
Centering Southeast Georgetown Community Voices 2019

*Update, Explore Emerging Needs, and Evaluate Impact of
Georgetown Health Foundation (GHF) Response to 2015 Assessment*

Author: Tracie A. Lowe, PhD

Co-Authors: Nina Clinton & Juan Tiney Chirix, MA

Contributors: Suzy Pukys, MA & Lorna Hermosura, PhD



Georgetown
Health
Foundation



The University of Texas at Austin
Institute for Urban Policy
Research & Analysis
College of Liberal Arts

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Update, Explore Emerging Needs, & Evaluate Impact of Georgetown Health Foundation (GHF) Response to 2015 Assessment

Prepared for
The Georgetown Health Foundation

By
The Institute for Urban Policy Research & Analysis (IUPRA)

Author: Tracie A. Lowe, PhD

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Holly W. Collins, and Unsplash.*

IUPRA Research Team

The Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis (IUPRA) is an interdisciplinary policy research institute that provides intersectional policy solutions. Our mission is to strengthen Black communities, promote social justice, and combat anti-Black racism using a racial equity framework. The Principal Investigator for the grant was Kevin Cokley, Ph.D., Director of the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis (IUPRA) and Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Other team members included:

Tracie Lowe, Ph.D., Project Manager, Postdoctoral Fellow, IUPRA

Desireé Ledet, M.A., Grants and Contracts Specialist, IUPRA

Nino Rodriguez, Ph.D., Research Fellow, IUPRA

Juan Tiney Chirix, M.A., Graduate Research Assistant, IUPRA

Nina Clinton, Graduate Research Assistant, IUPRA

Rudjy Ponceja, M.Ed., Research Intern, IUPRA

The IUPRA research team additionally recruited eight members and leaders in the community to serve on the Georgetown Community Advisory Board (GCAB). This board was formed to provide insightful guidance and feedback on best practices for working with the community. These individuals also played an integral role in the research process through their participation in our photovoice project. We are much appreciative of their assistance with the grant work and their dedication to the community.

Acknowledgments

Our research team would like to acknowledge all of the community members who shared their stories with us during the research process. We again, extend much thanks to our GCAB members and are grateful for their work in this project. Thank you also to our key-informants for providing additional insight that enriched our report findings. We give special thanks to Liz Bohon, Rebecca Mireles, Linda Owen, Ron Swain, and Lawren Weiss for helping us to secure venues for our focus groups.

We give special thanks to Ricardo Lowe for volunteering his time and also for his invaluable quantitative analysis contributions to our report. We'd like to thank the IUPRA staff for their continued support throughout the research process.

Finally, we express our gratitude to the Georgetown Health Foundation for commissioning this project and extending their resources to our organization to support its success.

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Introduction

Georgetown Health Foundation (GHF) commissioned a needs assessment in 2015 for the Southeast Georgetown community conducted by the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis (IUPRA). Findings from the 2015 study revealed there were 10 Critical Needs identified by residents in the community.¹ The Georgetown Health Foundation ratified the 10 Critical Needs as its strategic priorities, and the Foundation invested in a set of initiatives that addressed 8 of the 10 Critical Needs.

In 2019, IUPRA was selected again to conduct a follow-up needs assessment for GHF that fulfilled two goals:

1. to explore emerging needs and challenges, and
2. to collect community feedback on the actions taken by GHF since the 2015 findings were released.

The following research questions guided our efforts to meet the goals of the project:

1. Are the GHF initiatives, actions, and investments making a difference in addressing the needs of Southeast Georgetown residents?

2. What remains to be accomplished to enrich the lives of the people residing in the community?

3. What are the present needs, wants, challenges, and opportunities facing low-income residents in Southeast Georgetown?

The multi-staged research project spanned the months of March through November. During the first stage of the project, the research team conducted eight interviews with key-informants from organizations that are GHF grant partners. The second stage consisted of seven community focus groups, in which 58 residents participated to discuss their thoughts on the needs of the community. In the final step, the Georgetown Community Advisory Board (GCAB)² participated in a photovoice project in which they used photography as a research tool to examine challenges in the Southeast Georgetown area. The research team also received permission from Melissa Tung, Project Manager at the Williamson County and Cities Health District, to conduct a quantitative analysis of Southeast Georgetown data collected from the 2019 Community Health Assessment. We used this information to complement the findings that emerged as a result of our 2019 needs assessment study.

¹ The 10 Critical Needs of 2015 are as follows: 1) public transportation; 2) affordable and available quality housing; 3) access to college readiness programs; 4) accessibility of quality daycare, afterschool programs, and play for children; 5) access to healthy foods and nutrition education; 6) greater economic security; 7) treatment at Georgetown health care facilities and affordability and access to dental care; 8) availability and accessibility of quality mental health services; 9) acknowledge and reframe power differentials in systems; and 10) leaders connect with Southeast Georgetown community.

² The Georgetown Community Advisory Board consisted of eight community representatives that were selected in collaboration with the Georgetown Health Foundation. The advisory board was created to assist in fostering connections with community members and to provide feedback on research activities throughout the project.

Our findings are comprised of nine areas of perceived need identified by the collective of residents, key-informants, and GCAB members who participated in the research process: 1) transportation; 2) housing; 3) food; 4) workforce; 5) education; 6) racial issues; 7) teens and youth; 8) Georgetown leadership; and 9) immigrants and the undocumented.

GCAB members generated findings from the photovoice project regarding the perceived needs of those living in Southeast Georgetown. Their concerns focused around issues of safety (e.g., lack of crosswalks for pedestrians); the upkeep of spaces in Southeast Georgetown; a perceived lack of inclusivity for some residents; housing affordability; and the challenges of those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Community members also provided feedback on the initiatives created to address the 10 Critical Needs as outlined in the 2015 findings. Overall, most residents were aware of the GoGeo public transportation service in Georgetown and the services provided by the Boys and Girls Club of Georgetown. Residents indicated they had limited to no awareness of other GHF initiatives related to improving housing, post-secondary education, economic security, mental health, and supporting greater engagement and communication pathways between leadership and community members.

Several of the findings from our current assessment were comparable to the needs identified in the 2015 GHF Needs Assessment. Residents in the 2019 study once again reported transportation and the availability of and access to quality housing as challenges for residents of Southeast Georgetown. The desire for greater socioeconomic security also remains an issue since the first reporting in the 2015 assessment. Residents in this most recent study expressed that there is a lack of well-paying jobs in the City. The rising costs of living, coupled with low wages, are also factors that continue to influence the quality of life for community members. Akin to the 2015 assessment, residents in our study also referenced food as a need in Southeast Georgetown. Community members alluded to issues of food insecurity and expressed a desire for more food pantries. The reemergence of needs from the 2015 assessment suggests their importance among members of the Southeast Georgetown community.

We hope this report will foster an increased awareness of the perceived needs of Southeast Georgetown. We further hope that community members, service organizations, and City leaders will utilize the information from this project to generate additional efforts that result in the desired community goals and outcomes for Southeast Georgetown.





Methodology

Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is “the study of a phenomenon or research topic in context” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 4). This approach to research is used to understand how people interpret their experiences and assign a certain meaning to them. Researchers who utilize qualitative methods investigate or explore topics in natural settings to generate new perspectives on a subject. We chose a qualitative approach for this study because of the project’s emphasis on the inclusion of community voices. As researchers, we removed ourselves as experts on the topic and placed the experiences and stories of the participants at the center of the conversation. We then analyzed the information we collected to find relationships between similar and seemingly unconnected things (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). During the research process we sought to generate rich data that provided insightful narratives that explained the needs of community in the Southeast Georgetown area. We hope that information from our study can be used to better inform the work of those looking to elevate and strengthen their communities.

Community-Based Participatory Research

As researchers representing The University of Texas at

Austin, we acknowledged our positionality as outsiders with a desire to learn about the experiences of those living in the City of Georgetown. We also recognized how perceptions of our roles with the University might create power differentials that may have influenced our work and interactions with the community. To address each of these concerns, the research team chose to utilize Community-Based Participatory (CBPR) research as a guiding framework for our study. CBPR is an approach that is typically used to address health disparities and inequities in underrepresented or marginalized communities (Coughlin & Smith, 2017). This approach comprises a review of the relevant literature, the completion of a needs assessment, and the identification of priorities to address based on the data collected (Coughlin & Smith, 2017). Research conducted with the CBPR approach is founded on equal partnerships between community members, organizational members, and academic researchers, who work collaboratively in all phases of the project. In our work, we made intentional efforts to involve residents or individuals closely connected to the Southeast area during development phases of our research process.

Culturally Responsive Evaluation

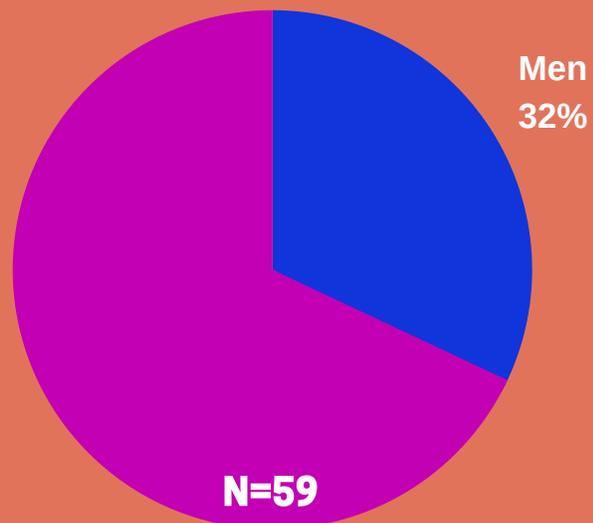
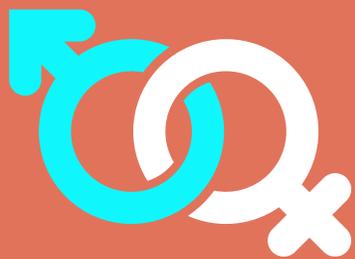
Culturally Responsive Evaluation is another methodological framework we used to inform our work. This approach comes from the combination of the two

theoretical frameworks: Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Culturally Responsive Education (Hood, Hopson, & Frierson, 2015). There is a priority given to the cultural lens of stakeholders and participants. In doing so, culturally responsive evaluation provides a more accurate assessment by gaining a complete understanding of contextual factors. The completion of the culturally responsive evaluation cycle positions evaluators to honor the culture of the initiative by uplifting essential shared life experiences and an enhanced level of understanding through the stories of stakeholders. Therefore, Culturally Responsive Evaluation is a necessary tool for program designers, implementers, and evaluators to assess their initiatives due to its ability to provide an understanding of the cultural contexts in which the initiative operates (Hood, Hopson, & Frierson, 2015).

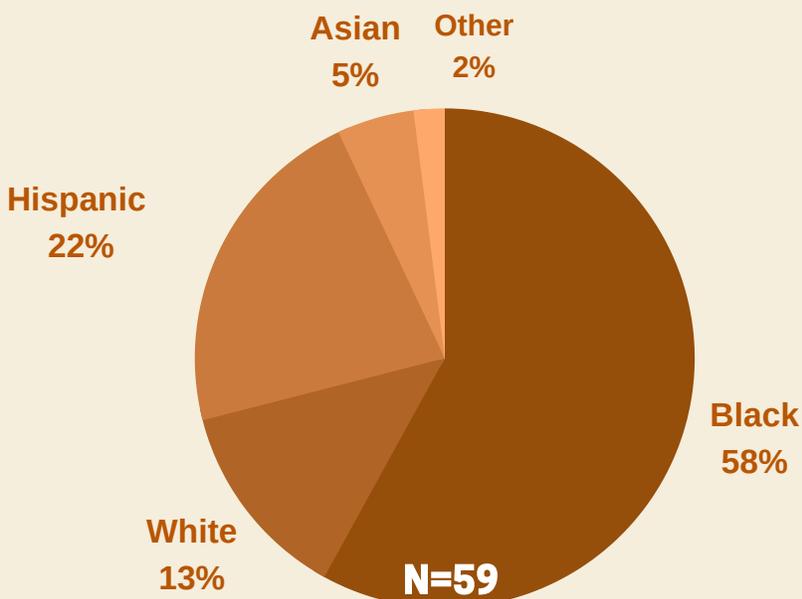
Focus Group Participant Information

Our research team desired to obtain feedback from a group of individuals from Southeast Georgetown who were gender diverse and from racially/ethnically diverse backgrounds. We also focused our efforts on recruiting senior members of the community and men to participate to increase their representation from the 2015 study. The following charts present the demographic profile of our 59 focus group participants. The demographic survey was voluntary for participants and all responses to questions were open-ended.

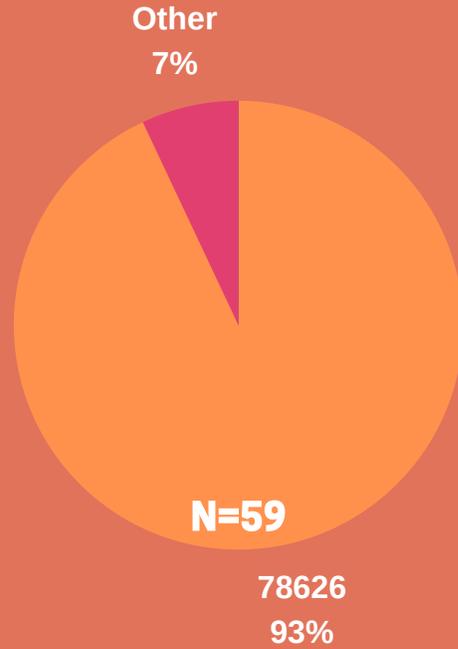
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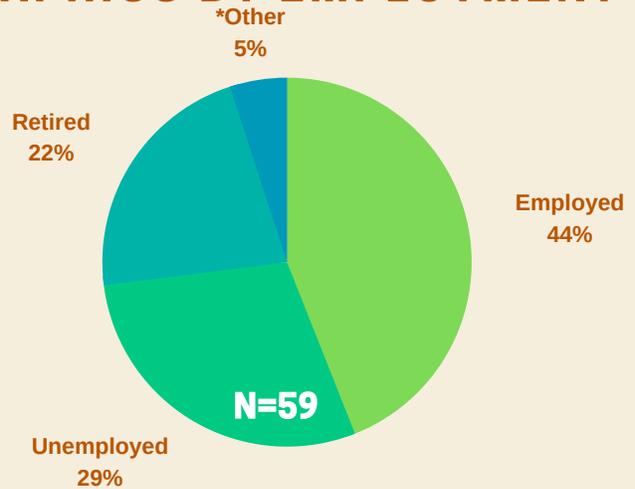
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FOCUS GROUPS DEMOGRAPHICS BY RESIDENCE

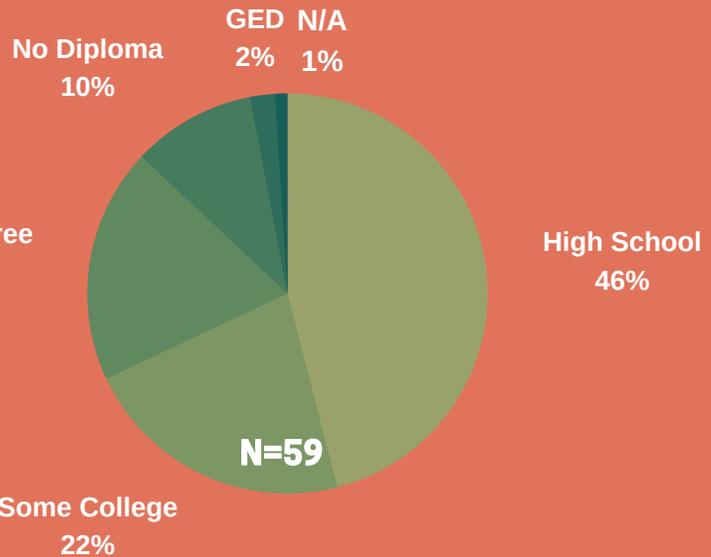
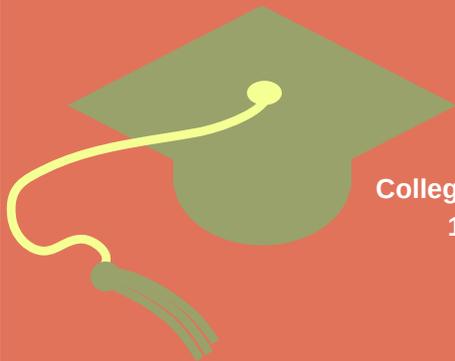


FOCUS GROUPS DEMOGRAPHICS BY EMPLOYMENT

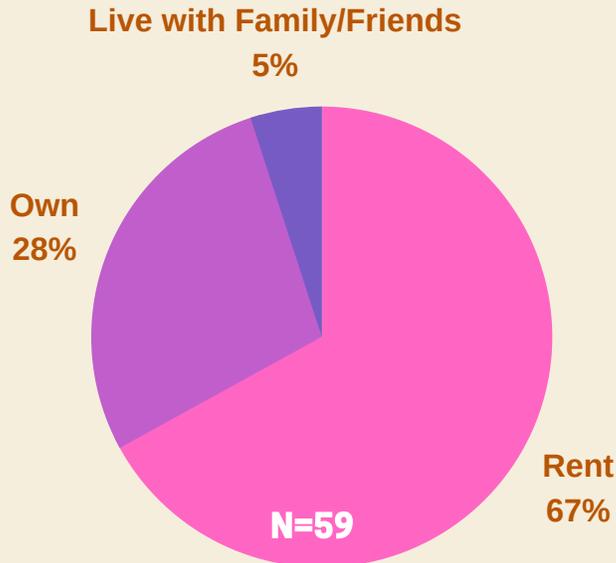


*Respondents in this category reported the following: disabled/disability, primary caretaker, stay-at-home mom, and volunteer.

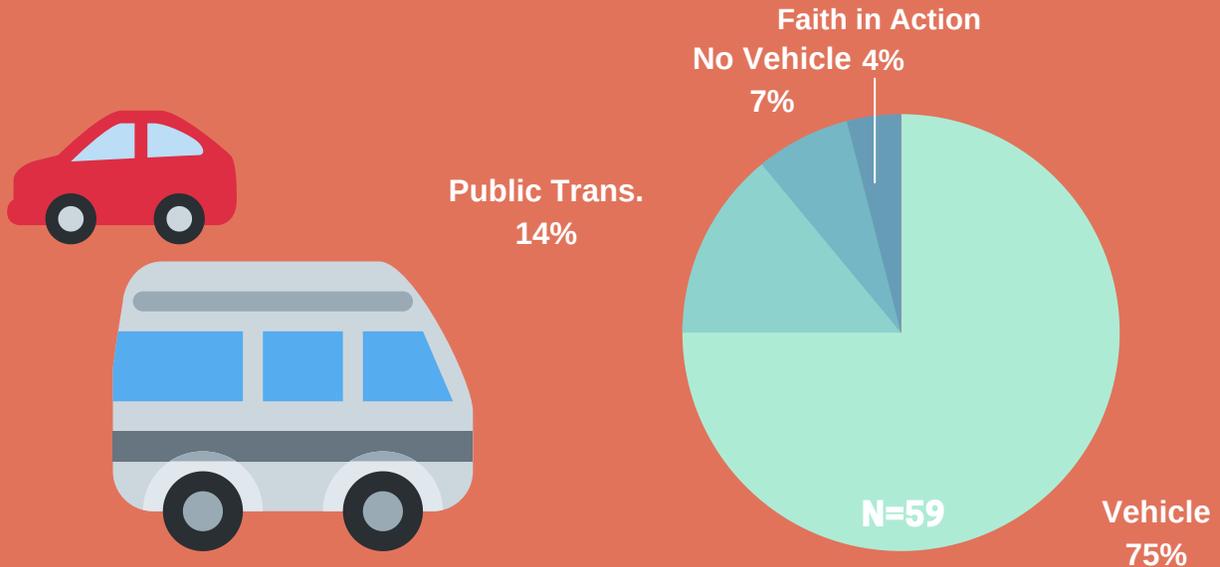
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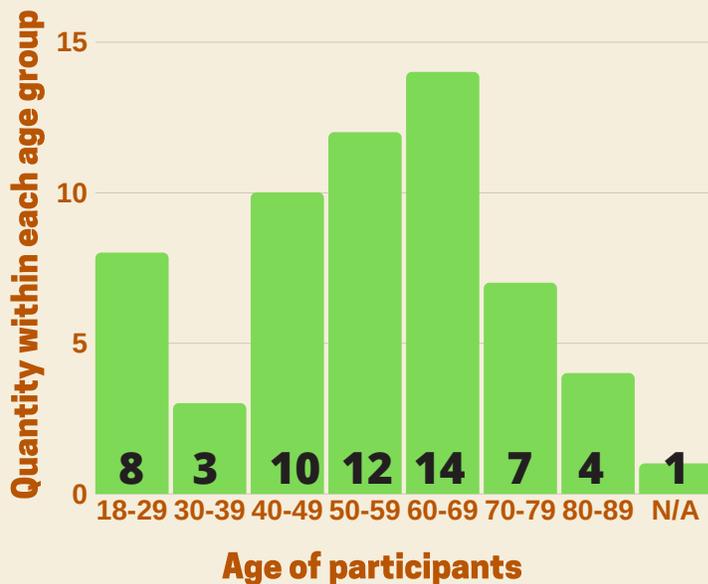
FOCUS GROUPS DEMOGRAPHICS BY HOUSING



FOCUS GROUPS DEMOGRAPHICS BY TRANSPORTATION



FOCUS GROUPS DEMOGRAPHICS BY AGE



Key-Informant Information

The IUPRA research team identified ten organizations that received grant funds from GHF and who also addressed one or more of the 10 Critical Needs through their community work. IUPRA, with the help of GHF, then worked with the organizations' leaders to select and interview employees who worked closely with community members in the Southeast area.

Georgetown Community Advisory Board Information

The Georgetown Community Advisory Board (GCAB) was created to serve as an integral part of advising the design and implementation of the research process. The GHF provided recommendations for potential members of the Board. At the outset, the GCAB was assembled with consideration to racial/ethnic and gender diversity. IUPRA interviewed each of the candidates to determine their interest in serving on the GCAB (See Appendix A for more details on GCAB Responsibilities and Expectations).

Each member was responsible for attending monthly 3-hour meetings during the months of June to October. During these meetings we discussed best practices for building trust with community members, and methods for recruitment efforts. We also piloted the research instruments used to collect data from community members. The members received \$500 stipends upon the completion of their service to the project in October.

Data Collection Methods

Key-Informant Interviews

The research team conducted eight key-informant interviews lasting no more than an hour in length. Each of the meetings was audio-recorded and transcribed for future data analysis (See Appendix B for the key-informant interview protocol).

Community Focus Groups

We incorporated focus groups for this needs assessment to elicit a variety of perspectives that may not have emerged except as a result of interactions between participants. The research team proposed to conduct eight focus groups. However, there were only a total of seven that were completed. We held the focus groups at the following venues in Georgetown:

- Boys and Girls Club, Georgetown
- Georgetown Housing Authority (GHA) Learning Center
- Georgetown Public Library
- Getsemani Community Center

Each of the focus groups was approximately 90 minutes in length and consisted of two parts. During the first part, participants completed a community mapping activity. We then facilitated a guided discussion with the community members using a semi-structured interview protocol (See Appendix D for community focus group protocol). Each of the focus groups was audio-recorded with the consent of participants. The participants in each of the focus groups were compensated with \$25 for their time and insights.

Photovoice

The Georgetown Community Advisory Board (GCAB) participated in a visual research process known as the Photovoice method. Photovoice incorporates photographs and narrative summaries to illuminate the collective concerns of a community (Wang & Burris, 1997). There are three main goals of photovoice: to enable people to reflect on the strengths and interests of their community, to promote critical dialogue through the discussion of photographs, and to influence policies.

The research team provided an introductory session on how to use the photovoice method during a monthly GCAB meeting. The research directive for the GCAB members was to take pictures that represented the needs of Southeast Georgetown using a camera. We requested that each member submit two of the photos to us along with a short, written explanation based on the SHOWeD method (See Appendix E for details of the SHOWeD Method) (Wang & Burris, 1997).

After completing their fieldwork, GCAB members participated in two data analysis debriefing sessions. During the first session, each member discussed the significance of their photos and obtained feedback from other members of the group. The GCAB members then worked collaboratively to identify commonalities between their pictures and to generate thematic narratives concerning the needs of the Southeast area. The second session consisted of a qualitative coding analysis tutorial where GCAB members had the opportunity to analyze the transcripts of audio-recordings from the first session. The collective group then revisited each of the pictures to determine if the themes they selected for each photo were accurate based on their discussions.



Findings

The findings in this report reflect themes that emerged from the narratives of residents of Southeast Georgetown, key-informants, and GCAB members. Their collective voices provide an insightful and informative perspective on the needs of those living in their community. Each of the themes presented are supported by direct quotes from members of each group. We appreciate and value the perspectives of the participants, but also understand that their experiences represent their personal truths. To be sure, their experiences and views may not represent those of everyone. The authors also recognize that some quotes can be refuted. However, their stories are an important addition to the conversation. These statements are meant to provide context and a deeper explanation of the issues these individuals feel their community currently faces. In this section we start with a discussion of the major themes that arose related to the needs of the community. We then provide feedback from residents regarding the initiatives that were developed to address the 10 Critical Needs identified in GHF's 2015 Needs Assessment. Next, we present findings from the photovoice project that GCAB members completed as part of their research efforts. Lastly, we provide a brief summary of findings from the quantitative analysis we conducted using data from the 2019 Williamson County Community Health Assessment. These themes of these findings are listed in no particular order.

Transportation

Transportation was an issue that surfaced in conversations with both community members and key-informants. The primary concerns of each group centered on the difficulties that community members had when traveling to destinations within and outside of Georgetown. Most residents feel that “[public] transportation is almost nonexistent” in the City. They also had opinions on the GoGeo public transportation service in Georgetown.

Community Members

Overall, community members are dissatisfied with the transportation options and services in Georgetown. Residents expressed that travel around Georgetown can be burdensome for people of all ages if individuals do not have access to a personal vehicle. One participant stated, “In our area – a lot of us don’t have transportation. You’ve got a minimum of what you can do.” Many individuals in their neighborhoods live in one-car households. If one person commutes to work outside the City, it often limits the ability of the rest of the family to travel around town. Another participant mentioned the lack of a transportation system in Georgetown.

I know that is not unique to Georgetown, but Georgetown’s a little bit – Georgetown doesn’t have a transportation system, so it’s a little difficult to get around

and save maybe on transportation as opposed to having a car and having to pay insurance and yada, yada, yada.

Residents expressed they not only worry about getting themselves to certain destinations. They also have to find ways to get their dependents to before- and after-school programs.

There's no concern because I guess everybody thinks that everybody in Georgetown has transportation or maybe your parents sit at home and can take you to school and pick you up from school and they can do that, but not everybody has that. So, what happens to the kids that don't have that? They lose out.

Community members also noted their concern for the safety of students who traveled lengthy distances on sometimes dangerous paths to get home from school.

...[Students] stay after school and they don't have [a] ride home, you see them walking on the freeway and stuff.

You know where East View is and them walking? Oh, man.

Improving the walkability and safety of the City is also an issue to address for seniors according to one resident:

Safety of pedestrians – they haven't finished having sidewalks in this area. We have a lot of seniors living in groups at San Gabriel Senior Center. Some of these roads don't have even one sidewalk on one side. That's essential for safety. Some people have to walk to get to the park. They have to walk through these areas.

Other community members described the difficulty of traveling to places outside of Georgetown as illustrated in the following comments:

The Texas Workforce Center is in Round Rock. If someone doesn't have a vehicle or someone is getting government assistance and it requires them to go to the Texas Workforce Center, if they don't have a vehicle, how are they supposed to get there? It's in Round Rock. It's pretty deep within there too.

The metro [is available], but it's kind of far. If you live on this part of town, then it's hard for us to go all the way over there. So, [have] something here [that's] available... You go to other places like that where they have the metro everywhere, it's like wouldn't it be nice if you can use the metro to go to the airport, not to drive to the airport. Imagine that.

You mentioned if you [need] go to Austin, there's no public transportation. If you go to UT or whatever, it would be awesome if we had transportation, public transportation.

Some residents gave a few recommendations for those who might be responsible for developing transportation that extends outside of the City:

If they established even a bus system that ran hourly or every two hours to Cedar Park, the people could coordinate and catch that system that's already established.

We're just getting too big and too large, and I think getting some of these cars off the road is the best thing. I would take transportation if, you know – something that is local but also maybe something that can take you into Austin if you wanted to just spend the day there like some kind of, you know, a couple of times a day or something, maybe, or someplace where you can get into Austin and not have to drive through that traffic if you want to go out and socialize. That's my main problem.

Seniors and Medically Disabled

For senior citizens or those with moderate to severe medical issues, finding services to transport them to and from various destinations or appointments, especially those outside of Georgetown, is particularly challenging.

What resources do they have for elderly people that can't drive to take them to appointments or take them shopping, people who can't drive?

A lot of medical [patients] and senior[s]...these people would love to have access to the bus [GoGeo]. The areas where they have the highest probability of ridership, they have no service to. It's been a big fight.

It's not conducive if you've got health issues for you to walk to those bus stops, stand in that heat waiting for the [GoGeo] vans and it takes so long for the van because I understand they're trying to pick up as many people as possible but it's so far stretched out and then they want to know why very few people take to the van. You can't ride that van for over an hour trying to get somewhere.

When community members made reference to these travel concerns, others in the group suggested using Faith in Action Georgetown, a nonprofit transportation service specifically for seniors.

There's a fine organization called Faith in Action. The resource they provide is transportation – transportation for over 65, mainly for medical purposes.

Faith in Action is offering on Mondays a different activity each Monday and you must, of course, schedule ahead of time and those activities are wonderful if people want to go to eat or [to the] library or a movie or something, that is wonderful.

Faith in Action has a way where they can take you one-on-one. You call them, make an appointment. They have a car that comes and picks you up, takes you where you want to go, waits for you, then comes and brings you back to the door.

Although Faith in Action is a highly used organization, capacity issues create limitations to the services they can offer to some of their clients with greater needs.

I understand you have to be respectful of the volunteers' time because they're trying to keep those appointments at an hour or under. Sometimes it's not possible like when I had dental surgery and I'm going for the fifth dental surgery procedure in early November. It's very difficult...It was four and a half hours.

GoGeo Public Transit

GoGeo, the City of Georgetown's first fixed-route bus system, is a service GHF invested in partnership with the City for the years of 2017-2020 as a means of addressing the critical need for public transportation. Although a public transportation system can alleviate some of the stressors of not having personal transportation, many residents feel the GoGeo system in Georgetown is an ineffective service that is not patronized for several reasons.

You're standing there waiting in the heat, or in the weather...there [are] no covered shelters [at some bus stops].

And the length of time. The routes run...I've heard people say you could be sitting there anywhere from, what is it, 35-45 minutes before the next bus comes?

GoGeo, yeah. And the problem with it is it's very needed. But it's limited. They don't really take you to the places you need to be. We can maneuver around in our neighborhoods and to HEB's, but oftentimes, I've known people that work at Goodwill, it doesn't go that far out. I know people that live out in Churchill Farms, even them, they can't ride the bus because the bus stops about at Southwestern, and we need it to go further. Sun City would use it more.

In essence, residents living in Southeast Georgetown desire a system that has better routes within and outside of Georgetown, shorter wait times, and shelters.

Key-Informants

Several of the key-informants further noted how transportation challenges in Georgetown impacted the ability of residents to access needed resources, services, or programs in the community. The lack of transportation also served as a factor that influenced other areas such as commuting to job opportunities within and outside of the City.

Limited Access to Resources

Several key-informants emphasized the importance of having transportation to access resources and services in the community such as grocery stores and medical care. The following comment summarizes most of their opinions:

...transportation is a huge issue. [Residents] don't have a ride to the doctor; [Residents] don't know how to get over here...so, they're going to church; they can catch a ride with someone. But even going to the grocery store can be difficult.

Income and Job Responsibilities

One key-informant attested to how a lack of public or private transportation might affect income levels due to the inability to get to work for some residents:

Transportation has a big impact on the income level because if they're not spending it on housing, they're spending it on gas too. And if something happens to their car, they can't pay their mortgage because they have to fix their car because there's no other option to get to work... Technically we have buses, but we really don't.

Access to Teen and Youth Programming

Key-informants had concerns akin to those of residents in relation to the lack of transportation to youth and teen programming. One key-informant noted how "[Parents] don't have a problem with picking them up [from the program], it's getting them from school to here." Another key-informant, for instance, expressed the difficulty of getting to teens to her organization's summer programming:

Transportation is a huge issue for our kids with our [youth program]. And so, we have a few of them, too, we had two

last year and one this year, that we get them bus passes. And our bus system is limited here in Georgetown.

Parents' concern about accessing reliable transportation has created a heightened demand for the services that are available to them:

We do bus sign-ups. It's one of those first-come first-served. And, when I tell you – they're already asking now and I'm like, we're barely in July, we haven't even gotten to August yet.

Some teen and youth organizations have partnered with the Georgetown Independent School District to ease transportation issues that have surfaced in the past:

Well, it really is because of a 22-year-old partnership with our school district. So, there's a lot of relationships and trust in place there. And we have not only accepted help from them, we have given resources to the district over the years, right? So, we don't pay for transportation here, but we do in our [other two programs].

GoGeo

During their interviews, key-informants noted how clients felt the GoGeo service was ineffective. One key-informant reported that the “ridership is growing” at a good pace and more people are becoming aware of the service. However, they admitted “it could be utilized more if the routes were expanded a little bit more, so [they] covered more area of the City.” The key-informant further discussed what they felt were the most pressing issues with the service:

That would probably be the top three things that most folks would say is, the stops, where they're at or can't get to it, once they get there, [at most stops] there's [limited] provisions for shade or anything else, and then the other one would be the time it takes to use the system, so. If you went down to, say, 30-minute headways, and then you probably would see, definitely see, a peak in ridership. So, that's pretty timely – in a city this size, I don't think that's unattainable.

As illustrated, the need for transportation remains a top concern for both community members and key-informants who work with the residents on a daily basis. Overall, accessing resources and services is more difficult for community members when the appropriate means of transportation are not in place.

Housing

Housing in Georgetown was another topic of significance for residents. The main topics that arose in the focus groups were related to affordability, homelessness, and apprehension regarding gentrification. Service providers made mention of affordability issues for residents and discussed the barriers that inhibited families from accessing affordable housing. The homeless population also emerged during our interview conversations as a population that goes unnoticed.

Community Members

Housing issues in Georgetown have persisted since residents' first report of them in the 2015 GHF Needs Assessment. One community member was seemingly not pleased with who the housing developers were targeting as their new potential residents:

Well, with all the jobs going to Austin, who are they marketing to? Commuters. You don't have to live in Austin. It's too expensive. Live in Georgetown in an apartment because they're not gonna provide you jobs. You can just ride off the 35 or whatever, make your way to 35 and just make the migration every day.

Affordability

The cost of housing was on the minds of many residents who felt the prices for rent or mortgage were too high. Parents particularly expressed worries that their children would face challenges moving out on their own.

My kids are not going to be able to afford – well, they can, but then they're not going to have certain things, and for them, you know, if one little thing goes wrong for them, then they're done. They will have no savings if they have an apartment.

Residents with connections to seniors or individuals with medical issues also stated concerns regarding the affordability of housing on a fixed income.

What they need to do is look for the senior citizens, people who are 65 and older. They can't afford these high-rise prices that they've got on there for apartments, for houses. These people need a place to live comfortably. Don't price them out of the market and make them go somewhere else and live with their daughter or their son or somebody they've got to live with because they can't afford it.

One community member also discussed the challenges facing those receiving income-based adjustments on rent prices.

Most of the people are below the base limit. And so, they need to bring housing – affordable housing here. Because now, when there used to be affordable housing, Georgetown used to be one of the cheapest places to live in. And now, the more I’m looking at it, we are the most expensive to live in. My nephew, he can’t even get a place to stay because they want him to make three times the money that he makes when he’s on disability, so he can’t work.

issues...how do we figure out the ones that don’t need to be, and I guess would like to not be homeless...but just haven’t found their way out of the cycle of poverty?

Residents are further concerned with how homelessness in the city also affects the youth and teen populations.

I mean, I’ve had kids stay at my house. It’s just the way – they can come here, and I can feed them, and I can – we have a shower here, let them shower here. But as far as the school – the school would let them shower there. Some of the schools will give them food, but not let them stay. But we have a lot of kids who are homeless that are just randomly living from house-to-house. So, they might not be homeless living in a park, but they might be homeless living at a house, and living here, and living here, and living here.



Gentrification

Residents of Southeast Georgetown also discussed specific challenges and frustrations they had which were associated with the gentrification happening in their neighborhoods.

Homelessness

Homelessness in Georgetown was a problem that residents believed could be handled better by organizations in the City. The circumstances of neglect surrounding this population led one person to conclude that “Georgetown does not want homeless people.” Those who referenced the challenges of the homeless all desire for the City to provide more resources and assistance to these individuals.

Georgetown is trying to do the same thing. They’re trying to move us out of this area to move in other places. They’re trying to move us out of this area. That’s been their agenda, to move us out, move other people in, make it a higher income place.

...I think we need more resources for homeless people because they’ll put them in jail.

We need a place for a homeless shelter, and we need a mental health system. Those two facilities are lacking.

When people talk about [the] homeless and stuff, I think they need to address the issue behind it. Why are these people homeless?

...We need some kind of assessment program. A lot of the homeless people, particularly veterans, have mental health

So, I have a lot of elderly that live in my neighborhood. We’re very – this neighborhood has always been very diverse. Heavily Black and Brown, but diverse. We’ve always had a little mix of everybody. And we’ve always kind of looked after each other, families have grown up together, kind of checked on each other. And then, we have these new folks coming in...I actually had to tell one, ‘Look, you chose the neighborhood. We didn’t choose you.’ So, that’s kind of where we’re at in the neighborhood, too. Feeling uncomfortable.

Key-Informants

Key-informants provided comments that were supplementary to those of residents. To be concise, housing needs remain an issue for those living in Southeast Georgetown. Several of the key-informants from different organizations discussed hearing about the high cost of housing from residents in Southeast Georgetown. Some noted how an increased need for

assistance with paying rent and utilities influenced the living situations of many residents. The reality is, multiple families often share a single-family dwelling to meet expenses within the household.

So, that's another thing that I'm kind of seeing a lot more people trying to come in here with their rent assistance. That deposit sometimes is as much as that first month's rent and they're needing those two things at the same time.

So, then you have combined families all trying to live in three-bedroom-four-bedroom, because the cost of living and they're barely working, making ends meet.

...Housing prices have just – we're at, I won't say ridiculous, but we're getting there, which in turn adds to the problem that we have right now with affordable housing and even we don't have enough housing period.

Affordable housing – so the houses start at \$200,000. Well that's not affordable for families that are earning that lower income. That's affordable for people making the median income.

Resources provided by housing assistance organizations make it easier for many people to buy homes they normally could not afford. However, some residents still face challenges that inhibit their ability to own a home.

Student debt is bad for everybody, but the number of families that come through our program and have \$200-300,000 worth of student loan debt don't have a degree that will actually get them...we have to calculate a portion of that when we're looking at their applications and they'll never qualify for housing through us because they'll never pay that down...it's like I don't really know what to tell these people.

Finding an affordable place to rent is also just as troublesome for some low-income community members:

[The subsidized housing is] based on your income...people are trying to get on [there] because they have low income, and that's the [lowest] one in Southeast Georgetown on this side. You have people on the waitlist for two or three years.

Key-informants understood the importance of affordable housing and rentals for families. However, they also faced monetary obstacles that limited their ability to assist the community.

Because everybody wants to move to Williamson County. Developers are buying all the land. We can't afford it,

so we're gonna have to move out further from where we are now to – in order to build anything. And some of the communities, like Georgetown within the city limits give priority to build out. There's not a lot of space left and there's probably not any space that's probably not already owned by developers or somebody who's got a plan for it. And then if we had endless money, of course that always helps for building, but our repair program could continue to expand.

One key-informant expressed how misconceptions of who needs affordable housing have influenced how people view those who require such assistance. These perceptions have made it difficult to have conversations surrounding affordable housing in the City.

Who needs it right? – Because the normal conception of what somebody thinks of somebody who needs affordable housing is someone who's living off welfare. That seems to be – and if you ask somebody what is affordable housing – like I said it's those people – the people that 'I pay all my taxes and they're just collecting money.' And that's really just not – that's not the case.

Homelessness

The homeless population in Georgetown was sometimes referred to as a “hidden” population. These individuals exist, but some key-informants felt issues related to the population are not always addressed or sometimes ignored.

...I think also, just, we have sort of a hidden homeless population. But the homeless adults in our community have increased. And I don't know if they're transient. I don't know if they're transient and then stay here.

They are out in various places. Like in the woods around the lake. In the drainage areas under the bridge. You don't really see them, but they're there. If you go to the library on – there's a schedule there with the Helping Hands of folks are giving out food and that's – you see them there.

As I said, I don't know, I think they had settled here, but maybe didn't grow up here or become homeless here, just sort of a transient group of folks. And then some who have lost their homes and lost their housing and jobs and everything else end up in that position.

Key-informants were very aware of the struggles of the population they serve related to this area and the impact it has on their quality of life. Although resources are available to assist with this need, there are not enough for those living in the area.

GCAB Members

The issues noted in prior sections regarding housing in Southeast Georgetown also emerged during GCAB discussions. GCAB members tended to place more emphasis on how the number of families living in single dwelling homes has increased. GCAB members asserted this change was due to the need for lower and middle-income people to share expenses in the City.

And we talk about affordable housing, it's plenty affordable for people who have sold their homes in other states. They get to come here, and they get to buy great property for cheaper. They think they're getting Walmart prices for these beautiful custom homes.

Then what's really a big part of this is that middle income people, people like us, the working poor, [there] really is [no affordable housing] for us when a one-bedroom costs \$1,200.00 month here. There's nothing for the person that makes an average income doing an average job. So, it's not just Georgetown, though. It seems to be a Central Texas thing.

They also suggested that these changes in living arrangements could also represent a larger cultural shift among families.

Another thing is we have to kind of question our own bias and our own prejudice. In our culture, you're supposed to move out and do your own thing. In other cultures, you stay close to that family and you live multi-generations in one home. We often will judge that from a position of a deficit. You all need to get that straight. Where maybe we're the ones that need to be more family oriented.

In summary, the need for affordable housing in Southeast Georgetown is still prevalent. Addressing housing challenges in Georgetown is a priority for the community members, key-informants, and GCAB members alike.

Food

Residents alluded to the issue of food insecurity in Southeast Georgetown. Some individuals referenced a few organizations that provide food assistance to those in need. Although these places are helpful, community members feel there should be more food pantries open to the public.

And there is also another one that's called Helping Hand, in Georgetown. And I'm affiliated with that one because we have a lot of people. And I know through the week we serve at least from 800-900 [bag lunches] to people a week...And with the homeless, as well. And then, we also – we give them hot meals every Sunday. We give them hot meals. So, even in the winter, we feed them, clothe them. We do a lot.

But the last thing we do need – food, resources of food – we need a daily pantry, not just The Caring Place. Leave The Caring Place alone. The Caring Place, I think they get it on every other Monday, every uneven Monday. We need a food pantry, a separate truck to come down, or two trucks at one location, and it will cut down on people.



Workforce

Workforce issues described in the focus groups centered around wages, job opportunities, and job training. Several stated there is “no work in Georgetown” which led people to find work in surrounding areas such as Austin.

There are no big companies, no potential growth within organizations. I work for the state. That's why I go to Austin.

Well, Georgetown is obviously the suburban part of Austin, and so it's a big community. People go out, they work in Austin, and Round Rock – even in Round Rock. You know, you go work in Round Rock, you make more money, and then, you drive, and you live here; this is home. But it's not – there's no money.

So, I would say that Austin was the first thing that came to mind, because any place that you're going to go to kind of break into an area where you can make a little bit better money, it's going to be Austin. It's not going to be here.

For the jobs that are available, residents desire that wages be higher to account for the cost of living in Georgetown.

The wages here are just, you know – for [my children], I kinda chuckle at them, because they think \$11, \$12 an hour is a good wage...So, you need to understand that in 2019, \$11 is not a good pay. It will not carry you for – and especially if you have – you have no way of making savings...So, wages are horrible. They're not keeping up with the pace of cost of living.

Job training for positions that could increase wages are, therefore, very important to community members.

Okay. I'm gonna mention this center, the Learning Center. I recently in the spring took my CNA training classes and graduated...It was provided free by the Literacy Council. And these classes, I looked it up – it was more than like \$1,100.00. I don't have that. So, it was a huge resource to use the center.

The resounding message in this section is community members would love to live where they work. Without access to higher paying jobs that are located in Georgetown, the “great migration” – residents who flow in and out of the city daily to commute to workplaces far from their homes – will continue. For those with no transportation, making a decent wage may be more of a struggle. All of these culminating factors inevitably influence the socioeconomic means of residents living in the Southeast area.

Education

Education was an important topic for the residents in Southeast Georgetown. Some residents felt the quality of education in Georgetown was satisfactory while others had differing opinions.

And then I gave the school district an A. I believe we have some good schools here, some good teachers.

[My son] was in one of the ISD schools here three years ago, and we pulled him out and put him in charter schools. You just get lost there. I mean it's just – I don't think the

curriculum is set up for children...to find their space and/or to get attention if they need attention or support I should say on a certain subject. So, I'm not really a fan, and I'm a public-school kid.

ISD is failing as far as I'm concerned on getting kids college ready.

Campus climate is a factor that can also influence satisfaction in terms of educational experiences. Residents reported how a lack of inclusion, generated through prejudiced acts, affects sense of belonging for youth of color in GISD schools and sometimes parents as well.

Little girl is out on the playground – kids don't see color; racist talk. But anyway, the kids are out on the playground playing. These are fifth and sixth grade kids. The Caucasian young girl looks at the African American girl and says, “I don't like playing with you all, and I don't like...because I was told not to play with Black kids.” The Black girl doesn't respond, she goes into class, she writes in her journal. She's just writing. Her feelings were hurt. And she says, “That's why I'm learning not to like White people.”



If you're Black or Brown, they've got 20 people in there with you like you're going to snatch one of them across the table. I mean, really, [administrators] act like they're constantly in defense. And then, if you say something, they talk down to the parents as if the parents don't have an education. You don't have my bio.

Teaching Staff

Some residents indicated the teachers in GISD were helpful and provided good learning opportunities for their students.

And my daughter graduated from there and several of my grandkids. I feel like they did get a good learning. It basically is up to the individual anyway. But I feel like they provided what they needed, and their teachers were good.

There were also some who felt their communication with parents and concern for students could improve:

It's like trying to reach out to teachers. You can call but you never get a call back. Sometimes you may get an email maybe, but sometimes it's kind of like wanting to go down to the school and having to talk to them face to face because you can't get ahold of them.

Further, many felt that salary was an issue for retaining teachers, as one resident explained, “the good teachers are running from Georgetown.” The average teacher salary in 2017-2018 was \$50,501, which is \$2,833 less than the state average (Georgetown ISD, n.d.). Education is vital to the growth and success of the youth population. Addressing the concerns of residents in terms of quality of educations, inclusivity of students of color, and teaching staff issues could improve the educational environment for all students.

Racial Issues

Community Members

Issues of race and inclusivity arose unelicited during our focus groups discussions. One participant summed up a majority of residents' sentiments well when they stated, “The point is, they're not including us.” The behaviors and actions of those in Georgetown towards people of color contribute to their feelings of not belonging. Prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory behaviors that residents spoke of are not uncommon experiences. As a result, they avoid some areas of Georgetown and also some venues. The quotes below provide concrete examples of how residents feel in their City.

There's just so much division, just Color, you're not the right color.

I feel like the people that live over here in this area, they don't want to go over there. Even though it's there, they don't want to go there because they don't want to be – I would say it's more bullied or looked down upon. I see the segregation thing because I don't go on the other side of Georgetown for that reason. And then me going over there, that's not my crowd.

It's like we're an unknown species to them.

They look at you like it's a whole new world or something. Like they cross the bridge and they just went to a whole new town.

Where I work, we cut all [the grass areas] of like Sun City and Berry Creek and we'll stop and go get something from like the Randall's on that side and people will just stare. I'm like, “Whoa –”



The lack of representation in City advertising and the City of Georgetown website also adds to the feelings of exclusion.

Pull up Georgetown's website and tell me what person of Color – I'll be happy to see a Brown or Black.

But I also want to see people that look like me and my friends, and my neighbors and stuff. It's not. Again, I go back to that website. They do have people of Color working. I have worked for the city for years.

Some residents also desired to see people of color in the community spaces they frequented in Georgetown. One community member discussed the importance of representation in the City.

I'll shop here, I spend money here, I want to see when I walk in, a diverse community – it looks like it's an all-lily-White town. And it doesn't represent us. And I want to walk in a store and see people that look like me and look like my friends.

A majority of the participants agreed that there was also a lack of spaces for people of color to relax and enjoy themselves. Although the downtown Square hosted events and had other social activities, residents felt it was not a place for them.

So, I guess what they're trying to basically say is the social life that's in the Square is predominantly for White people. There's not any social life for anybody else – anybody of Color, Hispanic or Black has to go to other areas when you have the same community...they should acclimate it for the whole community, not just one race of the community.

There's nowhere in Georgetown for Blacks to go to enjoy themselves. Yeah, they could go to the Square...To go and to relax and have a good time –there's nothing here – I don't know, is there any place for Hispanics?

Law Enforcement Presence

Residents of color also communicated what seemed to be an increased presence of law enforcement agents in their neighborhoods, impacting their daily experiences.

My son, he doesn't do anything. He's a working man. He goes to work, comes home, he runs at night. The police now pop up and look at him. I don't want them to stop him, but Lord, help him because he's a good guy. He doesn't drink. He doesn't smoke. He's a working man. He takes care of his family. And lived in this neighborhood the majority of his life. You mean to tell me now you're going to take a closer look at him because he's doing what he's always done? Jog late at night because he's off from work, and his kids are settled. And he runs in the neighborhood at night.

I've been driving and have gotten stopped at night. They're like 'Where are you going?' 'I'm going home.' 'Well, is that where you're going?' 'Yes, I'm going home.' 'What are you doing out so late?' 'Why does it matter?' I did not know I had to be inside at a certain time being 20 years old. I know there's a curfew for underage. I understand that. But if I'm 20 and I want to drive through Georgetown on that side of town over there and leaving Walmart or something, I don't think I should be stopped to ask why I'm out so late.

Friday, we had a – we were having a family reunion the whole weekend last weekend and we were down off Scenic Drive. Mind you, they normally don't come down through there on a Friday or whatever. But for some unknown reason, they kept circling the block on us last Friday night. Why? We don't know.

To recap, race is an issue for residents in Southeast Georgetown. Experiences with people who exhibit prejudiced behaviors toward them in overt and covert ways contributed to their sense of exclusion in the City. What seems to be an increased presence of law enforcement in their neighborhoods also presents as a concern for residents.

GCAB Members

GCAB members also expressed that some organizations or institutions are not as inclusive to people of color which impacted the culture of Georgetown.

A lot of our kids graduated never seeing one that looks like them. You don't have custodians, cafeteria people. I don't understand – I came on in 1971. I was the only African American teacher for 15 years at one school. This is 2019. You don't have administrators – now, we just got an African American principal.

I had to step into a situation there in the parking lot, about the time Trump was being elected. There was a lady with her two kids – I'm making an assumption she was a single mother. But she was just trying to deal with her kids and get them into the car and she wasn't messing with anybody. A white guy comes up to the family and starts yelling at them, talking about how we're gonna build a big beautiful wall to keep people like you out. He's twice her size. So, I started walking up and then he left before I could get there.

Teens and Youth

The top priority for youth and teens is increasing their access to needed programs and services that were affordable. According to one community member, there are “not enough daycare[s] for mothers. It's not affordable. It's too expensive. And then after school programs, they're getting there, but they're still a long way's out from actually doing it.”

Another resident expressed how she felt the cost of summer programming deterred some youth from participating in opportunities that could help them advance.

Yeah. As far as like the summer camps and stuff they hold, if you're paying \$600.00-something for your kid to play basketball, football, or something like that versus the kids that don't do all that, the ones that are paying all that money for the camps are the ones that are making the team and the ones that can't afford the camps, they're not making the teams.

Recreational spaces are also important to community members in Southeast Georgetown. Although the Southeast Georgetown area has community centers and parks, some still feel there are not enough venues for children to play in their neighborhoods.

...They have wonderful, amazing things on the other side of town for their children. I'm saying our neighborhoods... traditionally, these neighborhoods over here were culturally either African American or Latino, or Mexican, or other people other than White...we don't have those resources...we don't have anything for our children over here, in southeast Georgetown, and that's our focus.



[Have] more kid-friendly things. I mean they have some things like – but it's so hot outside that I think they need a big indoor place. There's the rec center, but all you have is swimming for the small kids, and other kids can play basketball, then [most] everything else is catered to adults where you can work out or take a class or something like that, but there's really nothing with the kids can just – I mean there's a teen room too where they have pool, but I don't know.

Community members wanted teens and youth residents to live in a City where they could enjoy social and recreational activities also.

Georgetown Leadership

Community members expressed they felt Georgetown leaders were not as concerned about the needs of their neighborhoods in comparison to other areas. Residents believed their voices were irrelevant and their opinions did not matter to the City leaders who made decisions on their behalf. One resident noted how people of color are not represented in City leadership positions: “Most of the judicial appointments, most of the elected positions are still mostly non-people of color, and particularly women have a hard time breaking into [these positions].” The perceived dismissal of their voices influences the community members’ connection to City leaders, as illustrated in the following comments.

Consider the people. Sometimes I don't think there's any consideration. [Georgetown leadership] just like, 'We're gonna do this. You might say what you want to do, but we're still gonna do what we want to.'

We did fight, but eminent domain – they will use that on us. The eminent domain. We're standing in the way of progress. Because we did try to fight to keep the justice center from going down there in that neighborhood. We fought hard. And they said that we were standing in the way of progress. They took people's homes and everything.

Residents desired more opportunities to provide feedback to City leaders. They suggested having more forums where they could connect to City representatives and give direct input on City matters.

I think there should be more opportunities like this, more forums for people to talk. You just mentioned some young lady who keeps you informed. Who is that person and what is the extent of the group or the individuals even who she informs? How do people know what's going on? I just kind of accidentally stumbled across this meeting, for example. One of my answers is more opportunities for everyday citizens like all of us here to participate in forums and focus groups.

Community members also suggested that leaders be cognizant of the timing of meetings during the week so as to attract more participants.

Most of the time, the reason why most people don't make the meeting, [or there are] only 10 or less [attendees] is because they don't schedule a time for everybody to be

there. They schedule them at all different times because they know more of the people are 9:00 to 5:00 and most of the meetings are at noon and at real late at night. Most people late at night, 7:00 and 8:00, that's too late for me to go because I've got to get up at 5:00 and be at work or I've got to be at work at 3:00. So, we don't get to make the meetings.

Immigrants and the Undocumented

During our interviews, the challenges related to immigrants and those living as undocumented residents emerged as a concern for key-informants. Consistent with the national political climate around immigration in the United States, key-informants noted there was an increased fear among these populations. The key-informants discussed how the undocumented would ask questions to ensure their information would not be given to sources that could deport them. Key-informants perceived that deportation fears contributed to their client's hesitancy to use their services. One key-informant suggested that the apprehension of the undocumented decreased their willingness to utilize needed healthcare resources and services:

Then the other one is the entire political climate right now, the way it is, and the way it's been, I guess, for the last year or so. They're more hesitant to even apply for benefits, or very cautious of even driving because they either have expired documents, or they're undocumented, and so they wish there was some sort of legal office where they can receive legal assistance, specifically about immigration services.

Another indicated how she made special efforts so her clients would feel comfortable coming to her organization for help:

A lot of our clients are trying to get that citizenship or trying to – are working on that and it's harder for them to get any help as far as government so they think, 'Oh well, coming to The Caring Place, I'm going to get in trouble.' So that's one thing I've tried to express to the community and even that one client that I'm talking to, please anybody that you may know that's needing assistance please let them know that we are here to help the community, not to report to anybody. We don't report any of our stuff to anybody.

The fear parents feel for their safety has also impacted if and how they interact with after-school programs to access services for their kids.

Our numbers went down, because people were not wanting to bring their kids; either to school or come here.

Bilingual parents who don't understand, they prefer to stay quiet. Because, they're either scared– with the whole immigration laws that are going on, and ICE and everything. We have a lot of parents who are not educated, as far as, what is their next step for their kid to get in the high school, and what are they doing from there. So, that's one of my big areas where I advocate as much as I can to get parents – Hey, just because you're from Mexico, or just because you don't have money; there's different avenues, there's scholarships that we give – Boys and Girls Club gives, their scholarships, the school district gives.

Feelings of anxiety regarding deportation are only compounded by the realities of starting over in a new country. The processes for establishing a foundation in the City present another set of challenges for immigrants in the area.

...That's what we're kind of seeing now is that a lot of our families are coming from across seas, living with other family households or like I said, it's a big family. And it's the food pantry that we're assisting more with. The need for that, the need for different resources as far as trying to help them out, how to be – how to stabilize themselves in Georgetown or any other place to where they're able to – without documents, without the income that they're needing.

The population growth of Hispanics in Texas is increasing and continues to surpass White population growth (Ura & Jin, 2019). Serving an increasingly diverse group of people who speak multiple languages and have differing customs is a reality for Georgetown considering its rapid population growth.

Photovoice Project

Georgetown Community Advisory Board (GCAB) members had the opportunity to participate in the completion of a photovoice project (see Methodology section for more details). In this section of the report we provide the photographs, narratives, and themes that resulted from their research efforts.

Themes

The following themes were derived by the GCAB members during their collective analysis of the photographs and narratives they each contributed to the project. After generating these themes, GCAB members then applied

them to each of the photos. Quotes are provided from the discussion to provide more context on the meaning of the themes.

Safety: This theme refers to a discussion of infrastructure needs such as more sidewalks, crosswalks, and upkeep of public services such as parks and recreational areas. All of the GCAB felt the City could do more in this area to create a safer community.

Why aren't there any speed bumps in the neighborhood to slow it down? The street isn't that wide and the cars – the speed limit is, I think, like 30. They're going about 40-50 miles an hour, some 60. It's the main road to go into our neighborhood and I feel that there should be speed bumps because the children are running across, especially out there towards the soccer fields, that whole street. You've got sidewalks down most of it, the last two streets like our street and the next one down, where there are the kids, the people walking, they had to go in the street. Then they walk on the property and it was liable if they get hurt on somebody else's property or get hit walking in the street because the car is on the side street.

Sunday's Best: This theme refers to discussions of how the Southeast areas of Georgetown are not as well-maintained or serviced as other development areas with more residents from a higher income bracket. Georgetown is presented as a nice place to live but there are a lot of internal issues that make it difficult to live comfortably in the city for Southeast Georgetown residents.

It's like we put our church clothes on, Georgetown puts their church clothes on so they look really good to the outside public but yet there are these underlying issues.

I call it a façade of the city that attracts because it does – I love that word selective. Those two terms that you just used – we that are here see it. It attracts outside people. So, there's a façade that the city presents.

Selective Neglect: This theme refers to the perception of the GCAB that the City gives special attention or consideration to certain parts of Georgetown while neglecting others.

There was a proposition where they were literally shitting on us. They wanted to move the sewage pipes from the west side of town and run it through Berry Springs Park. I think at the last minute, they had enough protest that they kind of diverted the pipe a little bit. It's just putting an elbow on a pipe. So, it's going to go around the park instead of having this above ground sewage.

So, when we're looking at the road that doesn't have any lights and then we're looking at this crosswalk in front of Southwestern, when Southwestern is close to Downtown and all of a sudden, you get to Downtown and they've just added these beautiful crosswalks and stuff because that's where all the tourists, that's where – that's where I see the selective neglect. You've got this that's been here and there was an actual death at this location, yet nothing has happened, yet you've got these gorgeous crosswalks and everything there.

Socioeconomic (SES) Issues: This theme refers to a combination of factors related to housing, healthcare, lack of well-paying jobs, and other needs resulted in socioeconomic issues.

Well, that's like my brother works two full-time jobs. With what he makes with two full-time jobs and goes to school, he still can't afford a single one-bedroom apartment in Georgetown on top of being able to pay bills, gas, food, school.

Our middle son is trying to find an apartment to live because right now, he's living with a cousin. He's working two jobs. He's fixing to go back to school, but he can't afford an apartment by himself. One of his jobs, he's making – he's just now making \$18.00 an hour. His other job, I think he's probably making \$10.00 or \$15.00. He goes, 'I can't do this on my own.'

Lack of Inclusivity: This theme relates to the lack of inclusivity among residents of color in institutions and recreational spaces within the City of Georgetown as discussed in the prior Racial Issues section of this report.

Housing: This theme relates to issues of housing affordability as discussed in the prior housing section of this report.

Photovoice Pictures and Narratives

We asked GCAB members to take 2-3 pictures that represented what they considered to be the needs of those living in Southeast Georgetown. The photos and samples from their narratives on the following pages represent their perspectives and correlate to the themes discussed in the previous section. Their views may not represent those of everyone; however, their thoughts and opinions contribute to a more holistic narrative regarding the issues in Southeast Georgetown.



This photo of the Hutto Community Garden represents the themes of selective neglect, lack of inclusivity, and socioeconomic status. One GCAB member felt the garden could be useful to community members who needed access to food resources:

This is the sign for Hutto Road Community Garden. Anyone can lease a plot for \$20 per year, but most of the plots are empty and overgrown with weeds. The garden has been available to the public for at least 20 years, yet not many people in the surrounding neighborhoods even know that it exists. Gardening is a great way to stay in shape and provide your family access to low-cost, healthy, organic food. I'm concerned that the city can take this site and use it for another purpose by claiming that no one uses the garden. But with this kind of advertising, how would people know to use it?



This photo represents the themes of housing and socioeconomic status. The photographer for this picture noticed how multiple families were living together in single family homes in this neighborhood possibly due to the increased cost of housing:

The photo shows a small house (maybe 1200sf) with five cars in front. This photo was taken about 1pm on a weekday, when most people are expected to be at work. What we might be seeing are several people living in one small home and either unemployed or working shiftwork that allows them to be home during a weekday. Because Georgetown doesn't have companies that offer shift work like Dell and other IT companies in Round Rock and Austin, one might assume these folks work [minimum wage] jobs with nighttime and weekend hours that take them away from their families during homework and dinner times.

If looking at this photo from a position of strength, we might see families and friends living together to pay high rent with low-paying jobs. Affordable housing is an issue in Georgetown and the City is trying different options. Time will tell. Currently, rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1300-\$2500+ a month. Many folks in this zip code are undereducated and underemployed, making rent-sharing a must.



This photo taken of a street in the Quail Valley Subdivision represents the themes of safety, selective neglect, socioeconomic status, and housing. Safety was the main concern for the GCAB member who took this photo:

This is the main street in the Quail Valley subdivision. This street does not have speed bumps to slow down drivers. The city put sidewalks on 3 out of the 5 streets in this subdivision. These last two streets do not have sidewalks and are also bus stops for children catching the bus to school. People drive so fast down the street and there are always cars parked on both sides of the street. Pedestrians walk on the street or on people's property. There have been situations where people are driving so fast that they have crashed into the parked cars on this street.

The theme of safety emerged frequently during GCAB conversations. Member of the advisory board were concerned about the lack of crosswalks in certain areas and the ability of pedestrians to move around the City.



This photo of the local HEB store represents socioeconomic status, safety, and lack of inclusivity. One GCAB member recalled an incident that affected her sense of belonging in the City:

This is a picture of an aisle of our smaller HEB. We have two HEB's in town, this one is closest to the S[outtheast] side. Some people think it has outgrown its customer base in size, parking and grocery options. I think it's perfect. This is where I get my groceries and get to see people from my community. I run into so many familiar faces, it can serve as a satellite office. That's an exaggeration, but you get the point. The cashiers, baggers and management know you by name or by the grocery preferences. We have an awesome cashier, Mable, who is one of the most outgoing, friendlies, kindest customer service representative I've ever met.

*This particular aisle is also the spot where an older woman made me feel as small as a bug. She was trying to get a particular size/type of plastic bag and seemed flustered. Just as I was about to offer my help she turned around and with an enraged face said "Why the f*** are these in Spanish.. for f*****' you. You shouldn't even be here. This is bulls***."*

I'm sure I'm not the only one that this has happened to, but it definitely changed me. Many products at this store and everywhere else, have the product information in English and Spanish (and often French as well). The [is the] climate of the country, the state and the city where "go back to where you're from" is ever present in the hearts and minds of some of our residents [and] sometimes boils over in actual words and actions. A great community asset can still be infiltrated by culture divides.



This photo of the Georgetown Health Foundation Community Resource Center represents the themes of socioeconomic status and “Sunday’s Best.” A GCAB member explained how people who are not directly connected to GHF may not understand the purpose of the building:

This is a picture of the Community Resource building. It looks like an abandon[ed] building despite having a wealth of resources inside. People are unaware this building exists unless they are working directly with an agency that is housed there. There is a sign listing all the agencies, but despite heavy traffic on University, this building goes unnoticed.

This picture also generated conversations about the need to create more awareness of the services in Georgetown for those from lower socioeconomic background or others who may be in need. GCAB members felt that community members generally are not familiar with resources that are available.



This photo of the Georgetown Administration Building represents the themes of lack of inclusivity and “Sunday’s Best.” One GCAB member highlighted the history of segregation in the Georgetown Independent School District:

This building was built in 1923-24 on the original site of Southwestern University. The building served as Georgetown High School over fifty years. In 1998, it was recorded [as a] Texas Historic Landmark. Prior to that, [I remember] my 1964 Senior Year when the building was the only Georgetown High School. This was a grand opportunity for me to leave high school having a typing class. We had only one typewriter in the segregated school. Activists and PTA leaders, Harvey and Ara Belle Miller organized a team to attempt to enroll [students] in the various all-white schools.

Representation in the school district was a concern for GCAB members who understood how the lack of inclusivity could impact students of color who did not see others who looked like them.



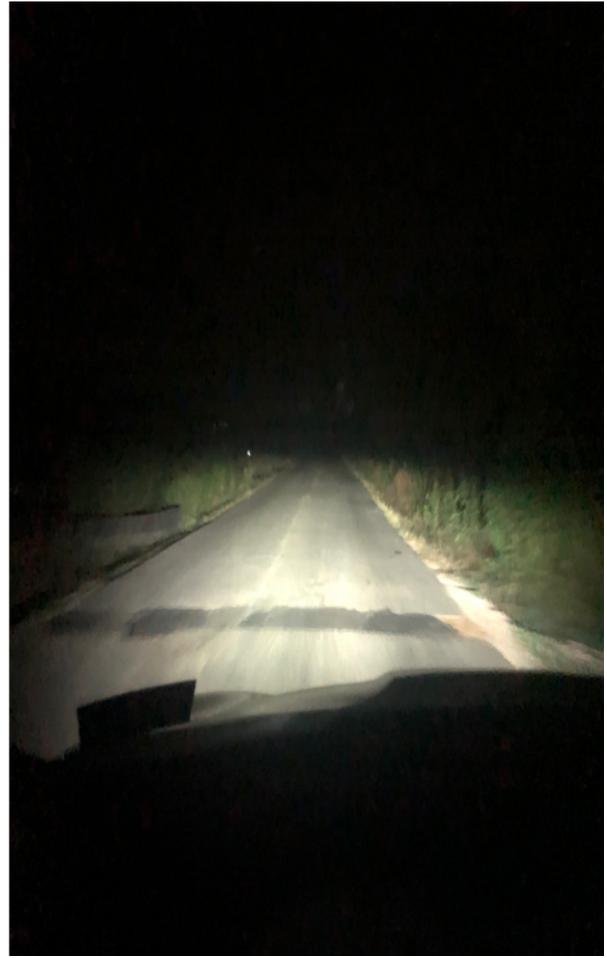
This picture of the Georgetown Soccer Association fields represents the themes of socioeconomic status, lack of inclusivity, and “Sunday’s Best.” The GCAB member responsible for this picture felt that youth in the Southeast Georgetown area were not able to engage in certain activities because it was not affordable:

This is a picture of all of the local kids who are allowed to play on the Georgetown Soccer Association’s fields located on Maple and Quail Valley. A few weekends a year, [the] soccer tournament will be held here. Otherwise the fields are locked behind chain-link fencing and empty. The kids in the neighborhood actually play in a vacant lot across the street. I understand that the property belongs to an organization that has the right to do with it as they see fit. But to a local kid-it’s just a thing that outsiders put in our neighborhood for their own benefit, and [kids living near it are] not welcome to use [it].



This picture of an abandoned lot in Southeast Georgetown represents the themes of selective neglect, housing, socioeconomic status, and safety. This photo was taken by a GCAB member to illustrate the neglect shown in some neighborhoods and the impact it had on youth living in the area:

What we see here is a hangout for elementary school kids that love to ride their bikes after school. But what we really see here is a dump site for people to throw away their trash. This affects our lives because we have children in the community playing on this street that is infested with garbage. This is concerning because littering is bad, and kids see this on a regular basis and think it is ok. No one has helped clean, and they are just contributing to the problem. We can prevent this from escalating by inviting people to have a community clean up on the last Saturday of every month.



This picture of an unlit roadway represents the themes of safety and selective neglect. The GCAB member who took this photo felt the lack of streetlights posed an issue:

What we see here is a road that leads into and from Inner Loop. What we really see here is a road that is really narrow and has no street lights. This relates to our lives because there have been multiple accidents on this road. This raises concerns for the safety of every person that drives on this road and people that might have to walk along this road. We can raise awareness and bring it to the attention of the city.

Feedback on 2015 Initiatives

At the end of each focus group session, facilitators provided a handout with the 10 Critical Needs identified in the 2015 assessment and a description of each of the initiatives funded to address them. The research team then inquired about their familiarity with the resources and asked them to provide feedback.

Initiatives Generated by the 2015 10 Critical Needs

Without hesitation, the community members all agreed that the needs outlined in the 2015 report were not yet fully addressed in Southeast Georgetown. As illustrated by the findings presented in earlier sections, transportation, housing, and workforce needs remain top priorities for residents.

1. **GoGeo:** Most residents were familiar with GoGeo public transit in Georgetown. They noted that more people would use the service if the routes extended to more places, the wait time was shortened, there were more shelters, and they could better serve seniors and those with medical issues.

2. **Growing Hope Alliance Emergency Shelter Capacity:** One resident expressed they had a knowledge of this initiative because they had spent time working within the area of child abuse and domestic violence.

3. **The Georgetown Project NEST:** A few residents had heard of this program and felt there still could be more done to help youth and teens with homelessness:

The NEST will feed them, clothe them, they will help as far as their education, but they can't house them because Boys and Girls Club – my team organization is in combination with the NEST. And they would do as far as their education, clothing, food, shower, soap – to an extent. After that, the homeless part, that's out of their hands; they can only do so much.

4. **Empowering Georgetown Through Education:** One resident had heard of this program and noted “It’s a strong program.”

5. **Growing Capacity of the Boys and Girls Club of Georgetown:** All of the residents knew of the Boys and Girls Club and understood the need for funding to secure more staff. Several alluded to the growing number of kids the organization served which impacted student to staff ratio.

6. Georgetown ISD Mental Health in Schools

Initiative: Only one resident expressed familiarity with this initiative and stated they only found out about it when their child was being placed out of school.

7. **Southeast Georgetown Community Council:** One community member knew of the SEGCC and noted they were doing good things in the community.

8. **Cultural Competency Workshops for the Non-Profit Leaders and Staff:** None of the residents had heard of this initiative. There were some however who felt it was needed among residents and administrators in the community.

Improving Services to the Community

We asked each of the key-informants to discuss some of the obstacles they encountered when trying to serve those in need. Below are a few brief comments on the areas they feel should be improved to provide better services in the community.

Addressing Language Barriers

Another issue that I think comes up sometimes especially in that area is the Spanish community and the language barriers, I think. More often on with having somebody around here that speaks Spanish that can be helpful. So, I know that that's sometimes a challenge for folks to get help with us because they don't have the ability to ask for the help.

I think one area where we have seen some needs and try to respond to that is within our Spanish-speaking population of parents. And particularly, those who are raising young children in our community...And we have seen much more engagement from families who are Spanish speaking come into our center because we have people now who speak the language there. And we may – we have probably done hundreds of new classes over the last couple of years that are bilingual classes.

...We are fortunate to have a few volunteers speak Spanish. [My colleague] speaks Spanish but there's times whenever we might not be around and it, then it – and then it discourages a lot of our clients. So sometimes I'll find them outside and I'm like, “Oh why haven't you come over, we do this.” And they're like, “Well, no one speaks Spanish, so you know.”

Lack of Awareness of Services

That's a big issue that we have in Georgetown is that we have a full complement of services for kids and families for a town our size. But oftentimes people don't know about them. So, how do we get people knowing about what's available to them in a better, more efficient way? And how do we coordinate all of our services in a more efficient way?

Funding

So we can't serve some folks that really need it because we're obligated to sort of spread that money a little bit further because those – it's sometimes it's quantity, but if you wanna get 'em really back the way they are it needs to be – Georgetown especially in the Southeast area really could use some focused neighborhood revitalization.

2019 CHA Findings (78626)

The 2019 Williamson County Community Health Assessment (CHA)³ was developed by a task force of community partners to collect, analyze, and use data to educate and mobilize communities, develop priorities, plan actions to improve population health, and provide a foundation of data to be used for goal setting and decision making for Williamson County. The data set included 2,407 respondents. The top five health priorities identified in the CHA study are as follows: 1) behavioral health, stress, and well-being; 2) chronic disease risk factors; 3) social determinants of health; 4) access and affordability of healthcare; and 5) building a resilient Williamson County. The results of the survey will be used to develop the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

For the purposes of our report, we examined data from respondents living in Southeast Georgetown using the 78626 zip code. The purpose was to determine whether any of the themes identified in the CHA survey were similar to the themes identified in the current needs

assessment. This resulted in a sub-sample of 158 respondents, which was approximately 7% of the overall sample. The sub-sample consisted of 125 females and 30 males. The average age was 49.54 and ranged from 20 to 85 years. There were 115 White respondents, 23 Hispanic/Latino respondents, 8 African American/Black respondents, 2 Native American respondents, and 1 Asian/Asian American respondent.

Using descriptive statistics, the results are reported as follows:

Regarding the question “What are the three most important things that make a “Healthy Community?”, respondents most frequently identified access to health care (e.g., family doctor) (n = 92), healthy behavior and lifestyles (n = 55), and low crime/safe neighborhoods (n = 47). Other frequently identified things included a clean environment (n = 46) and affordable housing (n = 44).

Affordable Housing: Akin to respondents of the 2019 CHA assessment, residents, key-informants, and GCAB members in the 2019 GHF Needs Assessment also expressed that there is a need for affordable, quality housing in the City. Many felt that the cost of living did not match the wages provided in the City.

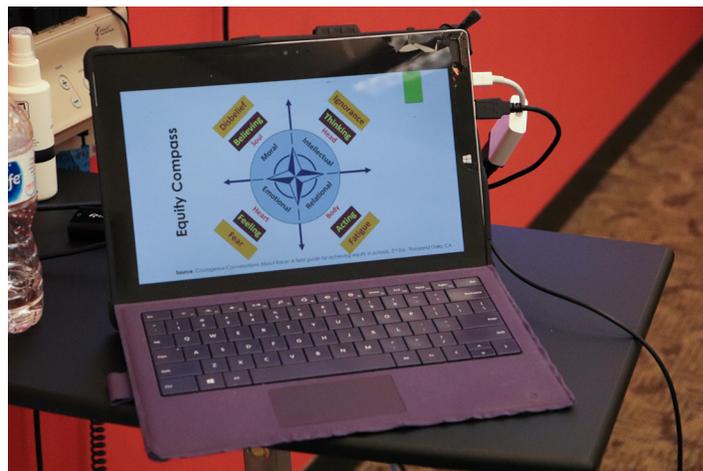
Clean Environment: In the 2019 GHF Needs Assessment, GCAB members reported feeling that certain areas of Southeast Georgetown were neglected in comparison to others. They desire that all residents have a clean environment also and that public spaces are well-maintained.

Regarding the question “What are the three most important health problems in our community?”, respondents most frequently identified mental health issues (n = 69), obesity (n = 54), and poor eating habits/choices (n = 41).

Eating Habits/Choice: Participants in our assessment alluded to challenges of food insecurity in the City. Food insecurity relates to the inability of individuals

³ For more information on the 2019 Community Health Assessment, please visit <http://www.healthywilliamsoncounty.org/tiles/index/display?id=135081634753390944>

to access nutritious, healthy foods and affects the eating habits/choices of individuals. The lack of public transportation and low wages, which were reported as needs in Southeast Georgetown, are both associated with food insecurity in communities. Participants in our 2019 study feel that food pantries are a necessity for the community and desire to see more of them.



Regarding the question “What are three strengths of our community?”, respondents most frequently mentioned low crime/safe neighborhoods (n = 74), use of parks and recreation (n = 74), and good schools (n = 52).

Schools: Respondents to the 2019 CHA assessment indicated good schools were a strength of the community. However, residents in our study felt that measures could be taken to improve the Georgetown Independent School District, such as enhancing the academic experience, creating inclusive environments, and addressing teacher compensation in schools.



Parks and Recreation: Although the Southeast Georgetown area has community centers and parks, community members in the 2019 GHF Needs Assessment study felt there were not enough activities for the youth to enjoy. Some residents also wanted more amenities in their neighborhoods such as public pools.

Regarding the question “Who are the people who need the most help in our community?”, respondents most frequently mentioned low income (n = 111), people with disabilities (n = 78), and seniors (n = 73).



Residents in the 2019 GHF Needs Assessment also voiced concerns for those from lower-income backgrounds, the senior population and those who were medically disabled. Lack of transportation, affordable housing, and food insecurity are factors that affect the quality of life for these resident groups.





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Appendices

Appendix A: 2019 GHF Southeast Georgetown Needs Assessment Update Georgetown Community Advisory Board (GCAB) Responsibilities and Expectations Agreement

GCAB Responsibilities and Expectations

- Attend required monthly GCAB meetings (5 total meetings lasting 3 hours)
- Respond to all communications (calls, emails, etc.) within 48 hours
- Assist in the development of community relations and community trust
- Assist with the development of research tools to gather community feedback
 - Develop/revise interview questions for community focus groups
 - Develop questions for key-informant interviews
- Assist with the recruitment of community members, service administrators, etc.
 - Recommend key-informants working in selected service areas
 - Provide strategies/recommendations to recruit community members for focus groups
- Participate in the photovoice project to provide feedback on the current needs of the Southeast Georgetown Community
- Provide input on the preliminary findings from community members and the development of the final report
- Give counsel on how to effectively communicate the findings of the research to community members, service providers, and other key constituents
- Assist with other logistics (i.e., securing focus group venues) of the project as needed

Appendix B: Key-Informant Interview Protocol Questions

1. Tell us about yourself and your background.
2. Tell us about your role in the organization.
3. Could you tell us about the purpose of your organization?
 - a. Do you feel your organization is fulfilling its purpose?
4. Tell us about the services your organization provides to Georgetown.
 - a. What services, if any, do you provide specifically to the Southeast Georgetown community?
5. Can you tell us about the people who receive your services?
6. Tell us how the needs of those you serve have either stayed the same or changed over time.
 - a. Have the demographics of those you serve changed over time? How so?
7. What do you feel are the current needs the Southeast Georgetown community faces right now?
8. What resources does your organization currently provide to address these needs?
9. Are there any barriers that hinder you from meeting the needs of Southeast Georgetown? If so, what are they?
10. In what ways can GHF better support your organization in meeting the needs of the residents of Southeast Georgetown? (Outside of money how can they better support your organization?)

Appendix C: Community Focus Group Protocol Questions

Phase One: What's in the Community (Revised)

1. What resources did you grade an A or B, and why?
2. What resources did you grade D or F, and why?
3. What resources did you grade C?

Phase Two: What's Missing? - New and Emerging Needs (Revised)

Introductory Paragraph if Needed: *What we've heard from you/community members so far is that there are several needs in the community that could be fixed with some help. For example, _____.*

1. What are the current needs of the SE community?
2. What suggestions do you have to fix the needs of the SE community?

Phase Three: GHF Initiative Evaluation Discussion (Revised)

Some of the needs you mentioned today are similar to those that community members brought up during 2015 focus groups sessions like this one. The Georgetown Health Foundation gave money to help lessen the needs that came up for the Southeast Georgetown area.

1. Are you familiar with the resources GHF funded to address the 10 Critical Needs identified in 2015?
2. If so, what are your views of the resources?

Appendix D: SHOWeD Questions⁴

The SHOWeD method answers the questions:

1. What do we **S**ee here?;
2. What is really **H**appening here?;
3. How does this relate to **O**ur lives?
4. **W**hy does the situation, concern, or strength **E**xist?
5. What can we **D**o about it?

