

The Pottsboro Library Community Collaboration Process

A Case Study Adapting COPEWELL for
Community Resiliency in Pottsboro, Texas



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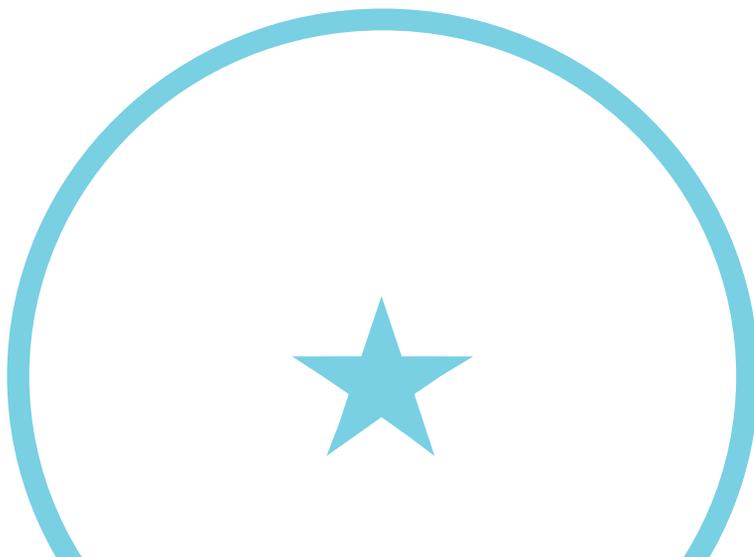
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Executive Summary

Disaster events have increased in frequency in recent years, causing billions of dollars in damage and resulting in “disproportionate physical, social, and economic impacts on vulnerable populations” (NOAA, 2023). Rural communities are particularly vulnerable to hazard events as they tend to have higher rates of people living on low-incomes, disabled people, people living with chronic illnesses, and older adults. Furthermore, they are typically located in geographically and/or socially distant areas from larger cities or resource-rich localities (Horney et al., 2016). Improving planning activities is one critical way to increase rural resiliency to disasters. As such, this pilot research project was designed to adapt a resiliency framework, COPEWELL (the Composite of Post-Event Wellbeing), to prepare libraries and librarians to convene community leaders and members as stakeholders in resiliency planning.

Libraries, especially in rural communities, are often the locus of information access and community resources and can act as a support to emergency response activities (e.g., boosting official disaster communications or acting as an information hub for residents). We proposed that librarians can take a leadership role in resiliency planning to help both community members and emergency responders better resist hazard events (see Eger, Long, Tonciu, Villagran, Schneider, & Treviño, 2023). Our project focused on how librarians can lead resiliency planning through community collaborations with stakeholder groups by using the COPEWELL self-assessment rubric(s) and other community resiliency organizing.

We conducted this research project with two rural libraries in Texas. Library Directors from each location assembled a cohort of stakeholders that represented community interests, local government, nonprofits, healthcare sectors, and emergency management. The stakeholders from each location participated in two 90-minute focus groups, a pre-survey to provide their individual scores on a specific COPEWELL self-assessment rubric, and a confidential exit interview. **Through group communication and community collaboration**, stakeholders examined current community and resiliency strengths and challenges, revisited past hazard events, and assessed their city in one core area of resiliency planning. This allowed stakeholders to create initial goals for future planning and actions. Our research team analyzed transcripts of these data collection events to compile key findings and next steps for each location. Readers can learn more about the pilot process and how to convene their own resiliency community collaborations in our process report entitled, “Libraries as Conveners to Build Community Resiliency in Rural Texas: A Pilot Project Translating the COPEWELL Framework Through Community Collaboration” (Eger et al., 2023).

Our objectives for this case study were to:

- Provide the Pottsboro Library Director and pilot stakeholders with **a detailed report of their process**, including the outcomes, next steps, and future resiliency planning needs identified in their community collaboration activities.
- Disseminate the pilot project process for residents of Pottsboro and surrounding communities who did not participate in the project and who would like to collaborate and/or implement future resiliency planning from this report.
- Position the Pottsboro Library Director to convene and lead future community resiliency planning activities.
- Visualize a unique, local case study of a community collaboration adaptation of COPEWELL for other Texas librarians and libraries who seek to conduct their own COPEWELL project.
- Present a detailed case study that can be

adapted by other local community resiliency practitioners (e.g., county-level emergency management) and community members for their resiliency and emergency management planning and response activities.

This case study report details project activities in Pottsboro, Texas; please see our companion report to read about project activities in Gladewater, Texas (Long, Eger, & Tonciu, 2023). Here, we condense highlighted findings and share salient next steps for Pottsboro stakeholders that arose from their focus group discussions.

Highlighted Findings

Pottsboro is a rural town in northeast Texas that sits just south of Lake Texoma and the Texas-Oklahoma border. A unique feature of Pottsboro is its proximity to the lake and its impact on the overall community. Stakeholders loved its relaxing, “laid-back sense of calmness” and natural beauty, and these features also bring an influx of visitors during summer months.

Pottsboro stakeholders shared challenges with growth (which exacerbates income gaps) and aging and absent infrastructure. Participants shared six central resiliency challenges: (1) transportation, (2) healthcare, (3) affordable housing, (4) broadband, (5) workforce, and (6) disaster events, and their interconnections. After our research team presented the COPEWELL framework, **the Pottsboro stakeholders selected the Community Functioning rubric** as their focal point.

Despite the expressed challenges, stakeholders also communicated hope in their creative library, new city government leadership, engaged nonprofit leaders, and active residents who are passionate about their town. Stakeholders also universally hoped to continue participating in this community collaboration at the completion of the project and championed the Pottsboro Library and the Library Director as well-positioned to be conveners for future community resiliency planning activities. Despite their trust in the Library Director, stakeholders commented on collaboration sustainability challenges with leaders’ time constraints and needing to continue to maintain momentum as a collective. Many stakeholders offered possible suggestions for ensuring the collaboration’s

sustainability, including attending to group composition and identifying the Library Director as a group champion to convene future meetings and hold the group together.

Based on stakeholder responses, our research team identified the following **broad action items for the Pottsboro stakeholders** to pursue in their next steps of planning:

- **Reconvene the current collaboration group** to finalize lingering discussions on identified challenges and solidify initial future action steps.
- **Improve communication with residents, from both the city and library,** regarding the needs and services of the city, the differences between the city vs. the unincorporated county, and connecting the wider community to the library.

- **Seek and receive future grants and governmental and donor funding** to support needed infrastructure, health, workforce, and resiliency needs in Pottsboro.
- **Sustain the collaboration as a stakeholder group and convene other stakeholders, residents, and organizations for addressing recommendations for Community Functioning needs** in business and workforce development, public and mental health support, affordable and low-income housing, water resources, transportation, broadband access, and more.

This report will detail our project design and methods, provide a description of the community and its resiliency challenges, discuss the role of the Library Director and the library in the community, and elaborate on stakeholders' process feedback and their applied recommendations.



Introduction and Background

This report provides a detailed case study of a pilot research project adapting a resiliency framework through hosting virtual community collaborations in two rural northeast Texas towns.

Our project explores how libraries and librarians could become future conveners for their community's resiliency planning needs in rural Texas areas.



At least 71 rural Texas communities do not have a hospital and, therefore, lack a physical location to serve as a hub for local emergencies (Falconnier & Hecht, 2022). As a result, the ability to plan for public health emergencies and natural disasters in these communities is especially urgent and challenging. This project grew from a vision from the Executive Director of the Translational Health Research Center (THRC) at Texas State University, Dr. Melinda Villagran, of librarians as community leaders who possess the information, resources, and expertise needed to build capacity for community resiliency, and libraries to serve as hubs for community collaborations for resiliency planning and action.

Past research has investigated how libraries can serve a crucial role in **supporting emergency response efforts**, including serving as an information hub, command center for aid organizations, or as a historical repository documenting and addressing scars left by crises (Alajmi, 2016; Bishop & Veil, 2013; Brobst et al., 2012). Emergent research is investigating how libraries from rural coastal areas in Florida and Texas navigate disaster preparedness and information technology responses (see Mardis, Strover, & Jones, 2020).

To explore the role that librarians could play in community resiliency planning in Texas, we designed a pilot project that combined a Communication Studies framework for community collaboration with COPEWELL (the Composite of Post-Event Well-Being). COPEWELL is an evidence-based model for resiliency planning developed by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and the University of Delaware and funded by the CDC to help communities identify and shore-up gaps in community resiliency across the lifespan of a hazard or disaster event (COPEWELL, 2022a). Collaboration focuses on how group interactions utilize

“stakeholder differences to come up with creative and innovative ideas and solutions” (Heath & Isbell, 2017, p. 20) and investigates how stakeholders represent their organizations and work together in groups to support their communities (see Heath & Frey, 2004) through dialogue and participatory decision-making.

We sought to partner with local librarians to convene community collaborations to translate COPEWELL to rural Texas communities. The pilot project **positioned librarians as local leaders to help identify and convene community members for two focus groups** and subsequent exit interviews that would initiate and/or build on current resiliency planning in rural areas of Texas.

Through our partnership with the **Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)**, we worked with Maria Freed to identify interested librarians to participate in the pilot project. We recommend readers engage our full process report entitled “Libraries as Conveners to Build Community Resiliency in Rural Texas: A Pilot Project Translating the COPEWELL Framework Through Community Collaboration” for an in-depth examination and analysis of our overall community collaboration and COPEWELL adaptation process (Eger et al., 2023).

Through this research, the research team selected two pilot site locations, and this report specifically presents a case study of the community collaboration in Pottsboro, Texas, where we partnered with the local Library Director as a convener of stakeholders from diverse leadership and community roles.

For the case study for Gladewater, Texas, and the Lee-Bardwell Library, please read the Gladewater site report (Long et al., 2023). We now briefly summarize our pilot process design before introducing the Pottsboro collaboration.

Our Pilot Process Design Overview



Photo Credit: Hannah Ridings

In organizing a community collaboration, the meaningful selection of stakeholders is integral to creating a process that includes a wide range of perspectives, expertise, and needs (Heath, 2007). For more information about our research design, please see our COPEWELL Pilot Process Report (Eger et al., 2023). Here, we briefly overview how the Pottsville Library Director and stakeholders participated in the pilot project.

After the Pottsville Library was selected for this pilot project, the research team worked closely with the Library Director to develop a list of participants for this study. To prepare for this discussion, we asked the Library Director to read the information on collaboration and COPEWELL to prepare her to support community resiliency planning activities (Eger, 2017; Heath & Isbell, 2017; COPEWELL, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d). We focused on the **principle of requisite diversity**, which invites multiple voices, positions, and differences in community collaborations to create the best, most inclusive, and innovative potential solutions (Heath & Isbell, 2017).

We then asked the Library Director to brainstorm up to 12 potential stakeholders that we could discuss together and think about the different “hats” they wear in the community, different life experiences and identities they could bring to conversations, and divergent viewpoints they might offer to enrich the conversation.

Because the project focused on resiliency and preparedness for future disaster events or public health emergencies, we also asked for the Library Director’s stakeholder list to consider community leaders and/or community members with interest in community resiliency, such as participants representing local government, emergency response, education, business, nonprofits, and more.

We worked with the Library Director to review, modify, and extend the participant list. In a second meeting, we considered the collective list and how each stakeholder would contribute multiple experiences, identities, and roles to the community collaboration.

The Library Director then **began the process of convening the group** based on the ideal participants on the list as individual representatives and also as a collective. During recruitment, we encountered individuals who were designated as ideal candidates who did not have an interest or, more often, no current availability to join the project. This allowed the Library Director to move to an alternate on the list and/or reconnect with the research team to discuss further alternates. For example, in Pottsville, the Library Director identified a community member who was a middle-aged woman living on a limited income with children to include perspectives from homeschool parents and people without home internet access, but she was unable to participate due to her work-life schedule. Through the support of the Pottsville Library in partnership with our team, participants were selected for the community collaboration to include: a higher city official, nonprofit leader, community center authority, fire and emergency services provider, internet and public policy provider, youth program coordinator

and community member, and regional governmental official. Not everyone selected had been born in Pottsville, but their continuous dedication to the growth of the city was evident throughout the process.

We provided recruitment language for email or phone communication that described the project, expectations for participation (including the anticipated time commitment), and ended with asking about interest in participating. The Library Director noted which people expressed interest and provided this information to the research team to contact them and gather informed verbal consent for participation per our institution's research ethics protocol. This conversation reiterated project goals and expectations and created a space for potential participants to ask questions about the project. If a participant then consented to the pilot project, they were officially enrolled as a stakeholder in the community collaboration with a pseudonym for confidentiality.

STAKEHOLDERS' PSEUDONYMS

To join the pilot project, stakeholders were provided with an informed consent document that listed, among other items, the project's confidentiality statement. For confidentiality, stakeholders are not named in any reporting of findings, except for the Pottsville Library Director (who requested to be named so that she could more directly share her experiences with the project and who functioned as a hybrid participant and convener).

As part of the confidentiality process, each participant received a Participant ID and a pseudonym (e.g., a fake name). Stakeholders were able to choose a pseudonym of their own or elect for the research team to randomly assign one from a list of named hurricanes.

This report only uses the participant pseudonyms to protect participant confidentiality. Transcripts were further de-identified, substituting business/organization names, professional titles, and the names of other mentioned individuals.



We then **applied our research that translated the COPEWELL model to two rural Texas communities** through their local librarian and library via focus group community collaborations with community leaders and members. Our overall pilot project invited stakeholders at each site to convene together twice for two 90-minute focus groups via Zoom. In the first focus group (FG1), stakeholders engaged in an open dialogue about community challenges and features of Pottsboro to explore the overall community and its resiliency needs. At the conclusion of the collaboration session, the research team presented the COPEWELL framework, and stakeholders then selected a single rubric to work through in the next session. Our second session (FG2) used a pre-survey and a focused version of a COPEWELL-inspired workshop supplemented with our own interview questions. Stakeholders ended the study with an individual, confidential exit interview.

In Pottsboro, we had eight stakeholder participants (including the Library Director). Table 1.1 represents the breakdown of each data collection point.

TABLE 1.1

Pottsboro Participant Count by Data Collection Event

Data Collection Type	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Exit Interview
Number of Participants	7	6	8

One participant could not attend FG1 with a last-minute work conflict, and in FG2, two other participants could not attend for work-life conflicts. All participants completed an exit interview.

We generated transcripts from each focus group and interview to facilitate qualitative coding. First, we developed an initial, deductive codebook based on the lines of questioning across all data collection protocols; this codebook identified primary, overarching coding categories. Then, after a brief review of the transcripts and interviewer notes, we developed a secondary layer of codes for each primary coding category inductively from fieldnotes and memos. The project Co-PI's met to review and discuss these codes and develop pertinent code label definitions as well as inclusion and exclusion criteria. Once the final codebook was developed, we uploaded transcripts to Dedoose (a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software), and the research team coded assigned transcripts. This process generated a series of coded excerpts, which are used in this report as key quotes (see Eger et al., 2023, for more information on the data collection and analysis process). **Please note:** Some quotes used in this report have minor edits for length and clarity.

We now turn to a detailed case study of the Pottsboro Library, the Library Director, and local stakeholders' participation in the community collaboration adapting COPEWELL. To begin, we provide an overview of the Pottsboro community as provided by stakeholders, including a snapshot of the community, a description of community resiliency needs, and the library and Library Director's roles in the community.





The Pottsboro Community

Pottsboro, Texas, is a rural town in northeast Texas that sits just south of Lake Texoma and the Texas Oklahoma border. A unique feature of Pottsboro is its proximity to the lake and its impact on the overall community. One impact of having “a huge lakeside community” is, as Claudette described, “the amount of people that come through Pottsboro in the summer months is ten times what” the town receives the rest of the year. Bret shared:

“Pottsboro just gives you that kind of laid-back sense of calmness. [When] we decided just to live in Pottsboro full-time, and it’s the people. We love the people here. I don’t know what else to say. It’s just a great place to live.

Kyle also mentioned that the area’s aura of relaxation helps people see the beauty of the community:

“I was just gonna add, it’s just a beautiful place when you go out there...When you [are] traveling into Pottsboro, it’s just so relaxing...almost vacation-like atmosphere. So, I think that’s kind of what it has that small town allure to it...And then everybody’s, I mean, southern hospitality is definitely alive and well there in Pottsboro...I love it.

Eva shared insight about the upcoming growth in the city and how it has been changing regarding the businesses coming into the city and still preserving the friendly community aspect:

“It’s mainly rural, that is changing rapidly. Growth right now, it would just [be] right on the front edge of population growth. So, there’s a lot of business moving in. There’s, it’s been very rural, all the years that I’ve come up here, even when I was living [out of the city], and then it’s very, very comfortable, pretty laid back. Lots of friendly people. But...there’s a population growth that is headed this way.

Though most stakeholders praised Pottsboro for being a welcoming, relaxing, and helpful town, there are still some residents and spaces that lack resources.

The stakeholders felt strongly about Pottsboro and how much they cared about the city and the library itself. Claudette reported, “I also think there’s some toxic factors to our community. And so, those are the areas we try to work on. The things that make it hard for people, the struggles that people have, the lack of resources, the lack of connectivity. And I think there’s an ongoing battle of people who don’t want the community to change.”

Charley lamented that there are not many spaces where people can get together for community events. She said that the police department, located across the street from the library:

“...is in such bad shape, it can’t pass building codes or health inspections. Like when it rains, the water is falling through the ceiling. There are no places for our community to meet that are safe. And the school is pretty locked down

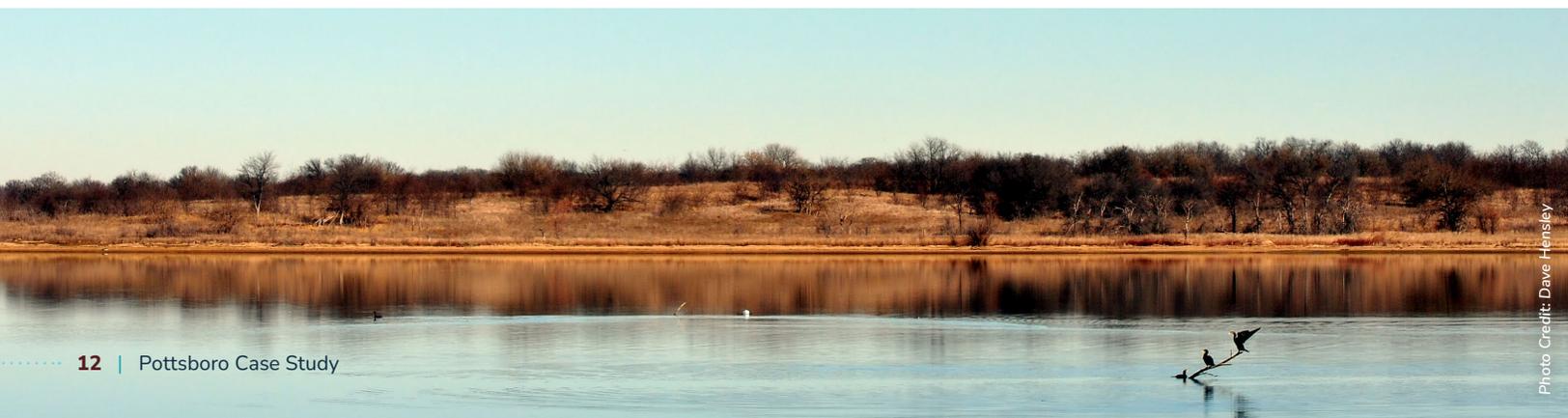
to just school events. So, I’m like, we don’t have community rooms. We don’t have places where these different critical first responders and organizations can meet and convene. Which is what I think the library in a lot of our other cities [do], we use them for that. We host things, we do training, and responders do their training. We need that, and we don’t have that.

Alongside the lack of rooms, Charlotte elaborated on the lack of other resources, “Because [of] the lack of transportation, we recognized that people were doing all their grocery shopping at the Dollar Store. So, all they were eating was processed food.”

Throughout their responses, stakeholders hinted at the **growth of population coming to Pottsboro** and how the town should proactively accommodate for upcoming changes. Eva mentioned her particular experience with such changes:

“There’s a population growth that is headed this way, especially in the Sherman and Denison and Pottsboro area, more so than I think in Fannin or Cooke counties. So, the progressiveness, I know that the progressiveness of the library was very impressive to me because it’s going to be that kind of thinking [that] is going to be cutting edge and necessary to really accommodate the growth that’s coming this way.

From this overview of Pottsboro, we asked stakeholders to share community resiliency strengths and challenges in their area in Focus Group 1 (FG1), the pre-survey, and exit interview.



POTTSBORO COMMUNITY RESILIENCY NEEDS

Broadly, the term ‘resiliency’ has been used in a variety of ways across multiple academic disciplines, and as a result, it has a fluid definition depending on fields and approaches. The COPEWELL framework defines resiliency quite simply as “the ability to withstand (‘resist’) and recover from a disaster event” (COPEWELL, 2022g).

Many stakeholders shared their perspectives regarding ongoing community resiliency needs in Pottsboro, focusing on examples of six central resiliency challenges: (1) transportation, (2) healthcare, (3) affordable housing, (4) broadband, (5) workforce, and (6) disaster events and their interconnections.

First, stakeholders repeatedly reported **transportation challenges** as a central resiliency concern. A lack of public transportation infrastructure, limited ride-share options, and inadequate and failing roads impacted residents’ access to healthcare, groceries, schools, and other life necessities. In fact, transportation was also a challenge for accessing the library. Kyle, for example, shared that to increase more representation from, “the more diverse sections of Sherman and Denison over to Pottsboro,” there needed to be transportation routes to and from the library.

Transportation directly impacted housing and health needs too. Eva specifically connected transportation needs to healthcare and affordable housing and noted that, “Healthcare is so underrepresented in this area, and doing whatever you can to make it more accessible to the people that are in the rural areas, that don’t have transportation.” In working with other community organizations, Eva found that Grayson County (which includes Pottsboro) had high needs for **housing, healthcare, and transportation**. She shared,

“We don’t have much public transportation there at all. So, you kind of have to go to a nearby city and then access healthcare.” She appreciated the telehealth programming the library already hosted but noted, “I’m sure it’s not sufficient for all the community.”

Second, other stakeholders connected transportation to **healthcare needs**. During FG1, Charley told fellow stakeholders:

“Pottsboro is so far out there that it is very difficult for either our case managers or our transportation drivers to work that area into their routines and their routes. So, I was really excited to see the virtual room and to think about partnering with the library so that we can open up some mental health access through utilizing and partnering with them. That will be extremely helpful even in a small way or in another place for our case managers to provide their skills, training, and psychosocial rehab with the clients because they do a lot of it in the community. So, it gives another safe place to do that. **And the transportation for mental health services is probably our biggest need. And problem. It comes up in all of the needs assessments that we do.**”

Charley also mentioned, “What limits us is sometimes **the protocols for these specific services**, especially paid by Medicaid, require it to be face to face, nonvirtual, but that’s...those laws are changing.” She also explained that some patients who needed virtual care at home could not receive it without access to broadband services.

For healthcare, almost all of our stakeholders shared their pride that the Pottsboro Library had a telehealth room and championed it as a success story. As Charley phrased it, “It gets talked about all the time, all the different places I go. The Library Director is so innovative [with] the mental health, the telehealth room that she has.

At the same time, broader community challenges with healthcare remain and need even more support at the city and county levels. Charley shared the challenges of pediatric and prenatal care in the region:

“A lot of the families we serve are living with grandparents in Pottsville. And we have really, really limited access to pediatric care and pediatric specialists. Our families are having to go to Dallas to Cook Children’s. Now there’s a new facility in Prosper. That’s been really great, but it’s far. We only have one pediatric home health care provider that can actually help families about transportation with speech or to PT [physical therapy], we have, in that area, we have no ABA [applied behavior analysis] therapist, nothing. And especially nobody that goes to their home. So, services for pediatrics are really hard.

We also struggle in that area, in the county, quite frankly, with prenatal care. And OB GYN, there’s three for the whole county, Fannin County next door has none. And it’s extremely hard to get into pediatricians’ offices, as well, depending on payer source just to clarify. So, Medicaid, there’s always a waitlist. And it’s really difficult to get kids seen who are income restrained. So, I think that’s a huge barrier.

Given the child healthcare needs in Pottsville, Rose also focused on her hope that future library services and the city could grow to better serve health needs with even more space at the library. She suggested, “If you can have more or bring it to the next level of healthcare service rather than just using a computer and that’s it, more of an actual place, like a little urgent care but not too extreme. Mental health, we need that a lot.”

The Library Director similarly recognized the mental health needs within the community. She described an experience where a library regular who experienced mental health needs was also evicted and houseless. She came to the library for support, and:

“She didn’t know what she was going to do. And she was very upset, and [it] so happened our new community health worker was inside, so I got him and had him go talk to her. But I

mean, he just happened to be there at that very time, and he and I talked about it. **Like, there’s so many needs right under our nose** that are out there that we’re not even aware of and conversely, people wouldn’t think, “Hey, I’m homeless. Let me go to the library and get help.” So, I guess those are the bigger kind of issues. Mental health, I would like to do more around mental health.

Third, as the Library Director’s example notes, stakeholders also shared about **affordable housing needs**. While being so close to the lake attracts many people to Pottsville, it also makes it harder for people to get housing at a reasonable price. Many stakeholders discussed the lack of affordable rental properties and homes for purchase. Bret questioned, “I don’t know whether it’s because of people moving in from outside the community who have driven the prices up, but there’s really no opportunity to buy a house today in the Pottsville area, in my opinion, that is going to meet the going rate of affordable housing rent.” Claudette spoke to this topic by focusing on how difficult it is or them to have housing in the city, even though they work for the city: “The people who are coming into the city to propose houses or subdivisions right now – I mean, I’ve got a subdivision going in where the average housing price is over \$700,000. I work for the city, and I can’t afford to live in the city.” Irma brought another perspective on how their volunteers need housing and how they also struggle to find housing for reasonable prices:

“Number [one] on this list for me is affordable housing. We employ, as a small employer and dependent on volunteerism, affordable housing is an issue. And I’ll give you an example. **Of our six employees, one lives within the Pottsville community.** The other five reside in Lamar County, Dallas County, far west Grayson County, and areas in between. And Oklahoma – which, of course, is not that unusual. But these are young people who need housing to work in this area.

Bret commented on his experience with the housing, considering his experience with rental houses in the area and the way the prices have been inflating lately:

“It’s important to me to have affordable housing, not just in Pottsville, but really everywhere. And this last round of sales of houses has really inflated the prices. And so, what I thought in today’s standard that the best you can get a house is maybe \$250,000- \$295,000. But the fact is, is that the houses are all being appraised at in the close to \$300,000 range. And if you follow a 1% rule in that business, **then the rent would be \$3,000, and that’s completely out of whack for most of the people in Pottsville.** So, it’s gonna be a struggle, and the city’s not gonna want a neighborhood of houses that were built for say \$100,000 because that’s just about darn near government housing.

Stakeholders also discussed differing perspectives on what was “affordable” and to whom in the focus groups, noting that many residents could not meet growing prices of rent or home purchases.

Fourth, stakeholders consistently noted **broadband and phone access** challenges as a significant barrier to community resiliency. To address this barrier, multiple stakeholders partnered together on rural broadband initiatives for North Texas to increase the connectivity in the region for the many homes and vulnerable community members that did not have internet access including seniors, disabled people, and people living on limited incomes. One stakeholder, Kyle, shared that despite the ongoing efforts in Grayson County, “There are certain pockets that [broadband] can’t reach.” He and others discussed ongoing grant and investor work to bring fiber internet to Grayson County to support connectivity challenges in the city and county. The stakeholders noted the Library Director’s particular work on developing broadband coalitions. As Charley said, “Broadband, I mean, she’s leading the efforts for the whole county.”

The Library Director also discussed her ongoing efforts for broadband access:

“I always go back to internet infrastructure. I think there’s still a real lack of understanding on the part of so many people. **If they have it in their home, they don’t realize how it can affect somebody 1/4 mile away who doesn’t have it.** So, I had always lived in large cities, and then when I moved here and started seeing the kids, teens, and tweens who didn’t know how to use computers and then realizing the number of people who don’t have internet subscriptions in their home.

Here, she discussed the assumption that those with the internet had common access and connection. The Library Director also noticed a tech education gap across age groups. She said, “A lot of residents have smartphones but don’t know, how do you use word processors or a mouse or a lot of things.” In particular, broadband access and technology knowledge were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as an example of a Pottsville resident:

“...who had [worked] at a hotel that had closed down because of COVID, and he said he had never touched a computer before in his life. But he had to get the government benefits. He had to get online and do those. And then for people who wanted a COVID vaccine, you had to go online to make an appointment. And as schools were shut down, the number of parents who contacted us and let us know that they didn’t have internet at home, so for as however long the schools would be shut down, their children would not be having any education.

These examples illustrate the interconnections of the global pandemic with technology gaps and broadband access constraints, showing holistic resiliency needs.

Stakeholders also shared how the **library became a primary access point for broadband** in the rural community when so many people did not have the internet at home, such as in the examples the Library Director shared. For example, Kyle visualized a viral photo of kids sitting outside connecting to the internet at a Taco Bell:

“I’m sure everybody knows this picture; this picture immediately went viral, and, but the first thing that comes to my mind when I think about Pottsville is actually the picture that the Library Director brought to us, whenever we were trying to figure out something for Pottsville, you know, it was the picture of the of the kids sitting outside there, you know, doing homework. So that’s kind of what comes to my mind.

Charley also shared an extended example in FG1 about how, in their infant and youth program, the lack of broadband access impacted **new parents and single mothers** in particular. She reviewed how programs that offered a hotspot and the ability to check out computers created opportunities for parents to work from home, explaining, “With the lack and very limited childcare options, the mothers that have been able to figure out Wi-Fi and figure out how to access the laptop, have been able to get jobs where they’re working from home still able to take care of their babies who aren’t school age, or have medically fragile needs, has been very successful.” Charley continued, “**Like what a huge difference we can make for our young families in the workforce** if we can get them the tools and knowledge to be able to work from home.”

Lastly, a few stakeholders noted **limited phone connections on the lake peninsula**, especially during inclement weather or unexpected outages. Irma shared a story about residents’ experiences calling 911 when the internet went down:

“If something happens to a radio communication tower, 911 is out of service. And I can give you a very clear example of how this disrupts emergency services. Several years ago, the landlines were interrupted, and they just happened to hit the Pottsville communications tower with the county communications 911 communications system. An emergency call came

in for an unresponsive patient. Unfortunately, our EMS station didn’t get the communication; there was no radio communication, there was no landline communication, and the call tree from the sheriff’s department dispatch ran through a list of personnel making phone calls, what’s wrong with EMS? Why are they not responding? And of course, no one knew this service was down.

Here, Irma’s example revealed the urgency of losing a communication tower to emergency response, including over 30 minutes of unknown delays in urgent, medical, and emergency responses.



Fifth, stakeholders noted challenges with community resiliency due to **workforce development needs and taxes on businesses** that would support community growth and planning. One stakeholder in particular has expressed concerns about having accessibility in the workforce through their studies. Rose told us that, “The local library will be a center that connects people because Workforce Solutions, they run their own thing.” She added some potential solutions were through connecting local and statewide colleges with larger, well-funded organizations. For example, Rose focused on, “trying to work with a lot of [Texas] colleges, [like] Grayson College...Would Workforce Solutions work with the large global tech with Silicon high-tech to find out what program that they want to teach at college?”

Claudette talked about how the Library Director personally helped Pottsboro residents in need, that there are options for workforce development, but there is much support needed:

“One of the stories that the Library Director uses a lot is there was a young mom who was struggling, and she was coming in all the time with her newborn baby trying to find a job, but...she wasn’t able to work and also pay for childcare. And so, the Library Director helped her get set up with a hot spot at home that had a particular speed and everything like that, and she now checks in with the Director regularly. Because of that hotspot, she is able to work from home, kinda sorta on her own schedule, and still bring in a paycheck while also not having to take her child to a different city for daycare.

Sixth and finally, in the FG1 and exit interviews, stakeholders shared how **recent and historical disaster events** impacted Pottsboro. Claudette brought into perspective that most of the disaster events that Pottsboro experiences are, “When there are big disasters, typically we’re dealing with something that’s weather-related. We do have pretty poor—again, I can only speak for inside city limits—neighborhoods that were pretty poorly structured in terms of electricity. If the wind blows too hard, our electricity goes out even at City Hall.”

Claudette continued about the recent Winter Storm Uri in February 2021 (also called the “Big Freeze” by stakeholders) that impacted areas across Texas and Pottsboro specifically:



Photo Credit: Jonathan Cutrer

“The big freezes we’ve had the last couple of years [are] something we’re not very used to having. Because we are such a small city, and our sales tax is pretty abysmal. We rely 100% on getting our water for the residents who live in the city of Pottsboro; we get 100% of our water currently from the city of Denison. **When that Big Freeze happened, Denison’s system froze up.** Which means our system froze up. Because we are 100% currently, 100% reliable on another city maintaining you know, being able to operate in [an] extreme weather emergency...”

We are so very heavily dependent on outside sources for a lot of things that if one thing goes wrong outside of our control, it affects us as well. So, it would be nice if we had the ability to kind of be more responsible for all of our, you know, water and wastewater utilities, working on it, it’s slow and expensive. But us **being a rural area and not having the business population** that we would like to have really is kind of one of the main reasons that we don’t have the funding, you know, to do those basic things.

Like Claudette, many stakeholders shared examples of The Big Freeze in their worries about future community resiliency needs. Winter Storm Uri was experienced—to differing degrees—by most people living in Texas in February 2021. Over 60 percent of Texans lost power while nearly half had disruptions to their water service, over 200 people lost their lives, and the financial impact is estimated to be between \$80 and \$130 billion dollars (Donald, 2021). Throughout the weeks following the freeze, Pottsboro residents had to learn how to work together and where to find each other for help; **the library and Facebook groups were among the only resources available** for people to see if anyone could provide help. The Library Director had direct experience dealing with the urgency of helping as many people as possible:

“When the freeze happened, because there’s an extremely small public works department, they work very hard, but there are not all these services that a larger city would have. And so, **as a library, one of our roles is information and connecting people to information.** So, we were able to contact people who had wells outside of city limits and get ranchers [and] farmers to bring in water, some of it drinkable, some of it just for flushing, into the library, and then arrange volunteers to distribute it. So, people, if they had cars, could come to the library and bring containers to fill up for water. One of the things that we learned is that we don’t have the capacity, or city doesn’t have the capacity, to respond in all the ways that may be needed in an emergency, and there was a real sense of people wanting to help people.”

Here, the Library Director and other stakeholders credited the library and the broader Pottsboro community for their resiliency response during the winter disaster. Her focus on “people wanting to help people” was a message we heard throughout our data collection in Pottsboro.

In addition to the winter freezes in Uri and other storms, others shared about other disaster events. Irma shared about a flood-related disaster event that directly affected the Pottsboro community:

“There have been several disaster events that may not actually impact some of those who

were on our [pilot project] committee. One of our disasters, we call it The Father’s Day Flood. In June of 2015, many homes throughout the community were—the rain, we had **nine inches in one hour.** And some of the structures that we had put in place to help with rainwater runoff were just overwhelmed. And so, many homes were damaged there. What was really interesting about that is that several community organizations came together and really helped these folks who were impacted.”

Here, Irma noted how residents and their partner organizations came together to support the community. Finally, Claudette also commented that a challenge to progress in the community is a result of some city leaders’ desire to hold on to the city’s past, despite the multiplying impact of disaster events:

“Right now, Pottsboro is really holding onto the—I want to say historic—Unfortunately our main street has been destroyed twice by both a big fire and a tornado way, way, way back when, so we don’t have any of the original buildings left.”

Most of the stakeholders view disaster management as translatable to overall community growth, with Irma commenting that each disaster event is a learning opportunity, owing to standard principles regardless of event type: “Well, that’s exactly right. And you can always learn from it even if it’s a new—even if the next disaster or event is something completely different. Some of the principles apply.”

From this overview of Pottsboro’s resiliency features and challenges, we now turn to background about its library and the roles the Library Director currently plays in community outreach and could hold in the future as a resiliency collaboration convener.

The Pottsboro Library and Library Director's Community Roles



Photo Credit: Hannah Ridings

In our pilot project, we asked stakeholders during focus groups and exit interviews about the role that the Pottsboro Library played in the community, the role of the Library Director as a leader, and the potential for the library and other libraries to be hubs for community resiliency collaborations. Here, we detail the experiences our stakeholders shared related to the library, with the Library Director, and how the library has supported the community, including any current or potential constraints around three sections: (1) the library as a community center, (2) library challenges and future needs, and (3) the Library Director and librarian as a collaboration convener.

THE LIBRARY AS A COMMUNITY CENTER

All the stakeholders in our project complimented the Pottsboro Library's role as not only a library offering books and resources but also as a community center, and they all championed the efforts of the Library Director, Dianne Connery. The Library Director joined during a time of change in the library, when she moved from being on the library board to the director role she now occupies. She discussed the transition period for the library when she began the Library Director role:

“The one lovely part of it is [the Pottsboro Library] was on the verge of having to close its doors, so

it was going to close whether I experimented with it or not. So, I didn't have any fear of failure because it was going to close anyway, and that gave me the freedom just to start innovating.

And then, in addition to that, and a really important factor, is we weren't, in the beginning, receiving any taxpayer funding. It was all grants, and so there was not a lot of bureaucracy. We were really able to pivot quickly when we identify community need, [be] flexible, and **we're like the front door of the rural community.** So, ours is a gathering place that people from all walks of life, all cross-sections, come into our building for various services. And so, we really get to know people on a personal basis and what their needs are.

Here, the Library Director disclosed how the potential closure of the library gave her freedom to think beyond common perceptions of a library to instead think about community-driven needs as the “front door of the rural community.” Removing the fear of failure and initially not having to worry about bureaucracy helped spark her creativity.

Irma recognized how the Library Director's creativity enabled the library to operate beyond assumptions the public may have of a library as just a place for books. She stated:

“I think one of the best features of the library is the community center. What I mean by that is that the library is really **functioning in non-traditional areas** for the community. If somebody wants to know what's happening in the community, what events are happening, and where we can participate, the library is the place to go.

And that's because the Library Director has all of the connections, and she's worked diligently to promote that. And, of course, she does this not only at a Pottsboro level but county level, state level, national level. Her ability to **find programs and really follow through and bring them to north Texas is just – I just think it's unmatched...** Considering our population, most people think of the library as books. And unless you're a professional doing research, you don't think about all the other [programs.]...But that's not what our library is.

Stakeholders like Irma noted the statewide, national, and even international coverage of the Library Director's creative programs that helped address unique, local, and rural community needs. When the research team asked Claudette about the best features or programs of the Pottsboro Library in her exit interview, she replied: “Oh my gosh, how much time do you have?” Claudette celebrated that the library received national attention “on Capitol Hill” and international coverage of the library:

“We had a film crew in this past weekend from South Korea. They heard about how our library is the opposite of what you would call a ‘quiet library.’ Yes, of course, we have quiet areas where you can check out books like a traditional library, but our library has more services crammed into that tiny little building than I have ever, ever seen. Even than most larger libraries.

Stakeholders repeatedly lauded the **innovative programs of the Pottsboro Library, particularly its “Library of Things”**—a program to check out everyday items to support community needs without forcing expensive one-time purchases. Kyle further noted, “There's so much she offers that you can borrow other than books that is amazing. There are shop vacs. If you need to borrow a tool, they probably

have it.” Claudette said, “I mean, just name **anything**, and I bet...[it is] in her in her library of things.” Bret shared extensive unique examples from the Library of Things as well as innovative programs, such as bringing a new North Texas Regional Airport administrator to the library for a lecture, and a coffee with the mayor event. The Library Director shared some of the diverse offerings of the Library of Things:

“We've got outdoor games, so we encourage people to check them out. Pickleball is our newest thing, so check things out and take them to the park. But we do have some blood pressure kits, wheelchair, knee scooter for people who need that, a pulse oximeter...So, we've got some purely medical devices, but then we also have a pressure canner. So, if you are growing beans during the summer and then you want to can 'em. We've had in the past, we've had a cook from the culinary institute at Grayson College come and teach some cooking classes and how to can and how to dehydrate, so we got a dehydrator, how you dehydrate herbs. And so, just **a general thought to well-being.**

Another example of a focus on well-being focus was a community garden program created in response to food insecurity and transportation issues in Pottsboro. The Library Director addressed these needs in adding new features to the Library of Things and programs and explained:

“Because [of] **the lack of transportation, we recognized that people were doing all their grocery shopping at the Dollar Store.** So, all they were eating was processed food. And so, we did two things. We, in our Library of Things, we got cargo bicycles so that people could get from the housing authority housing right around the library, to the grocery store and be able to haul back groceries. And then, we planted the community garden and provided the education, the water, the tools, the seeds, the space, everything they needed to grow their own organic vegetables.

Other stakeholders focused on library features and programs for people of all ages. Claudette said, “Whether it be the classes they offer for everyone of all ages, varying classes, meeting spaces. They have

an eSports team – they sponsored an official eSports team, which the kids love coming and playing video games, but they’re actually also learning skills.” She also discussed the library’s new drone program and a 3D printer. Kyle appreciated how such programs engaged youth and said, “**I would have never thought of having some of the video game teams out of Pottsville.** There are a lot in larger cities, but for her to have something like that for the youth to participate in is just phenomenal.” Kyle added, “I know a lot of the younger kids in Pottsville like to go there, because it’s just a good place to go and hang out. I mean, you know, with all of the activities that they have available. It’s just, it’s, you know, **it’s kind of like what a community center and, you know, what a library really should be.**” Reaching older adults was also crucial to stakeholders in this pilot project, and Claudette shared how Pottsville is a “Certified retirement community.” She mentioned that the library has “**a really awesome digital navigation program** that allows someone who may not be familiar with technology to learn anything and everything about it.”

Finally, through the Library Director’s vision and grant funding, she was able to create the first telehealth room in a library in the United States at the Pottsville Library.

Claudette shared that an important feature of the library was, “the whole medical aspect...We have the **first medical room in our library** that it’s completely soundproofed and everything like that where people can come and have virtual doctors’ appointments that don’t necessarily have internet connectivity at home or don’t have the ability or transportation to go to the metroplex for example.” Charley also credited the library for not only having virtual services but also “especially teaching people how to use virtual services,” which were impactful in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. She explained, “**Having that local hub is lifesaving.** It’s lifesaving for preventative care, for post care, for all of those things,” and expressed a desire for more support for healthcare at the library. Irma also noted how the public may not:

“...really think of the library as being a center for healthcare, but the Library Director has expanded access to healthcare for those who have very little means for access to healthcare. And that’s just an amazing opportunity for our community. And I’m really thrilled that that access is available...And the concrete example is that there is an isolated area so that **an individual can have a private conversation with their physician**, set aside and designated with its own entrance at the library. And that’s just a remarkable dedication of space and access for a small community like Pottsville.

The library’s telehealth room anticipated residents’ transportation challenges to seek care outside of town, their privacy needs, internet connectivity challenges, and also a need for broader healthcare than was available in rural Pottsville, which all came up as resiliency challenges in our focus group across all the stakeholders.

Claudette perhaps best summarized the library’s innovative programs and offerings:

“You would never know that looking at our little library building that used to be a post office way back in the day. So, when it comes to being more forward-thinking and everything like that, I – maybe I’m biased, but every time someone from another city asks, “Oh, what does your library do?” I tell them to sit down and buckle up because we have so much to offer, and it’s just a really fun place to be. I’ve had kids and parents alike say, “Look, we just like coming to hang out at the library.” So, yeah, it’s fantastic. I highly recommend [it] if you ever get to visit!

LIBRARY CHALLENGES AND FUTURE NEEDS

While all the stakeholders shared the strengths of the library, they also vocalized constraints the library currently faces and how these challenges relate to broader community resiliency challenges across the Pottsville community (which we examined above). Two library-specific challenges included: (1) **communicating programs and broader impact** and (2) **space and scale-up constraints**.

First, for communicating programs and broader impact, stakeholders repeatedly shared communication challenges to the broader public about all that the library was doing to support the community. The Pottsville Library needed better ways to communicate their resources, programs, and their stories.

The Library Director herself noted this challenge:

“It’s always **hard to reach the people who don’t currently use the library**. We don’t have a newspaper in town. So a lot of it happens just [by] word of mouth. And there are some things we do that I think are like really neat offerings, and it’s hard to get the word out. And then the other barrier we have is transportation because there’s no public transportation. So there are a lot of people who can’t get to the library.

Bret agreed and said, “Without a newspaper and other kinds of things, I’m not sure the library has done a good enough job of advertising what it is they’ve got. Well, people just don’t go to the library. I mean, we saw people in town go, ‘We have a library?’” Bret wanted more public communication about the library’s programs and resources to reach the broader residents.

Bret noted some low attendance at very thoughtful library events, such as a cybersecurity event with a handful of residents, compared to other city or community events where “the whole peninsula” would show up. Bret believed, “I think maybe a lot of the stuff that happens in the library may look like that. It’s all good. It has good purpose. But the community is just not showing up.”

Even as an informed and engaged community member, Bret was also unsure about how many of the programs were utilized. He suggested again that a newspaper could make an impact, remembering a past paper in town:

“Well, when we had a newspaper, it was pretty light. But at least we would take a subscription, and we’d see some things that might be happening. We really need a newspaper, and if something could be developed through the library, and it doesn’t even have to be a...printed document. It could be **something that was online**. That would be really helpful I believe.





In other words, even advocates, regular supporters, and attendees of the library’s events did not know which programs were working for the community and which were not.

Irma similarly lamented the **lack of “a web presence”** for the library. She said, “You do a Google search on the Pottsgoro Library, and it ought to bring up several...of those windows to gain access to it. And it just doesn’t.” As an internet-savvy person, she tried Googling library resources and programs for part of her participation in the pilot project, and she found little information. Irma explained, “I did try my web searches, access through the library connection on the city website, and some other resources. And I have difficulty finding access to library activities and such. I know that they are getting the message out, but I couldn’t find it. So, I’m not sure how to address that.” Irma also knew that hiring a staff member for web design and communication was expensive, but that the lack of a “vibrant web-based” presence was a major limitation for the library. Also, the library’s physical location presented a consistent barrier to its use, and according to Irma, it is, “because of where they’re located, even a marquee would not reach the public. So, a billboard, or a marquee, or art, or something. They don’t get drive-by traffic.”

Stakeholders also provided examples of how a lack of communication and the library’s location impacted the sustainability of the **community garden project**. Bret noticed that the community garden was, “good for a season, but now all that stuff, I guess it still sits there, and the weeds are just kind of overgrown it. There’s been some things that the Library Director has tried, and I think they’re good things. But I’m not sure how successful they’ve been in that people use them on a daily basis or even a weekly or monthly. I just don’t know.” Irma also noted the great start of the community garden for one season, but then:

“It failed because of location. And when I say failed, I mean it didn’t renew the next year. There was probably some produce and such that came from it... It was located at a park. Unfortunately, this park is, again, you have to purposefully drive to it. It’s not located on a heavily traveled community area. And so, every time I visited their park, the park has got a lot of really nice facilities. But there’s only been me at the park when I’ve been there, midday, afternoon, evening. And **an empty park is not good. And I think that’s what happened with the garden.** I don’t think it was a loss of personnel wanting to participate. I think it was just off the beaten path for the community.

Stakeholders, then, questioned how programs like the community garden could be sustained to continue supporting residents’ health and food needs.

Finally, Kyle noted that, “the biggest hurdle that the Library Director deals with is getting the information out. And for me, I’ve been there and I’ve worked with her so I know a lot of what they can offer, but I don’t think there are a lot of people even in Grayson, maybe inside of Pottsgoro – outside of Pottsgoro I don’t think there are a lot of people that really understand what they have available.” Kyle’s example demonstrated that some people within the city limits may be aware of the library, but the much larger county area and unincorporated areas had less knowledge.

Kyle agreed with other stakeholders who saw how the library “kind of struggles with getting the word out and letting people know what the library has to offer. Most people are still stuck on a library just has books, but unfortunately, her library is so much more.”

The challenges with communicating library programming and services to the broader community also impacted who used the resources, including stakeholders **sharing gaps in reaching middle-aged people without children, lower-income people, people without transportation, and people of color.** Kyle suggested that a broader, multi-county approach could reach different residents, sharing, “Pottsville, I think, the demographics are – there’s not a whole lot of diversity in Pottsville itself, but I do think that if more surrounding communities knew about it, I think they could definitely get some more diversity inside utilizing the library.” He believed community members from the Sherman and Denison areas would be willing to travel to the library, but, “You have to get the word out so everybody knows what’s available. Why do you want to go to Pottsville? But I think if you’re able to see everything that they offer, I would think there’s plenty of reason why you’d take that trip.”

The Library Director also wanted to reach more community members from the broader county, similarly noting that such outreach efforts would include more people of color and people from low-income households, especially since “Pottsville is largely white. We don’t just serve Pottsville, though, we serve the whole Grayson County, and we want to become more intentional about both our board members not being a representation of Grayson County. So how do we attract a more diverse board and keep a more diverse board?” She told our research team about a project with a student at UT Austin completing a capstone on inclusion, including the student’s focus on “practical things” like a “new recommended book list, and then posters, and then places we can place those posters in nonprofits around the county who haven’t used our services before. So some of those, if they’re books, they can be checked out online, they don’t even have to come to the building, but then hopefully, it’ll just build awareness with a more diverse group.”



Communicating the Pottsville Library’s community centered approach was therefore a challenge overall and specifically to residents outside of city limits and from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds.

Second, all our stakeholders mentioned the incredible breadth of programs and resources at the Pottsville Library for the community. However, despite such innovative offerings, they noted **spatial constraints and needs for scaling-up services.** Stakeholders lamented that the library’s physical building infrastructure did not match its robust programs. Irma said succinctly, “Their building is a limitation for them. Where they’re located, there’s not much parking. You have to look to find the library. So, finding it, its location is...It’s kind of hidden away.” She noted that infrastructure was a primary issue despite the Library Director being “able to **work wonders with the space** that she has.” Irma suggested that the city should support the library’s use of other vacant spaces in Pottsville that “have much more access and would work really well for a library facility... Especially under her vision of ‘It’s more than books.’”

The small size could become crowded, and the library’s exterior aesthetic was not welcoming, particularly to new residents. As Charley put it:

“The building is like old and gross and dinky and out of the way... The first time I went, if you would see the outside of the building...I was like, “I’m not using the bathroom in this place.” And you would never suspect it, but the second you walk in, it’s beautiful and colorful and clean. And fun and nice and little nooks and spaces to meet...**It is my favorite library just to go explore.** I mean, the last time I went they had all these seed packets, like rows and rows and rows of just seeds and gardening stuff. And I’m like, **“Well, crap. I didn’t know this was here.”** But it’s always different and fun.”

Here, Charley seemed to invoke the adage, “Don’t judge a book (or a library in this case) by its cover” with the inside’s many spaces and welcoming vibes. However, she also said that the very crowded space:

“It’s so small, they don’t have storage facilities. They don’t have the room. I mean they’re just kind of overcrowded in there with what they do have. And I feel like we do a lot with **some of the groups that have autism or sensory disorders, and it would not be a safe space** to do anything. I mean, they just don’t have room.

Charley went on to describe how spatial constraints prevent her from hosting regional meetings at the library and lamented the library’s general accessibility constraints, including that, “If you were in a wheelchair, you’re just kind of out of luck” after entering because, “You couldn’t roam around. You couldn’t freely access everything that there is. And it’s definitely sensory overwhelming.” She noted that it was good that the mental health room had a separate entry, despite its very small size, for people to directly navigate to the healthcare room without the sensory overload of the library’s main entrance.

Charley was not the only stakeholder to discuss **the size and accessibility challenges**. Rose suggested the library needed a future space to be more healing for holistic health needs. “Maybe an architect would look [at] more healing [options] with white, bright, the sunlight can come in, and people feel adjusted. I like those kinds of buildings. You feel healed instantly; you feel calm instantly. Where you can research, a gathering place.” Rose also shared that the size limited the ages and groups the library could serve fully. She explained:

“Again, the library is too small, but I’m just wishful if she can have more room, the seniors can come, and help do childcare. I think they already have the community garden there, so that [is] really [good] for emergency food supply. So, it’s things to do for seniors, and then they can watch the childcare...Then the library [could] have all kinds of nice computers, high speed internet **so kids, students, adults can research jobs, can look for research things, can apply for jobs.**

With more space, Rose believed there would be space for intergenerational care and learning, workforce development (including her idea to have “a coach” to review resumes), and emergency food supplies.

Building on support for food insecurity, Claudette also told us that the library was “one of the, if not the only, official meal spot[s] this summer outside of the school where kids can come and get meals that they would normally get during the school year. They have a tiny little kitchen.” She mentioned that a sponsor even wanted to gift an “industrial-sized fridge, but physically [they] don’t have a place to put it.”

Claudette said, “There has been more than one occasion where we would love to provide a particular service, but our physical space is limiting.”



Claudette also said that it was hard “thinking about a demographic that library doesn’t currently serve,” but that space was the current constraining factor. She said with a “bigger facility and bigger building,” the Pottsboro Library could extend what all the stakeholders shared about “community services, and not just traditional library services. I think it would be great if we had the ability to serve greater amounts of community members at the same time.” Yet, with the library design, despite “using every inch of the space as efficiently as possible” it was constrained. Claudette suggested:

“I think it would be really nice to have maybe a larger, more open space to serve larger groups of people. I know, recently, they’ve been doing like lifestyle classes and things like that...It would be great to have a community center, large open meeting party type space, we already do that. The library already does that, but on a on a smaller scale. And with the growth that is coming, and the fact that we do have so many community members, not just of Pottsboro, but the surrounding counties. We have people from all over the place that come to our libraries. **So just the ability maybe to serve on a larger scale is all I can honestly think of.**”

The lack of space for library programs was also something occurring across Pottsboro, as stakeholders noted **the aging infrastructure of the police station and no spaces for first responders and community members to convene** (something we shared above under resiliency challenges). This tension of space for convening and growing community resiliency programs was one the Library Director herself was working on during our pilot study, something we return to in our conclusion with her efforts for opening a second location. We now turn to the role of the Library Director as a convener.



THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR AS COMMUNITY COLLABORATION CONVENER

A central goal of our pilot research project was to understand how librarians could convene stakeholders for community collaborations to translate the COPEWELL resiliency framework to their rural area. In the pilot project, the Library Director operated as a hybrid participant, helping to convene, gather, support, and pose follow-up questions in our focus groups (see Eger et al., 2023, for the full report of the librarian convening process).

As researchers, we noticed in the first focus group that **many stakeholders chose to participate in the pilot project because of their passion for the Library Director’s** creative community planning. They believed the Library Director herself was an immense asset to the library and to Pottsboro. When prompted about the library’s best resource, Kyle responded:

“The Library Director is probably the best feature that the library has just because she’s done so well at not only getting the story out but also showing other libraries what she’s put together knowing that it’s not just about books anymore. **There are so many things that she offers that it’s almost overwhelming.** I’ve been there quite a few times, but it seems like there’s always something new, and there’s always something new that she’s able to offer. I would always boil it down **that she’s probably their best asset** just because she’s brought so much to the library and to Pottsboro itself.”

Kyle also explained that the Library Director’s creativity and programs were recognized outside of the region, and her focus on “creating more interest in bringing more people in to collaborate with” sustained many connections in Pottsboro and across the state. This included speaking engagements, partnerships, and generating a reputation for collaboration and innovation. Kyle said, “I’ll just mention the little library in Pottsboro, and they know exactly who I’m talking about, so it’s really cool.”

Like Kyle, all our stakeholders commented that part of their willingness and/or excitement to commit to a multi-month community collaboration in the pilot project was because of the Library Director, as shown in the pull-out box on the next page.

MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE IN PILOT PROJECT CONVENED BY THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

“[I worked] in a few other cities around the state and by far, hands down completely unbiased opinion, we have the best library ever. So [I’m] very proud of and excited for all of this and appreciate being asked to participate.” – **Claudette**

“I also was very impressed with what the Pottsboro Library is doing. This is new information for me. And I’m like, boy, they are really progressive...I’m happy to be here.” – **Eva**

“We’ve been working with the Library Director for a little while trying to help her with some of the some of the things that she has done for broadband. So, it’s been it’s been really, really cool to see all the things that she’s been involved with, and, you know, to kind of keep up and help out in any way possible. So, I’m excited to be here.” – **Kyle**

“She’s really wonderful...The Library Director is just the best. We love her.” – **Rose**

“One of the things, it was actually the first time I had been able to really go to the library was doing that community emergency response team training, and then being able to count on that when things happen as a hub and doers and a place to congregate when things important things are happening in the community. I think the diversity of education and services, I’ve never seen anything like it anywhere I’ve lived. So, I would say it’s very progressive and cutting edge.” – **Charley**

“I first met the Library Director at a grant writing seminar. And so, community funding is one of her real strengths in the community. And we’ve partnered on a couple of projects, and grants, but not just grant writing, but access to resources for funding.” – **Irma**

“The Library Director has done some great things at the library.” – **Bret**

Charley provided examples of her own experiences working with the Library Director with a coalition of Pottsboro community members focused on multiple interorganizational collaborations together in the region, including focused on emergency management and broadband, because of the impact of their shared goals. Charley said, “You know, I’ll do whatever she tells me to because I believe in her. So, it’s kind of just evolving organically.”

The Library Director shared her own efforts to connect with her local community but also with libraries across the state and nation. Part of those efforts have been through **learning about and submitting innovative grant writing** to support the Pottsboro Library and the community. She encouraged librarians to serve on foundations or grant review committees to be able to take the perspective of a grant reviewer. She also described how applying for one grant and delivering on the reporting enables her to seek future grant funding (see box on the next page).

“[Reviewing grants] gave me the perspective of, ‘Okay, when I’m the one giving out the money, what is it I want to see with the proposal coming across my desk?’...And then just the recognition and awareness that people want to be some part of something positive, exciting that other people are passionate about that’s bigger than themselves. There’s not a lot of money out there for just traditional library services because it’s just sort of expected.

But we’ve been really fortunate with the innovation and have found that one opportunity leads to another. So, we meet people, get a grant, they see that we follow through, we’re dependable on our reporting and all that. And then next time they have a grant come up, sometimes they reach out to us, or they connect us with, ‘Hey, I think you need to meet so-and-so, they’ve got a project going on..’” – **Library Director, Pottsboro Library**

In her exit interview, Charley confirmed the impact of the Library Director’s grant writing that supported other librarians and community leaders across the state of Texas. Charley narrated a story of bringing her own organizational team to connect with the Library Director for mentorship:

“I know several other people have **gone to her for help with grant writing**. She is a phenomenal grant writer and advisor. And definitely has her pulse on the federal funding, and no one else in our community does, I promise you that. So, I just feel like she’s a wealth of information, just as a human. Because I know I took my team, and we went and sat down with her and were like, “Tell us how you’re doing this because we’re in awe. Like we wanna be as awesome as you are.” And she spent like an hour of her time with us just sitting down like, “Oh, I find these grants that we are completely not eligible for, and here’s what I say. And here’s how I do it.” I mean she gave us before we even drove back to our office, she had sent an email with all these helpful links, and she never had to do that, ever. But **she wants everyone to succeed**.

For Charley, the Library Director’s commitment to supporting and convening community leaders and nonprofit organizers was incredibly impactful because of the competitive nature of grant funding. She elaborated:

“Grayson County has 412 nonprofits, and we compete with each other for everything. Every donor, every board member, every foundation, I mean it’s a highly competitive market here, and that’s been—**rural areas are so significantly harder to raise money in**. So, for her just to be so, “Here’s all my trade secrets. Here’s exactly what I do. Here, use these links. Have you heard about this foundation? I got money from them, you should try.” I mean that doesn’t happen.

The Library Director’s experiences convening community leaders and mentoring others on grant funding illustrated her willingness to partner in collaborative efforts like our pilot study.

Rose echoed that she was confident the Library Director would be a great convener for future resiliency planning and called her efforts, “Excellent: She had a passion and the energy that makes things happen. That is the most important, and she just keeps going and trying it...She’s one of the best.”

This passion for trying new ideas was also something the Library Director paired with addressing resiliency and broader inequities in Pottsville. Kyle mentioned the role of rural advocacy:

“That’s what’s so special about the Library Director. What she does is that she’s an advocate for not just **rural broadband, but for the rural community, in its whole**. So, you know, that’s what’s really cool is that you can, she gives access to so much more than just books and those things, but it also she advocates for, and she kind of, she’s the trailblazer. She’s been really showing people the way for rural advocacy, development, and providing all sorts of different things for the community. So that’s kind of what I look to her for and look to the library for.

The Library Director, then, is already focused on advocacy for rural needs, making her an ideal convener for rural resiliency future planning.

In addition to the director as a convener herself, stakeholders noted that the **Pottsville Library had potential as a space and organization** to reach broad, diverse community members. Bret explained that the library programs like summer reading that keeps, “kids involved and thinking and reading” helped support younger residents and made a big impact in their community. He also noted that the community beyond the Pottsville city limits could be served by the library as a convener because, “It’s not just the city. And it could be because of our uniqueness of being primarily populated by people beyond the city limits and some of those people out here are—the **economics swing for these people out here beyond the city are either very high, or they’re very low**. And there’s some in-between.” Bret wanted to be sure future collaborations reached all income levels and also considered, “who would be able to get involved” if future collaborations were hosted at the library.



Irma believed the combination of the Library Director and the library itself made perfect hosts for convening future collaborations. Irma told us, “I think it’s the perfect place. The Library Director is well known for pulling together the right people, the right resources, to achieve an objective. And we see her results frequently. It’s the right place.”

At the same time, given the earlier communication concerns Irma expressed, she also questioned if the library’s current spatial constraints could:

“bring a group together that is without distractions. When you’re working on these types of projects, you need to be in a **place without distractions**. And so, having a meeting place. Having the web resources to get the message out. To pull those people in that –the gem of the project may just be waiting to hear something, and the message is not getting out there. How can it not? But nonetheless, it isn’t.

For Irma, for the library to be prepared to host a future collaboration, it needed **better communication**

to disseminate information and space to do so for convening.

Rose questioned if and hoped that the library could even become a more prominent place for resiliency responses in the future. She asked:

“First of all, **is it a facility for people to know where to go when disaster hits them again**, right? ...A shelter has food, can shelter for a couple hundred people. And then, where they can communicate center to connect all the lost family like when they have a point of connect where to go when something happens. So, that’s for me disaster [response]. Secondly, where is the knowledge? The library is the temple, the wisdom, the beautiful. So, when people come in for a while, they could learn something from older to young, so that the little toddler can learn. Seniors can come.

Rose thus hoped the library, in a future location, could be a physical emergency response center and sustain the resiliency of intergenerational involvement and community building throughout the years.

Other stakeholders already saw the clear connection to resiliency convening with the library because they personally had participated or knew community members who had participated in a **previous emergency response training at the library** that included about 10 Pottsville residents. The Library Director explained the training to all the stakeholders in FG1:



“The Civilian Emergency Response Training brought people together in the community for a nine-week, pretty intensive training on **how we could be responders until real first responders**. So we talked about like train derailments, or if tornadoes hit, you know, we were taught how to search buildings that had been destroyed or apply tourniquets. Or if a train [derails] because there’s a train that comes right through Pottsboro, how [to] identify what chemicals are in the train? It was a lot of just sort of administrative, like, how do we assess and triage things until other responders can get to us, and then we can pass along the information and give them what they need.

She discussed how the group included people connected to emergency management like a volunteer firefighter, city leader, and retired nurse but also other residents. This type of convening created, “The big takeaway was neighbors helping neighbors like how we need to all like know that, okay, there’s a widow living alone. And if the water is off, and the electricity is off, what kind of help do I need to, you know, check on my neighbor?”

Charley echoed the challenges they already faced after their training ended just months before the COVID-19 pandemic, “and we realized our county emergency disaster plans hadn’t really broken down a global pandemic and what to do. So we’ve worked on that.” While they worked on pandemic response, “And then the winter storm hit.” Stakeholders shared successes of “days without sleeping...just trying to keep the hospitals up and running” and keep access to water.

Charley suggested that a county-level response focuses on “trying to take care of the really big systems, and without the libraries, we can’t take care of the little, there’s little you know, it’s scalable, these disasters are scalable.” She complimented the Pottsboro Library for being focused on recovery and emergency management and taking trainings to help support. As Charley told the other stakeholders and our research team, “Disasters come, but very few cities are leading the way Pottsboro is. And really the result of that with my organization is we are now the long-term recovery coordinators. **But I couldn’t do that without the Library Director.**” Charley said librarians across the state of Texas could partner in more resiliency planning and convening like in our pilot project and other trainings. This would enable:

“When something happens and how to respond, knowing we’re a rural area and the big, like, like Fort Worth resources from Dallas and Fort Worth, we’ve learned in each disaster, takes it a minimum of about a week to come help. So a week after the event is when we’re starting to see more, **bigger resources** coming to our aid in Grayson County.

Having community members and leaders connected to resiliency planning could thus prepare for more local responses in rural areas.

Finally, other stakeholders noted that for the Library Director to best convene and lead resiliency planning after the end of the pilot study, she needed stakeholders’ and leaders’ support in return. Eva, for example, commented, “I think [in terms of support, of needing] support from me, and other people, we can be supportive of her would be an essential piece of it.”

Charley also felt that a **librarian in general—and this Library Director in particular—made for a good resiliency convener because of public perception and avoiding political tensions.** Charley shared:

“The Library Director is **very politically correct**. I have no better way to say it. I’m like, so she approaches people just so genuinely nice and kind, and I mean all the time...And think because it’s the library, it’s completely neutral. It’s not the police department, and it’s not a nonprofit...It’s a convener and I think the **community sees her as a convener...100%**. Yeah, so I think she’s the perfect person to do it.

Kyle also cautioned that as much as the Library Director did for the city and community, “She has taken it upon herself to focus on those different things to really not just become a great library because nobody was really asking for a great library, but what they were asking for were different things that could help the community, and that’s what she has taken on.” He believed that to help support the Library Director that the **city could benefit from hiring and paying:**

“...one person who is dedicated to doing those types of things to go after different funding, to try and help collaborate with different entities that could help bring everybody together to make these projects that would help the community itself...It really could be anybody who the City could bring on and say this is going to be your role to bring in ideas, bring in funding, bring in entities that want to participate and collaborate.

Finally, we also end by noting that other stakeholders can **help serve as conveners and/or facilitators** to support librarians. For example, Charley shared a story of being asked by the Library Director to form a coalition on a broadband initiative, and after the director’s passionate pitch, Charley said, “Well, I can convene people. I can get places and people, and I know all sorts of people. So that’s easy, that’s done.”

This example illustrated that sometimes the librarian would not need to be the convener but could play other facilitation or organizing roles in a resiliency community collaboration. The Library Director herself even shared that facilitating communication and creating collaborations was something she preferred to do as a team.

She appreciated our pilot project because she did not have to be the facilitator and stated:

“I liked **not having to facilitate** the conversations. I’ve led community conversations before and I can do it and I think [I’m] semi-effective, but I don’t really enjoy the process. So, I appreciated you all facilitating that. And personally, I think it’s so subtle how when we have these conversations, it **plants a little seed**, and then the next project I’m working on without even consciously thinking about it, it’s just like, “Oh yeah, this is an issue that we need to be working on.” So, it informs my work in a way that makes it stronger.

To help support librarians as conveners, we asked in exit interviews about how stakeholders’ organizations and leaders could support the library and its staff as it contributes to community resiliency in the future. Irma shared that she and her organization could support libraries by focusing on their own organizational presence, especially in “Emergency management, for a small city, is a sort of a challenge” with potential leaders without emergency management backgrounds, city officials with a lot on their plates, and urgent needs during disasters. Instead, Irma suggested that stakeholders from the pilot “could share board members so that...**one of our board members liaisons with the library and vice versa**... Not necessarily serve on each other’s board but liaison and attend meetings and share information.”

Similarly, Eva said that there could be more impact if stakeholders were “being more **formally collaborative with each other** to where we have staff that work with her, and help all the people that they can identify [if...they have the funds for] someone who needs some help, that they can see, but also ways that we could utilize their skills, and make their skills more viable for the people that we all serve together in the community – in the Pottsboro area.” For Eva and others, this included **utilizing one another’s skills, cooperation, sharing spaces, and connecting with the library**. According to Irma, other community stakeholders could connect to the library through research and connectivity, where “there’s a much greater opportunity for me personally, as well as professionally, through the

emergency services to interact with the library quite a bit more.” Therefore, continuing to connect with the library and other stakeholders could help support interconnected organizational goals.

Now, from the role of the Library Director as convener in this project and in the future, we turn to presenting the specifics of the COPEWELL Pilot Process in Pottsboro. We describe Pottsboro stakeholders’ participation in the pilot project, including the site’s selection of a COPEWELL self-assessment rubric, thematized stakeholder responses to self-assessment sub-domain items, and how stakeholders engaged in discussion and planning based on the selected self-assessment rubric during FG2.



**Pottsboro’s
COPEWELL Pilot
Process**

For context, the research team used **the COPEWELL (Composite of Post-Event Well-Being) framework**, both to provide structure to project activities and as a mechanism to assess community perceptions of current resiliency. Developed by a team from the University of Delaware and Johns Hopkins University and funded by the CDC, COPEWELL proposes to help communities identify and shore-up gaps in

community resiliency across the lifespan of a hazard or disaster event (COPEWELL, 2022a). The process of COPEWELL implementation was designed to function at all levels of involvement: from local to federal and from community member to policymaker. For links to the COPEWELL framework and other COPEWELL resources, please see our References section.

The COPEWELL framework provides users with a choose-your-own-adventure style set of resources, allowing them to make use of its computational model and data, self-assessment rubrics, and compiled resources for change.

COPEWELL presents a structure of resiliency that “incorporates a broad view of the societal elements that influence resilience” and helps communities “to create a shared understanding and drive conversations related to the elements and factors that influence community functioning and resilience” (COPEWELL, 2022b).



INTRODUCING COPEWELL AND SELECTING THE COMMUNITY FUNCTIONING RUBRIC

In focus group 1 (FG1), we asked stakeholders about resiliency, disaster experiences, and related needs.

Some stakeholders already saw the possibility of the library as a convener for resiliency and health planning in part because of the vital leadership of the Library Director and outreach the library already provided, including being the first library in the nation to have a telehealth room to virtually connect community members to needed healthcare appointments and resources.

Throughout our own fieldnotes, our student co-researchers’ fieldnote sections, and our transcripts, a commonly communicated theme was **care for the community** and constant assurances of **supporting one another throughout disasters especially**.

Based on the stakeholders’ descriptions of community features and challenges in FG1, the research team selected the COPEWELL Community Functioning and the Population, Vulnerability, Inequality, and Deprivation (PVID) self-assessment rubrics to present to the group. After presenting the two possibilities to the group, Community Functioning quickly emerged as the clear favorite starting point for the COPEWELL framework, which mirrored what we noticed in our own thematizing of the group’s discussions.

Throughout the process, stakeholders seemed satisfied with their self-assessment choice and continuously talked about how they supported each other as a community throughout the process. There seemed to be quick consensus about the choice of self-assessment rubric. As a research team, we anticipated more dialogue about the two rubrics; however, in our researcher discussion before presenting the two possibilities, we quickly concurred that most of their stated resiliency challenges were most prominently about COPEWELL’s Community Functioning. Moreover, just as Eva described, many other stakeholders felt like this rubric was the first step:

“I don't think you can address the issues in PVID, unless you have a strong enough infrastructure, and ability to function in general, to be able to do that. So I think you have to have that foundation and that solid infrastructure to build from, and then you can look at deprivation and vulnerability and those other things, **but if you don't have an infrastructure, you're kind of dead in the water.**”

Here, Eva noted that choosing the Community Functioning rubric to work through was just the first step toward Potttsboro's resiliency planning and the community collaboration's next steps together for their community.

COPEWELL COMPUTATIONAL MODEL DATA

The COPEWELL framework (2022c) includes a system dynamics computational model that pulls county-level census data related to the model's **inputs** (the domains of Community Functioning, Population Factors, Preparedness and Response, Prevention and Mitigation, Resources for Recovery, and Social Capital and Cohesion) and **outputs** (the domains of Recovery, Resilience, and Resistance). The COPEWELL team also provides a summary of measures used for the model, as well as an explanation of their data collection approaches. This model allows localities to compare the quantitative score for model inputs in order to identify areas of greatest need for review. These quantitative scores can also be compared to the qualitative rankings from the self-assessment process; this can elucidate differences between quantitative census data and community perception of the same areas.

While this pilot project did not utilize the computational model, the research team thought it of interest to compare the qualitative scores from the self-assessment process against the model. Stakeholders' average score **for the Community Functioning rubric was 3.5 (out of 10)**, while the model scored it as .52 (next Table). Of note, score values were normalized by the COPEWELL team so that all items are scored from 0 (very low) to 1 (very high). While the COPEWELL computational model score is a mid-score (see COPEWELL, 2022c), the stakeholder's average score is closer to the low end. It is important to note that COPEWELL data is county-level, so any reported scores lose some



accuracy when focusing on city-level perceptions. Therefore, the disconnect between stakeholder and COPEWELL scores could suggest that Potttsboro ranks lower than other cities in Grayson County, or that the group we assembled was more critical of Potttsboro. Please refer to **Appendix A** for a full county snapshot based on the computational model.

Grayson County	Score
Community Functioning	.52
Population Factors	.53
Preparedness and Response	.55
Prevention and Mitigation	.59
Resources for Change	.51
Social Capital and Cohesion	.51

Source: COPEWELL, 2022c; COPEWELL computational model and data.

PRE-SURVEY PROCESS AND THEMATIZING

Our research team **designed a pre-survey in Qualtrics** to take the place of the individual scoring component in the COPEWELL implementation process. Instead of having the group review and assign individual scores to domain items during FG2, we opted to have this process occur between FG1 and FG2. There were two primary reasons for this adaptation to the COPEWELL process: (1) assigning the pre-survey as a between-session task gave stakeholders more time to review and consider the self-assessment rubric, and (2) gave more time during FG2 to discuss stakeholder rationale for their scores.

For context, the COPEWELL framework considers the Community Functioning domain to include “the ability of a community to deliver goods and services to residents,” and this domain “predicts functioning after a disaster using the computational system dynamics model” (COPEWELL, 2022b). This domain falls under the Pre-Event Functioning portion of the COPEWELL model, which determines the degree to which an event impacts community functioning and recovery. The Community Functioning Domain is composed of the following items (COPEWELL, 2022i):

- **Governance and Economy**, which involves “a community’s capacity to engage its residents fully and equitably in a thriving and diversified economy and in an efficient governance system that enables prudent policy-making, preserves the rule of law, and balances present and future needs.”
- **Life necessities**, which involves a “community’s capacity to provide and maintain systems and infrastructure that enable sustained access to goods and services that are indispensable for life, including food, water, housing, and education.”
- **Health and wellbeing**, which involves “a community’s capacity to promote, nurture, and protect the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of all people wherever they live, learn, work, worship, and play.”
- **Critical infrastructure**, which involves “a community’s capacity—embodied in physical capital, organizations, personnel, and procedure—to move people, goods, and/or electronic information safely, efficiently, and reliably, within, into or out of the area, affording economic and social opportunities to residents on an equitable basis.”

Following FG1, we adapted sections of the Community Functioning self-assessment rubric that were appropriate for a survey instrument (see COPEWELL Pilot Process Report Eger et al., 2023, Appendix D for an example). We sent stakeholders an email after FG1 that included a link to the survey along with instructions for completion and a PDF copy of the rubric their group selected. The survey itself opened with an introduction that provided instructions to stakeholders, along with research team contact information in the case of questions or technical issues. The survey was arranged so that the stakeholders received the COPEWELL definition of each domain item from the self-assessment rubric, including examples of low and optimal capacity. The survey then asked stakeholders – **using a sliding scale from 1 (very low capacity) to 10 (very high capacity)** – to assign their score for the item. Each domain item included a reminder that the research team was interested in honest opinions based on stakeholders’ current understanding or experience with the item in question. A space was provided, following the sliding scale, for stakeholders to explain the reason for their score selection.

After stakeholders completed the pre-survey, we aggregated both stakeholders’ scores and qualitative rationales to generate a thematized summary for each item of the Community Functioning rubric. These summaries allowed us to share the anonymized data with stakeholders during FG2 in order to facilitate conversations around priority items and begin ideating reasonable next steps.

In the exit interviews, we asked stakeholders to clarify how they individually scored the rubric via the pre-survey. Stakeholders had varied responses and approaches, ranging from attempts to be as honest as possible, to starting from a neutral place for each item, and to feeling as if they had scored higher than they should have out of their love of the community.

Most of the Pottsville stakeholders described the emotional process of scoring the COPEWELL pre-survey and how their identification with the community impacted them. Stakeholders worried about negative scoring, being “too harsh,” and some edited down their pre-survey critiques.

Charley summarized her scoring emotions, “I felt really bad...It made me feel better when we were in the second group that other people scored it literally the same way... I didn’t feel like I was giving the kid the F in school instead of the A.” Like Charley, almost all of the stakeholders worried about being “too harsh,” including some even deleting negative examples in navigating how to accurately respond to the rubric and critique a town they love. As such, we recommend that conveners and facilitators prepare stakeholders for potential emotional scoring difficulty and encourage their honesty and robust responses to current limitations and strengths.

★ **TIP TO TRY**

Conveners and facilitators should prepare stakeholders for potential emotional scoring difficulties and encourage their honesty and robust responses to current limitations and strengths. Getting all the challenges down will help to build toward collaborative responses.

Stakeholders also talked about how the rubric made them think about these areas in ways they would not have otherwise and that they took into account experiences and/or knowledge of other locations or similar rubric processes. One stakeholder described the scoring process as challenging and being surprised by other’s scores, while another noted that they took time to carefully review the rubric before scoring. The box on the following page describes the stakeholders’ presurvey scoring process reflections.



POTTSBORO STAKEHOLDERS' SCORING PROCESSES

In the stakeholders' own words, they described the pre-survey COPEWELL rubric scoring processes as:

The way I developed my scoring is I **started at neutral**. Which, for me, was a five. And...I sat at my notepad and just typed in everything that I could think about the subject. And then from that I would plus or minus the neutral five, and for the most part, that's where I would land. ...**It was really a challenge**...I would find a topic like infrastructure, and I would – like streets and roads. And I would start listing example after example after example. ...And so, then I would edit back. And when I looked at the rubric, I was really **stunned at the results** of the survey...I'm not familiar with the city process, but I do keep up with county and city budgets as part of my role ... the cumulative scores were much lower, I thought, 'What?' These guys have a different point of view maybe at the rubric or, you know, I certainly didn't expect 10s. But I was rather shocked at the scores. I was feeling I was being neutral, and yet seemed **I skewed things a little bit higher in the ranking**. – Irma

I guess the detail of the questions made me think specifically, because when you just have the general topic of community resilience after a disaster, **it's pretty abstract**. But then really going through some specific – and honestly, I can't even remember now what questions were in the survey, but I think it prompted some **specific thoughts** about, 'Well, what about this? What about that?' kind of thing? So, helping clarify. ...I think yeah. I mean mostly just **observation and having lived here** and the issues I see. – Charlotte

It was definitely good for me to kind of **focus on each individual category**, I guess, because, again, if it was left open to such a broad topic of how can we improve, I would be – you'd need to give me a whole week. So, it was **really nice** again to kind of sit on my own and think about these things and focus on them. However, really, I don't think I fully understood some of the topics, the **vast nature** of some of the topics, until we all got together [in FG2]. – Claudette

Well, it's kind of **biased**. It depends on the person. If you ask a person that never traveled to a different place, they can give the rubric a higher [score] ... I've been all over the place, so for me I would give more general [consideration], so cost [of living], is

that including weather, air, pollution, cultural, health service?... How did I do my score? I **compared your model** with the interesting one that I used [in a different project]. – Rose

What I did was I went through that first and **took some time to think** about the different questions and the different things the questions entailed, and I think that was a good idea. I don't know if it was intended to do it that way, but I just stumbled upon it that way and did that first, and then it was a lot easier when I was going through since I already had all my thoughts together.....At least from my perspective and [my work experiences], **I thought it was very good** just because you kind of think about it as a top-down structure that way, whereas without having the framework from the PDF, I think a lot of that part would have been missed. ...There were a **couple that I was unsure of**, really having to think of an answer that would come up, in general. Whenever it was questioning or asking about how some people would feel in the community that needed help, and things like that, I just had to think about how things could be better, and think about issues like there were a couple of things that we had talked about before for some vulnerable people, so I kind of **had to put myself in their shoes**. – Kyle

I felt really bad. You know, doing it by yourself. And I think I said that in the meeting was, 'Okay, I feel better because I wasn't the only one that scored at that level.' Because I think especially in my role, I tend to **try to err on the positive of things**. But if I was being honest, I scored it very low. And so, it kinda **conflicts** with how I see my professional role and trying to be the uplifter and maneuver with that. Well, here's what I actually think and the reality of it. So, it made me feel better when we were in the second group that other people scored it literally the same way. ... **Being mindful of just Pottsboro, trying to be authentic and focused**, I think was my experience doing it. – Charley

You know, I wasn't very effective on the scores as I thought I should have been, that's for sure. I think that I gave our town better scores than perhaps I should have, because maybe just a love of community, and maybe because I didn't want to really just blast this. Whereas I think that other folks ... gave us lower scores that were probably more in line with my thinking. – Bret

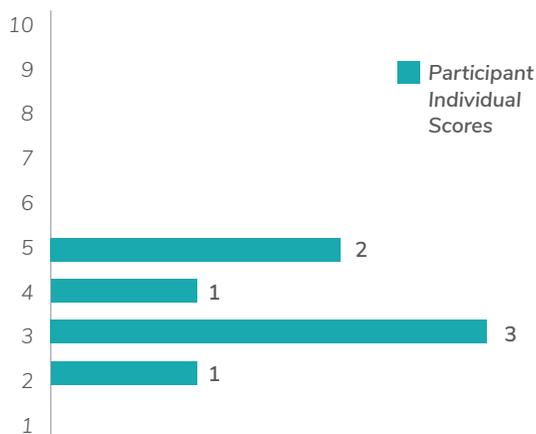
POTTSBORO SURVEY SUMMARIES – INDIVIDUAL ITEMS

Here, we present the responses from the data we aggregated from the COPEWELL rubric pre-survey. Our research team used the related open-ended stakeholder rationales to develop themes, under which we organized the rationale responses. The next section will go into more detail when stakeholders further discussed their decision-making in scoring the Community Functioning rubric in FG2. **Please note** that the graphs and themes provided below include responses that were submitted after FG2; one stakeholder was not able to submit their scores beforehand, but their responses are included here for a more complete representation.

Governance and Economy

The average stakeholder score for the Governance and Economy domain item was 3.6. This score indicates the majority of stakeholders view their community as having low capacity regarding the governance and economy item. Most stakeholders scored this domain item at a three, while others scored at a five, four, or two.

FIGURE 1.1
Participant Scores: Governance and Economy



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Community Functioning COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023.

For this item, we developed three major themes:

Resources and Funding. Here, stakeholders shared concerns around the city’s resources, especially considering anticipated population growth.

- Generally, the local government is under-resourced and underfunded.
- There is a need for more proactive planning for anticipated population growth.
- There is a perceived lack of institutional support for the new city manager, despite stakeholders’ own excitement for the new leadership.
- There is a lack of new commercial businesses and a need for more substantial commerce areas.
- There is a historic cycle in Pottsboro of reacting to problems and patching together solutions afterwards.

Matters of Public Trust. Stakeholders identified issues with local government and city employees that negatively impact community trust at micro and macro levels.

- Despite positive election turnout and community involvement via social media in recent local elections, stakeholders identified a need to **combat misinformation.**
- The community perceives the local government as out of touch with needs and concerns.
- Government communication is perceived as inaccessible, leading the community to feel that decisions are made arbitrarily.
- While public meetings are well-attended, they are held infrequently, and there is a need to provide residents with more time to formulate public comments(s).
- There was a past instance of inappropriate release of private information by law enforcement.
- Despite these issues, there has been excitement about recent changes in local government, including new leadership.

Barriers to Individual and Community Economic Growth. Stakeholders identified key issues that prevent the community from experiencing more robust economic growth.

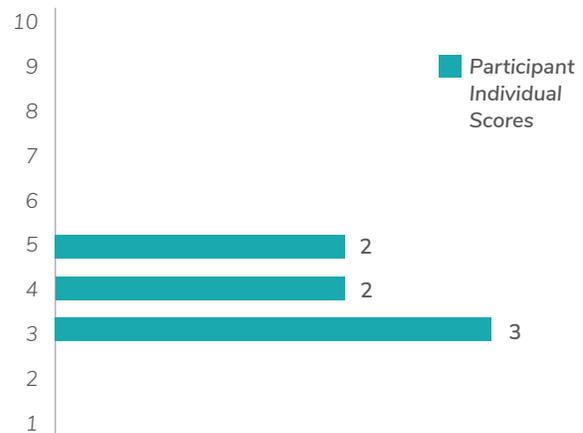
- There is a lack of public transportation, including access to public goods and services.
- Job opportunities are lacking in the area, as many jobs are seasonal and rely on either trained labor or pay low wages.
- Community members perceive a lack of resources to invest in or otherwise plan for their future.

Life Necessities

The Life Necessities domain item, scored at 3.9, was one of two to receive the highest average score from Pottsville stakeholders. Most stakeholders individually scored this area at a three, while others scored at a four or five.

FIGURE 1.2

Participant Scores: Life Necessities



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Community Functioning COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023.

For this item, we developed five common themes:

Water. Stakeholders spoke about several issues with their water source(s).

- Though infrastructure is under improvement, there are issues with the water treatment and sewage system, as well as a lack of funding for this system.
- The community relies on water solely from neighboring areas unless their residence has a personal well, limiting control over water quality.
- The water for the lakeside community routinely contains excess contaminants, and there are taste and odor issues.



Housing. Stakeholders also identified issues with the quality of housing in their community.

- There is a lack of affordable housing in the area, generally.
- Affordable housing that is in the area is perceived by some residents to report more 911 calls.
- Homes are in visible disrepair and/or are not up to code.
- There is also a lack of rental properties, as those homeowners make use of short-term rentals via sites such as VRBO or AirBnB.
- In-city apartments have income restrictions for residency eligibility.

Food Access/Security. Here, stakeholders indicated a few issues with access to high-quality, healthy food.

- There is one grocery store and one Dollar General in the community, and neither store has fresh produce or healthy options.
- Food prices at the grocery store are higher than in other areas, including locations on the outskirts of town.
- Recently, the SNAP center for elderly community members closed its doors.

Economic Strength. Economic concerns appeared in this domain item as well, with impacts for both community members and the city.

- There are excess empty buildings in the city that could otherwise be utilized by businesses, generating taxable income.
- Stakeholders worry that a stagnant workforce could add to business closures.
- There is a lack of doctor's offices and limited childcare options, impacting community member's time and income seeking alternative options.

Education. Stakeholders pointed to a couple of key issues that negatively impact the perceived quality of education.

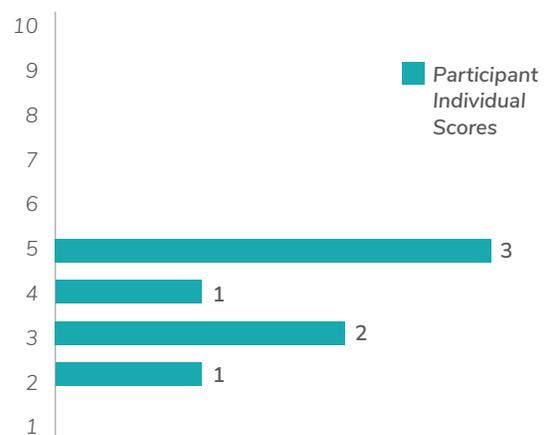
- There is a perception that schools are not as safe and supportive of an environment as they should be.
- There is also a perceived lack of quality of education and a lack of involvement from some parents/guardians.

Health and Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing domain item is the other item with the highest average score, a 3.9. Most of the stakeholders individually scored this item a little higher than others, at a five. Other stakeholders scored at a four, three, or two.

FIGURE 1.3

Participant Scores: Health and Wellbeing



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Community Functioning COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023.

For this item, three themes emerged:

Lack of Healthcare Options. A lack of healthcare was mentioned regarding another item, with stakeholders clarifying the impact further here in this section of the rubric.

- Community members use the local ER for primary care, which is often the more affordable option.
- Generally, **healthcare in the area is unaffordable**, particularly for uninsured community members.
- There is inadequate eldercare in the area, with a shortage of home healthcare workers.
- Community members are hesitant to seek mental healthcare; limited options are available, and practitioners offering sliding-scale payments have long waitlists.

- Healthcare practitioners generally do not stay in the area as Grayson County is perceived as a “training ground” rather than a landing point.

Lack of Childcare Options. The issue of childcare was also raised at an earlier point in the survey, though stakeholders elaborated further here.

- There is a latchkey program available at school(s), but there is a waitlist.
- There is a lack of childcare centers, with questions regarding quality of those that are available.
- Families struggle with childcare, generally, in cases where grandparents try to fill the gap as caregivers.

Social Environment. Compared to other items, stakeholders had more divergent perspectives on the social environment, leading to mixed perceptions and experiences.

- There are many “vibrant” social spaces (clubs, the library, churches, the senior center, etc.).
- There is a general perception that life is going well, with a positive outlook on life.
- Alternatively, there is a perception of dissatisfaction with life and little sense of purpose, with some community members feeling emotionally or socially cut off from others.
- There is a lack of celebrating the diverse cultures and identities in the area.
- There are limited and poorly attended events in the area.
- Sociability is limited by the availability of time and/or access to transportation.
- There is a lack of space for community members with functional and access needs.

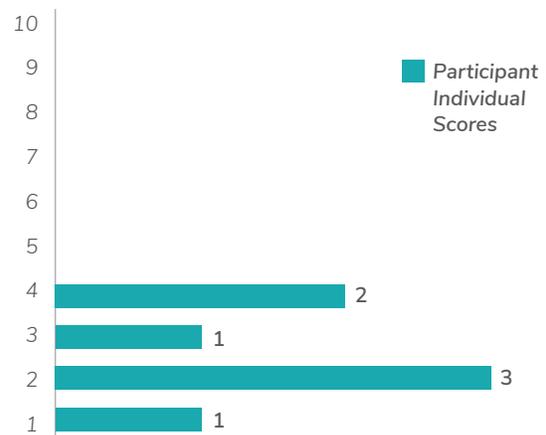


Critical Infrastructure

The Critical Infrastructure item received the lowest average stakeholder score at a 2.6, indicating that this area might require the most attention of resiliency building efforts in Pottsville. Most stakeholders individually scored this item at a two, though others scored at a four, three, or one.

FIGURE 1.4

Participant Scores: Critical Infrastructure



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Community Functioning COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023.

Three emerging themes for this item were:

Transportation. Transportation was another recurring theme in pre-survey responses, and here, stakeholders provided additional, critical details.

- **Public transportation is “almost nonexistent,”** and ride-share services are very unreliable.
- Roads and bridges are aging, too narrow, and in disrepair. Prior attempts at repairs have been inadequate, and the bridges themselves are not up to code.
- There is a general lack of sidewalks, which impacts walkability, safety, and accessibility.

Utilities/Services. Here, stakeholders pointed to specific utilities or services that are lacking and that have ramifications or emergency scenarios.

- Generally, **utility infrastructure is aged.**
- There is limited broadband connectivity, with differential pricing for those outside of Pottsboro proper.
- Cell service is unreliable.
- Local EMS relies on cell and radio services for emergency response, and these systems are not fully backed up with redundant power sources.
- Residents who rely on streaming services for entertainment or news may not be plugged into local news and information.

Local Environment. Stakeholders shared some concerns about the overall local environment that relate to health and local government action.

- There is a need for the city to proactively plan for the environmental impacts of population growth.
- There are perceived air quality issues or worsened air quality with population growth.

While stakeholders identified several issues in their pre-survey responses, transportation, healthcare, childcare, and connectivity were repeated or key cross-cutting responses.

Transportation impacts not only the current workforce and social opportunities but also has stark implications for any crisis that requires emergency evacuation. A lack of quality healthcare might result in a population that has poorer health generally, which can exacerbate recovery timelines post-event. Connectivity is another major issue that leads to poor emergency communication or access to emergency updates.

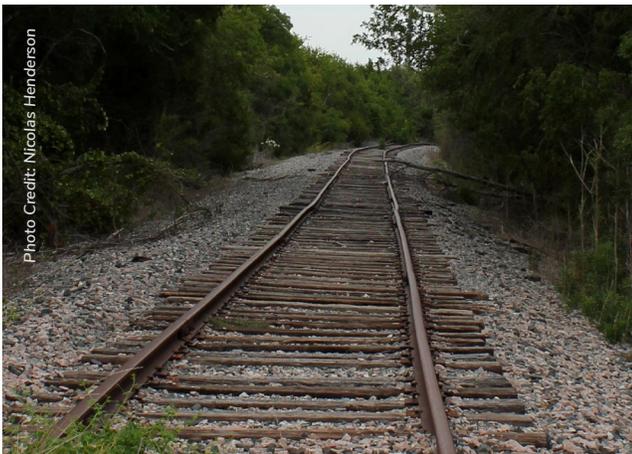


Photo Credit: Nicolas Henderson

DISCUSSING AND PLANNING WITH THE COMMUNITY FUNCTIONING RUBRIC

In this section, we move from the pre-survey responses to the discussions of rubric scoring and initial first-step planning from focus group 2 (FG2).

The purpose of FG2 was twofold: to review and elaborate on survey responses and to mark the starting point for action items to address resiliency challenges.

The research team walked stakeholders through the aggregated scores and thematized rationale summaries for each domain item. We then opened the floor to stakeholders to elaborate on their scores as they saw fit and explain the areas that most impacted their scores and the most pressing concern area that shaped their scoring. To keep the session within its stated time limit, we told stakeholders that if their comments duplicated another’s comments, they could note the repetition and “skip” responding for the sake of time. While the stakeholders often had overlap, almost all shared at least one response to each item.

Stakeholders reflected on the COPEWELL scoring process for the individual pre-surveys and also in the collective conversations. All stakeholders worried about having negative scores, being perceived as “too harsh,” and many felt they held back, edited their critiques, or scored too high in their presurvey, as we described above. This was openly discussed in FG2 as stakeholders processed their experiences with the COPEWELL rubrics.

We asked stakeholders to discuss the process behind their scoring and to identify any primary reasons for choosing the score they indicated in their pre-survey. We now turn to the Pottsboro scoring and resiliency challenges discussions in our second collaboration session.

Governance and Economy

For Governance and Economy, stakeholders' FG2 conversations focused extensively on a lack of economic stability (including a tax base for many resources), challenges with past governance's deficit of county-wide and regional participation, communication challenges with the local government, and understanding the differences with the city limits vs. the broader county for what resources the city could provide.

Charley perhaps best described these challenges in her exit interview when discussing her scoring process of governance and economy and community functioning holistically:

“Pottsboro has **honestly been its own island**. Very disconnected from the rest of the county, disenfranchised. I think all of the efforts go toward the school district. If you wanna see a “good ole American hometown school district,” that’s Pottsboro ISD. I always refer to it as beloved, but it is [also] as closed as you could ever imagine...They don’t participate with the rest of the county in any capacity. They’re not represented. They don’t show up, they really thrive on that kind of, “We do our own thing.”

The impacts of traditions on the government and its school district created an “island” which Charley and other stakeholders shared their concerns about. However, she experienced a new hope from participating in the pilot study itself as a way to begin to address these tensions in the government, explaining it gave **new connections to the county for emergency management and resiliency planning** through this collaboration, “That’s why

I was so thrilled to connect with the [city leader in the pilot study]. I mean at least if we get one relationship built outside of the Library Director and the library because I use all of our public libraries when disasters happen.” In the bulleted list below, we share the rubric scoring justification stakeholders discussed for governance and economy

Governance and Economy Rubric Scoring Justifications

- **Charlotte:** “I think I scored a two on this with underlining that it’s just a **lack of resources**. It is no reflection on [the city leader stakeholders] at all. I feel really good about that. It’s under-resourced, and growth is coming this way.”
- **Claudette:** “Regarding resources and funding, [it] was definitely the **lack of commerce** that most definitely affects the area. Without businesses and sales tax coming in, it’s really hard for us to get those resources. So, that was my big focus for resources and funding.”
- **Bret:** “The **sales tax** is an issue. How do we get businesses to – how [do] we attract the businesses to come to Pottsboro, Texas? And the income level of people who are going to come is not going to be a TI (Texas Instruments). But if it’s a Domino’s Pizza, it’s still gonna be probably a lower income kind of situation. It doesn’t neglect from the sales tax that will be generated. The other thing that I was concerned about was [the] **lack of information coming down from our elected officials**, opportunities for forums to speak. We have an election coming up, and I haven’t really heard anything in the way of a forum where we can hear the people running, what their ideas are for us.”
- **Irma:** “I scored a five, viewing five as neutral. And mainly that’s because I don’t live within the city limits. So, I’m confident that there is information available that I don’t have access to. But even from interactions with the city, even with interactions within the community as a whole, **lack of resources and lack of communication**, getting the message out, is definitely important, especially when the message is ‘we need help’. And what kind of resources are out there that we may not know about?”

- **Rose:** “I agree with everyone where lack of resources in public policies, sales tax, and in our specific...region. We have [a] lack of communication in terms of resources, what type of newspaper or social media. How can we...**connect people together?** Sometimes we have an issue with broadband. People [are] not able, cannot afford a broadband system, and they are not cover[ing] most of the local area.”
- **Charley:** “I think it’s all been said. I feel better because when I did it I thought my scores were very low. I scored at a three because I really see the struggle in how **people get siloed** and they get **very focused on whoever cries the loudest**, whether it’s roads and bridges or it’s – so, taking these on a bigger picture seems to be – I completely agree with Bret. A lack of community and leadership and things like that. So, that was easy to go last. I feel better about my score now. I felt really crappy. I’m usually the, ‘Let’s give them a great score.’ And I’m like, ‘I just can’t do it.’”
- **Kyle:** I know that a lot has to do with the size of the town itself, and I know there have been some other similar-sized communities that have gone through recent growth, but it doesn’t seem like there is, at least in the Pottsboro area, that there is **a lot of help with the economic growth** part of it...I think that would be a big help in shifting the mindset. I know that there’s probably going to be **a little bit of pushback** just because people who live in small towns are living in small towns for a reason, but at

the same time, there are ways to help create jobs and bring businesses in that would help benefit the city, and to be able to **bring in the revenue so the city could provide more services.**”

The research team asked the group, via a Zoom polling feature, to indicate which theme was the most pressing challenge; all selected the theme of **resources and funding** as a place to start. In their discussion of this item, they offered initial starting ideas of (1) resident discussions about the city vs. county areas for voting, taxes, and resources, (2) grants for building resources for rural areas outside of city limits, and (3) looking at similar sized rural areas in Texas as models for business development. Because this was the first item we discussed, stakeholders shared the most ideas here in FG2, whereas later items felt more constrained for time for brainstorming together.

First, for the resident discussions about the city and county, stakeholders explained that educating the public and opening conversations about what is (and is not) city limits and how that impacts resources the city could provide would be an open, educational communication approach.



Furthermore, the stakeholders discussed possible social media and general informational communications campaigns to better disseminate this information for voting and sources. As Charlotte suggested:

“One, I think, fairly simple thing would be in the zip code 75076, that includes both inside city limits and outside, many people do not understand the difference with the elections coming up. People were getting animated about who they were going to vote for, and then the people who lived outside city limits, somebody commented how **they felt like they were being discriminated against because they couldn't vote in the election.** And so, maybe even just a map that we could post on social media of these are the people who live inside city limits. And if you live outside, these are the officials that you would be talking to when you have issues with roads or whatever.

Claudette concurred about the confusion that occurred for residents, “If you're not in the city and don't pay city taxes, you don't get to vote for how those people's taxes are used, I guess, is how that works...We did get a lot of people that – same with mailing addresses. They think, ‘Well, I live in Pottsville because my address is Pottsville,’ but they may be in Denison School District or something like that. It's very confusing when it comes between city limits and [outside city of limits].” These distinctions were confusing for even long-term residents, and this limited how the city could respond to larger requests by the community for resiliency and general planning. Claudette echoed, “Going along with what Charlotte said, where do we go from here is the education but also the understanding that the city, because we are fully taxpayer-funded, we don't have the ability to do any sort of assistance outside of our city limits, outside of our borders, as much as we would like to.” She suggested residents reaching out to county leaders and even Homeowner's Associations (HOAs) helping to educate and “have the ability to really bring in resources and say, ‘Hey, we need help.’”

Importantly, Bret offered a differing perspective that despite living outside of city limits, those in the larger community may want to be connected and knowledgeable of the city limits legislation, elected officials, and their actions because it also impacted them. He told the group, **“Even though I live near the lake and out of town, I'm very much interested in**

who is our leadership in the city of Pottsville. Even though I couldn't vote, I would definitely attend those kinds of functions where individuals are saying, ‘This is why I wanna be mayor or city council person,’ and see if they're going to be moving in the direction that I like.”

Second, stakeholders discussed **rural grants to support needs outside of the city limits** especially. Claudette explained, “There's a lot of grant funding I know that's out there for rural communities that are specifically not in city limits. That's something that people just may not know about...I know The Council has been really good about getting information like that out there. But again, if people don't know where to get that information, they just may not know.” Bret was excited to learn about these resources for grant opportunities, as different county groups like volunteer fire departments “sit outside of the Pottsville community...They always need resources. So, it's good to know that there are avenues to find grant opportunities.” Grants as a central solution emerged throughout this focus group, something we discuss further in the recommendations section.

Third, stakeholders discussed the **challenges of a lack of economic development and business tax base** to support the city's needs. Charley offered a potential starting place or looking at other nearby or similar Texas rural communities for their economic growth plans. In her exit interview, she provided the example of:

“I know a similar-sized town – well, similar probably five years ago – was Salina, and I know they were very forward-thinking on how to get some economic growth in that area. I think that's probably one of the things that is lacking in Pottsville, just that there's not an economic development office that really focuses solely on that purpose of trying to bring businesses and things in that way. **It's a very heavy lift for the city itself to try and do that because they've already got so much on their plate,** so I think that would probably be an area that could be addressed that would help out quite a bit, but like I said, it's more due to the size, apparently, with Pottsville. There's already so much on the city council's plate that it's really hard to focus on those other things.

Charley felt encouraged by the City Manager and Library Director's work toward developing a community center to also help with community development that could support businesses' desires to be in the community.

Life Necessities

Life necessities sparked a deep discussion among stakeholders about how many residents and areas of the community lacked primary necessities in Pottsville, including housing, water, and education (which are central features that COPEWELL invites users to score on).

Water repeatedly surfaced as a theme in both focus groups and exit interviews, which included water access, water quality, and water needs in an emergency like from Winter Storm Uri challenges.

In her exit interview, Claudette described the complexities of **Pottsville currently having 0% of their own drinking water**, which the group discussed extensively in FG1 and some in FG2:

“We buy 100% of our drinking water from the city of Denison, right next door. So, during the freeze, Number one: we weren’t able to control or really have any say in what happens in Denison. So, in Denison, if their generators went down or if their water froze up, well, that means our water froze up. Unfortunately, there’s a particular part of our area that if the wind blows too hard, the power goes out, and that’s something that we’ve been in touch with the electrical providers about. And so, it was eye-opening from talking to current staff and the mayor, former leadership who was here, [and] it was really a lack of, other than being able to help clear the roads from the ice and help prepare them, we didn’t have any backup. We didn’t have any backup plan for what happens if we can’t get water.”

Claudette further recounted how the former City Manager, the Library Director, and community members with wells helped supply water that “really brought everyone together in that sense; however, a year – over a year and a half later, [The City is]

still to this day getting complaints that we were not better prepared.” Other stakeholders also narrated the immense impact of Winter Storm Uri and also of the library and other community members’ impact to help without a city plan. Claudette added, “It was days and days people went without water. And that’s one of the unfortunate parts of being a small city and having to rely on outside services – if that service goes down, we don’t have the ability to start it back up again. I think it really highlighted the fact that in the past **Pottsville has been very reactive to things instead of proactive.**” Housing and food insecurity also became a major focus of the FG1 and FG2 discussions. In the bulleted list below, we share the rubric scoring justification stakeholders discussed.

Life Necessities Rubric Scoring Justifications

- Charley: “I mean, clearly, all of these. And I think I scored it as a three as well, with **transportation, the childcare, and the education**, and a lot of those barriers. We had a good meeting yesterday about the Pottsville School District and how supportive families are and engaged in the schools. But then, there’s a gap before they even get to school or after high school. So, I saw that as a real downfall in getting newer points and bringing in new companies and things that can actually build the economy.”
- Rose scored a 3 and explained her recent county-level collaborations to assess these areas and found our themes “spot on” from what she had seen at county levels of the top five needs: “The first one was **food**, then **transportation**, then severe **lack of childcare**, and a lot of **mental illness healthcare** issues, and lack of **affordable housing**. So, this is right on.”
- Irma focused on a lack of affordable housing impacting volunteer firefighting: “Number on this list for me is affordable housing. And I’ll give you an example. Of our employees, one lives within the Pottsville community...These are young people who need housing to work in this area... **Lack of housing** is number one on that list.”

- **Bret:** “I don’t know whether it’s because of people moving in from outside the community who have driven the prices up, but there’s really **no opportunity to buy a house** today in the Pottsville area, in my opinion, that is going to meet the going rate of affordable housing rent. So, it’s a bad time.” Bret also discussed the **need for food** increasing in local youth program, “numbers have been increasing. New clientele. So, there’s definitely some food issues going on for kids who are in the Pottsville schools and elementary and so on. But those are my two keys, is lack of affordable housing and lack of food resources.”
- **Claudette:** “Echoing pretty much what everyone else has said, the majority of what we see is **lack of affordable housing. I work for the city, and I can’t afford to live in the city.** So, it’s fully – completely understand that.” Claudette also discussed food and water issues: “If you really think about it, **water and food is at the core of everything.** So, I echo everything that everyone says with the addition of the surrounding areas, the areas surrounding the city limits. The water sources are a concern.”
- **Charlotte:** “**Water would probably be at my top.** And living outside city limits, it’s a private water company that we use outside of city limits. And what I’ve learned is they’re not regulated the same way municipalities are. And I think both in terms of water quality but also their fee structure. They can basically make their fees whatever they want, and there’s been a lot of community talk through the years about, ‘We need to protest this.’ And probably hundreds of thousands of dollars in attorney fees, etc., and just basically it has been it is what it is.”

Again, we used the Zoom polling feature to indicate which theme was the most pressing challenge: We had one person vote for water, four for affordable housing, and one for economy. Because housing was the main focus, stakeholders brainstormed **initial starting places to understand housing challenges and starting solutions.**

Bret called for getting a national builder from surrounding areas to create subdivisions that were closer to \$200,000 homes instead of \$500-700,000. Irma added, “In looking at housing as well, on another spectrum, we’re a certified retirement community, yet we don’t have senior housing.”

Rose echoed her suggestions for affordable and subsidized housing and shared her experience from working in a different state, “We created [a] policy of every new builder come in, they had to set aside 20% of low income or affordable housing income. And as public housing sector that I used to work for, we have a department just to taking care – go out and search for property. We build those sites... So, I believe this current HUD and higher government have to step in and create some policy to have local to balance out.”

Should the city work toward affordable housing initiatives, Eva mentioned in her exit interview that “the critical infrastructure of the housing development situation in that area” was a central need for “some standard quality governance plus an influx of money needed to develop some of the affordable housing that is of good quality.” She discussed the distinct income levels near the lake with a mansion next to a “not well-kept-up trailer” and how often **lower income housing was simply on the property of a large house** where “there’s no governance over that... or at least not sufficient governance of it.” Pottsville, for Eva, needed to “be able to reach all financial aspects, people with all financial levels of resource... They need something that is very affordable, and is housing supportive – or, supported housing – but, that has decent quality to it.” She suggested the city look at nearby communities where the “city has a lot of apartment complexes that are subsidized and offer decent housing for low-income individuals.”

Charlotte also believed that with new subsidized housing initiatives, there should also be city, library, and other community education programs to disrupt assumptions about such housing.

She recounted seeing social media pushback to a current low-income Potttsboro community around crime and seeking support from police records and broader information. “Because I think if we’re talking about affordable housing, there’ll be pushback from some people like, ‘No, we don’t want that here.’ So, just having a discussion around what is affordable housing and does it increase crime rates and those sorts of things.” Charlotte’s example illustrates broader assumptions that residents make about housing access, social class, and crime. Furthermore, Charlotte affirms that having broader community support for community housing would also require conversations and education about why housing is a critical need in Potttsboro now and into the future.



Health and Wellbeing

Stakeholders discussed healthcare challenges they faced living in a rural area with limited hospital and provider access and how this shaped health needs, especially of the most vulnerable community members, including children, elders, disabled people, and people living on restricted incomes. **Some themes of housing and transportation are also echoed here** when considering holistic wellbeing.

Fewer stakeholders considered the wellbeing focus, as they saw the priority of basic healthcare to get addressed before wellness could be fully broadened to focus on holistic health and wellbeing.

A few did discuss the need for entertainment, culture, and activities. One example from Bret called for Potttsboro to have more **arts and culture focus** that the COPEWELL framework includes in this category. He shared his experience visiting a nearby city’s jazz museum during a jazz weekend, “The museum is neat, [and] the festival was good. And I’m not even a jazz lover. I just did it because it was something different and that we could enjoy.” In the bulleted list below, we share the rubric scoring justification stakeholders discussed.

Health and Wellbeing Rubric Scoring Justifications

- Charlotte: “**Healthcare was my interest combined with transportation.** For people who need to get to Sherman, if they don’t have a car, don’t have public transportation, that’s a real issue. And I agree [that] there are a lot of people who are older, when we talk about long-term **housing or senior housing.** Those could all be combined together. So, that’s why the **telehealth room** started at the library, to address some of those needs.”

- **Bret:** “I think back about my scores on all of these items, and they’re probably generously at a five. But I’m feeling it should be probably more like a three. But I saw a couple of things you listed were things I personally had mentioned. The **healthcare situation for many is that it’s tough**. For someone like me, it’s easy to go to the doc in a box, pay your \$100.00, get whatever you need, and move on. But that’s a big deal for some. Big deal...The **childcare issue**, also rough. We probably **need another latchkey** or a bigger latchkey operation. I know the school is going through some construction, and so at one time, they had a nice facility, but that building is gone. They’re gonna put a new junior high. Where they’re at now is in a temporary facility, and it’ll get better. But it could be a year or two.”

- **Irma:** “I scored this area as the lowest of all of my ratings, and obviously I have a real tie to healthcare options. That’s what I know most about. But there’s – and I think this is true overall. When you’re looking for information, when you’re trying to access information, it doesn’t fall in your lap. For example, **social opportunities**. It doesn’t fall in your lap. You don’t see it like we used to get the newspaper at our front door type of thing. You have to actively pursue information. And most people, especially younger people, won’t do that. The specific issues about healthcare have all been mentioned, I think. **Childcare options** as well. The **social atmosphere**, it depends on which window you look in as to whether it’s really as vibrant as it appears from the outside. You have to be a member of those or some linked into those opportunities to participate. Otherwise, **you really are isolated.**”

- **Rose:** Compared to another state with extensive healthcare support: “[I’m] relieved because I gave this a really bad score. I have 2.5 for this... For me, **healthcare** is the crucial, number one element to measure the wealth of society. And I do love Texas on the policy of free tax income, but at the same time, it’s [a] lack of healthcare... With the healthcare system, they have to work things out to have Texas to provide for **senior, special needs**. They have to step in and take care of this problem.”

After the Zoom poll, all stakeholders **chose lack of healthcare for the initial action steps**. They also brought in examples of childcare and workforce issues into our discussion and the need for broader grants to help address health and wellbeing. Rose also believed businesses and Workforce Solutions could be part of the solutions to childcare needs and said, “There’s a lot of programs out there. The next part they want to incorporate were the big business that they held childcare inside...Again, for me childcare is number one because that’s the golden primary age.”

Charlotte shared the numerous conversations she had with Charley and others about this topic for young children “before they get to kindergarten, essentially, under the age of five.” Stakeholders **prioritized childcare needs** in both focus groups as a priority for Pottsville. As Charlotte explained, however, getting support for the elderly and childcare was harder to actualize:



“There were some concerns about one of the childcare facilities in the city of Pottsville, and it just so happened in the last weeks [that] they closed, and now it’s for sale. I’ve had two developers come in and say to me, “We really wanna put in senior living,” and I’ve said, “Great. Tell me where.” And then, they come back after however long they do their studies, and they say, “Sorry, it’s not financially responsible. It’s not a profitable business.” And then, they leave.

So, a lot of that. And I hate to say that money is the root of everything, but unfortunately, when it comes to bringing people into the city or into our area, it’s, “This isn’t profitable. Your population isn’t right.” There’s always excuses. So, I could not agree more, that the healthcare – we don’t have doctors’ offices. We don’t have really daycare anymore now. There’s really not much. Everyone has to go to Sherman, or Denison, or even further to get those things. And it’s something that we desperately need.

Here, Charlotte surfaced a theme that came up throughout FG2 and exit interviews that for businesses to invest in Pottsville, there was ultimately financial and/or political interests that shaped their decision to not create infrastructure in Pottsville. This also shaped the health and wellbeing of children and older adults, as Charlotte discussed.

The group continued to discuss grants as a potential solution, and Charlotte saw an opportunity from this collaboration to **begin to plan grants**. She argued that grant planning was crucial because solutions are, “not falling in people’s laps and so it really is gonna take a lot of work and, just as an overall, I really appreciate everybody getting together and brainstorming all of this because it’s going to take work, but we’re all on the same page.”

The Library Director offered one current grant example on mobile healthcare to address the intersection of health and transportation constraints:

“We, through a grant, have a community health worker who can go out to organizations in the community, like VFW and American Legion, and do at least blood pressure checks and some things like that and then direct people to the resources since that always seems to be the issue, is helping inform people where the resources are. And then, we have had discussions about having a mobile healthcare unit that could have set appointments. Every Tuesday they would be at the Pottsville Library, on Wednesdays they’d be in Bonham – that sort of thing. Of course, that’s expensive. We may have some funding potentially for that. But that would be, I think, a way to circumvent the transportation problem people have. It’s about us getting to where they are.

Finally, Dr. Eger reminded the group from FG1 that, “One other thing we might just put on that list to remember is this bullet point about the lack of long-term health practitioners. And so, that comes back to some of our conversations about workforce development as well.”

Critical Infrastructure

Finally, for the Pottsville stakeholders, **issues of critical infrastructure were the most prominent item** throughout both focus groups. Before the research team even presented the COPEWELL rubric choices, transportation challenges were prevalent in FG1. This also tied into their concerns of infrastructure of roads and telecommunications in both focus groups. In the bulleted list below, we share the rubric scoring justification stakeholders discussed.

Critical Infrastructure Rubric Scoring Justifications

- **Charlotte** discussed the complexities of public transportation: “I have seen in other areas, other cities, is rather than having a public transportation system, like a route whatever, they would subsidize ridesharing, which I think is more appropriate for people here who live outside of city limits.”

- **Rose:** “**Transportation is a huge lack** in our region. First of all...I see [the] freeway building every day...We [are] grateful for that **expansion of those freeways**. So, TXDOT is doing great thing. But with transportation, offering [to] connect people together to grocery [and] healthcare; we [have a] real lack of transportation.”
- **Claudette:** “Public transport is something we get a lot for sure. But as a city [leader], when I see utilities, I think more like **water and sewer**, which we’ve kind of already talked about. Just in general, the infrastructure, whether it **be broadband, gas, water, sewer, electric**. A lot of those are unreliable in the area. In this area, if the wind blows too hard, I’ve got a whole neighborhood that just has **no electricity** until someone comes out. So, in general, that type of critical infrastructure, I think, is super important.”
- **Eva:** “You know, **basic needs are so intertwined** in its impact on [a] person’s ability to function that it’s almost impossible to tease out one of those things. If you don’t have **transportation**, and you don’t have a **place to sleep**, and you don’t have access to healthcare, and you don’t have **access to a cell phone** that’s going to work, you’re dead in the water these days. So, I don’t know how you don’t focus on all of it at the same time. You almost have to because in order to get somebody to function.”
- **Irma:** “**Transportation by all measures**. Looking as a service to the community, one of the things we look at is the condition of roads. So, I’m mainly talking about county responsibilities in our community rather than [the] city. We can get our ambulances and fire trucks around within the city fairly easily, but accessing some of the housing communities is just a matter of driving into their home. When we’re making capital vehicular apparatus purchase decisions, we have to look at if the road is gonna handle the weight of all that water. **Is the truck gonna be able to turn?** And almost in – what kinds of obstructions are in the way? So, for me, from that primary point of view – and of course, **as just as a resident, it’s just miserable to try to drive anywhere**. It’s uncomfortable. If I put a parent in the vehicle with me, they’re moaning and groaning everywhere I go because of the bumps and humps and such just – **they are in pain just driving down the road.**”

- **Bret** echoed all the road issues and the reduced routes of TAPS with ended funding for that transportation service. He told us the roads are too narrow: “**Getting a firetruck down there, if someone’s parked on the street, forget about it**. Buses meeting other cars as they’re delivering children home, bad. But [the] county is also difficult...It is very narrow. There’s always problems. But I did notice that our new commissioner is completely redoing [a county intersection]. And I appreciate it – making it wider and less bumpy. **So, things are happening. It’s just slow.**”

Most participants voted in the Zoom poll for transportation, with one voting for utilities.

Again, here, stakeholders returned to more governmental support and external grants to help address the massive transportation issues for people without their own vehicles, with accessibility needs, and all residents for narrow roads in disrepair.

Rose again voiced her **positionality as a person who lived in a different state** before moving to rural northeast Texas. Her past state had extensive state public works resources. However, without property taxes in Texas and constrained statewide funding for critical infrastructure, she deferred to grants as the main financial pathway possible for addressing critical infrastructure in Pottsboro for roads and transportation. She told the group: “So, if we as the stakeholders, what can we have with the system is apply for – looking for resources and looking for grant. Again, I mentioned with one of the cars that are in Oklahoma, they’re using connections with the Uber and apply for grants. So, we have to find a way to look for funding and be creative and put together a plan.”

Claudette also believed they should **educate the broader public on why certain repairs could not be made immediately** on roads because of the weather’s impact on repair and how climate caused road and utility problems to worsen. She shared an extensive example that encapsulates many of Pottsboro’s interconnected resiliency challenges:

“Regarding transportation, specifically the roads, this time of year when we go from cold to hot, **just the physical chemistry of what the roads are made out of**, they’re gonna start cracking and washing away. So, there’s been some education that we’ve put out regarding we can’t really repair potholes when it’s cold outside because that stuff needs to stay hot and that type of thing. So, we’re getting truckloads at a time to, again, fix what we can. But we have city engineers that are now focusing on some of the roads and bridges that I think we talked about previously, specifically the ones that lead out of town and the ones that connect to county roads..

Obviously, **we can’t touch the county roads**. They don’t like that very much. So, as soon as I get some of these engineers in for more permanent fixes, I think in the past we’ve done what’s called ‘Band- Aid’ jobs and just quickly throw some asphalt down or something. And that washes away after a while. It rains a couple of inches, and that’s gone. So, really, going back to how we’ve been reactive in the past, my biggest mission for all the staff has been, “Let’s be more proactive about things, and let’s do permanent solutions instead of the cheap, quick, and easy fix.” Because the cheap, quick, and easy fix ends up costing you more at the end of the day because you have to patch it and repair it. But just like everything else, I just got an example of a quote to widen a road six feet right next to the school so school buses can turn

in and off of Highway 120. In the span of three weeks, the quote went from \$575,000 up to \$950,000 with[in] less than a month. So, it’s one of those things that, man, if I could help sponsor a walkability grant to do sidewalks, but only on roads that touch their roads. So, it’s a lot of, unfortunately, politics, like Bret mentioned, and money that’s only there for certain things. So, the more creative we can get with our funding the better.

In this extensive passage, Claudette notes the climate impacts of resiliency planning, increasing costs of repairs from quotes, accessibility of sidewalks, short-term solutions that “ends up costing you more,” and city and county tensions. The example of repairing roadways was a key exemplar of the types of structural challenges Pottsboro and other rural towns in Texas face for needed critical infrastructure.

We now move from the detailed scoring and analysis stakeholders prepared for their communities in their collaboration to holistic beginning recommendations to work together with the broader Pottsboro area for change.





Reflections and Recommendations

In our final section of this case study report, we distinguish between stakeholders' reflections on their experiences with the COPEWELL adaptation and collaboration pilot project and the beginning action items conceived during their collaborations in FG2. When the research team conducted exit interviews, we asked stakeholders to reflect on their experience specifically with the COPEWELL portion of the project, as well as the community collaboration process more generally. These reflections were designed to gain a sense of whether our adaptation of the COPEWELL framework was useful to the assembled stakeholders, what things they might have changed about the process, and their perspectives on the sustainability of future community resiliency collaborations convened by the Library Director. During FG2, we asked stakeholders to identify potential starting areas for the challenges they identified during the pre-survey and group discussion. We begin with their pilot process reflections before introducing initial action items.

STAKEHOLDERS' PILOT PROCESS REFLECTIONS

In this section, we examine three central areas of feedback from the Potttsboro stakeholders about their participation in our pilot process design: (1) collaboration process feedback, (2) COPEWELL framework feedback, and (3) sustainability, including personal impact.

Collaboration Process Feedback

When reflecting on their participation in the pilot project, all of the Potttsboro stakeholders narrated their **overall positive experiences** participating in our community collaboration on resiliency. Stakeholders focused on (1) the impact of the diverse stakeholder group and future tips, (2) communication suggestions, and (3) collaboration impact reflections.

First, stakeholders repeatedly shared how the collaboration group convened by the Library Director deeply enriched their experiences and the impact of the intentionally inclusive group with diverse knowledge.

In other words, **stakeholders responded favorably to our research design of a community collaboration** using requisite diversity (see Eger, 2017; Eger et al., 2023; Heath & Isbell, 2017). The Library Director recounted the process of choosing stakeholders with us:

“Some of your questions made me think more deeply **about stakeholders who could be invited to the conversation.** Because a lot of times when you look at sort of volunteer or any kind of community thing going on, we have the usual suspects. There are certain people in town who are everywhere doing everything, and they’re the ones you always see. And kinda digging a little deeper encouraged me to think about some people who I would not have usually thought about. And then I think we discussed along the way to get some diversity in the group, both in terms of ethnic and gender that caused me to reach a little deeper too.

The director noted how requisite diversity created a list of stakeholders with unique personal, professional, and community identities and experiences.

Stakeholders all praised the group selection from the Library Director and research team and **credited the group cohesion and respectful communication as enriching the collaboration process.** Irma responded to how the stakeholders shared unique viewpoints for all of their interactions, “The representatives were really diverse. And so, the perspectives presented were, even if we had one topic, there were several different perspectives, avenues, in which in people came to the identification. It’s like the issue was housing, and there were several different doorways into the conversation, and those doors were used to access the information.”

Irma’s metaphor of doorways to the conversation showcases how even if multiple stakeholders had interests in the same resiliency challenge, they each “entered the conversation” differently.

This is a hallmark of dialogic communication and community collaboration (Deetz & Simpson, 2004; Heath & Frey, 2004). Charley, too, appreciated the group’s design and the expertise of all the stakeholders in both formal and informal roles:

“For such a small community, I feel like you had a good group of positive people that work with very diverse sectors. I think if it was bigger or if the Library Director didn’t really have a good handle on who to invite, I think it could’ve really gone down a lot of rabbit holes and tangents that wouldn’t been helpful or productive. One of the things I really liked about this was how collaborative it was. And representative of different [groups], you know, the government and people served food insecurity, and I mean I really appreciated that.”

Claudette echoed Charley’s perspectives and added, “Our particular group members, we had a pretty healthy mix of people who maybe worked the traditional 9-5, and those who are maybe retired... I’ve talked to just a couple of them outside of this... and I definitely think, for the most part, everybody would be in support of doing more.” Claudette remarked how stakeholders’ unique perspectives and interactions in and outside of the formal collaboration led them to **want to continue collaborating.** Bret discussed the importance of picking good people who were polite and did not dominate the conversation, even with stakeholders with strong passions for the topic of emergency and resiliency planning. He said, “I think you picked good people, or good people said, ‘Yes, I’ll do it.’”

Second, stakeholders in Pottsboro offered some tips **about communication and planning** for future conveners and groups in other rural Texas areas. Stakeholders wished that all members could attend both focus groups while also understanding the work and life conflicts that surfaced for multiple members. Irma mentioned, “One of [the] things I want to say about that second focus group is, I missed having some of the voices that we had in the first group. And I know that there are challenges and such in keeping a focus group intact. Over time, especially in and amongst all the busy mess that we are all doing. So, I missed some of those voices.” Notably, all the stakeholders who had to miss a session for last-minute conflicts lamented it and wished to have been there. For example, one said, “I kind of feel sad I missed out on the second round, but I had some stuff come up at work...I would definitely do [this] again.” Planning, then, for collaboration times that work for all members remains of the utmost importance, which we cover in more depth in our process report (Eger et al., 2023).

Additionally, stakeholders noted the **honesty and critiques of the community** that came up in the group as productive. They responded well to even critical feedback in their own personal expertise areas to improve. The Library Director shared her own worry when two stakeholders had different perspectives in FG1 about communicating with residents about upcoming city elections:

“It was interesting that in that first session, there was some disagreement, and one of the participants brought up something that I was very surprised that they brought it up as an issue. We were talking about the elections and how local government was not being—I understood them to say that local government was not being as transparent as they should be. And so, I’m a person – I don’t really like confrontation at all, so it just made me a little nervous. It’s like, “Oh, we’re not all on exactly the same page. Some of us see things differently.” Which, of course, ultimately is the whole purpose of this, and a good thing that we can come at it with different backgrounds and different experiences and perspectives. And then how do we work together to go forward?”

Here, the Director noted her discomfort with confrontation but then her appreciation of the open dialogue of the two stakeholders, who ultimately agreed on communication with the broader residents about city limits and the broader county was a key tension. In fact, Dr. Eger even shared with the Library Director that as facilitators, we want to **welcome dissensus and disagreement**, as long as it is communicated respectfully and from a place of understanding. The Library Director suggested this was an important practice to learn because many groups may have opening rules like where she had “been in meetings before, and they do the agreements in advance, and they’ll go through, ‘Oh, and different ideas are fine and be respectful.’ But it’s one thing to say those statements, and then when you’re in the moment and someone’s saying something I really disagree with it, it feels very different. Emotions are different than just the abstract agreements that we all agree to.” Given this critical point from the Library Director, we invite readers to specifically explore tips on facilitation and community collaboration to help **develop shared**

rules for open dialogue and dissensus while being able to understand disagreement can be productive (see Heath & Frey, 2004; Heath & Isbell, 2017). Rose noted how having a communication expert facilitate the group was necessary for this reason because “We trust your next step with you as an expert.” Supporting the Library Director to be trusted by other stakeholders as the facilitator is also central to them leading future collaborations.

Third, stakeholders also shared brief **impacts of collaboration** as a process that **made them want to continue** participating with the Library Director as a convener. Claudette championed community collaboration as a communication process and how it greatly impacted our approach in this pilot project. She appreciated how with:

“Collaboration—when you have a group of people offering all of their different perspectives, opinions and expertise—you come up with such a better response and a better outcome than if it’s just left to one or two people and their own devices. I am a big proponent of the more info, the better. The more education that’s out there, the better. Your decision-making is better. The – Again, there were things that were brought up that I didn’t even think about. So, if it were up to just me to make these changes, I would have a very hyper-focused view of some of them because that’s my experience. That’s my day-to-day. So, I would absolutely love – especially, I love the collaboration process. I really love being part of a team...Being able to be in a group or in a room with people who have those skills and working together...it’s just super inspiring. I would definitely feel unstoppable at that point.”



Charlotte's description of collaboration as solving more complex challenges with better decision making, education, and perspectives that takes people out of their "hyper-focused" expertise showcases the impact of collaboration and collective decision-making.

For Charley, joining this specific collaboration allowed her to build new relationships at a county level with city leaders and residents and invited them "to be a part of those conversations." She shared a story of a recent devastating tornado in a nearby unincorporated area where the residents were "closed off" to communication and support, which impacted the disaster event recovery from the larger region. Charley believed that this pilot collaboration and its future convening by the Library Director would impact future emergency and disaster event response in Pottsville and the broader county because "Honestly, through these meetings, that [separation] has changed for me. And which means it's changed for our community to have that connectedness." For Charley, seeing how all the stakeholders were connected through the focus groups had a meaningful impact beyond a meeting. She told the group in FG1:

“There's lots of meetings, everybody has lots of meetings. But it's rare when you have this focused, kind of concise, wanting to move forward together. And I think we're all committed to this community. So this has felt good. Like, I'm not the only one on the island. And we're not talking about another meeting to have seven more meetings to do nothing at the end of the year. So thank you for that. And thank you to the Library Director for this team.

As Rose shared above, stakeholders also wanted to **grow the connections** made in their interorganizational and community collaboration with the broader community and other regional and statewide experts. Charlotte wanted the smaller collaboration to be the "foundation of these bigger conversations if people would come together just to learn how government works and how the systems work in our area. And as we talked about in that first meeting, what's inside city limits and what's outside and the people who are not paying city taxes expect from the city staff... I love that idea of thinking about how to have these bigger brainstorming moments outside of just the group we convened. But how that could help with education and understanding as a whole."

The stakeholders found hope and inspiration in convening together in their collaboration and shared a collective enthusiasm and passion for planning for the future, as they noted their time of change and growth as an impetus to continue the planning.

Lastly, the stakeholders also shared the **personal impacts that participating** in the collaboration had on them as individual people and for their future hopes and dreams in Pottsville. Most reflected on the dynamic of the group and learning with one another. Charlotte said she "absolutely" would continue this collaboration and that she "did enjoy being part of this process and looking for ways that we can work more together. Because I think we do have overlap in this community's well-being and our emergency response. ...A lot of overlapping interest." As Kyle described their group, not only did the group have connecting interests, but they also could learn about new needs from one another. He said, "I think the way that everybody came together and were able to provide different feedback was great, and then personally, I enjoyed it to be able to hear the different perspectives." Kyle specifically resonated with one stakeholder's examples of working with single mothers and their work, health, and resiliency needs:



“To be able to hear those stories, it helped me to push forward, and it makes me want to do more, and make sure that we can make a difference. We know that there are those people in our community, but without having somebody who’s really talked to them and knows them, it almost dehumanizes them when you think about that, so for me, it was very enlightening because it made it more personal. I want to try harder and try doing better for our community.”

This feeling of impacting not only the community but also as a community advocate was something Rose told us she wanted to continue to support Pottsville’s resiliency in our collaboration group and her formal work role, even if she was one day working with a new organization. Rose reported that no matter her future professional roles, “You still have my support all the way. Just including if I find some time, I can find a way!” She believed stakeholders like her with busy schedules would value continuing their efforts because “you feel good to continue that in your life.” Finally, Irma loved how this collaboration reconnected her to both Pottsville and the library, “What I thought went really well with the process is the participation...I get more out of a setting where we’re working on a problem to solve, or improvement to make, or a positive step forward is...I get more out of that than I do the gatherings and pleasantries of an afternoon tea sort of example, but this is my social engagement process.” The collaboration became a stimulating social engagement for Irma and others, who enjoyed the collegiality of working together. Irma and a few other stakeholders also felt reconnected to the Pottsville Library and their childhood memories of libraries through this process. Irma remembered, “What I personally got out of it was recognizing the gap in my own access to the library and finding out what I need to do, personally, to reconnect with the library.” She recounted her childhood library in a small town with vivid memories, smells, and “the joy of escaping and the travels unknown through books. And so, what I got out of it is there’s a gap there. I need to fill it back in. That’s what I got out of it personally.”

The stakeholders’ **personal impacts are also tied to their community needs.** As the Library Director suggested, “We talked about the growth coming to this area; it’s really like the clock is ticking. It’s increasingly important for our community to be

having conversations. Because I’m really afraid what’s gonna happen is this growth is just gonna roll over us, and we will have very little control over what happens. But it would be lovely to have given some thought to it, to kind of control it as much as we can.” Given the upcoming changes to Pottsville, we now look at how the stakeholders perceived the COPEWELL framework in their resiliency planning and then the sustainability of this group.



COPEWELL Framework Feedback

Pottsboro stakeholders varied in their responses to the COPEWELL framework, including finding the framework intuitive, organized, and comprehensive vs. too academic and too structured.

Stakeholders directly compared COPEWELL to FG1 more than our other site, Gladewater (see Long et al., 2023), with **many favoring the FG1's open orientation to collaboration** in comparison to FG2's COPEWELL discussions. For example, Charlotte noted that FG2 was less generative than FG1 because it was more closed-ended. Charlotte loved FG1 for the:

“Brainstorming nature of it and for us to take space, take time to really think about what the issues in our community are. Because on a day-to-day basis, it's so easy to put your attention on the lightest thing that has come up in the town that we just have to focus on that. So,...like somebody posted today on Facebook. They were showing the potholes in front of their house, but then they were saying, “But the new city workers are driving in these fancy trucks.” And so, and then everybody starts talking about that. Just the opportunity to, “Let's step back and think sort of big picture.” I love those kinds of conversations.

Charlotte enjoyed the space and time to brainstorm and collaborate afforded in FG1, which fit with collaboration theories in communication that ample time is needed at each stage. Her example here of residents facing infrastructure issues of potholes but seeing new city trucks as a comparison is an example of a space where having further conversation about city funding and city needs would help larger groups discuss these tensions.

For Charlotte and other stakeholders, FG2 was **too structured and framework-centered**. She lamented, “I guess the second meeting didn't feel as impactful to me as the first meeting did. And the first meeting

I guess was the beginning of the discussion of what issues there are. The second meeting, my concern is always that we will have meetings, and nothing comes out of that.” We return to this concern in the sustainability section. Similarly, Claudette preferred the open collaboration of FG1, yet she saw COPEWELL as **helping narrow those first conversations**. Despite her not being “really familiar with COPEWELL at all until it was introduced to us,” Claudette found that COPEWELL invited the group to focus “all of the issues...we'd been discussing” through the rubric's “kind of parameters. Whether it be the scoring process or just here's an example of what we're talking about when we're talking about community health and wellbeing, life necessities, etc.” Once she understood how COPEWELL helped frame the overall FG1 conversations, Claudette understood it as “a really good tool, but I would definitely be interested in utilizing it again for anything like that.”

Stakeholders also **diverged in their experience with the COPEWELL rubrics**. Irma appreciated that the COPEWELL process was “very easy. And the reason I thought so was because of the resources that you shared with us.”

For Irma, our research team including examples from COPEWELL's rubrics and clear prompts helped her complete the rubric interconnectedly. She recounted, “Those sample questions were very helpful... [where one] prompted other questions in my mind to address other issues. One question would become five questions.” For Irma, the structure of the rubric worked well because as she followed the directions, she never experienced, “Well, there's no spot for this idea or thought that I had.” Instead, “It seemed to fit. Any time I had a random thought, it had a place. It fit within the framework well.”

For Claudette, again, COPEWELL was really a tool for categorizing our FG1 conversations. The rubric scoring helped her narrow, “all these ideas floating around, big picture style, and it was really nice to see those; once we got the rubric, almost everything I’d thought of was in there, and I could kind of understand how it categorized anytime. So, I don’t think there was anything that I felt like it was necessarily lacking.”

Other stakeholders described **both generating new ideas or being restricted** by the self-assessment on Community Functioning. For Kyle, the rubric enriched his brainstorming where he, “enjoyed it because there were a lot of things that I hadn’t really thought about or thought through, that were very thought-provoking in the questions.” Kyle also would use the COPEWELL framework again in resiliency planning because of its structure and how “it presented the information because it’s always hard to get ideas pulled together, especially if you’re having a meeting. You might have an agenda, but there are certain things that you know you’re going to talk about, but there’s not anything specific that you’re kind of moving towards.” For Kyle, COPEWELL allowed a quicker “focus more on where to go from there instead wasting a lot of time and thinking about what

the issues are and what the problems are. When really we kind of know the problems, but when they’re put together in a structure like this I think it’s important to save time but also to be productive, too.”

This is a significant contrast because Kyle’s affinity for COPEWELL was its structure to quickly organize toward productive solutions, contrasting the open collaboration Charlotte and others disliked about the model.

When asked if COPEWELL did help for resiliency, Charlotte appreciated the framework as a “guide to the conversation” and as a “foundation.” In contrast, she found “the ranking was less helpful because we would all do our individual rankings, but then when we discuss it as a group, I think the conversation guided us to our focus more than individual rankings.”



Finally, Bret found the **COPEWELL framework to be too jargon-filled and academic in nature**, which made him initially feel uncertain in his role as a stakeholder and community member. He explained that it seemed like other stakeholders understood COPEWELL “as a system” and, “It may have been that I felt like everybody who was there had already experienced that system, and I have personally been out of the corporate world for 30-plus years, so I’m not really aware and not really read up on a lot of those particular styles of management or problem-solving.” Despite none of the stakeholders working with COPEWELL beforehand, Bret felt like the others understood the model more quickly, and he pointed to onboarding needs (which we examine below) as, “After I received your background documents on the system, I read them, and it started to kind of be digested in my mind exactly what we were doing. And then, by the time we got to the second go around, I was much more comfortable.” In contrast, Rose quickly appreciated the model because of her work in resiliency planning and experience. In fact, she saw it as a clear overlap with a different model she was working on, explaining, “Oh, my God, there’s another model that’s similar to the planning part of” a current model she was using. Rose loved how “COPEWELL is that model just for the social connecting everything.”

Our analysis points to stakeholders’ positionalities, work and life experiences, and communication approaches as shaping their comfort with, appreciation of, or aversion to the COPEWELL framework.

Stakeholders also described wanting **clearer overall onboarding to the connections of COPEWELL to the overall collaboration process**. Our process report includes tips for these nuances (see Eger et al., 2023). Pottsboro stakeholders felt some initial confusion about the COPEWELL framework and how it would be a part of resiliency efforts with their library. Bret and others wondered why it was being used when the research team introduced it at

the end of FG1, “So, maybe the description of the presentation of how it works was a little confusing to me.” Eva called for future collaborations to detail that conveners would use COPEWELL sooner, even if it were kept open until after FG1. She described:

“I’m used to jumping into things I don’t understand initially, and just kind of getting to understand it as we go along. I’ve had to do a number of things like that. And, so, that is not a daunting process to me...But, at the same time, I think maybe it’s a very useful tool with maybe some explanation of what [to experience]..”

Eva said more onboarding was explicitly needed for COPEWELL: “If your goal is to utilize a tool like [COPEWELL] for planning in the future, then maybe a little bit more of, ‘This is what the experience is gonna be like because then you’re probably gonna get better feedback, and better responses because people will understand what the process looks like.’”

Bret also felt uncertain about the overall collaboration and “didn’t quite understand how it was all gonna come together until really closer to the second one. And so, I was a little confused. And I was struggling in the first meeting, let’s just say that.” Like Bret, Kyle felt more prepared for FG2 because of reading the COPEWELL materials in detail, as reading in advance allowed him to “participate a lot more having looked at the material beforehand..., [which] made it to where I could participate so much more and I was ready to provide details...I probably wouldn’t have thought of [it] if I was on the spot and hadn’t thought about it previously.” Eva described a similar process of wanting more orientation to COPEWELL when we explained wanting to keep it open at first to not use the model deductively, and she added:

“I understand what you’re saying because **you don’t want to influence the outcomes**, and I get that. Believe me, I get that. I also think that explaining the process a little bit would keep people engaged a little bit better so that they would know, “Okay. This is not gonna be something that is dictated, or lots of instructions. It’s gonna be open-ended. But, this is what that’s gonna look like going forward,” – if that makes sense.”

Kyle, Bret, and Eva’s feedback offers immensely valuable nuance between keeping FG1 open for generative brainstorming and providing more explicit initial onboarding directions before FG1 and as COPEWELL is introduced.

In closing, while some stakeholders found COPEWELL’s role in the collaboration clear, like Irma, who complimented the communication as “I found it very helpful and concise and clear,” others saw it as ultimately helpful but not the only approach needed. For example, while Bret found COPEWELL was ultimately helpful, he noted that other systems could do the same. COPEWELL works for resiliency discussions and “any kind of pre-planning and looking at our problems and figuring out maybe some solutions and answers. I’m all for it. Whether it’s this particular kind of system or if there’s some other system.” He shared a similar example of a city official touring other towns to get best practices and structural examples. In other words, COPEWELL could be **one tool of many available** to Pottsboro stakeholders and residents in their community planning.

Sustainability Feedback

Lastly, we asked stakeholders in exit interviews to share their thoughts on the sustainability of continuing future community resiliency collaborations after the conclusion of our pilot project. They described both their continued interest

in working together to sustain their collaboration for Pottsboro’s resiliency and also their concerns about sustainability.

While Charley said, “I think the people you had convened would actually do it,” and Kyle perceived that the assembled group has “a good chance [to] continue to meet just because we’ve come together for” other community resiliency needs, stakeholders shared several barriers or needs to sustainability.

These included: (1) the challenges of coordinating schedules, (2) the need to consider group composition (e.g., involving those with social capital to confer positive change), (3) identifying a group champion for the collaboration to rally behind, and (4) that a successful collaboration needs easily identifiable goals and wins. Here, we provide a selection of the stakeholder’s own words regarding sustainability challenges and needs.

First, stakeholders identified **time and availability as a challenge**. Most of our stakeholders were in organizational, city, or county leadership positions and thus had demanding schedules. As Irma pointed out, fallout between sessions was likely “to happen more often” because “we’re constantly in firefighting mode. And, so, we can [get] pulled out of it, of this type of project, by our own little fires.” Here, Irma noted the literal and metaphorical fires that our community leaders and members faced as they contributed to Pottsboro’s many needs. Other stakeholders shared their perspective regarding time constraints (see the next box).

TIME CONSTRAINTS TO CONTINUING COLLABORATING

Charlotte: *[There wasn't anything limiting about the collaboration process], I mean, just other than people's schedules. ...it's so easy for me...to get sidetracked on to something else. ...And the other things come up, and I really feel like this is one of those areas that being consistent is the only way that it's going to have any kind of impact. It can't be one-off conversations, and then nobody gets together or talks about it for three months.*

Kyle: *It's very hard to bring a lot of people together that are stakeholders, especially city officials, and a lot of that has to do with schedules. It's very hard to do that, but when you have somebody who can put that out there and who's taking care of scheduling...that in itself is one of the hardest processes to do.*

Rose: *So, for me, I'm busy with work and with new tasks [so] for me, what stops me is I don't have much time.*

Regardless of how difficult stakeholders imagined it would be to sustain this collaboration, they all agreed that finding time in stakeholders' schedules would be a key challenge. At the same time, they affirmed that a stakeholder group needs to meet consistently in order to maintain momentum. Building off this sentiment, Kyle suggested that a person **dedicated to scheduling stakeholder meetings** would make it easier for the group to meet.

Second, stakeholders communicated group composition as both a current and future need. Stakeholders first shared that sustainable collaborative efforts should be comprised, at least partly, of individuals with community influence. While conveners should emphasize requisite diversity, they should do so in a way that best ensures their collaboration's vision comes to fruition. In the stakeholders' own words, see the next box.



GROUP COMPOSITION – COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

Charley: And I think the people that you had convened would actually do it. Like, I don't think it's a dead-in-the-water project. I think you have the **right combination of people** that actually have some influence in the community and could make things happen.

Charlotte: I think [this kind of project] really opens up opportunities for us. Just saying yes to things and meeting people, particularly people who we don't work with on a daily basis or who are outside of [my] field, really gives us a seat at the table. And it makes so much sense now, in so many of these areas, because libraries are conveners, but not all the other organizations realize that.

Eva: So, [projects are] **driven by funding**. All the funding now is requiring different stakeholders in the community to collaborate with each other to produce better outcomes...we realize that's how we're going to make [community] change. ...I think it – I mean, I know [collaboration] is a sustainable tool because I've used it all the time.

Stakeholders next suggested that conveners, **for future stakeholder planning**, should continue to broaden the level of diversity present in the collaboration. Though expanding a collaboration might strain a convener's ability to schedule group meetings, increasing group diversity makes it more possible to address a wider swath of community interest or need. Conveners can include more residents by repeating the same requisite diversity process we completed. As Rose narrated, she was "very impressed" with the chosen stakeholders and the "COPEWELL sophisticated model," but she "just wished that you incorporated more [residents], but I know it's hard because of the amount of time. But I think you've got the right people [with] heart, too, so it's really nice. Maybe just more people involved." Including more residents, as Rose notes, would enrich the group, though it would also make scheduling more difficult. Rose's comment illustrates the need to scale up interactions with the larger community as a future step, which surfaced as a recommendation below.

The Library Director **also recommended that future librarian conveners choosing stakeholders** should: (1) "Look at who goes to city council meetings would be one suggestion. Because we have very few who

show up to that," and (2) Try to "really reach for a cross-sector coalition of people rather than the first people who come to mind." Both considering regular residents who participate and going beyond the "usual suspects" she shared above made a lasting impact in this collaboration.

Finally, Kyle said that future library conveners should look for changemakers in their communities. He recommended, "I know every area has those voices that most people do know because they are vocal about trying to get support, trying to make change, and things like that. If I was going to give advice, I'd probably say look at the people that they know are on that path to try and help bring change to the area, bring more benefits to the area, and help the community."

Bret added that conveners should be aware of potential group dynamics when assembling their stakeholder cohort. While dissensus can create a rich foundation for lively and productive discussion, members that are too adversarial to the process might derail the group. Bret thought that, “Everybody was professional and polite and was really looking for a way to fix things and not just kinda argue about things we’re not doing,” but adding in a local leader he perceived as less polite “would have been a different look, a different feel.” Irma added a crucial note about planning for a collaboration’s future: considering those that come after. Regardless of how well a collaboration goes, stakeholder turnover is to be expected. Per Irma:

“It really is organizational resilience ... you have to prepare for your departure. There’s almost a mindset of, “If I go, everything’s going to fall apart because nobody knows what I know.” Well, it’s incumbent on us to depend on other people to keep the organization healthy.

Third, stakeholders reflected on the need for a **group champion as convener** to ensure a collaboration’s sustainability. Such a champion would be a person that drives others to eagerly join a collaborative effort and who would create the sort of connectedness and community to hold a group together. For our project, stakeholders identified this person as the Library Director, which aligns with our holistic goal of positioning librarians as resiliency collaboration conveners (see Eger et al., 2023). As Eva and Charley both told us:

“Eva: Two things come to mind. One of them is – and I think you’ve got it with the Library Director – is a champion for making it work. You have to have one person who is willing to be the communicator and the guide to do the, “Let’s lead this down the road,” kind of thing. So, to me, at least one person who is willing to drive the communication is essential.

“Charley: [The project] felt collaborative. I think you could tell that there was a team behind the Library Director, that we all wanna be on her team. She’s just a wonderful human. ...I get invited to all sorts of meetings where you don’t have that person that everybody’s kind of on the team with trying to move forward, so [this project] was really refreshing.

Having a continued convener and a collective group commitment to **sustain and enact planning together** was important to Charlotte and other stakeholders. She remembered a past strategic planning group about six years ago in Pottsville where residents:

“...spent several months working through this thing, and it ended up with this plan that nobody has ever looked at again. It was a total waste of time and money to do that. And then that becomes discouraging the next time something comes up. Like, “No, I’ve been there, done that kind of thing. I know it doesn’t go anywhere.” So, yeah. That’s underlining that this **will result in a deliverable** that we can use and go forward with would be important.

Charlotte worried that using the COPEWELL model could lead to another failed community plan. Having the convener and the collective commit to sustaining and enacting planning from this collaboration, then, was crucial for the group’s sustainability.

Fourth, as stated by Charley, a successful collaboration needs easily identified **wins and goals**. This point aligns well with others here, such as consistent facilitation and the ability of a group to affect change for a community. Charley detailed:

“I think there has to be wins and goals. So, as a community convener that convenes for all sorts of things, I’m very well aware of the effort it takes to get people together. The right people, the right place, at the right time. ...[Without] wins and clear goals, and [knowing] where we’re going and good facilitation, it just dies. It stops. And I’ve seen it time and time again. You know, we’re all going to rally, and we’re going to fix X, Y, and Z. But without the means to get it done and the right foundation and facilitation, it just dies.

Finally, stakeholders offered **other unique challenges and ideas** for conveners to consider regarding sustainability. Irma, for example, shared that collaborations could make use of **remote technologies** – such as Zoom – that might not have been utilized in the past:

“One of the things this process has done is it has shown that technology can really overcome some of the challenges we have. And you all actually modeled a great way that technology can help in this process. There’s no reason why we can’t Zoom these resources or have these type of activities.

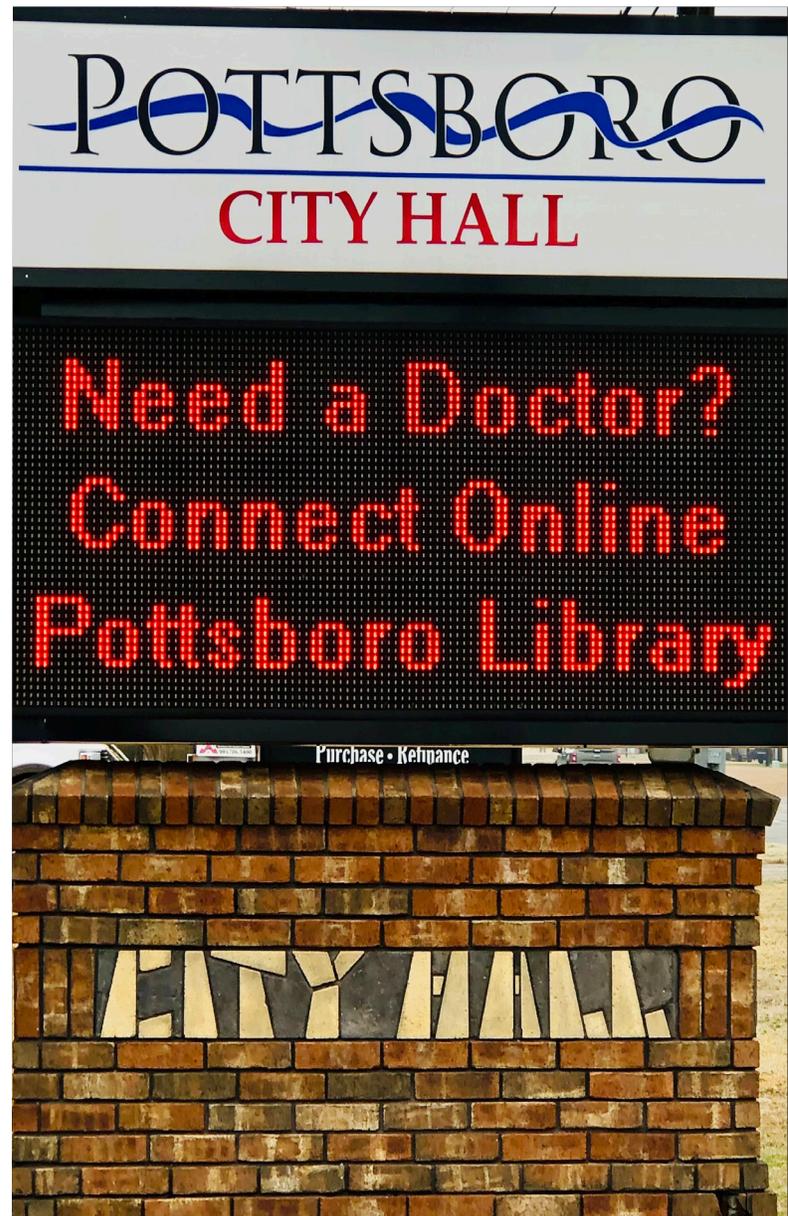
Charley shared that successful collaborations should consider **allowing more time for relationship building** to ensure continued success, saying, “I think if there was more time for that initial group that convened to build relationships, I think it would become more sustainable.” Otherwise, Charley worried that without the Library Director, the group would “just kind of float back to our silos that we were in before.” Rose keenly identified that **outcomes data** are crucial to sustainability. Any successful collaboration needs hard data to justify action, and to demonstrate the efficacy of any completed work. These data can also justify expanded partnerships. Rose told us:

“Again, if I had a concept, I would need a group study to show the facts from the study. I need to network a little more with the Library Director to identify a true working sample. And then, I can find out what data to collaborate on. ...Prove or show the pattern of lack of presentation, homelessness, poverty, distressed community. ... But if I can partner with the Library Director, she knows people, she’s already in. I can help with the strategic planning, and [we can work with others in our network].

Eva shared that a group champion can more successfully sustain a group by engaging in training around **systems theory**. A group champion may have natural dynamism to bring a collaboration together, but an understanding of how systems best interact provides an enhanced ability to sustain partnerships. In Eva’s words, the group champion:

“...also needs to be able to sustain [the group] and maybe [receive] some training on how systems interact because what you’re talking about is organizing a system and what makes it work better. So, that champion person needs to have some understanding of what to do and how to do it to bring different entities to the table. I mean, it’s very basic systems theory.

Our stakeholders considered several salient challenges and needs regarding sustainability, and shared examples of how the current collaboration has contributed to sustained change. Successfully addressing identified challenges will allow this collaboration a much greater chance of sustained success, and therefore, improved resiliency to future community challenges.



THE POTTSBORO COMMUNITY RESILIENCY COLLABORATION – INITIAL ACTION ITEMS

As we discussed in our COPEWELL Pilot Process Report, we discovered that **holding two focus groups was insufficient for providing adequate space to brainstorm** in both sites (Eger et al., 2023). Action items were not well-developed, and neither were clear steps for starting points to address community resiliency challenges raised by the group. Though our recommendations would have been more robust with a third focus group dedicated to action items, stakeholders still brought up several salient items to address and are places to begin for their group's next steps when convening with the Library Director.

Some of the action items are more suitable to engage in for the short term with immediate future recommendations, while others are better reserved for long-term and multiple steps of planning. Though we did not delve into action items as deeply as we had hoped, the items below are structured for both these stakeholders and other future leaders, stakeholders, and residents to work together for future change. Our COPEWELL Pilot Process Report (Eger et al., 2023) contains broader, cross-cutting recommendations designed to help librarians or other potential conveners adapt our pilot project to their community.

Immediate Future Recommendations

Stakeholders identified two recommendations for the immediate future: (1) **reconvening the collaboration group** for new, sustained meetings and (2) **improving communication with residents** through new approaches about the city, community, and library's needs and services.

First, given our stakeholders' concerns about wanting to generate more action steps and their holistic desire to sustain the collaboration together after the completion of our pilot project, the first immediate recommendation is **reconvening this same collaboration group** for new and consistent future meetings (such as monthly or every two months) to finalize lingering discussions on challenges identified in FG1 and the rubric in FG2 and to identify more initial action steps. As Charlotte noted, she knew we discussed COPEWELL planning in FG2, but "I can't



remember that we talked about first steps or action steps." Irma concurred, "Really and truly, [I have] the feeling that it's unfinished... I think it feels like we just scratched the surface and gotten started on this project." However, despite the unfinished feeling, Irma, when asked if she would participate again, shared, "Absolutely. Without hesitation."

Claudette believed future collaborations with her fellow stakeholders and city leadership would help reverse a trend in Pottsboro from reacting to emergency or disaster events after the fact to where, "We're going to **be proactive.**" This would allow their stakeholder group and their organizations to work together with the community to be ready for future events like Winter Storm Uri where, "We didn't realize, I guess, that we were not prepared for something like that until it was too late." Therefore, planning and implementing action steps would help focus on proactive approaches instead of reactivity.

Here, stakeholders noted the **unfinished planning** from only two group sessions and **the desire to continue connecting and working** together on community resiliency plans. Irma explained, "I think we brainstormed next steps. But I'm not really certain that we developed a clear plan for next steps. And I'm a planner. I like to know what the next steps are." Kyle also wanted to use a few future meetings to move from the benefits of the collaboration to "think more broadly" and notice how "some of those [resiliency] **challenges overlapped.**" He believed this would generate better future meetings and action steps where, "You can kind of get more out of by being able to fix one, because a lot of times you do have to narrow it down to focus on one or two issues that you're going to work on, but if you can find things that overlap like that, then I think you get more benefit out of it."

Interestingly, when Rose completed her pre-survey, she suggested in FG2 to the group that the future next steps for community resiliency planning were best addressed via creating “a partnership and structure [for] local stakeholders, such as school, college, local governments, city, county, workforce solutions, local community service, library, and city official.” She suggested conducting a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to “communicate, share the knowledge [to residents]...to get their help and support, to spread the communication out....And then, from that, we can identify, and we can greatly start to shape plan and action plan.” As we listened to her action plan, we reflected on how it mirrored our exact community collaboration design in this project. Dr. Eger explained to the group in FG2, “Thank you for that, Rose. And part of what we’re doing here is that, right? Getting a room of stakeholders together that all have different expertise to be able to make these kinds of plans. So, we feel like we have some great people in the room to help with this stakeholder planning.” Rose concurred and appreciated COPEWELL as an opening tool for this process; she and others had other tools and frameworks to bring to this continued stakeholder planning. For future convening of the group, we suggest the stakeholders **support the Library Director’s convening and her desire to have group support for facilitation**. While the director will continue to convene the collective and help support conversations, she also noted a preference for additional facilitation support, such as another stakeholder taking turns with her.

Second, a consistent, immediate future need from our pilot project showcased that Pottsboro leaders and the Pottsboro Library could improve communication with residents about the city’s efforts, the community’s needs, and the library’s services.

In FG2, stakeholders discussed this educational and discussion need under Governance and Economy. The most consistent communication need identified in this project was to **better communicate city vs. unincorporated services and needs**, including the distinctions of what services, resources, and funding are available to Pottsboro residents in the city limits and what is available or limited for those in the larger unincorporated areas. As Bret suggested above, residents of the entire community may want to be involved in planning together, even if they do not get a formal vote or pay tax money toward improvements.

Stakeholders also called for the **library to improve its communication with broader residents** (see our detailed section on this above in the library’s section, including direct tips), and our research team recommends the group spend a future meeting discussing communication tactics to improve the library’s reach within Pottsboro and surrounding communities. As Kyle noted, communicating their services to broader county and nearby areas would also reach residents from diverse backgrounds and those who experience hardships or marginalization. We also suggest one approach could be engaging more residents via broader “community conversations” like roundtables, listening conversations, share-outs, and more to help understand the area and library’s communication needs. We believe hosting community conversations on topics of the library, the city vs. the county, community functioning, and community resiliency would help engage more residents in collaborative decision-making and also give new ideas to bring back to the smaller group. The Library Director also shared the idea that the library could host moderated conversations about local challenges, such as addressing “some of the contentiousness that’s going on in our community lately with the elections.” FG1 also inspired her to communicate more about the city vs. the more prominent peninsula, and she would like to create:

“Bigger conversations if people would come together just to learn how government works and how the systems work in our area. And as we talked about in that first [focus group] meeting, what’s inside city limits and what’s outside and the people who are not paying city taxes expect from the city staff. And nothing, you know, is the answer to that...They feel like they deserve to vote in the elections, even if they’re not paying city taxes, and that they should have a say in who is elected and all that stuff.”

In addition to discussing common challenges and resiliency needs with residents, the stakeholders also brainstormed **new communication possibilities to connect with residents**. A city leader stakeholder shared that while current communication focused on required small publications on zoning and rules and in small blurbs on water bills for those in city limits that a, “brand new [approach], even since we last met as a group in FG1, is I’ve asked all of my department heads to start coming up with posts that can be put out through social media, specifically right now Facebook. A big demographic of our area uses Facebook still.” Here, the city leader’s participation in our collaboration helped initiate new communication plans for their city organization (see Heath & Frey, 2004, on community collaboration levels). Stakeholders also discussed **clearer web presence** for the city and library so that it does not remain what Claudette called, “all of the information that people don’t know how to get to; I always tell people go to the [city] website. Everything is there.” As she noted, having the information on the website also needed to be something residents could navigate.

Furthermore, Rose proposed examples beyond an online presence, including ideas to **communicate in school materials, the Chamber of Commerce and other business newsletters, and utility bills**. She suggested:

“The Chamber of Commerce, they have newsletter, [so] do all the businesses too. If you can partner with the school district, children go home with the flyer in their backpacks, and the parent can have that information directly. The school will display the electronic board news something [on] disasters, I think the school is very powerful to connect with the parent, and [with] email, parents can get right away. But then, how can you target the family that don’t have children or seniors?”

Rose offered to partner with her organization and other potential stakeholders’ organizations that specifically serve lower-income people and other vulnerable groups. She believed partnering with utility companies could “connect to older people, low-income, people who can’t afford schools, children.” Rose believed these suggestions would provide an alternate path to social media or internet communications where for low-income and other residents, “There’s no internet to go [to] the rural. So, it’s a lot of loopholes, and if you can get some

group that can help you to bring that gap, bring that knowledge in, and share.”

The stakeholders, thus, already had a helpful list of communication approaches to try, including: city social media, utilities, community conversations, school districts, chamber of commerce and businesses, and more to begin reaching more residents about community resiliency and broader needs and future goals.



Long-Term Recommendations

Stakeholders also shared potential action items and recommendations that require longer term planning and interim steps for Pottsville and will take collaboration and strategic planning over time. These required more steps to scaffold toward future programs, grant support to grow their efforts, and focus on the sustainability of the collaboration group moving forward. Each of the identified areas will need support of not only this collaboration group but also broader community leaders and residents and regional, state, and national stakeholders. The two, interconnected long-term recommendations are: (1) prioritize and work together on grant and governmental funding initiatives for the library and Pottsville's community resiliency and (2) create and sustain multiple collaborations for addressing resiliency and identified community functioning needs.

First, the most consistent challenge for the Pottsville community was limited funds and resources to solve multi-faceted resiliency challenges, so stakeholders repeatedly suggested grant and governmental funding as crucial to support sustained resiliency actions.

To fund needed resiliency action steps, the stakeholders called for more resources and collaboration on grant identification, grant writing, grant feedback, and receiving grants to support the community. Our stakeholders had various expertise levels in grant identification and writing, and both during and outside of our focus groups, they shared new sample grant and governmental funding ideas with one another, illustrating the impact of the group to connect to support one another's stakeholder organizations in their service to the broader community. Notably, stakeholders repeatedly planned to connect together on future grants to sustain their collaboration group and harness their expertise areas for the community. As Eva articulated, grant, governmental, and donor funding helps support long-term planning, and she believed

collaboration was the best tool for long-term planning and funding, including our COPEWELL adaptation. Eva explained:

“I think it's very sustainable because we're doing it in multiple places now, all over the place. I have collaborations going on at the local level with all of the counties, and one [with] cities and at the state level. So, all [are] being driven by funding. All the funding now is requiring different stakeholders in the community to collaborate with each other to produce better outcomes.

Here, Eva saw a way these stakeholders could connect is through seeking funding together to sustain their collective efforts.

Irma also identified stakeholders in FG2 who were experts at grant writing, including the Library Director who was “absolutely prolific” with grant writing, but she also worried that, “One of the biggest challenges for any of us, really, is **how much time we have available to write a grant application...** [We] have so many other responsibilities that actually having the time to write a grant application is—I mean, it's more than a challenge. Sometimes, you miss a grant deadline just because there's too many other irons in the fire.”

Irma and others suggest the city **employ a grant writer**, which may need to first come from an initial grant to fund the position. The city leader stakeholder expressed gratitude for the Library Director's grant writing support thus far, and said, “But I can't monopolize all of the Library Director's time, obviously. So, I appreciate that yes, if I had a grant writer, my gosh, it would be night and day difference, I think.”

In the meantime, Irma proposed that the group collaborate together to write grants where, “We could help one another with those responsibilities rather than everything that goes through the city that leaders are responsible for completing that application.”

Irma continued, “If [we have] a team of volunteers to help write different sections...[and] resource information to do the research. That’s one thing that I think we could help one another with is utilizing the connections that we have to help us with those applications.”

Rose shared **federal grant ideas to address the many infrastructure needs in Pottsville** and the surrounding area. She explained to the group in FG2 about another nearby city who utilized such funding, “If you can prove that your city is in deep need of infrastructure...[and] when the redevelopment plan adopt you will collect more money instead for your city. And I think that’s how other [nearby] city had the funds to fix their road and build in a sewer system and water system.” **Grants also take time to fund needs**, as Kyle noted:

“I’ve seen in other towns where if a town has been awarded a grant or something like that where from the time that it’s announced, you’re still looking at two or three years before people can actually benefit from it. I think that’s probably a misconception commonly made is that those projects do take time and most people...It needs to be addressed and say these are the timeframes you’re looking at before you start benefiting from some of those.

Funding from grants, governments, and donors are also needed to support the Library Director’s longer-term goal to **open a second library location as a Pottsville community center**. As we analyzed above, the stakeholders valued the Pottsville Library immensely, but many reported it needed more physical space for its excellent programming.

Claudette said the biggest long-term need for the library was “space” as the “library would love to host big group meetings, but again, [it is] a very small building with a lot of stuff crammed into it and not a lot of open space. It was a repurposed building. Just physically having the space to serve more people is really important for us.”

The Library Director saw this same need for space, and in her conversations with external funders and with the community, she shared how her simultaneous participation in our resiliency pilot project aligned with her broader goals for the library:

“I’m talking about this new [library] building and putting disaster response and emergency preparedness. And talking about workforce development, and that’s a piece of the building. And then the other bigger piece of it is the building cost...So, in terms of what you’re talking about, funding and economy and how things work, I’ve thought, “Well, as a library, I could convene interested community members, so all of this could be explained.”

Here, the Library Director advocated for the vision of our pilot study for libraries and librarians as community conveners for resiliency (see Eger et al., 2023).

One fear that stakeholders worried about was **getting community buy-in on a second library location** as the community center because residents worried about the total aging infrastructure across Pottsville. For example, Charlotte shared that funding a second library location would also likely necessitate the city matching some funds with low interest loans. There was a recent past experience where a school bond initiative failed, with one resident saying, “Our kids don’t need a Cadillac when a Ford will do.” Eventually, a new bond passed “because the school needed it so badly, and they are getting half of what they had proposed in the failed initiative for twice the price.”

Having more open discussions with the community about funding needs could be another important community conversation because residents often feel torn with so many infrastructure needs.

The Library Director worried the community might be skeptical of a “fancy new library building” when “City Hall has raccoon holes in the ceiling.” Kyle recommended the group focus on grant funding to **support the community center as a central funding priority**, and he advocated for the Library Director’s and city leaders’ plans to discuss the community center with residents and seek their input:

“I think they’re working on trying to get a community center that would be better to have town halls and to listen to the community and let them express their feelings on some of those things. I think they’re moving in that direction now, so it’s just going to be a matter of time before some of those changes start to go through, and we have a better place for people in the city to voice their concerns and what they want to see.

Furthermore, in addition to the community support for planning future space and needs from grant funding, the Library Director also noted that they needed “funding that we can count on” in addition to grants because, “I can’t hire the staff I need with temporary grant funding, so we need that. We need the stakeholders, the people with power in our community to understand the potential of the library.” Finally, the Library Director noted in her exit interview that she believed the impact of this pilot project would help support the library and the city. She told us that the pilot project:

“It informs my work in a way that makes it stronger. And personally, for me, just to strategically kind of building our credibility. Anytime I can say, “Yes, I’m working with this university on this project.” And when I did the building proposal, being able to list the project and here’s who it’s with, and here’s what it’s about, not only has it given me information that I need to do better work, but it then, to those funders, says, “Oh, okay, this is legit.”

We are hopeful that the Pottsville Library and other stakeholders can utilize findings from this report to support their visions and funding needs for Pottsville’s future to amplify the organizing they are already doing in their communities.

Second, stakeholders called for further long-term resiliency, public health, and workforce planning—both with the collaboration group and with other stakeholders across the county and state.

For example, Claudette shared an example in her work with a county-level hazardous mitigation plan connected to federal natural disaster areas and ranking them with her peers. She noticed that many of the potential disaster events discussed with county leaders were also surfaced in our FG1:

“So, [the county group] identified lightning, wind, and extreme temperatures both ways. Mostly extreme temperatures with heat, because then you have drought and wild fires to worry about. And then extreme temperatures with cold, because our homes and our infrastructure are not prepared for that. We haven’t been prepared for days and days and days of ice. I remember having snow and ice storms... We unfortunately back fairly recently had an outdoor gas receptacle get struck by lightning. Thank goodness no one was around because it was something that caused an explosion. But there’s something about our area – it’s not even that we’re necessarily at a higher elevation or what but we have lightning problems very regularly.

Claudette noted how a broader county and state response was needed to expand our group’s collaboration. She envisioned **working together on multiple projects across different groups** toward the same efforts of resiliency planning and actions. Rose also particularly wanted to do a future project similar to our pilot project in her county-level work, explaining, “My goal, as my wishful passion is, if I can able to put together a project that we understand the lack of broadband, healthcare, mental illness, transportation, housing, right? Work and childcare all kind of things.” Rose’s vision was also to **create both a tech hub and telehealth space and full community center**, which mirrored our project and the Library’s Director’s goals for second library location to be the new community center.

As Rose put it clearly, “We all see the same vision.” Claudette and Rose’s exemplars illustrate how community collaboration groups outside of our project can be utilized for county and state organizing that supports local collaborations like our pilot group.

Finally, the stakeholders shared additional long-term goals and opening recommendations to **address the Community Functioning needs from our COPEWELL adaption** including: business and workforce development, public and mental health support, affordable and low-income housing, water resources, transportation, and broadband. We provide a list of those suggestions in the box below.

LONG-TERM COMMUNITY FUNCTIONING NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Stakeholders recommended continued organizing and brainstormed potential outreach for Pottsville’s Community Functioning needs, including:

- **Business and Workforce Development:** In both focus groups (especially FG2), many stakeholders (especially Claudette, Rose, and Bret) discussed the need for **more businesses to come to Pottsville**, which would support their tax base and also employment needs for residents. Focusing on generating more businesses in Pottsville, then, would help not only employ residents but also provide tax bases to help support community and infrastructure needs.
 - Charley suggested one avenue for business development would be through rural economic resiliency grants.
 - Kyle advocated for a **future economic development office**, saying, “I think that would be a big help in shifting the mindset. I know that there’s probably going to be a little bit of pushback just because people who live in small towns are living in small towns for a reason, but at the same time, there are ways to help create jobs and bring businesses in that would help benefit the city, and to be able to bring in the revenue so the city could provide more services.”



Credit: Nicolas Henderson

- **Public Health and Mental Health Support:** Stakeholders universally valued the library’s telehealth room for holistic and mental health support in the community, but more outreach was needed for growing public health needs.
 - Eva described the different funding mechanisms that made it harder for Pottsville’s counties and city to access mental health grants. She shared that a nearby community had “a healthier funding base for their whole community, and their local mental health authority gets significantly more from their county government than we do [in any of ours]. And, they just have one to deal with. We have three. Well, we have seven, actually, that – because we have the cities and counties.”

- Kyle also shared examples of nearby cities that have “more mental health clinics available...I know that there are different grants and things out there, or different funding, that can help support that...And then if any nonprofits can help out with that. I think that would make a big difference because if there’s nowhere for people who are struggling with those types of issues to go, it almost creates a spiral effect. It really doesn’t help get them to the level where they need to be, to start having more success and being happier. I did notice just looking at some of the clinics that the Pottsville area does not have that availability.”
- Bret also noted how public health crises exacerbate health and resiliency needs, so future planning needed to consider simultaneous emergency and disaster events and the impact on healthcare. He noticed how Pottsville, “didn’t really even think about something like COVID, and I didn’t really even think about the freeze that we had that cut all of our power off.” He wondered about future events, “what that might look like. I can only just guess that there’s going to be, and I’m just not sure that we’re ready now.”
- **Affordable and Low-Income Housing:** Stakeholders communicated the **lack of affordable and low-income housing needs, including as a “certified retirement community.”**
 - Eva described the “critical infrastructure, the housing development situation” in Pottsville and how “there needs to be some standard quality governance, plus an influx of money needed to develop some of the affordable housing that is of good quality.”
 - Kyle shared a list of programs and grants the city and stakeholders could work to apply for to help address housing insecurity in Pottsville and surrounding areas. He said, “I know that HUD programs, and things like that are out there. I know USTA also now has single family house grants and then multi-family as well. Those could kind of be a place where the city could start and try to help out with affordable housing.”

Photo Credit: Nicolae Henderson



- **Water Planning:**

Stakeholders repeatedly worried about clean and available water in our project for their day-to-day lives and especially in emergency or disasters events, like with Winter Storm Uri.

- A city leader stakeholder noted that the City of Pottsville was working on long-term planning to have their own water access and said the city, “actually currently purchases almost 100% of our water from the City of Denison. Now, we have a well that’s underway, and we’re looking to, within the next two years, to be able to drop that by 50%, which is gonna be huge.

“It’s very expensive. But we are trying to get away from purchasing [water] from another city...And unfortunately, as much as I’d love to say water is free, it is definitely not.” - City Leader

- Bret also advocated for **well water** and how it could help with some residents who live outside of city limits, but he noted that it was a cost barrier. Bret said that well water repeatedly had better quality than other county water, which impacted his own water usage, noting it was the, “best decision we made even though the well itself was expensive...Our well water is excellent. But not everybody can, of course, afford to have their wells.” Future organizing efforts could examine the possibilities of well water programs for residents.
- Bret and Irma discussed water needs for firefighting support too. Bret shared that even apartment and housing complexes where, “If you have a fire hydrant out in front, it’s not gonna last long...to fill the need that you need to get to put out the fire. You can eventually put the fire out, but you might have saved the houses next door to it, but you lost your house. And it’s not just because of response time. It’s just that’s the big issues. We don’t have that kind of water support.”

- **Aging Infrastructure:**

Given the aging infrastructure, there were multiple needs to update Pottsville’s systems.

- Kyle recommended the city apply for **Rural Utility Services (RUS) grants** while the city still met the rural funding threshold given its current and anticipated growth. He suggested, “As the city grows, some of the qualifications will fall off RUS, but I know that currently they should be eligible because I just looked at the map today. I know that in terms of where they are now there is some available help there. Also, [RUS] just released a new program that will give low interest loans for upgrades to water systems and sewage systems for rural areas, but the city does have to help in that regard because that funding goes to lenders and then they would need to get the word out once those lenders were awarded some of those funds for issuing those grants and the guaranteed loans. So there are some things that are coming out now... There is a lot of work in them, and it’s going to take a lot of people to pull together to make sure that the word is out, and then from the city’s perspective that they’re looking into getting those as available options.”

- **Transportation Needs:**

As we described above, transportation was a consistent health, resiliency, and holistic need in Pottsville. Stakeholders shared multiple ideas for long-term transportation recommendations:

- Charley, Kyle, Claudette, and Bret discussed the positive impact of the **Texoma Area Paratransit System (TAPS) program**. They mentioned the need for further funding for the program, and more flexibility for residents to use it for their health and life needs.
- Kyle described that TAPS services across northeast Texas counties and how residents, “Basically just have to call and set up an appointment for pickup and drop off the next day. But one of the things [TAPS] did mention was that they were looking to create an app that people could use to make it more streamlined and to shorten that 24-hour requirement that you have to put in.” The future flexibility to shorten transportation needs was important, while also recognizing potential tech barriers of an app for all residents.

- Kyle also discussed creating a TAPS route that would go to the Pottsboro Library to reach underrepresented residents in Pottsboro and surrounding areas to utilize the library and said, “If you could have a set route from Sherman to Pottsboro to the library, and Denison to the library, I think that might help out.”
- Claudette described that while residents could access TAPS more in the past, TAPS had “lost a lot of its funding.” Because of funding constraints and population needs, she told us, “It’s not something that could run all day, every day. But just some sort of program to get people to and from where they need to go.”
- In FG1, Charley shared that in her county role how important matching funds would be for TAPS to grow, “What we learned this year with TAPS is there’s tons of state and federal dollars for transportation available to our community, only if we have local match... There’s tons of transportation dollars out there. We can’t access it without the local match. And I think in every conversation we’re having; transportation is the root barrier for everything. But we can’t make it better unless we figure out how to get local match dollars, which is not easy at all, because I know this is the very first year in over a decade that we’ve put any money into TAPS...So external money is there, federal money is there, community match isn’t.”

-
- **Claudette further explained more funding for TAPS or other transportation programs is a high priority because in Pottsboro for food, health, and resiliency needs and also to visit the library, “We have absolutely no options for public transportation other than calling up a friend and somebody starting an unofficial rideshare. But just getting people to really important things like doctor’s appointments, or if they have to go do taxes or important paperwork or go to the grocery store.”**
-

Claudette continued, “A lot of us take that for granted, but we have a huge population that doesn’t have their own transportation, and it’s so vital. I know for a few years obviously we weren’t doing a lot of transportation with the pandemic...If I need to go to the grocery store, then I can just drive down the street and go. A lot of people don’t have that. In fact, that’s a luxury. So, we have to be able to kind of sit back and remind ourselves we’ve got people who – in the summer, we’ve got kids who will walk to the library just so they can have a cool place to rest and get a meal and things like that.”

- Rose presented other state and county grants outside of TAPS where stakeholders could work together for rural transportation funding. She suggested other rural Texas communities that applied, “for credit, and they used the money to [buy] their own bus.” They also used “creativity...[to] connect with Uber and they can use the apps. And people can use that Uber app and to be able to order the ride. So, in term of connecting, networking, and use creativity and apply for grants, I think together we can create something like this for the region.”



- **Broadband Growth:**

Multiple stakeholders already partnered together on broadband initiatives in the community prior to the convening of this group, so they called for prioritizing continued broadband needs to address access gaps for community members.

- Charley described current efforts to connect to schools and colleges for broadband support, including a “very first broadband interest meeting at the college. And that went well...It’s kind of just evolving organically. But I can tell a big focus right now is on the broadband.”
- Claudette viewed the library as central to technology and broadband growth, and she argued that having more broadband and technology support for the library would impact not only Pottsboro residents but also on how Pottsboro could share its examples with other libraries and communities. Claudette called for long-term planning to support the library to have “the technology and the highspeed internet to be able to provide some of the classes and certifications. The Library Director is really big on promoting education and learning, maybe not even necessarily in the traditional classroom sense...Being in a more rural

area like we are, having the dedicated fiber utilities, for example, would be amazing. Because some of these programs and some of the lessons she does, some of the program workshops she holds where people will conference in from all over the world, quite literally. It would be a little more stable if we had better internet.”

Given the continued long-term community resiliency needs in Pottsboro, we hope the collaboration group from this pilot project will continue to work together and with new stakeholders and residents for these short- and long-term needs. Importantly, the Pottsboro stakeholders valued one another and had hope for this collaboration’s sustainability.

As Charley summarized, “I think the people that you had convened would actually do it. Like I don’t think it’s a dead-in-the water project. I think you have the right combination of people that actually have some influence in the community and could make things happen.”

Concluding Thoughts

Pottsboro stakeholders provided our research team with insights into a city burgeoning with change. This rural community is expecting population growth even as it experiences change in local city leadership, presenting the area with an opportunity to reevaluate how to best meet community needs. As with other rural cities in Texas, Pottsboro experiences resiliency challenges that range from pivoting away from old ways of managing the city to identifying resources to assist with residents’ employability, education, health, and recreation.

Many of our stakeholders have worked together in some capacity, although others met for the first time through this collaboration. The process of adapting the COPEWELL Community Functioning self-assessment rubric using community collaboration allowed the group to focus on an area of critical need for the community. Stakeholders were able to clearly identify pressing community resiliency challenges around community functioning and connectedness and begin brainstorming next steps to improve resiliency for their community. As some stakeholders had worked with one another in other organizations, they had already begun to address a few resiliency needs that emerged in our pilot project, like working to improve access to broadband internet.

By participating in this project, stakeholders also had the opportunity to expand their connections and make new ones. For example, one stakeholder introduced another to a source of funding for projects on aging seniors in Grayson County, while others connected on multiple grant ideas and future planning needs. One stakeholder joined the board of another's nonprofit organization, which they described as "That all happened because of this project... I loved hearing some of the things that she said in these focus groups, that I was able to then take back to my board and be like, 'Wow! We have someone who wants to get stuff done for this small community.'" The Library Director was also able to connect leaders and residents from across Pottsville and foster a better connection with another stakeholder from our project to collaborate on grant funding for a new library building that will specifically address emergency preparedness. As Charley told us and her stakeholder peers during FG1, "This was the first time in a very long time, I felt like I was at a meeting that wasn't wasting my time. And that we were actually productive...It's rare when you have this focused, kind of concise, wanting to move forward together." It is our hope as a research team that participating in this project will continue to help stakeholders "move forward together" to address community resiliency needs to improve community functioning in the area. Stakeholders' positive experiences with COPEWELL presents opportunities to collaborate on other COPEWELL rubrics and to invite more participants to join the collaboration groups in the future.

All the Pottsville stakeholders shared **hope for the sustainability of this collaboration**, the impact of the pilot project and this report for planning Pottsville's future. Simultaneously, this project represented the first step in many future collaborations to come. Irma summarized the impact of the pilot project and the future needs:

"I really think there's a benefit to continue the process...I feel like we've opened the window and air is flowing through. Or another analogy, we've pulled all the ingredients out of the cabinet to bake a cake. But we haven't figured out exactly what cake to bake yet. And the benefit of this process has been that there's a very clear strategy from COPEWELL. And you all brought us together and mediated this process...We need a cheerleader to take it on. And that's what this has felt like. That you all have coached us through the processes, and we need the coach to continue forward into the next steps, I think.

We believe that the **future coach is the Library Director** and also other stakeholders working together in leadership and facilitation roles to sustain these efforts.

Finally, the Pottsville Public Library and the Library Director acted as critical partners in this project. Library Director, Dianne Connery, has built an immense level of trust among her partners as she revolutionizes what a library can be and mean in Pottsville. She has already built services that operate outside of assumed, traditional services of a public library, and her plans for a new library space will only enhance how the library can actively assist community leaders ahead of, during, and after disasters. In her role as a project partner, Dianne helped the research team recruit a diverse stakeholder cohort, participated in data collection, and she has pledged to sustain this resiliency building collaboration. Libraries support and impact their communities across the state, nation, and globe, and we believe that their positioning and outreach enables **librarians and their libraries to act as conveners for resiliency building** activities. We greatly value Dianne's role in this project, and we hope that our readers join us in advocating for local governments to better involve librarians as stakeholders in emergency planning, response, and recovery activities.

We also hope **librarians from other areas in Texas and other states** reading this case study will see fruitful potential in undertaking our community collaboration adaptation of COPEWELL in their areas (see Eger et al., 2023, for concrete process steps). As Eva recommended to other libraries and other community stakeholders considering hosting their own community resiliency collaborations using COPEWELL in their areas:

"I think the first thing I would do is to suggest that they go in, listen, and learn and understand what the purpose is, and what it looks like, and what it can be. And, then think with them outside of the box. Don't try to put the process in the box. Let it go outside of that box, and see what it does.

We welcome future conversations with librarian conveners and Texas communities adapting our specific community collaboration approach and those going "outside of the box" to support their library and community's resiliency.

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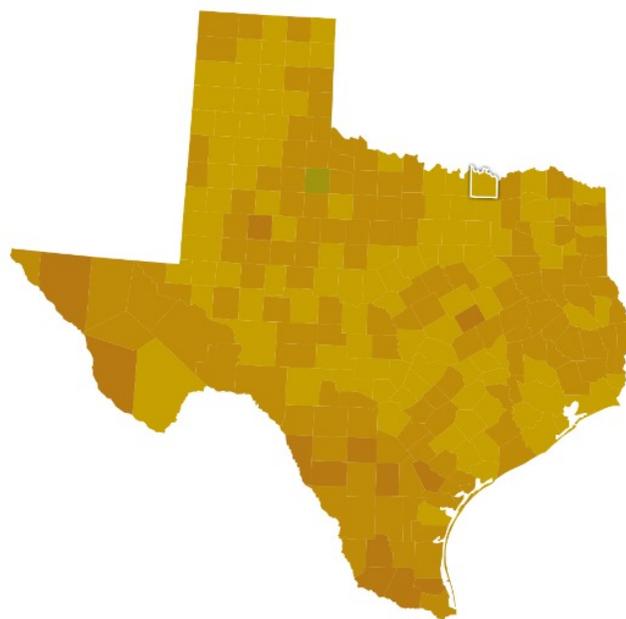
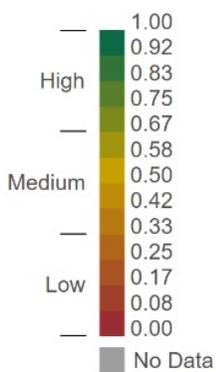
Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot for Grayson County

The following snapshot comes from COPEWELL's Computational Model and Data (COPEWELL, 2022c), which is available here by state and county: <https://copewellmodel.org/computational-model-data-0>

COPEWELL measures and data collection approaches can be found here: <https://copewellmodel.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/copewell-summaryof-measures.pdf> (COPEWELL, 2022e).

SCALE

0-1 Min-Max



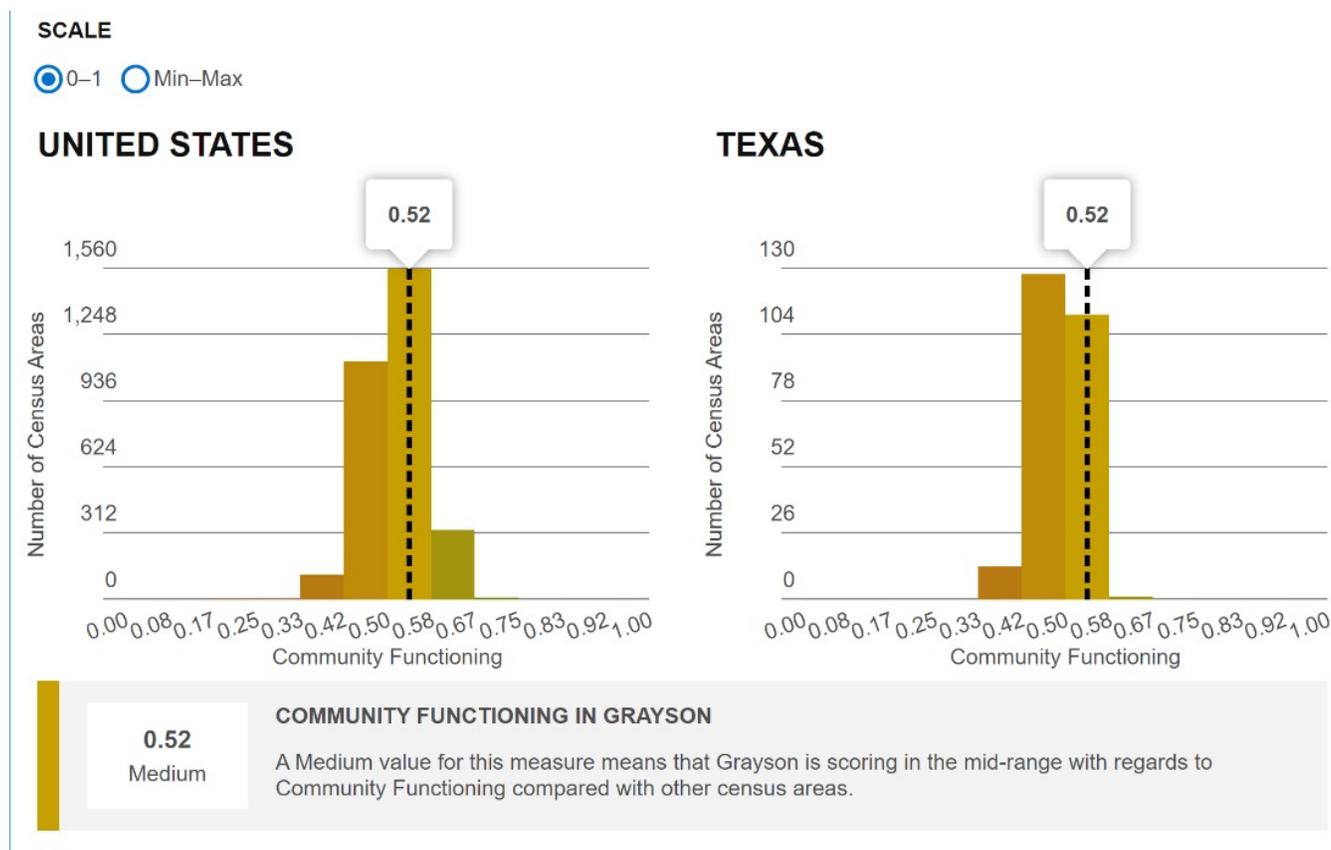
0.52
Medium

COMMUNITY FUNCTIONING IN GRAYSON

A Medium value for this measure means that Grayson is scoring in the mid-range with regards to Community Functioning compared with other census areas.

GRAPH A.1

COPEWELL Social Capital and Cohesion Map for Grayson County



GRAPH A.2

COPEWELL Social Capital and Cohesion Graph for Grayson County

Domain, Subdomain, or Measure	High/Med/Low	Normalized Value	Raw Value
Community Functioning	Medium	0.52	N/A
Communications	Medium	0.48	N/A
Internet Service	Low	0.33	76.24%
Telephone Service	Medium	0.63	98.35%
Economy	Medium	0.51	N/A
Banking Establishments	Low	0.1	2.77

continued »

Domain, Subdomain, or Measure	High/Med/Low	Normalized Value	Raw Value
Business Establishments	Medium	0.47	198.46
Employment Level	High	0.81	5900
Median Income	Medium	0.6	54815
Paid Employees	Medium	0.56	3081.85
Education	Medium	0.56	N/A
Colleges, Univ., & Prof. Schools	No Data	No Data	No Data

continued »

Domain, Subdomain, or Measure	High/Med/Low	Normalized Value	Raw Value
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Medium	0.56	13.18
Food and Water	Medium	0.53	N/A
Food Environment Index	Medium	0.5	7.1
Housing Lacking Plumbing	Medium	0.56	2.19%
Government	Medium	0.43	N/A
County Infrastructure	Medium	0.38	898694.65
Justice and Public Safety	Medium	0.48	1977128.2
Healthcare and Public Health	Medium	0.44	N/A
Health Insurance	Medium	0.38	84.12%
Healthcare Support	Low	0.17	128.74
Number of Hospital Beds	Medium	0.59	44.34
PHAB Accreditation	Medium	0.63	1
Housing	Medium	0.5	N/A
Crowding	Medium	0.47	2.30%
Severe Housing Problems	Medium	0.49	14.26%
Spending on Housing	Medium	0.53	23.80%
Nurturing and Care	High	0.78	N/A
Number of Nursing Homes	Medium	0.74	3.07
Pre-K Enrollment in Public School	High	0.82	95.74%

continued »

Domain, Subdomain, or Measure	High/Med/Low	Normalized Value	Raw Value
Transportation	Medium	0.53	N/A
Public Transportation Use	Medium	0.53	0.30%
Wellbeing	Medium	0.46	N/A
Arts and Entertainment	Medium	0.46	2.7
Fitness and Rec Sports Centers	Medium	0.41	0.6
Nearby Parks	Medium	0.51	18.00%
Population Factors	Medium	0.53	N/A
Deprivation	Medium	0.59	N/A
Persons Living in Poverty	Medium	0.59	12.00%
Inequality	Medium	0.51	N/A
Gini Index of Income Inequality	Medium	0.51	0.44
Vulnerability	Medium	0.48	N/A
Pop. Under 5 or 65 and Over	Medium	0.46	24.10%
Population with Disability	Medium	0.5	15.40%
Preparedness and Response	Medium	0.55	N/A
Preparedness and Response	Medium	0.55	N/A
First Responders	Medium	0.55	45.76
Recent Hazard Mitigation Plan	No Data	No Data	No Data

continued »

Domain, Subdomain, or Measure	High/Med/Low	Normalized Value	Raw Value
Prevention and Mitigation	Medium	0.59	N/A
	Medium	0.65	N/A
Influenza Vaccination Rates	Medium	0.64	51.00%
Pharmacies Enrolled in EPAP	Medium	0.66	31
Engineered Systems	Medium	0.53	N/A
Average Age of Housing Stock	Medium	0.5	40
Bridges with Structural Issues	Medium	0.56	2.94%
Recovery	Medium	0.47	N/A
Resilience	Medium	0.57	N/A
Resistance	Medium	0.61	N/A
Resources for Recovery	Medium	0.51	N/A
Resources for Recovery	Medium	0.51	N/A
Architectural, Eng., and Others	Medium	0.47	1.65
Construction Establishments	Medium	0.48	3.97
Highway, Street, and Bridges	No Data	No Data	No Data
Utility Systems Construction	Medium	0.59	1.57
Social Capital and Cohesion	Medium	0.51	N/A
Social Capital and Cohesion	Medium	0.51	N/A
Civic Organizations	Medium	0.52	1.2
Social Advocacy Organizations	No Data	No Data	No Data
Voter Participation	Medium	0.5	44.54%

