

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

Federal Lobbying Packet





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Rio de Flag Flood Control Project

PROJECT INFORMATION

The City of Flagstaff, Arizona is impacted by the 100-year flood plain of the Rio de Flag (RDF) drainage, which covers large portions of the downtown business district and historic neighborhoods. In addition to the community health and safety risk, a significant flood event would damage approximately 1,500 structures valued at over \$916 million and cause \$93 million in economic damages, for a total impact of over \$1 billion (Army Corps 2008 estimates). In addition to flood damage reduction, other benefits include elimination of mandatory flood insurance and restrictive floodplain management regulations.

The cooperative Army Corps/City RDF Project proposes to contain the 100-year flood event through construction of 2.9 miles of underground and open channel improvements through central Flagstaff and construction of a 72-acre detention basin, which has been completed. Construction of the channel improvements will require relocation of utilities, reconstruction of street improvements, construction of bridges, environmental remediation, and property acquisition.

The Project was originally authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 for \$24 million and subsequently reauthorized in 2007 for \$54 million. On December 10, 2016, the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act for the Nation reauthorized the project for \$102.9M. The current cost estimate is approximately \$122.3 million. This represents five times the original authorization of \$24 million in 2000 and more than double the cost estimate in the 2007 reauthorization. The Army Corps has spent \$28 million to date (includes project design, construction of the Clay Avenue Wash Detention Basin and Butler Tunnel and staff administration) and the City of Flagstaff has spent \$36 million (includes project design, construction of the Thorpe Bridge, real estate acquisition, full City project cost share and cash contribution, public involvement, environmental clearance, and staff administration).

There have been several significant project elements completed to date, including the 72-acre Clay Avenue Wash Detention Basin (\$6.4 million, completed in July 2014), the Butler Avenue Tunnel (\$3.6 million, completed in September 2010), and the Thorpe Road Bridge (\$2.7 million, completed in November 2012). The final design for the main stem improvements is currently at 100% final draft, nearing completion.

In February 2020, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded the final \$52 million in federal funding through its annual work plan to complete the Rio de Flag Flood Control Project. The City has been working with BNSF Railway (BNSF) on mitigation measures for the project undercrossing and with the Army Corps on design completion and approval to proceed with the real estate acquisition. A construction contract award is anticipated for early 2025, contingent on real estate and project agreement execution with BNSF. Resolution of these issues is our highest priority for the Project to move forward.



BNSF RAILWAY

A large portion of the Lower Reach section of the project is located on BNSF property and its main line track has the potential to experience flooding and impact rail operations. BNSF has reviewed the RDF engineering plans to determine the impacts to their property and operations due to the project construction.

BNSF is currently developing plans for its future third main line track through the region. This additional track will provide expanded operations and economic opportunity for BNSF. Aside from the critical RDF, the City has several other local projects planned and funded along the main line that provide grade-separated crossings, including a large overpass over the rail corridor and a pedestrian tunnel under the corridor in an active trespassing area. All of the City's local projects will improve rail safety and reduce vehicle traffic at other existing at-grade crossings and are designed to provide benefit to BNSF operations and facilitate construction of its third main line track through town. Delivery of the RDF and these local projects in conjunction with the construction of BNSF's third main rail is an ideal partnership opportunity for realizing our agencies' collective goals: economic growth for both the City and for BNSF, protection from flooding, and increased rail safety. In 2024, the City will continue to work with BNSF to finalize a Construction and Maintenance Agreement (CMA) to prioritize the construction of the RDF. The CMA is a crucial requirement for constructing Phase I in 2025 and the future viability of the project depends on timely completion of this agreement.

There was a significant development this past year that removed some obstacles for construction of the Rio de Flag. This was the successful partnering between the City and BNSF for a USDOT INFRA grant. The City was notified in September 2022 that we were awarded \$32,460,000 in federal infrastructure funding for construction of our Downtown Mile Safety and Connectivity Project. The City match is \$12,840,000 and BNSF's match is \$11,000,000, for a total project cost of \$56,300,000. While the grant does not provide funding directly to the Rio de Flag project, the Downtown Mile rail relocation does include is a critical component to phasing the construction of the Rio under the BNSF mainline rail corridor. This has been a long-standing unresolved issue that was championed by many in Washington, which we are very appreciative of.

The City has also submitted a Fiscal Year 2025 federal appropriations request to fund the local Amtrak Station improvements (through the CRISI program) that complement the Downtown Mile scope which benefits constructability of the Rio de Flag. This appropriation is critical for providing safe operations between passenger and freight rail traffic through our congested downtown area and we appreciate support for this request.

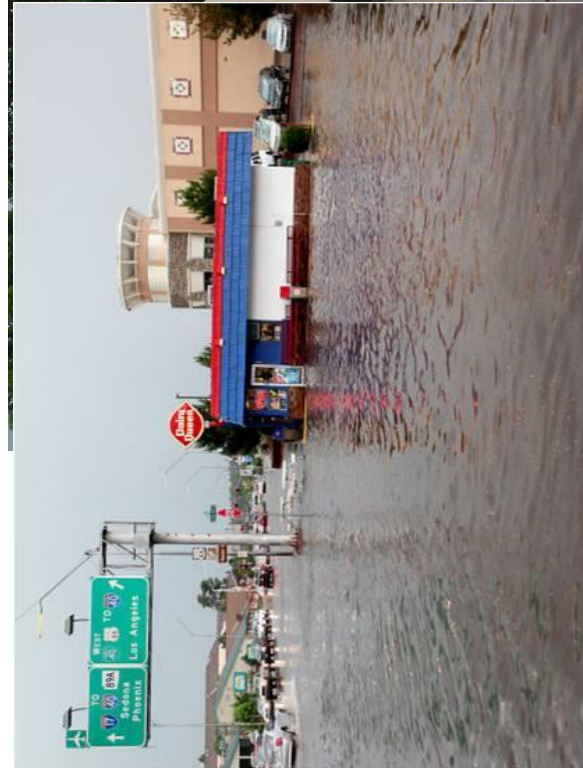
ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

In 2023, the City worked with Corps staff to refine the project design and develop the real estate documents required for acquisition of the property in Phase I of the project (Lower Reach and Clay Wash Reach). The City continues to move forward with appraisals and offers to purchase the

property necessary for construction of Phase I. The final Army Corps plan review and approval is anticipated for Summer 2024. Bid Document advertisement is scheduled for late 2024.

REQUEST

- Encourage BNSF’s continued participation in expediting a reasonable and cost-effective solution for the Army Corps and City to deliver the RDF Project with focus on approving the Construction and Maintenance Agreement for Phase I of the project.
- Encourage BNSF to cooperate in the investigation of cost-sharing and reduction of cost on its mitigation requirements for construction of the RDF Project and other locally planned projects which benefit BNSF’s third main line construction.
- Encourage the Corps to continue its commitment to safeguard the current project funding until a construction contract can be awarded.



Flagstaff, AZ – July 2, 2013



Community Wildfire Risk Reduction and Forest Health

Flagstaff, Arizona is surrounded by the largest continuous ponderosa pine forest in the world. It is flanked by sacred peaks and canyons. The ponderosa pine forests of northern Arizona have existed for thousands of years and evolved to benefit from frequent fires ignited by both seasonal monsoonal weather patterns and cultural burning practices. Unfortunately, more than a century of fire suppression-based management has left the forest in an altered condition. These changes threaten Flagstaff's natural resources, economy, infrastructure, and quality of life, which negatively impact recreation and tourism-based economies.

The threats and preventive solutions are complicated but well understood. Restoring the forest to its natural, fire adapted pattern can mitigate unnatural wildfire threats. Long term forest restoration strategies will also stabilize and enhance carbon storage. Collaborative efforts that involve agencies, communities and stakeholders are required to advance risk reduction projects.

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In 1997, the City of Flagstaff established a Wildland Fire Management Program (WFM) to address wildfire risks within City limits. The current mission of WFM is to increase and maintain wildfire resilience for the City of Flagstaff, Summit Fire & Medical District, and priority watersheds. Our vision is a community where Flagstaff thrives due to the WFM's unique skills, knowledge, and abilities within Wildland Fire Operations, Forest Management, Firewise Development, and Wildland Urban Interface Code Enforcement. This program has evolved to include multi-jurisdictional fire management and forest health partnerships.



In November 2012, residents of Flagstaff overwhelmingly approved a \$10 million bond to support forest restoration work within key watersheds on the Coconino National Forest and on State and City lands. The Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP), led by the Wildland Fire Management Program, is a unique effort where forest restoration work on the National Forests is being funded by a municipality. This \$10M investment is designed to mitigate between \$751 million and \$1.6 billion in future costs.

During the summer of 2020, the City of Flagstaff developed an innovative way to further invest in the prevention of undesirable wildfire impacts. The Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection fee is now included on City of Flagstaff water services monthly bills. This investment will support the Flagstaff Fire Department's Wildland Fire Management Program's ability to protect Flagstaff and its priority watersheds from the effects of catastrophic wildfire. A fee of \$0.52 per 1000 gallons of water used will provide a reliable and stable source of funding (\$1.3MM annually) for the Wildland Fire Management Program.



REQUEST

The City of Flagstaff is requesting continued commitment to fund and staff local efforts that are aligned with the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy:

- Resilient Landscapes – Landscapes, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries are resilient to fire, insect, disease, invasive species, and climate change disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.
- Fire Adapted Communities – Human populations and infrastructure are as prepared as possible to receive, respond to, and recover from wildland fire.
- Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response – All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

Flagstaff Fire Department’s Wildland Fire Management Station

- Estimated Cost: \$2.5MM
- As the capacity and intent of the WFM program has evolved to meet the current wildfire crisis, so has the need for a new Wildland Fire Station. To provide a level of service that is aligned with a year-round wildfire risk, the WFM program staffing structure has changed from 2-4 permanent year-round staff with 10-12 seasonal employees, to 8 highly skilled and qualified permanent year-round staff.
- The WFM program has been located at the same Station since 1997. This location worked well with the seasonal staff focused response model. A modern facility that can appropriately support the staff and apparatus needs of the current program is an important public safety priority for the City of Flagstaff and will increase the level of service provided by the WFM program.

Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project – Collaborative Prescribed Fire Training

- Estimated Cost: \$375K (5 annual training events, target = 5,000 acres)
- Collaborative programs like the National Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (NIPFTC) and Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges (TRES) create fire operations and



management training opportunities for fire fighters while achieving multiple organizations prescribed fire targets. Collaborative burning events are designed to bring together 10-30 career structure and wildland fire fighters for two weeks of focused prescribed fire treatments, training, and outreach. All efforts are designed to accomplish objectives within the 2020 Arizona Forest Action Plan, the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy, 2023 Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, USDA Wildfire Crisis Implementation Plan, and the prescribed fire targets of the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project and Four Forest Restoration Initiative.

- Effective wildfire response and collaborative fuel management efforts that involve agencies, communities and stakeholders have proven successful at advancing wildfire risk reduction projects across Arizona. No one person, agency or organization can do this alone.

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION PRIORITIES

The City of Flagstaff recognizes that, in addition to specific project funding, larger scale legislative efforts are critical to healthy forest management and fire adapted communities. Specifically, the City urges its Congressional delegation to:

- Increase federal investments in the collaborative efforts associated with the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project and the Four Forest Restoration Initiative.
- Protect and enhance the local authority that allows National Forest Line Officers to manage wildfires that meet forest plan objectives. Wildfire is a natural process in Arizona's coniferous forests and is a safe, cost effective and ecologically appropriate way maintain healthy forest conditions.
- Support the comprehensive implementation of all the recommendations within the two reports submitted to Congress by the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. Selected priorities:
 - Increase wages and benefits for the federal wildland fire workforce. A robust and well qualified federal wildland fire workforce is a vital public safety component of the Flagstaff community, and many other communities also surrounded by federal lands. There is a critical need to retain existing federal wildland firefighters and low pay can make this retention difficult. It also incentivizes personnel to work unsustainable levels of overtime. A permanent solution is essential to retaining the workforce we have and recruiting the workforce we need. Critical changes to the pay and benefits system are needed to create a healthy, sustainable workforce. See Recommendation 84 on page 164 in Chapter 5: Building a Comprehensive Workforce.
 - Increase the capacity of the US Fire Administration to empower, equip, and train the existing national structure fire service to better respond to wildfires safely and efficiently.



- Increase federal funding for the Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT) agreement. This cooperative agreement with the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior allows The Fire Networks (The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, The Fire Learning Network, Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges, and the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network) to support the comprehensive needs of communities at risk of catastrophic wildfire.
- Maintain federal funding for the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes, specifically the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. The collaborative leadership and research outputs created by the ERI are incredibly important for the stakeholders working to support resilient landscapes and fire adapted communities across northern Arizona.

Amtrak

The Southwest Chief is a critical engine of economic growth and commerce that connects rural communities throughout the northern Arizona region. Based on a 2018 Visitor Intercept Study, the City of Flagstaff estimates that Amtrak provides approximately \$3,744,400 in economic impact to the Flagstaff area alone. Other rural communities in the Northern Arizona region also depend on reliable and frequent Amtrak service to support their residents and economies. Thousands of passengers board or disembark on an Amtrak train in Flagstaff each year. Many of these passengers are visitors and contribute to Flagstaff's tourism-based economy by visiting unique sites like the Grand Canyon, Sedona, and other parks and monuments in northern Arizona. According to the Discover Flagstaff's Annual Report, visitors to Flagstaff have an economic impact of \$750 Million, supporting nearly 8,000 jobs.

The City of Flagstaff is committed to multi-modal transportation, and Amtrak has long been an important component of that effort. For the many riders that depend on Amtrak service to and from Flagstaff, reliable daily service is critical in avoiding scheduling difficulties and the need to seek our alternative means of transportation. Smaller communities in the northern Arizona region that do not have air service are also served by passengers boarding or disembarking trains in Flagstaff. The Southwest Chief route has dependably served communities across our nation for 53 years and ensuring that the national network continues to connect communities across the nation is imperative.

REQUEST

Continue seven-day service on the Southwest Chief to Flagstaff and protect this vital route from any potential cuts in the future that provide uncertainty to travelers and negatively affects the local Flagstaff economy.



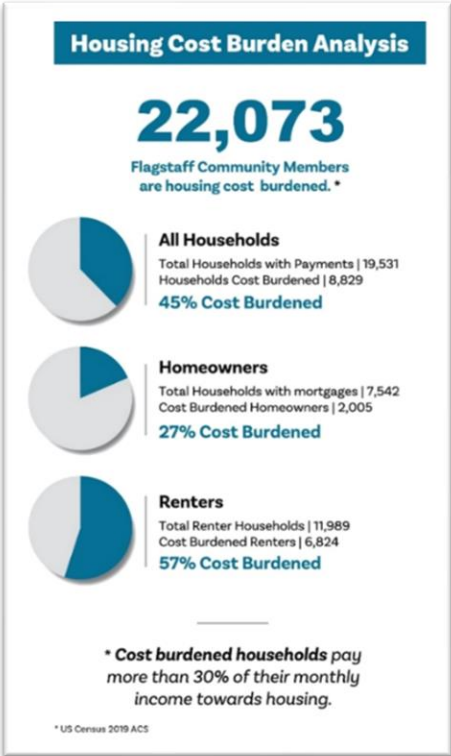
Affordable Housing / Workforce Housing Tax Credit Act

Flagstaff is a community where 45% of all households and 57% of renters are living in a housing cost burdened situation; the cost of living is 13% higher and housing is 29% higher than the national average. Recognizing the need for housing in Flagstaff is not limited to low-income households, City Council declared a Housing Emergency on December 1, 2020, committing to prioritizing affordable housing within City operations to create safe, decent, and affordable housing opportunities for all community members.

The Workforce Housing Tax Credit Act, introduced in December 2023, aims to alleviate the affordable housing crisis facing America’s middle-income workers by establishing a new federal tax incentive for rental housing development. Inspired by the success of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), this bipartisan legislation proposes tax credits for the construction and rehabilitation of properties affordable to households earning between 60-100% of area median income (AMI).

REQUEST

Support the creation of the Workforce Housing Tax Credit wealth gap through the first-ever national investments in homeownership for first-time, first-generation homebuyers.





Affordable Housing/ Fair Market Rents

Historically, HUD's published Fair Market Rents (FMRs) have been dramatically disconnected with the actual market rental rates in Flagstaff for over the past decade. FMRs for 2024 are more closely aligned with actual market rental rates for smaller bedroom sizes, however when accounting for the fact that FMRs include utility costs and the majority of market rental rates do not, FMRs remain significantly behind the rapid cost acceleration seen in the market.

CONCERNS

Coconino County is the second largest county geographically in the United States, consisting of 18,661 square miles (larger than the nine smallest states), with a population of 143,000. The largest city in Coconino County is Flagstaff, with 52 percent of the county population residing within the 66 square miles of Flagstaff city limits or 1,136.6 people per square mile. Accordingly, the other half of the population is spread out in the remaining 12,187 square miles outside of Flagstaff, at about 5.6 people per square mile.

Further widening the gap between FMRs and market rates, FMRs include utilities, but locally only:

- 13% of rents included electric
- 34% of rents included gas
- 47% of rents included water/sewer

Additionally, low FMRs impact other social service organizations within the community that use vouchers funded through the State of Arizona.

A 2022 Rental Attainability Report found that only 27 percent of apartment complexes in Flagstaff accept vouchers and many that do take vouchers also limit the total number of vouchers they accept.

The City of Flagstaff Housing Authority has considered the regulatory avenues available to request adjustment to FMRs and concluded there is not sufficient funding and staffing to produce the necessary statistically reliable, unbiased estimates of the gross rent of the entire 18,661 square mile MSA area (Coconino County, Arizona). This is particularly true considering that the adjustment would only be applicable until new American Community Survey (ACS) data becomes available.

REQUEST

- Establish Fair Market Rent (FMR) specifically for the Flagstaff area, separate from the much larger MSA in order to bring FMRs more in line with the rental market.
- Include \$150B for affordable housing within the Build Back Better plan. These funds will expand access to affordable, accessible housing; help 294,000 households afford their rent; build, upgrade, and retrofit over 1.8 million affordable housing units; and help close the racial



Flagstaff Pulliam Airport

The City of Flagstaff boasts the Flagstaff Pulliam Airport, a vital transportation hub facilitating daily air service to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX) and Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) via American Airlines. Serving as a crucial gateway for visitors and commerce into northern Arizona, the airport offers essential services including aircraft rescue firefighting, emergency medical response, and HazMat first response. Benefiting from multiple FAA grants, the airport has acquired an Air Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) vehicle, equipment, and snow removal vehicles, bolstering operational efficiency.

In 2023, Flagstaff Pulliam Airport recorded approximately 75,000 departing passengers, underscoring its significance as a regional travel hub. To enhance the traveler experience, paid parking was introduced last year, ensuring ample parking availability at affordable rates. In the past year, extensive renovations were undertaken, including resurfacing of the runway and improvements to both the interior and exterior of the terminal building. Ongoing terminal maintenance, funded by CARES grants, further underscore the commitment to providing top-notch facilities and services to travelers.

2024/2025 Goals

- Collaborate with a developer to establish a 31.45-acre business park, a multi-year project aimed at development and occupancy.
- Enhance air service by attracting additional routes and carriers to meet the evolving needs of the community.
- Revitalize the airport restaurant space and open an express Visitor's Center.
- Pursue new rental car concessionaire leases through a competitive bidding process to optimize service offerings for travelers.

REQUEST

We are seeking supplemental discretionary funding from the FAA to construct a 23,000 square foot snow removal equipment building, which will serve as a centralized hub for our fleet of snow removal equipment. Presently, our equipment is scattered across multiple locations, including hangars that could otherwise be used by aircraft. This complicates the task of managing snow removal amidst the average annual snowfall of 100 inches and over 200 freeze/thaw cycles. Consolidating all equipment and the fleet within the new building will significantly streamline our snow removal operations. The project has grant funding allocated from FAA entitlement grants, and the airport is applying Bipartisan Infrastructure Funds as well. The currently allocated FAA entitlement grant funds total \$4.4M and an additional \$4.4M in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding is pending. The remaining discretionary funding need is approximately \$13.75M.

OTHER CONCERNS

Funding for transition from AFFF to F3 for Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting



The Flagstaff Pulliam Airport provides Aircraft Rescue Firefighting (ARFF) Index B services, 24 hours a day, year-round, with crews prepared to respond to any aircraft up to 126 feet in length. Congress has mandated the FAA to develop a Transition Plan aimed at ensuring a smooth shift from current aircraft firefighting foam, which contains Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), to a safer alternative. Commonly known as "forever chemicals," PFAS persist in the environment and have been linked to adverse health effects from exposure. Aircraft firefighting foams pose a significant risk of releasing harmful PFAS into the environment.

Transitioning from Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF), which contains PFAS, to Fluorine-Free Foam (F3), a new type of foam used to extinguish fires involving flammable and combustible liquid, is not a straightforward substitution. Given the considerable differences among F3 products from various manufacturers, the transition process can be complex. Adequate funding is essential to facilitate the shift away from PFAS-containing AFFF, including the disposal of the foam and decontamination of equipment.

Several options exist for converting to F3-based systems from AFFF. One approach involves undergoing a complete fire suppression system replacement, offering a high level of confidence in eliminating PFAS from the system. Alternatively, retrofitting current aircraft fire suppression systems is another option, typically involving component replacements and distribution piping modifications. The distribution piping undergoes flushing, and the effluent is disposed of. While this method may not guarantee a PFAS-free system, it presents a more feasible alternative to replacing the entire system.

Securing additional funding is imperative to ensure compliance with this transition and to acquire the necessary resources for implementation.

Funding for law enforcement officer presence

In Fiscal Year 24, funding for the TSA Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) reimbursement program has been discontinued due to insufficient appropriation. Consequently, effective May 1, 2024, airports are tasked with ensuring the presence of a law enforcement officer capable of responding to security incidents at checkpoints and throughout airport premises in accordance with federal regulations. This shift places the financial burden of funding law enforcement squarely on airports, presenting a substantial and unforeseen expense to meet federal requirements and uphold traveler safety.

During Fiscal Year 23, the expenditure for maintaining the federally required law enforcement presence at Flagstaff Pulliam Airport amounted to approximately \$340,000. As a small regional airport under the management of the City of Flagstaff, assuming full responsibility for funding law enforcement presence will significantly strain our operating budget.

We urge reconsideration of the TSA Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) reimbursement program, recognizing the critical role it plays in supporting airport safety and operations.



FY25 Congressionally Directed Spending Requests

Flagstaff Amtrak Station Platform Improvements

- Requested amount: \$3,850,000
- Local match available
- The Flagstaff Amtrak Station Platform improvements will provide enhanced ADA accessibility, drainage mitigation, and improved safety and operational components for passenger boarding and coordination between freight and passenger rail on the BNSF Railway Southern Transcontinental main line.

Flagstaff Airport Terminal Expansion, Accessibility and Drainage Improvements

- Requested amount: \$1,200,000
- The Flagstaff Airport Terminal Expansion, Accessibility and Drainage Improvements project will provide design work for terminal expansion and accessibility improvements, as well as design and construct apron drainage improvements at the terminal.

Flagstaff La Plaza Vieja Phase 2 Infrastructure Improvements

- Requested amount: \$1,000,000
- Local match available
- The Flagstaff La Plaza Vieja Phase 2 Infrastructure Improvements will provide traffic calming measures, safer pedestrian crossings, increased visibility of pedestrians, improved ramps and improved storm drain locations for a historic Flagstaff neighborhood.

Flagstaff Fanning Wash Flood Mitigations

- Requested amount: \$3,000,000
- Local match available
- The Flagstaff Fanning Wash Flood Mitigations would address an ongoing and documented flood risk and could include improved culvert headwalls, an improved flood wall and/or a new diversion pipe.

Sustainable Biochar Facility at Flagstaff Wastewater Treatment Plant

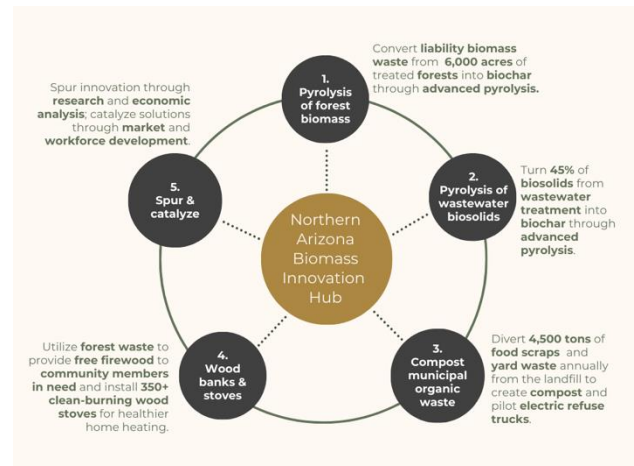
- Requested amount: \$4,000,000
- Local match available
- The proposed project will design and partially construct a cutting-edge biochar facility at the Wildcat Hill Wastewater Treatment Plant in Flagstaff that can serve as a model for sustainable wastewater management.



Northern Arizona Biomass Innovation Hub – EPA Grant

EPA Carbon Pollution Reduction Grant Implementation Proposal 2024 - City of Flagstaff (Lead Applicant)

Challenge: Northern Arizona faces novel challenges to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Like most communities, transportation, buildings and waste disposal are the top contributors to GHG emissions under normal conditions. But what Flagstaff and hundreds of other cities in the Intermountain West have in common is the impact from increasingly frequent and intense wildfires as the climate warms and dries. When catastrophic wildfires burn, status quo emissions pale in comparison to the millions of tons of emissions released from neighboring dense, overstocked forests. Tragically, wildfires are followed by a second potent threat to community well-being: flooding and debris flows now disrupt life in multiple Northern Arizona communities annually. Communities across the West are dealing with these immense challenges while simultaneously enacting plans to reduce emissions and build community resilience to climate change. This project will jump start replicable on-the-ground solutions that reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire while reducing GHG emissions from problematic regional sources of organic waste we collectively refer to as liability biomass.



5 Part Solution: The Northern Arizona Biomass Innovation (NABI) Hub is a replicable hub and spoke model that will reduce carbon emissions as it solves the region’s longstanding liability biomass challenges. Research, workforce, and market development will spur and catalyze a new circular liability biomass economy that builds community resilience and supports underserved residents. The City is leading a robust NABI Hub Coalition, tapping community assets including forest restoration leadership, university forest and carbon removal researchers, and a robust network of city, county, state, federal, and tribal partners. The five NABI Hub spokes are integrated strategies that can be replicated by other cities in the Intermountain West facing similar challenges.

1. Advanced pyrolysis of forest biomass

Challenges: Catastrophic wildfire is the greatest threat to public safety in Coconino County, with the greater Flagstaff area in one of the nation’s top 10 fire sheds. Since 1996, diverse stakeholders have worked together to build and implement forest restoration strategies to reduce the threat of wildfire. Despite overwhelming socio-political support, progress has been limited, largely due to high volume/low value biomass and high start-up costs of biomass processing. Solutions: A new



industrial scale advanced pyrolysis facility at the regional Cinder Lake Landfill will convert forest biomass into marketable biochar products.

2. Advanced pyrolysis of biosolids

Challenges: Flagstaff's aging Wildcat Hill Water Reclamation Plant (Wildcat) is operating near its solids capacity limit requires a near term solution. Additionally, Flagstaff disposes of Class B biosolids pm a 40-acre Designated Land Disposal Site A more energy-efficient, cost-effective method for processing and handling biosolids has evolved that would eliminate the need for conventional solids capacity treatment at Wildcat & test the strategy for future full deployment. **Solutions:** A novel biosolids treatment train at Wildcat will convert contaminated biosolids to sterile marketable biochar.

3. Composting food and yard waste

Challenges: The CLL receives 110,000 to 130,000 tons per year of solid waste generated in the city, surrounding unincorporated communities in the County, and some communities on the Navajo Nation. CLL does not currently capture, vent, nor flare landfill gas, which comprises large amounts of methane. In 2021, CLL emitted an estimated 96,437 metric tons CO₂e of methane. **Solutions:** The first municipally run compost facility at the CLL, paired with scalable food waste and yard waste diversion programs in multiple jurisdictions, will convert municipal and county organic waste to useful, marketable products.

4. Firewood banks and stove replacements

Challenges: Northern Arizona ranks among the highest in the nation for dependence on wood for home heating, especially in low-income households and tribal communities. Following the 2019 closure of the Kayenta Mine, thousands of Navajo and Hopi homes that were heated with coal transitioned to wood for home heating. Old stoves are inefficient. Woody stems from restoration thinning are problematic when burned in slash piles—they can produce coals that spark wildfires. **Solutions:** Processing long-burning woody biomass into firewood delivered to new wood community banks; replacing inefficient wood stoves with EPA certified models; and assisting tribal wood banks with staffing.

5. Spurring innovation through biomass burial, workforce and market development, and research.

Challenges: Building a new liability biomass industry will need knowledge, new markets and a trained workers to sustain it.

SOLUTIONS

Research will inform economics, scaling, replication, and market development; entrepreneurship incentives and technical assistance will build markets; and career education programs will build workforce capacity.



Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA) Renewal and Discretionary Grants Programs

MetroPlan’s top priority is the renewal of transportation funding in the IIJA including retaining discretionary grant programs. As a key partner in our community, the City of Flagstaff fully supports this request.

Discretionary grants are key resources for delivering major projects that are not possible to execute without large awards. There is some discussion to convert discretionary programs into formula funds, however MetroPlan believes **this would be a significant disservice to the region** because of the cost of construction and federalization.

IIJA benefits to the Flagstaff region:

1. \$32,460,000 INFRA | Downtown Mile Safety and Connectivity Improvement Project
2. \$9,611,991 SS4A (Safe Streets and Roads for All) | Butler Avenue Complete Streets Conversion
3. Millions awarded to Mountain Line Transit in new funding for maintenance bays, Downtown Connection Center, electric buses and operations, making the City’s transit tax go farther.
4. \$23,992,588 Wildlife crossings Pilot Program which will build a new crossing and fencing on I-17
5. \$15,590,568 PROTECT award to Coconino County for post-wildfire flood mitigation on US89
 1. While not in the City, the community will directly benefit from the above two awards (Wildlife Crossings and PROTECT).
6. Our strategic grants process has identified sixteen (16) additional projects that are good fits for grants.
7. The community would benefit from additional awards such as:
 1. Amtrak station upgrades
 2. Improving Butler and 4th Streets
 3. FUTS trails – improvement and completion

IIJA helps the City of Flagstaff to:

1. Leverage investments made by local community through the Prop 419 and transit taxes.
2. Achieve housing affordability and climate goals with multimodal infrastructure.
3. Keep the economy moving.

Council Biographies

MAYOR BECKY DAGGETT



Becky Daggett is deeply committed to Flagstaff and has spent more than 20 years creating good public policy, protecting open space, enacting smart growth strategies, supporting local businesses, and strengthening support for the arts and education throughout northern Arizona. Her guiding principles have always been—and will continue to be—inclusivity, thoughtful decision making, generosity of spirit, hard work, and honest conversations. Becky currently serves as the Northern Arizona Outreach Coordinator for Outlaw Dirty Money and has previously worked with organizations such as the Flagstaff Arts Council, the Grand Canyon Trust, the Flagstaff Family Food Center, and the City of Flagstaff, among others. She holds a master’s degree in sustainability

communities.

VICE MAYOR AUSTIN ASLAN



Vice Mayor Aslan was elected to a four-year term on the Flagstaff City Council in November 2018. Austin was born and raised in Arizona. He grew up the son of a firefighter in Prescott, and himself became a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), working as an Advanced Life Support (ALS) first responder for Life Line Ambulance.

Vice Mayor Aslan received a bachelor’s degree in wildlife biology at the University of Arizona, and earned a master’s degree in Conservation Biology at the University of Hawaii, Hilo. His research on rare Hawaiian plants located on the high slopes of Mauna Loa volcano won him a pair of destroyed hiking boots, a tattered rain jacket, and a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.

COUNCILMEMBER JIM MCCARTHY



Jim McCarthy was elected to a four-year term on the Flagstaff City Council in November 2016. Before being elected to Council, Jim served six years on the city Planning and Zoning Commission, and five years on the city Water Commission.

Jim earned a BS in mechanical engineering and started his professional career at AiResearch, serving as a performance analyst and project engineer. He later worked at Learjet as a flight support engineer and at Hughes Aircraft as a test engineer. He returned to AiResearch, now part of Honeywell, and managed an engineering group before retiring.