



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 21, 2024

To: Open Space Commission

From: Sara Dechter, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager

Subject: Flagstaff Regional Land Use Plan 2045 60-day public review

The City of Flagstaff and Coconino County have been jointly working on the Flagstaff Regional Land Use Plan 2045 since the summer 2022. This comprehensive update is a critical check in with the public and the community on how the development and conservation of land and infrastructure can be managed to maintain a resilient and inclusive community. Over the past 9 months, a Regional Plan Committee has been meeting with staff and reviewing draft content for the plan update. On Monday, September 30, the committee reviewed and endorsed a complete draft of the plan. The Draft plan will be posted to the project website at www.flagstaff.az.gov/regionalplan2045.

Following endorsement, the draft goes out to other government agencies, boards, commissions, councils, and the public for a required 60-day public review, which began on Sunday, October 20th. On October 21st, Sara Dechter presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on the Plan and public review period.

What is in the draft plan concerning Open Space?

In the Regional Plan 2030, open space was addressed in the Open Space Chapter within the Natural Environment section. This chapter had 1 goal and 5 policies. There was a separate Recreation Chapter in the Human Environment section with 1 goal and 5 policies. The draft plan has a combined Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Chapter with 1 goal and 6 policies:

Goal PROS: The regional system of parks, open spaces, and community centers supports the Region's public and environmental health, provides diverse recreational needs, is accessible to residents and visitors, and is

interconnected by trails and greenways between Flagstaff, regional open space, and other County communities.

Policy PROS.1 Incorporate and highlight the Region's defining landscapes and vistas through landscape design in trails, parks, and open spaces.

Policy PROS.2 Focus the purchase and management of regional preserves and connector open spaces on protecting cultural or significant natural resources, while allowing for concentrated development in areas that support housing supply and climate action.

Policy PROS.3 Provide urban parks and complementary open spaces that support livable and sustainable compact development.

Policy PROS.4 As greenfield sites are developed, ensure that new parks and open spaces have a balance of amenities and a flow with the natural and historical surroundings, are publicly accessible, and provide complementary amenities to existing public parks in the Region.

Policy PROS.5 Plan and design regional parks that support larger public events sustainably and support diverse recreational opportunities within the same park.

Policy PROS.6 Create and maintain opportunities for access to recreation and community centers through adaptive reuse of appropriate buildings, partnerships with non-profit organizations and neighborhoods, and new construction identified in master plans.

There are also related Growth and Land Use and Resource Stewardship and Resilience goals and policies about civic space and protecting significant natural resources:

Goal GM: Future development and reinvestment patterns in the Region integrate the community values of the importance of open space preservation, significant natural resources, the scarcity of water, the need to adapt to and avoid climate change, the Region's unique sense of place, and of meeting the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

Policy DP.10 Locate public civic spaces and natural areas to be accessible to pedestrians within the Neighborhood or Center they serve.

Policy RS.8: Incorporate the protection, conservation, and restoration of significant natural resources (see Information Maps 7-2 and 7-3) in the development of regulations and property acquisition, particularly for sensitive and uncommon habitats, and landscapes that support the health and resilience of regional wildlife and plant populations, ecosystems, or Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR).

There is a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Policy Map which identifies existing open space, parks, recreation centers, and areas in the Region where there is a need to acquire land for parks or open space. In the southwest portion of the Region, the map includes the area identified by the Joint Land Use Study for open space preservation. On the east side, around Walnut Canyon, the map identifies an area where there is a need for cultural resource and wildlife corridor protection.

Significant natural resources are described in the Resource Stewardship and Resilience Chapter by an informational map and associated implementation guidelines for protecting a range of mapped and unmapped resources.

The draft plan carries forward and updates the approach to viewshed management, focusing on landscape design in parks and open space. In the Regional Plan 2030, this topic was addressed in an overarching Community Character Chapter, which was not carried forward in the current draft.

In the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Chapter, the draft plan emphasizes trail connectivity, wildlife corridors, and the need to fund and plan for future open space as greenfield sites are developed. The Chapter includes findings from the 2019 Coconino County Parks & Recreation Master Plan and has an action item for the update of the City's Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Events Master Plan. The chapter contains implementation guidelines, which will be carried forward through the City's upcoming PROSE master planning process.

What kind of feedback is staff looking for?

Staff encourages all commissioners to review the draft plan during the 60 day public review and to help spread the word on this important opportunity for feedback. Commissions may wish to form working groups to review the plan and provide formal comments by December 19, 2024.