



City of Flagstaff Sustainability Division

April 2025 Monthly Report

HIGHLIGHTS:

Youth Climate Teach-In

The [Youth Climate Leadership Academy](#) successfully hosted a Climate Teach-In, featuring a diverse lineup of speakers, including an equity panel and presentations on topics ranging from youth activism to climate hope and anxiety. The event offered six hours of learning, connecting, and meaningful discussions.

Drop Off Day

The April [Drop Off Day event](#) was a record-breaking event! Volunteers and partners **assisted 535 households** in putting their waste in the right place and **diverted more than 18,000 pounds of waste** from the landfill. This bi-annual event provides an opportunity for community members to properly dispose of expired medications, medical waste, paper for shredding, batteries, lightbulbs, and e-waste.



Photo: Attendees at the Climate Teach-In listen to and engage in meaningful discussion about climate hope and anxiety.



Photos: (Left) Volunteers, staff, and vendors at the April 26 Drop-Off Day. (Right) The Hazardous Products Center drop-off area with its collection tubs for items such as batteries, aerosols, and lightbulbs.

Climate Action

Community Resilience:

- The [Climate Resilience Project](#) partnered with the [Azulita Project](#) to host “Beyond Recycling: Less Plastic, More Impact,” a community conversation featuring local businesses **Snow Mountain River** and **Peak Scents**. Attendees learned about real-world strategies for reducing plastic waste and how local businesses are leading with sustainable, low-waste practices.
- The [Flagstaff Resilience Hubs](#) hosted workshops at the Murdoch Center and the Market of Dreams. South Mountain Storytelling Institute led a storytelling workshop centered on cultural preservation, and Coconino County Emergency Management Staff led two workshops on



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financial emergency preparedness. Environmental Literacy Corps staff led a workshop on asset mapping where Sunnyside residents came together to map out the people, places, and resources that make their community strong.

Equity and Engagement:

- The climate team directly engaged with **602 people** in April.
- The **Equity Climate Advisory Group (ECAG)** provided thoughtful feedback on a potential Micromobility Share program, emphasizing the need for equity-centered design, safe and welcoming infrastructure, diverse vendor options, and meaningful community engagement. Members expressed general support for the program if implemented with strong attention to accessibility, job creation, and public safety.
- Staff launched Phase 2 of our internal climate action engagement process, focusing on deepening understanding of departmental priorities and exploring strategies for adaptation and resilience. This phase builds on insights from initial listening sessions and sets the stage for developing division-specific climate action roadmaps.

Building Fuel Switching and Reduced Energy Use:

- This month, PROSE received 40 pieces of electric lawn equipment, and the Sustainability Office installed two cold climate heat pumps to replace aging gas furnaces as part of the **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant** funded by the Department of Energy.
- The [Home Weatherization and Energy Rebate Program](#) provided nearly \$150,000 in assistance to community members who completed energy- and cost-saving home upgrades this fiscal year. The program is currently closed and will re-open on July 1st. Only projects completed after the July 1st start date will be eligible to receive funds.
- Sustainability, in partnership with City Building Safety, the Fire Department, and Water Services, kicked off the process to update the City's building and fire codes as part of the City's 6-year update cycle. Staff are currently researching the codes and will conduct community engagement and outreach on the proposed updates starting in the summer.

Business

- The 2025 [Innovate Green Business Pitch Competition](#) contest, a partnership with Economic Vitality, was held on April 11-12 at Moonshot Flagstaff Campus. This year's event included a pitch practice and VIP Reception on Friday, April 11, and the official Pitch Competition on April 12. Flagstaff business TechGenie, led by Flagstaff entrepreneur Jay Jones, was awarded first place and the full \$30,000 cash prize for its patent-pending design of a vertical food-growing system. Read the [May 1, 2025 press release](#).
- Staff and partners recruited **10 local businesses and nonprofits** to participate in the upcoming [Green Business Boot Camp](#), which begins on May 1st and runs through June 12th.



Photo: Vice Mayor Miranda Sweet, Tech Genie winner Jay Jones, and his partner Shiloh Begay, after TechGenie won \$30,000 at the 2025 Innovate Green Competition.



Housing and Land Use

- Staff announced the [ADU Model Plans Design Contest](#) winners. Congratulations to Paul Moore, Jill Morris, Allison O'Bryant, Carmel Plude, Trevor Soper, and Brooke Whitehurst, and runners-up Chris Heinrich, Diane Lott, Dwayne McCarthy, Don Pisula, Ty Reece, and Kathleen Toenjes Pennington! The Flagstaff community was also invited to vote for their favorite design. The Community Choice Award winners were Brooke Whitehurst, Trevor Soper, and Allison O'Bryant. The **ADU Model Plans Library will go live in July 2025** with approximately 20 pre-approved plans.

Transportation and Electrification:

- Staff joined **Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD)** to celebrate Bus Driver Appreciation Day and the arrival of the district's first two electric school buses. In addition to recognizing the outstanding dedication of FUSD bus drivers, staff had the opportunity to ride in one of the new electric buses.
- Mountain Line, MetroPlan, and Sustainability staff completed stakeholder outreach for the proposed **Micromobility Share program**, receiving feedback from eight community groups and eight City Commissions. The next step is holding informal conversations with micromobility share operators and developing a recommended action plan for the City Council to determine whether to move forward with implementation.
- Staff continued preparation for the upcoming [Electric Vehicle Ride and Drive](#) event on May 30th for City staff and May 31st for the public in partnership with Fleet Services, Northern Arizona University, and Drive Electric Arizona.
- Thanks to Management Services and Public Works staff, the City is **receiving \$40,350 in federal tax credits for five electric vehicles** purchased in 2023. Staff are also filing for additional tax credits for electric vehicles purchased in 2024.



Photo: Flagstaff Unified School District has added two electric school buses to its fleet.

Youth Climate Action:

- The **Sustainability Officers** program is wrapping up for the school year as participating students close their projects and prepare for next year. This program funded and supported student-led sustainability initiatives at Coconino High School, Ponderosa High School, and Star School. At Coconino High, students are partnering with **Nackard Pepsi** to revitalize the school's recycling program. Their efforts led to increased education around recycling, adding more bins, and a new tracking system to measure their impact campus-wide.
- The **Climate Action Challenge** awarded funding to three local organizations advancing sustainability and youth empowerment: the East Flagstaff Library, Mount Elden Middle School, and Willow Bend Environmental Education Center. Each organization will use the support to engage young people in hands-on climate action and community impact projects.



Neighborhood Engagement & Volunteer Services

Engagement and Outreach Highlights:

- In April, the NEVS Team engaged with 911 people through signature events, volunteer opportunities, interviews, and presentations.

Community Stewards Program:

- Monthly [Community Stewards program](#) statistics include volunteer activities for the Adopt-A-FUTS, Adopt-A-Stream, and Adopt-An-Ave programs.

April Stewards Data	
Number of clean-ups	15
Bags of Recycling	7
Bags of Trash/Invasive Species	20
Number of People	110
Service Hours	149

- Staff supported Code Compliance's request to coordinate volunteers to clean up a litter-dumping site along Cedar Avenue. Stewards assisted in successfully cleaning and removing all the litter from the dumping site.
- Staff supported and coordinated the successful installation of six bat boxes along the Rio de Flag as part of an Eagle Scout project for Troop 7033.
- Staff piloted three stewardship hubs throughout Flagstaff from April 14th – 17th. Stewardship hubs allow community members to check out litter cleanup supplies and conduct cleanups autonomously. The locations included the Visitors Center, The Murdoch Center, and the Sustainability Office.
- In collaboration with Wildland Fire and Public Works, staff completed the **first pilot Pine Needle Drop-Off** program in the Railroad Springs Neighborhood and began the initial service for University Heights. This effort aims to provide resources for community members to conduct fire preparedness activities on their property.



Photos: (Above) Illegal dump site along Cedar Ave. that community stewards cleaned up (Below) One of six newly installed bat box along the Rio de Flag.



City Volunteer Program:

- In April, city staff provided volunteer service to the community through blood drives, litter clean-ups, preparing food at the food bank, assisting with little league coaching, leading a poetry event for the Museum of Northern Arizona, and helping community members put their waste in the right place at the Drop-Off Day event.

Employee Volunteer Data	Year to Date
Number of Volunteers	90
Number of Events	92
Total Service Hours	476



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- The [Volunteer Flagstaff](#) platform saw an increase in total number of users to **420 volunteers** for Sustainability, PROSE, Code Compliance, and the Library.

Waste Prevention:

- In March, the [Residential Food Scraps Drop-off program](#) diverted **3,967.7lbs of food waste** from the landfill. This prevented **0.69 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂e)** from being released into the atmosphere, which is equivalent to 180 gallons of gasoline used in a passenger vehicle!
- In March, the [Recycle by City](#) website had **886 schedule searches, 22 calendars downloaded, 1,680 Unique Visits, and 1,110 new users.**
- Staff presented at the East Flagstaff Library with the Climate Resilience Project on Plastic and Recycling in Flagstaff to 18 participants. Casey Rapacki, Waste and Food Systems Supervisor, also interviewed with Radio Sunnyside's Learn, Know, and Grow sustainability series.
- Staff presented the 3R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) presentation to two groups and engaged with more than 30 community members.
- Staff completed **waste bin audits at 4 city facilities** and will continue to evaluate all 24 city facilities. Bin and signage upgrades to follow.



Photos: Batteries collected at Drop-Off Day on April 26.

Food Systems:

- The [Community Gardens](#) program engaged with **75 community gardens through plot registration and assignments for Bonito, Southside, and Hal Jensen gardens.** All available garden plots have been filled!
- A **new community garden** will be established this growing season at McAllister Ranch.
- The [Assessing & Growing a Community Food System](#) USDA-funded grant project entered its third and final phase. A draft with primary goals, objectives, and actions has been completed.
- Two [Backyard Animal Keeping](#) permits were processed and approved to support community members keeping miniature goats and chickens.



Sustainability Commission

- The April [Sustainability Commission](#) meeting was on Thursday, April 24. The agenda included an overview of the March 2025 Sustainability Division Monthly Report, a Micromobility Share presentation, and the creation of two working groups, including one to propose sustainability grant material updates and one to propose Ordinance updates.
- Commission [agendas can be found here](#) and Commission [minutes can be found here](#).

Social Media

- In April, our Facebook posts reached over **7,900 people**. We have **7,540 followers**. Our top Facebook post was about the Earth Day Celebration cancellation (21 likes and 2,300 reached). *See the photo to the right.*
- In April, our Instagram reached **3,800 people**, and **749 people interacted** with our content. We have **2,655 followers**, an increase of **61** from last month. Our top Instagram post was a reel advertising the Earth Day Celebration (66 likes, 873 reached, and 5 shares). View the reel [here](#).

