

# Carbon Neutrality Amendment to the Regional Plan

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# Agenda

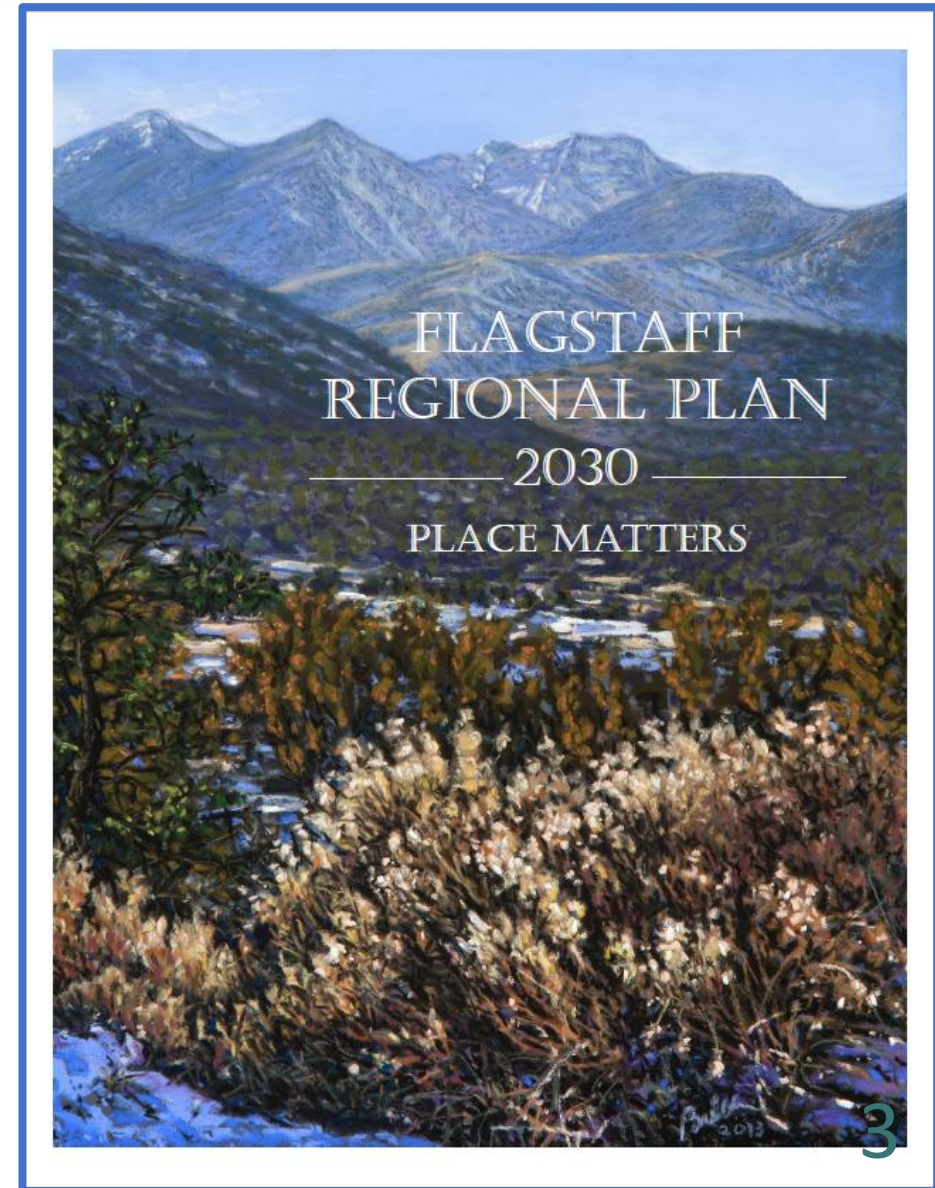
1. Process overview
2. Regional Plan amendment process and benefits
3. Climate action concepts & goals
4. The proposed amendment to the Regional Plan
5. Questions and discussion





# The Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030

- Adopted in **2014** after a years-long development and engagement process
- A planning document that serves as a **roadmap to implement the community's vision.**
- **Three themes:**
  1. • Promote growth that protects our scenic beauty and unique ecosystem
  2. • Encourage efficient transportation modes and better connectivity, with housing and job opportunities
  3. • Grow our businesses by making the most of our educated, entrepreneurial, and creative citizens





# Climate change in the Flagstaff 2030 Regional Plan:

Climate change is addressed over two pages in the Plan: Natural Environment Chapter, pages IV-11 and IV-12.

## **The climate change section includes three goals:**

1. E&C.2: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
2. E&C.3: Strengthen community and natural environment resiliency through climate adaptation efforts.
3. E&C.4: Integrate available science into policies governing the use and conservation of Flagstaff's natural resources.

## Climate Change and Adaptation

Changes to the climate system have been noted through observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2007). At the same time, weather patterns have become more extreme, with more intense and longer droughts, more extreme precipitation events, and increased heat waves. Many climate models predict further decreases in annual precipitation and increased temperatures for our region, which in turn are likely to result in changes to our vegetation and animal communities, as well as declines in agricultural productivity and food security.

### Local Climate Change Impacts

Recent warming in the Southwest has resulted in declines in spring snowpack and Colorado River flow. Key issues that the Southwest, including the Flagstaff region, must address include the following:

- Decreasing water supplies
- Reduction in annual snowpack and decrease in snowmelt
- Depleted soil moisture
- Increasing temperature, drought, wildfire, tree mortality, and invasive species
- Increased frequency and altered timing of flooding
- Impacts on the region's unique tourism and recreation opportunities
- Increasing risks to cities and agriculture from a changing climate
- Increased vulnerabilities of the lower income, poor, and elderly.

### Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

The region has historically faced climate risks, including forest fires, record warming, snow storms, high winds, flooding, and drought. These events affect every resident, and as the regional climate changes, these risks will become more frequent and severe. The effects of these extreme events may be lessened with preventative measures.

Mitigation of these risks refers to reducing the severity of climate change by decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting their concentration in the atmosphere. The Flagstaff region has the opportunity to help mitigate the changes in climate, and simultaneously be ready for its effects by understanding the potential of wildfire, flooding, drought, and other effects of climate change and then preparing for such hazards. Individual preparation measures could include preparing our homes for potential fire, implementing stormwater management best practices, and becoming more water efficient. Personal home or business investments in water conservation and stormwater collection, energy efficiencies, walking, biking, bus-riding, recycling, re-using, and sharing also contribute to mitigating climate change.



Photo credit: Coconino National Forest



Photo credit: Arizona Daily Sun

At the community level, investing in critical public infrastructure such as reclaimed water, conservation, and stormwater collection; efficient use of energy resources; self-reliance on transportation options; food production and the ability to generate energy by means other than fossil fuels; and protecting and preparing the community for hazards such as flooding, wildfires, and other natural disasters are key examples of large-scale preparation and adaptation. (City of Flagstaff *and Preparedness Study* (2012).

For the purposes of the Flagstaff Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan, the region will have an impact on our reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation of climate change.

Goal 1 is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Photo credit: City of Flagstaff

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION GOALS AND POLICIES

#### Goal E&C.2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy E&C.2.1. Encourage the reduction of all energy consumption, especially fossil-fuel generated energy, in public, commercial, industrial, and residential sectors.

Policy E&C.2.2. Promote investments that strengthen climate resiliency.

#### Goal E&C.3. Strengthen community and natural environment resiliency through climate adaptation efforts.

Policy E&C.3.1. Develop and implement a comprehensive and proactive approach to prepare the community for and to minimize the impacts of climate change induced hazards.

Policy E&C.3.2. Review and revise existing regulations, standards, and plans (codes, ordinances, etc.) to reduce the community's vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Policy E&C.3.3. Invest in forest health and watershed protection measures.

Policy E&C.3.4. Increase the region's preparedness for extreme climate events.

#### Goal E&C.4. Integrate available science into policies governing the use and conservation of Flagstaff's natural resources.

Policy E&C.4.1. Assess vulnerabilities and risks of Flagstaff's natural resources.

Policy E&C.4.2. Develop water use policies that attempt to integrate current best projections of climate change effects on the Colorado Plateau's water resources and emphasize conservation.

# Evolution of the City's climate work

- 2014** The **Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030** is adopted.  
This Plan sets three goals in the climate change section, including a goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- 2018** The **Flagstaff Climate Action and Adaptation Plan** is adopted.  
- Includes mitigation, adaptation and equity goals.
- 2020** City Council declares a Climate Emergency.
- 2021** City Council adopts the Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan.  
- Updates the mitigation goal to achieve carbon neutrality.

# The Climate Emergency Declaration

1. Calls for a dramatic increase in **ambition and** city-wide **mobilization**.
2. Discusses the need for **full community** participation.
3. Calls on the city to prepare for future change and prioritize **vulnerable communities while reducing emissions**.
4. Sets a goal of **carbon neutrality by 2030**

# Regional Plan Amendment: Process and Need





# Major amendments to the Regional Plan

- Major amendments to the Flagstaff Regional Plan are triggered when there are proposed revisions to **goals or policies**, the backbone of the Regional Plan.
- The Major Amendment process involves significant documentation, staff analysis and public participation, and takes place between March and December of each year.
- **This amendment** was initiated by the Planning and Zoning Commission, at the request of the Sustainability Commission.



## Need for this amendment

- The climate action work of the City has evolved rapidly since the 2014 adoption of the Regional Plan
- There is a **significant gap** between the Regional Plan's current climate goals and policies, and the City's climate goals as developed in its climate plans.
- The different goals have large differences in ambition and requisite actions, reflecting the growth in urgency for climate action.
- This amendment will update the Regional Plan **to align** with the goals of the Carbon Neutrality Plan.



## Benefits of this amendment

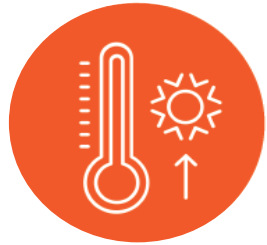
- **Restores alignment** between the Regional Plan and the City's climate goals, clarifying the carbon neutrality goal and the types of climate action the City will take.
- **Formally recognizes** the climate action efforts of the City of Flagstaff and its partners will increase understanding within the Flagstaff community.
- Provide decision-makers with **support** when making decisions based on the City's climate action goals.
- Provides **transparency and clarity** on the City's decisions.

# Background: Climate Change and Climate Action in Flagstaff



# Climate Change in Flagstaff

Compared to today, by 2050, on average we can expect to see...



- Hotter temperatures.
- Increased aridity and more severe drought conditions.



- Less snowpack.
- More precipitation as rainfall instead of snowfall.



- Increased wildfire risk.

# Vulnerabilities: What's at Risk?

Climate change will have cascading impacts in our community from health to housing.



Water



Land Use & Housing



Tourism & Economy



Health

# Not all people face the same threats from climate change

Climate change threats and vulnerabilities can vary based on:

- Age
- Health conditions
- Income
- Race and ethnicity
- Physical ability
- Neighborhood  
*and more.*



# Three Types of Climate Action

## MITIGATION

means reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, which are how we contribute to climate change

Reducing our impact

## ADAPTATION

means building resilience to long-term changes and short-term shocks

Preparing for change

## EQUITY

means ensuring fair distribution of resources, access and opportunities

Helping the most vulnerable

# Carbon Neutrality Plan: **Goals**

## **Mitigation**

- Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030

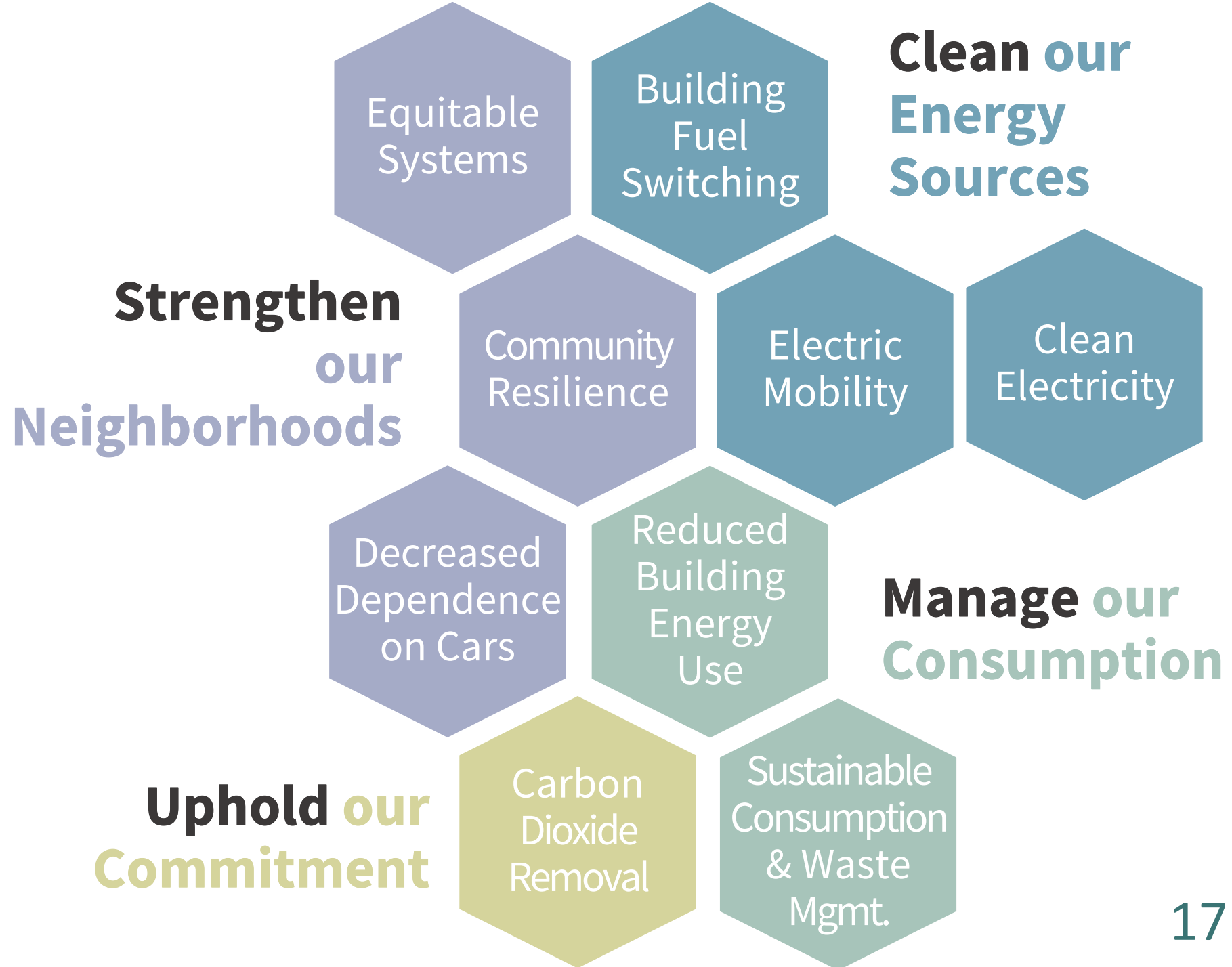
## **Adaptation** (carried forward from 2018 CAAP)

- Prepare the city's communities, systems, and resources to be more resilient to climate change impacts.

## **Equity** (carried forward from 2018 CAAP)

- Address climate change in a manner that prioritizes those most impacted and ensures the costs and benefits of climate adaptation and mitigation are equitably distributed.

# CNP: Nine Target Areas of Action



# The Proposed Amendment to the Regional Plan





## The proposed changes to pages IV-11 and IV-12 include:

- Changes to the narrative
- Revisions to **goals E&C 2 and E&C 3**
- Revisions to policies **E&C 2.1, E&C 2.2, E&C 3.2, and E&C 4.1**
- Addition of four policies: **E&C 2.3, E&C 2.4, E&C 3.5, and E&C 3.6**



## Edits to the narrative:

1. Updates to the projected climate changes, using data from the 2017 Flagstaff and Coconino County Climate Profile.
2. Additions to definitions and examples for the three types of climate action: mitigation, adaptation, and equity.
3. Updates to the list of possible climate actions, to align with the target areas in the Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan.



# Changes to Goal 2: Mitigation and associated policies

## Goal E&C 2:

The proposed revision will increase specificity in the greenhouse gas reduction goal, in order to align with the Carbon Neutrality Plan.

The proposed policy changes will:

- Simplify the policy around reducing energy and materials consumption.
- Add details to the types of investments that would support climate action.
- Create a new policy to review existing regulations and plans to reduce emissions.
- Create a new policy to specify how developments can support carbon neutrality.



# Changes to Goal 3: Adaptation and associated policies

## Goal E&C 3:

The proposed revision will align the Regional Plan goal with the adaptation and equity goals of the 2018 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and the Carbon Neutrality Plan.

The proposed policy changes will:

- Add detail to encourage the review of existing regulations and plans with the lens of reducing disproportionate impacts on vulnerable communities.
- Create two new policies to incorporate equity considerations and actions.



## Changes to policies under Goal 4:

One proposed change to Policy 4.1 will add clarity regarding how we will assess vulnerabilities and risks.

## Changes to Policy T.8.1 in the Transportation Chapter:

One proposed change to Policy T.8.1 will add specificity, clarifying the policy of promoting 'network connectivity.'

# Process Recap

## **Spring: Initiation of the Amendment**

- Sustainability Commission request for the amendment
- Planning and Zoning Commission initiation
- Interdivision Staff Review (IDS)

## **Summer: 60-day Review Period July 13 – Sept. 13**

- Targeted mailings, Daily Sun advertisements, press releases, social media advertisements, and a dedicated webpage
- Two online information sessions: July & September
- One in-person Open House: August
- Flagstaff community forum feedback form

## **Fall: Planning and Zoning Commission Review**

- Citizen's Review Session
- Two Public Hearings

# Next steps in this process

**November 17<sup>th</sup>**  
**4:30 PM**

Planning and Zoning  
Commission **Public Hearing #2**

Online Teams meeting *and*  
**Murdoch Community Center**  
203 E Brannen Avenue

**Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Public Hearing** at the Flagstaff  
**City Council** and potential  
adoption

# Questions, comments & discussion

**Thank you!**

**[www.Flagstaff.AZ.gov/CNP](http://www.Flagstaff.AZ.gov/CNP)**

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