

# Cathedral Pines Metro District Newsletter

## Happy Holidays from the Metro District Board!

No matter what holiday you happen to celebrate, your Metro District Board would like to wish all of our residents a safe, joyous, wonderful holiday season. We will be back in January with a new set of initiatives to help improve our community and serve you better. Until then--*ENJOY the season!*

## Metro Board Consolidates Management Companies

In an effort to streamline communications, improve operations and incur cost savings, the Metro District Board of Directors made the decision in its December meeting to consolidate all operations under its district management company, Walker-Schooler. Walker-Schooler has been overseeing our community finances, governmental compliance, annual audits, and state filing requirements, but Warren Management has been handling daily operations issues such as assisting Lodge management, working with contractors on specific projects, and overseeing Metro District landscaping needs. The Board felt our operations would be smoother by having one company handle all of the responsibilities, so after some discussions with its management regarding those responsibilities, the Board chose Walker-Schooler District Managers as its sole provider. The savings to the community will be approx. \$7,500/yr. They will take over the District's entire management responsibilities effective January 1, 2023.

Warren Management remains the management company for our HOA Board of Directors and will continue to work directly with homeowners on construction issues and with the HOA Board to organize and report monthly activities.

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## **Metro Board Consolidates Management Companies (Cont'd)**

The Metro Board would like to thank Jamie Adams and her team at Warren Management for her contributions to the community and our Board over the last six years as we transitioned from a developer-controlled Board to that run by our residents. Her knowledge of the community's history, decision-making, and outside resources has been invaluable during our transition, and her assistance to our community is appreciated.

## **Metro District Board Approves Operating Budget for 2023**

At its November 29<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the Metro District reviewed and approved the operating budget for 2023 by a 4-to-1 vote. The budget will be presented at our annual meeting in February, but in the meantime, here are a few highlights:

- Lodge revenues are projected to improve to \$115,000 vs. \$52,000 this year
- Minimum of \$20,000 in FEMA reimbursement funds projected to be recouped in '23
- Lodge capital improvements reduced by \$20,000 as all necessary improvements have been completed
- Compensation to Lodge management was reduced by 45% to reflect the change from a fixed retainer to a percentage of rental income per our management agreement [Ed. Note: Lodge management was on a retainer for a significant part of 2022 due to a lack of rental activity by previous management and the impact of COVID on rentals]
- District Management fees reduced by \$7,500 due to consolidation under Walker-Schooler
- Contingency and Reserve accounts continue to be funded per the Reserve Study completed earlier this year
- \$200,000 has been allocated for the irrigation system replacement and related landscaping to return Milam median to normalized look
- \$25,000 allocated to election fund should an election be required to replace two Board members whose current terms will expire in 2023
- Most of the other expense items remain approximately the same as in 2022.
- Mill levy maintained at 19 mills
- Community operations continue in the black despite the impact of the \$200,000 budgeted amount for irrigation system replacement

There were several significant points of discussion at the board meeting; specifically, the performance of the Lodge management company and lack of '22 rentals, the funding of the irrigation system replacement, and a possible change to the mill levy.



## Metro District Board Approves Operating Budget for 2023 (cont'd)

Concern was expressed regarding the lack of lodge rental activity and the Board agreed to work with Lodge management to significantly improve lodge rentals. Also, as stated earlier, the Metro will continue to pursue a state grant to partially offset the cost of the new irrigation system, which could significantly reduce the overall cost.

Finally, there was some discussion regarding reducing the mill levy from 19 mills to 17 mills (equating to approx. \$170/yr. reduction in taxes). However, the Board chose to maintain the 19 mills in light of 1) the unknown cost of the actual irrigation replacement and whether we will qualify for the grant; 2) the expectation of a decline in the economy, resulting in home valuation reductions and commensurate property tax decreases; and 3) preparedness for unexpected expenses which tend to occur in a 20-year-old community facility.

The vote to maintain the current mill levy passed 4-to-1.

## Flying Horse North Update

November was a very busy month regarding the requested approvals of the new Flying Horse North development just north and east of Cathedral Pines. For those of you not following the issue, the developer of Flying Horse North is planning to materially change the nature of the development, including:

Instead of the original 280 lots, they are now asking for 846 lots, an increase of almost three-fold from the original plan. It now covers 912 acres out of a total of 1459 acres. The breakdown of planned lots includes:

- 27 5-acre lots around the eastern half of the development, all located along the boundary of the development as a buffer
- 49 2.5-acre lots in the trees and all around the golf course – unchanged from before
- 632 1/3-acre lots and 138 1/4-acre lots
- A new fire station and small commercial area (Retail? Gas Station?) on the far northeast corner. The cost of the fire station would likely be borne by Black Forest and CP residents.
- A 275-room hotel with 50 additional rental homes as part of the hotel property in a gated neighborhood
- 204 acres of "open space" but much of this is the golf course, so this doesn't necessarily meet the criteria of open space in trees.
- Fortunately, still no Milam Road connection on the southwest corner of FHN.



## Flying Horse North Update (Cont'd)

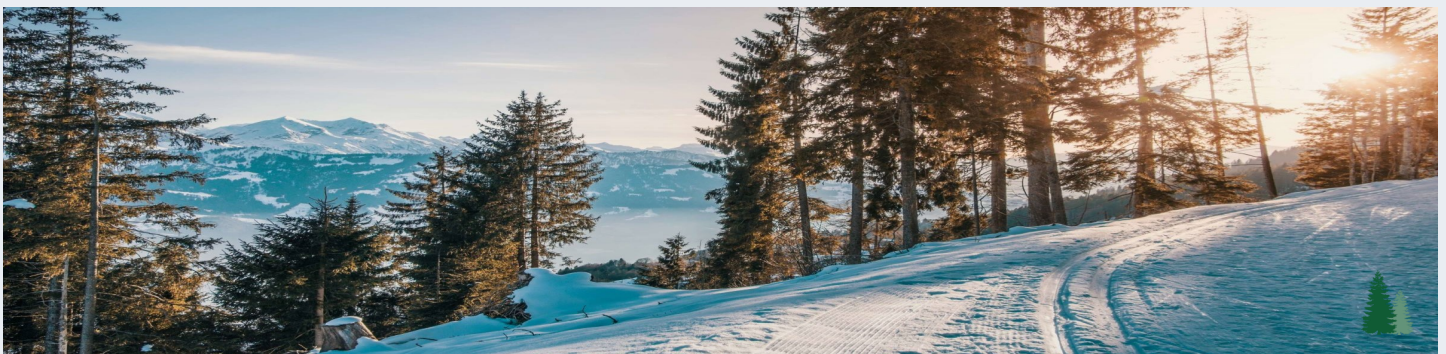
The revised plan was presented to the County Planning Commission in early November. A team of residents from Cathedral Pines, Black Forest, and adjacent communities presented a compelling case asking the Planning Commission to deny approval for a variety of reasons, including increased traffic on roads not built to handle it; increased noise and light pollution; deforestation of the area; and the impact on our water availability. The presentation was led by Rick Stauch of Cathedral Pines. After much discussion, the Planning Commission voted to send the Sketch plan on to the County Commissioners without a recommendation to approve or deny the plan.

On Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> the hearing before the County Commissioners was held in front of a crowd of 75–100 people, the vast majority opposing the Sketch Plan. Again, there was a team of five presenters led by Kristi Correa of Cathedral Pines and one from Terra Ridge (just east of FHN.) Rick Stauch was unavailable for the County Commissioners presentation and was replaced by Kristi Correa. Rick prepared most of the slides and coordination for the team, and Kristi ably presented our opposition to the plan and the logic behind it. The presentation addressed all of the points of disagreement, its inconsistencies with the recently-completed El Paso County Master Plan, and the impact on the neighboring communities. It was factual, unemotional, and comprehensive. Also briefing the Commissioners were Kathleen Shecter, Phil Shecter, Julie Chaffee (Terra Ridge) and Terry Stokka (Friends of Black Forest) along with a few other individuals all opposing the project. In spite of Rick's strong presentation against the sketch plan the project was approved by the BoCC, allowing it to proceed to the next stage.

Unfortunately, the Commissioners were not sufficiently moved by the presentation and voted to allow the plan to move forward. They talked about what a difficult decision it was and seemed to delay the vote as long as possible; the discussion started at 2:30 p.m. and the vote came at 7:15 p.m.

Commissioner Gonzalez voted against it but Commissioners Bremer, Vanderwerf, and Gietner voted in favor. Our Commissioner from District 1, Holly Williams, recused herself at the beginning of the hearing and departed without voting. As it turned out, her presence and a possible NO vote by her would not have changed the outcome, but her absence on this critical issue was conspicuous.

There are still several steps that will need to be addressed, including securing water rights to support the community and more infrastructure details. The next steps will likely be presented to various governmental entities in the first quarter of 2023.



# Cathedral Pines Metro District

## This Month's Shout-Out goes to ... Three Cathedral Pines Residents!

Many thanks to Nancy Piasecki, Rick Stauch and Kristi Correa for the terrific job they did of researching the background and information on the proposed Flying Horse North Sketch Plan and presenting our position to both the City Planning Commission and El Paso County Commissioners. They represented our community extremely well, to the point where both a Planner and Commissioner singled out our presentations as examples to other groups. Although despite our best efforts the project is moving forward, we will have opportunities next year to address our concerns again. So, thanks to all the others who contributed time and effort on this project—your participation has been extremely helpful.

## And a Second Shout-Out goes to...

Who Else? Ecton Espenlaub! After 17 years the ice machine in the Lodge finally gave up the ghost and was beyond repair, but the Metro Board was able to locate and purchase an almost-new replacement machine from a business that was closing in Boulder. Once it was delivered to the Lodge Ecton replumbed the machine to fit our kitchen and the new machine is now up and running. Ecton's efforts saved our community hundreds of dollars in plumbing and installation fees. Way to go Ecton!

## At Least Some Good News on the Development Front...

(Reprinted from *The Gazette*, November 7, 2022)

The Colorado Springs parks department is eyeing land that serves as a natural buffer between development on the city's far north side.

"I'd say it's the most rapidly urbanizing part of our city," said Britt Haley, who recently became the parks department director after years of managing the city's Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) program. [Ed. Note: The Trails and Open Space Program, known as TOPS, is a 1 cent sales tax on every \$10 purchase in Colorado Springs earmarked for land/open space acquisition.] "Recognizing the value of having those wild spaces and preserving a place for wildlife is absolutely thrilling. And particularly because TOPS hasn't yet been able to make its presence known in that particular area."

The parks board unanimously voted for TOPS to proceed on a multi-pronged deal that would give the city four parcels totaling 352 acres. The biggest of those is by the intersection of Powers Boulevard and InterQuest Parkway, a rolling, ravine-cut expanse of prairie, pines, and bluffs referred to as Kettle Creek. The other three parcels have similar characteristics south along Powers and Briargate Parkway.

Those are "attributes of a greenway that are well worth preserving," Haley said. She said their merits were highlighted in parks documents pre-dating the TOPS program, which in 1996 started taking sales tax portions for land acquisition.



# Cathedral Pines Metro District

## At Least Some Good News on the Development Front... (Cont'd)

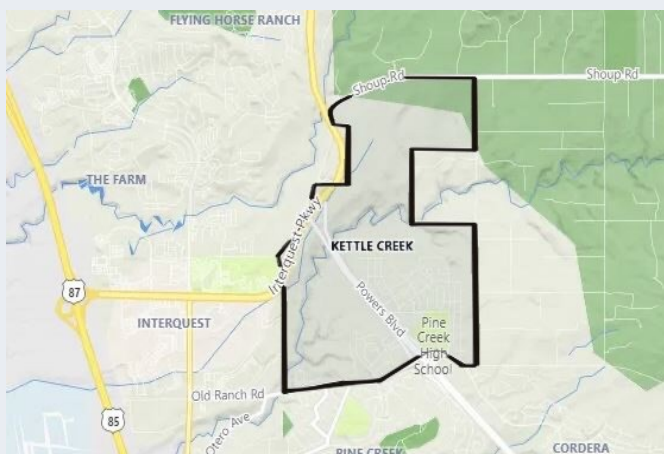
With City Council's vote, the 352 acres would be donated by La Plata Communities, which would seek tax benefits. In addition, the group would sell a nearly 4.5-acre tract for \$510,000 for the city to build a fire station in the vicinity.

Meanwhile, the city would sell nearly 45 acres to La Plata Communities for \$5.1 million. That would be returning the property for close to double the price the city paid in 2003 (\$2.6 million) to pursue building the Larry Ochs Sports Complex. Officials abandoned that idea in 2016 after neighborhood pushback.

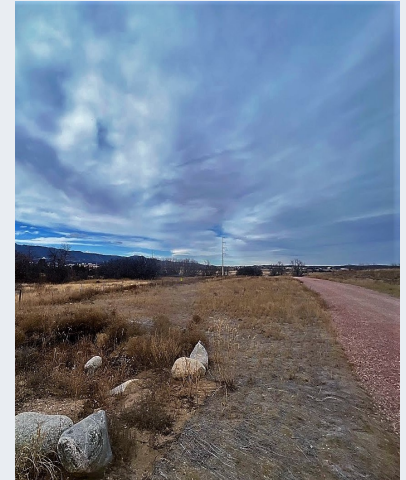
The city's desired 352 acres fall within federally mandated habitat protection. Development has been checked by a small, long-tailed critter found around the creek beds: the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

"We have been in conversation this entire process with U.S. Fish and Wildlife about potentially working on trail connections that would allow for activity," Haley said. "I'm hopeful we would be able to do that."

Believed to only reside in Colorado and Wyoming, the mouse has long been at the center of debate. Homebuilders and ranchers have contended its significance, citing evidence questioning its subspecies status.



"I think we're professionally, uniquely positioned to do the best job with this property," Haley said, envisioning "opportunities for the TOPS program and rangers to really educate the public about what's there."



## Community Long-Term Landscaping Plan—Next Steps

As a follow-up to last Spring's survey, Kimley-Horn has developed the first stage of our community's long-term landscaping plan. The plan has two stages—the first is a general overview that shows the various areas of the community, what priority each has for additional work, and which areas will be xeric vs. green. (As a reminder, our community voted resoundingly to have a hybrid approach, with certain areas green with grass and plants, and other areas that utilize rock, stone, and native "dry-tolerant" plants that will require minimal water.) This first stage was presented to the Metro Board at its October 24 meeting. Once the Metro offers its feedback, those comments will be integrated into a more detailed, area-by-area presentation by Kimley-Horn of how our entrances, roundabouts, medians, cul-de-sacs, Lodge grounds, and open areas would be addressed. This plan will then be presented to the community along with its budget implications at our annual meeting in February for your feedback.

**No action will be taken without community input and support.**

# Cathedral Pines Metro District

## Irrigation Update

As you may recall, last Spring the Metro Board conducted a community survey requesting input regarding our future landscaping design. Our residents prioritized the areas to be worked on, with the initial focus on Milam Road, the Milam monuments, and the Milam/Vessey roundabout. While other parts of the community may be xeriscaped to save water and require less maintenance, the survey indicated the majority wished the Milam median and Lodge grounds would be maintained in their current “green” state.

While the initial plan would be to irrigate the Milam Road median, the design would be modular so the system can be expanded to other parts of the neighborhood at a future date if desired. The system will reflect the latest technology, including centralized controls, much-improved water efficiency, easier repair, and adaptability to daily weather changes.

As part of this plan, the Metro Board has developed a comprehensive Request For Proposal (RFP) for a new irrigation system to be sent to a number of contractors for their bids on the design and construction of the new system. The RFP was sent to eight firms, including several regional contractors whose primary focus is the installation of these systems. The bids were initially due by November 1, and that deadline was extended until November 10. Unfortunately, six firms chose not to bid on the project either because it was outside their scope of work or their work calendar for 2023 is already filled.

The Metro Board reviewed those proposals at its 11/29 monthly meeting and decided to hold off making any recommendations to proceed. The number of respondents was disappointing as the Board always seeks to have a minimum of three bids for any capital project, especially one of this size. Therefore, the project was put on temporary hold until the Board can clarify why more bids were not received and pursue other bidders. The Metro Board and Walker–Schooler District Management will also be working with Kimley–Horn to identify other possible bidders to make the process more competitive. More information is expected in January. That plan would then be presented to the community at the Metro Board’s annual meeting in February. No action will be taken without community input and support.



## Is Your Zipper Down?

(Thanks to Tammy Abramowitz, who originally published this column on 11/1)

You live here and you know what an onslaught of construction we are obliged to be considerate about.!

# Cathedral Pines Metro District

## Is Your Zipper Down? (Cont'd)

After all, when it's said and done, won't it be nice? But for now, we must talk about the zipper merge, or how to merge two or more lanes of traffic into one.

You should know states across the country have been implementing zipper merge recommendations for more than a decade.

I used to think of it as cutting in line, and I had thoughts like, "Didn't you see the merge sign?" and "Why didn't you get in line before?" I have even been aggravated enough to want to cut off the offending driver. But that is all in the past.

Experts agree on the merits of the zipper merge and here is why: drivers using two lanes until the lane becomes one create more available road space which is needed during construction. And taking turns to merge to one lane at the end is both safer and better for traffic flow.

I know many motorists consider it very rude, but if you think that yourself, you might want reconsider and go ahead and let someone into that merge lane. The idea is, let one in from the left lane, and then one from the right, and alternate. Doing this will us all keep our sanity during road construction season.

Just a thought.



## Why Isn't Our New Parcel Locker Up and Running?

Good question! Just in time for the holiday season, the Metro Board voted to add a third pedestal mailbox for larger parcels that do not fit into our regular mail slots.

The existing two parcel boxes are fully utilized during the holiday season so a third one was added in mid-November to accommodate more packages.

According to Post Office guidelines, mail carriers are not required to deliver parcels to homes beyond six blocks of the mail center.

Our carrier, Jeff, has always been customer-oriented and will often deliver packages beyond this distance, but he is not required to do so. Any packages that cannot fit into the parcel lockers and are beyond the six-block radius will likely be returned to the Briargate Post Office for pickup, especially if Jeff is on vacation or it is his day off (normally Tuesday).

The problem is that our mailbox maintenance is now handled by the Denver USPS, and they have not yet made it down here to key the new boxes. Jeff has made the management of our Briargate Post Office aware of the issue and they are working to get it resolved. So, hang in there—it is bound to happen soon!

The new parcel lockers should make life a little easier and more convenient for Jeff and many of our residents!





# Cathedral Pines Metro District

## Be Sure to Mark Your Calendar...

Our Metro District Annual Meeting has been set for Thursday, February 24th at 6 p.m. at the Cathedral Pines Lodge. Food and beverages will be served, and we will be reviewing our 2022 performance and objectives and the budget for 2023. Be sure to attend, see some of your neighbors, and give us your feedback!

The next Metro Board meeting takes place on January 16, 2023 at 10 a.m. at the Cathedral Pines Lodge.



## Christmas Tree Recycling Pickup

Greetings and Merry Christmas!

It's that time of year again and Boy Scout Troop 246 is pleased to announce our 22nd annual Christmas Tree Recycling program! They will be recycling Christmas trees in northern Colorado Springs (including Cathedral Pines) again this year to help raise money to support troop activities, and to help the environment by keeping trees out of landfills.

This year we will be picking up trees on the following dates:

**Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022**  
**Saturday, Jan. 7, 2023**  
**Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023**  
**Saturday, Jan. 21, 2023**

Your donation in years past has helped support a great scouting program for boys in our community, and we want to thank you for your previous support. If you would like our scouts to pick up and recycle your tree again this year, please call us at 719-357-7407.

When calling, please be sure to give us your street address, name, phone, e-mail address, and the date you'd like your tree picked up (and when calling, spelling out your street name is always appreciated!)

By the way, if you've typically been watching for door flyers in years past, they are trying to cut costs again this year and won't be distributing many flyers. So, save this email and tell your neighbors!

Thank you and have a Merry Christmas!

*--- The scouts and parents of Boy Scout Troop 246*



# Contact Information

## Cathedral Pines Key Info

Metro District: <https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/>

## Cathedral Pines Metro District Board of Directors

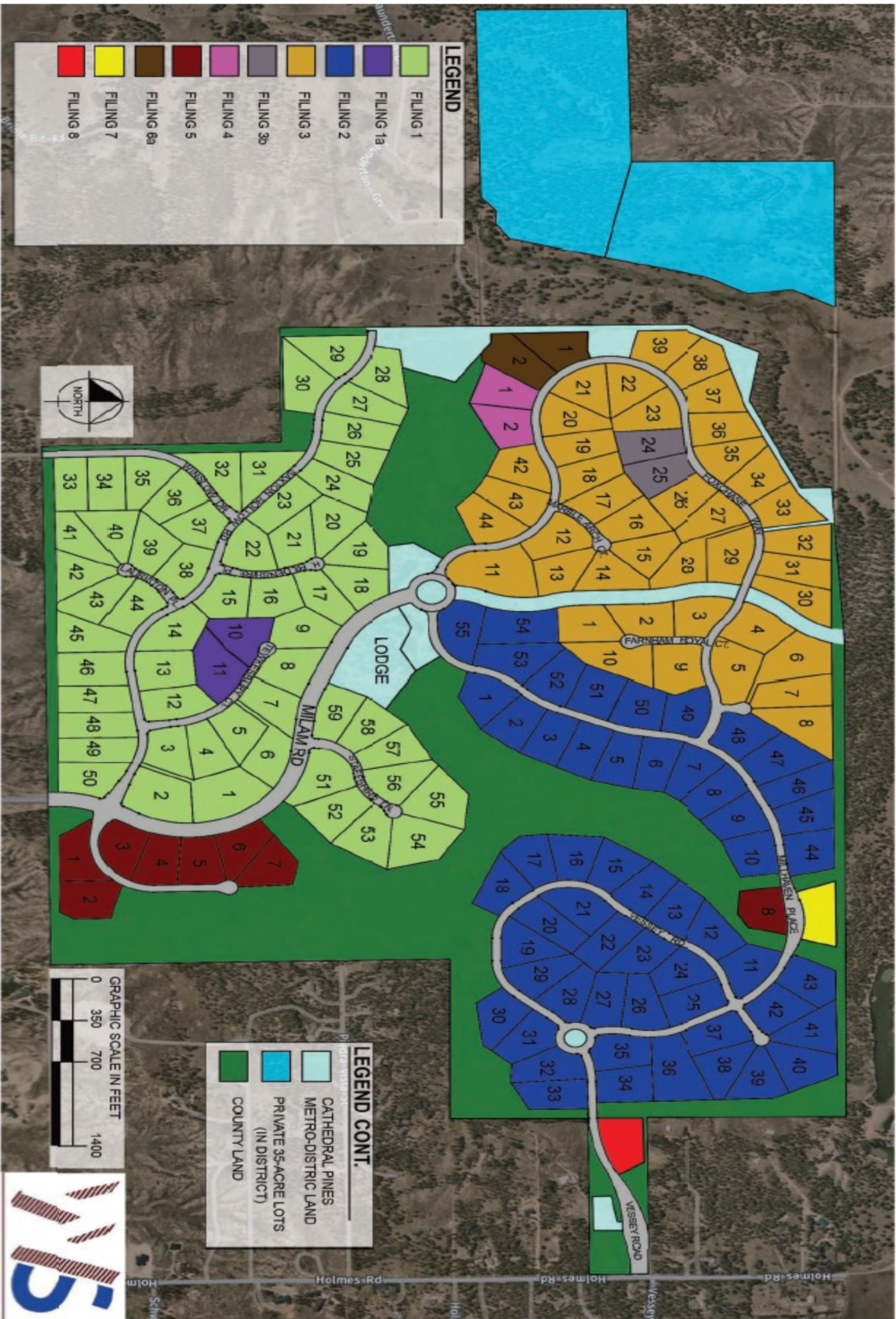
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# Community Map

## CATHEDRAL PINES METROPOLITAN DISTRICT



# Trail Map

