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The City of Cape Coral, Florida

Summary Report 2007



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Survey Background.....	1
About The National Citizen Survey™	1
Understanding the Results.....	1
Profile of Cape Coral	3
Community Life.....	4
Quality of Life.....	4
Ratings of Community Characteristics	4
Perceptions of Safety.....	4
Community Participation	4
Local Government	5
Public Trust	5
Service Provided by Cape Coral	5
The City of Cape Coral Employees	5

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).

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, 80 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 417 residents, for a response rate of 37%. 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 417 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 Cape Coral. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix B in the Report of Results. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix C 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 1 representing the best rating and 4 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 3 points based on all respondents.

PROFILE OF CAPE CORAL

As assessed by the survey, about 18% of Cape Coral residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years and 80% are over age 34. Another 24% are over age 64. Sixty-five percent are currently employed; 13% rent; 87% own and 81% live in detached single family homes. Over 76% of Cape Coral residents have at least some college and 62% have annual household incomes above \$50,000. Eight percent of Cape Coral residents reported that they are Spanish, Hispanic or Latino and 92% said they are White or Caucasian.

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 Cape Coral. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the City of Cape Coral. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Cape Coral.

Quality of Life

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Cape Coral, 12% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 4% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Cape Coral as a place to raise children received an average rating of 53 on a 100-point scale.

Ratings of Community Characteristics

The highest rated characteristics of Cape Coral were air quality, openness and acceptance, and overall quality of new development. When asked about potential problems in Cape Coral, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were taxes, traffic congestion, and drugs. The rate of population growth in Cape Coral was viewed as “too fast” by 83% of respondents, while 2% thought it was “too slow.”

Perceptions of Safety

When evaluating safety in the community, 60% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Cape Coral. In their neighborhood after dark, 71% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 20% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 74% had reported it to police.

Community Participation

Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Cape Coral during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 42% reported volunteering in the past year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the City of Cape Coral 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 Cape Coral. Those who had any contact with a City of Cape Coral 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 Cape Coral, residents gave an average rating of 40 on a 100-point scale.

Service Provided by Cape Coral

The overall quality of services provided by the City of Cape Coral was rated as 46 on a 100-point scale.

The City of Cape Coral Employees

Impressions of the City of Cape Coral employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a City of Cape Coral employee in the past year (67%) rated their overall impression as 57 on a 100-point scale.