



2040 Comprehensive Plan Frequently Asked Questions

What is the 2040 Comprehensive Plan?

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (the Plan) is a guiding document for Westminster’s future over the next 20 years and is a key long-range planning tool to consider future growth, priorities, services, neighborhood preservation and redevelopment of our city. In the context of land use, the Plan must be followed with future development applications. The Plan works hand-in-hand with other municipal plans, codes and policies and has been developed in tandem with the [Transportation & Mobility Plan](#), [Sustainability Plan](#), [Water Supply Plan](#) and forthcoming [Parks, Recreation & Libraries Plan](#). The Plan is indeed comprehensive with six chapters of policy content consisting of 46 goals and 161 policies and 8 supplementary maps.

What is the overall vision of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan?

The Plan's vision for Westminster is to manage growth in support of a thriving and healthy community comprised of great neighborhoods. The four guiding principles of ***Thriving City, Healthy Places, Great Neighborhoods*** and ***Managed Growth*** serve as the platform for the goals and policies of the Plan and are a direct result of [community engagement](#).

How does the Plan reflect changes to the City’s vision statement?

The Plan vision to manage growth in support of a thriving and healthy community comprised of great neighborhoods is a natural companion of the City’s [vision statement](#) ***We are a thriving community of safe neighborhoods and beautiful open spaces that is sustainable and inclusive***. Removal of “the next Urban Center” from the vision statement in 2020 is embodied in the Plan with a new emphasis on supporting existing neighborhoods, preservation of housing stock and recommendations to enhance conservation programming. Because Westminster is largely built-out, the sustainability and resiliency of existing neighborhoods and business districts will become a more central focus as the development of the few remaining vacant lands becomes less critical with time.

How does the Plan impact public safety?

The City’s Fire and Police departments were active participants in the Plan’s development process. Department representatives presented information to the planning team and were active participants in drafting Plan language. Public Safety and Emergency Management goals and policies can be found within Chapter 5 titled Health, Wellness and Community Services. As compared to the prior Comprehensive Plan, discussion has been added on hazard resiliency, emergency medical care and a new policy to further integrate the Police Department into

development review to ensure design strategies support crime prevention and do not hinder police response.

How does the Plan support access to education?

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies education as one of the Plan’s cross-cutting topics, meaning it is integrated throughout the Plan. Specific policies are provided within Chapter 5 titled Health, Wellness and Community Services that address education. As the three school districts and higher education institutions including the Front Range Community College within Westminster are separate entities from the City of Westminster, the Plan relies upon communication and partnerships to support access to educational resources and programs for all community members. Policies in the Plan include working with school districts to ensure facilities support projected enrollment needs, optimizing use of facilities for dual purposes with the greater community and an additional policy is proposed to support partnerships for mentoring and internships between the City and local school districts. Chapter 6 of the Plan, titled Economic Resilience, also discusses education in the context of the local workforce with two additional policies to support equitable access to opportunities for lifelong learning and partnerships with K-12 school and technical and community colleges to support training for workforce development. These statements help ensure the City remains a vested partner with the school districts and higher education institutions to continue high quality learning within the City. Residential development applications are provided to the school districts for the opportunity to review and make comments and the districts provide enrollment and capacity information. [Municipal code](#) also requires land dedication for public schools, or a fee-in-lieu, for residential development.

How much land is left to develop in Westminster?

With over one-third of the City’s land area committed to Parks, Golf Courses and protected Open Spaces only a small amount of land remains [available for future development](#), roughly 5% of the City’s land area. Westminster will reserve its remaining undeveloped land for high quality development with distinctive character, emphasizing businesses offering skilled employment, and limiting housing and retail uses, except when integrated into a larger context to ensure housing and services are linked to allow fulfillment of every day needs within close proximity.

Are zoning and land use change requests still required to go before the Planning Commission and City Council for approval?

Yes. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan does not change the [zoning](#) of any property within the City. Any changes to zoning, or additions of new land uses to a Preliminary Development Plan or Official Development Plan, must still be approved through the [Planning Commission](#) and ultimately, the [City Council](#). The Planning Commission and City Council will consider each prospective development as they have throughout Westminster’s history, with objective and careful scrutiny to determine if a proposal is appropriate for Westminster. As always, the public is invited to provide their input at any Planning Commission or City Council meeting regarding any development case.

How does the Plan consider existing neighborhoods and businesses?

The Comprehensive Plan departs from the singular focus of land use found in 1990s and 2000s era plans for Westminster with new policies to support established residential neighborhoods and strategies to support their long-term resiliency. The Plan encourages reinvestment in underperforming commercial sites and support for small and/or local businesses.

What about housing options?

The Plan builds on strategies from the previously adopted [Affordable and Workforce Housing Strategic Plan](#) with identification of a need for a variety of housing types that serve diverse households such as those seeking to age-in-place, intergenerational housing and special needs populations. The Plan recognizes that appropriate housing options are very important for the forecasted 2040 population that will be comprised of older adults, more diverse, and with smaller household sizes than today.

How does transportation play a role in the Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies create the framework of citywide elements, including transportation, to meet the current and future needs of the community. This framework includes a vision for a comprehensive multimodal transportation network to serve the current and future land use and other community needs. This vision is achieved by the modal networks and strategic actions and projects identified in more detail in the [Transportation & Mobility Plan](#) (TMP), with some higher-level policies identified and echoed in the Comprehensive Plan. The TMP actions were developed in coordination with the Comprehensive Plan update. Additionally, the master streets network shown in the TMP was created through travel demand forecasting using the future land use data from the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to implementing the transportation improvement projects and actions identified in the TMP, future development proposals will be reviewed for traffic impacts and may be required to make improvements (i.e. traffic signals, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc).

How were residents engaged in the process of crafting the Comprehensive Plan?

Community engagement shaped the Plan's guiding principles, goals, policies and recommended implementation actions. Community engagement also informed the Plan vision. Since 2018, the Plan gathered community input during 9 large public events including Movies in the Park and Taste of Westminster, 12 community meetings to inform development of the Plan, 6 online activities, 32 stakeholder interviews, and over 20,000 website hits. Communications included the City Edition/Westy Connection newspaper, the Weekly e-newsletter, the Westminster Forward e-newsletter, social media, informational displays at the City's libraries and recreation centers, as well as coverage in the Westminster Window. Presentations were also provided to the Westminster Chamber of Commerce and the City's Planning Commission, a body of 9 resident volunteers. Appendix B of the Plan describes the [community engagement process](#) and results of input used to develop of the Plan.

How does the Plan preserve Westminster’s suburban character?

The Plan will accommodate population growth in key areas while preserving the primarily suburban character of our community. The Plan maintains 37% of the City’s land area for parks and open spaces and 30% for residential estate and low density uses. The highest densities, Mixed Use Activity Center and Specific Plan, combined are roughly 2% of the City’s land area while multi-family uses are another 4% of the City’s land area. While future development of varying types and scale will occur, the majority of the City’s land area will continue to be stable and suburban in nature.

Is the Plan taking away Open Space?

No. [Open Space](#) refers to publicly owned and managed lands purposed for conservation of natural resources and ecosystems. Vacant privately-owned property is not Open Space. The Plan continues to protect existing Open Space lands, adds Open Space lands acquired since the time of the previous Comprehensive Plan and identifies additional lands subject to acquisition processes currently underway. Should a private property be desired for Open Space it is necessary for an acquisition process to be underway to be included as Open Space in the Plan. As additional Open Space is added, the Plan may be amended in the future to reflect such additions. Potential future Open Space acquisitions are not included in the Plan. [Municipal code establishes criteria for new acquisitions](#) and this must be balanced with funding availability and geographical need.

How does the Plan relate to the Public Land Dedication (PLD) requirements of municipal code?

[PLD](#) is used to obtain land area for municipal facilities associated with residential development. While PLD is often realized in the form of a park, PLD may be used for other municipal facilities to support growth such as utilities, fire stations, libraries, transportation facilities, or other municipal services. As a policy document, the Plan does not propose to amend the [City’s code requirements for PLD](#). The acceptability of an individual project’s PLD may be considered through the Preliminary Development Plan and Official Development Plan process and the approving authority has the liberty to agree or not agree with an applicant’s request.

How is water supply considered by the Plan?

The land use element of the Plan was closely correlated with the [Water Supply Plan](#). The planning process tested a series of scenarios with varying types of land uses and densities, and as a result of over 1,000 model runs, it was determined that drought and water conservation measures by customers are greater determinants of future water supply than land use. There is confidence in build-out of the Plan assuming continued investment in the City’s infrastructure, the Wattenberg Reservoir complex and continued customer conservation trends. Annual water supply reporting will continue.

What is the cost of implementing the Plan?

Chapter 9 of the Plan, titled Plan Administration, identifies that there is no specific financial commitment to implement the Plan. A fiscal impact analysis considered future operating and capital costs for the City as compared to anticipated revenues over the

next 20 years. This analysis identified a positive revenue position for the City. With a reduced emphasis on new development as the City reaches build-out, the focus in future years will be on critical infrastructure, water conservation and support for existing neighborhoods. This shift in focus away from new development to supporting the existing neighborhoods and their associated infrastructure is also reflected in the Sustainability Plan, Water Supply Plan and Transportation & Mobility Plan.

What happens to the Plan after adoption?

After adoption new development must be in compliance with the Plan per [11-3-2](#) of municipal code. Staff will use the goals and policies of the document to identify actions to implement the Plan, subject to availability of staffing, budget resources and City Council priorities. A biennial report will be prepared to assess plan progress and identify where adjustments may be needed, with many actions completed in coordination with other City plans and programs. Comprehensive Plan Amendments may occur as the Plan is a living document that will grow and change with the community.

Is the Plan retroactive and can the City make existing properties conform to the Plan?

No. The Plan is not retroactive and will be used to evaluate future development applications, capital projects and programming of city services. Existing development may continue to be occupied and used indefinitely, subject to applicable standards for health, safety and inspections. Development applications already submitted and under review may have vested rights afforded by Colorado state law depending on the type and nature of the application.

How can I stay informed on new and planned development?

- The status of development projects is available online at <https://www.cityofwestminster.us/Government/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Planning/ProjectStatus>
- A map showing development projects and their current status is available at <https://www.cityofwestminster.us/Residents/Maps>
- Any permit and development application can be viewed online at <https://develop.cityofwestminster.us/etrakit/>
- We also encourage you to review agendas of City Boards and Commissions involved with land development, municipal facilities and permitting at <https://www.cityofwestminster.us/boardscommissions> These include the Environmental Advisory Board, Historic Landmarks Board; the Parks, Recreation, Libraries and Open Space Advisory Board; the Planning Commission; and the Special Permits and License Board.

We want you to have the facts and ask you to go to the source for information: <https://www.cityofwestminster.us/Government/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Planning/LongRangePlanningandUrbanDesign/ComprehensivePlan>.

For other questions, please email us at westminsterforward@cityofwestminster.us.