



HIGHLANDS RANCH

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

COMMERCIAL IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES (CIG'S)



The Commercial Improvement Guidelines (Guidelines) were prepared by the Development Review Committee (DRC) and adopted by the Board of Directors of the Highlands Ranch Community Association. The Development Review Committee reserves the right to add to or modify these Guidelines at its discretion. Please check the HRCA website for updates.

Adopted April 2024

Published by:

HIGHLANDS RANCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

9568 S. University Boulevard
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126-2912
www.hrcaonline.org | (303) 471-8958 phone

Printed in the United States of America



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THIS DOCUMENT WAS PRINTED TWO-SIDED.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Basis for Guidelines.

These Commercial Improvement Guidelines (CIGs) are intended to assist business owners and developers in Highlands Ranch in the making of improvements to their property, and as provided for in Section 5.16 of the Community Declarations, to list the rules and regulations adopted by the Community Association with respect to the use of Commercial Properties.

THE HRCA COMMUNITY DECLARATION REQUIRES PRIOR ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL BEFORE ANY “IMPROVEMENT TO PROPERTY” MAY OCCUR WITHIN HIGHLANDS RANCH.

As authorized in the Community Declarations, the HRCA Board of Directors established the Development Review Committee (DRC) for review of Commercial Projects and the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) for the review of Residential Projects, all derived out of the Architectural Committee.

“Improvement to Property” is very broadly defined in the Community Declaration. For instance, an Improvement to Property would include any landscaping or change of grade of property; the demolition or removal of any building or improvement; and/or any change of exterior appearance of a building or other improvement.

To assist commercial developers and builders, the Community Declaration authorizes the HRCA to establish guidelines. This booklet contains the guidelines established by the DRC with respect to commercial property. Throughout this document the term “property” shall refer to a Commercial Site.

1.2 Contents of Guidelines.

The HRCA works to support the continuing success of our individual businesses and commercial centers. These Guidelines are designed to provide guidance to support the success of both new and established businesses.

Designs should consider the context and characteristics of the natural surroundings and previously approved development. Designs should complement existing construction while creating accessible, safe, and inviting environments at street level. This will promote pedestrian activity and minimize heat island effects of paved areas.

If your questions are not answered by reading these guidelines, feel free to call the Community Improvement Services staff at (303) 471-8821, or email commercialreview@hrcaonline.org.

1.3 Development Review Committee (DRC).

The Development Review Committee (DRC) consists of at least five (5) and up to nine (9) volunteer resident members appointed by the Board of Directors of the Highlands Ranch Community Association.

1.4 Committee Address and Phone.

The address of the DRC is the same as the address of the Community Association. The present address is c/o HRCA Community Improvement Service (CIS), 9568 South University Boulevard, Highlands Ranch, Colorado 80126.

The phone number of the CIS Department c/o the DRC is (303) 471-8821.

Information can be obtained at the Highlands Ranch Community Association website www.hrcaonline.org.

1.5 Effect of Community and Supplemental Declarations.

The Community Declaration for the HRCA is a document governing property within Highlands Ranch. Areas or groups of lots become part of the Community Association Area by Annexation pursuant to a Supplemental Declaration. Nothing in these Guidelines can supersede or alter the provisions or requirements of the Community Declaration or of the applicable Supplemental Declaration. If there is any conflict or inconsistency, the Community Declaration and the applicable Supplemental Declaration governs. Provisions relating to the use of property and to Improvements to Property are found in Article IX and X of the Community Declaration and in Article IV in most Supplemental Declarations.

Any improvement not in compliance with these Guidelines may result in a Notice and/or fine against the owner, and/or an opportunity for Hearing and any such further action, legal or otherwise, as permitted by the Community Declaration or statute.

If any provision of these Guidelines is ruled invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of these Guidelines shall remain in full force and affect.

1.6 Effects of Development Guide.

The Highlands Ranch Planned Development Guide (HRPDG) was approved by the Board of the County Commissioners of Douglas County on September 17, 1979, and was recorded in the Douglas County real estate records.

The HRPDG defines permitted uses in the various areas of Highlands Ranch and contains some provisions, which could affect improvements. It establishes, among other things, allowable uses, minimum parking requirements and standards, minimum lot area, minimum front yard, side yard and rear yard distances (i.e., "setbacks") and maximum building height.

1.7 Effect of Governmental and Other Regulations.

Use of property and improvements to property must comply with applicable building codes and other governmental requirements and regulations.

Approval by the DRC does not constitute assurance that proposed improvements comply with applicable governmental requirements or regulations. Further, DRC approval does not assure that a permit or approvals are not also required from applicable governmental bodies.

For general information about Douglas County requirements, developers may write or call Douglas County Building Department, 100 Third Street, Castle Rock, Colorado 80104, or at (303) 660-7497.

1.8 Interference with Utilities.

In making improvements to property, developers are responsible for locating all water, gas, sewer, electrical, cable television or other utility lines or easements. Developers should not construct any improvements over such easements without the consent of the utility involved and developers will be responsible for damage to any utility lines. Underground utility lines and easements may be located by contacting the following entities:

Highlands Ranch Metropolitan District..... (303) 791-0430
Centennial Water & Sanitation District..... (303) 791-2185
Utility Notification Center (cable, electric, gas, telephone) (800) 922-1987 or 811

1.9 Goal of Guidelines.

Compliance with these Guidelines, the provisions of the Community Declaration, and the applicable Supplemental Declaration are necessary to ensure the preservation of the inherent architectural and aesthetic quality of Highlands Ranch. It is important that the Improvements to Property be made in harmony with, and not be detrimental to, the rest of the community.

A spirit of cooperation with the DRC and neighbors will go far in creating an optimum environment, which will benefit business owners and the community. By following these Guidelines and obtaining approvals for Improvements to Property from the DRC, developers will be protecting their financial investment and will help ensure that Improvements to Property are compatible with the standards established for Highlands Ranch.

If a question arises as to the correct interpretation of any terms, phrases, or language contained in these Guidelines, the DRC's interpretation thereof is final and binding.

The DRC's decisions are not bound or restricted by any precedent relating to existing construction or prior decision(s) of the DRC.

2. **APPLICABILITY**

These Guidelines apply to new development, redevelopment, and operating commercial facilities within the Highlands Ranch Planned Development area.

Approval by the Development Review Committee is required for most projects involving new facilities, additions, and modifications including signage, painting, and any external additions such as telecommunication equipment. To determine if you are required to submit for a particular project, call 303-471-8821 or email commercialreview@hrcaonline.org.

These Guidelines are not meant as an all-inclusive, one-size-fits-all document. Certain sections may be more applicable than others, depending on the context, scale, and use of the project or unique circumstances.

Projects are evaluated according to their planning and design merits and conformity to the intent of these Guidelines, as well as all other applicable authorities, including the Highlands Ranch Planned Development Guide. The DRC does not represent or warrant that its approval of any project complies with any applicable contractual or governmental land use restriction.

3. SUBMITTAL AND REVIEW PROCESS

We are here to assist you. Contact HRCA Staff early in the design process to identify key issues and address concerns for any project requiring Development Review Committee (DRC) approval. In this preliminary stage, applicants may present design concepts through sketches, photographs, or other pertinent materials. Start the dialogue by emailing commercialreview@hrcaonline.org.

Addressing issues early will enable a faster review process when the submittal proceeds to the DRC for review and consideration. The review process time may vary depending on such factors as project scope, complexity, and location.

3.1 Submitting for Commercial Improvement.

To download a Commercial Review Application, go to:

<https://hrcaonline.org/property-owners/commercial/commercial-improvement-application>

Select: Commercial Review Application.

The application notes the type items (and quantities) that must be included with the submittal; however, reach out to CommercialReview@hrcaonline.org before making the submittal to ensure what's going to be required. The first submittal is an electronic only submittal to commercialreview@hrcaonline.org. Subsequent submittals may have a "hard copy" requirement.

3.2 Submitting for Signage Approval.

To download a Commercial Signage Application, go to:

<https://hrcaonline.org/property-owners/commercial/commercial-improvement-application>

Select: Commercial Signage Application.

Provide the following information with your submittal:

- A drawing of the sign including dimensions, letter style, layout, colors.
- Location where sign is to be installed.

The first submittal is an electronic only submittal to commercialreview@hrcaonline.org. Subsequent submittals may have a "hard copy" requirement (not typical).

3.3 Submittal Address

Submit Application and Supplemental Information to:

Commercial Signage
Highlands Ranch Community Association
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126
9568 University Blvd.
Phone: 303-471-8821
Email: commercialreview@hrcaonline.org

3.5 Submittal Requirements.

Application: Reference Sections 3.1 and 3.2 for the type of application needed.

Notice of Design: The Notice of Design is necessary to help the reviewers understand the design concept. This is a narrative description (typically two-pages or less) that outlines how the project is responsive to the Guidelines and is an opportunity to identify key aspects, unique features, or distinguishing characteristics of the design. It is also an opportunity to illustrate any project constraints that pose challenges to meeting key guidelines and how the design balances those challenges with HRCA standards.

Site Improvement Plan: These must be reduced to 11"x17" and must include such plan sheets as Cover Sheet, Site Plan, Grading & Drainage Plan, Utility Plan, Landscape Plans, Architectural Elevations, and Site Details. For presentation to the DRC, it is encouraged that full-size, color rendered versions of the Landscape Plans and the Architectural Elevations, at a minimum, be presented.

Materials Sample Board: These may be provided in digital format. Please contact Staff at commercialreview@hrcaonline.org to discuss what's necessary.

Other Reports and Documents: These may include Traffic Impact Studies, Drainage Reports, etcetera. Please contact Staff at commercialreview@hrcaonline.org to discuss what's necessary based on the scope and complexity of your proposed development.

3.6 Timing.

Projects are typically processed in thirty (30) days or less from the date the application is formally submitted to the DRC. This is contingent on the applicant providing all pertinent material and responses to staff inquiries in a timely manner.

The DRC meets the second Wednesday of every month. Presentation of the project to the DRC by the applicant, or their representative, is required. Presentation in-person is preferred; however, virtual presentations are acceptable to help mitigate potential travel costs. Please contact Staff at commercialreview@hrcaonline.org to discuss virtual meeting needs, if necessary.

All required documents must be submitted no later than noon (12 p.m.) on the Tuesday two (2) weeks prior to the next scheduled DRC meeting for the project to be placed on the agenda.

3.7 Review Fee.

Payment of applicable Review Fees is required for all DRC submittals. Fees are determined based on the scope and complexity of the project being submitted. Payment of the Review Fee is required at the time of submittal. No submittals will be processed until all appropriate fees have been paid. The Notice of DRC Findings will not be issued until all fees are paid.

If the DRC requires the applicant to attend additional meetings due to incomplete, inadequate, or improper submittals, the applicant may be responsible for additional review fees.

Please contact Staff at commercialreview@hrcaonline.org to discuss the Review Fee.

3.8 Variances.

The Development Review Committee, at its sole discretion, may authorize a variance from compliance with the Guidelines when circumstances such as topography, natural obstructions, hardships (non-self-imposed), planning or environmental objectives may warrant. HRCA Staff are authorized to review and approve variance requests where the variance being sought increases a maximum standard by less than 10%.

Variances must be specifically itemized, rationalized, and documented as such by a committee decision.

3.9 Notice of DRC Findings.

A notice from the DRC regarding their findings will be sent to each applicant within a maximum of thirty (30) days after the date of the DRC review. This notice will also be sent to Douglas County Planning for their files and records.

The notice will state whether the project received approval, approval with conditions (with the conditions detailed), or denial from the DRC. If the DRC denies or imposes conditions on a proposed improvement, an applicant may, under Section 10.11 of the Community Declaration, appeal to a Tribunal. Reference Section 3.9: Appeals.

The DRC does not represent or warrant that its approval complies with any applicable contractual or governmental land use restrictions.

3.10 Appeals.

If the DRC denies or imposes conditions on a proposed improvement, a property owner (or their duly authorized representative) may, under Section 10.11 of the Community Declaration, appeal to a Tribunal by giving written notice of such appeal.

The appeal must:

- Be made in writing by either the property owner, or duly authorized representative, and addressed to the HRCA Director of Community Improvement Services.
- Be **submitted within twenty (20) calendar days** after DRC denial or conditions.
- Identify the specific term or condition being objected to along with justification for the appeal.
- Provide recommended alternative means of mitigation or resolution of the element of concern.
- Be accompanied by any required review fee.

Appeals will be carefully considered according to the above criteria versus subjective preference or simply not adhering to established criteria.

Normally, the Tribunal Officer will respond in writing to an appeal within 15 days of receipt. In the event a formal hearing with the Tribunal is deemed necessary or is specifically requested by the grievant, the hearing will be set within 30 days of the postmarked date of the Appeal, and the Tribunal Officer will respond in writing within 15 days of that hearing.

3.11 Questions.

If you have any questions about these procedures or guidelines, feel free to call and talk to the Community Improvement Services department staff at 303.471.8821 or email to commercialreview@hrcaonline.org.

4. COMPLIANCE

The Douglas County Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code calls for projects to be “in conformance with the Commercial Improvement Guidelines (Guidelines)”. For commercial projects, the Development Review Committee (DRC) is responsible for reviewing plans that include the construction of any type including, but not limited to, landscaping, lighting, signage, and other exterior improvements.

Projects are found to be in conformance with the Guidelines when all concepts are responsive to the overall intent and vision embodied in the Guidelines, as adopted by the Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA).

Variations may be addressed by the DRC based on the unique characteristics and considerations of each project.

If, during the review/approval process, there are any questions as to the intent or meaning of any word, phrase, section, or chapter of these Guidelines, the final decision-making entity (the DRC and the HRCA Board of Directors, as applicable) shall render the official interpretation.

5. NON-COMPLIANCE AND FINES.

Fines are assessed when Notices of Violations are issued and not resolved in a reasonably timely manner. Please refer to www.hrcaonline.org for more information regarding our Non-Compliance violation process.

The Board of Directors will use whatever means necessary and available to enforce these Guidelines, including filing legal action, recording a Notice of Non-Compliance and/or Notice of Violation, and assessing fines pursuant to Section 5.17 of the Community Declaration.

6. GUIDELINES FOR NEW AND EXISTING FACILITIES

6.1 Building Materials & Colors.

A mixture of contrasting textures, color and materials is optimal. Encouraged materials include masonry (e.g., stone, brick, architectural pre-cast concrete, cast stone, integrally colored block, architectural concrete block, prefabricated brick panels, etc.), cement fiber siding, metal, glass, and cement stucco.

The use of stucco or similar synthetic coating systems should be avoided at ground level or where there will be regular contact with people, maintenance equipment, irrigation systems, etc. to avoid damage or discoloration over time.

Painting or staining of natural stone, brick or integral-colored blocks requires approval. Reference “Exterior Repainting” below.

Color palettes should complement the architecture of the building and the character of the surrounding area. Building colors should consist primarily of warm earth tone colors, including but not limited to browns, creams, warm grays, mossy greens, gold, terra cotta and some reds. Colors should have low reflective characteristics. Tone down or shade brighter hues and integrate them into the overall earth tone color palette. For example, rather than bright red, consider a deeper tone or shade. When beige, tan, cream, or similar colors are used, the underlying hue should generally be of a more yellow shade rather than red, to avoid the appearance of pink buildings in certain light. Brighter, bolder colors (including corporate branding colors) may be applied to areas or elements of the building where they are secondary

in application compared to the main body or features of the building. Counteract stronger colors by integrating natural materials and textures into the overall design.

Minimal use of “corporate colors” will be considered; however, if the “corporate colors” are not muted and/or complimentary to the surrounds, they must be limited to accent elements only.

Additional consideration for approval on specific colors will include, but is not limited to:

- The building architecture.
- The color and type of any stone, brick, or other masonry type accents.
- The roof colors.

The Highlands Ranch Community Association does not maintain an approved paint color list/book from which to choose. All paint schemes must be submitted for approval.

Painting over brick, stone, or other masonry material is discouraged and requires approval. Considerations for review include the amount of masonry, maintenance concerns, and application methods (e.g., limewash, staining, painting, etc.).

Building drainage systems such as downspouts and pipes should be internal when/where possible and should be incorporated into the building design and screened or painted to be compatible with the building design.

Shading devices such as awnings, canopies, trellises, sunshades, and other elements must be constructed of durable, high-quality materials such as tile, canvas, or metal in a matte finish.

Wood siding or wood elements should be limited to accent areas and must be of a composite or finished/treated wood that conveys high quality and longevity.

Where wood fencing is installed abutting a street, park, school, or residential or commercial property, it must be stained “Highlands Ranch Fence Brown,” available at most hardware and paint stores within Highlands Ranch.

Building materials that are not permitted include highly reflective glass curtain wall systems, unfinished/grey concrete masonry units, vinyl, or vinyl siding.

6.2 Drive-Through Lanes.

Where practical, drive-through lanes should be avoided to promote more walkable, compact development patterns.

If drive-through lanes are necessary, they should be located and screened to reduce the prominence of the canopy and its lighting, and to reduce the visibility of stacked cars from the street. Strategies may involve location, integrated design, landscaping, berms, and low walls.

Canopies, menu boards, bollards and similar features related to drive-through areas should be coordinated with the design of the building and detailed on the Site Improvement Plan.

6.3 Equipment Storage/Service Areas.

The visual impact of service, storage and mechanical areas should be minimized. ATM's and similar public functions may be designed in more prominent locations for safety.

Air conditioners, fans, vents, antennas, photovoltaic panel arrays and air network dishes must be effectively screened from adjacent grade-level views. Mechanical rooftop equipment must be effectively screened.

Examples are as follows:

- Units should be placed in the center of the roof area or away from prominent vantage points.
- The parapet should be as high as or higher than the highest mechanical unit or vent.
- Secondary roof screening systems should be as high or higher than the highest mechanical unit or vent.
- Systems should enclose groups of units rather than each individual unit, using materials and colors compatible with the building.
- Ground-mounted equipment and components** should be incorporated into the design of the building, located away from public areas, or screened from public view with landscaping and/or screen walls.

Electrical transformers, photovoltaic panel arrays and similar above-ground utility equipment should be located to minimize visibility and/or should be painted or screened to reduce visual impacts. Outdoor generators, coolers, permanent storage, and similar functions should be located to minimize visibility and/or should be screened with masonry walls and/or landscaping that is compatible with the design of the project.

6.4 **Exterior Re-Painting.**

Submission for review and approval by the Development Review Committee (DRC) is **required for all exterior re-painting.**

The paint submittal must include manufacturer's paint chips or samples indicating a manufacturer's color number (or name) and the respective location the applicant would like to paint the color (e.g., Base: Sherwin Williams "Urban Putty" SW7532; Trim: Sherwin Williams "Pure White" SW7005; Accent: Sherwin Williams "Sun Dried Tomato" SW7585).

Color selection should be muted and complimentary to the surrounds. Selected paint must be flat or low luster.

Minimal use of "corporate colors" will be considered; however, if the "corporate colors" are not muted and/or complimentary to the surrounds, they must be limited to accent elements only.

Additional consideration for approval on specific colors will include, but is not limited to:

- The building architecture.
- The color and type of any stone, brick, or other masonry type accents.
- The roof colors.

The Highlands Ranch Community Association does not maintain an approved paint color list/book from which to choose. All paint schemes must be submitted for approval.

Painting over brick, stone, or other masonry material is discouraged and requires approval. Considerations for review include the amount of masonry, maintenance concerns, and application methods (e.g., limewash, staining, painting, etc.).

6.5 Flag Poles.

Allowed: A flagpole for the display of a flag, badge, or insignia of any governmental agency, or of a civic, charitable, religious, or fraternal organization is allowed.

Prohibited: A flag designed to inform or attract the attention of people with the intention of advertisement is prohibited.

A flagpole must be ground mounted to an engineered footing and not attached in any way to any building or other structure.

A flagpole may not exceed 35 feet in height, must be commercial grade, and must be bronze, black, or silver in color.

The minimum setback of the flagpole from any property line shall be the height of the flagpole.

Flagpole(s) shall be depicted on an approved Site Improvement Plan. If not shown on the approved (and recorded at Douglas County) Site Improvement Plan, a Site Improvement Plan Modification may be required by Douglas County Planning.

Illumination of a flagpole is permitted. Illumination may only be provided by a narrow-spread lamp that is aimed so that it only illuminates the flag at the top of the flagpole. The source of illuminance (lamp) must be shielded in a manner so as not to be visible from adjacent property.

6.6 Landscaping, Irrigation and Maintenance.

A. Submittal Required.

- All submitted plans for site development to the Development Review Committee (DRC) review shall provide a landscape plan, which must, at a minimum, conform to [Chapter 2708: Landscape Plan](#) of the Douglas County Zoning Resolution.

B. Slopes.

- In some cases, there may be relatively steep slopes on a developer's property. It is important to note that if slopes are left without landscaping, severe erosion and silting may occur. As a result, it is recommended that the slopes be landscaped as soon as possible during the construction process.
- Slopes and banks should be planted with drought tolerant plants. Terracing or surfacing with stone or other free draining materials can lessen erosion of slopes. Loose aggregate or wood chips are not recommended on slopes unless measures are taken to prevent erosion and displacement by wind and/or water. Slopes can also be seeded/planted with groundcovers, shrubs, and bushes to prevent erosion. Rock gardens are another technique to help prevent slope erosion and create a landscape amenity.

C. Soil Preparations.

- Soil conditions vary throughout Highlands Ranch. Soil preparation is important due to our soil and climate. Soil testing is suggested for each lot to determine the exact nature of the soil and the desired level of amendment necessary, such as mulch, sand, and fertilizer to optimize plant growth. Local nurseries may help in determining the proper quantity and type of soil amendment.

- ☑ Soil Amendment should be applied to planting areas, allowing for plant establishment and easier infiltration of surface water back into the soil. Appropriate soil amendment quantity and type can be determined by GeoTech reports of the site and through Colorado State University Soil Testing Lab at:

<https://aqsci.colostate.edu/soiltestinglab/>

D. Design Guidelines.

- ☑ Emphasize native and drought tolerant plants, best grouped by their water needs to ensure efficient irrigation.
- ☑ Restrict evergreen trees along the southern or western edge of pedestrian pathways to mitigate ice buildup in their shadow. Plant material must not interfere with vehicle and pedestrian sight lines or reasonable surveillance of parking lots, entries, service areas, ATM's, and similar pedestrian uses. Thorny trees and shrubs at maturity should not encroach into walkways and other pedestrian areas.

E. Phased Projects.

- ☑ All phased projects visible to the public must ensure that perimeters will be finished with final landscaping, lighting and streetscape elements as approved in the Site Improvement Plan (SIP).
- ☑ Pad sites must be graded and seeded with natural grasses along with temporary irrigation for timely establishment.

F. Plant Materials.

The following additional resource links are provided for reference and consideration:

- ☑ Rabbit and Deer Resistant Plants, Flowers, Shrubs and Trees in Colorado
- ☑ Plant Select
- ☑ Sterling-Ranch-Recommended-Planting-List-2020-08-26-PDF
(sterlingranchcab.com)

G. Plant Location.

- ☑ Locate canopy and other large trees no closer than four feet from the back of curbs or sidewalks, driveways, and other hard surfaces to buffer trees from stress caused by salt, snow piling, vehicle overhang and compacted soils, and to allow trees to mature without buckling hard surfaces.
- ☑ On slopes 3:1 or greater, trees and shrubs (specifically those that help bind sloped soil) and native grasses should be used. Use drip irrigation for trees and shrubs and temporary irrigation for native or drought-tolerant grasses.
- ☑ Plant location must not obstruct access to utility boxes, fire hydrants, and similar elements. Consult with utility providers for specific landscape standards.

H. Other Landscape Materials.

- ☑ Mulches. An organic or inorganic mulch material is required on all exposed landscape areas without hardscape or plantings. Perennials should have a saucer of wood mulch during the plant's establishment period.
 - Wood Mulch – Shredded wood mulch is the preferred organic wood mulch as it tends to “knit” together to hold it in position better than bark or chipped wood.

- Depth of 3" (minimum) to help mitigate weeds and hold moisture in the ground. Shredded aspen or pine needles are not allowed.
- Rock Mulch – Typically one or a combination of varying sizes of rock, pebbles, and gravel. Depth of 2" minimum.
 - Cobble that is angular tends to be much more stable than round gravel or cobble.
 - Larger rock that is angular should be considered for sloped surfaces.
- ☑ Edging. Typically metal with stakes to secure to the ground to separate different landscape mediums.
 - Metal roll-top edging shall be 6" tall, minimum 7-gauge thickness (3/16") and colored black or green for commercial applications, unless otherwise approved.
 - Edging appearance should create consistently smooth arcs and straight lines.
 - Edging should neither be visible above the medium it is separating, nor sit on top of grade.
 - Composite plastic edging is not recommended for use in Highlands Ranch.
- ☑ Weed Fabric.
 - Weed fabric is required to separate rock mulch and soil. Weed fabric on slopes may require larger rock cobble.
 - Weed fabric is discouraged under wood mulch, especially on sloped planting beds, and is not recommended in perennial and annual specific beds.

I. Irrigation.

Automatic irrigation systems are generally required, but hand watering may be used for plantings in seasonal containers such as flowerpots and hanging baskets. Temporary irrigation may be used for the establishment of native grasses but must be removed once establishment is complete.

Design irrigation based on slope aspect, sun/shade/wind micro-climates, and provide separate valve zones based on grouped plants that require similar water demand. Incorporate drip systems or other low-volume application systems and use smart controllers and rain sensors to conserve water. Spray heads must minimize over-spray to non-pervious areas including sidewalks, buildings, and roadways. Shrubs and trees should be irrigated by drip, bubbler, or low volume spray heads. Drip irrigation is suggested for annual, perennial, and ground cover areas. Above ground, fixed spray heads are only allowed for the temporary native grass establishment period.

Information may be obtained from the Centennial Water & Sanitation District, (303) 791-0430 or visit their web site at centennialwater.org. Centennial Water has mandatory outdoor watering rules. The rules include:

- ☑ Beginning May 1 and ending September 30, no outdoor irrigation is allowed from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m.
- ☑ During normal conditions, it is recommended you limit watering to three days per week.
- ☑ Hand watering trees and shrubs is allowed any time if the hose is held, or a watering can is used. Irrigation using water conserving methods such as drip irrigation or a deep root watering device is also allowed.
- ☑ Wasteful water practices are prohibited. This includes allowing excess water to flow into street gutters and neglecting to repair leaks.

Irrigation schedules should be set at night or early morning to minimize evaporative loss and when pedestrians are less likely to be present. Contact Centennial Water for additional resources on water use regulations and potential water wise rebates.

J. Maintenance.

Owners shall maintain all areas of their property, including the immediate replacement of dead and unhealthy plant materials including dead, diseased, and broken tree limbs.

Remove tree limbs that obscure regulatory, parking, pedestrian, wayfinding and warning signs in rights-of-way and tree-lawns.

Native grass areas should have an establishment plan along with scheduled mowing at least twice a year.

Weeds shall be removed in a timely manner, especially in drainage swales.

Volunteer plants that do not appear on the unapproved plant list are acceptable in open space naturalized areas.

No exposed soil shall be acceptable on a site. The exception to this is user created pedestrian trails through public Open Space tracts and corridors. The surfaces within the property shall be covered completely with native grass (or provide proof of seed establishment program), hardscape, mulch, playground surfacing, sod, synthetic turf, or some other material as shown on the approved landscape plan.

6.7 Lighting.

Main building entries and canopies should have the highest illumination levels on the site, followed by pedestrian spaces and routes.

Parking lot and decorative pedestrian light poles and fixtures should complement the building and surrounding areas in design and color. Generally, black and silver colors are permitted.

Limit overall site lighting to a low-level intensity and provide cut-off and powder coated finishes on shielded fixtures. The use of energy efficient fixtures is required, and yellow lights should be avoided. Color specifications must be noted in project submittals. Refer to Douglas County Zoning Resolution, Section 30: Lighting Standards.

Lighting must be directed, shielded, and cut off so as not to cause light trespass, glare, or off-site impacts. Lighting under entry canopies, gas/service stations and similar applications should be flush-mounted.

The safety and security of the building and surrounding area should be enhanced through lighting design.

Commercial buildings may be decorated for the holidays. A cohesive, unified look should be applied between all buildings within a shopping center or retail area. Holiday lighting should be removed within 30 days after the holiday.

6.8 Parking.

Surface parking should reduce the visual prominence of vehicles, including landscaped parking islands and pedestrian routes.

Refer to Section XVI: Off-Street Parking of the Highlands Ranch Planned Development Guide, latest Amendment, for minimum parking requirements. Projects offering significantly more

parking than the requirements detailed in Section XVI may require a parking variance and may be required to construct parking structures to minimize the land area devoted to parking.

Sidewalks, separated pathways, designated crosswalks and similar features should guide pedestrians and enhance routes with landscaping, low walls, signage, lighting, or special paving.

Provisions must be made for snow storage on site. Pushing snow into streets, sidewalks, and median areas is not permitted. Site owners are responsible for timely snow removal.

6.9 Parking Structures (Non-Traditional: Canopies)

The use of “Canopies” may be allowed, but only if specifically approved as part of a Site Improvement Plan (or Revision, or Modification).

A “Canopy” is defined as an accessory structure consisting of a rigid support system (one or two post cantilevered design) and rigid or flexible canopy constructed for the sole purpose of protecting vehicles from adverse weather conditions.

Canopies are subject to the following design standards:

- ☑ **Structure Placement.** Canopies shall not be placed over the first 25 feet of the paved parking area that is generally parallel to the primary street frontage. In addition, Canopies shall meet all required minimum building setbacks.
- ☑ **Height.** The height of a Canopy shall not exceed 15 feet to the peak of the Canopy.
- ☑ **Coverage.** Canopies shall be generally restricted to a maximum coverage of 15 percent of the onsite parking spaces. Coverage greater than 15 percent requires variance approval by the DRC.
- ☑ **Structure Design.** Canopies shall be of a cantilevered design with one or two posts.
- ☑ **Structure Durability and Maintenance.** Canopies shall be constructed of durable, high-quality materials comparable to and including high density polyethylene mesh (HDPE) or steel. Canopies shall be maintained in a structurally sound, safe, rust-free, and good or better condition. Minor repairs must not result in an unsightly “patchwork” or “quilt-like” appearance. Peeling, dented, or faded materials or finishes, and worn or torn canopies shall be promptly repaired or replaced within a reasonable time.
- ☑ **Cover and Structure Color.** Canopies shall only incorporate covers of a solid color and tone. Approval of the color and tone is required and must fit or complement the colors in the general surrounds of the proposed installation. All support structures shall be solid black. In addition, all Canopies on the same property shall be of the same color and design.
- ☑ **Solar Reflectivity Index.** Canopy materials shall maintain a Solar Reflectivity Index (SRI) rating of no more than 40 measured in accordance with professionally accepted practices of the American Society for Testing & Materials (ASTM) or other methodology reasonably comparable to ASTM-accepted practices.
- ☑ **Signage and Attachments.** No signage (either permanent or temporary) shall be attached, mounted to, or permitted on Canopies. In addition, no materials or items shall be permitted to be attached to the Canopy including but not limited to the attachment of lights (except as permitted in subsection ix, Lighting below), panels, flags, balloons, banners, or any other device.
- ☑ **Lighting.** Canopies shall not cause existing on-site lighting to fail to conform with the existing approved site plan, photometric plan, or the lighting regulations of Douglas County. Any lighting integrated within a Canopy shall be designed to direct light in a downcast manner only.
- ☑ **Landscape Improvements.** Any site that installs Canopies, which is also adjacent to residential property, shall provide a 20 percent opacity landscaped buffer yard to screen the

site from the residential properties. If existing landscaping is used to meet the buffer yard requirement, the Applicant shall demonstrate how the existing landscaping meets the screening requirement.

6.10 Public Spaces.

Parks, courtyards, pedestrian corridors, sidewalk cafes, outdoor seating, plazas, and similar spaces are highly encouraged in all project designs.

All public spaces must offer safe and convenient access for wheelchairs, meeting ADA standards.

Materials should be durable, including stone, brick, integrally colored concrete and powder-coated/factory finished metals, as well as anti-graffiti coated elements, and other materials that resist chipping and fading. Patio umbrellas and awnings should be made of durable fabrics or other materials fitting the design character of the project.

Water features should conserve and recycle water. Excepting interactive spray fountains designed for children's play areas, fountain sprays should be avoided due to evaporative loss.

6.11 Shopping Carts.

Shopping carts must have designated areas for short and long-term storage and returns.

When exterior cart storage is located near an entry, it should be screened behind a masonry wall that matches the building materials and colors.

Cart returns in parking lots should relate to the design of the building or center they serve. Materials should be durable, resistant to chipping or fading and convey a sense of quality and permanence. Signage attached to cart returns must be of professional quality with messaging relating to products and services of the business for which the parking is provided.

6.12 Streetside And Sidewalk Experience.

Weather protection should include elements such as awnings, canopies, and shade trees to protect pedestrians from rain, snow, or sun at places of concentrated activity, i.e. entries, transit stops or retail corridors.

Awnings, arcades, dining areas and galleries may encroach into the public sidewalk to within five (5) feet of the curb. Structures must clear the sidewalk vertically by at least eight (8) feet.

If safety bollards are necessary in highly visible areas, they should be designed and colored to coordinate with the design of the project. Bollards painted with bright colors are not acceptable except in less visible service areas.

6.13 Trash Dumpsters.

Trash dumpsters must be enclosed with an approved enclosure design consistent with the materials and colors of the building (e.g., block, brick, MSU, etc.). Enclosure walls should include a cap or ledge along the tops. Wooden enclosures are not acceptable.

The enclosure must have a solid (or perforated) metal gate system that effectively screens the view of dumpsters and is powder coated or factory-finished in a complementary color to the project. Wood gate systems are not acceptable.

The enclosure must be at least 20" higher than the dumpster, or the enclosure must have an approved cover.

7. Signage

In accordance with Colorado law, the HRCA does not prohibit or regulate the display of signage based on its subject matter, message, or content.

An application must be submitted to, and approval obtained from, HRCA prior to submitting to Douglas County for any installation permit.

Professionally designed commercial signs, coordinated with building architecture, provide the following benefits:

- Enhance the appearance and economic value of the community.
- Promote safety by limiting distractions and confusion for drivers and pedestrians.
- Avoid sign clutter that detracts from the character and quality of commercial areas.
- Preserve the right of free speech and expression.

All signage must meet the general "spirit and intent" of these guidelines, as well as criteria set forth in the Highlands Ranch Planned Development Guide.

Per §XV Signs of the Highlands Ranch Planned Development Guide, latest edition, signs, and sign structures shall be always maintained in a state of reasonably good repair, with all braces, bolts, clips, supporting frame and fastenings reasonably free from deterioration, insect infestation, rot, rust or loosening. Signs shall be able to withstand anticipated wind pressures for the area in which they are located.

Several commercial centers have their own set of signage guidelines for businesses. Tenants must check with their property managers or owners to determine if there are restrictions on signs and advertising in addition to those in this document. To discuss the requirements of specific commercial center, email commercialreview@hrcaonline.org.

7.1 Prohibited Signage

- Signs and banners attached to any of the following:
 - Building walls and roofs, other than described in Paragraph B, "Wall Signs" and Paragraph G, "Temporary Signage Attached to a Building" described below.
 - Adjacent fences.
 - Attached to the exterior glazing (i.e., windows, doors, etc.).
 - Live trees and landscaping.
 - Light poles, excepting holiday decorations approved by the Design Review Committee.
- Painting on the exterior of building walls.
- Animated, moving, rotating or sound-emitting signs, including "air dancer" or "tube man signs" activated by electronic or mechanical means; inflatable signs and figures; balloons; streamers; as well as any flag, banner or other device ("feather" flags, for example) designed to wave, flap, or otherwise move with the wind (excepting any flag or emblem of any government or governmental agency or any civil, charitable, religious, or fraternal organization).

- ☑ Billboards
- ☑ Benches utilized for signage.
- ☑ Vehicles (delivery or otherwise) utilized for de facto site signage, as opposed to those regularly used during daily business with current registration and tags. Such vehicles may not be parked in areas adjacent to street frontages, and/off the premises of the businesses they serve.
- ☑ “Going out of Business”/ “Moving” signage displayed for more than 30 days.
- ☑ Off-premises signs.
- ☑ Roadway median signage.
- ☑ Any sign which could be mistaken or confused with a traffic control sign, signal, or device.
- ☑ Portable plastic (“coroplast”) or cardboard signs and banners attached to ground surface or landscaping, other than “Garage Sale” signs, real estate signs, and vendor signs approved by the Development Review Committee.

7.2 **Wall Signs in Commercial Centers**

- ☑ Defined as: Permanent signs identifying a business, erected against the wall of a building where the display surface is parallel to the face of the building to which it is attached.
 - NOTE: Many of the commercial centers within Highlands Ranch have separate signage guidelines that supplement these guidelines. A listing of the shopping centers that have supplemental signage guidelines can be found on the HRCA website, here:

<https://hrcaonline.org/property-owners/commercial/commercial-covenants>
 - Before proceeding with the design and submittal of a signage package, it is recommended that you reach out to CommercialReview@hrcaonline.org to discuss your project location and determine if any supplemental signage guidelines will be applicable.
- ☑ Sign length may be no longer than 70% of the linear sign band/fascia for each tenant. If a sign is restricted to a portion of the tenant's sign band, then the 70% rule will not apply to that specific area; however, the sign will still have to comply with other requirements noted below.
- ☑ All signs shall maintain a minimum distance of one-half the letter height from all architectural features, parapets and building corners, etc.
- ☑ Signage must be approved by property manager/landlord prior to review by HRCA.
- ☑ No exposed raceways, crossovers, ballasts, or conduit will be permitted unless existing or specific approval from the Property Manager, Landlord, or Building Owner is given and the HRCA approves an Administrative Variance.
- ☑ All signs must be illuminated, individual Pan Channel letters, no more than 5” deep, and centered horizontally and vertically on the respective fascia (unless otherwise approved).
- ☑ Cabinet signs are not allowed outside of Town Center South, unless as a part of a registered trademark or logo.
- ☑ Logo may not exceed 24” in height.
- ☑ Business name and logo (e.g., trademark) must be as is registered with the Secretary of State or other authority (Proof of registration of business name/logo may be required).
- ☑ No single letter may exceed 20” in height; overall stack height cannot exceed 26” in height.
- ☑ Illumination of signage shall comply with Section 30-Lighting Standards of the Douglas County Zoning Resolution.
- ☑ Permitted internally illuminated signs include those indicated below:
 - “Open” signs. One (1) professionally made and non-flashing “Open” sign is allowed in a storefront window without further approval required.

- Neon signs. One (1) non-flashing neon sign per 20 square-feet of window area is permitted for advertising of products and/or services available at business locations.
- Electronic message displays. Businesses may employ screen displays on window-facing monitors for promotion of their products and/or services, subject to the following:
 - Video screens must be parallel to the window and recessed at least four (4) inches back from the window surface.
 - Devices must not be placed in a location such that they may distract vehicle traffic, thereby endangering drivers and pedestrians.
 - One screen display is permitted per business.
 - Screens must be no larger than six (6) square feet.

7.3 Wall Signs Outside of Commercial Centers

- ☑ In cases where a free-standing building is not part of a commercial center and is in a nonresidential area, signage designs will be reviewed for compliance in accordance with Section XV: Signs of the Highlands Ranch Planned Development Guide, latest Amendment.
- ☑ One (1) wall-mounted sign, attached parallel to and within 18 inches of the wall of the building, is permitted for each building face.
- ☑ The total signage area per building face, regardless of the number of businesses within the building, may not exceed 200 square feet in surface area.
- ☑ Permitted internally illuminated signs include those indicated below:
 - “Open” signs. One (1) professionally made and non-flashing “Open” sign is allowed in a storefront window without further approval required.
 - Neon signs. One (1) non-flashing neon sign per 20 square-feet of window area is permitted for advertising of products and/or services available at business locations.
 - Electronic message displays. Businesses may employ screen displays on window-facing monitors for promotion of their products and/or services, subject to the following:
 - Video screens must be parallel to the window and recessed at least four (4) inches back from the window surface.
 - Devices must not be placed in a location such that they may distract vehicle traffic, thereby endangering drivers and pedestrians.
 - One screen display is permitted per business.
 - Screens must be no larger than six (6) square feet.

7.4 Window Signs

- ☑ Defined as: Signs affixed to or otherwise placed within 18 inches of a street or parking lot facing window, or transparent door, in a manner such that the sign is visible from the outside of the building.
- ☑ Window signage is allowed for use on pad sites and in-line retail tenants.
- ☑ Window sign design should be simple, clean, and cover a limited area of window glazing.
- ☑ High visibility in and out of businesses must be maintained to ensure safety and reflect the vibrancy of businesses to passersby. Open sight lines are necessary to enable law enforcement professionals to view the interior of stores they may have to enter.
- ☑ Window signs may only provide supplemental information on products, services, and atmosphere within the business.
- ☑ **Total window coverage may not exceed 25% of the total window surface.**

- ☑ Quantity Allowed:
 - Up to three window signs are allowed for each business if the building face at the main entrance is equal to or less than 50 lineal feet in length.
 - Up to six window signs are allowed if the building face at the main entrance is greater than 50 lineal feet and equal to or less than 300 lineal feet in length.
 - Six window signs, plus one additional window sign per additional 50 lineal feet, are allowed if the building face exceeds 300 lineal feet.
- ☑ Signs of six square feet in area or less (such as 2' by 3') meeting all the criteria above (including the requirement that 75% of the available window space remain open) do not require HRCA approval.
- ☑ Businesses may apply non-backed white lettering to windows without committee approval for the purpose of advertising products and services. (Example: a dry cleaner has script lettering on front window indicating that “comforters”, “bridal dresses”, and “carpets” are among the items they service).
 - A business is permitted to place white decal lettering, not to exceed 2" in height and no more than 144 square inches, indicating hours of business, emergency telephone numbers, etc. on its front door.
 - Total cumulative window coverage by all signs may not exceed 25%.
- ☑ All signs must be professionally made.
 - Use of bright and neon colors should be limited.
 - No signage may be attached to the outside of the window surface.
 - Window painting requires special review.
 - Please contact commercialreview@hrca.org for more information about window painting.
- ☑ **Full coverage window graphics (“decals”) are prohibited** as they may prevent visual access into the interior of businesses to the disadvantage of law enforcement officials who may need to enter the business. Opaque window covers also create a “closed” appearance by shielding the visibility of activity within businesses regardless of the quality of the graphics.

7.5 Illuminated Window Signs

- ☑ Certain internally illuminated window signs, listed below, are permitted for use in commercial locations.
- ☑ All illuminated signs must comply with the following:
- ☑ All internally illuminated window signs, except for “Open” signs as defined below, must be submitted to the Development Review Committee (DRC) for approval prior to installation.
- ☑ Illuminated signs may not be directly visible to adjacent residential areas, nor may they be placed in a location as determined by the DRC to be a potential distraction to traffic.
- ☑ Illuminated signs must be included in the calculation of total allowed window sign coverage. The maximum coverage of all windows signs must be less than 25% of the window surface.
- ☑ All illuminated signs must be turned off at the end of daily business and remain turned off until the commencement of business the following day. Verification of the ability to control the signage lighting shall be required as part of the sign permit application.
- ☑ Permitted internally illuminated signs include those indicated below:
 - “Open” signs. One (1) professionally made and non-flashing “Open” sign is allowed in a storefront window without further approval required.
 - Neon signs. One (1) non-flashing neon sign per 20 square-feet of window area is permitted for advertising of products and/or services available at business locations.

- Electronic message displays. Businesses may employ screen displays on window-facing monitors for promotion of their products and/or services, subject to the following:
 - Video screens must be parallel to the window and recessed at least four (4) inches back from the window surface.
 - Devices must not be placed in a location such that they may distract vehicle traffic, thereby endangering drivers and pedestrians.
 - One screen display is permitted per business.
 - Screens must be no larger than six (6) square feet.

7.6 Monument signs

- ☑ Defined as: Permanent, free-standing signs allowed on a case-by-case basis to identify a shopping center or public facility.
- ☑ Monument Signs are allowed per site on a case-by-case basis. A shopping center may have one monument sign per entrance.
- ☑ No monument sign may not exceed 6-feet in height or 12-feet in width, including the base or side columns.
- ☑ All monument signs must include a base, and the base and any additional architectural feature must match the building's materials and color.
- ☑ Monument signs may not utilize LED (light emitting diode) or LCD (liquid crystal display) to display a changing image, either in a series of still images or full motion animation, or any combination thereof.

7.7 Directional Signs

- ☑ Defined as: Signage on the interior of a shopping center or pad site directing traffic to a tenant or access way, providing information such as “exit” or “entrance.”
- ☑ Directional signs are allowed on the interior of a shopping center or pad site to guide traffic.
- ☑ There may be no more than four (4) directional signs per site.
- ☑ These signs can be no taller than four-feet high by three-feet wide and must have a base and color that matches the building.
- ☑ Directional signs may not contain signage for a business that has color, logo, or verbiage specific to that business.
- ☑ All designs must be approved.

7.8 Temporary Signage Attached to a Building

As part of a Permanent Signage Program, temporary signage or temporary banners are approved, with no further application to the HRCA, unless they will exceed the following allowances:

- ☑ Temporary Signage: “Coming Soon.” Non-illuminated and announcing, “Coming Soon,” followed by the name of the business, up to six (6) square-feet in area, may be posted on the inside window of the store frontage for up to four weeks after date of HRCA permanent signage program approval.
- ☑ Temporary Signage: “Opening/Reopening.” Non-illuminated temporary signage, of a size no greater than what the permanent signage would allow, announcing the name of the business opening/re-opening may be placed in the location that the permanent signage will be located for a maximum period of four weeks after the date of the permanent signage program approval. This temporary signage must be constructed of weather resistant material and be kept in good condition and must be removed when the permanent signage

is installed or within four weeks after the date of the HRCA permanent signage program approval, whichever occurs first. The fascia may not be penetrated unless approved by the property owner.

- ☑ Temporary Banners: New Business: Businesses may use a banner announcing, “Now Open”, “Grand Opening” or “Open” containing no other advertising, no larger than 3’ x 12’ for 30 days after the business is open on the front of the building at the entrance area. The fascia may not be penetrated unless approved by the property owner.
- ☑ Temporary Banners: Operations: Messaging pertaining directly to the operation of businesses (e.g., “Online ordering and delivery now available,” “Hiring now,” “Showing Tonight...”, etc.) **requires application** and is reviewed on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to the neighboring businesses and economic conditions as they impact retail activity. If approved, this type of Temporary Banner may be permitted for up to 90 days, after which a new application for review and approval is required. The fascia may not be penetrated unless approved by the property owner.

7.9 Freestanding Temporary Signage

- ☑ “For lease or sale” signage.
 - Defined as: Freestanding temporary signs used on a pad site for the purpose of advertising “For Lease”, “For Sale”, and the arrival of a new business.
 - If it is for a multi-tenant (e.g., medical/office) type building, one (1) freestanding sign for the building is permitted, but not for individual tenants.
 - Must be placed within 20 feet of business entry while leaving at least three (3) feet of clearance for pedestrian passage along sidewalk and into business entry.
 - The following guidelines apply:
 - The signboard must be professionally made, may not use neon colors, and may be no larger than four-feet high by eight-feet wide, and installed on a minimum of two (2), four-inch by four-inch posts.
 - The Overall height of the temporary sign may not exceed six feet.
 - The sign must be continuously maintained until it is removed (i.e., repainted, ensuring it is standing, etc.).
- ☑ Portable Signs
 - One (1) non-illuminated portable “sidewalk” sign (also known as an “a-frame” sign) of up to eight (8) square feet (i.e. 24” by 48”) may be displayed on the sidewalk by each business or tenant. A minimum of three (3) feet of clearance for pedestrian passage along sidewalk and into business entry must be maintained.
 - Must have a finished appearance.
 - Must not have a highly luminescent, reflective, or “day-glo” surface.
 - Must be removed at the end of each business day.



More Commercial Covenants Information

Questions?

Contact: **HRCA Community Improvement Services Department** at CommercialReview@hrcaonline.org. Office is located in the Recreation Center at Eastridge, 9568 University Blvd., Highlands Ranch, CO 80126.
(303) 471-8821

Key Phone Numbers

	Phone	Address
Main Number	303-791-2500	
Administration Office	303-471-8958	9568 University Blvd.
Eastridge Rec Center	303-471-8858	9568 University Blvd.
Northridge Rec Center	303-471-8950	8800 Broadway
Tennis Desk	303-471-8996	8800 Broadway
Southridge Rec Center	303-471-7020	4800 McArthur Ranch Rd.
Westridge Rec Center	720-348-8202	9650 Foothills Canyon Blvd

Published by:

HIGHLANDS RANCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

9568 S. University Boulevard
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126-2912
www.hrcaonline.org | (303) 471-8958 phone

Printed in the United States of America



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