



## **Buhler**

Community Workshop Recap

October 28, 2024

Participants: 38

## DATA WALK

<p><b>Data Source: Love Where You Live Survey</b></p> <p><u>II. Economic Perceptions In Our Community</u></p> <p>In regard to your community, how would you assess <u>current</u> business conditions and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Please select one answer for each of the following:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"> <b>a. Business Conditions</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Bad  <input type="checkbox"/> Normal             </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"> <b>b. Employment Opportunities</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs plentiful  <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs not so plentiful  <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs hard to get             </td> </tr> </table> <p>In regard to your community, what are your <u>future</u> expectations for the following.</p> <p>Please select one answer for each of the following:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 2px;"> <b>a. Business Conditions</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Better  <input type="checkbox"/> Worse  <input type="checkbox"/> Same             </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 2px;"> <b>b. Employment Opportunities</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Better  <input type="checkbox"/> Worse  <input type="checkbox"/> Same             </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 2px;"> <b>c. Income</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> Increase  <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease  <input type="checkbox"/> Same             </td> </tr> </table>	<b>a. Business Conditions</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Normal	<b>b. Employment Opportunities</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs plentiful <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs not so plentiful <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs hard to get	<b>a. Business Conditions</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> Same	<b>b. Employment Opportunities</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> Same	<b>c. Income</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Increase <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease <input type="checkbox"/> Same	<p><b>Our Economic Perceptions</b> <span style="float: right;">Report, pg. 4</span></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <caption>Overall Reno County vs Buhler Economic Perceptions</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Overall Reno County (%)</th> <th>Buhler (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Current Business Conditions:</td> <td>-18%</td> <td>-13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current Employment Opportunities:</td> <td>11%</td> <td>-15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Future Business Conditions:</td> <td>34%</td> <td>37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Future Employment Opportunities:</td> <td>31%</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Future Income:</td> <td>22%</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Overall Reno County (%)	Buhler (%)	Current Business Conditions:	-18%	-13%	Current Employment Opportunities:	11%	-15%	Future Business Conditions:	34%	37%	Future Employment Opportunities:	31%	35%	Future Income:	22%	25%
<b>a. Business Conditions</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Normal	<b>b. Employment Opportunities</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs plentiful <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs not so plentiful <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs hard to get																							
<b>a. Business Conditions</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> Same	<b>b. Employment Opportunities</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Better <input type="checkbox"/> Worse <input type="checkbox"/> Same	<b>c. Income</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Increase <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease <input type="checkbox"/> Same																						
Category	Overall Reno County (%)	Buhler (%)																						
Current Business Conditions:	-18%	-13%																						
Current Employment Opportunities:	11%	-15%																						
Future Business Conditions:	34%	37%																						
Future Employment Opportunities:	31%	35%																						
Future Income:	22%	25%																						

Workshop Prompt: What might be behind the uncertainty about the current economic conditions?

- Building costs.
- Empty store fronts.
- Have a more cohesive community.
- Politics/election, media (depressing news).
- Property taxes for businesses, no incentives.
- No incentives for new business. Not much support for current business.
- Inflation/economy, empty houses, jobs available, empty main street.
- We see opportunities that aren't taken advantage of.
- Recent business closings, national economy.
- Election, interest rates, taxes.

Workshop Prompt: What gives residents so much more hope for future economic conditions?

- Local business investments.
- Community.
- Because it's Buhler.
- New business.
- Good Buhler public schools!
- Industrial park expansion/creation.
- The desire to want things to improve.
- Building, new business, activity creates activity.
- Strong public schools.

## Data Source: Love Where You Live Survey

Please use the following scale to indicate how you feel about your community and leadership.

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat Disagree
- 4 = Neutral
- 5 = Somewhat Agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly Agree

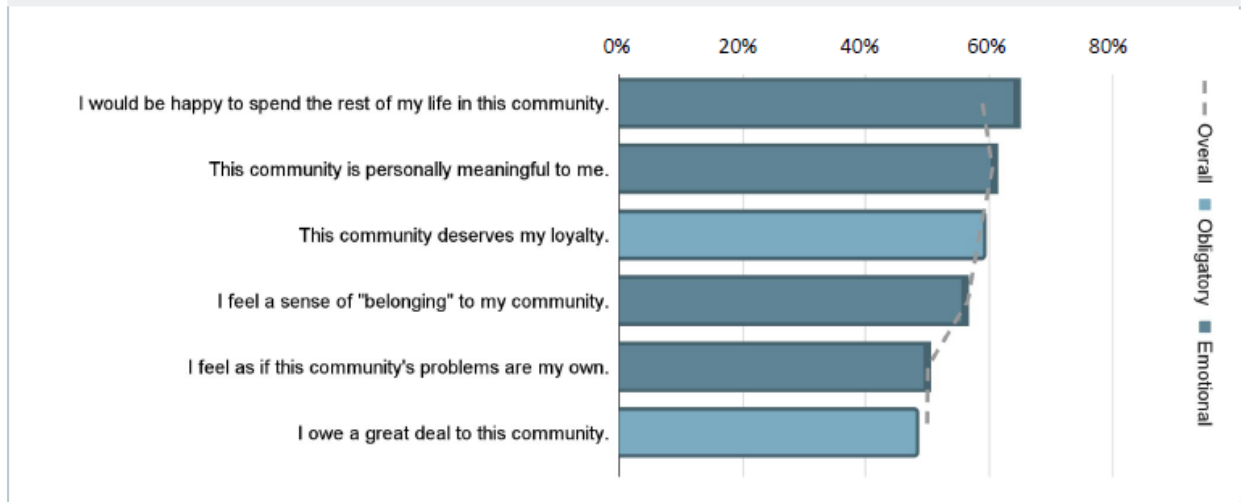
If you are unsure or do not want to respond, please use the following option:  
0 = Do not know/No response

Report, pg. 7

# Confidence In Our Local Community

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

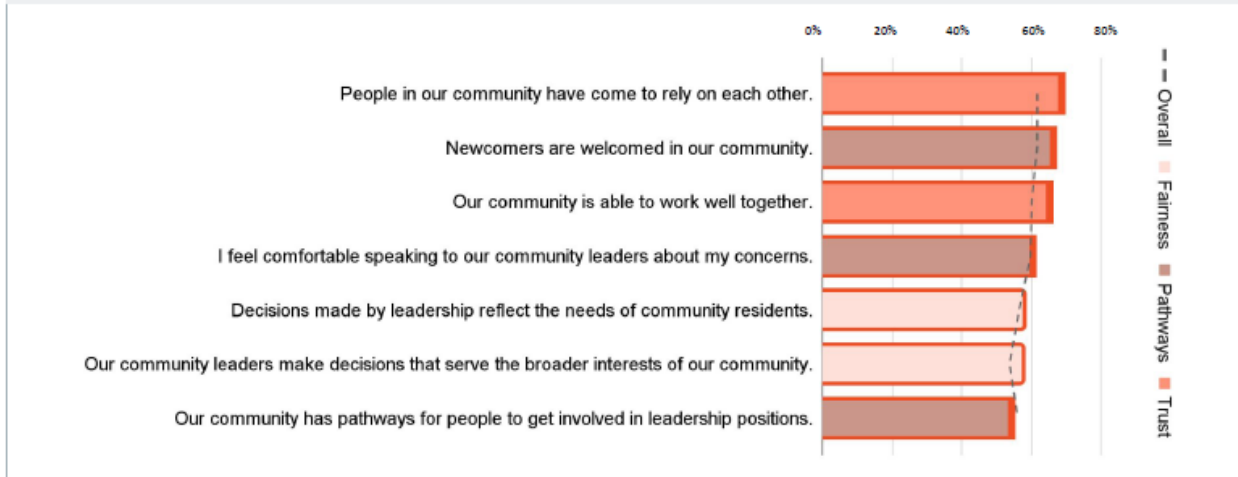
## Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



Workshop Prompt: What keeps you from getting involved in community challenges?

- Lack of vision
- Too busy!
- Judgement from others
- Always told NO! Lack of vision
- Knowing who needs help most (based on limited time)
- People with a vision and energy
- Communication – where do we communicate to everyone? Facebook is not the only way to communicate
- No direction from leadership
- Ask Community, “How would you like to receive communication?”
- Lack of collective, united strategies, lack of knowledge, information clarity of the collective ‘issue,’ disconnection.

## Community Confidence: Local Leadership



Workshop Prompt: What would it look like for leaders to be more responsive to community concerns?

- Communication.
- A 5-year plan we are working toward.
- Wider network for communicating.
- Communication through different platforms and methods.
- Actually listening.
- Groups getting together to help each other could help us all make progress faster with better outcomes.
- Town unity One Buhler start the...
- Central 'dashboard' of/for activities, services, etc.
- Start of community conversations.

## Community Confidence: Vision



Workshop Prompt: What is the long-term vision that residents would like to see for the Buhler community?

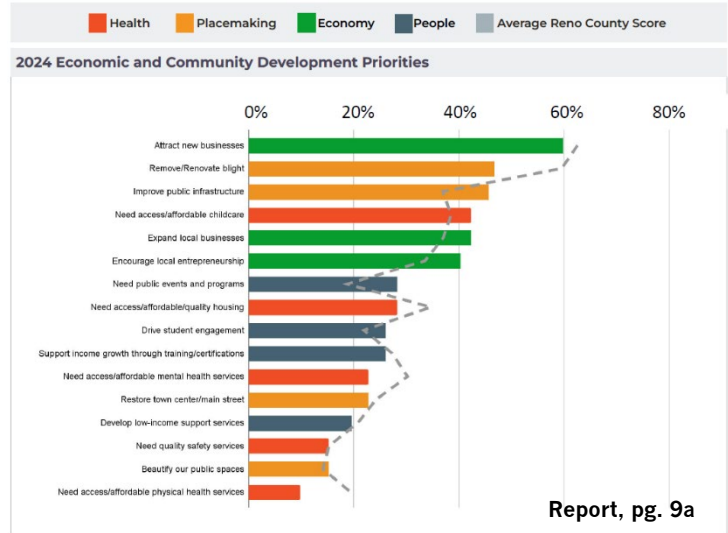
- A long term plan for sustaining what we have, what we need, and where we would like to be.
- More jobs (businesses), better paying jobs.
- Inclusion, kindness.
- Businesses that can create an experience for day trips.
- Grow to sustain the future of our community.
- Destination town.
- Growth! And support for current businesses.
- Small, start up homes for young families.
- To be a Mayberry community.
- Active thriving community
- Back to 1990, we know where we're going.

**Data Source: Love Where You Live Survey**

Understanding your communities economic and community development priorities **IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

Please select your top 5 economic and community development priorities.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Resilient Economy) Attract new businesses
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Resilient Economy) Expand local businesses
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Resilient Economy) Encourage local entrepreneurship
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Vibrant Place) Remove/renovate run-down properties
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Vibrant Place) Improve public infrastructure (sidewalks, roads, parks, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Vibrant Place) Beautify our public areas
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Vibrant Place) Restore our town center and main street
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Engaged Citizens) Create and refine programs to improve student engagement in the community
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Engaged Citizens) Develop training and certification programs to support income growth
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Engaged Citizens) Develop community pride through public events and programming
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Engaged Citizens) Develop more effective low-income family support programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Citizens) Expand access to quality and affordable (monthly payments <30% of household income) housing
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Citizens) Expand access to quality and affordable childcare support services
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Citizens) Address access and affordability of local Physical Health services
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Citizens) Address access and affordability of local Mental Health services
- \_\_\_\_\_ (Healthy Citizens) Improve the quality of safety and emergency services (Police, Fire, etc.)



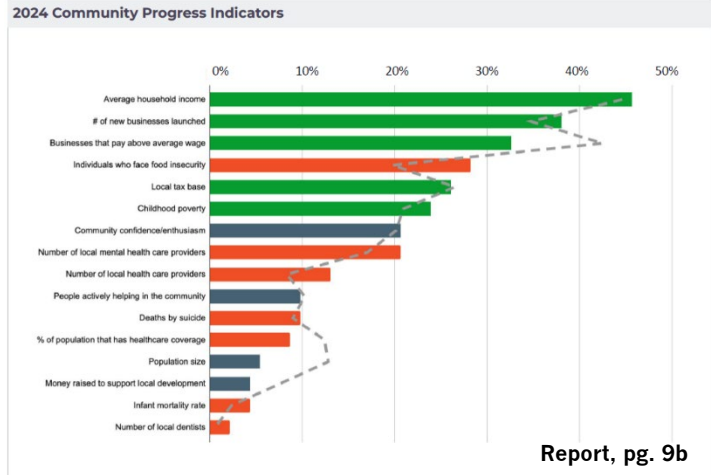
Workshop Prompt: What would it take to create change on the top priorities?

- Affordable housing, curious conversations.
- New leadership at the top!
- More community involvement in decision making.
- Better infrastructure, need for adequate tax base.
- Backing from city for tax incentives.
- Need to support local businesses.
- Create community buy-in by having events like this.
- More collaboration among top stakeholders, school, businesses, committees.
- More funding (from where...no idea).
- Incentivize new business owners to come to Buhler.
- Involve the youth in brainstorming ideas.
- More involvement from retired community members to encourage the younger, busier folks.

**Data Source: Love Where You Live Survey**

In a span of 1-3 years, which community metrics would you hope to improve upon. Select up to 3:

- Number of new businesses launched in the community
- Number of new businesses that pay above average wages
- Average household income
- Population size
- Amount of money raised to support local development
- Local tax base (wages, sales, property)
- Number of people actively (>5 hours/month) engaged in community development
- Community confidence and enthusiasm
- % of local population who has some health care coverage
- Number of Mental Health Providers available locally
- Number of Primary Health Providers available locally
- Number of Dentists available locally
- Number of deaths caused by suicide
- Individuals who face food insecurity
- Childhood poverty rate
- Infant mortality rates



Workshop Prompt: What would it take to create change on the top progress indicators?

- There is a big need for more local business with sustainability.
- City-wide citizenship day?
- More incentives from city for people/businesses to want to come.
- Community “brand,” visual support on important days & events (signs/banners, etc).
- Food insecurity needs more focus. It impacts families and education.
- Money.
- \$
- Local food bank (more than pantry).
- Consumers believing in Buhler, buying in Buhler, investing in Buhler.
- Affordable homes built.
- Less rentals, more incentives.
- Better paying jobs.
- More incentives to bring business/jobs to town. Keep people in town so they don’t have to leave Buhler for shopping, fuel, etc.

## BOLD IDEAS

### Workshop Prompt:

- What one opportunity or priority could make the biggest difference in our community in the next year?
- If this community was 10 times bolder to make progress on it, what big idea would you recommend?

### Workshop Participant Responses:

#### Top Priorities & Ideas:

1. Unique partnerships (ex: schools & housing = student/school/family/community initiative for housing renovation projects) Keep some type of ongoing “structure” similar to these community conversations with a very intentional blend of progress monitoring and just building fellowship/community. (27 points)
2. A restaurant like the HUB. Hang out with beverages. Draws community as well as visitors. (27 points)
3. Public infrastructure. All public infrastructure replaced at a high standard in 30 years. (26 votes)
4. Enhance local business. Full scale destination entertainment, food and beverage venue. (24 votes)
5. Secure & give away lots for housing. Marketing for the town. Attract people for dining, entertainment, activities, concerts, bar. (22 votes)
6. Families in every vacant home. Build 50 new homes. (22 votes)

#### Other Priorities & Ideas:

7. Fixing/selling empty houses. Multi-generational housing, repurposed housing for multiple reasons/uses.
8. Fix up empty houses to be able to have housing available. Community clean up days, work on one area at a time.
9. I would like to see more housing opportunities for people who would like to move to and live in Buhler. Houses that sit empty or need a lot to be made livable could be purchased and renovated with grant monies.
10. Bar and Grill. Even bigger bar and grill with happy hour.
11. Expand sewer and water capacity. Plat new housing areas.
12. Activities to meet your neighbors, divide the city into smaller groups that can enjoy fellowship. We need to attract more business which means we need more water.
13. Focus on housing stock, many empty homes. Incentivize renovations for rentals or sales to ultimately increase our tax rate.
14. Sustain a group like this with wide participation that catalogs all activities, social opportunities, services opportunities in Buhler and celebrates them and communicates openly and adds more. Bring in major acts, concert, opportunities like the baseball fundraiser.
15. Improve city street/water delivery system. Replace city water pipes.
16. Form a private group of “doers” that energize the start of upscaling downtown. Create electronic screen on side of elevator for movies, murals, etc.



17. Fix up houses/empty houses, incentives? Create downtown place to visit/shop/dine, small businesses.
18. Expand local businesses to make us a destination town again. Take unused buildings or combine businesses to make an area for a small mall highlighting boutiques & gift shops.
19. New business/additional jobs. Tax incentives.
20. Look for a new business that wants to be established in Buhler. Build ten home units that are affordable to young first time home owners.
21. Communication: businesses, needs, events, success. A rebranding of Buhler. A full main street business section that also partners with schools?
22. Better communication/relationship building. Work together to make Buhler the beautiful community it was once. Decreasing pride of ownership is so apparent in real estate.
23. Have a designated person to create/attract businesses, community events, etc. A business/visitor community liaison. (someone else wrote "Ashley with Economic Development"). Strategic city plan to grow housing and business through tax incentives, etc. A bar like "The Hub" with outside seating for example.
24. Spruce/clean up the town, ie: lawns, houses. Provide supplies, paid contractors to paint, free lawn care, trim trees, replace sidewalks.
25. Respect for others unlike yourself, strengthening community spirit. Overcoming differences that divide us.
26. More involvement with youth in the community. Community involvement (slow decline year after year. Communication avenues (not just Facebook or clique).
27. All committees working together as one. Meetings with us all. Town hall meetings.
28. Community participation in local activities 90 – 100%
29. Get our houses in the community livable and full. Affordable.
30. A complete re-evaluation of the budget & infrastructure.
31. Develop a vision for the next 10 years. Destination spot with businesses & venues that create fun experience.
32. Business that invites family, youth, etc. to gather and enjoy spending time together (someone else wrote "Library??").
33. Pull some actual current stats that we use to fix the town. Charts not based on stats are just fluff. (someone else wrote "statement not helpful.").

## LEADERSHIP IS AN ACTIVITY

Workshop Prompt: What can you do to immediately make progress on a big idea? Where do you have discretion and freedom to act? What can you do without more resources or authority?

Workshop Participant Responses:

- Advocating for / promoting USD 313. Work on filling the high school with pride – pictures/videos of accomplishments.
- Neighborhood BBQ. Have conversations that continue looking at these ideas!
- If we had new business/eating our downtown would not look so empty.
- Research funding (government, state fed, private grants) for infrastructure, repair and replacement. Share information with local government. Encourage action to seek funding.
- We need a plan to improve the infrastructure with a % completed each year. This is laying groundwork for our future. Fix as fail is not a good plan!
- Progress would look like designating part of our capital outlay funds for infrastructure each year without the option to defer maintenance.
- Have a neighborhood event – BBQ, ice cream.
- Welcome partnerships. We have a family-owned small business construction company and have enjoyed this community for over 15+ years (MCRS Construction Co.)
- Support, frequent, promote new business.
- Support volunteering for community roles and civic duties.
- Make more of an effort to meet new people.
- Continue to network...be curious about people and what people are doing. Pay attention to common needs, ideas that are 'bubbling' up from people/grassroots...join where my passions are.
- I would be willing to work on a committee that 'brainstorms' ideas for how to bring in retail business (venues) improves our downtown.
- Be a part of a committee or problem-solving group to look at building 10 – 20 homes of some kind for new or for multi-generational families.
- Visiting with people who have thriving small businesses for insight/ideas. Then approach leaders & visionaries within our community with insights from others. Visit with business owners.
- Begin identifying individuals with resources who are interested in investing in the community.
- Look for investors for a HUB type restaurant.
- Improve infrastructure so we can attract more housing & businesses
- Organize community work days to help paint, clean up housing.
- Collaboration progress – Use my work's partnerships to explore further opportunities.

- Get people to work together to improve each other not just focus on themselves. Don't deter growth. Embrace it!!
- Community/block events to make friends out of neighbors.
- Talk to Daniel about his vacant building on Main Street for restaurant/HUB idea.