

NORTH  STAR

**+ Owatonna, MN**

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Branding Research & Strategy Presentation

April 2023

# Branding Process



Stakeholder & Community Education



Insight Gathering & Research



**DNA & Strategy Formation**



Creative Brand & Message Development



Brand Action Ideas

# Research by the Numbers

METHODOLOGY

**100+** Site Visit Conversations: intercepts, focus groups, interviews, & calls

**30** BrandingOwatonna.com

**1870** Community Survey Respondents

**11** External Perception Calls

**307** External Consumer Respondents

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= More than **2318** unique inputs during the research

# Internal Qualitative Data

Site Visits

Intercepts

Focus Groups

Stakeholder Interviews

*(in person, phone conversations, and via Zoom)*

# Internal Qualitative Data

THEMES

## Best Descriptors

Unrealized opportunity	Innovative
Varied opportunities	Supportive
Dynamic (doesn't stay the same)	Giving/Philanthropic
Traditional yet progressive	Welcoming
Active	Pride
Committed	Ambitious
Proud	Potential
Safe	Siloed
Good schools	Quiet
Passionate	Determined
Simplistic	Corporate support
Complete	Intentional
Friendly	Nostalgic

## Greatest Assets

- Diversity of jobs
- Trails and parks
- County Fair
- Access to highways
- Industrial Park
- New high school
- Strong industrial base
- Medical facilities
- City services
- Diverse industries
- Vibrant business community
- Up and coming downtown
- Chamber

# Internal Qualitative Data

## THEMES

### Opportunities

- Promoting all that's here
- Celebrating our wins
- Kids to be involved
- Engage the community
- Promote tourism to residents and non-residents
- Youth rec leagues
- Create lasting memories for visitors

### Challenges

- Getting people to stop
- Slow permitting process
- Always needing to add to staff
- Attracting workforce
- Housing (it's affordable, but low inventory)
- Getting the City to spend money
- Maintaining a low tax base
- Population that doesn't want to grow

### Missing

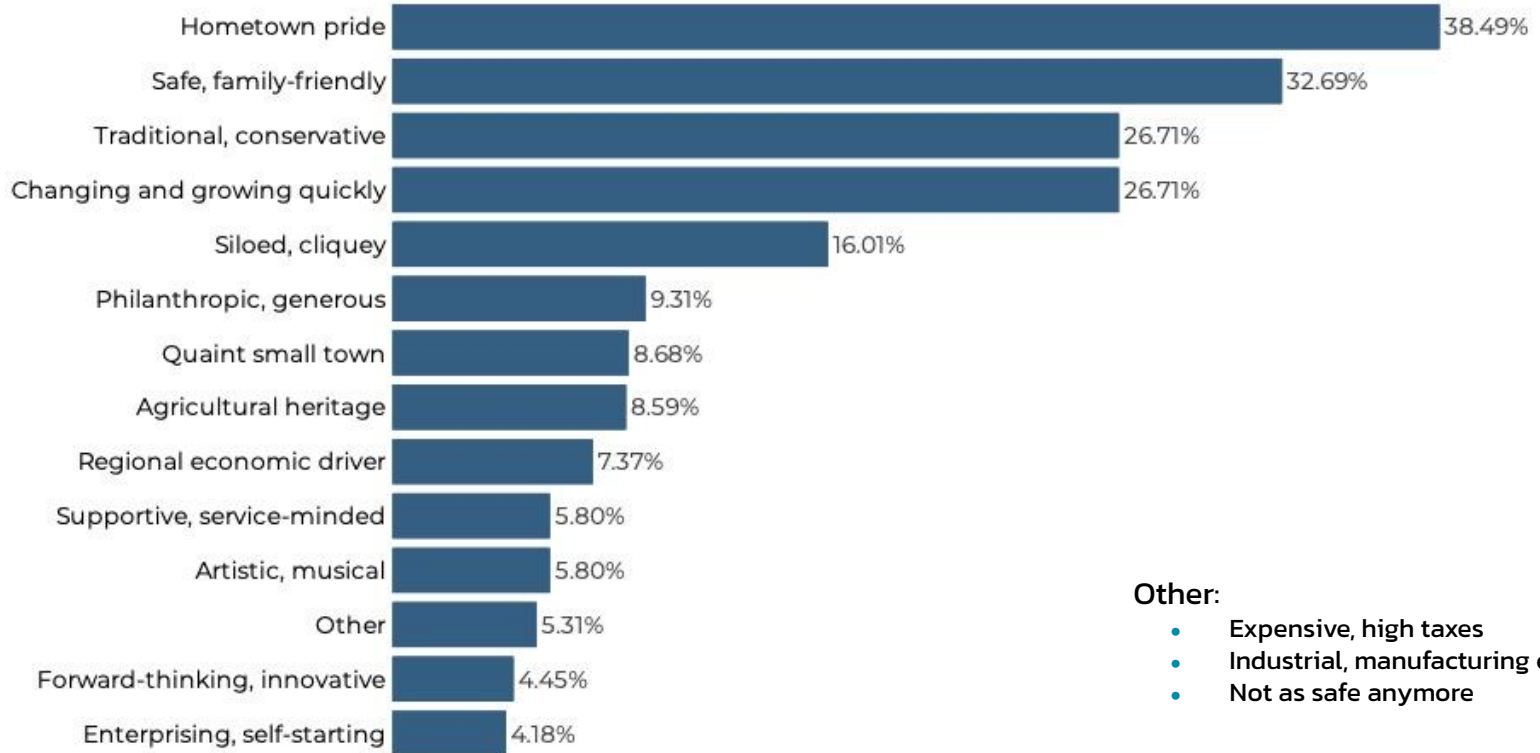
- Community center
- Dining and retail
- Higher education
- Racial diversity
- Entryway signage
- Workforce
- Live theater
- Nightlife
- Collective/cohesive messaging
- Communication from the City
- A reason to visit
- Better curb appeal
- Conference space
- Hometown restaurants
- Farm to table
- Infrastructure

# Internal Quantitative Data Community Survey

1870 Total Responses  
±2.77% at the 95% confidence level

# Community Survey

Which of the following are the best descriptors for Owatonna?  
*Choose two answers.*



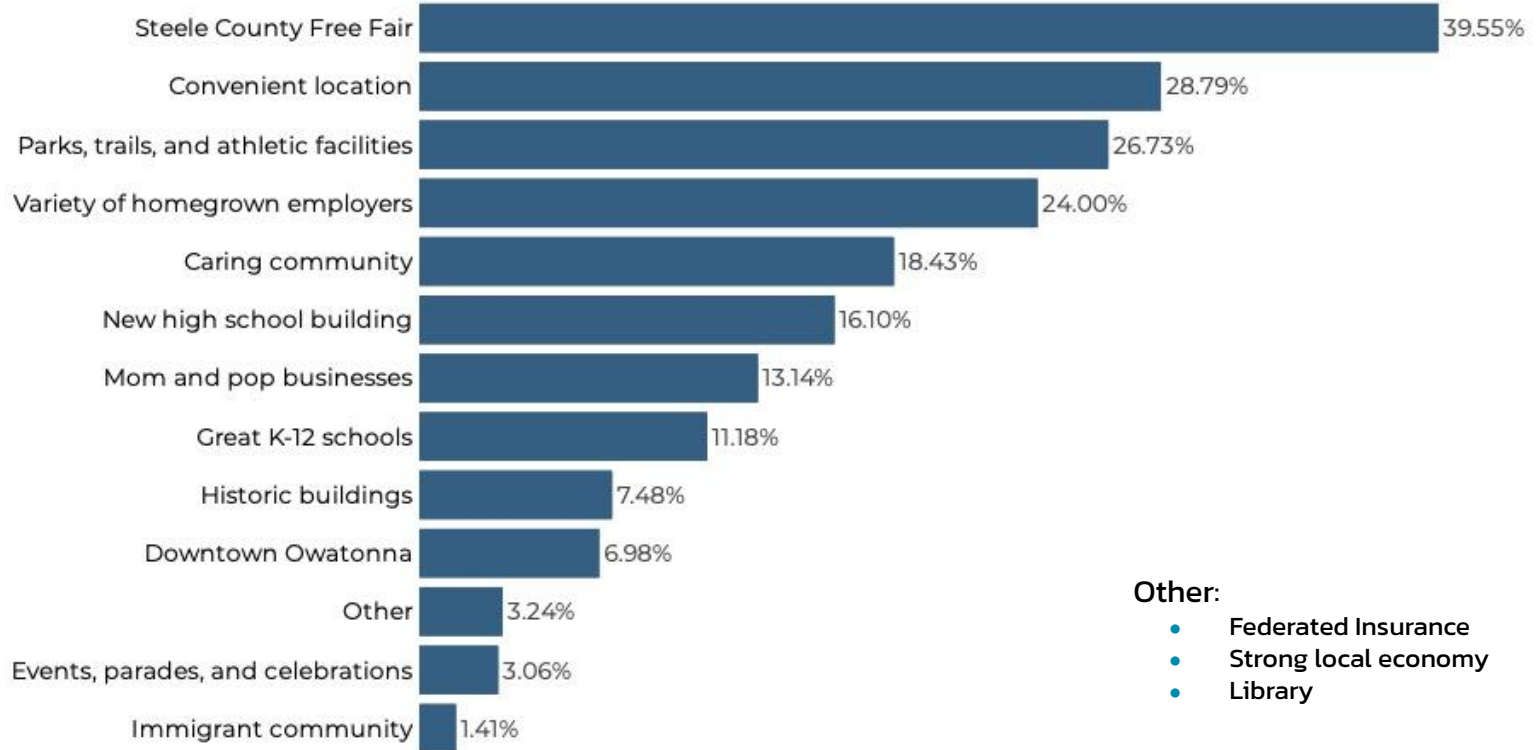
**Other:**

- Expensive, high taxes
- Industrial, manufacturing center
- Not as safe anymore



# Community Survey

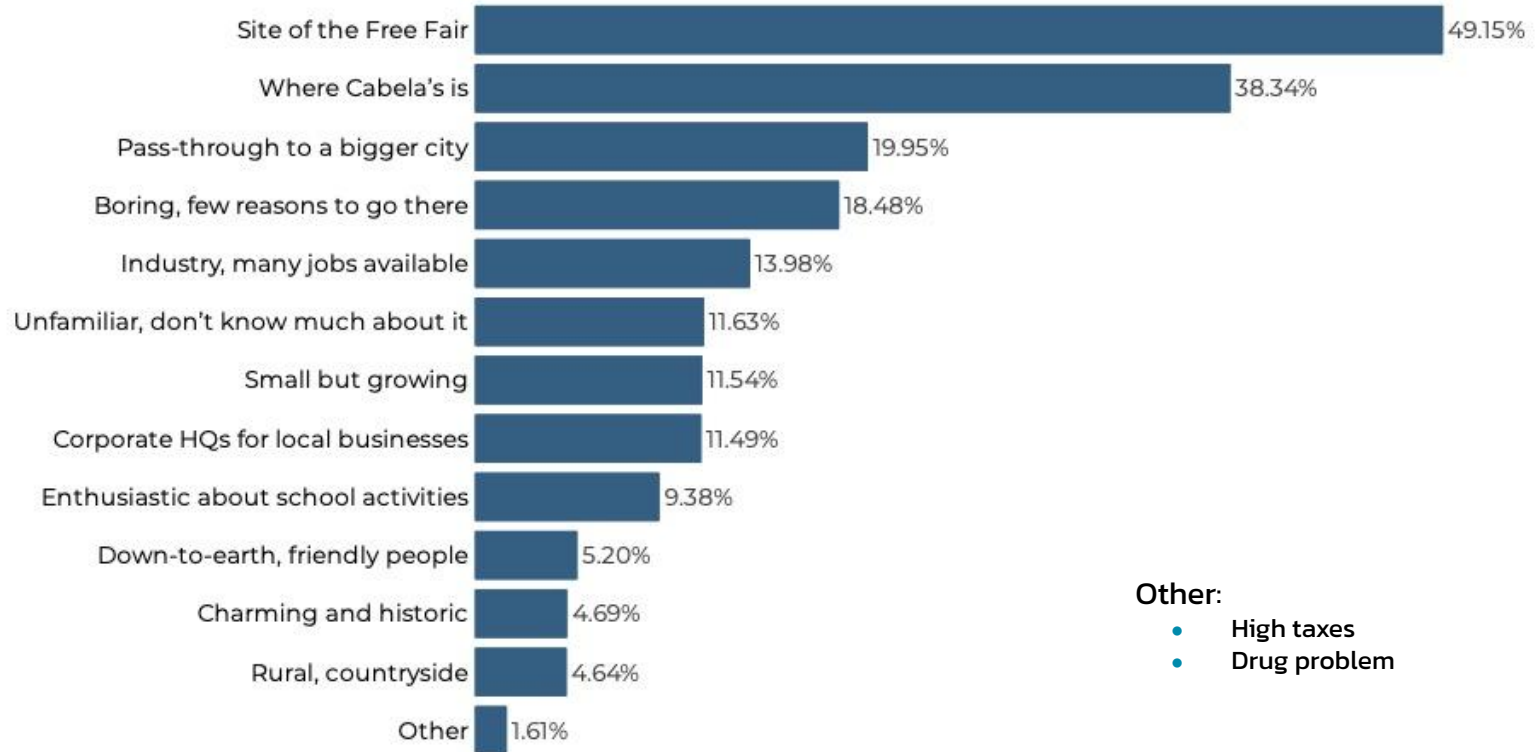
In your opinion, what are Owatonna's two greatest assets?  
*Choose two answers.*



# Community Survey

How do you think people describe Owatonna in other parts of Southern Minnesota, including Rochester and Mankato?

*Choose two answers.*



# Community Survey

What do people not know about Owatonna that they should know?  
What are its hidden gems?

- 1. Parks and Trails*
- 2. Breweries*
- 3. Downtown*

**Other top answers include (in order of frequency):  
Schools, History, Farmers Market, Federated Insurance,  
Old Town Bagel, Blast Soft Serve, Costas Candies**

# Community Survey

What distinguishes Owatonna from other nearby communities in Southern Minnesota?

## Industry that Gives Back

- *"The numerous employment opportunities combined with long term caring community members. We have several homegrown companies that are richly invested in the success of Owatonna."*
- *"Owatonna has just as many blue collar employees as they do white collar, and you can see how that benefits our community in a variety of ways with activity and engagement."*

## Access to Major Cities & Amenities

- *"Unique location at the crossroads of Highway 14 and I-35. Far enough away from Twin Cities to be its own small town, but close enough to access big city amenities."*
- *"Center of it all. We are 45 minutes from everywhere."*
- *"Small town feel but still has everything conveniently available. Great location."*

## Careful Growth

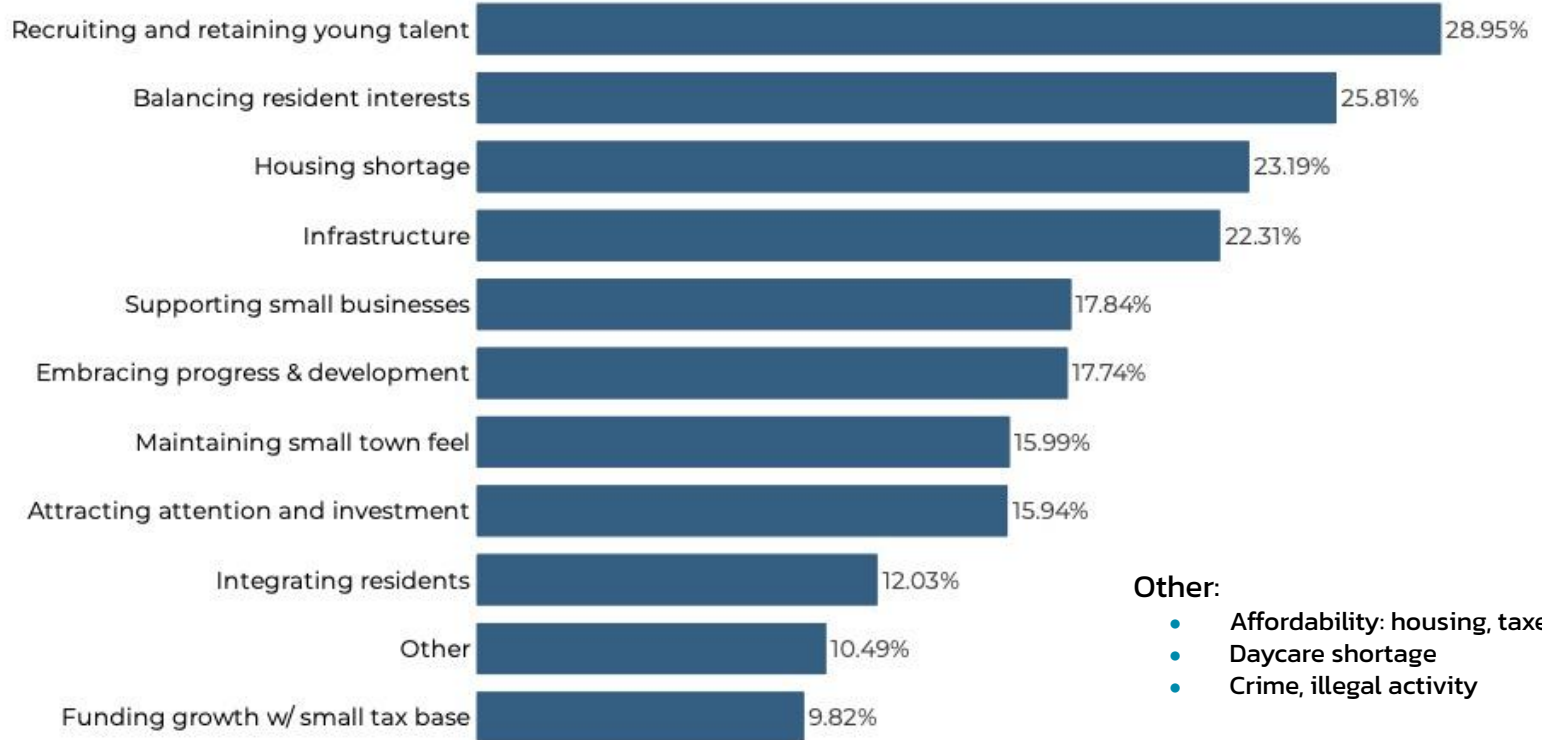
- *"Managed growth with thought to preservation."*
- *"Passion for growth that is shared from the business community and residents. Both groups want to see growth and changes to make Owatonna a better place to live and work."*
- *"Growing but not losing sight of its history and staying community driven."*

## Great Schools

- *"Great schools: small enough to know everyone, big enough to offer a variety of classes and activities."*
- *"Investment in the school system starting with the new high school."*
- *"Great schools with musical and sports pride."*
- *"One high school—everyone is a Husky from elementary on."*

# Community Survey

In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges currently facing Owatonna?  
*Choose two answers.*

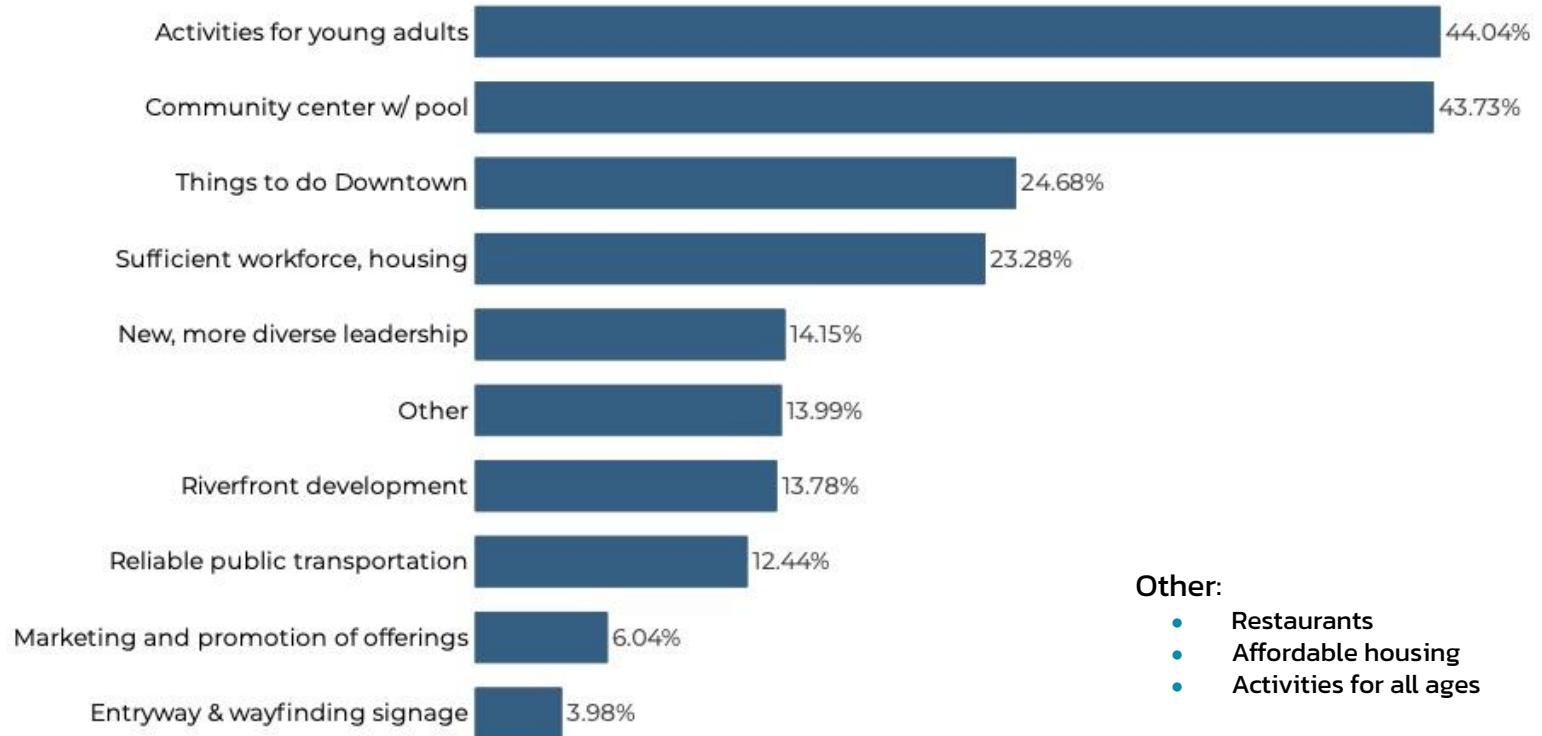


**Other:**

- Affordability: housing, taxes
- Daycare shortage
- Crime, illegal activity

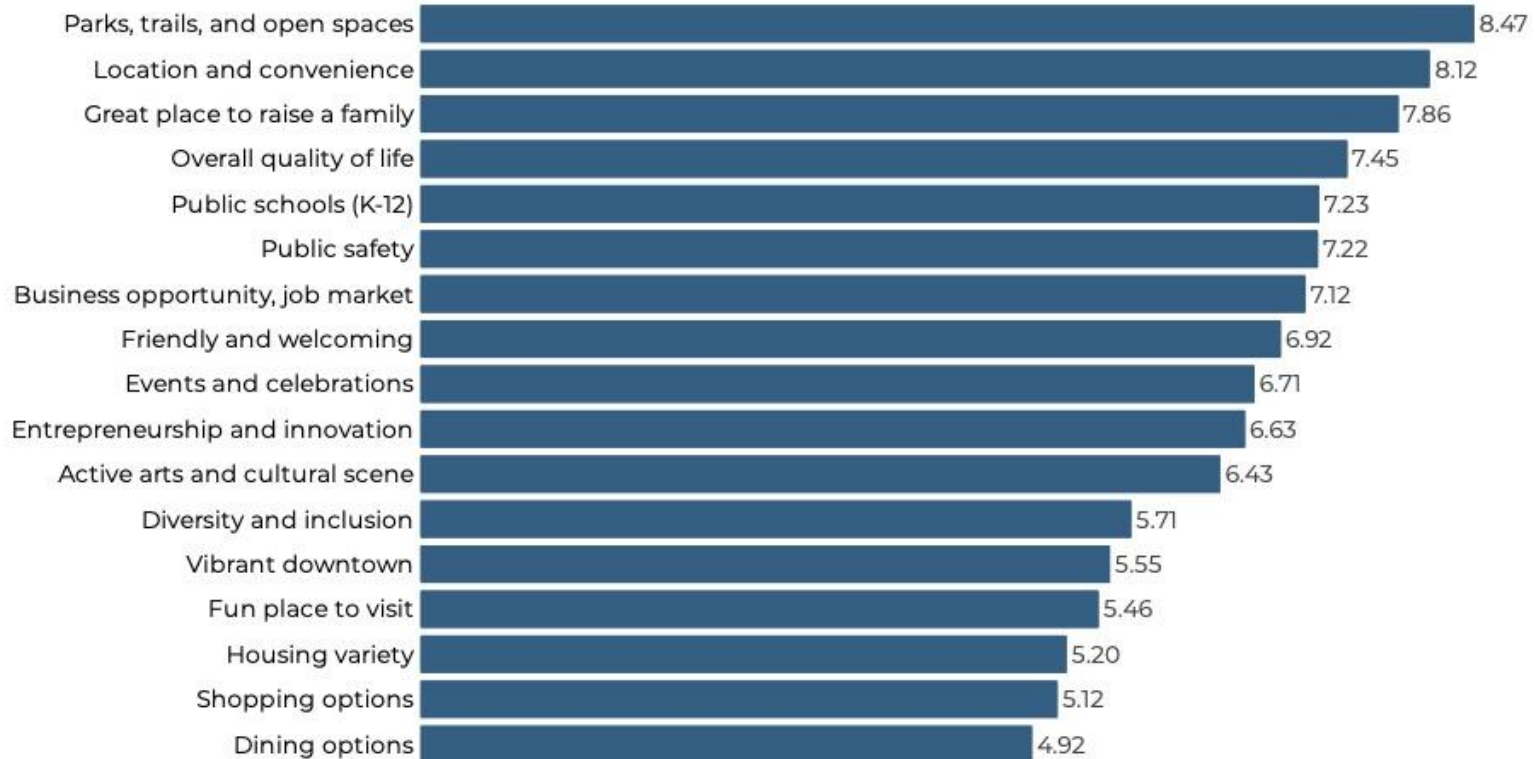
# Community Survey

In your opinion, what is missing in Owatonna?  
*Choose two answers.*



# Community Survey

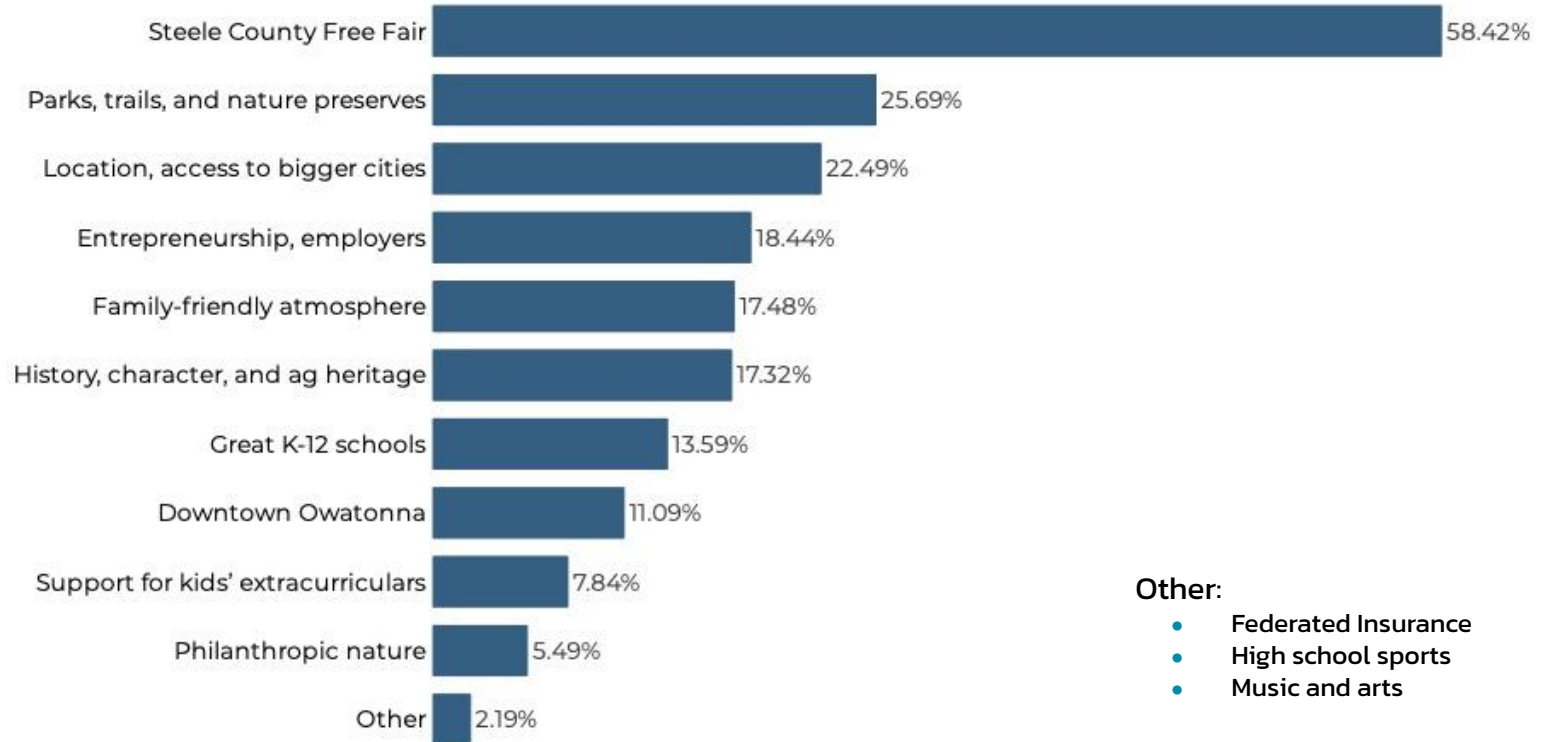
In your opinion, please rate the following Owatonna attributes and characteristics on a scale from 1-10, where 1 is "Poor" and 10 is "Excellent."



# Community Survey

In your opinion, what two things are most important to Owatonna's identity as a community (without these, Owatonna is not Owatonna)?

*Choose two answers.*

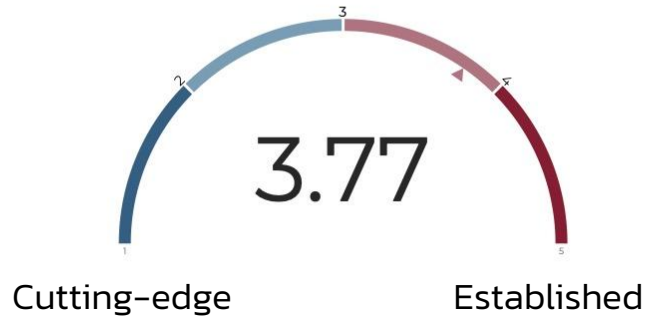




# Brand Character

# Community Survey

The pairs of phrases below represent opposite characteristics. Please indicate which phrase is a better descriptor for Owatonna by marking a bubble on the spectrum from 1 to 5.



# Community Survey

Which **vehicle** best represents the personality of Owatonna?

37.00%

Minivan

# Community Survey

Which of the images below best represents the personality of Owatonna?  
*Vehicles*



Minivan  
37.00%



Pickup Truck  
29.28%



Tractor  
14.01%



Classic Car  
7.32%



Luxury SUV  
6.74%



Hybrid Sedan  
4.32%



Off-Road SUV  
1.04%



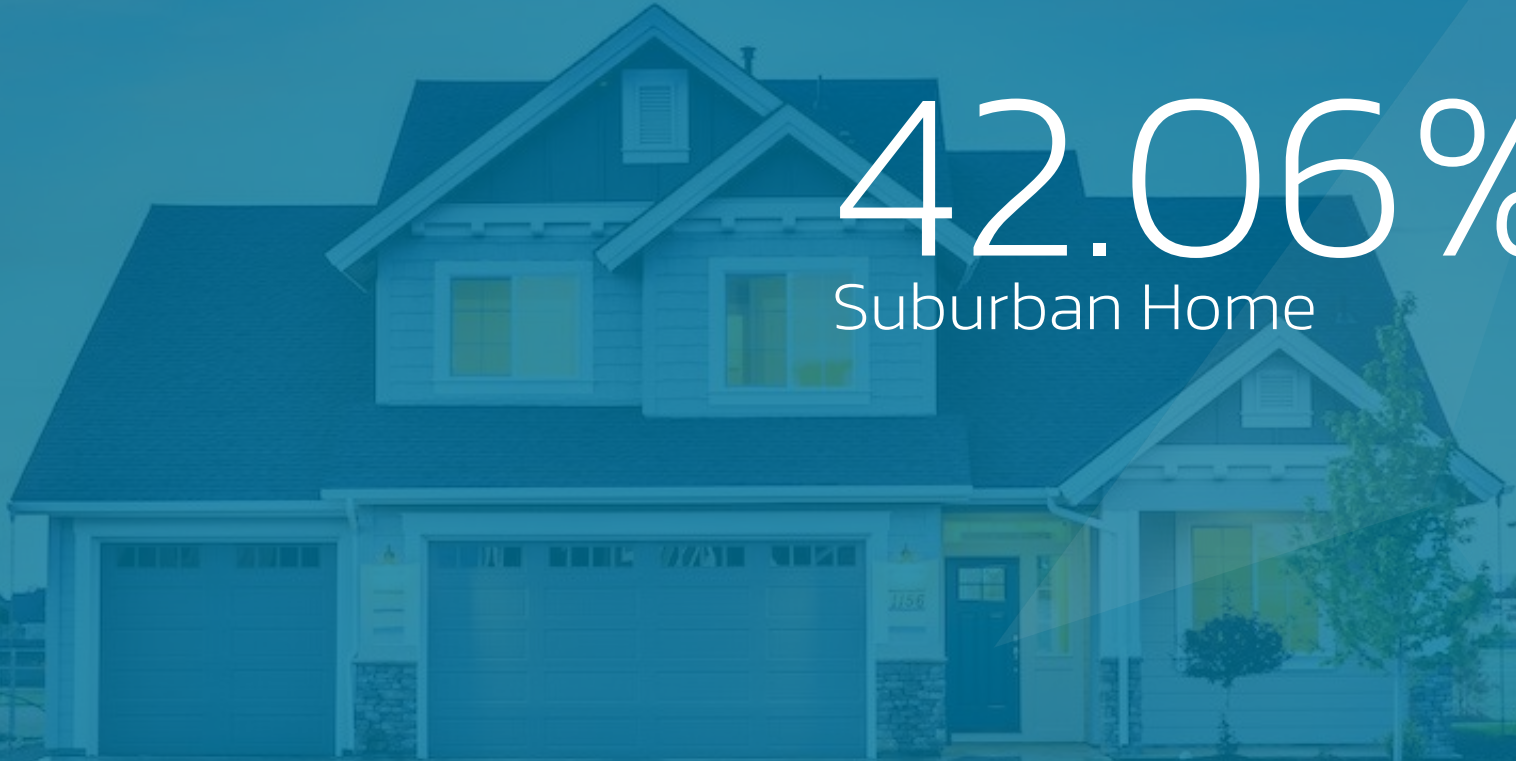
Motorcycle  
0.29%

# Community Survey

Which **Building/Architectural Style** best represents the personality of Owatonna?

42.06%

Suburban Home



# Community Survey

Which of the images below best represents the personality of Owatonna?  
*Buildings/Architectural Styles*



Suburban Home  
42.06%



Main Street  
30.96%



Single-Family Victorian  
12.19%



Farmhouse  
7.63%



Corporate Offices  
5.26%



Rustic Cabin  
0.81%



Executive Home  
0.75%



Modern Home  
0.35%

# Community Survey

Which **Brand Personas/Archetypes** best represents the personality of Owatonna?

36.22%

Helper

# Community Survey

Which of the images below best represents the personality of Owatonna?  
*Brand Personas/Archetypes*



Helper  
36.22%



Teacher  
19.48%



Best Friend  
18.66%



Expert  
7.27%



Creative  
5.99%



Geek  
5.81%



Explorer  
2.79%



Hero  
2.27%



Entertainer  
1.51%



# Community Survey

What **Visual Symbol/Landmark** is iconic in Owatonna?

12%

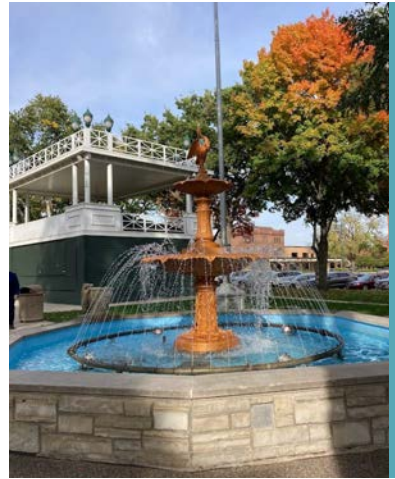
Wells Fargo Bank

# Community Survey

What is iconic in Owatonna?  
*Visual Symbols/Landmarks*



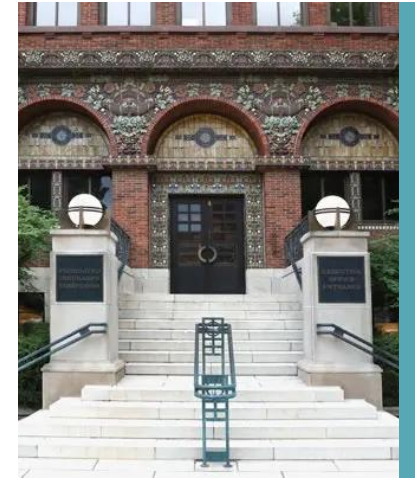
Wells Fargo Bank  
12%



Central Park  
9%



Princess Owatonna  
8%



Federated Insurance  
7%

# External Quantitative Data Consumer Awareness & Perception Study

307 External Responses  
±5.59% at the 95% confidence level

# Consumer Awareness and Perception Study

SURVEY TERMINATION

# 307

Total Respondents

- 114 Minneapolis
- 102 St. Paul
- 91 Mankato-Rochester
- 256 terminations for not being familiar with Owatonna

# Consumer Awareness and Perception Study

## SURVEY ANALYSIS GROUPINGS

### Markets

- Minneapolis
  - Carver, Hennepin, and Scott Counties
- St. Paul
  - Anoka, Dakota, Ramsey, and Washington Counties
- Mankato–Rochester
  - Blue Earth, Dodge, Le Sueur, Nicollet, and Olmsted Counties

### Age

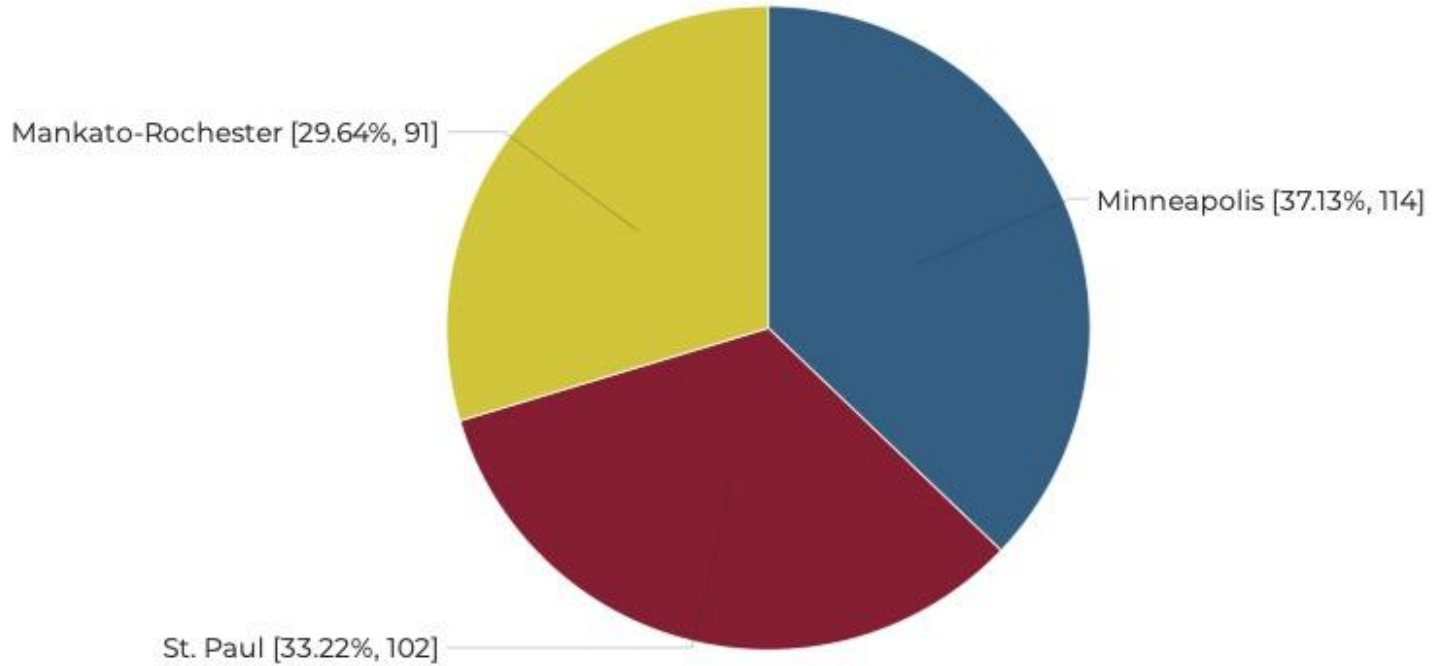
- Gen Z and Young Millennials: *18–34 years old*
- Gen X and Old Millennials: *35–54 years old*
- Boomers +: *55+ years old*

### Visitors (170 respondents)

- Visitors indicated that they have visited Owatonna in the past 3 years.

# CAP Study

Where do you live?

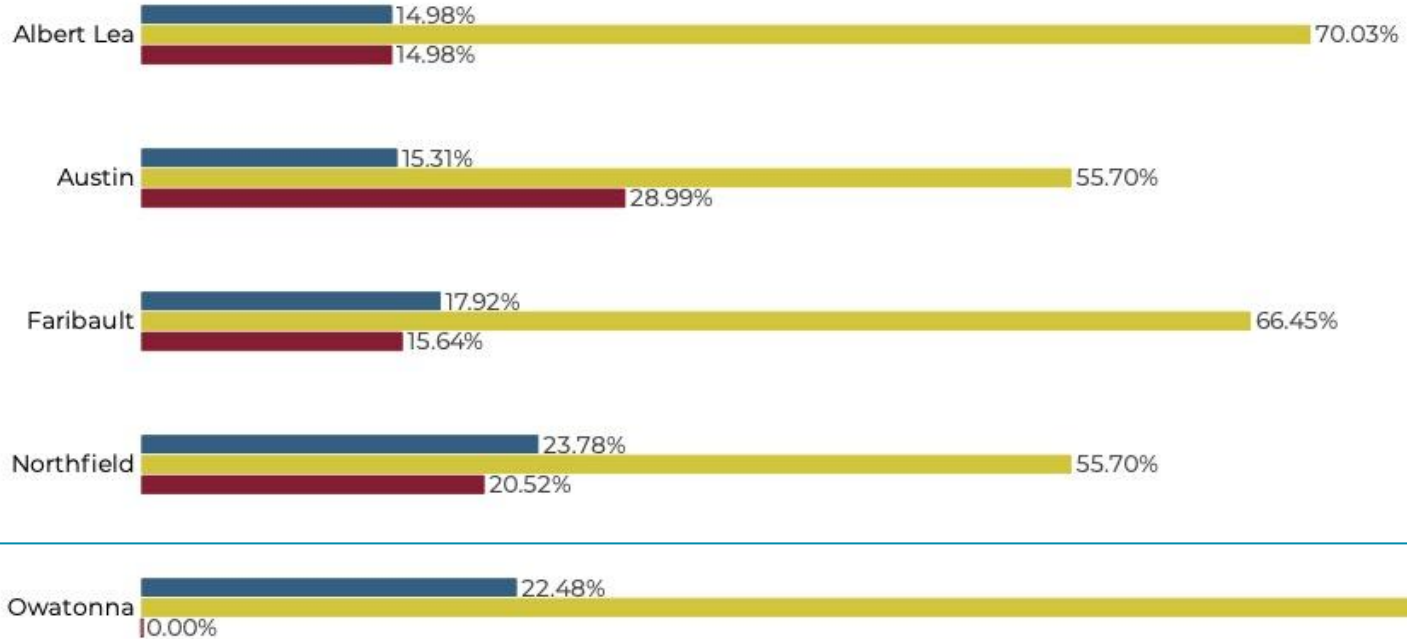


# Familiarity

# CAP Study

How familiar are you with the following communities south of the Twin Cities?

● Very familiar ● Somewhat familiar ● Not at all familiar



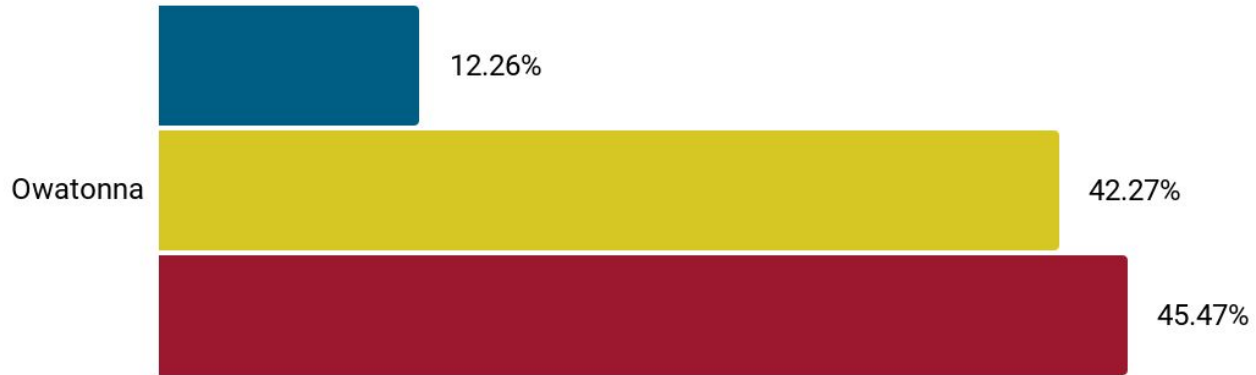


# CAP Study

## OWATONNA ONLY, TERMINATIONS INCLUDED

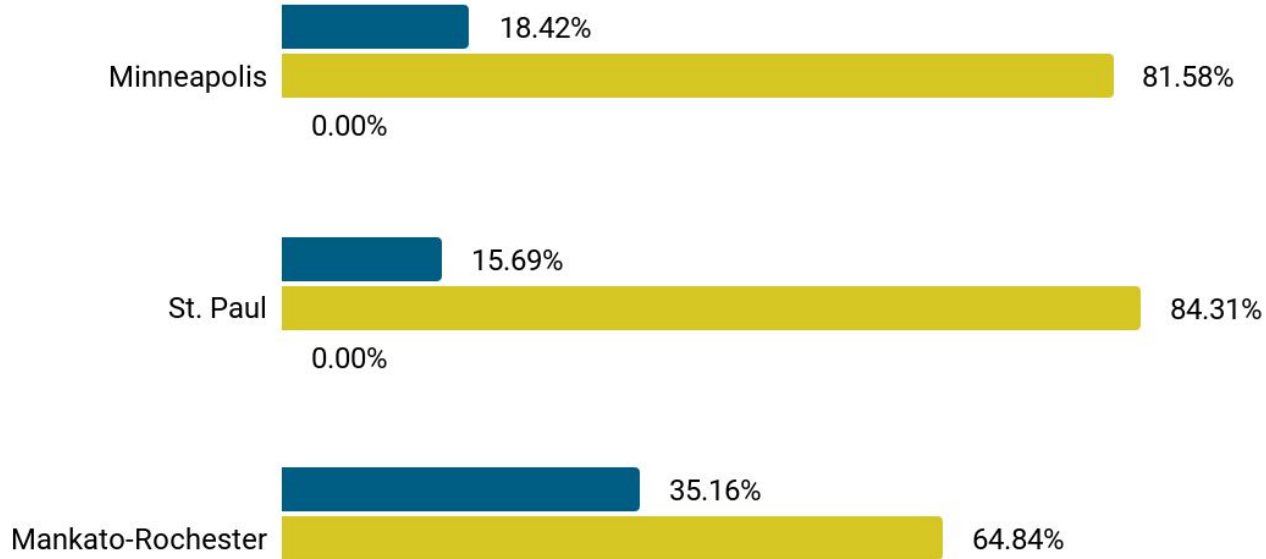
How familiar are you with the following communities south of the Twin Cities?

● Very familiar   ● Somewhat familiar   ● Not at all familiar



How familiar are you with the following communities south of the Twin Cities?

● Very familiar ● Somewhat familiar ● Not at all familiar



# Unaided Perceptions

# CAP Study

When you think of the following communities, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

## Albert Lea

- Lakes
- Shopping, outlet mall

## Austin

- Spam
- Hormel

## Faribault

- Prison
- Woolen Mill

## Northfield

- St. Olaf College
- Jesse James

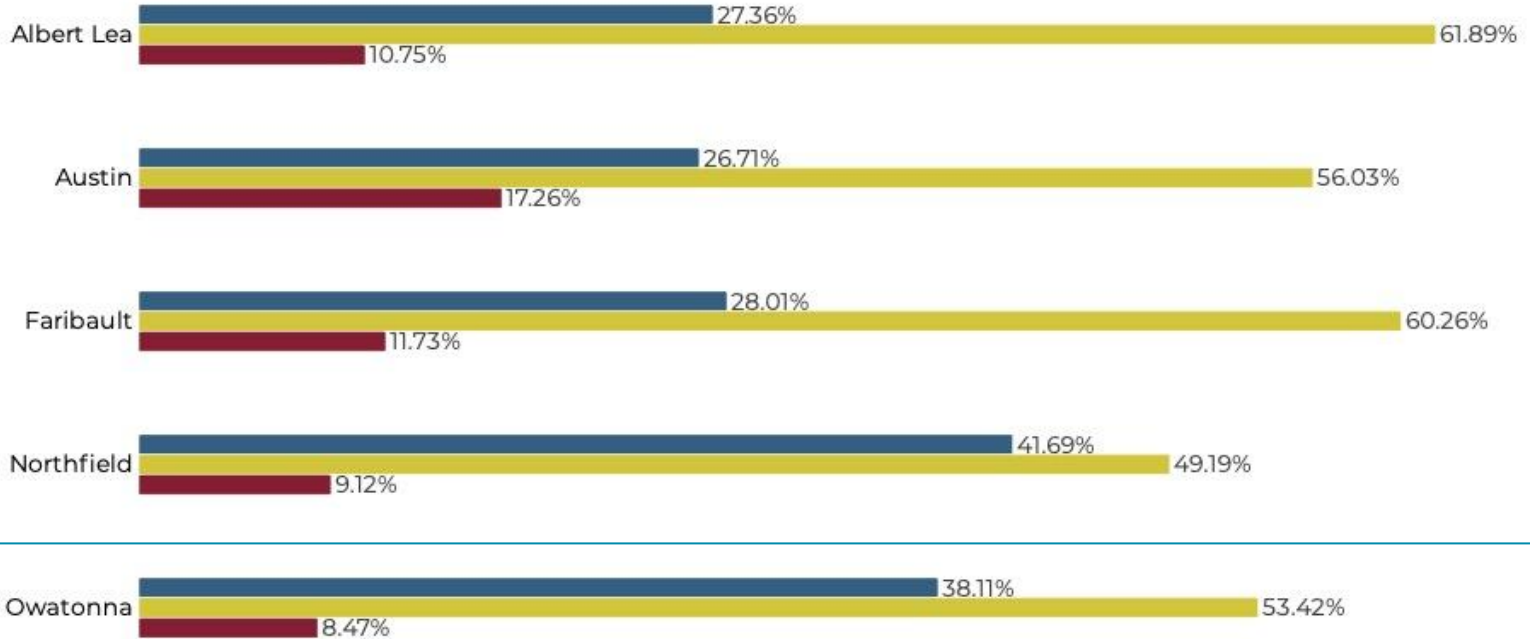
## Owatonna

- Cabela's, shopping
- Small town

# CAP Study

From your perspective, do you think the following communities are improving, declining, or staying the same?

● Improving ● Staying the same ● Declining

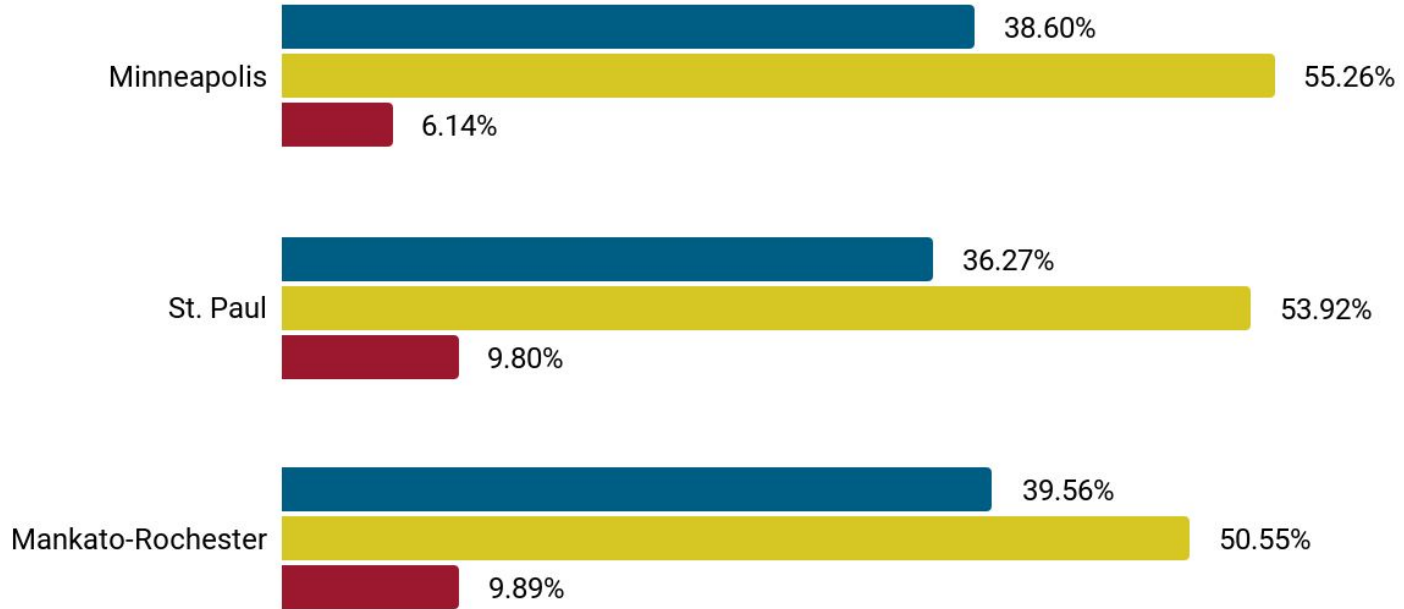


# CAP Study

## OWATONNA ONLY, BY MARKET

From your perspective, do you think the following communities are improving, declining, or staying the same?

● Improving ● Staying the same ● Declining

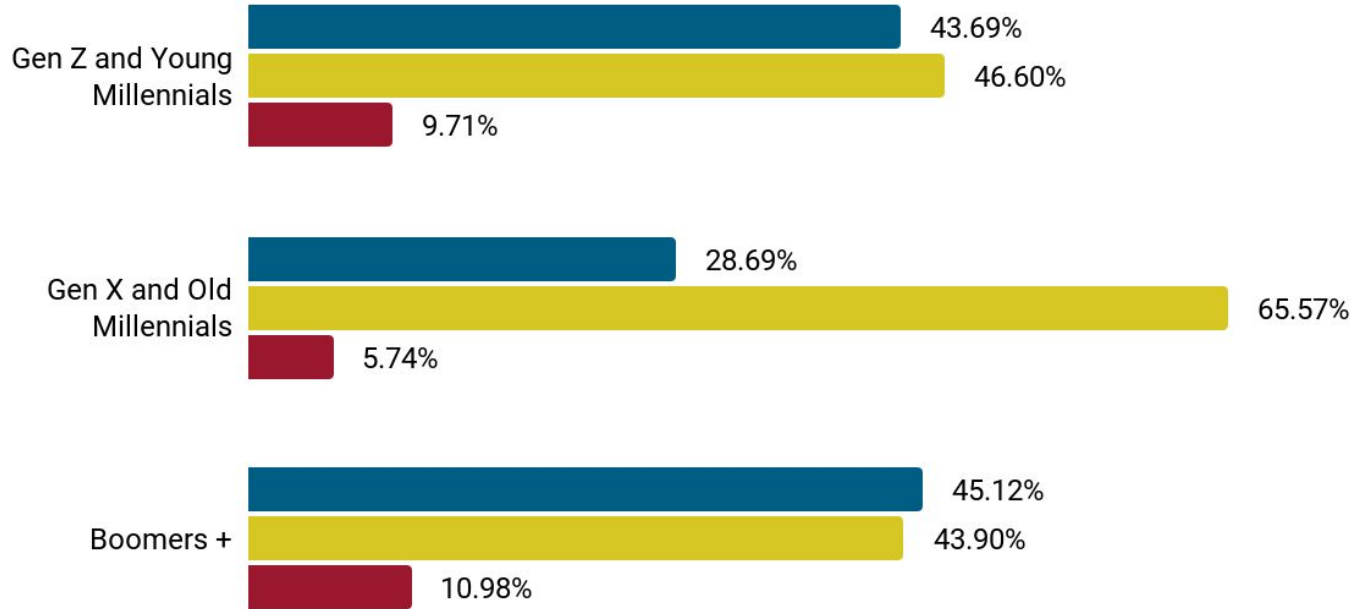


# CAP Study

## OWATONNA ONLY, BY AGE

From your perspective, do you think the following communities are improving, declining, or staying the same?

● Improving ● Staying the same ● Declining

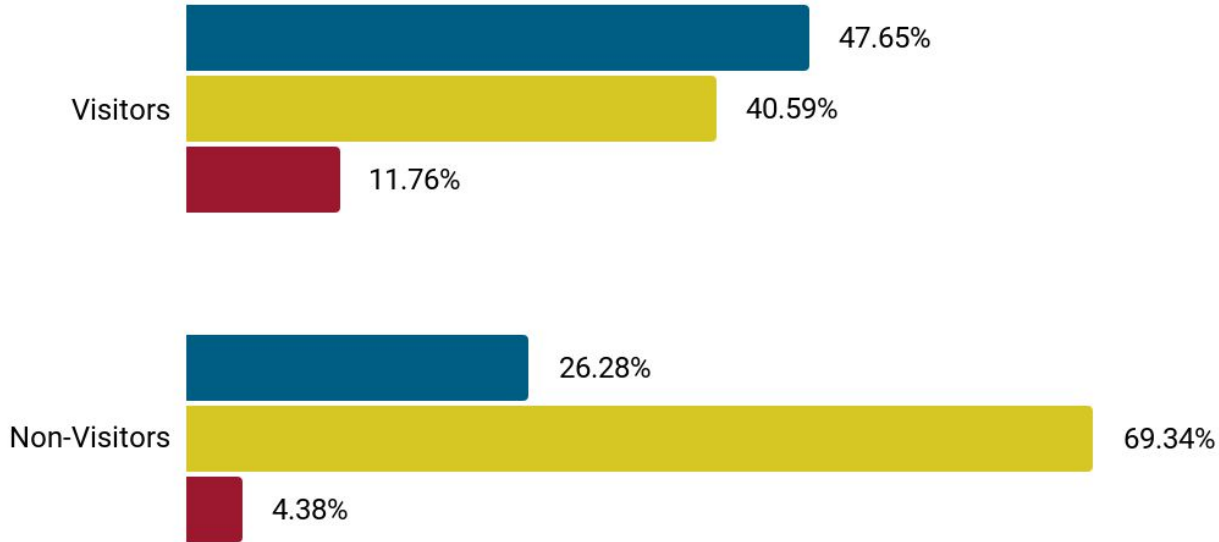


# CAP Study

## OWATONNA ONLY, BY VISITATION

From your perspective, do you think the following communities are improving, declining, or staying the same?

● Improving ● Staying the same ● Declining

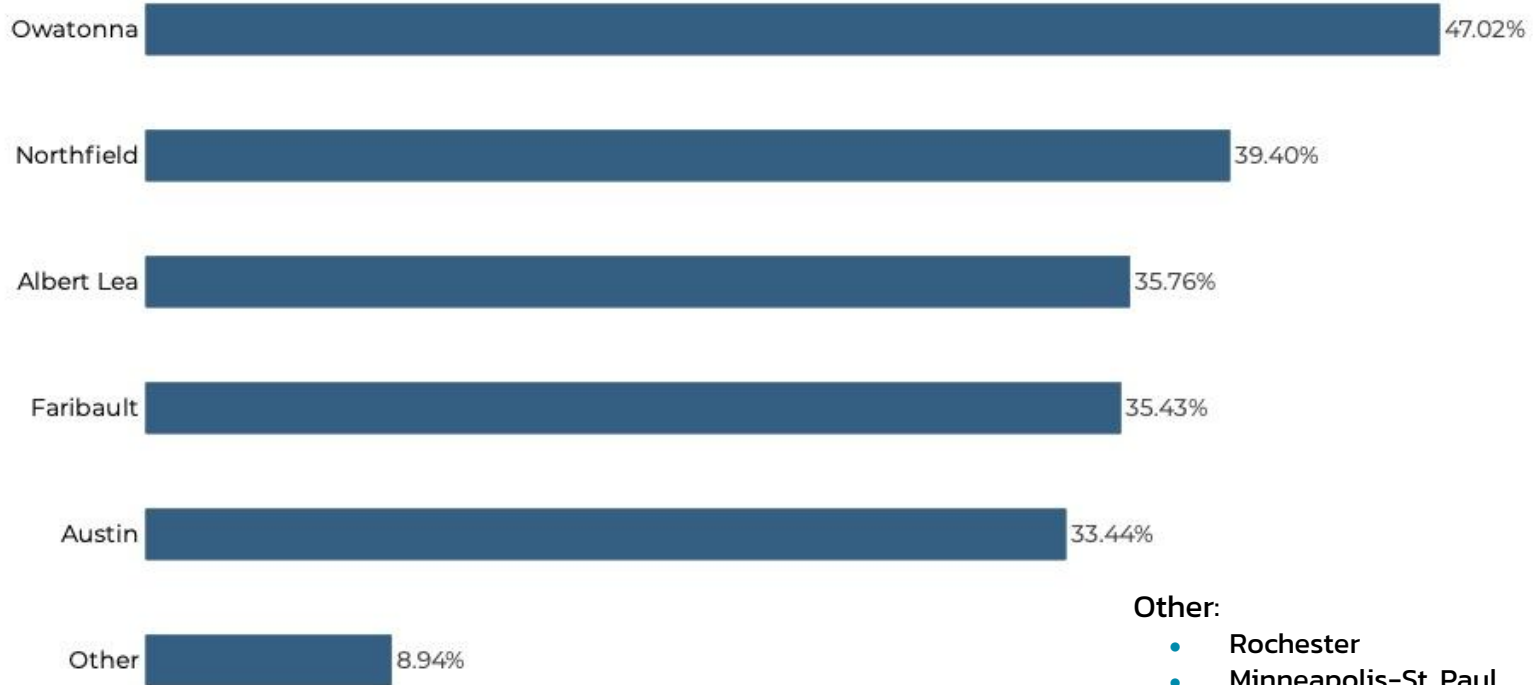




# CAP Study

Which of the following communities do you most associate with a diverse local economy that offers plenty of jobs and career opportunities?

*Choose two answers.*



**Other:**

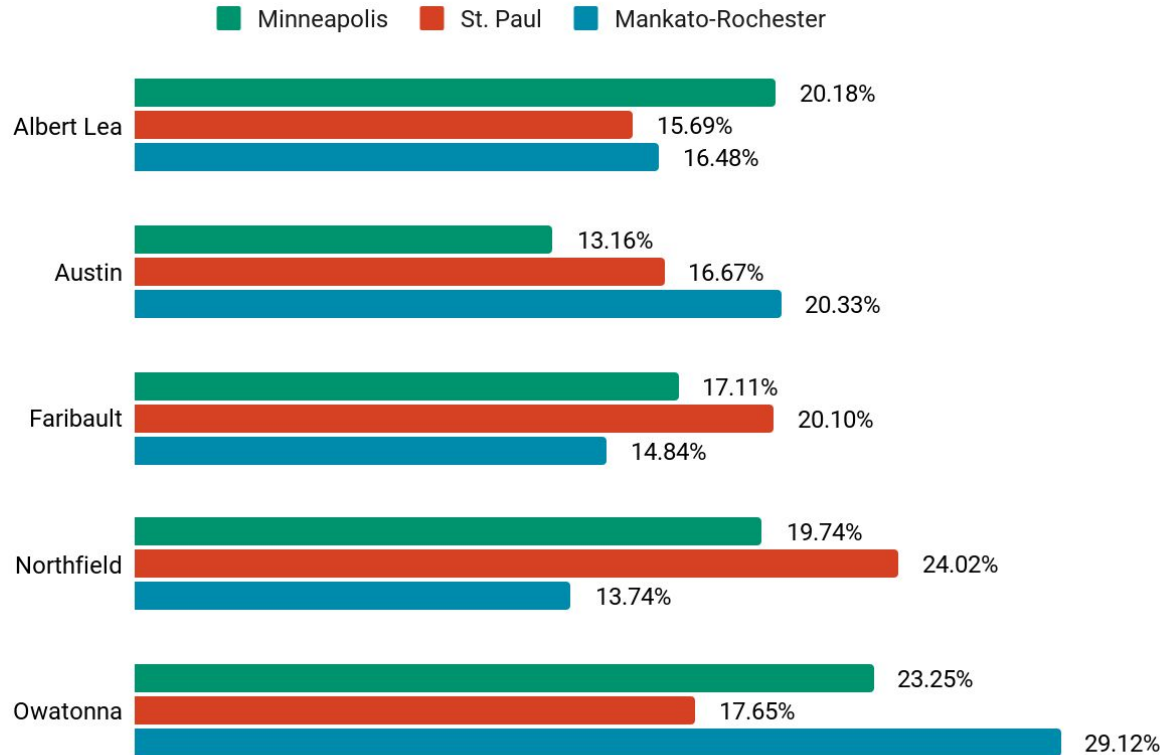
- Rochester
- Minneapolis–St. Paul
- Mankato

# CAP Study

## BY MARKET

Which of the following communities do you most associate with a diverse local economy that offers plenty of jobs and career opportunities?

*Choose two answers.*

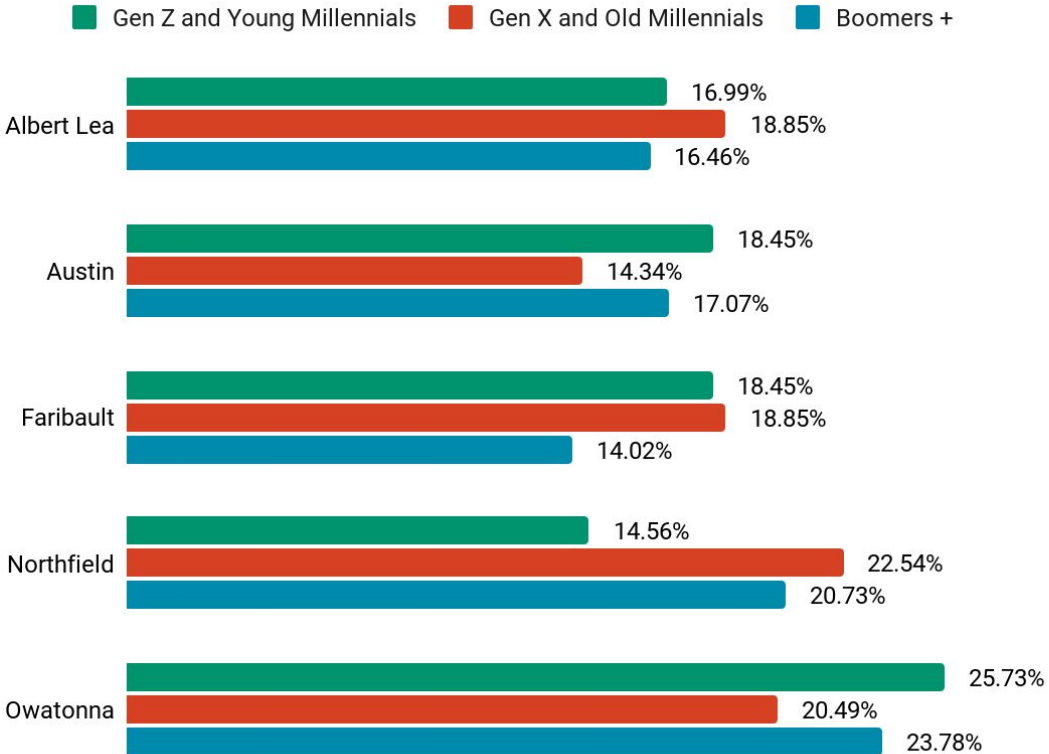


# CAP Study

## BY AGE

Which of the following communities do you most associate with a diverse local economy that offers plenty of jobs and career opportunities?

*Choose two answers.*

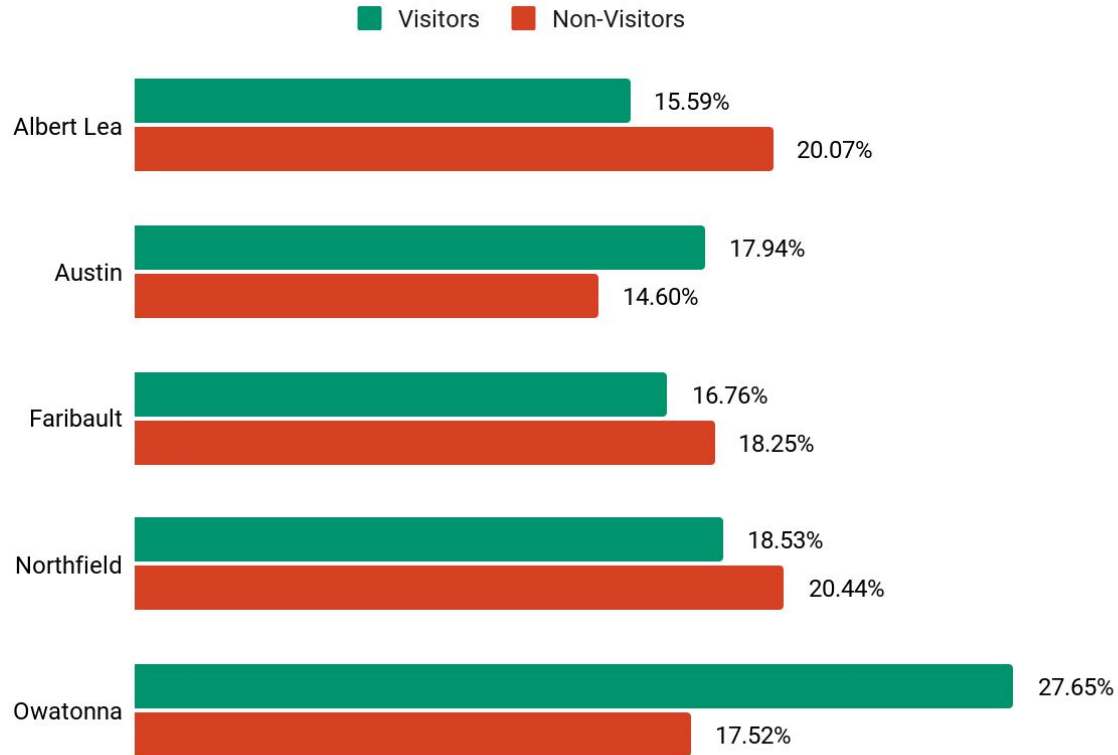


# CAP Study

## BY VISITATION

Which of the following communities do you most associate with a diverse local economy that offers plenty of jobs and career opportunities?

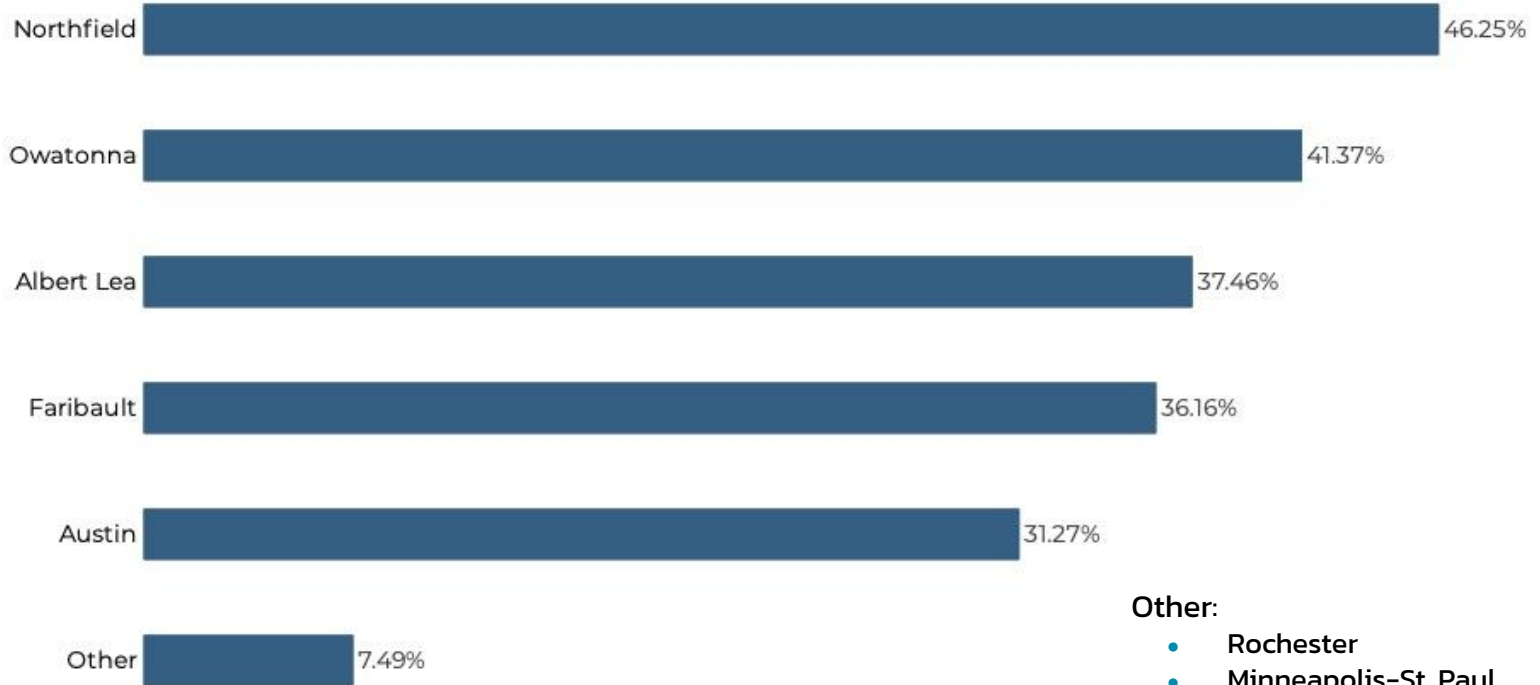
*Choose two answers.*



# CAP Study

Which of the following communities do you most associate with values like self-reliance, dedication, and entrepreneurship?

*Choose two answers.*



**Other:**

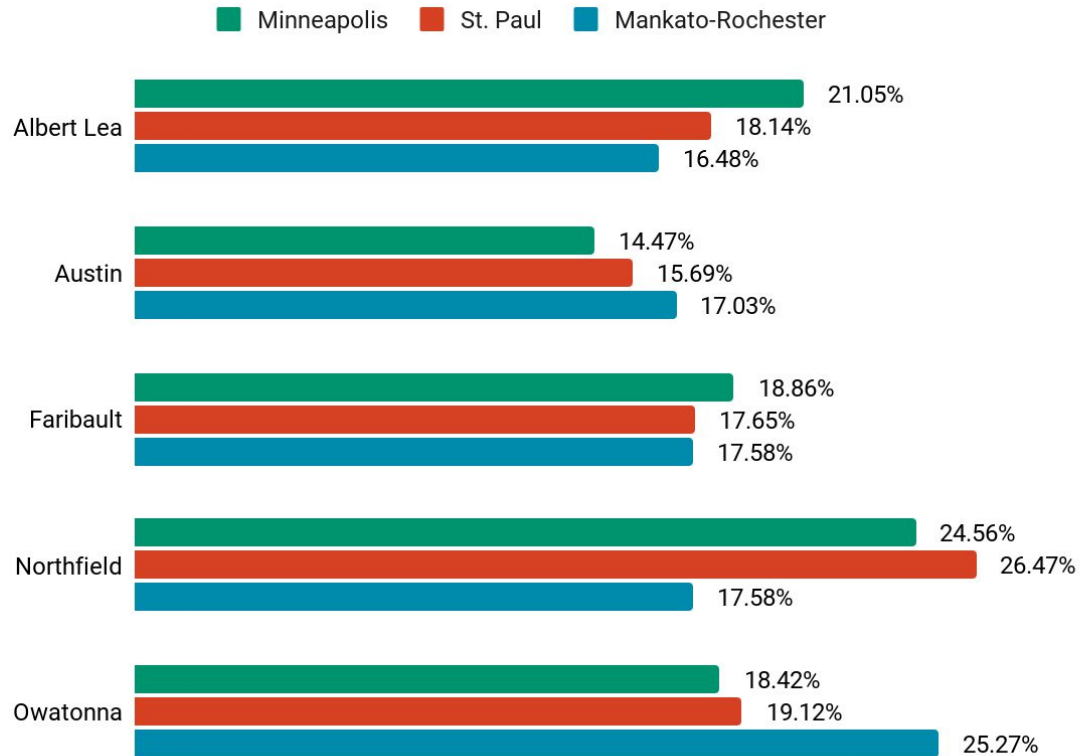
- Rochester
- Minneapolis-St. Paul
- Mankato

# CAP Study

## BY MARKET

Which of the following communities do you most associate with values like self-reliance, dedication, and entrepreneurship?

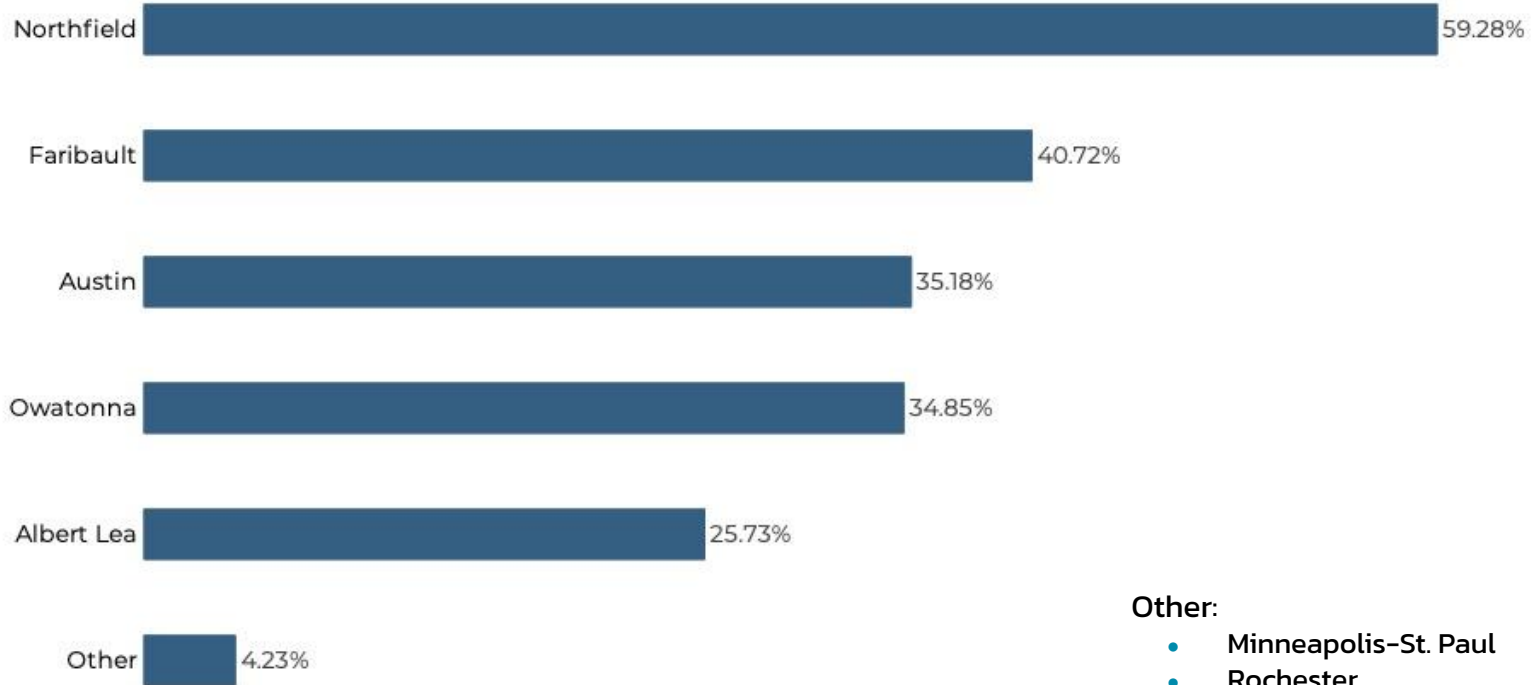
*Choose two answers.*



# CAP Study

Which of the following communities do you most associate with a rich history, as evidenced by unique architecture and interesting traditions?

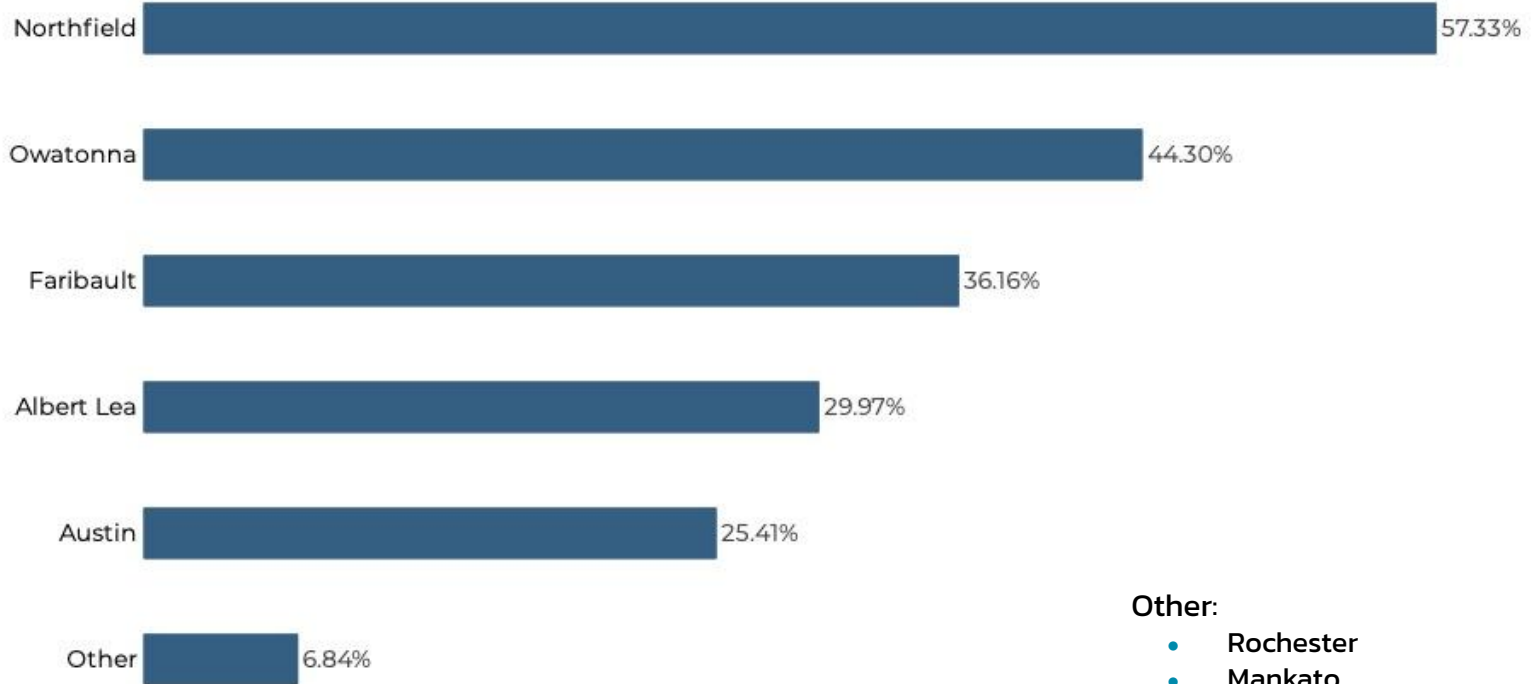
*Choose two answers.*



# CAP Study

Which of the following communities do you think provide the best education and after-school activities for kids and teens?

*Choose two answers.*



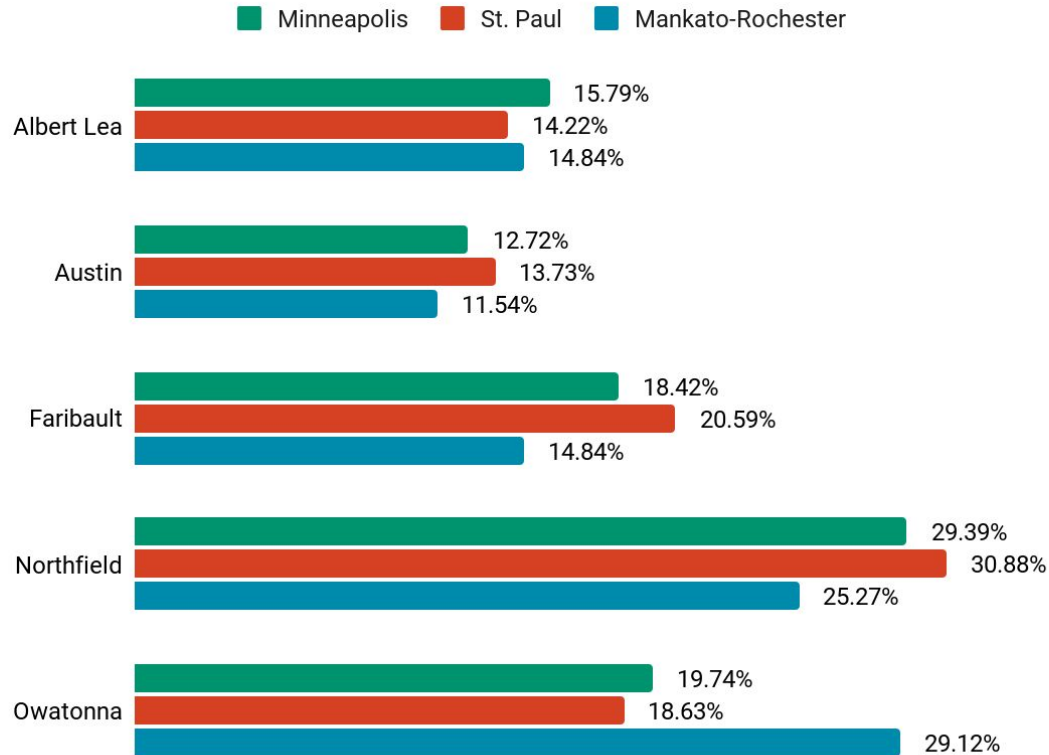


# CAP Study

## BY MARKET

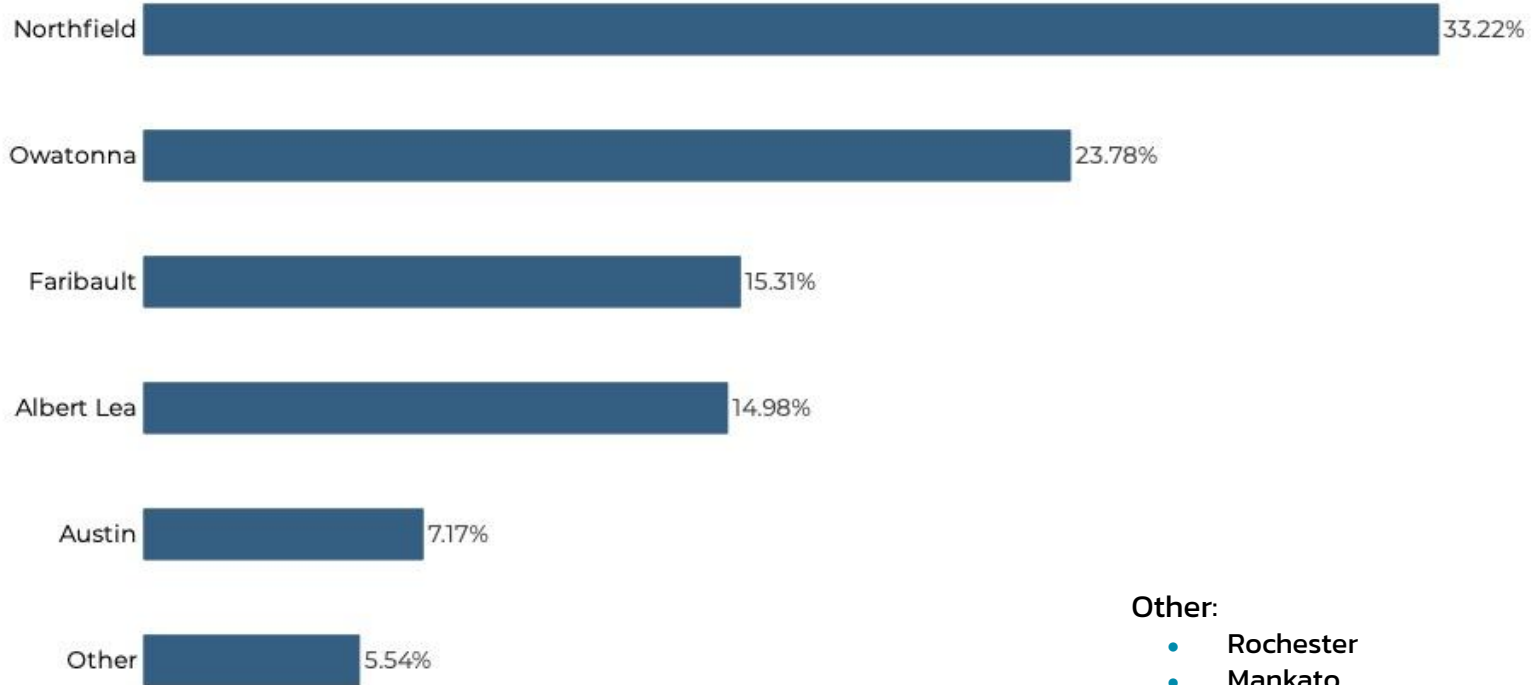
Which of the following communities do you think provide the best education and after-school activities for kids and teens?

*Choose two answers.*



# CAP Study

In general, which of the following cities do you think are the best places for someone to...  
*Raise a family? (One answer only)*

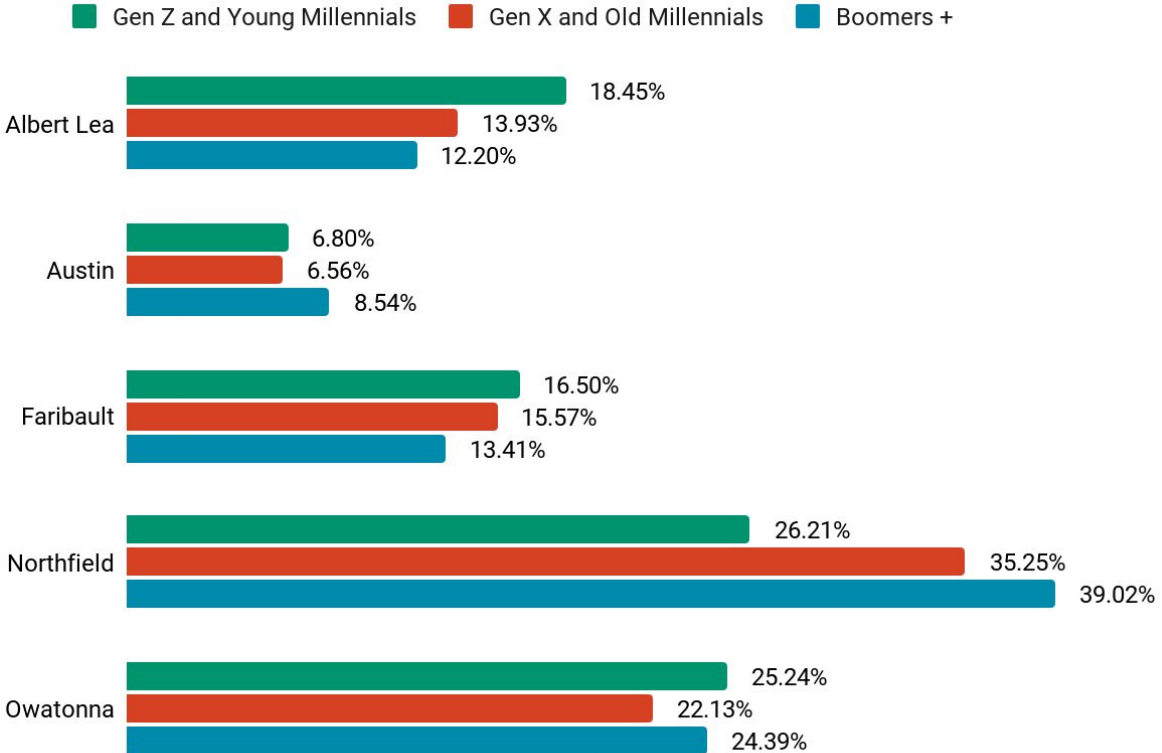


# CAP Study

## BY AGE

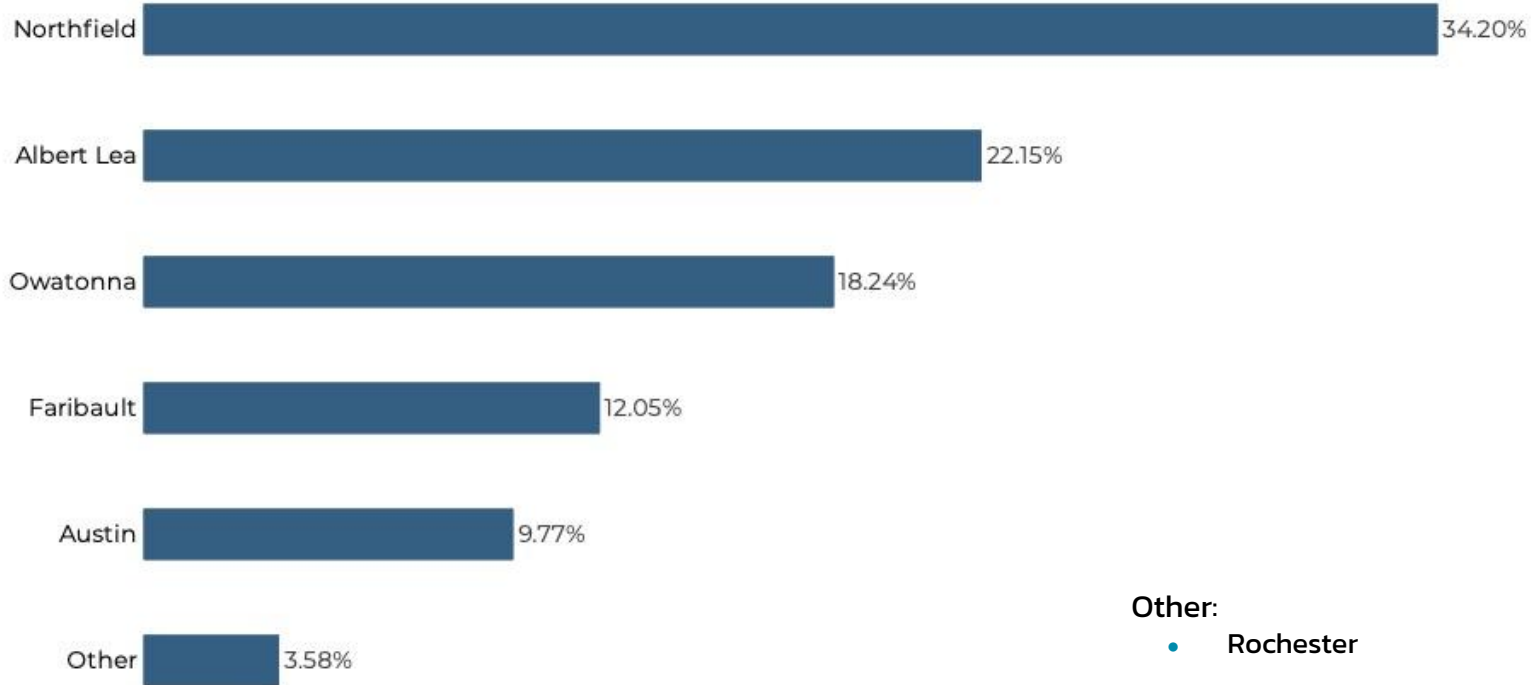
In general, which of the following cities do you think are the best places for someone to...

*Raise a family? (One answer only)*



# CAP Study

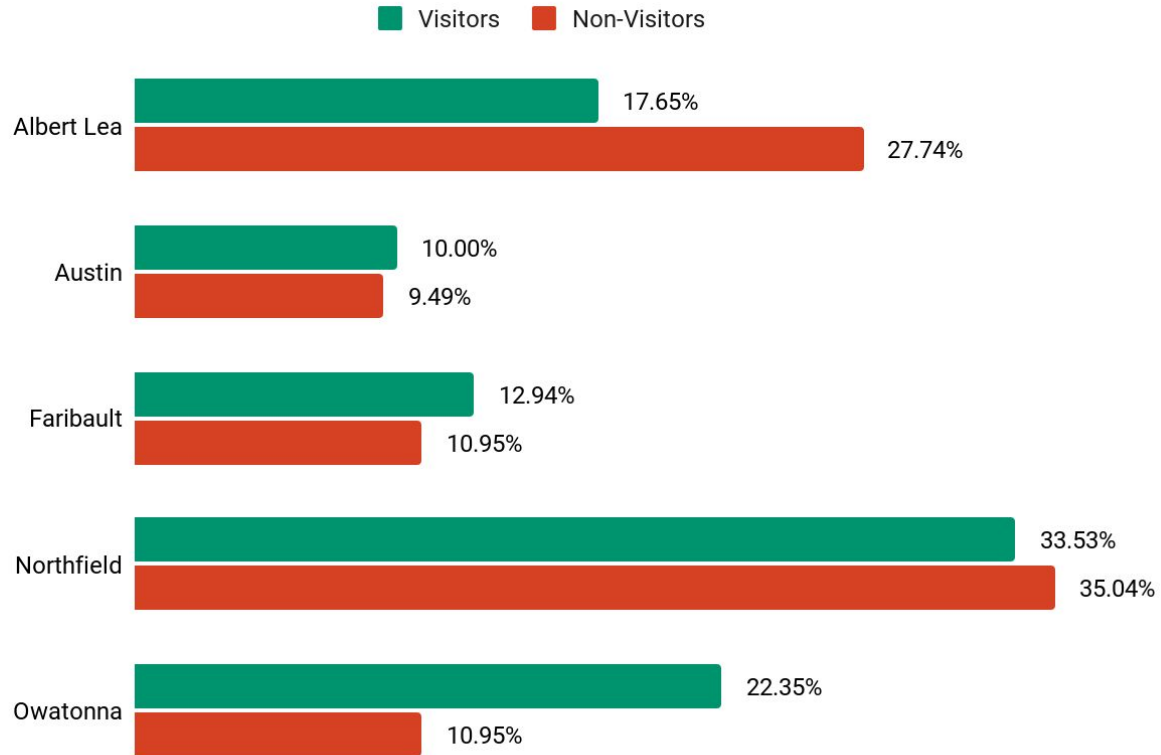
In general, which of the following cities do you think are the best places for someone to...  
*Visit over the weekend? (One answer only)*



# CAP Study

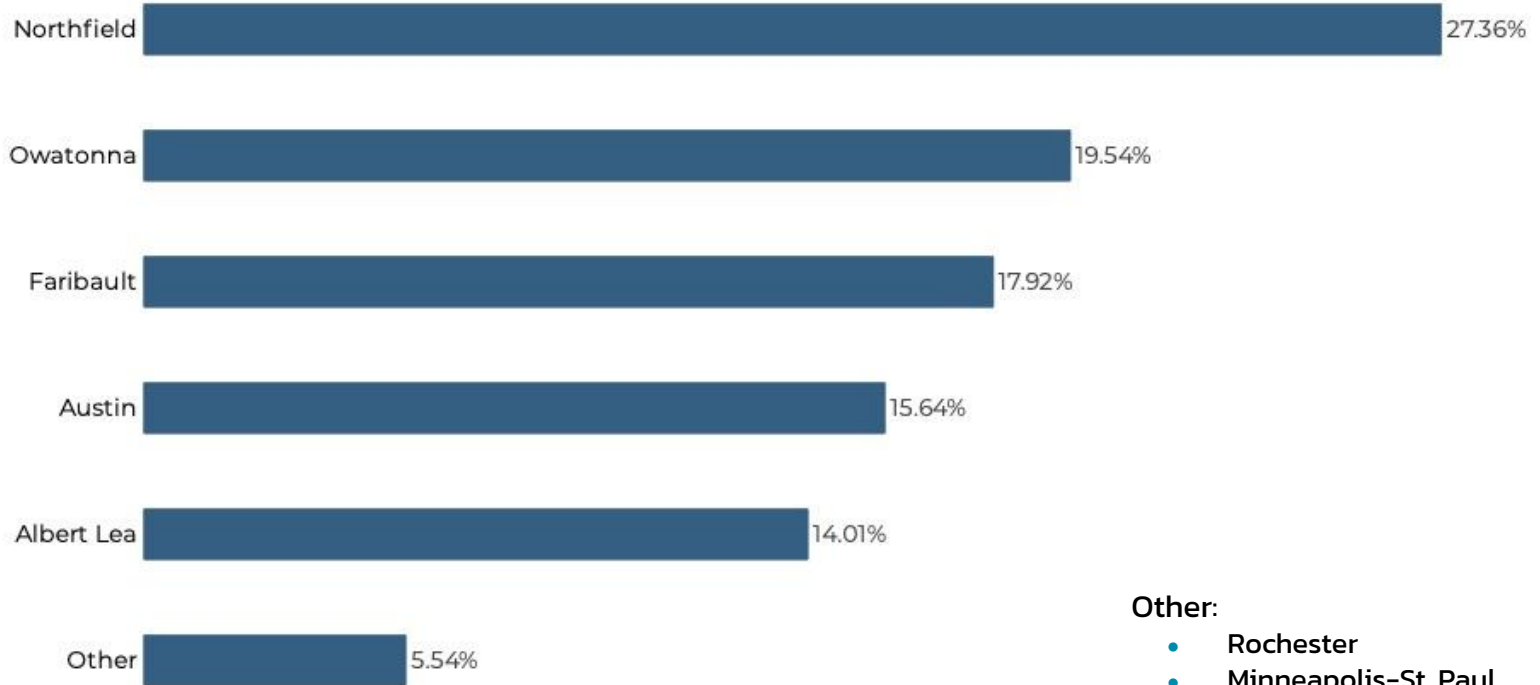
## BY VISITATION

In general, which of the following cities do you think are the best places for someone to...  
*Visit over the weekend? (One answer only)*



# CAP Study

In general, which of the following cities do you think are the best places for someone to...  
*Start a business? (One answer only)*



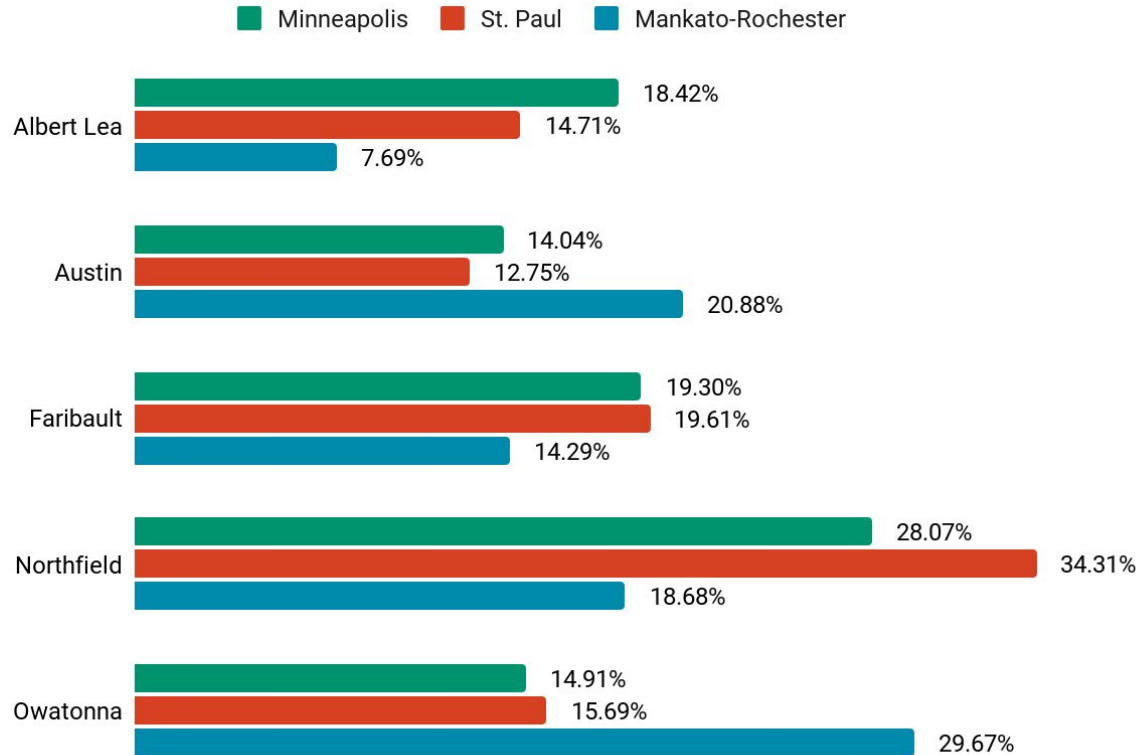
**Other:**

- Rochester
- Minneapolis–St. Paul
- Mankato

# CAP Study

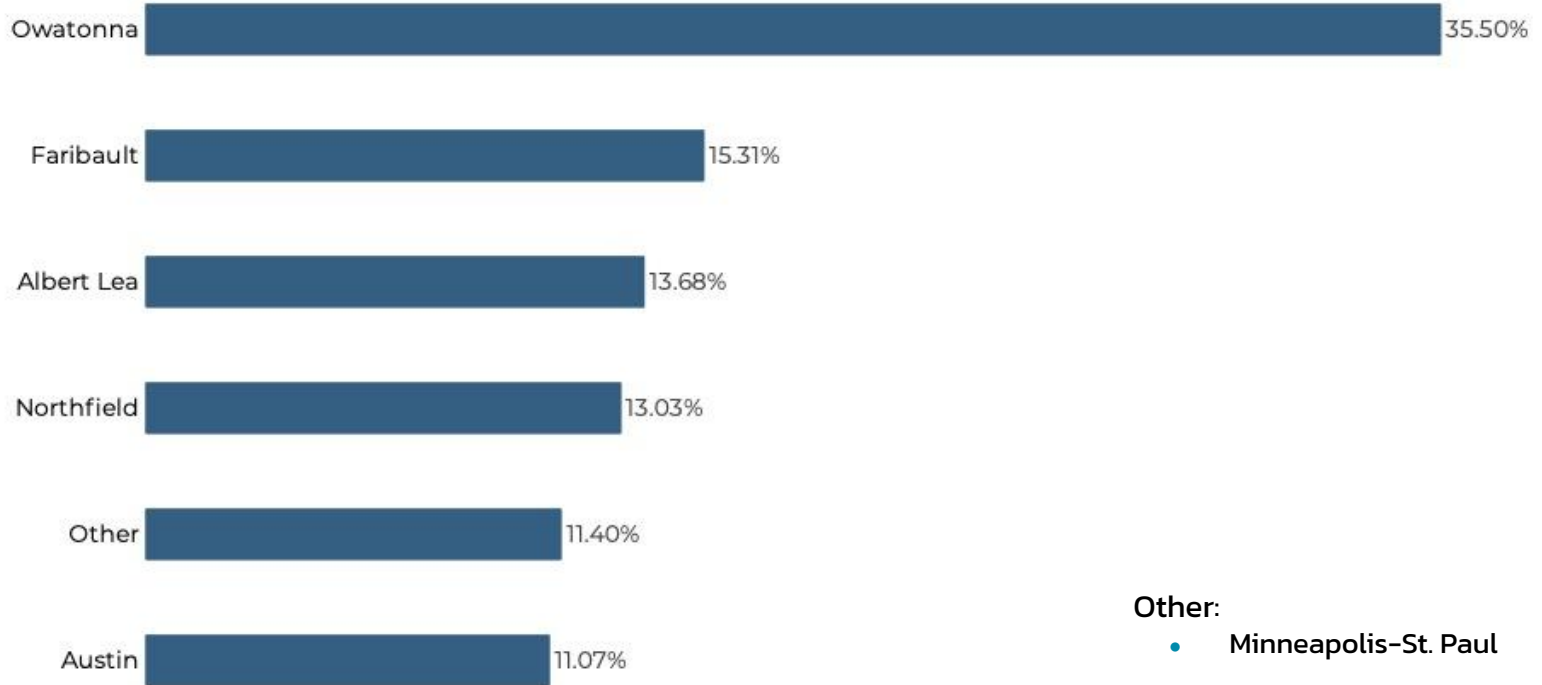
## BY MARKET

In general, which of the following cities do you think are the best places for someone to...  
*Start a business? (One answer only)*



# CAP Study

Which of the following communities hosts the largest county fair in Minnesota each summer?  
*Choose one answer.*

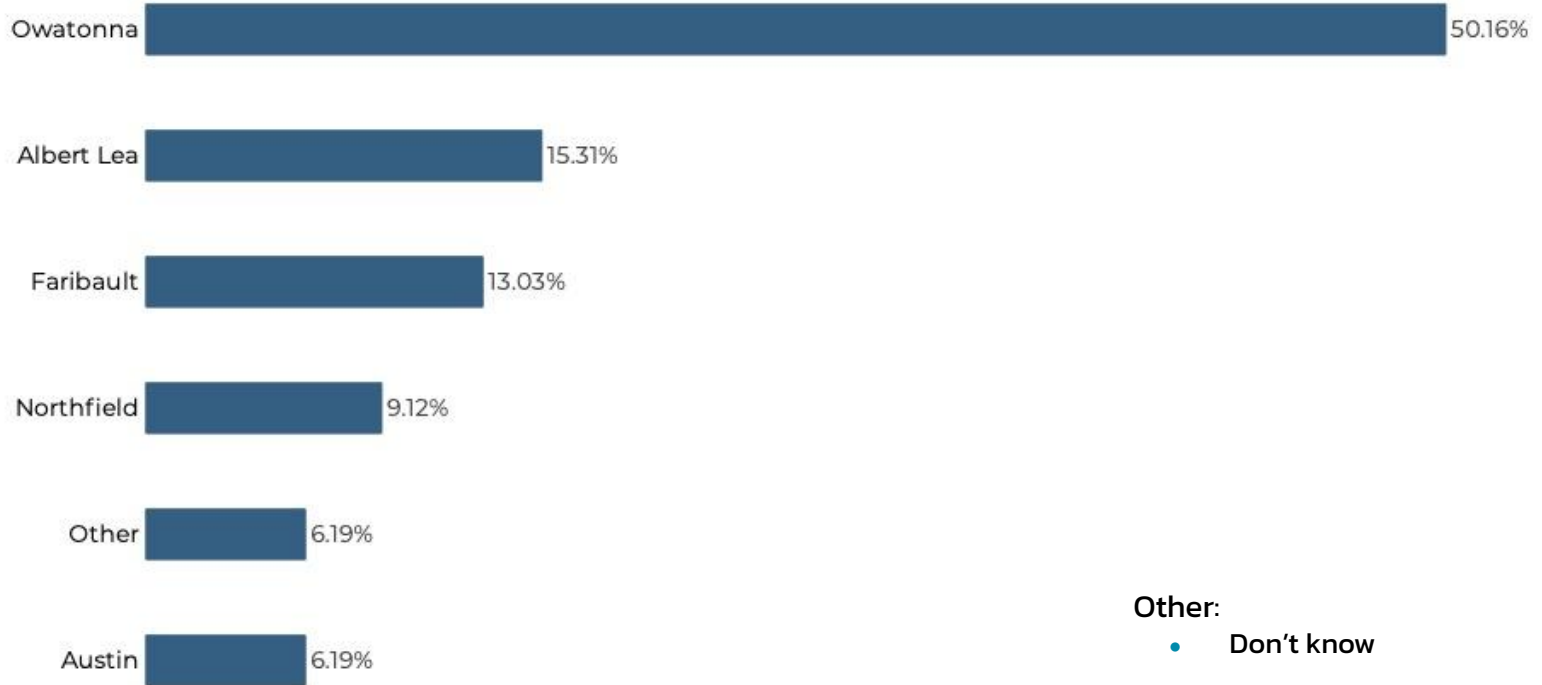




# CAP Study

Which of the following communities was home to the first Cabela's retail store in Minnesota, the largest such store when it opened?

*Choose one answer.*

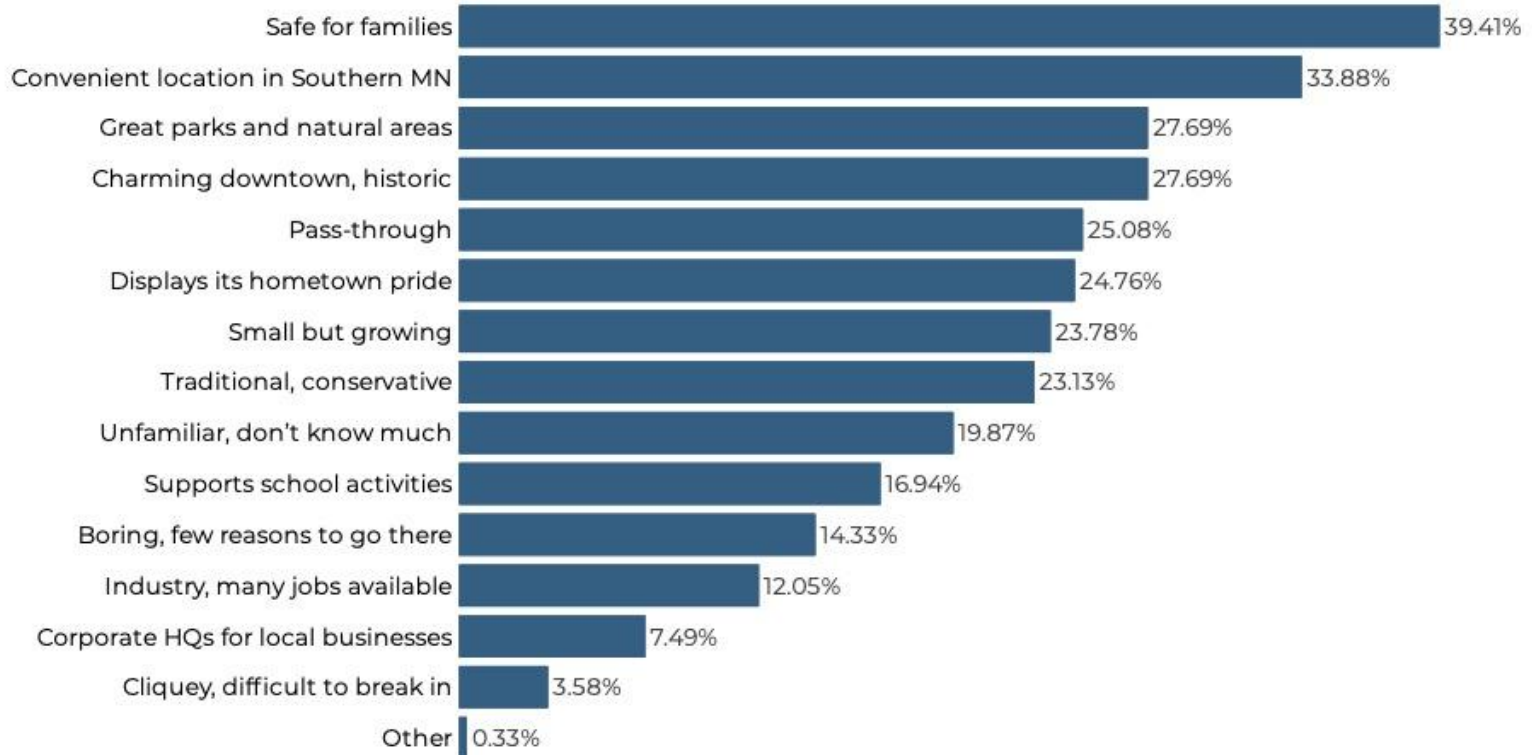


Other:  
• Don't know

# Perceptions

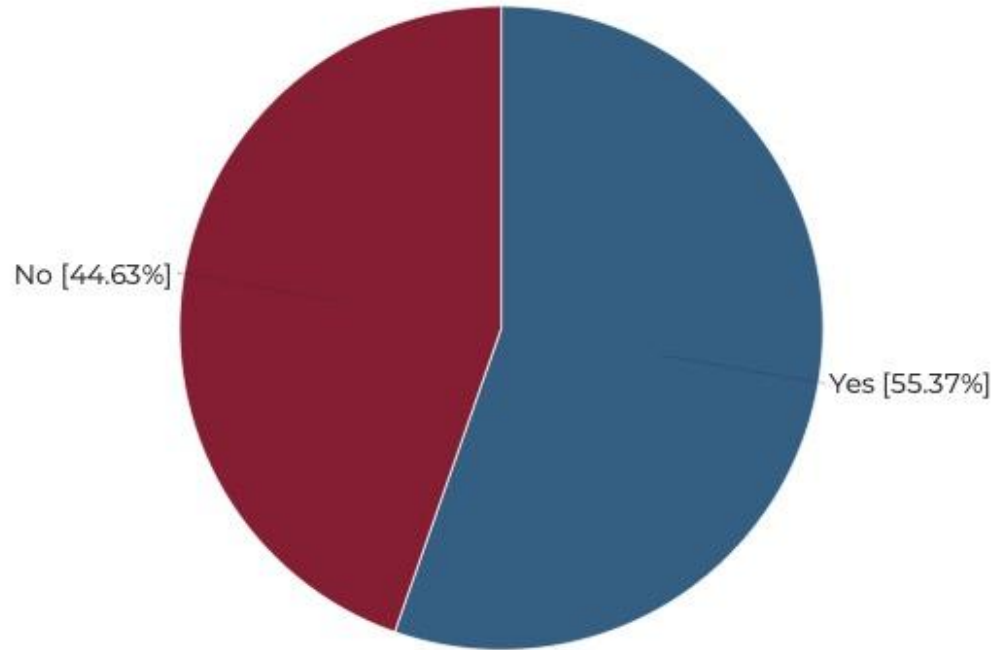
# CAP Study

Which phrase or adjective best describes the City of Owatonna, Minnesota?  
*Choose three answers.*



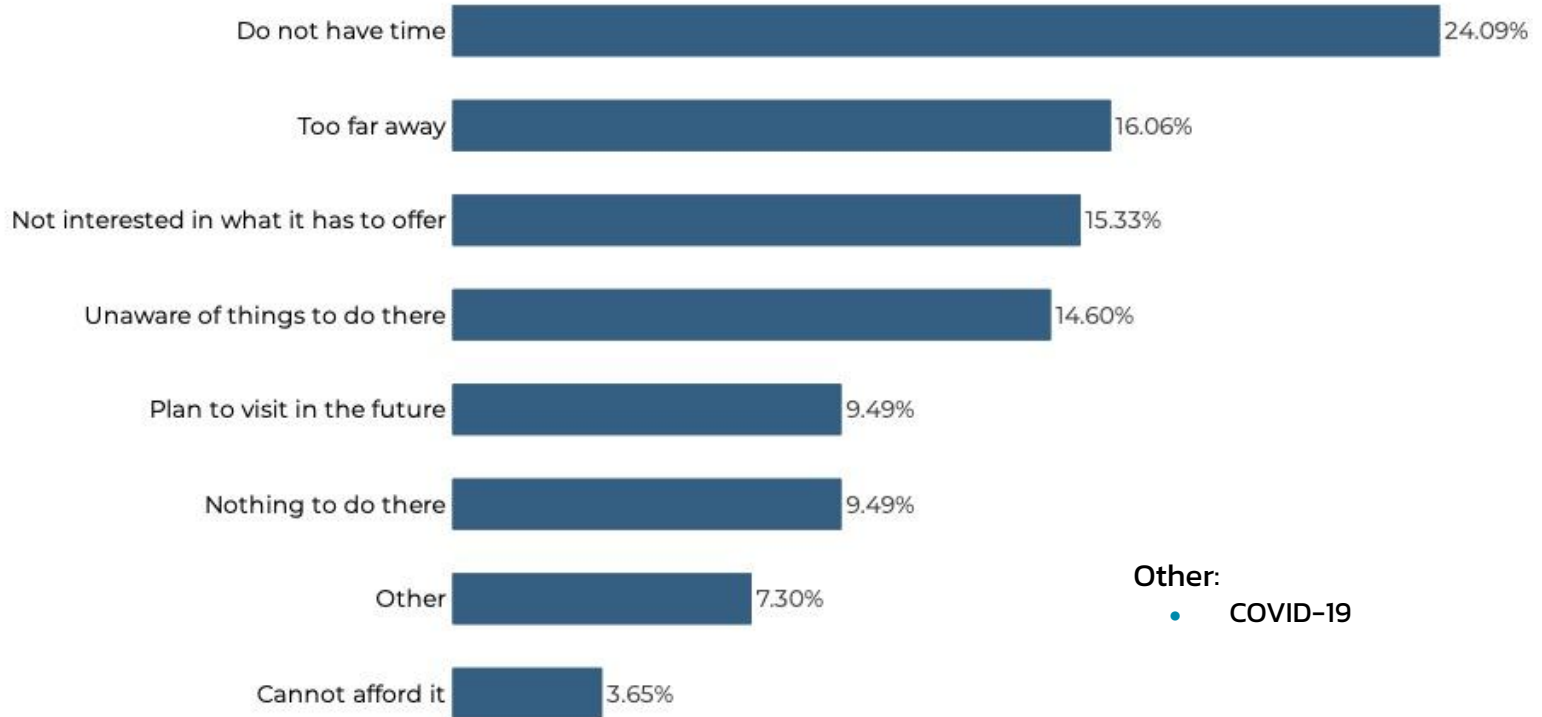
# Non-Visitors

Have you visited Owatonna, MN in the past three (3) years?



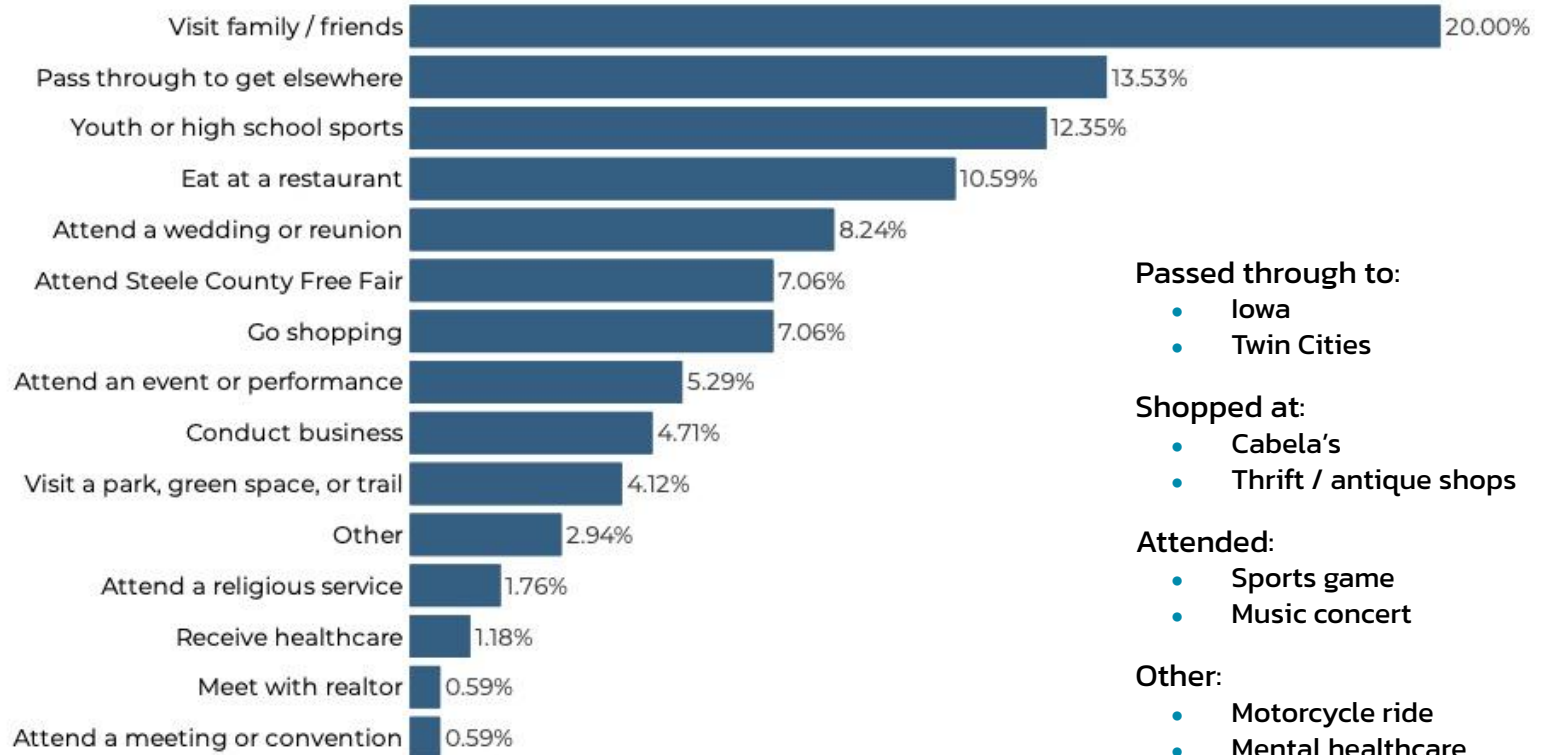
# CAP Study

Why have you **not** visited Owatonna?



# Visitors

## What was the primary purpose or main reason you visited Owatonna on your most recent visit?



### Passed through to:

- Iowa
- Twin Cities

### Shopped at:

- Cabela's
- Thrift / antique shops

### Attended:

- Sports game
- Music concert

### Other:

- Motorcycle ride
- Mental healthcare



What aspect of Owatonna leaves the most positive impression on visitors and newcomers?

- *"People were nice and friendly, town was so cute and clean, and had a blast at the fair."*
- *"Very cool old architecture, e.g. the downtown bank building"*
- *"Cabela's store is awesome, especially with all the animals in it."*
- *"Robust business climate, both large and small businesses are strong."*
- *"Big enough to be a city. Small enough to feel like a town."*
- *"Lots of downtown improvements."*
- *"Considering 35 goes right through town, it is impressive how it embraced that."*

What aspect of Owatonna leaves the most **negative** impression on visitors and newcomers?

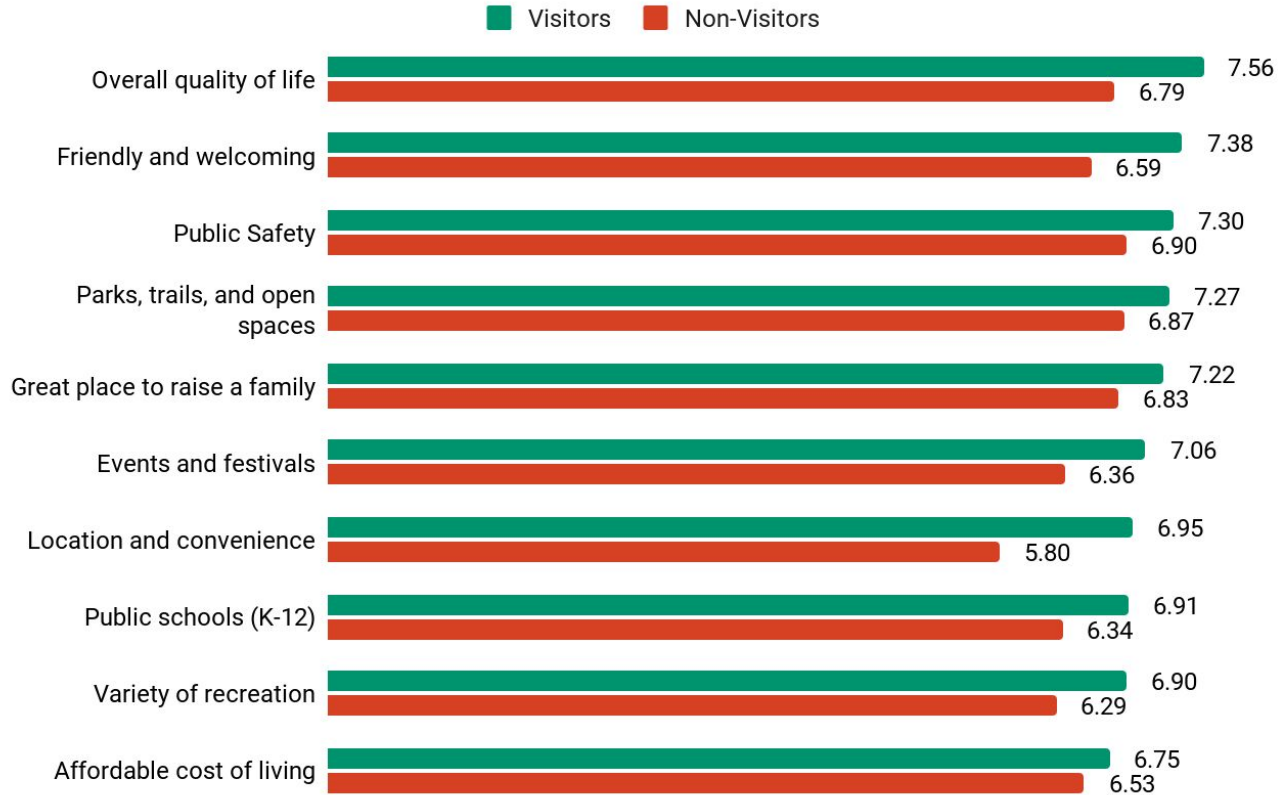
- *"Could be a little brighter in areas that seemed gray, drab...negative vibe."*
- *"It is so far from so many things."*
- *"Used to be a good place to start a family, not so much anymore."*
- *"They have construction all summer every year, but the road conditions are still horrible."*
- *"It is still considered 'rural' and doesn't have amenities."*
- *"It's easy to pass by going to other cities."*
- *"A small town knows everyone's business."*
- *"History of Owatonna"*

# All Respondents

# CAP Study

## BY VISITATION, TOP RANKED

Based on your perception of or experience in Owatonna, in your opinion, please rate its following attributes on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is "Poor" and 10 is "Excellent."



# CAP Study

## BY VISITATION, BOTTOM RANKED

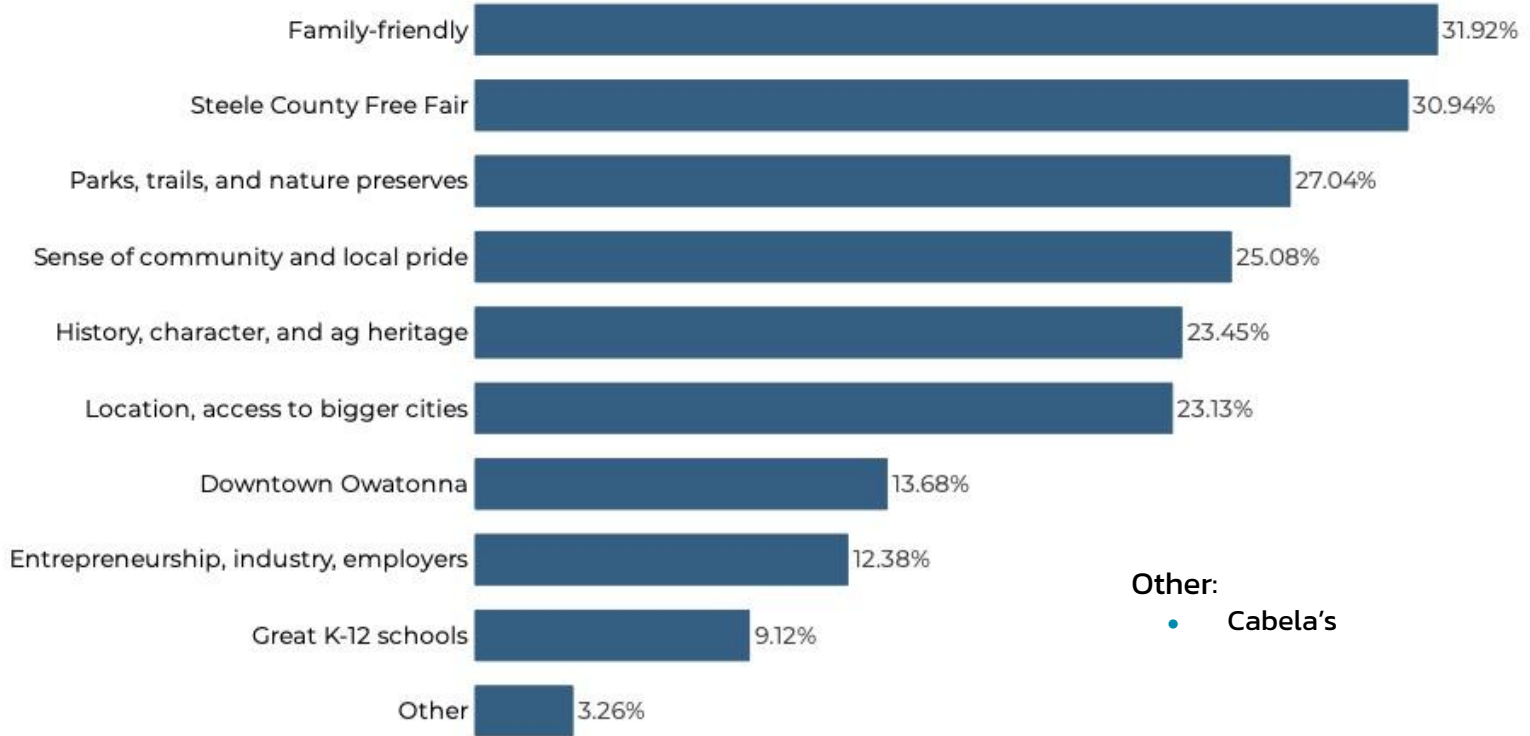
Based on your perception of or experience in Owatonna, in your opinion, please rate its following attributes on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is "Poor" and 10 is "Excellent."

■ Visitors ■ Non-Visitors



# CAP Study

What is most important to the distinct identity of Owatonna?  
(Without \_\_\_\_\_, Owatonna would lose its essence.)  
*Choose two answers.*



# External Qualitative Data External Influencer Perception Study

# Influencer Perception Study

## Assets

Diversified economy  
Manufacturing & industrial strength  
Federated, Wenger, Viracon, etc.  
Steele County Fair  
I-35; road and rail  
Business friendly  
Cabelas; retail  
Proximity to larger cities  
Kindness, generosity  
History, bank, orphanage  
Mineral springs  
Reptile Zoo

## Challenges

General lack of familiarity, knowledge, and awareness  
Pass through community  
Some blight  
Congestion

## Missing

Not sure  
Awareness (including business and fair)  
Anything that stands out  
Entertainment  
Personality  
Draw Downtown (off 35)

## EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS

### Opportunities

Investor interest  
Diversification  
Job growth  
More amenities  
Continued development (including Downtown)  
Regional tourism  
Hotel  
Logistics, freight  
Thought leadership on housing  
Diverse retail  
Updated Outlets

# Next Steps



Stakeholder & Community Education



Insight Gathering & Research



DNA & Strategy Formation



**Creative Brand & Message Development**



**Brand Action Ideas**



Thank you, Owatonna!