

Good [morning/afternoon], XX,

I'm... It's good to be here today on behalf of the Open Spaces Commission, to share our recommended revisions to the Draft Regional Land Use Plan 2045.

The Open Spaces Commission has been keenly interested and involved in the development of the Regional Plan throughout the process. We gratefully received presentations from Comprehensive & Neighborhood Planning staff, provided input from an open space perspective, received citizen comments, and formally reviewed and submitted a recommended revision letter during the last public comment period in December. In short, we have worked hard to stay informed and engaged in the process, and recently have undertaken the review of the revised Plan.

The Commission has worked diligently to understand the numerous changes and has been involved in discussions with Comprehensive & Neighborhood Planning staff to share their insights and gain a deeper understanding of their perspective.

We have now developed a set of recommendations that we believe are crucial for ensuring the document is both usable and representative of the community's needs. We created a recommendation letter with 18 points for your consideration. I assure you that the commission spent ample time deliberating these points and narrowing down their comments to those that would be most impactful and helpful to balancing community needs. To be respectful of our time, I will share the commission's main points, and I am happy to address any questions you may have regarding the commission's comments.

1. Our first significant point is about integration.

Currently, open space isn't integrated into the plan in a way that aligns with the core priorities of housing and climate. For example, the plan calls housing and climate "non-negotiable objectives." This indicates that the plan's complementary priorities will only be considered if first the core priorities are met. Then and only then will the complementary priorities be considered. A number of our recommendations would provide a better balance of core priorities with complementary priorities. Parks and Open Spaces are priorities for our community, as we heard during feedback on the Regional Plan. One of the three takeaways summarized was "Land Protection: State/Federal forest areas and open space is a coveted resource and what makes Flagstaff attractive".

*Recommendations related: (1. Balance the "core priorities" directive so open space integration is not de-prioritized in project decisions; 12. Add trail access points and trailheads to the map; 14. Update the Bikeway Policy Plan Map; 15. Make "integration" as important as "access" in neighborhood policy; 16. Strengthen Chapter 8 action items and timelines; 17. Map Stands of Ponderosa Pine; 18. Implementation Tools We Recommend Adding).*

2. Second, the policies themselves need balance.

Policy OS.2 is a good example. As this policy is written, it sounds like open space will only be considered where development *can't* happen. We're recommending a revision to update that policy so that open space is a part of the design.

*Recommendations related: (4. Make the 10-minute Walking Access Standard a policy target; 7. Re-frame Policy OS.2 so it doesn't read as "open space only where development can't go"; 2. Prioritize the Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) within Policy MT.5 to help promote inclusion; 6. Adjust Policy PROS.4; Recognize the importance of the Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) within the policy section (not just transportation) and require it to be thoughtfully located through new developments).*

3. Third, the Regional Plan needs to guide development so it helps deliver the things that the community values.

We need to ensure that projects include parks, trails and access points, and open spaces. We made some recommendations that are specific to this point, particularly mapping updates that pertain to open space needs for the community. For instance, we've suggested adding clarifications to better communicate open space needs.

*Recommendations related: (5. Clarify Map 3-1 and related text to avoid the impression that only one location "needs" open space; 10. Remove Reference to Private Parcels over 400 acres; 9. Recognize the importance of the Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) and other trails within Chapter 4: Growth and Land Use, and require it to be thoughtfully located through new developments; 10. Reframe the map disclaimer to ensure trails are incorporated into design; 13. Add missing existing trail right of way access; Reframe the map disclaimer to ensure trails are incorporated into design).*

4. And finally, I want to highlight Policy Map Fix, Recommendation #8.

We're requesting a correction to the Future Growth Illustration maps to prevent the loss of a top-priority

trail corridor between the Rio de Flag Water Reclamation Plant and Forest Service land. This is an important wildlife corridor, a community connection, and a way to make sure neighborhoods can reach public lands. Along this corridor a Suburban Center, which includes medium-to-high intensity of people, residences, jobs, and activities, is identified. Development goals for this zoning type may not support the long-standing trail corridor priority.

*Recommendations related: (8. Fix Policy Map designation to acknowledge trail continuity for identified top priority connection).*

So, in closing, our feedback is about making targeted updates that will help Flagstaff grow in a balanced way. Open space, trails, and parks are essential infrastructure that make housing and climate goals actually work for people.

We really appreciate your time, and we thank you for recognizing the Commission's hard work on this.