



2013 Board of Directors Retreat
Final Report
Date: March 26, 2013

The Metro District Board of Directors met at the Highlands Ranch Mansion as follows:

- 1:00 to 4:40 p.m. Friday March 8, 2013, and
- 8:30 a.m. to 3:35 p.m. Saturday March 9, 2013.

The following Board Members were present throughout:

Allen Dreher, Rick Owens, Nick Robinson, Carolyn Schierholz, Nancy Smith and Vicky Starkey. The seventh director position was vacant at the time due to the resignation of Kelly O'Sullivan on February 20, 2013.

The following staff members were present throughout: Jeff Case, Sherry Eppers, Terry Nolan, Stephanie Stanley and Carrie Ward. Additionally Mary Reed Wolfe facilitated the retreat throughout.

The retreat followed the agenda which is attached. The following is a summary of the retreat.

Expectations

The Board and staff identified the following expectations for the retreat:

1. Revisit goals current and future
2. Update the Long Range Plan
3. Determine possible Metro District roles in the development and operation of Wildcat Regional Park
4. Board understanding of future board role including expanded influence
5. Understand potential for rebranding/repositioning Highlands Ranch
6. Discuss future of Highlands Ranch and the Metro District's role.

Review Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

The Board discussed these and decided to revisit them at the end of the retreat. The Board ultimately decided not to change the Mission, Vision or Guiding Principles.

Review Board and Staff Roles

The Board reaffirmed the roles as listed in addenda A and B to the Bylaws.

Issues Facing Highlands Ranch at 32 Years Old

1. Structured properly to make decisions for the community?
2. Economic development/jobs
3. Annexation/incorporation
4. Transportation
 - a. Traffic
 - b. Road conditions
5. Seniors needs
6. Fire and emergency services
7. In-tract water and sewer line replacement

8. Wireless/high-speed internet coverage

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The Board conducted this evaluation in preparation for the remainder of the retreat.

Strengths

1. Well organized and run
2. Efficient and effective
3. Financially secure
4. Metro District and HRCA working better together
5. Conservative
6. Exceptional staff
7. We have a plan
8. Water supply
9. Sense of community
10. Low taxes
11. High standards for services.

Weaknesses

1. Residents not involved
2. Confusion between Metro, HRCA, CWSD and Douglas County
3. Decisions take too long – Fly'n B house as example
4. Too conservative
5. Future staff retirements could cause loss of historical knowledge
6. Not exerting enough influence.

Opportunities

1. More collaboration with HRCA
2. Post debt pay-off
3. Economic development
4. Mansion, Chum Howe and Fly'n B buildings and associated experiences
5. Historic Park
6. Wildcat Regional Park
7. Inform/communicate with residents
8. Joint Metro/HRCA/Centennial welcome packet for new homeowners
9. Enhance Park and Recreation Foundation
10. More Ice Cream Social type events
11. Teens
12. Increase volunteer opportunities
13. Tell good story at events
14. Seniors
15. Schedule LFR for events – not on call
16. Speakers Bureau
17. Encourage associated growth related to Children's Hospital.

Challenges

1. Vocal uninformed minority
2. More HRCA collaboration
3. Approaching build-out – balancing rising costs with the end of growing revenues
4. Rising costs
5. Major repairs
6. Economic development
7. Senior staff succession plan
8. Wildcat development and funding
9. Teens
10. Seniors

11. Other growth (south)

Future of Highlands Ranch

The Board had a thorough discussion about what the District, in partnership with others, should be doing to keep Highlands Ranch a vibrant community as we approach build-out and the community turns 32 years old. The discussion had five parts.

Collaboration Opportunities

1. By organization:
 - a. Douglas County – Wildcat Regional Park, Highland Heritage Regional Park operations and maintenance, economic development, C470, Town Center public land, Historic Park and Mansion, 4H, seniors and teens.
 - b. HRCA – recreation, cultural events, rebranding, volunteer clearing house, community events, open space management, Wildcat Regional Park, C470, Town Center public land, seniors, teens and 4H programs.
 - c. Shea– Historic Park renovations and future use, economic development and Town Center public land.
 - d. Douglas County School District – middle school sports fields improvements and programming, unused school sites and education programs on fire and emergency services, government and the outdoors and natural resources.
 - e. Douglas County Sheriff – emergency management coordination.
 - f. Douglas County Libraries – volunteer clearing house.
 - g. Chamber-Highlands Ranch – economic development
2. By major project:
 - a. Wildcat Regional Park – Douglas County, Lone Tree, Castle Pines and HRCA.
 - b. C470 – Douglas County and other Coalition members and HRCA.
 - c. Economic development – Douglas County, Shea, Chamber and HRCA.
 - d. Rebranding – HRCA, Shea, Chamber and possibly CWSD.
 - e. Historic Park and Mansion continuing renovation – Douglas County and Shea.
 - f. Historic Park and Mansion cultural and history – SCFD, HRCA, Douglas County and Shea.
 - g. Town Center public land – Douglas County, Shea and HRCA.

Post Debt Pay-off Opportunities (see attached spreadsheet)

After the debt is paid off in 2018 the 6.158 debt service mill levy would generate approximately \$7,500,000 annually. The Board had a thorough discussion on how they would use these funds. They agreed that we should, at a minimum, maintain our current level of service, therefore we will be required to use approximately \$700,000 from this mill levy to fund the General Fund budget. They then determined the following are the current Board's priorities for the use of those funds:

1. Major Repair Fund (13)*
2. Enhanced fire and emergency services (13)
3. Historic Park including barns and other buildings operations and maintenance (22)
4. Wildcat Regional Park operations and maintenance (27)
5. Contribution to a Regional Transit Authority to fund a portion of the Highlands Ranch share of expansion of C470 (32)
6. Eliminate arterial streetlight fee (36)
7. Eliminate residential streetlight fee (38)
8. Tax cut (40)
9. Eliminate storm water fee (43)

**Point totals in parentheses – lower number means higher priority*

Economic Development

The Board is interested in fostering economic development, particularly businesses providing primary jobs. They discussed some of the things the Metro District has already done that promotes economic development such as:

1. Building quality infrastructure such as roads, Lucent Boulevard interchange, parks, trails, storm drainage facilities and fire stations.
2. Providing “shovel ready” land that is optimized for development. Our road system provides great access to lots and our regional storm water detention allows optimum use of available land.
3. Great amenities – parks, trails, open space and Mansion.
4. Great services – fire and emergency, water and wastewater, recreation, trail and sidewalk snow plowing.
5. Solid financials – AA+ rated government and low taxes, rates and fees.

They also discussed some things that possibly could be done including:

1. Collaborate with Douglas County, Shea Properties, HRCA and the Chamber to tell the good story.
2. Encourage Douglas County and Shea to think first of Highlands Ranch when dealing with potential buyers/renters.
3. Focus on keeping quality services and low taxes.
4. Rebrand.

The Board directed Terry Nolan to seek an opinion from David Hahn concerning whether or not the District can spend tax dollars on economic development.

Rebranding

The Board is interested in cooperating with HRCA in possibly rebranding/repositioning Highlands Ranch as we approach build-out. This effort may include a new logo and/or tag line and may influence the Metro District as it looks to upgrade our community entrances. Other participants may include the Centennial Water and Sanitation District, Douglas County, the Highlands Ranch Chamber, Shea Homes and others.

The Board also wants to know whether or not the District can spend tax dollars on community rebranding. If it is possible the Board wants staff to develop a process and timeline with associated costs this year. They emphasized that it is important to define what we are trying to accomplish and that we establish a common goal.

Community Monuments and Entries Upgrades

After 32 years the community monuments and entries are in need of revitalization. This includes monuments, signs, landscaping, banners and holiday lighting. The only funding identified for this is:

1. \$250,000 in the Facility Plan for initial Lucent Boulevard and Town Center Drive monuments.
2. \$50,000 in the Major Repair Fund for re-designs of the University and Broadway entries.

In order to avoid wasting time and money any rebranding process should be completed before new community monuments are designed. Although the PROS staff has a 2013 goal to develop the plan for monuments and entries, they will hold off to determine if the rebranding initiative proceeds.

Current/Potential Services/Projects

Next the Board focused on some areas that the District may want to expand services.

Teen Services

Teenagers in our community have a variety of opportunities to participate in recreation and enrichment programs. Providers of these services include the Metro District, HRCA, Douglas County

School District, faith community, private program providers, and other organizations that provide programs such as soccer, lacrosse, ski programs etc.

The common denominator of all successful teen programs is that the teenagers are heavily involved in their planning.

The Metro District Board assigned this a low priority in relation to other projects and services.

Senior Services

The District, in conjunction with funding provided by Douglas County, established a Highlands Ranch Senior Outreach Services program. Senior Outreach Services is designed to provide a central repository for information on Highlands Ranch senior transportation, recreation and enrichment programs. This program has been enhanced by our efforts to unify the providers of these services which include the Metro District, HRCA, and the Highlands Ranch Senior Club (the “Seniors Triad”) as well as Douglas County, the faith community and private program providers. The key issue that needs to be determined is the role of the District in extending the current role to fund, provide or partner to provide:

1. Senior based facilities
2. Transportation for seniors
3. Additional recreational programs

The Board is supportive of evaluating use of the Chum Howe House or the Fly’n B house as a gathering place for seniors. The evaluation should include the possibility for seniors to get these facilities at a reduced rate in exchange for volunteer services. These uses should be considered as we complete the process for the future of these buildings.

The Metro District Board assigned this a low priority in relation to other projects and services.

Fire and Emergency Services

The Board wants to ensure the District is providing excellent fire and emergency services. In order to be confident that we are providing the best service that is reasonable the Board would like to conduct a *standards of cover* study. Staff will look into the options, hopefully with our partners.

Transportation/Transit/Roadways

The Board’s primary focus is on expansion of C470. Earlier this year the Board supported the C470 Coalition proceeding to evaluate a tolling lane option. Some Board members believe the expansion should be funded by taxes not tolling. Most Board members expressed a willingness to wait until fall 2013 for the detailed financial analysis on the tolling option before pursuing alternatives. The Board directed staff to include a question in the survey regarding preference for taxes or tolls if there is room after covering the higher priorities.

Wildcat Regional Park

There was a very thorough discussion of the history of the park, Wildcat Regional Park/BCWA infrastructure development and the possible planning/public process.

The Board is very supportive of the development of Wildcat Regional Park in a manner that addresses recreational needs and is sensitive to the concerns of neighbors. They supported the Metro District taking an active, even leadership, role in the planning, public process, construction management and in providing operations and maintenance services. They are willing to participate in funding the park and they would like to see the process begin. The development of the park ranked very high in their list of priorities.

Long Range Plan/Priorities

The Board through a series of prioritization votes came up with the following priorities (low number = higher priority):

1. Fire and emergency services	8
2. Wildcat Regional Park	11
3. Rebranding	14
4. Community monuments/entries	16
5. Historic Park	17
6. Economic development	21
7. C470/Regional Transit Authority	26
8. Fly'n B Park phase II	26
9. Toepfer Park expansion	27
10. Senior services	30
11. Town Center public land	31
12. Teen services	32
13. Highline Trail crossing Chatfield	37
14. BCWA development/management	40
15. Cultural Center	48

When asked to vote again on the top five (low number = higher priority):

1. Fire and emergency services	12
2. Community monuments/entries	15
3. Rebranding	18
4. Wildcat Regional Park	19
5. Historic Park	26

Post Debt Pay-off Opportunities Priorities

The Board conducted a prioritization vote with the following results (low number = higher priority):

1. Major Repair Fund	13
2. Fire and emergency services	13
3. Historic Park O&M	22
4. Wildcat O&M	27
5. C470 Regional Transit Authority	32
6. Replace Arterial Streetlight Fee	36
7. Replace Residential Streetlight Fee	38
8. Tax cut	40
9. Replace Stormwater Fee	43

Survey

The Board decided they want to do a survey this year on the following subjects:

1. Wildcat Regional Park
2. Highlands Ranch Outdoors (Metro District strategic plan for parks, open space and recreation)
3. Community preference for taxes or tolls to fund the expansion of C470
4. Rebranding

Review Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles

The Board discussed possibly making some changes but after further consideration decided not to change anything.