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Why does Central Park have two special districts?

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The Park Creek and Westerly Creek Metropolitan Districts were created in 2000 to establish governmental entities that would fund and construct infrastructure for the redevelopment of the abandoned Stapleton airport. These are quasi-municipal entities similar in many ways to local governments. Each district plays a different role and is governed by a separate board.

The two service districts are charged with financing and constructing Central Park's infrastructure. WCMD is referred to as the financing district because it imposes the metro district mill levy that pays for "local" or non-trunk infrastructure. Those tax dollars are then passed on to PCMD to pay for the construction.

PCMD. Park Creek is the sole entity responsible for the financing and construction of public infrastructure in Central Park including roads, drainage, landscaping, water and sewer lines and parks. It uses bond proceeds and loans to pay for these improvements. Of its five board members, two are selected by the developer (currently Brookfield, Forest City in the past) and three by SDC, an arm of the City of Denver. SDC is responsible for the sale of Stapleton Airport land to the developer and for oversight of its redevelopment. The Park Creek District consists of 16 acres of land south of I-70, west of Havana Street. The right to vote on the PCMD board is restricted to the five members who each have a share of the 16-acre property that geographically defines their district .

WCMD. Westerly Creek Metropolitan District (WCMD) is the entity that taxes commercial and residential land in Central Park to pay for local infrastructure. Approximately 3% of the total mill levy goes for maintenance and operating costs of Park Creek and Westerly

Creek while 97% of the tax revenue is used by Park Creek to pay for debt service and infrastructure. Westerly Creek board members are selected through a biannual vote of Central Park property owners. The WCMD board is legally obligated to bring into its boundaries all the Stapleton Airport land the developer purchases from Denver. Eventually, the Westerly Creek district will include all of redeveloped Central Park. In 2016, for the first time, all WCMD board members were residential Central Park property owners not affiliated with the developer.

Two-District Structure. The need for this two-district structure arose partly from circumstances at the beginning of Central Park’s redevelopment—there were no Central Park residents at that time. But apart from that, the developer and SDC appointees were given full control of the PCMD board to minimize the risk that non-developer interests would oppose and potentially stop infrastructure financing and construction plans.

Westerly Creek was created to establish a taxing entity that encompassed the entire district. The funds generated by the WCMD tax are used to retire debt incurred by Park Creek as it develops Central Park’s *local* infrastructure (neighborhood streets, alleys, pocket parks, pools). There is no ending date for the WCMD tax although the majority of the mills (97%) would go away when Park Creek has repaid all its debt.

Park Creek uses tax increment financing from 2000 to 2025 to pay for *regional* infrastructure, after which WCMD funds will be used for any remaining infrastructure development.

This “master/servant” district structure, where one district has power and the other doesn’t, is common early in developments, but many evolve as projects approach build-out. Options can include consolidation of districts or dissolution of one of the districts. The WCMD board has signaled its intent to re-evaluate the two-district structure by undertaking a “strategic planning process” and a desire to renegotiate its 16-year old intergovernmental agreement with Park Creek that defines the respective roles of the two districts.