Griffin-Spalding Archway Partnership
Listening Session Report
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The University of Georgia
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Introduction

In support of the Archway Partnership’s newest community, Griffin-Spalding County, Spalding High School and Orrs Elementary School hosted more than 60 community leaders and interested residents in two separate meetings to discuss the trends, forces, and factors important to the growth of the community. Approximately 35 community members attended the first session and 30 attended the second session.

The Archway Partnership, a unit of Public Service and Outreach (PSO) at the University of Georgia (UGA), is a joint venture between UGA and the local governments, businesses, and other organizations within the community in which Archway is located. Current partnerships exist with Candler County, Grady County, Hart County, Habersham County, Sumter County, Pulaski County, Washington County, and Whitfield County.

The Archway Partnership delivers a full range of university and other resources to local communities by building strong, sustained partnerships between UGA and the local communities served by Archway. The overall mission of the Archway Partnership is to provide a neutral platform where government and community leaders and groups can come together to discuss the needs of their community and connect to higher education resources to address those needs. Archway also provides an arena for university faculty and the community to serve as both teachers and learners, while providing opportunities to engage UGA students in active roles addressing community issues.

One of the first action items of a new Archway Partnership community is to hold one or more community-wide listening sessions to identify assets and issues affecting the community. A lead facilitator works through a series of three questions and facilitators from across UGA PSO and Academic units lead small group discussions around those questions.

The following report presents the results of the Griffin-Spalding County sessions. The discussion section offers a high-level summary of each question asked and themes that emerged from participant responses. The accompanying appendices contain the themed results from the listening sessions that were collected using computer input and table facilitators, and the verbatim transcription of individual written comments from participants. Results in the appendices are comments provided by those in attendance at the listening sessions and have not been edited except for spelling corrections.
Discussion

What are the trends, forces and factors that will impact the community, your organization, agency, etc. (increasing, decreasing, or cyclical)?

The listening session participants identified six overarching trends, forces, and factors (or themes) currently impacting Griffin- Spalding County: **education, economic development, healthcare, crime, built environment, and community identity**. The details (or subthemes) within each of the identified themes are summarized below. A complete list of themed responses is found in Appendix 1.

**Education.** Participants identified the following four subthemes relating to education: (1) resource utilization and access, which was defined as the availability and access to higher education institutions and the implementation of the college and career academy (GCCA); (2) issues around school governance and structure from birth through college including concepts around transparency, leadership changes at the superintendent level, and a focus on professional development for youth 0 — 5 years of age; (3) student preparedness and graduation rates including high dropout rates, low graduation rates, and a student workforce not ready to move into leadership positions in the community; and (4) the need for increased parental and community engagement.

**Economic development.** Participants identified the following three subthemes relating to economic development: (1) underemployment and unemployment including stagnant wages, lack of opportunities for skilled career workers and an abundance of unskilled workers; (2) negative trends in local industry such as small businesses leaving the community, large industry not selecting this location, and conversations for a new airport; and (3) available opportunities such as the influx of film industry and a growing collaboration between city and county government.

**Healthcare.** Participants identified healthcare assets as hospital improvements and increased support for elderly population. An increase in teen pregnancies and births to unwed mothers is of concern for community members.

**Crime.** Participants discussed perception of drug use and gangs. One respondent asked, “What is the perception of crime and its reality — where do those meet?”

**Built environment.** Participants discussed the need for revitalization of downtown Griffin, noting in particular a number of empty storefronts and no large meeting space available. The concept of infrastructure in a rural community was also discussed and focused on empty mall space, intentional building locations, and no ability to upgrade current infrastructure. Housing redevelopment is an ongoing opportunity with new developments in progress and improved public housing.

**Community identity.** Many participants stated that there is a negative perception of Griffin-Spalding County both within the community and from outside the community, in addition to tension within government. A positive perception held by many respondents is that they live in a very giving and collaborative community. The group discussed a change in demographics and population within the community, which included youth leaving and not moving back, low population growth, and changing demographics. Finally Griffin Spalding County is a civic-minded community, which according to respondents is great for a sense of giving, but is also a barrier when people take advantage of the resources and services.
Based on the trends, forces and factors that you identified, what are the specific things that need to be done in order to adapt to the change? (Start with a verb.)

Three themes materialized in response to this question. The first theme involves community dialogue and engaging the entire community, not just the usual suspects. Respondents want to have additional listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys to hear from the faith-based community, low income community, and youth. The second theme was program support design, which would include the following: (1) sex education classes and curriculum, (2) coordination of efforts among civic and charitable groups, (3) creation of a tracking system for who is taking advantage of what services, (4) intergenerational mentoring programs, and (5) development and attraction of new business and industry through restructured zoning. Finally several responses included change statements such as, “Develop what we have,” and “Grow the community.”

What are the opportunities, assets, etc. that we need to be aware of that would assist our work in Griffin — Spalding County?

Assets and opportunities within the community exist in five different identified areas: (1) nonprofit assets - the most referenced area - included references to the Spalding Collaborative and engaged civic groups; (2) education assets, including the new Georgia College and Career Academy and current and continuing partnerships with the institutions of higher education in the county; (3) local government, specifically the parks and recreation department, and the housing authority; (4) community and location appeared as a willingness to help community members new, established and everyone in between, with easy access to Atlanta and other resources; and (5) industrial assets, which focused on the new industrial park and the planned airport.

One word descriptors of future state of being: “Griffin-Spalding County is...”
Appendix 1

*Community Input Sessions 1 and 2*

**QUESTION 1:**

*What are the trends, forces and factors that will impact the community, your organization, agency, etc.? Think in terms of increasing, decreasing, or cyclical trends.*

- **Education**
  - Resource Utilization/Access
    - Zero robotics/housing authority kids ranked 3rd in state/transmitted to space station; moving program to provide access to more young people
    - Higher education opportunities in the form of technical and UGA Griffin Campus
    - Better utilization of educational resources — Better coordination between Gordon, Southern Crescent, and Griffin Campus
    - Griffin campus is underutilized; not enough people enrolled
    - No excuse for lack of education; great programs for youth and post — secondary education
    - Partnership with UGA — kids university — talking about STEM
    - Southern Crescent
    - Cowper Road granted a stem program/career academy
    - Impact of College & Career Academy (Upcoming)
    - A positive trend is an availability of technology in the workforce and in schools
    - New college and career readiness institute
    - More education is coming into our area (UGA Griffin, the tech college) which makes us attractive
    - Regional college and career academy will teach things that workforce needs
    - College and career academy will teach soft skills
    - College and career academy adds an additional focus
    - GRCCA
    - Strong research center in Griffin around food/agriculture that is beyond 2 year level
  - School Governance and Structure (Birth — College)
    - Short — term superintendent change in schools system
    - Childcare centers need to be quality rated and caretakers need to be well trained to prepare kids for school better
    - K — 12 alignment with college and career academies
    - Need to focus on early childhood learning, so students are not so far behind when they get to 3rd grade
    - Need more opportunities for children to better prepare kids for school
    - Despite graduation rates, students do not have strong skill sets
    - Education — loss of superintendent and new one without requisite experience
    - Transparency of leadership in schools
    - Reducing student population in community colleges
o Student Preparedness/Graduation Rate
  - Youth quitting school at age 16
  - Low graduation rate (maybe 60% — goal is to reach 80% by 2020)
  - High school and middle school students have high dropout rate
  - School system improving with higher grad rates
  - Need higher level of educational attainment
  - Low expectations reeducation example kids drop out of school
  - Graduation rate is moving up but still low
  - High dropout rate
  - Graduation rate low
  - High school dropout rate continues to remain high
  - High school graduation rates too low
  - Low educational attainment
  - High dropout rates; at risks children (e.g. Flats)
  - Low educational attainment

o Parental/Community Support
  - Failure to equate education to quality of life
  - More positive activities for children — arts, animals, low cost; teach skills/hobbies to kids
  - Not enough parent involvement with students
  - We have very good private schools
  - Large home — school community
  - Educational prosperity initiative with community garden and other programs that emphasize education
  - Senior seniors getting GED to set example for kids; shows what is possible
  - Ranking of school system and the perception
  - Active engagement and participation in schools
  - Kids leave and do not come back

• Economic Development

  o Unemployment/Underemployment
    - High Unemployment
    - Unemployment for youth
    - “Brain drain” where people are leaving lack of jobs
    - Economy
    - Marginal credit quality
    - Lack of appropriate workforce — don’t have the soft skills. Difficult to find quality employees
    - Wage stagnation is an issue — lack of upward mobility in jobs
    - Lack of tax base and revenue
    - Lack of employment for 60-year-olds and youth
    - Lack a job ready workforce among all sectors except fast food
    - Per capita income is lower than anyone around us
    - Unemployment rate decreasing
    - High levels of unemployment
    - Downward spiraling of economic development such as lack of job opportunities
    - Unemployment up although last 7 years has been high
    - Lack of qualified workforce — need workforce development training
Need a “trainable” workforce
Lack of jobs (head of household) too many low wage
Need to educate people for jobs that should come
Industry is providing skills to lower skilled workers uneducated workforce/needed skills and training to draw industry
There is an abundance of low skilled people in the area
Strategic industry workforce training
Not enough opportunities for upward mobility
Wages have been stagnant for many years

Local Industry
Business not choosing Spalding
Expansion of 1888 industry — textile industry that makes towels
Fairgrounds is major community project and brings lots of money into community; should continue to be used for community purposes
Need to save fairgrounds; will be sold when old airport is sold to build new one; $400,000 market value and Kiwanis club cannot afford to purchase and doesn’t want to be in real estate business
New industry coming into the industrial part
Corporate companies taking over
Decline in tax base coupled with increase in need for services. Digest dropped last year
Loss of large and small business, but getting better and some coming back
Three industries have located in the new industrial park
“Stepchild” to Atlanta in terms of regional projects
1888 mills adding 200 jobs and capital investment
Lack of industry — high property tax base, and would like to shift to higher industrial tax base. We’re bringing them in, but not yet benefitting from the taxes due to incentive structure
More small businesses are closing than opening; losing local, gaining chains
Businesses leaving downtown and empty building
Even though industry is coming, people are not moving into the area. They work here but don’t live here
Businesses have improved in quality and moved to better locations
New airport will be positive trend long term
Getting new airport not everyone is pleased and causing divide over what is going to happen to old property
New industrial park is positive
Lack of industry
New business opportunities

Available Opportunities (Labor Force and Accessibility)
We need to increase job base, provide more job opportunities. We’ve got a new industrial park, think our economy is coming back, but don’t have a skilled labor force, kids that do graduate don’t come back after college
City of Griffin has 60 percent rental, 22 percent home ownership. Not enough jobs for college grads to come back
Southern Crescent Tech GA film institute will be opening in the fall to train workers for production — assisting electrical, etc.
The development, including Sun City
- New airport possibilities — relocation of current airport
- Insufficient job opportunities
- Lack of jobs for local population
- Lack of public transportation
- Georgia film institute training
- State has implemented the Zell Miller grant to fund programs for strategic industries for education/degrees — welding, truck driving/CDL
- Need more public and private collaboration
- We should be able to capitalize on the film industry
- Increasing presence of film industry
- We keep getting SPLOST voted down. We need to start agreeing with the simple things
- ESPLOST shows opportunity for the community. SPLOST did not pass
- Government does not work together well
- Code enforcement is questionable
- Increasing number of laws, covenants and statues — some not enforced
- Economic disadvantage comparing our county with neighboring counties — attracting industries
- Economically we are losing in competition to our neighbors
- Managerial positions live elsewhere — take income and civic engagement
• **Healthcare**
  
  - Teenage pregnancy increasing getting worse — cycle. Leads to single parent households and then growing up into gangs
  - Children in our population don’t have proactive primary care — use emergency medicine instead of preventive care
  - The impact of a potential hospital sale will impact healthcare
  - Single, teenage mothers
  - Teenage pregnancy = generational and creates other strains
  - Teen pregnancy rate is high
  - Low birth weight in county has been improving with local agencies
  - Teen pregnancy
  - High number of unwed births
  - Hospital growing, building new building for doctors and improvements to ER
  - Expanding use of home health care providers

• **Crime**
  
  - Widespread drug abuse
  - The Flats is a rough neighborhood, their safety
  - Disrespect for authority, criminal activity, lack of parenting skills, absentee parents
  - Parents abusing drugs and alcohol causing youth to quit school
  - Crime rate seems high whether actual or only perception
  - City draws in crime from other areas because of services provided; media focuses on crime and portray city as a bad place to live
  - Single parent households cannot afford productive/beneficial activities for their children — keeps them out of structured programs and puts them on the streets to facilitate crime
  - Gang presence (incidents are high)
  - Disjointedness among law enforcement on how to address gang activity
  - High percentage for funding dedicated to public safety but still have issues
  - Perception of crime and its reality — where those meet
  - Increasing crime rate & how that affects future employment
  - Previous efforts on gang activity have hit roadblocks in implementing

• **Built environment**
  
  - Downtown Revitalization
    - Need to revitalize downtown; nice restaurants and shops, but lots of closed storefronts
    - Intersection improvement at North Hill, Tuskegee, Macintosh — lots of work to improve them — on its way to being approved on county side
    - The downtown needs to be revamped. Make it a pleasant experience
    - Increasing traffic throughout the county, mostly commuting to work
    - No large meeting and conference space
    - Too many empty buildings in downtown

  - Infrastructure and Rural Community
    - Increasing commercial signs along roadways as well as traffic signs, highway department
- This is a rural community and that is a good thing — city is part of Atlanta Regional Commission
- Effect Sun City has had on size of typical house (larger) — improves tax base
- There are many spaces of open land
- Great green space; recreation department; 4H
- Challenges of aging infrastructure with no financial mean to upgrade — roads, bridges, water, sewer, buildings, etc. in both city and county
- Overflow of strip malls from a visual aspects
- Route trucks around downtown
- When you drive into Spalding County it is very attractive and gives good first impression
- Empty ill-kept buildings such as churches
- Be intentional about where companies are located. For example, a nonprofit effort to help the homeless shouldn’t be right next to an ice cream shop
- Churches, there are a lot that are doing great work for the community, but locations are not ideal, in business areas
- Missed opportunities: I75, Air Force Academy, Gordon College
- We need to grow, we need development, if we’re going to do that we have to step out the bubble we’re a part of the Atlanta MSA, we need to realize we are compared with Atlanta metro areas
- Ample water and sewer infrastructure but low transportation infrastructure

- Housing Redevelopment
  - Blight houses being torn down to better the neighborhoods
  - New housing being developed for new neighborhoods
  - Redevelopment of housing along Meriwether Street — 60-yr.-old public housing redeveloped — will be completed by end of year, then year 2 for phase 2. Will be mixed ages — Spring Hill. City and housing authority are doing a great job
  - There are many aging neighborhoods. Houses are coming into the market.
  - Subpar housing opportunities for low income
  - The economic driver that will fill the housing market
  - New public housing opportunities
  - Elimination of substandard housing — have done a great job of getting rid of dilapidated substandard housing, have a land bank. City has done really well but it is very expensive. County could do better
  - Housing downtown deteriorating
  - Mothers being forced out of public housing leading to kids quitting school
  - Too few qualified home buyers
  - Substandard housing/rental property; slumlord issue; developments are quick to go section 8
  - $30 million being spent on new housing
  - Replacing public housing units with family and senior housing
  - Dilapidated housing
  - High instance of blight in housing
  - High percentage of rental property & lack of pride
  - Real estate prices are very low still
- High rental and low ownership — not engaged in their properties, no commitment to community

**Community Identity**

- Perception of Community Members
  - County image and perception — is not positive — lack of trust of the government at all levels, but more predominant in the county. Currently a bit better in the city, but that tends to change depending on various issues/factors.
  - Low self-esteem from the population/citizens — we don’t believe that this is a great place to be (large portion of the population) —
  - Facebook Spalding County discussion page, people helping each other
  - Leadership unity emerging with catalyst (Archway)
  - City vs. county vs. school lack of cooperation, fuels the apathy that exists in community
  - More involvement in community by senior citizens — teaching, mentoring — providing productive uses of expert knowledge
  - Community apathy, people with good ideas but no follow through and commitment
  - So much willingness for community to work together
  - There is a tension between the county people and the city people. Votes tend to be divided
  - Terrible self-image and our community isn’t doing anything to offset it
  - People are so negative in some parts of the county. They only want to see the bad
  - Money brings opportunity. If you have a highly educated population, they bring opportunities
  - Archway program has already begun to make an impact, we are already having better communication and making progress
  - Declining family structure
  - Lack of empathy & community pride
  - Lack of personal responsibility
  - The most negative people are the loudest
  - Ideology in community of defeatist attitude; can’t overcome
  - Negative perception of community image
  - Lack of community participation and engagement
  - We are negatively perceived by others and by people within the community. They concentrate on the bad rather than the good
  - We do have a lot of good people, supportive people but not engaged
  - Distrust between citizens and city/county and makes government work worse

- Demographics/Population
  - Demographic change — it’s killing us — socioeconomic demographics — new people moving to community have high needs — childcare, etc. The new people coming in are more down and out — coming here for various available resources through churches and also through local government
  - Demographic shift school system majority minority population becoming diverse with more immigrants creates challenges — difficult to meet all the different language needs
  - Overabundance/influx of people
  - Population decreasing
• Growth in population on the south side is a positive
• Re-entry project
• Numbers are going up in the re-entry
• Stagnant population growth, we have been talking about it for years without progress
• Elderly population is growing and younger is not coming back
• Demographics are vastly different. Poverty split
• Community is divided leading to a lack of communication
• Men and women returning from prisons, programming to support them on return to community
• More young people leaving after high school and not returning to community
• Distrust among groups
• Territorial attitudes
• Population in neighboring counties is increasing while we stay stagnant

o Civic Minded (barriers and successes)
  • Long-term: existing partnership between 11 major policy/decision — making organizations Partners for Prosperous Griffin Spalding
  • Hunger
  • There is a lot of poverty
  • High percentage of poverty
  • High amount of benevolent help with no accountability measures.
  • Foster care issues
  • Long-term volunteers going away
  • Homelessness
  • Not everyone believes that there is homelessness in Griffin
  • Rules for public housing so strict that mothers have to move for poor reasons, e.g.
  • Overregulation in public housing
  • Need systems of informing community in a uniform way
  • GARC great organization (Griffin Area Resource Center)
  • There is a great need for GARC resources there is a problem getting enough funding
  • Parents not making enough money
  • Generational poverty is an issue
  • Quality of life in regards to food options
  • Growing reliance on public and charitable assistance
  • High renter ratio
  • Seems to be an influx of residents who want to take advantage of the benevolence for assistance
  • Extremely charitable county, which is good, but community attracts large influx of uneducated people; contributes to low education achievement
  • Older children should tutor younger children in families; retired teachers could be put to use for this purpose if family involvement is not possible
  • Lack of family unit
  • Large economically dependent population
  • No correlation from assistance to actual need (i.e. health issues but on public assistance that doesn’t require them to buy healthy foods)
  • Families are not choosing Spalding
  • Infiltration of homeless, dependent, unemployed population from everywhere due to charitable community — to live here and request services
- No up to date clothing cause children to quit school
- Lack of recreation and outlets for youth and teens
- Drop out of school due to financial reasoning/early parenthood
- Lack of coordination & duplication of services
- Lack of youth development programs
- Lack of public transportation
- Increased poverty in certain areas without a foreseeable cure to break the pattern
- Fast becoming a bedroom community for metro Atlanta & Henry County
- Lack of involvement by fathers
- Falling numbers in civic clubs
- More people living in Griffin commute to Atlanta for work
- Employees commuting versus staying here
QUESTION 2:

Based on the trends, forces and factors that you identified, what are the specific things that need to be done in order to adapt to the change? (Start with a verb.)

- Community Dialogue
  - Facilitating a partnership so we can communicate and prioritize together
  - Outreach — beyond normal area of operation; e.g. housing authority needs to reach out to economic development; collaboration
  - Be more inclusive of all players/contributors to community — include Griffin Housing Authority, which is usually excluded
  - Sit down with key leaders and prioritize the measurable changes first
  - City/county government consolidation
  - Empower law enforcement/ more officers/resources to combat the gang and criminal activity
  - Bring diverse people together and understand different perspectives — facilitate an open discussion
  - Community visioning
  - Engage community in process, same people in all the meetings, get more people involved, ask people to participate
  - Partner community and business leaders around community reinvestment and other initiatives
  - More community investment, need a method to engage the community more effectively
  - Form collaborative partnerships to accomplish smaller goals that add up
  - Find way to engage “marginalized” and “disenfranchised” segments who aren’t normally participatory
  - Greater involvement from faith-based community
  - Create one vision for the community
  - Bring in “real” people in from the community to be a part of the discussion. Utilize churches, community centers, benevolent organizations...
  - Educate the public on the demographics changes in the community
  - Educate the public on economic development — the results of efforts need to be better publicized to the public, because they are doing great things
  - Community meetings to meet with faith-based leaders to promote partnerships
  - Lose the silo mentality and communicate across all areas of the community
  - Market to getting new people to come to meetings like these
  - Nucleus of community members to promote SPLOST
  - More community involvement
  - Meet together from different sects to address the problems
  - Increase communication between city and county
  - Engage faith community to be more vocal in helping children succeed (programs)
  - Regarding underutilization of higher education, BOR will have to demand that the facilities be used for degree options (Gordon and Griffin campuses)
  - Southern Crescent Tech — are first-time college attendees in their family — if they graduate, it can change the course of their family’s outcomes — lots of grants available. Encourage more people to get their education beyond high school. Create awareness of options for higher education and financial aid available
• **Program Support and Design**

  - Design neighborhood intervention programs to help with housing problems
  - Provide financial education
  - Develop job readiness
  - Give agencies support to do what they need to do; more social services help; government help; we need to do something about poor housing and poverty, we’re improving the housing
  - Stronger code enforcement for visual development
  - Coordinate resources for charitable organizations so they are working together — get them to the table to try to coordinate and work together better — do this through education
  - Make adult education/GED programs more accessible and assist with transportation issues or location of classes — housing community does this at Fairmont Community Center and have had great success
  - Address teenage pregnancy early in elementary school, increase awareness of problem, education of life choices.
  - Commuter railroad into Atlanta
  - Provide unique education opportunities from UGA at Griffin
  - Hire qualified teachers who care about students
  - More complete graduate programs at the Griffin campus
  - Coordinate charitable organizations and track them — figure out how to develop a system to track, monitor, and evaluate who is receiving public/charitable services
  - City/county purchase part, not all, of old airport area to be used for community use, parks/rec; don’t take all of the property off the tax roll
  - Change the ordinances that pertain to the newly incoming demographics — e.g. make them register with a place to live within a certain time period, show evidence of income
  - Free opportunities for GED classes.
  - Reasonably priced childcare opportunities for those who make minimum wage or lower
  - Implement and enforce housing/code enforcement/stop the slumlords
  - Improve transportation and connectivity around the community
  - Clean the flats and let us open the doors to sun city
  - Promote community reinvestment for sustainable communities
  - Strategically locate the outreach programs in the communities that need it
  - Change focus on graduation rate to ensure quality education — focus on skill set as the desired outcome
  - Free birth control for high school students
  - Transportation opportunity from sun city to ATL
  - Tracking system for benevolent help
  - Support small business even if it means using tax incentives
  - Purchase the fairgrounds at a minimum and keep it for community use
  - More amenities and activities to attract young professionals/families
  - Generate businesses that offer decent paying jobs, not just fast food
  - Talk to property owners for making rental better
  - Need facilities for larger events, cultural activities, community center, convention/hotel building, so people don’t have to go to Atlanta
  - Create opportunities for small businesses
  - Create business incubators
  - Promote startup businesses
  - College & career academy is a step in the right direction
Training students at an early age to communicate, dress appropriately and act the part of someone who is job ready
Apply for DOJ grants to support citizens returning from prisons stay out
Training young people in orientation to work
Fully utilize technical college & engage with them
Assistance to single parents
Mentoring young parents
Increase tax base, diversify by bringing in more industry
Participate in positive solutions to improve community i.e. Lose negative attitudes
Guiding young parents in using the social system
Clean up impact outreach ministries
The college and career academy will provide new opportunities for students and industry
Analyze why businesses are leaving downtown
Change community focus on abstinence/denial
Create an incubator, help with small business
Support to fathers who are not in the home
Support for children with parents in or returning from prisons
Start a mentorship for upcoming high schools students
Provide programs for support for parents supporting their kids in school such as adult literacy
Sex education (new programs & grant) support & collaborate
Sex education should involve parents as well
Teach sex education at early age
Provide access to locally grown produce for local people
Grow the workforce/allied health business will make a difference
Attract professionals from outside of the community
Need more public transportation, especially in the summer when school buses do not run
Create opportunities for teens to have a good outlet to stay out of trouble
Make it easier for business, less regulations
Foster recreation programs
More business incentives
Get families involved in education
Educate child care workers better
Start archway executive committee meetings soon
Mentoring through the schools
Support housing authority & educate yourself on their plans & vision
Focus on ways to keep kids in schools and out of juvenile justice system
Focusing on character education/giving a hand-up rather than a handout
Support of preschool programming (mandatory)
Need more restaurants that are not fast food chains
Revitalize downtown
Need more good facilities for recreation for youth, not much for girls in particular
Develop highway 16 into a 4-lane highway so that Griffin can be a connecting point for development
More focus on pregnancy prevention among young males
Need affordable activities for children
Attract more industry to settle down here
Support teachers by providing time to teachers, kids, etc./.
Developing local leadership so when people retire there are people ready to move up
- Smaller classroom sizes
- Create STEM shops — think-tank for kids/youth/young adults
- Utilize volunteer effectively (e.g. Sun City resources)
- Provide opportunities for improving substandard housing thru SPLOST
- Create opportunities for people to be engaged in positive change
- Find way of funding the recreation center and activities
- Mentoring for teen pregnancy
- Encourage efforts to obtain public transportation
- Use volunteers throughout the community not just in the school
- Introduce younger children to activities that will keep their interest in schools
- Track, monitor, and evaluate charitable giving
- More home and parent support for schools
- Support community events
- Provide training to enhance soft skills and work ethic
- Develop leaders
- Attract industry that can bring 21st century jobs and higher wages

- Change Statements
  - Start small and work our way up
  - Identify targets to create change — leverage assets/resources to create change, identify standards
  - Encourage everyone to stay in school, even the difficult students
  - Balance between really needy folks and those abusing the system
  - Stop rewarding unwanted behavior — teenage pregnancy — with priority housing, cell phones, etc.
  - Show companies looking to move here the entire community
  - Make community more marketable as a bedroom community through transportation to ATL
  - Need more accountability for making poor choices through positive, supportive programs; focus on abstinence
  - Is the money in the education system being utilized correctly and efficiently
  - Collaboration, don’t duplicate services, try things other communities have done
  - Personal commitment to change & engagement
  - Griffin working for Griffin: keep assets and concerns local
  - Pathways grant and other resources to support student opportunities
  - Awareness & promotion of services provided already
  - Need more community support to “parent” children
  - Take steps to grow the community
  - Show pride in what we own, our homes, businesses, parks
  - See residents of communities as valuable
  - Community communication about resources
  - Bring a minor league baseball team to the area
  - Have Griffin Daily News get rid of “My Two Cents” section
  - Soft skills to youth
  - To be involved
  - More negativity than progress
  - Get more volunteers
  - Develop the community that we have
  - Strengthen existing work instead of starting new ones
  - Success breeds success so start with action items
QUESTION 3:

What are the opportunities, assets, etc. that we need to be aware of that would assist our work in Griffin-Spalding County?

- Nonprofit Opportunities
  - Spalding Collaborative
  - Outreach programs — food pantry, soup kitchen, churches, Salvation Army
  - 4H — Kiwanis fairgrounds support 4H
  - Family connection collaborative
  - Young lives — for unwed mothers
  - Kiwanis, Rotary
  - Lions Club
  - Hope Health Clinic
  - Growth and conversations of Hope Health Clinic to FQHC
  - Service organizations, local leadership needs to engage with them and utilize these groups
  - Ferst Foundation & literacy
  - Senior center
  - Spalding Collaborative
  - Very charitable community
  - Salvation Army, Boys and Girls, Community Center
  - Five loaves, two fishes
  - Partners for a Prosperous Griffin Spalding
  - Mentoring programs for young men
  - Salvation Army
  - Christian Women’s Center
  - The civic clubs are very involved with the community, especially hosting events
  - Community groups that already meet together
  - Relay for Life brings our community together
  - Community garden with Spalding Collaborative
  - Dental and Hope Health — services for kids
  - Soup kitchen, food pantry
  - Spalding Collaborative
  - Spaulding Collaborative
  - Hope Health Clinic
  - Kiwanis Club
  - Rotary Club
  - Service clubs — have lots and they are active, including high school based clubs
  - Churches provide food pantries
  - Civic and service organizations
  - Spalding Collaborative authority for families & children
- Spalding Collaborative
- Senior center programs
- Griffin Area Resource Center
- Caring House
- Theater program for older people should be used to attract younger people
- Churches, faith-based community
- Volunteers
- First Foundation working to eliminate illiteracy
- BPW

**Educational Assets**

- 4H program
- College and Career Academy, housing authority & planning/development working together for housing issues
- College and Career Academy
- The technical school building out a film industry
- UGA and Southern Crescent redesigning and promoting education
- Educational Prosperity Initiative
- Backpack food for kids program in school system
- GED program at Fairmont community center
- Youth programs at UGA griffin campus — kids university, young scholars, zero robotics
- Mentoring program in the school system
- Challenge for Gifted Students, academic team programs
- One afternoon school program through Salvation Army
- Improved technology in schools
- Good school facilities, many being repaired or fairly new
- Higher education opportunities including Gordon, So. Crescent and UGA
- Partners in education
- New college and career academy
- Tech college expansion
- Young Life
- Southern Crescent — Helping to train
- Great new school system leadership
- Southern Crescent
- Good teachers
- Southern Crescent, UGA, College and Career Academy
- UGA Griffin, So Crescent, higher education
- Community college
- College & Career Academy
- Formation of educational prosperity initiative
- Lots of educational capacity — higher education presence that is underutilized
- Youth mentoring program at Spalding School District
o Film education program at southern crescent
  o Southern Crescent
  o Higher education institutions
  o Southern Crescent at link from high school to workforce
  o UGA Griffin Campus
  o College and careers
  o UGA Griffin campus provides a presence in our area
  o College and Career Academy
  o College and Career Academy
  o Sports programs, but could be improved by recruitment
  o Scholarships available/app being created
  o Schools/TV programs could improve sex education
  o College and career academies
  o UGA Griffin campus
  o Programs that give credit for high school and college

• Government Assets

  o Griffin Housing Authority — dilapidated housing in poverty areas
  o Blight Housing Removal
  o Griffin Housing
  o Parks & Rec
  o Archway partnership
  o Park District Shuttle
  o Utilities
  o Intergovernmental collaboration
  o Assistance program for electricity bills
  o Health Department
  o Educational prosperity thru housing authority
  o Zero Robotics program in housing authority
  o Housing authority rebuild
  o Parks & recreation, tournaments, visitor draw
  o Housing Improvement Program
  o Parks and rec
  o Coop Extension
  o ESPLOST
  o Good healthcare locally and eldercare facilities, can get most healthcare specialties locally
  o Ample water and sewer infrastructure
  o Regional hospital with medical overlay
  o Excellent library system — regional library with excellent staff
  o Improvement in public housing
  o Recreation department runs a great program with events and celebrations (e.g., Memorial Day celebration)
Parks and recreation department
Parks and rec department in the county/city — youth development
Housing Authority Bus Route plans
Griffin/Spalding Hospital Authority

**Location/Community**

- Proximity of county to Hartsfield and the city
- Sun City
- Community desire to change current situation
- Good leadership in city and county
- Tree City — but need to keep green spaces secured
- Chamber of Commerce
- Main Street Program
- Proximity to major metro area
- Griffin downtown
- Health community
- Sense of collaboration
- Equestrian practice, dog show
- Arts community offers many programs — plays, concerts
- We are a very giving community comparatively with neighboring counties
- Active arts community — sculptures, plays, community theaters, welcome center
- Social services and human resources are good
- Community events
- We have many people in the community who are willing to help
- Energetic volunteer force
- Lots of activities at senior centers
- Highly resourced retired community that is active and engaged
- Very caring community (maybe too much so) offering lots of opportunities to people
- There are options for people to go to when they are in need
- Chamber of Commerce
- Advocates for improvement, involved citizens
- Strong leadership
- Willingness of people to work together
- Agricultural resource center
- 4-lane highway to I75
- Tyus Park
- Land

**Industry Resources**

- New businesses are coming into the industrial park
- Airport planning
- Griffin Spalding Development Authority and publically owned industrial parks
- Exposure through film industry
- Workforce development program gearing up; recognizing need to reinvent oneself
- New industries to industrial park
- Industrial park is great
- Increasing commercial and retail development
- Airport
- 11 miles from I-75 location
- Potential big box store
- New airport
- Industrial parks
- Healthy retail
- Stable industries
- Green industrial park — only in state of Georgia
- Small business & entrepreneurship
Appendix 2

Written Responses Griffin Spalding County

**QUESTION 1:**

What are the trends, forces and factors that will impact the community, your organization, agency, etc.? Think in terms of increasing, decreasing, or cyclical trends. *(Pink Paper)*

- Departure of businesses from downtown area
- Housing in the downtown area is not kept up
- Future new airport and updated or new businesses
- Demographic shift
- Departing of textile mill
- Teenage pregnancy
- Film industry
- Employment opportunities
- Housing, education opportunities
- Strategic positioning of the city council
- School system improving, graduation rates increasing
- Non owner occupied housing
- Infiltration of homeless dependent population and criminal population
- Aging infrastructure with no financial means to upgrade
- Declining tax base coupled with increasing need for governmental service
- Lack of trust in the government
- Rural community, low self esteem
- Redevelopment along Meriwether Street
- Top leadership change
- Georgia Film Institute will be opening a facility in fall to train workers in the film industry
- Zell Miller Grant available for free tuition at in state institutions
- Businesses not choosing Spalding
- Families not choosing Spalding as their home
- Schools and parental involvement, drug abuse
- Generational poverty
- Better utilization of education resources specifically, coordination behind Gordon College, Southern Crescent, and UGA Griffin
- Growing reliance on public/charitable assistance, attracting those wanting free handouts
- Griffin is a very charitable community. It attracts lots of uneducated people from surrounding areas. This means low achievements, high crime rates, etc.
- An ideology of can’t overcome
- Competitive intergovernmental agencies
- How to get the city/county to use the old airport for recreation
- Disrespect for authority
• Influx of those looking for services
• More unemployment and more criminal activity
• Spalding County discussion page on Facebook
• GARC – Griffin Area Resource Center
• 4-H Program — teaching youth leadership, citizenship, and life skills
• Home school community
• Congested areas around downtown
• New industry in industrial park
• Crime impacting community perception of itself
• Stagnant population growth
• High percentage of population with only high school level or lower education
• Potential hospital transition unknown
• Lack of economic development/job growth
• Poverty among some families
• Strip malls
• Lots of open land and a new airport
• Actively engage young people in community projects to provide places for young people to go
• Increasing job base
• Improving infrastructure for low income areas
• Community perceptions/expectations
• Jobs/job opportunities
• Commitment/Follow through
• Bad self-image — negative perception of everything
• High millage rates
• High rental rates — low home ownership
• Apathy, or lack of participation unless it affects them
• Lack of commercial development
• Lack of vision for what we want to be
• Tax digest growth
• Graduation rates is at 62% overall
• Crime or perceptions of high crime
• Lack of tax base for revenue
• Lack of public transportation
• Better roads and access
• Financial education
• Population decreasing, lack of employment
• Parents not making enough money, with poor advice on drugs/alcohol
• Unemployment for youth and elderly
• Homelessness and hunger
• Opening of Career and College Academy
• Turfgrass Building additions
• Demographic shifts
- Lack of youth activities
- Duplication of services
- Need to have more early learning programs
- Distrust between groups
- GA Film Institute opening in fall
- Demographic change; more aging/elderly populations
- Personal responsibility
- Growth of traffic
- Regulations, laws, and statutes
- The return of men and women from prison
- Absence of fathers from the family
- Dropout rate
- Recidivism in Spalding County
- Food picnic building (UGA Griffin)
- GRCCA
- Transportation issues, including GA 16 bottleneck
- Failing and old infrastructure
- Lack of large meeting facilities
- Ample water supply
- Public education lagging behind
- Minimal qualified workforce
- Blight housing
- Too many avenues for generosity
- Downtown needing revitalization
- Downward spiraling of economic development
- Real estate prices
- Distributed economies/technology entrepreneurship
- Economic advances in surrounding counties
- Increased poverty with no mechanism to break pattern
- High taxes
- Unskilled workforce
- Understanding of things such as SPLOST
- Community impression that we are a destination to get things free without having to work for them
- Gang task force budgetary request suggests that gang activity is a problem
- Senior community will be built – applying for tax credits now
- No place to go for upward mobility in jobs
- Reluctance to recognize that other neighborhoods exist
QUESTION 2:

Based on the trends, forces and factors that you identified, what are the specific things that need to be done in order to adapt to the change? (Start with a verb.)

- Creating one vision for the community
- Track, monitor, and evaluate charitable giving clearing house
- Soft skills to youth; youth development responsible citizen
- Have HWY 16 built as a 4-lane from Griffin to I-85 and sell Griffin as a commuting point between I-75 and I-85
- Present community in a positive manner
- Get involved in something to help make community better (i.e. church, volunteer at hospital, civic club, read to kids)
- Be positive in what you think, do, or say
- If a student wants to drop out of school the counselor should meet with the student and advise them that in order for them to quit, they and their parents have to sign an agreement stating that they are not going to seek public assistance or be eligible for it for the remainder of their life with the exception of job training.
- Leadership participation
- Workforce training
- Collaborative efforts
- Econ engine infrastructure vision
- Be involved
- Volunteer
- Be polite in conflict
- Attend functions
- Be a positive voice
- Address problems
- Visit schools and be a speaker to students
- Support the government
- Education
- Training students at an early age about the importance of learning to communicate, dress for success, acting the part of someone who will not only be employable but sought after
- Showing pride in what we own — our homes, businesses, parks, community venues
- Growing our workforce and attracting professionals from outside our community to move here
- Giving a hand up instead of a hand out
- Job readiness training
- Mentoring program and for job maintenance
- Guidance for young people
- Support for single mothers
- Support and mentoring for young families
- Education relevant to job opportunities
- Start college and career labs as low as elementary school
• Build a community that is inviting to businesses
• Support teachers in our community
• Start mentorship program for upcoming high school students
• Provide funding through successful SPLOST for substandard housing
• Create community leadership goals. Program similar to Goals 2000 where community dialog meet regularly
• Provide downtown atmosphere with learning STEM Center
• More organization opportunity for teens
• Offer more education opportunities
• Bring in better job hires (box stores)
• Community working together for more participation and more involving residents
• Participate in positive solutions to improve our community, lose the negativity
• Lose the “silo” mentality and learn to collaborate across all community segments
• Get the Griffin Daily News to eliminate “My Two Cents” feature
• Bring a minor league baseball team to area as inspiration
• More summer recreation programs
• Focus on ways to keep kids in school and out of the courts (mentoring)
• Encourage efforts to obtain public transportation so people can go to work if outside of community
• Lower taxes, less government regulation
• More police
• Drop Common Core curriculum, smaller class sizes
• Reentry program: Second Chance Act grant, Pathways HHS grant, YouthBuild DOL grant
• Motivational interviewing, thinking for a change
• Inside/Outside Dad
• Apply the Word of God to everyday life
• Better family values
• Better crime prevention
• More industries
• Joint cooperation with city/county/school system/UGA
• Lots of fast food restaurants
• Good recreational facilities for young and old
• Churches have active youth programs for health, food sources
• Participate personally to rally others to get involved
• Educate yourself and others
• Contribute financially on community issues
• Collaborate groups toward a common goal, form partnerships on projects
• Encourage higher wage earners to live where they work
• College Career Academy
• Southern Crescent Technical College
• Teach appropriate programs to deal with sex education
- Support the Griffin Housing Authority
- Support mandatory preschool for all students
- Support the Spalding Collaborative
- Core team to analyze why are business moving out and not in
- Dressing up houses/painting/yard work/take down. Or maybe new community housing.
  Research on the housing project
- Career training — technical and soft skills
- Education of young ones about the reality of teenage pregnancy
- Find some way to mediate or reconcile diverse groups — social and socioeconomic
- Identify and place leadership to match initiative
- Identify targets that will create desired changes
- Develop and implement a strategy to increase opportunities in film business
- More outreach programs out of downtown to more specific neighborhoods
- Eliminate substandard housing
- Provide unique education opportunities that attract students/faculty
- Elected officials make the hard choices for the common good
- UGA partnership as a starting point
- Start with the measurable — vacant buildings, downtown
- Stronger code enforcement
- Livable communities
- Strengthen UGA academic program for less infighting
- Job readiness through the CCA
- Prove to physicians that Griffin is a good place to live
- Clean up streets and flats and open the door to sun city
- Work out communications
- Engage the community in work groups
- Give the agencies that can make the changes the support and tools to do it
- We have too many people doing the same thing
- Mentor girls
- Implement and enforce zoning
- Empower law enforcement
- Attract industry jobs
- Strengthen the social service to provide resources to do what they need to
- Work together without individual agendas
- Strengthen existing work instead of starting new initiatives
- Do not reinvent the wheel
- Griffin/Spalding needs to work together to publicize the good sides of our community
- More work to entertain the younger children to try to break the cycle of depravation
- City and county governmental consolidation
- Purchase part of old airport for parks/recs and Kiwanis
- Have to find a balance between really needy individuals and abuse of systems
• More inclusion of all players as contributions to the community such as the Griffin Housing Authority
• Skilled child care workers
• Teach sex education in schools — start in middle school
• Generate businesses that provide decent paying jobs not just fast food, etc.
• Support small businesses
• Railroad commuter transportation into Atlanta would attract more people to Griffin
• Centralized communication system
• Tax break to attract economic development
• Think local and buy local
• Demand commitment from Athens campus leadership, Gordon College leadership, and Southern Crescent leadership to present a plan of coordinated programs to the Board of Regents
• Evaluate some of our mandatory fees such as impact and sewer recovery fees
• Bring in real people from the community — not just community leaders that have their lives together
• Offer free opportunities for GED classes, job training, daycare
• Education changes the culture of the whole family
• Making adult education/GED attainment more accessible
• Develop a system of charitable groups and local government entitled to track, monitor, and evaluate individuals
• Coordinate and limit charitable donations
• Partner with businesses to promote community reinvestment activities in Spalding/Griffin
• Improve transportation and connectivity to surrounding communities
• Provide financial education in high school and community colleges
• Qualified teachers who have the concern for students
• Community leaders meet with local pastor who are concerned to discuss ways to motivate, educate, and support youth to stay in school
• Opportunities for small businesses
• Education improvement is key
• Gain trust among stakeholders
QUESTION 3:

What are the opportunities, assets, etc. that we need to be aware of that would assist our work in Griffin Spalding County?

- A world renown Agricultural Research Center
- College and Career Program
- Industrial park
- Southern Crescent and UGA
- Soccer and baseball facilities/ parks and recreation
- Community events – June Jam/ September Smash
- 4-lane highway from downtown Griffin to I-75
- Kiwanis/Rotary Club
- Active Service Clubs
- Sun City
- Energetic volunteers
- Active arts community
- Chamber of Commerce
- Gordon college
- Small businesses
- Families that are staying here
- Senior center
- Airport
- Griffin Collaborative
- Distance to ATL Hartsfield
- Griffin Housing Authority
- A few very concerned advocates for improvement
- Churches
- Trees — environmental concerns
- Dedicated teachers in schools
- Leaders (city and county)
- Health services
- Caring community
- Desire to change the current situation
- Good healthcare and elder care opportunities
- Water supply and sewer
- Some healthy retail to generate sales tax
- Spalding Collaborative
- Some civic-mindedness
- Film education for rise in film industry
- Box stores coming in
- Willingness of people to work together and collaborate
- Recognition of the need to work together
- UGA Campus
- City/County/BoE working together through Archway
- Great parks at senior center
- Have community pride but just don’t show it
- Very giving community
- Beauty, history, architectural potential
- Relay for Life event
- United Way
- Outreach programs
- Food Pantry
- Soup Kitchen
- Salvation Army
- Electric assistance
- Hope Clinic
- Young Life
- Fairgrounds support
- The opportunity for public transportation
- Scholarships not being taken
- Airport planning
- Exposure through film industry
- Griffin Spalding Developmental Authority
- Meriwether redevelopment
- Commercial development
- Growth and conversion of HHC to a FQHC
- Mentor programs
- A crisis pregnancy center
- 11 miles from I-75
- Specific downtown area
- Partners for a Prosperous Griffin Spalding
- Kids University, Young Scholars, Zero Robotics
- GED Program at Fairmont Community Center
- Afterschool programs
- Backpack Food for Kids Program
- County extension
- Main Street Program
- American Legion
QUESTION 4:

Do you have any additional thoughts for the Archway Partners?

- Plan more meetings, maybe later in the evening where this could be expanded
- I am tired of talking about problems and paying consultants to make plans and never, ever seeing any actions as a result of conversations and studies. I really don’t want this to be another hollow program or attempt. Let’s do something!
- Delighted with a change of heart in government to work toward not going back to “Separate but equal”
- As Archway comes into Spalding, please work together with groups that are already collaborating to address key issues in the community
- Prioritize by what is tangible: fix and invest in downtown first
- Give the community a win
- Opportunity to be an education community
- Be intentional to clean up the visual impact of primary corridors
- The people are the greatest asset. We have a lot of organizations doing tremendous work.
- Our educational facilities provide opportunities and we have great recreational facilities
- I notice a lack of participation in these groups: city commissioners, county, minorities, and people not with an organization
- It is important that Archway does not cause other groups to lose their potential because another “group initiative” has come in and draining volunteer energy
- No hidden agendas
- Forget about what we did in the past
- We are part of Atlanta’s area, not to be compared with Pike/Butts Lamar counties
- I am extremely disappointed in the lack of attendance in the following groups: County Commission, City Commission, Board of Education, news media, naysayers, bloggers
- Race is an underlying issue
- I want to know how can youth find employment
- Where can small businesses find start — up assistance to open up a business?
- How can local pastors and businesses get involved in archway to assist this community?
- Healing Bridge Women Veteran Reentry Program
- I would like to see larger companies bring more economy and stay in Griffin. I see a lot of progress from the local housing authority, Southern Crescent, and UGA
- As a former mill town, I would like to see more emphasis on promoting the arts to take advantage of skills the community from mills may be able to use as a creative outlet
- Work on health of community: Dictate and exercise community involvement
- Archway must define “The Vision”
- Looking forward to speaking directly with Archway staff. Want to assure we don’t reinvent the wheel and duplicate efforts. Spalding Collective has the infrastructure to support Archway long-term.
- Griffin has the opportunity to be great and growing again, once people begin to take pride in their communities
- I aspire for our community to be a place which our best and brightest young people will want to come back to, to start and raise their families, and be proud to call home.
- A destination of choice, the jewel of south metro, a great place to live, work, and play
- Potential to put Georgia on the map as an educational and economic development hub
- Proud, beautiful, educated, healthy
- Growing, united, accepting
• Top 50 school system
• G/S County will be a better place to live
• A safe place to live, Griffin Spalding is the educational center of Georgia
• Positive, continually improving, leading