



MCPHERSON COUNTY  
**Community  
Foundation**

# 2025 Community Benchmark Report City of Canton, KS

## **Be The Movement!**

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

[www.mcphersonfoundation.org](http://www.mcphersonfoundation.org)



**Innovation Economy Partners**  
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES



## What Makes Our Community Special?

*“Churches ,Buffalo on the corners,McPherson County Fair, gateway to Maxwell.”*

**Douglas**

*“Entire family lines live here and have for generations. A progressive High School.”*

*“Great School system”*

**Gina**

*“Shop here, buy here locally”*

**Dawn**

*“The small town feel. Pride is starting to come to our city. The reimagine community is doing a wonderful job making main street beautiful.”*

*“Affordable, easy to use parks. Supportive businesses”*

**Taylor**

*“Carnegie Library is a definite asset to the community Our school system is great and faculty are definitely involved with the students”*

**Rhonda**

*“There is an overwhelming show of support for all ages of kids and their activities!!”*

*“Quiet. Safety.”*

**Amy**

*“Our School District and our new leadership at the City.”*

**Kim**

## The Leaders That Make Our Community Special

dale anderson  
rhonda klatt  
morgan morgan  
joe allen  
brenda vogts  
jason jerry kremier  
clinkscale tom kueser  
austin morgan  
mark barnett  
jen and terry enns  
cheryl everhart  
rhonda hamby  
danny morgan  
jereka farner  
mary jowers  
mary jane  
kim witt  
tony wedel

# Executive Summary:

Canton's 2025 community assessment reveals a town rooted in deep emotional commitment, but struggling with low confidence in leadership and economic direction. While residents feel connected to one another and cherish their small-town identity, frustrations around infrastructure, stagnant development, and planning gaps persist. Priorities are clear: rebuild roads, improve infrastructure, and attract new businesses. Community feedback also suggests rising energy around beautification, student involvement, and housing, offering pathways for inclusive revitalization. The challenge ahead is to harness Canton's strong emotional fabric into collective action, bridge gaps in leadership trust, and develop a shared roadmap that inspires residents to invest their time, resources, and voices in shaping the future of their town.

pg **4, 5**

## Economic Confidence

Canton's economic confidence is low, with job outlooks and income concerns topping the list. Though the likelihood of investing is a notably positive metric.

pg **6, 7, 8**

## Community Engagement Confidence

Residents feel a strong sense of belonging but lack trust in local planning and leadership.

pg **9**

## Critical Community Priorities

Infrastructure, blight removal, and business attraction lead Canton's community priorities.

pg **10**

## Survey Respondent Profile

Retired and less educated residents show lower confidence and community engagement overall.

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

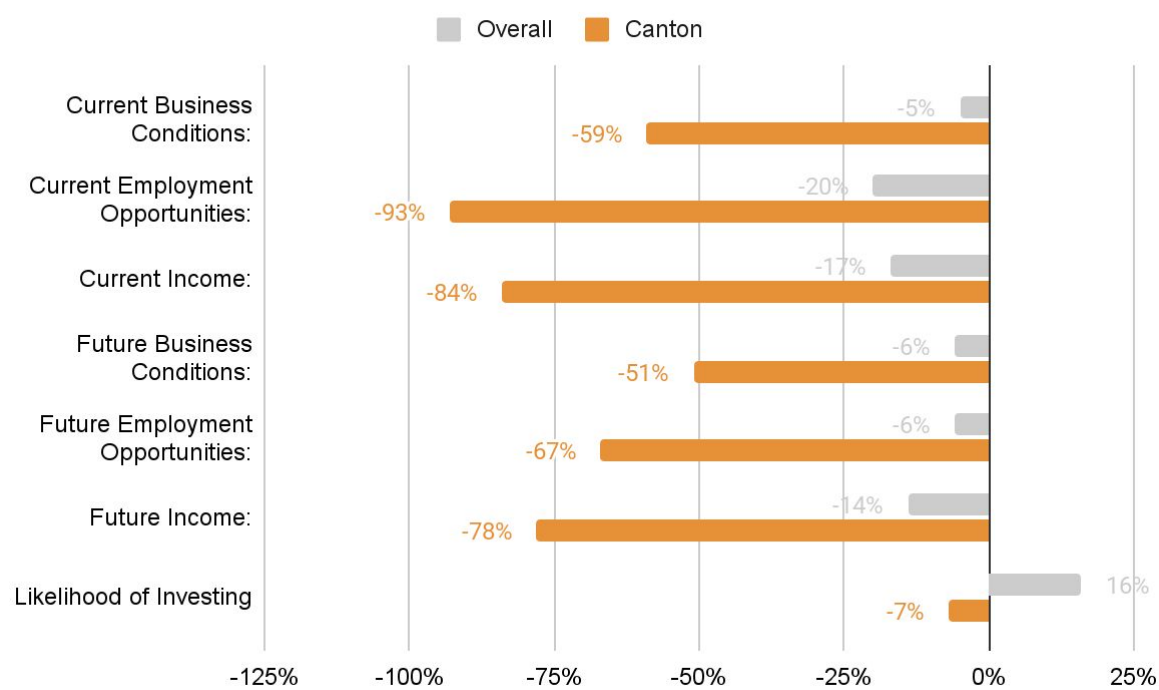
## Economic Summary:

Canton's economic outlook in 2025 reflects deep community concern and declining confidence. Compared to regional averages, all indicators—business climate, job opportunities, income prospects—are notably more negative. The most dramatic decline occurred in current employment opportunity perceptions, which plummeted to -93%. While future expectations are marginally better than present ones, overall sentiment has weakened since 2024, marking a reversal from modest gains the year prior. Despite widespread pessimism, a small segment remains hopeful, as shown by the slightly higher-than-expected likelihood of investing, suggesting a base for cautious optimism if the right improvements are made.

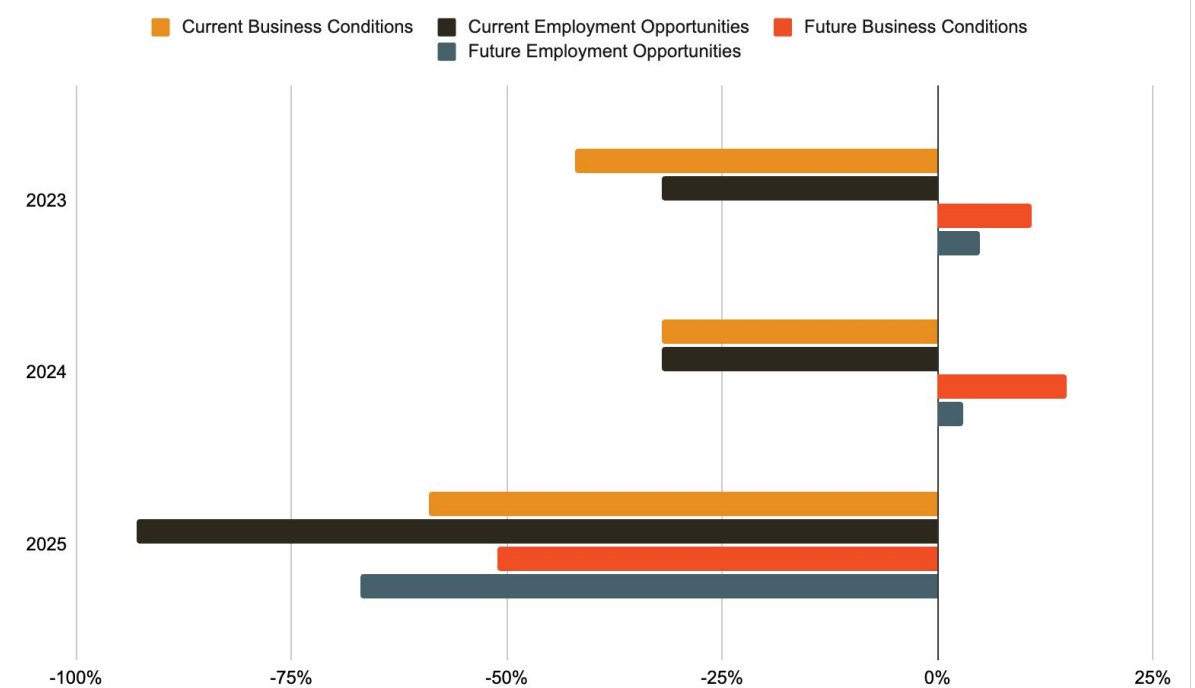
## Businesses Needed In Our Town:

- Grocery Store** – Essential food access, especially for elderly & families
- Restaurant** – Dining options needed to attract and retain locals
- Other** – Miscellaneous community needs
- Retail/Gift Shop** – Boost local shopping and tourism
- Coffee Shop** – Community gathering and casual meeting space
- Jobs/Industry** – Local employment opportunities needed
- Daycare/Childcare** – Support for working families
- Public Services** – Infrastructure for livability and safety
- Hotel/Motel** – Accommodations for visitors and events
- Medical/Doctor** – Basic healthcare access locally

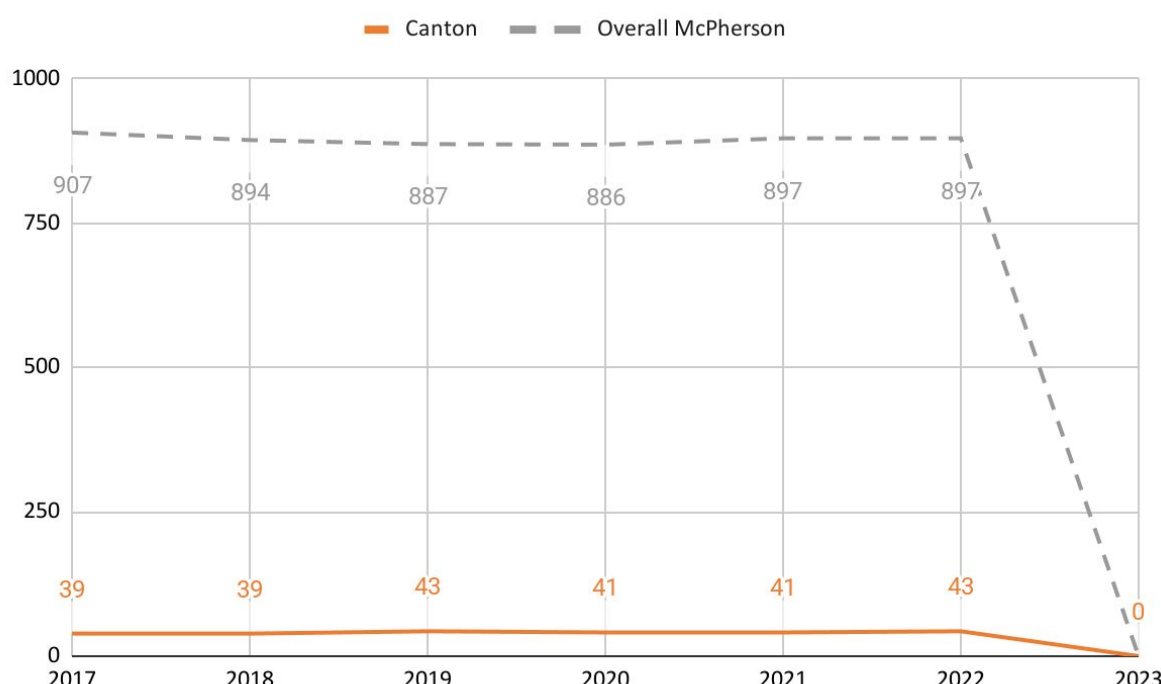
## Our Economic Perceptions



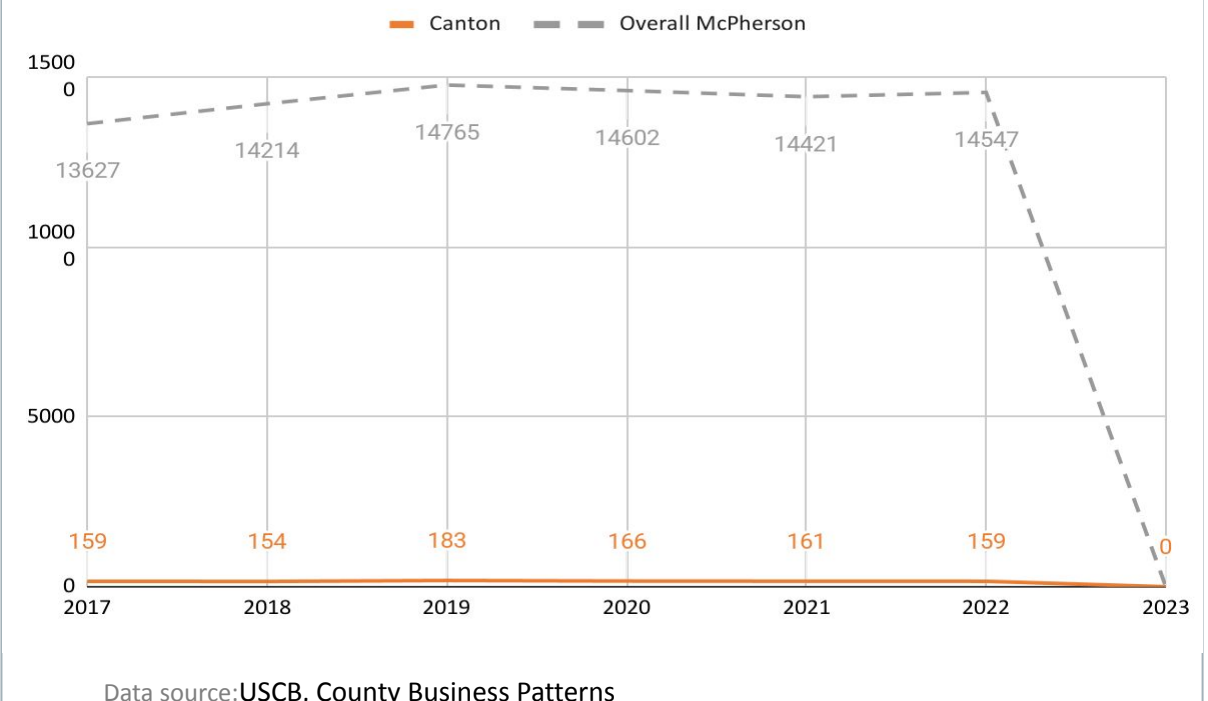
## Year Over Year Change (2023 vs 2025)



## Businesses in Our Town



## 10 Year Shift in Local Jobs

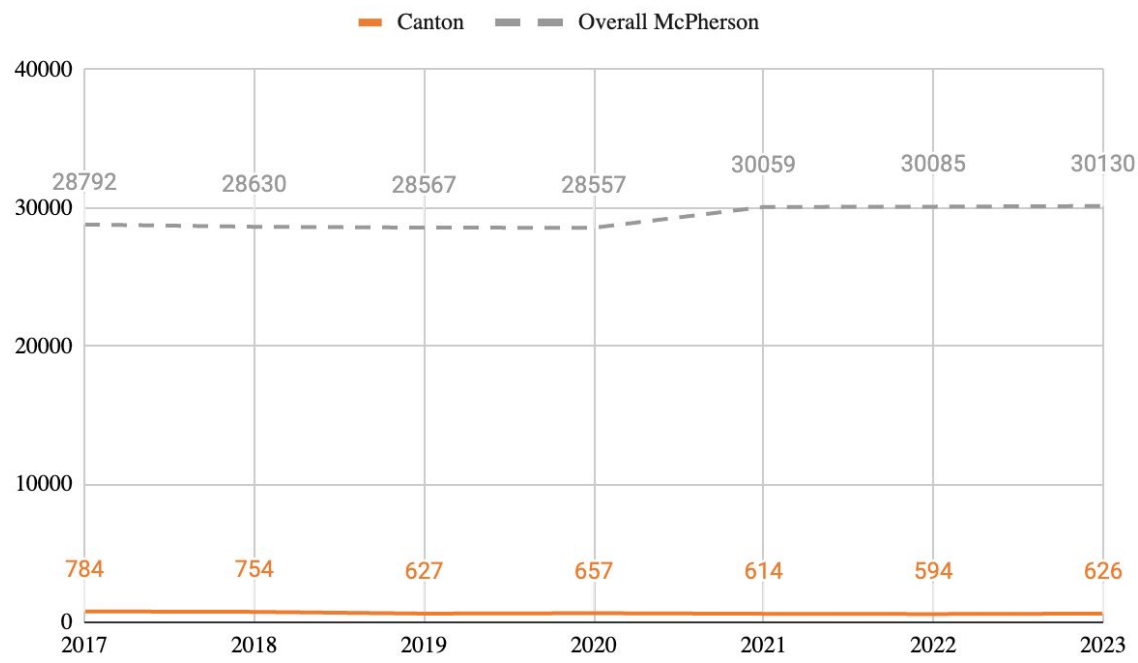




# Local Economic Indicators

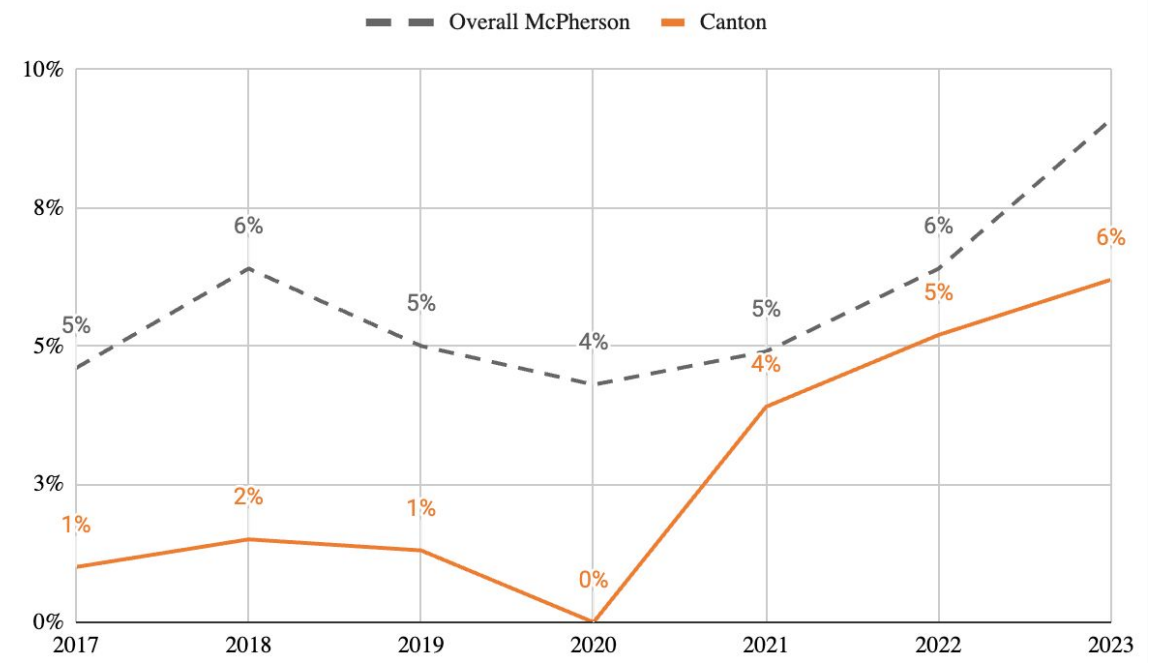


## Overall Population Trend



Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg

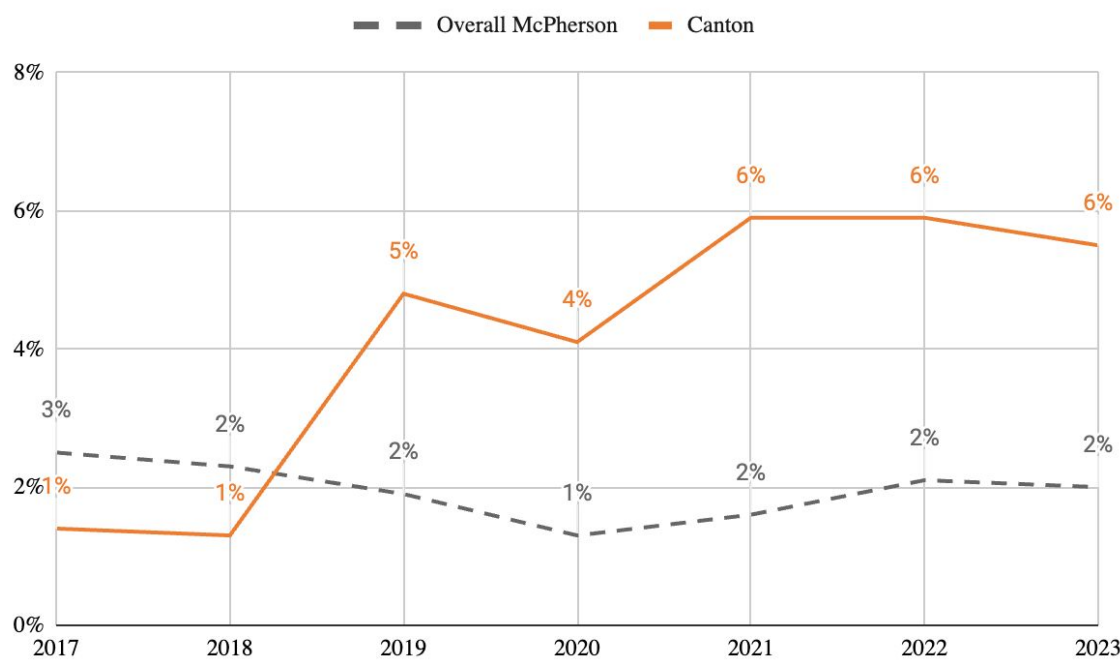
## Local Poverty Rate



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



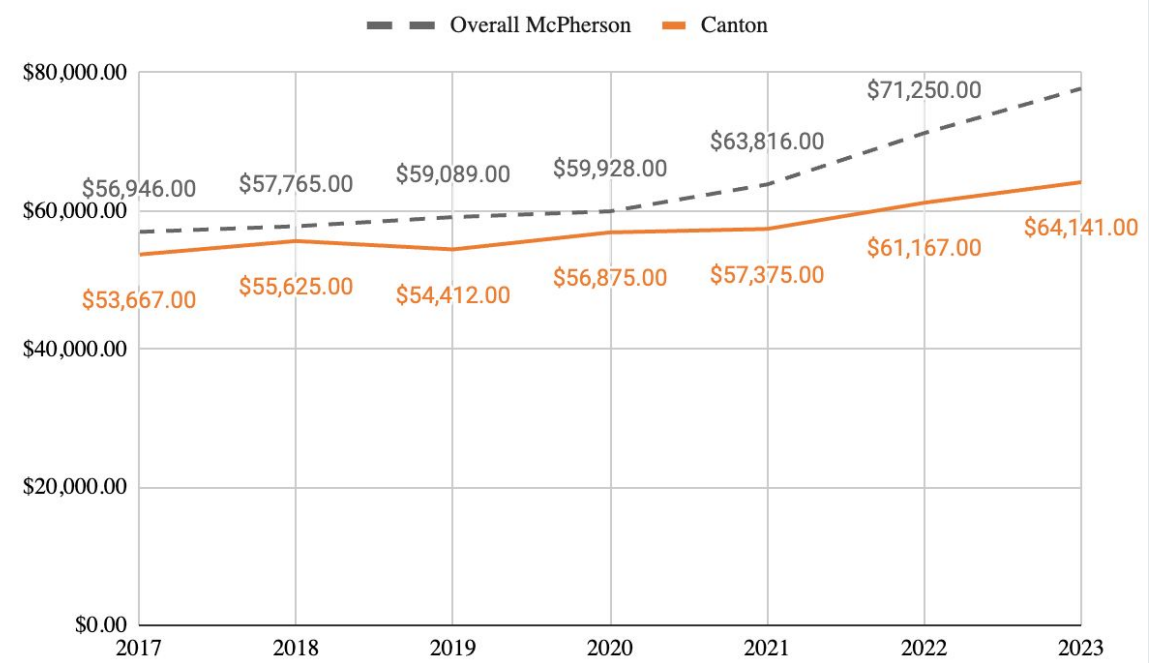
## Local Unemployment Rate



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



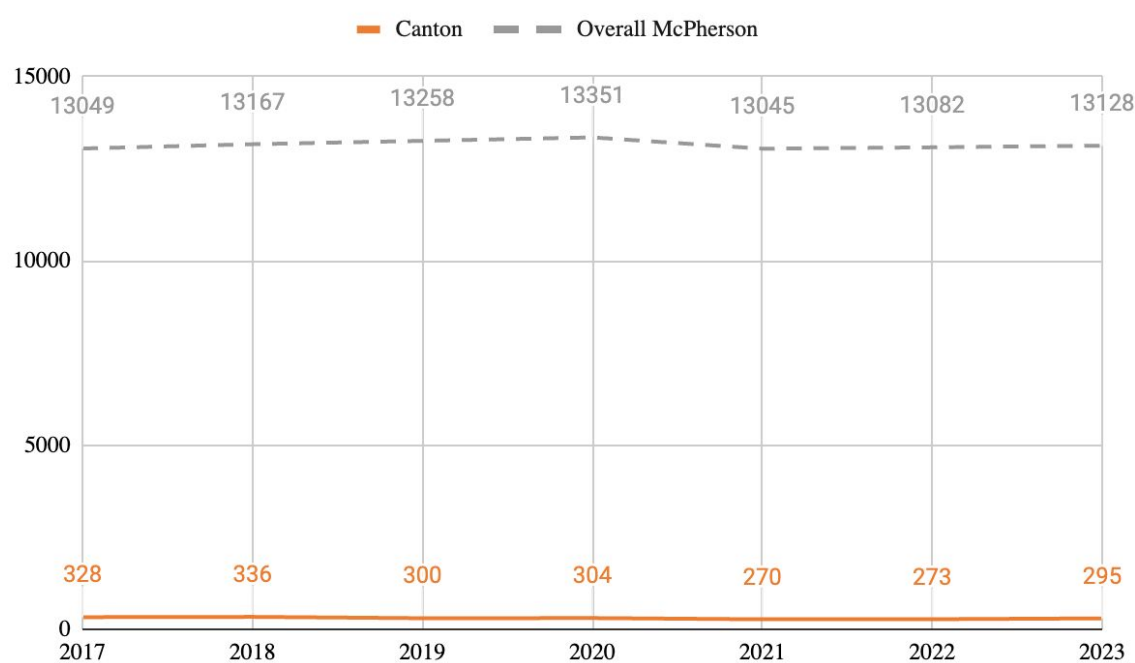
## Median Household Income



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

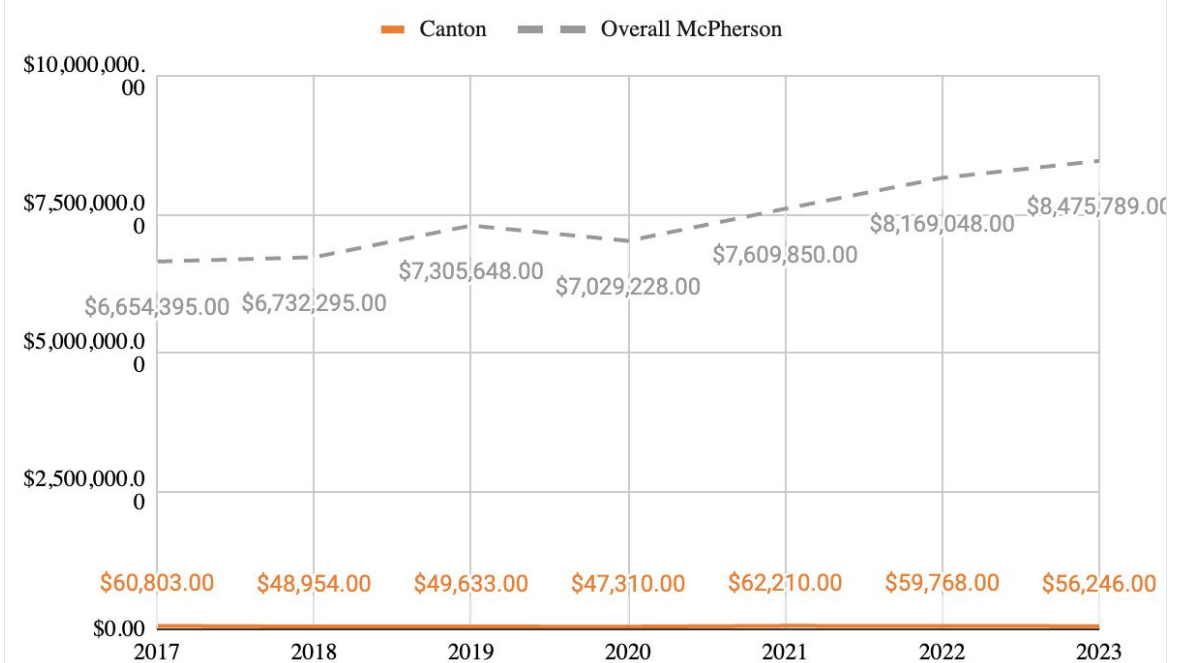


## Total Housing Units



Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg

## Annual Sales Tax Collection



Data source:Kansas Dept of Revenue

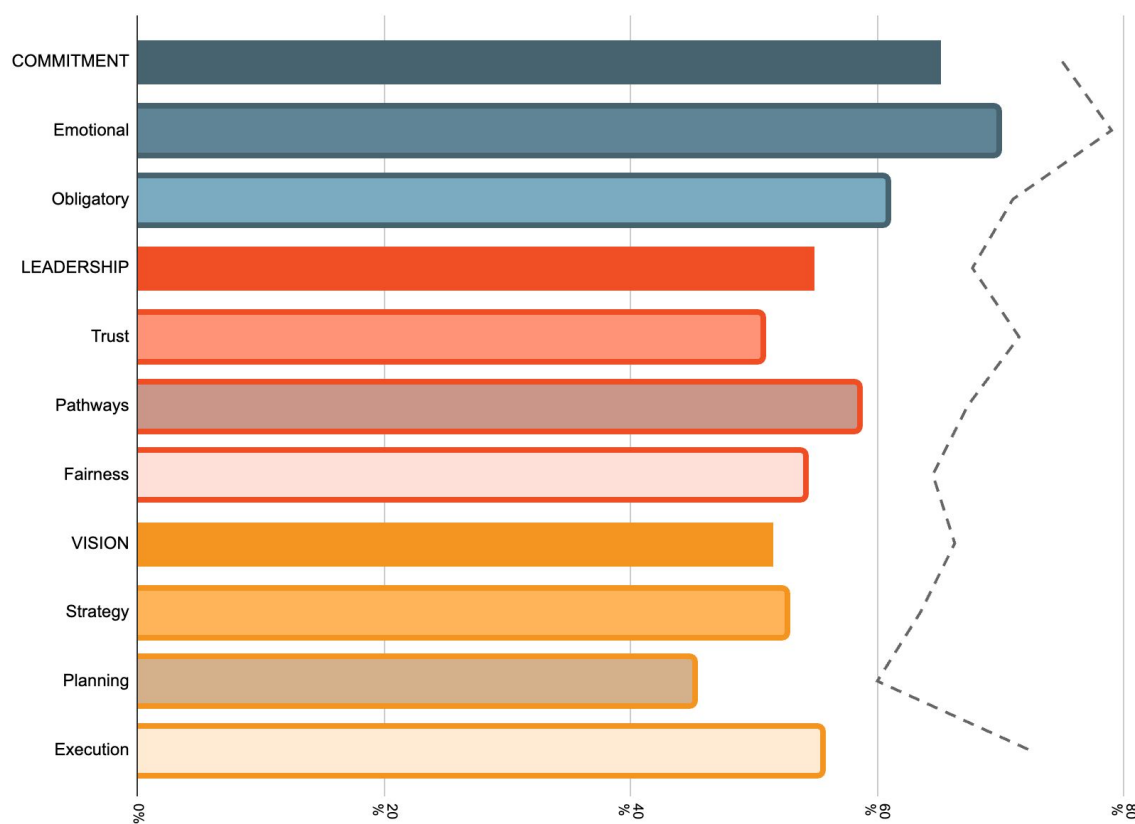
# Confidence In Our Local Community

## Engagement Summary:

Residents in Canton exhibit strong emotional ties to their community, expressing a sense of personal meaning, belonging, and commitment. However, this emotional commitment has not yet translated into confidence in local vision or leadership. Perceptions of planning, strategy, and community coordination remain below average, with planning ranked as the weakest subcategory. While people feel safe and welcomed, many do not believe there's a clear direction forward. The disconnect between love for the community and frustration with leadership and vision presents both a challenge and a powerful opportunity to re-engage residents in shaping the town's future.



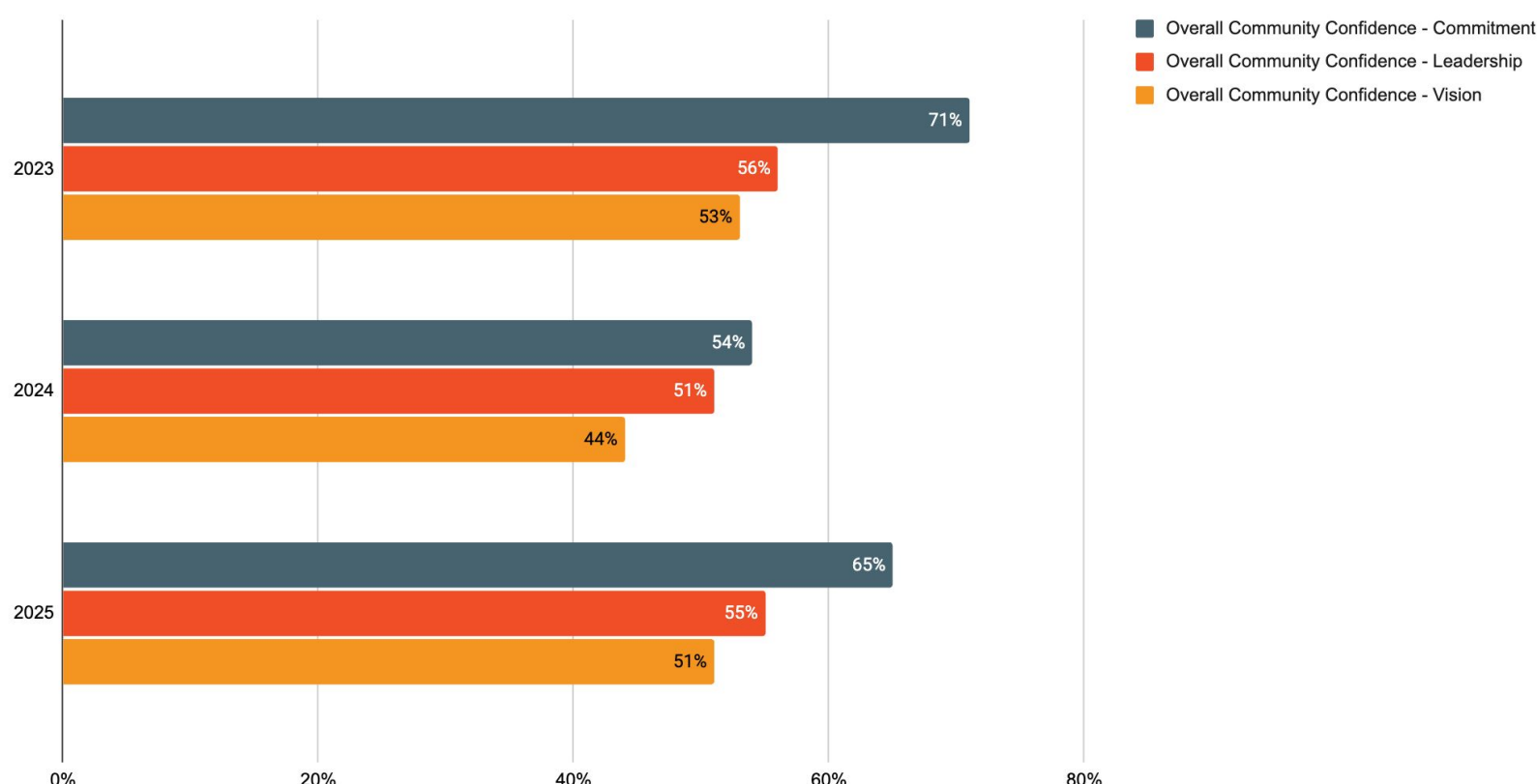
## How do our residents view our community?



### Questions:

- Why are all metrics below the community average and how can we increase them?
- What strategies can leverage high Emotional Commitment to improve Obligatory Commitment?
- How can the community address the disconnection from local problems, the lowest scoring Commitment metric?
- Why are Vision metrics scoring lower than average and what actions can raise them?
- With Execution being a Vision strength, how can we replicate its success in Planning?
- What steps would improve the lowest Vision metrics related to planning and direction?
- How can we increase understanding and confidence in the community's direction?
- Why are Leadership scores all below average and what improvements are most urgent?
- How can leaders build more trust and better teamwork in the community?
- Can trust in leadership and planning in vision both be raised at the same time and how?

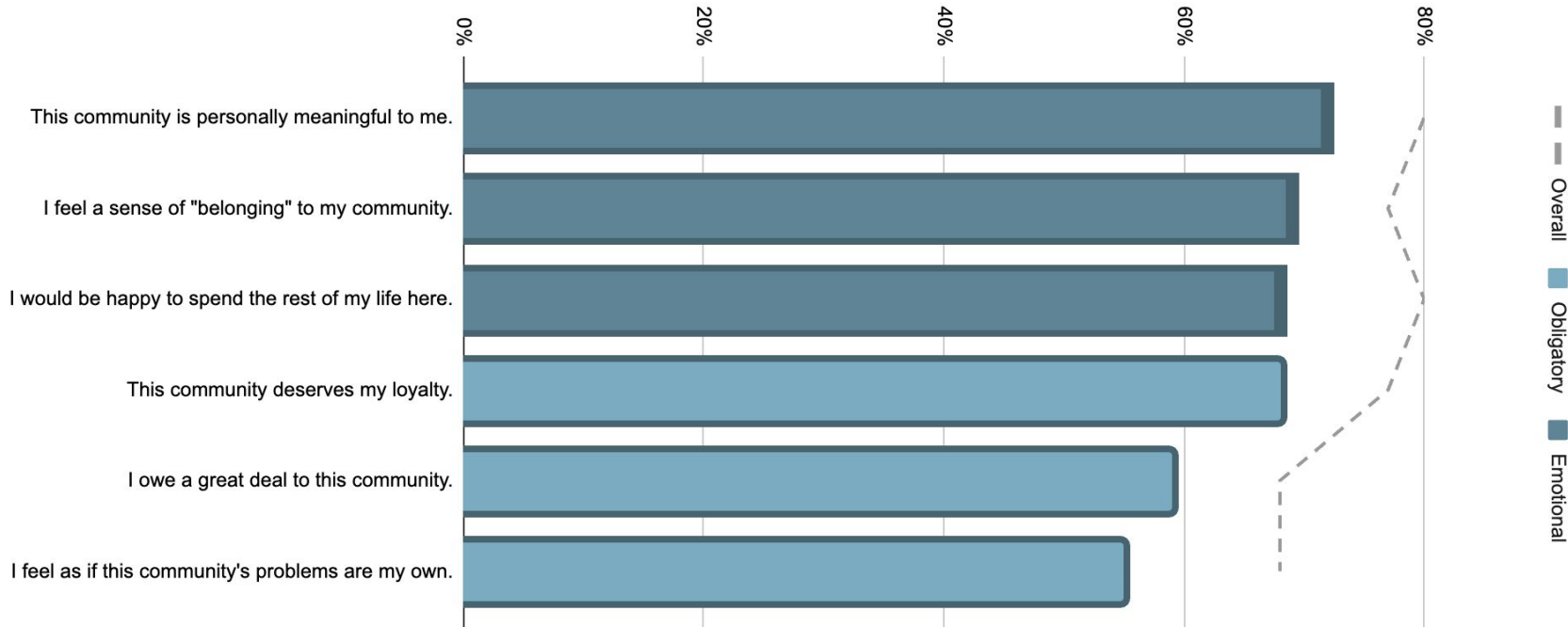
## Year Over Year Change





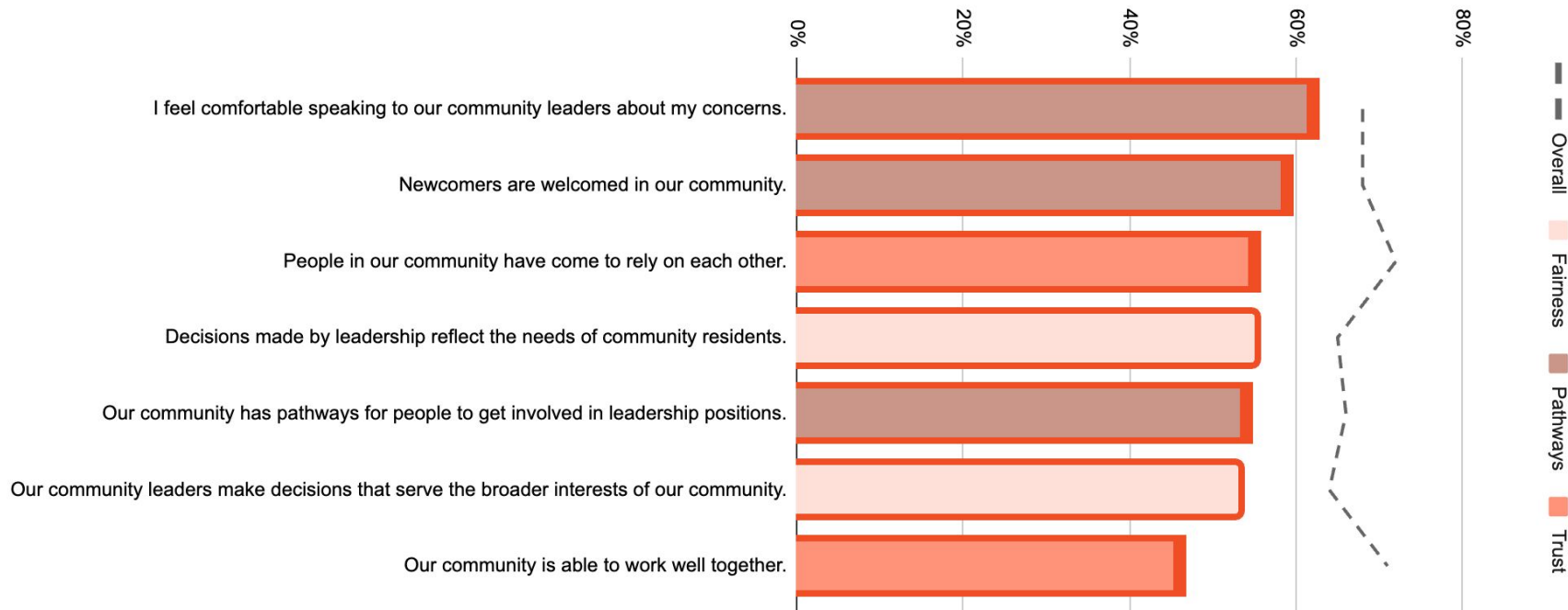
# Confidence In Our Local Community

## Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



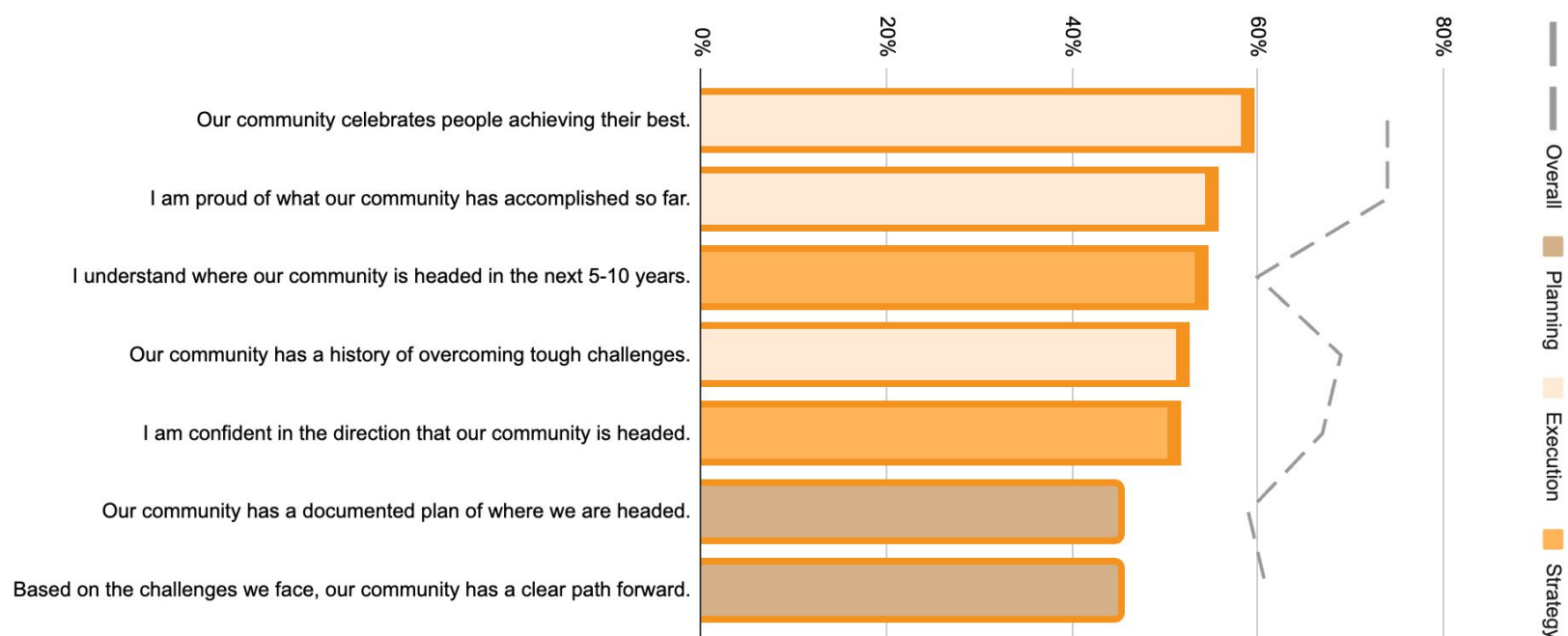
- What causes Commitment metrics to trail the community average?
- How can the emotional strength of residents be used to enhance civic loyalty?
- What interventions can connect residents more to the community's challenges and problems?
- How do we elevate both emotional and obligatory commitments simultaneously?

## Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- How can we improve teamwork and collaboration within the community?
- What makes residents feel comfortable speaking to leaders—and how can this be expanded?
- How can we create more accessible leadership pathways?
- How do we ensure leadership decisions reflect broad community interests?

## Community Confidence: Vision

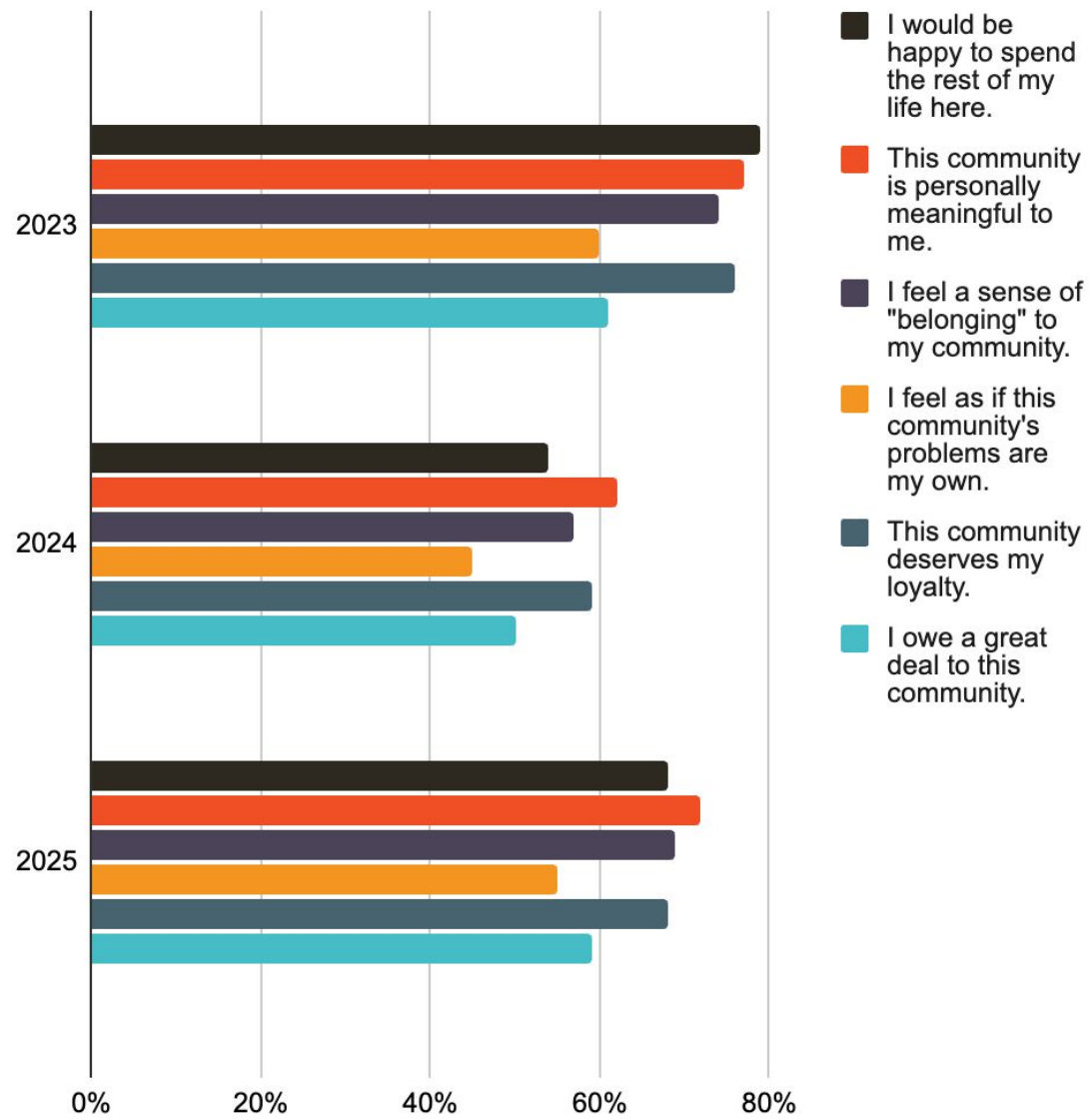


- Why do Planning metrics in Vision lag significantly behind?
- How do we ensure a clear and shared documented plan for the future?
- How can we build confidence in the community's long-term direction?
- What are effective ways to document and communicate strategic goals to residents?

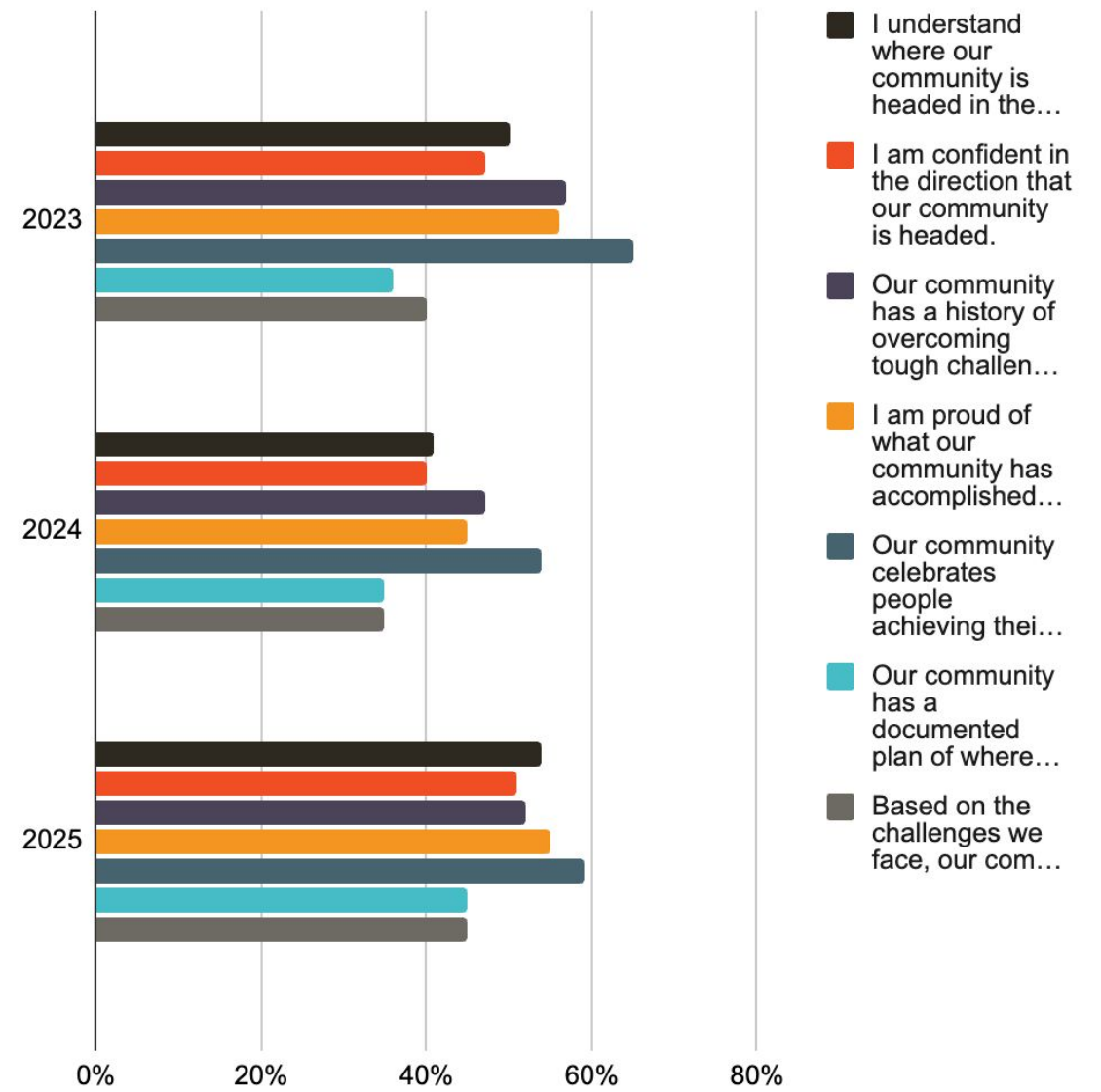
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

# Confidence In Our Local Community

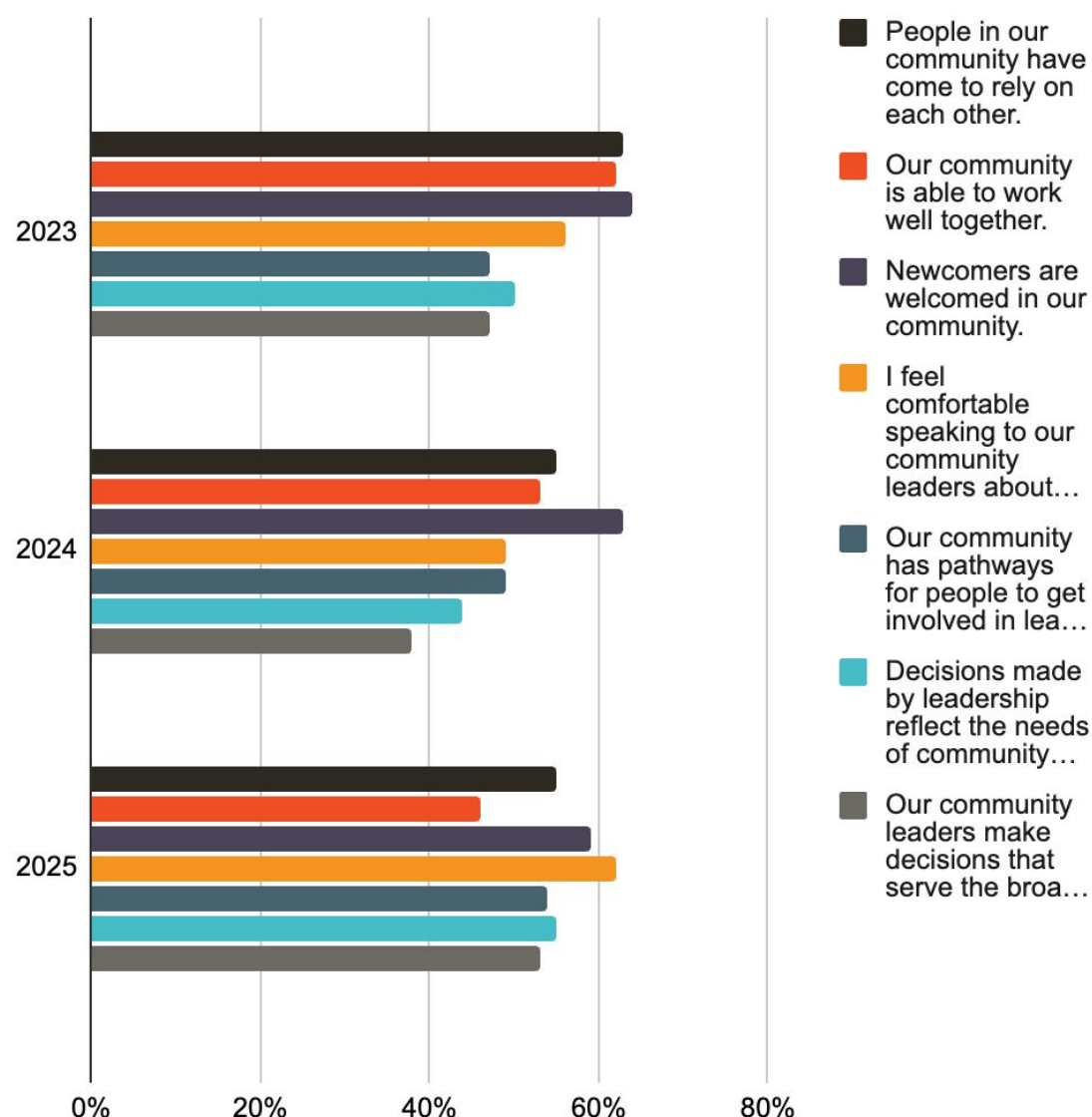
## Commitment



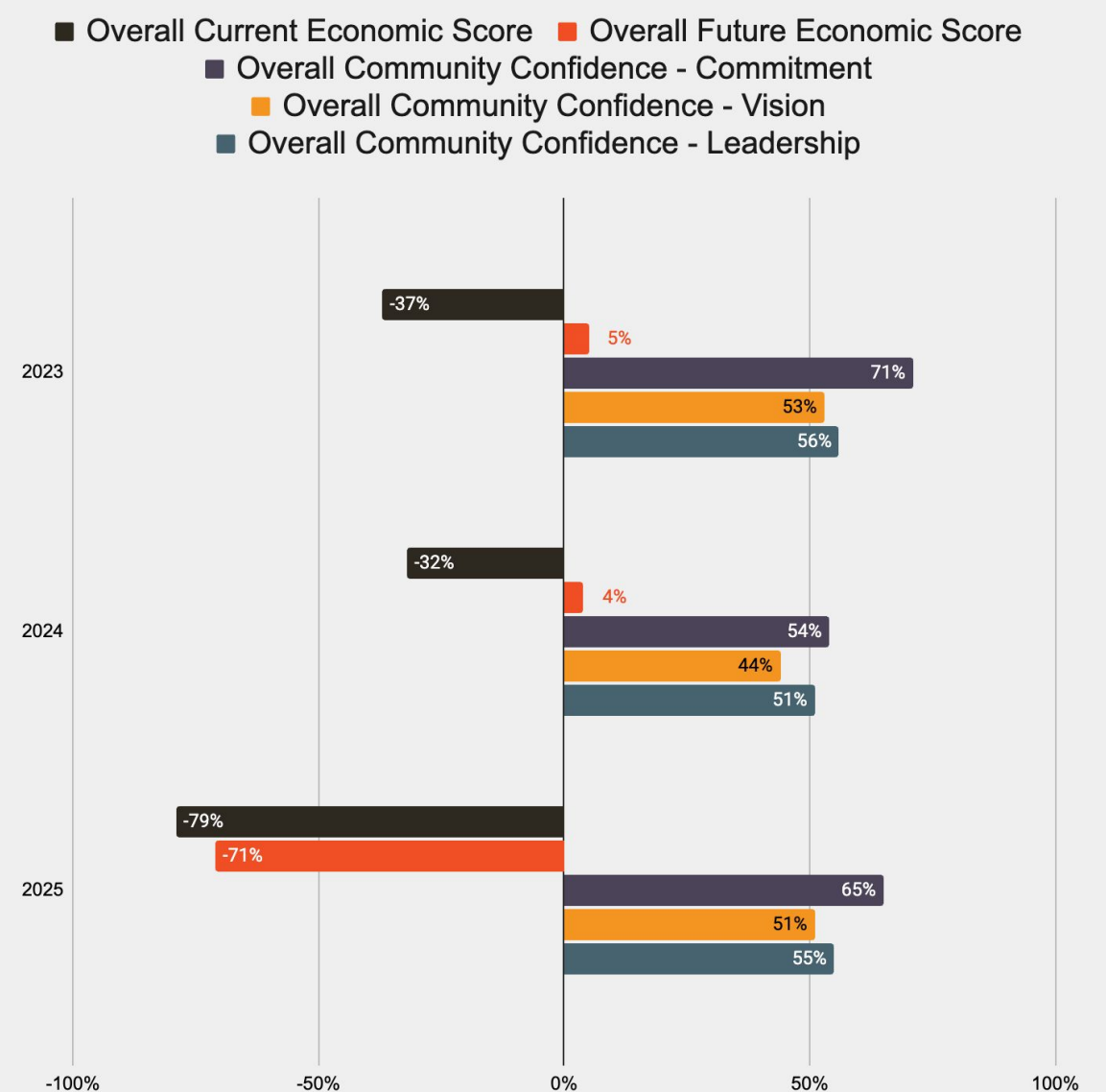
## Vision



## Leadership



## Economic vs. Community Confidence

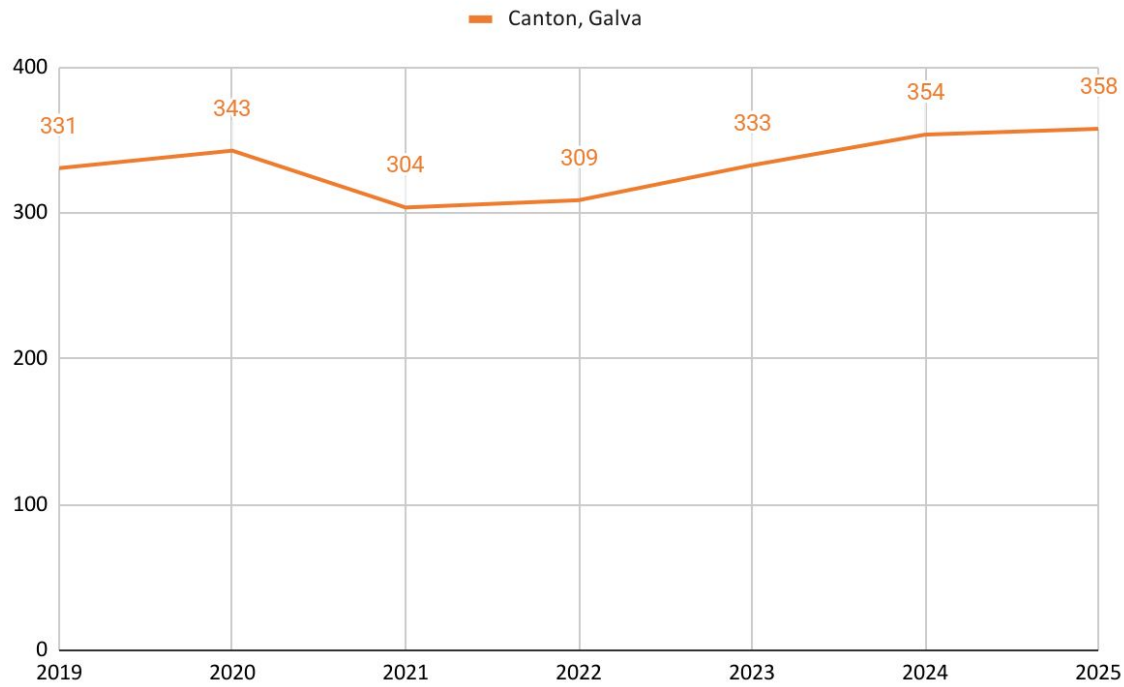


Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

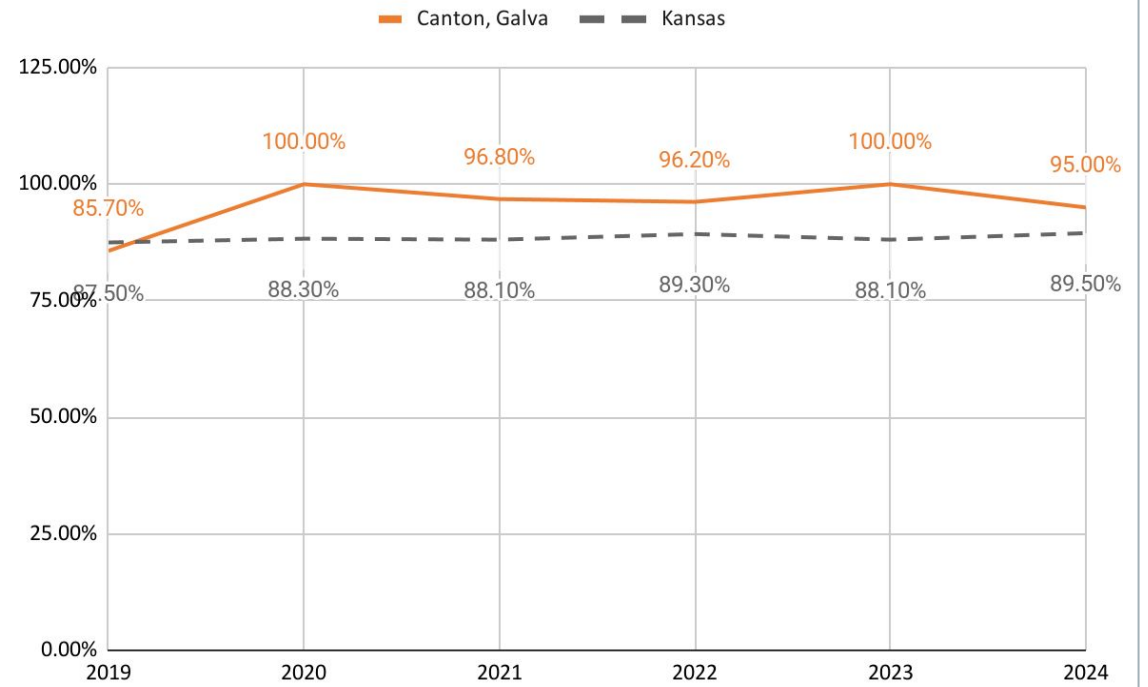


# Local Community Indicators

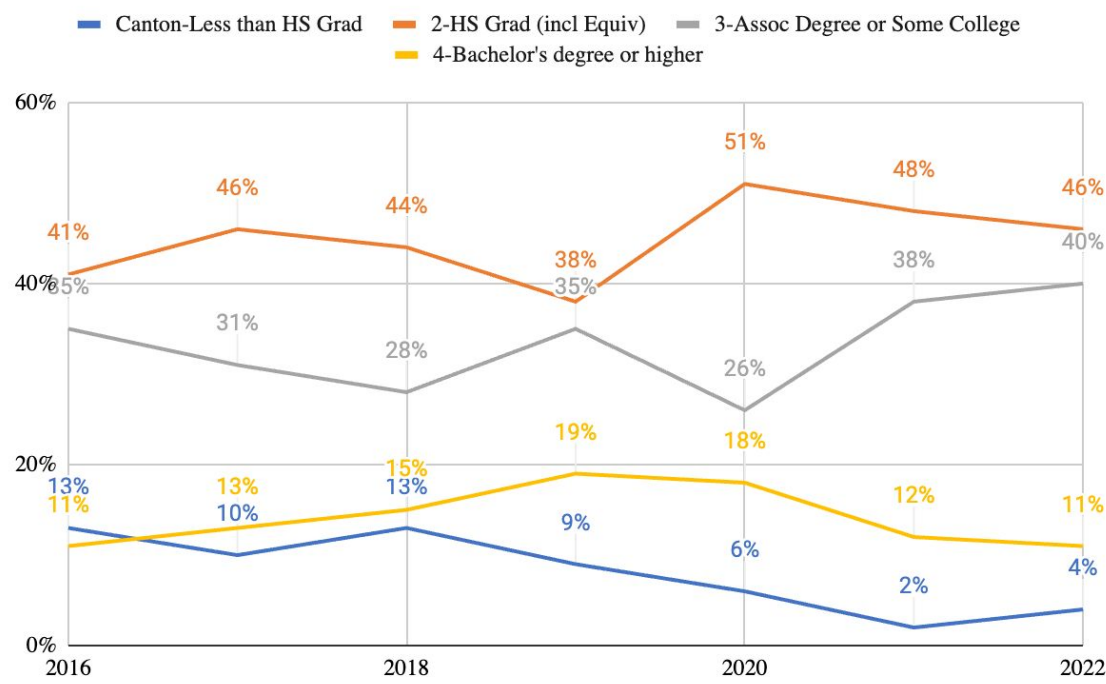
## Local School Enrollment



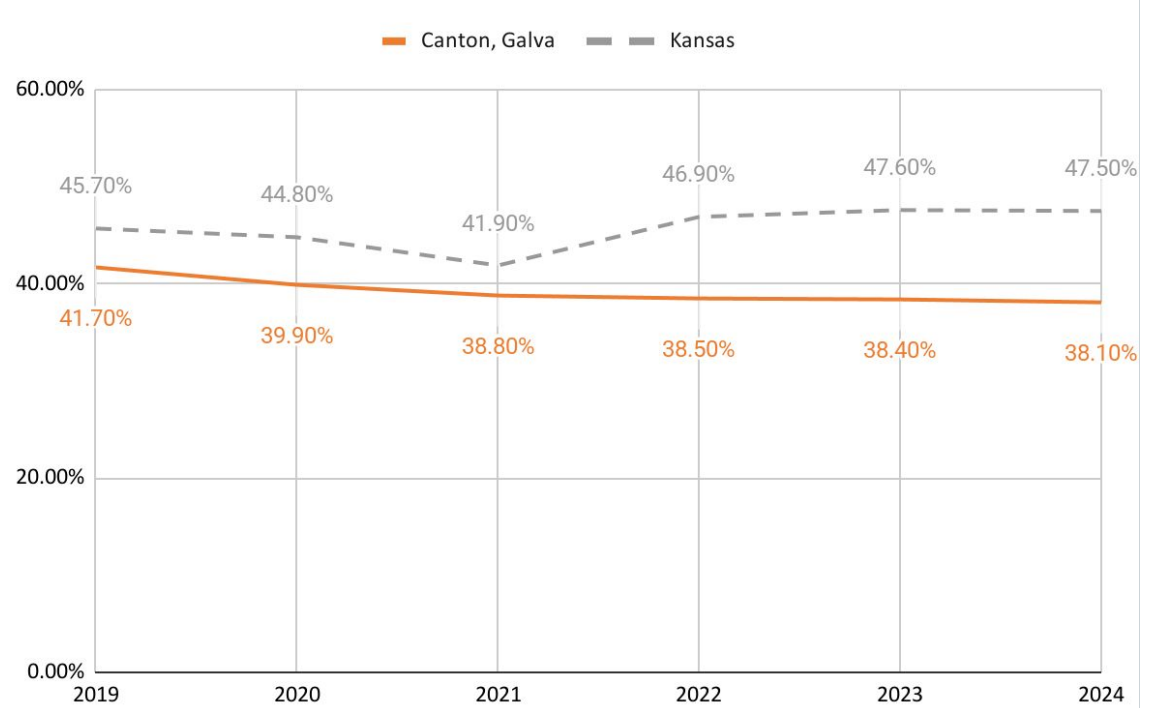
## High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



## Local Educational Level

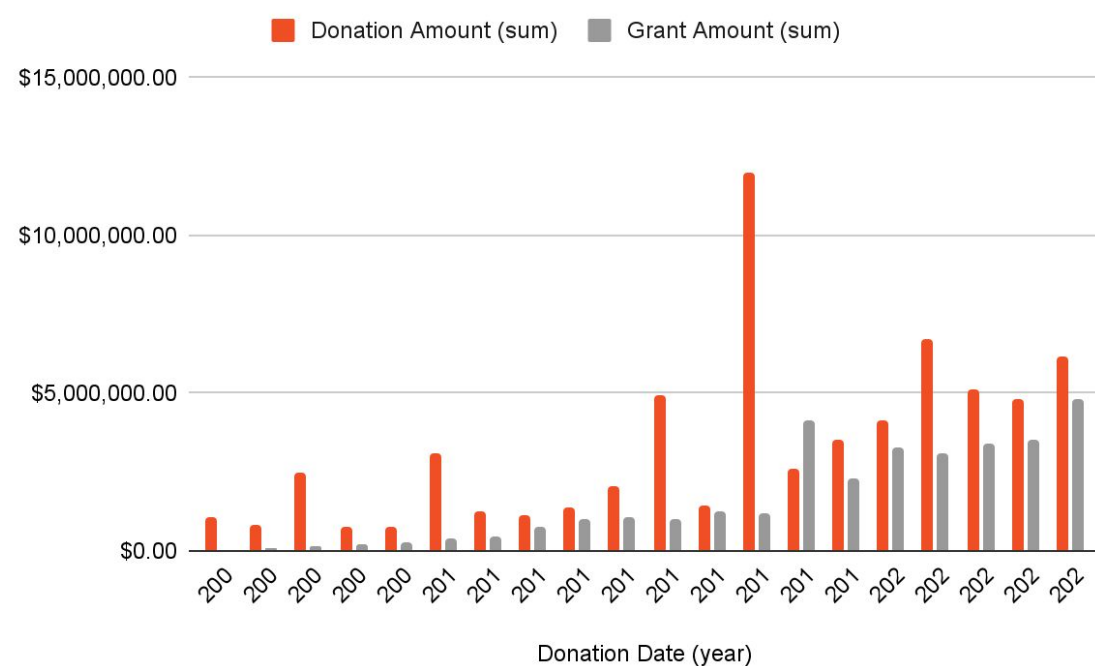


## School % Free/Reduced Price Lunch

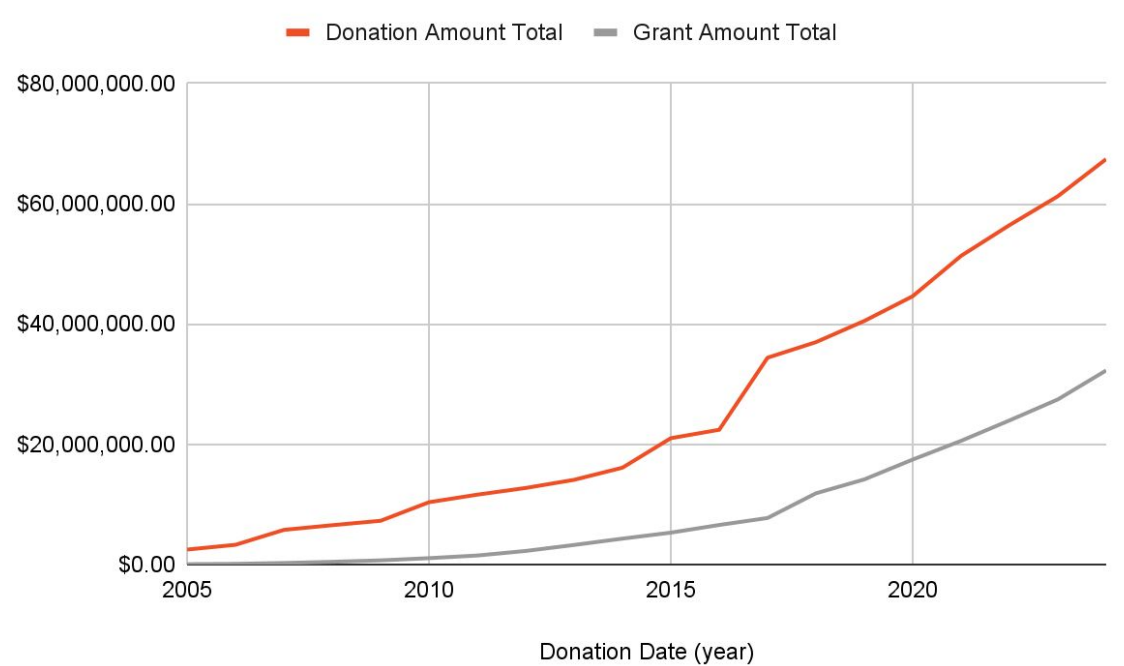


Source for all education graphs: Kansas State Dept of Education, Data Central

## McPherson Community Foundation: Annual Dollars Raised & Invested



## McPherson Community Foundation: Compound Dollars Raised & Invested

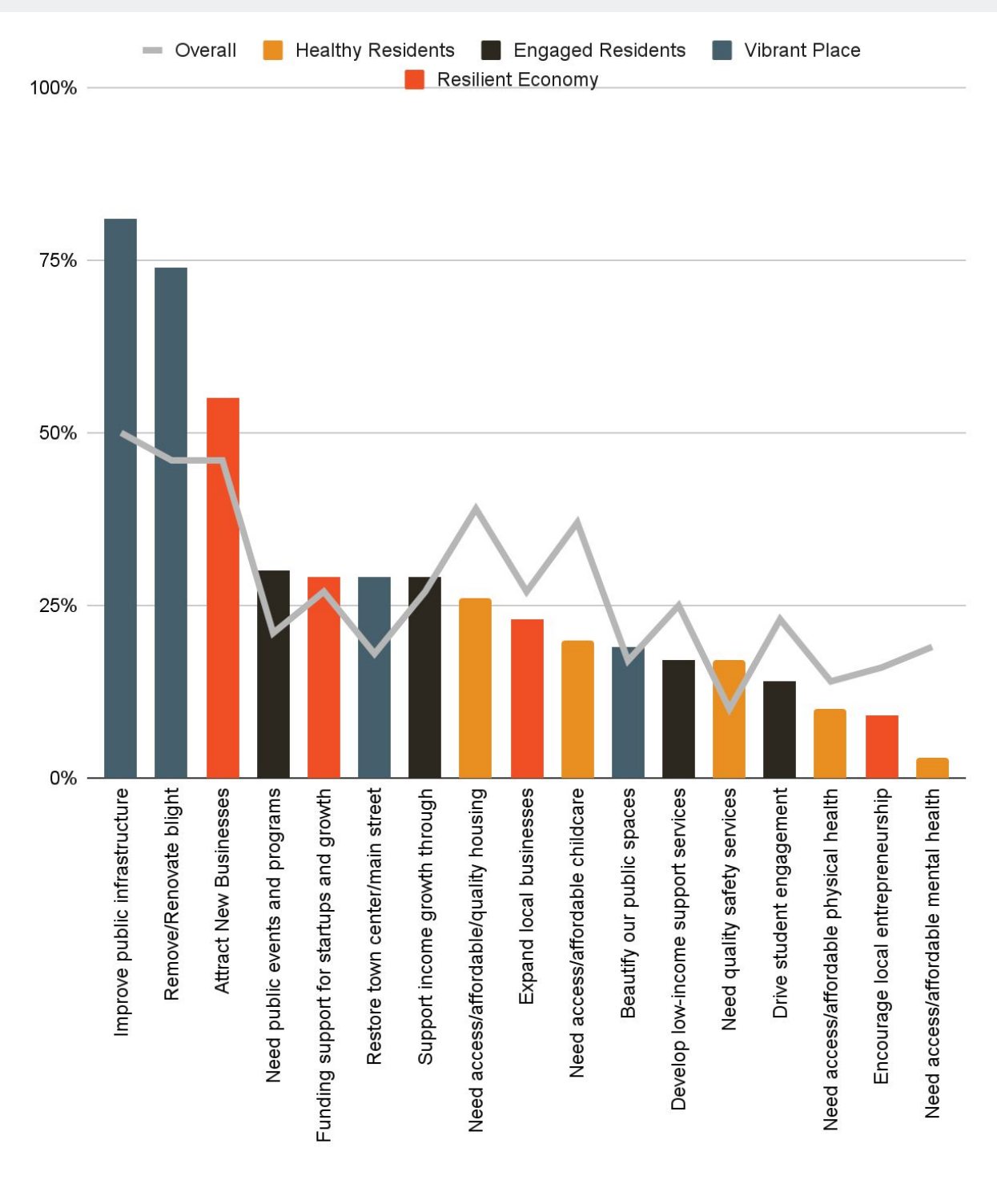


# Community Program Priorities

## Priorities Summary:

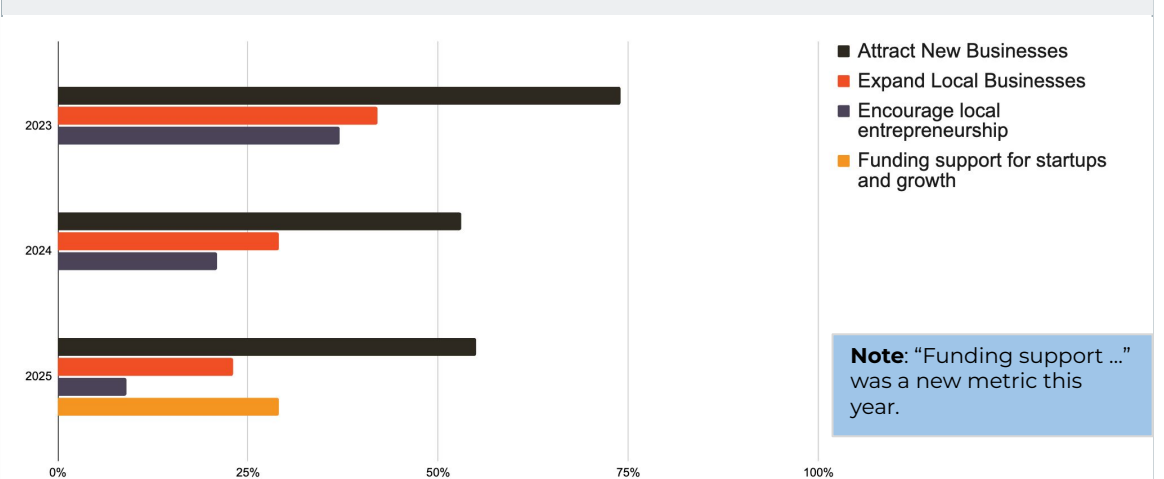
Canton residents are highly aligned around urgent physical improvements and economic revitalization. Top priorities include infrastructure (especially roads), renovating blighted areas, and attracting new businesses. These priorities mirror metric data, which shows acute concern for the town's roads and abandoned buildings. While entrepreneurship and health care ranked lower in program support, community feedback revealed strong interest in enhancing safety and beautification. This data suggests that while the town faces structural challenges, its residents are ready to engage in visible, transformational projects that restore pride and increase investment appeal. Opportunities exist to link these efforts to broader wellness, housing, and youth engagement strategies that have gained community attention in smaller but meaningful ways.

### Program Priorities

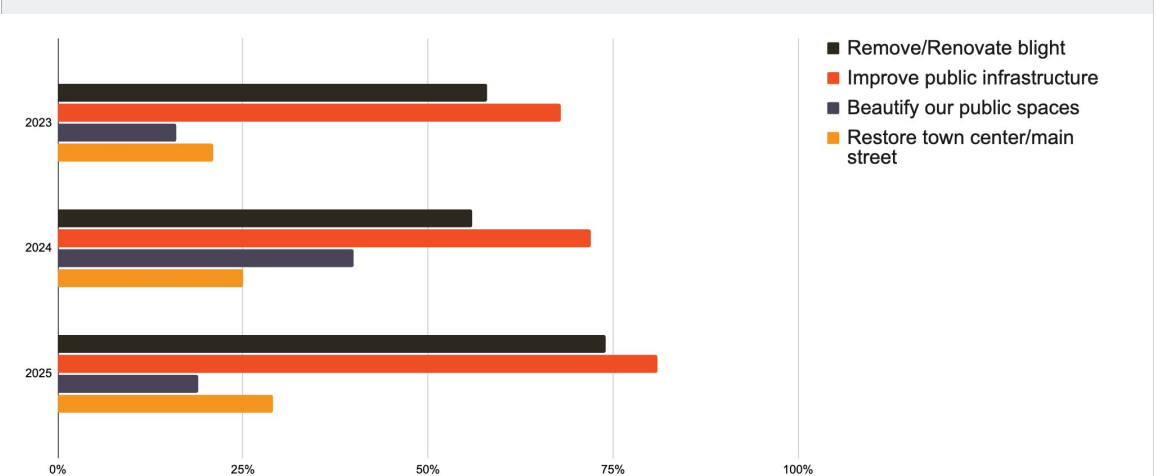


- Why is improving public infrastructure the top priority for Canton and how can it be implemented effectively?
- What specific factors are driving the strong demand for removing and renovating blighted properties?
- How can the momentum for attracting new businesses be aligned with economic development strategies?
- Why is encouraging local entrepreneurship rated so low despite economic need?
- What are the root causes of the community's concern about mental health services and how can we address them?

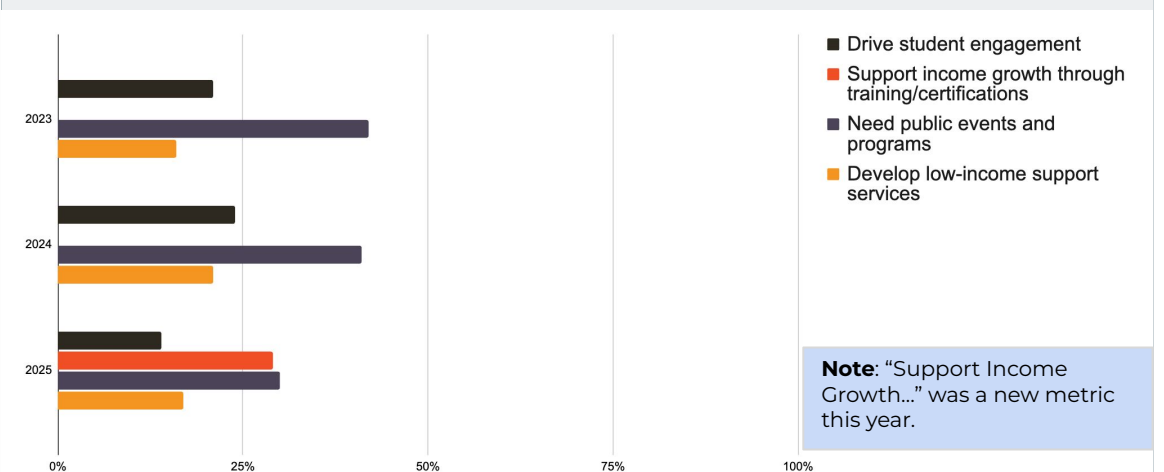
### Resilient Economy



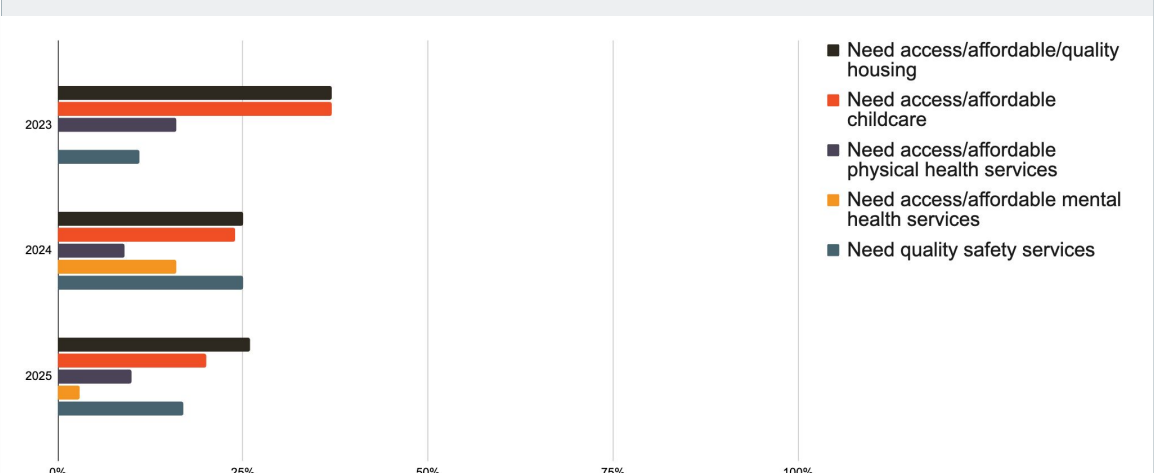
### Vibrant Place



### Engaged Residents



### Healthy Residents





# Community Priority Metrics



# 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 – Revamping roads for safer, more appealing streetscapes
- Water – Ensuring reliable, clean water supply and infrastructure
- Housing – Developing affordable housing to attract and retain families
- Childcare – Creating accessible, affordable childcare for working families
- Downtown – Revitalizing Main Street to boost pride and economic activity

**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?**

- Roads – Repair small sections for improved appearance and safety
- Water – Maintain clean, safe, and reliable drinking water
- Sidewalks – Make walking safer and easier for all residents
- Downtown – Enhance curb appeal to attract business and visitors
- Housing – Support rehab or incentives for affordable housing options

# Serving your community!

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

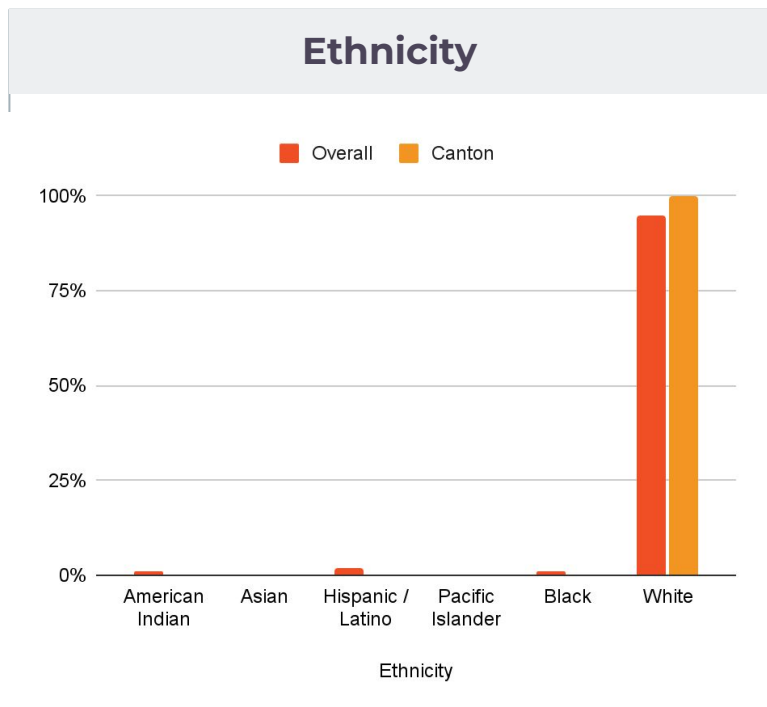
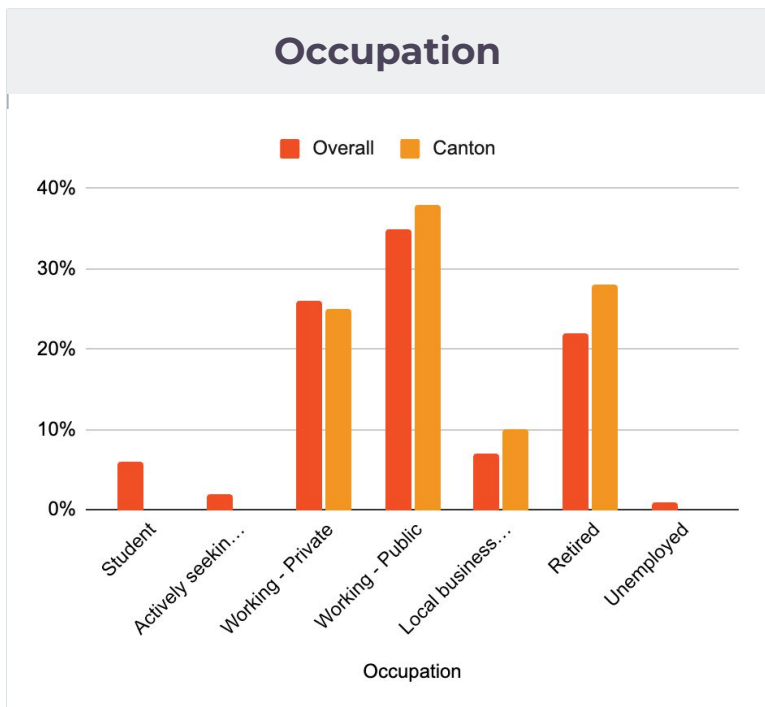
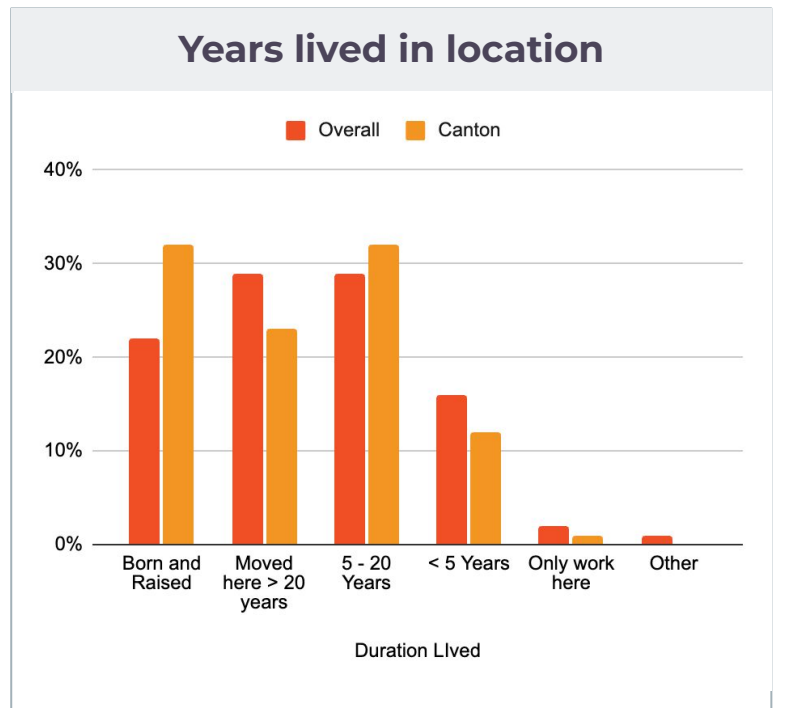
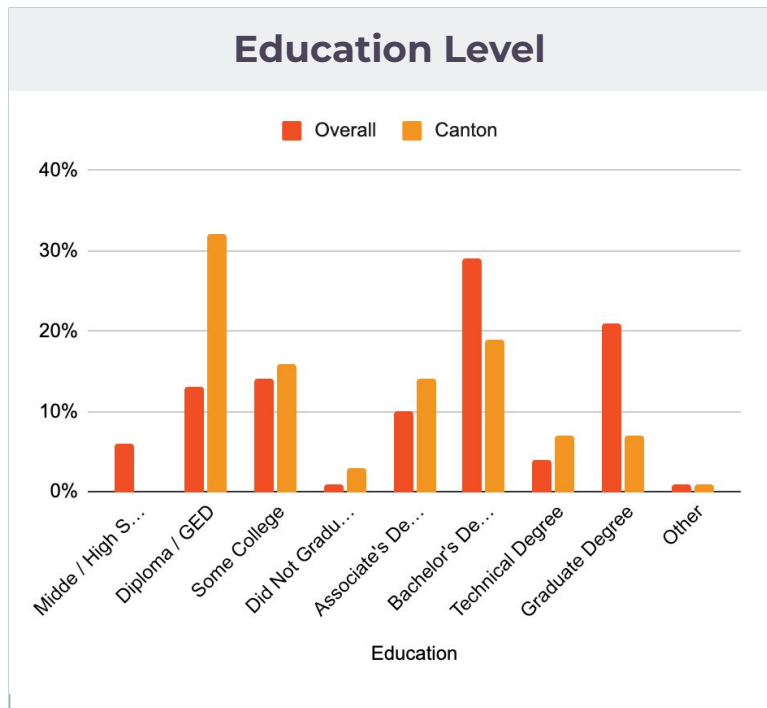
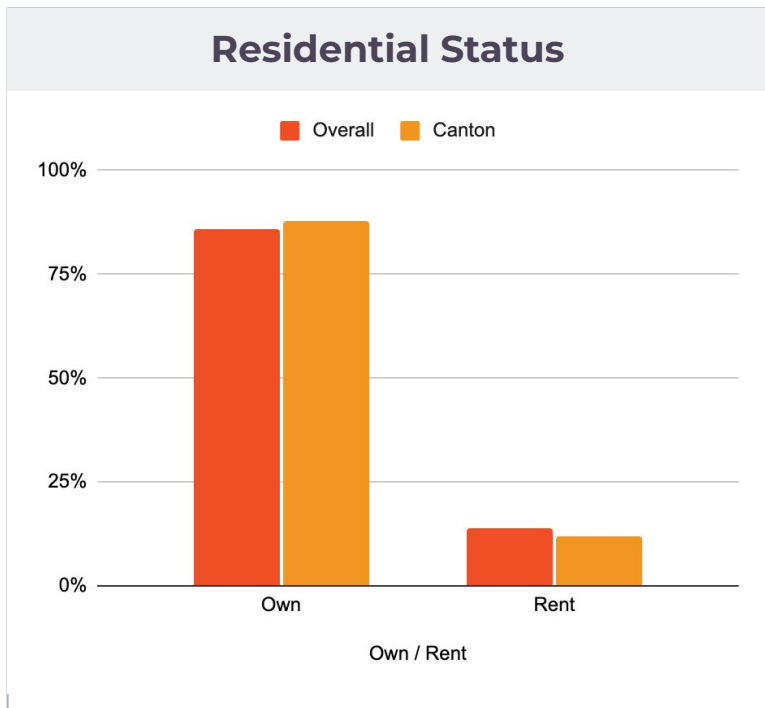
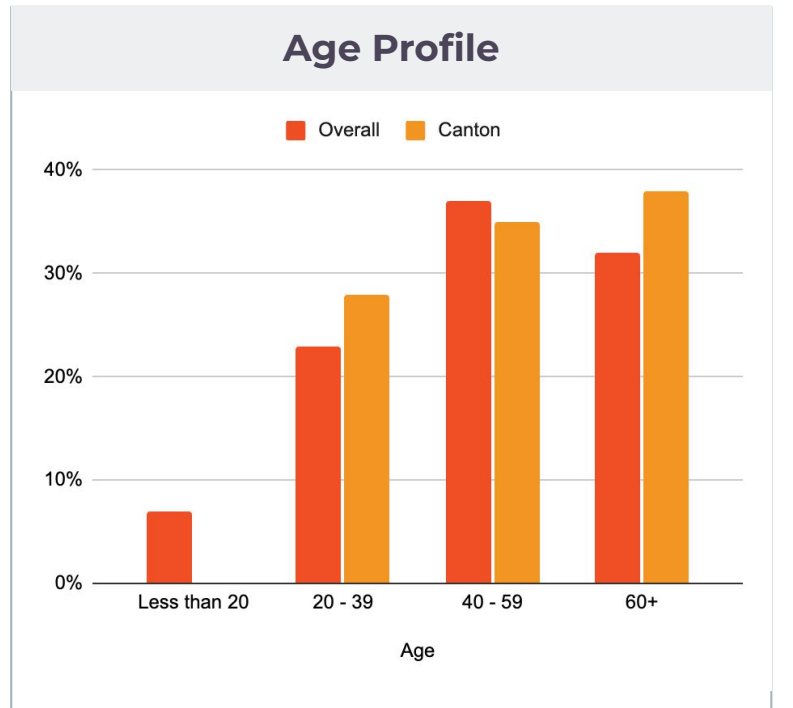
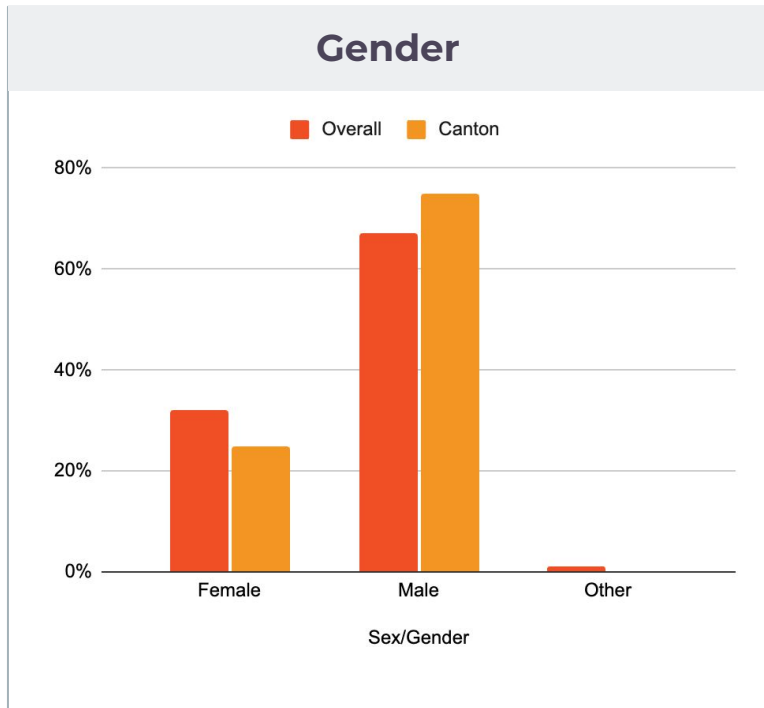
- Youth & Education – youth sports coach, teacher, school board member, technology director, site council member
- Civic Leadership – mayor, city councilman, city maintenance, maintenance dept.
- Community Beautification – beautification committee, city beautification, lawn assistance
- Library & Culture – library board member, library supporter, friend of the library
- Volunteer Organizations – American Legion Auxiliary, reimagine Canton member, community organization board member, county fair board member

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

- Community Involvement – be more involved, helping where needed, any way I can, however needed, volunteering
- Beautification & Environment – plant new trees, beautification committee, beautification efforts
- Civic Engagement – vote on decisions, give suggestions and feedback, building structure and plan
- Library & Culture – library work, serve with the library
- Local Economy Support – shop locally, buying local, promote Canton.



# Survey Respondents



Retired individuals are significantly less likely to invest (-32%) compared to those working in the public sector (27%).

People with an Associate's Degree report much stronger reliance on each other (4.67) than those with some college education (2.82).

Support for restoring the town center is far higher among Bachelor's Degree holders (46%) than those with an Associate's Degree (10%).

Community confidence and enthusiasm are markedly higher among Bachelor's Degree holders (62%) compared to those with an Associate's Degree (0%).

 **Town Score**

 **Average Community Score**

31

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community  
31 of 69 (45%)