



**City of Westminster
2009
Comprehensive Plan**

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 28, 2009



City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan

Adopted September 28, 2009

RELEASED FOR REVIEW on Friday, July 17, 2009

PUBLIC HEARING conducted on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 before the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission

APPROVED by the Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission on Tuesday, September 22, 2009

ADOPTED by The Mayor and Common Council of Westminster on Monday, September 27, 2009

The information contained in this Plan is current as of the date of Plan adoption and approval. As the programs, policies, and procedures described herein are subject to change, the City of Westminster makes no guarantee regarding the accuracy or timeliness of the information presented.



City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan

Adopted September 28, 2009

The Mayor and Common Council

Kevin R. Utz, Mayor
Damian L. Halstad, Council President
Suzanne P. Albert
Tony Chiavacci
Gregory L. Pecoraro
Dr. Robert P. Wack

Planning and Zoning Commission

Margaret R. Bair, Acting Chair
Suzanne P. Albert, *ex-officio*
Kevin W. Beaver
Nancy B. Palmer
Lori J. Welsh-Graham

City Administration

Marge Wolf, City Administrator
Thomas B. Beyard, Director of Planning, Zoning & Development
Jeffrey D. Glass, Director of Public Works
Chief Jeff Spaulding, Chief Police Department
Ron Schroers, Director of Recreation & Parks
Gary Ehlers, Director of Administrative Services
John B. Walsh, Jr., Esquire, City Attorney

Department of Planning, Zoning & Development

Melissa K. Hynes, Comprehensive Planner
Tim Rogers, Natural & Cultural Resources Planner
Stan Ruchlewicz, Administrator of Economic Development
Sandra Anderson, Community Development Specialist
Barbara Sardi, Engineering Specialist
Harrison Bloom, GIS Technician

2009 Comprehensive Plan

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Part 1: The City of Westminster.....	2
Part 2: History of the Comprehensive Plan.....	4
Part 3: What is the Comprehensive Plan?.....	4
Part 4: 2009 Comprehensive Plan.....	6
Part 5: Smart Growth.....	7
Part 6: Visions.....	8
Chapter 2: Public Participation & Neighborhood Planning	11
Part 1: Purpose of Public Participation.....	13
Part 2: Engaging the Public.....	14
Part 3: Communication & Information.....	17
Part 4: Neighborhood Planning.....	18
Goals and Objectives.....	20
Chapter 3: Population	23
Part 1: Population Trends.....	24
Part 2: Population Projections.....	34
Chapter 4: Municipal Growth	37
Part 1: Past Growth Patterns.....	39
Part 2: Population Projections & Future Land Use.....	42
Part 3: Westminster’s Housing Capacity.....	44
Part 4: Growth Outside of City Boundary.....	46
Part 5: Impact of Growth on Public Services & Facilities.....	49
Part 6: Growth Management.....	56
Part 7: Resource Lands.....	59
Part 8: Burdens on Services & Infrastructure.....	60
Part 9: Protection of Sensitive Areas.....	61
Part 10: Future Vision of Development.....	61

Part 11: Financing of Infrastructure Expansions	63
Goals and Objectives	65

Chapter 5: Land Use 70

Part 1: Existing Development of Westminster.....	72
Part 2: 2004 Land Use Plan.....	73
Part 3: Future Population.....	74
Part 4: Areas of Concern.....	77
Part 5: Proposed Land Use.....	78
Part 6: Land Use Designations.....	83
Goals and Objectives.....	87

Chapter 6: Environmental Resources & Protection 91

Part 1: History.....	93
Part 2: Climate.....	94
Part 3: Topography & Soils.....	94
Part 4: Water Resources.....	96
Part 5: Forested Areas.....	97
Part 6: Sensitive Areas.....	98
Part 7: Environmental Stewardship Programs.....	106
Part 8: State Environmental Programs.....	110
Goals & Objectives.....	111

Chapter 7: Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization 117

Part 1: Housing & Density.....	119
Part 2: Meeting Housing Needs.....	126
Part 3: Transitional Housing & Homeless Prevention.....	128
Part 4: Neighborhood Revitalization.....	129
Part 5: State Neighborhood Revitalization Programs.....	130
Part 6: Local Neighborhood Revitalization Projects.....	132
Part 7: Vision of Housing in Westminster.....	133
Goals & Objectives.....	136

Chapter 8: Community Character & Design **140**

Part 1: Community Character & Design 142
Part 2: Built Environment 143
Part 3: Vision for Future Development 144
Part 4: Westminster Historic Preservation 147
Part 5: Historic Preservation Programs 148
Part 6: Historic Preservation Partners 151
Part 6: Protection of Historic Resources 152
Goals and Objectives 154

Chapter 9: Economic Development **160**

Part 1: Business Patterns 162
Part 2: Existing Economic Development Trends 166
Part 3: Westminster Labor Force 168
Part 4: Current Economic Activities 171
Part 5: Economic Development Partners 173
Part 6: Economic Development Strategies 176
Goals and Objectives 179

Chapter 10: Tourism & Culture **185**

Part 1: Tourism Patterns 187
Part 2: Historic Westminster 187
Part 3: Main Street Community 189
Part 4: Department of Recreation & Parks Events 190
Part 5: Tourism & Culture Programs 192
Part 6: Tourism & Culture Partners 194
Part 7: Tourism & Culture Strategies 197
Goals and Objectives 203

Chapter 11: Water Resources **208**

Part 1: Vision & History of Water Resources 210
Part 2: Existing Water Resources 211
Part 3: Water Resources Demand 212

Part 4: Water Supply.....	214
Part 5: Water Supply Solutions.....	217
Part 6: Wastewater Service & Demand Capacity Analysis.....	220
Part 7: Stormwater Management Analysis.....	222
Part 8: Water Conservation Programs.....	223
Part 9: Summary & Conclusions.....	224
Goals and Objectives.....	225

Chapter 12: Transportation 231

Part 1: Transportation Infrastructure.....	233
Part 2: Traffic Volumes & Capacity.....	240
Part 3: Pedestrian & Bicycle Accessibility.....	242
Part 4: Transit Alternatives.....	245
Part 5: Commuting Patterns.....	248
Part 6: Corridor Studies.....	252
Part 7: Proposed Major Streets.....	256
Part 8: Transportation Planning.....	257
Goals and Objectives.....	261

Chapter 13: Community Facilities & Public Services 268

Part 1: Schools & Colleges.....	270
Part 2: Child Care Services & Facilities.....	275
Part 3: Westminster Area Libraries.....	275
Part 4: Facilities for Senior Citizens.....	277
Part 5: Public Safety Services.....	278
Part 6: Fire & Emergency Services.....	280
Part 7: Technology & Communications Facilities.....	282
Part 8: Government Facilities.....	284
Part 9: Recreation & Parks Facilities.....	286
Part 10: Cultural Facilities.....	290
Part 11: Solid Waste Disposal Service.....	291
Goals and Objectives.....	292

Chapter 14: Interjurisdictional Coordination 301

Part 1: Existing Coordination.....	302
Part 2: Carroll County Master Plan.....	303

Part 3: Future of Interjurisdictional Coordination	305
Part 4: Town/County Agreement.....	305
Goals and Objectives.....	307

Chapter 15: Implementation **310**

Part 1: Overview of Implementation Strategy.....	312
Part 2: Current Regulations.....	313
Part 3: Issues & Concerns with Zoning Ordinance.....	315

2009 Comprehensive Plan

Tables

Chapter 3: Population & Demographics

Table 3.1 City of Westminster Population Change, 1970 – 2000

Table 3.2 City of Westminster Population by Age and Sex, 2000

Table 3.3 City of Westminster Population by Age and Race, 2000

Table 3.4 Birth and Death Rates, Carroll County, MD 1995 – 2000

Table 3.6 Infant Mortality in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area, 2001

Table 3.7 City of Westminster Marital Status by Sex, Persons 15 Years & Older, 2000

Table 3.8. City of Westminster Household Types by Race, 2000

Table 3.9 Birthplace of City of Westminster Residents, 2000

Table 3.10 Language Spoken at Home by Persons 5 Years and Older, 2000

Table 3.11 Place of Residence in 1995 for Residents of Westminster, 2000

Table 3.12 Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older, 2000

Table 3.13 Graduation Rates in the Baltimore Metropolitan Region, 2000 – 2003

Table 3.14 Graduation Rates for Carroll County Public High Schools, 2000–2003

Table 3.15 City of Westminster Population Projections, 2000 – 2030

Chapter 4: Municipal Growth

Table 4.1 City of Westminster Population Growth 1970 – 2000

Table 4.2 City of Westminster Population Growth 1990 to 2030

Table 4.3 Vacant Buildable Residential Land in the City of Westminster, 2009

Table 4.4 Unbuilt Planned Developments in the City of Westminster, 2009

Table 4.5: Total Residential Capacity in Westminster, 2009

Chapter 5: Land Use

Table 5.1 Vacant Buildable Residential Land in Westminster, 2009

Table 5.2 Unbuilt Planned Developments in the City of Westminster, 2009

Table 5.3: Total Residential Capacity in Westminster, 2009

Chapter 7: Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization

Table 7.1 Housing Units by Tenure in the City of Westminster, 2000

Table 7.2 Persons per Housing Unit in the City of Westminster, 2000

Table 7.3 Tenure by Age of Householder in the City of Westminster, 2000

Table 7.4 Year Residential Structure Built in the City of Westminster, 2000

Table 7.5 Heating Fuel for Occupied Housing Units in Westminster, 2000

Table 7.6 Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units in Westminster, 2000

Table 7.7 Selected Monthly Homeownership Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999

Table 7.8 Gross Rent of Renter Occupied Housing Units in Westminster, 2000

Table 7.9 Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the City of Westminster, 1999

Chapter 9: Economic Development

Table 9.1 Westminster Area Business Patterns

Table 9.2 Major Employers in Carroll County, 2009

Table 9.3 Employment Status for Persons 16 Years and Older in Westminster, 2000

Table 9.4 Class of Worker for Persons 16 Years and Older in Westminster, 2000

Table 9.5 Employed Persons 16 Years and Older by Industry in Westminster, 2000

Table 9.6 City of Westminster Household Income, 2000

Chapter 11: Water Resources

Table 11.1 Westminster Future Water Supply Demand (Gallons per Day)

Table 11.2 Withdrawal from Water Sources

Table 11.3 Westminster Water Facilities Inventory

Table 11.4 Westminster Future Wastewater Demand

Table 11.5 Impervious Surface by Land Use in Westminster

Chapter 12: Transportation

Table 12.1 Changes in Average Daily Traffic, 1999-2008 Routes in the Westminster Area

Table 12.2 Park and Ride Lots in Carroll County

Table 12.3 Travel Time to Work for City of Westminster Residents, Workers, 2000

Table 12.4 Travel Time to Work for Carroll County Residents, 2000

Table 12.5 Means of Transportation to Work for City of Westminster Residents, 2000

Table 12.6 County of Employment for Carroll County Residents, 2002

Table 12.7 Destination of Workers Commuting Within Carroll County, 2002

Chapter 13: Community Facilities & Public Services

Table 13.1 City of Westminster Public Schools

Table 13.2 City of Westminster Non-Utility Based Properties

Table 13.3 City of Westminster Parks & Recreation Facilities

2009 Comprehensive Plan Maps

Chapter 2: Public Participation & Neighborhood Planning

Map 2.1 Neighborhood Planning Areas

Chapter 4: Municipal Growth

Map 4.1 Buildable Land

Map 4.2 Potential Lot Yield on Buildable Land

Map 4.3 Designated Land Use in Growth Area Boundary

Map 4.4 Annexable Land with Development Potential

Map 4.5 2008 County Zoning

Chapter 5: Land Use

Inserted Growth Tier Map (insert page 85.1)

Map 5.1 2009 Comprehensive Plan Land Use

Map 5.2 Existing Use of Land

Map 5.3 2004 Comprehensive Plan Land Use

Map 5.4 2008 City Zoning

Chapter 6: Environmental Resources & Protection

Map 6.1 Protected Environmental Areas

Map 6.2 Open Space

Chapter 7: Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization

Map 7.1 Housing Types in Residential Areas

Map 7.2 Westminster Priority Funding Area

Chapter 8: Community Character & Design

Map 8.1 Westminster Historic Districts and Sites

Chapter 9: Economic Development

Map 9.1 Major Shopping Centers

Chapter 11: Water Resources

Map 11.1 Westminster Watersheds

Map 11.2 Land Use by Watershed

Map 11.3 Water Service Area

Map 11.4 Sewer Service Area

Chapter 12: Transportation

Map 12.1 Roads and Highways

Map 12.2 Major Road Systems

Map 12.3 Pedestrian Accommodations

Map 12.4 Carroll Area Transit System Shuttle Routes

Chapter 13: Community Facilities & Public Services

Map 13.1 Community Facilities

2009 Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary

The staff of the City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development Department has worked hard to make the 2009 Comprehensive Plan a document that will become an everyday tool for the City of Westminster administration. The planning staff set a goal of ensuring that the public, local officials and City staff are able to refer to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan to not only better understand the community vision for the future but to also understand how planning can facilitate creating that vision. Incorporated throughout the plan are principles and concepts, adopted by various national organizations, which will be used to educate the public, local officials and City staff on how to implement the goals, objectives and actions of the plan.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan embraces the principles of Smart Growth, and the State of Maryland's 12 new State planning visions, to serve as guidelines for future growth and development while protecting the City's limited resources and land. The two new elements, Water Resources Element and the Municipal Growth Element, set the pace for future development in Westminster. This plan also works to give recognition to Westminster's community partners in State, County and local organizations and agencies. As a small city, Westminster depends on these partnerships to build a sustainable and vibrant community.

A new addition to the Comprehensive Plan is the Public Participation and Neighborhood Planning Element. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan update started with the coordination of the first Westminster resident survey in the summer of 2008. The survey was a success and triggered new initiatives within the City to improve residents' access to information and enhance communication between local officials and residents. The survey was followed by a series of community workshops in the fall of 2008 that offered residents the opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns about the future of their community. In the winter of 2009, the planning staff combined the results of the survey and the feedback from the workshops, to create the 2008 Community Vision Report. This report served as the base of the comprehensive plan update process. Each element in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan begins with a description from the 2008 Community Vision Report that relates to the element and an outline on how the element promotes a principle of Smart Growth and/or a State planning vision.

The City will use the Public Participation and Neighborhood Planning Element as a guide to create neighborhood-specific plans. The citywide vision and policies describe an overall preferred growth strategy for Westminster, while neighborhood planning establishes a specific vision and strategy for each neighborhood area

2009 Comprehensive Plan

Foreword

The City of Westminster initiated the 2009 Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”) update in October 2007, long before our country found itself in the midst of a significant economic recession. The approved Plan provides the means and methods to build a strong foundation for the future, and its goals, objectives and implementation plan create the roadmap to promote the orderly growth and development of the Westminster community.

Due to the economic slowdown from 2007 to 2009, development slowed to a crawl and tax revenues became flat. Unforeseen and unprecedented State budget cuts, with the possibility of significant additional County budget cuts, will likely cause the Mayor and Common Council to reconsider the timing of implementation of various elements of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. We fully anticipate the goals and objectives of the approved Plan will remain the same; however, the timeframes involved and who is responsible for implementation will likely change as City officials deal with the new financial reality.

The Mayor and Common Council look forward to the challenge of working to build a future of sustainability and self-sufficiency, albeit with limited resources. The Mayor and Common Council have come to believe that Westminster should strive to become self-reliant and not depend so heavily on State and County funding. The body is working on a financial plan that will outline how to continue providing high-quality municipal services with fewer resources and may also suggest the curtailment of services. Many recommendations in the approved Plan will further the goal of self-reliance and may be quickly implemented; other recommendations may have to wait until better times return to Westminster.

The City’s staff intends to provide a status report on the implementation of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan at yearly intervals. This will provide the Mayor and Common Council and community with information on the status of Plan implementation vis-à-vis the financial situation. In the end, the Mayor and Common Council and staff believe that the realistic implementation of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan is one of the best tools available to guide decisions on difficult choices, so that Westminster remains positioned for economic growth and recovery when the current financial crisis ends.