



2025 Community Benchmark Report City of Cimarron, KS

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Innovation Economy Partners
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES



Dear Cimarron Residents and Community Leaders,

As Innovation Economy Partners, we've seen few towns whose spirit shines as brightly as Cimarron's. Your deep emotional connection—pride in your hometown and unwavering trust in local leadership—forms the bedrock of everything you achieve together. That trust in execution gives you a unique advantage: when your leaders act, you stand beside them, ready to roll up your sleeves.

Today, economic perceptions have slipped, and that reality stings. Yet, confidence in your community's future remains remarkably steady. This mix—honest concern paired with steadfast belief—creates fertile ground for change. Now is the moment to harness your loyalty, channel that commitment into action, and rally behind targeted efforts to reignite growth and opportunity.

Imagine revitalized sidewalks, buildings, and public grounds drawing new attention and businesses, a modern childcare network freeing parents to contribute fully, and small-business owners expanding thanks to community-wide support. By uniting behind these strategic priorities, you'll turn cautious optimism into tangible progress: brighter prospects for families, renewed pride in your area, and the economic vitality Cimarron deserves.

We hope that the insights in these reports that our team has generated will help craft a bold and bright future for you—bridging vision and execution—to shape an even stronger future. We encourage you to leverage your exceptional social capital, translate loyalty into momentum, and write the next chapter of Cimarron's story: one of shared prosperity, enduring solidarity, and collective triumph.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Lee Pettijohn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lee" and last name "Pettijohn" clearly distinguishable.

Lee Pettijohn

Innovation Economy Partners

Supporting Local Strength, Strategy, and Success

What Makes Our Community Special?

"The loving and caring reactive responses to those in need."

Sharon

"Friendly people"

"Having the support the community gives during events such as sports, homecoming, or a fundraiser."

Madilyn

"Cimarron's community is very tight knit. Everyone genuinely cares about each other."

Natalie

"Pull together in the hard times."

Tiffany

"The police do an amazing job keeping us safe! Our strengths are when someone is in need the community gets involved!"

Stephanie

"Being a bedroom community between Dodge City and Garden City with all the amenities such as a Golf course, pool and park with the great schools make Cimarron special."

Lance

"Kindness and people who genuinely care about others and look out for one another!"

Debi

"A history of pride in our town. People care about one another."

Tony

"The residents of our community is what makes it special, unique strengths are the willingness to come together to help, safe place to have a family, basic necessities available without having to leave town."

Heather

The Leaders That Make Our Community Special

rodger davis kim fairbankssandi coast
jaden sommers lyn wright
ted brown donella snyder
casey flax autumn vanley gilbert benton
tony coast frankey schmidt jesse vanley
dan thomas erin morton
gordon jenkins alicia forsyth lynn unruh
steve schartz mary jenkins mike coast
mark busch lindsay herig mike waters
amy berry rocky fairbank jim coast
chris bryant sarah mcfarland tracy hilker
jackie jantz darrell dupree steve burns
bob unruh gordan jenkins charlotte neuschafer trenton fairbank
glenn oyley jeremy salem mr pingsterhaus arch frink
glenda davis sharon fryback jr gooch
tim dewey kalli scheveamy schilling
joel krosschelle brandon white steve hilker
darrie stebens carla unruh troy buller
candi hemel colby ellis alex hibbert
kathy holt jeff sharp

Executive Summary:

Mid-2025 finds Cimarron at a crossroads: economic confidence has plunged, yet a rare uptick in investment willingness reflects underlying hope. Socially, emotional and trust-based connections shine—residents take pride in their town, remain fiercely loyal, and rely on each other to meet challenges. Priorities converge on economic revival—drawing new businesses, supporting startups, and enhancing workforce skills—alongside critical investments in childcare and neighborhood renewal. Leveraging these social strengths and targeted economic actions, Cimarron can transform today's concerns into tomorrow's growth and shared prosperity.

pg **4 - 5**

Economic Confidence

Economic confidence in business, jobs, and income is at a low ebb, yet modest investment willingness indicates latent resilience. Targeted small-business and workforce support could spark a recovery.

pg **6 - 9**

Community Engagement Confidence

Pride, belonging, and loyalty exceed regional norms, and residents trust one another to overcome challenges. Vision and fairness metrics trail slightly, but social solidarity remains strong.

pg **10 - 12**

Critical Community Priorities

Priorities center on economic resilience—attracting businesses, funding startups, workforce training—and rising childcare and blight removal, while infrastructure investments have receded.

pg **13**

Survey Respondent Profile

Associate-degree holders show far higher investment interest than high school graduates. Retirees view childcare needs more urgently than business owners, and homeowners perceive a need for a stronger tax base than renters.

The Community Benchmarking report has been commissioned by Western Kansas 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 the Western County 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 the fellow residents are craving.**



Confidence In Our Local Economy

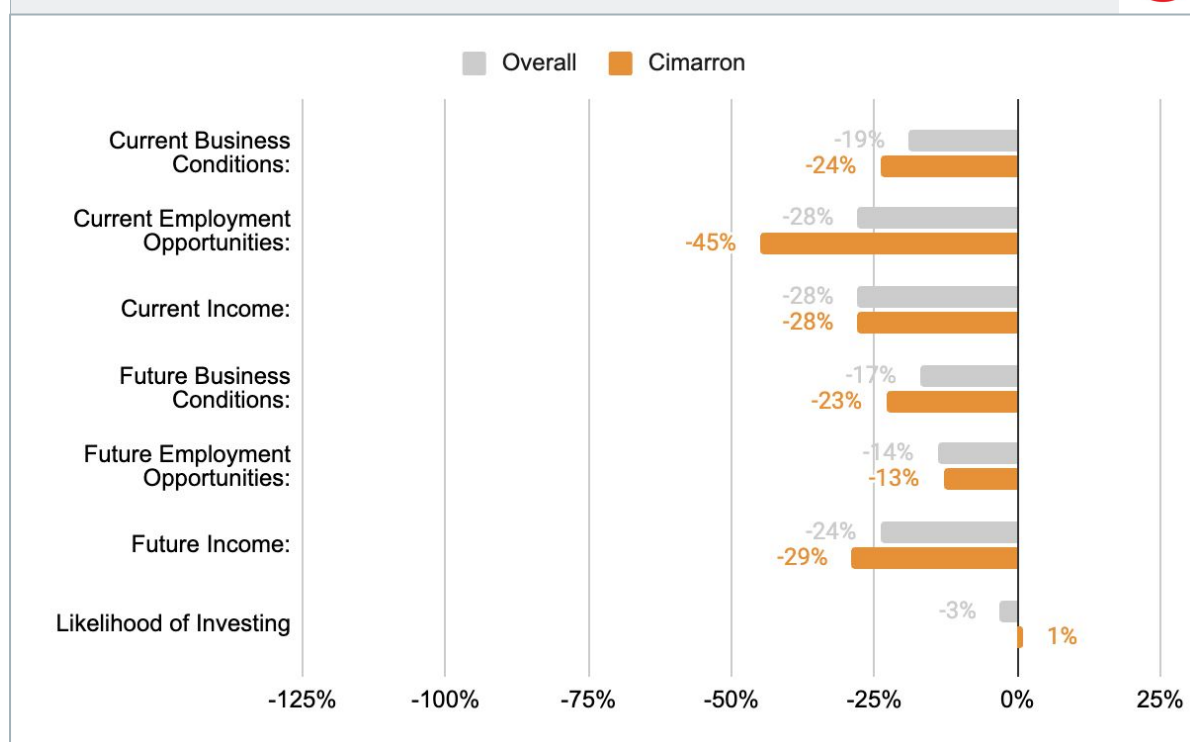
Economic Summary:

Cimarron enters 2025 under significant economic strain: business, employment, and income confidence all trail regional averages, with job prospects hit hardest. Future income expectations have slipped further, yet residents uniquely show a modest willingness to invest. Year-over-year data reveal a sharp decline in economic outlook, especially for employment. This mix of deep pessimism and a flicker of entrepreneurial intent highlights both vulnerabilities and potential—suggesting that targeted support for small businesses and workforce development could catalyze a much-needed recovery.

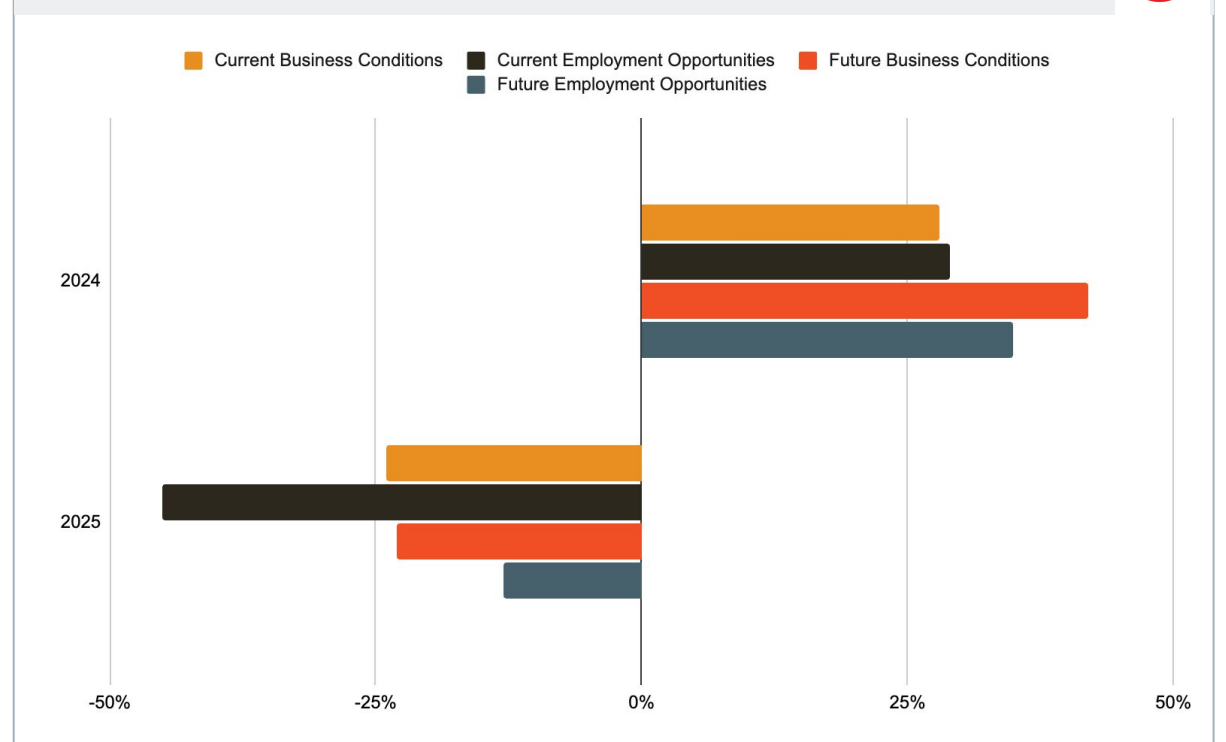
Businesses Needed In Our Town:

- Restaurants** – greater variety beyond fast-food chains
- Retail shopping** – local clothing, furniture, household items
- Childcare/Daycare** – affordable, full-day care for working families
- Medical services** – more doctors, dentists, vision, hospital access
- Entertainment/Recreation** – bowling alley, arcade, teen activity center
- Mental health services** – local therapists, counseling, support groups
- Convenience stores** – cleaner, well-stocked, modern amenities
- Car wash** – automated or hand-wash facility
- Physical therapy** – accessible rehab and wellness services
- Veterinary services** – local pet and livestock care

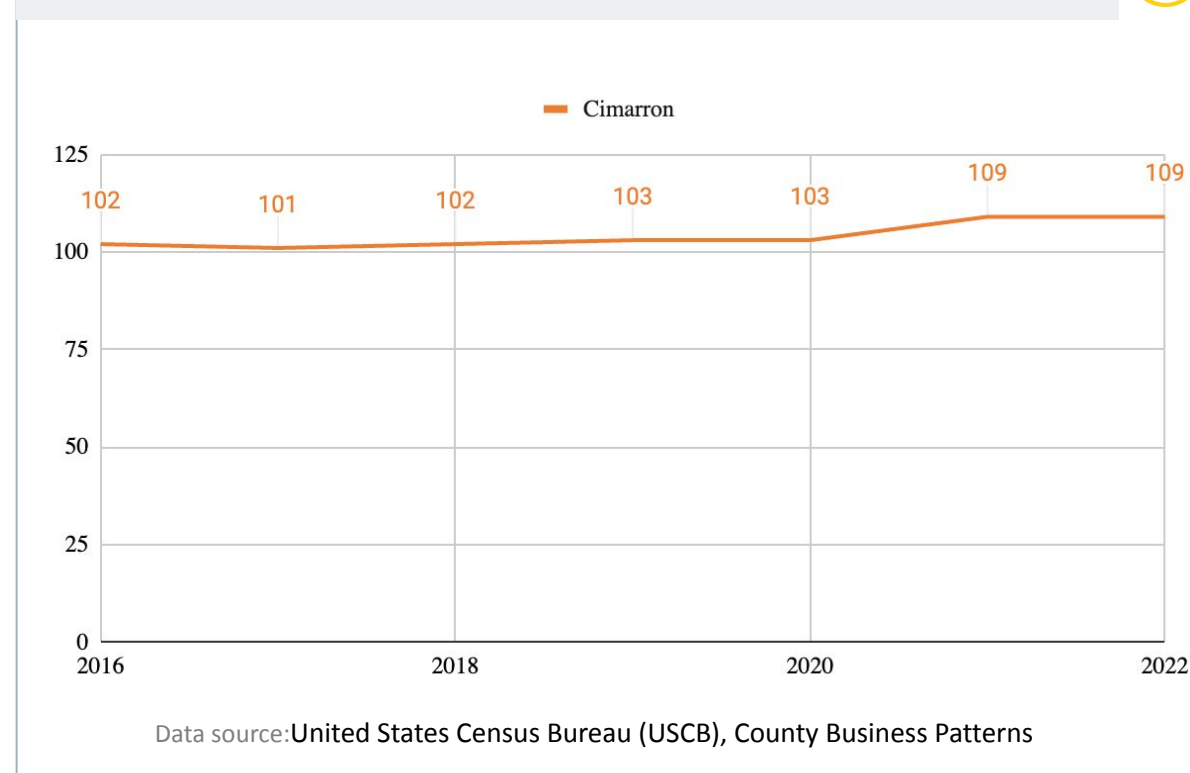
Our Economic Perceptions



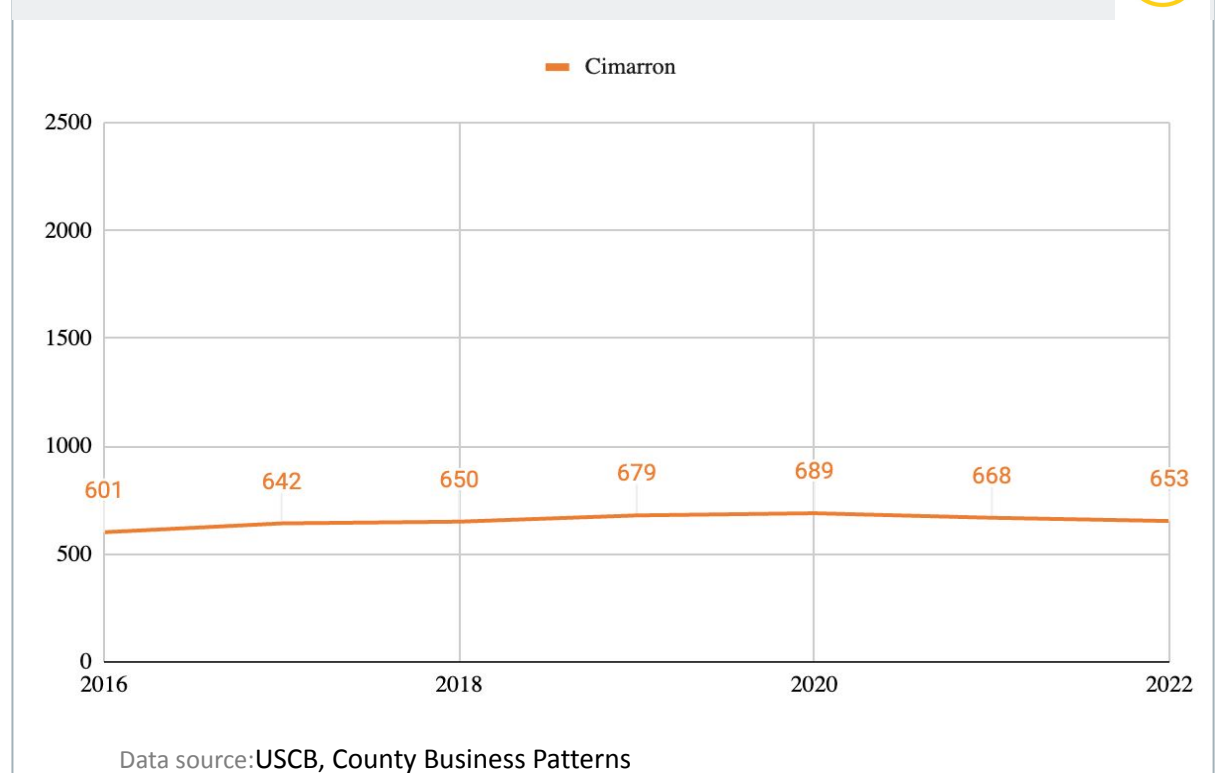
Year Over Year Change (2024 vs 2025)



Businesses in Our Town



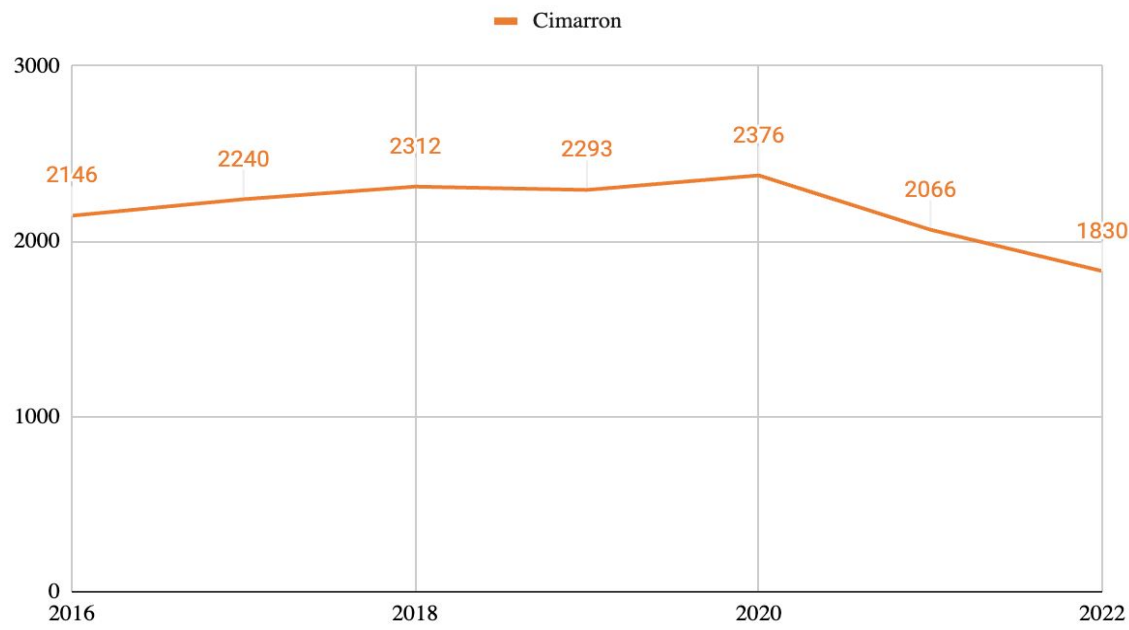
10 Year Shift in Local Jobs



Local Economic Indicators

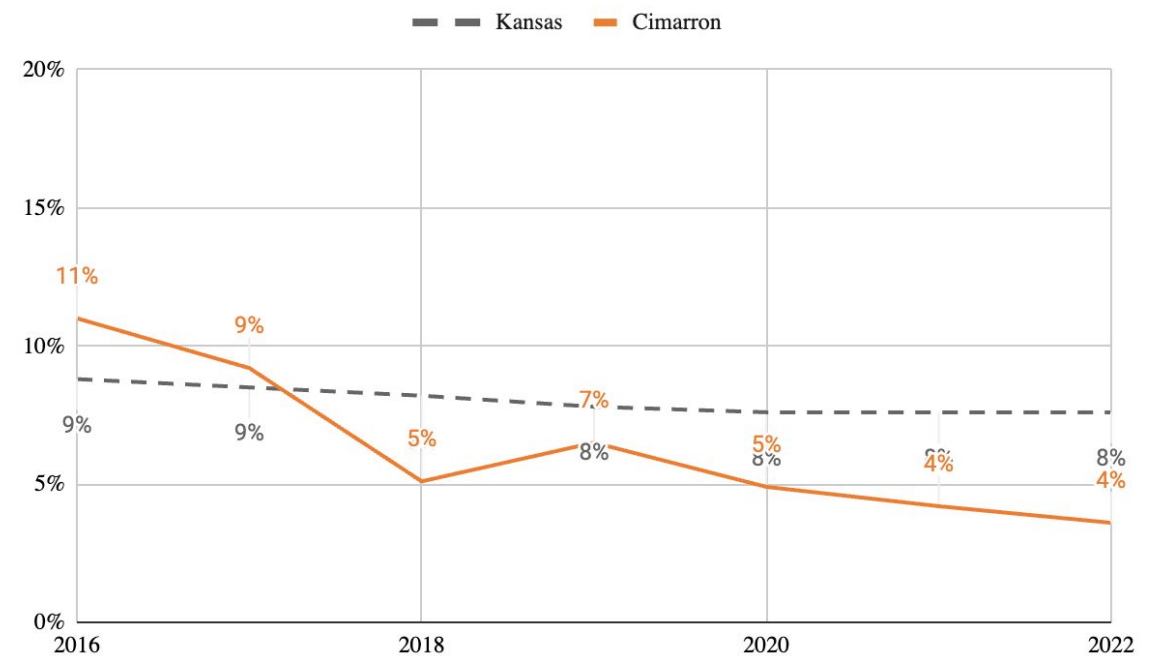


Overall Population Trend



Data source: United States Census Bureau (USCB)
American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Yr Avg

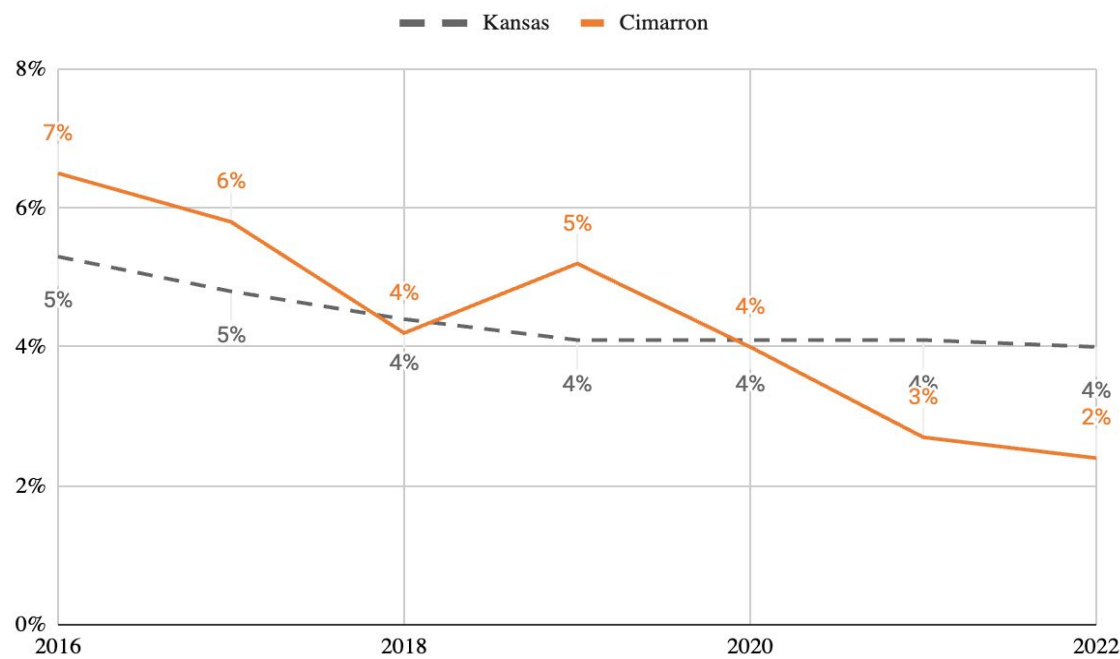
Local Poverty Rate



Data source: USCB, ACS, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

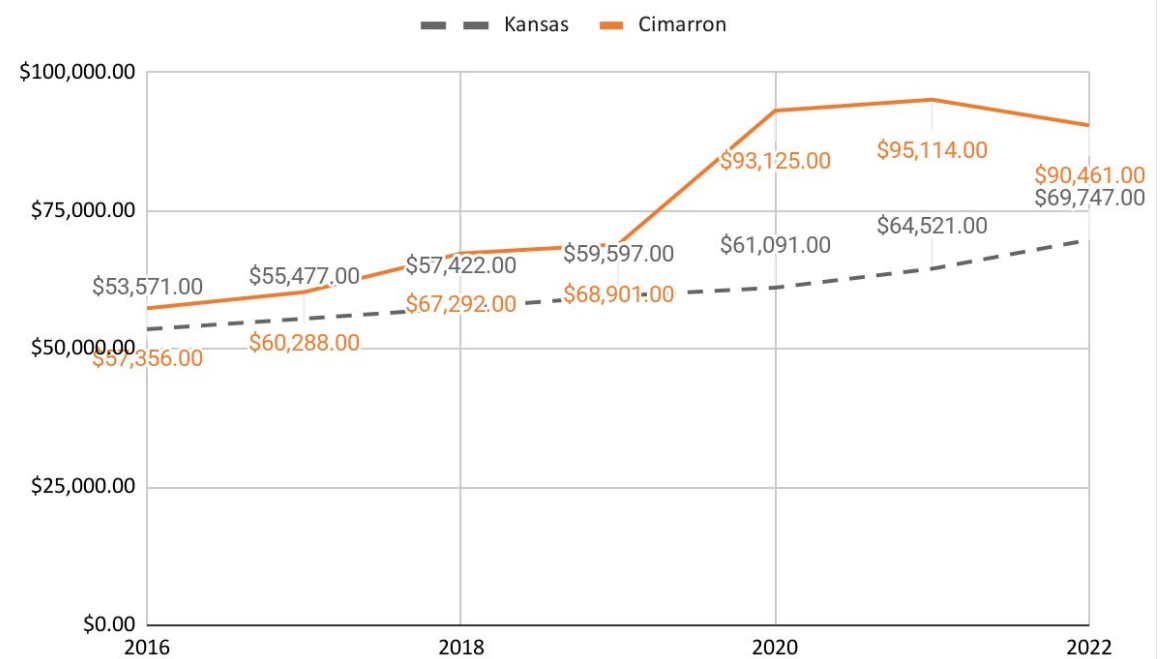


Local Unemployment Rate



Data source: USCB, ACS, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

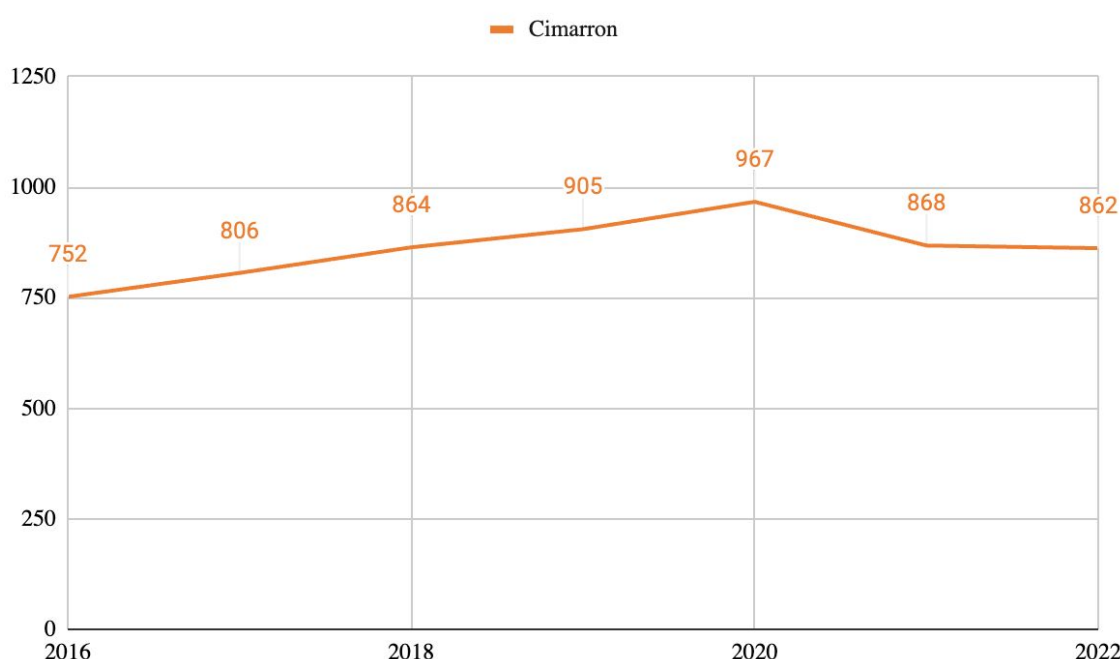
Median Household Income



Data source: USCB, ACS, 5-Yr Avg, DP03

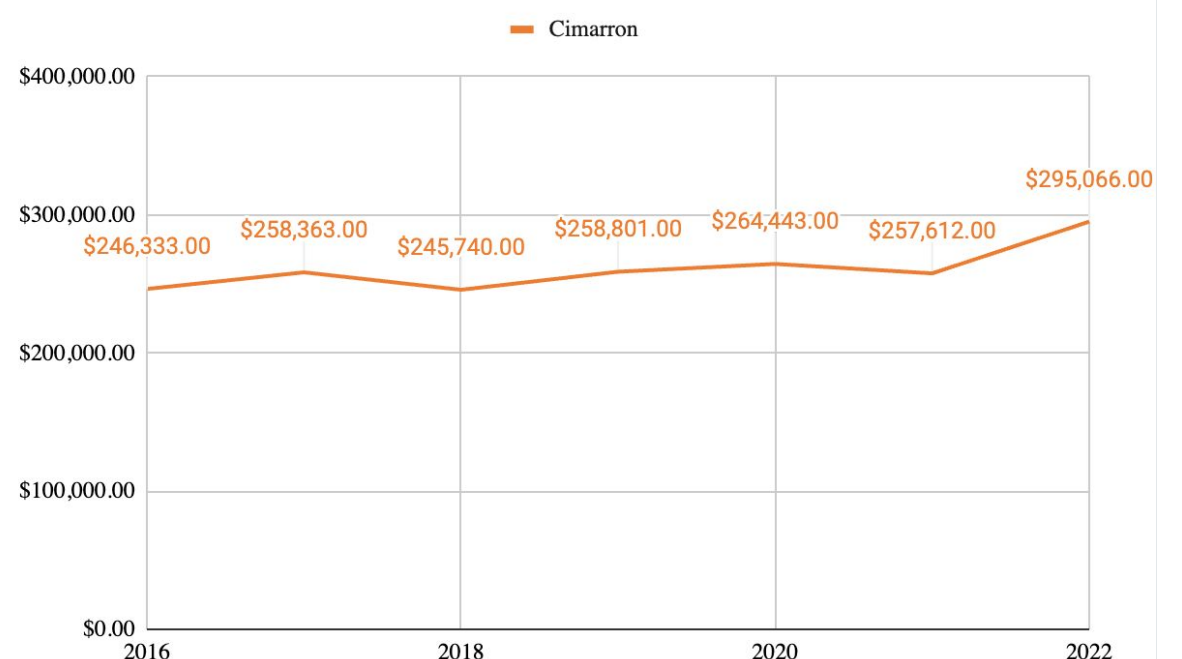


Total Housing Units



Data source: USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg

Annual Sales Tax Collection



Data source: Kansas Dept of Revenue

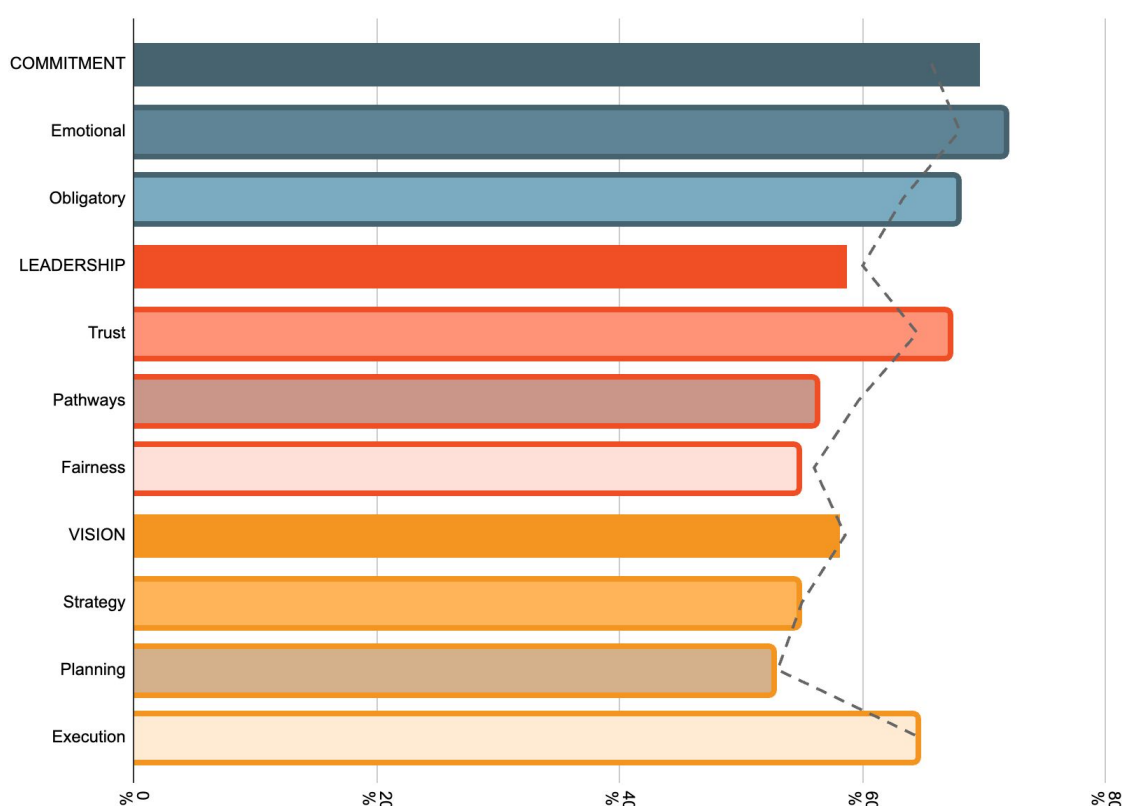
Confidence In Our Local Community

Engagement Summary:

Despite economic challenges, Cimarron's social bonds remain strong. Emotional commitment—pride, belonging, and loyalty—exceeds regional norms, while residents trust and support one another to overcome obstacles. Execution measures (celebrating achievements, overcoming challenges) top the charts, and faith in neighbors leads all leadership metrics. Although vision and fairness areas lag slightly, overall perceptions have stayed steady. This solidarity and mutual reliance form a solid foundation for addressing future community goals.



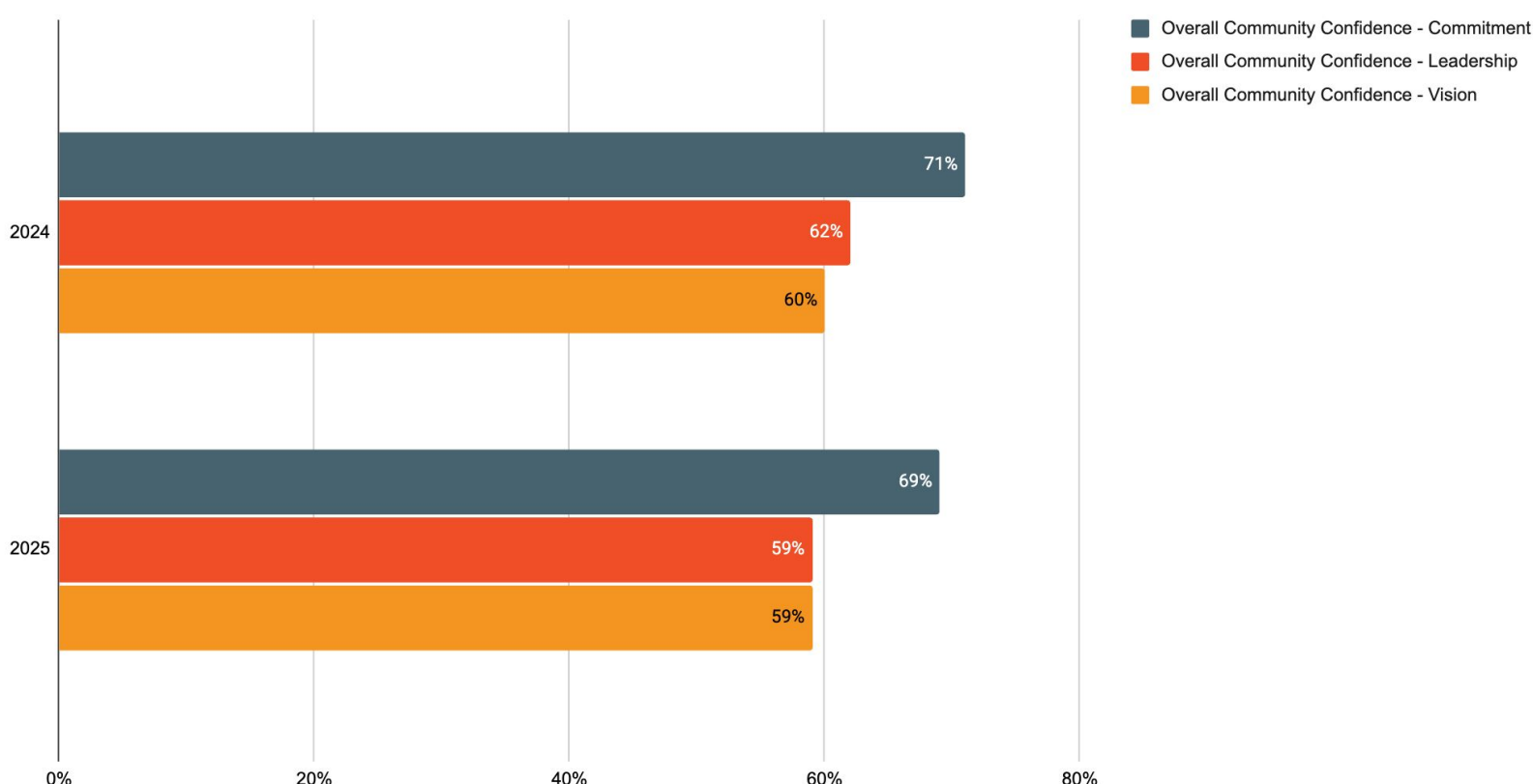
How do our residents view our community?



Questions:

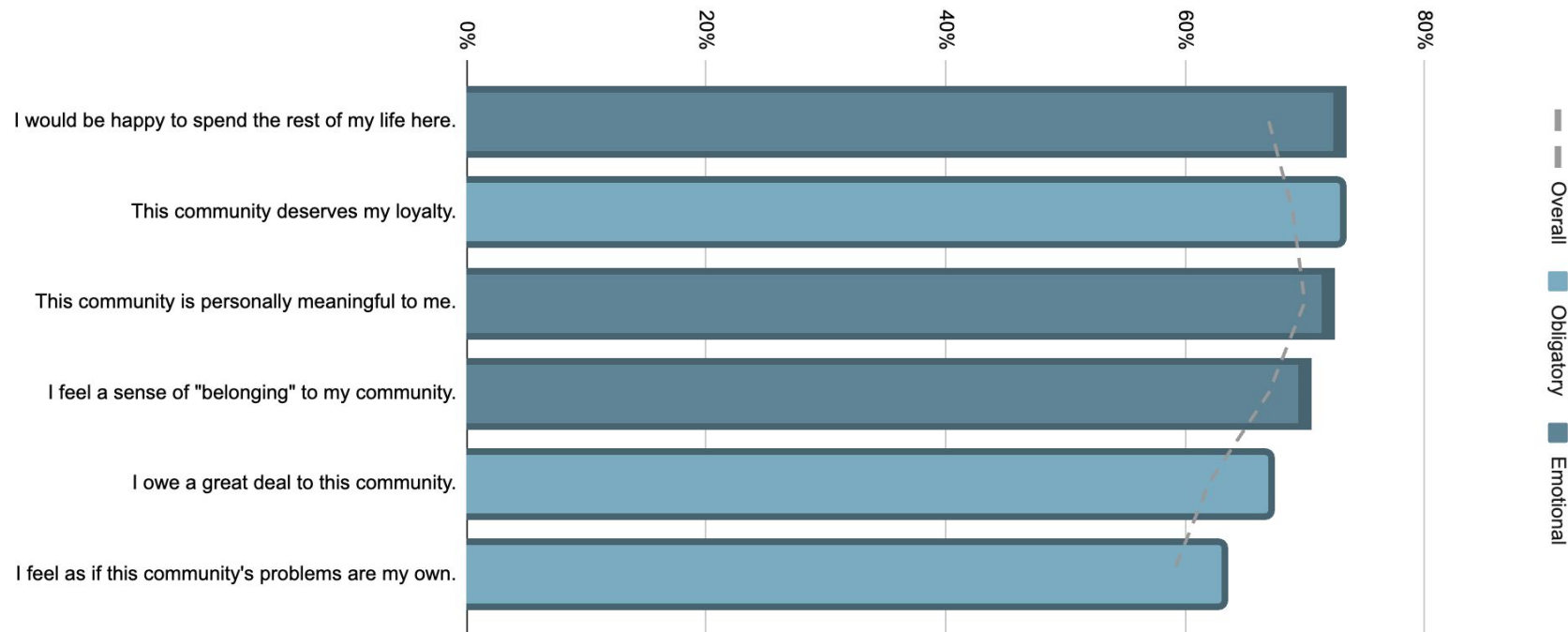
- How might Emotional Commitment be leveraged to bolster Obligatory Commitment?
- What factors could explain the gap between Strategy / Planning and Execution?
- How does the high Trust score compare to Pathways and Fairness?
- What strategies within Strategy could elevate the lower Planning metrics?
- In what ways can Pathways be expanded to support Obligatory Commitment?
- How can lessons from Execution guide improvements in Commitment?
- What initiatives could bridge gaps between Fairness and Obligatory Commitment?
- How might Planning be realigned to sustain strong Execution outcomes?

Year Over Year Change



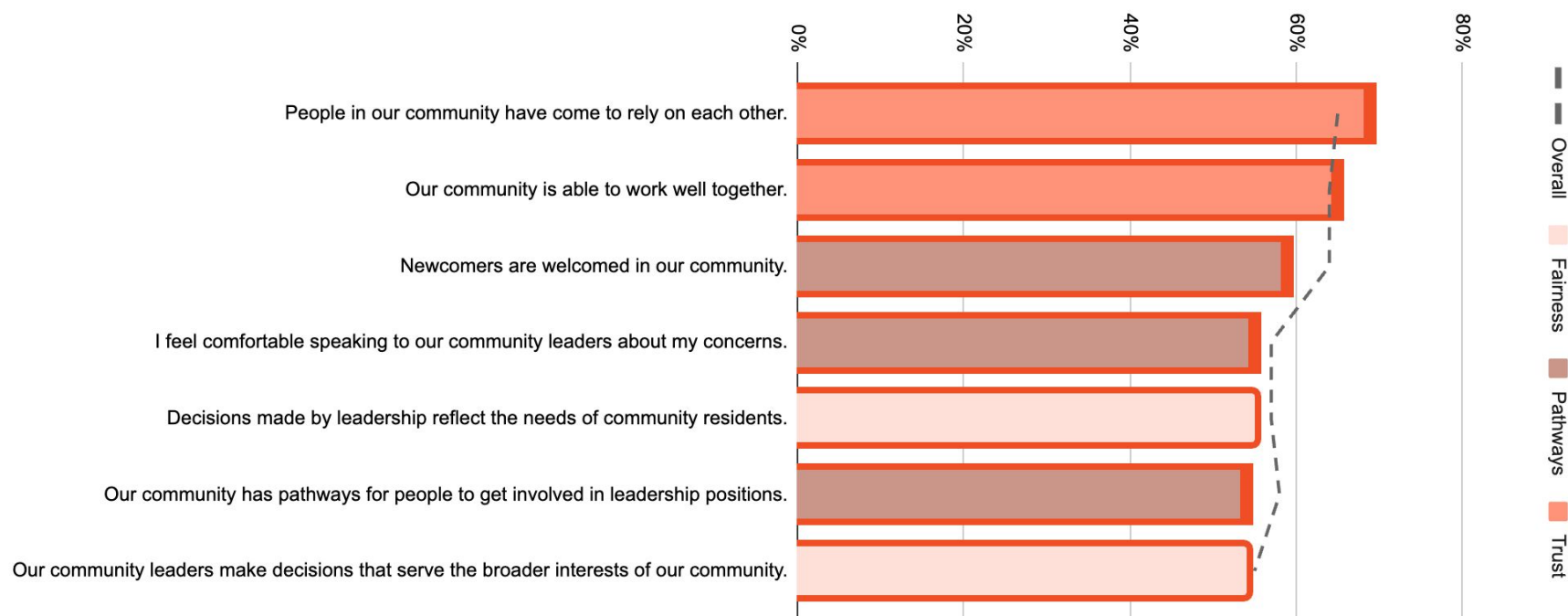
Confidence In Our Local Community

Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



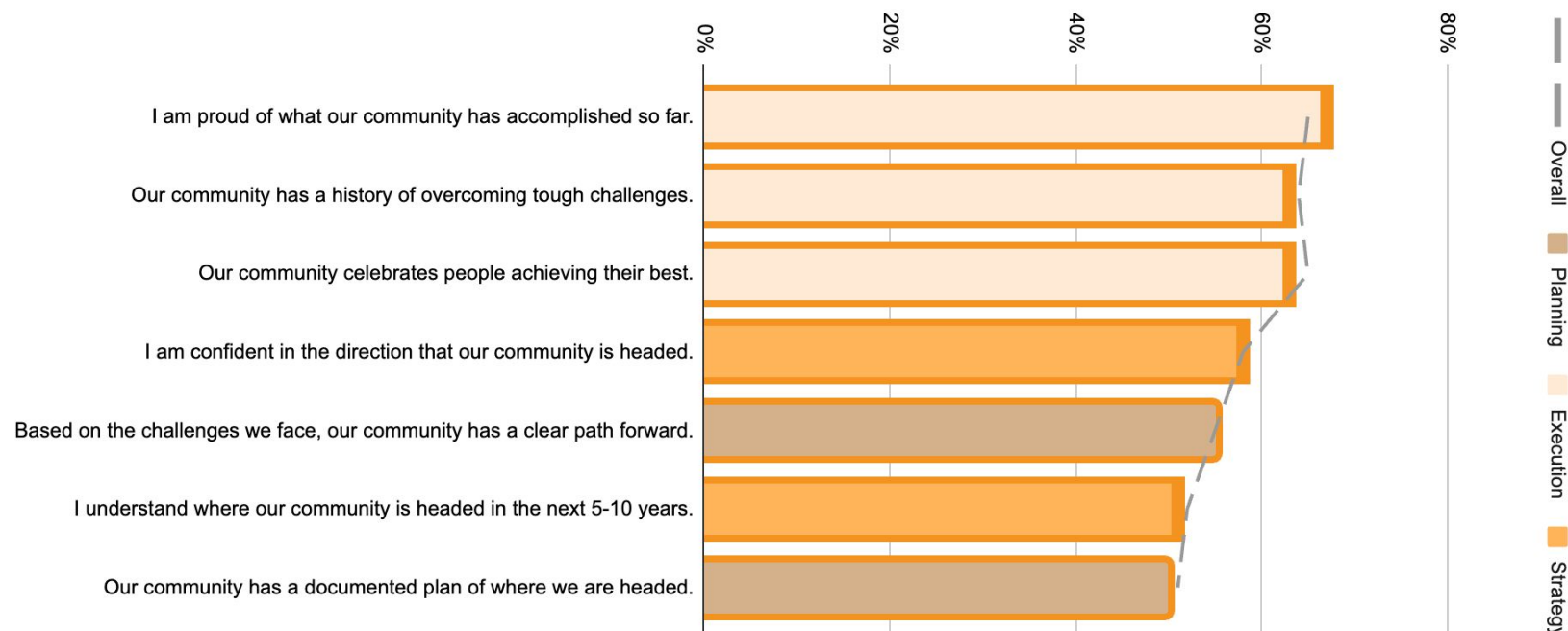
- What drives the high agreement with "I would be happy to spend the rest of my life here." and how can we sustain this Emotional Commitment?
- Why do three of the top four metrics fall under Emotional Commitment, and what strategies can deepen Obligatory Commitment?

Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- How can we build on the top Trust metric "People in our community have come to rely on each other." to strengthen Pathways?
- What initiatives could expand "Our community has pathways for people to get involved in leadership positions." to improve Pathways?

Community Confidence: Vision

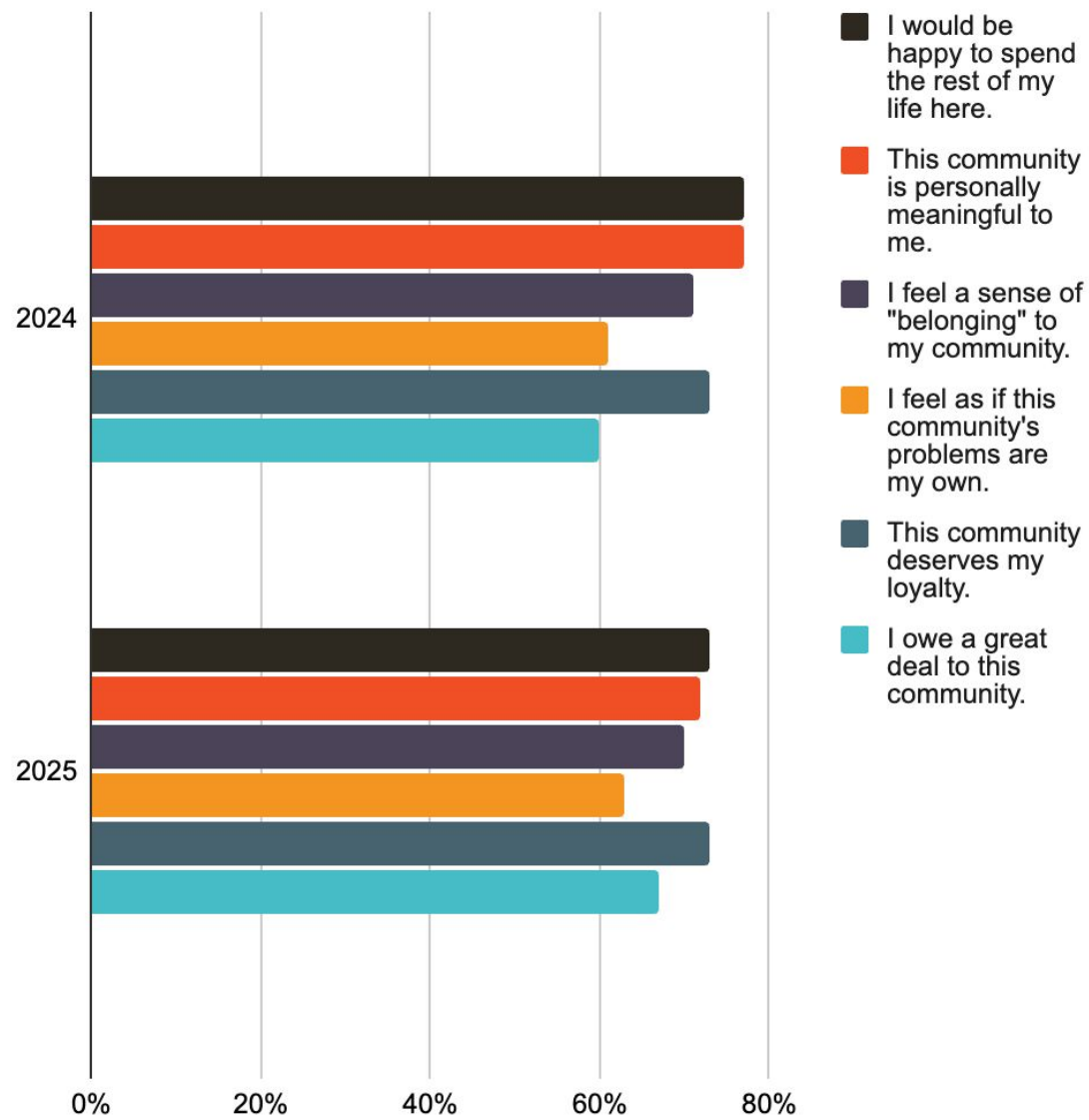


- How can we leverage the strong Execution metric "Our community has a history of overcoming tough challenges." to reinforce Strategy?
- What steps are needed to enhance "I understand where our community is headed in the next 5-10 years." to boost Strategy?

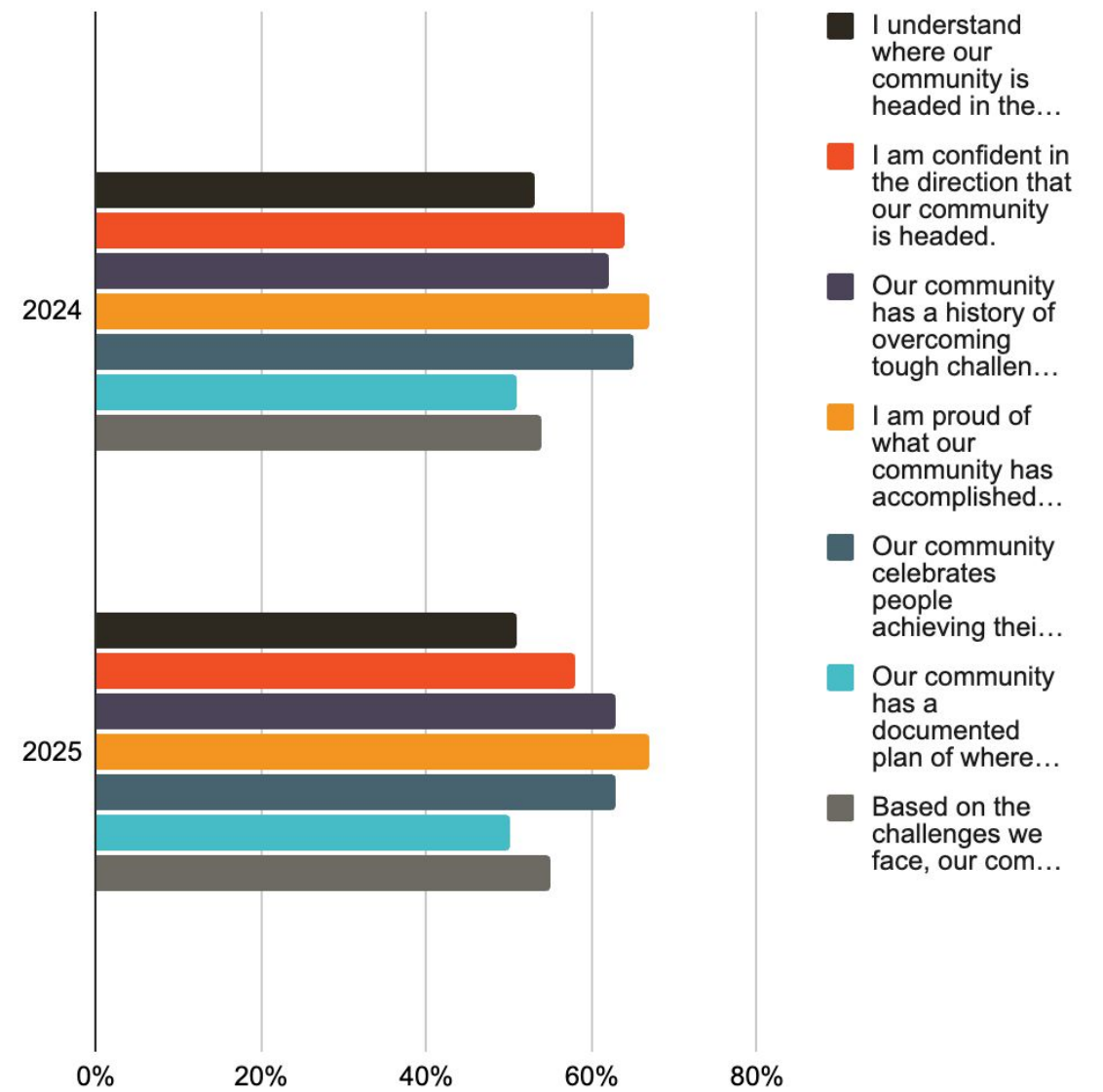
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Confidence In Our Local Community

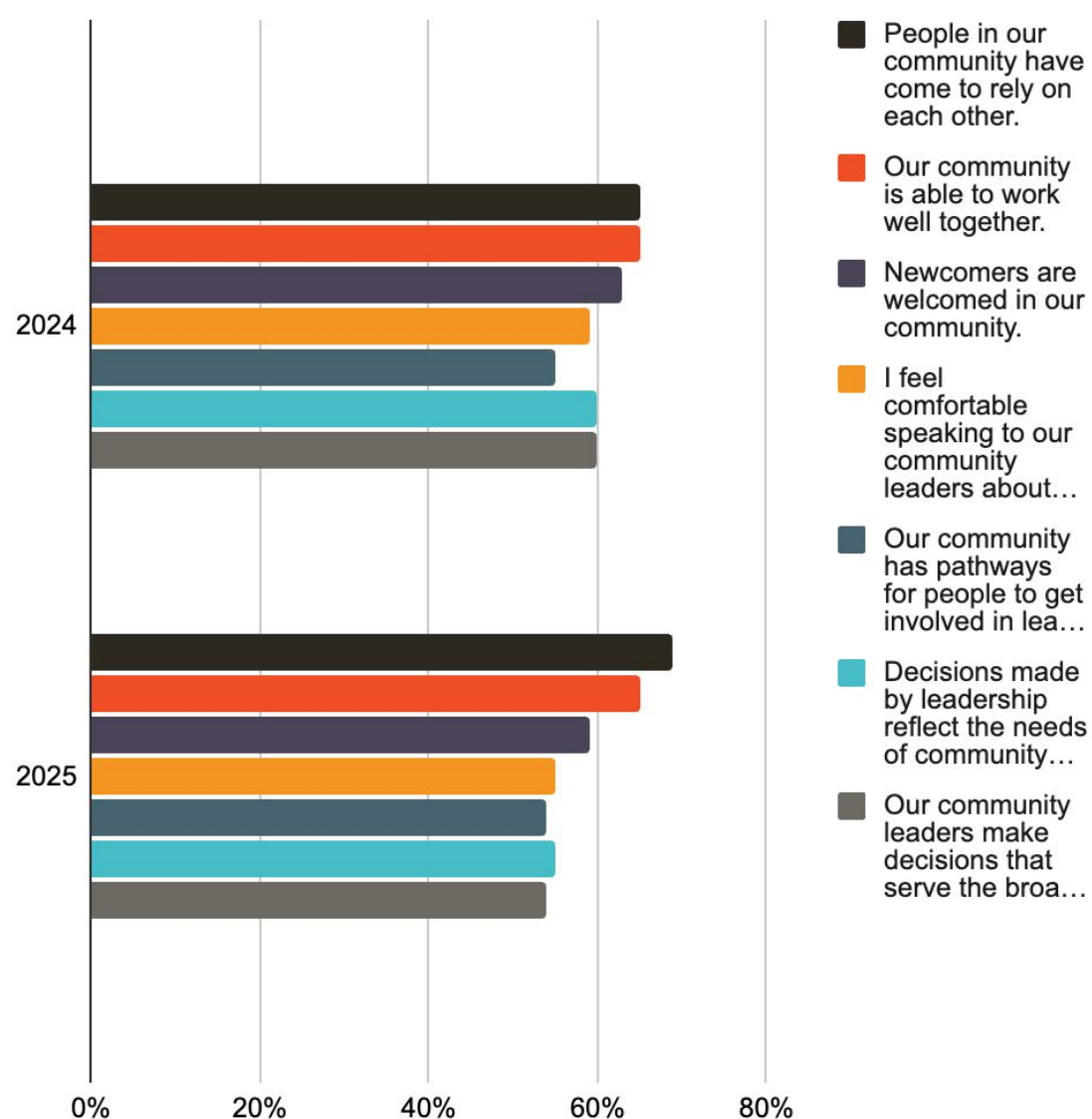
Commitment



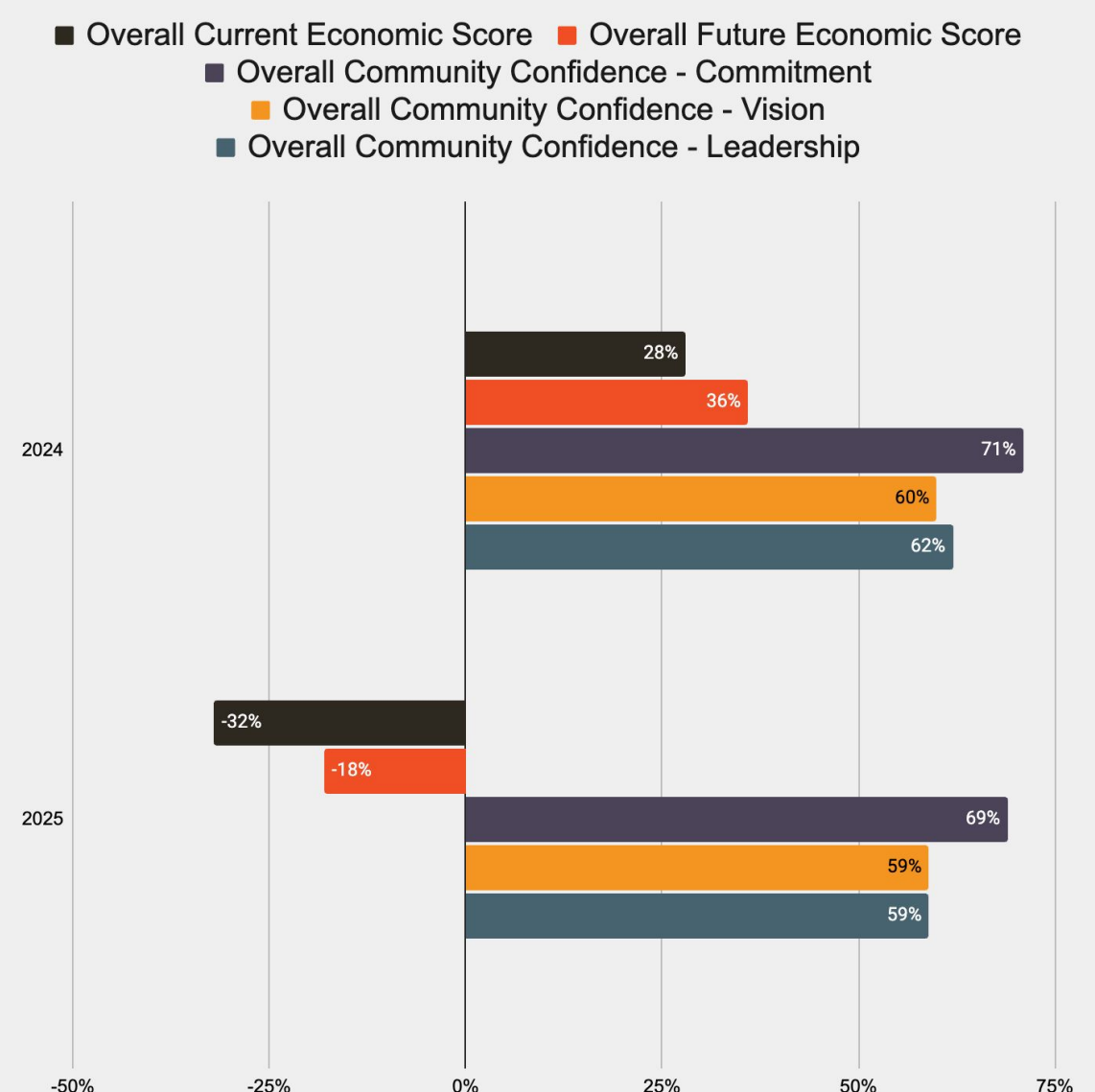
Vision



Leadership



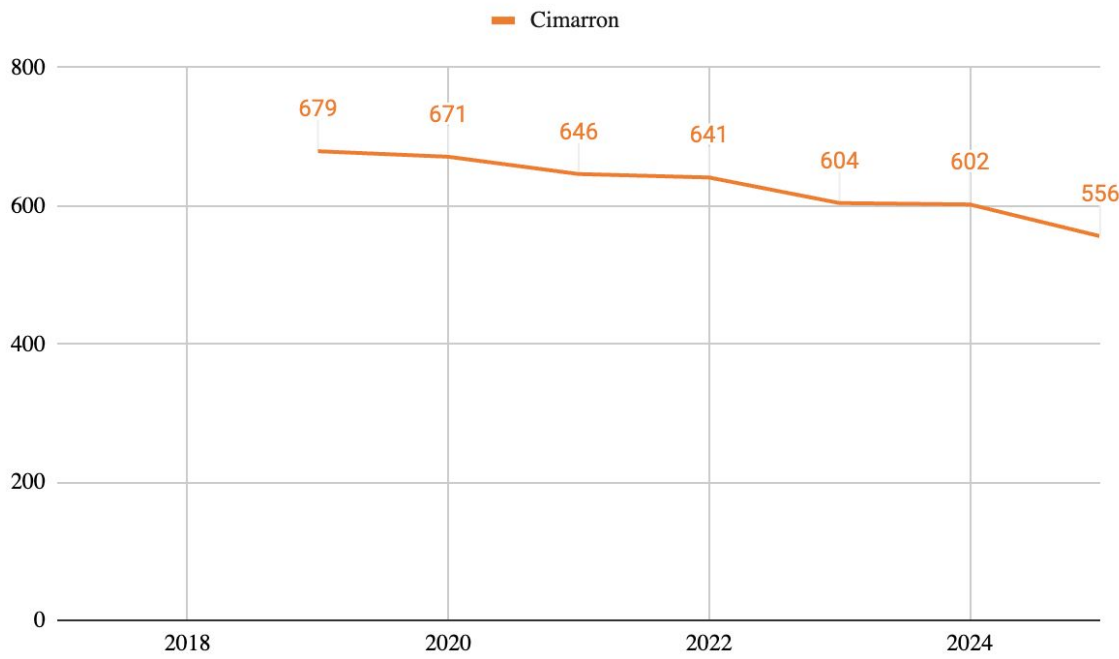
Economic vs. Community Confidence



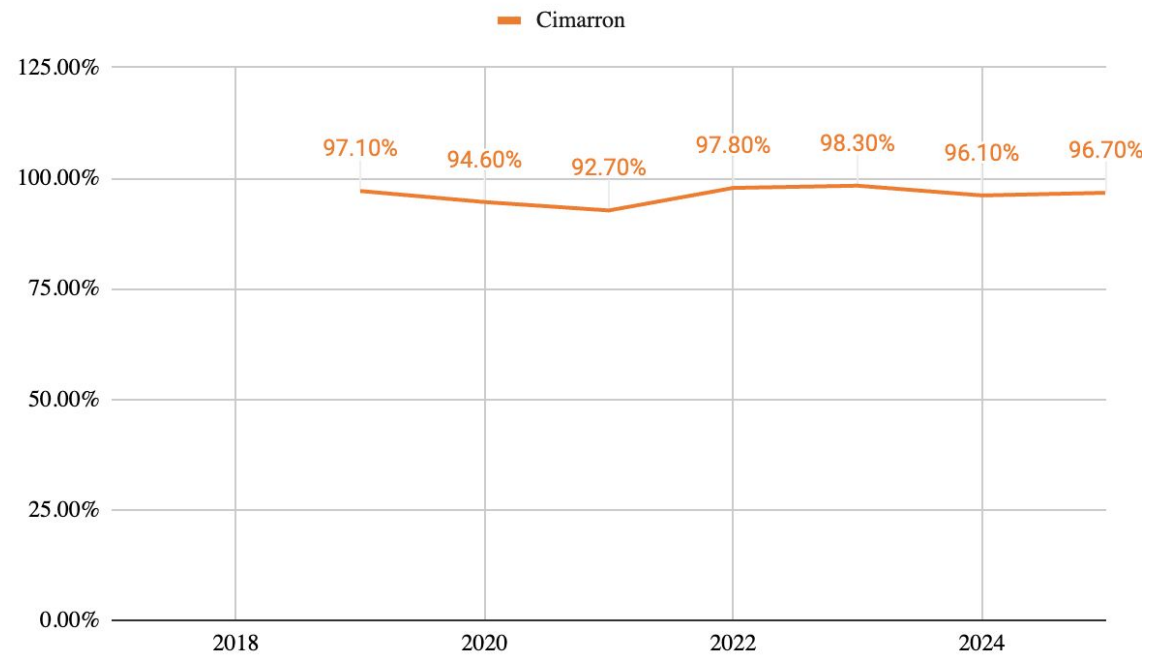
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Local Community Indicators

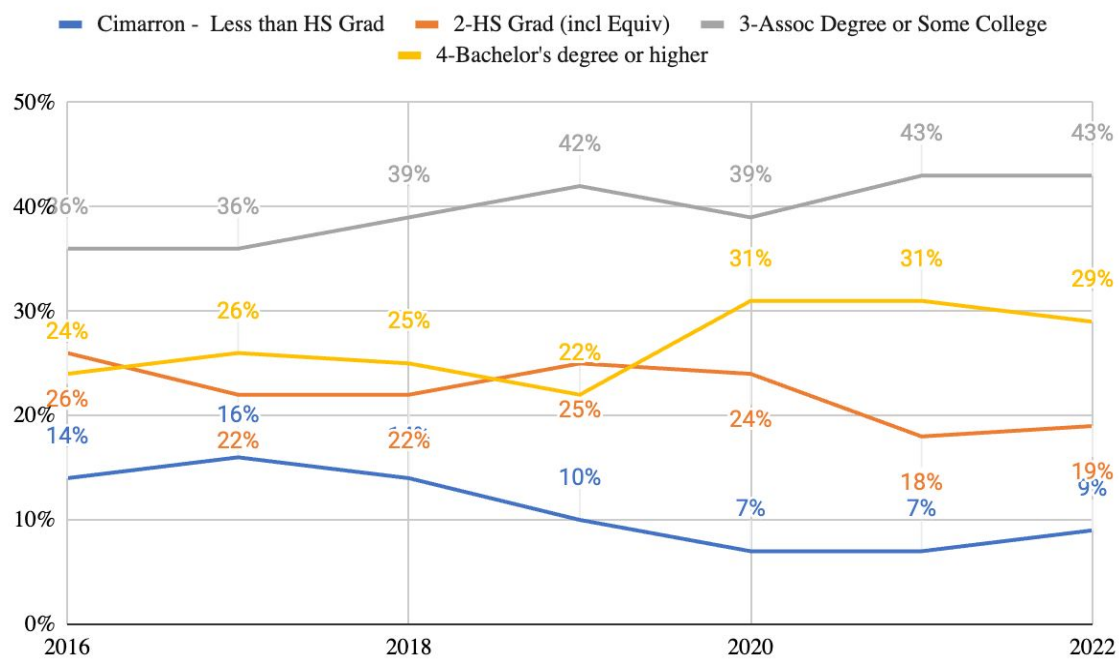
Local School Enrollment



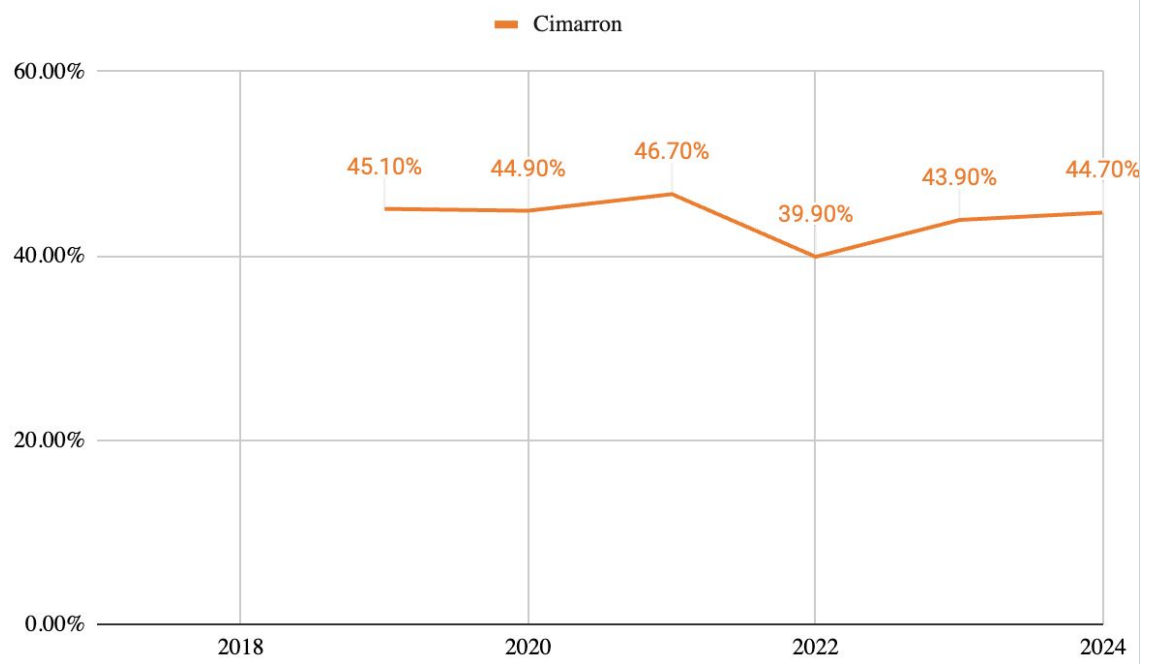
High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



Local Educational Level

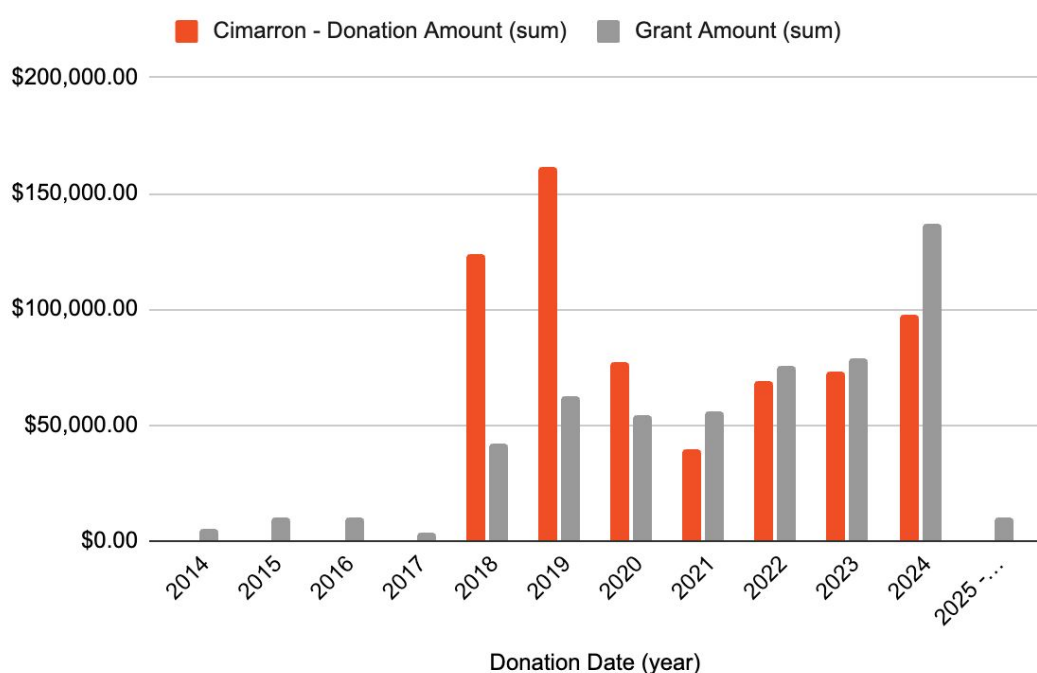


School % Free/Reduced Price Lunch

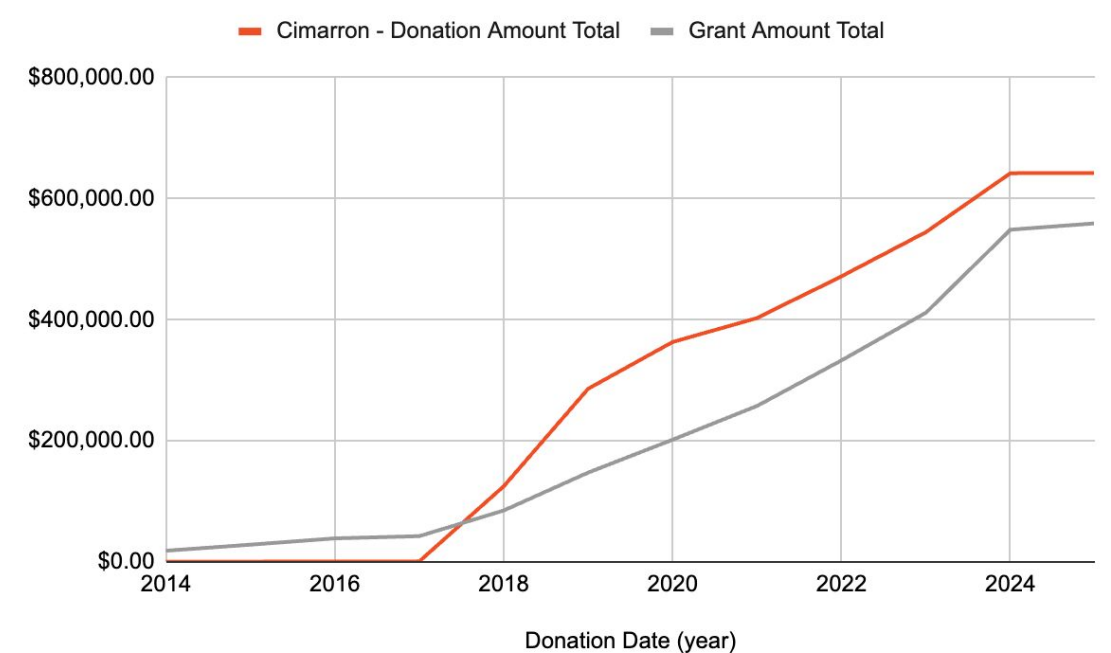


Source for all education graphs: Kansas State Dept of Education, Data Central

Community Foundation: Annual Dollars Raised & Invested



Community Foundation: Compound Dollars Raised & Invested

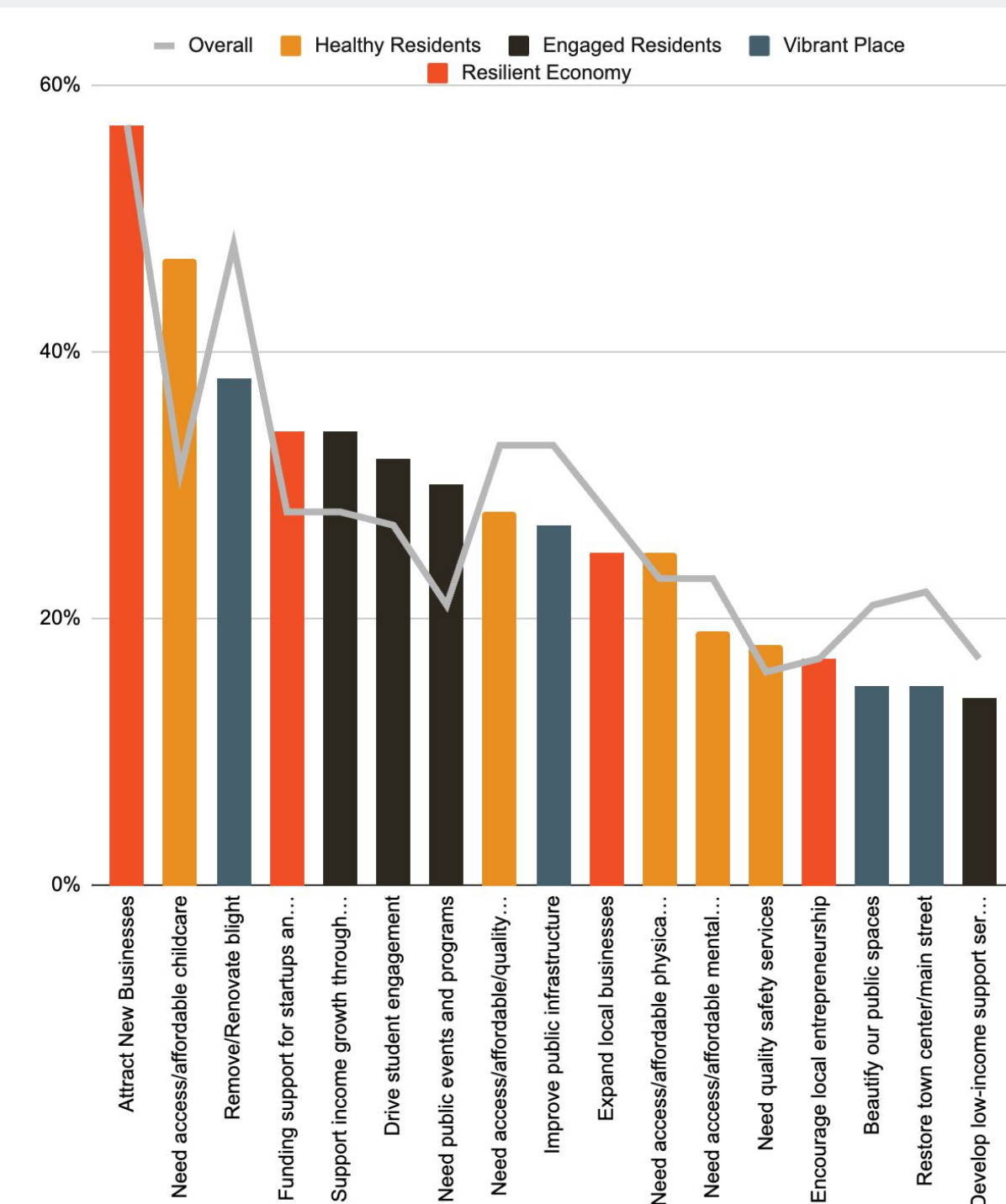


Community Program Priorities

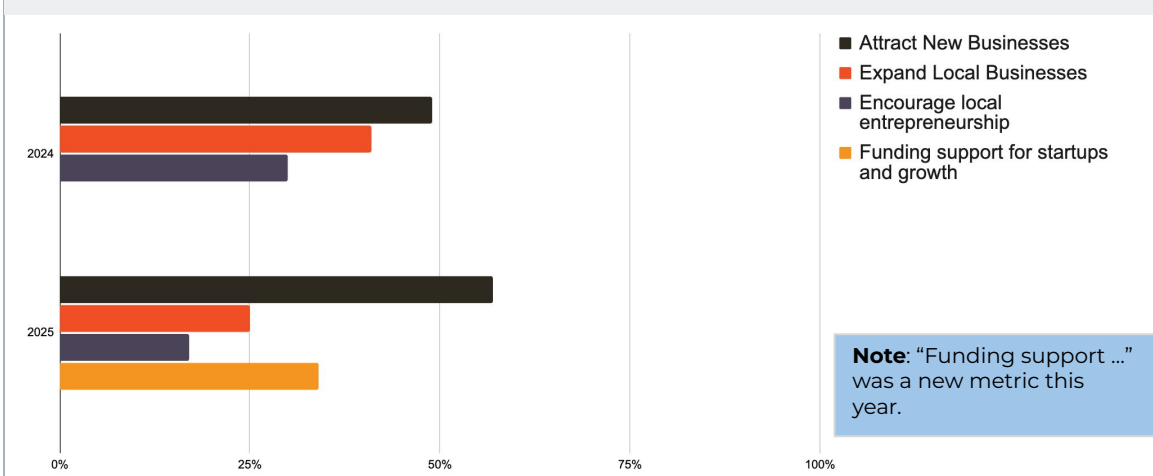
Priorities Summary:

Residents rank economic resilience highest: attracting new businesses, funding startups, and workforce training dominate. Affordable childcare has surged, and blight removal gains emphasis, while public infrastructure falls in priority. Engagement indicators—confidence and enthusiasm—signal public backing for these initiatives. Rising focus on expanding the local tax base suggests a strategy to fund childcare, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood revitalization. Collectively, these priorities aim to balance economic growth with social well-being and community pride

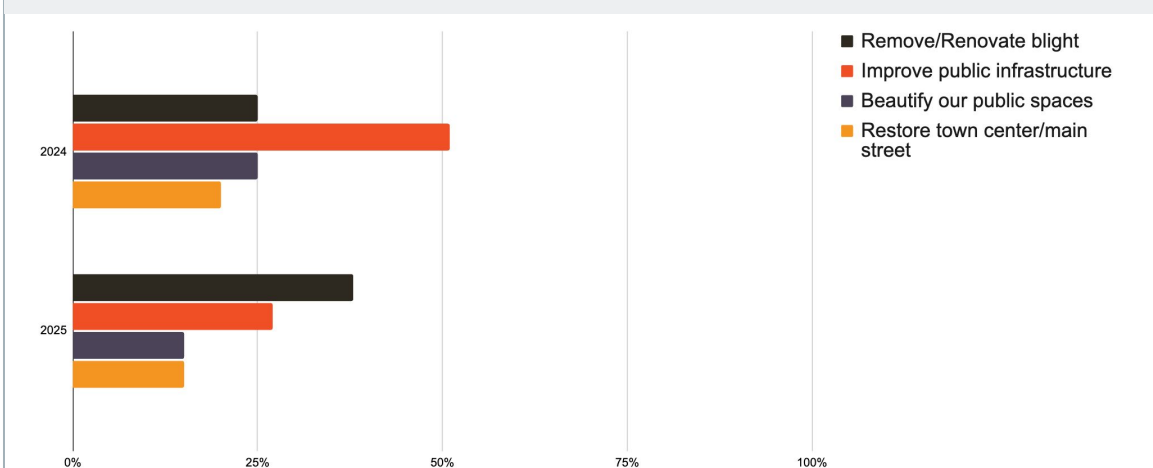
Program Priorities



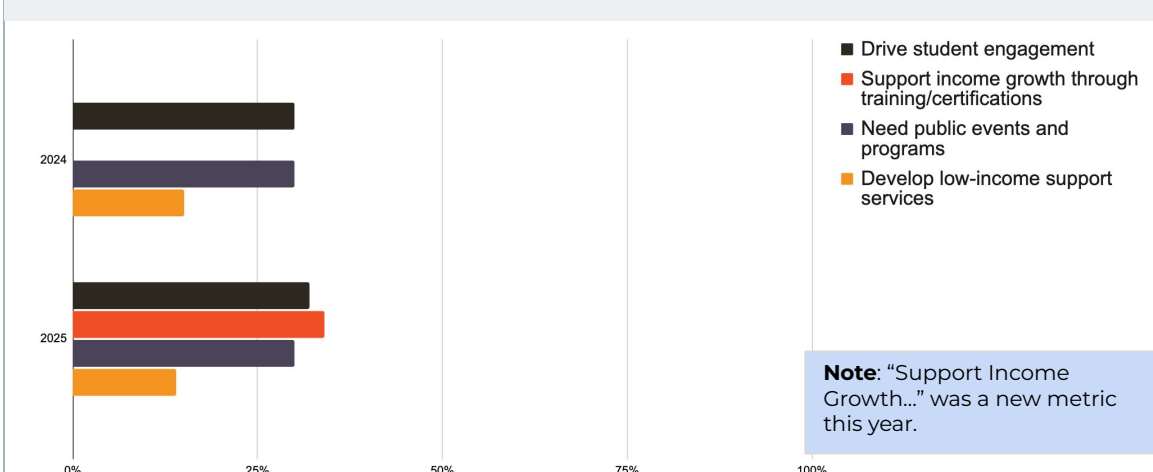
Resilient Economy



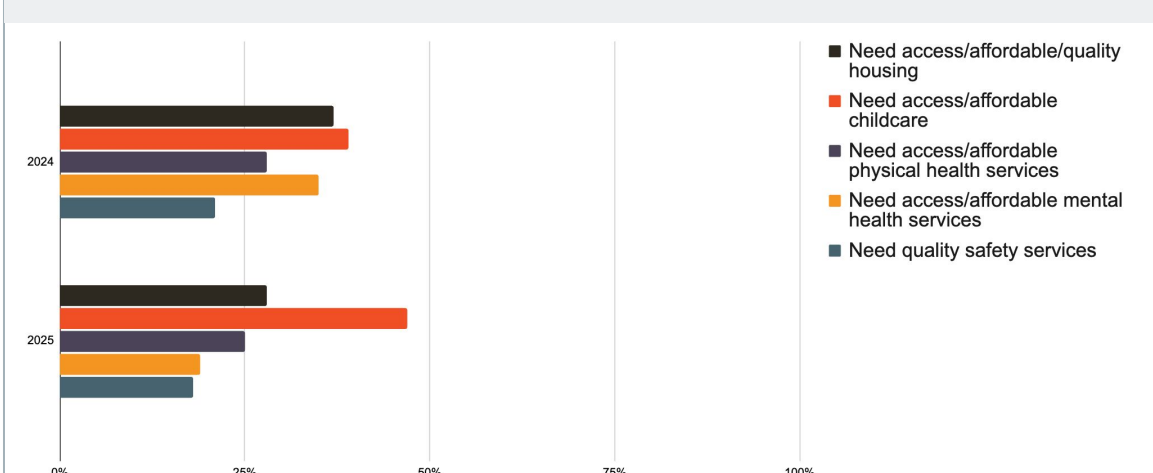
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents



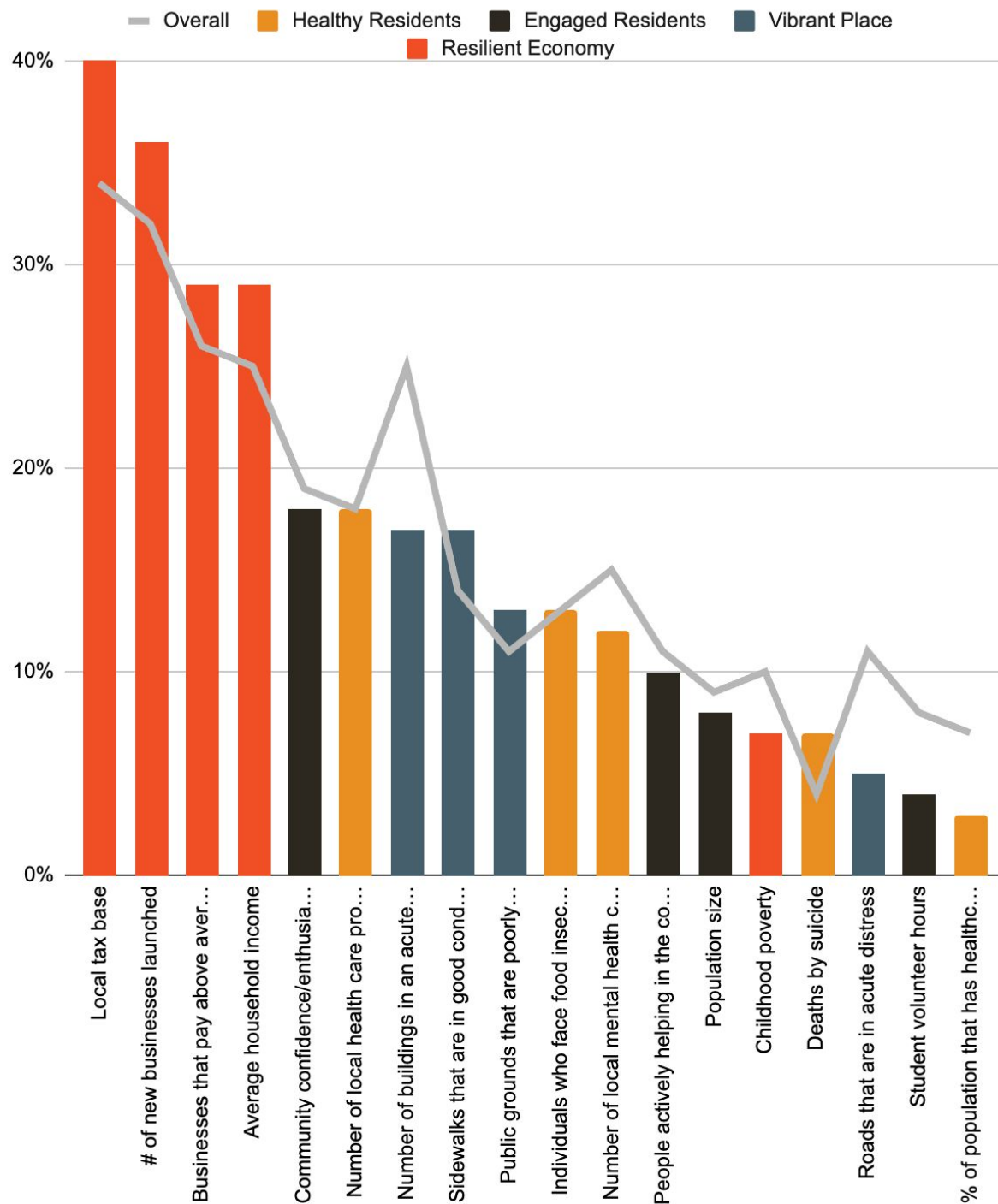
Healthy Residents



- Why has "Attract New Businesses" remained the top Resilient Economy priority even as "Improve Public Infrastructure" declined year over year?
- What strategies can build on the surge in support for "Funding Support for Startups and Growth" to sustain long-term new business attraction?
- Given the rising need for "Need Access/Affordable Childcare," what actionable steps can Cimarron take to expand childcare capacity?
- What might explain the significant drop in prioritization of "Improve Public Infrastructure," and how should the community interpret this shift?

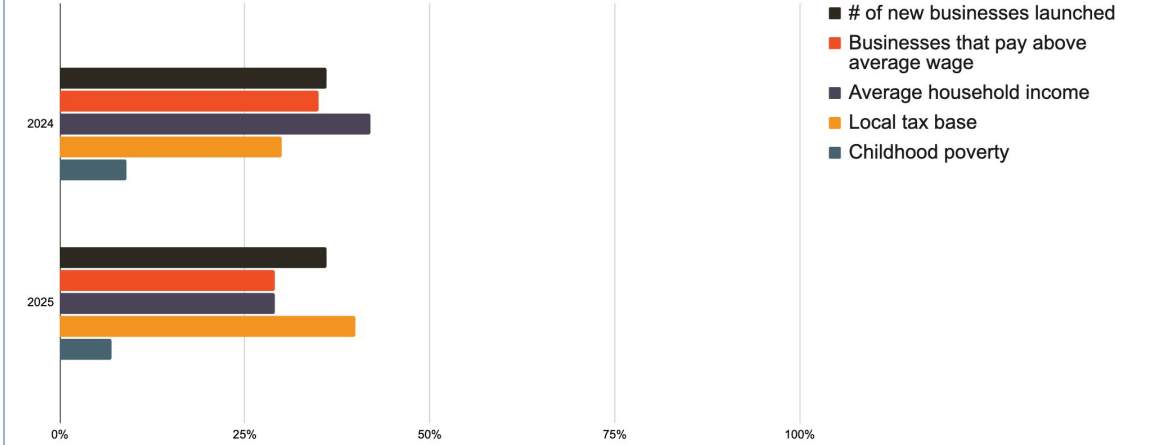
Community Priority Metrics

Priority Metrics

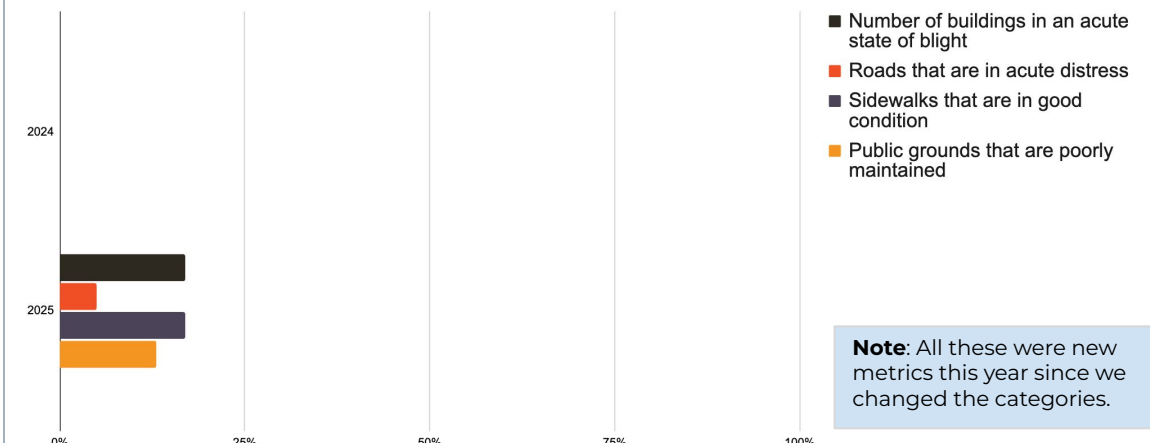


- With “Community Confidence/Enthusiasm” ranking highest in Engaged Residents metrics, how can leaders use this energy to promote new programs?
- Considering the top four metrics all fall under Resilient Economy, what balanced strategies can integrate Vibrant Place and Healthy Residents priorities?
- How can Cimarron capitalize on the year-over-year increase in “Local Tax Base” to fund high-impact programs like childcare and blight removal?
- What approaches could rekindle focus on Vibrant Place programs (e.g., sidewalks, public grounds) in light of shifting priorities?

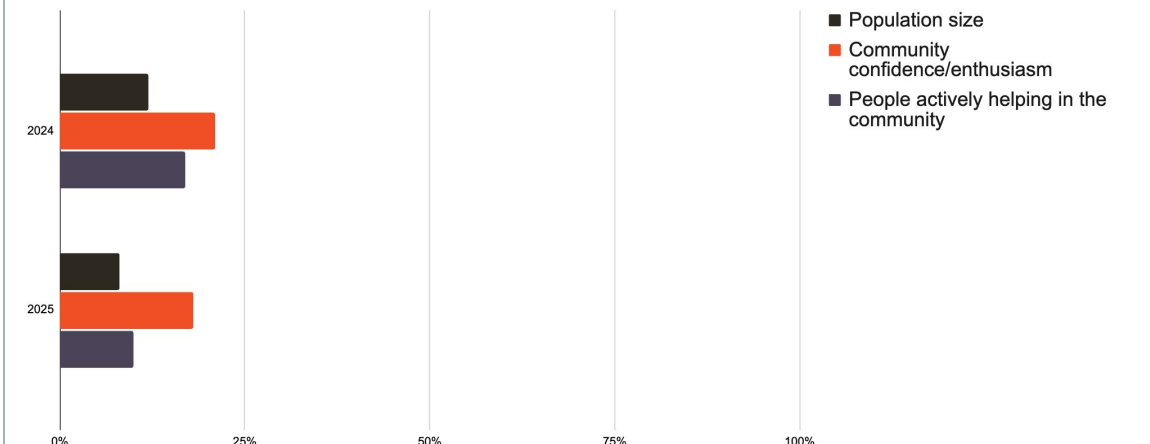
Resilient Economy



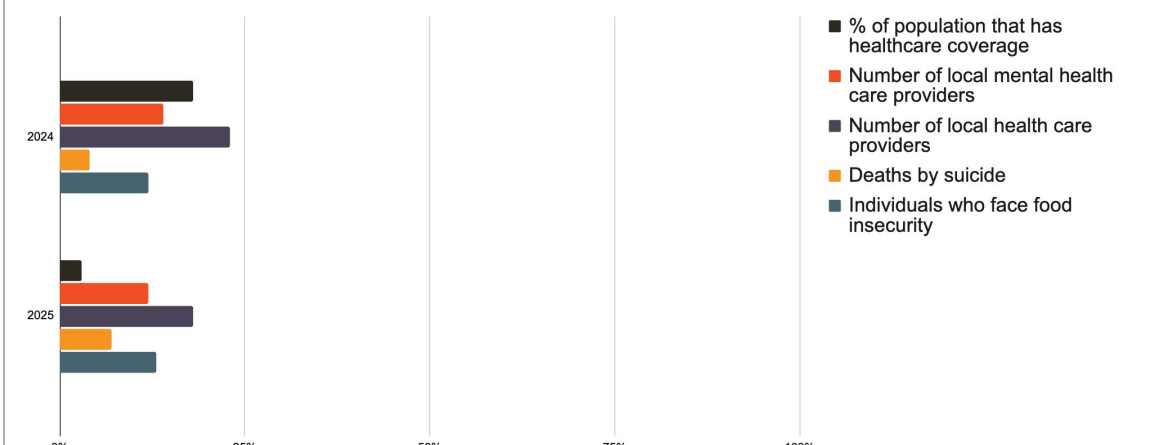
Vibrant Place



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?

- Youth Activity Center – create a dedicated space with arcade, bowling, fitness, and mental-health support to engage teens and build community pride
- Childcare Facilities – expand reliable, full-day daycare to attract young families and support working parents
- Pedestrian Infrastructure – install safe sidewalks, ramps, and crossings for better walkability and access for all ages
- Healthcare Hub – establish a local urgent care/hospital with mental-health and treatment services
- Property Revitalization – clean up and renovate dilapidated or abandoned homes to boost curb appeal, safety, and neighborhood value

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 Facilities – Reliable daycare attracts families and supports working parents
- Playground & Park Upgrades – Updated equipment and splash pad enhance recreation and community pride
- Sidewalk Improvements – Curb cuts and walkways improve safety and accessibility for all residents
- Youth Community Center – Hub offering programs, gatherings, and support for teens and families
- Business Development Program – Matching grants and mentorship attract businesses and create local jobs

Serving your community!

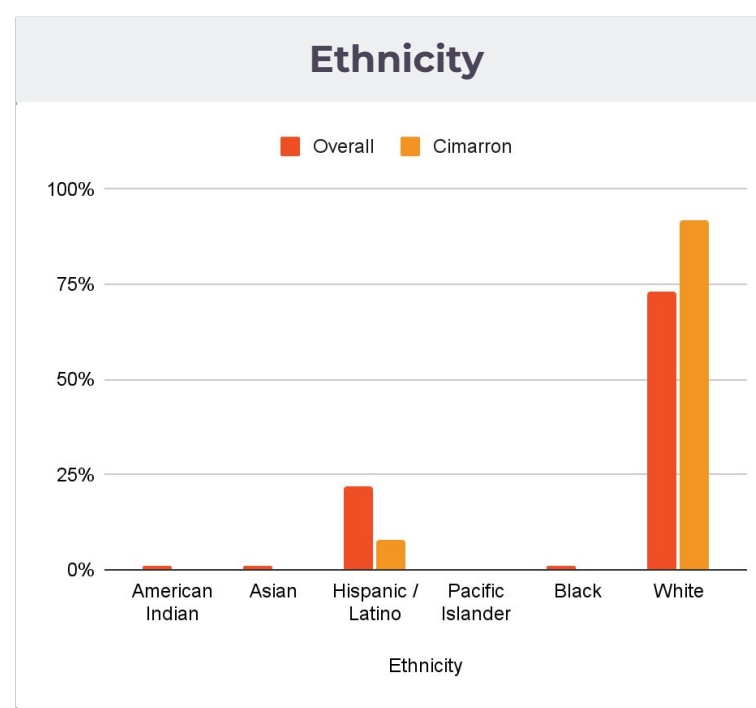
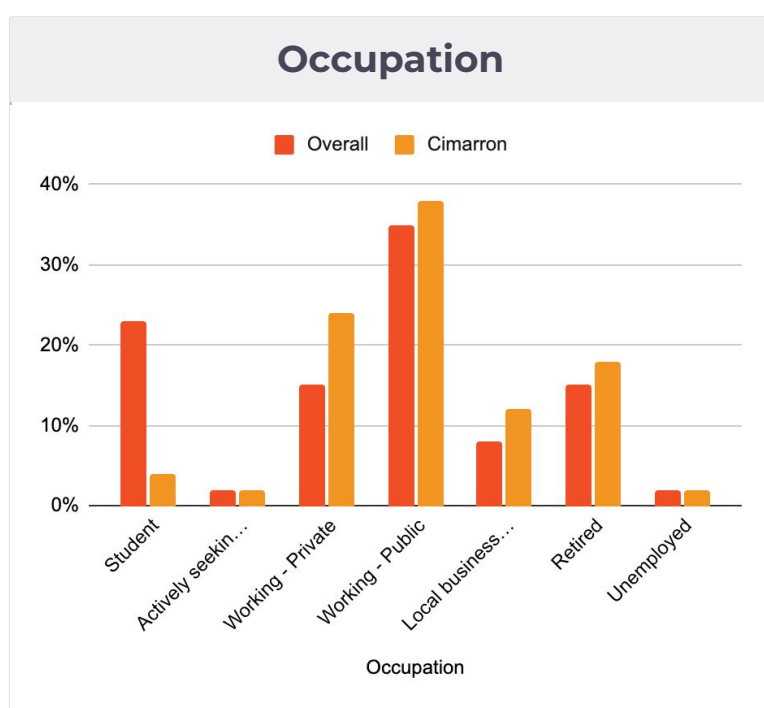
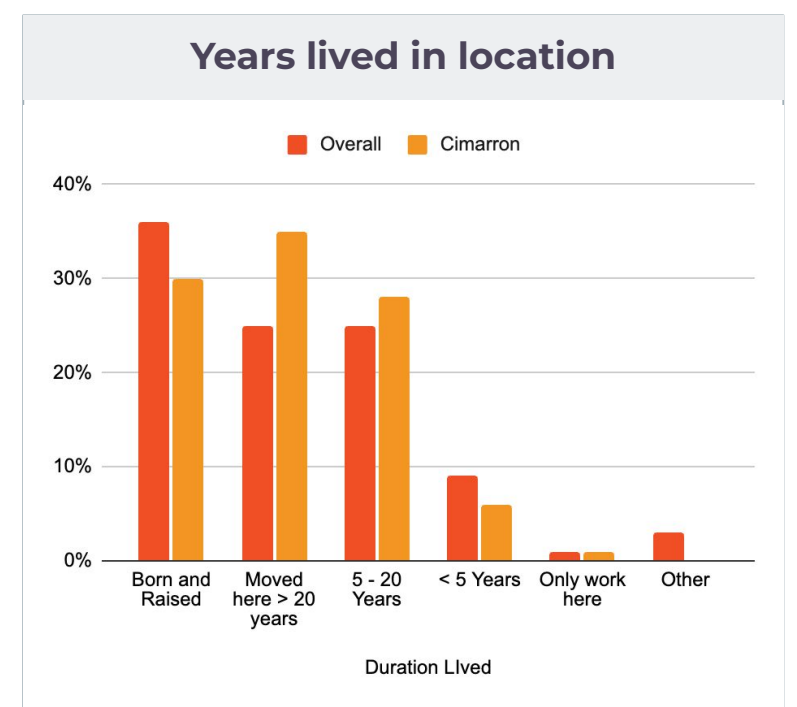
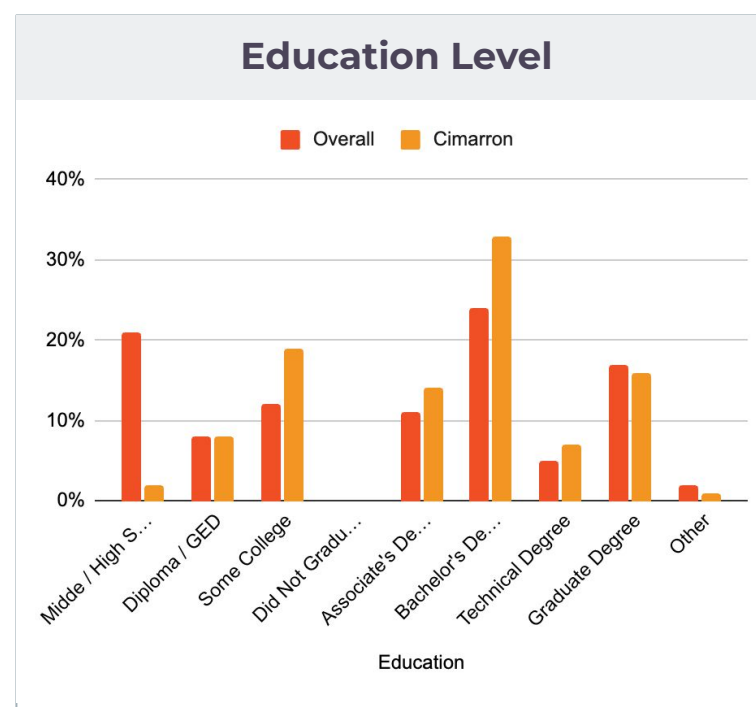
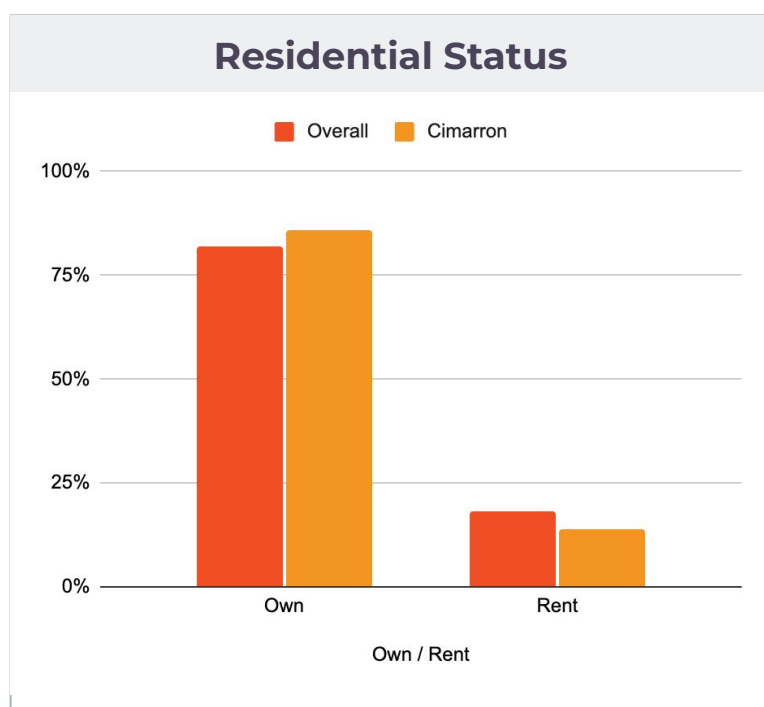
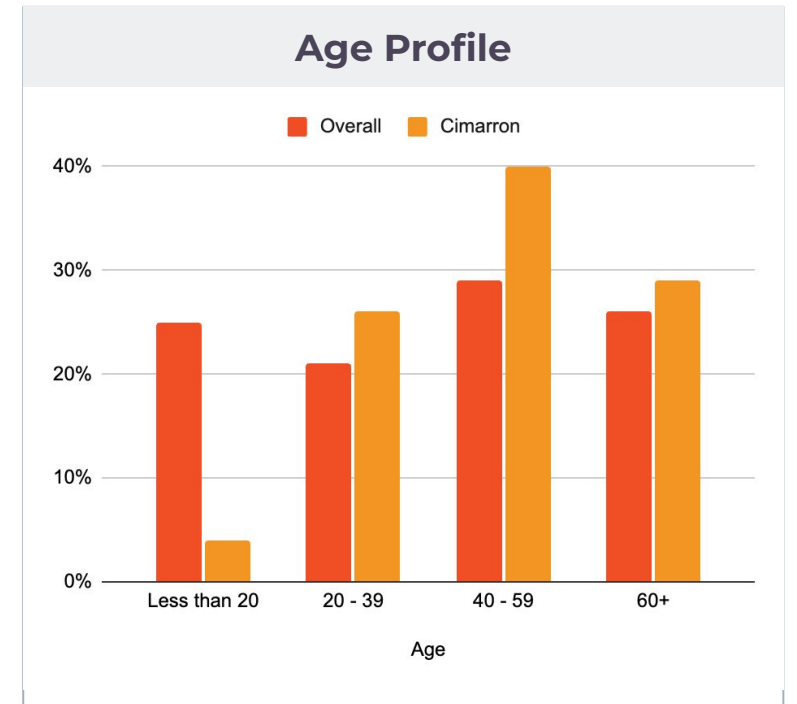
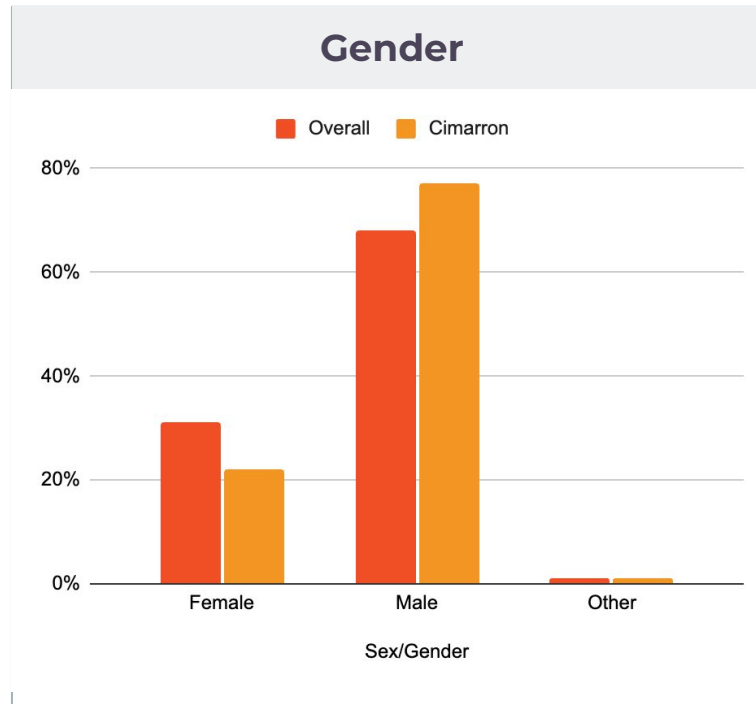
How do you serve your community today?

- Senior Meal Delivery – preparing and delivering meals to elderly residents and checking in on their well-being
- Food Bank Support – volunteering at the food bank to sort, pack, and distribute groceries to families in need
- Board & Committee Service – serving on the Chamber of Commerce, City Council, county boards, and community development committees
- Youth Coaching & School Volunteering – coaching youth sports teams, staffing school events like After Prom, and supporting extracurricular activities
- Community Fundraising & Events – organizing and staffing local fundraisers, parades, festivals, and support groups for causes such as cancer awareness


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


- Community Event Planning – organizing and hosting community gatherings through churches and local boards
- General Volunteer Support – increasing hands-on assistance wherever needed as schedules allow
- Educational Programming – leading ESL classes, youth entrepreneurship workshops, and Sister City exchanges
- Healthcare Provision – training as a registered nurse to deliver compassionate local medical care
- Historical Preservation – creating a dedicated museum and promoting Cimarron's heritage

Survey Respondents



- People with an Associate's degree are much more inclined to invest, whereas those with only a HS diploma are hesitant.
- Individuals holding an Associate's degree feel the community has a clearer path forward compared to those with graduate degrees.
- Retired residents view the need for affordable childcare as much more pressing than local business owners do.
- Homeowners perceive the local tax base as stronger compared to those who rent.

 **Town Score**

 **Average Community Score**

29

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community
29 of 119 (24%)