

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mayor Daggett called the Work Session of the Flagstaff City Council held May 13, 2025, to order at 3:01 p.m.

NOTICE OF OPTION TO RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the City Council and to the general public that, at this work session, the City Council may vote to go into executive session, which will not be open to the public, for discussion and consultation with the City's attorneys for legal advice on any item listed on the following agenda, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3).

2. Roll Call

NOTE: One or more Councilmembers may be in attendance through other technological means.

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

MAYOR DAGGETT
VICE MAYOR SWEET
COUNCILMEMBER ASLAN
COUNCILMEMBER GARCIA
COUNCILMEMBER HOUSE
COUNCILMEMBER MATTHEWS
COUNCILMEMBER SPENCE

Others present: City Manager Greg Clifton; City Attorney Sterling Solomon.

3. Pledge of Allegiance, Mission Statement, and Land Acknowledgement

The Council and audience recited the pledge of allegiance, Councilmember Matthews read the Mission Statement of the City of Flagstaff, and Councilmember Garcia read the Land Acknowledgement.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Flagstaff is to protect and enhance the quality of life for all.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Flagstaff City Council humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.

4. Open Call to the Public

Open Call to the Public enables the public to address the Council about an item that is not on the prepared agenda. Comments relating to items that are on the agenda will be taken at the time that the item is discussed. Open Call to the Public appears on the agenda twice, at the beginning and at the end. The total time allotted for the first Open Call to the Public is 30 minutes; any additional comments will be held until the second Open Call to the Public.

If you wish to address the Council in person at today's meeting, please complete a comment card and submit it to the recording clerk as soon as possible. Your name will be called when it is your turn to speak. You may address the Council up to three times throughout the meeting, including comments made during Open Call to the Public and Public Comment. Please limit your remarks to three minutes per item to allow everyone an opportunity to speak. At the discretion of the Chair, ten or more persons present at the meeting and wishing to speak may appoint a representative who may have no more than fifteen minutes to speak.

Public Works Director Scott Overton addressed Council and provided an update on the Montalvo Center Project stating there would be an upcoming community input event later in May.

Human Resources Deputy Director Jennifer Caputo introduced new the Risk Manager Aaron Kaminski.

Dapper Dre addressed Council regarding riding bicycles and accessibility. He spoke of speed limits and the dangers cars can bring. He encouraged others to bike as well.

5. PROCLAMATIONS

A. Proclamation: Ride Your Bike Week

Vice Mayor Sweet read the Proclamation.

B. Proclamation: Mental Health Awareness Month

Councilmember House read the Proclamation.

C. Proclamation: Economic Development Week

Mayor Daggett read the Proclamation.

6. Review of Draft Agenda for the May 20, 2025 City Council Meeting

Citizens wishing to speak on agenda items not specifically called out by the City Council may submit a speaker card for their items of interest to the recording clerk.

None

7. City Manager Report

City Manager Greg Clifton briefly reviewed his report and covered the rotation of divisions that will be presenting information for updates. The divisions for this Council meeting include the Water Division and the Engineering Division.

City Engineer Paul Mood, Capital Improvements Engineer Trevor Henry, and Transportation Director Jeff Bauman reviewed their Council Update PowerPoint that covered the following:

CITY ENGINEERING
CITY ENGINEERING
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS -- STAFF

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS -- PROJECT OUTREACH

Mayor Daggett asked where people can go to get individual project updates. Mr. Henry stated that there are projects sites that have more update to date information than the main website that has the full list of projects, he also stated that people can call as well. Deputy City Manager Joanne Keene also relayed there are updates on the Connect Flagstaff website.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS -- PROJECT DELIVERY

TRANSPORTATION -- STAFF

TRANSPORTATION -- COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

TRANSPORTATION -- GRANT PROGRAMS

TRANSPORTATION -- INTERNAL PROGRAMS

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING -- STAFF

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING -- PROJECTS

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING -- WECOM FIBER MICRO-TRENCHING PILOT PROJECT

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING -- IMPLEMENTED CITY INCLUSION IN AZ511 SYSTEM

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING -- COORDINATION WITH ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL

DEVELOPMENT ENGINEERING -- FLEET ELECTRIFICATION

CITY ENGINEERING -- CITY EMPLOYEE LITTER CLEANUP COMPETITION AWARD

QUESTIONS

Water Services Director Lee Williams reviewed his PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

WATER SERVICES

WATER SERVICE

FIELD OPERATIONS

PLANT OPERATIONS

STORM WATER

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Councilmember Matthews clarified that we have the designations for a 100-year water supply for 100,000 population. Mr. Williams stated the population number was closer to 140,000 or so. Councilmember Matthews reiterated how important the designation was.

ENGINEERING

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

QUESTIONS?

Councilmember Garcia expressed appreciation for the quality of Flagstaff's water, noting that it is gentle on appliances due to its softness. Mr. Williams added that being at a higher elevation it means residents receive water first from the source, which is both cold and clean. He highlighted that colder water tends to be purer and requires less chlorine. Due to increased reliance on well water this year, residents may notice more calcium buildup, such as in kettles. He added that the dedicated city teams work consistently to maintain the system and ensure water quality.

Councilmember Spence inquired about the percentage of non-revenue water which is water that is produced but not billed to customers and how Flagstaff compares to similar cities. Mr. Williams responded that the city's non-revenue water is around 10%, which is consistent with other comparable municipalities. He also noted that the city had enlisted a consulting group to conduct testing and analysis.

Mayor Daggett asked about facility tours, and Mr. Williams clarified that while individual tours are not offered, group tours can be arranged by emailing him directly or the department.

8. Discussion of childcare resources in Flagstaff and greater Coconino County and the impacts of the current status.

Community Investment Director Dave McIntire, and Economic Development Director Jeff McCormick introduced the Director of the Early Learning and Development Center from Northern Arizona

University Rebecca Cirzan., and President and CEO of United Way of Arizona Liz Archuletta who provided a PowerPoint Presentation that covered the following:

ADDRESSING THE CHILDCARE CRISIS: A PATHWAY TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT
THE CHILDCARE CRISIS IN AMERICA
THE CHILDCARE CRISIS IN FLAGSTAFF
THE COMMUNITY PROBLEM
WHY
THE CHILDCARE LANDSCAPE
PERCENTAGE OF FOUR YEAR OLDS IN PRESCHOOL
THE SOLUTION
CITY AND COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES NATIONWIDE
ARIZONA CITIES WITH FUNDED EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES

Councilmember House asked for clarification on the source of a study mentioned during the discussion. Ms. Archuletta responded that the study was conducted specifically for the Elevate Pre-K program in partnership with the Institute for Child Success.

Vice Mayor Sweet, referencing her role with NACOG, noted ongoing struggles with staffing and instructor retention in Head Start programs and asked whether Elevate Pre-K had faced similar challenges. Ms. Archuletta explained that they have not experienced those issues. She attributed this stability to their competitive salaries, noting that their teachers are paid more than those at Flagstaff Unified School District, which helps with retention. Additionally, she emphasized that Elevate Pre-K serves working families who earn too much to qualify for Department of Economic Security subsidies but still struggle to afford preschool, filling an important gap in early childhood education access. Ms. Archuletta also highlighted that the same teachers have remained with the program throughout the entire pilot phase, indicating strong retention.

NAU ELDC
THE NEXT STEPS AND GOALS

Mayor Daggett asked for clarification on what is meant by a "center" in the context of serving the entire community and whether there have been discussions around workforce development, specifically to support individuals interested in starting childcare businesses. Ms. Cirzan responded that over the next year, the focus will be on assessing infrastructure and developing a strategic plan that aligns with the community's goals. The intention is to bring together diverse perspectives to create a thoughtful and practical path forward.

Mr. McIntire added that a key consideration is building infrastructure that not only expands access but also maintains quality and affordability, ensuring that any solutions developed are both effective and sustainable.

THANK YOU

Councilmember House expressed appreciation for the detailed presentation and background materials, which reflected the deep challenges facing the community, particularly the intersection of childcare, affordable housing, and community health. She raised concerns about the overreliance on federal funding and asked what local efforts are being made to build sustainability. Ms. Cirzan responded that while federal funds helped stabilize things temporarily, local providers have adapted to working without them when needed. Some support has come in the form of infrastructure improvements for childcare centers, such as repairing sinks or classrooms, and providers are increasingly focused on finding local solutions.

Councilmember House asked about the proposed commission related to the childcare crisis and asked whether it would be a new city commission or tied to an existing committee. Ms. Cirzan noted that comprehensive conversations are needed with multiple partners and that a strategic plan must be developed. Mr. McIntire added that the effort is currently being called a "task force," and it is still being determined whether it will reside with the city or county, but the key need is to establish a permanent working group to guide the next steps.

Councilmember House asked about workforce development and the role of other partnerships. Mr. McIntire shared that one idea discussed was using limited funding to support scholarships for families or schools, and while smaller initiatives can help, the problem is much larger and requires strategic coordination. Ms. Archuletta emphasized the role United Way has played, noting their involvement in early childhood development and outreach. She pointed to examples like the creation of FACTS in response to afterschool care shortages and said there is a strong need to broaden collaboration with other industries. A key opportunity now is to bring more partners into the fold to build out the childcare infrastructure.

Councilmember House shared a personal story of a former colleague who benefited from Elevate Pre-K, which allowed her to support her family without sacrificing work or childcare. She then asked about the state of the childcare workforce pipeline and provider training. Ms. Cirzan responded that no consistent federal or state funding exists to support this, and the field suffers from poor wages, mental health strain, and high turnover. While some cities are exploring pipeline development through wage support and credentialed programs, there is a significant lack of data and organizational support. ARPA dollars helped temporarily, but a sustainable solution is still lacking.

Mayor Daggett clarified that the Alliance that was referenced in discussion consisted of the City, County, Northern Arizona University, Coconino Community College, Flagstaff Unified School District, and Mountain Line, which meet quarterly to discuss items of shared concern.

Councilmember Matthews sought clarification about income eligibility for the Department of Economic Security childcare benefits, and Ms. Cirzan confirmed that even full-time, minimum-wage single parents often struggle to qualify. Councilmember Matthews shared concerns about the slow pace of government action and asked for a more concrete timeline. Ms. Cirzan emphasized the urgency, saying the issue is worsening and that the time to act is now, specifically proposing a strategic plan be developed within nine months.

Mr. McIntire added that during early discussions with the County, there was a clear decision not to launch another broad study, but rather to focus on understanding existing data and selecting impactful pilot projects. He acknowledged that while funding is limited, meaningful citywide change will require scaled-up efforts. Ms. Archuletta concluded by noting that partners have supported Elevate Pre-K for four years without returning for additional funding and that the pilot ends in July. The program has proven successful and is ready to move into its next phase and grow this model. She stressed that no further studies are needed to prove its value; the focus should now be on creating the infrastructure to maintain more projects.

9. **Greater Observatory Mesa Area Trail Plan**

Open Space Supervisor Robert Wallace and Southwest Decision Resources Facilitator Mark Loseth provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

GREATER OBSERVATORY TRAIL PLAN DRAFT
 GENERAL OVERVIEW
 GREATER OBSERVATORY MESA AREA
 BACKGROUND -- LAND MANAGERS
 BACKGROUND -- CURRENT CONDITIONS
 MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS
 PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE AREA
 TRAIL PLAN OBJECTIVES
 FIRST TRAIL PLAN DESIGN
 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW
 FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT FEEDBACK
 WHAT CHANGED?
 SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT FEEDBACK
 WHAT CHANGED?
 THIRD AND FINAL PUBLIC COMMENT FEEDBACK
 WHAT CHANGED?
 FINAL DRAFT PLAN: PROPOSAL MAP

TRAIL PLAN REVIEW
TRAIL PLAN REVIEW -- PRIORITY 1
TRAIL PLAN -- PRIORITY 2
TRAIL PLAN -- PRIORITY 3
TRAIL PLAN REVIEW -- LONG TERM
NEXT STEPS
COUNCIL QUESTIONS? PUBLIC COMMENTS
CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DIRECTION

Councilmember Garcia asked for clarification on which quadrants of the proposed area fall within the City of Flagstaff, and which belong to other entities. Mr. Wallace explained that sections 6, 8, 12, and 18 and the yellow color are within the city, while sections 1, 7, and 13, along with areas to the west, are owned by the Coconino National Forest. Section 17 is private property owned by Lowell Observatory. Mr. Wallace reiterated the three phases and the long-term goals which have more challenging objectives.

Councilmember Garcia also raised concerns about the conflict between the Forest Service's emphasis on passive recreation and the conservation easement in place. He asked if anything in the easement directly contradicts the proposed plans, noting that public comments have reflected significant concern. Mr. Wallace responded that the conservation easement does include language that permits supporting infrastructure for access and for trail use, and that the project team believes the current plans align with it. He emphasized that the proposed trail system would benefit both public access and conservation goals, improving current conditions and allowing for better long-term land management.

Mr. Loseth added that out of the 20 acres in question, only about 7.8 acres would be developed, leaving 12.2 acres preserved.

Councilmember Aslan asked for details on the planned restoration efforts, and Mr. Wallace explained that current maps highlight unauthorized road use, which the team aims to restore using methods like those employed at Picture Canyon. He confirmed that native seeds will be used in the restoration process.

Mayor Daggett then asked about how the planning team reconciled the conflicting public feedback they have received, especially balancing recreation with land preservation. Mr. Loseth acknowledged that this tension has been central to the process. They have heard concerns about preserving wildlife and the natural environment while also providing quality access for residents. The team has tried to strike a balance by planning appropriate trail density and placing trails in areas that minimize environmental impact. Much of the public input reflected this balance of support for access, but in a way that is respectful of the land's ecological value.

Public Participants that addressed Council in support of the proposed plan:

- Martos Hoffman
- Jackie Thomas
- Mary Norton
- Michael Murphy
- Kenneth Lane
- Anthony Quintile on behalf of Flagstaff Biking Organization
- Molly Joyce
- Quinn Travis
- Truman Shoaff
- Cori Morse
- John Dailey

Comments included:

- Balanced and compromised plan
- People will never be fully happy or satisfied
- Suggested renaming from a trail system to a nature preserve

- Some in favor of e-bikes while others were not
- Appreciation for staff and partners who have worked on the plan
- Trails provide different experiences: optimizing for bikes, youth trails, and adaptive trails

Lucas Cowan submitted a written comment in support of Class 1 electric bikes for the proposed plan.

Ann Walka submitted a written comment advocating for preserving wildlife.

Kyle McKendree submitted a written comment in support of the proposed plan.

Michele James from Flagstaff Friends of Future addressed Council and submitted a written comment in opposition of the proposed plan.

J. Baxter, Matthew H. Hall and Karen Enyedy submitted written comments in opposition of the proposed plan.

Councilmember Aslan thanked the public for their strong engagement and applauded the efforts of Mr. Wallace and partners who went above and beyond in public outreach. As a regular user of the area, he shared his personal experience touring the space. He voiced full support for the compromised plan and was surprised by any controversy surrounding it. Councilmember Aslan reaffirmed his support for e-bikes, encouraging the Council to continue considering them. He stated he sees the economic driver the area could bring, emphasized the need for accessible trails, and stressed that trail use should be based on trust and responsible behavior. He also supported moving away from calling it a "trail plan" to something more reflective of the space's multifaceted purpose.

Councilmember House expressed appreciation for the staff and commission and highlighted how well the plan balances various tensions, which she described as the essence of democracy. She emphasized the importance of accessibility and adaptive trails, referencing public comments that called attention to ADA compliance. She also mentioned regional conversations with the county about place-based storytelling and balancing ecological integrity with public use. She inquired about educational programming in the area, outreach to tribal nations, and long-term monitoring of ecological impacts. Mr. Wallace responded by describing efforts to engage youth through educational field trips and nature-based play features. He said tribal outreach received limited but positive feedback, and ecological monitoring is supported by a volunteer program, State Site Stewards, and coordination with the local police.

Councilmember Matthews acknowledged the extensive public input and noted the harm caused by unauthorized trails, which do more damage than formal ones. She supported the trail plan for its focus on safety and connectivity, especially in areas like Railroad Springs. Although she initially had reservations about e-bikes, learning that the Council had already approved them for certain trails changed her perspective. She emphasized the importance of interpretive signage and trusted staff's integrity in the plan's development.

Vice Mayor Sweet also thanked the staff and noted her regular use of the area for running. She appreciated the depth of research and public involvement, particularly the focus on restoration and managed recreation. While she wished restoration efforts could begin sooner, she supported the trail plan overall. She requested more research on the public comment regarding the relocation of the 515 trailhead. She echoed others in supporting e-bikes and the idea of avoiding the term "trailhead" to reflect a broader, more inclusive vision.

Councilmember Garcia focused on the technical aspects of the trail design; particularly how mountain bike-optimized trails differ from multi-use ones. Mr. Loseth explained that mountain bike trails require specific design features, such as slopes and curves for lateral and vertical movement, making integration with multi-use trails difficult. Four mountain bike-optimized trails are included in the plan, alongside 20 general trails. Councilmember Garcia questioned whether the plan aligns with the conservation easement and reiterated that the area should be marketed as a natural preserve that acknowledges the many compromises made in the planning process.

Councilmember Spence praised the comprehensive work done by the commission and staff, fully

supporting the plan. He made a request to include bike parking at each trailhead to accommodate users who may want to walk instead of ride.

Mayor Daggett thanked the staff and expressed pride in the area and how far the project has come since she had served with Friends of Flagstaff's Future that worked on the bond measure. She was pleased with the plan's managed access and efforts to remove unauthorized roads. However, she questioned the consultation with Game and Fish, clarifying whether a wildlife biologist had been involved. Mr. Wallace stated a representative was consulted, though not necessarily a biologist, and stated he would need to verify credentials.

Mr. Wallace stated that e-bikes are only permitted on existing motorized alignments due to deed restrictions. He addressed adaptive trail design, noting that not all trails are adaptive by design to ensure varied experiences. He confirmed staff had taken note of feedback to use an alternative name rather than "trail plan." He stated that marketing would focus on residents. Mr. Wallace stated he would be back in June to provide a resolution for consideration and adoption.

10. Open Call to the Public

None

11. Informational Items To/From Mayor, Council, and City Manager; future agenda item requests

Vice Mayor Sweet requested a FAIR item on utilizing to council initiative funds for the Flagstaff Family Food Center. She stated she accepted an award for Adam Shimoni during Bike to Work Week. She also reminded the community that later that week the Market of Dreams is doing soft opening and encouraged everyone to attend.

Councilmember House stated she was honored to read the Mental Health proclamation at Buffalo Park over the weekend and stated that she attended Train Day. She spoke of an upcoming event for the Redemption Counseling Center and reminded the community of the opening reception of the multicultural art exhibit at the Liz Archuletta Park.

Councilmember Spence requested a FAIR item for a future discussion on noise mitigation at Bushmaster Park

Councilmember Matthews reiterated her FAIR item from last week for a discussion on incentives for middle market/workforce housing.

Councilmember Garcia reminded the community of a youth bike riding event that week at Sechrist School.

Mayor Daggett reminded the community of Rescue a Dog Day that was coming up.

12. Adjournment

The meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held May 13, 2025, adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK