



Alief



HOUSTON

Community Action Plan

July 2025



R4C
Identify. Understand. Act.

A collaboration between:



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July 2025

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COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



INTRODUCTION

Welcoming from the Mayor's Office of Resilience and Recovery

Dear Community Partners,

Building a stronger, more resilient Houston starts with empowering communities with the tools and resources they need to thrive in the face of challenges. The Resilient Cities Network, through its Resilience for Communities program, plays a vital role in strengthening Houston's neighborhoods by equipping them with the support necessary to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and extreme weather events. The City of Houston is proud of this important work and remains committed to fostering initiatives that drive meaningful, community-led resilience efforts.

Under the leadership of Mayor John Whitmire, we recognize the value of innovative programs like Resilience for Communities, which is highlighted in this Community Action Plan. This initiative has demonstrated impact in just under three years, helping to advance solutions that address the unique needs of vulnerable communities. By amplifying these efforts, we ensure that resilience strategies benefit and are informed by the communities they serve.

Collaboration is key to creating long-term, sustainable solutions. Non-profit organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders coming together is what allows successful resilience initiatives to scale across Houston. The programs, policies, and insights outlined in this Community Action Plan provide a meaningful direction for those looking to engage in community-driven resilience work, particularly in the Alief community.

We encourage all community partners-whether from the public or private sector-to join us in promoting local efforts that strengthen and empower Houston's neighborhoods. Through neighborhood collaboration, we can build a more resilient city for the challenges ahead.

Sincerely,



Angela Blanchard

City of Houston

Chief Recovery and Resilience Officer



The Resilience for Communities (R4C) Program

The Resilience for Communities (R4C) program was launched in 2021 as a partnership between The Resilient Cities Network, the Z-Zurich Foundation and Zurich Insurance, to help cities better understand the risks and vulnerabilities of communities in the face of extreme heat and flood events. The program is designed to enhance equitable city, community, and stakeholder engagement by prioritizing community participation; building local capacity through the use of innovative tools and processes; and driving investment into solutions that will increase community-level resilience utilizing the R-Cities' Resilient Community Impact Funds (RCIFunds) Platform.

This focus is timely, as extreme heat and flooding events are among the most deadly and costly climate events that cities are facing today. By 2050, the estimated cost of flooding in cities around the world may total over \$1 trillion USD, while extreme heat is projected to cost the United States \$500 billion in economic losses alone. Understanding climate resilience at the community level is critical for cities as they work to respond to these flood and heat risks. Despite its threats, the climate crisis also represents a significant opportunity for cities to redress long-lasting inequities and to work to improve social and economic conditions for communities while enhancing their ability to withstand and recover from climate-related events.

Partnership with the Z-Zurich Foundation & UCRP Program

In January 2023, the Z-Zurich Foundation launched the Urban Climate Resilience Program (UCRP), a global initiative across cities in 9 countries to build climate resilience at the local level. Along with the Resilient Cities Network R4C program, this initiative encompasses several similar programs being implemented by organizations including Plan International, IFRC, ICLEI and C40 Cities. These partners and implementing cities have contributed to the development and refinement of R4C program implementation, and are helping to build a larger movement towards community level resilient solutions.



FIGURE 1: Map of R4C cities

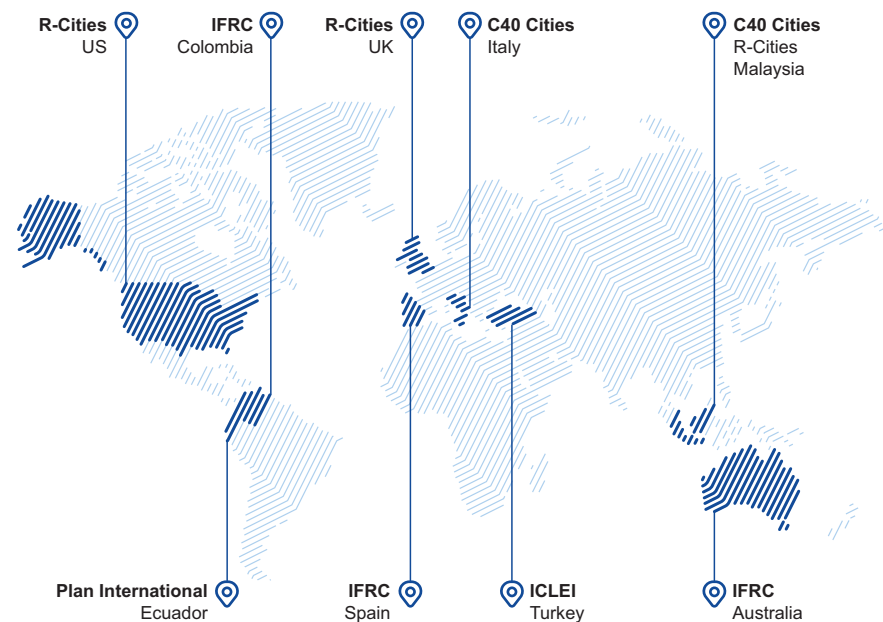


FIGURE 2: Map displaying the five implementing organizations in the UCRP and their respective program cities.

Resilience for Communities – Alief, Houston, TX

Resilience for Communities (R4C) is a multi-year program designed to strengthen neighborhood level climate resilience and help address social inequities in communities where existing stresses combined with growing climate shocks, make them ever more vulnerable to a changing climate.

The program works with a specific community on a multi-level engagement to examine the effects of cascading shocks and stresses (focused on flooding and extreme heat) and provides solutions that incorporate holistic resilience from the early stages of engagement through to implementation. R4C puts equity at the center of the work and ensures community voices are a central part of the solutions.

In the Alief neighborhood of Southwest Houston, the Resilience for Communities (R4C) program has been jointly implemented with the City of Houston Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resilience which focuses on the implementation of Resilient Houston and Houston's Climate Action Plan. An existing conditions analysis and community assessment was done as part of the multi-phased implementation approach of the program, including an in-depth community engagement process and project design in partnership with the City of Houston and local partners.



R4C Key Objectives

Through the R4C program, R-Cities funds and empowers local implementation partners to support and increase community resilience to floods, heatwaves and other extreme weather events.

The key objectives of R4C are to:

- Better understand risks and vulnerabilities and the status of resilience of cities using the Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities (CRMC) tool which measures community perceptions of local shocks and stresses;
- Enhance equitable City, community and stakeholder engagement through prioritizing community participation, thus fostering the collaborative development of resilience solutions;
- Build local capacity through innovative tools and processes and technical assistance;
- Drive investment and resources towards community resilience solutions developed with, and by, local stakeholders

Phases of Implementation

The R4C program follows a three-step process in the identified communities in each city.



PHASE 1

Onboarding and Engagement: Establishing partnerships with local governments and fostering community involvement.



PHASE 2

City Diagnostics: Conducting a comprehensive baseline assessment to identify and analyze the community's specific challenges and opportunities for building community resilience.



PHASE 3

Project Identification and Preparation: Selecting local implementation partners and interventions based on the diagnostic findings of resilience assessment and co-design process conducted in earlier stages of the program.

The Community Action Plan represents Phase 3 of the project and beyond, **anticipated impact between September 2024 to July 2025.**



The **Houston Climate Action Plan** demonstrates how the City will adapt and improve its resilience to climate hazards that impact the city today as well as risks that may increase in the coming years. Developing a Climate Action Plan allowed the City to develop strategies that will not only help minimize the City's carbon footprint but can help save money and improve the quality of life of residents. The project was informed by this action plan.



Resilient Houston frames five key thematic Visions for Houston's future and organizes Actions to achieve them at five scales. These thematic Visions include:

- A healthy place to live
- An equitable, inclusive, and affordable city
- A leader in climate adaptation
- A city that grows up, not out
- And a transformative economy that builds forward.

This project is informed by this strategy and interventions follow thematic Visions and associated Actions found in the plan.



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Houston - Alief

City Context

Houston, the largest city in Texas and the Southern United States, and the fourth most populous in the United States, is notable for its significant geographical expanse, diverse topography, and rapidly growing multi-cultural population. Located in Southeast Texas, it borders the Gulf of Mexico, which plays a crucial role in the city's climate, as well as economic activities. The city spans over 665 square miles and is characterized by flat marshlands and forested areas, crisscrossed by numerous waterways and highways. The city is also host to the Port of Houston, one of the country's busiest seaports.

Today, Houston houses over 2.3 million people and is also the heart and economic center of one of the country's largest metropolitan areas, with the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugarland MSA counting over 6 million residents. The city has experienced rapid growth over the last few decades, having doubled in size over the last 30 years. This growth has come with rapid and organic urban expansion, which has resulted in industrial, commercial and residential land-uses mixed together throughout the city, creating unique challenges.

Neighborhood Context

Alief is located at the edge of Houston's southwest city limit. As defined by Houston's Super neighborhood boundaries, Alief is bordered by the Sam Houston Parkway to the east, West Bellfort Avenue and Keegan's Bayou to the south and the Westpark Tollway to the north. Most of the neighborhood is within the city's limits, however a small portion of Alief is located in unincorporated Harris County. The neighborhood covers roughly 14.14 square miles and has a population of 109,634 as of the 2022 ACS census.

Originally settled in the mid-nineteenth century, Alief remained largely agricultural until the 1970s and 80s, when the City of Houston expanded westward, and the area's population grew four-fold. Today, the neighborhood sits just west of Houston's Chinatown and includes an area known as Little Saigon, as well as smaller residential enclaves and boasts a significantly higher population density than the Houston average.

ALIEF		HOUSTON	
14.14^{SQ MILES}	Area	665^{SQ MILES}	Area
109,634	Population	2,314,000	Population
34,520	Households	897,510	Households

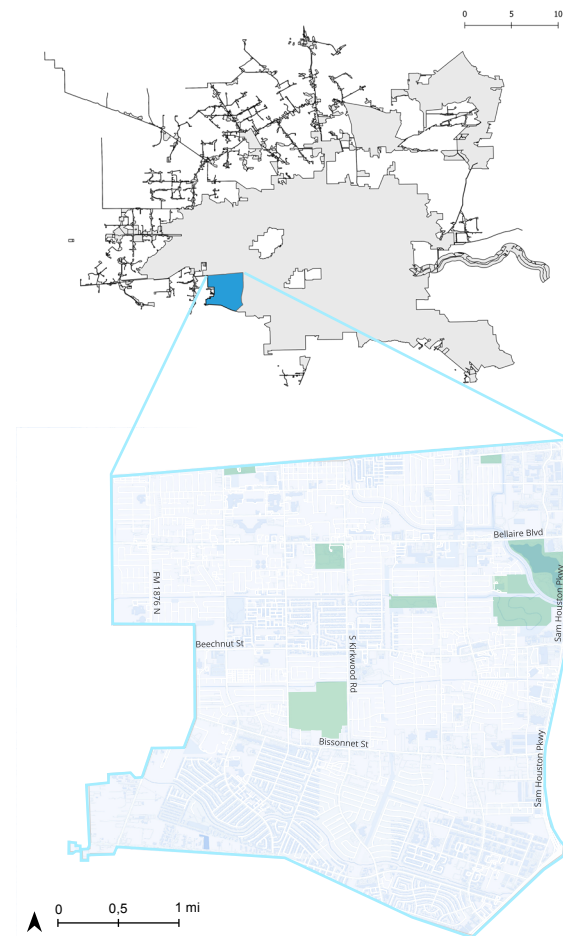


FIGURE 3: Outline of the Alief community in blue on the map of the City of Houston.

About Alief

Economic Pressures and Cost Burdens

Economic Pressures and Cost Burdens Alief is a lower middle-class neighborhood, with an **average household income of \$47,321** as compared to \$60,440 in the City of Houston overall. According to 2022 estimates, **42% of Alief residents spend over 30% of their income on Basic Household Expenses** as compared to 36% of Houston residents overall. **55% of households are earning less than \$50,000 per year** and 25% are living below the federal poverty line. According to the Texas Education Agency, more than 83% of the population in Alief is considered economically disadvantaged.

Diverse and Welcoming

Despite challenges, Alief is a dynamic community and a vivid example of Houston's urban diversity and complexity. Alief has a very high number of foreign-born residents as compared to the rest of the city, **with almost half of the community's residents estimated to be foreign-born**, as compared to just under 30% of the city overall.

This diversity is reflected in commercial establishments throughout the neighborhood, as well as the high number of foreign languages spoken at home, with over **60 languages and dialects represented throughout the Alief school district** including a larger than average share of Asian and Pacific-Islander languages as compared to Houston overall.

Alief's boasts strong cultural diversity and the area's multilingual and multicultural environment not only enriches the educational experience but also contributes to a vibrant community life that celebrates a wide array of cultural traditions and festivals. This diversity, coupled with Alief's strategic location and affordable housing, positions it as a potential hub for economic development and cultural exchange.

ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Avg Household Income

\$47,321 Alief

\$60,440 Houston

COST BURDENED

42% of Residents Spending 30% or More on Basic Household Expenses*

42% Alief

36% Houston

ECONOMIC PRESSURES

25% of Residents Below the Federal Poverty Line

25% Alief

14% Houston

DIVERSE AND WELCOMING

50% of Residents Foreign Born

49% Alief

30% Houston

DIVERSE YOUTH VOICES

90+ Languages Spoken at Alief Independent School District

About Alief



(Photo Source: Office of Complete Communities)

FIGURE 4: Alief is a diverse community in an international, multi-cultural city. Over half of Alief residents are foreign-born and over 60 languages are spoken at Alief schools. This multiculturalism is also felt in the built environment, with many shopping centers catering to a largely Asian and Hispanic customer base. Saigon Houston Plaza is a local landmark and represents these characteristics and commercial development patterns.



(Photo Source: Google Earth)

FIGURE 5: Suburban-style commercial development and industrial land-uses, like the one shown here, dot the landscape, with a heavy concentration in the Southeast. While these uses provide important employment opportunities, they contribute to flood and heat risks, with large impervious surfaces and lack of tree canopy.



(Photo Source: City of Houston's Mayor's Office)

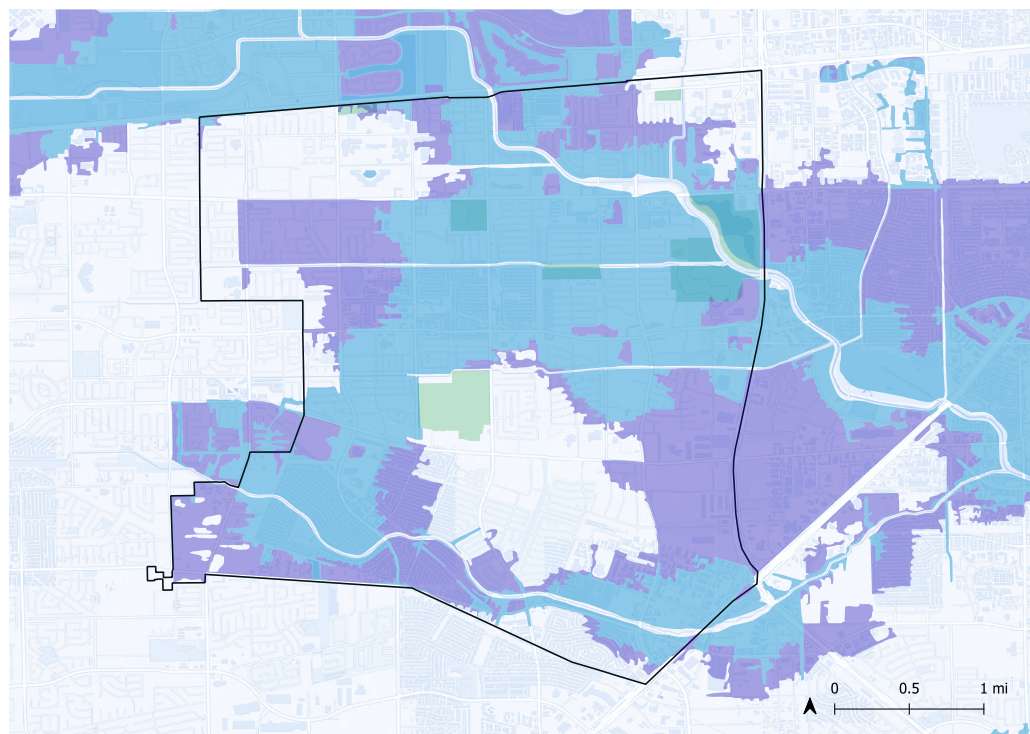
FIGURE 6: The Alief Neighborhood Center, shown here at the opening in 2023, is a centerpiece of diverse, welcoming and connected community in Southwest Houston.

Flood Risk

Flood Risk is especially severe in low-lying areas of the city, including many of the neighborhoods in the Southwest such as Alief which were **built on a flood-prone prairie**. According to an analysis conducted by First Street, a climate risk modeling tool, there are 16,571 properties in Alief at risk of flooding, which represents 76.1% of all properties in the community. Flood models which recreated the impact of Hurricane Harvey show that, **13,476** homes in Alief were impacted by flooding linked to the storm.ⁱⁱⁱ

Estimates for future flood risk predict that 80% of homes have a greater than 26% chance of being severely affected by flooding in the next 30 years.^{iv} Flooding is not just anticipated to cause property damage, but also disrupt access to utilities, emergency services, and transportation, affecting the area's social and economic well-being.

Today approximately 60% of the neighborhood falls within FEMA's 100-year flood plain.



○ Alief ● 500-year Floodplain ● 100-year Floodplain

FIGURE 7: Map of 500 and 100 Year FEMA Floodplains in Alief, Houston.



FLOOD RISKS

REPEAT PROPERTY DAMAGE

76.1%

of all properties at risk of flooding

60%

of neighborhood in FEMA 100-Year Floodplain

COST BURDENS AND CASCADING ECONOMIC IMPACTS

With household income below the city average, cost increases associated with extreme flooding events - such as insurance, property maintenance, damage repairs, etc. will greater burden Alief residents.

HURRICANES COMPOUND FLOOD RISKS

13,476

homes in Alief were impacted by flooding linked to Hurricane Harvey .

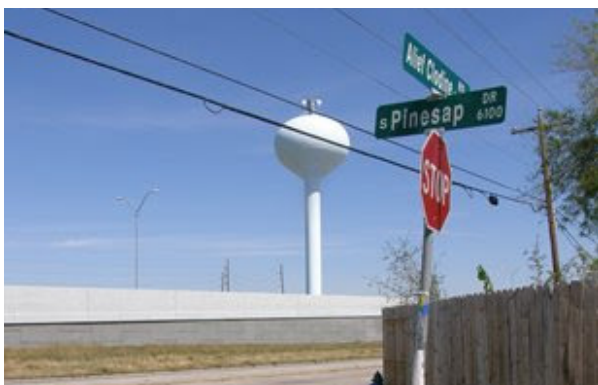
With frequency and duration of hurricanes increasing, flood risks increase and impacts/ costs are compounded.

Flood Risk



(Photo Source: Houston Chronicle)

FIGURE 8: Historically a prairie, lower elevations and existing topography in Alief make the neighborhood naturally prone to extreme flooding events and hurricanes.



(Photo Source: Wikipedia)

FIGURE 10: Large open areas are found along sidewalks and in medians throughout the community. Public right-of-ways are similarly lacking in vegetation, are largely impervious surfaces, and present opportunities for future tree plantings.



(Photo Source: Google Earth)

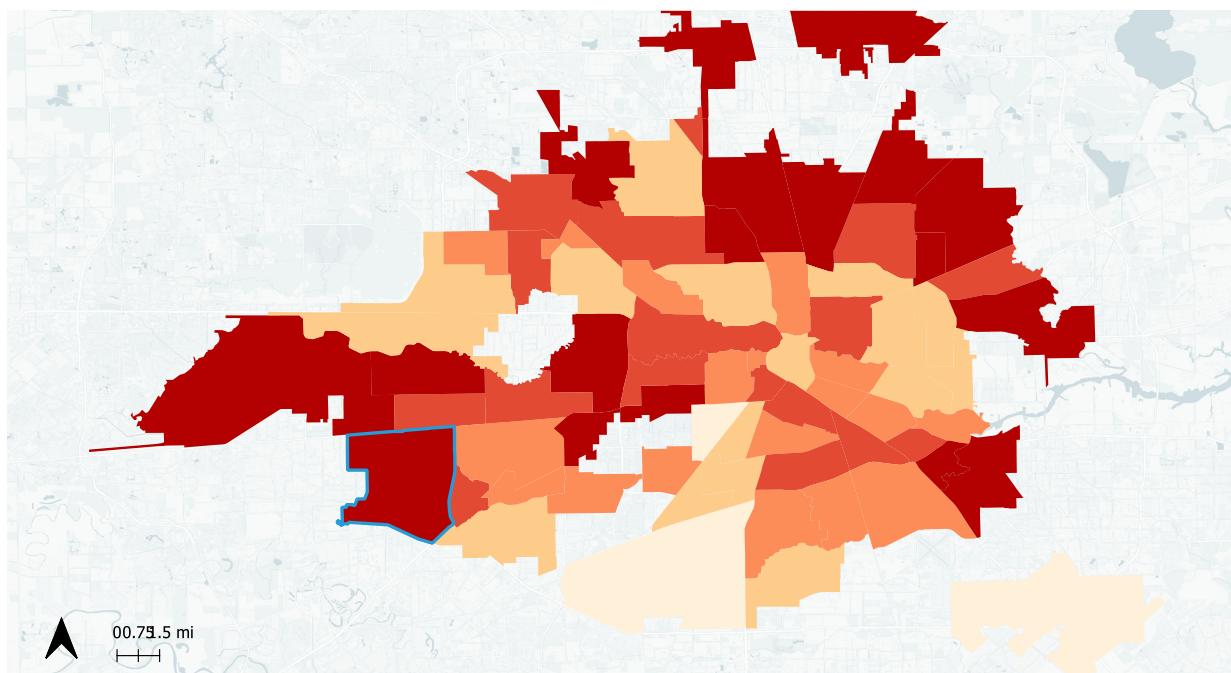
FIGURE 9: Years of suburban-style development have led to scattered-site growth patterns and large sites that often lack trees and vegetation, and are surrounded by impervious surfaces. These development patterns compound both flood and heat risks.

Heat Risk

Much as in other parts of Houston, Alief suffers from extreme heat. Increasing temperatures will bring the number of days at a temperature above 100 degrees Fahrenheit over 100 days per year in the next 30 years, and already the neighborhood experiences over 70 days a year with temperatures at this dangerous level – leading to fatigue and dehydration, cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

This year, Alief is expected to have 7 days that exceed 110°F. Due to increasing temperatures, this number is projected to rise to 22 days above 110°F in 30 years. Temperatures over 90°F can be hazardous for vulnerable individuals, while temperatures exceeding 100°F pose risks to everyone.

An analysis conducted by First Street indicates that Alief has extreme risk from heat. Due to high levels of humidity, and due to “feels like” temperatures increasing, 100% of homes in Alief already are classified as having extreme heat risk.^v



Average Temperature by Superneighborhood

● <103.91
 ● 103.91 - 104.65
 ● 104.65 - 104.99
 ● 104.99 - 105.52
 ● 105.5>
 ● Alief

FIGURE 11: Average Neighborhood Temperatures on Afternoon of August 7, 2020 across Houston

HEAT RISKS

INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS HEAT LEVELS

Alief is expected to have 7 days that exceed 110°F. Due to increasing temperatures, in 30 years this number is projected to rise to 22 days above 110°F.

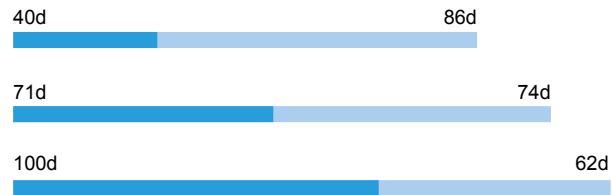
August 2023 marked the hottest August in Houston's recorded history, spanning 150 years.^{vi}

HUMIDITY COMPOUND RISKS

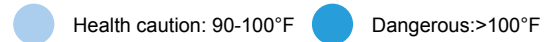
98%

of homes in Houston face extreme heat risk. With increasing average temperatures, dangerously hot days and heatwaves are likely to become more frequent.^{vii}

Heat Risk



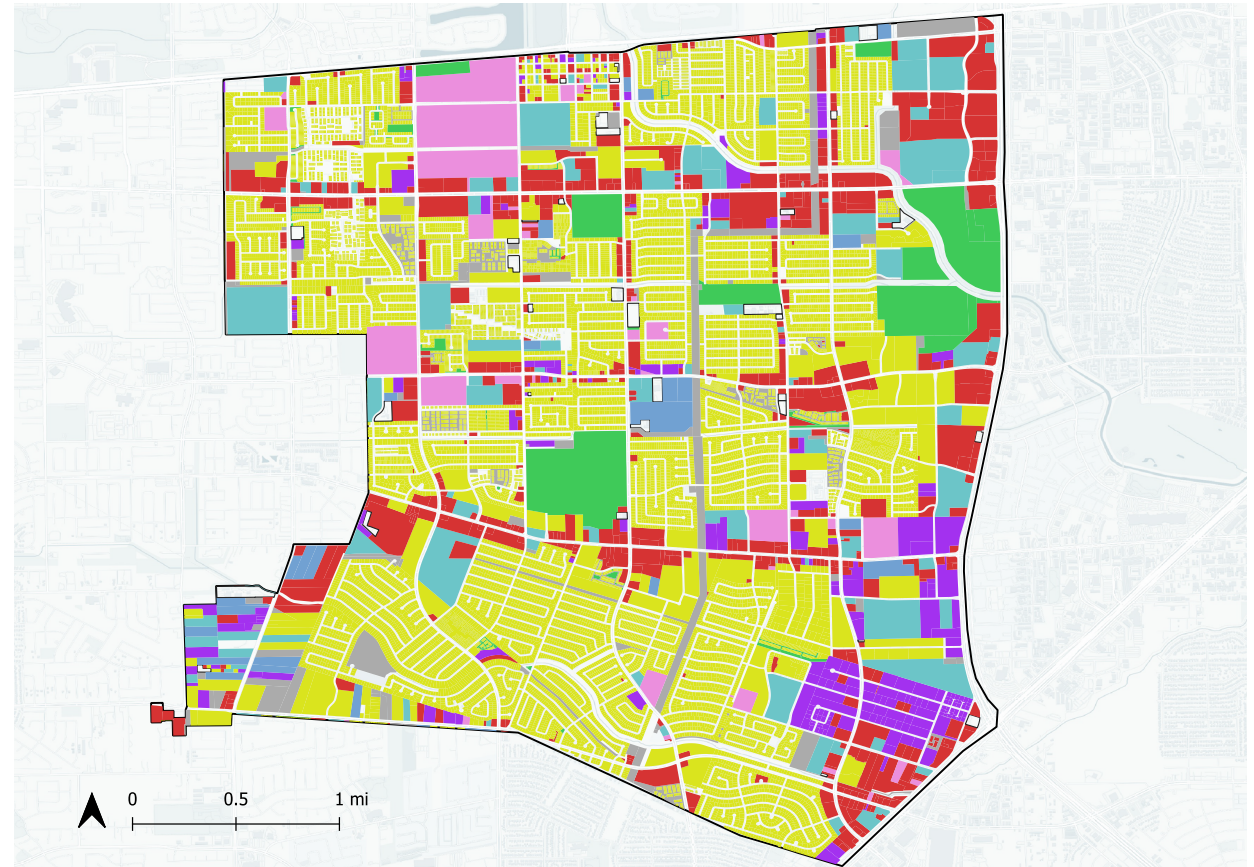
Number of Days per Year



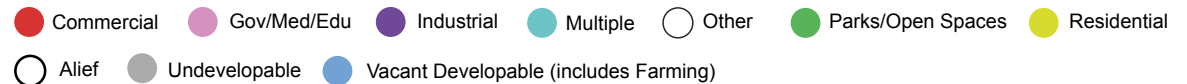
Average afternoon temperatures in Alief are among the highest in the city.

FIGURE 12: Number of Dangerous Heat Days Per Year. 30 Years Ago, Today, and Projected 30 Years in the Future

FIGURE 13: Aleif Land Use



Land Use Type



The map above shows the current land use for the community of Alief in Houston. Lack of green space, high impervious surface coverages, and a concentration of industrial and commercial land-uses all contribute to heat island effects increasing average neighborhood temperatures.

CRMC Tool and Public Outreach

From 2021-2023, Alief residents were engaged through the Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities tool (CRMC) which measures community vulnerability to flood and heat through Household Surveys, Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews.

Survey participants were asked specific questions regarding the impact of both flooding and heat on their lives and livelihoods, including ability to work, property damage and recovery time.

Participants also evaluated their climate hazard related knowledge, including knowledge of areas likely to flood, of evacuation routes in the case of extreme flooding and necessary actions during extreme heat.

68% female **32%** male

AGE BREAKDOWN

22.7% 18-30

61% 31-65

16% 65+

94%

of respondents not born in the neighborhood

>50%

of respondents have been in the community for between 5-20 years



CRMC Tool and Public Outreach

The CRMC Study revealed strengths and weaknesses in Alief across the 5 capitals of community resilience: natural, human, social, physical, and financial resilience.



Human Capital

refers to the skills, knowledge, health, and education of the community's residents.

+ Strengths:

Alief respondents have high levels of secondary school attendance, general knowledge of risks associated with climate change and specific knowledge about the certain mitigation efforts they can take to protect themselves from both heatwaves and flooding.

— Weaknesses:

Food availability is an issue for Alief respondents, and many respondents lacked knowledge about specific heat- and flood-related vulnerabilities as well as the threats presented by flood-related impacts, like unsafe water.



Natural Capital

refers to the natural environment and resources available to the community for over-all well being, as well as to buffer against extreme weather events.

— Weaknesses:

Alief has limited tree cover and a lot of impermeable surfaces, impacting the neighborhood's ability to mitigate flood and heat.



Social Capital

refers to the networks of relationships, trust, and cooperation within a community.

+ Strengths:

Alief respondents trust local authorities to represent their best interests.

— Weaknesses:

Inequity in Alief impacts the neighborhood's ability to have a strong social capital. In disaster times, there is limited mutual support. There is also a lack of inclusive data collection and stakeholder engagement in risk management to ensure all residents feel represented and accounted for.



Physical Capital

refers to the physical infrastructure of the community, including housing, transportation systems, communication networks, and public buildings.

+ Strengths:

Alief benefits from strong local communications networks and other infrastructure tied to basic services.

— Weaknesses:

Certain services may be impacted by both flood events including access to clean water and the ability to ensure the continuity of education.



Financial Capital

refers to the financial resources available to a community, both public and private.

+ Strengths:

At the public level, the City of Houston has diverse funding sources and specific resources allocated towards hazard mitigation and climate change.

— Weaknesses:

At the private level, many Alief respondents do not have access to discretionary funding or disaster insurance. At the neighborhood level, there is no budget for specific heat response and there have been limited investments in risk reduction.



FIGURE 14: Flooding and heat risk indicators were identified by survey respondents using the CRMC tool. These surveys quantified community perceptions and understandings to climate risks in the neighborhood.

Key Findings:

HEAT

79%

of respondents have been impacted by an extreme heat event in the last ten years

89%

of respondents either agree or strongly agree that heat waves are more frequent; 83% agree or strongly agree that flood risk is increasing

FLOOD

64%

of respondents either agree or strongly agree that their community should be taking greater action to address climate change

20%

of respondents do not know whether or not their homes are in a flood plain

38.6%

of respondents have had their property damaged 2 or more times by flooding in the last ten years.

What's Important to Alief?

Prioritized Resilience Indicators

Following CRMC tool implementation, neighborhood residents were invited to prioritize resilience indicators for future project implementation. Community residents participated in a series of events and activities to identify the following priority themes:



HEAT RISK REDUCTION INVESTMENT

According to respondents and key informant interviews, there is no dedicated heat-risk mitigation budget. Residents cited this as a primary concern and also linked this to growing apathy in the neighborhood, with residents feeling deprioritized by local government.



ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

High temperatures mean higher energy use in Alief, leading residents to spend disproportionate amounts of their income on energy bills. Residents identified a gap in alternate energy options and knowledge, as well as issues with existing power infrastructure. Additionally, they cited the dire impact that high energy expenses can have on community financial health, with both households and local businesses severely impacted.



FOOD ACCESSIBILITY

While not directly tied to flood or heat, food accessibility impacts Alief residents' overall resilience to climate hazards and can be further exacerbated during hazard events. Residents cited limited affordable food options in the neighborhood, and also limited knowledge of disaster relief programs that can help them access food during a flooding.

What's Important to Alief?

Community Design Sprints

Residents were invited to produce actions and desired outcomes that could enhance overall community resilience in Alief and specifically respond to the indicators they prioritized. The results are a wide range of potential program and project ideas which were used to influence and refine the projects chosen for implementation:

Education Programs
for at Home Repairs
and Retrofits

Tree-planting
programs for
community spaces



Retention Ponds
for Stormwater
Management & Cooling

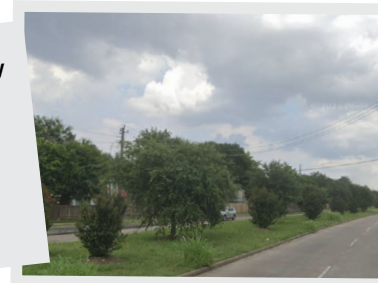
- Public Safety and Emergency Planning Awareness Campaigns

Updating
Neighborhood
Drainage System with
Green Infrastructure



Educational programs
on Alternative Energy
Use and Energy
Efficiency

Increasing greenery
in Alief and green
infrastructure:



Expanding Solar Panel
Installation Programs

Mobilizing of
Existing Food
Pantries & Increasing
Community
Awareness

Creating Community
Gardens



Training residents to
grow their own food



LOCAL PROJECT PROFILE

Local Partner Profile

The Resilient Alief Project

Alief is a vibrant and diverse community, home to a wide range of stakeholders and organizations that collaborate to drive impactful resilience projects. In partnership with R-Cities, AliefVotes, and the City of Houston, over the course of a year, the Resilient Alief project aims to strengthen community resilience through workshops that elevate youth voices, build disaster and emergency preparedness, and distribute emergency resources in post-disaster scenarios. The project also focuses on identifying new opportunities for capital investments to support the community's growth and resilience.



FIGURE 15: Community Workshops and Emergency Kit Distribution: On Nov 9th, AliefVotes hosted a workshop in which there were over 100 attendees and 50 emergency kits were distributed.

By the Numbers

a total of **12**

Neighborhood Groups Engaged in Assessment and Project Co-design

a total of **300+**

Community Residents Participating in resilience workshops

a total of **100+**

Emergency Kits Distributed

a total of **5**

Community-based Resilience Projects Identified, Prioritized and Supported

Local Partner Profile

Timeline of Project Deliverables

The Resilient Alief Project by AliefVotes is intended to jumpstart community resilience in the neighborhood by facilitating a series of workshops, distributing emergency supply kits, and convening key stakeholders in furthering community resilience projects and in building coalitions, such as the ongoing development of the Alief Community Garden. Quick wins in Q4 2024 will encourage future success and bring together key partners to continue addressing resilience issues and themes.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

These events will be designed to strengthen the community's capacity to prepare for and respond to the shocks and stresses identified in the Alief Community Resilience Assessment. Workshops are likely to take place quarterly but would happen more frequently with additional funding and capacity.



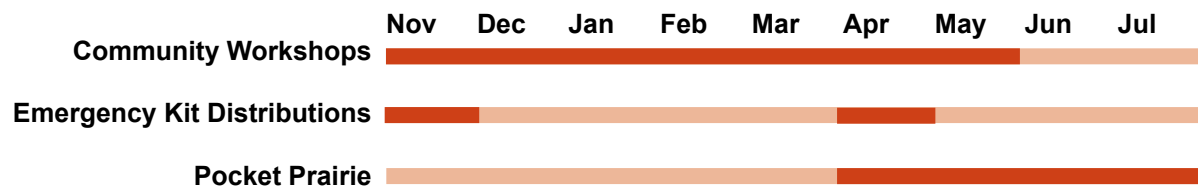
EMERGENCY KIT DISTRIBUTIONS

In addition to building preparedness, the workshops will serve as platforms for distributing aid and resources in post-disaster scenarios. A total of 50 high-quality emergency kits and 100 informational kits containing local resources regarding emergency preparedness from the City of Houston, Texas General Land Office, and Harris County Precinct 4 will be distributed. Future kit distributions, funding permitting, may be tied to community workshop events. The emergency kits are provided through the Resilient Alief Project.



POCKET PRAIRIE

The Pocket Prairie in the Alief Community Garden will serve as a permanent, community-driven installation that promotes ecological resilience, education, and engagement. The project will include community-led planning and volunteer efforts, with inclusive participation from residents of all ages. Designed to enhance biodiversity and stormwater detention, the prairie will feature native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs to support pollinators and improve air quality—especially in an extreme heat-prone neighborhood like Alief. The initiative also emphasizes educational outreach through workshops and permanent signage, engaging nearby schools and residents in topics like native ecology, conservation, food justice, and urban agriculture.



AliefVotes

AliefVotes is a neighborhood-based non-profit that builds resilience through proactive youth engagement, education, and community projects. Created for and by youth leaders in Alief, the organization aims to establish a pipeline of proactive, civically engaged, and community-oriented youth. As a key member of the Alief Super Neighborhood Council, the organization is also exploring potential collaborations and partnerships to drive impact in their community, exemplified by their driving role in the Alief Community Action Plan.

Website:

www.aliefvotes.org

Status:

501 (c)(3) US-Based Non-profit

Non-profit Year Incorporated:

2022

Board of Directors:

Jeanine Armitstead, Chuck Borstel, Abby Gail Trino, Mujeebat Gbolahan, Tommy Wan

Executive Director:

Abby Gail Trino

The Resilient Alief Project



FIGURE 16: Community Workshops and Emergency Kit Distribution: On Nov 9th, R-Cities and AliefVotes held a workshop in which there were over 100 attendees and 50 emergency kits were distributed. These workshops raised awareness and drove impact by providing resources to the community.

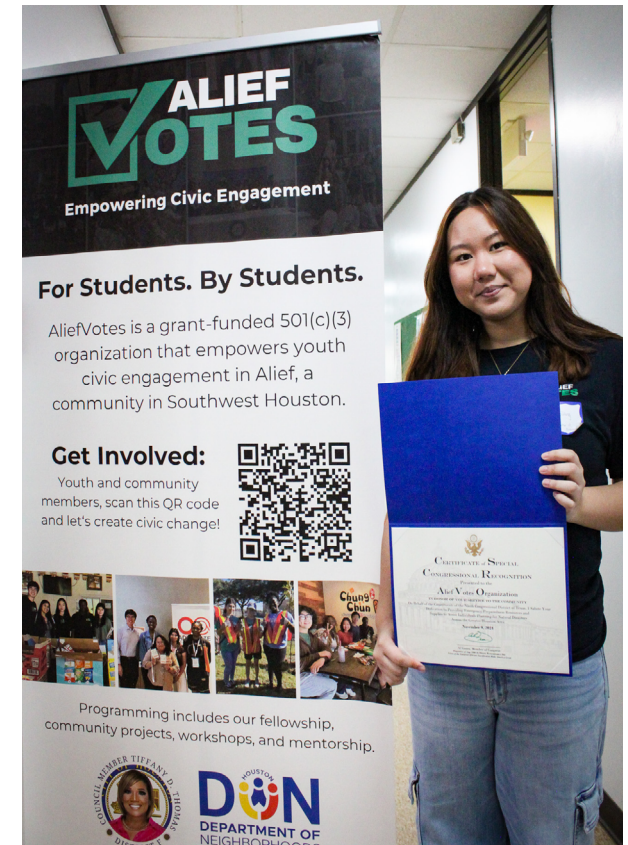


FIGURE 17: Building Local Support: AliefVotes, Resilient Cities Network and partners received a certificate of recommendation from local officials. Federal, state, and local representatives were part of early workshops, helping to build a broad coalition of support for community resilience work and funding among local elected officials and community leaders.

Community Impact

The Resilience for Communities Program (R4C) follows a three-step process of outreach, assessment, and action, all designed to elevate residents and stakeholders, drive community impact, and build upon ongoing local successes.

Early program “wins” include deeply engaging residents and local stakeholders in design sprints and project co-designs, identifying up to 5 impactful community resilience projects and ongoing partners, and assisting AliefVotes in hosting a well-attended community workshop in which 50 Emergency Kits were distributed to a diverse audience of over 100 attendees. These initial community projects are helping to build a foundation for further resilience action and investments, all while amplifying and centering the existing coalition of community resilience partners and ongoing initiatives.

Co-Benefits

A key part of the Resilient Cities Network methodology is the definition and understanding of project Co-Benefits. Co-benefits refer to the additional beneficial impacts that a resilient project can deliver to the community and/or a greater system beyond its basic functions. Addressing resilience challenges in an integrated and holistic way will help the initiative, project, surrounding community, and greater system realize multiple benefits across sectors and stakeholders. One of the core pillars of this project is empowering youth members of the community to become the next generation of resilience leaders in their community. Alief Votes engages young people through volunteer opportunities and training programs that connect into the wider civic engagement ecosystem in Alief. This drives a variety of these co-benefits, including:

- Increased social cohesion
- Improved public health and well-being
- Youth empowerment and skill development
- Environmental benefits
- Economic and social benefits
- Enhanced civic engagement





COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Community Action Plan

Introduction

The Alief Community Action Plan outlines a host of specific projects, initiatives, and strategies identified and developed with local partners during the R4C engagement and co-design process. Informed by public outreach, data-driven analysis, and the alignment of city strategies with identified community needs, the projects presented in the Alief Community Action Plan are real-time community resilience projects developed with, and by, key stakeholders actively tackling resilience challenges in the neighborhood.

How to Use This Section

Use this section to learn more about active projects and initiatives in the Alief community, including projects partners behind this important work and different ways you or your organization can get involved. The Alief Community Action Plan is the culmination of extensive public outreach and community engagement, and is where interested partners and funders can get involved in implementing projects contributing to a holistic neighborhood response to resilience challenges. Projects presented in the Alief Community Action Plan have been developed by project partners engaged during the R4C assessment and co-design process.



FIGURE 18: Projects and partners in the Community Action Plan are working collaboratively to drive resilience solutions and amplify impact at the local level. Learn more about projects in this section and how you get involved.

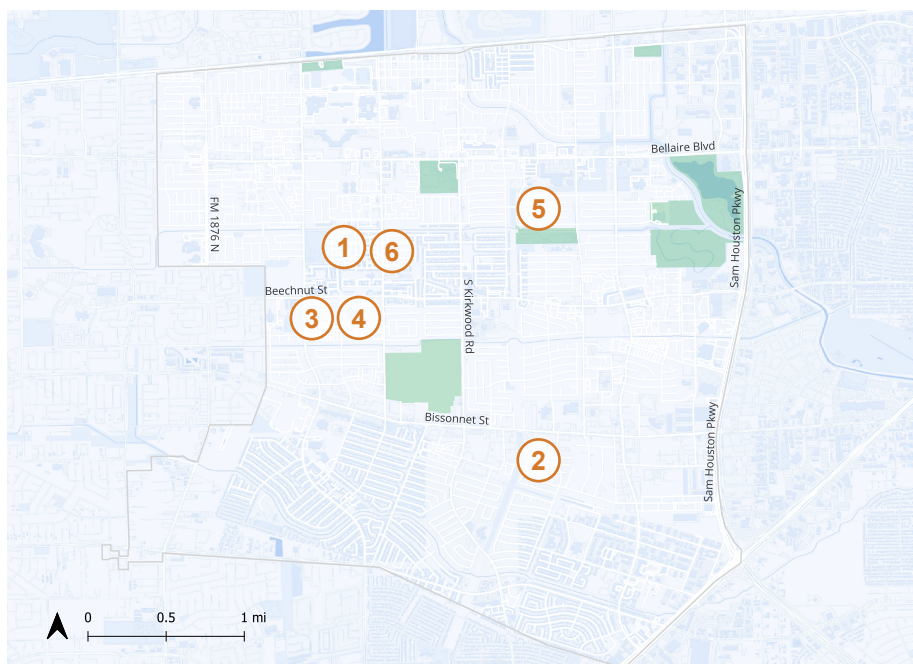
Guiding Principles of the R4C Alief Community Action Plan:

- 1 Community Generated Projects and Programs**
- 2 Data-Driven and Responsive to Local Needs**
- 3 A Living Document** to be used by community stakeholders, neighborhoods groups, funders and others, to pool resources, understand needs, and implement community level projects.

The projects included in this Community Action Plan address heat and flooding risks and provide tangible co-benefits to **109,000+** residents of Alief.

Community Resilience Projects

Mapped below are the currently active Alief Resilience for Communities (R4C) projects, as well as ongoing community resilience projects being implemented by existing community partners. These projects are addressing identified heat and flooding risks in the community, as well as providing tangible co-benefits, particularly around neighborhood equity and climate justice. Each project identified is actively seeking various forms of support, and align with ongoing efforts to build holistic community resilience in Alief. Review the project partners and project descriptions here and on the previous pages to learn more about specific initiatives. Icons below indicate if projects are looking for either funding, technical assistance, skilled/group volunteers, or some combination of support. Contact us to learn more about how you can get involved in the implementation of community level resilience solutions in the Alief community.



1 Community Workshops



Local partner AliefVotes will be hosting a series of youth-led, multi-lingual workshops focused on resilience topics impacting the community. Projects will leverage deep community engagement from project partners to introduce resilience themes to community members and grow community awareness and understanding of key risks and ongoing shocks/stresses.

2 Emergency Kit Distribution



Emergency Kits will be distributed to Alief community members as part of ongoing engagement work and community outreach. Kits will include various supplies and accessories to assist in future power outages, flood events, hurricanes and/or heat events. Kits will include educational materials in multiple languages.

3 Alief Community Garden Forward



Repositioning and revisioning a collaborative community space to drive resilient futures, the Alief Community Garden project seeks to make an informal "third-space" into an active community facility with an established vision and plan for the future. This effort is supported by a recently passed, multi-million dollar bond measure to fund significant improvements to the site.

4 Pocket Prairie



The Pocket Prairie at Alief Community Garden will be a permanent, community-led installation that fosters ecological resilience, inclusive engagement, and education through native plantings, stormwater management, and workshops on conservation, food justice, and urban agriculture.

5 Super Trees for Sustainability



Surface parking lots are a massive contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and urban heat island effects. Houston Wilderness seeks to address this by planting old growth species in strategic ways to absorb the sun, limit heat islands, and beautify Alief, one surface parking lots at a time.

6 Alief Linear Forest Project



Utilizing a broad coalition of partners and volunteers, local organization Alief Super-neighborhood Council is hoping to plant over a 400 trees in key community locations and strategic corridors as part of their multiyear planting efforts.



Building Community Through Resilience Workshops and Growing Capacity of an Emerging Youth-Led Organization

AliefVotes will leverage existing community relationships and elevate youth voices by organizing a series of quarterly resilience workshops and events in various community spaces throughout the neighborhood. These events will be designed to strengthen the community's capacity to prepare for and respond to the shocks and stresses identified in the Community Resilience Assessment. Strengthening community resilience to extreme weather events by empowering and organizing youth voices to lead and sustain collective action will also be a key output of these workshops and the overall partnership. The project seeks to increase the capacity and resources for a strong and emerging youth-led organization to help them create meaningful impact within their neighborhood for years to come. These workshops and a strong AliefVotes organization will improve community awareness and preparedness for extreme weather events both now and in the future, ensuring greater readiness and resilience. Workshop partners include SEWA, Alief ISD, Alief Neighborhood Supercouncil, the WOW Project, and others.

Moving forward, the size and frequency of community workshops are funding dependent. While the RCIFunds may support future community events and workshops, additional funders and project partners are needed to continue to sustain engagement and impact on an ongoing basis. AliefVotes would also benefit from partnership building with entities from the private and public sector interested in supporting youth-led community resilience, and through organizational capacity development to ensure the new non-profit is sustainable and able to scale with aspirations. This support could come in the form of funding, in-kind services, or other ways to lend support to a growing organization.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Surveying attendees of past workshop events
- ✓ Fundraising/partnership building for future workshops
- ✓ Fundraising/partnership building for increasing organizational capacity
- ✓ Participation in organizational development workshops for board, staff and community leaders.
- ✓ Participation in leadership development and network development activities for board, staff and community leaders.

PROJECT LEAD:

AliefVotes

PROJECT PARTNERS:

SEWA, Alief ISD

Alief Superneighborhood Council

Alief Art House

MITIGATION



HEAT RISK

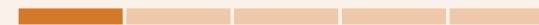
Educates residents on extreme heat events and coping strategies through hands-on workshops.



FLOOD RISK

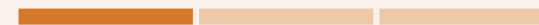
Provides sessions on at-home flood repairs, recovery strategies, and accessing federal aid to prepare for climate disasters.

FINANCING SCALE



TIMEFRAME

Quick Win



CAPITAL



Human



Social



Financial

Emergency Kit Distributions – Putting Resilience Tools in Community Hands

Emergency Kits have been, and will continue to be, distributed to Alief community members as part of ongoing engagement work and community outreach. Kits will include various supplies and accessories to assist in future power outages, flood events, hurricanes and/or heat events. Kits will include educational materials in multiple languages. Volunteers and community members volunteered to build Emergency Kits by putting together supplies prior to distribution. This event has helped provide important emergency tools and tangible resources to the community, and helps build community cohesion through volunteer events.



FIGURE 19: Distribution of Emergency Kits helped build community resilience to heat and flood risks by providing tangible resources to some of those most impacted, and providing wrap-around trainings to build awareness to resources, impacts, and what to do in the event of an extreme heat or flood event.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Survey Usage After Distribution for Improved Kit Design
- ✓ Fundraising and Volunteers for New Dispersals/Events
- ✓ Partner with Mayor's Office of Resilience and Recovery

PROJECT LEAD:

AliefVotes

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Volunteers

MITIGATION



HEAT RISK

Reduction through deployment of tangible resources to address heat risk. Guides were also provided in multiple language to demonstrate effective usage.



FLOOD RISK

Reduction through access to tangible resources to address flood risk. Guides were also provided in multiple languages to demonstrate effective usage.

FINANCING SCALE



TIMEFRAME

Quick Win



CAPITAL



Financial



Human



Physical

Pocket Prairie Project

The Alief Community Garden represents a powerful example of community-driven sustainability in Alief. The Pocket Prairie in the Alief Community Garden will transform 500–600 square feet of open space into a vibrant native ecosystem featuring wildflowers, grasses, and pollinator-friendly plants. This initiative will improve stormwater management, mitigate the urban heat island effect, and increase biodiversity—particularly vital in one of Houston’s hottest and most flood-prone neighborhoods. Adjacent to Youngblood Intermediate School, the project will provide a living classroom for students and a permanent landmark celebrating Alief’s cultural and ecological resilience.

The Pocket Prairie will also serve as a platform for education and civic engagement. Through interactive signage, hands-on workshops, and partnerships with organizations like the National Wildlife Federation and the Katy Prairie Conservancy, the prairie will connect residents to conservation practices, food security initiatives, and urban farming. By working closely with local students, educators, and community leaders, AliefVotes aims to make this prairie a model for sustainable development and a welcoming green space that can be replicated across Houston.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Stakeholder meetings with Alief ISD, WOW Project, and others to finalize project scope
- ✓ Confirm site approval and source materials
- ✓ Engage with design consultants for final spatial planning and renderings
- ✓ Organize first community build events and volunteer outreach
- ✓ Long-term fundraising and partnerships with conservation and education-focused organizations

PROJECT LEAD:

Alief Votes

PROJECT PARTNERS:

WOW Project, TBG Architects + Planners, Youngblood Intermediate School (Alief ISD), Alief Super Neighborhood Council, Alief International Management District

MITIGATION



HEAT RISK

Reduction through introduction of native grasses and wildflowers that reduce surface temperatures, improve air quality, and lessen urban heat island effect.



FLOOD RISK

Reduction through the installation of a native plant system that enhances stormwater detention and absorbs runoff to address localized flood risk.

FINANCING SCALE



TIMEFRAME

Long Term



CAPITAL



Natural



Social



Human

Alief Community Garden – Resilient Future

The Alief Community Garden SPARK Park was originally created through a partnership between the Alief Super Neighborhood Council, Urban Harvest, and the International Management District. The site is across the street from Youngblood Intermediate School, and the land is leased from the Alief Independent School District for a nominal fee.

In 2011, hundreds of volunteers came to the open field on Dairy View Lane to construct raised 4'x 25' garden beds. Individuals or groups are responsible for planting, watering, and harvesting their own beds. In December 2011, a beneficial garden, compost pile and leaf bin were added to enrich the garden and expand community involvement. A tree farm, added in February 2012 provides a space where 500 5-gallon trees can be grown and re-potted until they are large enough to be planted in Alief esplanades. Throughout the project there has been an emphasis on sweat equity, volunteering, education, and on the power of coming together as a community to improve the area.

While the project has active uses already, this effort seeks to develop the site into a more usable and inclusive greenspace, aided by a large capital investment facilitated by a bond measure by Alief ISD. The 23-acre largely undeveloped site presents an opportunity to collaborate with Alief ISD and stakeholders to enhance amenities that benefit both students and residents. Plans include developing shade structures and gathering areas, plus improving existing community gardens, alongside designating space for a farmer's market. Goals also encompass creating a concrete walking trail with amenities like covered park benches and picnic tables, rain water catchment systems, and fostering a welcoming environment for community interaction.

Specific to this funding, the project will assist in smaller-scale capital improvements while facilitating engagement and preliminary design work to revision this important community space. Future plans aim to transform the underutilized site into a vibrant hub that addresses community needs for recreation, food security, education, and environmental sustainability, enhancing the overall well-being and resilience of the Alief community.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Stakeholder meetings to discuss next steps and visioning plans.
- ✓ Development of vision plan and phased implementation discussions with Alief ISD and partners
- ✓ Feasibility and design studies
- ✓ Early project implementation
- ✓ Ongoing fundraising and partnership building

PROJECT LEAD:

Spark Parks

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Alief Super Neighborhood Council / Urban Harvest / The International Management District / FAM Houston-Shamba Ya Amani / WOW Project / AliefVotes / Alief ISD

MITIGATION



HEAT RISK

Enhances urban greening with native Texas trees for shade, cooling across its 23-acre site.



FLOOD RISK

Acts as a green space that improves drainage, mitigates flooding, and fosters environmental education and community engagement.

FINANCING SCALE



TIMEFRAME

Long Term



CAPITAL



Natural



Physical



Human

Alief Community Garden – Visioning and Demonstration Projects for a Resilient Future



FIGURE 22: Alief Community Gardens has taken shape over the past decade at a large parcel just west of Youngblood Intermediate School. The site is owned by Alief ISD and managed by the International Management District.



(Photo Source: Houston Chronicle)

FIGURE 23: Volunteers working in one of the many community gardens that have developed on the multi-use site.

Houston Wilderness – Super Trees for Sustainability

This project is targeted at reducing dangerous heat levels in the Alief community through tree planting in large, paved areas, which will also provide additional ecosystem services such as air quality improvement, carbon sequestration, floodwater absorption, and habitat for wildlife. The trees that will be planted are 14 species native to the Houston Region identified as “Super Trees” for the high level of ecosystem services (shade, flood prevention, air pollution reduction and carbon sequestration) that they provide and their survivability against climate stressors. These trees were identified in a joint study with Rice University and the Houston Health Department that developed a framework for benefiting vulnerable communities through tree planting in tandem with non-traditional partners, which informs Houston Wilderness (HW)’s broader Super Trees for Sustainability Program. The trees will be planted using planters and pavement removal at sites throughout the neighborhood.

This proposal has three main components to address challenges associated with shade, flood prevention, and carbon sequestration:

- 1) Increased urban forestry in substantially non-shaded concreted (impervious) areas through creation of Pavement/Parking Lot Tree Shading Planters and accompanying large-scale targeted native tree species plantings for a healthier environment;
- 2) Education and training on native Super Trees species, the high ecosystem services that they provide, long-term maintenance, and the connection to health (e.g., tracking of heat, particulate air pollution, heat related injuries, asthma attacks, cardiac arrest);
- 3) Expanded community engagement with the diverse demographic groups on health effects of urban heat islands and air pollution, and benefits of large-scale urban forestry on non-shaded (impervious) pavements, with information sessions in Spanish, English, and Vietnamese.

Initial project implementation is being funded by a federal EPA grant and supported by the City of Houston. Future plantings are dependent on fundraising and securing implementation sites. Support includes funding for ongoing project implementation and securing high-impact sites for future installations.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Fundraising and support for additional phases of project implementation.
- ✓ Securing parking lot sites for additional phases of project implementation.
- ✓ Scaling impact and learnings via data analysis, webinars and other knowledge sharing activities

PROJECT LEAD:

Houston Wilderness

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Alief Super Neighborhood Council
The International Management District
City of Houston Health Department
Houston Community College

MITIGATION



HEAT RISK

Introduces native tree species to impervious areas, providing shade, air quality improvements, and education on ecosystem benefits.



FLOOD RISK

Replaces pavement with permeable surfaces and native grasses, planting “Super Trees” that absorb floodwater, reduce runoff, and combat climate stressors.

FINANCING SCALE



TIMEFRAME

Long Term



CAPITAL



Natural



Physical

Alief Linear Forest Project – Community Tree Planting Along Strategic Corridors

Spearheaded by the Alief Super Neighborhood Council (ASNC), this project aims to plant 400 native species trees (even more, depending on funding) in the linear forest pattern beginning at the intersection of S. Dairy Ashford and W. Bellfort and going north, a main corridor in the community. Once completed, the ASNC will start planting the Bissonnet Esplanades. The Bissonnet Esplanades are generally very wide and will lend themselves to the linear forest pattern.

The project will focus on three critical areas with tangible deliverables: tree planting, environmental education, and community partnerships.

1) Tree planting: As part of this project, ASNC envisions planting 400 trees on Dairy Ashford (a major north/south corridor). These trees will increase tree canopy cover, reduce the heat island effect, assist with the negative impact of natural disasters such as flooding, and improve air quality by reducing pollution caused by heat.

2) Education: ASNC will develop and distribute educational materials on environmental topics relevant to Alief. Beginning its third decade, our linear forest project must be an intergenerational initiative. ASNC will also host ecological awareness events and campaigns and collaborate with local schools to integrate environmental education into the curriculum.

3) Community partnerships: Project supporters have strong relationships with the Alief Independent School District and the International Management District. ASNC will also work to educate residents about tree benefits and how to care for them properly through volunteerism and council meetings.

To put this project in perspective, this year the ASNC begins its third decade of tree-planting activities. It has planted approximately 10,000 trees in Alief parks and esplanades and has created a solid volunteer base of over five hundred students/volunteers.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Fundraising/In-kind for planting strategy and tree plan, first round of trees planted, watering budget, etc.
- ✓ Volunteer call for action on planting days
- ✓ Trees, materials, services – In-Kind donations

PROJECT LEAD:

Alief Super Neighborhood Council (ASNC)

PROJECT PARTNERS:

International Management District

Alief ISD

Residents

SEWA International

MITIGATION



HEAT RISK

Plants 400 trees along Dairy Ashford to increase canopy cover, reduce heat islands, and improve air quality.



FLOOD RISK

Creates green spaces that absorb rainfall, reducing runoff and flood risks in impervious urban areas.

FINANCING SCALE



TIMEFRAME

Mid-Term



CAPITAL



Natural



Physical



Social

Alief Linear Forest Project – Community Tree Planting Along Strategic Corridors



(Photo Source: Google Earth)

FIGURE 24: Large esplanades and grassy areas provide ample room for tree plantings at important intersections and along major corridors. Upwards of 400 trees are planned to be planted in these grassy areas found in the neighborhood to reduce flood and heat risk.

Alief - Toward a Resilient Future

The projects and partnerships presented in the Alief Community Action Plan outline a specific suite of interventions that will help build a more resilient community ready to respond to the impacts of heat, flood and other acute shocks.

By identifying and implementing these projects as a portfolio of community interventions, the essential conditions of holistic community resilience can begin to take root and set the course for coordinated and bottom-up neighborhood action for years to come.



Financial Capital

Increased Capacity of Local Partners – With strategic investments in local non-profit partners at the forefront of community engagement work in the neighborhood, we are integrating the resilience practice at the local level and simultaneously strengthening the local eco-system of non-profits working on resilience.



Human Capital

Knowledge and Resources in Community Hands – By hosting workshops and distributing critical supplies throughout the engagement, this Community Action Plan seeks to put the resources, tools and knowledge for effective heat and flood response in the hands of those most impacted and those best positioned to respond, the community.

- Four (4) Community Workshops, with 100+ attendees each
- Fifty (50) Disaster Kits Distributed
- Up to 30 Community Partners Present at Workshops
- Over 24 Languages Spoken at Workshop Events



Social Capital

Coordinated for Future Action – As envisioned, implementing the proposed Alief Community Action Plan will require continued engagement and collaboration among neighborhood stakeholders. To help solidify this network of collaborative actors, this plan will facilitate multiple formal and informal partnerships, and opportunities for mutual programming.



Physical Capital

Improved Community Spaces – Alief Community Gardens is improved through a coordinated and facilitated collaborative design process, fostering greater community involvement and shared ownership, in the face of large investments and improvements. This work will ensure the Alief Community Garden remains an inclusive space for multiple users driving community resilience and takes advantage of new investments to ensure resilient futures.

- Capital Bond Issued to Support Site Redevelopment and Improvements



Natural Capital

Expanded Tree Canopy Coverage – Significant tree plantings are envisioned on large surface parking lots and along key corridors in the community. This expanded canopy coverage would reduce heat and flood risk significantly by bringing nature-based solutions to the areas of the built environment most contributing to heat and flood risk, namely pavement spaces with high heat island impacts.

- 20 “Super Tree” Planting Sites
- Over 400 street trees will be planted on esplanades on key corridors and strategic corners
- A permanent pocket prairie incorporating a native plant system constructed and maintained in the Alief Community Garden

Implementation Guide

Projects in the Alief Community Action Plan are listed below along with corresponding sections for funding/financing and an estimated timeline of implementation. Additional sections identify key project partners, next steps and calls to action. These projects are part of a living plan of project implementation to prioritize resilient community solutions as funding, partnerships, and other opportunities become available.

PROJECT	PROJECT LEAD	PROJECT PARTNERS	FINANCING (\$ TO \$\$\$\$\$)	QUICK WINS (<1 YEAR)	MID TERM (1-3 YEARS)	LONG TERM (3+ YEARS)
Community Workshops	AliefVotes	SEWA, Alief ISD, Alief Neighborhood Supercouncil	\$			
Emergency Kit Distribution	AliefVotes		\$			
Alief Community Garden Forward – Visioning and Demonstration Projects	SparksParks	Alief Super Neighborhood Council, Urban Harvest, the International Management District, FAM Houston-Shamba Ya Amani, WOW Project, AliefVotes, Alief ISD	\$\$\$\$\$			
Pocket Prairie	Alief Votes	WOW Project, TBG Architects + Planners, Youngblood Intermediate School (Alief ISD), Alief Super Neighborhood Council, Alief International Management District	\$\$\$			
Super Trees for Sustainability in Alief	Houston Wilderness	Alief Super Neighborhood Council, the International Management District, City of Houston Health Department, Houston Community College	\$\$\$			
Alief Linear Forest Project - Community Tree Planting Along Strategic Corridors	Alief Neighborhood Super Council	International Management District, Alief ISD, Residents, SEWA International	\$\$\$\$			

Project Funding

Initial seed funding for the R4C program has identified, prioritized and implemented a series of catalytic community resilience projects utilizing the Resilience for Communities Impact Funds (RCI Funds). Additional opportunities also exist to get involved with project funding and leverage already committed resources to drive impact. Listed below are different ways funders can get involved at a variety of scales – all with an overarching goal, to finance and implement community identified, prioritized, and owned resilience projects and solutions.

Option A

Contribute to projects through the RCIFunds investment vehicle to allow for pooled resources from small, medium and large dollar funders. Funding includes individual giving, corporate giving, state/local/federal grants, etc.

SMALL

- ☐ Individual Giving
- ☐ Corporate

MEDIUM

- ☐ Local government
- ☐ Foundations
- ☐ Corporate

LARGE

- ☐ State/Fed government
- ☐ Foundations
- ☐ Corporate

RCIFunds

Option B

Direct to project funding facilitated by RCN and partners. Includes technical assistance, corporate giving, individual giving, the Benevity platform, state/local/federal grants, etc.

Community Projects
and Partners

Additional Support



Volunteer Opportunities

Opportunities exist with certain community partners and project to support via volunteering and donation of in-kind services. Check with individual project to identify who is currently seeking volunteer. The icon to the left of this box signifies projects seeking volunteers to help drive impact.



In-Kind Donations

Some community projects are seeking in-kind donations of labor, materials or other valuable services. If you have goods or services you would like to donate to community projects, you review the list to identify potential partners. The icon to the left of this box signifies projects seeking in-kind donations of good and services to drive impact.



Project Funding

Additional opportunities also exist to get involved with project funding and leverage already committed resources to drive impact. There are different ways funders can get involved at a variety of scales – all with on overarching goal, to finance and implement community identified, prioritized, and owned resilience projects and solutions. See the previous slide to identify options to fund projects.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PROJECTS, GET UPDATES, AND LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN TO GET INVOLVED!



Contact Us

Global Resilient Cities Network

Resilience for Communities/RCI Funds

rcifunds@resilientcitiesnetwork.com

r4c@resilientcitiesnetwork.com

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