



HAINES CITY

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2015 COMMUNITY VALUE SURVEY RESULTS

About Survey Participants

Survey participants included permanent Haines City Residents, Seasonal Residents, Non-residents, Business Owners and Property Owners. Single-family homes constituted 73 percent of all general survey respondents. Twenty-one percent of respondents were seasonal residents or visitors.

Fifty-three percent of Permanent Haines City Residents have lived in Haines City for more than 10 years. Likewise, 32 percent of Seasonal Residents have lived in Haines City for more than 10 years. However, it is important to note that 21 percent of respondents who marked that they were Seasonal Residents, also marked “I am not a resident” of Haines City for the question regarding the number of years they have lived in Haines City.

The age groups of the various survey participants groups were spread fairly evenly in the middle, with fewer participants from the youngest and oldest age groups. Not surprisingly, however, 76 percent of Seasonal Residents were over the age of 51.

The average income of Permanent Haines City Residents included 21 percent of individuals who earned less than \$24,999 annually. However, 36 percent of Permanent Haines City Residents marked that they earned between \$25,000 - \$49,999 annually, while 30 percent marked that they earned between \$50,000 - \$99,000 annually.

Thirty-four percent of Non-residents marked that they earned between \$50,000 - \$99,999 annually and 36 percent earned more \$100,000 annually. Likewise, 37 percent of Seasonal Residents marked that they earned more than \$100,000 annually.

Sixty-three percent of general survey respondents own a property in Haines City. Ten percent marked that they own a business in Haines City. Interestingly, 41 percent of Business Owners who took the survey marked that they earned \$49,999 or less annually, while 31 percent earned between \$50,000 - \$99,999 annually and 29 percent earned over \$100,000 annually.

Views of Haines City

Thirty-five percent of survey respondents “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that they were satisfied with the financial decisions by Haines City leadership. Forty-three percent neither agreed nor disagreed. Likewise, 40 percent of business owners who were surveyed “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” with the financial decisions of Haines City leadership. Furthermore, Business Owners

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doubled that of the general survey participants, with 16 percent who “Strongly Agreed” with the financial decisions of Haines City leadership.

On a similar note, 87 percent of general survey respondents support a “well-trained, well educated, highly professional, and competitively compensated City workforce.” Sixty-eight percent of respondents marked that they “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that interacting with Haines City staff is a positive experience. Fifty-three percent believe that Haines City is living up to its Mission Statement and moving in the right direction. The next largest majority neither agreed nor disagreed.

Seventy-six percent of the general survey respondents “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that Haines City is an affordable community. Likewise, 57 percent “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that Haines City is an attractive community and 56 percent “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that Haines City is a safe community. The next largest majorities for these questions marked that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Use of Services

Thirty-two percent of Haines City Residents responded that they used the public library at least once per month or once per week, 47 percent attend Lake Eva Park at least once per month or once per week, and 27 percent attend the Lake Eva Aquatic Center at least once per month or once per week.

Most feedback from Seasonal Residents and Non-residents did not vary from the responses of permanent residents, with the exception of significantly less Seasonal Residents using the Lake Eva Aquatic Center. Likewise, there was a lower percentage Non-residents who said they used library services. However, a more accurate percentage for the number of Non-residents using Haines City Library Services would come from the actual numbers of library cards issued to the public.

What Participants Value

The survey demonstrated that survey respondents have historically prioritized Haines City services in the same order for the last three years: 1. Public Safety, 2. Public Works, 3. Utilities, 4. Leisure Services and 5. Development Services. Conversely, in another value comparison, respondents prioritized “Building an Attractive Community” only second behind Public Safety.

What Participants Want

Survey respondents also prioritized the City’s focus for the next three to five years on “Job Creation” and “Economic Development.” Eighty-one percent of respondents stated that they “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” with Haines City’s efforts to add sidewalks, bike paths, recreational trails, and bus shelters.

In the open comments about what survey participants want, there was an overwhelming majority of open comments that asked for more youth programs. . Comments about youth included more opportunities for recreation, education, mentoring, establishing a YMCA and even decreasing the cost of sports. The next majority of comments asked for increased use of the pool and recreational opportunities for adults. Other notable categories of comments included requests for a dog park,

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downtown revitalization, improved roadways, attracting more businesses and better customer service from Haines City.

Conclusion

The results of the survey demonstrate a continued need for greater communication efforts and connecting key terms to public interest as the City educates and informs the public about the efforts of the City. The same communication effort is also important in assisting City Staff and Elected Officials understand what the public believes the City should focus on.

The survey demonstrated a clear disinterest of the public to attend the bi-monthly City Commission meetings. Seventy-eight percent of participants responded that they have either “never attended” or have “no interest” in attending City Commission meetings. With this stark confession from the Haines City population, there is an obvious need and responsibility of City Staff and Elected Officials to focus on alternative means of informing and engaging the community. Examples include traditional and non-traditional communication efforts—some of which have recently been instituted. Examples include: going door-to-door to garner citizen input; leveraging social media; building proactive relationships and regularly meeting with the media; regularly distributing the City Manager’s report; creating collateral materials; posting information about vital issues online; and continuing the issuance of the annual Community Value Survey.

On a similar note of communicating with the public, the low ranking of Leisure Services coupled with the high prioritization of building sidewalks, bike paths, recreational trails, and bus shelters during the next three to five years, demonstrates that Haines City Residents are not connecting Leisure Services to their desired focus. To add to this point, the high number of comments about a desire for more youth and adult programs and activities further demonstrate this disconnect. Likewise, the low rankings of Development Services coupled with the high rankings of Job Creation and Economic Development, show a similar disconnect. Both examples also demonstrate disconnect between survey respondent’s desire to “build an attractive community” and the relation of this focus to Leisure Services and Development Services. Identifying this disconnect makes evident the vital importance of connecting Leisure Services and Development Services to trails, sidewalks, job creation, economic development and building an attractive community when speaking to the public.

Finally, Haines City Staff and Elected Officials should take particular note at the high percentage of Non-residents and Seasonal Residents who earn more than \$100,000 annually. If individuals with greater disposable income have enough vested interest to come Haines City, as well as take the extra step to fill out the annual survey, the City must continue to focus on economic development opportunities that will attract and help boost the Haines City economy. This recognition only becomes more poignant when considering the strong emphasis survey respondents placed on economic development, job creation and building an attractive community.

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