

CITY OF WESTMORLAND

CITY COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: November 5, 2025

FROM: Laura Fischer, Manager

SUBJECT: Information Only REAP Downtown Zoning Overlay Materials for Community Outreach

INFORMATION ONLY: Update on the REAP Downtown Zoning Overlay Materials for Community Outreach

DISCUSSION:

The City of Westmorland had a meeting with representatives REAP Downtown Zoning Overlay Materials.

The consulting group MIG has prepared the Outreach and Engagement Plan for the project and I have attached it to this report for your information.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura Fischer

Outreach and Engagement Plan

City of Westmorland Zoning Map Update, Downtown Overlay Zone, and Objective Design Standards

Subregional Partnership Program 2.0

October 23, 2025



This project is funded and managed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) with Regional Early Action Program 2021 grant funding from the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Outreach and Community Engagement Plan describes the public outreach activities that will inform the Westmorland Downtown Zoning Overlay project. It identifies key engagement groups, tools, and methods that will be used to engage with the community and identifies the schedule.

The City has initiated a program to create an overlay zone for the City's downtown core, including adopting objective design standards to provide clear criteria for development. Westmorland is a small, rural city in Imperial County that experiences similar challenges to other underserved communities in California's inland regions. Many residents face barriers to housing stability, exposure to environmental health risks, and limited economic opportunity. The Downtown Overlay Zone represents an important step toward addressing these conditions through revitalization of the City's core. This project involves exploring a new strategy to encourage housing and economic opportunity in areas that have long experienced underinvestment. To support this effort, City staff and the MIG team will engage residents at three key points in the program. By making the most of available resources and prioritizing inclusivity, the program aims to reach a wide range of community members in a focused and meaningful way.

The City is committed to designing and implementing an inclusive engagement process to ensure the shared vision for Downtown Westmorland is based on robust feedback from all community members who live or own businesses in the City. This Community Engagement Plan outlines the approach and process for public participation, describing:

- Objectives
- Key Engagement Groups and Engagement Organization
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Timeline
- Outreach Summary

2. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the outreach and community engagement plan is to develop a framework and identify target audience groups, messaging, and outreach methods throughout this project.

Engagement and outreach will be built on the following objectives:

- Educate the community about Downtown Overlay Zone and build awareness and understanding of the project
- Identify shared community goals to guide the Downtown Zoning Overlay
- Generate input and feedback on the proposed Downtown Zoning Overlay and objective design standards
- Reach a broad cross-section of the Westmorland community
- Make participation accessible and inclusive, especially for those who face barriers to speaking up and being heard

3. KEY ENGAGEMENT GROUPS AND ENGAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

For each event, MIG will create one social media post and announcement for the City's distribution across digital platforms. MIG will coordinate with the City to comply with all SCAG public communications requirements.

3.1 Engagement Groups

The following key groups and demographics should be engaged during the Westmorland Downtown Zoning Overlay:

- Residents
- Property and business owners
- City Council
- Land development community
- Key City staff
- Local partners
 - Schools
 - Neighborhood groups
 - Community organizations
 - Churches and other religious organizations

3.2 Engagement Organization

Community input is proposed to be included through a variety of outreach methods tailored to community needs. The outreach methods include up to three focus groups, a community engagement event, and two community working sessions with City Council. The outreach events will remain flexible as the project evolves to ensure responsiveness to emerging needs and constraints and to maximize effective community engagement.

Focus Groups (up to three)

The focus groups will include up to six individuals from affinity-based groups to receive insightful perspectives on development in Downtown Westmorland.

Venue: Virtual, through Zoom

Materials: Focus group objectives and guiding questions memorandum

Stakeholders: While these participants are still being identified, they may include property and business owners, land development community, residents, and local partners.

Objectives: Gain insight and perspective from affinity-based groups to help shape a well-informed vision for Downtown Westmorland

Community Engagement

Venue: In person at the Honey Festival, November 1st, 2025

Stakeholders: Residents

Materials to be provided in English and Spanish: Flyer, social media graphic, engagement boards

Objective: Introduce the project and understand the community's perspectives. The input will help in the development of the objective design standards and overlay zone.

First Community Working Sessions with the City Council

A community working session is a facilitated meeting with the City Council that invites public attendance and input, providing an opportunity to review and discuss key work products, draft concepts, and land use options for Downtown.

Venue: In person at City Hall

Stakeholders: City Council members and residents

Materials to be provided in English and Spanish: Flyer, social media graphic, presentation

Objective: Introduce the project, present existing conditions, and gather input on the vision for development in Downtown Westmorland.

Second Community Working Sessions with the City Council

Venue: In person at City Hall

Stakeholders: City Council members and residents

Materials to be provided in English and Spanish: Flyer, social media graphic, presentation

Objective: Present the recommendations and proposed policies of the Downtown Overlay Zone and objective design standards.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The engagement events will be a collaborative effort between the MIG team and the City. In general, the MIG team will prepare materials for engagement events, and the City will promote the efforts and distribute information. **MIG and the SCAG Project Manager will work together to promote awareness and build local support for the project. The SCAG Project Manager, or their designee, will**

invite local elected officials representing the project area to participate in outreach activities and will coordinate these efforts with the appropriate SCAG Government Affairs Officer. Material will be produced in Spanish and English. The following summarizes the roles and responsibilities for each outreach event.

Method	MIG Team	City
Focus Group (3)	• Identify individuals or small groups from City-provided contacts. • Using links from the City, reach out via email and schedule meetings. • Prepare all meeting materials. • Develop a set of interview questions. • Conduct meetings via Zoom. • Provide a summary of key findings.	• Identify groups and individual stakeholders to participate in interviews. • If non-responsive to MIG contact, assist with outreach or with identifying additional participants. • Review MIG interview questions.
Community Engagement	• Prepare boards and stations to summarize the current stage of the project and provide space for community input. • Print presentation boards. • Provide materials, display, and exhibits. • Two MIG staff will attend, including one staff with Spanish fluency. • Notify and coordinate with SCAG project manager on any media inquiries or plans.	• Provide and reserve event space and advertise the event. • Review and approve materials, display, and exhibits. • City staff members will attend the pop-up.
Community Working Session (2)	• Prepare all meeting materials and provide materials. • Up to 3 MIG staff will attend, including one staff with Spanish fluency. • Notify and coordinate with SCAG project manager on any media inquiries or plans.	• Inform MIG team of meeting date and order on agenda. • Review and approve materials. • City staff members will attend the community working session.

5. TIMELINE

5.1 Preliminary Timeline

November 2025 – December 2025

The Community Engagement event (Honey Festival) and focus groups are planned to be held during this time frame. Additionally, tribal consultation assistance can also be provided. The feedback from those engagement events will be utilized to inform the draft overlay zone and the draft objective design standards that will be initiated in December.

January 2026 (On the first or third Wednesday of the month)

Following the existing conditions review, one community working session with City Council will be conducted to share the existing conditions and receive feedback and input on the vision for Downtown Westmorland.

April 2026 (On the first or third Wednesday of the month)

The second community working session with City Council is planned to be held in April 2026. The feedback gathered from this engagement will be used to revise the overlay zone and objective design standards before Planning Commission hearing.

5.2 Detailed Event Timeline

Focus Group (3)					
4+ Weeks Prior	3 Weeks Prior	2 weeks Prior	Week of Event	Day of the event	Post Event
MIG and City to develop list of participants. Draft focus group questions for City approval	MIG and City reach out to participants and set interviews	City to send reviewed material MIG to revise questions based on City's comments	City final review of questions	MIG to lead discussion	Focus group summary memo
Community Workshop					
4+ Weeks Prior	3 Weeks Prior	2 weeks Prior	Week of event	Day of the event	Post Event
MIG sends draft materials City to coordinate with workshop for pop-up	City to advertise pop-up Notify and coordinate with SCAG on media inquiries or plans.	City to send reviewed draft materials MIG to revise based on comments	Final review and updates	MIG to bring material for pop-up and attend event.	Event Summary memo
Community Working Sessions with City Council					

4+ Weeks Prior	3 Weeks Prior	2 weeks Prior	Week of event	Day of the event	Post Event
MIG sends draft materials	City to advertise Working Sessions Notify and coordinate with SCAG on media inquiries or plans.	City to review draft materials City to add applicable content	Final review and updates	MIG to lead presentation	Event summary memo

6. OUTREACH SUMMARY

Following the conclusion of each engagement, a summary of what was communicated and heard will be prepared.