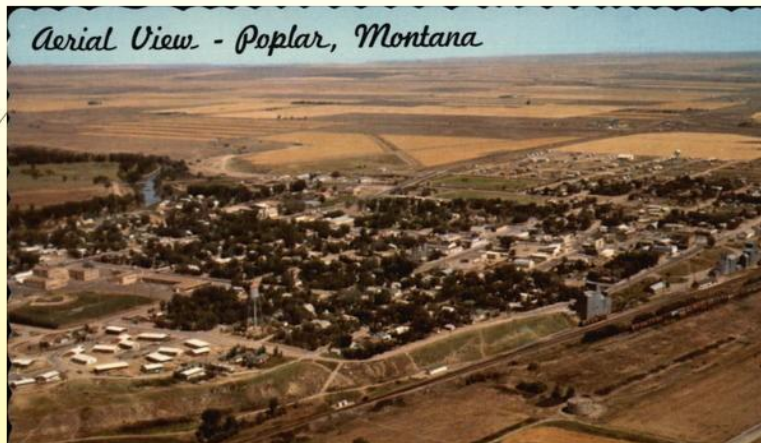


# **POPLAR AREA**

## **MONTANA COMMUNITY REVIEW**

**MAY 14 - 15, 2018 \* Phase 1**



A service of the Montana Economic Developers Association in partnership with Montana Department of Commerce, Montana State University Extension, the University of Idaho and the University of Wyoming.

This project is supported by USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Grant #2016-10945. It is part of the AFRI Foundational program.

# COMMUNITY REVIEW REPORT

*for*

## ***Poplar, Montana***

May 14 – 15, 2018



The Montana Community Review Program is a collaboration of federal, state, tribal, and local governments along with the private sector and nonprofits. Montana Community Reviews are made possible with sponsorship from Montana Department of Commerce and coordinated by Montana Economic Developers Association.



## **SPONSORING AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**Fort Peck Community College  
Great Northern Development Corp.  
Fort Peck Tribes  
Environmental Protection Agency  
City of Poplar  
Roosevelt County  
Make Poplar Great Again  
Poplar Schools  
American Legion  
Fort Peck Transportation**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The success of the Poplar Community Review is due to the many individuals who generously shared their time, opinions, and knowledge by serving on the home team, completing a survey, or participating in a listening session or other conversation with the visiting team. Special thanks to the following individuals: Ashleigh Weeks, Tori Matejovsky, Shane Halverson, Linda Weeks, Rusty Boxer, Martina Wilson, Ernestine Youpee, and Maureen Dionne.



L to R: Gloria O'Rourke, Tori Matejovsky, Paul Lachapelle, Wilfred Lambert, Gus Byrom, Martina Wilson, Linda Weeks, and Ashleigh Weeks.

## **HOME TEAM TOPIC ORGANIZERS FOR POPLAR COMMUNITY REVIEW PHASE 1**

**Economic Development:**

Deb Madison, Fort Peck Tribes Office of Environmental Protection  
Rodney Miller, Fort Peck Tribes Economic Development Officer  
Tori Matejovsky, Great Northern Development Corporation

**Eliminate and Redevelop Brownfields and Blighted Properties:**

Wilfred Lambert, Office of Environmental Protection

**Culture and Health:**

Ashleigh Weeks, Office of Environmental Protection

**Planning and Zoning:**

Shane Halverson, Public Works Director, City of Poplar

**Best Practices in Governance across multi-jurisdictional areas**

Sam Azure, In House Attorney, Fort Peck Tribes

**ADVANCE VISITING TEAM**

**Gloria O'Rourke, Coordinator, Advance Team Lead**

Montana Economic Developers Association  
118 E. Seventh St; Suite 3F  
Anaconda, MT 59711  
Ph: 406.563.5259  
gloria@medamembers.org

**Dr. Paul Lachapelle, Montana State University**

Associate Professor, Extension Community  
Development Specialist  
Department of Political Science, Local Government Center  
P.O. Box 172240 | Wilson Hall 2-117  
Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717-2240 USA  
w: MSUcommunitydevelopment.org o: (406) 994-3620 e: paul.lachapelle@montana.edu

**Gus Byrom, Outreach Specialist**

MT Dept. of Commerce/Community Development Division  
PO Box 200523  
Helena, MT 59620-0523  
Ph: 406 - 841-2777  
gbyrom@mt.gov



Advance Visiting Team: Paul Lachapelle, Gloria O'Rourke, Gus Byrom

**INTRODUCTION**

It was a privilege for the Poplar Advance Team to spend time in your culture rich community. Thank you for your hospitality, your time, and for sharing with the team the vision you have for your community.

Before diving into the report, thanks are due Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC) for its support of the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA). It is a partnership between MDOC and MEDA that makes the Montana Community Review program available across the state.

If you participated in the Poplar Community Review, you know that Poplar now has the distinction of being the second Montana Community Review. Due to a three-state grant project including Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, MEDA is collaborating with the University of Idaho, University of Wyoming, and Montana State University to develop the very best review process in each of our states. Dr. Lorie Higgins, University of Idaho Extension, is leading and guiding the project.

As a part of the three-state collaboration, each state has its own Design Team. Members of the Montana Design Team include Sue Taylor, Economic Development Director, Beartooth RC&D; Gus Byrom, Community Development Division, MT Dept. of Commerce; Dr. Paul Lachapelle, Local Government Center, Montana State University, and Gloria O'Rourke, Coordinator, MEDA. The Montana Design Team is guiding the three-phase process to help identify community needs, build community capacity, and provide resource information to address community needs.



The Community Review website is now up and running at <http://www.communityreview.org>; it will prove to be of immense help to communities now and far into the future.

Thank you again for sharing your hope and vision for Poplar with the Poplar Community Review Team. Working together, much will be accomplished!

## **MONTANA PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The three-phase Montana Community Review Process begins with an application. The purpose of the application is to assist the Montana Design Team in learning about a community and to help in determining readiness for a team visit. In addition, if a community is under the umbrella of a Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) the CRDC must agree to support the Community Review. With support from the CRDC, the MEDA Board lends its support; the Montana Design Team proceeds with implementing Phase 1.

In a nutshell, Phase 1 is the discovery process for all involved and includes a survey as well as a community profile. Phase 1 also includes a community visit from the Advance Team. Phase 2 is the learning phase of the process and involves digging deep into the topics and issues the community identified in Phase 1. Phase 3 is all about implementation, evaluation, and celebrating success.

## **POPLAR COMMUNITY REVIEW ~ PREPARATION FOR PHASE 1**

Approximately eight months prior to the Poplar Community Review, Tori Matejovsky, Executive Director, Great Northern Economic Development, indicated to MEDA that the community of Poplar was interested in an assessment process. The MEDA Board gave the “go” to proceed. In the meantime, the ID-WY-MT Community Review Teams were collaborating, researching, learning from each other, and fine-tuning each state’s process.

Tori Matejovsky and Ashleigh Weeks, Fort Peck Tribes Office of Environmental Protection, began making serious inquiries as to the process and worked hand-in-hand with the Montana Design Team to host the second Montana Community Review. Tori and Ashleigh completed the MEDA Community Review Application and identified topic areas that would likely come to the surface during the Advance Team visit. Great Northern Development and Fort Peck Tribes Office of Environmental Protection also assisted with a mailed survey and advertising for the Community Review. Over 300 people responded to the survey. In addition, the Polar Home Team helped with on-the-ground participation for the people of the Poplar area and planned the agenda and logistics for the Advance Team Visit.

### **PHASE 1 ~ Advance Visiting Team in Poplar**

Below is the Poplar Community Review Agenda.

#### **Monday, May 14**

	<b>Group Discovery Session</b>	<b>Location</b>
3:15 – 4:30 PM	Cultural, Community & Social Services	FPCC Greet the Dawn
4:30 – 6:15 PM	Business and Retail, Agriculture, Non-Profit and Church	FPCC Greet the Dawn

#### **Tuesday, May 15**

8:15 – 9:15 AM	Healthcare and Emergency Services	IHS and Riverside Clinic
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Tribal, Poplar City, & County Government	TEB Council Chambers
10:45 – 11:45 AM	Law and Justice	FPCC Greet the Dawn
12:00 – 12:45 PM	Lunch with Senior Citizens	Senior Citizen Center
1:00 – 2:15 PM	Youth and Educators	Poplar High School
7:00 – 8:00 PM	Town Meeting: MEDA Team Summary	American Legion Club

## Tour of Poplar

Local leadership conducted a tour some of which included: Tribal Building/BIA, Airport Addition (Headstart), Sustainable Village, Parks, A&S Industries, Poplar School, FPCC Buildings, and more.



## COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

Community listening sessions are open-ended, focus group-like discussions with key stakeholder groups identified by the home and visiting teams. The purpose is simple: we ask open-ended questions of a cross-section of community residents with diverse perspectives, listen to their answers, and reflect back what we hear. This means that for the most part, we're telling you exactly what we heard from residents; we also made a few observations and will share those at the end of this section.

Seven community listening sessions were held with the Poplar Community Review Advance Team. Over 100 people responded either in person or in writing their answers to three questions: 1. What don't you want to see happen in Poplar in the next five years, 2. What do you want to see happen in Poplar in the next five years, and 3. What, who and where are the assets that can benefit Poplar? Below is a summary of each of these questions based on what the team heard.



As listed on the agenda, the Poplar Community Review included listening sessions with the following stakeholder groups: Cultural, Community and Social Services; Business and Retail, Agriculture, Non-Profit and Church; Healthcare and Emergency Services; Tribal, Poplar City and County Government; Law and Justice; Senior Citizens; and Youth and Educators.

## What DON'T you want to see happen in Poplar in the next five years?

While it's never good to dwell on the things we don't want to see happen, the Poplar Review Team believes it is important that the conversation take place and the overriding themes be compiled and described. We asked locals to discuss and identify what they don't want to see happen in Poplar in the next five years and heard many items emerge that can be broadly categorized around three principal themes of 1. Drugs, Alcohol, and Crime, 2. Community Blight and Trash, and 3. Economic Decline. Listening session participants shared many comments as reflected by the following word cloud.

This word cloud visually represents the most frequently voiced responses when listening session participants were asked what they did not want to see in the community over the coming 5-10 years. Larger text indicates items mentioned most often.



### ***Drugs, Alcohol, and Crime***

In the listening sessions, people from different sectors consistently described concerns with the drug epidemic being experienced in the community and region. People expressed the vicious cycle of loss of jobs, dependence on drugs, increase in crime, harm to families, and eventual decline of the community. Poplar is not alone in this cycle; many communities across the nation are experiencing the same challenges.

Research is being conducted and action is being taken to turn the tide of this vicious cycle. Poplar can examine the information and determine a course to change the direction of its community. It can be done; Poplar can become the bright star of change for the rest of the state as well as the country.



### Community Blight and Trash

As the graphic above indicates, another often mentioned issue was trash and blight throughout the community. The people of Poplar expressed concern over trash found in rivers and streams, boarded up windows, empty decaying buildings, unofficial dump sites, and litter throughout the town. It was noted the landfill is not open convenient hours, thus people often dump in areas that are not appropriate. Many community members expressed the need to coordinate efforts to address the beautification needs of Poplar and restore pride in the community. By working together, the people of Poplar can transform their community.

### Economic Decline

Consistently, the issues of closed businesses, the lack of a vibrant downtown, panhandling, and unemployment were mentioned in the Poplar Community Review Listening Sessions. The people expressed the urgent need to find new avenues for Poplar, perhaps in agriculture, tourism, or education to begin the revitalization of Poplar.

### What DO you want to see happen in Poplar in the next five years?

On the flip side of what the people of Poplar don't want to see are all the things they DO want in order to be a community where everyone thrives. We've organized these ideas into these interrelated categories: Governance, Economic Development, Community Clean-Up, Education, Housing, Infrastructure, Culture and Health; and Downtown Revitalization.



This word cloud visually represents the most frequently voiced responses when listening session participants were asked what they do want to see in the community over the coming 5-10 years. Larger text indicates items mentioned most often.

### ***Governance***

Those attending the Poplar meetings clearly identified the critical importance of continual and on-going communication and cooperation between the Tribe, Roosevelt County, and Poplar town government. It was apparent to the Team in just the short time that Team Members were in the community that good communication already exists between the three entities. Representatives of all three governmental entities were well represented throughout the numerous conversation sessions.

### ***Economic Development***

Residents were very concerned about the lack of economic opportunities within the community and surrounding area. The loss of A & I Industries was repeatedly mentioned. Attendees at the sessions voiced the strong desire for jobs and reestablishment of an employment base such as Poplar enjoyed in some years past.

### ***Community Clean-Up***

Residents clearly want more attention paid to the solid waste disposal issue. Community litter needs to be addressed. Attendees voiced the need for better understanding of the current solid waste collection system. This was a major issue that repeatedly came up in the Group Discovery Sessions.



### ***Education***

Feedback strongly indicated support to reduce the dropout rate at the High School. Hope was expressed that the Ft. Peck Community College could provide an even greater role in supporting high school students so that the pupils are “early-on” put on the track to achieving a college-level education.

### ***Housing***

The need for increased supply and better quality of residential housing units repeatedly came up during the community meetings. Residents want fewer boarded up homes and more vigorous and healthy neighborhoods. The need for more rental units was articulated, as well as owner-occupied homes.

### ***Infrastructure***

A high degree of excitement was evident in regard to the planned park improvements proposed in the center of Poplar. Needs for improvement at the swimming pool were also frequently mentioned. Residents voiced strong support for the ongoing improvements that the city public works department is currently making to the city sidewalks. Many favorable comments were made commending the city for the recent sidewalk work.

More attention to street lights for greater nighttime safety was also voiced. Hope was also expressed for improved streets and roads in the community.

On a different note, support was also voiced for development of infrastructure in support of an areawide irrigation system that would provide more employment and make more efficient use of the significant water natural resource that the Tribe has access to along the Missouri River.



### ***Culture and Health***

The community clearly wanted more resources to serve those afflicted with drug addictions. Concerns were expressed that insufficient resources were available to assist those afflicted with drug addiction, other than transfer to expensive, out-of-state treatment and recovery programs. The corresponding impact of drug addiction was linked to a cry for stronger enforcement of laws dealing with use of illegal drugs, as well as more efforts to provide drug prevention education.

Mention was also made of the possible, future provision of a visitor center within Poplar that would provide education and training highlighting Tribal culture. Such a facility could serve as a magnet for the many tourists traveling U.S. Highway 2 between St. Paul - Minneapolis and Glacier Park. Comments were made repeatedly that Poplar could take more advantage of the numbers of tourists that are moving back and forth every day along the U.S. Highway 2 corridor.

### ***Downtown Revitalization***

At almost every session attendees described their attachment to Poplar's downtown, provoking many comments in regard to the past retail and general business activity that flourished in Poplar in earlier decades. Residents almost universally voiced support for the goal that the Poplar downtown be a renewed source of community pride and an attraction to residents and visitors alike.

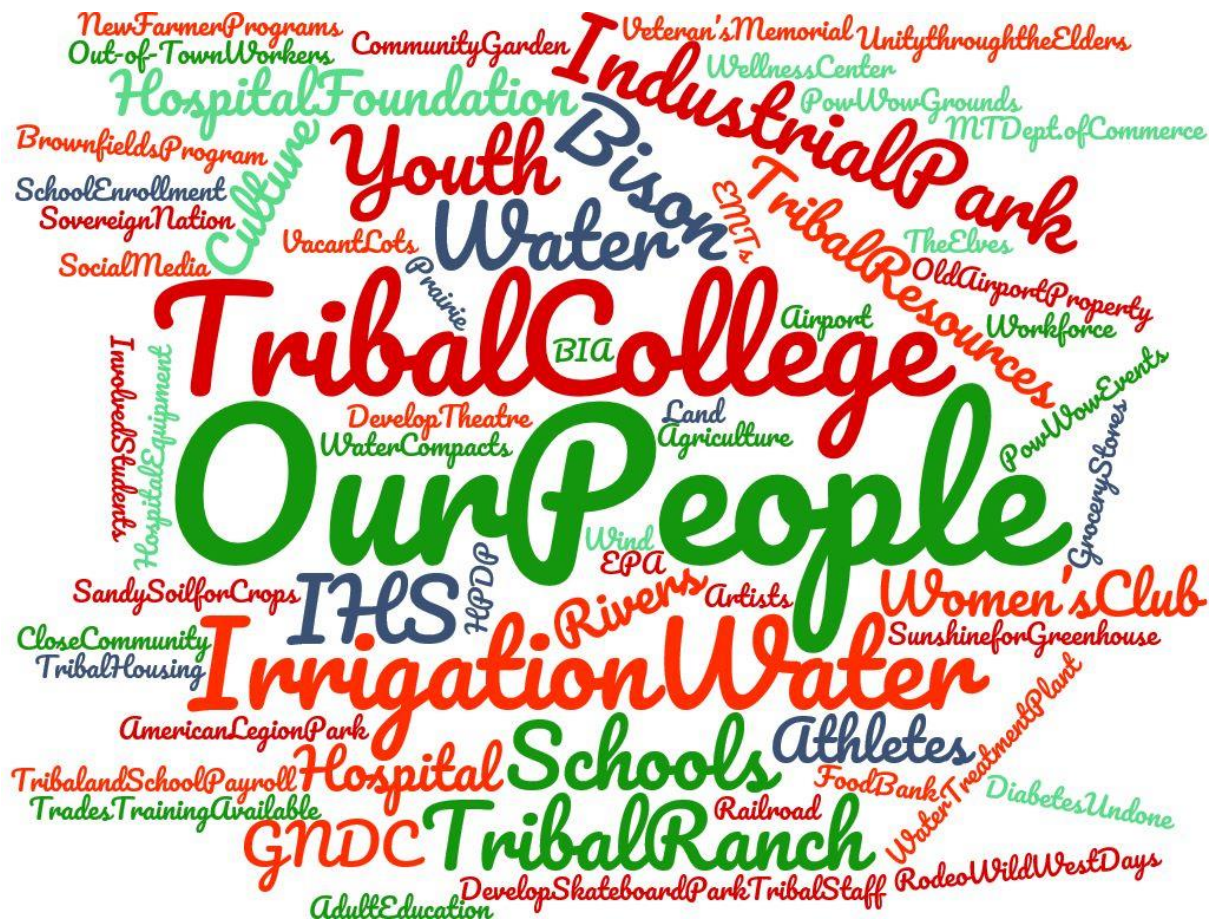


## What, who, and where are the assets that can benefit Poplar:

As outsiders looking in, we always take note of a community's setting within the surrounding landscape — whether it's forested, pastoral farmland, high desert, or near water. Next, we look for historic architecture or unique community features that define a sense of place.

We asked locals to identify assets such as people, organizations, natural resources, or places. Listening session participants shared numerous assets with us, as reflected by the following word cloud.

This word cloud visually represents the most frequently voiced responses when listening session participants were asked about assets and resources in the community. Larger text indicates items mentioned most often.



### Our People

As we often hear when visiting Montana communities, Montana is all about its people. Poplar is no exception and was consistently described as an engaged community because of the culture, tradition and influence of the entire community, particularly the elders who were described as caring people who serve as catalysts for the community to learn, teach and come together to get things done as a top asset.

In the listening sessions, people from different sectors of the local economy were cited as assets such as elders, government workers, school teachers, veterans, business owners and other professionals, EMTs, artists, athletes in the community and the youth. The Poplar Review Team often heard descriptions of the heart of the people of Poplar such as:

- The rich cultural traditions
- The vibrant workforce
- Community spirit and community pride are strong

In short, the people of Poplar were described as the biggest and most important asset in the community.

### ***Places***

Those participating in the listening sessions stated the obvious about the unique and beautiful location of Poplar, particularly in proximity to the nearby Missouri River. Situated on the Fort Peck Reservation and near incredible outdoor and wildlife resources, Poplar is truly a Montana treasure with a rich history and great potential because of its strategic location on Route 2 and the Missouri River.

The team heard a long list under the category of places in Poplar. In summary: the nearby rivers and associated outdoor recreation, existing businesses and infrastructure such as the Industrial Park, the nearby public lands and open space including areas where bison roam, the park and pool including the American Legion Park, the community garden, Wellness Center, Powwow Grounds, Veteran's Memorial, Tribal Ranch, old airport property, Food Bank and rich agricultural land. The potential for wind development was also describe as an asset to develop and which could help create a more vital community. Emotion was attached to the special "place" of Poplar with comments such as:

- The location near the Missouri River and great potential for water use
- The cultural connection to place
- A place where people care about and take care of each other



### ***Organizations***

The Poplar Community Review Team was amazed at the large number of organizations actively engaged within your community. These organizations work hard to plan events, serve those in need, take care of the town's physical needs, educate youth, provide healthcare, and so much more. The team heard about the local schools including the community college, Tribal government and related tribal originations, the hospital and Hospital Foundation, Women's Club, and the Great Northern Development Center

As the graphic above indicates, the most often mentioned organizational assets included the schools, hospital, and Tribal College.

# Survey Results

A “Community Satisfaction Survey” was conducted in Poplar prior to the Advance Team visit. This survey was conducted by University of Idaho and the HELPS Lab at Montana State University. The full survey is included in Appendix B of this report.

## 1. Who Responded

Surveys  
Mailed:  
1,448

Surveys  
Completed:  
200

Response  
Rate: 14%

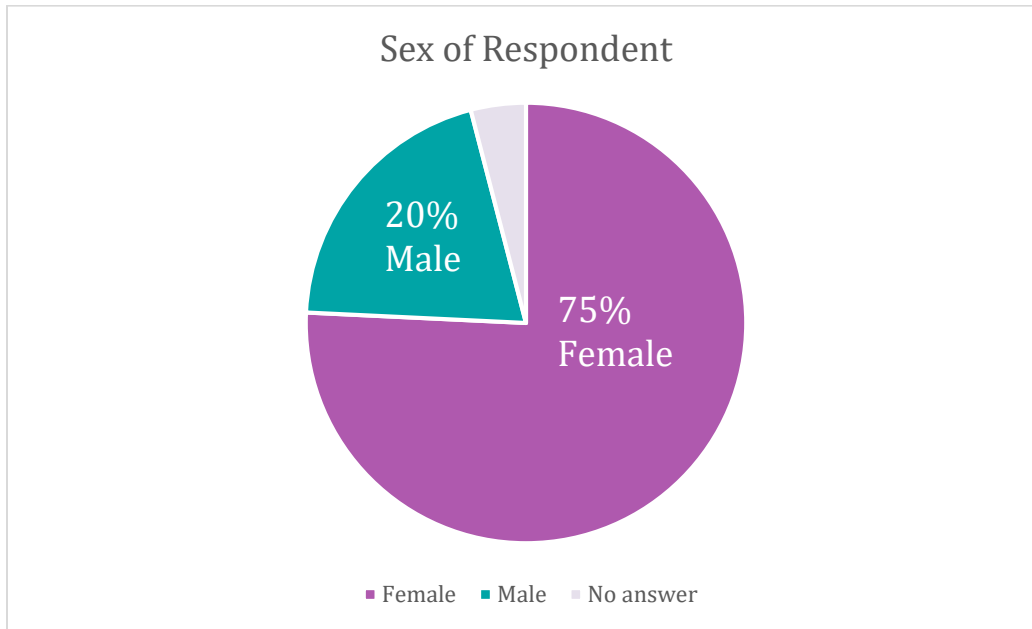
Online  
Surveys: 32

Paper  
Surveys: 168

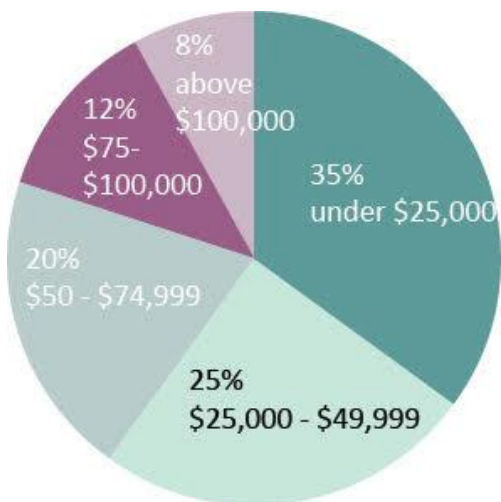


## Demographics

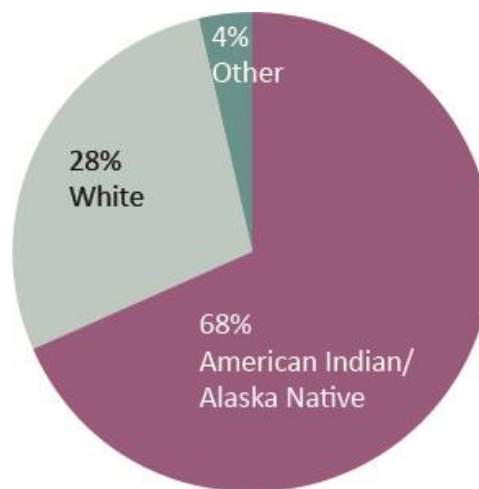
Mean age: 55 (average age of those responding)



### Household income

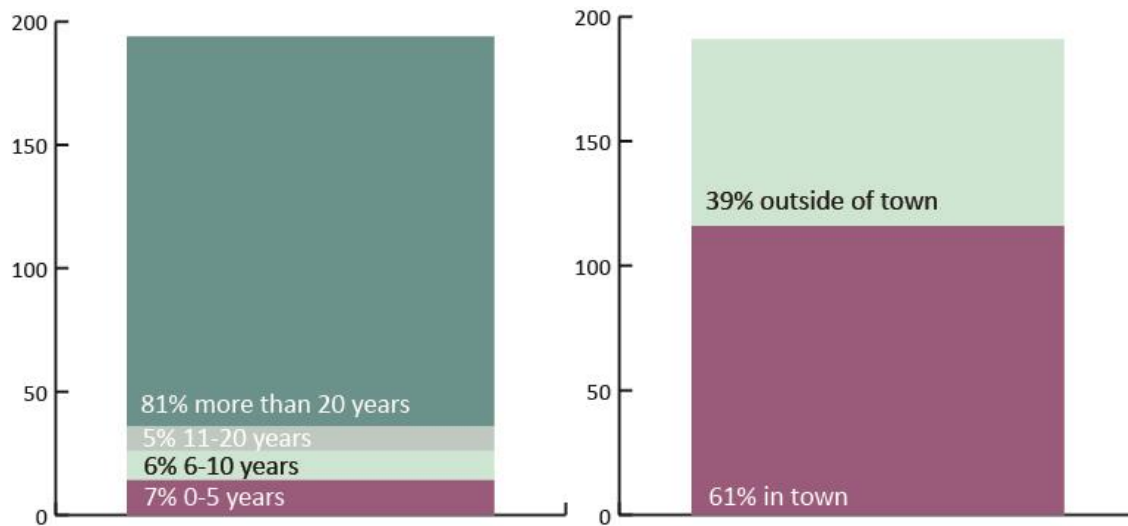


### Race & ethnicity



### Years in community

### Live in or outside of town



A note about the “satisfaction” section of the survey results: reported percentages are of those who answered the question. In a few cases many respondents did not select any of the options. Items where more than 15% selected “don’t know” as a response include “childcare/early childhood education,” “mental health services,” “senior citizen support services,” and “civic and non-profit organizations.” This is probably due to a lack of awareness or knowledge of the state of these services.

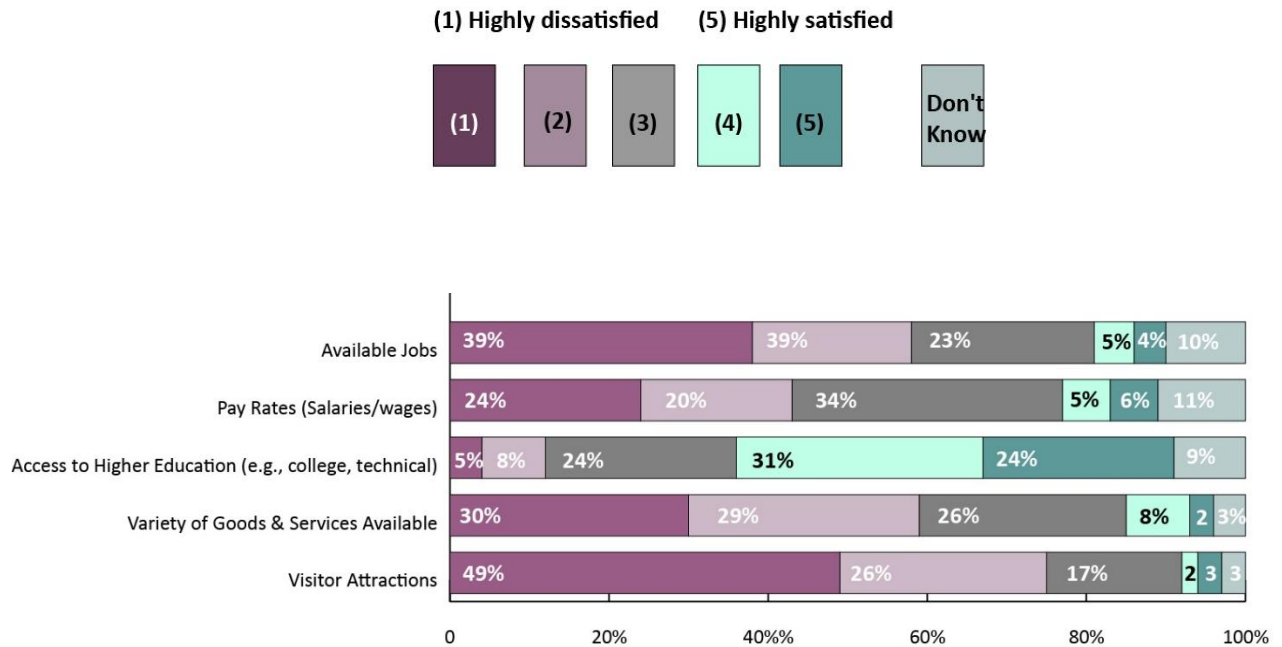
There were several opportunities for survey respondents to explain their satisfaction ratings and provide additional information and ideas. When balancing comments, which primarily explain negative ratings, and ratings, our sense is that most residents recognize and appreciate the efforts of groups like Make Poplar Great Again as well as several public initiatives but would like to see more people involved in those efforts, more results, and more support from local government entities. Further, there is a sense that residents want these governmental bodies to collaborate more in order to accelerate positive change.





## 2. Economy

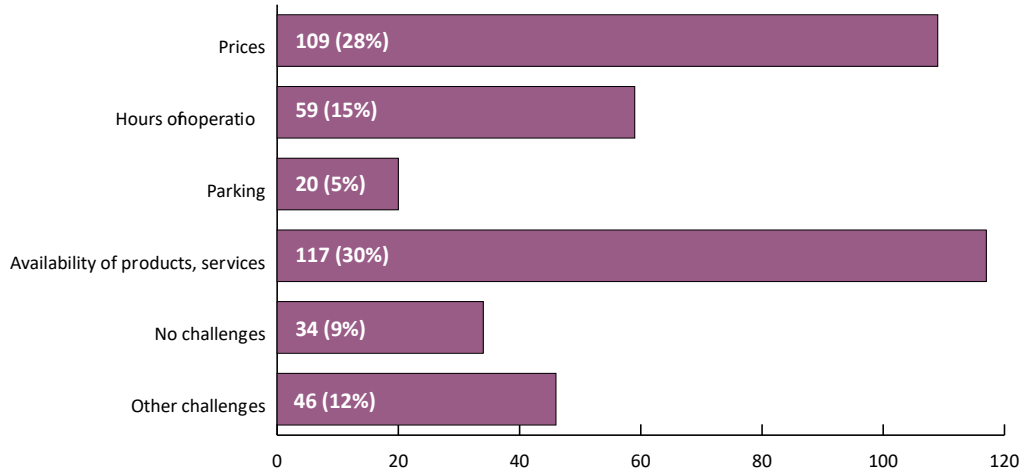
**Question: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your community?**



Items related to the economy that Poplar residents were most satisfied with included “access to higher education,” and “pay rates.” Having a local college and the predominance of tribal and other agency / government jobs likely explains these results.

“Visitor attractions” and “available jobs” were the items people are most dissatisfied with. Several comments mentioned the need for more businesses to increase the opportunity for residents to buy locally and to provide jobs. While comments are appreciative of pow wows and dances, they indicate a desire for a greater variety of local cultural activities and attractions that could capture more visitor dollars.

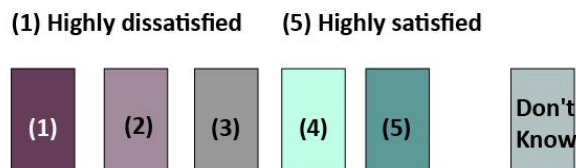
**Question: Do any of the following factors challenge your ability to support Poplar’s locally owned businesses? (Select all that apply.)**

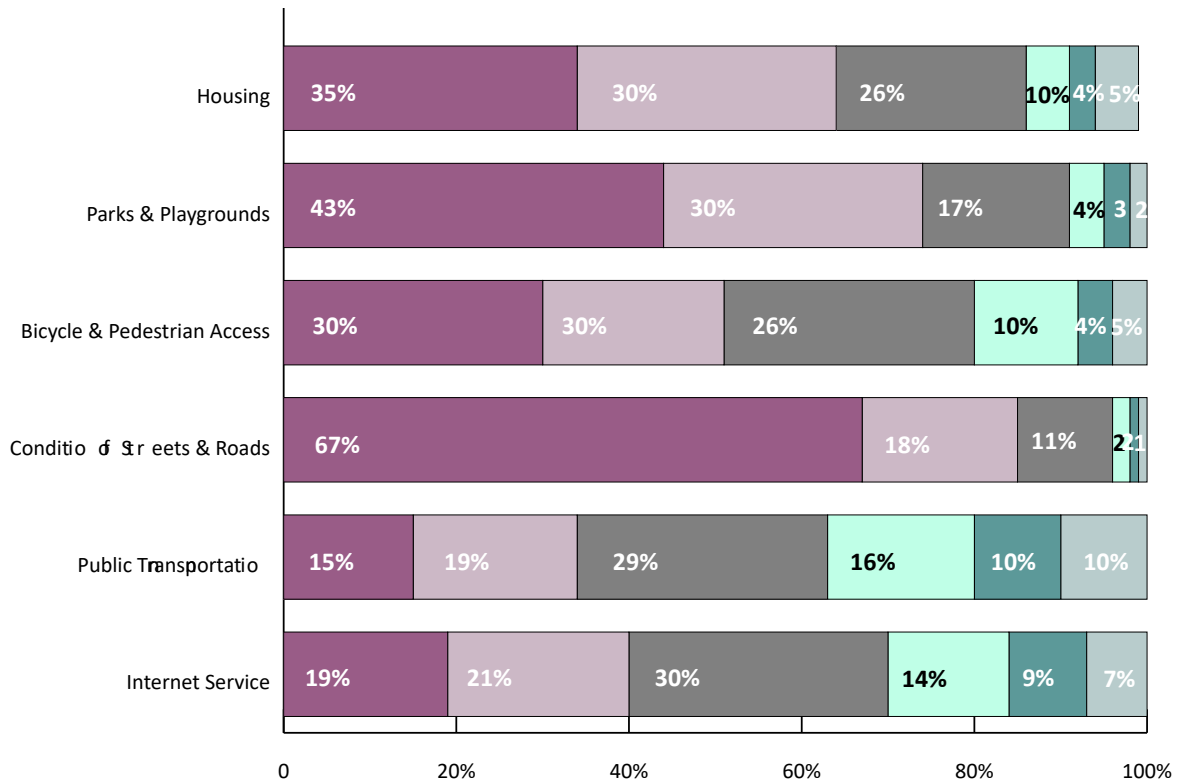


“Availability of products, services” was given as the greatest challenge to supporting local businesses. While locally available produce is acceptable to some, others feel the local stores get “end of the line” produce, which leads to round trips to Williston to buy groceries.

### 3. Infrastructure and Housing

**Question: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your community?**





“Housing,” “Parks & Playgrounds,” and the “Condition of Streets & Roads” were given the lowest marks among infrastructure and housing-related items. Housing concerns relate to both availability of quality housing and the state of disrepair and upkeep of many homes and properties in the community.

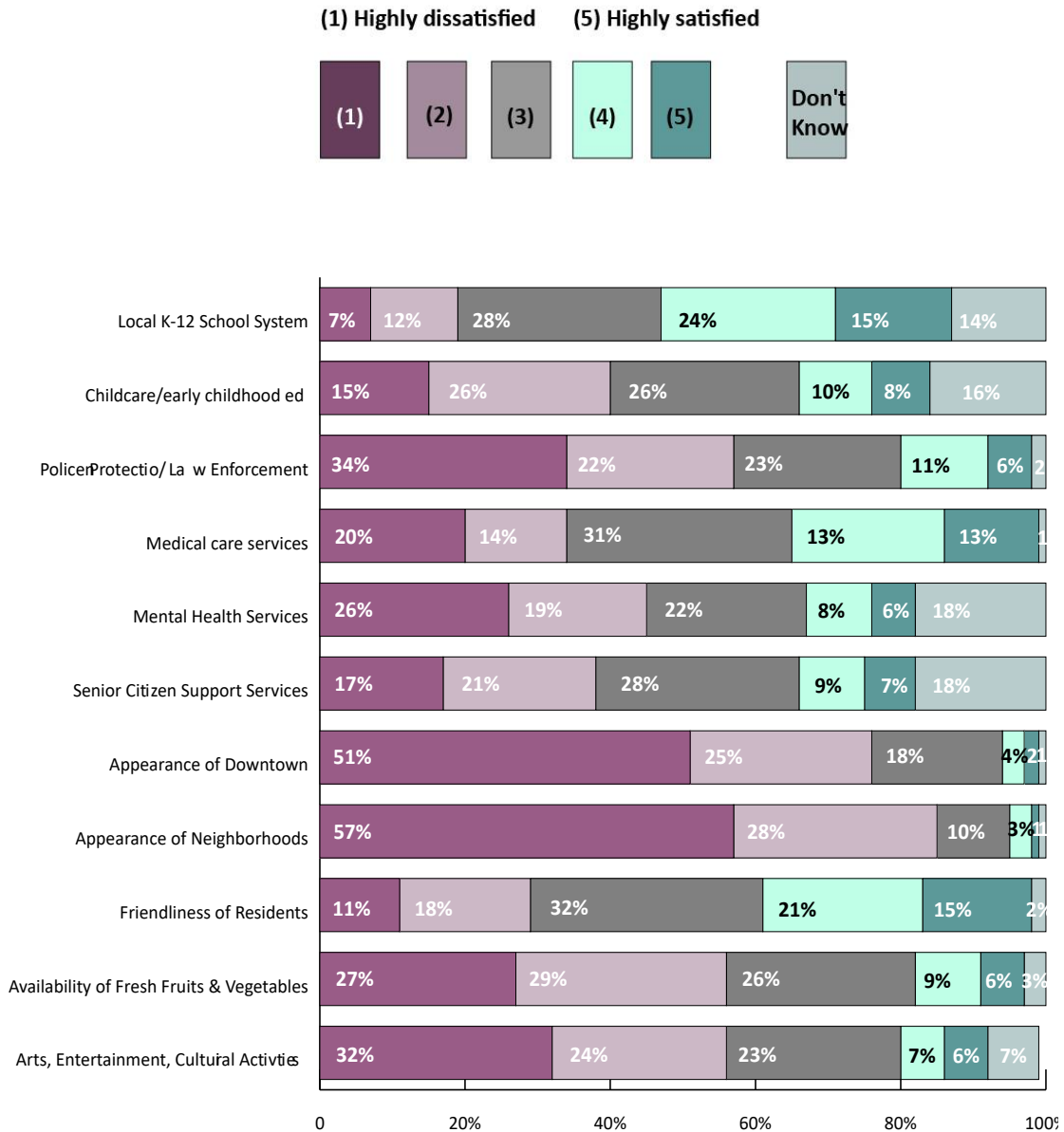
*Personal and public properties are frequently in a state of disrepair. Yards are trash littered, unkempt with many having junk cars.*

*Housing is extremely tight. Not much in the way of homes to rent or buy. Many neighborhoods are shabby, with abandoned houses next to ones where the owners are trying to keep their homes neat and clean.*

*Some of the things are just not there in our community, safe clean park and playground to take my girls and grandson too.*

## 4. Placemaking

Question: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your community?



People who responded to the survey are happiest with quality of education, medical services and friendliness of residents.

*Poplar people tend to be very friendly and helpful. If you need anything, friends and neighbors are there for you. They're welcoming and will invite you into their homes.*

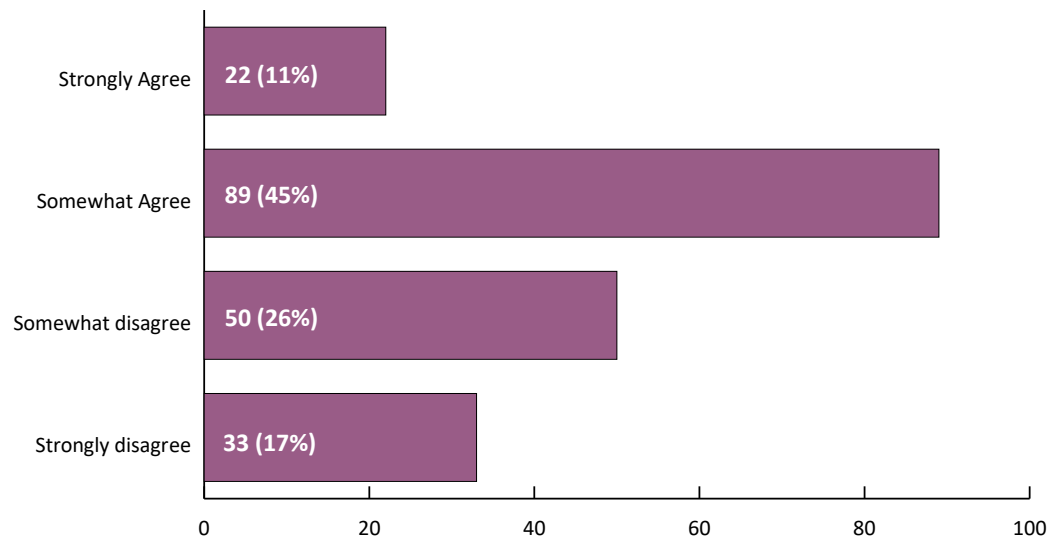
Appreciation for friendly, caring neighbors appears to be the only item among these that is universal, however. There were several negative comments about the quality of HIS care and education.

*The school system is streaks BEHIND and leaves students at a disadvantage.*

*Fort Peck Community College's main campus is located in Poplar and is a great asset to this community as it is providing affordable education and skills. Unfortunately many of the students are woefully unprepared for college level work.*

People are most alarmed about the visible indicators of community disorganization: deterioration of infrastructure, litter, people with obvious drug, alcohol and mental health problems, and unkempt property. There is a sense that if these issues could change course, other goals, such as economic development, and improved amenities, such as parks and shopping, could be attained.

**Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I am proud of my community"?**



This result (56% are proud, while only 43% are not) might seem surprising to some, considering the frequent comments and concerns expressed in survey results and during listening sessions about trash on the streets, unkempt properties and high visibility of homelessness and drug and alcohol abuse in the community.

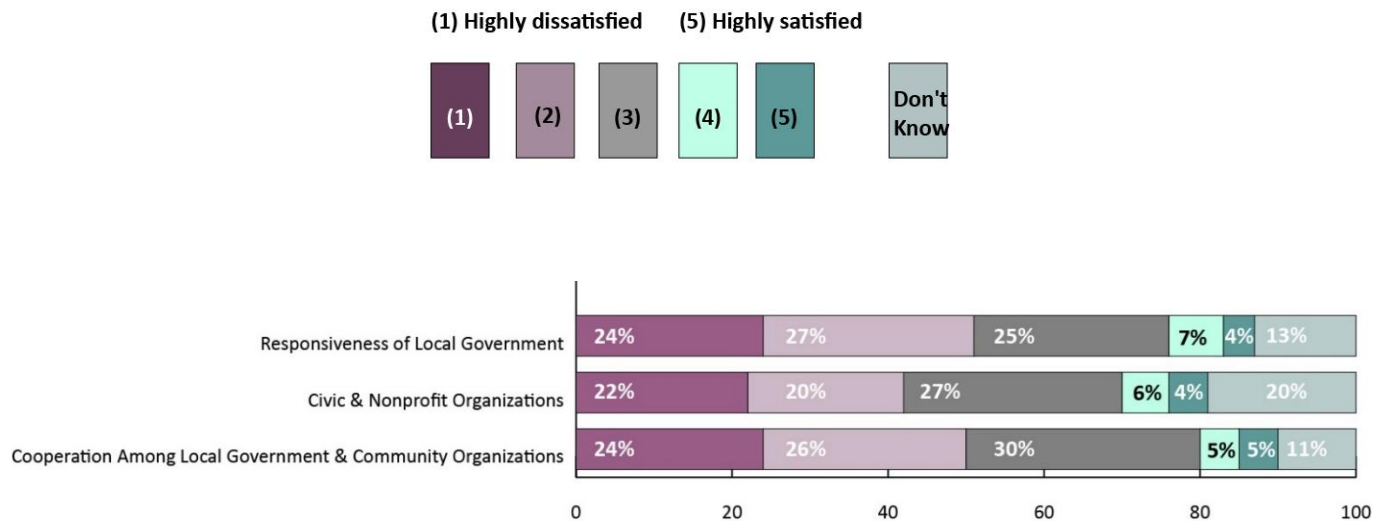
*The pride of our town needs to start at home. Sometimes when you start cleaning your yard your neighbor may kick in and do theirs.*

*The appearance of downtown is bad enough on its own but the vagrancy and panhandling that occurs downtown plays a major role in its decline.*

We read this apparent contradiction as a positive signal that survey respondents have hope, as well as a deep love of the Poplar community and pride in tribal identity and history.

## 5. Leadership

**Question: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your community?**



There appears to be mixed views about the capacity of local organizations and governments to effectively address Poplar’s challenges.

*There is not a lot of cooperation among agencies.*

*We have city, county and Tribal government. They don't talk to each other!*

*Seems like there are always lots of meetings about such things but we see few results of these meetings.*

*There needs to be more community/tribal organizations that care about creating change. Those who do care are not given a voice or access to resources.*

During the visit to the community in May, it was clear that city, county and Tribal governments DO communicate, but the prevalent perspective that they don't indicates a need to make that communication more visible somehow. Similarly, there is a perception that power is sometimes held by those who do not have the best interests of the community at front and center:

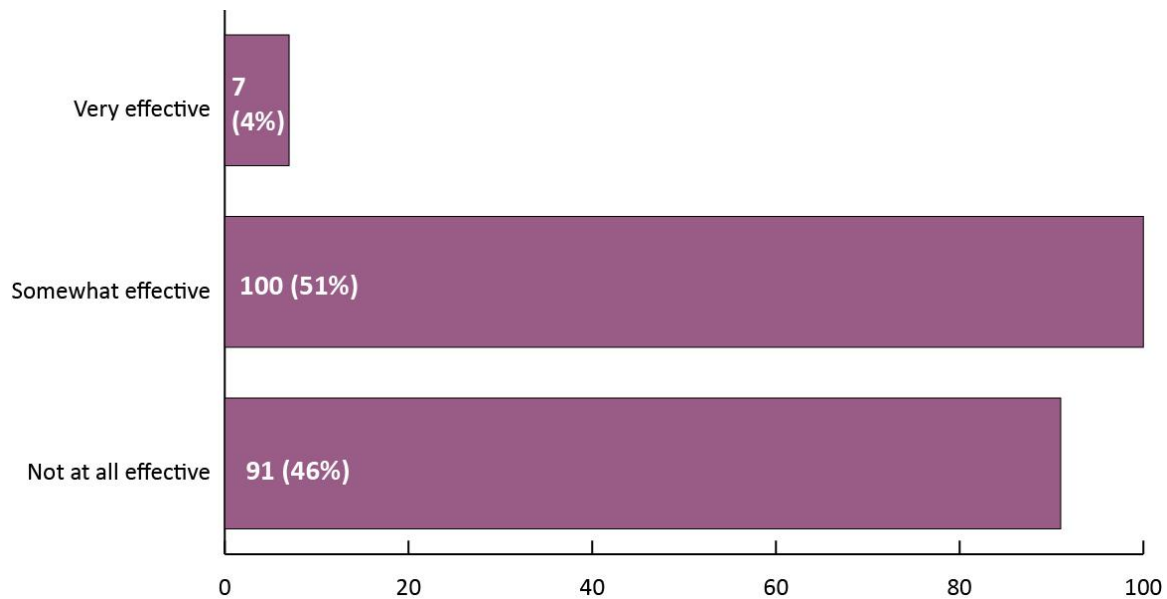
*Dishonesty is epidemic. Persons put into power positions for which they are untrained/uneducated. Misappropriation of government funding. Nepotism.*

*We need more police officers that will do their jobs. I've reported drug activity to several officers but so far nothing has been done.*

Again, this is not to say that these perspectives represent reality, but to make local governmental entities aware that this perception is out there. One goal might be to gain a deeper understanding of where these perceptions come from and address the root cause of these perceptions, whatever they are.



**Question: In general, how effective do you think the residents of your community are at working together to solve challenges?**



The split on this question recognizes the valuable (and valiant) efforts on behalf of the community, but also the monumental challenges that seemingly continue to worsen. For survey respondents, the glass is below the half empty point and they would like to see the level rise substantially.

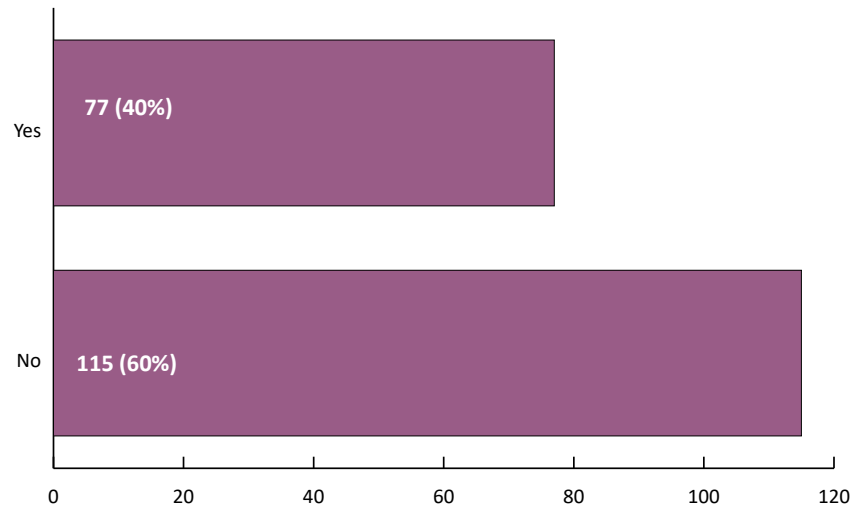
In a state of social disorganization, residents need signals and direction, which they apparently feel are lacking. One respondent, citing a theory of social order, shared this observation:

*This issue makes people unwilling to make new or additional investments in the community as there is the appearance of either inability or unwillingness to uphold certain basic standards and accountability in the community.*

In other words, unless people think others are going to make an effort on behalf of the community, they won't either.



**Question: Have you been involved in a neighborhood or community project in the last 12 months? (For example, youth development, community beautification, fund raiser, etc.)**



While the majority of respondents have not volunteered in the past year, the number and range of activities in which local volunteers have been involved is impressive:

**Question: Please tell us the type(s) of projects you have been involved in:**

**Note: X's indicate number of different times that item was mentioned. Count the X's and add 1!**

- Donated to Walleyes Unlimited
- Donated to the Fire Dept
- Raised money by donating
- Poplar Cemetery
- X Various community activities
- I donate baking and cooking services for community activities
- Community service through work
- PETA (Buffalo Group)
- Round about road improvements for Highway
- Neighborhood watch/captain of the street
- Community patrolling
- Spay and neuter clinics
- X Poplar community Garden
- College garden
- And I have done a few things for the museum. But that is gone now, and site for pie social is also gone.

## Community Events

- Earth day celebration
- XX Wild West Days weekend
- Family days
- Community carnival
- I am also involved in preparing to play bells in the concert May 16
- Sunday with Santa
- Community Picnic
- Easter
- Halloween
- Color runs
- Book club
- Ladies club



## Elders

- Help sick and elderly get their porches, steps and ramps rebuilt each June
- Elder Support

## Community Action

- X Make Poplar Great Again
- Fundraiser by Bruce (Cubby) Damon for community projects.
- X fundraisers
- Tribal Tourism
- make a visible difference...tourism project
- Community project meetings.
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Beautification projects (mostly clean up days).
- We helped with the care of plants/trees in our community after they were planted last year
- In our sustainable village aka "Brad Pitt" community, they planted trees and flowers last fall and left post care (watering) up to the block leaders, which includes our household
- Cleaning up our street, picking up trash, mowing neighbors yards, endless work
- Community services: I pick up workers and take them around Poplar to pick up mattress and large items laying around homes

## Poverty

- I help the mission with holiday meals for the homeless and needy
- I help feed the hungry
- I am currently housing a homeless person who hopefully will soon get back on her feet
- I volunteered and helped cook, clean, and try to improve the New Life Mission for the homeless people sometimes serving up to 50 meals at lunch daily
- Donated to those in need
- Volunteer transport service and assistance helping sick people get to their physician and help them get what they need without harassment

## Drug Recovery/Prevention

- Work with recovering drug users
- drug and alcohol prevention groups
- I give money for resources for teaching courses that will strengthen people to fight and win the fight of addiction and broken homes
- drunk driving awareness



## Church activities

- "Church veterans"
- X Church
- Church fund raisers
- I pray
- Activities at the Assembly of God church in Poplar

## Youth & Family

- H.S. youth basketball team fundraiser for NABI
- Basketball fundraising
- Sponsor basketball and softball teams
- Poplar youth tournaments
- Fundraisers/sports club
- School sports functions
- Pee wee softball
- X youth sports/recreation
- Volunteer with youth activities
- I crafted a teddy bear from a fur coat and donated it to be raffled to help a boy go to Carnegie H. P.A.
- I redo dolls, bears, toys for the Angel tree at Christmas
- Grad Nite
- Family days
- Community carnival
- Mentoring children for the past six years (We have learned that just a little quality time makes a huge difference in the lives of these children)
- Sunday with Santa
- December we made up 32 bags for all sizes of boys and girls, all sizes and ages NB through teens that had emergency clothing, toiletries, blanket, toy, stuffed animal to send with any child social services have to remove from their homes.
- Boy Scouts
- 4H Club
- X School
- toys for tots
- X Halloween/trunk or treat
- X Easter

- I have been involved with Tribal Elves
- XI helped out with the creators game camp w/the youth
- Tutoring
- I have purchased from the Music Booster Club
- I'm a student advocate
- Making blankets and quilts for various agencies in the area and for Denver Children's Hospital
- Youth Blast at church every Wednesday just to keep kids occupied and doing something
- Improving mental health services to youth
- "I serve with the nonprofit No Kid Hungry and we work on breakfast programs K-12. I also work with the community organization Health Promotion Disease Prevention. K-12 breakfast programs, K-12 nutrition, farm to school, The family dinner project (emphasis on emotional/physical benefits of family dinner)
- 4-H leader
- community picnic/kids days
- I go to the Juvenile Detention Center 2x per week and offer these children a new hope through the teachings of the Bible
- I took in a 17 year old girl who I had to go to tribal court for. It was a long process. I got her out of the state for treatment and is now getting her life back



**Question: What is something you like about the Poplar community?**

Last, and most definitely not least, survey respondents were asked to name one thing they like about Poplar. While there were several “nothing” answers and others used the opportunity to discuss aspects of the community they don’t like, the **OVERWHELMING** response was to name many positive aspects of the community. As you move forward to “make Poplar great again,” the best starting place is with your strengths and assets, of which you clearly have many!

*Note: X's indicate number of different times that item was mentioned. **Count the X's and add 1!***

**Social**

- Everyone knows you
- X Knowing just about everybody

- Everyone knows each other
- Has a great mix of people and artists
- Just going into a business, post office, or even school all the little kids that come up to hug me All the people that say hi to you in the community
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX The friendliness of the people
- The goodness and friendliness of its people
- The people here are typically kind and friendly
- People are friendly, closeness of community, caring people
- People are generally friendly, even through so much trauma
- It is a close community and culture is beautiful
- Very cultural
- People are nice, so friendly
- Friendly neighbors, good people
- Community is family.
- The way we stick together
- People really can come together as one, there are good people who want to stay here
- XXXXXXXXXX The people
- The people. hands down!
- Friendly people--we are family
- XXXXX I like that the community of Poplar will usually work together to help other community members in times of a medical emergency or crisis.
- There are a lot of good people here.
- X Family
- All my family is here, friends
- My church family and other good friends
- The children
- Great, hardworking people with amazing young people
- We are all proud of our kids!
- The small community
- There is a certain amount of serenity
- The sense of community I have
- I grew up here
- It's my home
- X It's home
- I was born here so I am loyal to my community
- It will always be where I grew up
- I was born and raised here and this town has potential
- It is my community
- A wonderful sense of humor
- The good friends that are still here
- X Low population
- Open spaces
- The isolation of location
- X It's a small community
- Small town allows me to know people on a more personal level



- Poplar is not as bad as some people say
- I am proud of Montana, there is no other state as beautiful

### Action

- X I like the small group of people who are willing to help out whenever wherever to make something happen for the community
- To see the ones who are trying to do good in the community
- The amount of people working and organizing to make Poplar beautiful
- Kenny Smoker is doing a great job at trying to improve things
- The people who go out of their way to make a difference
- There are some very good well-intentioned people in the community who want to do the right thing and not just painting their own wagon



### Traditional Institutions

- XX I think the kids in Poplar have a greater opportunity to participate in school activities than in bigger communities
- XXXXXXXX There is a nice community college
- And the college. It provides educational employment opportunities for Poplar and communities for miles around! The school also has a number of really dedicated teachers. We sure need that!
- Reservation headquarters
- The FPCC has done much to bring better image and services to Poplar
- NE Montana Health service with Judy & Abbie giving care
- Our medical staff at our clinic and hospital
- Health care is good
- HPDP is tribal program called Health Promotion Disease Prevention
- Hospital and clinic
- Spotted bull recovery resource center
- X Snow removal is great
- Fire dept and law enforcement are responsive
- The Poplar Public Schools have been improving over recent years
- Poplar has a clinic, emergency room, nursing home, gas station, grocery stores, college, public school, many Fort Peck Tribal programs that serve the people and many good people
- There is so much potential! The school is an example. It cares!!!

- Language and cultural activities
- I love how the schools are promoting "Poplar Strong. Community Strong." It's good to see our community and youth being proud of being a Poplar Indian
- Sport events with school kids
- HPDP activities for kids in summer
- Cost of living is low

### Culture and Amenities

- Open show house show good movies recent ones
- X Pow-wows
- I believe Poplar has the resources to be a more productive community
- I like the location, being on Highway 2
- Excellent fitness center
- Cultural events
- My church
- X History
- Bike path/walkways for pedestrians
- Been lucky to fall into a good job and home.
- Fitness center
- XX Library
- Basketball
- Sports
- Poplar girls went to state this year
- The school athletes
- Youth involvement
- Kid's activities
- The coffee shop, The Percolator
- Flower boxes on the corners



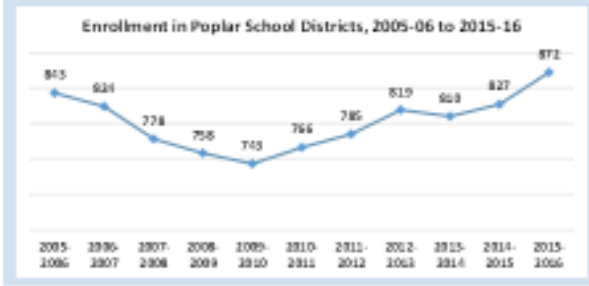
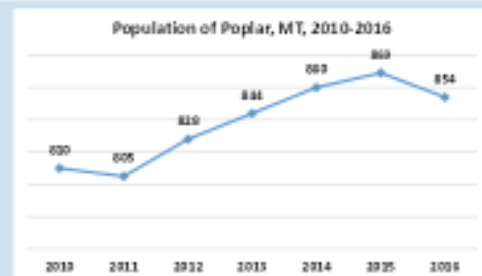
Appendix A: Community Profile

# POPLAR, MONTANA COMMUNITY PROFILE



## POPULATION

	Poplar City	Roosevelt County
<b>Total population</b>		
2016, number	854	11,305
2010, number	810	10,425
Change 2010-2016, percent	5.4	8.4
<b>Components of population change, 2010-2016</b>		
Net migration change (in-migrants minus out-migrants)		
Number	—	256
Percent	—	2.5
Natural change (births minus deaths)		
Number	—	609
Percent	—	5.8
<b>Population by race, 2012-2016 average, percent of total</b>		
White	20	37
American Indian or Alaskan Native	71	55
Other	9	9
<b>Population by ethnicity, 2012-2016 average, percent of total</b>		
Non-Hispanic	100	97
Hispanic	0	3
<b>Population by age group, 2012-2016 average, percent of total</b>		
Under age 18	22	32
Age 18-64	66	57
Age 65 and older	12	11
Median age, 2012-2016 average, years	30.3	30.2

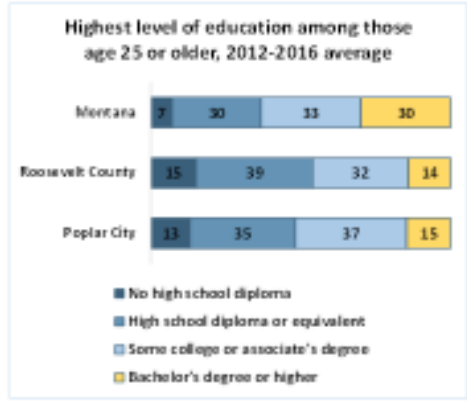


SOURCES: US Census Bureau, US Department of Education

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

	Poplar City	Roosevelt County	Montana State
<b>Income</b>			
Per capita income, 2012-2016 average, dollars	20,203	16,885	27,309
Median household income, 2012-2016 average, dollars	31,000	34,481	48,380
<b>Poverty</b>			
Overall poverty, 2012-2016 average			
Number	227	2,953	148,677
Rate, percent	28.7	26.9	14.9
Children living in poverty, 2012-2016 average			
Number	64	1,232	40,953
Rate, percent	36.6	34.6	18.6
<b>Food insecurity</b>			
Overall rate, 2015, percent	---	17.9	13.0
Rate among children, 2015, percent	---	24.4	18.8

SOURCES: US Census Bureau, Feeding America



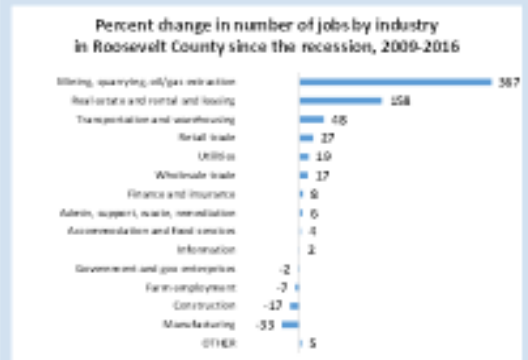
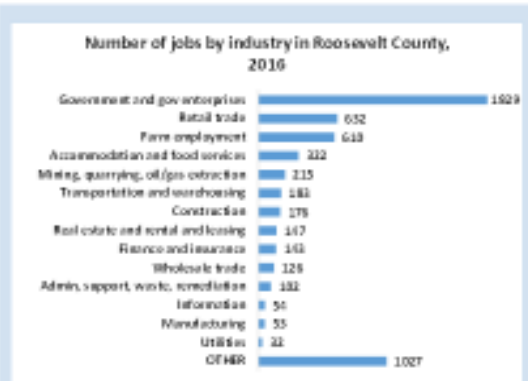
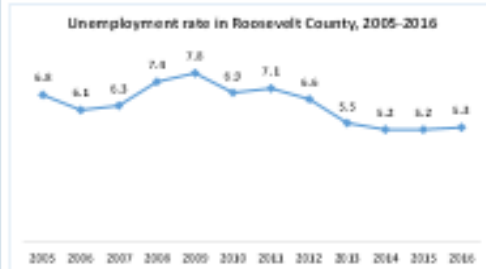
This project is supported by USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Grant #2016-10945. It is part of the AFRI Foundational program.



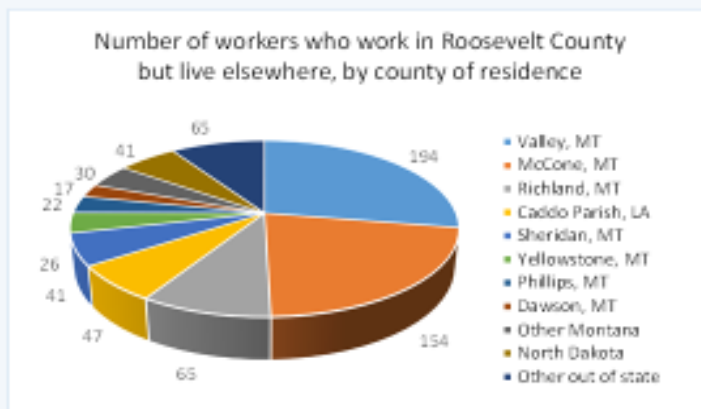
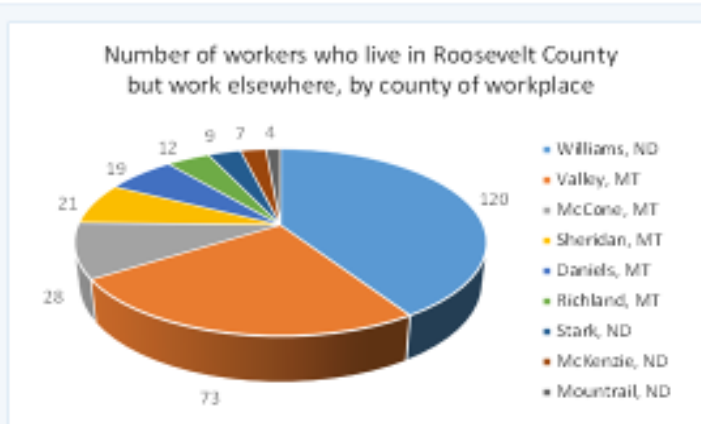


## ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Poplar City	Roosevelt County
<b>Full- and part-time jobs</b>		
Total number, 2016	---	5,651
Total number, 2011	---	5,433
Total number, 2006	---	5,206
Change, 2011-2016, percent	---	4.0
Change, 2006-2011, percent	---	4.4
<b>Employment characteristics</b>		
Labor force participation rate, 2012-2016 average, percent	50.2	49.7
Unemployment rate, 2012-2016 average, percent	15.0	6.2
Self-employment rate, 2016, percent	---	28.8
Average annual pay, 2016, dollars	---	36,048
<b>Business establishments with paid employees, by size, 2015</b>		
All establishments, number	---	225
Establishments with 1-4 paid employees, number	---	122
Establishments with 5-9 paid employees, number	---	48
Establishments with 10-19 paid employees, number	---	36
Establishments with 20-49 paid employees, number	---	13
Establishments with 50 or more paid employees, number	---	6



NOTE: "Other" industries include forestry, fishing, and related activities; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; utilities; transportation and warehousing; information; finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing; management of companies and enterprises; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services; and other services.



SOURCES: US Census Bureau, US Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Labor

## HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

	Poplar City	Roosevelt County
<b>Total housing units, 2012-2016 average</b>		
Number of units	358	4,082
<b>Housing tenure, 2012-2016 average, percent of housing units</b>		
Owner-occupied units	42	56
Renter-occupied units	58	44
<b>Housing type, 2012-2016 average, percent of housing units</b>		
1 unit, attached or detached	63	81
2-4 units	4	4
5 or more units	23	5
Mobile home, boat, RV, van, etc.	9	11
<b>Housing affordability, 2012-2016 average</b>		
Households spending 30% or more of income on housing costs		
Owner-occupied units, percent	16	12
Renter-occupied units, percent	17	19

SOURCES: US Census Bureau



## RESOURCES

Headwaters Economics, Economic Profile System

<https://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/economic-profile-system/>

- Poplar City – Demographics
- Roosevelt County – Multiple topics
  - Demographics
  - Socioeconomic measures
  - Agriculture, timber, and mining, including oil & gas
  - Services and tourism
  - Government
  - Non-labor income
  - Public land amenities
  - Federal land payments
  - Wildland urban interface

### PROJECT PARTNERS

Montana State University

Montana Economic Developers Association

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Gloria O'Rourke

[gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org)

<http://medamembers.org/meda>

<http://www.communityreview.org>

**Appendix B: Community Satisfaction Survey Instrument**

**Poplar Community Survey  
Poplar Community Survey**

**Q1. Listed below are public services and community amenities. Thinking about availability, cost, quality, and any other considerations important to you, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your community? Please circle a number from 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 5 (highly satisfied), or “don’t know.”**

	Highly dissatisfied			Highly satisfied		Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5	DK
a. Local K-12 school system	1	2	3	4	5	DK
b. Childcare/early childhood education programs	1	2	3	4	5	DK
c. Housing	1	2	3	4	5	DK
d. Parks & playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	DK
e. Bicycle & pedestrian access	1	2	3	4	5	DK
f. Condition of streets & roads	1	2	3	4	5	DK
g. Public transportation	1	2	3	4	5	DK
h. Internet service	1	2	3	4	5	DK
i. Appearance of downtown	1	2	3	4	5	DK
j. Appearance of neighborhoods	1	2	3	4	5	DK
k. Police protection/law enforcement	1	2	3	4	5	DK
l. Medical care services	1	2	3	4	5	DK
m. Mental health services	1	2	3	4	5	DK
n. Senior citizen support services	1	2	3	4	5	DK
o. Available jobs	1	2	3	4	5	DK
p. Pay rates (salaries/wages)	1	2	3	4	5	DK
q. Access to higher education (e.g., college, technical)	1	2	3	4	5	DK
r. Variety of goods & services available	1	2	3	4	5	DK
s. Responsiveness of local government	1	2	3	4	5	DK
t. Civic & nonprofit organizations	1	2	3	4	5	DK
u. Arts, entertainment, & cultural activities	1	2	3	4	5	DK
v. Friendliness of residents	1	2	3	4	5	DK
w. Availability of fresh fruits & vegetables	1	2	3	4	5	DK
x. Cooperation among local government agencies & community organizations	1	2	3	4	5	DK
y. Visitor attractions	1	2	3	4	5	DK

**Q2. Would you like to comment or explain why you rated your satisfaction with any of these public services and community amenities in the way you did? If so, please provide your comments/explanation here:**

**Q3.** Would you like to comment on your level of satisfaction with any other public services or community amenities that are not listed above? If so, please explain here:

**Q4.** In general, how effective do you think the residents of your community are at working together to solve challenges?

- Very effective       Somewhat effective       Not at all effective

**Q5.** Please briefly explain why you answered the previous question (Q4) in the way you did:

**Q6.** Have you been involved in a neighborhood or community project in the last 12 months? *For example, youth development, community beautification, fund raiser, etc.*

- Yes  
 No

If yes, please tell us the type(s) of projects you have been involved in:

**Q7.** Please complete this sentence: “I would be involved in more community projects if...”

**Q8.** Do any of the following factors challenge your ability to support Poplar’s locally owned businesses? *Please select all that apply.*

- Prices
- Hours of operation
- Parking
- Availability of products, services, or both
- Nothing/no challenges
- Other challenge(s)—please specify:

---

**Q9.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I am proud of my community”?

- Strongly agree       Somewhat agree       Somewhat disagree       Strongly disagree

**Q10.** What is something you like about the Poplar community?

**Q11.** What is your sex?

- Male       Female       Prefer not to answer

**Q12.** What is your race? *Please select all that apply.*

- African American/Black    American Indian/Alaska Native    Asian/Pacific Islander    White    Other

**Q13.** What is your ethnicity?

- Hispanic    Non-Hispanic

**Q14.** In what year were you born?

\_\_\_\_\_ birth year

**Q15.** What is your annual household income?

- Under \$25,000    \$25,000-\$49,999    \$50,000-\$74,999    \$75,000-\$100,000    Above \$100,000

**Q16.** Do you live in town or outside of town?

- In town    Outside of town

**Q17.** How many years have you lived in Poplar or the immediate area?

- 0-5 years    6-10 years    11-20 years    More than 20 years