

Potential Public Safety Ballot Measure

City Council – May 26, 2026





Background



- Identified core services, public safety, and fire resources as Council budget considerations in January 2025
- Discussed public safety needs in April 2025
- Public safety includes Fire, Emergency Management, Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting, and Police
- Supported the exploration of a public safety ballot measure and citizen committee in September 2025
- Citizen Committee met between November 2025 and May 2026 almost weekly
- Details are available at the Connect Flagstaff site <https://connect.flagstaffaz.gov/safety-committee>



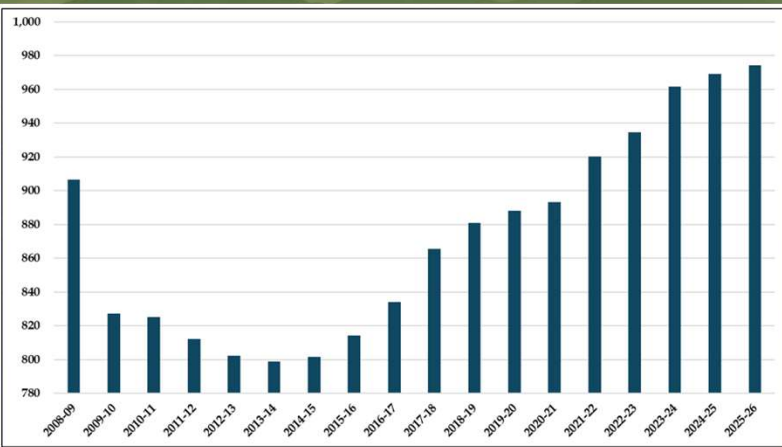
Financial Overview



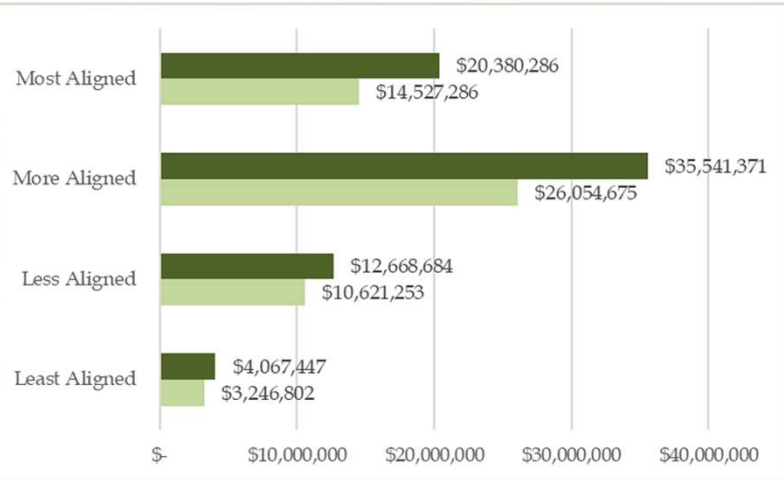
- Total General Fund is \$117 million
- \$54 million (or 46%) of General Fund is dedicated to public safety
- Additional \$29 million investment outside of General Fund
- FY 2025-2026 budget included \$83M to support public safety
- Public safety staffing is 32% of General Fund
- FY 2026-2027 Recommended Budget
 - 2 more full-time positions
 - Reallocated \$537,000 of property tax and new construction revenue towards public safety
 - Maintained competitive wages and benefits to retain staffing

How did we get here

- Inability to afford costs to reach 2008 levels again plus add staff to address community growth
- Experienced growth in population, visitation, on-campus students, and short-term rentals
- Ongoing increases in personnel costs
- Implementation of compensation and benefits to retain staff
- Investment in technology to monitor and report
- Aging infrastructure costs more to maintain



How did we get here



- Operating costs are outpacing revenue growth
- General Fund revenue grows on average 5.4% annually
- City uses all revenue plus one-time set aside money to fund needs
- Over \$18 million in operating requests still cannot be funded
- Capital costs have grown significantly following the pandemic
- Changes at the state and federal level





Public Safety Ballot Measure



- Presentation to Council on March 24th
- Citizen Committee expressed the need to keep any increases as low as possible
- Ability to reduce increase in cost to taxpayers by utilizing General Obligation Bonds for one-time purchases
- Staff identified the most critical needs to fit within proposal from Citizen Committee
- Most Committee members struggled to recommend a sales tax but believed the needs should be addressed now

Citizen Committee Process

Mike Loven, Chair





Citizen Committee Recommendation



- 0.50% (half cent) sales tax
- \$40 million general obligation bond
- Evaluate the Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection Fund fee (WRIP) in 2027



Ongoing Resources



0.50% (half cent) sales tax

- All-Risk Firefighters for wildland, suppression, and EMS
- Fire academy and training
- Fire supplies and equipment
- Fire cancer testing and turnouts
- Police training
- Station O&M
- Emergency response vehicles and maintenance
- Citywide evacuation plan
- Emergency Management personnel
- Aircraft rescue firefighters, equipment & supplies
- Police personnel, equipment & supplies



One-Time Resources



\$40 million General Obligation Bond

- Wildland fire equipment
- Wildland fire facility
- Emergency medical equipment
- JWP Fire Station #7
- Emergency Management supplies and equipment
- Station expansion and modernization
- Upgraded dispatch technology
- Radios and communications
- Emergency vehicle fleet
- Criminal investigation tools



WRIP



Water Resource and Infrastructure Protection Fund Fee

- Dedicated to Wildland Fire Management
- Prevention efforts to protect all Flagstaff water resources and infrastructure from wildland fires including water, wastewater, reclaimed water, and stormwater
- Current rate is \$0.53 per 1,000 gallons
- Recommend rate study moves to calendar year 2027
- Balance fund to pay for increasing costs



Community Survey Results



- Most important items (greater than 3.51)
 - Wildland Fire
 - Emergency Medical Equipment
 - Firefighters and Paramedics
 - Fire Academy and Training
 - Police Training
 - Emergency Management Personnel, Supplies, and Equipment
 - Upgraded Dispatch Technology
 - Fire Station Expansion and Modernization
 - Citywide Evacuation Plan
- FUSD recent survey feedback



Fire Department Impact



- Staffing to address Flagstaff's evolving risk and demands for firefighter safety
- Reduce severity of wildfire in treated areas
- Assist in addressing insurance premiums
- Sustain and improve response times
- Adequate resources to respond to large-scale or multiple incidents
- Facilities for personnel and apparatus
- Support Fire Station operations

Wildland Fire Risk



- Additional all-risk firefighters as first line response
- Address increase in frequency and intensity
- Provide additional equipment
- Build a wildland fire station and training facility
- Fund prevention work
 - Hazardous fuel removal
 - Home hardening to protect neighborhoods
 - Equipment

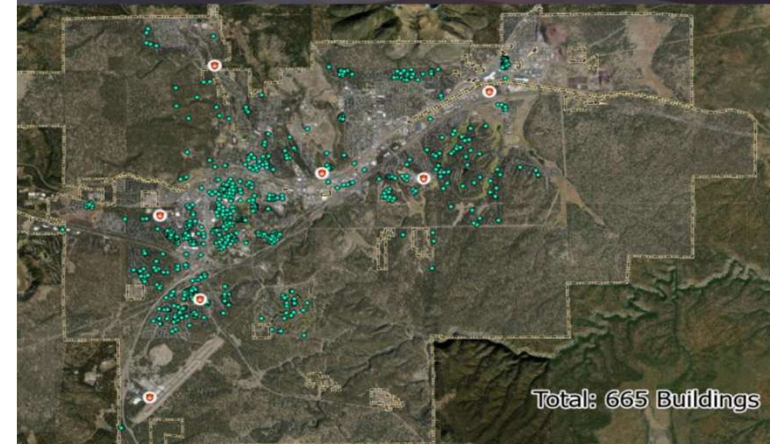




Building Height Risk



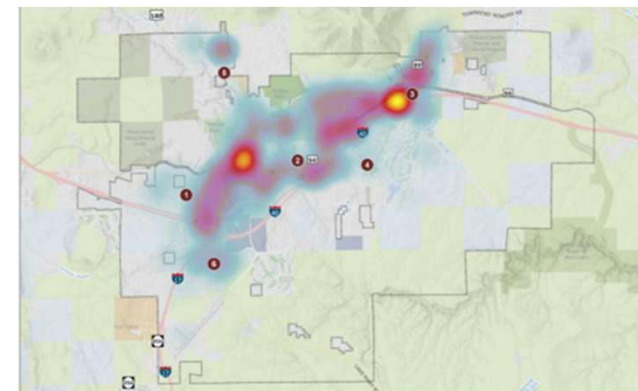
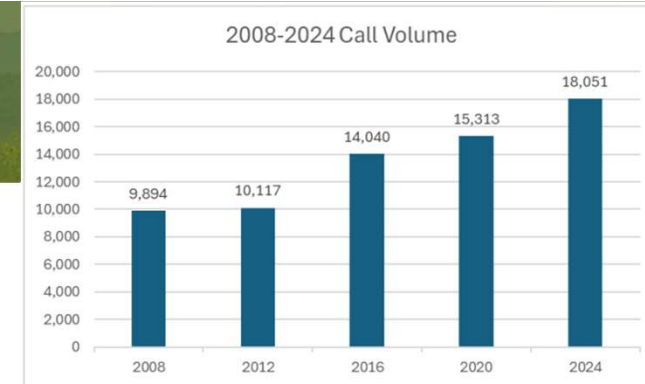
- 109.4% increase in mid-rise facilities
- Higher level of risk
- Requires a larger number of personnel to respond
- Additional Quint staffing
- Training for personnel





Calls for Service

- Increase in number of calls
- Exceeded ability to find efficiencies
- Additional supplies
- Replacement of life saving equipment
- Fire academy and training to retain qualified staff
- New Fire Station
 - Improve response times in existing neighborhoods
 - Address new neighborhoods near JW Powell



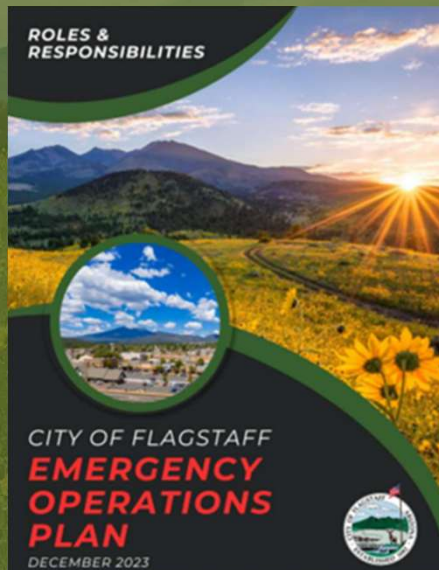


Emergency Management Impact



- Emergency Management has resources to address risks
 - Personnel to respond
 - Emergency plans
 - Citywide training exercises
 - Equipment and supplies
- Community impacts with additional investment
 - Provide a more coordinated emergency response
 - Clear and reliable public information and alerts
 - Reduce long-term recovery costs after disasters
 - Stronger support for residents and businesses during recovery

Emergency Preparedness



- Emergency operations planning
- Emergency Response Plans and Training
 - Active Shooter
 - Airport Emergency
 - APS Public Safety Power Shut-offs
 - Wide Area Search
 - Large scale events



Emergency Response & Recovery



- Emergency declarations
 - County
 - State
 - Federal
- Find resources to address community needs
- Emergency notification
- Communicate expectations and available support
- Disaster recovery
 - Local government damage
 - Residential & commercial damage
 - Engage community non-profits

Police Department Impact



- Additional personnel in Dispatch to answer 9-1-1 calls
- More support in evidence and records to maintain integrity
- Identify trends and create response plans to mitigate crime
- Improve response with Police Aides for non-emergency calls
- Increase space and people for proficiency and scenario-based training



Response

- PFM Study identified gaps in service
- Reduced transports from Jail to Court to create greater availability
- Maintain safety for large events and protest
- Ability to respond to more than one critical incident with additional personnel
- Keep streets safe
- Respond to community members calls for service



ALERT TOP STORY
Suspect in Flagstaff shoot-out,
helicopter crash makes first
appearance in Coconino
County Superior Court





Criminal Investigation



- Advanced software and specialized training needed to extract data
- Expansion of evidence with increased technology
- Aging systems and integration challenges to identify trends
- Additional staff to investigate 174 people crimes and 271 property crimes
- Build prosecutable cases to support victims
- Space to retain evidence and meet prosecuting and community expectations

ALERT **TOP STORY** **BREAKING**

Flagstaff police say homicide a possibility in disappearance of Kelly Paduchowski

CODY BASHORE Digital Editor Jul 2, 2024 0 1 min to read



ALERT **TOP STORY**

Body of missing 8-year-old girl found in Coalmine; Navajo Police Department and FBI investigation underway

DAILY SUN STAFF Jan 16, 2026 0 1 min to read

Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Impact



- Sustain economic impact of air service
- Maintain multiple airline operations to support visitor and business travelers
- Retain mandated level of airport security



Aircraft Emergency Response



- 3 more ARFF to respond to larger aircraft with higher level of risk
- Response available 24 hours a day increasing safety for non-commercial flights
- Improve emergency response





Why a sales tax & bond?

Balance the needs and maintaining lowest cost possible

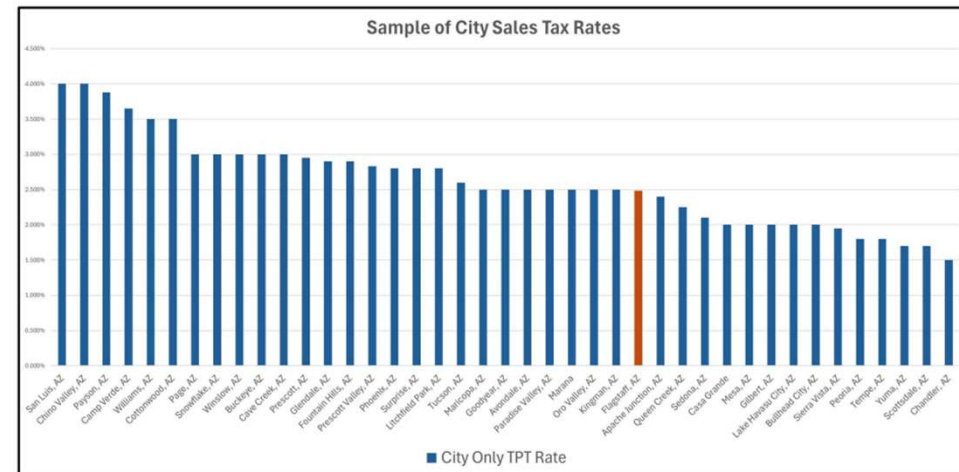
- Sales Tax
 - Ongoing dollars to pay for personnel, operating costs, contracts and commodities
 - Equipment replaced on regular intervals like emergency radios, PPE, or cardiac monitors
- Bond
 - Reduces the amount of a sales tax
 - One-time dollars for capital expenses like construction, additional equipment, or vehicles
 - Additional revenue within the current rate



Sales Tax



- 0.50% produces \$18.2 million per year, for 15 years
- Increase City's base tax rate from 2.486% to 2.986%
- 37% paid by visitors
- Half of AZ cities have rate of 3.00% or higher
- Utilized to address unmet public safety needs
- Ongoing source for additional staffing and related expenses



What does a Sales tax rate mean to consumers?

- Tax applies to dining bills and commodities like a refrigerator
- Tax does not apply to food at the grocery store or residential rent
- At 0.50% the tax would be \$0.50 (fifty-cents) per \$100





General Obligation Bond



- \$98 million in capacity
- Flat rate policy for Secondary Property Tax is set at 0.8000
- Assuming assessed value increases by 4%
 - Residential customer pays \$12.63 more per year
 - Commercial property pays \$51.20 more per year
- Supplement with Development Impact fees
- One-time source for buildings and equipment

Next Steps

- June 2nd to discuss a potential ballot measure further, if needed
- June 16th Council resolution for potential Call of Election
- June – November education and outreach, if election is called
- June 23rd Public Safety Ballot Measure update, if election is called



Questions & Council Discussion



Reference Slides



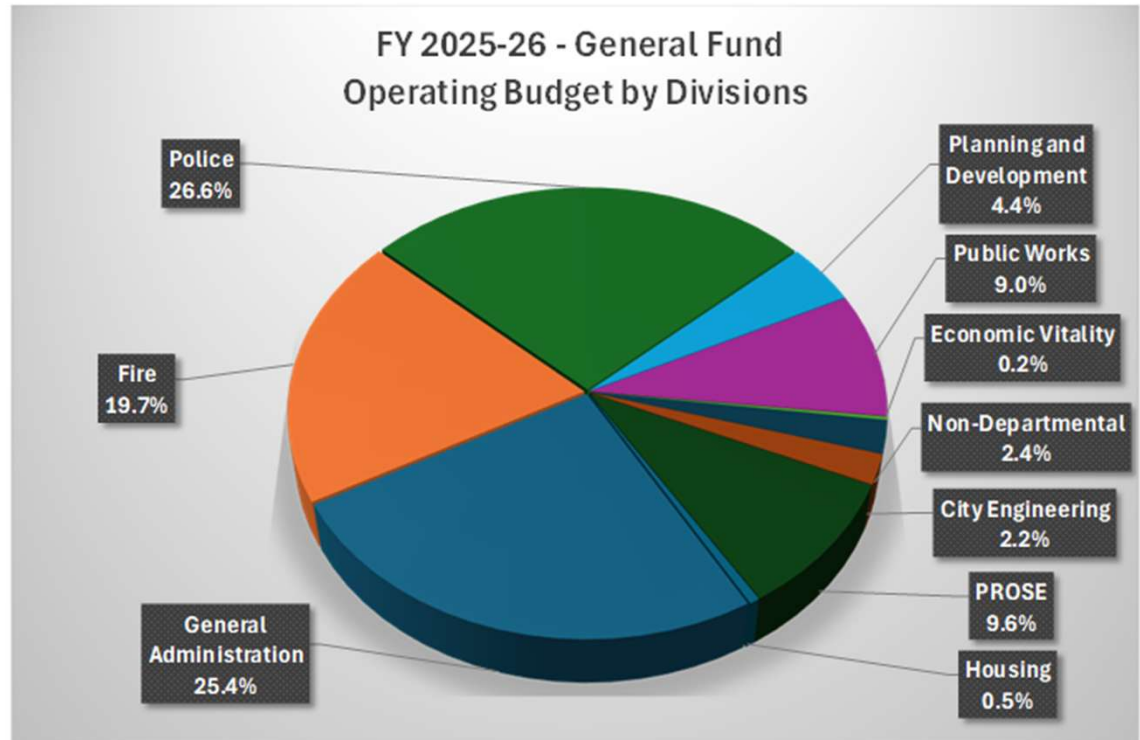


FY 2025-26 General Fund Budget Overview

Divisions	FY 2025-26 Budgeted Expenditures
General Administration	\$ 29,736,123
Fire	22,972,796
Police	31,126,623
Planning and Development	5,137,216
Public Works	10,509,306
Economic Vitality	255,305
Non-Departmental	2,793,535
City Engineering	2,526,781
PROSE	11,238,447
Housing	606,166
Total All Funds	\$ 116,902,298

General Administration Includes:

- City Manager
- Human Resources and Risk Management
- Information Technology
- City Attorney
- Municipal Court
- Communication and Civic Engagement
- Management Services

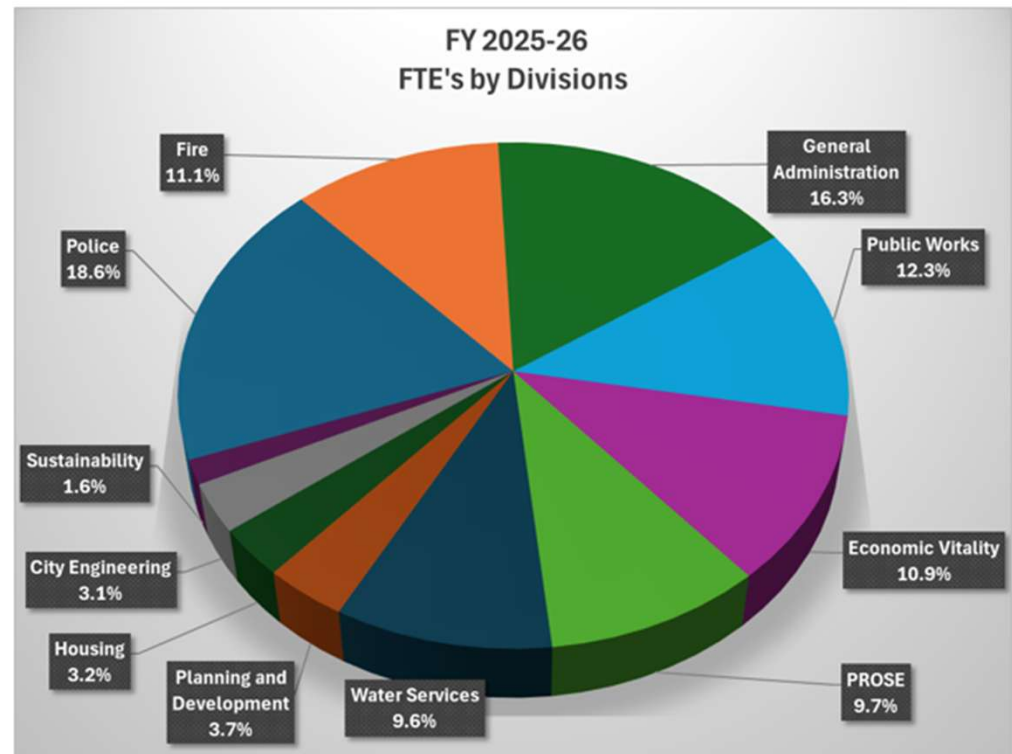




Citywide Staffing

Divisions	FY 2025-26 FTE's
Police	183.00
Fire	109.00
General Administration	159.75
Public Works	120.77
Economic Vitality	106.57
PROSE	94.83
Water Services	94.48
Planning and Development	36.00
Housing	31.00
City Engineering	30.48
Sustainability	15.38
Total All Funds	981.26

<u>General Administration Includes:</u>	
City Council	7.00
City Manager	3.00
City Attorney	18.00
Human Resources and Risk Management	15.00
Information Technology	22.00
Municipal Court	29.75
Communication and Civic Engagement	11.00
Management Services	54.00
	159.75





Growth

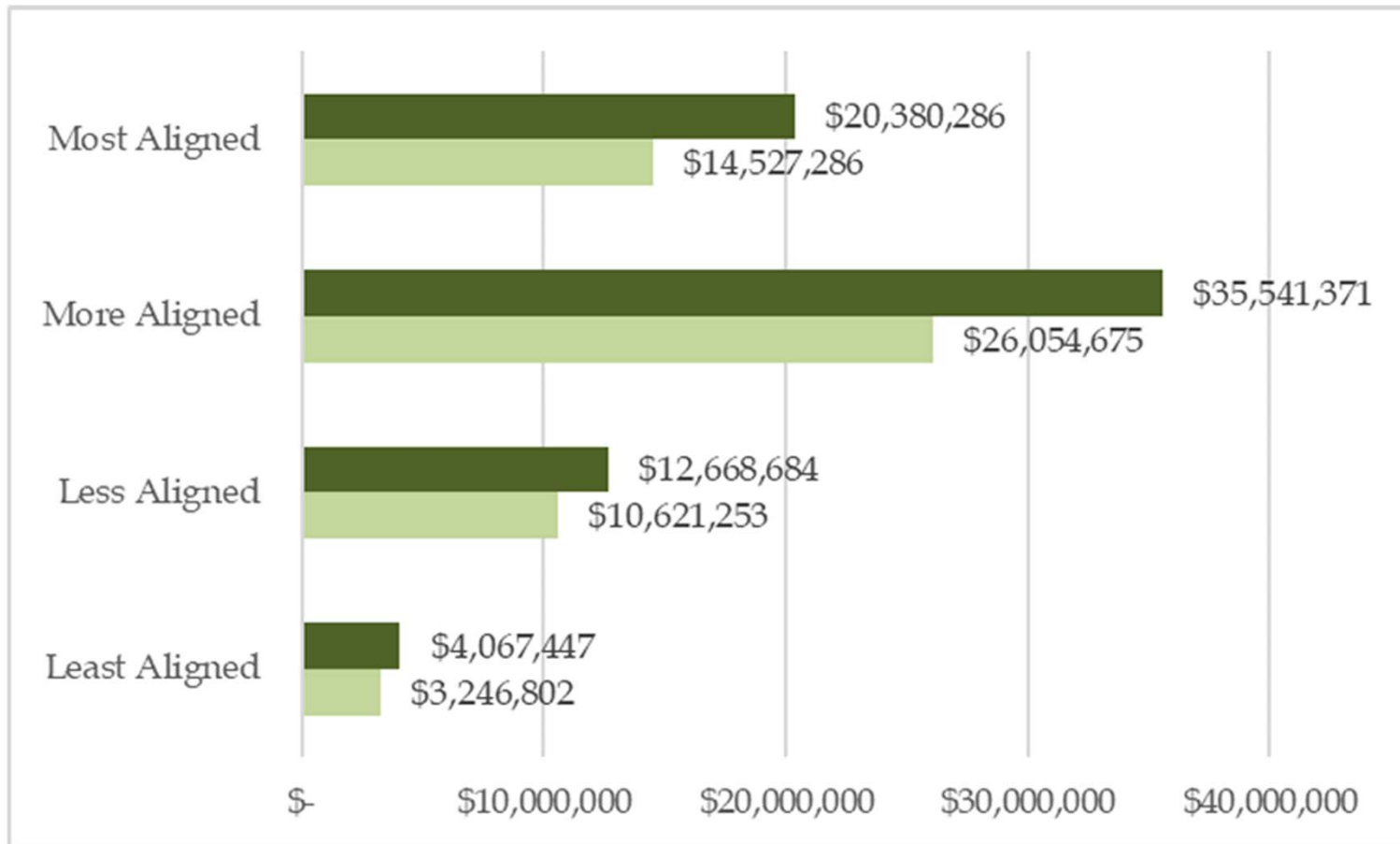


Metric	2008	2024-2025
Population	59,260	77,539
Visitation	3.1 million	5 million*
Flagstaff NAU Campus Students	14,766	Over 21,000
General Fund Revenue	\$49 million	\$88 million
General Fund Expenditures	\$50 million	\$85 million

*Additional 1 million Short-Term Rental Visitors

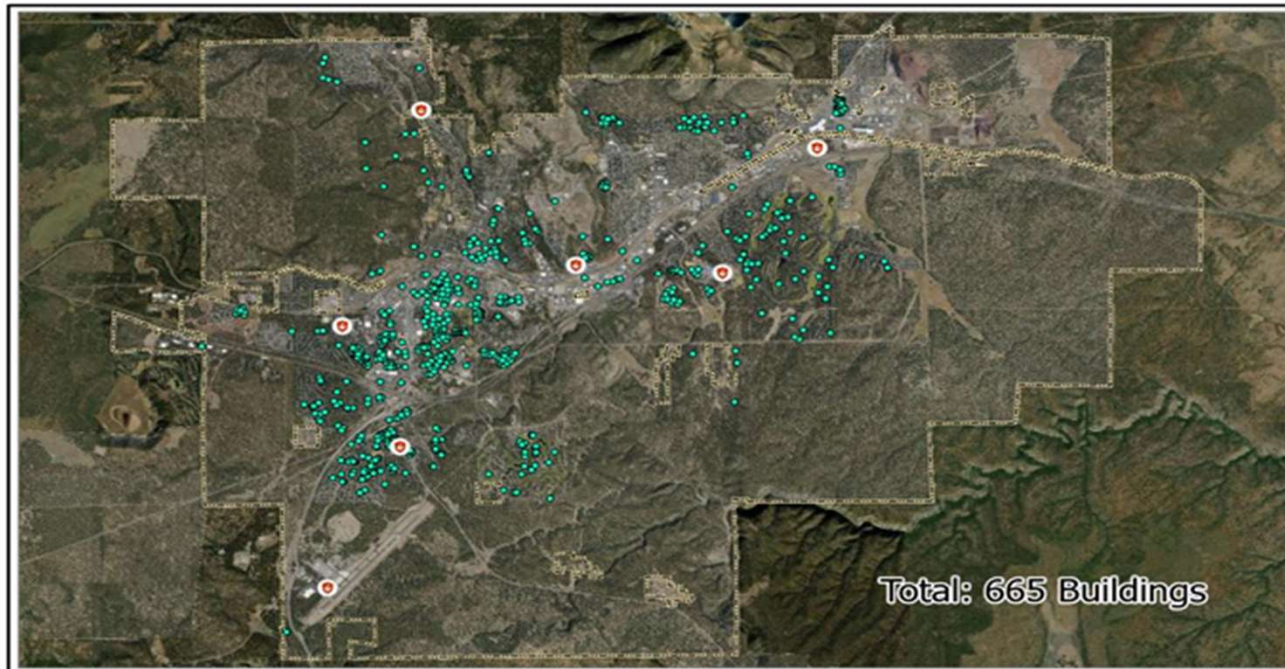


FY2026-27 Budget Requests





Buildings Over Two Stories



Total: 665 Buildings



Buildings over 2 Stories - 2025

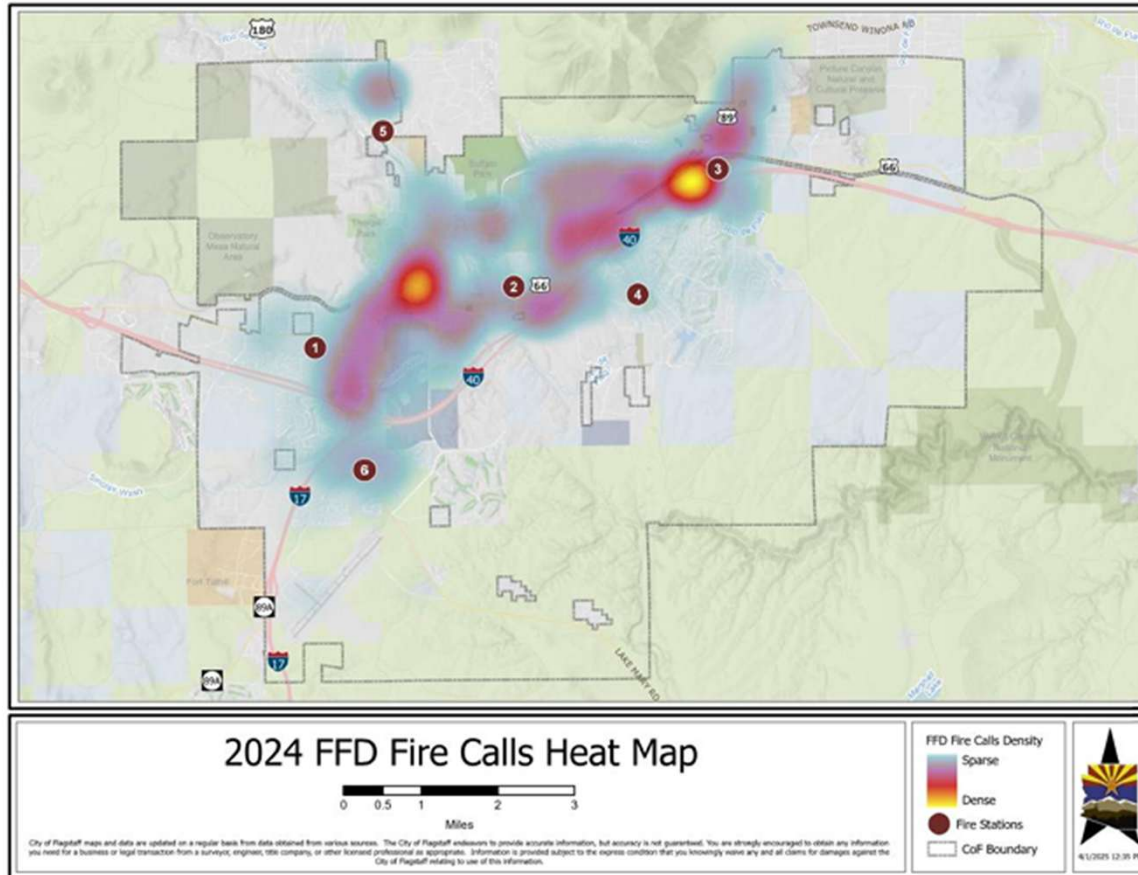


- Buildings over 2 stories
- Fire Stations
- City Boundary



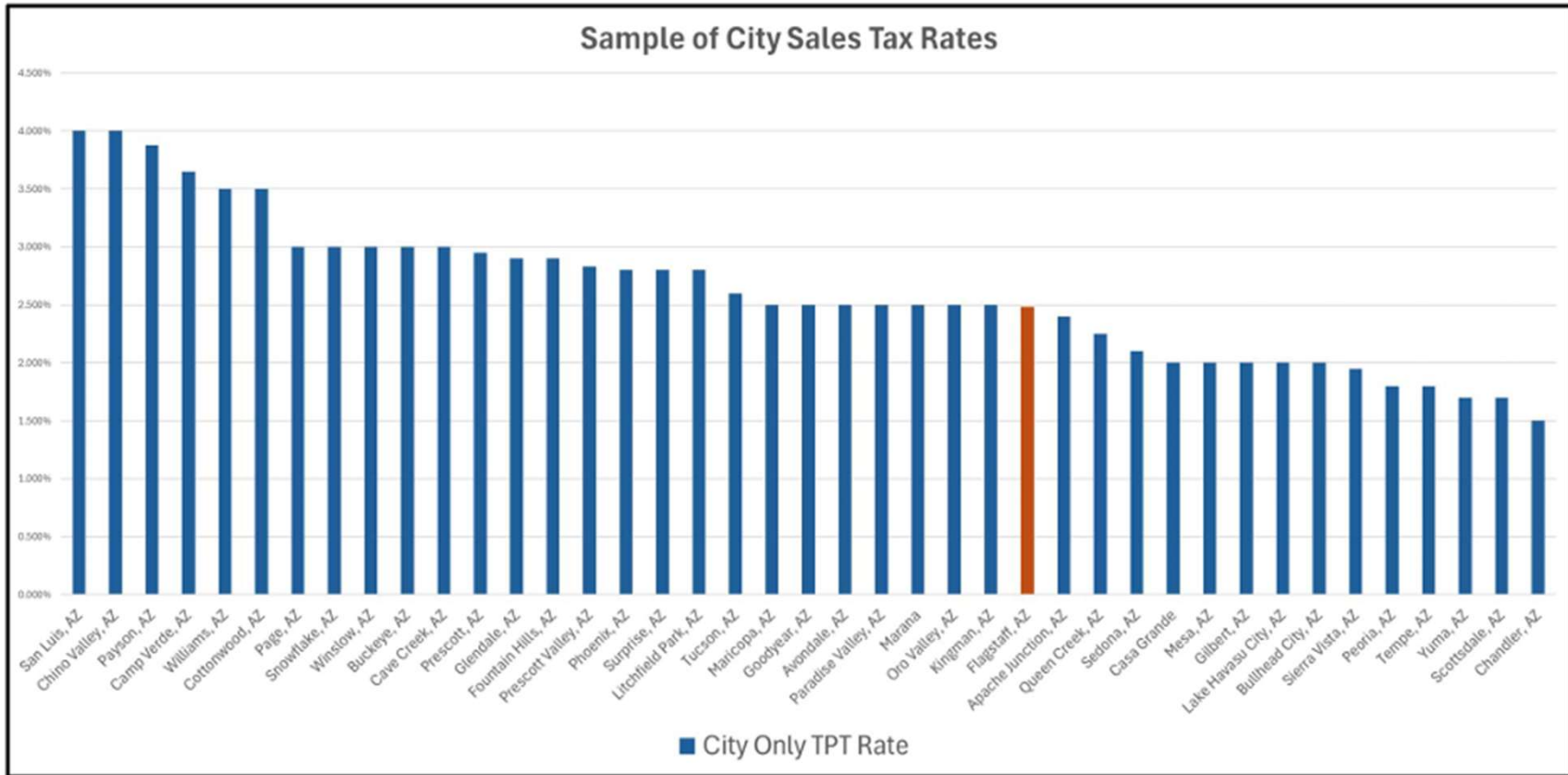


Call Volume Heat Map





City Sales Tax Rates





Total Tax Rates by City

