



Economic Development Plan

Soda Springs, Idaho

Submitted By

Bengal Solutions

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to create an economic development plan that will be an effective tool for local government leaders in achieving their goal to build up the local economy and bring more people to the city. The community has seen a significant drop – about 12% – in population over the last sixteen years¹, businesses have left, and a once thriving economy has struggled to regain traction. As one of the highest earning workforces in the state of Idaho, Soda Springs has the components necessary for community revitalization.

1.1 Background

In January of 2009 the Soda Springs Chamber of Commerce, in consultation with many local citizens, business owners, and government leaders, created a market analysis and action plan for the City of Soda Springs². The City of Soda Springs would like to take a more active role in economic development. The city has asked Bengal Solutions to update the information in the aforementioned action plan and create an economic development plan for Soda Springs.

1.2 Introduction

The information for this report was gathered using several research methods. A survey, two focus groups, a community town hall forum, and a search of scholarly research was conducted. The survey involved the employees of several prominent Soda Springs businesses – Itafos, Monsanto, Silver Star Communications, Kiewit, Degerstrom-Dravo, Caribou Memorial Hospital, and the Soda Springs School District. The first focus group was conducted at the high school in Soda Springs and the participants were 13 junior and senior class students. The second focus group included several members of the local Chamber of Commerce, local business owners, and other stakeholders. Bengal Solutions also conducted a Town Hall Forum. A group of about forty to fifty members of the community were in attendance. Finally, exhaustive scholarly research has been performed by several Bengal Solutions Graduate Assistant students.

Topics discussed included: housing, zoning, economic development, marketing the community to others, workforce attraction, entertainment, recreation, cultural events, youth retention, education, training opportunities, public safety, city services, and infrastructure. The complete findings of the survey can be obtained in Appendix A.

¹https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

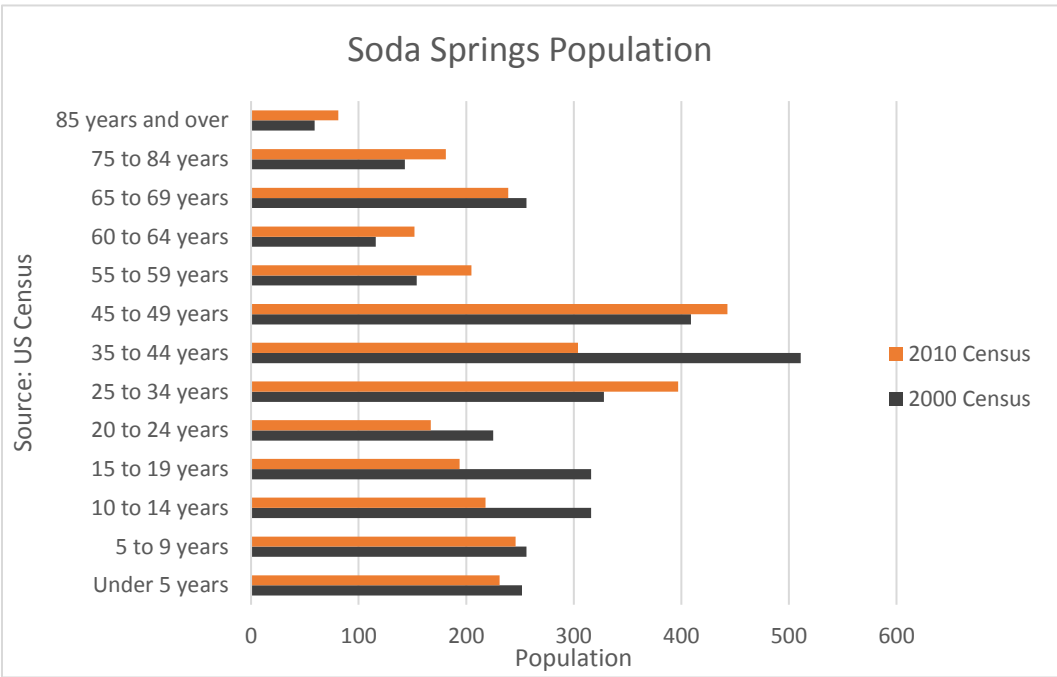
²http://www.sodaspringsid.com/Community%20Studies/4.Market_Analysis_-_FINAL_09.pdf

2. Current Economic Status

2.1 Population

The population of Soda Springs has changed substantially between 2000 and 2010. The proportion of the population in the following age groups have increased: 25-34, 45-64, and 75 and older and the proportion of the population for ages 0-24, 35-44, and 65-39 have decreased. The age group that has seen the greatest amount of change from 2000 to 2010 is 35-44 – showing a substantial decrease. These statistics indicate that much of the working age population has left the community. Maintaining individuals within the community who will actively participate in the local workforce is important as the city attempts to retain and recruit new employers to Soda Springs.

The median age of men in Soda Springs is 35 years old and the median age of women is 40 years old. Compared to Pocatello, the median age of men is 29.4 years old and the median age of women is 31.1 years old. In comparison to Bear Lake County where the median age of men is 40 years old and the median age of women is 41 years old. Soda Springs’ median age is similar to the median age of rural America suggesting that the population is “older” than the nation as a whole.³⁴



2.2 Educational Attainment

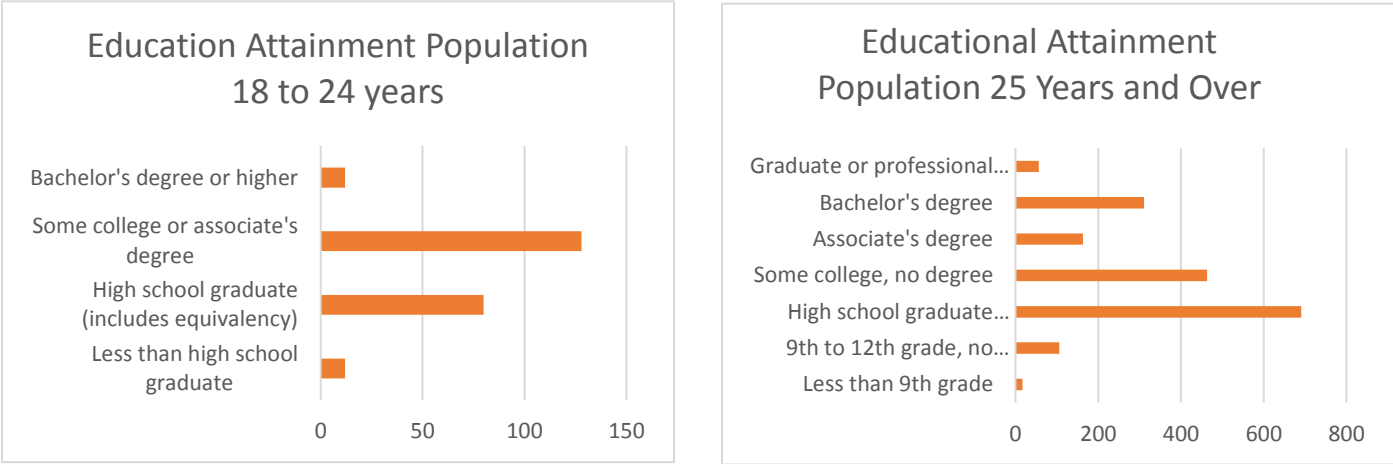
A majority of the population between the ages of 18 and 24 have some college or hold an associate’s degree. This falls in line with our assumptions of educational requirements considering the employment opportunities in Caribou County, namely Itafos and Monsanto. Eighty individuals 18-24 years old either have a high school diploma or a GED, and 12 individuals have a bachelor’s degree or higher and 12 have less than a high school degree (or its equivalent). For the population of Soda Springs that are 25 years old or

³<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

⁴http://www.ruralhome.org/storage/documents/ts2010/ts-report/ts10_rural_people.pdf

older, 691 of them have a high school diploma or its equivalent. 463 individuals 25 years old and older have some college but no degree. 311 individuals 25 years old and older have a bachelor's degree, and 56 individuals 25 years old and older have a graduate or professional degree. 106 individuals have an education between 9th and 12th grade with no high school diploma and 17 individuals have less than a 9th grade education.

Out of Soda Springs' employed population of 18-24 years old, 55.2% of them have some college or an associate's degree and 5.2% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. For employed individuals over 25 years old, 25.6% have some college and no degree, 9.0% have an Associate's Degree, and 17.2% have a Bachelor's Degree. Soda Springs has 9.4% more employed individuals 18-24 years old who have some college or an associate's degree and 1.1% fewer employed individuals 18-24 years old who have a Bachelor's degree or higher. For the employed population of Soda Springs 25 years and older, 1.2% fewer people have some college and no degree. 0.3% fewer people in Soda Springs have an Associate's degree in comparison to the rest of the state, and 0.7% fewer people in Soda Springs have a Bachelor's degree in comparison to the rest of the state. These figures imply that the city of Soda Springs with respect to educational attainment performs similarly at these levels of education in comparison to the rest of the state. For the employed population 18-24 years old, significantly more individuals (9.0%) in Soda Springs have an associate's degree. This significance adds skill to Soda Springs' labor pool, and can be explained by the skilled labor required in the phosphate mining and manufacturing industry within town.¹



2.3 School Enrollment

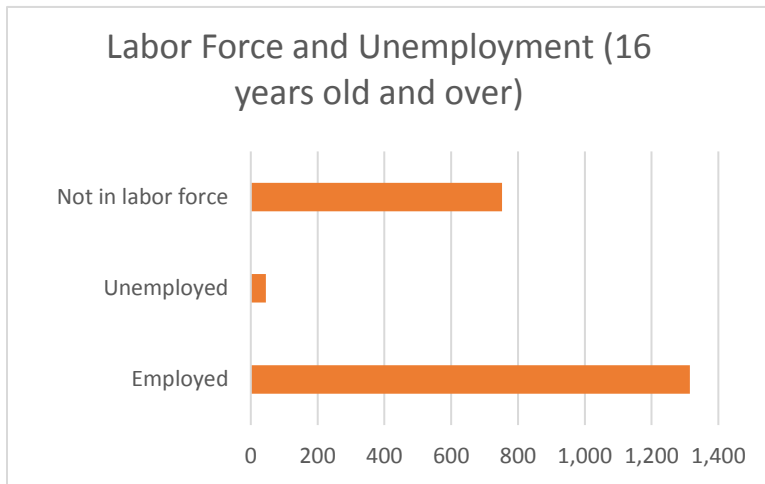
Between the 2016-2017 school year and the 2017-2018 school year the following changes in enrollment occurred: Thirkill elementary school has increased by 19 students, Soda Springs Middle School has decreased by 12 students, and Soda Springs High School has increased by 20 students.⁵ The changes within the context of enrollment imply that families with elementary school aged children could have moved away from the community; some middle school aged students continued on to high school. It may also suggest families with high school aged children tend to stay in the community, at least while those children finish school.

Year	Thirkill Elementary	Middle School	High School
2016-2017	236	259	312
2017-2018	255	247	332

⁵<https://www.sodaschools.org/>

2.4 Labor Force and Unemployment

2,112 individuals within Soda Springs are 16 years and over. Out of these individuals, 1,360 of them are considered to be part of the civilian labor force. The civilian labor force is simply defined as the number of people who are able and willing to work. Out of the 1,360 civilians in the labor force, 1,315 of them are currently employed and 45 of them are unemployed. 752 individuals within Soda Springs who are 16 years and older are not within the labor force. These individuals are either unable to work due to a disability, stay at home parents, or these individuals could also be retired. The unemployment rate of Soda Springs in 2016 according to the Idaho Department of Labor was 3.3%.⁶



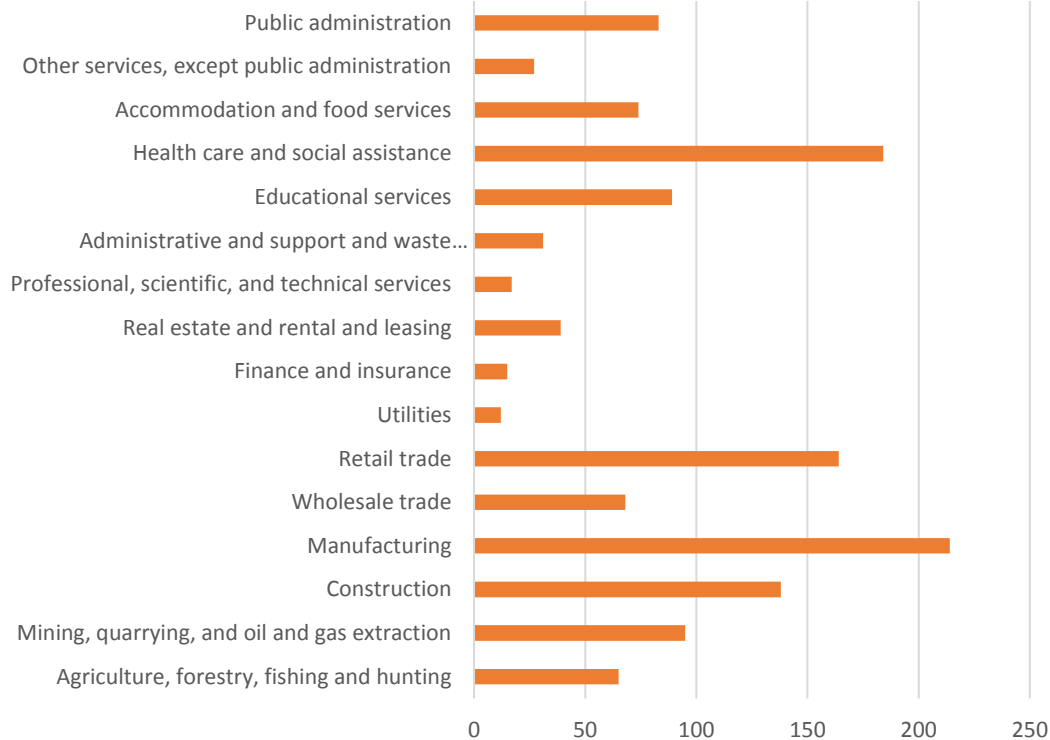
2.5 Jobs and Income

According to 2016 American Community Survey Data, the median household income for Soda Springs is \$51,875 which is significantly higher than the median household income for Idaho which is \$49,174. The substantially higher median household income comparatively to the rest of the state for Soda Springs is likely due to the existence of the major phosphate mining and manufacturing companies located within Caribou County. This industry also provides many positions which require an education level of an Associate's degree or higher implying higher wages than the average position customary to south-eastern Idaho.

The Employed Population of Soda Springs by industry graph importantly notes that the main industry of the employed population is manufacturing. This is unsurprising given the phosphate mining and related manufacturing companies within the county. The second largest industry is the health care and social assistance industry. This industry being the second largest seems logical considering that Caribou Memorial Hospital is based within Soda Springs, and a higher concentration of older residents.

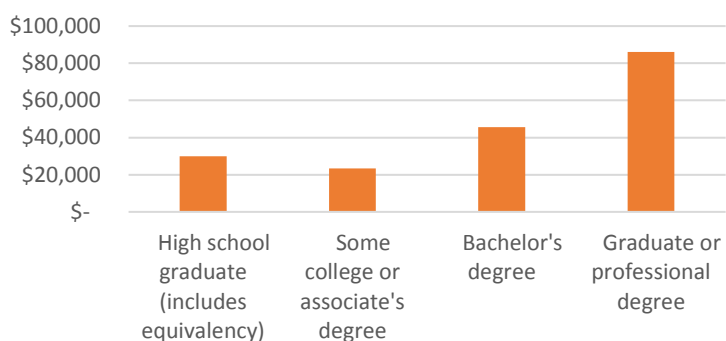
⁶<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

Employed Population of Soda Springs by Industry



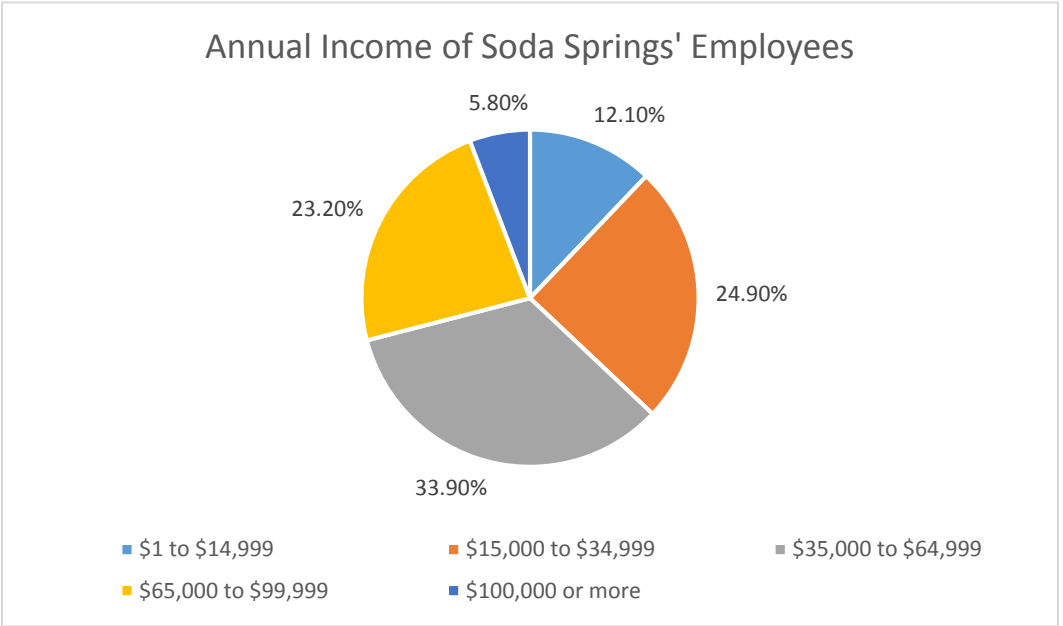
The Median Earnings by Educational Attainment graph shows that the highest median earnings are attained by individuals with graduate or professional degrees. The second highest median earning worker group are those with Bachelor's degrees, and the third highest median wage earners have High School diplomas. While the "Some college/associate's" degree category of median earnings is the lowest. These figures do consider the healthy atypical earning power of those with less than a four year degree in Soda Springs.⁷

Median Earnings By Educational Attainment



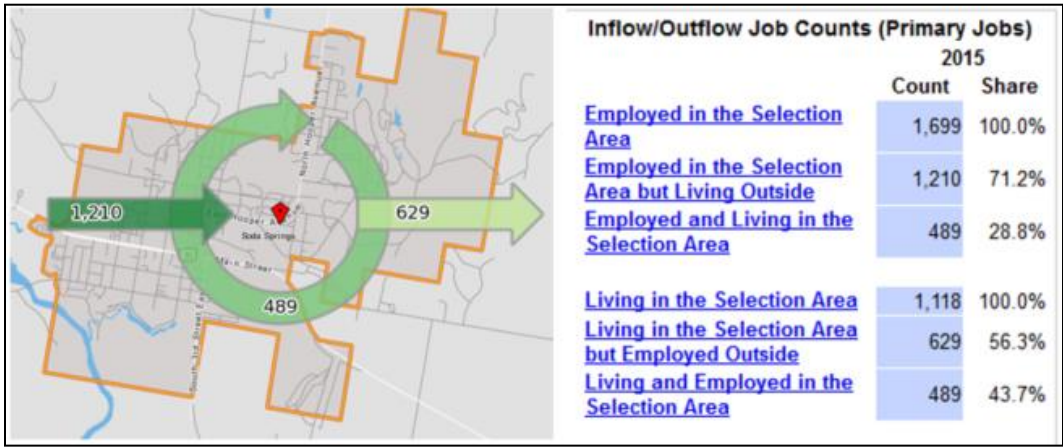
⁷ https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml#

The pie chart shows the earnings of fulltime, year round workers who live within Soda Springs. 17.4% of the employed full time year round working population of Soda Springs earns between \$50,000 and \$64,999 a year. The second largest portion of the population earns between \$35,000 and \$49,999 a year, the third largest portion of the population makes between \$15,000 and \$24,999 and the fourth largest portion of the population earns between \$75,000 and \$99,999.⁷



2.5 Commuter Data

According to the U.S. Census’ commuter software, a total of 1,699 individuals are employed in Soda Springs. 489 work and live in Soda Springs, while the other 1,210 of them live elsewhere. The survey indicated 52% of employees working in Soda Springs making \$75,000 or more do not live within the city limits. This confirms that many of the communities’ top earners are commuting in to work. This would not



be an unreasonable assumption given the inflow/outflow job count data gathered from the Census' On the Map tool.⁸

2.6 Business and Industry

The table below shows major private employers for Caribou County for the year 2016. These employers are likely to also be major private employers of the citizens of Soda Springs. It is also important to note that based off the graph of the industry of the employed population of Soda Springs, that there are major public employers of the population of Soda Springs such the school district and the hospital.⁹

Major Private Employers
Itafos
Broulim's
Lallatins
Degerstrom-Dravo
J.R. Simplot Co., Smoky Mine
Kiewit
Zachry
Monsanto Company
Mullen Crane and Transport

2.7 Retail Leakage

Soda Springs is having difficulty combating retail leakage. Specifically, the community has felt the impact of retail leakage since the highway to Pocatello was completed in 1980. Easier access to larger retail areas gave residents more shopping opportunities and they took advantage. Soda Springs has not since been able to recover.

A community member noted that “businesses last about five years when they do come in”. Upon polling the room at the town hall meeting, we discovered everyone in attendance agreed that they would leave town to shop. In fact, they would plan their weekends around these shopping and entertainment trips. Additionally, a significant proportion of the room also agreed that they do as much retail as possible on Amazon.com and other online sites.

All communities, including Soda Springs, have experienced difficulty in addressing the consumer shift towards e-commerce. Small towns cannot push e-commerce out of the market since they do not have a physical presence within the town. Additionally, small towns do not have the capacity or willingness to hinder resident's internet access to limit online shopping. Online sales in 2017 represented about 13% us U.S. retail sales, and that figure is likely to increase in the coming years. A study by Forrester shows that 83% of adults who use the internet made a purchase on Amazon in 2016 and last year more chain-store locations closed than in any previous years. Ninety percent of independent retailers noted that Amazon had

⁸<https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

⁹<http://labor.idaho.gov/publications/lmi/pubs/CaribouProfile.pdf>

a negative impact on their business and according to a 2017 survey of more than 850 business's negatively impacted by amazon, the number of retailers with fewer than ten employees fell by nine percent.¹⁰

While it is tough to compete with the convenience and the variety of goods you can get through online shopping, some of these online vendors do create venues for independent businesses as well. More than 140,000 small and medium sized businesses each sold more than \$100,000 each in goods on Amazon last year. According to U.S. Census data, the average American spends nearly \$15,000 a year on retail shopping. Small local economies' retail is drastically impacted because of the shift away from brick and mortar stores, and rural areas are hurt because the loss of this source of spending within the community. When the owner of a local retailer loses revenue, they end up having less money to spend on employees, goods, and services within the community. However, the lack of big-box stores in small towns does drive the transition to e-commerce because while some towns have a thriving downtown filled with small shops, these stores don't offer the same selection, or often the price competitiveness, as for example, a Walmart. To help independent business's, many cities create mixed use retail zones in downtowns and create affordable commercial spaces in new housing development.¹¹ Local business's also need to consider connecting to Amazon to sell their products or onto sites such as eBay or Etsy to sell their goods too.

There are some cornerstones in the community, such as Lallatin that has lasted one hundred years. When the Alco store was in Soda Springs, it was ranked second out of its one hundred and ninety seven branches in terms of profits.¹² The potential for retail in Soda Springs does exist due to high per-capita income, and with a continuation of public effort to buy locally, retail could grow. However, the need to connect to the online market for businesses in Soda Springs may be crucial to the success of Main Street since profitability without a connection to an online vendor will be difficult.



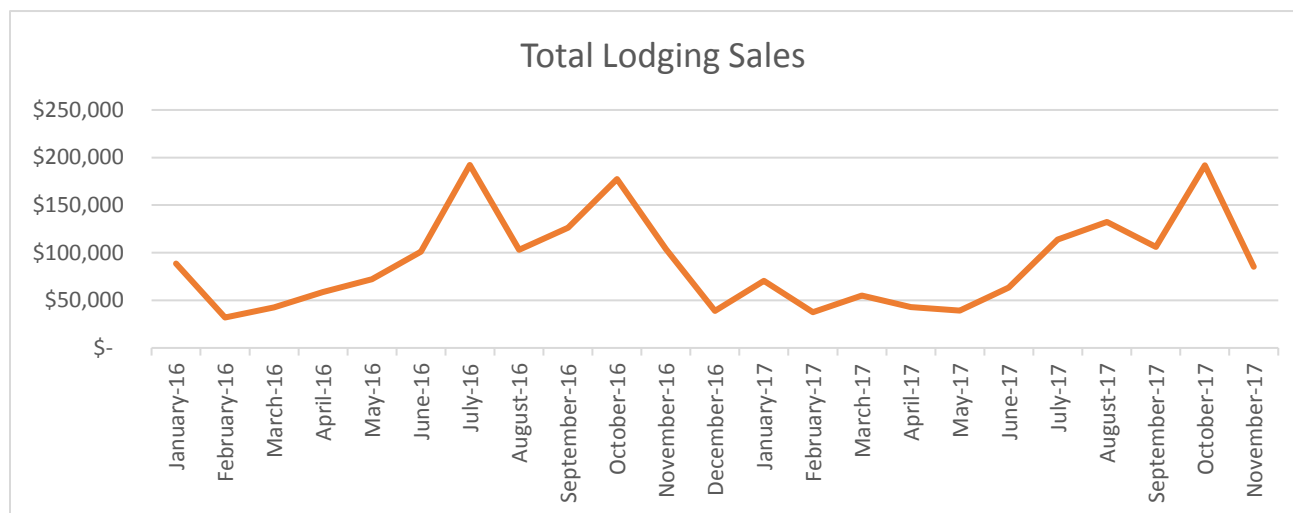
¹⁰<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2018/03/amazon-local-retail/554681/>

¹¹<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2018/03/amazon-local-retail/554681/>

¹²Soda Springs Chamber of Commerce Focus Group

2.8 Tourism Trends

Tourism trends are often measured by regional hotel and motel revenues. This information is only available at the county level, however, the lodging data still has significant implications for the City of Soda Springs. Total lodging sales fluctuate throughout the year in Caribou County. The busiest lodging seasons tend to be summer and early autumn, which is consistent with the typical tourism and hunting seasons. The highest month for lodging sales in the 2016-2017 years occurred in October 2017. The lowest lodging sales occurred in December 2016.



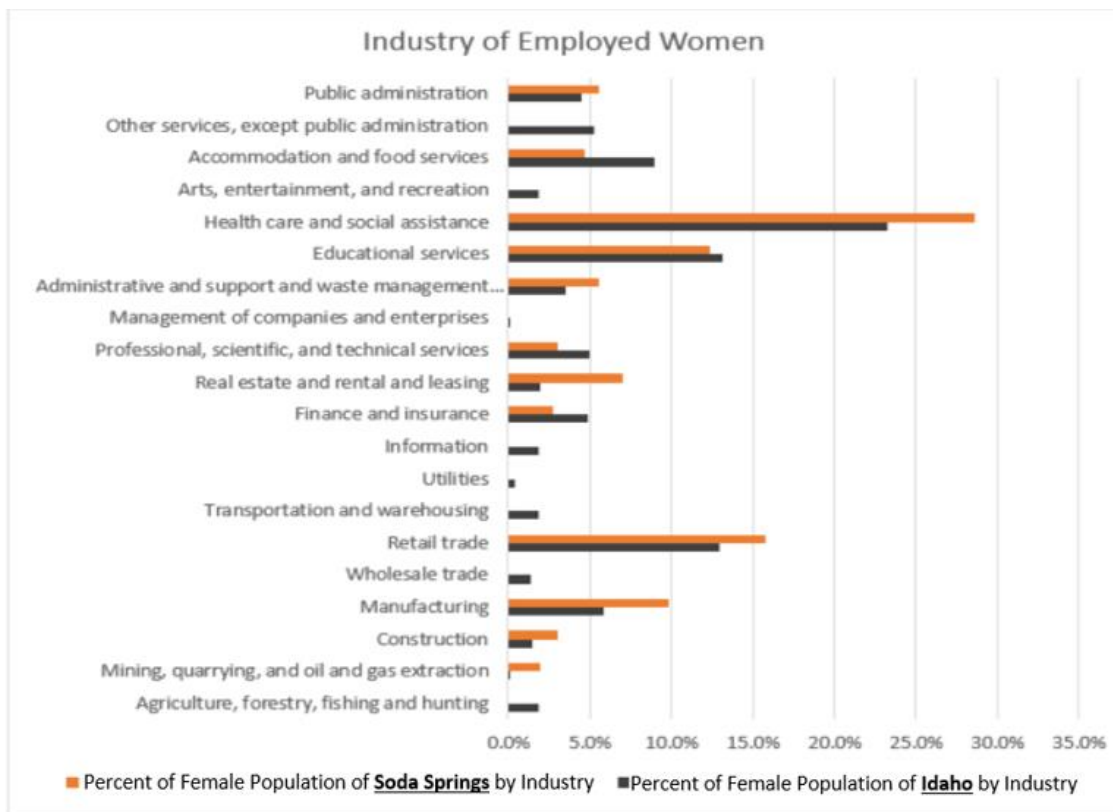
The table below shows information from the Idaho Department of Commerce's report on the economic impact of tourism and travel in 2011. This report shows numerous categories, the associated number of jobs with the categories, and the earnings and total sales in each category. In 2011, there were 88 jobs in Caribou County associated with tourism and in total the tourism industry earned \$2,846,650 and the total sale accrued to \$13,972,692.

Category	Number of Jobs	Wages Earned	Sales Generated
Traveler Accomodations	21	\$ 302,916	\$ 991,806
Food Service and drinking Places	21	\$ 244,144	\$ 666,686
Transportation Services	1	\$ 54,170	\$ 144,426
Motion Pictures and Performing Arts	3	\$ 3,070	\$ 58,990
Sports and Recreation	10	\$ 84,283	\$ 215,292
Nondurable PCE Commodities*	14	\$ 1,709,462	\$ 10,887,314
Trade	18	\$ 448,605	\$ 1,008,178
Total	88	\$ 2,846,650	\$ 13,972,692

*Nondurable Personal Consumption Expenditures Commodities - Goods that have an average useful life of less than 3 years and include discretionary items, such as clothing, footwear, fuels, transportation, communication, recreation, food service and accommodations, financial services and insurance, and other goods and services.

2.9 Job Market for Women in Soda Springs

Soda Springs has many occupations available for women to work. In fact, in Soda Springs, women have penetrated many atypical industries such as manufacturing, mining, quarrying, and construction. In addition to the aforementioned industries, health care and social assistance, retail trade, real estate, rental and leasing, and public administration are industries where a larger percentage of women in Soda Springs work in comparison to the rest of Idaho. The strong presence of the manufacturing and mining industry within Soda Springs does much to explain the proportionately larger compositions of women working within these industries. The size of the town also explains the larger percentage of women working in the public administration industry, health care, and retail trade. Many occupations in these industries however are generally filled. This implies that families who wish to move to Soda Springs may hesitate because the difficulty for women to find employment within Soda Springs. Comments made during the student focus group and again during the town hall meeting, noted that students and adults, mostly women, were competing for the same entry level jobs in Soda Springs.



3. Housing

A subject that has continuously surfaced in every conversation and information gathering method is housing in Soda Springs, or the lack thereof. In every venue and every survey, there was mention regarding the inability to find houses to buy or rent. In fact, several individuals present at the community town hall event expressed their frustration with how many local employees commute from other cities and towns for work. The responsibility for the high level of commuting workers was placed in large part on Soda Springs' limited degree of housing availability. It appears demand for housing is extremely high but supply is

virtually non-existent. One city employee explained her rental located within the city limits does not even last a day on the market before it is rented. A local realtor shared her frustration with not being able to provide sufficient housing options for her clients in the area and must seek opportunities outside city limits.

Proper housing availability is paramount in the economic success of a city or town, especially small towns like Soda Springs. A document written by the Office of Sustainable Communities with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency suggests the housing of a small town or city heavily influences its ability to support businesses in the region. Moreover, adequate housing helps retain existing businesses and attract new businesses.¹³

The same study suggests that small towns make housing availability a priority. It stated, “High quality, centrally located residential neighborhoods with homes priced for a range of income levels and family types make it possible for people to live near their jobs and let residents stay in the same neighborhood even if their income or lifestyle changes.”¹³ It would likely be beneficial for the City of Soda Springs to heed this advice and help itself accommodate the housing needs of the community.

To better understand the need for housing within the city limits a survey was sent out through many of the region’s major employers and received almost 150 responses. The survey showed a large number of individuals who would like to see more housing options within the city. It separated the employees into two categories: those who currently live in Soda Springs and those who do not. Among respondents who currently work and live in the city, 59% said they would relocate within Soda Springs if more desirable housing options were available. Similarly, of those who commute to Soda Springs daily 62% said they would move into town if there was housing that met their needs. Therefore, the survey found over 60% of current Soda Springs employees surveyed would purchase a home in Soda Springs.

3.1 Current Housing Availability

Despite this apparent high demand for housing, the market has very little to offer currently. After contacting a local real estate agent and researching houses on Zillow we found there to be a very limited number houses available for sale or rent within the City of Soda Springs. Additionally, during our Town Hall meeting it was expressed that most houses for sale in the city only remain on the market for a short period of time. In fact, the same local real estate agent mentioned above disclosed that a typical house in the city selling at anywhere between \$220,000 and \$250,000 will sell in just a few months.

3.2 Land Availability

The clear solution to this problem would be to build more housing. However, developing housing creates additional issues, the most significant is location. While there are few houses on the market, there are a number of available lots for sale. For example, there is a 3-lot parcel of land on block 49, and a 2-lot parcel on block 24 (details in Appendix C). If purchased and developed, 5 homes could be built on these lots to begin to fulfil some of the current demand for housing. After a conversation with a major land owner and builder in Soda Springs, it was mentioned that several properties are available that can be built on with sewer, water, and other utilities readily available. In summary, there is land available to build on for new housing.

¹³<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/framework-creating-smart-growth-economic-development-strategy>

3.3 Ideal Home

While potential buyers may not be seeking out builders, there is clearly a strong demand. Questions asked in the survey revealed an interest in a specific home size with specific features. When explaining features they would look for in a house, the majority of those currently living in Soda Springs said they would like a 4-bedroom home, with 2-3 bathrooms, and 2,000-2,500 square feet. Most would like a basement, an attached 2-car garage, and an average lot size (5,000-10,000 square feet). Those who do not currently live in Soda said they would prefer a 3-bedroom home with the same features listed above, although some did say they would like to be on a lot larger than most normal city lots.

3.4 Pricing and Builders

We contacted several builders in the region including: Bickley Construction, Arave Construction, Kelly Fisher Construction, and Ken Finlayson to get an idea of how much it would cost to build homes in Soda Springs like the ones described above. The prices ranged from \$90 per square foot for a very basic home with stock finishes (carpet, tile, trim, etc.) to \$130 per square foot for a more custom home with high end finishes. We were also informed during the presentation of our findings that the building environment is experiencing some significant increases in material prices. Robert Lau, owner of Caribou Jacks, stated that the range will be closer to \$100 to \$160 per square foot given recent legislation changes and increased costs.

However, many builders mentioned several deterrents from building in Soda Springs. These included utility extensions, city ordinances and codes, and the financial risk that homes would not sell right away. They explained that risk of developing land could be decreased with some help from the city in incentivizing and helping with land development rather than taking an adversarial role in creating red tape and hoops to jump through in order to build homes or subdivisions.

3.5 Building Incentive Opportunities for the City

There are several options for the city and developers to work together to solve the housing shortage in Soda Springs. One tool used by many cities across the country are Local Improvement Districts (LIDS). LIDS are a form of financing for builders who may not have enough resources to cover all utility hook-ups and road or sidewalk construction. The city usually puts out a request for bid and the job is given to the best bid. The city pays the contractor and the builder or homeowner pay the city back over a 10 year period and charges three to 6% interest. Cities in Idaho such as Nampa successfully use LIDS to incentivize development and could be contacted on how initiate such a program.¹⁴

Additionally, the city could revisit planning and zoning policies to make them more flexible allowing builders and property owners more leeway to increase housing availability. For example, it was expressed by a land owner in Soda that city ordinances do not permit the sale of undeveloped land by the lot but only by the acre. This comment may not be completely accurate but it speaks to the confusion and complication of Soda Springs' city ordinances regarding housing development. It is possible this comment may have been referring to the subdivision ordinance requiring land being divided into more than two lots go through the subdivision process. Requiring divided land to go through such a process creates a barrier to growth and may be an opportunity for the City to address.

The previously mentioned article, *Framework for Creating a Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy: A Tool for Small Cities and Towns* is a great resource available to any community interested. It

¹⁴<http://id-nampa.civicplus.com/184/Local-Improvement-Districts-LIDS>

contains some suggestions for adjusting policies to meet the needs of a growing community. Some suggestions include: adjusting zoning codes to allow mixed-use development, revising development standards to allow, encourage, or require desired building types, land uses, and density (i.e., reduced minimum lot sizes, setbacks, parking ratios, etc.), and make easy-to-understand zoning handouts available online (click [here](#) for an example).

It is recommended that the P&Z committee, city council, local builders, and local land owners have a meeting (or several) to discuss what steps need to be taken to make housing development a reality. It is likely that this will require give and take from all parties involved, but by coming together and discussing all of the issues that are preventing development, solutions can be found that will enable Soda Springs to grow and be an attractive place to live.

4. Tourism

Soda Springs is in an excellent position to take advantage of already existing landmarks and outdoor activities. During research, an article published by the Center for Rural Affairs was found, discussing a small town named Tulelake in California. The article stated,

“In the little farming community of Tulelake, California, thousands of visitors drive through the town on their way to birdwatching and hunting in the national wildlife refuges. One resident opened a bed and breakfast, and offered birding driving tours, capturing enough of these travelers to make a good living. Another entrepreneurial resident who sells auto supplies and sporting goods put in an espresso bar. Tulelake is slowly capturing the opportunity created by their location near an existing outdoor recreation destination.”¹⁵

This article highlighted the position that Soda Springs too could be in. Unique to Soda Springs is Geyser Park which has the largest man made geyser in the United States. It is also the world's only captive geyser. All attraction sites say that it is worth at least a stop. In addition to Geyser Park, also unique to Soda Springs and the reason for the name behind the town, Hooper Springs Park, with its natural “soda” spring. One travel critic said of the spring, “We took a cup to the Hooper Springs to sample it. Not bad, it tastes like lightly carbonated bottled water, a bit sweeter and more mineralized.”¹⁶ What is more, Camp Connor – a historical site exhibiting pioneers who traveled the Oregon Trail is close by along with Formation Springs Cave – an already frequented stop on the Pioneer Historic National Scenic Byway. Soda Springs has a lot of history behind it and exploiting that history can bring increased tourism revenues to the area.

In addition to the aforementioned sites unique to Soda Springs, there are many natural outdoor activities available for enthusiasts to enjoy. Alexander Reservoir and Sulphur Springs offer perfect alternatives to other tourist destinations like, Bear Lake and Yellowstone National Park. One commenter on the Alexander Reservoir Facebook page said in a caption with a picture of the reservoir, “Such a nice place for lunch in lovely Idaho...”¹⁷ There are also many wonderful opportunities to experience the areas many bike and ATV trails, river fishing and floats, and great camping experience. For example, the Bear River just west of Soda Springs is considered a premier spot to catch catfish in Idaho.¹⁸ If a family is looking for a quieter, less

¹⁵<http://www.cfra.org/node/2504>

¹⁶<http://idaho.for91days.com/the-wonders-of-soda-springs/>

¹⁷<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Alexander-Reservoir/131187083592387>

¹⁸http://www.bigfishtackle.com/forum/Idaho_Fishing_Forum_C22/Idaho_Fishing_General_F25/Catfish_in_Eastern_Idaho_P647522/

crowded venue to take their boat, do some trail riding, or explore nature's beauty, Soda Springs offers just that.

4.1 Awareness and Promotion

In order to fully take advantage of the natural tourist attractions available to the City of Soda Springs it is important that the City creates awareness and promote these resources. A member of the community posed the question. "Where are all the signs along the highway letting passersby know we have all these great attractions to stop and see?" This is an important question to ask because there are many other critical marketing tools that could be used more to promote Soda Springs as a vacation and tourism destination.

4.2 Traditional and Online Marketing Recommendations

- **Signage** – Physical and Digital Signage is important in creating awareness. An alarming 68% of American consumers have made a purchase because a sign caught their eye.¹⁹ Moreover, 1 in 5 people have made an unplanned purchase after seeing an ad via digital signage.¹⁹ These statistics represents how crucially important it is to have the appropriate signage and branding in an advertising plan whether it be a product or even a city. Clearly, Soda Springs must place the appropriate physical signage at critical viewpoints around the city. They must also scatter digital signage across social media sites and associated websites and webpages.
- **Website and Search Engine Optimization** – The City of Soda Springs' website is very informational. There is a page for every park, trail, and activity available in all of southeast Idaho. It will even direct a visitor to the Lava Hot Springs website to find activities. However, the problem is it's hard to find unless "Soda Springs" is typed in as an adjective in the search phrase. For example, when typing "Geyser" in a Google search, Soda Springs' Geyser Park webpage isn't anywhere to be found. The website the city has created for the Geyser Park doesn't even come up in the first 10 pages. To put this into perspective, 75% of users never scroll past the first page of search results,²⁰ and 67% of all clicks on a search engine result page don't even go past the first 5 listings.²¹ If the City of Soda Springs wants to invite more people to town to see all the wonderful attractions there are available, they must at minimum get the website to show up on the first page of a Google search.
 - Here is a list²² of helpful ways to help Google recognize Soda Springs' website and get it on the first page of a search result.
 - Don't confuse or annoy a website visitor
 - Have a responsive design that works on mobile and desktop
 - Put your keyword phrase at least once in the Page Title Element
 - Put your keyword phrase at least once in the Main Content on the page (at least once in page copy (in Paragraph tags)
 - Avoid keyword stuffing main content
 - Ensure the Main Content of the page is high-quality and written by a professional (most of your effort goes here – If your content is not being shared organically, you may have a content quality problem)

¹⁹ <http://visualogistix.com/insights/blog/152-10-signage-statistics-every-marketer-must-know>

²⁰ <https://www.imforza.com/blog/8-seo-stats-that-are-hard-to-ignore/>

²¹ <https://www.theleverageway.com/blog/how-far-down-the-search-engine-results-page-will-most-people-go/>

²² <https://www.hobo-web.co.uk/seo-tutorial/>

- Ensure the keywords you want to rank for are present on your site. The quality of competition for these rankings will determine how much effort you need to put in to this
- Use synonyms and common co-occurring words throughout your page
- Add value to pages with ordered lists, images, videos and tables
- Keep important content on the site updated a few times a year
- Trim outdated content from your site
- Disclose page modification dates in a visible format
- Use a simple navigation system on your site
- Ensure Fast delivery of web pages on mobile and desktop
- Add high-quality and relevant external links
- Ensure old SEO practices are cleaned up and removed from site
- Consider disavowing any obvious low-quality links
- Provide Clear website domain ownership, copyright and contact details on the site
- Share your content on the major social networks when it is good enough
- Monitor very carefully any user-generated content on your site, because it is rated as part of your own site content
- Pay attention to site security issues (implement https, for example)
- **Social Media Marketing** – Another way to attract visitors to the Soda Springs’ website and ultimately to Soda Springs is through social media. Social media works as an attention getter and how an entity gets attention is through high quality content. A far reaching social media presence can greatly increase search ranking²³ and further create awareness of the incredible tourism options available in the area.
 - Here are a few ways to increase social media awareness.²³
 - Grow the number of followers by posting useful articles, helpful tips, and general discussion items. Follow-up on the items discussed.
 - Locally- optimize posts by posting pictures of festivals, tradeshow, or other events and invite residents and businesses to comment.
 - Increase social sharing by offering rewards for people sharing posts or put interactive surveys out there for people to participate in and share with friends. The more content shared, the more interactions with non-followers, the greater the opportunity to win new followers.
- **Blogs and Vlogs** – Blogging and vlogging have become incredible marketing resources over the last couple of years. Both marketing avenues make information readily available to interested parties and the best part is they help create traffic to websites. In fact, featuring a blog as a key part of your website will give you a 434% better chance of being ranked highly on search engines.²⁴ Additionally, brands grow revenue 49% faster by adding video to their marketing strategy.²⁴ This information explains the importance of utilizing blogs and vlogs as core components to Soda Springs’ digital marketing plan.
 - Blogs must be consistent and is a long term program. A simple, single blog post won’t do the trick. A rule of thumb that can help with blogging or vlogging ideas is to find the questions most commonly asked by visitors or potential visitors and answer them in blog or vlog form.

²³ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2015/01/27/6-social-media-practices-that-boost-seo/#6096409e3d17>

²⁴ <https://expresswriters.com/blogging-statistics/>

Also, having a famous travel blogger or vlogger with huge YouTube or Social Media subscribers to visit Soda Springs could also yield favorable results. Invite some to Soda Springs, pay for their accommodations and travel in exchange for a blog post or a vlog. Ask them to feature specific attractions in their post. This can drive traffic to Soda Springs' website and hopefully to town for a visit.

- **Destination Video/Commercials** – Creating a tourism destination video/commercial is one way to let people know about the beauty of Soda Springs. After researching various tourism commercials, what separates an effective campaign from an unsuccessful one are the following attributes:²⁵
 - Catchy Tagline: Scenic Soda Springs: Experience the Awe



- Elicits Strong Psychological Response: The landscapes, hiking trails, lakes, Sulphur Springs and other attractions featured in the commercial must elicit an awe and a sense of urgency. The experience tourists can get from visiting Soda Springs must be marketed as a once in a lifetime opportunity.
- Demographics: Persons featured in the commercials must have the same demographic characteristics of the targeted tourists.
- Medium: The destination videos should be promoted via Facebook and YouTube paid advertising platforms.

5. Manufacturing

Attracting manufacturing companies to a small city like Soda Springs, Idaho can be a difficult task. Manufacturing companies can have a significant positive economic impact and many cities compete to bring those companies and facilities to their towns. To be an appealing location to manufacturing businesses, cities must have their own series of distinct advantages. Therefore, Soda Springs must also offer specific incentives in order to stay competitive and can do this through the use of economic development incentives coupled with existing business friendly programs. With these tools Soda Springs should be able to bring in new businesses and create manufacturing jobs.

Economic development incentives are “near cash assistance” that cities can provide through a variety of avenues to promote new business activity. These are commonly implemented in several ways including, but not limited to, utility incentives, local tax exemptions, and tax increment financing. Utility rates can be a real advantage when considering where to build a new manufacturing plant, and so low utility rates in cities or even special discounted rates for businesses would be important factors when trying to decide between different cities. For example, Rupert, Idaho, advertises on its economic development incentives how Idaho’s

²⁵ <http://www.marketing-schools.org/consumer-psychology/marketing-tourism.html>

power rates are well below the national average, and less than half of those in California²⁶. Simply advertising this information can attract potential businesses to contact the city.

In addition, many cities also offer special tax exemptions or credits. Essentially attracting new businesses with special tax rates for the first few years of operation in the city. Idaho has its own set of special tax incentives to attract business to Idaho, including 30% credits for sales, payroll and income tax²⁷. Many companies may not know about these incentives and Soda Springs could not only create their own incentives, but use those already in place by the state to entice new business

Finally, tax incremental financing, or TIF, is a special financing method that involves diverting future property tax revenue increases to pay for economic development and infrastructure projects in the community around existing or new businesses. This allows for improvements to be made to the commercial area using the additional taxes that would be created by the company improving value of the property around it. For example, in 2013 Blackfoot utilized a TIF to help Glambia Foods expand their parking lot and upgrade their sewer system^{28,29}. Soda Springs could promote its willingness to use TIFs for property improvement to lure new companies to the area.

Each of the methods mentioned above have been successfully employed by other cities in Idaho, such as Rupert. As discussed earlier, Rupert advertises multiple benefits of building manufacturing facilities in their city and has been able to attract several companies including Norwest and Interstate Manufacturing. There are many other economic development incentives that can be explored and utilized to help attract businesses to Soda Springs. However, when establishing new economic development incentive programs, it is important to properly set up and safeguard the programs from exploitation, which is a common criticism of such programs.

In addition to economic development incentives there are a number of business-friendly initiatives that can be utilized to make Soda Springs a more attractive location. These can take on many forms such as the existing Chamber of Commerce, special workforce training programs, or other various business assistance programs. In order for Soda Springs to take full advantage of these opportunities it can offer incoming businesses and manufacturing companies; the city needs to promote them so potential manufactures are aware of what Soda Springs has to offer. Creating a page on the city's website about the various economic development incentives and programs currently in use by the city would help promote these programs and attract manufacturers to Soda Springs.

6. Small Businesses

The area of Soda Springs is home to many businesses of varying size and industries. However, it is not exempt from the trend of companies leaving small towns in favor of larger cities with more workforce and consumer potential. This requires Soda Springs to work harder to keep and earn businesses locations. In order to do this Soda Springs can do several things:

²⁶ <http://www.rupert-idaho.com/departments/economic-development/economic-development-incentives/>

²⁷ <https://commerce.idaho.gov/incentives-and-financing/incentives/idaho-tax-reimbursement-incentive/>

²⁸ <http://blackfootjournal.com/blackfoot-city-council-approves-small-expansion-of-tif-district/>

²⁹ <http://am-news.com/content/council-adopts-resolution-expand-tif-district-glanbia-foods>

- Have incubator locations for business³⁰
 - Business need locations to establish their companies. In order for this to happen cities need to zone areas for commercial use. Furthermore, the lower the cost of these locations will allow more persons the opportunity to rent and build office and retail locations to create businesses, and subsequently increasing the amount of new businesses in the town.
- Create a Small Business Office or amend existing employees duties to include:
 - Appoint a person to help streamline the business creation process and allow residents to create new businesses more easily.³¹
 - Simplify business creation process.³²
- Incentivize new business creation³³
 - Offer companies incentives to locate or establish in your city such as: tax breaks, micro-loans, and discounted fees and permits.
- Publicize revitalization efforts in local newspapers and other media³³
 - Each new company in the town needs to be publicized within the community so the business can feel wanted and also so others can see the town is growing and is wanting business development.
- Allow city to have a more defined commercial area
 - Adjust building codes to allow for mixed-use buildings and for remodelling of old locations to be commercial properties.³¹³²
 - Widen sidewalks and provide benches to encourage residents and visitors to walk around community stores and restaurants.³²

With these guidelines incorporated Soda Springs can become a business friendly community where new companies are welcome to build.

6.1 Small Business Resources

The City of Soda Springs has many business license holders, and there are many resources in the area available to help businesses succeed. There are a number of consulting services, loan programs, and development programs here in Idaho to help grow and improve businesses. Some of the most successful resources include:

Consulting Services:

- **Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**
 - SBDC provides assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs throughout the US. This program helps start-up businesses realize potential ownership, as well as, help existing businesses remain competitive in a complex and changing marketplace.
 - SBDC services include business plan development, manufacturing assistance, financial packaging and lending assistance, exporting and importing support, disaster recovery assistance, procurement and contracting aid, market research help, program support, and healthcare guidance.

³⁰<http://www.nlc.org/article/how-local-leaders-can-make-their-city-small-business-friendly>

³¹<https://ilsr.org/8-policy-strategies-cities-can-use-to-support-local-businesses/>

³²<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2016/4/19/how-to-encourage-entrepreneurship-in-your-town>

³³<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/bring-business-small-towns-20765.html>

- **TechHelp Idaho Manufacturing Specialists**
 - TechHelp is a resource to help Idaho manufacturers, food processors and inventors/entrepreneurs improve their competitiveness through continuous product and process innovation.
 - Their services fall into three primary areas that include: new product and market development, operational excellence, and food & dairy processing.
- **Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)**
 - SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow, and achieve their goals through education and mentorship.

Loan Programs:

- **Small Business Administration Loan Programs (SBA)**
 - SBA works with a number of different lenders to provide loans to small businesses.
 - SBA sets guidelines for loans made, reduces risk for lenders, and makes it easier to access capital.
 - Some benefits of SBA-guaranteed loans are competitive terms, counseling & education, and unique benefits.
- **SICOG Small Business Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF)**
 - RLF's objective is to create and retain jobs, to secure capital formation and to help business and industry in activities that promote economic health.
 - The loan program can assist small business with loans ranging in size from \$10,000 to \$150,000. All you need to be eligible is a solid business plan, three year projections, and at least 10% equity participation.
- **East Idaho Development Corporation**
 - East Idaho Development Corporation is part of the SBA 504 loan program that offers small businesses another avenue for business financing.
 - A Certified Development Company (CDC) is a nonprofit corporation that promotes economic development within its community through 504 Loans. CDCs are certified and regulated by the SBA, and work with SBA and participating lenders (typically banks) to provide financing to small businesses, which in turn, accomplishes the goal of community economic development.

Development Programs:

- **Idaho Department of Labor**
 - The Idaho Department of Labor offers a number of different services to help support local businesses. Specifically, the department of labor offers a workforce training program that helps motivate employees, keeping current on industry trends, and teaching new technologies.
 - The program also encourages a work opportunity tax credit that can reduce federal tax liability up \$9,600 per eligible worker if your business qualifies.
 - A few other services the Idaho Department of Labor has includes:

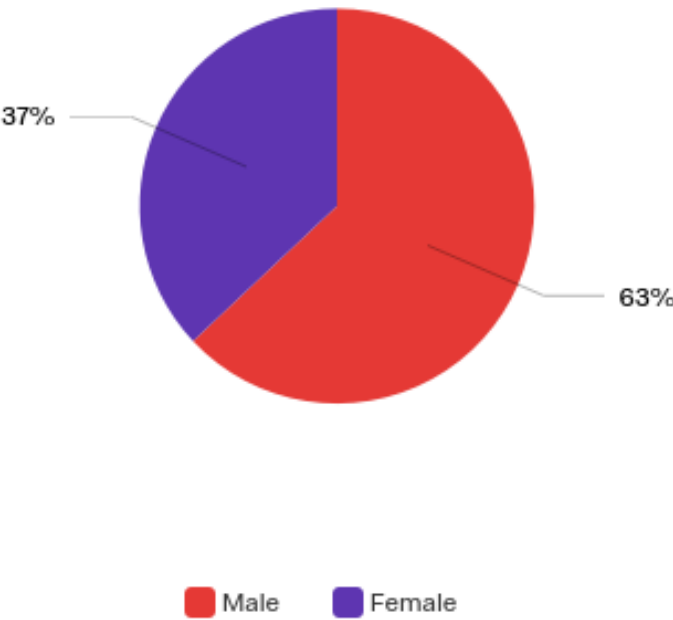
- Employee recruitment
- Unemployment insurance
- Business specialist
- Wages and Economic data
- Humans Rights Commission
- Business Seminars & Networking

Another great resource for the City of Soda Springs is the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA). USDA offers loans, grants and loan guarantees to help create jobs and support economic development and essential services such as housing, health care, first responder services and equipment, and water, electric and communications infrastructure.

Additionally, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is another fantastic resources for all sectors of the City of Soda Springs. The BPA offers many opportunities for businesses and residents to take advantage of energy efficiency programs. Some of these energy efficient sectors are residential, commercial, industrial, federal, and agriculture.

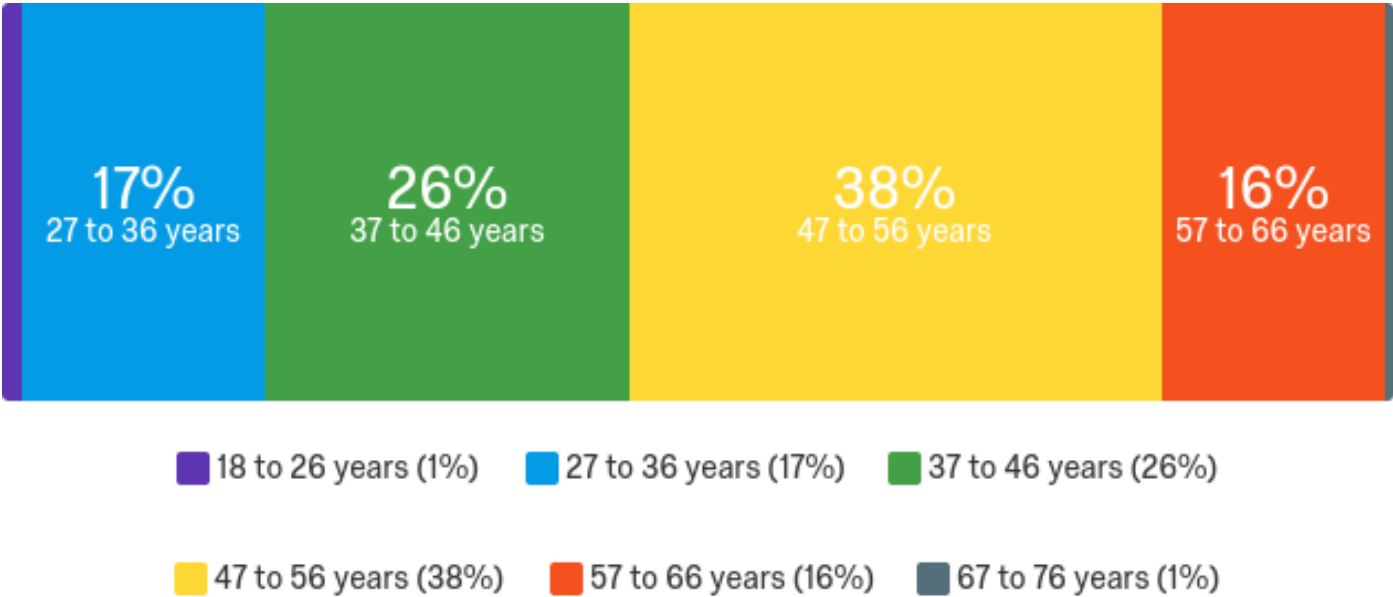
Appendix A – Employee Survey Results
Soda Springs Employee Survey

What is your gender?



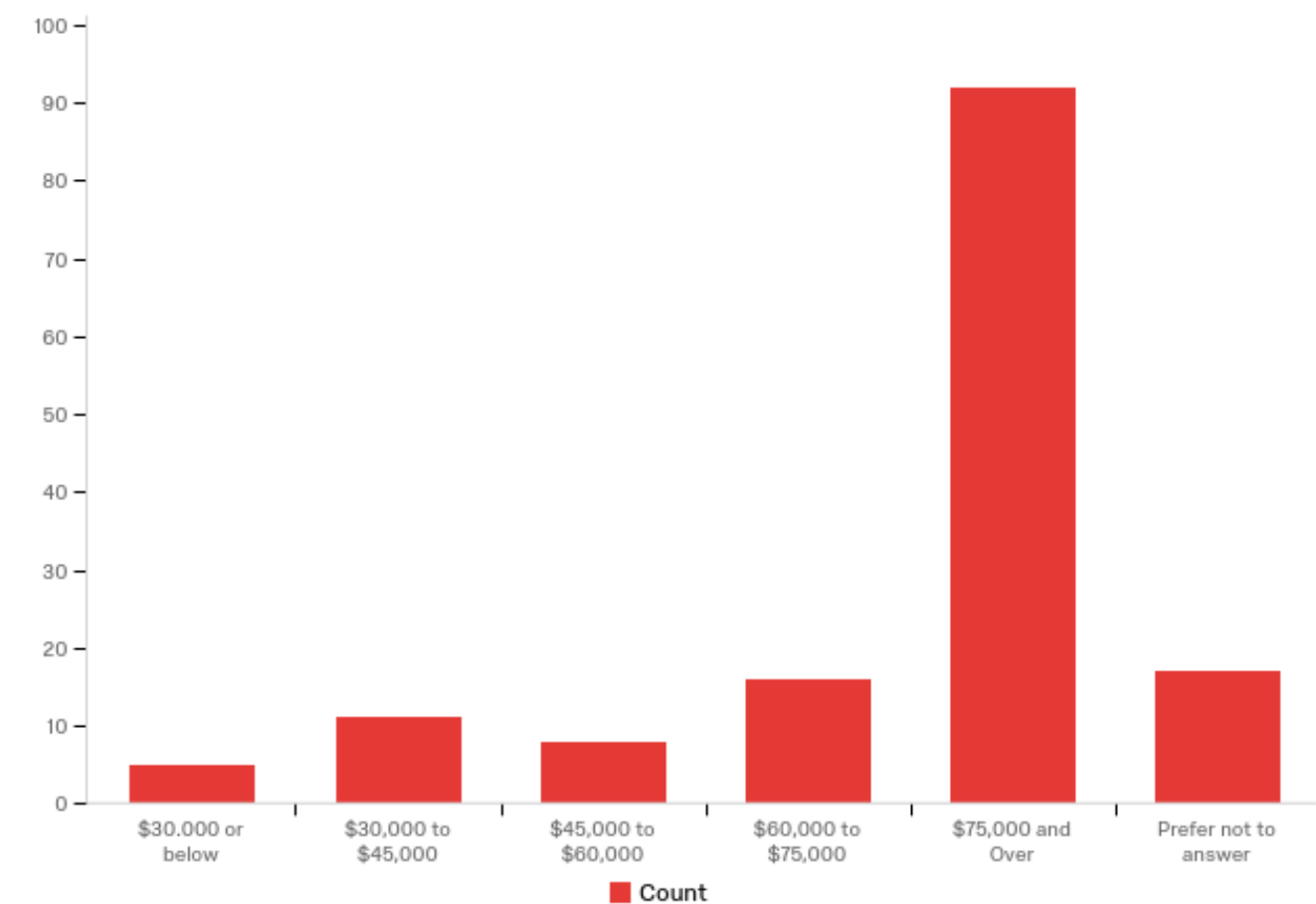
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	63.01%	92
2	Female	36.99%	54
	Total	100%	146

What is your age?



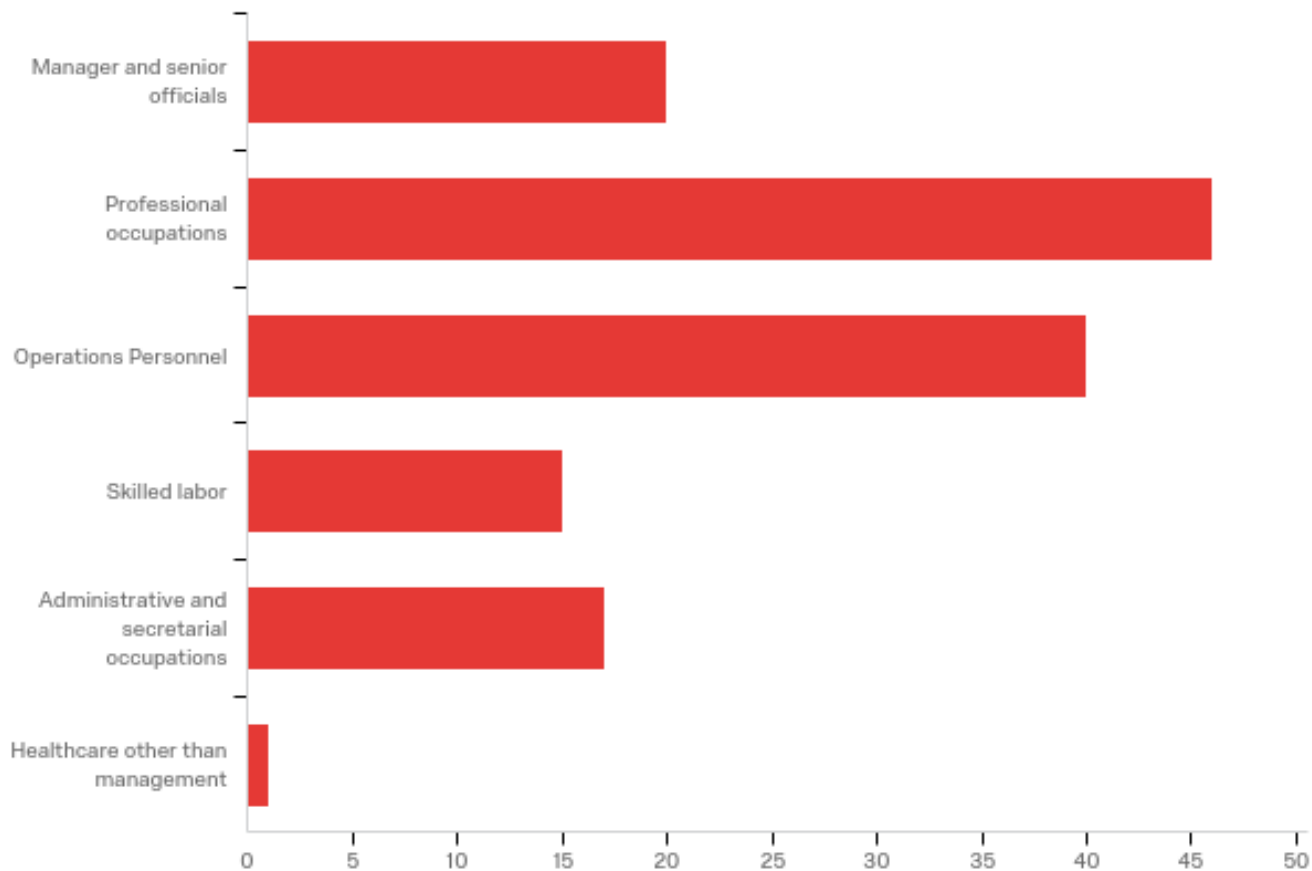
#	Answer	%	Count
1	17 years and less	0.00%	0
2	18 to 26 years	1.34%	2
3	27 to 36 years	17.45%	26
4	37 to 46 years	26.17%	39
5	47 to 56 years	38.26%	57
6	57 to 66 years	16.11%	24
7	67 to 76 years	0.67%	1
8	77 years and above	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	149

What is your annual household income?



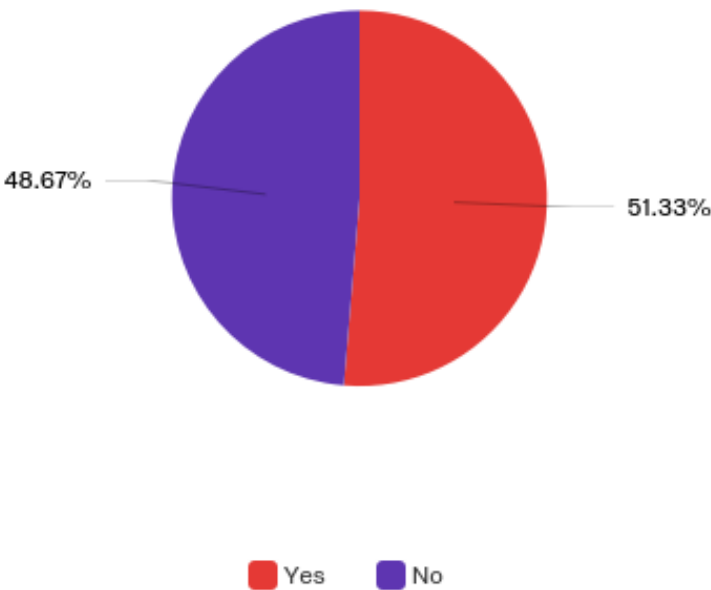
#	Answer	%	Count
1	\$30,000 or below	3.36%	5
2	\$30,000 to \$45,000	7.38%	11
3	\$45,000 to \$60,000	5.37%	8
4	\$60,000 to \$75,000	10.74%	16
5	\$75,000 and Over	61.74%	92
6	Prefer not to answer	11.41%	17
	Total	100%	149

What is your current profession?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Manager and senior officials (Production manager, marketing manager, officials in local and national government, health and social service managers, etc.)	14.39%	20
4	Professional occupations (Natural scientists and engineers, IT and communication professionals, legal professionals, social workers, etc.)	33.09%	46
5	Operations Personnel (heavy equipment, plant operations, etc.)	28.78%	40
6	Skilled labor (mechanic, plant maintenance, welder, plumber, carpenter, electrician, roofer, etc.)	10.79%	15
7	Administrative and secretarial occupations (Administrative officers and assistants, accounts clerks, secretaries, receptionists, etc.)	12.23%	17
8	Sales and customer service occupations (Sales assistants and retail cashiers, credit agents, customer care occupations, etc.)	0.00%	0
9	Healthcare other than management (doctor, nurse, CNA, housekeeping, etc.)	0.72%	1
	Total	100%	139

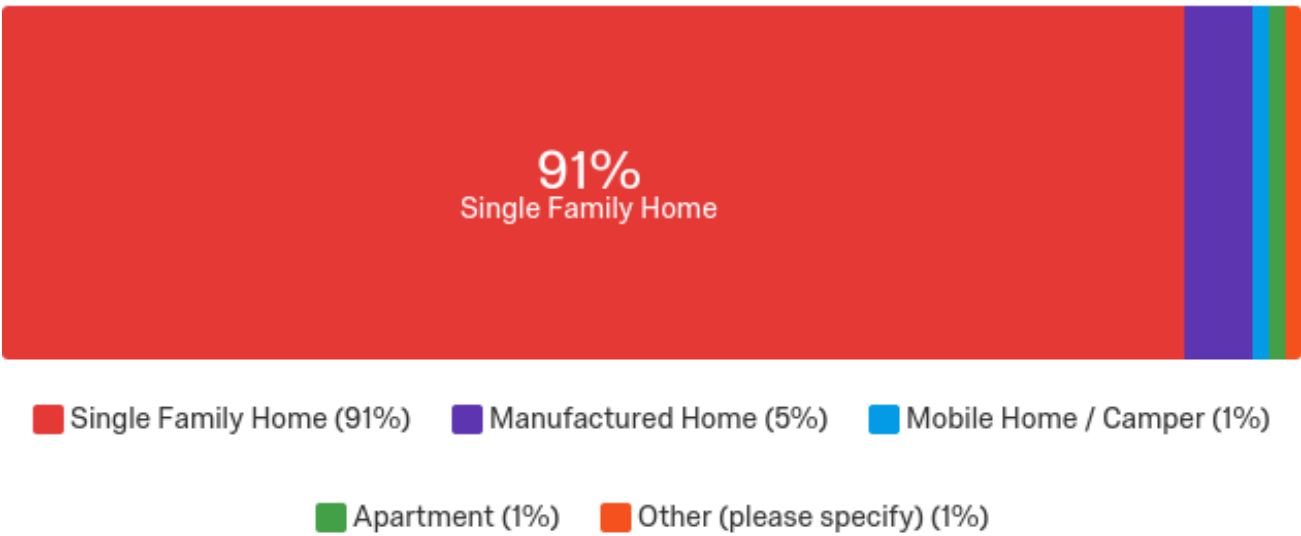
Do you live within the city limits of Soda Springs?



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	51.33%	77
2	No	48.67%	73
	Total	100%	150

What type of house/ apartment are you currently living in?

Those who live in Soda Springs



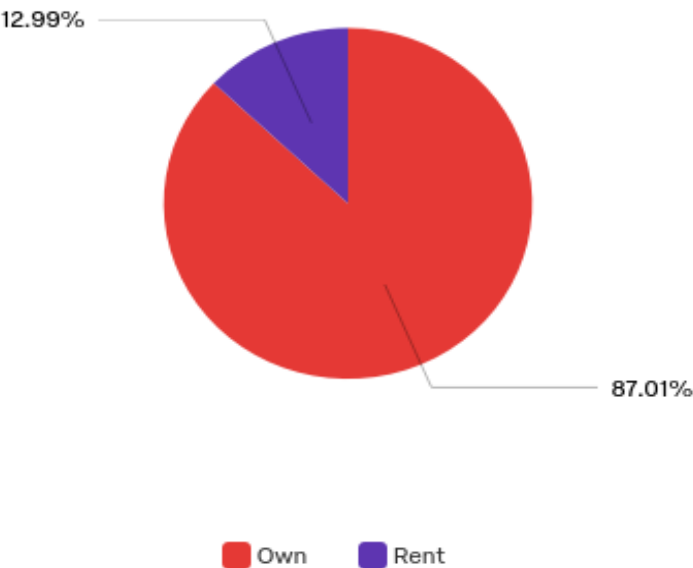
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Single Family Home	90.91%	70
2	Manufactured Home	5.19%	4
3	Mobile Home / Camper	1.30%	1
4	Apartment	1.30%	1
5	Duplex	0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify)	1.30%	1
	Total	100%	77

Other (please specify)

Fourplex

Do you own or rent your house/ apartment?

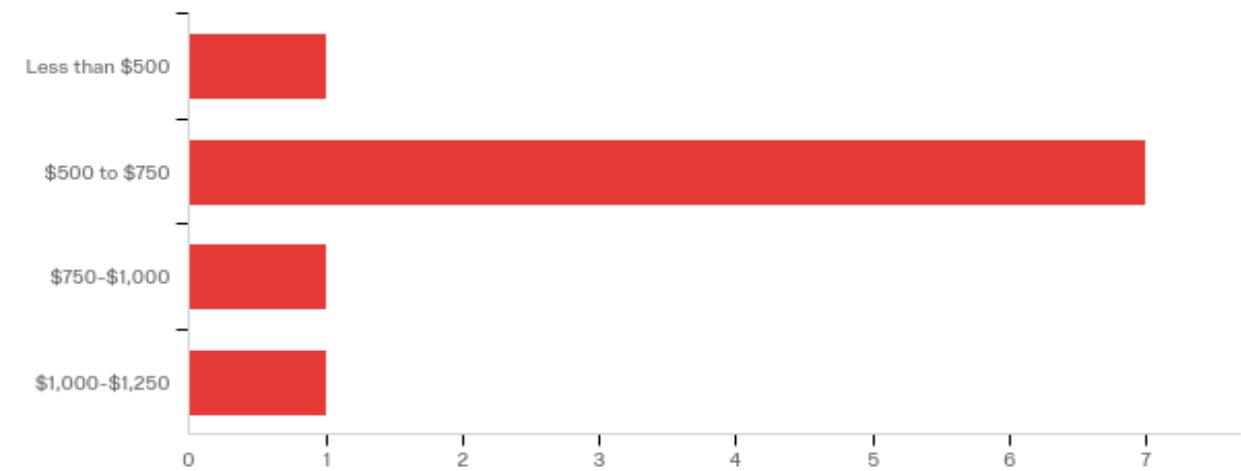
Those who live in Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Own	87.01%	67
2	Rent	12.99%	10
	Total	100%	77

How much rent do you pay per month?

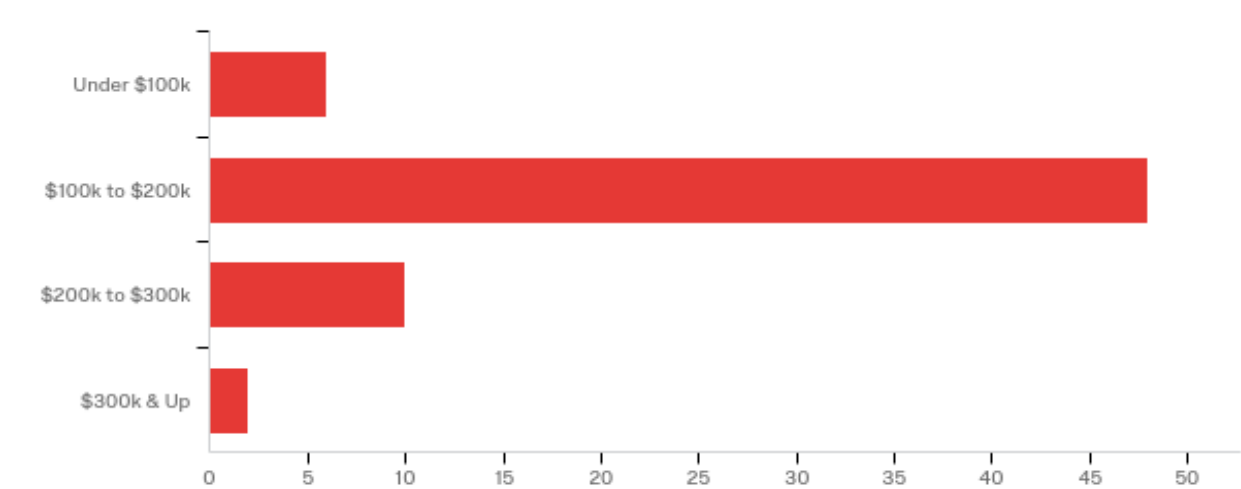
Those who live in Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than \$500	10.00%	1
2	\$500 to \$750	70.00%	7
3	\$750-\$1,000	10.00%	1
4	\$1,000-\$1,250	10.00%	1
5	\$1,250-\$1,500	0.00%	0
6	\$1,500-\$1,750	0.00%	0
7	\$1,750-\$2,00	0.00%	0
8	More than \$2,000	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	10

What is the current value of your home?

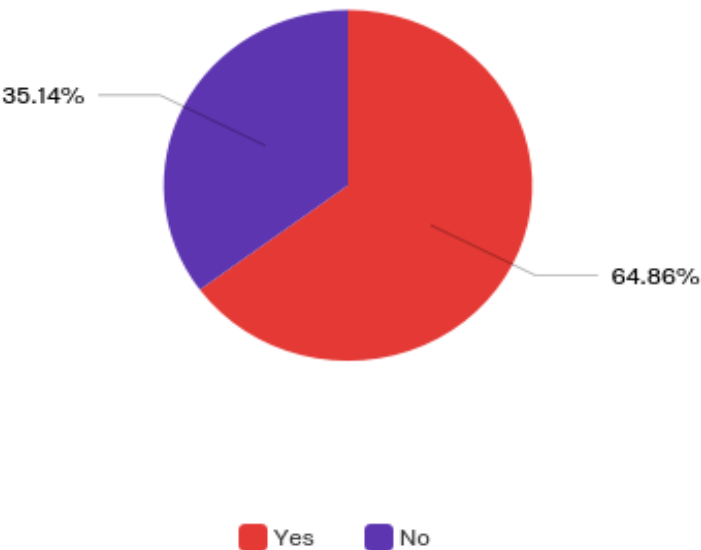
Those who live in Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Under \$100k	9.09%	6
2	\$100k to \$200k	72.73%	48
3	\$200k to \$300k	15.15%	10
4	\$300k & Up	3.03%	2
	Total	100%	66

Would you consider relocating within Soda Springs?

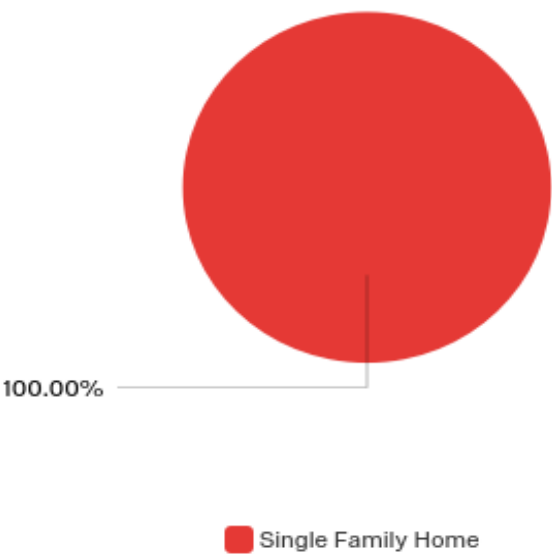
Those who live in Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	64.86%	48
2	No	35.14%	26
	Total	100%	74

What type of house / apartment would you consider relocating to in Soda Springs?

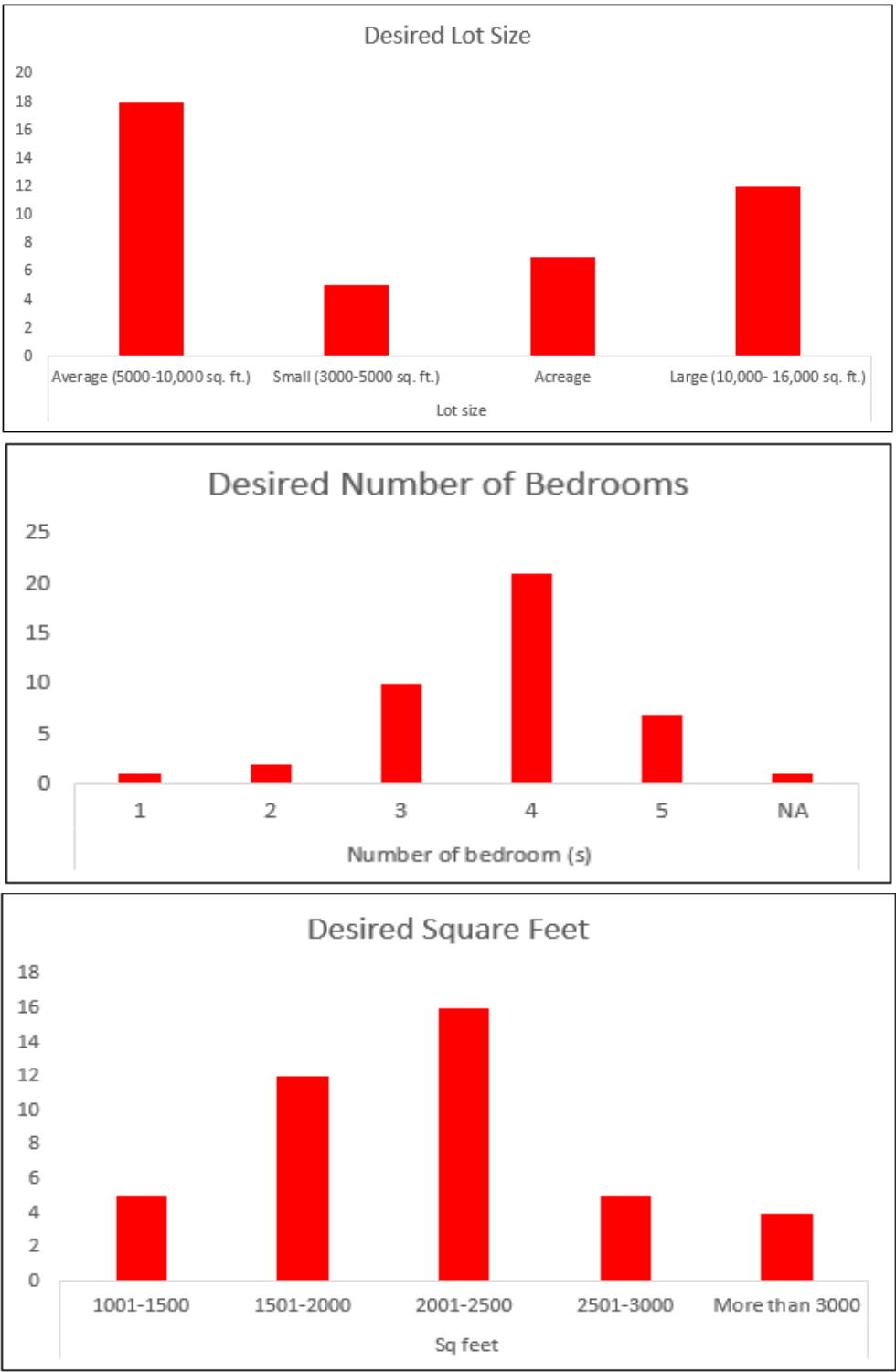
Those who live in Soda Springs

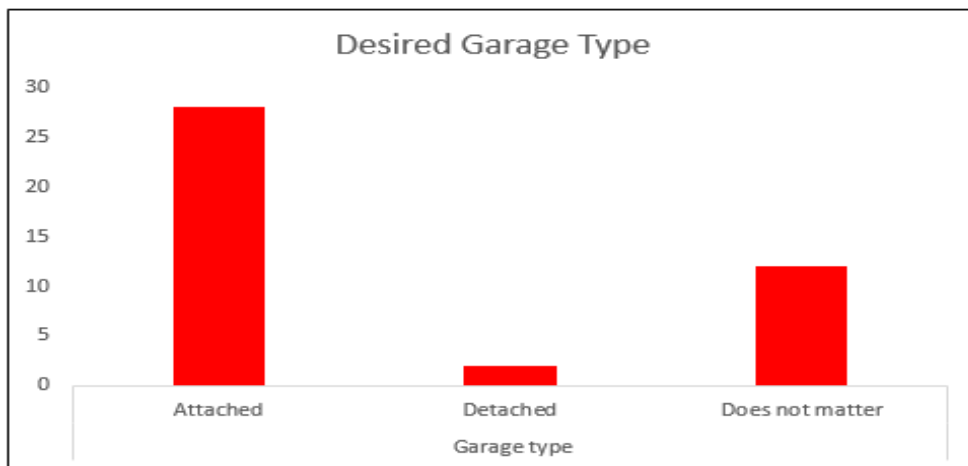
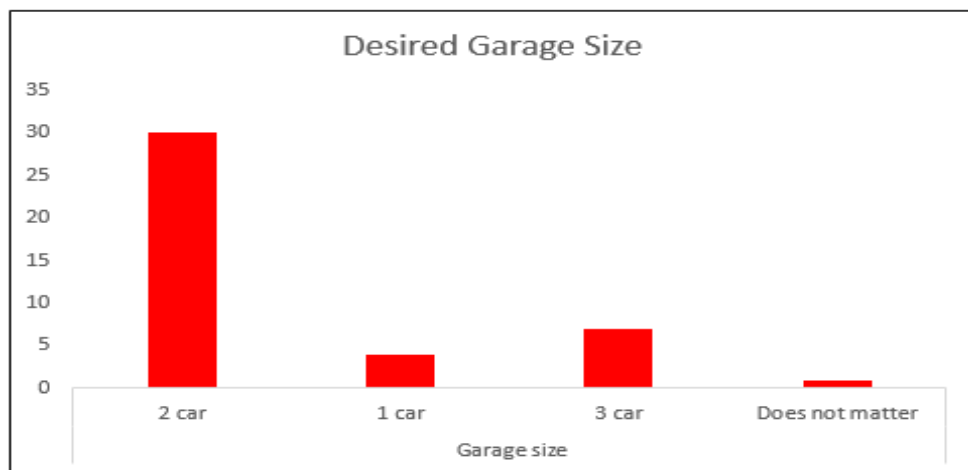
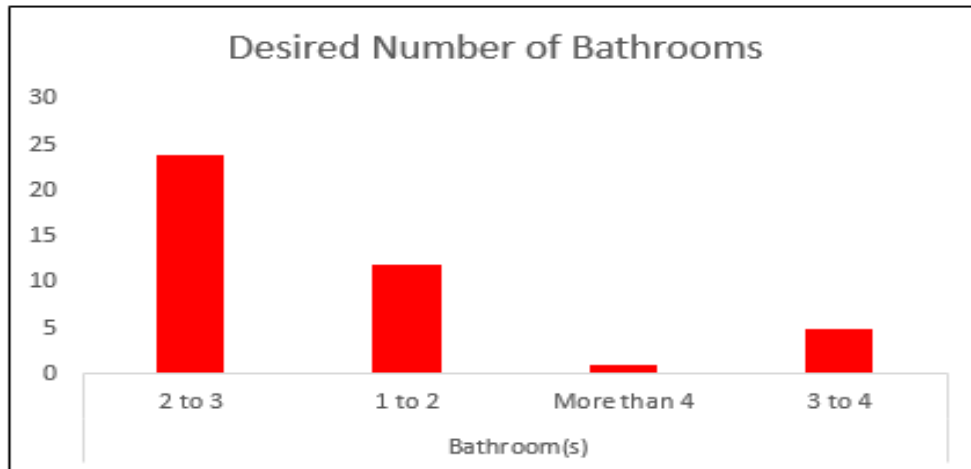


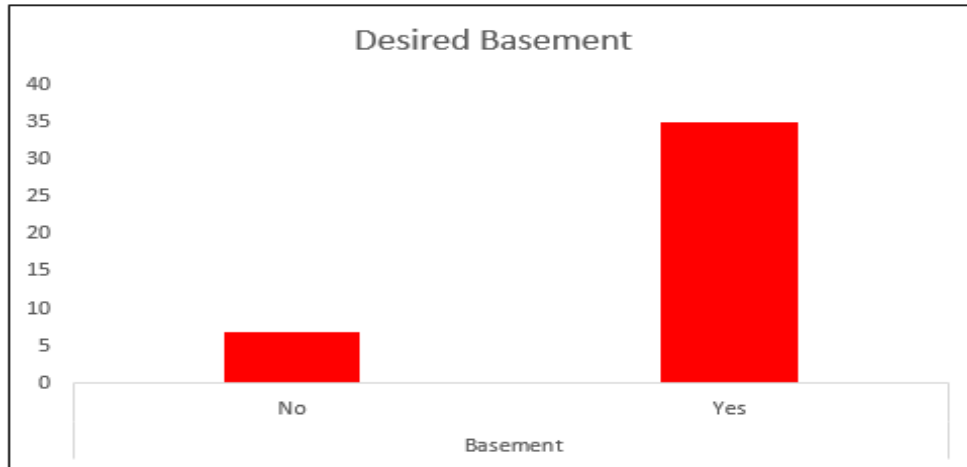
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Single Family Home	100.00%	47
2	Manufactured Home	0.00%	0
3	Mobile Home / Camper	0.00%	0
4	Apartment	0.00%	0
5	Duplex	0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	47

Describe the type of residence you would like to buy in Soda Springs:

Those who live in Soda Springs

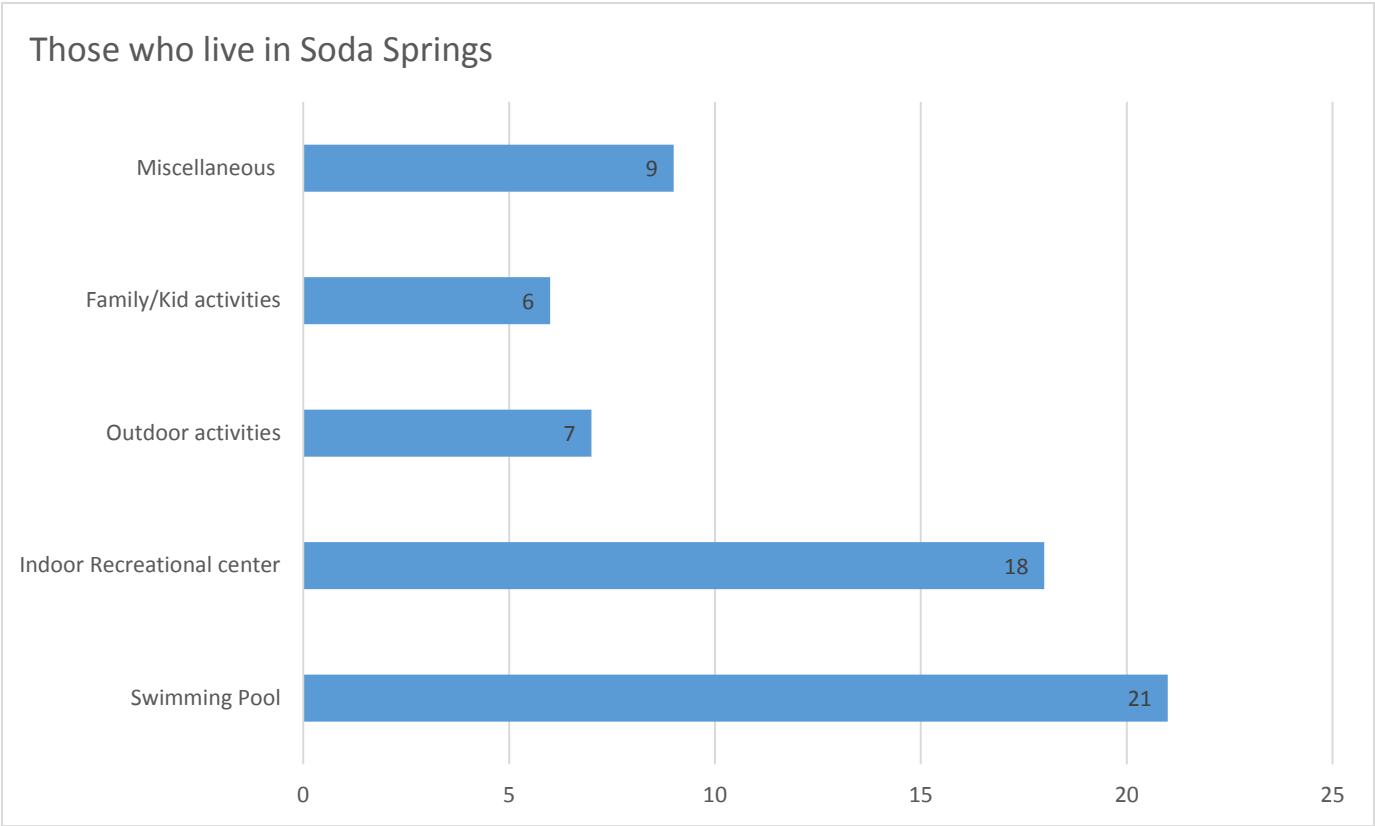






#	Question	Less than 1000 sq ft		1001-1500 sq ft		1501-2000 sq ft		2001-2500 sq ft		2501-3000 sq ft		More than 3000 sq ft		NA		Total
1	Sq. feet	0.00%	0	11.90%	5	28.57%	12	38.10%	16	11.90%	5	9.52%	4	0.00%	0	42
2	Basement	83.33%	35	16.67%	7	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	42
3	Lot size	11.90%	5	42.86%	18	28.57%	12	16.67%	7	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	42
4	Number of bedroom (s)	2.38%	1	4.76%	2	23.81%	10	50.00%	21	16.67%	7	0.00%	0	2.38%	1	42
5	Garage size	9.52%	4	71.43%	30	16.67%	7	2.38%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	42
6	Garage type	66.67%	28	4.76%	2	28.57%	12	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	42
7	Bathroom(s)	28.57%	12	57.14%	24	11.90%	5	2.38%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	42

What type of activities or facilities do you wish existed in Soda Springs?



Written Responses

- swimming pool
- Swimming
- Mountain bike trails, school and city involvement in winter activities, Nordic skiing, ice skating
- A rec. center kids could use year-round.
- swimming pool,
- None at this time
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Something for kids in the winter time
- More family entertainment
- More activities for my kids. Sports that are more long-term opportunities

Updated park for kids

indoor rock climbing wall, city swimming pool, open gymnasium - reservable

I Do not agree with subsidized activities or facilities.

Swimming pool

Swimming Pool

Specialized programs for special needs children, Community Recreation Center

Single track mountain bike trails, better involvement from the city to maintain exciting walking, ski trails

Motorcycle track, a place for people, children to ride dirt bikes.

Specialized therapy and education for special needs children.

Community Rec Center (Basketball Gyms), Retirement Homes/Condos/Center for active retirees

theater

Recreation center with indoor pool

Educational opportunities such as karate, cooking, computer classes, etc...

another new Motel/Hotel

More family and tourist entertainment

Pool community center

Swimming pool

Better cell phone facilities, friendlier and easier-to-use trash collection containers, recycle options

Swimming, outdoor concerts

swimming pool indoor or outdoor,

indoor swimming complex

UTV Trails

Heated swimming pool and similar activities shopping mall many more food services

Upgrade basketball and volleyball facilities at City Park.

more things for kids and families to do.

For a city of 3,000 people, we really have a pretty good cross section of facilities and activities

A scaled down version of Walmart - something similar to ShopKo Hometown

Rec Center; Large meeting area; indoor pool

A community center that could be rented by groups or family reunions.

Indoor playground or gymnasium

A recreation center with basketball courts and a pool

A community gymnasium.

Community Rec Center, More walking paths, Indoor Community Pool, More Restaurants

Swimming pool, indoor activities for kids

Rec center with swimming

consolidated schools with Bancroft & Grace

Recreational Center with gym

Rec center

More exercise classes outside of working hours; swimming pool; would be great to have like a YMCA

Indoor pool

Ice skating rink by Kelly Park, movies in the park, shopping promotion at Christmas like we used to have, Street Dances, Combined activities with Bancroft & Grace.

Rec Center/ice skating rink/

City Recreation facility and a swimming complex

City rec center

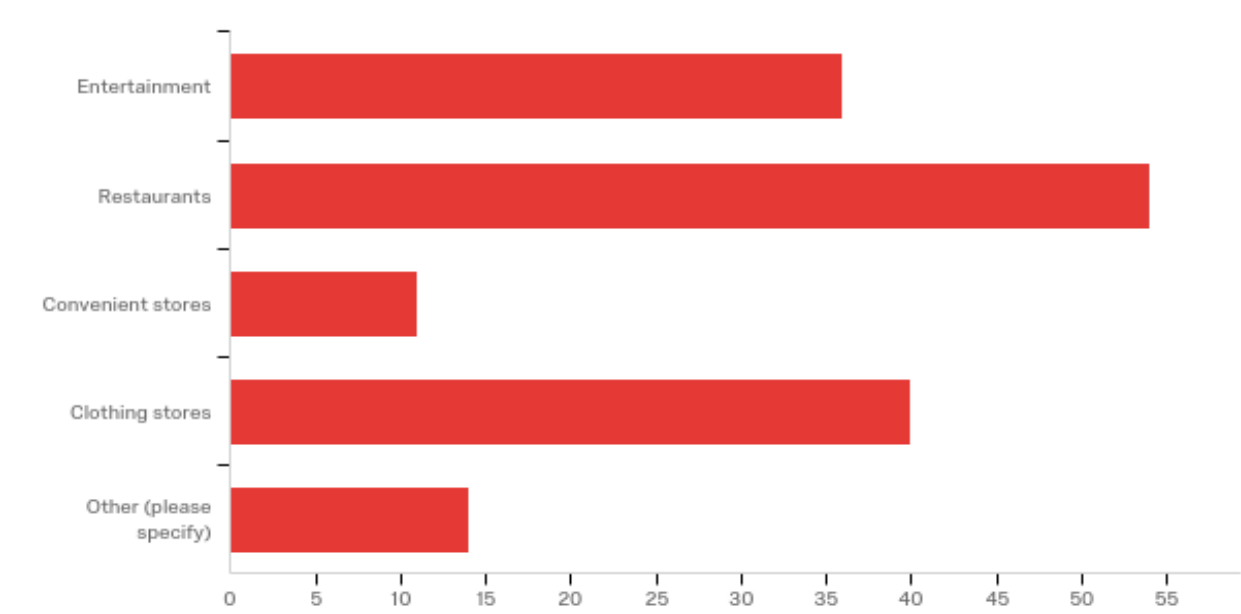
more indoor recreation areas, ice skating

Space Port

Clothing/Household necessities store, Wal-Mart type store

What else do you wish existed in Soda Springs?

Those who live in Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Entertainment	23.23%	36
2	Restaurants	34.84%	54
3	Convenient stores	7.10%	11
4	Clothing stores	25.81%	40
7	Other (please specify)	9.03%	14
	Total	100%	155

Other (please specify)

- Better maintenance of the things we already have
- Healthier activities that the city supported

brewery, outdoor sporting goods store

Shopko

Availability of variety of products including electronics, shoes, books, etc...

Golf store

Sporting goods

Brew pub type restaurant

Indoor active options or ice skating

Variety store

Shopko or something like it

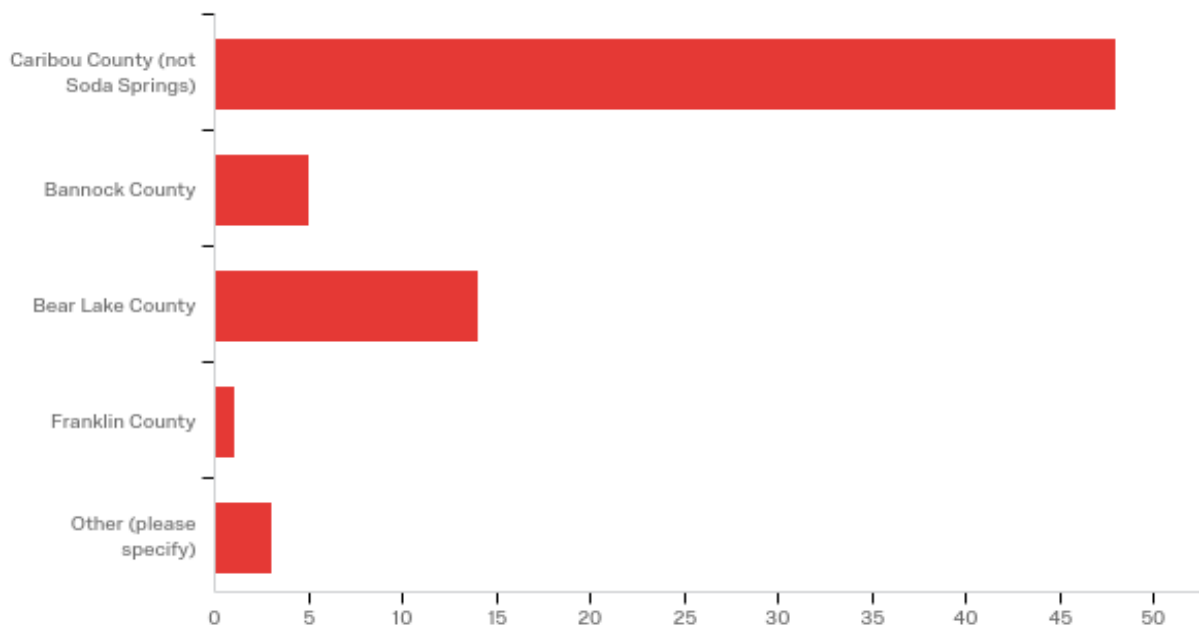
improve the overall appearance of the city

Small Walmart and Shopko Department Stores or Fred Meyers

Trans dimensional portals

Where are you currently living?

Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Caribou County (not Soda Springs)	67.61%	48
2	Bannock County	7.04%	5
3	Bear Lake County	19.72%	14
4	Franklin County	1.41%	1
5	Oneida County	0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify)	4.23%	3
	Total	100%	71

Other (please specify)

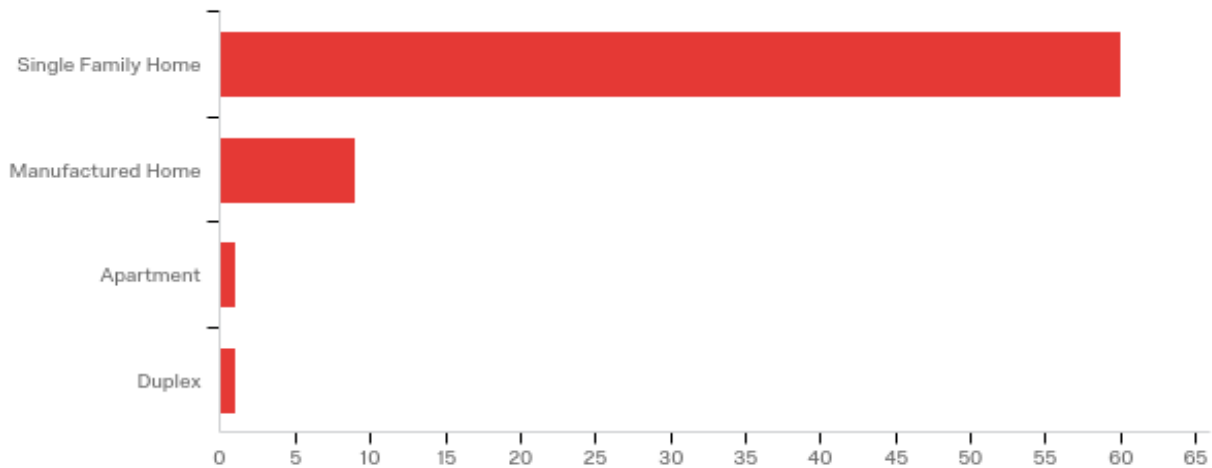
Jefferson

Soda Springs

Edge of Bonneville County (Wayan)

What type of house/ apartment are you currently living in?

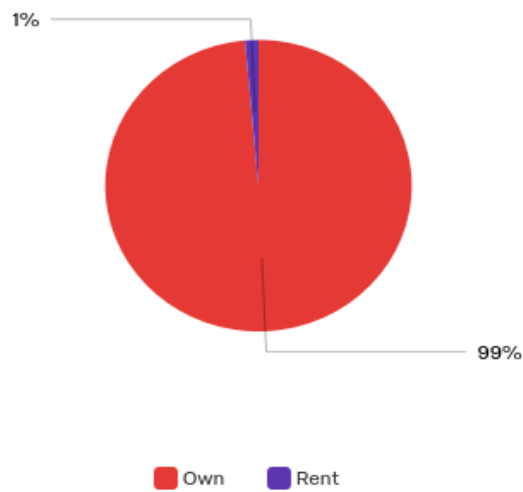
Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Single Family Home	84.51%	60
2	Manufactured Home	12.68%	9
3	Mobile Home / Camper	0.00%	0
4	Apartment	1.41%	1
5	Duplex	1.41%	1
6	Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	71

Do you own or rent your house/ apartment?

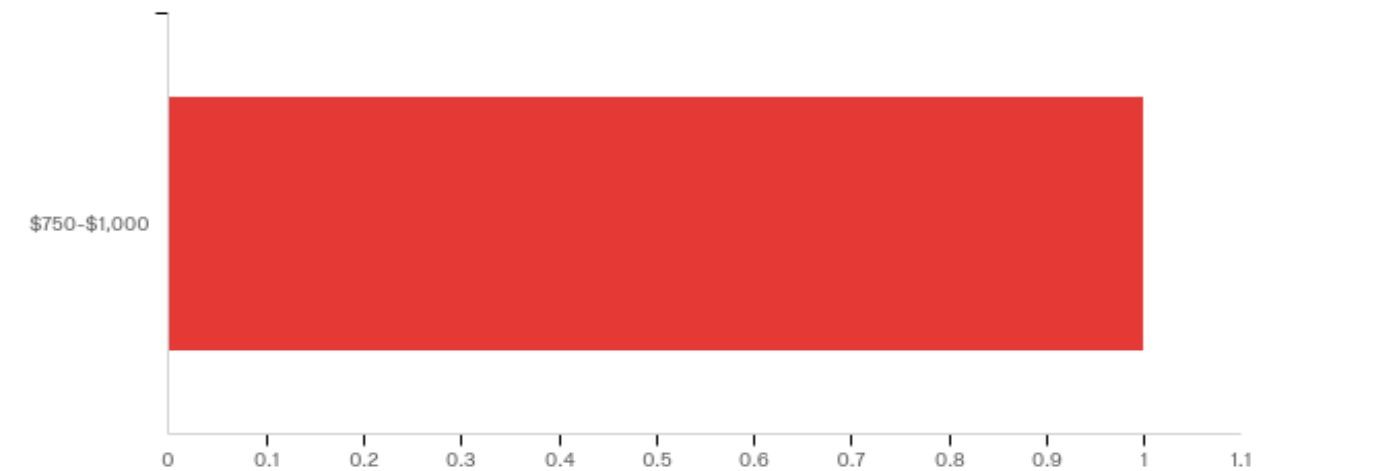
Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Own	98.59%	70
2	Rent	1.41%	1
	Total	100%	71

How much rent do you pay per month?

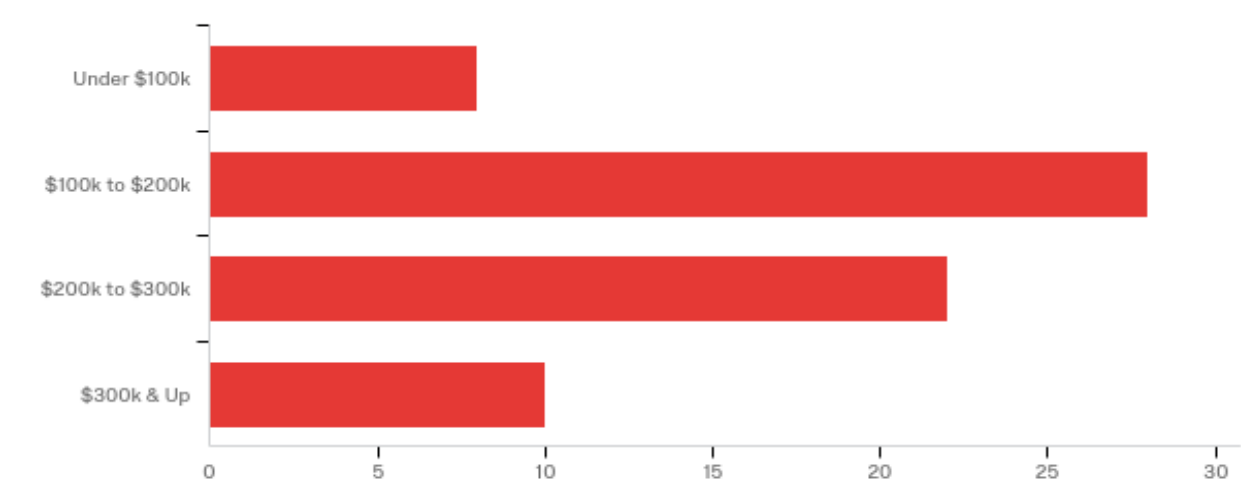
Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Less than \$500	0.00%	0
2	\$500 to \$750	0.00%	0
3	\$750-\$1,000	100.00%	1
4	\$1,000-\$1,250	0.00%	0
5	\$1,250-\$1,500	0.00%	0
6	\$1,500-\$1,750	0.00%	0
7	\$1,750-\$2,00	0.00%	0
8	\$More than \$2,000	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	1

What is the current value of your home?

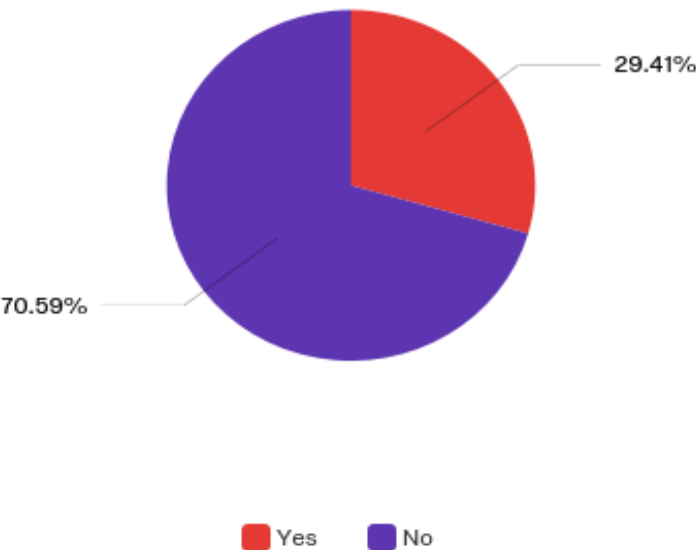
Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Under \$100k	11.76%	8
2	\$100k to \$200k	41.18%	28
3	\$200k to \$300k	32.35%	22
4	\$300k & Up	14.71%	10
	Total	100%	68

Would you be willing to relocate to Soda Springs if housing options were available?

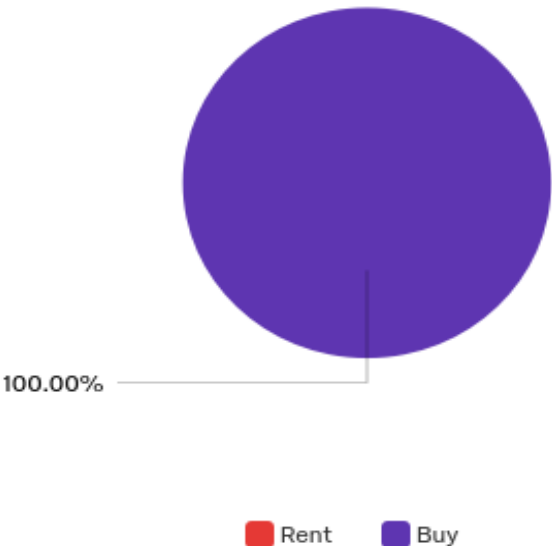
Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	29.41%	20
2	No	70.59%	48
	Total	100%	68

What type of housing options will you be interested in if you decide to move to Soda Springs?

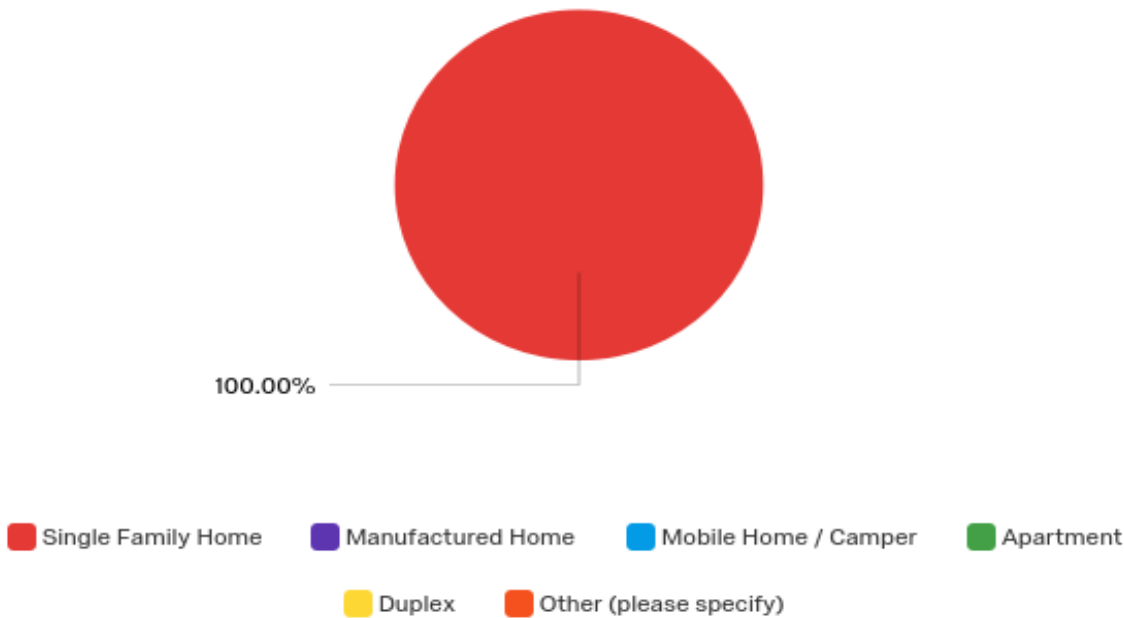
Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Rent	0.00%	0
2	Buy	100.00%	19
	Total	100%	19

Select the type of residence you would relocate to Soda Springs for:

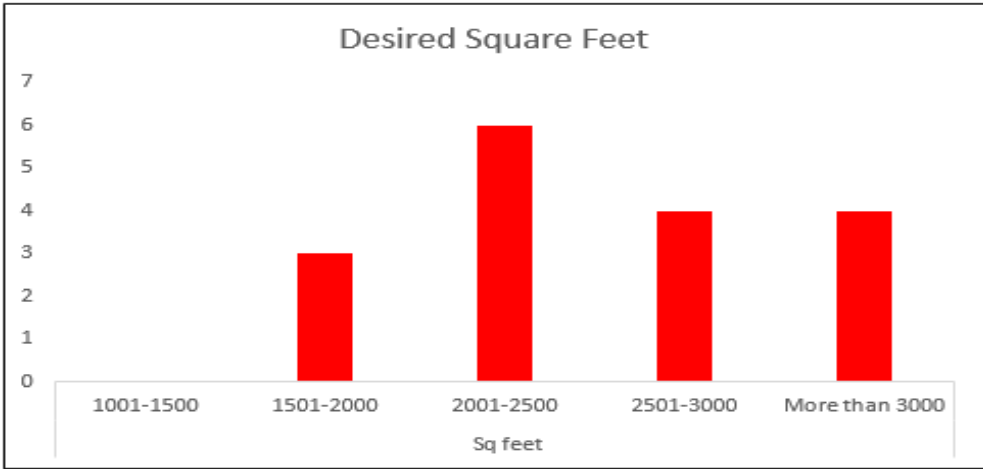
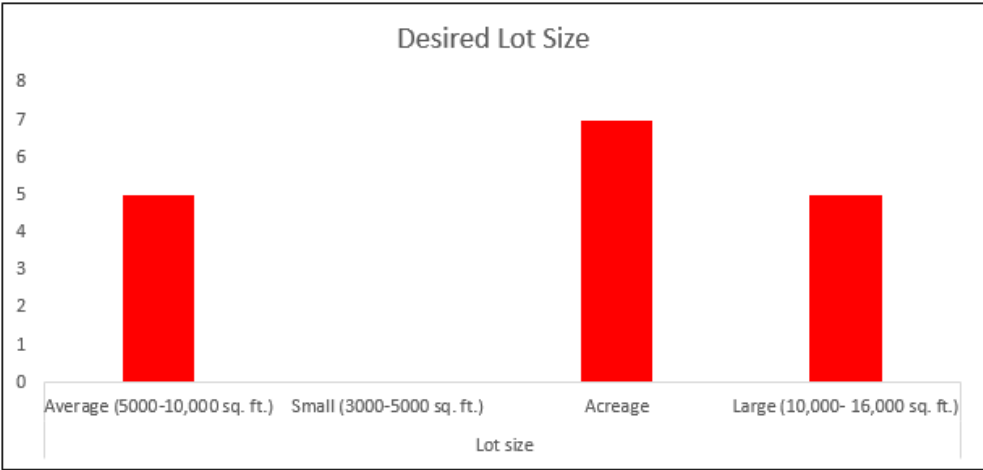
Those who live outside of Soda Springs

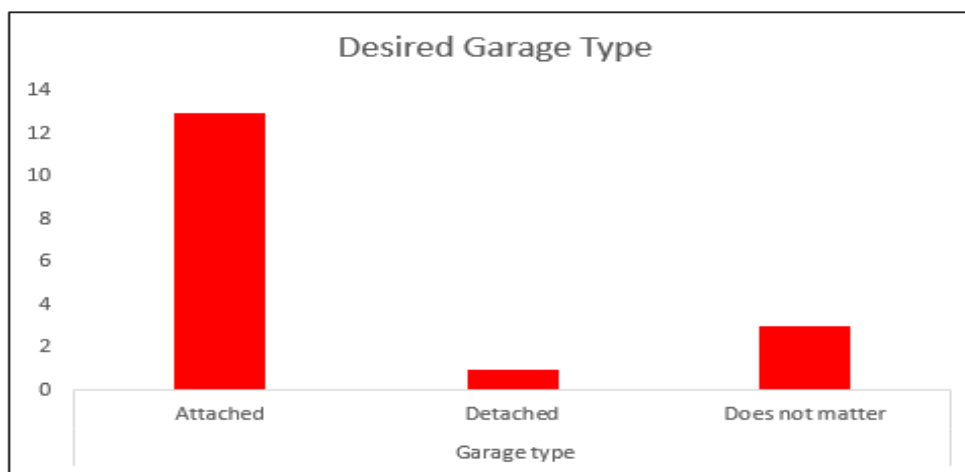
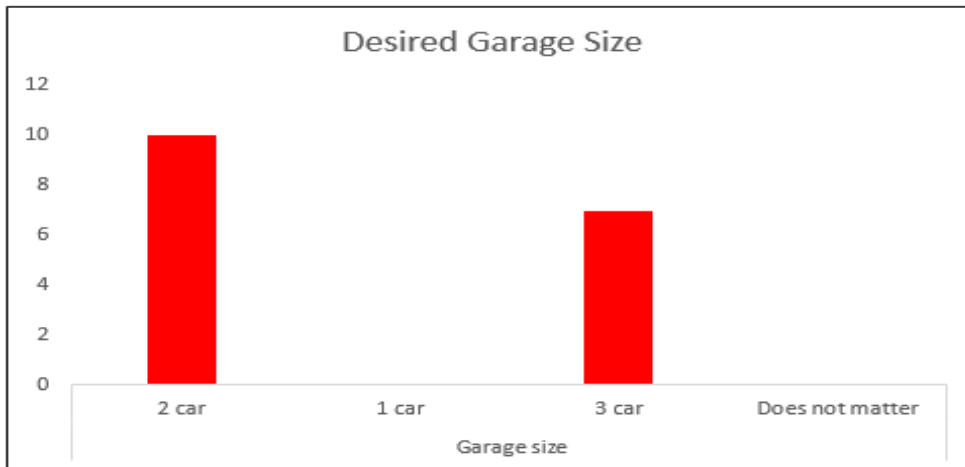


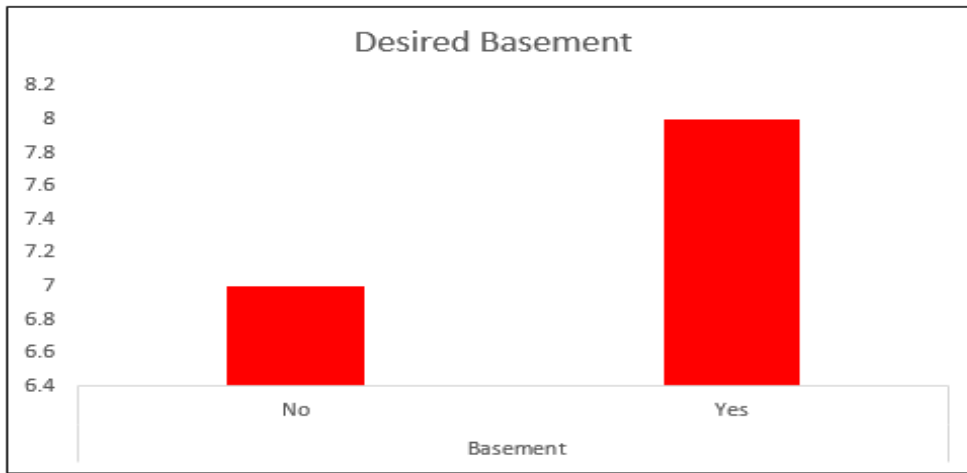
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Single Family Home	100.00%	19
2	Manufactured Home	0.00%	0
3	Mobile Home / Camper	0.00%	0
4	Apartment	0.00%	0
5	Duplex	0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	19

Describe the type of residence you would like to buy/rent in Soda Springs:

Those who live outside of Soda Springs



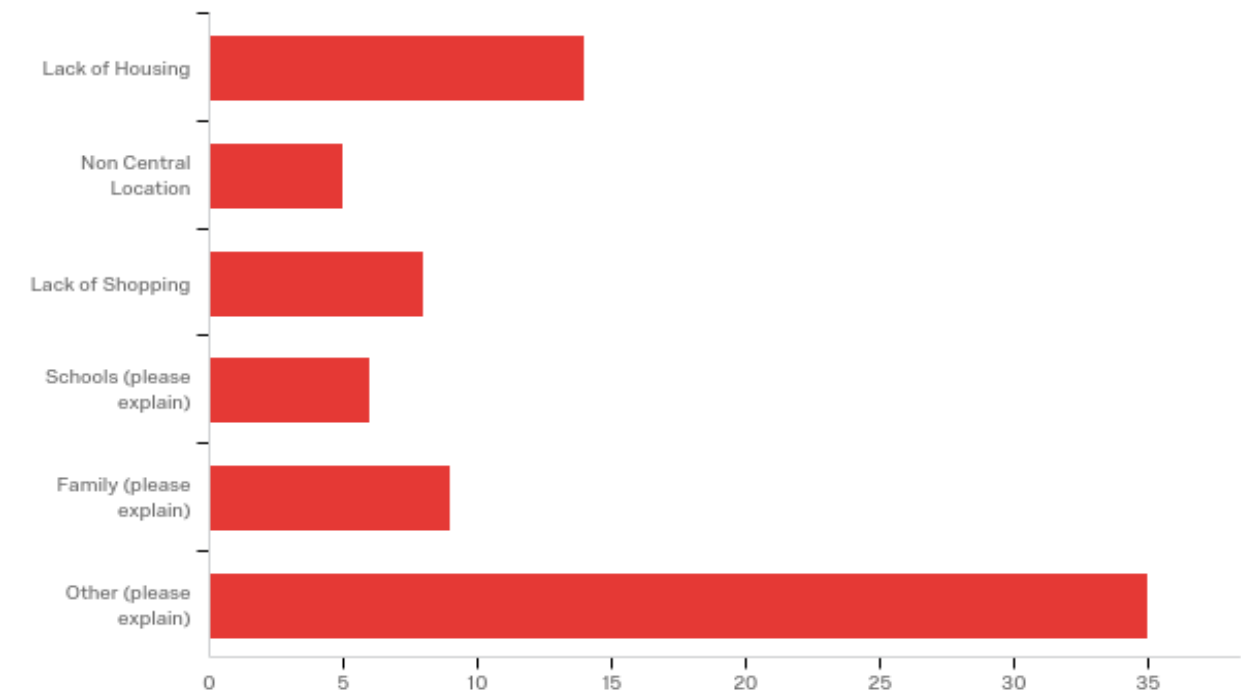




#	Question	Less than 1000 sq ft		1001-1500 sq ft		1501-2000 sq ft		2001-2500 sq ft		2501-3000 sq ft		More than 3000 sq ft		NA		Total
1	Sq feet	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17.65%	3	35.29%	6	23.53%	4	23.53%	4	0.00%	0	17
2	Basement	50.00%	8	43.75%	7	6.25%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	16
3	Lot size	0.00%	0	29.41%	5	29.41%	5	41.18%	7	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17
4	Number of bedroom	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	47.06%	8	29.41%	5	23.53%	4	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17
5	Garage size	0.00%	0	58.82%	10	41.18%	7	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17
6	Garage type	76.47%	13	5.88%	1	17.65%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17
7	Bathroom(s)	0.00%	0	70.59%	12	29.41%	5	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	17

Why do you not live in Soda Springs?

Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Lack of Housing	18.18%	14
2	Non-Central Location	6.49%	5
3	Lack of Shopping	10.39%	8
4	Schools (please explain)	7.79%	6
5	Family (please explain)	11.69%	9
6	Other (please explain)	45.45%	35
	Total	100%	77

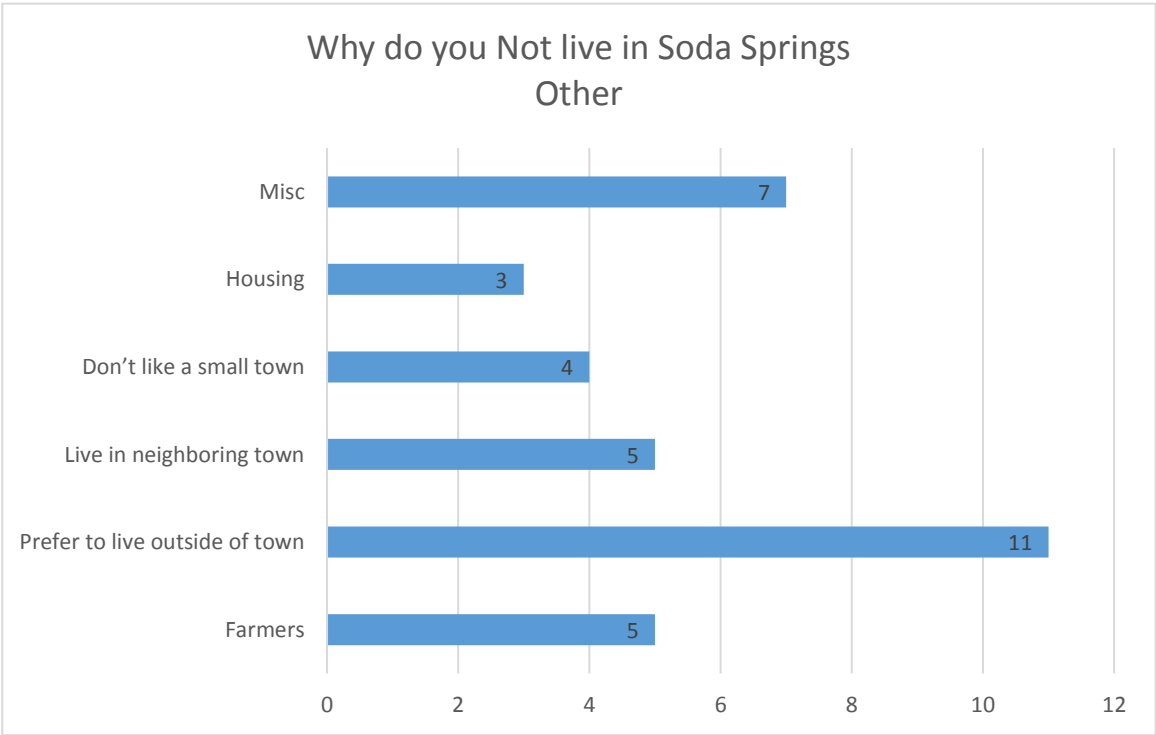
Schools (please explain)

- less opportunity for children (orchestra)
- small schools
- Don't want to cause kids to change schools.
- Does not offer programs I want for my kids
- No place to build a new home

Family (please explain)

- The majority our family is from Franklin county
- Family ties to Bear Lake County
- Raised in Bear Lake
- Family lives in Bear Lake
- Originally from Bear Lake
- Family involved in Ag

Other (please explain)



Written Responses (Other)

Climate is not great for gardening, concerns over contamination of water and air by plants

do not want to live in soda

To many rules and ordinances.

Area is to religion LDS which is judgmental and kids don't get accepted

Soda Springs is not desirable to me

over priced housing

Very few homes available when looking and found a home just outside city limits

Too small to live a life of privacy

I live in the impact Zone but not the city limits

multiple conveniences of larger place, dining, medical, etc.

prefer to live in smaller town

Don't want wife to have to commute.

the people

I live on a farm I operate.

Personal Space

I love where I live because that's where my ancestors are from

Live on established family ranch

Just outside city limits, like to have larger lot.

like being out of town

Own home and land outside the city limits

price of housing to high

preference

I live in the out skirts of Soda Springs, about 2 miles

I like living in the country. I am 5 minutes from Soda.

Like the quietness of a smaller community

Like the country living

I Like living out of town, No neighbors

Was looking for acreage.

We live on our farm land

I do live in Soda Springs, just not in city limits.

Live in the country. Soda Springs is a fine town

We have a family ranch in Gray's Lake. It is a long drive for me and we might purchase a small home in Soda in the future for a secondary residence.

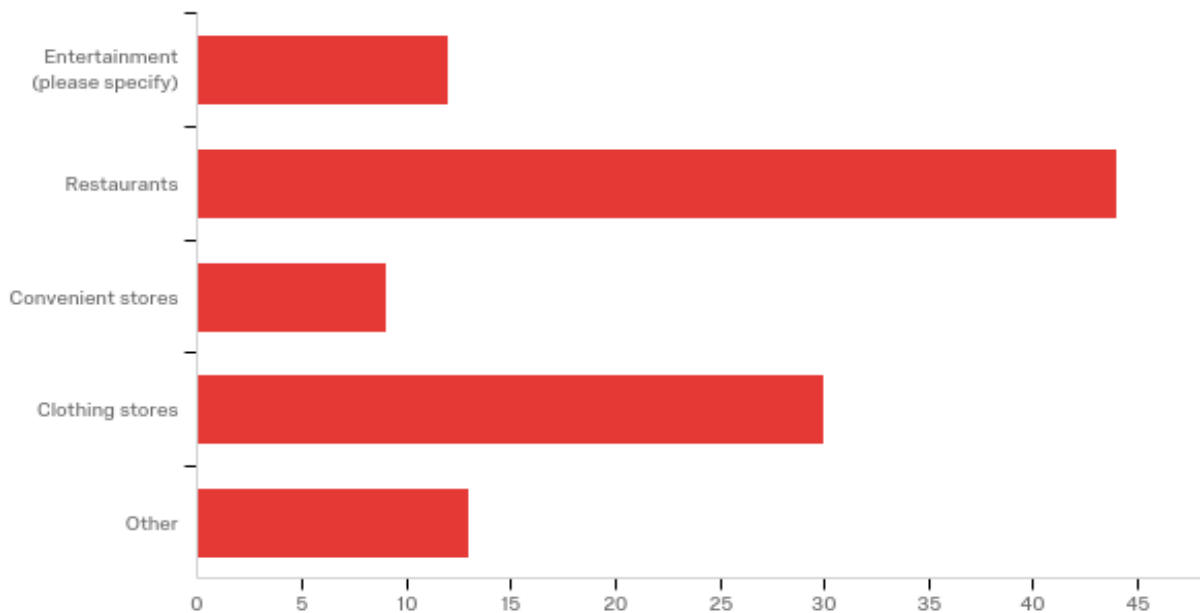
I live just outside of the city limits of Soda Springs

I am happy living in Grace

In live in Caribou County

What else do you wish existed in Soda Springs?

Those who live outside of Soda Springs



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Entertainment (please specify)	11.11%	12
2	Restaurants	40.74%	44
3	Convenient stores	8.33%	9
4	Clothing stores	27.78%	30
7	Other	12.04%	13
	Total	100%	108

Entertainment (please specify)

Noise park, swimming,

eateries, outdoor shopping

Concerts, festivals

Something indoor for young kids to play

Nice movie theater

more for kids to do

Other

Health food store

View

more option late at night

All of the above

Department stores

Indoor Swimming Pool

Shopko

City Pool

Real fitness places, more improvement to local library

Quilt/Fabric Store

Appendix B – Resources

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

SBDC provides assistance to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs throughout the US. This program helps startup businesses realize potential ownership, as well as, help existing businesses remain competitive in a complex and changing marketplace. One advantage to Soda Springs is Idaho State University has a SBDC site on the Pocatello, ID campus.

SBDC advisors provide new and current small business owners a variety of free business consulting and low-cost training services including: business plan development, manufacturing assistance, financial packaging and lending assistance, exporting and importing support, disaster recovery assistance, procurement and contracting aid, market research help, program support, and healthcare guidance.

Address, Hours, and Phone Number

Address: Idaho Small Business Development Center ~Idaho State University
921 8th Avenue
College of Business, Room 328
Pocatello, ID 83209
Hours: M-F 9am-5pm
Phone: 208-282-4402

TechHelp Idaho Manufacturing Specialists

TechHelp is a resource to help Idaho manufacturers, food processors and inventors/entrepreneurs improve their competitiveness through continuous product and process innovation. Their services fall into three primary areas that include: new product and market development, operational excellence, and food & dairy processing.

TechHelps mission statement, *“TechHelp strives to be a catalyst for strengthening Idaho manufacturing – accelerating its ongoing transformation into a more efficient and powerful engine of innovation driving economic growth and job creation.”* The company’s success is boosted by reputation of honesty, data driven strategies, and innovative, long lasting, and highly impactful solutions.

TechHelp is also located on Idaho State University’s campus in Pocatello, ID.

Address, Hours, and Phone Number

Address: Idaho State University
921 8th Avenue

College of Business, Room 327
Pocatello, ID 83209
Hours: M-F 9am-5pm
Phone: 208-282-3928

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow, and achieve their goals through education and mentorship. SCORE has been consulting for over 50 years and has a network of about 10,000 volunteers.

SCORE is a very unique association because they help clients with experience. Most of their volunteers have many years of service and experience in a variety of industries. Furthermore, they believe in relationships, giving back, diversity, and lifelong learning.

The closet SCORE location to Soda Springs is in Eastern Idaho near Idaho Falls, ID.

Address, Hours, and Phone Number

Address: Eastern Idaho SCORE
2300 N. Yellowstone Hwy Suite 100B
Idaho Falls, ID 83401
Hours: M-F 9am-5pm
Phone: 208-523-1022

Chamber of Commerce

The chamber of commerce is a great resource for new and current businesses in the community to turn to if they need advice and/or help. Chambers of commerce are essential to the economic growth of our communities.

We believe that if Soda Springs strengthens their chamber of commerce business growth in the community will substantially increase. As we viewed the chamber website it unknown how to contact the chamber and/or sign up as a member. A few simple changes and updates to the chamber's website would add substantial credibility to your organization.

Make it a point that as a member of the Soda Springs Chamber of Commerce it is rewarding, easy, fun, and a great experience!

Access to Capital

United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA)

USDA is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. USDA offers loans, grants and loan guarantees to help create jobs and support economic development and essential services such as housing, health care, first responder services and equipment, and water, electric and communications infrastructure.

USDA Program and Services:

All Programs	For Businesses	For Communities & Nonprofits
Business Programs	Rural Economic Area Partnership Program (REAP Zones)	Community Facilities Direct Loans and Grants
Community Economic Development	Rural Energy for America Program	Rural Community Development Initiative Grants
Community Facilities Programs		
Cooperative Programs		
Electric Programs		
Energy Programs		
Multi-Family Housing Programs		
Single Family Housing Programs		
Telecommunications Programs		
Water & Environmental Programs		

Please refer to the link for additional information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/>

Rocky Mountain Power

Rocky Mountain Power provides a number of incentives including: incentives for lighting, HVAC, compressed air and other equipment upgrades that increase your electric energy efficiency and exceed code requirements. This program offers incentives for small businesses to save energy, money and time. Additionally, Rocky Mountain Power offers energy management, energy project co-funding and agriculture.

Please refer to the link for additional information:

<https://www.rockymountainpower.net/bus/se/idaho/il.html>

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

BPA is a nonprofit federal power marketing administration. BPA is committed to public service and seeks to make its decisions in a manner that provides opportunities for input from all stakeholders. In its vision statement, BPA dedicates itself to providing high system reliability, low rates consistent with sound business principles, environmental stewardship and accountability.

BPA offers many opportunities for businesses to take advantage of energy efficiency programs. Some of energy efficiency sectors include:

EE Sectors	Offerings	Tools & Resources
1. Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential Lighting• Appliances• Heat Pumps• Weatherization• New Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail Sales Allocation Tool• Residential Marketing Toolkit• Implementation Manual
2. Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial & Industrial Lighting• HVAC• Custom Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marketing• Promotions• Air Northwest• Northwest Lighting
3. Industrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Custom Projects• Energy Management• Small Industrial• Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training Opportunities• BPA Manual• Industrial Audit Guide

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compressed Air • Distribution Efficiency • Energy Efficient Motors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Overview
4. Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Smart Federal Partnership • Utility Served Federal Sites • Direct Served Federal Sites • No Serving Utility Sites 	N/A
5. Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigation Water Management • Variable Frequency Drives • Irrigation Pump Testing and System Analysis • Irrigation Hardware Upgrades • Irrigation Technology • Lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Manual

Please refer to the link for additional information: <https://www.bpa.gov/EE/Sectors/Pages/Industrial.aspx>

Idaho Department of Labor

The Idaho Department of Labor offers a number of different services to help support local businesses. Specifically, the department of labor offers a workforce training program that helps motivate employees, keeping current on industry trends, and teaching new technologies. The program also encourages a work opportunity tax credit that can reduce federal tax liability up \$9,600 per eligible worker if your business qualifies. Additionally, this program has funds available to help pay training costs.

A few other services the Idaho Department of Labor has includes:

1. Employee Recruitment
2. Unemployment Insurance
3. Business Specialists
4. Wages & Economic Data
5. Humans Right Commission
6. Business Seminars & Networking

Please refer to the link for additional information:

<https://www.labor.idaho.gov/dnn/idl/Businesses/TrainingResources.aspx>

Small Business Administration Loan Programs (SBA)

SBA works with a number of different lenders to provide loans to small businesses. The SBA does not lend money directly to business owners. Instead, it sets guidelines for loans made. The SBA reduces risk for lenders and makes it easier for them to access capital. Some benefits of SBA-guaranteed loans are competitive terms, counseling & education, and unique benefits. Below is a list of a few different SBA loan programs.

1. General Small Business Loans
2. Microloan Program
3. Real Estate & Equipment Loans: CDC/504
4. Disaster Loans

Please refer to the link for additional information:

<https://www.sba.gov/loans-grants>

East Idaho Development Corporation

East Idaho Development Corporation is part of the SBA 504 loan program that offers small businesses another avenue for business financing. A Certified Development Company (CDC) is a nonprofit corporation that promotes economic development within its community through 504 Loans. CDCs are certified and regulated by the SBA, and work with SBA and participating lenders (typically banks) to provide financing to small businesses, which in turn, accomplishes the goal of community economic development.

The use of proceeds from 504 Loans must be used for fixed assets (and certain soft costs), including:

- The purchase of existing buildings
- The purchase of land and land improvements, including grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots and landscaping
- The construction of new facilities or modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities
- The purchase of long-term machinery
- The refinancing of debt in connection with an expansion of the business through new or renovated facilities or equipment

Address, Hours, and Phone Number

Address: 1651 Alvin Ricken Dr.

Pocatello, ID 83201

Hours: 9am-5pm

Phone: 208-234-7541

Please refer to the link for additional information:

<http://www.eidevco.org/home.html>

SICOG Small Business Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF)

RLF's objective is to create and retain jobs, to secure capital formation and to help business and industry in activities that promote economic health. These funds are available in conjunction with bank financing to for-profit small businesses in the seven counties serviced by SICOG—Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power Counties.

The loan program can assist small business with loans ranging in size from \$10,000 to \$150,000. All you need to be eligible is a solid business plan, three year projections, and at least 10% equity participation (collateral equal to one dollar collateral for one dollar of loan).

Please refer to the link for additional information:

<https://www.sicog.org/loans-home.html>

Appendix C – Housing and Land Availability

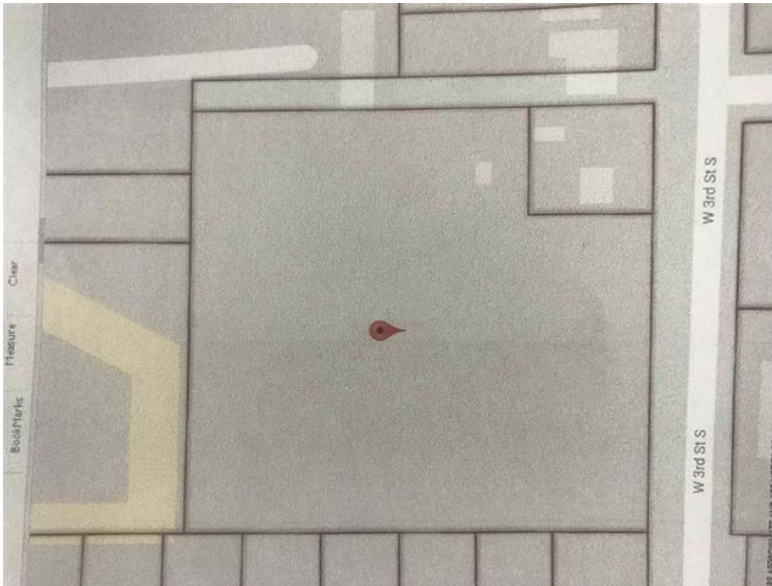
After contacting a local real estate agent and researching houses on Zillow we found that there are a very limited number houses available for sale in the City of Soda Springs, as of March 22, 2018. This is a big concern of the community. Additionally, during the Town Hall meeting we were informed that most houses for sale in the city only remain on the market for a short period of time. In fact, a local real estate agent disclosed that a typical house in the city selling from anywhere between \$220,000 and \$250,000 will sell in a few very short months.

Everybody knows the demand for houses in Soda Springs is high, however, there is only a limited number of houses for sale. So, we have located a few lots around the city that are available for new houses. Below is a list of few lots available in the city.

- Address: 00 Caribou County
 - Asking Price: \$20,000
 - Approximate Acres: 0.75
 - Zoning: Residential-City utilities and services located nearby
 - Possible Use: Single Family
 - Domestic Water: Provided by the City
 - Sewer: City Sewer
 - Gas and Electric-Other



- Address: NNA 3rd South
 - Asking Price: \$62,000
 - Approximate Acres: 2.40
 - Description: Lots 2, 3, Block 24, Less Tr 83' x 93' Lot 2, Soda Springs
 - Zoning: Residential-City utilities and services located nearby.
 - Possible Use: Single Family, Subdivision
 - Domestic Water: Provided by the City-Not Stubbed to Lot.
 - Sewer: City Sewer-Not Stubbed to Lot.
 - Gas and Electric-Other



- Address: TBD Formation Avenue
 - Asking Price: \$78,000
 - Approximate Acres: 6.00
 - Description: Lots 5-6-7-8, Block 49, Soda Springs
 - Zoning: Residential-City utilities and services located nearby.
 - Possible Use: Single Family
 - Domestic Water: Provided by the City-Not Stubbed to Lot.
 - Sewer: City Sewer-Not Stubbed to Lot.
 - Gas and Electric-Other



Available lots on Formation Avenue

