Executive Summary
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Introduction: LISC Phoenix, MetroEdge, and Corridor Initiatives

LISC MetroEdge launched in 2005 to seed and support development and economic growth along commercial corridors in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and was selected in 2010-2011 to provide comprehensive support to LISC Phoenix.

The “Corridors of Retail Excellence” (CORE) initiative focused on Main Street with the West Mesa CDC. In the Sunnyslope area of Phoenix, the focus was on Hatcher Road on behalf of Desert Mission.

Services included the use of local and national data to highlight investment potential and market readiness, an assessment that included on-the-ground surveys, and collaboration to help communities develop strategies and action plans to improve commercial areas.

Following completion of this effort, in early 2012, MetroEdge provided periodic support to LISC Phoenix as it selected NEDCO to implement the initial study recommendations.

With continuing support from State Farm, NEDCO and LISC Phoenix next sought to reinvigorate Apache Boulevard in Tempe. MetroEdge was engaged to perform a similar assessment and technical assistance beginning in 2014.

With support from NeighborWorks America and LISC Phoenix, MetroEdge was asked by Trellis to complete an initial assessment for McDowell Road in Phoenix.

While supporting ongoing work in Mesa, Tempe and Phoenix, LISC Phoenix leveraged the light rail to respond to interest in a “transit village” at the newly opened 19th and Camelback Station in Phoenix. LISC MetroEdge began the Camelback analysis in 2016 with a second phase focused on implementation strategies in 2017.

Background and Highlights

LISC Phoenix began investing in the Main Street Mesa commercial corridor with support of State Farm in 2008. Soon after, Valley Metro opened its first light rail line, with plans to expand throughout the Valley of the Sun. LISC leaders saw transit-oriented development as an important key to future development and support for low-income communities.

As MetroEdge completed market profiles, strategy development, and local stories for Downtown Mesa and Hatcher Road/Sunnyslope in 2011-2012, LISC and Raza Development Fund announced a $20 million Sustainable Communities Transit-Oriented Development Fund to support housing and mixed use projects on the light rail.

In 2011-2012, with light rail construction imminent in Mesa and recently completed in Tempe, LISC and State Farm began supporting NEDCO to focus on corridor redevelopment on Apache Blvd in Tempe and Main Street in Mesa.
In 2013-2014, rail construction started in Downtown Mesa. LISC completed a strategic plan with its priority: “Our Future is on the Line”. MetroEdge began a Market Scan for Apache Blvd Tempe, and NEDCO, the City of Mesa and partners implemented strategies to support business on the Main Street corridor during construction.

LISC and Raza Development Fund renewed their commitment with announcement of a new $30 million TOD fund in 2015. Light rail opened in Downtown Mesa. MetroEdge moved on to work with Trellis to complete analysis and strategies for the McDowell corridor in Phoenix and in 2016 to perform an initial assessment of Camelback Road.

In 2017, LISC Phoenix asked MetroEdge to work with IRC on Camelback Road in Phoenix to complete a Market Profile and strategies for the 19th and Camelback transit corridor.

In 2016-2017, LISC Phoenix expanded its support to include staff and project funding to Trellis, IRC, and Local First Arizona, and MetroEdge provided ongoing coaching for corridor managers in each of the target communities.

**Market Observations**

Initial progress on the corridors was slowed because the national and local economies were just beginning to emerge from the Great Recession.

The population increased in four of the five corridors studied. The McDowell corridor population decreased by 2% in the North Trade Area and 1% in the South Trade Area. The Apache Blvd Trade Area population increased by 14%, and Main Street Mesa increased by 11%. Sunnyslope and Camelback saw increases in the 6 to 8% range.

Each of the 5 corridor trade areas were (and are) low-income communities. Those making less than $35,000 annually constituted approximately half the population of the trade areas in each of the five corridors, ranging from 45% of the Convenience Trade Area in Sunnyslope in 2010 to 62% of the Apache Blvd Trade Area in 2014 (although that figure includes students).

The percentage of low-income households in the trade areas of the five corridors has decreased from the initial MetroEdge engagements to the 2018 totals. The North Trade Area for McDowell saw a decrease of low-income households of more than 21% from 2016 to 2018. Main Street Mesa saw a decrease of 12% in the number of households earning less than $35,000 annually. Camelback had a decrease of 11% of those earning less than $35,000.
# LISC Phoenix Investments

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<tr>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Initial Strengths</th>
<th>Initial Weaknesses</th>
<th>Sample Interventions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sunnyslope,</td>
<td>• Anchor institution: John C. Lincoln Medical Center</td>
<td>• Weak concentration of retail</td>
<td>• New revitalization committee formed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>• Initially strong staff capacity in retail/commercial development</td>
<td>• Staff capacity diminished</td>
<td>• Financial Opportunity Center created</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main Street,</td>
<td>• Incoming light rail</td>
<td>• Low density</td>
<td>• Organizing to combat disruption of construction</td>
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<td>Mesa</td>
<td>• Attractive infrastructure/amenities</td>
<td>• 3-4 years of construction</td>
<td>• Activate the Alleyways</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• NEDCO – a CDFI – lending and small business advising capacity</td>
<td>• NEDCO staff transitions</td>
<td>• Promotions and events to build reputation as a destination</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Anchor institution: Mesa Arts Center</td>
<td>• Not central to any freeway access</td>
<td>• New housing built near Main Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apache Blvd,</td>
<td>• ASU – strong anchor with high density of students</td>
<td>• ASU students displacing homeowners</td>
<td>• New housing being built on Apache</td>
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<td>Tempe</td>
<td>• Several longstanding businesses thriving</td>
<td>• Several large gaps – vacant land Light rail completed without strong community and business engagement</td>
<td>• Small business consulting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• New light rail</td>
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<td>• Development of Spice Trail to attract diners at area restaurants</td>
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<td>• Early redevelopment stopped at cleanup</td>
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<td>• Murals and public art</td>
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<td>• Growth of State Farm in Tempe</td>
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<td>McDowell Rd,</td>
<td>• Place-oriented host organization in Trellis</td>
<td>• Wide street, fast moving traffic</td>
<td>• Regular community cleanups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>• Active community participation</td>
<td>• Large gaps - vacant land and buildings</td>
<td>• Engagement of Banner reps in promotions and revitalization committee</td>
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<td>• $500 million investment by Banner</td>
<td>• Lack of participation by Banner</td>
<td>• Training for new corridor mgr</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Growing entrepreneurial and employment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Base and high traffic volume</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camelback Rd,</td>
<td>• Active, committed Councilwoman</td>
<td>• Wide, fast moving street</td>
<td>• IRC recruited to work corridor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>• Light rail and Park and Ride facility</td>
<td>• No initial corridor organization</td>
<td>• Training for corridor manager</td>
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<td>• Several well-maintained strip centers</td>
<td>• Inexperienced corridor manager</td>
<td>• Cleanups engaging local schools</td>
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<td>• High traffic counts</td>
<td>• Homeless population</td>
<td>• World Bazaar and Pop-up Markets attract shoppers</td>
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<td>• Strong presence - schools and civic orgs</td>
<td>• Other nearby shopping (Mall)</td>
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Read the full report at [liscphoenix.org/corridor-impact](http://liscphoenix.org/corridor-impact)