CELEBRATING COMMUNITY


These are all reasons I celebrate the community of Highlands Ranch. Celebrating our community comes naturally since Highlands Ranch has a lot to offer. People of all ages and with a wide variety of interests can find activities, programs, hobbies and adventures just out their back door.

My fellow board members were asked what makes them proud to live in and serve our community and they shared their responses. I hope our community makes you proud to call Highlands Ranch home.

JIM WORLEY
Chair, Highlands Ranch Metro District Board of Directors

SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS

WHAT COMMUNITY MEANS TO US

VICKY STARKEY, Vice Chair
Highlands Ranch has been our family’s home for 34 years. Living here has met every expectation we were searching for to raise a family, including education, recreation opportunities, community involvement and forming lasting relationships. Our roots are here and we can’t imagine being anywhere else.

ALLEN DREHER, Treasurer
All over this world there are streets and roads. There are small and large neighborhoods. I have been fortunate to travel and see many places, but there is truly no other community that has what Highlands Ranch has. Wonderful amenities with caring citizens that cherish their families and friends and truly care how their own homes and yards as well as their community looks and feels. Whether it is a walk or bike ride on one of the many trails or a stop at one of the recreational centers, families love to spend their time staying busy throughout the Ranch. From serving on the Metro District Board of Directors, I have developed a sincere love for where I live. As Dorothy once said, “There’s no place like home.”

RICK OWENS, Director
Having been part of the Highlands Ranch community since the 80s, watching our community grow and mature into such a vibrant and wonderful place to live, work and play has been a wonderful lifetime experience.

NANCY SMITH, Director
Highlands Ranch is a wonderful community to live in. I enjoy the parks and open spaces plus the many activities, which make it a very friendly place to live.

RENEE ANDERSON, Director
Living in Highlands Ranch is awesome! Have you been to the Mansion or enjoyed the 25 parks? Have you noticed there is nearly always a place to park when you shop, and sales tax is only five percent? The views of the Front Range on a clear day can’t be beat. I couldn’t be more proud to call Highlands Ranch home.

CAROLYN SCHIERHOLZ, Director

WE LOVE THAT WE LIVE
in a community in which we are
minutes from any park or trail. It’s
easy to meet up with friends or
to get a great work out.”
—Grace & Katie Simonson, residents
LFR MEDIC UNIT AND STUDY OF FUTURE FIRE STATION

The Metro District provides fire and emergency services to the residents and businesses of Highlands Ranch through a long standing intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the City of Littleton and the Littleton Fire Protection District. As part of this relationship, the Metro District builds fire stations in Highlands Ranch and purchases fire engines and ambulances. All operational costs are shared by the three agencies.

In 2015, the partners engaged Emergency Services Consulting International (ESCI) to develop a master plan for fire and emergency services. The plan evaluated all aspects of emergency services, including staffing, equipment, facilities, shared services and response time. Nine priorities were identified and some were implemented in 2016, including the addition of a new medic unit at station 18 on Lucent Boulevard.

Another priority contained in the report was the addition of a third fire station in Highlands Ranch, located in the south central region of the community. The Metro District Board of Directors adopted this recommendation in the current capital improvements plan. The next steps include a site analysis and selecting a firm for design. Additional information and updates on fire and emergency services can be found at highlandsranch.org.

DIAMOND K PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT

Diamond K Park’s new playground welcomes visitors with bright new play features. Completed in November 2016, the renovation provides a universal design that is more accessible for all abilities. The new equipment includes multiple slides, a small climbing wall and visually striking elements. Goals for the playground were to create a physically challenging and mentally stimulating inclusive play space that will promote social interaction for kids. Diamond K Park is located at 1631 Beacon Hill Dr. The playground is located on the east side of the park and can be accessed from Hermosa Drive.

MARIAN’S GARDEN

Marian’s Garden at the Highlands Ranch Mansion, completed in the fall of 2016, was built to honor the unofficial matriarch of the Mansion — Marian Morgan. Morgan was known as a hard-working and happy woman who loved to garden. She passed away in 2010 at the age of 99 after spending more than three decades on the property. The 5,000-square-foot informal style garden on the front east lawn boasts colorful annuals and perennials. It provides a quiet, reflective spot to enjoy the views of the Mansion. The paver walkways, garden benches and lighting all tie in with design elements of the historic property.

COMMUNITY ENTRIES/MEDIANS

During 2016, signs at the entries to Highlands Ranch were renovated with updated masonry, lettering and an enhanced logo. The improvements to the entry monuments, wall monuments and median monuments help reflect our vibrant, modern community. Additionally, improvements were made to the entry medians on both S. Broadway and University Boulevard. New concrete was completed in 2016 and landscaping including new trees, shrubs and ground cover will be planted in the medians in the spring of 2017.

MANSION FURNISHINGS

During 2016, the Highlands Ranch Park & Recreation Foundation donated $18,000 to the Highlands Ranch Mansion to purchase key furniture pieces for the entry hall, living room, master suite and office. The Mansion is furnished with two goals in mind – to represent how the property looked during different eras and to provide usable furniture for visitors and customers. While not exact replicas, the furniture was picked based on historical photos from previous owners of the Mansion. The foundation has made a long-term commitment to help support projects, programs and improvements at the Highlands Ranch Historic Park & Mansion. Learn more about the foundation at hrpf.org.
**OPEN BUDGET**

Explore information on Highlands Ranch 2016 and 2017 budget and actual expenditures at the new Highlands Ranch Open Budget website at openbudget.highlandsranch.org. Information is conveyed in colorful graphs, charts and tables. Data is updated twice a month.

“Packaging and publishing data in this online format allows us to make specific government data – which is already public information- more accessible, useful, and personally relevant to the citizens and businesses in Highlands Ranch,” said Allen Dreher, Highlands Ranch Metro District Board Member and Treasurer.

For those that wish to review the Metro District’s 2017 budget in its entirety, it can be found on the finance section of the Metro District’s website at highlandsranch.org.

**2016 PROPERTY TAX BY ACTIVITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mill Levy</th>
<th>For $400,000 Home</th>
<th>Per $100,000 of Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire &amp; Emergency Services</td>
<td>6.514</td>
<td>$207.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Open Space</td>
<td>5.766</td>
<td>$183.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>$15.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td>$26.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Administration</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>$29.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Capital</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>$15.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Repair</td>
<td>0.339</td>
<td>$10.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>2.875</td>
<td>$91.54</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.205</strong></td>
<td><strong>$579.65</strong></td>
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**2016 MILL LEVY COMPARISON COLLECTED IN 2017**

Highlands Ranch property taxes are among the lowest in the metro area.

**2017 BUDGET**

Through the 2017 budget, the Metro District board plans for long term priorities, which include enhanced fire and emergency services, a new community park, development of the Highlands Ranch Historic Park, expanded senior services and a new ice arena. The 2017 operating budget is a 6.9 percent increase over the 2016 budget. The increase is primarily driven by the increase in the fire and emergency contract.

The Metro District staff monitors economic conditions that could impact future year’s property tax collection. In early 2017, the State of Colorado announced a change to the residential assessment rate per the Gallagher Amendment. This lower residential assessment rate will reduce property tax revenue in 2018. The exact impact is not yet known, but early estimates predict a decrease of anywhere from three to 10 percent in the Metro District’s property tax revenue.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>$21,701,908</td>
<td>$23,322,882</td>
<td>$25,060,216</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water and Wastewater</td>
<td>28,789,563</td>
<td>29,000,000</td>
<td>30,910,000</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>11,873,320</td>
<td>6,513,184</td>
<td>536,400</td>
<td>-93.7%</td>
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<td>Capital Outlay</td>
<td>1,872,378</td>
<td>5,660,391</td>
<td>7,969,018</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
<td>124,176</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved Capacity</td>
<td>2,295,310</td>
<td>3,604,418</td>
<td>4,812,080</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$66,058,031</strong></td>
<td><strong>$70,102,875</strong></td>
<td><strong>$69,289,714</strong></td>
<td><strong>-1.2%</strong></td>
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**REFUNDING AND GREAT RATE**

During the 2016 budget process, capital needs were identified to meet level of service goals. To fund these goals, the board directed staff to investigate refunding of existing debt to fund these items. The projects identified were:

- New fire station
- Central Park (the park in the development near Lucent Blvd and Plaza Dr.)
- Senior services
- Highlands Ranch Historic Park
- Ice arena

In May 2016, the Metro District closed on the refunding of $29,800,000 of outstanding debt taking advantage of low interest rates. Prior to the refunding, the debt had interest rates varying from four percent to five percent. As a result of the Metro District’s AA+ Standard and Poor’s rating, the rate of the refunding is 1.8 percent and extends the debt repayment period from 2024 to 2025 with an early payment option of 2021. The net present value savings is $2.9 million. Staff choose to lock the rate in advance of closing and subsequent to the lock, the rate increased 20 basis points. The early lock saved the Metro District approximately $60,000.
VOLUNTEER NUMBERS
Highlands Ranch residents have a strong sense of community. Part of this can be derived from volunteerism. Volunteering brings people together, whom otherwise may have never met through their common desire to give back to the community, and creates a sense of community pride.

The Metro District relies on hundreds of volunteers every year to help with recreation programs, environmental stewardship, historical preservation and community events. More than 1,000 people volunteered with the Metro District in 2016.

- 650 coaches
- 248 at community events
- 75 at wetlands rehabilitation projects
- 58 at the Highlands Ranch Mansion
- More than 50 at parks and trail projects
- Mansion volunteer hours totaled 2,455

LED HOLIDAY LIGHTS ILLUMINATE COMMUNITY ENTRANCES
From Nov. 28 to New Year’s Day, 84 trees in 10 different areas of our community were illuminated with thousands of energy-efficient LED lights. Larger multi-color bulbs with wider spacing were installed in a scattered, random pattern to create beautiful scenes at the community entries and around Highlands Ranch.

VOLUNTEER CONNECT
Volunteerism is on the rise in Douglas County. The Metro District and the eight fellow members of the Partnership of Douglas County Governments oversee Volunteer Connect Douglas County, an interactive website that allows individuals to locate volunteer opportunities throughout the county. The site lists individual, family and group opportunities to choose from.

In 2016, the number of volunteers registered on the portal grew from 4,524 to 6,840. That’s an average of 190 new volunteers per month. Users represent all ages including groups, individuals, high school students, and older adults from every corner of Douglas County who are finding volunteer opportunities that fit their interests and schedule.

What began as a site that posted volunteer activities for members of the partnership has grown in 2016 to include volunteer opportunities for non-profits throughout the county. And it continues to grow with new organizations added on an ongoing basis, including these:

- Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA)
- Colorado Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF)
- Hide In Plain Sight
- Parker Area Chamber of Commerce
- Relay for Life of South Metro Denver
- Castle Rock Downtown Merchants Association
- Castle Rock Writers

To find a volunteer opportunity near you, visit VolunteerConnectDC.org.
ZONE 4C PUMP STATION ADDED TO WATER DELIVERY SYSTEM

Centennial Water & Sanitation District staff began designing a new zone 4C pump station and transmission pipeline in 2016. The work is necessary to allow Centennial Water to effectively meet current day peak water demands in the community and to maintain a sustainable and energy efficient water distribution system capable of meeting peak water demands of the community well into the future.

The pump station will be located in the open space area east of S. Broadway and north of Wildcat Reserve Parkway. The pipeline which connects existing infrastructure, is aligned along the drainage corridor between the two streets, across Gateway Drive and parallel to the northern right-of-way of Wildcat Reserve Parkway. The transmission pipeline is buried pipeline that conveys water to and from the pump station.

Centennial Water staff have worked diligently with the design team to use the topography and natural landscape of the area to minimize visual impacts once it is complete. The architectural treatments on the building are a barn theme to reflect the ranching heritage of the area while also meeting functional needs.

Construction of the pump station and pipeline began in March 2017. Construction is expected to span approximately 14 months. The project should be complete and the pump station and pipeline operational by the 2018 irrigation season.

For additional information and project updates, visit highlandsranch.org.

CENTRAL PARK DEVELOPMENT ROUNDS OUT BUSINESS PARK

Shea Homes is developing the final commercial area in Highlands Ranch, located near the intersection of Lucent Boulevard and Plaza Drive. The 100-acre parcel is anchored by a 72-bed UC Health hospital, a three-acre park, retail space, single family homes as well as apartments and townhomes. Development will occur throughout 2017.

NORTH RIDGE PARK RENOVATION

The first phase of the Northridge Park renovation was completed in 2016 and included updating the park’s 34-year-old restrooms. Northridge Park is the oldest park in Highlands Ranch and will undergo phase two of the renovation in 2017. The fields will be regraded to improve drainage, the irrigation system will be improved; the park’s interior trails will be widened to eight feet and the entry area will be enhanced with new retaining walls and landscaping. Additionally, the basketball court area will be repurposed for picnic-related activities including an outdoor table tennis area.

IMPROVING STORMWATER FACILITIES

Stormwater management is an important component of the Metro District’s public works services. The drainageways that carry stormwater through the open space need to be managed and maintained similar to parks and trails in the community. The drainageways provide flood control, water quality enhancement and are home to wildlife that call Highlands Ranch home.

In 2016, the Metro District completed two stormwater projects. The first was in Big Dry Creek near Ashburn Circle in the Cheese Ranch Historic & Natural Area. The project involved the construction of two sculpted concrete drop structures. The second project was in the Marcy Gulch West Tributary. The erosion below a stock pond was repaired and a trail crossing that washed out in 2014 was restored. Once the construction was complete at each site, the revegetation process began with the assistance of many volunteers who replanted wetlands grasses, shrubs and trees.

Stormwater projects in 2017 will address erosion and unstable banks along the west fork of Big Dry Creek, and further channel stabilization work in Cheese Ranch Historic & Natural Area.