



2025 Community Benchmark Report City of Hugoton, KS

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Innovation Economy Partners
OUR FOCUS: IMPACT AND OUTCOMES



Dear Hugoton Residents and Community Leaders,

Hugoton's unwavering trust in leadership and demonstrated ability to execute plans are exceptional strengths. While current business, employment, and income confidence has softened, residents remain cautiously optimistic about the future—outpacing regional peers on confidence metrics. Top survey priorities—attracting new businesses, renovating blighted properties, and expanding affordable housing—highlight a collective desire for tangible progress. Generational divides, with young adults driving student engagement and seniors emphasizing entrepreneurship, underscore the importance of intergenerational collaboration.

Your greatest assets are clear. High ratings for leadership trust and vision execution prove that when goals are set, the community achieves them. Steady emotional commitment and loyalty sustain collective resilience even amid economic headwinds. The opportunity now is to convert passive optimism into active participation by celebrating every milestone and sharing transparent data on economic and social indicators.

A campaign that can show the area pride in all the progress could harness trusted community voices to spotlight monthly successes—new storefront openings, business launches, housing developments, and public space beautification—through local media, school newsletters, and community gatherings. Complementing this, a Quarterly Growth Dashboard—accessible online and in print—would track metrics such as new business permits, job postings, housing starts, and participation in youth programs, keeping all residents informed and invested in Hugoton's trajectory.

One possible idea, to hopefully initiate more, would be to bridge generational divides and spark innovation, an Intergenerational Innovation Lab would pair senior mentors with young leaders to co-design projects like downtown pop-up markets, youth entrepreneurship workshops, and community clean-up events. This inclusive forum of wide age ranges could ensure that diverse perspectives fuel sustainable growth and strengthen civic bonds.

By leveraging your high leadership trust, proven execution skills, and resilient community confidence, Hugoton can transform cautious optimism into measurable progress. These initiatives will bolster economic metrics, deepen civic commitment, and foster an inclusive, prosperous future—ensuring that every generation can contribute to and benefit from the town's success.

Sincerely,

Lee Pettijohn

Innovation Economy Partners

Supporting Local Strength, Strategy, and Success

What Makes Our Community Special?

"What makes my community special is how helpful everybody is. A strength could be how safe it is."

Max

"The citizens of Hugoton are always willing to lend a hand. Whether that be to help someone financially, with rides to doctor's appointments, or whatever is needed. It's a nice feeling to know the town "has my back."

Angela

"Everyone is like family here! Everyone helps each other and makes sure each person in need is helped! Everyone watches out for you and your kids! The community does fundraisers for specific organizations to help one another!"

Jessica

"My community is special by its rural atmosphere, strong community spirit, and agricultural heritage. Hugoton strengths are working together."

Jasmine

"Everyone knows each other. We all get together and do things together."

Dayamit

"It is a small community where everyone knows each other and are helpful. A strength is good communication and look out for each other."

Brandon

"We are a very close community, we all keep everyone accountable."

Valeria

"Hugoton, Kansas is a special community known for its strong agricultural roots, hardworking people, and commitment to education and family values. It offers a safe, peaceful environment with beautiful landscapes and a rich local history. Hugoton is a place where simple living, neighborly support, and the well-being of future generations are deeply valued."

Jonas

"When tragedy strikes we come together."

Vaelynn

"The people in my community are what makes it so special to me. Our strengths are that we are all very kind and helpful to each other."

Jocelyn

The Leaders That Make Our Community Special

billy bell rex evans stanfields
 mrs. sosa mr. mcbride nancy honig
 jan leonard luke grubbs pat hall
 mr. adigun paula rowden hannah craig
 jim ghum angela heger matthew rome
 shelby martin dustin johnson mr. atkins
 emmanuel adigun joe thompson
 mrs. fann lance frazier jay witt
 tim singer neal gillespie greg liobl
 nancy johnson renee beesley felix flores
 toya gustafson craig swinney
 lennox torres jonathan torres todd gayer
 bob passimore jackie williams mega davis
 tiffany reust courtney beasley jim persinger
 adrian howie pheasant heaven charities sonio acosta
 kalinda wight juez kim schroeder mr. burrows
 lupe acosta jair josue michelle heger paul nordyke
 jeff ramsey cammie heaton justin renz
 wendy tinoco beth settlemyer
 coach witt coach o'laughlin nancy bansemer
 sarah foreman shannon crawford evan lahey
 vanessa heger austin heaton mr. howie
 endy bojorquez stacy burrows doug mills
 gayle claggett frankie thomas
 dean banker courtney leslie
 pat atkins jessica kolb
 ted heaton

Executive Summary:

Hugoton combines strong community loyalty, agricultural heritage, and clear vision with economic headwinds and generational divides. Residents trust leadership and share a roadmap but face declining business and income confidence year-over-year. Priorities center on attracting businesses, revitalizing blighted areas, and securing affordable housing. Younger adults drive engagement while seniors emphasize entrepreneurship. To sustain growth, Hugoton should invest in startups, downtown renewal, and housing initiatives while addressing gaps in fairness, infrastructure, and social services—transforming cautious optimism into inclusive, sustainable prosperity.

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Economic Confidence

Local outlook is muted but more optimistic about the future than the region, despite a year-over-year dip in business confidence — underscoring the need for targeted investments in jobs and housing.

pg **6 - 9**

Community Engagement Confidence

Deep loyalty and pride fuel strong trust in leadership and clear vision, though fairness and obligatory commitment need attention to keep everyone engaged.

pg **10 - 12**

Critical Community Priorities

Residents call to attract businesses, revitalize blighted areas, and expand affordable housing, while infrastructure and social service demands shift year-over-year.

pg **13**

Survey Respondent Profile

Younger adults (20–39) drive optimism, commitment, and student engagement, while seniors (60+) prioritize entrepreneurship but engage less—highlighting the need for age-inclusive, intergenerational initiatives.

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

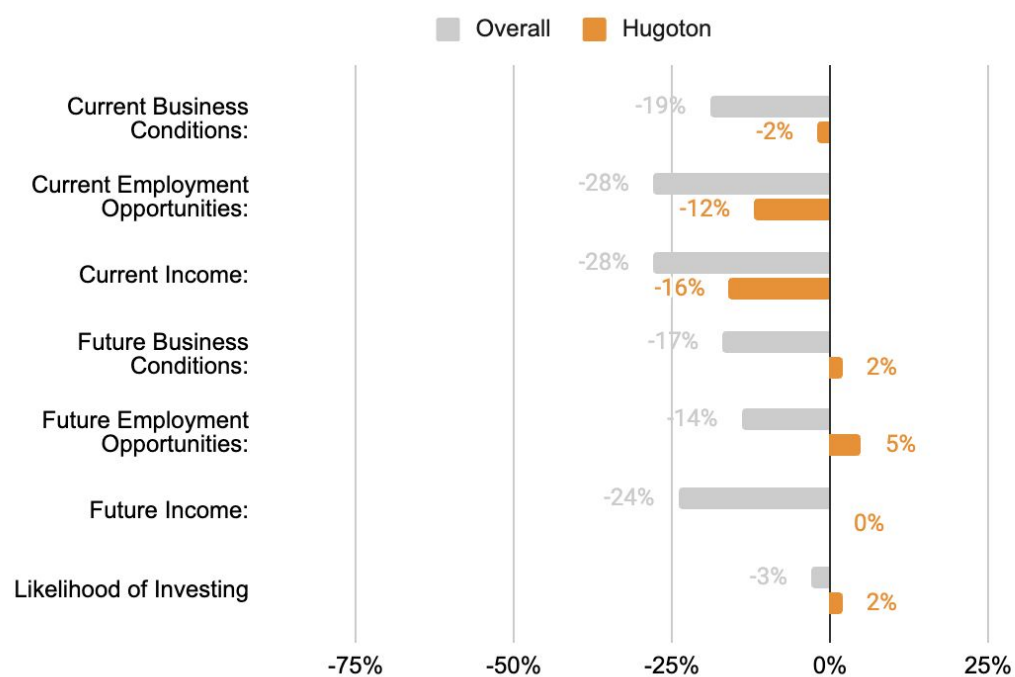
Economic Summary:

Hugoton's residents report subdued confidence in current business, jobs, and income, though they expect future improvements. Compared to the broader region, local optimism for future conditions is higher, despite a year-over-year drop in overall confidence—especially in future business prospects. Targeted investments in startups, infrastructure enhancements, and affordable housing could stabilize sentiment and catalyze modest investment over the next one to two years.

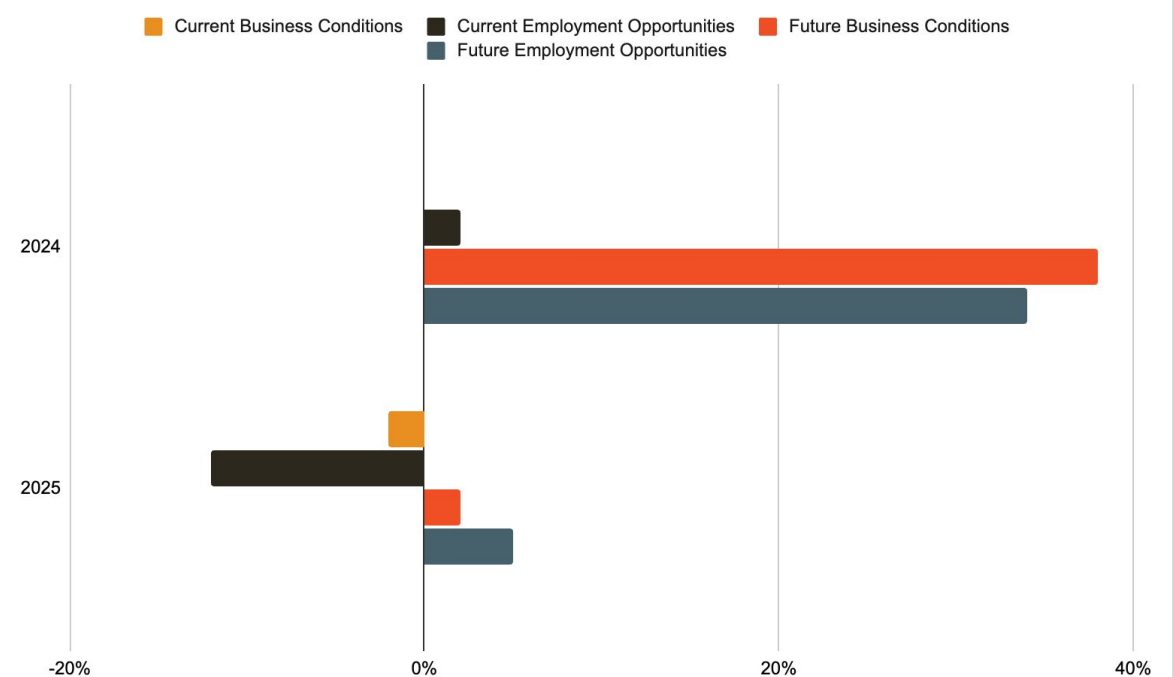
Businesses Needed In Our Town:

- Sonic**—lost local Sonic; fast food choice gone
- Restaurants**—limited dining variety; need more cuisine options
- Entertainment/Recreation**—few activity venues; need family-friendly spaces
- Clothing stores**—scarce apparel options; need affordable clothing
- Healthcare/Doctors**—limited providers; need full-time primary care
- Grocery stores**—few options; need closer and varied grocery
- Teachers**—shortage of skilled educators; need high-performing staff
- Affordable housing**—lack of housing; need more affordable homes
- Public transportation**—no local transit; need mobility for residents
- Retail stores**—minimal shopping; need diverse local retailers

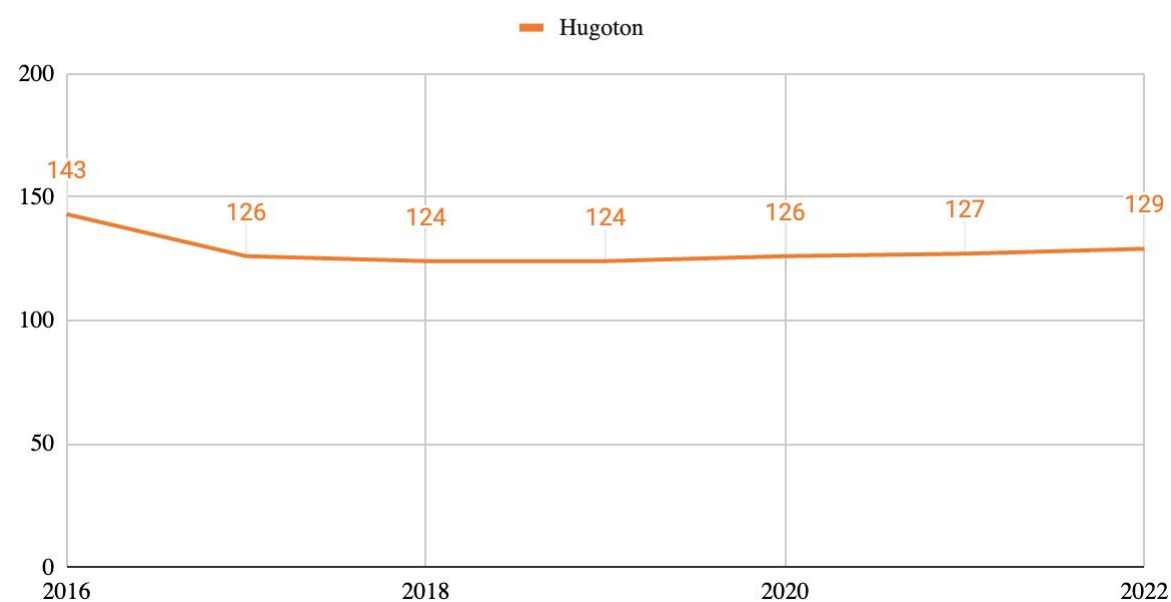
Our Economic Perceptions



Year Over Year Change (2024 vs 2025)

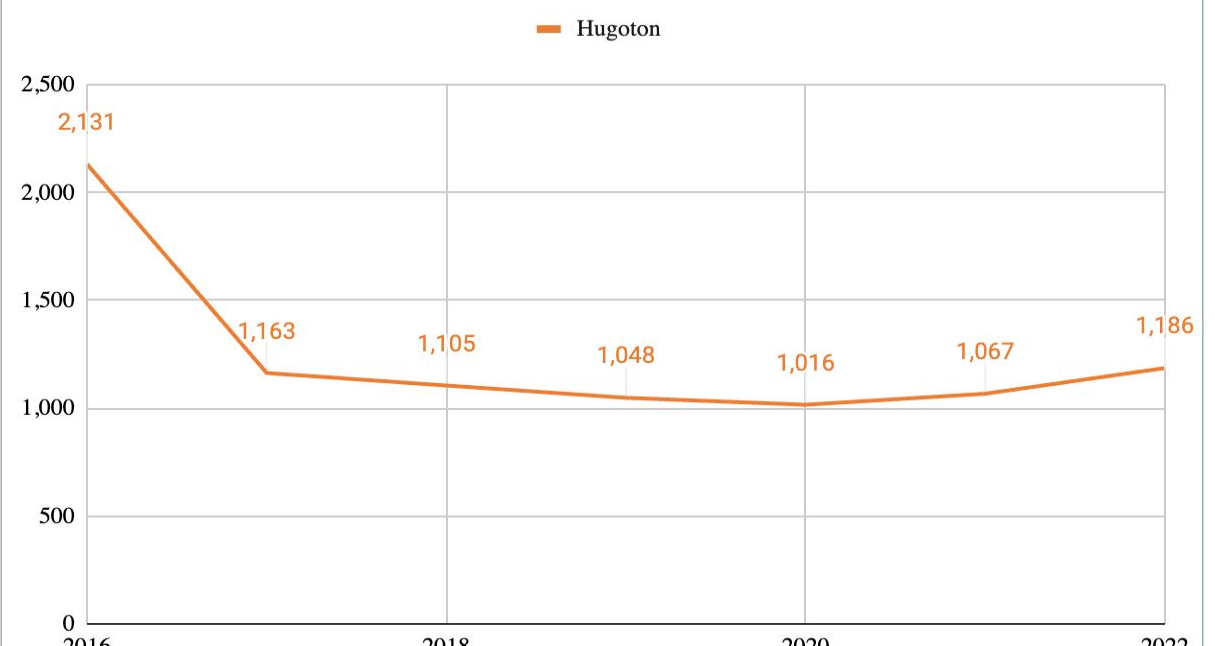


Businesses in Our Town



Data source: United States Census Bureau (USCB), County Business Patterns

10 Year Shift in Local Jobs

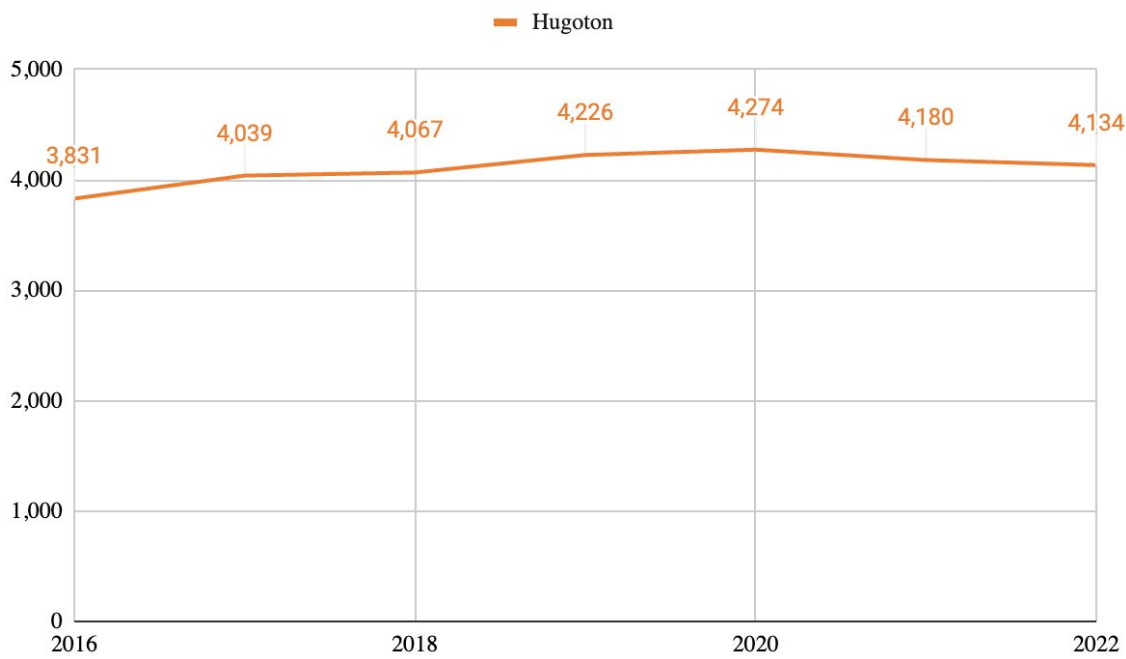


Data source: USCB, County Business Patterns

Local Economic Indicators



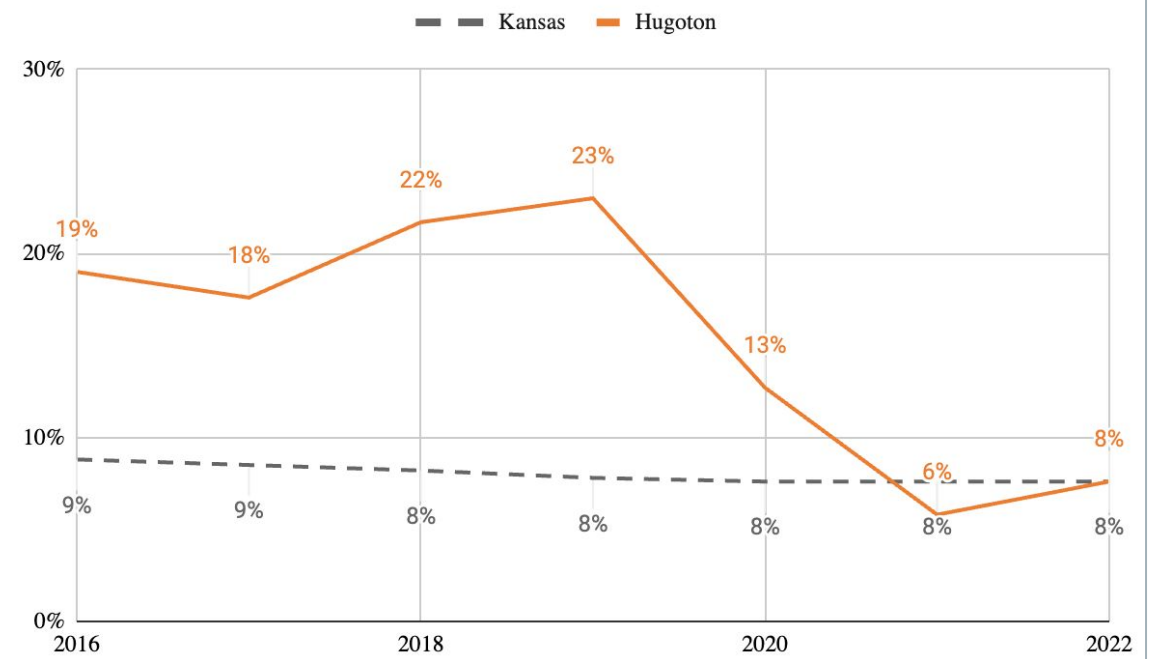
Overall Population Trend



Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg



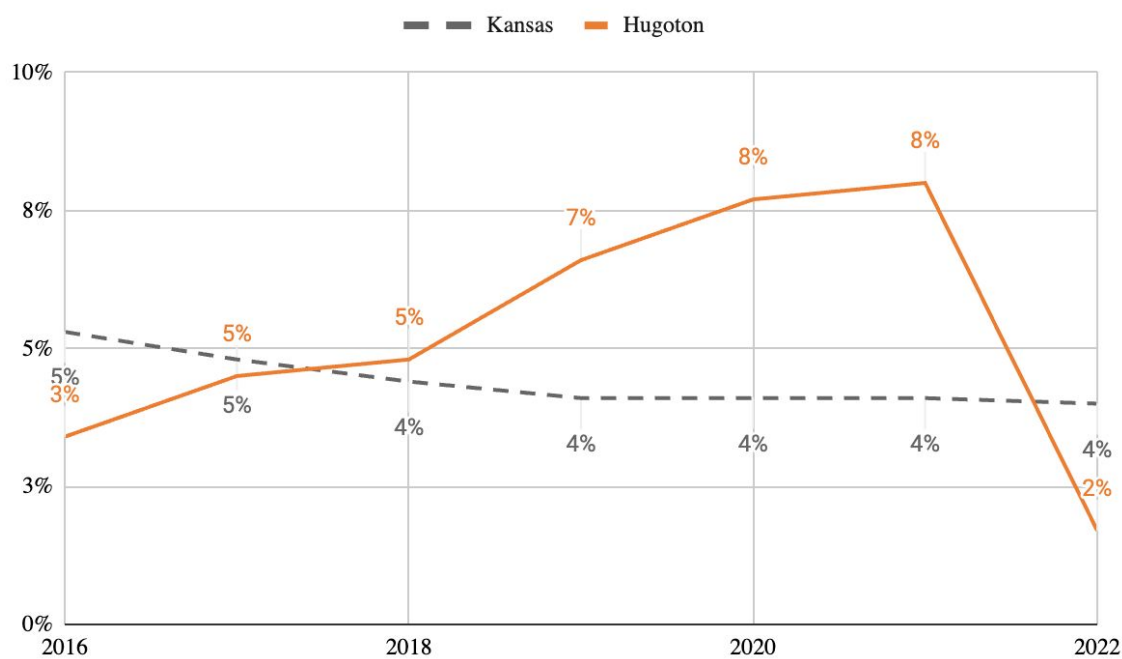
Local Poverty Rate



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



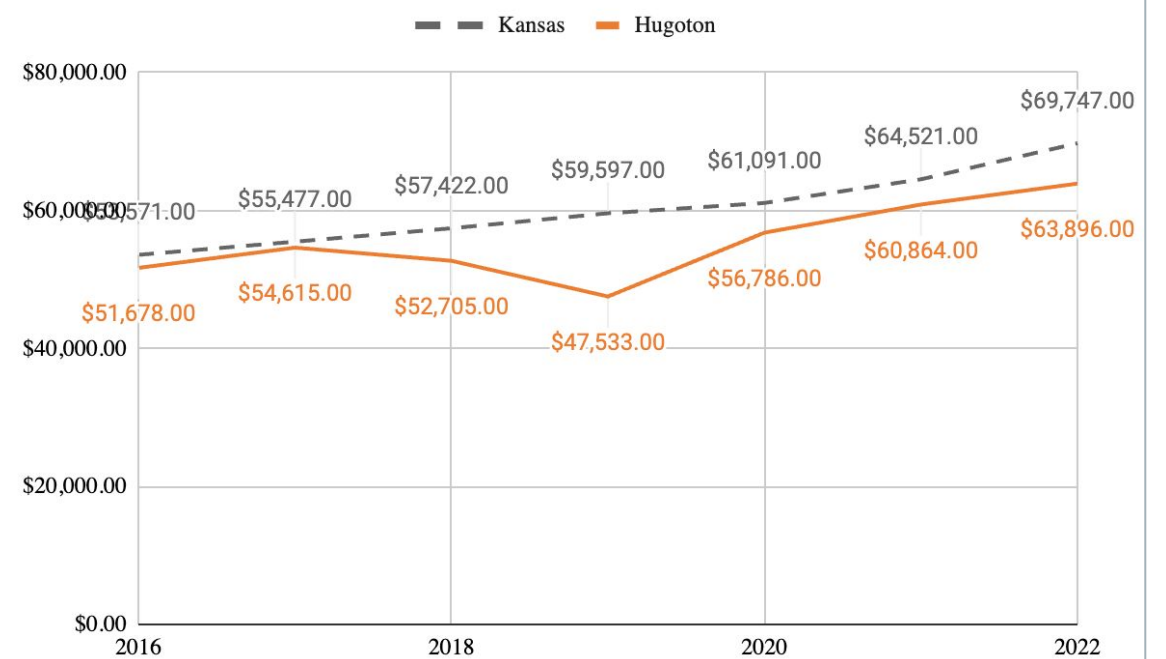
Local Unemployment Rate



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



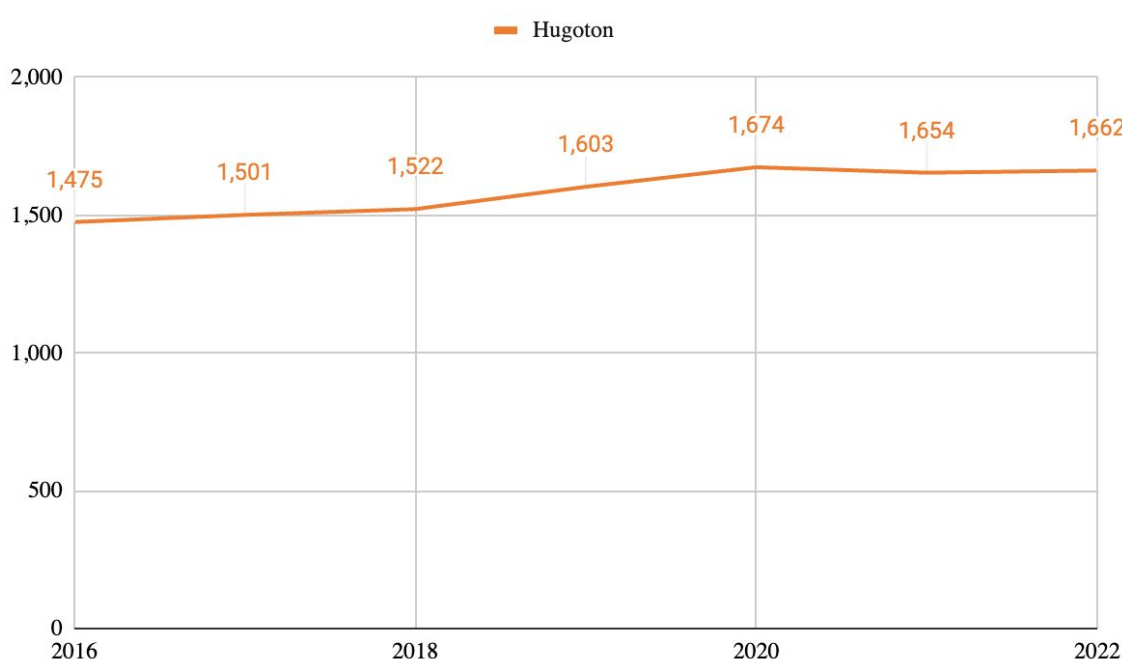
Median Household Income



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



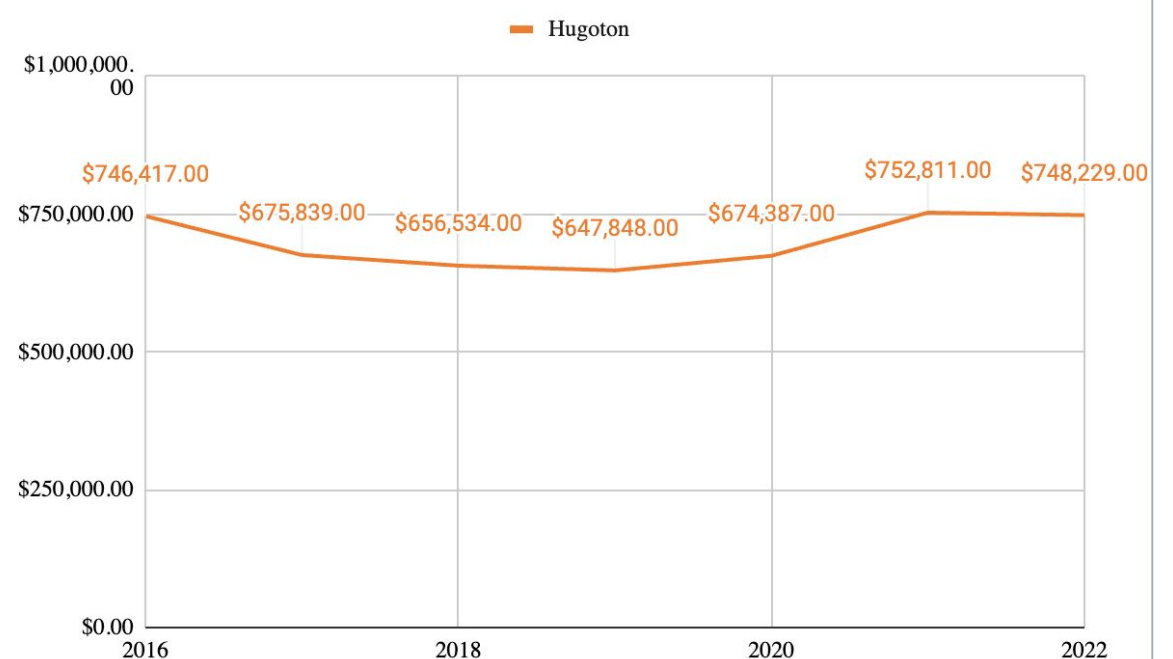
Total Housing Units



Data source:USCB, ACS 5-Yr Avg



Annual Sales Tax Collection



Data source:Kansas Dept of Revenue

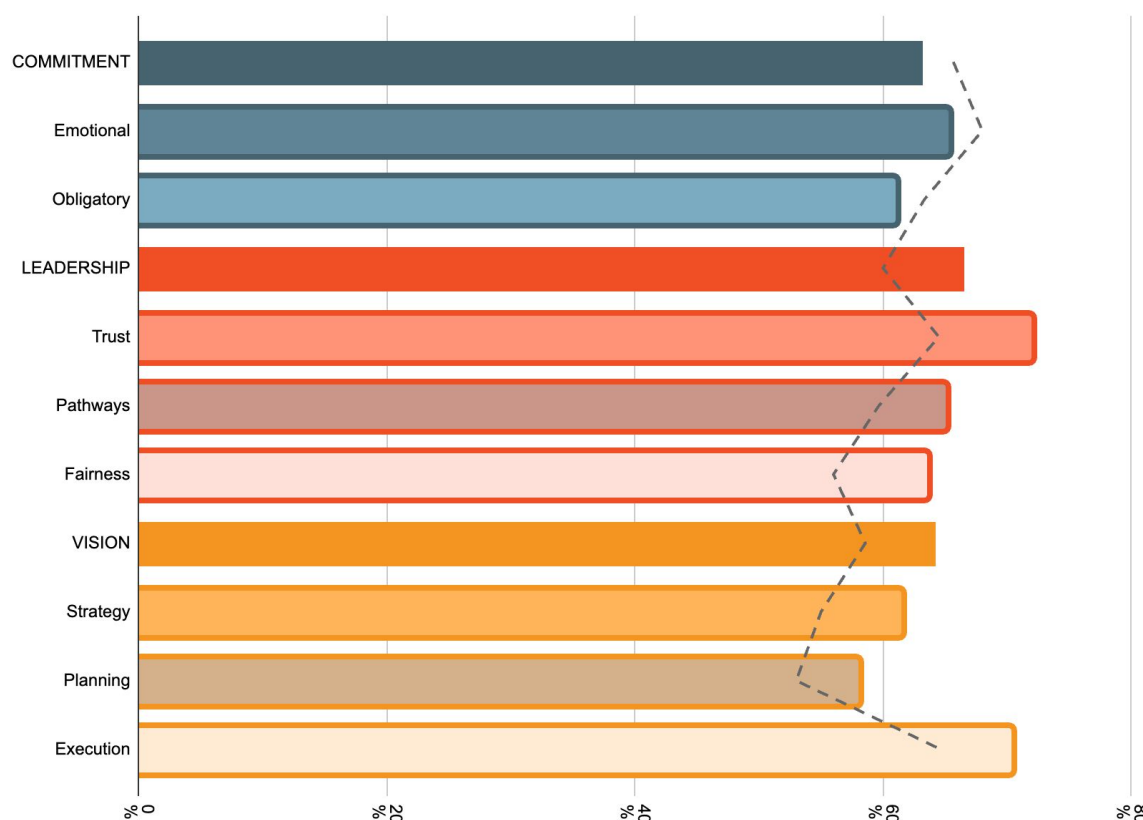
Confidence In Our Local Community

Engagement Summary:

Hugoton residents exhibit deep emotional attachment and pride, with the recognition of working well together ranking highest among all metrics. Vision execution—confidence in direction, pride in achievements, and resilience—also scores strongly. Leadership trust is exceptional, while fairness lags. Year-over-year gains in vision and leadership contrast with a slight decline in obligatory commitment, suggesting opportunities to reengage those whose involvement is more duty-driven than heart-led.



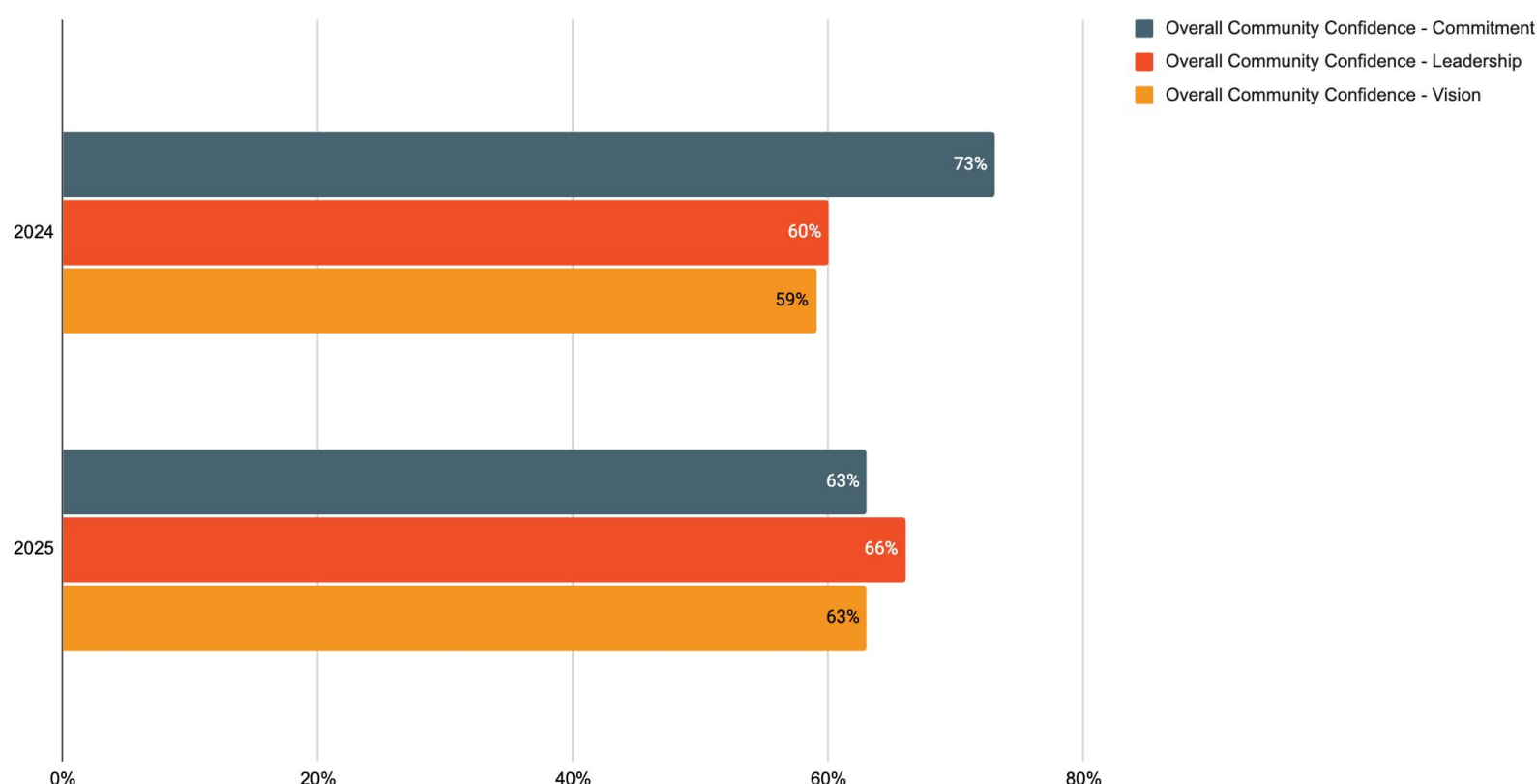
How do our residents view our community?



Questions:

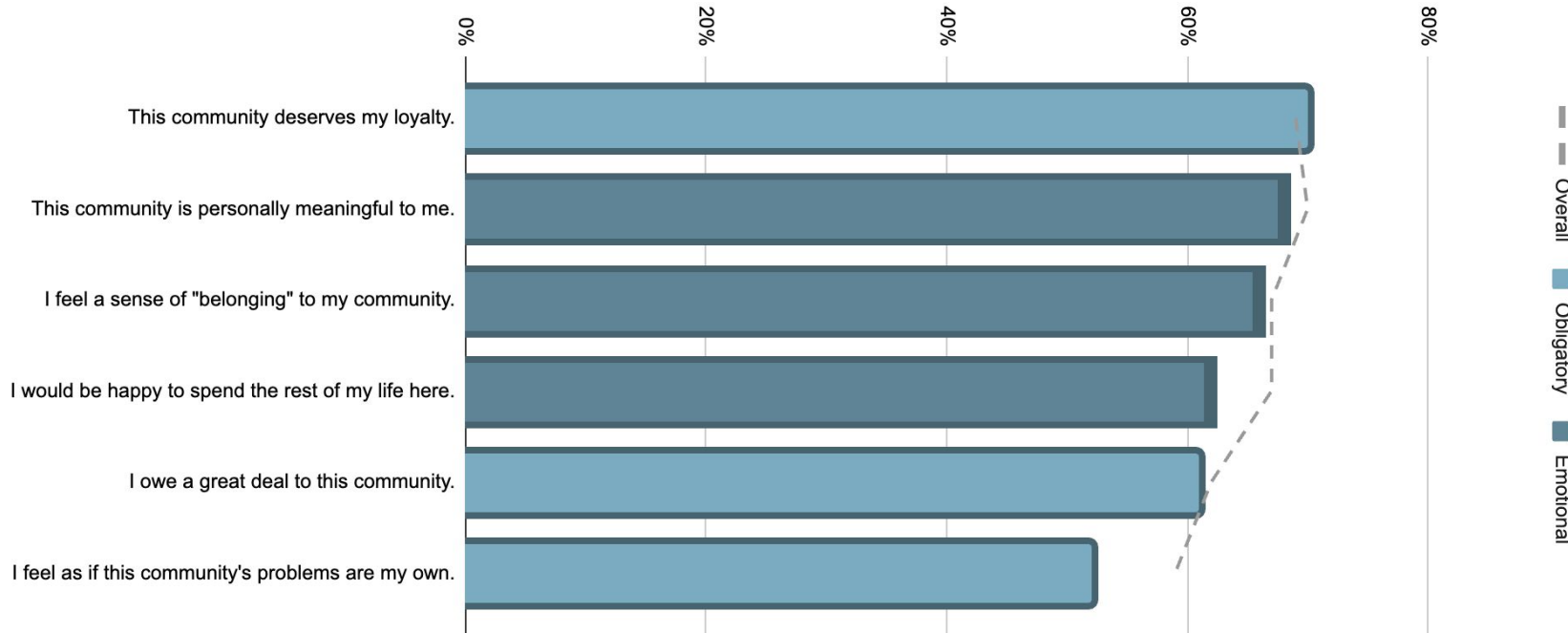
- What factors contribute to the high score in Trust?
- Why is Execution scoring higher than Planning?
- How do Emotional Commitment and Obligatory Commitment differ in Hugoton?
- What strategies can improve lower scores in Fairness?
- Why are Strategy metrics stronger than Planning?
- How might we leverage high Trust to boost other Leadership subcategories?
- What explains the gap between Execution and Strategy scores?
- How can we leverage high Emotional Commitment amid declining Commitment?
- What lessons from high Trust can apply to Planning?
- What interventions could elevate Fairness to match Trust levels?

Year Over Year Change



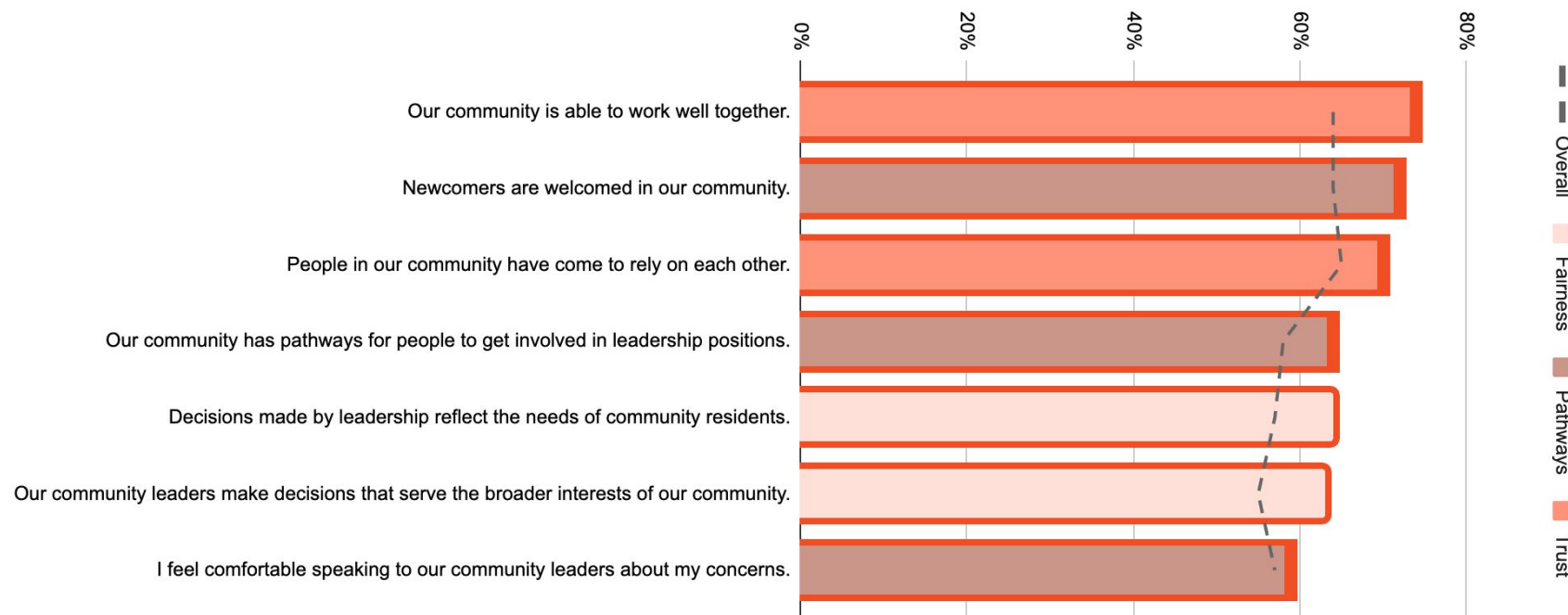
Confidence In Our Local Community

Community Confidence: Personal Commitment



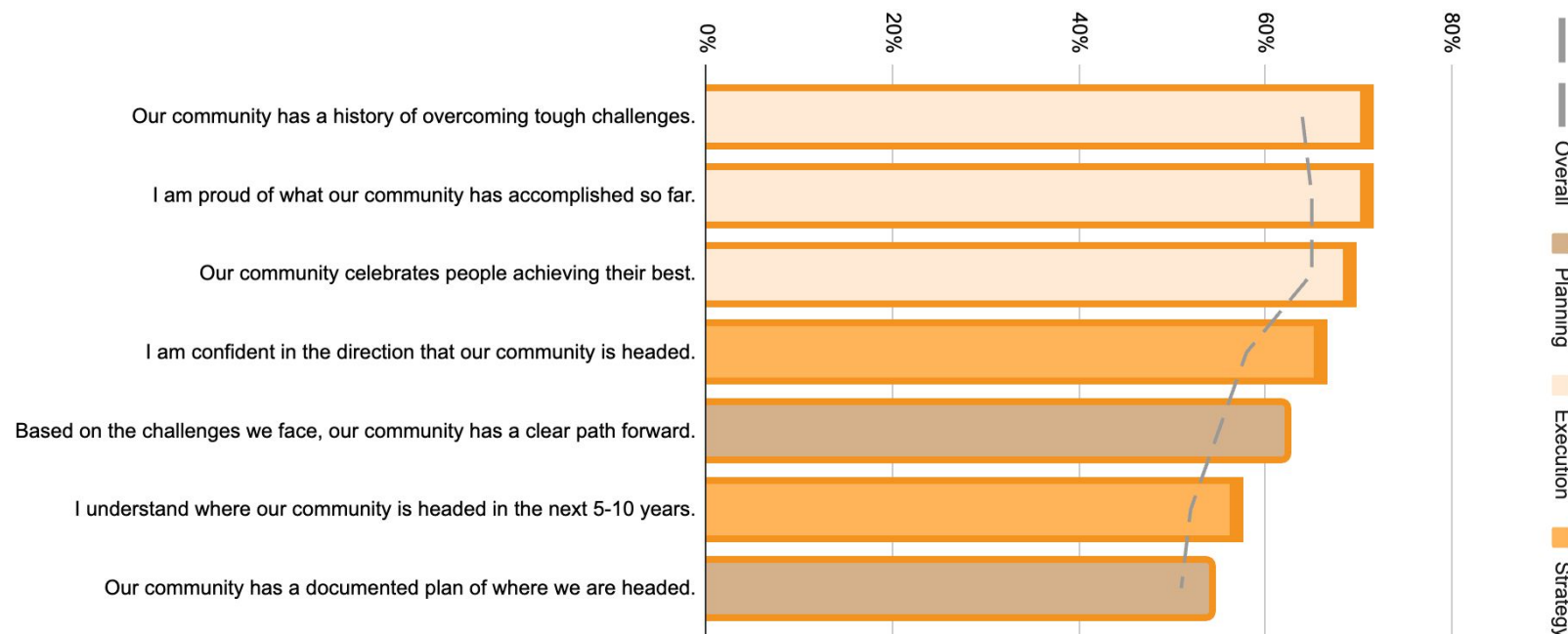
- How does a sense of "belonging" drive Emotional Commitment?
- What underlying causes explain the decline in Obligatory Commitment scores?
- Which initiatives could strengthen the feeling that community problems are personal?

Community Confidence: Local Leadership



- How can strong Trust be used to expand Pathways for involvement?
- What measures could improve perceived Fairness in leadership decisions?
- How might high scores in working well together translate into stronger Pathways to Leadership?

Community Confidence: Vision

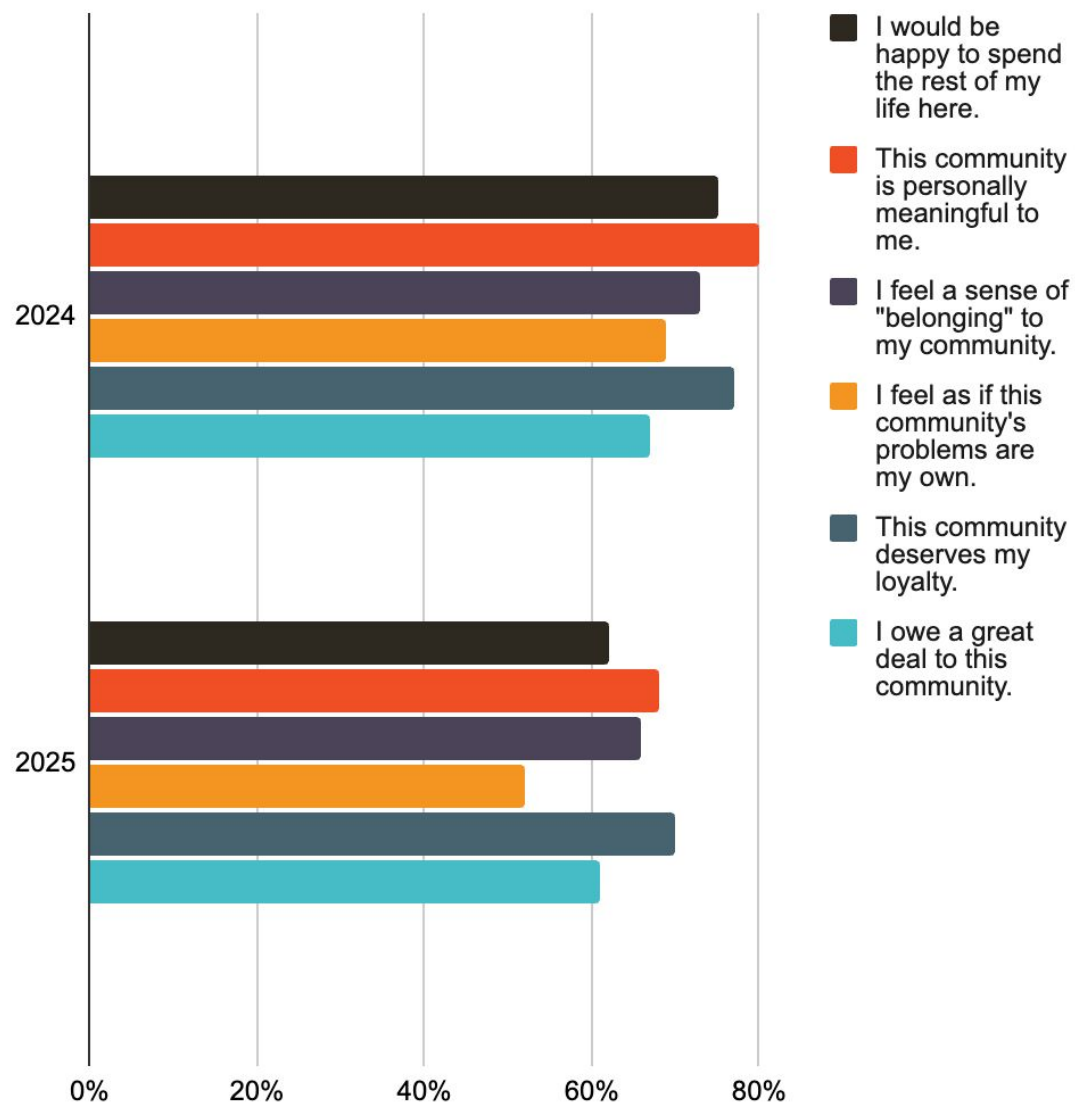


- What elements underpin the high scores in Execution?
- How could enhanced Strategy improve confidence in community direction?
- What actions can clarify the community's documented plan and Pathways?
- Which steps would most effectively raise Planning scores?

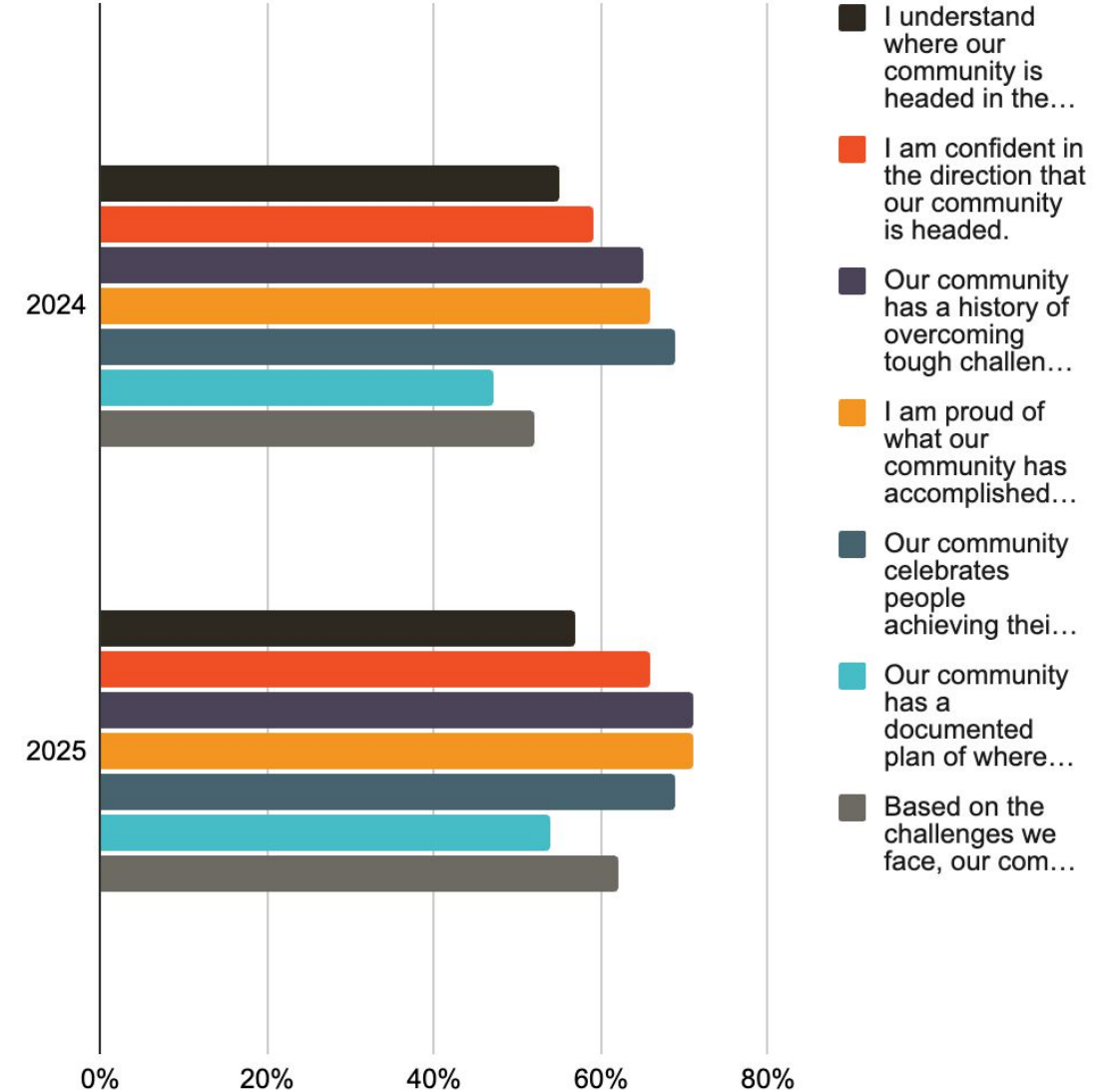
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Confidence In Our Local Community

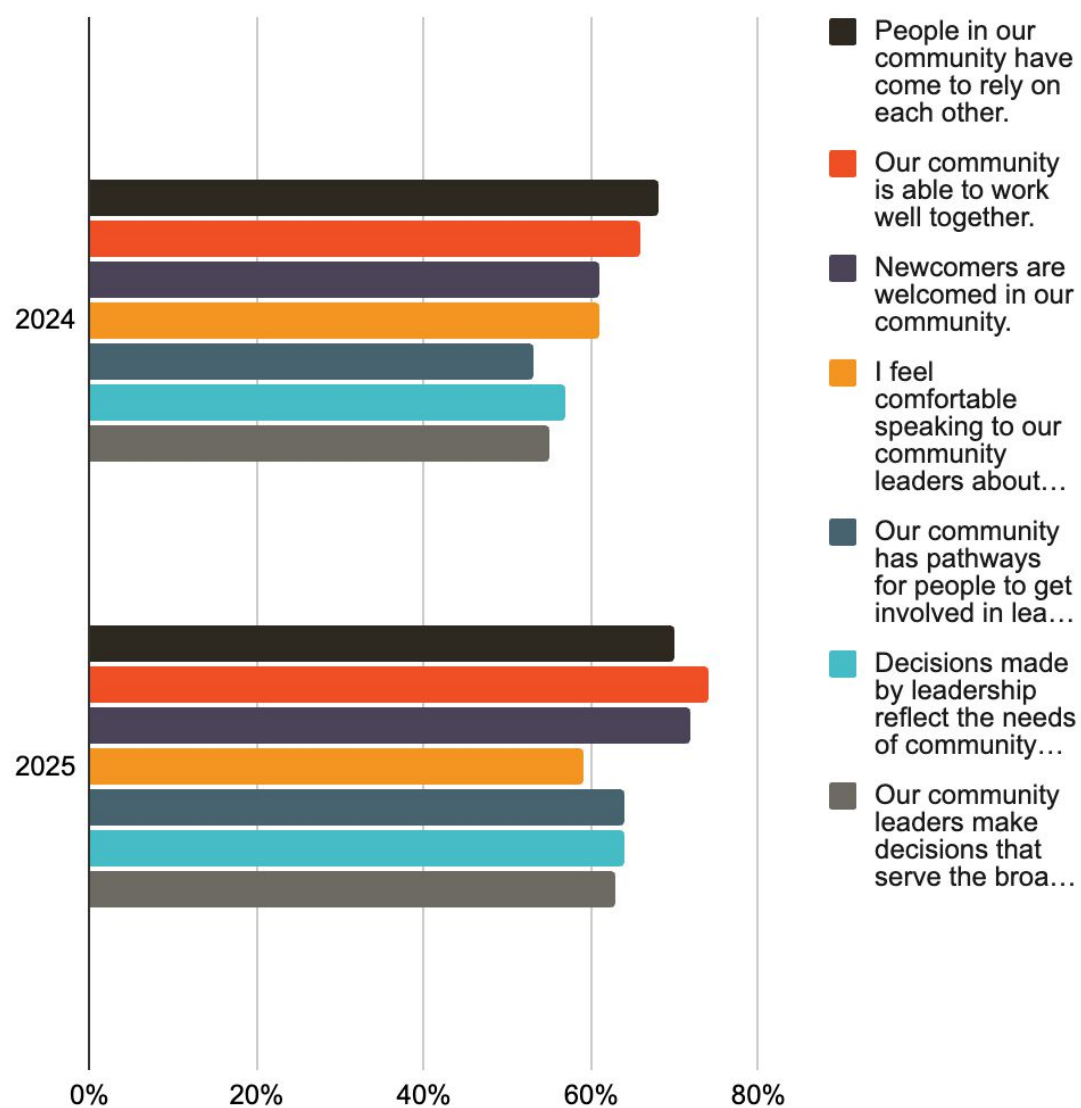
Commitment



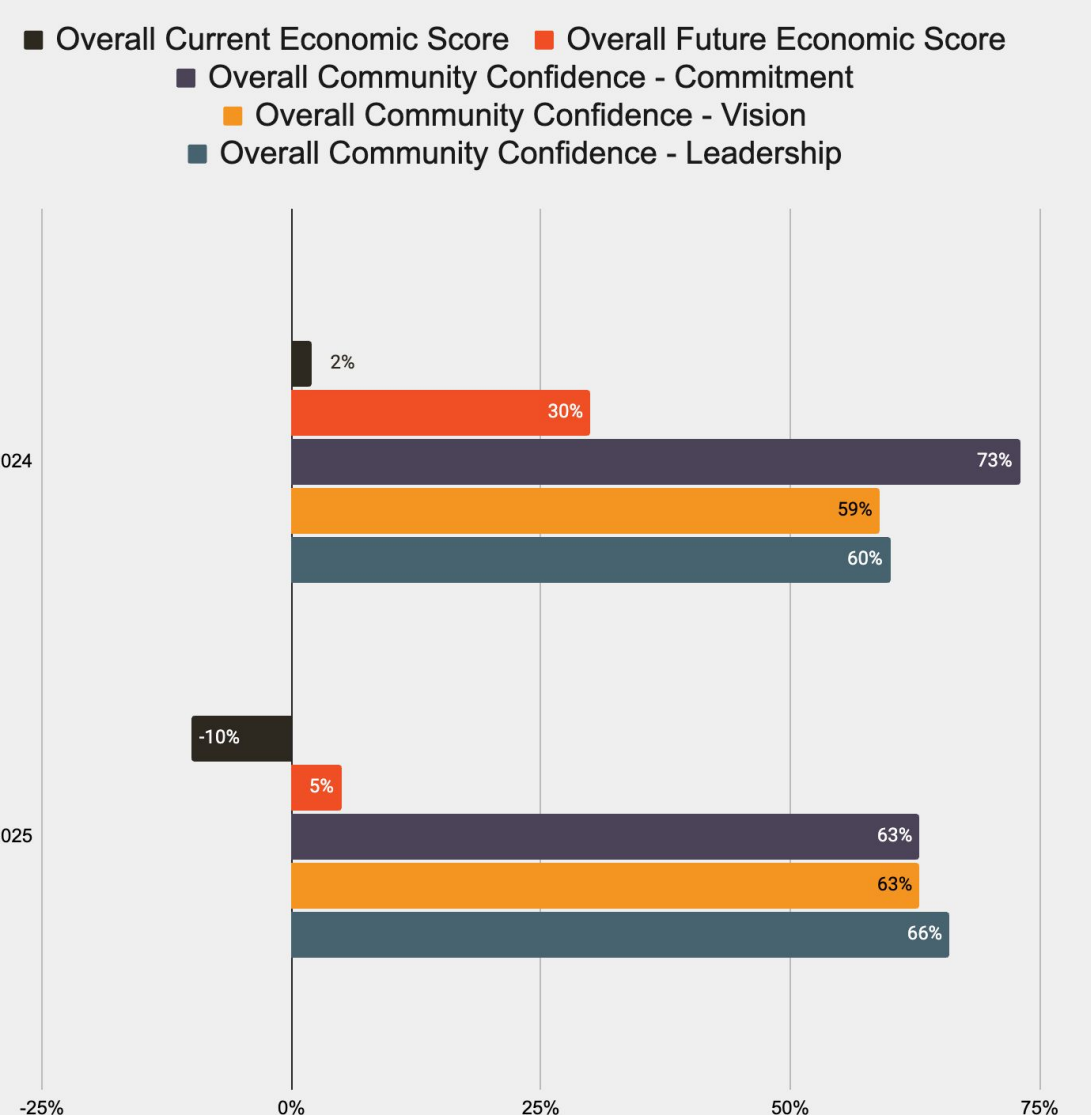
Vision



Leadership



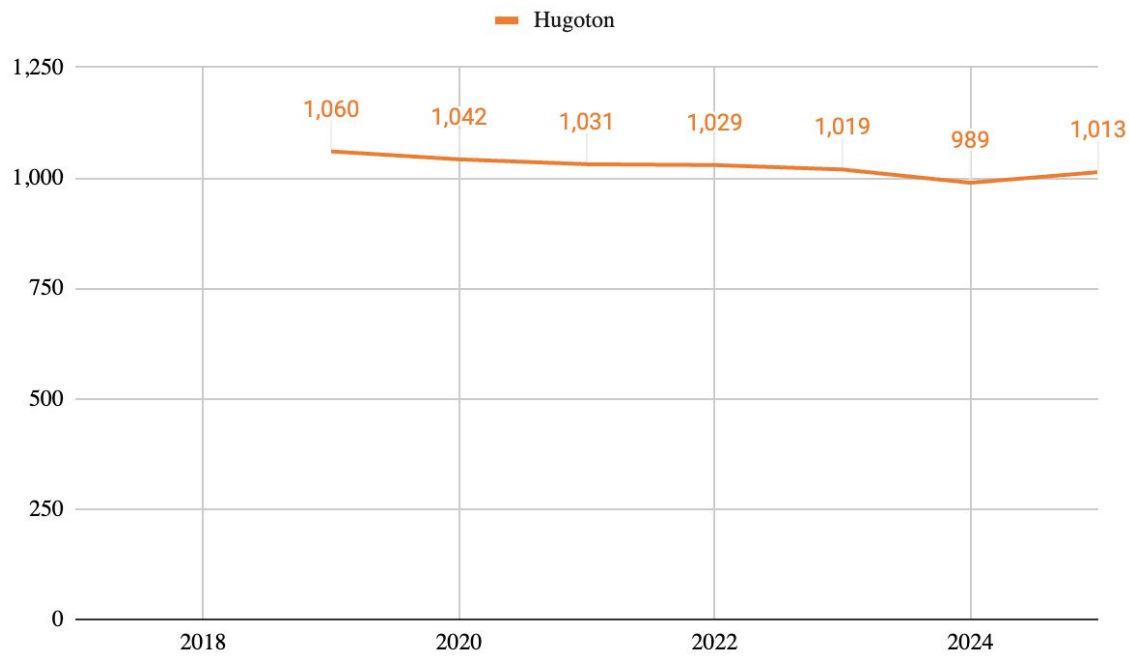
Economic vs. Community Confidence



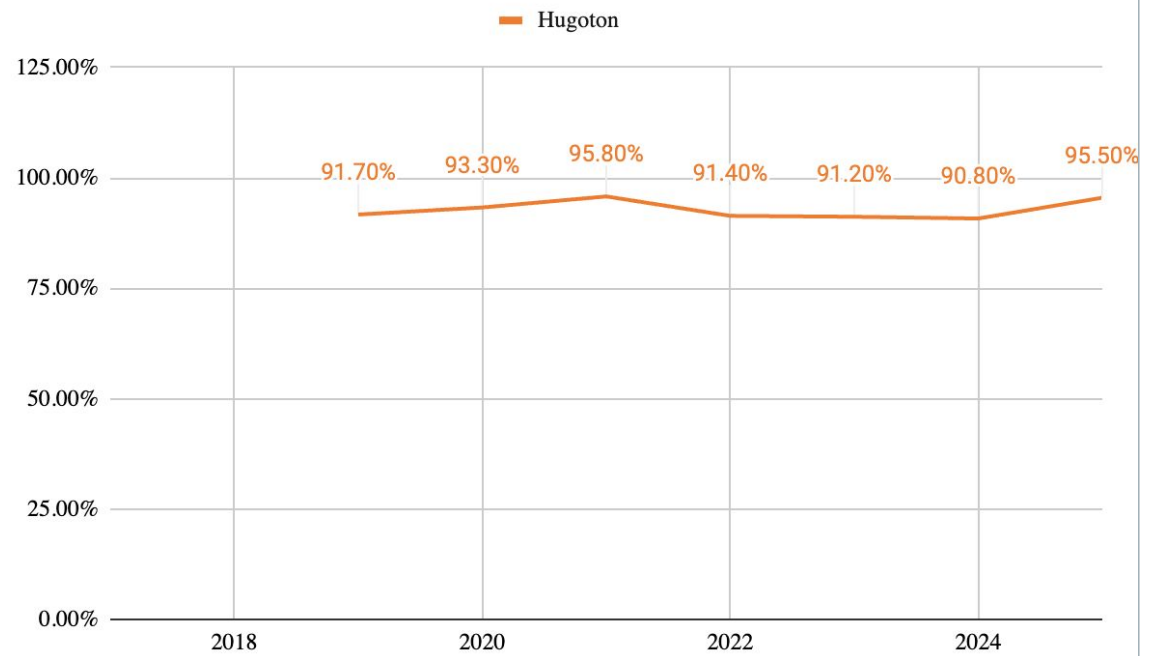
Portion of the community that is highly confident on the listed community dimensions (Rating range: 0-7)

Local Community Indicators

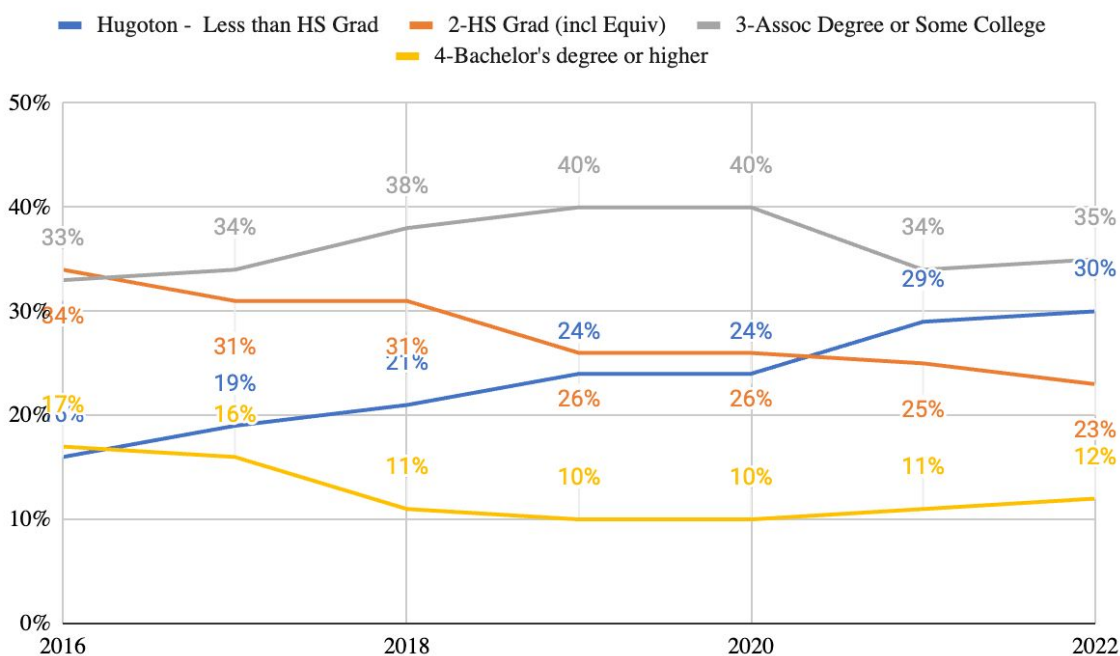
Local School Enrollment



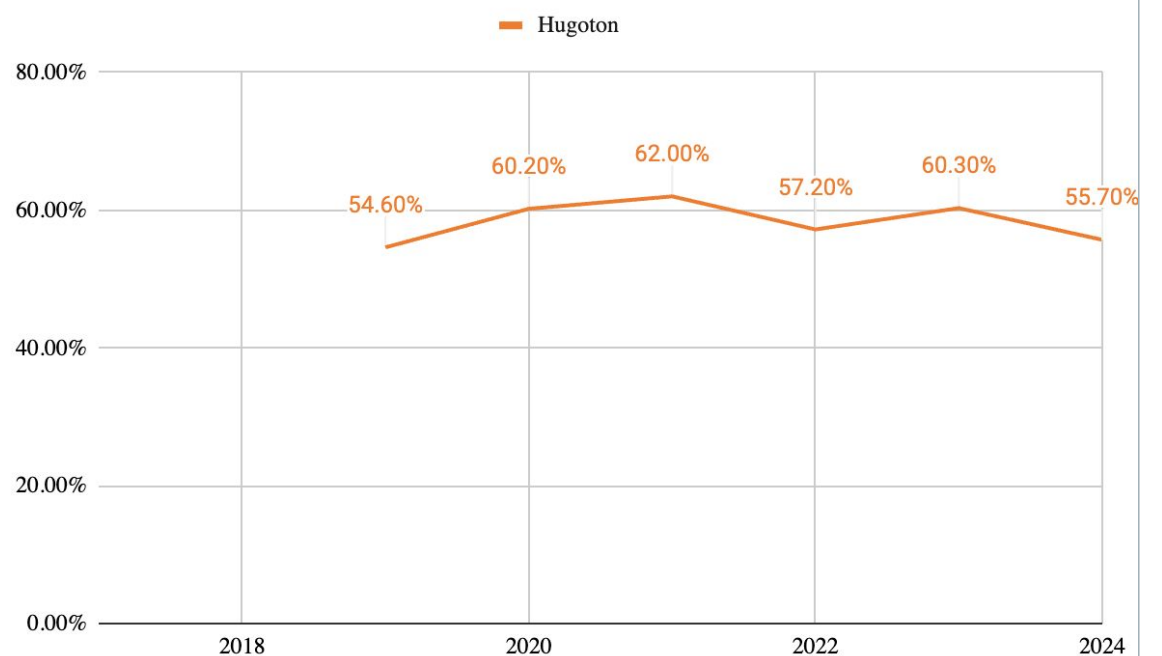
High School 4 Year Graduation Rate



Local Educational Level

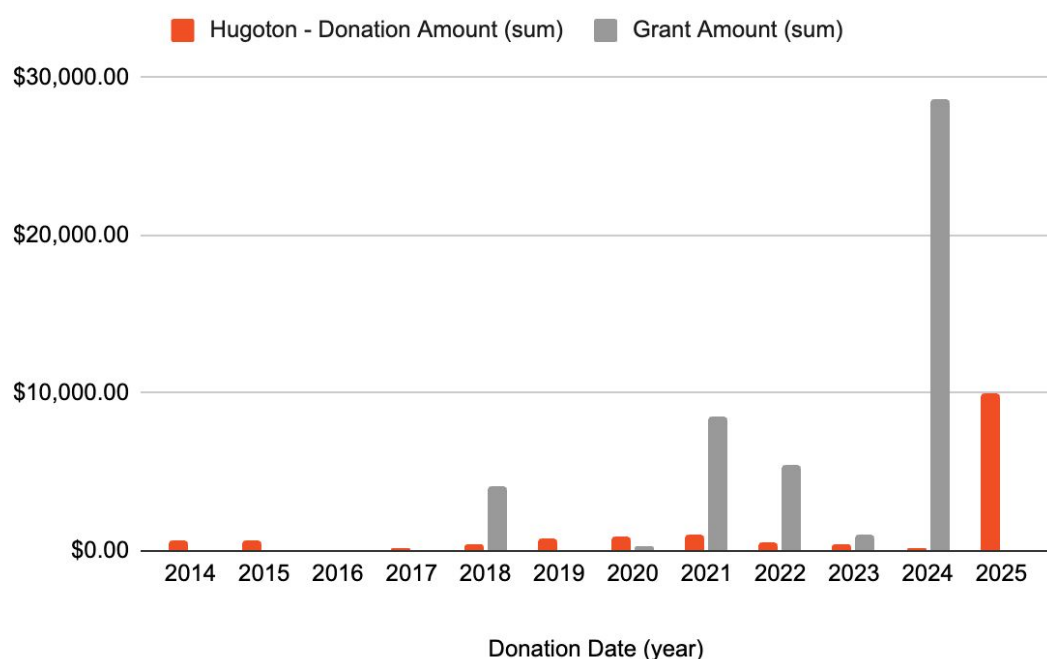


School % Free/Reduced Price Lunch

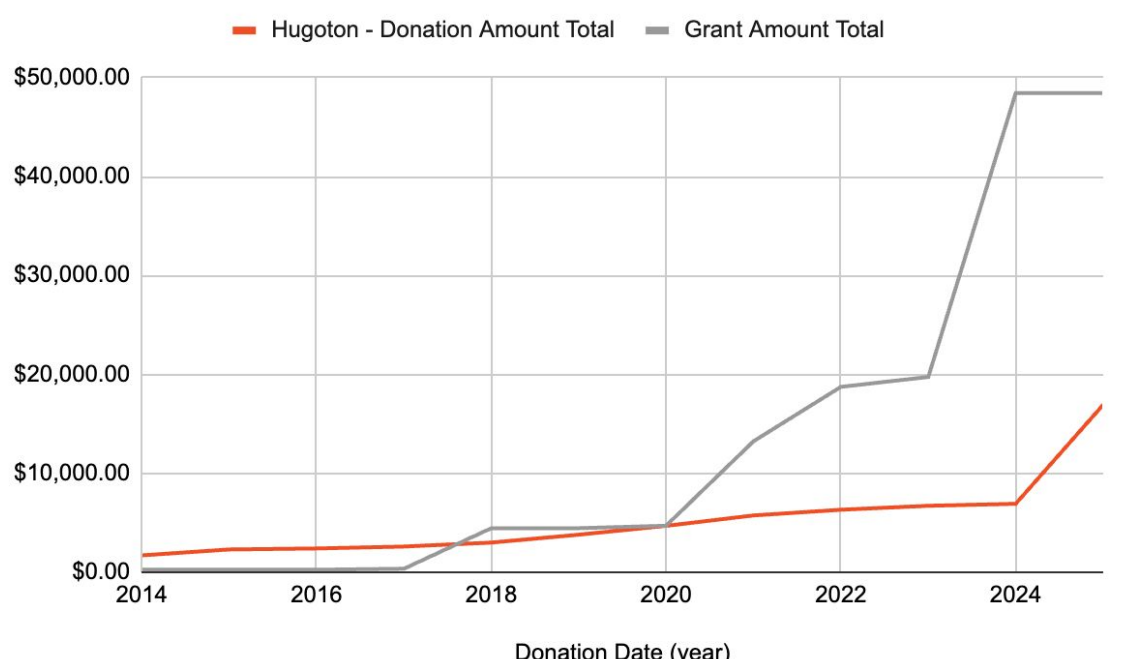


Source for all education graphs: Kansas State Dept of Education, Data Central

Community Foundation: Annual Dollars Raised & Invested



Community Foundation: Compound Dollars Raised & Invested

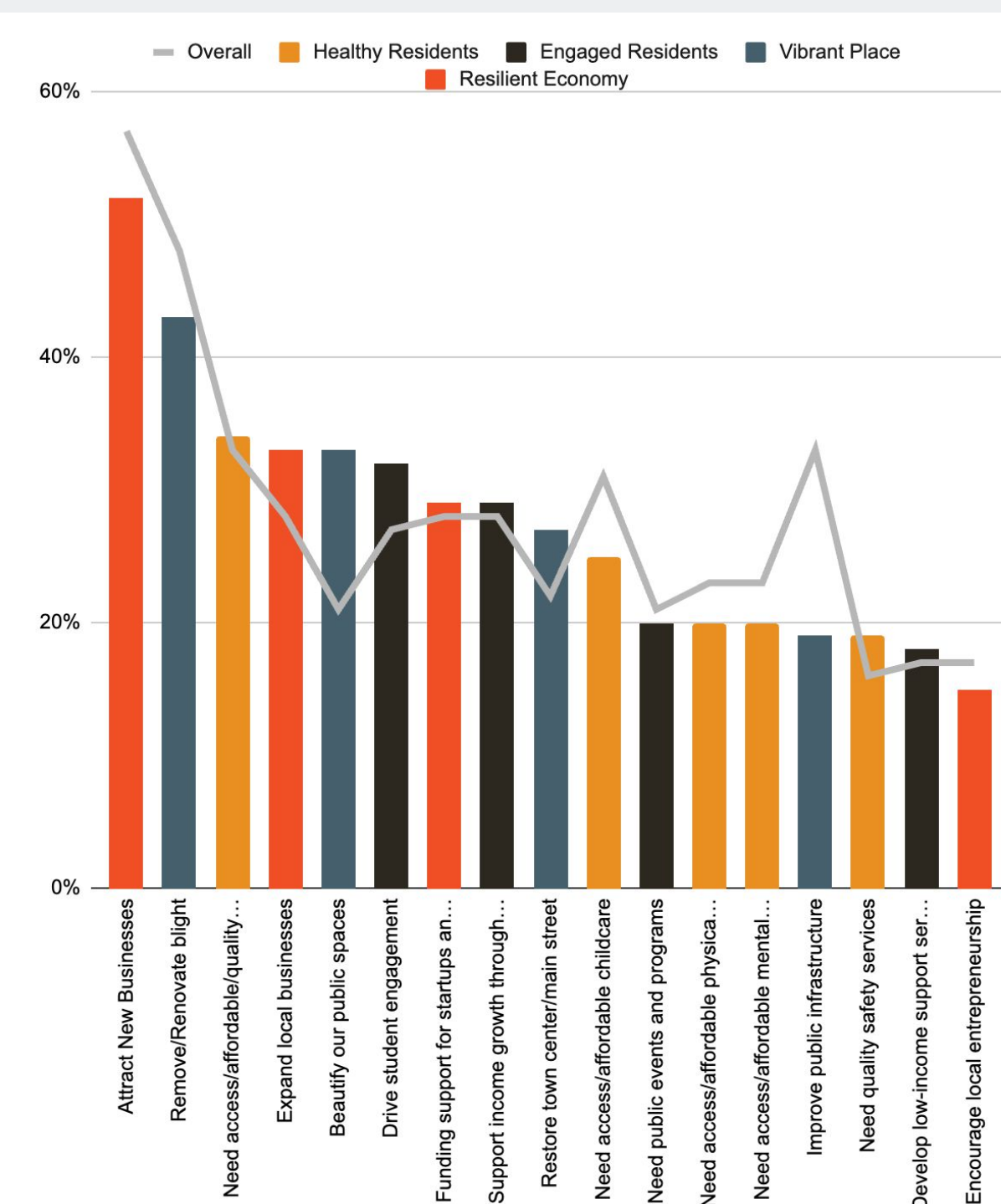


Community Program Priorities

Priorities Summary:

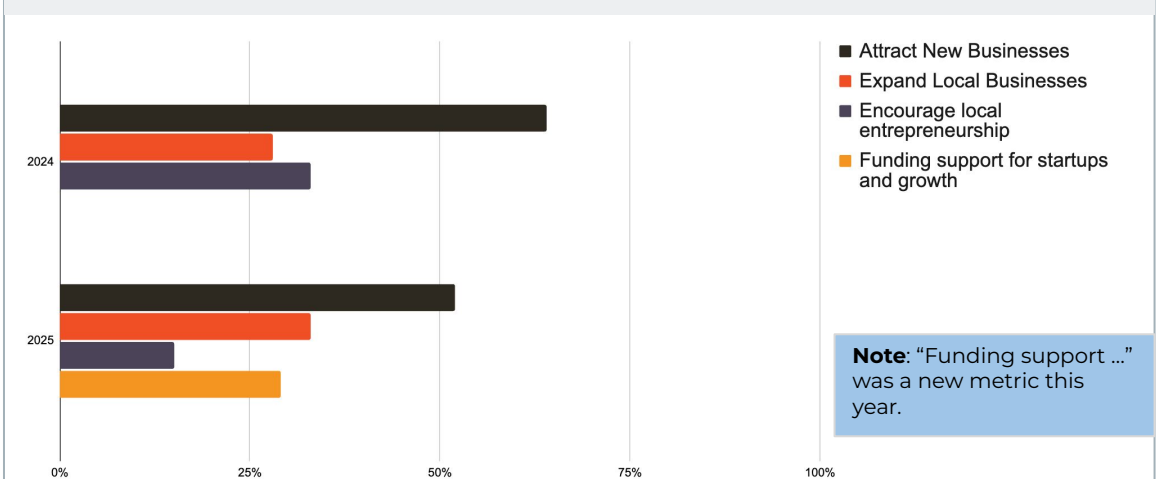
Economic vitality, aesthetic renewal, and housing security top Hugoton's priorities. Residents focus on attracting new businesses, renovating or removing blighted properties, and expanding affordable, quality housing. Year-over-year enthusiasm has grown for public space beautification, town center restoration, and low-income support services, while demand for childcare and health services has waned. Balancing these evolving needs will be essential to strengthening both the town's economy and residents' well-being.

Program Priorities

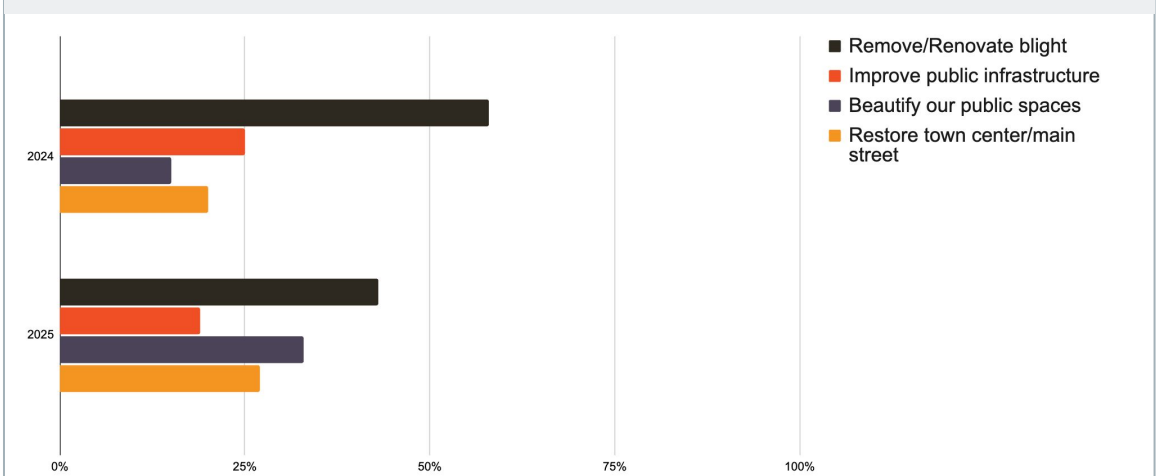


- How can we leverage the strong priority for attracting new businesses alongside the metric tracking new business launches to boost economic growth?
- In what ways might high support for removing and renovating blight be harnessed to further reduce the number of buildings in acute disrepair?
- What strategies can link the priority for affordable, quality housing with improving average household income and supporting housing development?
- Given that improving public infrastructure ranked low compared to other needs, how should we address roads in distress and sidewalks in poor condition?

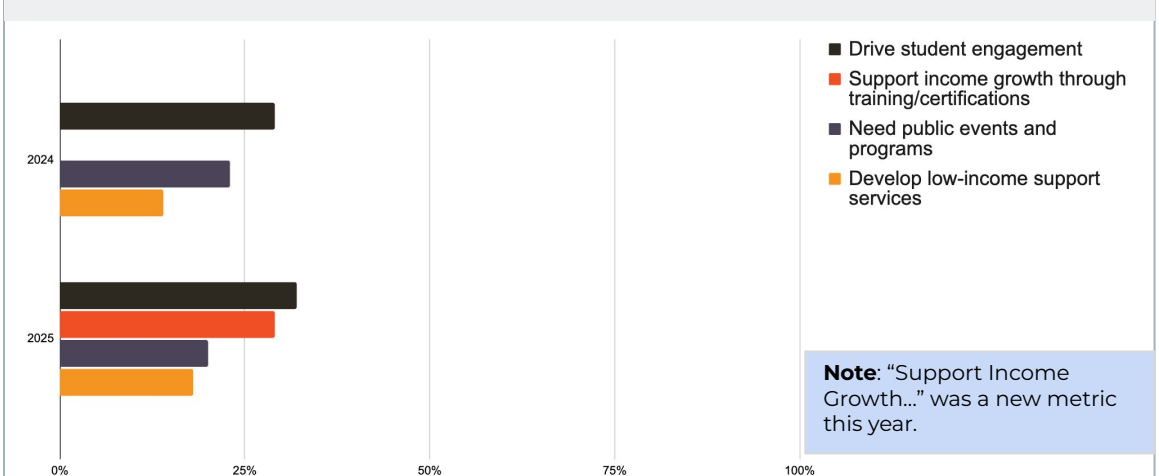
Resilient Economy



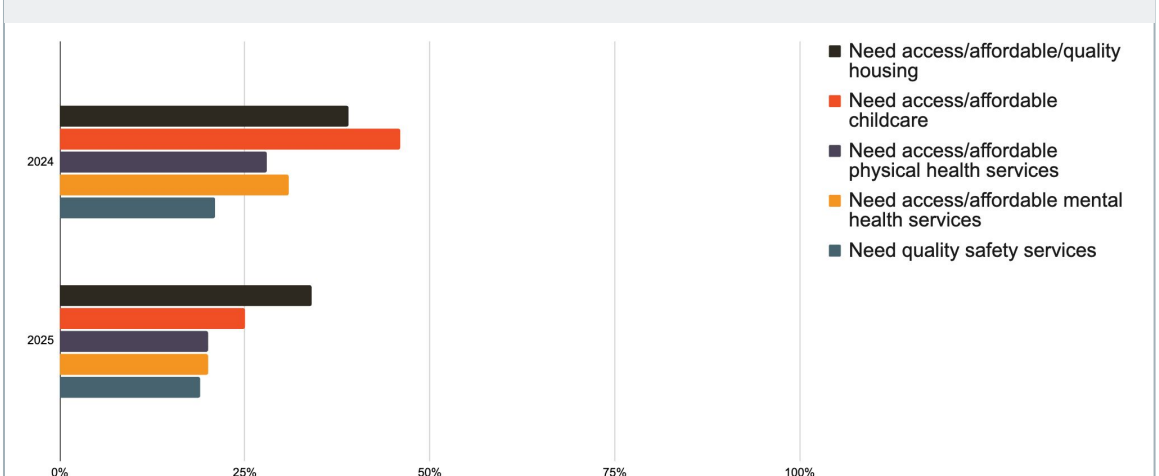
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents

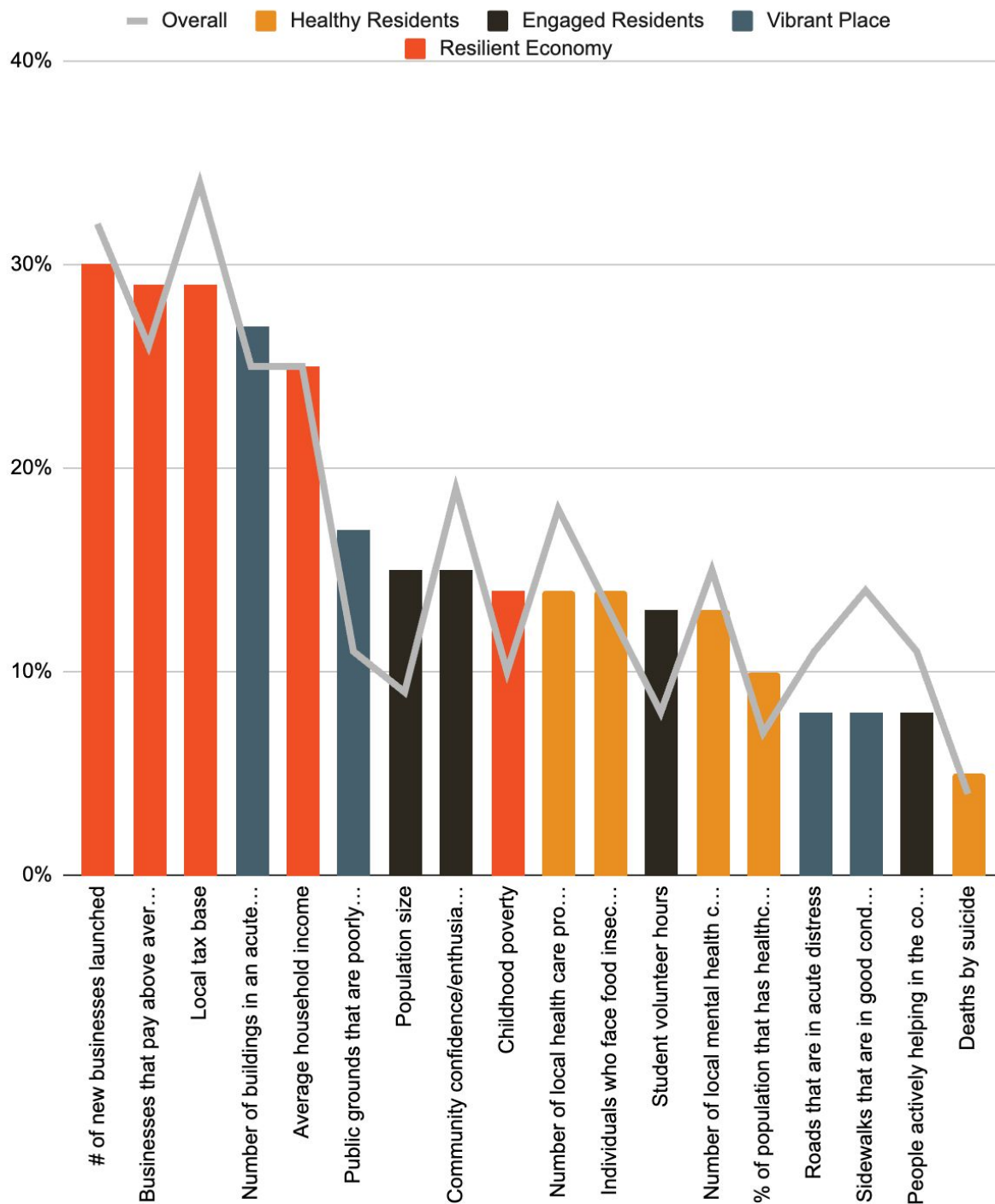


Healthy Residents

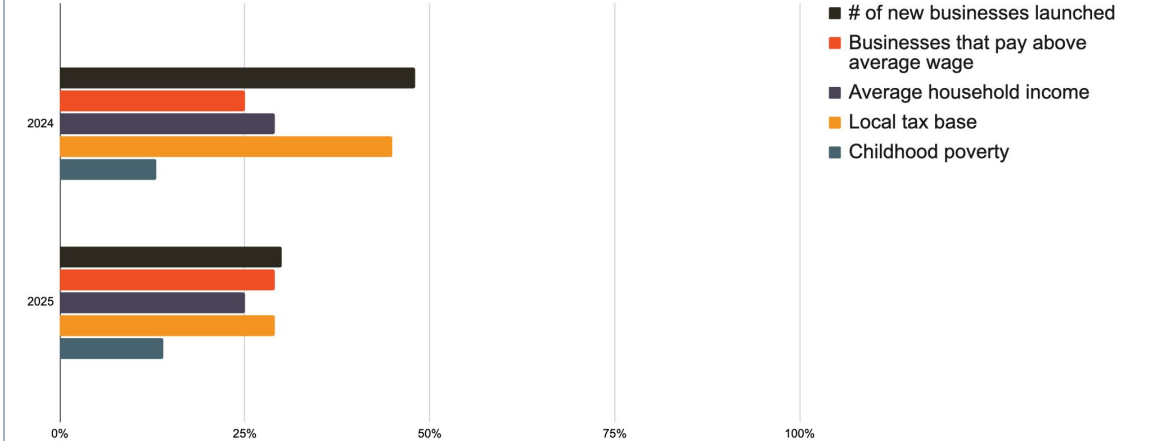


Community Priority Metrics

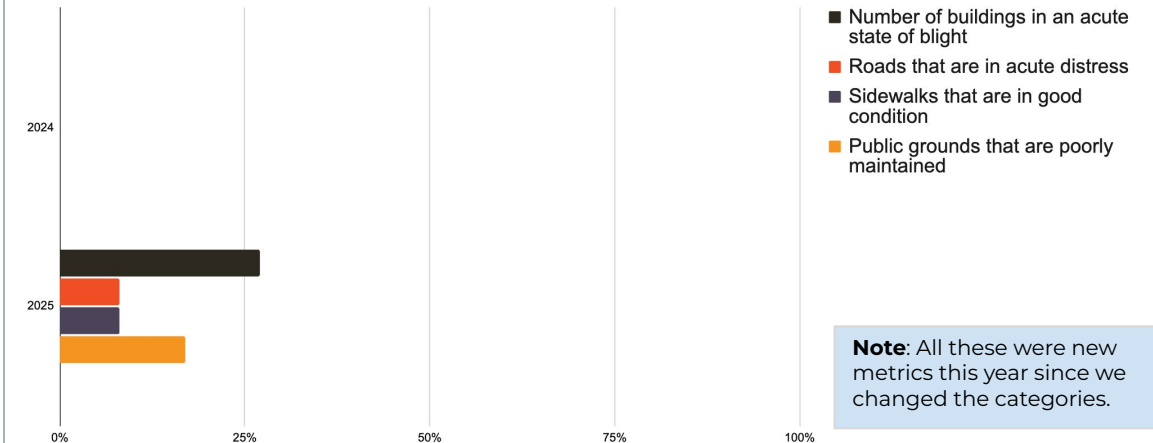
Priority Metrics



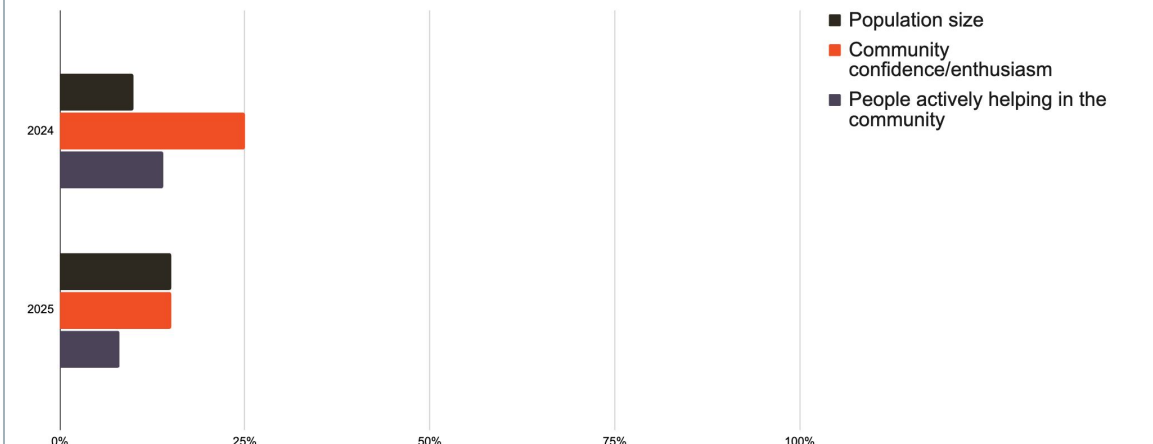
Resilient Economy



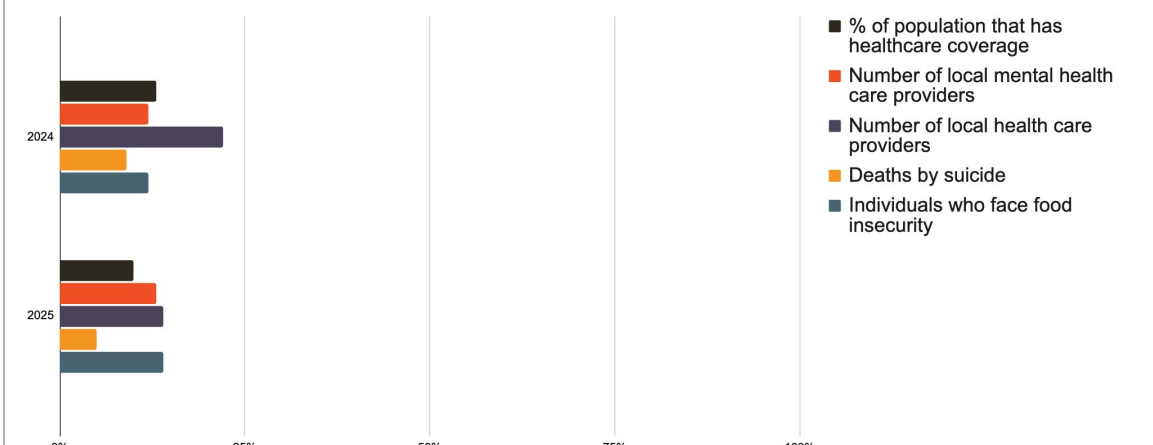
Vibrant Place



Engaged Residents



Healthy Residents



- How does the elevated priority for beautifying public spaces relate to maintaining public grounds, and what actions can sustain this momentum?
- Considering year-over-year increases in priorities for beautifying public spaces, restoring the town center, and services for low-income residents, which initiatives should we intensify?
- What factors contributed to the decreased demand for affordable childcare, health services, and mental health services programs, despite ongoing needs?
- How can we align the increased focus on population growth with efforts to attract new residents and support infrastructure expansion?



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?

- Mental Health Program – establish local mental health providers and support services to improve community well-being
- Entertainment and Recreation Center – create year-round indoor/outdoor facilities (water park, skate park, gaming)
- School Infrastructure Upgrades – renovate gyms, turf fields, and classrooms to boost education quality and community appeal
- Downtown Building Renovations – revitalize empty/main-street buildings to draw visitors and economic activity
- Affordable Housing Development – build low-income and market-rate homes to attract new residents and support population growth

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?

- Mental Health Program–supplement local therapists and improve care access
- School Enhancements–upgrade facilities, sports programs, and educator support
- Sonic Restoration–reopen/renovate Sonic for jobs, dining, and community hub
- Recreation/Youth Center–create year-round indoor/outdoor spaces for all ages
- Affordable Housing Renovation–refurbish and build safe, low-income homes

Serving your community!

How do you serve your community today?

- Food Pantry/Project Hope–volunteer at local food bank to feed and clothe those in need
- Trash Clean-Up–community members pick up litter to keep town clean
- Church Ministries–serve through church programs like laundry ministry and childcare
- School Support–teachers, crosswalk aides, coaches, and paraprofessionals serve students
- Board & Nonprofit Leadership–members of boards (Chamber, 4H, Lions) guiding local initiatives

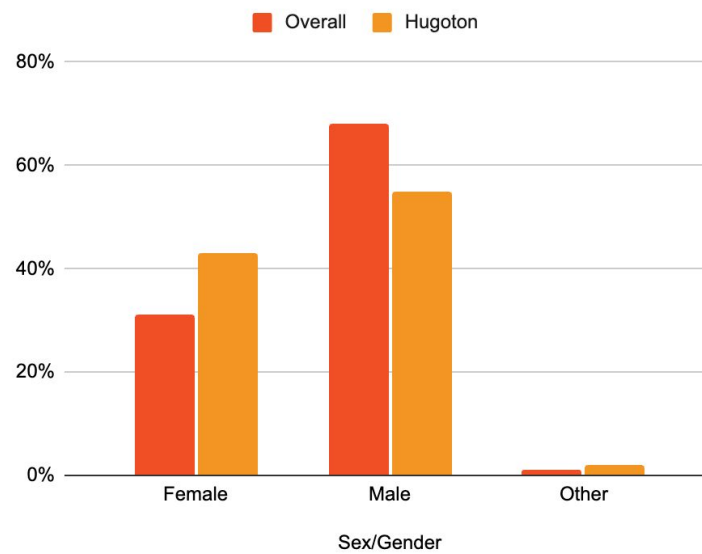
How would you like to serve your community in the future?

- General Volunteering – commit to ongoing acts of service wherever needed
- Youth & Education Programs – create after-school, sports, music, and entrepreneurship initiatives
- Infrastructure & Beautification – raise funds to build and renovate community spaces and roads
- Environmental Clean-Up – organize trash pick-up and maintenance to keep the town clean
- Support Services – establish food and mental health assistance for those in need

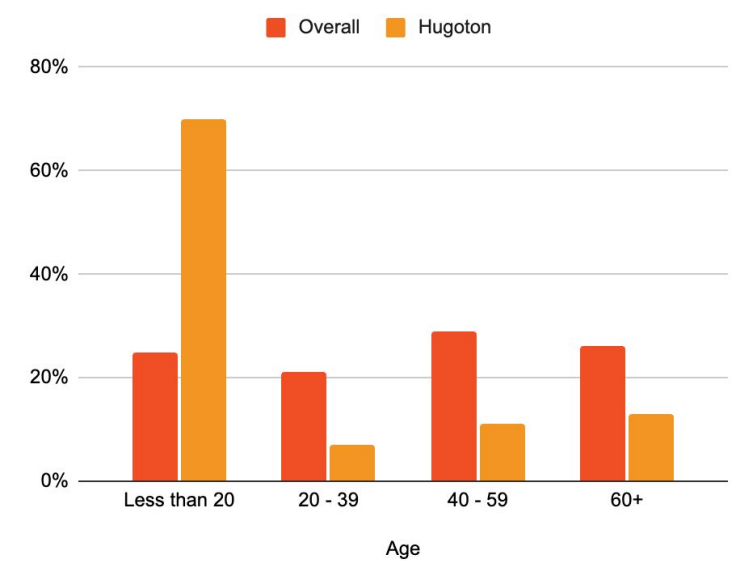
Survey Respondents

168
Total Responses

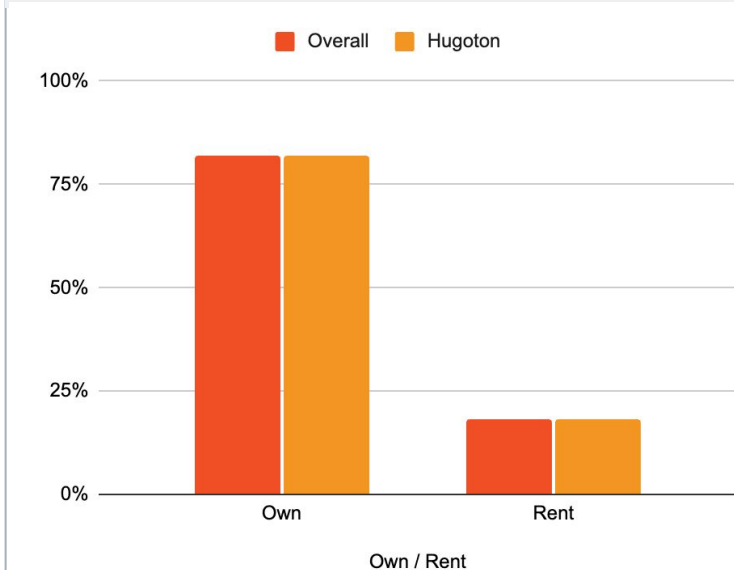
Gender



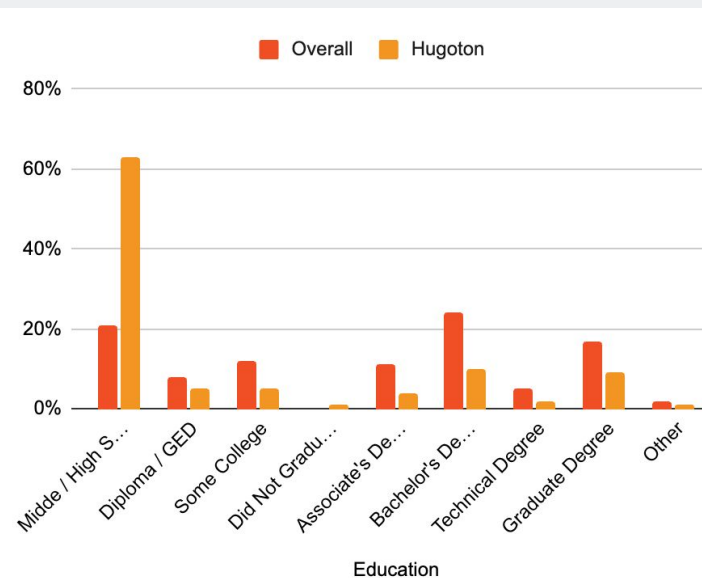
Age Profile



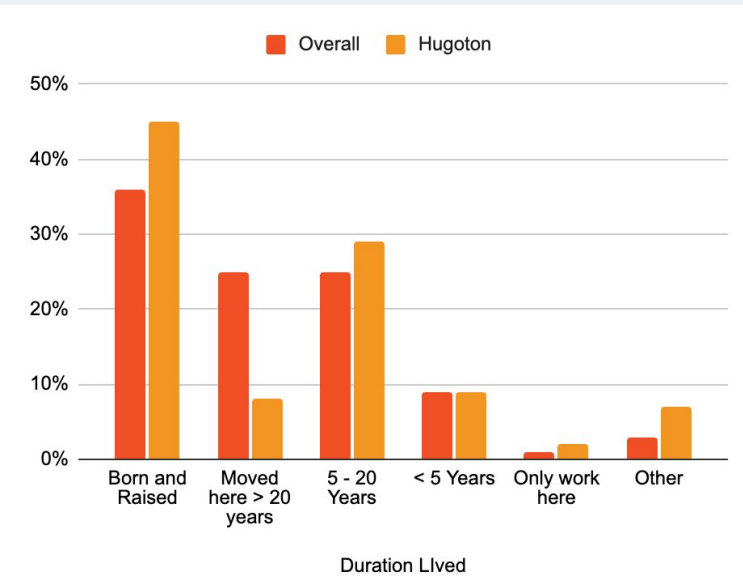
Residential Status



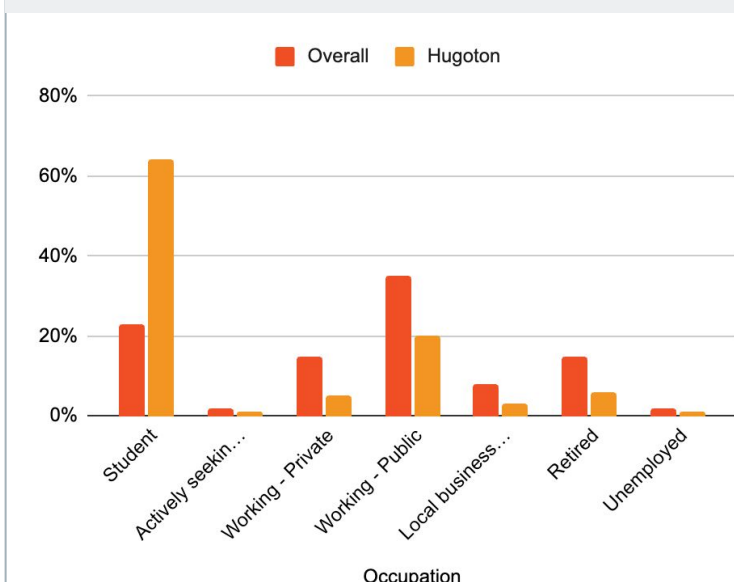
Education Level



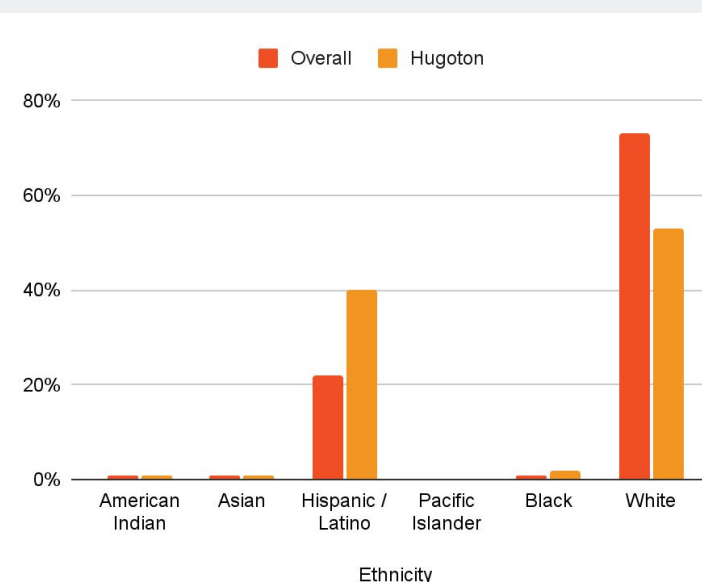
Years lived in location





Occupation



Ethnicity



- For Likelihood of Investing, older adults show much lower optimism compared to young adults.
- For Emotional Commitment, young adults demonstrate significantly greater emotional commitment than minors.
- For Drive Student Engagement, adults aged 20-39 are far more active in supporting student programs than those over 60, reflecting greater involvement from younger adults.

 Town Score
 Average Community Score

120

Number of people who expressed an interest in volunteering to better the community
120 of 168 (71%)