Resilience

The concept of **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE** began to be applied as a measure of effectiveness/capability in the field of urban studies at some point around 2008. Researchers were trying to determine whether or not community infrastructure, behavioral, social, economic and governmental systems were adequate for dealing with adversity and preserving community well-being.

Community Resilience is still an emerging concept and work continues in providing a robust definition and in identifying all of the elements that are required to achieve a resilient community.

Applying this concept to the Placitas community presents an additional challenge. In the field of urban studies, most of the research is conducted in large urban areas; some is conducted in moderate sized cities, very little in small communities – even less in small communities without real civic infrastructure like Placitas.

Nevertheless, community resilience continues to be an increasingly promising concept in assessing the health, capabilities and capacity of communities to provide for the well-being of its residents.

A working definition:

Having at least a place-holder definition of community resilience is helpful. One of the better definitions appears below:

> Community resilience is a community's ability to prepare for, withstand, and recover from adversity, whether that's a hurricane, an economic downturn, a pandemic, or the slow-building pressures of climate change. It goes well beyond emergency response. A resilient community has strong social ties, functioning infrastructure, accessible health services, and the collective capacity to bounce back when things go wrong. The concept has become central to how governments, planners, and public health agencies think about preparing for disruption.[1]

In Placitas, it is more likely that we would use the example of a catastrophic wildfire or a disastrous flooding event instead of a hurricane.

There is an additional important complication: in Placitas we have to answer the question of '*who owns resilience*' because there is not any civic infrastructure that has that responsibility. You might suggest that Sandoval County has the obligation, but Sandoval County is a big place with lots of unincorporated area and is under-resourced for addressing this concern – even IF it was well understood by county officials. So – in Placitas – it may be one of those 'YOYO' situations (YOYO = Your On Your Own).

Members of the PREP Alliance know that there is a strong connection between emergency preparedness and community resilience. That is – if you do a good job with emergency preparedness, that's a big contribution to overall resilience. However, it is also true that emergency preparedness is only a part of community resilience. PREP strongly advocates and encourages both, and that is why we are the Placitas RESILIENCE & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS Alliance.

PREP members continue to improve our understanding of community resilience and what it takes to achieve that. PREP also believes that a wider appreciation of the concept of community resilience among Placitas residents is helpful in informing meaningful discussion and is useful in making decisions about community involvement and the allocation of limited resources.

The PREP Alliance believes that building community resilience is an actionable and worthwhile goal that is actually achievable. Building community resilience takes hard work and, in current circumstances, that work will have to be accomplished by individual residents and community-based organizations working together. The starting point is getting to know neighbors so that individuals can help each other before, during and/or after an emergency situation. This is often referred to as "neighbors-helping-neighbors."

Becoming better prepared to deal with emergencies – all kinds of emergencies – is a great place to start. There is certainly much improvement needed in that area – both at the individual or family unit level and collectively. Collective preparedness ranges from neighbors-helping-neighbors to ensuring that we have appropriate, adequate and effective emergency response services.

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[1] ScienceInsights, March 12, 2026

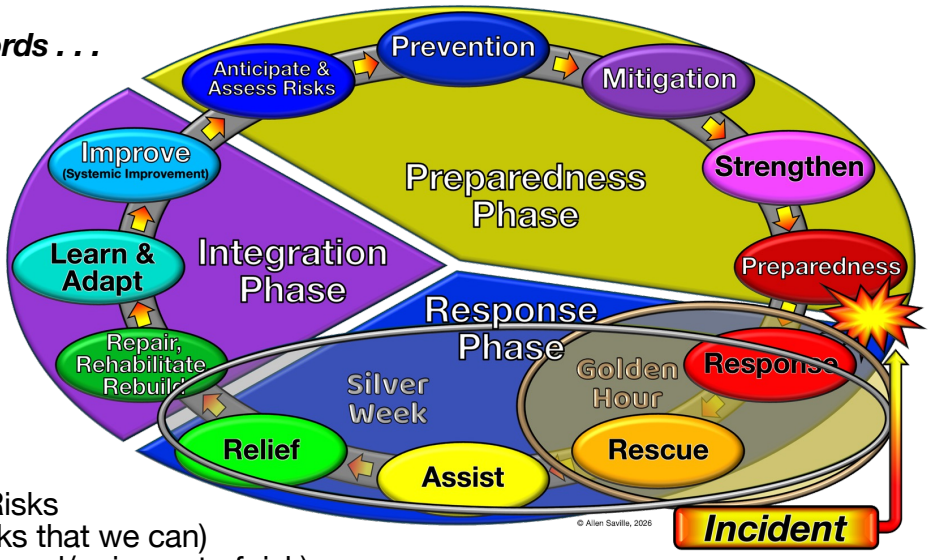
Resilience

There is more involved in building a truly resilient community – a community able to prepare for, respond to, and withstand catastrophic adversity, provide needed assistance and relief, bounce back quickly and move forward with confidence. Understanding what is needed to achieve resilience and building that capacity is a conversation and an endeavor that the PREP Alliance will seek to support. Promoting greater understanding and appreciation of the meaning of community resilience is part of that work.

To build resilience at the community level there is an implied responsibility for resilience at an individual and household level and a true desire to be of service to neighbors and the community. Individual preparedness and community service attitude are important not only as essential resources in responding to emergencies when they happen, but also in support of every day nonemergency actions to build and maintain community resilience competencies and capacity.

A picture is worth a thousand words . . .

A diagram to illustrate community resilience might look something like the one provided here. If our Placitas community were to be able to do all of the things in this diagram well, we would be resilient.



Preparedness is just one phase in the overall goal of being resilient. In terms of just the Preparedness parts of the diagram, the following are included:

- Anticipate, Identify & Assess Risks
- Prevention (eliminate those risks that we can)
- Mitigation (decrease incidence and/or impact of risk)
- Strengthen (improve ability to withstand crises, disasters, emergencies and adversity)
- Preparedness for emergency Response, Relief & Recovery
  - Capabilities
  - Capacity

Response: The first parts of the Response phase of our resilience capacity are in the hands of the Emergency Services agencies – *first responders* of all types. The response and rescue elements include:

- Incident management
- Life safety
- Incident stabilization
- Limit property loss

The next parts are provided by the agencies that provide immediate and temporary assistance and relief (e.g. FEMA, the Red Cross and lots more).

Integration: The Integration phase is critical in applying what is learned in dealing with all kinds of emergency incidents to improving our processes, protocols, procedures, competencies, capabilities, and capacities for dealing with emergencies and adversity of all types.

Community resilience is a constant and continuing improvement process – one that requires community cohesiveness and a positive, survive-and-thrive attitude in order to be successful. It encompasses identification of risk, preparation for potential emergencies, response to actual emergency incidents, recovery, and integration of lessons learned to reach a new – even higher – level of resilience.

The journey begins with understanding the destination.