

# IMPACT 2008-2018

AN ASSESSMENT OF LISC PHOENIX INVESTMENTS IN  
COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS IN PHOENIX, MESA, & TEMPE

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## Executive Summary



LISC  
Phoenix





# Executive Summary

## *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.

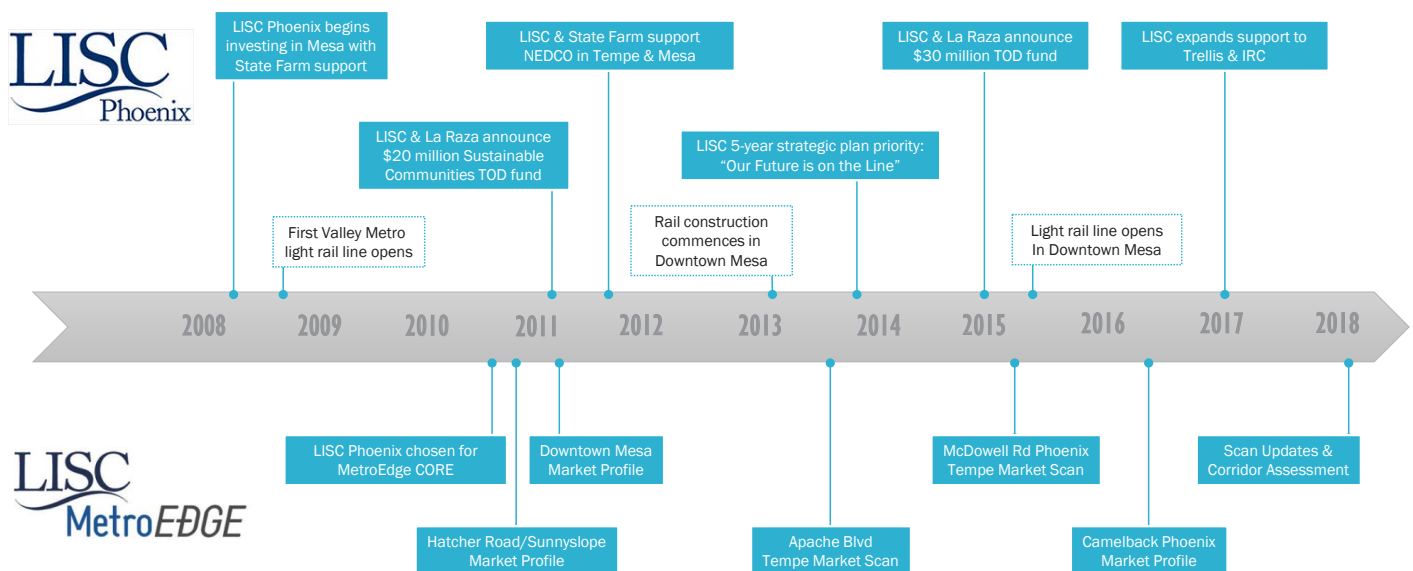
## Market Observations

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

Corridor	Initial Strengths	Initial Weaknesses	Sample Interventions
Sunnyslope, Phoenix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anchor institution: John C. Lincoln Medical Center</li> <li>Initially strong staff capacity in retail/commercial development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak concentration of retail</li> <li>Staff capacity diminished</li> <li>Not a core activity of organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New revitalization committee formed</li> <li>Financial Opportunity Center created</li> </ul>
Main Street, Mesa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incoming light rail</li> <li>Attractive infrastructure/amenities</li> <li>NEDCO – a CDFI – lending and small business advising capacity</li> <li>Anchor institution: Mesa Arts Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low density</li> <li>3-4 years of construction</li> <li>NEDCO staff transitions</li> <li>Not central to any freeway access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing to combat disruption of construction</li> <li>Activate the Alleyways</li> <li>Promotions and events to build reputation as a destination</li> <li>New housing built near Main Street</li> </ul>
Apache Blvd, Tempe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASU – strong anchor with high density of students</li> <li>Several longstanding businesses thriving</li> <li>New light rail</li> <li>Early redevelopment stopped at cleanup</li> <li>Growth of State Farm in Tempe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASU students displacing homeowners</li> <li>Several large gaps – vacant land Light rail completed without strong community and business engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New housing being built on Apache</li> <li>Small business consulting</li> <li>Development of Spice Trail to attract diners at area restaurants</li> <li>Murals and public art</li> </ul>
McDowell Rd, Phoenix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place-oriented host organization in Trellis</li> <li>Active community participation</li> <li>\$500 million investment by Banner</li> <li>Growing entrepreneurial and employment</li> <li>Base and high traffic volume</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide street, fast moving traffic</li> <li>Large gaps - vacant land and buildings</li> <li>Lack of participation by Banner</li> <li>New, inexperienced corridor manager</li> <li>Spotty retail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular community cleanups</li> <li>Engagement of Banner reps in promotions and revitalization committee</li> <li>Training for new corridor mgr</li> </ul>
Camelback Rd, Phoenix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active, committed Councilwoman</li> <li>Light rail and Park and Ride facility</li> <li>Several well-maintained strip centers</li> <li>High traffic counts</li> <li>Strong presence - schools and civic orgs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide, fast moving street</li> <li>No initial corridor organization</li> <li>Inexperienced corridor manager</li> <li>Homeless population</li> <li>Other nearby shopping (Mall)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IRC recruited to work corridor</li> <li>Training for corridor manager</li> <li>Cleanups engaging local schools</li> <li>World Bazaar and Pop-up Markets attract shoppers</li> </ul>

**Read the full report at**  
[liscphoenix.org/corridor-impact](https://liscphoenix.org/corridor-impact)