
MEMORANDUM

TO: GOLD HILL MESA METROPOLITAN DISTRICT RESIDENTS
FROM: REBECCA HARRIS, DISTRICT MANAGER
SUBJECT: TURF REPLACEMENT
DATE: JUNE 6, 2024 FROM 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM
CC: BOARD OF DIRECTORS, VARIOUS HOA'S

This townhall is being held to specifically address the turf replacement program, and to get some thoughts and ideas from the community on which turf areas to be considered.

The Metropolitan District was awarded a 50% matching grant opportunity to replace Kentucky blue grass (high water-use turf) with more water-wise landscaping. The grant was awarded in June of 2023, and the Metropolitan District Board has discussed the use of funds at each meeting leading up to the decision being made at the April 2024 Board meeting. The project was slotted to begin in May of 2024 (following Memorial weekend). However, due to a number of concerns being raised by the community, the project was halted on May 29, 2024, until after a discussion with the community.

Purpose for Turf Replacement:

The goals of the City, CSU, and State are to minimize water use. This is why the grant became available to encourage communities across the state to replace high water-use landscaping with more water-wise landscaping.

- The Past 2 years Utility cost for the Metro:
 - 2023 - \$102,378
 - 2022 - \$168,173
- Current Utility cost year to date for 2024 is \$10,824 (winter use)
- The maintenance cost for the grass is 10 times more expensive than rock, trees, and shrubs.
- The overall goal for the District is to save the District money in any way possible, where it is also most applicable to the Community.
- This project currently proposes to replace 8,200 Square Feet of turf.
- The intention for the tree lawns is to have them comply with current Colorado Springs standards. Today, the City's Landscape Code and Policy Manual (Policy 7.4.904.D.2b(2).1 (Page 17): https://coloradosprings.gov/system/files/2023-06/cos_landscape_code_and_policy_manual_6_5_23.pdf) states that "high water use turfgrass shall not comprise more than twenty-five (25) percent of the total green space area of the site, and shall not be used in street right-of-way between curb and sidewalk or on other locations on a site that are less than seven (7) feet wide."

Common Questions:

- Which trees are being replaced with this year's budget? Is it just the areas with the orange flags and removed tree stumps?
 - **See Attached Map. Yes**
- What do you mean by "tree lawns"?
 - **These are the landscape areas between the sidewalk and street. Correct term is Landscape Right of Way, the City has used the term "Parkway".**
- Where are the "tree lawns" that have been selected?
 - **Originally Portland Gold Dr and Cresson Mine (south of the community center), this Town Hall is to discuss other options.**
- How will we know when the areas are sprayed so pets can be kept away?
 - **They will be marked with flags**
- Why are we wanting to convert grass to rock? Is it the cost of replacing dead trees or dead turf? Or for water conservation?
 - **It is water conservation and saving the District money on utilities by converting areas that are more costly to maintain.**
 - **The tree lawn areas are considered to be "non-active" high water-use areas. They are also the areas that waste the most water producing runoff along the curbs.**
- Will the identified areas just be rock or will there be plantings included and what type?
 - **Trees will remain in these areas. As of right now, no other plantings are planned in the proposal. The intention is to have low-growing shrubs, perennials, and / or ornamental grasses with drip irrigation between the trees.**
- If the grass is healthy, but trees have repeatedly died in the specified area, is there an option to keep the grass without any trees?
 - **Removing the trees over grass does not impact water use enough and the goal is water conservation. A tree canopy is a defining element and intention of the community and city. Trees create value for the community and not replacing trees is not an option.**
 - **The City of Colorado Spring may have additional requirements.**
- Have those areas that have been identified as "over-watered" had the irrigation system adjusted to reduce watering time, or installed reduced emitters or capped emitters?
 - **Yes, however the reason for over watering was to establish the immature trees and growth.**
- How much water is expected to be saved?
 - **Over 50% of water use is expected.**
- Is this the first of other similar conversions that are being planned on district-managed areas?
 - **Not at this time, there are no other planned conversion. This was a grant opportunity that the District took advantage of at this time. Every November Town Hall meeting will discuss upcoming capital projects for the coming year.**
- Do you see other areas that you are aware of that haven't been identified that should be considered?
 - **This is the input we would like from the community.**
- Give input or ask questions on specific areas. Do you have any recommendations?
 - **Please use the attached map to mark areas you believe would benefit from improvement or have questions about.**

Tree Replacement Map:

2024 planned replacements are circled in Blue and Gold
\$45,000 is budgeted annually to replace trees



