

CITY OF
FAIRFIELD

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

2026
REPORT

CITY OF
FAIRFIELD
NEBRASKA



PO BOX 79
HOLDREGE, NE 68949
308.455.4770

WWW.SCEDD.US

2026 Fairfield- Community Needs Assessment Survey

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Introduction

Local governments that take the time to understand and respond to the needs of their constituents can lead their communities into a future envisioned and supported by the people. Accurately identifying community's needs and priorities demonstrates an investment by leadership to engage enthusiastic, committed residents. Gaining public input through the Community Needs Assessment Survey and the engagement opportunity provided during a Town Hall, assists local officials and leaders with establishing a benchmark for ongoing community participation. This benchmark to actively support public participation creates a legacy for future generations.

The Community Needs Assessment Survey (CNAS) is an important first step in the path that leads to ongoing community development and growth. The CNAS process produces information that enables a community to systematically set and achieve goals.

To ensure the CNAS provided meaningful information and community engagement, the survey process included the following steps:

- * formed a survey question selection committee of stakeholder that represented multiple community interests such as business owners, community club, and local government;
- * provided appropriate publicity to ensure all households were aware of the importance of their participation in the survey; and
- * hosted a town hall meeting for the presentation of results and inclusion of residents in priority identification and goal setting.

The City of Fairfield contacted the South Central Economic Development District, Inc. (SCEDD) to request its support to complete a 2026 CNAS. Volunteers within the community served a key role in collaboration and community initiatives in many areas and contributed to the stakeholder committee.

SCEDD provided guidance and support to the committee on question selection to address the priority areas for their community. SCEDD created electronic and paper survey questionnaires for distribution. A link to complete the electronic survey was provided through email and various social media posts, with the survey link placed on the City of Fairfield's Facebook page and on printed media. Paper surveys were made available to residents at the City Office, Library, C&M Ag, and Pinnacle Bank. The City collected paper surveys, scanning them to SCEDD for electronic entry. SCEDD compiled the completed surveys, conducted data analysis, and prepared the report that follows.

Methodology

The questionnaire was divided into five areas of interest:

- Demographics
- City/Community
- Business & Economic Development
- Housing
- Child Care

The electronic form of the survey was available from April 7 through 21, 2026. The City publicized the link for households to complete the survey through their City Facebook page, inserted into 185 utility bills mailed, as well as various flyers and posters posted throughout the community. Local organizations embraced the promotion with consistent social media posts through Fairfield Community Club, Fairfield Library, and extensive word of mouth efforts as well as distributing paper surveys to the oldest residents in the community.

In all publicity survey respondents were informed to only complete one survey per household. Only one survey was accepted from each Internet Protocol (IP) address, except for surveys completed at the City Library where a computer was available to the public. A QR code image was on the paper flyers that provided a link to scan with a smartphone to complete the survey electronically.

Paper surveys were also printed and delivered by personnel on April 6 to numerous Fairfield businesses. The paper surveys at the City Office, City Library, C&M Ag, and Pinnacle bank provided an option for those who preferred this format or who did not have access to a device to complete the electronic survey. Thirty-one paper surveys were returned to the City office; these were scanned by City staff, sent to SCEDD, and entered via the electronic survey link. Two individuals completed the survey at the Library computers.

Completed survey results were processed by SCEDD, utilizing the Survey Monkey software tool which integrates statistical analysis. Additional statistical comparison and analysis was completed by SCEDD staff to create the report and final presentation of data.

Responses were gathered in a variety of formats including **multiple choice, yes/no, and rating scales.**

- **Ratings scales were either *Excellent = 4, Good = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1* or *Definitely = 4, Probably = 3, Probably Not = 2, Definitely Not = 1.***
- **Responses to the four choices available on each rating scale were given a weighted average score, as noted above, to arrive at an overall rating.**
- **In addition to the four responses outlined, *don't know or no opinion* could be selected; *don't know or no opinion* responses were omitted from final results.**

The following information provides a snapshot for the community of Fairfield according to the 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate. Fairfield has a population of 327, with 151 total occupied households estimated. The 80 responses generated within Fairfield City limits represent a response rate of 53%, 26 respondents indicated they lived outside the City limits, and 5 did not respond to this question. The Fairfield zip code was selected by 92 respondents, 11 providing other zip codes, and 8 did not provide their zip code. **The total number of surveys completed was 111.**

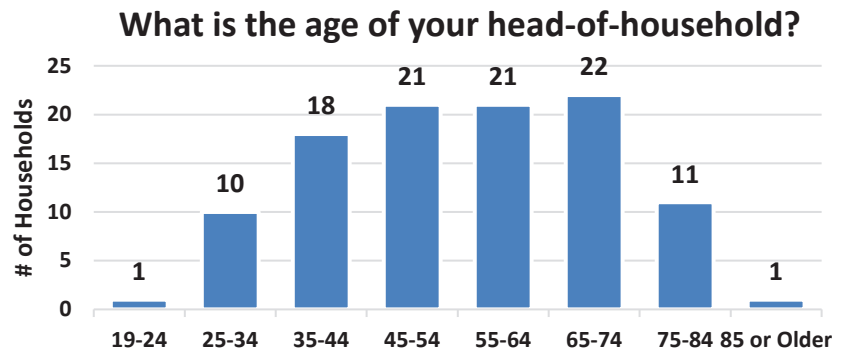
SURVEY RESULTS	Fairfield City Limits
City Population	327
Average Household Size	2.17
Total Households*	151
Total Surveys Returned from Fairfield zip code	92
Total Surveys Returned <i>within City Limits</i>	80
Response Rate <i>within City Limits</i>	53%
Total Surveys Completed	111

*Source: 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

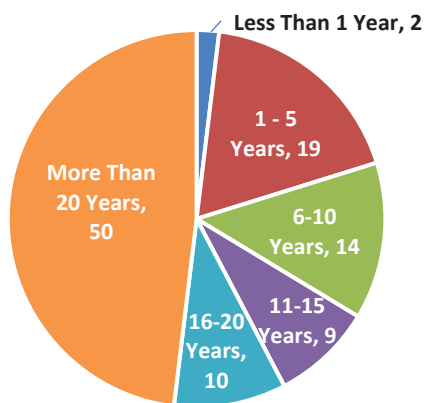
Demographics

Demographic questions provide an overview of the make-up of a community, based on age, number of years in the community, commute to work, combined annual household income, and number of members in a household.

The first demographic question asked the age of the head-of-household. Four age groups between 25 and 84 were well represented. The prevalent age groups were 35-44 at 17% (18), 45-54 at 20% (21), 55-64 at 20% (21), and 65-74 at 21% (22). Other age groups that were represented include 25-34 at 9.5% (10) and 75-84 at 10.5% (11). The least represented age groups were 19-24 and 85 or older head of household each with 1 respondent, under 19 had no responses.



How many years have you lived in the community?

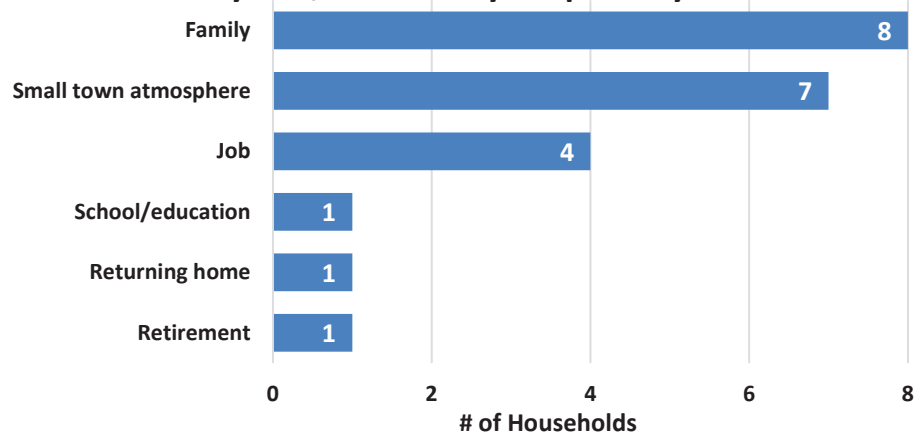


community within the last five years were asked to provide the primary reason for moving. Twenty-two (22) households responded, with the top reason indicated for moving was family by 8 households, followed by 7 for small town atmosphere, and 4 for job. Additional responses with one

Respondents were asked how long they have lived in the Fairfield area. Of the 104 households that answered this question, 48% (50), have lived in the Fairfield area for more than 20 years. Only 2% (2) moved to the area within the past year and 18% (19) had lived there 1-5 years, 13% (14) have lived in the area 6-10 years, 9% (9) for 11-15 years, and 10% (10) have lived in the area for 16-20 years. Two additional respondents reported commuting to Fairfield to work.

Those who answered they had moved to the

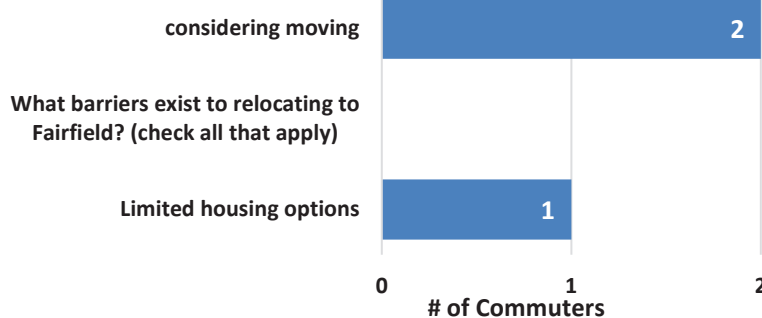
If you moved to the community within the last five years, what was your primary reason?



respondent each were school/education, returning home, and retirement.

Regarding Commuters:

If you commute from another community, do you prefer to continue commuting or are you considering moving to Fairfield?



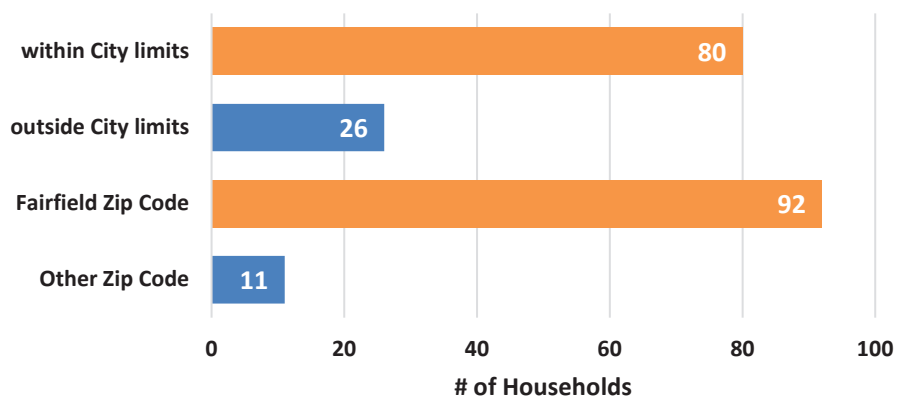
Households that commute from another community were asked if they prefer to continue commuting or would they consider moving to Fairfield. Of the 2 responses, both indicated they would consider moving, with one (1) indicating the barrier to relocating to Fairfield was limited housing options.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they lived within or

outside the City limits of Fairfield. Eighty (80) respondents, representing 53% of all households in the City limits responded, with 26

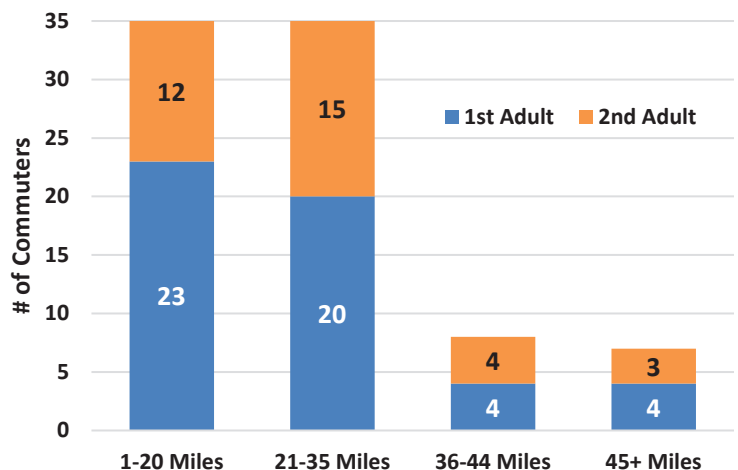
respondents indicating they lived outside City limits. Five (5) did not provide a response, which likely impacts the percentage of in-town resident responses. Respondents then indicated their home address zip code. Of the 103 respondents, 92 (89%) had the Fairfield zip code, and 11 respondents had a home zip code other than Fairfield. Glenvil was represented by 6, Edgar by 3, Deweese by 1, and 1 household indicated 'other'. Eight (8) respondents did not provide a zip code.

Where do you live:

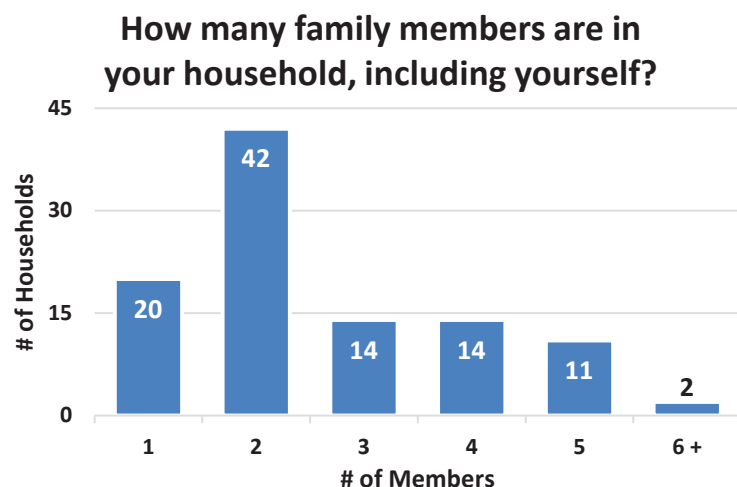


Households were asked, if they work outside of the Fairfield area, to identify how far they commute to work, one way. Each household could report on two adults with 85 adults report they work outside City limits. Results indicate 35 adults commute 1 to 20 miles outside of Fairfield, 35 adults

If you work outside of the Fairfield area, how far do you commute one way?



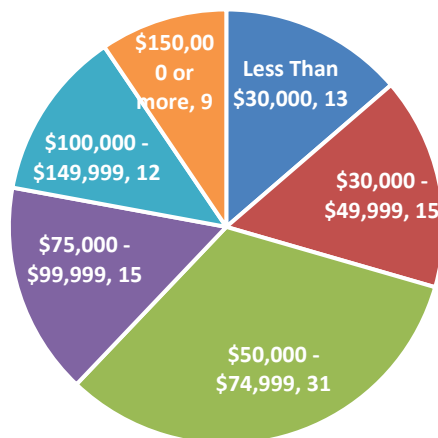
commute 21-35 miles, 8 adults commute 36-44 miles, and 7 adults commute 45 or more miles.



The number of family members in a household was provided by 103 households. Twenty (20) had one-person households (19%), 42 (41%) were two-person, 14 (14%) were three-person, 14 (14%) were four-person, 11 (11%) were five-person, and 2 households had 6 or more (2%).

The final demographic question asked for the combined annual household income with 95 responding. The highest representation was in the \$50,000-74,999 annual income bracket with 31 (33%) households. Fifteen (15) or 16% of households each for the income brackets of \$30,000-49,999 and \$75,000-99,999, with 13 (14%) had income less than \$30,000, 12 (13%) with \$100,000-149,999 income, and 9 (9%) with a combined income of \$150,000 or more.

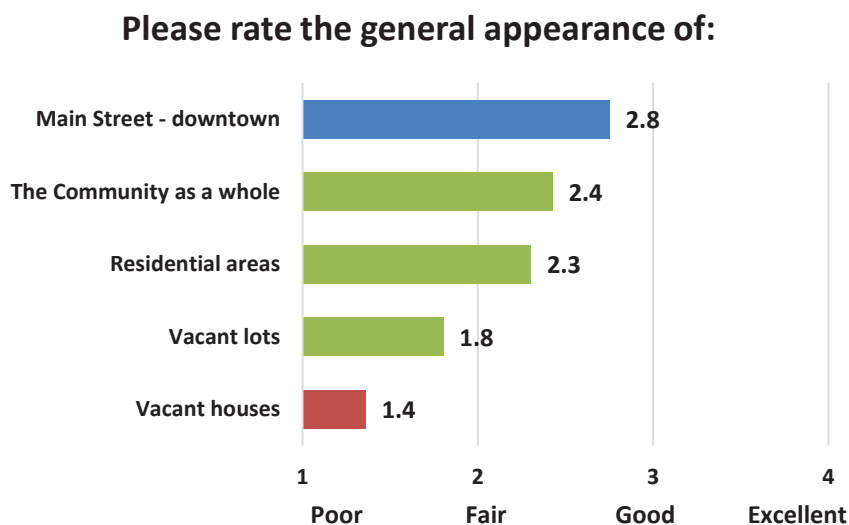
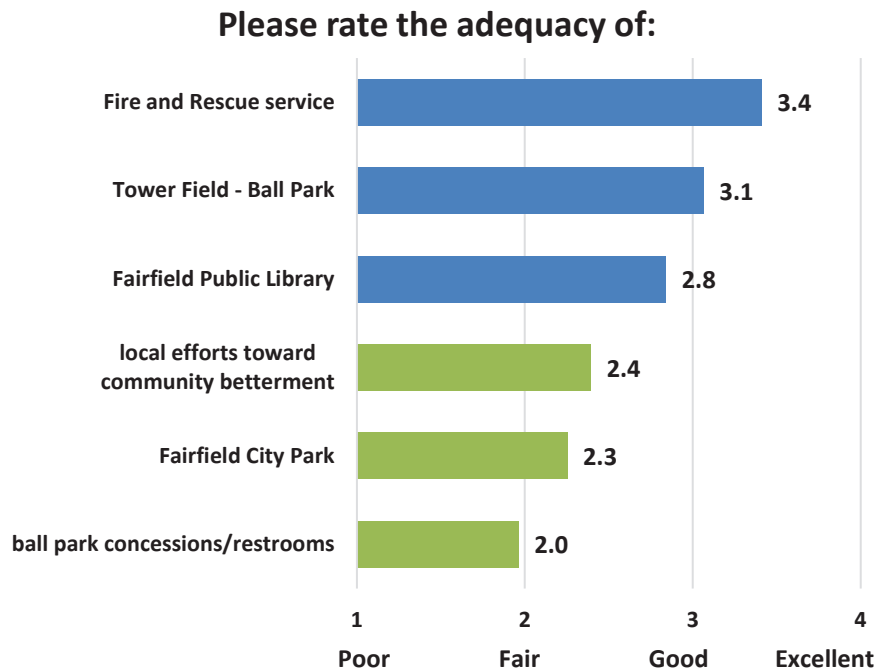
What is the combined annual income of all family members living in your home?



City/Community

This section of the survey addressed items specific to the local government as well as how residents felt about the community. A weighted rating is shown in the following charts, with an excellent rating weighted as 4 and a poor rating weighted as a score of 1.

The **adequacy** of fire protection and rescue service received the top weighted average score of 3.4, equivalent to a high good rating. Of the 111 providing responses, 94% rated fire and rescue service as excellent or good, and 80% rated Tower Field – Ball Park as excellent or good. Fairfield Public Library was rated by 71% as excellent or good. Local efforts toward community betterment had a mixed response 46% as excellent or good and 54% as fair or poor with 21 responses as poor, Fairfield City Park had 61% rating as fair or poor, and ball park concessions and restrooms had 79% rating as fair or poor for an overall fair rating, with 23 responses rating as poor overall.

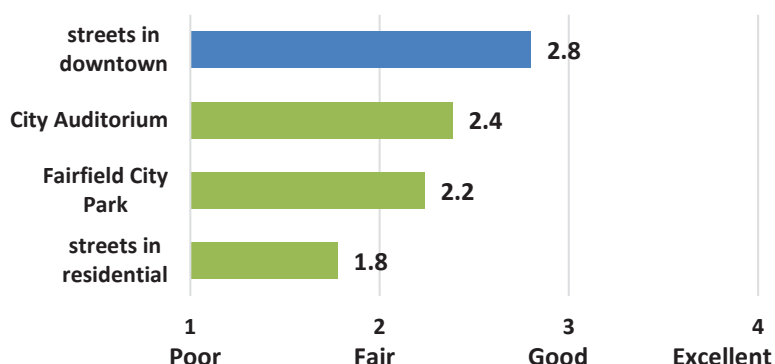


Respondents were asked to rate the **general appearance** of community features on a scale of excellent to poor. Main Street – Downtown received an overall good rating with 67% rating as excellent or good. The community as a whole had 50 good ratings and 45 fair ratings, residential areas received a 2.3 with 61% (66) rating the general appearance as fair or poor. Vacant lots received a 1.8 overall fair rating with 43 fair responses

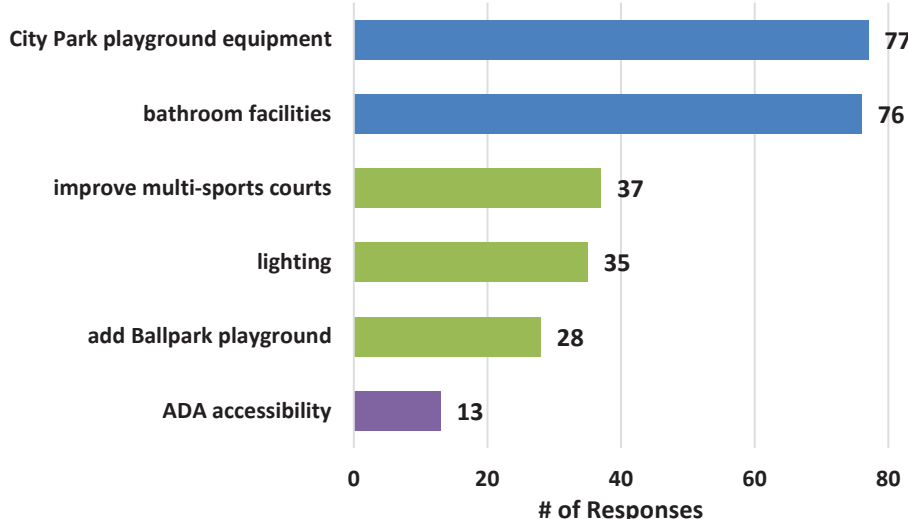
and 37 poor responses, and vacant houses received the lowest rating of 1.4 with 19 rating as fair and 73 rating as poor for a combined 92% overall poor rating.

Respondents were asked to rate the **condition** of additional City features. Streets in downtown areas received an overall good rating of 2.8 with 75% rating as excellent or good. The City Auditorium received 51% rating as excellent as good, noting 17 responses rated as poor for an overall fair rating. Fairfield City Park had an overall fair rating with 61% rating as fair or poor, and streets in residential areas received an overall fair rating with 79% rating as fair or poor.

Please rate the condition of:



What improvements to the City parks are most important to you? (select up to 3 priorities)

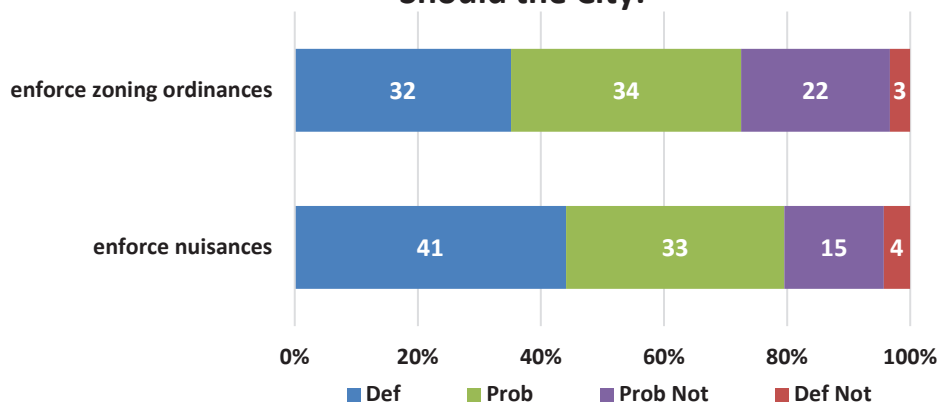


The improvements to City parks most important to households was the next question asked, with 109 respondents selecting up to 3 priorities. City Park playground equipment was the top priority with 71% (77), indicating this as a priority, followed closely by bathroom facilities with 70% (76) selecting as a priority. The other amenity improvements were prioritized noticeably lower with 37 selecting to

improve multi-sports courts, 35 for lighting, 28 to add a ballpark playground, and 13 for ADA accessibility as a priority.

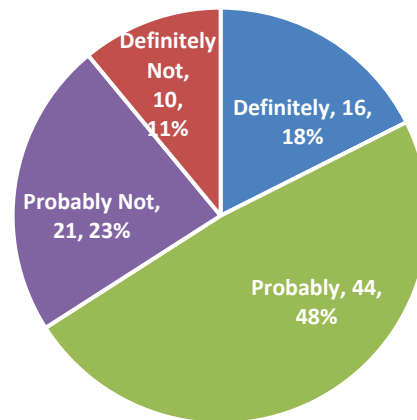
Support for City enforcement of nuisances and zoning ordinances resulted in 66 (73%) indicating zoning ordinances should definitely or probably be enforced and 74 (80%) indicating definitely or probably nuisance ordinances should be enforced.

Should the City:



Respondents were asked, “Does Fairfield encourage public participation – individuals having a voice regarding local government decisions?”. A combined 60 respondents (66%) indicated public participation was definitely or probably encouraged, which is a good indicator for City leadership. Twenty-one respondents (23%) felt public participation was probably not encouraged and 10 (11%) said it was definitely not encouraged.

Does Fairfield encourage public participation - individuals having a voice regarding local governmental decisions?

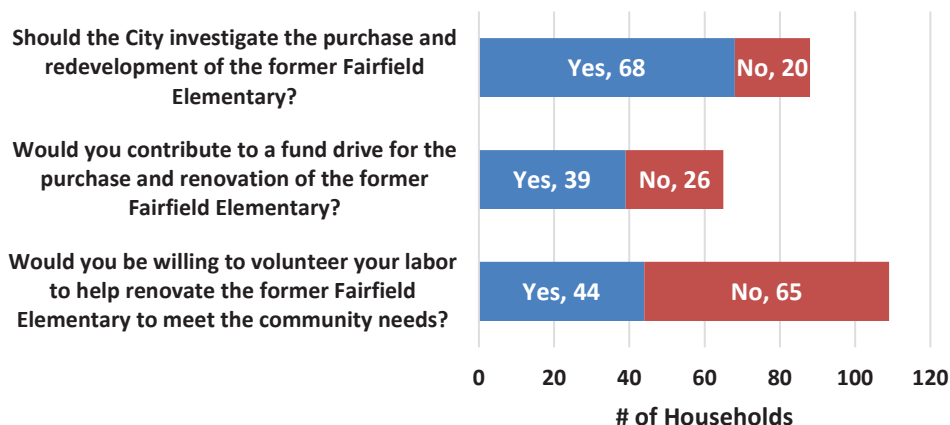


Community Projects

The next series of questions asked what projects the City should focus on as the next best steps for community amenities. This City has discussed purchasing the former Fairfield Elementary School to renovate and re-purpose the building. The facility has been vacant for a couple of decades yet has many possibilities to serve community needs that have been discussed, including: senior center, fitness room, storm shelter, youth programming, City

offices, and meeting and event spaces.

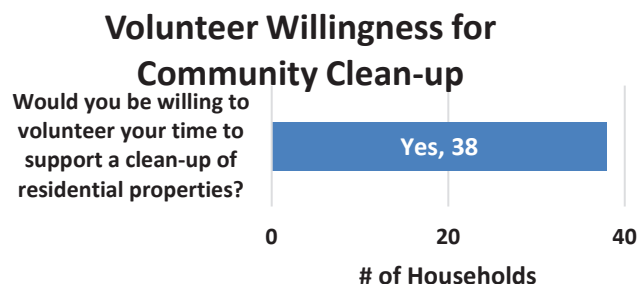
Support for a Special Project: Purchase and renovate the former Fairfield Elementary School



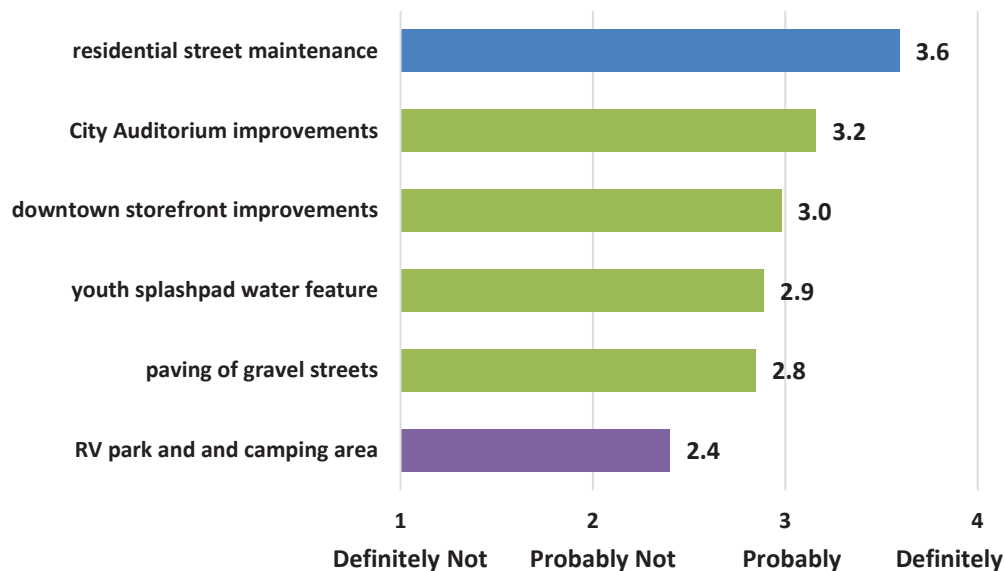
Respondents were asked if the City should investigate the purchase and redevelopment of the former Fairfield Elementary; 68 (61%) indicated yes, 20 (18%) answered no, and 23 (21%) needed more information before answering yes or no.

Support for a fund drive to purchase and renovate the former Fairfield Elementary was shown as 39 households answered they would contribute to a fund drive. Another 45 answered they needed more information before committing. The willingness to volunteer labor to renovate the building was indicated by 44 households. The support to explore the purchase and renovation of this landmark building presents an opportunity for leadership to continue more conversations with the community on the potential for this project.

Respondents were asked if they would be willing to volunteer their time to support a clean-up of residential properties, 38 answered yes, indicating an area the community leaders could explore more; 70 answered no.



Are the following projects needed in the community?

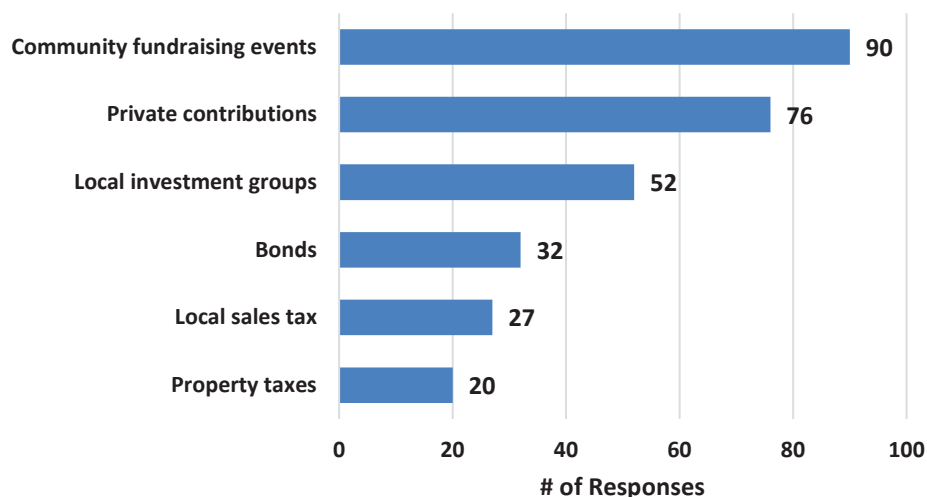


Opinions on the need for specific projects were asked on several community amenity topics. Residential street maintenance received significant support, 91% (92) answered as an overall definitely needed community project. City Auditorium improvements were rated by 90% (89) as overall probably

needed, followed by downtown storefront improvements with 73% (75) indicating overall probably needed, youth splashpad water feature at 62% (62) as overall probably needed, and paving of gravel streets at 59% (62) indicating it as overall probably needed. An RV park and camping area had 45% (44) indicating it overall as probably not a needed project.

If partial funding sources can be acquired from state and federal sources for the above-listed projects, respondents were asked how Fairfield should fund its share; respondents could check all preferred

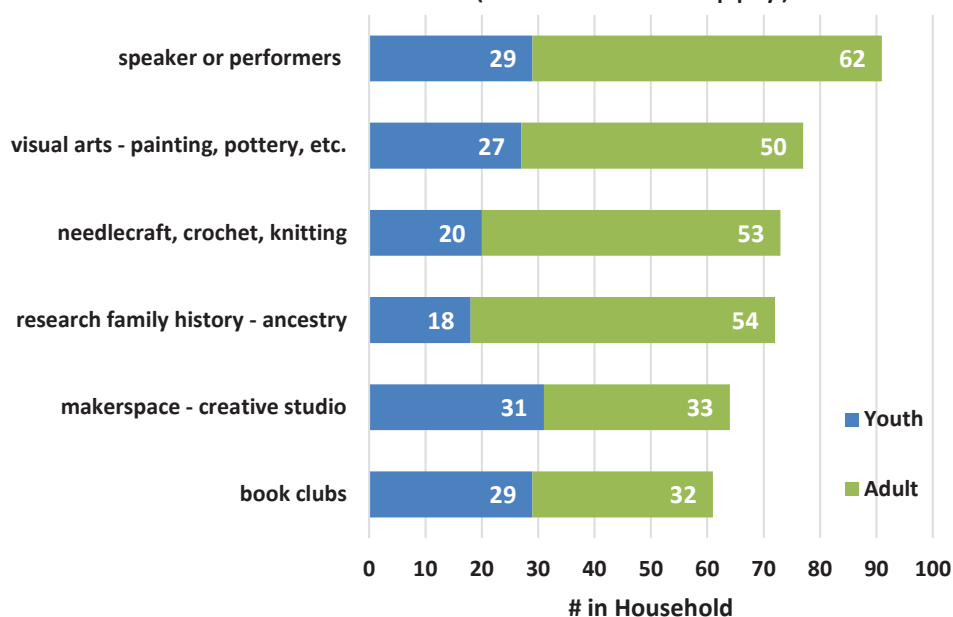
If partial funding for the projects listed above can be acquired from state and federal sources, how should Fairfield fund its share? (check as many that apply)



funding sources. The most preferred option by 90 households of 109 respondents was community fundraising events, followed by private contributions indicated by 76, local investment groups indicated by 52, bonds by 32, local sales tax by 27, and finally property taxes with 20 households selecting that option.

Households were asked if programs were offered by the library, which of the following would a youth or adult member of the household utilize. The most popular program selected was speaker or performers with 29 youth and 62 adults indicating they would utilize for a total of 91 interested, followed by visual arts such as painting and pottery indicating 27 youth and 50 adults,

If offered by the Library, which of the following programs or classes would a member of your household utilize? (Check all that apply)



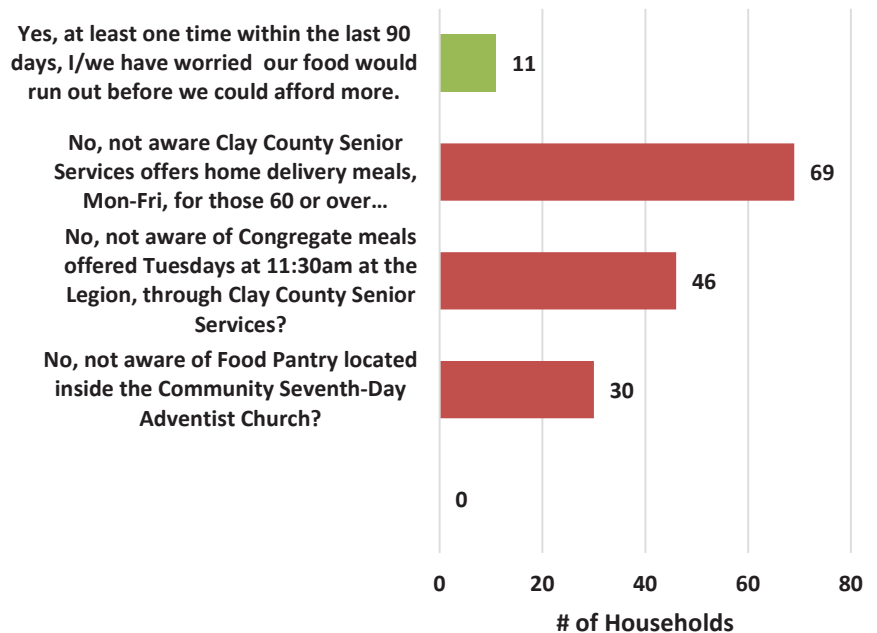
followed closely by needlecraft, crochet and knitting with 20 youth and 53 adults for an overall 73 interested in participating, then research family history – ancestry indicating 18 youth and 54 adults. Makerspace creative studio was the most popular program or class for youth with 31 indicating interest and 33 adults, with book clubs indicating 29 youth and 32 adults would utilize such a program.

Community Services – Food Security & Access

The next questions addressed local issues including community services for food insecurity, food pantry, and senior services including meal delivery.

Respondents were asked if, at least one time within the last 90 days, they had worried about running out of food before they could afford more and 11 households answered yes. Of those, 5 households have children ages 18 and under when compared to the demographic question of their household.

Regarding access to food:



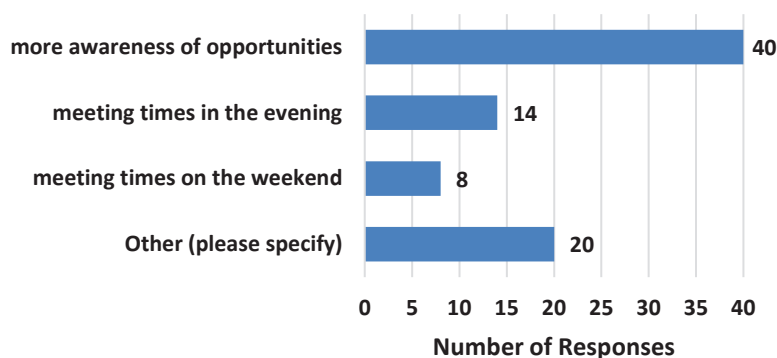
Clay County Senior Services

offers home delivery meals, Monday through Friday, for those over 60 or over or for those with mobility needs; 69 households were unaware of this service with 41 households aware.

Senior Services also offers congregate meals on Tuesdays at the Legion for a reduced cost or free will donation, 46 households were not aware of this with 63 households aware of this opportunity. Thirty (30) households were not aware of the food pantry located inside the Community Seventh-Day Adventist Church, while 81 households were aware.

The Fairfield Community Club is very active offering many events such as Triple F Festival,

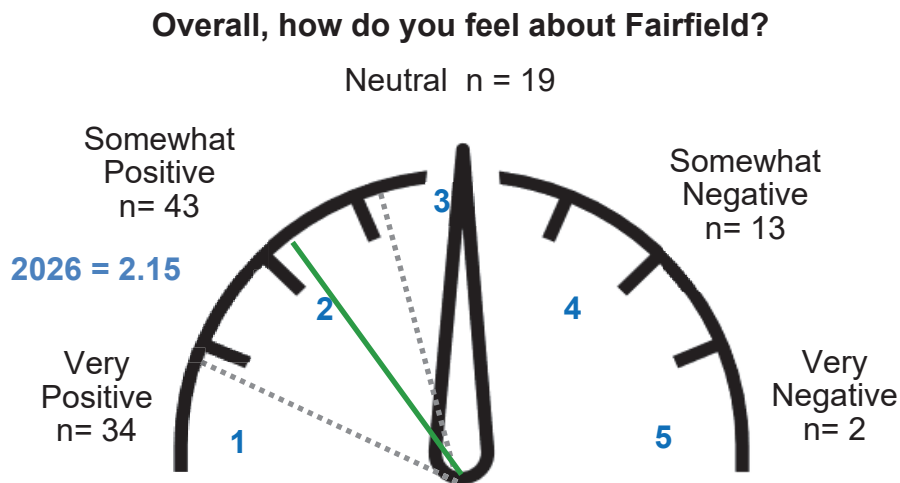
What would encourage you to volunteer at more Community Club events?



Street Dance, Egg Hunt, and the Poker Run. Respondents were asked what would encourage them to volunteer more at such events. More awareness of opportunities was selected by 40, followed by meeting times in the evening by 14, and meeting times on the weekend. Twenty 'other' responses were provided with 14 of those centered on having too busy of a schedule with kids, and others indicated not feeling welcomed or appreciated for time or too much time was expected. All comments will be provided to the Community Club

for future conversations.

The final question of the community section asked respondents, “Overall, how do you feel about our community?” Respondents could select from a 5-point scale of very positive to very negative; all 260 respondents provided an opinion. The breakdown of answers 34 (31%) stated very positive, 43 (39%) answered somewhat positive, 19 (17%) answered neutral, 13 (12%) answered somewhat negative, and only 2 household answered very negative. The responses were weighted for an overall positive score of 2.15 shown on the green line with a solid 69% combined households selecting a very positive and somewhat positive answer. The gray dashed lines show the range of ratings answered by over 30 communities over a 20-year span, in their respective CNAS, with Fairfield’s falling right in line with the average community rating.



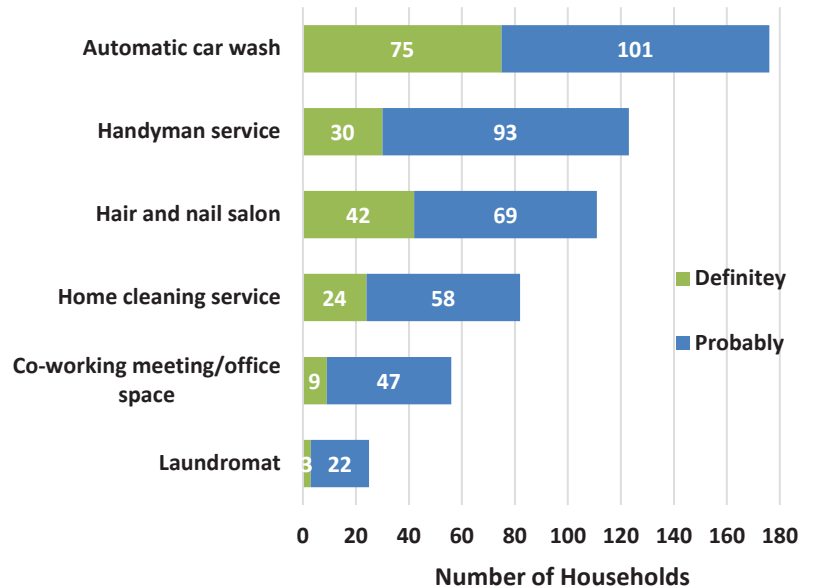
A follow-up question asked respondents to indicate why they felt the way that way about Fairfield. Sixty-two (62) households provided comments which will be shared with the City Council and Fairfield Community Club in the final report.

Business & Economic Development

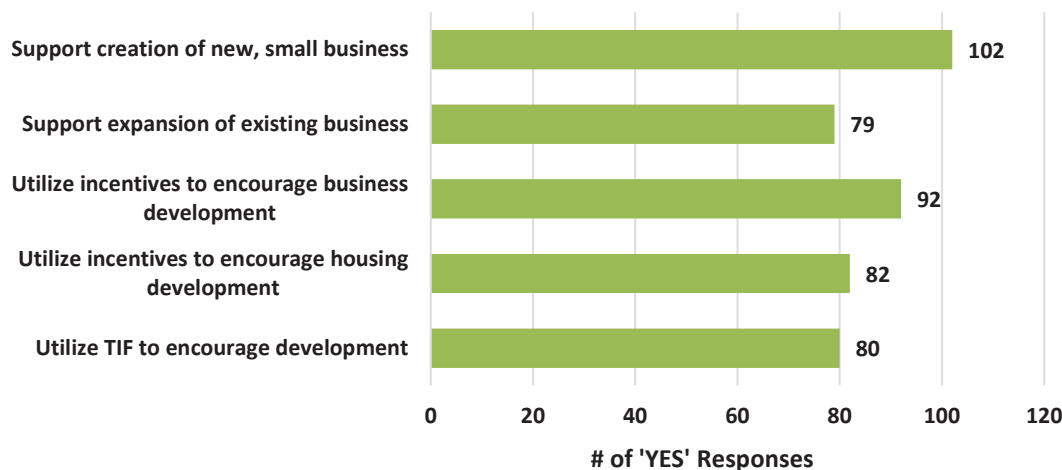
Business and economic development questions were addressed in the next section. Households were asked if they would utilize the suggested businesses or services if they were available in Fairfield. All 111 households responded to this question. Of the responses received, 98 households, representing 91% of respondents, indicated they would definitely or probably utilize an automatic car wash. Other businesses that would definitely or probably be supported included a bakery with a coffee shop with 85 (79%)

definitely or probably supporting, 71 (74%) for handyman service, 53 (57%) for lawn care and snow removal, 45 (47%) for home cleaning services, and 22 (27%) for a co-working meeting/office space. Other responses varied by topic and are provided to the City. These household responses indicate there is potential for exploring new businesses in all the areas, as there is notable support for all. Households could write in other businesses not listed, 4 suggested a grocery store, 2 a convenience store, 2 a fitness exercise gym, and 1 roller skating at the old school.

Would you utilize the following businesses if they were available in our community?



Supporting City Initiatives: Housing & Business Growth

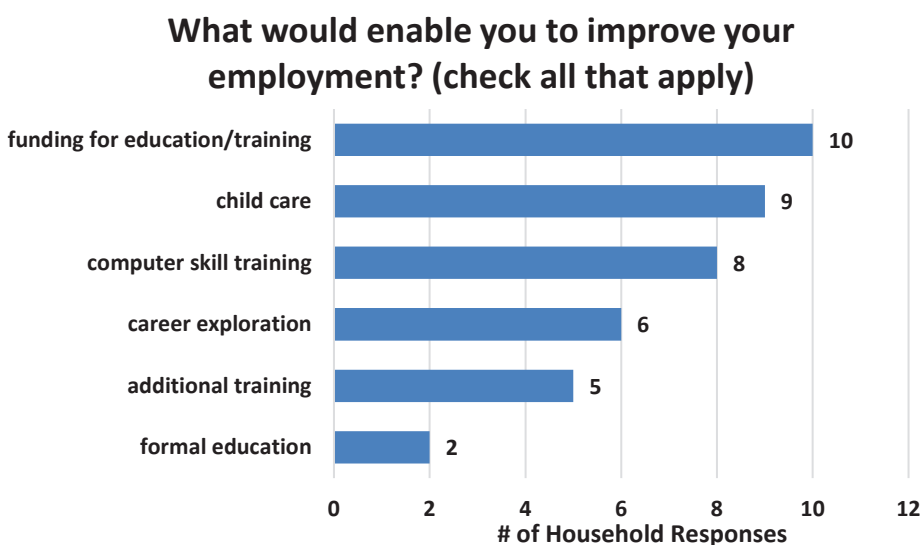


The next series of questions asked households if the City should support new and existing business expansion and utilize incentives to promote community growth in

specific areas. One-hundred and two (102) indicated the City should support the creation of

new, small business, and 79 indicated yes to support expansion of existing business. Ninety-two (92) households (87%) indicated the City should utilize incentives to encourage business development, while a strong 82 households (77%) indicated incentives to encourage housing development should be utilized, and 80 households (77%) answered yes, Tax-Increment Financing should be utilized to encourage development.

These are strong indicators for City leadership of public support to encourage investment and growth in your community.



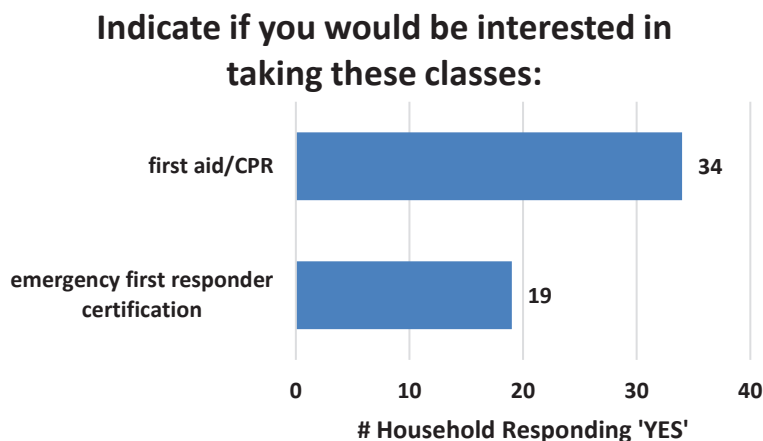
Respondents were asked what would enable them to improve their current employment status; more than one item could be selected. Of the 22 households selecting one or more factors, funding for education and training was the top factor with 10, followed closely by child care at 9 and

computer skill training by 8. Career exploration activities were selected by 6, additional training by 5, and formal education by 2 households. These employment factors could be explored by community organizations, the library, or businesses to further support, recruit, and retain the workforce in the Fairfield area, including reaching out to the local community college for resources and hosting an outreach event to the community.

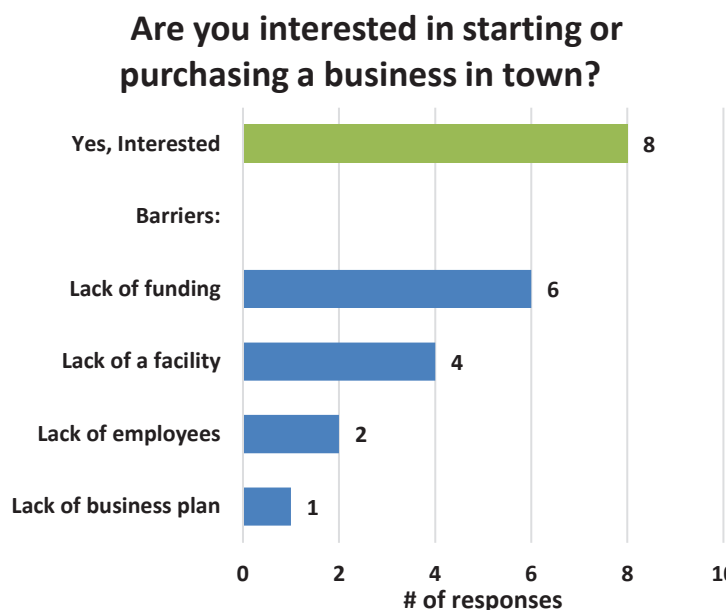
Respondents were then asked if they had an interest in emergency and first aid classes, as this was of interest to the Volunteer Fire Department to increase recruitment.

Thirty-four (34) households indicated interest in taking first aid/CPR, while 19 had interest in taking emergency first responder certification. The number of responses is per household noting there could be more than one

person per household interested in these classes. These are strong numbers for the VFD to explore hosting classes to spur recruitment efforts.



The next series of questions asked households of their interest in starting or purchasing a business in Fairfield. Eight (8) households indicated they would be interested in starting or purchasing a business.



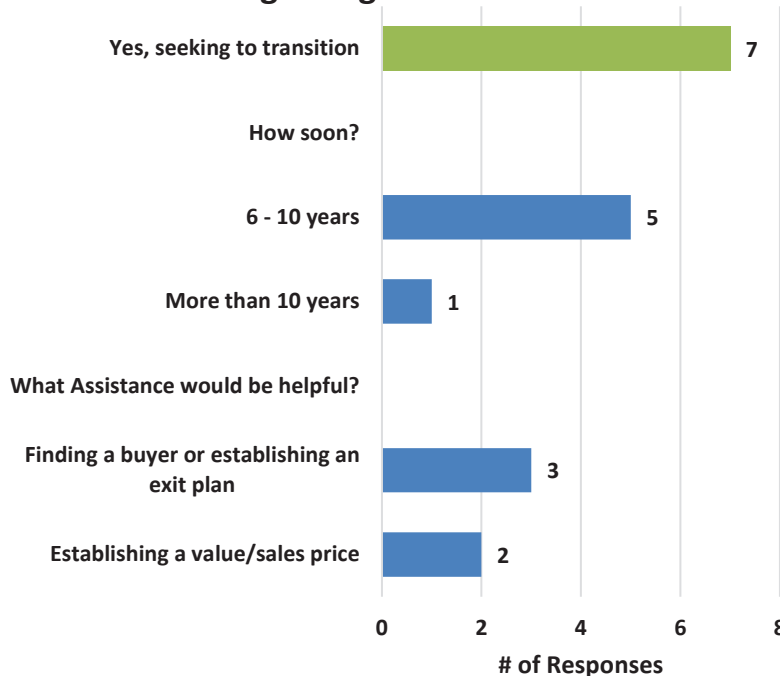
Those expressing interest were asked what factors were barriers to starting or purchasing a business. Lack of funding was selected by 6, lack of a facility by 4, lack of a employees by 2, and lack of a business plan by 1 household.

Regional resources for start-up businesses include the Central Community College's Entrepreneurship Centers and low-interest loans through the Capital Loan Fund, and the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) for navigating resources and business consulting.

Respondents were then asked if they were a business owner that will be seeking to transition out their business in the future. Seven (7) responded yes, they are planning to transition out of their business in the future. The business owners that answered were then asked how soon they want to transition, 5 indicated in 6-10 years, 1 in more than 10 years; none indicated within 1-5 years.

Respondents that indicated they planned to transition their business were asked what assistance would be helpful to them. Three (3) business owners selected assistance finding a buyer or establishing an exit plan, and 2 owners selected establishing a value/sales price.

Owners Regarding Business Transitions

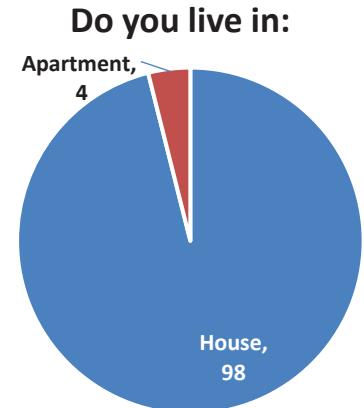


The opportunities to explore the development of new businesses, provide incentives for business development, and provide assistance to businesses in transition, are all areas the community could explore. Resources through SourceLink and SCEDD are available.

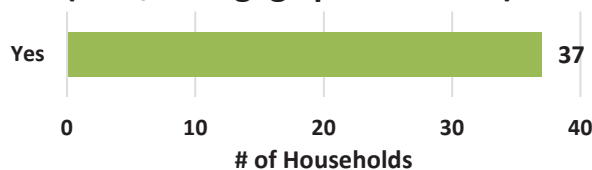
Housing

The next survey section was geared toward identifying several types of housing needs in Fairfield.

The first question asked respondents what type of home they lived in; 96% of respondents said they lived in a house, representing 98 households. Four (4) households lived in apartments.



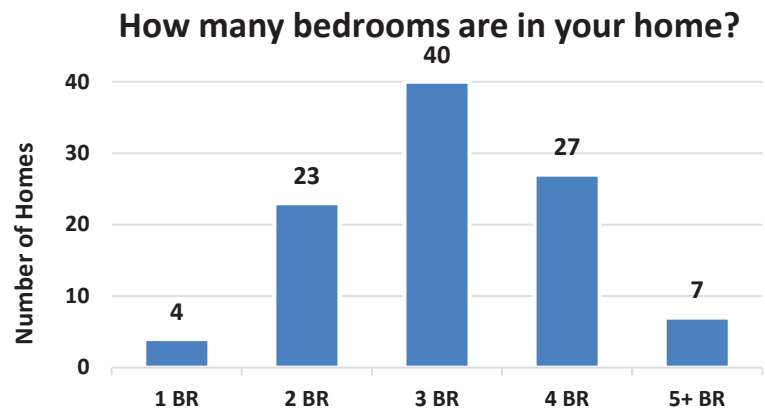
Do you pay more than 30% of your income towards housing (rent/mortgage plus utilities)?



Households that spend more than 30% of their income toward housing (rent/mortgage plus utilities) are often considered to be cost burdened by their housing costs. Thirty-seven percent (37%) or 37 households responding, reported

spending more than 30% of their income toward housing.

Households were then asked about the number of bedrooms in their home. Fourteen percent (4) lived in a one bedroom home, 23% (23) had two bedrooms, 40% (40) had 3 bedrooms, 27% (27) had 4-bedroom homes, with 7% (7) at 5 or more bedrooms.



Age 55+ Head of Household with 3 to 5+ Bedrooms



The cross-tabulation of data for the number of bedrooms compared to the age of the head of household for those 55 and over is helpful in visualizing how many older households have large homes and may consider transitioning to a smaller home if options were available. There were 36 households over the age of 55; 15 in age group 55-64 had

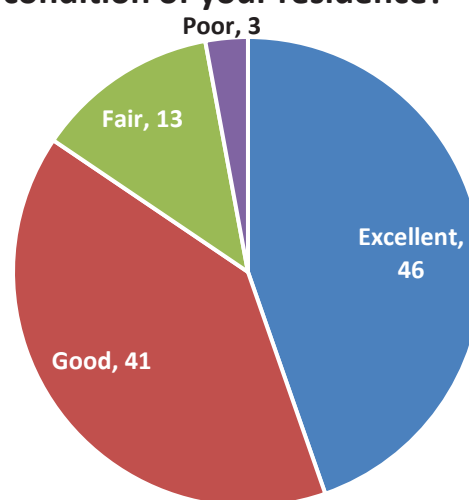
3 to 5+ bedrooms, 13 with head of household age 65-74 had 3 to 5+ bedrooms, and 8 household age 75-84 had 3 to 4 bedrooms.

Respondents were asked to rate the condition of their residence. Only 3 households indicated their home was overall unsatisfactory or in poor condition for a rating, having multiple issues. Thirteen (13) indicated their residence was fair with substantial wear and one major issue. Forty-one (41) households indicated a good rating as their home was structurally sound only needing minor repairs, while 46 indicated their home was in excellent condition. A combined 84% of respondents believed their home to be in either excellent or good (structurally sound) condition.

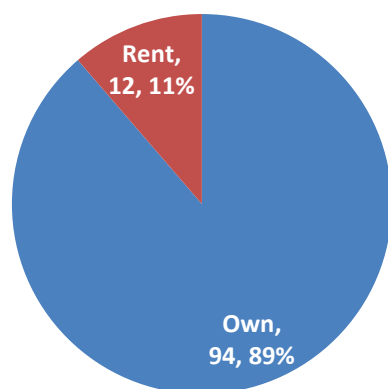
Conditions of housing are described typically in universal terms in Nebraska housing reports, by the following criteria:

- **Excellent**, solid roof and foundation, contributes positively to housing stock of the community;
- **Good**, structurally sound, may need minor repairs such as shingles, paint, concrete steps or new doors;
- **Fair**, substantial wear, one major issue such as sagging roof, missing/rotted siding, rotting windows, sagging porch;
- **Poor**, overall unsatisfactory, multiple issues such as crumbling foundation, broken/rotted windows and doors, sagging roof.

How would you rate the condition of your residence?



Do you rent or own your home?

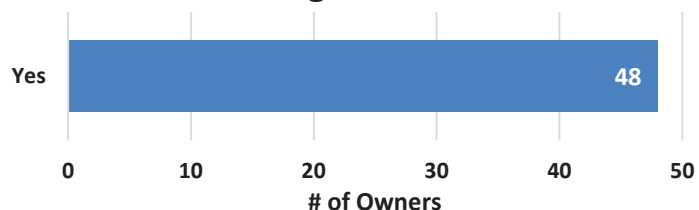


Households were asked if they owned or rented their home. 89% (94) of households responded they owned their home while 11% (12) indicated they rented.

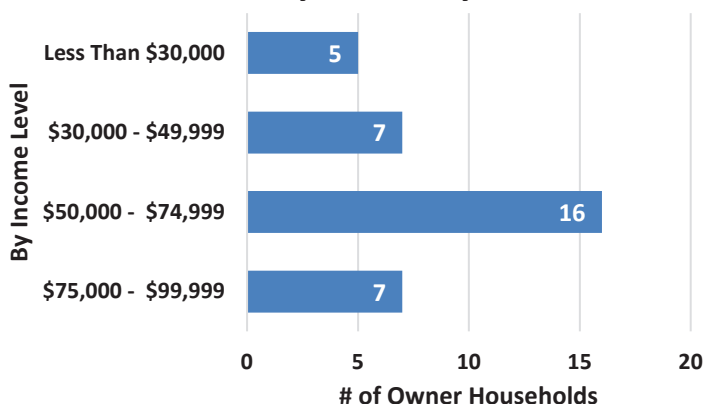
Owners

Homeowners were asked specific questions geared to their household. Homeowners were asked if they were interested in cost sharing assistance to complete rehabilitation improvements of their home. Of the 87 total responses, 48 (55%) of homeowner respondents indicated “yes” they would be interested in cost-sharing assistance.

Interested in Applying for Cost-Sharing Assistance



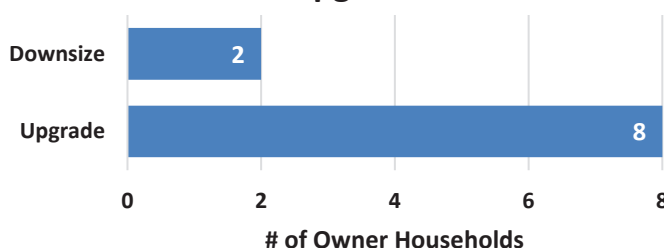
Owners Interested in Assistance - Likely to Qualify



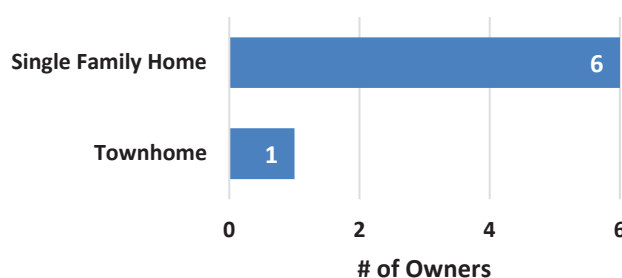
Further analysis was utilized, pairing homeowners who indicated interest in cost sharing assistance to complete rehabilitation improvements with their household income. Of the 44 who indicated interest in cost-sharing assistance and provided a household income, an estimated 35 homeowners with household incomes below \$99.9K *could be income eligible* for a rehabilitation program, based on their household income and size. A breakdown shows 5 household

income less than \$30,000 that answered yes, 7 households \$30,000-49,999, 16 households \$50,000-74,999, and 7 households \$75,000-99,999. Qualification for a household of 4, for example, for some state programs would be at or under 120% of Area Median Income for Fairfield, depending on household size.

Are you considering changing your residence to upgrade or downsize?



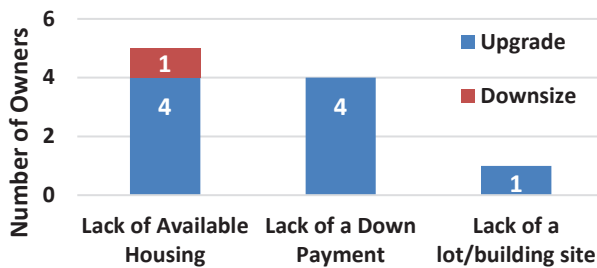
Which type of housing would you prefer? (select only one)



Homeowners were asked if they had considered changing their residence to either upgrade or downsize. Ten (10) respondents had considered changing their residence, of those, 8 to upgrade and 2 to downsize.

Homeowners considering changing their residence were asked about their preferred type of housing. Single family homes were the

Barriers to Changing Residence?



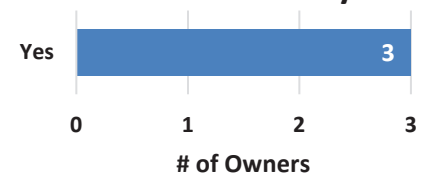
most popular, preferred by 6, one preferred a town home. Given the results for interest in downsizing and upgrading, this would indicate single family homes of varying sizes would meet the need.

Homeowners considering changing their residence were asked to select barriers that kept them from doing so with 8 answering this question. Lack of available housing was selected by 5 as the barrier to changing with

4 considering upgrading and 1 downsizing. Lack of a down payment was selected by 4 looking to upgrade, with lack of a lot/building site selected as a barrier for 1 owner household.

Homeowners were then asked if they were considering building a new home in Fairfield. Three (3) owner households indicated they were considering building a new home within the community.

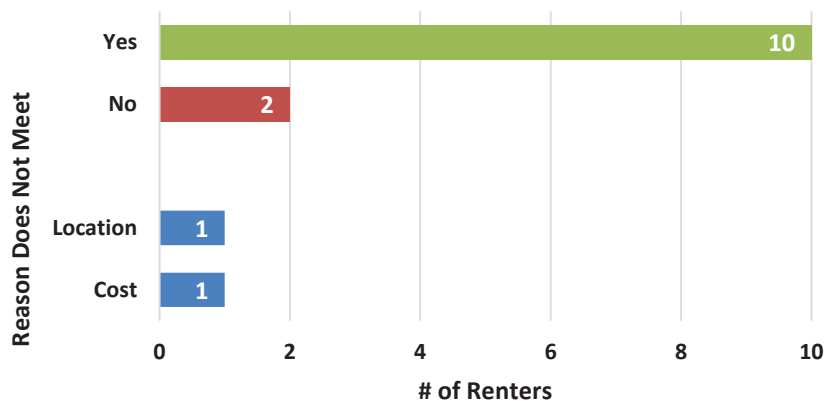
Are you considering building a new home in the community?



Renters

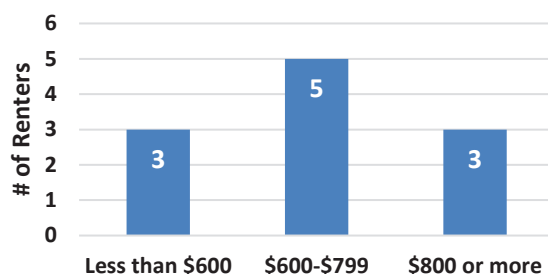
The next sub-section of housing questions was specific to renters. Renters were asked if their current rental met their needs. Of the 12 who responded, 10 indicated that their current rental met their needs and 2 said that their current rental did not meet their needs.

Rental Meeting Needs - Reasons it Does Not



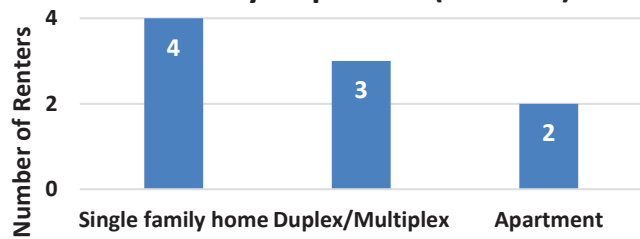
Respondents who indicated their rental did not meet their needs were asked the primary reason with 1 indicating location and 1 indicating cost as the factor.

What are you currently paying for rent on a monthly basis? (NOT including utilities)



Renters were asked how much they paid for rent monthly. Eleven (11) renters indicated the price range of their monthly rent with 3 responding as less than \$600 rent, 5 between \$600 -799, and 3 households at \$800 or more. This rent did not include utilities.

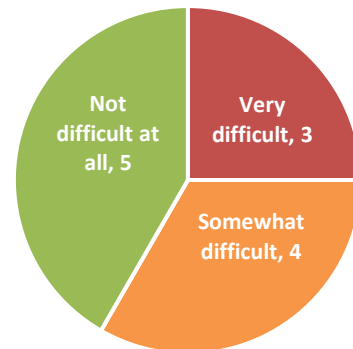
If other rental housing were available in Fairfield, which type would you prefer? (select 1)



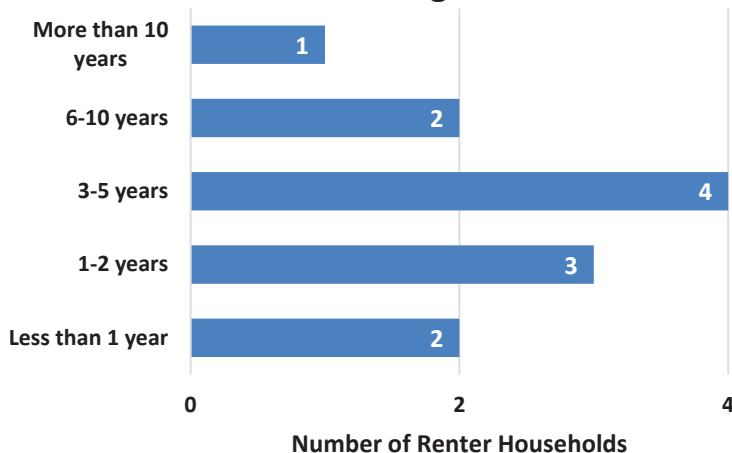
Renters were asked about the type of rental housing they would prefer in Fairfield if other options were available. Of the 12 renter households that responded, 4 indicated their preference for housing style as single family home, 3 indicated duplex or multi-plex, and 2 indicated apartment as their preference. Three (3) renters did not have a preference.

Renters were asked about the difficulty finding their current rental. Seven (7) of the 12 indicated it was very difficult or somewhat difficult to find their current rental. With 5 households stating it was not difficult at all, showing two extreme scenarios.

How difficult was it to find your current rental?



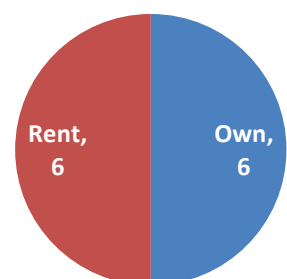
How long do you plan to continue renting?

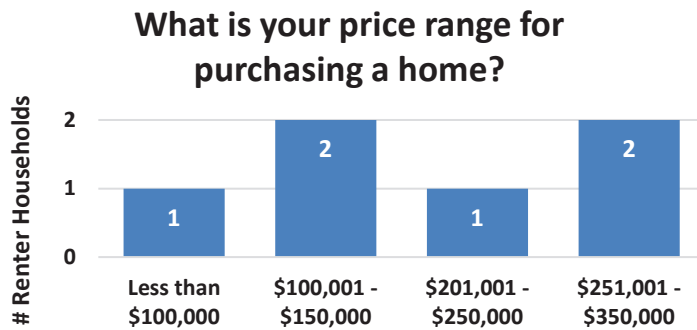


Current renters were asked how long they planned to continue renting. Of the 12 total respondents, 2 said they planned to rent for less than a year. 3 planned on renting for 1-2 years, 4 indicated 3-5 years, 2 indicated 6-10 years, and 1 planned to rent for more than ten years.

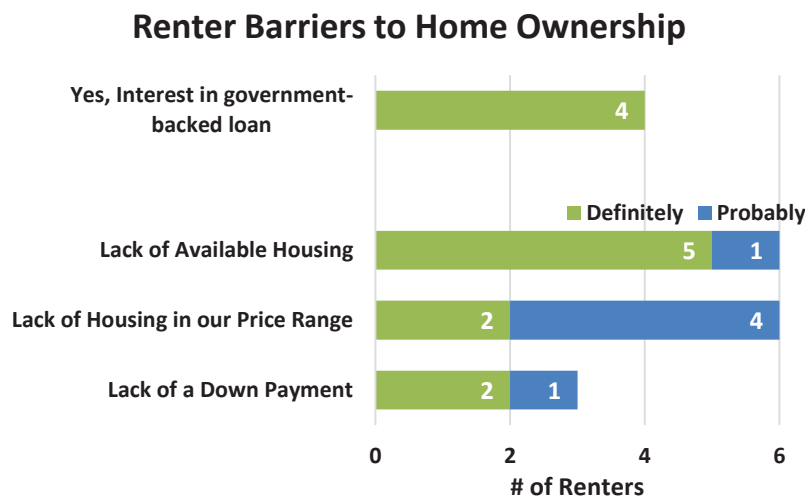
Residents who currently rent were asked if they preferred to own or rent. Of the 12 renter households responding, it was evenly split with 6 preferring to own and 6 to rent.

Do you prefer to own or rent?



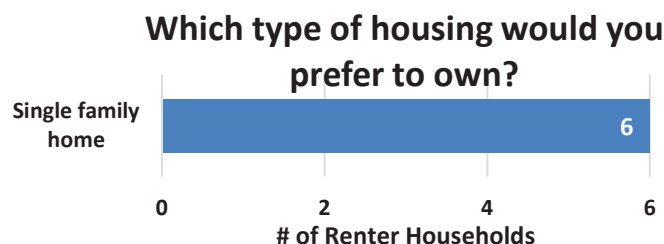


Additional questions were asked of the 6 renters who preferred to own, including their price range for purchasing a home. Of the renters responding, 1 was seeking a home costing less than \$100,000; 2 between \$100,001 and \$150,000; 1 between \$201,001 and \$250,000; 2 between \$251,000 and \$350,000.



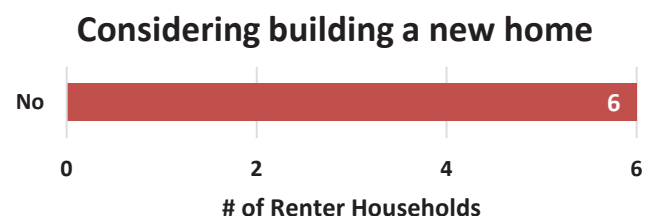
Renters preferring to own were asked if lack of a down payment were a barrier, would they be interested in a government-backed loan. Four (4) renter households said they were interested in this type of loan.

Renters wishing to own were asked about barriers to ownership for them, on a scale of definitely to definitely not. A combined 6 renters selected lack of available housing was definitely or probably a barrier, 6 selected lack of housing in their price range, and 3 indicated lack of down payment.



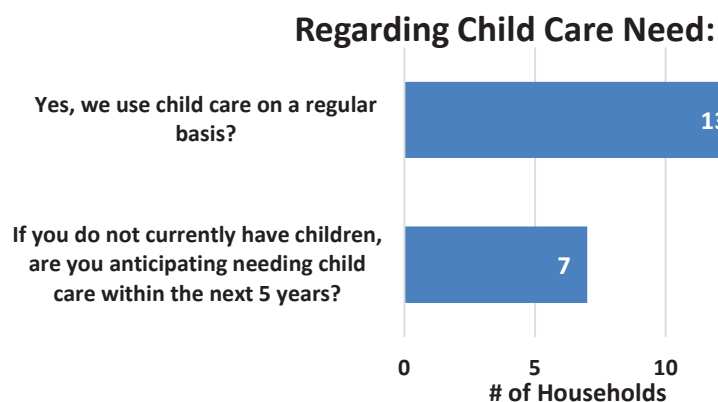
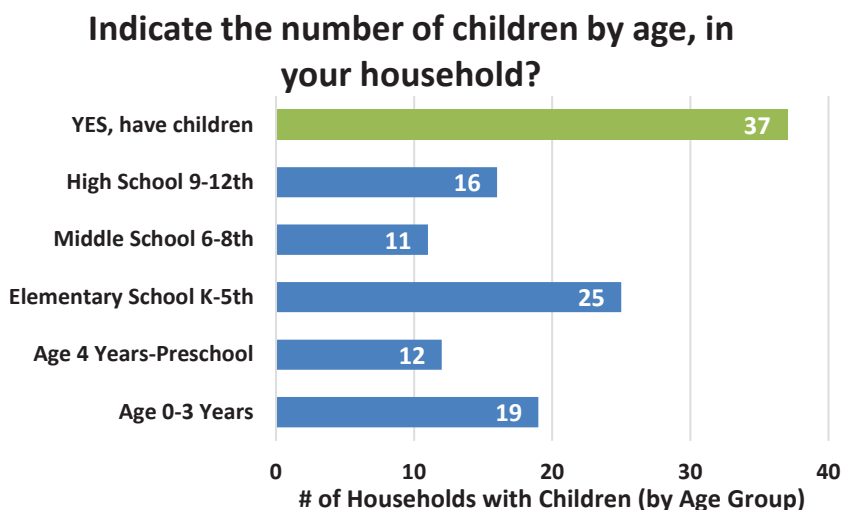
Renters were asked what type of housing they preferred with all 6 responding they prefer a single family home.

Renters were asked if they were considering building a new home within Fairfield, none of those responding were interested.



Child Care

Child care was the next topic addressed in the survey. Respondents were asked how many children were in their household by the following age categories and indicating 1, 2 or 3 or more for each category. Households with children under age 18 were represented by 37 households, with 19 children age 0-3 years represented, 12 age 4 to preschool, 25 elementary kindergarten to 5th grade, 11 in middle school 6th to 8th grade, and 16 children in high school 9th to 12th grade, for a total of 83 children.

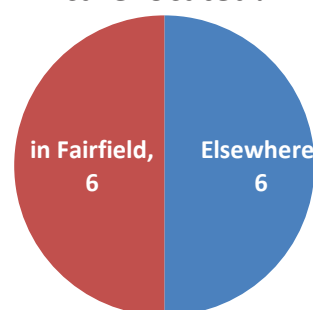


The current and anticipated demand for child care was then addressed. Respondents were asked if they used child care services on a regular basis. Thirteen (13) households, representing 12%, stated that they use child care on a regular basis. Households were then asked if they do not currently have children, are they anticipating needing child

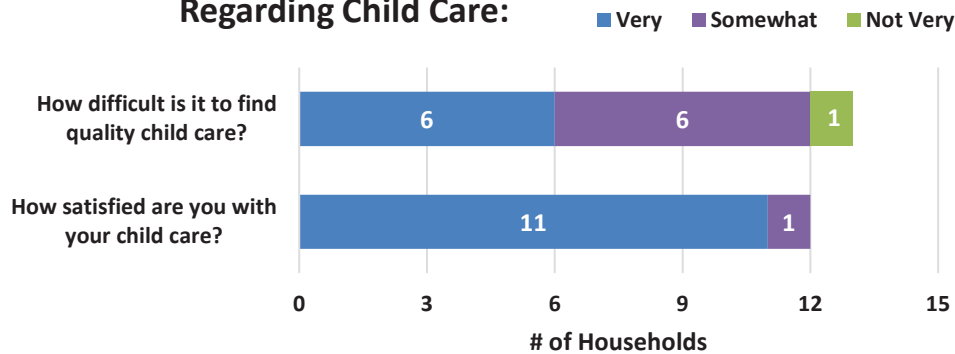
care within the next 5 years. Seven (7) households indicated they anticipated needing child care within the next 5 years.

Respondents who answered yes to currently using child care, were asked about the location of their child care. The location of child care was split with 6 in Fairfield and 6 located elsewhere.

Where is your child care located?



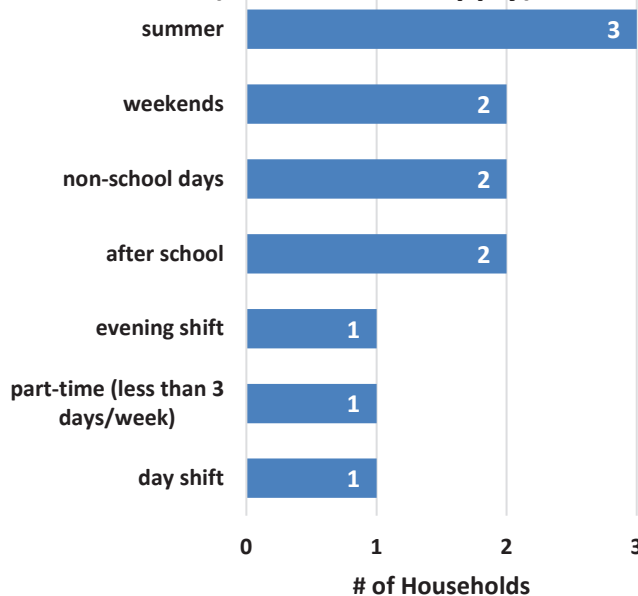
Regarding Child Care:



Respondents were asked about the difficulty of finding quality child care. Of the 13 households that responded, 12 indicated it was very or somewhat difficult, and only 1 household indicated it was not

very difficult to find quality child care. Respondents were then asked how satisfied they were with their child care with the results showing a strong satisfaction level. Eleven (11) households responded with very satisfied and 1 indicated somewhat satisfied. No households indicated they were not at all satisfied with their child care.

What child care needs do you have that are not currently being met? (check all that apply)



Fairfield residents were asked what child care needs they had that were not currently being met and were provided with a list of options to select all that apply to their household. With 6 households responding, summer was the highest unmet child care need indicated by 3 households, followed by weekends, non-school days and after school with 2 each, and evening shift, part-time (less than 3 days per week), and day shift each selected by 1 household. Drop-in care was written in as an additional unmet child care need.

2026 Community Needs Assessment Survey – Summary



Based on 53% (80) households reporting in the City of Fairfield limits; 111 total surveys completed

Demographics

- * 92 surveys from Fairfield zip code, 11 households with surrounding community zip codes
- * 21 respondents had lived in the community 5 years or less, 48 (50%) for 20 years or more
- * Household size – 20 - 1-person, 42 – 2-person, fewer respondents of families of 3 or more (41)
- * Balanced incomes represented in survey, Fairfield Household Median Income is \$67.1K; responding \$30-99K ranges represented by 64%
- * Commuters: 50 adults represented as commuting 21 miles or more to work

City/Community Strengths

- * **Favorable opinion regarding:**
 - the adequacy of Fire and Rescue service, Tower Field Ball Park, Library
 - the appearance of main street downtown
- * **Strong Support for local initiatives:**
 - Special Project: 68 (61%) support City investigating purchase and redevelopment of former Fairfield Elementary, 23 want more information; 39 would contribute funds
- * 70% (70) households had a **very positive and somewhat positive community feeling**

City Opportunities / Focus Areas

- * **Improve the favorable opinion regarding:** *overall/majority ratings of fair to poor*
 - the adequacy of efforts toward community betterment, City Park, ball park restrooms/concessions
 - the general appearance of Community as a whole, residential areas, vacant lots
 - Vacant houses rated as poor by 73, fair by 19, combined 92%
 - the condition of streets in residential areas rated as fair or poor by 79%
- * 38 households willing to volunteer for residential clean-up of properties
- * Park improvement top priority areas: City Park playground by 71%, bathroom facilities by 70%
- * **Strong support:** as the City should definitely or probably enforce zoning ordinances (73%), enforce nuisances (80%)
- * **Projects supported:** residential street maintenance by 91%, City Auditorium improvements by 90%, downtown store improvements by 73%, youth splashpad water feature by 62%, paving of gravel streets by 59% as probably or definitely needed
- * Expanded Library Programs show strong support in diverse areas for both youth and adults
- * 69 households not aware of Clay County Senior Services home delivery meal program, 46 not aware of Congregate meals; 30 not aware of Food pantry location; increased promotion of community services would serve to improve access and use to eligible populations
- * Increased awareness of volunteer opportunities and flexibility of time commitment and openness to new ideas and newcomers could assist Fairfield Community Club with recruitment
- * **Interest in emergency first responder training by 19 households** – could support VFD recruitment if classes hosted; 34 households interested in first aid/CPR

Business & Economic Development Strengths

- * **Strong support for the following new businesses:**
 - Automatic car wash supported by 98; bakery with coffee shop by 85, handyman repair service by 71; support for lawn care/snow removal, home cleaning service, co-working space – opportunities to grow local businesses

Business & Economic Development Opportunities / Focus Areas

- * **Very strong support for the City to use incentives:** 92 supports for business development, 82 for housing development, 80 for Tax-Increment Financing (TIF)
- * **8 respondents interested in starting or purchasing a business**
 - * Lack of funding (6) and lack of a facility (4) indicated as top barriers
- * **7 business owners looking to transition**, 5 w/in 10 years; 3 receptive to assistance finding a buyer or establishing with an exit plan
- * **Need for funding to further education/training and child care** indicated by 10 and 9 households respectively, as factor needed to improve employment

Housing Strengths

- * **84% rated the condition of their residence as excellent or good** (structurally sound)
- * 10 of 12 renters stated their rental met their needs, housing style preference mixed

Housing Opportunities / Focus Areas

- * **6 renters prefer to own**; 5 wish to rent for only 1-2 more years; price range to purchase a home vary less than \$100K to up to \$350,000; lack of housing and housing in price range indicated as barriers to ownership.
- * **10 owners interested in changing their residence**; 8 to upgrade, 2 to downsize, indicated lack of available housing (5) and/or lack of down payment (4) kept them from changing
 - * Older households by age with 3-5 bedroom homes: 28 – 65 and over; may consider transitioning to smaller home or other options if available to open up larger homes
 - * Only 4-1 bedroom homes to own in responses; townhomes or duplexes to own could be viable
 - * 3 owner households considering building a new home
- * **Owners applying for cost sharing assistance to rehabilitate** – 48 interested; of those answering ‘yes’ and income provided, 35 likely to qualify by income and household size

Housing Challenges

- * 37% of households are considered “housing burdened”, meaning they pay more than 30% of income towards housing each month (rent/mortgage + utilities)
- * Nearly 60% responding renters found it very or somewhat difficult to find their rental
- * **92% rated vacant houses’ appearance as fair or poor**; together with nuisance enforcement supported by 80% could assist in improved inventory or turn-over of properties for rehab

Child Care Strengths

- * **100% (13) respondents rated their child care as very satisfied to somewhat satisfied**

Child Care Opportunities

- * **12 of 13 respondents** said it was very or somewhat difficult to find quality child care
 - * Half (6 of 12 respondents) use child care outside of Fairfield
 - * 7 households without children anticipate needing child care in next 5 years

CNAS Steering Committee

SCEDD and the City would like to thank those community stakeholders that contributed their time to selecting the 2026 Fairfield CNAS questions and promoting survey and Town Hal participation.

Name	Community Role
Melissa Whitefoot	School, Business
David Francis	City Council, Ministerial
Diann Gentry	Community, Library, Senior
Brett Lahndorf	Community Club, City Council
Joanna Lahndorf	Community Club, Business
Sonnie Otto	City, Library
Don Sorenson	City Council

Fairfield 2026: Community Needs Assessment Survey

Answer Key: E=Excellent, G=Good, F=Fair, P=Poor, dk=Don't Know or No Opinion

D=Definitely, P=Probably, PN=Probably Not, DN=Definitely Not, dk=Don't Know or No Opinion

Please fill in circles like this: ● NOT like this: ⊗ ∅ ∅

**Complete 1 survey per household*

City / Community

1. Rate the adequacy of:
- | | E | G | F | P | dk |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| fire & rescue | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Fairfield City park | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Tower Field - ball park | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| ball park concessions/restrooms | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Fairfield Public Library | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| local efforts toward community betterment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

2. Rate the general appearance of:
- | | E | G | F | P | dk |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| the community as a whole | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Main Street - downtown | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| residential areas | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| vacant houses | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| vacant lots | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

3. Rate the condition of:
- | | E | G | F | P | dk |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| streets in downtown | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| streets in residential | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Fairfield City park | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| City Auditorium | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

4. What improvements to the City parks are most important to you? Pick up to 3.
- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ADA accessibility | ☐ | City Park playground equipment | ☐ |
| bathroom facilities | ☐ | lighting | ☐ |
| improve multi-courts | ☐ | Add Ballpark playground | ☐ |

5. Should the City:
- | | D | P | PN | DN | dk |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| enforce nuisance | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| enforce zoning ordinances | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

6. Does Fairfield encourage public participation - individuals having a voice regarding local government decisions?
- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

7. The City has discussed purchasing the former Fairfield Elementary school to renovate and repurpose. The facility could serve many purposes including: senior center, fitness room, storm shelter, youth programming, City offices, meeting and event spaces.

Should the community investigate the purchase and re-development of the former Fairfield Elementary?

Yes ☐ No ☐ need more info ☐

8. Would you be willing to volunteer your labor to help renovate the former Fairfield Elementary to meet the community needs?
- Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Would you contribute to a fund drive for the purchase and renovation of the former Fairfield Elementary?
- Yes ☐ No ☐ need more info ☐

10. Would you be willing to volunteer your time to support a clean-up of residential properties?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please email the City if interested: cityoffairfieldne@gmail.com.

11. Are the following projects needed in the community?

	D	P	PN	DN	dk
residential street maintenance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
paving of gravel streets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
downtown storefront improvements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
youth splashpad water feature	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
City Auditorium improvements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
RV parking and camping area	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. If partial funding for the projects listed above can be acquired from state and federal sources, how should Fairfield fund its share? (Choose as many as apply)

community fundraising events	☐	bonds	☐
private contributions	☐	property taxes	☐
local investment groups	☐	city sales tax	☐

13. If offered by the Library, which of the following programs or classes would a member of your household utilize?

(Check all that apply) Youth Adult

book clubs	☐	☐
research family history - ancestry	☐	☐
makerspace - creative studio	☐	☐
visual arts (painting, pottery, etc.)	☐	☐
needlecraft, crochet, knitting	☐	☐
speaker/performers (NE authors, historical, magician, comedy, health...)	☐	☐

14. Do you agree with the following statement as it pertains to your household? *At least one time within the last 90 days, we have worried whether our food would run out before we could afford afford more?
- Yes ☐ No ☐

15. Are you aware of the Food Pantry located inside the Community Seventh-Day Adventist Church?
- Yes ☐ No ☐

Open 2nd Wednesday each month, 400-630pm at 205 E 6th St.

For additional pantry needs, contact Roland or Karla Marsh

Ph 402-726-2514.

16. Are you aware Clay County Senior Services offers - home delivery meals Monday thru Friday, for those age 60 or over or those with mobility needs?
- Yes ☐ No ☐

Additional services include the Aging & Disability Resource Center and transportation assistance. Contact Clay County Senior Services for more information: phone 402-762-3226

or email: info@midlandareaagencyonaging.org.

City / Community (continued)

17. Are you aware of the Congregate meals offered every Tuesday at 11:30am at the downtown Legion through Clay County Senior Services? Yes ☐ No ☐

A suggested \$5/lunch meal is available for those 60 and over.
Anyone interested in a lunch may purchase for \$9.

18. What would encourage you to volunteer at more Community Club events, such as ...Triple F Festival, Street Dance, Easter Egg Hunt, and the Poker Run?

more awareness of opportunities ☐
meeting times in the evening ☐
meeting times on the weekend ☐
other _____ ☐

For more information on getting involved, email the Community Club:
ffcommunityclub@gmail.com

19. Overall, how do you feel about Fairfield?

very positive ☐ somewhat negative ☐
somewhat positive ☐ very negative ☐
neutral ☐

20. Why do you feel that way?

Economic Development

21. Would you utilize the following businesses if they were available in our community?

	<u>D</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>PN</u>	<u>DN</u>	<u>dk</u>
co-working meeting/office space	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
lawn care & snow removal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
automatic car wash	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
home cleaning service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
handyman repair service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
bakery with coffee shop	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. Indicate if the City should focus on Economic Development in these areas:

support the expansion of existing businesses Yes ☐ No ☐
support creation of new, small business Yes ☐ No ☐

Some communities use incentives such as free lots, free or reduced utility hook-ups, contractor incentives, or low interest loans to encourage new development.

23. Should the City utilize incentives to encourage housing development? Yes ☐ No ☐

24. Should the City utilize incentives to encourage business development? Yes ☐ No ☐

Economic Development (continued)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool communities can use to encourage new business or housing development. With TIF, the increase in property taxes created by a new development (not existing taxes) is used for a limited time to pay for infrastructure improvements - such as streets, sewer, water, or site preparation, that directly support that project.

TIF does not raise taxes or use existing tax dollars from current residents or property owners.

25. Should the City utilize TIF to encourage development?

Yes ☐ No ☐

26. What would enable you to improve your employment ?

(check all that apply)

additional training ☐ funding for education/training ☐
formal education ☐ computer skill training ☐
career exploration ☐ not applicable/ not interested ☐
childcare ☐

27. Indicate if you would be interested in taking these classes?

emergency first responder certification Yes ☐ No ☐
First Aid / CPR Yes ☐ No ☐

Email Chandler at csouc8@gmail.com if interested in joining the Volunteer Fire Department.

28. Are you interested in starting or purchasing a business in town?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (If No, skip to #30)

29. If yes, what is keeping you from starting or purchasing a business:

lack of funding ☐ lack of a business plan ☐
lack of a facility ☐ lack of employees ☐
other _____ ☐

30. Are you a business owner that will be seeking to transition out of your business in the future?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (If No, skip to #33 - Housing)

31. If yes, how soon do you want to transition?

1-5 years ☐ more than 10 years ☐
6-10 years ☐ does not apply ☐

32. If you plan to transition your business, what assistance would be helpful to you? (check all that apply)

assistance establishing a value / sales price ☐
assistance finding a buyer or establishing an exit plan ☐
other _____ ☐

Housing

33. Do you live in:

- a house ☐ duplex / triplex ☐
an apartment ☐

34. Do you pay more than 30% of your income towards housing (rent/mortgage plus utilities)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

35. How many bedrooms are in your home?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5+ ☐

36. How would you rate the condition of your residence?

excellent, solid roof & foundation, contributes positively to community's housing stock	☐
structurally sound, may need minor repairs such as shingles, paint, concrete steps, or new doors	☐
substantial wear, has one major issue such as sagging roof, missing or rotted siding, rotting windows, sagging porch	☐
overall unsatisfactory condition, multiple issues such as a crumbling foundation, broken or rotted windows and doors, sagging roof	☐

37. Do you rent or own your home?

Rent ☐
Own ☐

For Renters Only: (Owners skip to #49)

38. Does your current rental meet your needs?

Yes ☐ (If Yes, skip to #40) No ☐

39. If No, indicate the primary reason: (select only one)

too small ☐ location ☐
too large ☐ quality ☐
cost ☐ other _____ ☐

40. What are you currently paying for monthly Rent?

(NOT including utilities) \$800-\$999 ☐
less than \$600 ☐ \$1,000-1,199 ☐
\$600-\$799 ☐ \$1,200 or more ☐

41. If other rental housing were available in Fairfield which type would you prefer? (select only one)

no preference ☐ duplex/multiplex ☐
single family home ☐ apartment ☐

42. How difficult was it to find your current rental?

very difficult ☐ not very difficult ☐
somewhat difficult ☐ not difficult at all ☐

43. How long do you plan to continue renting?

less than 1 year ☐ 6-10 years ☐
1-2 years ☐ more than 10 years ☐
3-5 years ☐

Renters (continued)

44. Do you prefer to rent or own? own ☐ rent ☐

(If prefer to Rent, skip to Next Section - Child Care)

Renters - Answer only if you prefer to own:

45. What is your price range for purchasing a home?

Less than \$100,000 ☐ \$200,001 - \$250,000 ☐
\$100,001 - \$150,000 ☐ \$250,001 - \$300,000 ☐
\$150,001 - \$200,000 ☐ \$300,001 and over ☐

46. Which of the following are barriers to home ownership for you?

	D	P	PN	DN	dk
lack of down payment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
lack of available housing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
lack of housing in our price range	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
lack of available lot/building site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
other _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

47. If the lack of down payment is a barrier, would you be interested in a government-backed loan that required no down payment? Yes ☐ No ☐

48. Which type of housing would you prefer to own?

(select only one)

single family home ☐
Townhome ☐ no preference ☐

49. Are you considering building a new home in the community? Yes ☐ No ☐

For Owners Only, (Renters skip to Next Section)

There are programs for low to moderate income households that can offset needed rehabilitation costs in your home.

50. If your household qualifies, would you be interested in applying for such a program? Yes ☐ No ☐
Not Applicable ☐

51. Are you considering changing your residence to upgrade or downsize? upgrade ☐ downsize ☐

(If No, skip to Next Section - Child Care) No ☐

52. If you've considered changing your residence, which type of housing would you prefer? (select only one)

apartment ☐ townhome ☐
duplex / triplex ☐ no preference ☐
single family home ☐

53. What barriers keep you from changing your residence?

(check all that apply) lack of available housing ☐
lack of lot/building site ☐
lack of down payment ☐
other _____ ☐

54. Are you considering building a new home in the community? Yes ☐ No ☐

Child Care

55. Do you have children age 18 or under in your household? Yes ☐ No ☐
(If No, Skip to #57)

56. If yes, indicate the number of children, in your household by age:

	1	2	3+
Age 0-3 years	☐	☐	☐
Age 4 years-preschool	☐	☐	☐
elementary school K-5th	☐	☐	☐
middle school 6-8th	☐	☐	☐
high school 9-12th	☐	☐	☐
no children under age 18	☐		

57. If you do not currently have children, are you anticipating needing childcare within the next 5 years? Yes ☐ No ☐

58. Do you use child care on a regular basis? Yes ☐ No ☐
(If No, Skip to Demographics)

59. Where is your child care located?
 in Fairfield ☐ Elsewhere ☐

60. How satisfied are you with your childcare?
 very ☐ not very ☐
 somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

61. How difficult is it to find quality child care?
 very ☐ not very ☐
 somewhat ☐ not at all ☐

62. What childcare needs do you have that are not currently being met? (check all that apply)

before school ☐	summer ☐
after school ☐	non-school days ☐
day shift ☐	weekends ☐
part-time (less than 3 days/week) ☐	evening shift ☐

Demographics

63. What is the age of your head-of-household?

under 19 ☐	35-44 ☐	65-74 ☐
19-24 ☐	45-54 ☐	75-84 ☐
25-34 ☐	55-64 ☐	85 or older ☐

64. How many years have you lived in the community?

less than 1 year ☐	11-15 years ☐
1-5 years ☐	16-20 years ☐
6-10 years ☐	more than 20 years ☐
commute here for work ☐	

(If Commute, Answer #65)

Demographics (continued)

65. If you commute, do you prefer to continue commuting or are you considering moving to Fairfield? *(Skip if not commuting)*
 plan to continue commuting ☐ considering moving ☐

66. If you moved to the community within the last five years, what was your primary reason? *(Select only one)*

job ☐	community amenities ☐
family ☐	small town atmosphere ☐
retirement ☐	school / education ☐
returning home ☐	

67. Do you live: within the Fairfield City limits ☐
 outside the Fairfield City limits ☐

68. Your home zip code: 68938 ☐ 68933 ☐
 68941 ☐ 68934 ☐ 68935 ☐
 other:

69. If you work outside of the Fairfield area, how far do you commute one way? *(select N/A if not commuting)*

1st Adult	2nd Adult
1 to 20 miles ☐	1 to 20 miles ☐
21-35 miles ☐	21-35 miles ☐
36-44 miles ☐	36-44 miles ☐
45+ miles ☐	45+ miles ☐
not applicable ☐	not applicable ☐

70. How many family members are in your household, including yourself?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Household income information is anonymous but is very helpful in determining appropriate projects and grants the City may be eligible for.

71. What is the combined annual income of all family members living in your home?

less than \$30,000 ☐	\$75,000 - \$99,999 ☐
\$30,000 - \$49,999 ☐	\$100,000 - \$149,999 ☐
\$50,000 - \$74,999 ☐	\$150,000 or more ☐

72. Please feel free to make any additional comments that you think would help our community: attach additional paper if needed

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to the future of Fairfield.

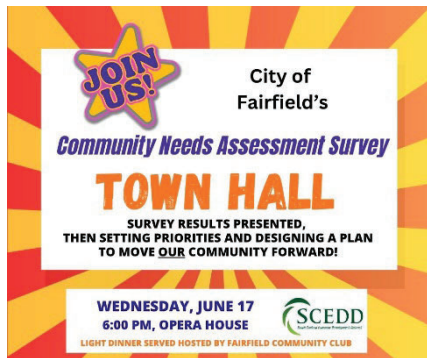
The survey results will be shared in a town hall meeting, open to all Wednesday, **June 17, at 6:00pm** at the Opera House.

Plan to join us for this important conversation for the future of our community.

Fairfield 2026 Community
Needs Assessment
Survey
Promotion



Fairfield 2026 Community
Needs Assessment
Survey
Town.Hall.Promotion



City of Fairfield
Invites All Community Members

Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday June 17

6:00 pm - Opera House
Light dinner followed by *Conversation on Setting Priorities for the Future*

Sharing the Results:
2026 - Community Needs Assessment Survey!

Opera House
415 D Street

For More Information Call:
City Office 402.726.2478 or SCEDD 308.455.4776

SCEDD
South Central Economic Development District, Inc. facilitating

CITY OF
FAIRFIELD
NEBRASKA

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

WED. JUNE 17
6 PM

OPERA HOUSE
Light dinner provided by
Fairfield Community Club

TOWN HALL



Call SCEDD at 308.455.4776 with questions.

Results of the survey presented followed by setting priorities and a plan for our future.

Plan to join us and contribute to a bright future for our community!

Fairfield Town Hall Meeting Community Needs Assessment Survey Results & Envisioning Our Future June 17, 2026

LeAnn Jochum, Lori Ferguson, and Howard Wong of the South Central Economic Development District (SCEDD) facilitated a Community Needs Assessment Survey (CNAS) Reporting Town Hall meeting in Fairfield, Nebraska on June 17, 2026. The Town Hall was sponsored by the Fairfield Community Club and City of Fairfield at the downtown Opera House Bar & Grill. The community was well represented with 42 community members participating.

The Town Hall meeting opened with LeAnn Jochum welcoming the community members and explaining the importance of listening to the community for their needs and how the survey results are used to guide leadership decisions. SCEDD proceeded with introductions and a review of the agenda for the evening then presented the CNAS results.

2026 City Council Members: Bruce Soucie, Mayor, Brett Lahndorf, David Francis, Don Sorensen, and one position is currently vacant.

What Stuck Out?: *participants were asked what stuck out to them from the CNAS results, then share:*

- Park improvements (large number of supported)
- Fairfield grade school as a project to investigate (large support)
- Need camper/RV spots not as well supported
- Need summer childcare & drop-in
- Population sign compared to 2022 ACS Data – around 100 population drop
- Need to get people involved

What Surprised You?: *participants were asked what surprised them about the CNAS results, then share:*

- Rental prices high
- Good number of households with school age kids represented in survey
- Interest of homeowners wanting to upgrade/build
- Number of households interested in upgrading the old school (many concerns, market value, collaboration)
- Number of possible new business owners

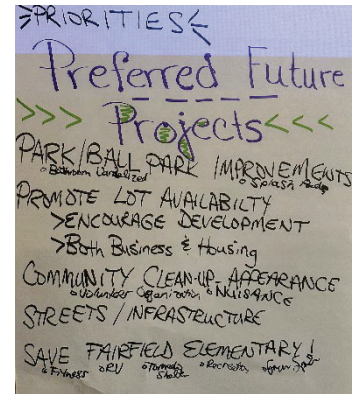
What Did You Not Hear?: *participants were asked what results they did not hear in the CNAS results, then share:*

- Fitness center (in school re-purpose)
- A way to attract small businesses
- A way to promote quality of life
- Closest town to Silver Creek Schools – a big benefit
- Store fronts – to improve



Community participants were asked to brainstorm future community projects. Task Forces were established to address the top five priority goals, with community members choosing which table to participate in to develop the vision and goal setting for their respective priority. The 5 priority areas for community improvement (listed in alphabetical order) to discuss in small groups:

- Priority 1: City Park/Ball Park Improvements
- Priority 2: Community Clean Up/Appearance
- Priority 3: Fairfield Elementary Building
- Priority 4: Promote Lot Availability for Housing & Business
- Priority 5: Streets Improvement/Infrastructure



Each priority was assigned to a table, and participants were asked to congregate at the table with the topic of choice. Attendees did not choose to go to the Streets Improvement/Infrastructure table, which is not uncommon given those issues are exclusively addressed by the municipality but street improvements was still noted as a top priority for Fairfield. Following are the plans, discussion highlights, and goals, if discussed, developed for each priority.

1. City Park/Ball Park

- Elwyn Fitzke
- Melissa Whitefoot
- Liz Spray
- Montana Thatcher
- Deb Ridgway
- Michael Sorgen
- Becky Gerdes
- Jason Gerdes

2. Community Clean Up/Appearance

- Ron Shipman
- Beth Shipman
- Peg Hoins
- Bob Hoins
- Maxine Shunkwiler
- Diann Gentry

3. Fairfield Elementary Building

- Don Sorensen – Primary Contact
- Sherry Sorensen
- Joanna Lahndorf
- Ann Schlick
- Laurie Kohmetscher
- Sonnie Otto

4. Promote Lot Availability for Housing & Business

- Todd Otto
- Mike Schlick
- Brett Lahndorf
- Gary Soucie



2026 Fairfield CNAS – Town Hall Report

Priority #1: City Park/Ball Park Improvements

Members: Elwyn Fitzke, Liz Spray, Montana Thatcher, Deb Ridgway, Michael Sorgen, Melissa Whitefoot, Becky Gerdes, Jason Gerdes

Who else should be involved: Parents of young children, people who live near the park, people who work with the ball program. Andy & Adam Engel, Eli & Ashley Smidt, Michaela Vap

What is the priority of this group: Park Improvements

30-60 Days:

- Explore Grants
- Explore Community Foundations
- Cost Estimates – playground equipment, splash pad
- LWCF – Land Water Conservation Fund

6 months:

- Begin fundraising – 1st of the year – January/February
- Look into Community Foundation

12 months & beyond:

- Construction – start small, then plan to add on



Who or what resources can help the group address these priorities?

RESOURCE	WHO WILL CONNECT	BY DATE
Grants (LWCF)		
Community Foundation		

When will this group meet again to report back and determine/implement next steps?

- July 15

What is the headline that declares ‘mission/success achieved’? (What does done look like?)

New Park Improvements Enjoyed by All

Priority #2: Community Clean Up/Appearance

Members: Ron Shipman, Beth Shipman, Peg Hoins, Bob Hoines, Maxine Shunkwiler, Diann Gentry

Who else should be involved: Fairfield Mayor

What is the priority of this group: To make Fairfield more attractive.

30-60 Days:

- Figure out how residents can more easily dispose of unwanted junk and debris as they attempt to improve their properties

6 months:

- Explore programs to demolish abandoned and unlivable properties properly

12 months & beyond:

- Check with the City if they will pay someone to mow properties and send the bill to property owner, and if not paid, place a lien – through the right process
- Check and see if taxes are paid



Who or what resources can help the group address these priorities?

RESOURCE	WHO WILL CONNECT	BY DATE
City Council		

When will this group meet again to report back and determine/implement next steps?

What is the headline that declares ‘mission/success achieved’? (What does done look like?)

“Ten properties available in Fairfield, NE, all ready for your new home!”

Priority #3: Fairfield Elementary Building

Members: *Don Sorensen* – Primary Contact, Sherry Sorensen, Joanna Lahndorf, Ann Schlick, Laurie Kohmetscher, Sonnie Otto

Who else should be involved: City Council, Melissa Whitefoot, Josh Dittmer

What is the priority of this group: To have the City acquire the school for community use (tornado shelter, City office, senior center, exercise/fitness, daycare, business).

30-60 Days:

- Attend next school board meeting – July 15th – have a proposal of what we want to do with the school, and options to acquire it
- Have several community members attend the meeting

6 months:

- Have a follow-up meeting to discuss what the school said at the July meeting.
- Get survey facts of school building purchase interest

12 months & beyond:

- Look into grants, fundraiser projects, and cost for repairs



Who or what resources can help the group address these priorities?

RESOURCE	WHO WILL CONNECT	BY DATE
School Board	Laurie Kohmetscher	July 15 th
Appraiser	City Council	If attainable
Contractor	City Council	If attainable
Plattsmouth School	Emily Baush	

When will this group meet again to report back and determine/implement next steps?

- After July 15th meeting, possibly August 10th, at the City council meeting

What is the headline that declares ‘mission/success achieved’? (What does done look like?)

From Empty Classrooms to Endless Possibilities: Fairfield's Old Elementary School Begins a New Chapter

Priority #4: Promote Lot Availability for Housing and Business

Members: Todd Otto, Mike Schlick, Brett Lahndorf, Gary Soucie

Who else should be involved:

What is the priority of this group: Fairfield is on the move!

30-60 Days:

- Available lots – contact lot owners from GIS

6 months:

- LOIS listing – NPPD
- LB 840 for profit business

Who or what resources can help the group address these priorities?

When will this group meet again to report back and determine/implement next steps?



What is the headline that declares ‘mission/success achieved’? (What does done look like?)

“Fairfield has Your Lot!”

Participants and the City leadership were encouraged to reach out to SCEDD to ask questions about any action steps or resources available. The evening concluded with a call to action for participants to continue the conversations, visit with elected officials, and make progress towards their preferred community future.