

Appendix C General Plan Buildout Methodology

Appendices

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MEMORANDUM

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SUBJECT General Plan and EIR Projections Methodology

PROJECT Westminster General Plan

This technical memorandum outlines the methodology used to establish the development projections for the Westminster General Plan that serves as the baseline for analyzing potential impacts in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This memorandum also serves as a general reference for City staff, elected officials, and the public.

Background

All California cities are required to identify development projections (i.e., a “buildout analysis”) in their general plan. The analysis refers to the total development and impacts associated with the land uses approved in a general plan. This Memorandum provides a summary of the assumptions associated with the “proposed plan” along with two other comparisons: the amount of development on the ground (existing conditions/baseline) and the amount of development allowed by the current general plan. The analysis considers housing units, households, residents, jobs, and nonresidential square footage. A projection estimate is important for several reasons; in particular, it allows a city to adequately plan for roads, water service, parks, recreation, and other infrastructure and services.

The General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the tool that analyzes impacts associated with land uses and development allowed by the General Plan and provides programs to avoid undesirable impacts. It should be noted that communities rarely—if ever—achieve maximum projections. Regulatory constraints, physical constraints, and foreseeable market conditions often result in less development than allowed. The EIR analyzes a general plan’s projections to determine the potential impacts associated with a reasonable amount of development that could occur under the general plan.

Westminster’s projections methodology uses generally accepted methods that are consistent with traffic, noise, air quality, and other assessments in the General Plan EIR, while allowing for unique differences within the community. Westminster’s projections methodology is based on data from a variety of sources and contemporary planning experience. These include federal and state sources (U.S. Census, American Community Survey, and Department of Finance, to name a few) coupled with City staff input. Westminster’s projections analysis is also consistent with: 1) projections with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), water service, sewer providers, and others; 2) regional housing needs allocations; 3) historical growth patterns; and 4) approved specific plans and other projects.

The following pages outline in greater detail the process and methods for calculating Westminster’s projections.

Existing Conditions (Baseline)

For the purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) the City's existing conditions (existing on-the-ground number of units, households, population, nonresidential building square footage, and employment) serve as the baseline for the General Plan EIR analysis. A General Plan EIR is required to compare the potential impacts of the Proposed Plan against existing conditions. The methodology follows.

EXISTING LAND USE, UNITS, HOUSEHOLDS, POPULATION, UNITS, AND JOBS

PlaceWorks and the City conducted an Existing Land Use Inventory to validate on-the-ground uses and serve as the EIR's baseline conditions. Nineteen land use categories are identified based on information from the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG) Existing Land Use Database, aerial photography, site visits, and local knowledge. Building square footage is derived from floor area ratio (FAR) assumptions for the City's nonresidential land uses. Every City parcel is designated a specific land use category and associated acreage. The following generalized assumptions were used to calculate existing residential units, households, population, and jobs.

1. Existing residential units from the Existing Land Use Inventory

Any parcel identified as Single Family Residential or Multifamily Townhome is assumed to have one unit per parcel. For parcels designated as Mobile Home, unit counts are based on aerial review (if possible) or a representative average density of 9 units per acre. Existing housing unit counts for parcels designated for Multifamily Residential are based on an average density of 22 units per acre, based on a representative sample of built projects.

2. Existing households in Westminster: [unit] x [occupancy rate]

At any given time, a percentage of existing housing units in Westminster are occupied; the others are vacant (referred to as the occupancy and vacancy rates, respectively). In terms of this projections methodology, "households" represent the number of units that were occupied. Based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates (2008-2013), an estimated 95.5 percent of the units are assumed occupied. The total number of units is multiplied by the estimated occupancy rate (95.5%) to arrive at the number of households in Westminster during the base year.

3. Existing population in Westminster:[households] x [persons per household]

According to the 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the average persons per household (pph) is 3.32 pph, which includes 3.40 pph for owner-occupied units and 3.23 pph for renter-occupied units. To customize the population estimates, all single-family units are assumed to have 3.40 pph (e.g., owner-occupied) and multifamily units are assumed to have 3.23 pph. An exception applies to parcels designated as Mobile Home, because mobile home households are typically smaller in size than other types. Based on the 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the average mobile home household has 2.45 pph.

4. Existing jobs: [nonresidential building square footage] / [employment generation factor]

The U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data and County Assessor's data are used to estimate the average number of nonresidential square footage per employee. The employment generation factors are: 600 square feet/employee for Commercial Lodging, 300 square feet/employee for Commercial Office, 500 square feet/employee for Commercial Retail, 800 square feet/employee for Light Industrial, square feet/employee for Heavy Industrial, and 400 square feet/employee for vertical mixed-use. As example, a 20,000 square-foot Commercial Office building is assumed to generate 37 jobs (20,000/300). Additionally, actual employment for schools are drawn from 2014 School Accountability Report Cards, and counts from major employers (City of Westminster, Home Depot, Target).

Table 1. Existing Conditions Assumptions

CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATION	LAND USE CODE	PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD	ASSUMED INTENSITY	SQUARE FOOTAGE PER EMPLOYEE
Single Family Residential	SFR	3.40		
Mobile Homes	MH	2.45		
Multifamily Townhome	MFT	3.40		
Multifamily Residential	MF	3.23		
Commercial Lodging	CL		0.30	600
Commercial Office	CO		0.25	300
Commercial Retail	CR		0.35	500
Light Industrial	LI		0.40	800
Heavy Industrial	HI		0.50	1,000
Mixed Use	MU		0.30	400
Special Care Facilities	SCF			
Educational Facilities	ED			
Open Space and Recreation	OSR			
Public/Quasi Public Facilities	PQP			
Railroad ROW	RA			
Flood Control Channel	FC			
Vacant	VA			
ROW	ROW			

Current and Proposed General Plan Projections

Westminster’s Current and Proposed General Plan projections refer to the realistic development expected under its current (approved) and proposed land use plans. Historically, most parcels are not built-out to accommodate the allowed maximum development capacity. A parcel or group of parcels is often built at a lower density or intensity due to physical site constraints, zoning requirements, development regulations, and product type. As a result, the projections represent the likely development that could occur based on average levels of density and intensity for each land use category. The following assumptions were used to determine the projections for the Westminster General Plan.

1. Current/proposed units: [parcel acreage] x [assumed density for land use designations]

Dwelling unit projections are estimated by multiplying the acreage of each parcel by the assumed density for different land use designations. The assumed density for each land use represents an average (midrange) density for that land use type in Westminster. Westminster’s residential land use designations are defined by a density range. To determine projections, a residential density assigned for each land use designation is multiplied by the acreage of each parcel to determine the total number of housing units that exist or could be reasonably accommodated.

2. Current and proposed households: [units] x [occupancy rate]

The housing occupancy rate assumed for the current and proposed plan is consistent with that assumed for Existing Land Use: 95.4 percent based on data collected from the 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates. A standard assumption is used because it will accurately reflect the averages of

economic recession and booms. As mentioned above, the number of housing units is derived by multiplying the acreage of individual parcels by the assumed density allowed within a particular land use designation.

3. Current and future population: [households] x [persons per household]

Since 2010 the City of Westminster has seen a relatively stable pattern of average household size, growing only slightly over the past 5 years. It is reasonable to assume that in the future, average household size in Westminster will largely reflect existing conditions. Based on data from the 2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates and the 2015 Department of Finance E5 Report, the persons per household factors used to estimate population for the current and proposed plans are included in Table 2.

4. Nonresidential building square footage: [parcel square footage] x [assumed FAR]

Building intensities for nonresidential uses are measured by floor area ratio (FAR). FAR refers to the ratio of the total floor area of a building (building footprint times number of building stories) to the total square footage of that parcel. FAR calculations do not include floor areas for parking structures or outdoor open storage. Westminster’s nonresidential designations include a target FAR (also referred to as building coverage); no minimum threshold is required. To determine future projections for Westminster, a FAR is assigned to each nonresidential designation that represents the anticipated intensity for each different land use designation.

5. Calculate employment : [nonresidential building square footage] / [employment generation factor]

Employment generation factors represent the average amount of building square footage typically required per employee and are customized based on the land use designation; dividing the nonresidential building square footage by the employment generation factor results in an estimate of the number of jobs at buildout. The resulting employment number represents a count of the total number of jobs associated with a given amount of building square footage. This includes both full- and part-time jobs and is not a full-time equivalent measure.

Summary Land Use Assumptions

Table 2 summarizes assumptions for the Current Westminster General Plan (1996) and Table 3 summarizes assumptions for the Proposed Westminster General Plan (in draft form). These assumptions are used to estimate the current and future number of households, population, housing units, nonresidential building square footage, and total number of jobs in Westminster. Table 4 summarizes the preferred mix of uses for each of the 6 new mixed-use categories.

Table 2. Current Plan Density and Intensity Assumptions

CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATION	LAND USE CODE	DENSITY RANGE	ASSUMED DENSITY	PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD
Residential - Low	LDR	04-07 du/ac	7 du/ac	3.4
Residential - Medium	MDR	08-14 du/ac	12 du/ac	3.4
Residential - High	HDR	15-25 du/ac	22 du/ac	3.4
Planned Development	PD	Varies	16 du/ac	3.4
CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATION	LAND USE CODE	TARGET FAR	ASSUMED INTENSITY	SQUARE FOOTAGE PER EMPLOYEE
Commercial – Low Intensity	CL	0.33	0.33	500
Commercial – General	CG	0.33	0.33	400

Industrial	I	0.50	0.50	1000
Planned Development	PD	Varies	0.35-0.50	600

Notes:

The Current Plan includes a designation for Planned Development, which provides for mixed use or single use development. In the 1996 General Plan, each PD area has a goal that guides development potential as well as use type. FAR and density limits identified in the Current Plan could be exceeded in the PD District so long as compliance with other required standards are demonstrated. The densities and intensities allowed in PD areas vary, but generally reflect an average density of 16 du/ac and FARs of 0.33 or 0.50, per the requirements of Commercial and Industrial designations.

Table 3. Proposed Density and Intensity Assumptions

PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATION	LAND USE CODE	DENSITY RANGE	ASSUMED DENSITY	PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD
Residential - Low	LDR	04-07 du/ac	7 du/ac	3.4
Residential - Medium	MDR	08-14 du/ac	12 du/ac	3.4
Residential - High	HDR	15-25 du/ac	22 du/ac	3.4
PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATION	LAND USE CODE	MAX FAR	ASSUMED INTENSITY	SQUARE FOOTAGE PER EMPLOYEE
Neighborhood Commercial	NC	0.35	0.33	500
Regional Commercial	RC	0.65	0.40	400
Urban Industrial	UI	1.0	0.45	600
Industrial	I	0.50	0.50	1000

PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATION	LAND USE CODE	MAXIMUM DENSITY, FAR	ASSUMED DENSITY, INTENSITY	PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD, SQUARE FOOTAGE PER EMPLOYEE
Mixed-Use Civic Center	MU-CC	40 du/ac, 1.0 FAR	36 du/ac, 0.60 FAR	3.4 pph, 500 sf/employee
Mixed-Use Corridor	MU-CO	40 du/ac, 1.0 FAR	30 du/ac, 0.40 FAR	3.4 pph, 500 sf/employee
Mixed-Use Little Saigon	MU-LS	40 du/ac, 1.0 FAR	36 du/ac, 0.60 FAR	3.4 pph, 400 sf/employee
Mixed-Use Northwest District	MU-NW	40 du/ac, 1.0 FAR	24 du/ac, 0.35 FAR	3.4 pph, 500 sf/employee
Mixed-Use Westminster Blvd/Downtown	MU-DT	36 du/ac, 1.0 FAR	24 du/ac, 0.35 FAR	3.4 pph, 400 sf/employee
Mixed-Use Westminster Mall	MU-WM	40 du/ac, 1.0 FAR	30 du/ac, 0.50 FAR	3.4 pph, 400 sf/employee

Table 4. Preferred Land Use Mix for Mixed-Use Areas

PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATION	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL	OFFICE	OTHER
Mixed-Use Civic Center	20%	20%	20%	40%
Mixed-Use Corridor	30%	35%	35%	-
Mixed-Use Little Saigon	30%	25%	25%	20%
Mixed-Use Northwest District	50%	50%	-	-
Mixed-Use Westminster Blvd/Downtown	50%	25%	25%	-
Mixed-Use Westminster Mall	30%	70%	-	-

Notes:

In the Civic Center, “Other” refers to public and semi-public facilities, including City Hall, the Police Department Building, and the West Justice Center of the Superior Court of California. In Little Saigon, “Other” refers to hotel and creative media and technology uses.