This Voice Of Our Community Study has been developed to help local community leaders and citizens identify the major local patterns. The data that has been captured here can be broadly classified in two categories: (1) The perceptions by the citizens of the community and (2) The numbers that measure the economic facts. The report helps identify the opportunities and the challenges, so that the community can build on what is working. **Our big observation: McPherson seems to be a tale of two cities.** There are incredible positive economic factors (economic confidence, housing growth, tax collections,...) that demonstrate that the city is moving in the right direction. At the same time, however, the community confidence is much lower than the average county resident. What are some efforts that local leaders can engage in to lift the outlook of the residents?

**THE EQUATION THAT DRIVES COMMUNAL PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY**

![Collaborative Leadership + Committed Citizenship + Community Vision & Action = Economic & Community Sustainability]

“The industrial base and corresponding employment separates McPherson from many communities of similar size. In addition, the community development organizations that exist in McPherson, such as MIDC, the Chamber, Main Street, the Community Foundation, etc. are doing a terrific job of keeping McPherson ahead of the curve. Finally, the success of the MHS athletic programs provides an enormous boost to civic pride.”

- A passionate City of McPherson citizen.
Key Economic Observations

McPherson has a unique economic position. The most critical variables that are working in its favor: (1) Local population is growing, (2) Citizens have a very positive view of current employment opportunities, and (3) Local tax base is increasing. Also, unlike most communities that rank economic development as top priorities programs, this was not the case in McPherson.

While the economic programs were not prioritized by the citizens, they certainly see the need to measure the economics as a critical priority.

The big challenge that city needs to tackle is local school enrollment (which equates to future workforce). How can the local leaders take targeted actions to retain and attract young families? Given that the local business market has been flat what additional steps can be taken?

Points of further reflection:

What is causing the future outlook of the Employment and Income opportunities to be lower than current? What steps can be taken to help demonstrate to the citizens that the community is on a path to attaining its economic potential. (Important clue: Business leaders would like to see more entrepreneurship programs in the community.)

Can you spot areas where McPherson residents have a significantly different view than the other communities? Why is this?

Data source: Community Survey (Conducted in Spring 2023)
Community Benchmarking Report
City of McPherson, KS | June, 2023

Additional Important Economic Data
What opportunity do you see here?

### Annual Sales Tax Collections

![Graph showing annual sales tax collections](image)

Source: Kansas Dept of Revenue

### Median Household Income

![Graph showing median household income](image)

Source: USCB, American Community Survey, 5-yr Avg.

### Local Unemployment Rate

![Graph showing local unemployment rate](image)

Source: USCB, American Community Survey, 5-yr Avg.

### Local Poverty Rate

![Graph showing local poverty rate](image)

Source: USCB, American Community Survey

### 10 Year Shift in Local Jobs

![Graph showing 10 year shift in local jobs](image)

Source: USCB, County Business Patterns By Zip. Data is on zip code basis.

### Businesses in Our Town

![Graph showing businesses in our town](image)

Source: USCB, County Business Patterns By Zip. Data is on zip code basis.
Our People, Our Pride
What opportunity do you see here?

---

**Community Benchmarking Report**
City of McPherson, KS | June, 2023

---

**Overall Population Trend**

![Graph showing total population trend](source: USCB, American Community Foundation)

**Population Trend by Age**

![Graph showing population trend by age](source: USCB, American Community Survey, 5-yr average)

**Overall Community Confidence**

![Circular chart showing overall community confidence](source: Community Survey [Conducted in Spring 2023])

---

**Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7; Scored >5)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Leadership</th>
<th>Citizen Commitment</th>
<th>Community Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Fairness**
- **Trust**
- **Access & Pathways**

The leadership confidence scores are lagging in McPherson.

- **Emotional**
- **Obligatory**

Citizen Commitment in McPherson is slightly more positive. The higher Emotional Commitment shows a deeper desire to live in the community.

- **Visioning**
- **Planning**
- **Doing**

The data shows tremendous opportunity to better engage the community in the local Visioning and Planning efforts.

---

**OVERALL COMMUNITY PERCEPTION**

We see a lower level of community confidence being expressed in McPherson than an average county resident towards their community. Most concerning are the metrics related to the ‘Actions’ that are being taken in the community to set the agenda. The residents are indicating that they are not seeing a cohesive visioning process for the community. The lowest scores that were shared relate to how the town conducts its planning process. Local leaders should consider if this challenge can be addressed through consistent and proactive communication? Or does this require a deeper level change in how the planning process is conducted in the city.

---

**Challenges identified by local citizens:**

- **Housing Development:** Expanding Housing, Affordable Quality Housing
- **Economic & Workforce Development:** Expanding Childcare, Public Transportation, Cut tax incentives, an NAACP Chapter, More inclusivity, expansion in Mental Healthcare, Workforce development and training
- **Infrastructure Development:** Expanding Roads and Sidewalks, Trails and Parks, Repair School Buildings, Beautification Efforts

---

Data source: Community Survey (Conducted in Spring 2023)
Key Community Metrics
What opportunity do you see here?

Local School Enrollment

High School 4 Year Graduation Rate

Source: Kansas State Dept of Education, Data Central

Local Educational Level

School District % Free-Reduced Price Lunch

Source: Kansas State Dept of Education, Data Central

Community Foundation

Total Dollars Raised and Invested

Source: McPherson County Community Foundation, 2023
Who Responded to the Survey
What opportunity do you see here?

Number of people:
We received a total of 312 responses. While our survey response target was 125, the leaders in McPherson were able to go well above this threshold.

Gender:
In most communities we see a varying responses from males and females. In McPherson the responses were quite consistent across both the groups.

Age Profile:
The young people have the lowest confidence in the community and the oldest have the highest. The young people want a higher focus on business growth and town beautification.

Residential Status:
Property owners are more enthusiastic about the town than renters. Renters had a far poorer view of the current business conditions in the community.

Occupation:
Those who are school tend to have lower confidence. One data point that jumps out is that business leaders would like to see more entrepreneurship programs.

Education Status:
Individuals with any Degree have the best perceptions of the current and future of the town. Those who are in high school have the poorest.

Ethnicity:
Not enough data to analyze.

Duration of Residence:
Those who moved to the community more than 20 years ago had the highest perception of the community. Those who are newer prioritize seeing the town beautified.

---

Data source: Community Survey (Conducted in Spring 2023)
Total Housing Units

Source: USCB, American Community Survey