

Love WHERE YOU *Live*

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

**2025
Pretty Prairie
Benchmark
Report**

Hutchinson 
community
FOUNDATION



Innovation Economy Partners
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

info@HutchCF.org | hutchcf.org

What Makes Our Community Special?

Small but mighty...care for each other!

Anonymous

We support each other and always come together when there is a need. Members of our community are part of multiple integral parts of our community... to better our community.

Maegan

We're a safe, small town with good people, a great school, an excellent library, and an AWESOME rodeo!

Tanna

The people, their caring, volunteerism, monthly summer get togethers, amazing rodeo bringing thousands of people to the town.

Anonymous

The rodeo each year. The volunteers who help with different projects when needed.

Liz

Everyone rallies to help when a need arises. We are there for each other.

Anonymous

The people are friendly and welcoming and lots of them care enough to work for a better community.

Anonymous

This community has a strong sense of pride and has a unique strength in coming together to help out a community member in need.

Anonymous

We have a community of dedicated volunteers... Hard workers can accomplish so much!

Anonymous

Close knit community, strongly supported school district & nursing home.

Nancy

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.

Leaders That Make Our Community Special



A word cloud of names in various sizes and colors (blue, red, grey) on a light grey background. The names include: james white, james blake, jake graber, sid strohl, jon strohl, bill schaben, mary treaster, dennis detter, jake strohl, dustin vanceyoc, ashley anderson, jenifer albright, angela devore, jeremy webb, tanna wagner, jason deel, sid graber, priscilla hoyt, and leslie epp.

Executive Summary:

Pretty Prairie enters 2025 with a clear paradox: people love this place, but they are unsure the economy will reward their loyalty. Commitment is the town's superpower—belonging is high, pride is real, and residents repeatedly show up through the rodeo, schools, churches, boards, and care for neighbors. At the same time, economic confidence is below the regional benchmark, investment intent is negative, and newcomers feel the most uncertainty. The path forward is not mysterious; it is visible and actionable. Residents are asking leaders to tackle visuals; blight first, restore Main Street, and use that momentum to attract new businesses and food options while creating fair, transparent support for startups and local entrepreneurs. Pair those place-based wins with workforce training pathways that lift income, and make progress measurable.

pgs **4-5**

Economic Confidence

Economic confidence is negative: today feels tough, but the future looks slightly brighter if the basics return—local food, childcare, and a cleaner downtown that invites investment.

pgs **6-8**

Community Engagement Confidence

Belonging runs deep and neighbors show up for each other, yet people want clearer plans and stronger shared trust—especially younger adults and newcomers who need easier pathways in.

pgs **10-12**

Critical Community Priorities

Top priorities are visible wins: remove blight, restore Main Street, launch new businesses, and support startups—while tracking progress in business launches and reducing food insecurity.

pg **13**

Survey Respondent Profile

Long-tenure residents show stronger emotional commitment and the biggest push for Main Street restoration, yet they're less likely to invest soon—suggesting pride is high but caution is real.

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

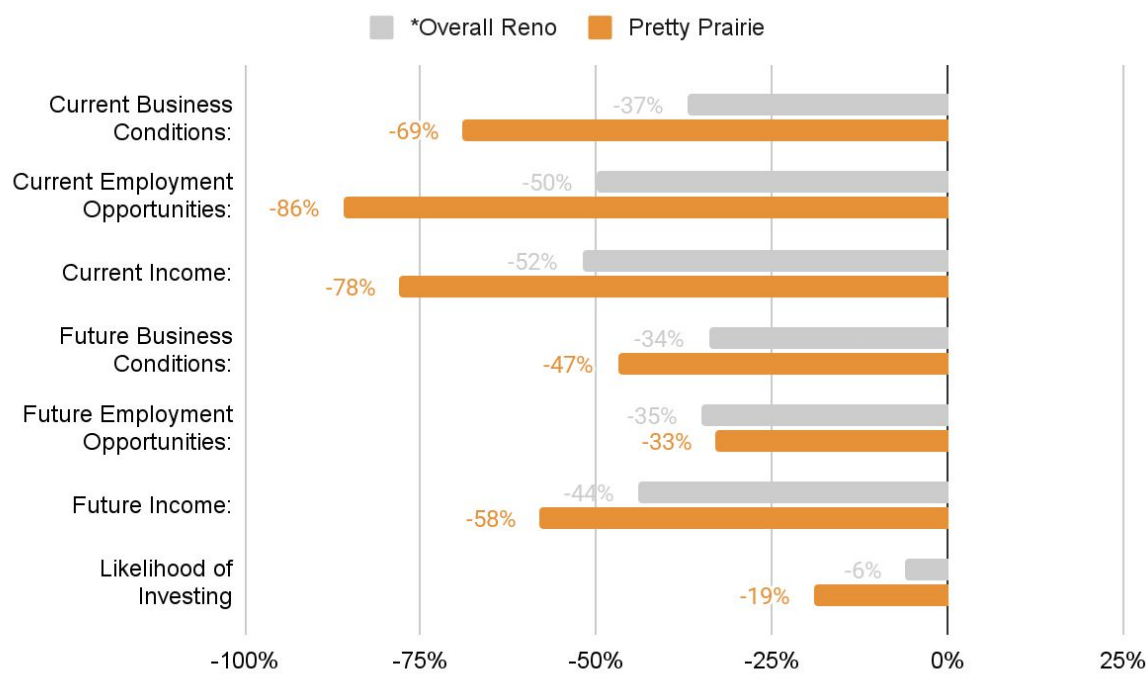
Economic Summary:

Economic confidence in 2025 carries a negative current tone and a future cautious tone while the likelihood of investing remains below zero. Yet the future feels a little less heavy than the present—residents can see a path to improvement if visible wins arrive. The story beneath the numbers is practical: people want the basics close to home (a grocery option, a reliable place to eat, childcare) and they want reasons to stay and spend locally. Younger residents have cooled slightly since 2024, while long-tenure households remain comparatively steadier; newcomers are the most uncertain. The opportunity is to turn “cautious optimism” into “earned confidence” through tangible, everyday convenience.

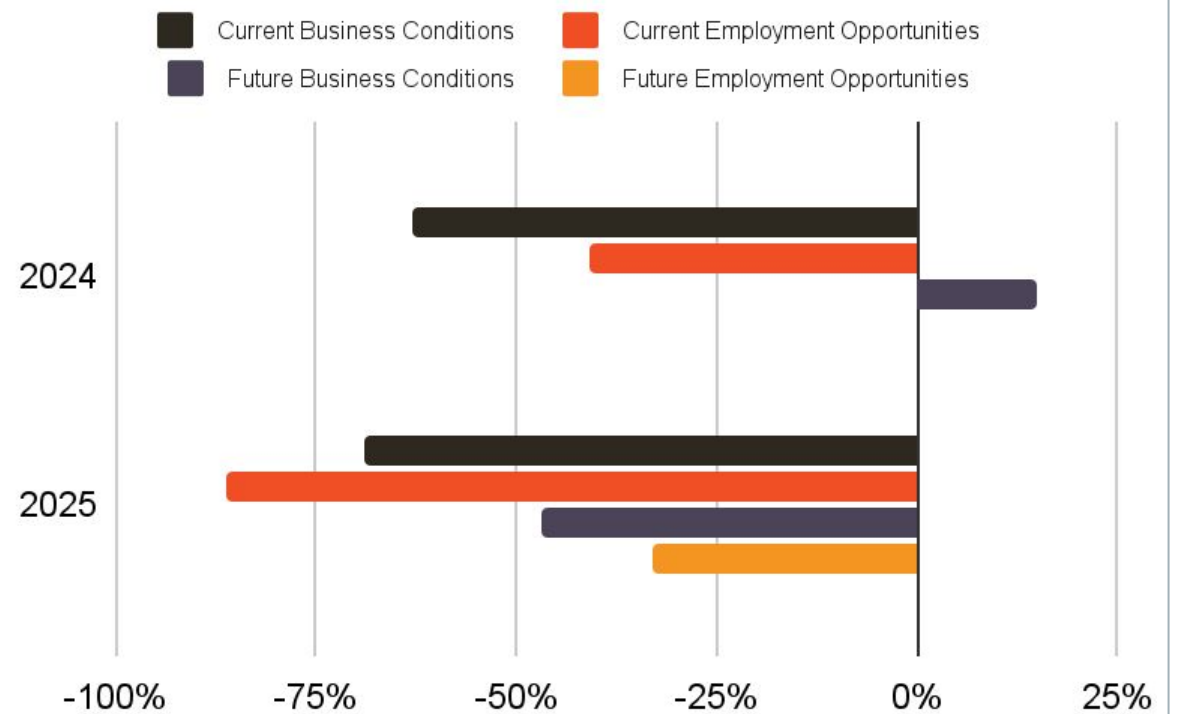
Businesses Needed In Our Town:

- **Grocery Store – Buy basics locally; fewer long trips.**
- **Restaurant – More sit-down options for families.**
- **Gym / Fitness Center – Indoor exercise and wellness space.**
- **Liquor Store / Bar – Gathering place; keeps spending local.**
- **Hardware Store – Home and DIY needs without driving out.**
- **Dollar Store – Affordable essentials and convenience.**
- **Pharmacy – Local prescriptions and health essentials.**
- **Laundromat – Basic service for renters and travelers.**

Our Economic Perceptions



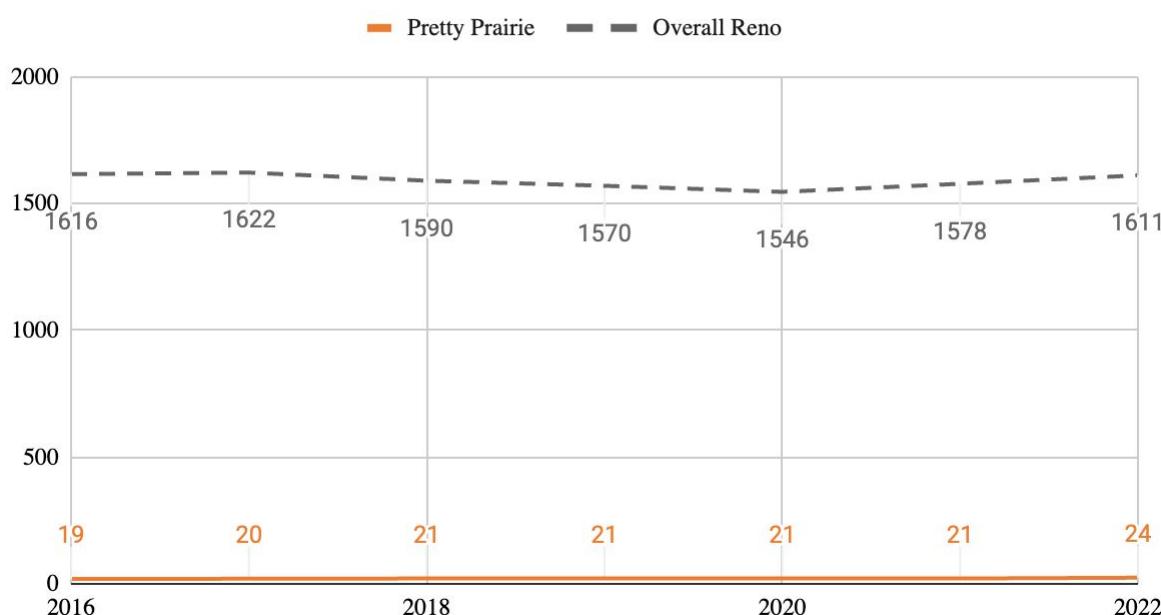
Year Over Year Change (2024 vs 2025)



Businesses in Our Town



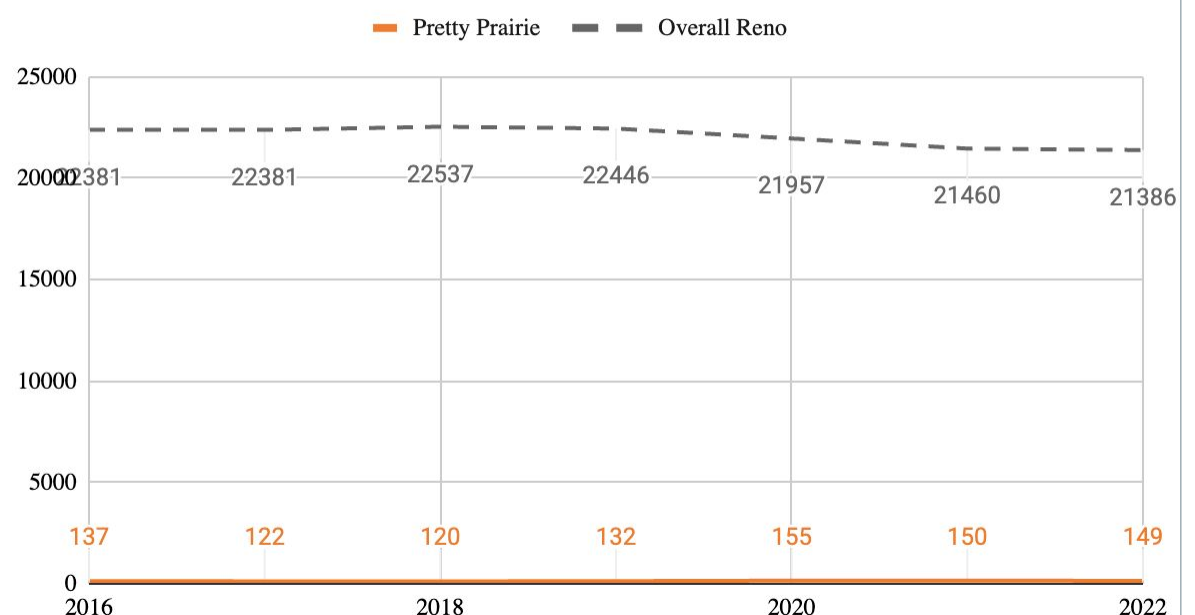
Businesses in Town



10 Year Shift in Local Jobs



Employment

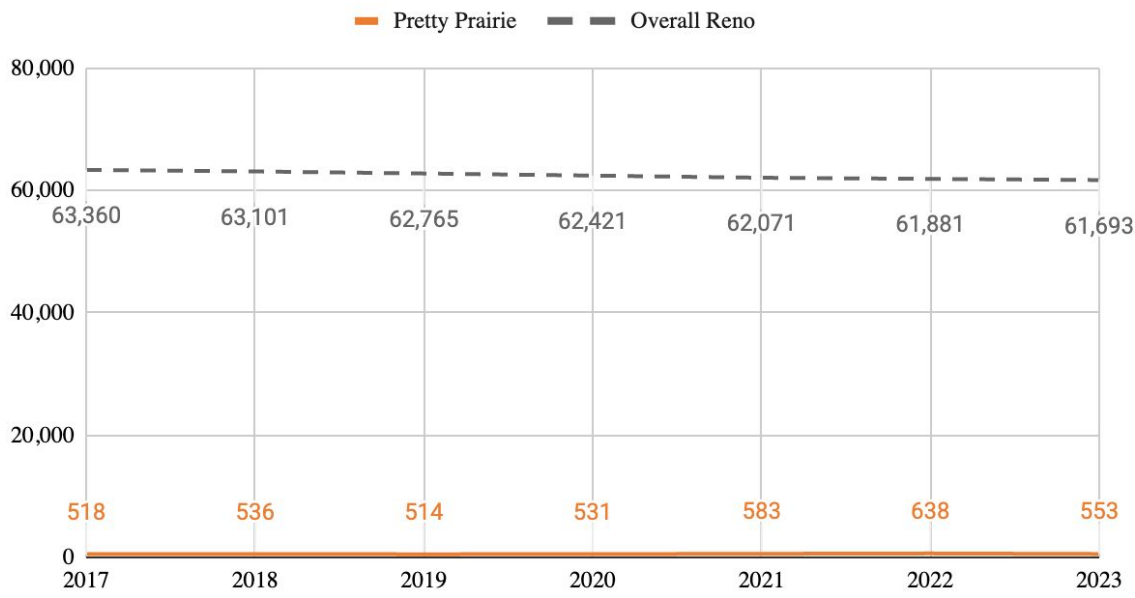


Local Economic Indicators (Cont'd)

Overall Population Trend



Population

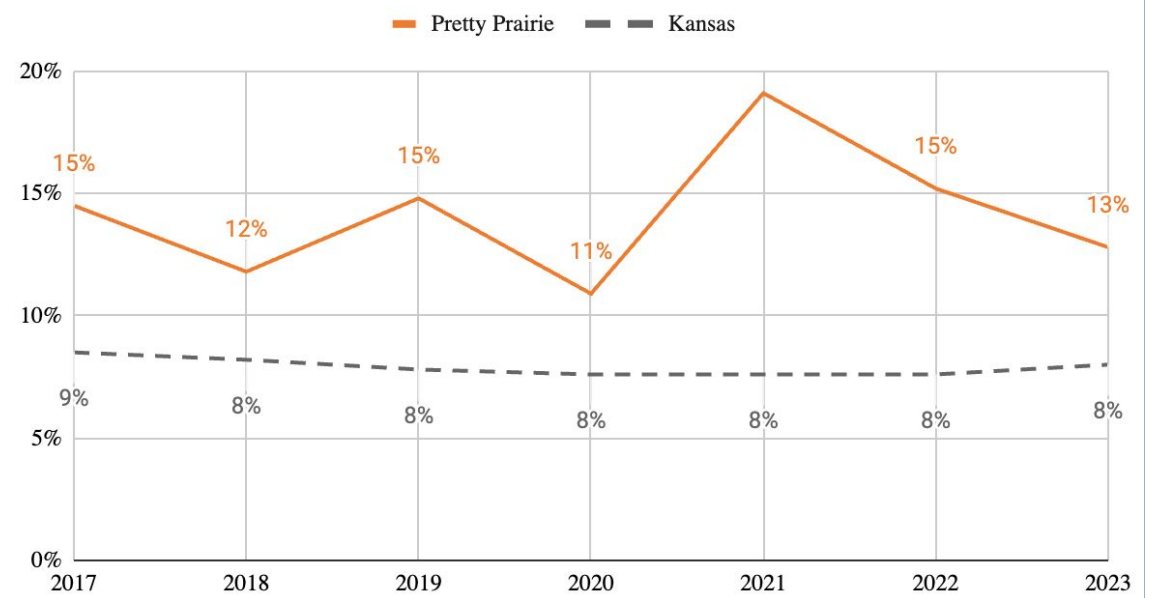


2020 official decennial census data for Pretty Prairie, KS: 660
Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg

Local Poverty Rate



Poverty Rate

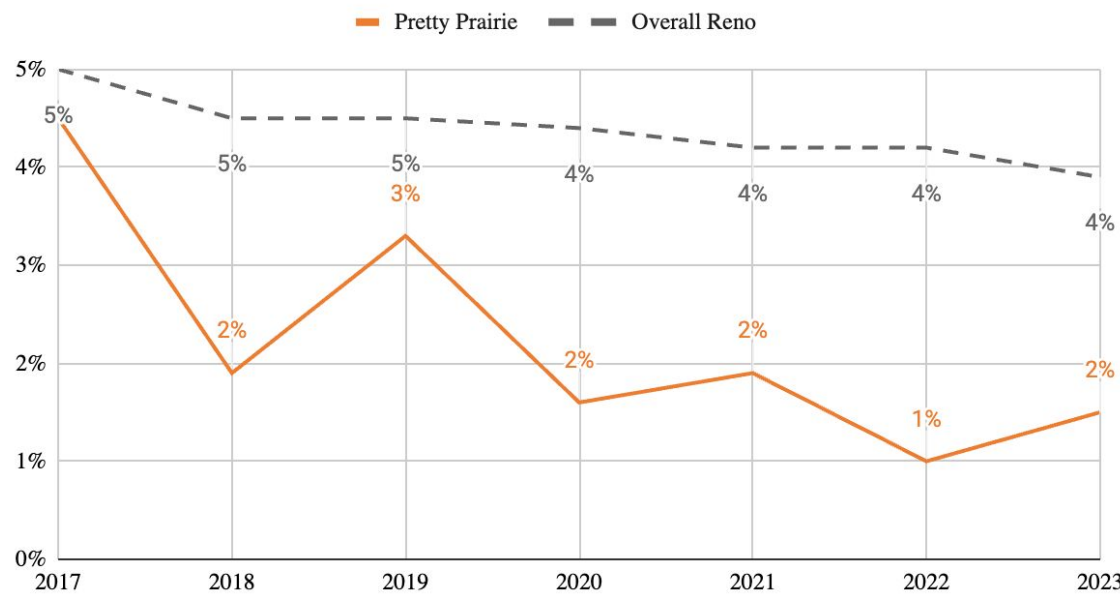


Data source:USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

Local Unemployment Rate



Unemployment Rate

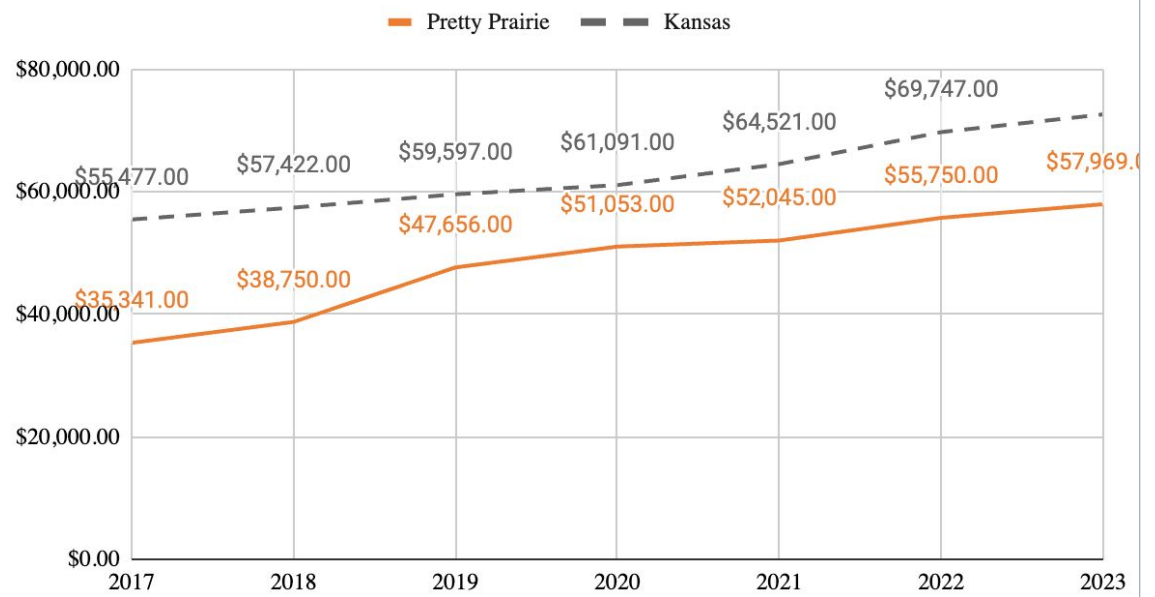


Data source:USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

Median Household Income



Median Household Income

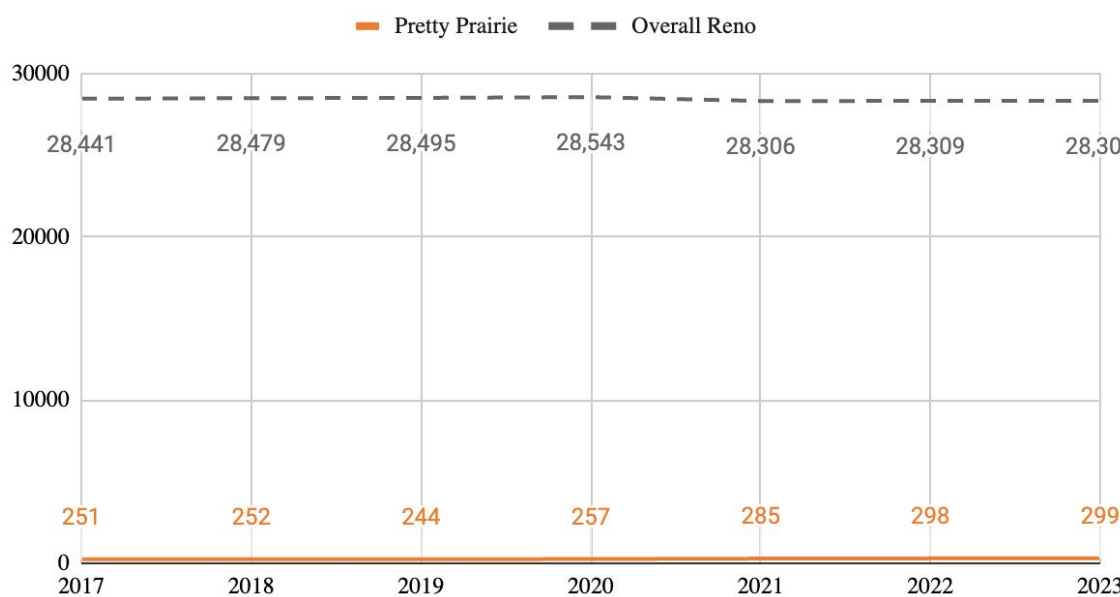


Data source:USCB, American Community Survey, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

Total Housing Units



Housing Units

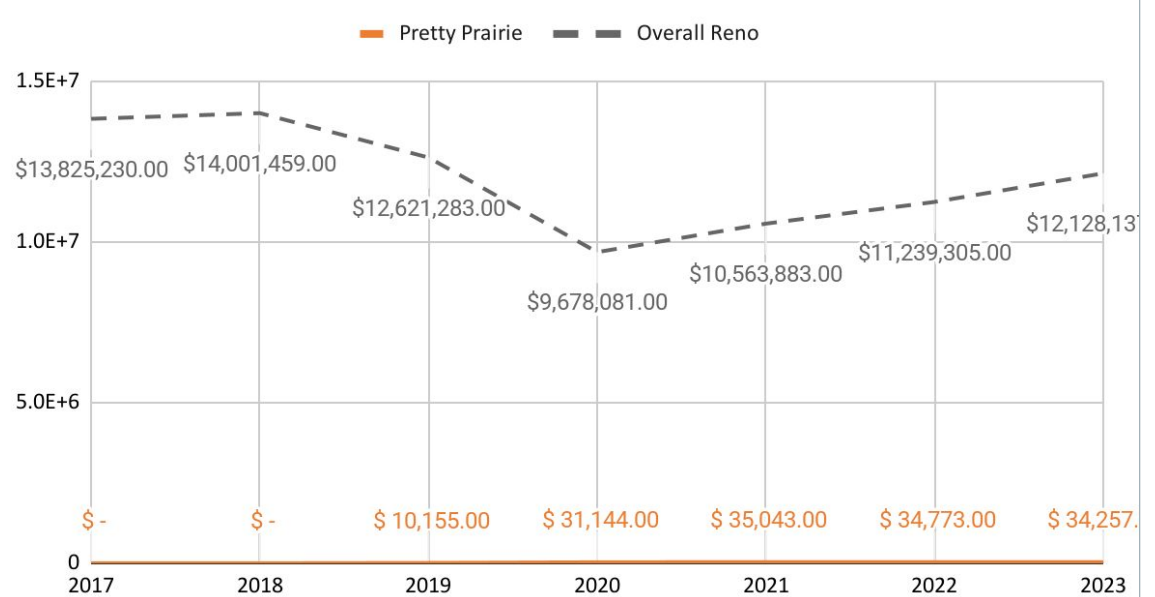


Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg

Annual Sales Tax Collection



Annual Sales Tax Collection



Data source:Kansas Dept of Revenue

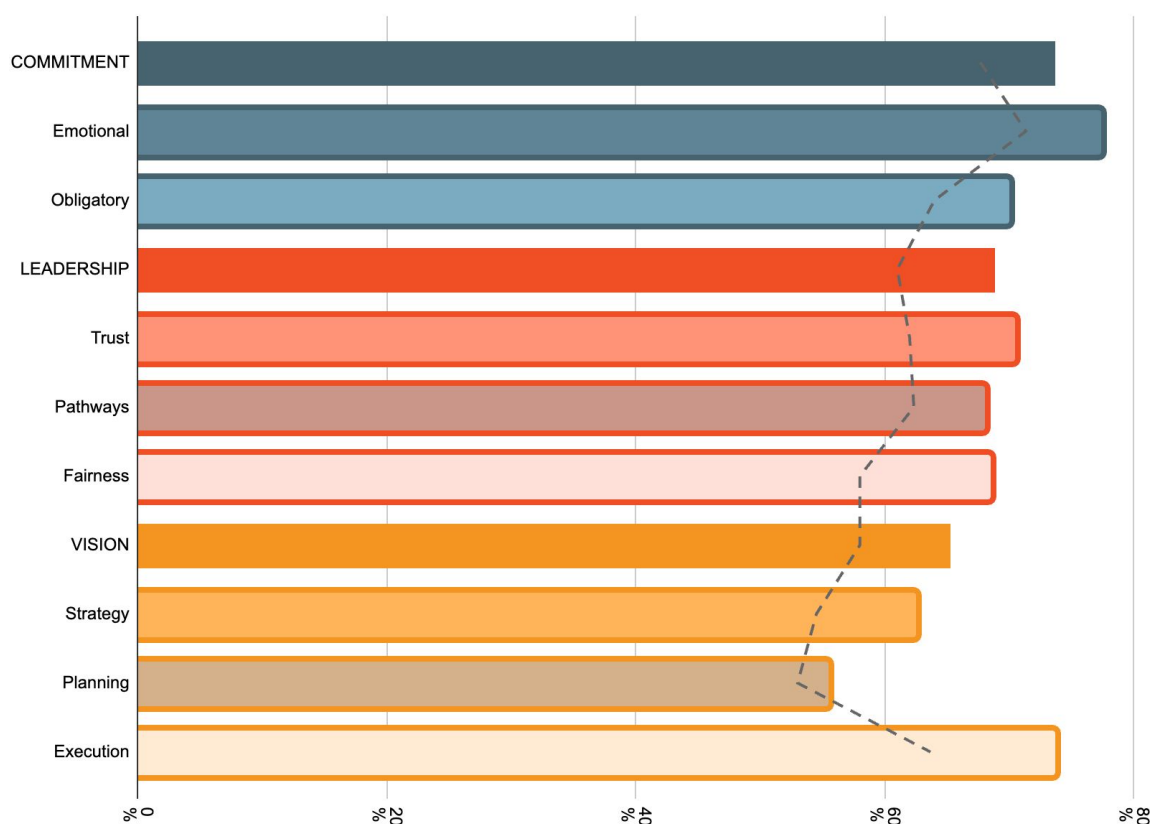
Confidence In Our Local Community

Engagement Summary:

Behind the statistics, the community's emotional foundation is strong. Most residents say the town is personally meaningful, they feel they belong, and many would be happy to spend the rest of their lives here. That deep attachment shows up when neighbors rally, churches and boards carry weight, and volunteers keep traditions running. Where the confidence softens is in the "how": residents are more certain that the community can execute than they are that a documented plan exists or that the path forward is clearly written down. Leadership confidence is moderate, with fairness and transparency improving year over year.



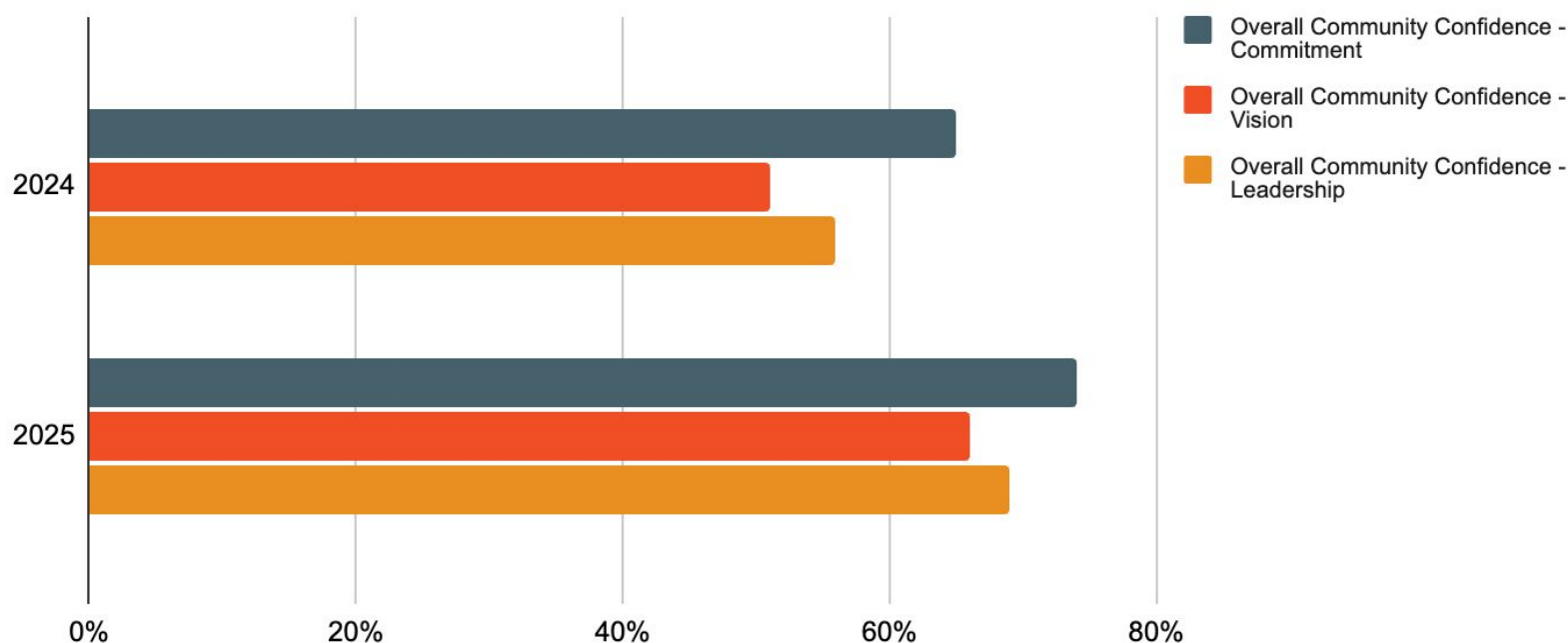
How do our residents view our community?



Questions:

- What helps explain the high strength in Commitment (Emotional), and how can the town extend that same "belonging" to newer residents?
- What could be the cause of the large jump in the YoY change?
- Residents feel progress is happening—what 2–3 visible wins should be prioritized next to sustain confidence in execution?
- Where do younger adults feel leadership decisions are least aligned with resident needs, and what feedback loops would rebuild trust?
- What are the biggest gaps between long-tenure residents' rising confidence and younger adults' skepticism, and how can leaders bridge that perception divide?
- How can the community better communicate the "where we're headed in 5–10 years" story in plain language across multiple channels?
- Which single change in planning documentation would most increase confidence in the community's path forward?

Year Over Year Change

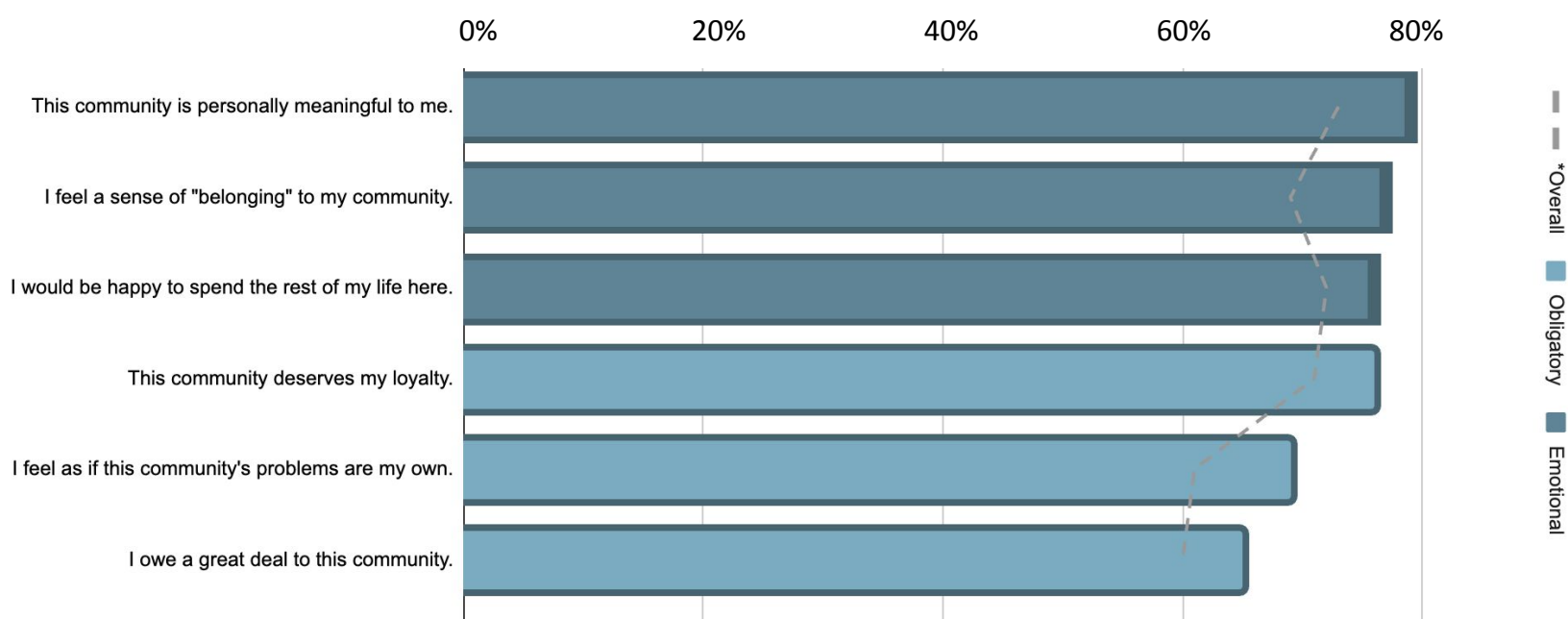


Confidence In Our Local Community

Average Reno County Score

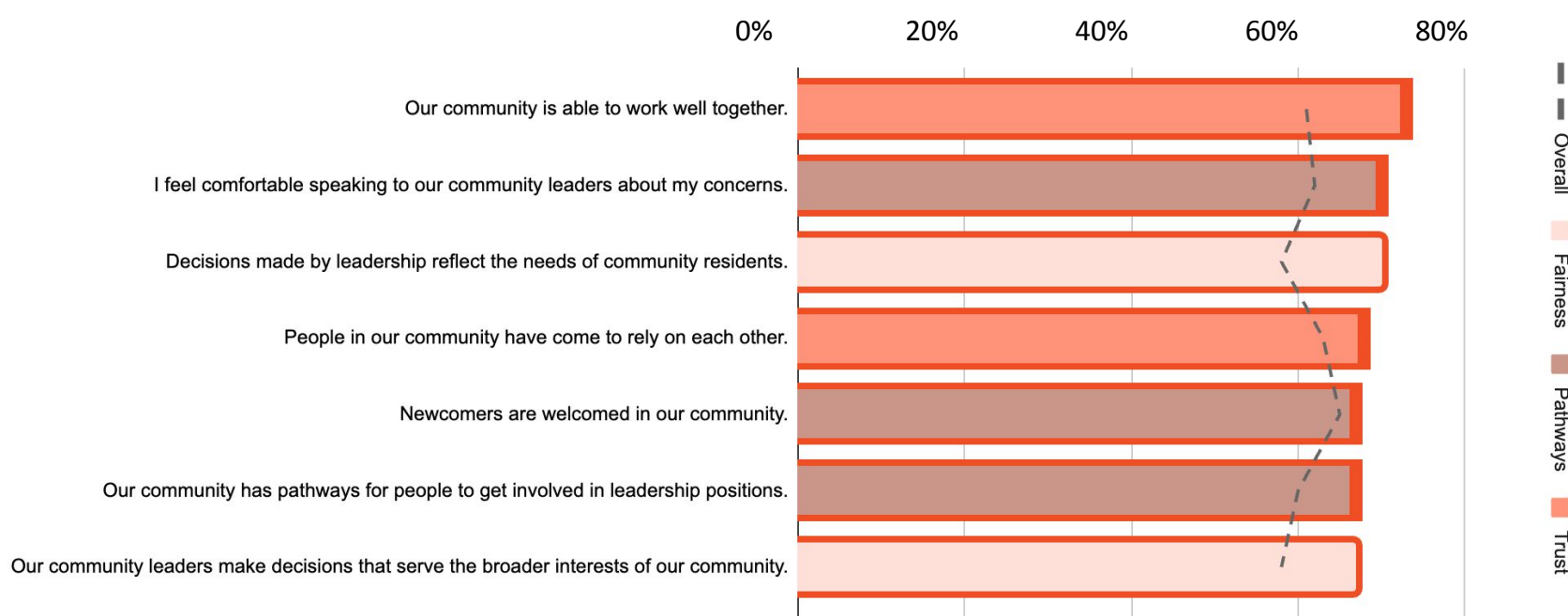
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



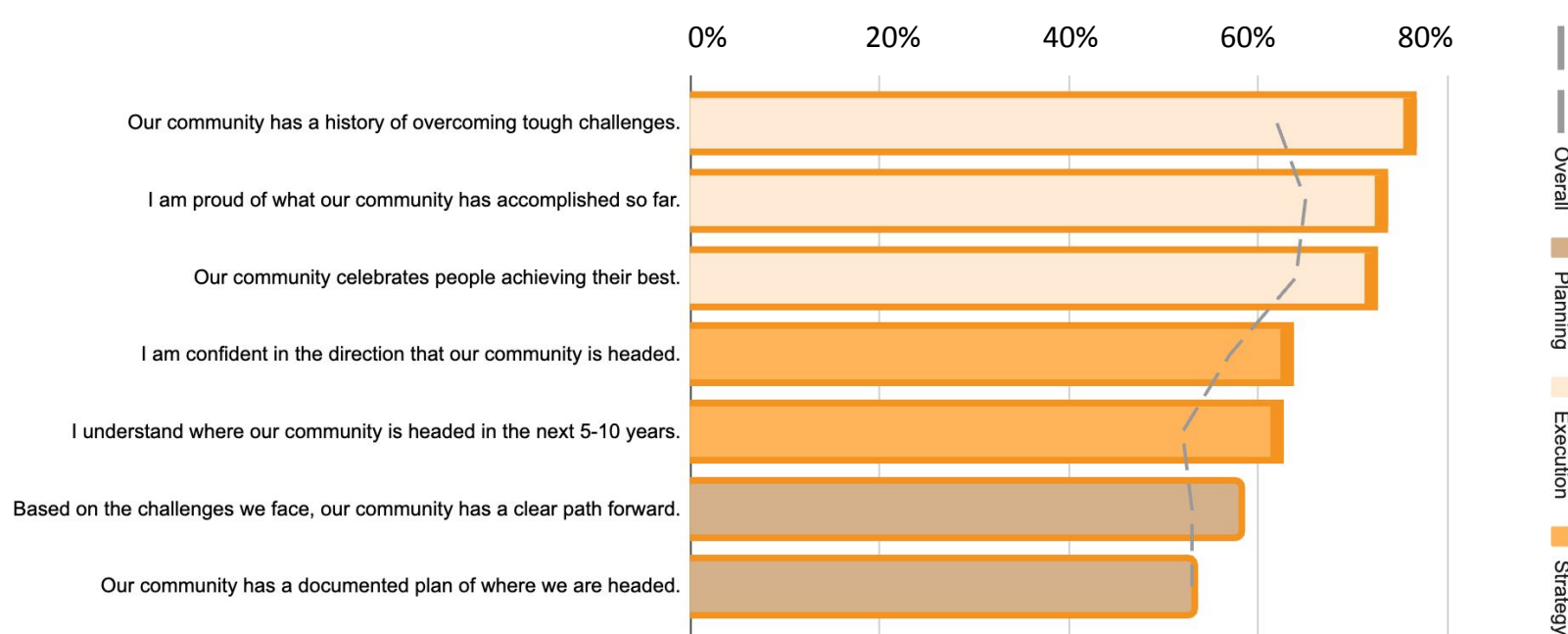
- What keeps "personally meaningful" and "belonging" so strong, and how can those strengths be protected as the town changes?
- What would help more residents feel the community's problems are their own in a healthy, non-burnout way?
- How can families with children be empowered to lead community-building efforts that deepen loyalty and pride?

Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- Fairness and transparency improved—what behaviors or decisions drove that change, and how can they become standard practice?
- Where do residents feel decisions don't reflect community needs, and how can leaders show alignment more clearly?
- What would make it easier to speak to leaders about concerns (office hours, listening sessions, digital options)?

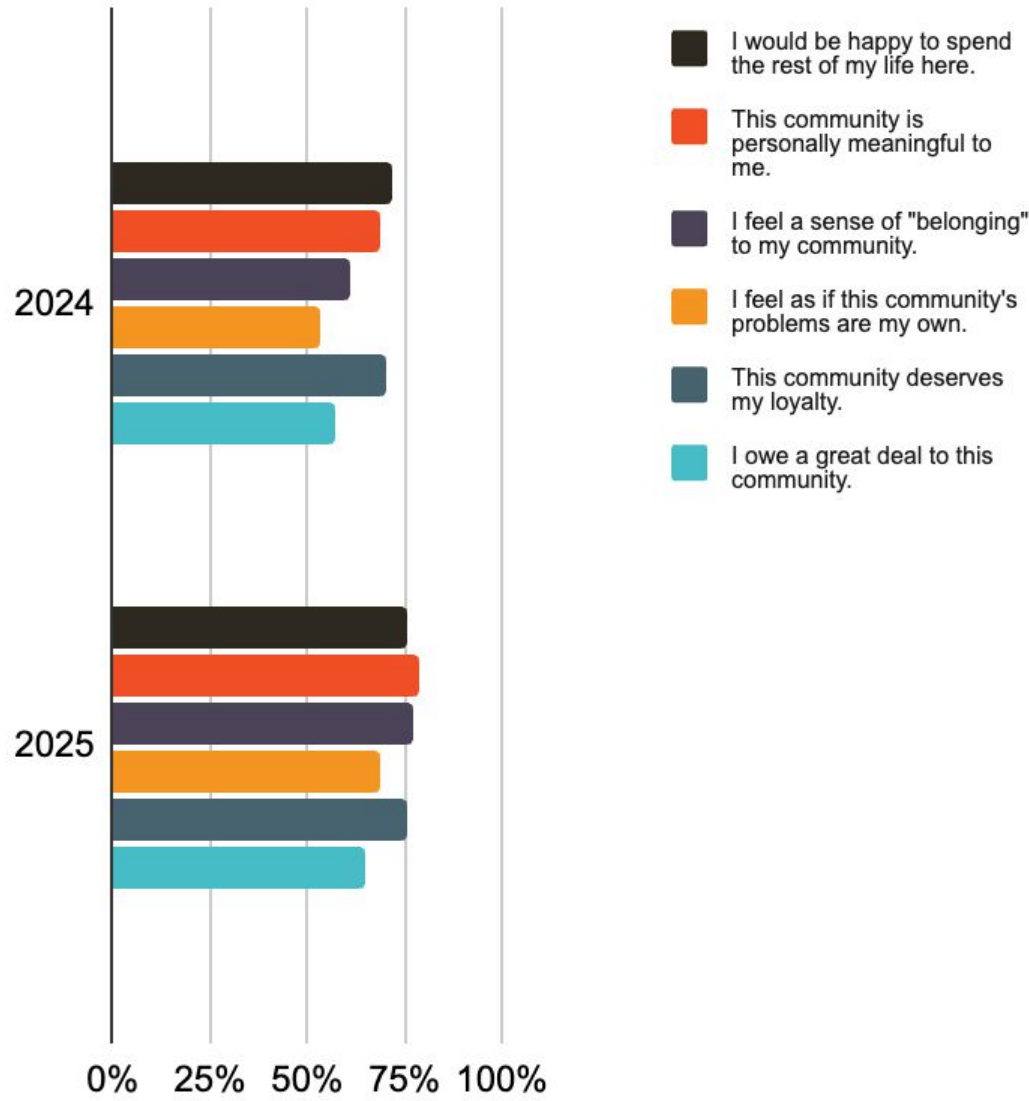
Community Confidence: Vision



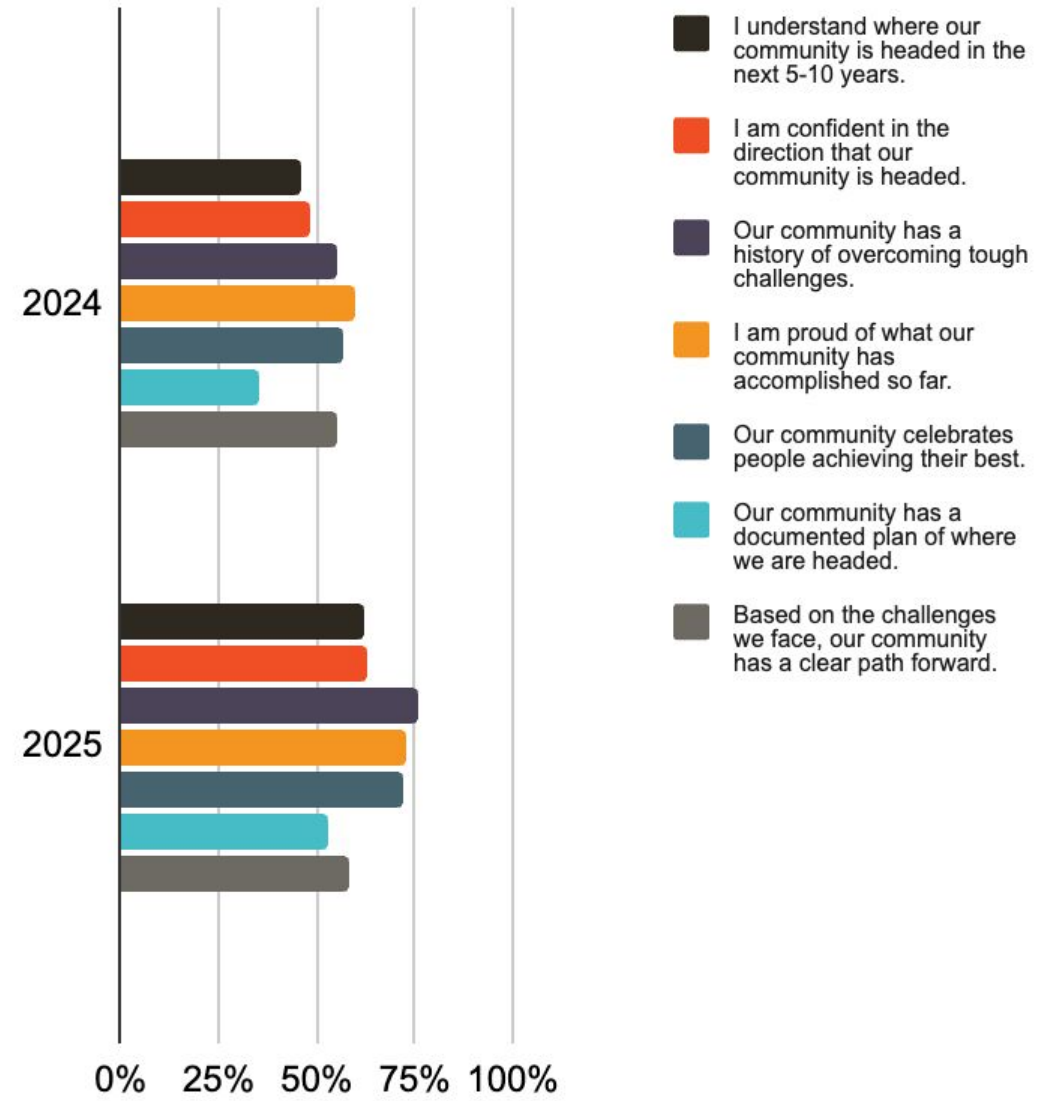
- What's missing from a "documented plan," and who should own creating and updating it?
- Execution confidence is rising—what projects or improvements are residents seeing that prove progress is happening?
- How can leaders translate the community's challenges into a clear path forward with milestones people can track?
- What would make retirees, families, and newcomers all feel equally confident?

Confidence In Our Local Community

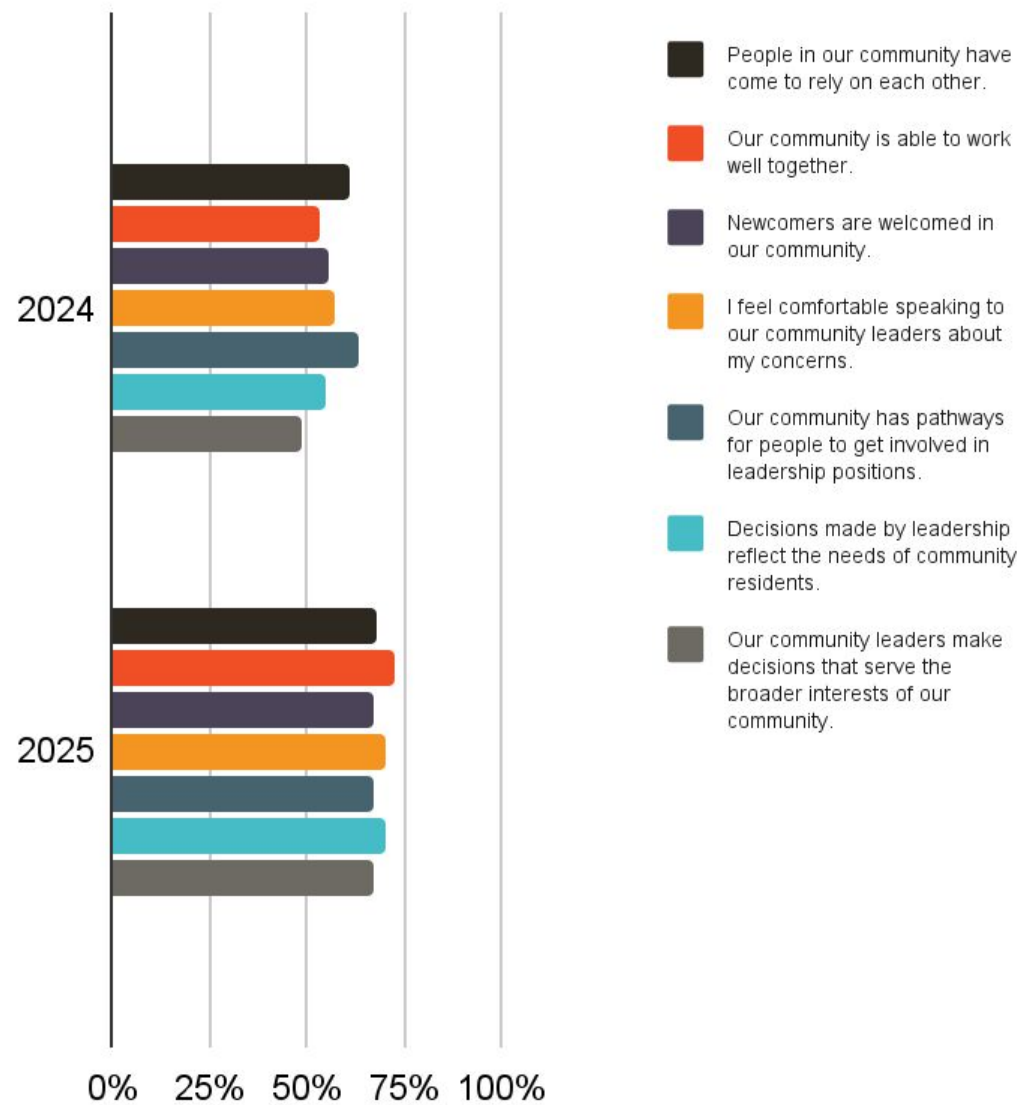
Commitment



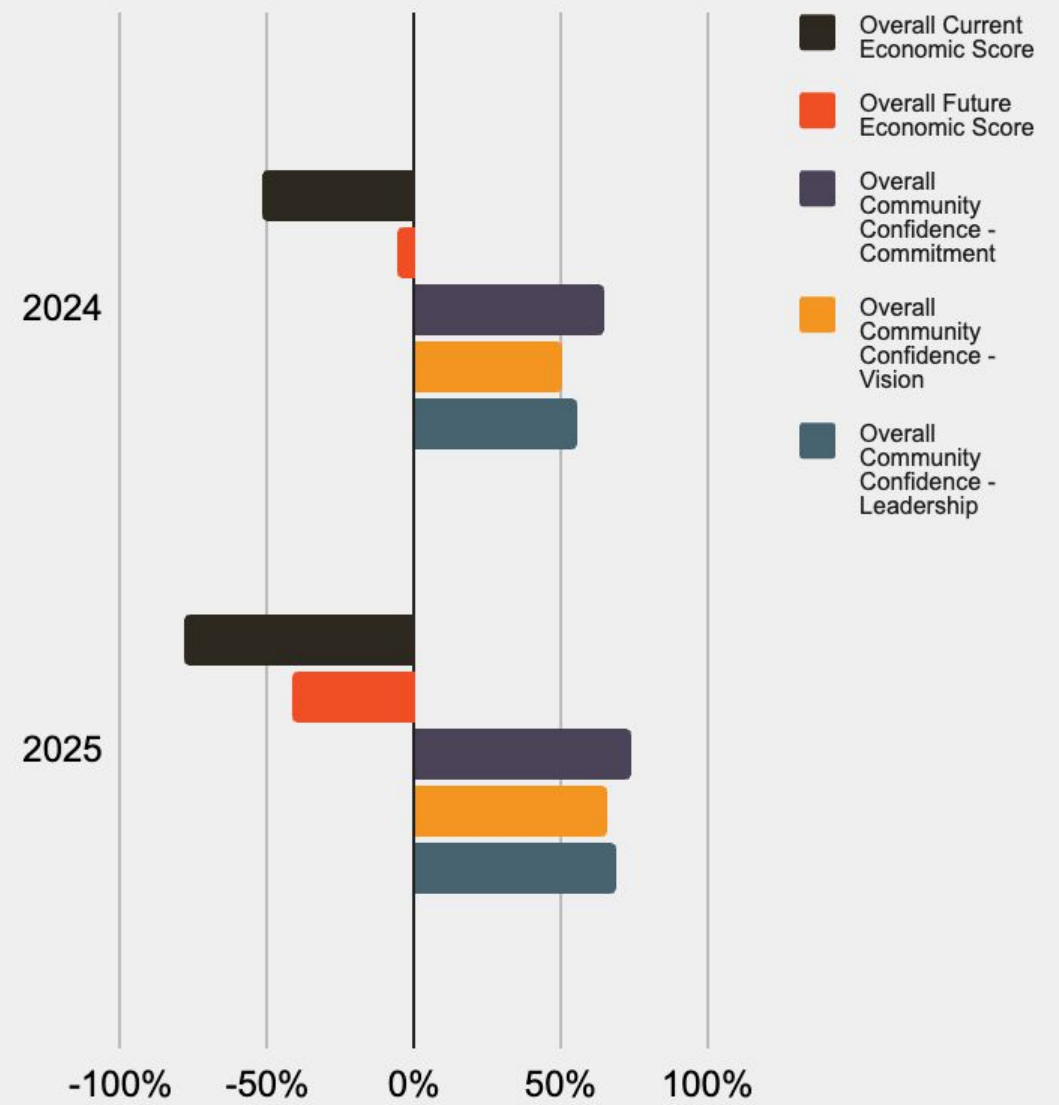
Vision



Leadership



Economic vs. Community Confidence

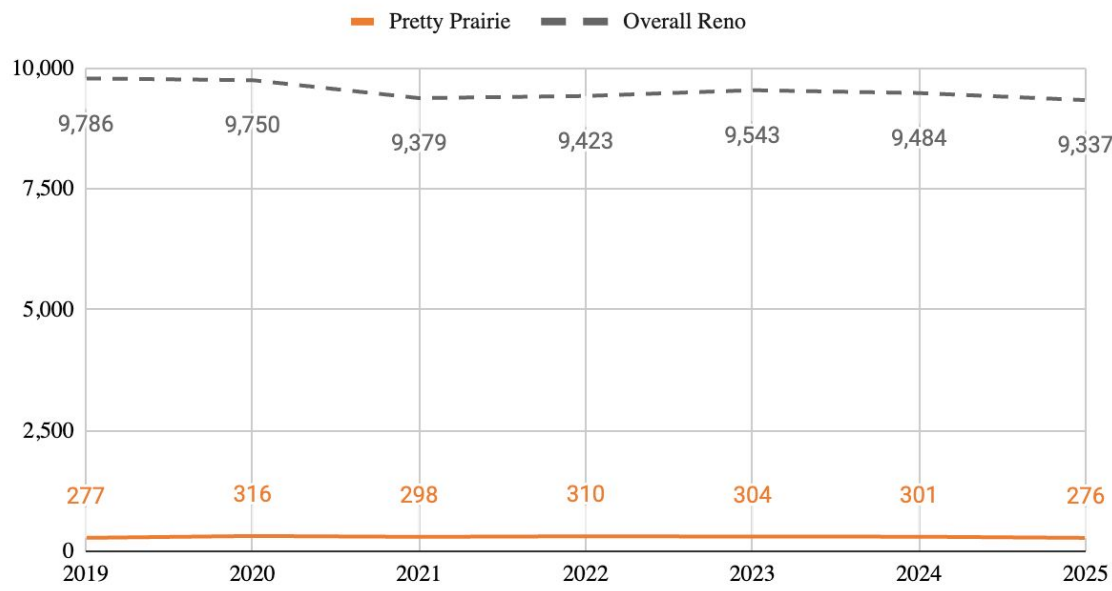


Local Community Indicators

Local School Enrollment



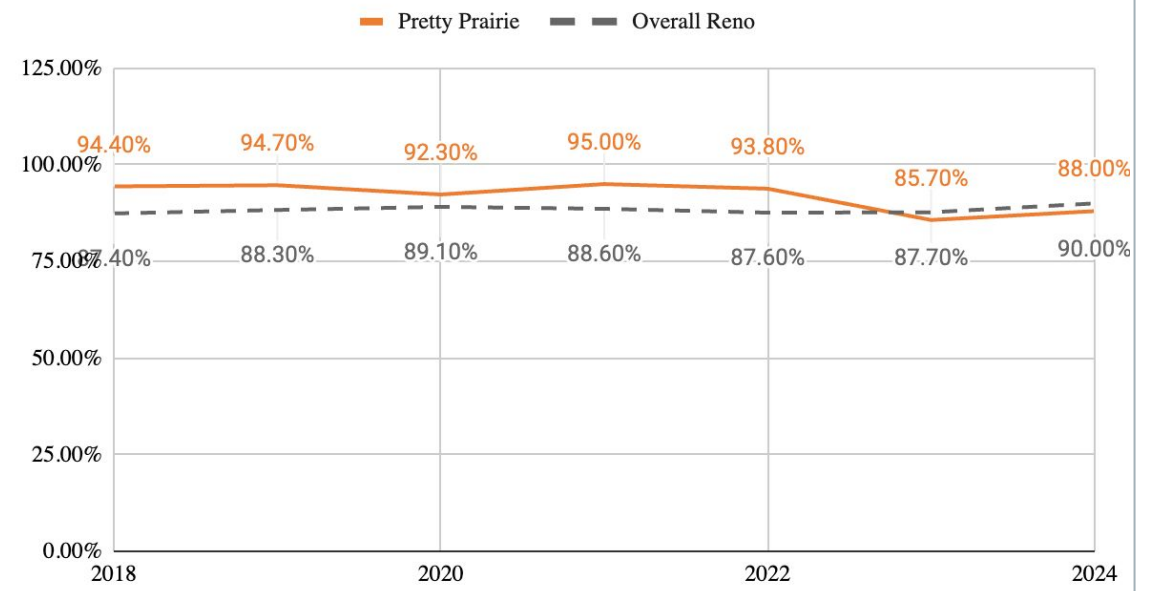
Enrollment



High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



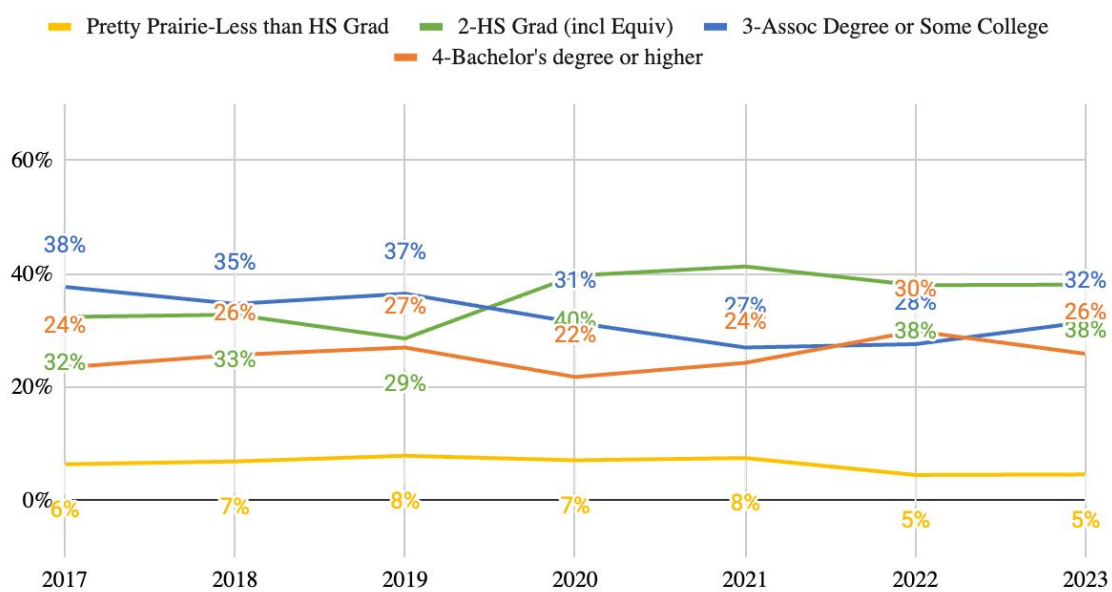
Graduation Rate



Local Educational Level



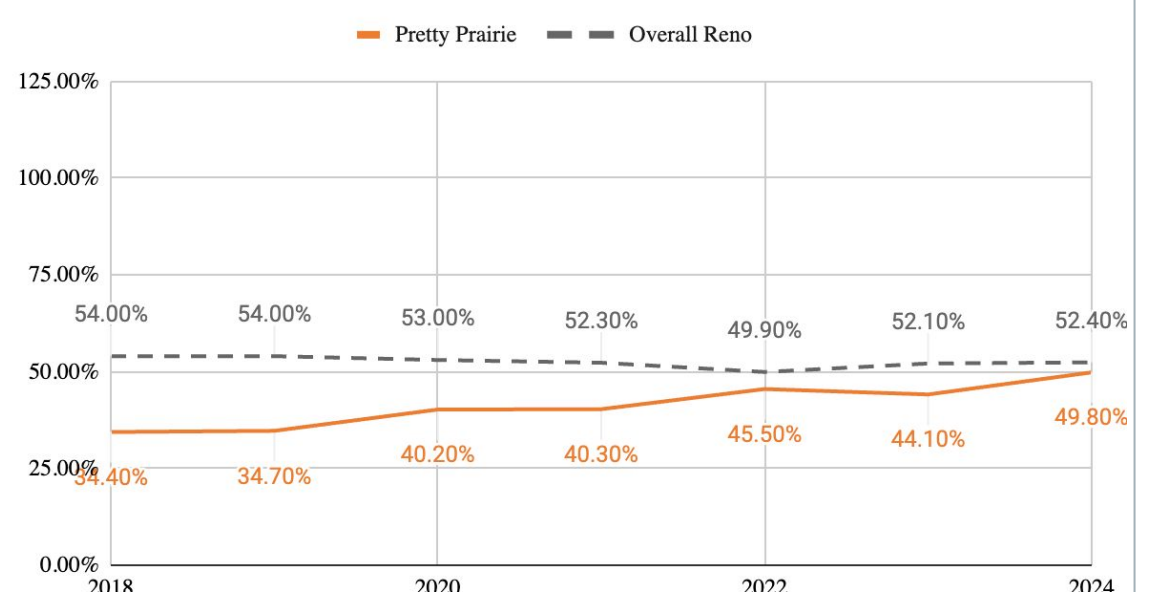
Education Level



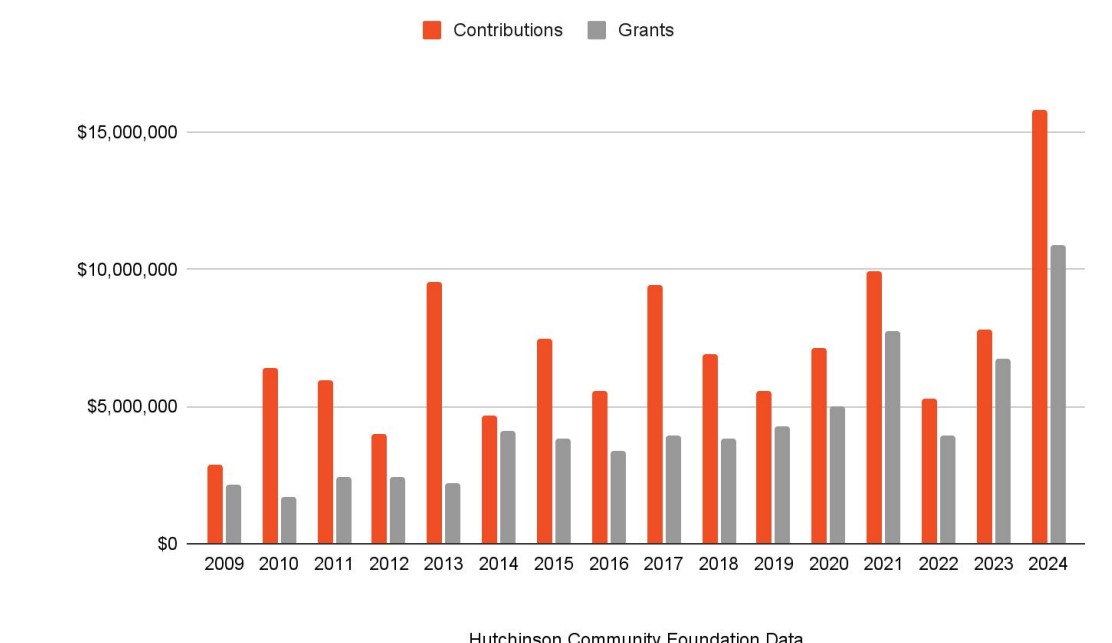
School % Free-Reduced Price Lunch



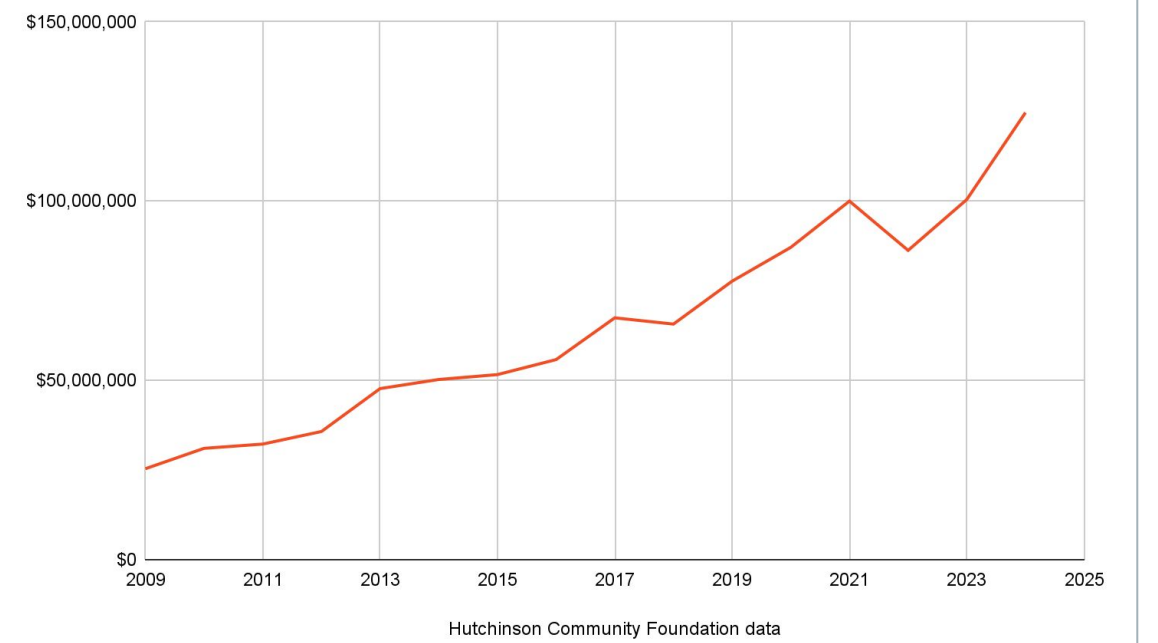
Free/Reduced Lunch



Hutchinson Community Foundation: Contributions & Grants



Hutchinson Community Foundation: Total Assets

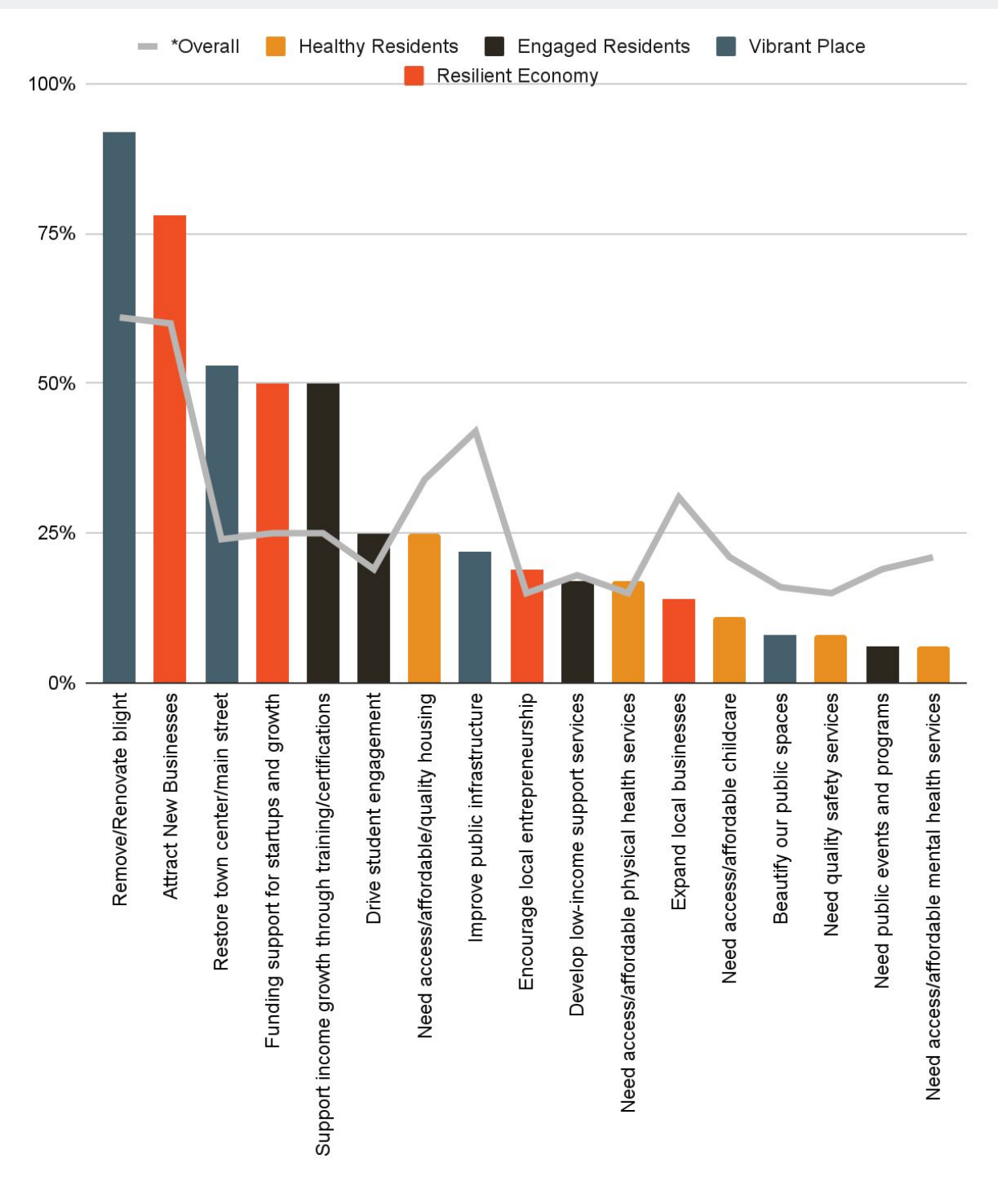


Community Program Priorities

Priorities Summary:

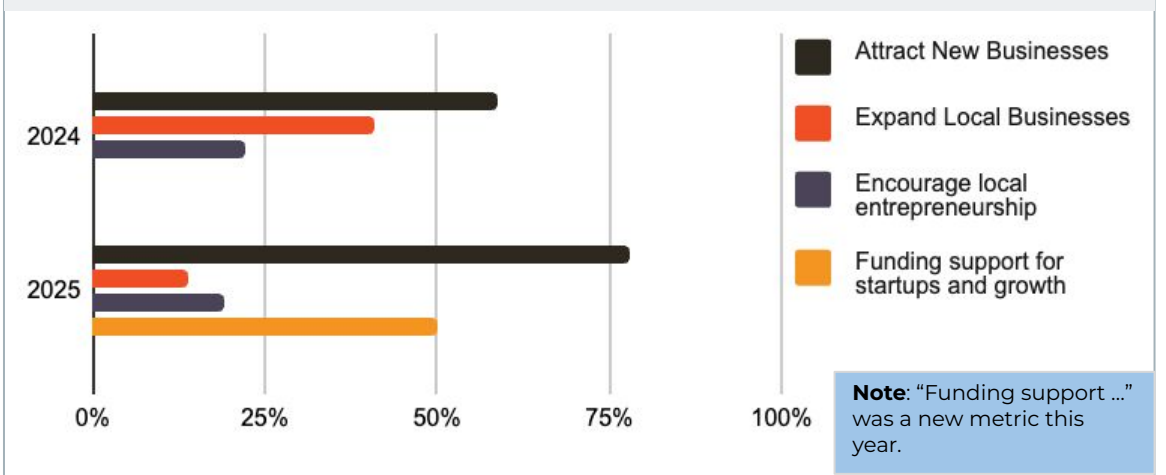
When residents talk about priorities, they point to what they can see from the curb and feel in daily routines. The loudest call is to remove or renovate blighted properties and restore the town center—because a cleaner Main Street isn't cosmetic; it's a signal that the community believes in itself. From there, the focus turns to growth that fits small-town life: attracting new businesses, creating food options, and providing funding support so local ideas can launch and survive. Job training and certifications rise to the top as a practical bridge to higher income, especially for households trying to make ends meet without leaving town.

Program Priorities

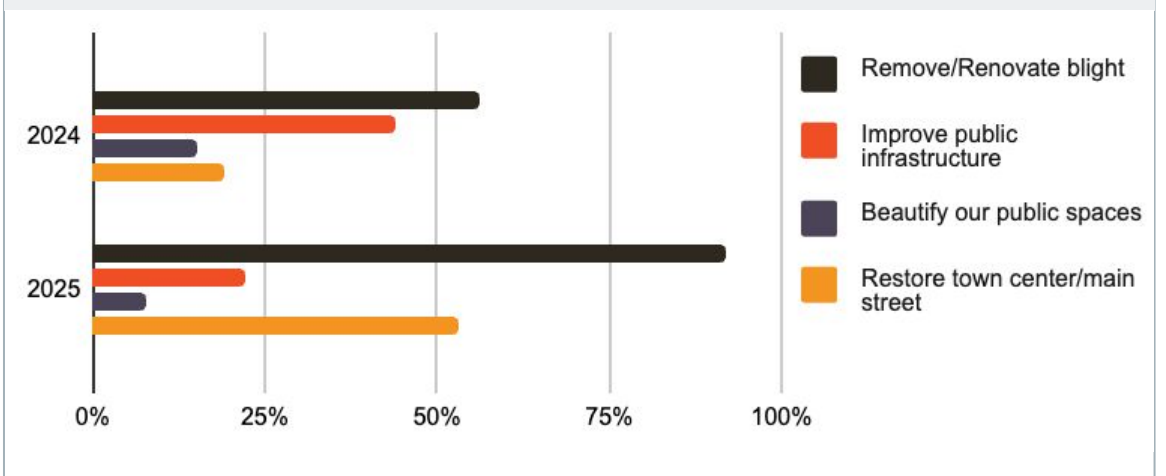


- Pretty Prairie's top vote is Remove/Renovate blight (92%)—what specific properties or blocks should be tackled first for visible impact?
- Funding support for startups & growth is strong (50%)—what would a small-grant or revolving fund need to include to be fair and effective?
- Restore town center/main street is prioritized (53%) while infrastructure improvement is lower (22%)—what "Main Street wins" matter most to residents right now?

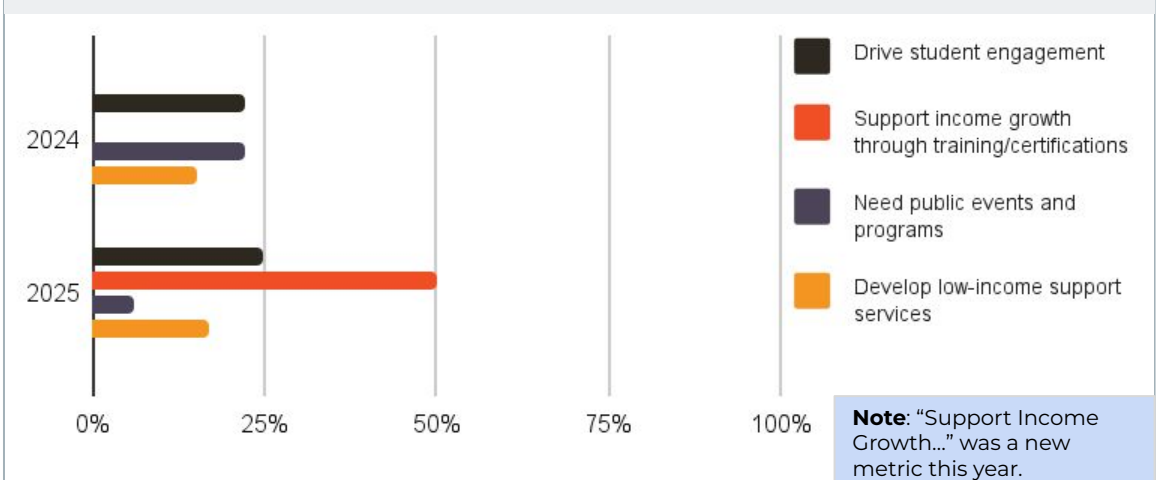
Resilient Economy



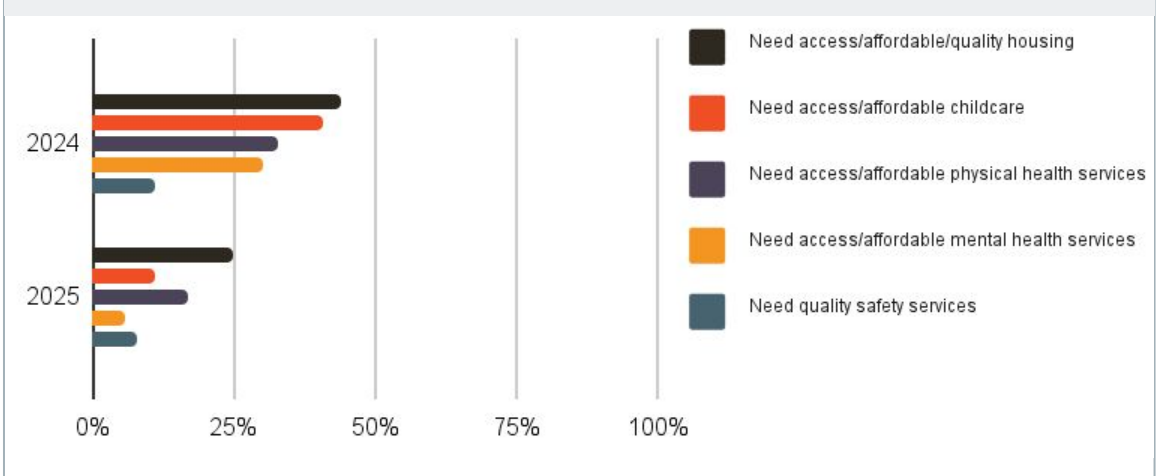
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents

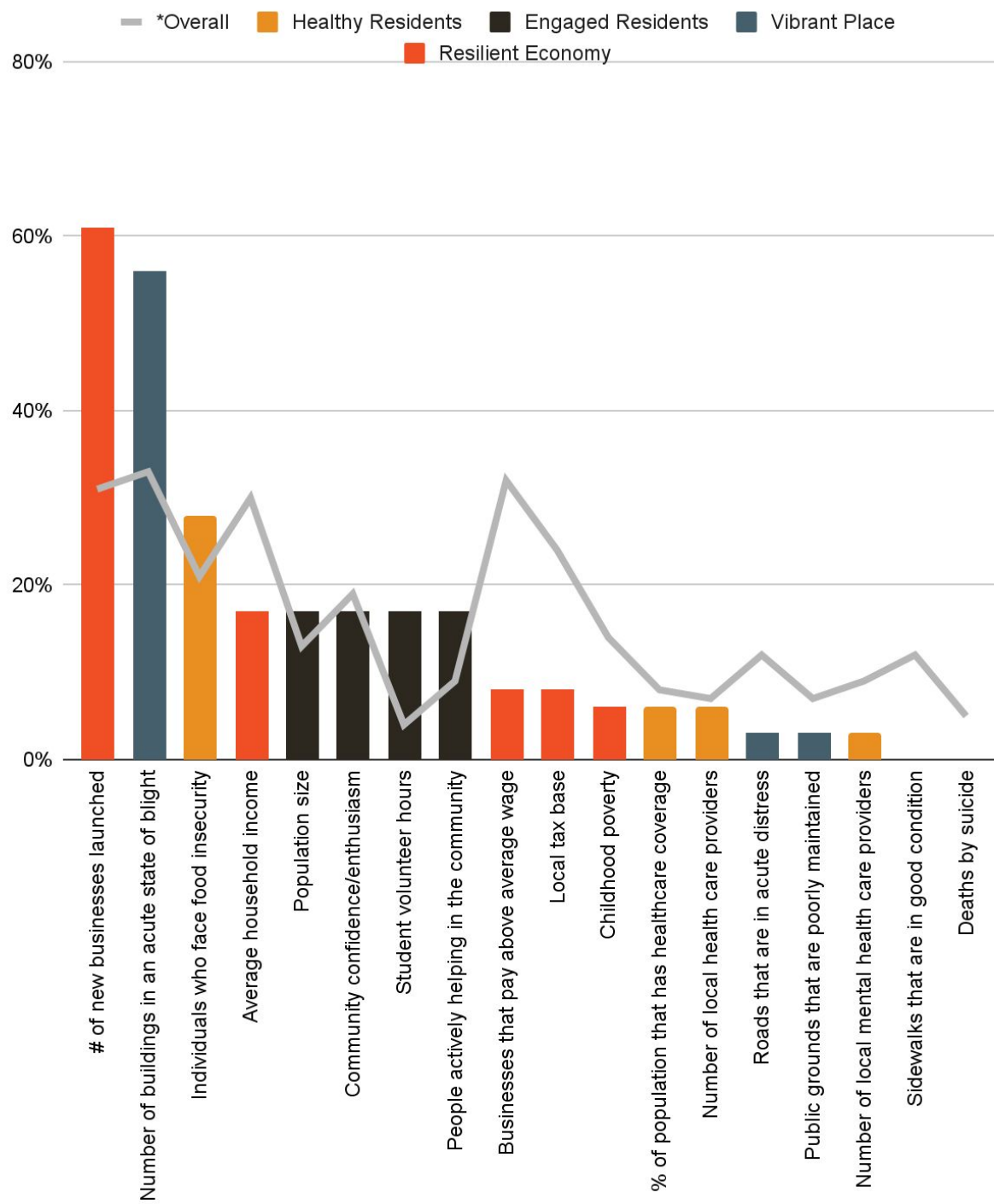


Healthy Residents

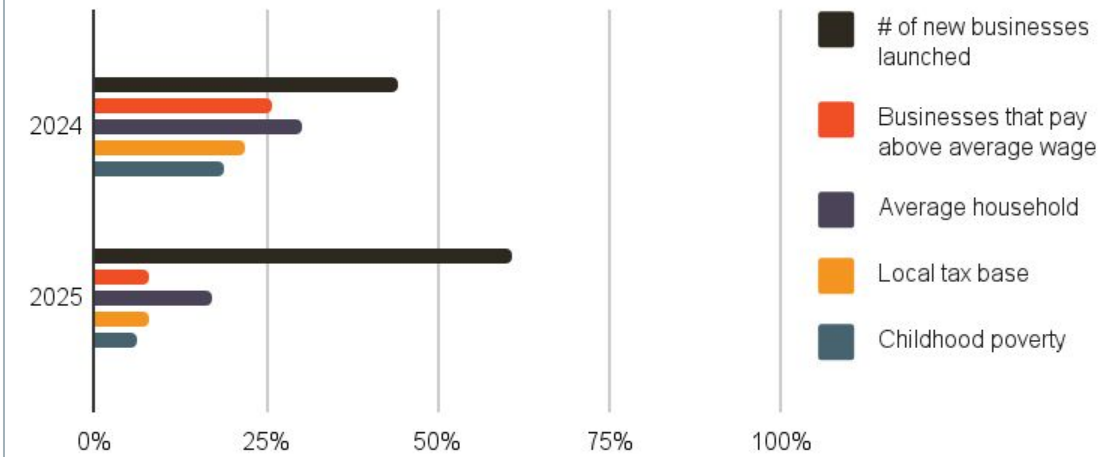


Community Priority Metrics

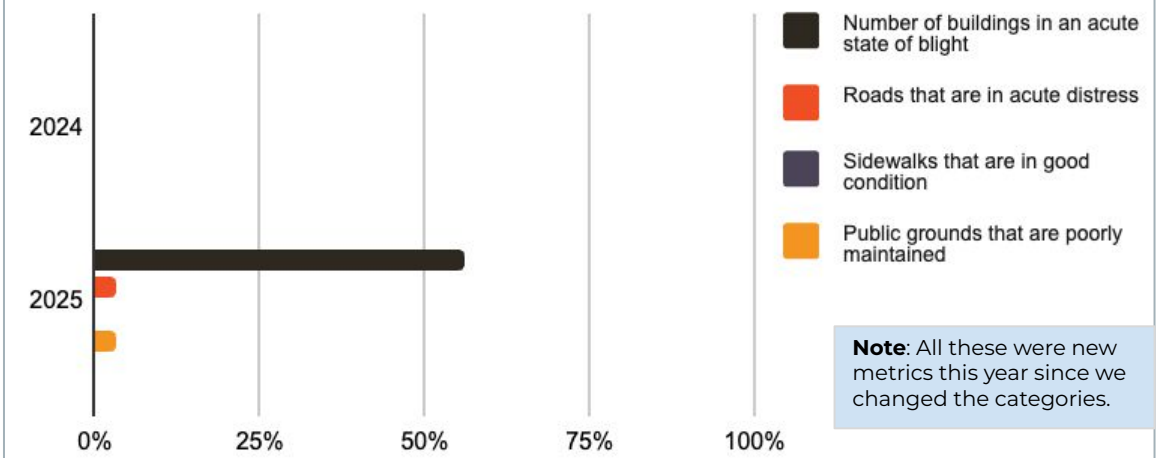
Priority Metrics



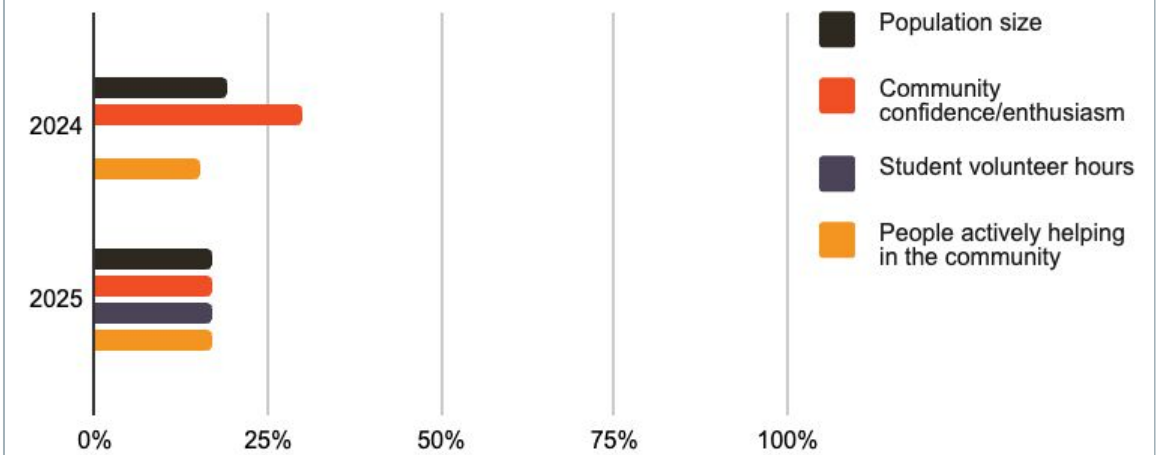
Resilient Economy



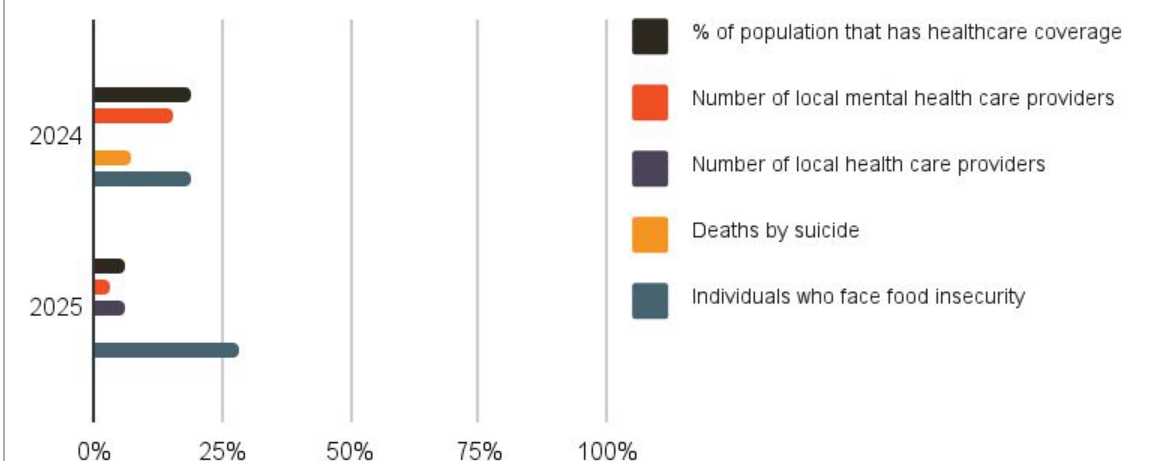
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents



Healthy Residents



- New businesses launched (61%) and acute blight buildings (56%) are the leading metrics—how should success be defined and tracked quarter-to-quarter?
- Individuals facing food insecurity is highest among Healthy metrics (28%)—what’s driving need, and which partners could reduce it fastest?
- Student volunteer hours and people actively helping (both 17%) are mid-tier priorities—what programs would convert willingness into consistent participation?



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?

- Revitalize Main Street & remove blight—Tear down/remodel dilapidated buildings, beautify and enforce codes to restore pride.
- Add essential businesses (restaurant/grocery/hardware)—Create local jobs, keep spending local, and provide a community gathering place.
- Affordable/low-income housing (especially rentals)—Keep and attract families and young professionals by increasing available, attainable places to live.
- Family amenities (park access + pool/splash pad)—Give kids safe, fun places to play and cool off; boosts quality of life and community connection.

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?

- Beautify Main Street / Clean-up & Revitalization—Improve appearance and pride; create space that attracts small businesses and keeps dollars local.
- Business Development Incentives (restaurant/food options)—Seed a café/restaurant/food-truck hub that creates jobs and boosts local sales-tax revenue.
- Youth Engagement & Teen Space Programs—Give teens a place to belong; build stronger long-term community involvement and reduce volunteer burnout.
- Entrepreneurship Support Program / Micro-grants—Help residents launch ideas with small grants, mentoring, and low-cost startup space.

Serving your community!

How do you serve your community today?

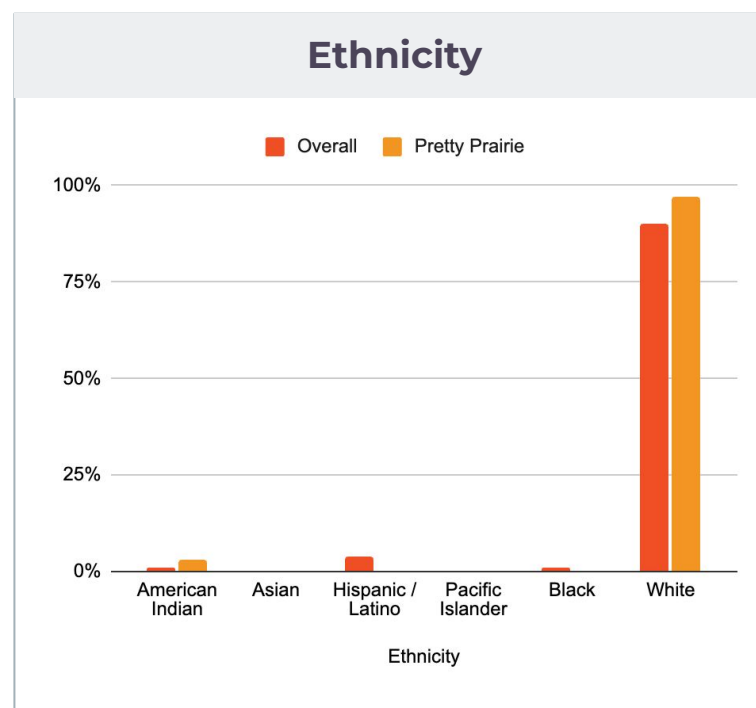
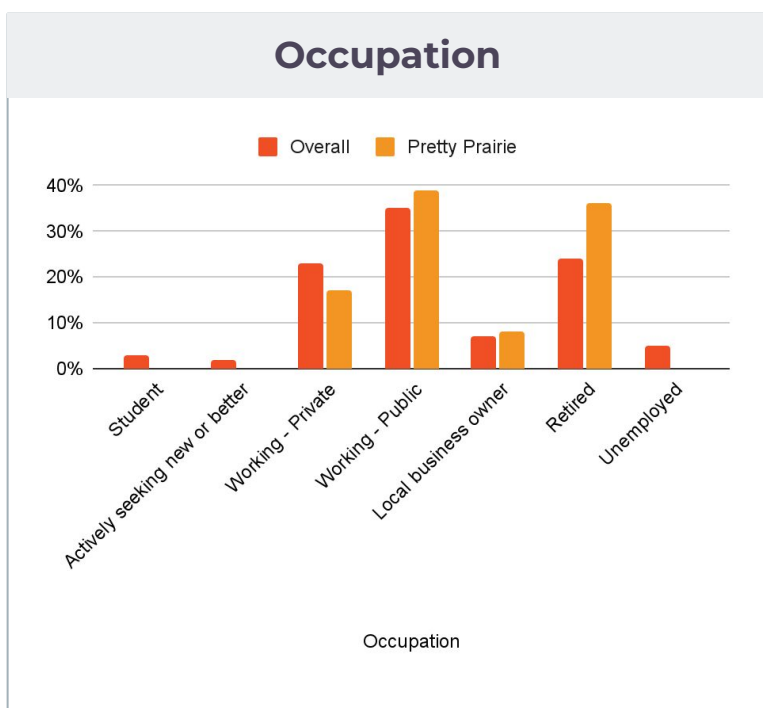
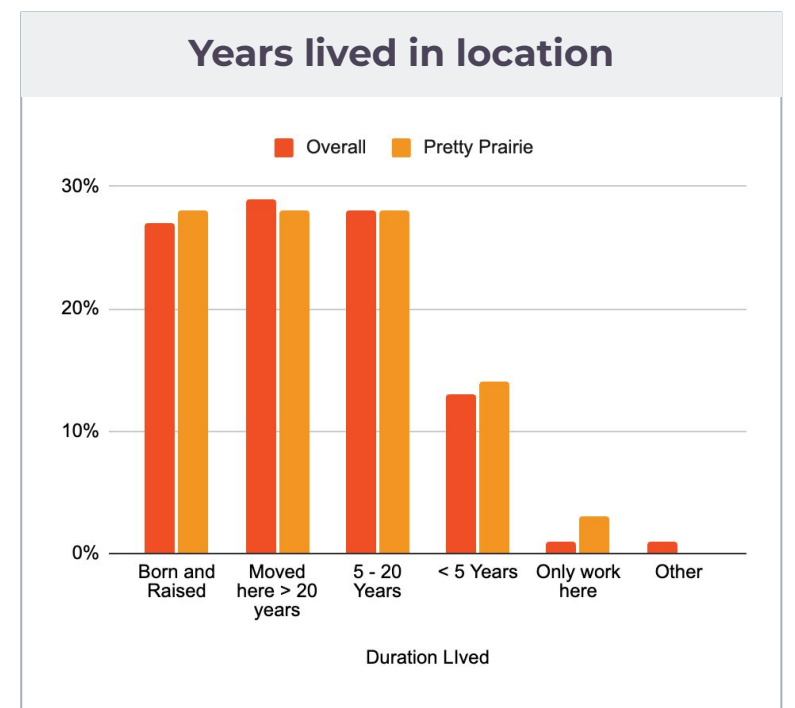
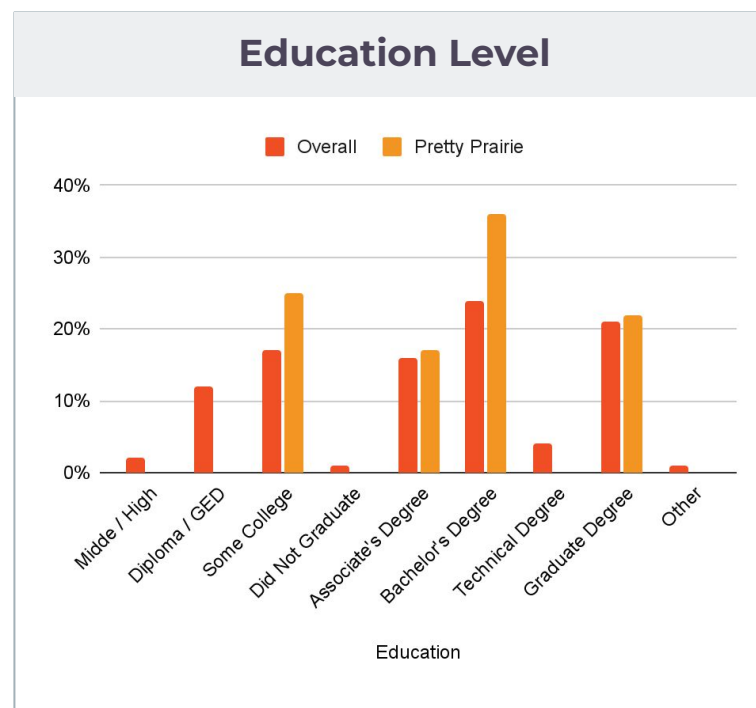
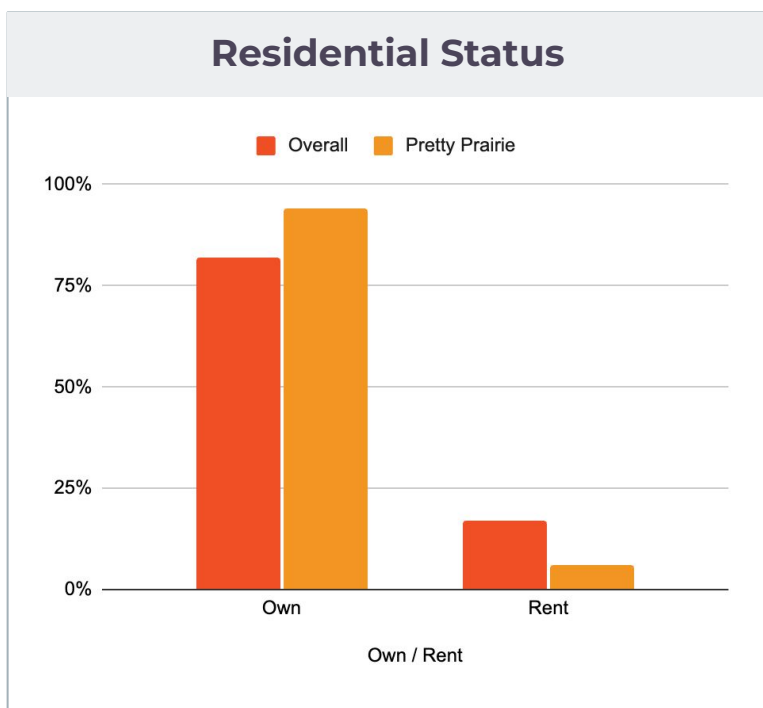
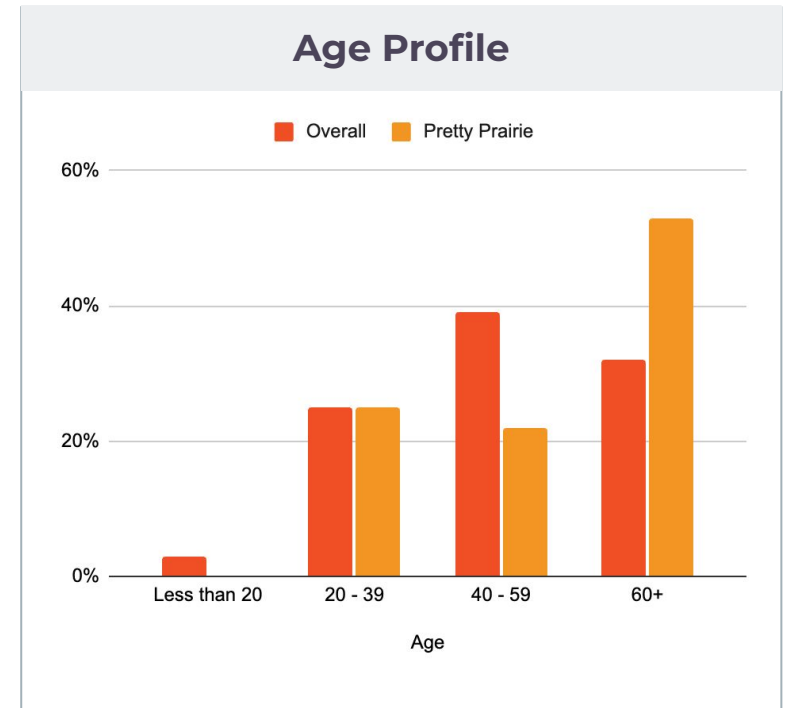
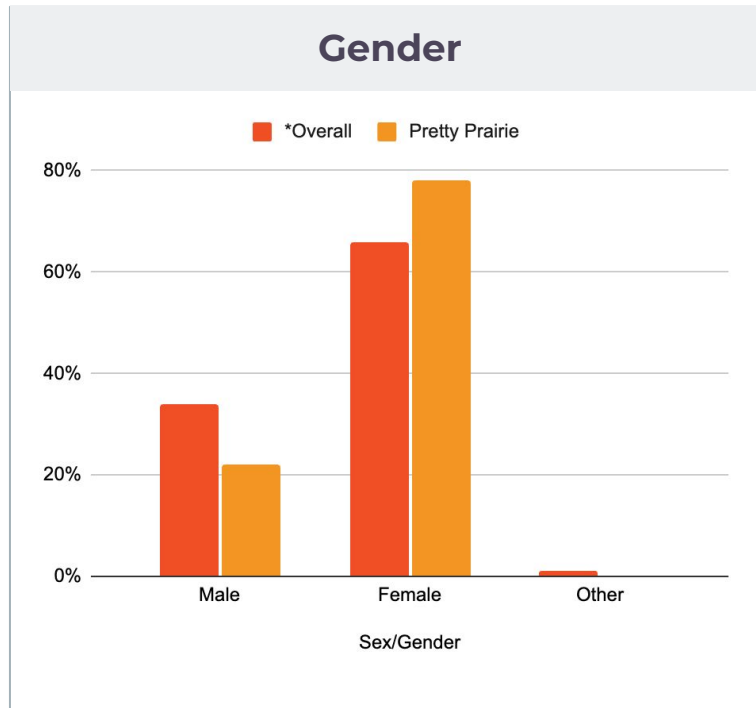
- Rodeo & Community Event Volunteering—People pitch in to run signature events and bring the town together.
- School & Youth Support—Serving through school jobs, school board roles, youth activities, and 4H involvement.
- Church Leadership & Service—Treasurers, liaisons, and volunteers help churches support community needs.
- Library & Newspaper Service—Library board service and local news leadership keep residents informed and connected.
- Care & Basic-Needs Support—Volunteering at Prairie Sunset, helping with yards, and supporting the local food bank.

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

- Food Pantry Support—Help stock, organize, and expand services for neighbors in need.
- Community Events & Boards—Serve through committees, boards, and organizing gatherings that build connection.
- Town Clean-up & Beautification Projects—Join cleanup days and improvement efforts that boost pride and curb appeal.
- Civic Leadership (City Council / School Board)—Step into decision-making roles to guide progress and accountability.
- Library & Economic Development Service—Support the library while helping drive small business and growth.

Survey Respondents

36
Total Responses



- Long-term residents (>20 yrs) report much lower likelihood of investing (-50%) than born-and-raised residents (0%), suggesting the “stayers” may feel more cautious about near-term returns while natives are comparatively more open to investing locally.
- Emotional commitment is far stronger among residents who have lived here >20 years (5.7) than those born and raised (3.78), indicating lived experience and time-in-community may be a bigger driver of belonging than hometown identity alone.

Average Community Score
Town Score

7

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community (19%)