

Best Practices and Recommendations
From the Tempe EnVison Center Resilience Hub

USP 533 - Planning Methods I

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Background

The Tempe EnVision Center is a resilience hub in the city's University Heights neighborhood. It is located less than one mile from Arizona State University's Tempe campus, and about nine miles from downtown Phoenix. The center is co-located with a Community Health and Human Services Resource Center. Additionally, the Institute for Digital Inclusion Acceleration hosts "The Hive" at the EnVision Center, which provides resources to help community members access digital technology.

The EnVision Center serves a number of purposes and community needs that collectively make it a resiliency hub. In particular, the EnVision Center features easy access from the surrounding community, an energy resilience plan for power outages and natural disasters, and a technology resource center to help all community members access digital technology.

Access to the EnVision Center

The hub is located at 1310 E Apache Blvd, Tempe, AZ 85281. This part of Tempe is densely populated due to its proximity to Arizona State University (ASU), a major educational institution and employer. Immediately in front of the center is the Dorsey Ave / Apache Blvd Valley Metro station. This stop serves as the terminus of the 'S' line streetcar which circulates throughout much of Tempe's dense, university-anchored development. The station also sees service from the 'RAIL' route, which takes riders to Phoenix in the North and Mesa to the East.

The 'MARZ,' 'MARS,' 'MERC,' 81, and 72 bus lines all have stops within the center's proximity. Apache Blvd has bike lanes, and the center has on-site parking.

All of this together means that the center should be easily accessible by most Tempe residents who may seek out the provided services, regardless of whether or not they are able or willing to travel by car.

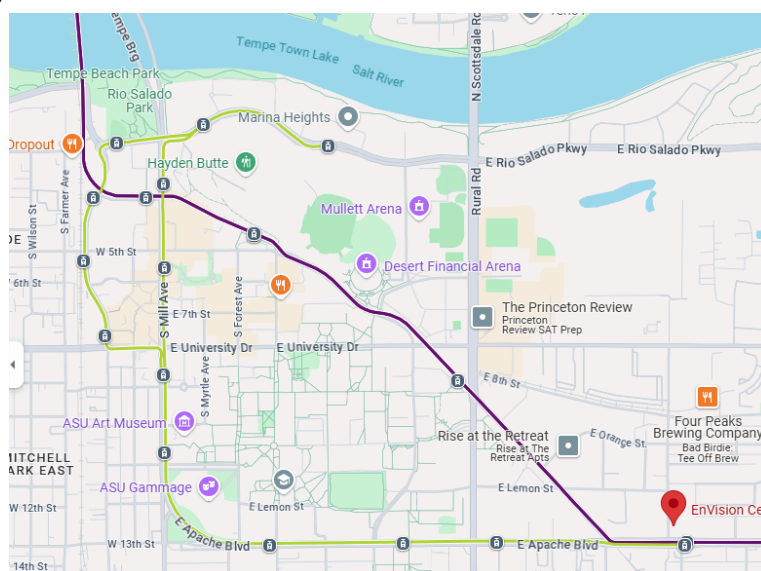


Image 1. The EnVision Center in relation to ASU and the rail services

The Rosewood Initiative can work to inform its users of the different modes of transportation available in the Hazelwood area, and can build and leverage connections with the City of Portland to increase ease and accessibility in the area when funding arises.

Energy Resiliency Plan

Though the EnVision Center does not currently have any resources to maintain power in case of an outage, it currently has plans to install solar panels as well as backup batteries. In the case of power outages during extreme heat, extreme cold, or other weather events or disasters, the center would be able to maintain a safe temperature, lighting, access to power-dependent medical devices, and possibly an internet connection. This would be particularly useful in Arizona where extreme heat conditions are a regular occurrence and where solar panels could likely power the entire facility without a grid connection.

This could be a lifesaving resource during prolonged outages, particularly for those who do not have access to safer temperatures or for those who have medical devices that cannot lose access to electricity for longer periods of time.

In these prolonged events, the backup energy sources may be able to sustain a connection to the internet, as long as the internet provider's equipment is still running. This could provide access to crucial information and could facilitate emergency communications in the event that landlines or cell phones are not available.

Though Portland's weather in the winter may not make solar panels a useful investment during that season, they could prove to be an excellent investment for the Rosewood Initiative in the summer months when the region often experiences extreme heat. The Rosewood Initiative could provide the same resources mentioned above in the case that the majority of the community is without power, and they could continue to operate like normal. For prolonged events, the Rosewood Initiative could serve as a base for emergency services in East Portland.

Digital Technology

"The Hive" is a series of technology access centers provided by the Institute for Digital Inclusion Acceleration (IDIA). The EnVision Center is home to the largest of these locations.

Services provided include coding, 3D printing, podcast creation, and photography to name a few. Though some of these may not be essential during a weather event or a natural disaster, they each can help to strengthen the community and its members. For example, community podcasts can help to build a stronger sense of community and togetherness that would be vital in a disaster.

Additionally, The Hive has a dedicated telehealth room for community members to use. This is an excellent resource for those who may not have access to the internet at home or who do not have a quiet, distraction-free environment to discuss medical concerns with a doctor.

Though public libraries typically provide access to computers and the internet, they may not always have a private location such as this.

While the Rosewood Initiative may not be able to provide all of the same resources at The Hive without the assistance of an organization like the IDIA, they may be able to implement some of the resources. In particular, computers with internet access that are available to the public as well as a dedicated room for telehealth appointments could both prove to be valuable resources for the surrounding community.

Conclusion

Tempe's EnVision Center resilience hub is an excellent example of the types of resources that these centers can offer to community members. As each resilience hub is carefully curated to meet the needs of its users, no two will be exactly alike.

The Rosewood Initiative should consider ways to increase ease and accessibility of their facility to the community, a solar or other form of backup energy, and a new or expanded set of digital resources. These three efforts could greatly increase the Rosewood Initiatives ability to serve as a resilience hub in times of community need.

Works Cited

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