



# Mesa Southside Neighborhoods' **RESILIENCE HUBS ACTION FRAMEWORK**

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**Mesa Southside Neighborhoods’  
2024 Resilience Hubs Action Framework**

**Executive Summary**

The Southside Neighborhoods in west Mesa have been a hotbed of activities to strengthen the existing community fabric, address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and better prepare for the increasing extreme heat and other disruptions. These resilience building programs have culminated in the development of the Southside Neighborhoods’ 2023 Resilience Hubs Action Framework, the first step in creating a necklace of resilience hubs in the area. While resilience hubs are an evolving concept, we have defined resilience hubs as a trusted, place-based network of neighbors that operate a self-sustaining community hub offering residents collaboratively designed programming the vast majority of the time. The network can spring into action and provide emergency services if there is a disaster or disruption and the resilience hub can become a central location for recovery services. A network of resilience hubs will expand the burgeoning community capacity, especially during difficult times, shift power dynamics, preserve the communities’ cultural heritage, address public health, and increase neighborhood economic vitality. This will be accomplished in two phases: the first phase focusing on the people, programming, and network building and the second phase concentrating on physical space, long-term leadership, and sustainable funding streams. Southside Neighborhoods Resilience Hubs not only represent opportunities to assist each other in the community but also help to create new systems that make people’s lives better.

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## I. Introduction

The Southside Neighborhoods' 2024 Resilience Hubs Action Framework focuses on underserved, underinvested neighborhoods in West Mesa, Arizona, battling climate hazards including extreme heat, gentrification, and resulting displacement from large-scale development and proposed green infrastructure projects. The Southside Neighborhoods are not only frontline environmental justice communities, with disproportionately high cancer and respiratory risks (+90-95%, [EPA EJScreen tool](#)), but are also highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic from an economic and public health standpoint, testing traditional recovery efforts. Despite these challenges, a strong and mighty sense of community is present, with leadership emerging that can assume formal roles to improve the economic, environmental, and public health profiles of their neighborhoods.



Figure 1: Business Districts in Mesa and Tempe, Arizona along the Apache Corridor

The Healthy Urban Environments Initiative provided funds in late 2020 to develop a strategic plan for a resilience hub in West Mesa. This funding was supplemented by an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Justice Small Grant to develop demonstration projects that support the development of a resilience hub and execute the hyperlocal heat action plan developed from [The Nature's Cooling System](#) project. Through various community meetings, the concept of a resilience hub was introduced and neighborhood needs were discussed.

Table 1: How we know what the community needs and wants

Engagement	Description	Dates	# of Participants
Pláticas	Conversations with residents at various popular food vendors	2022	Total 40 residents
Walking Audits		2021	Total 14 residents
ASU MIX Center Community Advisory Council Meetings	Community leaders from the Southside Neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods serve as advisors to newly sited Sidney Poitier School of Film/ASU MIX Center	2020-present	10 members
Distrito Latino Business Task Force meetings	Consultants for businesses impacted by COVID-19	2020- 2022	12 business owners
Better Block Southside project	Rapid Community Driven Event	12 community planning sessions in 2022	Over 30 partners and 500+ attendees
Distrito Latino and Mesa Urban Garden Mural Projects/Barrío Stories	Placemaking mural projects that reflect the neighborhood culture; documentation of community leaders' stories	2021-2022	Over 300 individuals
Tools for Supporting Our Community Presentation	Stakeholder convening for RAIL CDC updates: Placemaking, Financial Opportunity Center and Resilience Hub	September, 2022	Over 80 people in attendance including residents, business owners, and the City of Mesa Mayor
Heat Action Planning	Neighborhood developed heat action plan	2016-2019	Workshops and community outreach - 120 residents
HeatReady Neighborhoods project	Equitable, place-based planning rubric for mitigating and adapting to extreme heat	2021-2022	Interviews, surveys and focus group- 89 respondents
Resilience Hub Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	Community identified assets, hazards, and vulnerabilities and barriers to reducing risk for emergency management	2022	Intensive sessions with 5 key stakeholders and limited attempts with 50 residents during other community events

Despite numerous setbacks due to COVID-19 restrictions, project goals were established, community programs were prioritized, and a deep discussion about emergency preparedness was conducted. While this project took many interesting twists and deviations from the original plan, **a framework for the development of a necklace of resilience hubs emerged that builds community capacity, especially during difficult times, preserves the community cultural heritage, shifts power dynamics, addresses public health, and increases wealth for all residents. In doing so, we are creating new systems that make people’s lives better.**

## II. The Spotlights Community

Within metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona, there is a special community, rich with culture, hardworking people, and strong community ties, the Southside neighborhoods in West Mesa. The project area is located adjacent to the downtown business district. Historically, the Southside neighborhoods were built for workers in the vast citrus groves in Mesa. As residential development expanded eastward, the Southside neighborhoods became more Latinx, more impoverished, more neglected, and more precarious. According to the U.S. Census, the neighborhood is made up of 70% Latinx with 35% of the population being foreign born, and Spanish as the primary language in 60% of the households. The median household income of the neighborhood is roughly \$29,000 and 23.9% of the population is below the poverty line. It is an environmental justice frontline community, with a high percentage of renter occupied (65%) and very low-income households, the demographics that often encourage displacement.

The light rail extension connects Mesa to many cities and has accelerated the path of progress. \$1.27 billion in approved development is slated for the downtown area of Mesa, with 1100 units of market rate and luxury apartments planned. Arizona State University has completed a \$100 million campus called ASU Media and Immersive eXperience (MIX) Center, which includes the Sidney Poitier Film School. For forty years, east Mesa has experienced rapid suburban sprawl development and City of Mesa infrastructure investment was concentrated in the eastern region, leaving the historic downtown and west Mesa communities neglected.

The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool ([CEJST](#)) clearly identifies Southside Mesa as a disadvantaged community facing significant burdens.

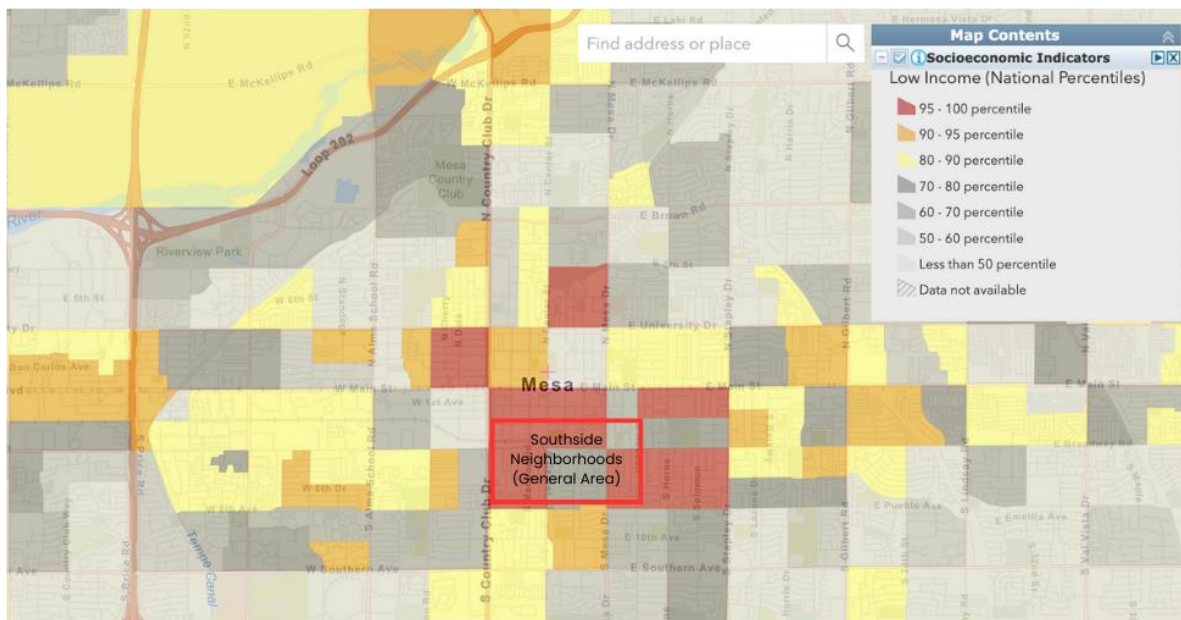


Figure 2: CEJST Tool outlining the southside neighborhood boundaries.

The EPA EJScreen tool also revealed that this neighborhood is at a distinct disadvantage compared to other neighborhoods across the state, EPA region and the country. Ozone, for example, highly influenced by extreme heat episodes, has an index of 95%.

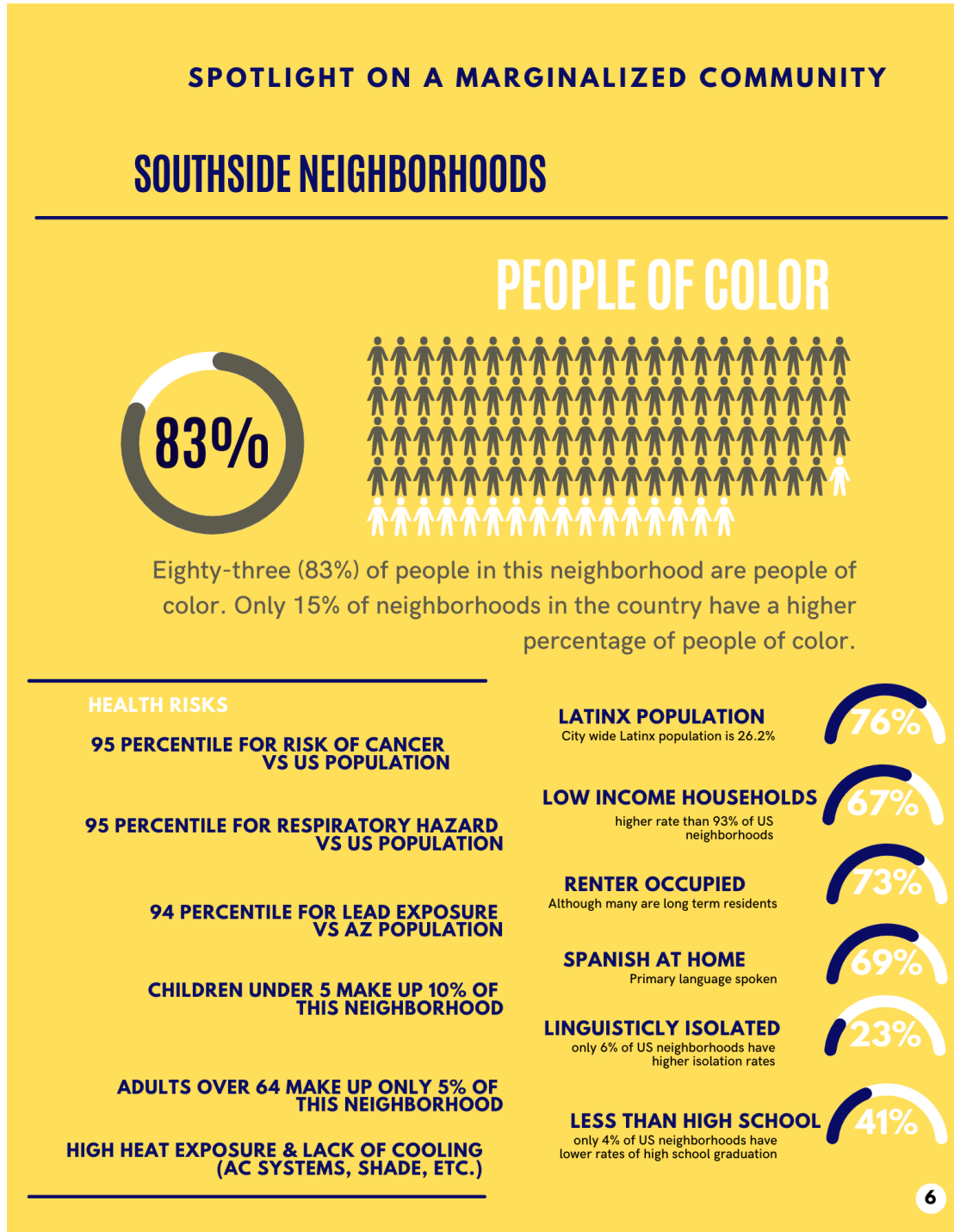


Figure 3. Southside neighborhoods statistics on socioeconomic, demographic, and health risks. Credit: RAIL CDC.



# INCOME COMPARISON

Broadway  
Corridor



Mesa



Maricopa County



Figure 4: The implementation of the Southside Mesa Resilience Hubs project will vastly improve the health and well-being of residents, prepare residents for disasters, and build capacity to promote a more equitable future, while maintaining the neighborhood's cultural character.

### III. What is a Resilience Hub

Each community has a space that residents know, visit frequently, and trust. These can be libraries, city-run community centers, schools, faith-based campuses, local coffee shops, and are commonly referred to as “third places.” A resilience hub is a trusted community space that is also retrofitted or built to be prepared in emergency situations and can act as a conduit for information and resources following a disturbance (COVID-19) or disaster (fire or power outage after a storm). The term “resilience hub” is an evolving concept and our work reflects the following definition:

***Southside Mesa Resilience Hub*** = A trusted, place-based network of neighbors that operate a self-sustaining community hub offering residents **collaboratively designed programming the vast majority of the time**. The network can spring into action and provide emergency services if there is a disaster or disruption and the resilience hub can become a central location for recovery services afterwards.

Table 2. Differing concepts of resilience hubs

Group	Resilience Hub Definition	Source
Urban Sustainability Directors' Network	Resilience Hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life. Hubs provide an opportunity to effectively work at the nexus of community resilience, emergency management, climate change mitigation, and social equity while providing opportunities for communities to become more self-determining, socially connected, and successful before, during and after disruptions.	resilience-hub.org
Cambridge Community Center	A physical location in a neighborhood that is altered to serve a community year-round and in the event of a disruption, and throughout recovery.	resilience-hub.org
NorCal Resilience Network	Resilience Hubs: community serving facilities, shifting power to the neighborhood. Resilience Spaces: community gardens, open spaces Resilience Villages: community supported green infrastructure, tool banks. Resilient Blocks and Neighborhoods: centered on community cohesiveness, connectivity, collaboration	norcalresilience.org
Austin, TX	Resilience Hub Network Operation Models (being explored) = Agency-Owned + Agency Operated Agency-Owned + Community Programmed Community-Owned + Community Operated	www.austintexas.gov/department/our-approach
Vibrant Hawaii	A network of trusted, people powered spaces that provide resources to build more connected and prepared communities.	https://www.vibrant-hawaii.org/hubs

The goal of Southside Mesa resilience hubs is to have the community design their own neighborhood destiny, preserving the cultural heritage and increasing economic vitality, with government, agencies, and non-profits in the helper seat. This requires a shift in power dynamics, increased capacity for residents to advocate for change that they want to see in their community, and, most of all, an increase or the establishment of a mutual aid network that harkens back to earlier times when neighbors helped neighbors, creating a strong sense of place and belonging. This is a leap from business as usual. It requires other stakeholders to have trust that the Southside Mesa communities 1) know what is best for them, 2) know how to solve these issues, and 3) are capable of managing funding *which they control* to execute their ideas.

#### IV. Why a resilience hub is needed:

***“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.” R. Buckminster Fuller***

The Southside Neighborhoods resilience hubs can become a vehicle for local investment and a means to get local problems solved. Resilience hubs will allow residents to disrupt the systems that perpetuate socioeconomic inequities in a respectful, culturally sensitive manner, closing gaps in current services provisioning. Placemaking activities become “place keeping,” preserving identities, and providing for inclusive gentrification - where generational legacy residents coexist with new arrivals who embrace the rich, cultural heritage evident in the artwork, food, festivals, and traditions.

**The Southside neighborhoods would greatly benefit from a necklace of resilience hubs to build a healthy community that has the ability to address crises, change the trajectory of the current development pattern and to be able to collectively self-design an inclusive future.** Residents in the Southside neighborhoods want this trusted community space to be operated by local residents, for local residents. The network of relationships around the resilience hubs will serve as delivery, information, and health infrastructure and, as such, will build a new system of community resilience. The residents are proud people, often relying on family and friend networks for help. **The resilience hubs will augment these informal mutual aid networks by offering and designing programs to attract people to the hub without the stigma of needing help.** For example, at the Baltimore Stillmeadow resilience hub, teens can volunteer for the afternoon and get a bag of groceries, whether or not their family needs it. In the Los Angeles Boyle Heights Arts Conservancy, residents can cool off by coming for Saturday morning cartoons and cereal or join the quilting club for elders. The Southside Neighborhoods Resilience hubs space will be open to the community every day to provide services. By strengthening the community social fabric, trust is built BEFORE a disruption occurs.

Particularly in emergency situations, **a community-led resilience hub is more likely to be trusted than a city-run shelter space.** Lack of trust impedes the uptake of programs designed to assist the most impacted residents. For example, we know that there is a need for home weatherization and that government programs exist. Community members, however, are unlikely to allow a city worker into their home to assess the situation, regardless of the “free” or “low-cost” opportunities, because they fear that it will invite the risk of condemnation, a (historic) tactic to remove legacy families from their homes. They will, however, allow local, known, trusted contractors into their homes.

A key part of the need for a resilience hub is developing a story around risk and disruption in the community in response to the increasing threat from climate hazards and disasters, like extreme heat or wildfires, and disruptive events like pandemics, economic emergencies, and civil unrest which disproportionately affect this community. Emergency preparedness at the neighborhood level is extremely important as first responders will not be able to reach them within 24-48 hours. Our community engagements highlight the lack of motivation by residents to prepare for emergencies both collectively and individually.

## V. Planning for emergencies: the story of risk and disruption

*“We can’t talk about emergencies until we talk about risk.” - RAIL CDC*

A key aspect to developing a resilience hub is to understand, explore, and build a vehicle for problem-solving around the community’s story and experience of risk and disruption, whether that is in response to development pressures or climate change. **Building trust and understanding within and outside of the community around what is needed during a disruption is a constantly evolving effort. However, trust and community understanding are essential to creating a new, better system so that the resilience hubs can provide culturally specific emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.**

As an initial first step in identifying risk and disruption in the Southside neighborhoods, a community-informed risk assessment effort helped identify some of the future emergency functions the necklace of resilience hubs could offer. The collaborative effort also started the conversation around how best to talk about risk and disruption and barriers that exist in reducing the risk to disruption. Early on in the planning process, the risk assessment for the Southside neighborhood set out to follow a more traditional approach in order to align with broader disaster planning language, protocols, funding opportunities, and with City and State hazard mitigation planning efforts. To meet traditional funding and emergency management protocols, risk assessments in the United States use the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidance and typically align with the agency’s Hazard Mitigation, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, and the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) Framework as a way to connect with city, state, and national emergency support functions and FEMA’s core capabilities and mission areas. What became clear at the onset of the planning effort was that **a more thoughtful, constantly evolving, and place-based conversation needs to occur first around the concept of emergency preparedness. Most importantly, understanding risk and threat was not a one-time effort, but a continual process and one that starts with developing a baseline in which to engage and explore preventative activities.**

These initial community-informed discussions helped to document some of the existing types of risks and disruptions the community faces, including the often-unseen risks that disproportionately impact the neighborhood. **The three main hazards identified were extreme heat, air quality/pollution, and uneven development pressures that lead to displacement.** Each of these are also considered a threat multiplier, which increases the risk when other place-based emergencies exist such as flash flooding or high winds. Community assets were also identified according to housing, health, and social services, economic, infrastructure systems, and natural and cultural resources/heritage assets as a way to understand assets that are valuable as part of the broader mutual aid network. The list of hazards and community assets can be used to identify types of emergency supplies and programming that will be needed in the resilience hub.

The outcome of these initial conversations resulted in conducting an analysis of barriers to reducing the risk of hazards held by the community. This identified cultural values and behaviors that surround risk, vulnerability, and uncertainty. **The two main outcomes from this first-step effort included the cultural relationship to long-term planning, where short-term needs and lack of time outweigh long-term and time intensive decisions such as mitigating the risk to specific hazards or disruptions. The other primary finding was that due to historic disinvestment in the neighborhood, the community perceives hazard mitigation investments as unrealistic due to feelings of disenfranchisement.**

## VI. What we want in a resilience hub/Principles

We envision a network of resilience hubs serving the community in various capacities. Each resilience hub will look different, have different programming, and be tailored to the neighborhood's needs and desires. This network will be managed by a RAIL CDC Resilience Hub Council, a representative group selected from other active working groups in the community and will oversee a network hub manager for centralized administration. Where possible, staff for each resilience hub will be sourced from within the neighborhoods. Resilience hub building occurs in two phases: Phase One-Building the dream, vision and leadership and Phase Two-Occupying a building, formalizing long-term leadership, creating sustainable funding streams.

Figure

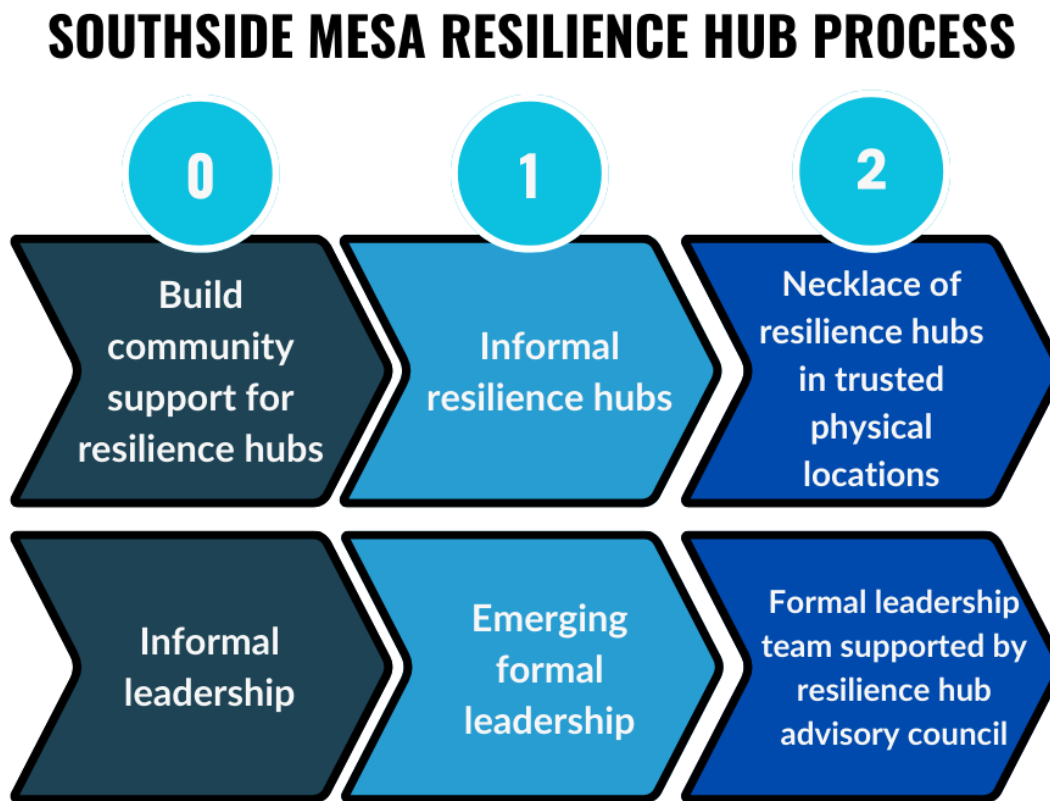


Figure 5: Aligning social infrastructure with physical infrastructure for community-based resilience.

**Phase One: Building the dream, vision, and leadership goals.**

1. **Further develop the safe, trusted space for building and strengthening relationships within the community**, which transcends a building or physical location. Amplify existing community work and continue to have hard conversations with respect and sincerity while acknowledging what has previously transpired. This safe space allows for diverse voices to be heard and is encouraged through regular gatherings within the neighborhood for people to connect on any topic of interest. Discussions will center on community service, especially mutual aid networks, which will take a different approach than the city service model, to build capacity within the community and to not duplicate municipal programming.

## WHAT DO WE WANT IN A NECKLACE OF RESILIENCE HUBS?

### FIRST STEPS: BUILDING THE DREAM, VISION, AND LEADERSHIP

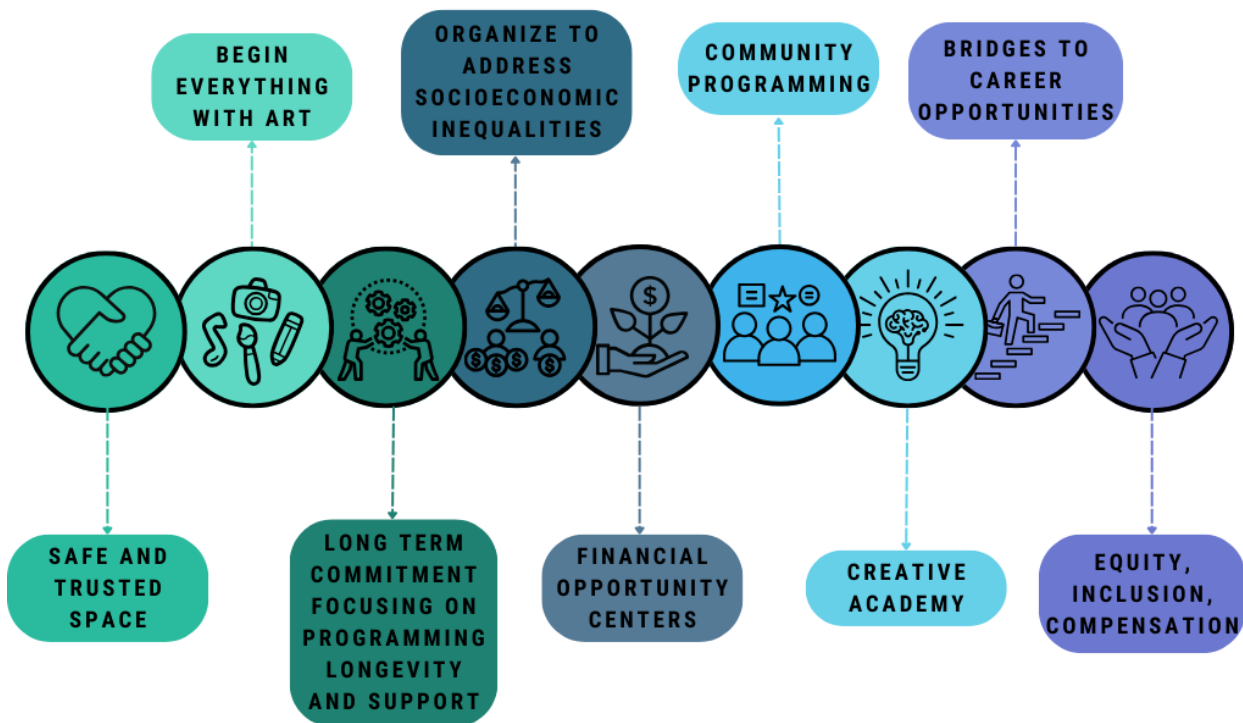


Figure 6: Key features of community-based resilience hubs. A necklace of resilience hubs will provide all the features requested by the community.

- **Building trust among a growing number of community members and stakeholders may take a long time**, the length of which can only be determined by the community. We are building a new system of community problem-solving that is an evolving process, tailored to the cultural context, past history, and experience of risk and disruption.



- **Establish relationships with knowledgeable people in emergency response, government, health departments, banking, academia** and develop a systematic process to maintain those institutional relationships to be prepared if there is an emergency, during recovery, or if there is a community-identified need or gap. This is an important part of building a new system for community problem-solving with grassroots people in a leadership role. As such, a shared language will be learned and open conversation will be developed and encouraged during the trust-building process to minimize misunderstandings and increase problem solving capacities unique to the Southside community environment.
2. **Begin everything with art.** Use art as a cornerstone to amplify a sense of place (place keeping), claiming cultural ownership, and opening doors to conversation and belonging. The resilience hub network will host fun events that bring the community together around shared cultural holidays, community projects, and creative opportunities, using art to encourage progressive discussions.
  3. **Focus on the long-term.** Instead of historical temporary fixes that lacked commitment, build a long-term commitment to the community, focusing on programming longevity and support. Community programming could include after-school programs, fiestas, and English language classes. Long-term neighborhood artwork projects such as murals or signage will be supported to increase a sense of community pride. Funding for the resilience hub network is controlled by the resilience hub leadership team, rather than government or “helper” organizations. Programming and funding will be pursued with the goal of becoming self-sustaining within five to ten years.
  4. **Build equitable coalitions while being aware of power imbalances.** Further improve the RAIL CDC Rules of Engagement for both resilience hub network formation, leadership and outside stakeholders involved in the project. Extractive activities will not be tolerated. Hire from within the neighborhood wherever possible and compensate residents for their time if they are volunteering and not participating in organizing activities as part of their job function. Apply an equity and inclusion lens to every aspect of the resilience hub project.
  5. **Wealth building strategies will be a cornerstone of programming** and could include reduced interest mortgage and home improvement loans, down payment assistance, small business investment (micro-equity) for BIPOC business owners, access to affordable housing, and favorable rates for businesses to acquire their real estate properties. Further expand the current Financial Opportunity Centers (FOC) that include:
    - Employment Services (resume building, job training), collaborating with Consultants of Color program already underway.
    - Financial Education & Coaching by connecting with banking and lending resources.
    - Income Support Access
      - Address immediate survival needs (housing, rental assistance, food insecurity, utility assistance)
      - Develop programming to support and sustain home ownership.
      - Focus on home improvement resources to support homeowners.
    - Personal Financial Support for Business Owners (pathways for building ownership, budgeting/financial management, networking, group health insurance options)
    - Bridges to Career Opportunities

- Addresses basic education gaps that prevent participants from succeeding in training programs.
  - Connects job seekers to early career ladder rungs.
- Creative Academy, September 2022
  - Financial coaching, budgeting, management skills assistance for visual, performing, literary and interdisciplinary artists.

**Phase Two: Occupying a Building, formalizing leadership, creating sustainable funding streams.**

Once Phase One groundwork is underway, the Southside Resilience Hub network can begin to identify physical locations that will uniquely serve the community. Care should be given to neighborhood concerns, tensions, and perceptions of Broadway as a boundary. Any building considered north of Broadway will require additional programming and outreach to ensure that Southside residents feel welcome and part of the foundational structure.

Should there be an emergency situation, these buildings will have the capacity to be activated 24/7 as a gathering space, providing targeted programming requested by the neighborhood, and essential services. The resilience hub network will be developed and managed by the RAIL CDC Resilience Hub Council, a community task force, with staff hired from the community where possible.

**The RAIL CDC Resilience Hub Council will be tasked with developing long-term leadership** for the network, preferably from within the neighborhood. Measures of success for this metric include tenure for management positions for three or more years, embeddedness of leadership in other community activities, and a deep bench ready to assume leadership should the need arise.

**Since the Southside Neighborhood Resilience Hubs will be grassroots driven, it is imperative that long-term, sustainable funding streams become identified** so that the network is self-sustaining in five to ten years. The ability to become self-funded, rather than relying on grants and outside funding sources, increases community resilience, freeing decision-making from “pleasing funders” to taking calculated risks on community-inspired projects. This builds community capacity, a valued skill in an ever-changing world. Sustainable funding streams could come from office/desk rentals, educational programs, cooperative activities (like a community kitchen/food business incubator) and long-term contracts. Programming and building acquisition/partnerships with existing community spaces will develop simultaneously. There is no “standard” Southside resilience hub; rather the physical space will have some common features (listed below) but be adapted to the “normal” operations and thematic programming.

## WHAT DO WE WANT IN A NECKLACE OF RESILIENCE HUBS?

PHASE TWO: OCCUPYING A BUILDING, FORMALIZING LEADERSHIP, CREATING SUSTAINABLE FUNDING STREAMS



ACCESSIBLE  
PLEASANT  
SAFE  
CONNECTED



SELF-SUSTAINING  
NETWORK OF RESILIENCE  
HUBS



RAIL CDC RESILIENCE HUB COUNCIL  
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Figure 7: Along with physical space and local leadership, a key feature is to implement programming that ensures long-term sustainability of the resilience hub.

### Buildings should reflect the following characteristics:

- **Parking** should be adequate with secure parking areas and the site should be accessible to traffic flow to avoid congestion during an emergency and for emergency vehicles.
- Hospital grade **air filtration** and **cooling system** that is appropriate for Arizona's high temperatures and that can prevent air contaminants from entering the property in the case of
- poor air quality due to smoke from wildfires and air pollution.
- Backup **power generation** to address power grid vulnerabilities such as solar power generation with battery storage for backup electricity for at least five days. This is to support continuity of energy resources for heat and A/C, refrigeration for resident's medication, and power for resident's medical devices.
- **Accessibility** for strollers, individuals with ADA requirements (i.e., wheelchair and medical bed accessibility), and/or support for neurodiverse and visually or hearing-impaired individuals.

- Interior **rooms and furniture** that are pleasant, welcoming, and available for a diverse range of activities, needs, and people. This includes administrative offices, workspaces, play areas, food preparation, and gathering spaces. These should be flexible and accommodate everyday needs as well as emergencies.
- **Security systems** that protect communications and support systems are critical for long-term operations as a way to maintain continuity during an emergency. The focus is to help visitors feel comfortable and safe, particularly for vulnerable individuals.
- Robust and backup **communication systems** including satellite, ham radio, voice and data communications, hard wired landline for phone communications, Internet connectivity, computer, and interoperability with police, fire, and medical services radio systems.

The next steps of the risk conversation in the Southside Neighborhood is to create a **longer-term public outreach campaign that focuses on building emergency response awareness and community-created materials that tell the story of risk and disruption from the perspective of the residents.** Long-term, these efforts can be used to align with FEMA emergency preparedness, such as connection with the State/County/City Hazard Mitigation plans and other assessments, as a way to develop new emergency communication and delivery systems tailored by the community.

**The building should be designed with emergency preparedness in mind** and should be based on cultural-specific needs, which can be identified as part of the community-led risk assessment process. At a minimum, a Resilience Hub should include the following to be emergency ready:

- Emergency **food and water supplies**, including pre-packaged emergency food supplies should be regularly maintained with a long shelf life. Standby contracts may be established with NGOs to provide catered meals during an emergency event.
- **Sanitary supplies** such as PPE, First Aid, feminine products, and childcare products should be on-hand. **Medical supplies** may be limited but should include basic supplies, instructions, storage, and disposal for both medical and sanitary supplies. Partnership with triage support, such as local emergency clinics or hospitals, should be incorporated into the emergency preparedness guidance. Efforts should be made for lactation/infant accommodations and supplies.
- **Furniture and office equipment** such as beds, chairs, tables, and desks should be both folding/collapsible and stationary to accommodate low, moderate, and high capacities. Office furniture and equipment should be maintained for staff.
- To support long-term emergencies, **administrative supplies** such as forms, documents, checklists, and support service information should be included in hard copy in the case where computer systems are unavailable.
- Emergency **status communications** are necessary to inform visitors or long-term residents of potential risks during an emergency. This may be in the form of a status or “situation board” within the Resilience Hub.
- **Support services** such as trash pickup, restroom maintenance, other janitorial services, or emergency vendor services (i.e., to administer emergency medical services) may be established on an on-call basis or a regular in-house service. Mental health services, while difficult during an emergency, may be considered during recovery phases.

## VII. The Promise of Southside Mesa Resilience Hubs

The surrounding Southside Mesa neighborhoods will be transformed through a network of resilience hubs with residents living up to their full potential with a high quality of life. The Southside Mesa Resilience Hubs will shepherd systems change, moving beyond mere delivery of services, to building an inclusive, empowered, sustainable community fabric where programming and related budgets reflect what works in this community and centers the voices of leadership, inclusiveness, and equity. When experiencing the streetscape of the Southside Mesa community, neighborhood cohesiveness, community pride, and celebrated cultures are made visible.

The Southside Mesa Resilience Hubs, managed by the RAIL CDC Resilience Hub Council, and powered by local leaders, hold the following promises:

1. **Inclusive gentrification**, keeping the legacy residents and welcoming new residents.
2. **Increased wealth** for all.
3. **Increased health** by improving livability.
4. **Increased happiness** by having a connected community.
5. **Honoring cultures** and history.
6. **Greater sense of equity**
7. Through art as the engagement multiplier, the **neighborhood is beautified** and the net is cast wider.
8. **Increased power and leadership within the neighborhood.**
9. **Community is prepared for anything** and has identified threats that could affect community and a plan for each.
10. **Resilient and strong community** that is able to minimize damage and recover quickly from extreme events and changing conditions.

## VIII. Self- Assessment:

The resilience hub project did not develop as we originally planned. There was COVID. There was zoom fatigue. People did not understand what resilience was, much less what a resilience hub was or could do for the community. Other priorities emerged that sidelined working towards building a community-inspired resilience hub. Yet, the Southside Mesa Resilience Hub framework became crystal clear from myriad community interactions, evolving opportunities, and shifting partnership missions. Some self-reflection uncovered what we did well and where we fell short.

### **What we did well...**

Initially, we thought we would host engagements in the community focusing solely on resilience hubs and the gaps that a mutual aid network could fill. We realized early that the concept of resilience was foreign to our neighbors, especially when applying it to their community, household, and personal life. We quickly pivoted our work and nimbly introduced resilience concepts and principles at other community events. It became more of a discussion framed by other issues that concerned the community such as displacement, economic uncertainty, and COVID related concerns.

One important phase of resilience hub operations are to be prepared for emergencies, whether that is climate related such as extreme heat waves, forest fires or flooding but also pandemics, civil unrest, and severe economic downturns. We did not jump into an emergency plan but rather stepped back to understand the community's perspectives on risk. Many risk assessments are created based on city, state, or national mandates or guidelines. *The Southside Neighborhoods' 2022 Community-Led Risk Assessment (2022)* is a tailored planning document co-created with the community. The effort outlines risk assessment efforts that are ongoing as well as action steps for continued risk and hazard-related analysis, outreach, and projects.

We learned from other resilience hubs in development, as this is a moving target. While no one group, city, or hub has the right answer and the only path for development, we gleaned information from those that emerged from emergency preparedness, were championed by city management and were expansions of a community space with an existing mission. This led to the development of the concept of a necklace of resilience hubs in Southside Mesa that could serve different aspects of the community in synergistic ways.

### **Where we fell short**

The biggest shortfall was planning to accomplish too much within a short period of time. After deep listening in the community, it became clear that our goals were too lofty, especially during the latter stages of the pandemic. We also realized that we needed to do a better job educating the residents about possible disruptions, their risk to these hazards and culturally specific emergency response needs without raising unnecessary concerns about how precarious certain situations could be.

We had identified a community partner to host the resilience hub without considering the changing dynamics within that organization and outside forces affecting their policies to having an open door for the community. In retrospect, we did not need a brick and mortar location to start the process of building a resilience hub. We now understand that the resilience hub is not the building but the people devoted to their neighborhood. Now, it is more appropriate to pursue community partners, a range of

## IX. Next Steps (2023-2024)

The development of the Southside resilience hubs is a continual process, informed by the community and revised based upon changing needs and conditions, while building on small and large successes. This Southside Neighborhoods Resilience Hubs Action Framework will be used to develop community-facing resilience hub materials for pláticas, fiestas, and art projects in the neighborhoods. The framework and community-facing materials will spark more conversations around risk and disruptions, eventually culminating in “emergency” Zine materials and an emergency preparedness plan specific to the Southside. The framework will also be used as source material for applying for funding and writing proposals. A process diagram may better highlight the continuous process, with the Framework as the central node.

### Process Diagram of Resilience Hubs Development

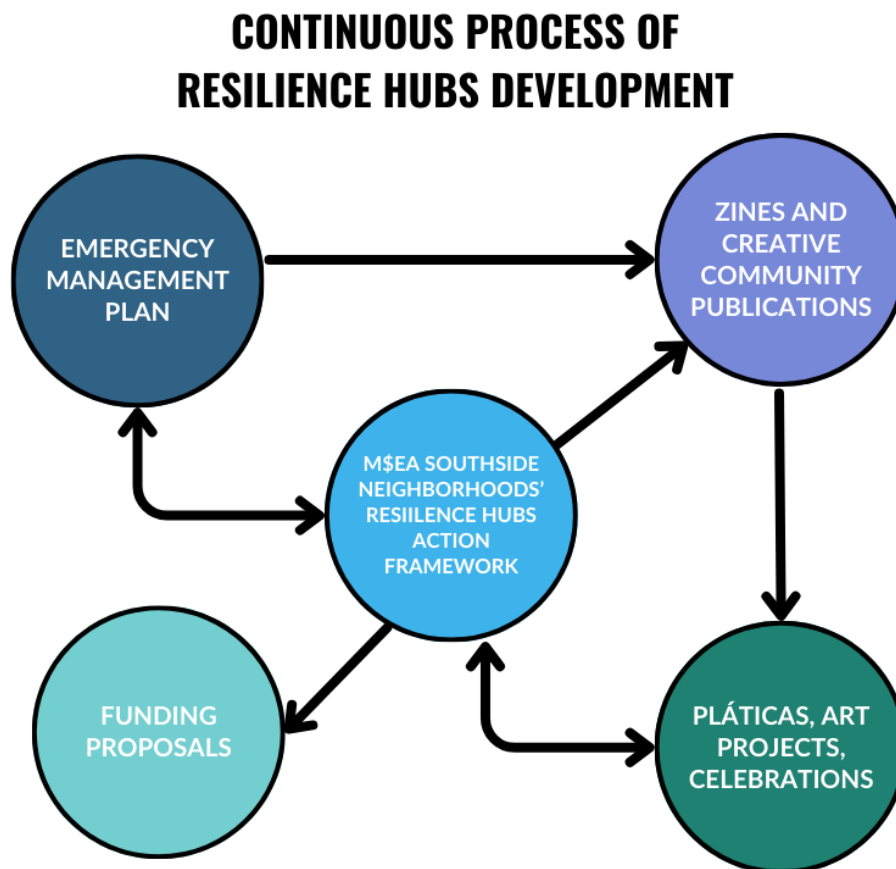


Figure 8: Continuous process diagram for resilience hubs development.

The next steps in the Southside Neighborhoods Resilience Hubs project is to further develop the programming for each hub, develop an emergency plan for extreme heat and other disasters, and secure space for the hubs while synergizing offerings to the greater community. Specific actions are detailed below that will assist in funding proposals, strengthen community cohesion, and prepare the community for anything that may arise.

- In selecting members for the RAIL CDC Resilience Hub Council, prioritize members of existing steering committees (Distrito Latino, Consultants of Color, ASU MIX Center) to coordinate programming and emergency response. Collaborate with these groups and other organizations invested in building a sustainable Southside Mesa.
- Explore, and build a vehicle for problem-solving around the community’s story and experience of risk and disruption, whether that is in response to development pressures or climate change. Building trust and understanding within and outside of the community around what is needed during a disruption is a constantly evolving effort, one that is essential to creating a new, better system so Resilience Hubs can provide culturally specific emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Working with community partners, determine optimal location for a necklace of resilience hubs.
- Utilize the Arizona State University Knowledge Exchange for Resilience to streamline the formation process for each community location by providing data, governance/convening, and economies of scale, so that each community is not on their own, starting from scratch, or competing with nearby communities for precious funding.
- Coordinate with other resilience hubs in nearby municipalities to provide a range of services, capitalize on economies of scale, and reduce duplication of services.
- Continue and expand the funded Financial Opportunity Centers
- Continue developing the risk assessment planning effort to coordinate with next steps as outlined in the *Southside Neighborhoods’ 2022 Community-Led Risk Assessment* (2022). Create a community outreach campaign specific to threat and emergency preparedness and planning that incorporates awareness and coalition building for prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery activities.
- Develop a **community-led emergency plan** that includes, at a minimum:
  - **Emergency mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery priorities** that are culturally relevant and historically responsive to focus attention and energy.
  - **Robust community-outreach** that continues to foster the conversation around risk and disruption and incorporates community-led emergency preparedness.
  - Completed **risk assessment** to understand what threats and hazards need to be addressed in the resilience hubs.
  - A set of **maps** that document community assets and local risks for use in connecting community resources and bringing awareness of emergency plans to stakeholders.
  - Resilience Hub **site team roles, possible members, and cooperating organizations**.
  - **Mitigation and preparedness** activities focused on awareness, resourcing, and planning.
  - **Response protocols** for Resilience Hub site team and users of the site.
  - **Recovery steps** that outline social and economic support functions for the Hub in the near and long-term.



## **Conclusion**

The Resilience Hub Framework presented here represents an opportunity to shift power dynamics in marginalized communities, from being the community being “acted upon” to a community that manages its destiny and increases wealth, health, and capacity for all residents. It has the potential to preserve the cultural and historical fabric that define neighborhoods. Community capacity is enhanced and existing mutual aid networks are amplified so the residents are prepared for anything. In short, the resilience hub framework is creating new systems that make people’s lives better.

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764214550296>

**Other supporting materials:**

[RAIL CDC Engagement Report for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

[Community Centered Economic Inclusion Draft.docx](#)

[RAIL Report - 2021,2022 Placemaking](#)

[Barrio Stories Volume 1](#)

[HeatReady™ Neighborhoods Report](#)

Risk Assessment Report (Draft)

[Financial Opportunity Center & Bridges Network](#)

[Heat Action Planning Guide](#)

Demographics and Market Data from “The Future of the Broadway Corridor,” Mesa Economic Development, January 13, 2022, with data analysis by Esri, 202

RA series of 40 interviews and focus groups was conducted by Joel Bookman of Bookman Associates, Inc., during the period of February through August 2022.