

Carbon Neutrality Amendment to the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030

Public Participation Report

Submitted September 24, 2021

Project:

Carbon Neutrality Amendment to the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030
Development timeline: Proposed adoption in December 2021

Applicant:

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This document summarizes the feedback received from the community during the 60-day review period.

The following outreach methods were utilized to solicit public feedback:

- Informational webpage
- Flagstaff Community Forum feedback form
- Community Open House
- Online information sessions
- Print advertisements
- Social media postings
- Direct outreach

The feedback received is detailed below.

I.1 Flagstaff Community Forum feedback form

Staff created a feedback form on the proposed Amendment, on the Flagstaff Community Forum portal. This feedback form was open from July 13, 2021 through September 13, 2021. The form was available to all members of the public.

On the forum site, staff provided links to the information webpage, dates and information for the Amendment Open House and information session events, and contact information for staff.

Five responses were provided through this feedback form. Those responses are below.

Note: the feedback form remains open, for members of the public to provide comments on the proposed amendment.

Comment #	Date	Comment	Response
1	8/24/2021 9:51	Commercial and residential buildings will have to convert to all electric at a significant level to meet CO2 reduction goals. The use of electric heat pumps instead of natural gas heat should be a large part of this effort. Is there a program planned to facilitate and encourage this? Thanks	There is a program planned to support commercial and residential buildings when converting to electric space- and water-heating. The City's strategies on this are outlined in the Building Fuel Switching target area of the Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan. The City has recently published a website to assist homeowners with residential fuel switching, and is planning additional programming to support residents, businesses and contractors in this work.

2	9/8/2021 16:22	<p>Dear Community Shapers:</p> <p>I would ask several items when integrating the carbon neutrality amendment into the regional plan.</p> <p>First, could the plan please include incorporation of non wind and solar power for the power infrastructure. Inclusion of non-GHG emitting nuclear energy would provide resiliency when conditions are not favorable for wind and solar. Secondly, could the plan please include the disposal of wind and solar components as they cannot be recycled and should not be placed into the landfill with the hazardous materials they are constructed from. Thirdly, could the rare earth metals which batteries and solar panels are made be purchased using fair trade practices to avoid supporting and encouraging child and forced labor and horrific environmental practices of China, which mines most of the rare earth metals used to make solar panels. Lastly, the Sustainability Commission would benefit from having a climate realist on the commission to present a different point of view than all the other members.</p> <p>Please do your research and look at the data and make a truly more sustainable America.</p> <p>https://climaterealism.com/</p>	<p>The Regional Plan Amendment does not specify which clean or renewable energy technologies will be used to achieve our emissions reduction goals.</p> <p>Regarding the reliability and resilience of wind and solar: new utility-scale wind and solar plants are being installed with battery-storage systems, meaning that they can store the energy produced on-site for when it is most needed. This removes the concern about the reliability of wind and solar. The energy industry is transitioning to renewables (wind and solar) rapidly: Large solar plants with battery storage have decreased in price, making them price-competitive with natural gas. This trend is expected to continue as the market continues to innovate and the costs of solar and battery storage plants continue to fall.</p> <p>When new technologies emerge, there are often legitimate concerns that one bad thing (i.e., air pollution from coal) is just being replaced with another (i.e., waste from used solar panels). There are negative externalities associated with all forms of energy production. While we cannot avoid all negative impacts, we can choose the energy production methods that do the least harm to our environment and our community. The negative impacts of wind and solar are relatively modest, and are far outweighed by the positive impacts on air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Large renewable energy projects sometimes face concerns about where turbines or other equipment are disposed of after their useful life. There is much misinformation about wind turbine disposal, particularly. In fact, wind turbines are highly recyclable, as they are made of many valuable components. About 85% of wind turbine components are reusable or recyclable. Much of a solar panel is also recyclable; recycling practices for solar and wind are improving each year. Regardless, the total environmental impacts of solar and wind are far lower than other forms of energy production and involve far more recycling of components than coal, natural gas, and nuclear energy. The City will continue to consider short- and long-term impacts to</p>
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			<p>the environment and our community when developing renewable energy projects.</p> <p>In response to this comment, staff have changed the narrative section of the proposed page amendments to specify clean electricity, as opposed to renewable electricity, to provide clarity. Clean electricity is a term that signifies zero-emissions electricity, and includes renewable energy generation like solar and wind. Clean electricity is the name of the relevant target area in the Carbon Neutrality Plan, and so this change mirrors other changes in the narrative to match Carbon Neutrality Plan target area language.</p> <p>The website referenced - ClimateRealism.com - is a well-known climate-denial website that works to undermine the global consensus on climate change. It is backed by fossil-fuel companies and anonymous donors, and is not a reliable source for evidenced-based information on climate science and climate action.</p>
3	9/9/2021 15:09	I would like to comment on city staff's structuring of the carbon neutrality amendment. The language in the amendment is comprehensive in addressing the scientific, social, and policy needs of Flagstaff regarding climate change and what will be unfolding in the coming years. The State of Arizona heavily restricts what the City is capable of implementing so kudos for putting forth good directions for us to follow. Thank you for your hard work!	Response not required.
4	9/13/2021 11:58	The Carbon Neutrality Plan is dead on! I fully support the changes and proposals	Response not required.
5	9/13/2021 12:25	Happy to see the inclusion of the Carbon Neutrality Plan into the Regional Plan! The proposed language is clear and easy to understand. One issue that needs to be addressed in the Regional Plan Update is how the community wants to prioritize regional plan direction related to carbon neutrality when it is in conflict with other direction.	City staff believe the proposed amendment is compatible with the other goals and policies of the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030. That said, the many goals of the Regional Plan must be balanced amongst each other. The proposed new goals in the Climate Change and Adaptation Section will need to be weighed against and balanced with the many other goals of the Regional Plan, from transportation to economic development goals. This prioritization takes place regularly, as staff, City Council, and other decision-makers weigh the many goals of the Regional Plan. The amended Climate Change and

		Adaptation section goals will be treated similarly to all other goals in the Plan: decision-makers will consider all goals of the Regional Plan and strive to balance these goals when making decisions about the future direction of Flagstaff.
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I.2 Emailed or written Comments:

Staff sent mailings and email notifications to local, state, and regional agencies, as well as lists of interested parties and residents on the Regional Plan notification list.

One comment was received via email.

Comment #	Date	Comment	Response
6	8/19/2021 4:28 PM	<p>From: Kate Morley <kmorley@naipta.az.gov> Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2021 4:28 PM To: Jenny Niemann <JNiemann@flagstaffaz.gov>; Heather Dalmolin <hdalmolin@naipta.az.gov> Subject: RE: Major Amendment to the Flagstaff Regional Plan - carbon neutrality</p> <p>Hi Jenny,</p> <p>Thanks again for allowing us to comment. We have several comments we would love to be considered to strengthen language around the role transit plays in achieving carbon neutrality.</p> <p>Policy E&C2.2: modify “promote” to “develop” or similar other word that commits to action.</p> <p>Policy T8.1: specifically identify transit as a component of “network” which could otherwise been seen more narrowly as streets.</p> <p>Policy T.8.2: reads as if there is no improvement to be made with work</p>	<p>The comment and suggestions provided are in line with the direction and intent of the Regional Plan Amendment. However, the request for revisions to specifically include transit call for a higher level of detail than the Regional Plan pages currently provide. The proposed revised pages communicate the broad goals of the City’s carbon neutrality work – achieving carbon neutrality, preparing for change, and acting equitably. The revised pages include supporting actions: reducing emissions from transportation and improving community connectivity are specifically mentioned actions that cover transit.</p> <p>The requested additional goal, to specifically designate the emissions reductions provided through transit and first last mile infrastructure, would introduce a level of detail not used in the amended Regional Plan pages. For renewable energy, for example, neither the original nor the revised pages suggest which types of renewable energy should be used (wind, solar, hydropower, etc.). The transportation actions follow this model.</p> <p>In response to this feedback, revisions will be made to clarify the actions to be taken. We will reference the seven target areas of carbon neutrality actions, as specified by the Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan. This will introduce two areas that are actively related to transit: Decreasing Dependence on Cars and Electric Mobility.</p>

“maintain.” I suggest “modify” or something similar.

Policy T.8.5: can often result in poor design for bike and ped infrastructure which is critical to Mountain Line riders. Consider “balancing” these needs.

Most of all, we would love to a goal specifically around transit. I am not sure if it fits in the climate section or transportation section but something to the effect of:

- Support the reduction of transportation emissions through the prioritization of public transit and associated first last mile infrastructure, and through the implementation of Mountain Line services and Transit Guidelines.

Happy to discuss specifics and thanks again.

Kate Morley, AICP
Deputy General Manager
Mountain Line

Regarding the suggested revision to Policy E&C2.2: the City utilizes the word ‘promote’ throughout the Regional Plan to designate areas that need further City support. Because the City is not always the actor, for example in development cases, words that connote more action or power on the City’s behalf are not appropriate in this context.

Regarding the suggestion revision to Policy T8.1: the change to policy T8.1 was made to clarify the meaning of this policy, as there was confusion about the meaning of transportation connectivity. This revision, to specify network connectivity, is being made to clarify that this policy discusses the street network and the need for the efficient connections that are provided by a more grid-like network.

Regarding the suggestion revision to Policy T.8.2: this suggested change is outside of the scope of the proposed amendment. This amendment focuses on the Climate Change and Adaptation section, with one change to transportation policies to remove confusion. The road and street classification system is somewhat related to climate action to reduce transportation emissions, but this policy is not incompatible with the proposed amendment. Staff do believe that the word maintain does imply continual work to actively sustained the desired state of the road and street classification system, and that improvements are possible and encouraged under this policy.

Regarding the suggestion revision to Policy T.8.5: while this policy does elevate the importance of freight movement, it is to be implemented in balance with policy T.8.3, which is located in the same section. (T.8.3: Design neighborhood streets using appropriate traffic calming techniques and street widths to sustain quality of life while maintaining traffic safety.) Decision-makers need to weigh both policy T.8.5 (fright movement) and policy T.8.3 (traffic calming and street widths), to balance these two priorities. Staff believe that the existence of these two policies addresses the commenter’s concerns.