

Downtown Lufkin Economic Development and Public Realm Vision

Public Meeting 1 Summary

Thursday, January 28, 2021 | 6pm – 7pm

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Project Overview
- Vision and Goals
- Q&A
- A Downtown for Everyone
- Q&A
- Next Steps

Introductions and Project Overview

The Consultant Team began Public Meeting 1 with introductions to the Project Team and Advisory Team. The Consultant Team also discussed the project overview, including the project study area, goals, and engagement timeline.

Vision & Goals and Q & A

The Consultant Team shared the draft vision statement for the project:

“Downtown Lufkin is a downtown for all, offering spaces that are welcoming, diverse, and family-friendly where locals and visitors gather to explore, dine, shop, relax, and learn”. A public comment we received on this was to add "live" to the vision statement.

The Consultant Team also guided attendees through an analysis of five (5) goals—and strategies for each goal—for Downtown Lufkin. The five goals include:

- Downtown Lufkin must be **Dynamic**
- Downtown Lufkin must be **Lively**
- Downtown Lufkin must be **Magnetic**
- Downtown Lufkin must be **Inviting**
- Downtown Lufkin must be **Healthy**

Strategies the Consultant Team mentioned include:

- Downtown having a variety of locally-owned and minority-owned restaurants and stores
- Downtown offering family-friendly spaces and affordable events
- Downtown bolstering a nightlife that attracts adults to socialize and gather with friends
- Downtown having a regional draw that attracts travelers
- Downtown having public art and branding that conveys a sense of place and reflects the Lufkin community.
- Downtown providing parks, plazas, and trails that encourage people to congregate, socialize, and stay active

During the Q & A session, attendees posted questions and comments to the Project Team about the Vision Statement, Goals, and Strategies. Public comments and questions included:

- Economic development, businesses, and entrepreneurship
 - *“Will there will be any financial assistance programs and small business loans to help someone...start up a new business downtown?”*
 - *“What are some ways for local government or LEDC to incentivize diversity in new businesses?”*
 - *“Any thoughts around a downtown mall within a promenade that would allow space for outdoor events surrounded by retail/restaurants?”*
 - *“The cost of living in Lufkin and wages compared to Houston [are] better. It was one of the big reasons [we] chose Lufkin.”*
 - *“I miss a nutrition store downtown or somewhere in town with high quality yet affordable supplements.”*
 - *“There was mention early on of a visitor’s center. A central location, easy to find, for things to do in downtown, walking maps, etc. It will also help remind visitors of other Lufkin highlights outside of downtown that are worth a visit.”*
 - *“Buildings and spaces that are updated and affordable for shop owners like myself.”*
- Event, gathering, and public spaces
 - *“The Bronaugh Park needs to be planted [with] pine trees.”*
 - *“Please, do not move the farmers market, [it] is located in a beautiful place and [!] wish they take the whole green area that is at the back of it.”*
 - *“Would a marked mileage walking trail be feasible with signage and a family friendly playscape be advantageous for the area for residents and visitors?”*
 - *“We would love to see an outdoor music pavilion with mixed use green space for local, regional and national artists.”*
 - *“A green space with outdoor restaurant seating where we can sit, relax and feel comfortable with the kids running and playing.”*
 - *“Yes, we used to do the free movies in the Park, I believe via Townsquare Media”*

A Downtown for Everyone and Q & A

The Consultant Team lead a discussion on what a “Downtown for Everyone” means for Downtown Lufkin. They shared personal narratives based on research and survey findings that depict what a “Downtown for Everyone” would look like for different people. These personal narratives include:

- **Chris, the young graduate.** Chris just completed his Associate's Degree from Angelina College and is deciding whether or not he wants to look for a job in Lufkin, or move to Houston. He is also curious about what is exciting and happening in Downtown Lufkin.



- **The Hernandez family, looking to get out the house.** They have three (3) kids who like to get outside and attend community events. The parents are interested in cost-sensitive activities and places to go.



- **Morgan, the entrepreneur.** Morgan wants to open a healthy food store but needs help locating an available, affordable space. She wants to open her business downtown to be a part of the exciting changes coming to Downtown Lufkin, but personally hasn't spent much time downtown.



- **Jolene and Dalton, the out-of-town visitors.** They are traveling from Austin, and have hiked extensively in the hill country and West Texas. They want to hike and fish in the Angelina National Forest. Jolene and Dalton want to stay in or near downtown, but aren't excited about the accommodation options. They like to support local businesses, artists, and restaurants when they travel.



Attendees shared that they agree with these narratives and that each one describes challenges that Downtown Lufkin will need to address in order to be a “Downtown for Everyone”.

Next Steps

The Consultant Team concluded the public workshop by sharing next steps for the project. These include:

- Ways for the public to stay involved through the www.lufkinforward.com website
- Finalizing the vision statement and goals
- Brainstorming and developing the concept plan
- Developing projects and programs to include in the concept plan