



FLAGSTAFF REGIONAL PLAN 2012

City of Flagstaff Regional Plan Advisory Committee

Retreat Report
December 10, 2009

Prepared by:
Peggy Fiandaca, AICP
President
Partners for Strategic Action, Inc.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Flagstaff Regional Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) has been working diligently on an update of the regional plan. It was decided that timing was right to pause and take the time to evaluate the process and determine if any changes needed to be made. A retreat was organized and a facilitator was hired to assist the CAC in its discussions. Peggy Fiandaca, President of Partners for Strategic Action, Inc. was hired to facilitate the CAC retreat and document its results. The retreat was held:

Date: December 10, 2009
Time: 3:00 – 7:00 pm
Location: Northern Arizona Healthcare Educational Offices; 1000 N. Humphrey's Suite 241, Flagstaff, AZ.

Following is a report that summarizes the discussions from the retreat and direction provided by the retreat participants.

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Retreat participants discussed the accomplishments made by the CAC and staff to date.

1. Established the CAC which is comprised of people with diverse backgrounds and expertise. The CAC is working closely with staff.
2. The City of Flagstaff took the time (1.5 years) to choose the group and to appoint the members to the CAC.
3. Drafted and finalized a vision statement that has received public review.
4. Developed and approved a framework and schedule to guide the plan process.
5. Reviewed the current plan and received recommendations for changes from staff.
6. The CAC has received a lot of education on a variety of topics that will impact the plan.
7. Requested and received additional information for use by the CAC in the development of the plan.
8. CAC has spent a lot of time to ensure that all members of the CAC were at the same level of understanding about planning and the regional plan.
9. The public involvement effort has begun with surveys, community meetings and focus groups. Interaction with the public about various planning topics has been helpful.
10. The process to date has been very open and ideas have been able to “bubble up” and be discussed openly. There are good CAC dynamics because of the diverse backgrounds and creative thinkers.

11. There is recognition by the CAC about the importance to focus on the future desired community.
12. The CAC is spending a lot of time learning about everyone in the group. There is a lot of commonality though it is very diverse group of individuals.
13. There is a concern that the CAC has not accomplished much, though a lot of time has been spent together.
14. There is a concern that other projects (e.g., Regional Transportation Plan and Development Code) are accelerating.
15. There are so many people that want to make Flagstaff an even better community than it is today.
16. CAC has learned a lot about community needs through CAC conversations and the public events.
17. The focus groups have been excellent and have provided valuable input to the process.
18. CAC is moving down the path that they have established.
19. CAC is in the process of reviewing all of the policies thoroughly.
20. Speakers that have come to CAC meetings have all been great. The concern is that there has not been enough time to have the CAC discuss the information thoroughly while the information is fresh.
21. It appears that there are a lot of the “right things cooking” and the CAC is heading in the right direction.

III. PROCESS DESIRED OUTCOME AND EXPECTATIONS

The CAC discussed what their expectations were for the Regional Plan and the process. Following are the comments organized under four themes. It is important to note that the following list is a summary of all comments and consensus was not reached. Therefore, conflicting statements are included.

1. Process/Logistics
2. Context
3. Vision and Values
4. Relationship to Other Planning Processes

1. Process/Logistics

CAC must determine the extent of the update effort.

- It is important for the process not to “reinvent the wheel.” There has been great progress made from past planning efforts. There is no need for the CAC to start over. It needs to build upon the success.
- Decision needs to be made – decide if a fundamental review and update is needed or is the CAC just tweaking the current plan. Concerned was raised that if

- it is a fundamental rewrite, the regional plan might not have enough resources for the CAC to finish the plan adequately and within the schedule.
- The focus should be on what needs to be fixed and not a total rewrite.
 - A thorough examination of each element and a determination of what is most critical to address as it relates to the community's value to be sustainable. It is important for the process to identify the "critical" elements to implement or examine and how they relate to each comprehensively.
 - Determination of the inter-relationship between the various elements and develop a process to ensure inconsistencies.
 - Complete a holistic review of the plan to determine what new items are needed and where the CAC should focus its efforts.
 - CAC must discuss, understand and reach consensus on trade-offs and implications of policies and future direction.
 - Reach agreement on the decision-making process.
 - Define the plan's underlying guiding principles.

Agree to a planning process schedule, meeting protocol, and responsibilities.

- It was expressed that it is important to stay on the timeline and keep moving forward.
- Ensure that the plan meets the statutory requirements.
- A process that is effective with well run meetings that have stated objectives, clear agenda and a process to achieve objectives.
- Everyone has a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Process is clear on how comments from the public are brought forward by individual CAC members or input gained through the public process.

How will the plan be used?

- An understanding is gained on how the regional plan is used by the public, developers, landowners, and staff.
- People that will be impacted by it and use it should be actively engaged in the development of the plan. Critical that people are drawn into the process so that there is a level of ownership in the outcome.

2. Context

- Defined planning assumptions (e.g., defining the future planning environment, identification of capacities, and where is the region today or what is the baseline to build upon).
- Process should follow a traditional planning process that starts with a good understanding of population projections, demand for services in the future based on the projections, and identification of future trends that might impact the Flagstaff region that the plan should address.

- Process should analyze the information thoroughly. The process to date has been focused on providing information without the ability to discuss or analyze the information. Need to determine how to apply the information learned into policy or text. There needs to be an analysis of emerging themes from the input being received so that the CAC can ensure the public's comments are not lost and are incorporated into the plan.
- Synthesis of data and summarization of information gathered to date so that it can be used by the CAC. Need to be able to synthesize the raw data so that it can be digested more effectively. A lot of information has been created, but it is still in the raw state.
- It is critical to understand the environment and the level of growth that the plan will address; including economics, water resources, environmental implications, etc.

3. Vision and Values

- An understanding of "whose values" are being addressed in the plan. How do we determine the values?

4. Regional Plan Relationships

- It was mentioned that the city should consider slowing down other processes so that the plan can be the guiding document. The city should consider redirecting financial resources to the plan's development. The importance of continuity and integration of the various planning process with the regional plan was stressed.
- The title is "Land Use and Transportation Plan" and therefore, the CAC thought to develop the transportation component of the regional plan. It was not expected that the transportation plan would get out in front of the regional plan.
- It was suggested that the CAC should be tackling the "big issues" that have been identified in the Regional Transportation Plan.

IV. PLAN RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

Regional Plan Defined

The Flagstaff Regional Plan embodies the comprehensive long-term policy that sets the vision for the evolution of change within the region.

- The direction is provided through the goals, objectives and policies as well as the element text.
- The plan is more than just land use and transportation.
- Collectively when the various elements and policies within the plan are addressed they move the Flagstaff region toward its vision.
- The plan directs the evolution of change that occurs within the region which is aligned with the community's vision.

- Typically a regional plan is not amended as often as other regulatory documents.
- The planning area is larger than the City of Flagstaff incorporated boundaries.

The CAC discussed the various other “tools” that are used to implement the Regional Plan. They include:

- Land Development Code
- Regional Transportation Plan
- Other Planning Documents related to specific topics (e.g., redevelopment or parks) or areas (e.g., certain neighborhoods) as well as Capital Improvement Plan and Annual Budgets.

Land Development Code Defined

The Flagstaff Land Development Code is a regulatory document that provides specific direction on how specific development will occur within the City of Flagstaff.

- The Land Development Code is intended to implement the vision embodied in the regional plan.
- If substantial development policy shifts occur as a result of the regional plan, then the Land Development Code will need to be amended.
- Regulatory documents typically are amended more often than policy documents, such as the regional plan.
- The Land Development Code is only applied within the incorporated boundaries of the City of Flagstaff.

Regional Transportation Plan Defined

The Regional Transportation Plan being completed by the Flagstaff Metropolitan Planning Organization is a tool for the CAC to use in understanding today’s transportation environment, trip generation, roadway classifications, future roadway issues, and transportation recommendations.

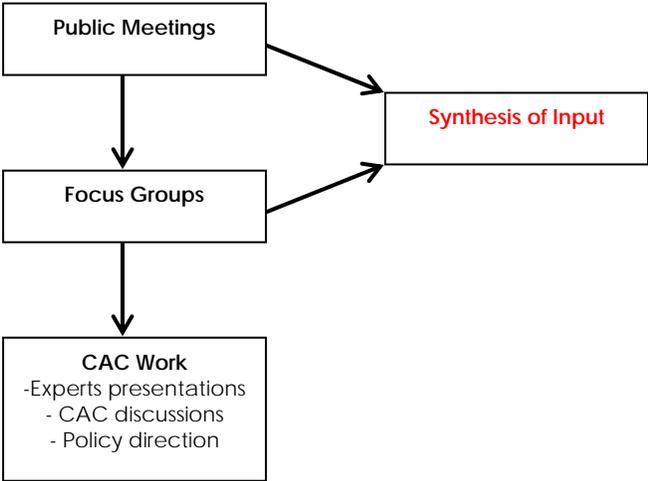
- The Regional Transportation Plan includes a regional transportation model.
- The plan identifies short- and long-term multi-modal transportation cost-constrained recommendations, project costs and anticipated revenues to meet federal requirements (SAFETEA-LU).
- Integrating transportation, land use, and urban design is a plan component for maximizing transportation investment options from a cost perspective.
- The plan includes an implementation program that is clear and specific regarding the cost of each project, priority timeframe for implementation, proposed funding source(s), and implementation responsibility.

Retreat Report

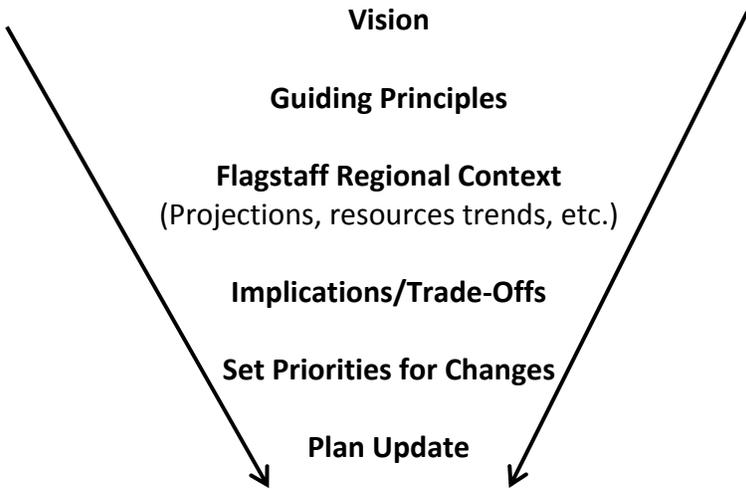
- Maps, tables, and text are structured so the City (and County) can use to update its Comprehensive Plan Circulation Element.
- The foundation for the Regional Transportation Plan was the existing regional plan. If major shifts in land use philosophy occurs during the update process, recommendations for changes to the Regional Transportation Plan will be included in the plan.

V. PROCESS

The CAC is currently spending its time receiving information from a variety of sources including public events, focus groups and expert presentations at committee meetings. Members raised concern that the information was not being synthesized adequately for the CAC to digest it effectively in order to ensure it gets included. Following is an illustration of the current planning process.



The CAC discussed the following revised framework that can assist in creating the plan update. Several of the items listed are already completed but others such as agreement to Guiding Principles are not yet completed. The above process outline has been effective for CAC work, if adequate time is allocated to thoroughly discuss the information being received.



VI. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The CAC discussed the following roles and responsibilities. However, the CAC did not complete a thorough discussion of all roles within the process and this topic may need to be revisited.

Coconino County

- Actively participate in the planning process.
- Ensure consistency in the outlying county areas that are within the regional plan area.
- Ensure consistency between the planning being done by the county and city.
- Ensure compatible growth patterns.

City of Flagstaff

- Provide staff support to the planning process (serve in the consultant role).
- Provide logistical support to the process.
- Monitor and facilitate the process to ensure the schedule is met.
- Provide expert guidance and technical support to the CAC discussions and work.
- Provide input to the CAC on how the current regional plan has performed and how it was used and implemented.
- Document the process, decisions made, input received, and track comments throughout the process. Present common themes and divergent viewpoints as the process unfolds.
- Present technical information and draft documents for CAC review, discussions, and approval.
- Provide policy level analysis and implications as well as the context for decision-making (i.e., future projections, resources issues, trends, etc.).

Citizens Advisory Committee

- Evaluate the existing plan and determine what needs to be changed and/or updated. Determine what in the existing plan has not worked.
- Identify what issues the CAC needs to know more about or what questions should be asked and answered that could assist the update process.
- Address the new state requirements for the plan.
- Implement the plan update process and engage the public.
- Identify and define future critical issues and develop policies to be implemented.
- Focus on the “big picture” policy issues on how the Flagstaff region will change over the long-term.
- Evaluate all policies to eliminate any contradictions and ensure that they work together to implement the vision or desired outcome.
- Ensure the development of a user-friendly plan that can be implemented.

- Develop a plan that will receive approval from the City of Flagstaff Council and Coconino County Board of Supervisors and be ratified by the voters in Flagstaff.
- Develop an implementation program to ensure accountability.

VII. CAC Organizational Issues

There are a number of organizational issues that still need to be addressed. There appears to be a difference of opinions among CAC members on how to actually create the plan update. Some suggested that the CAC be divided into work groups that take an element or group of elements at a time. This division could be based on a member's interest or expertise. The work group would conduct in-depth analysis of the information, review and discuss the public comments, draft the plan update language, and when complete present to the whole CAC for discussion.

Others felt that breaking into small groups was not the best approach and concern was raised on how the CAC would make decisions about the small groups' work when it was presented. Concerns were identified related to the consistency between the elements and policies if small groups were assigned to study and write various elements

Lastly, others felt that it was the CAC's responsibility to debate the issues, provide direction related to policy, and allow staff to craft text based on this input for the CAC to react to and finalize. Many felt that it was not effective to try and write the document by committee but to set the policy direction and ensure that the plan was reflective of that policy direction.

Following is a list of things that need to be addressed that will get the process moving forward more rapidly.

- Analyze the raw data/input collected to date. Provide more than a documentation of the information. Synthesis (but not filter) what the input means (e.g., common themes and divergent viewpoints).
- Develop a flow chart on how the various plans work together, the specifics of each, and how they are used.
- Provide an understanding of the various asset modeling - how it works and how it is used for decision-making (e.g., traffic model).
- Provide regional baseline socio-economic information and the future context in terms of projections, resource needs or gaps, and trends that might impact the region.
- Determine the relevancy of the policies and guidelines outlined in the current plan.

- Reformat the existing plan into the new outline. The CAC can review and determine if the outline makes sense or if it needs to be changed. This exercise might also assist in identifying priorities for updating.
- Develop a process to keep in touch with the community and to communicate how the input they provided was heard and is being used.
- Understand how to use social network tools to encourage more participation and ownership of the plan.
- Establish a stronger meeting protocol and manage meetings better. Set a meeting objective, provide more time for discussions of materials, and at the end of each meeting consider asking what the CAC need to do their job more effectively.
- Track decisions being made so time is not wasted revisiting topics already addressed and monitor unresolved issues to ensure that they don't fall through the cracks.

VIII. NEXT STEPS

The next two meetings are crucial for the process moving forward. Following are key topics for discussion at the upcoming CAC meetings. It was agreed that materials would need to be distributed ahead of the meeting and that all participants would come prepared for a robust discussion about the topics.

January 2010 Meeting

1. Review Reformatted Plan (existing document into new outline)
2. Presentation and Discussion of Contextual Information (10-year growth projections)
3. Development of Guiding Principles (review existing principles; discuss sustainability notes, vision exercise, and public comments on "what is your ideal community.")

February 2010 Meeting

1. Contextual Discussion (continued if needed)
2. Finalization of Guiding Principles
3. Set Priorities for Plan Update
4. Decide on Process and Schedule Going Forward

APPENDIX A ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Paul Babbitt, Chairman	Carol Bousquet, Vice Chair	Ben Anderson
Susan Bean	Michael Chaveas	Ken Kaemmerle
Jean Griego	Shaula Hedwall	Richard Henn
Maury Herman	Nat White	Devonna McLaughlin
Jerome Naleski	Eva Putzova	William Ring

Alternate Members

Judy Louks

Staff Members

John Aber	Tiffany Antol	Bob Caravona
Jim Cronk	Mark Ogonowski	Sue Pratt
Kimberly Sharp	Dave Wessel	

Facilitator

Peggy Fiandaca, Partners for Strategic Action, Inc.

APPENDIX B AGENDA

Regional Plan Citizen Advisory Committee

Date: December 10, 2009
Time: 3:00 – 7:00 pm
Location: Northern Arizona Healthcare Facility; Sycamore Room
Purpose: 2009 Retreat

1. Welcome and introductions
 - a. Accomplishments to Date
2. Regional Plan Update Process Review
 - a. Desired Outcome and Expectations
 - b. Plan Relationship to Other Planning Efforts
 - c. Process Review and Action Plan/Schedule
3. Roles and Responsibilities
 - a. Project Management
 - b. CAC Responsibilities
 - c. Staff Responsibilities
4. CAC Organizational Issues
 - a. Logistics – time, location, length, frequency
 - b. Format and Group Interaction/Dynamics
5. Engaging the Public
 - a. Our Approach to Date and Effectiveness
 - b. Engagement Process Moving Forward
6. Next steps
7. Adjourn