

Date: June 22, 2026

To: Board of Directors, Cherokee Metropolitan District
Kevin Brown, General Manager

From: Joan M. Fritsche, Esq.

Subj: District Parks

The following is a summary of issues related to District parks and open space for review during the June 23rd special meeting.

Brief History

The Cherokee Water District was organized in 1957. In 1981 the Cimarron Sanitation District was dissolved and consolidated with Cherokee Water District – Cherokee became the Cherokee Water and Sanitation District (“Cherokee WSD”).

On May 5, 1992, the voters in the Cherokee WSD and the Cimarron Hills Street Improvement District voted to dissolve Cimarron Hills Street Improvement District and authorize Cherokee WSD to become a Metropolitan District. By Court Order entered May 11, 1992, Cherokee WSD was converted to the Cherokee Metropolitan District, with all the statutory powers and authority of a Title 32 Metropolitan District, including parks and recreation.

On May 28, 1992, El Paso County deeded and transferred certain park lands to the District:

- Tracts C1 and C2, Cimarron-Westridge Subdivision (*Westridge Park*)
- Tract 2, Cimarron Eastridge No. 2 (*Cimarron Hills Eastridge Park and Cimarron Hills Ballfields*)
- Tract A, Block 5, Constitution Hills North (*Fredericksburg Park*)

In the early 2000s, the developer of the Claremont Ranch community faced financial difficulties and filed for bankruptcy. During 2004-2006, the following Tracts were conveyed to the District by Claremont Ranch, LLC and Morley Companies Family Development, LLLP:

- Tracts A and B, Claremont Ranch Filing No. 2
- Tracts A and C, Claremont Ranch Filing No. 3 (*Tract A - Woodpark Park*)
- Tracts A-F, Claremont Ranch Filing No. 4
- Tracts A, B and D, Claremont Ranch Filing No. 5 (*Tract D – Sand Creek Disk Golf*)
- Tracts A-E, Claremont Ranch Filing No. 6 (*Tract A – Colorado Tech Park*)

Based on the conveyance deeds, the developer did not install most of the improvements within the conveyed Tracts.

Based on consolidation of services, the District “ended up” owning and managing parks and limited open space. There was never a comprehensive plan for park ownership, maintenance or sustainable funding for operations and capital investment.

The District owns and maintains the following parks and open space within the District’s boundaries:

Parks and Outdoor Spaces

- Colorado Tech Park
- Eastridge Dog Park
- Eastridge Park
- Fredericksburg Park
- Pinyon Jay Park
- Pronghorn Meadows Park
- Sand Creek Disc Golf
- Westridge Park
- Woodpark Park

Outdoor Rented Spaces

- Cimarron Hills Eastridge Park Pavilion
- Cimarron Hills Softball Field (North Field)
- Cimarron Hills Baseball Field (South Field)

Parks Governance and Funding:

District parks are owned, funded and maintained by the District. As a local government, the Board of Directors has a fiduciary duty to maintain District assets. Parks and open space properties, trees, landscaping, turf, irrigation systems, playground equipment, ballfield infrastructure, park pavilions and maintenance vehicles and equipment are examples of District assets.

The District does not impose a mill levy (property tax) as a revenue source. Similar to most water and sanitation districts in the state, Cherokee’s operations are broken down into proprietary or enterprise funds. Revenue is generated from various rates, fees and charges. Enterprise Funds promote self-sufficiency and sustainability for local services and infrastructure. The District has a Water and Wastewater Enterprise Fund for financing the District’s water and wastewater services and infrastructure, and a Golf Enterprise Fund for operating and maintaining the Cherokee Ridge Golf Course. There is no Parks Enterprise Fund or Enterprise operations.

Currently, revenue for the District’s Parks Department is generated through monthly parks maintenance fees, rental fees, Conservation Trust Funds and minimal interest income. (*See Parks Budget Overview.*)

Parks Fees (51-55% of the Parks revenue).

- District customers pay a Parks Maintenance Fee of \$1.85/month. The Parks Maintenance Fee was first imposed in April of 2014 at \$1.75/month. Effective in 2025, the Fee was increased by \$0.10/month (\$1.20 total increase per year).

Ballfield and Pavilion Rental Fees (3% of Parks revenue):

- Cimarron Hills Eastridge Park Pavilion: \$175 per time block (5.5 hours)
- Cimarron Hills Softball Field (North Field) and Cimarron Hills Baseball Field (South Field): In-District: Mon- Fri \$10.00 per hour; Sat & Sun \$20.00 per hour; Out-of-District: Mon- Fri \$15.00 per hour; Sat & Sun \$25.00 per hour.

Conservation Trust Funds (38-40% of Parks revenue)

Interest Income (4% of Parks revenue)

The Park's revenue sources sustain minimal parks operations. Parks O&M costs continue to increase, with Parks revenue largely flat. The costs of watering, mowing and maintaining turf areas, including irrigation system repairs, along with annual tree maintenance, and snow removal services increase every year. The Parks funding level determines operational staffing of two full time and two seasonal employees, maintenance levels and future capital projects.

Increased costs for operations, maintenance and planning for future capital investment will require additional sustainable revenue. *See attached chart of available funding options.*

Recommendation and Options for Community Involvement

Prepare and distribute a District-wide survey to property owners. Seek fairly specific input on what park facilities and services are important to property owners and residents. Gauge support for an increase in the monthly Parks Maintenance Fee, with an anticipated cost of living adjustment. Gauge support for a sales tax measure.

Educate property owners and residents on the total number of parks and acreage maintained by the District and current budgetary restraints. Gauge how important the parks are to community members.

Educate property owners and residents on the value and costs of maintaining trees in Colorado, including the following benefits of a healthy tree canopy:

- Improves air quality by filtering pollutants and producing oxygen.
- Provides shade, reducing urban heat and cooling energy costs.
- Enhances biodiversity by offering habitat for various wildlife species.
- Reduces stormwater runoff, minimizing flooding and erosion.
- Increases property values and enhances aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods.
- Promotes mental well-being and encourages outdoor activities.

Metropolitan Districts with significant park and tract maintenance may have an arborist on staff.

Remind community members that the District's Board of Directors, staff and website are the only official sources of District information. The Cherokee Metropolitan District Parks Committee was dissolved by the Board of Directors on February 17, 2026. Any supposed "Parks Committee" communicating with residents has no authority, control or involvement with District activities, District funds or District assets.

Restructuring the Parks Committee does not seem productive prior to distributing a community survey, analyzing the survey results and the Board setting direction and goals for a committee, if the Board determined a Parks Committee would be beneficial.

The standard committee make-up would be one Director, one District staff member and generally three resident committee members selected by the Board for specific terms, based on a set of criteria. Committee meetings would be on set dates (quarterly or semi-annually), take place at the District office, and would be run by the Director or staff member.

CHEROKEE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

Funding Options for Parks O&M and Capital Projects

Increase Monthly Parks Maintenance Fees



Determined and set by Board of Directors during annual budget approval process.

Dependent on number of District customers and timely payment.

Consider imposing Colorado CPI increase going forward.

Increase Pavilion and Ballfield Rental Fees



Determined and set by Board of Directors during annual budget approval process.

Dependent on number of monthly rentals.

(Not a significant source of revenue)

Impose a Property Tax Mill Levy



Requires Voter Approval

District-wide TABOR Election

Paid only by property owners within the District.

Impose a Recreational Sales Tax



Requires Voter Approval

District-wide TABOR Election

Paid through sales tax charged at retail locations and billed to online purchases delivered within District boundaries (HB23-1062).