

## MEMORANDUM

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TO City of Westminster General Plan Advisory Committee

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SUBJECT Vision, Values, Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions – An Overview

PROJECT NUMBER CWE-11

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It is very common, and quite easy, to confuse the meaning of the myriad terms we use in developing a general plan. The primary terms—Vision, Values, Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions—all have specific definitions, but are not always applied correctly. Frequently, we find goals and values appear interchangeably in a narrative, while implementation actions masquerade as policies. To avoid confusion and better clarify how the components of the Westminster General Plan will operate, we have prepared the following overview.

**Vision** statements are aspirational. They describe the desired, positive future of a community, city, county or other geographic area created by conceiving important desired characteristics. A vision is an image of the future the community wishes to create; it provides a picture of how growth should occur in Westminster over time—but it does not mandate how much growth should be accommodated.

The vision should be a succinct description of “community values”. Community values, sometimes also referred to as “guiding principles”, are beliefs about basic considerations that should apply to whatever the city does. Examples of community values/guiding principles that are important to Westminster could include: sense of place, family-friendly atmosphere, culture, location and access, etc.

**Goals** are statements of desired future conditions, regarding a particular topic in the community, toward which effort and use of resources are directed. For example, a goal related to land use may be: “Westminster has a spectrum of housing types and price ranges that match the jobs in the City so that residents can both live and work in the community.” Both the city government and the community (e.g., developers and builders) will need to devote resources to achieve this goal.

**Policies** are statements that guide decision-making and specify an intended level of public commitment on a subject. If you are faced with a decision on this subject, here is the policy you are to follow. For example, a policy related to mobility may be: “We require development and urban design that reduces reliance on the automobile and capitalizes on multi-modal transportation opportunities.” When a development project is being evaluated, here’s what should be considered in its design.

**Implementation Actions** are individual steps taken to implement one or more policies. Developing a park master plan, revising the Municipal Code, creating a commercial recycling program, installing bike racks and storage facilities, and administering a housing rehabilitation grant and loan program are all examples of discrete actions that support city policies.

So, values lead to goals, which in turn shape policies that result in implementation actions. Pretty simple. Not easy, though.

Following is an example demonstrating how the hierarchy works:

**GOAL:** We have sufficient park and recreational facilities that meet the diverse needs of residents and visitors.

**POLICY:** We require variety in the design and intended function of park and recreational space to reflect the varied needs of the community.

**IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:** Conduct a periodic community-wide survey of park users to measure frequency of park usage, satisfaction with services provided, and desired recreational amenities.