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Welcome to the latest edition of the Cathedral Pines Metro newsletter! It is being written as we are enjoying the 20” of snow on the way— hopefully you’ve been able to dig out of it and life is back to “normal” for you—whatever that may be.

Lots of action taking place over the last few months, so please read on.

Recap of Annual Meeting

The Metro Board held its annual resident meeting on Tuesday, February 20 at the community Lodge. Here are a few of the highlights:

- A review of the responsibilities of the HOA, Metro District, County, and United States Postal Service
- An update on the Trails, including repairing the pond liner on the lower pond, restoration of native vegetation north of Vessey, rerouting of trail near mail kiosk, and erosion repair on trails
- An update of Lodge operations, including much-improved Lodge bookings for 2024 (we have already achieved our annual revenue budget!) and various capital improvements
- A review of our new Lodge website and video production
- A recap of nearby community activity, including Flying Horse North and the Estates at Cathedral Pines (see related article below)
- Financial update: the community remains “in the black” despite spending on the Milam irrigation system and a reduction in our Mill Levy for 2024
- 2022 Annual financial audit was completed by our accounting firm and came through with no significant issues to be addressed, 2023 annual financial audit is underway
- Irrigation system update: the system will be activated in late April (weather dependent); new perennial and shrub plantings to begin in May; overseeding of grassy areas on Milam with fescue, which requires less water; and planned repairs to cuts in asphalt road
- New irrigation system is expected to reduce water consumption by 50-60%
- Several options to improve security around mailboxes were discussed. The Metro Board has appointed a special committee to review the choices and recommend a plan of action to the Board to be implemented this Spring/early Summer

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- 2024 budget was reviewed. Despite heavier-than-normal spending on landscaping to complete Phase I of the Milam irrigation system replacement and installation of walking trail, we have forecasted a year-end surplus of \$50,000 while continuing to fund our contingency and reserve funds

All these subjects were covered in more detail (and related articles appear below).

At the end of the meeting a Q&A session was held. Several residents expressed a desire to see greater improvement in our community landscaping. The Metro District is not permitted by law to seek special assessments, which would be required to facilitate that spending, but the concern was noted and will be considered by the Board.

Thanks to those of you who attended; the meeting was very positive in nature and the feedback was most helpful to the Board. And those of you who were not able to attend, you missed an absolutely scintillating presentation—and some great pizza too!

Mailbox Security Committee Appointed by Board

Due to vandalism that has taken place at our mailboxes over the last several years and the challenges of deterring it, the Metro Board held a special meeting in early March to appoint a committee to explore better alternatives. The installation of cameras posed not only an operational issue, but other local communities, the El Paso County Sheriff's department and the USPS have discouraged that approach as it has proven to be ineffective in other areas. The vandals are adept at hiding their faces, covering their license plates, and in some cases have damaged the cameras. Unfortunately, by the time local authorities receive the video information it is too late for them to act upon it.

The Committee, which consists of Rick Stauch, Ecton Espenlaub, and Brad Ausmus, has already identified several alternatives, including enclosing the entire kiosk with decorative wrought iron fencing to prevent unauthorized access; relocating the mailboxes closer to or inside the Lodge; or rebuilding the kiosk with an interior entrance to access mailboxes. However, each of these options comes at a significant cost and none can assure 100% security. The committee made recommendations to the Board at the March Metro Board meeting; no decision has been made at this time as we narrow down the best solution while collaborating with the USPS.



Update on Mailbox Damages

Thanks in large part to our USPS carrier, Jeff, the two damaged mailbox units have now been replaced/repared and all individual mailboxes are now operational again. The delay was caused by the fact that these units are no longer manufactured, replacement parts are no longer available, and new USPS requirements would have forced us to rebuild the kiosk to accommodate slightly larger units. This would have greatly increased our costs and delayed the ability to restore mail delivery to them for months.

Instead, an abandoned unit was found, and parts were cannibalized to allow it to be reused in our kiosk. The new/old unit was reinstalled in mid-March and delivery was re-established on Monday March 11.

However, in an unrelated incident, the three parcel lockers were severely damaged when an automobile crashed through them. While the driver was not injured, one of the units was destroyed beyond repair, and the two others were damaged. The two damaged units were temporarily repaired and re-installed, but due to USPS/ADA accessibility requirements, they will need to be permanently replaced. An insurance claim has been filed to fund the repairs necessary.

Pothole City

You may have had a chance to see a humorous comment recently on Facebook asking if anyone would like to join in a pothole swim party on Milam Road. Yes, the condition of our roads, particularly on Milam, had deteriorated badly enough that 27 significant potholes were counted on Milam alone. The El Paso County Department of Public Works is responsible for the condition of our roads, and it was particularly disturbing that they had deteriorated so badly after last fall's chip sealing.



The Metro Board, which has a good working relationship with the County, had made several requests for the necessary repairs but because of weather-related issues and other priorities, it took several months to direct their attention here. In addition, a number of residents filed complaints on the County's website, CitizenConnect, which also helped emphasize the problem with the DPW (and thanks to those of you who did that). Thankfully, beginning Tuesday, March 12, those repairs began and should be completed when the latest snowfall is cleared.

In addition, the areas where the asphalt had to be cut to allow installation of the irrigation pipeline have sunk since being patched in the fall. While the County is doing the pothole repairs, we are hopeful they will also repair those areas; however, it is not directly their responsibility as we are the ones who initiated those cuts. If the County does not address them, the Metro Board will seek an asphalt repair company to make those improvements.

If you have concerns about our road conditions, whether potholes or other problems, please report your concern on the county's CitizenConnect.elpasoco.com website.

What Causes Potholes, Anyway?

Potholes are created when the top layer of pavement and the material beneath—called the base or sub-base—cannot support the weight of the traffic. Two factors are always present in such a failure: TRAFFIC and WATER.

The “gestation period” for a pothole includes: 1) Snow-melt or rain that seeps through cracks in the pavement and into the sub-base; if the moisture cannot adequately drain away from the sub-base and soil underneath, it becomes saturated and soft. 2) Trapped moisture is subjected to repeated freeze/thaw cycles—and with each occurrence the expanding ice lifts and cracks the pavement more. The passing traffic weakens the pavement, cracking it further. 3) As temperatures rise and the ice melts, a void is left under the pavement. This void collects more water, and during the next freeze, the void will enlarge. 4) Vehicles driving over the weakened pavement pound it until the surface breaks and collapses into the void below, thus creating a pothole.



Could we become a Gated Community?

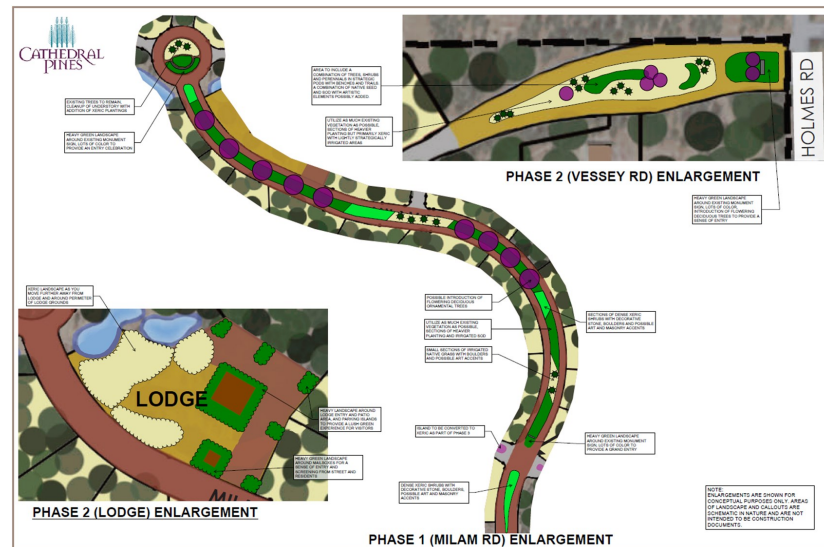
The short answer is simply, no. When Cathedral Pines was formed and registered with the County, certain provisions were set up that dictated our tax status, mill levy, bond fund repayment, and other legal requirements. Part of this is that the community would be open in exchange for the County providing certain services, including maintaining our roads, snow plowing, etc. Because of our charter and taxing authority, the cost and difficulty in seeking a change to our status isn't practical or necessarily a positive move.



New Landscaping Contract Awarded

As part of the Metro Board's plan to open our major contracts for bid every three years, last fall we solicited proposals for our 2024 mowing and landscaping contract. Rick Stauch headed this project and, working with WSDM (our District Manager Rebecca Harris) we sent our Requests for Proposals to a number of landscaping companies, including our current provider, A Cut Above Landscape. Several companies responded with formal proposals, which were then vetted by Rick.

One of the new objectives the Board had set was to seek a contractor that can provide more than basic mowing and snowplowing services. In light of the multi-year plan to improve our community landscaping, which was approved in 2022 by our residents, one of the new requirements for the provider is to do landscape design, plantings, and other services in addition to the basics.



After several revisions to the proposals to “fine tune” the services being offered and the cost, the Board made the decision to move to LandTech Landscape Maintenance effective January 1. Landtech is a well-established Colorado company having been established for 37 years, with three in-state locations—Loveland, Denver, and Colorado Springs. Landtech has the capability to perform all our required outdoor maintenance of our property, including turf care (especially important with the work being done on the Milam median); fertilization; weed control; pesticide application (as needed); tree and shrub trimming; irrigation system maintenance; flower, tree and shrub planting; insect and disease control; and during the winter, snow removal. They perform all these services themselves, as they do not subcontract their work. Landtech also employs an extensive fleet of modern equipment, with certified and licensed technicians. A Cut Above has served us well over the last four years, but the Board felt it was important to find a full-service provider which was beyond A Cut Above's capabilities. We thank them for their service over the years.

We Want to Know What YOU think!

Both the HOA and Metro District Boards are elected to serve our residents and reflect their goals and objectives for the community. As such, the Boards are working together to poll our residents to determine if we are moving in the right direction and your priorities are being reflected. Each resident who has signed up on the HOA mailing list will receive a brief survey via e-mail in late March requesting feedback on several issues. The survey will be short—less than ten minutes—and all feedback is anonymous. Please keep an eye out on your e-mail Inbox and complete the survey! We want your feedback—good, bad, or—well, never mind that last one. Our goal is to be the best Boards we can be, but we need your input! Every response will be read and considered by the Boards, and the results of the survey will be reported back to our residents.

Update on The Estates at Cathedral Pines

As most of you know, the 35-acre property directly north of Saxton Hollow (which was damaged in the Black Forest forest fire) was purchased in 2022 by Villagree Development Corp. Shortly thereafter all of the dead trees were cleared and the property was prepared to be developed by Villagree into a small upscale community. Since that time Villagree has proposed an 8-property, upscale development called The Estates at Cathedral Pines.

This new gated community is composed of eight 3 – 4 acre homesites. The project is nearly complete with El Paso County Planning and the initial homes are already in the design phase – ranging from 8,000 sf to 12,000 sf. Villagree anticipates the initial groundbreaking to begin this summer. The prestigious homesites are strategically placed with beautiful front range views of Pikes Peak, Air Force Academy, Cheyenne Mountain, Palmer Lake outcroppings, and the majestic spires at Garden of the Gods, all with the consideration of minimizing the obstruction of those homes already built to its south. The Estates will be a gated community, covenant-protected with an HOA independent of Cathedral Pines itself, access to The Estates will be on Winslow Road and will include snow plowing of the private roads and driveways, and options for secondary buildings, sports courts, party barn, etc. While there has been substantial interest in the development, not all lots have been released yet. If you desire more information, visit Villagree.com/Estates for the development site plan and features of the new community.



(Site Plan subject to change)

Oh Poo!

One of the concerns expressed by regular trail-walkers is the amount of dog waste left on the trails, especially after heavy usage in the summer. Whether it is the waste literally left on the trail, waste bags left nearby, or other litter deposited there, it is a growing issue and concern! In an effort to curb this poopy situation, the Metro Board has approved installing several waste stations along the trail for the waste to be deposited. Although we hope most dog-walkers already carry their own waste bags, in case they are forgotten or already used, the stations will offer disposable bags and baskets to deposit the waste. Maintenance of the stations will be conducted as part of our new landscaping contract. While the final locations have not yet been finalized, the hope is to have these installed sometime in late Spring when the ground is suitable for installation.

Is There Someone You Would Like to Memorialize?

In a new program for 2024, Cathedral Pines will be installing several new wrought iron benches along our trail system. The benches will be placed at strategic points along the trail—near our lower ponds on Milam; where the viewing of Pikes Peak and other natural phenomenon are “special;” or where simply a good rest would be appreciated by walkers.

Residents of Cathedral Pines have the opportunity to purchase one of these benches with a plaque dedicated to someone special they would like to acknowledge. The cost to the participants is \$1,500; this includes the bench itself and the plaque (which the District will order on their behalf (based upon their desired wording). The Metro District will install the benches, secure them, and maintain the areas around them. Specific locations will be announced shortly.

There are opportunities for four residents to purchase the dedicated benches; however, two of those were committed shortly after the program was announced at the Metro Annual Meeting. If you are interested in purchasing one of the two remaining benches, please contact Rebecca Harris at WSDM (Rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co).

Each bench will be of the same design as the others near the Lodge:



Kroger? Albertsons? King Soopers? Piggly Wiggly? What's the Latest?

In the January Metro newsletter, we provided an update on the status of the proposed merger between Albertsons and Kroger. This is relevant to Cathedral Pines residents as King Soopers (a division of Kroger) is in the process of building a new store on the southwest corner of Hwy. 83 and North Gate Road. Any change in ownership could affect the status of the project—including many King Soopers being acquired by Piggly Wiggly as part of Kroger/Albertson's divestiture plan. But that situation materially changed in late February. On February 26 the Federal Trade Commission sued to block Kroger Company's \$24.6 billion acquisition of the Albertsons Companies, Inc.—the largest proposed supermarket merger in U.S. history—alleging that the deal is anticompetitive.

The FTC charged that the proposed deal would eliminate fierce competition between Kroger and Albertsons, leading to higher prices for groceries and other essential household items for millions of Americans. The FTC believes the loss of competition will also lead to lower quality products and services, while also narrowing consumers' choices for where to shop for groceries. With thousands of grocery store workers, according to the FTC's complaint, Kroger's proposed acquisition of Albertsons could immediately erase aggressive competition for workers, and threaten the ability of employees to secure higher wages, better benefits, and improved working conditions.

Kroger operates thousands of stores across 36 states, which includes regional banners such as Fred Meyer, Fry's, Harris Teeter, King Soopers, Kroger, and Quality Food Centers (QFC). Albertsons also operates thousands of stores across 35 states under regional names including Albertsons, Haggen, Jewel-Osco, Pavilions, Safeway, and Vons. If the merger were completed, Kroger and Albertsons would operate more than 5,000 stores and approximately 4,000 retail pharmacies and would employ nearly 700,000 employees across 48 states.

Executives for both Kroger and Albertsons have acknowledged that the two supermarkets are direct competitors, forcing each other to aggressively compete for customers by lowering prices and for employees by providing better pay and benefits across the country. Similarly, executives for both supermarket chains have conceded that Kroger's acquisition of Albertsons is anticompetitive, with one executive reacting candidly to the proposed deal: "you are basically creating a monopoly in grocery with the merger."

To try to secure antitrust approval of their merger, Kroger and Albertsons have proposed divesting several hundred stores and select other assets to C&S Wholesale Grocers (C&S), which today operates just 23 supermarkets under the Grand Union and Piggly Wiggly names and a single retail pharmacy. The FTC's administrative complaint alleges that Kroger and Albertsons's inadequate divestiture proposal is a hodgepodge of unconnected stores, banners, brands, and other assets that Kroger's antitrust lawyers have cobbled together and falls far short of mitigating the lost competition between Kroger and Albertsons.

The FTC says the proposed divestitures are not a standalone business, and C&S would face significant obstacles stitching together the various parts and pieces from Kroger and Albertsons into a functioning business—let alone a successful competitor against a combined Kroger and Albertsons.

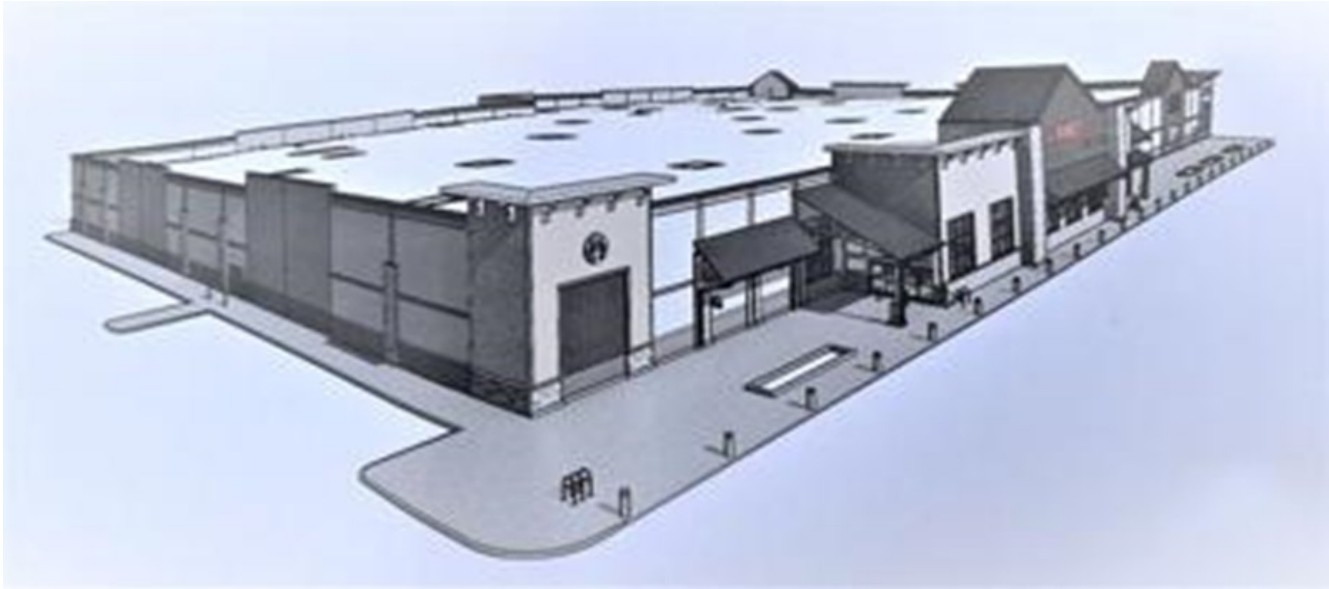
In its response to the FTC, Kroger executives stated "We remain in active and ongoing dialogue with the Federal Trade Commission and individual state Attorneys General regarding our proposed merger and divestiture plan. We believe our merger with Albertsons and the comprehensive divestiture to C&S will result in the best outcomes for customers, associates and our communities.

In light of our continuing dialogue with the regulators, we are updating our anticipated closure timeline. We currently anticipate that the closing will occur in the first half of Kroger's fiscal 2024. While this is longer than we originally thought, we knew it was a possibility and our merger agreement and divestiture plan accounted for such potential timing.

We remain committed to closing the transaction and providing the meaningful and measurable benefits that we promised when we originally announced the transaction."

Bottom line: To Be Determined through the courts.

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This is an artistic rendering of the 118,000 sq.ft. King Soopers building under construction on the corner of Northgate Boulevard and HWY. 83.

Spring is Around the Corner (really, it is) - and so is our Annual Chipping Event

One of our annual Rites of Spring is the Cathedral Pines Chipping Event, where residents can place their slash to be removed along the curbside for pickup and disposal.

The Metro Board has scheduled this year's Chipping Events to be held in May and September.

- The first chipping event begins Tuesday, May 28 through Friday, May 31, which is the week after Memorial Day (giving residents the holiday weekend for any last-minute clean-up) The second date will be at the end of September, beginning the week of 9/30. As a reminder, the first date will be for everyone to gather up all of the deadfall that occurred over the winter, as well as getting rid of any dead trees on your property. That is not a time for pruning or removal of live trees as that would attract pine beetles; fall is much better for that.
- Remember too that piles of slash should be placed along the roadside in piles no larger than 5 ft. x 5 ft. x 5 ft. They can be stacked there the week before pickup; please do not place your yard waste on the curb more than a week before the start of cleanup.
- Be sure to register for this service with Rebecca Harris at WSDM. Because the chippers are booked throughout the summer, we cannot make last-minute additions to homes requesting service that would delay their work in other communities.

Fiber-Optic Internet Option Coming to Cathedral Pines!

While currently residents of Cathedral Pines only have one option for cable/internet—Stratus IQ—a second one is on our doorstep.

Mountain View Electric is in the process of expanding its fiber-optic internet to our part of Colorado. Orange spools of fiber-optic cables and cement-walled fiber huts may not look like much, but they represent the progress that is being made to bring high-speed internet access to 100% of Mountain View Electric Association's co-op members over the course of the next four years.

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Members in portions of Black Forest, Colorado Springs, Peyton, and Simla have received notifications about broadband-related pole audit and fiber network construction activity in advance of crews. These are important notifications as they signify that those areas are being prepped and scheduled for fiber construction. If you receive one of these notifications, residents can visit www.ConexonConnect.com to look at available service options, sign up, and check for service availability in your area. Latest projections show the completion of our project this summer. However, like all projects of this scope, they are subject to weather and other delays.



2024 Community Volunteer Activities

One issue that was raised at the Metro Annual Meeting was the lack of residents' awareness of the need for volunteers for certain community activities. In an effort to improve the communication, effective this month the Metro Boards will be publishing an events calendar that details social and volunteer activities for the balance of 2024. In those areas where volunteers are needed, we will also include contact information for individuals to sign up. Volunteering is great opportunity to meet your neighbors and help improve our community. Most volunteer events take place on the weekend and seldom require more than 2-3 hours of your time—or less with more volunteers! So please sign up—we all need to chip in to help maintain and improve the scenic, wonderful community we live in.

Thanks in advance—we appreciate your help!

2024 Community Volunteer Activities (Dates Subject to Change)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| • Shoup Rd. Litter Pick-up | Saturday 4/13
9:00 a.m.– 11:00 a.m. | Sponsored by the HOA
Board |
| • Shoup Rd. Litter Pick-up II | To Be Announced | Sponsored by the HOA
Board |
| • Barn Area Clean-up
Rain Date | Saturday 9/21
9:00 a.m.– Noon | Sponsored by the Metro
Board |
| | Saturday 9/28
9:00 a.m.—Noon | |



METROPOLITAN DISTRICT 2024 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Metro Board meets every third Tuesday of the month in the Cathedral Pines Lodge at 9 a.m. * **

Tuesday, April 16

Tuesday, October 15

Tuesday, May 21

Tuesday, November 19*

Tuesday, June 18

Tuesday, December 17

No meeting in July

Tuesday, August 20

Tuesday, September 17

* Regular Meetings start at 6 p.m.

** All dates subject to change. Any changes will be announced on the community bulletin Board and via e-mail to those who have signed up for the Metro District e-mail list.

(Note that if you are already on the HOA e-mail list, you are NOT necessarily on the Metro e-mail list. They are not shared and you must register for each.)

Not on the Metro e-mail list? It is easy to sign up—just go to the Metro District website at www.cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov /and click the “E-Mail Sign-up” tab in the blue bar at the top. It takes seconds and your e-mail address is not shared.



Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District

Contact Information

Cathedral Pines Key Info

Metropolitan District Website: <https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/>

Cathedral Pines Metro District Board of Directors

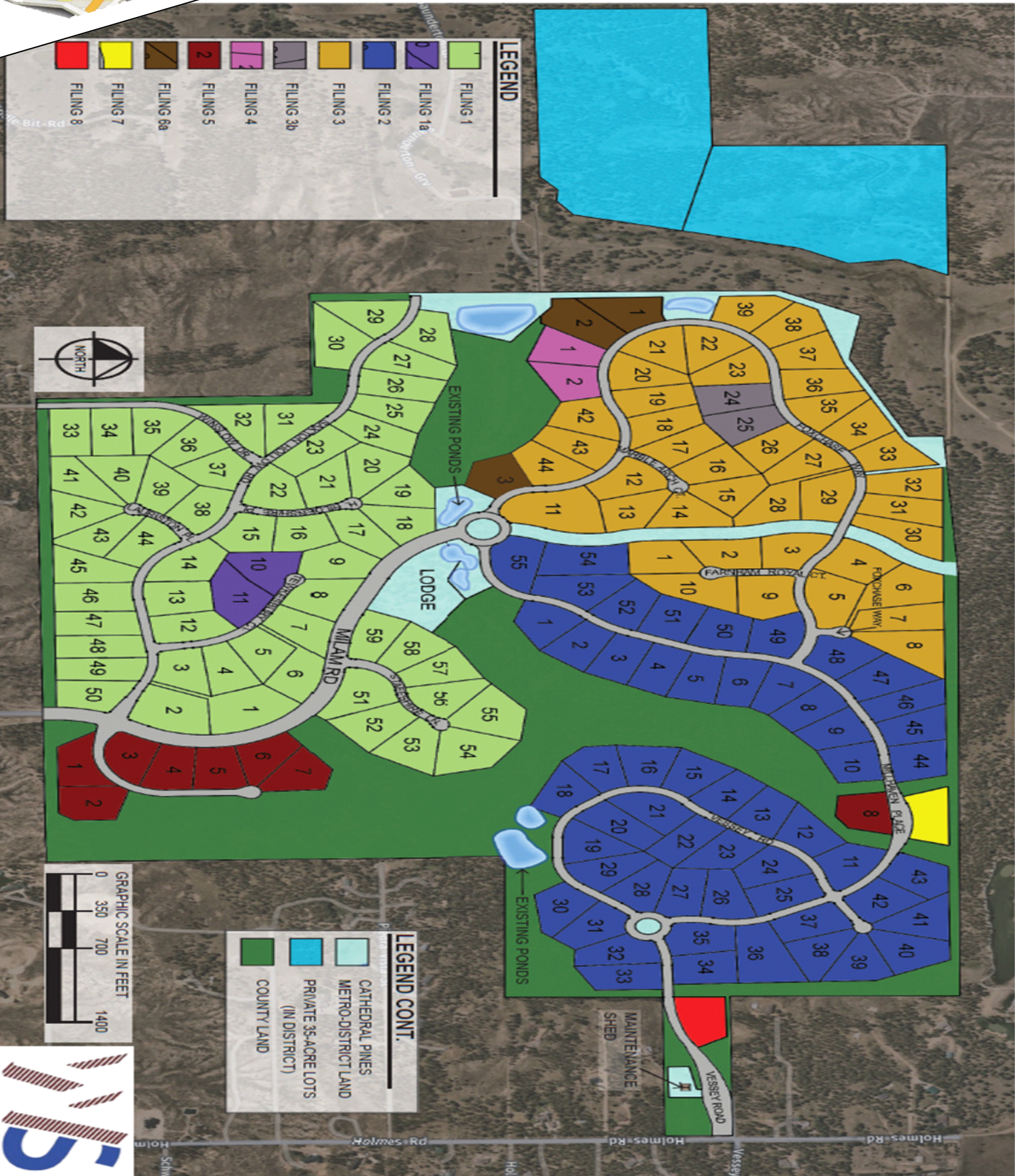
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Treasurer	Kevin Combs	May 2027		Kevin.C@CathedralPinesMD.org
Secretary	Ecton Espenlaub	May 2025	719-822-0410	Ecton.E@CathedralPinesMD.org
Member at Large	Chris Meacham	May 2025		Chris.M@CathedralPinesMD.org

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Community Map



Trail Map

