



# PASCO COUNTY, FL 2009

Report of Open-ended Question

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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/County Management Association (ICMA).

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. Pasco County staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries NRC used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. Pasco County staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options to The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

## UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

### ABOUT CLOSED-ENDED AND OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Questions can either be asked in a closed-ended or open-ended manner. A closed-ended question is one where a set of response options is listed on the survey. Those taking the survey respond to each option listed. Open-ended questions have no answer choices from which respondents select their response. Instead, respondents must “create” their own answers and state them in their own words. The verbatim responses are categorized by topic area using codes. An “other” category is used for responses falling outside the coded categories. In general, a code is assigned when at least 5-10% of responses will fit the code.

Advantages of an open-ended question include:

- Responses are not prompted, allowing respondents to provide answers that are not anticipated or well known.
- This type of question tends to capture response options that come to mind most quickly.
- The final result can be richer, since verbatim responses are included in an appendix, giving you and others a chance to “hear” the voice of respondents in their own words.
- There is a smaller risk of missing important dimensions.

### VERBATIMS

Respondents were asked to record their opinions about Pasco County in the following question:

- What do you think are the three biggest issues facing Pasco County over the next several years?

The verbatim responses were categorized by topic area and those topics are reported in the following table with the percent of responses given in each category. Because some comments from residents covered more than a single topic, each topic mentioned by a resident was categorized and counted for the table below. Those verbatim responses are grouped by the first topic listed in each comment whenever a respondent mentioned more than a single topic. Verbatim comments that contain more than one topic nevertheless appear only once (in the category of the first topic listed), however the analysis in the following table counts each of the topic areas given by all respondents regardless where those topics appeared in the comment.

Results from the open-ended question are best understood by reviewing the table of frequencies that summarize responses as well as the actual verbatim responses themselves.

What do you think are the three biggest issues facing Pasco County over the next several years?	
	Percent of Respondents
Economic Development/Jobs	35%
Traffic/ Roads	31%
Growth Management/Planning	26%
Crime and law enforcement	25%
Government/Taxes/Budget/Maintaining levels of service	24%
Housing cost/Property values/Foreclosure	20%
Education	16%
Water- shortage of/policy	11%
Code enforcement- cleaning up the County	10%
Health and Human Services	9%
Environment	5%
Public Safety Services- storm shelters, fire services	5%
Cost of Living/Quality of life	4%
Infrastructure/Utilities	3%
Don't know/No comment	3%
Other	12%
<i>Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one category.</i>	

## VERBATIM RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The following pages contain the respondents' verbatim responses as written on the survey and have not been edited for spelling or grammar. Responses have been organized by coded topic areas, according to the first topic given by the respondent.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE THREE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING PASCO COUNTY OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS?

#### Economic Development/Jobs

- (1) creating professional jobs. (2) increasing the quality & value of the education program (3) maintaining the emergency service/fire service in the County
- (1) lack of industrial parks. (2) poor education standard. (3) expensive healthcare services.
- (1) lack of jobs - must leave County to get good paying work (2) crime - with new growth brings added issues (3) roads not keeping up with growth
- \*not enough job opportunities in Pasco County \*no opportunities for using reclaimed water for existing homes for lawn use \*transportation - most who live here work in Tampa/St. Pete.
- 1) economy 2) crime 3) health care
- 1) low salaries 2) foreclosures will continue 3) increase in crime
- 1) no jobs to support a family on 2) no safe place for children to play 3) not enough public buses running on timely basis to Pinellas or Tampa to get to work
- 1. To many small businesses closing up. 2. Unemployment 3. Increase in crime
- Economic development employment senior population
- Economic growth code enforcement law enforcement
- Economy, education, community services
- Economy, taxes, jobs & gas
- Employment housing growth (pop)
- Employment housing insurance
- Employment overcrowding roads school system
- Employment oppertunities
- Income (jobs) income (jobs) income (jobs)
- Job growth, crime, housing prices.
- Job loses - budget loses gas prices rising need more help in animal & elderly services
- Job security, taxes being raised, & medical services.
- Jobs retail growth
- jobs for all the children in this area jobs for housing (plumbers, masons, carpenters 'jobs')
- Jobs, crime, drug abuse increase
- Jobs, road improvements, affordable housing
- Jobs, schools, roads
- Lack of employment opportunities - job growth water & lack thereof decreasing property values
- Loss of residents due to the economy road repairs educational standards
- Need to encourage continued business expansion. Need to encourage continued housing expansion. Hwy 19 traffic control & speed enforcement!
- New restaurants traffic congestion police - enough coverage
- No jobs. We need more jobs.
- Retail and small business development
- The economy decreasing house values jobs - loss of businesses.
- Unemployment health water

## Traffic/ Roads

- (1) road improvement to handle traffic congestion. Sr54/bbd is a total joke being one lane (still). (2) ploughing over grasslands to develop retail stores that should never have been approved in the 1st place--the dustbowl sr56 - i-75 is a tragedy --for what?? -another mediocre discount chain store!!!! (3) fiscal responsibility for taxpayer \$. Where did the windfall development tax \$ go?-collect & spend, spend, spend?
- (1) road improvements to keep pace with population growth & commercial growth (2) ability to have affordable homeowners insurance optional for residents (3) ability to track high quality employers so residents can work in County where they live
- (1) roads & infrastructure in developing areas (2) employment opportunities in recession (3) general budget decisions
- (1) roads. (2) not being able to use other County libraries without a fee. (3) transportation buses etc.
- (1) traffic flow - roads do not (not able) to accomidate increase in cars with population & construction growth (2) unemployment for retiree's & growth (3)
- \*road expansion and maitenance \*economic development \*population growth
- 1) establishing priorities - example too much of the funding for road construction is going to planning future roads rather than to maintaining and improving existing roads. (2) keeping quality of life (eg) cutting back on parks, rec, & libraries (3) environment. \*too much is spent by the County on County council salaries and unnecessary administrative positions; so I'm currently against any tax increase while these salaries remain so high.
- 1. Road improvement for all roads east of i75. 2. More law enforcement. 3. Better animal control services.
- Expanding roads improve drinking water more retail shopping
- Get 54 widened to 4-6 lanes start working on the new tennis stadium in Wesley Chapel.
- Heavy traffic on 41 from I.o.I. high school going north.
- Hwy 54, east from I 75 should have 6 lanes. Any time of the day (except Sunday) it takes 30 to 45 minutes to drive 5 miles.
- Increased commercial traffic - with no regulations traffic patterns uncontrolled commercial growth quality of life at home
- Increased traffic need for another hospital in Wesley Chapel
- Lack of road improvement to accomodate high traffic, alternate road ways into/out of Wesley Chapel, job market
- Making hwy 54 4 lanes from i-75 to Curley road.
- Not enough roads for the population lack of water resources over building of communities with not enough schools or highways
- Road conditions. Property values decreasing.
- Road construction public transportation preservation of natural areas
- Road construction economy - loss of tax revenues, jobs maintaining services
- Road expansion falling behind building going on - specifically h54 Z'hills to Wesley Chapel. Too much building in evacuation zones. Ambulance svc as important as fire dept
- Road improvement
- Road improvement crime prevention homeless issue
- Road improvement to carry heavy traffic flow. Water for all the new development. Efficient electricity for new development, our power goes out at least twice a month for no reason other than the population it to much they tell me.
- Road maintenance schools law enforcement
- Roads - construction - services
- Roads education housing
- Roads - streets
- Roads & traffic empty-abandoned homes & businesses

- Roads (new and existing) employment schools
- Roads taxes water
- Shopping malls and traffic (zoning) crime water management
- Too much traffic not enough water
- Traffic home values water shortage
- Traffic congestion on 54 from i75 to 301 allowing homebuilding before roads are improved make reclaimed water more available
- Traffic flow in east Pasco new roads new business
- Traffic on 19 - in bayonet point
- Traffic/population explosion drugs & violence in schools
- Widening of RT 54 east of 75 to Zephyr Hills. Occupancy of abandoned housing and commercial developments. Rightwing conservatism.
- You need to put ridge road through to us 41. The only major highways going e and w are 52 & 54. We live on us 41 and work in New Port Richey. It is a nightmare to drive. We can't sell our house to move closer to work.

### **Growth Management/Planning**

- (1) adjusting to reduction in growth (2) managing available funds effectively (3) eliminating unnecessary expenditures
- \*appropriate growth - \*decrease unnecessary building (houses & malls) \*improve public schools
- Building
- Control building water crime prevention due to economic problem
- Dealing with the rapids growth in central Pasco County especially the Land'o Lakes area.
- Density of population in relation to road access! Growth rapidness
- Fast growth roads won't be adequate water supply
- Growth
- Growth
- Growth available water crime
- Growth - business opportunities - roads
- Growth - growing too fast water drainage - ditches need to be maintained law enforcement/fire dept/ambulance services - we need more if we continue to grow.
- Growth - taxes - water
- Growth - too fast budget traffic - congestion
- Growth vacant office/retail space school overcrowding
- Growth & services control
- Growth fire police
- Growth housing concerns & education.
- Growth management land use (neg. Impact has been ongoing) need to increase law enforcement, fire and emergency medical service.
- Growth planning water energy
- Growth, budgets
- Growth, development, services
- Increase in residential development w/out road improvement water shortages crime
- Increased growth insufficient roads crime
- Keeping up with growth. Maintaining and adding roads, and infrastructure.
- Land development garbage franchise comp. Utilities construction
- Managing growth transportation issues: traffic, road improvements, new development crime prevention
- New construction should have a moratorium
- Over development!!!! Not preserving land for the wildlife to exist crime - gangs
- Over population poor streets not enough street lights

- Over population water shortage over building
- Overcrowding driving on hwy 54 destroying of wooded areas
- Overcrowding overbuilding lowered standards of living
- Overpopulation of the area. Too many subdivisions and construction. Traffic problems
- Overpopulation traffic & foreclosures to many of the same stores in same areas (grocery stores)
- Population growth job growth retail growth and water management
- Population growth road improvements schools
- Population growth, education, and unemployment epidemic
- Rapid growth
- Rapid growth in north Tampa area.
- The County allowed & are still allowing builders to build houses too densely. 1) road system 2) electricity 3) water
- Too much growth & not enough roads poorly maintained roads increasing elderly population & not enough services to meet increase
- Too much home construction (to many houses on market traffic congestion water shortage
- Too much development for the amount of available water essential services (fire, law enforcement, medical) given the economy traffic and road conditions
- Too much growth, the reduction of nature preservation. Loss of resources toward civil services due to so much growth in which these funds are being allocated. I'm happy with the current progress, we don't need more.
- Too much home developments not enough saving land, wetlands need more local job development, not must a bedroom community
- Too much housing development - due to our water shortages & drought?
- Uncontrolled growth roads gov't services
- Uncontrolled growth poor planning on road improvements as usual

### **Crime and law enforcement**

- #1 crime, gangs, theft, #2 longer response times for fire & police #3 jobs - no jobs leads to #1
- 1. Peace and order - due to increase population. Includes drugs, thieves, robbery, traffic accidents.
- 2. Traffic on sr-54 from i-75 to Zephyrhills 3. Employment not adequate or enough.
- Corruption crime pollution
- Crime expansion roads
- Crime - foreclosures.
- Crime people who sit and collect welfare. Inept schooling
- Crime taxes employment
- Crime - theft & vandalism traffic on us 19 south of 52 vacant businesses
- Crime crime and more crime
- -crime moving from Tampa to Pasco (gangs) -growth & businesses -jobs
- Crime, congestion, cost/quality of life
- Crime, insurance (car, house) affordability, traffic
- Crime, unemployment, quality education
- Crime/drugs over population lack of police involvement in illegale activity
- Crime-gangs seniors
- Do not cut law enforcement - the growth in Pasco brings good and bad and we need police and law enforcement to maintain the safety of our citizens, residents....willing to fund improvements but the County must deliver promises.
- Drug problem - illegal aliens teenage sex & pregnancies too much welfare & not enough work ethnic
- Drug use by teens tax increase insurance increase of all types
- Drugs and drug dealers. I believe the current law enforcement is being paid off. There are known drug dealers selling from their homes

- Drugs drugs drugs
- Drug's, shooting at night, prostitution, on us-19
- Growing number of sex offenders economy growth not keeping up with roads
- Having law enforcement crack down on people speeding & going thru red lights make up revenue just doing the right thing on the road law enforcement
- Increase in crime (gang violence) lack of people moving to the area because of economy lack of funding for public schools
- Increase of violent crimes well-paid job opportunities environmental protection
- Increasing crime homelessness lack of jobs
- Law enforcement - including traffic water restrictions roadside garbage & recycling
- Law enforcement - we need better trained officers some are nice - quite a few are nasty and approach people immediately with a negative tongue.
- Law enforcement, medical services, housing for family.
- Lots of waste in law enforcement. Sherriff not a businessman - wastes \$. Crime on the increase.

### **Government/Taxes/Budget/Maintaining levels of service**

- (1) bringing more people to increase tax payers. (2) bring in more business to employ and increase tax dollars (3) keeping it a safe place to live and work
- (1) trying to keep taxes reasonable while still providing a good standard of services! (2) trying to keep low to moderate population in Pasco Cty to stay. Once we all leave, who's going to serve all the wealthy people! (3) had planned to make Pasco Cty my home for the rest of my life. No where is perfect, but taxes & insurance costs in Pasco & Florida are extremely high. Only the wealthy will be able to live here! Good luck!
- (1) unsophisticated leadership in an increasingly sophisticated community (2) declining property values (3) inadequate roads/traffic control
- 1 - to get officials or planners to make up to the fact that there is a need in east Pasco. Seems like all the taxpayer dollars are going to communities on the west section of Pasco. 2 - roads east Pasco 3 - roads
- 1) fiscal responsibility \*\*run County like a business 2) fiscal responsibility \*\*run County like a business 3) stay ahead of population growth ie: - roads, schools,
- 1. How to maintain essential services and not raise taxes 2. The water shortage 3. Unemployment
- 1. Keeping the County in the black. 2. Insuring clean drinking water 3. Crime prevention
- 1. Poor leadership 2. Unwise spending 3. Poor traffic flow
- 1.) Government over spending & overtaxing people & business to the point where people can't afford to buy property, health care & other needs. 2.) Too many people abusing public services & bleeding the system. 3.) Government interference & over-regulation of business will discourage new businesses to prosper. 4.) Impact fees!
- Budget health care education
- Budget (waste)
- Budget cuts too much growth w/out the infrastructure to support unemployment
- Budget cuts, increased traffic, slow house sales
- Cutting waste from the gov't. Roads - upkeep & reduce congestion. Feeding and sheltering the needy.
- Funding, infrastructure improvements & water supply
- Greatest challenge is to maintain current level of services and simultaneously eliminate wasteful spending.
- Increased prop. Taxes stagnant real estate market economic development
- Learning to stop waste, growth repair
- Lowering property tax lowering property insurance retail growth

- Make the sheriff account for monies spent (public should have more control) improve roads - pave dirt roads. Have every one pay a trash fee and pickup all trash to stop people from putting trash in woods or beside roads
- Paying more in taxes (property) for declining property value. Impossible to sell homes that have exhorbitant taxes with small value.
- Politics - too much repeatition in parties! Nature - trim dead trees for firewood for poor! Water - conserve bath water - use for lawns! Tell everyone!
- Politions, too much political interference. Cut the big salaries of people who cheat the people. Leave schools and teachers (who teach) alone.
- Property tax, insurance, law enforcement.
- Property taxes schools development in Pasco County
- Property taxes homeowners insurance cleanliness
- Providing services to a growing population with decreasing revenue. Drugs/crime deteriorating neighborhoods
- Reduce services reduce budget paycuts/layoffs
- Reducing the number of County employees, and the associated benefits packages.
- Revenue reduction development reduction schools
- Revenue reduction - reducing services population growth
- Revenue, wasteful spending (esp. Sheriff's dept.), elected official incompetence
- Tax tax tax (stop the tax)
- Taxes - money keep good services - law, fire and emergency medical and inportant services like elderly nutrition and veteran's services
- Taxes roads population
- Taxes going up we need more restaurants in the area - CDD charges...
- Taxes, people who will lose there jobs there home's because there's no jobs!
- Top heavy overpaid bureaucracy excessive waste in sheriff's dept. W/o corresponding service expansion of major highways - US 41 & SR 52
- Wasteful government spending (overpaying administrators) commercial growth destroying the environment (ex. - cypress creek)

### **Housing cost/Property values/Foreclosure**

- (1) decreasing property values (2) attracting major/large employers (3) maintaining current tax rate (4) keeping Obama's hands out of our wallets.
- (1) population due to real estate person losing home due to f/c
- (1) stabilization of property values, (3) community development, (2) economic recovery
- 1) property value 2) tax revenue 3) retail growth
- 1) property values declines/property taxes did not! 2) budget cuts/make the hard decisions! 3) law enforcement/crime prevention
- 1. Have foreclosures i.e., declining tax revenue 2. State mandate of no more that 25 children per classroom 3. Maintaining adequate emergency services.
- Declining home values, vacant homes not govt takes care of & cutting services based on declining tax revenues.
- Forcloreure -property values -insurance (homeowners)
- Foreclosing houses - employment.
- Foreclosure, property tax, traffic control.
- Foreclosures employment help for low income - homeless - youth - elderly
- Houseing, water, code enforcement
- Housing economy jobs
- Housing market decline; code violations; crime
- Housing medical jobs
- More housing forcloreure tax increase community/County value going down - due to high renters.

- Pasco County I think does a pretty good job. -more foreclosures -no help for 1st time buyers -gas prices are going to be outrageous
- property values 'road improvement' job's
- Property values decreasing
- Recovering from the foreclosure rate. I feel it has hit Pasco County harder than other counties because of the investors that bought up the cheap real estate a few years ago and how they are in foreclosure.
- Taxes, crime, building codes
- The drop in home prices effect everyone especially older people. The dregs of Tampa may occupy openings and cause further problems socially

## Education

- (1) education (2) lack of high salary jobs (3) library hours being cut
- 1) budget cuts in schools 2) unemployment high 3) road improvements
- 1) funding schools 2) maintaining services - emergency & law enfor. 3) tax revenue - some of us always have to give more & more while others nothing or close to it. There's too much money going to migrant/minority groups - vs. Citizens
- Better public schools, veterans elem. Is horrible putting our daughter in private schools, the development of abandon const. Sites, widening of major roads
- Education
- Education employment tax money
- Education - schools
- Lack of funding for public education and other services like police and fire. Amendment 1 was a terrible amendment. Very short sighted.
- Lost of monies towards schools because 2 or 3 years the market jumped sky high on homes and now should be lower than it is at the present time. Should have never passed the tax law for real estates for homestead.
- Our schools - no jobs people will be moveing out of Pasco.
- Over spending & specially top heavy (administrative) school systems schools back to basics (reading, writing, basic math and English!!! Getting rid of illegal emigrants (two (2) illegals do not make (1) legal.
- School housing taxes

## Water- shortage of/policy

- (1) water; (2) lax controls over developers that clear cut, get wet land exemptions from Swiftmud & County (3) transparency of local (city, town) and County government.
- (2) law enforcement (3) real estate taxes (1) water supply
- Lack of good water
- Lack of water misappropriation of city & County funds.
- Water - drought (shortage) tider control on growth (limited building) no crossover on main highways (except by lights)
- Water overbuilding schools
- Water traffic health care
- Water availability not overbuilding homes for the water levels sink holes if drought continues
- Water for increases in development & population crime because of economy - drugs traffic & infastructure - too many bottle necks
- Water shortage too much development traffic congestion
- Water shortage crime roads
- Water shortage, law enforcment, animal control
- Water shortage, school rooms, road improvements
- Water, building codes & drugs

## Code enforcement- cleaning up the County

- (1) practical land management, too much loss of longtime property owners rights (too many restrictions). (2) minority drug problems in certain areas (3) practical County staff dealing with public problems.
- 1. South part of Zephyrhills on 301 is embarrassing & deploring clean up peak house mandates on business to maintain there property 2. Wesley Chapel is nice
- Animal control services, law enforcement, jobs taxes
- Building permits no cod fees
- Clean up all the trashy areas health care for elderly
- Clean up the scum!!!! (Moon Lake, Hudson, Bayonet Point, Port Richey)
- Code enforcement - many areas are rundown expansion of retail & entertainment to keep up with pop. Growth create high-income jobs
- Code enforcement safety public education
- Code enforcement urban planning public light eradication
- Empty properties
- Renter's who don't take care of property crime, theft, break-ins water, restricted usage and poor quality
- Vacant homes & renter not maintaining homes school safety local job growth in Pasco

## Health and Human Services

- 1. Lack of health care facility 2. Lack of employment opportunities 3. Maintain an affordable quality of life
- Elderly home foreclosures services (like libraries) to all residents
- Elderly services, emergency medical services, law enforcement
- More youth programs
- Veteran services elderly services crime
- Z.hills & Dade city hospitals-trauma treatment-pediatrics floor & pediatric ER docs.

## Environment

- (1) environmental protection - proper planning to keep us from becoming a cement filled mess like Hillsborough County (2) bringing jobs to Pasco County (3) matching infrastructure to growth
- Destroying wetlands and habitat for the wildlife/uncontrolled growth/job loss
- Need to preserve more land - it is heart breaking to see the land razed for another shopping center!

## Public Safety Services- Storm shelters, Fire services

- More storm shelters code enforcement on watering helping the seniors
- Technologically backwards emergency services (fire, amb, sheriff) crime increase elderly population needs

## Cost of Living/Quality of life

- Declining quality of life in Pasco non responsiveness of elected govt officials no one listens to common citizens
- Hold status quo -

## Infrastructure/Utilities

- (1) using the funds provided by gov't stimulus - improve infrastructure (2) creating job opportunities (3) attract more businesses - industry
- Flooding taxes (shortfall) roads
- There is discordance in developments when compared to infrastructure - traffic congestion, congested schools

## Don't know/No comment

- ?
- ?
- Don't know
- Don't know
- Don't know
- Don't know
- Don't know don't know don't know
- I won't be here that long I hope.
- No opinion. I have been in Pasco County only 5 months
- Not sure
- Part-time resident - not informed of issues

## Other

- (1) the number one issue facing all levels of government is supporting the children of people that should not be having children. This puts a great strain on social services, crime prevention, jail system, health care, etc. (2) continuing to grow good paying jobs. (3) recovering from the real estate bubble.
- 1. Fire John Gallagher! 2. Get rid of cronyism in Pasco Co. Government 3. Elect new County Commissioners that aren't told how to vote by staff.
- 1. Impact fees 2. Traffic 3. Jobs 4 utility costs
- 1. Ware. 2. Disease. 3. Emergency services.
- Dade city - drugs!!
- Illegals getting free schools, medical, money aid more law enforcement not letting northeast landowners develop their land
- Make the sheriff account for monies spent would approve a garbage tax for everyone to end roadside dumping. Still believe there alote of wast in Pasco goverment. Welfare and education of illegals must stop
- need better restaurants, 'open casino gambling for senior citizens, and keep our money in Florida. Every where I go most gamblers are from Florida?"
- Public transportation. Law enforcement. Social services.
- restaurants with good food -more audio/video retailers -improved hospitals
- the proposed landfill on enterprise road in Dade city -unrestrained housing development w/out sufficient water
- To attract people to live in Pasco County, clean up the property on the main road's, fine owners of property with run down homes (trailer homes) junk in yards that can be seen from the road ways. Even if the County cleans it up and bill the owners, with tax leans.
- Welfare participation, lack of barriers to minimize people asking for food stamps - it's too easy