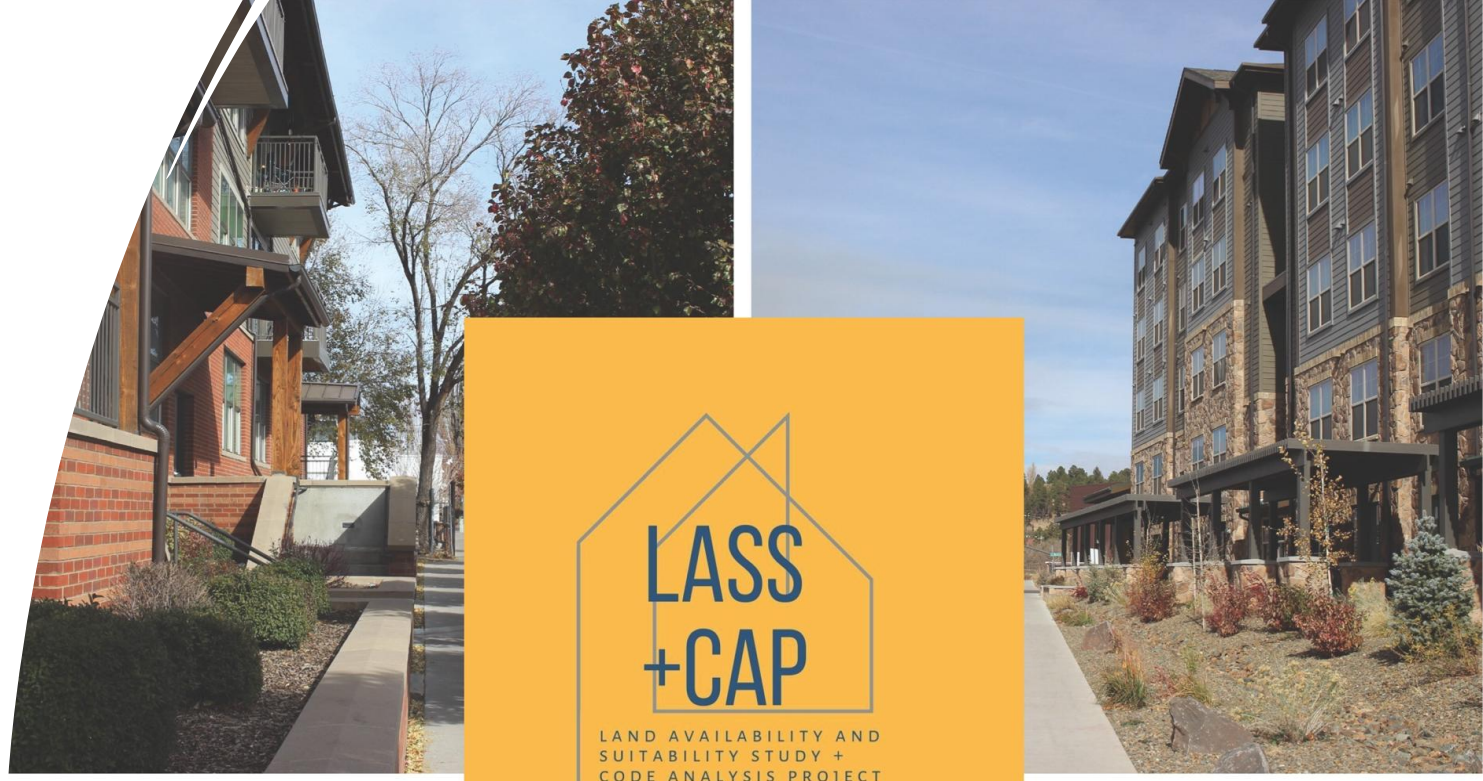
Code Concepts Final Recommendations

August 26, 2025



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CITY OF FLAGSTAFF

CODE ANALYSIS PROJECT–
CODE CONCEPTS REPORT

Presentation Overview + Goals

- Seek Council direction and confirmation on next steps for 6 decision points related to:
  1. Density
  2. Floor area ratio (FAR) caps
  3. Menu of sustainable development options
  4. Parking
  5. Street widths
  6. Winter Parking Ordinance
- Based on Council's direction, staff will direct the consultant team to recommend specific code amendments to update core development standards and incentives

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City Housing and Climate Goals

The 10-Year Housing Plan aims to reduce the affordable housing need in our community by half over the next ten years through two elements:

1. Impact at least 6,000 low-to-moderate income Flagstaff residents through a combination of unit creation or subsidy provision
2. Create or preserve 7,976 housing units by 2031 with a minimum of 10% of them being affordable. This will increase the overall supply of market rate, workforce, and affordable housing occupied by local residents

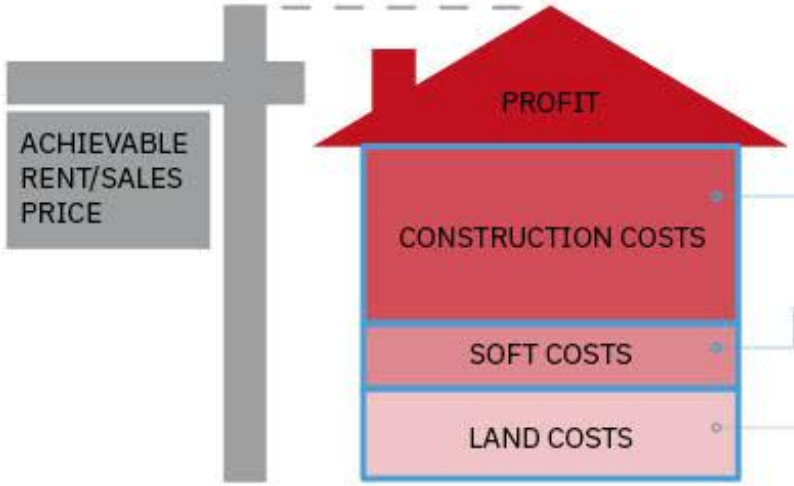
The Carbon Neutrality Plan has three primary goals:

1. Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 through a 44% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
2. Prepare Flagstaff's communities, systems, and resources to be more resilient to climate change impacts
3. Address climate change in a manner that prioritizes those most impacted and ensures the costs and benefits of climate adaptation and mitigation are equitably distributed

Zoning and Housing Costs: Opportunities and Limitations

What is Economically Feasible Housing and What Role Does Zoning Play?

- Housing will only be built if a project is economically feasible – said another way, when expected revenue (from rents or sales) covers all the costs and yields an acceptable profit, a project will get built. If a project is not feasible, the market will not respond.
- While zoning can impact the cost of development, it is only one aspect impacting overall project costs. If labor and construction costs or interest rates are high, zoning changes alone, while significant and worthwhile, may not result in affordable rents/sales prices.



What can zoning impact?

Some building types are more expensive to construct than others due to building code requirements. Lower parking requirements can enable a lower cost construction type or influence unit size.

Zoning can reduce the amount of permitting fees or shorten review timelines and increase review certainty.

Zoning can allow a developer to spread land costs across more units. Land prices respond to the potential value of development.

Outreach and Engagement: City Commissions & Partners

1. Sustainability Commission
2. Planning and Zoning Commission
3. Housing Commission
4. Transportation Commission
5. Heritage Preservation Commission
6. Commission on Inclusion and Adaptive Living
7. Commission on Diversity Awareness
8. MetroPlan Technical Advisory Committee
8. MetroPlan Executive Board
9. Mountain Line Transit Advisory Committee
10. Mountain Line Board of Directors
11. Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce
12. Economic Collaborative of Northern Arizona (ECONA)
13. Friends of Flagstaff's Future (F3)
14. Northern Arizona Climate Change Alliance (NAZCCA)

Outreach and Engagement: Community Conversation

- 80 attendees
  - Developers, current and former City Council members, Flagstaff community, sustainability, climate, economic development, and housing advocates, Realtors, City staff, and members from City Commissions
- Robust discussion on each of the 6 decision points
- Feedback from outreach and engagement, including from the Community Conversation, incorporated into recommended next steps

Decision Point 1

Density

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Where and how should we increase density?

Should by-right density increases be limited to areas where people tend to drive less?

Do we want to increase density allowances for only affordable housing projects or all housing?

Community Conversation Themes

Density

- General support for increasing density citywide, especially near public transit
- General support for more affordable units and diverse housing types, including rental and ownership
- Desire to simply development processes to make it easier to build higher density and support a broader mix of housing
  - Support for increasing density in the ER (Estate Residential) and RR (Rural Residential) zones without going through a rezoning process
  - Discussion about whether increasing density by itself will drastically increase new housing, or if density increases need to be paired with other tools to ensure housing affordability and housing diversity
- Concerns about infrastructure costs and fire risks for development in forested areas

Next Steps

Density

With Council's support, staff will direct the consultant to explore:

- Examine base density increases for all zoning districts excluding the R1N zone
- Model the benefits of increasing density within the RR zone
- Focus the highest density projects in areas that are supported by transit and other multimodal facilities

Staff will work to simplify the rezoning process by developing a Planned Area Development (PAD) or Planned Unit Development (PUD) to provide greater flexibility to develop large land holdings and potentially encourage a greater range of housing opportunities

Decision Point 2

Floor area ratio (FAR) caps

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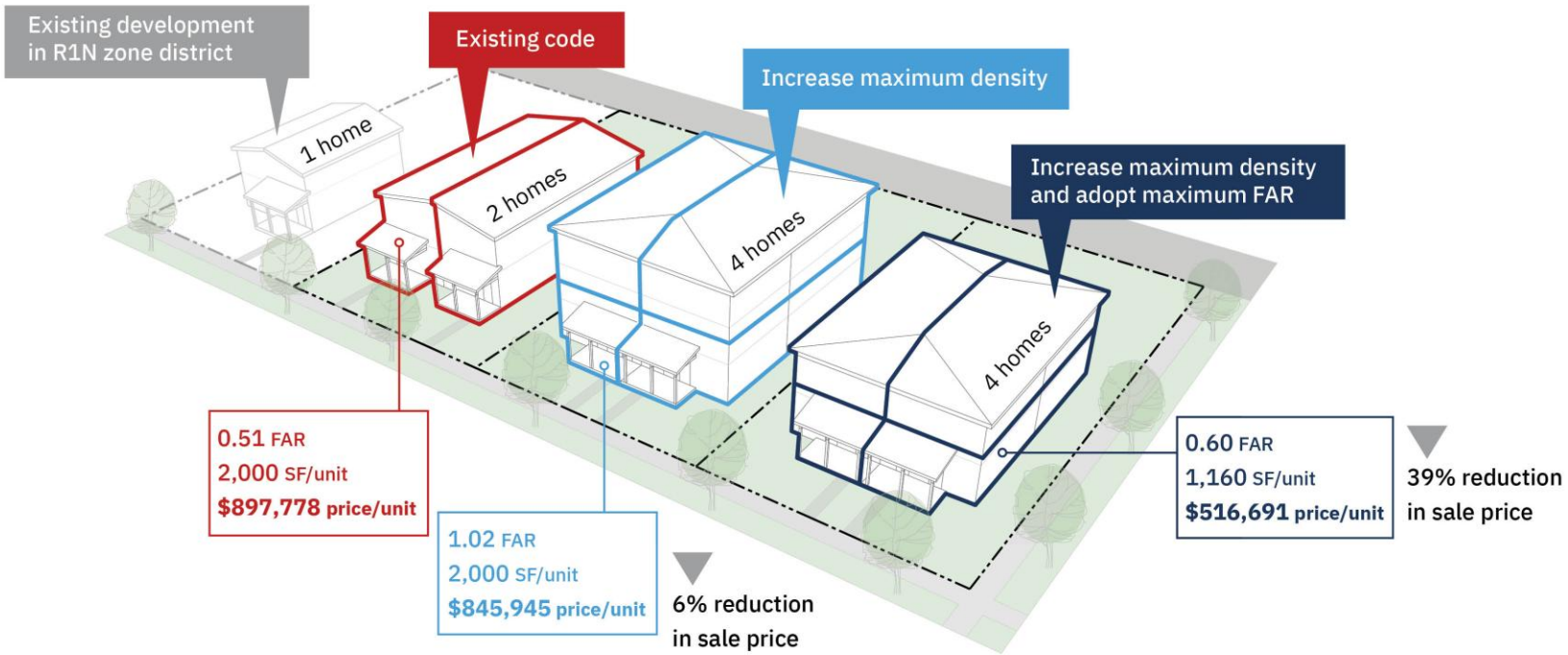
Do you support managing the intensity of residential land uses with floor area ratio (FAR) caps?

How FAR and density maximums work together

Maximum density (units per acre) and maximum FAR (floor area ratio), are tools that:

- Encourage development of more housing units
- Influence the minimum feasible sales/rental prices and advance City goals of more attainable housing
- Promote compatible scale (height and building footprint) with existing character of a zone



Community Conversation Themes

Floor area ratio (FAR) caps

- Interest in how FAR could help support development of smaller unit sizes, especially if density increases
- Desire for a better explanation (including visual examples) of how FAR could work, especially in relation to density, lot coverage, and bedroom density
- Concern that FAR may make development more complicated
- Questions about how FAR impacts different development types and sizes, and how FAR would work in neighborhoods that are already built

Next Steps

Q2: FAR

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With Council's support, staff will direct the consultant to explore:

- The use of FAR caps in zones with the highest density allowances, including the R1N zone
- How to calibrate FAR caps to each individual zone, and for large and small parcels
- How lot coverage and FAR may work together in some zones, and how FAR may replace lot coverage in others
- How FAR may work in tandem with the maximum bedroom density for very large developments

Decision Point 3

Menu of Sustainability Options

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Do you support creating a menu of sustainable design options for developers to choose from?

Should a wider menu of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies be included in this menu?

Community Conversation Themes

Menu of Sustainability Options

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- Strong support for a menu in general, but less so if it is required
- Some concerns about a menu making development more complicated and increasing construction costs
- Support for a menu giving developers flexibility to accommodate site constraints and developers' needs
- Support for menu items that are the most impactful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and least impactful on upfront costs
- Support for considering items that promote long-term housing affordability, including savings on monthly utility bills

Next Steps

Menu of Sustainability Options

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With Council's support, staff will direct the consultant to explore:

- What the menu could look like
- Focus on the items, including TDM, with the greatest potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance climate resilience, and minimize impacts on costs (upfront costs and potential for long-term cost savings)
- Explore ways to streamline the development process in general and identify any development regulations that could be removed or made easier

Decision Point 4

Parking

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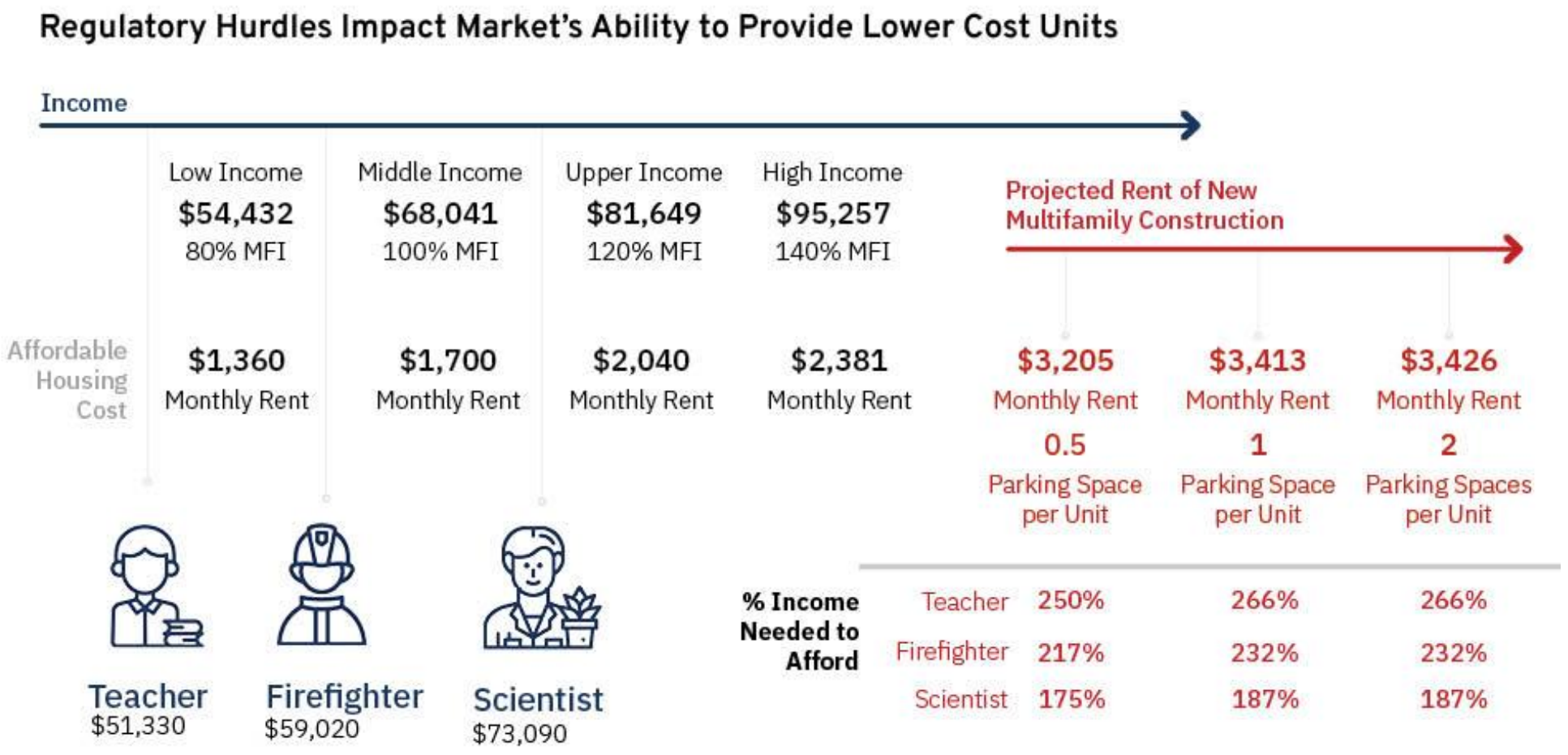
Do you support moving forward with parking reductions?

Should parking be left to the developer or the market to decide (no minimum standards)? Or should there be standards?

Should on-street parking be addressed in conjunction with reducing parking standards?

The Zoning Code and Housing Costs: Opportunities and Limitations

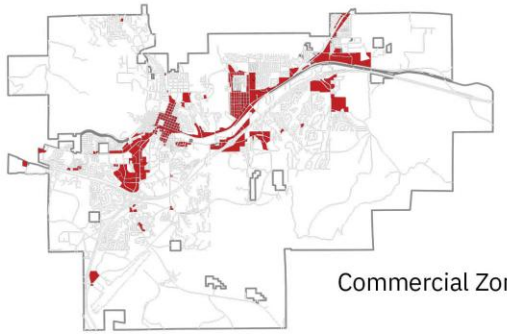


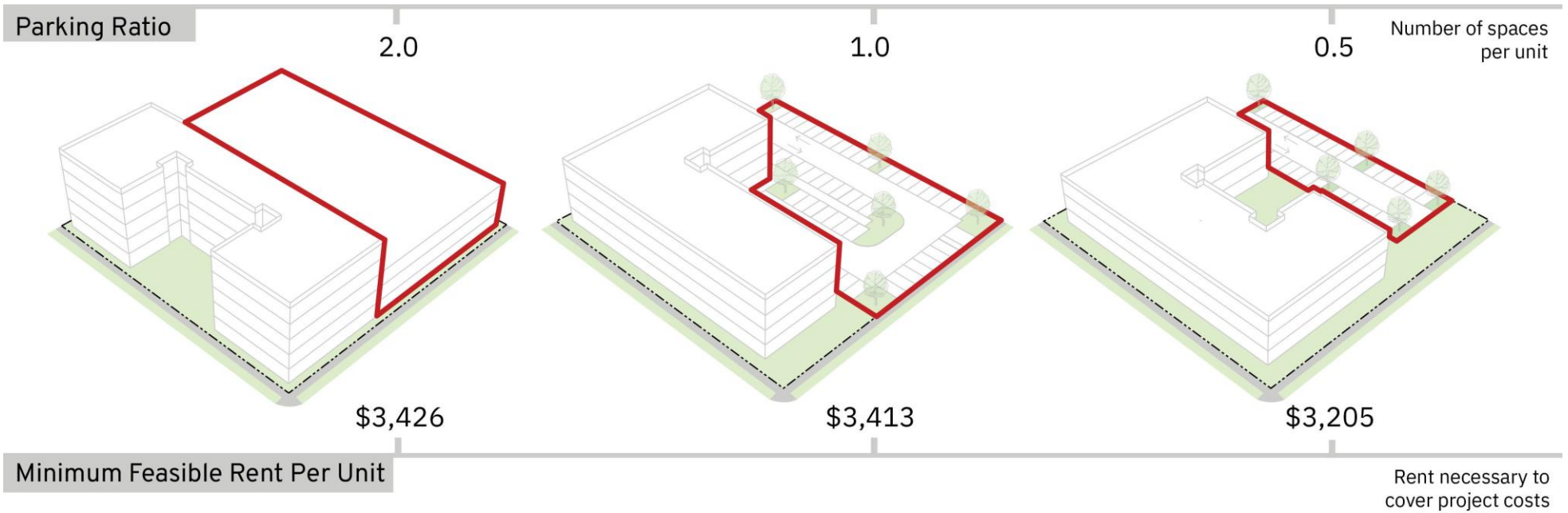
Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, Flagstaff, AZ May 2024, https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/area/0022380; U.S. Census Bureau, 2023: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Table S1901

How parking requirements impact land use, building form, and rent

A lower parking ratio allows development that is:

- More compatible in scale
- More sustainable- less embodied carbon, encourages lower vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Lower cost with rents that are more attainable - lowering the parking ratio irrespective of other zoning changes can decrease minimum feasible rents by **6.1%.**





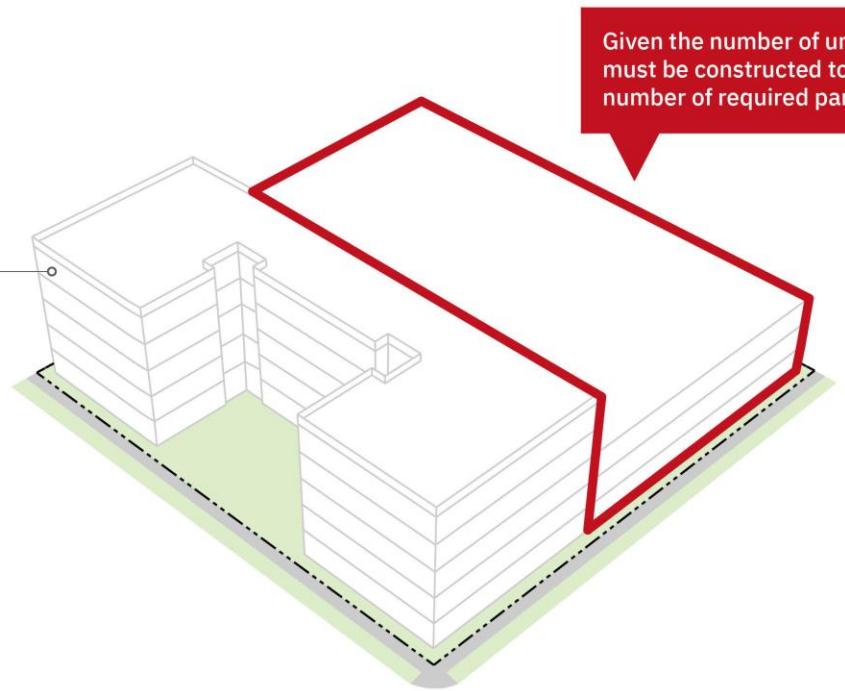
More parking can require larger building and a parking garage >> higher rent and higher emissions

50 Units Per Acre with 2 Parking Spaces per Unit

A multi-family project trying to maximize the number of units that can be developed is limited by the number of required parking spaces that must fit on the lot. This is a balancing act impacting the total number of units, project cost, and environmental outcomes.

A project with a higher parking requirement must build up to **five stories** to maximize density in order to be feasible.

Five story buildings require a concrete podium type of construction, which is significantly more expensive than four story wood frame buildings.



$3,426

Minimum feasible rent per unit

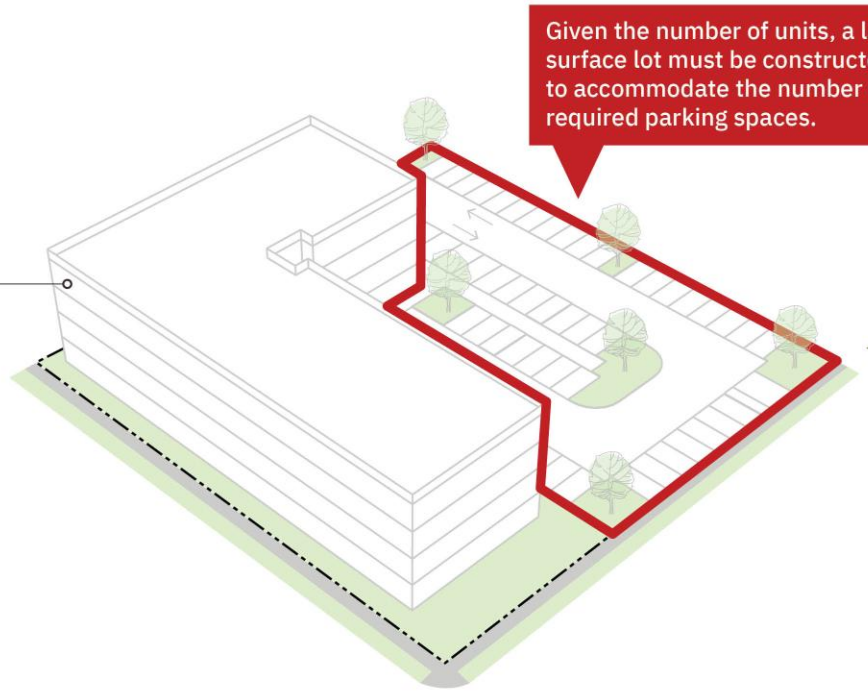
Less parking can reduce the building size >> lower monthly rent and lower emissions

50 Units Per Acre with 1 Parking Space per Unit

With a lower parking ratio, the site design shifts. Less space on the lot must be dedicated to meeting parking requirements, allowing a surface parking lot, instead of a parking garage, which lowers the cost. A development is able to maximize density in only four stories, as opposed to five stories.

A **four story** building is a wood frame construction type, which is a lower cost construction type than a five story concrete podium.

A shorter building may be more compatible with existing or typical development patterns.



$3,413

Minimum feasible rent per unit

0.4% ▼ in rents

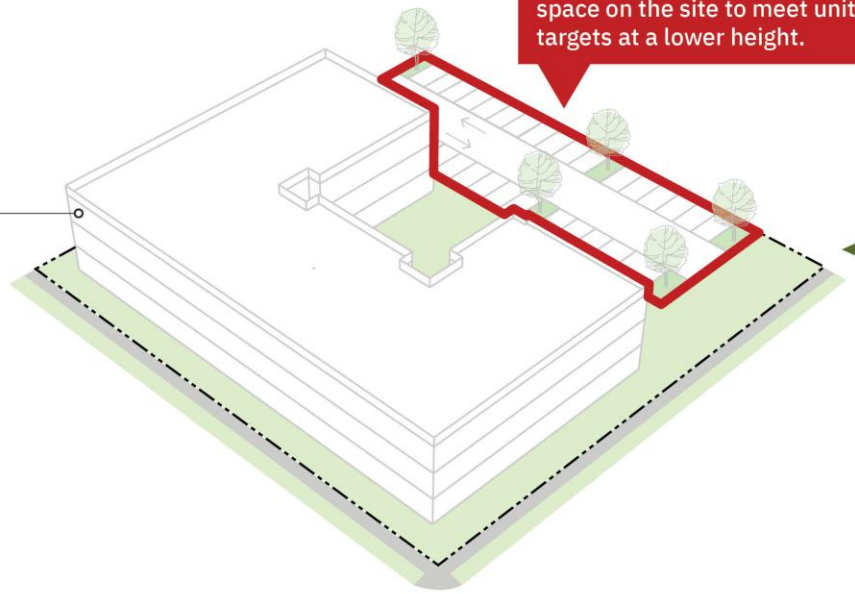
Even less parking can reduce the building size even further >> lower monthly rent and emissions, more open space

50 Units Per Acre with 0.5 Parking Space per Unit

With further reductions in the parking ratio, it is easier for a development to maximize the number of units on a site in a lower height building, which lowers the cost of construction and encourages better environmental outcomes.

A **three story** wood frame construction does not require an elevator, which lowers the cost of construction.

The massing is more compatible with existing or typical development patterns.



A lower parking ratio translates into a smaller parking lot, leaving more space on the site to meet unit number targets at a lower height.

A smaller surface parking lot has less embodied carbon and encourages a lower VMT. It allows a more efficient site layout and potentially more open space on the lot.

$3,205

Minimum feasible rent per unit

6.1% ▼ in rents

Community Conversation Themes

Parking

- Strong support for lowering parking requirements
- Options discussed:
  - Reducing minimum requirements,
  - No requirements (allowing developers to provide the parking they need)
  - Parking maximums
- We have a housing crisis, not a parking crisis
- Parking covers a lot of land that could be used for housing and open space
- Residents should be able to choose housing where parking costs are separate from rent
- Concerns about impacts of reducing parking for short-term rentals in single family neighborhoods

Next Steps

Parking

With Council's support, staff will direct the consultant to explore:

- Lowering minimum parking requirements
- Implementing maximum parking requirements
- How parking reductions impact (and are impacted by) reducing street widths and revising the winter parking ordinance

Decision Point 5

Reduced Street Widths

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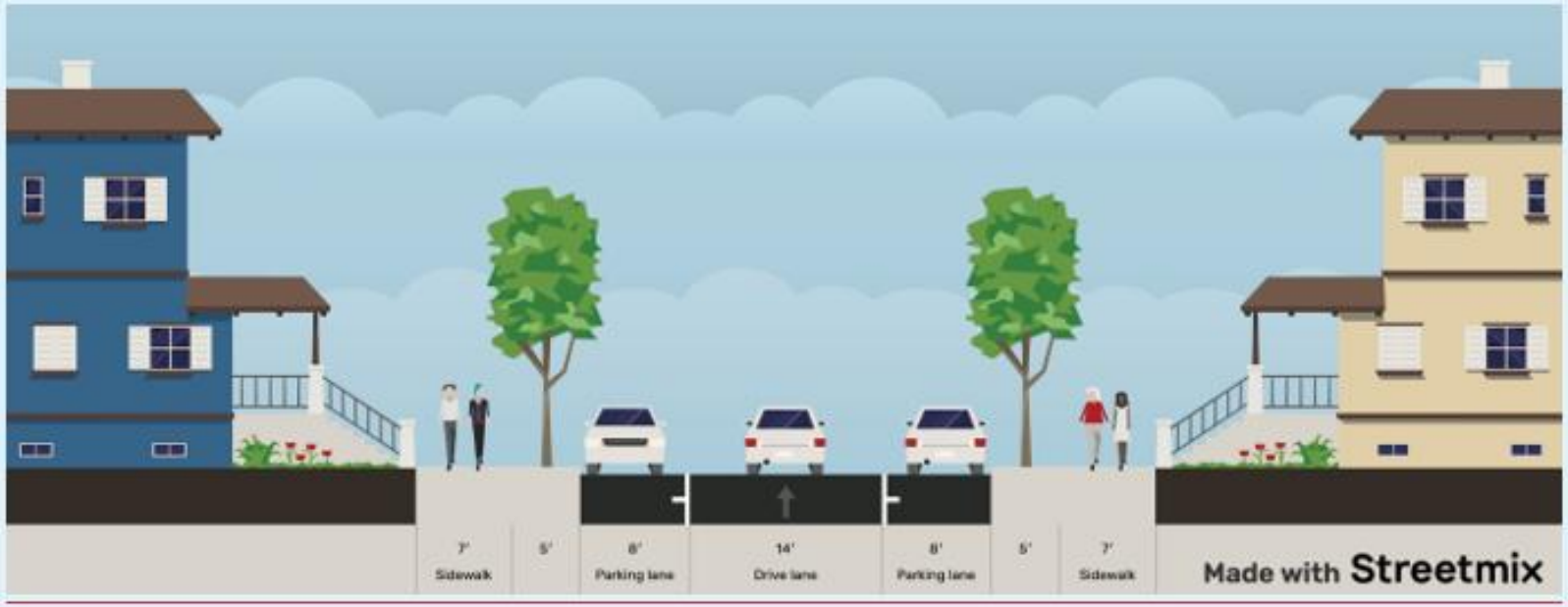
Do you support developing a strategy and outlining a process for creating a narrower local street design option?

Figure 3. Concept 1, 54' ROW



- 5-foot sidewalks, both sides (plus 2-foot gutter)
- 5-foot parkways, both sides
- 14-foot travel lane (queuing for 2-way traffic)
- 6-foot parking, both sides not striped (including 2-foot curb/gutter)

Community Conversation Themes

Reduced Street Widths

- General support for reducing street widths due to safety concerns of wide streets, and the need for more land for housing
- Need enough room to accommodate emergency services, snow plow operations and storage, trash/recycle services, and on-street parking
- Parkways are helpful places to store snow and they contribute to road safety
- Reductions in street width needs to be considered in tandem with on-site parking reductions and revisions to the Winter Parking Ordinance

Next Steps

Reduced Street Widths

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With Council's support, staff will direct the consultant to explore:

- How to reduce street widths and accommodate on-street parking, snow, and access for emergency vehicles, snow ploughing, and trash pickup operations
- Reductions in the standard residential street cross-section
- Options for alternative street cross-sections, such as for attached townhomes and higher-density development along historic downtown streets
- How street width reductions impact (and are impacted by) reducing parking requirements and revising the Winter Parking Ordinance

Decision Point 6

Winter Parking Ordinance

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Do you support developing a strategy and outlining a process for replacing the current Winter Parking Ordinance?

Community Conversation Themes

Winter Parking Ordinance

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- General support for revising the Winter Parking Ordinance and exploring different options for winter parking, such as parking on one side of the street and having winter parking restrictions apply only during declared snow events
- Winter parking is tied to the narrower street width and reduced parking decision points,
- Parking from snowplay visitors is a concern, but we may see fewer snow events each year in the future with climate change
- Revising the Winter Parking Ordinance needs to be considered in tandem with on-site parking reductions and street width reductions

Next Steps

Winter Parking Ordinance

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With Council's support, staff will direct the consultant to explore:

- Different options for revising the Ordinance
- How to revise the Winter Parking Ordinance and accommodate on-street parking, snow, and access for emergency vehicles, snow ploughing, and trash pickup operations
- How revising the Ordinance impacts (and is impacted by) reducing parking requirements and street widths

Next Steps

- Finalize the Code Concepts report based on City Council direction
- Research and prepare recommendations for specific code amendments
- Preparation and adoption of code amendments

Extra Slides

- Just if needed…

Scenario 1: Anticipated Housing and Climate Outcomes

10-Year Housing Plan: Moderate Impact		Carbon Neutrality Plan: Low Impact	
Abundant Housing Supply	Low	Community Resilience, Health & Safety	Moderate
Diversity of Housing Types	Moderate	Sustainable Transportation Networks and Neighborhoods	Low
Lower Cost Market Rate Housing Production	Low	Electric Mobility	Low
Income-Restricted Affordable Housing Production	High	Energy	Low
Mixed-Use Development and Neighborhoods	Low	Waste and Water	Low
Infill Development and Compact Land Use Patterns	Moderate	Healthy Forests and Carbon Dioxide Removal	Moderate
Equity and Fair Housing	Moderate		

Scenario 2: Anticipated Housing and Climate Outcomes

10-Year Housing Plan: High Impact		Carbon Neutrality Plan: High Impact	
Abundant Housing Supply	Moderate	Community Resilience, Health & Safety	Moderate
Diversity of Housing Types	High	Sustainable Transportation Networks and Neighborhoods	High
Lower Cost Market Rate Housing Production	High	Electric Mobility	High
Income-Restricted Affordable Housing Production	Low	Energy	High
Mixed-Use Development & Neighborhoods	High	Waste and Water	High
Infill Development and Compact Land Use Patterns	High	Healthy Forests & Carbon Dioxide Removal	Moderate
Equity and Fair Housing	High		

Scenario 3: Anticipated Housing and Climate Outcomes

10-Year Housing Plan: High Impact		Carbon Neutrality Plan: Moderate Impact	
Abundant Housing Supply	High	Community Resilience, Health & Safety	Moderate
Diversity of Housing Types	High	Sustainable Transportation Networks and Neighborhoods	High
Lower Cost Market Rate Housing Production	Moderate	Electric Mobility	Moderate
Income-Restricted Affordable Housing Production	Low	Energy	Moderate
Mixed-Use Development & Neighborhoods	High	Waste and Water	Moderate
Infill Development and Compact Land Use Patterns	High	Healthy Forests & Carbon Dioxide Removal	Moderate
Equity and Fair Housing	High		

Analysis considered carbon emissions associated with site development, construction, and operation of the buildings over a 30-year timespan in a multifamily development in the HR zone:

- **Embodied Carbon Emissions**. Cumulative emissions associated with building materials, their replacements, and with landscape maintenance.
- **Electricity Emissions**. Cumulative emissions associated with the energy use from the electrical grid.
- **Fossil Fuel Emissions**. Cumulative emissions associated with onsite fossil fuel use.
- **Refrigerant Emissions**. Cumulative emissions associated with the refrigerant use in the building services.
- **Biogenic Carbon Storage**. Sequestered emissions from building structure and landscape planting.
- **Avoided Energy Emissions**. Avoided emissions from onsite energy generation in excess of use.

Floor Area Ratio

Floor Area Ratio regulates the total size of a building (all floors) in relation to the total size of the development site.

Parcel Size	.5 FAR	.8 FAR	.9 FAR	1.2 FAR	1.8 FAR
6,000 sf	3,000 sf	4,800 sf	5,400 sf	7,200 sf	10,800 sf
7,500 sf	3,750	6,000	6,750	9,000	13,500
10,000 sf	5,000	8,000	9,000	12,000	18,000
14,000 sf	7,000	11,200	12,600	16,800	25,000
23,000 sf	11,500	18,400	20,700	27,600	41,400
35,000 sf	17,500	28,000	31,500	42,000	63,000

Lot Coverage regulates only the footprint of a building in relation to the total size of the development site.

Maximum Floor Area Ratio by Zone

Scenario	R1			MR			HR			CB			CC-HC-CS		
	B	S	A	B	S	A	B	S	A	B	S	A	B	S	A
Existing Code	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.5	2.5	2.5
Scenario 1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.5	2.5	2.5
Scenario 2	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.8	2.0	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.8
Scenario 3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B = By-Right; **S** = Sustainable Incentive Projects; **A** = Affordable Incentive Projects