

The National  
**CITIZEN SURVEY™**

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**Summary Report for  
The City of Palm Coast, FL**



Submitted by:

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# **SURVEY BACKGROUND**

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL CITIZEN SURVEY™**

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and The International City and County Management Association (ICMA).

## **UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS**

### ***Survey Administration***

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 1,200 households, surveys were mailed to the same residences approximately one week later. A reminder letter and a new survey were sent to the same households after two weeks. Of the mailed postcards, 120 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 553 residents, for a response rate of 51%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey of 553 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 4 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the City of Palm Coast. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix II in the Report of Results. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix III of the Report of Results.)

### ***Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale***

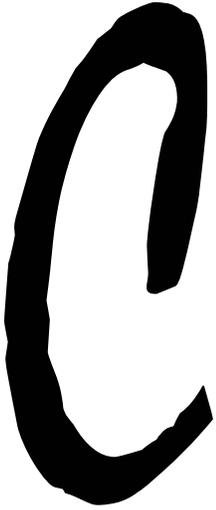
The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

### ***Putting Evaluations Onto a 100-Point Scale***

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 4 representing the best rating and 1 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 4 points based on all respondents.

### ***Interpreting Comparisons to Previous Years***

This summary report contains some comparisons with prior years’ results. In the full length Report of Results, we are comparing 2003 data with 2002 data in the graphs. In the Report of Results graphs, there are two separate representations labeled by year. The table following a graph contains 2003 data only, and is labeled accordingly.



# COMMUNITY LIFE

The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to the life of residents in the community. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as other aspects of quality of life in Palm Coast. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Palm Coast. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Palm Coast.

- **QUALITY OF LIFE**

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Palm Coast, 21% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 1% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Palm Coast as a place to live received an average rating of 72 on a 100-point scale in 2002 which compares to its rating in 2003.

- **RATINGS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS IN PALM COAST**

In 2003, the highest rated characteristics of Palm Coast were overall appearance, overall quality of the natural environment, and sense of community. The average rating on a 100-point scale given to overall appearance in 2003 was 63 compared to 62 in 2002. When asked about potential problems in Palm Coast, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” in 2003 were traffic congestion, too much growth, and unsupervised youth. In 2003, 35% rated traffic congestion as a “major problem” compared to 22% in 2002. In 2003, the rate of population growth in Palm Coast was viewed as “too fast” by 76% of respondents, while 0% thought it was “too slow.”

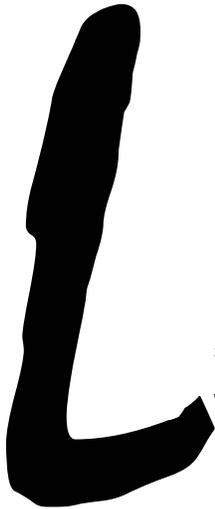
- **PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY**

When evaluating safety in the community, 76% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Palm Coast in 2003, unchanged from 76% in 2002. In their neighborhood after dark, 78% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe” in 2003, compared to 83% in 2002.

In 2003, as assessed by the survey, 7% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. In 2002, 9% of households had reported that at least one member had been a crime victim. Of those who had been the victim of a crime in 2003, 69% had reported it to police.

- **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Palm Coast during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 95% reported reading the City of Palm Coast newsletter in the past year compared to 88% in 2002.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Palm Coast were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey™. They were asked how much trust they placed in their local government, and what they felt about the services they receive from the City of Palm Coast. Those who had any contact with a City of Palm Coast employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

- **PUBLIC TRUST**

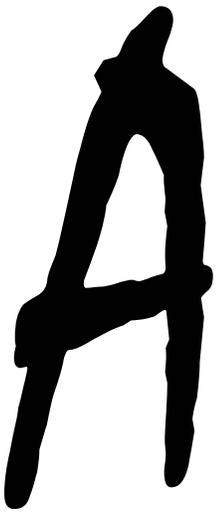
When asked to evaluate whether they were pleased with the overall direction taken by the City of Palm Coast, residents gave an average rating of 55 on a 100-point scale.

- **SERVICES PROVIDED BY PALM COAST**

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Palm Coast was rated as 51 on a 100-point scale in 2003 compared to 52 in 2002.

- **THE CITY OF PALM COAST EMPLOYEES**

Impressions of the City of Palm Coast employees were assessed on the questionnaire. In 2003, those who had been in contact with a City of Palm Coast employee in the past year (44%) rated their overall impression as 59 on a 100-point scale. The same average rating of 59 was received in 2002.



## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Three additional questions were asked by the City of Palm Coast as listed below.

The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results.

<b>Question #1: The City of Palm Coast should allow a variety of housing opportunities for residents including single family residences, duplexes, townhouses, and multiple family dwellings (apartments).</b>	
	Percent of Respondents
strongly agree	15%
somewhat agree	27%
neither agree nor disagree	13%
somewhat disagree	23%
strongly disagree	19%
don't know	2%
Total	100%

<b>Question #2: Development in Palm Coast should pay its fair share through impact or other fees.</b>	
	Percent of Respondents
strongly agree	46%
somewhat agree	27%
neither agree nor disagree	10%
somewhat disagree	6%
strongly disagree	3%
don't know	8%
Total	100%

<b>Question #3: The City of Palm Coast should spend public funds to support economic development to attract or retain businesses that create quality job opportunities and increase the tax base.</b>	
	Percent of Respondents
strongly agree	40%
somewhat agree	32%
neither agree nor disagree	9%
somewhat disagree	9%
strongly disagree	6%
don't know	4%
Total	100%