

PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP #5 AGENDA

1. ROLL CALL
2. INFORMATION ONLY:
 - a. Planning 101 and Unified Development Code Workshop
Prepared by: Andrew Spurgin, AICP, Principal Planner
3. OLD BUSINESS
4. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS
5. ADJOURNMENT

PLEASE NOTE

The following are the procedures used by the Planning Commission for in-person meetings.
For participation guidelines please visit www.cityofwestminster.us/pc

Please note: Study Sessions/Information Only/Workshop meetings are open to the public, and individuals are welcome to attend and observe. However, these briefings are not intended to be interactive with the audience, as this time has been set aside for the Planning Commission to receive information and make inquiries.

If you need further information regarding this process, or any other matter related to the City's development review process, please contact the City Planning Division at 303-658-2092.

NOTE: Persons needing an accommodation, such as an interpreter for another language, or who have an impairment that requires accommodation, must notify the Planning Aide no later than noon on the Thursday prior to the scheduled Planning Commission hearing to allow adequate time to discuss arrangements. Please call 303-658-2092/TTY711 or State Relay or email rgarcia@westminsterco.gov to make a reasonable accommodation request.



WESTMINSTER

Staff Report

Agenda Item 2a

Planning Commission Meeting
March 10, 2026



Strategic Priority 1: Access to Opportunity

Advance access to opportunity and prosperity for all in Westminster through diverse housing choices, increased mobility options, safe and walkable neighborhoods, and strong social networks.



Strategic Priority 4: Economic Vitality

Promote and support a resilient economy that attracts and retains a diversity of businesses, workers, and industries, expands living wage jobs, and diversifies the City's tax base.

SUBJECT: INFO ONLY – PLANNING 101 & UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE WORKSHOP

PREPARED BY: Andrew Spurgin, AICP, Principal Planner
John McConnell, AICP, Planning Manager

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

- This report is for Planning Commission information only and requires no action by Planning Commission.
- The first portion of this presentation will include foundational information about Westminster's growth and development history, how this history shaped the Growth Management Program, the site development process, and how staff works to implement the City's Vision through new development.
- The second portion of this presentation will function as the fifth workshop for the Planning Commission to learn about the Unified Development Code (UDC) and ask questions in advance of planned adoption hearings in the coming months.
- Four workshops were held with the Planning Commission to learn about the UDC in 2025, including the November 18, 2025, workshop where a draft UDC was made available for Commissioners to read and review the document.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A background presentation is planned due to recent changes in the composition of the Planning Commission and to provide opportunities to ask questions about the Commission's roles. The first part of the presentation will review Westminster's growth and development history, how this history shaped the Growth Management Program, the development process, and how staff works to implement the City's Vision through new development.

The presentation will then transition to discuss the UDC, as a follow up to the four workshops held in 2025. Adoption of the UDC is planned in the coming months and this presentation will provide an additional opportunity for the Planning Commission to learn and ask questions about the UDC. The agenda memo from the November 18, 2025, Planning Commission is included for reference since it provides additional information about the purpose and scope of the UDC.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES:

The City's Strategic Plan priority of Community Empowerment & Engagement is met through this presentation by engaging methods of communication and dialogue that improve accessibility, increase understanding, and encourage participation in civic and city life.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John McConnell".

John McConnell, AICP
Planning Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. November 18, 2025, UDC Agenda Memo



WESTMINSTER

Staff Report

Agenda Item 3a

Planning Commission Meeting
November 18, 2025

**Strategic Priority 1: Access to Opportunity**

Advance access to opportunity and prosperity for all in Westminster through diverse housing choices, increased mobility options, safe and walkable neighborhoods, and strong social networks.

**Strategic Priority 4: Economic Vitality**

Promote and support a resilient economy that attracts and retains a diversity of businesses, workers, and industries, expands living wage jobs, and diversifies the City's tax base.

SUBJECT: INFO ONLY – UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE WORKSHOP

PREPARED BY: Andrew Spurgin, AICP, Principal Planner
John McConnell, AICP, Planning Manager

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

- This report is for Planning Commission information only and requires no action by Planning Commission.
- The Unified Development Code (UDC) will implement the 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2040 Plan) and other recent policies and plans accepted by City Council through new and/or revised development regulations.
- Three workshops were scheduled earlier this year for the Planning Commission and Westminster residents to learn about the UDC earlier this year, and this fourth workshop will be used to introduce the first draft of the UDC.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

UDC is a unified set of development regulations establishing requirements for new construction. Policy for the UDC is largely informed by the 2040 Plan, with additional concepts resulting from the Sustainability Plan, Transportation & Mobility Plan, and the Housing Needs Assessment. Creating the UDC facilitates inclusion of concepts from these plans into actions through provisions such as missing middle housing, senior housing, standards for office and industrial development, and redevelopment and adaptive reuse. The scope of the UDC is citywide with generally applicable standards and procedures and not geographic-specific.

How is land development currently administered?

Currently key chapters within Westminster Municipal Code (W.M.C.), the stand-alone landscape regulations, and six different design standards/guidelines documents function as the regulatory documents for development proposals. Downtown Westminster and Westminster Station are governed by Specific Plan Districts (SPDs) which are a parallel regulatory structure to the more general citywide structure.

Most land in Westminster is zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) or SPD, approximately 2/3 or 68% of the City's land area. An additional 20% is zoned as Open (O1), which is typically used for agriculture, open spaces, and some publicly owned properties. This leaves just 12% of the City's land area with conventional zoning districts for residential, commercial, or industrial uses. See also Attachment 1.

PUD in concept is "customized zoning" and allows tailoring of standards to a particular development site, instead of imposing citywide provisions without regard to neighborhood context. PUDs have further defined allowed uses and development characteristics for a particular site, through Preliminary Development Plans (PDP) and Official Development Plans (ODP). The ability to achieve negotiated outcomes aligned with the City's vision is a reason the PUD system has been in place for the last several decades. For example, in Bradburn Village and the Uplands the rezoning to PUD was used to obtain affordable housing commitments. Existing PUDs would remain regulated by their existing PDP and ODP approvals unless significant changes in land uses and site layout are requested.

Why is the UDC being done now?

Over the last several years the City has adopted the 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2040 Plan), as well as the Sustainability Plan, Transportation & Mobility Plan, Water Conservation & Efficiency Plan, an update the City Vision Statement, and Strategic Plan. Implementation of these plans in part relies on updated development regulations to balance community character with opportunities for economic vibrancy, housing development, and conveniences to support daily living.

There has not been a review of the larger organization and structure of the Code since 1997 and it is appropriate that an update reflect considerations such as the City's changing housing needs, water conservation, multi-modal mobility, and changing preferences and technologies that affect commercial and residential development patterns. Additionally, the City is now substantially built out and warrants a modified approach to development regulations that focuses on the remaining vacant, developable properties and the unique challenges related to infill development and redevelopment.

Approach

Work to form a UDC was initiated during the 2040 Plan process however the previous approach was far-reaching beyond the more context-based amendments needed to facilitate responsible development on the remaining land inventory in Westminster and the need to focus on infill and redevelopment. As of the time of this memo only about 2.3% of the City's land area is undeveloped without already having development applications or active construction in progress as shown in Attachment 2, further speaking to the need for a more targeted approach.

With changes from the 2021 draft of the 2040 Plan to the adopted 2023 version of the 2040 Plan, it was determined that the best course of action would be to reset the UDC process. Prior community engagement on the UDC, such as the visual preference survey results and stakeholder interview comments, is still relevant and helped inform the more focused scope of work.

Specifically with the 2040 Plan in place, the UDC will have zoning and development standards tailored to the type of land uses found in the 2040 Plan, including the associated maximum densities, intensities, and related design guidance set forth in the 2040 Plan. The existing zoning districts in W.M.C. bear no relationship to the land uses in the Comprehensive Plan, and the current design standards/guidelines are only in place for single-family attached or detached, senior housing, multi-family, commercial, and Traditional Mixed Use Neighborhood District (TMUND). This leaves a void for office and industrial projects and does not account for the variety of different housing and mixed-use formats typical of recent development proposals.

City Staff completed an effort to audit the existing design documents to determine what provisions should be retained, what should be revised or updated, and what content is no longer needed. This further focuses the UDC's approach to design issues. Similarly, the entitlement processes are proposed to remain largely unchanged with comprehensive plan amendments and rezonings being governed by state statute and the PDP and ODP processes to remain in place so as not to confuse residents nor decision makers.

Challenges

In prior discussions with City Council and Planning Commission, as well as in internal City Staff discussions, the degree of predictability versus the degree of flexibility has been a key concern. The current process includes minimum standards and elective choices; however, applicants increasingly have sought exceptions to minimum standards and the electives. Most applicant-requested exceptions have been approved by City Council, suggesting there is support for standards that allow more compact formats and/or which do not provide the scale of amenities as compared to earlier forms of development in Westminster.

As discussed above, draft UDC carries over many existing development standards but provides additional avenues to address deviations at the Staff level while continuing to engage with Planning Commission and City Council on more significant deviations that warrant larger conversations. Adaptive reuse, specifically repurposing an existing building for a new use, has been identified for a “sliding scale” approach to applicability of development standards. Similarly, nonconforming uses will benefit from new provisions to allow site improvements that incrementally meet standards without requiring retrofitting of an entire parcel to current standards.

Experience of Peer Communities

Many peer communities are either updating their land development codes or have recently completed such updates. Staff has reviewed materials, and in some cases spoken with City Staff in other communities, to understand the approaches taken and lessons learned. This scan included Arvada, Englewood, Fort Collins, Lakewood, Littleton, and Thornton.

Best practices pursued by peer communities include:

1. **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):** allowances for ADUs on all single-family lots, which Westminster already codified in 2024, so this will not change with the UDC.
2. **Administrative Approvals:** reducing public hearing requirements to facilitate timely delivery of housing and business proposals. Due to concerns from prior City Councils and enactment of the Concept Plan Review process most approvals in Westminster’s UDC are proposed to remain as currently structured.
3. **Parking Reductions:** peer communities are reducing or eliminating parking requirements for certain uses, typically focused on residential uses, and establishing parking maximums. The UDC proposes slight adjustments to parking ratios, and will provide avenues to request further reductions, and the introduces parking maximums for uses that require more than 50 spaces.

With resident-initiated petitions (Fort Collins, Lakewood, Littleton) and City Council recall efforts (Englewood) experienced in some communities, Westminster Staff urges a balance between updating the code to meet current needs and maintaining standards and procedures understood by residents. Staff notes three key differences with our approach as compared our peers:

1. **Applicability:** Westminster’s approach is to apply the UDC to new development only, not changing the site-specific regulations in place through PUDs and SPDs for existing neighborhoods and business districts. As such, most of the City is expected to remain stable with the potential for incremental changes as new development occurs on the few remaining development sites.
2. **Comprehensive Plan:** Another difference is Westminster’s mandatory Comprehensive Plan. In many communities a Comprehensive Plan is used as a guide and is more advisory in nature rather than mandatory. As such the type, amount, and scale of new development has already been determined and the role of the UDC is provide technical code language to implement the ambitious goals and policies of the 2040 Plan

3. **Recent State Legislation:** Many nearby communities have chosen to include new state laws enacted in 2024 relative to zoning, housing, and parking. Staff has worked with City Council separately on this matter and Westminster has joined five other Front Range communities to challenge certain aspects of these laws that erode the City's home rule authority on zoning and development standards. However, key code changes already adopted, such as allowances for ADUs on single family lots and removal of residential occupancy limits, will be carried over into the UDC.

Key Concepts Included

Based on interest from residents and businesses as well as prior feedback from Planning Commission and the City Council, there are several topic areas worth highlighting, as shown in Attachment 2:

1. **Policy & Plan Alignment:** The existing zoning and development requirements are not aligned with either the current 2040 Plan or the previous Comprehensive Plan. The UDC will also incorporate concepts from the Sustainability Plan, Transportation & Mobility Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, and Redevelopment & Adaptive Reuse Toolkit.
2. **Organization:** The UDC will consolidate eight different documents with land planning and development standards into a single "unified" development code to provide a one-stop shop for development customers, residents, and decision makers.
3. **Residential Development:** Building on the 2040 Plan, the UDC will establish provisions for senior and special needs housing, relax residential minimum lot size requirements and dimensional standards such as setbacks to ensure efficient land use, and the opportunity to support lower price points on housing. These changes also support infill development in older parts of Westminster and provide opportunities for townhomes, small-lot homes, and similar products geared to homeownership.
4. **Commercial Development:** The UDC will simplify the commercial zoning districts which are seldom used with most applicants opting for PUD. The UDC will also provide avenues to facilitate revitalization by adding uses and creation of mixed-use settings as well as live-work units, which is limited under existing provisions. Uses identified in the 2040 Plan as potentially prohibited will be aligned with conditional use and special use permit processes.
5. **Employment Development:** The UDC will create standards for office and industrial development that are currently lacking. Currently the Retail Commercial Design Guidelines are used for office and industrial development and the business community has expressed a desire for provisions tailored to current employment needs, balancing aesthetics, and sense of place with practical considerations such as security, access, and loading.
6. **Procedures:** The UDC will clarify procedures to support transparency for applicants and residents; identify sequencing and opportunities for concurrent reviews to facilitate delivery of projects; provide administrative flexibility to reduce the number of exceptions brought to City Council for approval; and provide alternatives to PUD, which can be confusing to both applicants and residents. The UDC will also define variance and appeal procedures.
7. **Sustainability:** Building upon strategies from the Sustainability Plan, the UDC will incorporate provisions to ensure serviceable recycling collection facilities, healthy food access, low water use landscaping, sustainable building materials, provisions for renewable energy generation, and protection of natural areas.

8. **Mobility:** Building upon strategies from the Transportation & Mobility Plan, the UDC will also support multi-modal mobility with provisions for street and trail connectivity, transit stop enhancements, and electric vehicle infrastructure. The UDC will update parking requirements to facilitate options for shared parking, potential reductions in parking amounts, bicycle parking provisions, and creation of parking maximums.

Next Steps

This Planning Commission workshop will introduce the draft UDC and open a public review period. Staff will then review input received and determine the appropriate updates to be included. This may include an additional workshop with Planning Commission or a Study Session with City Council. After these additional checkpoints a final draft will be prepared, to include a detailed legal review, and published in the spring of 2026. Additional discussions will occur on the implementation approached once adopted considering Staff capacity and budget resources.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES:

The City's Strategic Plan priority of Access to Opportunity is met by implementing the housing, mobility, and neighborhood development concepts of the 2040 Plan, Sustainability Plan, and Transportation & Mobility Plan. The Strategic Plan priority of Economic Vitality is met by establishing provisions for office and industrial development and through revitalization of older commercial areas with opportunities for new uses.

Respectfully Submitted,

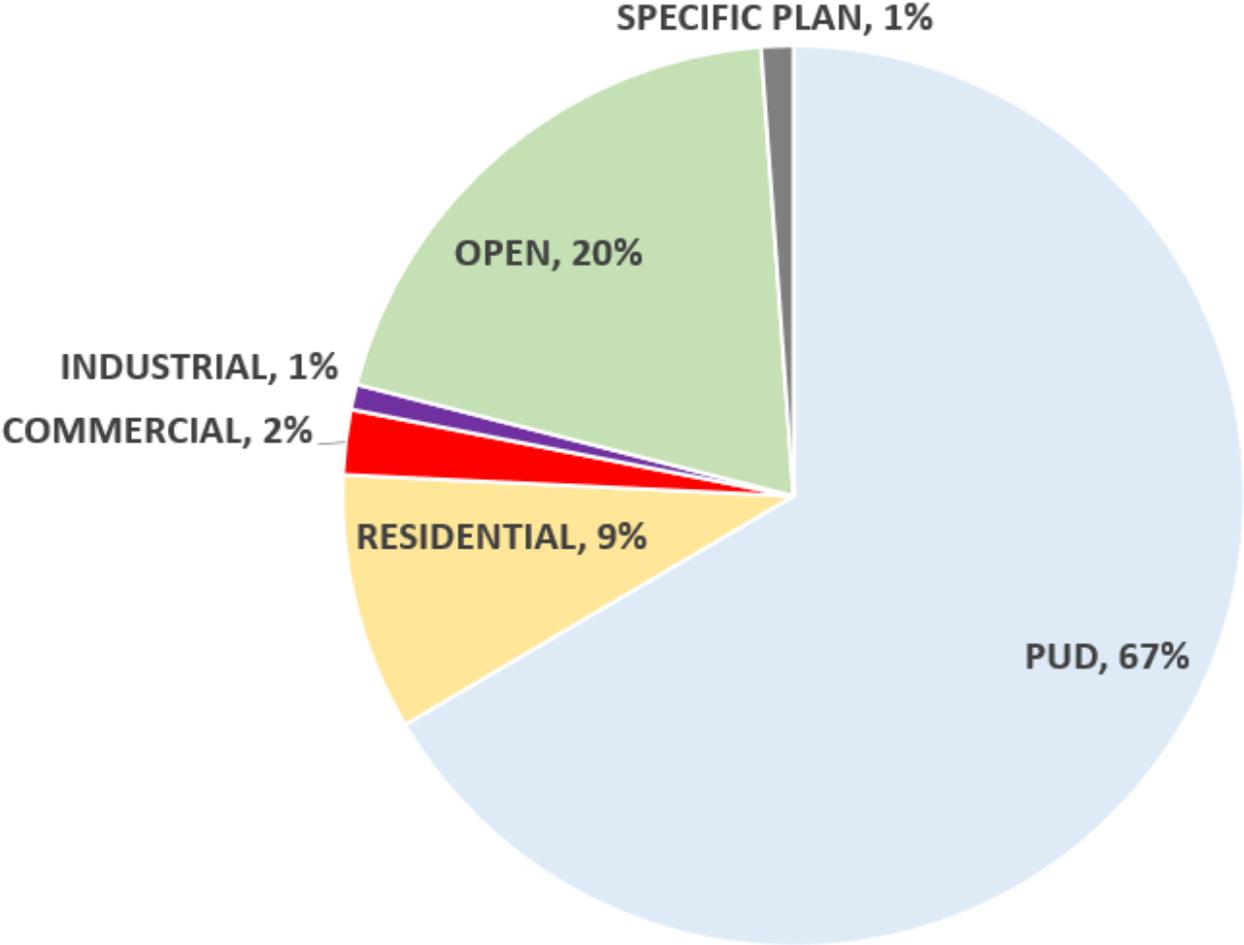


John McConnell, AICP
Planning Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Existing zoning
2. Vacant developable land
3. UDC key concepts

Zoning Districts Within Westminster



Vacant Land Status and 2040 Comp Plan

Vacant Developable Land

- No Development
- Project
- Under Construction
- Under Review
- FlexIndustrial

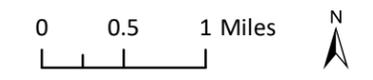
Comp Plan 2040

- Residential Large Lot
- Residential Low Density
- Residential Medium Density
- Suburban Multi-Family
- Urban Multi-Family
- Mixed-Use Neighborhood
- Specific Area
- Employment-Flex
- Neighborhood Office
- Employment-Office/Inst... Campus
- Public/Quasi Public
- Commercial
- Service Commercial
- Commercial Mixed-Use
- Mixed-Use Activity
- Parks/Golf Courses
- Open Space/Creek Corridor
- Agricultural/Conservation Area

City Limit

- City Limit
- Enclave

Project Status	Acres	Percentage
No Development	492.9	2.3%
Project Approved	2.6	0.0%
Under Construction	111.6	0.5%
Under Review	256.4	1.2%
Projected Completed	20.4	0.1%



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

CODE ORGANIZATION & USABILITY

- Consolidate 8 different development regulations into a one-stop shop
- Defined applicability and enforceability
- Consistency to support fairness and transparency
- Simplify exception process
- Incorporates recently approved ordinances including the oil & gas regulations, telecommunications, and concept plan review



PLAN AND POLICY ALIGNMENT

- Incorporates concepts from Sustainability Plan, Transportation & Mobility Plan, 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, and Redevelopment & Adaptive Reuse Toolkit
- Perpetuates Westminster's sense of place achieved through gateways, streetscape enhancements, view preservation, and quality building materials



RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Updates and expands senior and special needs housing options
- Removes minimum lot sizes in most residential settings, subject to the densities in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan
- Incorporates provisions for homeownership through "missing middle" housing
- Housing product diversity/anti-monotony
- Adjusts standards to respond to remaining infill land inventory



COMMERCIAL & EMPLOYMENT

- Simplify zoning districts
- Removes obsolete land uses and add provisions for new land uses and changing technologies
- Provisions for mixed-use development
- Retail revitalization
- Provisions for live/work units
- Creates specific standards for office and industrial development



SUSTAINABILITY

- Provisions to support recycling collection
- Food access
- Low water using landscape concepts
- Solar access and battery storage systems
- Building materials resilient to moisture, wind, and fire damage
- Protection of natural areas



MOBILITY

- Updates parking requirements with options for shared parking, parking reductions, bicycle parking, and creation of parking maximums
- Multi-modal transportation options
- Trail and street connectivity
- Transit stop enhancements
- Electric vehicle infrastructure

