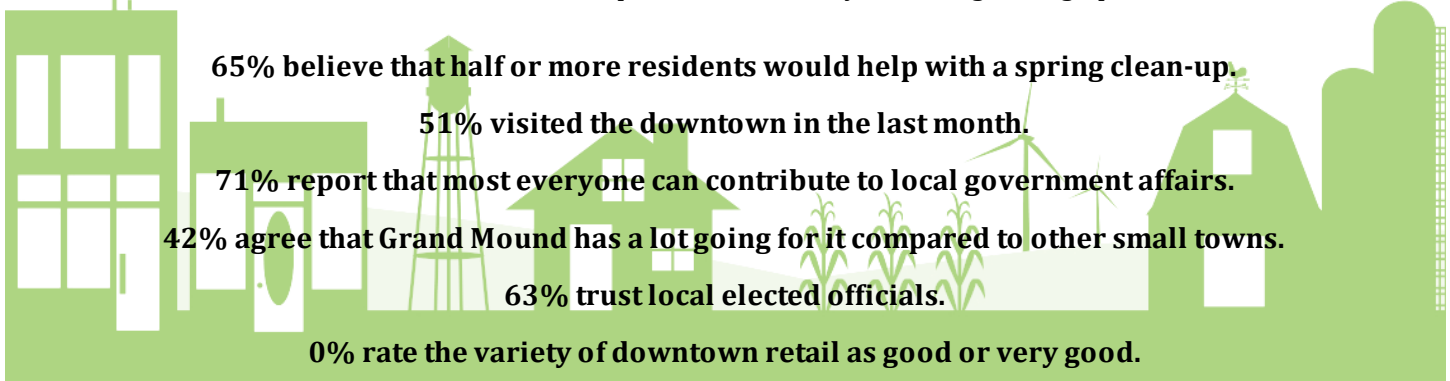


A PROFILE OF GRAND MOUND FROM 1994 TO 2014

Grand Mound was one of 99 Iowa small towns randomly selected in 1994 for an Iowa State University study of life in small towns. The study was repeated in 2004 and again in 2014. 150 residents of Grand Mound were randomly selected in each year to participate in the study. In 2014, 73 residents returned completed surveys. In this report, we show the changes that have occurred in residents' assessment of the quality of life, their description of the social environment, and their level of attachment to and involvement in the community during the past two decades.

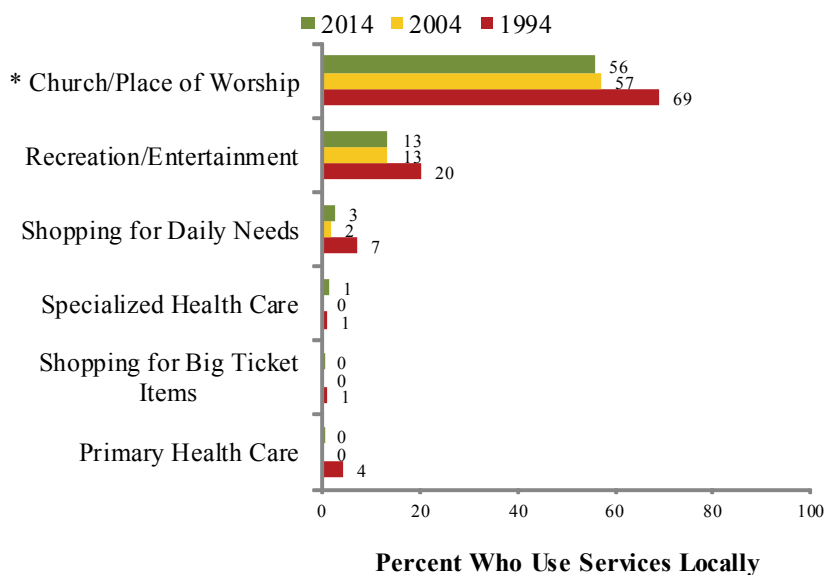
LIFE IN GRAND MOUND

Grand Mound was platted in 1866 and incorporated in 1884. By 2013, 569 residents call Grand Mound their home, a drop of 8 percent from the town's 1990 population level. Grand Mound sponsors the Grand Mound Community Historical Museum and the biggest display of 4th of July fireworks in the state of Iowa. Local recreational opportunities include a city park with playground, baseball and softball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, and sand and grass volleyball courts. In addition to being able to enjoy these unique features of small town life, the primary reasons provided by respondents in 2014 for living in Grand Mound are it is the place they grew up, they want to be close to relatives and in-laws, and it is a safe area. In 1994, residents also selected safety as a reason for choosing to live in Grand Mound, but affordable housing and the friendliness of the area were more important than family ties and growing up in town.



LOCAL PATRONAGE PATTERNS

Figure 1

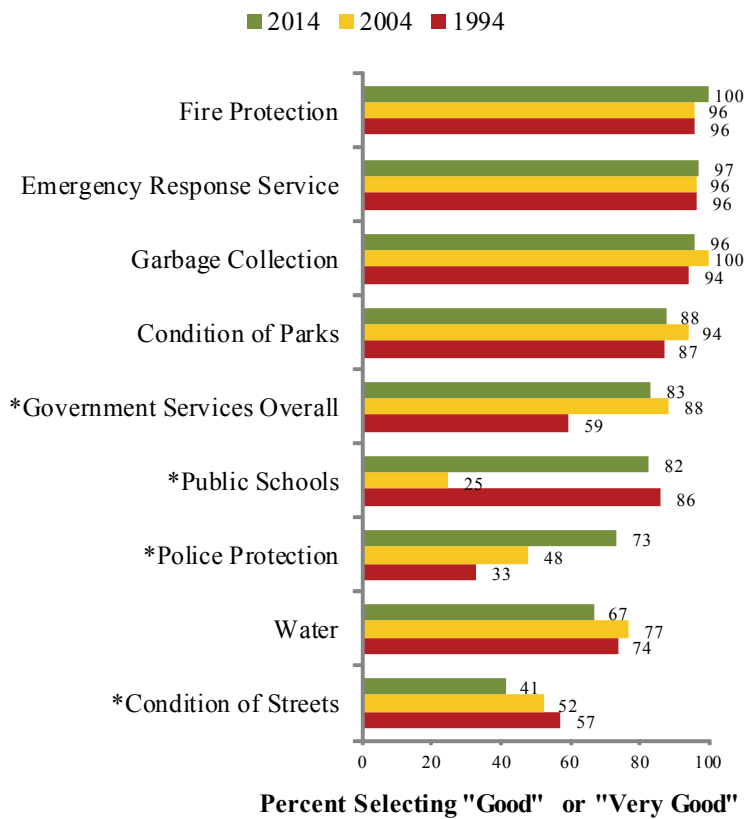


For a variety of reasons many residents of small towns rely on neighboring cities and towns for services. Residents of Grand Mound are no exception. In 2014, church/place of worship is the only local establishment used by more than 50 percent of residents. Moreover, a smaller percent of residents attend the local churches in 2014 than in 1994. Essentially all residents leave Grand Mound for the other services shown in Figure 1 except for recreation/entertainment.

* A note on Interpretation: For Grand Mound, differences in percentages between 2014 and 1994 of less than 11 should be considered a statistical dead-heat. That is, they fall within the margin of error range, which occurs whenever samples are used to draw conclusions about a larger group. With a modest sample size used in this study, the differences must be relatively large before we can be confident that they are real. Throughout the report, differences that are equal to or exceed 11 percent are statistically significant and are indicated with an asterisk (*).

RATINGS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

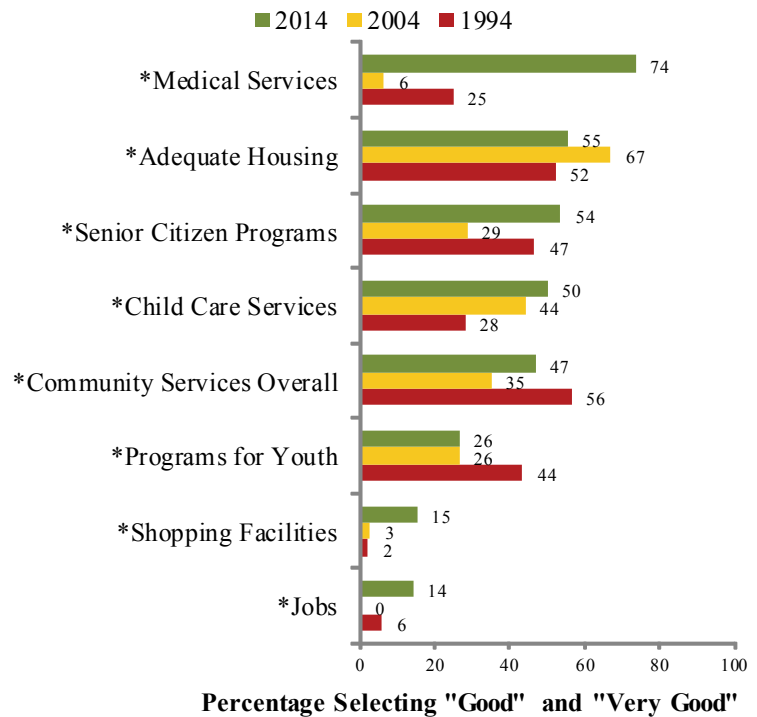
Figure 2



Grand Mound residents were asked to rate eight services normally provided by local governments and to furnish an overall rating of government services. Figure 2 shows the percent of residents who rated the service as good or very good in 1994, 2004, and 2014. All services except condition of the streets received positive ratings from at least two of three residents in 2014. In all three years, emergency response services, garbage collection, and fire protection earned the highest scores. The assessments of government services overall, the public schools, and police protection are considerably improved in 2014 over one or both previous years. The condition of the streets earned the lowest rating, and a smaller percent of residents approved of it in 2014 than in 1994. All other changes are smaller than the 11 percent margin of error for Grand Mound.

RATINGS OF LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

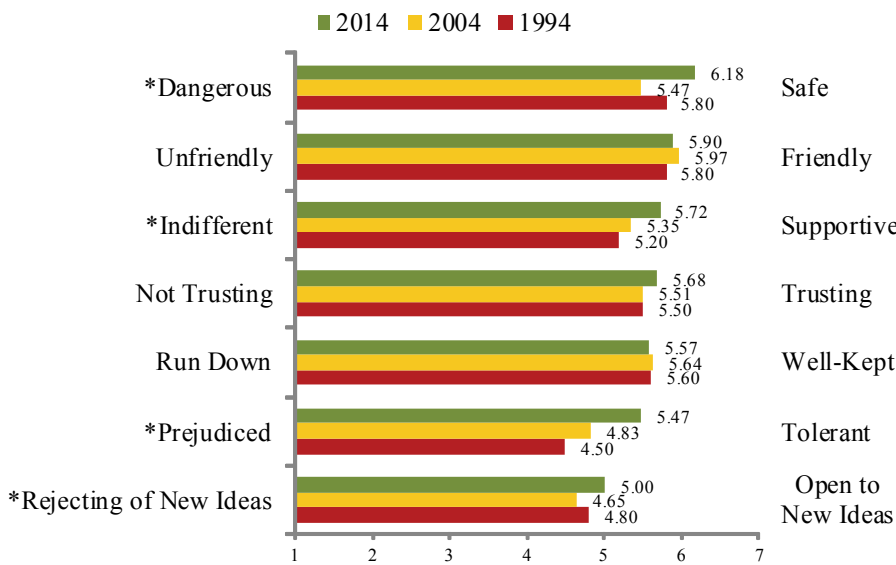
Figure 3



Non-governmental community services in Grand Mound received much lower ratings as a group compared to the residents' assessment of local government services. Even so, four of eight services shown in Figure 3 are rated as good or very good in 2014 by more than half of the respondents. Six of eight earned positive ratings from significantly larger percentages of residents in 2014 compared to one or both previous years. Only the adequacy of housing and programs for youth are rated lower in 2014.

GRAND MOUND'S SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Figure 4: Average Rating of Social Qualities



The margin of error is calculated differently for averages, and will sometimes vary from question to question within the survey depending on how many people answered each question. Thus, changes of the same size may exceed the margin of error for some items in Figure 4, but not for others. Only those items designated by asterisks () have differences large enough to fall outside of the statistical margin of error and can thus be considered to have changed since 1994.

In spite of the frequently publicized economic challenges experienced by many small towns, they are regularly praised for having favorable social climates. Several questions in the survey were designed to evaluate this aspect of small town life. Residents were presented with a list of seven sets of qualities and asked to describe where their town fits on each. As shown in Figure 4, residents report that among all the qualities listed, Grand Mound is especially safe and friendly. While still positive, the town is lower in tolerance and openness to new ideas. Residents view Grand Mound as significantly safer and more supportive, tolerant and open-minded in 2014 compared scores in one or both previous years.

SOCIAL TIES

Everybody knows everybody else is often cited as a feature of small towns. This fairly well describes life in Grand Mound. Forty-two percent of residents reported that they know half or more of the people in town by name in 2014, down from 67 percent in 1994. However, in all three surveys an average of 37 percent indicated that half or more of their close friends live in town. Approximately one in ten residents reported in 1994, 2004, and 2014 that half or more of their relatives live in town. In sum, social ties in Grand Mound have declined somewhat over the previous 20 years.

One way that people come to know and trust each other and learn to work together is through socializing at gathering places in town. Any place where people meet and spend time together can be a site of “relationship building.” We asked residents to indicate how often they socialize with other residents in eight potential gathering places in 2004 and 12 places in 2014. In Grand Mound, the gas station/convenience store is the most common place to meet, with residents socializing there once a month. Other popular gathering places are churches where people socialize a little less than once a month.

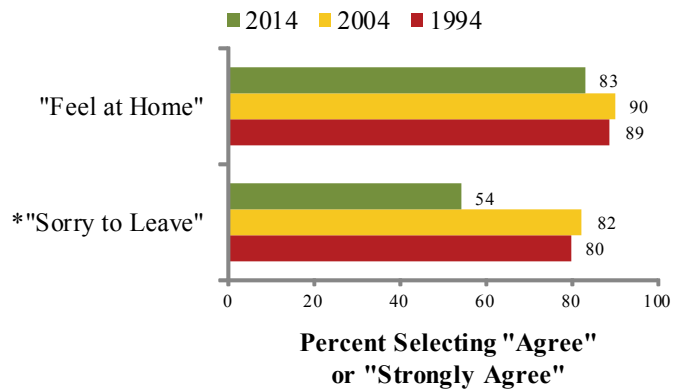
SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN GRAND MOUND

An important aspect of the small town social environment is how well people work together to solve problems and support each other. Grand Mound has experienced a significant decline from 1994 to 2014 in the assessments of this factor. In 1994, 80 percent agreed or strongly agreed that local clubs and organizations are interested in what is best for all residents. In 2014, 61 percent agreed with the statement. Sixty-eight percent agreed in 1994 that when something needs to get done, the whole community gets behind it compared to 52 percent in 2014. Fifty-seven percent of the residents believed that the town is receptive to new residents in leadership positions in 1994. By 2014, 38 percent believed the town was open to new residents as leaders. Respondents are more favorable about the amount of support they personally receive from the community, but at lower levels than in 1994. In 2014, 64 percent reported that they could find someone to talk to if they just wanted to socialize, down from 88 percent in 1994. However, about the same percentage in both years (88% in 2014 compared to 86% in 1994) agreed that if they had an emergency even strangers in town would help them.

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

According to the results shown in Figure 5, Grand Mound residents are attached to their community, but less than in 1994. Roughly nine of ten residents agreed or strongly agreed that they “feel at home” in Grand Mound and eight of ten would be “sorry if they had to leave town” in 1994. By 2014, the proportion who feel at home is about the same as in past years, but a significantly smaller percent of residents would be sorry if they had to leave town.

Figure 5: Community Attachment

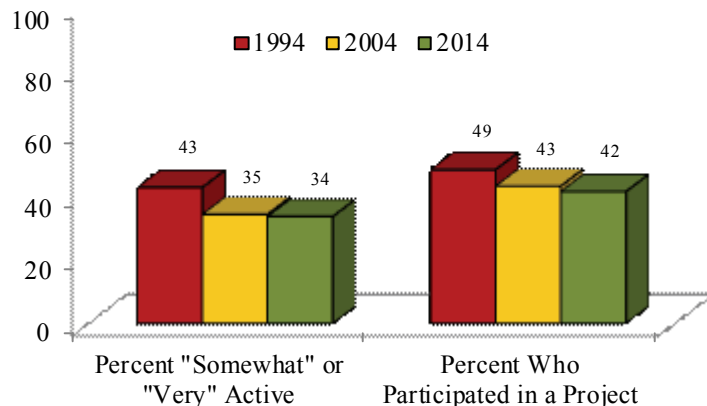


COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Residents working together to improve the quality of life is an important feature of communities. Forty-two percent of Grand Mound residents participated in a community improvement project in 2014, statistically unchanged from 1994. The percent who describe themselves as active in the community is also the same. In 1994, 43 percent indicated they were very or somewhat active compared to 34 percent in 2014. However in 2014, 56 percent reported that they belonged to at least one local organization (for example, church, civic, or recreational organizations) while in 1994, 68 percent were members. The major reasons provided by Grand Mound residents in 2014 for not participating in the community are that they had not been asked to volunteer (32%) and they did not have time to get involved

(29%). This set of questions was not asked in 1994. In 2004 the major reasons for non-involvement were lack of available time (58%) and they were not asked to volunteer (35%).

Figure 6: Informal Participation



In 2014 we asked residents to describe local leadership in Grand Mound on seven dimensions: trustworthiness, team building, concentrated vs. dispersed, open mindedness, informed, effectiveness, and inclusiveness. Grand Mound leaders are perceived positively on all dimensions, especially trustworthiness and effectiveness. The lowest score is for inclusiveness.

SUMMARY

An important goal of this study is to provide residents of small towns a snapshot of the local quality of life and residents' attachment and involvement over the past twenty years. Grand Mound has experienced significant changes in many categories. Population has declined by 8 percent. Government services continue to earn strong positive ratings with government overall, public schools, and police protection receiving approval from more residents in 2014 than in 1994. The score for condition of the streets is down. Non-government services are not rated as favorably. However, significantly larger percentages of residents gave six of eight services positive ratings in 2014, while housing and programs for youth declined. In all three surveys, townspeople describe Grand Mound as safe and friendly. Community participation remains the same, but social ties and sense of community dropped over the last twenty years. Residents are still attached to Grand Mound, but fewer would be sorry to leave town in 2014.