



City of West Covina 2016 General Plan Update and Downtown Master Plan and Code

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

The City of West Covina will be the Lead Agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that will analyze the environmental impacts associated with a proposed update to the West Covina General Plan and adoption of a Downtown Master Plan and Code. These two related actions are described below. More information on the Downtown Master Plan and Code are available on the project website at: <http://www.planwc.org/index.html>.

2016 General Plan Update (PlanWC)

The proposed project is a comprehensive update of the City's General Plan, which has not been comprehensively updated since 1985. The General Plan will be reorganized and reformatted, with updated goals and policies that reflect the community's vision of West Covina that the General Plan seeks to achieve. The General Plan Land Use Map will also be updated. The General Plan Land Use map (see attached) reflects the community's vision to direct the majority of new growth to the Downtown area where the development pressures are the greatest and change is desired. Housing and job growth is targeted to strategic areas along the corridors and neighborhood centers.

The Draft 2016 General Plan includes the following eight Elements:

- Our Natural Community
- Our Prosperous Community
- Our Well Planned Community
- Our Accessible Community
- Our Resilient Community
- Our Healthy and Safe Community
- Our Active Community
- Our Creative Community

Among the goals of PlanWC and the Downtown Master Plan and Code are the following:

- Direct new growth to the downtown area where development pressures are the greatest and change is desired, while protecting stable residential areas. This strategy is referred to as “Downtown First.”
- Target housing and job growth in strategic areas along key transportation corridors.
- Encourage pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development in Downtown, while providing vibrant public spaces and gathering places.
- Preserve existing open spaces, improve the quality of natural resources, and improve access to open space.
- Maintain and monitor West Covina’s fiscal health by reinforcing West Covina’s brand as a great place to Live, Work and Play in the San Gabriel Valley, and nurturing local businesses and attracting non-retail jobs.
- Design streets that provide safe access for all users—pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users, and motorists—of all ages and abilities, while also being in harmony with the area’s history, environmental resources, and overall aesthetic.
- Support development patterns and support systems that yield a resilient low-carbon built environment.
- Create environments that encourage safe and healthy lifestyles and maximize the opportunities for physical activity.
- Become a vibrant cultural center by weaving the arts and local heritage into everyday life.
- Enhance the value of fitness and celebrate healthy living; improve the existing condition of public open spaces and facilities to encourage use; and acquire, develop, and maintain quality public open spaces and trails.

West Covina includes many different kinds of places, with very different characters.

Accommodating new growth requires either designing changes to match the character of the area or carefully and intentionally changing the character of key locations.

Plan WC contains a description of the different land use planning designations for West Covina, and the equivalent transect zone. The transect zones provide a framework to describe a broad but continuous range of environments for human habitation and activity. The transect zones reflect how intensely land is used, and how placement and scale of buildings, the type of streets, presence and width of sidewalks should reinforce the character of the area.

The allocation of separate land use designations evolves to a geography of places that address “form and character” of the place. Plan WC informs the nature of intended change in different areas. The basic organizing place types for areas designated for growth are neighborhoods, districts and corridors. The majority of new growth will be directed to the downtown district and the corridors. The level of change ranges from reinvestment in existing buildings and

minor improvements to utility infrastructure and the public realm, to the occasional infill development that completes the prevalent development pattern.

This rigorous and principled approach to planning establishes the regulatory geography and sets the stage for coding. The Downtown Plan and Code's regulatory framework seamlessly carries the logic of good design and sound planning from the scale of a building, lot and block to the scale of neighborhood, community, and city.

Downtown Master Plan and Code

The Downtown Plan and accompanying form-based code seeks to form consensus around and establish a common image for Downtown West Covina as a livable, healthy and economically vibrant center for the community. The Downtown Master Plan and Code will guide public funding and seek to attract private investments. The central theme of PlanWC is Downtown First. As the Downtown Master Plan and Code and PlanWC were prepared and adopted simultaneously, the two documents are entirely consistent with each other.

The Development Code implements the Downtown Vision and Goals and Policies. The prescriptive standards in the Development Code ensure that new development projects exhibit the highest standards of urban design, architecture, and landscaping at the scale of neighborhood, block, lot, and building according to the Transect. The Downtown vision's form is compact, walkable, and mixed use. The urban form is intended to be inviting, comfortable, safe, and ecologically resilient. The Development Code allows a mix of uses within a walkable environment so driving is an option, not a necessity to meet every day needs.

The Downtown Code provides all requirements for development and land use activity within the boundaries identified in the Code (see attached). Except as specifically referenced within the Downtown Code, the West Covina Municipal Code requirements in place prior to the adoption of the Downtown Code would be replaced by the requirements of the Downtown Code within these boundaries.

Environmental Impact Report

The Draft EIR will be a program EIR. Per the *CEQA Guidelines*, a program EIR is an EIR that may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project. The purpose of a program EIR is to allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and programwide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts.

The EIR will examine each of the issue areas on the City's environmental checklist. Issues to be discussed include:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Mandatory Findings of Significance

In addition to the CEQA-required "no project" alternative, the EIR will examine a range of land use scenarios that address one or more of the projects' potential environmental effects.

The City of West Covina would like to know the views of your organization as to the scope and content of the environmental information that should be addressed in connection with the proposed project. Public agencies may need to use the EIR prepared by the City of West Covina when considering permits or other approvals regarding certain aspects of the proposed actions. Due to time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Jeff Anderson, Planning Director, at

City of West Covina
Planning Department
1444 West Garvey Avenue South
West Covina, California 91790

Mr. Anderson can be reached at (626) 939-8422. Mr. Anderson's email address is Jeff.Anderson@westcovina.org. Please provide the name for a contact person in your agency.

The City of West Covina will hold an EIR scoping meeting to provide an additional opportunity for input on the scope and content of the EIR. The scoping meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 29, at 6:00 p.m., in the Community Room at West Covina City Hall, located at 1444 West Garvey Avenue South.

Project Title: City of West Covina 2016 General Plan Update and Downtown Master Plan
and Code

Project Sponsor: City of West Covina

Date February 16, 2016

Signature 

Title Planning Director

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