

## CHAPTER 2: PLAN PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

### Westminster Environs Community Comprehensive Plan Update Process

The community comprehensive plan update process was divided into six separate phases, each phase having a distinct and specific focus or set of tasks.

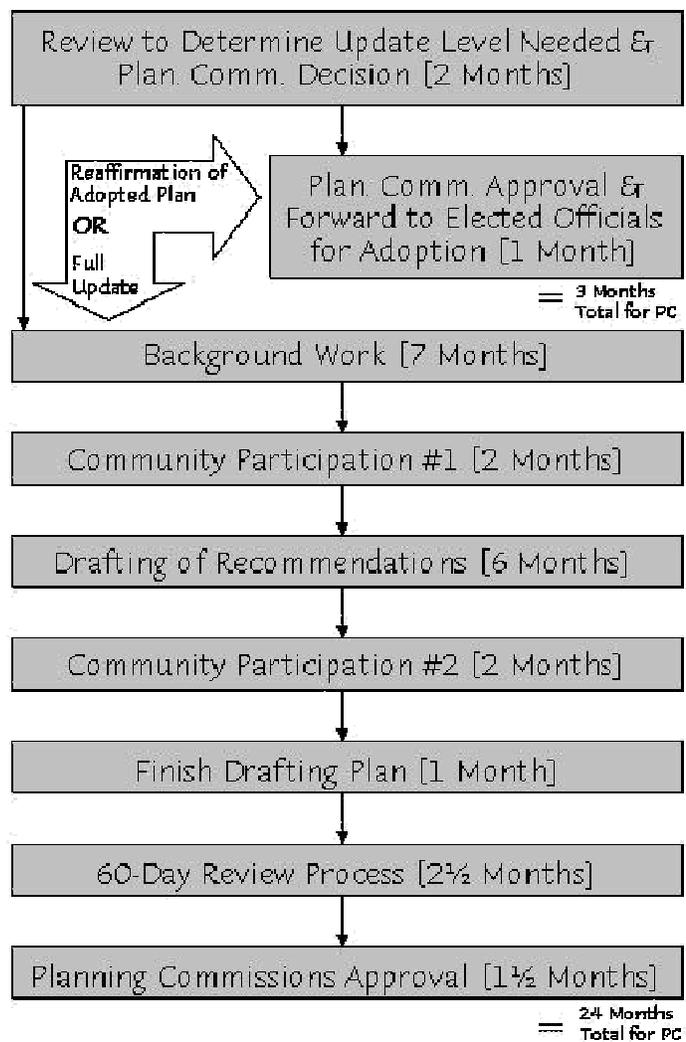
*Phase 1* was the Background Work Phase. During this time, staff researched existing uses of land, current conditions of community facilities, and community demographic characteristics. Staff also interviewed community officials, developed the initial study area maps, and prepared the survey and the first newsletter.

*Phase 2* was the first Community Participation Phase. All community households within the study area received a series of newsletters. These newsletters informed the community of plan update progress and upcoming community workshops. Each household also received a survey. This survey gave each household in the community the opportunity to participate and share its needs. In addition, this phase included a community workshop series. Participants identified their desires for the community’s future, the goals the community wanted to achieve, and other issues specific to the Westminster environs. The community workshops resulted in a better picture of what the community wanted to accomplish and where it wanted to go in the future.

Based on the Phase 1 background work and the direction for the future provided by the community, during *Phase 3* County staff developed a recommended list of ways to achieve the goals. Any proposed land use designation changes or additions needed to accomplish these goals were mapped.

*Phase 4* was the second Community Participation Phase. A newsletter, which included all the recommendations, was prepared and sent out to give the community the opportunity to

### Standard Update Process for Community Comprehensive Plans



review the recommendations prior to the next set of workshops. These workshops allowed the community to give feedback on these recommendations and make additional suggestions before finishing a draft plan.

During *Phase 5*, a draft plan incorporating the workshop results was developed and potential Community Investment Plan (CIP) projects associated with the recommendations were identified.

In *Phase 6*, the draft plan was available for a 60-day public review period. State agencies and neighboring jurisdictions also reviewed the draft. A community meeting was held toward the end of this review period to allow community members to ask any questions needed to fully understand the draft plan and to be able to provide well-informed written or verbal comments at the public hearing. Following the public hearing, the County Planning Commission reviewed the comments and prepared and approved a final draft plan. They forwarded this draft to the elected officials with a recommendation for adoption.

## **Plan Structure**

To better identify how the goals that support the vision may be accomplished, this plan uses each of the following topics as a separate element (chapter) of the plan, each with its own individual recommendations for implementation. These topics correspond nicely with the traditional and required elements of a comprehensive plan. These same topics and chapters can be found in each community comprehensive plan developed in Carroll County after 1999. Therefore, the types of information and the format are consistent and predictable among community plans.

- ♦ *Growth Management & Land Use* addresses issues related to the intended future use of the land as well as issues surrounding measures to manage growth.
- ♦ *Transportation* addresses issues related to roadway function, improvements, and new roadways.
- ♦ *Community Facilities* addresses the need for certain amounts and types of facilities and services based on capacity and future population.
- ♦ *Natural & Agricultural Resources* addresses stewardship of environmental resources and farmland.
- ♦ *Economic Development and Activity* addresses availability of land for commercial and industrial development and related issues.
- ♦ *Historic & Cultural Resources* addresses the significance of historic structures and their preservation.
- ♦ *Community Involvement* addresses the input of citizens and leaders to the planning process.
- ♦ *Interjurisdictional Coordination & Communication* addresses the relationship between the Town, County, and State and issues of coordination and cooperation between the jurisdictions.
- ♦ *Housing & Community Design* addresses the way neighborhoods and features of the community are designed, how design affects the community, and promotion of community connectedness.

The chapters around which these issues are organized each share common components. They all contain a synopsis of current conditions; an analysis of community needs; recommended actions; fiscal implications; and, anticipated CIP projects. These components, which encompass more of the community's needs than they often have in the past, will be consistent among all the

community comprehensive plans as they are updated.

The current conditions information describes the existing status of features with which a chapter deals, the existing capacity and/or demand of community facilities, and the existing development and use of land. This information was compiled through coordination with other agencies and the City, and through field research. In compiling the current conditions information, data was collected and reviewed for the entire 7<sup>th</sup> Election District, which comprised the study area. The purpose of this was to define a Community Planning Area that was appropriate based on current conditions and community needs without being restricted by the existing Community Planning Area. The Community Planning Area (CPA) is defined by a Growth Area Boundary (GAB) line.

The community needs for each chapter were developed through discussions with the City, a review of current conditions and population projections, observation, and the results of the various citizen participation efforts – the survey, the interviews, the community workshops, etc.. The analysis of community needs does not include suggestions for solutions to problems and needs; these are addressed under recommended actions. Rather, it identifies problems and issues that need to be addressed, as well as areas where amenities or implementation are lacking.

The State requires that a plan be reviewed and updated every six years. As a result, an opportunity exists to add, delete, and/or modify the recommendations included more often than in the past. Therefore, the recommended actions were developed with the intention that those that are included should be those that are higher in priority, are more likely to begin implementation prior to the next update, and/or are being implemented concurrent with the adoption of the plan. Every possible action that could be taken to address the goals was not included. While the vision and goals are meant to be long-range and are less likely to change, it is possible that every identified community need may not be addressed until a future update. Those actions that are possible but were not deemed appropriate to pursue at this time will be reviewed during the next update, along with any additional actions that are feasible at that time. Also during the update, recommendations that have already been implemented can be deleted.

By including anticipated Community Investment Plan (CIP) projects that may be related to recommendations in the plan, the community will have a plan that is more realistic and better represents what the citizens are willing to accept. It also provides a checklist of projects to be considered each year when the CIP is developed. It should be noted that these projects are not necessarily already in the CIP but are projects that would need to be done to accomplish the recommendations and goals of the plan.

