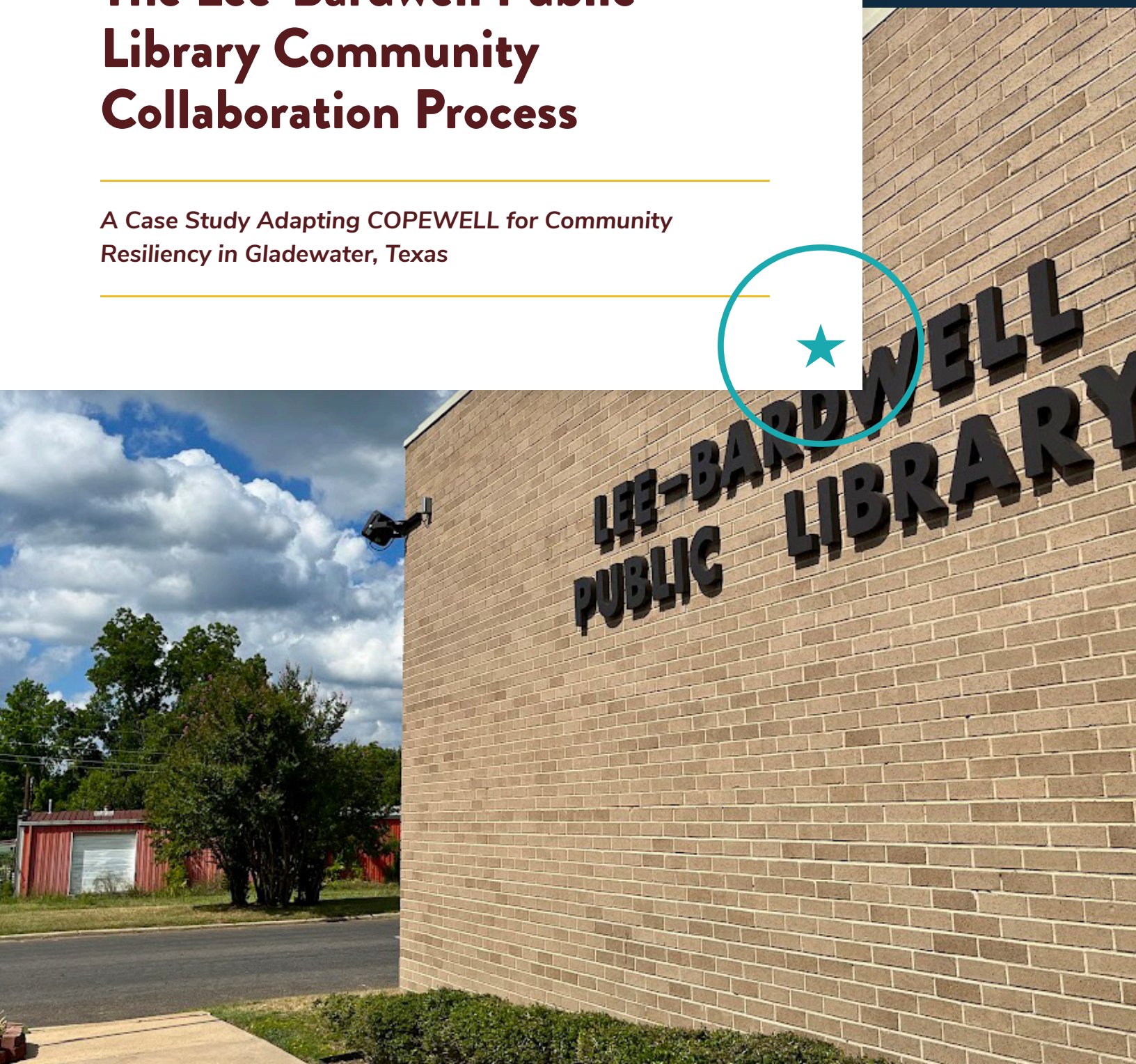


The Lee-Bardwell Public Library Community Collaboration Process

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



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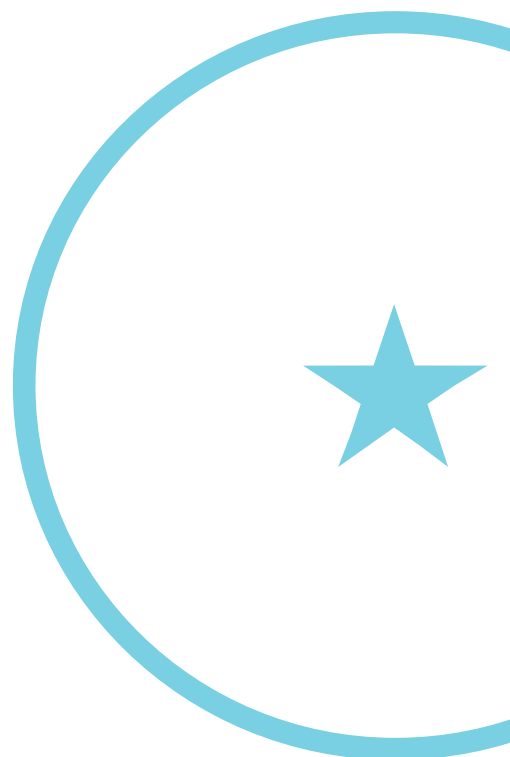
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Executive Summary

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 emergency 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, 2023a). 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., 2023a).

Our objectives for this case study were to:

- Provide the Lee-Bardwell Public 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.
- Visualize the pilot project process for residents of Gladewater who did not participate in the project and who would like to collaborate and/or implement future resiliency planning from this report.
- Position the Lee-Bardwell Public Library Director to convene and lead future community resiliency planning activities.
- Create 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 Gladewater, Texas. Please see our companion report to read the case study of the community collaboration in Pottsboro, Texas (Eger, Long, & Tonciu, 2023b). Here, we condense highlighted findings and share salient next steps for Gladewater stakeholders that arose from their focus group discussions.

Highlighted Findings

Gladewater, located in East Texas, was a former oil town that has seen its share of boom and bust.

Currently known as the “Antique Capital of East Texas,” Gladewater is expecting population growth in the coming years and has grappled with aging infrastructure and a city government that has seen continual turnover in personnel. These conditions have resulted in strained trust between residents and local government and left residents feeling uninformed of governmental decision-making. After our research team presented the COPEWELL framework, the Gladewater stakeholders selected the Emergency Management rubric as their focal point. Two primary challenges emerged as themes across focus groups and the COPEWELL self-assessment:

- **Lack of communication regarding emergency planning:** Stakeholders shared that most residents are unaware of how emergency plans are created, updated, or what information is contained within. Some stakeholders also shared that they were unable to find current emergency plans when looking at the city website. This lack of information has made it difficult for the average resident to understand how the city plans to respond to hazard events, or to prepare for them at the household level.
- **Lack of organized community involvement in resilience activities:** Some stakeholders expressed that residents often do not seem to care about hazard events until they are directly affected by one. As such, many residents did not participate in and/or did not know about public-facing emergency drills, activities, or information sessions. Gladewater residents, however, have a strong drive to help one another in times of need, reflecting their “Gladewater Strong” motto. Unfortunately, this means that residents often do not know how to interface with official emergency response activities. This may make it more difficult to carry out official response efforts through their involvement.

Despite the difficulties expressed, stakeholders also communicated hope and confidence regarding current city leaders. For example, stakeholders shared that responses to everyday problems like burst pipes were already more effectively organized and communicated. They also expressed that the city’s emergency management coordinator is involved in efforts to explain salient, potential disasters to residents. Stakeholders also uniformly agreed that the Library Director of the Lee-Bardwell Public Library and the library are well-positioned to act

as a convener for community resiliency planning activities in the future. Some stakeholders, however, shared concerns regarding sustainability of these planning activities, citing time constraints, potential issues with turnover among the stakeholder group, and the need for an outside position to schedule and moderate planning sessions. Based on stakeholder responses, our research team identified the following broad action items for the Gladewater stakeholders to pursue in their next steps of planning:

- Diversify modes of communication.
- Formalize youth outreach regarding disaster preparation.
- Pursue grant funding for needed repairs/ infrastructure.
- Identify funding for a part-time emergency management liaison.

- Formalize the stakeholders convened for this project, and others, into an Emergency Management Committee.

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 stakeholders' process feedback.

WHEN DOES A HAZARD BECOME A DISASTER?

As a note, there is some nuance when discussing disasters, whether natural or technical in origin. Many hazards, such as hurricanes, are more or less natural in origin, and only truly become disasters when they interact with the human element – e.g., built environments and related policy decisions around building and emergency response planning. This report uses variations of the terms 'hazard event' and 'disaster event' in an attempt to distinguish between the two, as using 'natural disaster' as a blanket term "blurs the causal picture in the public mind and subtly shifts responsibility for disaster losses away from their root cause" (Olson, 2018).



2021 freeze-related water damage

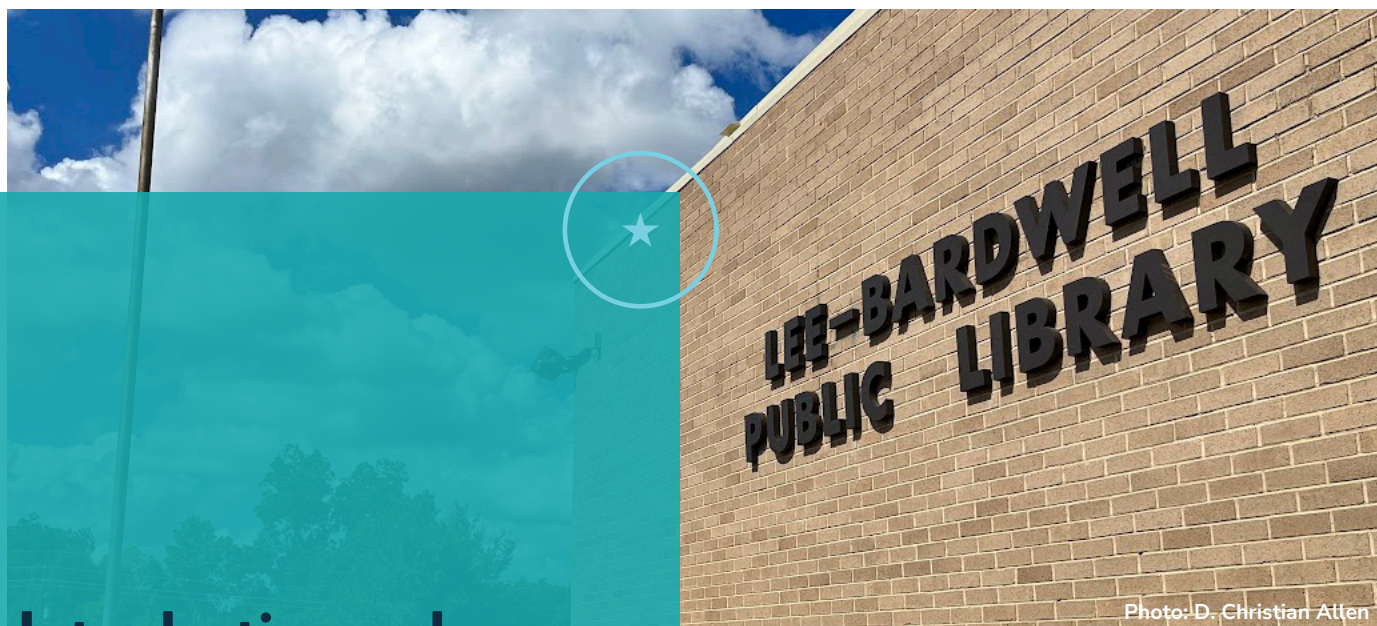


Photo: D. Christian Allen

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. 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, 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.

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

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 with 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., 2023a).

Through this project, the research team selected two pilot site locations in rural Texas communities. Here, we specifically present our case study of the community collaboration in Gladewater, where we partnered with the local Library Director as a convener of stakeholders from diverse leadership and community roles. For the case study for Pottsboro, please read the Pottsboro case study report (Eger et al., 2023b).

We now briefly summarize our pilot process design before introducing the Gladewater collaboration.



Our Pilot Process Design Overview

In organizing a community collaboration, 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., 2023a).

Here, we briefly overview how the Lee-Bardwell Public Library Director and stakeholders participated in the pilot project.

After the Lee-Bardwell Public Library was selected for this pilot project, the research team worked closely with the Lee-Bardwell Public Library Director to develop a list of stakeholders for this study. To prepare for this discussion, we asked the Library Director to read 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 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 list to consider community leaders and/or community members with interest in community resiliency.

We worked with the Library Director to review, modify, and extend the stakeholder 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 stakeholders 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 Gladewater, the Library Director identified a community leader who was an older individual who worked with lower income residents in his advocacy work. He was

interested in participating but did not have time in his current schedule and would have had difficulty participating via Zoom. The Lee-Bardwell Public Library pilot stakeholders represented organizations and interests from local government, business, emergency response, community members, and education sectors.

We provided the Library Director with 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 re-iterated project goals and expectations and provided space for potential stakeholders to ask questions about the project. If a stakeholder then consented to the pilot project, they were officially enrolled in the community

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 Lee-Bardwell Public 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.

collaboration with a pseudonym for confidentiality (see box page 9). We then applied our research that translated the COPEWELL framework 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 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 Gladewater 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 Gladewater, we had seven stakeholders (including the Library Director) participate in the project. The

table below represents the breakdown of the number of stakeholders present at each data collection point.

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., 2023a, 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 Lee-Bardwell Public Library, Library Director, and local stakeholders’ participation in the community collaboration adapting COPEWELL. To begin, we provide an overview of the Gladewater community as provided by stakeholders, including a snapshot of the community, a description of community resiliency needs, the library’s role in the community, and

TABLE 1.1

Gladewater Participant Count by Data Collection Event

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

All stakeholders completed both focus groups in Gladewater. One participant did not complete an exit interview.

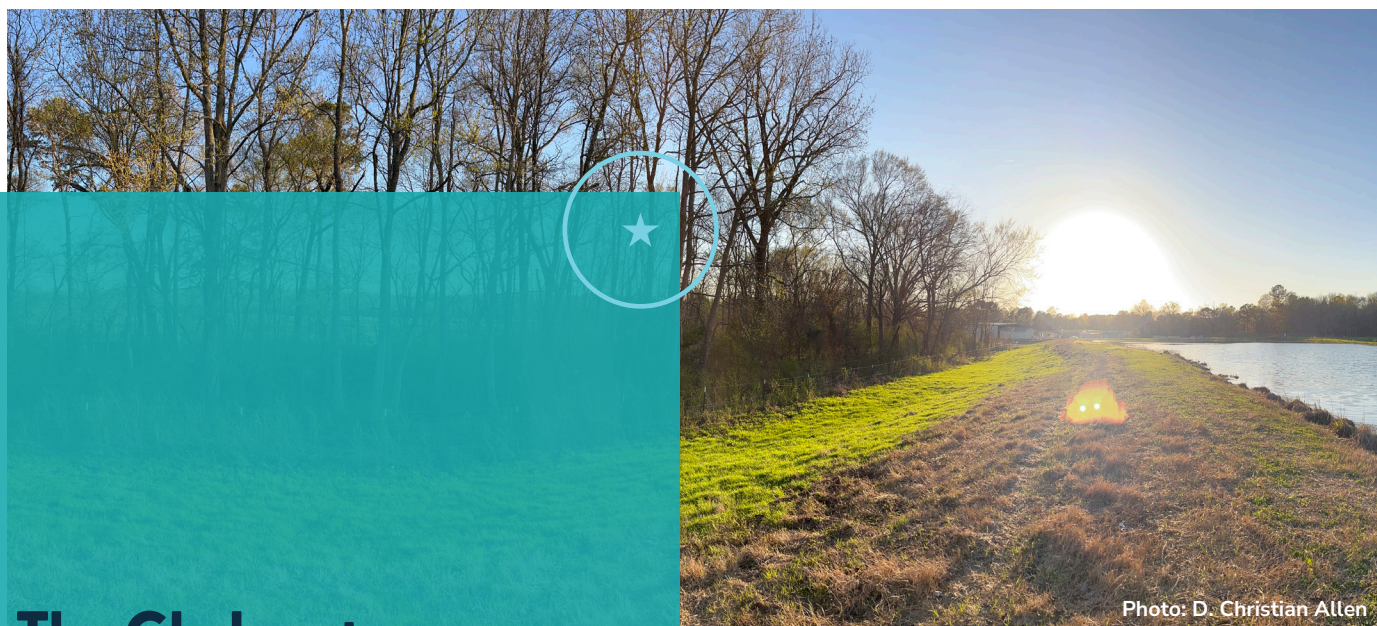


Photo: D. Christian Allen

The Gladewater Community

pertinent challenges to the library's outreach goals.

Gladewater, a rural city in East Texas with a population of over 6,400 people, is spread across Gregg County, Upshur County, and a part of Smith County and is located just south of Lake Gladewater. The assembled stakeholders have lived in Gladewater for vastly different amounts of time, with some living there for around a year and others for decades; one stakeholder is a life-long resident. No matter how long they've lived there, stakeholders described deep personal and professional ties to the area, and all had something positive to say about the community. Ivan, for example, said he considers Gladewater to be "the best kept secret in East Texas." The city is home to arts and crafts festivals, cooking competitions, rodeos, and more, and is experiencing a population increase. Throughout data collection, stakeholders remarked on the "Gladewater Strong" spirit of the community, describing residents as always willing to help in times of crisis. Eloise shared her perception of the community:

Gladewater is a cool little town. We have a lot of antique stores. We call it the Antique Capital of East Texas. And there are a lot of new restaurants and venues starting to come ... It's a lovely community. I love being here. The small town is great. All your neighbors help each other, and the festivals are great.

Ivan added to this perspective, while indicating that some in the community see Gladewater as lacking the attractions of nearby areas:

I didn't really know much about Gladewater, other than it was a town north of Kilgore. And so, when I got [my current position], when I first got here, one of the first events we went to, a lot of [residents] kind of would come up to us and say, "Man, why'd you come work here? This is kind of a dying little town, and it's kind of struggling." And I kept going, "Man, I don't see that." ...

As Ivan explained, the area is seeing a growth in population; some of this is likely to do with Gladewater's proximity to larger cities. Clark elaborated on this, sharing:

I think because of where we are, we are between Longview and Tyler, I think that gives us a unique position. We don't have the theaters, we don't have the bowling alley, we don't have this and that. ... we are so close to Longview, and we are so close to Tyler, you can drive there in 20 minutes and drive back. ... So, I think that Gladewater is a bedroom community, but it's also just far enough from Longview and Tyler that it has to be its own town.

And so, I think that we are in a prime position to grow, and we are seeing that ... It has taken years and years to do that, because the property was owned by a handful of people. And so, this is opening up and we are seeing a variety. We are an Antique Capital of East Texas, but there are far more unique shops and eating places than there are antique shops now. And I think that people out there still see us as the Antique Capital or the actual oil field town, and they simply haven't visited, and we just don't really publicize it the way we should.

The example provided by Clark hinted at the **tension between the old and the new in Gladewater**: the desire and need to embrace new perspectives as the population grows while confronting long held beliefs about the town, including how things should be done. In an exit interview, Clark shared how, even as Gladewater grows, it has work to do to improve its image:

It was the only place to buy liquor for probably a 60-mile radius. So, you had everyone [that] was coming to Gladewater to go party or have fun when they were off work. So, basically Gladewater got a really rough name. But now it has kinda swung the other way, and Gladewater has had a tough time changing that image.

Despite stakeholders' overall affection for Gladewater, and despite the events and attractions available, the small town lacks some offerings. Eloise described how this area of improvement impacted younger residents in particular:

We still don't have a lot to offer our young people ... we still haven't added much that keeps our young people in Gladewater as opposed to having to go to Longview or Tyler to go do things with friends. ... on an ongoing, everyday basis, we don't have a lot for our young people.

As detailed by our stakeholders, Gladewater is exciting, family-friendly, and primed for growth. It is also a city with an entrenched history and way of doing things that pose a challenge for that very growth.

Next, we examine the community-stated resiliency needs for Gladewater.



COMMUNITY RESILIENCY NEEDS

Resiliency, which is related to the ability of a locality to withstand and recover from a disaster event (COPEWELL, 2022g) or major disruption, looks different in every community and stakeholders shared their perspectives on resiliency needs for Gladewater. From Ozzy's perspective, as a longtime resident, Gladewater has always faced resiliency challenges:

Gladewater has had to be resilient several times just in my lifetime because it was a small town and then the oil boom hit. My grandfather was a part of that ... Lots of stores, lots of restaurants, lots of options, and then of course the oil boom went bust and Gladewater did also miss out on some opportunities.

We were in the running for like a Walmart, different restaurants, and at the time there were a lot of family-owned stores and restaurants and they kind of stopped that from happening and I think that hurt. In the end, it hurt Gladewater but then we rebounded. Now it's the antiques.

Resiliency challenges related to “boom and bust” periods of change are not uncommon for rural communities.

As Ozzy and others shared, despite Gladewater’s challenges the area is currently experiencing a growth in population. Because new personnel are in city leadership roles, stakeholders were also able to identify how some of these challenges are beginning to be addressed. Stakeholders described **four central, inter-related resiliency challenges**: (1) tension between past and present, (2) infrastructure, (3) emergency planning and response, and (4) disaster events.

First, stakeholders shared that the **tension between past and future** generated some conflict for the city. Some of these tensions resulted from entrenched local government that has resulted in a stagnant way of operating that is resistant to change, though there has been substantial turnover in local government positions, including recently. Despite this history of turnover, it has only been recently that stakeholders and broader community members have been optimistic about new leaders, who represent an opportunity to implement new procedures and attitudes. Over the years, though, turnover in local city personnel has resulted in crucial tasks and responsibilities falling through the cracks and contributed to tension as city employees were sometimes unaware of their critical but ancillary responsibilities. Impacts of this include the loss of funding as emergency response plans and crucial infrastructure, in particular, have gone without necessary maintenance. Fabian commented on the tension between past and present more broadly:

One of the biggest, I think, holdups for our city at large is that we want great things to happen, but we’re reminiscing on how things were in past times and we’re no longer living in those times.

This reminiscing is an excellent example of **city leaders desiring change without being willing**, or having the tools, to update modes of thinking and operation. Contributing to the “holdup,” as Fabian put it, has been the role of communication between

key components of the city’s functioning, such as public works and the school district. In FG1, Fabian elaborated on how this has already changed since new personnel have joined city leadership:

One thing that I’ve seen drastic improvement in, and I’m gonna credit it to [the new city manager] and what he’s doing as city manager. Typically, since I’ve been [working for the school district], we’ve had to close school at least one day a year because of water main breaks or something of that nature. And I will tell you that I see an effort now, localizing—fitting pipes, or redoing that, and it’s making a difference. That have, I think, [been] neglected, wasn’t tended too high, we wanna put it—I see them being tended to in a different fashion, and I think it’s helping.

It helps—like this year, we haven’t had to do that. And when there’s a pipe or an area that’s being refitted, redone, we know about it in advance, [we] can make sure to avoid the area and they get it done. I’m very pleased with that.

While **prior city leadership may have contributed to communication issues** that impacted both day-to-operations and broader community goals, recent new personnel are already improving in these areas according to our stakeholders. Roger recognized Fabian’s comments, and added:

When you’ve got fire and police, they’re very important. They’re public servants. People just don’t even think about public works a lot of times, and those guys are as important as your fire and police departments. And I think we’re seeing that camaraderie now. The fire department responds to help public works. They helped cut up trees when we had a bunch of trees down, here a week or so ago. So, that’s just adding to what [Fabian] was saying.

Second, stakeholder comments about main breaks and repairs to pipes bring us to **infrastructure** challenges. Here, stakeholders talked, in part, about the local dam and building codes. The dam and its maintenance represent an important community asset whose maintenance fell through the cracks amidst turnover in city personnel. As stakeholders elaborated later (see section, **Discussing and Planning with the Emergency Management Rubric**), crucial maintenance had been neglected and lakeside

residents were unaware of the dam's potential to flood. Ozzy, who was unaware of the potential for a dam failure until this project, said:

I mean, everything's kind of older. It's been around for a while. There are repairs and things that need to be done there. Of course, the fracking is not at the lake, but it's in areas all around. So, I mean, that could have an impact too, on the stability of some of the structures at the lake.

As Ozzy mentioned, the dam is an older structure, and a **history of neglected maintenance** would contribute to a higher likelihood of issues that could have catastrophic impacts for the entire community. The structure of this project provided stakeholders the opportunity to participate with a sense of openness and honesty, which in turn allowed stakeholders to learn from each other about critical issues facing their community.

One of the new city leadership positions is the emergency management coordinator; according to Roger, "He's working on a plan for our lake and things of that nature, there's just so many things that people don't prepare for." Roger's point is well taken, in that residents are unable to fully prepare for hazard events they haven't considered or even been made aware of. This is one area that stakeholders hope to see improved by more closely integrating the library with emergency management processes. Ivan offered:

[Roger] mentioned the dam—you know, the possible dam failure. We can have the whole plan laid out for people to go study and research ... So, being able to have all that information in the library, for us to encourage [residents] to go and study this ... I'm excited by the potential of that.

New city leadership is already developing plans to address a possible dam failure and is generally working to undo years of neglected maintenance. Participating in this pilot project also spurred initial ideas for how the library can aid the efforts of the emergency coordinator.

Ivan also talked about the potential issues caused by buildings not being up to code, or being updated without meeting current codes and regulations:

Another biggie is our beautiful little downtown is really old. And a lot of it lacks sprinkler systems, and as these businesses come in and try to turn over this [or that] business and change it into something else, per code it's gotta come back up to code, and a lot of people don't understand how all that works.

Buildings failing to meet code have the potential to worsen hazard events, and further endanger community members. Even a small-scale incident, restricted to a single out-of-code building, could result in serious harm. Though the dam and building codes were two specific examples of infrastructure, stakeholders indicated more generally that many areas of the community are older and are likely in need of updates to be more resilient to both small- and large-scale hazard events.

Third, for **emergency planning and response**, stakeholders segued from an individual lack of planning for hazards to ways in which the city has demonstrated less than optimal emergency planning. Winter Storm Uri, an extreme weather event that struck in 2021, represented a catastrophic disaster that affected the entire state of Texas. 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). Dubbed "Snowmageddon" by stakeholders, this winter storm caught many Texas localities by surprise. Ivan shared:

What made Snowmageddon so bad was: Nobody had a plan. The water treatment plant froze up. People couldn't drive anywhere. City officials couldn't get out of their driveways. [Residents] were without power, didn't have backup generators, didn't have water supplies, didn't have rations. ...

That's what really exacerbated Snowmageddon, because it got into where now, we're having to panic respond to it. ... [Emergency response has] only got three firefighters on duty and two police officers—maybe three or four. We only have so many public works officials. Oh, by the way, they're being affected by the disaster also. They gotta tend to their families and stuff. ... And, so, there's

a disconnect between our [residents] and that information.



An often overlooked component of disaster response is that response and recovery timelines can be severely impacted if responders are also affected by a hazard event.

This can cause frustration and anger in times of extreme crisis as, even when appropriately communicated, community members might expect a speedy response. This has the potential for long-term,

downwind impacts on public trust in local government when communities feel that they are left to their own devices to respond to a disaster.

Roger added his perspective of overlooked aspects of emergency response:

And of course, human life's always the main important thing that we want to deal with. And I think that's one of the things that [the emergency coordinator] wants to get out to the public, too, because when you're out here and we have a situation like that, you need so many people involved. And one of the things you don't think about is flat tires on emergency vehicles. You need somebody out there full-time to fix tires on emergency vehicles, because you're gonna have flats, because there's gonna be nails and there's gonna be everything else landing in the roadway.

So, those are just some of the things that, I think in [the emergency coordinator's] plans and stuff with emergency management, we're gonna have to get that out to the public .

As stakeholders begin to elucidate here, communication issues began to emerge in FG1 as an underlying, cross-cutting theme. There are critical aspects of emergency management that need to be communicated to the public, and improving such communication could significantly bolster the quality of recovery from disaster events.

Eloise, who has connections to the elderly and disabled community in Gladewater, further illuminated the gap of information for populations disproportionately affected by health disparities:

I don't have answers, and I don't know where to go to get answers. It's very difficult to know what is out there. And we also have a big elderly community here in Gladewater. It would be helpful if we had resources that we could access.

Stakeholders discussed city personnel turnover that **impacted the frequency and quality of emergency plan maintenance**, that community members were unaware of how to individually or commercially plan for hazards, and that the city experienced difficulties that arose from a lack of a larger set of emergency response planning for hazards. They also highlighted the difficulty faced by the city to effectively respond to hazards when they are affected similarly to the rest of the community.

Fourth, while Snowmageddon and a potential dam failure were the most discussed resiliency challenges, stakeholders talked about other **disaster events** that the community has or might experience. Ozzy mentioned fracking and how it might lead to future structural damage to the dam or other critical systems. Alma added that fracking might be tied to “the small earthquakes and stuff” that have occurred in the area, and she also mentioned “an oil rig blowout ... it wasn’t that big, but there is that potential that it could ... shut traffic down.” She described these “smaller” hazards as events that “could culminate into something big.” Ivan shared another rare but possible event for the community:

Some other things we can think about are plane crashes in the middle of downtown because we have an airport. We just had a plane crash two weeks ago, or three weeks ago I think it was. To my knowledge, it's one of the first times that we had one that took off, left the airport. Fortunately, where it crashed was out in the cow pasture south of the runway, but they fly over downtown all the time, so that's a possibility.

These mentions of smaller, unlikely but possible events spurred others **to think of additional technical or natural hazards that could affect the community**. These include pipelines and gas lines that might be ruptured when installing fiber optic cable, emergency events that occur on the river that runs through the city or the lake, tornadoes, and potential train derailments. As Ivan mentioned, any of these events could be a smaller-scale event on its own, but could influence the severity of future hazard events, or if they occurred during another event.

Additionally, Ivan provided an example when he shared his perspective of the ways in which the national response to the current COVID-19

pandemic generated local confusion about the role of government in emergency response:

I think this is where the COVID response really got messed up, was we took our playbook that we know works, and that's the whole community approach—churches, schools, libraries, police, fire, public works, local restaurants, local grocery stores all coming together and being together, and you have this formidable army that is hard to stop.

But with COVID, we flipped it upside down, told everybody to stay home, shut down churches ... shut down everything, and then now we're finally figuring out, well, why was it such a big cluster? Well, because we did exactly the opposite of what we know needs to be done.

As Ivan indicated, the national COVID response early in the pandemic generated confusion for some emergency response practitioners and community members, largely by contributing to real and perceived mixed messaging from local and national leaders. Such miscommunication thus set the foundation for the community to distrust the efforts of local emergency management personnel, a foundation with consequences outside of the pandemic.

While stakeholders discussed the impact of Snowmageddon on the community more generally above, they had much more to share about the storm's direct impact on the library. The library, then named the Lee Public Library, was forced to close as a result of the catastrophic damage sustained during Snowmageddon, and almost did not re-open. Alma set the scene:

So, there was an incident where they didn't have heat on at the library at the time that Snowmageddon happened, and there were frozen pipes that burst. And, unfortunately, it basically destroyed the entire library. I know that there were a lot of books that were lost. ...

So, I mean, it was a huge impact, [The library] was down for a year-and-a-half. It was 18 months of no library in Gladewater. ... I think it had a major impact on a lot of people, because ... they're like "I'm so glad that [the library] is open. It was very depressing that we've been waiting on this and waiting on [that]." ... I think it had an impact on a lot of people just emotionally.

Snowmageddon clearly had a highly localized impact in the loss of the library. Further complicating matters was that city council debated not allocating funds to re-open the library following the storm, significantly delaying repairs. In fact, the library had only been re-opened for a few short months at the start of this pilot project. Ivan recalled:

“The library was basically destroyed, and there was talk about rebuilding it, but there was also a lot of talk about, “The city’s struggling, why are we putting money to something that nobody uses?” ... The library’s always been the central point of information, and being in the know, and understanding how your community works.

The loss of a local library is the loss of a vital communal space for learning and community-building and is a hard felt impact in rural communities.

Harkening back to an earlier comment, Ivan said that Snowmageddon resulted in “all kinds of issues and struggles and challenges; I think that kind of opened some people’s eyes up that were involved in it that we need to go a different path.” Another participant, Eloise, shared an example of individual and specific community response to the winter storm:

Now, when Snowmageddon was here, one of our members asked to use the [church’s] kitchen. And he made tons of soup and we let it be known that we were serving soup and stuff because a lot of people didn’t have a hot meal. But it was an individual choosing to do something, as opposed to a church with a plan.

Eloise’s example demonstrates that, while Snowmageddon represented a significant community challenge, it also spurred the **growing community’s sense of togetherness**.

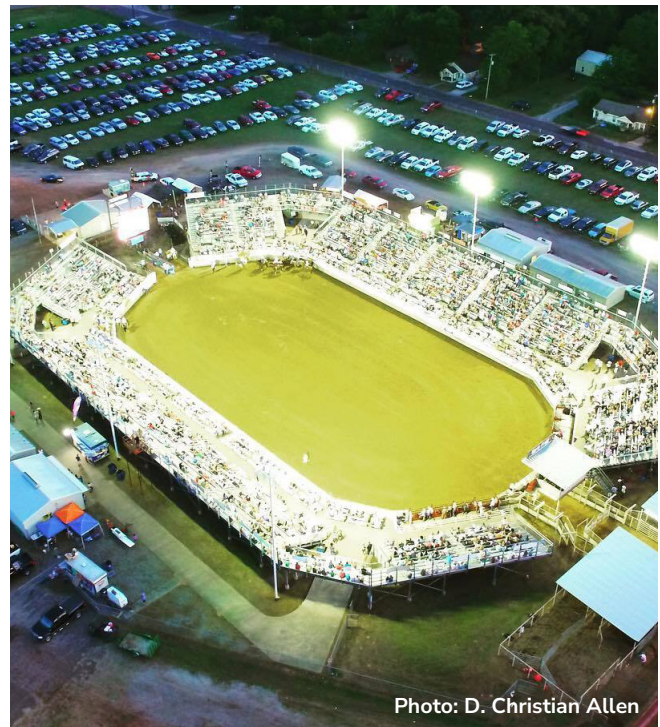


Photo: D. Christian Allen

The library only re-opened because of vigorous community demand. Stakeholders described this streak of social support as being “Gladewater Strong.”

Recalling community response to plans to permanently close the library, Ivan shared that what he “saw in the library situation was [a community member’s wife] and all the people that supported it, they said, “Hey, no, we’re Gladewater Strong, and you’re not shutting down our library.”

Led by Suzanne Bardwell—a tenacious resident with a vision for a library that would serve the whole community—Gladewater residents rallied in support of reopening the library. As Clark relayed, this community member’s perspective was that “you can fix the pothole with that money [saved by not reopening the library] and it’s going to be back in two years. But you can fix the library and you can influence a child’s life forever.” Unrelenting community pressure, accompanied by funds identified

and acquired for rebuilding, eventually led to the re-opening of the library.

As Clark put it: “I truly believe if it hadn’t been for her effort, the library would not be here today because she not only saved it by writing about it and saving it, but she also got funds to go help pay for it. So, she put her money where her mouth was ... So, that’s the deal there.”

Unfortunately, the community member that pioneered the grassroots campaign to save the library passed away before the library could re-open. The library, “in

the process of reinventing itself,” was renamed from the Lee Public Library to the Lee-Bardwell Public Library in her honor and memory. Ivan closes this section with a call-back to the heart of Gladewater’s sense of resiliency: “I just thought it was pretty cool to see how fast the talk of shutdown turned into, ‘It ain’t happening in our town.’ So, Gladewater Strong.”

Though the library has been discussed throughout this section, we turn now to a more specific discussion of the library and the Library Director’s role in the community.



The Lee-Bardwell Public Library and Library Director’s Community Roles

In our pilot project, we asked stakeholders during focus groups and exit interviews about the role that the Lee-Bardwell Public 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 share the experiences of our stakeholders related to the library itself, with the Library Director, and how the library has supported the community, including any current or potential constraints regarding three areas: **(1) the library as a valued community space, (2) library challenges and future needs, and (3) the Library Director and library as a collaboration convener.**

THE LEE-BARDWELL PUBLIC LIBRARY AS A VALUED COMMUNITY SPACE

Because the Lee-Bardwell Public Library **had only recently reopened in November 2022** under the direction of the current Library Director, many of the examples provided by stakeholders focused on new and emerging programs and resources or from before the library’s closure. Stakeholders admitted that it was difficult to go into much detail about the library’s new programming or the demographics and experiences currently served. Eloise shared, “[They’re] just starting to build programs again.” as revealed in prior examples, though, the Gladewater community has long considered the library to be a vital community space.

Located in downtown Gladewater, the library operates as a neutral space in town. As Clark put it, it is “a place where people can gather ... it is a wonderful community gathering place where you can get information on anything.” Some stakeholders have lived in or around Gladewater for years and even decades, and shared fond memories of attending the library as a child, or of taking their own child to the library. Eloise shared that when she thinks of the library, she “think[s] about the story hour. We always brought our kids when they were little ... so when I think of the library, the first thing I think of is my kids’ experience.” Ozzy offered a similar personal story:

My mom took me to story hour when I was young, and then I took my son when he was young. and then ... the school I taught at was in walking distance to the library, and we would walk our classes to the library.

The library eventually became less available to patrons, however, as hours changed and programming was altered or ceased entirely. As Eloise shared, the “library was a very vibrant place. ... and it got to be a place that working people couldn’t go to.” Back in operation post-snowmageddon, the library director is working to make the library more available to patrons. The library provides wi-fi and other services that are otherwise unavailable for many in the community and uses its space and resources to give school-age children a place to gather and play. Clark provided his perspective of the newly re-opened library space:

It was built so that it would be an actual venue where people can gather, and [residents] can make phone calls to their doctor via their laptop in a private room ... We wanted to include everybody. And [the Library Director is] doing a wonderful job doing it. At the last city council meeting, I think they mentioned they had gone from zero numbers up to 1,000, and that’s in three months. ... That’s super.

Ivan echoed this sentiment:

And the short time it’s been open, I see it already starting to become the center point of the community ... for people to come and gather. And so, it’s really neat to see that it survived Snowmageddon and all the tough love that was thrown at it, and for it to still be here.

Proving its promise to the firebrand community organizer that fought so hard for the library to be re-opened, the Lee-Bardwell Public Library has quickly re-established its value to the community. Clark continued with another concrete example:

It is the one place people can come and sit outside on the bench or sit in their car, and they can get online so that they can do something. The downtown does not have Wi-Fi ... but right there at the library, it’s a nice, safe place. And so, it’s one of those things where people know that they can come and do their business. ...

I was in there the other day, and there was a gentleman in there. He’s an attorney, I think, and he was talking to a client in one of the closed rooms ... he was in there working and doing that. So, I think it’s a wonderful thing that we have provided an opportunity for anybody to come and use our city library for free.

The Library Director was in the midst of planning summer programs and working to attract patrons from across the community during our project. As part of this, she and the local superintendent, with others in the community, are collaborating to bring the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library in the ISD to children living within ISD boundaries. There are also plans to install book vending machines in school in collaboration with a local branch of the United Way.

The Library Director has also brought in occasional guest speakers to address topics such as healthcare, is planning to establish a community garden, has started a group on Saturdays dedicated to crochet and knitting, and has set up a videogame station for school-age children. Ivan shared that he views the gaming programming as a space for students to utilize electronic resources for personal and intellectual growth:

So, I really thought it was cool they added those features to the library because if the library’s where anybody can go to get information, well, then why not a young kid ... we think everybody has internet and everybody has computers, and really, it’s a very small part of the population in the United States that actually has that. And so, these kids, they might not have access to that Xbox at home. Being able to come to the library and have that experience, who knows, it may be the next Bill Gates that’s sitting in

our library right now playing that videogame that some of us older people don't understand. ... So, I like seeing the technological enhancements of the library, I thought it was really cool.

Ivan notes both broadband and technology gaps that residents may face in Gladewater and how having technological programming, along with internet and computer access, meets residents' needs. The Library Director also plans to offer future tutoring and after-school services to fill a critical community gap; there were other organizations that offered these resources in prior years, but they are no longer available

The Library Director, working with the school district, aims for these resources to help with the district's mission to get "kids educated on, now, how they can use [the library] in their future," according to Fabian. As Ivan put it:

We have, in the past, had some churches that have had after-school programs and tutoring. We've had [the] Boys and Girls Club here briefly for a couple of years, but they're not here anymore. And I know that's one thing that [the Library Director] is talking about, is having a place for the kids to come get help with work and get an after-school snack and that kind of thing. So, we definitely have that need in our community.

Reaching a younger demographic is an important goal to the Library Director, and providing electronic and technology resources is a core component of reaching that goal. Roger shared his perspective as an older individual, and how the library's offerings positively challenged his thinking:

I used to take my kids up there to the story time, and when this library [re-]opened and I started hearing

about the things that we were gonna put in there for gaming stuff for the teenagers and the kids ... And that has brought so many people in.

I talked to the Library Director about it, and it's like, somebody comes in and they bring their friends with them. So, she's really working hard to get that aspect of the library going and bringing those kids in ... I love to see the growth that's going on.

While stakeholders have mentioned **summer programming and story hour**, the bulk of what they shared includes what some may consider non-traditional library services.

Part of the Lee-Bardwell Public Library's strength is pushing the boundaries of what people consider to be typical library offerings. Despite the Library Director's efforts, however, the library faces challenges to its current and future utility as a public resource.



LIBRARY CHALLENGES AND FUTURE NEEDS

While the Library Director is working to offer services to as many people as possible, stakeholders acknowledged that there are remaining challenges to offering services and resources to the community. Stakeholders largely identified the challenges of: **(1) transportation, (2) challenging community perception of standard library services, (3) communicating about the library to the community, (4) staffing, and (5) funding.**

First, stakeholders indicated that low-income people, disabled people, and elderly people are more difficult to reach to offer services or resources. **Each of these groups are less likely to have access to reliable**



Photo: D. Christian Allen

transportation to the library and might have other functional access needs that prevent them from accessing library services. To address transportation needs and reach more residents, the library, with assistance from the Friends of the Library (a non-profit, charitable group formed to help the library), recently obtained a trailer that will allow them to go out into the community. Per the Library Director, this service will deliver programming and feed into emergency management considerations:

I'm about to start a program where one day a week I will deliver library books to those who cannot get to the library, and then I'll pick them up and all that. So, I mean, that way I can have a list of people ... and so that if there are any problems that come up and they can't get out, or nobody's heard from them, we have a tornado come through or whatever, then we'll have a list of people that we know could not have gotten out of their house.

The Library Director's comments about disabled and elderly people connect to stakeholders' overall focus on emergency management to address their community's resiliency challenges (elaborated on in sections below). Despite having emergency management and city leadership representation among our stakeholders, the only people who really discussed the emergency needs of disabled and elderly people were the Library Director and a member of the community. A significant goal of this pilot project was bringing people together to interact

in ways they might not otherwise, in an effort to generate outside the box ideas and conversations.

Second, stakeholders also spoke of challenging perceptions of the library, indicating that people who only perceive the library as a place for books are less likely to go to the library.

Notably, stakeholders shared that young adults and people in their mid-twenties to early forties might be difficult to attract because they do not regularly read or prefer reading digital copies of books. Clark elaborated:

Our library, I think people ... automatically think books. Just books. And I had several people during all this process go, 'Well, I don't read books anymore. I don't read books. I do them online.' And I'm going, you can do that there. And so, I think we can be all things to all people.

Eloise's perspective goes a bit further, speculating that this disconnect in perception is tied to the overall lessened value of libraries:

I think one of our big challenges, too, ... is that people do not read as much anymore. And so, that is

a problem in our culture right now, is people are not really reading. ... I feel like libraries will always have a place, but they're not always valued as much as it used to be.

Though brief, Clark and Eloise's examples support the Library Director's effort to expand the library beyond its more traditional role.

Which brings us to the **third challenge of communication** – a theme that resonated in many areas during the project. Residents of Gladewater, as evidenced by examples above, have not been made fully aware of the library's programs and resources.

Stakeholders suggested that the library needed to focus on communicating more widely and to use new approaches to reach residents.

Ozzy indicated that, "Right now, it's just a matter of people knowing [the library is] open again and active again." She elaborated on this challenge, adding that she does not view it as insurmountable:

And again, if we can get the word out, because that's what happened with the library [under the prior librarian]. People did not realize the library was going to shut down, and they were not going to reopen it. And as soon as people figured that out, there was an upswell of people that contacted City Council, like "You've got to figure this out. This is not gonna happen." So, and I think, again, it's communication.

Getting that word out what the library needs, and I think she'll get response to that. ... For community resources like the city manager, city council, the Library Director is gonna have to [get] buy in that the library needs to be the hub for information ... they're going to have to include the library and the Library Director in on how to get these resources.

Fourth, stakeholders discussed the challenge of **library staffing**, as there is "only one full-time [person, and] one part-time person" assisting the Library Director (at the time of this report). A lack of

staffing places discrete limits on what can be done regardless of how active the library wishes to be in the community, particularly without experiencing burnout or diminished quality of services. **Funding was raised as a related fifth challenge**; the library's lengthy closure resulted in its loss of accreditation, which in turn cuts the library off from applying for certain grant funding opportunities. The library has submitted for reaccreditation, but evaluation for accreditation occurs just once annually. Even when the library can apply for additional funding, however, funding will remain a primary challenge.

Other mentioned challenges include the library's outdated technology, and that the library can be intimidating to people who think it requires a certain level of education or social class to use. Despite the challenges mentioned here, Ozzy capped off her comments by tying the library's efforts to the communal spirit of the community:

"Actually, the library is a perfect example of resilience because of what happened during the snowstorm, and how it took community members coming together to bring it back to life. I just feel like it's a place that everyone can come to, you know?...I felt like the library is the place where they could feel welcome no matter what walk of life they come from. I'm hoping that's what it can turn into." - Ozzy

The example of how the library had already become a space in the community for disaster **response illustrated the potential for future resiliency planning and convening** at the Lee-Bardwell Public Library, which we now examine.

THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR AS A COMMUNITY COLLABORATION CONVENER

The library's current success would not be possible without the guiding hand of the current Library Director. Brimming with new ideas and the drive to push boundaries, the Library Director is determined to build the library into a community service that extends well beyond books. Speaking of her passion for the job, the Library Director shared, "I also am an ambitious person when I take something from the ground up, and that was basically handed to me when I came in as librarian. Because after being closed down for a year and a half, there wasn't really that much of a base anymore, it seemed." Here, she explained that because she became the director at a time of change after the library's closure, there was a possibility for the library to be re-created to better serve the community. The Library Director also specifically credited being selected to participate in this pilot project as:

An even better way to help the community than just being a repository for books. I want to make sure that people have the things that they need, the tools that they need to make life better for themselves. And part of that is making sure that if there's any problems [that] come up, that we're able to help them. ...

I wanna be a place where they can go and say, "This is what I need," and I will be able to give them information on either where they can get it, or wanna be able to give it to them. ... That was what interested me in the [pilot project] is making the library the focus for the community, the central part of it. And that's what I want this place to be.

The Library Director's comments illustrate how a librarian considering hosting their own community collaboration for resiliency planning, with adapting the COPEWELL framework, could help the library forge new connections within their communities.

Other stakeholders, in both the focus group sessions and exit interviews, shared their faith in the Library Director both in her current position and as future convener around community resiliency (see panel).

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Fabian: [She is] the right person in the right place. ... I am really impressed with her vision for where things are going to go, and with what she wants to do. ... I trust her.

Clark: Oh, I think [the library is] a good neutral territory, which is important. ... It's a free-for-all. I mean, everybody's welcome. And nobody's judging anybody. And I think it's wonderful.

Eloise: I think it's a great idea. Because the library is the heart of the community and I think it's a great idea to make that the gathering spot. ... [The Library Director is] very much a go-getter. She's got a lot of great ideas for the library, and I can definitely see her pushing people forward.

Ivan: I think it's what it should be. ... the library was always ... kind of the cornerstone and fabric of our societies, was it brought people of all walks of life to a central point ... So, why not use the library to be the one that is kind of the centerpiece of bringing all this information together? ... That's what got me excited when I finally understood what we were doing. It's like, okay, that's the answer to this big gap, is a center point that's a safe place that is historically known for where you go to find information.

Ozzy: [The Library Director is] wonderful. She's very involved and invested in this library. I feel like we need somewhere besides schools and churches that we can come together, or that we know we can go there and get information ... I think [the library] would be a good hub to have things that the community needs to see, as far as emergency resources or just resources in general. ... I have all the confidence in the world in her that she's going to be able to, with the help of community leaders, turn that into a place where people can come, and people can get the information that they need. Not just books, but community resources.

Roger: She's really working hard to get [the technology] aspect of the library going and bringing those kids in. And I think she said this morning they had 40 people in the story time this last week, and that's amazing to me. When my kids were going there at that time, there was five or six that went to story time, but I love to see the growth that's going on.

Though the Library Director has only been in her position since November 2022, she has already earned the respect and trust of many in the community; this trust will be integral to her future as a convener of community resiliency planning. Additionally, throughout data collection stakeholders returned to the idea that libraries have had longstanding value in societies across the world, and that innovative approaches the Library Director seeks to undertake will only strengthen the Lee-Bardwell Public Library’s position as a central hub for information outside of and during disaster events.

We now detail Gladewater’s 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.



Gladewater’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 view 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 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RUBRIC

During the first focus group session, it became clear that the local government and emergency response stakeholders were concerned about prepping the community for disaster and hazard events; other stakeholders agreed this was a concern, particularly those that expressed a lack of awareness of current emergency response protocols. Stakeholders discussed community again during this conversation, sharing that resources for communal gathering and participation are lacking, such as Eloise’s observation of a lack of entertainment options to keep young people in the city as opposed to going to a nearby city.

Based on the stakeholders’ descriptions of community features and challenges, the research team selected the Emergency Management and Social Capital and Cohesion self-assessment rubrics to present to the group. Either rubric would provide the group with the opportunity to identify gaps in community understanding around emergency response or in ideating how to more holistically bring together an enthusiastic – if disorganized – cohort of community members, all wishing to lend a hand in times of crisis. When weighing rubric options, Alma shared:

I can say that there is a lot of community involvement already. There are certain areas that I think that it’s lacking in, and I’ll say this, it’s the lower income areas that don’t have that cohesion, I guess, that some of the other areas have. ... So, you know, I agree with [Ivan], some of that is gonna—the overlap on it—I mean, as far as I’m looking at it, I agree that the emergency response issue is gonna be a little more important. Because if there’s a disaster, how are we gonna have a community?

As for Ivan, he offered:

There [are] a lot of people willing to help. And in a

disaster, that sounds good, but it can also become another disaster because those people don’t know what they’re doing, don’t know how to function within the organized approach to this response. ... So, there’s that gap.

There was this big willingness to help. You know, there’s a lot of [residents], when disasters show up, they’re Gladewater Strong, and they show up. But a lot of them don’t understand the big picture understanding of ... trying to coordinate and organize this response for a more effective response. - Ivan

Aside from one minorly hesitant participant, the group appeared unanimous in their selection of the Emergency Management rubric; feedback from some stakeholders indicated that better understanding gaps in emergency response was a more pressing need, and that they would likely address some community-centric issues in one of the Emergency Management domain items (COPEWELL, 2022h).

We now introduce the COPEWELL computational model in more detail. While these data were not used during data collection for the pilot project, they provide a county-level focus to complement our qualitative insights derived from the self-assessment rubrics. Because of our adaptation to the COPEWELL model, this section will compare the qualitative scores from our pre-survey for each item of the Emergency Management domain against model data.

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 use the computational model, readers may want to compare our project's qualitative scores from the self-assessment process against the model. Stakeholders' average score for the Emergency Management rubric was 4.9 (out of 10), while the model scored the equivalent Preparedness and Response as .44 (Table 1.2). Of note, computational score values were normalized by the COPEWELL team so that all items are scored from 0 (very low) to 1 (very high). These are both mid scores, indicating that **Emergency Management** was a worthwhile selection.

Based on the below table, **Population Factors** and **Social Capital and Cohesion** have similar mid scores, suggesting that either rubric would be good candidates for future resiliency planning activities.

It is important to note that the figures listed in the table include an average of Gregg and Upshur County values, as Gladewater is primarily located in both counties. Gladewater is also included in Smith County, but to such a small extent that the team did not include the values for such a large county here. These values also represent county-level data, so there are some areas in which Gladewater specifically is better or worse than indicated by these data. Please refer to **Appendix A** for complete county snapshots based on the computational model.

PRE-SURVEY PROCESS AND THEMATIZING

The 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 (it is a common practice in COPEWELL self-assessments to do scoring in person), we opted to have this process occur between FG1 and FG2. There were two primary reasons for our 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. The COPEWELL framework considers the Emergency

Table 1.2. Aggregated COPEWELL Model Data for Gregg and Upshur County

Gregg County	Upshur County	Average Score
Community Functioning		
0.54	0.51	0.53
Population Factors		
0.46	0.48	0.47
Preparedness and Response		
0.59	0.28	0.44
Prevention and Mitigation		
0.65	0.61	0.63
Resources for Change		
0.53	0.43	0.48
Social Capital and Cohesion		
0.38	0.53	0.46

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

Management domain to include “the deliberate and institutionalized processes through which the entire community--i.e., residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials—works to assess and reduce risks and vulnerabilities, and to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters” (COPEWELL, 2022h).

Emergency Management falls under the Recovery portion of the COPEWELL model, which is broadly concerned with the ability of a community to resume providing goods and services following a disaster event, and in particular the preparedness and response activities involved in restoring community functioning.

The Emergency Management rubric is composed of four related items (COPEWELL, 2022h):

- **Hazard and vulnerability analysis and awareness**, which involves “the identification—derived via experience, forecasting, and expert consultation—of locally relevant threats and hazards, their possible effects on the whole community, and the community capabilities needed to manage potential crises, accompanied by community-wide understanding of the risk environment and its management.”
- **Whole community**, which involves “an emergency planning process that reflects the community’s actual composition and that allocates a shared responsibility for disaster management across private, public, faith based, philanthropic, and non-profit sectors as well as with individual residents.”
- **Readiness and response**, which includes “the planning, practice, and operation of systems to protect human lives, property, and the environment in a disaster; to stabilize the incident; to meet basic human needs; and to restore basic community functionality.”

- **Recovery planning and operations**, which includes “the ability to affect the timely restoration, revitalization, and strengthening of the community’s economic, health, social, cultural, historic, built, and natural assets, and to improve readiness and response systems in the aftermath of a disaster.”

Following FG1, the research team adapted sections of the Emergency Management self-assessment rubric that were appropriate for a survey instrument (see Eger et al., 2023a Appendix D for an example). Stakeholders were sent 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 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, the research team aggregated both stakeholders’ scores and qualitative rationales to generate a thematized summary for each item of the Emergency Management rubric. These summaries allowed us to share confidential responses through PowerPoint slides with stakeholders during FG2 in order to facilitate conversations around priority items and begin ideating reasonable next steps. In exit interviews, stakeholders added some critical context about what informed their scoring process. Stakeholders indicated a desire to score honestly based on their experience. For some this involved a consideration of what changes or improvements they expected in the future, while for others this meant being more critical of plans and processes currently in place.

COPEWELL Rubric Scoring

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Fabian: [It's] just subjective ... It's based on your vantage point. And, like I said, going back to what my description of the community [was] as emerging ... I've seen a move towards getting things done. I've seen a move in personnel who get things done. Are we where I think we need to be completely? Absolutely not. But have we moved, and are we moving in the right direction? Yes. And, so, that's what I brought to [scoring the rubric].

Eloise: I really did look at the highs and lows and what that looked like. And, of course, I never felt that we were at the bottom of anything. But it was hard to judge some of it, simply because I don't know the ins and outs of how well prepared various things are. ... I pretty much stuck to the middle of the road, simply because I know there's evidence that there is some preparation and planning, and things in place. Just that I'm not necessarily in the know of all of it.

Alma: So, it was hard for me to see what we were missing, what we didn't have. ... These were things that I would expect to be done, and they just hadn't been for ten, 15, 20 years. ... scoring all of those things and realizing how much work needed to be done, I mean, I'm just ready to roll up my sleeves, I'm ready to get in.

Ivan: When the first question popped up, it was like, you know, do I sugarcoat this ... or do I stick to what I know and speak from an expert level of what I see? ... so, I was like, man, how do I do this? You know what, they're asking my opinion of where we sit ... this was a perfect opportunity for me in a safe environment with moderators.

Ozzy: Well, I tried to be as honest as I could ... I did have to stop and think, 'Okay, really not in a perfect world or how I want our town to be right now,' and 'Where are areas that we need help to kind of step it up a little bit.' ... I just tried to take in the community as a whole and not just me.



Stakeholders were concerned about providing their honest opinions while assessing Gladewater, though this was balanced by some stakeholders not having complete knowledge of emergency management processes while others were more informed. Those that were more informed tried to balance their scoring between providing an honest assessment of gaps and areas of improvement, and in recognizing the areas in which they have seen improvement recently.

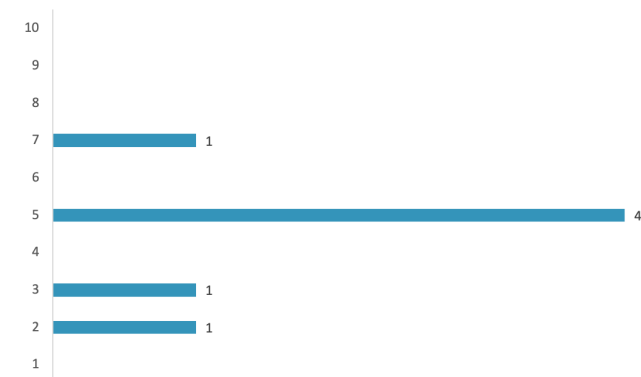
**GLADEWATER SURVEY SUMMARIES
– INDIVIDUAL ITEMS**

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

Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis and Awareness

The average stakeholder score for this domain item was a relatively middle-ground 4.6. Just over half of stakeholders scored this domain item at a five, with other stakeholders scoring at a two, three, or seven. This domain item reflects some stakeholders’ approach of using the “5” score to represent a neutral score, indicative of a **real or perceived lack of knowledge** to score the item higher or lower.

Figure 1.1. Participant Scores: Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis and Awareness



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Emergency Management COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023.

For this item, we developed two major themes:

Awareness of Emergency Management Plans and Processes. Stakeholders broadly indicated a lack of knowledge around emergency response procedures or local hazards.

• **Non-government Gladewater residents are unaware of emergency plans, when they are updated, or the decision-making involved in the development of emergency plans.**

- The public should be made aware of relevant local hazards and community vulnerabilities, though there is concern that this knowledge will be easily forgotten.

Neglected Emergency Management Tasks and Responsibilities. Stakeholders with knowledge of emergency plans indicated that there is a level of neglect and lack of awareness around key responsibilities.

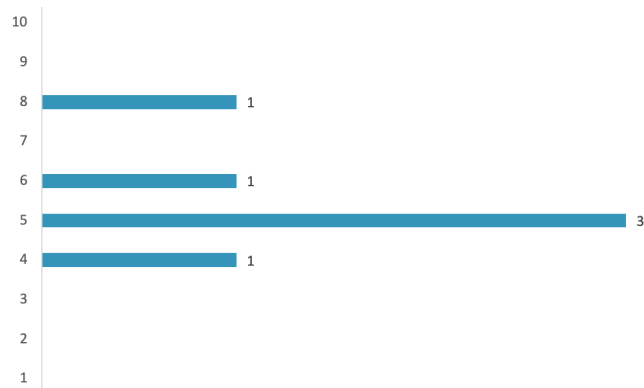
- Tasks and responsibilities are important for emergency management personnel to prepare and practice for upcoming hazards.
- The city’s **economic downturn** led to cut positions (i.e., Lake Warden position), increased employee turnover and personnel changes of key staff, delayed repairs, and halted maintenance/upkeep of emergency preparedness plans.
- There has been a **lack of communication about multiple emergency plans** at both city and county levels, and failure to keep up with emergency plans and required updates has resulted in a loss of grant funding.
- There is a concern that city officials might abandon plans and return to the “old way” of addressing emergencies.

Whole Community Involvement

The average stakeholder score for this domain item was a mid-score of 5. Most of the stakeholders scored

this domain item at a three, while other stakeholders scored it at four, six, and eight. Here, we see a mix of stakeholders using the "5" score as a neutral value, while the stakeholder scoring this area at an eight considered the city's current efforts at improvement.

Figure 1.2. Participant Scores: Whole Community Involvement



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Emergency Management COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023.

Based on stakeholders' open-ended rationales, the research team developed the following two themes:

Feeling of Uncertainty Around Level of Planning. Mirroring feedback from the prior domain item, stakeholders expressed a lack of knowledge around emergency response plans.

- Stakeholders did not know whether individuals, businesses, or other organizations have emergency plans in place (and whether businesses know they need to have such a plan).
- Stakeholders did not know whether emergency management personnel work with any community organizations in developing emergency plans.
- Expressed need to include diverse community members in planning (e.g., gender, race, disability, age, and more).
- Perception that the response to Snowmageddon was more community-led than city-led, and that city employees were not prepared to respond to community needs.

Feeling of Uncertainty Around Community Willingness/Interest in Emergency Planning

• **There is an “It can’t happen here” and “don’t fix it if it’s not broken” attitude with a public that does not want to think about possible disasters or hazards.**

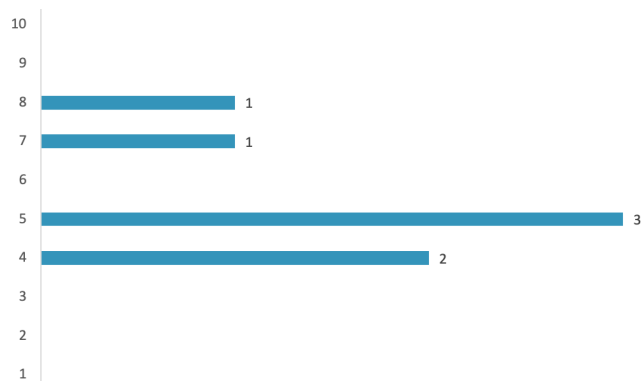
- Skeptical feelings about sustainability, as planning is minimized as time passes or hazard events do not occur.
- Some businesses may attempt to circumvent permit requirements, which includes bringing buildings up to code; some businesses have no interest in knowing about potential disasters or their long-term effects.
- There is a community desire to help during a crisis, but a lack of understanding around organized or meaningful ways for residents to participate.
- The community generally does not understand the role the local government plays in disaster response.

Here, the research team identified a lack of communication between emergency management personnel and the community as an early, cross-cutting theme.

Readiness and Response

Stakeholders' average score was just above the midpoint at 5.4. Again, the majority of stakeholders scored this domain item at a five, while others scored it at a four, seven, and eight. The higher scores indicate a perception of improvement compared to the past, and more knowledge about this area because of the stakeholder's role in local government.

Figure 1.3. Participant Scores: Readiness and Response



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Emergency Management COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023

The research team developed two themes based on stakeholders’ open-ended rationales, summarizing their responses under each:

Lack of Community Engagement. Like the prior domain item, stakeholders indicated that there is a perceived lack of community engagement in emergency response processes, which contributes to lack of knowledge.

- There is no participation in or awareness about any community preparedness activities related to emergency response.
- Non-emergency management stakeholders indicated they were unaware of whether there was an Emergency Response Center in the city/region.
- Continued expression of “Those disasters can’t or won’t happen here” beliefs.

Acknowledged Emerging Efforts to Address Emergency Response Needs. While many responses relate to areas of improvement, stakeholders took time to acknowledge the current efforts they are either engaged in or aware of.

- Building community training activities and other training efforts.
- Confidence in local personnel to respond to hazard events, including optimal planning and practice for disaster response.
- Plans are in the process of being revised, partly based on the needs of relevant departments.

- City officials are beginning to come around to the need for establishing plans for a variety of hazard scenarios.
- Fire and police departments are currently planning, training, and applying for grant funding.
- There is an effort to build and maintain mutual aid partnerships.

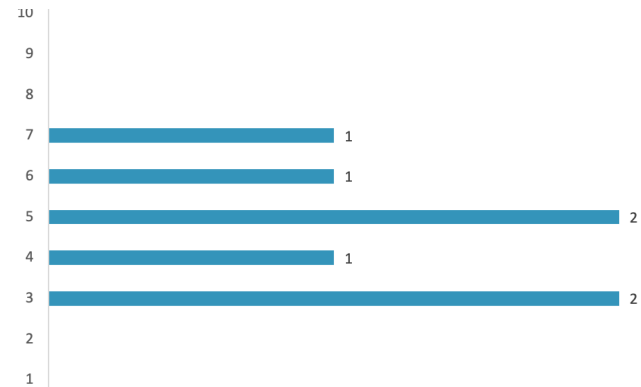
Stakeholders continued to identify a disconnect between emergency management personnel and the community, though they also took a moment to consider the positives related to the efforts of the new personnel in city government.

Stakeholders did indicate one concern: to **avoid turning the library into an emergency management center if it comes at the expense of providing space to shelter people during an emergency.**

Recovery Planning and Operations

Stakeholders’ average score for this domain item was a 4.7. This item received more varied scores than the others; two stakeholders scored at a three, two scored at a five, while others scored at a four, six, and seven.

Figure 1.4. Participant Scores: Recovery Planning and Operations



Source: Pilot project pre-survey, adapted Emergency Management COPEWELL rubric, aggregated scores. 2023

The research team developed the following two themes for this domain item:

Needed Areas of Improvement. Here, stakeholders called out areas for improvement, many of which mirror comments from earlier domain items.

- Need for community awareness for specific recovery and/or operations plans.
- Acknowledgment that planning processes are time-consuming, and more progress is needed to complete updates.
- Perception of **slow recovery times**, based on water failure during Snowmageddon.
- There is a need to plan for hazards that impact different locations, with plans accounting for local and cultural beliefs that will influence priority recovery elements.
- Recovery planning should be oriented around restoration of services, with healthcare a high priority service.
- Some stakeholders were concerned that the team working on disaster plans would have difficulty pulling needed elements together should a hazard strike today.

Areas of Commendation. Again, stakeholders wanted to call out positive elements related to this domain item.

- Acknowledgement of concerted efforts to provide community with drinking water during Snowmageddon, with commendation for a well-executed endeavor.
- A generally strong belief that **the Gladewater community is willing to step up and help** in times of need.

Two clear, broader themes emerged based on stakeholder rationale across all four domain items: (1) Communication Challenges and (2) Engagement in Emergency Response. Stakeholders clearly indicated that

there was a lack of information about emergency plans available to the public, along with a lack of information in terms of how emergency plans were designed or how frequently they were updated.

Stakeholders also shared that there appeared to be a lack of engagement in response activities on the part of community and business members, and that those that did engage were not informed of how to complement the activities of emergency responders.

DISCUSSING AND PLANNING WITH THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 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, including a primary driver behind their response. To keep the session within its stated time limit, we told stakeholders that it was likely not possible that everyone could respond to each item, so if their comments duplicated another participant, they could note the repetition and be skipped.

Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis and Awareness

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. For Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis and Awareness, stakeholders largely communicated their scores from the perspective of (the lack of) information regarding emergency plans and perceived issues around communicating risk to residents.

Hazard and Vulnerability

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Fabian: I put [my score] because I think we have some good people in place. **I think we have some good things in place, but we need to practice.** We need to perfect things ... I think that we're a whole lot better than what we used to be, but there's always room for growth.

Roger: The public soon forgets when you start doing the preparedness things. We get in there. We try to make them aware of the situations that could happen. And then it's short-lived, even ... what happened on 9/11. It's out of sight, out of mind after. It took several years for that, but I think that's one of the things that happens to a lot of people when you don't keep them aware of it.

Ivan: I want to preface that by saying that's not saying we're bad here in Gladewater. ... Just as I came in, I inherited a lot of situations with contractors trying to work around the safety codes and building instructions, and the dam situation where we're in a decline, and then a lot of the maintenance hasn't been done. **And there's a gap between what I see and what needs to be done,** and the [residents] understanding all of that and trying to communicate that. It's challenging without being alarmist. A lot of people, like [Roger] said, we had disasters that have been warning signs that exposed us and showed we had deficiencies. But as soon as we get past the disaster, nobody really wants to go back and talk about what could've happened, or how to prepare and to prevent that from happening in the future.

Ozzy: I don't remember exactly what I put on here ... but I might change my score after last night. We had a lake board meeting [about the dam]. And I probably scored it low, and I took some of the blame for that because I don't know the emergency plans. ... But after last night's meeting, I do think we are on the right track. I think we've got the right people in place now. There was a lot of eye-opening information last night concerning the dam. And concerning a lot of things in the town. **There's been a lot of turnover** in city manager, city council leadership-type roles. **But I think the right people are there now** and want to get everything back on track.

Eloise: Honestly, when I started looking at this, it was difficult because **I'm not aware of what's going on and what our city plans are. And I kinda felt bad about it.** I did [select my score] because there are certain things I've noticed in our past things, whether it's the water mains breaking or it's the lack of water and what have you during Snowmageddon. So, I've seen evidence that we have some plans, but I really, honestly, have no idea what they are or how they're updated, or how they're communicated at all.

Alma: So, I kinda cheated a little bit on this. **I went looking for the disaster plan and couldn't find it anywhere.** I went looking for anything that would give me any information on an emergency management plan, on a long-range plan, on anything that could give me any information. I couldn't find anything. Nothing on our website, nothing anywhere that I knew of. ... and the reason I didn't score lower, actually, is because I do know there are plans in place to get those things to the public.

Clark: In [my role here] for 30 years, I have seen people come and go. ... The names remained the same. The attitudes change. This group is a good group. **The prior groups ... they were kicking the can down the road.** That's all they ever did. They didn't want to spend the money. They didn't want to upset the apple cart. ... With the dam situation, we were at that meeting last night. I was thinking, oh, this is the same story that I've seen time and time again. It's just a lot worse now. And with the people we have in charge now, I think we actually will get something done.

In their comments, stakeholders reiterated that there was a lack of public information about emergency plans (including difficulty finding the plans), that the public tends to forget – intentionally or not – about both emergencies and emergency response procedures, and that there has been a tendency with prior constellations of local government to “kick the can down the road.”

Ivan, who has experience with emergency management, said that it was difficult to communicate about disaster preparation without coming across as alarmist, while Alma felt they had “cheated” by trying to find information about emergency plans after reading the rubric.

Whole Community

Stakeholders focused their comments on the Whole Community domain item on community engagement with emergency management information and response activities, along with disaster communication, including issues around how information is delivered to the public. In the box below, we share the rubric scoring justification stakeholders discussed.

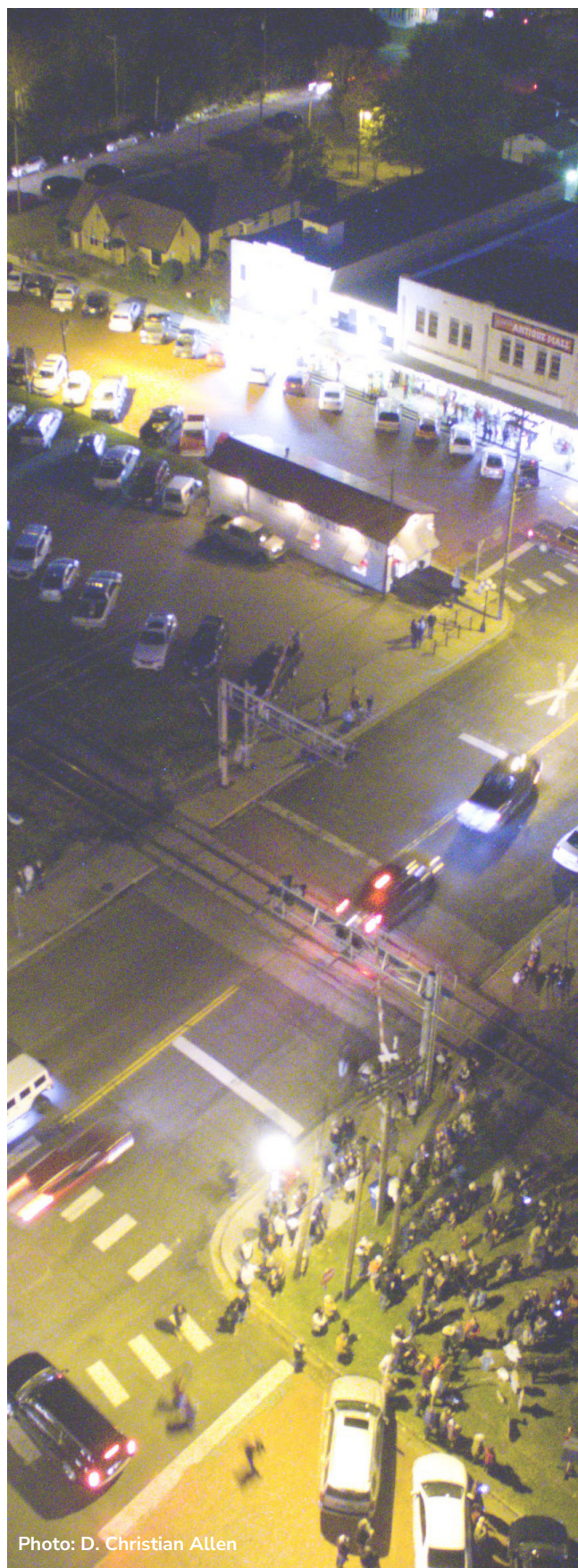


Photo: D. Christian Allen

Whole Community

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Roger: I think one of your first obstacles is to get the word out to everybody. And then as far as getting people involved in, say, like a drill that you might wanna do, I feel like you're gonna have such a poor turnout a lot of times. People just don't want to be involved, or they get too busy. Or they're gonna talk to their friends about it, something like that. And, once again, I still think that if **it's out of sight, it's out of mind**, and they're not going to worry about it. ... In my [prior career], we've probably been involved in three different drills over the last 15 years. Those things need to happen a lot more often than that, not just for the public, but for the responding units and people that are involved.

Fabian: We have a plan. ... The folks inside the school know it, but our parents don't. So, it is legitimate that they should know what's going on before they get there. But another thing that [Roger] said, I'll make this too. My feeling is that things don't matter until they're directly affecting me. [Ivan] might be able to say the same thing, that **we don't get an overwhelming amount of support unless it happens to me**. Then we want everybody to go gung-ho.

Ivan: And that is, there is a plan in place, but the public and the community generally doesn't know and understand it. So, **when the disaster takes place, there's confusion or a mixed message** about, when the government starts to have press conferences telling you what to do, and you're getting a new source of media from your social media and the news. There's conflicting messages. Well, it looks like your government doesn't know what we're doing. But what we're really doing is enacting our local plan. ... That, to me, a big gap is the public tends to rely on the national news. Well, what's going on nationally and in New York is very different than what takes place in East Texas, in trying to get people to understand that your local officials ... we're the ones that have the information locally about what our plan is, and then when we enact our plan, it's better for the local community.

Alma: So, I know I scored low on that, mainly because any information, anything that comes along with the disaster plan and emergency management, we've got such a high amount of low-income folks that aren't – **I don't know if they're disconnected, but they don't seem to be part of the whole community**. So, bringing them in, to me, is gonna be like the major deal.

Clark: I think if you wanna get the information out there, **you might go to the source that the people have been going to for so long** to figure it out. Maybe together, we can all get it out there, because there's all sorts of ways of doing it, or that we know ways of doing it.

Eloise: Well, I agree with what everyone has said about the communication. I am not a Facebook follower, that's not what I do with my time. ... I think about our older community too, because my mother doesn't get any news or anything at all, because she is unable to even change a channel on her TV and put it back. So, she keeps it [on] one spot. So, she doesn't hear the news and [other] things. She can't work a cellphone, she can't use an app, she's forgotten how to use her computer. **So, we've got to think, how are we going to help the people who can't use the resources that are out there for the mainstream?**

Stakeholders shared that one **obstacle to engagement** is getting the word out; Roger indicated that many in the community are just not interested in engaging with emergency response activities while acknowledging that some critical drills are run too infrequently to maintain said interest. Further, Fabian shared the perception that community members in general seemed to only care about disasters once they were personally impacted by one.

Ivan, returning in part to an earlier point related to the response to COVID-19, talked about confusion around disaster communication as another dimension to consider. Here, community members might see differences between what is communicated nationally compared to what is communicated locally, leading to potential mixed messages about emergency response efforts.

Participants Alma and Eloise added that demographic variables influence community members' engagement with communication efforts. People from low socioeconomic (SES) backgrounds are unlikely to have the same means as higher SES demographics to be as connected to lines of authority, have limited time to participate outside of work, or may be less likely to have positive prior experiences with law enforcement; therefore, **they are much less included in emergency response communication or activities.** Older and disabled populations may not be engaged with information networks for a variety of reasons. Generational differences might mean that older community members do not receive information via social media, for example, while older and/or disabled community members may not be able to access communication media whatsoever. Finally, Clark pointed out that, despite the work the emergency management team has put into their communication, there is a distinct **lack of coordination** in getting the message out.

Readiness and Response

For the Readiness and Response domain, stakeholders continued their discussion around a need for improved communication and the perceived lack of engagement on the part of community members. In the "In Their Own Words" section on the following page, we share the rubric scoring justification that stakeholders discussed.

Clark shared that emergency plans are only effective if the average resident knows about them, with Eloise adding that community members need to be aware of what their role – informal or otherwise – should be in emergency situations. Community members tend to help one another at a very hyper-local, neighborhood level, so more knowledge of the roles they can or should play would only increase the effectiveness of community response efforts.

Stakeholders also spoke to two specific dimensions of the perceived lack of engagement with emergency activities: (1) bad prior experiences and (2) inability to partake in activities. Ozzy indicated that some community members have acquired a "bad taste" for local government, including a residual lack of confidence based on the city's past response to emergency situations. Ozzy echoed other comments, though, sharing the belief that better communication – including more thorough detail – would help to restore confidence. Alma indicated that a lack of engagement may be a by-product of those who cannot join response activities, such as disabled community members. Related to this, they also shared that other localities maintain lists of elderly people and disabled people, among others, who are unable to evacuate in emergency situations and therefore require a different kind of emergency assistance. Lastly, Eloise and Fabian shared that they perceive a conflict in how much information is necessary to communicate; depending on the hazard type, providing too much information might be a detriment to response efforts (i.e., in the case of a school shooting).

Recovery Planning and Operations

Lastly, stakeholders remained consistent in their discussion moving into the final domain item of Recovery Planning and Operations, focusing on communication needs between emergency management and community members.

Readiness and Response

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Clark: You can have all the plans in the world, and you can have all the training the world, but if you don't have people [that] know what to do and when to do it – and I'm not talking [about] the fire department or the police department – I'm talking about Joe Blow. You need to have them be aware. When we had the big ice storm ... people just zapped in. The city was trying to help, but the city was also zapped in with their own water problems. They had a frozen water plant. ... And then we were going house to house. And that's what it takes. We also got hold of the churches ... and let them get their congregation involved. And that's how you do it.

Alma: So, for me, like I said, the biggest issues are communicating to those that are not going to participate, the ones that we know can't or won't. ... I remember when I worked for every county or city department that I've ever worked at ... we had different lists of what children were on oxygen, or feeding tubes, or whatever that would need a generator in case of the electricity going off for any length of time.

Fabian: This is one of the challenges that I have with communication ... It's about divulging all of your information or making sure that the part that they need to know, they get. When I was talking before ... about our hazard plans, or our emergency plans, or whatever the plans are, our parents don't need to know everything about what will happen if an intruder comes into a school. Someone may use that against [us] if they know that. But they need to know, in case that happens, this is what [parents] need to do. This is what we're expecting them to do. ... **So, it's about, what do we need? How do we get the folks the things that they need in order to make us safer,** in order to do the things that we need to do?

Ozzy: To me, everything's boiling down to that communication. And I think, too, there's people in the community that have a **bad taste in their mouth from things that have happened in the past**, that's shaken confidence in different parts of the community. ... Again, that needs to be communicated to everyone, because everyone doesn't come to the board meetings or the city council meetings ... I feel like if they knew what the plans were going forward, even if you have to tell them the bad part ... I think the more information they have of what is going on now, trying to move forward would help more people in the community buy into anything that we're talking about. But we've got to build that confidence back up with them, and let the community know that we're going in the right direction.

Eloise: I appreciate that ... you don't have to give everyone all the details. You just need to know what your job is. What is it that you need to do when a disaster strikes or what have ... I feel like our community is very much growing in this, and figuring out, how are we going to manage things? I was very impressed with the water delivery during Snowmageddon when our pipes were broken. But I think we need to remember the community too, because our community, our street was looking out for each other because we have elderly people on our street. We all had that neighborhood connection of, do you have what you need? How can we help you? **So, we can't forget that part of people taking care of people either.**

Recovery Planning and Operations

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Clark: Well, I think the highest need is to actually keep people informed of what you're doing in the process. I know we found that out with the snowstorm. The mayor at the time, he did updates daily. He did a morning update, a midday update, and an evening update. ... By letting people know where you're at and where you're going and where you are right now, it gives them confidence in the city. It gives them confidence in the leadership. And I know that everybody's working really hard, but you have to take the time to let other people know what you're doing ... just enough to make them feel safe.

Alma: All I can say is, look how long it took for the library to open back up, and look at the opposition that Mrs. Bardwell had prior to getting the money together to do anything with it. I'm still gonna come back to the communication issues. ... the more information that you have, the more you can piece it out, and the more that you're staying on the forefront of people's mind, especially during the disaster, will make it easier for the next one ... and we're ready to go, I think.

Eloise: I feel like we do have people in place that care and really want to make these changes to help our community be a more resilient community.

Ozzy: I would just echo about the communication. And I think too, we talk about getting the updates, and that's great when we had the snow. But a lot of times our electricity's out, water's out, all that ... **So, I think a plan that's put out, just a general plan for ... the main things would be a good idea too.**

Ivan: Definitely, we see the Gladewater Strong mindset. And whenever things do happen, there's a lot of people willing to help. But ... [people] show up with good intention to try to help, but because they don't understand that there's an organized plan in place, they go and start doing things, and then it ends of hampering the response or getting in the way of the plan that we're trying to do. So, ... **getting the citizens to trust that we have a plan.** That plan is in place, and we're operating that plan.

Here, stakeholders mentioned frequency of communication, planning for multiple emergencies, building trust in emergency plans, and the need to establish expectations around recovery timelines. Clark mentioned the daily updates from the mayor during Snowmageddon, while Alma brought up how long the library was closed following the disaster, and Ozzy talked about the need to have timely communication for smaller scale issues as well as more dangerous hazards. Eloise, however, reminded us that recent changes in city leadership are cause for hope for positive changes and increased resilience.

Overall, stakeholders frequently discussed

communication challenges disseminating and engaging emergency response plans – including what information is in the plans, how they are updated, and how residents can access the plans – and ways to better involve community members in response activities. As mentioned above, **while plenty of residents are happy to help and demonstrate their Gladewater Strong spirit in times of crisis, an unorganized or undereducated response effort has the potential to hamper official response activities.**

We turn now to stakeholder's reflections on participating in the pilot project as well as their recommendations for continuing the momentum generated by this project.



Reflections and Recommendations

In our final section of this case study report, we distinguish between stakeholders' reflections on their experiences with the 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 a future community resiliency collaboration 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 in the group discussion. Some of these ideas are feasible in the short term, while others represent long term aspirations and therefore these action items, detailed below, are separated as such.

Stakeholders' Pilot Process Reflections

In their pilot process reflections, participants focused on feedback about (1) the COPEWELL framework, (2) on their selection of the Emergency Management

rubric, and (3) on the sustainability of continuing the collaboration without the research team as led by the Library Director.

First, stakeholders agreed that the COPEWELL framework would be worthwhile to use in future community resiliency activities in Gladewater. With a structuring framework such as COPEWELL, stakeholders liked having a tool that acted as a guide so that they were not reinventing the wheel and shared that the collaborative aspect was a strength of the framework.

Alma elaborated:

I guess that's kinda the point, is to find out what the needs are and where we need to start. ... But I think once I look more at each of these [rubrics], I don't see why we couldn't implement more than just one. 'Cause I think there's gonna be a lot that we need.

Stakeholders also agreed that they **would continue to participate in this kind of community**

collaboration in the future “if given the opportunity.” Two stakeholders summed up prevailing thoughts on participating in a collaboration with fellow Gladewater stakeholders in the future:

Eloise: Oh absolutely ... Because I was always that person that wanted to learn and grow and challenge myself. ... And yeah, I would absolutely want to be involved in something else.

Fabian: Again, if it's to make whatever we're doing better, I'm all for it.

We also asked stakeholders to share their perspectives on whether they felt the COPEWELL framework, specifically, was constraining or felt limiting to use. Most stakeholders did not feel the framework was constraining, though one stakeholder provided a complementary, opposing view:

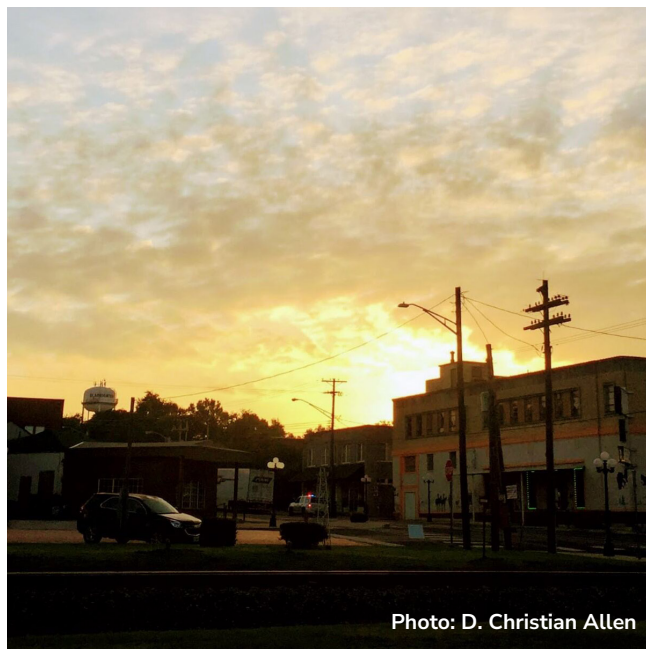


Photo: D. Christian Allen

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

Question: Did you feel the COPEWELL framework was constraining or limiting in any way?

Ivan: Yeah, I didn't [find it constraining] – but I'm the type of person, though, that I like talking, discussing, planning. I don't mind that you have a completely different opinion or view of me, we can discuss it and talk about it, because that's how we come to solutions, you know? ... But I do think the way it was structured, also, would allow somebody who was on the other side of the fence of me who may not feel comfortable. I think in this particular format, I think, to me, it looked like they were comfortable coming out and discussing and talking about it.

Alma: I don't think so. ... and I think part of it is because it was broad enough, if we're talking in terms of the rubric, to me, that it could reflect on anything. Any disaster, any problems that could happen within the city. So, while I'm focusing on disaster planning and emergency management, I feel like some of that could be used for other things.

Ozzy: No, I don't think so. They're pretty broad questions and, again, I guess it's how an individual thinks about it. I tried to think about it, like I said, in terms of it [not] just by myself but the community as a whole. So, no, I don't think there were any constraints.

Clark: I think it did [feel limiting or constraining]. After it was determined we were gonna go in this direction, as far as emergency management. We have a lot of issues in Gladewater for emergency management needs to address. We have a problem with the dam. ... And I think I see [that] Ivan mentioned that, but he had also mentioned it in a meeting that I was at for the planning and zoning board for the lake board. And it's the same story [as] 20 years ago. ... Nobody's done anything, you know? ... So, it's a great big ball of wax and they act like they have the answer, but the answer is just for one little chip over here.

We then asked stakeholders to share their thoughts about what went well or was challenging about the community collaboration experience more generally. Stakeholders largely expressed no perceived challenges with the collaboration process overall. Eloise, however, shared a layered perspective:

“The only thing that I wished, is I felt like we didn’t get to the next step. I don’t like doing the activities and then have them serve no purpose. Okay, I don’t want this to end with our discussion with you, and then nothing is done past that.”

Eloise also went on to share about the communication dynamics of the group, “I think that what went well was that people were very open and easy to talk [to]. And everybody was very respectful, and I thought it was a good collaboration. ... the only [challenging] thing, sometimes for me, was just being the only person that wasn’t in some big role in Gladewater. At times, [that] made me feel like I wasn’t the right person in the group. ... I didn’t feel like I couldn’t talk, I just often wondered why I was part of the group.” While Eloise may have felt somewhat out of place as a community member rather than as a formal leader, her comments solidify the reasons behind our stakeholder selection process with the Library Director. Without community stakeholders like Eloise, it is likely that **key perspectives would have been missed or severely underrepresented.**

Second, one purpose of the exit interviews was to evaluate the choice stakeholders made regarding the **selection of the COPEWELL self-assessment rubric on Emergency Management.** After we presented the COPEWELL framework to stakeholders in FG1, we asked them – based on their comments related to community resiliency challenges – to select between the Emergency Management and Social Capital and Cohesion rubrics. At the time, **all stakeholders but one initially agreed that the Emergency Management rubric was the most appropriate choice.**

By the time of the exit interviews, however, a couple of additional stakeholders expressed that they might have preferred a focus on the Social Capital and Cohesion rubric. One stakeholder suggested that the rubric selection was partly a result of the **presence of city leadership among the group.** Stakeholders with stronger relationships to city leadership remained confident in their rubric selection, sharing that emergency management was a primary concern for the city and that they felt there was significant overlap between the two rubrics. As Fabian explained, since emergency management was, “on most folks’ minds ... the results will be greater if you capitalize on where folks are focused right now.” Those that changed their view shared some of their reasoning, as well as how the group’s discussion might have changed:

Eloise: I was almost disappointed that we went with Emergency Management. Not because it’s not a good thing to do, but because I feel like we are not a united community. We have our areas of Gladewater of our African American culture, we have our areas that are low economics and HUD housing, and we don’t have a lot that brings everybody together. ... [If the group had selected another rubric] I think we would have to take a closer look at some of the helps that we have in place for people. And, perhaps, find ways to involve across the community in leadership.

Ozzy: I remember thinking I kind of wanted to do that [other] one instead, but I could see why—I mean, we have a lot of instances in our community where there could be some type of an emergency, and I didn’t feel that we all knew what the preparation was. ... [If the group had selected another rubric] I think it would have ways we could get the community involved, and then like I said when we were meeting, in Gladewater right now we don’t have a lot of big industry. ... and I think it would have somehow got into that, on how we can communicate and get people together for different events or community resources to get those out to them, and it kind of ties into even [in] an emergency. ... And now that I’m [in a leadership role in the community] there’s some people that have been in the town a long time that have a distrust because things haven’t been communicated, or they feel like they haven’t communicated until it was too late, or it was done they were like, “Well we didn’t know anything about it.” So, there’s that hump that we

have to get over and kind of getting their trust back.

Clark: I didn't understand it, tell you the truth. I can see why [we] went there because the [city leaders] ... I felt [they] directed it in that direction through their comments and raising concerns. And a bunch of the other people who were on it probably just went along with it. ... I said, I'll go with it, but I just don't see where the library quite goes along with your emergency management. I can see it as a resource center, but I don't see it as a viable link in case of an emergency. ... Yeah, see, I like the other [rubric] because it seemed like that the library would fit in perfectly because it's, I mean just like I said, it's an asset like our lake or our downtown shopping or our growing areas to eat.

Stakeholders largely understood the benefit of selecting the Emergency Management rubric, though some wondered whether selecting the Social Capital and Cohesion would have been an equally worthwhile choice. Clark brought up a salient point; many in our group had ties to local government, and we did have emergency management representation among the group. As a result, it would not be unfair to suggest that some stakeholders may have deferred to perceived authority within the group when selecting the Emergency Management rubric.

Third, while stakeholders generally agreed that they would be happy to participate in a similar community resiliency collaboration in the future, as mentioned earlier in this section, many were less certain about the **sustainability of maintaining this group** to pursue generated action steps. When asked about how sustainable it would be to continue this endeavor, stakeholders shared:

Eloise: I don't know. I know that, in the beginning, people are always excited about something and willing to take it on. But as time goes on, sometimes it becomes less important. ... I suppose it would depend on the level of commitment to the group, and I don't know how you get that level of commitment.

Ivan: That's the hard part, and I think that's not just a challenge with the library, that's around the world. Because like I talked about before, emergency management's the hardest thing to sell. ... I mean, it's doable, especially if it's something—and I don't know what role the local colleges could play in

this. When it's something where you're setting the date and the time ... and we're all plugging into this person that's outside our organization, it seems like we all made time to fit. But if you leave it to me to schedule, I've got a thousand things going on ... It's not that I don't wanna schedule it, it's just in the critical nature of things, scheduling a meeting for us to get together and talk about emergency management can sometimes be challenging.

So, we're only as strong as the people who are part of the process. These people are now, in the future it depends on who comes in really. - Alma

Alma: It depends on, let's say, if [a stakeholder leaves] and another [city leader] comes in. ... If [they] leave, and somebody else comes in, are they gonna be as diligent as [they] are? For my part, I don't know. ... But as long as I can get the processes in place, and their relationships [are] maintained then, I mean, I don't see a problem. ... personalities clash. At this point, though, we're all very strong, and we're all ready to get it done, and get it started, and move on to the next problem.

Ozzy: So, I think it's essential, to move forward, to hear everybody because nobody can do it by themselves. So, they want the public's help, the community's help, so the more you engage them, have them be a part of it, I think that would be more successful. ... [For this group] it would just be a matter of time, but just like with what you did, scheduling it on Zoom when most people could be there, and I honestly think that if they told others about it that they would probably want to be a part of it too.

Clark: I hope it's possible, I do. Coordinating it is the hard part, as you know. You have folks like me, who actually think it's gonna be on Thursday, [and] it's really on Wednesday. ... But if you can get somebody who can—somebody other than our Library Director, because see, she has her hands full. ... But I would do it as a Zoom call ... I wouldn't do it as a live group yet. I might do it like the third or

fourth one ... because I felt more comfortable with the Zoom because I know I can just turn mine off.

Fabian: I'm looking, in my head, five members that I know personally that I work with, and those folks are dedicated to making things better in this city. So, [as] with everything it's about your people. ... For me, the greatest barrier is time, like today I had someone come in with an issue we had to handle, and I couldn't get on [Zoom] in time. ... normally, I mean, a meeting is about an hour. So, when [it] goes over an hour, my eye starts twitching, or whatever the case may be. ... It's about folks' time. Time is valuable. But letting them know ahead of time that this is—these are the time requirements kind of resolves most of that. ... I think y'all's communication [about the time commitment] was good, but it's different. You normally don't realize that when you're still participating, if you understand what I'm saying.

Here, stakeholders similarly identified barriers to sustainability including the maintenance of the stakeholder cohort, the time commitment involved, and the need for an outside scheduler so that stakeholder members have one less responsibility added to their task list, which is something we took on as a research team for this project.

Stakeholders provided valuable insight into what it is like to participate in a collaborative community resiliency building activity such as our pilot project. This project was designed to capture these thoughts so that other communities or practitioners can go into a similar process with a better idea of what to expect or adapt for their locality.

Finally, we turn to recommendations generated in FG2, which are meant to set out a path for our stakeholders and the Gladewater community to pursue and achieve as our project ends. A

substantive purpose behind COPEWELL, and similar community resiliency building activities, is to generate feasible, actionable next steps that then feed into the sustainability of such activities. These recommendations may also help other rural Texas communities address emergency management needs they see in their own areas.

GLADEWATER STAKEHOLDER 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., 2023a). Action items were not well-developed, and most lacked clear steps for starting points to address community resiliency challenges raised by the group. Though our recommendations would have been stronger with a third focus group dedicated to action items, stakeholders still brought up several salient items to address and are places to begin when next convening with the Library Director.

Some of the action items are more suitable to engage in for the short term, while others are better reserved for long term planning. Consistent with the themes discussed earlier, these action items are primarily related to communication of emergency planning and making improvements to community member engagement with emergency management processes in Gladewater.

Though we did not delve into action items as deeply as we had hoped, the items below are structured, as possible, to identify any actor(s) who should be involved in carrying out an item, who they should interact with to accomplish the item objective, and the

outcome of the action item.

Our COPEWELL Pilot Process Report (Eger et al., 2023a) contains broader, cross-cutting recommendations designed to help librarians or other potential conveners to adapt our pilot project to their community. Based on stakeholder responses, the five following actions should be considered as starting points for future planning:

Short Term/More Immediate Action Items

The most significant resiliency need was related to **communication of emergency management processes**, including to the broader community. It should be noted that some stakeholders are already actively working in this area in their individual roles and in other collectives, such as in the reported emergency management presentation to the lake board among other activities.

1. Diversify modes of communication. While emergency management personnel are working on clear plans for emergency response, they have previously struggled with communicating these plans to the larger community.

- Based on group conversations, emergency management leaders should reach out to local print media to begin aligning not only content of messaging, but timing. Critically, this information should not emerge only in times of need; a regularly scheduled segment in the local newspaper could allow the emergency management coordinator to routinely speak to different issues facing the community, better preparing residents for any eventual emergency.
- The **local newspaper** also has, compared to city accounts, greater social media reach. What is posted in the paper can be posted online, reaching a more diverse audience. Information should include relevant roles expected of community members compared to expected roles of emergency responders.
- The emergency management coordinator should work with other city leadership to host emergency management plans on the city website. More than one stakeholder shared that, between focus group sessions, they were unable to find such plans online, no matter where they tried to

look. Easily searchable plans might also improve community members' perceptions of city leadership transparency, thereby building more trust. Working with a staff person or community member with web design experience could help the plans be easily located.

The emergency coordinator could work with the Library Director to establish a “Disaster Corner” in the library. This informational section of the library can display relevant emergency information residents should be aware of, including how to prepare for certain disasters.



Photo: D. Christian Allen

- Information shared in a “Disaster Corner” of the library can rotate throughout the year, similar to the emergency management coordinator’s efforts with the local newspaper. Further, the library – as a recognized hub of local knowledge – should host physical copies of updated emergency response plans and display them to the public.
- Emergency management leaders can work with local food distribution centers as a location to hand out or otherwise communicate relevant emergency management information. This effort is more likely to reach low-income community members who might otherwise not have access to other modes

of communication. For more information – and to establish connections among efforts – these residents can also be told about the “Disaster Corner” at the library should they want more information.

- The members of this collaborative activity should design and implement a fact-finding mission to better understand how elderly people, low-income people, and disabled people access local news and information. The answers uncovered during this mission might point to new modes of communication needed to ensure that those most at risk of significant harm during a disaster are well informed of emergency response plans.
- As part of the summer reading program, the Library Director can include age-appropriate disaster content for youth story hour and coordinate with emergency management to bring in guest speakers who can speak about specific disasters and their preparation.
- The Library Director, in coordination with the emergency management coordinator, can host workshops or town hall meetings to present emergency response information. These meetings should be held consistently; providing the community with a voice can help generate buy-in for emergency response initiatives and continue to build trust.

As a critical note: Communication should be interactive and not unidirectional. We suggest that the Library Director and other stakeholders use principles of collaboration to welcome diverse voices and challenges to planning conversations.

Long Term/Less Immediate Actions

Stakeholders also shared potential action items that required longer term planning and could not be solved immediately. 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.

2. Formalize youth outreach regarding disaster preparation.

As Ivan shared, we know “the survival rates are through the roof” as more community members “are trained and understand what to do in” the event of a disaster or hazard.

- The emergency management coordinator should collaborate with the school district to implement a required paper that asks high school-aged students to self-reflect on disasters and, as Ivan put it, “write a report on what you discovered, and how ready you are for disasters.” This approach creates additional synergy between emergency management, education, and the library; students would be required to make use of the “**Disaster Corner**” and locally available copies of emergency response plans to complete the assignment.
- Incorporating disaster preparation during events that include emergency response personnel reading to or otherwise interacting with children and youth in their professional capacity.

3. Pursue grant funding for needed repairs/ infrastructure. This is an example of an area in which emergency management has already started in Gladewater by city officials and others in the community, but sustained grant support will remain a consistent need with the challenges identified earlier in this report. The emergency management coordinator, city officials, the Library Director, and other local nonprofits could connect as grant writing partners.

4. Identify funding to staff for an emergency management liaison. Per Ivan, it is common in rural communities for city leadership to “throw a lot of hats on you,” and sometimes without additional pay. The city government could identify additional funding for a person who can build connections between relevant parties to ensure information remains consistent, to schedule the regular meeting of stakeholders for community resiliency planning, and to assist with grant writing to fund necessary initiatives. As a research team, we suggest the city consider interviewing and selecting a staff member for the liaison role that has personal connections

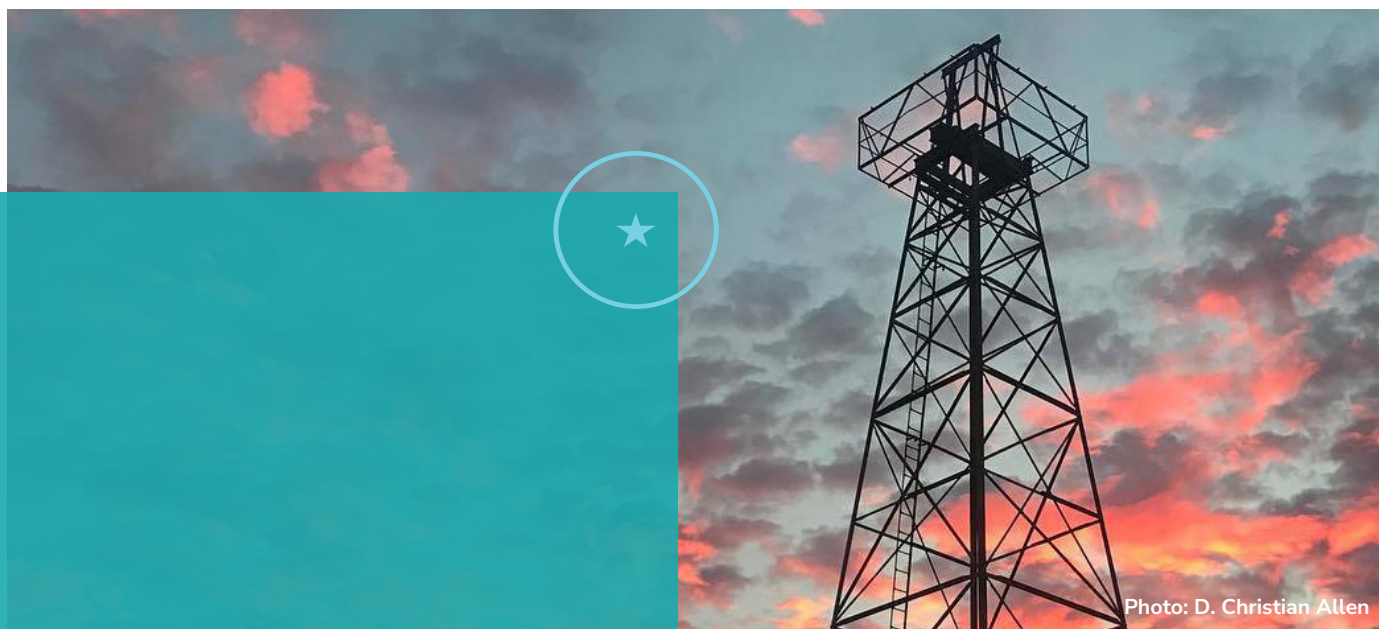
and/or experience with the underserved community groups that were identified in this collaboration. In addition to liaising between departments, such a person could also work to hold conversations with the greater public.

5. Formalize the stakeholders gathered for this project into an Emergency Management Committee.

Ivan shared that Gladewater has “committees and everything in the city from airports to lakes, to parks and rec. We don’t have an emergency management committee in any city I’ve ever worked in. So, maybe this can kinda be the kickoff point ... then you have

a bunch of people coming together to solve these problems.”

The five suggestions and related sub-actions identified above are excellent starting points to affect positive change in community resiliency ahead of future hazard events or disasters that might impact the Gladewater community. These are not the only steps to take, but our research team believes that the Gladewater stakeholder cohort is well-positioned to carry out feasible, meaningful tasks to better involve community interest and involvement in emergency management planning, response, and recovery.



Concluding Thoughts

Gladewater stakeholders presented the research team with a picture of a city in transition. The area, long known for its adaptability in the face of change and hardship, has evolved from an oil town to the Antique Capital of East Texas, and is preparing for population growth that will further expand the city and its rural charms. Like many rural cities in Texas, Gladewater faces challenges to its resiliency that range from combatting an “old vs. new” mentality to emergency management processes by local government that are outdated. Many residents maintain an “it can’t happen

here” outlook in a world in which hazard events are happening with increased frequency and severity.

The process of adapting the COPEWELL Emergency Management self-assessment rubric gave the Gladewater stakeholder cohort an opportunity to interact with one another for either the first time, or in ways they do not typically convene. Not only did this pilot project allow stakeholders to

solidify pressing community resiliency challenges around emergency management processes, but to also begin ideating next steps to improve resiliency for their community.

As a pilot site, Gladewater has experienced recent changes in some local government and first responder positions, and those new leaders, including some of whom that were members of the stakeholder cohort, are eager to enact positive change and new ideas. This includes the already planned Lake Board advisory meeting for the Lake Gladewater dam that took place between focus group sessions. It is our hope that the process of participating in this project will help with stakeholders' future community collaboration efforts to build community resiliency to hazards and disaster events. Their positive experience with COPEWELL also presents new opportunities to engage further COPEWELL rubrics as a collective and to invite more participants into these conversations.

Finally, the Lee-Bardwell Public Library and the Library Director acted as critical partners in this project. Library Director, Brandy Winn, is new to her position, and she strongly desires to use the library to foster a stronger sense of community connection while meeting the diverse needs of residents that fall outside of the assumed, traditional services of a public library. As a key partner, Brandy helped the research team recruit a varied stakeholder cohort, participated in data collection, and will endeavor to shepherd the sustainability of this group. Libraries have long been known as cultural anchor points in communities across the nation and globe, and we believe it is this positioning that enables librarians and their libraries to act as conveners for resiliency building activities. We greatly value Brandy'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 reading this case study will see fruitful potential in undertaking our community collaboration adaptation of COPEWELL in their areas, and we welcome conversations to support those efforts.



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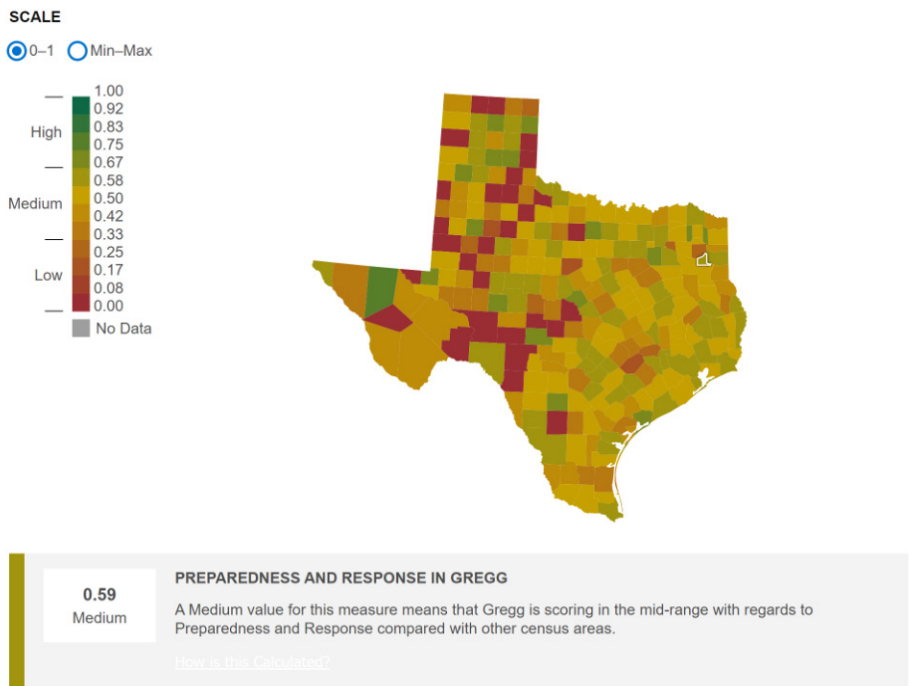
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Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot

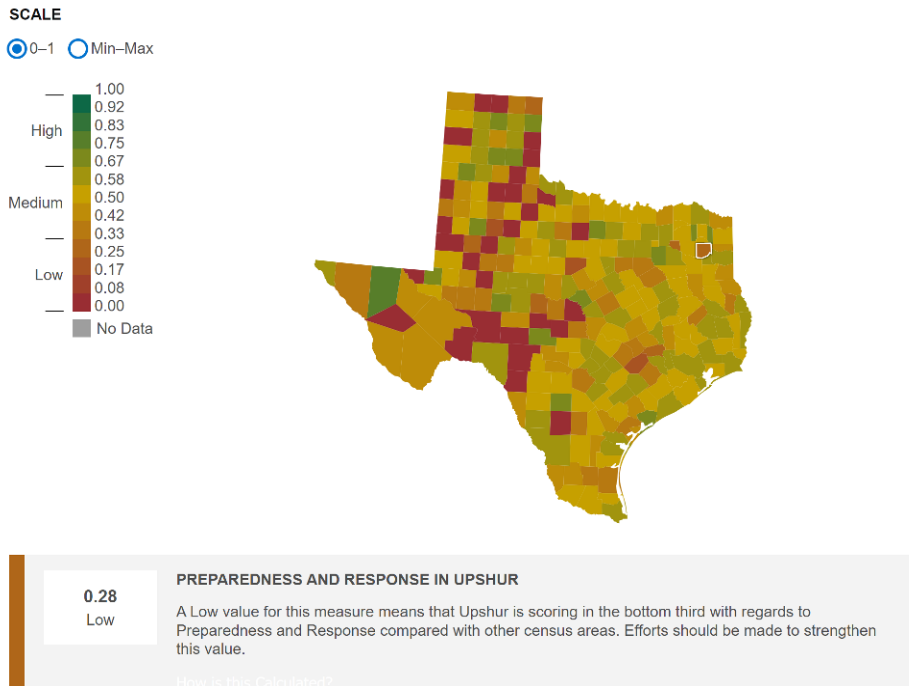
Below are the full tables for Gregg and Upshur County. The following tables come from COPEWELL's Computational Model and Data (COPEWELL, 2022c), which is available here by state and county: <https://copewellmodel.org/computational-model-data-0>.

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

Graph A.1. COPEWELL Preparedness and Response Map for Gregg County

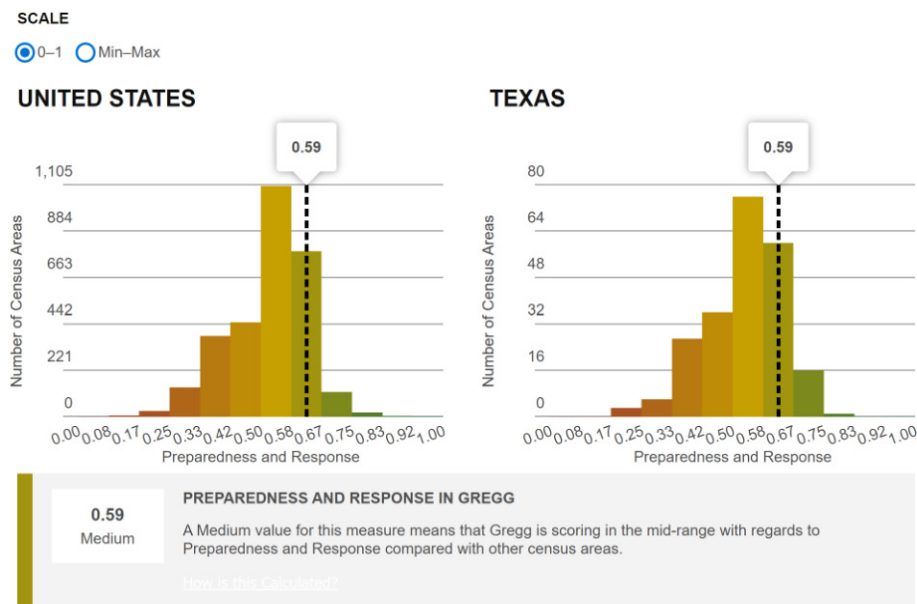


Graph A.2. COPEWELL Preparedness and Response Map for Upshur County

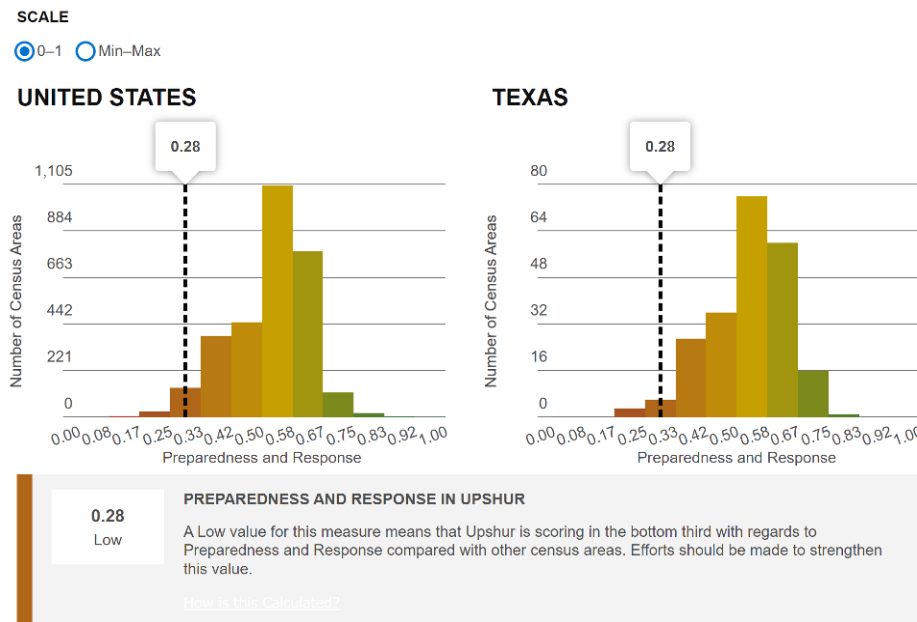


Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot cont.

Graph A.3. COPEWELL Preparedness and Response Graph for Gregg County



Graph A.4. COPEWELL Preparedness and Response Graph for Upshur County



Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot cont.

Table A.1. COPEWELL Full Computational Data Table for Gregg County

Domain, Subdomain, or Measure	High/Med/Low	Normalized Value	Raw Value
Community Functioning	Medium	0.54	N/A
Communications	Medium	0.49	N/A
Internet Service	Medium	0.39	79.61%
Telephone Service	Medium	0.59	98.09%
Economy	Medium	0.59	N/A
Banking Establishments	Low	0.21	4.45
Business Establishments	Medium	0.66	325.32
Employment Level	High	0.78	5800
Median Income	Medium	0.55	50180
Paid Employees	High	0.76	5432.21
Education	Medium	0.54	N/A
Colleges, Univ., & Prof. Schools	No Data	No Data	No Data
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Medium	0.54	13.64
Food and Water	Medium	0.58	N/A
Food Environment Index	Medium	0.44	6.6
Housing Lacking Plumbing	Medium	0.72	0.60%
Government	Medium	0.46	N/A
County Infrastructure	Medium	0.41	1229445.2
Justice and Public Safety	Medium	0.5	2191971.4
Healthcare and Public Health	Medium	0.43	N/A
Health Insurance	Medium	0.34	82.24%
Healthcare Support	Low	0.21	154.89
Number of Hospital Beds	Medium	0.55	19.74
PHAB Accreditation	Medium	0.63	1
Housing	Medium	0.46	N/A
Crowding	Medium	0.43	2.90%
Severe Housing Problems	Medium	0.43	16.29%

Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot cont.

Table A.1. COPEWELL Full Computational Data Table for Gregg County cont.

Spending on Housing	Medium	0.53	24.10%
Nurturing and Care	High	0.76	N/A
Number of Nursing Homes	High	0.81	4.53
Pre-K Enrollment in Public School	Medium	0.7	59.35%
Transportation	Medium	0.48	N/A
Public Transportation Use	Medium	0.48	0.10%
Wellbeing	Medium	0.59	N/A
Arts and Entertainment	Medium	0.54	3.96
Fitness and Rec Sports Centers	Medium	0.65	1.62
Nearby Parks	Medium	0.59	34.00%
Population Factors	Medium	0.46	N/A
Deprivation	Medium	0.45	N/A
Persons Living in Poverty	Medium	0.45	17.60%
Inequality	Medium	0.39	N/A
Gini Index of Income Inequality	Medium	0.39	0.47
Vulnerability	Medium	0.54	N/A
Pop. Under 5 or 65 and Over	Medium	0.52	22.65%
Population with Disability	Medium	0.57	13.50%
Preparedness and Response	Medium	0.59	N/A
Preparedness and Response	Medium	0.59	N/A
First Responders	Medium	0.58	53.14
Recent Hazard Mitigation Plan	Medium	0.61	100.00%
Prevention and Mitigation	Medium	0.65	N/A
Countermeasures	Medium	0.64	N/A

Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot cont.

Table A.1. COPEWELL Full Computational Data Table for Gregg County cont.

Influenza Vaccination Rates	Medium	0.61	49.00%
Pharmacies Enrolled in EPAP	Medium	0.66	32
Engineered Systems	Medium	0.67	N/A
Average Age of Housing Stock	Medium	0.48	42
Bridges with Structural Issues	High	0.87	0.00%
Recovery	Medium	0.42	N/A
Resilience	Medium	0.55	N/A
Resistance	Medium	0.61	N/A
Resources for Recovery	Medium	0.53	N/A
Resources for Recovery	Medium	0.53	N/A
Architectural, Eng., and Others	Medium	0.62	3.56
Construction Establishments	Medium	0.49	4.37
Highway, Street, and Bridges	Medium	0.5	0.49
Utility Systems Construction	Medium	0.5	0.89
Social Capital and Cohesion	Medium	0.38	N/A
Social Capital and Cohesion	Medium	0.38	N/A
Civic Organizations	Low	0.33	0.4
Social Advocacy Organizations	Medium	0.41	0.32
Voter Participation	Medium	0.39	38.81%

Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot cont.

Table A.2. COPEWELL Full Computational Data Table for Upshur County

Domain, Subdomain, or Measure	High/Med/Low	Normalized Value	Raw Value
Community Functioning	Medium	0.48	N/A
Communications	Medium	0.54	N/A
Internet Service	Medium	0.39	79.49%
Telephone Service	Medium	0.7	98.73%
Economy	Medium	0.38	N/A
Banking Establishments	Low	0.11	2.9
Business Establishments	Low	0.28	121.78
Employment Level	Medium	0.65	5310
Median Income	Medium	0.57	52162
Paid Employees	Low	0.3	1227.47
Education	Medium	0.64	N/A
Colleges, Univ., & Prof. Schools	No Data	No Data	No Data
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	Medium	0.64	11.7
Food and Water	Medium	0.44	N/A
Food Environment Index	Medium	0.53	7.3
Housing Lacking Plumbing	Medium	0.36	7.13%
Government	Medium	0.41	N/A
County Infrastructure	Medium	0.39	990673.17
Justice and Public Safety	Medium	0.43	1449765.6
Healthcare and Public Health	Medium	0.36	N/A
Health Insurance	Medium	0.4	84.87%
Healthcare Support	Low	0.17	130.96
Number of Hospital Beds	Low	0.22	0
PHAB Accreditation	Medium	0.63	1
Housing	Medium	0.48	N/A
Crowding	Medium	0.38	3.60%
Severe Housing Problems	Medium	0.51	13.47%

Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot cont.

Table A.2. COPEWELL Full Computational Data Table for Upshur County cont.

Spending on Housing	Medium	0.56	22.80%
Nurturing and Care	Medium	0.72	N/A
Number of Nursing Homes	Medium	0.72	2.66
Pre-K Enrollment in Public School	Medium	0.72	64.94%
Transportation	Medium	0.48	N/A
Public Transportation Use	Medium	0.48	0.10%
Wellbeing	Low	0.33	N/A
Arts and Entertainment	Low	0.29	1.21
Fitness and Rec Sports Centers	No Data	No Data	No Data
Nearby Parks	Medium	0.37	4.00%
Population Factors	Medium	0.48	N/A
Deprivation	Medium	0.51	N/A
Persons Living in Poverty	Medium	0.51	14.90%
Inequality	Medium	0.49	N/A
Gini Index of Income Inequality	Medium	0.49	0.45
Vulnerability	Medium	0.44	N/A
Pop. Under 5 or 65 and Over	Medium	0.47	23.87%
Population with Disability	Medium	0.4	18.50%
Preparedness and Response	Low	0.28	N/A
Preparedness and Response	Low	0.28	N/A
First Responders	Medium	0.41	17.88
Recent Hazard Mitigation Plan	Low	0.15	16.71%
Prevention and Mitigation	Medium	0.61	N/A
Countermeasures	Medium	0.47	N/A

Appendix A: COPEWELL Computational Data Snapshot cont.

Table A.2. COPEWELL Full Computational Data Table for Upshur County cont.

Influenza Vaccination Rates	Medium	0.54	44.00%
Pharmacies Enrolled in EPAP	Medium	0.41	3
Engineered Systems	Medium	0.74	N/A
Average Age of Housing Stock	Medium	0.6	33
Bridges with Structural Issues	High	0.87	0.00%
Recovery	Low	0.24	N/A
Resilience	Medium	0.43	N/A
Resistance	Medium	0.57	N/A
Resources for Recovery	Medium	0.43	N/A
Resources for Recovery	Medium	0.43	N/A
Architectural, Eng., and Others	Medium	0.41	1.21
Construction Establishments	Medium	0.37	2.17
Highway, Street, and Bridges	No Data	No Data	No Data
Utility Systems Construction	Medium	0.51	0.97
Social Capital and Cohesion	Medium	0.53	N/A
Social Capital and Cohesion	Medium	0.53	N/A
Civic Organizations	No Data	No Data	No Data
Social Advocacy Organizations	Medium	0.54	0.72
Voter Participation	Medium	0.52	45.65%



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