



Outlook

Flagstaff Housing Commission Feb 27 meeting - citizen feedback

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To CD P and Z Commission <CDPandZCommission@flagstaffaz.gov>

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Dear Flagstaff Planning and Zoning Commission,

Thank you for considering citizen feedback for Missing Middle housing types, commercial zone residential uses, and efforts to streamline Flagstaff code. I strongly support all three initiatives. Since living here and working on development plans in Flagstaff, I was dismayed at the sheer number of Single Family housing projects, the “ghost-towns” of empty second-home neighborhoods, the numerous storage units going up to house objects but not people, and the increasing loss of Flagstaff’s quirky, down-to-earth culture. I hope to learn more about the nuances of Flagstaff’s zoning code to contribute more concrete solutions in the future.

My additions to this discussion are:

- There is stark imbalance between the lands apportioned to Single Family/Estate/Rural Residential versus higher density housing zones (including Commercial zones that permit residential use). A 1-minute glance at the [zoning map](#) shows that the City has dedicated much more land to low density housing. This effectively lays the foundation for housing imbalance in Flagstaff
- Future discussions on housing should investigate the economic connections between low-density communities, lower cumulative sales tax, and Flagstaff’s tax revenues
- Measures like ADUs, subsidies, Habitat for Humanity Starter Homes, etc. are not harmful per se, but they do not *effectively* address lack of affordable housing—the quantity of people needing affordable housing far outnumbers the housing actually provided by these patchwork solutions
- Update Flagstaff’s code to be congruent with AZ House Bill 2721: Encourage duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in Commercial and T3 and T4 zones. These housing forms are especially appealing for families where apartment living is unfeasible. Currently, Sunnyside and the Milton/Woodlands Village corridor are prime examples of Commercial zoning but with strong residential presence and are quite interesting neighborhoods to walk through. This model should be applied more broadly in the City. Apply such modifications to the base code rather than rely on overlays or Conditional Use Permits. To do otherwise perpetuates exclusionary zoning which negatively impacts City walkability, increases vehicles on the road and carbon emissions, and creates the conditions for increased socio-economic and racial segregation by neighborhood
- Transect zoning versus Overlays versus base code creates confusion. Simplifying the code reduces potential cost and complexity for developers and families. I can attest to spending extra hours trying to interpret code, especially when sections contradict each other. I bill for this extra time, which raises the cost of development. Costs multiply when multiple trades (civil, arch, etc) have to do the same thing
- Reduce the number of Transect categories. They have considerable overlap and the Transect zones are primarily in and around downtown. This proximity renders the more rural categories

T1 and T2 somewhat redundant with each other, for example, especially given expected growth in the area

- Combine T3N.1 with T3N.2, and T4N.1 with T4N.2
- Permit tri- and quad-plexes in T3, and possibly T4
- Add Garden-style Courtyard multifamily to the recommended housing form mix; more diversity is visually interesting and functionally useful to have in the City's toolbox
- Simplify *10-40.30.040 Commercial Zones*. There are currently 6 subcategories that could be reduced. For example, Commercial Service, Central Business, and Highway Commercial categories are good candidates for being combined or simplified. Rather than overarticulating negligible differences, combine categories with common sense and practicality. I believe this is possible since building permits are usually vetted through community meetings and the Planning Commission, thereby preventing incompatible use scenarios
- Remove the requirement that any proposed residential use in certain Commercial zones be anchored above or behind a commercial use. This requirement can result in the ground commercial floor being empty, somewhat like a "throw-away" sacrifice in order to obtain higher density housing in these zones. We have some structures like that currently in Flagstaff. Allow the best form of development in these areas and remove these types of restrictions

Thank you sincerely,

Farrah Dang