

May 18, 2016

To our fellow community members, the FMPO Executive Board and David Wessel, FMPO Manager:

Transportation congestion is a problem. It clogs our streets, slows us down, detracts from our quality of life and pollutes our environment. In the *City of Flagstaff 2013 Citizen Survey* when asked to write in their own words the one thing the City could do to improve their quality of life the most, one-quarter of residents mentioned better traffic flow, roads and mass transit. This scored 27% and the next highest was 10%. Although busy streets, sidewalks, bikeways and buses are a result of a thriving community, there is a difference between gridlock and the “Great Streets” described in *Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030: Place Matters* (hereto referred to as *Regional Plan 2030*). As our community grows in population and popularity, so must our systems for moving people who reside and visit here. The document before you, *Blueprint 2040*, is a first step in addressing this critical community challenge and moves forward the vision crystalized in *Regional Plan 2030* that was adopted by residents.

As the Steering Committee for *Blueprint 2040: Regional Transportation Plan*, our mission has been “*To identify priority transportation projects, related costs and viable revenue sources for turning ideas into reality.*” We are a diverse group representing environmental, business, government, education, economic development and citizen interests. Our focus over seven months was to work together to meet our mission in a manner that each of us could agree upon.

In the words of management guru Peter Drucker, “*plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.*” This Steering Committee and the staff of the Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization have done hard work and we hope that others will pick up where we left off. Our mission was identification. In many ways, that is the easy part. Our intent is to point the community in the right direction so that planning can be refined, funding can be secured and projects can be built. Keeping sustainability, fiscal viability, and this place we love in mind, we prioritized projects that have great impact on congestion mitigation and create resiliency through connectivity and mode choice. These projects also align with the vision and values of *Regional Plan 2030*.

Projects come down to money and money is expanded with partnerships. By working together we will leverage public and private funding sources. For example, dedicating public funds to the Lone Tree corridor and the Lone Tree railroad overpass may allow private sector landowners to develop property and support transportation infrastructure in a manner that is financially viable and consistent with *Regional Plan 2030*. Similarly, by dedicating local funds to transit construction projects, we may be able to leverage federal grants and build more than we could build on our own. Many of the projects recommended are on state facilities. Through these recommendations, the City will be an able partner with the State to improve these highways. As citizens of the region and state, we strongly urge the State and City to join together as financial and construction partners. The guiding philosophy is that working together on common projects toward a vision shared by all funding partners, the constituents and customers we serve will benefit.

Recognizing that much more work on revenue analysis is needed, the Steering Committee’s initial environmental scan identified several viable – and reasonable – potential funding sources. For example, the .00426 Transportation Sales Tax approved by voters in the City of Flagstaff expires on June 30, 2020. Extending that tax at existing rates without an increase would generate an estimated

\$195 million over a 20 year period. Furthermore, the transit system has averaged \$3 million per year in competitive federal grant awards over the past 10 years and the Steering Committee's recommendations estimate \$2 million per year over the next 20 years.

Potential Funding Source	20 Year Total
Transportation Tax Renewal at Current .00426 Rate	\$195,000,000
Federal Transit Grants	\$40,000,000
ADOT Capital Projects (Federal and HURF)	\$16,000,000
Transit User Fees / Fares	\$8,500,000
Private Sector Investment	\$15,000,000
(A) Total Revenues	\$274,500,000

Recommended Projects	Cost
Lone Tree Railroad Overpass (Includes Debt Financing)	\$81,200,000
Lone Tree Widening – Pine Knoll North	\$11,500,000
Fourth Street Bridge (Over I-40)	\$13,000,000
Operations TDM Signal Sync (not on map)	\$8,000,000
West Route 66 (Complete Street and Widen)	\$12,000,000
Milton Road BNSF Underpass Widening	\$20,000,000
Milton Road BRT Capital and Right-of-Way * NB BRT Lane University to BNSF Bridge	\$22,000,000
Fourth Street Corridor (Complete Street)	\$15,000,000
Lone Tree I-40 Interchange (Design)	\$3,300,000
Bus Rapid Transit (20 Year Operating Costs)	\$25,000,000
Lone Tree (Existing) Widening – I-40 to J. W. Powell Boulevard	\$12,000,000
Bus Rapid Transit (Other Capital)	\$8,000,000
J.W. Powell Boulevard Extension (Airport Only – 2 Lanes)	10,000,000
Missing Sidewalks (Major Segments)	\$3,500,000
Pedestrian/Bicycle Grade Separation	\$10,000,000
Enhanced Pedestrian Crossings	\$2,600,000
Missing Bike Lanes (Major Corridors)	\$1,000,000
Future FUTS Trails (Major Projects)	\$3,000,000
2 nd Lake Mary to Lone Tree via Anita and Zuni Drives	8,000,000
Total Estimated Expenses	\$269,100,000
Surplus / (Deficit)	\$5,400,000

We anticipate that our project recommendations will be modified and we welcome a rigorous review and assessment of our findings. A number of references and appendices, including details on these project recommendations, are found elsewhere in this document. They document the process we have been through and the guiding principles our recommendations are based upon. We encourage the reader to view these documents. It is only through this ongoing evaluation that we will arrive at the best choice for our community.

As a Steering Committee, it is time for us to pass the baton. Our recommendations are a beginning, not an end. As an advisory group our influence is limited and work now needs to be taken by others who have the political and financial authority to affect change. We respectfully request that our work can be most useful if the following steps are taken:

What	Who	When
Form a Citizen Review Panel to review project and funding recommendations in preparation for a return to Flagstaff voters in November 2018.	City of Flagstaff	Winter 2017
Send transit tax question back to voters in November 2016 and request a flat tax renewal without an increase.	City of Flagstaff NAIPTA	November 2016
Continue discussions between ADOT and City of Flagstaff regarding possible route transfers.	ADOT City of Flagstaff	Winter 2017
Complete a statistically valid survey of Flagstaff residents' interests related to specific transportation projects.	City of Flagstaff	Spring 2018
Continue to pursue grant funding.	ALL	
Continue to work with statewide interests to restore and expand transportation funding at the state and federal level including but not limited to Highway User Revenue Funds.	City of Flagstaff Coconino County	Ongoing
Continue to review capacity of Transportation Decision 2000 (Sunsets 2020).	City of Flagstaff	Winter 2017
Research property for I-17 Lone Tree Connector via Anita Drive.	ALL	Winter 2017
Conduct discussions with BNSF on widening Milton underpass and Lone Tree overpass.	ALL	Fall 2016
Explore the implications of various levels of debt financing on project costs and timing.	City of Flagstaff	Winter 2017
Consider J. W. Powell / Lone Tree design and land use implications carefully to protect the arterial roadway function and balance development with potential future growth.	City of Flagstaff	
Consider providing flexibility in 2018 Transportation Renewal Ballot language.	City of Flagstaff	
Provide clear messaging of project benefits for the voters.	ALL	
Explore impact fees and other funding mechanisms for developers, especially those who benefit from public investments.	City of Flagstaff Coconino County	
Schedule a focused discussion between regional partners regarding commitment to projects that have shared costs.	ALL	

In closing, it has been an honor to serve on this Committee and we convey these suggestions and recommendations with the utmost respect. We do not claim to completely understand all of the political, financial and technical intricacies of these major capital projects. We do, however, trust the commitment and talent of the people and institutions of this community. We offer our suggestions with a healthy dose of humility and encourage others to refine our effort and take it further. The quality of our transportation system can improve if we continue to work together and take action.



Respectfully submitted,

Blueprint 2040 Flagstaff Regional Transportation Plan Steering Committee

Rick Barrett
City of Flagstaff

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rick Barrett".

Rich Bowen
EcoNA

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Barbara Goodrich
City of Flagstaff

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Joanne Keene, Co-Chair
NAU

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Bob Kuhn
Flagstaff Unified School District

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Stuart McDaniel
Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce

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Jeff Meilbeck, Chair
NAIPTA

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Audra Merrick
ADOT

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Laura Myers
La Plaza Vieja

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Tory Syracuse
F-Cubed

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Neal Young
Coconino County

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