

*Love* WHERE YOU *Live*

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

# 2025 Hutchinson Benchmark Report

Hutchinson   
**community**  
FOUNDATION



Innovation Economy Partners  
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

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Photo Credit: Nick Hemphill

## What Makes Our Community Special?

*"HUTCHINSON HAS SO MUCH TO OFFER! WE ARE A DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH!"*

**Jon**

*"Since I've gotten clean the Recover Committee is very special to me and being able to walk around with my head held high."*

**Brian**

*"It has a small town vibe, but with more people. The resources are amazing."*

**Logan**

*"We try to look out for each other in our neighborhood in Careyville... That makes me proud."*

**Wendy**

*"We have an amazing Recovery Community... We have a collaborative nature and value leadership for all. Resources are plentiful..."*

**Valerie**

*"We are special because so many of us are sincerely good people that want to help. Unique strengths are the micro communities that have been built."*

**Amy**

*"Day-to-day kindness... We are tough-as-nails people, but still care for and want good things for each other."*

**Jace**

*"Hutchinson is a big, small town... there always seems to be something going on... It is fairly easy to get involved."*

**Evan**

*"What makes Hutchinson special isn't just the place, but the people... that unique sense of unity and care is what makes our community stand out."*

**Sean**

*"Hutchinson is special to me... a 'big small town.'... What really makes it stand out... are the people and organizations that work hard to make the community stronger."*

**Deven**

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



# Executive Summary:

Hutchinson enters 2025 with a powerful advantage: people care. Commitment is high, pride is real, and a “big small town” sense of belonging still shows up in how residents talk about service—through nonprofits, churches, schools, and everyday neighbor-to-neighbor help. That love, however, is carrying weight. Economic confidence remains negative across business, jobs, and income, and residents want proof that the community is moving from endurance to momentum. The clearest throughline is stability: living-wage jobs, affordable housing, and childcare capacity—because without those three, families struggle to stay, businesses struggle to hire, and optimism becomes fragile. Residents also want the community’s “front porch” restored: fewer blighted properties, better roads, stronger corridors, and a downtown that feels active and welcoming.

pgs **4-5**

## Economic Confidence

Economic confidence is still negative. Residents want living-wage jobs, childcare, and housing to stabilize families—plus visible fixes like roads and blight reduction.

pgs **6-8**

## Community Engagement Confidence

Commitment is strong and pride runs deep. Vision and leadership confidence are mixed—people want clearer plans, visible follow-through, and stronger trust, especially among younger adults.

pgs **10-12**

## Critical Community Priorities

Top priorities blend big goals and quick wins: jobs, housing, childcare, blight removal, youth programs, roads, and public spaces.

pg **13**

## Survey Respondent Profile

Big gaps appear by occupation and education: job seekers feel the deepest strain and prioritize higher-wage employers; graduate-degree respondents rate leadership higher than technical-degree peers.

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

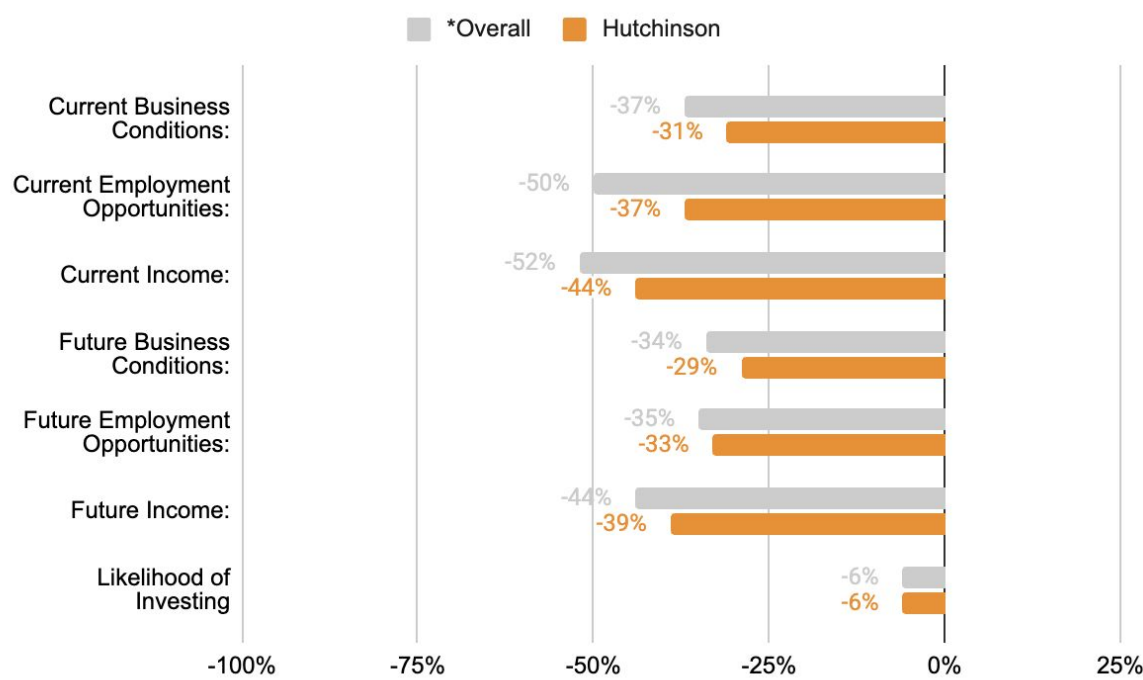
## Economic Summary:

In 2025, Hutchinson's economic mood is decreasing and strained. Residents rate current business conditions, jobs, and incomes as clearly negative, and even future expectations remain below neutral, with only a modest lift from "now" to "next." That tension shows up in what people ask for most: living-wage work, stable employers (especially industry/manufacturing), and the basics that let families stay—housing they can afford and childcare they can actually access. Even with low willingness to invest in the next 1-2 years, the community isn't disengaged; it's pragmatic. People want visible progress that reduces daily friction (roads, blight, sidewalks) while building a stronger wage base.

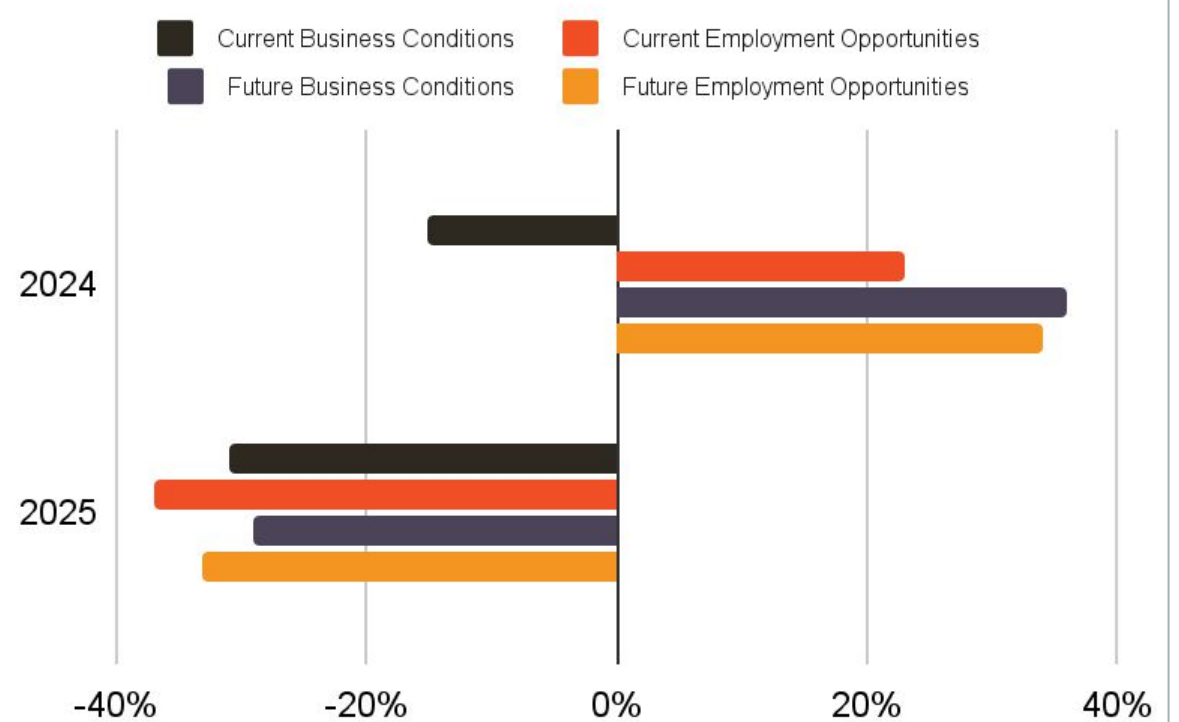
## Businesses Needed In Our Town:

- **Living Wage Jobs / Manufacturing – Stability, benefits, and blue-collar career paths**
- **Retail Shopping / Mall Revival – More variety, anchor stores, and filled storefronts**
- **Big Box Brands – Target + other major brands for one-stop savings and convenience**
- **Entertainment / Youth & Family Activities – More things to do indoors and for teens/families**
- **Affordable Housing + Support Services – Middle-income options, senior housing, and homeless supports**
- **Childcare / Daycare – Affordable capacity for working families and after-school care**
- **Healthcare Specialists / Clinics – More providers, more options, and less out-of-town care**

## Our Economic Perceptions



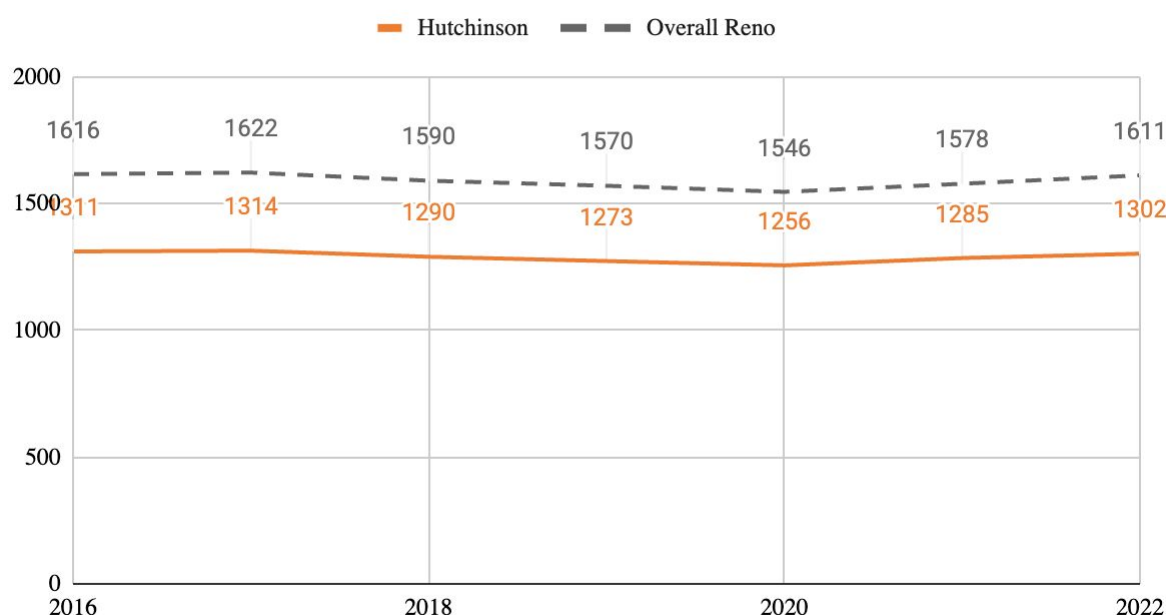
## Year Over Year Change (2024 vs 2025)



## Businesses in Our Town



### Businesses in Town

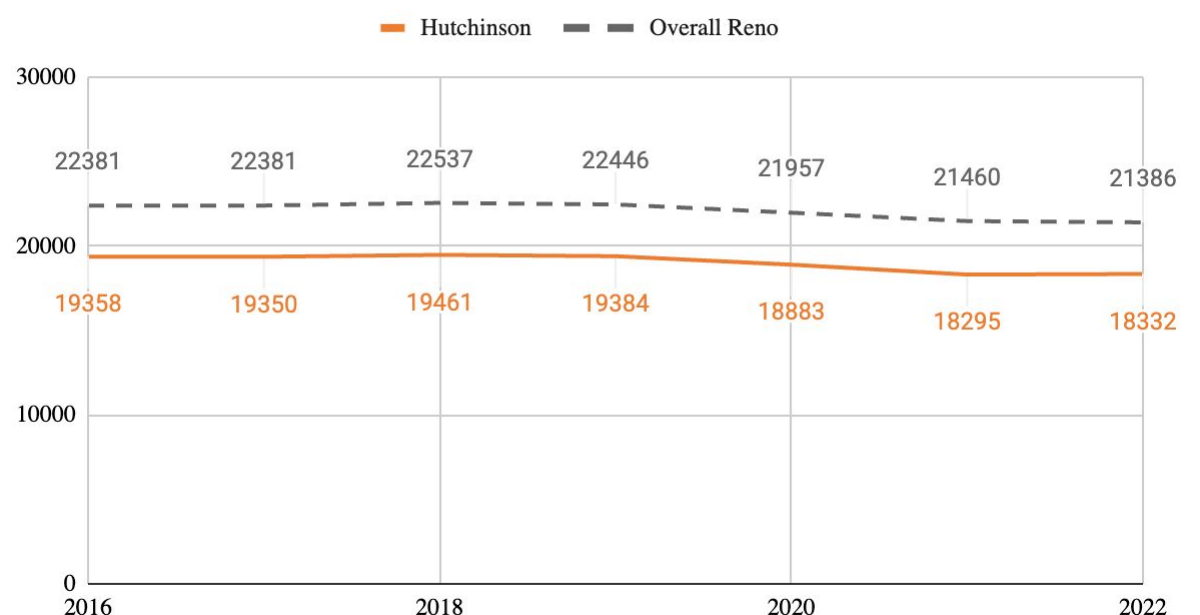


Data source:USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

## 10 Year Shift in Local Jobs



### Employment



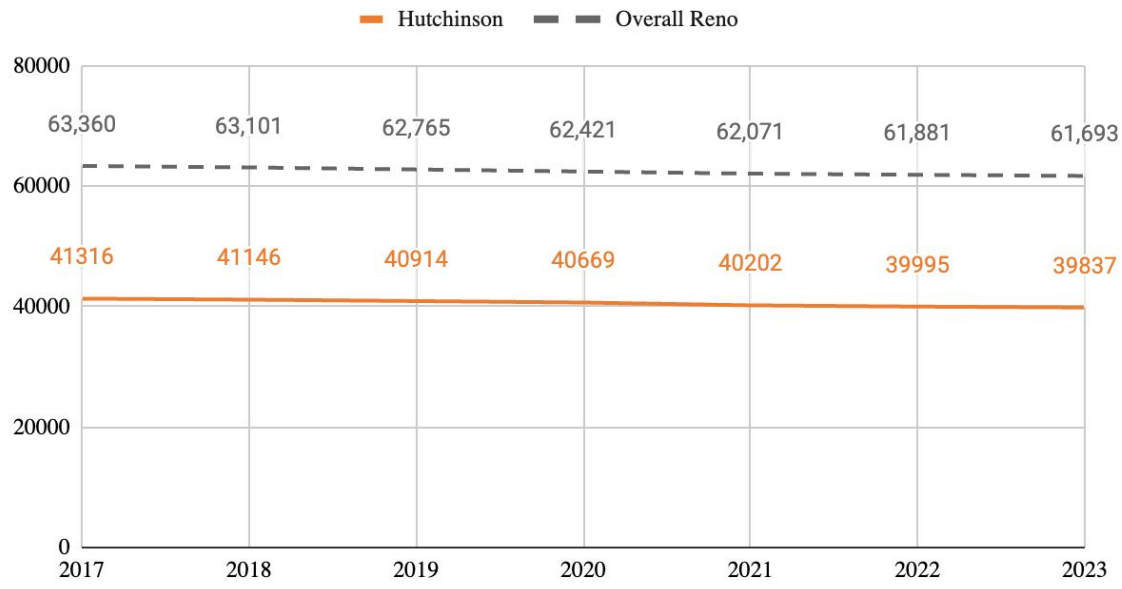
Data source:USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

# Local Economic Indicators (Cont'd)

## Overall Population Trend



### Population

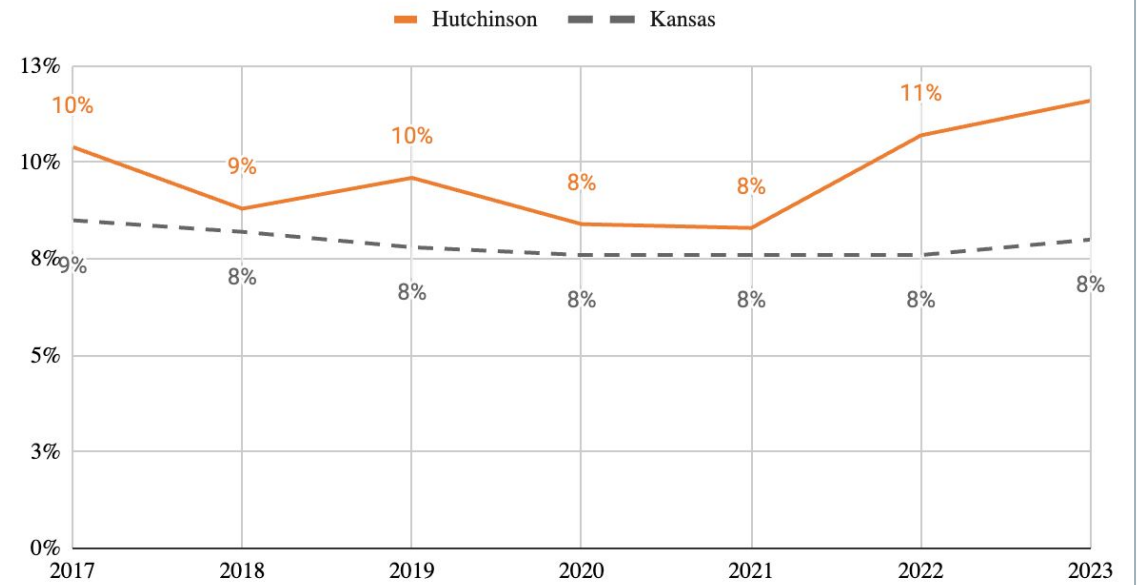


2020 official decennial census data for Hutchinson, KS: 40,006  
Data source: USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg

## Local Poverty Rate



### Poverty Rate

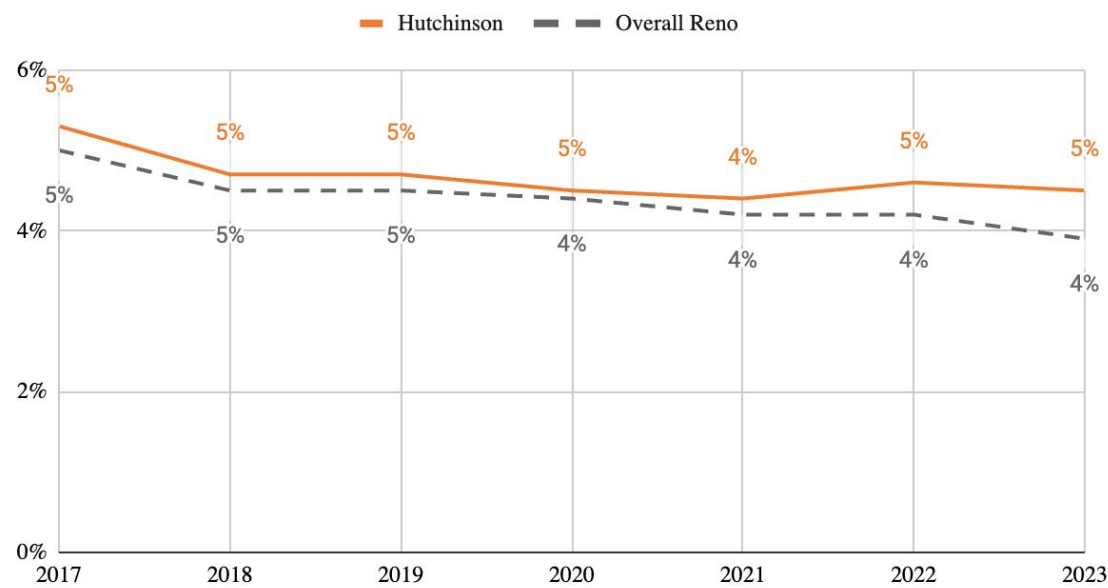


Data source: USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

## Local Unemployment Rate



### Unemployment Rate

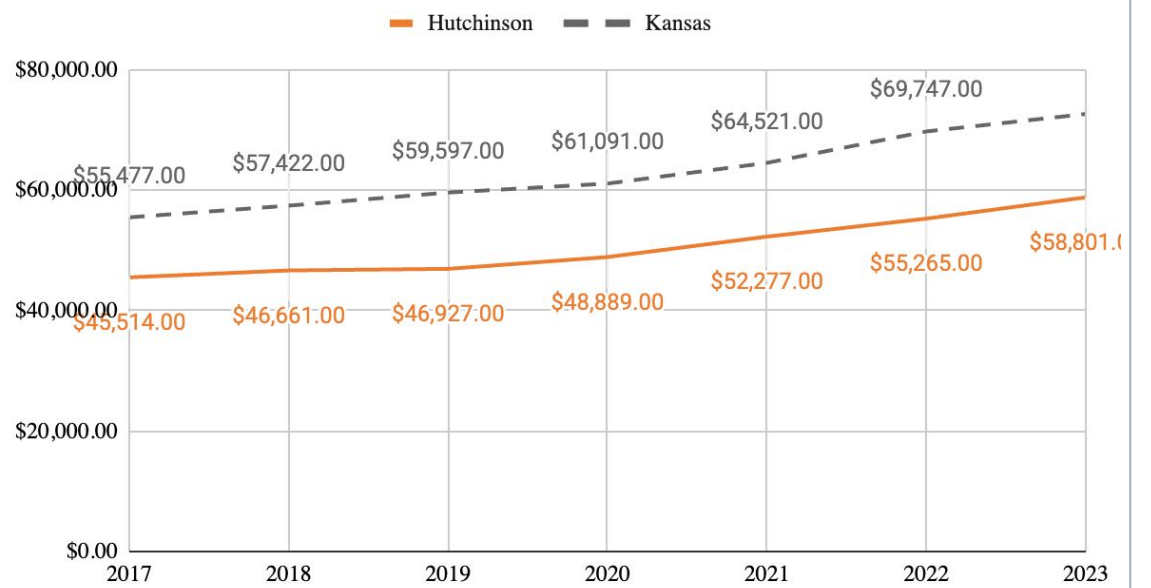


Data source: USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

## Median Household Income



### Median Household Income

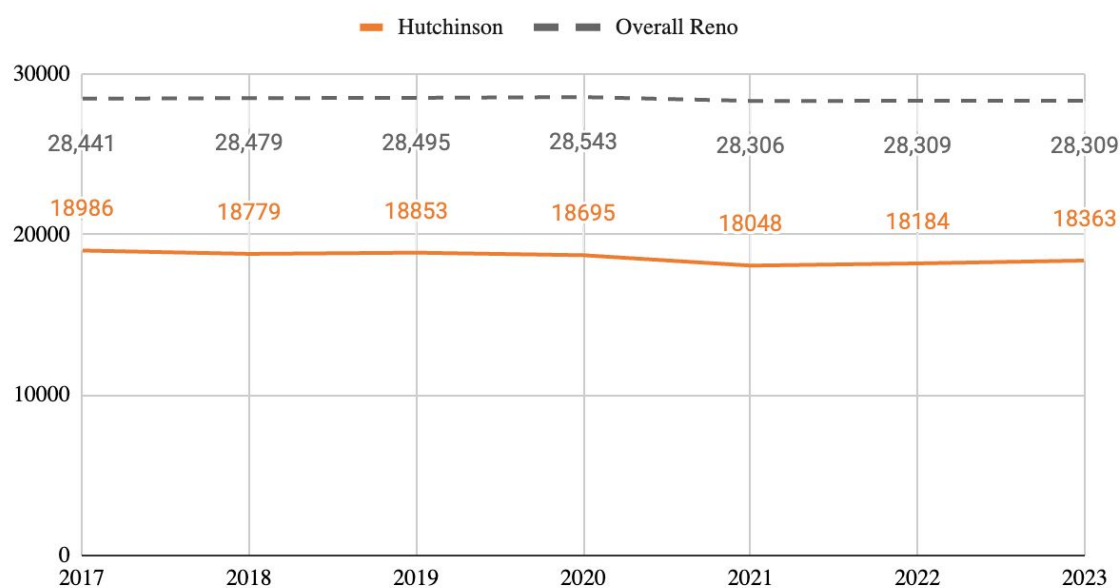


Data source: USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

## Total Housing Units



### Housing Units

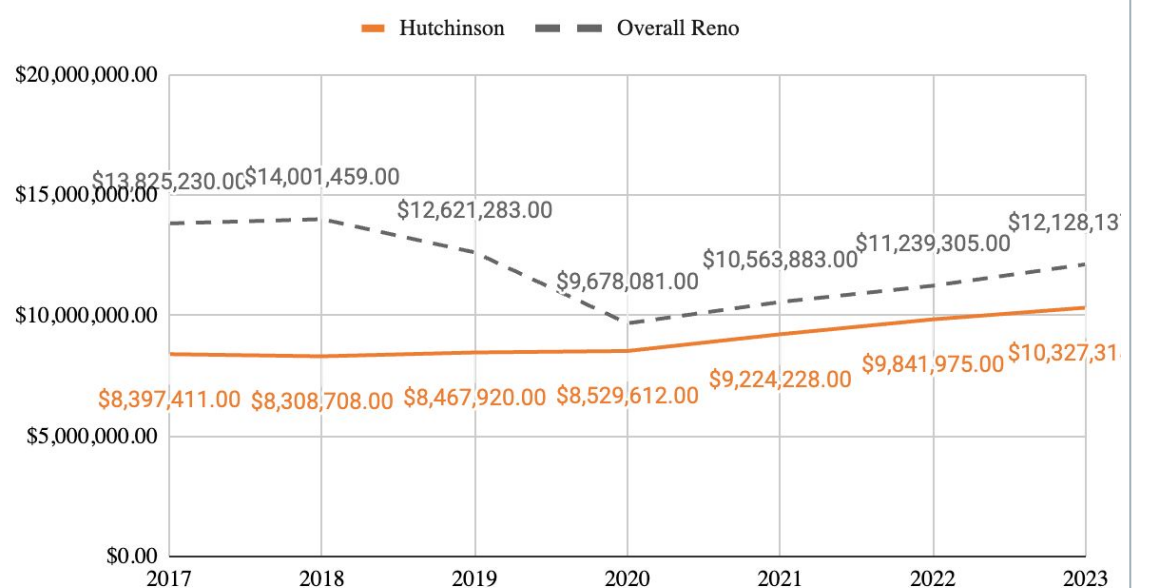


Data source: USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg

## Annual Sales Tax Collection



### Annual Sales Tax Collection



Data source: Kansas Dept of Revenue

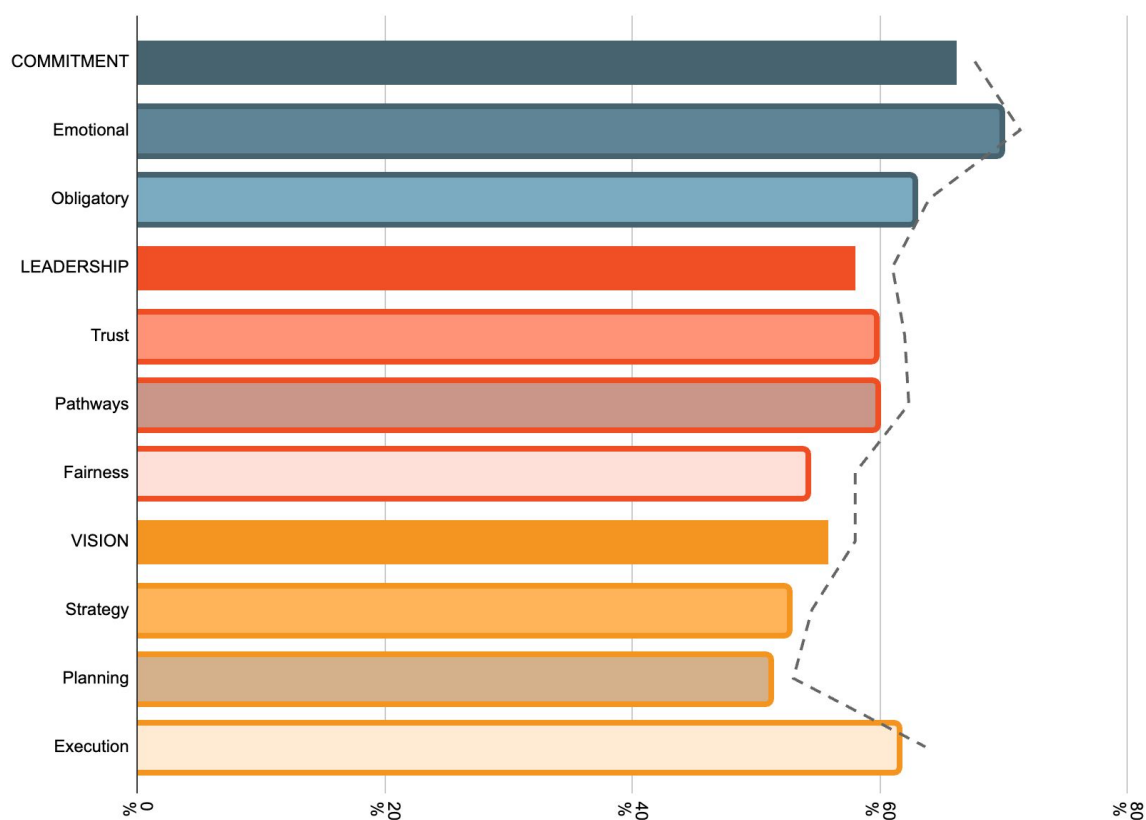
# Confidence In Our Local Community

## Engagement Summary:

Hutchinson’s identity is rooted in commitment: people feel the place is meaningful, they’d like to stay, and loyalty remains a defining strength—especially among long-term residents and families. But confidence softens when residents look outward to the future and upward to leadership. Vision scores suggest people want clearer direction, a better-told plan, and more proof that progress is happening—not just promises, although they are satisfied with what’s been accomplished. Leadership confidence is moderate: pathways into involvement are viewed relatively positively, yet trust cohesion and decision clarity remain weaker points.



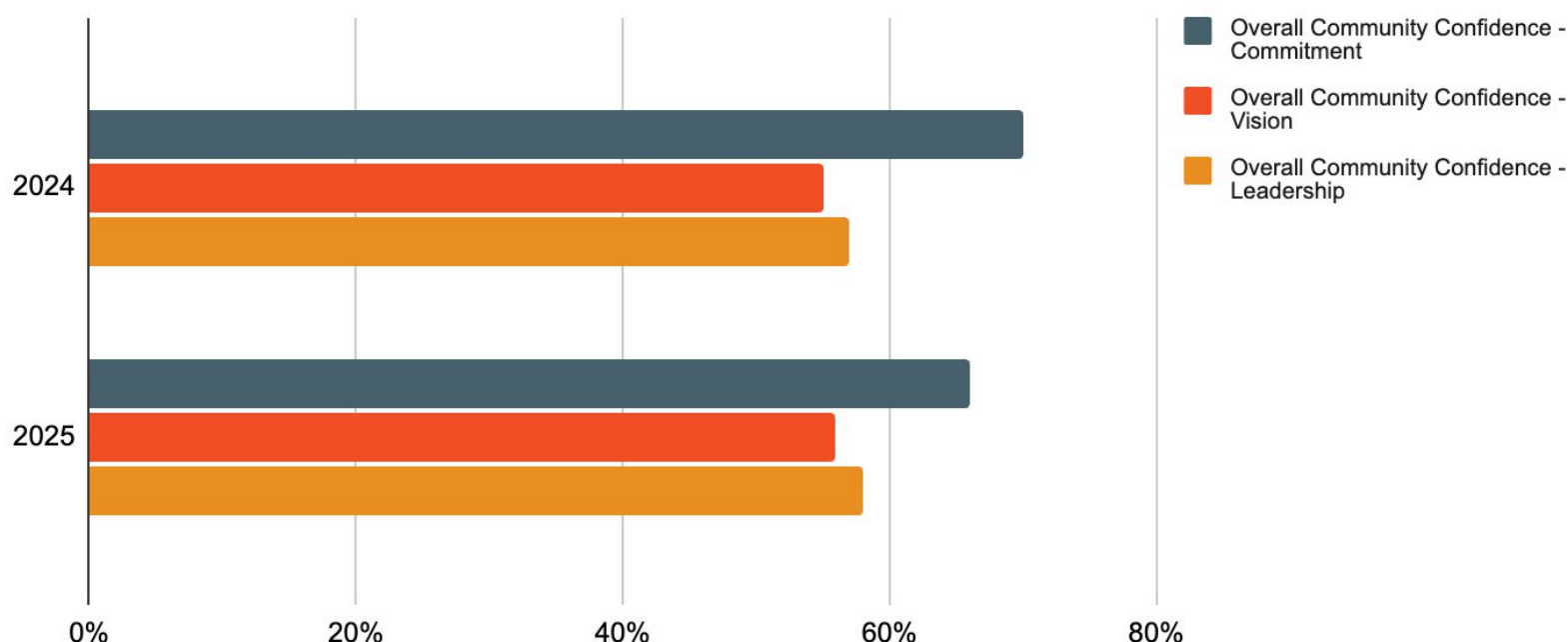
## How do our residents view our community?



## Questions:

- What’s driving the strongest emotional connections, and who feels left out?
- What would increase shared responsibility without creating burnout?
- What would help residents better understand where the community is headed?
- Where are people seeing progress, and where does it still feel stalled?
- What planning details are missing for residents to feel clarity and confidence about where it’s headed?
- Which pathways feel most accessible, and who still can’t “get in”?
- What decisions most influence fairness perceptions—and why?
- How do leadership actions shape confidence in long-term direction?

## Year Over Year Change

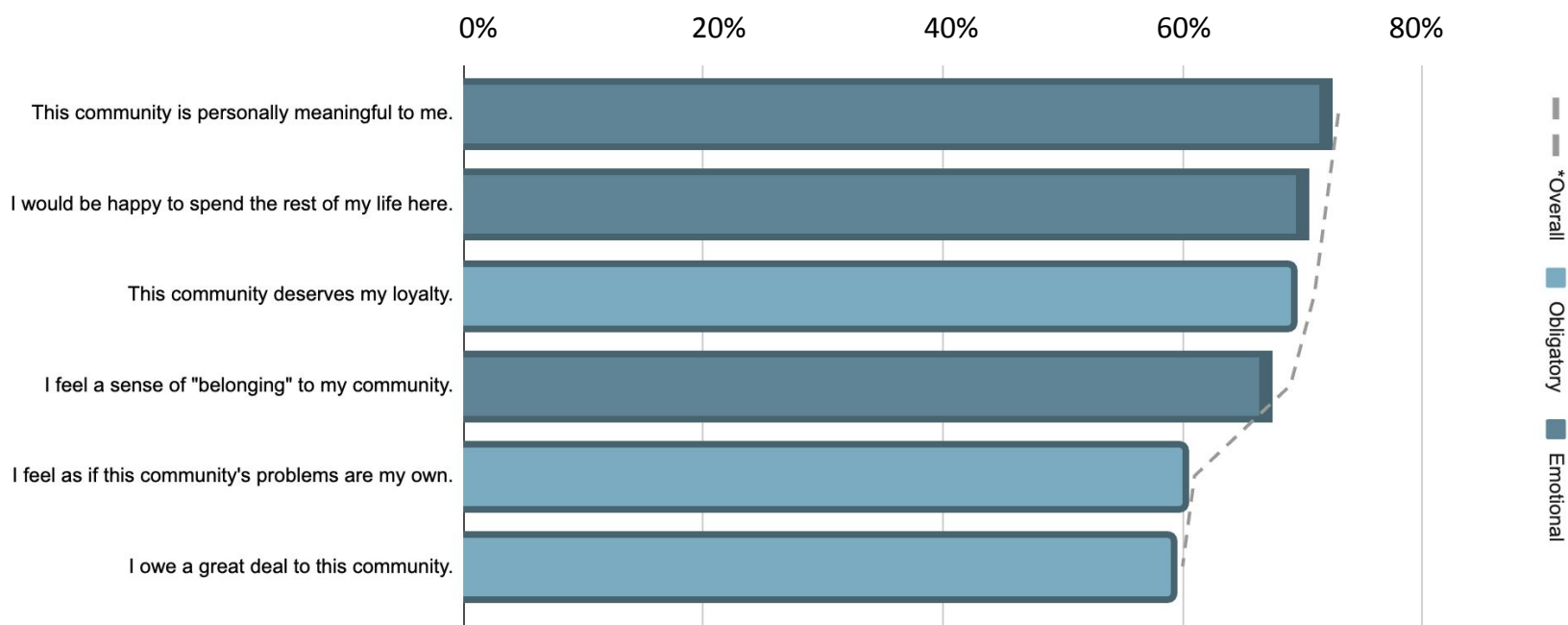


# Confidence In Our Local Community

## Average Reno County Score

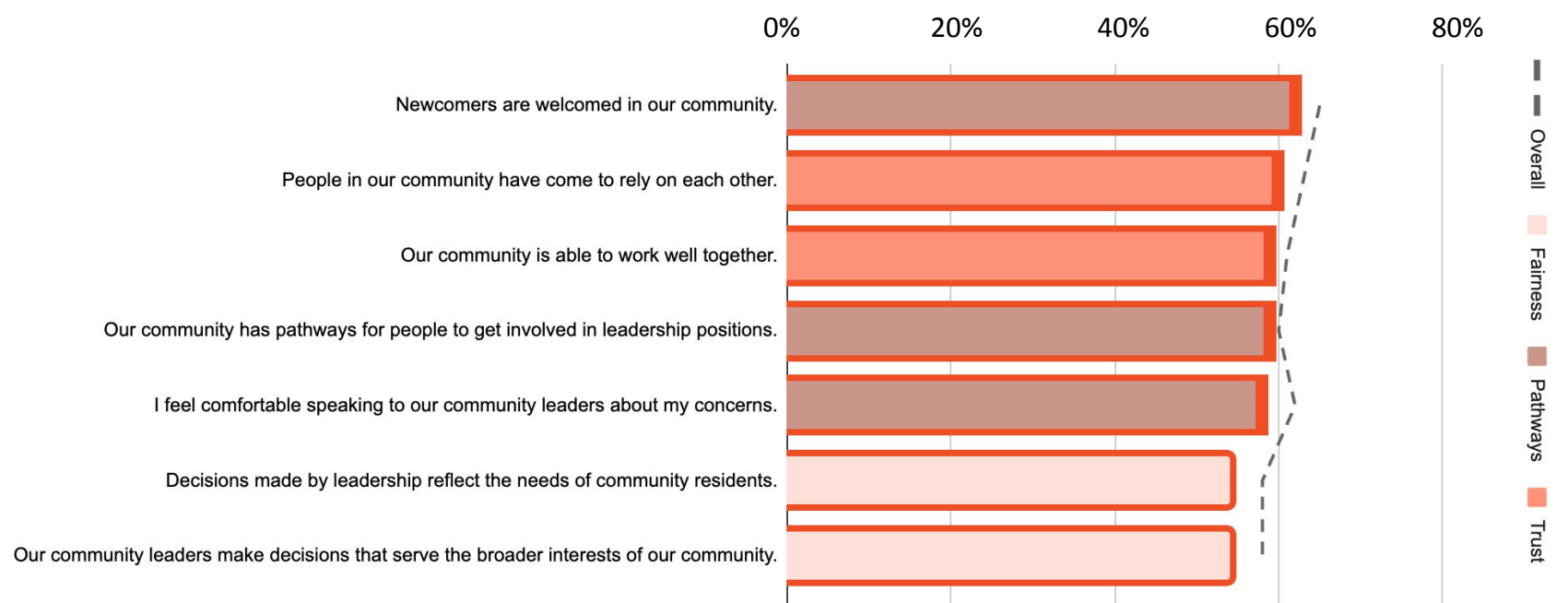
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

### Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



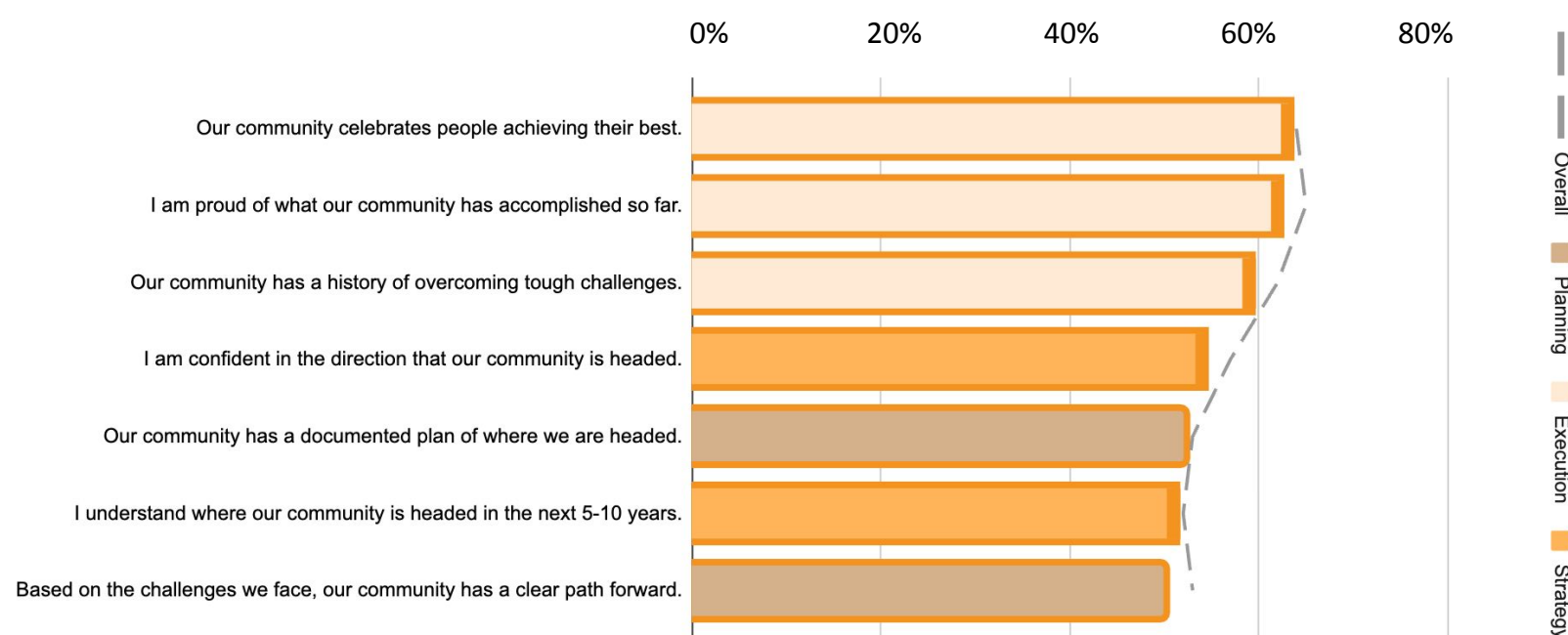
- What most influences whether someone would be happy to spend the rest of their life here?
- What makes this community personally meaningful—and how can that deepen for younger residents?
- What conditions create a strong sense of belonging?
- What helps residents feel the community's problems are their own—without exhausting them?

### Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- Where do people feel they can rely on each other—and what weakens or strengthens that reliance?
- What helps the community work well together, and what blocks collaboration?
- What makes newcomers feel welcomed, and what unspoken barriers still exist?
- What would make more residents feel comfortable speaking to community leaders about concerns?

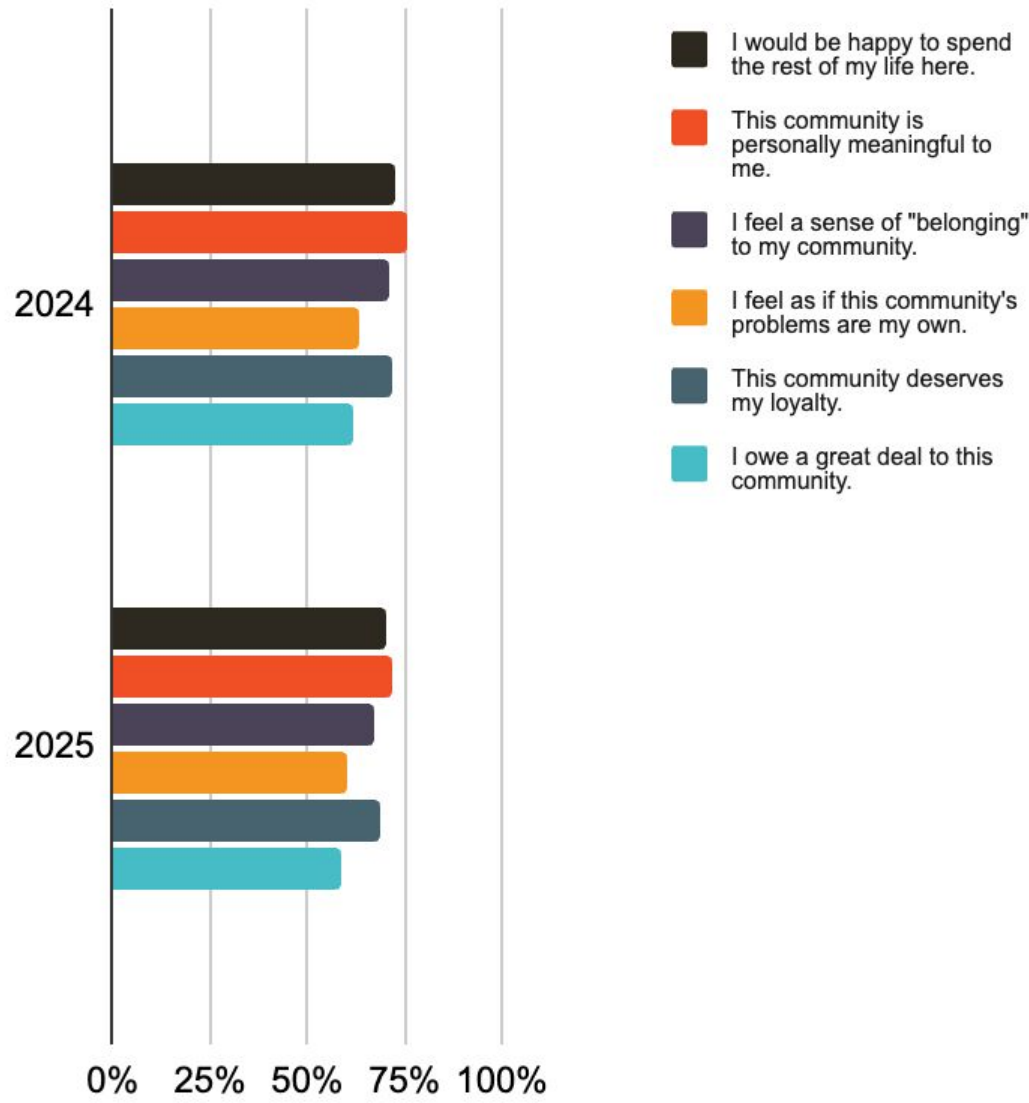
### Community Confidence: Vision



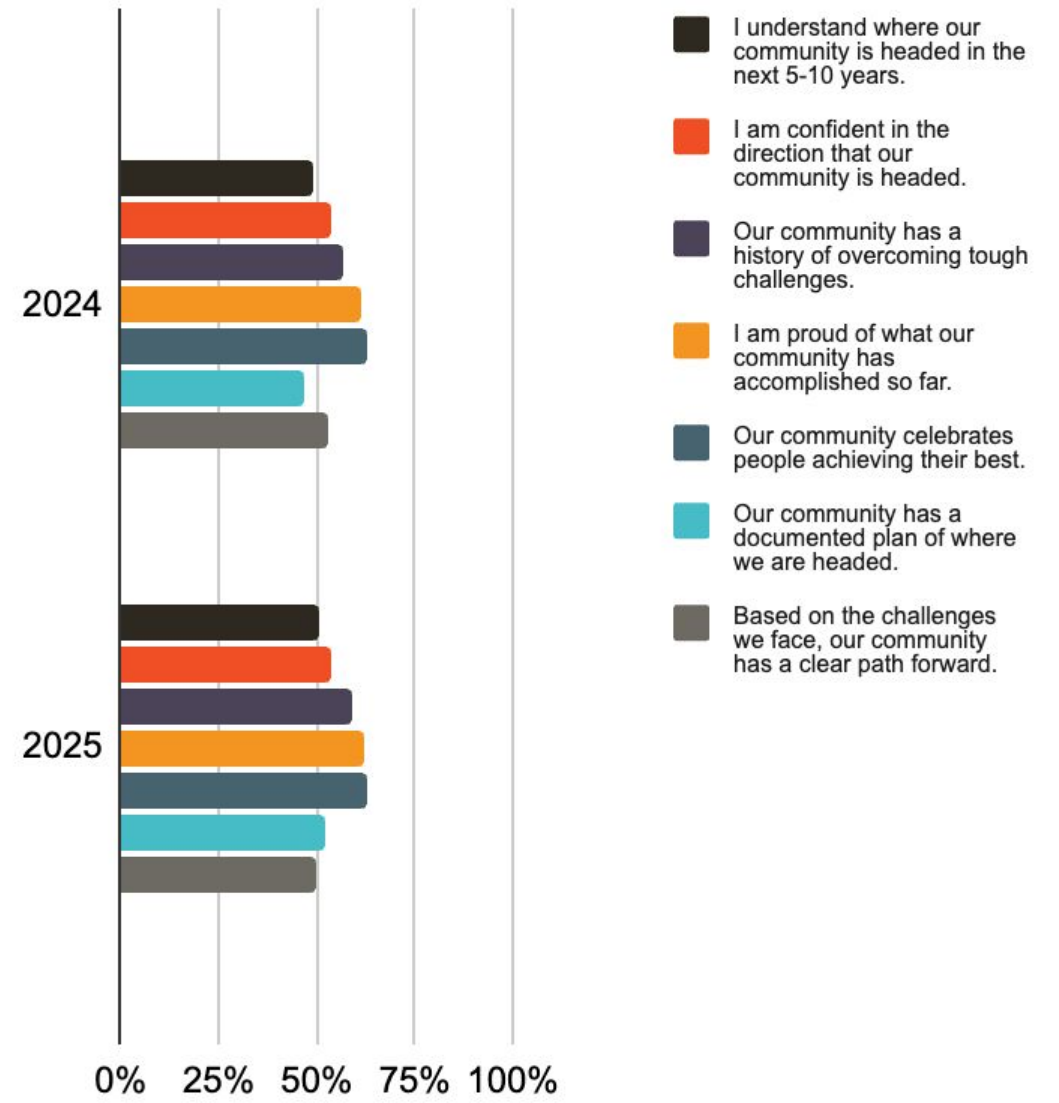
- What would help more residents understand where the community is headed in the next 5–10 years?
- What specific signals make people confident—or not confident—in the direction the community is headed?
- Where do residents see the community overcoming tough challenges today, and is there anything missing to repeat that success?
- What accomplishments are people most proud of, and how can they be built upon visibly?

# Confidence In Our Local Community

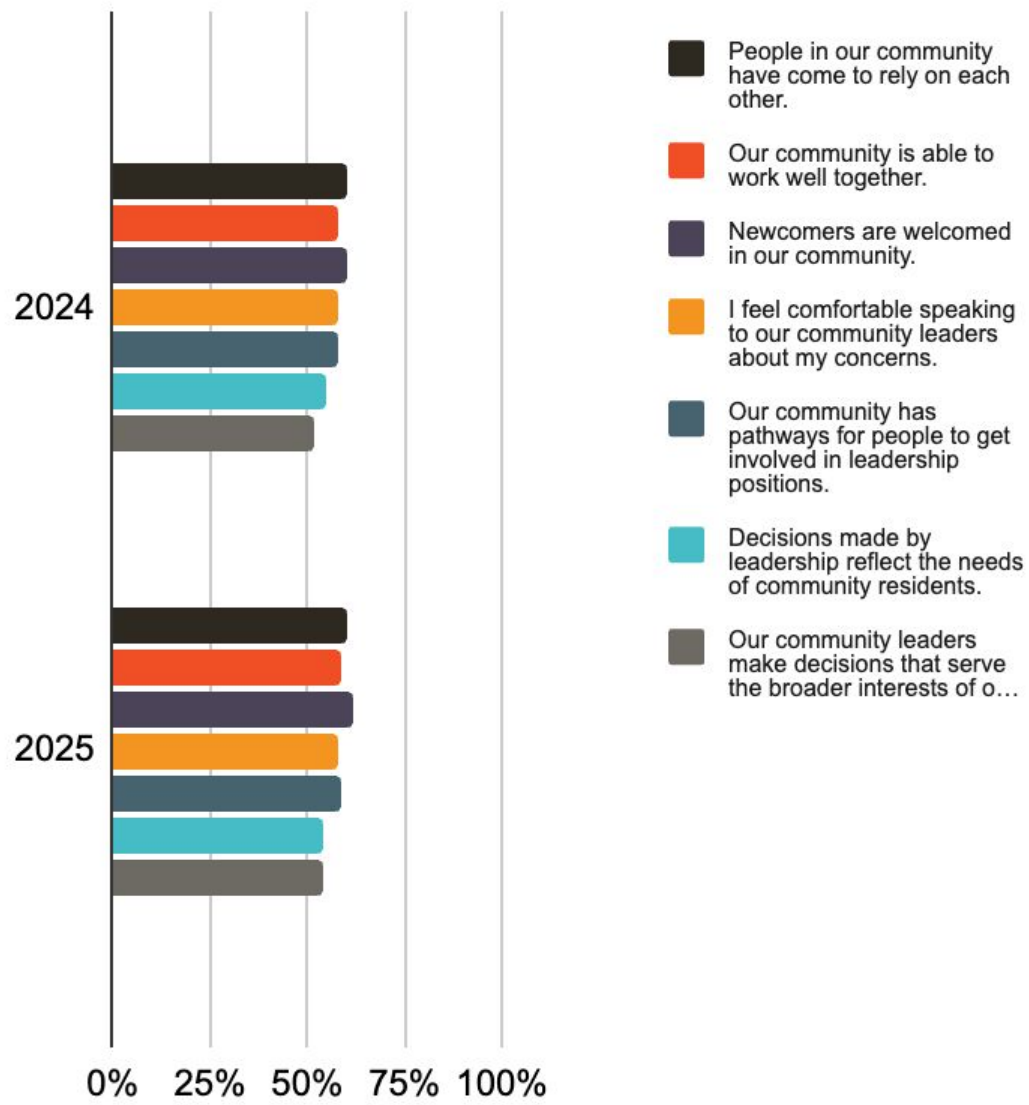
## Commitment



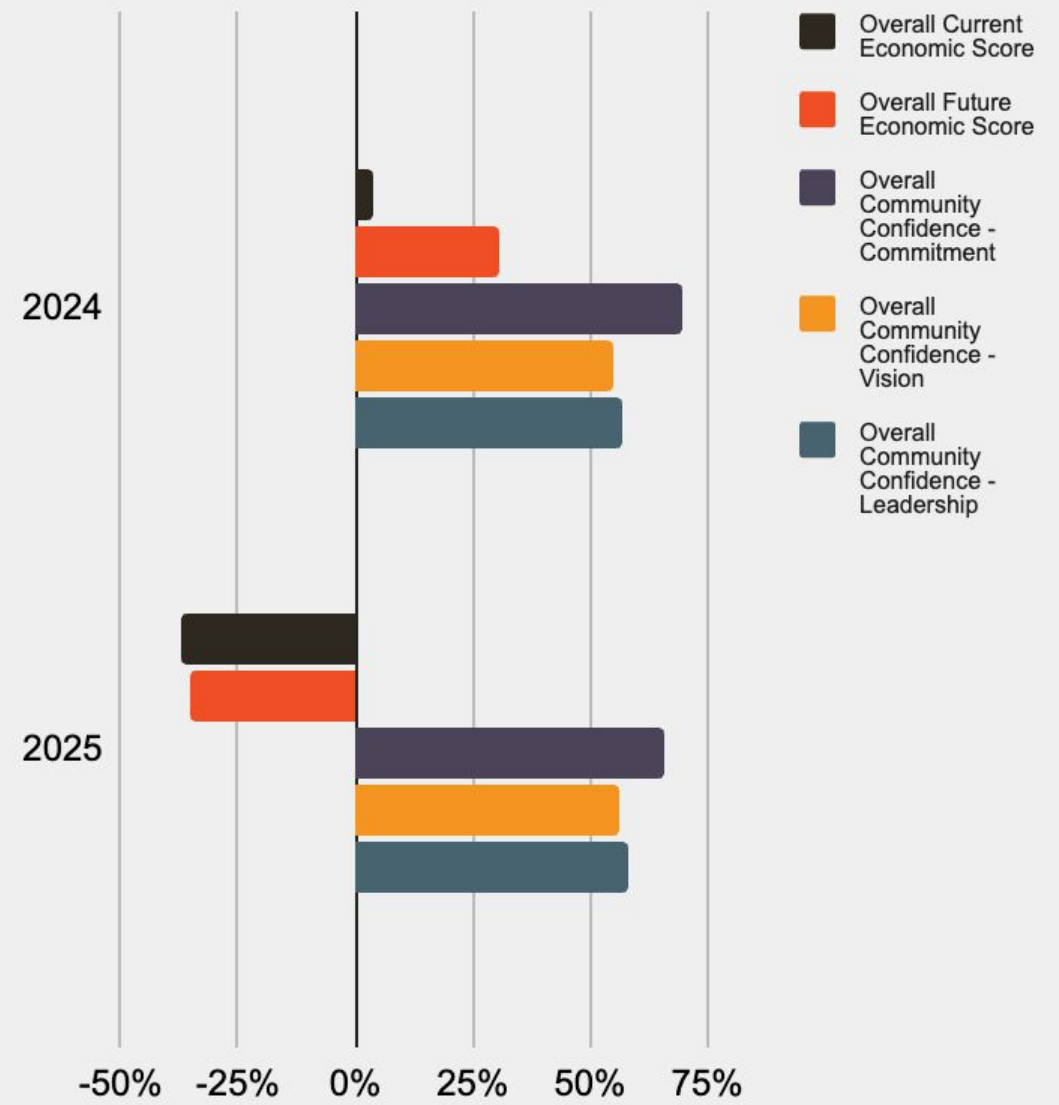
## Vision



## Leadership



## Economic vs. Community Confidence

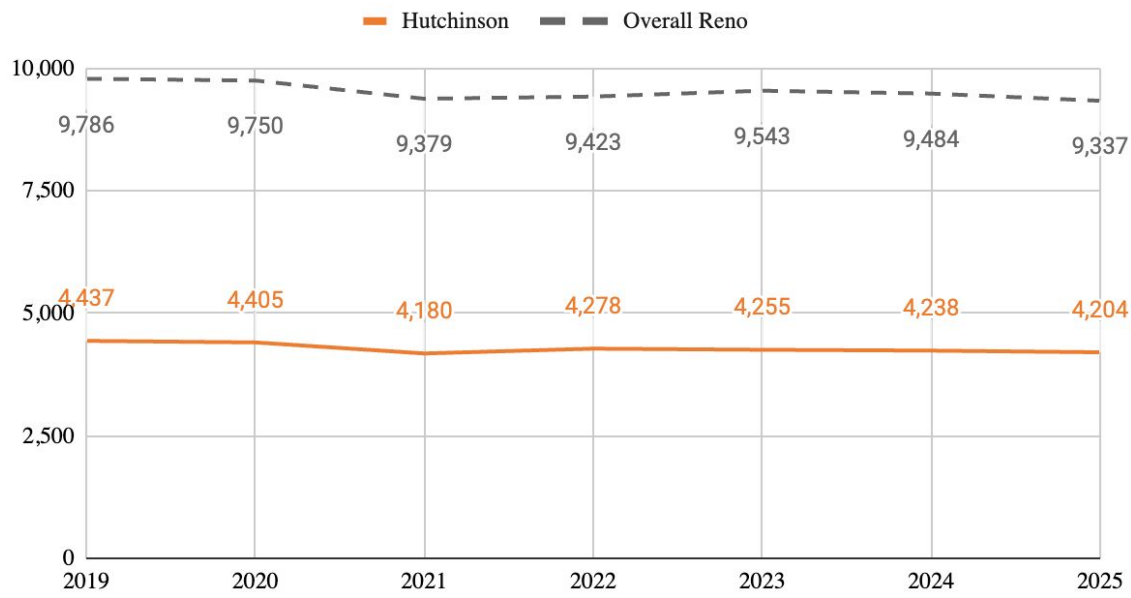


# Local Community Indicators

## Local School Enrollment



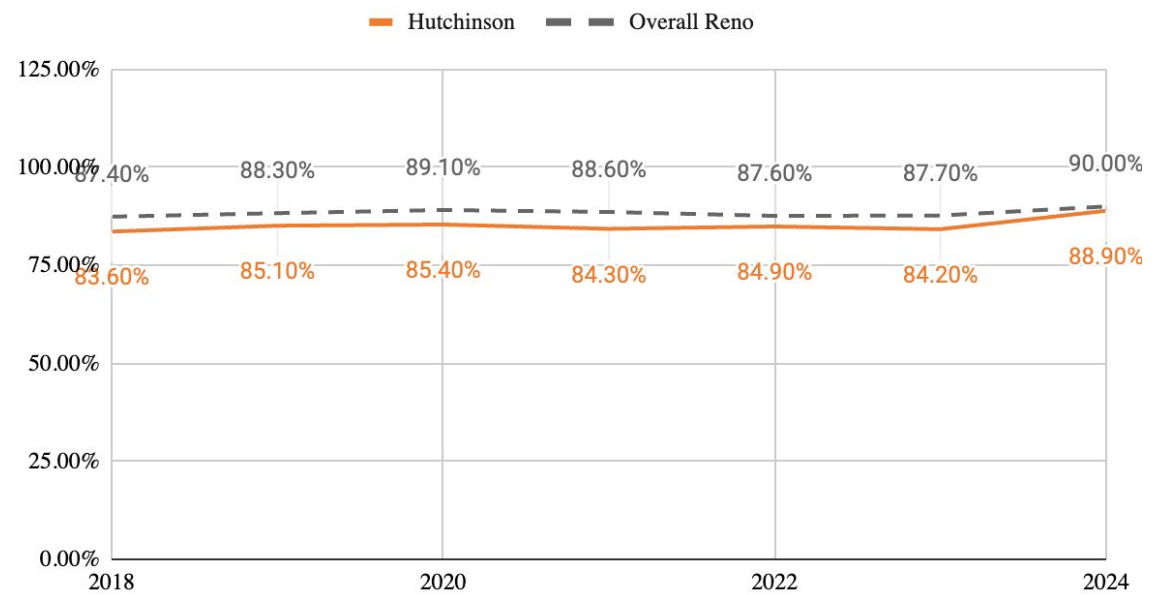
### Enrollment



## High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



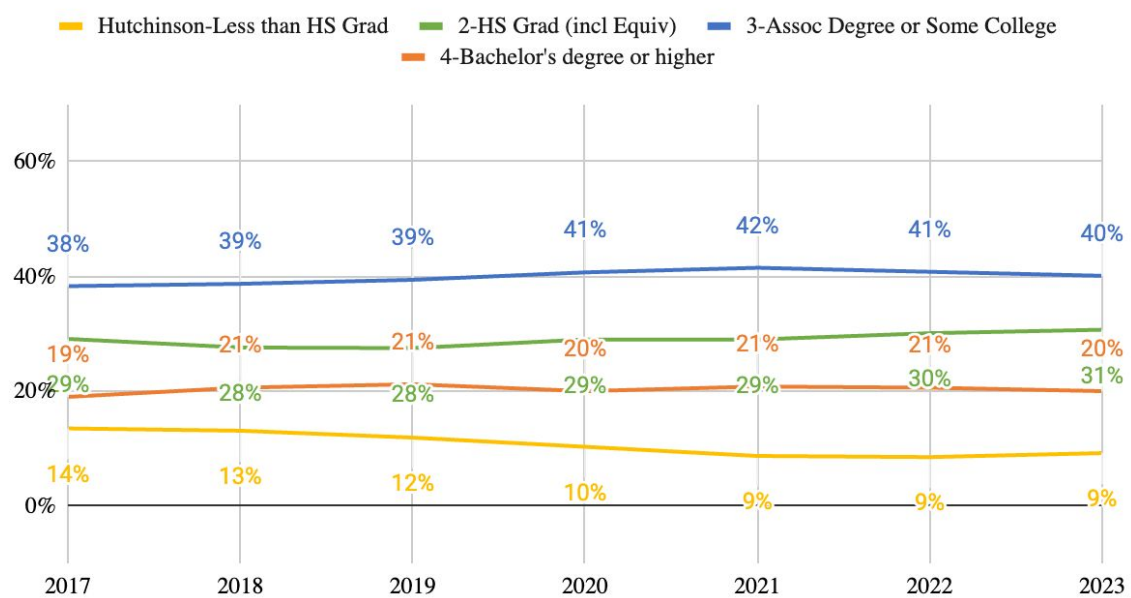
### Graduation Rate



## Local Educational Level



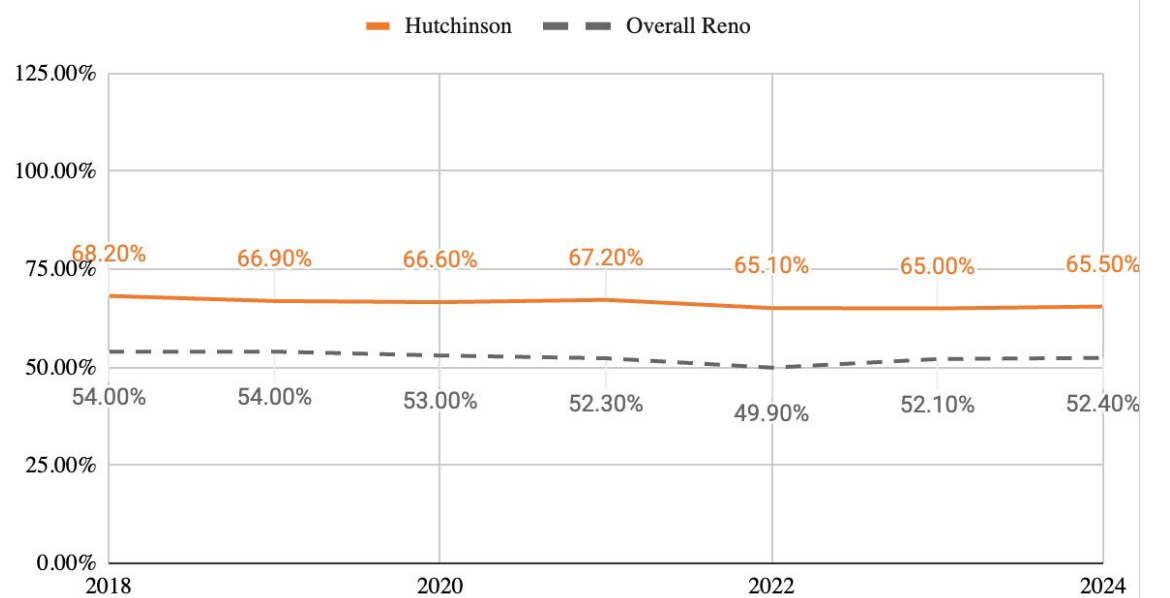
### Education Level



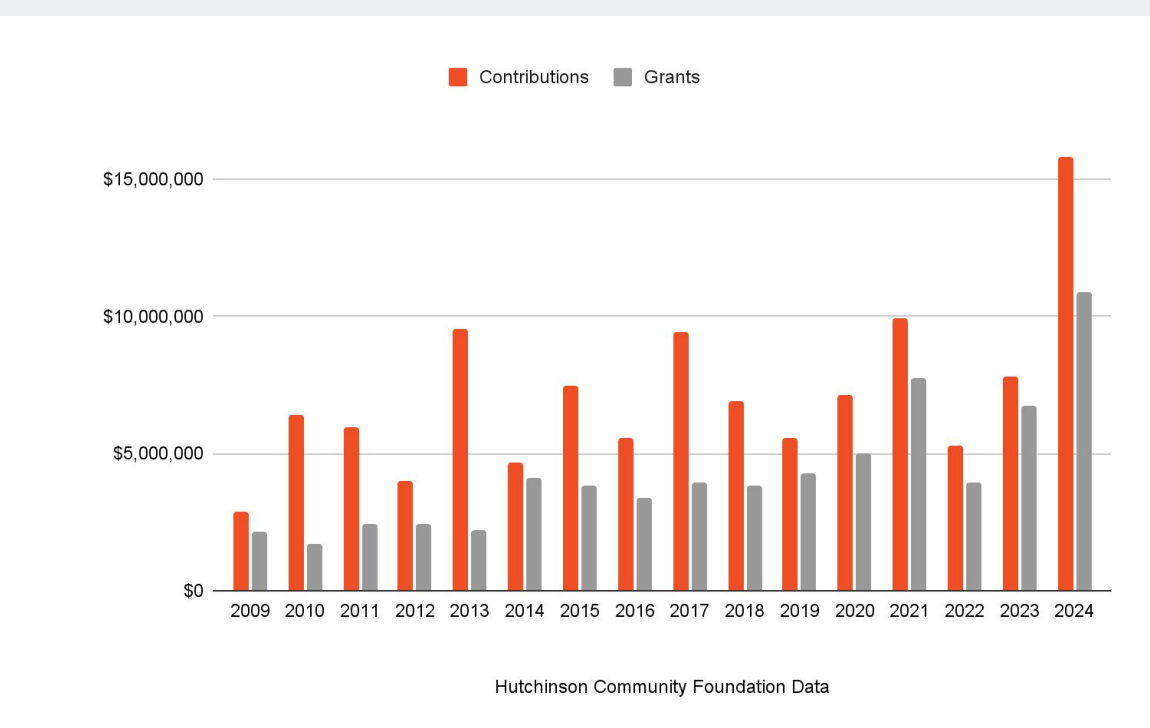
## School % Free-Reduced Price Lunch



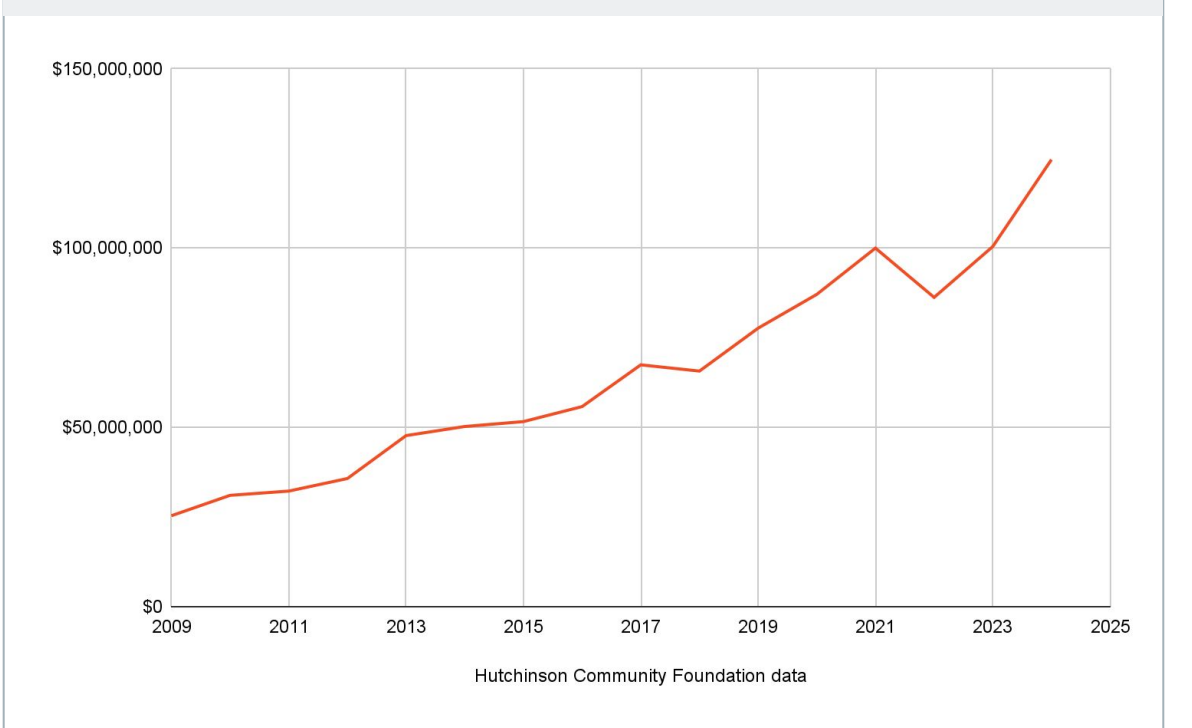
### Free/Reduced Lunch



## Hutchinson Community Foundation: Contributions & Grants



## Hutchinson Community Foundation: Total Assets

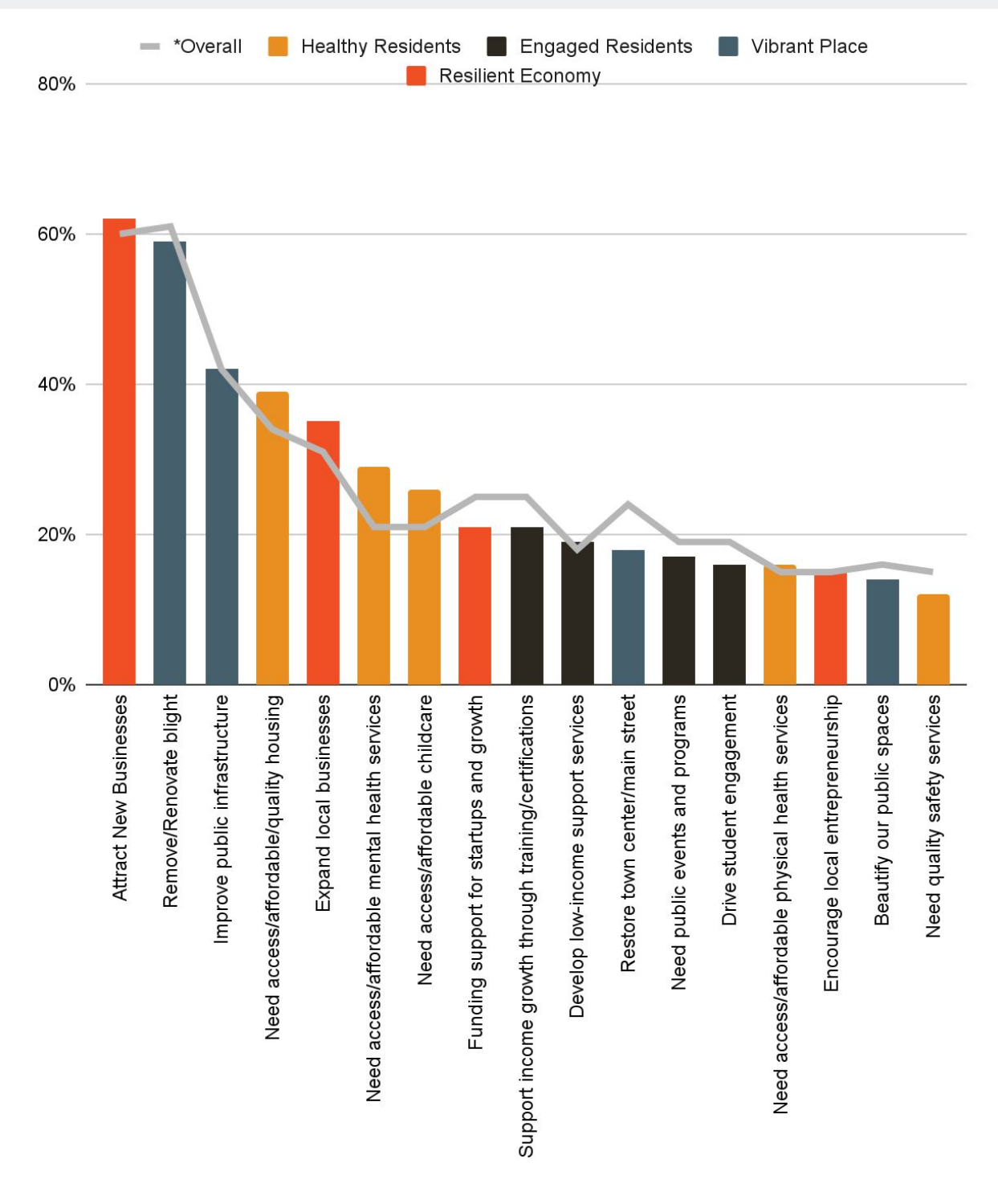


# Community Program Priorities

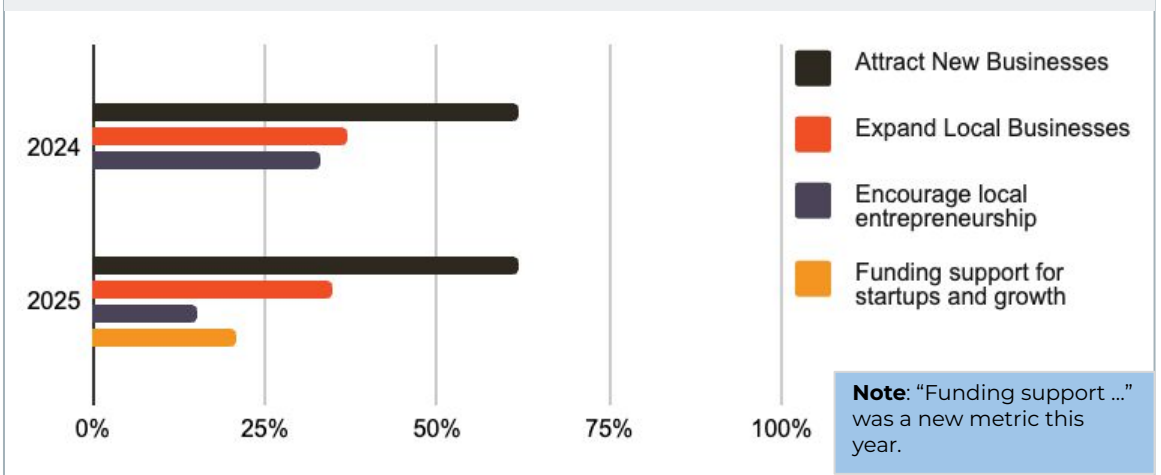
## Priorities Summary:

When residents imagine “unlimited funds,” they reach for big, visible transformation: core infrastructure, recreation and community spaces, corridor revitalization, and housing improvements that change the feel—and function—of everyday life. Hutchinson puts slightly stronger weight than many regional peers on housing and increasing business opportunities—signals that stability and livability are seen as economic strategy, not just “nice to have.” Priority Programs reinforce that mix: attract new businesses and expand existing ones, remove/renovate blight, improve infrastructure, and increase housing access and affordability.

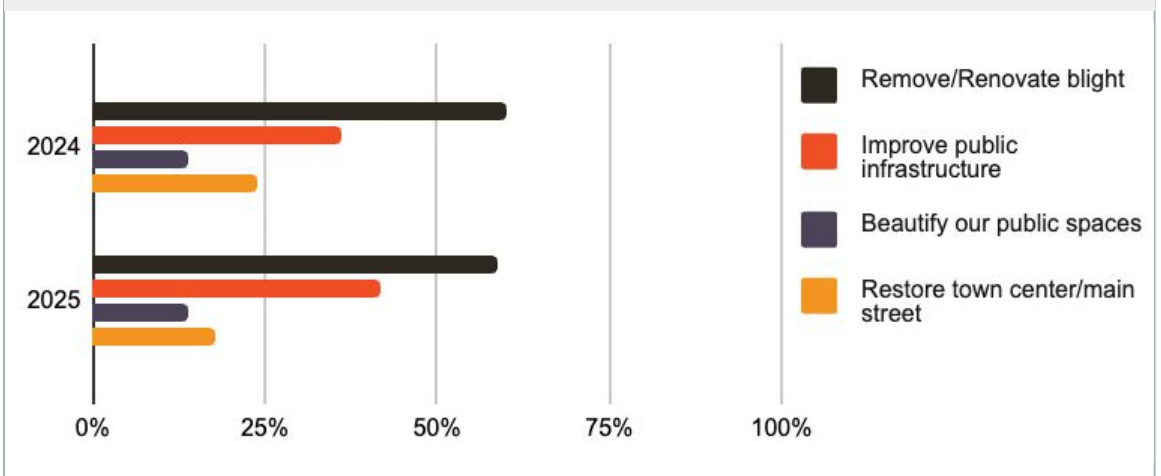
### Program Priorities



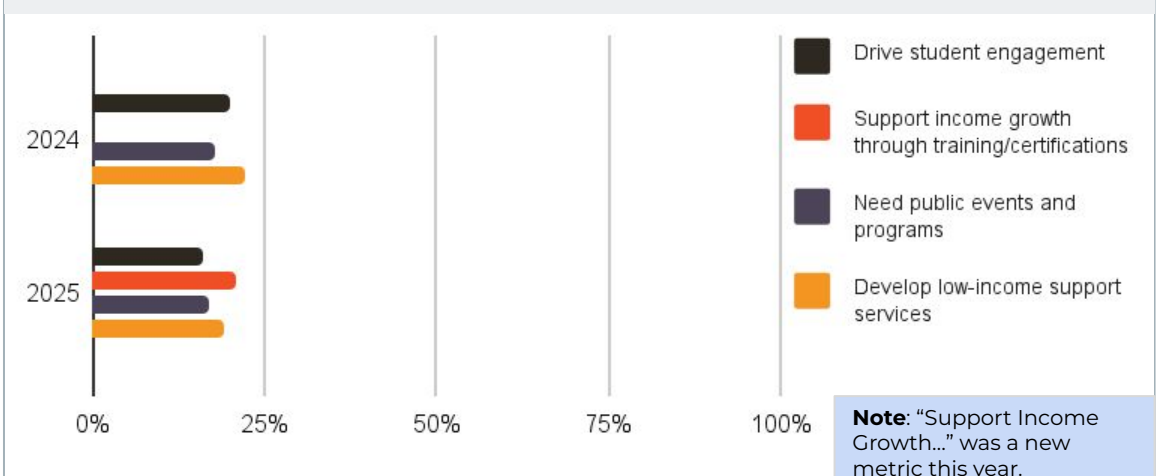
### Resilient Economy



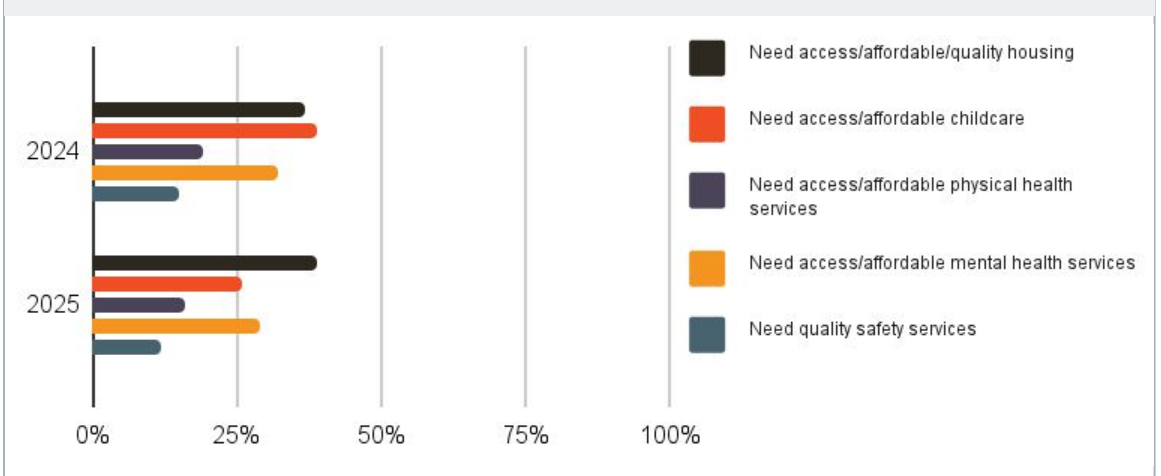
### Vibrant Place



### Engaged Residents

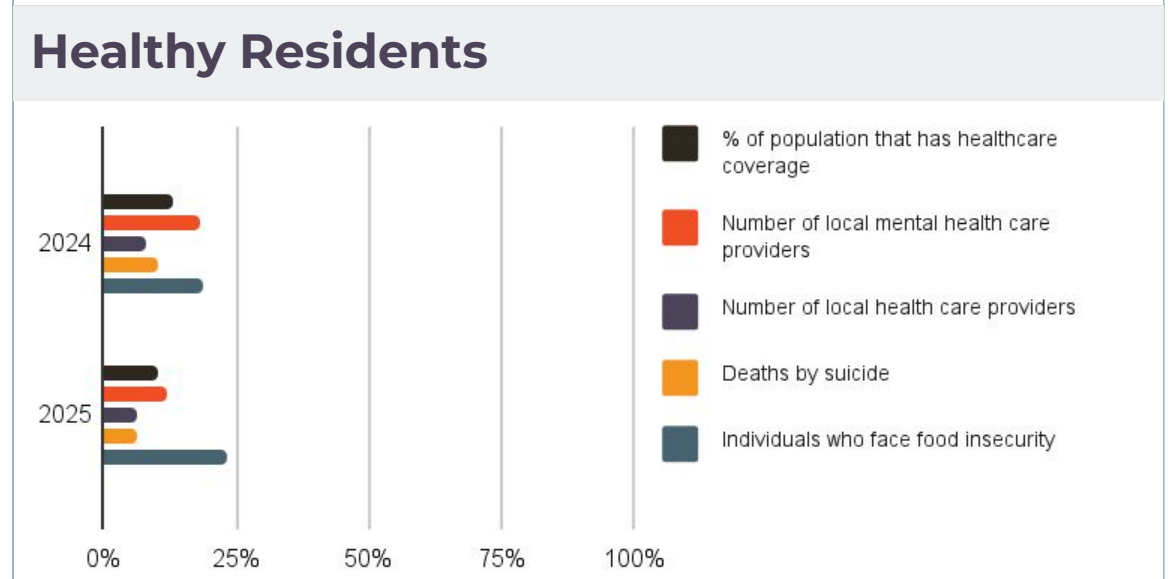
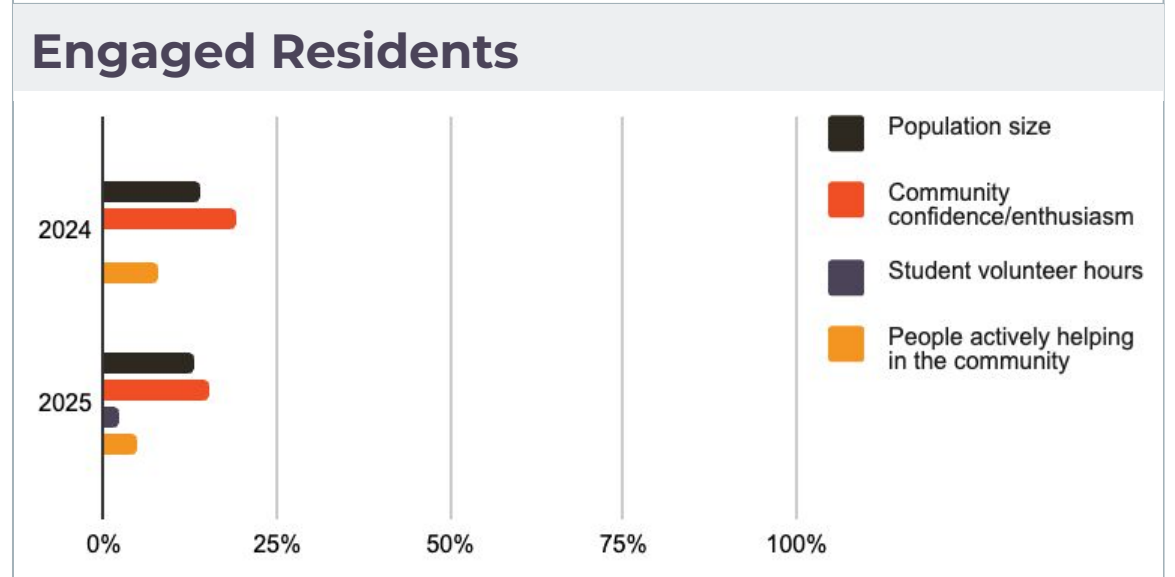
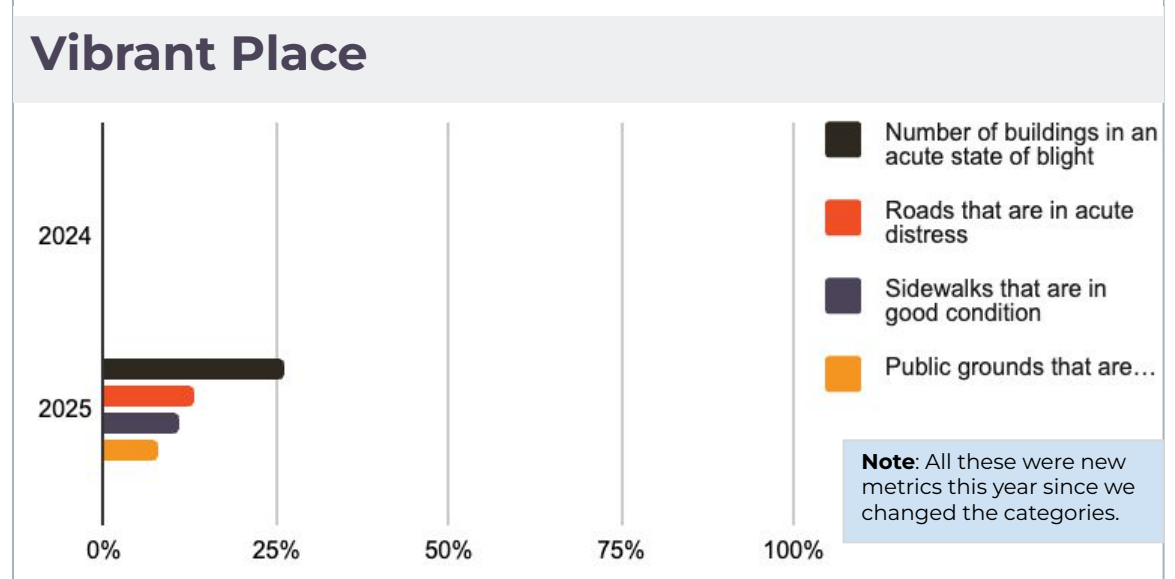
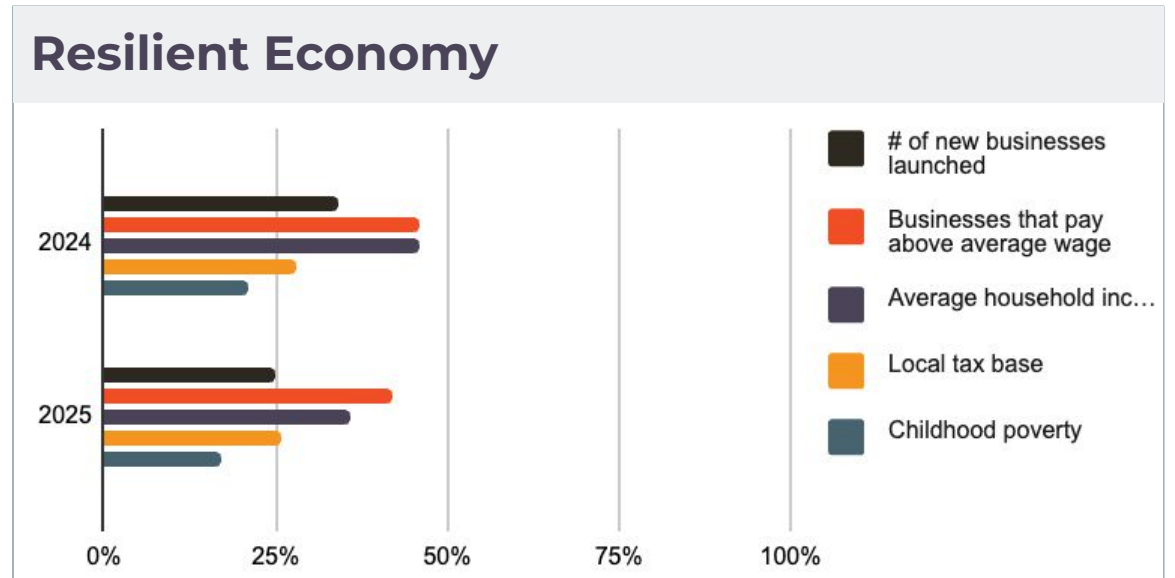
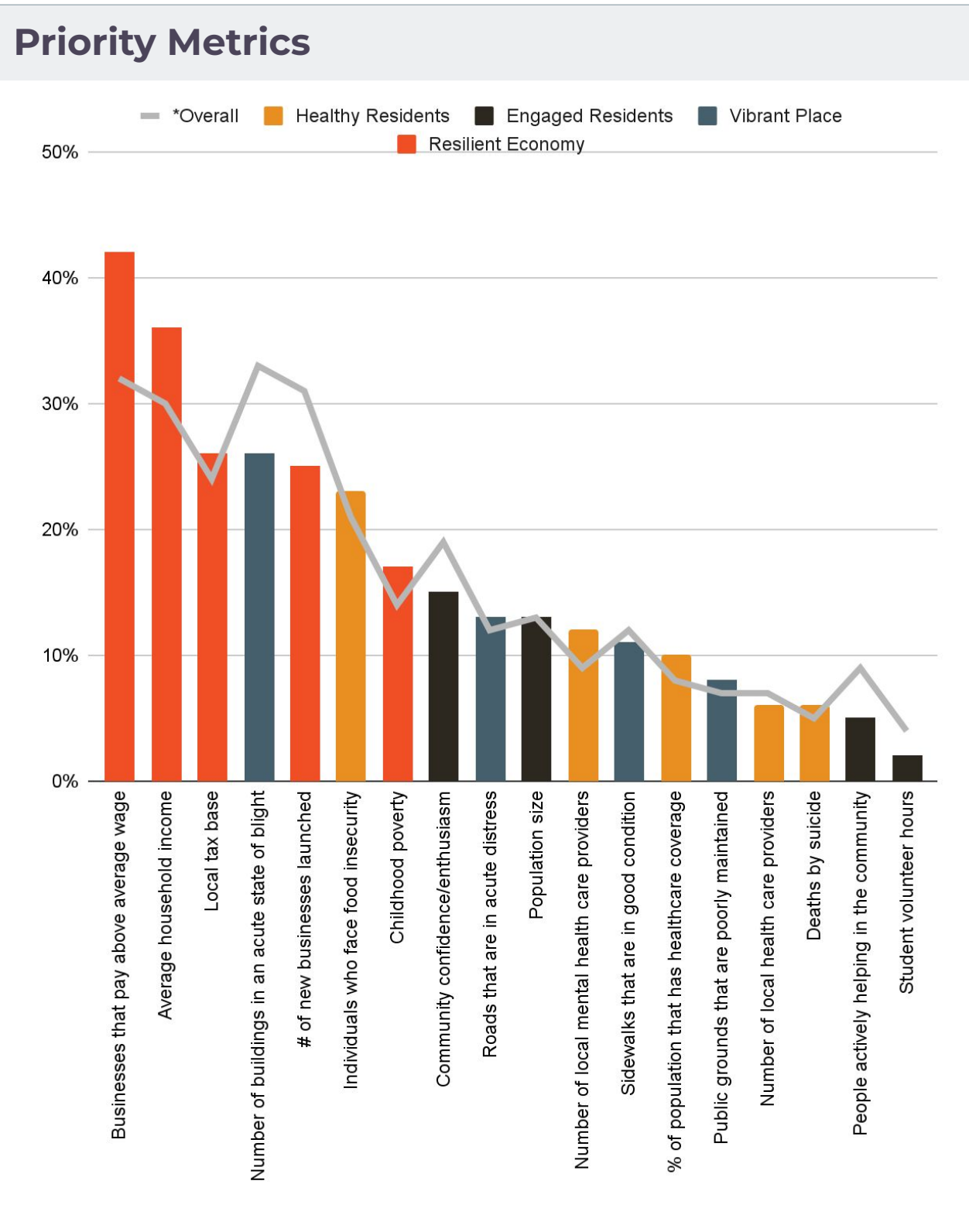


### Healthy Residents

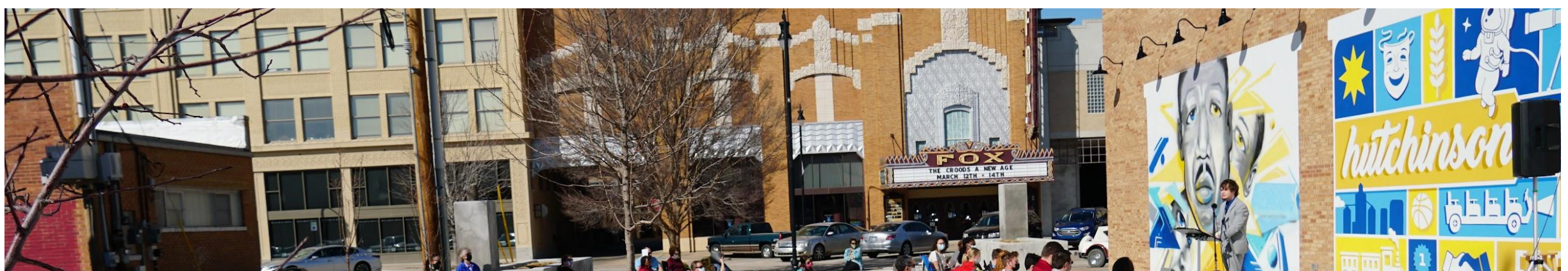


- Which Resilient Economy priorities (Attract New Businesses, Expand Local Businesses) will most directly raise wages and household income—and what “first wins” can be achieved in 12 months?
- Hutchinson ranks housing access/affordability above Overall (39% vs 34%); what specific housing actions feel most urgent: rehab, infill, rentals, or supportive housing?
- Blight removal and infrastructure both score high as programs (59% and 42%); which corridors or gateways should be prioritized to maximize visible impact and private investment?

# Community Priority Metrics



- Hutchinson’s top metric in Resilient Economy is “Businesses that pay above average wage” (42%); what employer types or sectors best fit the community’s workforce and assets?
- Blight reduction (# buildings acute) is a top metric (26%); what enforcement, incentives, or redevelopment tools should be used to reduce that count meaningfully?
- Road conditions (13%) and sidewalks in good condition (11%) are mid-tier metrics; how can the community pick projects that are visible and safety-focused even with limited funds?



## Investing In Local Priorities

**What project should be undertaken locally if money, time, or skills were not a constraint? What outcome would this create in the next 2-3 years?**

- Street & Core Infrastructure Fixes – Repair roads/brick streets, bridges, and basic maintenance to improve safety and curb appeal
- Housing Supply + Quality Upgrades – Expand affordable and middle-income options, rehab unsafe units, and add senior housing to stabilize families
- Job Creation + Higher Wages – Recruit/expand industry and manufacturing to raise wages, increase benefits, and strengthen the middle class
- Blight Removal + Vacant Property Rehab – Renovate/demolish abandoned properties and repurpose empty buildings to reduce decay and improve gateways

**If we could only invest \$15k in a program each year for the next 3 years, what project should we work on? What outcome would this create in the next 2-3 years?**

- Better-Paying Jobs + Industry Growth – Recruit/expand employers to grow living-wage jobs, strengthen the middle class, and broaden the tax base
- Housing Supply + Rehab – Add affordable/middle-income options and rehab rundown homes to stabilize neighborhoods and reduce homelessness pressure
- Childcare Availability + Affordability – Expand daycare slots and supports so parents can work and families feel more stable
- Downtown / Main Street Revitalization – Activate empty buildings and create a walkable district to boost spending, pride, and visitor draw

## Serving your community!

**How do you serve your community today?**

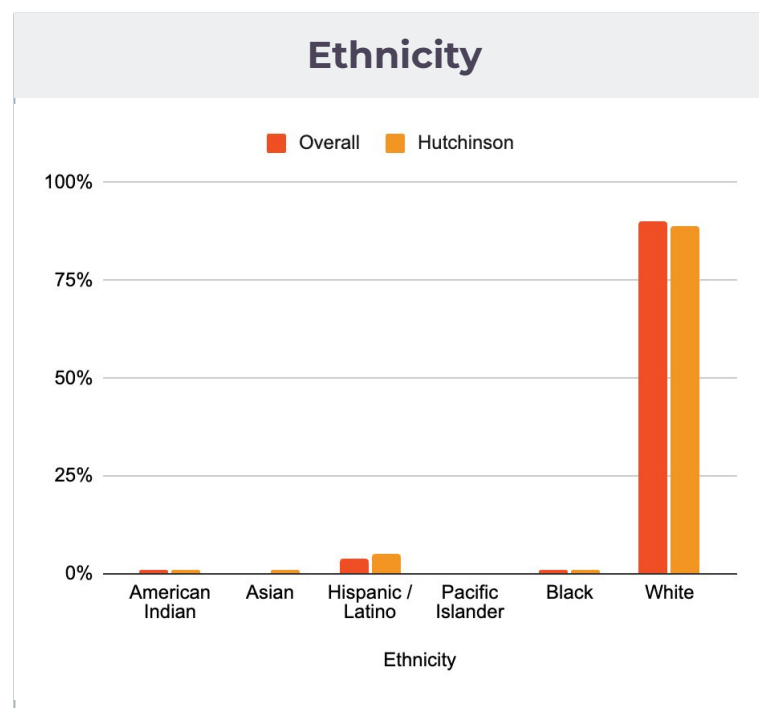
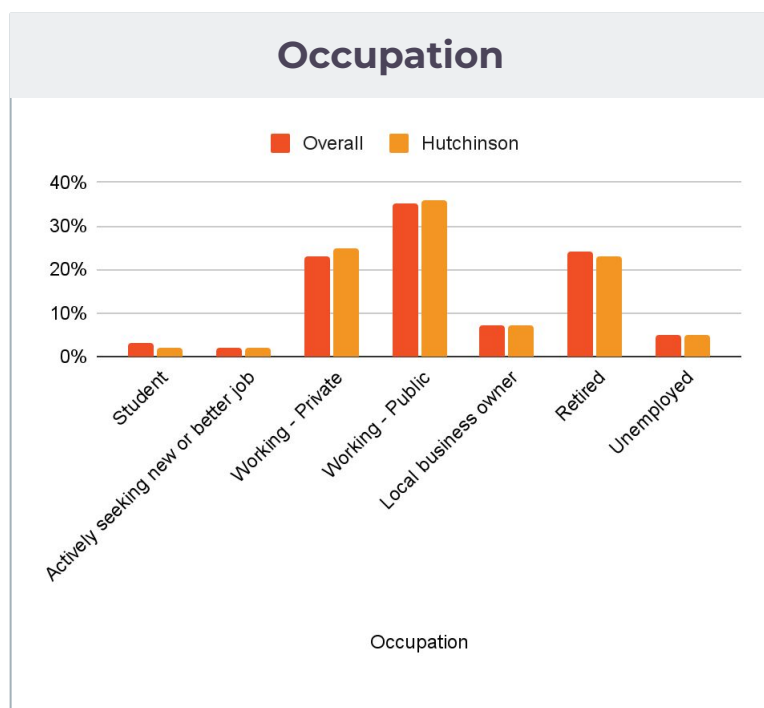
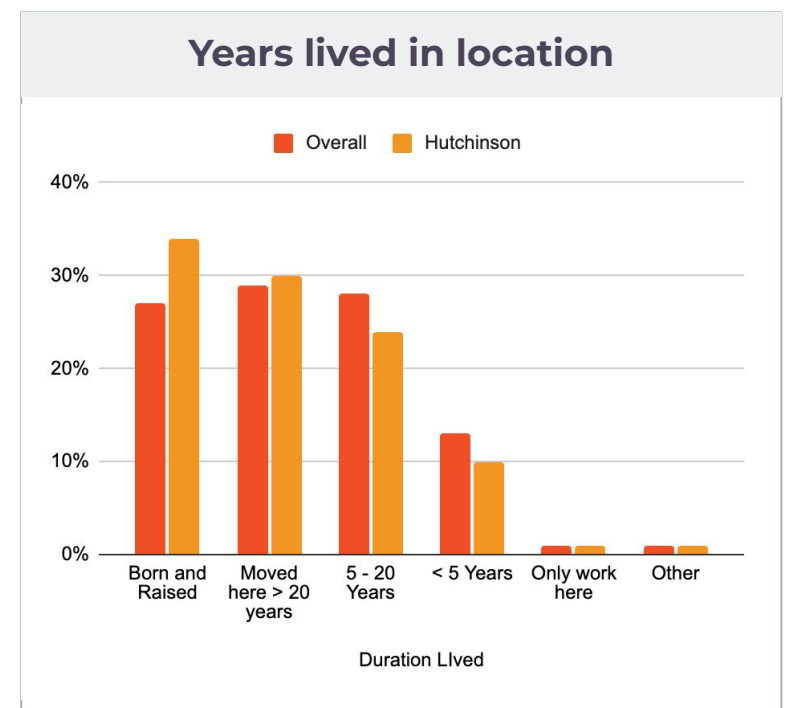
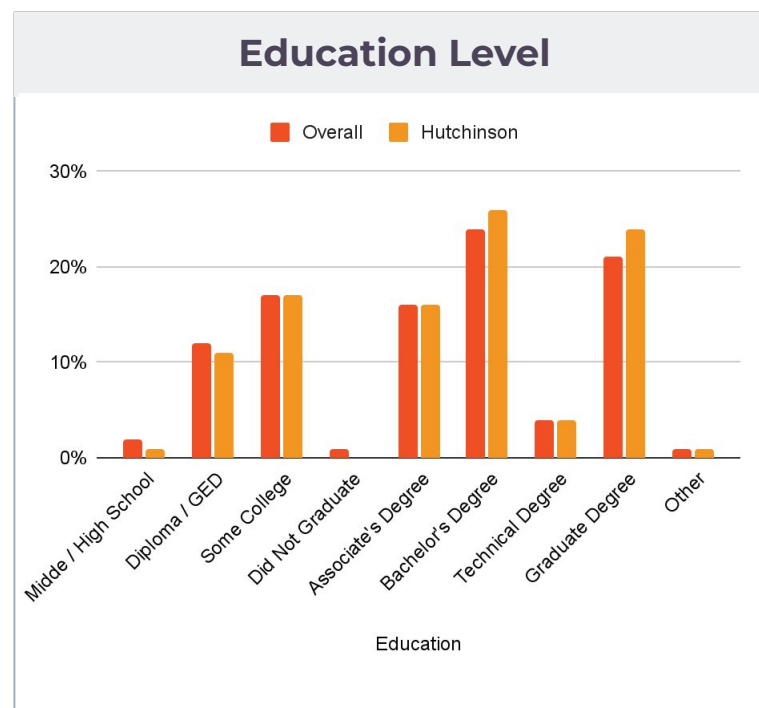
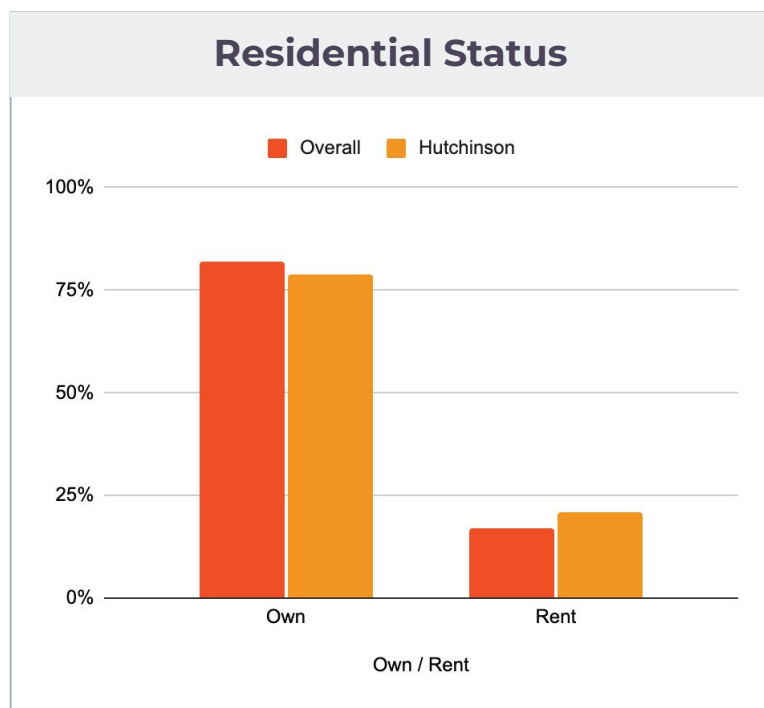
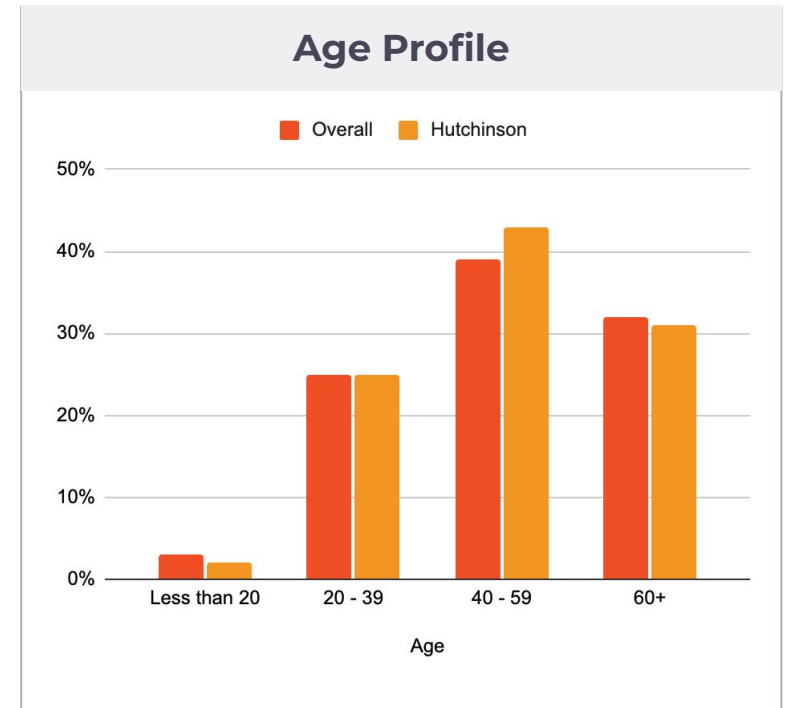
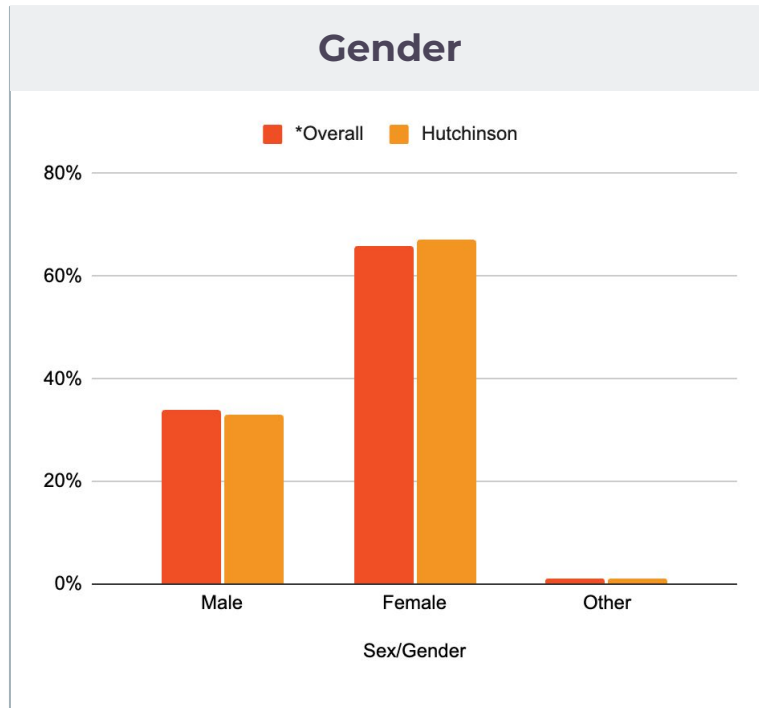
- Volunteer with Nonprofits / Service Orgs – Food support, outreach, & community aid through local organizations
- Serve Through Their Job – Public-facing work (schools, healthcare, EMS, city services) that directly helps residents
- Church / Faith-Based Service – Outreach, ministry, and practical support coordinated through congregations
- Boards / Commissions / Civic Leadership – Time spent guiding community groups, committees, and local decision-making
- Help Individuals + Youth Support – Neighbor-to-neighbor help, mentoring/coaching, and showing up for kids and families

**How would you like to serve your community in the future?**

- Show Up Where Needed – General willingness to keep helping in whatever way is useful
- Clear Pathways to Plug In – More visibility on volunteer options, roles, and how to start
- Leadership & Civic Involvement – Serve on boards/committees or run for school board/city council
- Community Pride & Care – Help with events, welcoming efforts, advocacy, and neighborhood clean-up
- Support Vulnerable Neighbors – Focus on homelessness, hunger, recovery, mental health, and housing stability

# Survey Respondents

**691**  
Total Responses



- Current Employment Opportunities differs sharply by Occupation: those actively seeking work report very low confidence (~88%), while students are mildly positive (7%).
- Perceptions that leaders serve the broader interests vary by Education: graduate degree holders rate this much higher (4.27) than technical degree holders (2.46).
- Support for encouraging local entrepreneurship splits by Education: technical degree respondents prioritize it far more (52%) than those with some college (19%).

**Average Community Score**  
**Town Score**

**262** Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community (38%)