GROUNDSWELL

CAPITAL

Our Mission

Groundswell Capital's mission is to empower communities through innovative financial solutions that advance equity, sustainability, and innovation.



Tucson Small Business Center

Small Businesses

- Lending
- Grants
- Education



EARTHWISE

Affordable Green Financing

Projects that make your space safer, cleaner, and greener.

Homeowners

Small Businesses



- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels
- Solar Water Heater
- Solar Pool Heater
- Solar Pool Pump
- Solar Attic Fan
- Window Film and Solar Screens



- Window Repair
- Window Replacement
- Doors
- Garage Doors
- Hurricane Shutters & Fasteners
- Window Shutters
- Hail Protection
- Exterior Siding



- Pool Pump
- Low-flow: Toilet, Shower, or Aerator
- Septic to Sewer Conversion
- Sewer Lateral Line Replacement
- Irrigation Package
- Rain Water Barrel
- Cistern
- Sprinkler Heads
- Drip Irrigation
- Electric Water Heater
- Gas Water Heater
- Plumbing



- Wheelchair Ramps
- Stair Lifts
- Walk-in Tubs and Showers
- Doorway and Hallway Widening
- Assistive Technologies



- HVAC
- Duct Testing & Repair
- Ceiling and Attic Fans
- Programmable Thermostat



- Roof Replacement (Tile, Shingle, Metal)
- Roof Repair & Reinforcement
- Hurricane Clips/Straps/Roof Anchors
- Roof Soffit Vent Sealing/Flashing
- Reflective Roof



- Weatherization
- Insulation and Air Sealing

GOOD ENERGY

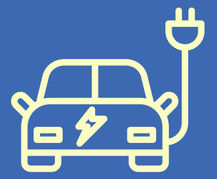
LOAN FUND



Clean Energy Generation



Net-Zero Building



Clean Transportation



Water Conservation

new project / new approach



SONORAN ABUNDANCE FUND

FIRST, SOME BACKSTORY

DECADES OF COMMUNITY CONFLICT HAVE BOILED OVER.

Project Blue became a shorthand in Tucson for everything people fear about secretive, resource-hungry mega-projects in the desert. It also exposed how broken the relationship has become between economic development officials and the community.

‘The city that draws the line’: one Arizona community’s fight against a huge datacenter - The Guardian

Tucson City Council rejects Project Blue data center amid intense community pressure - Arizona Luminaria

Arizona city defeats massive data center project over water, energy concerns - Fox Business

Public officials reconsider NDA process amid Project Blue outrage - Arizona Luminaria

Photo by Michael McKisson, published in Arizona Luminaria

- Project Blue was a proposed 290-acre, multibillion-dollar data center campus on Pima County land, backed by developer Beale Infrastructure with Amazon Web Services as the end customer.
- Plans envisioned up to 10 buildings totaling about 2 million square feet and as much as 600MW of power demand, making it one of the largest developments in county history.
- For at least two years, city and county officials discussed the project under sweeping non-disclosure agreements, with no public disclosure of AWS’s role or detailed water and energy impacts.
- In June 2025, the Pima County Board of Supervisors voted 3–2 to approve a $3.6 billion land sale and rezoning for Project Blue, seeing it as the largest capital investment in county history with major promised tax revenues.
- Once details emerged public outrage exploded.
- On August 6, 2025, after weeks of intense community pressure and packed hearings, Tucson City Council voted unanimously to halt annexation and end all negotiations, effectively killing the city’s role in Project Blue.
- Even after Tucson’s rejection, Pima County continued advancing agreements, deepening the sense of disconnect between different levels of government and the community.

“WE NEED TO BE THE CITY THAT SAYS NOT HERE, NOT NOW AND NOT LIKE THIS.”

—

Lane Santa Cruz
Tucson City Councilperson

Challenge

IN DISCUSSING THESE CHALLENGES WITH HIGH RANKING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS AT THE CITY AND COUNTY AND TRUSTEE MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA, THERE IS A PALPABLE “US VS. THEM” MINDSET, A BYPRODUCT OF YEARS OF FRUSTRATION.

“If only we could cut the public out of the process.”

“Our [elected officials] need to show more bravery.”

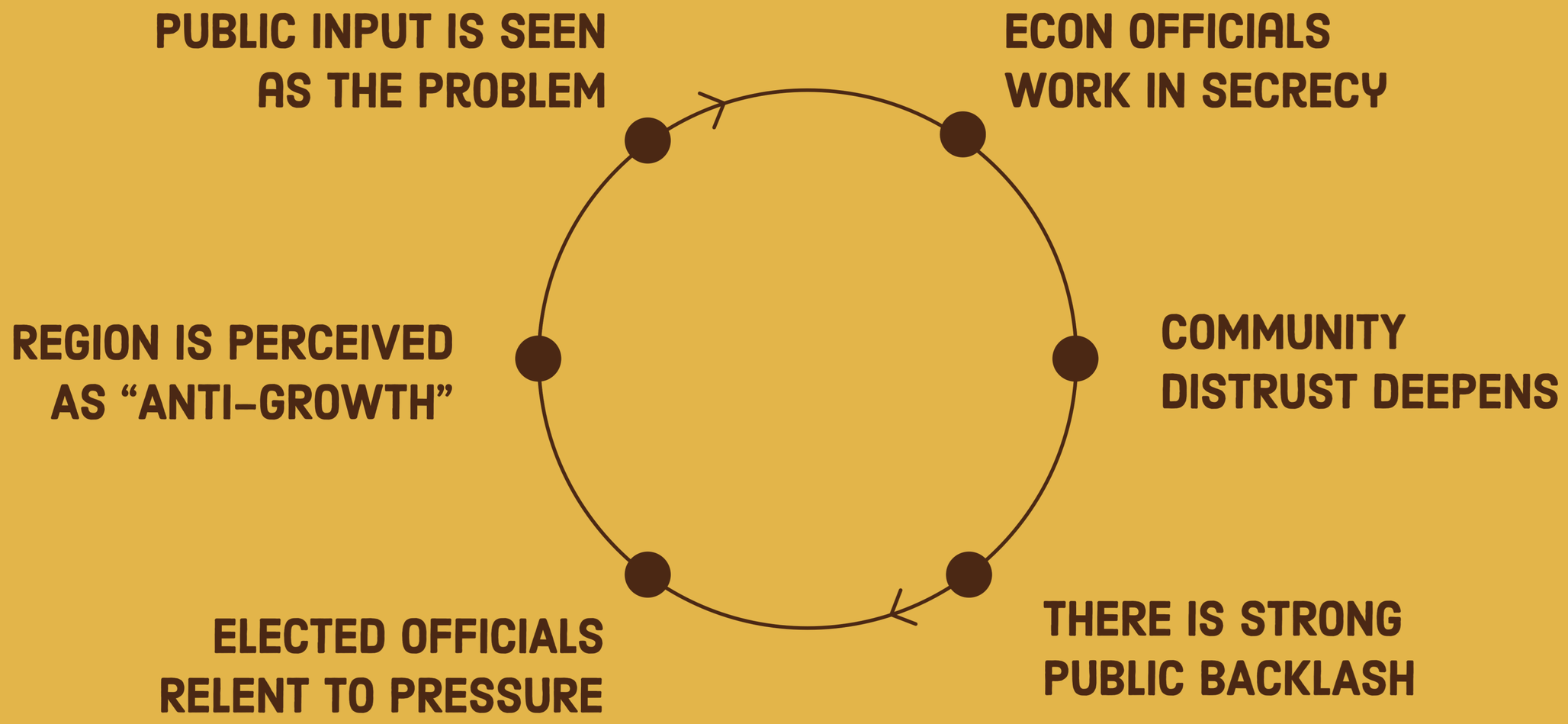
“This has been a problem for decades.”

“Someone has to be the bad guy and take the heat.”

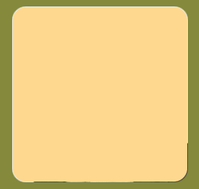
“Now people won’t speak out due to fear of blowback.”

Source: Quotes from primary interviews we conducted, left anonymous due to the sensitive nature of the topic

The Fracture Loop



“IF WE TREAT THESE PROJECTS AS A FIGHT WITH THE COMMUNITY, NOBODY WINS.”



—

Rob Tull,CPA, CFE, FRM
Treasurer, Groundswell Capital

Reframing the Debate

AN ECONOMIC CATALYST FOR REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Transformative investment, jobs and tax revenue are essential for Southern Arizona's lagging economy. We continue to be stonewalled by a community that has a remarkably anti-growth mindset.

AN UNSUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DRAIN AND CORPORATE EXPLOITATION

These exploitative developments guzzle our scarce water and electricity resources for minimal jobs and our public leaders have eroded our trust over time by failing to deliver on promises and working in secrecy.

WE HAVE A PROUD AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY WHO WILL SUPPORT THE RIGHT DEVELOPMENT

People want good jobs, more tax revenue and community investment, cheaper energy and a more climate resilient system. They have failed to see and believe these types of net benefits will result from the region's economic plans.

Truth #1

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES DON'T SEE THEIR VALUES REFLECTED IN EFFORTS LIKE PROJECT BLUE.

"You do not come to our desert and disrespect it."

— Caryl Clement
Landscape Architect
Local Resident

As quoted in Arizona Luminaria

"We need to find common ground with the business community."

— John A, "Skip" Laitner
Energy and Resource Economist
Board of Directors, Sustainable Tucson

From primary interview

"This town wants to know who they are working with."

— Melissa Cordero
Lead Arizona Veterans Power America Organizer
Common Defense Fund

From depth interview

Truth #2

THE PUBLIC IS ANXIOUS ABOUT RESOURCE SCARCITY.

91%

are concerned about Colorado River supply running dry.

74%

believe drinking water and food production should always be prioritized over corporate needs.

50%

predict there won't be enough water in the desert within 100 years.

Based on a poll of 799 registered Arizona voters conducted by Morning Consult.

Truth #3

THERE HAS BEEN A FAILURE OF EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

“Our internal marketing to our community is embarrassing. I cannot understand how we invest in all these materials to share across the world to site selectors but nobody in the community has seen them.”

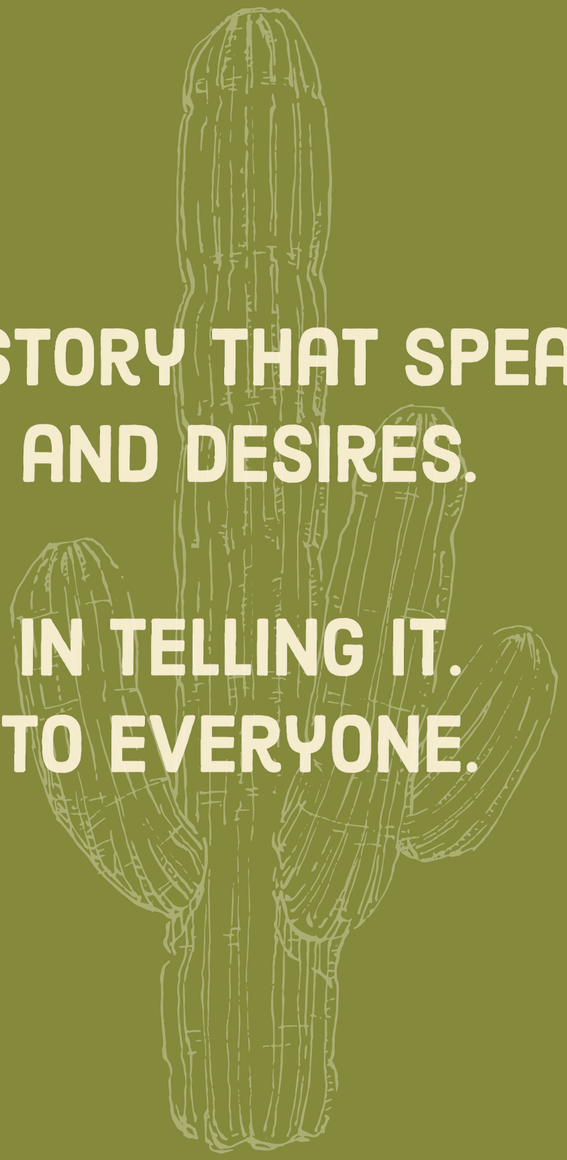
— Patrick Marcus
Founder, Marcus Engineering LLC
Commercialization Lead, Tech Launch Arizona
Long-time local business advocate

“When community partnerships are absent or weak, stakeholders report lower trust and engagement; conversely, when communities are positioned as co-designers rather than passive recipients of development, participation and support increase significantly.”

— Mahryan et al., Journal of Community Psychology (2023), "How community partnerships shape engagement across difference"

WE NEED AN ECONOMIC STORY THAT SPEAKS TO THE COMMUNITY'S CONCERNS AND DESIRES.

AND WE NEED TO INVEST IN TELLING IT.
NOT JUST TO OUTSIDERS. TO EVERYONE.



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THE BIG IDEA

SONORAN ABUNDANCE FUND

NATURE

Centers the Sonoran Desert ecology, with which harmony is a communal priority.

CULTURE

Calls to mind the lifestyle of this region. The food, the art, the architecture, the music, the heritage, the shared values.

COOPERATIVE

Evades the baggage of government distrust and municipal labels. Denotes a cooperative region without borders.

PROSPERITY

Shifts the frame from extractive growth (take from the land and people) to regenerative prosperity (give back more than we take).

Pillar #1

WE DON'T HAVE TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITY CHOOSE BETWEEN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WELLBEING.

WE SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT THAT:

- Creates net benefits such as jobs and tax revenues to fund public services and infrastructure improvements.
- Leverages our communal strengths and our local talent across creative and professional ecosystems.
- Is in harmony with our desert environment, learning from 2,000 years of wisdom going back to Hohokam farmers and canal builders.

WE WON'T SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT THAT:

- Happens in secrecy and without community buy-in.
- Significantly changes the cultural makeup of our community.
- Has net negative impacts such as resource depletion or adverse living conditions that risk our future in the desert.

Pillar #2

WE HAVE ATTRACTIVE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES THAT MAKE US AN IDEAL SITE FOR CLIMATE-FORWARD PROJECTS.

PORT OF ENTRY / BINATIONAL TRADE

An ideal hub near the US-Mexico border for logistics and warehousing, pipeline to California and inner U.S.

LEADING R&D IN CLIMATE + LAND-USE

Leading innovation in land-use, water and climate resilience technologies anchored by a top research university.

THE SOLAR PROMISED LAND

Southern Arizona gets abundant sunshine 85% of the year — stable climate and ample room for solar farms.

MOST WATER RESILIENT COMMUNITY IN SOUTHWEST

One of the leaders in creative, robust desert water systems and a community that is bought-in on responsible desert living.

A DESIRABLE SONORAN LIFESTYLE

A low cost of living and awe-inspiring setting with renowned cultural assets that help attract and keep workforce.

Note: These 5 distinctive regional assets were crystalized from a cross-analysis of the Pima County, City of Tucson, and Southern Arizona Chamber of Commerce economic development strategies.

Pillar #3

WE MAKE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, NOT A POLITICAL CONCESSION.

- Economic development has often been seen as outward-facing only. We need to tell a story to our own community.
- When communities co-design projects, support and stability increases, and friction is reduced.
- A unified community vision will make it easier to align and focus our regional assets on making projects reality.

COMMUNITY FOCUS

DEVELOP A SHARED COMMUNITY VISION

- Lead a public process to proactively draft a more detailed community vision on what projects they want. Intentionally engage those groups most active in fighting past development projects.
- House the agreement on a website in English and Spanish in a way that is plain spoken, succinct and visual.

DESIGN A DEAL EXPLAINER FORMAT

- Create a repeatable story template for any project: what it is, who benefits, what it costs, what the community asked for and how this deal fits with the vision.
- Deliver it as simple visual one-pagers and short motion pieces instead of dense staff reports or jargon-heavy decks.

MAKE RESIDENTS THE PROTAGONISTS.

- Produce short resident and small-business profiles that show how community-shaped growth will positively impact daily life.
- Use those stories to explain tradeoffs and benefits in plain language, tying them to specific projects and outcomes.

DEVELOPER FOCUS

BUILD A VETTED PORTFOLIO OF PROJECTS

- Publish a simple portfolio of projects that shows clear entitlement path, visible community support, and aligned public partners (city, utilities, university) for each deal.
- For each example, make the narrative: “Here’s how we reduced surprises and shortened the timeline.”

BUILD A DIGITAL “FRONT DOOR” WITHIN OUR FRAME

- Curate the various economic development resources site selectors and developers are seeking and wrap in a “Sonoran Abundance” story-focused user experience.
- Include direct language about where there’s flexibility (design, phasing, community benefits) and where there isn’t (water, displacement, cultural sites).

MARKET THE FUND AS A RISK PARTNER.

- Position stories around: “We help you avoid death-by-NIMBY and last-minute council surprises by co-designing community benefits up front.”
- Identify 1–2 early projects where you can move quickly, show clean process, and then tell this story relentlessly.

“THIS STORY IS BIGGER THAN THE FUND. IT’S ABOUT SHARING A VISION AS A COMMUNITY.”



—

Dre Thompson

President and CEO, Groundswell Capital

Questions?

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