



Love WHERE YOU *Live*

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

2025 South Hutchinson Benchmark Report

Hutchinson 
community
FOUNDATION



Innovation Economy Partners
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

info@HutchCF.org | hutchcf.org

What Makes Our Community Special?

“Clean streets”

Alyssa

“Job opportunities per capita of residents. Positive and forward thinking administration to improve and enlarge the city.”

Ron

“Small town relaxed atmosphere”

Paul

“What makes the Community in South Hutchinson special is that almost everyone in the community wants to see growth and opportunities arise in the town. Right now we don't have a ton of businesses, but the ones we do contribute so much to the community whether is for non-profit events or city sponsored events.”

Paige

“Easy Highway Access, Friendly feel”

Melony

“A Community that engages and encourages growth! great people”

Anonymous

“small town feel, centrally located”

Nick

“It's quiet and feels like a small town, without being far from anything.”

Anonymous

“Safe neighborhoods. Great areas to walk (on the Southeastern part of town).”

Anonymous

“We have the best neighbors and neighborhood! We have small town vibes, with great proximity to Hutchinson”

Anonymous

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

matt nisly
lance hirt
matt mock
kyle cokeley
jeff schenk
katy pickrel
matt elliot
paul s val

Executive Summary:

In 2025, South Hutchinson continues to display a decrease in confidence in the economy, strong community commitment and steady if cautious optimism about its future. Although only 27 responses were recorded, most of the insights seem to line up with county averages. This small sampling of residents deeply value the town's small-town feel, safety, and close proximity to essential amenities. Economic confidence has decreased since the 2024 survey, but many residents are still willing to invest in the long-term future. Long-standing concerns remain central like blight removal and upgrading the downtown area, but local willingness to invest in change is growing. The town shows standout interest in infrastructure upgrades, beautification, and corridor revitalization, especially when paired with practical low-cost initiatives. Leadership confidence is moderate and trust-building remains a priority.

pgs **4-5**

Economic Confidence

South Hutch shows declining economic outlook, but with investment interest and continued calls for groceries, childcare, and family-friendly businesses.

pgs **6-8**

Community Engagement Confidence

Strong pride and emotional commitment define South Hutch, though trust in leadership and long-term planning remain growth areas.

pgs **10-12**

Critical Community Priorities

Residents prioritize infrastructure, parks, and economic mobility, with strong support for practical improvements and revitalization projects in some quantitative data as well as resident comments.

pg **13**

Survey Respondent Profile

Some of the larger demographic segments are women, 40-59 year-olds, house owners and public workers

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

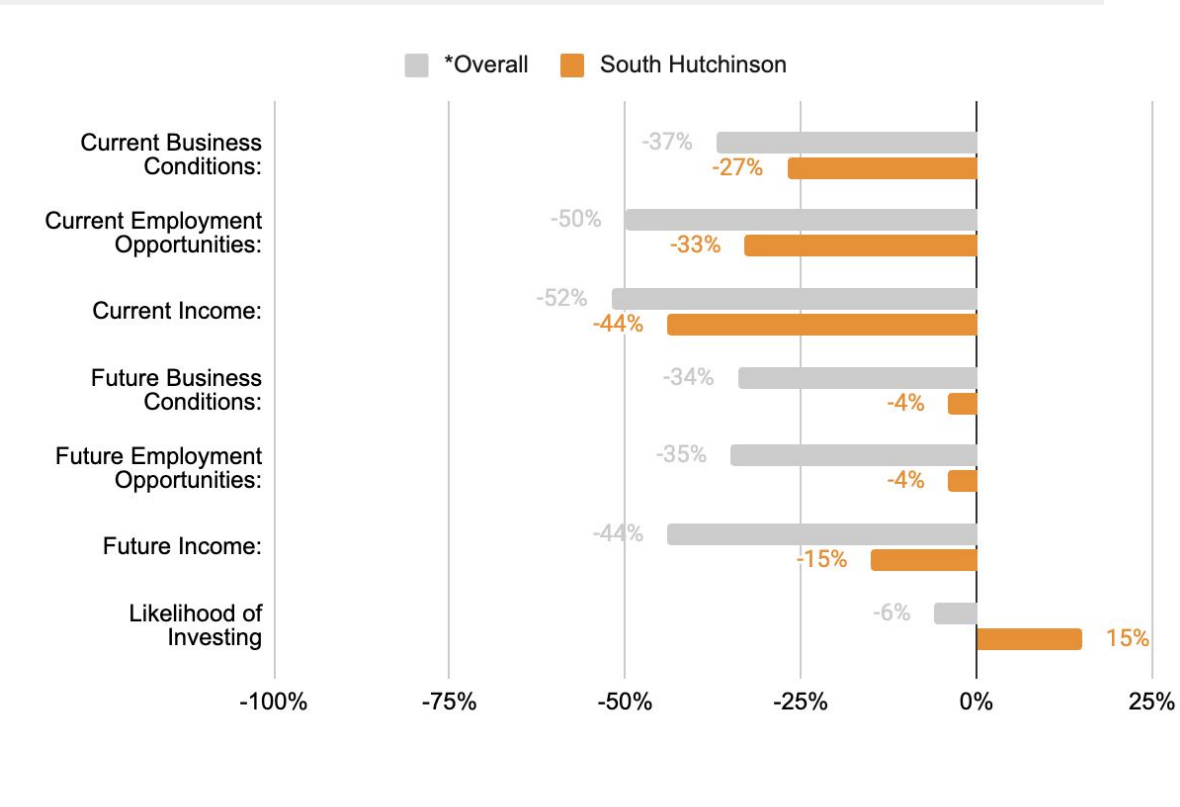
Economic Summary:

In 2025, South Hutchinson's economic confidence took a downturn along with the rest of Reno County. While current conditions around jobs and income remain a concern, forward-looking indicators like business growth and local investment potential show more promise. The town's +15% investment likelihood stands out positively against regional trends, signaling residents' growing trust in local direction. Key demands remain steady: a full-service grocery store, more dining options, child care services, and recreation-based businesses. Compared to regional peers, South Hutchinson displays a stronger interest in accessible, service-oriented development that enhances both quality of life and economic opportunity.

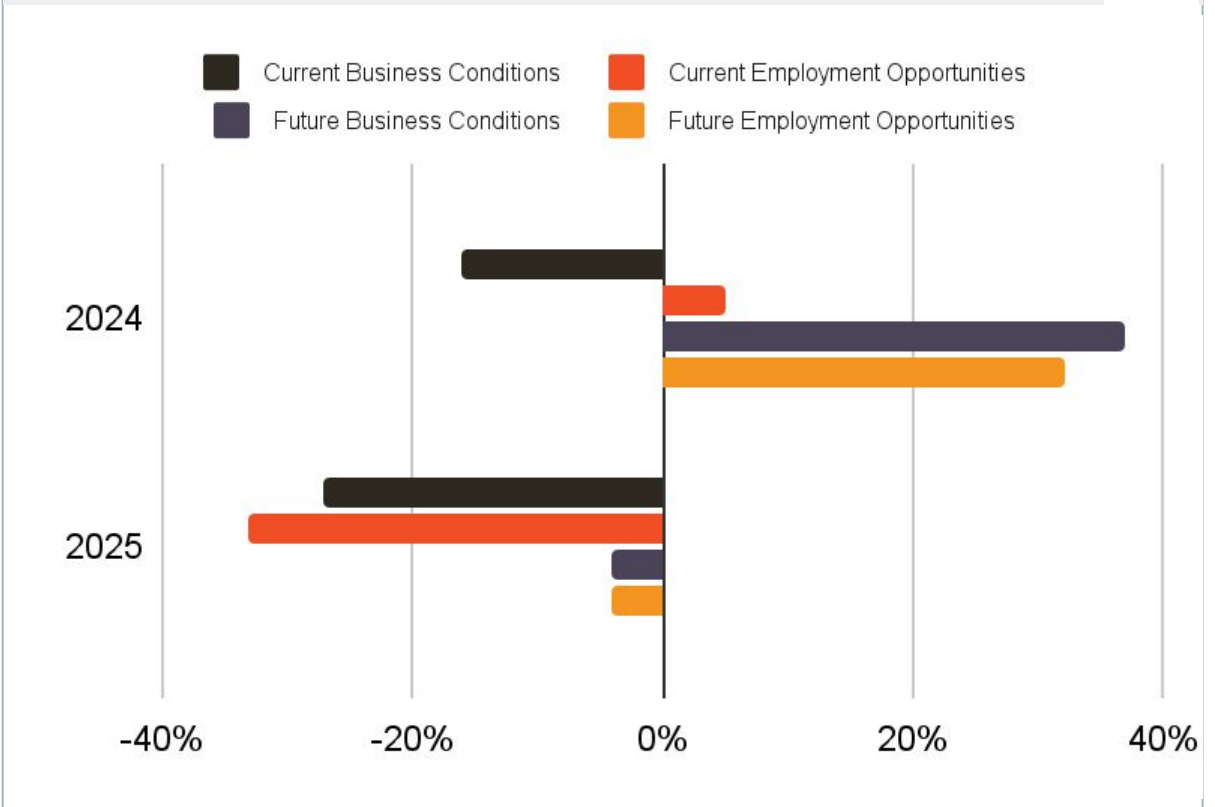
Businesses Needed In Our Town:

- **Grocery Store – Needed for access to fresh produce and essentials**
- **Coffee Shop – A community gathering place is lacking**
- **Entertainment – Residents want fun, active things to do locally**
- **Retail Stores – Desire for general shopping options beyond basics**
- **Housing – Need for affordable and pet-friendly living options**
- **Restaurants – Want better dining with full drink service**
- **Youth Activities – Limited outlets for kids and teens to be engaged**

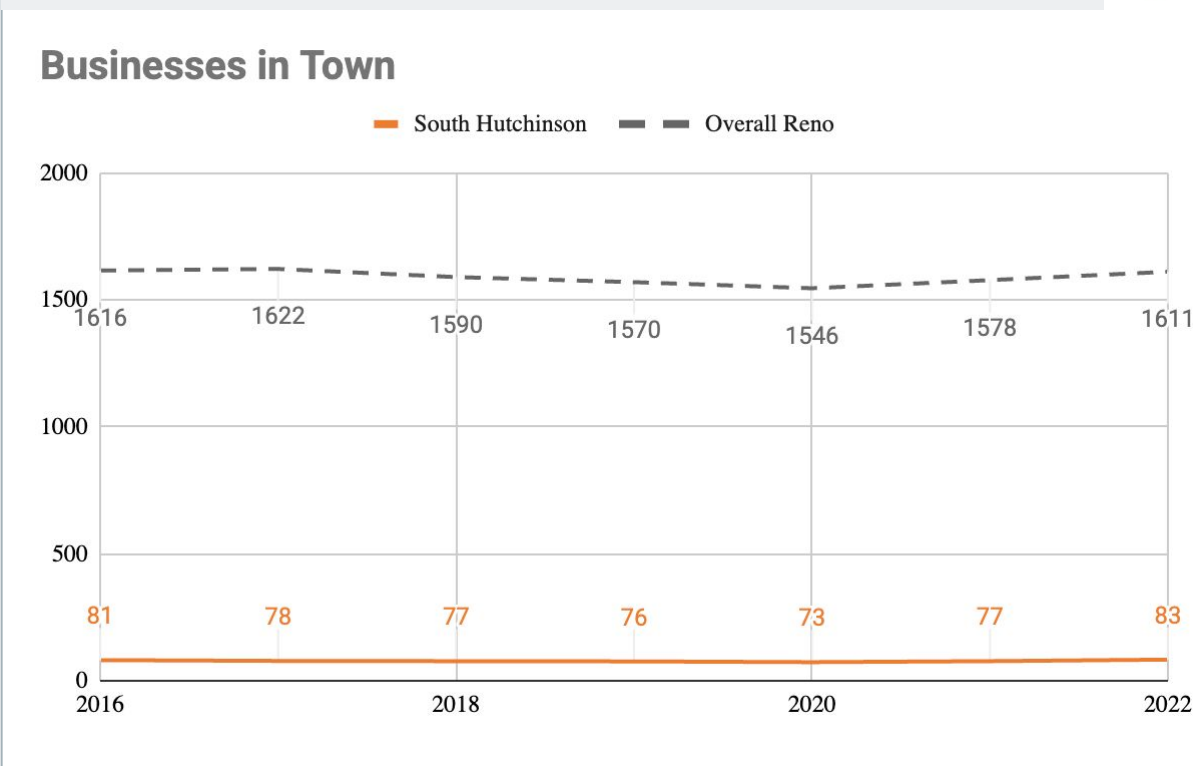
Our Economic Perceptions



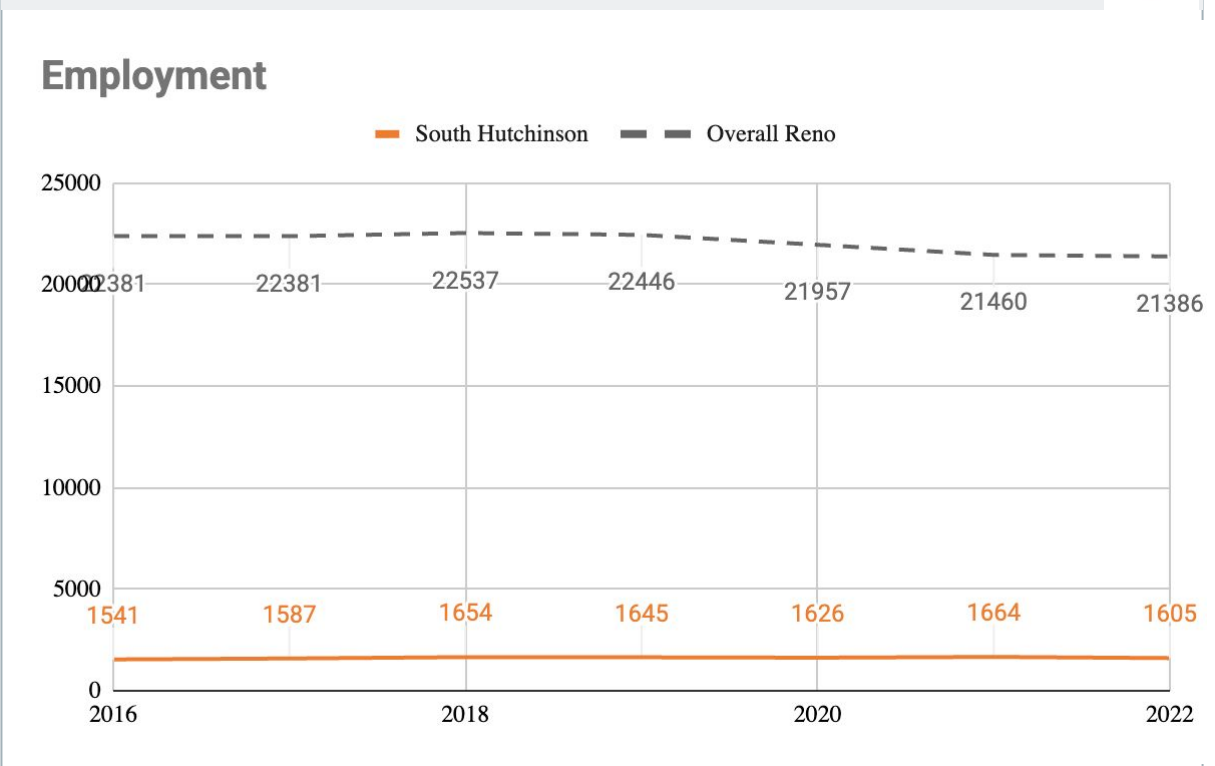
Year Over Year Change (2024 vs 2025)



Businesses in Our Town



10 Year Shift in Local Jobs

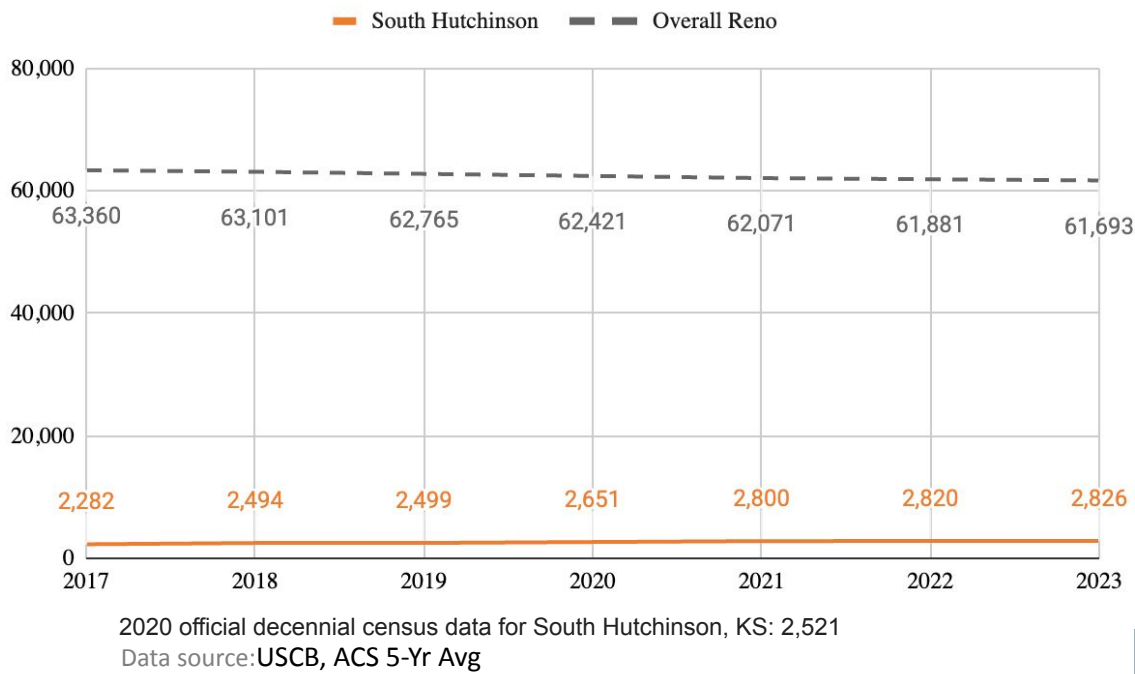


Local Economic Indicators (Cont'd)

Overall Population Trend



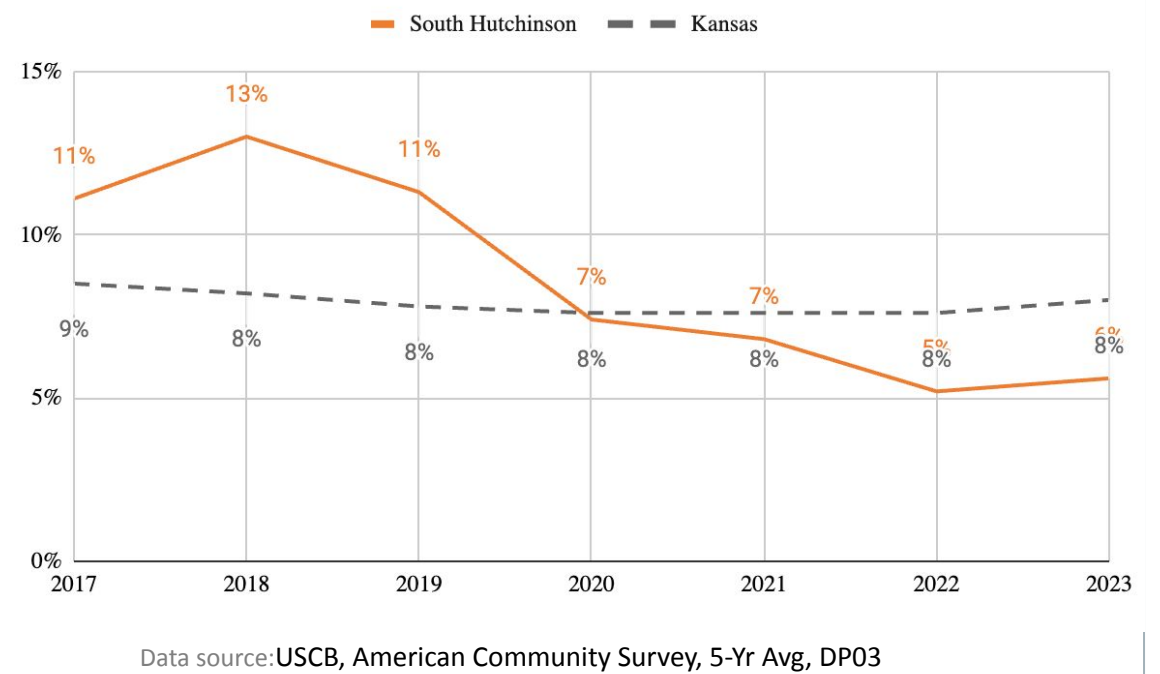
Population



Local Poverty Rate



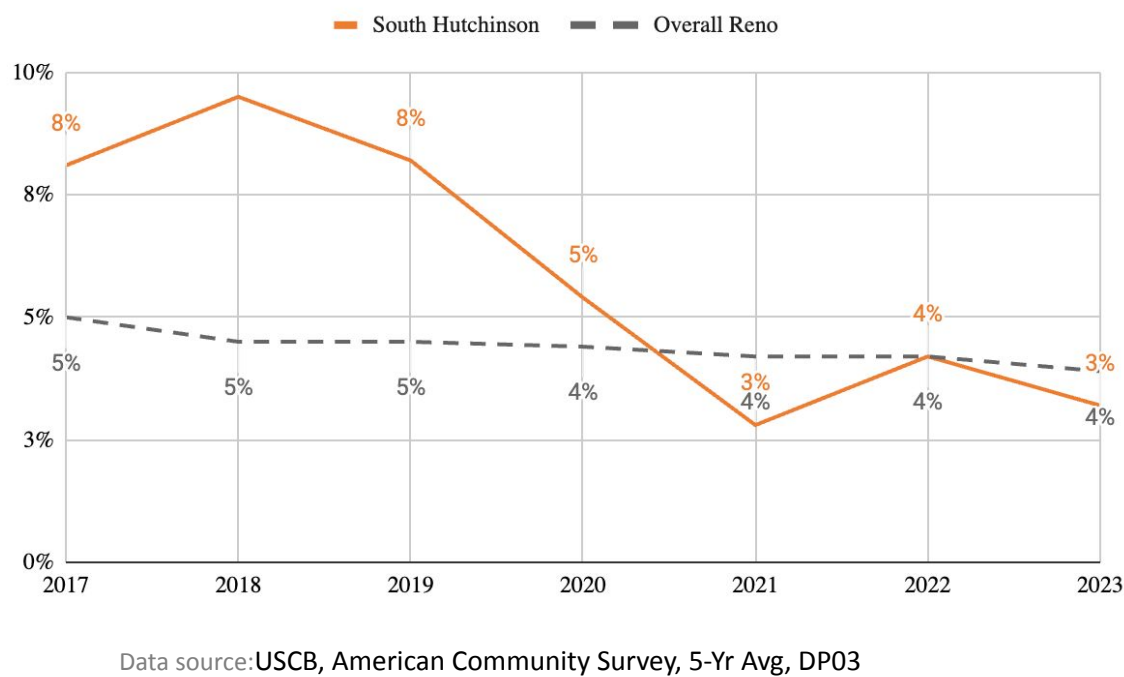
Poverty Rate



Local Unemployment Rate



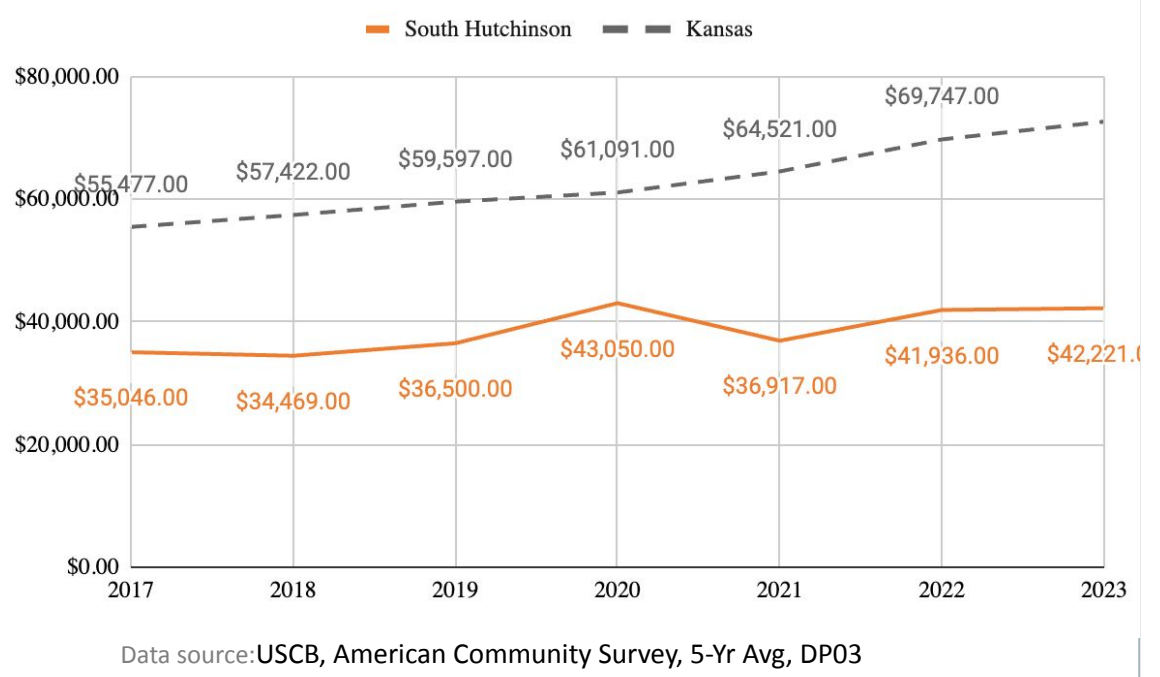
Unemployment Rate



Median Household Income



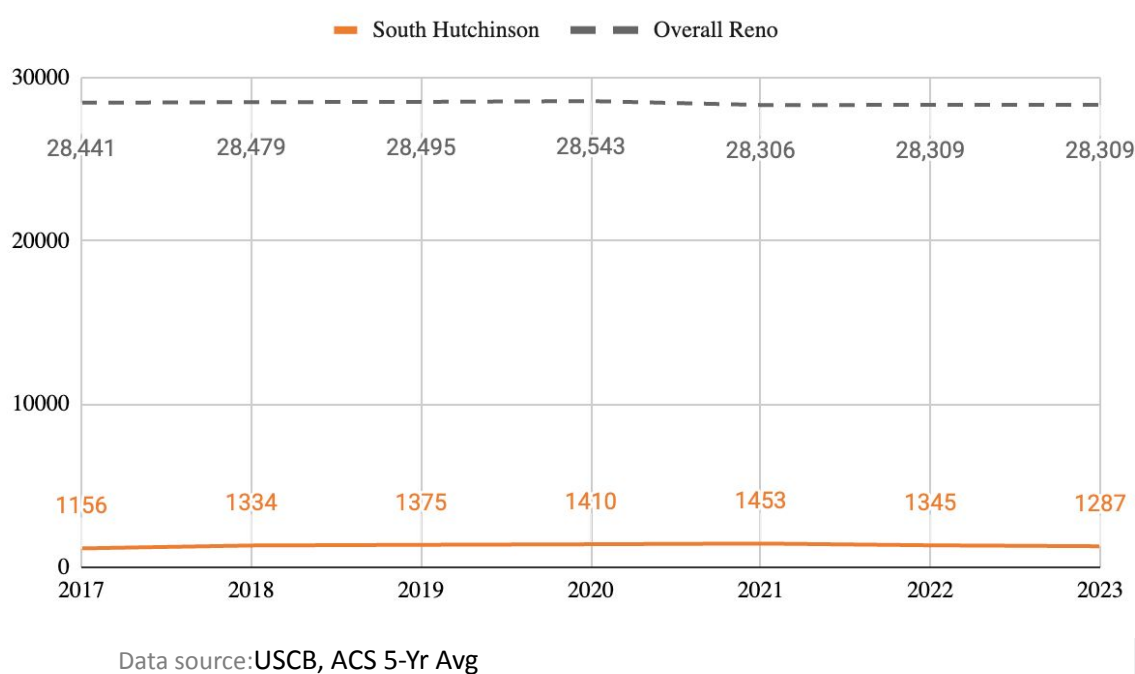
Median Household Income



Total Housing Units



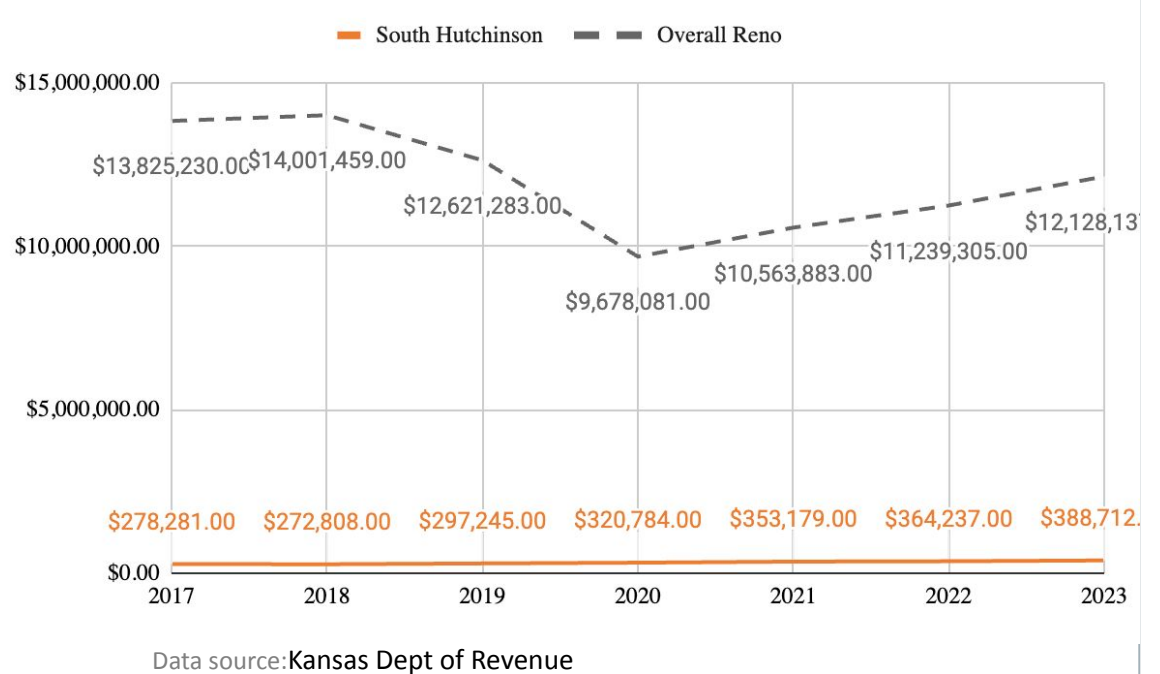
Housing Units



Annual Sales Tax Collection



Annual Sales Tax Collection



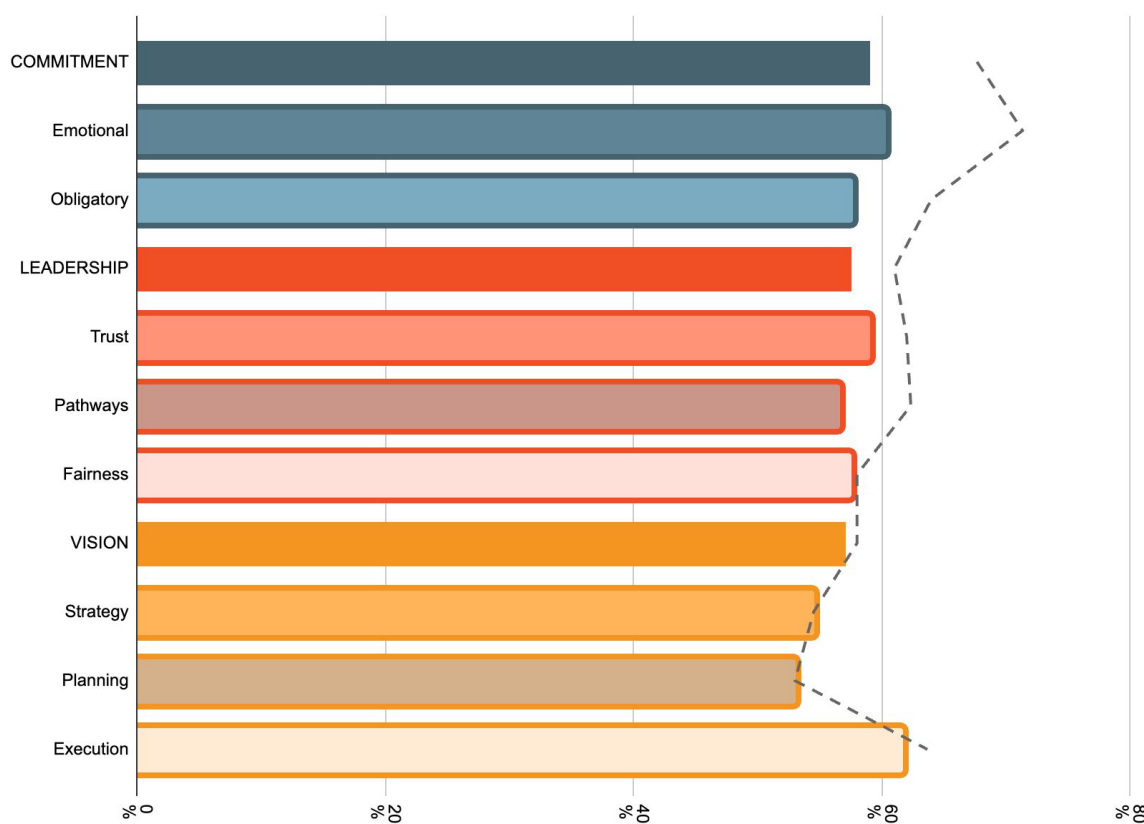
Confidence In Our Local Community

Engagement Summary:

Community commitment remains a clear strength in South Hutchinson although scores dropped slightly in two categories. In 2025, long-term residents express high pride and emotional connection, ranking the town above the regional average in loyalty and sense of place. Residents report moderate confidence in local leadership, with fairness and accessibility improving slightly year over year. Trust and cohesion among leaders, however, continue to trail neighboring communities, especially among younger residents who remain skeptical of transparency. Vision metrics show progress, with residents increasingly confident.



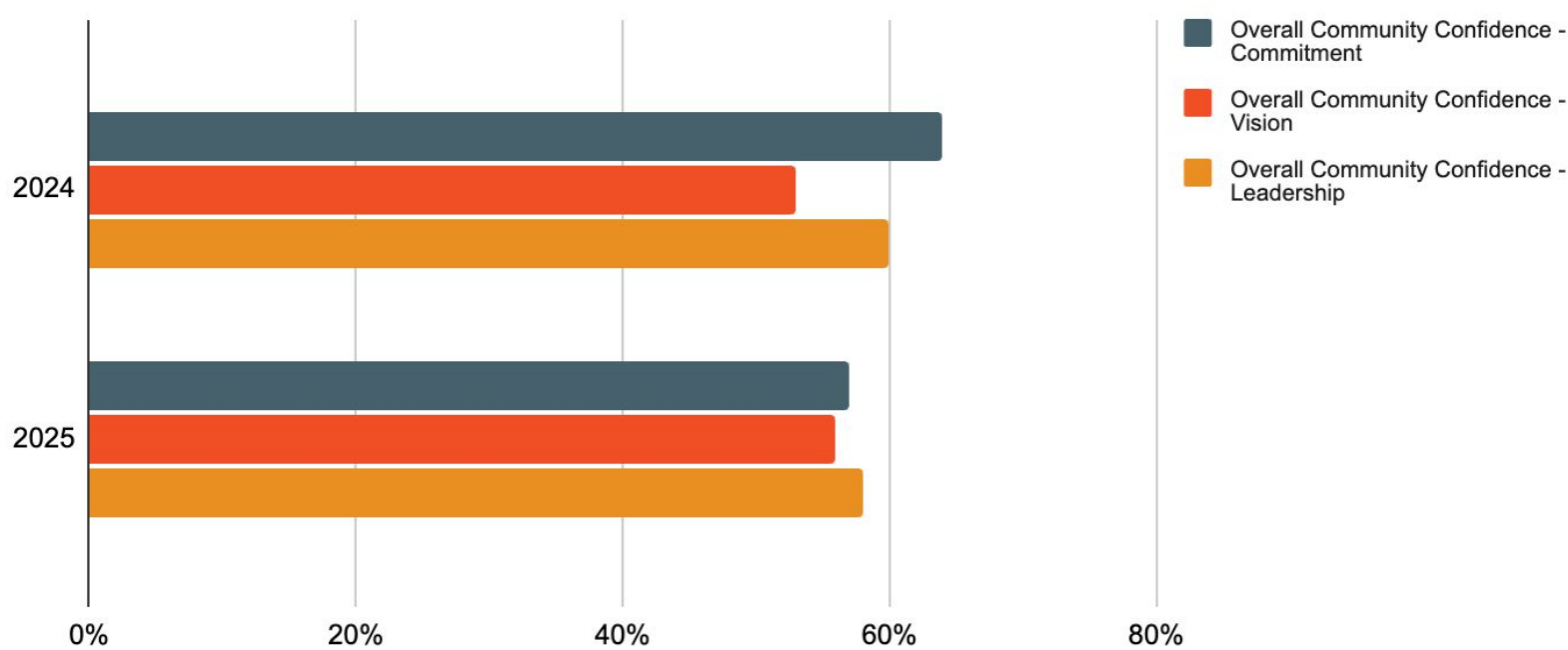
How do our residents view our community?



Questions:

- What factors contribute to strong Execution scores?
- How can Planning clarity be improved to support a clearer community direction?
- What strategies could increase Obligatory commitment among newer residents?
- Why is trust in leadership leading other Leadership metrics?
- How can community leaders improve perceptions of pathways to leadership?
- What initiatives could enhance Strategy understanding among residents?
- What role do community events play in building a stronger sense of Belonging?
- How does transparency affect Obligatory commitment scores in younger residents?
- What can be done to help residents feel more confident about overcoming community challenges?

Year Over Year Change

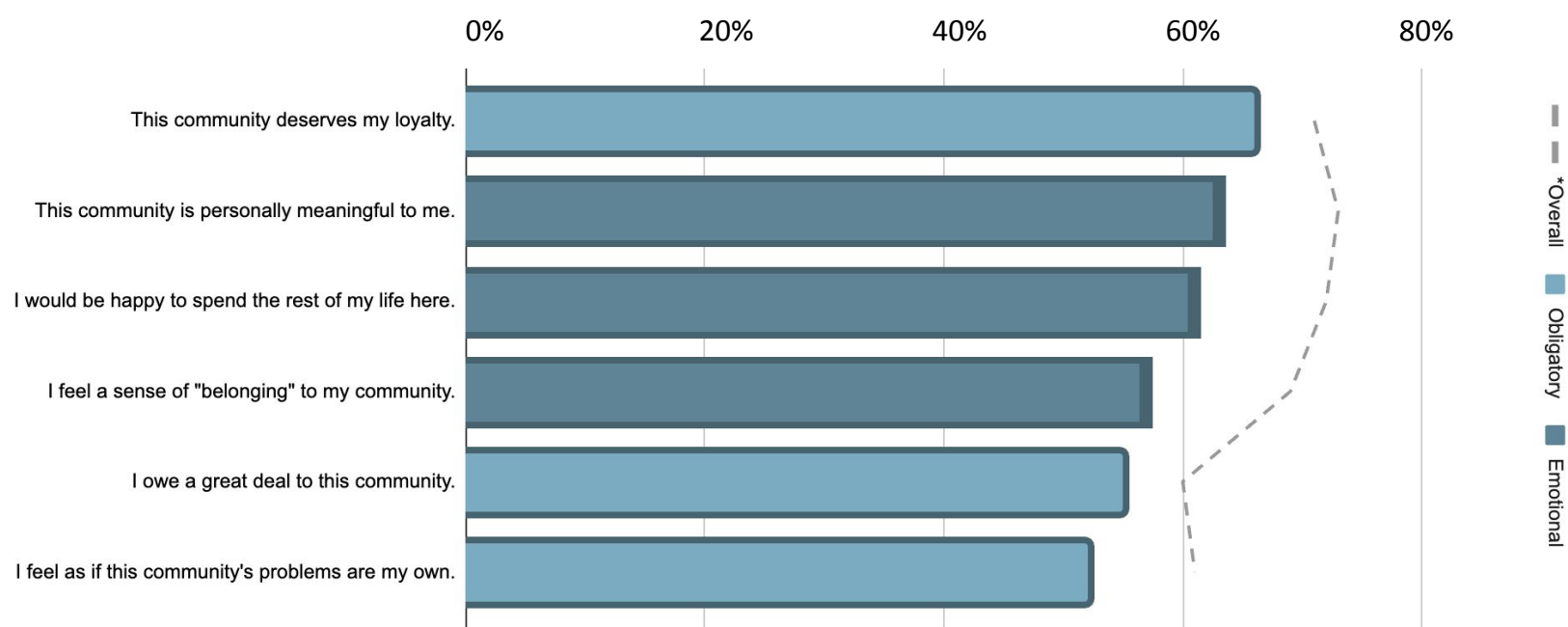


Confidence In Our Local Community

Average Reno County Score

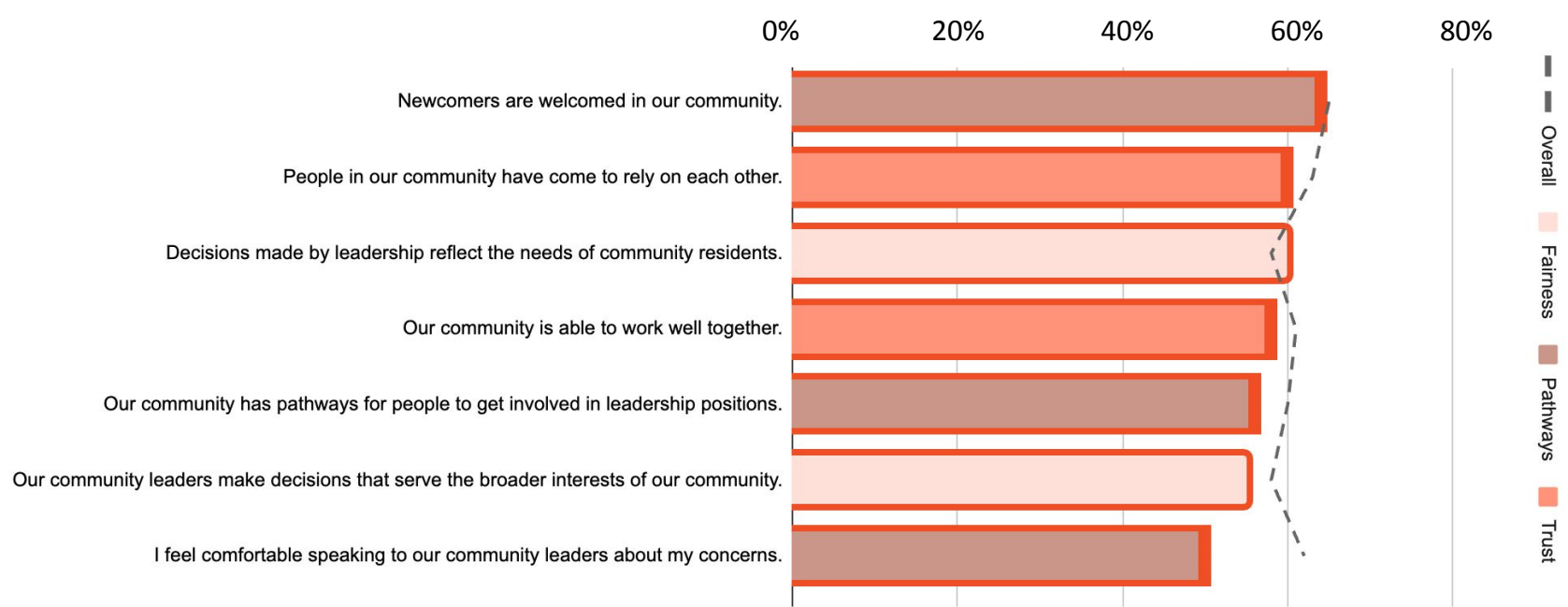
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



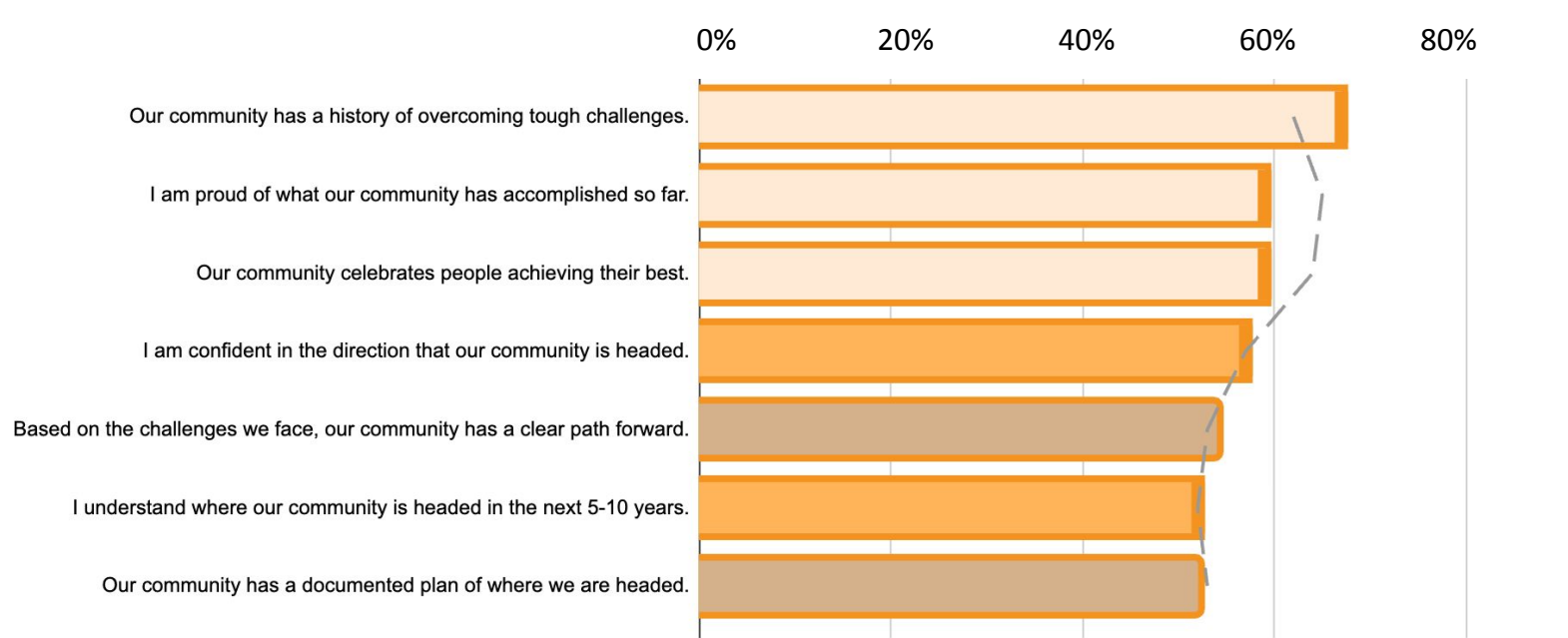
- What drives the strong sense of loyalty and belonging among long-term residents?
- How can we foster obligatory commitment among newer or younger community members?
- What barriers exist for residents who don't feel their community's problems are their own?
- How are some ways to improve scores compared to the overall Reno area?

Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- How can leaders improve transparency for younger or skeptical residents?
- What steps could increase collective trust in local leadership?
- How can leadership pathways be made more accessible to new voices in the community?
- What factors have improved perceived fairness and leader accessibility since 2024?

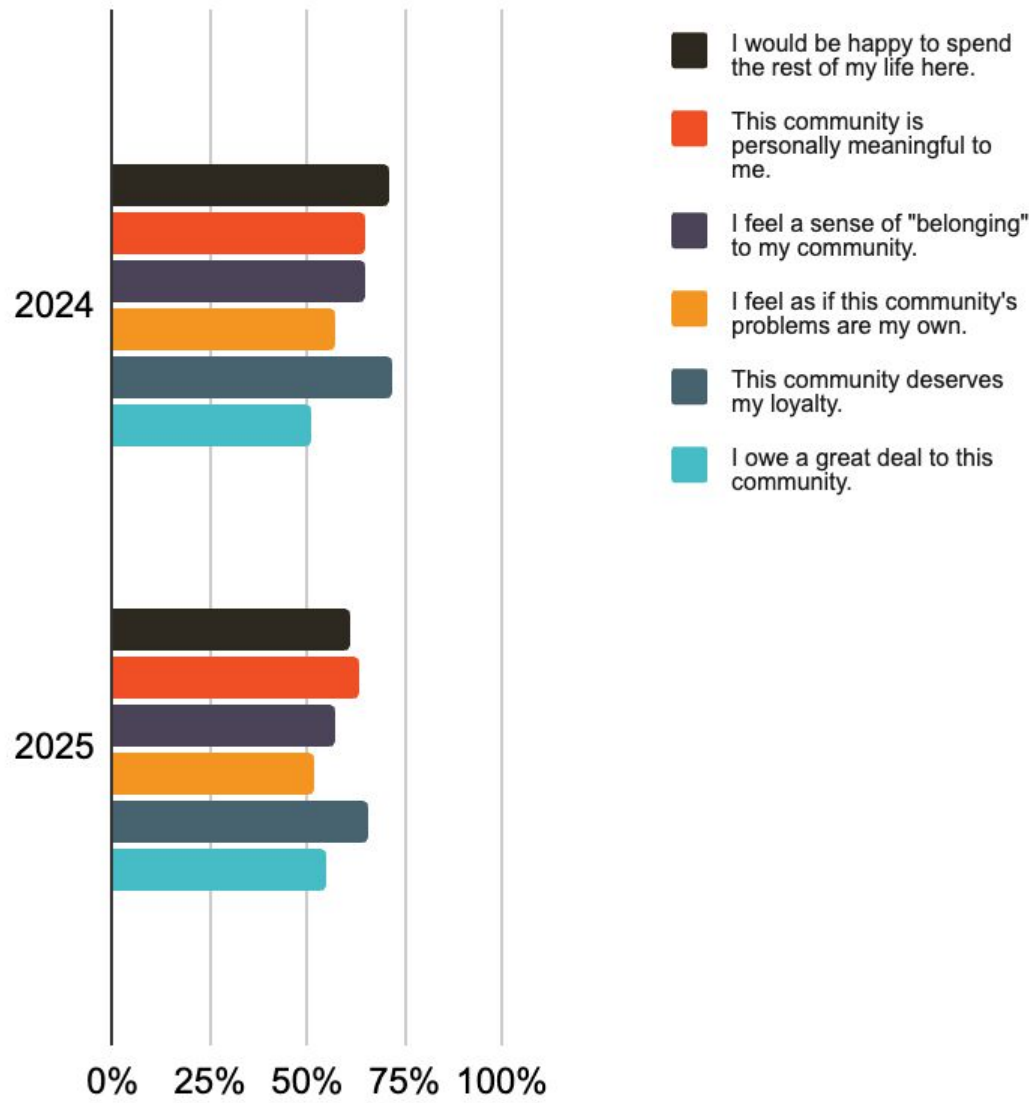
Community Confidence: Vision



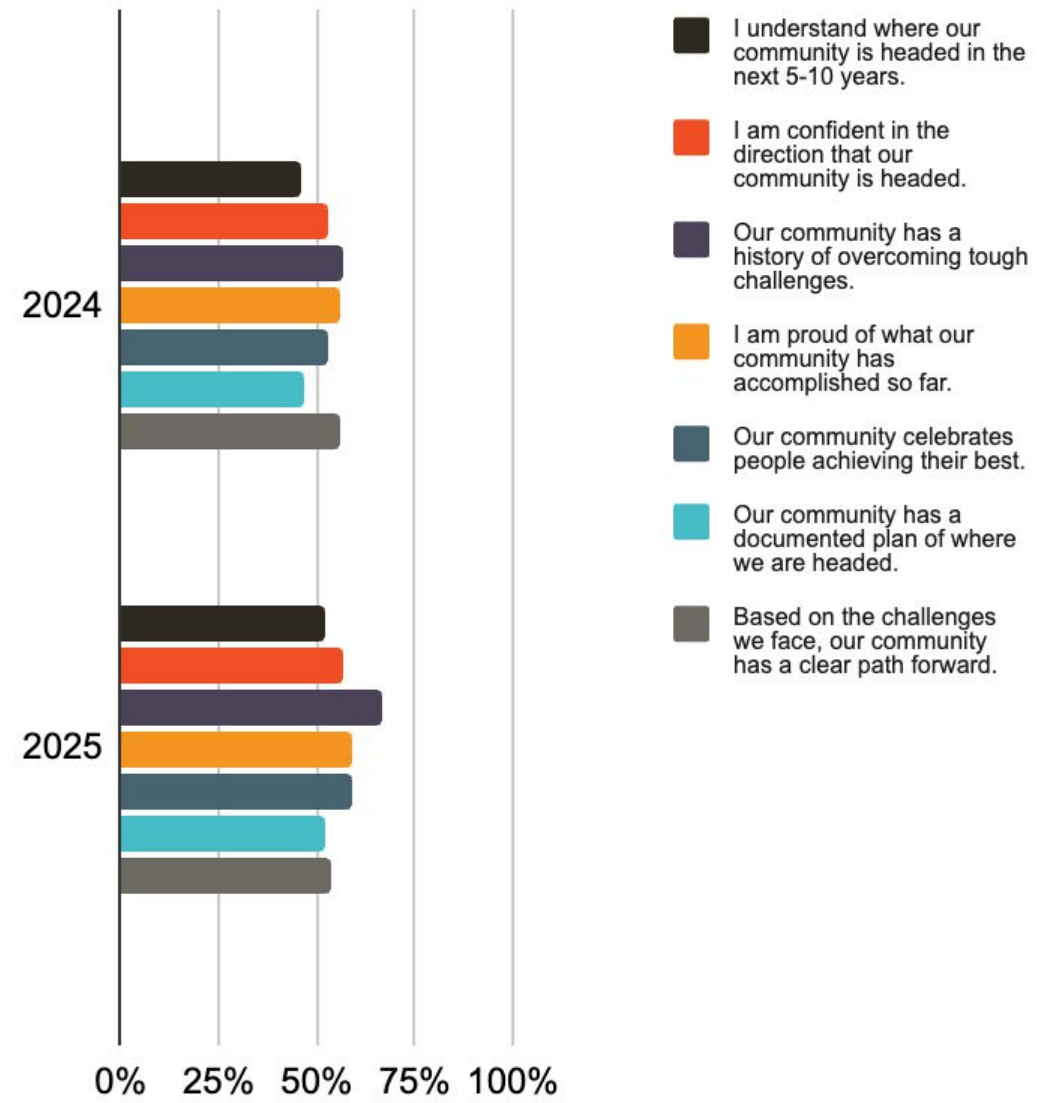
- Why do residents feel uncertain about long-term planning despite believing in progress?
- What visible improvements have most influenced community optimism in 2025?
- How can we strengthen confidence in documented planning and next steps?
- Which groups are most likely to feel disconnected from the community's strategic direction?

Confidence In Our Local Community

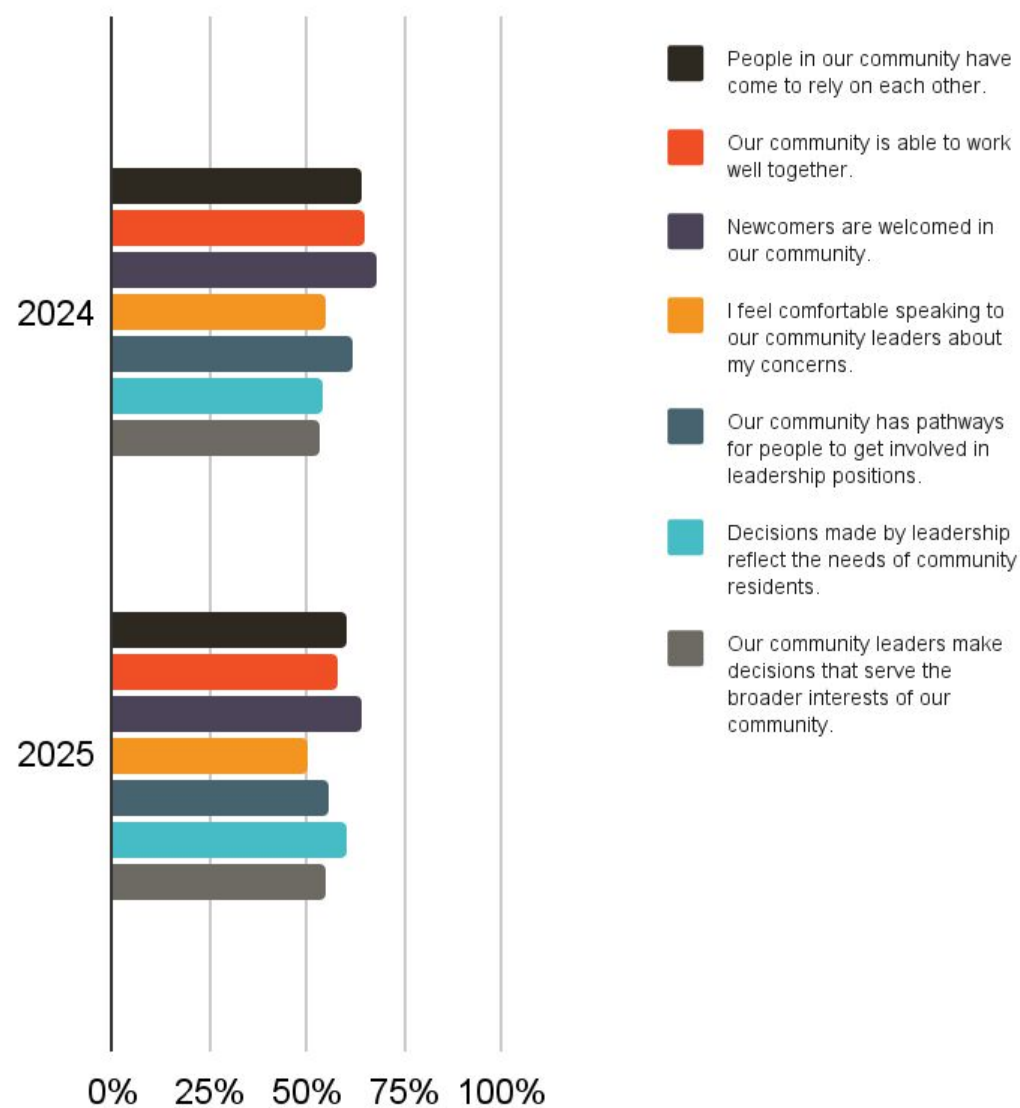
Commitment



Vision



Leadership



Economic vs. Community Confidence

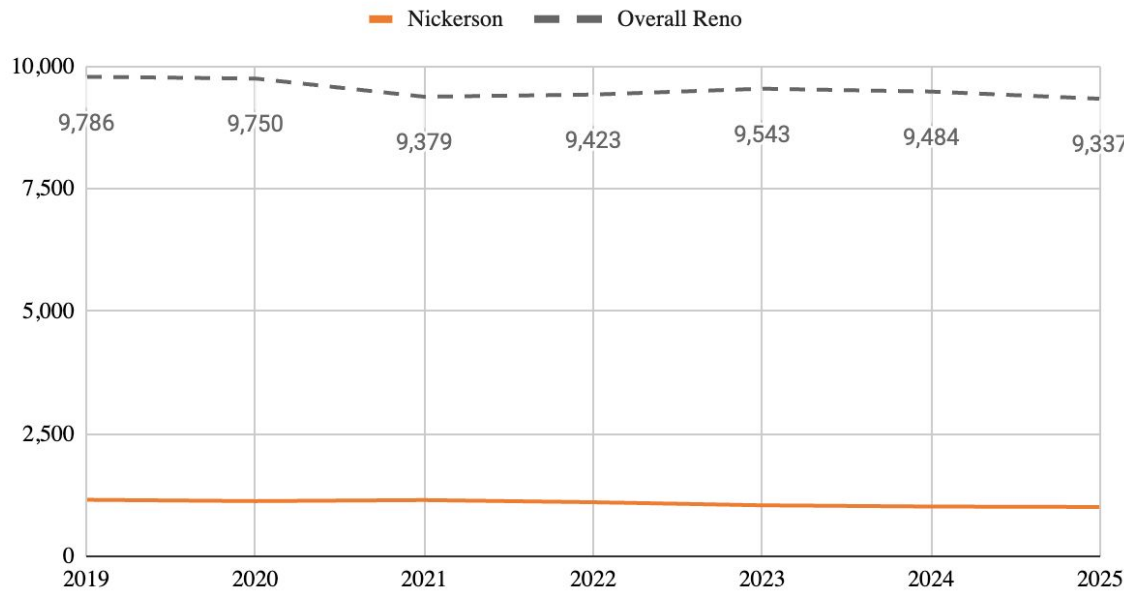


Local Community Indicators

Local School Enrollment



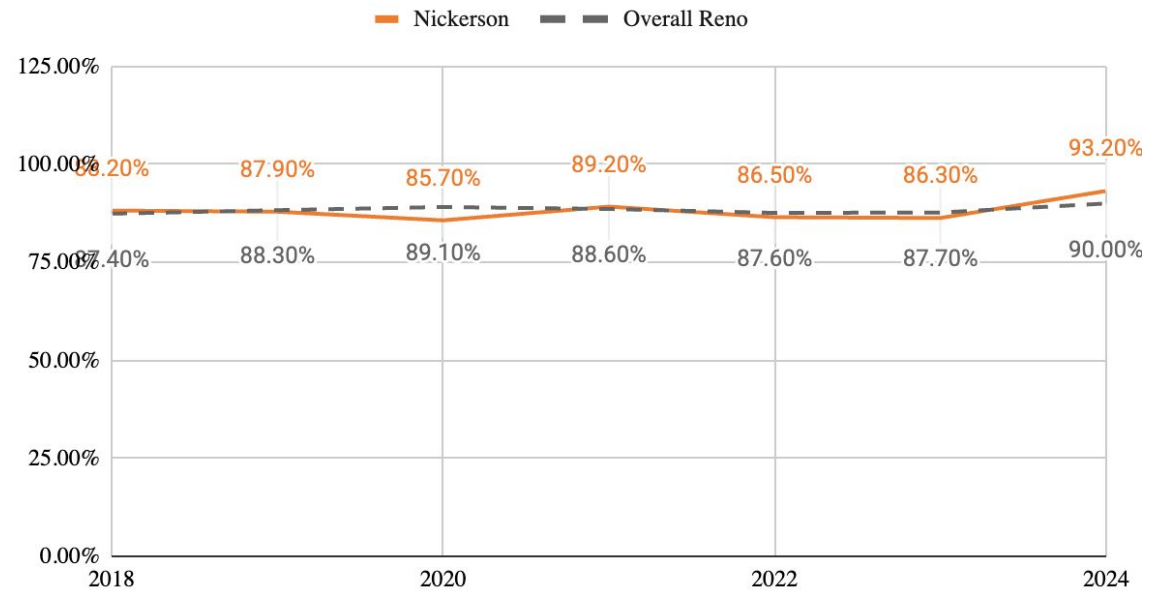
Enrollment



High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



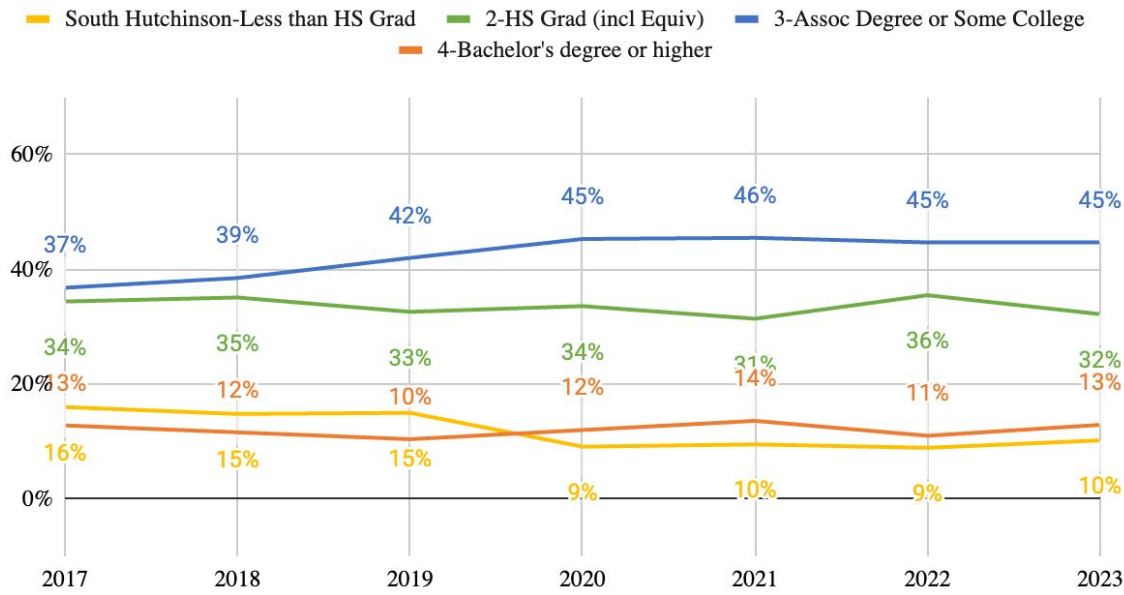
Graduation Rate



Local Educational Level



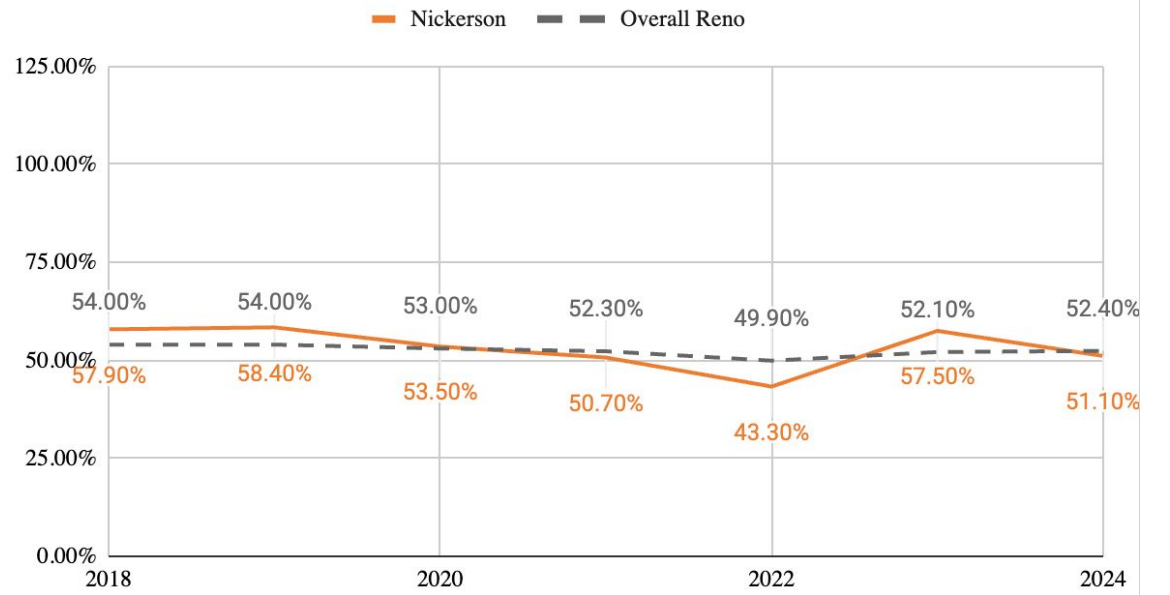
Education Level



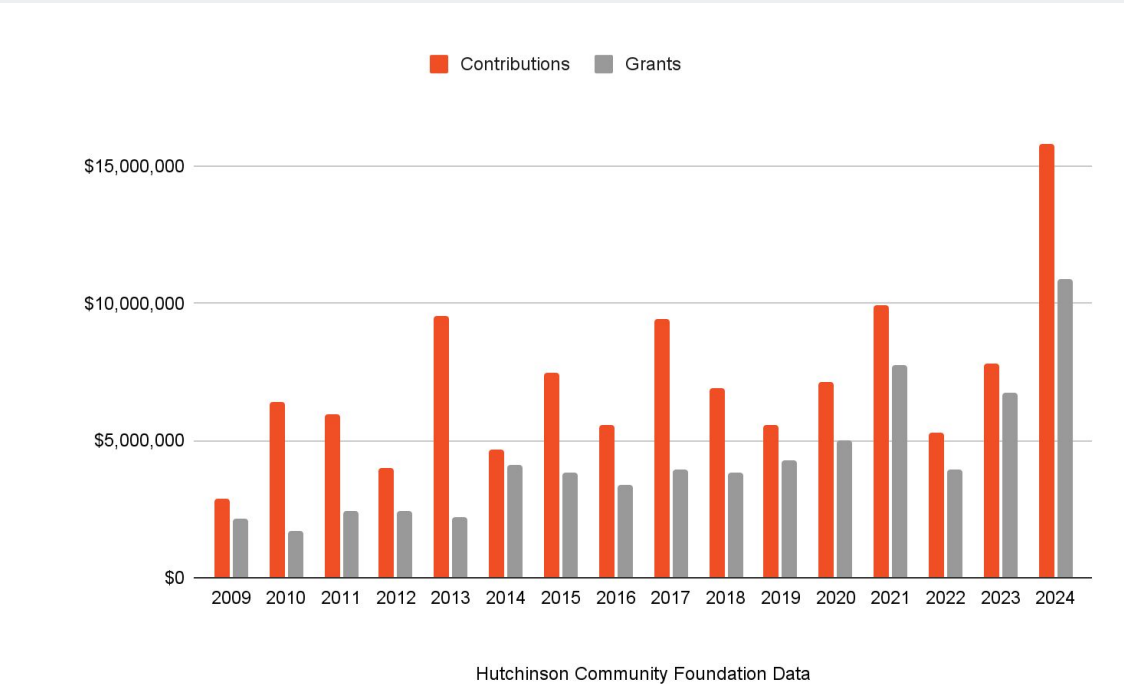
School % Free-Reduced Price Lunch



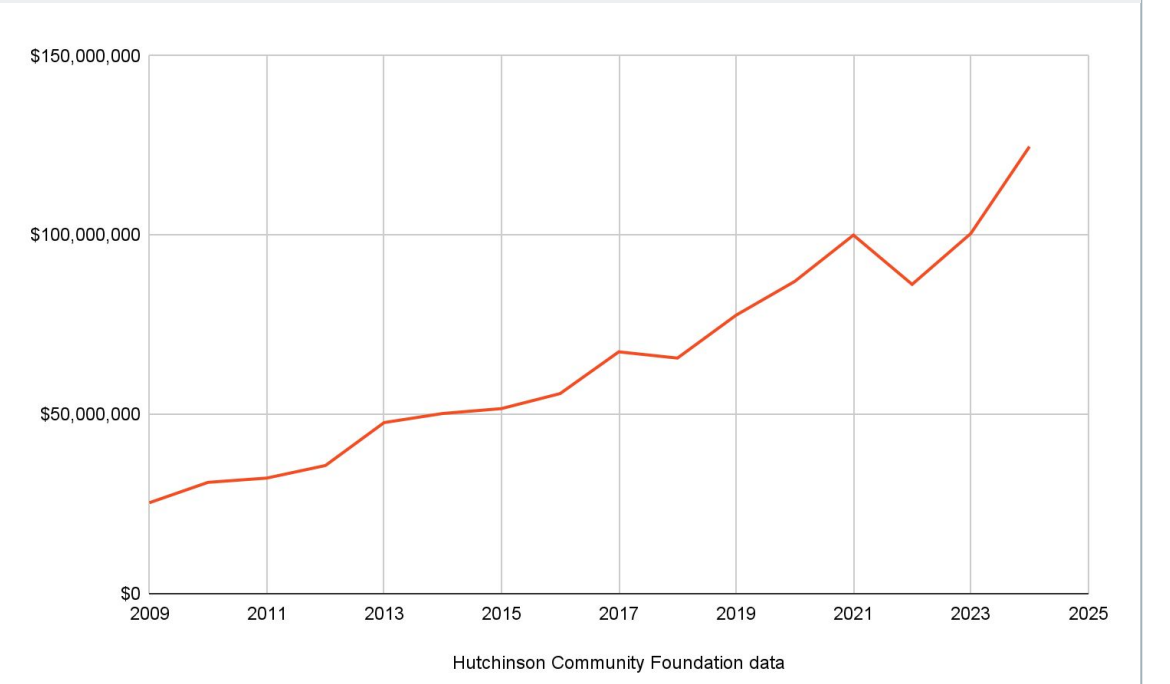
Free/Reduced Lunch



Hutchinson Community Foundation: Contributions & Grants



Hutchinson Community Foundation: Total Assets

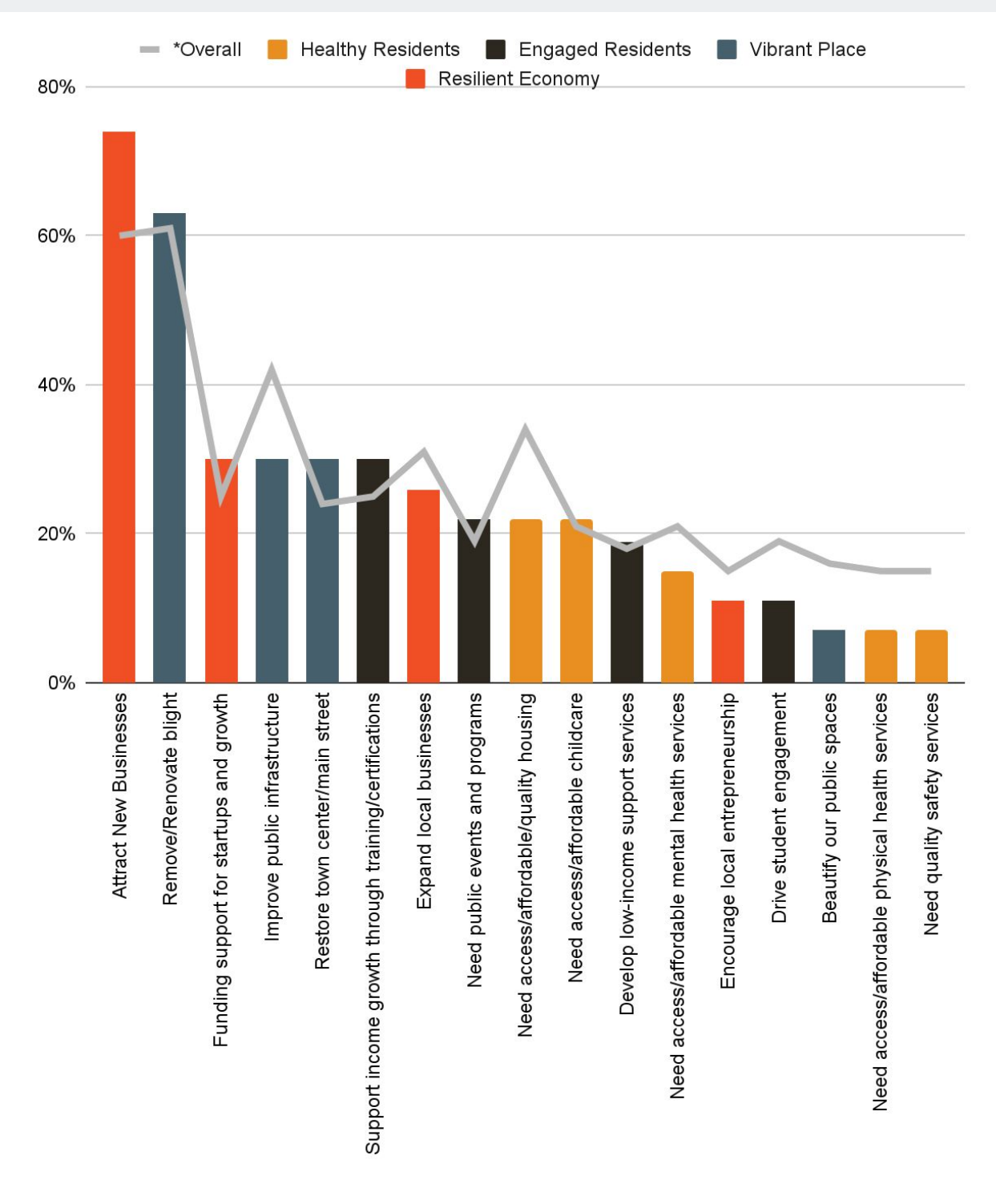


Community Program Priorities

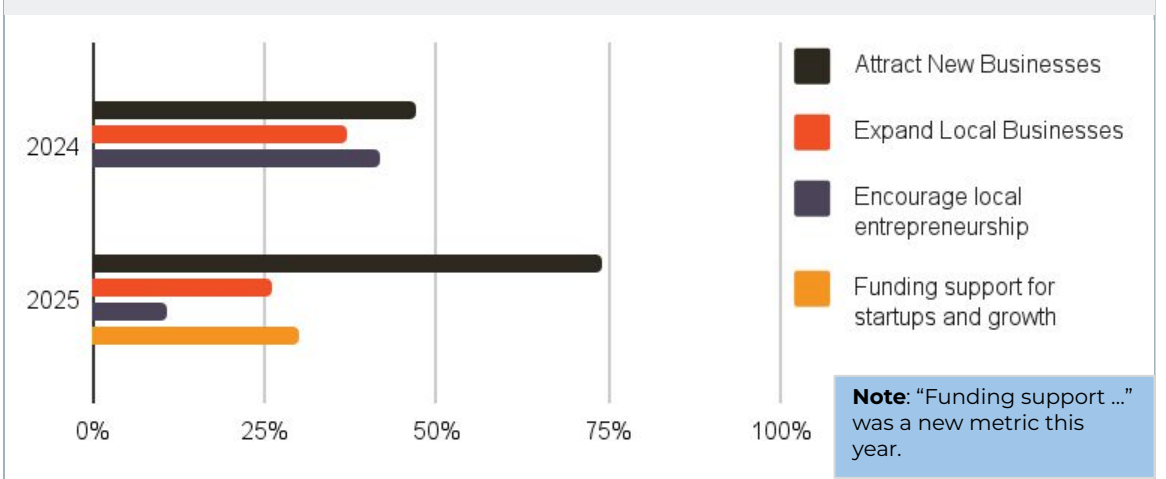
Priorities Summary:

South Hutchinson's 2025 priorities are centered on improving the economy and infrastructure, and creating inviting public spaces. Residents call for both large-scale investments—like expanded recreation facilities and housing development—as well as practical, lower-cost projects such as signage upgrades and neighborhood events. Infrastructure repair, park beautification, and mobility enhancements remain the most supported programs, driven in part by increasing parental involvement. After attracting new businesses, the town shows heightened urgency around blight removal, road conditions, and restoring the downtown area.

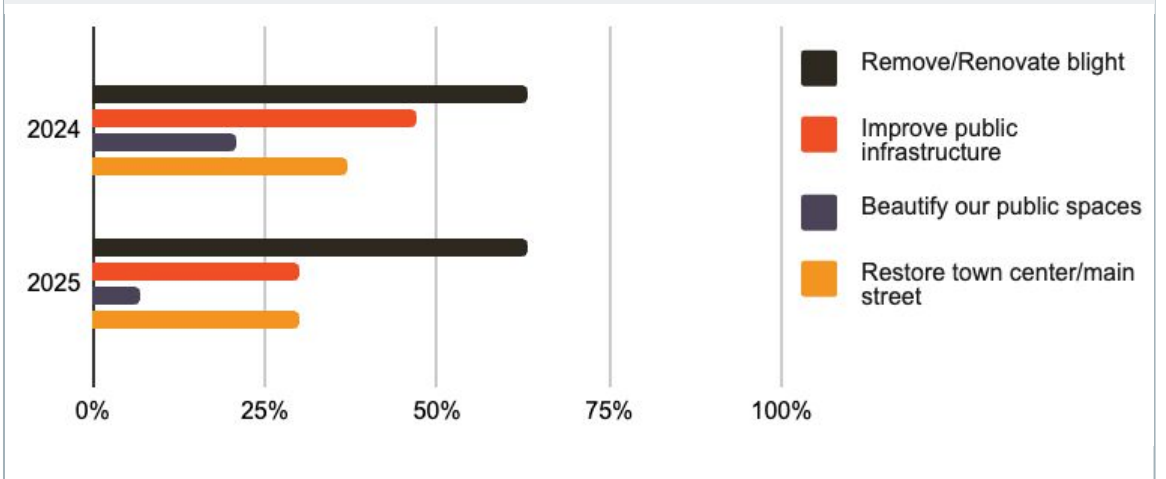
Program Priorities



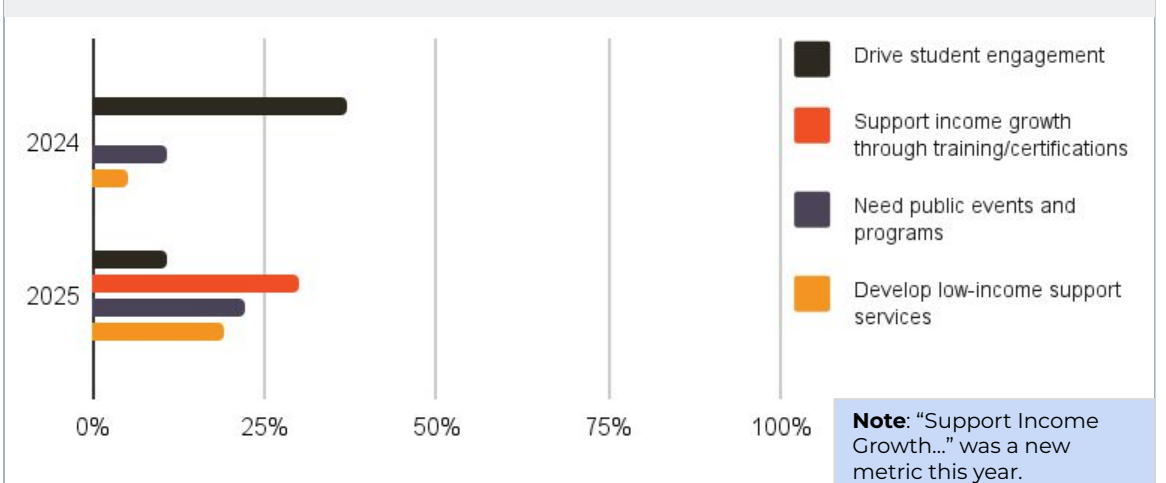
Resilient Economy



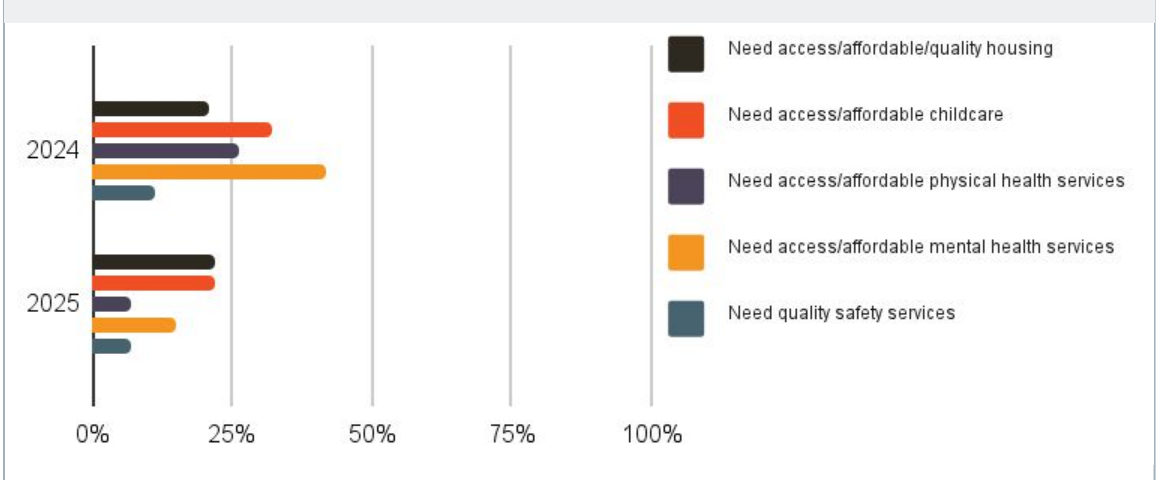
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents



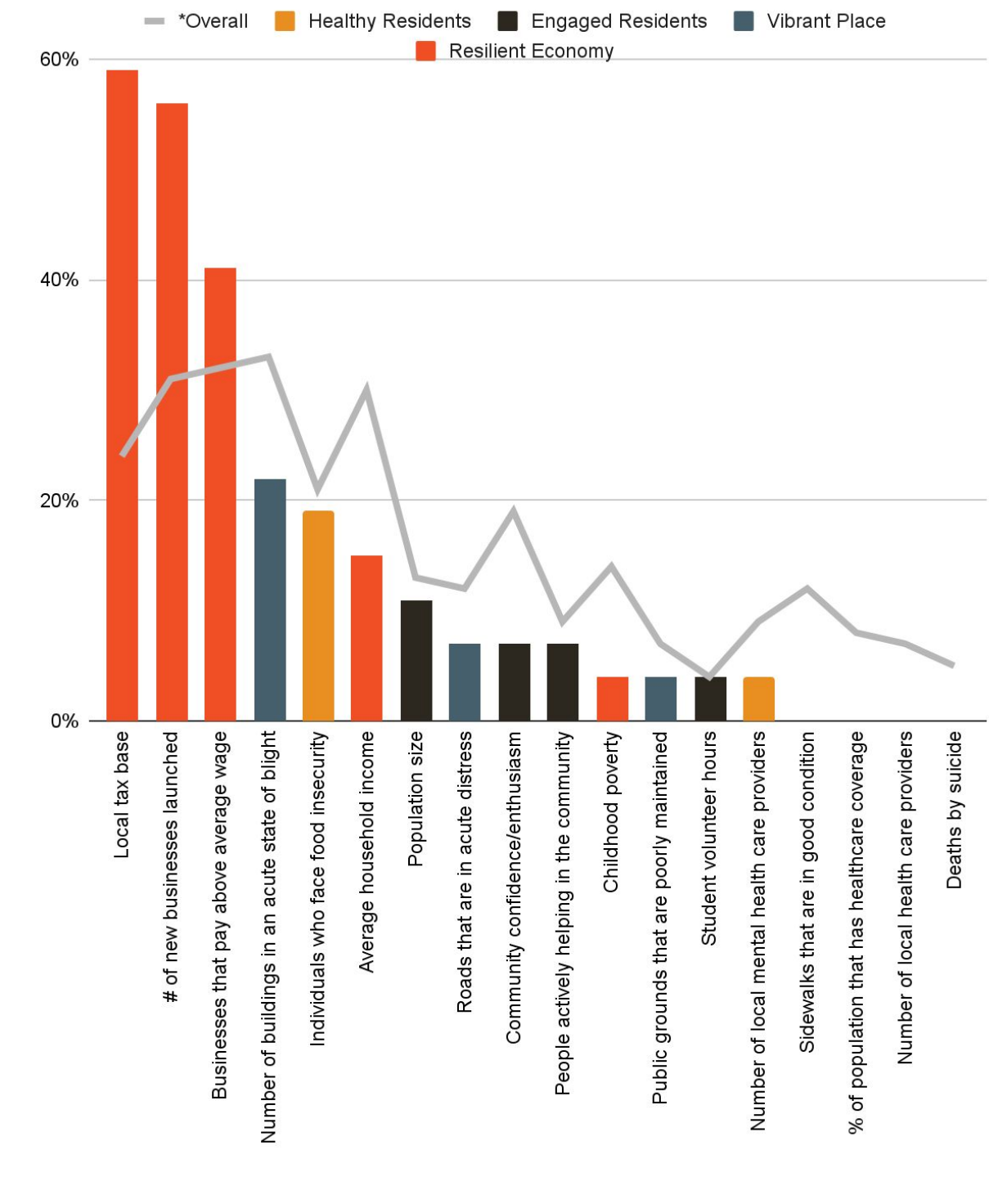
Healthy Residents



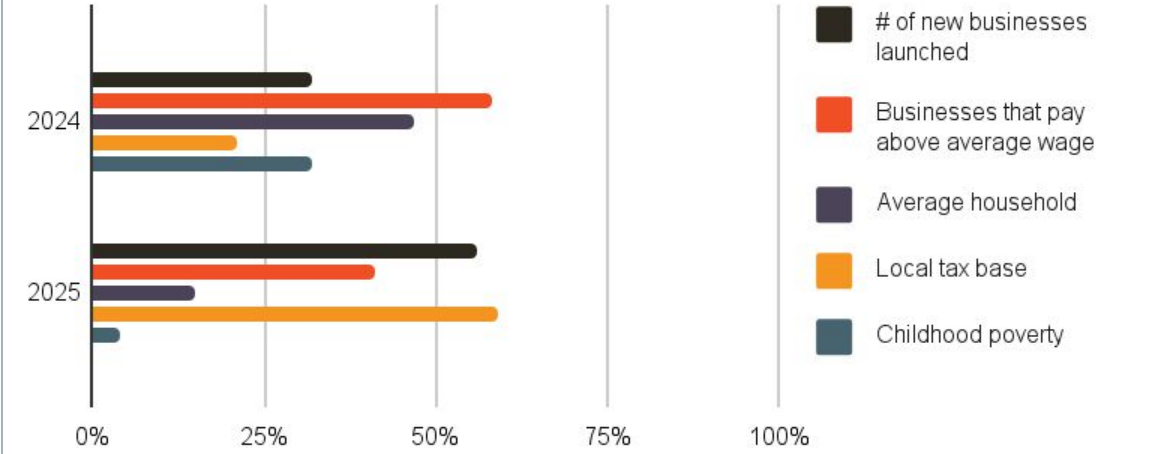
- Why does South Hutchinson place such strong emphasis on infrastructure and beautification programs compared to neighboring communities?
- How can the city turn high interest in corridor revitalization into achievable short-term actions using \$15k/year?
- What barriers may be limiting support for programs like public events and entrepreneurship despite resident support?
- What practical strategies could better align parks and trail improvements?

Community Priority Metrics

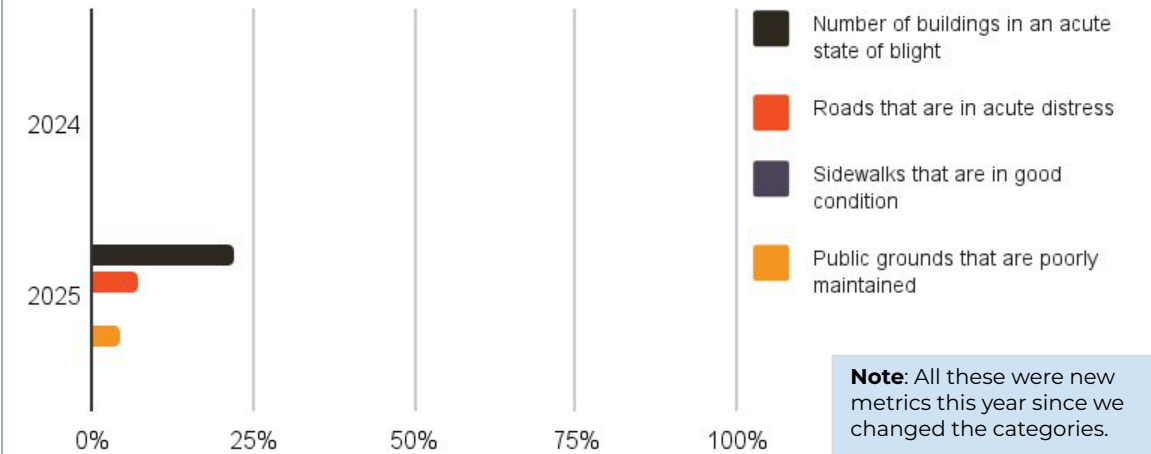
Priority Metrics



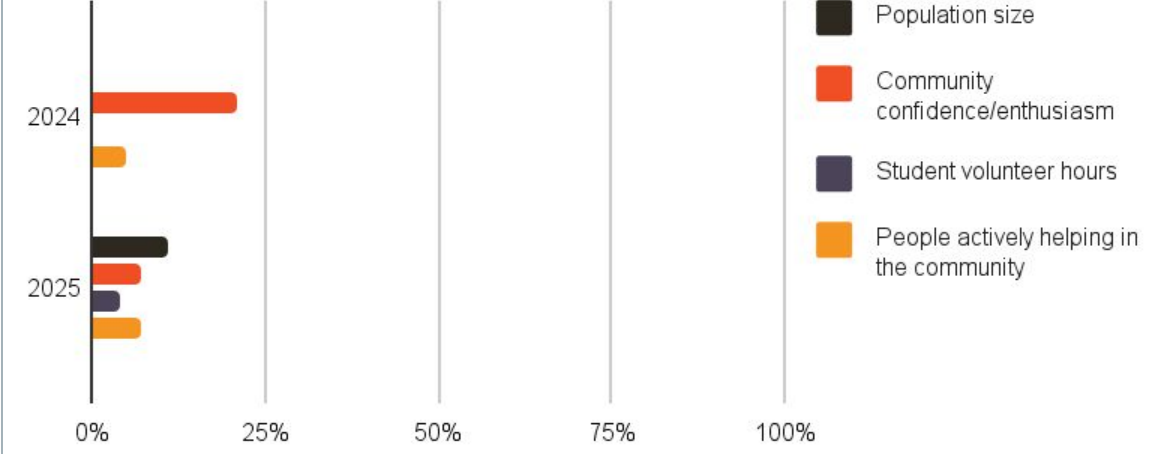
Resilient Economy



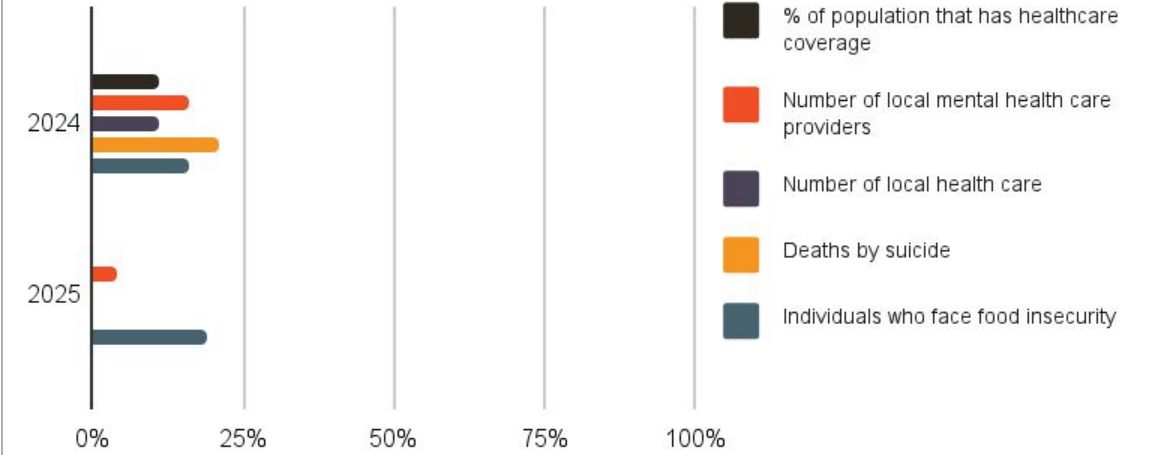
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents



Healthy Residents



- What underlying factors cause residents to rate the Resilient Economy metrics so high?
- What policies could help South Hutchinson address high concern for road conditions and blight?
- Why the drop in prioritizing community confidence from last year to this year?
- What might be behind the significant increase in interest in the local tax base metric?
- How can economic mobility metrics guide workforce development programs in South Hutchinson?



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?

- Recreation Center or Indoor Activity Space – A family-friendly space like with adventure features or indoor play area
- Infrastructure and Roads – Upgrade of streets, sidewalks, and drainage for better mobility, safety, and community pride
- Business and Economic Development – Support for Main Street revitalization, new business attraction, and large retail options to increase economic activity
- Beautification and Code Enforcement – Clean-up and visual improvement initiatives to boost property values
- Education and School Facilities – Investment in new school facilities

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?

- Affordable Housing Access – Support pet-friendly and lower-income housing to reduce homelessness and support residents
- Youth Programs and Engagement – Create programs like a Boys and Girls Club or leadership development to empower youth and support families
- Beautification and Code Enforcement – Encourage property upkeep and city appearance, improving pride and attractiveness for residents and businesses
- Business and Real Estate Development – Marketing, securing property, and renovating buildings to attract new business
- Daycare Services – Address urgent childcare gaps, enabling parents to work

Serving your community!

How do you serve your community today?

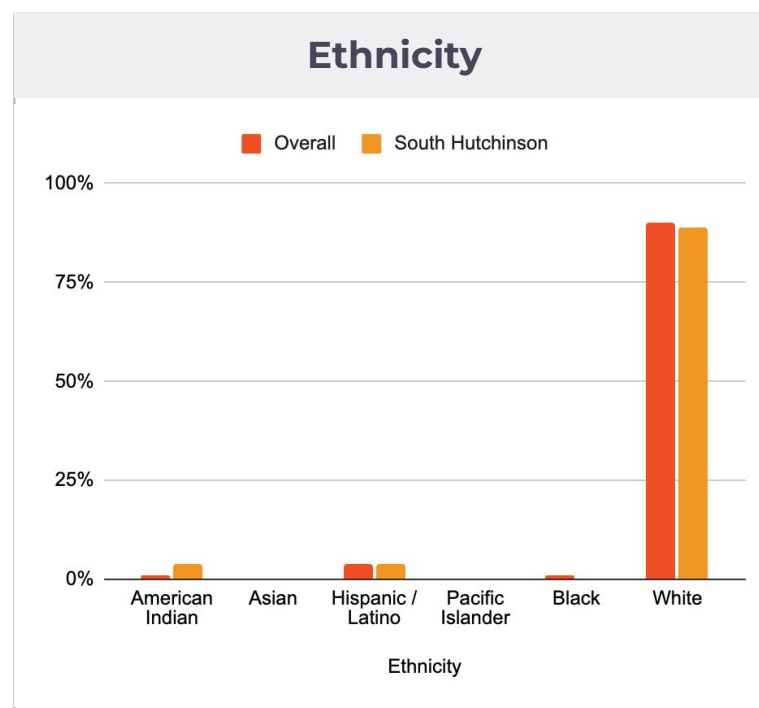
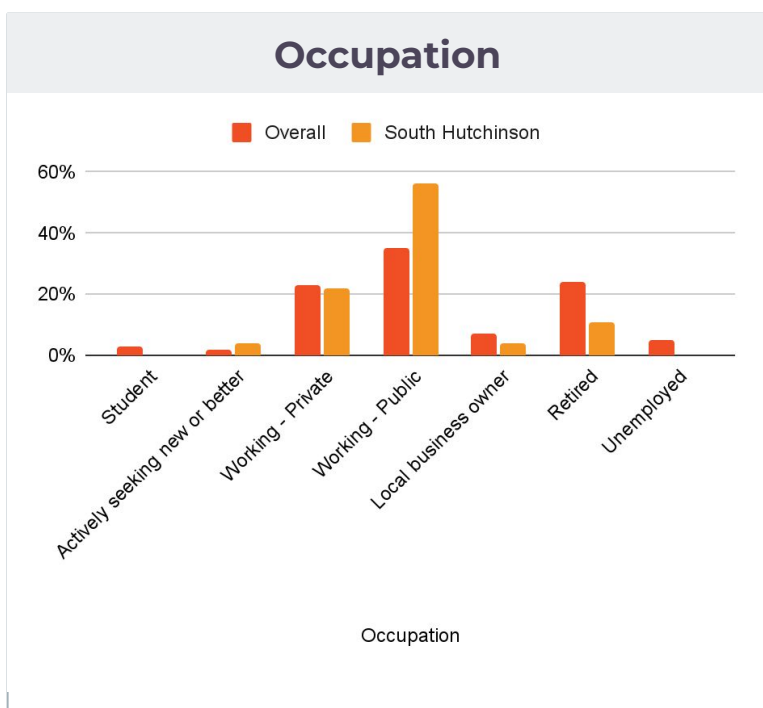
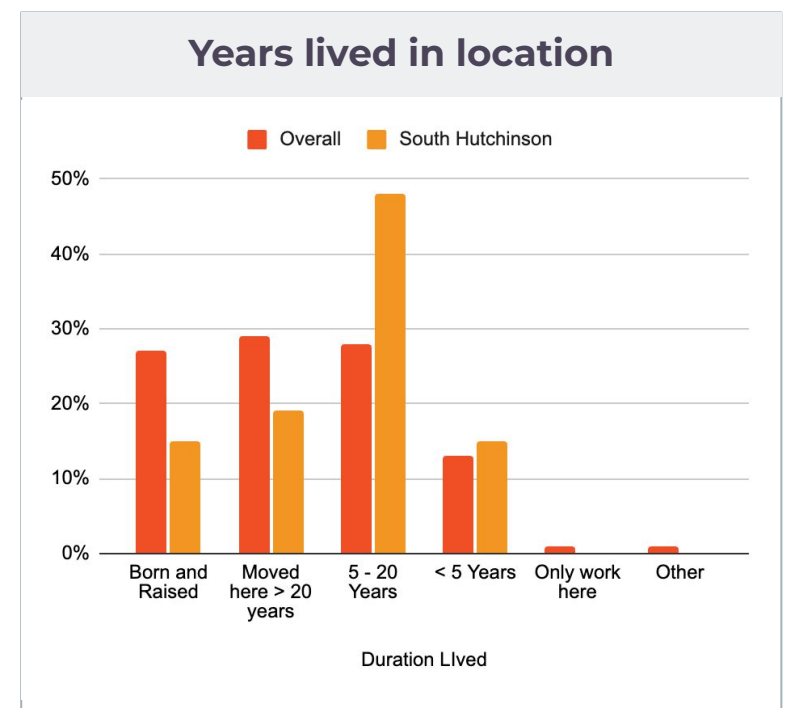
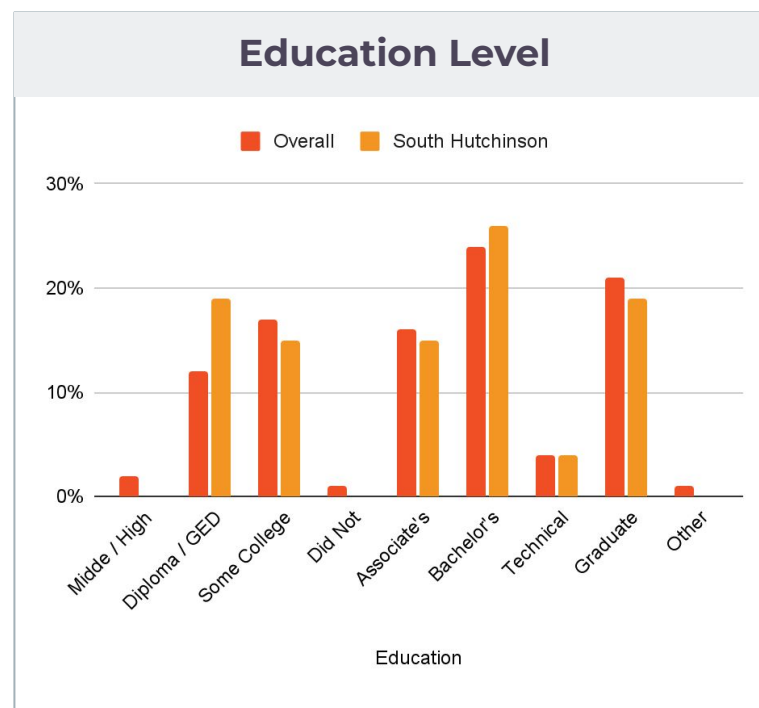
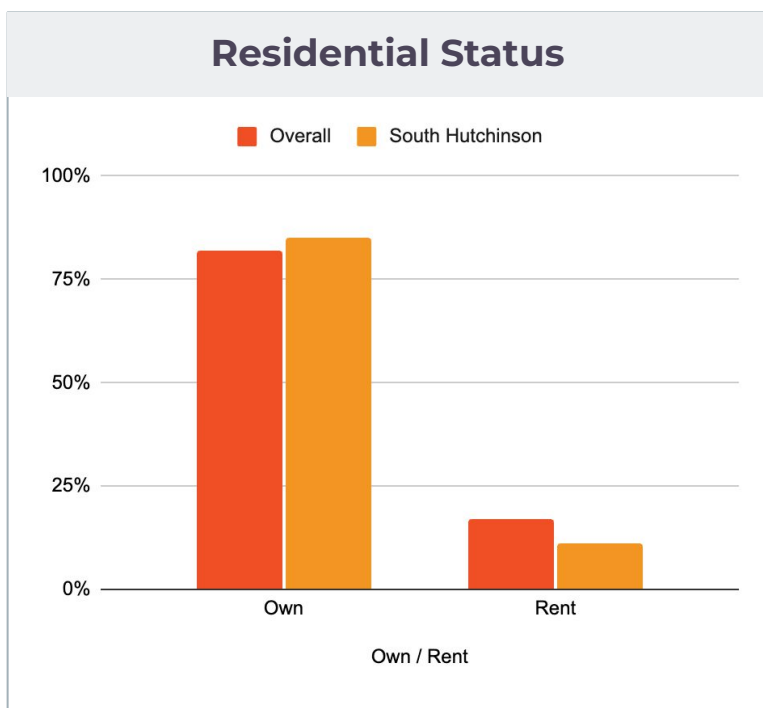
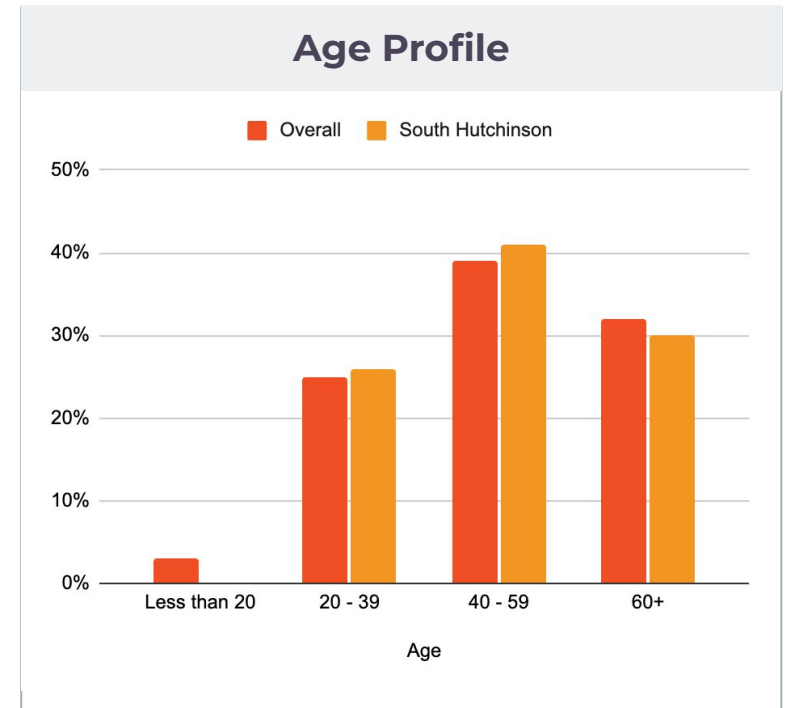
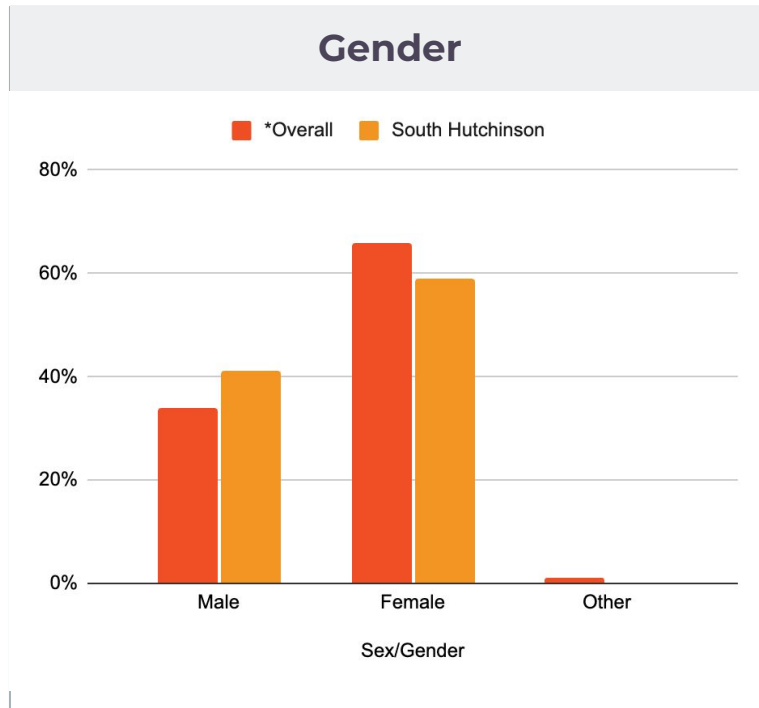
- Local Government Roles – Community members serve as city council members, city staff, or county commissioners to support governance and planning
- Faith-Based Involvement – Churches are active hubs for volunteerism and support in the community
- Civic Employment – Individuals serving the community through roles within city operations and public services
- Educational Volunteering – Programs like Master Gardeners at Hutchinson Community College provide educational and beautification contributions
- Limited Time Capacity – Several respondents indicate limited ability to serve due to time constraints

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

- Community Event Planning – Residents want to help organize events like block parties and fundraisers to build stronger community connections
- Planning and Advisory Boards – Interest in serving on boards to help guide development and community decisions
- Hands-On Volunteering – Many are willing to offer time and labor for remodeling, renovation, or other community improvement efforts
- Housing Development – Some want to directly support local housing solutions, including building or supporting homes
- Increased Volunteerism – A general desire to give more time to community needs through various services

Survey Respondents

27
Total Responses



Average Community Score
Town Score

7

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community
(26%)