

NEIGHBORHOODS, HOUSING, & URBAN CONSERVATION



Neighborhoods are the backbone of every community. These are the places where people live, play, go to school, work, and interact. Central to Flagstaff’s urban neighborhoods is a pedestrian experience interconnecting businesses, homes, schools, places of worship, transit, and parks in a compact, walkable land use pattern. The City and County suburban neighborhoods encompass typical residential development with larger homes and yards primarily accessed by the automobile. The County’s rural neighborhoods are more typically low-density “ranchettes” with barns, animals, and open space. An important part of this Plan is to address the housing options available to our current residents, as well as looking to the future to make sure that the right housing options are available as our population grows and changes. This chapter addresses the need for quality, affordable housing for our residents, while also focusing on neighborhood conservation and revitalization efforts that contribute to our unique community character and sense of place. *Refer to Chapter IX – Growth Areas & Land Use for further discussion of gentrification issues in existing neighborhoods.*

Inside this Chapter:

Our Housing Needs	XIII-2
Managing Our Needs	XIII-3
Neighborhood and Urban Conservation	XIII-7



Photo by: H.R. Buchan



Photo by: Stephanie Manning

Our Vision for the Future

In 2030, we continue to build and improve healthy and diverse neighborhoods, while maintaining affordability and connectivity to the greater region.

Our Housing Needs

Some of the community's favorite urban neighborhoods to emulate in future development and redevelopment include the historic Townsite, Downtown, Southside, North End, and Coconino Estates. These neighborhoods exhibit timeless qualities of mature street trees, front porches, and active neighbors.

- 2010 Community Values Survey



Photo by: G. Clayton

As a community priority, creating more housing and neighborhood diversity is paramount to a resilient Flagstaff. The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* identifies existing and potential “activity centers” through which to cultivate walkable neighborhoods, efficient transit connections, and economic opportunities. These are considered appropriate locations for sensitively designed, higher-density residential and mixed-use development, either as infill or as redevelopment.

The City of Flagstaff federally funded housing program functions under a five-year consolidated plan and an annual update with investment strategies specific to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds. The FY 2011-2015 HUD Consolidated Plan contains a description of community needs, goals, and priorities in the areas of affordable housing, human services, public facilities, and other programs designed to improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents of the community. This chapter of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* is intended to provide long-term guidance for meeting the region's housing needs for all economic sectors, and works in concert with Flagstaff's consolidated plan.

Several elements of the housing market impact supply and demand, including the variety (types of housing that are available), quality (most often defined by age, unit value, and whether the unit has complete plumbing or kitchen facilities); affordability (defined by the percentage of household income that must be spent for housing costs); and other factors including population growth, income, and household size and makeup.

Everyone should have a chance to go to a safe home after a day at school or work, so housing, as an element of community infrastructure, needs to be available to all segments of our population. A complete range of choices is necessary within a community, from homeless housing to rental units to home ownership. The housing choices should be tailored to meet the demographic needs of our particular community. For example, if our population is 25 to 30 percent students, our housing market should be similarly structured to meet that demand.

The housing policies presented in this chapter focus on providing safe, decent housing for the well-being of individuals, households, and the community as a whole.

Managing Our Needs

Flagstaff's growing population will require an increased emphasis on housing choices in the future. The region's housing framework can be defined by:

- A limited supply of land for development
- Approximately 40 percent of Flagstaff's households are by definition low- to moderate-income (City of Flagstaff FY 2011-2015 HUD Consolidated Plan)
- Flagstaff is experiencing a consistent but modest rate of population growth
- Student populations at Northern Arizona University (NAU) will continue to grow
- Housing needs for the elderly, multigenerational families, and downsizing will increase over the next several decades as the Baby Boom generation moves into the retirement years.

As a tourist-driven university mountain town with seasonal weather, housing in the Flagstaff region has a higher cost and value than comparable housing in other Arizona communities. According to the Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, the local housing cost is 37.4 percent higher than the national average. Land identified for residential development is both privately and publicly held (i.e., State Trust lands). Future housing needs will focus on revitalization, infill, and preservation opportunities, yet new neighborhood development is possible.

Population Growth

Population trends are important indicators of future housing needs. Local growing population sectors include the elderly, students, single-parent households, and nonfamily households. These community members need a variety of housing options within close proximity of jobs, schools, and play.

NAU students currently make up approximately 25 percent of our population, and their continued demand for student housing impacts cost and availability of housing in the region, resulting in a higher demand for multi-family housing, or housing affordable for single-incomes or multiple low incomes (students). Housing developments catering specifically to NAU students may also have negative impacts on existing neighborhoods, especially those closest to the university campus. These impacts include for example, parking and noise concerns, and the need to ensure new student housing projects are appropriately designed and situated with regard to neighborhood character and scale. It is, therefore, important to continue to foster close work relations with the university, and to adopt and implement appropriate tools and programs to mitigate these impacts.

Helpful Terms

“Revitalization” is to repair what is already in place, adding new vigor by remodeling and preserving.

“Redevelopment” is when new development replaces outdated and underutilized development.

“Infill” occurs when new buildings are built on vacant parcels within city service boundaries and surrounded by existing development.

“Preservation” is an endeavor that seeks to preserve, conserve, and protect buildings, objects, landscapes, or other artifacts of historical significance.

“Adaptive Re-use” is fixing up and remodeling a building or space, adapting the building or space to fit a new use.

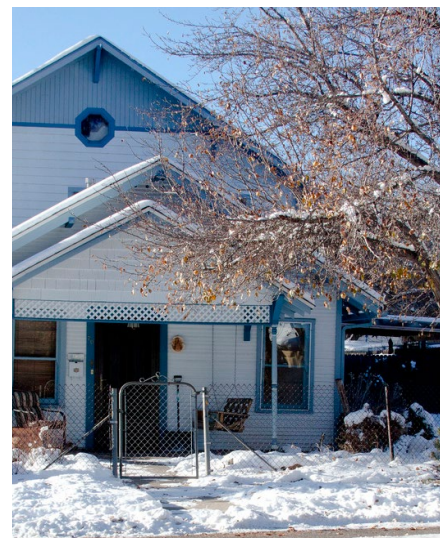
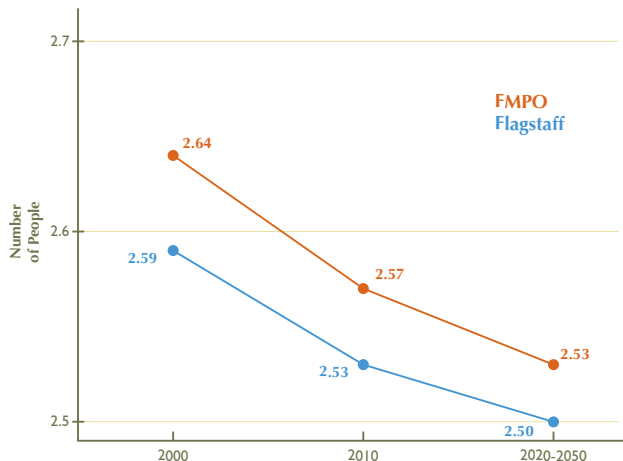


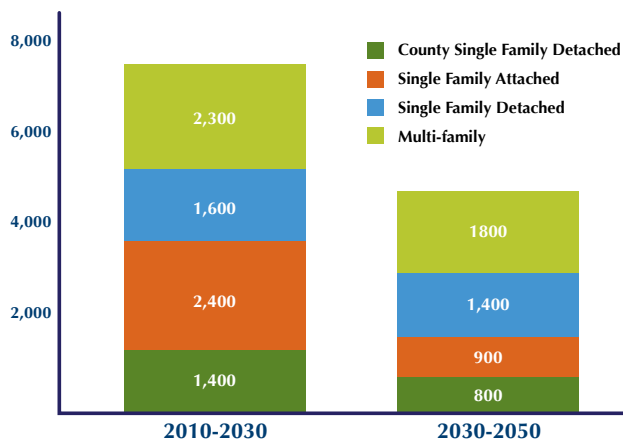
Photo by: Stephanie Manning

Average Household Size



SOURCE: 2010 U.S. Census Bureau and projections interpolated from <http://www.azstats.gov/population-projections.aspx>

New Dwelling Units Projected by Type and Period



SOURCE: Flagstaff Regional Plan Core Planning Team

Affordability

Government programs define “cost burden” as paying more than 30 percent of gross household income for total housing cost (in rent or mortgage, and utilities). People paying more than that have little remaining to pay for the essentials – clothing, food, transportation, and child care. Higher income households may choose to pay more for housing.

In Flagstaff, the housing cost burden is realized especially by the lowest paid residents, with nearly a fifth of households making less than \$20,000 per year and paying 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs.

“This is a neighborhood, with schools, a baseball field, and a fire station. It is possible and safe, as safe as anywhere, to walk to the store to buy real farmers’ market produce and freshly baked bread. The liquor store four blocks away is locally owned and operated, as is the coffee shop, and the people who own them also work in them.”

- Roxanne George, “The View from Here: Contemporary Essays by Flagstaff Authors”

Monthly Housing Costs by Percentage of Household Income

Income	Percent Paying 30 Percent or More
Less than \$20,000	19.6%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	14.5%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	7.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	3.5%
\$75,000 or more	2.1%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Values Survey 1-Year Estimates; these numbers include university students

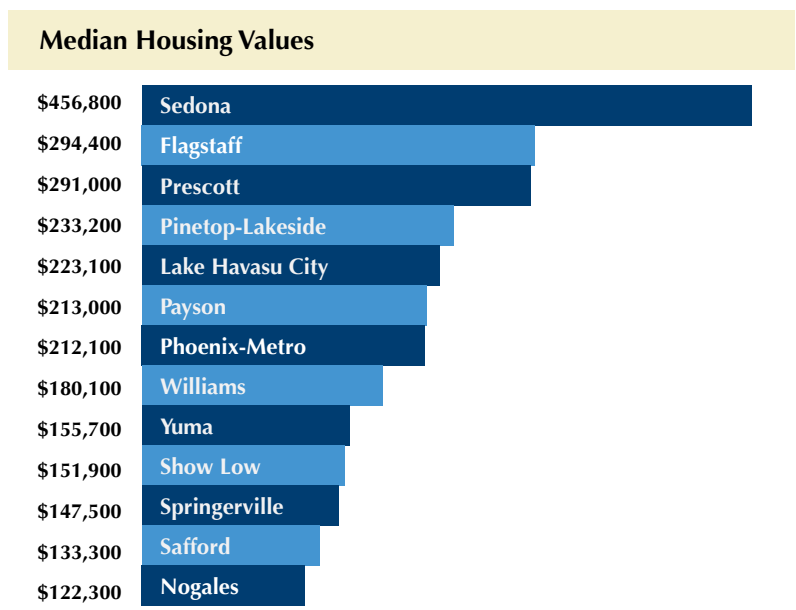
As an economic development factor, housing plays an important part in major employer and workforce location decisions. Flagstaff renters versus homeowners are about 50/50, which is typical of a university mountain town. Both rental values and median housing values in Flagstaff are higher than average for the state of Arizona. HUD annually estimates Fair Market Rents (FMR) for 530 metropolitan areas and 2,045 non-metropolitan County FMR areas. FMR is primarily used to determine payment standard amounts for several HUD rental programs and are gross rent estimates. They include the shelter rent plus the cost of all tenant-paid utilities, except telephones, cable or satellite television service, and internet service. HUD uses the most accurate and current data available to develop the FMR estimates.

The Flagstaff MSA has the highest FMRs in the state, reflective of the high rental costs in the community. In addition, median home prices are the second highest in the state.

The City of Flagstaff Housing Section provides Landlord Tenant Act and Fair Housing Act education and referral information. In addition, every five years, the City completes an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, a document that analyzes housing conditions within the City and establishes goals to help reduce the impediments.

Average Two-Bedroom Rental Rate for Arizona Metropolitan Areas - FY 2013	
Flagstaff	\$1,066
Lake Havasu City - Kingman	\$769
Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale	\$925
Prescott	\$819
Tucson	\$876
Yuma	\$780

SOURCE: HUD Final FY 2013 Fair Market Rent Documentation System - www.huduser.org



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey



Photo credit: City of Flagstaff

Housing Continuum

People in the Flagstaff region live in diverse conditions. The graphic below illustrates where our residents live, as a “continuum,” meaning that there is a progression of housing options, and everyone who lives here is somewhere along this line.



By state statute, this Plan lists all existing programs in the area that assist in making our neighborhoods cleaner and safer. Several neighborhood safety and social programs are in place to promote home ownership, provide assistance for improving the appearance of neighborhoods, promote maintenance of both commercial and residential buildings in neighborhoods, and provide the safety and security of neighborhoods. These programs are operated by Coconino County Health Services, Flagstaff United School District, the Police Block Watch Program, the City’s Sustainability Program’s community gardens, and Community Design’s beautification community grants, all of which are means to successful neighborhood preservation and revitalization efforts.

One critical success factor for the community is the systematic coordination of services. The vision is that someone may enter services at whatever point they require along the housing continuum and, at the appropriate pace and under their own volition, have access to, and an understanding of, the supports designed to move them from their point of entry through to self-sufficiency or the highest appropriate and attainable level.

Examples include:

Elimination of sub-standard units

- City of Flagstaff Housing Program
- Coconino County Housing Rehabilitation Services and CREC
- Rebuilding Together
- BOTHHANDS Acquisition-Rehabilitation Program
- NACOG Housing Rehabilitation Program
- Churches
- Code Enforcement [Zoning, Building, Fire, Environmental, Stormwater]

Improvement to housing quality, variety, and affordability

Quality

- Programs above (for elimination of sub-standard dwelling units)
- Design guidelines

- Market demands

Variety

- Market demand
- Zoning which allows for and encourages mixed-income housing and mixed-use buildings

Affordability

Homeless:

- Flagstaff Shelter Services
- Sunshine Rescue Mission
- Hope Cottage
- Open Inn
- Alternative Center
- Northland Family Help Center and HALO House
- Sharon Manor
- Catholic Charities Family Shelter
- Catholic Charities
- The Guidance Center
- PATH Day Program and Outreach
- Coconino County Community Services
- Faith-based

Supportive and Transitional:

- Catholic Charities – Cedar Rose
- Sharon Manor
- Sunshine Rescue Mission
- The Guidance Center – Intake Triage Unit
- The Hozhoni Foundation, Inc.
- The Alternatives Center for Family-Based Services

Rental:

- Market Rate
- City of Flagstaff Housing Authority
 - » Section 8 Vouchers
 - » Public Housing
- Flagstaff Housing Corporation
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit Projects (Timber Trails, Pinehurst, Mountain Side Village)
- Municipally subsidized or supported
- NAU
- Private Developers
- Hozhoni and other Group Home providers
- Eviction Prevention
 - » Coconino County Community Services
 - » St. Vincent De Paul
 - » Catholic Charities

Home Ownership:

- Market Rate
- Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance
 - » BOTHHANDS
 - » NACOG
 - » Individual Development Accounts
- BOTHHANDS Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity of Northern Arizona
- Youth Build
- City of Flagstaff Ownership Programs
- Private Developers
- Foreclosure Assistance
 - » BOTHHANDS – Counseling
 - » Coconino County Community Services-Prevention

Provision of adequate sites for housing

- Designated Regional Plan Land Use categories for residential, density and intensity
- Appropriate and adequate zoning for residential and mixed-use
- Function of market
- Public lands

Improve appearance of buildings

- Historic Preservation – guidelines and incentives
- City of Flagstaff Façade Improvement Program (historic commercial buildings)
- HOA’s
- Market demands and neighborhood pressure
- Code enforcement
- Owner-occupied Housing Rehabilitation Program

Neighborhood and Urban Conservation

Community conservation, rehabilitation, redevelopment, and preservation efforts all support the goal of preserving our sense of place. Most people cherish certain things about their neighborhood, but everyone has issues they would like to change to make their home, neighborhood, and local community more appealing, feel safer, and in cases of commercial areas, attract more businesses and allow local businesses to thrive. These goals take effort and investment, and do not just “happen.”

Current efforts in neighborhood conservation and rehabilitation have focused on commercial areas where business opportunities are prime, such as along Milton Road and Butler Avenue. Fourth Street has seen planning for corridor improvements, and Community Development Block Grant funds for housing repair and affordability, while used throughout the City limits, are often spent in the historic neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Southside, and La Plaza Vieja. Rehabilitation efforts focusing on residential energy efficiency prove worthwhile in this climate, and have been significant investment in the past five years.

Although “enhancing neighborhoods” appears as a good overall objective and fosters pride of place, it also raises concerns of gentrification and affordability. While many Flagstaff neighborhoods will experience change over time, existing neighborhood values and character, as well as cultural diversity, should be considered during the redevelopment process. Efforts to stabilize certain neighborhoods during redevelopment may also be necessary. One example of this balancing act will be the Southside neighborhood after the Rio de Flag flood control project is complete. With the threat of potential flooding eliminated, the neighborhood will be ripe for redevelopment and infill development that could push out its long-time residents and businesses. In an effort to manage potential transformation and preservation, the neighborhood created *The Southside 2005 Plan* to guide its future.

Neighborhood plans and County area plans address a defined neighborhood or area of the City or County. These are developed with the involvement of residents and serve as an amendment to the City or County general comprehensive plan, identifying challenges, opportunities, and the vision for that particular neighborhood. Adopted City of Flagstaff neighborhood plans include *The Southside 2005 Plan* and *La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Plan*. Adopted area plans for communities within the Coconino County region include Kachina Village, Fort Valley, Bellemont, Doney Park, Timberline-Fernwood, and Mountaineer¹.

Urban conservation is the revitalization, remodeling and fixing-up of homes, streets, blocks, or neighborhoods. Urban conservation is a way to add new vigor to an under-served neighborhood with investment, jobs, and opportunities for residents. Urban conservation is accomplished by rehabilitation of buildings, streets, and public spaces; redevelopment of underutilized and dilapidated sites; as well as infill on vacant lots with sensitive buildings. Design solutions that are context-sensitive restore a sense of walkability using human-scale buildings, roads, and signage, and respect the culture of the neighborhood in which conservation efforts are made.

“What is a Neighborhood?”

The concept of neighborhood includes both geographic (place-oriented) and social (people-oriented) components. Neighborhoods are the backbone of every community - where people live, play, go to school, interact with their neighbors, and work. Flagstaff’s diversity and vitality are all rooted in its neighborhoods, some historical and some new. When citizens become active members of their neighborhood, or a neighborhood association forms and neighbors work together - many great things can happen!

¹<http://www.coconino.az.gov/comdev.aspx?id=21698>
to access all Coconino County Area Plans

Policies presented in this chapter support addressing the following key challenges and opportunities for the future:

Need for diversity

- Fostering mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods with a range of housing and transportation choices, in which our diverse population can afford to live.
- Recognizing multi-generational housing as a growing sector, fulfilling the needs of both the younger and older generations.

Community challenges

- Balancing new development and redevelopment in lower-income and historic neighborhoods, while maintaining the essential character of those neighborhoods.
- Creating community buy-in for higher density housing development and redevelopment within the City to provide more affordable housing choices.
- Addressing the region's need for affordable housing to make community sustainability and economic development work.
- Ensuring that rentals do not suffer from under-maintenance.

Planning outside City limits

- Addressing housing growth at the periphery and outside city limits; responding by planning for how people get to work and school from these residential neighborhoods, as well as affordable housing and maintained rental concerns.

Who provides housing

- Ensuring that the community provides affordable housing as a comprehensive solution.
- Recognizing that the private sector builds the majority of all housing in the community.

Housing for non-market residents

- Providing affordable housing options to special needs populations.
- Addressing the needs for the homeless and those who are at risk of becoming homeless.
- Providing housing to individuals who have been incarcerated.
- Addressing the housing needs of students in our community.
- Addressing the external market demand for housing in our community, which drives prices higher than our local wages can support.
- Helping reach and bridge the transition from non-market to market housing.



Goal NH.1. Foster and maintain healthy and diverse urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods in the Flagstaff region.

Policy NH.1.1. Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods.

Policy NH.1.2. Respect traditions, identifiable styles, proportions, streetscapes, relationships between buildings, yards, and roadways; and use historically appropriate and compatible building and structural materials when making changes to existing neighborhoods, especially in historic neighborhoods.

Policy NH.1.3. Interconnect existing and new neighborhoods through patterns of development, with complete streets, sidewalks, and trails.

Policy NH.1.4. Foster points of activities, services, increased densities, and transit connections in urban and suburban neighborhoods.

Policy NH.1.5. Use traditional neighborhood design standards for new and revitalized urban neighborhoods, neighborhood plans, specific plans, or master plans.

Policy NH.1.6. New development, especially on the periphery, will contribute to completing neighborhoods, including interconnecting with other neighborhoods; providing parks, civic spaces, and a variety of housing types; and protecting sensitive natural and cultural features.

Policy NH.1.7. Develop appropriate programs and tools to ensure the appropriate placement, design, and operation of new student housing developments consistent with neighborhood character and scale.

Policy NH.1.8. Prioritize the stabilization of a neighborhood’s identity and maintain cultural diversity as new development occurs.

Goal NH.2. Look to downtown Flagstaff as the primary focal point of the community character.

Refer to the Downtown goals and policies in Chapter IX - Growth Areas & Land Use

Policy NH.2.1. Encourage the rehabilitation of historic downtown structures and contextual new structures as office, retail, entertainment, and residential space to reinvigorate the area as a destination of culture, shopping, government, and the arts.

Policy NH.2.2. Plan for future downtown development and contiguous development that respects the established historic core, historical architecture, and urban design.

Policy NH.2.3. Continue the tradition of multi-story, multi-use buildings to maintain and increase a stable, mixed-income residential population when planning new structures in the downtown and Southside neighborhoods.

Goal NH.3. Make available a variety of housing types at different price points, to provide housing opportunity for all economic sectors.

Policy NH.3.1. Provide a variety of housing types throughout the City and region, including purchase and rental options, to expand the choices available to meet the financial and lifestyle needs of our diverse population.

Policy NH.3.2. Promote accessory dwelling units, where appropriate.

Policy NH.3.3. Increase the availability of affordable housing for very low-income persons, through innovative and effective funding mechanisms.

Policy NH.3.4. Reuse former brownfields, vacant buildings, and commercial buildings to provide new mixed-use and/or housing options.

Policy NH.3.5. Encourage and incentivize affordable housing.

Goal NH.4. All housing is safe and sanitary.

Policy NH.4.1. Expand the availability of affordable housing throughout the region by preserving existing housing, including housing for very low-income persons.

Policy NH.4.2. Reduce substandard housing units by conserving and rehabilitating existing housing stock to minimize impacts on existing residents.

Policy NH.4.3. Address accessibility issues and other housing barriers to persons with disabilities or special needs.

Policy NH.4.4. Encourage green practices in housing construction and rehabilitation that support durable, healthy, and energy-efficient homes.

Policy NH.4.5. Renovate the existing housing stock to conserve energy and reduce utility and maintenance costs for owners and occupants.

Policy NH.4.6. Consider and integrate public transportation when possible in planning housing developments, to help reduce a household's transportation costs and minimize impact on the community's roads and transportation system.

Policy NH.4.7. Enforce compliance with fair housing laws.

Goal NH.5. Eliminate homelessness.

Policy NH.5.1. Provide adequate resources for families with children experiencing homelessness.

Policy NH.5.2. Provide adequate resources for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Policy NH.5.3. Support and expand programs that prevent homelessness.

Policy NH.5.4. Make transitional housing resources available to populations experiencing homelessness.

Goal NH.6. Neighborhood conservation efforts of revitalization, redevelopment, and infill are compatible with and enhance our overall community character.

Policy NH.6.1. Promote quality redevelopment and infill projects that are contextual with surrounding neighborhoods. When planning for redevelopment, the needs of existing residents should be addressed as early as possible in the development process.

Policy NH 6.2. Use urban conservation tools to revitalize existing underutilized activity centers to their potential.