

Westminster 2040 Comprehensive Plan

General Planning Project Merit Award

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Resilient Plan Making Post-COVID

The City of Westminster adopted the [2040 Comprehensive Plan](#) on March 27, 2023 that emphasizes economic development, homeownership, and protection of lands for open space and parks. The Plan goes beyond land use with strategies for water, sewer, stormwater, solid waste, transportation, parks and recreation, libraries, health and human services, housing programs, economic development strategy, historic preservation, and arts and culture. Importantly, the Plan requires mandatory compliance with any development applications, thus elevating the Plan from advisory to regulatory.

The bulk of community engagement occurred in 2019, reaching an estimated 77,000 people including targeted outreach to Latino and Asian communities as well as area youth. The Plan was on its way to adoption in early 2020 when the COVID-19 Pandemic hit, slowing work on the Plan to allow prioritization of other immediate needs. This pause provided time to reconsider assumptions for housing, employment, and the need for green spaces for all neighborhoods. This reconsideration included making contact with every business within the City, over 2800 in all, to determine both their immediate and long-term needs. A meeting-in-a-box was also developed to allow residents to host small household gatherings to provide input on the Plan while complying with COVID-19 protocols.

City Council elections in 2021 also brought in a new majority, with a high concern for water supply and thus a challenge to bring the newly elected leadership up to speed on the Plan. An interactive web-based model was developed to allow staff and City Council to run scenarios for buildout of the City with different land uses, densities, differing assumptions for conservation activities, weather, and economic activity. This transparent process resulted in thousands of model runs, demonstrating the resiliency of the system through multiple possible futures. Through this iterative process the Plan results in a projected annual reduction in water demand of 613 acre-feet or 199,838,000 gallons as compared to the City's prior Plan.

In support of homeownership, the Plan establishes greater opportunities for housing diversity to better balance the conventional single-family development and recent higher density multi-family that predominates. The Plan provides new opportunities for townhomes and smaller-format homes to address a range of ages and lifestyles across the City.

Employment development will be supported by protecting key sites for office, incubator spaces, and research and development labs with a focus on sites with proximity to other employment land uses and supporting transportation infrastructure. The Plan also proposes supporting the revitalization of aging commercial centers to fit the changing needs of the community.

Open space, parks, golf courses, and creek corridors, which constitute over 40% of Westminster's land, are identified for protection. This thoughtful development pattern will ensure Westminster balances more intense activity centers, that can support future transit and access to jobs with lands for recreation and preservation of views and natural features.

The Westminster 2040 Plan overall will preserve and perpetuate the City's legacy of protecting resources, while providing needed opportunities for housing diversification and business development.