

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT  
FLAGSTAFF REGIONAL PLAN 2030 AMENDMENT**

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**PZ-15-00139-01**

**DATE:**  
**MEETING DATE:**  
**REPORT BY:**

**February 19, 2016**  
**February 24, 2016**  
**Jennifer Mikelson**

**REQUEST**

A minor *Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030* amendment request by the City of Flagstaff to change the area type designation on Maps 21 and 22 from Area in White to Park/Open Space for approximately 26.03 acres located at the north end of San Francisco Street.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission forward the minor *Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030* amendment to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

**PRESENT LAND USE**

Undeveloped land in the Area in White area type category.

**PROPOSED LAND USE**

Park/Open Space area type, which would designate the area as a passive recreation park.

**NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

North: Vacant parcels and single family residences; Agricultural Residential (AR) zone, 1 acre minimum (County)  
East: City-operated Buffalo Park; Public Open Space (POS) zone  
South: Single family residences; Single Family Residential (R1) zone  
West: Vacant parcels and single-family residence; Agricultural Residential (AR) zone, 1 acre minimum (County)

**REQUIRED FINDINGS**

The Planning and Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed *Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030* (FRP30 or the Plan) amendment meets the requirements of the General Plan and Subdivision Code (City Code Title 11).

In considering the request for an amendment to the Plan, the goals and policies in the Plan should be considered to ensure that the requested change to the Future Growth Illustration is in conformance to the overall vision of the Plan. “The Flagstaff Regional Plan establishes the vision for the future growth and development of Flagstaff and its surrounding area through goals and policies” (p. III-4). “General plans are not static documents; they recognize growth as a dynamic process, which may require revisions to the plan as circumstances or changes warrant” (p. III-1).

**STAFF REVIEW**

**Introduction/Background Discussion**

This request is the first of two related items on the Commission’s agenda; the second item is identified as a Zoning Map amendment request.

The applicant, City of Flagstaff Recreation Department, is requesting a minor Regional Plan Amendment to ensure conformance with a proposed Zoning Map Amendment to formally designate city owned property with the Public Open Space (POS) zone. Changing the subject property from Area in White to Park/Open Space will affect approximately 26.03 acres of land depicted on the Future Growth Illustration (Maps 21 and 22). The amendment table

on page III-9 of the Plan states that a minor Plan amendment is appropriate for the designation of any land for conservation. The primary purpose of this rezoning is to enact a prior dedication as stated in City of Flagstaff Ordinance No. 2014-23. The dedication states, “The portion of real property owned by the City of Flagstaff...is hereby set aside, preserved, and dedicated to the public for passive park purposes to be included in the immediately adjacent Buffalo Park.” The rezoning of the property “to the zoning best reflective of the dedication of the property as a public park” was identified as a secondary enactment of the Ordinance.

The subject property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Fir Avenue and San Francisco Street. San Francisco Street is privately held in this area, and splits the subject property in two. Two privately held parcels are located in between both parts of the subject property. Neither the private street nor the private parcels are part of this minor Plan amendment.

Access to the property and the adjoining Buffalo Park from San Francisco Street will be determined by the Parks Department at a later date. There are existing unofficial trails across the parcel connecting to Buffalo Park. A future Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) trail is proposed on Map 26: Flagstaff Urban Trail System, and will make connections to the existing Switzer Canyon and Cedar Trails. The site has abundant slope, forest, and floodplain resources. There is a prominent slope up to the northeast corner of the site. Portions of the site are located in the Switzer Canyon Wash. The Park/Open Space area type category is most appropriate given the numerous resources onsite. This amendment to the Future Growth Illustration will clearly reflect this expansion of designated open space.

### **Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 Amendment Request**

As discussed in the “How This Plan Works” chapter (page III-4), the *Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030* is used in the regulatory decision-making process by the Planning & Zoning Commission, City Council and city staff. The Commission and the Council are responsible for making development decisions such as zoning map amendments or annexations, approval which depends on whether the proposed changes or projects are consistent with the Plan’s goals and policies. The Future Growth Illustration on Maps 21 (regional scale) and 22 (city scale) and the text of the Plan will provide supplemental information for the interpretation of goals and policies. In case of any conflict between the Future Growth Illustration and the Plan’s goals and policies, the goals and policies will prevail. The Future Growth Illustration displays broad land use categories, called “area types,” which describe the placemaking context of Urban, Suburban, Rural, Special Planning Area, Park/Open Space, or in some cases, Area in White. Within these Areas in White existing entitlements are retained and have no other assigned area type. In most cases, these parcels are public lands held by the Forest Service or City. With this request the “Area in White” will, if approved, be assigned the Park/Open Space area type.

Attached are exhibits comparing the existing and proposed Future Growth Illustrations. The Plan’s maps and any applicable text should be considered in the context of the Plan’s goals and policies. A discussion of the FRP30 goals and policies is provided below.

### **APPLICABLE GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES**

#### **Ecosystem Health**

*Goal E&C.6. Protect, restore, and improve ecosystem health and maintain native plant and animal community diversity across all land ownership in the Flagstaff region.*

The Switzer Canyon Wash is identified as a natural watercourse on Maps 6 and 7 in the FRP30. Map 6: Existing Land Management Areas and Boundaries identifies a “hydrologic flood management feature,” and the property is shown as having “potential riparian vegetation” on Map 7: Significant Natural Resources Map. This site is already subject to the Resource Protection Overlay (RPO), which ensures any future facility development, such as parking/restrooms, will comply with those preservation requirements.

### **Wildlife**

*Goal E&C.10. Protect indigenous wildlife populations, localized and larger scale wildlife habitats, ecosystem processes, and wildlife movement areas throughout the planning area.*

The subject parcel is not located within a known wildlife corridor, however, Maps 7 and 8 illustrate the wildlife features of the adjoining Buffalo Park property. Map 8: Concentration of Natural Resources identifies the park as a watchable wildlife area, with natural grasslands and openings shown on Map 7: Significant Natural Resources. The subject property will connect directly with this wildlife site.

### **Open Space**

*Goal OS.1. The region has a system of open lands, such as undeveloped natural areas, wildlife corridors and habitat areas, trails, access to public lands, and greenways to support the natural environment that sustains our quality of life, cultural heritage, and ecosystem health.*

*Policy OS.1.3. Use open space as natural environment buffer zones to protect scenic views and cultural resources, separate disparate uses, and separate private development from public lands, scenic byways, and wildlife habitats.*

*Policy OS.1.4. Use open space as opportunities for non-motorized connectivity, to interact with nature, and to enjoy the views and quiet.*

### **Water Quality**

*Goal WR.6. Protect, preserve, and improve the quality of surface water, groundwater, and reclaimed water in the region.*

The Switzer Canyon Wash drains towards the southeast corner where it eventually joins the East Fork of Switzer Canyon Wash. A Rural Floodplain designation is proposed with the rezoning of this property, which ensures additional protections of this environmentally sensitive area.

### **Recreation**

*Goal REC.1. Maintain and grow the region's healthy system of convenient and accessible parks, recreation facilities, and trails.*

*Policy Rec.1.1. Integrate active and passive recreational sites within walking distance throughout the region to promote a healthy community for all City and County residents and visitors.*

**Policy Analysis:** In summary, the subject property has been designated by the 2014 ordinance for use a public park. This list below identifies several key points and community benefits supporting (+) or not supporting (-) the proposed amendment:

- + It meets several open space and water resources goals;
- + The property will enhance and grow the City's existing parks system;
- + Three layers of resource protection zones (Public Open Space, Resource Protection Overlay, Rural Floodplain designation) will ensure the maximum preservation and integrity of the site;
- + The site will provide passive recreation opportunities for all city residents; and
- The ability to provide affordable housing on this site has been lost with the removal of Single Family Residential (R1) zoning.

### **PUBLIC SYSTEMS IMPACT ANALYSIS**

No public service impact analysis was required.

**Citizen Participation:** Public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council are conducted in conjunction with the Zoning Map amendment request. In accordance with Arizona Revised Statute and Section 10-20.30.080 (p. 20.30-9) of the Zoning Code, notice of the public hearings was provided by placing an ad in the Daily

Sun, posting notices on the property, and mailing a notice to all property owners within 600 feet of the subject property. The mailing asked residents and property owners to attend the October 19, 2015 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting as a venue for discussion. The Commission did not meet quorum for their advertised meeting, but a public meeting for the rezoning was still held with the applicant and other city staff present. One member of the public attended the meeting to receive clarification on the Zoning Map Amendment for this property. There were no email inquiries about this Plan amendment.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff believes that the proposed amendment to the Plan is supportable under the guidelines of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030*, and would recommend approval of the proposed amendment.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Minor Regional Plan amendment application
- Future Growth Illustration – existing/proposed
- Public hearing legal advertisement