

METRO DISTRICT STATUTORY HIGHLIGHTS:

A 75+ YEAR HISTORY

Metropolitan (metro) districts are types of special districts, which have operated under Colorado state statutes since 1861. For over 160 years, metro districts have operated legally and successfully to foster residential and commercial development by financing, building, and maintaining public infrastructure (water, sewer, and sanitation systems, for example) that is critical to functioning homes and local businesses.

While this is not a complete legislative history of metro districts, the timeline below demonstrates key statutory milestones over the past 75 years that have led to greater clarity, control, limitations, accountability, and transparency.

1947

Authority to Provide Two or More Services

State law is amended to allow metropolitan districts the ability to levy and collect taxes for two or more services, and limited to water, sewer, sanitation, fire and police protection

1949

A Unit of Government

State statute recognizes metro districts as a unit of local government

1961

Limiting Land Use Control

State law limits the zoning and planning powers of a metropolitan district within the boundaries of a local or regional planning authority such as a city or county

1969

Greater Definition

State statute brings greater clarity by amending legal definitions related to metro districts

1981

Special District Act

Passage of Title 32, the Special District Act, a legal framework under which all special districts must operate – including rules on election laws, Sunshine laws, real estate disclosure laws, and expanded services than can be provided by metro districts

1991

Disclosures & Notices

Several provisions in state statute are amended to codify disclosures and notices, creating greater transparency

2009

Increased Transparency

Several amendments set forth requirements for audited financial statements, an accurate map of metro district boundaries, and an annual transparency notice

2013

Enhanced Disclosures

Pertaining to fees and other charges, property owners must be invited to public meetings and notified in at least one of several specific ways

2019

Meeting Notices

Additional requirements for online notices of public meetings for property owners

2021

Public Information

MDEC helped author and pass SB21-262, legislation that requires all metro districts to have public websites with easy-to-find contact info for administrators and the Board of Directors, in addition to other important transparency measures, such as requirement for all districts organized after January 1, 2000 to provide expanded notice of directors elections by email and hard copy mail to all households

2023

Codifying Best Practices

MDEC worked with a bipartisan group of legislators to pass into law SB23-110, a new bill that requires cities and counties to impose a debt limit and mill levy caps on metro districts and mandates that bonds must be issued at the same or lower rates/terms as those on the public market; also includes notices to prospective homebuyers prior to escrow monies going hard

2024

MDEC worked with a bipartisan group of legislators to pass HB24-1267

which eliminates a metro district's power to foreclose on properties related to covenant enforcement issues.

2025 & Beyond

MDEC will continue to support measures that codify best practices improving transparency, accountability, and affordability.

To learn more visit:
MetroDistrictEducation.com