

Report
Appreciative Inquiry Wards 1 and 2, Lufkin, Texas
“Listening to the voice of the community”
“Escuchando la voz de la comunidad”



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VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

"A holistic approach to address core needs of the community is important. We need buy-in from the community. It is important to ask the question of who will benefit from the change. People have to stay engaged and it must be guided by the community. People will do what is important to them. We need to decide what had to be in place to sustain a community revitalization project." (County Judge Wes Suiter, Angelina County, Texas).

"School systems are the backbone of any community. When communities improve, schools improve, which in turn makes the communities even better. As a school system, we look forward to partnering with parents, community members and business leaders to make a positive impact revitalizing our community. It is with this common goal of enhancing the area in which we call home, that we wholeheartedly support the efforts to move our community forward." (Dr. LaTonya Goffney, Superintendent of Lufkin Independent School District).

"Our community must work together for our children's future. We want to build a neighborhood center so that people can come to Wards 1 and 2 for the services they need. We want our voices to be heard. We live, eat and breathe community change." (Ms. Cynthia Davis, liaison community volunteers and residents).

"Es importante responder y ayudar y no siempre estar pidiendo algo ¿Es cierto siempre es importante dar algo a cambio. En este momento están pidiendo recomendaciones con las necesidades. [We should not be asking for things but also to give back. The task at hand is to voice what we feel is needed]." (Augustin Aguilar, resident and business owner).

"We hope the suggestions in the report are taken seriously and will benefit Wards 1 and 2 as well as the community as a whole." (Ms. Sydney Benemon, President National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Lufkin branch, resident and validation team member).

"The community as a whole should work together to help build the community up. We have all these organizations, but it takes a village to work together. The vision is out there and you put the inquiry out there and we know what is out there, so now we have to work together." (Ms. Ester Mills, Officer and Board Member of the Angelina County Citizens Chamber of Commerce and resident).

"Impact Lufkin reúne toda la comunidad. Aquí, el color y el género no importan y este tipo de diversidad hace que yo, como representante de la cultura hispana, me sienta bienvenido." Estoy muy contento de que hagamos la reunión de socios porque nuestra comunidad necesita saber acerca de todos los servicios aquí. Nuestra comunidad hispana no siempre tiene acceso a ellos. Pero estoy aquí representándolos. ["Impact Lufkin brings the entire community together. Color and gender do not matter here and this kind of diversity makes me, as a representative of the Hispanic culture, feel welcome. I am very glad that we have the partner meetings because our community needs to know about all the services out here. Our Hispanic community can't always access them. I'm here representing them]." (Father Raymundo Garcia, St. Patrick Catholic Church).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The T. L. L Temple Foundation funded/sponsored the Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA), School of Social Work, to conduct an appreciative inquiry in Wards 1 and 2 of Lufkin, Texas. A partnership developed between the foundation, School and the community. The purpose of the appreciative inquiry was to explore the strengths, resources, assets, resilience and challenges in the community. The appreciative inquiry gave a voice to the community by collecting data, identifying key priority areas and formulating recommendations for change. The anticipated outcome of the appreciative inquiry is the revitalization of Wards 1 and 2, which will ultimately impact the City of Lufkin as well as Angelina County.

The appreciative inquiry is based on a participatory action research design. The main principle of the design is the inclusion of community residents in the research project. It is assumed that the people who are most affected by circumstances in a community can best explain and describe it. Community change and revitalization should be based on sustainable efforts. In order for this project to be sustainable it was necessary to use the principles of community-driven development and collective impact. In summary, these principles include open communication, building trust, respecting life circumstances of residents and developing a partnership network.

A mixed methodology research approach was used, including multi-level and multi-source strategies to collect data over a period of 18 months. The data collection approach included qualitative and quantitative methods. The multi-source data resulted in trustworthiness of the information. Data was validated by using triangulation methods and the principles of trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability). The data included a survey of resident perceptions of the community, focus groups, community conversation cafés, interviews, key informant interviews, partner agency surveys and interviews, community art by children and youth, photos of the community, secondary data, historical narratives and maps of the wards.

The findings included key priorities as identified by the appreciative inquiry participants. Many of the priorities are already being addressed by the City of Lufkin and other community partners. The development of a sustainable change strategy calls for the partnership between all stakeholders including internal and external resource utilization.

Although all priorities should be considered equally important, some were highlighted in the data as main concerns. Jobs and economic development, education, housing and community safety and policing were identified as most important. Challenges specific to transportation are clearly impacting all priorities. The locality of resources and services, beautification of the community, quality of life, specialized services for recreation, health and youth development are highlighted as important. Residents voiced a desire to build a neighborhood center in Wards 1 and 2 to address some of the priorities.

A neighborhood center can house services to address some of the needs of residents such as creating jobs, business development opportunities, enhancing youth development presenting training programs for residents and providing recreation activities to all residents. The appreciative inquiry identified the many strengths and assets in the community and city. It is evident that the residents, partner agencies and other stakeholders are positive about change and willing to work together to revitalize the community.

Recommendations include the development of a strategic plan that includes effective short and long-term strategies to address the community needs and priorities and the establishment of an extensive partnership network within the community and city to include all stakeholders. It is recommended that the stakeholders work in a systemic and holistic manner, enhance inclusiveness, build on existing efforts by city, community and partner agencies and utilize internal and external resources to apply the strategic plan.

The Impact Lufkin project extended far beyond an appreciative inquiry. From January 2016 to August 2017, the project team started to address some of the community needs. Staff and volunteers at Impact Lufkin project office promoted and facilitated weekly partners' meetings. Residents, as well as service providers, acknowledged the partners meetings as a valuable avenue to connect socially with other community residents and acquire knowledge about available programs, resources and upcoming events within the county and surrounding areas. Several local events were attended in order to engage residents and demonstrate commitment to their projects and interests. Spanish/English classes for the community were provided for those who had a desire to speak Spanish or English. Participation and interest in the Spanish classes was very positive. Classes were well attended. Individuals from the city of Lufkin, as well as the entire county, were encouraged to participate in these free Spanish/English classes. The Impact Lufkin project office provided office space and support for local organizations/agencies to assist residents with needed services. Numerous workshops/training were provided for residents. Workshops focusing on healthy eating and life-style changes were provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at no charge to residents, as well as grant writing seminars. Impact Lufkin provided supervision and opportunities for Angelina College and SFA student interns to participate in case management, service learning projects and the appreciative inquiry (AI) process. Staff and volunteers at Impact Lufkin continuously strive to empower community residents and front-runners to develop strong leadership skills, create a culture of continuous evaluation and ongoing improvement, ensuring that all voices are heard throughout the process.

The findings and recommendations of the appreciative inquiry as outlined in this report and the lessons learned from the actions already taken will enable the community and its partners to effectively inform, formulate and develop revitalization strategies. The information collected will provide important information necessary to plan and implement future sustainable change strategies.

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1. Introduction

Sustainable community change starts with listening and responding to the voice of its residents. “Listening to the voice of the community” is an appropriate name given by the community to the appreciative inquiry phase of the Impact Lufkin revitalization project. Appreciative inquiry provides the opportunity for in-depth exploration of the strengths, resources, assets, resilience and needs of a community. It focuses on the strengths of a community, while acknowledging challenges, barriers and problems. Even though there is a strong focus on data collection and interpretation, an appreciative inquiry creates opportunities for interventions and change strategies at the same time as the inquiry. Appreciative inquiry is not merely a needs assessment; it is the first step in changing a community. Its aim is to accurately listen to the voice of the community and reflecting on what is most important to its residents.

Impact Lufkin is a community revitalization project specific to Wards 1 and 2 in Lufkin, Texas. Although the main focus is on Ward 1 and 2, it is anticipated that the change will further impact Lufkin and Angelina County and surrounding areas. This report is written to reflect the voice of the community. The narratives are direct and reflect perceptions and opinions of all who participated in the appreciative inquiry. This report can be used to design and implement the community revitalization process and support strategies for change.

2. Rationale for the appreciative inquiry

Residents of Wards 1 and 2 Lufkin, Texas in collaboration with the T.L.L Temple Foundation identified a need to revitalize the community. In November 2015 the T.L.L Temple foundation funded Stephen F. Austin State University, School of Social Work to conduct an appreciative inquiry. Initially, the partners wanted to focus on low-income individuals and families who were in need of services. The need to revitalize the community as a whole became apparent. Wards 1 and 2 (sometimes referred to as North Lufkin) experience limited resources within the boundaries of the wards. The importance of a revitalization project became evident resulting in the project team identifying the need for an appreciative inquiry.

It is important to find evidence for general assumptions such as limited resources, existing socio-economic problems, community participation and resistance to change. It became necessary to collect data and develop recommendations for stakeholders to move forward with the community revitalization project. The recommendations are valuable in generating ideas and strategies for community change.

One of the participants in the appreciative inquiry said it best when asked about the need for revitalization: *“It’s long overdue and it’s a blessing from God because this part of Lufkin has really suffered as far as jobs and beautification and upgrading the economy.”* (Key informant, interview).

3. Purpose of the appreciative inquiry

The purpose was to conduct an appreciative inquiry in Wards 1 and 2 in Lufkin to explore the strengths, resources, assets, resilience and challenges in the community. It ensured that the voice of the community is respected and valued, which is an essential part of the design and implementation of community revitalization and change strategies. The appreciative inquiry aimed to listen to the collective voice of the community and stakeholders who are invested in the community revitalization efforts. The findings and recommendations of the appreciative inquiry as outlined in this report will enable the community and its partners to effectively inform, formulate and develop revitalization strategies. The information collected will provide important information necessary to plan and implement future change strategies.

4. Objectives of the appreciative inquiry

- 4.1. To describe community trends by analyzing existing data specific to the history of the community, demographic information and socio-economic issues in order to inform the appreciative inquiry process;
- 4.2. To collect data from residents, county, community and city leaders, partner agencies and participants interested in the community on their perceptions of resources, assets, ability, community dynamics, strengths, services, challenges and limitations;
- 4.3. To collect data from inter-professional service providers and volunteers specific to (1) existing services and (2) the need of additional services;
- 4.4. To report findings, conclusions and recommendations to the T. L. L Temple Foundation, community residents, Impact Lufkin project team, partner agencies and other stakeholders.

5. Method of the appreciative inquiry

5.1 Design

The research design used for the appreciative inquiry is based on the participatory action research model (Bergold & Thomas, 2012 and Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006). Mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative research) was used to collect information. Community-driven strategies and the collective impact model were integrated to form the theory of change for the community revitalization. The appreciative inquiry is the first phase of a community revitalization project.

An appreciative inquiry is more than a community needs assessment. It is a strategy used to discover the strengths, dreams, resources, assets, challenges, barriers and needs of a community. It is an ongoing discovery, based on the participation of the community residents and leaders, city and county leaders, partner agencies, businesses and other individuals who have some degree of investment in the community. Specific “grand tour” questions guided the appreciative inquiry:

- What matters to the residents?
- What is most important to residents?
- What revitalization elements are most important to residents?

- How do residents and other stakeholders perceive the current strengths, resources and assets in the wards?
- What are existing resources?
- What are the perceptions of residents about available services and resources?
- What are the most important challenges and needs residents believe should be addressed?
- What are the dreams of the residents?
- How can these dreams be used to transform the community?
- What is important to other stakeholders?
- What are the residents, community partners and other stakeholders' understanding of sustainable change in the community?
- What has to change/be put in place to revitalize the community?
- Who or what can assist/play a role in the community change process?
- What new insights, trends and themes are evident from the appreciative inquiry?
- How can the evidence contribute to a shared vision of the community revitalization process?

The following discussion highlights participatory action, community-driven and collective impact principles.

Participatory action

Bergold & Thomas (2012) describe participatory research as a method which is geared towards planning and conducting the research process *with* those people whose life-world and meaningful actions are under study. It was important to engage residents in the conversations about change in the community. They participated in planning and implementing the appreciative inquiry. The following principles of participatory action were adhered to:

- Community members are not being researched, but they are part of the inquiry process. They ask questions, reflect on and share information, make decisions about the research, provide input in survey development and validate data.
- The community is engaged in the process and the appreciative inquiry builds on the collaboration between the community residents, Stephen F. Austin State University, School of Social Work's research team and the T.L.L Temple Foundation.
- The inquiry focuses on the voice of the community, telling the story of the community in its own words.
- Reflection and validation of the data is an ongoing and inclusive process.
- The community has ownership of the process, which enhances sustainability.

PARTICIPATORY ACTION

The community residents are the experts of their own life experiences.

The process is inclusive and decisions are based on respect and trust.

- The focus is on building capacity by empowering and inclusion of internal and external resources.
- The community is respected and valued as understanding its own life experiences best.
- The process of change is based on mutual respect, ongoing communication, transparency and inclusiveness.

Community-driven change

Community-driven principles of change put the responsibility of the revitalization in the hands of the community members. In this study, the residents collectively shared an opinion of how they want the change to look like, what revitalization is to them, what their dreams are for the community, what outcomes look like and how they can reach these outcomes. Effective change can only take place when those who are most affected by the realities of the community, voice their concerns about it. Those residents most affected by specific circumstances must also be part of the solutions (Urquilla, & Shelton, 2015 and Brikenmaier & Berg-Weger, 2017). Community driven principles for the purpose of this study include:

- The community is in charge of the project and drives the decision-making process;
- Community residents are the experts of their own life experiences. They are most affected by their life situations;
- Principles of respect for the community and its residents are at the forefront of all actions;
- Participatory action methods guide all processes and are encouraged through ongoing communication;
- Participatory action methods are used to engage the community in research and intervention processes (often at the same time);
- Building trust by taking time to develop and strengthen relationships with community residents and other role-players;
- Principles of ownership, inclusion and transparency guide the process;
- Effective community development includes social and economic development;
- Interconnectedness of social, economic and environment justice is acknowledged;
- Resources within and outside of the community are used to empower and build capacity;
- Focus on assets, resources, strengths and resilience;
- Strong emphasis is placed on empowerment and sustainability;
- Project evaluation and measurement strategies are based on community input.

COMMUNITY DRIVEN CHANGE

The community drives the process of change using internal and external resource, strengths and assets.

The community has ownership of the project.

Collective impact

Collective impact is a change strategy used to initiate collaboration between stakeholders to effectively transform communities. The model suggested by Kania and Kramer (2011) utilizes partnerships to effectively change systems on a long-term basis. The strategy is based on five conditions:

- A common agenda based on trust between the partners;
- A shared measurement system;
- Continuous communication;
- Mutually reinforcing activities;
- Backbone support organization.

Collective impact strategies include various stakeholders in the design, development and implementation of community change. Internal and external resources including community, city and county leaders are part of the change team. An important condition of the collective impact process is the establishment/creation of a backbone organization. This organization (for example a nonprofit organization or a partnership network) ensures sustainable change and can guide the initiative.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONDITIONS

Common agenda
Shared measurement
Continuous communication
Mutually reinforcing activities
Backbone support

Community Assessment Framework

A community assessment framework was used to design the appreciative inquiry. The framework utilized sources including but not limited to the following theories of change frameworks:

- Netting's (2016) framework for community assessment based on the strengths approach;
- Viner, Ozer, Denny, Marmot, Resnick, Fatusie and Currie (2012) framework to identify and describe trends;
- Systems theory described by Gregory (2012) and Tan (2009);
- Intervention research including program design and development methodology;
- Community assessment toolbox (community toolbox);
- Social determinants of health as described by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016).

Assumptions

The following are important assumptions of the community-driven change process.

- Real sustainable change can only take place if residents are respected as experts of their own community. The voices of the community are heard through an

ongoing appreciative inquiry and followed up by strategies and actions to impact. Participatory action principles ensure that the project is community-driven, implying that the residents and leaders should make the decisions about the project;

- Effective sustainable change is based on strengths, assets, resilience and existing resources and should be guided by the community – including the participatory action team, working (action and advocacy) teams and the steering committee;
- Sustainable change includes social and economic development. Effective change strategies are based on the principals of social, economic and environmental justice;
- The values of, dignity and worth of the residents of the community, human rights, integrity and community partnerships are important;
- The community has the capacity and internal resources to change. Sustainable change should include connecting internal and external resources to work together toward the benefit of the community;
- Preparation for impact, collective action and change are cyclic and guided by the appreciative inquiry;
- The building and strengthening of partnerships and relationships within the community is of utmost importance for the success of the project.

5.2 Data collection

Multi-level and multi-source strategies were used to collect data over a period of 18 months. The appreciative inquiry team used mixed methodology to explore the strengths, resources, challenges, assets and needs of the community. Mixed methodology is based on qualitative and quantitative methods of research to identify, describe, explore and explain the dynamics of a community.

The following qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect the data:

- Children and youth drawings;
- Community assessment survey;
- Community conversation cafés;
- Community partner survey;
- Focus groups (formal and informal);
- Interviews – residents;
- Interviews specific to historical data;
- Interviews with community, city and county leaders;
- Key informant interviews;
- Map development;
- Photovoice (Pictures of community);
- Secondary/existing data;

DATA

“Data can help identify needs, opportunities and solutions. Data can also give communities a voice. It enables transparency and promotes greater trust and accountability (Urquilla & Shelton, 2015, p.1).”

- Survey administered after visit to the Neighborhood Centers, Houston;
- Surveys for specific groups including veterans and people with disabilities.

5.3 Data time line

The following table provides a time line of the appreciative inquiry. It includes specific methods of collecting data, validation tasks and general dissemination information.

Table 1: Data timeline

Phase 1	
Qualitative data collection and analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups • Conversation cafés • Short Interviews • Key informant interviews 	January 2016 – October 2016
Secondary data analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of data • Writing of report • Presentation to T.L.L Temple foundation, partners, residents and community residents 	March 2016 – October 2016
Geographic information systems (GIS)study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of information • Presentation to partners and the community • GIS map and report 	May 2016 – August 2017
Feedback (Phase 1) to the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations • Small group discussions 	July 2016 – December 2016
Phase 2	
Quantitative and qualitative data collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community needs assessment survey • “Walk- through community” assessment • Appreciative inquiry with community members under 18 (children and youth) • Community café events • Community conversations 	October 2016 – July 2017
Phase 3	
Qualitative and quantitative data analysis Validation of results Feedback to the community	February 2017 – August 2017
Phase 4	
Final report to T. L. L Temple Foundation and Lufkin community Presentations to all stakeholders	August - September 2017

5.4 Participant sample

Demographic representation of the participants was essential to the success of the appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry participants invited to participate included all age groups - children and youth, young adults, elderly residents, volunteers and people with a shared interest in the community. Diversity and community representation were used as important criteria for sample inclusion - age, ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation and socio-economic status, as well as time lived in Wards 1 and 2 in Lufkin, emotional investment (including people who are not living in the community at this point but are planning to move back).

Participants included persons who can influence the process in a positive way, residents who have lived in the community for years, people who can comment on quality of life including residents, service providers, community and city leaders, professionals and volunteers. Participants from formal and informal networks were invited including social clubs, associations, women's groups, schools, hospitals, chambers of commerce, professionals, service providers and agencies and any other groups who are active in the community. It was also important to include people who showed initial resistance to the project.

Children and youth under the age of 18 were included. The appreciative inquiry team worked closely with Dr. LaTonya Goffney, Superintendent of Lufkin Independent School District (LISD), to ensure the Stephen F. Austin State University, Institutional Review Board requirements were met.

The following table provides an overview of the participant sample and the methods of data collection.

Table 2: Information and sample of Appreciative Inquiry

Method	Population	Sample	Focus
Community Needs Assessment Survey	Community members	N=546	Residents and partner agencies' perceptions about the community Services, strengths, resources, assets Problems/challenges/barriers Demographic information
Interviews Residents (Mini interviews)	Community members	N = 446	Quality of life Perception of community Dreams of the community
Interviews	Service providers	N= 39	Quality of life

Oliphant, E and Avant, F. L. (2017). Appreciative Inquiry Wards 1 and 2, Lufkin, Texas Report. Stephen F. Austin State University School of Social Work, Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development.

Method	Population	Sample	Focus
Service Providers (Mini interviews)			Perception of community Services needed for the community
Focus groups	Community members Service Providers	N = 80 Focus Groups N = 450 Participants in all	Experiences living and/or working in Wards 1 and 2 Lufkin Experiences providing services in Wards 1 and 2 Lufkin
Focus groups with specific focus (veterans, people with disabilities, elderly community members)	Community members Service Providers	N = 12 Focus Groups N = 105 Participants	Experiences living and/or working in Wards 1 and 2 Lufkin Experiences providing services in Wards 1 and 2 Lufkin
Key informant interviews		N= 45	Community in general
Research Conversation cafés	Volunteers Community members	N=12 Cafés	Strengths, assets, resources Challenges Dreams for the wards
Services and agency analysis	Service Providers	N = 100	Services provided by agencies
Interviews historical data	Service Providers Residents	N = 30	Information on the history of the Wards
Appreciative inquiry children	Residents 18 and younger	N = 80	Children's perceptions and dreams for the community
Social services and agency analysis	Service Providers	N = 100	Services Provided by agencies

Method	Population	Sample	Focus
Data validation interviews Community talks and conversations	City and county leaders Key informants Community residents Service providers/agency partners	N = 120 Five community conversation groups Individual interviews	Validation of data

5.5 Data analysis

Content, thematic and comparative analysis methods were used to analyze the qualitative data (narratives). Statistical analysis was used to analyze the survey data. The data was compared with existing data from local reports and census records.

During the appreciative inquiry the needs of the community were identified. Strengths, resources, assets and challenges were researched. The initial creation and strengthening of community agency participatory action teams took place. Specific trends were identified and were used to inform the priorities as outlined in the findings and discussion section of this report.

5.6 Data validation

Data validation is a key requirement of the appreciative inquiry. The main question of data validation was: *“Does the data adequately reflect the voice of the community?”*

Reflection of the process and validation of data took place on an ongoing basis during the project implementation. Multi-source data was important as it provided the opportunity to triangulate information. Trustworthiness of data was important at all times during the appreciative inquiry. The following methods of trustworthiness were used:

- Triangulation of data (comparison of different sources of data);
- External coding of data in addition to internal coding;
- Data reflection through validation sessions.

Criteria used for trustworthiness included credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity/ generalizability), dependability (reliability) and conformability (objectivity). It is based on the model described by Shenton (2004).

6. Overview of Lufkin Wards 1 and 2

6.1 History

This section of the research was conducted by Dr. Jennifer Beisel (Stephen F. Austin State University, Department of History) in collaboration with community residents and members of the history committee.

Wards 1 (Central) and 2 (North) of Lufkin, Texas comprise the historic civic, cultural, economic, social and residential center of the town. This brief overview of the area's historic development including notable events, structures and persons provides a foundation for all future work to document, preserve and interpret historic Wards 1 and 2 history for current and future residents. The Houston, East and West Texas Railway platted Lufkin in 1882 as part of an eighty-seven mile extension in that year. The historic downtown area, located in Ward 1, began along the railroad line around Cotton Square, so named for Angelina County's most important product commodity at that time. The current railroad lines still cut through the lengths of Wards 1 and 2 and intersect at the heart of downtown.

Although some of the street names have changed since the early 1900s, much of the downtown historic core remains mostly intact. The town resembled many other southern county seats of the time period with its mix of commercial, industrial and residential structures based on an underlying agricultural economy. Cotton Square was bounded on three sides by one-and two-story brick buildings, some with wooden awnings and by the railroad on the western side. The businesses on Cotton Square and down Lufkin Avenue included something for everyone: printers, saloons, jewelry stores, drugstores, dry goods, barbers, restaurants, tailors, candy stores, hardware stores, banks, groceries, undertaker, blacksmith, livery stables and even a bowling alley. Elsewhere in Ward 1 houses alternated with grain and agricultural implement warehouses and manufacturing plants such as the 1902 Lufkin Foundry and Machine Shop at the corner of Douglas Street and the railroad tracks or the Cook Brothers Manufacturing company along Lufkin Avenue. The town's population had grown slowly but steadily and its population had reached 1,527 in 1904.

When the Sanborn Map Company returned to Lufkin in 1922 to create its fourth and final set of maps, in its coversheet for the town it noted the population was five thousand persons, the city had a municipal owned waterworks and a twenty-five member fire department. Unfortunately the survey only included the downtown areas of today's Ward 1 bounded by Abney Avenue on the north and Chestnut Street on the east, the southernmost portion of Keltys Street and the partial blocks on the west of the railroad were included in this survey. While the streets of "North Lufkin" along Keltys as far north as Wilson Avenue were noted, they were not documented nor were any of today's Ward 2.

Lufkin's trajectory of rapid physical and economic growth, unlike neighboring county seats which remained tied to a dispersed rural economy, was anchored in its location along the Houston, East and West Texas Railway. Established in 1875 to link Houston and Texarkana, the railroad was the first to penetrate the woods of East Texas and in December 1885 the tracks had reached the Sabine River. The next year the railroad had crossed the river into Louisiana and linked Houston with Shreveport. Despite a series of corporate restructurings, replacement of the narrow gauge track with standard track and a takeover by the Southern Pacific Company in the 1890s, the railroad remained the lifeblood of Lufkin. In 1891, a year before Lufkin became the county seat, it had four sawmills (T. R. Bonner & Co, Henderson & Kurth, R. L. Maxwell and Townsend & Chestnutt) and one wholesale and retail lumber distributor, Waco Lumber Company.

Keltys, Texas was once a separate town established as a sawmill site later purchased by Joseph H. Kurth Sr. in 1887. Kurth and his partners, S. W. Henderson and Sam and Eli Wiener, created the Angelina County Lumber Company headquartered in Keltys in 1890. In 1948 the mill at Keltys was the worksite of "465 people and had an annual payroll of \$1,104,000," much of which fueled Lufkin's economy. Today Wards 1 and 2 include portions of the former town and sawmill site, the company cemetery and more importantly, the homes of its owners and workers employees. J. H. Kurth's 1890 two and a half story, wooden home with classical styling in a foursquare plan at 1860 Old Mill Road was the "most substantial and elaborate residence in the Keltys community." The circa 1900 Queen Anne style Clark-Whitton Residence at 1865 Old Mill Road was first owned by Dr. Clark, the Angelina County Lumber Company doctor. Built with some classical detailing, this property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Like many of its competitors, the Angelina County Lumber Company offered employees company-owned housing. Two extant examples representing the 1880s to 1910s in Ward 1 are the McGilbert Residence at 1902 Old Mill Road and the structure at 109 Maas. These were one-story wood frame homes with simple plans and minimal detailing.

The north-south road connecting the sawmill town and Lufkin, Keltys Street, was the major corridor of the historic African American community. According to *The Mirror*, published by the Negro Chamber of Commerce and Dunbar High School in 1956, in that year there were two African American employees with fifty years of service with the Angelina County Lumber Company. The *Mirror* also listed seventeen men with twenty-five to forty-five years of employment. There were over forty more African American employees with one to twenty-five years of experience. The company remained an important part of Ward 1 and Ward 2 communities until its sale in 1966 when it was the "longest continually operating timber concern in Texas." Except for the previously noted houses and the Keltys Cemetery, little remains of the former sawmill town.

6.2 Demographic information

This section is written in collaboration with Ms. Lenola Wyatt and Dr. Darrel McDonald

The North Lufkin community (Wards 1 and 2) comprises of Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7 for statistical analysis. For the purpose of the discussion on demographic information, this section will refer to Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7. Approximately 14, 724 people live in the North Lufkin community, representing 41% of the population of the city of Lufkin. The majority of the population in Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7 identifies as African American. However, Hispanic or Latino Race represents 43% of the population in Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7, with the major concentration of Hispanic and Latino individuals residing in Census Tract 6 (48.4%) and Census Tract 7 (61.4%). Census Tract 5 has a median age of 44.8, with 18.1% of residents ranging from ages 45 – 54. Census Tract 6 has a median age of 31.5, with 15.4% of residents ranging from ages 25 – 34. Census Tract 7 has a median age of 25.7, with 17.4% of residents also ranging from ages 25 – 34.

The following tables provide information on the census data specific to Angelina County, City of Lufkin and Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7. Additional tables are included in the findings discussion section of the report.

Table 3: Total Population

Location	2015
Angelina County	87,748
City of Lufkin	36,015
Census Tract 5	3,666
Census Tract 6	7,010
Census Tract 7	4,048

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), the population of Angelina County is comprised of 87,748 residents of which 36,015 (41%) residents reside within the city of Lufkin. Census Tract 6 (7,010) has the largest number of residents. There are approximately 14,724 residents residing in Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7, representing 41% of the population of the city of Lufkin.

Table: 4 Male/ Female Population

Location		Number		Percent	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Angelina County	42,886	44,862	48.9%	51.1%	
City of Lufkin	17,343	18,672	48.2%	51.8%	
Census Tract 5	1,701	1,965	46.4%	53.6%	
Census Tract 6	3,648	3,362	52.0%	48.0%	
Census Tract 7	2,141	1,907	52.9%	47.1%	

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

Approximately 48.2% of the population within the city of Lufkin is male as compared to 51.8% female. Census Tract 6 (52.0%) and census tract 7 (52.9%) have the highest percentage of males when compared to Census Tract 5 and the city of Lufkin. However, Census Tract 5 (53.6%) has the highest percentage of females as compared to the remaining service area.

Table 5: Median Age

Location		Median Age	
Gender	Total Population	Males	Females
Angelina County	36.4	35.6	37.5
City of Lufkin	35.0	33.3	36.2
Census Tract 5	44.8	38.0	46.8
Census Tract 6	31.5	27.7	34.1
Census Tract 7	25.7	22.9	29.5

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The median age for both males and females in Angelina County (36.4) and the city of Lufkin (35.0) are somewhat comparable. Census Tract 5 (44.8) has the highest median age and Census tract 5 (25.7) has the lowest median age. Census Tract 7 is represented by a much younger population, especially males, when compared to Census Tracts 5 and 6.

Table 6: Population by Age 15- 54

Location	Age 15 – 19	Age 25 -34	Age 35 -44	Age 45 -54
Angelina County	(6,173) 7.0%	(10,955) 12.5%	(10,979) 12.5%	(11,412) 13.0%
City of Lufkin	(2,458) 6.8%	(4,602) 12.8%	(4,190) 11.6%	(4,157) 11.5%
Census Tract 5	(272) 7.4%	(330) 9.0%	(332) 9.1%	(663) 18.1%
Census Tract 6	(504) 7.2%	(1082) 15.4%	(753) 10.7%	(908) 13.0%
Census Tract 7	(245) 6.1%	(704) 17.4%	(481) 11.9%	(385) 9.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The highest percentage of the population in Angelina County was between the ages of 45 – 54. However, the highest percentage of the population in Census Tracts 6 and 7 was between the ages of 25 – 34. Census Tract 6 (2.5%) had the highest percentage of residents who were 85 years and older.

Table 7: Population by Age 55 and Over

Location	55- 59	60- 64	65- 74	75- 84	85 years and over
City of Lufkin	(5,015) 5.7%	(5,382) 6.1%	(7,168) 8.2%	(3,884) 4.4%	(1,769) 2.0%
City of Lufkin	(1,693) 4.7%	(2,204) 6.1%	(2,727) 7.6%	(1,922) 5.3%	(1,097) 3.0%
Census Tract 5	(291) 7.9%	(225) 6.1%	(306) 8.3%	(261) 7.1%	(69) 1.9%
Census Tract 6	(237) 3.4%	(441) 6.3%	(337) 4.8%	(233) 3.3%	(173) 2.5%
Census Tract 7	(104) 2.6%	(202) 5.0%	(180) 4.4%	(58) 1.4%	(0) 0.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The highest percentage of the population in Angelina County was between the ages of 45 – 54. However, the highest percentage of the population in Census Tracts 6 and 7 was between the ages of 25 – 34. Census Tract 6 (2.5%) had the highest percentage of residents who were 85 years and older.

Table 8: Population by Race/ Ethnicity

Location	White	Black/ African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Some other Race	Hispanic or Latino
Angelina County	(70,180) 80.0%	(13,923) 15.9%	(1,067) 1.2%	(958) 1.1%	(69) .1%	(3218) 3.7%	(18,353) 20.9%
City of Lufkin	(24,334) 67.6%	(10,420) 28.9%	(333) 0.9%	(561) 1.6%	(0) 0.0%	(1,258) 3.5%	(9,391) 26.1%
Census Tract 5	(1,047) 28.6%	(2,567) 70.0%	(0) 0.0%	(4) 0.1%	(0) 0.0%	(48) 1.3%	(425) 11.6%
Census Tract 6	(4,621) 65.9%	(1,928) 27.5%	(6) 0.1%	(46) 0.7%	(0) 0.0%	(466) 6.6%	(3,391) 48.4%
Census Tract 7	(2,553) 63.1%	(1,115) 27.5%	(12) 0.3%	(0) 0.0%	(0) 0.0%	(491) 12.1%	(2,484) 61.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

Approximately 80% of residents in Angelina County identify as White. However, 20.9% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino and 15.9% identifies as Black or African American. Approximately 3.7% of residents identify as Some Other Race. Census Tract 5 (70%) has the highest population of Black or African American residents, as compared to Census Tracts 6 and 7 with 27.5% of Black or African American residents. Census Tracts 7 (61.4%) has the highest percentage of individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino with Census Tract 6 having the second highest percentage (48.4%) of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino. Census Tracts 7 (12.1%) and Census Tract 6 (6.6%) have higher percentages of individuals who identify as “Some Other Race” than the remaining service locations.

Table 9: Percentage of Population 25 years of age and older who have only a high school diploma or less

Location	High School diploma/GED	9 th – 12 th Grade – no diploma	Less than 9 th grade
Angelina County	31.6%	12.1%	8.7%
City of Lufkin	25.3%	13.7%	9.2%
Census Tract 5	32.7%	20.9%	13.0%
Census Tract 6	31.6%	15.2%	19.7%
Census Tract 7	21.4%	25.7%	20.8%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

In Angelina County approximately 31.6% of individuals have only a high school diploma as compared to 8.7% of individuals who had less than 9th grade education. Census Tract 5 (32.7%) and Census Tract 6 (31.6%) had the highest percentages of individuals with a high school diploma, whereas Census Tract 7 (21.4%) had the smallest percentage of individuals with a high school diploma. Census Tract 7 (25.7%) and Census Tract 5 (20.9%) had the highest percentages of individuals who attended high school but did not receive a high school diploma. However, Census Tract 7 (20.8%) and Census Tract 6 (19.7%) had the highest percentages of individuals who had less than 9th grade education.

Table 10: Percent of High School Graduates or Higher

Location	Percent
Angelina County	79.2%
City of Lufkin	77.2%
Census Tract 5	66.1%
Census Tract 6	65.1%
Census Tract 7	53.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

Angelina County has 79.2% of residents with a high school diploma. Census Tract 5 has 66.1% residents, Census Tract 6 65.1% residents and Census Tract 7 has 53.5% with a high school diploma.

Table 11: Bachelor's Degree- Persons age 25 years of age and older

Location	Percent
Angelina County	10.1%
City of Lufkin	12.6%
Census Tract 5	3.6%
Census Tract 6	3.7%
Census Tract 7	6.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

In Angelina County approximately 10.1% of individuals age 25 years of age and older had a Bachelors' Degree. However, Census Tract 7 (6.7%) had the highest percentage of individuals with a Bachelors' Degree.

Table 12: Language Other than English Spoken at Home

Location	Percent
Angelina County	17.8%
City of Lufkin	23.1%
Census Tract 5	13.0%
Census Tract 6	46.2%
Census Tract 7	51.3%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

In Angelina County, approximately 17.8% of residents spoke a language other than English at home. Census Tracts 6 (46.2%) and Census Tract 7 (51.3%) had the highest percentages of individuals who spoke a language other than English at home. Census Tract 5 (13.0%) had the smallest percentage of individuals who spoke a language other than English at home.

Table 13: Percentage not Proficient in English

Location	Percent
Angelina County	7.2%
City of Lufkin	9.8%
Census Tract 5	6.3%
Census Tract 6	18.3%
Census Tract 7	25.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

In Angelina County, approximately 7.2% of residents were not proficient in English. Census Tract 7 (25.9%) and Census Tract 6 (18.3%) had the highest percentages of residents who were not proficient in English.

Table 14: Child Poverty Rate and Number of Children under age 5

Location	Child Poverty Rate under age 5	Number of children under age 3	Number of children ages 3- 4
Angelina County	35.4%	3,793	2,396
City of Lufkin	48.4%	1,543	995
Census Tract 5	55.3%	112	49
Census Tract 6	41.2%	229	181
Census Tract 7	48.8%	329	165

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The poverty rate in Angelina County for children below age 5 was 35.4%. The city of Lufkin had a poverty rate of 48.4% for children below age 5. Each of the Census Tracts had high poverty rates for children below age 5. Census Tract 5 (55.3%) had a poverty rate much higher than the city of Lufkin and Angelina County. Census Tract 7 (48.8%) had the second highest poverty rate for children below age 5.

Table 15: Children under 6 Years old with all Parents in Family in Labor Force

Location	Number	Percent
Angelina County	4,513	62.4%
City of Lufkin	1,875	60.5%
Census Tract 5	154	87.5%
Census Tract 6	304	58.0%
Census Tract 7	459	86.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

Approximately 62.4% of parents in Angelina County with children below age 6 were within the labor force. Census Tract 5 (87.5%) and Census Tract 7 (86%) were comparable with all parents in the family working. Census Tract 6 (58%) had the lowest percentage of households in which all parents were in the labor force or working.

Table 16: Families with Low income below Poverty Level past 12 Months

Location	Married Households	Female-Only Households
Angelina County	8.0%	35.0%
City of Lufkin	10.3%	33.0%
Census Tract 5	14.3%	38.5%
Census Tract 6	15.8%	29.0%
Census Tract 7	9.8%	47.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

Oliphant, E and Avant, F. L. (2017). Appreciative Inquiry Wards 1 and 2, Lufkin, Texas Report. Stephen F. Austin State University School of Social Work, Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development.

Approximately 35.0% of female-only households in Angelina County were below poverty within the past 12 months, as compared to 8.0% of married households. However, Census Tract 6 (15.8%) and Census Tract 5 (14.3%) had the highest percentages of married households below poverty within the past 12 months. Census Tract 7 (47.7%) had the highest percentage of female-only households below poverty within the past 12 months, significantly higher than the remaining service areas.

Table 17: Households with Cash Public Assistance Income (TANF)

Location	Number	Percentage
Angelina County	991	3.2%
City of Lufkin	546	4.2%
Census Tract 5	75	4.7%
Census Tract 6	83	4.3%
Census Tract 7	62	5.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The percentage of households that received TANF benefits within Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7 was higher than the city of Lufkin (4.2%) and Angelina County (3.2%). Census Tract 7 (5.6%) had the highest percentage of households with TANF income

Table 18: Adults Receiving Food Stamps

Location	Percentage	Number
Angelina County	19.6%	5,980
City of Lufkin	22.5%	2,954
Census Tract 5	35.3%	567
Census Tract 6	29.5%	571
Census Tract 7	46.9%	523

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The percentage of households that received SNAP or food stamp benefits within Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7 was higher than the city of Lufkin (22.5%) and Angelina County (19.6%). Census Tract 7 (46.9%) had the highest percentage of households that received SNAP or food stamp benefits, significantly higher than the remaining service areas.

Table 19: Table Unemployment Rates

Location	2015
Angelina County	9.1%
City of Lufkin	15.0%
Census Tract 5	10.7%
Census Tract 6	14.7%
Census Tract 7	9.5%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The unemployment rate for Angelina County was 9.1% according to ACS. The city of Lufkin (15.0%) had a much higher unemployment rate than Angelina County. Census Tract 6 (14.7%) had the highest unemployment rate somewhat comparable to the city of Lufkin (15.0%). Census Tract 7 (9.5%) had the lowest unemployment rate.

Table 20: Median Household Income

Location	2015
Angelina County	\$44,223
City of Lufkin	\$45,596
Census Tract 5	\$22,465
Census Tract 6	\$39,618
Census Tract 7	\$36,047

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

The median household income for Angelina County was \$44,223, as compared to the city of Lufkin's median household income (\$45,596). Census Tract 5 (\$22,465) had the lowest median household income, where Census Tract 6 (\$39,618) had the highest median household income. It is important to note that median household income for Census Tracts 5 (\$22,465), 6 (\$39,618) and 7 (\$36,047) were significantly lower than the city of Lufkin (\$45,596) as well as Angelina County (\$44,223).

The following figures provide indicates census tracks and zoning:

Figure 1 provides information on the census tracks in Lufkin.

Figure 2 provides information on Ward 1 zoning.

Figure 3 provides information on Ward 2 zoning.

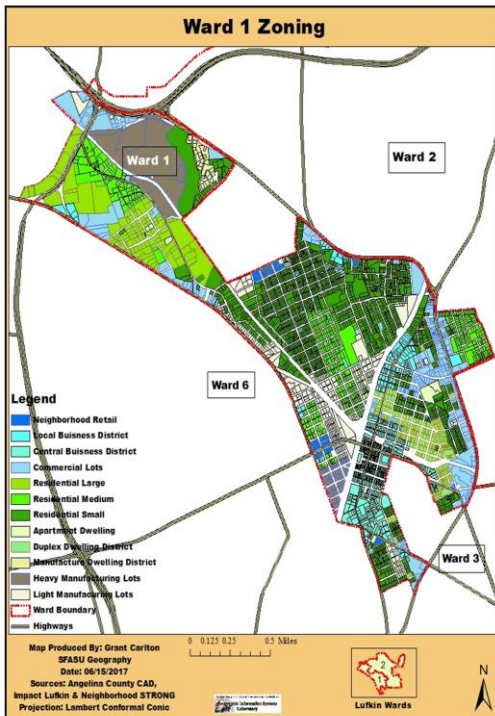


Figure 2: Ward 1 Zoning

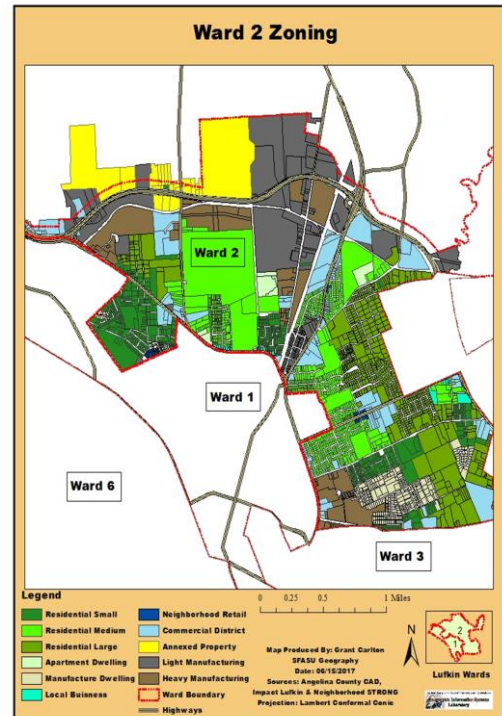


Figure 3: Ward 2 Zoning

7. Findings

The findings discussed in this section are based on the quantitative survey and all qualitative data including focus groups, interviews, key informant interviews, conversation cafés, children's drawings and photovoice. Change in Wards 1 and 2 should be viewed from a holistic perspective focusing on long-term and short-term goals. It is also important to acknowledge that systemic change in one part of the community impacts all of the community. Priorities identified are not necessary in an order of importance. This order has to be determined when the next of community revitalization are implemented.

The priorities are in line with the Lufkin comprehensive plan developed in 2017. The city completed this plan and is currently implementing it. Mr. Keith Wright, City Manager of Lufkin, confirmed that the priorities identified by the appreciative inquiry are similar to the priorities of the appreciative inquiry.

7.1 Dreams of the community

Residents shared their dreams for the community. Table 21 provides a summary of the dreams and relevant narratives.

Table 21: Dreams of Wards 1 and 2 of Lufkin, Texas

Dreams for Wards 1 and 2 Lufkin, Texas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beautification of the area;• Decrease in high school dropout rates;• Economic and business growth;• Improve infrastructure – better bus stops, sidewalks and working streetlights;• Increase awareness of availability of resources, services and opportunities;• Increase in financial support;• Increase in job opportunities;• Neighborhood center;• Opportunities for young people to live healthy lives;• Providing access to higher education;• Services and resources located in Wards 1 and 2 for those in need of care;• Transportation system accessible to all. <p><i>“To see kids getting the best education, especially kids from the Hispanic community.”</i> (Participant, community conversation café).</p> <p><i>“Encourage spiritual healing for the people.”</i> (Participant, focus group).</p> <p><i>“Empower the youth with job skills.”</i> (Key informant).</p> <p><i>“To make agencies stronger in order to support more and more people.”</i> (Service provider, agency serving youth).</p>

7.2 Community strengths, assets, resources and opportunities

Identification of the strengths of a community is an essential requirement for successful revitalization. Many strengths, assets and resources are evident in Wards 1 and 2 in Lufkin as well as in the larger city and county. Residents identified strengths, including the physical environment, systems dynamics and relationships in the community, quality of life and community leadership. Collective wisdom, experience, knowledge and insight resulted in a deeper understanding of the realities experienced by Wards 1 and 2 residents. There is respect for leaders and the wisdom of elderly community members is acknowledged. Elderly community members are embraced and loved in the community and included in decision-making. The residents value transparent decision-making and open communication. When asked why residents like living in Wards 1 and 2, specific themes emerged.

Residents feel safe due to the presence of law enforcement, regular police patrols and limited traffic through the residential blocks. It is generally viewed as a community with quiet neighborhoods and limited traffic.

The relationship between neighbors creates a sense of belonging and a safe environment. Responses about relationships between neighbors include - *“good neighbors,” “neighbors look out for each other,” “everyone knows each other” and “friendly people.”*

The rural environment is an important factor why people choose to live in Lufkin and specifically Wards 1 and 2. People feel that the commute time to work is short and they are close to hospitals, churches, schools and shops. Hispanic residents reported that they enjoy the closeness to schools, stores, hospitals and pharmacies.

Residents often have a generational history of living in Wards 1 and 2. According to residents, many have lived there all their lives. They work in the area, go to church in the community, have children in the schools in Wards 1 and 2, or have retired there after living and working in Lufkin their entire lives. African-American residents specifically mentioned that their families have been living in the area for many generations. One resident said: *“I cannot think of any other place to live.”* They also mentioned the importance of *“preserving our history and re-building the social clubs and restaurants of the past.”* A senior resident who has been living in the community for 80 years said: *“We used to have a lot of black businesses on this side of town, we had cleaners, laundromats, hotels, barber shops, restaurants, theater, service station and a grocery store.”*

The community has been described as *“safe, quiet, peaceful and tranquil.”* The quiet rural atmosphere is important to many residents. They are at peace and enjoy its safety and peaceful environment.

Hispanic residents specifically mentioned that they feel connected to the community. They highlighted the importance of *“being very involved and invested in our community.”* They trust their churches and feel connected to the religious community.

What are the existing resources in the community?

Churches: Thirty-three (33) churches in Wards 1 and 2. Some residents also attend and are members of churches in Lufkin or Nacogdoches and surrounding areas.

Schools: Brandon Elementary School (469 students), Garret Primary School (398 students), Dunbar Primary School (364 students), Coston Elementary (294 students) and Hackney Primary School (246 students). High school students attend Lufkin High School.

Child Care Centers: There are six registered child care centers in Wards 1 and 2. These are Lil’ Panthers Head Start Child Development Center, Hackney Day Care, Lufkin Head Start Center, Tots on the Move Child Education Center, Storybook Hollow Childcare and Learning Center and the Cottage (Creek Side Apartments).

Businesses: There are more than 70 businesses located in Wards 1 and 2. The downtown area of Lufkin is located in the wards, resulting in the high number of businesses.

Agencies: There are more than 100 agencies serving Wards 1 and 2, but these agencies are not located within the wards.

Community resources in Lufkin can be more accessible to all residents and specifically Hispanic residents if they are addressed in their first language.

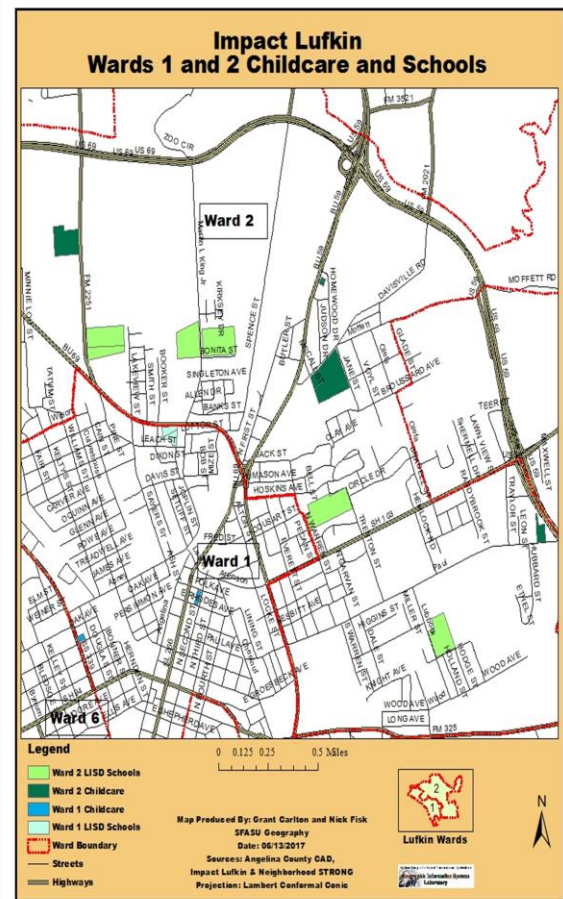


Figure 4: Childcare and schools

7.3 Resident's perception of community

Improving the community

Community residents are positive about enhancing and improving their community. The residents of Ward 1 and 2 perceive change as important for the long-term development of the community. Partner agencies are hopeful and encouraged by current community revitalization efforts. There is a sense of urgency to move towards action. When asked what are their feelings about community revitalization participants provided positive feedback.

"I think it's really needed in North Lufkin. They used to have baseball games...and a whole lot of activities for kids and that kept a lot of them out of trouble." (Key informant, interview).

"...The best thing that's ever happened to Lufkin is Impact Lufkin, because Impact Lufkin in going to get us together as a community." (Key informant, interview).

"Praise the Lord for Impact Lufkin. I do believe that God brought us together to work together and break down all these walls that are separating us." (Key informant, focus group).

A service provider mentioned: *"Buy-in is necessary for the community to be effectively involved and we should not be spinning wheels on it."*

The strong sense of belonging, which exists among residents, results in a collective need for change. Residents make efforts to preserve, honor and respect the history of the community. One of the residents said: *"Many people who grew up here speak positively of Lufkin."* (Resident, interview).

"So if we keep doing our part and showing genuine care and love for one another, our community will grow..." (Key informant, interview).

"Community change needs to be contagious. People need to be part of it to be successful. When people feel safe and comfortable the atmosphere in a community it lends to success." (City leader, interview).

"We need something that will motivate us to want to [change], we need motivation, something to make someone get up and say this is my neighborhood and I want to do anything to make it grow." (Resident, interview).

Overall, residents embrace change. Residents are positive about the building of a neighborhood center in Wards 1 and 2. They anticipate that such a center will include much needed services, resources and areas for recreation. Residents see the Impact Lufkin project as a collaborative effort between residents, resources and funders. They emphasize the importance of all stakeholders working together: *"Impact Lufkin is the best*

thing that ever happened to Lufkin. It makes the community come together. For a long time, different people were engaged in making Lufkin a better place but each person was doing their own thing. We were not on the same page. I was swimming alone in the ocean. Then I saw a big boat called Impact Lufkin and the captain of the boat invited me to come in. I jumped in and now I am working together with the organization.” (Resident and service provider, community conversation café).

Community structure and dynamics

Wards 1 and 2 residents are positive about the formal and informal leaders within the community. Elected officials are respected. Mentorship as a prominent form of leadership is well-respected and various mentorship programs exist.

Hispanic residents specifically noted that they consider bilingual service providers and public officers as positive resources in the community. *“There are people who speak both languages. Including teachers and staff at schools, firemen, staff at hospitals and police officers – very helpful.”* (Agency partner, interview).

Residents voiced the need for *“people with leadership skills to get more involved at a city level. “Where is community leadership? Many residents in North Lufkin need to run for city leadership... it has been voiced, but more people should be stepping up.”* (Key informant).

Community support

When asked where they get most of their support, residents answered: *“family and church.”* Residents mainly reported that they receive support from their church, families and the larger community.

The strong sense of community and the feeling of belonging provide emotional support to residents. They experience the community as welcoming.

Community members feel that official leaders and clergy support them in a positive and uplifting way.

Religion is an extremely important source of support. Hispanic and African-American residents, who participated in the study, voiced the importance of seeking God’s plan in the multi-generational future of the community.

Opportunities in the community

Residents experience different opportunities in the community. The schools and community support were most identified by community members as opportunities. The opening of the Jones Park pool is considered as a very positive show of change. A resident commented that *“the kids can now have a place to swim & go to the park.”* Hispanic residents specifically mentioned that *“the support in the community creates opportunities for the children to grow and dream about jobs.”* (Community focus group).

The opportunity to volunteer and help other community members who are in need was identified by several residents. The volunteer network adds to the sense of a caring community. *“...opportunities to volunteer and help others”, “many people give their time and give back”, “there are people who helped others”, “volunteers can assist elderly residents and mentor the youth” and “if the possibility to help shows up....I will do anything necessary.”* (Focus group participants).

One of the key informants summarized the opportunities: *“...growth, stability, there is an absolutely wonderful opportunity for this community to prosper and flourish if we could all just see past our current situations and see that this is God's way of letting us know that we have not been forgotten, change our mindsets and change our entire lives and give a better future for our children and our children's children.”* This positive attitude about the possibilities and opportunities is observed and shared across the community.

Residents can experience a positive quality of life within a peaceful environment. One of the residents commented: *“I can sit on my front porch without anybody or anything bothering me day or night. I live next to where the old cotton club was.”* (Focus group participant). Residents also feel that they have the opportunity to *“raise [a] family without feeling afraid.”*

Residents feel that *“there are more opportunities and a definite market for businesses to develop.”* (Focus group participants).

7.4 Challenges

Unstable economy

Residents cited challenges such as *“loss of industry, as not an individual problem, but a community issue.”* This has most likely led to compounding problems. Specifically, with the lack of employment, residents refer to not having enough jobs in their area. Economic issues manifest in the lack of access to grocery stores located in Wards 1 and 2. The economy does not materialize itself to be strong enough to support local businesses, even though that is vital to the needs of those living in the area. Residents are of the opinion that there are limited opportunities for advancement. Financial stability is impacted by low salaries and limited job opportunities. The loss of jobs in Lufkin over the past years is impacting economic development of the community. Residents are of the opinion that *“pay day”* loan companies in the area are problematic. *“Business is lost for the North Lufkin community. We lost our jobs, farms, saw mill industry has disappeared, economical industry is down. The only attraction is the cost of living is cheap to live here.”* (Resident Interview).

Socio-economic problems such as poverty are cyclic and trans-generational in nature. Residents are of the opinion that it is *“difficult to break the cycle and to sustain change in the current economic environment.”* (Key informant). The economy impacts the real estate market, which again influences younger adult's decision to move to neighborhoods in Wards 1 and 2.

Oliphant, E and Avant, F. L. (2017). Appreciative Inquiry Wards 1 and 2, Lufkin, Texas Report. Stephen F. Austin State University School of Social Work, Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development.

Crime

According to the responses, the public's perception of crime rate in the area has left some citizens feeling uneasy. Some residents are of the opinion that the media's portrayal of crime in Wards 1 and 2 is not based on facts and it results in the community being stigmatized. Some residents feel the unstable economy is to blame, alluding to a lack of jobs as a reason for the crime rate. While some appear to recognize the issues of crime in their area, others feel as though their neighbors are failing to grasp the trend of occurring delinquencies.

Medical challenges

The residents mentioned medical challenges that must be addressed. Citizens expressed several medical challenges that appeared unique to their individual needs, but some resembled needs that all cities have. This included challenges such as: Home Health/Check in/Life carts and pharmacy delivery for the needy. Behavioral health, including substance abuse, is considered a challenge by some of the residents. This is perceived as due to the lack of access to treatment options or programs.

Quality of life improvements

An important theme that emerged dealt with quality of life issues for residents. One community member stated they wanted to *"Feel like I'm a person."* Others mentioned they would *"enjoy improving like more recreational activities/centers/programs that can be utilized for both youth and adults."* (Participants, focus groups). While the church is considered a strength in the community, some residents encourage increased involvement in the church – *"bringing God back to the area."* (Key informant). These quality of life issues mentioned are important and reflect the real desire members have for growth in their community.

Challenges with infrastructure and services

The lack of awareness about specific resources, including businesses and services, impacts effective resource utilization. Services to residents are offered in isolation, rather than as a collaborative effort. This results in duplication of services. Service providers, who move into the community, start services and do not spend time getting to know the community. Services are duplicated unknowingly. Residents voiced the importance of any service provider to develop an understanding of the culture of the community.

The transportation system is challenging and results in inaccessibility to services, resources, businesses, hospitals and churches.

The physical environment is not child-friendly in all parts of the neighborhoods. Residents mentioned that infra-structure should be given attention. The City of Lufkin is currently working on an extensive strategic plan. Residents are aware of this plan and positive about the intended outcomes.

7.5 Community revitalization priorities

Community revitalization is a process which brings community residents, city and county leaders as well as funders together to initiate meaningful change. It is important to understand that some priorities can be addressed through short-term goals, but most need long-term strategies before change is evident. Priorities should be linked to positive, manageable, measurable and sustainable outcomes. The priorities are interconnected and should be viewed within a holistic framework.

Residents are of the opinion that community revitalization is necessary, but that it would be difficult and time-intensive. There is a need to involve younger adults, youth and children in community revitalization efforts. Limited information on community change efforts results in limited involvement. Residents are of the opinion that they need to work together to bring about change in the community. *“There is a need for greater unity in the community.”* (Key informant interview).

For the purpose of this report, priority areas are discussed in no particular order and areas are not prioritized in any way. These needs are all priorities as identified by the participants in the study. It is important for the community to work with internal and external partners to develop specific actions, tasks and activities to support long - term strategies that address the priority areas. However, the priorities most cited relate to transportation, education, housing, jobs and economic development, community safety and policing. In order to enhance quality of life, it is important to view the community from a systemic and holistic perspective, acknowledging all priorities should be addressed.

7.5.1 Transportation

At the center of all discussions about priorities is the issue of transportation. Most of the challenges identified by the participants are related to the transportation problems. It is evident that there is a need for effective and dependable public transportation. The limitation of transportation by residents creates challenges for many residents who are dependent on public transportation. The development of a more effective transportation system with access for all residents in Wards 1 and 2 is considered a priority by many residents and leaders. According to the survey, 37.24% participants perceive accessibility to transportation as a problem, 42.39% do not perceive it as a problem and 20.37% do not know (N=546). The data from focus groups and interviews provide evidence that it is a problem, specifically to the residents who do not have a dependable vehicle. Of the survey participants, 29.53% perceive **public transportation services** as good and 19.69% as fair, 17.13% perceive it as excellent and 18.90% as poor, while 14.76% indicated they do not know.

Transportation problems impact residents of all age groups including senior residents and children. It is evident that residents in Wards 1 and 2 consider the current bus system as challenging. Limited availability of transportation impacts quality of life. For example, transportation problems create challenges for families who need to take their children to school/day care and go to work at the same time. Another example, elderly or residents

with disabilities cannot access services and resources easily, mainly due to transportation issues. Churches are very helpful in providing volunteer services to transport residents and church members when necessary. Volunteers who assist with transportation are mostly church members. Dependable transport to grocery stores is needed on a regular basis. People with disabilities, no support system, no way of personal transportation and elderly residents most often experience the need for dependable public transportation. Limited transportation opportunities is challenging for residents who do not own a dependable vehicle. Elderly residents and people with disabilities voiced their concerns. In an interview with an elderly resident with disabilities, she indicated that *“she had to pay \$10 to a neighbor to take her to the grocery store and that she sometimes needs to go and there is no one available.”* (Senior resident, interview).

Families mention different kinds of problems with transportation. For example, different family members sharing one car can be problematic. It makes it difficult when they need the vehicle at the same time. In addition, individuals and families without a dependable vehicle experience transportation problems. *“Transporte para los jóvenes que están trabajando y no pueden conseguir un viaje al trabajo porque el carro de la familia no trabaja. Sólo tienen un coche y luego tienen que encontrar a alguien para llevarlos.”* [Transportation for the young who are working is a problem... and can't get a ride to work because the family car is broken.”]

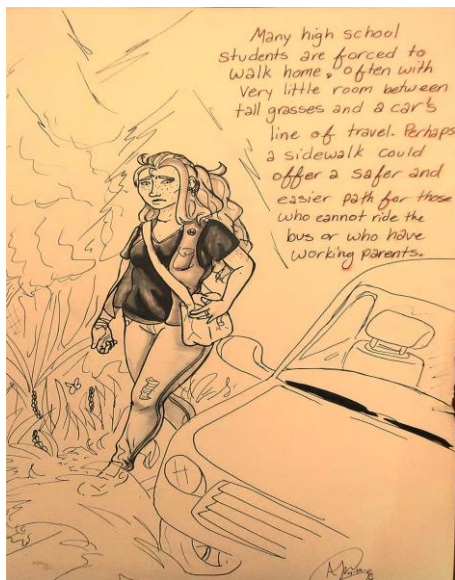


Figure 5: Child's art depicting lack of sidewalks

“I need dependable transportation to the grocery store on a regular basis and I have to pay someone to take me to CVS. I do not always have the money. I have to depend on other people to help me.” (Senior resident, interview).

Children who participated in the appreciative inquiry mentioned the importance of having easy access to the schools through transportation. Of great concern is the fact that the closest bus stop for Stubblefield School is at Walmart on Whitehouse Street. The school accommodates students who have dropped out or who are having trouble graduating. The nearest bus stop being more than a mile's walk, impacts academic progress to students who are already experiencing challenges.

A serious concern mentioned during focus groups and interviews is the fact that school buses do not pick up children who live near enough to the school to walk. Service

providers are of the opinion that transportation problems can result in student absenteeism. A mother participating in a conversation café stated: “*Si usted vive a una milla de la escuela el autobús no vendrá por los niños. [If you live a mile away... the school buses won’t pick up the children].*” This is, however, a Texas State law.

Sidewalks are not always safe and students mentioned they have to “*often walk in the street*” and “*it is unsafe to ride a bicycle to school or the park.*” (Youth participants, children’s appreciative inquiry). The city is addressing this issue. New sidewalks were built in front of Garret Primary School. Several residents mentioned the significance of this and that it provides a safer environment for children.

School to home transportation is a problem in cases where parents cannot pick their children up from school, school buses do not pick them up in the specific mileage range and alternative arrangements cannot be made. Lufkin Independent School District (LISD) makes additional efforts to provide 600 non-qualifying students with transportation to Boys and Girls Clubs.

Table 22 provides information on the distances as measured from the intersection at Kurth and 105 Lofton Street.

Table 22: Walking and Driving Distances to Resources

Place	Distance
Grocery stores	HEB Car – 5 minutes; Bike – 9 minutes; walk – 24 minutes Brookshire Brothers Car – 3 minutes; Bike – 6 minutes; walk – 11 minutes
Library	Car – 7 minutes; Bike – 11 minutes; walk – 37 minutes
Hospitals	CHI St. Luke Car – 7 minutes; bike – 12 minutes; walk – 40 minutes Woodland Heights Car – 12 minutes; bike – 11 minutes – walk 1 hour
Parks Ward 1 and 2	Jones Park – Car – 2 minutes; bike – 4 minutes; walk – 12 minutes Brandon Park – car – 4 minutes; bike – 6 minutes; walk – 19 minutes Winston Park- car – 5 minutes; bike – 7 minutes; walk – 12 minutes Lufkin Land Park- car - 6, bike – 14 minutes; walk – 37 minutes Kit McConnico Park car - 7 minutes, bike - 17, walk – 51 minutes Betsy Gamble Park car – 3 minutes, bike – 5 minutes; walk – 16 minutes Ellen Trout Park – car – 6 minutes; bike – 9 minutes; walk – 32 minutes

The Brazos Transit System (non-profit) Purple Route serves areas in Wards 1 and 2. Brazos Transportation bus stops are not labeled and bus stops are not all clearly marked. This occurs not only in Wards 1 and 2 but also in the rest of the city. There are no signs, benches or covers. It is just an area in the open elements and residents have to wait at



least 30 minutes to be sure they are able to catch the bus. Figure 6 illustrates that there are no bus signs, benches or covered areas at official bus stops. Residents were observed sitting on the ground to wait on the bus. (Brazos Transit). The bus will not wait for individuals walking toward the bus stop area. They must be waiting at that area to be picked up. Although most of the pick-up areas appear safe, the main issue is that residents have to stand out in the heat, cold or rain if they want to catch the bus. A validation team member/key informant said: *"We need more of a connection between Brazos, the community and the city. Better collaboration. It was better in the past, but the company is now private. Community leaders may attempt to look at what routes/ identify key locations to have an added drop and include a stop."* Another serious concern is the fact that the bus does not carry change. *"The bus does not carry change. If you only have a \$5 it will not give you the change. They will keep the full \$5."* (Validation team member).

Two private transportation companies provide services. Charles Wilson V.A. Shuttle provides transportation for veterans to medical appointments. The trip origin and destination must be within 3/4 mile of the Fixed Routes. Hughes Taxicab Company is a private taxi company available to residents. The City of Lufkin will be partnering with Uber Technologies Inc. and the service will start September 27, 2017.

"Better economic conditions and more jobs translate to the opportunity for new and improved transportation systems. In rural areas, residents have issues accessing resources, jobs, healthcare and other important institutions due to unreliable transportation. Improving transportation systems will help residents gain better access to necessary." (Agency partner). It is evident that there is a need for dependable transportation to ensure that basic service needs of residents are met. Without regular and dependable transportation, residents cannot refill their prescriptions, access a grocery store or meet medical appointments.

7.5.2 Locality of resources and services

Locality of resources specifically refers to infrastructure, businesses, state and non-profit organizations, offices, clinics and services providers within Wards 1 and 2. Many resources and agencies are available in Angelina county and the City of Lufkin. However, agencies and services are not necessarily located in Wards 1 and 2. There is an inconsistency in data about locality of services. The survey responses indicate that residents perceive they have access to services, while the information from focus groups, conversation cafés and key informant interviews indicates they do not experience easy access. Overall ratings of services were positive based on the survey.

Table 23: Perceptions of access to services

Service	Yes	No	Some access	Do not know
Social / Welfare	54.62%	15.66%	10.24%	19.48%
Medical	69.66%	14.57%	8.98%	6.79%
Immigration	18.35%	20.97%	4.23%	56.45%
Legal	42.91%	20.76%	13.37%	22.95%
Financial	50.60%	26.21%	9.88%	13.31%

N=546

Source: SFA School of Social Work and Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development. (2017). *Impact Lufkin Survey*

Based on this table, it is evident that survey participants perceive that they have access to social/welfare, medical, legal and financial services. However, only 18.35% survey participants indicated that they do have access to immigration services, 20.97% indicated that they do not have access and 56.45% said they do not know.

Table 24: Access to internet, cell phones, landlines and social media

Services	Yes	No
Internet at Home	71.54%	28.46%
Internet at Work	50.96%	49.04%
Internet at Library	49.36%	50.64%
Landline	55.19%	44.81%
Cellphone	92.07%	7.93%
Social Media	68.66%	31.34%

N=546

Source: SFA School of Social Work and Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development. (2017). *Impact Lufkin Survey*

Based on this table, it is evident that most survey participants have access to internet at home and work. Most participants have access to landlines and use social media. Of the 546 survey participants, 92.07% have access to a cellphone.

Table 25 provides information on resident's perceptions of services available to them (N=546). It is evident that survey participants mostly rated services as good or excellent.

Table 25: Services as perceived by residents

Service	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Do Not Know
211 Services	(42) 8.61%	(66) 13.52%	(142) 29.10%	(78) 15.98%	(160) 32.79%
Ambulance Services	(38) 7.47%	(50) 9.82%	(178) 34.97%	(166) 32.61%	(77) 15.13%
Animal Control	(70) 13.94%	(93) 18.53%	(176) 35.06%	(83) 16.53%	(80) 15.94%
Counseling	(77) 15.40%	(57) 11.40%	(143) 28.60%	(92) 18.40%	(131) 26.20%
Education	(29) 5.72%	(60) 11.83%	(197) 38.86%	(159) 31.36%	(62) 12.23%
Emergency 911	(27) 5.28%	(53) 10.37%	(151) 29.55%	(210) 41.10%	(70) 13.70%
Fire Protection	(22) 4.33%	(51) 10.04%	(161) 31.69%	(180) 35.43%	(94) 18.50%
Food Pantries	(52) 10.30%	(70) 13.86%	(171) 33.86%	(126) 24.95%	(86) 17.03%
Garbage Collection	(28) 5.51%	(54) 10.63%	(204) 40.16%	(177) 34.84%	(45) 8.86%
Gas Stations	(55) 10.89%	(77) 15.25%	(190) 37.62%	(138) 27.33%	(45) 8.91%
Government Assistance	(6) 10.71%	(2) 3.57%	(26) 46.43%	(16) 28.57%	(6) 10.71%
Grocery Stores	(78) 15.42%	(72) 14.23%	(170) 33.60%	(155) 30.63%	(31) 6.13%
Law Enforcement	(50) 9.94%	(65) 12.92%	(173) 34.39%	(176) 34.99%	(39) 7.75%
Library Services	(75) 14.94%	(52) 10.36%	(159) 31.67%	(143) 28.49%	(73) 14.54%
Medical/Dental Services	(99) 19.72%	(73) 14.54%	(166) 33.07%	(120) 23.90%	(44) 8.76%
Mental Health Services	(91) 17.98%	(71) 14.03%	(134) 26.48%	(101) 19.96%	(109) 21.54%
Nutrition Education	(108) 21.39%	(90) 17.82%	(140) 27.72%	(81) 16.04%	(86) 17.03%

Service	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Do Not Know
Programs/ Services for Seniors	(98) 19.48%	(81) 16.10%	(129) 25.65%	(92) 18.29%	(103) 20.48%
Public Transportation	(96) 18.90%	(100) 19.69%	(150) 29.53%	(87) 17.13%	(75) 14.76%
Recreation Activities	(87) 17.23%	(122) 24.16%	(168) 33.27%	(78) 15.48%	(50) 9.90%
Roads/Streets/ Highways/	(98) 19.37%	(139) 27.47%	(180) 35.57%	(65) 12.85%	(24) 4.74%
Services to help with Flooding	(107) 21.19%	(90) 17.82%	(126) 24.95%	(51) 10.10%	(131) 25.94%
Services to help with Job Opportunities	(117) 23.26%	(105) 20.87%	(129) 25.65%	(64) 12.72%	(88) 17.50%
Storm Drainage	(103) 20.60%	(92) 18.40%	(142) 28.40%	(42) 9.20%	(117) 23.40%
Substance Abuse Services	(96) 19.35%	(84) 16.94%	(122) 24.60%	(78) 15.73%	(116) 23.39%
Youth Programs	(122) 24.02%	(86) 16.93%	(131) 25.79%	(67) 13.19%	(102) 20.08%

N= 546

Source: SFA School of Social Work and Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development. (2017). *Impact Lufkin Survey*

The following discussion highlights some of the responses to services:

- Most participants 29.10% rated **2-1-1 services** as good, 15.98% as excellent, 13.52% as fair, 8.61% as poor and 32.79% do not know. 2-1-1 Texas is a free, anonymous social service hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year (Texas Health and Human Services). The service connects people to specialized services including early childhood intervention services, employment, independent living, palliative care, behavioral health care and disaster assistance;
- Of the 546 survey participants, 28.60% rated **counseling services** as good, 18.40% as excellent, 15.40% as poor, 11.40% as excellent and 26.20% do not know;
- Most participants rated **mental health services** as good (26.48%) or excellent (19.96%), while 17.98% rated it as poor, 14.03% as fair and 21.54% do not know;
- Of the 546 survey participants, 24.60% rated **substance abuse services** as good, 19.35% rated it as poor, 16.94% rated it as fair, 15.73% as excellent and 23.39% do not know;

Oliphant, E and Avant, F. L. (2017). *Appreciative Inquiry Wards 1 and 2, Lufkin, Texas Report*. Stephen F. Austin State University School of Social Work, Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development.

- Of the 546 survey participants, 25.65% rated **services for seniors** were mostly rated as good, 18.29% as excellent, while 19.48% rated it as poor, 16.10% as fair and 20.48% do not know. The high percentage of people who responded “do not know” can be attributed to several reasons. Survey participants may not be aware of the specific services or use the services and therefore do not know how to rate it;
- **Ambulance services** were mostly rated as good (34.97%) or excellent (32.61%), 7.47% rated it as poor, 9.82% as fair and 15.13% do not know;
- Survey participants mostly indicated that the **medical and dental services** are good (33.07%) or excellent (23.90%), while 19.72% indicate that it is poor and 14.54% fair, while 8.76 % do not know;
- In terms of **nutrition education** most participants rated services as good (27.72%), 21.39% rated it as poor, 17.82% as fair, 16.04% as excellent and 17.03% indicated they do not know;
- Of the 546 survey participants, 43.84% participants indicated that they are on some form of **government assistance**. The government assistance available in Wards 1 and 2 in North Lufkin is the following: Medicaid, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Social Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Most survey participants perceive services related to government assistance as good (46.43%) or excellent (28.57%), while 10.71% perceive it as poor, 3.57% as fair and 10.71% do not know;
- In terms of **food pantries**, 33.36% rated it as good, 24.95% as excellent, 10.30% rated it as poor, 13.86% as fair and 17.03% indicated they do not know;
- Most survey participants (63.87%) indicated that they have access to a **grocery store** (N=501). Overall survey participants rated grocery stores as good (33.60%) or excellent (30.63%), while 15.42% rated it as poor, 14.23% as fair and 6.13% indicated they do not know;
- Of the 546 survey participants, 75.79% survey participants have access to **gas stations**. Gas stations were mostly rated as good (37.62%) or excellent (27.33%), while 10.98% rated it as poor, 15.25% as fair and 8.91% indicated they do not know. (N=546);
- Survey participants perceive library services as good (31.67%), excellent (28.49%), poor (14.94%) and fair (10.36%), while 14.54 % indicated they do not know;
- Of the 546 survey participants, 28.40% survey respondents report **storm drainage** as good, 20.60% as poor, 18.40% as fair 9.20% as excellent and 23.40% do not know;
- **Services to help with flooding** were rated as good (24.95%), poor (21.19%), fair (17.82%), excellent (10.10%) and 25.94% indicated they do not know;
- **Roads, streets and highways** were mostly rated as good (35.57%) or fair (27.47%), 19.37% perceive it as poor, 12.85% as excellent, while 4.74% survey participants indicated they do not know;
- **Garbage collection** is perceived by 40.16% of participants as good, 34.84% as excellent, 5.51 % perceive it as poor, 10.63% as fair and 8.86% do not know;

- **Animal control services** are perceived as good (35.06%) or fair (18.53%), while 16.53% perceive it as excellent (16.53%) or poor (13.94%) and 15.94% indicated that they do not know.

Even though the survey indicates that residents perceive they have access to services, the qualitative information from focus groups and interviews indicates they do not have access in Ward 1 and 2. Residents voiced that medical and behavioral health services are available in Lufkin and are accessible to community residents who have dependable transportation only. At the time of the appreciative inquiry there was one medical practitioner in the wards. A clinic located on Kurth drive recently opened and is managed by East Texas Community Health. However, residents would like to see more medical and dental resources located within the wards. There are two dental offices accessible to the residents of Wards 1 and 2. Although residents feel that medical assistance and emergency services are accessible and readily available, other services are not easy to access. A key informant said: *“Medical assistance is available to all.”* There is a need for an emergency room in the wards. However, residents are not positive about a 24/7 private emergency room, which will be costly to patients and residents. One validation team member said: *“... the problem with private 24/7 emergency rooms is that it is built and funded by physicians and if they are not making money they automatically close. We had one here and then they open and closed. Then another provider tried and it didn't work. If you don't have insurance, they don't want to see you. You have to have cash money on hand or insurance. It runs like a business. Most people don't know the difference between urgent care and emergency.”*

A concerned resident said: *“Trabajo para servicios médicos y algunos no pueden pagar por servicios. Si no tienen un número de seguro social o dinero para pagar, no pueden obtener servicios. Los servicios médicos son una necesidad para todos y deben proporcionarse en el centro.”* [Medical services are needed because other medical services won't provide services if they (Hispanic residents) don't have money and turn them away. Also if they do not have a social security number. No one will help them. They need help with medical services. Services should be provided in this center for those who cannot be served]. (Community conversation café participant).

As mentioned there are services in the greater City of Lufkin as well as much needed businesses. Service providers and representatives of non-profit agencies emphasize that

Wards 1 and 2 are included in their target areas. Infrastructure including sidewalks, bus stops and street lights were identified as serious concerns. These were described by residents as a safety issue for students who had to walk to and from school. In addition, the need for maintenance to streets and roads was identified. The City of Lufkin is currently assessing these problems. Bus stops are not safe places for residents especially children and elderly. *“Children are waiting for the bus - there is no shelter when it is cold or raining.”* (Participant, Hispanic conversation group). Bus stops do not have seating or a roof/shelter to protect against inclement weather. Observations at the bus stops show that elderly residents have to stand for extended time, with no opportunity to sit. *“Bus stops needed for the elderly also and not only for the children.”* (Focus group participant). Goodwill is currently working on a project to build shelters at the bus stops. Although the qualitative data indicates that bus stops are a problem, only 39.88% of the survey participants identified it as a problem, 43.60% do not perceive it as a problem, while 16.53% do not know. There are no sheltered bus stops with benches anywhere in Lufkin.

Residents are also of the opinion that safer roads and streets will contribute to a safer community. As indicated in the discussion on transportation it includes - safer sidewalks, streetlights and safe waiting areas at bus stops. Several residents commented that areas where there are no working streetlights are dark and unsafe in the evenings. 45.68% of survey participants indicate that sidewalks are a problem, 44.42% do not consider it a problem and 9.89% do not know (N=546). It is important to mention that sidewalks are being built across the city. Mr. Keith Wright, Lufkin city manager, emphasized that the city has been building sidewalks the last 10 years using grant programs: *“The city uses every opportunity to apply for grants to build sidewalks.”*

It is evident that residents are aware of the variety of services in Lufkin and Angelina County, however they feel that information should be shared on a continuous basis. *“Raising awareness of existing programs should be constant.”* (Service provider interview). When establishing new services in the community, the issue of replication has to be addressed. *“Several programs of the same kind already exist...may cause issues by adding additional programs of the same kind.”* (Key Informant, interview).

7.5.3 Beautification

Beautification of the community is an important starting point in the revitalization process. Residents have already organized clean-up projects and these efforts have brought the community together. There is however a need for more clean-up activities as evident



Figure 7: Sidewalk

from the photovoice data, focus groups and community conversation cafés. Information on beautification is specific to streets, parks, recreations areas and houses in the neighborhoods.

Residents highlight the importance of building sidewalks where none exists and beautifying those which are in place. There is also a need for more streetlights and lights in recreation areas. Lights are not only part of beautification but can contribute to the safety of the streets, parks and recreation areas. Residents feel that there is a need to *“beautify sidewalks.”* A high school student said: *“Many students are forced to walk home, often with very little room between tall grasses and a car’s line of travel. Perhaps a sidewalk could offer a safer and easier path for those who cannot ride the bus or who have working parents.”*

There are beautiful areas in Wards 1 and 2 and residents are proud of these areas. Residents are specifically proud of the parks, lakes and recreational areas. The recreation areas including parks and swimming pools were identified as areas, which should look attractive and reflect the pride of the community. Community vegetable gardens, for example, are important resources of nutrition for the

community as well as a way to beautify the neighborhoods. This is again cyclic in nature – working together on a community garden can strengthen a community, build effective partnerships and show the younger generation how they can sustain a healthy community. As indicated in the drawings by younger residents, they would like to see community gardens including vegetable gardens as part of beautification (Example Figure 8). These vegetable gardens can add to quality of life for all residents. A young resident mentioned that a public garden can promote active participation, creating a healthier ecosystem. *“[A] public garden to help brighten and better the community-gets people involved in nature and helps our ecosystem, - can be located in a local park for plenty of people to see-this could also be helpful to the bees and butterfly’s to help repopulate.”* (Youth participant, children’s inquiry).

The drawing by a 12 year old resident shows a community garden, organic fruits and vegetables, enabling efficient and sustainable foods for healthy living and a transformative lifestyle.

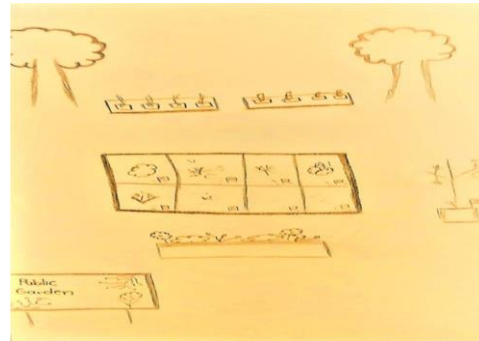


Figure 8: Drawing Community Garden

Suggested beautification projects include murals, community vegetable gardens, gallery of local art and exhibitions of children's art. An art committee was established that is interested in beautification of the community. The downtown area of Lufkin is considered as an area which has been revitalized and has completed some beautification efforts. Residents feel they would like to see the same beautification efforts in the wards.

Residents mentioned that there are many houses that are uninhabitable, neglected and

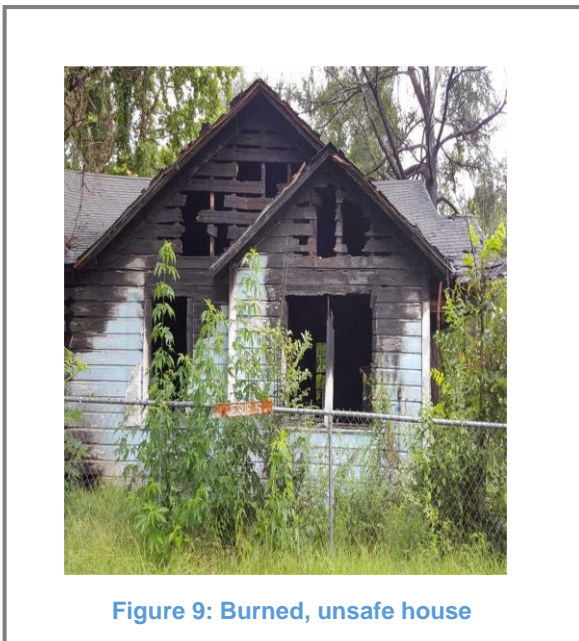


Figure 9: Burned, unsafe house

do not look attractive. Residents believe that beautification should begin with the cleaning up of distressed houses in Wards 1 and 2. *"In this neighborhood we have a lot of boarded up houses that need to be torn down. The beautification needs to continue with cleaning of the wooded areas and demolishing of the uninhabited houses. People need to report vacant lots to the city. It is not only about beautification, but also about safety. Community pride is an important part of beautification."* (Resident, validation team).

It is evident that residents feel everyone must take responsibility for beautification of the neighborhoods. A key informant said: *"People need to know that we can call the city to complain about vacant lots,*

overgrown grass and unsafe houses. I think people do not know they can call." (Focus group participant).

According to Mr. Keith Wright, Lufkin city manager, people should report the neglected houses and unsafe areas to the city. Broken sidewalks should be reported to the City of Lufkin Street Department.

7.5.4 Community safety and policing

The community safety and policing priority focuses on perceptions, rather than available crime statistics. According to Lufkin Chief of Police, Gerald Williamson: *"Perception is more important than the statistics, assumptions are often made, based on the crime statistics and can result in stigma."* The residents perceive the relationship with the Lufkin Police Department as very positive, while always having the support of police officers. Community neighborhood associations assist with keeping the community safe. Several residents voiced the importance of taking responsibility for safety of their neighbors. *"We used to have a neighborhood watch. People now watch out for each other, people look after each other...I will be gone and my neighbors will look after my house. Community policing is very important."* (Key informant, validation team).

Of the 546 survey participants, 78.32 % indicated that they feel safe in the community during the day, while only 35.65% feel safe at night. Of these survey participants, 19.91% indicated they do not feel safe during the night, 14.44% were undecided and 12.27% reported that they feel unsafe during the day, while 9.41% were undecided.

Residents reported being very positive about the emergency services and time police officers take to respond to a call. *“Excellent rapid response system.”* (Focus group participant). Responses to the survey indicated that 41.10% consider 911 services as excellent and 29.55% as good, 5.28% consider services as poor, 10.37% as fair and 13.70% do not know (N= 522).

Residents are positive about law enforcement. Of the 522 survey participants who completed this question, 70% perceive law enforcement as good and excellent and 12.92% perceive it as fair, 9.94% perceive it as poor and 7.75% do not know.

Community members are overall positive about fire protection. Respondents to the survey perceive fire protection as excellent (35.43%) and good (31.69%). Less than 15% indicated that it is poor (4.33%) and fair (10.04%), while 18.50% do not know (N=546).

Residents indicated that they would like to have a police substation in the community. This is a recurring discussion at community talks and focus groups. According to local

officers, a police substation would require more officers; it takes five or more officers to man a single substation. This would leave fewer officers on the street to take care of the current crime issues. However, according to Chief Gerald Williamson, an administrative office located in Wards 1 or 2 is a possibility. Such an office will not be a substation but can add to the visibility of the police in the wards. *“We can utilize a space in an existing building which an officer can use for paper work and a computer station. What people want is more visibility of an officer in the community. It’s not an unrealistic goal. The office can be smaller than a substation. It is all about the visibility.”* (Resident, interview).

The residents feel that unsafe structures such as uninhabited houses results in an increase in crime activity. They believe these unsafe houses should be removed to deter criminal activity. One of the interview respondents mentioned: *“Landlords need to be more responsible for their people selling drugs and things like that.”*

This image depicts a crossing guard, to help students cross from the high school across the street in a safe manner.



Figure 10: Child's art discusses safety and crosswalks

Raising awareness about community safety and how residents can collaborate with the local police is an important priority.

A young participant highlighted the importance of a police officer or multiple guards at the high school crossings at the Loop. Though the high school is not located in the wards, the youth from the wards attend Lufkin High School. A mother said: *"Se puede colocar algo en el camino para evitar que los niños crucen porque cruzan y no es seguro. Corren a través de... [can something be placed along the road to prevent the kids from crossing because they cross and it is not safe. They run across...]"* (Community conversation participant). There is a need for the Lufkin Police Department and Lufkin Independent School District to work together to increase guards at the crossing. LISD suggested an assisted traffic light at the high school.

7.5.5 Education

Responses specific to education vary and are related to more than formal education. Residents are positive about the education system in Lufkin and report good relationships with the Lufkin Independent School District. Overall, the residents are positive about the opportunities provided by Angelina College and Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA). Angelina College and SFA are considered as important resources in the community.

Survey participants are overall positive about the education provided to students in Wards 1 and 2. Several residents mentioned that there are good relationships between residents and the school district. Residents commented on the importance of the school board and administration encouraging community input. Of the 546 survey respondents, 38.86% perceive education in Wards 1 and 2 as good, 31.36% as excellent, 5.75% rated services as poor, 11.83% as fair and 12.23% do not know.

Residents are of the opinion that there should be strategies in place to address the specific issues related to education. A strong emphasis is placed on access for all children to early childhood development services in addition to higher education. The data overall shows that an educational outcome residents would like to see is an *"increased enrollment of minority students to higher education."* (Key informant interview). According To Dr. Goffney, Superintendent of Lufkin Independent School District (LISD). *"We have strategies in place to identify gifted/talented students. This includes universal screening of all children starting in kindergarten and grades 2, 5 and 8. This allows the schools to identify children, instead of waiting for parents."* All students are tested. Advancement placement classes and students taking dual credit classes are high priorities for LISD.

The need for financial assistance to pursue higher education is evident from the focus groups and interviews. *"Scholarships should be increased to give youth the opportunity to attend college."* (Key informant, Ward 1). Scholarships are provided by associations such as the Angelina County Citizen's Chamber of Commerce, Top Ladies of Distinction

(Lufkin Chapter), Dunbar Alumni Associations and the Lufkin branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These associations/organizations give several scholarships per year. NAACP partners with CHI St. Luke's to give a scholarship to a senior who applies to Angelina College and is interested in a medical career. These are inspiring young people to attend college. *"Our children's future is limited by funding."* (Key informant). An increase in scholarships will allow more students from Wards 1 and 2 to have access to higher education. According to Dr. Michael Simon, Angelina College President, there are many scholarships available to students but they are not always aware of it. The college provides information about the scholarships and it is necessary for agencies to work together to recruit more scholarship recipients. It is evident that there is a need for public awareness about the available scholarships. There are many affordable options and scholarships available for students interested in pursuing higher education. Many students do not know about the availability or do not have the support to complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA). According to Dr. Simon, 55% of students did not pay anything in the last academic year for tuition because of access to grants and scholarships.

Residents are of the opinion that schools should include more social skills programs in addition to academic programs. Social skills training specific to students should include life skills development, problem-solving and conflict resolution training. Several residents mentioned: *"soft social skills such as life skills training should include religious and spirituality content."* (Focus groups participants). Residents feel that there should be more of an emphasis on art and music to broader educate and prepare students for life. *"There should be more emphasis on encouraging youth for the STEM program"* and *"Kids should work on projects for science fairs, engineering and mechanics."* (Key informant).

It is evident that accessible mentor programs exist in the community. Several of the programs are offered in Wards 1 and 2, providing easy access to students. Residents, however, feel that there is a need for more mentor programs. In addition, a need for emotional support groups for students was identified. The emotional support groups refer mainly to students who are experiencing academic challenges or behavioral problems in school. Programs, for example, Stephen F. Austin State University's East Texas Gear Up, is considered helpful in preparing students for higher education.

Residents identified a need for training of parents about the concepts of education. Educational needs were identified by focus group and conversation café participants, including a need for vocational schools in Angelina County and the City of Lufkin. Training suggestions can be summarized as:

- Parents- educational rights and procedures;
- Students- responsibilities and life skills;
- Educators- racial profiling;
- Training in student rights;
- Mentorship for parents.

Participants emphasized the importance of addressing the high school dropout rate in a positive way. It will be valuable to explore dropout rate information and make it available to the community. It is also important to motivate young people to take the GED or finish high school. One validation team member said that it is important *“not to only look at the statistics but discover the real story behind the statistics. Why are students dropping out?”*

Several residents indicated that there is a need to address discipline challenges within the schools. This includes an open discussion within the community about discipline was identified. For example - *“bring discipline back in schools”* and *“we need consistency with discipline problems and corrective procedure of students.”* (Focus group participants). LISD is addressing discipline in schools. *“In moving forward, LISD is recognizing restorative discipline practices to teach children appropriate social skills. We are training teachers to help children understand why they get in trouble.”* (Dr. Goffney).

It is evident that parents want to be involved in their children’s education. *“Reach out to all parents – don’t wait for them to ask.”* (Parent Ward 2). Residents suggested several strategies to increase parent involvement in their children’s education and future planning. These include:

- An Education Summit which includes parents. College Days @ Campuses – college week for all LISD;
- College Parent Night – for assisting parents with the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA);
- *“Take students on college tours.”* Brandon School already goes to SFA, Angelina College, Sam Houston State University, Prairie View A&M University, University of Texas and Texas A&M University.

It is evident from discussions with Dr. Goffney, that LISD is already implementing these suggested activities.

Language barriers are considered as one of the most important challenges to address in education. It is specifically difficult for parents who do not speak English.

According to Dr. Goffney, they have several strategies in place to enhance parent involvement. Strategies include Charm monthly advertisements, PSA’s on radio including the Hispanic radio station, LaLengua advertisements, social media, monthly Lufkin Daily Bright Star column and the LISD website (lufkinisd.org) to name a few. Information shared with parents is in English and Spanish. LISD is always exploring how to reach out to parents through awareness campaigns. It is important that parents respond and react. Overall responses indicate that parents trust LISD.

It is, however, important that parents learn more about the use of online tools in communication between the school and parents. LISD uses an online parental portal, which provides electronic access to parents on their child’s academic progress. This portal increases communication between LISD and parents and enhances parental

involvement. One resident summarized the importance of preparing students for higher education. *“We should not ask a student ...if you plan to go to college but rather ask where do you plan to go to college?”* (Key informant interview).

There is a need to reach out to children of migrant farmworkers. It needs to be tracked and strategies should be developed to address the challenges they are experiencing. Children of migrant workers are not always in school and may be working themselves. There is limited information available about children of migrant farmworkers in Angelina County. However, several partner agencies mentioned that there is an increasing need to address this issue.

7.5.6 Housing

The qualitative data collected from interviews with key informants, residents and community leaders and partner agencies suggests that it is necessary to address the housing problems in Wards 1 and 2. The data on housing refers to availability and affordability of housing, home ownership and rental properties. Residents mentioned that affordability of housing could be problematic. The data from interviews, focus groups and conversation cafés indicates that residents feel housing is not necessarily affordable to all. However, 40.21% of the 546 survey participants feel that housing is affordable, while 39.79% do not feel it is affordable and 20% do not know.(N=522).

The following table provides information on the total housing units, occupied and vacant housing units and homeowner and rental vacancy rates. There were 1,965 total housing units in Census Tract 5, of which 1,604 housing units were occupied. The homeowner vacancy rate in Census Tract 5 was 0.8% as compared to 1.7% in Angelina County and 1.2% in the city of Lufkin. Census Tract 7 (15.9%) and Census Tract 6 (10.3%) had the highest rental vacancy rates, significantly higher than the city of Lufkin (8.5%) and Angelina County (7.6%). Both Census Tracts 6 and 7 had homeowner vacancy rates of 0.0%.

Table 26: Vacancy rates and Occupied Units

Location/Percentage	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units	Vacant Housing Units	Homeowner Vacancy Rate	Rental Vacancy Rate
Angelina County	36,070	30,583	5,487	1.7%	7.6%
City of Lufkin	15,146	13,114	2,032	1.2%	8.5%
Census Tract 5	1,965	1,604	361	0.8%	3.6%
Census Tract 6	2,144	1,936	208	0.0%	10.3%
Census Tract 7	1,251	1,115	146	0.0%	15.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2011 - 2015

Oliphant, E and Avant, F. L. (2017). Appreciative Inquiry Wards 1 and 2, Lufkin, Texas Report. Stephen F. Austin State University School of Social Work, Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development.

There are 374 rental properties in Wards 1 and 2. Several apartment complexes are located in the wards. The following table provides information about rental properties:

Table 27: Gross rent (occupied units paying rent)

Location	Less than \$500	\$500 - \$999	\$1,000 - \$1,499	\$1,500 - \$1,999	\$2,000 - \$2,499	\$2,500 - \$2,999	\$3,000 or more	Median Rent
Angelina County	1,312	6,046	1,636	194	9	11	0	\$773
City of Lufkin	591	3,781	1,157	171	9	11	0	\$810
Census Tract 5	244	530	31	0	0	0	0	\$648
Census Tract 6	12	529	120	0	0	0	0	\$778
Census Tract 7	118	362	100	0	0	0	0	\$792

Source: American Community Survey 2011 - 2015

Census Tract 7 (\$792) and Census Tract 6 (\$778) both had median rent that was higher than Angelina County's median rent of \$773. The majority of residents in Census Tracts 5, 6 and 7 were paying rent ranging from \$500 - \$999.



Figure 11: House labeled
"unsafe do not enter"

Residents indicated that there is a need to renovate houses that are neglected and dilapidated. Several structures exist which are hazardous to the community. Houses that should be demolished are structurally unsafe and uninhabitable. Community residents voiced the importance of either demolishing or renovating the houses. Some houses are burned, while others have signs warning it is unsafe to enter. Of the survey participants, 43.24% see the condition of houses as a problem, while 44.91% do not see it as a problem and 11.85% do not know (N=546). Of the 546 survey participants who completed this question, 42.17% feel that some unsafe houses are a problem, 45.65% feel unsafe houses are not a problem and 12.17%

indicated they do not know. Community leaders highlight the importance of *"...housing revitalization and rehabilitation of existing structures. Housing seems to be a concern that influences everything else in the community."* (Key informant interview). *"Home owners of some of these houses do not live in Lufkin or even Texas anymore...someone has to take responsibility for these houses."*, *"Fix up or get rid of dilapidated houses"* and *"Removing dilapidated houses is necessary."* (Focus group participants).

There is a need for residents to understand the housing codes. These codes will enable residents to address some of the problems related to uninhabitable and neglected houses. *"People should know they can contact the city about neglected houses, the city can enforce codes."* (Validation team member).

Validation team members including residents feel that strategies should be in place to assist vulnerable residents with renovation. The strategies should specifically accommodate senior residents while their houses are being renovated. *"Las personas mayores no tienen dinero para arreglar sus hogares ... si hay una ventana o puerta rotas o sus pisos ... están solos y no tienen manera de pagar o arreglar sus casas." [older individuals have no money to fix their homes...if a window, door or the floor needs to be fixed...they are alone and have no way to pay to fix it because they have other bills].*

Residents are positive about working with non-profits to renovate houses in the two wards. Lufkin Neighborhood Strong is a non-profit actively involved in Lufkin with the intention to be more involved in Wards 1 and 2. The organization supports improvement and repairs on houses. Habitat for Humanity is also actively working in Wards 1 and 2. They are of the opinion that



Figure 12: Abandoned home

“demolishing houses and renovating others will beautify the community. It can lead to increased home ownership.” It can also lead to an increase in young adults moving back to the community. There is a need to restore older church buildings, which are deteriorating.

7.5.7 Jobs and economic development

Economic development is an important requirement for sustainable and positive community change. Effective long-term economic development should be an intentional effort by stakeholders, including community residents and leaders, city and county officials, business developers and funders. It is evident from the key informant interviews and focus groups that economic development is a priority need for residents. It is important to understand that residents can contribute to economic empowerment in the community. In general, economic development including the creation of jobs is influenced by the economic challenges in the county and state. Residents acknowledge that not all needs related to economic development can be addressed by internal resources in the community. Residents recognize that the results of limited job opportunities are *“more global than the reach of just Lufkin and the city is not the only place experiencing this problem.”* (Key informant interview). *“The economy is becoming more unstable as we speak, a lot of it locally...we have no control of it. [National Leaders] are making decisions nationally. They are putting the economy on hold.”* (Validation team member).

Residents consider the increase of job opportunities in Wards 1 and 2 as crucial to an effective revitalization project. Residents are aware of the limited availability of jobs in Angelina County. *“Jobs are very limited here,” “Not many employment opportunities, we need more jobs” and “There’s no jobs that make any money.”* (Focus group participants).

According to the US Department of Labor (*Unemployment Rate*, June 2017) unemployment steadily fluctuates above and below the Texas average. For the months of April, May and June the unemployment rate has dipped steadily below 6% compared to the previous ten months, which all climbed above that rate. The city reflects an average of 6.19% unemployment indicating some movement in the right direction.



Figure 13: Local Coffee Shop



Figure 14: Pines Theatre

Residents mentioned that underemployment is a serious challenge impacting families. Community members are concerned about underemployment and unemployment. Several focus group participants mentioned having more than one job but still unable to be financially stable. *“Lufkin lacks career jobs now that we have lost all of the industries here. People now have to take multiple jobs in order to raise a family.”* (Key informant interview). When people lose their jobs, it becomes difficult or even impossible to maintain the same standard of living. *“People have jobs, then industries leave and people cannot afford life. It is necessary to bring jobs back so people can afford living.”* (Validation team member and key informant).

Several residents shared their resistance to outside industries coming in and building plants in Wards 1 and 2. *“Somebody built a huge plant near the zoo, it is ugly. The plant is now abandoned and has no purpose.”* (Key informant interview).

When asked what they would like Wards 1 and 2 to look like in 5 years, residents stressed an increase in jobs and more business development in the wards. An increase in stable jobs will keep young adults in Wards 1 and 2. *“I’d like to see more jobs here because none of our young people are coming back to Lufkin.”* (Key informant). *“There is no interest from young people to come back or move to a retirement town.”* (Validation team member and key informant).

Crucial to job development is the need to encourage businesses to open offices in the wards and increase the development of opportunities for entrepreneurship. New job opportunities can be created by *“empowering people to start their own business.”* (Resident interview). A young resident, participating in the children’s appreciative inquiry suggested: *“A fashion store, modern trends and high end fashion, for men and women, sewing classes, teaching youth skillsets on how to create their own fashion clothing.”* A validation team member and key informant mentioned: *“We need help with business startup and those who are already established.”*

Overall residents consider WorkForce Solutions Deep East Texas and the Work Force Development Board as positive resources. There is, however, a need to raise public awareness on a regular basis. Job opportunities for young adults are considered a priority. Interconnected with job opportunities, is the need to encourage young people to attend and complete high school and college. Survey participants perceive **services to help with job opportunities** as good (25.65%), poor (23.26%), fair (20.87%) or excellent (12.72%). Of the 546 participants, 17.50% indicated they do not know.

One of the main challenges related to job stability, is the need for dependable transportation and affordable day care. Dependable transportation will allow residents to work in Lufkin or surrounding towns. There are six (6) day care centers in Wards 1 and 2, but residents feel there is a need for more. Participants interviewed indicated that it is difficult to maintain a job without dependable day care.

Specific training needs were identified in order to effectively prepare community members for the job market. Training suggestions include business development, entrepreneurship, computer literacy, English as a second language classes and financial planning. Additional suggestions include job placement programs, improving local industry and business hiring activities, youth vocational training, internships, job shadowing and tangible training as well as preparation on how to obtain a job. Residents feel that there should be an increase in educational initiatives to develop vocational and professional opportunities. This includes a vocational school, which can increase the job marketability of young residents. Dr. Michael Simon, Angelina College President, confirmed that the college offers a vocational program.

The following are suggestions by residents to strengthen economic development in Wards 1 and 2.

“Inclusion of more faith-based businesses.”

“Finding larger companies or corporations to build in the area.”

“Bring small businesses back to the area.”

“Build new stores, restaurants or attractions for residents and visitors/tourists.”

“Make renovations on existing companies.”

“Find creative ways to “bring back businesses.”

“Make entrepreneurs aware of the resources.”

“Campaign on tax incentives for new businesses in the community including places in town already offering that process (Like Kurth Drive).”

“Finding ways to sell homes and have reasonable rent rates (i.e.; flipping houses, building new/low income housing).”

“Invite businesses to recruit at events in the community.”

(Key informant interviews, focus groups and surveys).

7.5.8 Neighborhood Center

It is evident from the interviews, focus groups and conversation cafés that residents have a desire to build a neighborhood/resource/community center, which can enhance access to much needed services and contribute to a sense of community. During the appreciative inquiry, a neighborhood committee consisting of residents was established to explore the possibility of a neighborhood center located in Wards 1 and 2. Residents are of the opinion that programs and services located at a neighborhood center will address key priority needs in the community.

Residents mentioned that the design of the neighborhood center should be guided by the needs of the community members, based on their input and feedback. *“Design must be dictated by needs of community.”* (Focus group participant). When constructing the center

it is important to consider location and accessibility. Residents are clear that it should be located in Wards 1 or 2. Community input is essential to the development of the project. Participants stressed the importance of gaining community input and feedback on issues such as location, services and business development. Residents understand the need to *“think about and discuss the process of developing a center.”* (Neighborhood center committee member/ key informant interview).

Community members emphasized the fact that they want to be involved in the identification of the location for the center. *“We must involve the people who LIVE where the center will be built.”* (Focus group participant).

Specific requirements for a neighborhood center were identified by the neighborhood center committee and other residents. The following responses were provided by participants:

“People who live near/in the immediate area where the center will be built should be included in the discussions”, “Must meet the need of diverse populations”, “Opportunity for one stop resource, referral, assistance and collection of programs”, “The center must prevent unnecessary duplication of services or businesses, [so that] we don’t duplicate the programs but help enhance what is already established”, “develop the park and surrounding areas first and then build the center” and “The center must create a safe environment without fences.” (Interview and survey participants). Residents mentioned that it is important that a neighborhood center should be a quality, multi-purpose center beneficial to the community. It is an opportunity to unite the community and people can share and learn from each other. The center can provide social services that address people’s needs. Participants were of the opinion that it can motivate the community to enhance existing strengths and resources. *“I believe a neighborhood community center would improve social, business and education opportunity in our community.”* (Key informant interview).

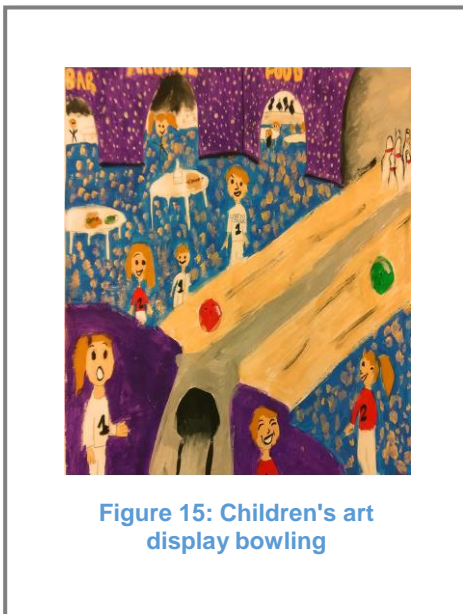


Figure 15: Children's art display bowling

It is also important when developing a center to plan in terms of how it will look and who will benefit from the center. When planning a neighborhood center the community has to consider the importance of sustainability. Residents voiced the importance of

making the center accessible to all community members (children, young adults, families and elderly)

as well as the greater Lufkin community. Community involvement in the decision-making process about the neighborhood center is a priority criteria identified by the residents. The neighborhood center needs to be multi-functional, described by focus group participants

as “a multipurpose building for many activities.” Figure 15 illustrates different activities as drawn by a young person.

Centralized services can be available at the center, including but not limited to a library, bank/credit union services, legal assistance including immigration services and training programs. The neighborhood center can be a place where “*people feel loved, wanted and safe. [It will] empower our community as well as educate them.*” (Neighborhood center committee member, resident). Participants are of the opinion that the neighborhood center can “*make North Lufkin feel a part of the city of Lufkin.*” (Focus group participant). In addition, social, medical, immigration and other community-based services offered at the center should include counseling services, immigration services, support groups and services to veterans, homeless, substance abuse and elderly residents, prevention and treatment of substance abuse, services to children and parents specific to behavioral and academic challenges and services to people with disabilities. Responses in terms of what kind of services include: “*We need an area for youth to socialize*”, “*Information center about services in the community*” and “*not only social services/specialized services but broad focus.*” (Focus group participants).

Examples of how the community center could be utilized include: “*picnic and recreational areas at the center. Recreational activities for example ballet, boxing, drama, music and art classes.*” (Neighborhood committee member interview.) A conversation café participant said: “*Un centro de arte para aprender la pintura, el teatro, lanzar lanzas, y sobre la cultura.*” [A cultural center is needed to teach painting, art, theater, spear throwing].”

The neighborhood center committee members and other residents identified realistic barriers to the development of the neighborhood center. The most important barriers mentioned are location, financial support, community buy-in and volunteer support to maintain services and businesses. There is a need for a bus stop near the neighborhood center. The underlying theme to these barriers is sustainability. The critical issues identified by community members are:

- Finding a centralized location and property - “*Finding an area of land large enough to build a center of this magnitude.*” (Key informant interview)
- “*I believe they will outgrow their space.*”
- Recruiting volunteers to support the center;
- Engaging business owners to become involved;
- Sustainable fundraising;
- Community ownership, involvement, support and buy in;
- People’s perception about the neighborhood center – “*the mindset of people.*” (Neighborhood center committee member interview);
- Transportation is a challenge. “*Transportation to the center is important, not only for the residents in this area, also other people from Lufkin who want to come here.*” (Key informant interview). As with other resource

accessibility, transportation is identified as a barrier and can impact sustainability of the center;

- Community members identified important questions.
 - *Will it be sustainable? How?*
 - *Will it increase property values?*
 - *Will it make property taxes increase?*

It is evident from the data that residents feel the center will add economic value to Wards 1 and 2. *"A neighborhood center would help our community to work together and understand ways and means of life" and "this center would be beneficial to our neighborhood as it will give so much hope and pride. A community driven center where community members can come in... share their visions... and become beneficial in watching the vision become reality will help positively shape the culture of North Lufkin."* (Key informant interview).

"This center is good for this area but also for Lufkin. We must think about this, clearly." (Key informant, interview).

7.5.9 Quality of life (health, spiritual, social and emotional wellness)

Priorities are interconnected, all impacting quality of life of the residents of Wards 1 and 2 as well as greater Lufkin. Quality of life for the purpose of the appreciative inquiry refers to the well-being of individuals and families, specifically within the context of their community. Neighborhood conditions have lasting impact on the trajectory of community members (Jutte, Miller, & Erickson, 2015). Several factors impact quality of life. Quality of life for individuals and families is impacted by concrete issues such as community safety, job availability, cost of living and access to resources including health care. In addition, quality of life can be impacted by community members' perceptions specific to religious/spiritual well-being, economic well-being/stability, social and emotional wellness and overall health including behavioral health.



Figure 16: Children's Art "A beautiful sunset"

Quality of life is holistic in nature – the impact on one aspect of a person's life, impacts all. Quality of life of an individual is influenced by larger systems, such as infrastructure in the community.

For example – a family does not have dependable transportation; the children have to walk to school in an unsafe environment. This can affect academic performance and social relationships.

"A tranquil and peaceful environment"
(Participant interview.)



Figure 17: North Lufkin Scenery

Residents feel that they experience good quality of life due to the rural nature of the area. Residents also feel that job stability enhances quality of life. However, factors such as accessibility to child care impacts parent's ability to work. Residents and partner agencies identified the need to expand current day care facilities including a 24-hour nursery and daycare for working mothers. There is a need to raise awareness of existing child care facilities. Residents are of the opinion that quality of life can improve by establishing more resources in the community and accessibility to services. Some residents are of the opinion that even though they are

experiencing economic hardships the cost of living is a positive aspect keeping them in the area.

Specific programs to enrich families were identified by residents. Family empowerment programs were highlighted: *"We need specific programs for families to enjoy and relax and visit with each other, not mandated... but carve out time to strengthening, biggest problem is that people are working."* (Resident interview). *"Parenting classes are needed because successful parents learn from others."* (Focus group, participant).

As indicated in the discussion about strengths, churches play an important role in the community and the well-being of individuals and families. Residents reported that churches can influence change in a positive way through collaboration. *"Need for churches to come together and show unity."* (Pastor, clergy focus group).

Church members and ministers are involved in “*upgrading the standards of life.*” (Pastor, clergy focus group). Data collected from focus groups, community conversations and key informant interviews indicate that residents feel it is important to them to belong to a church and to be actively involved in church activities. There are more than 30 churches in Wards 1 and 2. The strong leadership provided by clergy is one of the most important strengths evident in the data. “*Church is a strength in the community. One way we can leverage that strength is coming together with a common cause and it is under used.*” (Pastor, clergy focus group). “*Encourage membership at churches.*” (Key informant).

Health needs of elderly citizens were highlighted by partner agencies and focus groups with senior citizens. The delivery of medicine/prescriptions to residents and availability of services to the elderly were most important.



Figure 18: Peaceful Environment

Table 28 provides information concerning resident's perceptions of possible problems in the community. This data clearly indicates that typical community problems such as burglaries, gangs, violence, homelessness and vandalism are not problematic in the wards. The only problem that received a rating as a problematic issue is *drug dealers*. Of the 546 survey participants, 39.71 % responded that they perceive drug dealers as a problem, 37.65% do not perceive it as a problem and 22.63% do not know.

Table 28: Perceptions of problems in Wards 1 and 2

Problems	Yes	No	Do Not Know
Burglaries	(166) 34.51%	(219) 45.53%	(96) 19.96%
Drug Dealers	(193) 39.71%	(183) 37.65%	(110) 22.63%
Drug Manufacturing	(128) 26.39%	(199) 41.03%	(158) 32.58%
Elder Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation	(57) 11.85%	(251) 52.18%	(173) 35.97%
Family Violence	(111) 22.84%	(238) 48.97%	(137) 28.19%
Gangs	(109) 22.29%	(241) 49.28%	(139) 28.43%
Homelessness	(150) 30.80%	(223) 45.79%	(114) 23.41%
English Comprehension	(142) 31.84%	(224) 50.22%	(80) 17.94%
Spanish Comprehension	(117) 26.00%	(251) 55.78%	(82) 18.22%
Physical Assault	(108) 22.69%	(242) 50.84%	(126) 26.47%
Recreation Drug use	(142) 30.02%	(210) 44.40%	(121) 25.58%
Vandalism	(141) 29.56%	(238) 49.90%	(98) 20.55%

N= 546

Source: Stephen F. Austin State University and Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development. (2017). *Impact Lufkin Survey*

7.5.10 Specialized services

Residents emphasized a need for specialized services for people with disabilities, elderly residents, veterans, substance abuse and documented and undocumented immigrants).

The following specialized services were identified by partner agencies, service providers and residents. It is important to note that many of these services exist, however, residents feel there is a need for increased services located in Wards 1 and 2.

Oliphant, E and Avant, F. L. (2017). *Appreciative Inquiry Wards 1 and 2, Lufkin, Texas Report*. Stephen F. Austin State University School of Social Work, Center for Rural Social Work Research and Development.

- Adult protective services (APS);
- Community-based counseling services;
- Immigration support and education including legal assistance;
- Veterans services such as support groups;
- Homeless resident support;
- Assistance for the elderly residents – including a multipurpose building for senior citizen activities;
- Assistance for people with disabilities;
- Family services including prevention and counseling;
- Parental support;
- Support to children who are experiencing behavioral and educational challenges.

A desire to build a youth rehabilitation center was identified by residents. This is important for those struggling with a variety of needs. *“If the community can invest in places for [troubled] youth and offer services locally where families can be involved, it will benefit the youth and help outcomes for success.”* (Key informant, interview).

For the purpose of this report, the need for services to the elderly, veterans, immigrants, people with disabilities, people who are homeless and individuals/families experiencing substance abuse is highlighted. In the case of homelessness, it is not considered a problem in Wards 1 and 2, but residents are concerned about the homeless population in Lufkin and are positive about assisting this population.

Elderly

Residents emphasized the importance of taking care of senior citizens in the community. *“I want the seniors to be able to come outside and sit on their porch and enjoy life.”* (Focus group participant). Senior residents often face challenges including medical conditions, financial needs and difficulties with housing as well as limited access to care. Elderly residents often find themselves isolated from the rest of the community. One elderly resident mentioned: *“I do not have any family here, my neighbors are my family. I have to ask people to take me to places like the grocery store. My neighbors do not always have the time to take me.”* Another elderly resident living in an apartment complex said: *“The church helps me...they have a van that comes and picks me up to take me to church.”* Senior residents emphasize the importance of the church in providing support. Residents mention church members who volunteer to take them to the pharmacy and grocery store.

A service provider is of the opinion that: *“there are services available, but that they do not always reach all the elderly individuals who are in need of care.”* There is a need for more services including *Meals on Wheels* and additional pharmacy delivery services. Data suggests that community members look after the elderly residents. *“A need is identified*

to assist senior residents and their families with information on elderly-advanced directives, power of attorney and asset protection.” (Focus group participants).

Residents voiced the desire for more services for their elder population. This includes inviting more service organizations such as Meals on Wheels, which provide nutrition to elderly residents, to Wards 1 and 2. Key informants and focus group participants mentioned that elderly residents experience challenges with housing. They specifically identified the need for temporary housing for them during the housing renovation process.

Immigration

Community conversation café participants highlighted the importance of immigration assistance to documented and undocumented immigrants. One participant said: *“Es importante que haya ayuda con la inmigración. La gente necesita ayuda completando los documentos. [It’s important for there to be assistance with immigration. People need help with the paperwork].”*

They specifically need help with the immigration process, including completion of documentation and filing of applications. In general, there is also a need to raise awareness about immigration requirements, including sharing correct information. Service agencies and providers are concerned that young children, who are proficient in English, are trying to assist parents and other family members with legal matters. *“It puts responsibility on a minor and sets the stage for incorrect information to be conveyed and misunderstanding of important documents.”* (Interview, resident assisting with immigration).

Residents voiced the need for training on immigration – for people who are interested in filing for resident status as well as volunteers to assist with the process. Residents mentioned that an immigration assistance program should be available at the proposed neighborhood center. Hispanic residents participating in a community conversation café identified immigration as the top priority to be addressed.

There is a need to assist community members who are not documented. It is evident from focus group and conversation café data that undocumented community members experience many challenges. A provider said: *“I schedule surgeries through a surgeon’s office and I notice that there is not a lot of help for people who have no social security number. A lot of time... they have to come up with the money to pay half up front or sometimes all and that can get very expensive. Not to mention the fact that it is not the full cost because they have to have money for the hospital as well. If there was help for patients who could go and get help with financial aid for surgery.”*

Partner agencies and key informants identified the importance of developing strategies to support community members who are not documented.

Substance abuse

Residents are concerned that substance abuse is a problem affecting their community and influencing youth. The discussion on substance abuse refers to prevention and education/awareness, treatment and services to address substance abuse.

Residents are of the opinion that substance abuse is problematic in Wards 1 and 2 but information about it is limited. Community members are frustrated that they are not able to help individuals who are involved in substance abuse. Several residents voiced concerns for the youth and families in general. Residents feel that the community should address the substance abuse problems. *“Landlords should be more responsible for there are people selling drugs and things like that in some of the houses that are neglected.”* (Focus group participant).

Services are available to residents to prevent and treat substance abuse. Residents mentioned that people should be aware of drug dealing in their specific neighborhoods. A service provider warned that marijuana is a gateway drug available on the streets of Lufkin. *“We as a community will make marijuana a normal behavior, inviting youth to marijuana...and move on to a stronger drugs.”*

Agencies including Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council of Deep East Texas (ADAC) and the Coalition provide services in Wards 1 and 2, although their offices are outside of the wards. *“They have to go out on the other side outside of Wards 1 and 2. There is really no place for a person on drugs anymore. They don’t have counseling to walk in and say I need help, can you help me to get to so and so and so. It’s not a place like that around here. It’s not anything positive to help them do any better.”* (Focus group participant). *“The dope thing is the worst thing ever...I have family members that are on drugs but the danger is there is nowhere you can guide them to, to get them help. I feel I am not being able to help them.”* (Focus group participant).

In terms of prevention and awareness, it is suggested that programs be offered locally and the neighborhood center is considered an ideal venue. The most important target group according to service providers is grades 6 – 8. *“Substance abuse prevention should be a collaborative effort between providers, including the Junior All Star program. Since the program is already successful, it should be expanded. It is necessary to run a community club at a central location. It is important that the community is kept aware of the current trends in substance and drug abuse in the area.”* (Ms. Sharon Kruk, Executive Director, The Coalition). Existing behavioral health services and resources are also available in the community, but residents feel that *“there is a need for more medical assistance to people experiencing substance addiction.”* (Focus group participants).

Service providers are of the opinion that there needs to be collaboration in order to render effective services. Service providers are also of the opinion that they must receive additional resources in order to address the substance abuse problems in Wards 1 and 2. An effective partnership with churches is suggested as a solution to prevent problems.

Veterans

Section is written in collaboration with Mr. Greg Sims and Ms. Lanita Proctor.

Community veterans participated in a focus group and interviews and they provided insightful information. Participants mentioned: *“the adequacy of the healthcare offered to veterans in the area is a concern.”* The main challenge is: *“The distance to the nearest care facility, the time it took to get treatment and some doctors’ refusal to see them due to the length of time it takes to get payment from the government.”* (Focus group participants).

One veteran highlighted the problem by stating: *“Young vets come back needing jobs while older vets are just looking for good healthcare.”* Another veteran said: *“Most veterans aren’t looking for big parades in their honor. They mainly want access to services that they need.”* (Key informant interviews).

The participating veterans conveyed that they have adjusted well to returning to civilian life. Many hold or have held positions of authority and respect with no ill effects from the transition other than difficulty obtaining healthcare services. According to a service provider working with veterans: *“By giving them a voice to discuss topics in a confidential setting, the veterans become empowered to speak out and to seek out resources that might allow them to overcome problems.”*

Table 29: Veterans by gender

Location	Total Population	Males	Females
Angelina County	6,356	5,987	369
City of Lufkin	2,646	2,443	203
Census Tract 5	165	165	0
Census Tract 6	298	288	10
Census Tract 7	96	74	22

Source: American Community Survey 2011 – 2015

In Angelina County there were 6,356 veterans of which 5,987 were males. Census Tract 6 (288) had the largest veteran population, whereas Census Tract 7 (74) had the smallest veteran population. The majority of veterans were identified as male, but it is important to note that 22 female veterans reside in Census Tract 7 and 10 female veterans reside in Census Tract 6.

Homeless people

Section is written in collaboration with Ms. Kristina Irwin

Homelessness is not specifically identified as a problem in Wards 1 and 2. However, residents, churches and agencies would like to assist homeless persons in the city. Specific agencies already provide services to the homeless population in Lufkin and residents and partner agencies verbalized the importance of addressing the issue in a sustainable way. The services should include “*feeding the homeless*” and “*a shelter for persons without housing.*” (Service provider, interview). “*There is a need for a shelter other than GODTEL and Salvation Army. The need is bigger than we think.*” (Validation team member, resident). It is assumed that the problem is underreported. Validation team members and residents reported that they have seen homeless individuals on Kurth drive.

Existing data provides insight on current homeless population in Angelina County. There is not specific data on Wards 1 and 2. Texas Homeless Network indicates that 33 adults and 39 children were homeless in January 2017. Of this identified group, 87.9% of the people were between 18-65 years old. The majority of the homeless population was African American (54%) and Caucasian (36%). Interestingly, only 63.6% of homeless people in Angelina County (as reported in 2017) had experienced homelessness for the first time within the past 3 years. While only 30% had a reoccurrence of their second or third time within the last three years and 6.1% experience homeless continuously (Texas Homeless Network, 2017). According to a service provider, twenty-three families did not meet the formal definitions of homelessness according to HUD; however, these families did not live in or have their own home. These families are living with other families, as they are currently unable to provide for themselves. Families living with other family members are considered homeless by definition of the McKinney-Vento Act.

People with disabilities

Section written in collaboration with Ms. Stephanie Hutchinson.

Participants with disabilities reported that transportation and accessibility to services are the two major challenges they face. Although support services exist in Lufkin, “*it is not always easy to find transportation.*” (Key informant interview). Residents who are experiencing disabilities reported that they would like to actively participate in events. According to one participant, all buildings and events are not always wheel-chair accessible, which makes it difficult for her to participate in activities such as bowling. She expressed the need for people with disabilities to be part of the activities and to feel included in the community.

Transportation is linked to all activities including recreational activities, contact with family, visiting and connecting with others. In general, the quality of life of a person with disabilities is impacted by their access to the community.

There are approximately 15,925 (8.6%) residents in Angelina County with a disability. Approximately 47.9% are age 65 and over. Census Tract 5 (30.7%) had the highest percentage of individuals with a disability of which 61.6% are individuals age 65 and over. Census Tract 5 (18.9%) and Census Tract 7 (10.7%) had the highest percentages of children below age 18 with a disability.

The census data emphasized the need for specialized services and support for people with disabilities. It is important to provide community based services, such as home health and meals on wheels, in the homes of people with disabilities.

A resident mentioned: *“Disabilities resources need to be available through “at home” counselors who could explain home health.”* A validation team member mentioned: *“There needs to be a medium or forum for people who are disabled, to voice their concerns. We use to have a committee who worked on this, not sure if it still exists.”*

7.5.11 Recreation

Residents are positive about the recreation opportunities in Wards 1 and 2. Of the 549, survey participants most feel that recreation opportunities and services in Wards 1 and 2 are good (33.27%) and fair (24.16%). 15.48% feel that it is excellent, while 17.23% feel it is poor and 9.90% do not know. (N= 522).

Lufkin’s parks system has six parks specifically located in Wards 1 and 2. (See Figure 19). The parks are recreation areas and used for social events, meetings and public holiday gatherings. Residents mentioned the importance of the parks, which are accessible and have resources. Residents consider the parks as strengths in Wards 1 and 2. A challenge with on-duty lifeguards at the Jones Park swimming pool was identified early on during the appreciative inquiry. However, this issue has been addressed.

There is a need to sustain the services of lifeguards at the pool. *“Pay lifeguards more than hourly wage. There is still a need for showers and for a place children can find shelter when it rains. There needs to be a building with lockers, showers – like a bath house. The park use to have it but it was torn down.”* (Validation team member, key informant). A need for beautification of parks and maintaining safe swimming pools has been identified by validation team members. Residents are proud of the parks and enjoy fishing, picnicking, hiking and recreation. The following parks are located in Wards 1 and 2:

Jones Park - Picnic area; swimming pool; fish pond; tennis court; basketball court; pavilions; children sprinkler; restroom and trail;

Brandon Park - Swing sets; gazebo; community building and basketball court;

Winston Park - playground; pavilion; picnic area; restroom; tennis court; basketball court; volleyball court and trail;

Lufkin Land Park - small playground;

Kit McConnico Park - baseball field, concession stand and bathrooms and soccer fields;

Betsy Gamble Park - Gym set for children only.

The Ellen Trout Zoo also features a public park with a pavilion, picnic area, playground, restroom, train & depot, lake/fishing, zoo and nature trail.

The parks are not necessarily easily accessible to all residents through walkable sidewalks and safe roads for bicycles. Safe sidewalks are extremely important to access recreation areas. Residents were of the opinion that it is not safe for their children to walk/use their bicycles to access the parks. They have to walk or ride bicycles in the streets, resulting in dangerous situations. *“Our children cannot use their bicycles to go to the parks if there are not safe sidewalks... that means they have to be in the middle of the roads or on the big streets like Kurth...”* (Community conversation café participant).

Young residents under the age of 18 provided most of the responses related to recreation. Residents, specifically youth and children under the age of 18, identified the importance of having recreation areas in Wards 1 and 2. One of the residents captured the need – *“Parks need to be safe places*

where children can play and relax. A place where children can go for entertainment.” (Interview participant).

Children identified the need for entertainment, sports and opportunities to develop hobbies. Residents reported the need to have these activities located within Wards 1 and 2 and they feel that young people should not need to go outside of the wards for entertainment. Many of the entertainment and recreation activities suggested by the participants, also creates business opportunities for residents.

One youth participant said: *“I think that there should be more activities within our community, there are not many forms of entertainment for teens and I would like to change that, I’ve drawn some activities that I enjoy doing and I feel others in our community would enjoy doing as well.”* (Youth participant, drawings).

There is an interest in developing a soccer field which is centrally located. Several parents indicated that a soccer field will be a valuable asset, in addition to the existing basketball courts. *“A soccer field will bring the community together. It is much needed, our children enjoy soccer.”* (Participant, community conversation café). There are soccer fields at Kit McConnico Park but it may not be accessible to the majority of residents of the two wards. One young person, participating in the children’s appreciative inquiry said *“A new soccer field would be a major upgrade because people are tired of playing in dirt, the field should have a fence so people won’t mess it up and lights for nighttime playing.”* Another participants said: *“A soccer field in the city is needed with well taken care of field and lights, the field should be grass not dirt, as we already have and the lights should turn on for night time playing and caged to protect. To cover cost of the field, the city should charge [players] per hour.”* (Youth participants, children and youth art inquiry). The soccer field will be a place where the residents can do more than play soccer.



Figure 20: Children art dream of a soccer field

Residents are of the opinion that they can meet together as a community, enjoy family time and build a sense of community. Young residents also voiced a need for other types of recreation including zip lining, a go-cart track and a paintball center. Young people mentioned a need for adventure sports for children to learn skills such as hand-eye coordination, target prioritization, ammo management (*local battles and gaming center*), decision-making, discipline, work ethic, respect for nature and people, team work, resilience and survival. *“I feel that having a place to go zip lining would bring a sense of adventure and excitement within our community. I feel that is something that Lufkin is lacking in and this could change that.”* (Participant, children’s art inquiry). Children

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expressed to include families in the activities. *“Kids need to have something to do and places to go.”* (Key informant interview).

7.5.12 Youth development

Effective youth development programs can support children towards becoming responsible adults. Residents shared that they are involved in community revitalization for the youth and leaders of the future. As with adults, youth can become involved in the revitalization process through participatory action. Residents are of the opinion that there is a need for more youth development programs in Wards 1 and 2.

“A go-kart track for youth and adults to enjoy”
(Youth participant).



Figure 21: Children's art ask for a place for adults and children to be together

restaurants close at 8pm in Lufkin as well - leaving not much to do for the young people.”

A service provider said *“...get African Americans and Hispanic organizations involved. Boys and girls clubs are already doing a great job – more children should be part of an organization.”*

According to a pastor: *“Many men and women of distinction are trying to mentor youth, but the youth of this generation are not always taking advantage of these opportunities the older residents are trying to provide.”*

According to a focus group participant: *“[There are] not many opportunities or social activities for the youth. Activities (entertainment) for socialization that was once in Lufkin are now gone.”* A key informant, age 60 said: *“[The] Movie theatre closes at 7:00pm or 8:00pm (Sun-Thurs), On Friday and Saturday night last showing is 11pm. Many*

“Having a paintball center for the youth and adults to participate in” (Youth participant)



Figure 22: Children's art express the need for fun activities

It is evident from the conversations with residents and agencies that any issues related to the youth should be dealt with in a systemic way. Challenges are not isolated, but rather contextual. A child or young person is part of a family of a community and a larger society.

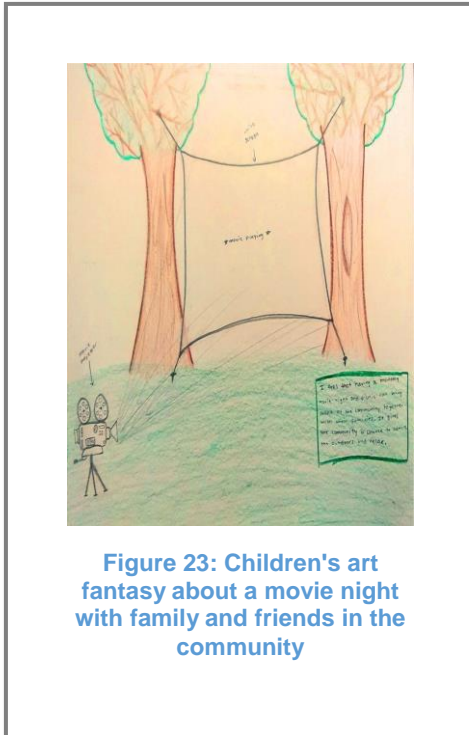


Figure 23: Children's art fantasy about a movie night with family and friends in the community

“Address the problems with youth as a systemic issue – keeping children busy – education, resources and activities. Youth development money should go towards instructors empowering children. What the youth need is a “sense of belonging” – feeling something bigger than yourself. There are multiple avenues to create this sense of belonging - identify with family, but families need back-up - church, school, community organization, teams...” (Executive director, agency working with youth).

Residents are of the opinion that youth programs should address physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being of children and youth. For example, Mr. Joe Morales, Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in private practice, mentioned a program, which can serve food to 100 children in Lufkin during the summer. The program received 800 applications, leaving 700 children in need of food. This indicates the importance of addressing needs in a holistic manner.

Current youth development programs are offered by the churches in Wards 1 and 2 as well as greater Lufkin. These youth development programs are aimed to prepare youth for the future. *“Churches continue to be a strength, but more outreach and advertisement and communication are needed to try to reach different groups. You have to “target” those groups and areas. Individuals must have the tools...dress the part, to do the job.”* (Key informant, mentoring youth). *“Each church has their different youth programs, once again leveraging the ability to come together and team up in a project and come together.”* (Key informant, interview).

From the appreciative inquiry with the youth it is evident that they have a need to be part of the community and to feel the sense of belonging, as cited earlier.

Survey responses about youth development programs vary. Participants indicated that 25.79% perceive it as good, 13.19% as excellent, 24.02% as poor, 16.93% as fair and 20.08% of the respondents do not know.

Effective youth development programs are considered as positive and empowering. There is also a need to focus youth development programs on all youth including those

from low income families. *“More things for our kids to get involved in - positive things to keep them out of trouble.”* (Participant interview).

Young residents voiced the need to engage in activities with their families and the community.

This has the potential to create a healthy family life. A young participant said: *“I feel that having a monthly movie night and picnic can bring people of the community together with their families. It gives the community a chance to admire the outdoors and relax.”*

Residents and agency partners have specific ideas about what kind of youth development programs should be offered. The following list is based on resident and service provider feedback:

- Job preparation and training programs for youth;
- Mentorship programs for youth (several already exist in Ward 1 and 2);
- More activities for youth – recreation and education;
- Programs on how to advocate for youth;
- Specific activities for youth from low income families;
- It was also mentioned that the youth of North Lufkin need a place where they can learn and advance in productivity, within drug free environments to help end debilitating community and family dynamics.

“We need unstructured but safe place for young people to interact. Kinda like a skate park, it’s well-lit but it’s safe.” (Validation team member).

There are several after care programs for children in Wards 1 and 2. Abundant Life, Boys and Girls Club, Pam McLain at Pinewood Apartments, JD Center of Hope and Maintain the Knowledge are some examples.

7.5.13 Health

Section written in collaboration with Ms. Lenola Wyatt

Although health does not feature as an emerging theme in the data, there are alarming statistics available about Angelina County. It is not possible to isolate statistics specific to Wards 1 and 2. It is assumed that residents consider health a confidential issue and were therefore not confident to speak about it in the focus groups and interviews. In general, service providers, partner agencies and community leaders are concerned about health.

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings, Angelina County ranked 193 out of 243 counties in the state of Texas in regards to health outcomes. Areas to explore were quality of life (ranked 209) and health behaviors (ranked 243). In Angelina County, 22% of residents rated their health “fair” or “poor” as compared to the state (19%). Residents also reported experiencing 3.9 poor mental health days as compared to the state report of 3.2 poor mental health days. Approximately 20% of adults

reported smoking as compared to the state rate of 15%. An estimated 38% of adults self-reported being obese, as compared to the state average of 28%. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of residents in Angelina County reported physical inactivity, which is slightly higher than the state (23%). Having access to exercise opportunities (70%) was much lower in Angelina County than the state average of 84%.

Residents mentioned the importance of programs about healthy living, balanced lifestyles and nutrition. Residents are of the opinion that there is a need for an increased awareness about health and health care. Information on health care policies, home health services, health advocacy, specific health conditions, nutrition and behavioral health were identified by partner agencies as important. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension delivers programs in healthy cooking, creating healthier meals and balancing lifestyles. These programs are available in English and Spanish and are offered in Wards 1 and 2. Texas Department of State Health Services offer programs and training in chronic disease management, living healthier strategies, medical self-management, chronic pain management, diabetes management and a medication class for persons over 55. All these classes are available per request with a minimum of 15 people to attend. Classes can be offered at churches, nursing homes or any other agency. The medication class for persons over 55 can also be offered on an individual basis.

8. Community empowerment suggestions

Community revitalization starts with training residents, leaders and partner agencies. Effective training can prepare all role-players and partners for sustainable revitalization and leads to empowerment. A variety of training needs and additional services were identified by residents, community leaders and partner agencies.

The following table outlines these services and training needs. It provides direct responses from participants in the survey, focus groups, interviews, key informant interviews and conversation cafés. Many of the residents feel that the services or programs should be centralized at a neighborhood center.

Table 30: Training needs and additional services

Support for Children	Youth Development	Programs for Elderly Residents	Family Programs
Early childhood development programs	Program to help youth to excel and be productive	Support programs to enhance quality of life	Family strengthening program
After-school programs	Teen pregnancy support programs	Programs to renovate homes of the elderly	Social skills program
Child care services	Entertainment and activities for youth and young adults	Senior day care programs	Family spending/budget programs
Preparation of adult life		Information on self-care	Parenting skills training
Entertainment for children	Programs to create awareness of substance abuse	Nutrition programs specifically for elderly	Life skills training for families
Recreation activities and programs for children			Nutrition programs for families

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Support for Children	Youth Development	Programs for Elderly Residents	Family Programs
Support groups for children experiencing behavioral problems Programs to enhance pride and a sense of belonging	Programs to create a sense of belonging for example sport programs Mentorship programs for youth Training for youth to become mentors	Recreation activities Health education Treatment adherence	Balancing life training Financial training for families (for example budget development for individuals and families and financial planning for retirement)
Financial Assistance Programs and Services	Training Programs	Education	Behavioral Health Services and Programs
Build a credit union/bank Tax preparation and support program Financial programs that assist individuals with home ownership (especially single mothers) Financial and budget management Effective money management The need for effective job preparation including technical and social skills For example, more computer literacy classes Programs to develop entrepreneurship, job skills and develop effective partnerships	Small business development Job skills development Training to prepare for jobs Computer literacy Immigration information Art classes Music classes Job preparation English classes Spanish classes Workshops to unite the community Training in child care	GED program training Classes for young parents raising their children Training to assist parents with pre- K through HS and college Alternative education opportunities	Prevention of drug and alcohol usage Prostitution prevention STD awareness Social services- case coordinator Support groups Preservation services for young and troubled mothers
Recreational Activities	Business and Economic Development	Health and Nutrition Services	Resources/Services
Open park Indoor stage Outdoor stage Relaxed atmosphere Recreation center	Café (coffee shop) Training for owning businesses Resale shop Business skills development	Nutrition services Health care education Healthy home environment counseling and workshops Medical assistance	Immigration assistance office Computer and technology access center Art and music center Transportation

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Support for Children	Youth Development	Programs for Elderly Residents	Family Programs
Cultural interaction events	Vocational Center	Fitness center	Job placement center
Garden	Vocational training	WIC	Volunteer network
Facilities for community events	Technology advancement	Cooking classes on site with a garden to use	Crime prevention and awareness training

9. Impact Lufkin - program and communities activities

This section is written in collaboration with Ms. Lenola Wyatt.

This appreciative inquiry is the first phase of the community revitalization project. It is suggested that this phase be followed by the planning and implementation phases. In a typical community-driven project, these phases are often implemented at the same time. While we discover more about a community, we also act upon the needs, discover ways to change it and design solutions. Kesler (2013) refers to *simultaneity* - exploring needs while simultaneously addressing these needs. In the case of Impact Lufkin project, the appreciative inquiry involved both assessment and exploration of needs while taking action. An appreciative inquiry includes the elements of discover, dream, design and destiny (action/deploy).

Although the appreciative inquiry explored the needs of the community, it was important to provide support and address the needs at the same time. It was important to build relationships within the community, the City of Lufkin, partner agencies and community residents. These partnerships are important for sustainable change to occur in Wards 1 and 2.

Many exciting opportunities were presented to the Impact Lufkin project during the past year and a half. The North Lufkin community was enthusiastic and excited about all related projects and activities that were made available to them. There were many invitations to attend community events for the staff and volunteers of the Impact Lufkin project and the SFA School of Social Work appreciative inquiry team. Some of the community events in which the team participated were: Gift of Life Gospel Trail Ride, Kit McConnico Easter Egg Hunt, Kelty's United Methodist Family Fun Day, Team EASSE Fun Day at the Park, Resource Fairs, Cinco De Mayo, Juneteenth Parade, Lufkin HS Football Game, J.D. Center of HOPE Community Cookout, local town hall meetings, Fall Festivals, Stronger Economies Together Regional Planning Sessions Veteran's, NAACP, Concerned Black Men, Salvation Army and Angelina Citizen Chamber Banquets. The Lufkin State Assisting Living Center provided a tour of their facility and the Mosaic center provided our team a tour of their facility as well. Team members attended the grand opening at Pinewood Park. Impact Lufkin participated in the CHI St. Luke Listening Sessions as well as the Kurth Memorial Library Community Assessment.

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Impact Lufkin team members attended church services with many of the local African American and Hispanic churches in North Lufkin, as well as St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church on the south side.

The Impact Lufkin project team further participated in the North Lufkin Community clean up, as well as Education Summits that were sponsored by the school district. Team members volunteered to assist with the distribution of hygiene items for the House of Compassion, a local homeless initiative. Our program assisted with the Junior League's Back to School Bonanza, the Dream Center annual Christmas dinner and Brookshire Bro. Christmas Drive. An adult vision screening event, hosted by the Lion's Club, was provided free of charge to local residents. Community members who received these services were very grateful. The Impact Lufkin project provided an event for the SFASU Gen Jack program. The Gen Jack event was well attended by over 50 students. Impact Lufkin also participated in the harvesting of vegetables at the Community Garden of Love in North Lufkin. This was an initiative to bring fresh produce to the community. The collaborative effort between St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church and Abundant Life United Methodist Church proved very effective in bringing community members together for this common purpose. Impact Lufkin project also partnered with the legal community by bringing "A Day with a Lawyer" program for local residents.

In January 2016, a small group of six (6) individuals, including team members, began to meet at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday mornings to discuss issues/topics that were important to the community as well as the research project. These small meetings soon became a platform for residents to express their voices, ideas and announce upcoming events that were important to the community. Also, local social service agencies and organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, city officials, hospitals and other non-profit organizations attended the Thursday partners' meeting to either participate as a learner or supporter, or to present programs to the community. This venue was a productive way to keep the community engaged and abreast of the progress of the project, as well as to learn about available services and programs within Angelina County and the surrounding area. These meetings became very important to raise awareness, develop action strategies, build partnerships, discuss appreciative inquiry tasks and build on the theme of "listening to the voice of the community." It also emphasized the importance of community-driven strategies to create change. Several committees were formed as part of the appreciative inquiry including an art revitalization committee, a neighborhood center committee and an historical committee. These committees will continue to use the results from the appreciative inquiry to guide and frame their work.

In January 2017, the Impact Lufkin project team, along with community members, began a Spanish/English class for those wanting to learn to communicate in Spanish or English. These classes were free and provided by a volunteer community member and a staff member from the T.L.L Temple Foundation. There were approximately 154 people attending over the course of the program, with an average of 15 per session. Other

workshops and seminars provided to the local community were: Female Reproduction Seminar, Sexual Abuse and Awareness, Working with Autistic Children, Medicare Supplement and the Affordable Care Act, Fresh Start to a Healthier You (diabetic awareness), A.R.D. process for Children with Special Needs, Financial Education, Grant Writing Basics and US Census Bureau Data Mining.

Angelina College and SFA interns were provided supervision on basic case management practices. They were able to conduct 17 intakes and assessments in addition to the appreciative inquiry tasks and partnership network building activities. Appropriate referrals were made to the Red Cross, Love Inc., Community Action, Salvation Army, Christian Information Center, House of Compassion and local churches.

Many residents expressed concerns about not having someone to hear their voice pertaining to disability issues. Impact Lufkin assisted with the proposal to re-establish the Mayors Committee of People with Disabilities. Another concern of the community was the possible closing of the Jones Park swimming pool. The Jones Park pool had been closed for about four (4) years and was on the verge of being closed permanently. The community joined together to re-open the swimming pool. This was another successful project resulting from collaboration between Impact Lufkin, the City of Lufkin and the North Lufkin community.

Partners who have offices in the same building as the appreciative inquiry team Women Infant and Children (WIC) program, Workforce Solutions, Angelina Health District, Greater East Texas Community Action program, Neighborhood Strong and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council. Our project was fortunate to have community volunteers. Community members provided approximately 24,443 volunteer hours to the research project.

10. Recommendations

1. The data from the appreciative inquiry should be used to develop effective strategies to address the needs of the community. Using appreciative inquiry enabled the community to better understand its strengths, needs, challenges and assets and develop realistic expectations for change.
2. Priorities and challenges should be addressed using a holistic systems perspective. It implies that change in one part of the community, influences the entire community. For example, creating more recreation opportunities can benefit youth, which further impacts family life leading to enhanced quality of life.
3. Strategies to sustain long-term change should be developed and implemented. Sustainability is created through involving all residents of the community. Resident

involvement is based on transparency, respect and trust. It is essential to the success of the project to develop realistic short-term and long-term goals. These goals should be continuously communicated to all stakeholders.

4. A shared vision is the first step to sustainable community change. Objectives, strategies, action plans and outcomes should be in line with the shared vision. It is created through ongoing communication and shared decision-making. In order for the vision to be realistic, all stakeholders should take ownership of it.
5. Revitalization efforts should be multi-level and must focus on social, economic and environmental change. Again, long-term goals and outcomes should drive sustainable efforts.
6. The City of Lufkin is currently developing a strategic plan which addresses some of the priorities described in this appreciative inquiry. It is suggested that the community residents partner with the city. The residents will benefit from partnering with many existing agencies, which are already addressing some of the priorities and challenges mentioned in this study.
7. To achieve collective impact, the need for a backbone organization should be addressed. In order to bring about sustainable change, structure should be in place. A backbone organization can initiate and maintain the change strategies. It can either be newly established or an appropriate existing agency can assume the role.
8. A comprehensive participatory action network should be established to assist the backbone organization and move the community-driven project forward. The network should include specific working committees including a participatory action team, action groups and a community partnership network.
 - a. A *participatory action team* is a team that will oversee the project, including residents and representatives from the community, local resources and funders;
 - b. *Action groups* are small work groups focusing on priority areas as identified in the appreciative inquiry. These are work/action/advocacy groups, consisting of community residents and other stakeholders who can influence change. Community residents are selected as leaders of the action groups;
 - c. A community partnership network consists of community residents, students, agencies, community resource partners and businesses who can take action to bring about change. This network has a strong focus on services, business development and other resources development.
 - d. Strategies to sustain long term change should be developed and implemented by the *participatory action network for short and long term success*. Sustainability is created through involving all residents of the community. Again, resident involvement is based on transparency, respect

and trust. It is essential to the success of the project to develop realistic short-term and long-term goals. These goals should be communicated to all stakeholders.

9. Leadership development training and support networks should be developed and implemented to build on and enhance current knowledge and skills.
10. General broad outcomes should include/be based on but not be limited to:
 - a. Addressing education goals in partnership with Lufkin Independent School District and partner agencies by improving student outcomes, decreasing high school and college dropout rates, increasing financial support through scholarships and individual sponsorships;
 - b. Addressing health conditions and health care services. Medical services and dental care should be made available and accessible to residents by increasing availability in Wards 1 and 2. Existing services should be strengthened to meet the needs of the residents;
 - c. Addressing transportation challenges by developing business and entrepreneurship opportunities to bring private transport to Wards 1 and 2, partner with local transport authorities to enhance services and provide better infra-structure at existing bus stops;
 - d. Addressing sustainable economic development including current business expansion and establishing new businesses in Wards 1 and 2 is necessary. Since this is a long-term goal, strategies should be put in place to communicate to residents how business development in the city and county can impact Wards 1 and 2. The strategies should include research on feasibility of a business incubator to be explored for Wards 1 and 2;
 - e. Addressing community safety and law enforcement by building on positive relationships with the Lufkin Police Department and increasing civic awareness through neighborhood associations;
 - f. Addressing accessibility of services in Wards 1 and 2 through increased services located in the wards. The need for resources located within Wards 1 and 2 should be addressed. It is important to invite agencies and businesses to the community. In order to effectively address problems (for example health, behavioral health and socio-economic problems) agencies should considered having an office in the community. The presence of agencies and service providers in Wards 1 and 2 will increase the possibility of reporting problems and needs. Even though there is a need to invite new resources to Wards 1 and 2, it is important to strengthen existing resources within the community. Strategies to strengthen include but are not limited to funding support, training, volunteer support and empowerment;
 - g. Addressing housing needs by demolishing uninhabitable houses, renovating existing houses in need of renovation and partnering with existing agencies to revitalize the neighborhoods through new construction and development of affordable housing and home ownership;

- h. Addressing infra-structure by communicating infra-structure challenges such as side-walks, street lights and inadequate bus stops to stakeholders and city officials. Adequate infrastructure specific to safety of roads, sidewalks and working streetlights should be strengthened. It is important to acknowledge the importance of working with the city to address any issues related to infrastructure.
- 11. Develop a strategic plan based on a sustainable change model. The ideal model reflects integration between the principles of community-driven change, participatory action and collective impact. A hybrid model should be developed by stakeholders. Several priorities as cited in this report should be discussed and data disseminated by stakeholders. In order for the strategic plan to be effective, realistic base-line measures should be formulated and processes and programs should be evaluated.
- 12. In order for Impact Lufkin to effectively function as a sustainable community-driven project, all stakeholders should be involved in participatory action. Principles of participatory action include trust, respect, community ownership, inclusiveness, transparency and shared decision-making.
- 13. It is important for all stakeholders to collaborate and develop an effective partnership with the community. These partnerships are important in addressing specific social and community priorities. The Thursday morning partner's meetings held at the 105 Lofton office is a valuable resource to continue effective partnerships and networking opportunities.
- 14. An information hub to continue raising awareness of the existing resources in the two wards, city and county should be created. Information on available resources in the form of a resource guide can be beneficial. The resource guide should be distributed to residents, community, county and city leaders, churches, businesses, schools, medical centers and agencies delivering services. Social media such as webpages live streaming of meetings and events and Facebook™ can be used to provide information to all stakeholders. Angelina College and Stephen F. Austin State University can also house an office/information booth at the information hub site.
- 15. The prevalence and in-depth nature of socio-economic problems in Wards 1 and 2 should be studied. These problems include but are not limited to socio-economic challenges, substance abuse, domestic violence, post-traumatic stress experiences by veterans and challenges for people with disabilities.
- 16. The need for empowerment must start with individuals and families. Effective programs to address individual needs should include job skills development, parenting and family skills development. It is important to develop programs unique to the rural realities and demographics of families.

17. It is important to continue positive relationships with first responders, including police officers and ambulance personnel.
18. In order to make significant progress with the Impact Lufkin project, it is recommended that the project team utilize existing resources. These resources include Angelina College, Stephen F. Austin State University, local consultants, experts and local agency partners and businesses.
19. There is a definite need for sustainable funding. It is recommended that a partnership network be developed to strengthen efforts for grant applications and service development. The partnership network should include agencies and institutions with resources. It is important to include county residents who will take ownership of sustainable change. Grant writing and funds development training is recommended for those who wish to participate in the partnership network committee efforts to obtain and sustain funding.
20. When addressing socio-economic problems it is important to focus on the person as a whole rather than a single aspect of his/her functioning. In order to effectively develop services, agencies and service providers need to work together as a team. This can positively impact the success rate of services.
21. All services should be accessible to residents who do not speak English. Spanish speaking volunteers can continue to participate in making services accessible.
22. There is a need for a larger volunteer network. Many Wards 1 and 2 residents volunteer their time, talent and services. This volunteer network needs support to continue its work. Current volunteers are committed to community change. Information about volunteer services should be developed and made readily available to county residents. It is recommended that an official volunteer partnership network be created, led by community residents.
23. A central location for services is recommended. It will enhance accessibility to services. It will also create easier collaboration between service providers. Such a model will enable service providers to effectively refer residents without the need for additional transportation.
24. Residents should work with all stakeholders to create opportunities for young individuals and families to increase homeownership within the wards and relocate back to the community.
25. Stakeholders should work together to determine the feasibility of a neighborhood center located within the boundaries of Wards 1 and 2. When planning the neighborhood center, it is important to address questions related to sustainability, community needs, capacity building, program development and asset leveraging.

26. Residents should partner with stakeholders to continue preservation of the history of Wards 1 and 2. The current history committee developed the narrative of the history and can further preserve history through cemetery preservation actions, coordinated digitization of rare materials and interpretative projects.
27. Further research specific to infrastructure, economic development and utilization of resources should be conducted. The following types of studies are recommended:
- a. A walkability study to evaluate access of residents walking and cycling through safe side walks;
 - b. A community agency partner network and power analysis to determine strengths and dynamics of partnerships;
 - c. A study to identify and assess the need to the ongoing development of partnerships;
 - d. A service utilization study to determine how residents utilize existing resources in Lufkin;
 - e. Longitudinal analysis of businesses including conversations with business owners and economic developers;
 - f. A systemic analysis of the partnership networks, once established.
28. Appreciative inquiry is an ongoing process and should be part of further phases in the implementation of the project. These phases typically include discovery, define, dream, design and destiny. Ongoing evaluation of the feasibility of sustainable change efforts is important.

11. Conclusion

A positive attitude towards community change clearly exists. Community residents are ready to partner with agencies, external partners, county, city and ward leaders and funders. Residents are willing to take responsibility for change.

The challenges in Wards 1 and 2 are systemic and should be viewed with a holistic lens. For example, limited job opportunities impact financial stability, which again impacts family life.

External and internal resources specific to Wards 1 and 2 should be utilized to build all change efforts. Contextual factors, specifically economic stability of the county and city play an important role in the well-being of residents. Economic development depends on job development, new businesses and entrepreneurship. Change in Wards 1 and 2 is dependent on economic change in the county state and country.

The appreciative inquiry provides evidence of the resident's desire to build a neighborhood center in Wards 1 and 2. The residents feel that a center which house services, recreation areas and training facilities will be beneficial to the community. It is widely considered as a place where families, children and youth can feel they come together as a community.

At the core of the change process is the need for a backbone organization, which can take the lead in sustainable revitalization.

The appreciative inquiry is the beginning of the revitalization process and all stakeholders are encouraged to work toward listening and responding to the voice of the community.

The residents of Wards 1 and 2 are experts of their community. It is evident that there are many strengths, resources and assets, which currently exist. The reasonable challenges can be addressed through teamwork and community ownership. These challenges are similar to those of other rural areas across the nation. Sustainable change can only take place through effective partnerships, patience and commitment of residents, agencies, service providers, funders, positive leadership and ownership of the solutions. One resident summed it up: *"We are connected to something bigger than ourselves."*

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