

9. Significant Irreversible Changes Due to the Proposed Project

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describe any significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the proposed project should it be implemented. Buildout of the City of Westminster would occur over the next 30 years or more. Implementation of the proposed General Plan Update would provide guidance for additional residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial, and institutional development consistent with the City of Westminster's goals and policies. The significant irreversible changes due to the proposed project are:

- Future development would involve construction, operation, and maintenance activities that entail the commitment of nonrenewable and/or slowly renewable energy resources such as electricity, gasoline, and diesel fuel; human resources; and natural resources including lumber and other forest products, sand and gravel, asphalt, copper, lead, steel, other metals, and water.
- Population and employment growth related to project implementation would increase vehicle trips over the long term; emissions associated with vehicle trips would contribute to the South Coast Air Basin's nonattainment designation for ozone and particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).
- This growth would also require an increased commitment of social services and public maintenance services (e.g. police, fire, sewer, and potable water). Service obligations would be long-term due to the low likelihood of returning the land to its original condition once it has developed.
- Future implementation of the proposed project is a long-term irreversible commitment of vacant parcels of land or redevelopment of existing developed land in the City of Westminster.

The City of Westminster General Plan Update is guided by objectives that reflect the community's values and priorities. The project objectives describe the community that would result from the implementation of the General Plan Update. These objectives would lead to a number of long-term benefits for Westminster.

- Be forward thinking and embrace sustainability, innovation, and technology to continually improve the City.
- Be well known throughout Southern California for its quality neighborhoods, unique community culture, exciting local and regional destinations, and diversity in economic opportunity.
- Cultivate a special sense and quality of place which sets Westminster apart from its neighboring cities.

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- Promote distinct local and regional activity centers, districts, and cultural destinations—including a Downtown and Little Saigon—and places where community members can gather to participate in civic events and other special programs.
- Utilize walkable streets, signage, architecture, landscaping, and neighborhoods that contribute to Westminster’s unique identity.
- Maintain a strong community culture which celebrates Westminster’s history, diversity, and family-friendly atmosphere.
- Encourage residents to take pride in their homes and neighborhoods, and ensure they are well maintained, clean, safe, and supported by strong infrastructure and public services.
- Provide a variety of housing choices for people looking to call Westminster home, including first-time homebuyers, families with children, empty-nesters, and retirees.
- Maintain an economy with a range of high-quality dining, hospitality, shopping, entertainment, and employment choices.
- Help encourage a strong business community that is invested in maintaining the positive image of Westminster, especially along its corridors and business districts.
- Provide people who live, work, and visit Westminster convenient access to popular destinations throughout the region.
- Ensure that people of all ages and abilities within Westminster can safely and efficiently get around by walking, biking, or using public transit and the City’s extensive network of trails.
- Encourage residents of all ages to be healthy and active, and ensure that they are well served by ample park facilities and recreation opportunities.

Additionally, planning to achieve these objectives will result in numerous benefits such as:

- Creating more vibrant and dynamic places for economic development by accommodating future growth along corridors and in key activity centers.
- Preserving and protecting the City’s existing residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other important facilities.
- Clarifying land use designations, including mixed-use areas, to provide more transparency and certainty for both applicants and decision-makers.

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- Allowing a greater range of housing options to meet current and projected residential demand.
- Supporting the long-term success of a cultural destination in Westminster that meets the needs of residents, business and property owners, and visitors.

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