



2.0

UTILITIES AND RESOURCES

Public utilities and resources are an essential element of a city's quality of life and livability. Water quality and availability, the efficient removal and treatment of waste and waste water, and stormwater management are all essential to the function and quality of service in the city. These elements provide the foundation upon which the community is built and are critical to maintaining quality of services and emergency response. This chapter provides direction for continued high-quality public utility provision and resource use and management. Additional services not provided by the city are also addressed here, such as solid waste collection, electricity, gas, and telecommunications.

OVERVIEW

A key focus of the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that the city is able to continue to provide adequate water supply and delivery to the Westminster community as it continues to grow in population and development intensity. This is embodied in both the *Healthy Places* and *Managed Growth* plan cornerstones. Water availability and utility infrastructure are essential considerations of future land use choices moving forward. Utility sizing and availability will also be important for higher-intensity redevelopment areas.

As a full service community, Westminster owns and maintains its own water, wastewater and, stormwater utilities. The associated infrastructure system is valued at over \$4 billion, plus a water supply portfolio valued at \$1 billion. This system includes water treatment plants, wastewater treatment, a reclaimed water system, hundreds of stormwater treatment ponds, thousands of miles of pipes, fire hydrants, pumps, tanks, valves, and other critical infrastructure to ensure exceptional water, wastewater, and stormwater service for the entire city.

Provision of utilities and services outside of the city's purview, such as solid waste, energy, and telecommunications, will be evaluated for adequacy and potential improvements as new development is proposed.

Through recent and ongoing utility planning efforts, Westminster hopes to harness momentum to promote water smart principles and increase sustainable planning. These goals will be balanced with the need to address current market challenges while allowing enough flexibility to accommodate future market trends. The Comprehensive Plan and companion plans, such as the Water Supply Plan, Sustainability Plan, and Unified Development Code (UDC), should continue to be evaluated and updated as needed to ensure alignment.



2.1 GOALS & POLICIES

The following goals and policies provide direction for all aspects of physical planning. Goals are defined as desired ideals and a value to be sought. Policies articulate a course of action that guides governmental decision-making to meet the goal. To further define how policies can be implemented in the short- and long-term, specific strategies can be found in chapter 9, Plan Compliance & Implementation. They are not inclusive of all actions and options.

WATER SUPPLY



Goal UR-1 Ensure current customers and new development maintain a balance between water demand and supply.

- 1.1 Appropriately coordinate the Comprehensive Plan and Water Supply Plan to ensure existing and future customers have a safe and reliable water supply.
- 1.2 Responsibly manage and conserve the city's limited water resources in both existing and new development.
- 1.3 Continue implementation of water conservation strategies identified in the Sustainability Plan and Water Conservation & Efficiency Plan.
- 1.4 Monitor demographic, development, water supply, and usage trends with regular reporting to City Council and proactively identify where adjustments to the Comprehensive Plan may be needed should water use increase.
- 1.5 Continue to strengthen the integration of land use and water planning and policies to meet the needs of future growth and development.

RELEVANT PLANS

The following plans are incorporated by reference and are not repeated in detail:

- Drought Management Plan
- Transportation & Mobility Plan
- Sustainability Plan
- Water Supply Plan
- Water Conservation & Efficiency Plan

CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS

-  Education
-  Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
-  Health
-  Resilience
-  Safety
-  Climate

LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE

The landscape ordinance balances the need for aesthetic enhancement, promoting plant diversity, and tree canopy with the need to conserve water resources and minimize costs of long-term maintenance.

RECLAIMED WATER SYSTEM

Reclaimed water is wastewater that has been further treated and disinfected to provide a supply that is safe and suitable for landscape irrigation. Use of reclaimed water allows a sustainable water supply for parks and golf courses. Some additional advantages of this system include:

- Reduced demand on drinking water and scarce raw water supplies.
- Efficient use of existing facilities and city employees.
- City growth can be maintained in a responsible manner.

WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE



Goal UR-2 Plan, budget, operate and maintain, and construct our infrastructure to protect public health and safety.

- 2.1 Provide service consistent with established Levels of Service referencing the 2017 FOCUS Project Results or successor and applicable requirements of state regulations, Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- 2.2 Monitor the Utility Condition Index (UCI) as a measurement of the amount of useful life remaining in the utility system and use the UCI to guide the Minimally Responsible Capital Improvements Project (CIP) package.
- 2.3 Prioritize public health and safety through strategic and proactive efforts to protect water quality and the environment.
- 2.4 Support coordination between city departments to maintain a link between infrastructure and various planning efforts.
- 2.5 Incorporate equity considerations, including location and costs, into infrastructure and service improvements.

COST OF SERVICE



Goal UR-3 Ensure the long-term financial viability and sustainability of water and wastewater utilities.

- 3.1 Maintain a tap fee and rate structure sufficient for future utility-related needs as determined by City Council.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT



Goal UR-4 Protect the community from adverse flooding and pollution impacts of runoff with efficient and progressive stormwater management practices.

- 4.1 Encourage development of regional stormwater management facilities for higher intensity land uses.
- 4.2 Encourage green stormwater infrastructure measures to reduce pollutants from development and redevelopment.
- 4.3 Coordinate storm drainage and flood management with appropriate agencies, including the Mile High Flood District (MHFD) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- 4.4 Ensure that development and redevelopment activities are compliant with the city's Storm Drainage Design and Technical Criteria and the State's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements.
- 4.5 Establish and maintain floodplain buffers to ensure compliance with FEMA required floodplain regulations, to promote water quality and to improve riparian habitat.
- 4.6 Ensure the long-term financial viability and sustainability of the stormwater utility.

SOLID WASTE



Goal UR-5 Cultivate improved waste and materials management that supports source reduction, sustainable diversion, and regulatory compliance through accessible services and programs for residential and commercial land uses. Also refer to the Sustainability Plan for additional and more specific policies.

- 5.1 Incorporate the Sustainability Plan's goal to increase reduction and recycling efforts within the city to divert solid waste from landfills.
- 5.2 Promote the importance of recycling industrial and construction waste.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT / GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Low impact development (LID), also commonly referred to as "green stormwater infrastructure" is an approach to surface water runoff treatment and management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle.

SUSTAINABLE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

In Front Range communities like Westminster, reducing waste at the source and increasing diversion efforts have the potential to produce substantial environmental and economic benefits. By recycling and composting, communities can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy associated with the extraction and production of new materials and the decomposition of organic waste in landfills. Material reuse and waste diversion also have the potential to boost Westminster's economic resilience by creating new jobs. (2020 Sustainability Plan)

**UTILITIES AND SERVICES
FROM OTHER PROVIDERS
(NON-CITY)**



Goal UR-6 Ensure all residents and businesses have access to high-quality and resilient utility systems.

- 6.1 Coordinate development review with all utility providers to ensure site improvements accommodate current and future needs for residents and businesses.
- 6.2 Continue efforts to underground electric utilities as new development occurs throughout the city.
- 6.3 Provide low-cost, effective, secure, and resilient information and communication technologies citywide.
- 6.4 Minimize surface telecommunications infrastructure site proliferation and visual impacts.
- 6.5 Expand right of way management policies to incorporate power and broadband to support evolving transportation technologies.