



# Boulder Parks & Recreation 5-Year Progress Report

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Boulder community members,

Five years ago, City Council adopted the Boulder Parks and Recreation (BPR) Master Plan. The plan, developed through extensive research and a robust community engagement process, notes Boulder's continuous evolution in ways that reflect economic, political, social and environmental landscape changes. The 2014 Master Plan provided BPR with a roadmap aligned with community values to navigate these shifts.



With the plan, BPR committed to a new mission and vision, as well as a set of outlined initiatives scaled to anticipate a fiscally constrained budget. Since then, we have used the plan to guide daily work in service to and partnership with you. Together, we and our partner organizations have developed a wide range of meaningful programs and initiatives, an effective asset management program, and financially responsible and sustainable practices.

We are delighted to share this Progress Report illustrating the collective strides taken to promote the health and well-being of the entire Boulder community. While this overview is not exhaustive, it highlights significant milestones we hope illustrate promises kept as we implement the Master Plan goals from enhanced community access and improved facility condition to our department's organizational effectiveness.

Starting in 2020, we will undertake an update to this plan guiding us into the future. As we build on recent successes and continue implementation of items in the plan, we look forward to continuing our relationship with you. We promise that BPR will continue to listen, to understand your expectations and values and to honor the trust you place in us. Together, we can continue to make health and wellness accessible and inclusive for everyone in the city.

Sincerely,  
Yvette Bowden, Director  
City of Boulder Parks and Recreation  
and Community Vitality



## FIVE YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES

2014-15

2016

- Council approves BPR Master Plan (February 4, 2014)
- Launched key projects:  
Valmont City Park Concept Plan, General Urban Park Maintenance and Management Plan (GMMP), Aquatics Feasibility Plan and Athletic Fields Feasibility Study
- PRAB accepts concept plan for Valmont City Park (February 2015)
- PRAB accepts Aquatics Feasibility Plan (May 2015)
- Service Delivery Model and Recreation Priority Index (RPI) created

- Phase One Civic Area - construction begins
- Knight Foundation funds # program for management Ash Borer tree debris
- Silver Sneakers offered at recreation centers, Financial program simplified
- Joint Use Agreement renewed Boulder Valley School District
- Donor Recognition and Sponsorship Guidelines approved
- BPR 2013 flood-related project restoration completed (Flood Knollwood Tennis Courts)
- SPARK program through Youth Services Initiative (YSI) enhanced youth fitness

## MISSION

The foundation of Boulder Parks and Recreation is built on the department's mission, vision and guiding principles. These are the blocks that shape the focus for the department's strategies for action and decision-making, partnership and outreach efforts.

### Vision

We envision a community where every member's health and well-being is founded on unparalleled parks, facilities and programs.

### Mission

Boulder Parks and Recreation will promote the health and well-being of the entire Boulder community by collaboratively providing high-quality parks, facilities and programs.

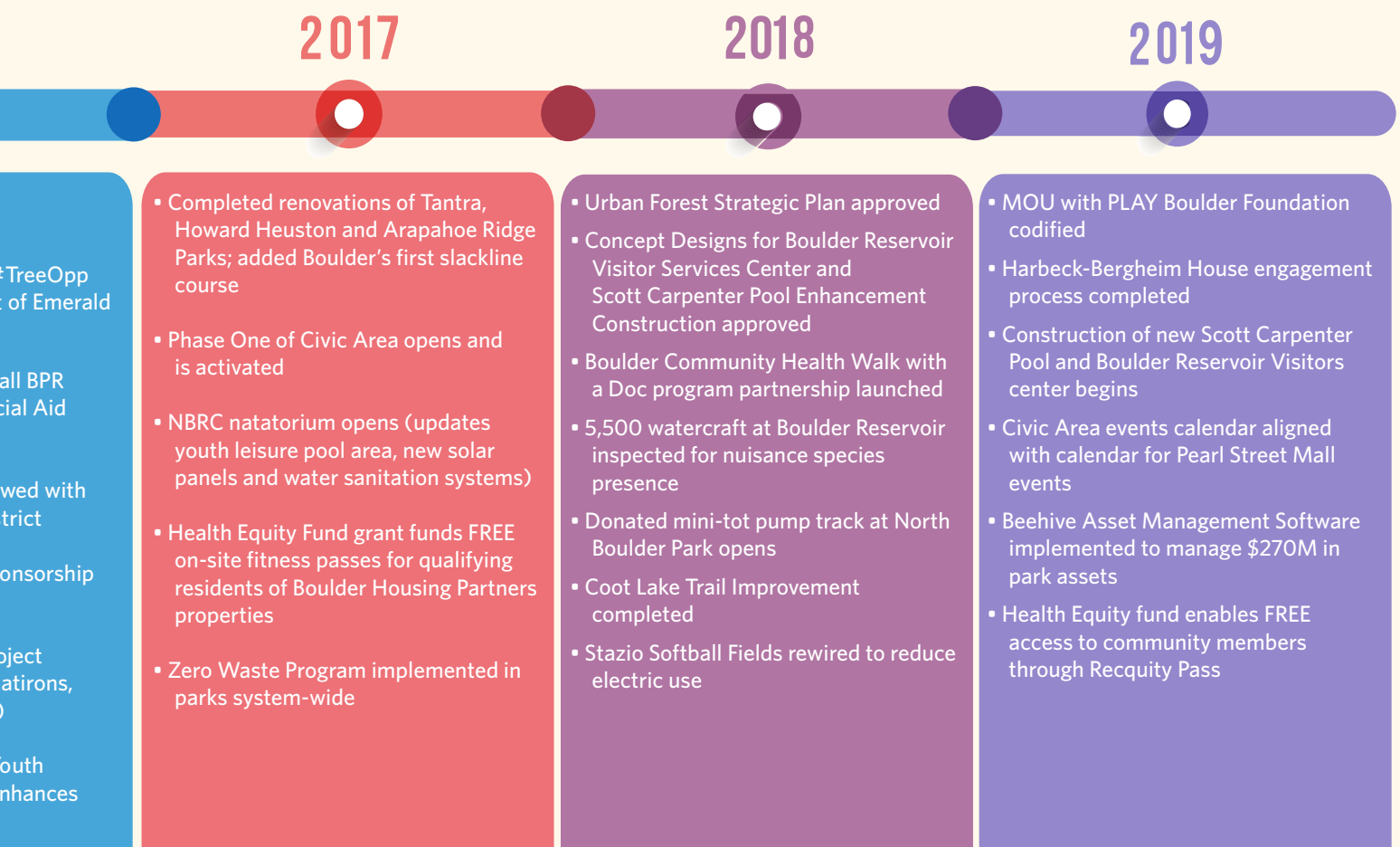
## KEY THEMES

The goals of the Master Plan are organized around six themes, which emerged from community engagement, research and needs assessment elements of the planning process.

- Community Health and Wellness
- Taking Care of What We Have
- Financial Sustainability
- Building Community and Relationships
- Youth Engagement and Activity
- Organizational Readiness

Visit **[BoulderParks-Rec.org](https://boulderparks-rec.org)** to find the complete Boulder Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLNESS IN OUR COMMUNITY



## COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Services are planned, designed and delivered to provide opportunities for physical activity and social interaction to keep Boulder a healthy and vibrant community.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY & RELATIONSHIPS

Promote a healthy community and address social and cultural inequities.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & ACTIVITY

Engage our youth in experiential learning through play and shared experiences.

### Health and Wellness for ALL!

Everyone – regardless of age, income level or ability – can elevate their well-being and health by accessing BPR’s recreational facilities and programs. Partnerships broadened the city’s program offerings and opportunities.

#### Reducing Barriers

BPR provided greater access to recreation and fitness programs by reducing the financial, language and transportation challenges some residents experience.

BPR’s Recquity Pass program, for example, offers free recreation center passes to Boulder Housing Partners (BHP) residents. In the first eight months of the program, recreation center use by these participants increased 340% (5,000+ visits). The program also provides bilingual community liaisons to support non-English speaking participants.

#### Partnering Up

BPR partnered with others to improve community health equity. The PLAY Boulder Foundation collaborated with the city on its PLAYpass program awarding eligible youth registration vouchers for sports and recreation programs. By reducing barriers to fee-based participation, PLAYpass allows more Boulder youth to engage in a healthy, active lifestyle.

BPR also joined forces with Boulder County’s I Have A Dream Foundation (IHADF) and Boulder Housing Partners (BHP) to create “Healthy Together.” Healthy Together, funded by a Health Equity Fund grant, provides low-income youth with physical activity, education and mentors in their neighborhoods.

#### Enhanced Inclusion

Boulder’s EXciting Programs Adventures and New Dimensions (EXPAND) program for people with disabilities offered new summer camps and BVSD sites for participants (ages 6 to 17) enhancing self-esteem and social skills. EXPAND also implemented an inclusion model allowing youth with disabilities to participate in a broader range of camps. Camp staff received training to support campers of all abilities.

#### Staying Fit for Life

Boulderites should age well. BPR expanded the SilverSneakers program to all recreation centers and added access for Silver & Fit American Specialty Health participants. These programs allow older adults (with qualified health plans) access to all BPR recreation facilities, adding to BPR’s existing age 60+ discount rates.

We will continue to strive to serve all community members seeking health and social well-being through fitness and recreation!



#### Building Community & Relationships

- 11 Completed/Ongoing
- 1 In Progress
- 0 Not Started

#### Community Health & Well-Being


- 9 Completed/Ongoing
- 1 In Progress
- 2 Not Started



#### Youth Engagement & Activity

- 11 Completed/Ongoing
- 3 In Progress
- 1 Not Started





“We are proud to strengthen our ongoing partnership with BPR to promote health equity to all in our community regardless of physical ability or financial means. Through programs like PLAYpass, we’ve been able to help more than 600 low-income Boulder youth access sport and recreation programming throughout the community at no cost, or at a very reduced cost.”

– **Katie Theiler**, Executive Director,  
PLAY Boulder Foundation

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Financial aid program: expanded access for low-income and older adults; provided forms in Spanish; offered programs where people live.
- BPR’s Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube accounts invite residents and visitors to interact with us virtually with more than 1-million interactions in 2019.
- BPR fostered greater partnerships with the PLAY Boulder Foundation, Growing Up Boulder, Boulder Valley School District, Boulder Housing Partners and I Have A Dream Foundation to serve Boulder better.
- Volunteer recruitment and retention increased thanks to the new, city-wide Volunteer Cooperative and volunteer handbook.
- System-wide efforts keep us “green,” reducing fuel use and exhaust emissions by phasing in electric vehicles and equipment, updating irrigation systems, and following organic turf management practices. Our turf maintenance program has been pesticide and herbicide-free for 18 years.
- Local youth help shape BPR’s future. For example, Growing Up Boulder youth helped design Civic Area Phase One - “Park at the Core” and they can now walk across the 11th Street Spine Bridge and explore the Nature Play areas they envisioned.
- BPR has enhanced amenities by partnering with grassroots community organizations to bring the Green Block skate park pilot at Valmont City Park, a pump track for kids at North Boulder Park, and a slackline course to Tantra Park.

“I am a senior living in a BHP property . . . the rec center pass has changed my life. I experience joint pain and since being able to take a water aerobics class my pain has been reduced (I would estimate) by at least 75%. All my blood work numbers are improved. This program works!”

– **Sue N.**, BPR program participant



## TAKING CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE

*Ensure the department's assets remain in good condition to serve the community.*

Boulder Parks and Recreation (BPR) started with a backlog of over \$27 million in repairs for existing facilities in 2014. The Master Plan directed us to focus on maintaining existing facilities while balancing development of long-term plans for new parks and facilities.

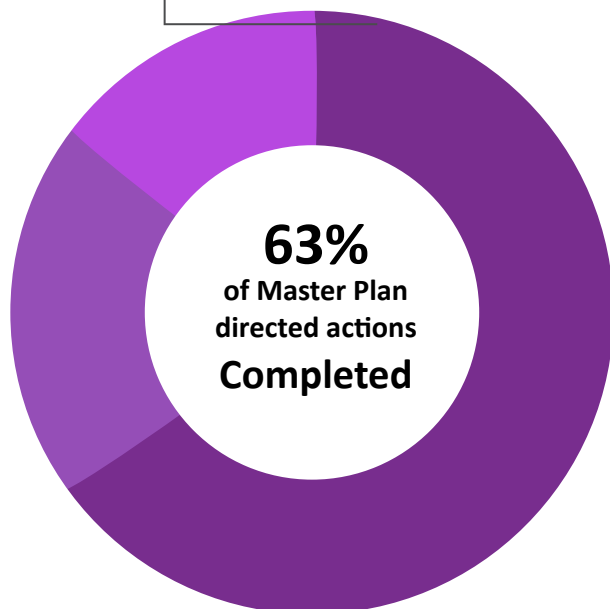
Thanks to community and city council support of the Community, Culture and Safety Tax and the .25 cent sales tax, BPR was able to reduce the backlog to \$16 million in only five years while still delivering on our promise to provide unparalleled parks, facilities and programs.

### Starting with Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks serve as the backbone of our 1,800-acre urban parks system, providing a recreational and social focus for neighbors. Since 2014, BPR has refurbished 15 neighborhood parks across the city, including Crestview, Emma Gomez Martinez and Howard Heuston Parks. These park renewals are examples of “taking care of what we have.” Primarily funded through the .25 cent sales tax and some flood-related funding, BPR prioritized each park based on deficiencies or needed access by underserved communities. Explore what park projects are coming next by visiting [BoulderParkNews.org](http://BoulderParkNews.org).

#### Taking Care of What We Have

- 12 Completed/Ongoing
- 4 In Progress
- 3 Not Started



### Leveraging Grassroots Efforts & Partnerships

When residents or community groups come to us with new ideas and funding - we all win! Over the past five years we've been able to add the tot track at North Boulder Park, Tree House in the Civic Area's Creekside Nature Play Area, a slackline course in Tantra Park, and the Green Block Skate Park pilot at Valmont City Park - by community members and donors finding ways to enhance our Master Plan-aligned construction projects.

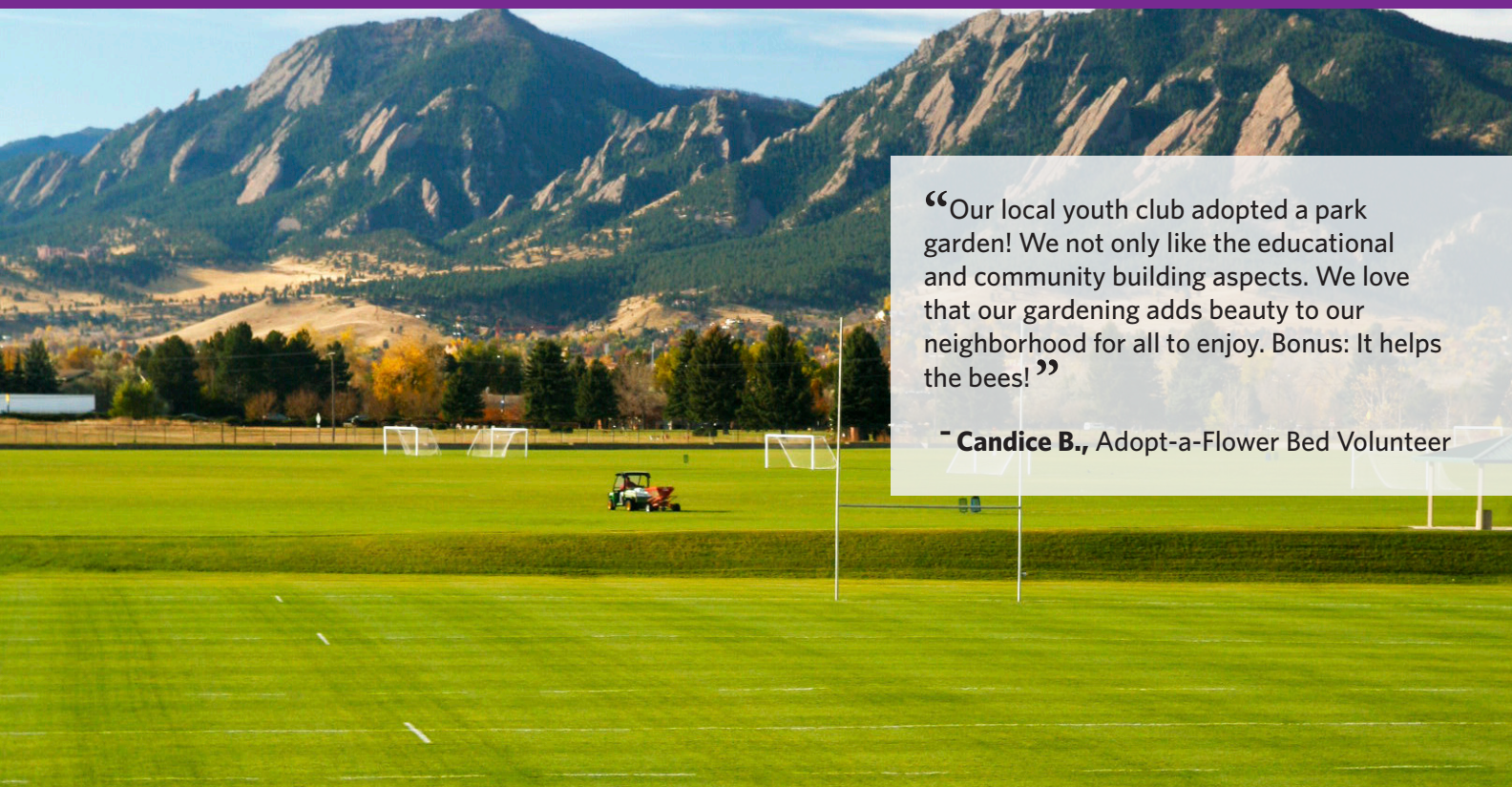
### Building a Better Tomorrow

“Taking care of what we have” also means building a great system for tomorrow. The 2014 voter-passed 2A Community, Culture and Safety Tax (CCS) invested \$8.7 million to transform 13-acres in Boulder's downtown for an expanded Central Park.

Last year, BPR broke ground on the Scott Carpenter Pool Enhancement Project (funded in part by the 2017, 2A CCS Tax) and a new Boulder Reservoir Visitor Services Center which will also feature a donor-funded boardwalk and inclusive play amenities. Investments like these enhance our long, rich history of providing Boulder with great spaces to gather and play.







“Our local youth club adopted a park garden! We not only like the educational and community building aspects. We love that our gardening adds beauty to our neighborhood for all to enjoy. Bonus: It helps the bees!”

— Candice B., Adopt-a-Flower Bed Volunteer

## HIGHLIGHTS

- BPR refreshed 15 parks and playgrounds, inviting visitors to experience several signature spaces like the first slackline course at Tantra Park and the restored natural rock play structure at Arapahoe Ridge “Rock” Park.
- Urban Forestry inventoried the city’s 50,800 public trees and managed the impacts of Emerald Ash Borer. Boulder’s first Urban Forest Strategic Plan was adopted, assessing our urban canopy and identifying ways to ensure its long-term health.
- The city completed renovation of the downtown Civic Area with construction of the “Park at the Core” activated with more than 250 community activities each year.
- BPR started construction on two popular facilities: Scott Carpenter Pool and the Boulder Reservoir Visitor Service Center. Both are anticipated to open for the 2020 summer season.
- BPR reduced our overall system Facility Condition Index (FCI = total estimated backlog repairs divided by total current replacement value) from .14 to .08 to ensure assets are safe. In short, we put our tax funding where it was needed most.
- BPR also implemented a new asset management software to ensure ongoing park safety and functionality through enhanced tracking, maintenance and repairs.





## ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS

*Attracting, training and retaining an effective workforce enhances the community's quality of life through impact and continuity.*

Over the past five years, BPR has developed into a high-performing learning and growth organization. An internal team ensures all staff develop the technical, project management, leadership and communication skills necessary to meet the community's expectations.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

*Being good fiscal stewards is important every day.*

BPR is supported by several sources of funding (dedicated sales taxes, program and facility user fees, property tax and general fund revenues). Effective stewardship of these resources means directing them towards the parks, programs and facilities of greatest community benefit. It also means continually seeking to limit costs and ensure the long-term viability of adequate funding.

BPR's financial strategy has led to improved asset management, enhanced cost containment, and a consistent recreation pricing methodology that better align with community values and desires. This allows limited tax subsidies to enhance community benefit programs and increase inclusive access.

## HIGHLIGHTS

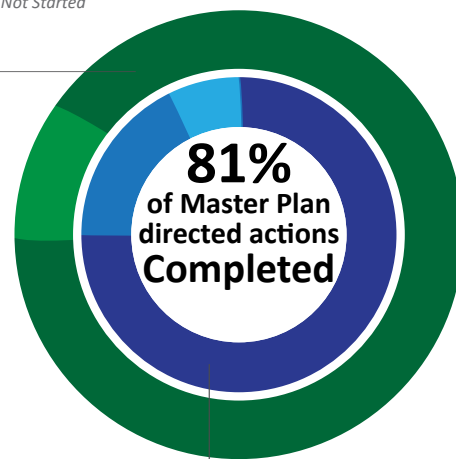
- The department contained costs in the face of rising expenses while maintaining quality parks and programs.
- Data related to capital backlog supported voter renewal of a .25 cent sales tax dedicated for parks and recreation.
- BPR developed community-responsive resource allocation tools such as:

General Maintenance and Management Plan;  
Capital Investment Strategy;  
Facility Strategic Plan;  
Athletic Fields Study;  
Urban Forest Strategic Plan;  
Aquatics Feasibility Plan, and  
several targeted facility business plans.



### Financial Sustainability

- 12 Completed/Ongoing
- 2 In Progress
- 0 Not Started



### Organizational Readiness

- 9 Completed/Ongoing
- 2 In Progress
- 1 Not Started

- BPR invested in staff retention, training and succession planning to provide the community with a highly skilled, innovative and engaged workforce.
- Department fees and budgets were adjusted to accommodate economic trends and to support community-desired minimum and living wage goals.
- BPR developed the Recreation Service Delivery Model and Recreation Priority Index to ensure programs are aligned with the Master Plan, and appropriately managed throughout their life cycle.
- Programs such as pottery, dance, competitive gymnastics, and some summer camps were out-sourced to community partners, allowing us to focus more resources on recreation level and community-benefit programming.



# EVERYDAY EXCELLENCE

Thank you for entrusting the care of our community's parks, facilities and recreation resources to Boulder Parks and Recreation. We consider the daily care and operation of our robust parks and recreation system an accomplishment. Here's what we did in 2019 by the numbers.



**90** PARKS, PLAZAS  
& PROPERTIES  
**43** PLAYGROUNDS  
**1,800** + ACRES  
OF URBAN PARKS & PLAZA SPACE



**51,000**  
TREES CARED FOR  
& 500 NEW PLANTINGS

**3** FULL SERVICE  
RECREATION CENTERS  
**125** WEEKLY DROP-IN  
FITNESS CLASSES  
512,420 RECREATION CENTER  
VISITOR ENTRIES WELCOMED



**767** YOUTH AND  
ADULTS SERVED  
THROUGH YSI  
PROGRAMMING

**100** OUTDOOR  
BALL COURTS  
**2** OUTDOOR  
POOLS  
**44** MULTI-USE  
SPORTS FIELDS &  
BALL DIAMONDS



**300** FLOWERBEDS  
WITH 50,000  
NEW FLOWERS



**2** MAJOR CONSTRUCTION  
PROJECTS STARTED -  
SCOTT CARPENTER  
POOL & BOULDER RESERVOIR  
VISITOR SERVICES CENTER



**2,424**  
VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED  
**19,130** HOURS TO **100**  
PLUS PROJECTS  
AND OPPORTUNITIES



**18** YEARS OF PESTICIDE &  
HERBICIDE-FREE TURF  
MAINTENANCE PRACTICES



**2,340**  
ENROLLMENTS IN  
EXPAND PROGRAMS  
TO SERVE COMMUNITY  
MEMBERS WITH  
DISABILITIES



**236 MILES**  
OF MULTI-USE PATHS  
FOR SAFE YEAR-ROUND  
CONNECTIVITY

**1,801**  
YOUNG CAMPERS  
SERVED  
THROUGH DIVERSE &  
POPULAR SUMMER  
CAMP OFFERINGS



**4** DOG PARKS  
9 ACRES TOTAL

**5** OTHER SPECIAL  
PROPERTIES:  
• PEARL STREET MALL  
• VALMONT BIKE PARK  
• COLUMBIA CEMETERY  
• FLATIRONS GOLF COURSE  
• BOULDER RESERVOIR



**35,695**  
GOLF ROUNDS PLAYED AT  
FLATIRONS GOLF COURSE



# MEASURING PROGRESS – THE 5-YEAR BOTTOM LINE

**92%** of identified  
Master Plan initiatives **Achieved**



**Backlog repairs  
reduced 60%**  
\$27 million in 2014 to  
\$16 million in 2019

**\$430,496** in scholarships  
provided for parks & recreation programs



**50 BPR events** including  
Creekside Concerts & Movies and more!



**\$1.5M** additional external funding  
raised to directly support BPR capital  
projects and programs (PLAY Boulder  
Foundation responsible for 62%)



**2,529** Trees Planted  
by Forestry 2015-2019



**475** Public Special Events hosted in  
parks (750+ including the Boulder County  
Farmers Market)



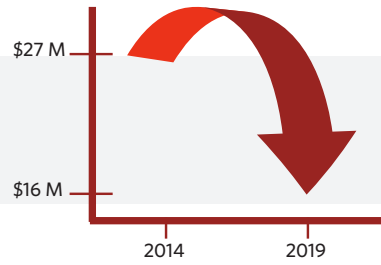
Since 2015, over **12,085 volunteers** have  
contributed on average **26,300 hours** annually!



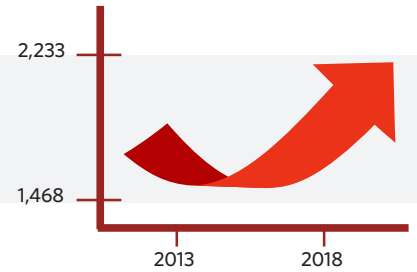
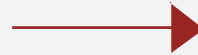


# THEN & NOW

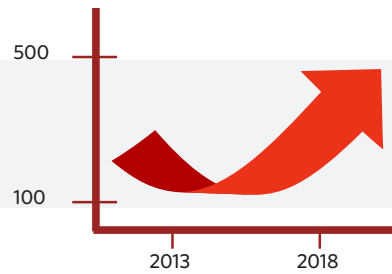
BACKLOG IN REPAIRS FOR EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION ASSETS



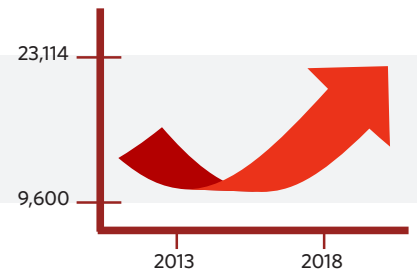
ENROLLMENTS IN EXPAND PROGRAM INCREASED



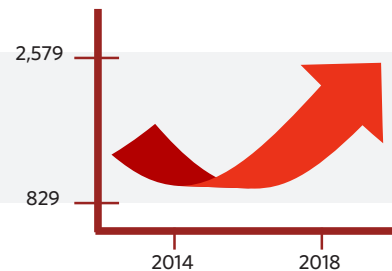
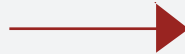
YOUTH SERVED BY YOUTH SERVICES INITIATIVE (YSI) INCREASED



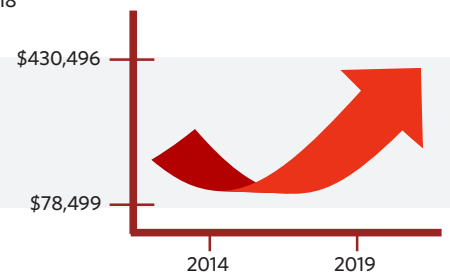
YOUTH DAILY PARTICIPATIONS INCREASED



FINANCIAL AID ENROLLMENTS INCREASED



BPR SUBSIDY FOR COURSES/ENTRIES INCREASED







## 2020 & BEYOND

Since the 2014 Master Plan adoption, BPR has focused on the goals developed with you, the community. Through this work, we've achieved 92% of the initiatives identified in the plan. While this work and your continued support have made Boulder's parks and recreation system strong, challenges remain in meeting Boulder's desires for quality, accessible recreation and parks.

The community has placed important emphasis on the climate emergency and social equity in the last five years – areas for greater attention moving forward. New park development, such as Valmont City Park, has been delayed by the need to prioritize available funds on existing facilities and needs.

### Please stay involved!

We need your input on system needs and balanced, prioritized investments to continue serving your health and well-being needs as a leader in parks and recreation. In 2020, BPR will launch the Master Plan update process to refresh our strategy for continued improvements in the programs, facilities and services you need.

“The opportunity to expand and deepen programming, community, and equity is the aim within our partnership. By leveraging each organization's strengths, we are activating access, movement, and choice by partnering together and with our community.”

**Garett Brownlee Plantz**, V.P. of Programs,  
I Have A Dream Foundation

Get involved and learn more about BPR at **BoulderParks-Rec.org**