

*Love* WHERE YOU *Live*

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

# 2024 Pretty Prairie Benchmark Report

Hutchinson   
**community**  
FOUNDATION



Innovation Economy Partners  
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

[info@HutchCF.org](mailto:info@HutchCF.org) | [hutchcf.org](http://hutchcf.org)

## What Makes Our Community Special?

"Small town"

– Gina

"Small, friendly"

– Liz Shepherd

**Other anonymous quotes ...**

"Small town living"

"People that live there"

"The Rodeo"

"Small, friendly  
Caring helpful people"

"Small town, good  
school"

In June 2024, Hutchinson Community Foundation launched Love Where You Live, a three-year community empowerment initiative that centers resident perceptions, dialogue, and collaborative action. Alongside community partners, our goal is to provide Reno County communities (and the county as a whole) with data and a process that will empower residents to make positive change and boost community pride. Learn more at [hutchcf.org](https://hutchcf.org).

## Leaders That Make Our Community Special

jake strohl  
chad basinger  
pretty prairie city council  
dustin vanscyoc  
james white  
dennis detter  
ashley anderson  
jason deel

# Executive Summary:

Of critical note: There were 27 individuals who responded to the survey, which is a low number that cannot be considered “statistically significant.” However, the data can be used to provide qualitative guidance on the general perceptions of community members. We note some key observations in the responses: The economic confidence in the community is quite low and much lower than that of average residents across the county. The local community perceptions are also lower across all of the measured categories compared to the county average. However, there are some key areas of strength for the community, including trust among residents and the ability of the community to “execute” on local projects.

pg **4, 5**

## Economic Confidence

Economic confidence is very low compared to the average responses across the country. This applies to both the current economics and the future economic perceptions. On a positive note, it is worth noting that the unemployment rate in town is trending down, and the household income is increasing.

pg **6, 7, 8**

## Community Engagement Confidence

The community engagement perceptions are generally lower than that of the average responses captured from across the county. Respondents generally feel that the community has a strong ability to execute projects, but the planning process could be improved.

pgs **9a-9b**

## Critical Community Priorities

Critical community priorities focus mostly on economic factors including launching new businesses, as well as encouraging local entrepreneurship. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on developing community pride by removing blight and renovating the main street area.

pg **10**

## Survey Respondent Profile

Most respondents are female homeowners, aged 40-59, with graduate degrees. The majority have lived in the community for 5-20 years, work in the public sector, and identify as White (non-Hispanic). This group reflects a well-educated, long-term resident base actively involved in community life.

The Community Benchmarking report has been commissioned by Hutchinson Community Foundation to help local residents gain a better understanding of the most pressing opportunities Reno County towns face. The annual reports that are generated will help leaders determine the extent to which community efforts are having an impact on local residents. The reports are also a way for towns in the area to pursue grants to help further their local efforts.

**Local leaders can use this framework to help inspire change.  
This report provides the clues on what fellow residents are craving.**



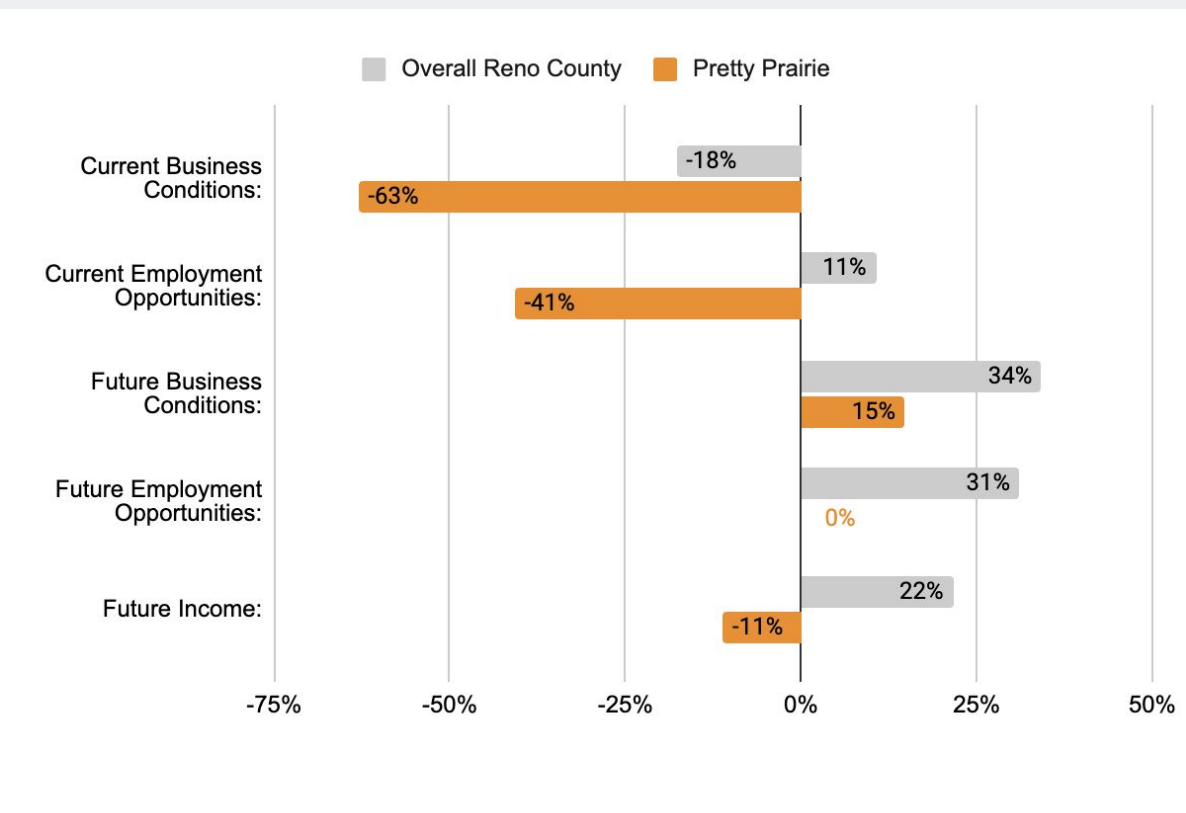
# Confidence In Our Local Economy

## Economic Summary:

The local residents who took the survey hold a very poor view of the community's economic confidence (both current and future). The confidence is far lower than that of the rest of the county. This is especially interesting, given that the town seems to be doing fairly well on a few economic metrics such as: the number of businesses in the town are holding steady, unemployment is down, and the median household income is up. This economic confidence sentiment suggests the community may be grappling with limited local business activity. Employment opportunities, both now and in the future, appear to be a central concern for residents. A proactive approach to fostering local businesses, through support for entrepreneurs and attracting external investments, could stimulate job creation.

## Survey Responses

### Our Economic Perceptions



### Popular Ideas for the Town:

#### New Businesses and Services:

- "Grocery store, liquor store, restaurant, Coffee shop, convenience, barber shop, gym for people to work out"

#### Healthy Food Options:

- "Healthier food options. McAlister's or a place to get a quick lunch without fried food. Soup/Salads/Fruits."

#### Family Entertainment and Activities:

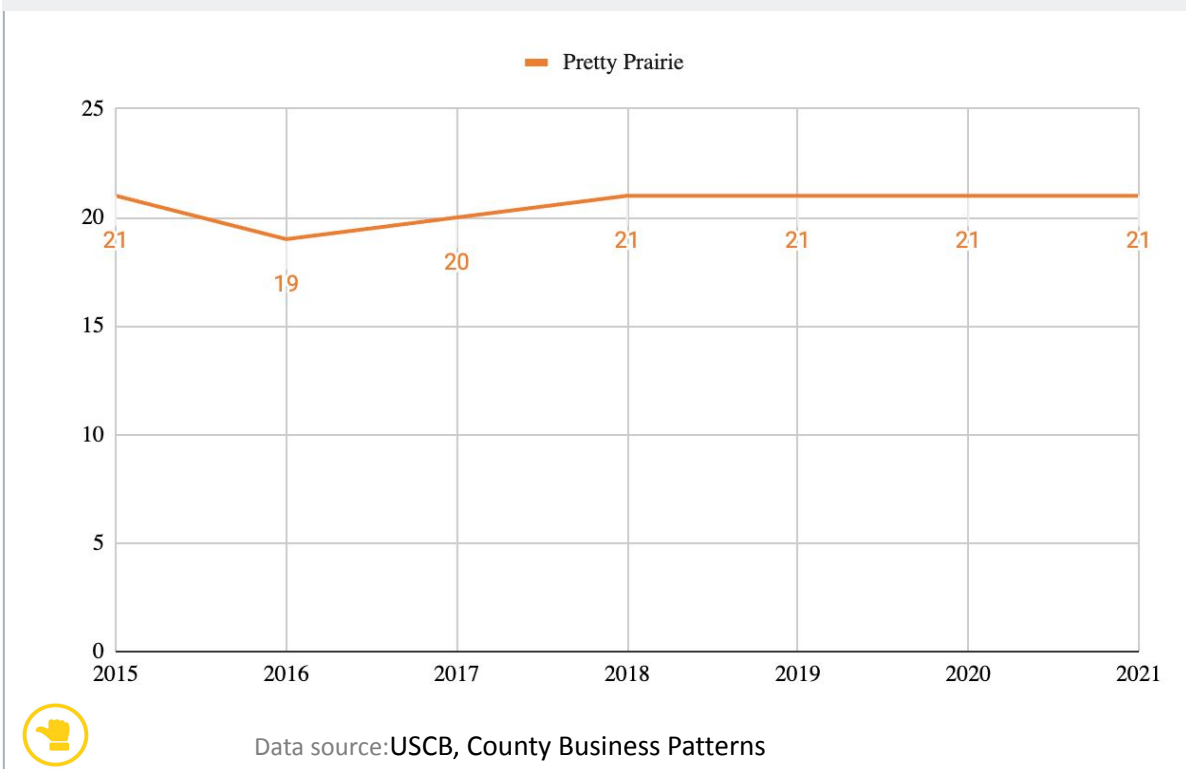
- "More things for kids to do (splash pad, small arcade), our movie theater utilized more, Family entertainment establishment"

#### Business Access and Growth:

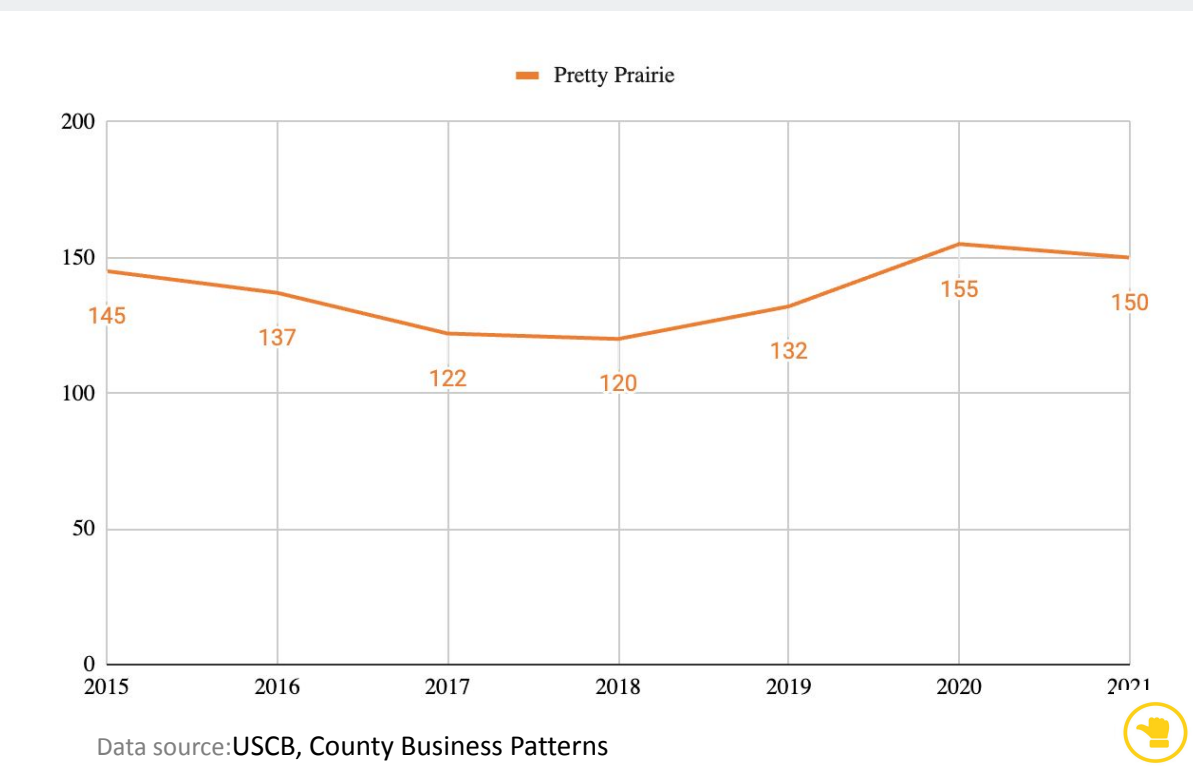
- "Several community members have tried to buy property on Main Street in Pretty Prairie. Owner won't sell. Owner doesn't upkeep, more support for current businesses."

## Local Economic Indicators

### Total Businesses in Our Town

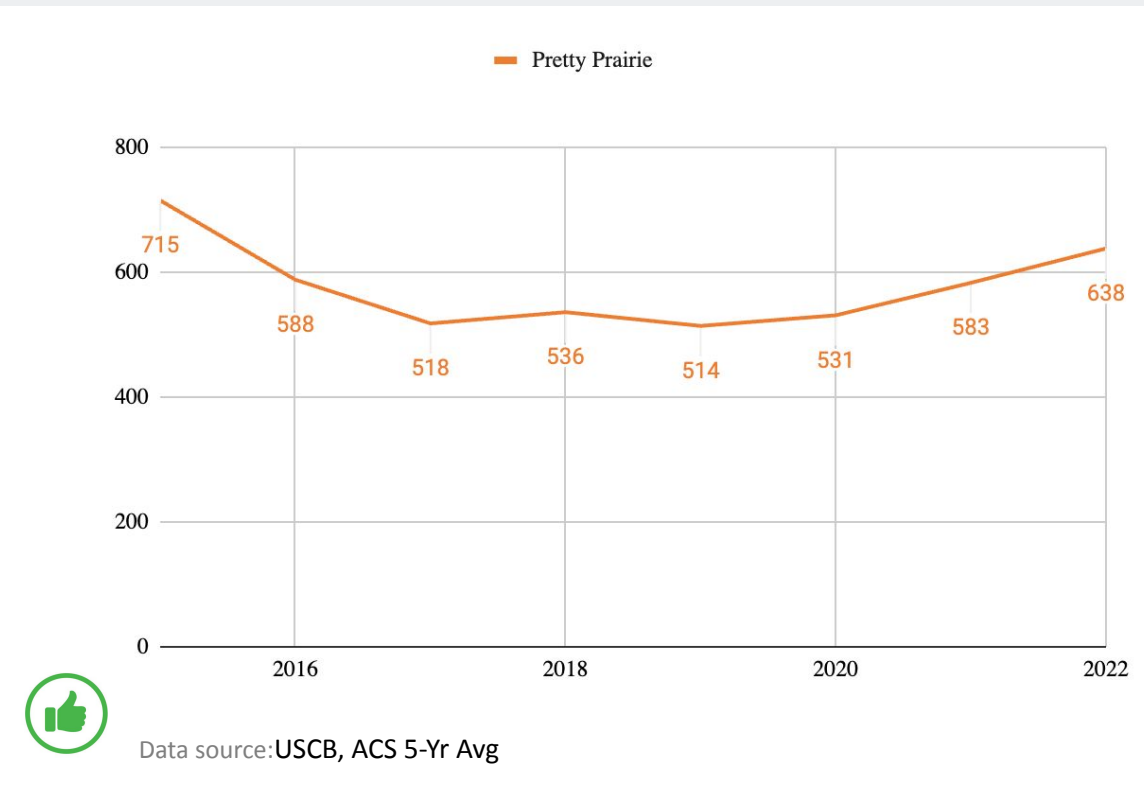


### Employment in Our Town

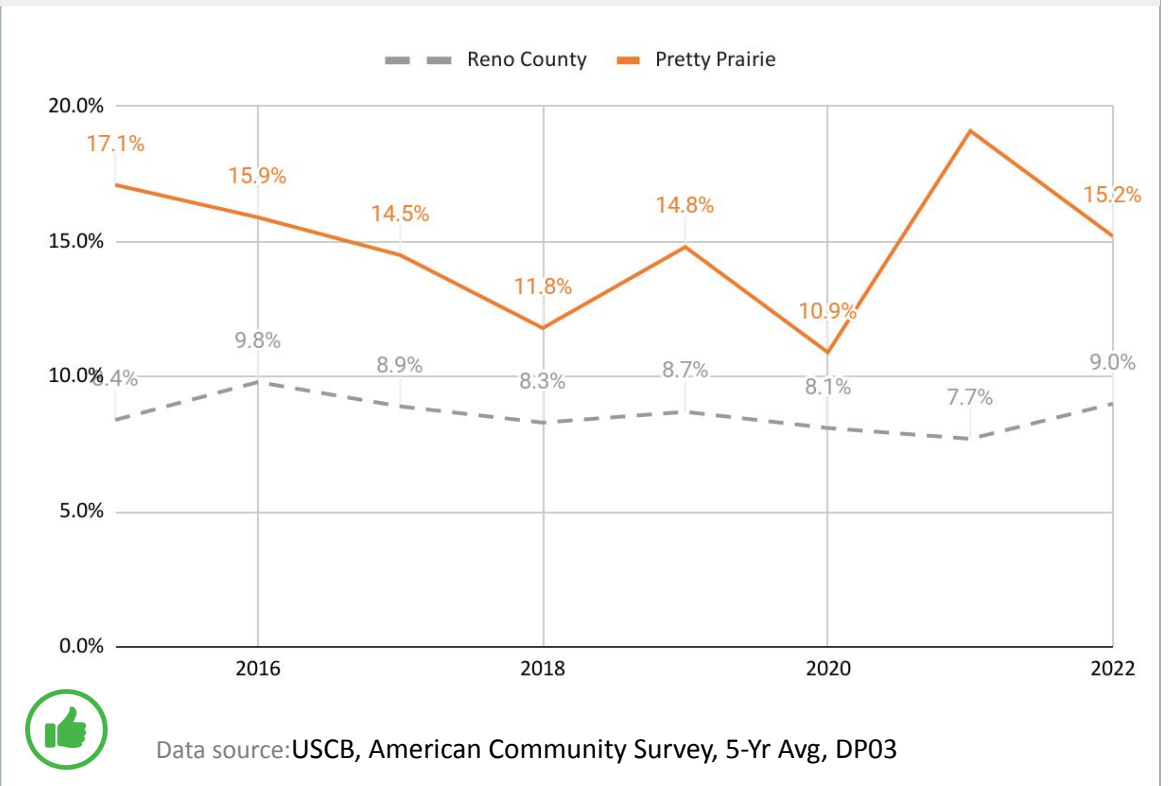


# Local Economic Indicators (Cont'd)

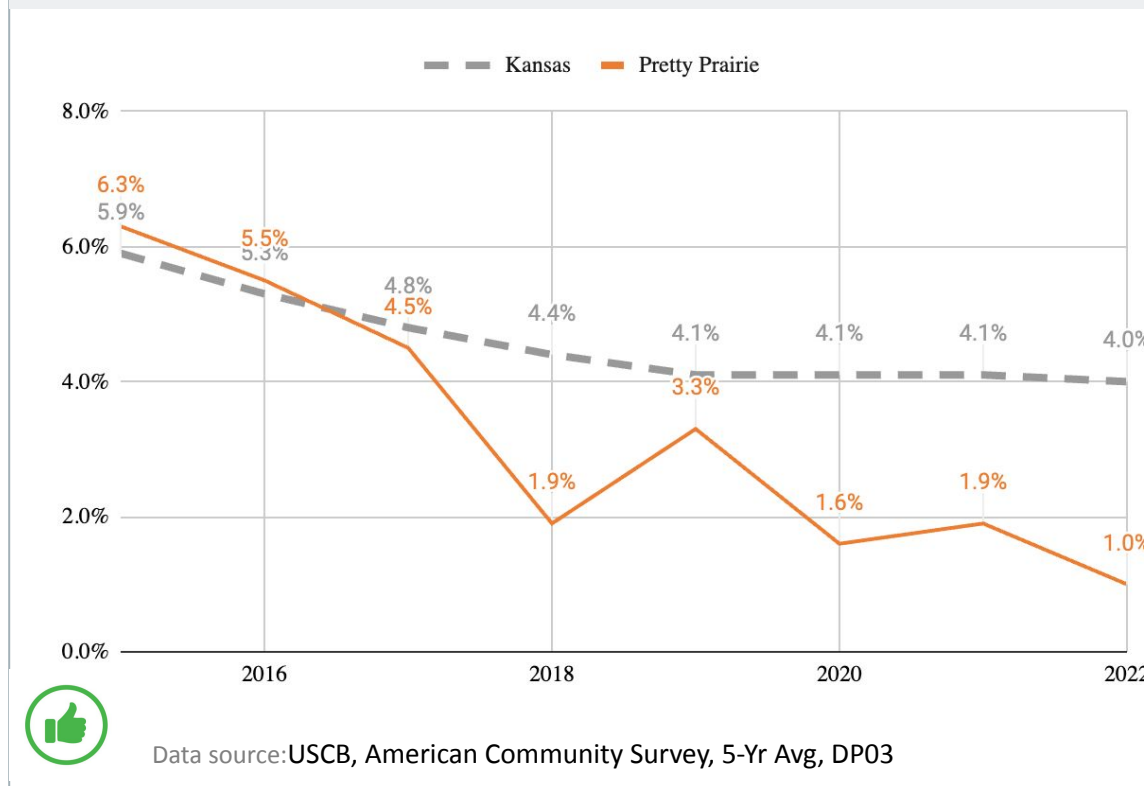
## Overall Population Trend



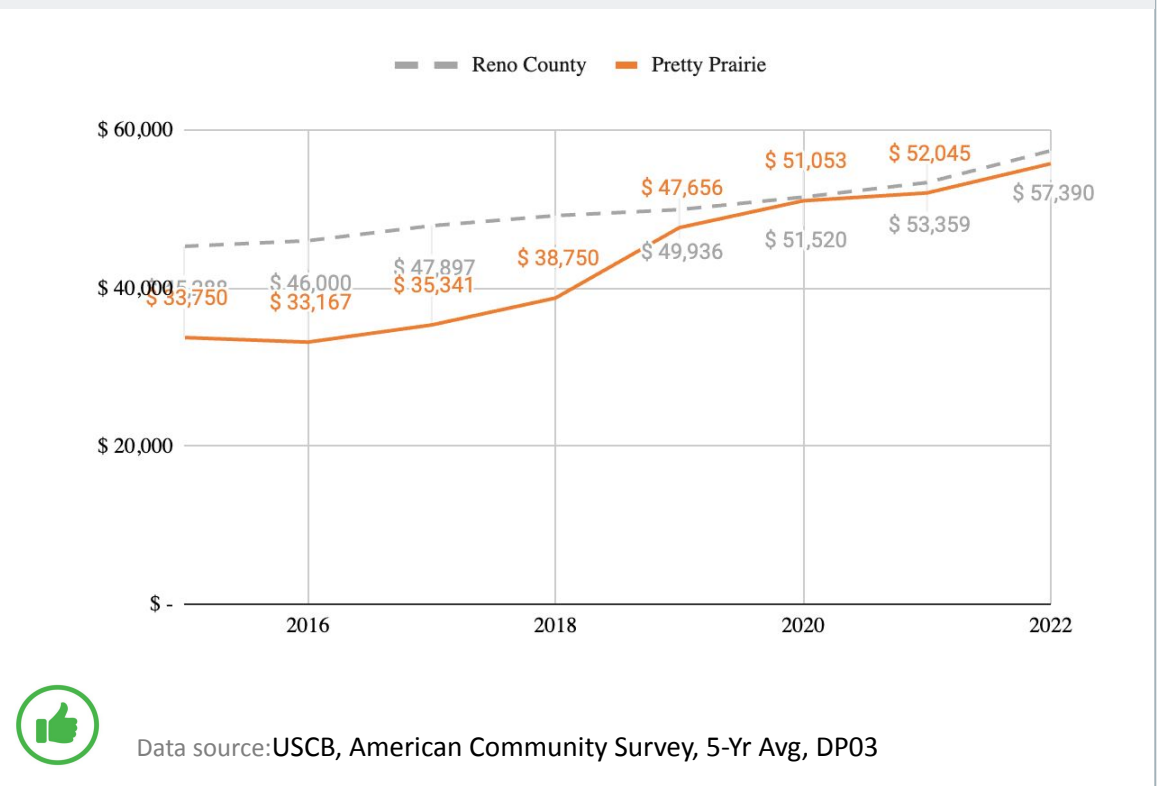
## Local Poverty Rate



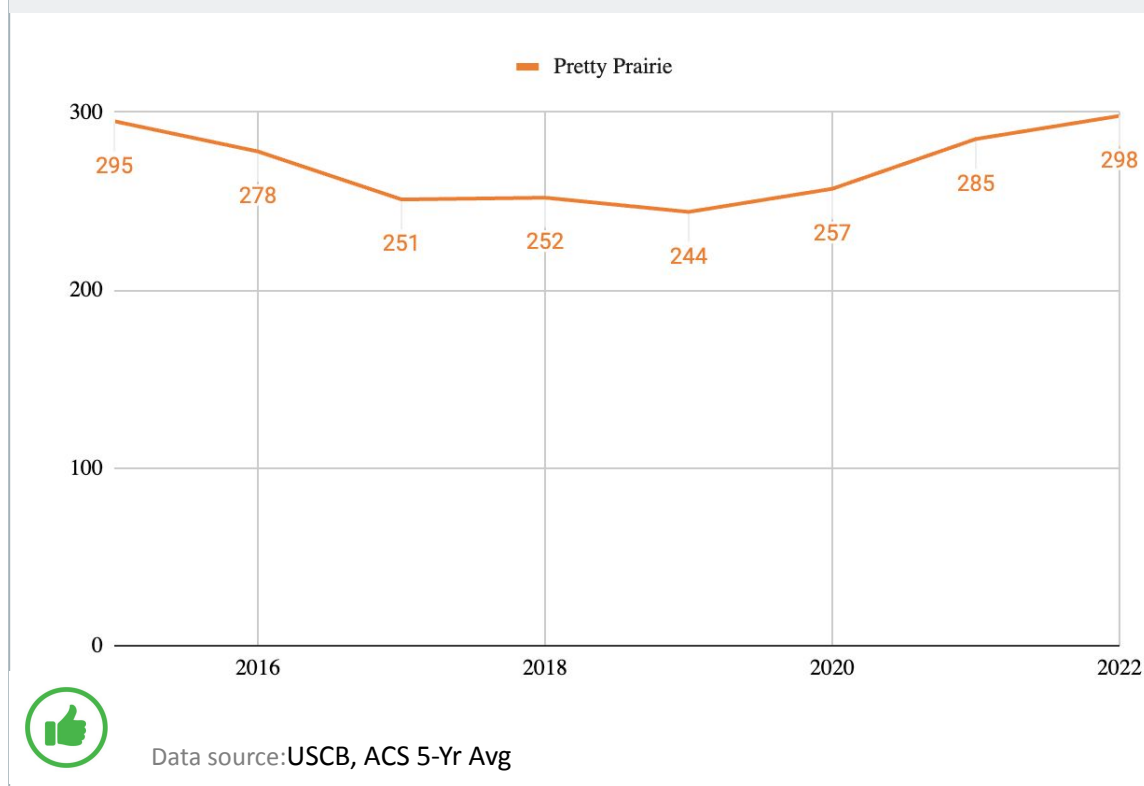
## Local Unemployment Rate



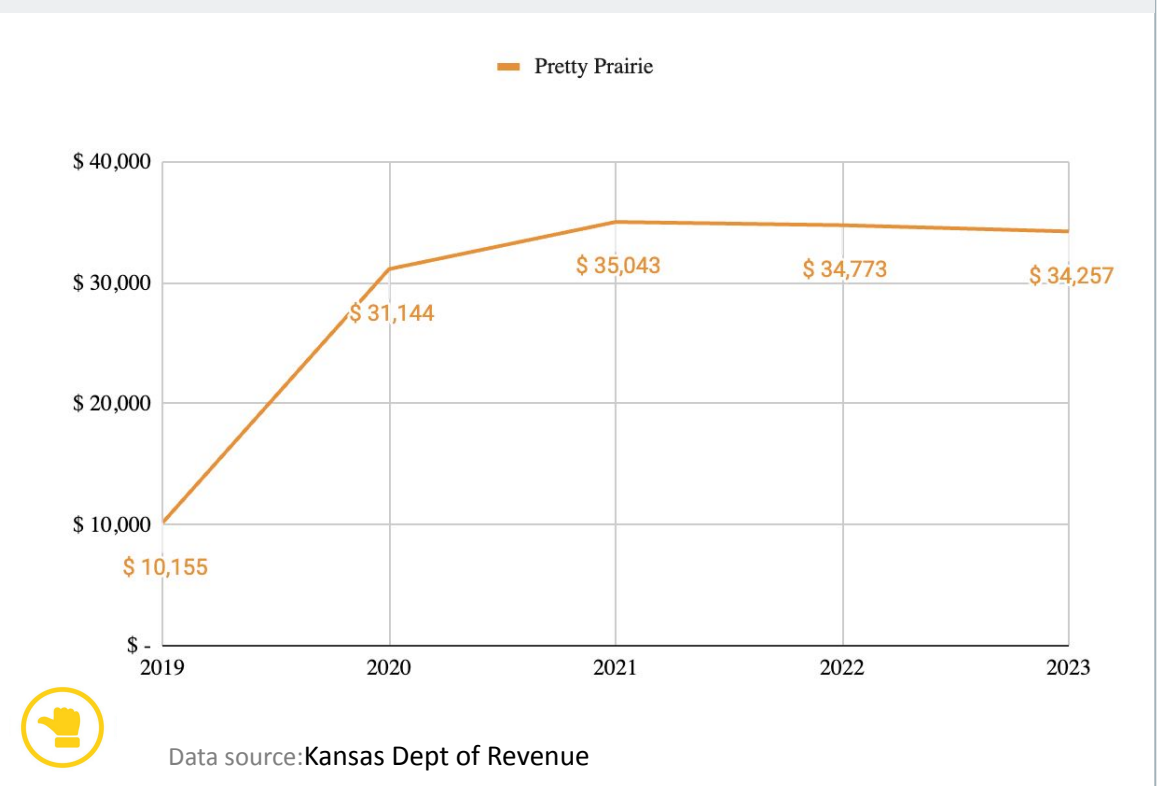
## Median Household Income



## Total Housing Units



## Annual Sales Tax Collection



# Confidence In Our Local Community

## Engagement Summary:

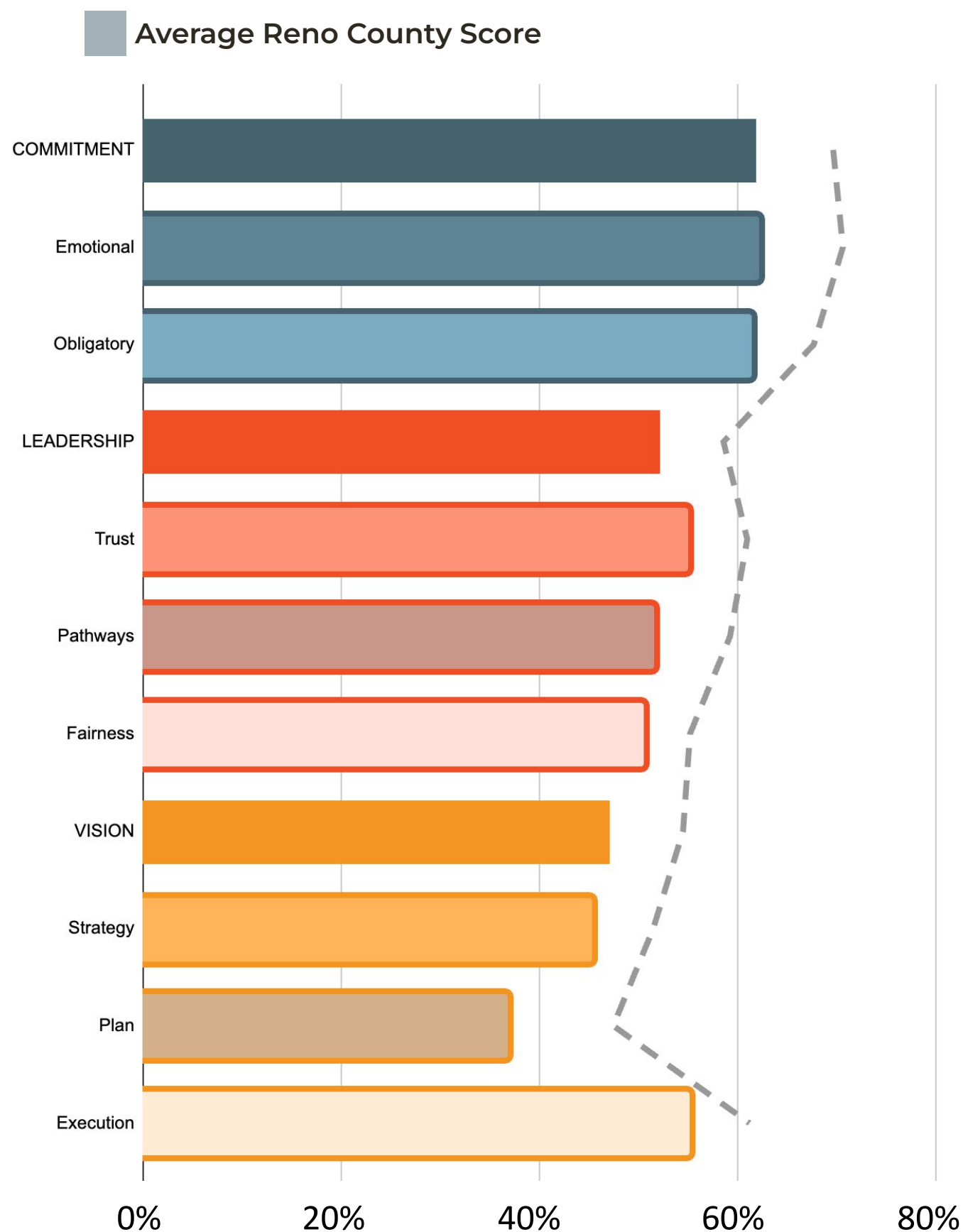
Before evaluating the data, it is worth noting that only 27 people took the survey. As such the data is not statistically significant. The data however be seen as a directional gauge on the sentiments of a few residents.

The data suggests that there is opportunity for the leaders to build on the positive view that is held in regards to how well the community executes projects. Through deliberate and focused efforts, the community will be able to help drive further community engagement.



Photo Credit: Sandra Milburn

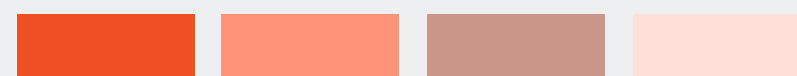
## How do our residents view our community?



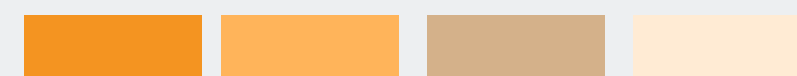
### Commitment



### Leadership



### Vision



Across all the community dimensions, the local community members have rated the local community lower than the average ratings across the county.

Especially lower are the local community's planning abilities, and the area that comes closest to the county average is the ability for the local leaders to execute on projects.

While lower than the county average, the local commitment levels of the residents seems to be high.

**What opportunities do the local leaders see here?**

**What interventions would the leaders consider pursuing?**

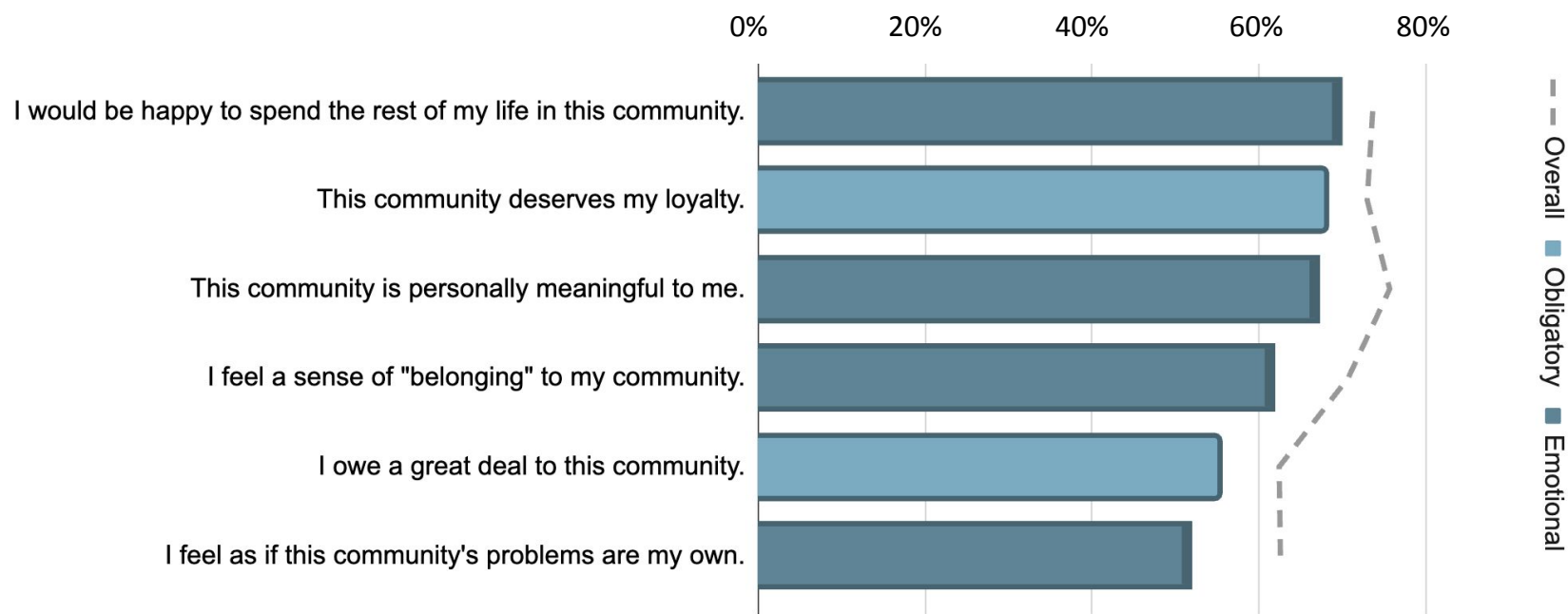
**What would be the value of taking these interventions?**

# Confidence In Our Local Community

## Average Reno County Score

Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

### Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



Across all these areas, the community seems to be significantly below the county average.

Questions for consideration:

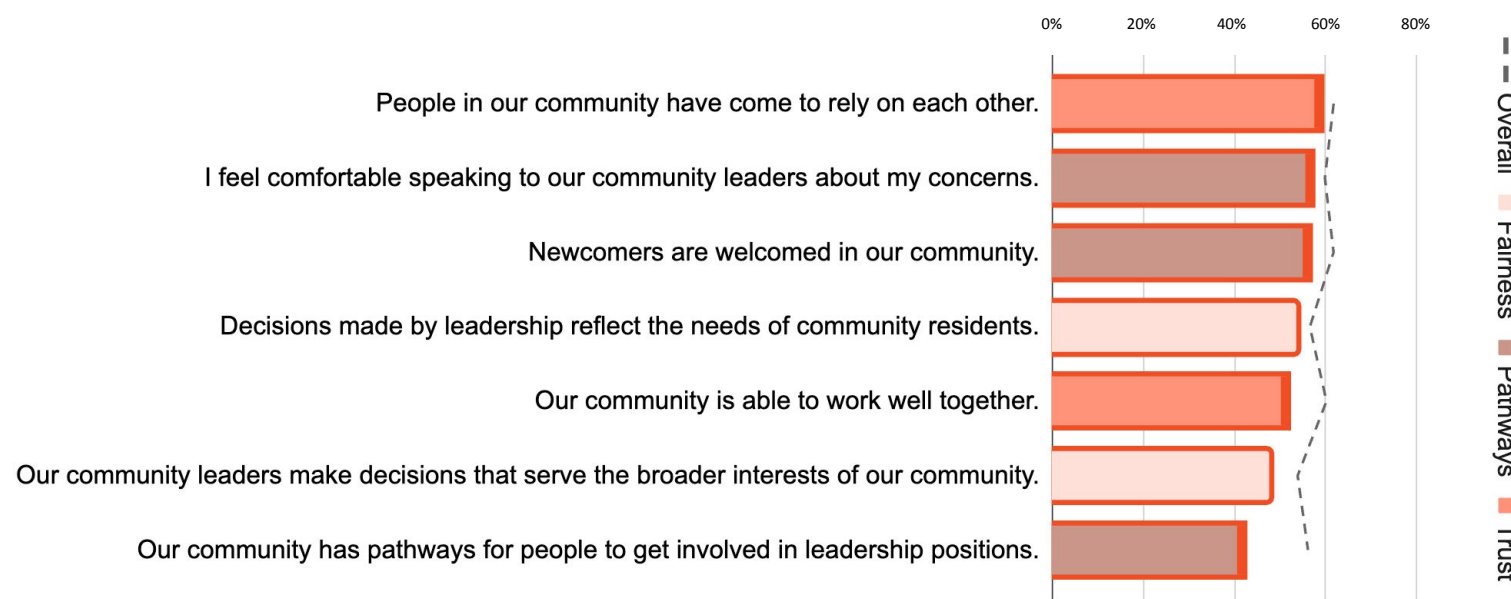
**Why does this pattern exist?**

**What is unique about the community that residents have a lower sense of personal commitment?**

**What steps can be taken to tap into the local pride and drive more community engagement?**

**Is this important?**

### Community Confidence: Local Leadership



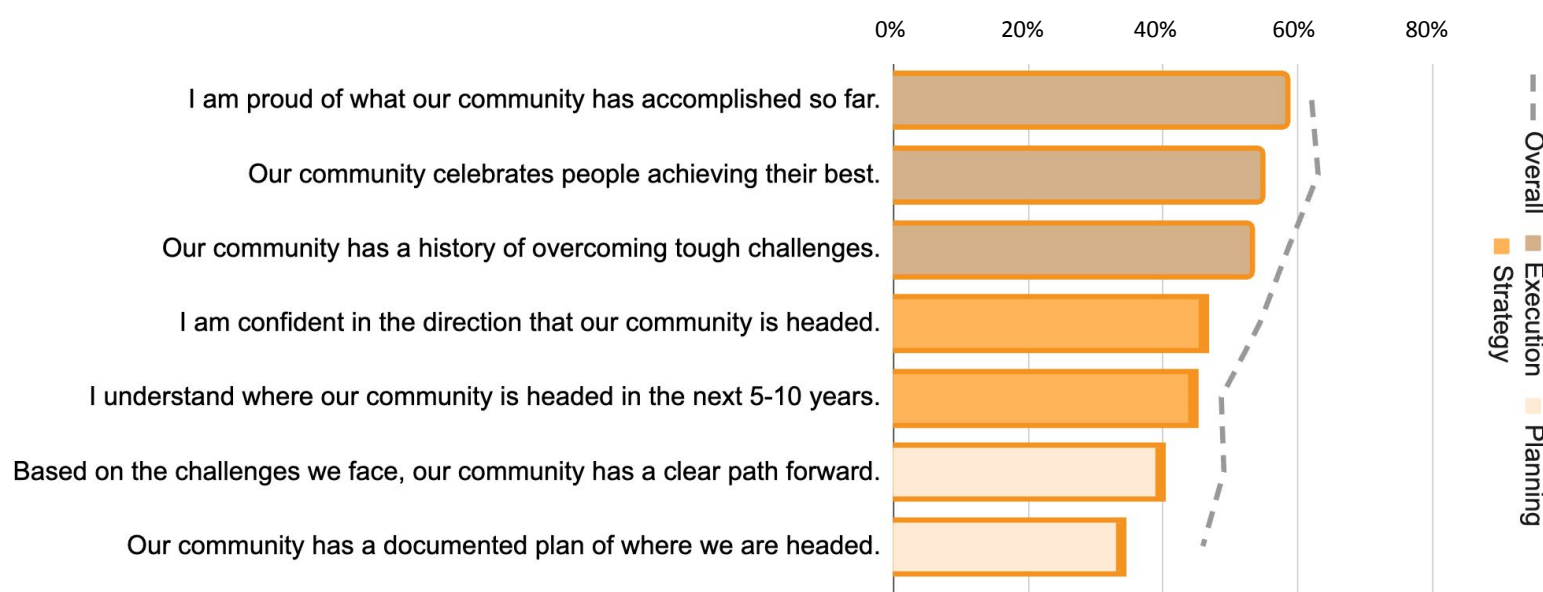
This is the category where the community comes closest to the general county sentiment: confidence in local leadership.

It may be worth assessing how more leadership pathways can be created for local citizens.

**How can residents have a stronger voice in leadership choices?**

**How can the strength related to how people rely on each other be organized such that this energy can translate to more leadership opportunities locally?**

### Community Confidence: Vision



The local perceptions related to the community vision are slightly lower than the county average. A clear pattern emerges where the town is perceived as being better at executing than developing strategies. And locally perceived as worst in developing strong plans.

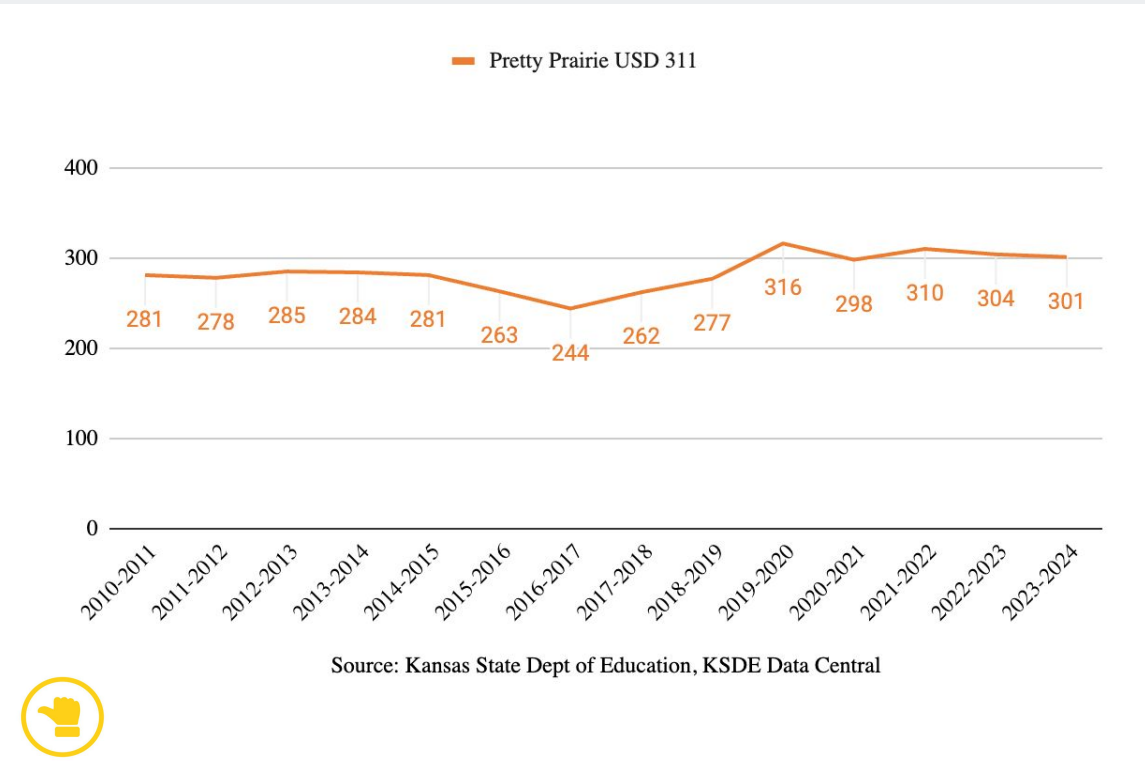
**Is it important for local residents to understand the community plans for growth and sustainability?**

**What steps can be taken to help address this opportunity?**

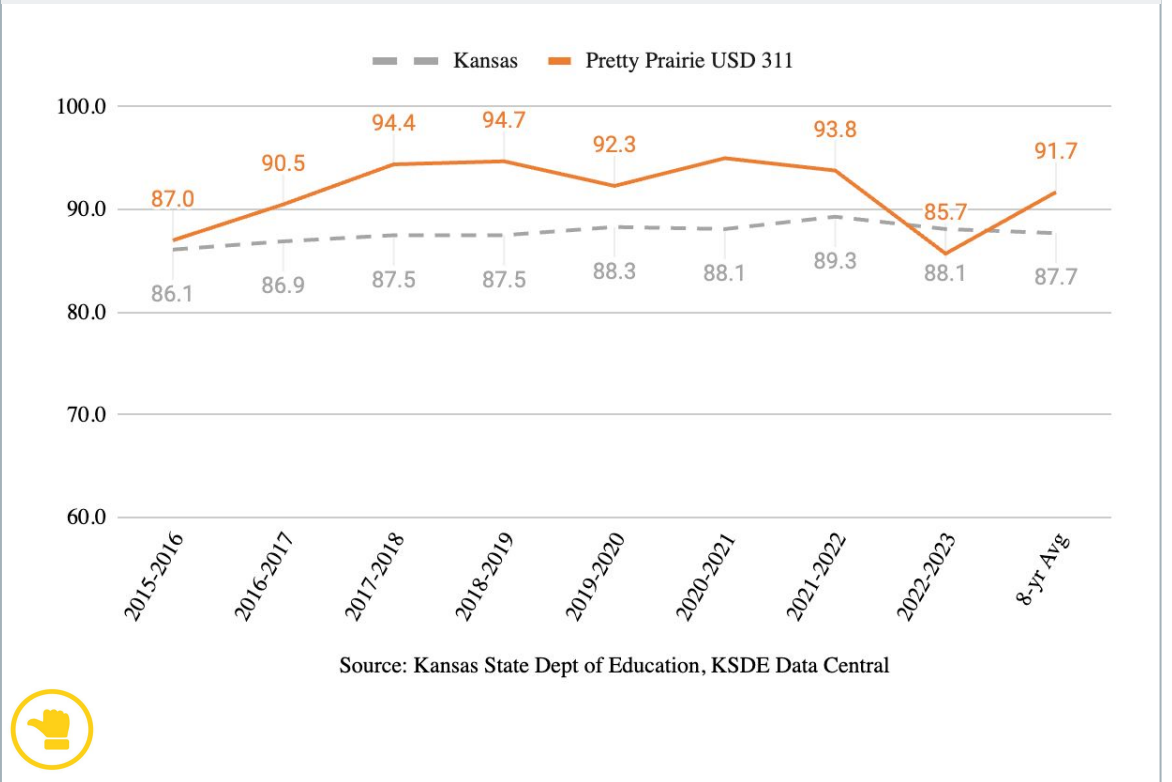
**Why is it that the town believes that good work is being done locally?**

# Local Community Indicators

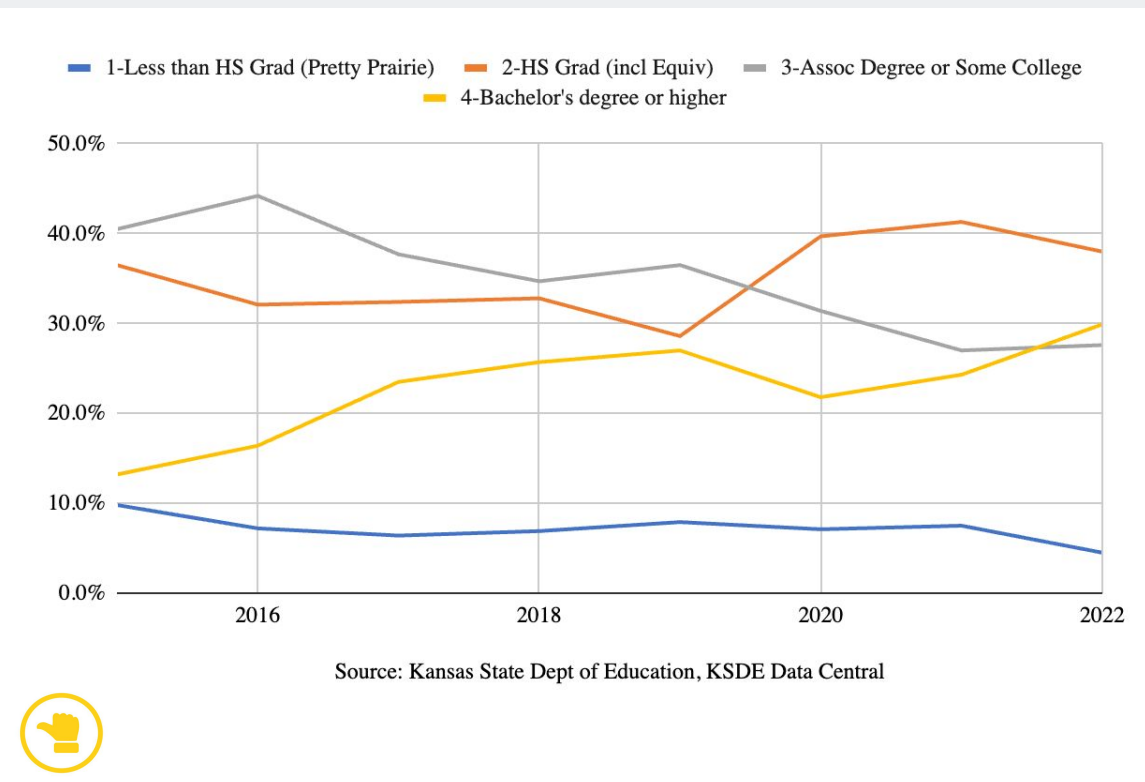
## Local School Enrollment



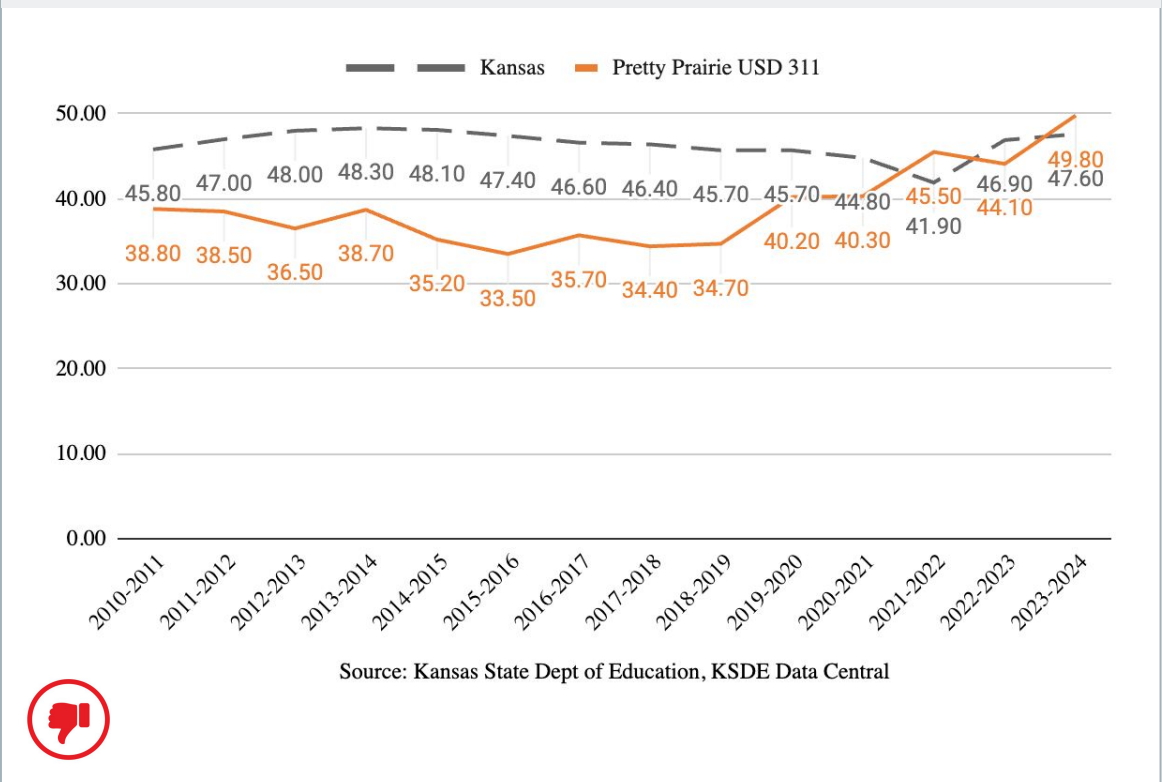
## High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



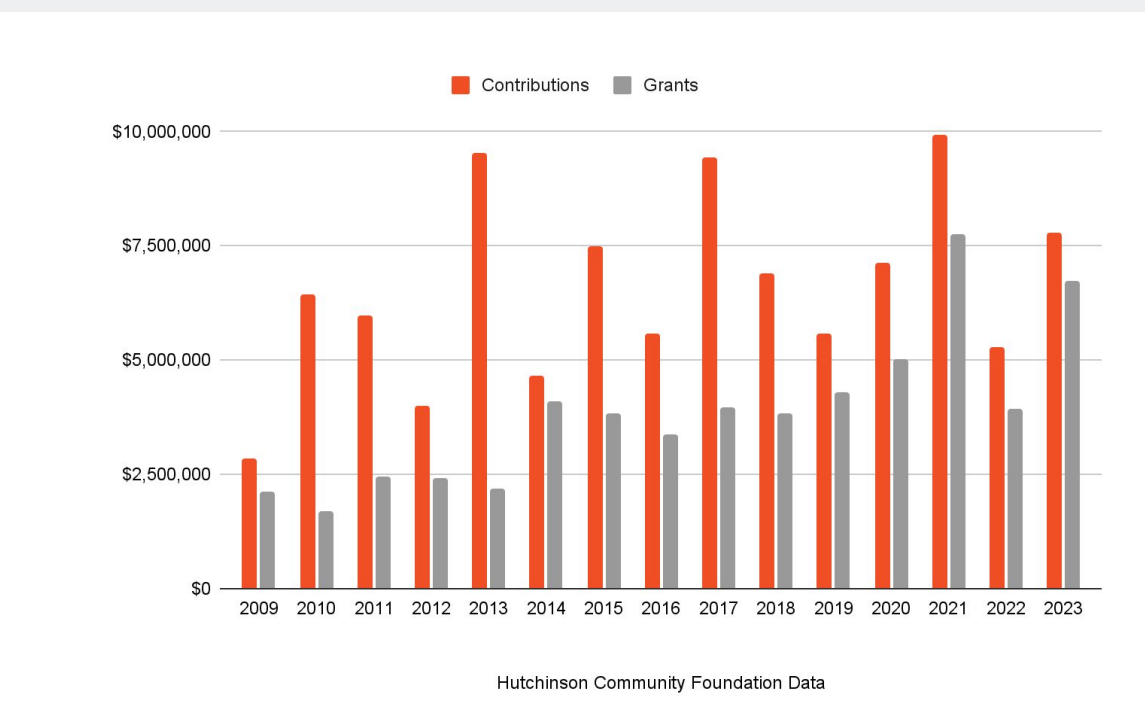
## Local Educational Level



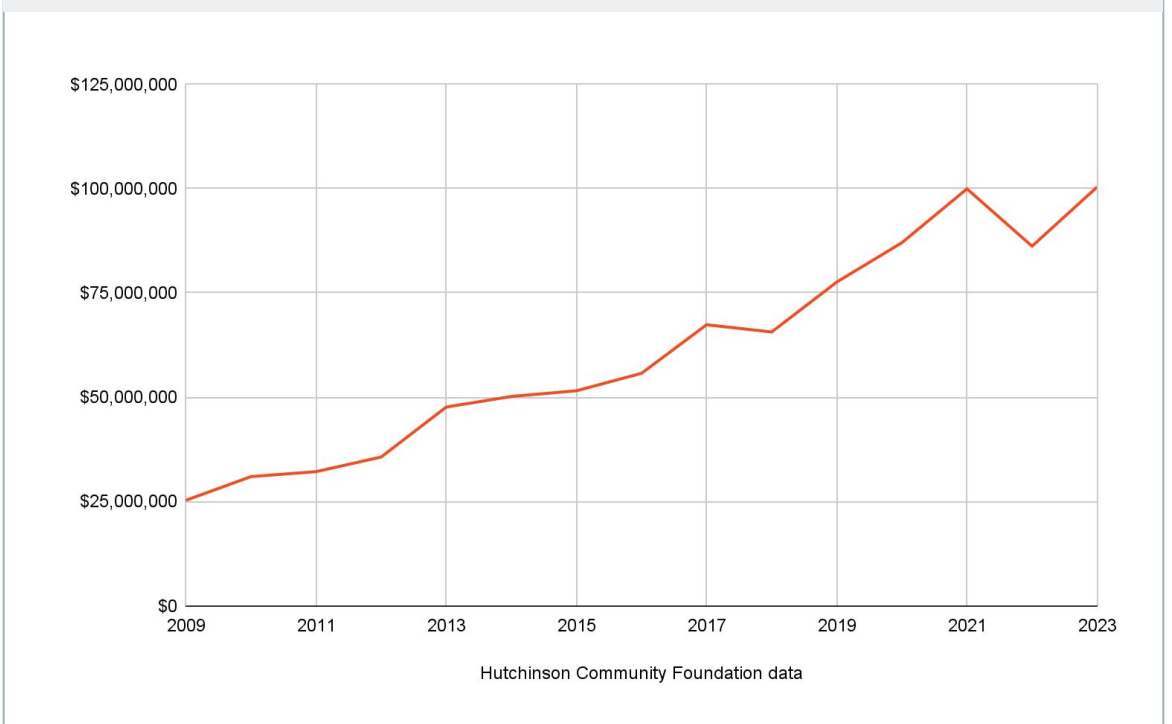
## School District % Free-Reduced Price Lunch



## Hutchinson Community Foundation: Contributions & Grants



## Hutchinson Community Foundation: Total Assets





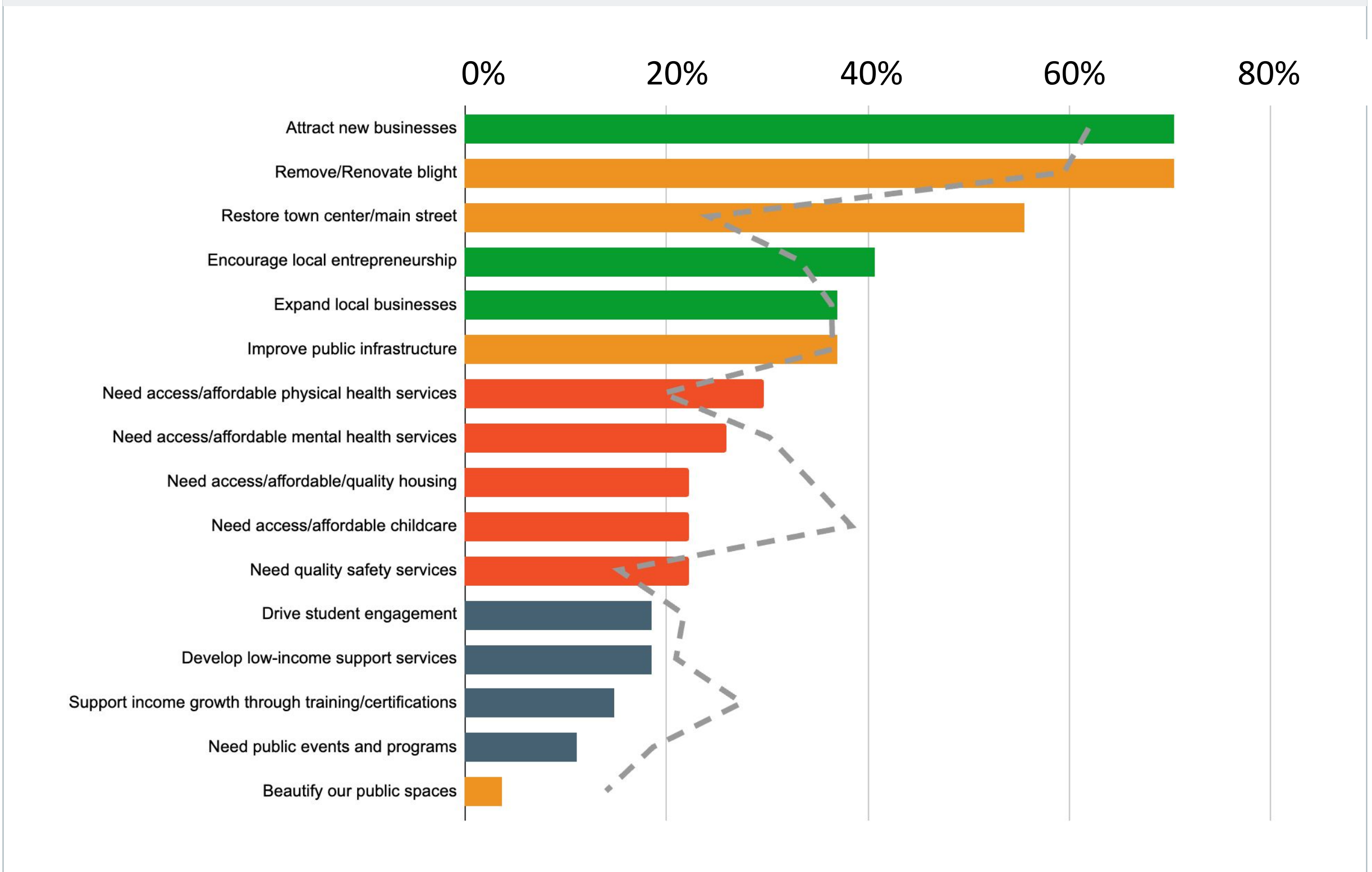
# Community Program Priorities

## Priorities Summary:

The community's top priorities include attracting new businesses, renovating rundown properties, and restoring the town center. These three issues were rated significantly higher than the average ratings in other communities in the county. More than half of the responders have identified these three issues as key priorities that the community should focus on. It is also worth noting that all the projects related to local 'people' efforts were ranked at the very bottom, even though these were ranked higher in other communities..

■ Health    
 ■ Placemaking    
 ■ Economy    
 ■ People    
 ■ Average Reno County Score

## 2024 Economic and Community Development Priorities



### Vibrant Place:

Improving and restoring public spaces is a clear priority, with the 2nd and 3rd highest support for removing or renovating rundown properties and restoring the town center. Public infrastructure improvements also matter, but beautification efforts are less urgent.

### Resilient Economy:

Attracting new businesses is overwhelmingly the top economic priority, with a strong desire to encourage local entrepreneurship, attract new and expand existing businesses. This highlights a need for economic growth, driven by both external investments and internal development,

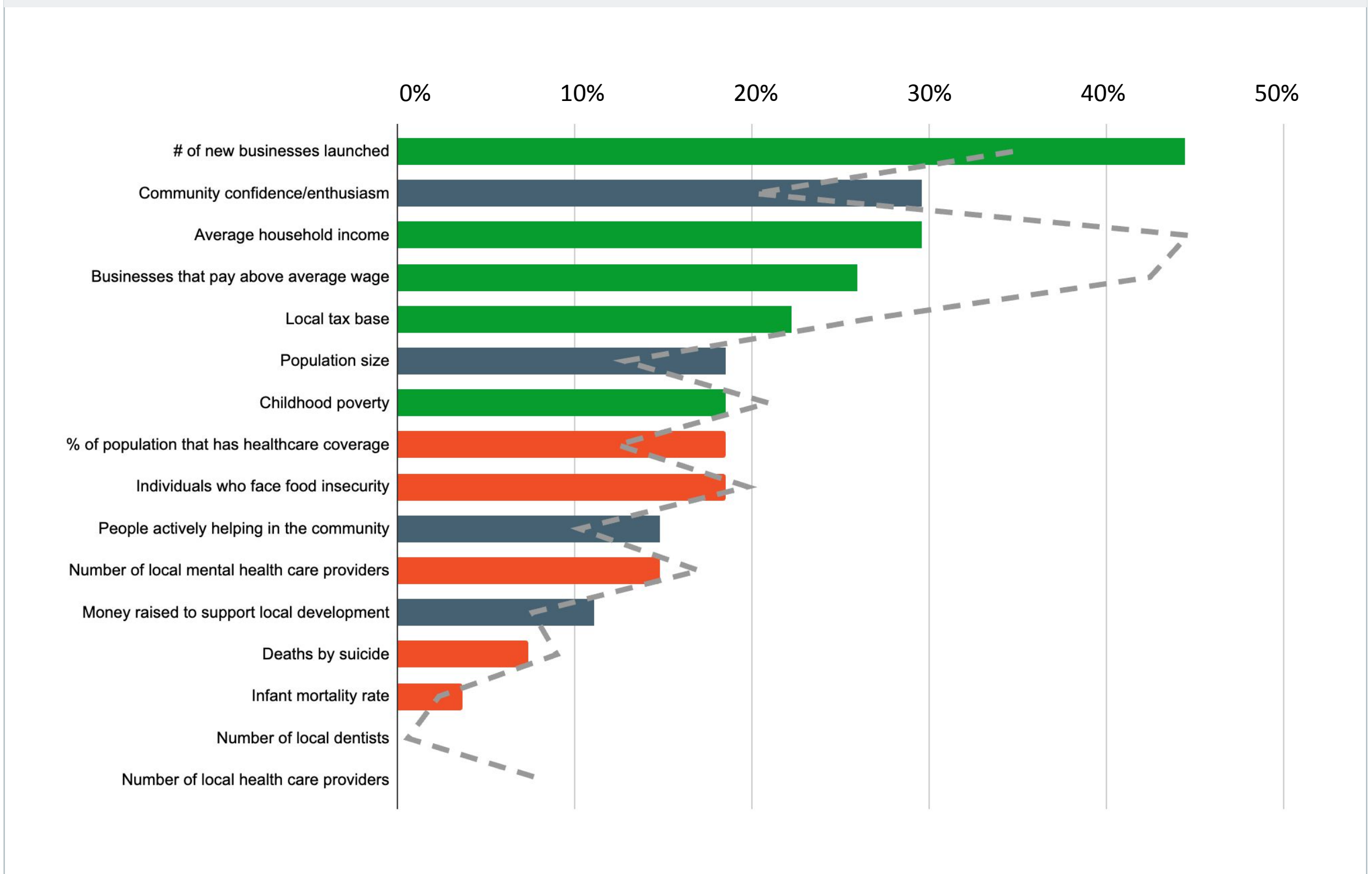
### Healthy Citizens:

The focus for Healthy Citizens centers on improving access to affordable mental and physical health services, housing, and childcare. Engaged Citizens are interested in fostering community pride, creating student engagement programs, and developing low-income family support and training programs for income growth.

# Community Progress Indicators

Health Economy People Average Reno County Score

## 2024 Community Progress Indicators



### Economy:

The community places a strong focus on launching new businesses and attracting those offering above-average wages. Improving household income and expanding the local tax base are also key priorities, signaling a desire for sustainable economic growth and higher living standards.

### Community Engagement:

Confidence and enthusiasm in the community are central to development efforts. Population size is also prioritized as a key metric to measure.

### Health:

Health priorities are mixed, with significant concern for improving healthcare coverage and addressing food insecurity. However, there is little emphasis on increasing the number of local dentists or primary health providers, despite mental health providers being identified as a need.

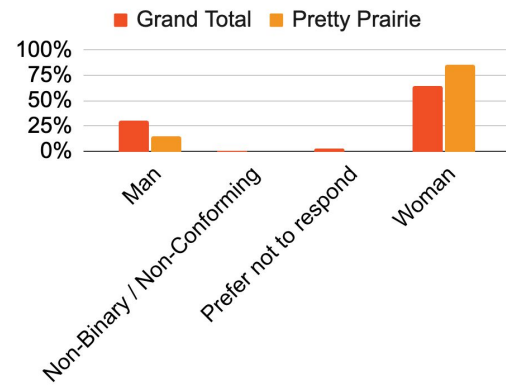
# Survey Respondents

## Number of Participants



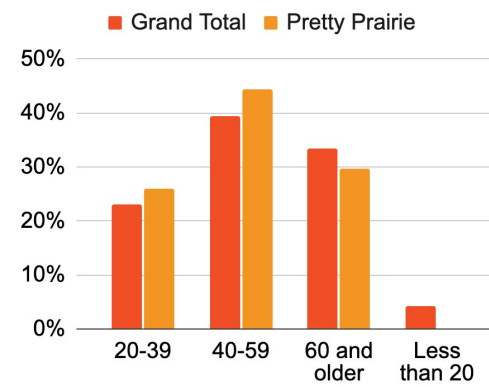
The largest demographic group in the survey has lived in the community for 5-20 years, suggesting a population with significant local experience and community ties.

## Gender



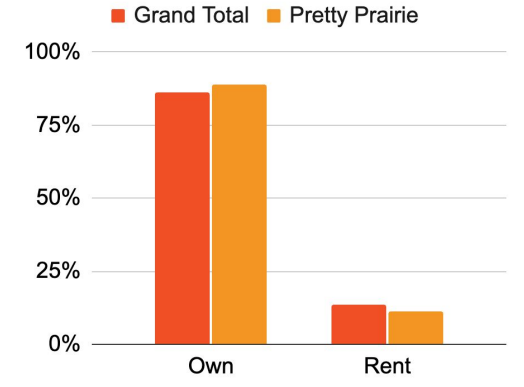
Female respondents outnumber male respondents, indicating that women may have a stronger voice or greater participation in this particular survey.

## Age Profile



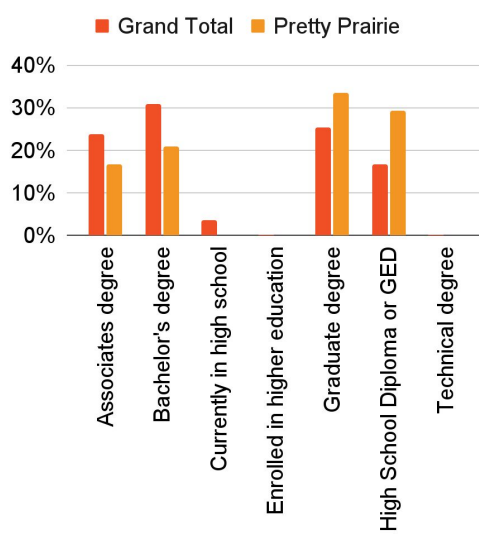
The majority of respondents are aged 40-59, reflecting a mid-life demographic heavily involved in community and economic activities.

## Residential Status



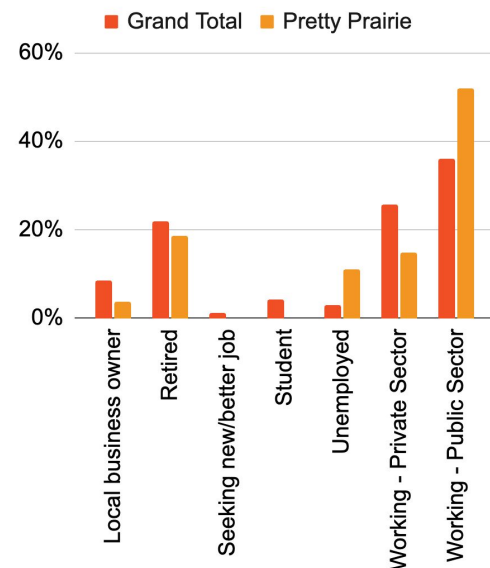
Most respondents own their homes, indicating a stable, rooted population with a vested interest in local affairs and development.

## Education Level



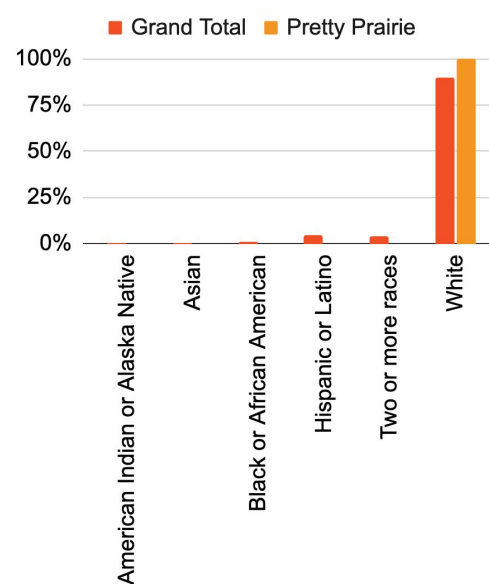
Graduate degrees are the most common education level, highlighting a highly educated population that could influence decision-making and community leadership.

## Employment Status



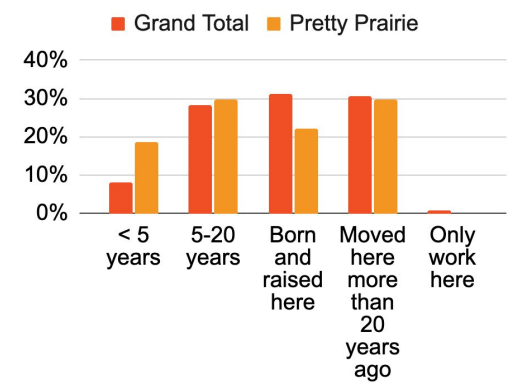
A significant number of respondents work in the public sector, but also a high number of Retired respondents also providing a good mix of working class and those enjoying retirement.

## Ethnicity



The respondents are predominantly white, but survey results may not fully reflect the ethnic percentage profile of the community. Some important voices may still need to be engaged.

## Years lived in location



Most residents have lived in the community for 5-20 years, indicating a stable population with both recent arrivals and long-term residents contributing to local development.

■ Town Score

■ Average Reno County Score

**4**

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community  
4 of 27 (15%)