

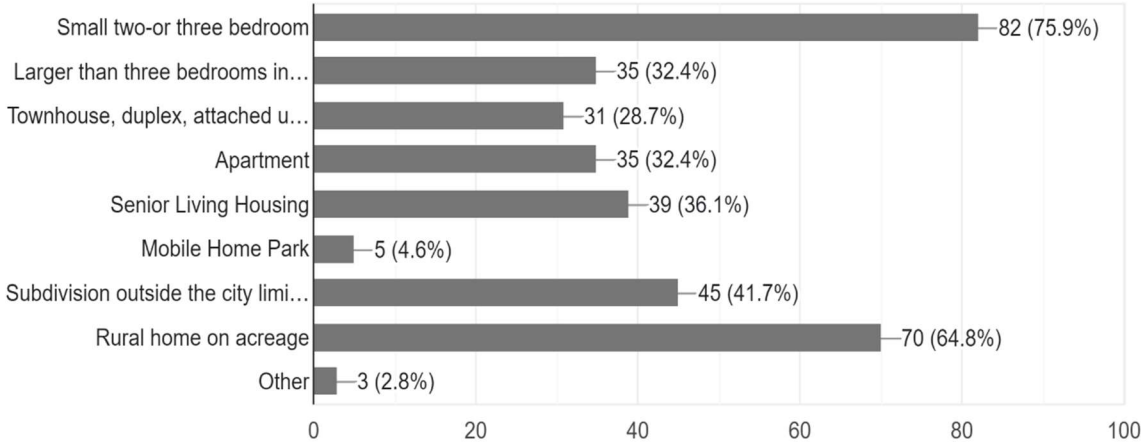
Reimagine Housing

The results are in! Wabaunsee County, like most areas across Kansas, has a housing shortage. Root causes stem from the reduction in the size of households, lack of building sites and affordability. Many of our businesses have job openings and are looking to hire locally. Our three public school districts that have buildings within our County are among our largest employers. In the last 25 years, we have dropped enrollment by 388 students collectively. Bottom line, we need more housing to retain our businesses, attract new, and to allow adequate housing for the next generation.

Most respondents in our County Wide Housing survey prefer a single-family home or a rural home on acreage. Over 70% of the respondents would be willing to pay for rent or a mortgage under \$1500 per month. In the current housing market, it may be difficult for home buyers to find their forever home in many areas of the County, however, there are other options to consider.

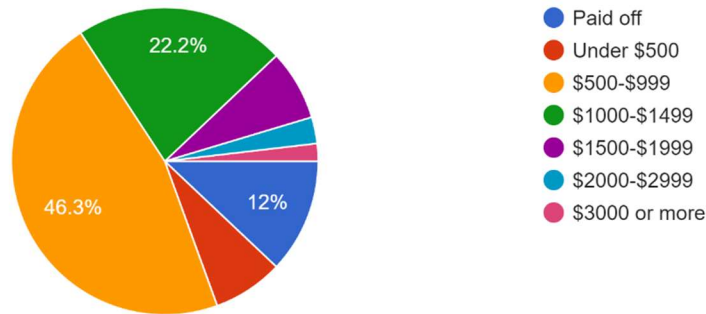
What types of housing do you think would be successful in your community today? Select all that apply. "Successful" means if available, people would want to live in this housing unit.

108 responses



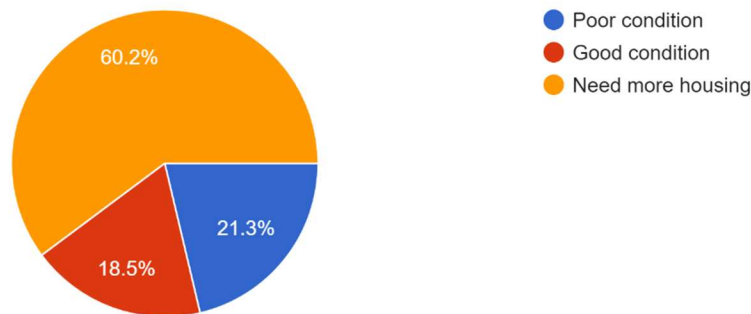
Within what range are you willing and able to pay for rent or a mortgage payment?

108 responses



What is your overall impression of housing in your community?

108 responses



What steps can we take to grow our communities?

In our 2019 Wabauunsee County Comprehensive plan, we encourage infill within our cities. The biggest advantage to this approach would be existing infrastructure such as water, gas, electricity, and roads. Local developers believe this can save a homeowner at least \$25,000- \$40,000 on their build.

The County Commissioners recently passed a resolution for a County Wide Land Bank. Land Banks are becoming an important tool that can return tax delinquent, distressed and unwanted property to productive use that benefits the County. Advantages of a land bank are:

- Encourage the development and reuse of vacant properties consistent with the 2019 Comprehensive plan and the County Land Bank goals.
- Strengthen the County's tax base by returning property to a productive tax paying status.
- Support and preserve open space, and other agricultural production.
- Encourage timely development and discourage real estate speculation.
- Assemble land for economic development.
- Removal of blighted properties will make neighborhoods more attractive and may encourage reinvestment.

g. Multifamily homes are a great infill option.

We may need to reimagine our Main Streets. One option would be multi-use buildings that include apartments. The Rink apartments in Alma are an example of meeting the needs of the community. Tyler and Morgan Holloman converted what once was an upper-level skating rink to seven apartments that recently was recognized at the Kansas Housing Conference as one of the best examples of a Moderate-Income Housing project in the State. The possibilities are endless!

For more information on our housing initiative or donating property to our land bank, please reach out to simthurn@wbcounty.org.