



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 2, 2024

To: Sustainability Commission

From: Sara Dechter, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager

Cc: Genevieve Pearthree, Jenny Neimann, Nicole Antonopoulos

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. They met on Monday, September 30 to review and endorsed the draft plan, which is being sent to other government agencies, boards, commissions, councils, and the public for a required 60-day public review, scheduled to begin on Sunday, October 20th.

What is a General Plan?

The 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 carefully developed goals and policies to realize the future vision. The vision of these documents has continued to move forward from the Flagstaff Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan (adopted 2001) to the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 (adopted 2014) to the Flagstaff Regional Land Use Plan 2045. These forward-looking and cooperative plans have created shared resources for land use decisions, City and County policies, transportation and environmental planning and intergovernmental coordination with State and federal partners for the last 20 years and intend to build on this legacy for another 20 years.

General Plans may inform a variety of community policy conversations as outlined in Chapter 2: How the Plan Works. Applications for zoning map amendments, annexations, and certain types of dedications and abandonments of real property are required to have a “finding of conformance” with the Regional Plan. Proposals that cannot meet this finding must also propose an amendment to the Regional Plan as outlined in this chapter, Title 11 of the City Code, and Section 5.13 of the Coconino County Zoning Ordinance, and the *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan*. These are impactful community decisions that can support the community’s sustainability and help the community meet the challenge of housing affordability and meet the goal of carbon neutrality.

Plan Priorities

The Regional Plan 2030 has 97 goals and over 500 policies that are all evenly weighted in the consideration of community decisions. This broad scope and lack of prioritization was intended to build a positive vision and to represent a wide spectrum of community values. However, after 10 years of implementation, very few community outcomes changed in the direction the plan intended. This unintended outcome has informed how the draft plan has been created.

The draft plan is more narrowly tailored on land use and topics that relate to development while still encompassing a broad community vision and reflecting priorities and values that were brought forward in the public participation and analyses so far. As a result, the draft plan is almost 100 pages shorter and have 23 goals and 87 policies. To create more clarity and direction for future decisions, the participants in this process identified the Region’s highest priorities as:

- Create more housing attainability in all the Region’s neighborhoods and centers to mitigate displacement and reduce housing costs.
- Create mixed-use, denser neighborhoods that support a variety of housing types, and active transportation.
- Reduce community-generated climate pollution and protect air quality.
Note: Reducing climate pollution includes meeting the City’s goal of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- Protect the Region’s significant natural and cultural resources.
- Expand the Region’s preparedness and resilience to hazards and climate change.

How is the Plan organized?

The draft plan is organized into two introductory chapters and 2 sections. The policy section is the portion of the plan that will be used to make findings of conformance. This section contains goals, policies, and future land use categories:

- Goals, which are desired results or future conditions that the community envisions and commits to achieve.
- Policies, which are courses of action to achieve the stated goals that guide decision making. Policies may be text or maps identified in the Plan.
- A proposal that fits the appropriate zoning category and/or Category Guidelines associated with the Future Land Use Category of the parcel, as defined by the Future Growth Illustration.

Other aspects of the Plan can inform City and County staff in implementation related to zoning code updates, publicly generated specific and area plans, CIPs, annual work programs and budget reports, staff reports, and coordination with Regional Partners, in the following ways:

- Implementation Guidelines are assumptions, and corresponding principles that guide how the goals and policies are interpreted and applied. They may require further steps to be incorporated into Zoning and Building Codes before they can be applied to discretionary development applications. Voluntary conformance with these guidelines can be recommended and incentivized but cannot be required for private development unless it is incorporated into City and County regulations.
- Action Items are strategies, projects, procedures, actions, or programs that implement the goals and policies. These are primarily actions by the City or County and may be achieved through legislative and administrative actions and through partnerships.

What kind of feedback is staff looking for?

The draft plan will be available for the Commission to read on Sunday, October 20 at www.flagstaff.az.gov/regionalplan2045. The presentation on the Thursday, October 24th Sustainability Commission meeting will give a rout of the parts of the plan most closely related to sustainability and climate action. 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. If the Commission would like to make a formal recommendation to staff during the 60-day review, then the Commission can form a subcommittee to draft a Commission level response. Community Development and Sustainability staff would be happy to meet and discuss the plan in greater detail.