



Rural Wellbeing

Navigating Challenges and Opportunities

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Utah State University

ULCT Annual Convention

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Salt Lake City



UtahStateUniversity





Session Agenda:

- Rural Findings from the Wellbeing Survey – Spring 2024
- Heber Mayor Heidi Franco
- Nephi City Manager Seth Atkinson
- Discussion



Wellbeing Survey Project Goals

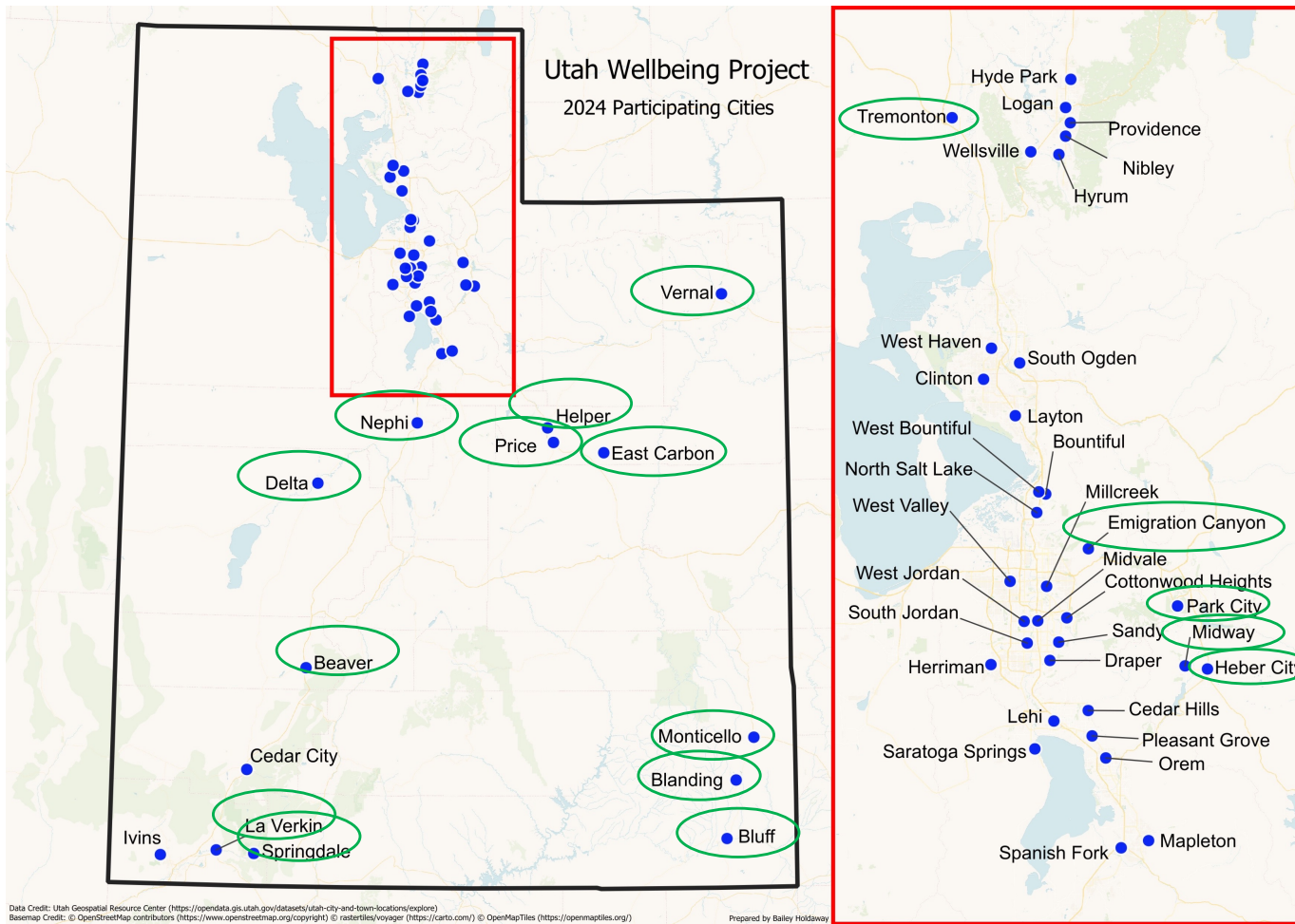
To provide cities with information on the wellbeing of residents to inform planning processes and decisions

To support comparative research on community wellbeing and local concerns

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

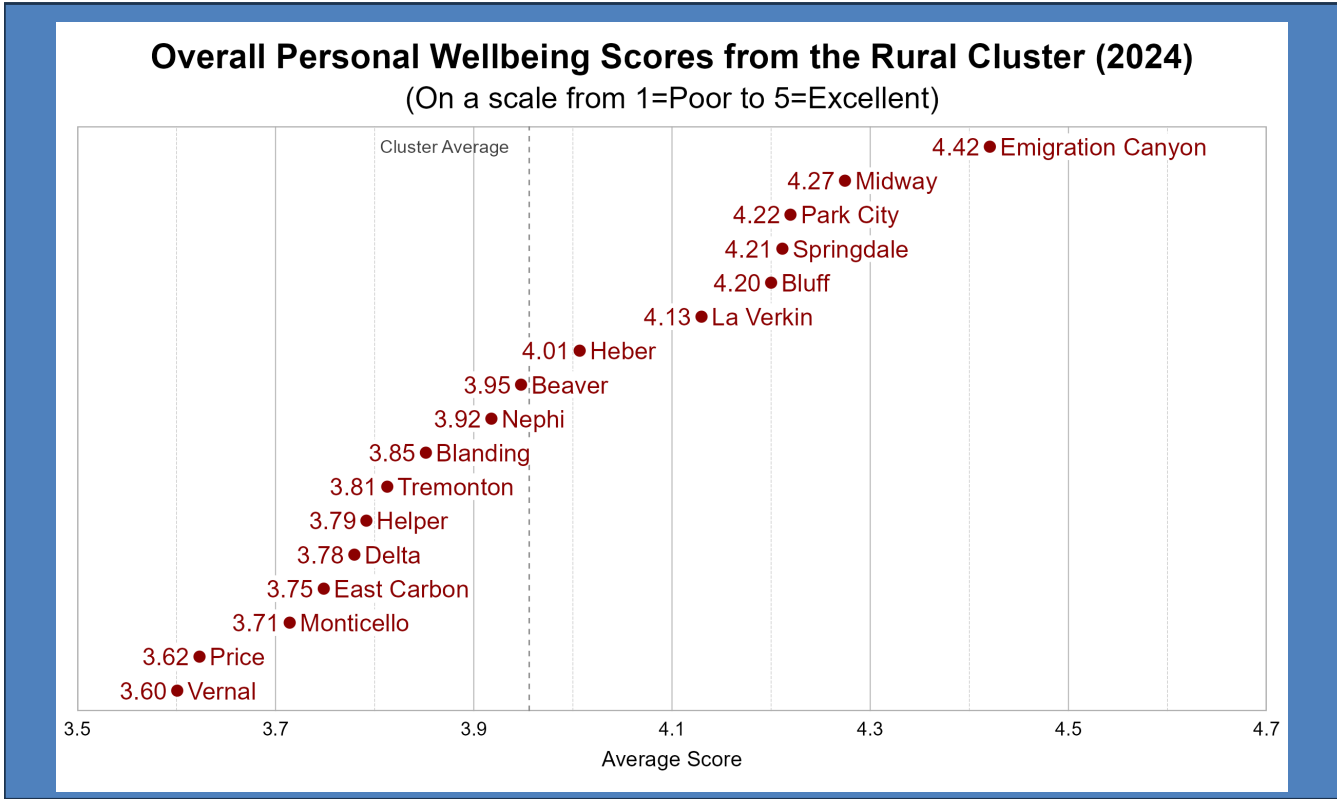
Wellbeing: Everything that makes up a good life.

2024 Survey Partners

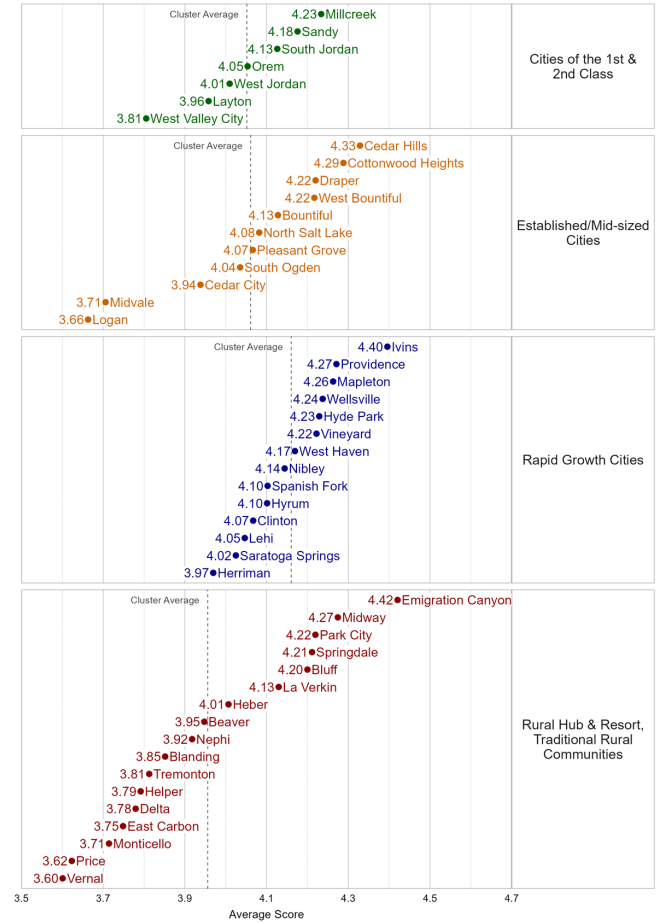


How is Wellbeing in Rural Utah?

Rural wellbeing varies widely.



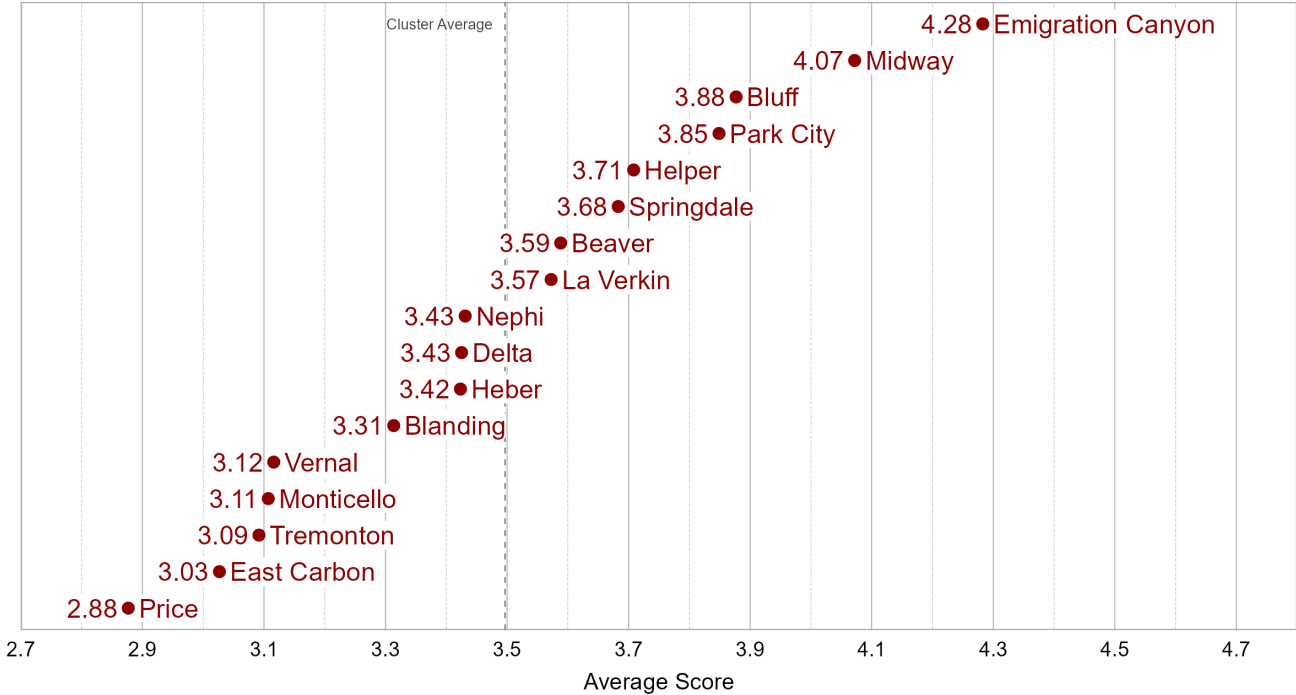
Overall Personal Wellbeing Scores from Participating Utah Cities (2024)
(On a scale from 1=Poor to 5=Excellent)



Community Wellbeing

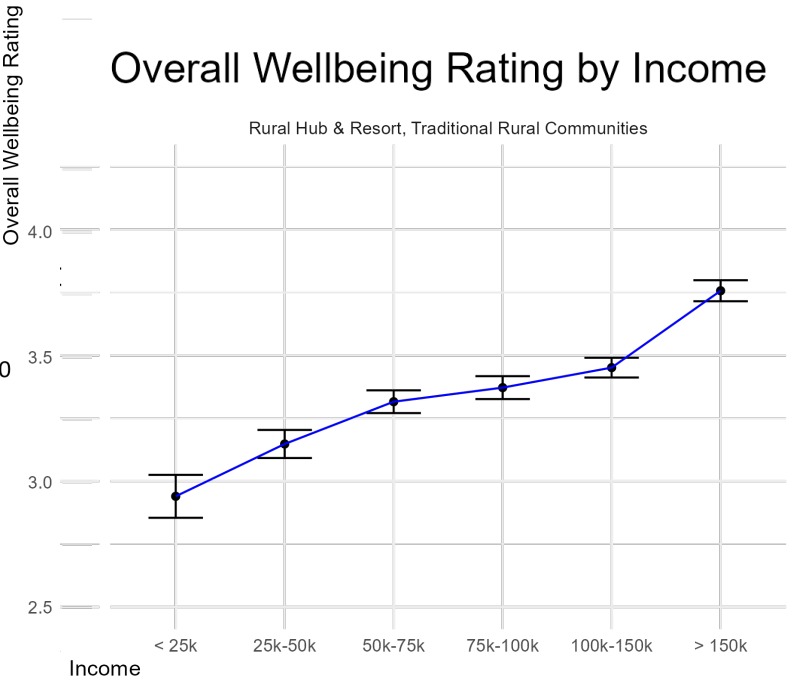
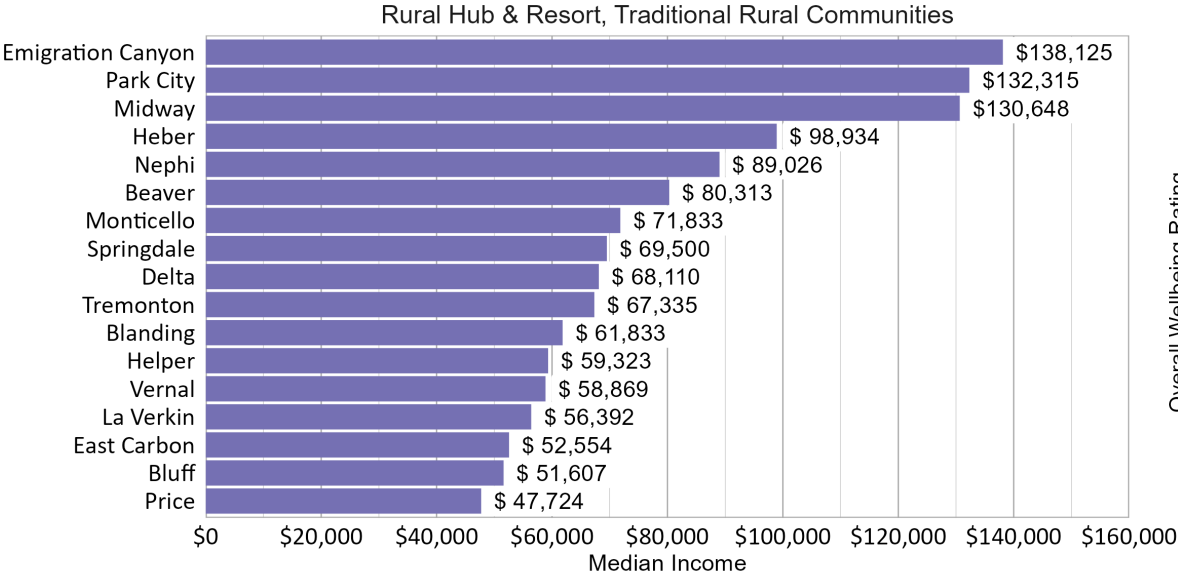
Overall Community Wellbeing Scores from the Rural Cluster (2024)

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

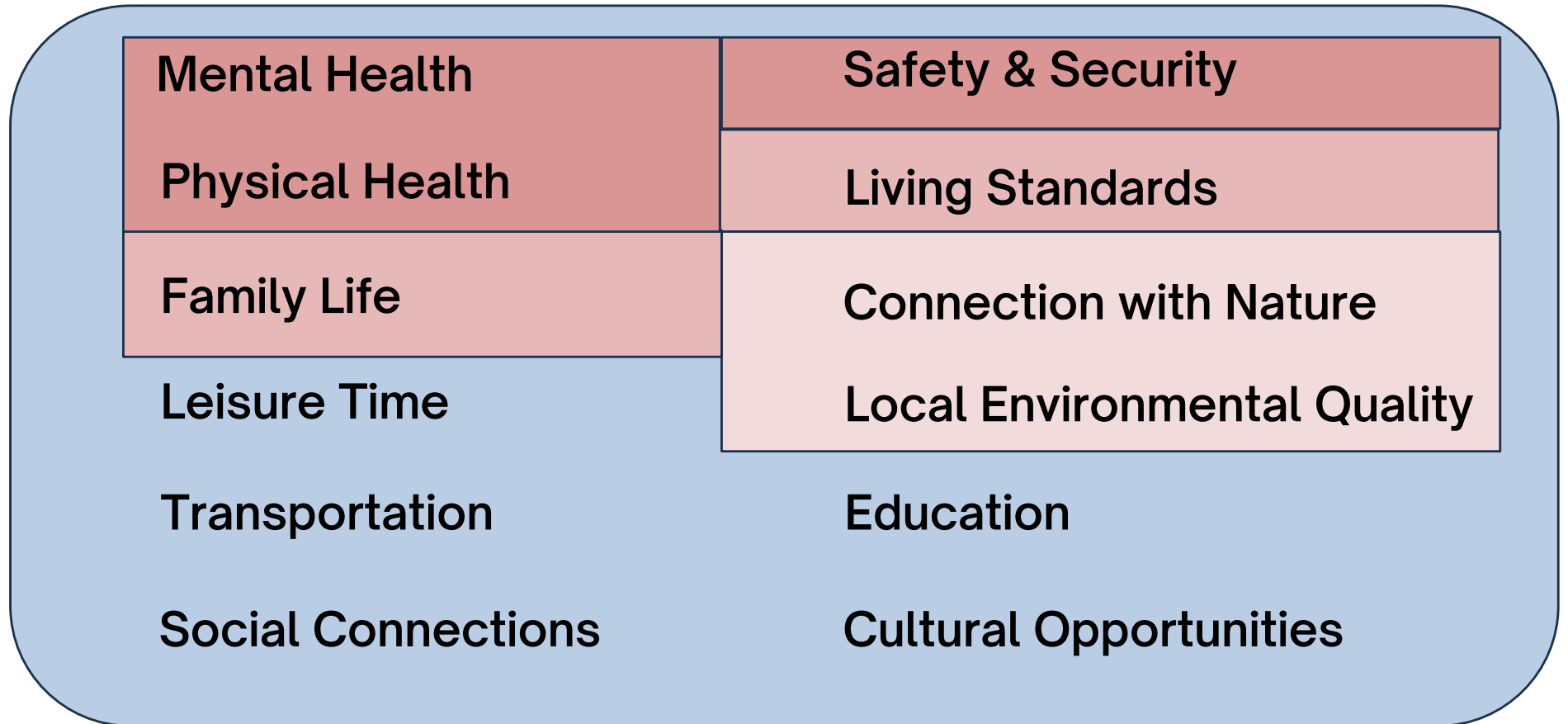


Median Income Of Participating Cities (2024)

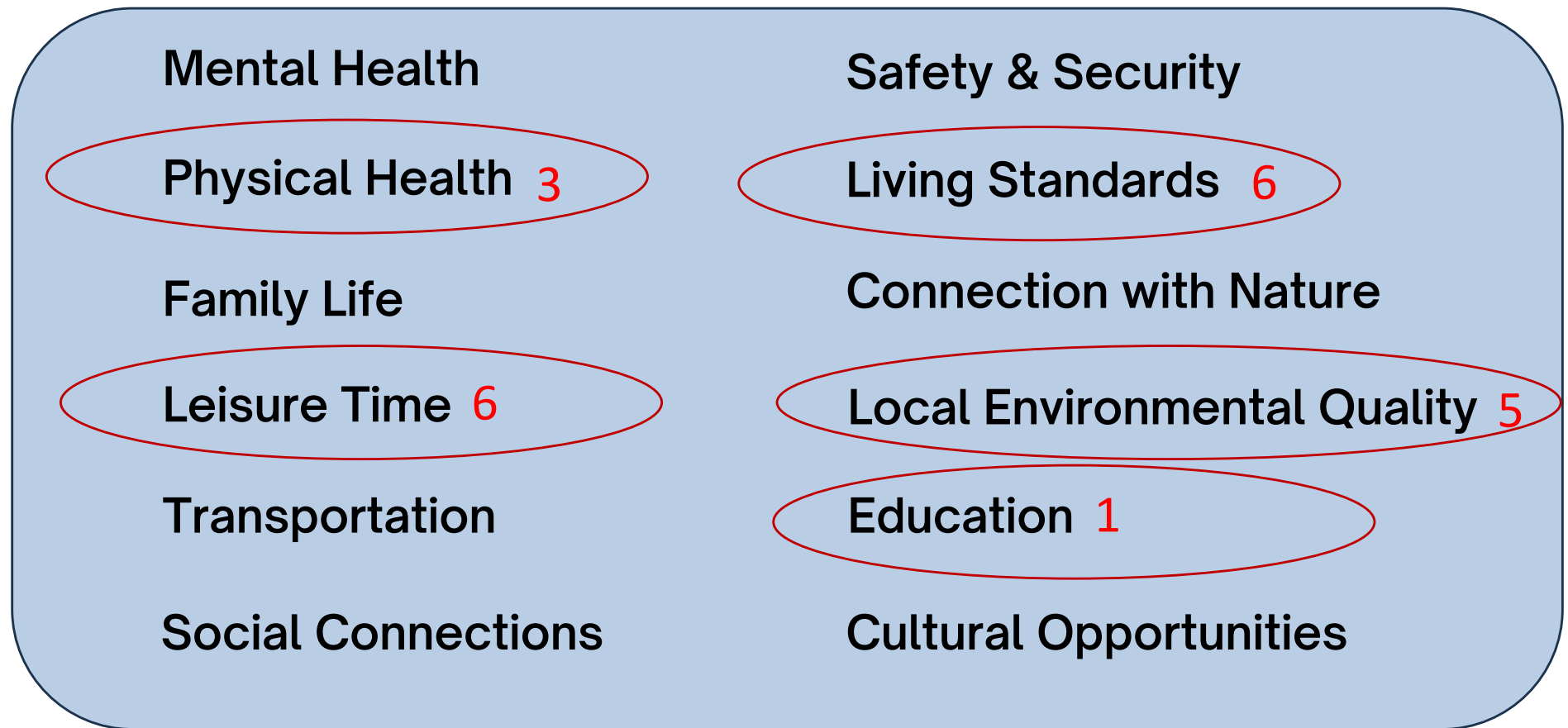
Income Makes a Difference



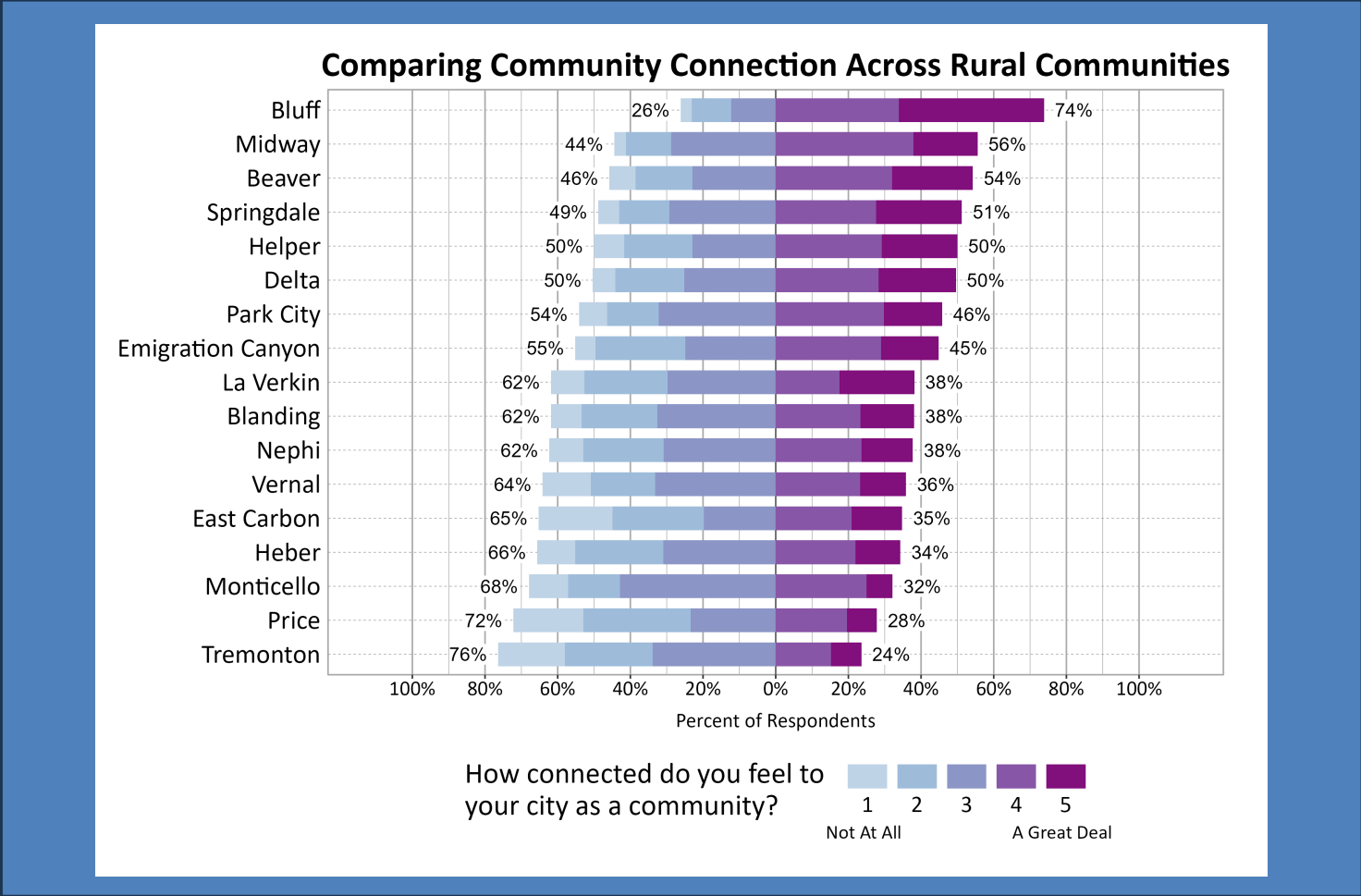
Wellbeing Domains



Wellbeing Domains in the “Red Zone” (High Importance, Lower Rating)



Community Connection

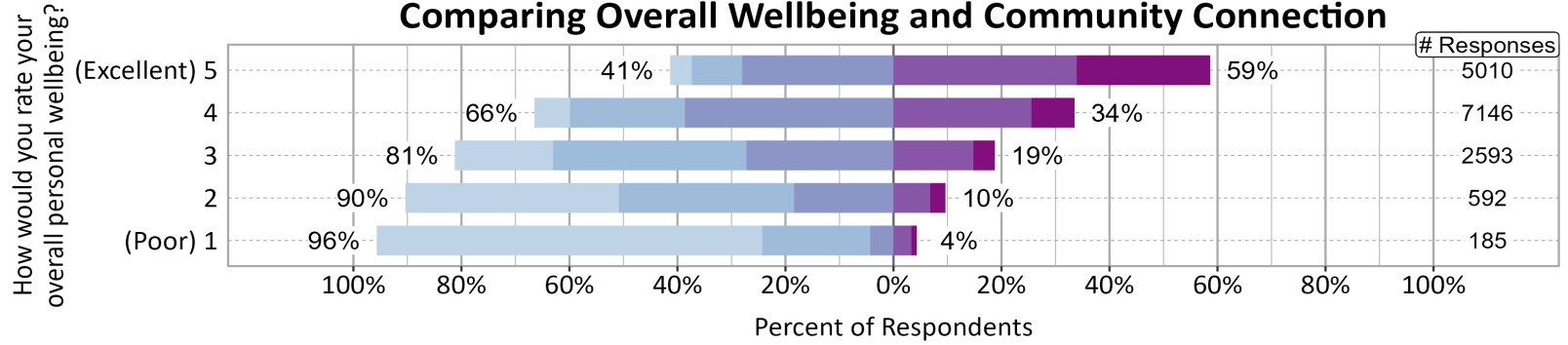


Average Length of Residence (years)

- 18
- 12
- 24
- 15
- 17
- 22
- 15
- 18
- 18
- 24
- 21
- 23
- 23
- 19
- 22
- 25
- 21

Only a significant relationship with length of residence in 6 of 17 communities.

Comparing Overall Wellbeing and Community Connection

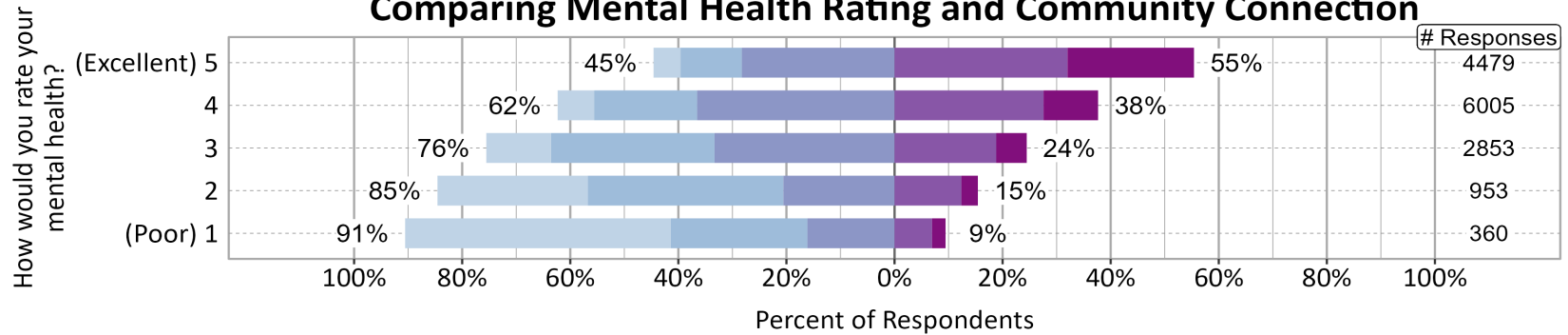


How connected do you feel to your city as a community?

1 2 3 4 5

Not At All A Great Deal

Comparing Mental Health Rating and Community Connection



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

1 2 3 4 5

Not At All A Great Deal

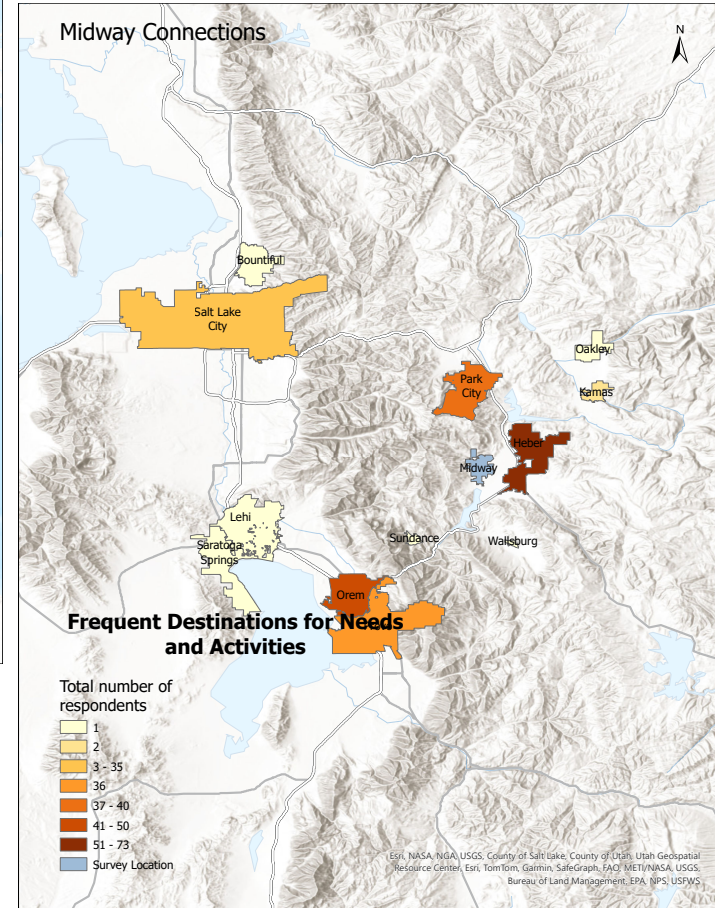
What do people in rural communities leave town for?

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

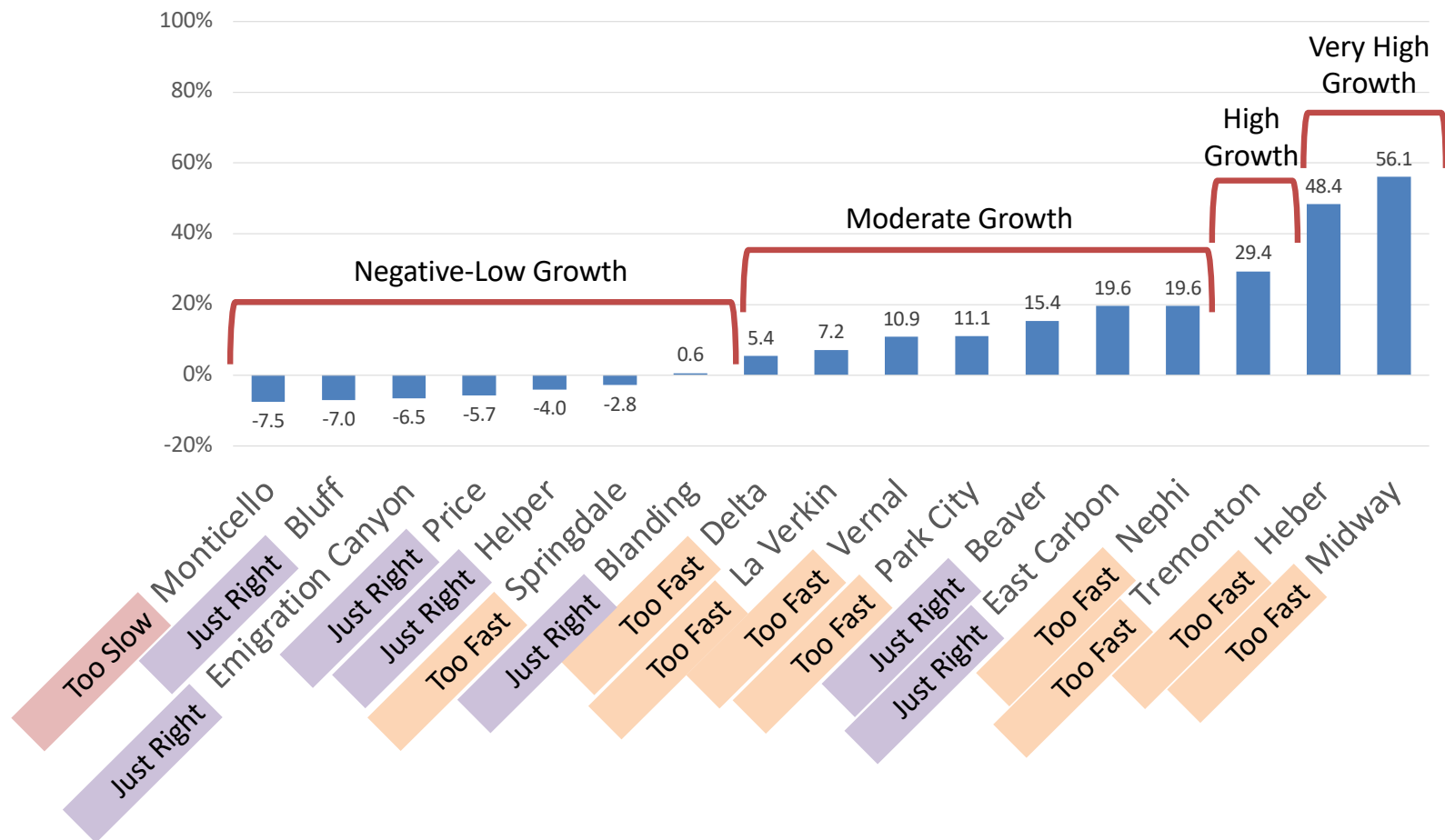
% Once Per Month	% At Least Once Per Week
28.0%	50.4%
38.5%	35.4%
33.4%	20.5%
30.7%	28.6%
37.1%	47.6%
11.0%	31.0%
8.6%	8.5%
8.3%	10.3%
36.2%	28.7%

	Never	Rarely (a few times per year)	Sometimes (about once a month)	Regularly (about once per week)	Often (more than once per week)
Groceries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eating Out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health /Medical Care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreation/ Sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friends and Family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School/ Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Where are they Going? Frequent Destinations



% Population Change 2010-2020



Population Change Data Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, University of Utah

Dominant Perspective on Population Growth

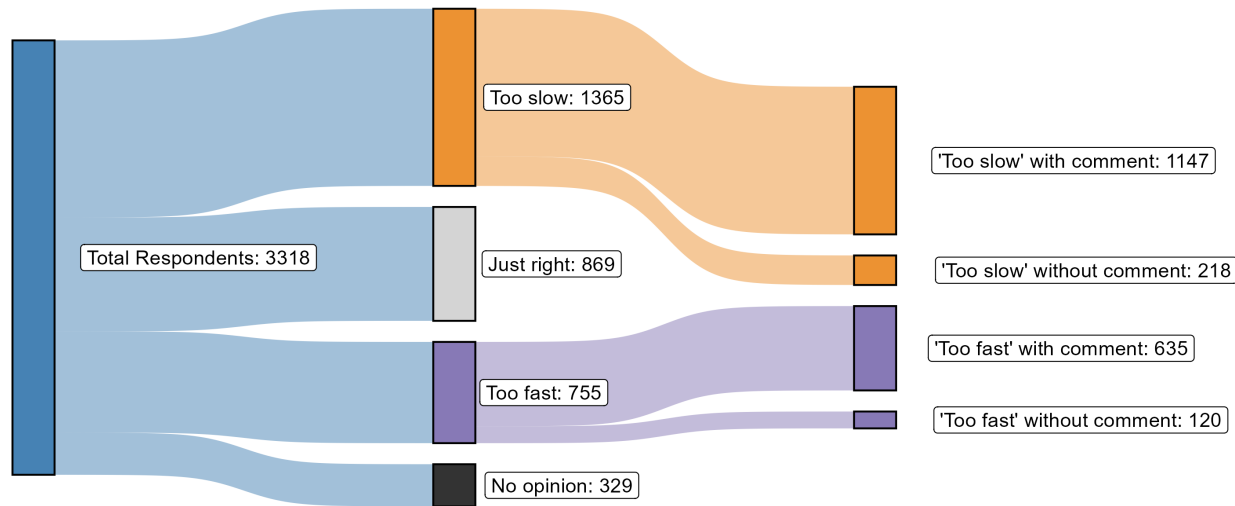
Population Growth “Too Fast”	Population Growth “Too Slow”	Population Growth “Just Right”
Delta (47%)	Monticello (58%)	Beaver (53%)
Heber (90%)		Blanding (48%)
La Verkin (47%)		Bluff (54%)
Midway (84%)		East Carbon (42%)
Nephi (61%)		Emigration Canyon (44%)
Park City (75%)		Helper (50%)
Springdale (44%)		Price (40%)
Tremonton (77%)		
Vernal (56%)		

Dominant Perspective on Economic Development

Economic Development "Too Fast"	Economic Development "Too Slow"	Economic Development "Just Right"
Heber (49%)	Beaver (54%)	Bluff (46%)
Park City (49%)	Blanding (61%)	Emigration Canyon (56%)
Springdale (69%)	Delta (52%)	La Verkin (33%*)
	East Carbon (68%)	Midway (41%)
	Helper (45%)	Nephi (36%*)
	Monticello (76%)	
	Price (76%)	
	Tremonton (51%)	
	Vernal (48%)	

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

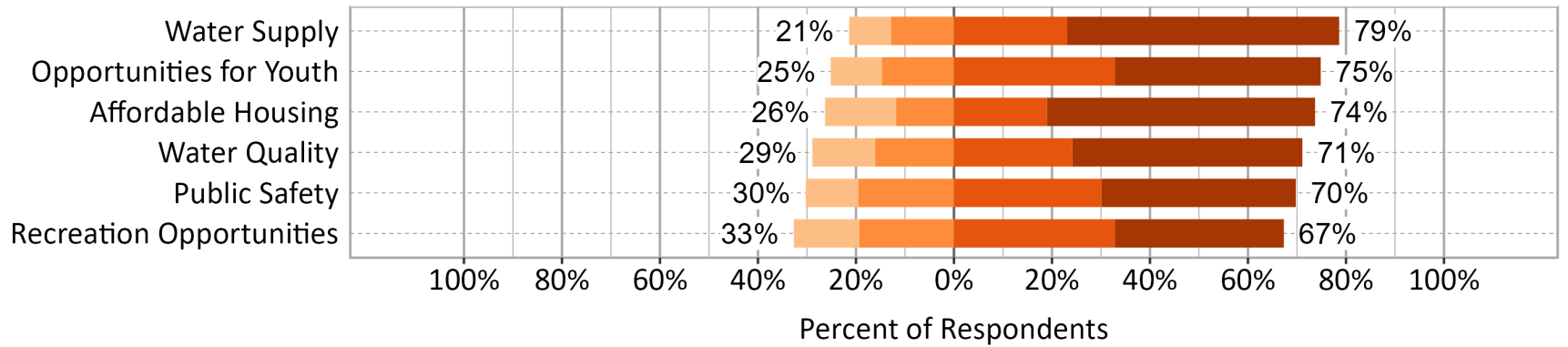
Too Fast

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

Top Concerns for Utah Survey Respondents By Cluster

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

Rural Hub & Resort, Traditional Rural Communities



Not A Concern At All Slight Concern Moderate Concern Major Concern

Resource Categories

Select a category below to learn more about what it is and to see specific resources that may be used to improve wellbeing in your community. Please note that solutions implemented to target one aspect of wellbeing will often result in improvements in other areas as well.



Community Connection



Connection With Nature



Environmental Quality



Safety and Security



Mental Health



Physical Health



Living Standards



Substance Misuse



Communications



<https://www.usu.edu/utah-wellbeing-project/resources/>

Rural Leader Perspectives

- Heber Mayor Heidi Franco
- Nephi City Manager Seth Atkinson



Discussion

How is your city or town addressing wellbeing?

Opportunities and Challenges

THANK YOU!

Next Wellbeing Survey 2026
Pending Funding

**U
&
T** UTAH LEAGUE OF
CITIES AND TOWNS


WASATCH FRONT REGIONAL COUNCIL

UTDOT
Keeping Utah Moving

UTAH
AGRICULTURAL
EXPERIMENT STATION
UtahStateUniversity

EXTENSION 
UtahStateUniversity

Utah
**WELLBEING
PROJECT**

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SPRINGDALE
Utah

