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, 126 were undeliverable due to vacant or "not found" addresses. Completed surveys were received from 489 residents, for a response rate of 45%. 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 5 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 5 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).

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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 5 points based on all respondents.
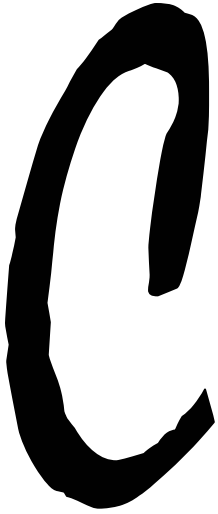
COMMUNITY LIFE

The National Citizen Survey[TM] 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, 24% of respondents in 2004 thought it was "excellent." Only 2% rated overall quality of life as "poor." The average rating of overall quality of life on a 100-point scale was 72 in 2002 and 2003. In 2004, the rating of overall quality of life did not change, and remained a 72. Palm Coast as a place to raise children received an average rating of 61 on a 100-point scale in 2002 and 63 in both 2003 and 2004

- ## RATINGS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS IN PALM COAST

  In 2004, the highest rated characteristics of Palm Coast were overall appearance, recreational opportunities, and shopping opportunities. The average rating on a 100-point scale given to the overall appearance of Palm Coast in 2004 was 69 compared to 64 in 2002 and 63 in 2003. When asked about potential problems in Palm Coast, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a "major problem" in 2004 were traffic congestion, unsupervised youth, and taxes. In 2004 56% rated traffic congestion as a "major problem" compared to 21% in 2002 and 35% in 2003. In 2004, the rate of population growth in Palm Coast was viewed as "too fast" by 86% 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 2004, compared to 79% in 2002 and 75% in 2003. In their neighborhood after dark, 80% of survey participants

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felt "somewhat" or "very safe" in 2004, compared to 82% in 2002 and 78% in 2003.

In 2004, as assessed by the survey, 8% 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, while 7% reported so in 2003. Of those who had been the victim of a crime in 2004, 66% 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. The proportion of respondents engaging in various activities is shown in the chart below, with comparisons made between 2004, 2003 and 2002. Among those completing the questionnaire in 2004, 78% reported visiting a Palm Coast park in the past year compared to 80% in 2002 and 78% in 2003..
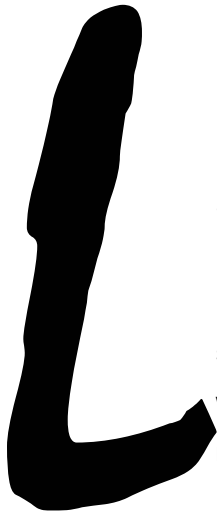
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Palm Coast were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey.[TM] 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 in 2004, compared to 52 in 2002 and 55 in 2003.

- ## SERVICES PROVIDED BY PALM COAST

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Palm Coast was rated as 56 on a 100-point scale in 2004, compared to 50 in 2002 and 52 in 2003. .

- ## THE CITY OF PALM COAST EMPLOYEES

Impressions of the City of Palm Coast employees were assessed on the questionnaire. In 2004, those who had been in contact with a City of Palm Coast employee in the past year (42%) rated their overall impression as 62on a 100-point scale, compared to an average rating of 59 received in 2002 and 60 in 2003.
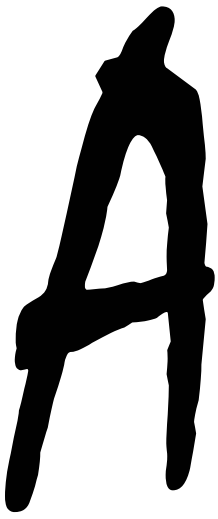
A DDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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.

Figure 25: Question #16a: Importance of various issues to Palm Coast over the next five years						
	extremely important	very important	somewhat important	not at all important	don't know	Total
Storm water Utility Fee	12%	29%	32%	12%	16%	100%
Funding for a permanent City Hall	9%	19%	40%	24%	8%	100%
Funding for Capital Improvements	11%	35%	36%	8%	10%	100%
Funding for Infrastructure Maintenance	16%	38%	28%	6%	10%	100%
Expansion of Parks	13%	25%	37%	17%	8%	100%
Expansion of Recreation Services	15%	28%	36%	14%	7%	100%
Economic Development	33%	38%	19%	5%	5%	100%
Commercial Development	33%	34%	22%	6%	5%	100%
Annexation	7%	17%	28%	23%	26%	100%

	very satisfied	somewhat satisfied	neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	don't know	Total
Building Department	6%	17%	28%	10%	7%	31%	100%
City Administration	8%	24%	27%	9%	5%	27%	100%
City Clerk	10%	22%	29%	4%	3%	33%	100%
Code Enforcement	10%	22%	23%	16%	10%	19%	100%
Engineering	6%	20%	29%	8%	4%	34%	100%
Finance	7%	17%	29%	10%	4%	33%	100%
Fire & Rescue	39%	32%	12%	2%	1%	14%	100%
Law Enforcement	26%	43%	13%	6%	4%	9%	100%
Planning & Zoning	7%	23%	23%	16%	11%	20%	100%
Public Works	8%	30%	28%	10%	5%	19%	100%
Recreation & Parks	13%	34%	26%	8%	3%	17%	100%
Water & Sewer	16%	37%	23%	10%	6%	9%	100%

Figure 26:
Question #16b: Please rate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the way Palm Coast provides the following services

Figure 27:
Question #16c: In the last 12 months, about how many times, if ever, have you or other household members participated in the following activities in Palm Coast?

	Watched cable television	Watched satellite television	Read the Palm Coast News Tribune/Journal	Read the Flagler Times
never	36%	39%	6%	8%
once or twice	4%	4%	9%	7%
3 to 12 times	5%	3%	12%	11%
13 to 26 times	3%	3%	14%	15%
more than 26 times	53%	51%	60%	60%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%