



## Vision Statement

Westminster is a safe, healthy, and engaged community where new ideas and sustainable innovation enhance the community's quality of life and create economic opportunity for today's residents and for future generations.

## Critical Success Factors and Priority Projects

To realize this vision for the City of Westminster, the Mayor and Common Council collaborated with the City's executive leadership team to identify five key focus areas – or Critical Success Factors – to serve as their collective work plan for 2018 – 2021. They are Responsible Stewardship of City Resources, A Safe and Livable Community, Strong Partnerships and an Engaged Community, Economic Activity and Growth, and Water and Sewer Capacity for Future Generations.

Attainment of these Critical Success Factors capture the Mayor and Common Council's long-term vision for the Westminster community. Priority projects have been identified for each of the five Critical Success Factors to guide the future work of City staff so that the Mayor and Common Council's vision for the City of Westminster is realized.

### Strong Partnerships and an Engaged Community

The City has an excellent working relationship with the County government, surrounding municipalities, the State of Maryland, and the federal government to advance matters of interest for the betterment of Westminster. The City fosters communication and works well with McDaniel College, nonprofits, homeowners' associations, businesses, and individual citizens. Westminster residents are engaged in their community, including voting in City elections.

#### *Priority Projects:*

- Continue to enhance the City's relationship with its downtown partners, building upon the existing bi-monthly meetings and exploring other avenues for engagement with this segment of the business community.
- Identify the leadership of the various homeowners' associations in Westminster and establish a mechanism for enhanced two-way communication with them.
- Build upon existing initiatives, such as McDaniel and Main, to enrich the City's partnership with McDaniel College. Continue to identify opportunities where the City and the College can collaborate for their mutual benefit.
- Explore the cost and feasibility of creating a Communications Coordinator position to plan, organize, and manage the City's information dissemination, website content, media relations, government-related social media, and create and publish a City newsletter geared towards Westminster residents.
- Engage the community in the City's election process through increased communication and advertising, including the City's social media channels, posting of signs, and newspaper advertisements. Staff a booth at City special events to facilitate voter registration. Explore modifications to the City Code to make it easier to cast absentee ballots and to allow early voting.

## Water and Sewer Capacity for Future Generations

The City of Westminster manages its water and sewer resources in a manner that ensures the continued growth and prosperity of the community. Through thoughtful planning, the City has a defined short-term, mid-term, and long-term strategy to increase its water capacity. Inflow and infiltration into the sewer system has been minimized through appropriate City investment, restoring capacity.

### *Priority Projects:*

- Adopt a new water and sewer policy to guide the allocation of the City's water and sewer resources.
- Complete water and sewer rate studies and, as warranted, adopt a new rate structure to ensure that the City can fund the development of new water sources and address inflow and infiltration into the sewer system.
- Develop an intergovernmental strategy to pursue the acceptance of water re-use by the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- Collaborate with Carroll County and neighboring municipalities to regularly review the County's Plumbing Code to include the most water efficient technology currently available for new permits. Explore the feasibility of establishing an incentive mechanism to encourage the replacement of existing fixtures and equipment to conserve water.
- Retrofit City-owned facilities to model best practices in water conservation as they are renovated.

## Economic Activity and Growth

Westminster is branded as a technologically savvy community in a historic and accessible setting, allowing the City to expand its economic base through increased economic activity.

### *Priority Projects:*

- Explore the cost and feasibility of creating a contractual or staff Economic Development position.
- Modernize and streamline the City's Zoning Code by consolidating the number of zoning districts. Look for other opportunities during this review to remove barriers to development and redevelopment in the City. Also update the City's Sign Code.
- Retain a consultant to conduct a market analysis and develop a marketing strategy for promoting downtown Westminster as a place to shop, visit, and invest.
- Hold regular meetings between the City government and the largest employers in Westminster to enhance communication and to determine how the City can support these employers in their continued growth.
- Promote opportunities for the City to be an active partner in public-private joint ventures that address the underutilization of key parcels in the downtown area.
- Identify and pursue annexations on a targeted basis, focusing on ones that will increase the City's commercial and industrial taxable base.
- Develop a brand as the foundation for the City's marketing and economic development efforts.

## Responsible Stewardship of City Resources

Westminster is a good steward of all its resources, including its workforce and physical infrastructure, and makes appropriate investments in them. The City makes fiscally sound and sustainable decisions for the long-term health of the City, including appropriate reserve planning and well thought out operating and capital plans. It strives to be an environmentally sustainable community that looks for ways to reduce its carbon footprint.

### *Priority Projects:*

- Complete the Compensation and Classification Study. Develop a financially sustainable plan to implement the Study results to ensure that the City can attract and retain a quality workforce.
- Implement a comprehensive performance evaluation system that integrates with the new classification system, with the goal of promoting communication between supervisors and their direct reports and enhancing employee development throughout the organization.
- Continue to invest in the professional development and training of the City's workforce through tuition assistance, management programs, and career ladder training.
- Supplement the City's existing financial management policies by the development of a formal reserve policy for the General Fund. Refine the existing debt management and investment policies to provide a higher level of detail and transparency to the City's financial operations.
- Continue to refine the City's multi-year Capital Improvement Program to ensure the appropriate maintenance of the City's existing infrastructure, including roads, bridges, buildings, technology, and fleet.
- Continually look for opportunities where technology can be used to improve and optimize the delivery of City services.
- Develop and adopt a Parks Ordinance to clearly communicate the City's policies regarding the use of its parks, playgrounds, and open space to users of these facilities.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the City's open space and park land to determine whether the existing spaces are being used to their maximum potential. As part of this review, solicit input from Westminster residents on their level of satisfaction with the current use of these City-owned properties and what changes, if any, should be made to better meet the community's needs.
- Determine the future use of the City-owned property formerly known as the Wakefield Valley Golf Course. Develop a master plan to guide the implementation of the desired use, including associated funding requirements.
- Assess the feasibility of relocating the City's Street Maintenance Facility to an alternative location, facilitating the long-term goal of revitalizing the Route 27 gateway into Westminster.

## A Safe and Livable Community

Westminster is a community of safe and well-kept neighborhoods. Residents enjoy tree-lined streets and a thoughtfully planned multi-modal transportation network connecting the City's neighborhoods to Westminster's diverse cultural, recreational, and commercial venues.

### *Priority Projects:*

- Identify desired linkage points for bicycle and walking trails and investigate feasibility of creating those connections, including any required easements. Develop engineering plans and cost estimates for building these trail systems and incorporate the associated projects into the City's multi-year Capital Improvement Program.
- In partnership with the Westminster Public Safety Advisory Council, increase community engagement and collaboration in matters relating to public safety in the City.
- Enhance crime analysis capabilities to provide actionable information to facilitate proactive community problem solving, crime prevention, and law enforcement activities.
- Continue to enhance recruiting and retention efforts for public safety positions to ensure an appropriately staffed and diverse workforce, allowing the Police Department to provide a high level of service to all segments of the community.
- Working with the City of Westminster Tree Commission, develop a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal, or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets, and in other public areas of the City. Collaborate with BGE in developing the plan to identify appropriate tree species in the vicinity of utility lines.
- Review the City's current rental property licensing program, evaluate whether it is achieving the City's goal of safe and habitable housing, and modify its provisions as warranted.
- Implement a more proactive approach to property maintenance matters. Establish zones so that all areas of the City are checked on a regular basis, ensuring that all neighborhoods are well maintained and in compliance with the City's property maintenance code.