



# Gunnison County Metropolitan Recreation District

## 2020 Annual Report



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## Introduction & Overview

The Gunnison County Metropolitan Recreation District (Met Rec) is committed to understanding *who* it serves and *how* to **best** serve them.

That is why we embarked on our first-ever strategic planning process. Following a successful de-brucing in 2018, we are better positioned to fulfill the entirety of our mission. We are committed to improving and enhancing the television service while becoming more effective at serving the recreation community.

Met Rec's development as a recreation special district, funded by a 1 mil levy property tax and Colorado Lottery proceeds, make it a dependable community cornerstone. With a service area that encompasses almost all of Gunnison County, Met Rec harbors the unique ability to facilitate collaborative initiatives across silos and jurisdictional boundaries.

*The Annual Report highlights work being done to implement Met Rec's Operations (TV) and Recreation strategic plans.*

Met Rec operates as a **special district** of Colorado

In Colorado, special districts are entities that can tap into property taxes to provide essential services. Colorado has over 1,000 special districts that address needs from fire protection to water and sanitation services. Met Rec is supported by a 1 mil levy property tax for the purpose of providing over-the-air television and recreation services.

### Vision

To improve our citizens' quality of life by promoting vital recreation opportunities.

### Mission

To provide high-quality over the air television service and strategic leadership that leverages innovative partnerships to accomplish vital recreation opportunities for communities.

# Met Rec Services

## Television & FM Services



Using satellite downlink technology and a terrestrial translator network made up of 12 translator sites, Met Rec provides Denver DMA TV channels to residents of portions of Gunnison and Saguache Counties.

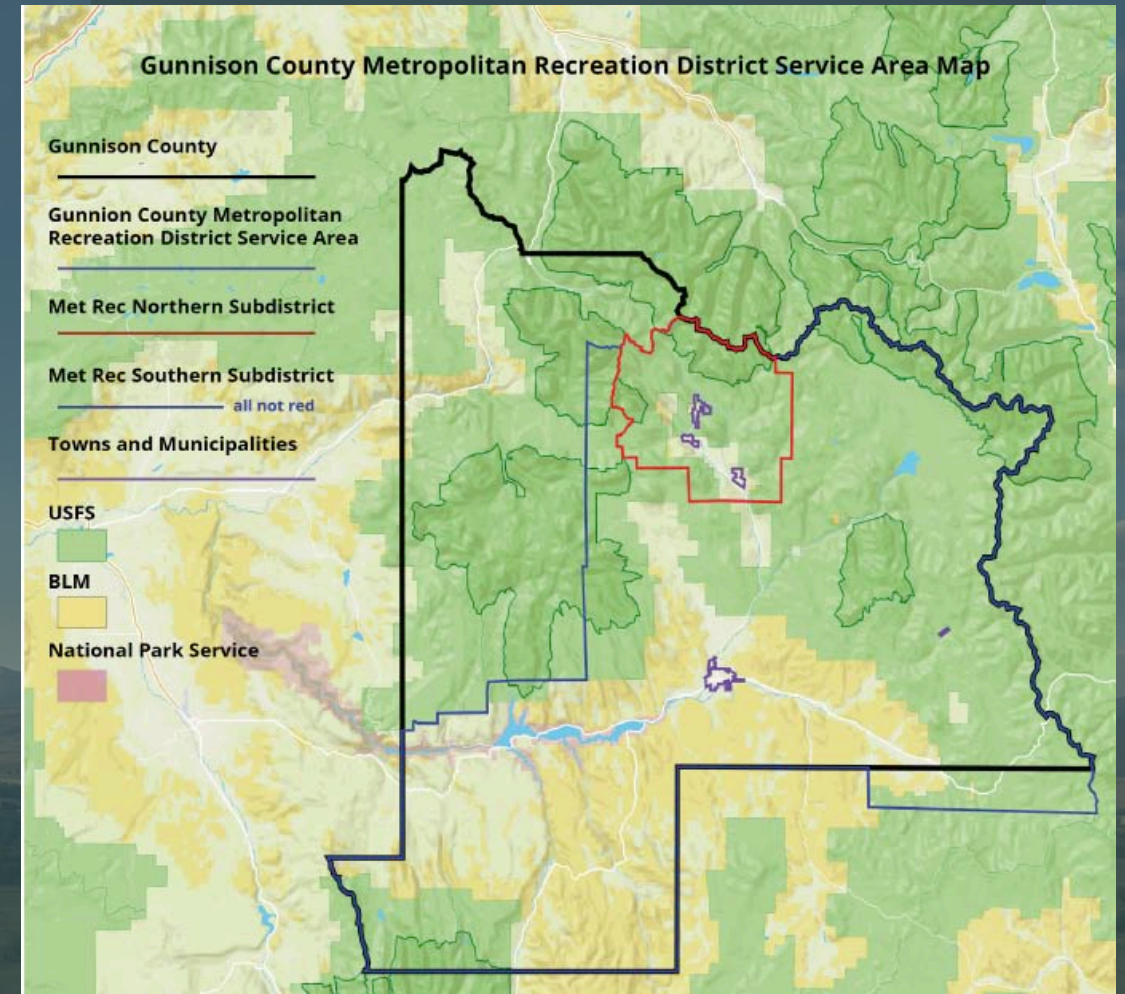
## Park & Recreation Services



Through partnership building and grant programs, Met Rec works to facilitate and support collaborative recreation initiatives that achieve solutions needed by the entire valley.

In particular, Met Rec seeks to advance priority developed recreation amenities, outdoor recreation needs, and increase equitable access to recreation opportunities.

## SERVICE AREA



# Strategic Plans

This spring, Met Rec completed its first-ever Strategic Planning Process - informed by public and stakeholder outreach, including an extensive recreation needs assessment.

This report outlines work being done to realize the goals established in both plans.

The new Strategic Plans include nine focus areas:

## Operations (TV)

Improve System Safety

Enhance Reliability

Enhance Environmental Controls

Plan for Long-term Signal Delivery

Service Expansion Criteria

## Recreation

Developed Recreation Amenities

Outdoor Recreation

Increase Access to Recreation

Community Collaboration

The complete strategic plans can be viewed on the Met Rec [website](#).

November, 2019

### Public Work Session

Review of Recreation Needs Assessment

January, 2020

### Public Work Session

Review of Recreation Strategic Plan strategy and focus areas

February, 2020

### Public Work Session

Review of Recreation Strategic Plan strategy, focus areas and action items

March, 2020

### Public Work Session

Review of Recreation Strategic Plan action items.

Review of Operations Strategic Plan focus areas and action items

April, 2020

### Public Work Session

Review Operations Strategic Plan focus areas and action items

Approve final Recreation Strategic Plan

May, 2020

### Public Work Session

Approve final Operations Strategic Plan

## Developed Recreation Amenities

Regional assessments and stakeholder outreach confirm the demand for additional developed recreation amenities, such as field space, refrigerated ice, and indoor recreation facilities.

Met Rec will work to provide leadership and coordinate responsible planning and implementation of recreation amenities that require regional support to achieve successful development and sustainable operation. This process seeks to ensure efficient utilization of existing facilities, the prevention of duplicative services, and an understanding of near and long-term capital, operating and replacement costs associated with new projects.

## PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

A framework has been developed to guide Met Rec and partners in the planning for priority, large-scale, developed recreation amenities.

Met Rec has engaged partners in the piloting of the framework to identify how we can develop field space that best meets today's needs as well as future needs. Visit our website to learn more about the [Field Space Initiative](#).

## RECREATION RESERVE FUND

In 2019, Met Rec established a Recreation Reserve Fund. The Fund will grow Met Rec's ability to financially support the planning and development of large-scale developed recreation amenities.

## DEVELOPED RECREATION GRANT PROGRAM

In 2020, Met Rec launched the new grant program designed to catalyze the development of recreation amenities that meet valley-wide needs. In its first year, funds were awarded to three major projects; Gunnison County's Shady Island River Park, the Hartman Rocks Terrain Park, and the Town of Crested Butte's Big Mine Ice Arena Changing Room Addition.

# Increase Access to Recreation

Improved access to recreation was supported by constituents throughout Met Rec's service area, with particular concern for high program and equipment costs and inadequate transportation to recreation amenities and programs.

Met Rec will invest in and support efforts that reduce local barriers faced by youth, elderly, and underserved communities in the planning and implementation of recreation programs and amenities.

## SUPPORT & COLLABORATION

This year, Met Rec partnered with six local organizations to connect more community members to transformative recreation experiences.

**1** Gunnison Valley Mentors

**2** Gunnison County Substance Abuse Prevention Project

**3** Adaptive Sports Center

**4** West Elk Hockey Association

**5** City of Gunnison Parks & Recreation

**6** Gunnison Middle School

# Outdoor Recreation

Regional assessments demonstrated significant interest in supporting trail maintenance and development, including community connector trails and trailhead infrastructure for people of all ages and abilities. Met Rec will support outdoor recreation needs through its partnership with Gunnison County's Sustainable Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee (STOR) and through its recreation focus area, Community Collaboration.

Met Rec recognizes that certain outdoor recreation needs do not align with STOR's focus on public and conserved lands. Therefore, we seek to support alternative outdoor recreation needs as part of our Community Collaboration focus area.

## 2021 OUTDOOR WINTER REC. INITIATIVE

This summer, Met Rec engaged partners in a collective effort to:

- Connect *more* Gunnison Valley residents to outdoor winter recreation opportunities
- *Reduce local barriers* to engaging in outdoor winter recreation pursuits
- Promote *safe and responsible* outdoor recreation for residents and visitors
- Provide *capacity building support* to help partner organizations operate safely and efficiently

[\*Visit our website to learn more about the 2021 Outdoor Winter Recreation Initiative!\*](#)

## GUNNISON STEWARDSHIP FUND

For the third year in a row, Met Rec partnered with Gunnison County and the National Forest Foundation to help finance the stewardship of our public and conserved lands by acting as a collaborative partner and fund contributor.

# Community Collaboration

Supporting valued community recreation opportunities is a core element of Met Rec's work. Ensuring quality amenities and sustainable programming is a priority.

Engaging in, promoting, and financially supporting community-based recreation initiatives is critical to improving our citizens' quality of life. Met Rec will continue to respond to proposals that fall outside of the Developed Recreation focus area through its Community Collaboration grant program.

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION GRANT PROGRAM

With updates to its criteria, Met Rec's refined Community Collaboration Grant Program has been designed to:

- Promote quality recreation amenities and sustainable programming for Met Rec's Service Area
- Encourage efforts that reduce local barriers to recreation
- Keep recreational programs and services diverse and affordable
- Support collaborative initiatives that achieve solutions needed by the entire valley

## RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEES



In 2019, Met Rec re-established its north and south recreation advisory committees. Together, the committee members help inform Met Rec's work. Their collective involvement with various organizations, entities and businesses provide insight into opportunities for collaboration. Each committee represents interests from Met Rec's north and south sub-districts.

# How does the translator system work?



Met Rec receives signals at our Gunnison Studio using large, outdoor satellite dishes



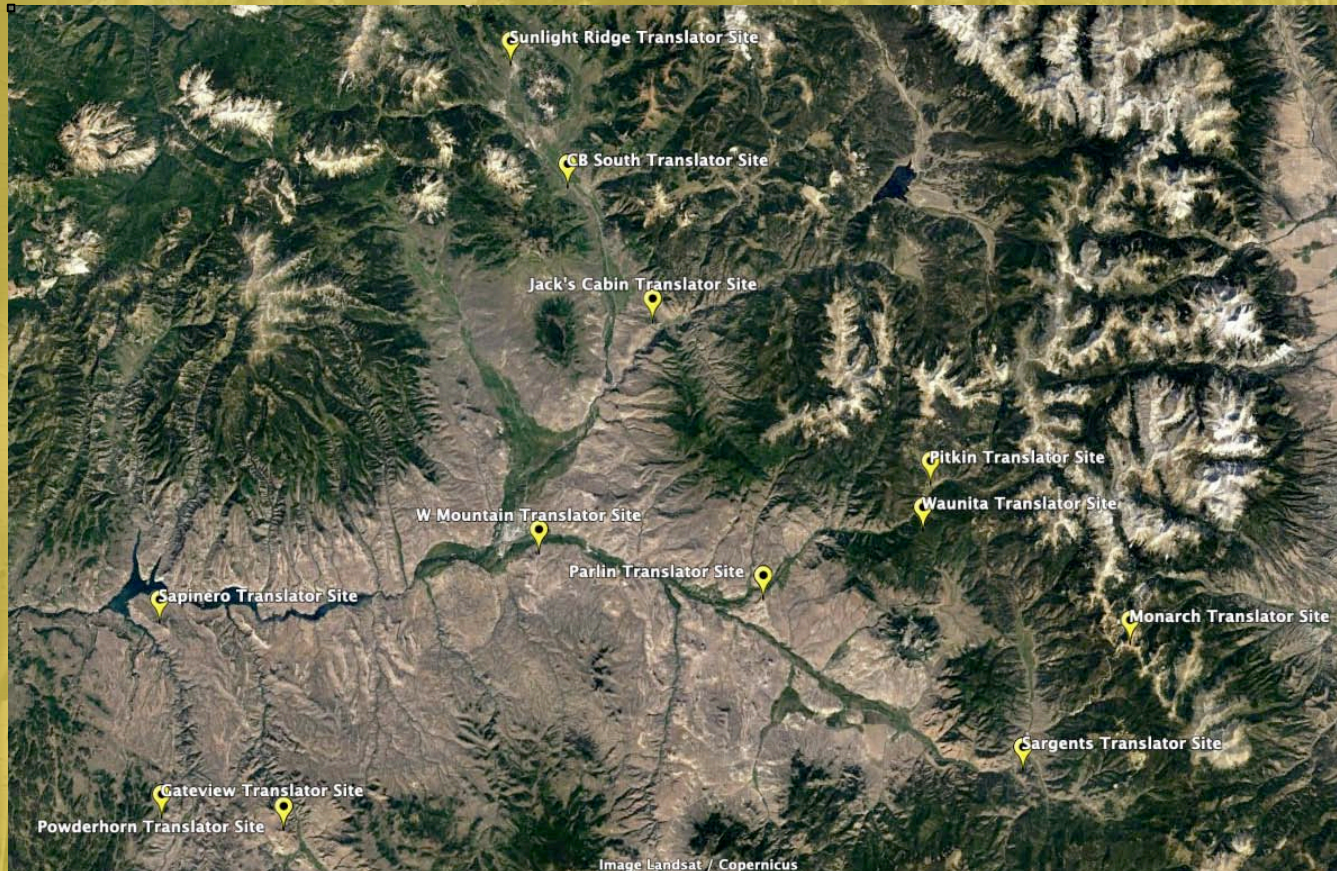
Equipment is then used to combine the signals into a format that can be transmitted over TV channels



The re-configured signals are transmitted to W Mountain



From W Mountain, TV signals are distributed in a daisy chain fashion, relaying from one site to the next



A map of Met Rec's 12 translator sites.

# Improve System Safety

Ensuring safety across all aspects of the Met Rec translator system is a priority. This includes adequate safety protocol for Met Rec staff and contractors as well as the need to maintain structurally sound infrastructure.

Met Rec's translator system consists of a complex network of translator sites. The majority of sites are located in remote areas with access challenges that are heightened during winter months. Additionally, several towers require replacement due to deferred maintenance and changes to design and construction standards. To ensure system-wide safety, Met Rec will prioritize the planning and development of necessary safety procedures and infrastructure improvement plans.

## DONE IN 2020

- A procedure has been developed to guide safe, year-round site access for staff and contractors.
- We are assuring that new equipment (i.e. transmitters) have remote control interface abilities. This will reduce the likelihood of having to make winter visits to remote translator sites.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- We are planning for implementation of cellular hot spots at translator sites, furthering monitoring capabilities of remote sites.
- We are including tower replacement costs in our annual budget to support the necessary upgrades.

# Enhance Reliability

Met Rec seeks to improve the translator system's overall reliability by taking a holistic, system-wide approach. To accomplish this, projects will be strategically prioritized that enhance the system's function for the largest number of viewers first, beginning at the system's hub in Gunnison, outwards to its remote translator sites. Met Rec will continue to provide basic maintenance throughout the whole system.

Increased reliability will benefit viewers as well as Met Rec. Television viewers will benefit from experiencing fewer outages. In the long-term, Met Rec will benefit from the operation of a durable and robust translator system.

## DONE IN 2020

### Gunnison Studio

- Improved signal strength by replacing all satellite receivers with professional grade receivers.
- Studio wiring re-done, organized and labeled, increasing durability.
- Improved reception during weather events by overhauling and re-building satellite dishes to maximize signal strength.
- Installed network equipment, enabling us to remotely monitor and diagnose equipment at other sites.
- Installed new computer to provide over-the-air channel guide.
- Installed new battery backup power to protect equipment from power glitches and surges.

### W Mountain & Monarch Translator Site

- Replaced six aging transmitters with high-end transmitters.
- Installed equipment to enable remote management and troubleshooting, allowing for a quicker response to outages.
- Improvements made to grounding and lightning protection to protect equipment from power surges.
- Installed high-bandwidth ethernet bridge to carry programming from Gunnison Studio to W Mountain, preparing us to accommodate required transition to new technology standards and eliminating the need to utilize unreliable receivers which were prone to failure and weather fade.

### At Other Translator Sites

- New batteries and solar array installed at the Waunita Translator Site (solar site).
- New antenna and equipment installed at Powderhorn to improve signal quality and reliability.

# Enhance Reliability

## LOOKING AHEAD

- Assess current satellite dish utilization to inform satellite dish improvement plan.
- Improve translator site wiring for easier management and increased durability.
- Develop an equipment replacement plan for aging broadcast equipment, inclusive of a spares plan (to acquire and stage spares where needed).
- Assess ability to implement a site-to-site communications system to allow remote diagnostics, monitoring and control of equipment and implement where appropriate.
- Develop and implement an equipment management database. This database will ultimately provide a cradle to grave history of the installation, use and repair of all significant equipment used by Met Rec.

# Enhance Environmental Controls

In an effort to improve the management of its remote translator sites, Met Rec seeks to enhance its environmental controls. Keeping translator site equipment within operating specifications of temperature will prevent failure and damage to Met Rec resources.



## DONE IN 2020

- We have purchased covers for the main satellite dishes at the Gunnison Studio to prevent snow accumulation and weather-related outages.
- We have purchased appliances to help prevent equipment failure due to large temperature swings that occur in the spring and fall months.

## LOOKING AHEAD

- We are planning for implementation of cellular hot spots at translator sites that enable remote monitoring of equipment power and facility temperature.
- We are including translator site facility improvements in our budgeting process to ensure necessary upgrades are made to enhance their durability.

# Plan for Long-Term Signal Delivery

Given the rapidly changing technology, it is imperative that Met Rec maintains a strong understanding of the available options for its content delivery. This need is heightened due to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) anticipated sale of a large portion of the C-Band satellite downlink spectrum.

Met Rec seeks to consider future content delivery methods (i.e. Ku Band, internet, etc.) as part of its approach to enhancing reliability.

With the impending implementation of ATSC 3.0 video transmission standard, Met Rec must develop a strategy that will allow it to rollout the new standard with minimal impact to capital replacement needs. All newly purchased equipment should allow for remote control and be ATSC 3.0 compliant to the greatest amount possible.

Met Rec needs to look at implementing the delivery of signals to the Monarch site from Gunnison Studio. Current Direct Broadcast Satellite delivery may not be viable for the long-term. This will require the completion of the microwave transmission of content to Monarch via the existing service and realignment of channels as some channels currently received at Monarch are not available from the Gunnison Studio.

## DONE IN 2020

- Installed high-bandwidth ethernet bridge from Gunnison Studio to W Mountain and Monarch, providing necessary infrastructure to support replacement of obsolete equipment required to transmit programming.
- We ensured new equipment purchases can support upcoming, new TV transmission standards (ATSC 3.0).

## LOOKING AHEAD

- We are planning for available options for delivery of signals to Met Rec with respect to near-future changes to the broadcast television satellite spectrum (C-Band).
- We are considering strategies for a timely and cost effective transition to ATSC 3.0.

# Service Expansion Criteria

Expansion of Met Rec's television services will be considered but is a lesser priority in comparison to the plan's other focus areas intended to enhance the system's reliability.

Met Rec will consider expansion of its television service using specific criteria, including cost, technical feasibility and number of people served.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Assess translator coverage to find areas of significant population not covered by the current system that could have coverage with optimization to the current system. This task could include additional translators or modification to antenna propagation pattern. In the first case, an example would be the north valley Gunnison while in the second case it could be the increase in broadcast pattern to cover areas from Crested Butte South through areas such as Stallion Park and south of Skyland. This would allow Met Rec to respond to a potential new filing window from the FCC for TV translator service.

# Finances

## Where does Met Rec's funding come from?



**Property Tax** - The majority of Met Rec's funding comes from a 1.0 mil levy on real and personal property (1.0 per \$1,000 of assessed value).



**Conservation Trust Fund (CTF)** - The CTF funds are a portion of the Colorado Lottery proceeds. These funds are mandated for distribution to local governments for acquiring and maintaining parks, open space and recreational facilities .

In 2020, Met Rec increased program budgets from 2019, allowing for service improvements and expansion:

**Recreation Support** up ~ 27%

**Capital Outlay** for television equipment up ~ 10%

**Television Operations** up ~ 20%

## REVENUES

Revenues	FY 2020
Property Tax	\$666,161
CTF Funds	\$76,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$742,161</b>

*Note: Total CTF proceeds are not known until year-end. This is an estimate.*

## EXPENDITURES

Expenditures	FY 2020
Recreation Support	\$135,000
Capital Outlay (TV)	\$85,300
Television Operations	\$152,300
*CTF IGA	\$38,000
*CTF (TV & Rec support)	\$38,000
*Administrative Expenses	\$250,248
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$698,848</b>

*\*1/2 of CTF Funds are re-distributed to local municipalities (5) per Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA). 1/2 are used towards Met Rec's television and recreation services.*

*2020 Administrative Expenses includes final lease purchase payment for Met Rec facility (~\$63,700 ) and a non-recurring expense (\$50,000).*

# 2020 Television Viewership Survey Overview

The 2020 Television Viewership Survey is the third viewership survey conducted by Met Rec since its inception. Results are used to help Met Rec better *understand who it is serving and how it can best serve them*.

The 2020 Survey was conducted using an interactive, online survey platform. The public was also able to respond by telephone by calling the Met Rec office.

The survey was launched on July 1, 2020 and concluded on September 30, 2020.

To view the complete [2020 Television Viewership Survey Report](#), please visit our [website](#).

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- 316 households reported to currently use the Met Rec television service
- 581 individual viewers were reported to reside within the 316 current households
- 71% of households reported to use the service daily
- 86% of households reported to be very satisfied (35%) to somewhat satisfied (51%) with the television service
- 85% of households reported to be very satisfied (58%) to somewhat satisfied (29%) with their interaction with Met Rec staff in regards to the service
- The most common response when asked *why* users utilize the Met Rec television service was, *that it is an affordable (tax funded) alternative to satellite/cable television services*

	2020	2016	2005
<b>Current Users of Met Rec TV</b> (by household)	316	389	513-668
<b>Potential New Users</b> (by household)	30	40	N/A

**Note:** 2005 numbers are approximate due to lack of existing information on survey methodology.