



3 December 2020

Planning and Zoning Commission  
City of Longmont  
Chairman Michael Shernick and Commissioners

**Re: ModernWest Property Concept Plan Amendment**

Dear Chairman Michael Shernick and Commissioners,

Please accept our application for the ModernWest Concept Plan Amendment. ModernWest's updated and visionary concept will incorporate land uses outlined in the MU-E zoning district and reflect the community goals established within *Envision Longmont*. The original concept plan approval for this site included one use, Light Industrial, and was based on the prior zoning designation of BLI. With the adoption of Envision Longmont and the introduction of MU-E zoning the applicant has an amazing opportunity to present a project more in line with the City of Longmont's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed concept plan amendment will allow for a more sustainable and resilient project that provides a diversification of uses and businesses, allows for onsite residential, provides community benefits, and generates a supportable density within walking distance to transit services and multiuse bike and pedestrian networks. ModernWest will comply with all requirements of the MU-E and AIZ zoning districts. The project will add appropriate uses to the area and will be a valuable and transformative addition to the City environment.

The project site contains approximately 16 acres within the Municipal Service Area boundary. It is located north of Nelson Road, south of Rogers Rd, and adjacent to the Anderson Self Storage buildings.

Please take the time to view this short video on the project. We are excited to share the forward-thinking vision and goals visually, prior to coming before the board in December. [ModernWest Video](#)

Our vision is to create a new, high quality, and energy-efficient mixed-use development that will provide a transformative space for community benefit within the City of Longmont. This new community will provide a mix of housing, new commercial and office spaces, amenity uses for the surrounding community, and high bay industrial spaces with office support. ModernWest will be developed with a focus on sustainability and the promotion of the arts. It will provide a space for creatives and business owners (as well as the broader Longmont community) who would like to be a part of a ground breaking and tenable neighborhood. The development partnerships with both NREL (National Research Energy Laboratory) and RMI (Rocky Mountain Institute) will further our ability to establish the community as a blueprint for the future. The ModernWest project is now being included as a case study in NREL's Guidebook to Sustainable Development. The applicant feels the project is in perfect alignment with Longmont City Council's goals and will put Longmont on the map for cutting-edge sustainability, not only in the states, but internationally. It is the applicant's hope that the City of Longmont welcomes this vibrant and forward-thinking community.

This project will provide a forward thinking and pioneering neighborhood for both small businesses and a variety of residents and incomes. ModernWest will create spaces for community benefit and outdoor gathering. The ModernWest site is situated in an area of Longmont that will see future changes based on the adoption of the Envision Longmont plan and the introduction of the MU-E district, and is within an 'Area of Change' identified in the adopted document. Although the site is currently somewhat isolated farmland, future transportation plans will bring a collector road along the northern property boundary, and a local connector road along the western property boundary. The introduction of these roads will perfectly situate the ModernWest site within the grid of Longmont and allow easy access to cars, pedestrians and bicyclists. With the future in mind, the ModernWest property would like to be the trailblazer for this community, an inspiration that will affect each additional development that follows.

### ***Building Organization and Usage***

ModernWest has been planned with site-specific considerations of the airport, new city infrastructure, and solar access.

- **Airport:** As a community that will exist within the Airport Influence Zone, the development has taken special consideration of the runway and associated air traffic. Non-residential uses have been placed along the northern boundary as a buffer. The height of those northern structures will be minimized, and ***all structures*** throughout the site will comply with all FAA rules and regulations regarding the airport approach. See packet attachments for further description of the development's compatibility with the Vance Brand Airport.
- **New Roads/Infrastructure:** The site is organized with the understanding that most traffic will be arriving from the north, along the new collector road. Non-residential uses front this collector road and will be the focal entrance architecturally and functionally. Site community amenities such as the amenity building, container collective, and urban greenhouse are prominent and visible from the collector road. The one-way truck traffic for the light/medium industrial uses will come off the collector road and be directed along the eastern property boundary, then wrap along the southern property boundary, where truck traffic will exit along the new local road. Residential uses will fall within the western and central portion of the site and front the new local road. A greenway for pedestrians and bikes bisects the site from north to south, connecting the new collector road to Nelson road, and supporting an area for duplex tiny homes along the southern parcel of the property.
- **Solar Access and Sustainability:** To the extent possible, buildings have been placed on the site and shaped specifically to capitalize on solar access. As a part of the development's sustainable goals, buildings will be placed with an east to west orientation wherever possible, to allow for passive solar opportunities throughout the site, and specifically for the residential uses. Greenhouses on rooftops will support the urban farming capabilities, and architecturally denote the intentions of the community. As previously mentioned, the applicant has established development partnerships with both NREL (National Research Energy Laboratory) and RMI (Rocky Mountain Institute). See attached letters of support from both organizations.

### ***Vehicular Access and Parking***

The site will be accessed from the new east-west collector road (Mountain Brook Dr.) along the north (two entrances into ModernWest site) and the new north-south local road along the west (3 entrances into ModernWest site and one "exit-only" from site). The southern parcel will provide secondary emergency access into main portion of site from Nelson Road (via 60' wide strip of ModernWest land). Parking for the residential units will be a mix of surface parking, ground level multifamily covered parking and garages.

### ***Residential Uses***

MU-E zoning allows for a secondary use of high density residential and live work. The creation of diversified, walkable and sustainable site is made complete with the introduction of residential uses. The design team made special consideration to the flight path of the Vance Brand Airport. Residential uses are justified towards the southern portion of the property and building heights will step down towards the north. The project will implement aviation easements and comply with the FAA's criteria for compatibility, in addition to all the City of Longmont AIZ requirements. See attached aviation information in the submittal packet.

The ModernWest development will support mixed income living on site. It is the current plan to have elements of both affordable market rate housing and deed restricted affordable housing. The holistic vision for the development will be reflected on the residential areas by offering a varying mix of opportunities in housing.

We believe that the ModernWest Project will add valuable employment opportunities, attract new businesses and technology, provide a variety of housing opportunities, and allow businesses and people the space to grow sustainably within the City of Longmont. As a part of the established North Metro Enterprise Zone, and the identified 'Areas of Change' in the zoning code, ModernWest is set to be a step towards many of the goals established in Envision Longmont, Longmont Sustainability Plan, and the 2018 City Council Work Plan.

December 2, 2020

Sopher Sparn/ModernWest

We are looking forward to presenting this amendment request for your review. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Erin Bagnall  
Architect

Cc: Derek Guarascio

**Attachments:**

Review Criteria

## REVIEW CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

The sections below are the *relevant* excerpted text from the Longmont Municipal Code 15.02.055

1. The application is consistent with the LACP, as amended; conforms to any previously approved concept plan, preliminary plat, or PUD plan; and complies with all applicable statutes, codes, ordinances and regulations.

The application is consistent with Envision Longmont as follows:

*The property is designated as Mixed Use Employment on the Envision Longmont Land Use Plan and the Concept Plan as submitted reflects these designations.*

The application as proposed furthers the following Envision Longmont Goals as described below:

### **1.1 Embrace a compact and efficient pattern of growth**

#### **1.1A: GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

Prioritize the development of sites located within the Municipal Service Area, where infrastructure and services can be readily provided; continue to use open space buffers, agricultural easements, and other tools to ensure Longmont remains a free-standing community with a unique and separate identity from surrounding communities.

*The project site is located within the Municipal Service Area, adjacent to existing and planned utility and transportation infrastructure, within an area designated as anticipated Mixed Use Employment development.*

### **1.2 Promote a sustainable mix of land uses**

#### **1.2A: OVERALL MIX OF USES**

Strive for a balanced mix of residential, employment, retail, commercial, recreational, and other uses that allow residents to live, work, play, learn, and conduct much of their daily business within the City and increase the self-sufficiency of the community.

#### **1.2C: COMMUNITY AMENITIES**

Recognize the role community amenities play in the vibrancy of the City and the quality of life of residents, encouraging the use of distinctive features in design of the public realm, the presence of arts and cultural programs or facilities, and spaces for people to gather and host events.

#### **1.2D: DEVELOPMENT TYPES**

Plan for a combination of greenfield development, infill development and redevelopment, and adaptive reuse within the Municipal Service Area to meet the needs of Longmont's residents, businesses, and people who work in Longmont.

#### **1.2E: MIX OF HOUSING TYPES**

Anticipate and plan for the changing needs of the community, and diversify the City's housing stock by:

- Encouraging the development of a range of housing types, sizes, prices, and densities
- Actively working with the private sector to promote and potentially incent the construction of housing types documented to be in short supply
- Supporting the integration of a more diverse array of attached and multifamily housing types in Mixed Residential neighborhoods and in defined centers and corridors.

#### **1.2F: HIGHER DENSITY HOUSING**

Support the incorporation of higher density housing types, such as townhomes, multifamily apartments and condominiums, live-work options—and housing for special populations such as seniors or people with specialized needs—in centers, corridors,

Downtown, and Mixed-Use Employment Areas where transit and a range of services, employment opportunities, and amenities are accessible today, or are planned for the future.

#### **1.2G: INTEGRATION OF USES**

Encourage the integration of complementary uses within the same building (i.e., residential or office above retail) or on the same site (i.e., residential adjacent to employment and/or retail uses) as a way of revitalizing centers, corridors, and employment areas and improving access to services.

*The Concept Plan as proposed will allow for a more sustainable and resilient project that provides a diversification of uses and businesses, allows for onsite mix of residential housing types, provides community benefits, and generates a supportable density within walking distance to transit services and multiuse bike and pedestrian networks. ModernWest will be developed with a focus on sustainability and the promotion of the arts. It will provide a space for creatives and business owners (as well as the broader Longmont community) and will be a ground-breaking and viable mixed-use area.*

#### **1.4 Focus infill and redevelopment in centers, corridors and other areas of change**

##### **1.4B: ACTIVITY GENERATING USES**

Promote a diverse mix of activity-generating uses in centers and corridors where they may be readily accessed by those who live or work in these areas, as well as by residents of adjoining neighborhoods and visitors to the City. Although the suitability of individual uses will vary by location, seek to provide a balanced mix of:

- Retail, office, multifamily residential, entertainment;
- Educational facilities such as schools and library services;
- Public and non-profit health and human services facilities and other service oriented uses; and
- Community gathering spaces and recreational amenities—plazas, parks, community gardens, recreation centers, meeting space, and others as appropriate.

##### **1.4C: TRANSIT SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Encourage Transit-Supportive Development—or development that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and a broader mix of uses at higher densities than may exist today—in all centers and corridors to enhance community livability and expand transportation options.

##### **1.4E: CONNECTIVITY**

Encourage and invest in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements that will enhance multimodal connections within and between centers and corridors and adjacent neighborhoods, as well as to other parts of the City and region.

##### **1.4H: DISTINCTIVE DESIGN**

Promote notable architecture or design at high visibility intersections to help give identity and a sense of place to centers, corridors, and neighborhoods.

*ModernWest will establish a new, architecturally distinct, high quality, and energy-efficient mixed-use development that will provide a transformative space for community benefit within the City of Longmont. This new community will provide a mix of housing, new commercial and office spaces, amenity uses for the surrounding community, and high bay industrial spaces with office support, thereby generating activity and supporting connectivity to bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit.*

**2.1 Integrate land use and transportation planning to enhance the overall quality of life in the City**

**2.1A: MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS**

Provide effective multi-modal connections within and between existing and developing neighborhoods, and mixed-use centers and corridors, parks, city facilities, and schools.

**2.1B: TRANSIT SUPPORTIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Encourage Transit-Supportive Development—or development that emphasizes pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and a broader mix of uses at higher densities than may exist today—in all centers and corridors to enhance community livability and expand transportation options.

**2.1D: FIRST AND LAST MILE CONNECTIONS**

Provide well-connected pedestrian and bicycle networks in areas where enhanced transit service exists (i.e., high frequency bus, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and commuter rail) to enhance First and Last Mile Connections.

**2.1H: PRESERVE RIGHT-OF-WAY (ROW) FOR FUTURE CONNECTIONS AND ACCESS**

Maintain existing ROW for a variety of modes of travel to the maximum extent feasible to preserve opportunities for future connections and access, particularly within designated Areas of Change. Vacate City ROW only under careful consideration of all other uses.

*The ModernWest site plan will be nicely situated between a new collector road to the north and an existing arterial to the south, Nelson. Rapid transit bus lines on Nelson, the addition of bike lane along the collector road to the north (Williams Ave), and easy access to the St. Vrain Trail to the north, will set up future visitors and residents for transit supportive development. Future development of the property will provide internal links to the perimeter transportation system as appropriate.*

*The proposed Concept Plan is in keeping with all desired future ROW outlined in the Envision Longmont Plan*

**2.2I: AIRPORT**

Ensure that the Vance Brand Airport continues to provide for the current and future general aviation needs of the community; providing efficient multimodal surface transportation connections to the airport and surrounding land uses.

**6.6B: AIRPORT OPERATIONS**

Administer airport operations in accordance with the Airport Master Plan:

- Managing airport operations to ensure their continued compatibility with other land uses in the airport environs;
- Operating the airport as a community asset and improve the facilities to increase its use and revenues;
- Mitigating airport-related noise impacts on development in the airport environs; and
- Allowing residential uses only in compatible areas around the airport

*This property is located within the Vance Brand Municipal Airport, Airport Influence Overlay Zone. ModernWest will comply with all requirements of the MU-E and AIZ zoning districts. The applicant will work with the City to ensure the needs of the airport and air traffic relative to ongoing operations of the Airport are not compromised by the proposal. From the FAA perspective, the project is compatible from a noise and building height perspective. It is worth noting that the project is a mixed-use development which will contain commercial and light industrial uses (along with associated vehicle parking), with multifamily residential uses being only a secondary use. This creates an “urban” environment in which there is more background noise than would be expected to be present in a neighborhood that is purely residential. The higher the background noise the less that aircraft noise is audible or considered problematic. Modern West is*

*agreeable to executing and recording a Surface and Overhead Avigation Easement. This is similar to easements the City has negotiated with developers of property near the Airport. The recording of this document will ensure that the proposed development will remain compatible with the Airport into the future, and that the investment of the City and FAA in the Airport will remain secure.*

### **5.1 Protect and conserve Longmont's natural resources and environment**

#### **5.1G: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES**

Encourage the creative use of sustainable development practices in all public and private development projects, focusing on practices with the ability to minimize the short and long-term impacts of future growth on the natural environment and improve the efficiency of City operations in measurable ways, such as:

- Expanded use of active and passive solar, and other renewable energy sources;
- Use of water- or energy-conserving fixtures;
- Use of Low Impact Development (LID) principles;
- Promoting the use of LEED or other green building standards; and
- Other techniques as applicable to new construction or the rehabilitation of existing buildings or facilities.

*The applicant has established development partnerships with both NREL (National Research Energy Laboratory) and RMI (Rocky Mountain Institute) and has intentions to be a groundbreaking demonstration of sustainable development.*

*As a part of the developments sustainable goals, buildings were placed with an east to west orientation wherever possible, allowing for passive solar opportunities throughout the site, and specifically for the residential uses. Greenhouses on rooftops support the urban farming capabilities, and architecturally denote the intentions of the community to support sustainable agriculture and community food production.*

#### **6.2A: WORK SPACES**

Encourage the creation of new businesses and growth of small businesses and ensure there are ample building sites and spaces for these businesses to start and grow into by:

- Planning for and investing in public and private spaces in regional centers and employment areas that facilitate the interaction of local businesses, workers and residents; and
- Cooperating with the private sector in establishing an environment for nurturing small and start-up businesses.

*The Concept Plan as proposed will fill an established need for flexible, light industrial space and live work opportunities within the community. High quality buildings, flexible enough to be used by a variety of tenant sizes, and incorporating high bay ceilings and loading docks, will fill a specific need known to the market for light industrial use. Live work opportunities will allow small business owners to live and work in their community.*

#### **6.3B: MIXED USE EMPLOYMENT AREAS**

Prioritize employment uses within Mixed-Use Employment areas—such as the St. Vrain Creek Corridor and the Sugar Mill—while supporting their diversification and enhancing their economic vitality by:

- Encouraging a range of secondary uses that benefit employees, but do not hamper the ability of existing businesses to operate—such as public gathering spaces, parks, trails, and recreational facilities, retail and restaurants, and multifamily housing;
- Reinvesting in and improving public infrastructure, such as streets, sidewalks, bikeways, and transit;

- Facilitating the development, rehabilitation, and/or adaptive reuse of existing properties to meet the contemporary needs of emerging businesses while making a positive contribution to the appearance of the City;
- Encouraging a mixture of building types and sizes; and
- Supporting the incorporation of multifamily housing and live/work opportunities to increase the number of households located near employment and transit corridors.

*This new community will provide a mix of housing, live work opportunities, new commercial and office spaces, amenity uses for the surrounding community, and high bay industrial spaces with office support, thereby generating activity and supporting connectivity to bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit.*

2. The application complies with applicable design standards and construction specifications, including for street and utility design and layout, and adequate utilities are available or will be provided for appropriate urban-level services.

*This application sets forth the basic framework for future development of the property. At the time the property is developed it will comply with applicable design standards and construction specifications, including for street and utility design and layout. Adequate utilities are available or will be provided for appropriate urban-level services.*

3. The application is consistent with the intent and purpose of the zone, and proposes development compatible with neighboring existing and approved developments in terms of land use, layout, site design and access.

*The proposed development is consistent with land uses outlined for MU-E in the adopted Envision Longmont document.*

4. The application will not significantly adversely affect surrounding properties, the natural environment, existing or planned city transportation, or utility services or facilities, or the impacts will be mitigated to the extent feasible considering existing plans and zoning for the area.

*The application will not significantly adversely affect surrounding properties, the natural environment, existing or planned city transportation, or utility services or facilities. The Concept Plan as presented outlines the general plan for future development of the property. The property will comply with applicable provisions of the Land Use Code in effect at the time of development.*

5. The application includes an appropriate transportation plan, including multi-modal transportation access, and is integrated and connected, where appropriate, with adjacent development through street connections, sidewalks, trails and similar features.

*The proposed Concept Plan reflects all desired future and existing ROW outlined in the Envision Longmont Plan. Access to the existing City street network is illustrated in the Concept Plan and will be further refined through the Land Development Review process at the time the property is developed. Future development of the property will provide sidewalks on the proposed streets and internal links to the perimeter transportation and trail system as appropriate.*



## REVIEW CRITERIA FOR CONCEPT PLAN APPLICATIONS

The sections below are the *relevant* excerpted text from the Longmont Municipal Code 15.02.060 (A)(3) CONCEPT PLAN REQUIRED

- (a). Appropriate land use, utility, and transportation design, including multi-modal transportation access, given the existing and planned capacities of those systems;

*The Concept Plan for this property is a general description of how the property will develop in the future. Site access is conceptual and may change at the time the property is developed. It is our understanding there is capacity in the City system to provide utility service to the planned development.*

- (b). Mitigation of potential adverse impacts on surrounding properties and neighborhoods

*At the time the property develops specific attention to buffering will help to mitigate the impact of adjacent properties. The transportation study will identify specific improvements to the transportation system.*

- (c). Mitigation of potential adverse impacts on the environment.

*At the time the property develops specific attention will be given to help to mitigate any adverse impact on the environment, with specific attention to water quality.*

## REVIEW CRITERIA FOR USE SPECIFIC STANDARDS

The sections below are the excerpted text from the Longmont Municipal Code 15.04.030 (A)(1) SECONDARY USES

- a) In residential districts, secondary uses shall be limited to lots adjacent to arterial streets and corner lots on collector streets. Secondary uses shall avoid access directly to a local street to the maximum extent practicable.

*The MU-E zoning is not a residential district, so the limitation does not apply. Residential uses will not directly access the local street, however the local street will provide access to the internal circulation system of the project.*

- b) Secondary uses allowed as permitted uses or requiring conditional use review pursuant to Table 4.1 shall comply with the applicable procedures and criteria in chapter 15.02.

*The proposed residential uses are allowed as secondary uses and will meet the applicable procedures and criteria in chapter 15.02.*

- c) Secondary uses shall also meet the following additional criteria:

- i. The secondary use as proposed is of a scale and design and in a location that is compatible with surrounding uses and potential adverse impacts of the use will be mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.

*The residential uses proposed will be integrated into the fabric of the mixed use development as proposed and support the vision of the MU-E district outlined in Envision Longmont. Any adverse impacts will be mitigated to the maximum extent feasible*

- ii. The secondary use as proposed is consistent with the comprehensive plan and the purpose and intent of the code and underlying zoning district.

*The residential uses proposed align the vision of the MU-E district outlined in Envision Longmont.*

- iii. The secondary use as proposed will not substantially diminish the availability of land within the underlying zoning district for primary uses, or reduce the availability of land for primary uses below a minimum level necessary to meet the intent of the district.

*The residential uses proposed will integrate and complete the vision of the development, in keeping with the vision for the MU-E zoning established by City of Longmont standards.*

## REVIEW CRITERIA FOR USE SPECIFIC STANDARDS

The sections below are the excerpted text from the Longmont Municipal Code 15.03.050 Overlay Zoning Districts (A)(5)

- a. **Use Restrictions.** No use shall create any electrical interference with navigational signals for communications between the airport and the aircraft, make it difficult for pilots to distinguish airport lights from others, result in glare for pilots using the airport, impair visibility in the vicinity of the airport or otherwise in any way create a hazard or endanger the landing, take-off, or maneuvering of aircraft using the airport.
- b. **Height Limitations.** No structure or object of natural growth shall be erected, altered, allowed to grow, or be maintained at a height that intrudes into the 14 CFR Part 77 surfaces for the Vance Brand Airport.

*ModernWest will comply with all requirements of the MU-E and AIZ zoning districts. The applicant will work with the City to ensure the needs of the airport and air traffic relative to ongoing operations of the Airport are not compromised by the proposal. From the FAA perspective, the project is compatible from a noise and building height perspective.*

## AREAS MODERNWEST CAN SUPPORT CITY COUNCIL CURRENT WORKPLAN

The sections below are the excerpted text from the City Council Work Plan 2018

Goal B1: Have a diverse housing stock with higher densities, access to high quality public transportation, food and jobs

*This new community will provide a mix of housing densities, live work opportunities, new commercial and office spaces, amenity uses for the surrounding community, and high bay industrial spaces with office support, thereby generating activity and supporting connectivity to bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit currently available along Nelson Rd. City long term transportation goals along Nelson will reinforce the quality of transit and accessibility for the project.*

Goal B3: Become a nationally recognized geographic center of science, technology, engineering, education, arts, and entrepreneurialism

ModernWest will be developed with a focus on sustainability and the promotion of the arts. It will provide a space for creatives and business owners (as well as the broader Longmont community) who would like to be a part of a groundbreaking neighborhood. The development partnerships with both NREL (National Research Energy Laboratory) and RMI (Rocky Mountain Institute) will further our ability to establish the community as a blueprint for the future. The ModernWest project is now being included as a case study in NREL's Guidebook to Sustainable Development. The applicant feels the project is in perfect alignment with Longmont City Council's goals and will put Longmont on the map for cutting-edge sustainability, not only in the states, but internationally. The project will provide opportunities for growth in science, technology, engineering, education, arts, and entrepreneurialism.