

# SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE FLAGSTAFF REGIONAL PLAN 2030

February to August 2022

City of Flagstaff, AZ and Coconino County, AZ

## Project Background

The Flagstaff Regional Plan is a policy guide, serving as the general plan for the City of Flagstaff and an amendment to the Coconino County Comprehensive Plan. The plan covers a range of topics with information on current conditions, our vision for the future, and carefully developed goals and policies to realize the future vision.

The current Regional Plan was adopted in 2014 and under state law must be updated or readopted every 10 years. To ensure that the plan reflects and accounts for the dynamic changes occurring in the region, the City of Flagstaff and Coconino County are working toward a full plan update. Once developed, the updated plan will be presented to voters in the City of Flagstaff and the County Board of Supervisors in 2025.

## SWOT Analysis Overview

As part of the first phase of the Regional Plan update process, the Regional Plan update team invited all City and County Commissions, Boards, Advisory Councils, and Committees to participate in a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and during the exercise, the commission/committee/board members were asked to enter their assessment of the current Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 related to the group's subject matter and to consider what opportunities or threats could be foreseen in the update process. The Regional Plan team asked each group to consider the following specific questions:

**Strengths:** What are the strengths of the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030?

**Weaknesses:** What are the weaknesses of the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030?

**Opportunities:** As we are revising the Flagstaff Regional Plan, what opportunities do we have that we did not have in the past?

**Threats:** What could negatively impact the creation or implementation of an updated Regional Plan?

The Regional Plan team utilized the software, GroupMap, for the SWOT exercise, and commission/committee/board members were able to enter their assessment digitally. After entering their assessments, members were then invited to rate the items on an importance scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important).



Figure 1. GroupMap software illustration

The following report summarizes the feedback received and will provide a reference document for the Regional Plan update team to assess whether the update process and plan are achieving similar successes, avoiding weaknesses in the

current plan, and staying attentive to the opportunities and threats identified.

## Commission List

The SWOT analysis was conducted with the following commissions, committees, councils, and boards.

### City of Flagstaff

Airport Commission	Pedestrian Advisory Committee	Commission on Inclusion and Adaptive Living	Tourism Commission
Parks and Recreation Commission	Indigenous Commission	Sustainability Commission	Heritage Preservation Commission
Bike Advisory Committee	Water Commission	Transportation Commission	Open Space Commission
Housing Commission	Beautification and Public Arts Commission	Commission On Diversity Awareness	Planning and Zoning Commission

### Partner Organizations

Mountain Line Board of Directors	Mountain Line Transit Advisory Committee	Mountain Line Staff
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### Coconino County

Coconino Hispanic Advisory Council	African Diaspora Advisory Council	Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council	Planning and Zoning Commission
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## Approach to SWOT Analysis Summary

Through the SWOT analysis process, the Regional Plan team received 561 comments from 21 City and County commissions and, by request, Mountain Line staff. The Regional Plan team reviewed and categorized the SWOT comments by applying the following methodology.

In order to understand the breadth and depth of these comments, a bottom-up topic coding process was used to categorize SWOT comments into topics and subtopics. Bottom-up coding is an approach to content analysis where codes (topics and subtopics) are developed as content is analyzed. This is differentiated from top-down coding where the coder applies a predetermined/previously created codebook to the content being analyzed.

Staff began the coding process by organizing all comments in an excel spreadsheet (one comment per row). Comments were filtered by the four SWOT categories and each comment was then read and split into multiple rows based on distinct and differentiable content within the comment, resulting in over 570 rows of content. An initial short-description code was applied to the split comments during this process. After reading through all comments, the short description codes were sorted and organized into groups of similar codes. Each group was assigned an overarching topic category and the short-description codes were further sorted to develop subtopics within each topic. This process resulted in 7 topic areas that were used across all four SWOT sections and between 32 – 56 subtopics per SWOT section. The final topic groups are:

1. General Plan Comments
2. Economic
3. Environment and Natural Resources
4. Equity and Inclusion
5. Public Participation, Plan Development, Community Values
6. Transportation and Infrastructure
7. Land Use, Development, and Community Character

Although these topic groups have consistent names across the four SWOT categories, what they capture differs and a description of each is provided in each of the SWOT Result and Analysis sections in this report. Subtopics are identified in each section of the SWOT analysis as bulleted lists.

Unlike many comment or content analysis efforts, reviewing and categorizing SWOT comments is intended as an information gathering/scoping exercise and is not intended to quantitatively gauge perceptions of the Regional Plan – it is not a survey. This document presents the breadth and depth of comments that staff received, without any reference to the number or percent of similar comments that were received.

The purpose of this report is to serve as a reference document throughout the Regional Plan update process. Staff will refer back to this report with questions such as:

- Are we replicating the strengths that were identified in the current regional plan?
- Are we avoiding the weaknesses in the current regional plan?
- Are we incorporating the opportunities that were identified?

## Regional Plan SWOT Analysis Summary Report

- Are we adequately addressing the threats that could stand in the way of plan creation, adoption, and implementation?
- Where did we receive potentially conflicting perspectives that we need to address?
- Are there things (SWOTs) that were identified that fall outside of the scope of the regional plan but that should be shared with other staff/departments?

## SWOT Results and Analysis – What we Heard

### Strengths

Question: What are the Strengths of the Current Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030: Place Matters

#### **General**

Most commissions provided several general comments about the current Regional Plan. These comments were not topic-specific and covered the length, breadth, and thoroughness of the plan, how the plan is implemented and used, the clarity of writing and structure, and the guiding principles and vision for the plan. Generally, commissions appreciated that the current regional plan was thorough and comprehensive, that it is used in city decision-making (not a plan that gathers dust on a shelf), guides the future, that it is clear and understandable, that it is aspirational in nature, and that it is grounded in data.

Key Strengths Identified:

- Thorough and comprehensive – covers many topic areas
- Extent and depth of goals and policies
- Guiding principles and vision reflect the community
- Plan is aspirational
- The plan is used in city decision-making
- The plan is future looking and provides guidance to achieve a future vision
- Writing and structure and clear and understandable
- Contains good data and maps that are easy to understand

#### **Economic**

Several commissions identified strengths in the current regional plan related to economic development and local business. These comments were general but indicated that the current regional plan supported the region’s retail and local business environment, tourism, and investment in the community.

Key Strengths Identified:

- Supportive of local businesses
- Supportive of events, festivals, and tourism
- Intended to promote reinvestment

#### **Environment and Natural Resources**

Strengths that fall under Environment and Natural Resources included the plan’s support for and goals/policies to protect the region’s unique natural resources, ecosystems, and dark skies, planning for parks and recreation, general sustainability, and recently added goals and policies aimed at addressing climate change.

Key Strengths Identified:

- Planning for and preservation of the region’s forests, plants, ecosystems, and dark skies

- Support for National Parks, Monuments, and other natural sites
- Goals, Policies, and planning for the region’s parks and open spaces
- Modeling and planning for the City’s water supply designation
- Goals, policies, and planning to both mitigate and address the impacts of climate change

### **Equity and Inclusion**

Strengths that fall under equity and inclusion include those related to sections of the current regional plan that address inclusion and adaptive living, the inclusion of specific heritages, cultures, and groups – especially Native American culture -, accessibility concerns related to parks, recreation, and other services, and gentrification and displacement. The short demographic analysis in the current regional plan was also perceived as a strength – although there was a preference for expanding the analysis.

Key Strengths Identified:

- Inclusion and Adaptive living
- Goals, policies, and general planning for improved and equitable access to parks
- Discussion, goals, and policies that address culture, heritage, and diversity
- Goals and policies recognizing and attempting to address gentrification and displacement
- Inclusion of demographic data and analysis

### **Land use, Development, and Community Character**

At the core of the Regional Plan is land use. Numerous commissions identified strengths in the current Regional Plan related to how the plan envisions, plans for, and sets goals and policies around neighborhood and community character, mixed-use/walkable development patterns, density, attainable and affordable housing, and adaptive reuse and infill development. Staff also heard an appreciation for the robust scenario modeling/planning that supports the future growth illustration and 100-year water supply designation.

Key Strengths Identified:

- Goals, policies, and discussion surrounding neighborhood and community character
- Goals and policies that promote activity centers, mixed-use development, and walkable urban environments
- Goals and policies that support growing up, increasing density in core areas, and a discussion of the benefits density provides
- The land use section generally supports attainable and affordable housing
- Robust scenario planning/modeling basis for future growth illustration and water supply designation
- Goals and policies that support infill development and adaptive reuse of buildings

### **Public Participation, Plan Development, and Community Values**

Strengths in the public participation, plan development, and community values category referred to the public engagement efforts that were a part of the current plan’s development, inter-agency and stakeholder input, how well the plan reflects community values, and how the plan is adopted. Most commissions appreciated that there was a high level of public involvement in plan development and that there was close collaboration between the City, County, community groups, key stakeholders, and

subject matter experts. Several City commissions noted that the state requirement for the plan to be adopted by voters in the City is a strength.

### Key Strengths Identified:

- Strong public participation and involvement in plan development
- Strong inter-agency, community group, stakeholder, subject matter expert collaboration
- Reflective of community values and desires
- Adopted by voters in the City

### Transportation and Infrastructure

Strengths related to transportation and infrastructure largely relate to bike and pedestrian issues, transit, and the Flagstaff airport. Commissions identified that the plan's emphasis on promoting bike and pedestrian infrastructure, connectivity, and active transportation-supportive land use patterns was a strength. Several commissions specifically called out the plan's support for the Flagstaff Urban Trail System and its role in supporting multi-modal transportation. Similar supportive goals and policies for transit were also seen as a strength. Finally, a few commissions identified support for a strong regional airport as a strength.

### Key Strengths Identified:

- Strong goals, policies, and planning content that supports a multi-modal and active transportation system – specifically, bike, pedestrian, and transit connections and infrastructure
- Bike, pedestrian, and transit-supportive land use section
- Goals and policies that support a strong regional airport

## **Weaknesses**

Question: What are the Weaknesses of the Current Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030: Place Matters?

### **General**

General weaknesses of the current Regional Plan constitute the largest group of comments that staff received. Commission members felt that the plan did not do a very good job of prioritizing goals and policies, didn't contain enough specifics as to how the plan would be implemented, and didn't speak to the competing goals or trade-offs that might occur in implementing the plan. Some commission members stated that the plan was too broad and contained too many goals and policies. Another common weakness was that implementation of the plan seemed minimal or unclear and that implementation of the plan is limited by the City and County's resources and tools (time, money, etc.). Several commission members also suggested that the implementation of the plan is also subject to the political climate at any given time and that there is often a disconnect between the implementation tools, such as the zoning code, and the plan's goals and policies.

Some commission members noted that the plan is not clear or understood well enough by the general public and that the plan doesn't make clear how it impacts people in their daily life.

Key Weaknesses Identified:

- Lack of goal and policy prioritization
- Lack of specific implementation strategies or timeline
- Not enough information on trade-offs and/or competing goals and policies
- Too many topic areas
- Too many goals and policies
- Insufficient implementation resources – staff, time, money
- Political influence in the implementation process
- Too complex and unclear to the general public how it affects them
- Unclear how much of the plan has been implemented and at what scale

### **Economic**

Commissions identified several weaknesses in the current regional plan related to economic development and the local economy. Some commission members recognized that certain goals and policies in the plan might have economic trade-offs or present competing values. The lack of an in-depth discussion of those trade-offs or competing values was seen by some as a weakness. Another weakness identified is that the economic development section goals and policies didn't clearly state the goal of effectively meeting the needs of all of Flagstaff's residents. Another comment also raised the possibility that the plan might overstate the economic impact of a formally educated population.

Several weaknesses that were identified were not specific to the Regional Plan content and instead addressed weaknesses in the current state of the region. These included a lack of affordable visitor accommodations, a difficult labor market, and a challenging economic environment.

Key Weaknesses Identified:

- Goals and policies that have economic trade-offs or competing values with economic development
- Lack of emphasis on meeting the economic needs of all Flagstaff Residents
- The plan might overstate the importance of education on economic prosperity
- Current conditions - including affordable tourism accommodations, labor market shortages, and challenging macroeconomic conditions

**Environment and Natural Resources**

Weaknesses related to environment and natural resources addressed the current regional plan content on climate change mitigation and adaptation, parks and recreation, natural resource conservation and management, and clean energy. Several commission members felt that the current regional plan did not go far enough in planning for future parks and open spaces, and the capacity of such facilities to meet future demand. Others suggested that the plan should have more robust content on the management of forests in populated areas for wildfire mitigation and stormwater capture. Several comments suggested that the plan's content on climate change mitigation and adaptation didn't go far enough in connecting development and land use to the carbon neutrality plan's goal of reducing VMT. Other climate change comments wanted to see more emphasis on the urgency of climate change and the role of renewable energy. One comment expressed concern that new developments are not installing dark sky lighting.

Key Weaknesses Identified:

- Insufficient park, open space, and recreation planning – facilities and future capacity
- Need more robust content on the management of forest resources for wildfire mitigation and stormwater capture
- The climate change section doesn't connect clearly enough to land use and development and their impact on VMT
- Not enough emphasis on the urgency of climate change and the role of renewable energy
- Concern about new developments not adhering to dark sky lighting practices

**Equity and Inclusion**

Weaknesses that commission members identified related to equity and inclusion include definitions and the scope of content around cultural diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility, demographic data, systemic racism, and disparities. Specifically, some commission members thought that the current Regional Plan could expand on content related to cultural diversity and how the plan examines and defines community character. Others thought that the idea of accessibility was too narrowly focused and that it could be expanded to include a more holistic sense of accessibility. Several commission members noted that the goals and policies related to preserving community character, cultural diversity, and accessibility and inclusion were not specific enough to ensure that diverse voices are heard in future planning processes. Staff also heard that the plan doesn't contain enough content surrounding the intersection and complexity of systemic discrimination and the topics within the plan.

Key Weaknesses Identified:

- Too narrow on what is included in the cultural diversity conversation
- Accessibility goals and policies are too limited - should be more inclusive and aspirational

- Limited engagement and content relative to the wide range of cultural identities. Goals and policies are not explicit enough.
- The Community character section is too narrowly formulated
- The plan does not adequately speak to the complexity of systemic discrimination and how planning can contribute to or be used to address it
- Does not include an explicit land acknowledgment
- Limited definition and evaluation of Flagstaff’s demographics

### **Land use, Development, and Community Character**

The weaknesses identified in the current Regional Plan related to land use, development, and community character are wide-ranging. Some include concerns that the current plan supports too much density and assumes too much of a connection between density and affordability. Conversely, some weaknesses noted that the plan doesn’t clearly identify existing barriers or trade-offs to denser affordable housing such as parking, open space, and resource protection standards. Other comments suggested that the lack of clear housing affordability and unsheltered population goals and policies is a weakness.

Activity centers and the future growth illustration were identified as lacking some level of economic or ground truthing. Some comments indicated that there were too many activity centers identified, and some were identified in the wrong locations.

The City’s Beautification and Public Arts Commission provided one unified weakness that the current plan does not have a dedicated beautification and public art section.

#### Key Weaknesses Identified:

- Supports too much density
- Assumes affordability is connected to density
- Doesn’t explicitly address the impact of speculation and investors on land/housing
- Supports traditional/Euclidean zoning
- Doesn’t address the unsheltered population
- Too many activity centers are identified and not always in the correct locations
- No clear housing affordability goals
- Not clear enough on the impact of parking on development patterns and costs
- Lacking discussion on the wide-ranging trade-offs of land use decisions and development types
  - Heritage preservation - housing affordability
  - Parking – density, walkability, housing affordability
  - Open space – housing affordability
  - Viewscapes – housing affordability
  - Resource protection – density, compact growth, housing affordability
- Lacks dedicated beautification and public arts section

### **Public Participation, Plan Development, and Community Values**

Weaknesses related to public participation and plan development suggested that the current Regional Plan could have had more general community input, more input from youth, and more input from

traditionally underrepresented groups. Some noted that there was a high level of public participation fatigue due to the length of involvement in the current regional plan development.

### Key Weaknesses Identified:

- Could have had more community input in plan development
- Lack of youth input
- Public participation fatigue in the plan development process
- Public participation didn't include an educational component
- Not all voices represented
- Not enough input from traditionally underrepresented groups

### Transportation and Infrastructure

Weaknesses identified related to transportation and infrastructure indicated that the current Regional Plan was not strong enough on elements related to shifting transportation modes away from individual vehicles. This includes not strong enough prioritization of bike and pedestrian infrastructure, no complete streets policy, and lack of implementation of elements that were included in the plan.

Several commission members provided comments about existing conditions and infrastructure that were perceived as community weaknesses.

- Not strong enough language around prioritizing bike and pedestrian transportation and making vehicle travel less attractive
- Not strong enough on public parking
- Needs content on better wayfinding
- No complete streets policy included
- A lot of bike and pedestrian elements have not been implemented
- Concerns about specific street sections and automotive infrastructure

## **Opportunities**

Question: As we are revising the Flagstaff Regional Plan, what opportunities do we have that we did not have in the past?

### **General**

Commissions identified numerous general opportunities for the regional plan update.

Key Opportunities Identified:

- Look for ways to reduce and streamline the number of goals and policies
- Incorporate new best practices
- Include a funding section to plan for and anticipate new funding sources
- Create a prioritization scheme for goals and policies
- Improve the regional plan implementation reporting and accountability mechanisms
- Improve and expand implementation strategies
  - Enterprise risk management as a potential strategy
- Include emerging issues and new technologies in the plan
  - public health
- Enhance public-facing GIS offerings
- Enhance and improve online and digital offerings
- Incorporate beautification and arts throughout the plan
- Acknowledge the unexpected – awareness as a guiding principle

### **Economic**

Commissions identified several opportunities related to economic development that could be included in the next Regional Plan. Some suggested that the plan update provides an opportunity to support and attract a wide range of businesses and employers to the area. Others see an opportunity to extend the city's focus on sustainability to the tourism industry.

Key Opportunities Identified:

- Include more robust content on attracting businesses and employers and supporting various business models
- Support compatible development around the airport
- Leverage the area's appeal and high quality of life
- Include content, goals, and policies that support the creative economy
- Extend sustainability goals and policies to consider tourism

### **Environment and Natural Resources**

Opportunities related to the environment and natural resources addressed the improvements in knowledge regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental justice and equity, equitable access to parks and open space, urban food systems, ecosystem preservation, and sustainable building practices.

Regarding climate change, numerous commission members felt there is an opportunity to connect the Regional Plan more closely to the City's Carbon Neutrality Plan and address the equity implications of climate change more directly. Staff also heard that addressing environmental justice and equity more broadly was also an opportunity in the next Regional Plan, specifically as they pertain to climate impacts, park and open space access, and environmental hazards.

### Key Opportunities Identified:

- Align the Regional Plan with the Carbon Neutrality plan
- Expand goals and policies around equitable access and design for parks and open space
- Climate and sustainability at the forefront of the plan
  - We know more about the science and impacts today than we did before
  - Climate mitigation and adaptation could be more prominent in the next plan
- Incorporation of urban food systems
- Sustainable public facilities
- Reclaimed water systems and use
- Sustainable development practices
  - Consider incentives
- Renewable energy systems
- Improve collaboration with USFS and other agencies to ensure forest health
- Environmental justice and equity
- Add clarity on water resources and limits
- More on the region's ecosystems and wildlife and ways to protect and maintain their health

### Equity and Inclusion

The predominant opportunities that were identified related to equity were to translate the plan into multiple languages and to expand the plan's equity considerations.

### Key Opportunities Identified:

- Translate the plan into multiple languages
- Add more specific equity considerations throughout the plan, including narrative, goals and policies, and implementation strategies
  - Consider how the plan can be used to improve housing access for people with varying needs
  - Include a discussion of economic disparities and how the plan can be used to address them

### Land use, Development, and Community Character

Commissions identified several opportunities related to land use, development, and community character. Some commission members saw scenario planning as a way to test gaps in goals and policies, and others wanted to see more robust scenario planning in the update process. Other opportunities included incentivizing brownfield development and private development amenities, and including goals and policies to forward cost recovery mechanisms. Numerous comments suggested expanding housing types outlined in the plan to include middle missing housing and focusing goals and policies on smart growth principles. Some also suggested looking into the opportunity for land use planning to address climate impacts.

## Summary of Regional Plan SWOT Analysis

### Key Opportunities Identified:

- Use scenario planning to test goals and policies
- Incentivize brownfield development over greenfield
- Incorporate cost recovery mechanisms
- Encourage amenities and facilities in private development
- Land use solutions to climate impacts
- Incorporate and promote a wide range of housing types
  - Middle missing housing
- Land use solutions to affordable housing
- Make the connection between land use and transportation more robust
- Incorporate smart growth principles
  - Walkable/Dense/mixed-use development
- Include goals and policies to create a city/county land trust

### Public Participation, Plan Development, and Community Values

A key opportunity identified across commissions is more robust public participation. Although many thought that the public engagement in the current plan was good, the plan update provides another opportunity to improve and work to include people that are typically absent from these types of processes. Suggestions were also made to think through a wide range of outreach methods that may be more accessible to a wide range of citizens and stakeholders.

Related to better public involvement, some commission members also felt that public education about the plan and how it impacts people's lives could be improved.

Staff also heard that the update presents an opportunity for more robust inter-agency collaboration and collaboration between government, non-profit, education, and community organizations.

### Key Opportunities Identified:

- Robust public engagement and involvement in plan development
  - Call out for better indigenous involvement
  - Wide variety of outreach methods
  - Work to get input from those typically absent from the process
  - Partner with people that have local knowledge and expertise
- Inter-agency and organization collaboration
- Public Education
  - Issues trade-offs and other hard discussions
  - Clarify the "what's in it for me?" and "who does it benefit?" comments
- Include reference to other plans and documents
- Goals and policies to direct better outreach for capital projects
- Create a more inclusive vision and guiding principles

## Transportation and Infrastructure

Several opportunities were identified related to transportation and infrastructure. Suggestions included adding best practices for traffic calming, consideration of emerging technology and services, adding more robust content related to promoting bike, pedestrian, and transit usage, and planning for a more robust internet infrastructure.

### Key Opportunities Identified:

- Include best practices in traffic calming
- Inclusion of emerging technology and services
  - EV, micro-transit/mobility, autonomous
- Include transportation behavior research
  - Speeding, telecommuting, bike/ped usage
- More robust content, goals, and policies around promoting bike, pedestrian, and transit use
  - FUTS expansion, transit planning and service, street design and connectivity, infrastructure
- Include planning for a downtown parking structure
- Plan for additional roadway expansions
- Emission analysis for new infrastructure
- Inclusion of regional street network and design policies
- Internet/broadband infrastructure

## **Threats**

Question: As we are revising the Flagstaff Regional Plan, what could negatively impact the creation or implementation of an updated Regional Plan?

### **General**

The commissions identified many general threats in the current regional plan. This topic was the bulk of the comments in the Threat category. Within that, most of the comments were related to how the plan could be implemented. Some members felt the current plan and new plan will be subject to changing political wills, especially at the State and Federal levels where the city and county have little sway. Many members commented on the lack of accountability and transparency in the current plan translating into the same issues in the next plan. Others felt that the current plan covered too much and that doing so again would result in difficulty accomplishing its goals.

Key Threats Identified:

- Less transportation needs due to work-from-home shift
- Cyber security risks associated with new technologies
- State and Federal legislatures may have conflicting goals
- Lack of necessary resources to implement the types of change being discussed
  - Length of document
- No way to ensure individual cooperation and responsibility
- Political influence may change what the plan's future looks like
  - Monetary influence
  - A lack of political consensus could stonewall efforts

### **Economic**

The commissions identified a variety of economic threats the region may face when attempting to create or implement the next Regional Plan. These ranged from the increasing cost of living to the current housing market in the region. There was also a comment about local tourism competition.

Key Threats Identified:

- The cost of living has been increasing, pricing people out of living here
  - Unsheltered individuals could harm the tourism industry
- Inflation and slowed economic functions could be detrimental
- Multiple areas in the region that are competing for tourism in their local economies
- The available housing market is increasingly unaffordable
- Workforce is shrinking

### **Environment and Natural Resources**

The commissions found multiple threats to the Regional Plan that arise from local resources and the environment. These include topics like the region's current population growth, wildfires, and the implications of global climate change.

Key Threats Identified:

- Current and future public health issues
  - Global pandemics

- Air quality
- Growing instability in many facets of life-related to climate change
  - Limitation of water as a resource
- Increased risk of natural disasters throughout the region
- Population growth beyond what can be accommodated currently

### **Equity and Inclusion**

Threats related to equity and inclusion noted that structural and institutional racism/discrimination threatens broad citizen participation and buy-in and that upholding the status-quo environment will likely result in no change to systems and outcomes.

Key Threats Identified:

- Institutional racism creates long-lasting barriers for many community members
- Upholding the “status quo” ends up perpetuating harmful policies to affected community members

### **Land Use, Development, and Community Character**

The commissions pointed to multiple threats related to land use, development, and community character. There were several concerns related to housing density. Some were pointing at nearby growth as also a potential problem. Others discussed the community character and how it is influenced. There was also a comment acknowledging limitations on growth by pointing out the city is landlocked by National Forest.

Key Threats Identified:

- The real, spatial limitations of developable land
- Higher housing density and development construction could hurt the community
- Lack of focus on arts and the community
- The public and Private sectors have conflicting goals
- Current land is not used to its potential
  - Coupled with the lack of available land

### **Public Participation, Plan Development, and Community Values**

The commissions identified many threats related to public participation, plan development, and community values. Most of these comments were about the need for more broad community input. Commission members also pointed out the need for more agreement among the key players.

Key Threats Identified:

- The city may run into involvement fatigue due to the wide net being cast
  - Regional Plan, RTP, and County Comprehensive plan all happening at the same time
- Public participation needs to cover a broader cross-section of the community – not obtaining that might result in a lack of buy-in
- Need more buy-in from stakeholders

### **Transportation and Infrastructure**

The commissions noted several threats linked to transportation and infrastructure. There were comments about the region’s car-centric thinking, the lack of existing infrastructure to support the number of vehicles on the roads, and the conflicts between local and ADOT interests.

### Key Threats Identified:

- Much of our current lifestyle and economy is centered on automobile travel, but the plan is shifting away from this
- Lack of investment and infrastructure for both new and existing modes of transit
  - Passive transportation not prioritized
- ADOT jurisdiction on roads leads to the city's/county's inability to act on those areas
- Tourists affect our transportation systems but are not included in this process

## Appendix A

### Top Three Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

As part of the SWOT analysis, each member was given the opportunity to rate the importance of each comment/item on a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important). The following section outlines the top three comments that received the highest average score for each commission. The African Diaspora Advisory Council, Beautification and Public Arts Commission, Coconino Hispanic Advisory Council, Commission on Diversity Awareness and the Indigenous Commission did not rate their comments, feeling that all of their input should be equally weighted. The items listed here are the verbatim responses, with no topical coding applied.

#### **Airport Commission**

##### *Strengths*

1. "A strong regional airport with two commercial airlines is an asset to residences, and helps retain and attract new business."
2. "The professionalism and consistency of the City in developing and using this plan."
3. "The airport has been able to incorporate and make progress on many of the policies in the plan"

##### *Weaknesses*

1. "infrastructure"
2. "Competing values that can kill a vibrant economy"
3. "Milton Rd needs an overhaul in the NAU area"

##### *Opportunities*

1. "Success of the airport can be success for businesses that are appropriate for the airport."
2. "waiting list for hangers and importance of land preservation near the runways FOR the airport"
3. "To attract business that would utilize our airport even more."

##### *Threats*

1. "limited room to grow"
2. "The city is landlocked"
3. "Limited workforce"

#### **Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)**

##### *Strengths*

1. "Policy T.6.2. Establish and maintain a comprehensive, consistent, and highly connected system of bikeways and FUTS trails"
2. "Strong emphasis on FUTS"
3. "Recognizing need for long-term planning."

*Weaknesses*

1. “Not strong enough language for prioritizing bike ped and making vehicle travel unattractive”
2. “Disconnect between high level vision to what is actually implemented in the city”
3. “Educating the public on current issues/transportation”

*Opportunities*

1. “Opportunity to provide more connectivity between Futs and other trail systems. The system should be comprehensive and not have gaps between various parts.”
2. “We definitely need to integrate the Climate Emergency Declaration into updating the plan. This MUST include much better infrastructure for Bike-Ped needs and expand that network for our desired future of many more bike-peds.”
3. “Educating the public on current issues/transportation options and usage”

*Threats*

1. “The old way of doing things that prioritizes and accommodates automobiles.”
2. “Population pressure on limited water resources”
3. “Assuming we will continue to travel the same way we are today. I.e. telecommuting, new mobility options, younger generations, ebikes”

**Housing Commission**

*Strengths*

1. “Much of the discussion and goals and policies in the plan is very strong and accurate to the dynamics of housing issues”

*Weaknesses*

1. “No explicit housing affordability goals”
2. “No discussion of how Resource Protection requirements can be counterproductive if excessively applied to residential developments, by preventing compact growth. There is a tradeoff between the two.”
3. “No discussion of potential tradeoffs between historic preservation and housing affordability”

*Opportunities*

1. “Greater recognition now that housing and affordable housing needs to be a focus and priority for the community.”
2. “The housing Commission published detailed housing affordability goals and analysis that could be incorporated into the regional plan”
3. “Is there a way to make minor regional plan amendments more quickly? I believe anything needing a regional plan amendment takes a really long time.”

*Threats*

1. “One of the problems with all long-term plans in the City is that past Councils/Plans/etc., usually cannot obligate future Councils. This means we often see the same arguments again and again...”

2. “Time. It seems regional planning activities always take longer than they are originally scheduled for. So things at the end of the process don't get as much focus as things at the beginning of the process.”
3. “What enforcement mechanisms, if any, are there in the plan? The 2030 plan already had some great goals & policies with regards to housing, but their implementation in the years after publication seems limited.”

### **Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC)**

#### *Strengths*

1. “Strong cooperation between the county, planning authority, transportation authority etc.”
2. “Easily accessible opportunities for public awareness and participation.”
3. “Perspective of growing in vs growing out as the population continues to rise”

#### *Weaknesses*

1. “Lack of timeline”
2. “The natural resources and cultural resource maps are basically fluff and don't provide real information”
3. “The number of goals is too high”

#### *Opportunities*

1. “Fully explore and document the challenges of balancing a desire for sustainability, which effectively equals density, and the general desire for single family homes/low density”
2. “Lack of maps on the Heritage Preservation Snapshot PDF”
3. “Show how we changed from the previous plan, how does what we want our city to look like change”

#### *Threats*

1. “Trying to do everything with one document/process. There is a limit to what the plan can do”
2. “Not have a broad cross section of our community provide input”
3. “Overwhelming amount of content - although well organized and displayed, it's a lot!”

### **Commission on Inclusion and Adaptive Living**

#### *Strengths*

1. “Clear vision of Inclusion and Adaptable Living for Flagstaff.”
2. “Clear vision by the community and it's members.”
3. “Sheer breadth of issues and concerns addressed.”

#### *Weaknesses*

1. “The plan should reflect inclusion needs.”
2. “Ageism - seeming lack of consideration for older adults.”
3. “Competing goals/”

### *Opportunities*

1. “Opportunity to improve housing access (affordability and accessibility) for people who are differently abled.”
2. “Opportunity to continue to educate the public.”
3. “Opportunity to extend equity to underserved communities of Flagstaff.”

### *Threats*

1. “Lack of Participation by underserved areas and groups.”
2. “Lack of representation of all stakeholders.”
3. “Developers with different goals than what the public wants in the Regional Plan.”

## **Indigenous Peoples Advisory Council (IPAC)**

### *Strengths*

1. “Public input and part of the process.”
- Note: Only had one

### *Weaknesses*

1. “Include a land acknowledgement to honor and recognize the Indigenous peoples in this region”
2. “Not enough input from Indigenous community members or county population”
3. “Additionally, builders build without using "Dark Sky" lighting. This is absolutely essential to keep the night sky.”

### *Opportunities*

1. “To start saying "NO" to excessive growth. Saying "NO" to architecture that is bland, unsightly, and blocks views. Be honest about water issues. I've only lived her 8 years but I continue to hear about the 100 year water supply. Why are authorities not saying 90 now? Also, why not add in a realistic assessment that factors in the negative impact on water supply due to project growth, increase water usage, climate change, and builders who fail to plan low water and indigenous plants, etc.”
- Note: Only had one

### *Threats*

1. “A weak Zoning committee, City Council, or BOS. Undue influence on the plan by outside sources (builders, etc.).”
- Note: Only had one

## **Mountain Line Board of Directors (BOD)**

### *Strengths*

1. “Strong emphasis on bike/ped/transit needs/goals”
2. “Strong collaboration”
3. “Data Driven”

*Weaknesses*

1. "City efforts don't reflect what is written in RP"
2. "Could use better explanation of how accountability will be kept"
3. "Hard to predict issues of the future"

*Opportunities*

1. "Seek Community input prior to design"
2. "Align our policies to our practice"
3. "Develop stronger community input"

*Threats*

1. "Lack of understanding of mode shift opportunity"
2. "Buy in from key players"
3. "Economic impacts - inflation, slowed economy, reduction in revenue, etc."

**Mountain Line Staff**

*Strengths*

1. "Recognizes that public transit needs to be "baked in" to the permitting process for all development"
2. "multi agency cooperation"
3. "Prioritizes transit and multimodal transportation"

*Weaknesses*

1. "Despite what the plan says, roads/cars always seem to "win""
2. "staffing/ resources to implement"
3. "Disconnect between Regional Plan policies and implementation tools (TIA, zoning, roadway classification/complete streets, etc.)"

*Opportunities*

1. "consider transit a utility"
2. "Permanent Transit Network"
3. "New Downtown Connection Center - multimodal hub"

*Threats*

1. "Staffing time to implement"
2. "PTN is hard for development in a very costly real estate market"
3. "Struggles with getting ADOT on board"

**Mountain Line Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)**

*Strengths*

1. "Inclusive of participation"

2. “public participation”
3. “extensive mapping”

### *Weaknesses*

1. “very large document”
2. “Activity centers are not scaled to actual market potential - number of prospective dwelling units within a defined area, accessibility by different modes, etc.”
3. “reasonableness of activity centers proposed at what feels like most every major intersection”

### *Opportunities*

1. “Position the region for several technological advances: automated vehicles, clean energy, manufactured housing technologies”
2. “increased land use and transportation connection discussions”
3. “Having more departments contribute to and utilize the plan”

### *Threats*

1. “NIMBYS have turned into BANANAS increasing the obstacles to any kind of growth.”
2. “big dreams, small wallets (not having the funding to support the plan)”
3. “In the past support for residential density has not always materialized at the project level”

## **Open Space Commission**

### *Strengths*

1. “Better connected FUTS system, more passive transportation opportunities”
2. “Informational graphics and mapping”
3. “Seems to be a good aspirational plan full of ideas”

### *Weaknesses*

1. “Shared community values to drive vision and goals.”
2. “people want things now- no specifics on implementation/timelines”
3. “Lack of specifics in order to implement.”

### *Opportunities*

1. “Greater emphasis of how to get to our goals.”
2. “Use of enterprise risk management to identify the risks that could prevent goals from not being achieved. Applying ERM to a strategic plan can improve success in achieving goals. ERM looks at a spectrum of risks and how they can impact objectives and goals. Those risks can then be prioritized and managed.”
3. “Active public conversations for roads and bridges- shifting in transportation focus”

### *Threats*

1. “Uncertain changes in economic conditions that could impact tourism or residents within the Flagstaff region. I.e. housing becomes unattainable. Travel becomes too expensive. “
2. “road and housing development pressures taking priority over passive transportation”
3. “Future technology developments with modes of transportation”

## **Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) – Joint City/County**

### *Strengths*

1. “Flagstaff urban areas staying historical, walkable, and open to all.”
2. “Conservation of the Natural Environment and Open Space”
3. “Scenery and Natural beauty”

### *Weaknesses*

1. “Urgency of Climate Change”
2. “Increase surveying of underrepresenting groups: Latina/o, Indigenous, Black etc.”
3. “Adoption of denser activity centers has led to the unpopular high rises in the community and looks like “Phoenixing Flagstaff.” The “mountain town” flavor of the community is being lost.”

### *Opportunities*

1. “Create a joint City/County workforce housing agency with housing land trusts and as a primary goal. (The City has a very good start on this that would be strengthened by County involvement.)”
2. “Prioritize the Conservation Land System goal to maintain critical wildlife and vegetation resources on a landscape scale. This is especially important as we see landscape scale renewable energy development being developed.”
3. “The impacts of population growth and climate change are now farther along and more obvious than they were a decade ago.”

### *Threats*

1. “Climate Concerns - water...fire”
2. “state legislature restrictions against self-governance, property rights that conflict with good planning”
3. “Not enough affordability of housing, jobs, schooling for diverse populations”

## **Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC)**

### *Strengths*

1. “Focus on continuing to further connect current ped/bicycle paths”
2. “recognition that Flagstaff is a great place to encourage ped/bike traffic - 30% of work commute trips being under 10 minutes lends itself to getting people out of cars”
3. “complete streets policies”

### *Weaknesses*

1. “continued acceptance that cars “should” or “will” be the primary mode of transportation - doesn’t lean into the “big shift” idea enough”
2. “The language in section 5 is nice, and comprehensive, but sounds very standard and uninspiring i would like to see use of the words increase/best etc.. to demonstrate a true commitment”
3. “lots of goals and policies - but the plan doesn't include a lot of “specifics” on how each will be accomplished”

### *Opportunities*

1. “creating goals and policies in line with the carbon neutrality plan”
2. “Plan based on aspirational carbon neutrality goals rather than current ped-bike usage (eg imagine an intersection has high bike-ped use and prohibit RTOR)”
3. “more emphasis on traffic calming techniques”

### *Threats*

1. “tourists and visitors don't have a say in these plans but influence our transportation system heavily”
2. “Always easy to be reactionary and backslide on bike/ped goals (ex: potential gas tax holiday)”
3. “Increasing housing prices and especially recent year-round-profitability of short term rental investments mean that most of my coworkers can't afford to live in town so only the most athletic are leaving their cars”

## **Parks & Recreation Commission**

### *Strengths*

1. “Strong vision for providing parks and recreation facilities for Flagstaff”
2. “Emphasis on equitable access to parks”
3. “Neighborhood emphasis”

### *Weaknesses*

1. “Lack of funding for additional park and rec facilities”
2. “Unclear if the plan has obtainable (SMART) goals included”
3. “Complex, not easy to understand”

### *Opportunities*

1. “Community engagement”
2. “Integration of accessible and equitable designs for all parks and rec facilities”
3. “Adding parks and recreation facilities to underserved communities”

### *Threats*

1. “Expiration of BBB tax funding”
2. “Financial capabilities”
3. “Affordability of services”

## **Sustainability Commission**

### *Strengths*

1. “The plan was approved by voters!”
2. “modes of transportation”
3. “Comprehensive and addresses diverse issues”

*Weaknesses*

1. "Accountability for implementation"
2. "I know that this may be out of the purview of a document of this length, but there seems to be relatively little in the way of concrete strategies to pursue the goals laid out."
3. "I don't know if this is the purview of the Flagstaff Regional Plan, but there does not seem to be any mention of restricting the number of properties going to speculators and investors that price out Flagstaff residents."

*Opportunities*

1. "An increased focus and awareness of climate and sustainability that can be at the forefront of the new plan."
2. "Provide more robust engagement and accountability"
3. "Having difficult discussions during the creation of the plan provides greater clarity on how to resolve the myriad tensions inherent in community planning. This would include prioritizing goals across all areas of the plan."

*Weaknesses*

1. "The cultural/societal/municipal inertia toward development and economic growth frustrates the overarching goal of creating well-being for all especially as it relates to climate action"
2. "There is a high chance of increased political and economic volatility in the coming years. There is a chance of future state or national policy that could interfere with these plans, and the volatility itself could also interfere."
3. "The same folks that tend to give feedback to the city dominate the community engagement elements of plan creation and there is limited ownership of the plan by the larger community"

**Tourism Commission**

*Strengths*

1. "San Francisco Peaks"
2. "National monuments, parks, etc. generate strong traffic"
3. "Native American culture"

*Weaknesses*

1. "qualified workforce"
2. "event venues"
3. "No luxury lodging - no spas, etc"

*Opportunities*

1. "Parking structure downtown"
2. "Expansion of I17"
3. "Discover Flagstaff supporting public private partnerships and sustainable tourism"

*Threats*

1. "Cost of living"
2. "Lack of affordable housing to support"

3. “Fire events”

### **Transportation Commission**

#### *Strengths*

1. “Comprehensive, addressed bike-ped-transit as stand-alone categories for metrics”
2. “The region plan includes the future growth areas”
3. “Vision of mode shift holds true per recent MetroPlan survey”

#### *Weaknesses*

1. “identify broader performance measures”
2. “We never adopted complete streets policies or incorporated context sensitive solutions into our city code.”
3. “more specific for how to achieve goals/policies”

#### *Opportunities*

1. “update to include the Permanent Transit network”
2. “Affordable Housing”
3. “Plan ahead with affordable land areas that are in the middle of the city”

#### *Threats*

1. “People have concern with density - sounds good until it actually happens”
2. “Conflicting unprioritized goals”
3. “Goals and policies”

### **Water Commission**

#### *Strengths*

1. “Acknowledgement of, and planning to adhere to, EPA and other regulatory requirements”
2. “modes of transportation”
3. “ahead of regulation”

#### *Weaknesses*

1. “Is the 2030 plan trying to tackle too many issues? Should it be simplified to land use, water use and transportation infrastructure?”
2. “Storm Water potential damage without sufficient capture of storm water run off.”
3. “a realistic plan to bring in tech jobs”

#### *Opportunities*

1. “Increased collaboration with USFS, state and county agencies for increased focus on the health of the Coconino forest, our single largest asset”
2. “Provide fully integrated GIS maps of all of the identified categories. A project team should be able to go to one map to identify local and surrounding issues, constraints and goals of that may influence the design.”

3. “The flooding and "almost at capacity" status of the water treatment system can/should create heightened awareness of wastewater and stormwater issues. This should generate revised/new policies to address this core need.”

*Threats*

1. “Catastrophic fire and flooding”
2. “Integration of too many issues can water down the whole plan”
3. “Flooding issues overwhelming stormwater and wastewater treatment infrastructure”