

GOOD ECONOMY - FRAMEWORK

The collective vision for Flagstaff's economy is deeply rooted in ecological sustainability, social equity, and community well-being, guided by principles of creativity, openness, fairness, and continuous learning. It envisions an economy that not only meets the basic needs of its residents but also supports a rich, fulfilling life beyond work, characterized by strong social ties, creative expression, and active civic engagement.

The guiding principles of a good economy challenge the conventional economic model, which depends on unlimited growth, zero-sum competition, and compulsive consumption. Systemic failures produced by this conventional economy include great concentrations of wealth, economic insecurity and disempowerment, homelessness, social isolation, and desperation for many. The resulting division between the “haves” and “have-nots” tears at the social fabric and destroys community well-being. Moreover, unlimited economic growth and the endless consumption upon which it depends are fundamentally at odds with our capacity to meet the climate crisis and other ecological crises bearing down upon us.

By contrast, a good economy embraces principles of abundance, cooperative engagement, intergenerational responsibility, and meaningful living over material consumption. It seeks to eliminate extremes of wealth, recognizing that individual contentment and community well-being are relational and dependent on equitable resource sharing. A good economy ensures access to high-quality essential services like healthcare, childcare, education, and housing. It fosters a community where creativity, freedom, and genuine belonging flourish, moving from a narrow focus on job-based living to a richer, more diverse life experience. The economy's health in a good economy is measured not by traditional metrics such as GDP that consider even diseases, environmental disasters, and wars a source of economic growth but by metrics such as the Genuine Progress Indicator that reflect real progress toward well-being and quality of life.

The city government's role in a good economy is to facilitate infrastructure that promotes quality of life for all equally and to guide private sector behavior to ensure social justice and environmental sustainability. Toward those ends, public policy is designed to protect and restore community natural resources, support living wages, and direct public investments in housing to permanently remove a significant portion from the speculative market so it remains affordable. It is also designed to support resident-owned businesses, limit construction to a human scale, and prioritize redevelopment of neighborhoods and commercial centers.

Municipal public utilities that distribute and conserve essential resources are expanded in a good economy. In addition to water, waste management is expanded to further separate and recycle materials within the community; internet services as a public utility does away with the near monopoly of private service providers; and a public utility in food that supports year-round, large-scale cooperative enterprises for growing and storing basic food supplies strengthens food security during supply chain disruptions.

Other practical manifestations of this vision include a carbon-neutral community with a flourishing natural environment and a strong circular economy in which sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling of existing materials and products decrease consumption and destructive impacts on earth's living systems. In addition, a good economy seeks to reduce dependence on outside financial inflows while reducing financial outflows to enhance community self-sufficiency and resilience. Guided by the goal of fostering cultures of cooperation, worker empowerment, and non-exploitation, a good economy supports a diversity of economic forms (e.g., worker-owned cooperatives and benefit corporations). The business sector is characterized by enterprises committed to living wages and comprehensive benefits, ensuring economic security for all.

The word economy comes from the ancient Greek word *oikos* meaning home. We believe a good economy supports the thriving living systems of the earth—our home—and nurtures the collaborative, cooperative, and empathetic capacities needed for all of us to be at home in the social world.