

## MINUTES

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Daggett called the meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held October 9, 2025, to order at 3:02 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 regular meeting, 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: Mayor Becky Daggett  
Vice Mayor Miranda Sweet  
Councilmember Austin Aslan  
Councilmember Anthony Garcia  
Councilmember Khara House  
Councilmember Lori Matthews  
Councilmember David Spence

Staff 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 Garcia read the Mission Statement of the City of Flagstaff, and Councilmember Matthews 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. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

##### A. Public Hearing: Flagstaff Regional Land Use Plan 2045 Adoption

Mayor Daggett opened the public hearing.

Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Manager Sara Dechter provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

FLAGSTAFF REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE FOR 2045  
WHAT IS THE REGIONAL PLAN?  
THE FLAGSTAFF REGION  
QUICK DOCUMENT DEMO  
WHAT CAN THE PLAN DO AND NOT DO?  
THE PLANNING PYRAMID  
COMPREHENSIVE UPDATE OF THE GENERAL PLAN  
PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS  
REGIONAL PLAN COMMENTS  
HOW DID THE COMMISSION TRACK EDITS?  
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY GOALS AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES (9-461.05.C)  
CHAPTER 2, PAGE 2-4  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION  
ALTERNATIVE STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS  
ADDITIONAL STAFF RECOMMENDATION  
ALTERNATIVE P&Z RECOMMENDATIONS

Councilmember Garcia asked for clarification about the structure of priorities, specifically whether it would be possible to keep the two established core priorities and add two additional development priorities. He noted staff had indicated no preference between having two core plus one additional or three total priorities and asked whether maintaining the two core priorities and adding two more would be prohibitive.

Ms. Dechter explained that staff recommended the "one-and-one" approach (one core and one additional priority) to keep projects focused and manageable. She noted that requiring too many priorities could lead to lengthy, burdensome analyses, often up to 40 pages, while the one-and-one structure allowed for concise, meaningful reviews of about 10--12 pages. The intent was to ensure strong, focused narratives without creating unnecessary workload or cost for applicants or reviewers. She emphasized that the approach was a practical balance rather than a perfect solution, tailored to what works best for Flagstaff.

MAJOR PLAN AMENDMENT CATEGORIES  
ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES  
P&Z PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS  
COMMENT TABLED FOR COUNCIL DISCUSSION  
LAND USE ELEMENT (9-461.05.C.1)  
P&Z LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS  
CIRCULATION, TRANSIT, BICYCLING & GROWTH  
P&Z TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS  
URBAN TRAILS MAP RECOMMENDATION  
OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION  
P&Z OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

Councilmember Garcia asked for clarification on why the "10-minute walk" concept appeared in two different sections of the document and asked about staff's perspective and the committee's intent behind that decision.

Ms. Dechter explained that they generally avoided including strict metrics in goals and policies to allow flexibility, acknowledging that something like an 11-minute walk could still meet the intent. She

emphasized viewing the "10-minute walk" as an aspirational goal rather than a rigid standard. Open Space Supervisor Robert Wallace explained that the Open Space Commission, discussed the issue extensively and chose to highlight the "10-minute access" concept within their specific goal for open space and parks to emphasize its importance to the community and future planning efforts.

ENERGY ELEMENT  
P&Z ENERGY RECOMMENDATIONS  
OTHER REQUIRED ELEMENTS  
OTHER P&Z RECOMMENDATIONS  
RECOMMENDED MOTION  
ALTERNATIVE MOTION

Council thanked staff for all their involvement in the process. The time spent was significant and the commitment of staff and the committee was astounding.

The following individuals addressed Council about the Regional Plan:

- Tom Pearson
- Laura Kessler
- Patrick Wickstrom
- Michele James, Friends of Flagstaff's Future
- Sat Best
- Russell Randall
- Stefan Sommer
- Bruce Fox
- Haley Creighton
- Robert Breunig
- Jim Schweikert
- Marcus Ford
- Phil Goldblatt
- Jacqueline Thomas
- Susie Garretson
- Doug Gee
- Walter Dempsey
- Irish Noble
- Charity Lee
- Yiqun Lin
- Hillary Turby
- Noel Griemsmann

The following comments were received:

- Supported Planning and Zoning Commission conditions #47 and #64, which maintain both electric and natural gas as energy sources for resiliency, redundancy, affordability, and safety in Flagstaff's climate.
- Warned that eliminating natural gas could endanger residents during cold winters and power outages, particularly affecting elderly, disabled, and low-income households.
- Condition #64 gives equal weighting to all six regional plan priorities to ensure the economy is not treated as secondary and aligns with public preference.
- Opposed making carbon neutrality the top core priority, citing limitations in renewable energy reliability, declining national/international support, and the financial impact on residents.
- Highlighted that reliance on gas or electricity alone can be costly; diversified energy sources mitigate financial and reliability risks.
- Emphasized that retaining climate action and housing attainability as core priorities is essential for guiding land use, preserving community character, and meeting the city's carbon neutrality goals.
- Warned that adopting conditions #47 and #64 as written could weaken climate commitments, reduce effectiveness of the Carbon Neutrality Plan, and undermine public support.
- Advocated for maintaining non-negotiable core priorities (climate action and housing affordability) while allowing complementary priorities to support them.
- Recommended adopting additional planning comments to:

- Require major amendments for water provisions outside urban growth boundaries to discourage sprawl.
- Modify open space goals to reflect Open Space Commission recommendations.
- Emphasize use of native plants to reduce wildfire risk and improve invasive species management.
- Include responsible tourism policies to educate visitors about ecology, history, and indigenous heritage.
- Strengthen ecosystem management by integrating native plant planning.
- Supported improving accessibility and inclusion by:
  - Including mental health facilities in the public health section.
  - Highlighting the lack of ADA-compliant accessible housing.
  - Clarifying paratransit services for people unable to use standard bus service.
  - Ensuring maps and charts are accessible for visually impaired residents.
- Emphasized that climate and housing priorities are widely supported in community surveys and are critical for long-term environmental, social, and economic well-being.
- Urged careful consideration of alternative energy options, including virtual power purchase agreements, and highlighted the risks of over-reliance on APS.
- Proposed minor plan amendment pathways for parcels under 5 acres to reduce burdens on small landowners and infill developers, aligning Flagstaff with other Arizona jurisdictions and speeding rezoning processes.
- Recommended updates to policy maps to reflect actual road classifications, development densities, proposed trails, and included disclaimers for conceptual maps.
- Advocated for prioritizing safety, economic resilience, and long-term planning while balancing climate action, housing affordability, and community preferences.

Sam Meier submitted written comments in opposition to Condition #64.

Aneeka Bippus submitted written comments in opposition of Condition #47 and Condition #64.

Councilmember Matthews stated that several presenters had highlighted priorities from the regional plan survey, with housing attainability consistently at the top, followed by a healthy economy, natural and cultural resources, walkability, resilient public services, and climate action. While past discussions, such as the North Star presentation, discounted those priorities, a resurvey could help confirm the community's current perspective.

Councilmember Matthews offered that as the city planned for 2045, it was important to consider energy realities. APS and SRP relied heavily on natural gas and planned for 100% clean energy by 2050 but would maintain gas plants to ensure reliability during peak demand. While there was strong interest in faster climate action, practical limitations must be recognized.

She also emphasized that housing remained critical. Proposed sustainability-related building code changes could raise costs by nearly \$28,000, underscoring the importance of keeping housing affordability the top priority. While all priorities mattered, it was important to ensure that economic and technological realities were addressed before implementing significant mandatory changes.

Councilmember Garcia noted his long-term involvement in the regional plan process, including committee work and attending public meetings over nearly three years. Throughout that time, carbon neutrality and affordable housing consistently emerged as top priorities for both the community and the committee majority, even though a minority of participants raised other issues. Those priorities reflected the input of thousands of community members, not just individual opinions. He asked about the plan's treatment of Flagstaff's financial feasibility, asking when and how the city's economic prosperity would be addressed within the land use plan.

Ms. Dechter stated that the plan could suggest programs and actions for the city, but adoption did not obligate the Council to act on them if timing, conditions, or funding made them infeasible. Financial health would continue to be addressed through the city's annual budgeting process, with the plan providing guidance rather than dictating yearly priorities. Strategic plans, like the carbon neutrality and 10-year housing plans, also influenced decisions. Financial stability had consistently underpinned all conversations about the regional plan, alongside priorities like carbon neutrality and affordable

housing, because it was essential for the city's long-term success.

There were questions related to the interactive 2045 plan map, specifically the realignment of John Wesley Powell Blvd. Ms. Dechter noted that minor arterials flanked by commercial and mixed-use development were the most economically functional. Working with a property owner, the plan places neighborhood-oriented development to the west and commercial/mixed-use along the corridor, minimizing impacts on nearby county residents. The property owner remained open to ongoing dialogue with the Open Space Commission regarding preservation of open space across the parcel. The proposed layout was conceptual, and final development plans may require minor amendments in the coming years.

Councilmember Matthews asked for clarification on how the 2045 regional plan map affected a property owner's development. Specifically, what happened if the plan reflected road types that differed from the developer's vision plan and whether or not adjusting the plan to match the developer's preferred road types would impact their ability to develop the property.

Planning and Development Services Director Michelle McNulty clarified that the 2045 regional plan map did not restrict the developer's ability to move forward with their project. The design of roads would be determined by the traffic impact analysis for the specific development. While the map may indicate a collector or arterial, there was flexibility in how the road was ultimately designed, so changing the map did not impact the developer's plans.

Traffic Engineer Jeff Bauman added that roads in the plan were laid out based on applications seen and their functional classifications. Minor collectors were intended to channel neighborhood traffic onto roads designed for higher volumes, without houses directly fronting them, to avoid past issues like mazes of local streets and excessive traffic calming requests. While the plan set general spacing and alignment, there was flexibility, and road designs or alignments were adjusted as development projects were approved and traffic impact analyses were completed.

Ms. McNulty also noted that if the parcel developed according to its land use designation, a rezone would be required, triggering a public process that ensured open space considerations were addressed and codified. The property owner had been open to these discussions, though it was still early in their design process. It was possible to both protect open space along the corridor and develop a commercially viable activity center on the site.

Mayor Daggett asked about the comments regarding native plants. Ms. Dechter stated that there were suggestions for inclusion of native plants in three areas of the plan, particularly in the natural resources chapter. Staff had some concerns that the suggested policies were overly broad. While the Planning and Zoning Commission ultimately voted against including it as a condition of approval, she noted that it could still be considered for inclusion, though she did not recall the specific reasons the Commission voted it down.

Mayor Daggett asked Sat Best to return to the podium to explain the concerns about the native plants. Mr. Best emphasized the importance of coordinating native and invasive plant programs across city and county jurisdictions, since plants did not respect property lines. He highlighted that the county already included native plants in its implementation actions and suggested aligning city language to match. Drawing on precedents like the San Francisco Peaks Weed Management Plan, he stressed the need for a coordinated effort to protect native plants, prevent invasive species spread, and leverage expertise from institutions like NAU, the Arboretum, and the museum. Including native plants in the plan was seen as a practical first step toward broader collaboration and landscape-scale conservation, ensuring ecological health and preventing widespread degradation.

Council agreed to include the comment given the neutral position of staff.

Council and staff discussed the trails plan. The discussion focused on the urban trails map for the 2045 plan, which distinguished between existing trails, planned trails (with partial or full property rights), private trails, and areas on large parcels with flexible alignments. The distinctions were designed to address concerns about trespassing, safety, and misuse of trail data, particularly on large private properties like Little America. Proposed "soft" or "faint thick" lines aimed to reduce the risk of the trails

being misused if displayed publicly or downloaded to apps like AllTrails or Strava. Ms. Dechter noted that it was difficult to trace how third parties acquired trail data, and displaying the lines differently (e.g., shapes versus lines) was primarily a technical preference rather than a policy issue. Decisions about whether to include the data on the city's open data portal could further manage public access. Council discussion leaned toward following the original approach developed during the May 2, 2025 retreat, rather than reversing it based on Planning and Zoning Commission feedback, as the original plan addressed most concerns while balancing transparency, safety, and usability.

Councilmember Garcia asked if responsible tourism was a definition within the plan. Ms. Dechter explained that because the regional plan was primarily focused on land use, it did not specifically address tourism. Many community uses served both residents and visitors, and topics like responsible tourism were considered better suited for more targeted plans, such as those developed by the Convention and Visitors Bureau. Tourism-related issues were often programmatic, and other section-specific or county plans could address them more directly.

Councilmember Garcia then asked about incorporating language related to disability in Chapters 4 and 5 of the plan. He was also curious about whether adding a definition for paratransit would be important or relevant for the land use plan, noting that it may not need to be addressed immediately.

Ms. Dechter indicated that the addition of paratransit as a definition was one of the conditions of approval from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Councilmember Aslan asked for more clarification on the issues related to comment #29.

Ms. Dechter stated that it was suggested to revise Policy OS2 to emphasize integrating open space into development to support compact housing, climate action, and 10-minute walking access, rather than treating open space as an afterthought. The Open Space Commission supported that change, while Planning and Zoning preferred the current language, partly because including a walking access "standard" could be redundant or confusing with other policies. Open space in the plan was defined as undeveloped or minimally developed land designated for preservation, buffering, and recreation without facilities. She noted that the term "open space" could be problematic, as it might be interpreted as formally dedicated land, and the policy was most effectively implemented through strategies and zoning code updates rather than individual development projects. The overall intent was to ensure open space was integrated thoughtfully into future development, while avoiding conflicts with other policies or development requirements.

Council agreed to keep the language as it was presented.

Council then discussed comment #5 and the suggestion to change the urban growth boundary. The suggestion proposed striking language about expanding the urban growth boundary to limit city water and sewer services. Staff explained that due to water scarcity, development pressures, and potential well failures, the city may need flexibility to provide services outside the boundary to protect water quality and address failing private systems. Allowing increased intensity or density with city utilities could help manage those issues responsibly, but any change would require revising city water policy and thresholds in the next Utilities Master Plan. No automatic changes would occur; Council approval would be required before any water policy adjustments took effect, ensuring careful oversight while maintaining flexibility to address practical development and infrastructure challenges.

Council then discussed the comments related to accessibility and housing. Chapter 4 lacked mention of specific mental health facilities, which the disability community felt should be included. Chapter 5 had minimal reference to accessible or ADA-compliant housing. Staff noted that adding language to Chapter 5 would require a separate source, as the existing citation did not address accessibility. Planning and Zoning was not eager to pursue new research, but staff from housing confirmed it was possible to add a sentence highlighting the importance of accessible housing, even if full compliance was aspirational, to acknowledge the needs of people with disabilities.

Council agreed to add those elements to Chapters 4 and 5.

Council discussed condition 64 and 47. Condition 64 proposed flattening priorities from two tiers to one

and increasing the minimum findings from two to three. Council preferred to keep the original structure, which maintained a core priority plus one complementary priority for plan amendments, reflecting public input and consistency with prior decisions.

Condition 47 concerned fuel switching from natural gas to electric. Council clarified that the plan encouraged electrification but did not require abandoning natural gas. Language was largely background narrative and incentive-based, not mandatory. Keeping it as-is allowed developers flexibility while supporting energy efficiency and carbon reduction goals. Council emphasized the importance of maintaining a reliable energy mix, noting APS's ongoing commitment to carbon neutrality and diverse energy sources.

Council supported retaining the original language to balance guidance on sustainability with practical flexibility for development.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Daggett closed the public hearing.

**Moved by** Councilmember Lori Matthews, **seconded by** Councilmember David Spence to read Resolution No. 2025-56 by title only with the following conditions:

Update the plan per the attached and amended Errata and make changes to the Plan as shown in the Conditions of Approval document prepared and reviewed during the Planning and Zoning hearing, with the following modifications:

1. Add Condition #99, an edit to the first high priority action item on page 7-2.
2. Remove Condition #11 on Policy Map 4-5 on page 4-37. Maintain Condition #34 on planned forest access points and trailheads.
3. Add Condition #80, which adds a statement on page 5-3 in the section "Housing Insecurity" with a new and appropriate reference.
4. Remove Condition #64.
5. Remove Condition #47.

**Vote:** 7 - 0 - Unanimously

*A RESOLUTION OF THE FLAGSTAFF CITY COUNCIL, ADOPTING THE FLAGSTAFF REGIONAL LAND USE PLAN 2045 (REGIONAL PLAN) AS THE GENERAL PLAN FOR THE CITY OF FLAGSTAFF*

**Moved by** Councilmember Anthony Garcia, **seconded by** Vice Mayor Miranda Sweet to adopt Resolution No. 2025-56 with the modifications.

**Vote:** 7 - 0 - Unanimously

Council expressed sincere gratitude to staff and the community for all the time, attention, and input that was put into developing the Regional Land Use Plan 2045. It was an incredible effort that spanned a number of years with a focus on ensuring that all voices were heard and considered.

## 5. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held October 9, 2025, adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

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MAYOR

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK

**CERTIFICATION**

I, STACY SALTZBURG, do hereby certify that I am the City Clerk of the City of Flagstaff, County of Coconino, State of Arizona, and that the above Minutes are a true and correct summary of the Meeting of the Council of the City of Flagstaff held on October 9, 2025. I further certify that the Meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 16th day of December, 2025

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CITY CLERK