

Westminster Mall Specific Plan FAQs

Is Westminster Mall closing?

No. The Specific Plan is a long-term planning tool to prepare for the future.

What is a Specific Plan?

A Specific Plan is a comprehensive planning and zoning document for a defined area. It is a planning tool used to guide future land use, mobility, and design to achieve a unique vision for that area.

Per State law, a specific plan must include the following information:

- Standards and guidelines for development (building heights, setbacks, parking requirements, etc.)
- Program of implementation measures including infrastructure and financing
- Text and diagrams showing the distribution, location and extent of desired land uses
- Proposed distribution, location, extent, and intensity of essential facilities needed to support the land uses
- Statement of the specific plan's consistency with the General Plan

Why is the City creating a Specific Plan for the Westminster Mall?

During the General Plan update process, the community expressed the desire to see the Mall be a mixed use site that is an integrated, accessible, attractive, economically viable, and exciting place to be. The Westminster General Plan states that a Specific Plan will be created to implement that vision.

Why now?

In recent months, some major stores operating at the Mall have experienced downsizing or closure, including Sears and Babies R Us. Mall property owners approached the City indicating that they are exploring the possible conversion of their properties to new or modified uses.

The City is preparing the Specific Plan to ensure the community's vision is represented in any future changes at the site. Additionally, from a technical standpoint, a Specific Plan will allow development entitlements to be considered in a cohesive and efficient manner.

How big is the Westminster Mall?

The Westminster Mall houses approximately 1.3 million square feet of retail on nearly 100 acres of prime real estate, with direct access to the I-405.

Why are stores closing? Can't they just fill empty spaces with retailers I like?

Retail has changed dramatically over the last 15 years, as online shopping has become increasingly common. Retailers have had to completely rethink where they locate stores and how many they have. This is happening nationwide and is not unique to Westminster.

How long will this take?

The Specific Plan and related environmental documentation is expected to take approximately 18 months to complete.

Changes at the Mall could take months or years after that point and may be something that occurs over time as the different property owners have different perspectives and timelines. This is another reason



the Specific Plan is important – to assure a single vision is adhered to, even if redevelopment takes place in phases.

Why is this opportunity important for the Westminster Community?

Invigorating this large site could have significant benefits to the community. For the City, sales tax revenue from Westminster Mall is an important contributor to our budget and something we monitor closely. Improving our City's financial position is critical to affording high quality services and facilities, such as police, fire, parks, and roads. A lively destination-type project could improve the image of our community and attract more visitors to stop and shop in Westminster.

What types of topics will be addressed in the specific plan?

The specific plan will cover the topics listed below.

- **Community Input.** Your ideas matter! The specific plan will reflect input collected from the community.
- **Vision.** The image, functionality and type of place that the Mall site should be in the future.
- **Land Use.** The desired future land uses allowed on the site, including densities and intensities.
- **Mobility.** A multi-modal system that facilitates all types of mobility (automobile, bus, bike, pedestrian) and supports the planned land uses.
- **Infrastructure.** An assessment of water, wastewater, drainage, and other essential systems needed to support future uses.
- **Design Guidelines.** Architecture and landscaping standards and criteria to guide the character of future development or redevelopment.
- **Implementation.** A series of actions to be taken by the City or other stakeholders to achieve the vision. This can include financing, phasing and programming. A general timeframe for completion is identified for each action to help prioritize when and where resources should be focused.
- **Environmental Impacts.** Environmental documentation will be prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Does the Specific Plan approve construction?

No. The Specific Plan does not approve construction or development of a specific project. It does provide development “rules” such as maximum densities, required amounts of open space, quality standards, etc. Any development or redevelopment of the Mall site would first require the property owners to submit the entitlements called for in the specific plan. If the entitlements are approved, then plans would be submitted for plan check before a permit can be issued.

How can I get involved or learn more about the project?

The City is planning different outreach efforts. You can keep updated by visiting our website http://www.westminster-ca.gov/our_city/depts/cd/planning/major_development_projects.asp, by following us on Facebook, or by submitting your name to our interest list for emailed updates on that same webpage or by an email to Alexa Smittle at asmittle@westminster-ca.gov or (714) 548-3674.

