

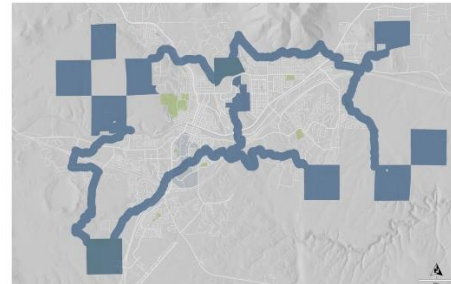
Open Space Summary: Future Funding Priorities

Open Space Mission

Protecting and restoring Flagstaff's natural, cultural, and scenic resources to enhance recreational and educational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Open Space Vision

To create an integrated system of protected lands around Flagstaff that are connected by the Flagstaff Urban Trail System and various corridors, such as washes and hillsides.



How We Got Here...

History & Facts

- Reviewed and considered existing plans to create open space system vision: Open Space (OS) Strategic Plan, Open Space and Greenways Plan, Legally Designated Open Space Management Plan, FUTS Master Plan, Regional Plan, and CAAP.
- Conducted detailed GIS analysis to assess access, locations, FUTS priorities, current use trends, and locations in need of improvement.
- Directed communication with the community to gather data on needs for an open space system: Conservation Study Forum, Nature Conservancy, Friends of the Rio de Flag, Audubon Society, Flagstaff Trail Initiative, and Open Space Commission public comments.

Known Gaps

- Allocation of Open Space is not equitable based on coverage, community need, or community growth.
- Residents do not have equal access (Open Space opportunities within a 10-minute walk or ¼ mile) across our community, which is identified as a primary goal of the Open Space and Greenways Plan.
- Spatial distribution and connectivity need to be incorporated into the City's integrated Open Space system to provide walkable, bikeable networks.
- Access for residents and visitors will improve well-being and usability.

Open Space Priorities

Priority	Description	Estimated Cost
Integrated OS System	Secure Open Space (OS) in the southeast quadrant of Flagstaff and provide connectivity to existing trails and natural areas. Flagstaff lacks OS opportunities in this region and connectivity between preserves. This recommendation would ensure an equitable, livable, walkable, healthy community.	\$24.5 M (2020 estimate)
Conserve Existing OS	Preserve current City OS assets by completing 48 backlogged projects; 20 restoration, 10 preservation, and 18 facility improvement projects. Projects include invasive plant removal, vegetation restoration, graffiti mitigation, wildlife-friendly fencing, and trail repairs essential for proper management and a presentable condition.	\$2 M (2020 estimate)
Observatory Mesa Trail System	Enhance the quality and value of Observatory Mesa by implementing a comprehensive trail plan. The only formal trails in this natural area consist of a connector between Thorpe Park and Tunnel Springs, and a small section of the Flagstaff Loop Trail. Creating a stacked loop trail system would provide opportunities for both residents and visitors.	\$2.9 M (2020 estimate)

Open Space Importance to Community Growth

Community Growth

- An integrated open space system will reduce traffic congestion, noise, pollution, infrastructure deterioration, and changes in community character.
- An integrated OS system that is well connected by transit provides mobility options to the community.
- Reducing transportation emissions is a priority in the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

Community Health

- People living in walkable neighborhoods get about 35–45 more minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week and are substantially less likely to be overweight.
- Obesity rates have risen dramatically. Being physically active is more than a personal decision; community design and the availability of Open Space strongly influence how active people are.

Economic Benefit

- Studies demonstrate that, on average, open space lands require far fewer expenditures to maintain than they generate in local revenue.
- Access to nature is one of the key reasons people visit our community.
- Maintaining our communities' character with Open Space dispersed throughout the City will keep us from becoming just another unidentifiable city by keeping trails accessible, views prominent, and maintaining the atmosphere that comes with nature being incorporated with everyday living.

Equity

- Parks, from their earliest roots, help bring people together across social, economic, and racial divides.
- Research shows OS has a positive impact on low-income urban communities by filling gaps in health inequalities.

Resilience

- Open Space captures precipitation, reduces stormwater management costs, reduces air pollution control costs, and protects habitats that allow for stabilizing biodiversity.
- Open Space acts as a buffer from catastrophic wildfires.
- Open Space has significant importance as carbon sinks.