



WESTMINSTER

**Westminster Economic Development Authority**

TO: The Westminster Economic Development Authority Board Members  
DATE: August 21, 2013  
SUBJECT: WEDA Post City Council Meeting Agenda for August 26, 2013  
PREPARED BY: J. Brent McFall, Executive Director

*Please Note: WEDA Study Sessions and Post meetings are open to the public, and individuals are welcome to attend and observe. WEDA was created by the Westminster City Council for the purpose of moving forward with strategic redevelopment of key areas of the City. WEDA Study Sessions and Post meetings are not intended to be interactive with the audience, as this is time set aside for WEDA Board Members to receive information, make inquiries, and to provide Staff with policy direction.*

ROLL CALL

PRESENTATIONS

1. WURP Site Plan Update

INFORMATION ONLY

None at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None at this time.

Items may come up between now and Monday night. The WEDA Board will be apprised of any changes to the agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Brent McFall  
Executive Director



# WESTMINSTER

## Staff Report

Westminster Economic Development Authority Meeting  
August 26, 2013



SUBJECT: WURP Site Plan Update

PREPARED BY: Mac Cummins, AICP, Planning Manager

### Recommended WEDA Action

Listen to the staff presentation on the Westminster Center Urban Reinvestment Project and provide comments. Staff will be presenting the first draft of a possible site plan and massing model for the new Westminster Downtown for Council consideration and comments.

### Summary Statement

- An initial vision for the Westminster Mall site was presented to City Council in early 2008. The mall site was envisioned as a “downtown” style district with a transit-supportive mix of retail, residential, and office uses.
- The assumptions and overall vision for the site have evolved over the past five years, particularly as a result of the City’s acquisition of the majority of the site. Although the vision for the site has not changed, there will be more flexibility in the design and planning of the site than for the original concept. This is primarily due to the acquisition of the large retail anchors (Sears, Macy’s, Dillard’s, Montgomery Ward and Mervyns).
- The planning process is expected to extend into early 2014, with refinement of the plan vision and plan development occurring over the next few months. Site plan approvals are expected by October, with refinements for development standards, zoning, design guidelines, etc. occurring toward the end of the first quarter of 2014.
- Public outreach during the planning process will continue to include ongoing input from City Council as well as community-wide meetings. The [www.westminstercenter.us](http://www.westminstercenter.us) website will act as a main portal for project information and will provide additional opportunity for public input throughout the planning process. Depending on Council input on the draft site plan and renderings this evening, public outreach sessions are tentatively scheduled for September 18 and 19 at the Mature Adult Center (MAC) and City Park Recreation Center, respectively. If Council gives the “go ahead” staff will publish notices and advertise the neighborhood open houses.
- City staff will provide a presentation of the project background, base assumptions, and initial project vision for the new Downtown. Discussion with the City Council over key topics will follow, including refinement of the site plan, urban design and character, land use mix, and open space and the public realm. Input from the City Council from this discussion will be folded into the visioning and plan development process over the next few months. Further input from the public and City Council is expected during this timeframe through City Council meetings, community-wide meetings, the project website, and social networking venues.
- The Planning Commission has been invited to attend Monday night’s Westminster Downtown presentation.

**Expenditure Required:** \$0

**Source of Funds:** N/A

## **Policy Issue**

Discuss whether the site plan and, renderings, and massing model are in line with the direction that the Council would like to proceed on the project.

## **Alternative**

City Council should consider whether the land use mix of retail, office, and residential uses with building intensities discussed over the past five years are still appropriate for the new Downtown. Lower or higher intensities and densities, as well as additional land uses, could be located on the site depending on Council's vision. Building heights could also be lower or higher than the four to 12-story building envelope originally considered. Additionally, Council should consider that pushing for additional density would need to be evaluated in terms of market conditions as a part of this process.

## **Background Information**

### Process

The planning process for the new Downtown has begun and is expected to extend into the first quarter of 2014. Initial plan development with concurrent public outreach will occur over the next few months, with the preliminary development plan and site plan approvals expected by October 2013. Further refinement of the Master Official Development Plan, including zoning and development standards, design guidelines, etc., will occur by the end of the first quarter of 2014.

### Project Vision

As the City begins to develop a plan for the site, it will be important to ensure that the plan vision is consistent with the direction provided by City Council. An initial vision for the former Westminster Mall site was developed in concert with city staff and the consulting firm of Van Meter Williams Pollock and presented to City Council in early 2008. The concept for the site envisioned change of the site with a mix of retail, residential, and office uses. Development principles emphasized higher-intensity, transit-supportive development with a walkable, pedestrian-oriented building scale and public realm. Key assumptions and design concepts for the site included maintaining four mall anchors (Macy's, JC Penney's, Dillard's, and Sears) and maximizing internal views to the mountains with taller buildings (primarily office) lining the eastern portion of the site.

Since the 2008 vision was produced, some underlying assumptions and circumstances have changed that will affect the overall design and planning for the site. The City has acquired 95% of the mall property, with the exception of Brunswick Bowling and the McMurtry & Bench dental office (the City owns the land on which Penney's sits; however, Penney's owns their building). While these remaining uses will likely remain in their existing locations, there will be greater flexibility in planning the remainder of the site. Anchor retail locations, as part of a mixed-use district, will be located to best serve and shape the public realm and activity within the site. The existing traffic signal locations will also influence planning of the site.

Building on the initial vision for a new Downtown, design concepts that encourage urban, walkable, mixed-use development have been drafted by city staff to help guide further refinement of the vision. These concepts encourage a:

- Vibrant mix of land uses;
- Urban district with active frontages;
- Visual and physical center of Westminster;

- Pedestrian-oriented environment;
- Walkable, interconnected vehicular circulation network;
- Multi-faceted open space, trail and park network;
- Direct, convenient access to transit; and
- Convenient, integrated parking.

Many of these design concepts are evident in the design and public realm of successful downtowns and urban centers throughout the state of Colorado and country. Some examples of these types of urban districts include:

- Cherry Creek North
- Portions of LoDo and Platte River Valley
- Downtown Boulder
- Pearl District in Portland, OR
- Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, MO
- Columbia Heights in Washington, D.C.
- Carlyle Neighborhood in Alexandria, VA
- Downtown Walnut Creek in CA
- Clarendon, VA

#### Public Outreach and Plan Process

Staff held a visioning session with the City Council early in 2012 to mark the beginning of public outreach and the plan development phase of the planning process. Two community-wide visioning meetings followed that meeting at the end of March, 2012. Both meetings focused on refining the vision for the site with interactive opportunities for input and discussion with City staff. The content and activities presented at the meetings is available on the project website, [www.westminstercenter.us](http://www.westminstercenter.us), links to which will be provided on the City website main page and Facebook page. The summary of the public input was provided to City Council in June, 2012 and is attached to this report for reference and Council consideration.

The project website, City website, Westy Connect and the City's social networking sites will play an important role in providing ongoing opportunities for public input throughout the planning process. While additional meetings will be held with City Council and the community, providing opportunities for focused input at key project milestones, community members will be able to access these sites to view project materials and status updates, as well as to provide input at any time in the planning process.

As mentioned above, the next public outreach opportunities are both tentatively planned for Wednesday, September 18 at the MAC in the Ballroom, in south Westminster from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and in the Community Room at the City Park Recreation Center from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on September 19; depending on Council's input on the site plan and renderings this evening. If Council would like substantial changes to the site plan or concepts being presented, staff may need more time to make those changes/refinements and the Council might consider delaying the public outreach meetings until the Council is satisfied with the site plan.

Subsequent City Council and Planning Commission meetings are planned for October. Dates for these meetings have not yet been finalized.

### Proposed Downtown Plan

Earlier in the summer, City Council authorized the staff to enter into a contract with Torti Gallas, a nationally recognized urban planning and design firm, with principal offices located in Washington DC and Los Angeles, California. In July, a three-day design charrette was held involving all City departments to put together the “bones” of the plan that is being presented this evening. This was an intensive process, where different ideologies of development types and patterns were discussed. Many iterations of the plan were not used and left on the “cutting room floor.” However, out of this process, and many subsequent refinements, staff believes the proposed site plan accomplishes the implementation of the vision outlined by Council and the public through the engagement meetings held to date.

#### ***Plan Assumptions and Intent***

The plan itself is composed in a way that will allow development, and more importantly “redevelopment,” to occur over time. The hallmark of great cities, in staff’s opinion, is that they grow and evolve over time. For most successful downtowns and urban places, project development occurs one block at a time, or even a portion of one block at time, but the street grid and public spaces remain constant. For example, individual buildings or projects that are constructed in Cherry Creek North, LoDo, or Downtown Boulder enhance the overall area, but none completely “define” the downtown or urban spaces. It is the sum total of those projects that define the Downtown, that make it a place. Individual projects built over time also allow for creativity, change and variety, all of which can be lost within a single, large homogenous development. One defining characteristic of great downtowns, either within a central core (i.e. Denver) or suburban downtown (i.e. Boulder) is that they are built by many different land owners, with many different ideas, over time, in a very organic fashion, and not dominated by one type of vision.

The Plan also allows for the continued operation of the JC Penney and Brunswick bowling alley. The blocks and street grid are structured to accommodate continued operation and/or be adaptive reuse or redevelopment to occur over time. This accommodation includes space for what are called “liner buildings” or “wrap” buildings to help activate and energize areas.

#### ***Block Structure and Street Grid***

The proposed grid structure and public realm framework is the “skeleton” from which great urban spaces and places will evolve. This “skeleton” is critical to the implementation of a new Downtown, creating the bones upon which new development will orient and remain vibrant and connected. To that end, staff has constructed a street grid and block pattern that gives preference to pedestrian movement and is more indicative of a “downtown” block structure than a “lifestyle” or “retail-oriented” shopping center. Blocks are generally in the range of 360 feet by 285 feet long, which is roughly the size of a Downtown Boulder block, and similar in scale to parts of LoDo in Denver as well. Alleys of some type will also be contemplated at mid-block locations for “back of house” functions, and will also help break up the massing of the area; thereby creating a more fine grain urban scale. Additionally, the majority of blocks are sized such that a parking structure could be accommodated with development surrounding all sides.

There are several new streets and organizing factors in the new street grid being proposed. One of the key elements of the plan is the continuation of Westminster Boulevard into Downtown to act as a spine of activity and the public realm. Westminster Boulevard, as the namesake roadway of the City, will be realigned to run through the western portion of Downtown, anchored at one end by a 5.5-acre public park facility (more below) and on the other by the future train station at the southern edge of the site at 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Along Westminster Boulevard, one might find shopping and restaurants, offices

and residential uses. The angles of the street will frame views to key public spaces and allow for terminated views with signature building design. Following a similar alignment, a new north-south street on the eastern side of Downtown is proposed with a linear park (again, more below) to connect 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue at the existing traffic signals. This street is intended to create an active urban boulevard that will serve as its own unique setting and address within Downtown.

In addition to capturing new connections through Downtown, the proposed street grid is oriented to existing view corridors to Denver, Mt. Evans and Longs Peak. The organization of the grid allows for terminated views (a la 17<sup>th</sup> Street in Denver which terminated at Denver Union Station on one end, and angled at Broadway at the other) in multiple locations, while retaining a relatively straightforward rectilinear block structure. As a result, this block structure retains flexibility for private development while also creating opportunities for interesting public spaces and building designs, particularly where streets intersect or bend.

### ***Public Realm and Development Setting***

As part of the “skeleton” of the project, staff spent considerable time contemplating the public gathering spaces and public realm that is needed to create a true Downtown for the City. Downtowns throughout America have historically been defined by some central cultural organizing mechanism; some had courthouses and City Hall buildings, some had “town square” park facilities; some had a “Main Street” of retail. However, all were the cultural “core” of the community, where residents and businesses gathered and energy was focused. One of the comments staff repeatedly heard throughout the WURP public outreach process, and more recently in the CLUP update process, was that the City of Westminster residents and business community want and desire this kind of cultural “core” where civic events, farmers markets, and the like, can be held. The feedback has been that the City wants and needs a “true Downtown” for future generations.

As staff laid out the “building blocks” of the plan, and created the street grid network, significant thought was given to land use and the needs of the future development community, as well as the need for the cultural gathering locations described above. The public realm, comprising the streets, sidewalks, parks and plazas of Downtown, is contemplated to be as large a driving force in the implementation of this plan over time as any retail or private development; and is critical to establishing a sense of “place” and community ownership, and thus the cultural core “Downtown” that the City envisions. To that end, staff has designed private development block sizes that will accommodate a wide variety of land uses, and has the flexibility to be “morphed” from one use to another over time; i.e. retail to office, office to residential, etc. The block sizes are sized appropriately for this variety of uses; and will allow the City to market any one block to a wide “net” of potential developers after platting. The public spaces are located on the plan in a way that will allow them to be “anchors” of the plan, and not an afterthought, or too programmed toward just the retail interests, which can be a “hallmark” of lifestyle retail centers (i.e. some of the open spaces at the Orchard for example, which are well-designed spaces, but not necessarily indicative of a Downtown park or open space).

Staff is proposing the Council consider moving forward with the plan as proposed, which will include several types of open space/park facilities to help tie the entire downtown for the public to use; all interconnected by active streetscapes. Along the eastern and southern edges, respectively, staff is proposing to use the existing terrain and slope, as well as the Allen Ditch, for linear park facilities, that include bike and trail connections, passive use areas, and along the Allen Ditch, areas for outdoor active uses that relate to development. This will set the framework for a beautiful urban edge against US36 and 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with tall buildings rising above the trees and landscape areas. In the northeast corner of the site, staff is proposing a park facility to be accessed by the future US36 bike trail, which

is at the highest portion of the site, and will offer spectacular views to the southeast and westerly directions, affording beautiful views of the Downtown Denver skyline as well as the Flatirons and Front Range.

Interior to the site, three park facilities are contemplated to serve the needs of both the Westminster community as a whole as well as the potential addition of 2,200 new housing units to the site. The largest proposed facility is located at the northwestern portion of Downtown where Westminster Boulevard turns into the site. This urban 5.5-acre park will provide a large venue for public gathering and will serve as the primary neighborhood park for new residents in Downtown. To the east, a smaller roughly two-acre urban park will connect to the eastern linear parkway and provide an intimate setting for new development in the northeastern part of Downtown. Finally, at what is likely to be the retail core of the Downtown, a one-acre plaza or piazza open space is proposed to focus energy and retail activity around a central public core. In addition to these park spaces, a linear 35-foot-wide boulevard park space is proposed along a new street, running north and south (with some curves), connecting 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 92<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. This urban boulevard will be a significant address in the City; contemplating density on either side with a wonderful, varied active and passive linear green space in the interior. It is staff's hope that this boulevard can be implemented and recognized regionally as some of the great Boulevards around the country have come to be known.

### ***Project Phasing***

The phasing for the project will be an ongoing discussion with the City Council, once the streets and grid network are finalized. There are many pros and cons to starting on one side of the Downtown versus the other. Staff is just now beginning to evaluate what types of public improvements should be constructed in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase to set the "right tone" and give the indication that the City of Westminster wants a true "Downtown" and not just another retail mixed-use project that might include other land uses such as office or residential. A key consideration of the creation of a new Downtown is holding to the vision, and being firm over time as new development interests come to the City to participate, especially if those interests are not consistent with the City's vision for the Downtown. In addition, great Downtown's also re-evaluate their visions on an ongoing basis, and many Cities update their Downtown Plans every 5 or 10 years; as our Downtown grows, this would be a good practice for the City to consider.

### **Consistency with the Strategic Plan**

Staff considers the development of a cohesive vision and plan for the new Downtown as furthering all of the City Council's Strategic Plan goals. These include a Strong, Balanced Local Economy; Financially Sustainable City Government Providing Exceptional Services; Safe and Secure Community; Vibrant Neighborhoods in One Livable Community; and Beautiful and Environmentally Sensitive City; all of which encourage the development of an active, livable, transit-oriented and urban environment within the heart of the City.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Brent McFall  
City Manager



WESTMINSTER  
C E N T E R

## Community Outreach Summary

May 2012



WESTMINSTER



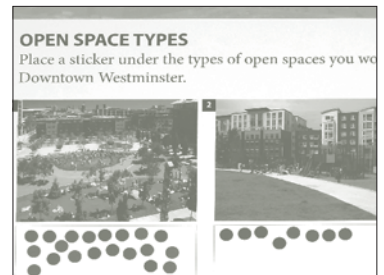


The City of Westminster has begun the planning process for the redevelopment of the former Westminster Mall site. The 105-acre area is located in the heart of Westminster between 88<sup>th</sup> and 92<sup>nd</sup> avenues along the US 36/Sheridan Boulevard corridor. The area is envisioned as a new downtown for the City of Westminster with a vibrant mix of uses, open spaces, and activities. In March and April of 2012, a first round of community outreach was initiated. Outreach included a visioning session with City Council and a community-wide and online interactive open house.

This document provides a summary of the input received from the community during this first round of outreach. The document is organized into three chapters:

- *Chapter 1: City Council Visioning Session*, provides an overview of the comments and direction received by City Council.
- *Chapter 2: Interactive Open Houses*, summarizes the key themes that emerged throughout all of the input gathered in the open houses and online survey; describes specific feedback on each of the brainstorming questions and preference surveys; and summarizes individual comments received at the open houses and online.
- *Chapter 3: Next Steps*, describes the planning process and future opportunities for public input.

The appendix at the end of this summary provides the materials presented at the open houses and online.



# 1 City Council Visioning Session

A visioning session with the Westminster City Council was held on March 19th, 2012. City Council members were presented with the City's vision for the former Westminster mall site as the city's new downtown and mixed-use district. The presentation included discussion and brainstorming of other downtowns and urban districts that could serve as inspiration for Westminster's new downtown. Questions relating to land use, urban design and open space and public amenities were posed, along with a visual preference survey for building types and design.

Overall, City Council supported a dense urban district with a mix of uses that would establish the area as a vibrant downtown district. Further discussion of the vision for the former Westminster mall site included the following points:

- *Land Use:* Land uses in the site should include a mix of uses including retail, office, residential and open space. Retail in the core of the area should have a mix of large and small stores.
- *Views:* Development should take advantage of views with rooftop seating areas and locate taller buildings to preserve views to the mountains.
- *Building Heights:* In general, there should be verticality on the site with some taller buildings, particularly for office uses. Taller portions of buildings should be set back from the street edge above three or four stories in order to preserve a pedestrian scale at the street level and to allow for sun access.
- *Building Design:* Building massing, especially of taller buildings, should not be bulky or overwhelming to the street. Natural materials, such as masonry, and earth tones should be used.
- *Open Spaces:* There should be a range of appropriately-scaled park spaces throughout the site, such as smaller green and gathering spaces in pedestrian-oriented mixed-use areas and larger park spaces in residential areas. There should be an open/public space area that could accommodate festivals, fairs and public events. Finally, water features should be incorporated into the open space framework.
- *Streetscape:* Streets should have ample trees and landscaping with planting strips wide enough to accommodate healthy plant life. Sidewalks should be wide to accommodate pedestrian traffic, outdoor seating areas and pedestrian amenities like benches.

## 2 Interactive Open Houses

Two community-wide open houses were held at the Westminster City Park Recreation Center on March 28th and March 31st, 2012. The open houses included five topical stations: Project Vision, Downtowns and Urban Districts, Land Use, Community Character, and Open Space and Public Amenities. Four of the stations included an opportunity for community input through polls, preference surveys, and brainstorming questions. City staff members were also present at each station to help answer any questions and guide community members through the activities. An online version of the open house activities was also developed to run concurrent with and for two additional weeks beyond the open house dates. Comments on the online open house closed on April 15<sup>th</sup>; however, additional comments may still be provided through the Westminster Center website throughout the planning process. To date, over 200 community members participated in this first round of outreach.

This chapter provides an overview of the feedback obtained through the open houses and online survey. The first section, Key Themes, describes several constant themes that emerged from all of the public comments and activity responses. These themes will help provide direction for the City as the planning process moves forward. The Brainstorming Questions, Preference Surveys, and Additional Comments sections describe the input gathered through each activity and the individually-submitted comments from community members.

### 2.1 Key Themes

Themes that presented themselves throughout the responses and input from the open houses and survey included a unique character, walkable, friendly environment, public events and engagement, outdoor space and activities, and accessibility.

#### Unique Character

Community members envisioned Downtown Westminster as a community-wide destination with a distinct character and unique mix of businesses. A sense of ownership was important for many, where downtown would have a “hometown” feel that would attract both existing and new Westminster residents.



### **Walkable, Friendly Environment**

Having a walkable, pedestrian- and bike-friendly environment in downtown was important for community members. Connections to open spaces, transit, shopping and parking were emphasized. For many, it was important to have an environment that would be comfortable for all ages, particularly children and the elderly.

### **Public Events and Engagement**

A consistent theme in community responses was that of community involvement. People wanted to feel more connected to Westminster, with fairs, festivals and public and holiday events. Major civic events desired included outdoor music/concerts, a farmers market, festivals and fairs.

### **Outdoor Space and Activities**

Creating a sense of openness within the downtown area was emphasized by many. People wanted to see a variety of outdoor spaces, from natural open spaces to small parks and plazas adjacent to commercial areas. The open spaces would provide places to relax, linger and recreate, providing a reason to come and stay in downtown beyond shopping or other activities. They could also provide a central focal point and sense of place in the heart of downtown where civic events could take place.

### **Accessibility**

Accessibility into and throughout downtown was a constant theme in community responses. Being able to easily access the Downtown area, find parking, and navigate the area by foot was essential for many. Additionally, community members felt the area should have a network of walkways and bikeways with easy access to public transit.

## 2.2 Brainstorming Questions

Several of the open house stations posed brainstorming questions for community members. These questions were meant to provide an understanding of the community's vision and point of view regarding the composition and character of a new Westminster Downtown. Community members responded to each question on a sticky note and posted the answers below each question. These responses (including those received from the online survey) were recorded and categorized to provide a clear description of the community's varied vision for Downtown Westminster. These descriptions are organized by station topic below.

### Downtowns and Urban Districts

#### *Where else do you go to shop, linger and play?*

For community members, places to shop, linger and play were located throughout the Denver metro area, foothills, and nearby mountain towns. Half of the places mentioned were shopping and lifestyle centers, most notably the Flatirons Mall in Broomfield (16%) and the Orchard Town Center in Westminster (13%). Approximately 40 percent of community members cited downtowns (31%) and urban districts (13%) in and around the Denver metro area, with the most popular being Olde Town Arvada. Other popular downtowns and districts included the Highlands and Tennyson areas, Downtown Golden and Downtown Boulder, and mountain downtowns like Estes Park and Breckenridge. The remaining five percent of responses referenced open spaces and trails in and around the Denver metro area and Westminster.



#### *Are there other downtowns or districts outside of the Denver area that should serve as inspiration for Downtown Westminster?*

A wide range of downtowns and districts were mentioned by community members, almost half of which were out of state. Just over half of the downtowns or districts cited were small-scale or historic areas with building heights of four or less stories. In the Denver metro and surrounding area, these included many foothill, Front Range, and mountain downtown areas, as well as smaller-scale districts in Denver like the Highlands. Olde Town Arvada, Downtown Boulder, and Bradburn Village in Westminster were popular responses. Mid- and larger-scale districts comprised an additional 35 percent of responses (19% and 16%, respectively) ranging from areas like LoDo in Denver



with four to seven stories to downtown districts like Washington D.C., Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon with buildings of 15 stories or more. Finally, approximately 14 percent of responses referenced shopping and lifestyle districts within the Denver metro area and other cities, including places like the Streets at Southglenn, Flatirons Mall, and Country Club Plaza in Kansas City, Missouri.

### Community Character



*Name one or two adjectives that would describe Downtown Westminster*

The most common words used to describe a new Downtown Westminster included or were synonyms of: “friendly and inviting” (16%), “fun and lively”(16%), “walkable” (15%), “hometown and quaint” (11%) and “open and parklike” (9%). Accessibility, a sense of openness, and a unique character were also key concepts expressed by Downtown descriptions.

*How many stories should buildings be in Downtown Westminster?*

Approximately 70 percent of respondents supported building heights of four stories or more—half of which supported a variety of building heights of 7-10 stories (13%) or greater (21%). The tallest building heights suggested were between 15-30 stories. Conversely, approximately 30 percent of respondents did not want to see tall buildings or more than three stories. Preservation of views to the mountains and maintaining a smaller-scale district were important factors for the lower heights.

### Land Use



*Name one type of business, activity, or event that would bring you to Downtown Westminster.*

Participant responses reflected a desire to have reason to not only visit Downtown Westminster, but to stay for the day with a wide variety of uses, attractions and activities. The majority of responses included multiple uses, the greatest number of which referenced entertainment and special events (39%), which included outdoor music and concerts, farmers market, festivals and fairs, and movies. Shopping was also mentioned as a big draw, particularly specialty, boutique and unique store offerings (22%). Dining was important as well (comprising 9% of responses), where unique, non-chain restaurants were more desirable. Civic and cultural events and facilities such as museums, a library and

art were also strong attractions for many (8%). Additional suggestions included outdoor spaces like playgrounds, parks and plazas where people could linger and extend their stay, as well as bars, breweries and wine tasting.

*What businesses, land uses, and activities make up a vibrant, interesting downtown?*

Overall, community members envisioned a vibrant downtown as having a wide variety of uses, with almost equal mention of entertainment and events, public space and parks, shopping and dining experiences. Entertainment and events such as music, theater, farmers market and festivals constituted approximately 20 percent of the responses. Another 18 percent were focused on the provision of a rich outdoor environment with parks, playgrounds, public assembly places and recreation. A rich diversity of unique destinations and events was desired from all, particularly for shopping (17%) and dining uses (13%). For many, this meant capitalizing on local, independent and small businesses to establish character, attract visitors and provide diversity in retail and restaurant offerings. Civic and cultural uses comprised an additional 10 percent of responses, with art and museums as the most popular.

### Open Space and Public Amenities

*What are your favorite park spaces that you think would be appropriate for Downtown Westminster?*

Community members responded to this question in two ways, naming specific parks as well as features that they would like to see in park spaces. Of those responses that listed a specific park, 45 percent cited large-scale or grand city parks as their favorite spaces. The majority cited Washington Park in Denver and Westminster City Park as their favorites. Just over a quarter (26%) of responses cited a neighborhood-scale park, some of which included Squires Park in Westminster and Boulder's Central Park/Boulder Creek spaces. Water-oriented park spaces (along creeks, lakes or rivers) comprised another 20 percent of favorite spaces.

A wide variety of park features and activities were also mentioned. These included active recreation like biking, jogging, and sports courts (24%); passive recreation with shaded areas, open lawns, and seating areas (22%); ample planting, trees and gardens (19%); water features (16%); and spaces that would accommodate a variety of uses like play and recreation, gatherings and festivals, and passive uses (13%).





*What types of civic events should be held in Downtown Westminster?*

Almost all of the responses from community members focused on outdoor enjoyment and activities for Downtown Westminster. Events that might be held on a weekly basis, like a Farmers Market, outdoor concerts in the summer, and movies or live theater in the park comprised over 50 percent of the responses, with outdoor music events and concerts being the most popular suggestion. Another 40 percent of the responses referenced large-scale events like fairs, festivals, art shows and holiday celebrations or parades. Other civic activities mentioned included sports events like bicycle or road races, fundraiser/charity events, City-government events, rallies and other cultural and gathering opportunities.

**2.3 Preference Surveys**

Three preference surveys were presented as part of the open house and online survey. They included a poll of local downtowns and urban districts that community members often visited; a visual preference survey of building types that would express community character; and a poll of preferred open space types and features for parks and public amenities. Each preference survey component included six choices, of which community members could “vote” for as many as they liked. The results of these surveys were tallied to show overall preferences for specific places, building types, and open space features. These results are discussed below.

**Downtowns and Urban Districts**

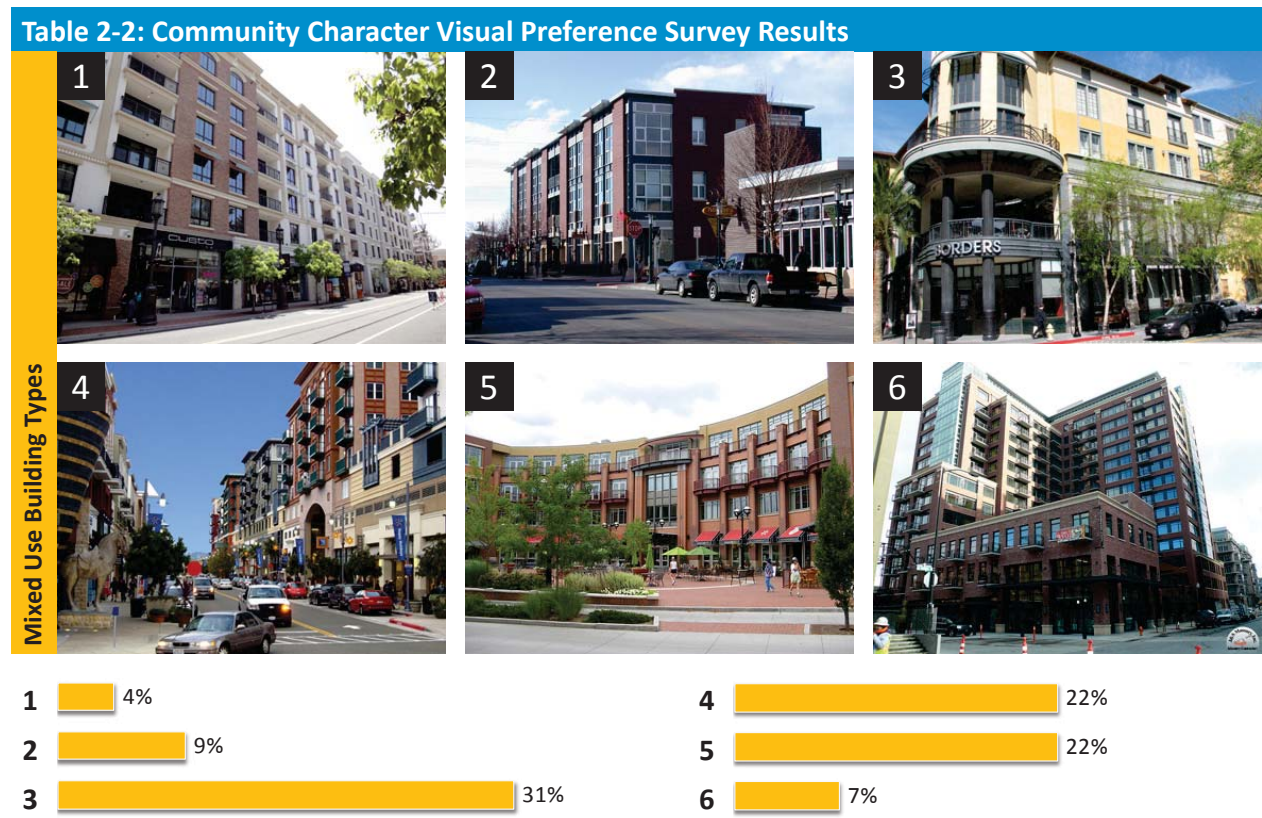
Community members were asked to indicate which, if any, of six local downtowns or urban districts they frequented to shop, linger and play. Table 2-1 shows that places like LoDo, Downtown Boulder and the Denver Highlands were popular destinations. Belmar in Lakewood and Cherry Creek were also generally popular among participants.

**Table 2-1: Downtowns and Urban Districts Poll Results**

<i>Location</i>	
Highlands, Denver	19%
LoDo, Denver	24%
Downtown Boulder	22%
Belmar in Lakewood	15%
Cherry Creek	12%
Downtown Fort Collins	9%

## Community Character

Five visual preference surveys were presented as part of the Community Character station. The visual preference surveys were used as a technique to identify the viewer’s preference for physical design characteristics. These included building height, bulk, materials and design. The images presented illustrated a range of building types and design—no specific image or building was intended as a proposal for Downtown Westminster. Rather, the survey was intended to achieve an understanding of the community’s preference and comfort with specific design characteristics. The five building types presented in the survey included mixed use (residential, office, or other uses above ground floor retail), residential, office, retail and parking structures. The combined results of the visual preference surveys from the open houses and online surveys are shown in Table 2-2 below.



**Table 2-2 Continued: Community Character Visual Preference Survey Results**

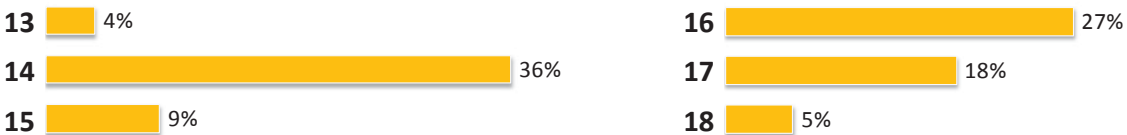
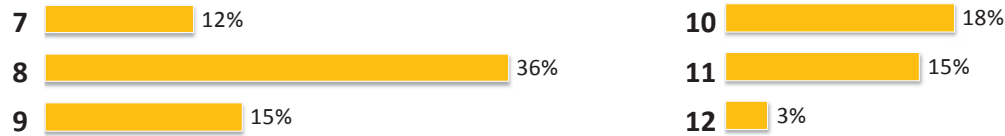
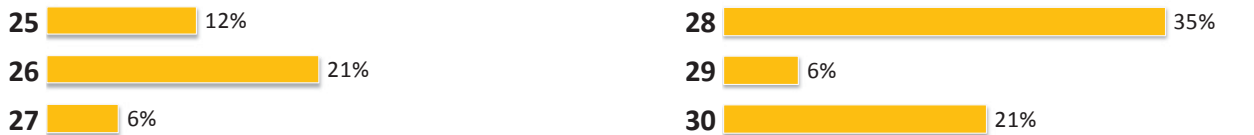
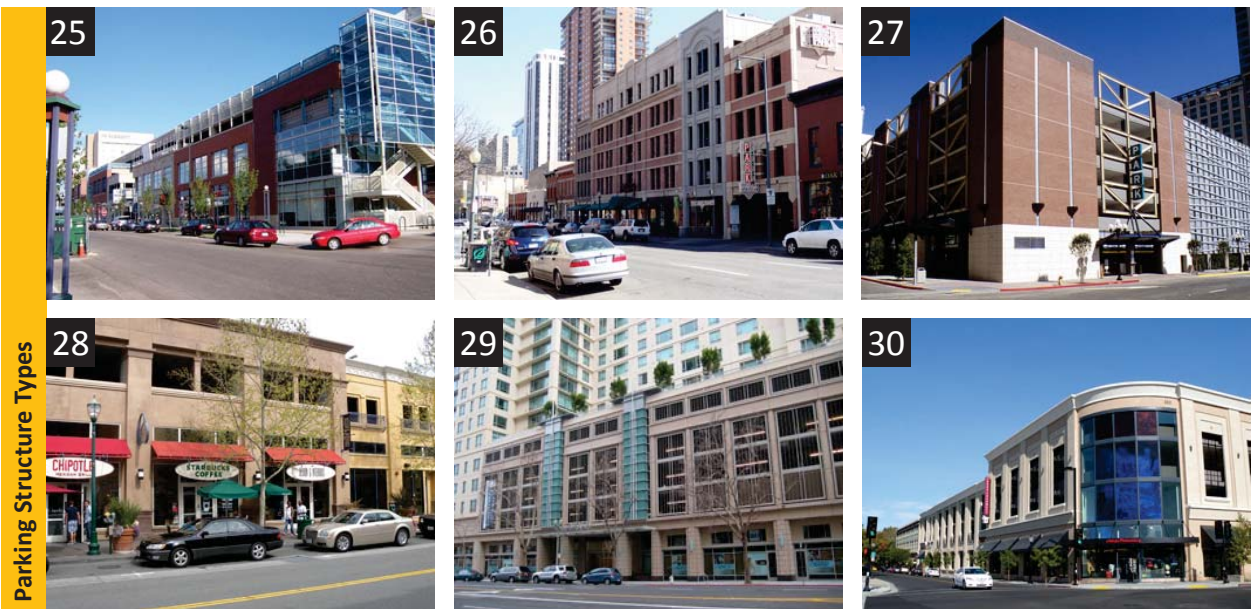
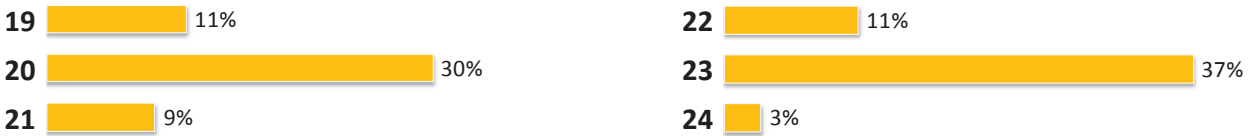


Table 2-2 Continued: Community Character Visual Preference Survey Results



### **Open Space and Public Amenities**

Community members were also polled for their preference for specific park types and features. The first survey included a series of park spaces that presented different scales, activities, and physical design elements. The second preference survey was more focused on park features and elements such as seating areas, lawns for passive recreation and public art. The results from both surveys are documented in Table 2-3.

### **2.4 Additional Comments**

In addition to input gathered through the open house station activities, community input was collected through comment cards at the open houses and a comment form on the online survey. Over 120 community members took the time to contribute thoughtful and meaningful input through this forum. A summary of the comments, organized by topic, is below.

#### **Community Character**

Community members emphasized the role of Downtown Westminster as a public and social gathering space—a place that belongs and appeals to all Westminster residents, not just the new residents on the site. For many this meant creating a strong sense of place—establishing a “focus,” or “there there” within the downtown, with development that included a mix of uses, an attractive public realm, public art and even historic remnants or elements of the former mall (like the balloons). A consistent theme in the comments was that of interaction—creating spaces and a public realm that fostered community gathering and events, and that would invite people to stay in the area. Examples included town squares, piazzas and a central park or square.

The envisioned character of a new downtown for Westminster varied, however, from a smaller-scale hometown feel to an urban, lively district with taller buildings. Many who expressed a desire for a hometown feel felt that buildings should be lower (mostly four or less stories in order to preserve views to the mountains) and designed to express a timeless, “old city” style. On the other hand, some community members felt that a denser, yet still pedestrian-scaled environment with some taller buildings would help foster a vibrant atmosphere and establish an urban scale and visibility of downtown. Regardless of the scale, the majority of community member responses expressed a desire for a unique, varied, walkable environment with a range of stores, activities, and districts, access to public transportation, and integration into the surrounding context of Westminster.

**Table 2-3: Open Space Visual Preference Survey Results**



Finally, an additional theme in the responses for community character was that of authenticity. People wanted Downtown Westminster to be representative of the city and distinct from other lifestyle or “downtown” projects like Belmar in Lakewood, the Orchard Town Center in Westminster or 29th Street Mall in Boulder. Specific comments included “timeless” design, allowing the downtown to “evolve over time”, and avoiding the creation of a “fake downtown” and “anyplace” design.

### **Land Use Mix**

The mix and arrangement of land uses within the site were important factors for many community members. For many, it was essential to have a dense, mixed-use urban environment that would underline the area as a true downtown district. There would be a range of uses, including both large and small-scale shopping establishments, grocery and neighborhood services for residents, diverse and unique dining options, office uses, residential development, parks and public spaces and civic venues and uses. Several community members emphasized the need for a vertical mix of these uses, with retail at the ground floor and other uses located above to support an active pedestrian environment. Additionally, several comments emphasized the need to replace the extent of shopping that was lost with demolition of the mall: community members wanted to stay within Westminster to meet their shopping needs.

### **Circulation and Accessibility**

Some community members expressed concern about potential traffic impacts that might result from increased intensity in the area. Access to and from US 36 was cited as a key element of circulation and access into the site. Others expressed concern for traffic and access along 88th and 92nd avenues, citing potential for traffic impacts to these arterials. Access to existing and future public transportation was also a key concern—particularly in crossing significant streets like Sheridan Boulevard to the RTD park-and-ride and 88<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the future rail station.

Circulation through the site was also important for many community members—in terms of accessing key destinations and parking, as well as ensuring safe and direct circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists. Several people mentioned the need for wide walkways and sidewalks to accommodate pedestrian movement and traffic. Additional comments prioritized connections to existing bike trails and residential areas, such as the Discovery Trail in Arvada and into the Green Knolls residential neighborhood in Westminster.

In addition to traffic impacts and circulation, access to parking was a key concern for many. The ease of getting to parking, its proximity to shopping and other destinations, and the perception of easy, safe parking were all mentioned as important aspects of site design and function. Several comments addressed parking location within the site, with some advocating for central, shopping-adjacent parking and others for structures to be located at the perimeter of activity in order to encourage people to walk to destinations.

### **Sustainability and Local Business**

A sustainable Downtown Westminster was important for many on several levels—both economically and environmentally. Community members wanted to ensure that new development would be viable, with a synergistic range of market-appropriate businesses that would not compete with existing business in adjacent and nearby areas within the city. Several comments focused on incorporating and supporting small and local mom-and-pop businesses into the downtown, with the caveat that smaller local businesses would not be able to afford the higher rents of new development.

Environmental concerns were focused on creating a sustainable infrastructure through support of green building and resource conservation practices. Comments ranged from wanting to see recycling and dog waste bins incorporated throughout development and open spaces, recharging stations for electric cars and bicycle parking to natural, water-efficient plantings throughout parks and public spaces.

### **Open Space and Public Amenities**

Community members envision an attractive downtown environment that reflects the City's values for open space, high quality landscape design and recreation. Additionally, community comments advocated for public spaces that would serve as central gathering spaces, venues for public events and activities, and community interaction. Key aspects of parks and the public realm that were mentioned included maintaining an open, green feel throughout the downtown, with trees (including preserving the cottonwoods along 88th Avenue), integrated green spaces and ample plantings; incorporating public art and sculpture; creating some pedestrian-only areas; and providing an engaging environment for children with informal play areas (like the rocks along the Boulder Pearl Street Mall) or water features.



Providing for active recreational opportunities was emphasized by many, with comments suggesting the inclusion of walkways, bike paths, tennis courts and green spaces throughout the site. Additionally, programmed recreational activities were suggested, such as outdoor fitness classes and children's activities.

A venue for public activities and events was also desired by the community, whether it be a town square, lawn or pedestrian or vehicular street. Suggested events included entertainment, music, fireworks, parades, farmers markets and any other community-oriented activities that would foster interaction.

### **Outdoor Environment**

Many community members placed a great deal of emphasis on the design of the site, shopping areas, streets and open space with respect to Colorado's climate and intense sun. People advocated for open spaces with shade structures and trees to escape the summer sun. For cold and inclement weather, many community members reflected on the need for indoor or protected spaces. Places like the Orchard Town Center, for example, were listed as undesirable destinations in the cold winter months, while indoor malls like Flatirons were extolled as comfortable places to shop. The primary concern was over finding a place that would foster lingering beyond just a shopping experience, where some comfort and protection could be provided. This was particularly important for families with children and the elderly.

### **Accommodating a Range of Incomes and Ages**

Accommodation of a range of incomes and ages was an important aspect for many community members. This was reflected in not only the advocacy for local businesses to be able to locate within the Downtown area, but also for residential and commercial uses that would meet a range of income levels and ages. Several community members felt that affordable housing should be provided in the area, while others felt that commercial uses like grocery stores and shops should cater to a range of income levels. Additionally, several people expressed the need to accommodate the growing senior population—not only in providing appropriate housing types but also in creating an environment that would support the needs of the elderly such as easy access to key services, public transportation and passive recreation space.

## **3** Next Steps

The City of Westminster planning team will closely review and consider input from this first round of public outreach and incorporate it into the planning process for the former Westminster mall site. A preferred plan will be developed over the next six months, during which additional community meetings will be held as the plan is refined. It is expected that these meetings will be held in late summer/early fall of 2012. The Westminster Center and City of Westminster websites will post the dates as they are identified. Community members can sign up on the Westminster Center website ([www.westminstercenter.us](http://www.westminstercenter.us)) to receive updates for important events and milestones during the planning process.

## **Appendix -Open House Materials**

This Appendix provides the materials presented at the Open Houses at the City Park Recreation Center as well as online at the Westminster Center website.

<b>Project Vision .....</b>	<b>19</b>
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<b>Community Character .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Amenities .....</b>	<b>28</b>

# Project Vision

1. Create a new downtown for Westminster with a mix of office, retail, and residential uses.
2. Focus on the human scale within a downtown, urban environment.
3. Establish building heights and densities that foster an urban experience and walkable pedestrian environment.
4. Ensure that circulation through the site and access to transit is accessible for all modes of transportation.
5. Integrate the site into the Westminster community, creating inviting edges and easy visual and physical access.
6. Reinforce the urban environment and ease of access by distributing structured parking throughout the site.
7. Accentuate natural views and view corridors through site and building design.
8. Encourage development that incorporates sustainable development practices.
9. Establish a sense of place with the first phase of development, upon which future development can build.

# Downtowns & Urban Districts

## PLACES YOU MAY KNOW

You likely know many different downtowns and urban districts within the Denver metro area and beyond. Here's how they would fit into Downtown Westminster.

### How big is 105 acres?



LODO, Denver



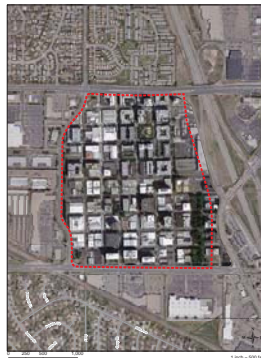
Cherry Creek, Denver



San Francisco, CA



Portland Pearl District, OR



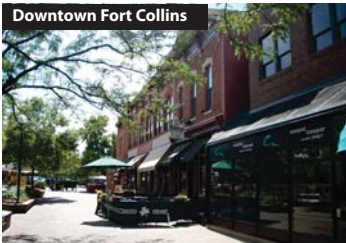
Downtown Boulder



# Downtowns & Urban Districts

## PLACES YOU MAY GO

Where do you go to shop, linger and play in the Denver area? Place a sticker below the places you like to visit.



# Land Use

A wide range of land uses and activities are anticipated in Downtown Westminster. These include:

## RESIDENTIAL



## EMPLOYMENT



## ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION



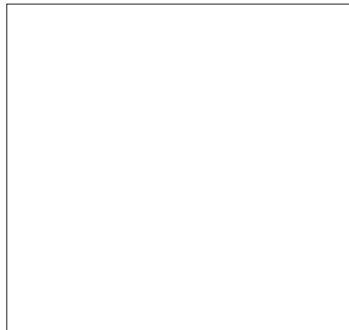
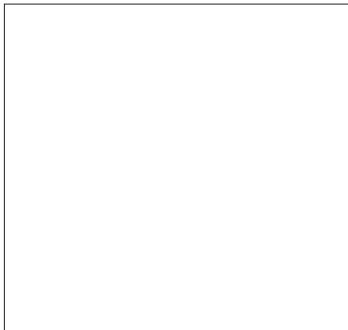
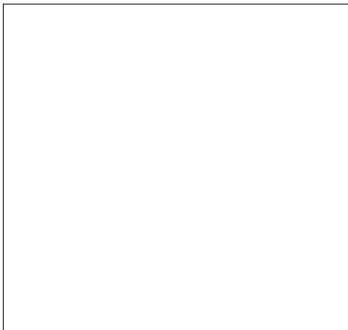
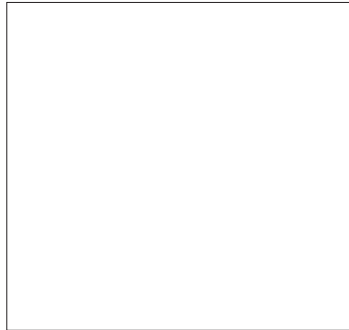
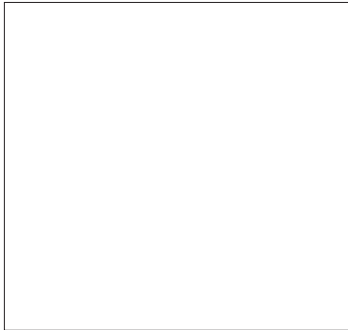
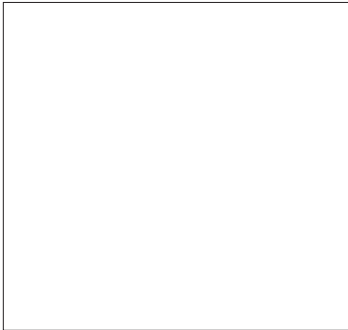
## CIVIC & CULTURAL



# Community Character

## MIXED USE BUILDING TYPES

Place a sticker under the types of buildings you would like to see in Downtown Westminster.





# Community Character

## RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TYPES

Place a sticker under the types of buildings you would like to see in Downtown Westminster.



# Community Character

## OFFICE BUILDING TYPES

Place a sticker under the types of buildings you would like to see in Downtown Westminster.



# Community Character

## RETAIL BUILDING TYPES

Place a sticker under the types of buildings you would like to see in Downtown Westminster.



# Community Character

## PARKING STRUCTURE TYPES

Place a sticker under the types of buildings you would like to see in Downtown Westminster.



# Open Space & Public Amenities

## OPEN SPACE TYPES

Place a sticker under the types of open spaces you would like to see included in Downtown Westminster.



# Open Space & Public Amenities

## OPEN SPACE FEATURES

Place a sticker under the features you think would most benefit parks and open spaces in Downtown Westminster.

7 Promenade



8 Passive Recreation



9 Community Gathering



10 Outdoor Play



11 Eating Areas



12 Sculpture/Public Art

