8

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUBS

The safety of residents during and after disaster events continues to be a critical need for SWLA.

Project Description

Various communities throughout SWLA lack well-constructed, public building spaces that promote community engagement and can serve as a critical facility during disasters. Resilience hubs are community-serving facilities that support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and enhance quality of life. In emergencies, community resilience hubs would provide places for food and water distribution, shelter, charging, cooling, and disaster response coordination. During non-disaster times, these facilities can serve as community buildings for gatherings and recreation. Parishes can start by identifying existing facilities; strategically acquiring public, private, and vacant/underutilized land; and understanding each community's specific needs to develop a customized strategy.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CALCASIEU PARISH?

While communities centrally located in Calcasieu Parish and in proximity to Lake Charles have several options for easily accessible and safe facilities that can be used as resilience hubs, those living in the northern, western, and eastern edges of the parish struggle to have the same access. Targeting these communities with new resilience hubs would minimize the driving distance to a resource center and promote storm-prepared communities.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CAMERON PARISH?

With the distance between communities in Cameron Parish, it is difficult for residents to access the resources they need during and after disasters. Strategically locating resilience hubs around Cameron Parish would not only provide necessary resources close to home, but also offer community places to gather on blue-sky days.

HOH

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

On blue-sky days, resilience hubs provide a community gathering space for enrichment activities that improve the quality of life for residents of all ages. From meetings to performances to youth summer camps, the resilience hub can serve many purposes for the residents who use the facility. The grounds of the resilience hubs can also serve as park and recreation space, provide outdoor space for pop-up farmers markets or become a music venue. Resilience hubs offer endless possibilities for blue-sky day programs and services, and make dreams a reality through the cooperation and partnership of a local champion, the parish, and the city.

During times of disaster, resilience hubs will act as a critical facility, meant to serve critical needs during response and recovery. Built to withstand hurricane force winds and located in areas of low flood risk, a resilience hub is meant to be a community constant and beacon of hope that can withstand the worst of storms. Resilience hubs can provide power and communications when the grid is down, serve as disaster resource centers, and temporary shelters following a disaster.



PLAN TOPIC AREAS

Plan Topics

Community resilience hubs focus on growth in Community Planning, Infrastructure, and Natural and Cultural Resources. A Community resilience hub would:

Community Planning

• Better connect people to public buildings with sidewalks and improved access. Resilience hubs must be easily accessible following a disaster, whether people arrive by foot, bike, car, or emergency vehicle. Improvements to sidewalks, trails, and roads begin at the resilience hubs, but should extend throughout the community and can coincide with the complete streets efforts that are a part of building Strong Downtowns.

Infrastructure

- Provide necessary, critical, community facilities for support during disasters, especially if existing public facilities or other infrastructure are compromised during a storm event.
- Promote the necessity of resilient construction, both in building to withstand hurricane force winds and locating in areas of low flood risk. FEMA rated, community safe rooms are

designed to provide near-absolute protection in extreme-wind events. Resilience hubs will showcase the latest advances in building materials and disaster resistant, sustainable design and will be models for other community facilities.

- Demonstrate best practices in green infrastructure and sustainable design. Effectively and responsibly managing stormwater will be a requirement to keep resilience hubs accessible during an event. They will also require technology and equipment to provide emergency power and communication. These features will be models for community facilities across SWLA.
- Improve quality and reliability of public infrastructure. Resilience hubs must remain operational during and after a disaster. They will also require technology and equipment to provide emergency power and communication. These features will be models for community facilities across SWLA.

Natural and Cultural Resources 😁

- Create opportunities for community gathering by providing public recreation space for youth and adults that improves social cohesion and continues local traditions. Public engagement results showed that SWLA residents lack family-friendly entertainment. Resilience hub sites can offer space for residents to play, gather, and celebrate culture.
 - Resilience hubs can be designed specifically to host events unique to the community that can provide community enrichment and increase tourism.
 - Outdoor spaces could be utilized as festival parks that can host live music, makers markets, and local art installations.
 - Current playgrounds can be built to provide youth with a variety of play opportunities that may be lacking in the community.
 Walking and biking trails, as well as skate parks can be prioritized in areas that lack sidewalks. Small water parks can serve areas that lack a community pool. Innovative playground equipment can provide enrichment for children with disabilities.
 - Interior spaces can be used for youth summer camps, senior citizen game nights, and Mardi Gras balls.





ACTION STEPS

Identify Sites & Resources Linking Community Lifelines

Resilience hubs should be strategically located throughout the region to connect with existing roadways and public buildings. If one public facility or geographic area is compromised during disaster, such as the government complex in the Town of Cameron, having Resilience hubs that are on higher ground and built to withstand hurricane force winds can offer a backup facility for public works or serve the residents during recovery.

1 Analyze, Understand, and Identify Communities in Need

The landscape and built environment of SWLA has changed over the past 20 years, due to storm migration and urban sprawl. Many rural communities and unincorporated areas have increased in population without expanding infrastructure and public resources. In older sections of the city limits, infrastructure and community services are often outdated and in need of repair, in order to support the existing population before and after a disaster.





Even if a community would benefit from a resilience hub, ramifications of property operation and maintenance should be considered: Does the community want a resilience hub? Does the community have a need for additional facilities that can offer needed services and be the resilience hub? Can the community afford to maintain the facility?

2 Analyze Existing Conditions and Resources

There are several things to consider when analyzing existing conditions and resources in areas for potential resilience hubs, including:

- Is there enough population in the area to utilize the resilience hub on blue-sky days and after a disaster?
- Does the community already have a facility that is a resilience hub, but isn't recognized as one?
- Is there an existing facility that needs upgrading and can be the resilience hub?
- Is the location easily accessible by foot, bike, car, and emergency vehicle or can upgrades be made to make it accessible?
- Is the location in the flood plain?
- Can the parish and utility service providers harden infrastructure sufficiently to main-tain resilience hub operation?

Identify Existing Facilities and Publicly Owned Land Outside the Special Flood Hazard Area

Much of the land in SWLA is located within high risk flood zones that are subject to coastal, riverine, or drainage flooding. Since resilience hubs are meant to serve the public after disaster events, it is crucial that the building, roadways, and parking area are not vulnerable to flood damage. If the resilience hub is compromised during a hurricane or flood, the community will lose a lifeline that is intended to provide critical recovery services.

By locating resilience hubs outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and verifying the probability of little to no flood risk using high-water mark data from historic flood events, communities can protect their investment from known risk and proactively account for future conditions, such as sea level rise and increased precipitation.

2b Identify Strategic Locations for Hubs

Once a flood risk analysis has identified non-flood prone areas, land use, existing building inventory, and property ownership should be investigated.

While publicly owned facilities and land would be the most economical choice for a resilience hub site, it may not be the best long-term location. Low risk, privately or publicly owned vacant land should be considered for not only resilience hub sites, but other critical community facilities as well.

For instance, portions of Grand Lake and Sweet Lake, in northern Cameron Parish, contain the

only non-SFHA land in the entire Parish and have shown minimal flood vulnerability in past hurricane events. A land use analysis revealed that much of this land is vacant, but under private ownership. Communities that lack low-risk, developable public land should consider strategic acquisition of underutilized acreage or vacant land to site critical facilities, like resilience hubs.

Resilience hubs should be easily accessible to residents to promote usability. Siting must also consider the population it serves. For instance, low-income populations that lack reliable transportation may need a neighborhood resilience hub they can walk to, whereas rural communities sharing a large, community resilience hub may site the facility on a major highway that can be accessed from multiple directions.





Plan & Decide

3 Plan for Customized, Targeted Community Resilience Hubs

In order to plan for customized, targeted community resilience hubs, the following questions should be considered and answered:

- Can the resilience hub fill a gap in public facilities and services?
- How many residents will the facility likely serve? This will determine the size.
- How large is the lot size? Can it accommodate outdoor amenities?
- Is the site easy to access with ample parking and driveways that can be used for emergency services and distribution?
- What traditions make the community unique? Can the resilience hub be a place to continue and celebrate those traditions?

4 Dedicate Publicly Owned Sites for Community Resilience Hubs

Nine sites throughout Calcasieu and Cameron parishes have been identified as ideal candidates for resilience hub facilities. Some sites are currently vacant land, which will require a new structure to be built, while others have existing facilities that can be retrofitted to current wind mitigation standards. Identifying sites includes answering the following questions:

- Is there a publicly owned site that is accessible to community residents and outside the flood plain? Is there a property the Parish can purchase that is outside the flood plain and accessible?
- Is there a public facility that can be expanded to include the resilience hub?

5 Retrofit and Harden Existing Facilities to Create Community Resilience Hubs

Retrofit & Build

Iowa and Hackberry have existing facilities located in low flood risk zones or that are elevated to current base flood elevation requirements. Existing facilities that will be used as resilience hubs must meet current wind mitigation building standards. Buildings may require structural reinforcement that promote continuous load path for increased strength and wind hardening of the building envelope, which includes the roof covering and window and door openings.

6 Build New Community Resilience Hubs

New constructed resilience hubs are being proposed for DeQuincy, Vinton, Sulphur, Goosport, Hayes, Hackberry, Sweetlake, and Moss Bluff. While each facility should be built to withstand hurricane force winds, the size of the facility will be dependent upon the population it serves, as well as the lot size.



Programming Ideas for Community Resilience Hubs

Commun	ity Center	Emergency Services		
Youth	Adult	Hurricane/Tornado Resistant Community Storm Shelter or Safe Room		
Summer Camps	Rental Space: Wedding Receptions, Parties, etc.	Municipal Services Annex (Law Enforcement, Building Department, Public Works, etc.)		
4-H Meetings/Events	Community Meetings	Evacuation Site for Public Works Vehicle Fleet		
Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts	Voting Facility	Public Emergency Back-Up Power (Climate Controlled Recovery Shelter)		
Dance Class	LSU Ag Master Gardener Community Garden	Public Communications and Charging Hub		
Home School Meetings	Food Drive Site	Disaster Recovery Center and Resource Site (FEMA, Insurance, Contractors)		
Playground	Training and Workshops	Food/Supply Distribution Center (Red Cross, VOADs)		
Splash Pad and/or Pool	Gym Facility	Medical Clinic (Temporary or Permanent)		
Skate Park	Walking Trail	Livestock/Pet Evacuation Space		
Bike Trail	Stocked Fishing Pond	Learning/Training (Construction Rebuilding, Tool Loan Out, etc.)		

A Good Example LUMBERTON PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

WHAT?

- 200 mph-rated safe room with 1,145 occupant capacity
- Dual purpose resilience and community center
- Used an average of four times per week for community events during blue-sky days

HOW?

• Funded through FEMA grant and community match



25,447 sf Monolithic Concrete Dome



Trade Shows/Conference Space



LOCATION RESILIENCE HUBS IN SWLA





DEQUINCY

Location: S. Grand Avenue at Old School Site Approx. Address: 510 LA-27 Property Type: Vacant Lot Ownership: Public

This vacant site is located within walking distance of residential homes. It is large enough to house a small to medium size facility suitable for drive-thru distribution lines. The facility can be a storm shelter for residents who cannot evacuate during hurricane events and long-term sheltering. Playgrounds, sports facilities, community gardens, and the incorporation of the areas logging history are all recommended.















VINTON

Location: West Street & I-10 Off Ramp Approx. Address: 1905 West Street Property Type: Vacant Lot Ownership: Unknown

This vacant site is located next to Vinton High School and near a major roadway that connects to the interstate. A small to medium facility could be used as a storm shelter for the school and would be ideal as a distribution site during disasters, due to its proximity to I-10.



Location: Beglis Parkway & Carr Lane at WW Lewis Middle School Approx. Address: 1600 Carr Lane Property Type: Vacant Lot **Ownership:** Public

This vacant site is located next to WW Louis Middle School, residential homes, and a former grocery store that was recently acquired for local emergency services. A medium to large facility could be used as a school and neighborhood storm shelter and could serve as a public facility during disasters. The facility could also coordinate with the recently required emergency services building.

MOSS BLUFF

Location: Corner of Park Road & Moss Bluff Middle School entrance Approx. Address: 470 Park Road <u>Property Type</u>: Vacant Lot North of Moss Bluff Middle School Ownership: Public

This vacant site is located next to Moss Bluff Middle School, residential homes, and an outdoor sports complex. A medium to large facility could be used as a school and neighborhood storm shelter and could serve as a public facility during disasters. The facility could be used for indoor sports use for the school or sports complex.















GOOSPORT

Location: Opelousas & N. Cherry Street Approx. Address: 380 N. Cherry Street Property Type: Vacant Lot Ownership: Unknown

This vacant site is located within walking distance to residential homes, a health clinic, community garden, and elementary school, and is large enough to house a medium size facility that is suitable for drive-thru distribution lines. The facility can be used as a storm shelter for the school and for residents who cannot evacuate during hurricane events, and long-term sheltering.



<u>Location</u>: Building <u>Approx. Address</u>: 800 Calcasieu Road <u>Property Type</u>: Existing Structure <u>Ownership</u>: Public

This existing facility may be wind hardened to ensure continuous operation of the building during and after storm events. The facility and driveway is large enough for public food and supply distribution and ideal to host disaster recovery resources, such as FEMA, Red Cross, and VOAD services. HAYES

Location: Highway 14 & Alabama Avenue next to the Library <u>Approx. Address</u>: 7712 Perier Street <u>Property Type</u>: Vacant Lot <u>Ownership</u>: Public

This vacant site is located next to the community library and park, and is within walking distance to residential homes. A small facility could be used for sheltering and disaster use, as well as a recreation/ community center that connects to the local park and library.









HACKBERRY

<u>Location</u>: Hackberry Community Center <u>Approx. Address</u>: 986 Main Street <u>Property Type</u>: Existing Structure <u>Ownership</u>: Public

This existing facility is ideal to serve the west side of Cameron Parish. While this facility performed well during Hurricane Laura, it is only recommended as a shortterm solution for a resilience hub until a new facility elevated above Category 5 storm surge can be complete.



SWEETLAKE

Location: Corner of LeBoeuf Road & Fournerat Road <u>Approx. Address</u>: 191 LeBoeuf Road <u>Property Type</u>: Vacant Lot <u>Ownership</u>: Private, Sweet Lake Land & Oil

This vacant site is ideal for a medium to large facility to serve the eastern side of Cameron Parish. Since this facility is in a coastal area, it is not recommended for residents to shelter during hurricanes, but can be used for other evacuation and disaster uses. Playground and bike paths could replace damaged community recreation assets and no sidewalk.



Potential Partners

- Calcasieu and Cameron parishes
- Cities and towns
- Service providers, non-profits, and foundations
- Calcasieu and Cameron Councils on Aging
- Existing recreational districts



Potential Funding Sources

- FEMA Grant Funding
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Funding
- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)
- Other Grant Funding
- USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program
- Land and Water Commission Fund
- Recreation Economy for Rural Communities
- State Funding LA Restore Program
- Resilient Communities Infrastructure Program (\$50 million)
- Hometown Revitalization Program (\$75 million)
- Local Funding
 - Industry donations
 - Taxpayer approved bonds

HIGHLIGHTING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

I would use a resilience hub during and after a disaster.



I would use a resilience hub in my area as a community center during non-disaster times.



I think this project will benefit SWLA.





IMPLEMENTATION

Economic Impact and Return on Investment

Resilience hub facilities have great potential to generate revenue for the community.

There are many examples throughout the United States. Resilience hub spaces can provide shortterm rentals for various uses, such as weddings, social gatherings, summer camps, youth dance classes, and conferences or meetings. Portions of the building can also be used to house long-term community services, such as health clinics or a police annex.

It is important to mention that some grant funding sources may restrict the types of blue-sky day uses and the revenue it generates. Typically, the revenue and services must benefit the local entity that owns the building, which can be used to cover operating costs and facility maintenance. More storms are inevitable — let's get prepared and have a plan!

To increase a community's chances of receiving grant funding, Resilience hubs should be designed to encompass multiple uses that are not currently being met. This should include both emergency and non-emergency uses.

Several of the Resilience hub sites are located next to schools and could be utilized by the school district. During extreme weather events, the facility could be used for sheltering students and residents in the area. The facility could be designed as a theater or athletic arena to host school functions.



HOW? (ACTION STEPS)	COST	TIME FRAME	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	LEAD ENTITY	SUPPORTING PARTNERS/ENTITIES
Identify what resources and facilities already exist, where publicly owned land exists outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area, and plan for customized, targeted hubs	n/a	0 to 1 year	• n/a	Calcasieu Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Cameron Parish	GOHSEP
Identify strategic locations for hubs in areas of minimal flood risk and particularly in areas of need. Identified communities include: Sweetlake, Hackberry, Hayes, Goosport, DeQuincy, Sulphur	n/a	0 to 1 year	• n/a	Just Imagine SWLA Implementation team Calcasieu Parish Cameron Parish	
Juror/Council process to dedicate publicly-owned sites for resilience hubs	n/a	1 to 2 years	• n/a	Local municipalities or parish for each identi- fied site	Calcasieu Parish Cameron Parish
Build community resilience hubs	\$1 to \$5 million	2 to 5 years	 FEMA BRIC funding FEMA HMGP FEMA HMGP, Community Storm Shelter funding CDBG-DR funds for the required match 	Calcasieu Parish Cameron Parish	Calcasieu Parish Cameron Parish