



MCPHERSON COUNTY
**Community
Foundation**

2025 Community Benchmark Report City of McPherson, KS

Be The Movement!

Connect with local changemakers, local community projects, resources & grants, and much more.

www.mcphersonfoundation.org



Innovation Economy Partners
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

What Makes Our Community Special?

"Genuinely caring people who are willing to help, and forward thinking community members who are always looking toward the next best thing for our community."

Debbie

"The diversity of businesses in McPherson tends to insulate the community from national and state economic down turns. Also McPherson is a little unique compared to most small KS communities in that much of the population moved to MP rather than being lifetime locals which makes it very easy for someone relocating to MP to fit in very quickly. The city is well maintained with beautiful parks and local recreation facilities for a community this size. You can tell many of community leaders are progressive in their thinking."

Bill

"McPherson has a unique combination of Main Street businesses, larger corporations, arts and culture attractions, and solid public services. It has a wonderful quality of life that I think is hard to find, especially in communities this size."

Dorothy

"We have a small and safe town that has a sense of togetherness. Great town for families and those looking for community. A strength of McPherson is that it has small town vibes with plenty of good people and fun things to do."

Caleb

"McPherson gives me a strong sense of belongingness. Our community has excelled at finding ways to bring members together in one way or another."

Brandi

"It is well-coordinated among many different organizations to really and holistically help people who need it. This also reflects the number of individuals who care here."

Dallas

"The love and care and the strength that our community puts towards helping their neighbors—I mean the passion as a whole, our bond we have is like no other."

Anthony

"The 'giving' attitude of many groups and individuals in the community. The traditions that bring people together. (All School's Day)"

Sarah

"People come together to support each other."

Amber

"Employment opportunities, clubs and organizations including the Omega project, STEP MC, Civil Discourse and churches."

Darrel

The Leaders That Make Our Community Special



Executive Summary:

McPherson today is a community proud of its heritage and united by a deep emotional bond. Yet beneath this solidarity, confidence in future prospects and faith in equitable leadership are eroding. While economic indicators still outshine regional peers, residents see cracks in long-term planning—especially around infrastructure and other visible concerns. Community pride runs high, but strategic vision and fairness in governance demand urgent attention. Priorities have evolved: rather than chasing new business launches, the town calls for renovated roads, affordable housing, and revitalized public spaces. These tangible actions, combined with renewed investment in childcare and low-income support, can reverse declining confidence and rekindle McPherson’s promise.

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Economic Confidence

Residents’ current economic confidence tops regional peers but weak future business outlook and three-year decline signal need for reinvestment.

pg **6 - 9**

Community Engagement Confidence

Emotional commitment is high, but strategic vision and fairness lag behind—leadership must clarify plans and ensure equitable decision-making.

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Critical Community Priorities

Focus has shifted to fixing roads, removing blight, and expanding housing and low-income support to meet tangible community needs.

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Survey Respondent Profile

Education drives differences: associate-degree holders are far more confident in investing and leadership fairness; those with vocational training prioritize road repairs most urgently.

The Community Benchmarking report has been commissioned by McPherson Community Foundation to help local residents gain a better understanding of the most pressing opportunities that the local towns face. The annual reports that are generated will help leaders determine the extent to which the efforts are having an impact on the local residents. The reports are also a way for the the various towns in McPherson County 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 the fellow residents are craving.**



Confidence In Our Local Economy

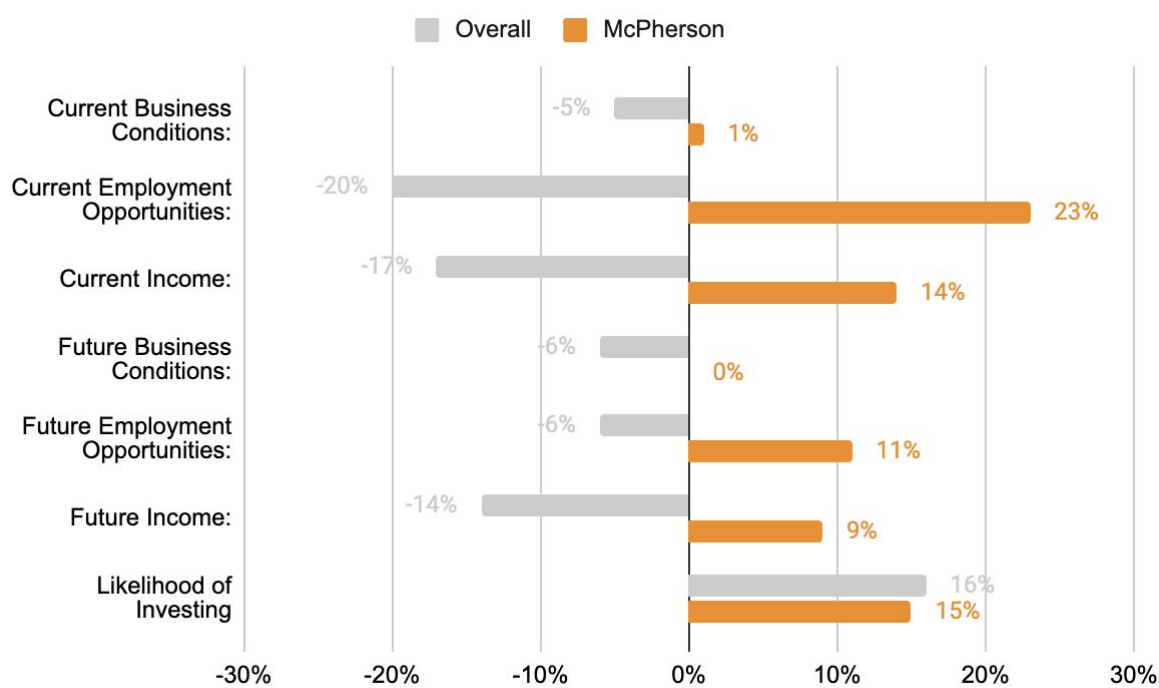
Economic Summary:

McPherson's residents remain relatively optimistic: current business, employment, and income confidences all sit in positive territory, outpacing regional averages that remain negative. Yet future business confidence stalled, signaling caution. Notably, McPherson's employment confidence stands more than forty points above the broader community, yet investing enthusiasm lags by a hair. Over the past three years, even these bright spots have trended downward—suggesting that, without renewed focus on growth and targeted investments, the region risks eroding the gains it has achieved.

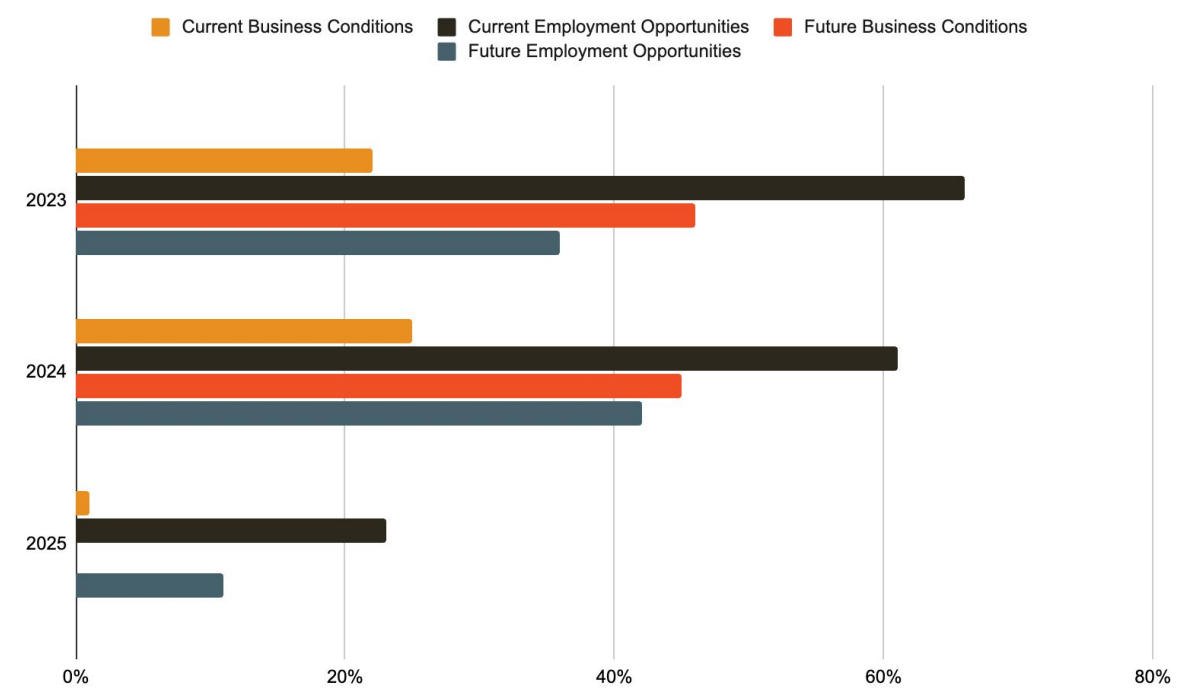
Businesses Needed In Our Town:

Restaurants—more varied sit-down dining options
Child Care—affordable, flexible infant and shift-work care
Affordable housing—needed to attract and retain local workforce
Entertainment & Recreation—family-friendly venues and indoor youth facilities
Grocery options—an Aldi-style low-cost grocer or improved Dillons
Public Transportation—effective local transit for non-drivers
Medical Specialists—OB/GYN, mental-health and substance-use rehab care
Clothing Retail—more diverse apparel and shoe stores beyond western wear
Professional Services—UPS store, dry cleaner, optical shop
Bakery & Local Foods—fresh bakery and local food product offerings

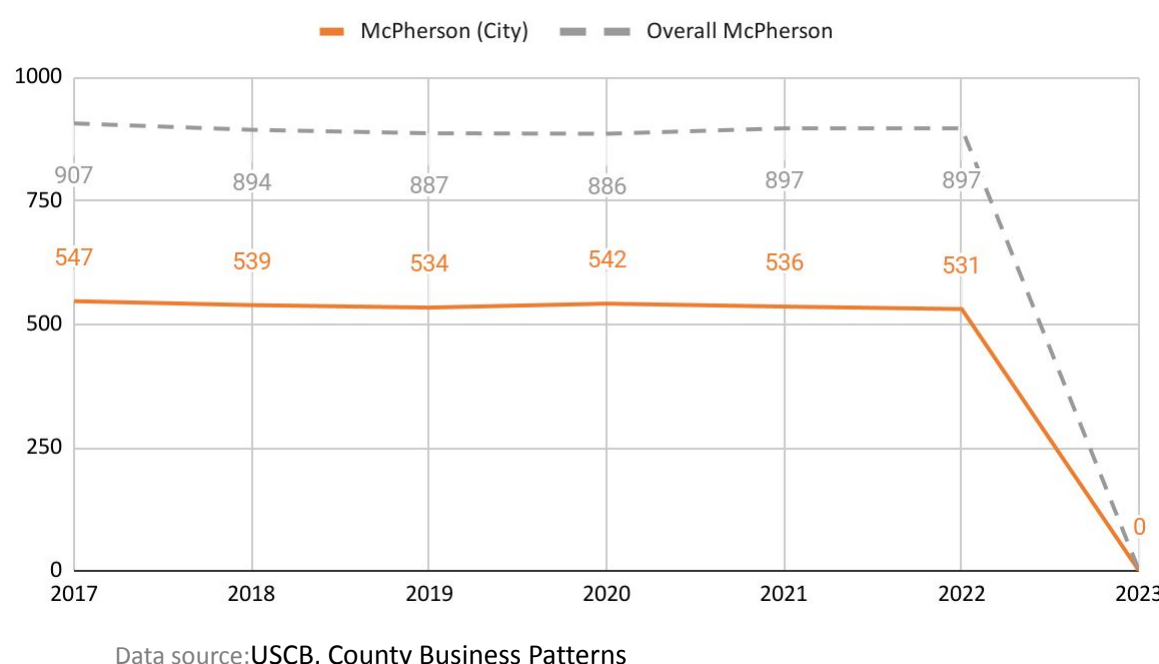
Our Economic Perceptions



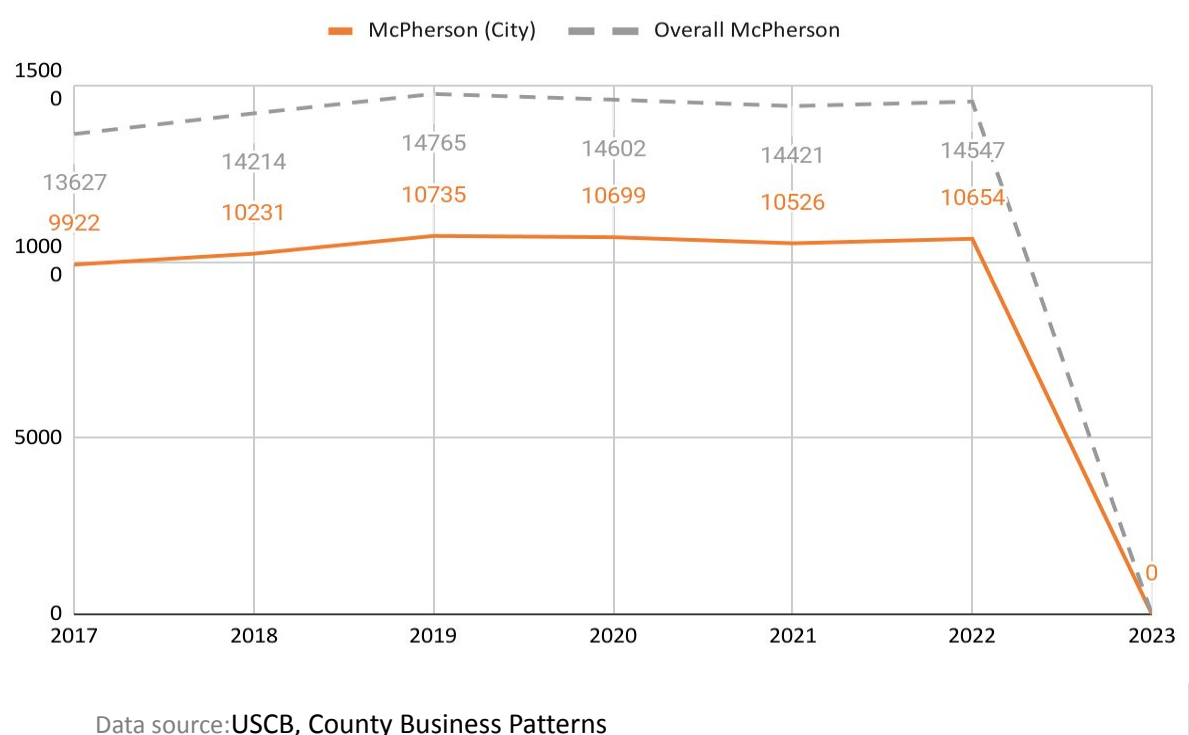
Year Over Year Change (2023 vs 2025)



Businesses in Our Town



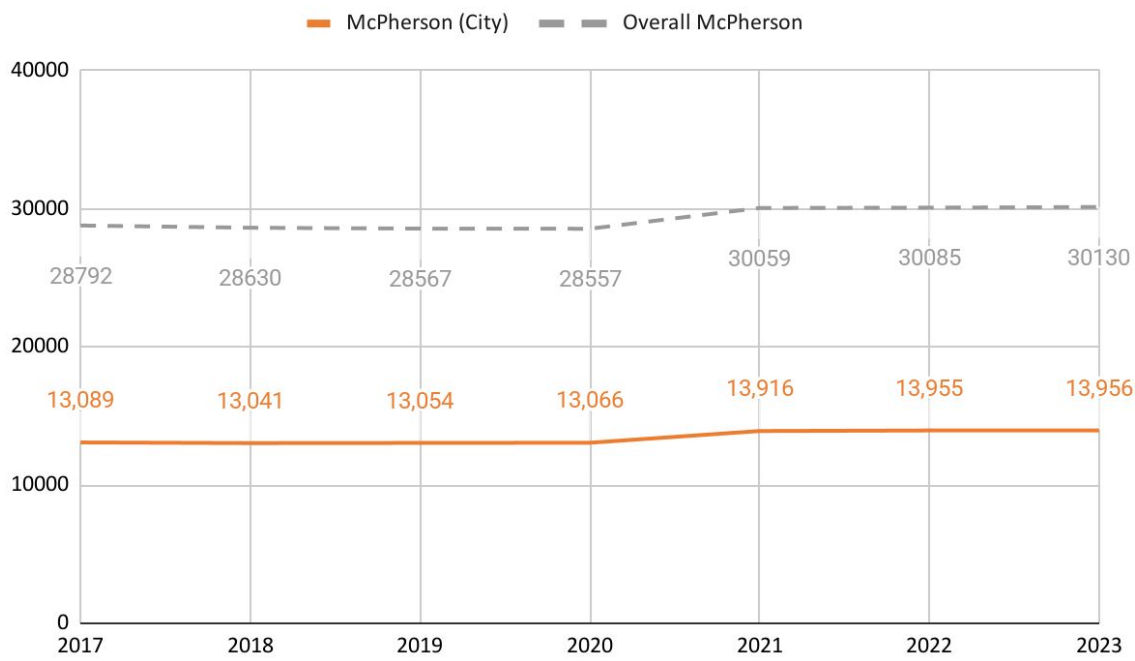
10 Year Shift in Local Jobs



Local Economic Indicators



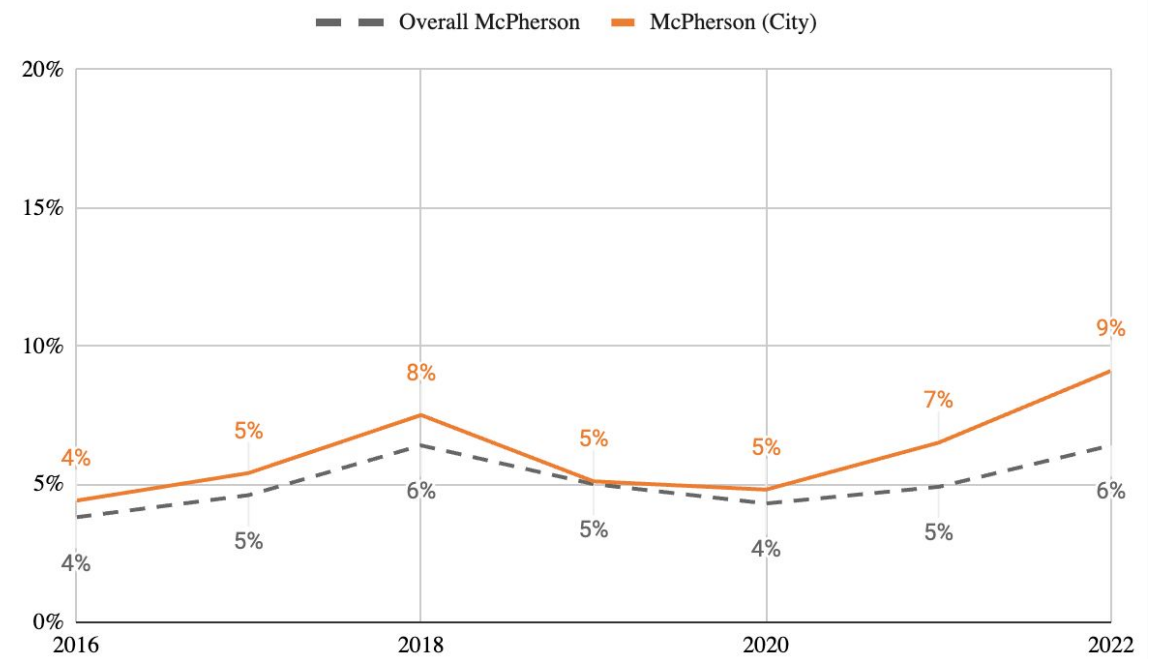
Overall Population Trend



Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg



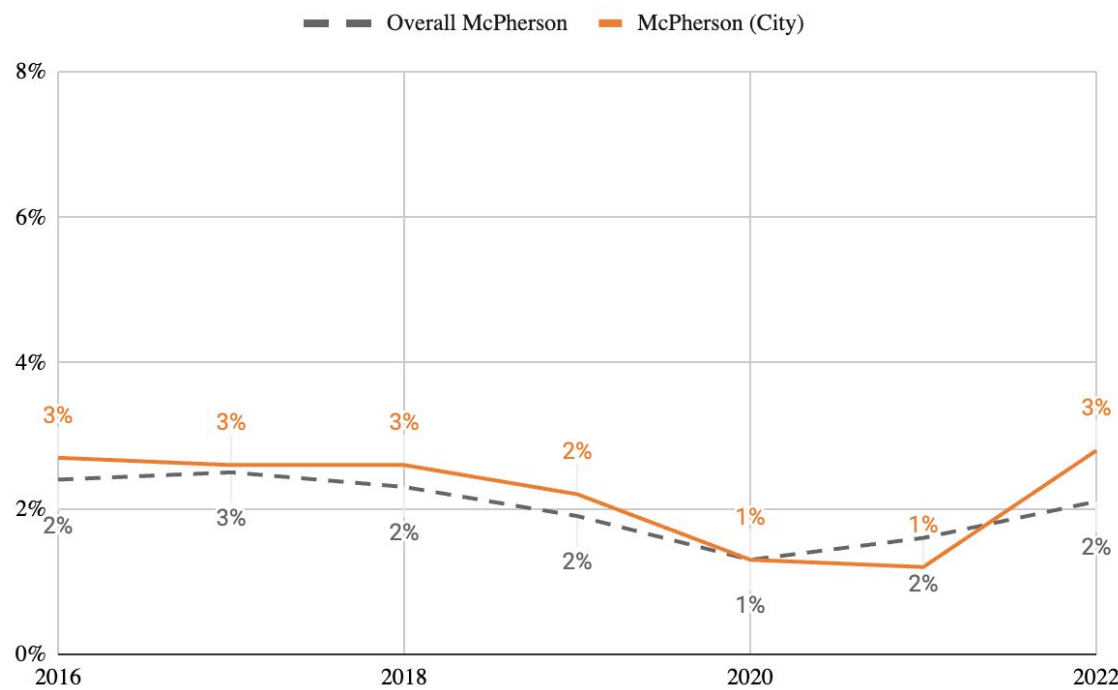
Local Poverty Rate



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



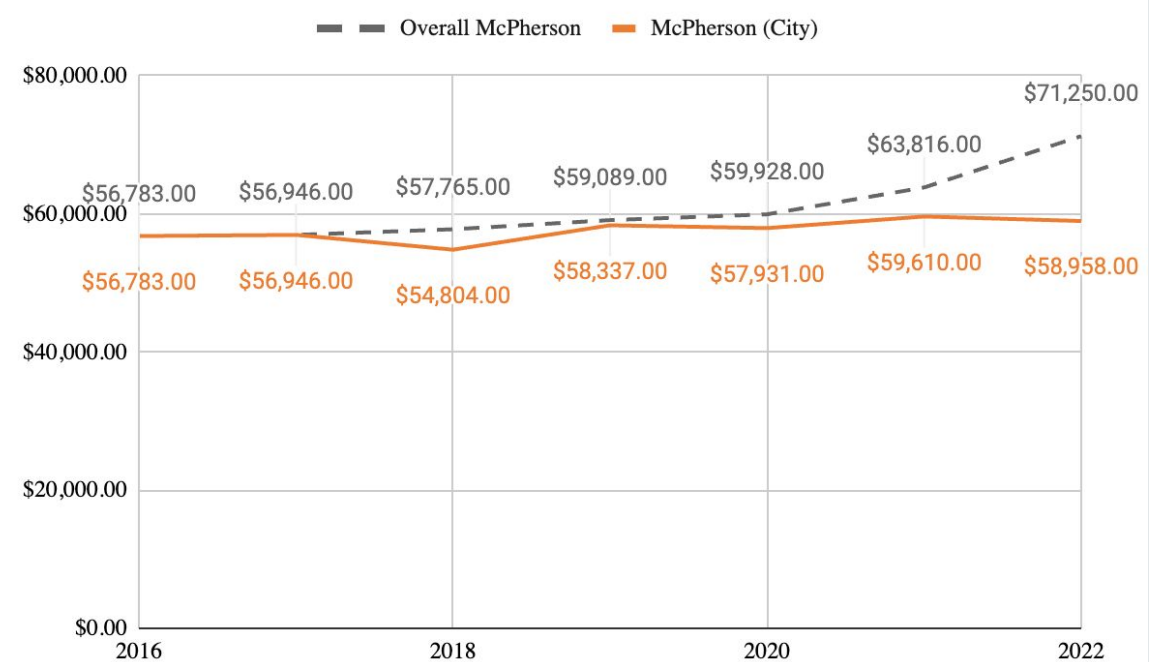
Local Unemployment Rate



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



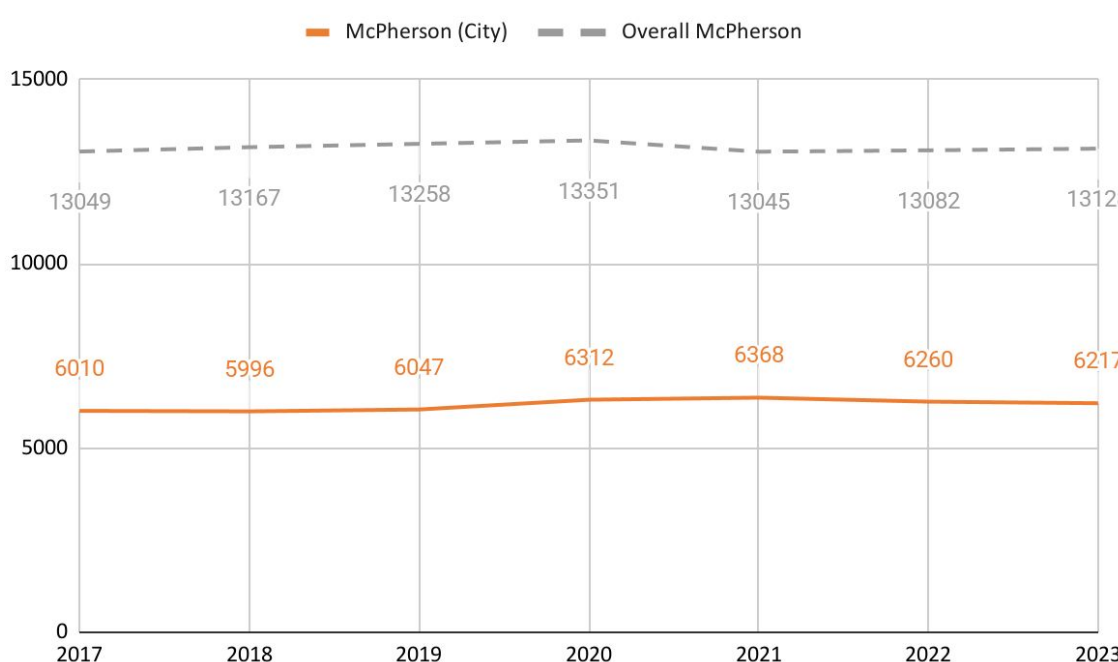
Median Household Income



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



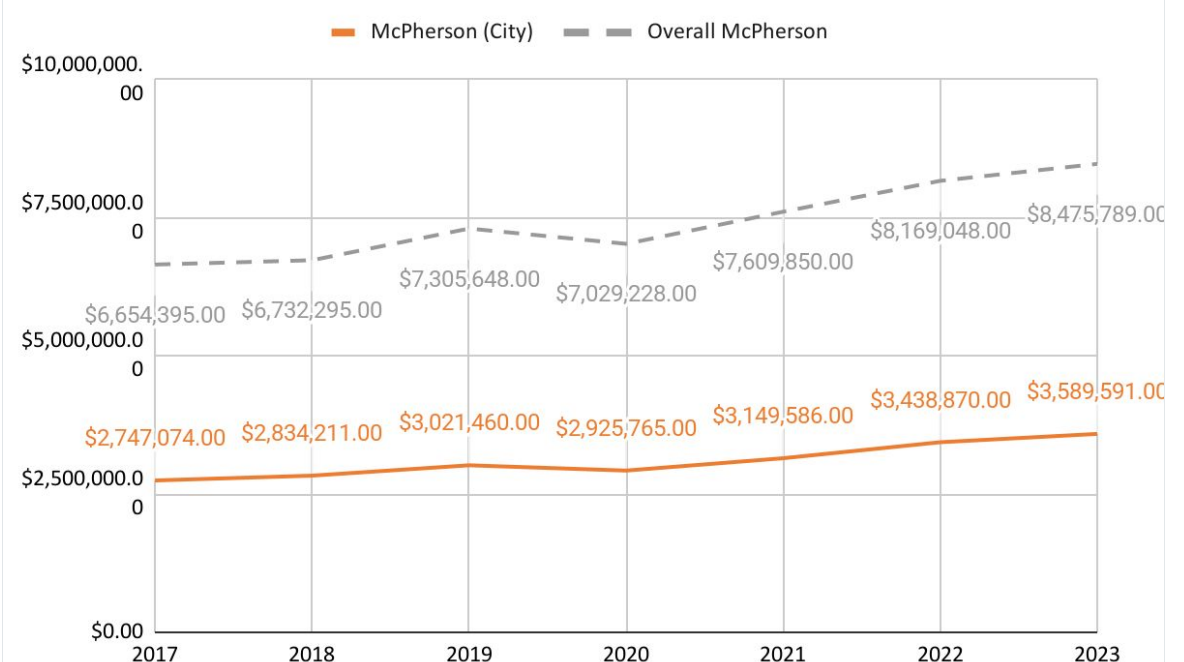
Total Housing Units



Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg



Annual Sales Tax Collection



Data source:Kansas Dept of Revenue

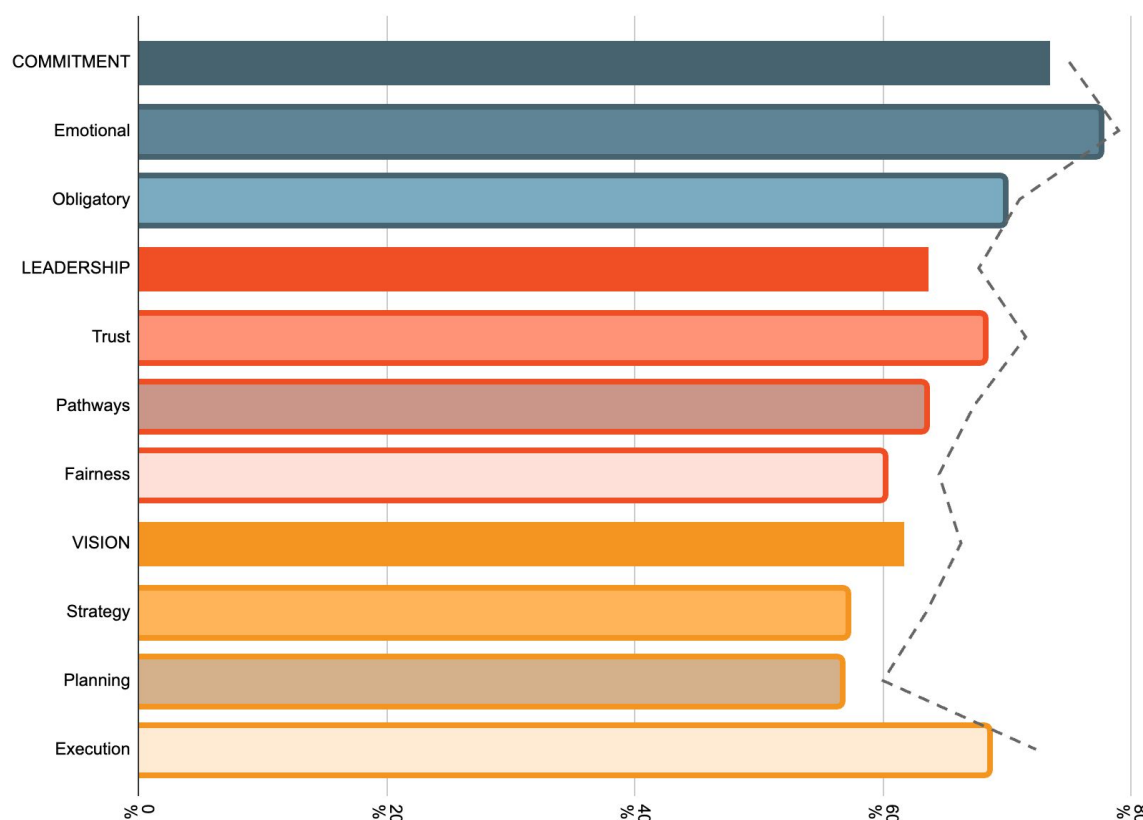
Confidence In Our Local Community

Engagement Summary:

Emotional commitment to McPherson shines brightest: residents overwhelmingly feel the town is personally meaningful and home for life. Execution within the Vision domain outperforms Strategy and Planning—people believe in what’s done but lack clarity on what’s next. Trust in leadership exceeds opportunities for involvement and fairness, yet every perception metric trails the regional average. The weakest points—planning for the future and fairness in decision-making—underscore where energy should be directed: strengthening vision roadmap and ensuring equitable leadership to bolster pride and engagement.



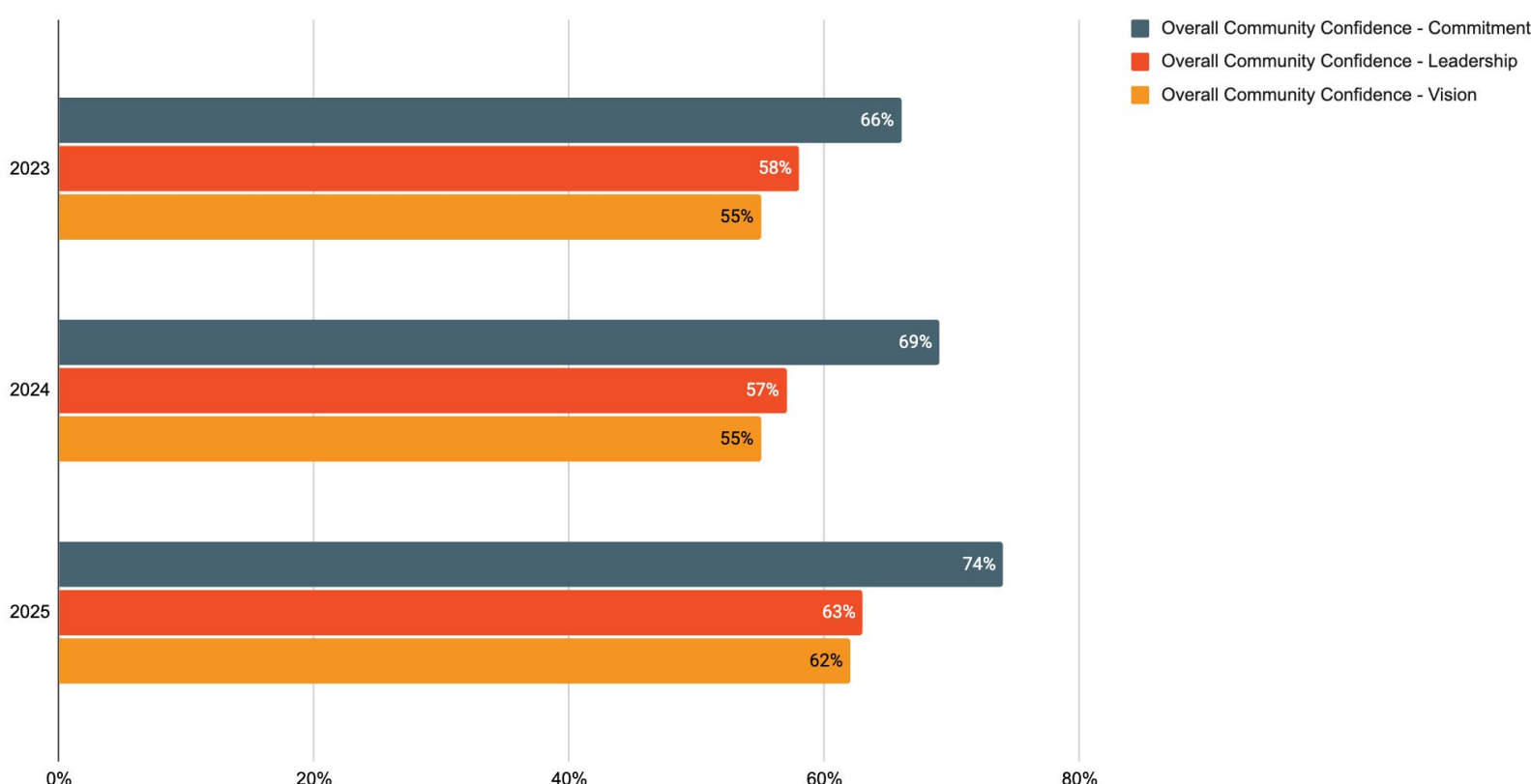
How do our residents view our community?



Questions:

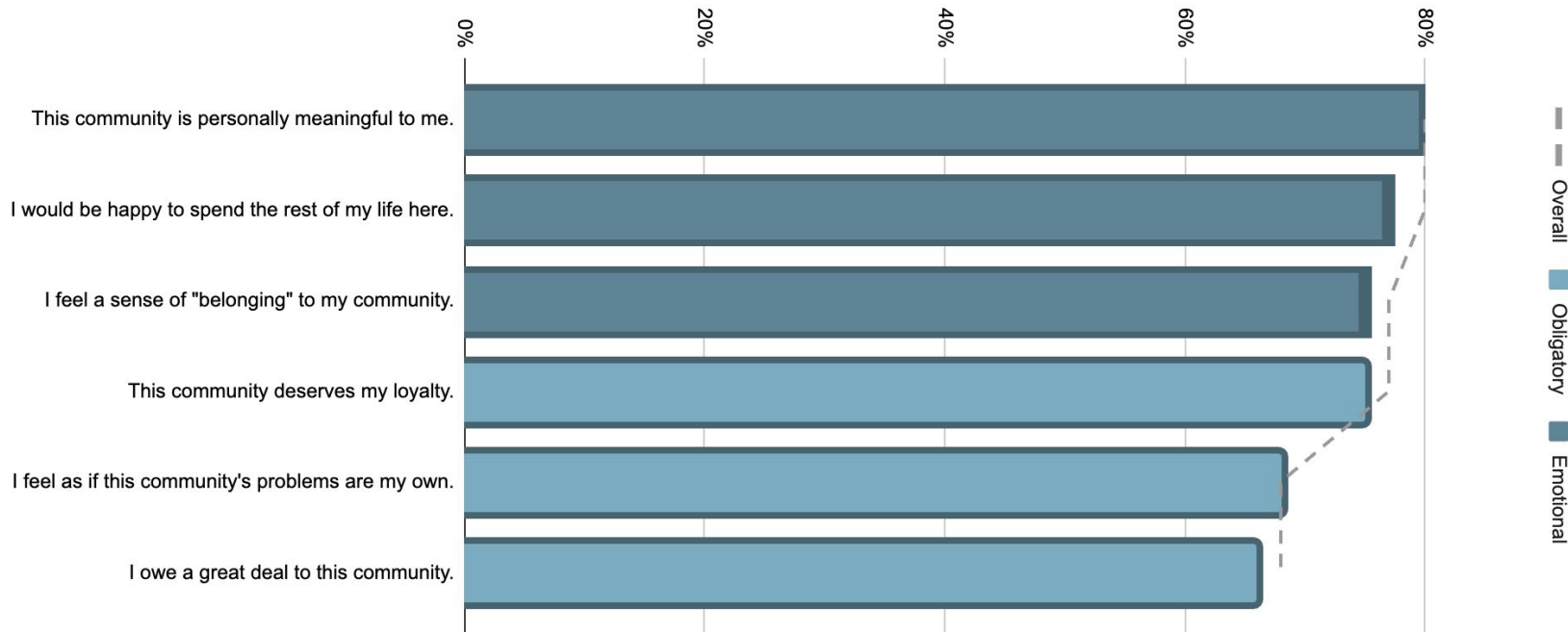
- What drives McPherson’s higher Emotional commitment compared to Obligatory commitment?
- Which initiatives could effectively boost Obligatory commitment in the community?
- Why are Execution scores stronger than Strategy and Planning within the Vision category?
- How might the city enhance Strategy to match Execution performance in Vision?
- What steps can elevate Planning subcategory alongside Execution in the Vision category?
- Why do Trust metrics outperform Pathways and Fairness under the Leadership category?
- How can community leaders strengthen Pathways to increase leadership engagement?
- What measures could improve Fairness metrics within the Leadership category?

Year Over Year Change



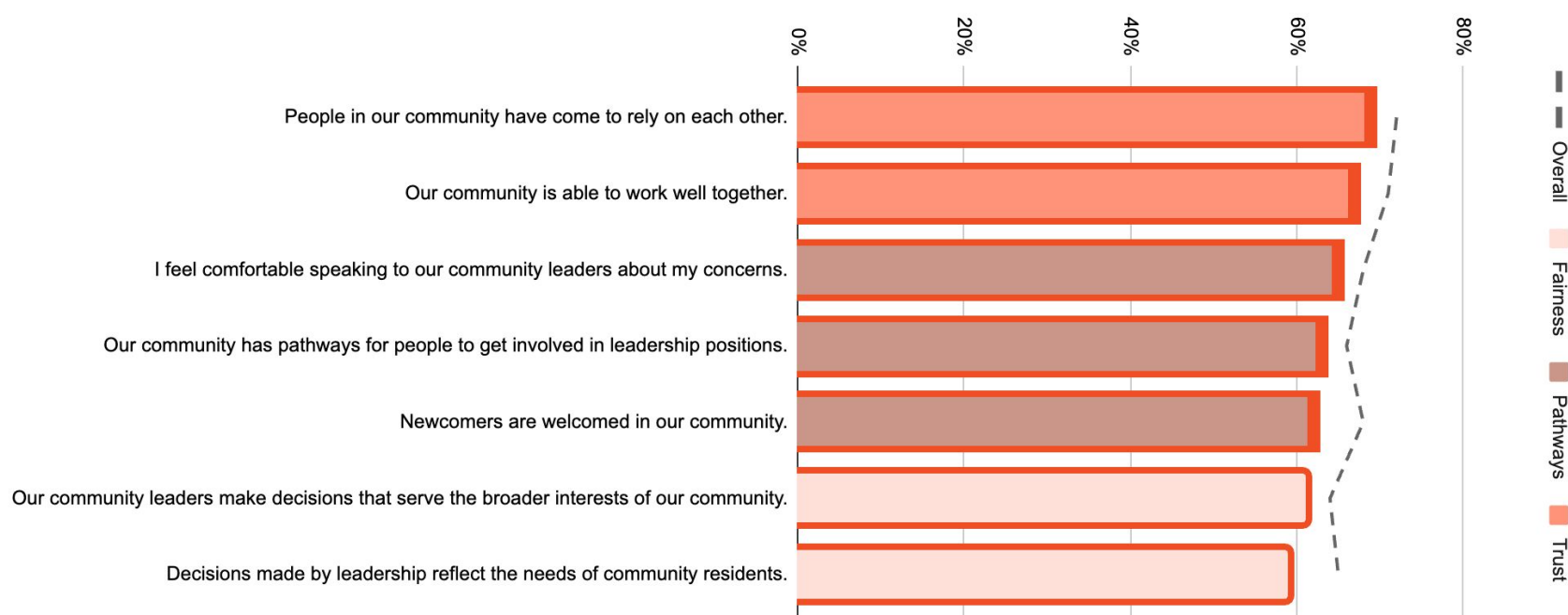
Confidence In Our Local Community

Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



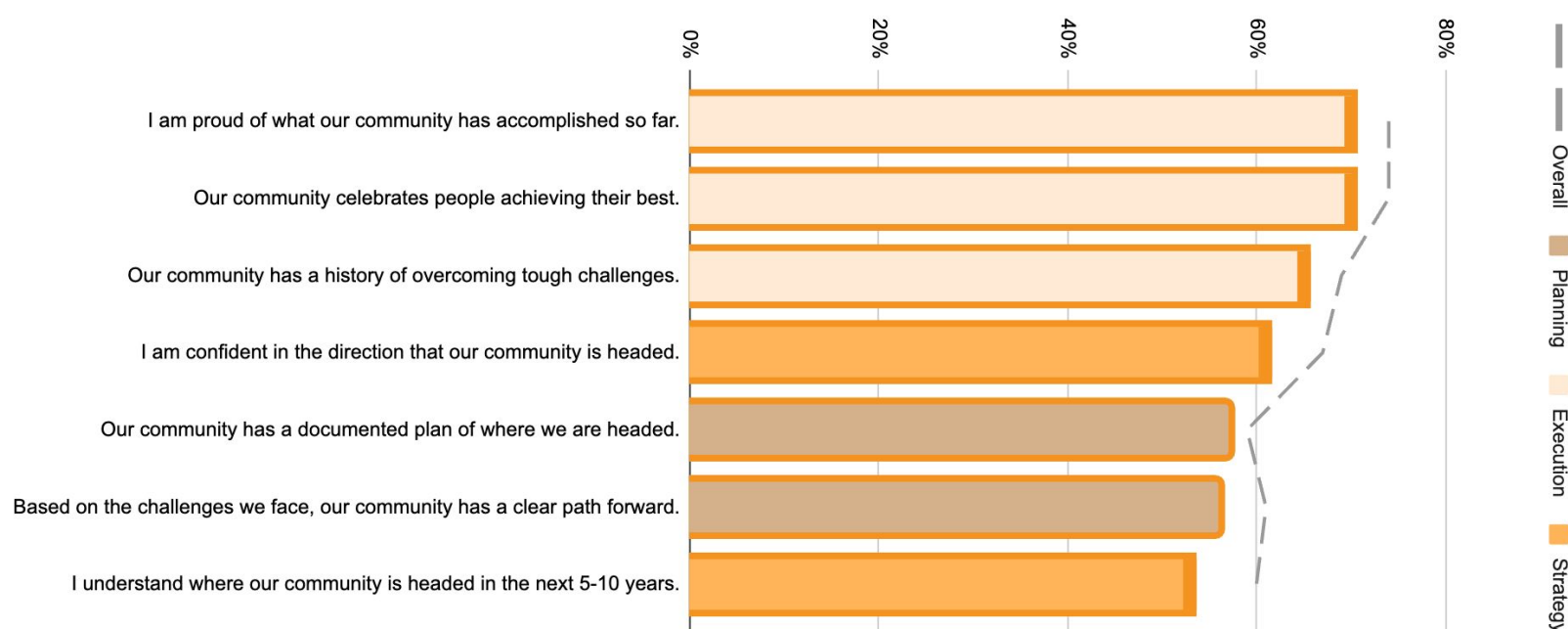
- How can we sustain high Emotional commitment among residents?
- What barriers are hindering Obligatory commitment and how can we address them?
- What causes more people to be "loyal" to the community but not "owe" to the community?

Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- What initiatives could keep Trust and increase other areas and foster stronger community relationships?
- How can we expand Pathways for residents to engage in leadership roles?
- What measures would improve Fairness perceptions in decision-making processes?

Community Confidence: Vision

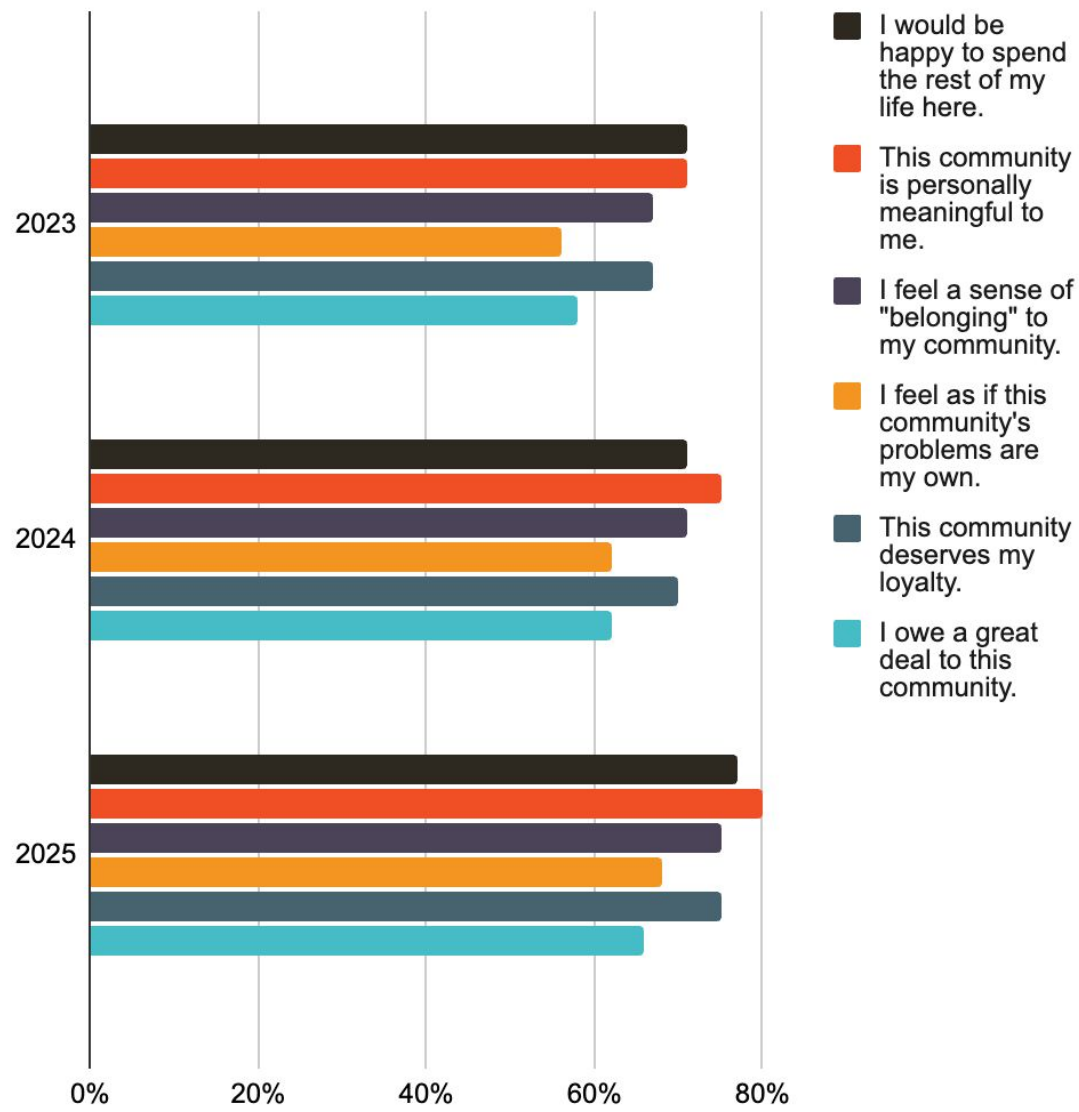


- What community actions could strengthen Strategy to improve confidence in our direction?
- How might we elevate Planning to set clearer pathways for future development?
- How can we leverage strong Execution metrics to build momentum for long-term goals?

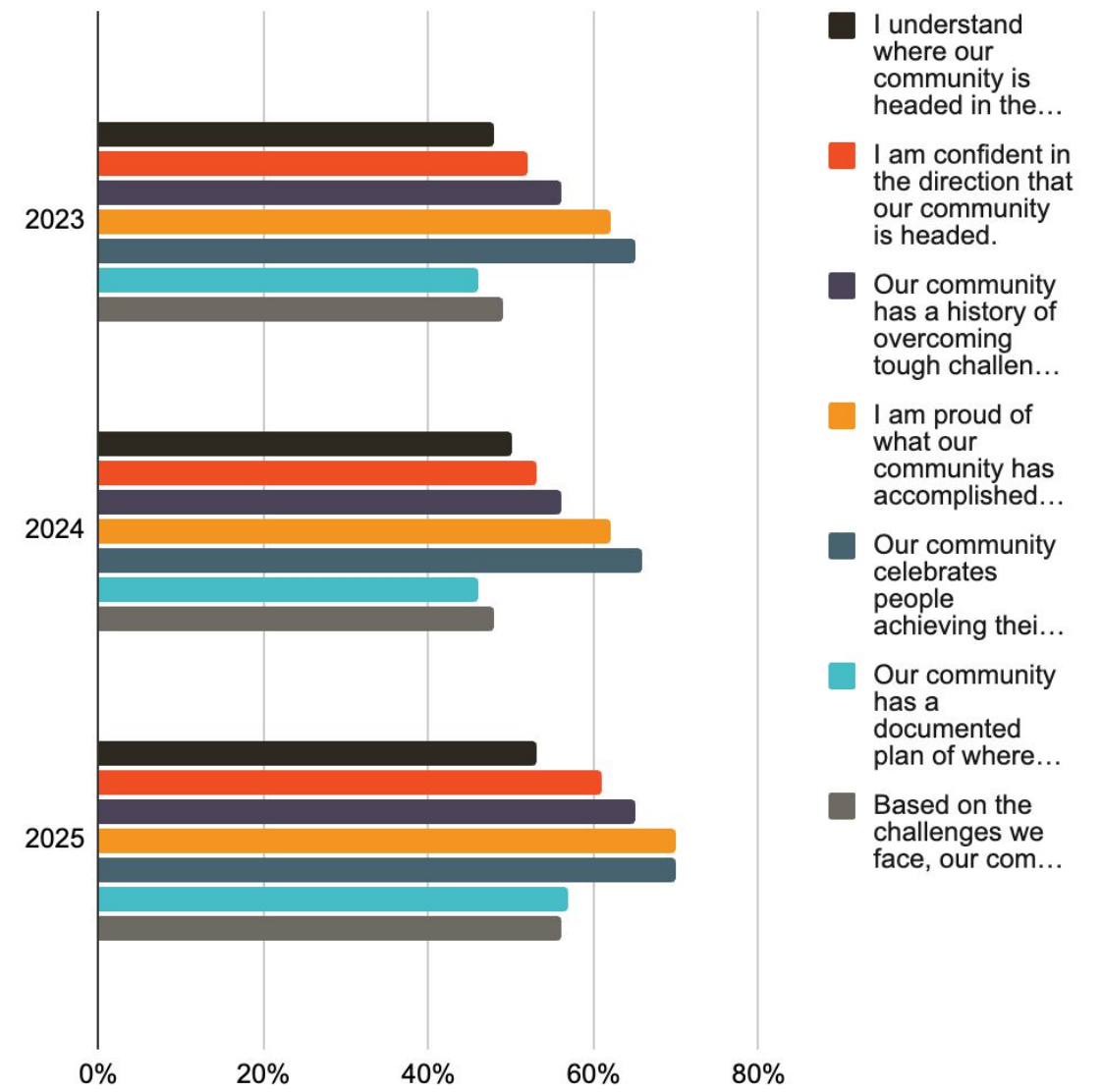
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Confidence In Our Local Community

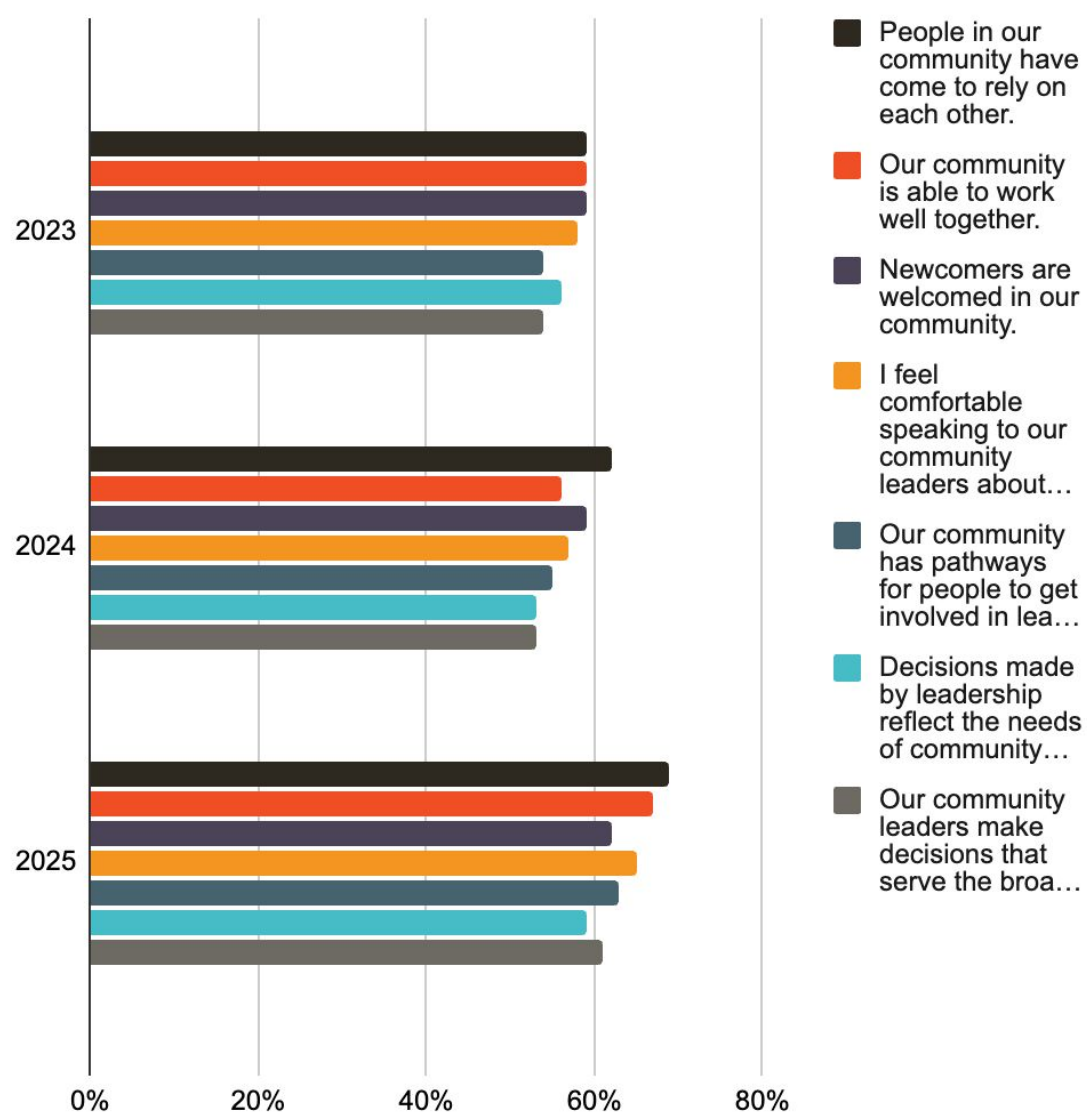
Commitment



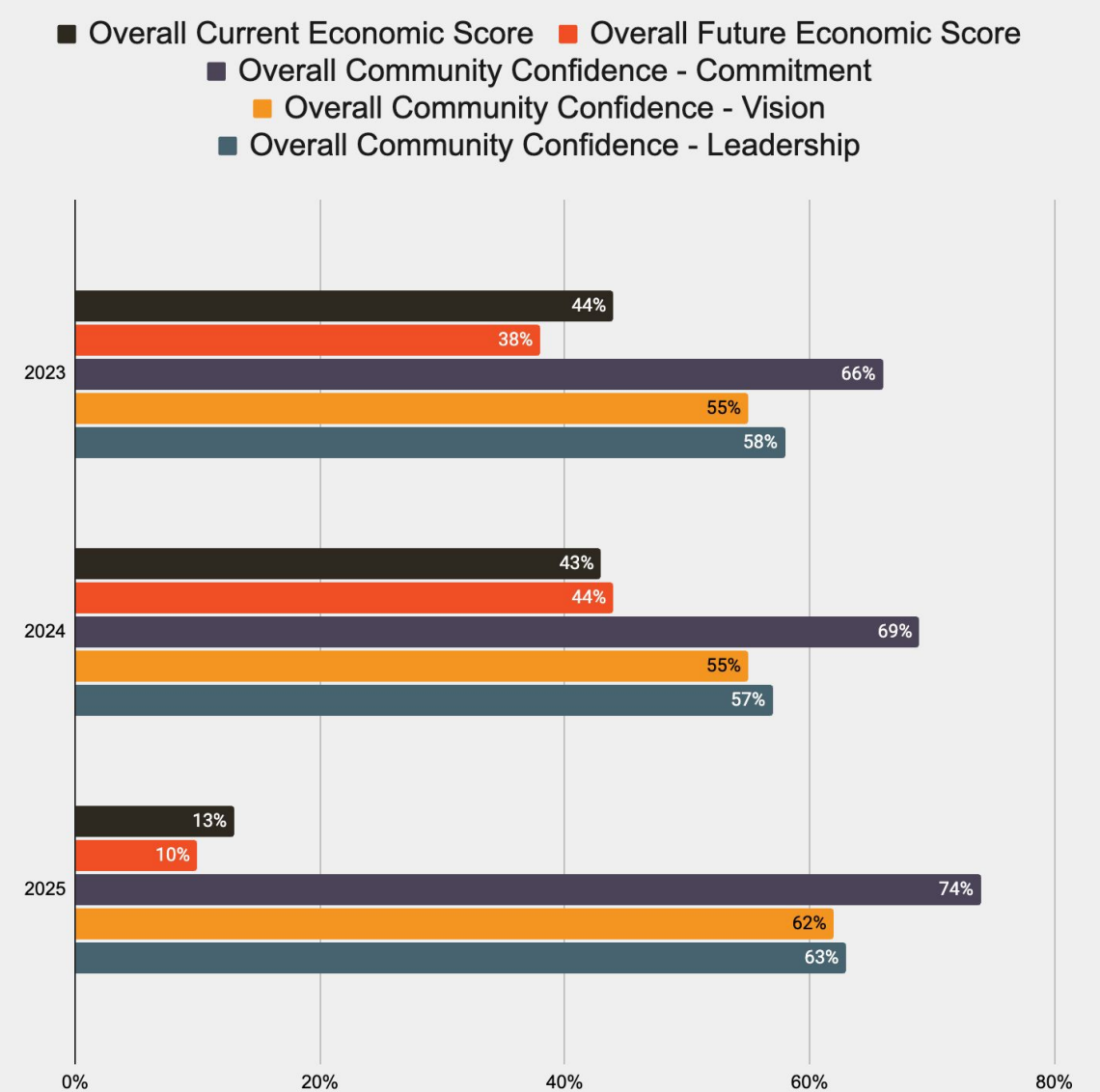
Vision



Leadership



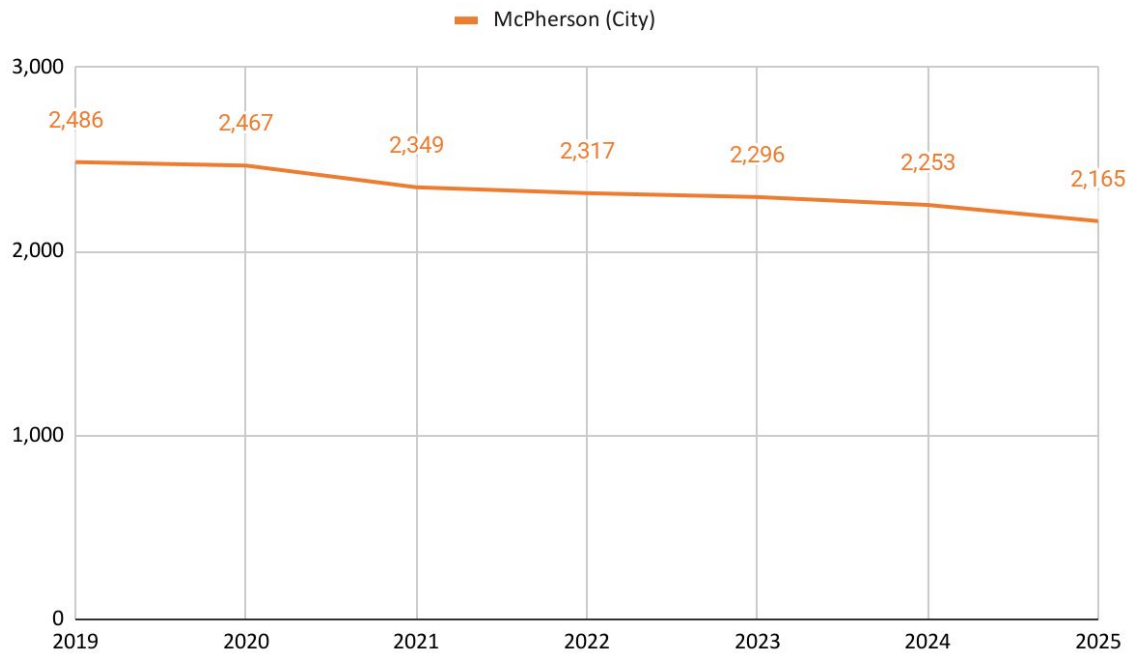
Economic vs. Community Confidence



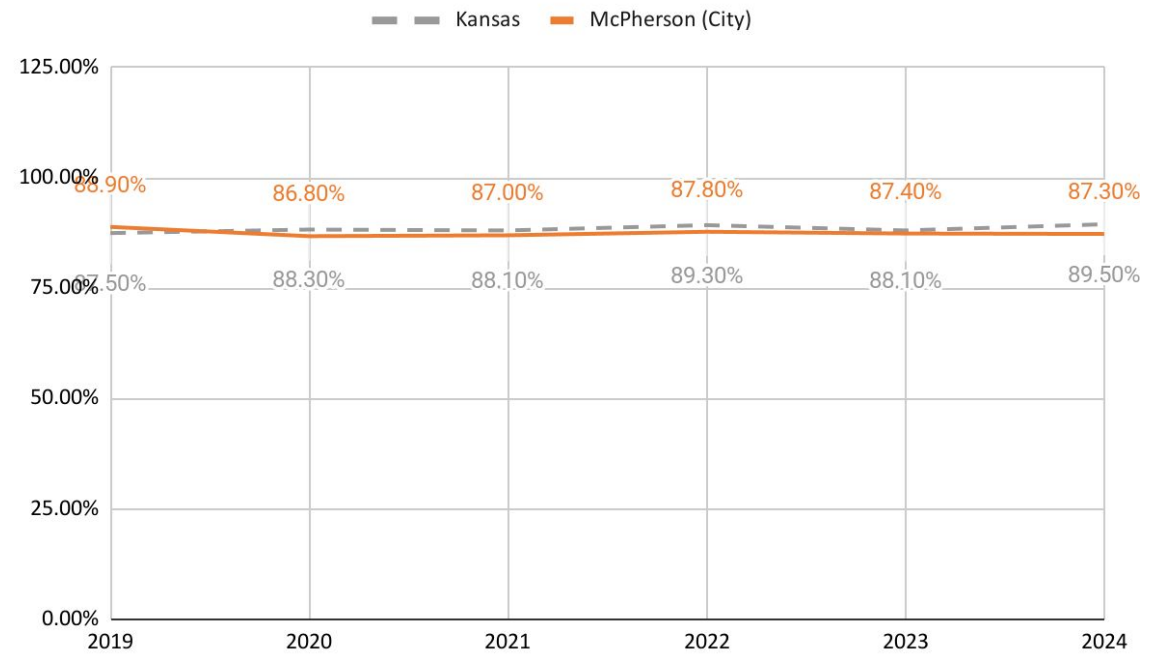
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Local Community Indicators

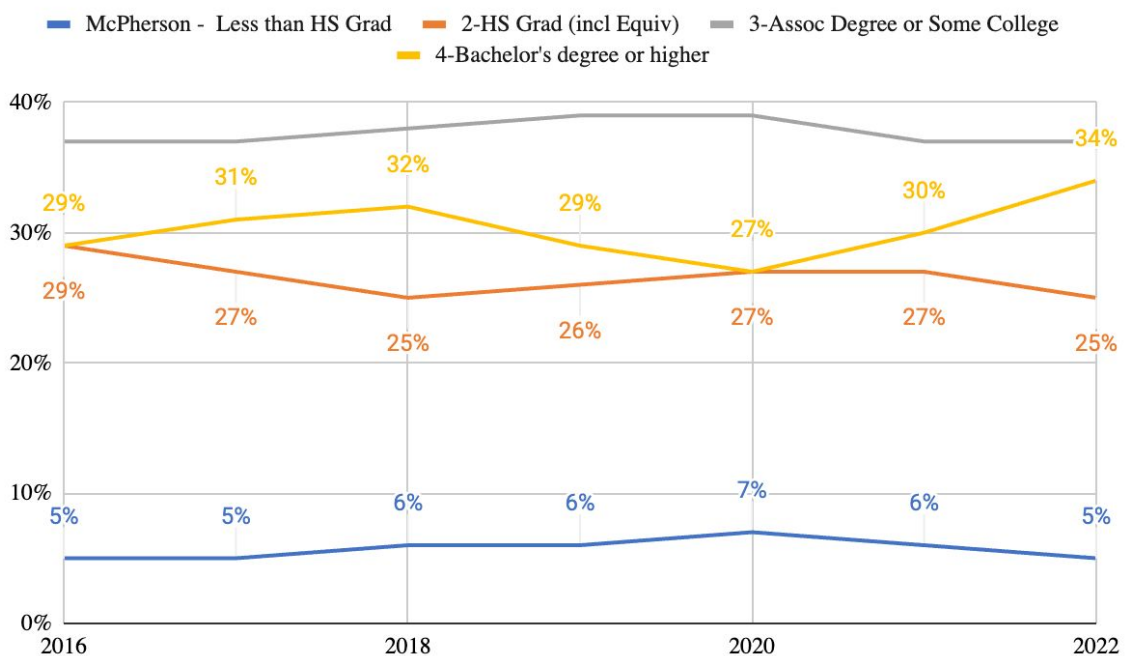
Local School Enrollment



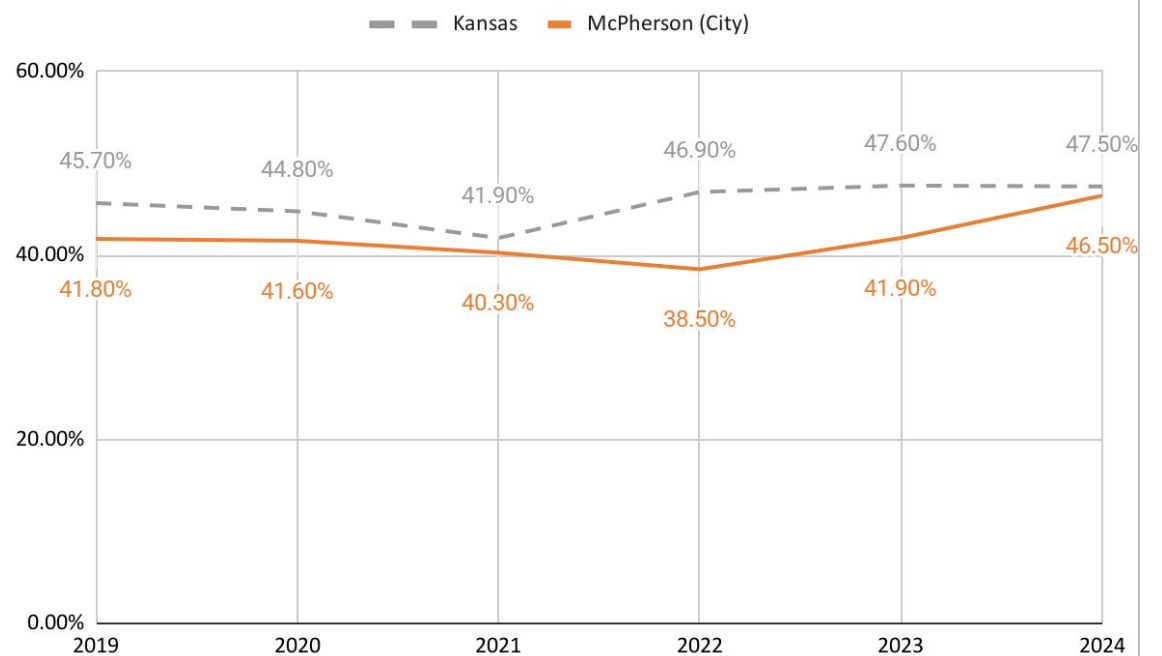
High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



Local Educational Level

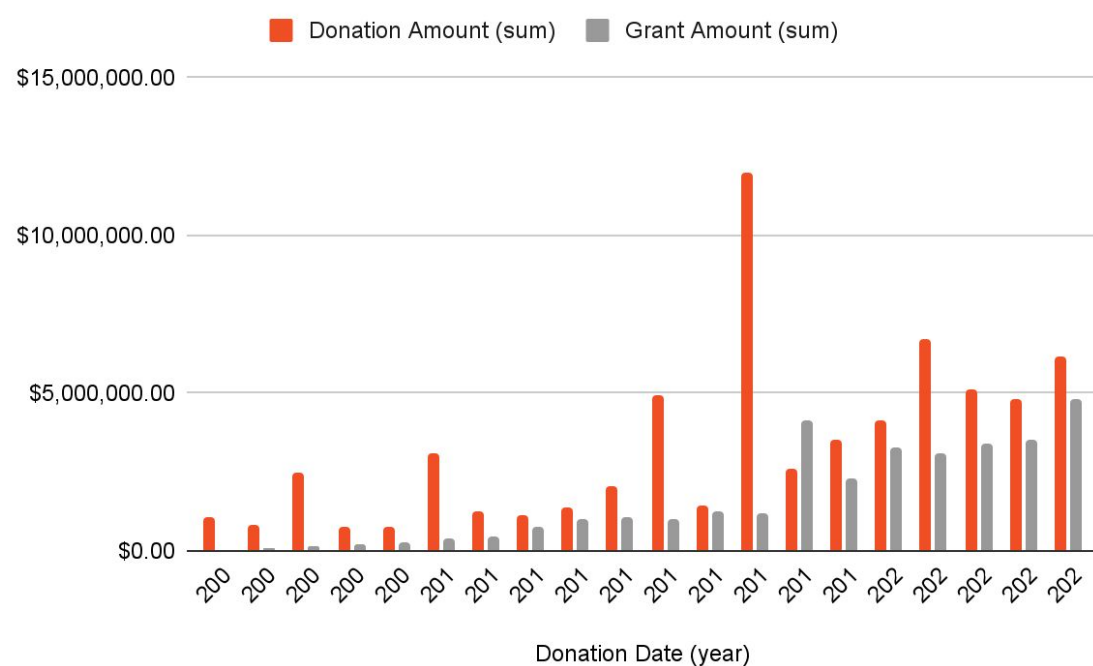


School % Free/Reduced Price Lunch

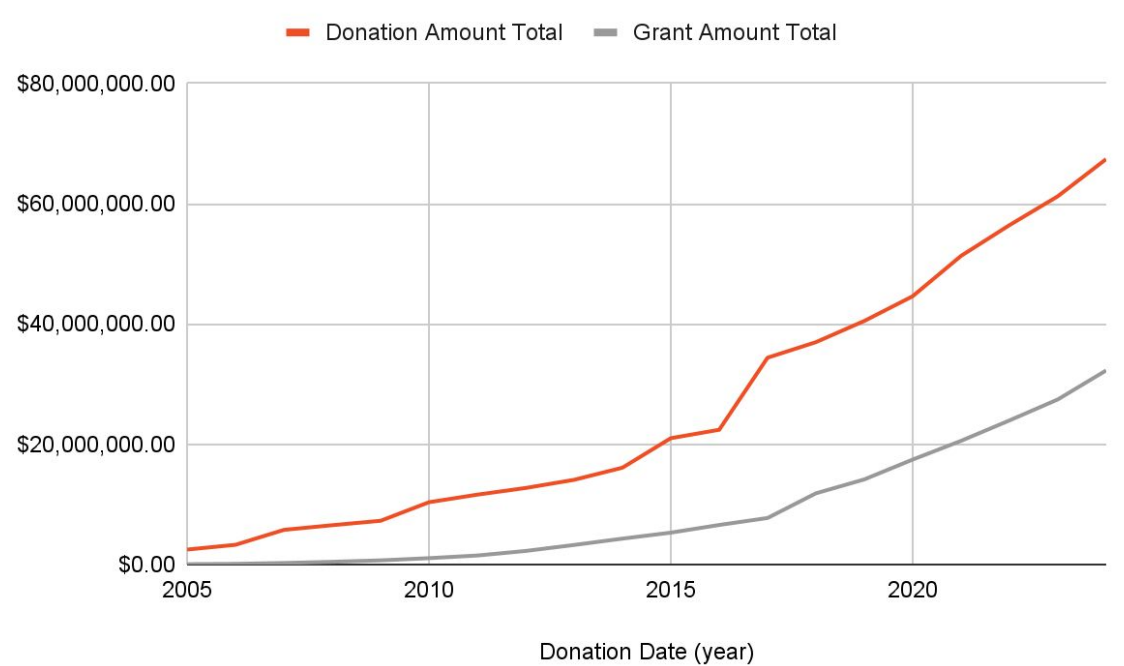


Source for all education graphs: Kansas State Dept of Education, Data Central

McPherson Community Foundation: Annual Dollars Raised & Invested



McPherson Community Foundation: Compound Dollars Raised & Invested

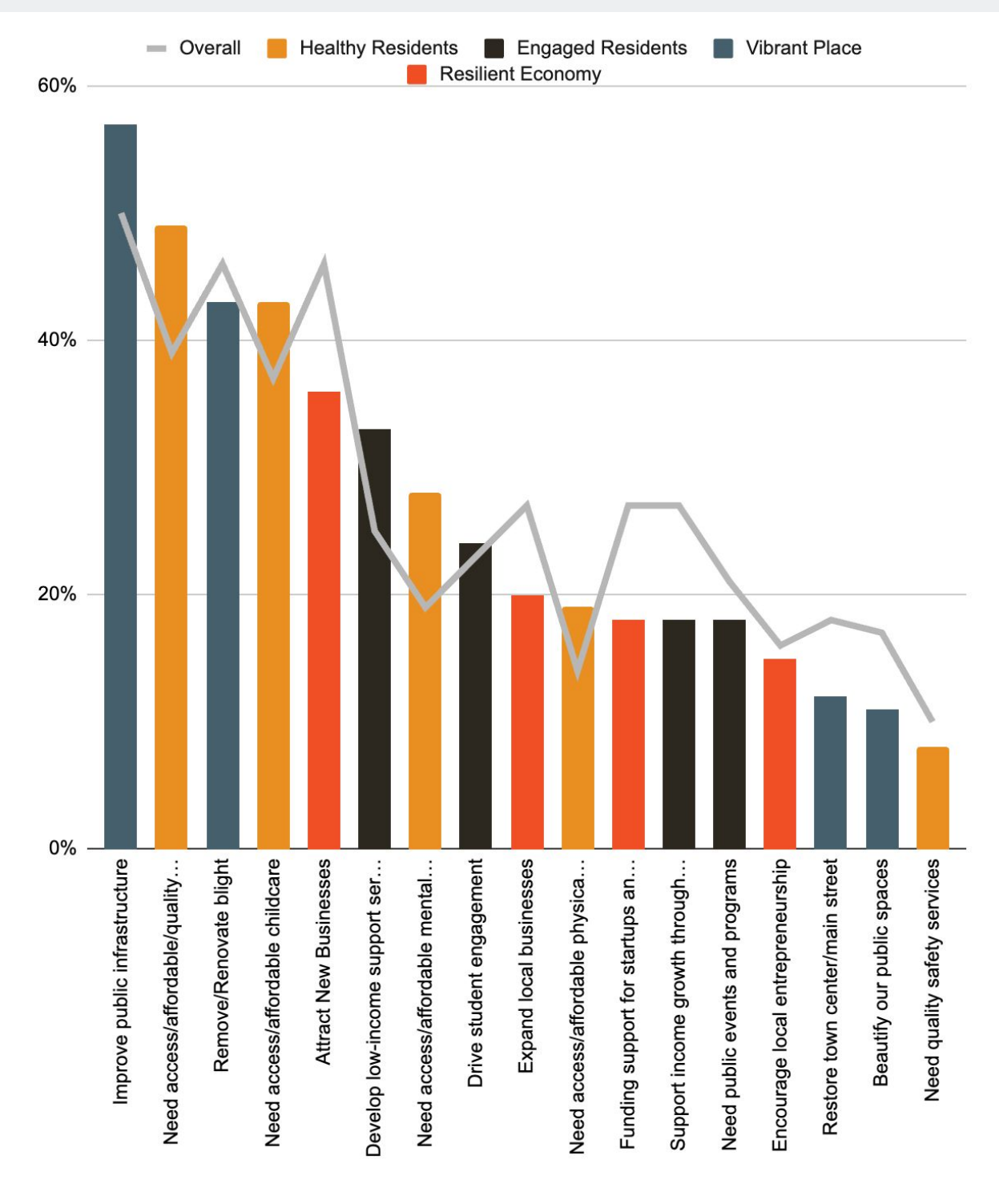


Community Program Priorities

Priorities Summary:

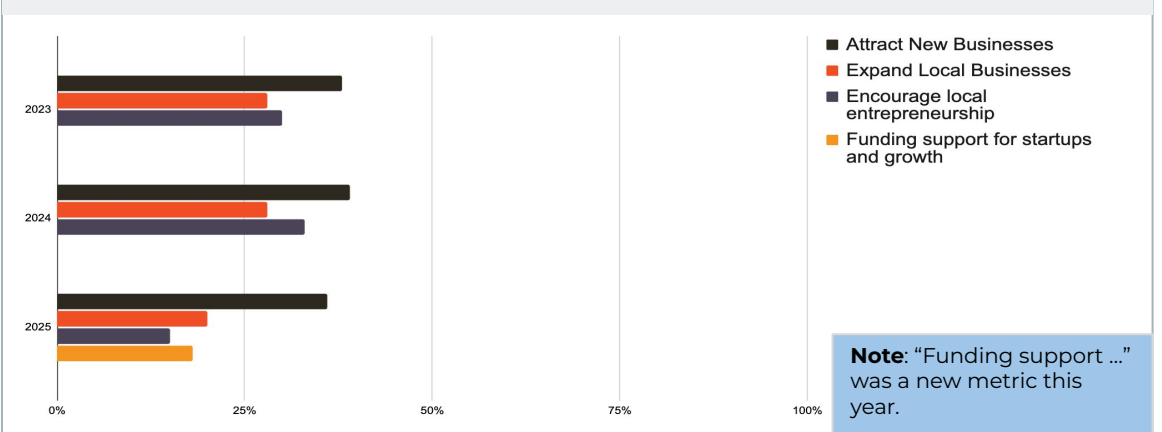
Priority has clearly to vibrant placemaking. Infrastructure improvement tops the list, closely followed by blight removal, low-income support, and affordable housing—each seen as essential to quality of life. Traditional economic initiatives like business attraction and entrepreneurship funding decelerated in importance. On the metrics side, the urgent need to fix roads eclipses all other concerns, even as household income, tax base, poverty, and food insecurity hold steady and healthcare provider capacity edges upward. The community is ready to build on stability by addressing visible, tangible needs.

Program Priorities

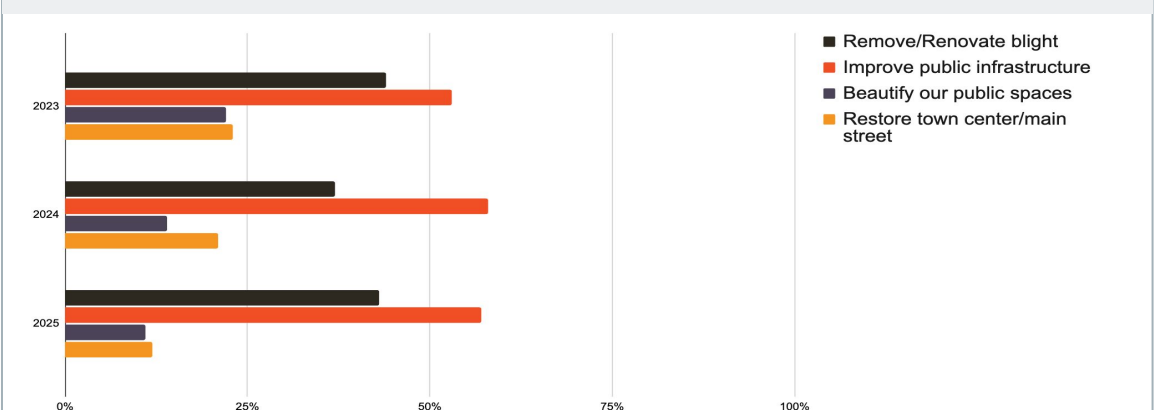


- How can improving public infrastructure at 57% be leveraged to also accelerate blight removal efforts?
- What factors drive the shift from resilient economy toward vibrant placemaking priorities?
- Why is “Attract New Businesses” the only resilient economy program in the top eight, and how can we boost interest in other economic initiatives?
- In what ways can developing low-income support services (33%) complement affordable housing efforts (49%) to strengthen community well-being?
- Can an emphasis on infrastructure improvements be realigned with to maximize impact beautifying public spaces?

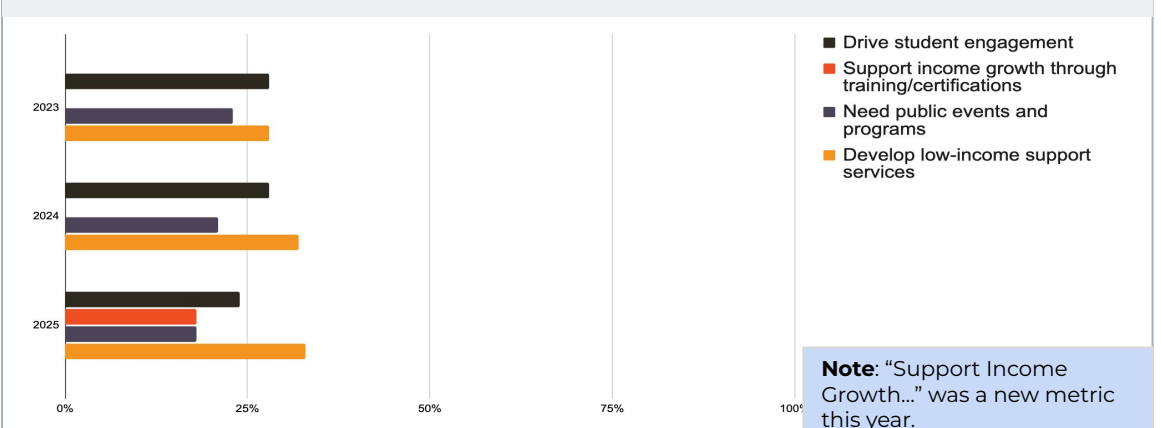
Resilient Economy



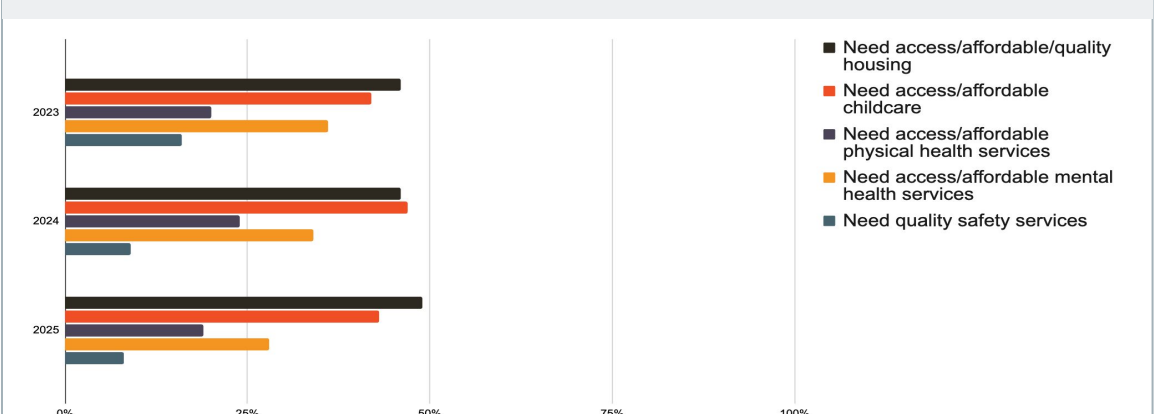
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents

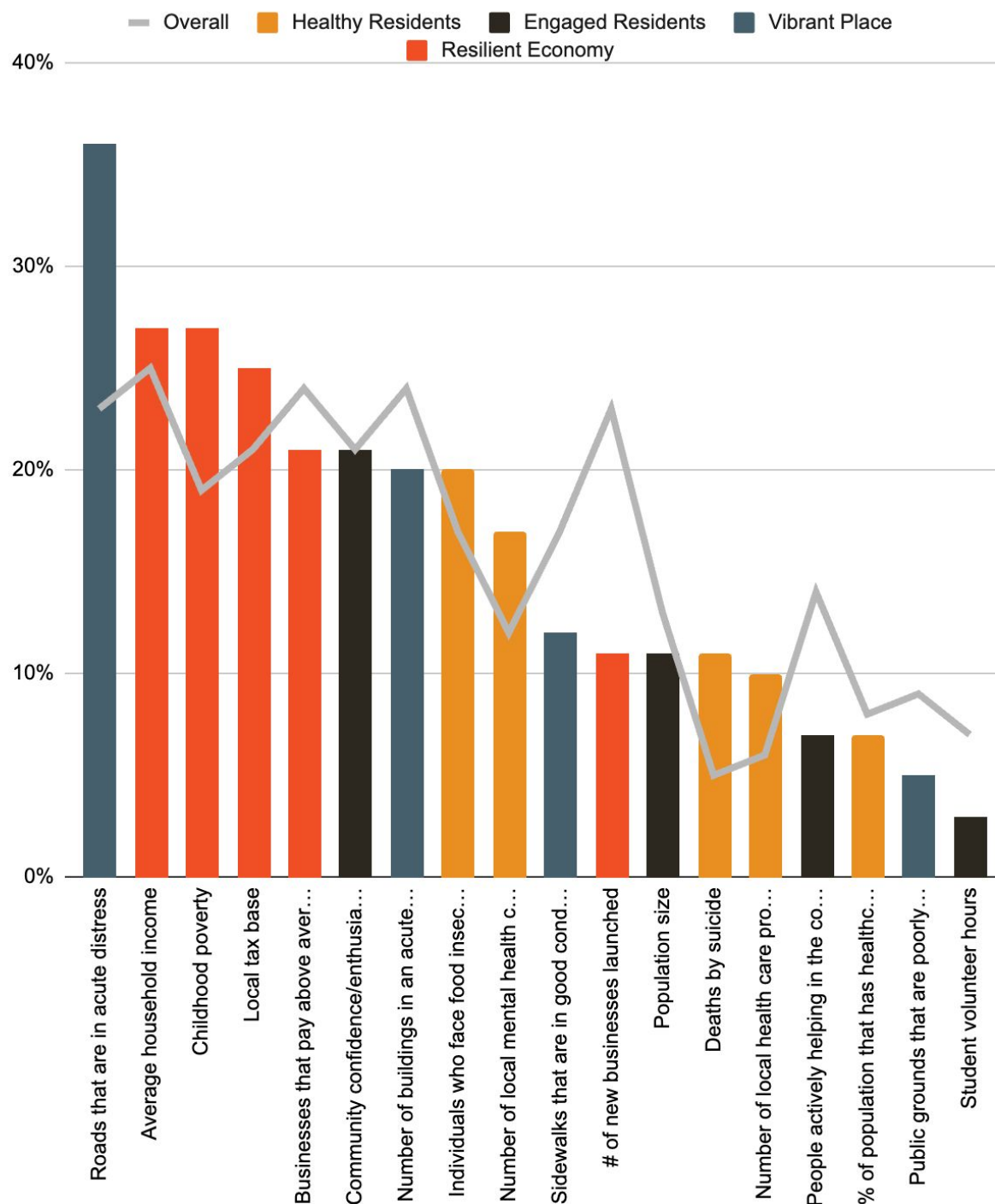


Healthy Residents



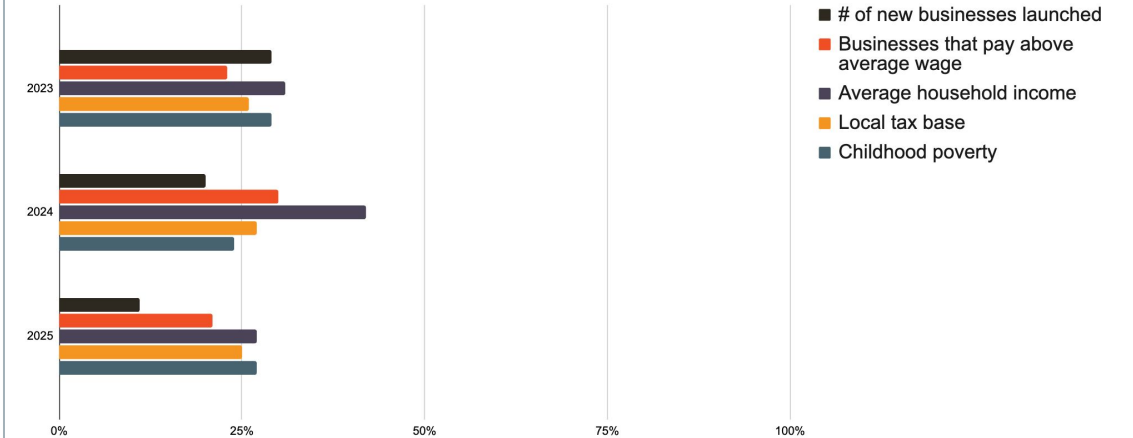
Community Priority Metrics

Priority Metrics

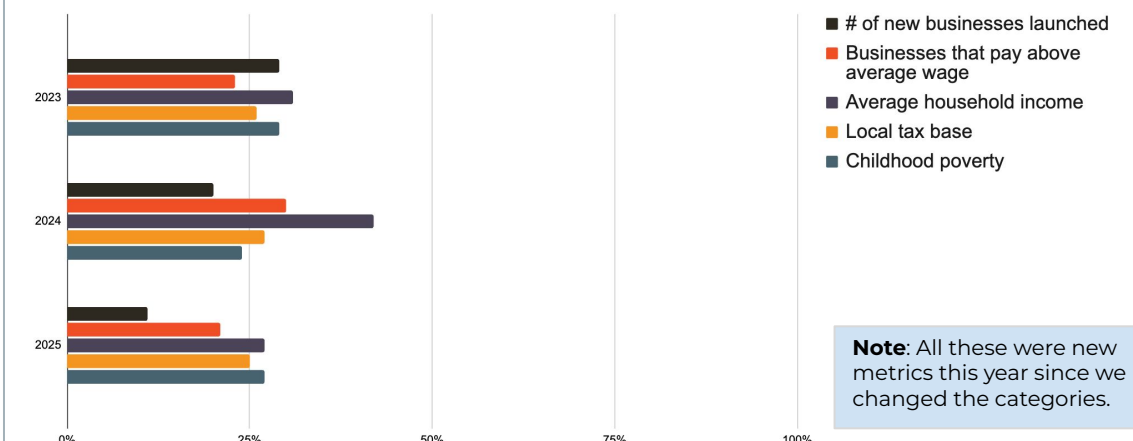


- With roads in acute distress identified as the most critical metric, what targeted Vibrant Place interventions could most effectively improve this area?
- How does McPherson's lower rate of new business launches compared to the community average highlight gaps in Resilient Economy priorities, and what actions could close this gap?
- Given that average household income and the local tax base have remained steady, how can we ensure these Resilient Economy metrics continue to support long-term growth?

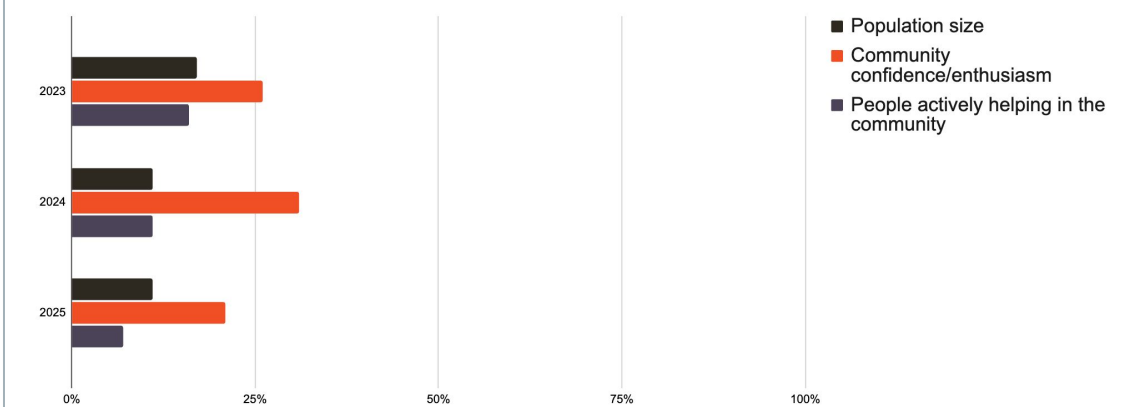
Resilient Economy



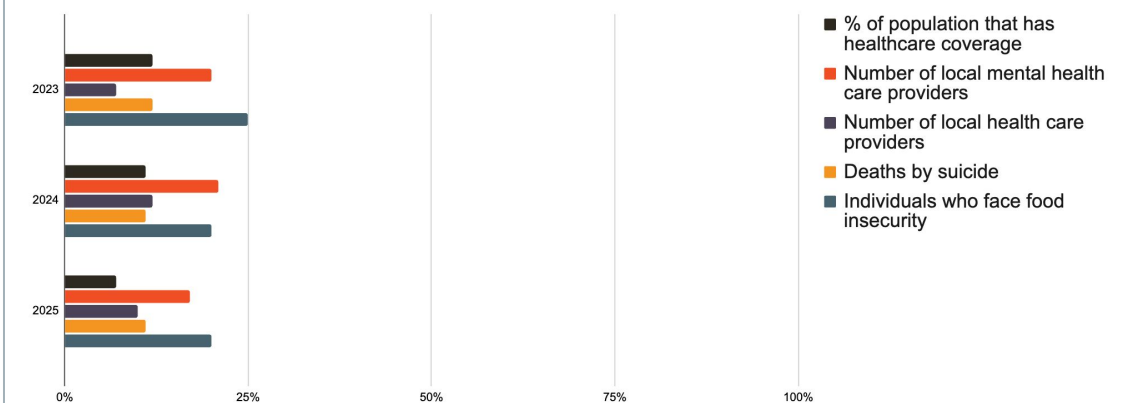
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents



Healthy Residents



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?

- Roads Repair – Overhaul and maintain city streets and crossings to improve safety, reduce vehicle damage, and boost confidence in local infrastructure.
- Affordable Housing – Expand housing options across all price levels
- School Facilities Upgrade – Pass a bond and renovate or rebuild public school buildings.
- Child Care Center – Create a municipally-sponsored or centralized child care facility (birth–3 yrs).
- Downtown Revitalization – Beautify and renovate Main Street buildings, enhance public plazas and green spaces, and develop indoor/outdoor gathering venues

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?

- Childcare Expansion – establish affordable birth–3 yr care to boost workforce participation and attract young families
- Road & Sidewalk Maintenance – fix potholes and repair ADA-accessible paths for safer, more inviting streetscapes
- Youth Engagement Programs – fund after-school volunteering, internships, and skill workshops
- Community Events & Branding – support local festivals, concerts, and marketing to draw visitors & increase revenue, and build pride
- Microgrant Entrepreneurship Support – seed small-business workshops and startup grants to cultivate sustainable local enterprises

Serving your community!

How do you serve your community today?

- StepMC & ReUselt
Volunteering–support recovery programs and the reuse center
- Board & Committee Service–hospital, opera house, chamber, senior center, etc.
- Food Relief–food banks, Meals on Wheels, Christmas baskets
- Church & Faith-Based
Outreach–youth groups, home visits, shelter support
- Mentoring & Tutoring–school activities, 4H, scouts, literacy and youth programs

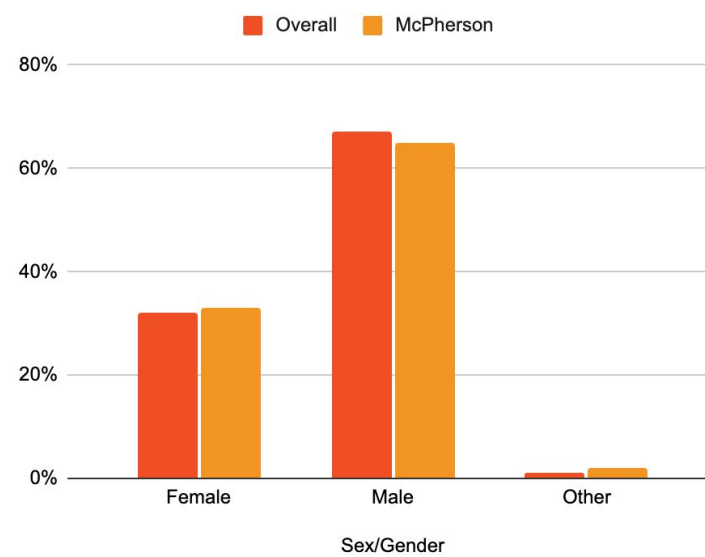
How would you like to serve your community in the future?

- Continue volunteering–maintain and expand current volunteer activities across nonprofits and community events
- Board & policy roles–serve on committees, boards, and local governance to shape strategic initiatives
- Child Care Advocacy–support child care awareness groups and help expand affordable child care services
- Mental health & recovery–help establish treatment facilities, support recovery programs, and expand mental-health services
- Youth mentoring & engagement–lead youth programs, volunteering, and mentoring to connect students with community opportunities

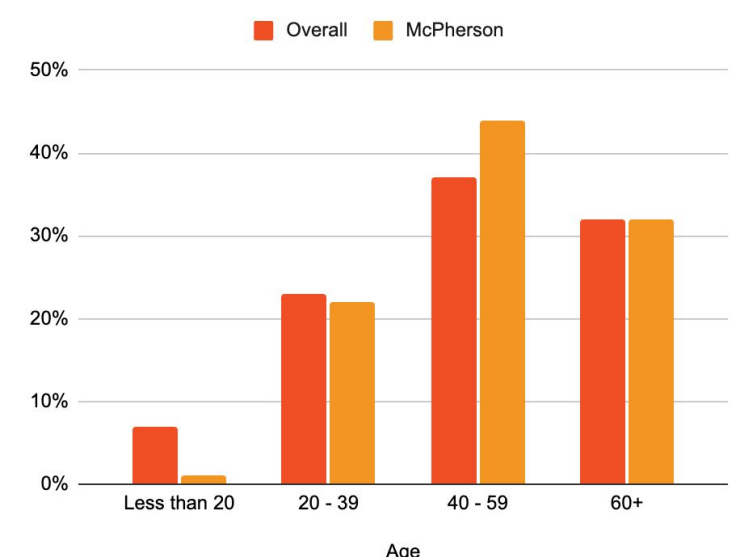
Survey Respondents

241
Total Responses

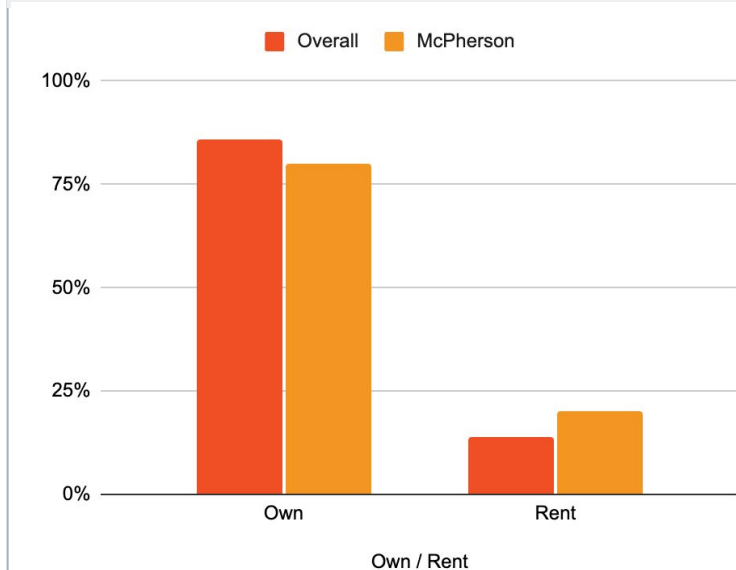
Gender



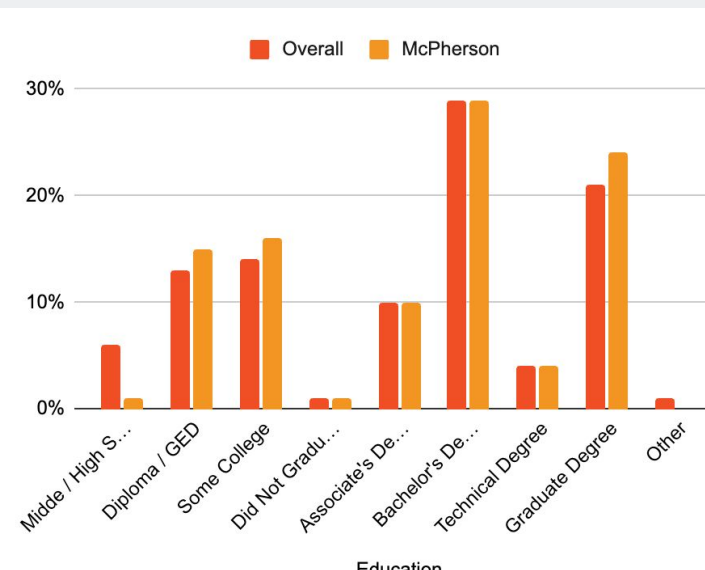
Age Profile



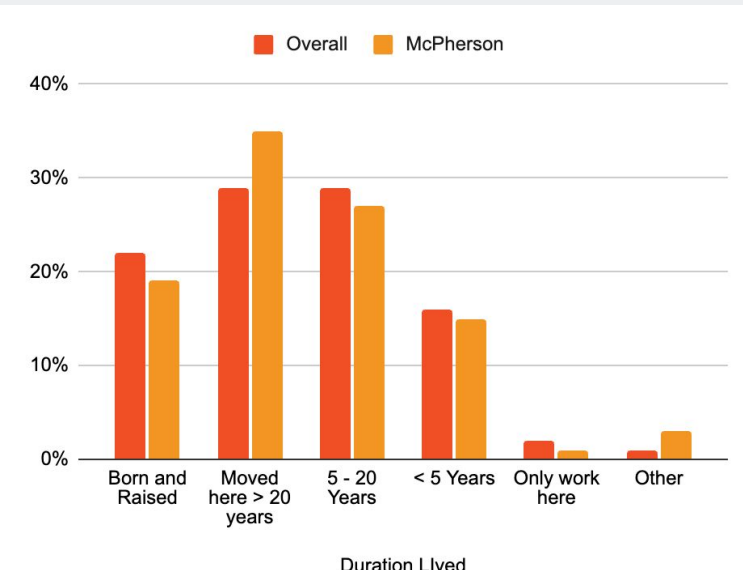
Residential Status



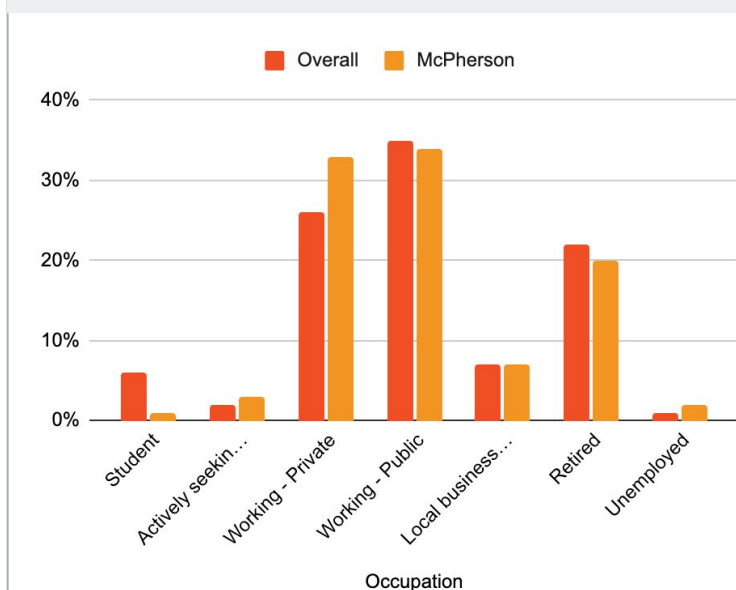
Education Level



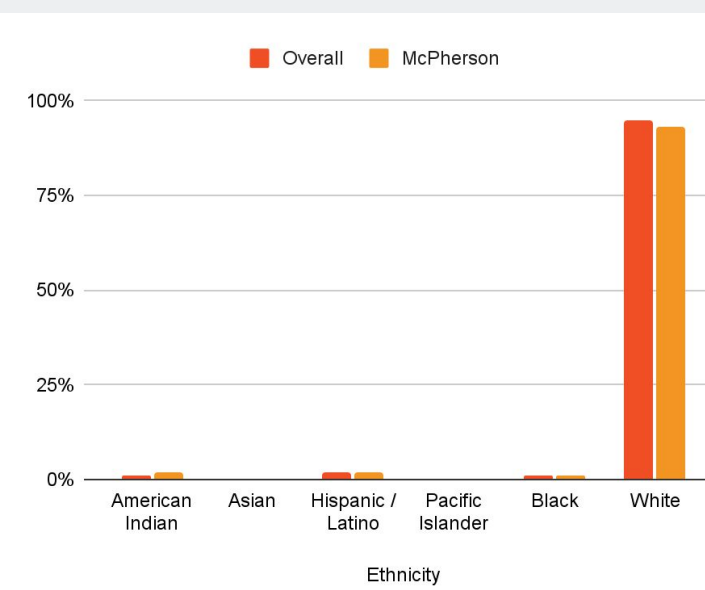
Years lived in location



Occupation



Ethnicity



- Associate's degree holders report a positive likelihood of investing, while high school graduates are negative.
- Those with an associate degree perceive leadership fairness more strongly than technical degree holders.
- Participants with some college education prioritize public infrastructure improvements more than associate degree holders, reflecting differences in infrastructure concerns across education levels.

Town Score
Average Community Score

106

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community
106 of 241 (44%)