Executive Summary
Since July 2014, City staff and La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Association (LPVNA) have been collaborating to update the Specific Plan for La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood, originally drafted in 2012. This renewed effort included forming a new project team, regular meetings with the neighborhood association and public meetings to look at new information, issues, and potential directions for the plan. The team, which includes two members of LPVNA, has updated the Plan to align with the new Regional Plan, incorporate up-to-date public involvement, and better incorporate the partnership between the City and the neighborhood. Before the Plan goes to public hearings for adoption in Fall 2015, staff is seeking input from City Commissions on the Plan’s policies and implementation strategies. All recommendations gathered from City Commissions will be incorporated into the public hearing draft of the Specific Plan for La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood.

Recommended Action: Commission Discussion and Direction
1. Staff is requesting direction from the Parks and Recreation Commission on the Specific Plan’s parks related policies, specifically the items listed under Implementation Strategy 3.1: “Enhance Old Town Springs Park.” Staff would like to hear from the Commission on the following items:
   - Purchase and install a new flagpole and light fixture in order to permanently fly the American flag at Old Town Springs Park to commemorate the historic significance of the natural spring in Flagstaff’s history.
   - Address crowding at the Old Town Springs Park by installing a second porta-potty, indicating a limit on available on and off site parking in the Parks reservation system, and extending the red curb along Lower Coconino to further limit on-street parking.
   - Having the Old Town Springs Park designated as a first come first served facility in order to increase availability to nearby residents.
   - Comments on the Old Town Springs Master Plan draft proposed by staff.

2. A recommendation for Council to adopt the Specific Plan for La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood, including any changes the Commission may provide.
Public Driven Issues and Concerns
City staff received feedback from several neighborhood meetings, and many comments focused on the three public parks within the La Plaza Vieja’s boundaries. Staff heard the following concerns from the public over the course of the year’s public meetings:
1. The neighborhood’s history should be displayed at the parks with interpretive panels and plaques.
2. Park improvements should include decorative fencing and more seating using native stone.
3. The shrubs along Coconino Avenue at Old Town Springs Park are overgrown.
4. More parking is needed at the baseball field.
5. The display of the American flag is missed by neighborhood families, who used to raise the flag daily. The neighborhood has felt slighted that two other possible sites for the original Flagstaff Townsite have permanent flags on display, but Old Town Springs Park lost theirs when the City was not able to pay a volunteer to raise the flag on a daily basis.

The update of the Plan included a Historic Context Report of the La Plaza Vieja neighborhood. One of the report’s recommendations was to designate the spring at Old Town Springs Park as a nationally recognized Historic Landmark. City staff consulted with Larry Stevens from the Springs Stewardship Institute from the Museum of Northern Arizona on how to improve the condition of the spring, which has informed many of the Plan’s implementation strategies for improvements to Old Town Springs Park.

Coordination with Parks Staff
Parks and Streets staff has been involved in the update of the Specific Plan for La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood. Early revisions to the parks goals, policies, and implementation strategies were reviewed by Steve Zimmerman and Mike O’Connor. Steve and Mike provided early feedback on the feasibility of the Plan’s goals, and helped shape more specific implementation strategies for park improvements. They also were present at the Old Town Springs Park neighborhood meeting, where they were available to answer specific questions about maintenance and budget questions related to park improvements.

If you have questions, or require clarification on the contents of this memorandum, please contact Jennifer Mikelson, Associate Planner at jmikelson@flagstaffaz.gov.

Attachment A. Excerpt from the La Plaza Vieja Specific Plan – Chapter 3: Introduction to the Community Goals and Recommended Policies, and the relevant Goal #3 from Parks and Community Spaces
Attachment B. Excerpt from the La Plaza Vieja Specific Plan – Chapter 4: Introduction to the Implementation Strategies for Goal #3 and the relevant Implementation Strategies for Goal #3
Attachment C. Draft of the Old Town Springs Park Master Plan – August 4, 2015 version
Attachment D. Background information on Specific Plans and the Regional Plan
CHAPTER 3: NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS AND RECOMMENDED POLICIES

Goals and policies in the La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Specific Plan are area-specific ways of advancing the goals and policies of the Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 (FRP30). They are written broadly because they are intended to be viable for a 10- to 20-year planning horizon. During the next 20 years, physical, financial, political, and social environments may change, but the goals and policies should provide consistency in the path forward for reinvestment and revitalization in the Plan area La Plaza Vieja neighborhood.

The headings and names of the goals are for reference purposes only and should be disregarded in interpreting the language of the goals.

The Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 supports the neighborhood Vision Statement through Policy LU.10.3: Value the Traditional Neighborhoods established around Downtown by maintaining and improving their highly walkable character, transit accessibility, diverse mix of land uses, and historic building form.

PARKS AND COMMUNITY SPACES

GOAL #3: ENHANCE PARKS MAINTENANCE, DESIGN, AND CONNECTION

Ensure City parks in La Plaza Vieja provide safe, user-friendly, and interactive neighborhood spaces for gatherings and family activities.

Related FRP30 Goals: Goal REC.1: Maintain and grow the region’s healthy system of convenient and accessible parks, recreation facilities, and trails.

POLICY 3.1: Provide well-designed, attractive, safe, and accessible amenities and entrances at all neighborhood parks.

POLICY 3.2: Create opportunities for parks, especially Old Town Springs Park, to showcase La Plaza Vieja’s identity and natural and cultural history through the use of native landscaping, and the installation of public art and interpretive signs.

POLICY 3.2: If any public space or park amenity is displaced for future parcel reconfiguration, infrastructure or transportation need, then relocate the amenity to an appropriate area within the neighborhood.

GOAL #4: COMMUNITY GARDENS

The neighborhood desires a community garden with irrigation and composting that allows residents to participate as an affordable venue for education about health and local food systems.

Related FRP30 Goals: Policy NH.1.4: Foster points of activities, services, increased densities, and transit connections in urban and suburban neighborhoods. Policy NH 6.2: Use urban conservation tools to revitalize existing underutilized activity centers to their potential.
GOAL #5: COMMUNITY CENTERS AND SPACES

Provide publicly accessible meeting spaces throughout La Plaza Vieja for education and social events; and provide resources for local children, seniors, and local small businesses.

Related FRP30 Goals: Goal REC.1: Maintain and grow the region’s healthy system of convenient and accessible parks, recreation facilities, and trails.

**POLICY 5.1:** Create a community bulletin board in a park or other public space for advertising meetings and outreach efforts.

**POLICY 5.2:** LPVNA and the City support development of gathering spaces, such as a community center, meeting rooms, or plaza, that is available to the public in La Plaza Vieja.
CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation Strategies are designed to help effectuate the goals of the Plan, but they are not City policy like the content of Chapter 3. The strategies do not represent commitments of City staff or resources. Their purpose is to provide a complete and essential picture of how the City and LPVNA can reasonably achieve the goals and policies of the Plan. Having strategies as part of the Plan allows LPVNA and the City to build partnerships, apply for grant funding, and take advantage of opportunities that arise in the future in a well-coordinated way. Some of these strategies may never come to fruition because of issues such as lack of funding, timing, changed conditions, or lack of willing partners. Nevertheless, articulating these intended strategies clearly will allow for a more complete dialogue as reinvestment takes place. If a strategy listed in this chapter is infeasible at a future date, it does not need to be removed by Plan amendment.

For the prioritization of implementation strategies and potential means of funding them, see Appendix 1.

PARKS AND COMMUNITY SPACES

GOAL #3: ENHANCE PARKS MAINTENANCE, DESIGN, AND CONNECTION

Implementation Strategy 3.1: Enhance Old Town Springs Park (Many of these strategies are reflected in the Master Plan for Old Town Springs Park, which is a part of the Concept Plan in Chapter 2)

- Enhance the landscaping and signing on both sides of the park to provide an attractive entrance from either West Coconino Avenue or Lower Coconino Avenue. Maintain the existing sign at the north entrance to the park, which was built by neighborhood families.
- A new flagpole and American flag can be provided to mark the Old Town Spring as a significant historical site in Flagstaff. A small light can be installed at the top of the flagpole so that the flag can be flown permanently.
- Consider historically themed playground equipment when replacing equipment.
- Add a second porta-potty near the parking area to accommodate large parties that use the park’s ramada, and indicate a limit on available parking spaces (on and off-site).
- Consider having the Old Town Springs Park a first come, first served facility so that it is more available to the local families who fought to have the park created.
- Interpretive signs can be installed to highlight the historic importance of the site and spring in local history.
- The spring in the park could be set apart from the surrounding grass and restored ecologically to some extent by improved drainage features and the introduction of native spring vegetation. Irrigation would be needed for establishment of new plants.
- Incorporate native stone seating areas and low-profile decorative walls to better delineate the spring and extend the gathering space.
- Install commemorative plaques for each of the pine trees planted by neighborhood families along Coconino Avenue.
- Replace the overgrown vegetation with slope tolerant northern Arizona deciduous trees and cut back the overgrown juniper trees along the northern slope of the park so that the view of the pine trees above is improved.
• Add a decorative bicycle rack and new park lights to ensure pedestrian safety and access.

Implementation Strategy 3.2: Enhance Clay Avenue Park
• Install dark-sky friendly lighting for evening games.
• Pave and stripe parking lot to provide accessible and efficient parking.

Implementation Strategy 3.3: Enhance Plaza Vieja Park
• Incorporate a low ornamental wall that provides seating and separates the park from the traffic on Clay Avenue.
• Replace some of the blue rug junipers with northern Arizona perennials. Irrigation would be needed for establishment of new plants.
• Coordinate with the Beautification and Public Art Commission to provide public art opportunities that are historically and culturally relevant to La Plaza Vieja.
• Provide picnic tables for gatherings.

GOAL #4: COMMUNITY GARDENS

Implementation Strategy 4.1: Provide City program support to sustain a community garden on the Natural Grocers property at Clay Avenue and South Milton Road.

Implementation Strategy 4.2: LPVNA will help the City recruit and retain gardeners for the community garden and build a partnership with the local school to provide youth education on food systems.

GOAL #5: COMMUNITY CENTERS AND SPACES

Implementation Strategy 5.1: Look for opportunities to provide common areas that are open to all La Plaza Vieja residents such as greenways and plazas.

Implementation Strategy 5.2: Actively research development opportunities as a stand-alone project or part of a broader redevelopment project to establish a community center within La Plaza Vieja. LPVNA could assist with efforts by establishing a business plan and exploring options and potential development partnerships.
Background

*What is a specific plan and what are the procedural requirements?*

A neighborhood plan is a specific plan, which bridges the strategic goals and policies in FRP30 and the site specific guidelines and standards of the City Codes (i.e. Zoning, Engineering, etc.). Its role in the development review process is similar to the Regional Plan. The Specific Plan will only apply in discretionary decisions and does not impact existing entitlements.

However, the Plan is also a vision for compatible reinvestment, and therefore will be available as a tool for all developments within the plan boundaries to preserve and enhance the neighborhood character.

The City Code Title 11-10.30 (Specific Plans) states, “The purpose of a Specific Plan is to provide a greater level of detail for a specific geographic area or element of the General Plan, and to provide standards for the systematic implementation of the General Plan.” This title lays out the requirements for the content of a specific plan and the procedures to be followed in its adoption. The content presented today has undergone legal review to determine that it meets all of these requirements.

*How does it support the Regional Plan?*

The Specific Plan for the La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood supports the Regional Plan by prioritizing policies for a complex area of the city. Every goal in the Specific Plan is designed to make progress toward in one or several Regional Plan goals and policies.