

2021 State Legislative Agenda

Board of County Commissioners

Adopted December 10, 2020



Winter storm, Boulder County Open Space



Boulder County residents conceived the idea of a county open space program in the mid-1960s, fueled by the twin interests of the parks and recreation needs of the unincorporated area and preservation of land in the face of rapid county development.

The open space program became a reality in January 1975, and the first two properties, Betasso Preserve and Walker Ranch, were purchased in 1977. Today, Boulder County residents have protected more than 100,000 acres of land, working farms and ranches, wildlife habitat, riparian and wetland areas, and scenic vistas and buffers between communities.

Trail systems traverse across vast open spaces from the foothills to the plains, provide glimpses of our history, and offer abundant recreational opportunities.

Boulder County Parks & Open Space

Mission

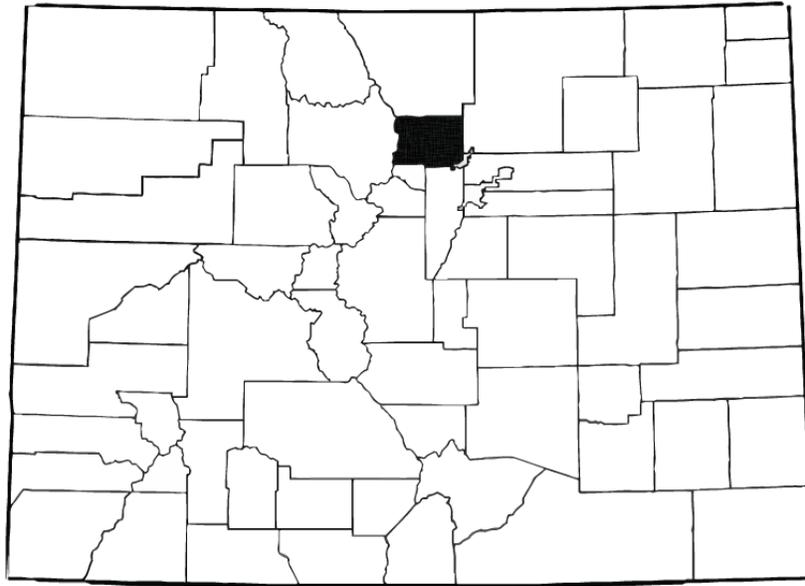
To conserve natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and provide public uses that reflect sound resource management and community values.

Goals

1. Preserve rural lands and buffers.
2. Preserve and restore natural resources for the benefit of the environment and the public.
3. Provide public outreach, partnerships, and volunteer opportunities to increase awareness and appreciation of Boulder County's open space.
4. Protect, restore, and interpret cultural resources for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.
5. Provide quality recreational experiences while protecting open space resources.
6. Promote and provide for sustainable agriculture in Boulder County for the natural, cultural, and economic values it provides.
7. Develop human resources potential, employ sustainable and sound business practices, and pursue technological advancements.



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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in Boulder County's 2021 State Legislative Agenda.

The 2021 State Legislative Agenda was developed over the course of the summer and fall of 2020 through engagement with county departments, partners, legislators, and other stakeholders. It identifies core county legislative and state budget priorities in need of support from our state legislative delegation, and will be used by the county's elected officials and staff to inform any county positions that may be taken on active state legislation.

It is our hope that this legislative agenda will serve as a reference tool for our Boulder County state legislative delegation when they consider legislation that may impact the county and those whom we serve. We also present this legislative agenda as an informative guide for our residents, partners, and staff to assist in understanding Boulder County's positions on the wide variety of public policy issues that impact our work.

In closing, we'd like to take thank the members of Boulder County's state legislative delegation and express our deep appreciation for their service on behalf of the residents of Boulder County and all Coloradans. Their collective effort to understand Boulder County's positions on issues and advocate on behalf of the county is invaluable. Just as invaluable is the collaborative partnership that we have with our delegation members. We look forward to working with them during the 2021 state legislative session.

– the Boulder County Board of County Commissioners





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Legislative Principles

Boulder County's State Legislative Agenda adheres to the following Legislative Principles, which guide the development of the positions the county takes on state legislation.

Equity: Boulder County supports equity for all residents. In 2018, the county commission identified equity and justice as one of its five strategic priorities. Boulder County strongly support rights and protections for all people, including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, people in LGBTQIA+ communities, people who have immigrated into the United States, who are older adults, Native American, female, and/or are earning a low-wage at their employment. In addition to serving as an overarching principle for the entire legislative agenda, social justice and equity considerations are also noted where appropriate for specific policy positions.

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action: Boulder County is committed to protecting and enhancing our environment for generations to come. To that end, Boulder County advances strategies that promote sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as multi-modal transportation networks and alternative modes of transportation, electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, compact land use development, energy efficiency, renewable energy, conservation of resources, and the protection of healthy land, air, and water. We will continue to make decisions and promote policies that support our ability to conserve resources and protect our environment.

Lands and Natural Resources: Boulder County manages public lands and natural resources through initiatives that improve the quality of life of our residents while balancing the multi-faceted needs and rights of community stakeholders. To that end, Boulder County works to preserve open spaces for recreation use, wildlife habitat, and sustainment of our agricultural heritage; manage our wildland urban interface area for disaster preparedness, forest health, and resilience; protect water sources and ensure a sustainable water supply; and efficiently regulate extractive industries, including mining and oil and gas development, to protect air and water quality, and reduce impacts to residents.

Public Service Integration and Collaboration: Boulder County strives to ensure effective use of taxpayer funds and successful outcomes through efficient service delivery and integration of public programs and services. To increase efficiency and effectiveness, Boulder County engages in and strongly supports collaborative efforts within county departments and with partner agencies and organizations in the local community, regionally, and state-wide.

Health and Human Services: Boulder County is dedicated to supporting and sustaining healthy communities that strengthen individuals and families while promoting human dignity and positive outcomes for the future. To that end, Boulder County promotes a high quality of life for all residents by protecting vulnerable populations, ensuring the well-being of seniors, supporting access to affordable health insurance and health and mental health care, maintaining and increasing safe and affordable housing for residents, and improving access to effective and efficient public benefits that support healthy lives and promote self-sufficiency for our residents.

Local Control: Boulder County believes that the authority to address issues that pertain to the county must reside firmly with the county. Local governments are best suited to identify solutions to local issues, particularly with regard to the services we provide, the land use decisions we make, and regulation of the public health and safety impacts of those land uses. Local authority also includes the flexibility to determine use of funding locally and precludes unfunded mandates from the state or federal government.

Fiscal Responsibility: Boulder County recognizes the importance of a state government that is fiscally responsible and advances the economic vitality and well-being of all Coloradans. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into and remain informed about the state budget, and we seek collaboration with the state, especially with regard to decisions and processes that affect our organization or our constituents. Boulder County believes it is critical to the long-term health of Colorado's economy to address the state revenue structure that restricts the state's ability to respond to changing economic conditions, including the Taxpayer Bill of Rights and Amendment 23.



Legislative Priorities

The following are Boulder County's priorities for the 2021 legislative session, including references to legislation that will be introduced in the General Assembly. Additional bills will be introduced in these priority areas throughout the legislative session. Boulder County staff will be active in any legislation introduced in these areas, and we ask for our legislators' support for these bills that are important to us and our constituents.

COVID-19 Legislation

Vaccination: Support efforts that expand COVID-19 vaccination among all community members.

Public Health Workers: Protect public health employees from intimidation and violence.

Human Services: Support human services program flexibility to remove barriers during the pandemic (e.g., electronic signature, CCAP reimbursement for absences).

Additional Legislation

Climate Action and Resilience: Enable new and creative legislative, regulatory, and administrative tools that will enable Colorado to achieve its aggressive greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

Anticipated legislation:

- Support for communities to increase investments in climate resilience
- Measures to accelerate the electrification of buildings and vehicles

Wildfire Mitigation: Support measures that improve forest health and support wildfire mitigation efforts.

Anticipated legislation:

- Reauthorization of the Forest Health Advisory Council
- Tools for local governments to finance and implement mitigation projects

Transportation: Support modernization of transportation funding with prioritization for investments that support transit, reduce single occupancy vehicle use, and decrease emissions through measures such as adoption of electric vehicles.

Human Services: Support access to services to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families, and to assist people in need.

Anticipated legislation:

- Services and funding for youth transitioning from foster care
- Definition of domestic violence for child abuse and neglect in the Children's Code
- Repeal of verification of lawful presence requirement for county services
- Adult Protection Services alternative response authorization

Behavioral Health: Support and enhance behavioral and mental health. *Anticipated legislation:*

- Implementation of Behavioral Health Task Force recommendations
- Increased implementation and funding of co-responder programs

Housing: Support efforts to increase and maintain safe, affordable housing.

Anticipated legislation:

- Inclusionary zoning, allowing requirement of new housing development to include affordable housing



State Budget Priorities

In the development of the FY 2021-2022 state budget and in analyzing 2021 legislation with fiscal notes, Boulder County asks for the support of the General Assembly in maintaining or increasing appropriation levels for the following important areas. More detail about these positions can be found in the relevant sections of the county's 2021 State Legislative Agenda.

COVID-19 Priorities

- **Health Equity:** Support investments in health equity to address disparity of COVID-19 impacts on Black, Latino and Latinx, and Indigenous people.
- **Housing Assistance:** Support assistance programs for renters and landlords so people can remain housed during the pandemic, along with eviction legal protection and housing counseling.
- **Childcare:** Support CCAP stimulus and budget investments such as grants for existing and new providers and funding to increase quality and number of providers.
- **Assistance Enrollment:** Support sufficient County Administration dollars for increased benefits enrollment due to the pandemic.
- **Workforce Job Training:** Support Workforce Development Centers job training funding.
- **Broadband:** Provide support to increase access to affordable broadband infrastructure for remote learning, telework, and telehealth access.
- **LPHAs:** Increase funding for local public health agencies, especially to address COVID-19.
- **Economic Recovery:** Provide continued funding and legislation to support Colorado's businesses and employees recovering from COVID pandemic impacts.

Human Services

- **Division of Youth Services IMPACT Partnership Contract and Collaborative Management Programs:** Continue Division of Youth Services contract and support ongoing funding for these effective, cost-saving programs that reduce youth detention, commitment, out-of-home placement, and recidivism.
- **Child Welfare:** Ensure that the Child Welfare system is fully funded, including sufficient funding for caseworkers per the 2014 caseload study, and able to effectively implement the federal Family First Prevention Services Act and prioritize prevention, with robust analysis of post-IV-E Waiver and other resources.
- **Affordable Housing:** Protect housing dollars for development of affordable housing, including increased funding from HB 19-1245 and HB 19-1322.
- **Data Interoperability:** Support investment to link human services and health data systems across programs to improve services and outcomes, while protecting confidentiality and data security.

Disaster Recovery and Resiliency

- **Flood Recovery:** Ensure sufficient state funding match is budgeted for projects related to 2013 flood recovery.
- **Wildfire Mitigation:** Increase funding to support local government wildfire mitigation and prevention projects.

Community Services

- **Older Adults:** Maintain funding for programs for older adults such as the Older Coloradans Program and Old Age Pension.
- **Community Corrections:** Support funding and no unfunded mandates for community corrections programs.





2021 State Legislative Agenda



COVID-19 Recovery

Resources to support coronavirus pandemic response, recovery, and resilience.

ENCOURAGE THE ADOPTION OF CLIMATE-POSITIVE INNOVATIONS, DRAWING FROM THE LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE AIR AND CARBON POLLUTION

The coronavirus pandemic has necessitated changes in how many families live and work, in order to reduce the spread of infection. In some cases, these changes have had the secondary effect of reducing greenhouse gas and other emissions. For instance, families for whom working from home is an option have been able to reduce their level of vehicle travel and the pollution it creates. Boulder County supports legislation that explores opportunities to turn these temporary changes into lasting policy changes that benefit the climate.

EQUITABLY EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES

Coloradans' broadband needs have increased exponentially in the past five years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which has necessitated that many people work and learn remotely. Current broadband infrastructure is not robust and widespread enough to meet these needs. According to the Colorado Broadband Office, approximately 13% of rural households, between 85,000 to 90,000 households, lack broadband access. Without reliable, affordable broadband access households are cut off from participating in remote work, remote medical care, and e-learning. Communication and connectedness today and in the future are increasingly dependent on internet access. During the COVID-19 pandemic telecommuting and e-learning has become the norm for many people with broadband access. This is a chance for our state to reassess fossil fuel intensive commuting and promote telecommuting as a more environmentally conscious alternative in a future post-pandemic world. Creating the infrastructure for telecommuting could lead to markedly decreased emissions from the transportation sector, which is currently the state's largest source of greenhouse gases, and contribute to achieving the 2030 target set by the Governor's Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap to cut 50% of transportation emissions.

In order to make telecommuting an option for all, broadband must be ubiquitous and affordable. Boulder County supports increased sustainable funding for broadband infrastructure to ensure equitable access and enable people statewide to participate and succeed in the digital age. Broadband grant programs throughout the Department of Local Affairs and the Department of Regulatory Agencies must have sustainable sources of funding. Increased coordination between state agencies, community stakeholders, and the private sector to expand broadband access and address the specific needs of local communities will also help to eliminate the broadband access gap. Boulder County also supports managing broadband as a regulated service to ensure that broadband is an affordable and accessible utility. In the past, government agencies have used regulation and subsidies to incentivize the construction of infrastructure for universal access to utilities and services including the electricity, water, telephone services, and the postal network. Expanding access to broadband will empower people regardless of their socioeconomic status or location and improve quality of life for rural Coloradans.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ANALYZE COLORADO'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM PRACTICE AND POLICY CHANGES TO REDUCE JAIL POPULATIONS IMPLEMENTED AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 TO IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR USE POST-PANDEMIC

Due to the public health risks of COVID transmission in jails and prisons, several practices have been implemented in Boulder County and elsewhere to reduce the incarcerated population. This includes new arrest standards, increased eligibility for personal recognizance (non-monetary) bonds, and early releases of sentenced individuals. Boulder County supports efforts to evaluate these practices and identify the strategies that proved most effect in reducing jail populations while protecting public safety, for potential implementation post-pandemic.

SUPPORT EMERGENCY MEASURES TO PROTECT VULNERABLE RENTERS AND LANDLORDS IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have put housing at risk for many Coloradans that have lost jobs or income. Over the course of 2020, the Governor has taken a number of actions to address this crisis, including a series of executive orders limiting evictions and the creation of a Special Eviction Prevention Task Force. During that same period, \$33 million in state and federal emergency housing payment assistance has been provided for renters and landlords, with another \$50 million for emergency housing payment assistance approved during the December 2020 special session from the Governor's FY 20-21 "stimulus" budget proposal.

Recognizing the long-term economic damage that will result from the COVID-19 pandemic, Boulder County supports policies that improve protections for renters such as limits on evictions and late fees, as well as continued funding for housing payment assistance programs, including for both renters and landlords, so that families can remain in their homes.

SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING AND PROGRAM FLEXIBILITIES TO SUPPORT COUNTIES' ABILITY TO ADMINISTER PROGRAMS AND MANAGE INCREASED ENROLLMENT, INCLUDING REMOTE ENROLLMENT, OF CLIENTS IN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DUE TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increases in administrative costs for counties due to higher levels of client enrollment in critical human services and health care programs such as Medicaid, food assistance, and emergency housing assistance. In addition, due to COVID-19 safety precautions, counties have needed to rapidly invest in entirely new processes to remotely process enrollments that previously were conducted in person, an effort supported through helpful state and federal waivers and flexibilities, such as electronic document submittal signature, paying childcare providers for absences, and increasing access to telehealth services. Boulder County supports increased state funding to reduce the impact of increased administrative costs resulting from increased program enrollments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as continued program flexibility to remove barriers during the pandemic.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES, ESPECIALLY TO ADDRESS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2008, the state of Colorado set forth in law a set of core public health services that every community in Colorado should have, but no additional resources were provided to implement the services. During the last decade, Colorado's population has grown by more than 17 percent, yet state public health funding has decreased by 19 percent. At the same time, new and more complex public health concerns have emerged such as the COVID-19 pandemic, increased substance use, climate impacts, and under-immunized children. Infrastructure that addresses such concerns and funds public health services is critical to keeping Colorado communities healthy and thriving. Boulder County supports investment in local public health services.

Investing in public health prevention and early intervention programs results in health care cost savings in the future for diseases and illness prevented. In a 2017 systematic review of more than 50 studies, the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health reported that the median return on investment for all reviewed public health interventions was 14.3 to 1. In addition, Boulder County supports prevention and early intervention policies and programs to strengthen early childhood development and support family stability and maternal-child health, including family-friendly workplace policies, funding for early care and education programs, and home visitation programs. Boulder County supports adequate funding for local public health agencies, and most specifically sustained funding for local public health agencies to adequately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUPPORT EFFORTS THAT EXPAND COVID-19 VACCINATION AMONG ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The COVID-19 virus disparately impacts individuals who are medically or socially vulnerable. Boulder County Public Health has identified eight priority populations that are at risk for COVID disease and transmission due to these social and/or medical vulnerabilities: essential workers, residents and staff of long-term care facilities, unhoused individuals, people who are detained or incarcerated, New Americans, Native Americans, young children and families of young children, and individuals that are medically vulnerable (people over age 65, isolated seniors, people with intellectual and physical disabilities requiring support with activities of daily living, people with chronic conditions and immunocompromised health status, and people with complex behavioral health needs).

While the risk for death and disability increases with age, people of color have also been observed to be disproportionately impacted by the virus. These data are observed nationally and at the local level. A COVID-19 vaccine will be distributed based on a tiered model that recognizes the risks to frontline workers, essential workers, the medically vulnerable, and healthy individuals. Broad, statewide increased funding to public health and community-based organizations are key to delivering a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine which is trusted by all communities. This vaccine distribution will take years, and funding is needed long-term to save lives and protect the health of our community.

PROVIDE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUNDING AND LEGISLATION TO PROTECT COLORADO'S BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES

Colorado and the world's economy have been drastically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Colorado, during the initial stay at home order more than 170,000 Coloradans began receiving unemployment benefits as businesses shuttered in compliance with the state order to protect public health, more than any other time in recent history. The federal CARES Act, passed on March 27, 2020, provided much needed relief to employees, families, and businesses through the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Disaster Injury Loans, increased unemployment insurance benefit, and paid family leave protections. The state of Colorado also passed SB20-222, US CARES ACT Money Small Business Grant Program and SB20-1413, Small Business Recovery Loan Program Premium Tax Credits. Many cities, towns, and counties, including Boulder County, utilized CARES Act funds to provide much needed support for small businesses across the state. Because of the influx of federal funds into our economy, in September, Colorado's pandemic unemployment fell to a low of 6.4% and private businesses added 219,700 jobs from May until October.

However, as of December 2020 COVID-19 cases continue to spread in Colorado and across the U.S., and current public health interventions are not stemming the tide of increasing cases, decreasing hospital capacity, and rising deaths. Along with public health interventions or orders to protect the health of state residents must come economic support for businesses and workers to prevent further drastic economic

impacts in Colorado. Boulder County supports economic recovery funding and legislation to protect Colorado's businesses and employees.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH EMPLOYEES FROM HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

The coronavirus pandemic is one of the most devastating public health crises of this generation. In order to stem the spread of COVID-19 to protect public health and prevent needless loss of life, public health officials across Colorado have enacted and/or are enforcing public health orders that reduce the ability of the disease to spread among uninfected individuals. These public health officials, employees, and their families have been subject to numerous and well-documented threats and attacks, including death threats, threats of physical attacks, and verbal harassment, both at their homes and places of employment. Boulder County supports legislation that protects key public health employees from harassment and violence, including protecting the confidentiality of their home addresses and personal contact information.

Aging

To secure a high quality of living for Colorado's older adults.

SUSTAIN FUNDING FOR THE OLDER COLORADANS PROGRAM TO SUPPORT SERVICES FOR COLORADO'S GROWING AGING POPULATION

The population of those 60 and older in Colorado is expected to increase by more than half a million and represent more than 20 percent of the state's total projected population by 2030, with the largest growth anticipated to be adults aged 80 and older. This unprecedented demographic shift will require an increased focus on *health span*: Providing all older Coloradans with access to locally delivered preventive services that enable them to thrive. The Older Coloradans Program (OCP) supports Colorado's sixteen regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), whose programs provide basic resources needed for older Coloradans to age well in their communities – whether that be in their homes or in long-term care. AAAs have a specific focus on lower-income older adults, those 75+, and racial and ethnic minority older adults. Increased funding for the OCP will help Colorado's AAAs expand the broad array of programming and services that are relied upon by Colorado's growing aging subpopulations.

MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE OLD AGE PENSION PROGRAM, AND ENSURE REASONABLE ACCESS AND BENEFIT CALCULATION FOR QUALIFIED OLDER ADULTS

The Old Age Pension (OAP) program provides financial assistance and medical benefits for low-income adults age 60 or older. Cash payments augment older adults' income from other sources to reach a set base amount, currently \$771 per month. Certain requirements negatively impact access to the program and the amount of the benefit granted. For example, older adults are required to report all income, even small gifts of money, and the benefit is reduced by the corresponding amount. Meanwhile, older adults who have free housing (for example, when living with relatives) may report an estimated housing expense as "in kind support and maintenance" (ISM) toward the calculation of their benefit amount, which is unfair to older adults who do pay for housing. Finally, rules require a face-to-face interview for redetermination of eligibility, but the qualified population often has mobility issues that make an in-person interview difficult. Boulder County supports ongoing funding for and reasonable access to this important safety net program, as well as removal of the ISM requirement and a calculation of benefit that does not consider gifts as income.

SUPPORT ADEQUATE, ONGOING FUNDING FOR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES TO KEEP VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFE, PROVIDE FUNDING FOR PREVENTION SERVICES TO ASSIST VULNERABLE ADULTS REFERRED TO APS, AND ALLOW FOR ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE IN APS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Colorado instituted mandatory reporting for elder abuse in 2014 and for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in 2016. Since the implementation of mandatory reporting of elder abuse, there has been a 112 percent increase in the number of reports and 41 percent increase in open cases. APS funding levels should support the nationally recommended caseload-to-caseworker ratio of 25:1 as the best strategy for keeping at-risk adults safe. In FY2018-29, this ratio was 28:1. In addition, the increase in reports illuminates the vulnerability of many individuals in the community and presents opportunities to support prevention and early intervention for older adults and other at-risk adults so that they can safely stay in the community. These funds should be provided through APS for emergency support services and through regional Area Agencies on Aging so that APS can refer individuals for which a protective case was not opened to stabilization services.



SUPPORT EQUITABLE AND FLEXIBLE APPLICATION OF THE COLORADO SENIOR HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

In 2000 Colorado voters approved Referendum A, a constitutional amendment which created the Senior Homestead Property Tax Exemption. This property tax exemption is available to taxpayers aged 65 or older who have occupied their home as a primary residence for at least 10 years, and exempts 50 percent of the first \$200,000 of the home's actual value from property taxation. The constitutional amendment provides the General Assembly with authority to adjust the \$200,000 value to which the exemption applies, and also requires the state to reimburse local governments for any property tax loss resulting from the exemption. Since its adoption, the number of older adults claiming the exemption has grown year over year, from 123,326 in 2002 to 227,611 in tax year 2017. In State Fiscal Year 2020-21, the exemption is projected to require a \$163.6 million state General Fund transfer to local governments to reimburse them for lost property tax revenues.

While the goal of the senior homestead exemption is laudable, 20 years after its adoption, analysis of the program suggests that with changes to how it is implemented, it could better achieve the goal of helping older adults age in place. In particular, Boulder County supports strategies that will increase equity and access to the senior homestead exemption. Means testing of qualification for the exemption – for example, by limiting qualification to older adults whose home values are below a certain threshold, basing qualification utilizing an annual median income metric or qualification for low-income assistance programs such as Medicaid or the Colorado Old Age Pension program, or even on annual income – would help ensure that the exemption is being received by older Coloradans who are truly in need. Portability is another strategy supported by Boulder County: Allowing older adults to “port” the exemption to a new home, say if they are down-sizing for health-related reasons from a multi-story home to a single story home, would support the broad goal of helping older Coloradans age in place. Tying means testing and portability together could be a smart way to ensure both goals are met.

While acknowledging that changes to the senior homestead exemption beyond the current authority granted to the General Assembly will require voter approval, Boulder County believes that fine tuning the exemption program to ensure it is serving older Coloradans in need is a cause that is worth the effort.

Behavioral Health

To support and enhance the public's mental and behavioral health, and to ensure Coloradans have access to high-quality, continuous, and affordable mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION, FUNDING, AND OTHER EFFORTS THAT EXPAND ACCESS TO QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER PREVENTION, SCREENING, TREATMENT, AND RECOVERY SERVICES, INCLUDING IN-PATIENT TREATMENT

Mental health and substance use disorders have a significant effect on the health of individuals, their families, and the broader community. Many residents of Boulder County struggle with episodic or ongoing mental health and substance use issues. In a 2018 Boulder County survey, about 95 percent of respondents reported that they or someone they knew has struggled with mental health or substance use issues. Colorado ranked 47th out of 50 states on Mental Health of America's 2020 rankings for the prevalence of mental illness and limited access to care. Colorado also has among the highest suicide rates in the country. In the Boulder Valley School District, more than one in seven high schoolers has seriously considered committing suicide in the past year, and an inequity created by unequal treatment and discrimination exists for LGBT students, with almost three times the number of LGBT students reporting an attempted suicide compared to heterosexual students.

Gaps in screening, diagnosis, and treatment services and retaining care over time challenge Colorado children, youth, adults, and families. Timely and equitable access to behavioral health services and early childhood and school-based mental health services are needed, as are reforms in coverage of peer-delivered services and in the licensing of behavioral health providers to both increase the number of providers available and to ensure providers have effective skills in areas such as suicide prevention and cultural competency. Colorado must also advance reforms in private insurance and Medicaid to ensure parity between physical and behavioral health services and to improve access to care including telehealth care and in-patient and psychiatric treatment.

Efforts specific to substance use treatment services also are necessary, including: on-demand treatment and increased access for individuals and families with low and middle incomes including minors, non-opiate addiction treatment, continued seven-day limits on first-time opioid prescriptions, continued support for the prescription drug monitoring program, requirements to adhere to nationally recognized protocols in determining medical necessity of treatments, funding for Medicaid coverage of substance abuse treatment, medication-assisted treatment in syringe access programs and other facilities, and protocols that include relapse as a natural and expected part of recovery. Reforms also should require insurers to cover alternative treatments for pain such as physical and occupational therapy and atypical opioid and non-opioid treatments.

Boulder County supports legislation to improve mental and behavioral health within our communities across the prevention-to-recovery continuum, and is especially supportive of legislation to address the increased need in mental health and substance use disorder services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ENSURE COLORADO'S HEALTH FIRST PROGRAM (MEDICAID) AND CHILD HEALTH PLAN PLUS ARE EFFECTIVE TOOLS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER CARE, INCLUDING INPATIENT TREATMENT, FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WITH LOWER INCOMES

As of 2020, 48,500 individuals in Boulder County were covered by Colorado's Health First Program (Medicaid). Health First provides health care and behavioral health care coverage for children and individuals and families with lower incomes. The program in Colorado is administered by Regional Accountability Entities (RAEs). As with others, Boulder County's RAE, Colorado Community Health Alliance, receives funding from Health First Colorado to administer the program in our region, managing payments to providers and care coordination of patients. RAEs are evaluated on key performance indicators of the health of the population of people within their region. Boulder County supports funding and legislation to ensure quality mental health and substance use disorder prevention, screening, and treatment (including in-patient treatment) services are easily accessible to Health First enrollees. Specific reforms needed include improved Medicaid payment models, improved access to quality mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and efforts supporting increasing the number of providers accepting Medicaid.

SUPPORT EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF SERVICES, ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSPARENCY, AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE IN MANAGED SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, REGIONAL ACCOUNTABLE ENTITIES, AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

See full policy statement in the Human Services section.

SUPPORT INCREASED AND CONTINUED FUNDING FOR EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS STABILIZATION SERVICES AND CO-RESPONDER MODELS STATEWIDE TO REDUCE PLACEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS IN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOMS AND JAILS

Crisis stabilization units assist people experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis and divert them from hospitals and the criminal justice system. Boulder County supports the continued expansion of mental and behavioral health crisis stabilization centers, diversion to community-based mental and behavioral health services, and co-responder models that integrate law enforcement and behavioral health provider response to reduce the placement of people with mental illness in emergency rooms and jails. Specific to the criminal justice system, individuals with mental illness comprise a disproportionately large population in the Boulder County Jail, with more than 40 percent of inmates diagnosed with a mental health disorder. SB 18-249 established pilot programs across Colorado, including one in Boulder County, to divert individuals with low criminal behavior and mental health disorders to appropriate community programs, and SB 19-211 increased funding to these programs. Boulder County supports continued funding and expansion of programs to divert qualified individuals from incarceration or hospitals to programs that provide appropriate treatment for behavioral health disorders and reduce recidivism.

SUPPORT STATEWIDE STRATEGIES THAT ELIMINATE STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION ASSOCIATED WITH BEHAVIORAL AND MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS

A recent survey of Boulder County residents revealed that negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition are common. There is a clear need to educate the public about how to better support individuals with mental and behavioral health illness and reduce barriers for those seeking or receiving treatment. Stigma can result in a reluctance to seek treatment; lack of understanding on the part of friends, family, and employers; fewer opportunities at work, school, and social environments; and discrimination. Programs and legislation to address stigma and discrimination include the integration of physical and behavioral health services, Mental Health First Aid training to assist

community members in responding to mental and behavioral health issues, and Project AWARE to support the ability to identify mental and behavioral health issues in schools. Boulder County supports state and local efforts that promote a humanistic approach to mental and behavioral health.

SUPPORT HARM REDUCTION LEGISLATION AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACHES AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS TO ADDRESS SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Substance and alcohol misuse continue to create public health challenges in the U.S. and Boulder County. Substance misuse can lead to overdose deaths, trauma, family disruption, HIV and hepatitis C infections, and chronic health conditions. Unfortunately, substance abuse treatment is too often unavailable or unaffordable for the people seeking treatment, and a criminal justice response, including requiring arrest to access health services, is ineffective. Public health approaches offer effective, evidence-based responses to address these challenges, but some of the many effective approaches are not currently accessible owing to outdated drug laws, attitudes, and stigma. Boulder County supports legislation that takes a comprehensive approach to substance use disorders, including prioritizing proven prevention, treatment, and harm reduction strategies, and funding for state and local public health agencies. Such comprehensive efforts can more effectively address the syndemic or linked health problems associated with substance use disorders to improve or save lives. Examples of efforts include syringe access programs that facilitate access to behavioral health and treatment services for people using substances, increased access to clean syringes at pharmacies, prevention of drug-related deaths through advanced drug testing and community notification, community-based overdose education and naloxone distribution programs including funding for opioid agonists and antagonists in jails, information on treatment upon release, and “safe stations” where individuals can dispose of unwanted drugs and receive medical transport if necessary. To limit disruption in housing and for families, Boulder County supports a measured response to methamphetamine contamination, for example by allowing for the quarantine and clean-up of only the affected areas in a housing unit if the substance was used but not produced in the residence, rather than quarantine of and eviction from the entire residence. Boulder County will continue to support effective efforts and legislation that promote prevention strategies, public education and training, development and dissemination of best practices at the local level, access to treatment and recovery services, and increased funding for harm reduction programs across the state.

Community & Environmental Health

To protect and enhance the health of the public and the environment, and to ensure that Coloradans have access to high-quality, continuous, and affordable public health services.

Community Health

INCREASE FUNDING FOR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES, ESPECIALLY TO ADDRESS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Investing in public health prevention and early intervention programs results in health care cost savings in the future for diseases and illness prevented. In a 2017 systematic review of more than 50 studies, the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health reported that the median return on investment for all reviewed public health interventions was 14.3 to 1.

In 2008, the state of Colorado set forth in law a set of core public health services that every community in Colorado should provide, but no additional state financial resources were provided to implement the requirements. Twelve years later the challenges facing public health have only expanded, and now include new and more complex public health concerns such as increased substance use, climate impacts, under-immunized children, and most notably, COVID-19. Colorado has invested in public health in response to the pandemic, but more investment is necessary given the critical and pressing role public health services play in keeping Colorado communities healthy and thriving. Boulder County supports investment in local public health services.

Additionally, Boulder County strongly supports the Amendment 35 funding stream, revenue generated by Colorado's tobacco tax, which provides much-needed programming to support prevention, early detection, and treatment of cancer, cardiovascular, and pulmonary diseases; tobacco prevention and cessation; and health equity grants to prevent, screen, and treat diseases that disproportionately affect specific populations. In addition, Boulder County supports prevention and early intervention policies and programs to strengthen early childhood development and support family stability and maternal-child health, including family-friendly workplace policies, funding for early care and education programs, and home visitation programs.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR AND ACCESS TO COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES AND EVIDENCE-BASED SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION

Family planning is an integral component of health. Unplanned, mistimed, or unwanted pregnancies can result in poor health outcomes for parents and children. Boulder County supports legislation that maintains or increases access to affordable, medically accurate family planning services, birth control methods, and safe and affordable abortions. Programs must provide comprehensive sexual health education and family planning services that are culturally relevant and include the experiences of all people, including LGBTQIA+ people. New restrictions on federal Title X funding increase the need for state and local support of family planning services. Confidentiality is another critical concern in reproductive health. Teens and women in abusive relationships have the right, under Colorado law, to access

confidential family planning services. However, current Explanation of Benefits procedures do not safeguard privacy. Legislation that supports adequate reimbursement for all contraceptive options, confidential health services, and comprehensive, science-based sex education will improve the ability of adults and adolescents to plan their families when the time is right for them.

SUPPORT CONTINUED EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND REDUCE THE USE OF TOBACCO AND ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES AND REDUCE EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE

Boulder County supports proven interventions that reduce youth access to and use of tobacco and electronic smoking devices, encourage tobacco use cessation, reduce tobacco-related disparities, and protect individuals from the health hazards of secondhand tobacco smoke. In 2020 the General Assembly made significant progress in support of this policy goal when it adopted HB 20-1001, Nicotine Product Regulation, which raised the minimum age for purchasing cigarettes, tobacco products, and nicotine products to 21, and created a statewide nicotine retailer licensure program. Boulder County also supports restricting the sales and marketing of products that are flavored and/or broadly appeal to youth, and opposes legislation that would restrict or preempt local jurisdictions from passing ordinances or regulations addressing tobacco use.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESS

Boulder County and Boulder County Public Health strongly support a balanced, public-private approach to food safety programming. This approach provides the best opportunity for Colorado's public health agencies and its restaurant industry to move closer to national best practices for food safety programs, resulting in better protection of the public from food-borne illnesses. While much progress has been made since the adoption of HB 16-1401, Retail Food Establishment Licensure and Inspection, more work needs to be done. Boulder County and Boulder County Public Health will continue to advocate for improvements to the Colorado Food Protection Act, such as changes to the enforcement and civil penalty process for facilities that repeatedly violate food protection regulations, with the goal of ensuring that all Coloradans have the highest degree of confidence possible in Colorado's retail food establishment inspection program.

SUPPORT EFFORTS THAT EXPAND CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

Although Colorado remains one of the healthiest states in the nation, the United States is one of the unhealthiest developed nations in the world, with the prevalence of chronic diseases and obesity among children and adults continuing to climb. Fostering health and well-being from the earliest stages of life helps build a lifetime foundation for overall health. Healthy nutrition and physical activity reduce risk for heart disease and cancer, the two leading causes of death in Boulder County. Boulder County supports policies that support increased physical activity, access to healthy foods, increased alternative transportation utilization, increased breastfeeding initiation and duration, and other programs to prevent chronic disease in Colorado.

SUPPORT EFFORTS THAT EXPAND MANDATORY VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS AND LIMIT EXEMPTIONS

Population-based programs and services focus on delivering resources that are proven to achieve a more positive health impact than individual interventions alone. The use of vaccinations to control against the spread of communicable disease is a prime example of this strategy. Colorado's vaccination rate routinely ranks amongst the lowest in the nation, and Boulder County's amongst the lowest in the state. Mandatory vaccinations have been recommended by multiple national organizations as a best practice to increase herd immunity and therefore improve protection of our population against communicable disease. While SB 20-163, School Entry Immunizations, was a positive step forward, to increase Colorado's protections against dangerous infectious diseases Boulder County continues to support

mandatory vaccination requirements and a standardized process for exemptions, public health policy approaches that are especially critical in this era of COVID-19.

SUPPORT FUNDING AND OTHER APPROACHES TO EXPAND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COLORADO IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS) is a confidential, population-based, computerized system that collects and disseminates consolidated immunization information for Coloradans of all ages. Operated by the Colorado Immunization Program at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), CIIS supports high immunization rates by consolidating immunization records from multiple providers, allowing providers to generate notices for individuals who are not up-to-date, minimizing over-immunization, and identifying missed opportunities for immunization.

As Colorado and the nation prepare for dissemination of the COVID-19 vaccine, broad, statewide implementation of CIIS, including increased funding and universal utilization by health care providers, will be essential to ensure the COVID-19 vaccine is available for all Coloradans, especially for children.

SUPPORT EFFORTS THAT EXPAND COVID-19 VACCINATION AMONG ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The COVID-19 virus disparately impacts communities of people that are medically vulnerable, have disparate access to resources, or are impacted by discrimination due to historical policies in the United States. Boulder County Public Health has identified eight priority populations that are at risk for COVID-19 disease and transmission due to these social and/or medical impacts: essential workers, residents and staff of long-term care facilities, unhoused individuals, people who are detained or incarcerated, New Americans, Native Americans, young children and families of young children, and individuals who are medically vulnerable (people over age 65, isolated seniors, people with intellectual and physical disabilities requiring support with the activities of daily living, people with chronic conditions and immunocompromised health status, and people with complex behavioral health needs). While the risk for death and disability increases with age, people of color have also been observed to be disproportionately impacted by the virus. This data is observed nationally and at the local level. A COVID-19 vaccine should be distributed utilizing a tiered model that recognizes the risks to frontline workers, essential workers, the medically vulnerable, and healthy individuals. Successfully delivering a safe, effective, and trusted COVID-19 vaccine will be time intensive and will require state technical resources and funding to public health and community-based organizations in order to ensure that this delivery effort saves lives and protects the health of our communities.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH EMPLOYEES FROM HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION ASSOCIATED WITH COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

The coronavirus pandemic is one of the most devastating public health crises of this generation. In order to stem the spread of COVID-19 to protect public health and prevent needless loss of life, public health officials across Colorado have enacted and/or are enforcing public health orders that reduce the ability of the disease to spread among uninfected individuals. These public health officials, employees, and their families have been subject to numerous and well-documented threats and attacks, including death threats, threats of physical attacks, and verbal harassment, both at their homes and places of employment. Boulder County supports legislation that protects key public health employees from harassment and violence, including protecting the confidentiality of their home addresses and personal contact information.

SUPPORT EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE AND DEATH IN COLORADO

The United States suffers from an epidemic of gun violence unparalleled in any other developed nation. In 2016, 37,200 people died as a result of gun use, the second highest number worldwide, and the U.S. has six times more firearm-related deaths than Canada and sixteen times as many as Germany, according to the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation study of Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors. Research has demonstrated that the U.S. does not have a higher prevalence of crime than other developed countries, but it does have more lethal gun violence (suicides and homicides) than all other developed nations. Suicides make up the highest proportion of deaths related to firearms, followed by homicides and accidental shootings. Suicides linked to guns occur at a rate of 6.4 per 100,000 deaths in the U.S., the second highest worldwide. Alarming, firearm-related deaths are the third leading cause of death of children in the United States. Opponents to gun violence prevention argue that any limit to the type or number of firearms available for civilian use would lead to more deaths in communities. However, data from the Centers on Disease Control demonstrate that states with more guns have more gun deaths, and states with tighter gun control laws have fewer deaths.

In 2017 in Colorado, 779 people died from firearm injuries. Colorado can decrease gun-related violence and death in our state by passing legislation that fills the gaps in Colorado's current gun violence prevention laws. A comprehensive approach in Colorado:

1. Changes how firearms are purchased or obtained, including extending waiting periods, strengthens permitting and licensing processes, increases the minimum age to purchase, addresses and reduces gun theft, increases notification in the case of gun thefts, limits the number of firearms and ammunition purchased at one time, and develops standards for concealed carry classes;
2. Reduces the human lethality of firearms and ammunition by regulating deadlier firearms and ammunition and implementing other safety protocols, includes prohibiting the transfer and possession of assault weapons and fifty caliber rifles and requires guns to meet design safety standards;
3. Reduces access to firearms and ammunition by children, and prevents accidental shootings and suicide through safe storage measures;
4. Addresses the determinants associated with gun violence through policies such as disarming persons convicted of hate crimes and violent misdemeanors and enhancing risk screening in schools to evaluate students and connect to appropriate interventions;
5. Reduces illegal gun possession by increasing penalties for prior felony offenders, individuals who are denied purchase because of a failed background check, and those who sell guns to juveniles; and
6. Supports further investment in mental health treatment, prevention programs, and research to identify additional solutions to prevent gun violence and death.

Boulder County supports comprehensive legislation to prevent gun violence and death in Colorado.

Environmental Health**SUPPORT STATE REGULATION AND OTHER POLICY MEANS TO PROTECT AIR QUALITY**

Since 2008, the nine-county Denver Metro area, including Boulder County, has exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) health standards for ozone. In recent years, regional air quality has continued to worsen, with evaluation of air quality data revealing that the region is not making progress on meeting federal Clean Air Act requirements. In December 2019, the EPA reclassified the

region to the higher non-attainment status of Serious, which will lead to the imposition of stricter Clean Air Act compliance standards. The region is likely to be further downgraded to Severe non-attainment status in the near future.

Under the Clean Air Act, the EPA establishes air quality standards to protect public health, with special attention paid to the health of “sensitive” populations (children under 10, adults over 65, and asthmatics). Poor air quality has significant public health and environmental impacts, from increasing doctor visits and hospital admissions, to compromising the unique value of our parks and open space lands, to negative effects on wildlife and habitat. Boulder County supports state legislative, regulatory, and other efforts to protect public and environmental health by reducing the emissions of harmful pollutants, including providing CDPHE with the tools and resources it needs to address the more-stringent EPA non-attainment designation for the Denver Metro region.

SUPPORT STATE REGULATION AND OTHER POLICY MEANS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Protecting the quality of Colorado’s water is vital to its environment, economy, and people. While Boulder County works on several levels to improve water quality, prevent waterborne illness, and reduce negative environmental and public health impacts to local water sources, collaborative policy and programmatic efforts between federal, state, and local governments and other public agencies is critical to achieving water quality goals across the region and state. Boulder County will advocate for legislation, regulations, and other policy approaches that focus on the critical goal of protecting water quality.

MAINTAIN ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF SAFE DRINKING WATER STANDARDS TO ENSURE SAFE AND QUALITY DRINKING WATER

Access to safe drinking water is vital to life. While the drinking water for millions of Coloradans is protected by CDPHE funding levels for the Colorado Safe Drinking Water program have been flat since 2007 while the population of the state and the costs of protecting drinking water continue to rise. In August 2017, the Colorado Safe Drinking Water program announced staff and service level reductions that CDPHE recognized will increase the number of violations issued to public drinking water systems. Boulder County supports funding for the CDPHE’s Safe Drinking Water Program to effectively serve the state’s growing population, to comply with the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Act, and to follow recommendations from the Flint Water Advisory Task Force. In addition, Boulder County supports CDPHE’s programs to coach water providers on issues related to secondary drinking water standards. Secondary water standards apply to contaminants that may cause the water to appear cloudy or colored, or to taste or smell bad. These issues may cause people to stop using water from a regulated system, even though the water may pass primary safe water standards.

SUPPORT LICENSING OF RADON CONTRACTORS AND OTHER EFFORTS TO REDUCE RADON EXPOSURE IN COLORADO

Radon exposure is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, behind smoking. A colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that exists naturally in soil, radon typically enters buildings through small gaps and cracks in foundations and walls. Data collected by CDPHE indicates that approximately 50 percent of homes in Colorado have radon levels above the level set by the EPA at which homeowners should take action to reduce radon in their homes. In Boulder County, the problem is even more acute: Boulder County Public Health estimates that 54 percent of all homes in the county have radon levels above the EPA’s action level of 4.0 picocuries per liter of air.

As the health effects of radon are not immediate, public policy can play a critical role in raising awareness about the long-term health effects of radon exposure and increasing action to both identify and fix radon

problems in Colorado's housing stock. Currently, training and certification for radon contractors – professionals who test for radon and install mitigation devices – is voluntary. Improper testing can lead to a false sense of security for homeowners, and poorly installed mitigation systems can cause harm. To address this challenge, the Rocky Mountain chapter of the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists initiated a Sunrise review of the radon profession through the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, as provided by state statute. Completed in October 2019, the 2019 Sunrise Review of Radon Measurement and Mitigation Specialists concludes that the best path forward is to regulate this trade. Licensure would be granted to professionals who hold certification through the two primary national certification standards, the National Radon Proficiency Program or the National Radon Safety Board.

Boulder County supports licensure of radon measurement and mitigation specialists as licensure will protect the health and safety of Coloradans by ensuring that proper testing and mitigation standards are followed and, through continuing education requirements, radon specialists are informed of current standards and technological advancements. Boulder County also supports increasing homeowner awareness of the health hazards of radon through efforts such as strengthening existing real estate transaction disclosure requirements.

Community Justice

To support integrated treatment services that reduce recidivism, racial disparities, and criminal justice costs while improving public safety.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR EFFECTIVE PRETRIAL PRACTICES AND A SHIFT FROM A MONEY-BASED TO A RISK-BASED SYSTEM

Research demonstrates that the money bail system does not increase public safety or court appearances in the pretrial population. Under the current bail system, those who can afford to post bail are released while those who cannot remain in custody regardless of risk, which leads to bias in the jail population by race, ethnicity, gender, income, country of origin, and other factors. Boulder County supports legislation to develop a statewide risk-based system that employs evidence-based practices to increase court appearances. Statewide pretrial services play an important role in ensuring court appearance and public safety, whereas the commercial bond industry exists primarily for profit. A statewide system should include a preventive detention statute, a validated pretrial assessment, pretrial substance abuse monitoring, and other services to allow high-risk offenders to be held without money bail, along with the release of low-risk offenders. Boulder County supports efforts to provide adequately funded statewide pretrial services and opposes efforts to reduce appropriate regulation of the commercial bond industry or to impede or otherwise diminish the role of pretrial services programs.

SUPPORT CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM AND RESOURCES TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM AT ALL INTERCEPT POINTS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES IN ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING AND EXPANDED EFFORTS TO DIVERT OFFENDERS FROM INCARCERATION, INCLUDING DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT COURTS AND JAIL PROGRAMMING

Boulder County supports legislation to advance alternative sentencing facilities, community-based sentencing, and other diversion strategies as the best opportunities to reduce recidivism and associated costs to counties and taxpayers while supporting public safety. Expansion of and sustainable funding for programming and expanded access to data that measures evidence-informed practices at all intercept points – arrest, detention and hearing, jails and courts, re-entry, and community corrections – is critical to the effort to reduce long-term recidivism in Boulder County and Colorado.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND DEDICATED FUNDING THAT REMOVE BARRIERS AND PROVIDE A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO OFFENDER REENTRY FOLLOWING INCARCERATION IN JAIL, PRISON, OR JUVENILE DETENTION

Prisoner reentry is a complex issue, with the transition from jail or prison to the community being challenging not only for offenders but also for their families and communities. Offender reentry efforts should seek to promote offender success in the community and reduce recidivism. Reentry programs traditionally have focused on a specific area such as employment, job training and placement, housing, access to services, or substance abuse treatment. However, given the complexity of challenges faced by returning offenders, an integrated approach to problem solving that includes cognitive behavioral treatment is crucial, with comprehensive, collaborative case management based on a continuum of service, from jail “in-reach” through successful reentry. This integrated approach must also include adequate funding for services and proper coordination and communication with community correction boards, local elected officials, and local law enforcement in the placement of offenders in local communities. Boulder County supports increased coordination between agencies and service providers to ensure successful reentry of offenders.

SUPPORT THE REINVESTMENT OF COST-SAVINGS ACHIEVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES, AND STATE JUDICIAL IN PROGRAMS THAT PREVENT AND REDUCE INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM

Recent reductions in the annual budget for the Division of Youth Services are the result of a positive shift in youth corrections – earlier and less invasive interventions are supporting families and youth and reducing the need for incarceration. Collaborative Management Programs such as Boulder County’s IMPACT partnership exemplify effective early intervention programs that reduce the need for detention, probation, and commitment. However, prevention and early intervention services must be sustained to keep youth and adults free of incarceration. When incarceration budgets are reduced, every effort should be made to determine which services and programs are contributing to the improved outcomes and utilize dollars saved to invest in and sustain those services and programs.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ANALYZE THE PRACTICE AND POLICY CHANGES IMPLEMENTED ACROSS COLORADO’S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM TO REDUCE JAIL POPULATIONS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 TO IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS FOR USE POST-PANDEMIC

Due to the public health risks of COVID-19 transmission in jails and prisons, numerous practices have been implemented in Boulder County and across the state to reduce the population of incarcerated individuals. These efforts include new arrest standards, increased eligibility for personal recognizance (non-monetary) bonds, and early releases of sentenced individuals. Boulder County supports efforts to evaluate these practices and identify the strategies that proved most effect in reducing jail populations while protecting public safety, for potential implementation post-pandemic.

SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF COLORADO’S 2020 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TASK FORCE THAT IMPROVE ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that mental health problems affect three times as many people in jails as compared with the general U.S. population. In spring of 2019 Governor Polis launched the Behavioral Health Task Force, challenged to design a behavioral health system that works for all Coloradans. The Task Force released *Behavioral Health in Colorado: Putting People First* in September 2020, identifying nearly 150 strategies in the areas of access, affordability, workforce and support, accountability, consumer and local guidance, and whole person care, to ensure the creation of a comprehensive, equitable, and effective continuum of behavioral health services to meet the needs of all Coloradoans. Boulder County supports timely implementation of the Task Force recommendations that improve access to behavioral health services.

Economy, Employment & Income Stability

To increase employment opportunities, improve economic equity, and promote self-sufficiency.

SUPPORT STRATEGIES THAT ADDRESS WAGE STAGNATION AND THE WAGE GAP FOR WORKING COLORADANS

One-fourth of Americans have jobs that pay so little that they are not able to support their families without public benefits. Americans' wages continue to lose ground to the cost of living and inflation, eroding the ability for families to become self-sufficient. In Colorado, the costs of meeting basic needs such as housing, food, and transportation are beyond the means of those earning the minimum wage. For a family with one adult, one preschooler, and one school age child, the self-sufficiency annual salary in Boulder County in 2020 is \$86,066. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the income required to afford a two-bedroom rental home in Colorado is \$26 per hour, and even higher in the Boulder (\$33 per hour) and Denver (\$30 per hour) regions. This compares to a state minimum wage of \$12 per hour, which clearly is inadequate for families to meet their basic needs. Increasing the minimum wage and addressing wage equity are strategies that Boulder County supports to remedy wage stagnation and the wage gap for Colorado's low-income workers.

SUPPORT LOCALLY INFORMED, ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES SUCH AS INTERNSHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

Experiential opportunities provided through on-the-job training, apprenticeships, internships, or job-shadowing allow job-seekers to build skills and employment histories while also helping employers to reduce personnel costs. Relevant work experience is crucial to unemployed workers, those entering the workplace for the first time or after an absence, and workers seeking to change fields to earn increased wages. Effective programs consider the local labor market, key industry clusters, and economic conditions including variable wages; support workers with challenges related to poverty; utilize incentives for employers to build pipelines for higher paying jobs; and include all relevant employers, including the nonprofit business sector, and all workers in need, rather than specific populations. State funding for training should be more flexible to address soft and technical skills and the need to pay wages as necessary. Programs should be designed at the local level to create access points and advancement within in-demand industries, such as those identified through local Workforce Centers. For example, opportunities within high-demand professions in the health care, manufacturing, and information technology fields (Boulder County's key industry sectors) provide a pathway for living wage employment and career ladders. Skills-based training in those fields will help meet the need for workers while facilitating access to well-paying jobs for lower-income individuals. Boulder County supports legislation that increases funding for locally informed programs to provide accessible on-the-job training programs.

SUPPORT COUNTY- AND WORKFORCE CENTER-DIRECTED PROGRAMS THAT IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING TANF AND OTHER BENEFITS

Federal public benefits programs administered by counties have their own specific work requirements. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, for example, comes with a work participation requirement mandating that recipients engage in certain levels and types of work activities to receive the benefit, which is also required for Colorado to receive its share of federal block grant funding. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) requires able-bodied individuals to



participate in the Employment First program. Families and individuals in these programs may have unique challenges which require targeted approaches to obtaining and retaining employment, and counties and Workforce Centers are best positioned to develop and implement supportive programs that address client needs while meeting local and regional labor market demands. The Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has a strong focus on serving special populations, more than ever before – and yet the accountability measures for job placement remains the same and mean that more resource-intensive populations are expected to meet the same outcomes as more experienced and work-ready clients. Performance measures and outcome timelines should be tailored to the needs of job seekers within WIOA programs. One example of a program which has been successful in supporting some of the hardest to employ is the Colorado Parent Employment Project (CO-PEP), which focuses on non-custodial parents with issues meeting child support payments. Boulder County supports locally driven, innovative approaches to serving the hardest to employ Coloradans as well as flexible performance measures to improve outcomes over the long run.

PROVIDE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUNDING AND LEGISLATION TO PROTECT COLORADO'S BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES

Colorado and the world's economy have been drastically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Colorado, during the initial stay at home order more than 170,000 Coloradans began receiving unemployment benefits as businesses shuttered in compliance with the state order to protect public health, more than any other time in recent history. The federal CARES Act, passed on March 27th, 2020, provided much needed relief to employees, families, and businesses through the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Disaster Injury Loans, increased unemployment insurance benefit, and paid family leave protections. The state of Colorado also passed SB20-222, US CARES ACT Money Small Business Grant Program and SB20-1413, Small Business Recovery Loan Program Premium Tax Credits. Many cities, towns, and counties, including Boulder County, utilized CARES Act funds to provide much needed support for small businesses across the state. Because of the influx of federal funds into our economy, in September, Colorado's pandemic unemployment fell to a low of 6.4% and private businesses added 219,700 jobs from May until October.

However, as of December 2020 COVID-19 cases continue to spread in Colorado and across the US, and current public health interventions are not stemming the tide of increasing cases, decreasing hospital capacity, and rising deaths. Along with public health interventions or orders to protect the health of state residents must come economic support for businesses and workers to prevent further drastic economic impacts in Colorado. Boulder County supports economic recovery funding and legislation to protect Colorado's businesses and employees.

EQUITABLY EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES

Coloradans' broadband needs have increased exponentially in the past five years, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic which has necessitated that many people work and learn remotely. Current broadband infrastructure is not robust and widespread enough to meet these needs. According to the Colorado Broadband Office, approximately 13% of rural households, between 85,000 to 90,000 households, lack broadband access. Without reliable, affordable broadband access households are cut off from participating in remote work, remote medical care, and e-learning. Communication and connectedness today and in the future are increasingly dependent on internet access.

During the COVID-19 pandemic telecommuting and e-learning has become the norm for many people with broadband access. This is a chance for our state to reassess fossil fuel intensive commuting and

promote telecommuting as a more environmentally conscious alternative in a future post-pandemic world. Creating the infrastructure for telecommuting could lead to markedly decreased emissions from the transportation sector, which is currently the state's largest source of greenhouse gases, and contribute to achieving the 2030 target set by the Governor's Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap to cut 50% of transportation emissions.

In order to make telecommuting an option for all, broadband must be ubiquitous and affordable. Boulder County supports increased sustainable funding for broadband infrastructure to ensure equitable access and enable people statewide to participate and succeed in the digital age. Broadband grant programs throughout the Department of Local Affairs and the Department of Regulatory Agencies must have sustainable sources of funding. Increased coordination between state agencies, community stakeholders, and the private sector to expand broadband access and address the specific needs of local communities will also help to eliminate the broadband access gap. Boulder County also supports managing broadband as a regulated service to ensure that broadband is an affordable and accessible utility. In the past, government agencies have used regulation and subsidies to incentivize the construction of infrastructure for universal access to utilities and services including the electricity, water, telephone services, and the postal network. Expanding access to broadband will empower people regardless of their socioeconomic status or location and improve quality of life for rural Coloradans.

Energy, Environment & Sustainability

To advance climate action, reduce the use of fossil fuels, promote clean energy, and reduce waste.

Energy and Climate

REDUCE STATEWIDE CARBON EMISSIONS CONSISTENT WITH OR GREATER THAN THE STATE OF COLORADO'S 2019 CODIFIED GOALS

Climate change is a reality in Colorado and in Boulder County. According to analysis completed by the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization, the Boulder area will see temperatures exceeding 95°F an average of 75 days per year by the end of the century, compared with an average of five days per year in the late 20th century. Boulder County continues to pursue county-level efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but recognizes that true progress will require comparable efforts at the state, national, and global levels.

Colorado took significant action in 2019 to codify its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals with the passage of House Bill 19-1261. This legislation creates a regulatory framework for ensuring the state makes timely progress towards its 2025, 2030, and 2050 statewide emission reduction targets of 25 percent, 50 percent, and 90 percent, respectively.

Regulatory responsibility for implementing this work has been delegated to the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC). Boulder County will work closely with Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA), the Local Government Coalition, and other partners to engage and participate in these processes. To the extent related regulatory proceedings are undertaken at the Public Utilities Commission or other bodies, Boulder County will similarly seek to prioritize and engage in those processes. In all cases, a key County priority will be to advocate for specific implementation steps and sector-specific emissions reduction targets that will ensure rapid and equitable progress is made towards achieving the HB 19-1261 targets.

Boulder County will also work closely with the Polis Administration and state legislators to implement through legislation, regulation, or policy the recommendations of the Colorado Energy Office's GHG Reduction Roadmap to enable the state to meet its emissions reduction goals.

ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE MARKET-BASED APPROACH TO REDUCE COLORADO'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS WHILE PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Climate change is considered a market failure by economists because it imposes huge costs on society—so-called external costs—that are not normally reflected in the prices of the goods and services causing the cost. To overcome this market failure, Boulder County supports an effort to internalize these costs, by putting a price on heat-trapping emissions and allowing that price to help drive emission reductions. Such a market-based approach can be undertaken at national, regional, and/or state levels, and could take different forms. One approach would be a tax on greenhouse gas emissions. Another would be a cap-and-trade program that allows trading of limited emission rights that are sold and traded to achieve

economically efficient emission reductions. Examples include the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative covering eleven eastern states, and California’s statewide cap-and-trade program. Approaches could be either economywide or sector-specific, with individual targets and mechanisms for electric generation, buildings, transportation, and fossil fuel extraction. Any such program must be structured to ensure that it addresses historic inequities and provides benefits to low-income or other vulnerable or disadvantaged communities.

EXPAND THE CONSIDERATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF FOSSIL FUELS IN MAKING AND IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE-BASED POLICY

The social cost of carbon is a measure of the economic harm from the environmental and health impacts of emitting one ton of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, expressed as the dollar value of the total damages. Boulder County supports the Public Utilities Commission’s requirements under SB 19-236 to consider the social cost of carbon when making decisions related to electric utilities; expanding the use of a social cost of carbon to other emissions modeling efforts, including to clean energy plans submitted by utilities to the AQCC; and the use of a social cost of carbon and/or methane in the decision-making processes associated with other emissions sectors such as heating, oil and gas, and transportation.

Boulder County also supports the appropriate use of other measures to fully capture the costs of fossil fuel use, such as life-cycle emissions accounting, air quality impacts and associated public health impacts and costs.

SUPPORT SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR STAFFING AND OTHER NECESSARY RESOURCES AT THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT AND THE COLORADO OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO EFFECTIVELY DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE OIL AND GAS REGULATIONS AUTHORIZED BY SB 19-181 AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS ESTABLISHED IN HB 19-1261

See full policy statement in the Oil & Gas section.

Local Climate Strategies

REMOVE BARRIERS AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALLOW COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES TO MAXIMIZE THE DEPLOYMENT OF LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE-RELATED STRATEGIES, INCLUDING RESILIENCE-ORIENTED STRATEGIES, WHILE PROMOTING AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, AND EQUITABLE DELIVERY OF RELIABLE CLEAN ENERGY

Local governments can be a source of creativity and experimentation for developing climate policy solutions. Boulder County supports policies that ensure local governments, whether home rule or subject to the County Powers Act, have the ability to implement climate policy strategies that reflect local values and priorities. This could include such measures as energy conservation ordinances for improving the energy efficiency and performance of the existing residential and commercial building stock, or a local carbon pricing system that incentivizes reductions in carbon emissions and uses the revenues to support the clean energy transition.

SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC PROCESS FOR EVALUATING RETAIL AND WHOLESALE ENERGY CHOICE OPTIONS FOR COMMUNITIES, INFORMED BY A BROAD VARIETY OF STAKEHOLDERS

Decarbonizing the state’s electricity portfolio is an important component of meeting overall greenhouse gas reduction goals. At the retail level, policies such as Community Choice Energy (also known as Community Choice Aggregation) could provide additional choices for consumers to opt for renewable energy electricity sources, while also creating a larger market for those options. Boulder County supports

legislation to study these policies and determine the degree to which they contribute to the state meeting its climate policy goals and provide benefits to ratepayers.

SUPPORT POLICIES THAT PROMOTE ENERGY-EFFICIENT BUILDINGS

Residential and commercial buildings account for more than 44 percent of the electricity and natural gas consumed in Colorado. Research suggests that, using tools such as green building codes, energy consumption disclosure requirements, and demand-side management programs, energy use in Colorado's buildings could be effectively reduced by more than 30 percent. Within this context, Boulder County supports policy, programmatic, and regulatory efforts that will lead to improvements in the energy performance of Colorado's building stock. In particular, Boulder County supports efforts to improve the energy efficiency and affordability of the existing building stock, in which there is significant energy savings potential, but which can be difficult to finance improvements for. These measures can be especially beneficial to low-income homeowners and renters for whom energy represents a disproportionately high share of housing costs. Legislation requiring large commercial buildings to be benchmarked and subject to energy conservation performance standards is a good first step as it addresses the buildings which use the greatest amount of energy.

PROVIDE FOR EQUITABLE STRATEGIES TO ENABLE AND ACCELERATE BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION

"Beneficial electrification" refers to replacing direct fossil fuel consumption (e.g., propane, natural gas, gasoline) with electricity in end uses such as furnaces, water heaters, and automobiles. While the ability to decarbonize fossil fuels is limited, electricity will continue getting cleaner (including Colorado's goal for 100 percent renewable electricity by 2040), meaning that electrification will generally reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have the potential to lower energy costs as well. Electrification of the U.S. transportation, commercial, and residential sectors would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70 percent. Replacing natural gas heat with electric heat pumps is one example: heat pumps are over 200 percent efficient at capturing heat from the air, ground or waste sources. They also cool buildings more efficiently, which will be increasingly important as climate change leads to hotter weather.

Boulder County supports legislative and regulatory policies, strategies and practices that aggressively accelerate beneficial electrification for both existing buildings and new construction. These policies will save money for consumers, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve quality of life, and make the electric grid more robust and resilient. They also provide substantial air quality benefits: according to a study conducted by the Rocky Mountain Institute, simply boiling water on a gas stove can generate concentrations of nitrogen dioxide that are nearly twice as high as indoor air quality standards.

Energy Generation

ACCELERATE RETIREMENT OF EXISTING FOSSIL FUEL GENERATION FACILITIES AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH COST-EFFECTIVE AND RELIABLE CLEAN ENERGY SUPPLIES, THROUGH MEANS THAT PROTECT BOTH UTILITIES AND CONSUMERS

Wind and solar energy is now less expensive than the energy generated by many aging coal plants, and is increasingly cost competitive with natural gas power plants. Colorado is blessed with some of the best solar and wind resources in the country, which should allow for a faster and a more affordable transition to clean energy. The key to unlocking emission reductions and electricity bill savings is developing a legal framework allowing utilities and their customers to equitably share the benefits and costs. Boulder County supports actions in Colorado such as the provisions of SB 19-236 that will enable the early retirement of fossil fuel-based power plants and their replacement with clean energy sources, while

protecting the economic interests of both the utilities owning the power plants and electricity customers. In the regulatory area, Boulder County also supports AQCC review of these facilities in the context of regional air quality proceedings.

MODERNIZE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY-BASED RESILIENCE AND INTEGRATE DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES

A wide variety of grid modernization policies and actions are available to both communities and utilities that can reduce energy consumption, better align availability of electricity to demand, expand renewable energy generation, and collectively reduce carbon pollution from the power generation sector (while also improving reliability and reducing cost). Boulder County supports policies and funding that advance these types of grid modernization efforts in Colorado, including extension of the expiring property tax exemption for community solar garden equipment attributable to residential subscribers.

Energy Efficiency

EXPAND DEMAND SIDE SAVINGS FROM EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION FOR ALL ENERGY TYPES

While the 2019 legislative session produced significant greenhouse gas emissions legislation, no new steps were taken to update utility-level energy efficiency goals. As greenhouse gas emissions reductions and renewable energy goals ratchet up in coming years, Boulder County supports a continued focus on least-cost energy efficiency as a critical policy for minimizing ratepayer costs and easing the transition to more renewable energy sources. In 2017, a goal was set by executive order for utilities to achieve two percent per year in energy efficiency savings by 2020, which is readily achievable and should be extended beyond that date. The State of Massachusetts, for example, had an electric energy efficiency target of 2.95 percent for 2018.

Moreover, no recent state actions have included energy efficiency targets for natural gas utilities or unregulated fuels such as propane. Establishing a two percent annual energy efficiency savings target for these utilities is one potential action. Such actions could also include encouraging municipal and cooperative utilities to adopt and achieve similar efficiency targets and exploring mechanisms for establishing similar goals for non-utility energy providers (e.g., propane sales).

SUPPORT ONGOING AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR WEATHERIZATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS SO THAT ALL COLORADANS HAVE ACCESS TO COMFORTABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOMES

See full policy statement in the Housing section.

Solid Waste Reduction

GRANT CDPHE AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT A PLAN FOR MEETING COLORADO'S STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL SOLID WASTE DIVERSION GOALS

In August 2017, the Colorado Solid and Hazardous Waste Commission (S&HWC) adopted new statewide and regional municipal solid waste diversion goals, including separate goals for 11 Front Range counties and for the remainder of the state for the years 2021, 2026, and 2036. Boulder County supports granting S&HWC the authority to adopt and modify enforceable solid waste diversion goals, and to give the S&HWC the authority to adopt rules requiring measures such as “pay as you throw” for local governments not meeting their goals. Boulder County also supports increased data collection and reporting by the waste hauling industry, including statewide reporting standardization.

REDUCE THE USE OF DISPOSABLE AND SINGLE-USE PRODUCTS AND PROMOTE THE REUSE OF MATERIALS

Existing protocols for greenhouse gas emissions inventories do not include emissions associated with the use of resources other than landfill-related emissions. However, a recent C40 Cities study investigated the consumption-based emissions from 79 cities, focusing on the goods and services consumed and used by residents, and found that total consumption-based emissions were approximately 60 percent higher than the traditional energy sector-based inventories. Construction and demolition waste, for example, is an important contributor to emissions.

Boulder County supports traditional recycling and composting initiatives, legislative efforts such as eliminating the state's preemption of local authority to ban the use or sale of specific types of plastic materials or products or restrictions on containers for consumer products, and strategies to reduce the embodied emissions associated with the consumption of goods and services.

FOSTER INFRASTRUCTURE, POLICIES, INCENTIVES, AND PROGRAMS FOR RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING

Zero waste strategies such as recycling, composting, reuse, and source reduction are proven solutions that reduce emissions of both carbon dioxide and methane and can be implemented immediately. Recycling 90 percent of our discards by 2030 would reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of closing more than 80 coal-fired power plants. However, Colorado has a poor waste diversion rate of 17 percent, compared with the national average of 35 percent. Not all recycling and compost solutions are created equally, so individual proposals and policies should be evaluated based on their potential to reduce emissions in both the short- and long-term.

The largest climate benefit from recycling is the reduced energy and materials needed to manufacture new products. Boulder County supports a range of actions, including encouraging remanufacturing and end market development for recycled products and purchasing policies that include recycled-content standards. For organic waste, composting is often an effective strategy.

Forty percent of our waste is organic material, which not only produces methane when it breaks down anaerobically (e.g., in landfills), but can be a powerful climate solution when converted aerobically into compost. Research is just starting to quantify the carbon sequestration potential of this material. Boulder County supports food waste diversion and rescue efforts as well as purchasing policies that drive market development.

General

ENCOURAGE THE ADOPTION OF CLIMATE-POSITIVE INNOVATIONS LIKE TELECOMMUTING, DRAWING FROM THE LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, TO SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE AIR AND CARBON POLLUTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated changes to how many families live and work, in order to reduce the spread of infection. In some cases, these changes have had the secondary effect of reducing greenhouse gas and other emissions. For instance, families for whom working from home is an option have been able to reduce their amount of vehicle travel and the pollution it creates. Ensuring all Colorado households have access to broadband, regardless of income, would make this a possibility for more individuals. Boulder County supports legislation that explores opportunities to turn these temporary changes into lasting policy changes that benefit the climate.

PROMOTE PROACTIVE PROGRAMS AND EFFORTS THAT IMPROVE THE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY OF COLORADO COMMUNITIES IN THE FACE OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND OTHER MAJOR CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Even in the best-case scenarios for reductions of greenhouse gas emissions, Colorado will experience significant impacts from climate change in the years to come. This will include higher temperatures, more wildfires, severe flooding, increased likelihood of drought, and other changes. For Boulder County, a 2018 study found climate change could lead to a 50 percent increase in damage from wildfires; a doubling of severe and extreme drought events; and dramatic increases in road and bridge maintenance costs due to flooding events.

Building on the creation of a permanently-funded Colorado Resiliency Office in 2019 (through HB 19-1292), Boulder County supports further efforts by the state to work with local governments to prepare for the severe weather of the future. In areas such as transportation, infrastructure, and air and water quality, the state should establish planning processes, codes, and standards designed to withstand the future weather events and patterns that will result from climate change,

SUPPORT POLICIES THAT ACCELERATE THE REMOVAL OF GREENHOUSE GASES FROM THE ATMOSPHERE

In addition to advancing policies that reduce future rates of greenhouse gas emissions, averting the worst impacts of climate change also requires taking steps to reduce the levels of greenhouse gas emissions already in the atmosphere. Boulder County supports policies that encourage carbon removal such as but not limited to direct air capture, biochar, restoring forested lands and enhanced agricultural practices. We also support policies that promote responsible carbon storage and utilization.

INCORPORATE EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND JUST TRANSITION CONSIDERATIONS INTO CLIMATE POLICIES AND ACTIONS

To reduce heat-trapping emissions and avoid the worst effects of climate change, the world must rapidly transition to a clean energy future, one built upon the pillars of energy efficiency and renewable energy, while dramatically cutting its reliance on oil, coal, and natural gas for energy production. Such a transition will without question result in large-scale social and economic impacts, with the potential for disproportionate impacts on certain communities (e.g., people of color, low-income areas, and immigrant communities). While increased investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy will generate millions of new jobs, workers and communities whose livelihoods depend on the fossil fuel industry will unavoidably face challenges. Colorado is already experiencing the effects of the clean energy transition, as coal-fired power plants are retired and coal mines dramatically reduce production or shutter altogether.

Boulder County supports the provisions of HB 19-1314 and SB 19-236 which created a Just Transition model for assisting workers and communities impacted by reductions in the use of fossil fuels for power production. Programs should be designed to ensure high participation rates and could include such strategies as transitional income and benefits support, education and training, and community and economic development. Strategies to advance a rapid transition to a clean energy future must include programs that serve as catalysts for bringing displaced workers and communities into the clean energy economy.

REQUIRE STATE GOVERNMENT TO ASSESS CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS IN ITS INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO MITIGATE THAT RISK UP TO AND INCLUDING DIVESTMENT

See full policy statement in the State Fiscal and Governance section.

Equity & Human Rights

To improve social, environmental, and economic justice and equality.

SUPPORT POLICY TO ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY AND ELIMINATE RACISM

According to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, race is a “social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time.” An Aspen Institute study found that, because of structural and cultural racism in American society, Americans “more or less take for granted a context of white leadership, dominance, and privilege. This dominant consensus on race is the frame that shapes attitudes and judgments about social issues. It has come about as a result of the way that historically accumulated white privilege, national values, and contemporary culture have interacted so as to preserve the gaps between white Americans and Americans of color.”

Economic inequities between communities of color and of white people are an example of racial injustice. As reported in Mehrsa Baradan’s 2019 research on the racial wealth gap, “When the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863, the black community owned less than 0.5 percent of the total wealth in the United States...more than 150 years later...blacks still own only one percent of the wealth in the United States.” This example of economic disparity has been driven by racist American policies such as slavery and redlining, which is the refusal to offer credit or insurance in particular communities.

Boulder County supports legislation that increases and achieves racial equity in our state and communities, and supports approaches such as the use of racial equity tools to eliminate bias in the development of government programs and policies, truth and reparations processes, and other policies to eliminate bias and racism in government.

SUPPORT THE RIGHTS OF NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS IN COLORADO AND POLICY THAT SUPPORTS CONSULTATION, RECOGNITION, AND RESTORATION TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO THE LOSS OF LANGUAGE AND LANDS, PAST AND CURRENT OCCUPATION, GENOCIDE, AND COERCIVE AND BROKEN TREATIES

First Nations, and their project Reclaiming Native Truth, conducted ground-breaking research to support greater respect, inclusion, and social justice for Native Americans. Their work states that the history of Native Americans is one of great strength and revitalization. It is a story built around values that have shaped Native cultures and U.S. society: respect for family and elders, shared responsibility to care for the land, and an obligation to do right by the next generation. It is a story of resilience through great pain and injustice, from broken treaties and loss of land and language in the past to derogatory sports mascots and biased history taught in schools today. Across more than 600 sovereign Native nations and in every profession and segment of society, Native Americans carry the cultural knowledge and wisdom that sustains Native nations and helps build a stronger future for all. In recognition of the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Boulder County supports policy that is developed in partnership with Native nations and individuals to atone for current and past wrongs. Boulder County also supports policies that ensure the protection of civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and land-based rights held by indigenous peoples; Native people’s right to maintain their cultural and spiritual identity, traditions, and values; and the protection of Native sacred sites and places of worship.

SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN RIGHTS FOR LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE IN COLORADO

Boulder County supports continued efforts to ensure adequate protections and rights for LGBTQIA+ Coloradans. Protections such as marriage equality, anti-bullying programs in schools, banning of conversion therapy for minors, and anti-discrimination in health care and the workplace have demonstrated that Colorado is committed to equity for LGBTQIA+ Coloradans. Access to public and private services and inclusive facilities must be protected as well. Boulder County supports strong and clear civil rights protections for LGBTQIA+ Coloradans in opposition to the influence and pressure of local and national efforts to limit those rights.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT ENSURES EQUITABLE RIGHTS FOR TRANSGENDER, NON-BINARY, GENDER QUEER, INTERSEX, TWO-SPIRIT, AGENDER, AND OTHER GENDER EXPANSIVE PEOPLE IN COLORADO, INCLUDING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND OTHER SERVICES

Transgender and other gender expansive people, including transgender and gender expansive young people, need and deserve equitable access to healthcare, education, and a variety of other public and private services. Examples include access to discrimination-free health care; adequate health insurance and care for transition surgeries and associated therapies; access to gender neutral public bathrooms; and identity support in schools and other public institutions. Denial of these services has been shown to have negative outcomes physically, mentally, financially, and socially throughout an individual's lifetime. Boulder County supports legislative and other efforts to protect and advance the rights of transgender and gender expansive Coloradans and opposes legislation that restricts these rights.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT ENSURES THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE IMMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES

The current immigration system, which is the purview of the federal government, is ineffective, unwieldy, backlogged, unjust, and increasingly commits human rights abuses, with a disparate focus and impact on people who have emigrated from specific areas such as the Middle East and Latin America, and people who have fewer financial resources. These actions, in addition to punitive federal practices such as deportation raids, law enforcement information sharing, family separation, and monitoring of public buildings like courthouses, have impacted community trust in local law enforcement and increased fear among the immigrant community, affecting willingness to report crime, access services, or appear for probation appointments and court hearings.

When interacting with public services, law enforcement, and courts, immigrants must be confident that they will be treated justly, that their information is secure, and that they will not be detained beyond what is lawfully required. Boulder County opposes imposition on local governments of responsibility for enforcement or verification of immigration status, which is a purview of the federal government, or of requirements that limits state and local governments' ability to serve immigrants. Boulder County supports repeal of two bills passed during a 2006 special session, HB 1009 and HB 1023, which respectively limit immigrants' ability to access services or to be professionally certified or licensed. Furthermore, Boulder County affirms and supports the rights for all residents, including immigrants, to work in Colorado, obtain occupational and commercial licenses, own businesses, and access public services. Boulder County also supports improved data protection for the SB 19-251 driver's license program and adequate, on-going funding for implementation of the program. Boulder County ultimately urges comprehensive federal immigration reform and immigration policy in accordance with international human rights law and opposes new state-legislated mandates for state and local government enforcement of federal immigration law and unreasonable or unlawful detention of or access to immigrants.

SUPPORT FUNDING AND POLICY TO REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES AND PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY

See full policy statement in the Health and Well-being section.

OPPOSE EFFORTS TO IMPEDE VOTING RIGHTS OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS IN COLORADO, INCLUDING REQUIREMENT OF IDENTIFICATION AT POLLING PLACES AND LIMITATION OF ABILITY TO MAIL BALLOTS TO VOTERS

Voting is one of the greatest privileges and responsibilities that we enjoy in the United States. But for many U.S. citizens, access to their right to vote is being obstructed by unnecessary and overly burdensome requirements intentionally designed to create barriers to registering to vote and voting. Voter identification laws deny voting rights to students, minorities, the elderly, and the disabled, and restrict citizens' ability to rightfully participate in elections. Same-day voter registration and the use of student identification cards, utility bills, and documentation other than driver's licenses, passports, and state identification cards provide secure and viable options for verifying voter identity and allowing American citizens to rightfully vote. Boulder County opposes efforts to roll back mail-in ballot laws, same-day voter registration, and other measures that ensure the right to vote to all United States citizens while maintaining election security and integrity.

SUPPORT WOMEN'S RIGHTS LEGISLATION THAT GUARANTEES THE EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN IN ALL SPHERES OF LIFE AND PREVENTS SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Tremendous progress has been made in the movement for gender equality, but women still face violence, discrimination, and institutional barriers to equal participation in society. Women make 78 cents for every dollar earned by men, encounter discrimination and firing for pregnancy and parenting, and homelessness due to violence committed against them. Boulder County supports legislation that provides consistent and explicit non-discrimination protections for women across key areas of life such as employment, housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, reproductive health, menstrual equity, freedom from violence, and equity in the criminal justice and court system. In 2019, Colorado passed the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act to prevent pay disparities; however, additional legislation is necessary to ensure workplace equality, such as paid family and medical leave insurance for all Coloradans. Boulder County supports legislation, policies, and practices that eliminate gender inequality and exploitation.

Health & Well-Being

To protect and enhance the health of the public and ensure that Coloradans have access to high-quality, comprehensive, and affordable health services.

PROTECT AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR ALL COLORADANS

Access to adequate and quality health care is a human right. Most of the provisions of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) were implemented in 2014, and since that date Colorado has seen its rate of uninsured drop by more than half, from 14 percent in 2013 to 6.5 percent in 2019, with 600,000 more Coloradans having health insurance in 2017 than did in 2013. Following implementation of the ACA, the rate of medical-related bankruptcies has plummeted by 50 percent.

The essential provisions of the ACA have ensured improved access. Due to the ACA, insurance providers are required to equalize charges across genders, cover care for pre-existing conditions, include coverage for dependents up to 26-years-old on parents' insurance plans, and provide at minimum the ten ACA essential benefits. ACA provisions currently under attack at the federal level include, but are not limited to: preventive services with no cost to the patient, right to appeal claims to a third party reviewer, and the amount plan enrollees have to pay each year in out of pocket costs. Boulder County supports legislative efforts to continue to protect and improve access to health care for all Coloradans, especially to ensure Coloradans receive the care they need during the coronavirus pandemic.

PROTECT AND IMPROVE AFFORDABILITY OF HEALTH CARE IN COLORADO

The Affordable Care Act was built upon compromise, and though the cost of health care coverage was partially addressed through Medicaid expansion, tax credits and cost-sharing for middle income families, and a proposed transition to pay for health outcomes versus services, the final federal legislation did not include all of the provisions necessary to address the rising cost of health care in the United States. The Colorado General Assembly has made significant efforts to address the cost of health care through addressing surprise medical billing, reinsurance, and other legislation passed in recent years, yet Coloradans continue to experience some of the highest health care costs in the United States. The Center for Improving Value in Health Care, in a 2018 study across six states, found that Colorado was the only state with higher than average costs of care across all categories: inpatient, outpatient, pharmacy, and professional, with the cost of care 19 percent higher than similar populations. The increases in cost were not attributed to increased utilization, as use of care declined during the same period in Colorado.

Increased costs are taking their toll on businesses, individuals, families, and Colorado's state budget. Even among families receiving insurance through their employer, insurance costs rose more than 60 percent from 2008 to 2017. Deductibles grew as well, with Coloradans facing some of the highest out-of-pocket costs in the nation. Components of these increasing costs include rising pharmaceutical drug prices and rising profit margins for hospital systems and insurance carriers, with profit margins across all insurance types up 250 percent from 2009 to 2017. During the same period, Colorado hospitals increased prices by 76 percent and administrative costs per patient visit by almost \$4,000, a 64 percent increase, double the national average of 32 percent.

Most uninsured individuals cite the cost of insurance as the biggest barrier to obtaining coverage and view even the least expensive plans as unaffordable. As a result, individuals are turning to high-deductible health plans that feature low monthly premiums but more out-of-pocket spending. With 54 percent of

the un- and underinsured reporting they have no place to go when they are sick, high-cost services are emerging in the healthcare market, such as free-standing emergency rooms that typically charge two to three times the prices of urgent care centers for comparable levels of care. In addition, hospitals often charge uninsured patients much higher rates than those paid by patients with private or public health insurance, since their rates are not negotiated. A lack of cost transparency, hidden costs, and the proliferation of emergency rooms as the easiest-to-access care have resulted in many Coloradans facing unexpectedly high medical bills.

Boulder County supports continued efforts in Colorado to reduce the cost of health care and health care coverage, to ensure access to care and quality are protected, and to increase access to affordable preventive health care. Specific reforms could include utilization of a “Centers of Excellence” model to provide highly specialized care within specific Colorado hospitals, capping reimbursement rates among Colorado’s hospitals to a reasonable percentage of Medicare rates, increasing cost transparency and consumer education, and reducing pharmaceutical drug prices for consumers and insurers.

SUPPORT AND IMPROVE COLORADO’S HEALTH FIRST PROGRAM (MEDICAID) AND CHILD HEALTH PLAN PLUS AS EFFECTIVE TOOLS TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES WITH LOWER INCOMES

Continued access to Medicaid is critical for insuring more Coloradans. Colorado may add more than 500,000 people to Medicaid’s enrollment by December 2020, due to COVID-19 pandemic-related job losses, with more than one-third of all Coloradans utilizing the state’s Health First Program by the end of the year.

Connecting enrollees to preventive health programs and services is key to saving money within both the Medicaid system and the health care system overall. In pursuit of this goal, Colorado administers the Accountable Care Collaborative, with Regional Accountable Entities (RAEs) designed to improve health outcomes of adult Medicaid clients through administering access to physical and behavioral health services and focusing holistically on wellness and preventive care, as does the Healthy Communities program which coordinates healthcare for children enrolled in Medicaid and CHP+. But gaps still exist statewide in access to preventive care, specialty care, mental health, and substance abuse treatment services, forcing patients to wait for or even forego care.

Boulder County supports legislative, regulatory, and administrative actions to ensure qualified Medicaid recipients remain covered and access is increased; that access to evidence-based mental and behavioral health services is on par with access to physical health services; and that the Medicaid provider base is expanded through strategies such as increased provider rates and incentives for medical, dental, and behavioral health career paths.

SUPPORT FUNDING AND POLICY TO ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES AND PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY

Boulder County supports the development, expansion, and monitoring of programs to reduce health disparities. Systemic inequities across all segments of society contribute to health disparities, meaning that millions of Americans suffer from a disproportionately high burden of disease, disability, and premature death. These disparities are not naturally occurring and instead are exacerbated by policies and programs imposed by government and institutions. Efforts must include funding for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s Office of Health Equity and statewide solutions that address the root causes of inequities. An example of a statewide solution is HB 19-1184, which piloted a process to ensure information on the impact of proposed legislation on disparately impacted communities is available to legislators and the public, similar to the legislature’s current fiscal note

process. Boulder County supports continued efforts to eliminate health disparities and promote health equity, especially to address the disparate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Indigenous, Latinx Coloradans.

INCREASE RESOURCES FOR FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CARE CENTERS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED, PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Many health centers are experiencing a surge of patients needing COVID-19 screening and treatment. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) have adjusted clinical operations to meet this mounting public health challenge while at the same time experiencing severe declines in regular primary and preventive care visits. This decline has resulted in a significant decrease in health centers' revenue, in turn impacting their operations and employment.

Due to the Affordable Care Act, the expansion of Medicaid had resulted in an infusion of federal funds into the medical system. However, private providers are not expanding their practice to include newly eligible Medicaid clients at the rate expected, resulting in increased demand for the services provided by community clinics and FQHCs. FQHCs are essential partners in local community safety nets, having developed strong prevention service programs and a whole-client health approach that supports the medical, dental, and behavioral health needs of patients. FQHCs recognize the importance of the social determinants of health and structure care to include linkages to critical social supports such as housing, food, and child and family well-being. While many FQHC clients are covered through Medicaid, these clinics also remain the only option for care for those who are uninsured. Additional sources of funding are necessary to sustain these essential community health clinics and ensure access to their integrated behavioral health services.

SUPPORT INTEGRATED PUBLIC HEALTH, HOUSING, AND HUMAN SERVICES STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The success of the health care system at reducing costs and improving health outcomes is dependent upon the strength of the community safety net which provides food, housing, employment, and family services supports to those Coloradans in greatest need. Current funding structures for the Affordable Care Act support direct health care services, administrative services, and navigation services that link people to insurance, Medicaid, and health care. But these funding structures do not reflect the critical role that the human services safety net and public health prevention programs play in supporting the health of individuals within our communities. These foundational programs help Coloradans meet their basic needs and reduce costly behaviors like smoking, unhealthy eating, and substance abuse that require expensive health care interventions. Boulder County supports increased funding for programs that support the social determinants of health.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CLIENT CORRESPONDENCE AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICAID AND OTHER PUBLIC BENEFITS PROGRAMS

In 2016, a legislative interim committee was formed to examine issues associated with Medicaid client correspondence. The committee identified multiple issues, including duplicate correspondence, incomprehensible messages, conflicting requirements and requests for clients, and use of terminology not familiar to a layperson. Boulder County continues to support efforts to improve client correspondence across multiple benefits systems so that Medicaid, food assistance, TANF, and other program correspondence can be better coordinated to fully inform clients. In addition, client correspondence should use clear and accurate language so that counties do not have to spend additional time problem-solving with clients who cannot understand the meaning of the correspondence. Boulder County supports continued efforts to improve the client experience and access to eligibility-based programs.

Housing

To secure and maintain safe and affordable housing, and to protect homeowners and residents in Boulder County.

SUPPORT EMERGENCY MEASURES TO PROTECT VULNERABLE RENTERS AND LANDLORDS IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 CRISIS

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have put housing at risk for many Coloradans that have lost jobs or income. Over the course of 2020, the Governor has taken a number of actions to address this crisis, including a series of executive orders limiting evictions and the creation of a Special Eviction Prevention Task Force. During that same period, \$33 million in state and federal emergency housing payment assistance has been provided for renters and landlords, with another \$50 million for emergency housing payment assistance approved during the December 2020 special session from the Governor's FY 20-21 "stimulus" budget proposal.

Recognizing the long-term economic damage that will result from the COVID-19 pandemic, Boulder County supports policies that improve protections for renters such as limits on evictions and late fees, as well as continued funding for housing payment assistance programs, including for both renters and landlords, so that families can remain in their homes.

SUPPORT STATE POLICY AND FUNDING INITIATIVES TO INCREASE COLORADO'S STOCK OF PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND EXPAND ACCESS TO DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS

Boulder County supports state and local policy efforts and funding to increase the development, acquisition, and preservation of and access to a diverse range of safe, affordable, market-rate or below market-rate, and rental housing, including ensuring local authority to address local affordable housing needs. Affordable housing is out of reach for many even as Colorado's population continues to grow. Many hard-working Coloradans cannot afford to live in the communities where they work. The affordability crisis is especially critical for households with very low incomes, over 80 percent of which are cost burdened, spending more than 30 percent of their monthly budget for housing. Lack of attainable housing affects self-sufficiency for individuals and families and employee retention for employers, and a pervasive lack of affordable housing near job centers strains infrastructure. Significant advances in multi-year funding were made in the 2019 legislative session through House Bills 19-1228, -1245, -1319, and -1322. The state should ensure that those funds are preserved and that coordinated planning for and distribution of those funds includes local participation, reflects local and regional needs, and is flexible to meet the broad array of needs across Colorado and achieve optimal housing balance and distribution.

Boulder County supports specific strategies for the development, acquisition, and rehabilitation of affordable housing; funding for land and property acquisition and horizontal infrastructure costs such as water, sewer, utilities, and curb gutter; grants and low-interest and/or forgivable loans for new construction and purchase of for-sale homes for buyers; supportive housing for chronically homeless single individuals and homeless families; rental assistance programs that target vulnerable populations; mobile home repair, replacement, and disposal programs; accessible, adaptable housing for older adults and people with disabilities; programs that assist persons in households with an annual income up to 120 percent of the area median income to address the need for workforce housing; and local authority to increase affordable housing, including authority to enact inclusionary zoning.

INCREASE FUNDING TO THE COLORADO HOUSING TRUST FUND TO PROVIDE AN ON-GOING, SUSTAINABLE SOURCE OF STATE FUNDING FOR PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the supply gap in Colorado for rental housing for low income households earning less than \$26,500 annually is approaching 115,000 homes. At the current rate of affordable rental housing construction in Colorado of 823 homes per year, it would take over 100 years to eliminate this gap. In 2014, the General Assembly passed HB 14-1017, which, among other things, repurposed the Colorado Home Investment Fund to create the state's first Housing Trust Investment Fund. The Housing Trust Fund expanded the number of sources that can be used to support affordable housing production, including federal grants, and made housing production funds available to any qualified applicant, including for-profit developers, all in an effort to increase private investments and equity. However, state financial investment in the Housing Trust Fund is limited. Additional and ongoing funds are necessary to increase the pace, scale, and sustainability of affordable housing development and address the affordable housing crisis facing Colorado. To maximize the long-term impact of these funds, Boulder County supports ongoing strategic planning efforts that build upon the work of the Strategic Housing Working Group.

SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO END INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY HOMELESSNESS THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED, COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

Homelessness is among Boulder County's most pressing issues for individuals and families. On a single night in January 2020, 689 people were sleeping in homeless shelters or on the streets and other places not meant for human habitation in Boulder County. This understates the true extent of homelessness and housing instability because it does not account for those who experience homelessness at other points throughout the year, who were not found on the night of the count, or who were staying with friends and family and lacked stable housing of their own. This is especially true for families who do not have access to an emergency shelter in Boulder County and instead must often choose, on a nightly basis, unsafe and overcrowded temporary alternatives to being on the streets with their children.

Beginning in October 2018, Boulder County in partnership with the cities of Boulder and Longmont and community partners launched Homeless Solutions for Boulder County, a new system of coordinated services for single adults experiencing homelessness. Since the launch of the new system, 5,108 single adults age 18 and older were screened for homeless services. Of these, 1,132 successfully transitioned out of the shelter system. This count does not include individuals in families or youth under the age of 18 seeking services from other providers, who have traditionally comprised about one-quarter of Boulder County's overall homeless population. To reduce the incidence and impact of homelessness in the community, Boulder County is committed to investments in evidence-based approaches, including coordinated entry, to provide the housing and supportive service resources necessary to help individuals and families move out of homelessness quickly and sustainably. Boulder County supports continued investments by the state to expand permanently supportive housing and rapid rehousing resources, a strong integrated data infrastructure that supports assessment of needs and program performance, and efforts by the Division of Housing and Office of Behavioral Health to increase Medicaid's ability to cover supportive services.

SUPPORT COORDINATION, EFFICIENCY, AND INTEGRATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING AND COMPLIANCE

Underwriting and gap funding for state affordable housing grants and equity sources at the Colorado Housing Finance Authority, Department of Local Affairs, and local jurisdictions are not coordinated or streamlined. Each organization has its own applications and underwriting processes that are discreet, cumbersome, and create regulatory burdens. Affordable housing development projects require multiple

sources of funding, each with its own underwriting and application process which results in considerable time and cost spent on administrative functions rather than on direct housing creation. Compliance for these multiple funding sources also is not integrated or efficient, and each of the 10 or more funding sources requires inspections and requests of the residents, with homes inspected multiple times per year. This creates stigma and is invasive for residents and costly to administer for housing agencies. Boulder County supports coordinated and efficient affordable housing development funding and compliance, to reduce burdens to housing developers and residents.

SUPPORT RESIDENT-OWNED COMMUNITIES AND FAIR PROTECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES THAT OWN OR RENT HOMES IN MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITIES

Mobile homes are the largest source of unsubsidized affordable housing in the U.S., and as with other forms of housing, it is common for individuals and families to have much of their wealth invested in their mobile home. Because most people living in mobile home parks own their home but not the underlying land upon which it sits, property owners can wield significant power over residents' housing security. For example, if a mobile home park owner pursues redevelopment of their property, residents are at risk of losing their investment, as the likelihood of being able to relocate a home is minimal due to the scarcity of vacancies in parks and the significant cost of relocating a home. In effect, when a mobile home park redevelops or closes, residents can find themselves pushed further into poverty.

Similarly, there exists a pattern of mobile home park residents facing fines or being evicted by property owners, often for illegitimate reasons. Violation of sometimes unfair and impractical park rules is often used by property owners as grounds for eviction, which leads to mobile homeowners not taking action to address health, safety, or other park concerns out of fear of retribution. As the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) reported in its 2018 Sunrise Review of Manufactured Home Owners and Operators, "Clearly, harm is occurring in manufactured housing communities," concluding that enforcement of existing laws, amendments to the existing Mobile Home Park Act (MHPA), and legislation supporting resident ownership of parks would further protect homeowners. In 2019, the General Assembly implemented DORA's recommendation to enforce existing laws and passed HB 19-1309, Mobile Home Park Act Dispute Resolution and Enforcement Program. This was followed in 2020 with legislation to improve the ability of mobile home park residents to explore purchase of their park (HB 20-1201) and updates to the MHPA and the newly-created dispute resolution program (HB 20-1196). Boulder County supports continued policies to protect homeowners' rights and to support resident ownership of mobile home parks to provide more stability for these affordable communities.

SUPPORT ONGOING AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR WEATHERIZATION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSISTANCE TO LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS SO THAT ALL COLORADANS HAVE ACCESS TO COMFORTABLE AND AFFORDABLE HOMES

Low-income and vulnerable households spend a disproportionately large percentage of their income on energy utility bills. Assisting families and seniors by increasing the safety and comfort of their homes while reducing their energy bills will allow all Coloradans greater choice in where they live while also improving energy efficiency. Sources of existing funding for programs include the annual federal Weatherization Assistance Program allocation, supplemental funds from state severance tax dollars, and utility-allocated demand side management funds. Other programs assist these households with obtaining renewable energy, both onsite and as part of community solar gardens.

Additionally, programs that assist communities in transition from coal-dominated economies should include these types of weatherization and renewable energy programs to assist those community members who need it most and to help build the local clean energy economy. Boulder County supports

long-term sustainable funding for these programs, in support of the goals of assisting families in reducing their energy bills, promoting safe, comfortable, and energy-efficient housing, and creating new economic opportunities for Colorado families.

Human Services

To support legislative, administrative, and funding decisions that improve systems and programs, support safety and self-sufficiency for families, and advance prevention and positive outcomes in the delivery of human services.

Systems Integration and Administration

SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING AND PROGRAM FLEXIBILITIES TO SUPPORT COUNTIES' ABILITY TO ADMINISTER PROGRAMS AND MANAGE INCREASED ENROLLMENT, INCLUDING REMOTE ENROLLMENT, OF CLIENTS IN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DUE TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increases in administrative costs for counties due to higher levels of client enrollment in critical human services and health care programs such as Medicaid, food assistance, and emergency housing assistance. In addition, due to COVID-19 safety precautions, counties have needed to rapidly invest in entirely new processes to remotely process enrollments that previously were conducted in person, an effort supported through helpful state and federal waivers and flexibilities, such as electronic document signature, paying childcare providers for absences, and increasing access to telehealth services. Boulder County supports increased state funding to reduce the impact of increased administrative costs resulting from increased program enrollments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as continued program flexibility to remove barriers during the pandemic.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SYSTEMS THAT SERVE CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE SYSTEM INTEGRATION, INTEROPERABILITY, AND SHARING OF DATA

Human service and community programs exist to improve the lives of Coloradans in times of great need. The state, counties, and their partners utilize disparate and often siloed data systems to track these various programs and benefits. Individuals and families receiving services and programs can undergo multiple interviews and walk through redundant processes for different programs at the same agencies and same locations because data are not permitted to be shared across programs. Boulder County recommends data sharing and interoperability across health and social risk factors. The ability to share data while allowing for client consent management and data protections across multiple programs will greatly increase agencies' ability to improve and streamline services, providing the most impactful interventions to clients. Data sharing across programs also allows agencies to measure effectiveness of services, ensuring that public investments are generating the highest returns.

Boulder County supports increasing counties' and other state-funded programs' ability to share data and increase system integration and interoperability appropriately and securely to ensure that clients experience the best possible service while maximizing program efficiency and effectiveness, including alignment of eligibility standards, to reduce unnecessary administrative costs and inefficient processes. We urge the state to work closely with counties to ensure an interoperability strategy that will work effectively for counties and families. And any efforts to improve or modernize systems – such as the TRAILS modernization that began in 2018 – should have adequate planning, project management and oversight, resources, communications, and coordination with counties as well as across all relevant state departments.

SUPPORT LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND ENROLLMENT

Health and human services programs are best delivered through locally relevant approaches and programs that leverage partnerships and knowledge of the community to meet the needs of individuals within the community. The human services networks at the county level are comprised of public-private partnerships that include non-profit agencies, schools, human services agencies, housing agencies, law enforcement, and other stakeholders. Boulder County would oppose efforts to shift to a state-administered system for delivering health and human service programming or a system which diverts clients seeking benefits to a private vendor that has little or no familiarity with local services. Data show that counties perform better in terms of timely enrollment, service provision, and outcomes and are better equipped to answer clients' questions about services and resources available in their community. Experience shows that community-based safety-net strategies are the best approach to addressing human service needs.

Children and Family Services

MAXIMIZE FUNDING FOR THE CHILD WELFARE BLOCK GRANT TO FULLY FUND THE SYSTEM TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE FEDERAL FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT AND TO CONTINUE AND EXPAND EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN ORDER TO BEST SUPPORT FAMILIES INVOLVED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Child Welfare is a crucial service that counties provide to protect children and improve outcomes for children and families. Boulder County supports funding the child welfare system to fully meet the system demands, while incentivizing the outcomes and services proven to best support families. Additional work is needed to ensure an aligned fiscal and practice approach to successfully implement SB 18-254 and the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Continued investments will be required to implement a prevention focused system transformation.

Child Welfare funding is under pressure from various directions, including increased workload, inflationary pressures not addressed in the annual funding process, and the changes related to the FFPSA implementation and transition in federal funding sources. Increased referrals resulting from implementation of the abuse and neglect reporting hotline and trends in mental health and substance use resulting in greater complexity of cases further exacerbate the system demands. Investments also must continue to be made in increasing funding for more caseworkers per recommendations from the 2014 Caseload Study.

Implementation of FFPSA should bring system changes intended to support and advance the prevention and early intervention programs that Colorado has put in place over the past years. Consideration should be given to strategically investing and maximizing federal resources in the Child Welfare Block Grant, FFPSA transition and IV-E funds, TANF Reserves, Medicaid, and for data systems changes that will be needed to support implementation, such as the child welfare TRAILS system. State policies, funding, and programs must be sufficient, effective, and aligned with FFPSA to maximize positive outcomes and continue to advance the child welfare system improvements the state has worked hard to achieve through the IV-E waiver.

SUPPORT FUNDING FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES THAT REDUCE YOUTH INCARCERATION AND OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS, INCLUDING THE COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AND THE BOULDER COUNTY IMPACT PARTNERSHIP

Evidence-informed Collaborative Management Programs, which have been widely implemented and proven effective and replicable under the highest level of scientific scrutiny, successfully support community-based alternatives to youth confinement. Replication of these programs in communities across Colorado demonstrates reduced costs and improved outcomes in multiple systems, including education, corrections, child welfare, and public benefits. One example is Boulder County's Integrated Managed Partnership for Adolescent and Child Community Treatment (IMPACT) Program, which for more than two decades has provided high-need, high-risk youth with mental health, juvenile justice, and child welfare services.

IMPACT has achieved proven results for reducing out-of-home placements, psychiatric hospitalizations, and commitments while increasing the numbers of youth residing in family and kinship environments. Since 2000, more than 8,500 unduplicated Boulder County youth have remained safely in their community. Early intervention is more cost effective and produces much better outcomes than incarceration; youth who have been incarcerated have higher rates of recidivism, substance abuse, and lower employment and education rates. IMPACT is a risk-sharing model that is based on a cooperative arrangement to blend staff, resources, and funding between the partner agencies. Funding flexibility and waivers have been key to the success of the IMPACT collaborative. The project has integrated services in order to achieve program outcomes and to effectively meet the needs of the county's most at-risk children, youth and families.

An analysis of cost savings revealed that the state Division of Youth Services (DYS) has saved an estimated \$29.4 to \$33.0 million over the past 11 fiscal years in commitment and parole costs as a result of the IMPACT DYS contract. The IMPACT program is supported in part with state funding through the 1451 Collaborative Management Program (CMP). In 2015, the state legislature recognized the effectiveness of the 1451 CMP program and provided a \$2.5 million investment in the program through SB 15-241. Boulder County supports ongoing funding for the 1451 CMP program and urges investments in evidence-based Collaborative Management Programs for at-risk youth in Colorado. Other opportunities include the alignment of programs such as HB 1451 and SB 94 to better leverage state funds for prevention and cost-savings in youth incarceration and to increase strategic collaboration and improve funding models across systems.

SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT OF CHILD WELFARE FUNDING METHODS IN ORDER TO ENSURE INVESTMENTS ARE DATA-DRIVEN, TRANSPARENT, AND ALIGNED TO ACHIEVE STATEWIDE OUTCOMES THROUGH BEST PRACTICES

Boulder County supports a collaborative approach to improving the current child welfare funding model and process to ensure funding is linked to need across the state, incentivizes prevention and positive outcomes, and that funding decisions are consistent, transparent, data-driven, and fair to all counties. Funding processes have at times resulted in winners and losers, rather than focusing on need and results. Boulder County supports alignment of all funding lines with uniform goals and positive outcomes across the child welfare system, and the ability for increased flexibility in spending across programs to best meet children's needs.

SUPPORT INCREASED SERVICES AND ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

According to state data, only 29 percent of youth in the foster care system will graduate from high school, but 25 to 35 percent of these youth will experience homelessness, and 36 percent will have been incarcerated between the ages of 16 and 19. National data show that 43 percent of women and 74 percent of men who emancipated from the foster care system will have been incarcerated at least once in their lives. Colorado has taken significant steps toward placing foster children in permanent homes, through adoption or reunification with their birth families. But for those youth for whom permanency was not achieved, and for all children who have spent significant time in the child welfare system, Colorado needs to increase access to the supports that are available to improve their chances of success once they age-out of the system. Housing is one such support that is largely unavailable; programs that provide transitional housing and supportive services for youth as they graduate into adulthood can help prevent incarceration and improve lifelong outcomes. One example is the Chafee Foster Care Independence program: While the program provides supports for this population, it is underfunded and has limited eligibility. State investments in services for youth transitioning from foster care can provide practical help to foster youth and prevent many long-term costs and poor outcomes, including homelessness, incarceration, public assistance support, and educational attainment.

SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED AND PREVENTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES IN COLORADO

The safety and well-being of children should consistently be a very high priority of our state and communities. Policy changes around child abuse and neglect can be reactive, driven by an incident that piques awareness of child maltreatment and fatalities. Working on proactive strategies that align with the work of the National Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities can help identify opportunities to change our communities, partnerships, and the child welfare system to reduce the occurrence of child fatalities. Strategies include efforts to focus on primary prevention and intervention such as home visitation and counseling; strengthen and support the parents and caregivers of children at risk for abuse and neglect; leverage data from calls received by Colorado's child abuse and neglect hotline reporting system; collaborate between health and public health systems and partners; and better integrate data systems that allow for earlier identification of at-risk children. Boulder County supports efforts to reduce abuse- and neglect-related child fatalities in Colorado.

SUPPORT ADEQUATE, ONGOING FUNDING FOR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES TO KEEP VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFE, PROVIDE FUNDING FOR PREVENTION SERVICES TO ASSIST VULNERABLE ADULTS REFERRED TO APS, AND ALLOW FOR ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE IN APS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

See full policy statement in the Aging section.

Early Childhood and Education

SUPPORT INCREASED INVESTMENT IN THE CONTINUUM OF EARLY CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION, INCLUDING THE COLORADO CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, TO PROVIDE SAFE, QUALITY CHILDCARE OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES WORKING TOWARDS SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND TO SUPPORT SCHOOL READINESS

The cost of childcare presents a challenge for low- and middle-income working parents across the country. In Boulder County, childcare ranks as the costliest monthly expense for families with one preschool and one school-age child, above even housing and food costs. Colorado is ranked as the fourth least affordable state for infant and toddler care at \$13,874 to \$14,960 annually; by the time a child attends kindergarten, a family will have spent more than \$70,000. In a recent assessment of more than

3,000 Boulder County families, childcare emerged as the highest-risk unmet need for families. This means that their risk of losing, not being able to afford, finding, and keeping childcare is higher than health, food, employment, housing, or any other need.

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) provides childcare subsidies to families struggling to afford care for their kids while they work or go to school. Colorado has experienced significant shifts in the CCCAP program, primarily as a result of HB 14-1317, HB 18-1335, and federal changes to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) block grant. These changes have improved access to the program through increased eligibility, provider rate increases, more high-quality providers and transparency around quality, and strengthened technical infrastructure to support the system. However, the amount of funding in the program is not sufficient to meet the need. Market rate studies will drive provider rate changes and further increases, and it is important that the funding level be adjusted to account for the changes to rates or the number of children served likely will decrease year over year. Extending the timeline of the next market rate study from one year to three years is reasonable so long as it does not result in any unfunded mandates being passed on to local governments. Recognizing that 2017-18 funding levels allowed only 13 percent of the eligible CCCAP population to actually utilize the program, the General Assembly passed HB 18-1335 with the vision to steadily increase CCCAP access to achieve parity with general population utilization of licensed childcare, which is 31 percent.

While the General Assembly made a significant investment in CCCAP in 2018 and 2019, there is more to do toward realizing that vision. Colorado must recognize the importance of childcare as a critical support for families and an economic and community investment and increase resources for childcare assistance to better address the demand for these services. Boulder County urges the state to continue its commitment to expand access to high-quality early childcare by increasing the resources that go to this program.

Self-Sufficiency

SUPPORT A STRATEGIC AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING PLAN AND APPROACH FOR FEDERAL TANF FUNDS AND THE COLORADO WORKS PROGRAM

Boulder County supports a strategic and sustainable plan for the Colorado Works program and federal TANF funding, including state and county reserves. With the child welfare system and overall funding structure in transition with implementation of FFPSA and SB 18-254, coupled with the need for ongoing flexibility to use TANF reserves for work programs and supports to help people achieve self-sufficiency, efforts and resources should be focused on investing TANF resources strategically and sustainably through long-term planning. Colorado has been appropriating the use of TANF funds at a rate greater than which funds are being awarded to the state, and as a result, there is concern about the sustainability of this funding. Colorado Works funding should be prioritized to support TANF participants in accessing employment and education services that will assist them in reaching self-sufficiency, including a provision for post TANF and cliff effect mitigation. An effective plan for TANF reserves precludes using these funds for ongoing costs or for one-time or pilot projects that are not critical or strategic, and criteria for accessing the long-term reserves should be developed with the counties. These criteria should be established prior to additional transfers from TANF reserves, including the proposal in the Governor's FY 21-22 budget proposal to use \$35 million to refinance child welfare programs that were previously supported by the General Fund.

Food Security

SUPPORT UTILIZATION OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) AND FUNDING FOR THE EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS THAT INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY, LOCALLY GROWN FOODS

Although SNAP reaches 18,000 recipients in Boulder County at any given time and 27,000 annually, food security remains an issue in Boulder County and across Colorado. In Boulder County, at least half of all households receiving SNAP have one or more children under 18, and nearly a quarter have at least one person over 60. SNAP is the largest public program available to individuals and families whose income is not enough to provide for basic food needs, but there are still many individuals and families who don't access this assistance. Continued strategic outreach is needed to ensure that people experiencing food insecurity and hunger are aware of their eligibility and receive this benefit.

In addition, people who receive SNAP don't always have access to nutritious, quality foods. In Colorado, there are places where grocery stores and markets with healthy food selections are not easily accessible, particularly for those with transportation limitations. Programs such as Colorado's Double Up Food Bucks Program provide customers who utilize SNAP with an incentive to purchase locally grown, healthy foods from farmers' markets, corner stores, and other retail locations. The Double Up Food Bucks Program not only increases low-income residents' access to healthy, local produce, it also supports our local economy and farmers. For example, this program has effectively increased SNAP sales at the Boulder and Longmont farmers' markets by more than 100 percent.

Additionally, the federal government has proposed a rule to limit categorical eligibility to those receiving TANF benefits. In total, the rule change could eliminate some 33,000 Coloradans on a monthly basis, and in Boulder County would make about 1,200 individuals per month ineligible and have an annual fiscal impact of \$851,000. Because SNAP supports local businesses like grocers, ranches, and farms, this change would have a \$21 million negative annual impact on Colorado economies. Boulder County supports policies and increased funding that seek to expand the utilization of SNAP as well as programs that promote access to healthy foods, such as Double Up Colorado. This should include additional funding for county administrative costs to support participant enrollment, which have increased significantly this year due to the COVID pandemic.

Land Use & Transportation

To improve upon the built environment and quality of life for Coloradans by promoting well-planned communities.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER EFFORTS TO LINK LAND USE, HOUSING, AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND INVESTMENT

Consistency and coordination between land use planning, housing development, and transportation investment will result in reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, fossil fuel consumption, and transportation infrastructure costs while increasing mobility for all. Boulder County supports policies to strengthen this approach such as Indirect Source Rules and state incentives that regulate emissions related to development by encouraging land use policies that reduce vehicle miles traveled, reduce emissions, and increase housing near jobs.

SUPPORT POLICIES THAT REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AND OTHER POLLUTANTS FROM THE TRANSPORTATION SECTOR

The 2020 Colorado Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap identifies several “policy transitions” needed to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions to levels required to reach overall state emissions reduction goals. Boulder County has long supported many of these policies, most notably aggressive adoption of electric vehicles and expanded support for public transit, reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), transportation demand management, and sound land use planning. Additional policy changes such as an overall limit on greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector should also be considered. Adoption of these policies will not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, they will also help to improve air quality and manage traffic congestion. This is a particularly important consideration for our region given longstanding poor air quality which has led to the Front Range being classified as a Serious Nonattainment area for ozone pollution.

PARTICIPATE IN OVERSIGHT OF RTD TO ENSURE TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION OF TRANSIT SERVICES

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) is an essential partner with Boulder County in providing transit services to our residents, students and workforce. Its financial stability and health are critical for these services to be provided in a manner that will serve the needs of the community. The impact of COVID has imposed enormous additional financial pressures on RTD, making this an especially critical time to ensure that it will be capable of meeting community transit needs now and in the future. Boulder County supported the creation of the RTD Accountability Committee and the Reimagine RTD strategic planning process to help ensure RTD will be a reliable and stable partner capable of fulfilling its commitments to our region. The RTD Accountability Committee is expected to make initial legislative recommendations in 2021.

SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE, MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND NON-SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

Boulder County’s 2020 Transportation Master Plan supports transportation planning, projects, programs, and services with a strong multi-modal focus and investment in a regional transportation system that improves safety and reduces reliance on fossil fuels. Examples include integrating Vision Zero safety policies and GHG pollution and air quality budgets into regional and statewide transportation plans, timely completion of a transit system that connects the entire Denver metropolitan region, development of multi-modal infrastructure through safe bikeways and walkways, managed HOV/transit lanes, transportation demand management, and other transit services and alternative modes programs that provide people with modal choice. New technological innovations such as autonomous vehicles and new business models such as ridesharing may provide additional opportunities to provide more diverse transportation services.

Boulder County will continue to work with regional partners to advocate for these policies, including the Northwest Mayors and Commissioners Coalition, corridor coalitions (SH119, SH7, US287 and others), DRCOG, CDOT and other stakeholders such as the Mobility for All Local Coordinating Council, Commuting Solutions, Boulder Transportation Connections, and Northwest Chamber Alliance.

SUPPORT INCREASED FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION, PRIORITIZING MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND VEHICLE ELECTRIFICATION

Boulder County supports increased new and innovative funding for the transportation system in Colorado to support multi-modal transportation options and vehicle electrification. Any new funding streams must not supplant current Colorado Department of Transportation funding. Any new road capacity funding should be invested in managed lanes that place prioritization on maximizing the travel of people (not just vehicles), and that managed lane projects must provide equitable travel choices in order to ensure that lower-income residents benefit from the public investment in a toll road (low-income residents are more likely to use public transit and carpools, and much less likely to be regular users of toll roads).

Multi-modal options are expanding but access and availability are still limited in many areas. Boulder County supports increasing the proportion of multi-modal funding in transportation plans across Colorado, assigning a significant amount of dedicated multi-modal funding with new funding sources and allocations, prioritizing the expansion of high-speed electric transit and bus rapid transit services, employing transit-oriented design principles where appropriate, promoting transit alternatives over general purpose highway lane alternatives when feasible, and expanding accessible, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure.

Given the unsustainability of current transportation funding sources, particularly gasoline and diesel taxes, Boulder County supports efforts to identify new broad-based revenue sources to supplement and ultimately replace fuel taxes, such as usage-based models. In addition to supporting investment in multi-modal transportation options, any new funding should prioritize adoption and usage of electric vehicles and measures such as ridesharing. Options for such funding approaches were analyzed at length as part of the SB 19-239 working group, which Boulder County was an active participant in. With the defeat of Proposition CC representing the most recent failure to increase statewide funding for critical transportation infrastructure, Boulder County supports the continued exploration of local and regional funding options.

IMPLEMENT THE 2020 COLORADO GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION REDUCTION ROADMAP, THE COLORADO ELECTRIC VEHICLE PLAN 2020 AND OTHER EFFORTS TO INCREASE ELECTRIFICATION OF ALL MOTOR VEHICLES

The 2020 Colorado Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap and the Colorado Electric Vehicle Plan 2020 provide policy frameworks for accelerating the purchase and use of electric vehicles (EVs), including a goal of having nearly one million EVs on the road by 2030 and near-universal adoption of EVs by 2050. One key component of an effective EV deployment strategy is the build out of a robust network of public charging stations, including fast charging stations. Doing so will increase general awareness of EVs and provide assurance of the ability to charge vehicles on longer trips. This is especially true in rural areas and along highway corridors. Other important elements include incentive and grant programs, increased EV availability and model types, reduced barriers to expanding EV fleets and transit, and expanding EV education and outreach. Colorado should continue taking advantage of other opportunities to expand EV deployment as well, such as the current plan to commit all of Colorado's remaining share of the Volkswagen emissions control violations settlement to the construction of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and to the purchase of zero emission transit vehicles.

ENSURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION AND ONGOING STRENGTHENING OF COLORADO'S VEHICLE EMISSIONS STANDARDS AND OTHER REGULATORY ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS AND OTHER POLLUTANTS FROM VEHICLES

Boulder County supports the Air Quality Control Commission's 2019 decision to adopt California's stringent Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) standards, as well as the ongoing regulatory process that will implement that decision. This follows the state's 2018 decision to adopt California's Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) standards. These are important steps that should be followed by additional policies such as the Colorado Clean Trucking Strategy process to develop markets for electric trucks and buses.

Boulder County also supports legal action to ensure that California's LEV and ZEV emissions standards remain intact, in response to the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to revoke California's longstanding Clean Air Act waiver. This waiver allows California to adopt more stringent emissions standards for new motor vehicles such as its LEV and ZEV rules, and for other states in turn to adopt California's standards. Additionally, Boulder County supports any state-level actions that might be required to support increasingly stringent vehicle fuel economy standards.

Marijuana

To ensure local authority to appropriately regulate marijuana uses and ensure effective public health education, treatment, and youth prevention programming.

SUPPORT FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING FOR RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA EDUCATION, TREATMENT, AND YOUTH USE PREVENTION

Marijuana legalization poses risk to certain residents in our communities, particularly youth, children, and those vulnerable to substance abuse and mental health disorders. The commercialization of marijuana facilitates easy access to the drug and a decrease in perceptions of harm related to its use. Boulder County continues to support the sharing of state marijuana sales tax revenues with those communities that allow the commercial sales of marijuana within their jurisdictions, both to support their regulatory and enforcement infrastructure and to promote a multi-faceted approach to prevention, early intervention, and treatment of marijuana use in order to reduce negative health and safety impacts.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENACT AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF MARIJUANA PRODUCTION, SALE, PROMOTION, AND USE

Eight years' experience with legalized recreational marijuana in Colorado has demonstrated the benefits of thoughtful and cautious regulation. Research on the public health impacts of marijuana use points to concerns related to brain development through young adulthood, exacerbation of conditions for persons with mental illness or brain disorders, increased risk for stroke, and the impact on the fetus during pregnancy. The risk to the health of children is also of particular concern. A study published in 2016 in *JAMA Pediatrics* reports that the rate of marijuana exposure in children under 10 years old in Colorado, as measured through the calls to the regional poison center and visits to a children's hospital, increased significantly between 2009-2015, and at a higher rate than the rest of the United States. About 50 percent of exposures involved edible marijuana products, which frequently look like foods that are attractive to children; efforts must continue to address the potency and identification of edible marijuana products and how these products are marketed to the public, especially youth and children. Boulder County continues to support a strong regulatory structure to oversee the production, sale, promotion, and use of marijuana products in Colorado.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY, AND ADMINISTRATIVE APPROACHES TO RESEARCH, DEVELOP, AND IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE MARIJUANA CULTIVATION PRACTICES

National attention is increasingly being focused on the sustainability impacts of the marijuana industry in states where marijuana has been legalized. Many marijuana businesses have initiated sustainability programs to reduce their environmental impacts and are partnering with local communities for environmental and social good. Boulder County is one such local government that is collaborating with its marijuana industry to support and advance key community sustainability goals: Established in 2014, the Boulder County Marijuana Energy Impact Offset Fund aims to reduce industry environmental impacts while simultaneously reducing production costs. Commercial marijuana growers are required to either offset their electricity consumption with renewable energy or pay into the Offset Fund. The Fund is used to educate and encourage marijuana cultivation best practices for energy consumption, and supports other carbon offset projects, such as the development of local renewable energy. Boulder County is planning to expand this initiative to support other sustainable industry practices, for example relating to water consumption and industry waste. As the primary regulator of the state's marijuana industry, the State of Colorado will play a critical role in helping the industry reduce its environmental footprint. Boulder County strongly supports state initiative in this area.



Natural Disaster Resilience & Recovery

To ensure the safety of our community during emergencies, prepare for and mitigate prior to natural disasters, and facilitate timely and full recovery following natural disasters.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESILIENCY AND BUILD CAPACITY TO PREPARE FOR AND RESPOND TO NATURAL DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Disaster events and ecosystem disruptions deeply impact residents and communities, and demand preparation and ability to respond on the part of local governments. Data and forecasting reinforce recent experiences of communities along Colorado’s Front Range: We will continue to be burdened by the negative effects of climate change, from drought to wildfires to floods and more. As we look to the future, wildfires are more catastrophic and frequent, rain events are more intense, and tornadoes are occurring in areas previously free from those hazards. Continued population growth will only exacerbate the risk. With local emergency responder and management agencies in place, county response to disasters is typically well-managed and triaged. However, the growing scale of disasters means that more resources and staff are necessary to aid in recovery, and local governments – especially smaller communities – can lack capacity for the immense immediate and long-term recovery work while maintaining regular ongoing government services and operations. Similarly, state government needs to be well-positioned to respond and to support local governments in their response and recovery, and to incentivize regional collaboration where appropriate. HB 18-1394 codified the Colorado Resiliency Office (CRO) to ensure its long-term viability, and HB 19-1292 funded the office through September 2022. CRO staff provides the expertise, relationships, and programs necessary to increase resiliency, decrease risk, and connect critical sectors, helping make Colorado local governments more effective and resilient in their response to and recovery from disasters. Building on this, the Governor’s proposed budget for FY21-22 includes creation of an Agricultural Office of Climate Resilience. Boulder County supports continued state funding, technical support, and other resources that ensure local governments maintain continuity of operations while effectively responding to and recovering from disasters.

ENHANCE COLLABORATION BETWEEN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE NATURAL AND DISASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Natural disasters, from fires to floods to droughts, are becoming increasingly common, complex, costly, and long-lasting. Boulder County is still in the process of recovering from the 2013 flood. Local governments can best respond to these disasters when there is a strong financial and collaborative partnership with state government. As flood and fire recovery work continues in many counties in the state alongside a pandemic response and recovery, so does the uncertainty of how local governments will manage revenue reduction, cash flow, and federal funding eligibility and reimbursement issues. The impacts of these events are often disproportionately borne by vulnerable and underrepresented populations. Boulder County supports enhanced state coordination with local governments in all aspects of response and recovery with a focus on equity and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Boulder County also supports continued state and federal funding mechanisms that allow communities to fully recover while ensuring that local governments remain financially solvent.

SUPPORT TIMELY AND RESPONSIVE STATE FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE, RECOVERY, AND RESILIENCY

Seven years into the 2013 flood recovery, much has been achieved. With strong and responsive support from the state, local governments have made incredible progress on addressing the wide and varying recovery issues in their communities, many of which dealt with critical needs such as transportation, housing, and public health and safety. However, flood recovery work continues today, as does the uncertainty of how local governments will continue to deal with flood recovery cash flow and federal funding eligibility and reimbursement issues. Boulder County asks for continued consideration of funding mechanisms as needed to allow communities to fully recover while also ensuring that local governments remain financially solvent.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND FUNDING THAT ASSISTS COUNTIES IN REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK THROUGH MITIGATION AND PREVENTION EFFORTS AND REIMBURSEMENT OF LOCAL SUPPRESSION COSTS

The 2020 wildfire season saw Colorado experience its three largest wildfires in recorded history. In Boulder County, 2020's CalWood fire was the largest fire in county history. Local governments have various land use and land management tools available to reduce the risk of these wildfires on public and private lands. Many counties also work closely with the community on wildfire prevention, mitigation, and suppression. The return on investment for wildfire mitigation efforts was proven through fires as recent as the CalWood Fire, where extensive mitigation work by Boulder County significantly reduced destructive impacts on forests at its Heil Valley Ranch open space. Boulder County's nationally recognized Wildfire Partners program supports a comprehensive approach to community wildfire mitigation and resilience by providing private homeowners with wildfire mitigation assessments, technical assistance, and financial incentives for completing mitigation projects. Through the Colorado Department of Natural Resources Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant program and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding, Boulder County has assisted more than 2,100 homeowners in reducing their wildfire risk. Other examples of important county programs include outreach to people experiencing homelessness and living on public lands about wildfire risk and prevention through the Nederland Interagency Council for Homeless Encampments program, the private resident prescribed burn permit program, chipping and sort-yard services, and law enforcement efforts that assist with the coordination of wildfire suppression such as multi-jurisdictional cost-sharing agreements. Boulder County supports increased funding for mitigation programs as well as legislation that provides counties and law enforcement partners with the tools necessary to reduce wildfire risk in the wildland urban interface, ensure public safety, and improve collaboration during wildfire disasters.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND FUNDING THAT PROMOTES FOREST RESTORATION, INCLUDING THE USE OF PRESCRIBED FIRE, IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Forest health efforts improve the conditions of Colorado's forests to restore ecosystems to a healthier state. Together, these efforts have the benefit of minimizing the destructive effects of wildfire on Colorado's communities, land, and environment. Activities such as forest thinning and prescribed fire are common and proven tools for reducing wildfire risk. These risks can be further reduced by local governments regulating the amount and type of development that occurs in areas at risk for wildfire and establishing requirements for wildfire mitigation measures for any development within these areas. Boulder County supports the use and expansion of forest restoration efforts and land use regulation across Colorado's forests.

REAUTHORIZE AND STRENGTHEN THE FOREST HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC) was created by HB 16-1255 to provide a forum for advising the State Forester on a range of issues regarding Colorado's forests, including wildfire issues. The FHAC is

housed at the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), and includes representatives from local governments, state agencies, wildlife advocates, hunting and fishing organizations, and others. In 2021, the FHAC will be subject to the statutory sunset review process. Boulder County supports reauthorizing the FHAC and strengthening its role, in particular as an advocate for wildfire mitigation and prevention efforts that makes policy recommendations to the General Assembly and Governor's office. Boulder County also supports moving the FHAC from CSFS to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to facilitate integration of its work with other forest health work being undertaken by DNR.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS AND PROGRAMS TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE RISKS OF HUMAN-CAUSED WILDFIRES AND HOW THEY CAN BE PREVENTED

Far too many of Colorado's wildfires are the result of human activity, as opposed to natural causes such as lightning strikes. A 2020 study published by CU Boulder found that nationwide, 97% of the wildfires that threatened homes between 1992 and 2015 were caused by humans. This trend will only continue as Colorado's population continues to grow, and with it human activity in the Wildland Urban Interface. Boulder County supports increased investments in programs that increase public awareness of the risks of human-caused wildfires and steps to reduce or prevent them.

SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND REDUCE THE STRUCTURAL IGNITABILITY OF HOMES IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Recent wildfires in Boulder County and across the state have reinforced the need for collaborative landowner participation in the planning and implementation of mitigation efforts in the wildland urban interface. In particular, Boulder County supports legislative efforts that promote forest health and restoration projects that improve overall forest conditions; forestry projects that reduce fuels for fire and create fuel breaks and safe escape routes; increased private homeowner awareness and participation in the creation and maintenance of defensible space and a safe home ignition zone; and increased use of ignition-resistant building materials in residential construction, renovations, decks, and additions in the wildland urban interface. Boulder County's Ignition-Resistant Materials and Construction building code is a local strategy that supports these efforts, and our nationally recognized Wildfire Partners program, which provides wildfire mitigation assessments, technical assistance, and financial incentives to private homeowners interested in reducing their wildfire risk, is another. Boulder County supports state legislation that advances wildfire mitigation and reduction of wildfire risk through ignition-resistant building codes and other means.

SUPPORT ONGOING FUNDING FOR THE COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN IMPROVING FOREST CONDITIONS AND REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) manages and treats thousands of acres of forested lands across Colorado, educates landowners and homeowners about forest stewardship and wildfire mitigation, and partners with federal and local entities on forest restoration and resiliency efforts – all with the goal of achieving healthy and resilient forests in Colorado. For local governments, CSFS is a critical partner in helping residents of forested lands better understand their role in the forest health and wildfire challenges we face, and regional field offices and staff provide local governments with technical assistance and support about local forest-related challenges. Funding for the CSFS comes from the state and federal government through various sources including state severance tax funds and more recently \$1 million from the general fund resulting from the enactment of HB 19-1006. However, the CSFS has limited capacity to meet the statewide need and also continue to facilitate forest health efforts at the local level. Boulder County supports increased funding and staffing for the CSFS to support wildfire mitigation efforts and community engagement around forest health and wildfire issues.

Oil & Gas

To support expanded ability for Colorado state and local governments to regulate the oil and gas industry consistent with community needs and desires.

SUPPORT STRONG, TIMELY, AND EFFECTIVE REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAJOR REFORMS OF OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY REGULATION ENACTED IN SB 19-181

In 2019, Colorado enacted SB 19-181, landmark legislation reforming the regulation of oil and gas operations in the state. Boulder County strongly supported this legislation and played a significant role in helping to craft it. The legislation created a statutory and regulatory framework for the accomplishment of many longstanding policy goals of Boulder County regarding oil and gas development, including:

- Reducing impacts on Colorado’s land, air, and water;
- Reducing public health and safety impacts;
- Affirming and expanding the ability of counties and local governments to regulate oil and gas operations through land use and other authorities;
- Reforming the mission of the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) to ensure the commission protects public health, public safety, and the environment; and
- Revising Colorado’s forced pooling regulations to better protect the interests of private and public mineral rights owners.

While the enactment of SB 19-181 represented enormous progress in improved regulation of oil and gas development in Colorado, much work remains to be done to build and implement the regulatory structures required to achieve the goals the legislation set out to address. An extensive series of regulatory proceedings at both the COGCC and the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) to create the initial implementation rules for SB 19-181 will take several years to complete. Following this initial round of proceedings, significant ongoing effort will be required to implement, enforce, and where called for amend these rules over the course of time. Mechanisms such as a limit on emissions from the oil and gas sector might also be required as part of this process to meet the overall emissions reduction targets in HB 19-1261.

Boulder County supports effective and timely regulatory and administrative implementation of SB 19-181’s provisions in a manner that strongly prioritizes public health, safety, and environmental protection, consistent with the intent of the legislation and with Boulder County’s longstanding policy goals for improved regulation of the oil and gas industry. As part of these efforts, Boulder County also supports actions that expand monitoring and reduction of the full life cycle emissions from fossil fuel extractive industry activities.

SUPPORT INCREASING COLORADO’S SEVERANCE TAXES, REDUCING OR ELIMINATING INDUSTRY EXEMPTIONS, AND PURSUING OTHER APPROACHES TO INCREASE STATE REVENUES RECEIVED FROM OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Severance taxes are taxes that states levy on minerals “severed,” or removed, from the ground. Every major energy-producing state, including Colorado, levies severance taxes to make up for the permanent loss of nonrenewable natural resources and to mitigate the impacts of energy and mineral development on local communities. By almost every measure – annual collections, annual collections as a percentage

of total state tax collections, actual tax rates – Colorado’s severance tax regime lags those of other energy-producing states. In combination, Colorado’s low severance tax rates, stripper well exemption, and severance tax credit of 87.5 percent of ad valorem taxes both reduces the revenues available to the state and its local governments to address the impacts of oil and gas development and provides no opportunity to leverage this burgeoning – and ultimately finite – industry for the benefit of Colorado’s people and environment. Boulder County supports increasing Colorado’s severance tax rates and pursuing other policy approaches – for example, eliminating industry tax credits – to increase state tax revenues collected from oil and gas development, end taxpayer subsidization of oil and gas producers, ensure better mitigation of the industry’s near- and long-term impacts, and provide broader benefit to Colorado for the extraction of nonrenewable energy resources. Increased severance tax revenues could also be utilized to support implementation of Colorado’s renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

SUPPORT CREATION OF A SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE ONGOING INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF AND ADVICE REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICES AND REGULATIONS PROMULGATED BY THE COLORADO OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION COMMISSION AND AIR QUALITY CONTROL COMMISSION

In 1978, the U.S. Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish a Science Advisory Board to provide independent, science-based advice to the EPA administrator. The Science Advisory Board is charged with reviewing the quality and relevance of scientific and technical information that is used by the EPA as the basis for agency regulations; reviewing EPA research programs and plans; providing science advice as requested by the Administrator; and advising the agency on scientific matters in general. Similarly, the EPA’s Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee, created through the Clean Air Act, provides independent, science-based advice on the technical bases for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards while also advising the EPA on air quality research, sources of pollution, and strategies to attain and maintain air quality. Boulder County supports the creation of a scientific advisory committee based on these models to provide independent, science-based review of the technical bases for the regulations promulgated by the COGCC and the AQCC. Such a committee would provide the COGCC and AQCC with the capacity to review the ever-growing body of data and research regarding the impacts of oil and gas development in Colorado, for example in relation to public and environmental health, and assist the COGCC and AQCC in developing regulations that best serve to protect Colorado’s people and its land.

REVISE COLORADO’S FORCED POOLING REGULATIONS TO BETTER PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC MINERAL RIGHTS OWNERS

Known by a variety of terms, including compulsory drilling, mandatory pooling, and statutory pooling, forced pooling is a regulatory process overseen by the COGCC, whereby some mineral rights owners can compel other mineral rights owners to involuntarily relinquish their rights if their refusal to voluntarily do so will prevent the development of an oil and gas resource. Said another way, the regulatory goal behind forced pooling is that a mineral interest owner who refuses to enter into a lease should not be permitted to prevent development of mineral interests owned by others.

Forced pooling intersects with Boulder County priorities and values primarily in the realm of open space and land and natural resource conservation. For example, when the county purchases land in fee simple for open space purposes, the properties typically fall into one of three categories in respect to mineral rights: 1) The mineral rights have been severed from the property, and belong to another party; 2) The mineral rights are subject to an active lease, and the county purchase is contingent on meeting the conditions of the lease; or 3) The mineral rights are purchased along with the property. Mining, including oil and gas development, is prohibited on county-owned open space lands. Because forced pooling can

result in the development of county-owned mineral rights, the process is in direct conflict with adopted county policy.

SB 19-181 significantly improved Colorado's forced pooling statutes to better protect private and public mineral rights owners. It increased to 45 percent the minimum share ownership and control of mineral rights required before forced pooling is allowed, and slightly increased the statutorily-defined royalty percentage for mineral rights owners who are forced pooled, to incentivize negotiation between industry and mineral rights owners. Boulder County supports these measures, and further supports prohibiting the forced pooling of mineral rights that are publicly owned or encumbered by a conservation easement that prohibits oil and gas development. Boulder County also supports changes to the forced pooling regulations to require oil and gas companies to demonstrate that forced pooling is technically required to extract resources from unwilling lessors. Lastly, Boulder County supports requiring agreement from a simple majority of mineral rights owners (51 percent) prior to forced pooling being allowed.

REPEAL AND/OR AMEND HB 14-1371 TO REQUIRE PROPERTY TAX REVENUES FROM OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION TO BE ALLOCATED PROPORTIONALLY TO ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAXING DISTRICTS LOCATED WITHIN A DRILLING UNIT

The development and utilization of horizontal drilling techniques has enabled oil and gas operators to drill across multiple jurisdictional boundaries from a single well pad. Horizontal drilling brings two specific kinds of impacts to jurisdictions that are adjacent to drilling operations: these jurisdictions have no formal ability to influence the COGCC review process of new drilling applications, and state law mandates that only those jurisdictions containing wellheads will be allocated production value for property tax purposes. This single allocation of property tax revenues from oil and gas production came about through HB 14-1371, which became law absent the Governor's signature in 2014. Boulder County supports repeal or amendment of HB 14-1371, to require oil and gas property tax revenue to be allocated proportionally to all local government taxing entities located within a drilling unit. Boulder County will also support General Assembly action on other issues that result from cross-jurisdictional drilling, including prohibiting drilling across jurisdictional boundaries without agreements with those jurisdictions, and providing standing at the COGCC for all local governments where cross-jurisdictional drilling is proposed.

SUPPORT SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR STAFFING AND OTHER NECESSARY RESOURCES AT THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT AND THE COLORADO OIL AND GAS CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO EFFECTIVELY DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT THE OIL AND GAS REGULATIONS AUTHORIZED BY SB 19-181 AND THE CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS ESTABLISHED IN HB 19-1261

SB 19-181 was landmark legislation that authorized numerous new regulatory proceedings and rule-makings to allow for more effective oversight of the oil and gas industry, with a much stronger focus on protecting public health and the environment. Similarly, HB 19-1261 set ambitious targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions between now and the year 2050. As the key state agencies involved in implementing many of these regulations, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the COGCC need to be provided with the resources necessary to develop, implement, and enforce this new set of laws and regulations that will protect the public interest. Boulder County supports increased funding for CDPHE and COGCC to hire the personnel needed to ensure that the legislative intent of SB 19-181 to protect public health and the environment will be successfully implemented. Boulder County also supports legislation to ensure that CDPHE is able to acquire the equipment and other resources it needs to accurately monitor air quality and emissions associated with the oil and gas industry and other sources.

INCREASE PROTECTIONS FOR MINERAL AND SURFACE RIGHTS OWNERS TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD WITH OIL AND GAS OPERATORS

Most mineral and surface rights owners face significant disadvantages when negotiating lease provisions with the oil and gas industry. Industry representatives come to the negotiating table armed with financial, technical, and legal resources that few mineral and surface rights owners can compete with. As a result, lease provisions far too often benefit the oil and gas industry at the expense of the public.

Boulder County supports reforms to level the playing field between the oil and gas industry and mineral and surface rights owners. These reforms could include:

- Regulating certain lease provisions to ensure they are equally beneficial to all parties. These could include: limiting lease terms to a reasonable duration; prohibiting the transferability of leases from one operator to another without consent of the lessor; and termination of leases where the level of resource production is minimal.
- Providing for increased transparency so that all parties can negotiate on an equal footing. Such measures could include: requiring oil and gas operators to disclose prices paid for comparable agreements; requiring that royalty offers be calculated based on net costs instead of gross costs to make it easier for mineral and surface rights owners to evaluate the true value of those offers; and requiring a third-party audit of lease-related expenses being charged to mineral and surface rights owners to ensure they are fair and reasonable.
- Accelerating royalty payments so that mineral and surface rights holders can more easily afford legal counsel and other professional services necessary for them to negotiate fair compensation for their resources.

Public Lands & Natural Resources

To promote land conservation and preservation and outdoor opportunities for Coloradans.

SUPPORT THE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CARBON SEQUESTRATION PRACTICES TO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY AND SEQUESTER CARBON FROM THE ATMOSPHERE

Research indicates that carbon sequestration through agricultural, land management, and forestry practices is a potentially powerful tool to absorb excess carbon from the atmosphere and help mitigate the effects of climate change. In addition to reducing heat-trapping emissions, carbon sequestration in soils is also shown to have many co-benefits, including improved soil health, improved crop yields, increased water retention, and restoration of native plant and animal species. Carbon sequestration practices include but are not limited to methods such as applying compost to rangeland and croplands, using slow-release fertilizers and nitrification inhibitors, planting cover crops, reducing tillage or growing crops without tillage, planting trees and shrubs as windbreaks on cropland, and applying biochar to reclaim and restore land and boost soil fertility. Boulder County supports applicable practices and state funding that increase carbon sequestration efforts and improve overall soil health and productivity.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND FUNDING THAT PROMOTES FOREST RESTORATION AND WILDFIRE MITIGATION, INCLUDING THE USE OF PRESCRIBED FIRE, IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Cross reference to Disaster

SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS THAT THE STATE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS USE TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT COLORADO'S LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Colorado's environment defines its quality of life and economy. Recognizing this, the state and its local government partners have developed an array of public policy and programmatic initiatives designed to preserve and protect Colorado's land and natural resources; examples include the Conservation Easement Tax Credit and Great Outdoors Colorado. Boulder County will continue to utilize these tools to protect our local environment and will advocate for their continuation and expansion to ensure the preservation of the environment and quality of life that Coloradans have grown to expect.

OPPOSE LEGISLATION AND OTHER EFFORTS TO TRANSFER COLORADO'S FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO STATE OWNERSHIP

Boulder County supports the protection of Colorado's federal public lands including national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, historic sites, and wilderness areas, and will oppose legislation that attempts to authorize state control of these lands. Public lands provide economic, environmental, ecological, recreational, and health benefits to the state and local communities. Year after year, public surveys consistently show that Coloradans overwhelmingly appreciate and support the opportunities these benefits provide, and that an overwhelming majority of state residents believe that federal public lands should continue to be owned and managed by the federal government.

Public lands serve as economic drivers for local communities by increasing tourism, income and employment opportunities, and land and home values. The outdoor recreation economy in the U.S. is bigger than mining and agriculture, and on par with broadcasting and telecommunications. In 2019, outdoor recreation accounted for more than \$12.2 billion in economic impact in Colorado, or about 3.1% of the state's total economy. Outdoor recreation businesses in Colorado employed 149,140 workers who earned \$6.4 billion in wages.

Additionally, western states, including Colorado, woefully lack resources to manage the millions of acres of federal public lands located within their borders. The transfer of these lands to state control raises legitimate concerns that the land will be sold to private interests or the natural resources exploited to pay for firefighting and other management costs. Finally, existing case law and constitutional interpretation strongly suggest that states have no constitutional authority to force federal land transfers. Theories based on state enabling acts do not circumvent the fact that the U.S. Constitution's Property Clause and Supremacy Clause make state legislation intending to force federal land transfers unconstitutional.

For all these reasons, Boulder County will strongly oppose state legislation or other efforts to transfer Colorado's federal public lands to state ownership.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT PROMOTES THE EFFICIENT UTILIZATION AND CONSERVATION OF WATER

Colorado's lakes, rivers and streams, and water delivery systems provide clean drinking water for our cities and towns and are critical to supporting the state economy, fish and wildlife populations, and our way of life. Within this context, state and local government water policy must result in water supply and management decisions that are environmentally and economically sustainable in order to conserve, protect, and restore Colorado's rivers. Boulder County staff participated directly in the two-year long effort to draft Colorado's Water Plan, the state's first comprehensive water plan. The inclusion of conservation, land use, and watershed health metrics in the plan will move the state toward sustainable water resource management practices and create public policy incentives to achieve greater conservation and more efficient use of Colorado's water supply; state legislation and other policy approaches will be important tools in this effort. In addition, Boulder County has established Land and Water Stewardship as a 2019-2023 Strategic Priority and will work towards the goal of expanding and maximizing utilization of the county's water portfolio to support sustainable agriculture and healthy riparian and aquatic ecosystems.

SUPPORT RESOLUTION TO CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND STATE WATER LAW

Currently, the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits certain modifications to endangered species habitat. Designed to protect and enhance the quality of habitat for federally listed species, these restrictions describe the specific kinds of activities allowable within habitat areas. Meanwhile, state water law establishes maintenance standards for ditches and stream corridors, including the removal of vegetation for enabling stream flows. At times, these state maintenance standards come into conflict with the federal ESA restrictions. Boulder County supports bringing resolution to these conflicting requirements.

INCREASE STATE CAPACITY AND RESOURCES TO RESPOND TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species are a continual threat to Colorado's landscapes, wildlife, aquatic habitat, agriculture industry, and native plants. One of the most recent examples is the state's experience with the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Its September 2013 discovery in the City of Boulder marked the western-most infestation of the federally quarantined EAB, and the first in Colorado. Despite robust state and local

education and other efforts, including a regional quarantine, EAB has continued to spread and today the estimated 1.45 million ash trees within the Denver metro area are at risk. The regional quarantine has been rescinded, recognition that the pest has won.

EAB presents a cautionary tale as Colorado works to address the threats of aquatic nuisance species, noxious weeds, and forest pests. For example, management of forest pests requires significant financial investments from institutions and individuals trying to save trees or remove and replace them. Local governments, the state Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as private industry and the public must work collaboratively to slow or stop the spread of invasive species. Funding, public education campaigns, and proactive agency planning will be critical to the effort. As a start, Boulder County supports increasing state resources and directing them to broad, stakeholder collaboration efforts as primary strategies for addressing invasive species in Colorado.

FOSTER A STRONG STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION ETHIC AMONGST COLORADO'S DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Colorado's natural environment depends upon the next generation of residents and visitors to sustain and promote the health of local, state, and federal public lands. Boulder County supports programs and efforts that foster stewardship and long-term support for our public lands, such as youth corps programs, programs to get children, seniors and multicultural populations outdoors, and efforts to link urban areas to parks and public lands. A key county organizational strategic priority is to develop and begin implementation of a Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion Strategic Plan to guide engagement with underserved populations in Boulder County. Boulder County supports initiatives, and funding for those initiatives, aimed at establishing outdoor experiences and an appreciation for our public lands among our diverse populations.

SUPPORT STATE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AND COMPLETE REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS THAT LINK COMMUNITIES AND CONNECT VISITORS TO IMPORTANT LANDMARKS AND AMENITIES

Boulder County supports statewide efforts to assist with the completion of regional trail systems that have been identified and supported by communities through local planning processes. One such state-level initiative in support of this goal is the Colorado the Beautiful (CTB) Grant Program, which funds connectivity projects through regional trail planning and construction grants. A joint partnership between Colorado Parks and Wildlife and Great Outdoors Colorado, the CTB grant program provides a unique opportunity to overcome funding, ownership, access, and other obstacles to the completion of regional trails throughout Colorado. Boulder County supports additional efforts like the Colorado the Beautiful Grant program to develop regional trails to link communities and local and federal public lands to provide transportation and access to outdoor amenities and active outdoor recreation.

SUPPORT ONGOING FUNDING FOR THE COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE LANDOWNERS IN IMPROVING FOREST CONDITIONS AND REDUCING WILDFIRE RISK

See full policy statement in the Disaster Resiliency and Recovery section.

REVISE STATE STATUTE TO PROVIDE PERMISSIVE AUTHORITY FOR COLORADO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO LIMIT THE USE OF ELECTRIC SCOOTERS TO PAVED SURFACES

Like electric bikes, electric scooters, or e-scooters, are another emerging mobility technology. E-scooters can serve as a viable and efficient "first mile" and "last mile" transportation option, but their rapid deployment in many urban areas, including Denver, has resulted in regulators struggling to catch up. To address this challenge, in the 2019 State Legislative Session the General Assembly passed and Governor Polis signed into law HB 19-1221, updating the state statutes that regulate the operation of e-scooters.

As a result of these changes, e-scooters are now included within the statutory definition of “vehicles.” Similar to e-bikes, e-scooters do not need to be registered and are generally permitted on roads with some exceptions. While HB 1221 allows local authorities to prohibit electric scooters on bike or pedestrian paths, the law does state that “[a] local government may regulate the operation of an electric scooter in a manner that is no more restrictive than the manner in which the local government may regulate the operation of a class 1 electrical assisted bicycle.” CRS § 42-4-221(8.5)

After extensive study and completion of a pilot study, Boulder County recently approved the use of Class 1 and 2 e-bikes on county trails on the plains where regular bikes are allowed. Electric scooters were not studied as part of this project, nor were they approved for use on county open space trails. While e-scooters are designed for urban transportation and not well suited to the crusher fines or dirt trails found throughout the Boulder County open space and parks system, as a result of HB 19-1221, the county cannot permit e-bikes on its trail system without also allowing e-scooters on the same trails.

Boulder County finds itself in the untenable position of wanting to support our residents’ desire to utilize e-bikes on open space trails but having to take e-scooters as part of the bargain, with no public discussion or staff analysis regarding the myriad of safety and other issues raised by the prospect of e-scooters utilizing trails designed for recreation. Thus, the county supports providing Colorado’s home rule municipalities and statutory cities, towns, and counties with permissive authority to limit the use of e-scooters to trails with paved surfaces.

State Fiscal & Governance

To improve the fiscal position of the state to sustain services to Coloradans today and into the future.

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO BRING FISCAL STABILITY TO THE STATE OF COLORADO

The state and its counties are intertwined in many significant ways when it comes to the delivery of services to Colorado residents. As a result, Boulder County will continue to engage with any substantive efforts to evaluate and address the ongoing structural and budgetary challenges that negatively impact the fiscal stability and sustainability of the State of Colorado, and by extension, its local government partners. For example, in 2020 the county supported Amendment B, which was approved by the statewide electorate and repealed the Gallagher Amendment from the state constitution. Additional state fiscal stability efforts should look to: Reform the Taxpayer Bill of Rights to at minimum eliminate the ratchet effect and lift the revenue and spending limits included in it; explore creative solutions such as local government revenue sharing and service taxes; repeal or modify the three-percent TABOR reserve requirement; and conduct a periodic review and assessment of Colorado's tax credits and exemptions to ensure that these benefits create public value.

REQUIRE STATE GOVERNMENT TO ASSESS CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS IN ITS INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO MITIGATE THAT RISK UP TO AND INCLUDING DIVESTMENT

Despite the overwhelming scientific consensus that greenhouse gas emissions need to be dramatically reduced in the immediate future, new fossil fuel infrastructure that will make the problem even worse continues to be constructed. This construction is supported in part by state government-administered pension plans (such as the Public Employees' Retirement Association, or PERA) that invest in the fossil fuel industry. To date, over 1,200 institutions representing nearly \$14 trillion in assets have opted to divest from the fossil fuel industry. Boulder County supports legislation such as HB 19-1270, which had it become law, would have required PERA to commission an assessment of the climate-related risks in its portfolio and make recommendations to mitigate that risk.

Notes



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