



The Highlands Newsletter

Winter 2025

A Message from the Board

The past few months have been both busy and productive for your Board of Directors. During this time, we have focused on holding the Developer and the Town of Mead accountable, establishing essential policies and procedures, taking initial steps to bring the District's budget under control, and ensuring our community standards continue to protect property values and enhance the quality of life for all residents. Highlights of this work are included in this winter edition of *The Highlands Newsletter*.

Every Board decision is made with careful consideration and a commitment to the long-term interests of our community. We remain dedicated to transparency, accountability, and preserving the character of our neighborhood. We encourage residents to attend our quarterly [Board meetings](#), either in person or virtually, and we welcome your questions and feedback (contact@publicalliancellc.com).

Happy New Year,

Bryon Fessler, President
Highlands-Mead Metropolitan District

Board Rescinds Prior Acceptance of Phase 1 Landscaping

Bryon Fessler, President

At the January 21, 2026 meeting, the Board adopted a [resolution](#) rescinding a prior decision to accept responsibility for the Phase 1 landscaping. The original acceptance occurred on February 27, 2023, and was made by a developer/builder-controlled Board of Directors. At that time, the District relied on assurances that the Developer, Highlands Mead, LLC, and the Town of Mead would ensure all required repairs and corrections were completed during the

applicable warranty period. The warranty periods expired in 2024 without the maintenance, repairs, or corrective actions directed by the Town of Mead being completed by the Developer.

As a result, the Town of Mead has not granted final acceptance of the Phase 1 landscaping improvements, and significant punch-list items and deficiencies remain unresolved. Because these improvements were never fully completed or formally accepted by the Town, the current Board determined that continuing to accept maintenance responsibility would expose homeowners to unnecessary financial risk. The responsibility for completing, repairing, replacing, and maintaining the Phase 1 landscaping improvements remains with the Developer until final acceptance is issued by the Town of Mead. The District will not pay for costs related to incomplete or deficient landscaping, including watering, tree replacement, or ongoing maintenance tied to the Developer's unfinished work.

Finally, the Board is actively researching all landscape-related invoices from the past two years and plans to present those costs to the Developer and the Town of Mead for reimbursement, as appropriate. Once the Town grants final acceptance and all required improvements meet Town standards, the District will consider assuming responsibility for the landscaping at a future public meeting. This action is intended to protect homeowners by ensuring District funds are used appropriately and that the Developer fulfills its obligations before maintenance responsibility is transferred.



2025 Financial Recap

Rene Singer, Treasurer

Recapping 2025:

The District received approximately \$45,000 in property tax collections to fund operations and maintenance. Total District expenses related to operations and maintenance were approximately \$325,000, far exceeding available tax revenue. To address this gap, the District relied heavily on its quarterly Operations & Maintenance (O&M) fee, currently set at \$350 per property. The additional \$200,000 collected from these fees funded the essential financial obligations of the District, including: weekly trash service, biweekly recycling, common area maintenance, insurance, legal and administrative support. Despite collecting \$245,000 from taxes and O&M fees, there was still a shortfall of approximately \$80,000.

The District decided to address this issue through a refinancing of the bonds, resulting in lowering interest rates, paying off developer advances and providing \$100,000 as a one-time transfer to the General and Operations Funds to meet our financial obligations for 2025. Additionally, the bond refinancing resulted in average annual property tax savings of approximately \$350 per household. Separate from the operating funds, the Debt Service Fund received approximately \$275,000 in property taxes which aligned with District debt and bond obligations related to infrastructure and landscaping development.

Looking ahead to 2026:

Property tax revenue for operations is expected to grow slightly to approximately \$58,000 after the required transfers to the Town of Mead. The quarterly O&M fees are expected to collect \$280,000, providing the District with operating revenue of

\$338,000. Given continued build out of the community, we expect commensurate increases to utilities, water, trash and maintenance. Despite that, the Board is taking action to reduce costs of operations in 2026 and beginning to build reserves for asset replacement. The [2026 budget](#) shows expenses at \$325,000.

Of note, the Board worked diligently to avoid a proposed annual \$200 per household O&M increase by beginning to cut costs, including \$25,000 in annual savings from newly acquired accounting services. The Board remains committed to reviewing expenses line by line for additional efficiencies.

Challenges:

To ensure fairness to all residents, the Board is required to enforce the District's collection and late payment policies as outlined in the governing documents. At this time, 30 of our community's 200 homeowners are more than six months delinquent, representing over \$30,000 in unpaid O&M fees. With a budget as tight as ours, we need compliance from all homeowners in order to fund our District's needs. As of now, the Board is pursuing foreclosure actions against two homeowners who each owe more than \$4,000.



Board Approves Comprehensive Covenant Enforcement Policy

Bryon Fessler, President

Covenant enforcement is not something the Board enjoys; however, it is a legal obligation we must fulfill. As elected fiduciaries, the Board is required to enforce the covenants consistently and fairly in order to protect property values and uphold community standards for all residents. In prior years, the District lacked an adopted enforcement resolution, which limited the Board's authority to issuing warning letters only. Consequently, more than 200 warning letters have been sent over the past three years, many to the same residents, without achieving lasting compliance and at a significant cost to the District.

To address this, the Board recently approved a comprehensive [covenant enforcement policy](#) that establishes clear notice requirements, reasonable cure periods, a defined fine structure and formal hearing procedures. Because the new notice requirements differ from past practice, the Board is implementing a hard reset of enforcement activity. Beginning with inspections in February, all notices will start as warning letters and will include the required cure periods. Any additional or subsequent violations of the same covenant provision occurring within one year from the date of the first notice will be treated as repeat or recurring violations and may be subject to additional fines. This policy fully aligns the District with Colorado law, while ensuring enforcement is transparent, consistent, and respectful of homeowners' rights.



Board Approves Revisions to Community Design Guidelines

Scott Felter, Vice President and DRC Committee Chair

The Board approved revisions to the [Community Design Guidelines and Homeowner Handbook](#) effective January 20, 2026. These updates clarify expectations, streamline approvals, and promote water-conscious landscaping while protecting neighborhood character and property values. Updates address landscaping, basketball hoops, antennas and satellite dishes, seasonal décor, flags, signage, and other exterior improvements.

As a reminder, all exterior changes require prior approval from the Design Review Committee (DRC) unless specifically pre-approved in the guidelines. The full handbook is available on the Highlands website. The DRC is currently a committee of one, and we are seeking homeowner volunteers interested in serving. Please contact the Board at contact@publicalliance.com if you would like to participate.

Common Issues Noted During Inspections:

- **Portable Hoops (Section 2.8):** Hoops may not be placed in the street or on the sidewalk unless during actual play. Portable hoops are allowed in the driveways from April 1 through the first measurable snowfall (at least 0.1" at Denver International Airport) but no later than through October 15 unless otherwise determined by the DRC to account for mild fall weather. Notwithstanding the dates in this section, portable hoops must be removed from streets, sidewalks, and driveways to avoid interference with snow removal operations. From October 16 through March 30th, portable hoops must be stored out of view from any street, common area or ground floor of any adjacent lot when not in active use/play.
- **Seasonal Decorations (Section 2.12):** May be displayed 30 days before and 15 days after a holiday. Lighting must be turned off by 10:00 p.m.
- **Fencing (Section 2.18):** Prior DRC approval is required. Only approved wood fencing styles and colors are permitted.
- **Landscaping (Section 2.26):** Approval is required. Xeriscape is allowed but zeroscape is not and landscaping must be completed within required timeframes after closing.
- **Flags & Signs (Sections 2.19 & 2.39):** Allowed within size, number, placement, and timing limits. Commercial and right-of-way signs are prohibited.
- **Trash Containers (Section 2.49):** May only be placed out during approved pickup times and must be stored out of sight afterward.
- **Unightly Conditions (Section 2.51):** Materials, debris, dead landscaping, and inoperable vehicles may not remain visible.
- **Vehicles & Parking (Sections 1.6–1.8):** RVs, trailers, and commercial vehicles must be stored in garages or approved driveways; repairs must occur inside enclosed structures.

These guidelines help maintain community standards and protect property values. Homeowners are encouraged to review the Design Guidelines before making exterior changes.

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