



## Agenda Memorandum

Agenda Item – 3.A.

### Westminster Economic Development Authority Study Session April 7, 2025



#### **Strategic Priority 1: Access to Opportunity**

Advance access to opportunity and prosperity for all in Westminster through diverse housing choices, increased mobility options, safe and walkable neighborhoods, and strong social networks.



#### **Strategic Priority 2: Community Empowerment and Engagement**

Enhance the sense of community and connection in Westminster through engaging methods of communication and dialogue that improve accessibility, increase understanding, and encourage participation in civic and City life.



#### **Strategic Priority 4: Economic Vitality**

Promote and support a resilient economy that attracts and retains a diversity of businesses, workers, and industries, expands living wage jobs, and diversifies the City's tax base.

**Subject:** Presentation Regarding Potential Partnership and Contract Between the Westminster Economic Development Authority and Westminster Chamber of Commerce for Activation in Downtown Westminster

**Prepared By:** Lindsey Kimball, CEcD, EDFP, Community Services Director  
Heather Cronenberg, Real Estate Development Manager  
Mona Choury, Focus Area Administrator

#### **Recommended City Council Action:**

Receive a presentation and ask Staff questions regarding a partnership between the Westminster Economic Development Authority and the Westminster Chamber of Commerce for activation in Downtown Westminster.

#### **Summary Statement:**

- The Downtown Specific Plan, approved by City Council in 2014, describes the vision of Downtown as filling the role of the former Westminster Mall in being a regional and community-wide destination with bustling activity both day and night.

- The Westminster Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) has been a significant pillar of the Westminster business community since 2013 and a strong advocate for, and supporter of, Downtown Westminster (Downtown). The Chamber strives to build opportunities for growth in Westminster and the surrounding areas through programs focused on advocacy, economic development, events, and direct services to its members.
- The Chamber has proven to be a successful host of a wide variety of large yearly events including the Annual Awards Gala, State of the City, the Taste of Westminster, and numerous ribbon cuttings and business networking events.
- The Downtown Westminster Business Association (DWBA) is a network of businesses located in Downtown that, in partnership with the Chamber, supports the economic growth of Downtown Westminster and identifies the need for activation in Downtown to support business vitality and growth.
- There is a Downtown General Improvement District (GID) in place that is funded through a self-assessed mill levy on real property of 35 mills. The GID has generated approximately \$2.4 million in revenue to date from Downtown businesses and property owners. In addition, the Downtown Westminster Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) generated approximately \$3 million in revenue from Downtown businesses and property owners in 2024.
- Staff recommends building on the successes of the Downtown businesses and their contributions to the GID and URA revenues by furthering the City's partnership with the Chamber to increase activation in the Downtown and enhance the revenue generation potential in the Downtown.
- Community benefits of an enhanced partnership include increased foot traffic and community engagement, enhanced sense of place and identity for Downtown, and a strengthened local economy.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Not to exceed \$300,000 in support to the Chamber.

**Source of Funds:**

WEDA Fund: WURP City Participation.

**Policy Issue(s):**

Does Westminster Economic Development Authority (WEDA) wish to receive a presentation regarding a potential partnership and contract between WEDA and the Chamber for activation in Downtown?

**Alternative(s):**

WEDA could choose not to receive a presentation regarding a potential partnership and contract with the Chamber for activation in Downtown. This is not recommended due to the importance of bringing enhanced activation to the Downtown area to support increased foot traffic and economic growth.

### **Background Information:**

Approved by City Council in 2014, the Downtown Specific Plan outlines the vision of Downtown as filling the role of the former Westminster Mall in being a regional and community-wide destination with bustling activity both day and night.

There is a Downtown General Improvement District (GID) in place that is funded through a self-assessed mill levy on real property of 35 mills. The GID has generated approximately \$2.4 million in revenue to date from Downtown businesses and property owners. In addition, the Downtown Westminster Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) generated approximately \$3 million in revenue from Downtown businesses and property owners in 2024.

Staff recommends building on the successes of the Downtown businesses and their contributions to the GID and URA revenues by furthering the City's partnership with the Chamber to increase activation in the Downtown by supporting Downtown-specific activations and events proposed by the Chamber and DWBA, which will enhance revenue generation potential in the Downtown.

The proposed public-private partnership recommended by Staff incorporates approaches that have proven successful elsewhere, including Orchard Town Center in the City's North I-25 Focus Area. This is consistent with one of the over-arching recommendations of the Parks, Recreation and Libraries Vision Plan, which is to leverage and enhance partnerships. The City's Special Events Team is currently fully engaged delivering existing programmed and budgeted community events citywide. There is not capacity to absorb additional events without additional staffing resources. The proposed partnership provides a targeted, cost-effective alternative that does not result in adding to the City's full time employment count.

Since 2013, the Chamber has supported the Westminster business community through programs focused on advocacy, economic development, events, and direct services to its members. The Chamber's network of businesses and community leaders, as well as nonprofit government partners, creates a healthy ecosystem for small business growth in Westminster. In addition to supporting small businesses, the Chamber supports special programs and memberships to support non-profits, schools, and youth in Westminster neighborhoods. The Chamber has proven to be successful hosts of a wide variety of large yearly events including the Annual Awards Gala, State of the City, the Taste of Westminster, and numerous ribbon cuttings and business networking events. These events range in size from 15 attendees to over 500 attendees.

The DWBA was created in 2024 to support economic growth for Downtown businesses. Although a new organization, this network of businesses has already shown great potential and assisted the Chamber and the City with marketing initiatives, events, and small business support.

In November 2024, the Chamber and DWBA partnered with the City of Westminster to host a Holiday Lighting Ceremony on the Central Square Plaza in Downtown. The Chamber and DWBA brought in support from local businesses such as Edward Jones, PetVet365, Hope Pediatric Dentist, Inks and Drinks, MADabolics, and Sherman Associates to make the event successful. Over 150 guests were

estimated at the ceremony, and the event was a great example of how the City can effectively partner with these business networks to effectively utilize resources and empower businesses to take initiative in the growth of their local economy.

Staff supports a formal partnership with the Chamber and DWBA that includes a year-long, pilot program focused on community events, business engagement, and promotional activities that will enhance the Downtown experience for residents, visitors, and businesses.

The Chamber and DWBA have provided the City with two options for this URA-funded plan – a “Better” plan, with a total cost of \$200,000, and a “Best” plan with a total cost of \$300,000 as follows:

BETTER Plan:

Potential events and programs that may come from this partnership at the \$200,000 “Better” level include:

Signature Community Events (Minimum: 6 events)

1. Downtown Holiday Lighting Ceremony
2. Seasonal Concert Series featuring local and regional musicians
3. Spring and Fall Street Festivals
4. Westminster Cultural Celebration
5. Halloween Spooktacular
6. Movie Nights
7. National Night Out 2025

Business & Retail Activation Initiatives (Minimum: 10 events)

8. Monthly Pop-Up Markets
9. Small Business Saturdays
10. Taste of Westminster Expansion
11. Shop and Sip Events

Interactive & Community-Driven Programming (Minimum 12 events)

12. Wellness in the Square
13. Family Friendly Sundays

14. Public Art Walks and Murals

15. Live Street Performances

16. Business Workshops and Networking

#### BEST Plan:

The above signature events can be expanded to offer enhanced programming to further drive community-wide engagement and economic development. The enhancement to the “Best” proposal will require an additional \$100,000 for a total not to exceed \$300,000 and includes the following enhancements:

#### Potential Expanded Signature Events

1. Holiday Market at the Downtown Westminster Lighting Ceremony – A new expansion featuring a European-style winter market with local artisans, food, and entertainment.
2. Seasonal Concert Series Expansion – Additional concerts, including themed nights (jazz, country, indie) and higher-profile performers.
3. Westminster Food and Wine Festival – A large-scale festival showcasing Downtown restaurants, breweries, wineries, and live culinary demonstrations.
4. Multi-Day Street Festival – Expanding the Spring and Fall Street Festivals to multi-day celebrations with national entertainment.
5. New Year's Eve Celebration – A family-friendly countdown event with music, fireworks, and late-night programming.

#### Potential Enhanced Community Engagement & Public Space Utilization

6. Downtown Westminster Ambassador Program – A team of trained ambassadors promoting Downtown businesses, guiding visitors, and collecting feedback.
7. Interactive Window Displays and Art Installations – A Downtown-wide activation featuring themed window displays, lighting, and community-driven art projects.
8. Restaurant Week – a Downtown-exclusive dining event featuring prix-fixe menus and special culinary experiences.
9. Expanded Wellness in the Square – Additional fitness and wellness programming, including senior-friendly classes and expanded community partnerships.
10. Family-Friendly Sundays – A weekly program featuring rotating kids' activities, family performances, and local food vendors.

11. Public Art Activation Series – Live mural paintings, interactive art events, and sculpture installations to engage visitors in Downtown placemaking efforts.

12. Expanded Street Performances and Busker Program – Officially incorporating street performers to create a constantly lively and energetic Downtown.

The two plan options are both projected to attract larger crowds through multi-day and large-scale events, increase business revenue by driving more sustained and frequent foot traffic, strengthen community ties by offering events for all demographics and interest groups, and elevate the Downtown's reputation as a premier entertainment and cultural hub.

The City's Strategic Plan priority of Access to Opportunity is met by supporting strategic neighborhood activation and partnerships equitably throughout the City. The enhanced special events, family outings, and living experiences create safer neighborhoods and promote social networks among residents. Activation in Downtown directly supports the priority of Community Empowerment and Engagement by fostering mutually beneficial partnerships between the City and local businesses and organizations. These partnerships allow Westminster businesses to have more control over the activities in their neighborhoods and create stronger relationships within focus areas. Finally, the Strategic Plan priority of Economic Vitality is supported by using URA-generated revenue from Downtown businesses to create a heightened level of events and activities in Downtown to attract increasing levels of foot traffic to current local businesses and further the recruitment of new businesses to the area.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jody L. Andrews', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jody L. Andrews  
City Manager

**Attachments:**

Staff Presentation for Activation in Downtown Westminster