

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The City Council may consider applicant qualifications for the Council vacancy in executive sessions which are closed to the public, and then make the appointment in a public meeting. You have the right, however, to have your application considered in a public meeting by providing a written request to the City Clerk.

**CITY OF FLAGSTAFF
APPLICATION TO SERVE ON THE CITY COUNCIL**

RETURN TO: CITY CLERK VIA EMAIL AT STACY.SALTZBURG@FLAGSTAFFAZ.GOV

DEADLINE TO SUBMIT APPLICATION: MONDAY, OCTOBER 12 AT 5:00 P.M.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS PUBLIC INFORMATION
(personal identifying information will not be released)

DATE: 10/12/2026

YOUR NAME: Rachael (Rey) Costello

HOME ADDRESS: [REDACTED] ZIP: 86005

EMPLOYER: The Nature Conservancy JOB TITLE: Executive Coordinator

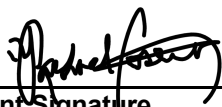
E-MAIL: [REDACTED]

PHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED] LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN FLAGSTAFF: 3 years

Using additional pages, please answer the following questions in 250 words or less, per question:

1. What makes a good Councilmember?
2. What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff? Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.
3. What are your top three priorities for being a City Councilmember and why?
4. What method do you expect to use to make a decision when you believe that there is a segment of the Flagstaff population not being heard on a particular issue?
5. Please give an example of when you were in a position of responsibility and others disagreed with you on how an important matter should be handled. How did you help resolve the issue?
6. What is your leadership style, please provide an example of your style in use.
7. What is your understanding, awareness, and familiarity with the Flagstaff Zoning Code?
8. A key role of the Flagstaff City Council is to adopt the city's budget; how would you balance the seven key community priorities and the realities of the city's financial position with the Council's role of policy development?

I certify that I meet the statutory requirements of living within the corporate limits of the City of Flagstaff for at least one year, that I am over the age of 18 years, that I am a registered voter of the City of Flagstaff, ***and that I have read and understand the right to have my application considered in a public meeting by providing a written request to the City Clerk.***


Applicant Signature

Dear Mayor Daggett and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the Flagstaff City Council. Having grown up in Northern Arizona and having attended NAU, I care deeply about this community and believe local government plays an important role in shaping the quality of life, affordability, resilience, and future of our city.

My professional background is in climate, conservation, stakeholder engagement, project management, and executive support. I currently work as an Executive Coordinator supporting global climate initiatives at The Nature Conservancy. My academic background includes a Master's degree in Conflict Resolution and Mediation as a Fulbright Scholar, a B.S in Political Science and a B.A in International Affairs from Northern Arizona University. Throughout my career, I have worked across diverse groups of people, helping build consensus, manage complex projects, and navigate challenging issues with empathy and professionalism.

The issues that most motivate me to seek this appointment are housing affordability, community and environmental resilience, positive tourism, and pedestrian infrastructure and safety. I believe Flagstaff has already laid important groundwork through initiatives such as the 10-Year Housing Plan, the Carbon Neutrality Plan, the Regional Plan, and the Safe Streets initiatives. I am excited by opportunities to expand housing affordability, invest in climate resilience, improve wildfire preparedness, strengthen the relationship between visitors and residents, and create safer and more inviting spaces for walking, biking, and community life. I am particularly drawn to ideas that address multiple challenges at once by improving affordability, sustainability, public health, and quality of life.

What I believe I would bring to Council is a willingness to learn, collaborate, and a commitment to public service. My approach to leadership is rooted in listening. Whether working in professional settings, community initiatives, or academic environments, I have found that lasting solutions come from understanding people's underlying interests, finding common ground, and focusing on shared goals rather than divisions.

If appointed, I would approach the role with humility, integrity, and a willingness to do the work. I would strive to be a thoughtful steward of public resources, an advocate for residents, and a Councilmember who listens carefully before making decisions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rey Costello
Flagstaff, Arizona

1.) What makes a good Councilmember?

A good Councilmember is someone whose primary motivation is to improve the lives of the people who live in their city. That improvement should be viewed holistically. It means pursuing policies that help residents become healthier, more financially secure, better prepared for a changing climate, and ultimately happier.

A good Councilmember actively seeks out ideas, solutions, and critiques from many different sources. They work to stay above dogma and avoid falling into echo chambers, remaining open to new information and perspectives. This also means maintaining the highest ethical standards. A good Councilmember should never participate in anything that resembles corruption or self-enrichment and should carefully consider who benefits and who bears the burden of every decision.

I believe a good Councilmember has a particular responsibility to ensure that those with the least power and influence are not disproportionately harmed by public policy, while also resisting pressure to give preferential treatment to those with the most resources or influence. Fair representation means considering the needs of the entire community, especially those whose voices are not always heard.

A good Councilmember must also have an eye toward the future. They should be continually learning about emerging challenges, from extreme heat and wildfire risk to new technologies and changing economic conditions, while also looking for opportunities in areas such as renewable energy, housing, and sustainable tourism.

Above all, I think a good Councilmember is someone who listens. They approach people with empathy, seek out perspectives different from their own, and make decisions based

2.) What do you think is the biggest issue facing Flagstaff? Give specifics and ideas for addressing the issue.

The biggest issue facing Flagstaff today is housing affordability.

I believe Flagstaff is already on the right path. The 10-Year Housing Plan is a wonderfully robust document that explores a wide range of tools for increasing housing affordability while acknowledging the limitations imposed by Arizona law. As a City Councilmember, I would hold

myself accountable to the goals of that plan, paying close attention to its progress, looking for opportunities to accelerate its implementation, and advocating for the solutions it outlines.

I would also continue supporting efforts at the state level to give cities greater authority over housing policy. This could include allowing communities to determine their own approaches to inclusionary zoning, rent stabilization measures, short-term rental regulation, and financing structures that can increase the supply of affordable housing.

One area I would like to see emphasized is affordable homeownership. While affordable rental housing is critically important, I believe Flagstaff should also prioritize development projects that create opportunities for residents to build equity and long-term financial stability through homeownership.

At the same time, housing affordability does not exist in isolation. As the Housing Plan acknowledges, many Flagstaff residents are facing a broader affordability crisis. Reducing the overall cost of living can be just as important as reducing housing costs.

For that reason, I would support complementary efforts that help residents save money in other aspects of daily life. One example would be stronger promotion of public transportation, walking, and biking. The City could explore incentives such as free bus passes, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

3.) What are your top three priorities for being a City Councilmember and why?

My top three priorities as a Councilmember would be community and environmental resilience, positive tourism, and pedestrian infrastructure and safety.

The Flagstaff Carbon Neutrality Plan outlines 15 target areas across four strategies, and I think there are some amazing opportunities within that document. One example would be developing a citywide municipal composting program. This could significantly reduce the amount of organic

waste sent to the landfill while also lowering methane emissions, which are substantially more harmful than CO₂. I would also be interested in exploring municipal solar investments. City-owned solar generation could help provide discounted energy to residents while increasing Flagstaff's energy resilience. I would love to see creative dual-purpose projects as well. For example, solar panels could be installed over heavily used sections of the Urban Trail to generate renewable energy while also providing shade, rain cover, and snow protection for pedestrians and cyclists.

As conditions become hotter and drier, every summer feels like it could be the one when Flagstaff burns. I think it would be incredible if the City and County implemented an automated wildfire awareness alert system similar to Amber Alerts. Beyond emergency notifications, these messages could educate visitors about current fire restrictions, explain what Stage 1 through Stage 3 fire conditions mean, and provide simple steps people can take to reduce wildfire risk while visiting Northern Arizona.

This ties directly into my second priority: creating a more positive relationship between tourists and locals. Copenhagen piloted and later expanded a program called [CopenPay](#) that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4.) What method do you expect to use to make a decision when you believe that there is a segment of the Flagstaff population not being heard on a particular issue?

I suspect there are often segments of the community whose voices are underrepresented in local decision-making. While public meetings are an important part of the process, they are not always accessible to everyone. Many residents work during meeting hours, have caregiving responsibilities, lack transportation, or may simply find the formal structure of City Council meetings intimidating or difficult to navigate.

If elected, I would make a deliberate effort to meet people where they are. One idea I would like to pursue is holding regular community office hours in rotating locations throughout the city, such as coffee shops, libraries, community centers, and neighborhood events. These informal settings can make it easier for residents to share concerns, ask questions, and engage with their local government.

I would also support expanding opportunities for public input through online engagement, surveys, and community outreach efforts that reach people who may not traditionally participate in Council meetings.

When confronting a particularly contentious issue, I would start by identifying who is most likely to be affected by the decision, especially those who may experience negative impacts or who have historically had less influence in public processes. I would seek out those perspectives directly, listen carefully, and ensure they are considered alongside other viewpoints before making a decision.

Ultimately, my goal would be to make decisions based on a combination of community input, evidence, and long-term outcomes, while ensuring that the people most affected by a policy have a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

5.) Please give an example of when you were in a position of responsibility and others disagreed with you on how an important matter should be handled. How did you help resolve the issue?

As a Fulbright Scholar at Tel Aviv University, I co-led an initiative to expand the curriculum in my peace and conflict studies program to better reflect the role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. I became interested in the issue after identifying a gap in the curriculum that overlooked research showing that diverse representation in peace processes often contributes to more durable and lasting outcomes. My goal was to ensure future students were exposed to these perspectives and the evidence supporting them.

While most faculty members were immediately supportive and began incorporating the material into their courses, the Dean of the program disagreed with how I had approached the effort. He felt that I had made a procedural mistake by first building support among students and faculty before speaking with him directly.

Recognizing that the disagreement was about process rather than substance, I requested a meeting with him and acknowledged that I could have approached him earlier. Drawing on the conflict-resolution principles we both studied, we focused on understanding each other's underlying interests. For me, the priority was strengthening the curriculum by incorporating important research and perspectives that were missing. For him, the priority was managing institutional and reputational considerations.

Once we understood what mattered most to one another, we were able to find common ground. Together, we developed a path forward that addressed his concerns while achieving the broader goal of expanding the program's approach to peacebuilding. The result was the creation of a new course and a [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

6.) What is your leadership style, please provide an example of your style in use.

My leadership style is collaborative and connector-oriented. I believe effective leaders do not need to be the smartest person in the room; they need to listen carefully, bring people together, identify strengths, and help good ideas become reality. I am comfortable seeking out those with greater expertise, learning from them, and then helping move ideas from discussion to action.

A good example of this approach occurred at my organization following the overturning of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. Employees began using an anonymous internal discussion board to share concerns about healthcare access for women living in states with increasing restrictions. Many of the contributors were researchers and scientists who articulated thoughtful arguments for expanding employee healthcare benefits.

Recognizing an opportunity to create change, I volunteered to organize interested employees and posted my contact information. Seven people joined the effort, and together we developed a proposal advocating for expanded travel benefits for employees who needed to travel significant distances to access medical care.

As the group's leader, my role was not to be the primary subject matter expert. Instead, I focused on understanding each person's strengths, creating space for different perspectives, organizing our work, and ensuring everyone felt comfortable contributing at a level that matched their risk tolerance. I coordinated meetings, helped build consensus, co-represented the group in discussions with executive leadership, and communicated progress to employees through town halls and written updates.

The effort was ultimately successful, resulting in a new benefit that reimbursed eligible U.S. employees for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7.) What is your understanding, awareness, and familiarity with the Flagstaff Zoning Code?

I am not an expert on the Flagstaff Zoning Code, nor have I studied it in any formal or professional capacity. My interest in zoning issues has primarily grown out of topics I already care about, particularly high-density housing, mixed-use development that promotes walkability, and industrial zoning practices that help separate noisy or polluting businesses from residential neighborhoods. Because of those interests, I occasionally review zoning regulations and planning discussions to better understand how cities balance growth, economic development, and quality of life. One area that particularly caught my attention was the City's preemptive evaluation of zoning and land-use considerations related to potential data center development. I was interested in this issue from an environmental standpoint as well as the fact that many data centers are used for military and surveillance AI technologies.

I was pleased to see how Flagstaff approached the issue before any specific project or land purchase was proposed. Rather than reacting after development pressures emerged, the City took the initiative to evaluate where such facilities might be appropriate and what zoning standards would be needed to guide future proposals. I found that approach thoughtful and forward-looking. By considering the issue in advance, the City created an opportunity for public discussion and careful policy development before being faced with a specific application. I also appreciated the depth of discussion that took place during the Planning and Zoning Commission's deliberations. Even as someone observing from the perspective of a resident interested in planning issues, it was clear that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- 8.) A key role of the Flagstaff City Council is to adopt the city's budget; how would you balance the seven key community priorities and the realities of the city's financial position with the Council's role of policy development?

Flagstaff's budget is ultimately a reflection of its values. While the City has seven community priorities, I do not believe they should be viewed as competing interests so much as interconnected goals that can reinforce one another when approached thoughtfully. As a Councilmember, I would focus on policies and investments that deliver benefits across multiple priorities at once while remaining mindful of the City's fiscal realities. Housing affordability would be a central consideration in my approach. As I noted previously, I believe the City's 10-Year Housing Plan provides a strong roadmap, and I would look for opportunities to advance its goals through strategic investments that make it easier for residents to live, work, and thrive in Flagstaff. At the same time, I would prioritize projects that improve affordability more broadly, such as pedestrian infrastructure, public transportation, energy efficiency, and community resilience initiatives that can help lower household costs over time. I also believe the Council has a responsibility to think beyond annual budget cycles. Many of the challenges facing Flagstaff, including housing, wildfire risk, extreme weather, infrastructure needs, and economic diversification, require long-term planning. Good policy development means evaluating not only the immediate costs of a decision but also the future costs of inaction. When resources are limited, I would approach budget decisions by asking three questions: Who benefits? Who bears the burden? And does this investment leave Flagstaff stronger in the future than it is today? I would pay particular attention to residents who are most vulnerable to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Rachael (Rey) Costello

██████████ | ██████████ | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachaelcostello23/>

EDUCATION

Tel Aviv University

M.A. Conflict Resolution and Mediation

Fulbright Fellow (2020-2021)

Graduation - August 2021

Northern Arizona University

B.A. International Relations, B.S. Political Science

Model United Nations

Graduation - August 2018

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Nature Conservancy

Executive Coordinator to Global Managing Director of Tackle Climate Change

Remote | Flagstaff, Arizona

February 2022 – present

Provide strategic project, operations, and program coordination support for the Global Managing Director of Tackle Climate Change, helping advance conservation priorities through stakeholder engagement, partnership coordination, reporting, communications, and project implementation.

- Coordinate communications and activities across a geographically dispersed global conservation team and external stakeholders.
- Develop and maintain relationships with board members, donors, government officials, vendors, business partners, and staff at all organizational levels.
- Support conservation, climate, and fundraising initiatives through project management, strategic planning, and administrative leadership.
- Track, analyze, and report on financial, fundraising, conservation, and program performance metrics to inform decision-making.
- Develop reports, presentations, briefing materials, fact sheets, and meeting agendas for leadership, partners, and stakeholders.
- Coordinate contracts, vendor relationships, procurement processes, expense tracking, and budget-related activities.
- Manage complex domestic and international logistics, timelines, deliverables, and cross-functional projects with minimal supervision.
- Monitor project progress, document outcomes, and communicate results to leadership and stakeholders.
- Project-managed and co-authored a global extreme heat science report intended to inform local policymakers in arid climates.
- Supported organization-wide initiatives related to climate resilience, human rights, equity, and environmental stewardship.

Fulbright Fellowship Program

Fulbright Fellow

Tel Aviv, Israel

August 2020 – August 2021

Awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to pursue MA in Conflict Resolution and Mediation from Tel Aviv University.

- Designed and implemented an advocacy initiative focused on increasing women's participation in peacebuilding and security through higher education.
- Built partnerships with faculty, administrators, and students to advance institutional change and program development.
- Negotiated creation of a new university course and collaborated on curriculum development.
- Monitored outcomes, evaluated progress against established objectives, and communicated results to stakeholders.

Women Wage Peace

Research and Policy Intern

Tel Aviv, Israel

March 2021 – June 2021

- Conducted policy research and analysis to identify barriers to implementation of a National Action Plan under UNSCR 1325.
- Identified and developed partnership opportunities with nonprofit, environmental, and advocacy organizations.
- Tracked policy developments, analyzed legislative proposals, and prepared reports for organizational stakeholders.
- Facilitated dialogue among diverse constituencies and represented the organization in cross-community engagement initiatives.
- Mobilized community and student stakeholders in support of peacebuilding and civic engagement efforts.

Auxilliares de Conversación

Granada/ Spain

Prepared lessons and taught English in an underprivileged elementary and middle school. Managed several classrooms and developed lesson plans with minimal supervision. Provided support to other teachers and performed other duties as assigned.

- Developed lessons on Healthy Communities; promoting civil/community engagement and physical/mental health
- Developed and implemented a workshop on healthy masculinity

The German Marshall Fund of the United States

Washington DC/ United States

*Transatlantic Leadership Initiatives**September 2017 – March 2018*

- Coordinated and implemented high-profile international fellowship and leadership programs involving government officials, nonprofit partners, vendors, and institutional stakeholders.
- Managed project logistics, timelines, budgets, procurement activities, and stakeholder communications.
- Developed program materials, reports, presentations, and briefing documents for leadership and participants.
- Maintained relationships with domestic and international partners and served as a liaison among multiple stakeholder groups.
- Supported financial management, purchasing processes, and vendor coordination.
- Monitored program outcomes and contributed to evaluation and reporting efforts.

ADDITIONAL**LANGUAGES:** German (fluent), Spanish (basic)**TECHNICAL SKILLS:** Project Management • Program Coordination • Stakeholder Engagement • Strategic Partnerships • Cross-Sector Collaboration • Government Relations • Fundraising Support • Grant Writing • Contract Coordination • Budget Tracking • Policy Analysis • Reporting & Data Analysis • Coalition Building • Public Speaking • Presentation Development • Negotiation • Mediation • Community Engagement • Microsoft Office Suite • SharePoint • Teams • Workday • HubSpot • Kindful • Canva • STATA • Comfortable working in strenuous conditions, harsh environments, and remote locations**OTHER EDUCATION:** Certification in International Mediation**INTERESTS:** archery, hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, ceramics, art, reading, travel