Mobile Homes program, helping make homes more resilient to extreme weather, more airtight and more affordable to operate and cool.

Renter Protection Through Energy Standards: Since 2011, the city has required all licensed rental housing to meet a basic energy efficiency standard through SmartRegs, improving housing quality and reducing energy costs for renters.

Climate Equity Fund: Boulder partnered with Boulder County to help shape the Climate Equity Fund, a multi-million dollar grant program run by Boulder County that supports community-led climate solutions and expands access to funding for frontline communities most impacted by climate change.

Investment in Frontline Leadership: In 2025, the city invested approximately $460,000 in climate equity funding to support programs that center frontline communities and strengthen local resilience.



Community members learn about pollinators during a guided nature walk with Growing Up Boulder.

BIG MOVE

Center Frontline Leadership in Climate Solutions

Climate risks and burdens are not felt equally across Boulder. In fact, frontline communities (often defined as BIPOC people, immigrants or people with lower incomes who are impacted first and worst by climate change) include those without resources to recover fully and quickly from acute emergencies and ongoing stressors.

However, these same communities are often some of the most resilient in the city, having the experience, wisdom and strength to thrive in the face of these realities. Using an asset-based approach, this big move involves celebrating and empowering community leadership in designing and implementing a just transition and climate solutions that improve the social, financial and physical safety and wellness for those most at risk.

How We Will Get There

Reducing Energy Cost Burdens: Reduce energy burden through advocacy at the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and through the support of low-income solar garden subscriptions.

Inclusive Community Engagement: Facilitate meaningful, inclusive community engagement to understand and to address climate injustices.

Investing in Frontline Leadership: Continue funding initiatives to support capacity building and climate leadership from within frontline community-based organizations.

Tracking Progress

Percent of climate tax funds directly supporting historically underserved communities.

Status: Establishing a methodology to track and report this metric. Results will be published as data becomes available.



Equity in Action

Continuing to elevate the voices of historically disadvantaged community members supports community-driven solutions and climate equity. This includes ongoing consultation with frontline communities to identify and minimize undue burdens, maximize shared benefits, and ensure city programs and investments reflect community-defined priorities.

Food Systems and Climate Justice

Food access and production are essential to both resilience and justice. Equitable food systems connect directly to community health, affordability, and climate resilience. Boulder recognizes the importance of supporting local, cooperative, and culturally rooted food production and distribution models that reduce emissions, strengthen local economies, and ensure all community members can access healthy food. The city is exploring opportunities to strengthen local and regional food systems as part of its work. This work builds on partnerships with local organizations such as Boulder Food Rescue, Harvest of Hope, Emergency Family Assistance Association and the Boulder County Farmers Market.

Volunteers harvest vegetables at Growing Gardens community garden.

BIG MOVE

Empower Youth Voices and Strengthen Intergenerational Climate Leadership

Recognizing that young people will live longest with today's climate decisions, we are working to elevate youth voices, support intergenerational collaboration and create pathways for youth leadership. In 2024, through its child-friendly city work with UNICEF USA, the city heard from more than 1,000 young people and caregivers. Many said they wanted a stronger role in city decisions. Boulder also joined the Nature Everywhere Initiative to help reconnect young people with nature.

How We Will Get There

Nature Connection and Education: Increase the time young people spend outdoors through place-based opportunities for unstructured nature play and walkable, nature-based neighborhoods. Support collaborative educational strategies to increase outdoor learning and climate literacy.

Climate Career Pathways and Workforce Development: Continue and expand youth career development programs and partnerships, such as Community Forestry Corps, the Junior Rangers Program, and other programs that offer well-rounded opportunities for service-learning and local climate action.

Youth Climate Leadership: Foster intergenerational mentorship and learning through community engagement, educational forums and climate action projects. Elevate youth voice in city decision-making and systems-level change.

Tracking Progress

Number of youth employed or trained through the city's climate-related programs.

Status: Establishing a methodology to track and report this metric. Results will be published as data becomes available.



88%

percent of Boulder Valley School District high school and middle school students who spent time in nature at least once a week during 2023.

Equity in Action

Empowering youth leadership, especially those from frontline communities, ensures climate action is sustained across generations and informed by diverse lived experiences. At its core, this work involves connecting youth perspectives with those of elders and community leaders to foster a just transition for communities most at risk.



Community Forestry Corps

Boulder's Community Forestry Corps connects local teens with hands-on climate action through tree planting, maintenance, and data collection. Half of participants in 2024 identified with historically marginalized communities, reflecting the city's goal to make green career paths accessible and representative.



Musicians Jeff and Paige perform for families at an outdoor concert. Their music invites kids to explore nature, science and the outdoors.

ACTION AREA

Community Resilience

Big Moves

Prepare Our Community for **Climate Risks**

How this supports our **key goals.**

MITIGATION

Support lower-emission systems as the city prepares for climate risks.

EQUITY

Prioritize people most exposed to climate impacts.

RESILIENCE

Improve preparedness, response and recovery systems.



ACTION AREA

Community Resilience

Resilience is our ability to **prepare for**, **endure** and **recover** from climate impacts and disruptions.

These impacts include extreme events, such as wildfires, floods and heat waves, as well as long-term stressors like drought, ecosystem change and rising temperatures. These hazards directly impact safety, infrastructure and access to services.

To prepare for future climate change impacts, Boulder is prioritizing:

- research, investments and programs that strengthen resilient infrastructure
- strengthening emergency preparedness and response systems
- building more reliable and interconnected services
- increasing our community's ability to adapt to change

Work So Far

Flood Resilience Investments: Boulder has invested strategically in flood resilience to protect residents, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Key projects enhance creek conveyance, green infrastructure and flood safety across Gregory Canyon, Upper Goose & Two-Mile Canyon, and South Boulder Creek. Ongoing greenway and creek restoration projects strengthen natural flood channels, improve habitat and increase overall community resilience across Gregory Canyon, Upper Goose & Two-Mile Canyon and South Boulder Creek.

Climate Risk Knowledge: Boulder advanced new assessments of local climate risks, including heat mapping, wildfire modeling and a desertification risk assessment. These assessments identify vulnerable neighborhoods, critical infrastructure and natural systems, providing actionable data to guide resilience planning, prioritize interventions and inform community preparedness efforts.

Wildfire Protection: The city launched the *Wildfire Detailed Home Assessment* program, offering free, specialist evaluations and recommendations to residents in high-risk areas. Boulder also updated its *Community Wildfire Protection Plan*, strengthening coordination among community members, businesses and agencies to prioritize mitigation, improve preparedness and raise public awareness of wildfire risks.







Boulder uses targeted cattle grazing on public and private lands to reduce invasive plants, manage grasses and lower wildfire risk.

BIG MOVE

Prepare Our Community for Climate Risks

The city is prepared for climate change and its impacts, with strengthened systems that help people, places and nature **adapt** and **recover**.

How Boulder is Addressing Climate Risks

This mapping shows how city plans and programs are already working to reduce climate risks. Each item contributes to one or more hazards, reflecting the coordinated, citywide approach to building resilience.

Type of climate risk addressed:

Air Quality · *Drought* · *Extreme Weather* · *Flooding* · *Heat* · *Wildfire*

Access Management & Parking Strategy (AMPS):
Uses parking and curb tools to encourage sustainable modes and cut congestion and pollution.

Boulder Arts Blueprint:
Builds climate readiness for cultural programs and events as weather becomes more disruptive.

Boulder Housing Partners Sustainability Commitment:
Expands clean energy and low-emission mobility access for affordable housing residents.

Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan:
Guides land use and growth in ways that support climate and resilience goals.

Citywide Extreme Heat Management Strategy:
Prepares for extreme heat with response as well as urban cooling strategies.

Commercial Areas Blueprint:
Adds mobility-hub amenities (secure bike storage, e-bike charging, carshare) to make cleaner trips practical.

Community Sustainability, Equity and Resilience Framework:
Citywide framework that centers equity in climate action and resilience work.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP):
Supports fire-adapted communities, resilient landscapes and fire response.

Why This Matters

Climate resilience in Boulder is a citywide effort. This work is already happening across the city through many plans and programs that reduce risk and prepare for climate impacts. These efforts build on lessons from past disasters, including the 2013 floods and the Marshall Fire, which highlighted vulnerabilities in infrastructure, emergency response and community preparedness.

Equity in Action

Efforts to strengthen climate resilience will prioritize neighborhoods most exposed to climate risks, ensuring the most vulnerable communities can benefit from safer buildings, reduced displacement risks, and improved preparedness. Key considerations include supporting renters, low-income households, and small, minority-owned businesses in the transition through financial and technical support and clear communication.

BIG MOVE

How Boulder is Addressing Climate Risks (Continued)

Comprehensive Flood & Stormwater Master Plan:
Guides projects and land use to reduce flood hazards and protect people, property and ecosystems.

Core Arterial Network (CAN):
Delivers multimodal corridor upgrades that improve safety and support mode shift.

Desertification Risk Assessment:
Evaluates long-term heat and dryness impacts on soils and vegetation to guide land management.

Drought Plan:
Sets phased response, efficiency measures and engagement when drought conditions emerge.

Electric Mobility Plan:
Lays out fleet electrification, public charging, expanded home charging and pilots like bi-directional charging.

E-Bike Incentive Program:
Helps residents shift to zero-emission trips that reduce local air pollution.

Facilities Master Plan:
Hardens critical buildings and integrates cooling and preparedness so facilities stay functional during events.

Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan:
Uses nature-based solutions to reduce runoff, protect waterways and support cooling.

Greenways Master Plan:
Integrates habitat and flood mitigation along riparian corridors.

Integrated Pest Management Program:
Manages rising heat-driven pest pressures while avoiding added air-pollution impacts.

Landscape and Building Codes:
Code tools the city uses to improve performance, safety and climate readiness.

Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan:
Citywide plan to identify risks and reduct impacts from multiple hazards.

Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS) Corridors:
Advances multimodal regional connections that support cleaner travel.

Open Space & Mountain Parks Climate Plan:
Aligns land stewardship with risk reduction for water, heat, flood and fire.

Source Water Plans / Source Water Protection Plan:
Protect and manage city water supplies to remain reliable under changing conditions.

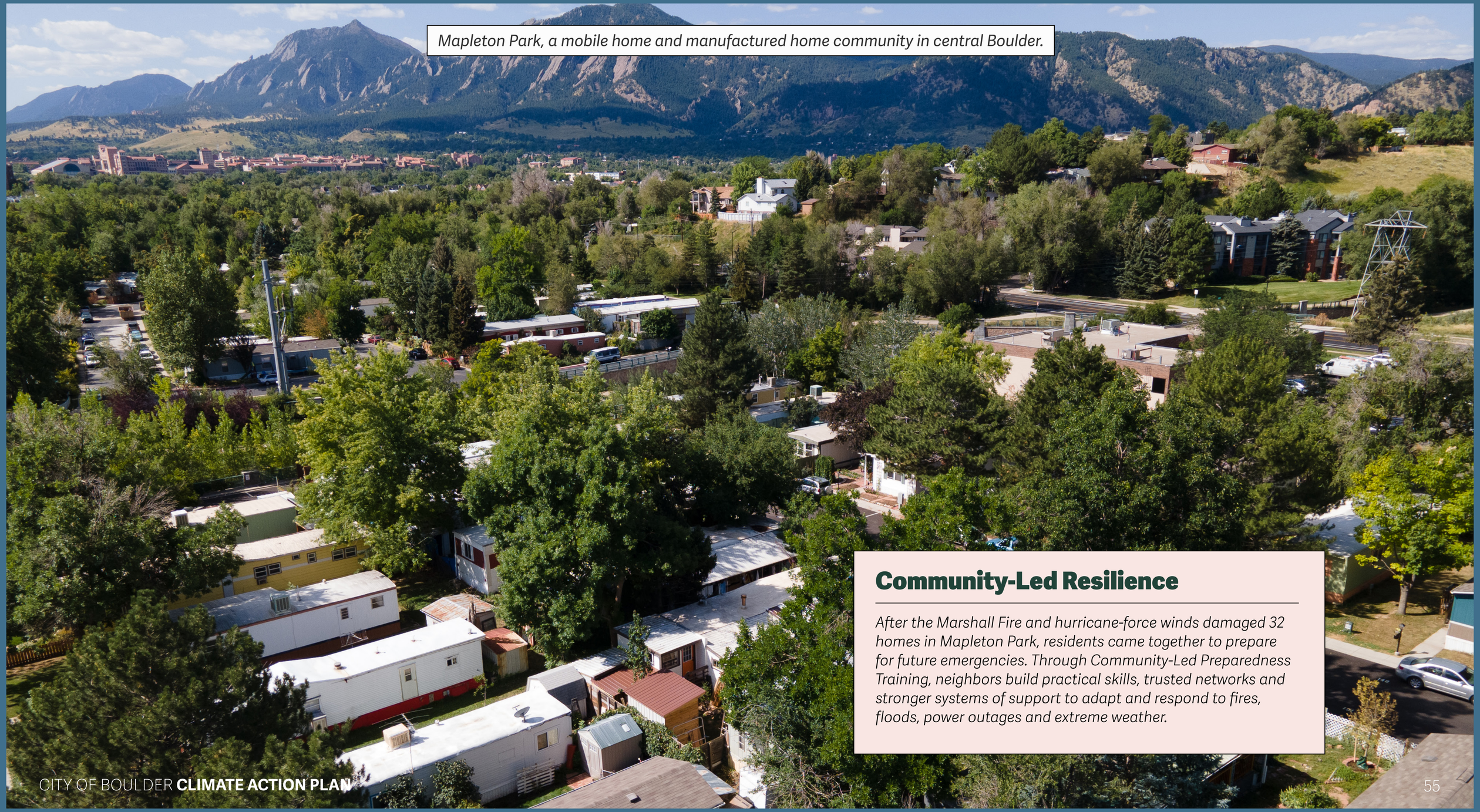
Transportation Master Plan (TMP):
Encourages walking, biking and transit to lower vehicle emissions and improve health.

Urban Forestry Strategic Plan:
Expands tree canopy for cooling, cleaner air and risk reduction.

Wastewater Collection Master Plan:
Keeps wastewater systems functioning during heavy rain to prevent overflow and contamination.

Water Conservation Program:
Supports efficient water use through community education and programs at Resource Central and PACE.

Water Efficiency Plan:
Runs water conservation programs for homes and businesses.



Mapleton Park, a mobile home and manufactured home community in central Boulder.

Community-Led Resilience

After the Marshall Fire and hurricane-force winds damaged 32 homes in Mapleton Park, residents came together to prepare for future emergencies. Through Community-Led Preparedness Training, neighbors build practical skills, trusted networks and stronger systems of support to adapt and respond to fires, floods, power outages and extreme weather.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Isabel Sanchez



President,
Mapleton Homeowners Association

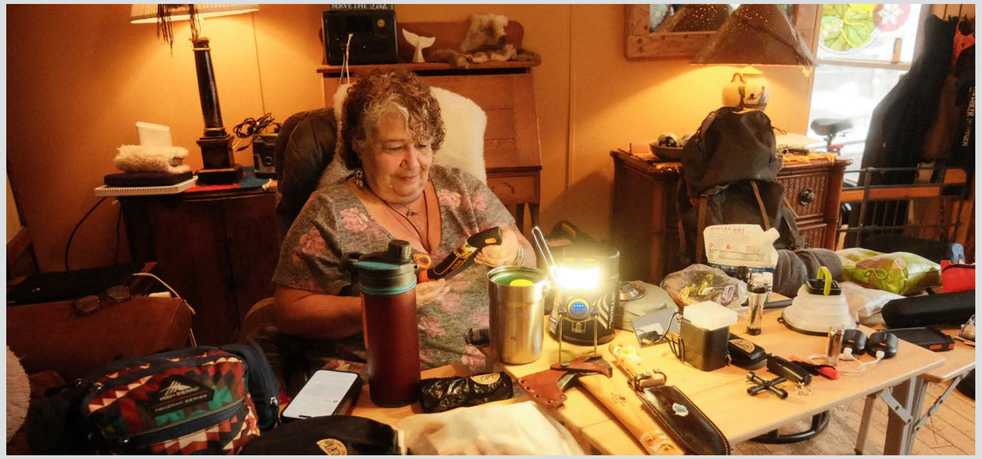
Isabel Sanchez's resilience work is rooted in Mapleton Park and shaped by the people who call it home. After the Marshall Fire's wind event and related power outages affected the area, she launched the Community-Led Preparedness Training program to help community members build practical skills, trusted relationships and stronger systems of support. Mapleton Park is one of Boulder's affordable housing communities. About 90% of households qualify as low or moderate income, and 124 of 136 homes are reserved for families earning 60% or less of the Area Median Income.

"The power outages left families unable to replace spoiled food and critical medications. Seeing neighbors struggle not only with immediate danger but also with the financial and emotional aftermath revealed just how unprepared and vulnerable we were — and it motivated me to dedicate my time to building stronger systems of community preparedness and resilience.

A hotter, drier future places our most vulnerable communities at even greater risk. Building resilience requires communities and governments at every level to work together in preparation for climate emergencies such as fires and floods.

My goal is to help as many people as possible prepare by sharing practical tools and empowering them to recognize that they are their community's first responders. The more prepared individuals and families become, the less loss our communities will experience — and the stronger our collective recovery will be."







ACTION AREA

Energy Supply

Big Moves

- Decarbonize the Electricity Grid and Ensure it is **Safe, Reliable** and **Resilient**
- Make Energy **Accessible** and **Affordable for All**

How this supports our **key goals.**

MITIGATION

Shift from fossil fuels to clean electricity.

EQUITY

Lower energy costs and expand access to clean energy.

RESILIENCE

Strengthen the grid for outages and extreme weather.



ACTION AREA

Energy Supply

Our energy supply is our leading source of **climate pollution**.

Transforming how our energy is produced, delivered and used is critical to meeting our climate goals. A clean, efficient, reliable and resilient energy system requires prioritizing renewable energy, leveraging local distributed resources and ensuring equitable access to affordable energy for all.

Through policy advocacy, litigation and regional and state partnerships, Boulder works to transform markets to ensure clean electric options are available and affordable. Boulder advocates for zero-emission electricity, drives adoption of local distributed energy resources to reduce costs and strengthen grid reliability and expands energy efficiency programs to ensure broad benefits. Boulder challenges legacy financial models that favor fossil fuel systems and foster innovation instead. Boulder also drives local investment in clean energy through voluntary incentives, advising services and local codes and regulations.



Work So Far

Reduced Electricity Emissions: Between 2018 and 2024, carbon pollution from electricity has decreased 29%, and renewable energy across the city has avoided 52,000 metric tons of carbon pollution, equal to 12,000 gas-powered cars driven for a year.

Local Renewable Growth: By 2023, more than 105 megawatts of renewable energy had been installed locally, seven years ahead of schedule.

Cleaner State Grid: As of 2024, statewide renewables now supply more than 47% of grid electricity, and that share is expected to grow to more than 80% by 2030.

Community Solar Leadership: The city helped author the first statewide community solar garden legislation in the country. Since it passed, more than 1,500 households and businesses have subscribed to solar gardens as of 2024, with more than 10 MW of subscribed capacity.

Low-Income Solar Access: The city built the first municipally owned solar garden in the county, and through this garden and other partnerships, more than 1,000 low-income households now receive utility bill relief through solar garden subscriptions.

Solar Grants and Rebates: As of 2025, grant and rebate programs had helped 54 households and 37 local organizations install more than 1.8 MW of solar since 2008.

BIG MOVE

Decarbonize the Electricity Grid and Ensure it is Safe, Reliable and Resilient

Through advocacy and partnership, support a state-wide shift to zero-emissions electricity generation, and modernizing and hardening of the grid to ensure it is reliable and able to withstand extreme events.

How We Will Get There

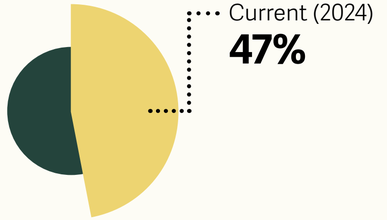
Advocating for Clean Electricity: Advocate at the state and national level for zero emission electricity and advanced technologies.

Grid Modernization and Reliability: Ensure investments are made in the energy distribution system to enhance reliability and resilience, including undergrounding lines in high-risk areas, and to support future growth as buildings and transportation transition from fossil fuels to electric.

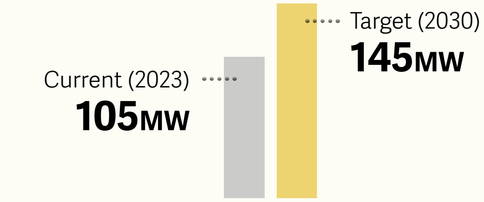
Local Renewable Energy and Battery Storage: Capitalize on local investment in distributed energy resources that enhance resilience and deliver local economic benefit.

Tracking Progress

Renewable Energy Supply: Achieve 100% renewable energy by 2030.



Local Solar Generation: Achieve 145 MW by 2030.



Equity in Action

Ensure that grid modernization and clean energy investments benefit all communities, not just those with wealth or influence. Advocate for equitable rate structures and community participation in grid planning so that the transition to renewable energy does not increase burdens on those already facing high energy costs. Prioritize reliability upgrades in neighborhoods most vulnerable to outages or climate impacts.



BIG MOVE

Make Energy Accessible and Affordable for All

Lowering energy bills by expanding access to local solar, offering energy efficiency and bill assistance, and making sure homes, nonprofits and small businesses benefit from and have access to the energy solutions they need to meet their needs

How We Will Get There

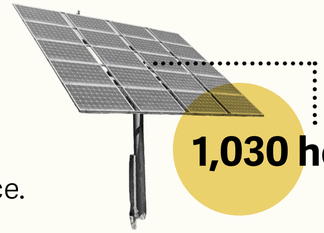
Energy Bill Reduction: Advocate at the state level to mitigate rate impacts and expand access to voluntary programs that help reduce the number of customers experiencing energy insecurity.

Utility Cost Stabilization: Pursue utility cost stabilization through solutions that reduce energy use and lower bills including energy efficiency and electrification paired with solar.

Workforce Development and Community Participation: Work through regional partnerships to support workforce development and other initiatives that enable equitable participation in the clean energy transition. Empower local community members and organizations to participate in the regulatory and legislative process.

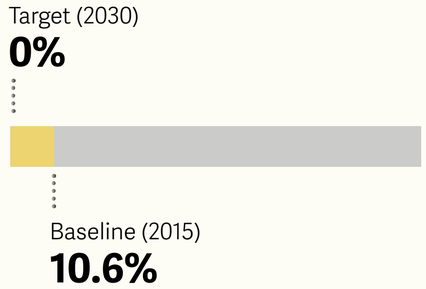
Tracking Progress

Target: Increase over the baseline of households enrolled in solar gardens or other energy assistance.



1,030 households
current baseline

Target: 0% of households considered energy impoverished (10%+ spent on energy needs) by 2035



Equity in Action

Ensuring equitable and affordable access to energy for all community members supports community-wide social and economic resilience. Prioritized investments are made in programs and services that lower the energy cost burden, increase energy efficiency and provide renewable energy solutions for vulnerable populations. Access to high value jobs and business ownership opportunities is advanced through equity-focused workforce development and supportive services.



COMMUNITY VOICES

Rachael Bramblett

Program Manager, **EnergySmart**

"I work with the city to help people navigate home energy upgrades, from efficiency and electrification to rooftop solar and rebates. Our solar group buy programs have been especially popular because it gives folks in our community a simpler, more affordable way to explore rooftop solar together.

We've heard from participants that they were interested in solar but felt unsure about where to start. The solar co-op and group purchase programs helped turn that interest into a clear, manageable process. Participants learn about installers, incentives and timelines together, and the group purchasing model helped bring down costs. That combination of guidance, shared decision-making and savings made rooftop solar feel less overwhelming and more within reach."





"It's like having a friend on your side to walk you through the solar purchasing process. This is the best price by far, which means I get a payback I'm happy with."

Jared Friedman
Program Participant



ACTION AREA

Healthy, Resilient Buildings

Big Moves

Construct and Transform Buildings to be **Healthy and Resilient Spaces**

How this supports our **key goals.**

MITIGATION

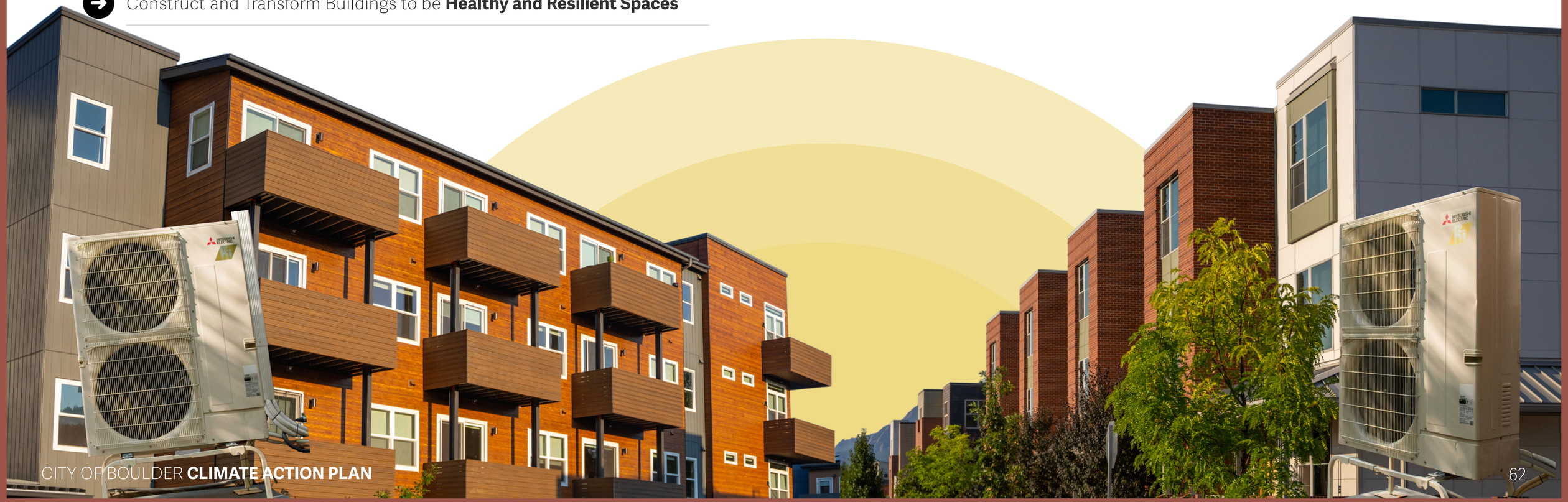
Cut building emissions with efficiency and electrification.

EQUITY

Lower energy costs and expand access to healthy buildings.

RESILIENCE

Make buildings safer, healthier and better able to handle extreme weather.



ACTION AREA

Healthy, Resilient Buildings

Buildings are **the largest source of energy-related emissions in Boulder** and a major source of air pollution; they are also where people spend 90% of their time.

Efficient designs and electric appliances that replace fossil fuel-powered equipment are essential to creating a healthier, more resilient and lower-emissions built environment.

Boulder has been a longtime leader in advancing local and national building codes that improve performance, reduce energy costs and pollution and ensure new buildings meet the highest available standards. Today, Boulder prioritizes removing barriers to heat pump adoption, a proven electric technology that provides heating and cooling with maximum efficiency and minimal emissions. Boulder continues to expand advising services, affordability programs and incentives that have already helped thousands of community members and businesses improve their buildings for healthier, safer and more equitable outcomes.



Work So Far

Building Performance Requirements: Boulder's SmartRegs and Building Performance Ordinance (BPO) require specific types of buildings to meet energy standards over time, supporting ongoing upgrades that reduce emissions and improve comfort and efficiency.

Statewide Low-Carbon Code: The city helped establish a statewide low-carbon code that now serves as Colorado's mandatory minimum, ensuring new buildings meet the most efficient standard wherever they are built.

Regional Efficiency Investment: Through partnerships and regulatory advocacy, more than $0.5 billion is being invested regionally in building efficiency and heat pump adoption, including workforce development and consumer education.

Healthy Buildings, Stronger Community Roadmap: A 10-year roadmap is guiding ongoing work to upgrade existing homes and buildings to reduce emissions, improve indoor health and comfort, and make energy improvements easier and more accessible.

Leading by Example: The city organization has led by example in decarbonizing its own buildings, with many already electrified and a roadmap in place to address the rest.

Lower Residential Energy Use: As of 2024, residential energy use had decreased 8% since 2018.

BIG MOVE

Construct and Transform Buildings to be Healthy and Resilient Spaces

Making homes, rentals, businesses and community spaces more efficient, healthy and resilient. Increasing the energy performance of buildings to mitigate rising energy costs as extreme heat events increase in frequency. Reducing indoor and outdoor air pollution by replacing gas combustion appliances with efficient electric alternatives.

How We Will Get There

Efficient and Electric Building Systems: Accelerate building upgrades that eliminate fossil fuels by improving efficiency, transitioning to all-electric technologies, and integrating on-site renewable energy and storage. This includes encouraging or requiring replacement of fossil-fuel equipment with electric alternatives, alongside programs that support weatherization, high-efficiency appliances, and solar and battery systems.

Equitable Building Transition: Prioritize support for renters, older homes, and income-limited households who face higher energy costs and climate risks.

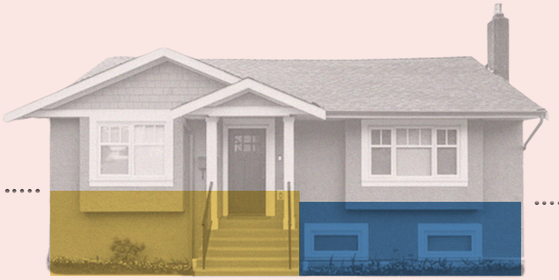
High Performing Building Codes and Standards: Advance local and national building codes to prioritize building performance, energy cost savings and emissions reductions.

Support for Building Upgrades: Provide advising, incentives and technical support to help community members and businesses make improvements to their buildings voluntarily and in response to local regulations.

Tracking Progress

Target: 100% all-electric buildings by 2035

31% of homes use electric space heating



27% of homes use electric water heating

15% of commercial buildings use electric space heating



47% of commercial buildings use electric water heating

Equity in Action

These upgrades reduce climate pollution, improve indoor air quality and help lower utility bills, especially when paired with income-qualified support and rebates.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Asian Market replaced freezer and refrigeration equipment that was more than 30 years old during a pilot with a PACE grant. The upgrades save the business more than $8,000 per year in utility and maintenance costs and reduce climate pollution by 50 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.

"Without this grant, there is no way we could have made this happen."

Maria Nguyen
Owner, **Asian Market**



ACTION AREA

Nature-Based Solutions

Big Moves

- Cool the City with **Nature**
- Restore and Manage **Resilient Landscapes**
- Support **Healthy Ecosystems**

How this supports our **key goals.**

MITIGATION

Store carbon and reduce climate risks through healthy ecosystems.

EQUITY

Expand access to nature's health and cooling benefits.

RESILIENCE

Use healthy landscapes to reduce heat, flood and fire risks.



ACTION AREA

Nature-Based Solutions

Healthy ecosystems are a powerful climate tool.

They store carbon, absorb and filter water, produce food, support biodiversity, improve air quality and help protect the community from climate extremes. Access to nature also improves well-being, strengthens belonging and can support emotional resilience. Nature-based solutions build on the connection between people and nature to reduce risks from heat, fire, flooding and disease.

The city stewards natural lands, agricultural lands and urban landscapes as living systems that support people and ecosystems. Staff work across departments, agencies and community to increase biodiversity, carbon storage and water absorption across these landscapes. Staff also work with Indigenous organizations and individuals to integrate Indigenous wisdom and honor traditional ecological knowledge, including through a partnership with Harvest of All First Nations.

People have lived in Boulder Valley for more than 14,000 years, and open space now managed by Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) still plays a vital role in the community. Forest and grassland protections, along with watershed-scale conservation and restoration, are nature-based climate solutions. This work is guided by OSMP management plans and government-to-government consultation with sovereign Tribal Nations.

Work So Far

Cool Boulder Partnerships: Launched in 2022, the city-sponsored Cool Boulder campaign has brought together more than 60 community partners to advance nature-based climate action with community members.

Advancing Global Nature Commitments: Boulder joined the Berlin Urban Nature Pact, a global coalition of cities working to restore urban ecosystems and protect biodiversity by 2030. This positions Boulder within an international effort to scale nature-based climate solutions, accelerating shared learning, accountability, and impact beyond city boundaries.

Long-Term Land Stewardship: City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks as well as Parks & Recreation deliver a wide range of programs, from forest and grassland restoration and trail management across more than 46,000 acres of open space to neighborhood tree planting and community park enhancements.



BIG MOVE

Cool the City with Nature

Boulder's urban and natural ecosystems provide cooler, healthier spaces, reducing extreme heat and improving resilience for all community members.

How We Will Get There

Heat and Urban Forestry Mapping: Advance citywide heat mapping and urban forestry analyses to identify high-heat neighborhoods and guide natural cooling interventions. These assessments inform both ongoing projects and future planning decisions.

Community Action and Stewardship: Support community efforts to plant and care for trees, monitor the urban forest and implement local cooling strategies, including programs like Cool Boulder and the Community Forestry Corps.

Maintaining and Expanding Tree Canopy: Expand Boulder's tree canopy to extend cooling benefits to more neighborhoods, while also maintaining existing trees to preserve established shade and ecosystem services. This work is guided by the city's Urban Forest Strategic Plan, which sets long-term goals for maintaining and expanding Boulder's urban canopy while improving tree health, safety, and ecosystem benefits across the community.

Tracking Progress

As of 2023, the city has reached a **21% average canopy** across the entire city. Nationally, the average tree canopy for comparable cities is **18%**.

Targets for 2040



25%

baseline target for neighborhood tree canopy coverage across the city to support cooling and climate resilience.

up to 35%

in heat vulnerable areas to achieve optimal cooling benefits

Equity in Action

Expanding and maintaining tree canopy and natural cooling infrastructure provides relief from extreme heat, especially for community members in historically under-canopied, heat-vulnerable neighborhoods. Key considerations include ensuring investments and pilot projects prioritize high-need areas and engaging community members in co-design to avoid unequal access to cooling benefits.



COMMUNITY VOICES

Kelia Portis

Crew Leader,
Community Forestry Corps

"It is powerful to see how something as simple as a tree can bring people together. Planting trees improves the environment, but it also strengthens neighborhoods. Trees create safe, welcoming places where children, families and neighbors can connect.

Seeing community members enjoy the open spaces made possible by our efforts makes me proud to be part of something so meaningful. Many people do not have access to shade and green space and that is why it means so much to be part of an organization that helps provide something that should be accessible to everyone."







BIG MOVE

Restore and Manage Resilient Landscapes

Boulder strengthens resilience to climate disruption through regenerative ecosystems that support biodiversity, enhance vegetative and water management systems and reduce the impacts of climate change.

How We Will Get There

Analyzing Landscape Risks: Assess landscape risks to guide planning and investment, building on completed work like the Desertification Risk Assessment to identify areas facing long-term drought and ecosystem decline.

Tools and Guidance for Resilient Landscapes: Develop practical tools, guidance and training can help city staff, partners and community members use resilient landscape practices. Examples include design templates, fire- and drought-tolerant plant lists and training for contractors, organizations and community members to build capacity and promote adoption of practices.

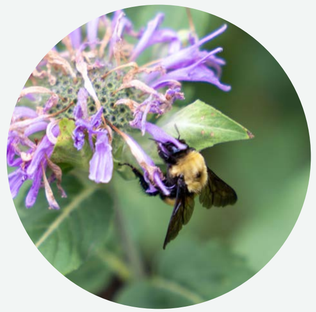
Embedding Resilience in Codes and Regulations: Integrate climate risks into city codes and regulations to shape how landscapes are designed, managed and maintained. By addressing wildfire, drought, flooding and heat in codes, standards and planning, we can reduce climate risks and support healthier ecosystems on public and private land.

Implementing Resilient Landscapes Across the City: Restore and manage landscapes across Boulder to reduce climate risks and improve ecosystem health. Existing examples include open space restoration and fuel reduction, green infrastructure that improves water absorption and reduces flooding, and greenways and landscape improvements that enhance habitat and connectivity.

Tracking Progress

This is an **emerging area of work**, and tracking systems and indicators will be developed as programs, trainings, and pilot projects advance in the following areas:

- Amount of non-functional turf replaced with biodiverse absorbent landscapes.
- Number of resilient landscape trainings completed.
- Number and scale of climate resilient pilot and demonstration projects.







Equity in Action

Resilient landscaping practices reduce climate risks and create healthier outdoor landscapes, with the potential to benefit neighborhoods disproportionately affected by drought, flood, fire, and heat hazards. Key considerations include providing training, guidance, and incentives to ensure small contractors and landscapers and under-resourced community members can participate and adopt resilient practices without undue burden.



Community members partner with Cool Boulder to create Pollinator Pathways, corridors of plants that help cool neighborhoods and support biodiversity, especially for native pollinators.

BIG MOVE

Support Healthy Ecosystems

Boulder manages ecosystems to reduce exposure to environmental contaminants, enhance biodiversity and improve public health, while promoting nature-based solutions that strengthen both human and ecological resilience.

How We Will Get There

Reducing Pesticides and Toxics: Minimize exposure to harmful chemicals while maintaining healthy ecosystems. This includes efforts such as collaborative research on chemicals and ongoing tracking and analysis of environmental contaminant trends.

Ecosystem-Based, Integrated Pest Management: Prioritize nature-based strategies to manage mosquitoes and other pests, balancing public health needs with ecosystem resilience. Efforts include carrying out a citywide Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program that addresses climate change magnified insect and disease pressures while minimizing the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.

Pollinator Gardens and Pathways: Expand and connect native plant corridors and pollinator habitats across public and private spaces to strengthen biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. Efforts include guidance and resources to help community members and businesses create pollinator-friendly landscapes, and partnerships to expand habitat connectivity. The city is also establishing 24 biodiversity gardens to track pollinators and seasonal changes in native plants.

Tracking Progress

The Vector Index tracks mosquito risk by measuring the proportion of mosquitoes carrying disease.



Target: maintain below 0.75 (elevated risk). Weekly mosquito data is tracked on the city's mosquito report.

0.75
Point of elevated risk.

0.24
Boulder's index in 2025 was well below the target.



Pesticide monitoring: Boulder tracks and monitors pesticide applications on city-owned property. More information is available on the city's IPM page.

Equity in Action

Nature-based ecosystem management improves both human and ecological health. Key considerations include communicating clear, actionable guidance and providing training and resources to small-scale landscapers.



A rooftop solar installation at Spruce Parking garage in Downtown Boulder.

Part VI

What's Next

What's Next

This plan is a living document. The work outlined here is already underway, and progress is shared online as it evolves. To explore the plan and track progress:

Explore the Climate Action Plan online

- View Action Areas and Big Moves, and explore related programs, projects and data on the CAP webpage

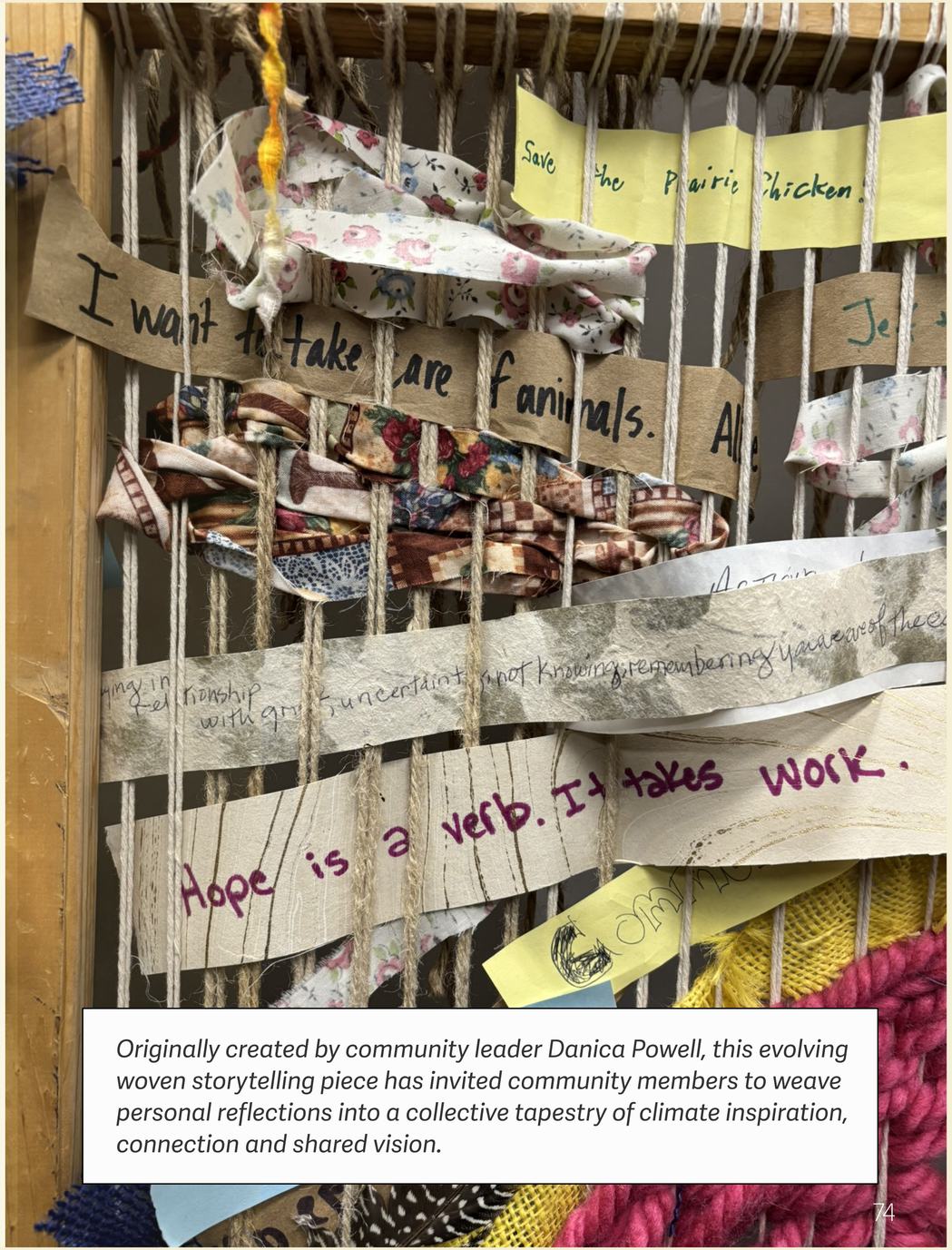
Track progress and see results

- Annual Climate Impact Report with key outcomes, data and stories
- Community indicators and dashboards linked throughout the plan and on the CAP webpage

Get involved and stay connected

Follow the City of Boulder on YouTube, X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and NextDoor

- City updates and community stories: bouldercolorado.gov/news
- Sign up for the Climate Initiatives e-newsletter



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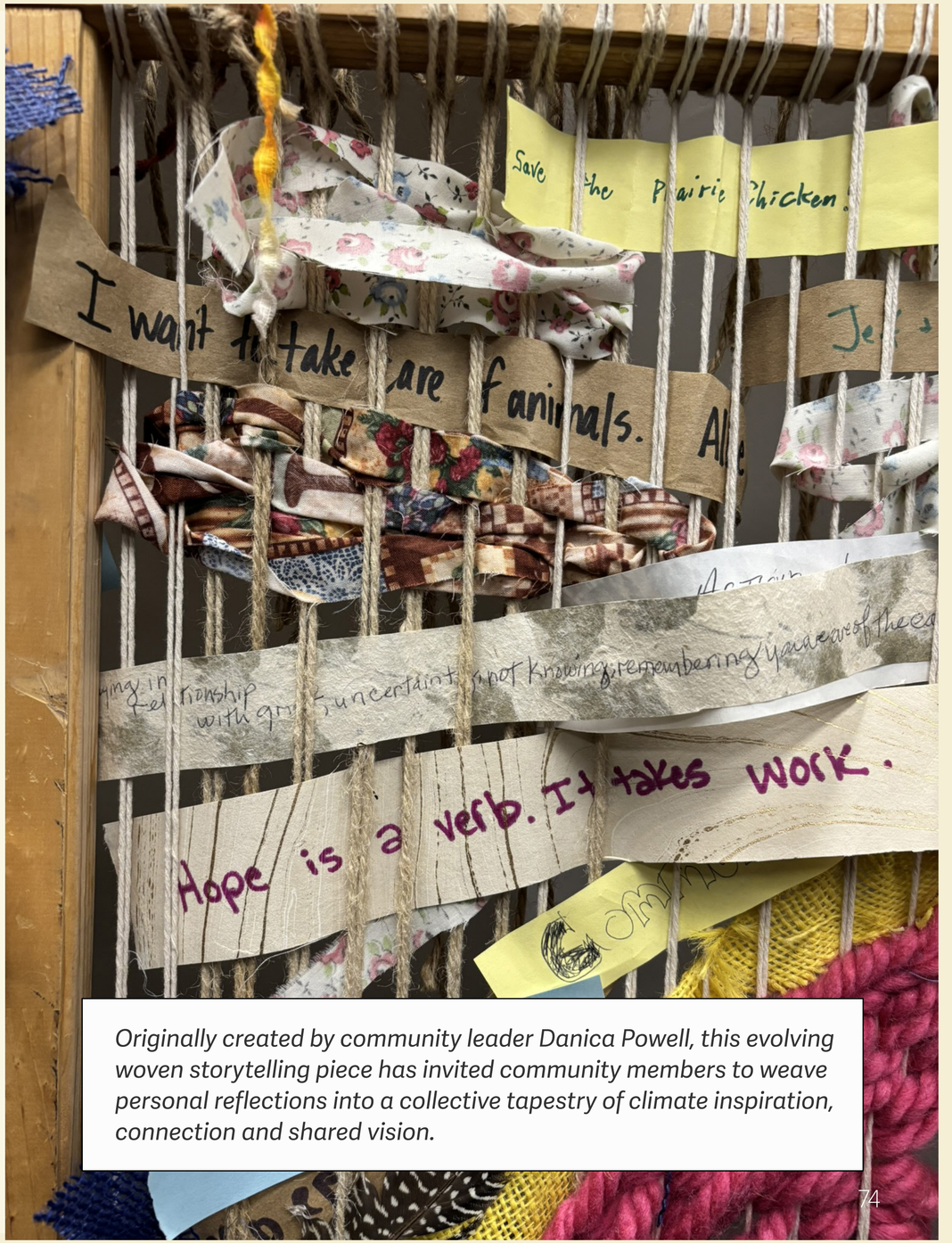
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