



The Utah Wellbeing Survey Project

Supporting Planning in Utah Communities

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Utah State University

May 8, 2025

For APA UT Spring Conference, Logan, Utah

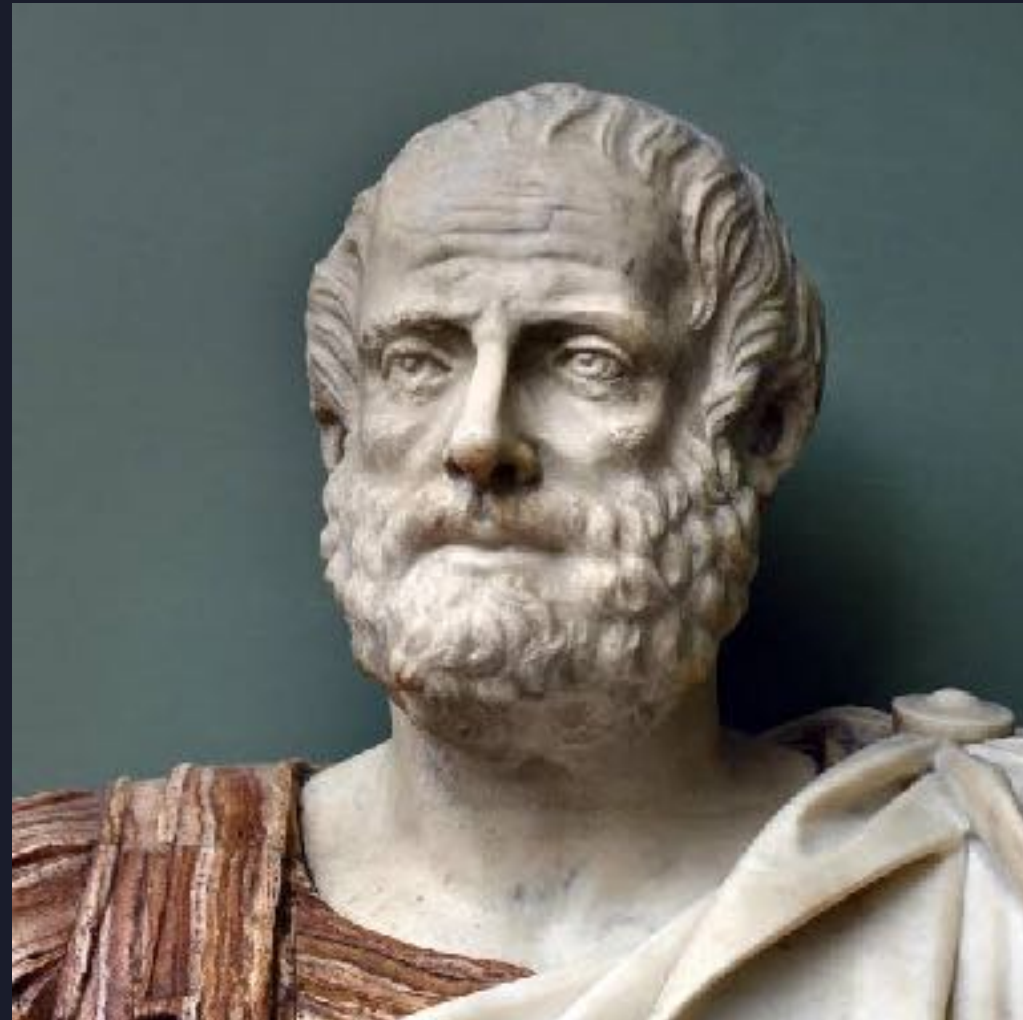


UtahStateUniversity



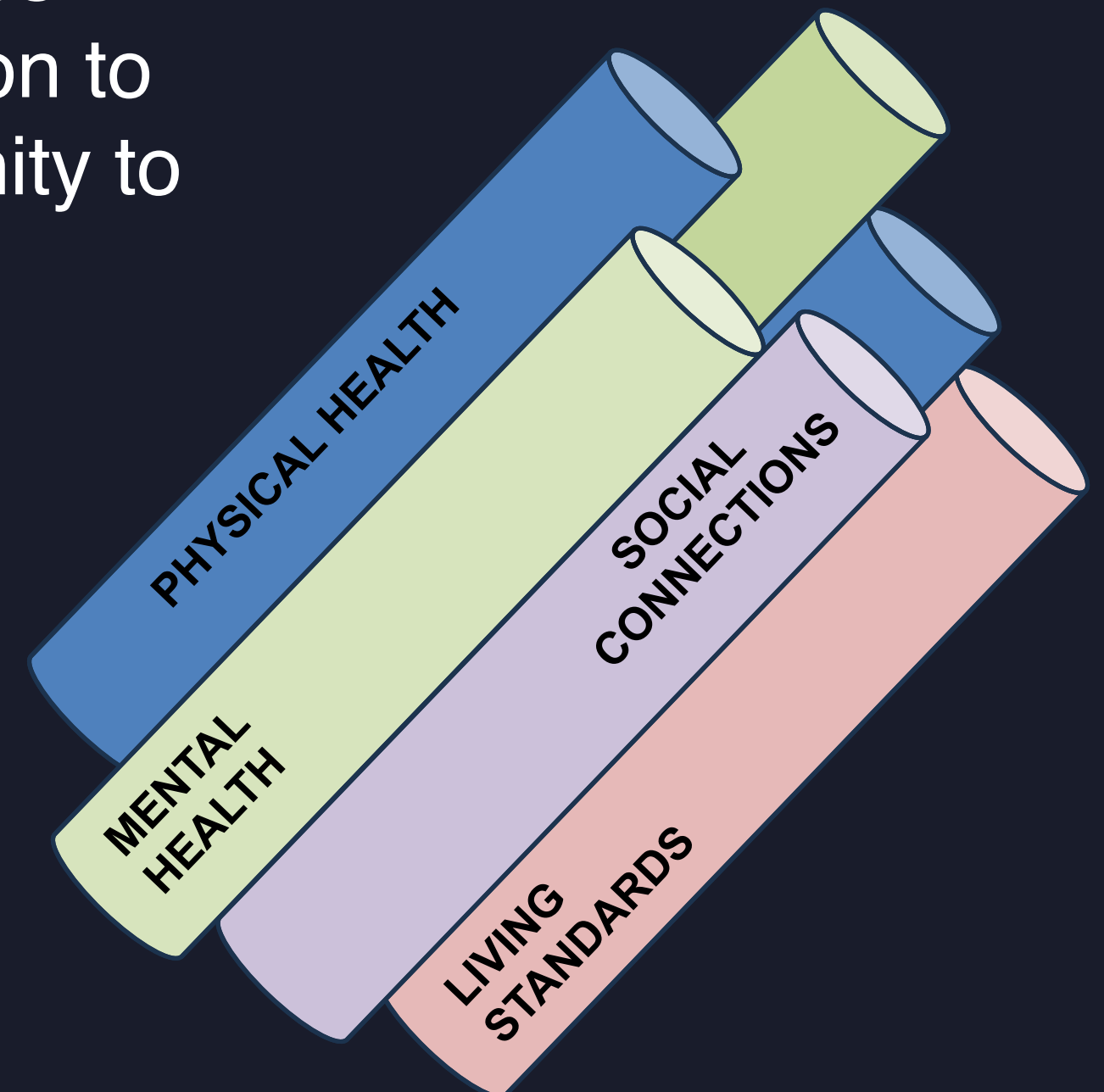
Wellbeing...

Everything that makes up a good life



Aristotle

Wellbeing bundles
can vary from person to
person and community to
community.



Utah **WELLBEING PROJECT**

**Online Survey
Research**



**SURVEY
RESEARCH**

Wellbeing Survey Project Goals

To provide cities & towns with information on the wellbeing of residents to inform planning processes and decisions

To support regional and statewide initiatives related to community & environmental wellbeing

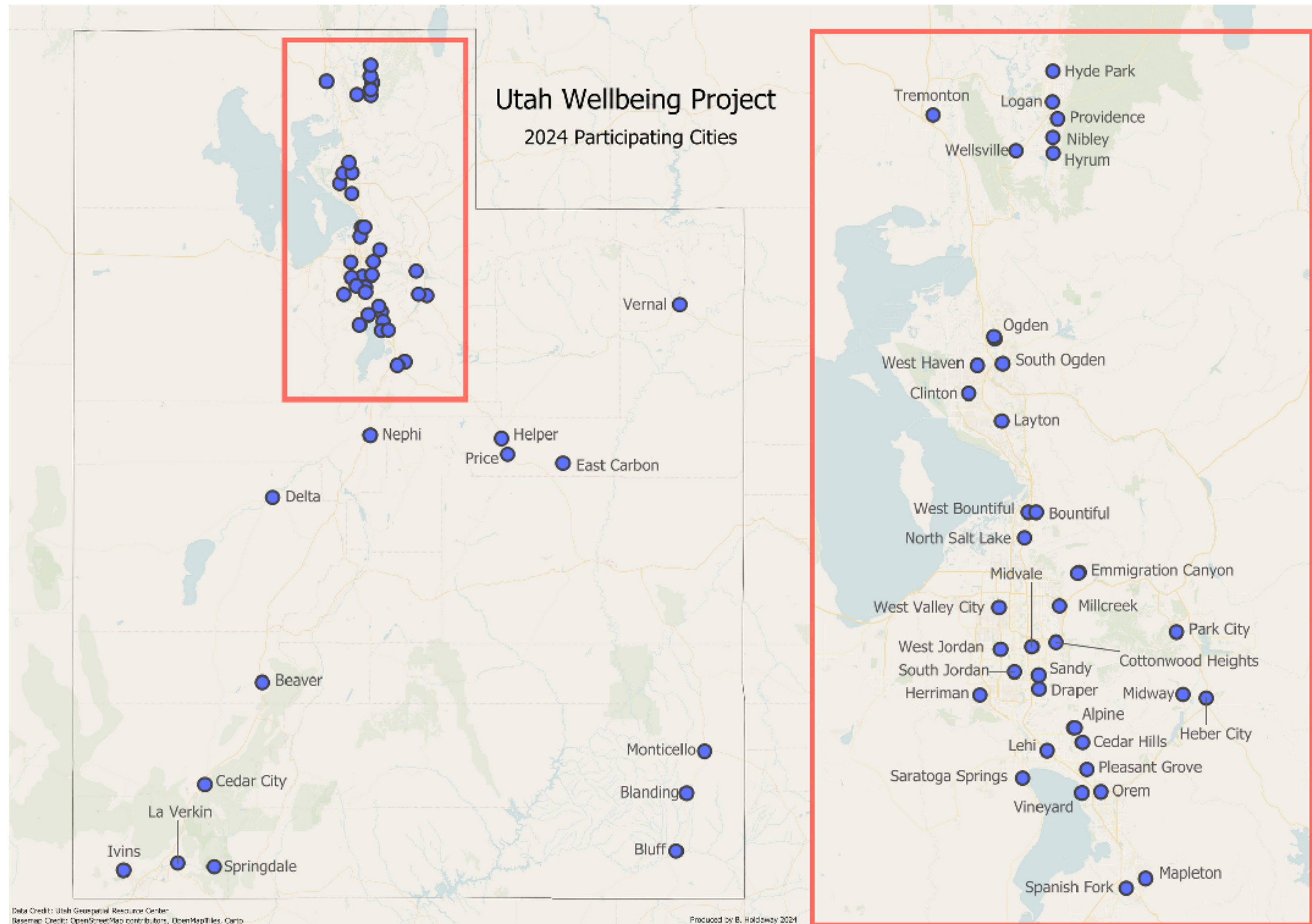
To support comparative research on community wellbeing and local concerns

Reports are available on the [Utah Wellbeing Project's Website](#)

51
Survey
Partners in
2024

62
Community
Partners
since 2019

Over 42,000
Surveys To
Date

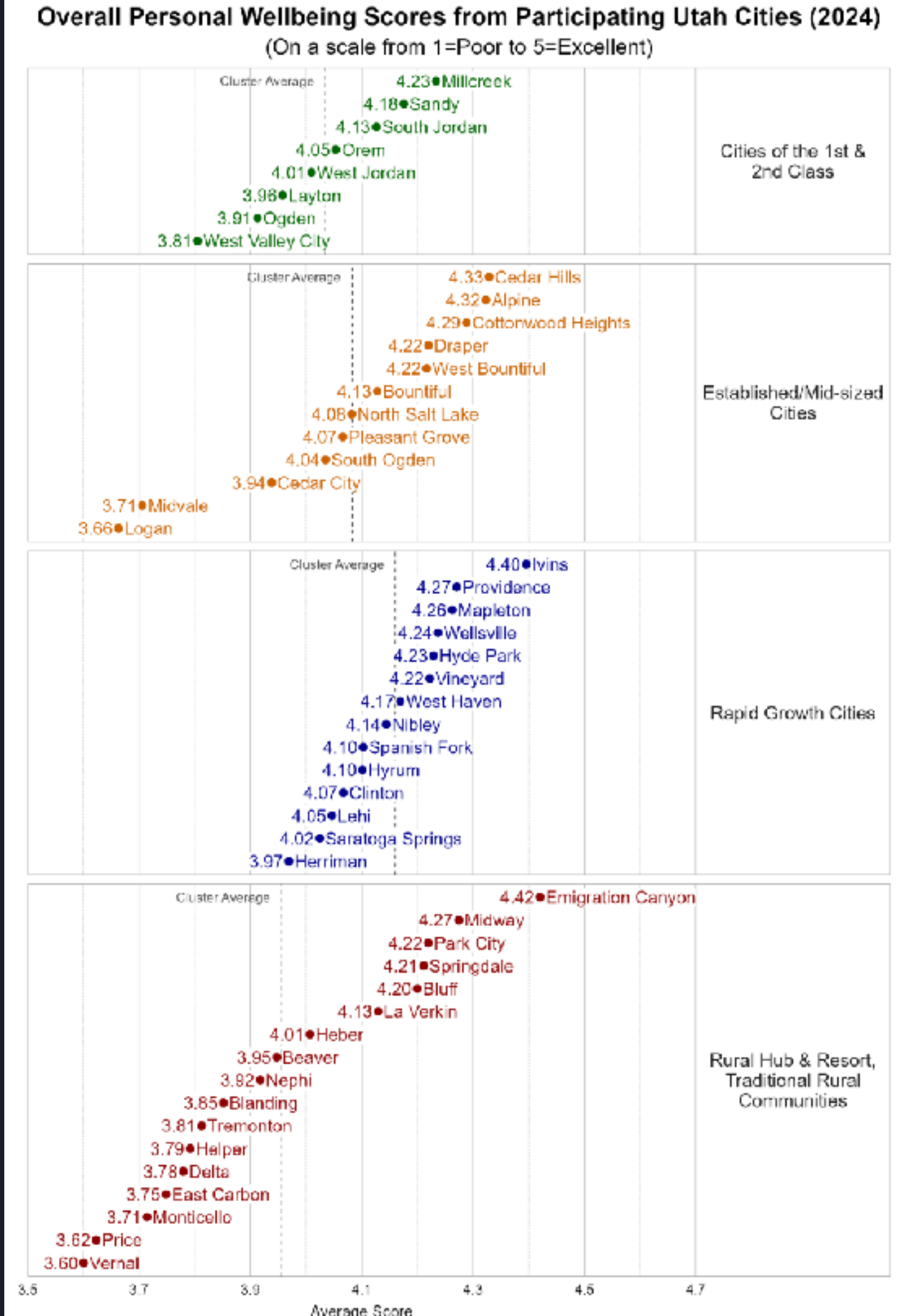


How is Wellbeing in Utah?

How would you rate your overall personal wellbeing?

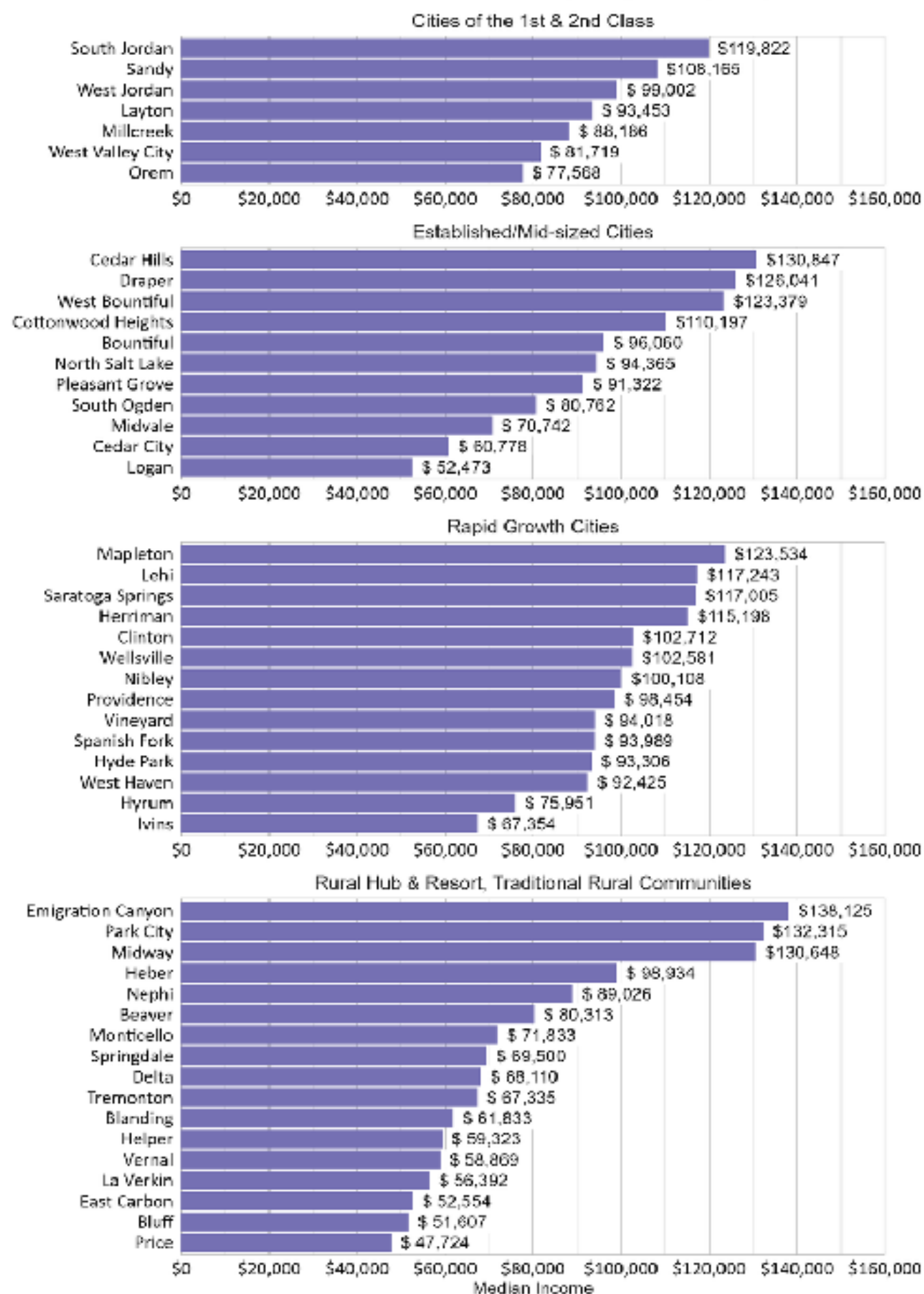
Statewide Average = 4.05
(on a 1-5 Scale)

Overall average personal wellbeing varies within and across Utah communities



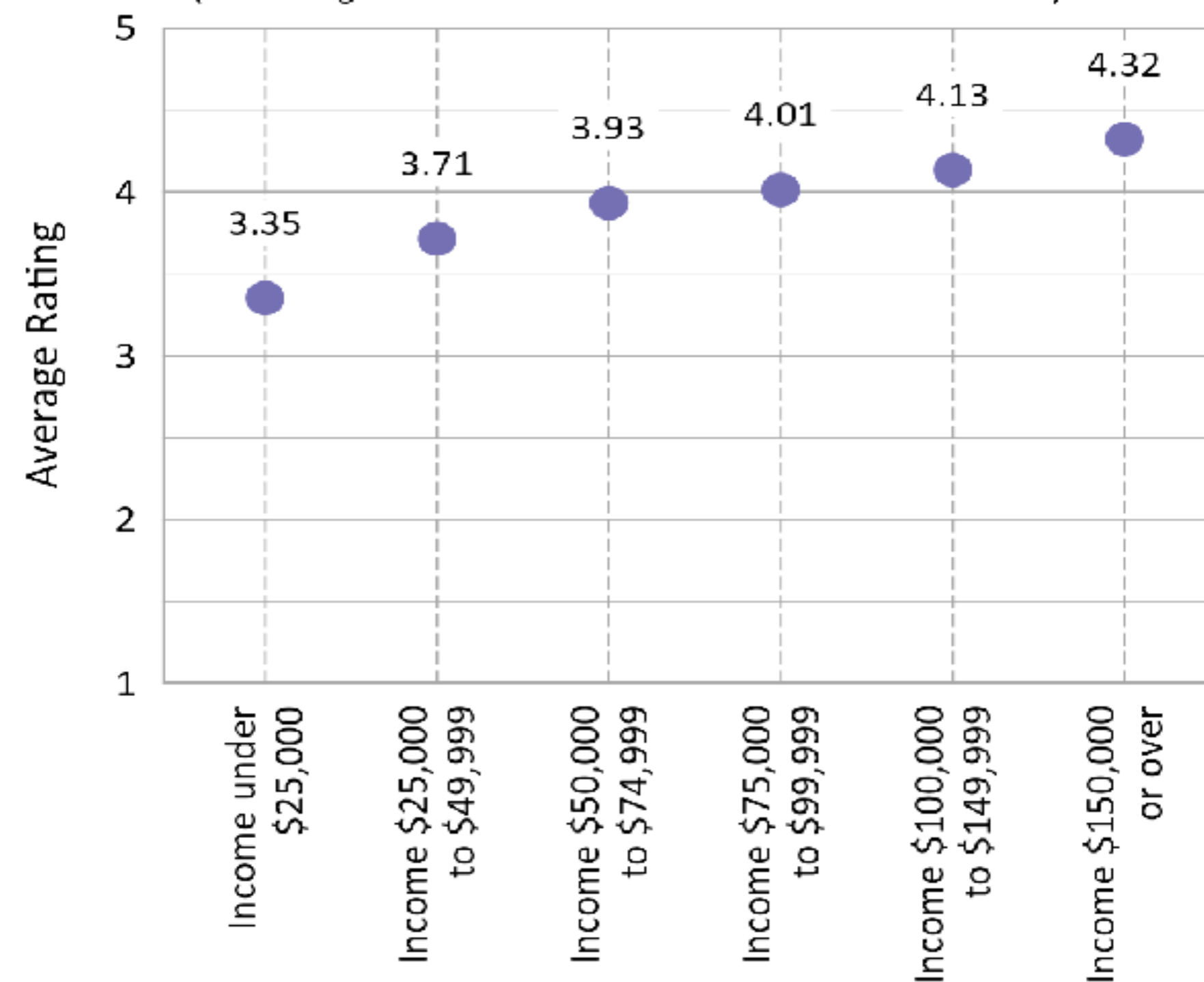
Income Makes a Difference

Median Income Of Participating Cities (2024)



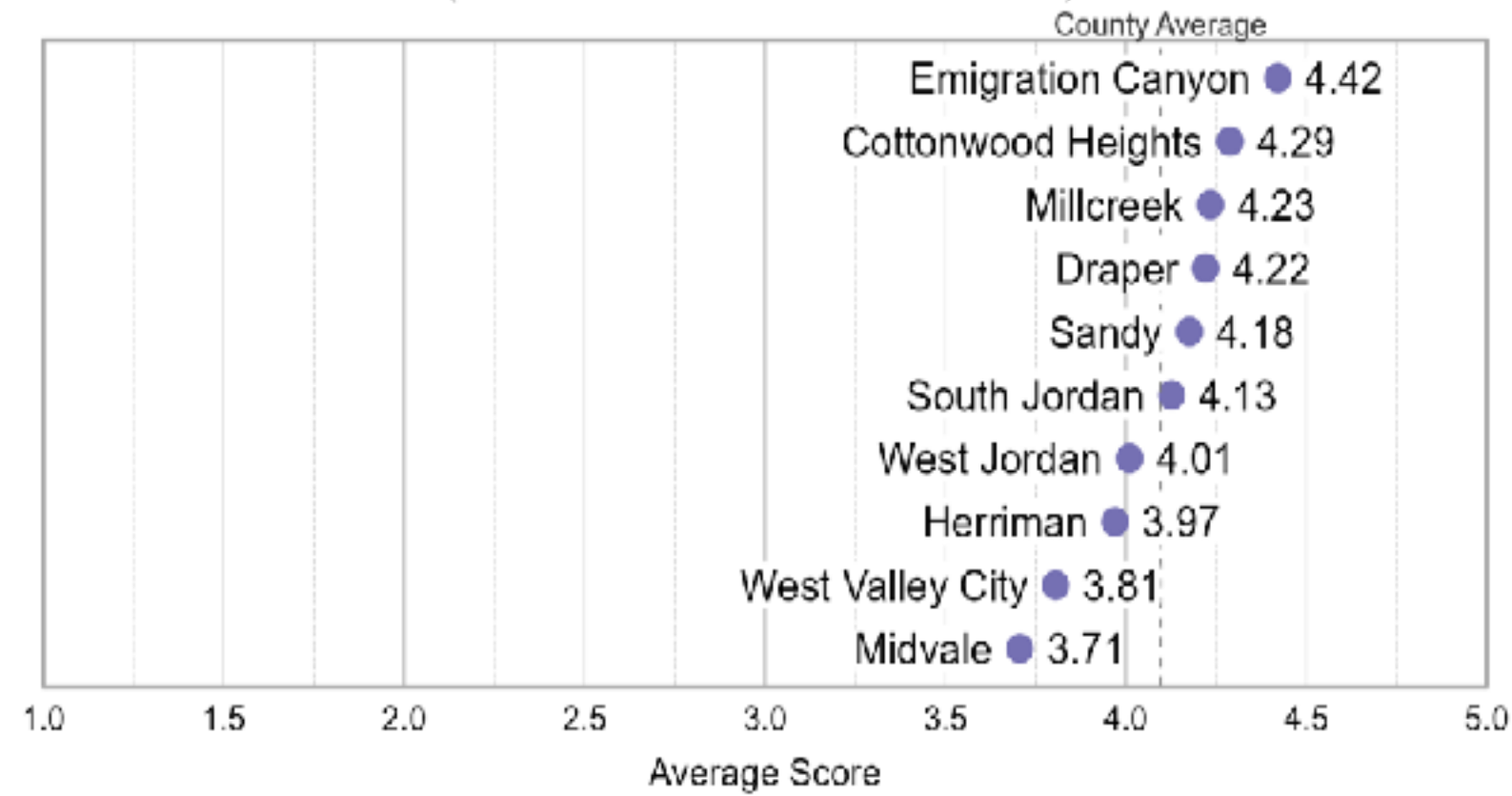
Average Rating of Personal Wellbeing By Income

(Wellbeing is rated on a scale from 1=Poor to 5=Excellent)



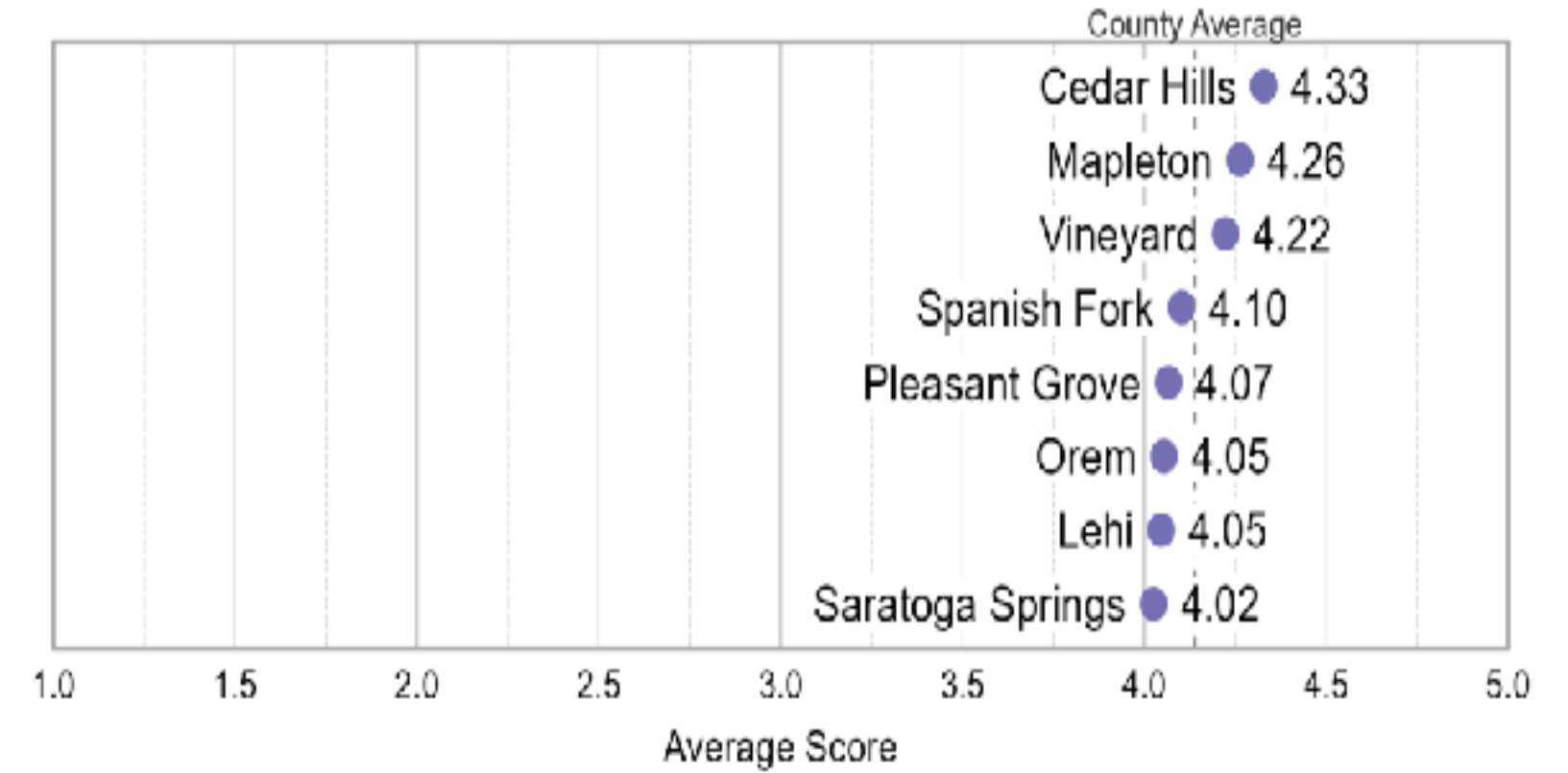
Overall Personal Wellbeing Scores from Salt Lake County (2024)

(On a scale from 1=Poor to 5=Excellent)



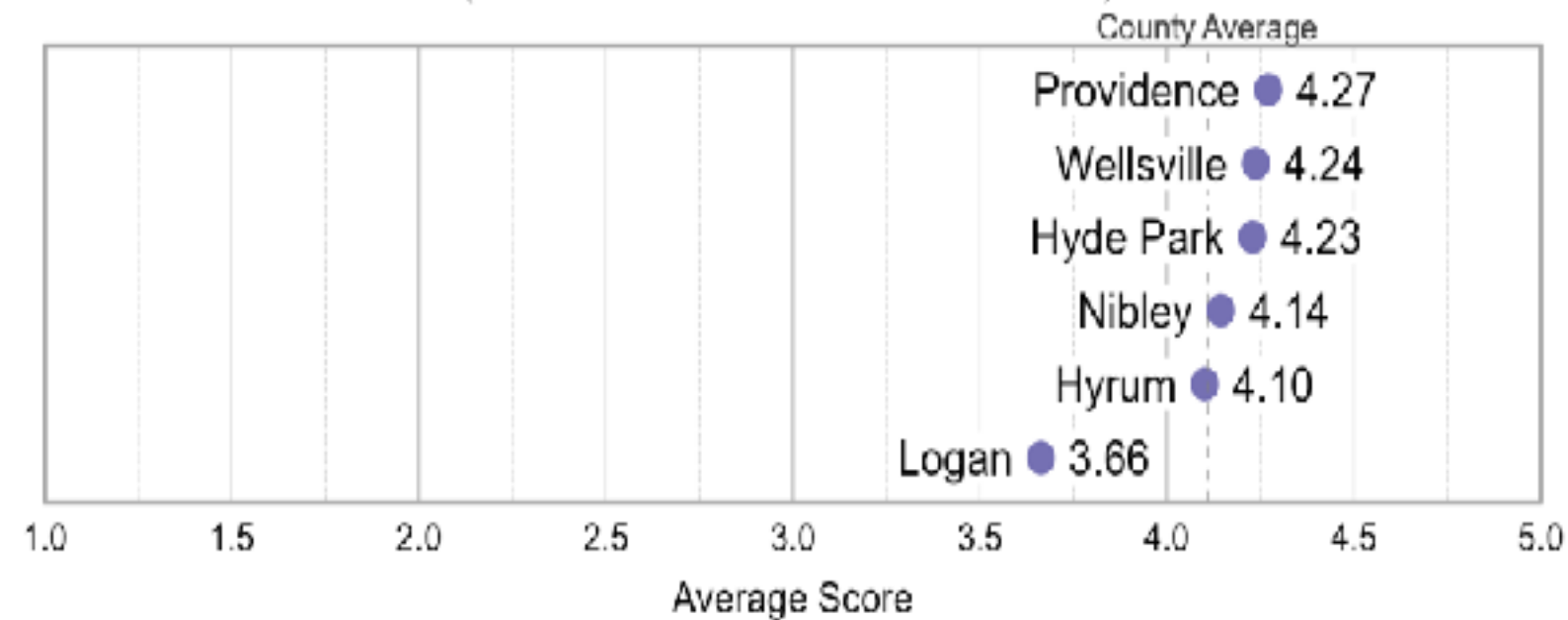
Overall Personal Wellbeing Scores from Utah County (2024)

(On a scale from 1=Poor to 5=Excellent)



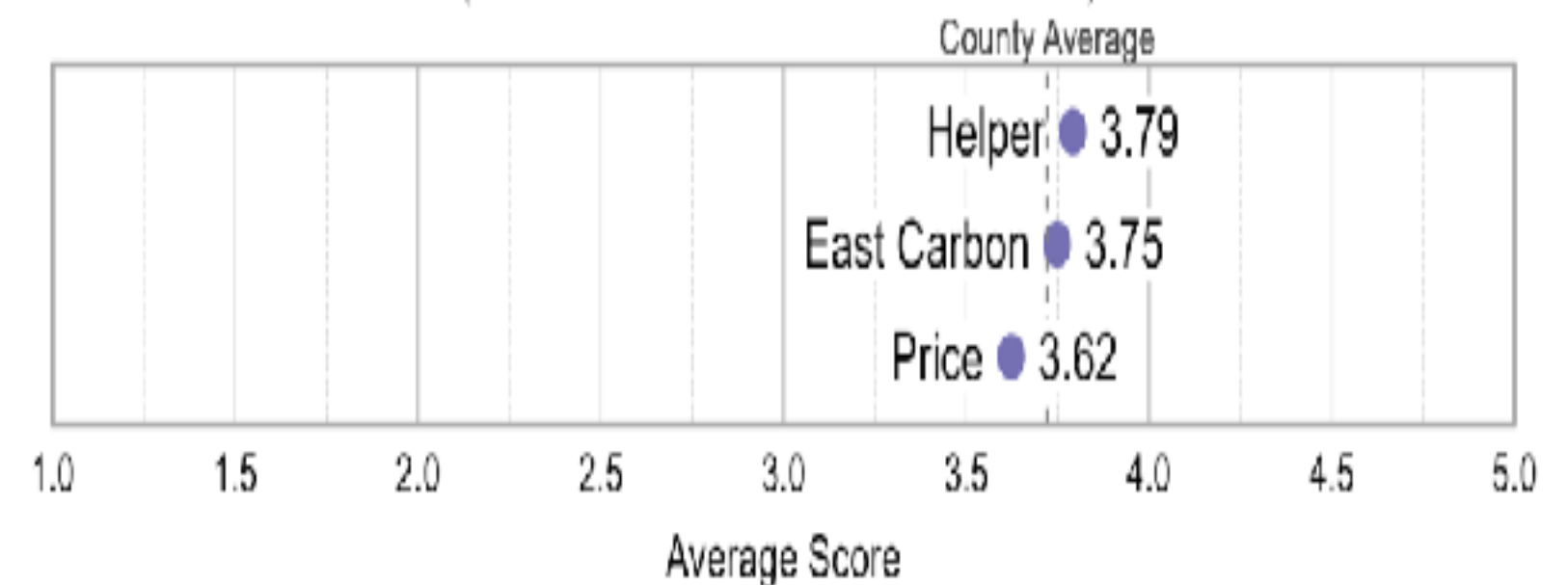
Overall Personal Wellbeing Scores from Cache County (2024)

(On a scale from 1=Poor to 5=Excellent)

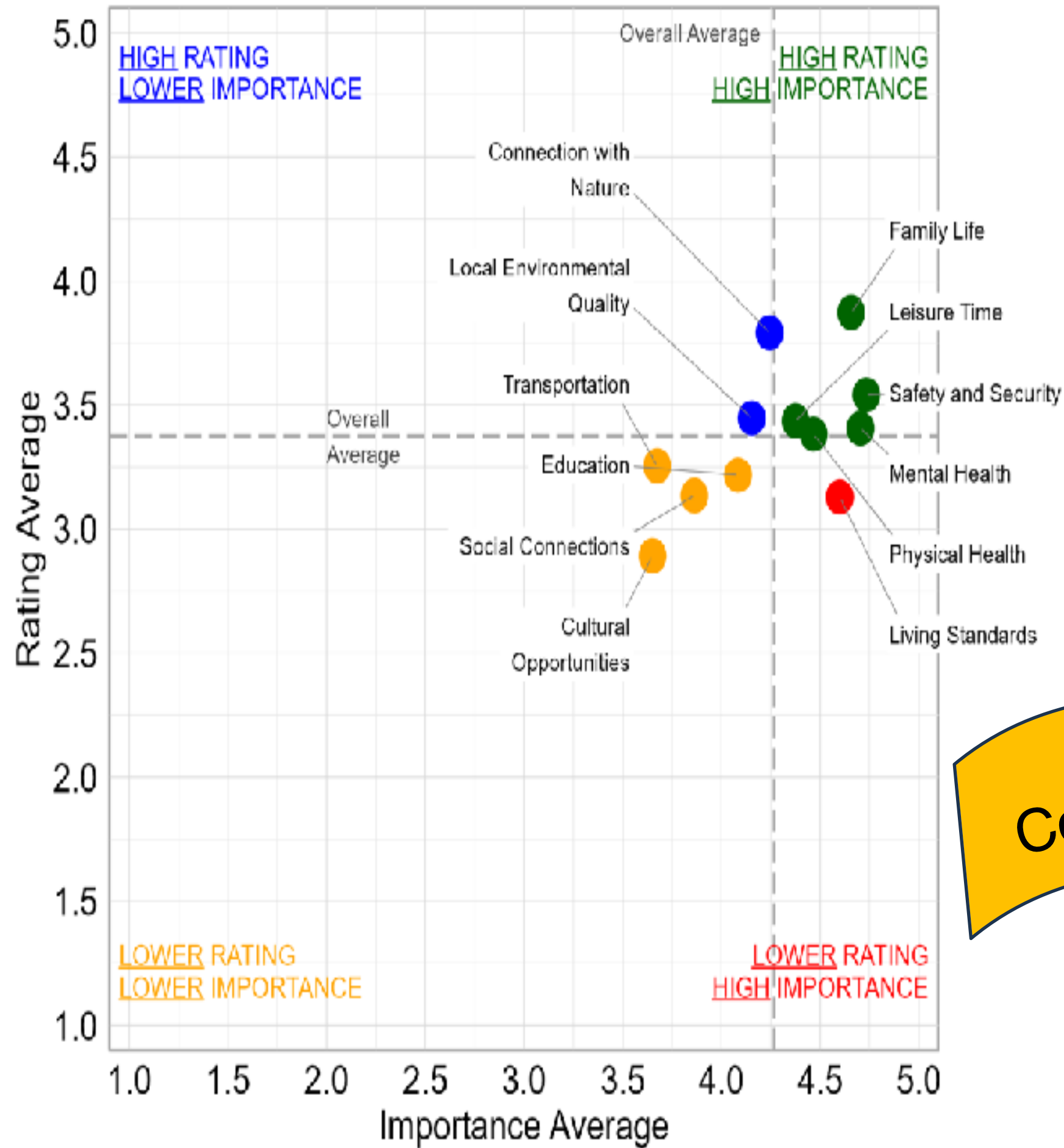


Overall Personal Wellbeing Scores from Carbon County (2024)

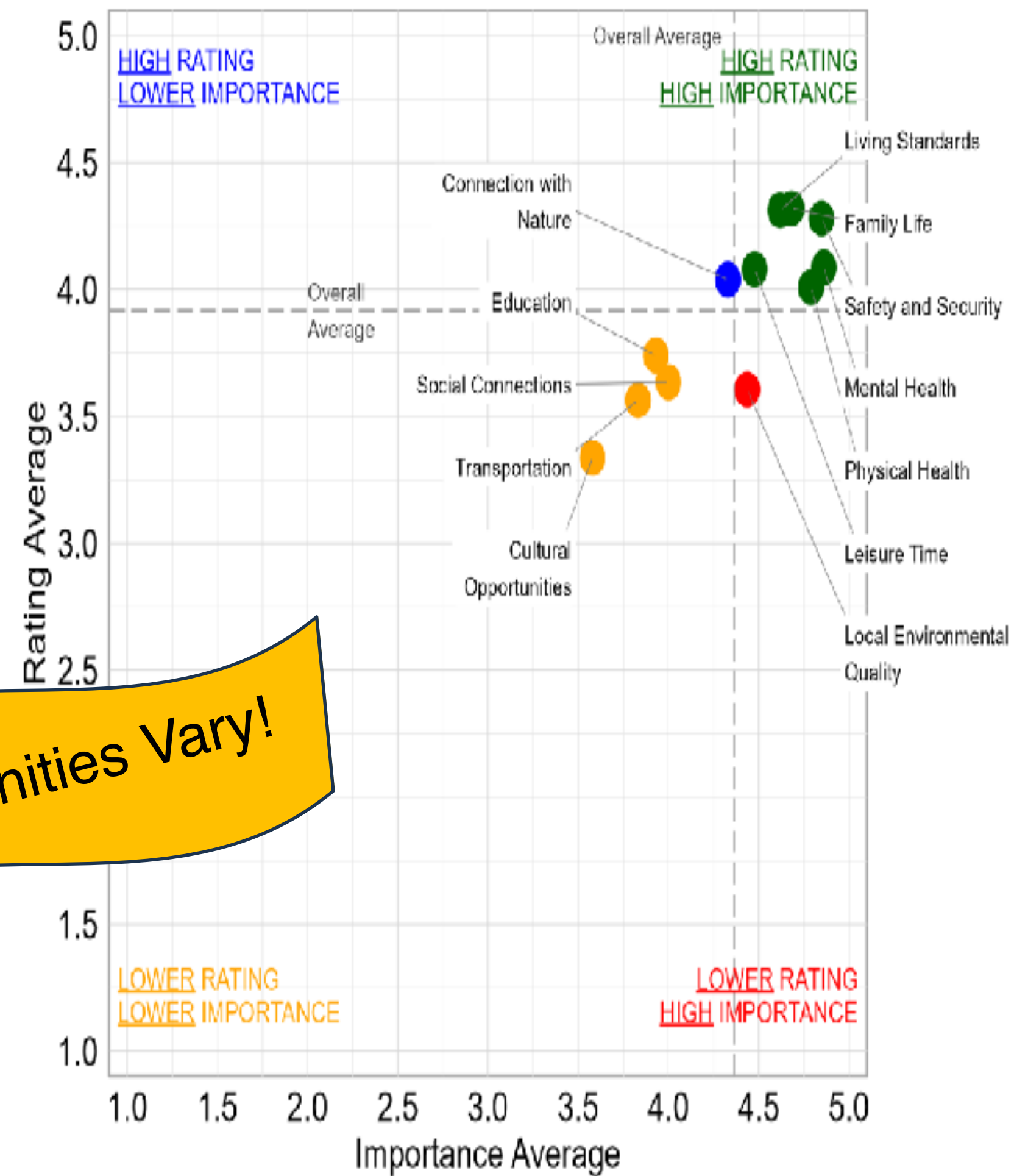
(On a scale from 1=Poor to 5=Excellent)



Vernal Wellbeing Matrix



Draper Wellbeing Matrix



Communities Vary!

Wellbeing Domains – What's Important? (Statewide)

Safety & Security	Mental Health
Physical Health	Family Life
Living Standards	Leisure Time
Local Environmental Quality	Connection with Nature
Transportation	Education
Social Connections	Cultural Opportunities

Wellbeing Domains – What's Important?

**Bluff
Springdale
Emigration Canyon
Midway
Cottonwood Heights
Ivins**

Connection with Nature

Local Environmental Quality

**Highly Important Domains in
these Cities and Towns!**

Wellbeing Domains – What's Rated High? (Statewide)

Family Life

Safety & Security

Living Standards

Mental Health

Connection with Nature

Leisure Time

Physical Health

Education

Social Connections

Local Environmental Quality

Transportation

Cultural Opportunities

Wellbeing Domains – What's Rated Low?

**Logan
Price
Vernal**

Mental Health

Wellbeing and Planning

- Wellbeing is high in Utah, **but** varies across communities in unique, place-based ways.
- ~~Safety~~ & Security often most important
A guiding principle for planning
- Mental Health Rating and Overall ~~Personal~~ Wellbeing are very strongly correlated
How do we incorporate mental health into community planning?

From Mental Health America:

Green Spaces

Affordable Housing

Safe, Walkable
Neighborhoods

Foster Social
Connections

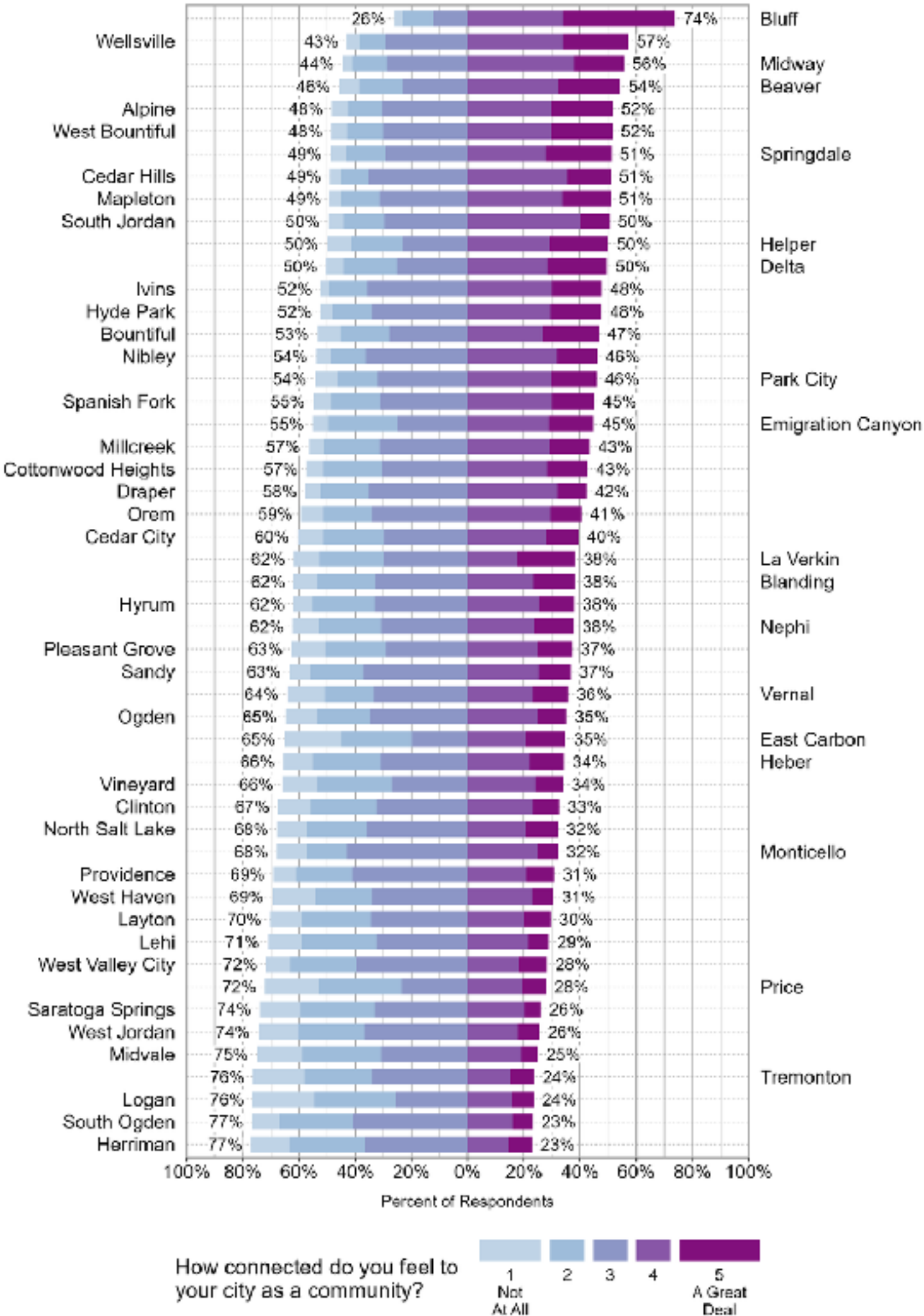
Community Connection

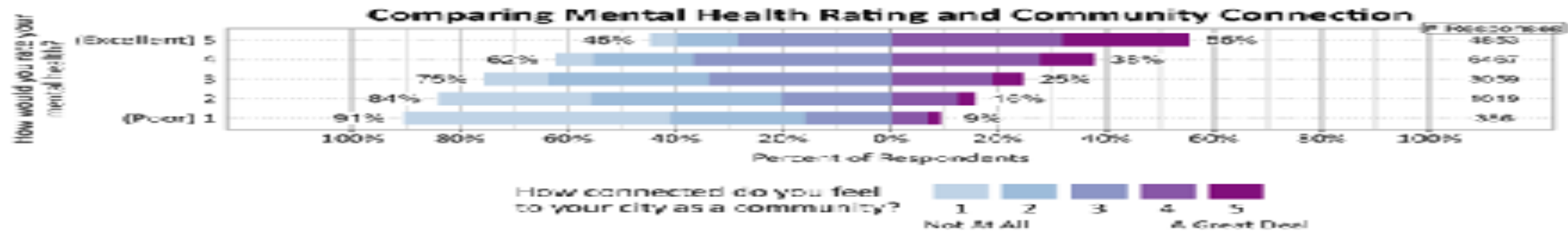
How connected do you feel to your city as a community?

Community connection varies within and across Utah communities

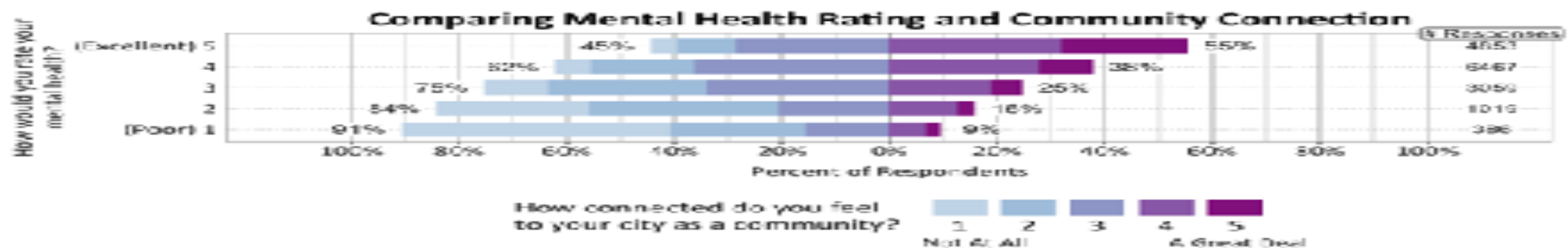
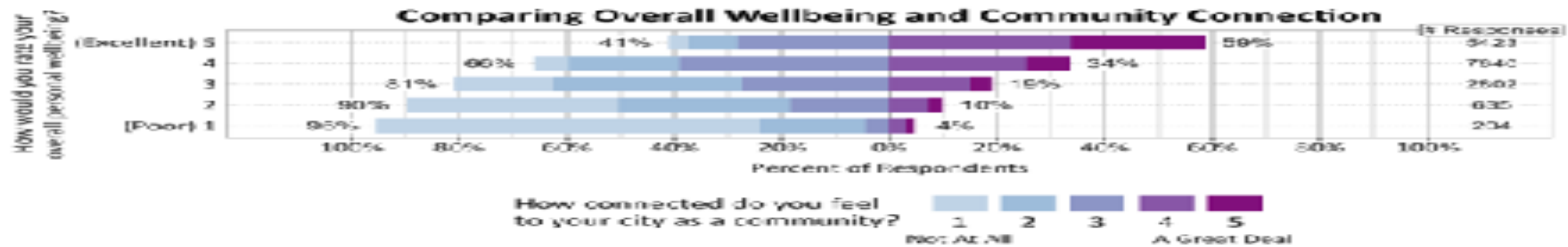
Urban

Rural

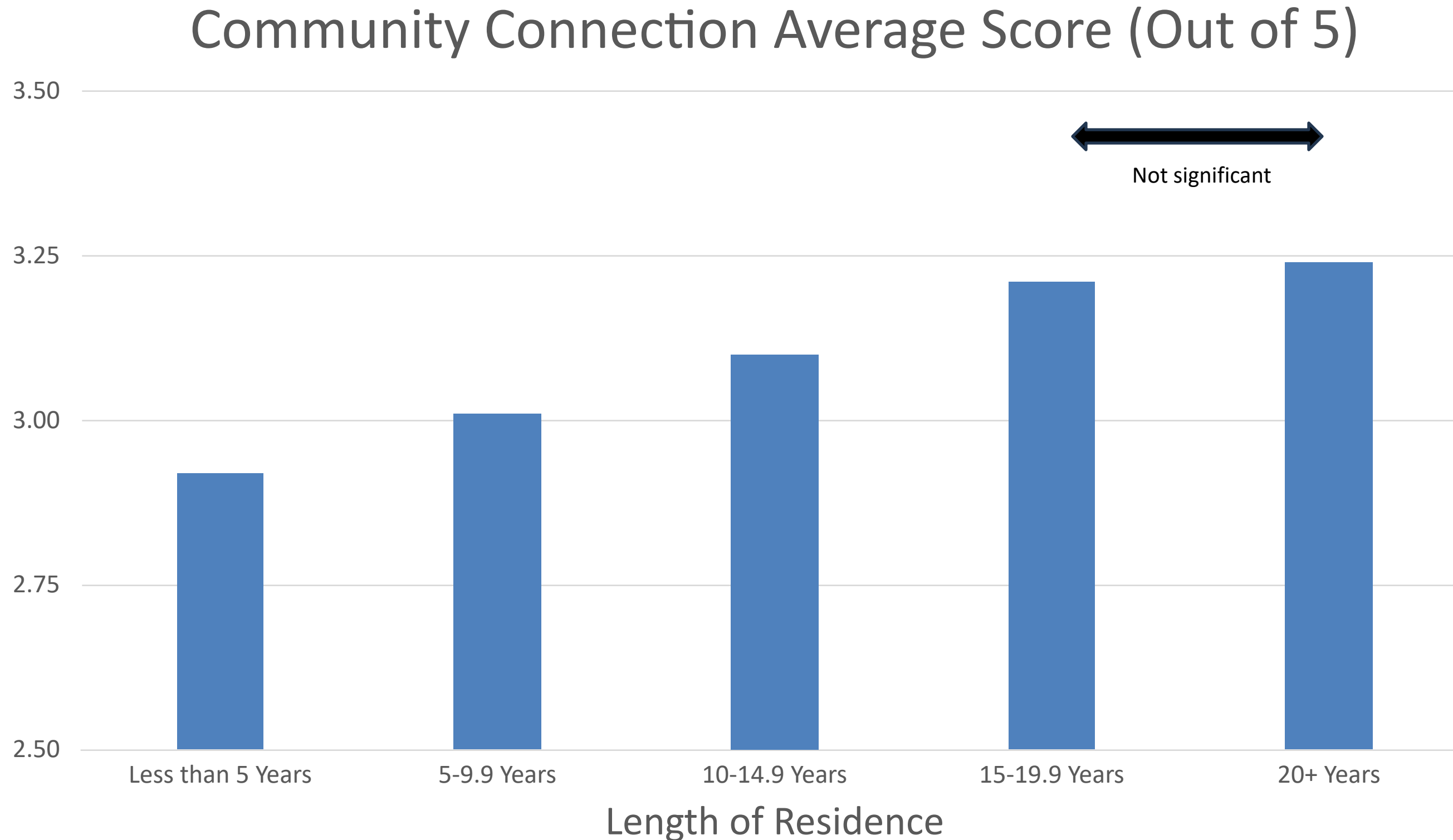




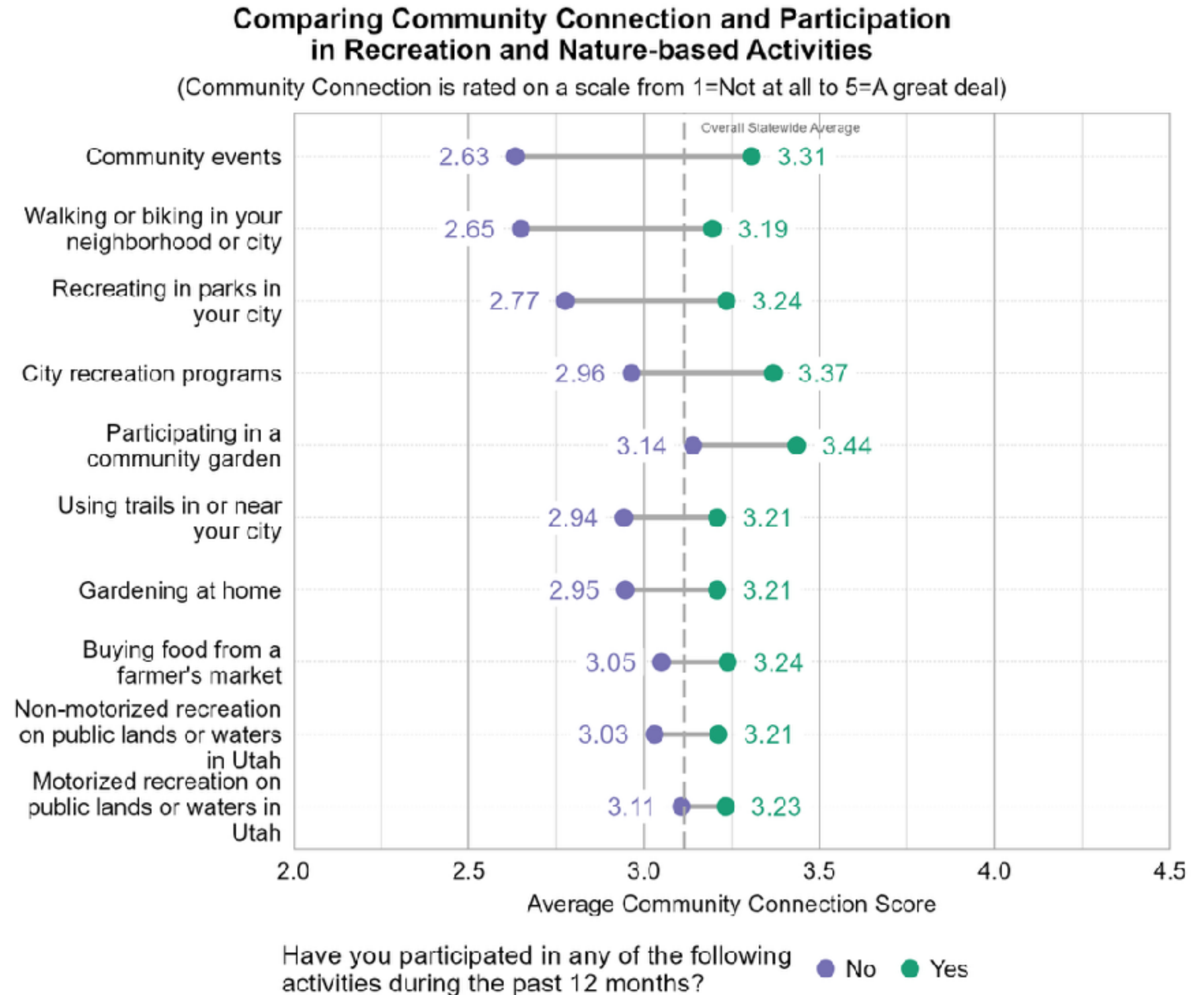
Community Connection Matters!



Newcomers feel less connected... for 15+ years!



Recreation is
Associated
with Higher
Levels of
Community
Connection
...
Everywhere!



(Statewide Data)

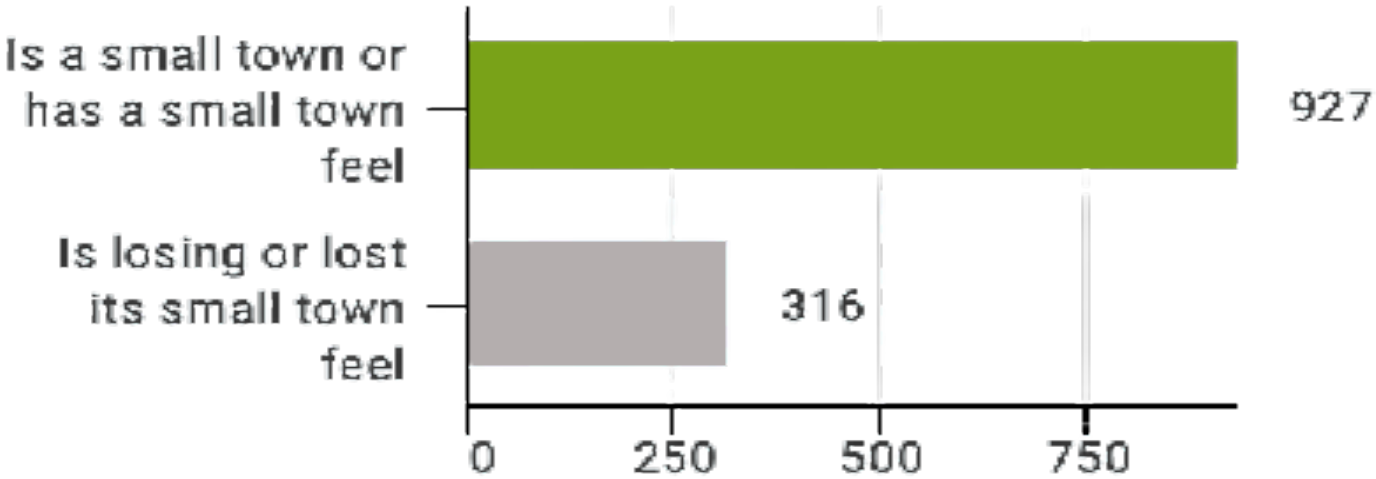
Small Town Feel Matters! ... and not just in small towns



“I value the small town,
**know all your
neighbors feel**”

“This is a small community of **people who show
concern for each other** and for the town, located in an
area of outstanding scenic beauty.”

The way respondents talk about small town feel within their city or town

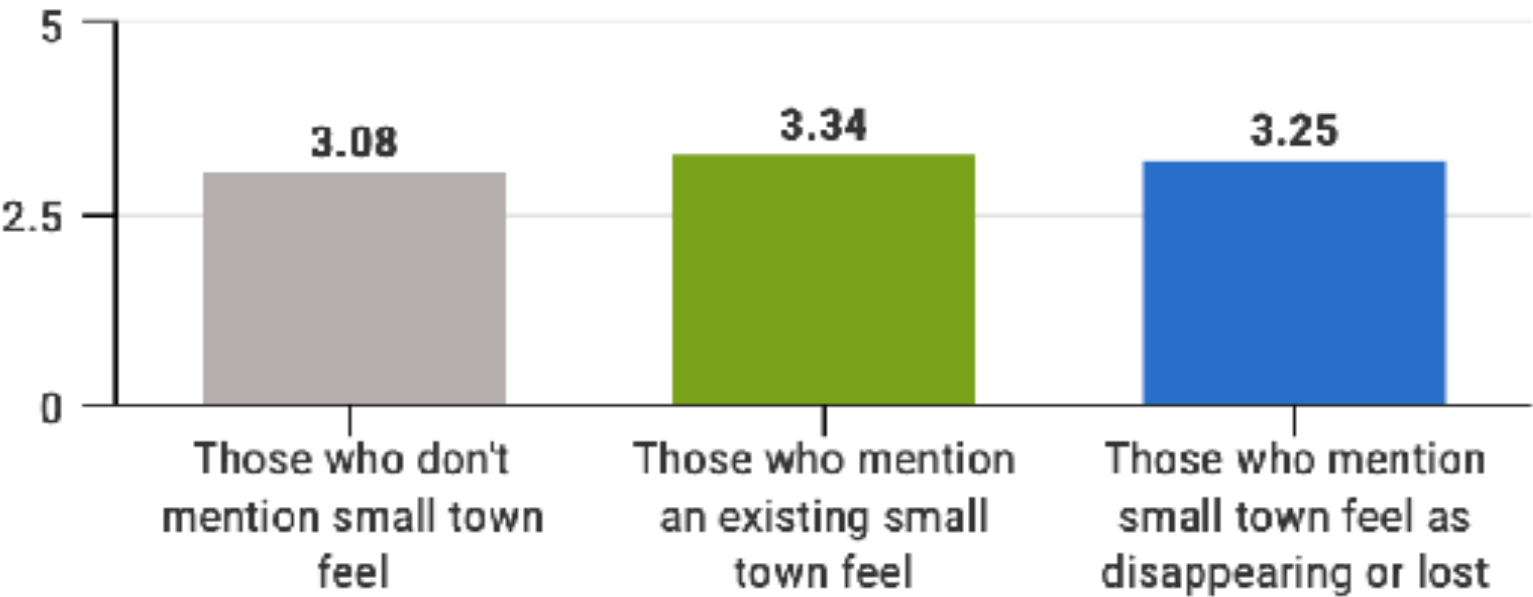


From 2022-23 Survey

“**Keep the rural feel** of Nibley ...Can't we be the one city that still embraces **farmland, open space, parks and nature?**”

“The **cow pastures create a calm and peace and small town feel** that a city park will never create.”

Community Connection



From 2022-23 Survey

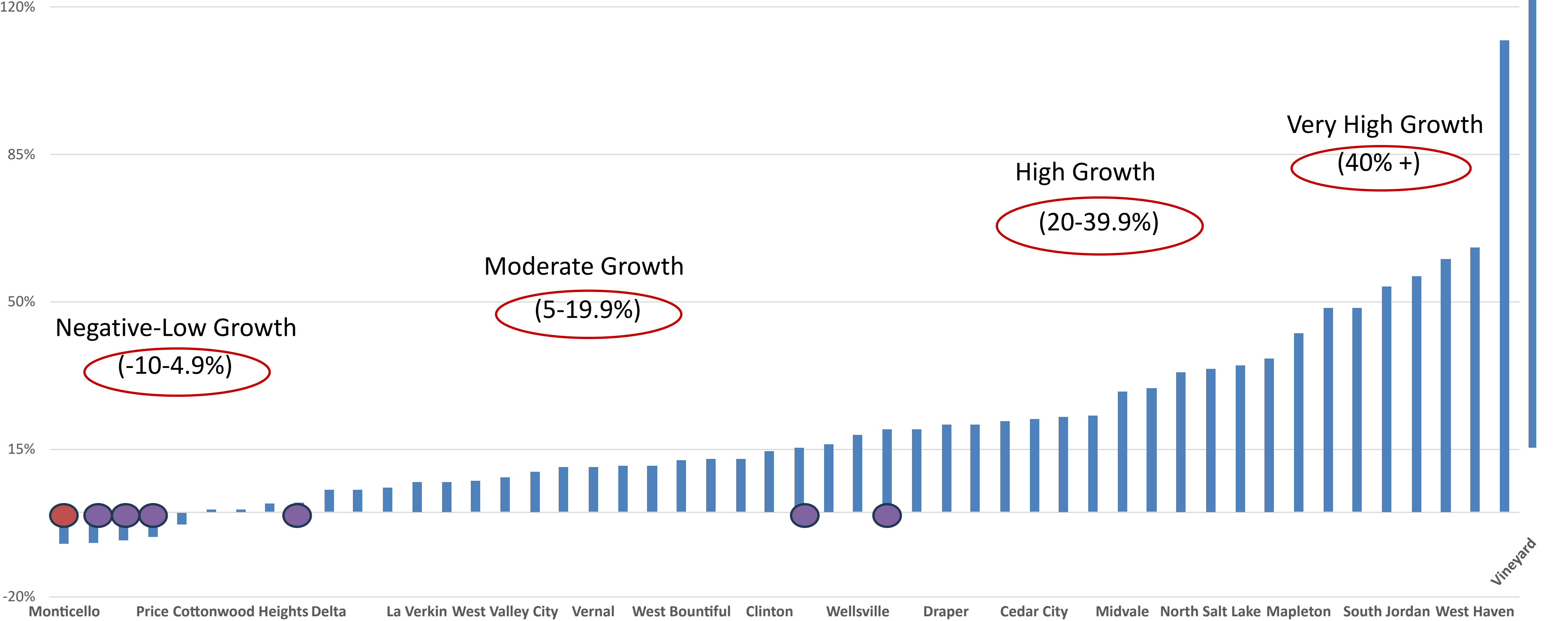
Community Connection and Planning



Plan for Building Community Connections - through Recreation & Gathering Spaces!



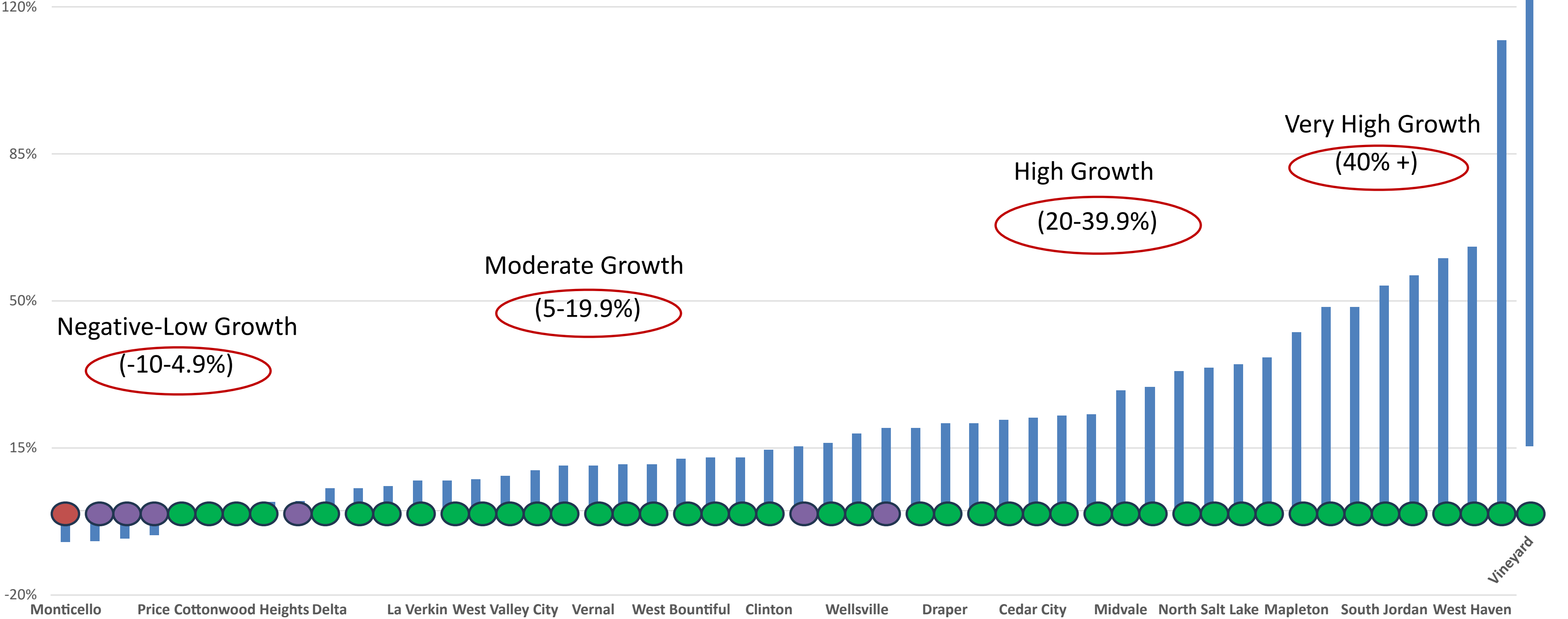
Population Growth Rates (2010-2020)



● Too Slow ● Just Right

Perceptions of the Rate of Population Growth

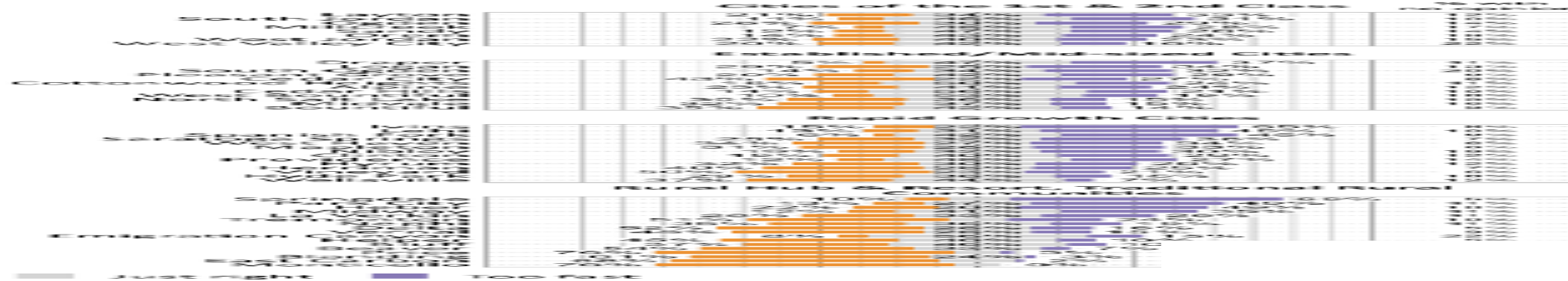
Population Growth Rates (2010-2020)



Too Slow Just Right Too Fast

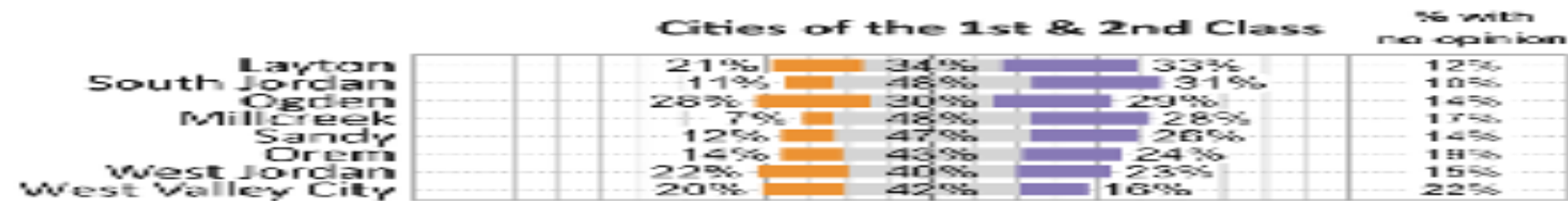
Perceptions of the Rate of Population Growth

Very Mixed!

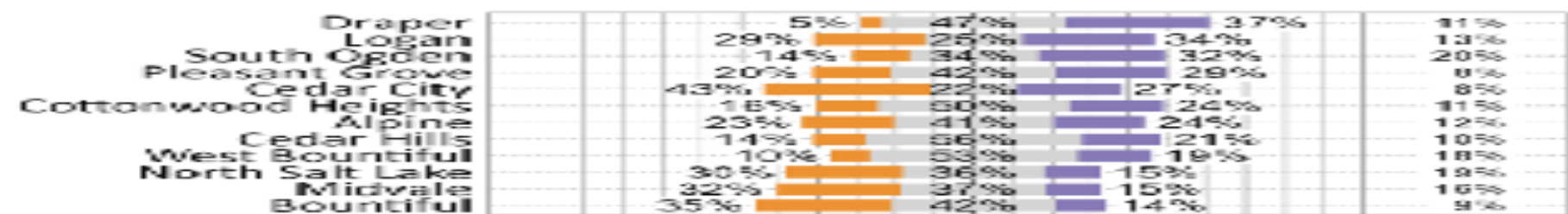


Economic Development

How would you describe the current pace of economic development in your city/town?



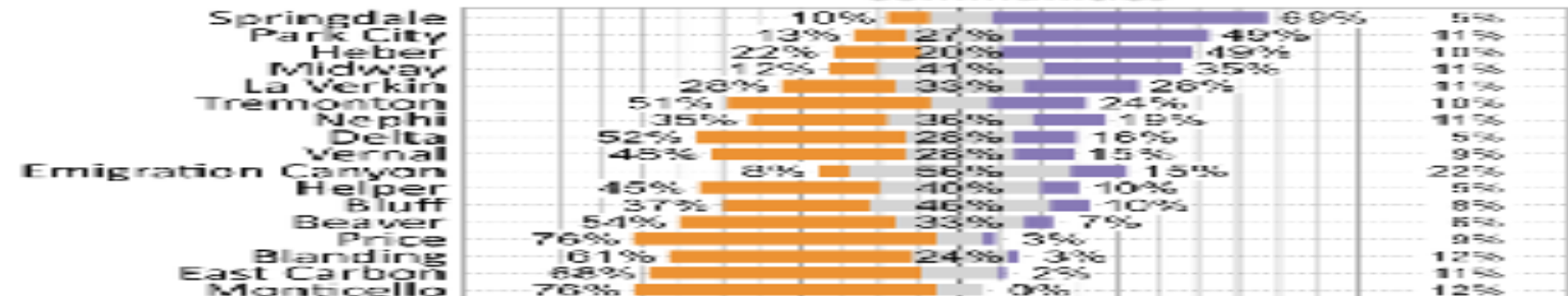
Established/Mid-sized Cities



Rapid Growth Cities



Rural Hub & Resort, Traditional Rural Communities

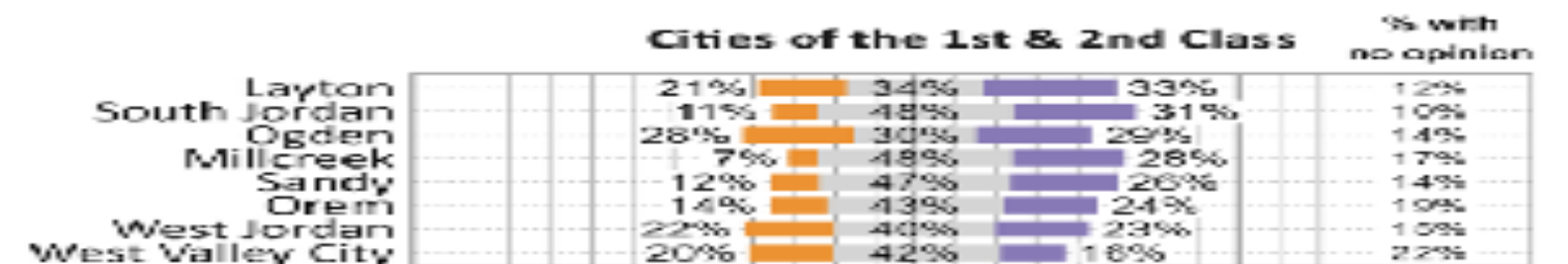


Just right Too fast

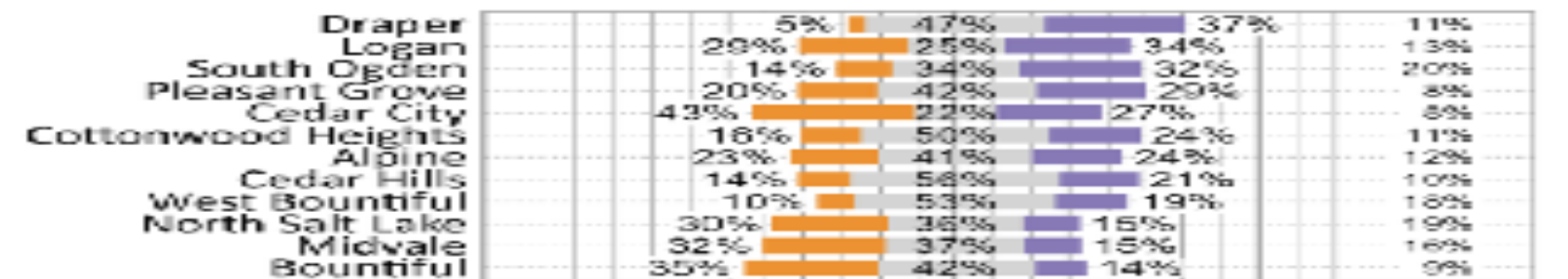
Too slow Just right Too fast

Economic Development

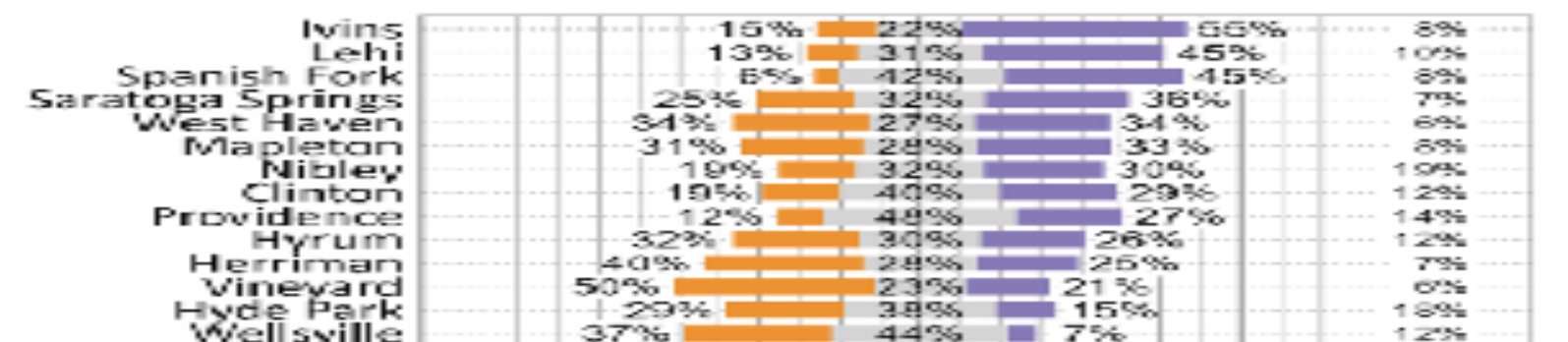
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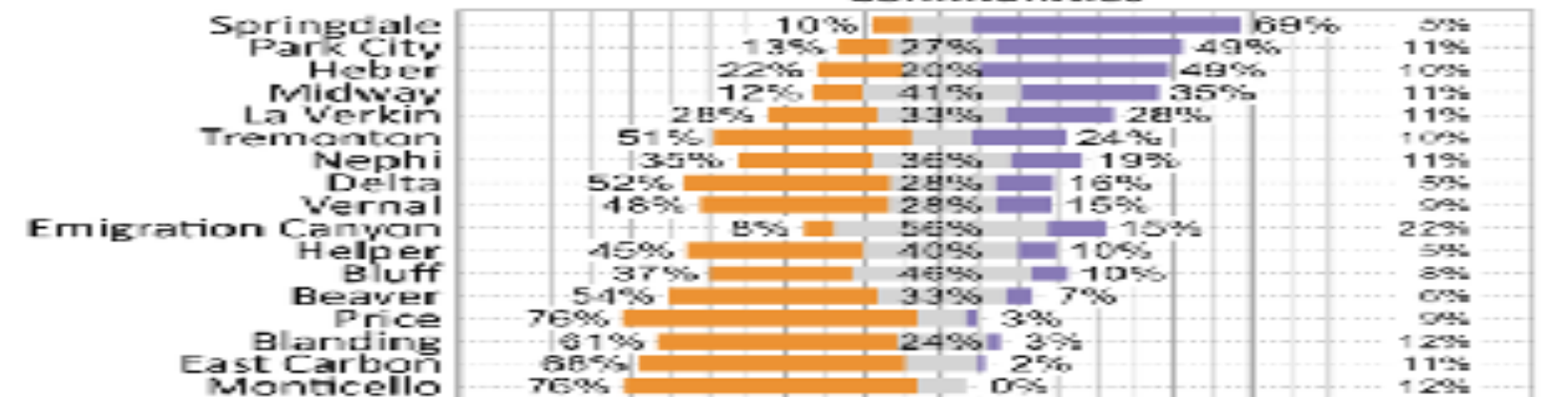
Established/Mid-sized Cities



Rapid Growth Cities



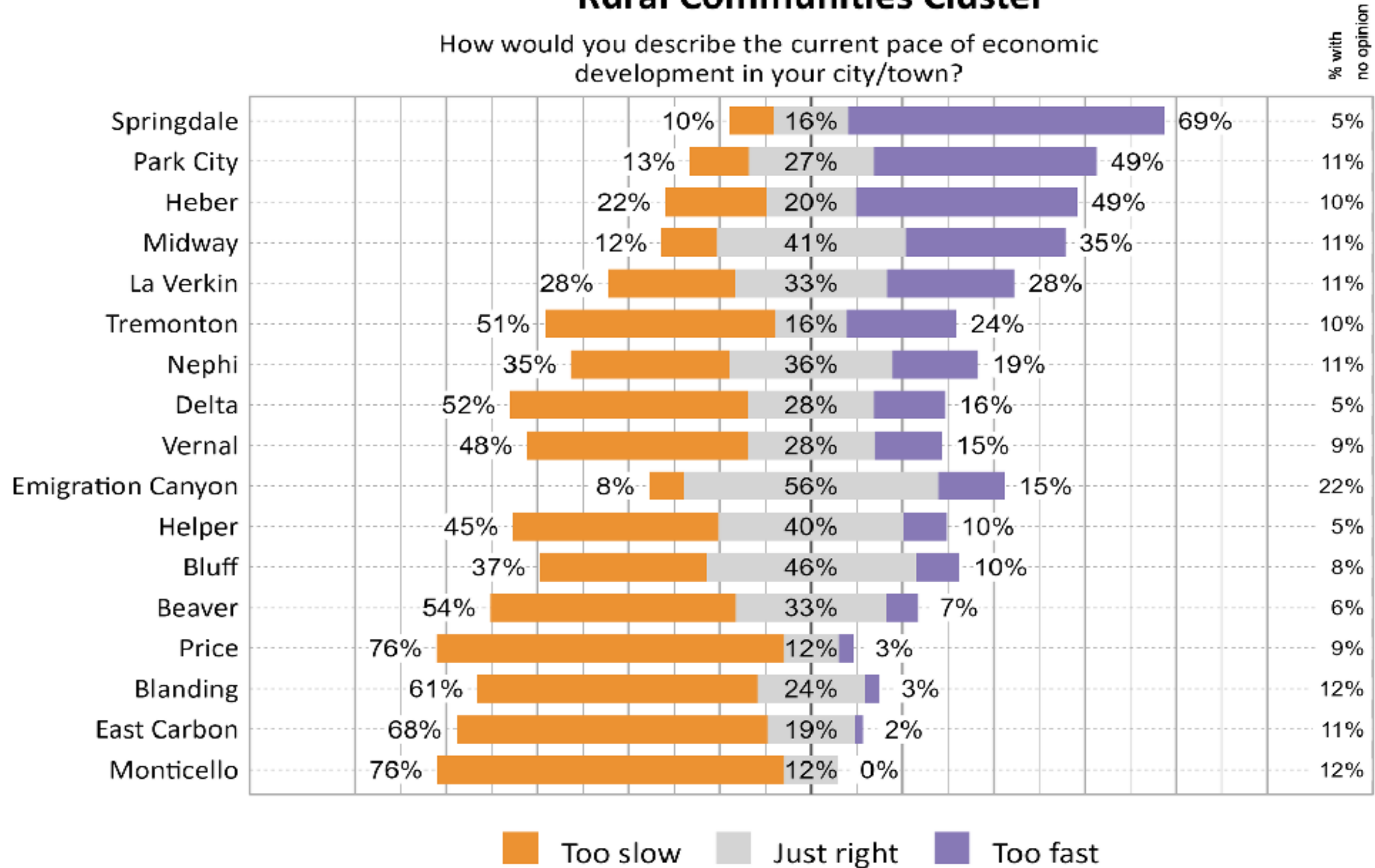
Rural Hub & Resort, Traditional Rural Communities



Just right Too fast

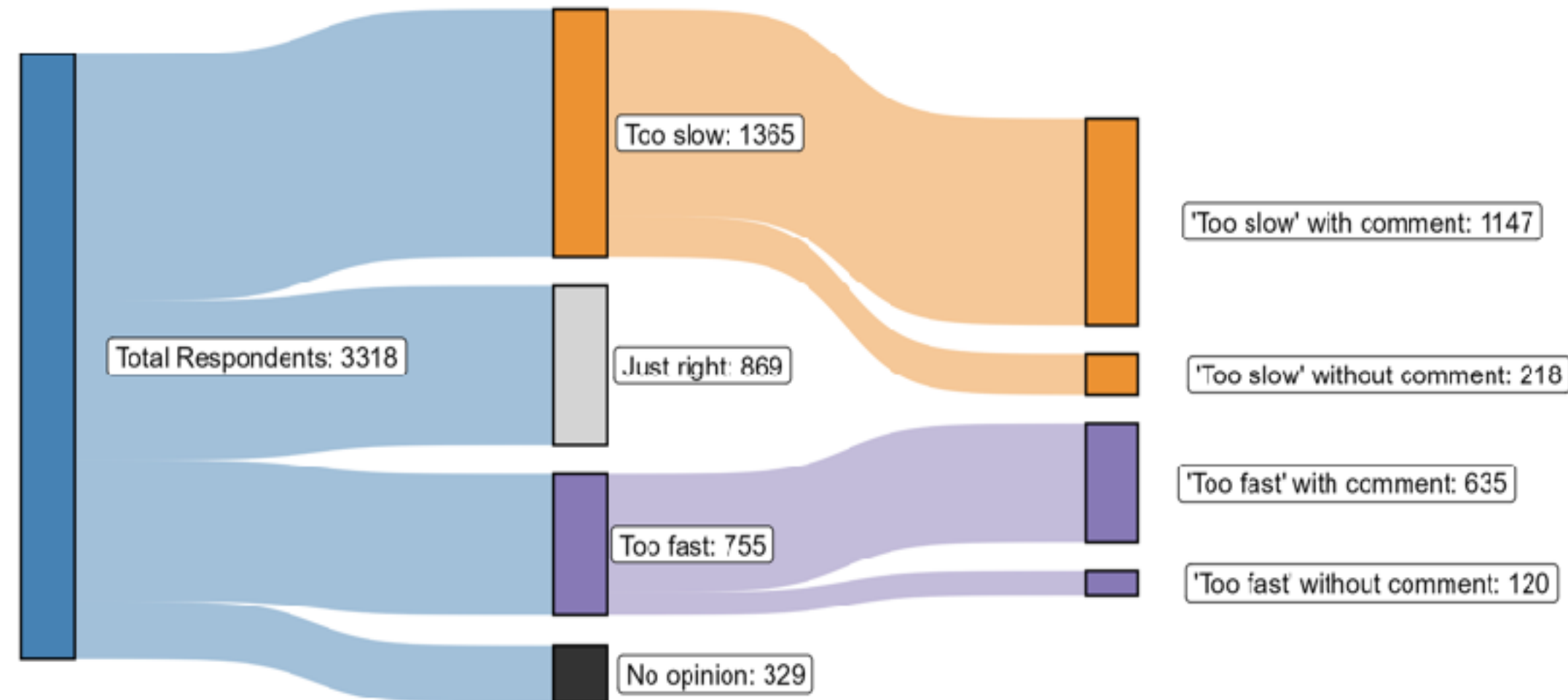
Economic Development for the Rural Hub & Resort, Traditional Rural Communities Cluster

How would you describe the current pace of economic development in your city/town?



Perceptions about the Pace of Economic Development in the Rural Cluster

How would you describe the current pace of economic development in your city?



Too Slow

Need:

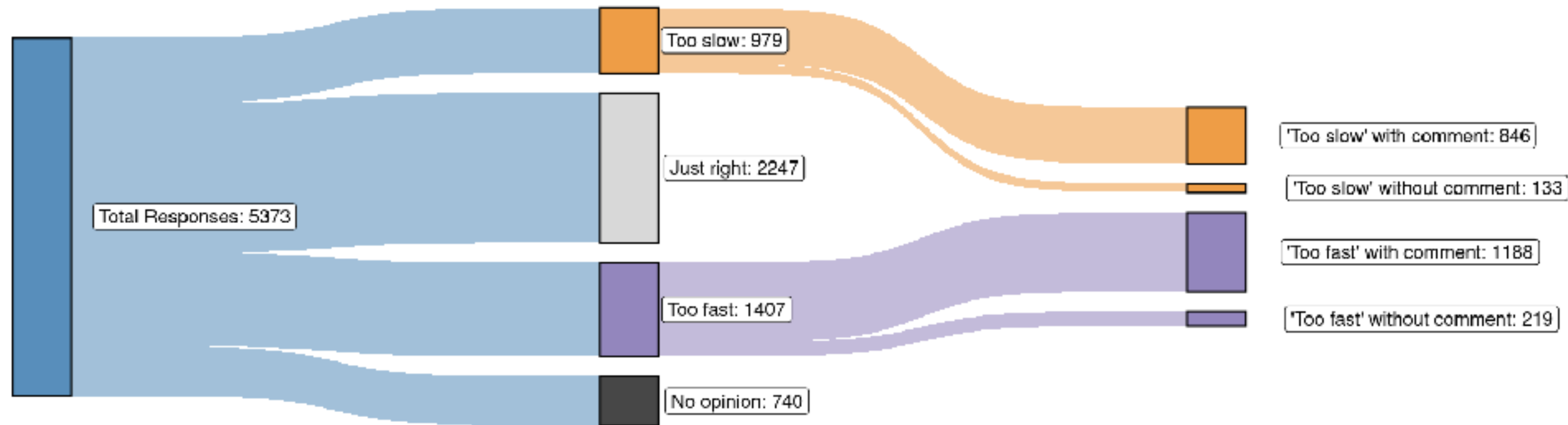
- Retail Opportunities
 - Often Restaurants
- Job Opportunities
- Recreation Opportunities
- Affordable Housing

Too Fast

- Housing
- Traffic
- Tourist Lodging
- Loss of Small Town Feel
- Infrastructure Concerns
- Affordability Concerns

Perceptions about the Pace of Economic Development in the Wasatch Front

How would you describe the current pace of economic development in your city?



Too Slow

Need:

- Retail and Business
- Job Opportunities
- Other Amenities & Services

Too Fast

- Retail and Business
- Housing
- Infrastructure Concerns

Population Growth, Economic Development and Planning

- Population growth and *perceived* population growth are not always aligned.

Efforts to maintain small town feel, open space, well-functioning traffic management will help with the *experience* of rapid population growth.

- Perspectives on economic development are mixed. Goldilocks Principle

Work to avoid too much or too little of anything in communities

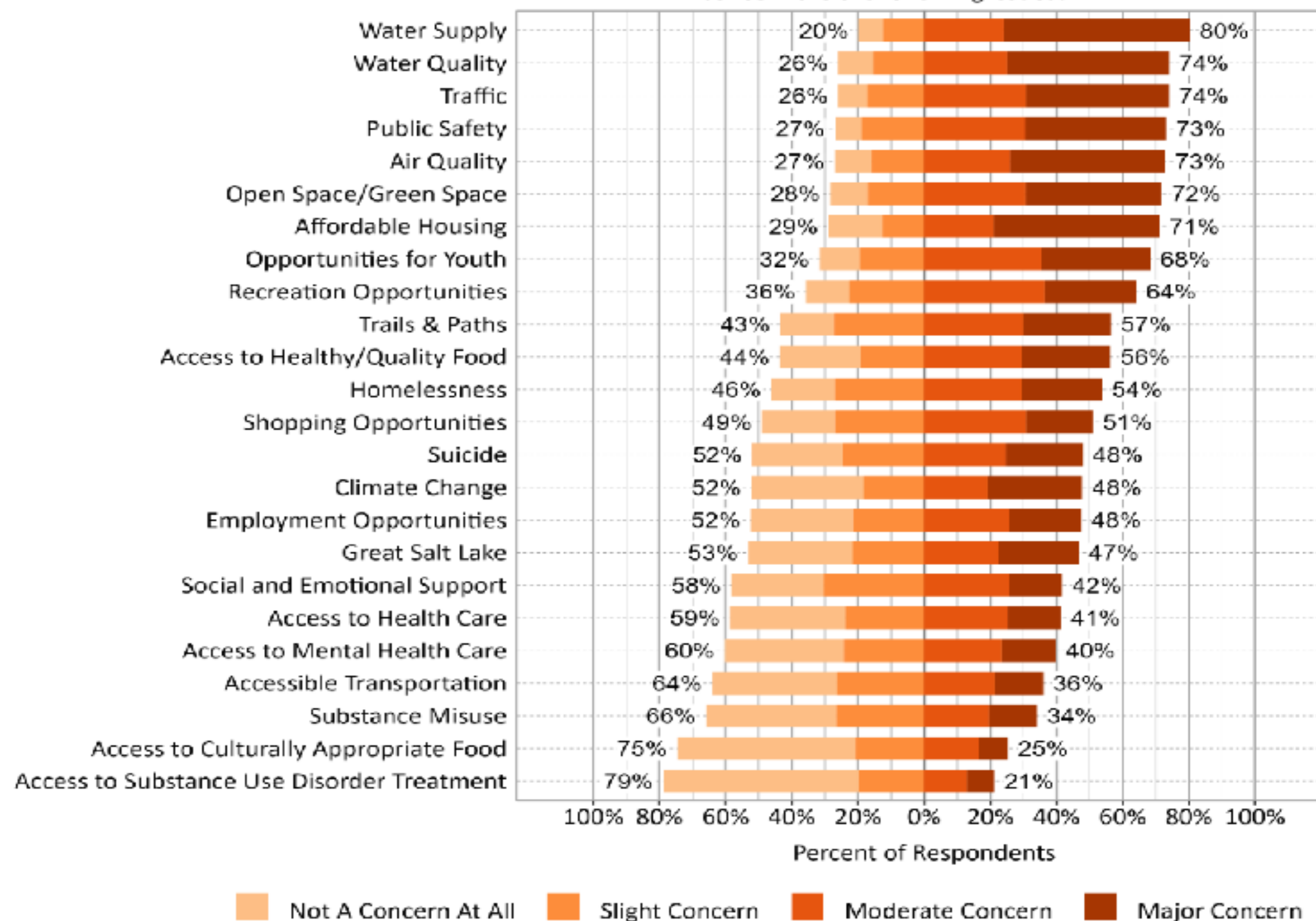
- Retail & business, restaurants, job opportunities, housing, and infrastructure capacities are hot development topics.

Top Concerns Statewide:

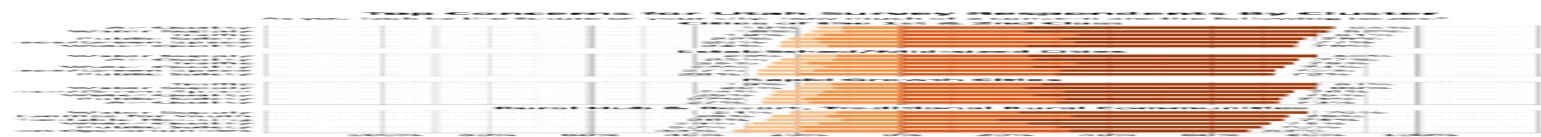
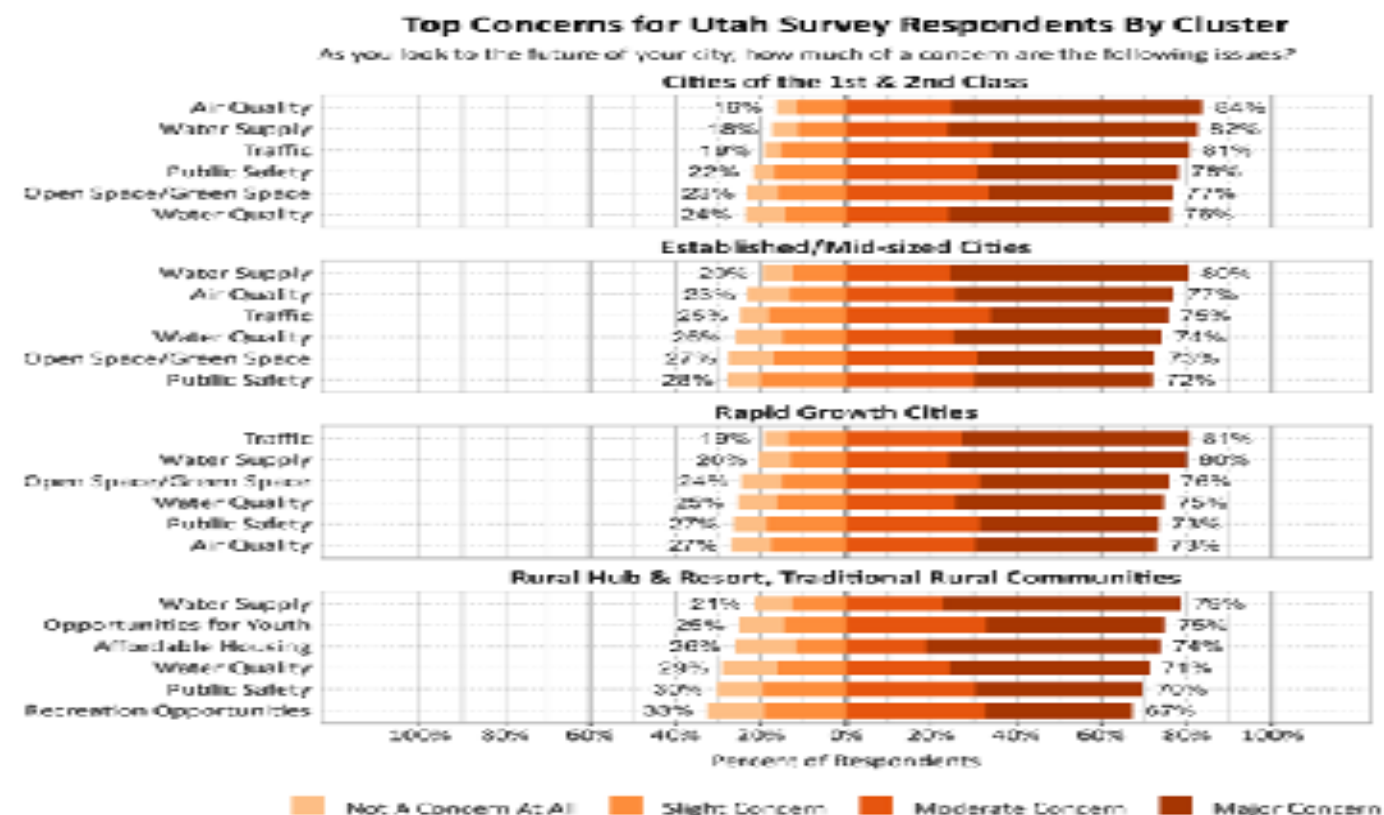
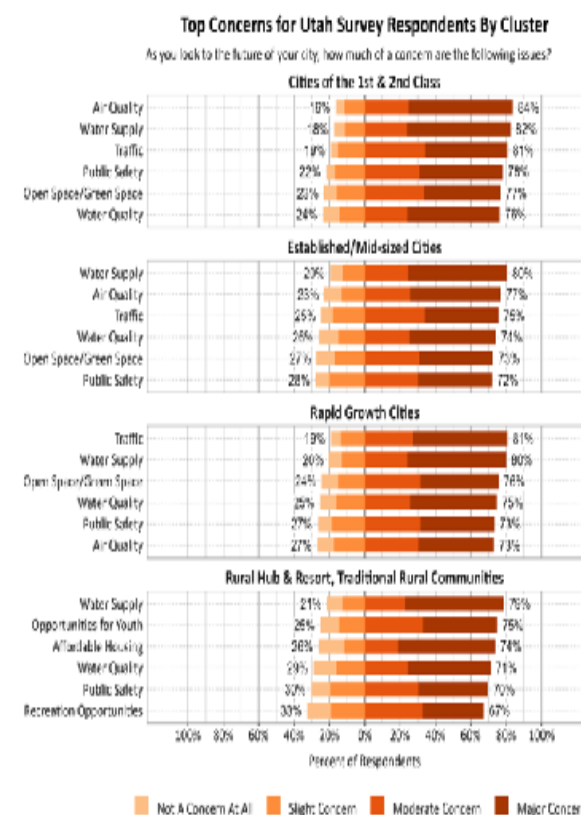
Water Supply
Water Quality
Traffic
Public Safety
Air Quality
Open/Green Space
Affordable Housing
Opportunities for Youth
Rec Opportunities
Trails & Paths

Concerns for Utah Survey Respondents

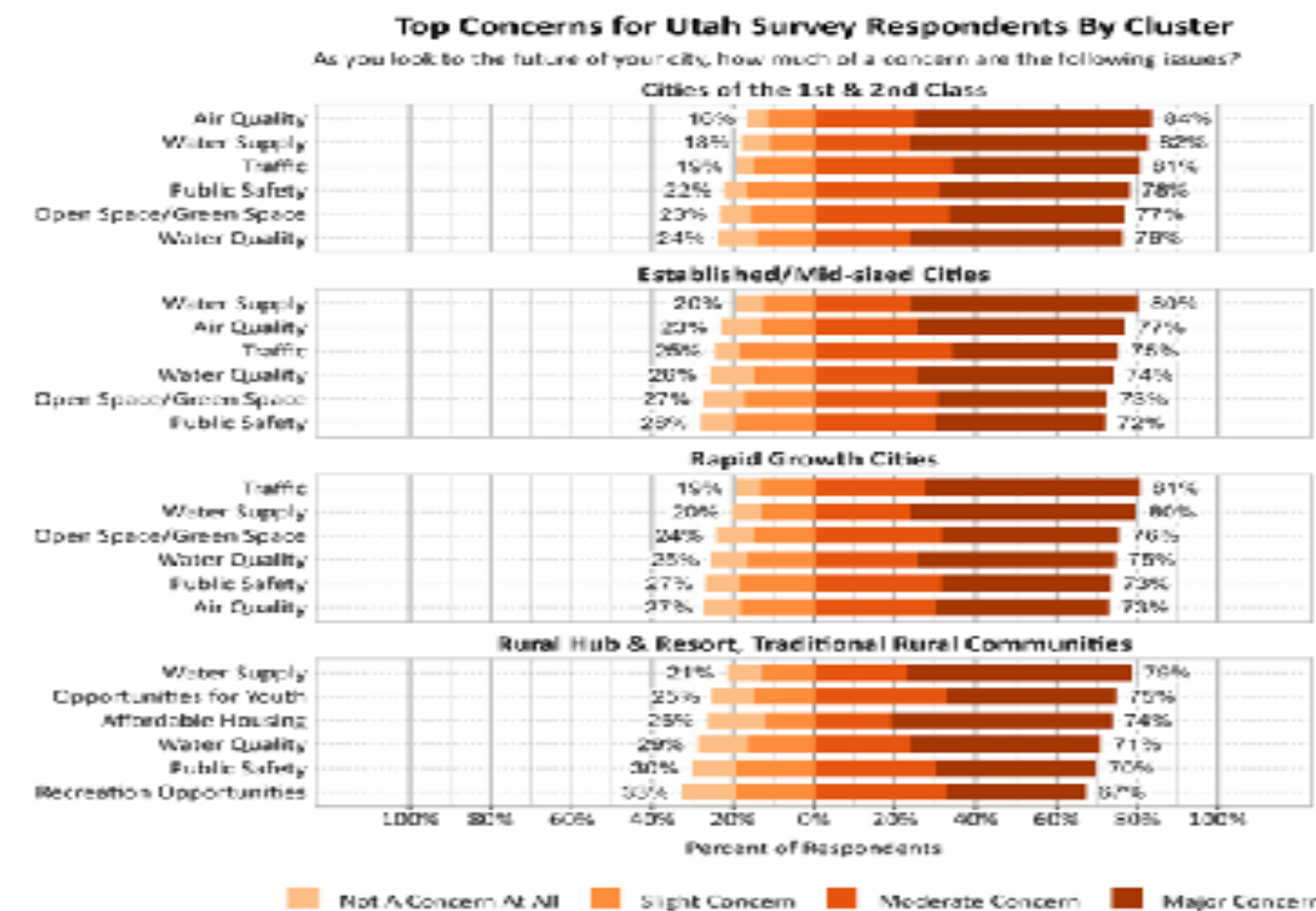
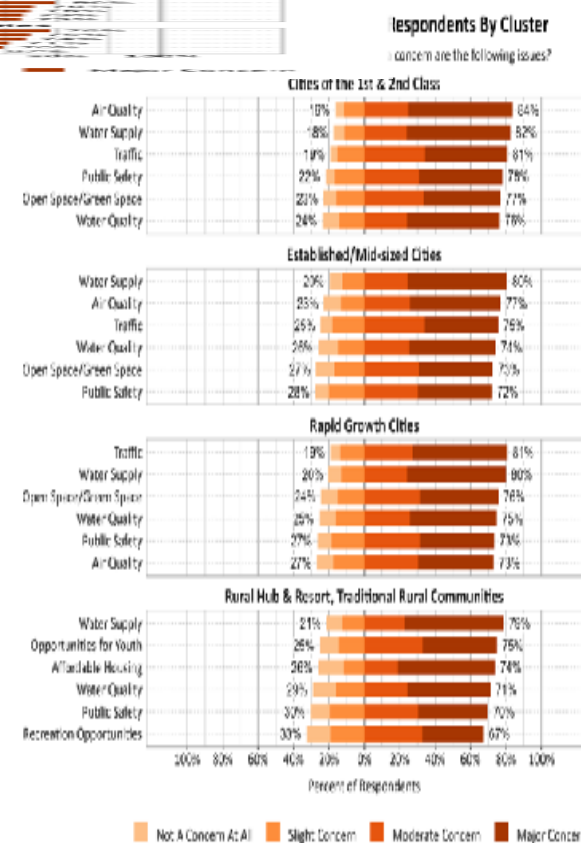
As you look to the future of your city, how much of a concern are the following issues?



Top Urban Concerns:
Water, Air Quality, Traffic,
Open Space, Public Safety



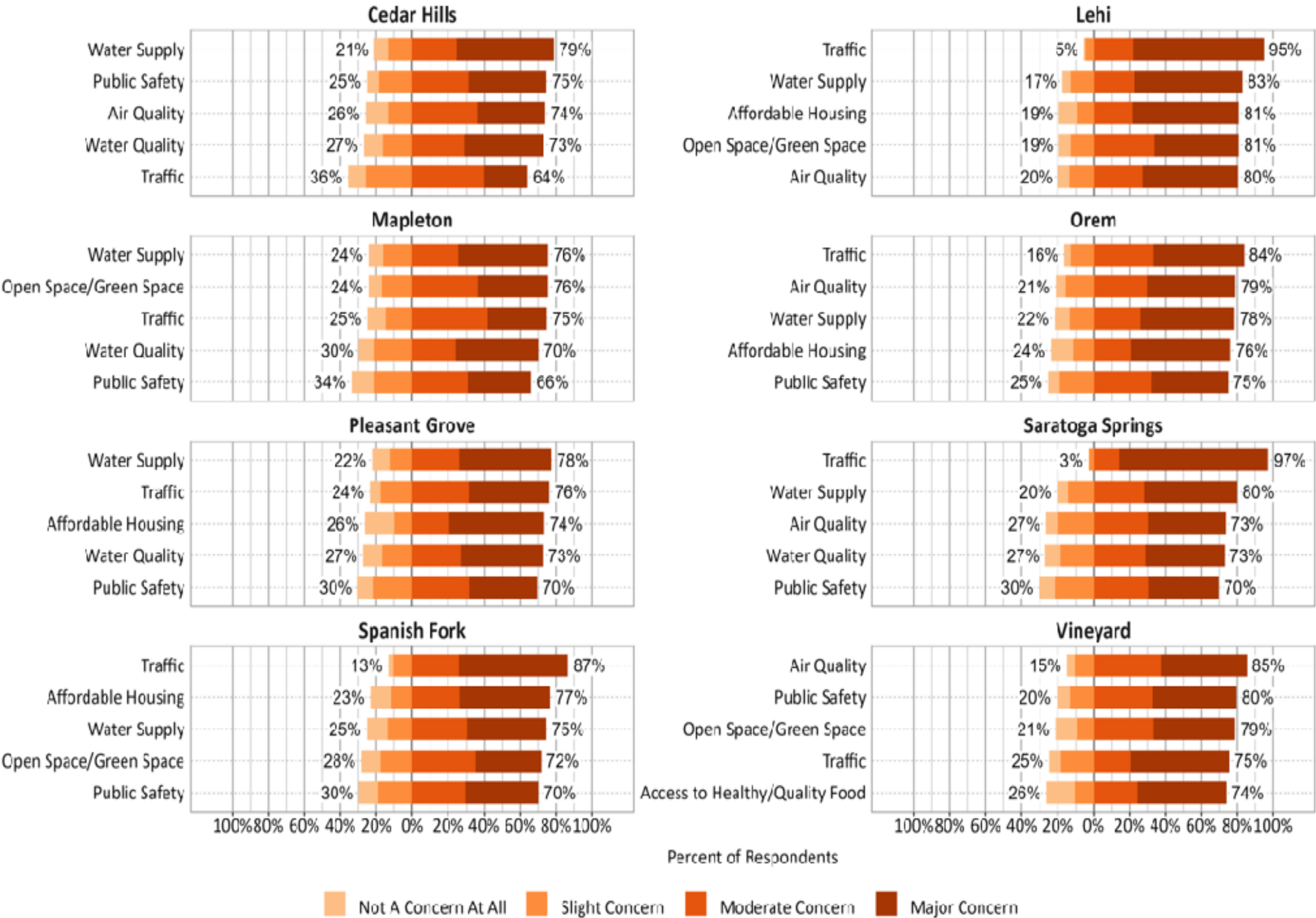
Top Rural Concerns:
Water, Opportunities for
Youth, Affordable Housing,
Public Safety, & Recreation
Opportunities



County Concerns:

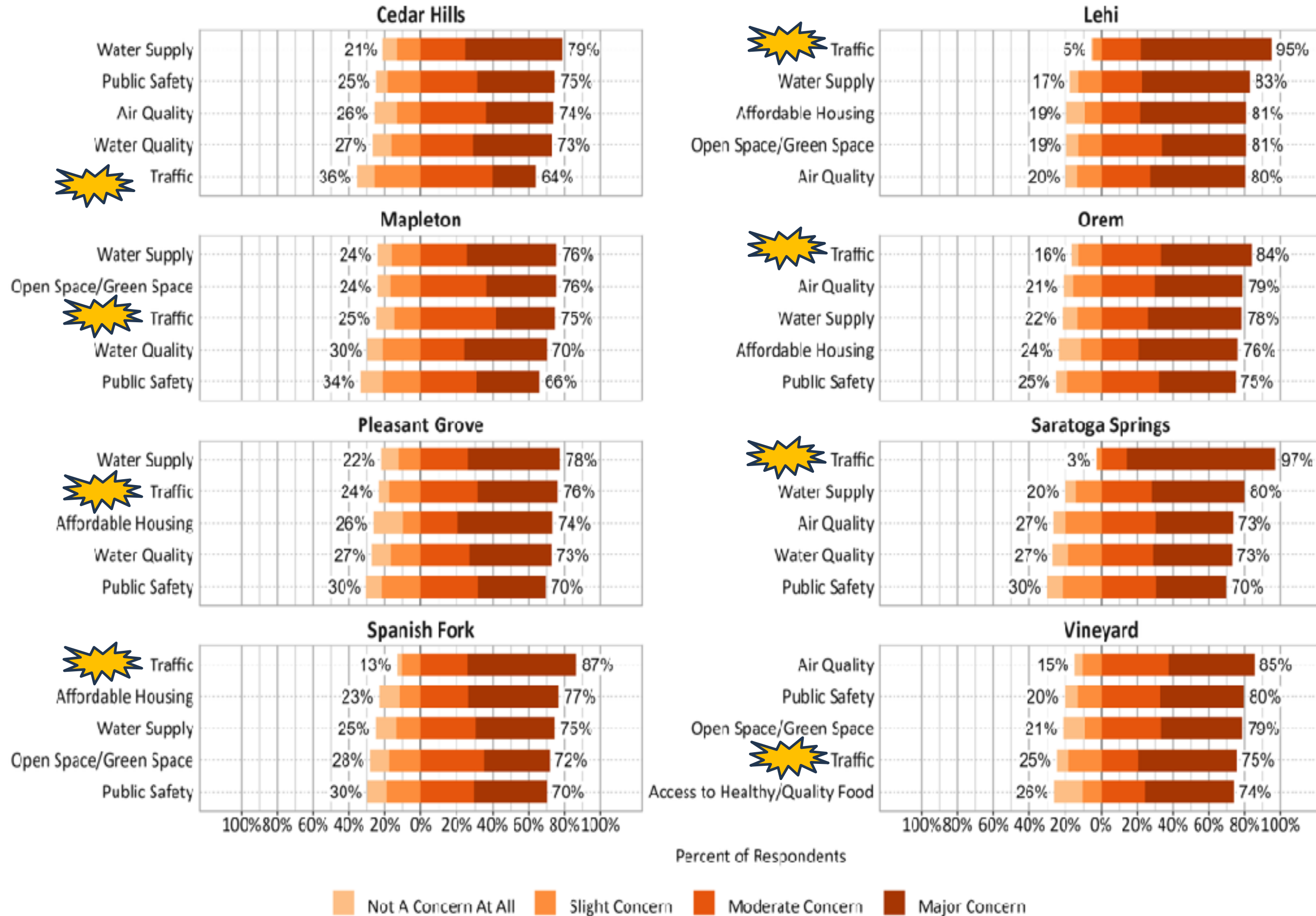
Top Concerns for Utah County by City

As you look to the future of your city, how much of a concern are the following issues?



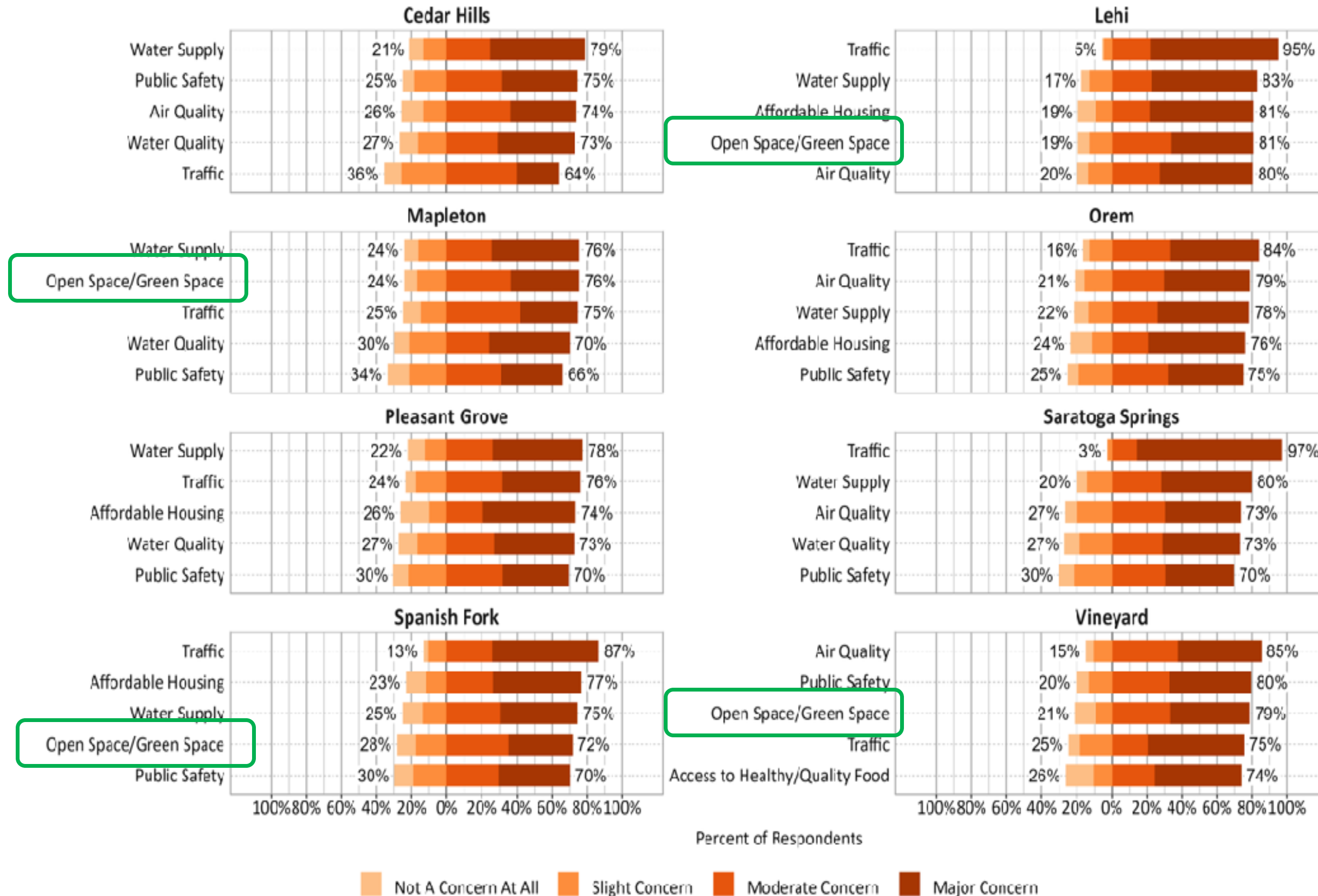
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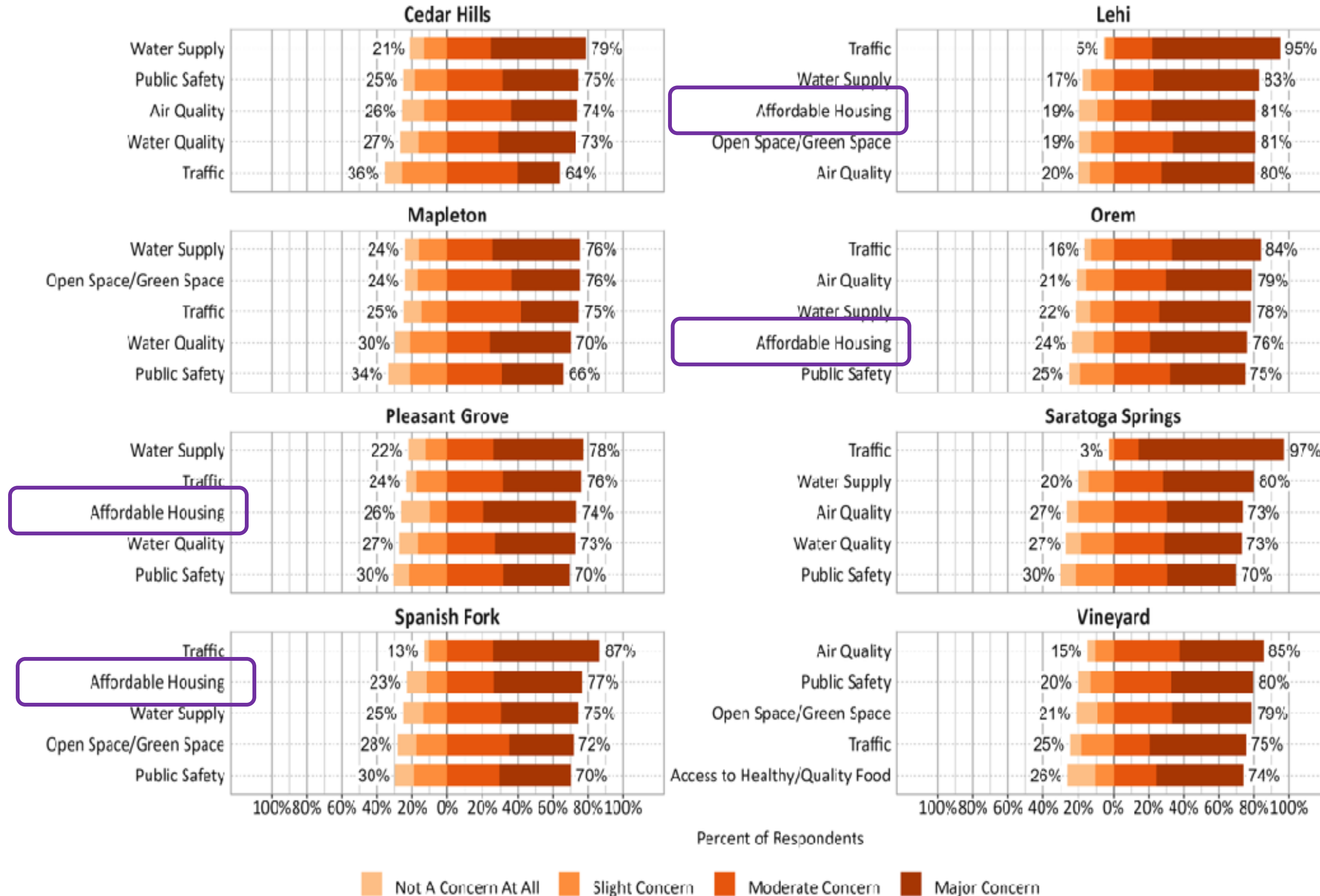
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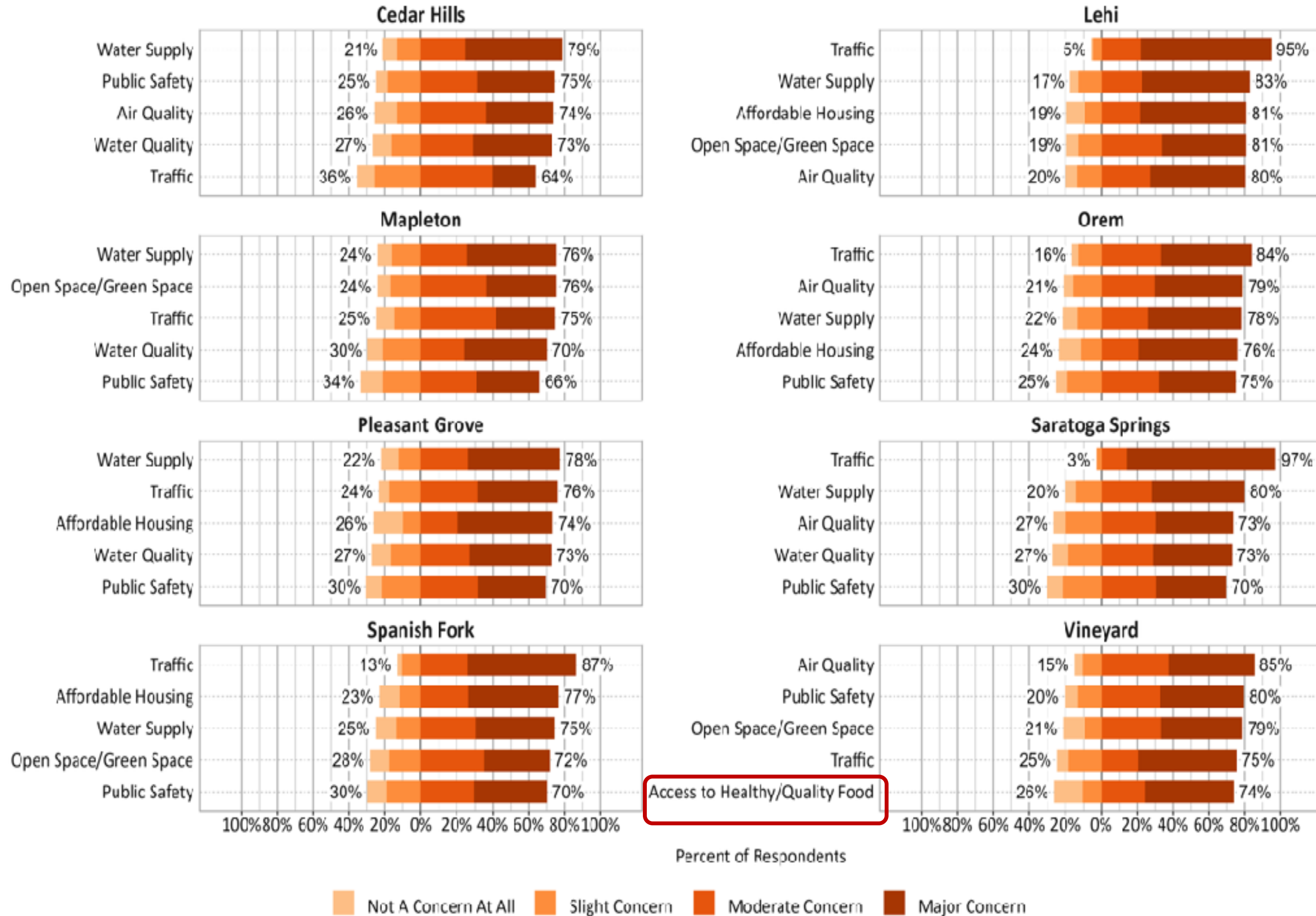
Top Concerns for Utah County by City

As you look to the future of your city, how much of a concern are the following issues?



Top Concerns for Utah County by City

As you look to the future of your city, how much of a concern are the following issues?



Community Concerns and Planning

Environmental and natural resource issues are among highest concerns statewide

- Address water, air quality, open space, etc. in planning
- Communicate with residents when addressing environmental issues

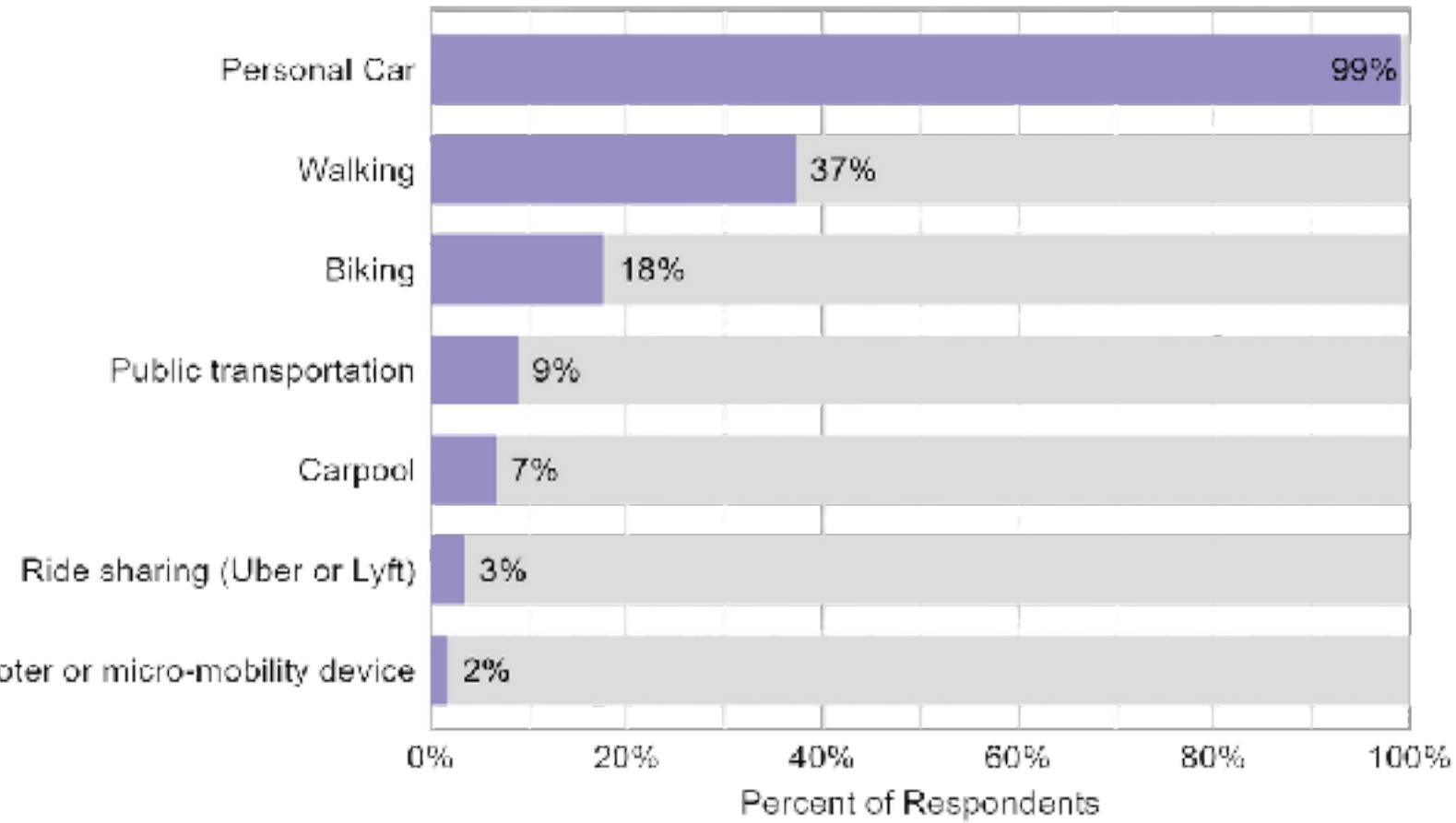
Rural communities have some unique concerns

Concerns often vary *within* counties – watch out for assumptions of homogeneity



Primary Modes of Transportation in the Wasatch Front & Greater Wasatch Front (2024)

What are your primary modes of transportation?
(select all that apply on a regular basis)

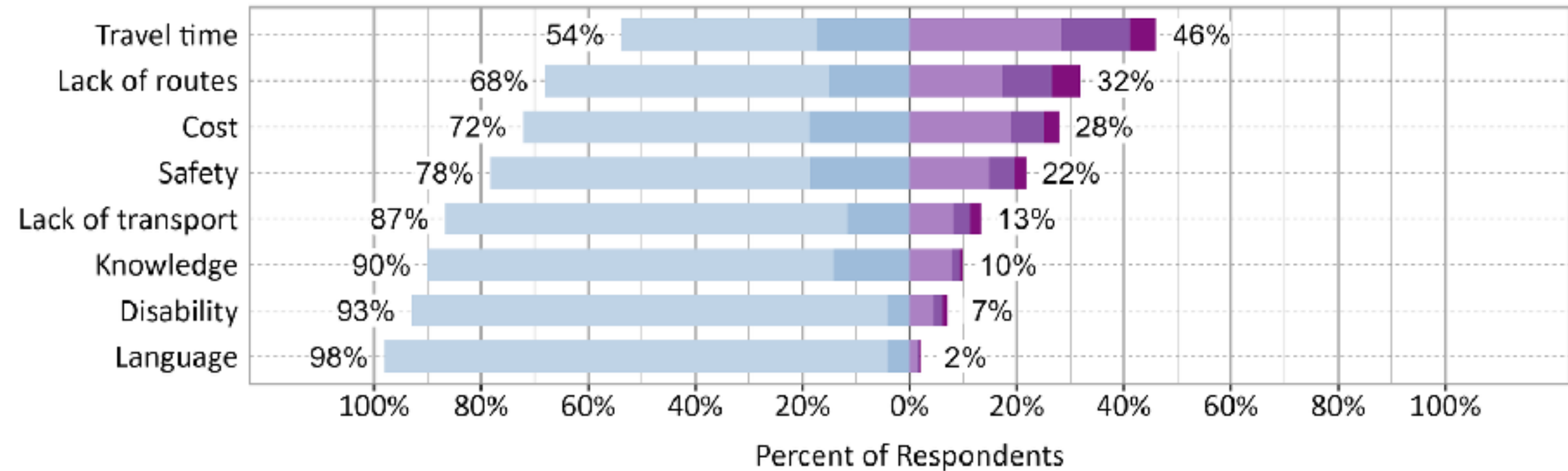


Cars, Cars, Cars!
& Travel Time Woes on
the Wasatch Front

Transportation Modes & Barriers

Barriers to Personal Travel in the Wasatch Front & Greater Wasatch Front (2024)

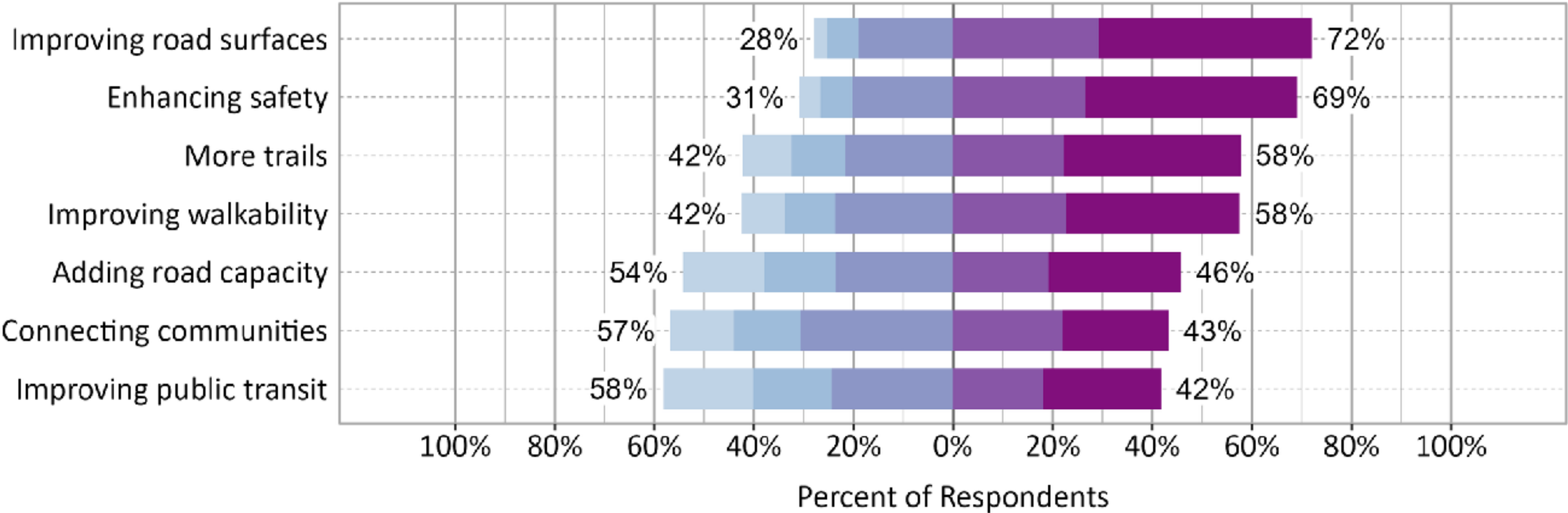
Are any of the following a barrier to your personal travel?



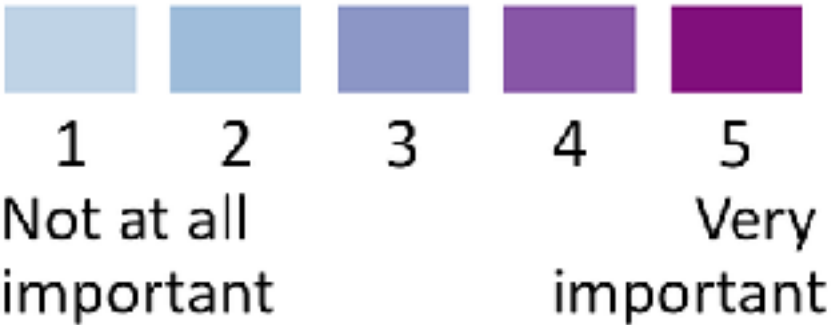
Not at all Seldom Sometimes Often Always

Top Transportation Desires: Improved Road Surfaces & Safety (Trails & Walkability Too!)

Possible Transportation Developments in the Wasatch Front & Greater Wasatch Front (2024)



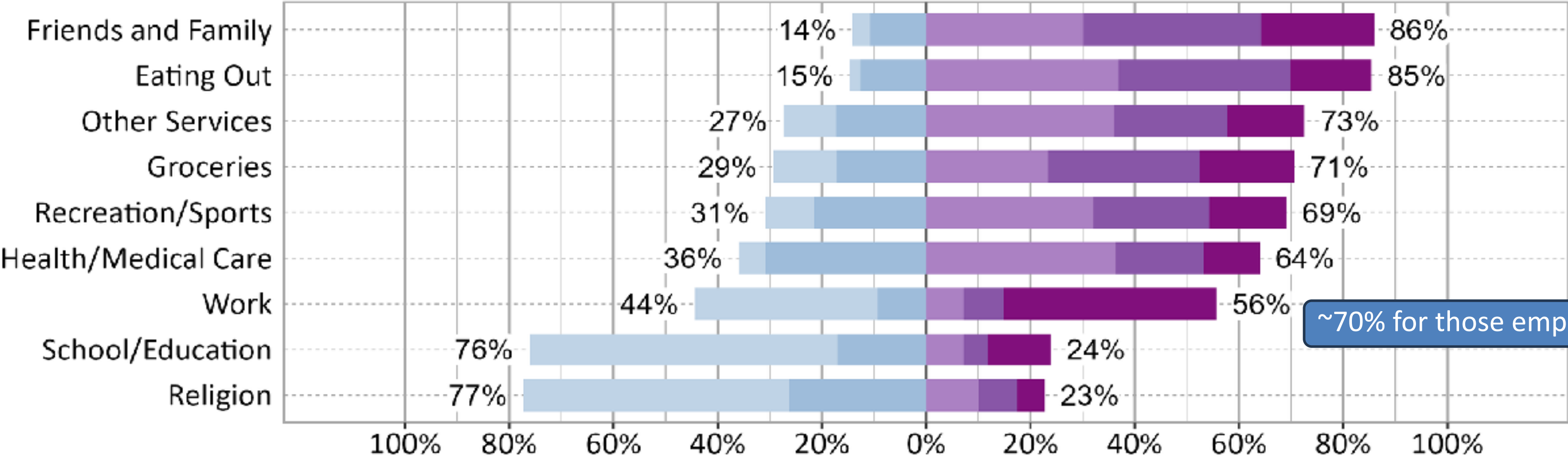
How important to you are the following
transportation developments in your city?



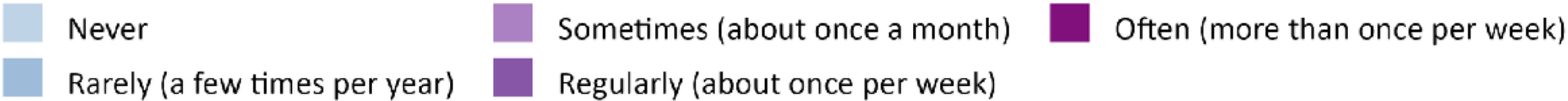
Not all needs are met within one's community...

Frequency of Wasatch Front/Greater Wasatch Front Residents
Traveling to Other Cities for Various Activities (2024)

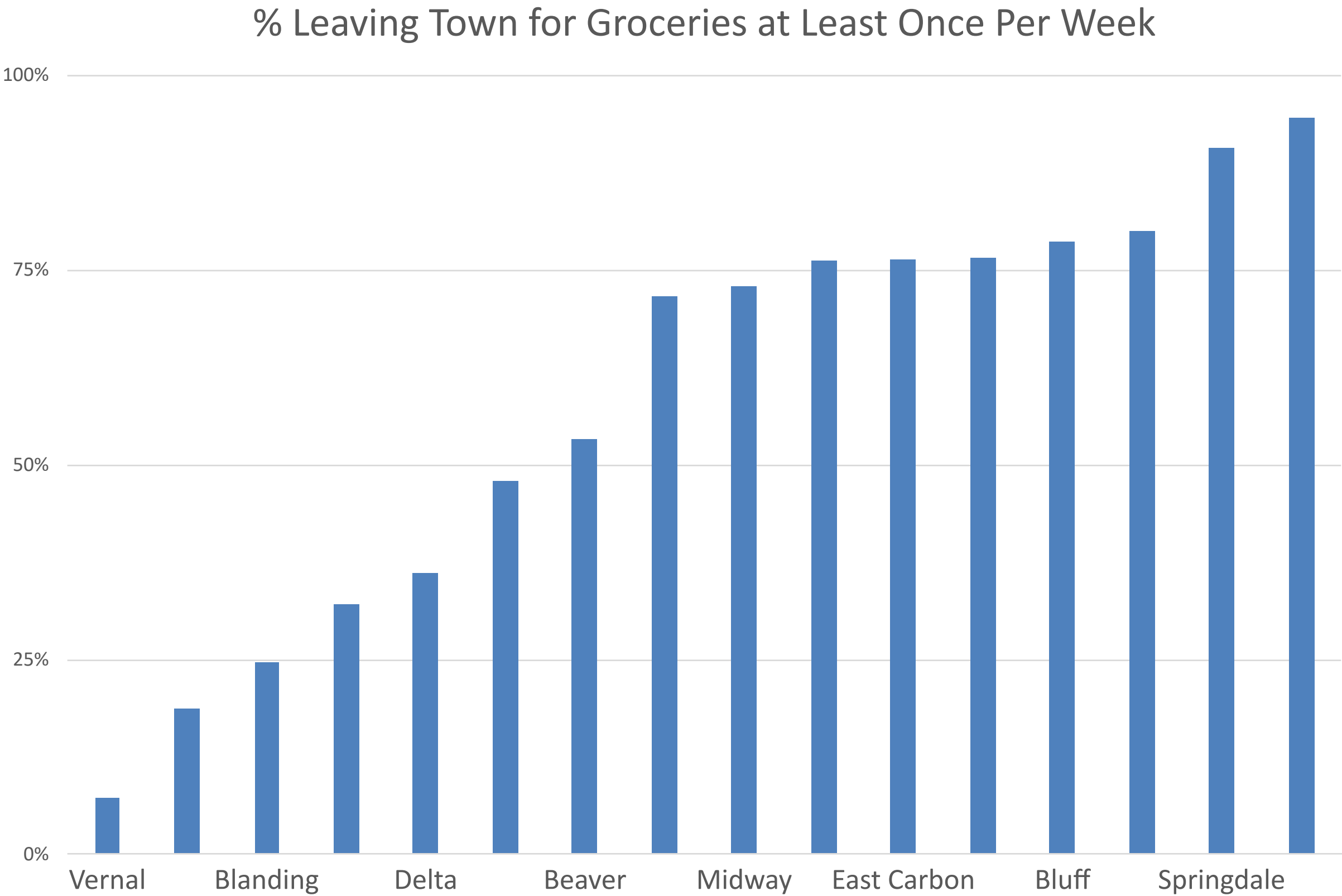
How frequently do each of these activities take you out of your city to another city or town?



~70% for those employed



Leaving Town for Groceries

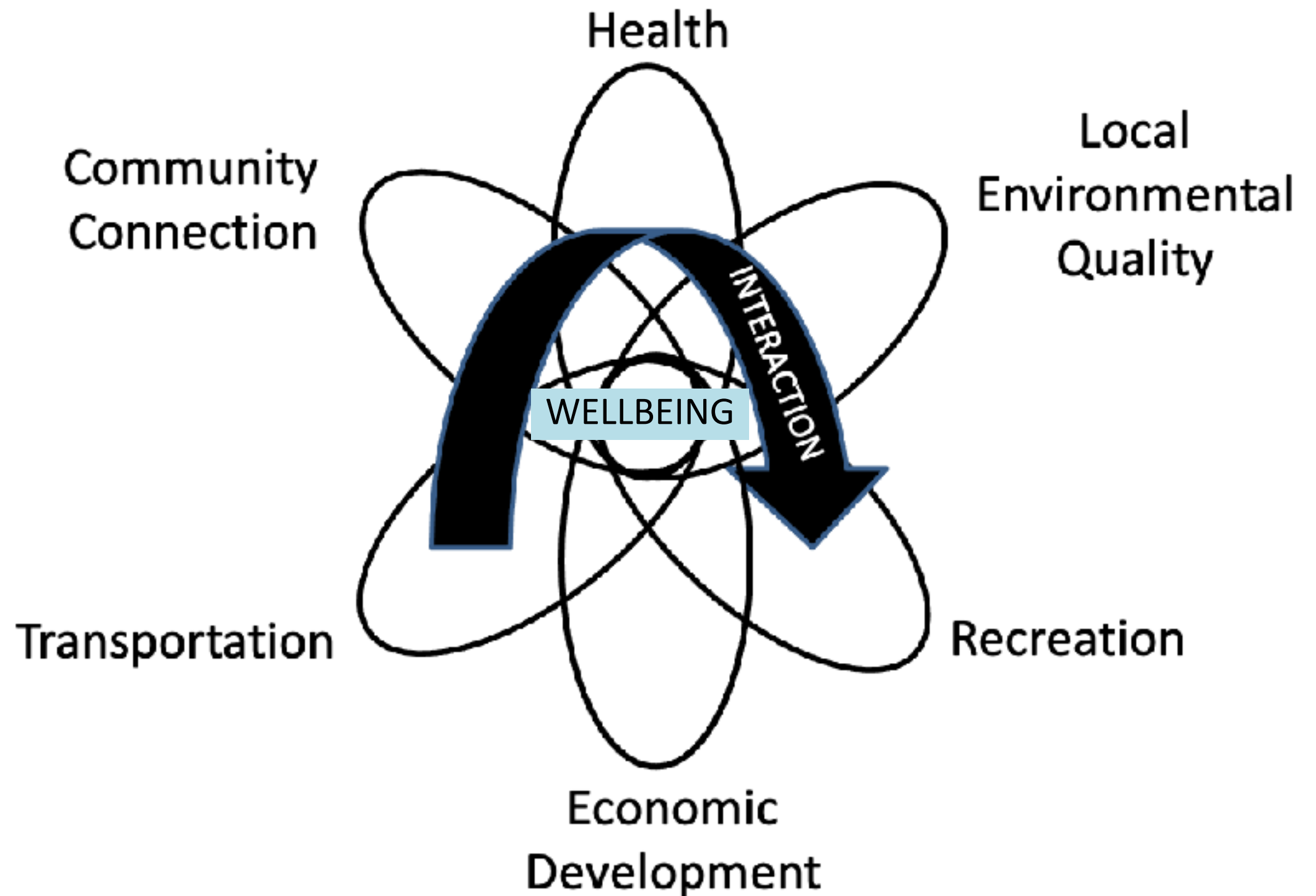


Transportation and Planning

- For better or worse, **cars, cars, cars**
- People want:
 - Improved Road Surfaces
 - Safety
 - Trails & Walkability
- Plan with regional connections in mind!
- In some places, basic needs are hard to meet locally – like groceries



Planning for Wellbeing: Build Interactional Capacity



Feedback on Wellbeing Survey Project and Planning

*When I started, the city was just updating our **general plan**. ..., **The wellbeing survey was actually a great tool in getting some snapshots from the community of what people valued from living in Hyde Park** and how they viewed their quality of life with the city. And then we used the custom questions to add in some things that we specifically wanted to look at as we did our general plan update. So, we found it really useful.* (Hyde Park)

We've integrated some of the information into our general plan. (Nephi)

*We're also in the middle of doing a **Main Street plan** for our city. And so, we're partnering with a consulting firm to help with that. We've given them that information just so they know **what are our priorities** and things like that. So yeah, we've definitely used it so far.* (Alpine)

We're in the process of updating our redevelopment agency policies and we're going to use that survey together with a flash vote survey that we recently did to guide the policies and then also make some strategic planning decisions going forward. (Ogden)

*The process itself has been valuable. Part of what we do in the Community Development Department is to try to **implement our general plan**, and a lot of the goals from our general plan are all about **increasing communication and connection with the community, and this process has given us the opportunity to do that**, to have opportunities to connect and have conversations with the community. So that's been fantastic and **the results of the survey have also been really informative for us as well to be able to see those areas that our community feels like are positive contributors to wellbeing and things that we're doing well. And more importantly, those things that we need to improve on those things that the community feels like are negative negatively impacting their personal and community wellbeing.*** (Springdale)

Wellbeing Survey 2026?



Please contact me if
interested

... and about any funding
ideas!

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Thank you!

Dr. Courtney Flint –
courtney.flint@usu.edu



www.usu.edu/utah-wellbeing-project

