

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT
MINOR REGIONAL PLAN AMENDMENT

PUBLIC HEARING
PZ-21-00129-01

DATE: August 20, 2022
MEETING DATE: September 14, 2022
REPORT BY: Sara Dechter, AICP

REQUEST:

Amend the text and maps of Chapter X Transportation and the Glossary of the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 to provide additional descriptions of terms used in goals, policies, and maps, and to replace Map 26 with five maps that provide more detail on the existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle systems in the City of Flagstaff.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission, in accordance with the findings presented in this report, forward the Minor Regional Plan Amendment request to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:

The amendment applies to the City of Flagstaff and describes future and existing public rights of way and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

I. Project Introduction

A. Background/Introduction

The City of Flagstaff is requesting text and map amendments to improve the integration of active transportation in the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030. The minor plan amendment will add more detail to Chapter X Transportation with the intent of ensuring consistent interpretation of terminology and to provide more detail on the desired pedestrian and bicycle circulation system.

B. Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment would change the text of Chapter X Transportation in the following ways:

1. Add information on context sensitive solutions, complete streets, implementation of the 6 Es of walking and biking and long-term maintenance to the Quality Design section.
2. Replace existing descriptions and add more detail on walking infrastructure (specifically sidewalks, crossings and intersections, universal design and accessibility, the Flagstaff Urban trail System, regional open space access and electric and micromobility devices) to the Pedestrian Infrastructure section.
3. Replace existing descriptions and add more detail on bicycling infrastructure and bikeways to the Bicycle Infrastructure section.
4. Add a call out box on Regional Trails including the Flagstaff Trails initiative, the Arizona National Scenic Trail, and the Flagstaff Loop Trail.

The amendment proposes to replace Map 26: Flagstaff Urban Trail System with the following maps:

1. Map 26a: Existing and Missing Sidewalks
2. Map 26b: Bikeways by Class
3. Map 26c: Enhanced and Grade Separated Crossings
4. Map 26d Existing and Planned FUTS Trails
5. Map 26e: Forest Access and Trailheads

No changes to the goals and policies of Chapter X Transportation are proposed and this amendment does not change area or place types of the Future Growth Illustration.

II. Impact Analysis

- i. It has been determined that the amendment will have no measurable impact on water and sewer services, stormwater management, housing, fire preventing, building safety or public parks and open space.
- ii. A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) was not required because the Minor Regional Plan Amendment is not associated with a development application. However, Engineering staff did conduct a qualitative review of the application and determined that many of the items identified in the approach will require changes to Engineering Design Standards and Specifications to fully implement. It is recommended that the standard road sections in the Engineering Design Standards and Specifications, and the associated Roadway Classification Map be considered as next steps to implementing the plan amendment.

III. Minor Plan Amendment Findings

An application for a Minor Regional Plan Amendment shall be submitted to the Planning Director and shall be reviewed and a recommendation prepared. The Planning Director's recommendation shall be transmitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission in the form of a staff report prior to a scheduled public hearing. The recommendation is based on an evaluation of the consistency and conformance of the proposed amendment with the goals and policies of the General Plan and any applicable specific plans; a description of anticipated community benefits; cumulative impacts; and whether the amendment should be granted, granted with conditions to mitigate anticipated impacts caused by the proposed development, or denied.

A. Regional Plan Conformance:

The proposed amendment must be found to be consistent with and in conformance with the goals and policies of the General Plan and any applicable specific plans. If the application is not consistent with the General Plan, and any other applicable specific plan, the applicable plan must be amended in compliance with the procedures established in Chapter 11-10 of the City Code (Title 11: General Plans and Subdivisions) prior to considering the proposed amendment.

i. General Plan/Flagstaff Regional Plan (FRP 2030) Process and Analysis Summary

When staff performs a Regional Plan (the "Plan") analysis, staff reviews all maps, text, and goals and policies to determine which are the most relevant in relation to the proposed application.

ii. Applicable General Plan Goals and Policies

As part of its review, staff identified relevant Regional Plan Goals and Policies that could be applied to support or not support the proposed Minor Regional Plan Amendment. These goals and policies are located in an attachment to this report and within the City's narrative. The following is a discussion of how the project generally meets or conflicts with goals and policies in each chapter.

a. Accessibility

Growth Areas and Land Use, Transportation Chapters

Accessibility is the topic of meeting the needs of all users of the transportation system through universal design. This amendment adds an explicit section describing the principles of universal design and accessibility on page X-12, which will improve implementation of the existing policies.

b. Compact Development, Context Sensitive Solutions and Placemaking

Growth Areas and Land Use, Transportation, Public Buildings, Services, Facilities and Safety, and Community Character Chapters

Compact development is fundamental to all the growth policies of the Flagstaff Regional Plan (described in detail on page IX-16). One of the listed reasons for this focus is "Appropriate multi-modal thoroughfare design." Additional language in the Quality Design section of Chapter X Transportation provides a definition of context sensitive solutions and complete streets in support of compact development that supports walking

and biking and therefore access to transit, consistent with the goals and policies that support compact development and placemaking. Creating a better understanding of human-scale features in the built environment is also supported by the additional context in pedestrian infrastructure and bicycling infrastructure.

c. **Bicycling, Walking/Pedestrian Environment and Complete Streets**

Growth Areas and Land Use, Transportation, Open Space, Neighborhoods, Housing, and Urban Conservation, and Community Character Chapters

Significant detail is added to the Flagstaff Regional Plan concerning the topic of walking, bicycling and complete streets because of this amendment. Prior to the amendment, the relevant concepts were included in the goals and policies with a very limited description of their intent. In addition, the only map describing desired bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure was the Flagstaff Urban Trail System. Expanding the descriptions and mapping of bikeways, crossings, sidewalks, trail access points and other bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure will increase the consistent implementation of the existing goals and policies that support complete connected places that provide for the mobility and safety of all modes as demonstrated through multiple chapters of the Flagstaff Regional Plan.

d. **Circulation, access, and connectivity**

Growth Areas and Land Use, Transportation, Open Space, Water Resources, and Community Character Chapters

The pattern of streets in the community, and the resulting pedestrian and bicycle grid, is an important determinant for the success of the pedestrian and bicycle environment. The Flagstaff Regional Plan already includes desired block sizes for many areas and place types and provides for a complete vehicular circulation system through Map 25: Road Network Illustration. Maps 26a, 26b, and 26c add detail to what is needed to make those same systems complete in terms of access and circulation for bicycles and pedestrians. Increasing the level of detail provided on these types of infrastructure raises their profile in the plan and ensures more consistent implementation of the associated goals and policies.

e. **Climate change, environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, renewables**

Environmental Conservation, Energy, Transportation Chapters

In Flagstaff, the transportation sector accounts for 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, which is a major focus of the 2021 Carbon Neutrality Plan implementation strategies. Goal E&C.2. calls for the Flagstaff community to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Promoting walking and biking, and reducing reliance on single occupant vehicle use, will help reduce fossil-fuel consumption and improve the region's air quality. The amendment also directly implements Policy E&C.2.3 by presenting a roadmap, clear actions, and guidelines to achieving this objective.

f. **Public support and relationships, city financing/funding, and government coordination**

Transportation, Cost of Development, Public Buildings, Services, Facilities and Safety, Growth and Land Use, Economic Development Chapters

This amendment will create new funding and grant opportunities for pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure in the City of Flagstaff. Clear direction and prioritization in these areas will also allow staff to create more robust intergovernmental partnerships, like those that created the Flagstaff Trails Initiative, which can support expanded funding and resident and recreational use of the bicycle and pedestrian networks. The plan amendment itself does not have any impact on funding; however, the plan is considered when the City Council is evaluating requests for the acceptance or abandonment of public rights of way, parks, and open space. It is also considered when creating and reviewing the city's capital improvements plan as both processes have a finding of conformance with the goals and policies of the Flagstaff Regional Plan. The Regional Plan can also provide guidance for complementary private sector investments. The additional details in Chapter X Transportation can add information to these considerations and processes.

g. Recreation and tourism, parks, and open space

Transportation, Recreation, Economic Development Chapters

Goal REC.1 and ED.6.1 are integrated indirectly into the proposed amendment. Increased trail accessibility supports the City's quality of life by creating non-motorized access to parks and open spaces for more residents and increasing the equity in that accessibility. In turn, this also supports the regions eco- and adventure-based tourism opportunities and supports the tourism industry. These goals and policies are also offered greater opportunities for funding through public-non-profit relationships such as those with the Flagstaff Biking Organization, the Flagstaff Trails Initiative, and the Arizona Trail Association.

B. Community Benefits

Community benefits from the proposed plan amendment beyond the goals and policies of the Flagstaff Regional Plan include:

- Consideration of emerging technology and micromobility in creating carbon neutral transportation options
- Public health benefits from the increase in activity for individuals and households
- Opportunities to decrease the number of bicycle and pedestrian accidents by creating greater separation and updated design standards that could result from plan implementation

C. Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative impacts of adopting the plan amendment are anticipated to positively influence the City's ability to reach its carbon neutrality objectives and active transportation goals. Cumulatively, there will be additional upfront costs to create the desired transportation network, which may be later recaptured in decreased transportation costs for households and better public health outcomes. These costs may be passed on to new residents and consumers through increased costs in housing and developed real estate.

V. Citizen Participation

Public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council are conducted in conjunction with requests for Regional Plan Amendments. In accordance with Arizona State Statute, notice of the public hearing was provided by placing an ad in the Arizona Daily Sun, and mailing a notice to interested parties registered with the Planning and Development Services Department. In addition, a notification was sent to other jurisdictions as required in Flagstaff City Code Section 11-10.10.020.G.

The city staff will be holding two virtual public review meetings during the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee Meetings on Thursday, September 1, 2022, and at the Transportation Commission meeting on Wednesday, September 7, 2022. Both meetings included a formal presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. These meetings were advertised with the required public hearings.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff believes that the proposed Minor Regional Plan amendment is in substantial conformance with the required findings and recommends the Planning & Zoning Commission forward the request to the City Council with a recommendation approving the amendment to the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030.

Attachments:

- Application
- Waiver letters
- Legal notice of public hearings
- List of goals and policies evaluated
- Proposed Plan Amendment with track changes
- Proposed Plan Amendment