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File #: 25-983, Item #: 5.7

Meeting Date: June 11, 2025

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## ***Westminster City Council***

### **SUBJECT**

Strategic Plan Goal #2 – Implement and Support Effective Land Use Policies that Encourage Quality Development.

Strategic Plan Objectives: Initiate the General Plan Amendments throughout the City and report back to the City Council on the status and timeline to execute the Environmental Impact Report process; provide a status on the City's ongoing Zoning Phase 2 Study, including an overview of the project schedule and cost; and provide the City Council a bus tour of areas in Orange County and/or Southern California that have been redeveloped to successful mixed-use projects.

**From:** Christine Cordon, City Manager

**Requested by:** Administration

**Prepared by:** Sheri Vander Dussen, Interim Community Development  
Director; Adolfo Ozaeta, Assistant City Manager

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Receive and file.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of May 14, 2025, the City Council confirmed the 2025-28 Strategic Plan. The plan contains five goals that support the City's mission, which is:

“The City of Westminster is committed to providing the highest quality of service, ensuring that Westminster is a desirable place to live, work, play, and do business.”

The Community Development Department (CDD) plays a key role in carrying out this mission. The CDD interacts with all customers seeking to develop property in Westminster, from new mixed-use projects to patio covers. The Code Enforcement Division contributes to the quality of life by maintaining standards in the neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. Therefore, three of the five goals in the Strategic Plan involve the CDD.

The Strategic Plan calls for an update in June 2024 regarding Strategic Plan Goal #2: Implement and Support Effective Land-Use Policies that Encourage Quality Development.

### General Plan Amendments

On September 11, 2024, the City Council directed staff to initiate changes to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to increase the density in the Mixed-Use districts from 30/40 du/acre, depending on the site. Modifications to the boundaries of some of the districts will also be considered. The following actions have been taken so far:

- De Novo Planning Group has commenced environmental documentation based on funds remaining from an existing contract to prepare the Housing Element.
- City Advisors was selected to draft updates to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance following distribution of requests for proposals to the six consultants on the CDD's on-call list.

### Anticipated Schedule:

- City Council will be asked to authorize an additional expenditure of \$58,000 to complete the environmental documentation.
- Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to the City Council: Last quarter of 2025.
- City Council public hearing and decision: Last quarter of 2025.
- New zoning standards effective: Early 2026.

Staff recommends that the City Council schedule a study session with staff following adoption of the new mixed-use standards to determine if the revised standards will achieve the Council's goals for the various areas that are currently envisioned to be covered by a Specific Plan. At that time, the Mayor and City Council members can articulate their goals for each area. With that information, staff can identify the benefits and drawbacks of various zoning tools that can be employed to achieve the goals of the City Council with respect to land use and

infrastructure. If the existing zoning will not be adequate to achieve the Council's goals, the areas can be prioritized for the creation of specialized standards.

### Phase 2 Zoning Code Update

This update is being prepared by De Novo Planning Group under an agreement approved by the City Council on December 10, 2019. The update will:

- Comprehensively update the Zoning Ordinance, making it easier for staff and the public to use
- Address inconsistencies with state law
- Modify development standards to enhance the appearance of new construction
- Streamline review procedures for ministerial permits

Anticipated Schedule:

- Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to the City Council: First quarter of 2026
- City Council public hearing and decision: First quarter of 2026
- New zoning standards effective: April/May of 2026

As part of the Phase 2 update, staff decided to break out the update to the Sign Ordinance as a separate work effort; the sign ordinance requires a more focused approach, given the internal inconsistencies and other issues that have been identified. City Advisors was selected to handle this update following distribution of requests for proposals to the six consultants on CDD's on-call list.

Anticipated Schedule:

- Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to the City Council: First quarter of 2026
- City Council public hearing and decision: First quarter of 2026
- New sign standards effective: April 2026

### Bus Tour of Successful Mixed-Use Projects

Staff is working on an itinerary to show the Mayor and City Council members a range of mixed-use projects in the area. The goal is to find projects that include residential densities in excess of 50 du/acre with a retail component. The tour may also include a representative from the City or the developer to meet at each site to provide insight into each project. A date and tour locations are currently pending

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Adequate funds have been included in the Department's budget in Account Nos. 11501-43090 and 61050-43090 to fund the zoning text amendments described in Strategic Plan Goal No. 2.

## **LEGAL REVIEW**

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed as to form.

## **CONCLUSION**

The CDD is making progress on the code amendments the Council has identified as important to the City's long-term economic success. When the new mixed-use zoning standards are adopted, it will be a good time to determine if those standards alone will result in the type of development the Mayor and Council wish to see in key areas identified in the General Plan. If additional specificity is necessary in one or more areas, staff can help the Mayor and Council identify the most appropriate land use tool (Specific Plan, Overlay Zone, Design Guidelines, etc.) to achieve the desired goals. The areas can then be prioritized.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None

## **REVIEWED BY**

Erin Backs, Finance Director  
City Attorney's Office  
Christine Cordon, City Manager