

The National Citizen Survey™

Peoria, IL

Open Ended Responses

2014

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The National Citizen Survey™
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Summary

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 research methods and directly comparable results across The NCS communities. This report includes the verbatim responses to an open ended question included on The NCS 2014 survey for Peoria. Additional reports and the technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Respondents were asked to record their opinions about priorities for the City Council in the following question:

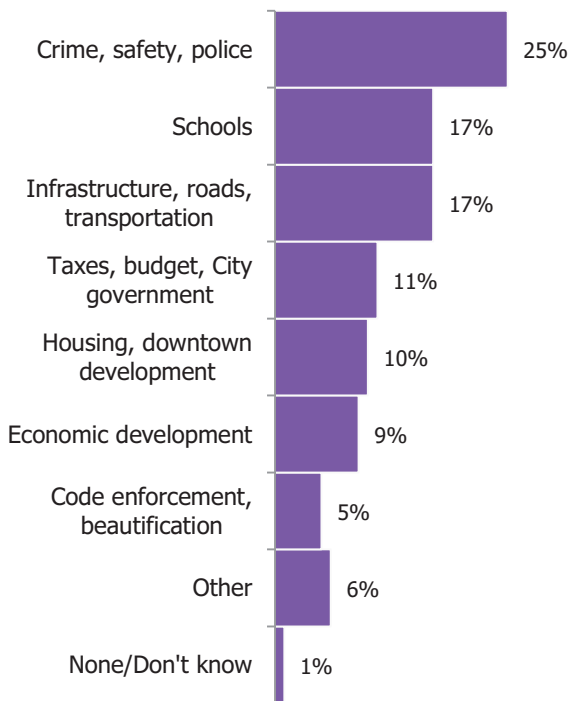
- What is the single most important issue that you would like the Peoria City Council to address in 2014?

The verbatim responses were categorized by topic area and those topics are reported in the following chart with the percent of responses given in each category.

Results from the open-ended question are best understood by reviewing the frequencies that summarize responses as well as the actual verbatim responses themselves. A total of 286 surveys were completed by Peoria residents; of these 202 respondents wrote in responses for the open-ended question. Safety was the top concern, listed in 25% of responses to the question. Schools and infrastructure were highlighted as high priority issues by 17% each of respondents. Other issues cited by respondents related to the budget, development in the city, economic development and maintaining the appearance of Peoria.

Figure 1: Question 17

What is the single most important issue that you would like the Peoria City Council to address in 2014?



Verbatim Responses to Open Ended Question

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.

What is the single most important issue that you would like the Peoria City Council to address in 2014?

Crime, safety, police

- 1. Public safety & gang actualy across the city 2. Dist 150. Failing school system & subpar school direct leadership keep more families from moving and or remaining in Peoria than any thing else. And it is getting ware should consider mayoral to takeover of school board.
- Citizen safety
- Community safety along with job development.
- Crime
- Crime
- Crime
- Crime
- Crime
- Crime
- Crime
- Crime & our handling of the Police Dept-new Chief, new City Manager, new Mayor.
- Crime + neighborhood decline. Our property values are declining because no one wants to live on this side of the river. Get rid of these people. Make it hard if not impossible to live here. Until you do this good people will not want to live here either.
- Crime in the black community
- Crime is out of control City taxes to high for value of services. Dist 150 schools, and administration is a joke scatland site housing, Sec 8 housing out of control. Where is business opportunities to support Bradley students on Main St? Compard to other cities with universities it is another joke.
- Crime prevention
- Crime prevention, more police parked the street
- Crime reduction
- Crime reduction-greatly improve degree of education in Dist 150 get gangs & criminals off streets.
- Crime!!!
- Crime.
- Crime-our safety
- Crooked police officers.
- Curfew (be sure curfew is enforced.
- Declare war on & show no marcy to street ganes!!!! Those hurt our whole community a keep others from locfing here!!
- Elimination of "gangs" and their related activities
- Focus on crime in the south-end of Peoria.
- Gangs & violence against citizens #2 & should side developments
- Get guns of street, thieves breaking in homes
- Getting drug dealers out of town
- Getting rid of gangs/low income housing
- Many things. Get the thugs from Chicago under control, and let's make downtown an actual downtown. Not all these banks and law services, we want more night life and recreational activities like what real cities have in their downtown. More arts and music! Really nicely designed buildings, something to attract locals and tourists. Our Current "downtown" is a disgrace and a ghost town after 6pm. Where's the "hustle & bustle?"
- Our city & safety

- Reduce crime in known "high crime" areas
- Reducing crime
- Reduction in crime-need more police
- Rising crime rate drug related issues.
- Safety
- Safety
- Safety
- Safety
- Safety
- Safety and police services
- Safety from drug addicts & guns
- Safety in East Bluff/get rid of Section 8 in every block and move the overflow out north/rid drugs in neighborhood by following tips by citizens no matter their age/Bloomington/normal very few parking meters making downtown more user friendly/focus more efforts on crime. As a landlord have affordable housing to police at a lower cost-in four years no takers-what does it say about police efforts? Do not relocate residents in housing so wealthy whites get river view!! Thank you
- Safety in my neighborhood-gang violence
- Safety in Peoria
- Safety in the downtown area.
- Safety issues around medical complexes and safety on the riverfront
- So much violence/school district is terrible
- Stopping gang violence/influence, bringing in "better-paying" jobs to the area (not just minimum wage) with benefits to be able to live on.
- Stricter punishment for people who abuse a abandon their dog & or cats.
- Strong police presence
- Teen age kids, job's. Montering the neighborhood's more often yesterday (I live on the 1000 block of Hanssler Pl. 50 kid's were in the middle of the street's fighting (are you kidding me) reinvent neighborhood watch groups, put up signs, have a captin we are trying to raise kid's (help us take back our neighborhood before it reach's your's (██████@yahoo.com) Feed back!
- The crime in Peoria
- The Infection of gang weakness
- The safety of the street; more hands on experiance for the youth to get them off the streets and to hold point them in positive things to do. Turn the old Knoxville shop and save to a youth center the city spent a lot of money to have that builded and it has been sitting for years. Spend the money on your youth they are the future of Peoria.
- The safty of community and gang violence fixing the roads and not just doing a cover up job of all of these above.
- Violence
- Youth crime

Schools

- Better education system/update
- Better schools
- Bettering Dist. 150 school system!!
- D150
- Dist. 150 teachers are doing their very best-the caliber of students is going down (no support from parents at home)-Also realtors & friends of people considering moving to Peoria are being told by the realtors & friends to not move into an area that is in Dist 150. Many current residents of Peoria & Dist. 150 who want to stay in the area are moving outside Peorai & Dist. 150. Also because of the violent crimes.
- District 150 school board.
- District 150 schools
- Education
- Education though high school

- Educational opportunities outside the area of school district - public involvement - participation
- Fire school board
- I think the only thing I am most concerned about for 2014 is a need for a change in leadership in the school district. I feel the way the current leadership has led has been inappropriate. A leader may put change into action but doesn't bring fear and intimidation into it. If there is something the city council can do to support a more effective leadership that what I want to see.
- Improving the quality of education provided in District 150 schools
- Issue of school reform
- Keep children in school, no drop outs!!
- Peoria public schools District 150
- Peoria public schools/school board
- Public education Prek-12. Dist 150.
- Quality of education in Dist. 150.
- Retiring the teacher to teach the students of all ages
- School budgets!!
- School Dist 150
- School system
- Schools
- Schools and real estate values
- The quality of school districts in the areas.
- The reform of district is schools is far and a way the single most important thing the city needs to do. No are who can afford to get out of those schools choses not to and it creates a huge problem for the city. I do not believe the answer is great more money on the school system. The answer is to clean the house of the management of the system and create enforce a variety of policies for conduct in the schools.

Infrastructure, roads, transportation

- 1. Bus service on Sundays & holidays
- Better infrastructure. And nicer buildings
- Downtown streets (get them open)
- Fixing numerous potholes in a manner, so they stay fixed.
- Foot paths! People have to walk on the highways because there is no foot paths. Peoria will not become a healthy & active city until people have the facilities to walk to the store (or ride) currently, just to get to my streets corner store, I have to drive or walk an the main road & get in the way of traffic. Also, to find anything in Peoria: community events volunteer opportunities, festivities, cultural activities (poetry, plays, art) you have to search hard & accidentally find something by chance.
- For paying 5000 of property tax a year, I cannot believe the condition of the roads & that I don't just have regency @ my at house paying extra-is this the 1980s?
- I would like to see additions options in cable TV/Internet. With the Comcast merger pending, I see this as a portrait for higher prices and a lower quality of service. I would love to see I TV3 come to Peora. I would also like to see some additional side walks, in particular on N Richwoods Blvd. There are many people walking to and from like grocery store (Kroger) that I'm afraid could be hit one day. There is also a school on this road.
- Improve & increase sidewalks for pedestrian safety.
- Improve infrastructure (roads, transportation,etc.)
- Improve road conditions, many streets are unsafe for my car due to pot holes.
- Improved bicycle & pedestrian access to city streets & new developments.
- Making the city link bus run on Sunday for people to get places Have a White Castle in Peoria.
- Need better street maintenance. Instead of patching every year, let's replace by outside contractors. When city crews tear up a piece of road, it takes them too long to finish the job. Outside contractors usually have a time frame they have to meet or pay for time extension. Police dept. Is doing there best to keep crime rate down.
- Parking on Main Street and on the Bradley campus. Also deal with BU cops who focus on stupid things like over night parking in campus town instead of focusing on the crime in the area.
- Poor roads. Pot holes every where. They put the tar in holes with water in them. Does that work? No!
- Repair city streets;
- Road maintanance and litter removal.

- Road maintenance
- Road repair.
- Roads roads in Peoria are similar third world country like Mexico etc.
- Sidewalk repairs for mobile wheelchairs residents, more lights & crossing for wheel chairs
- Snow removal on walks that "force" people to walk in streets.
- Spend more money on the streets and crime to many potholes
- Stop sprawl. Make Peoria more bikeable, pedestrian friendly.
- Storm drainage creeks eroding residents lawns yet still increasing property taxes for new smaller pieces of land.
- Street quality-road maintenance & snow remover
- Street repair
- The only thing I have to call city service for are the pot holes from Cox to War Memorial on Prospect and Crestwood to War Memorial on Prospect. A little tar stuff never holds-this has been for several years now! I love Peoria I was born here in 1929-our neighborhood is friendly & good to one another!
- There should be free parking for the Riverfront Museum.

Taxes, budget, City government

- 1) Decrease school tax for these who do not have kids in Dist. 150. 2) Not charge the same for households who only put trash out once every 3-4 weeks-as they do for those who have multiple cans weekly. 3) Roads-potholes 4) Police response time as well as police using lights/seem to get thru traffic light because they don't want to stop. 5) Police using their badge to bully citizens.
- 1) I believe in cross-training, I see in some of the city offices, too many people seem to have one thing they do, if at lunch, even when other staff is around you have to wait for that person to return from lunch, I feel it's a waste of man power and a waste of tax payer money too paid too many to do one job. Just an observation. 2) lighting used in neighbourhood's are to dim.
- 1. Balanced budget & extrapolate out plans, to, 5, 106 etc I am really impressed with the budget deliberations for the last two years. They did not seem as "tedious" as the budget meetings were in the past. 2. Personal-most important issue. We never see a policeman, or a pieman in my neighborhood. I feel its pretty safe. But I think Peoria needs to have neighborhoods activities so you know your neighbors. (not just in "at risk" neighborhoods)
- City employees should be paid well but not at the expense of the city-look at funding 401k-get out of pensions business. Balance the budget! Mandatory recycling environmental planning-saving old growth trees! Take care of what we have reduce everything equally-mandatory no parking for snow removal
- Fesical responsibility
- Fiscal responsibility
- High sales tax
- I feel the city past their agendas foward even if the people of Peoria vote it down. Example. Riverfront Museum
- I have a hard time believing that decreasing taxes will automatically result in significant reduction or elimination of services. Put more disposable income in the tax payers pockets by reducing the taxes across to board. That extra income will be spent in the area and will improve to economy. Secondly, the pension/healthcare benefits of current and retired public workers need to be addressed immediately, finally perception of District 150 bad and hurting Peoria.
- Improve arts funding. Reduce pay for Mayor and other city officials. Find out if Aaron Shock is gay even though he is a republican.
- Need some one care about tax paid
- Pay decrease to politicians in order to balance city budget.
- Property tax is too high.
- Property taxes. Other city taxes. No Increases.
- Quit giving a way our money by being on the hook for new projects. If the developer does not see it as a full money making product-then it should not be built!
- Reduce expense paid for employee benefits and pensions.
- Revenue/taxes
- Stop the rubber stamp approval, for protects, until getting adequate input, from those most affected.

- Support neighborhood services
- Take care of basic services, police, fire, garbage & roads. Festivals, bands, + arts are great but basic services should come first.
- Taxes
- Taxes, safety
- The ridiculously high property taxes. That is the only reason we have not end do not plan to buy a home in Peoria.
- Try to pick Peoria residents for school board President also City Manager & Mayor.
- We do not need a tax increase an any services.

Housing, downtown development

- Do not relocate Taft homes to Lake Street. -Schools -Downtown development.
- Issues on the south end. Housing, streets, crime businesses, schools.
- Keep Taft homes where they are now! Not in our neighborhoods If they move them to our neighborhood I and my family will move to Florida !
- Keeping track of Section 8 housing and remodel apartments for safe living and enjoyment of a person's home.
- Stop Taft homes relocation
- Why relocate people in/form Taft Homes
- Development of downtown; including sidewalks commercial development etc.
- Development of the Warehouse District & downtown lots of street work has been done but no development yet of the warehouses. We must get residents downtown to see more development. Can't something be done to "beautiful" the platform? Plants, seating, umbrellas, etc? It's an eyesore.
- Development to make our city better take after Peoria Heights with a restaurant area.
- Downtown area is miserable. No place to convene. This town is for 30+ with family.
- Downtown re. Development responsible service of developers in positive community projects. Keep engaged in Madison Theater and Warehouse district
- Downtown rehab
- Downtown renewal
- Downtown/business development
- Falling house price due to people leaving the neighborhood because of unwanted business moving in and horrible leadership -School board/administration.
- Riverfront development.
- Stop ignoring the plight of desolation in the south side of Peoria. The living situation is horrendous. Coming in to Peoria on Adams St. from Bartonville is too bare. Do more to wake up the south side. Encourage more business in the south end. Folks from other countries are taking over the south end. Come up with programs to help the ones that live there or become self-sufficient, own their own businesses in their neighborhood.
- Stop scattered site housing/increase job opportunities
- The number of abandoned houses on Peoria street to go down.

Economic development

- Become more business friendly & bring some of the businesses to this side of the river/there are reasons why so many businesses choose East Peoria. Let's make it easier for businesses to open here-to build a stronger economic base instead of leaning so much on the backs of tax payers!
- Being businesses friendly by cutting taxes and regulations; which will grow the economy improve personal wealth and family income and encourage investment in our city. Would like to see completion of 4 lane travel Peoria to Chicago!
- Being more competitive with East Peoria so they don't get all the new business revenue
- Bringing more variety and choices to Peoria, East Peoria is always ahead of us where it comes to new places to visit such as restaurants.
- Bringing viable businesses to the city.
- Create a favorable small business environment.
- Economic development
- Economic development

- Economic development
- Economic development Why not make Peoria a techno/startup hub? Make it easier for startup to establish business and entice tech companies to establish office here. We have great community here but lack our work opportunity so most people leave.
- Economic development.
- Economic development.
- Economic development-being new revenue into this city insted of depending on us who all already paying are of the wills to pay more. This would helps residents get jobs to support themselves & their family which in then would increase tax dollers paid.
- Economic opportunity
- Employment opportunities for non-college graduates with strong work and life experience.
- Employment opportunities for young people in Peoria area.
- Higher wages, with #14.
- Job development
- Jobs
- Making Peoria attractive to job creators.
- More job opportunity
- Peoria's economic health
- Providing jobs for professional and general people for this community or it wont be around long, start providing tax breaks for companies who want to set roots down in our city. People needs jobs and we can't count on Caterpillar any more.
- Reduce unemployment/economic development.

Code enforcement, beautification

- Cleaner & greener community. Less trash on the streets, sidewalks-liter is horrible in the city put the people locked up in jail to work in a reflective vest and make them pick up the trash along the side of the road. Have them working on creating a green community space, gardens, planting flowers-make Peoria beautiful!
- Code enforce ment: we need to enforce land lord responsibility we need to enforce that rental property is maintained this would strengthen and support our heritage neighborhoods.
- Code enforcement services
- Code enforcement!
- Dog control snow sidewalk removal, general code enforcement-apt Devilla walk-no kids our schools need more new supl. Perhaps city has multicultural agenda as do most places
- Enforce the noise ordinance! Patrol neighbor more frequently.
- Peoria is not a very attractive city. It is important for us to maintain our individual houses appearance. Why shouldn't our city have nice "curb appeal"? One of the first things a visitor sees when coming across the R/U bridge is public housing. Our downtown looks run down. Make use out of those old buildings. Peoria skyline is pretty at night. Lets make it beautiful in the day light too.
- Making sure sidewalks are clear during the winter month, many times I had to walk in Jefferson Street or Madison because the sidewalks were full of snow. (Between Spalding & Fayette & Jefferson and Madison sidewalk).

Other

- Core neighborhoods
- Culture for all ethnic groups, more things to do in Peoria
- Some churches own and keep buying or harming property donated many non profits-make millions of dollars. I feel everyone needs to help. According to income many of these organization can afford to help and they should
- Helping to promote diversity in our community.
- Historic preservation
- Overall sense of community
- The cost of living for needy families of Peoria and years and years of waiting list for help if any at all.
- To helping the poor

- Why does the city give. Licenses to business owners that are from other countries permits to open up smoke and tobacco shops in all the vacant store fronts, closed restaurants and make it difficult for residents born and raised in this country and this city of Peoria to open anything. In order to open new businesses in Peoria you have to be Mexican or Iranian. Why is that being allowed to happen. The tax laws needs to the same for all businesses.
- Allow home owners to return unwanted trash containers to the city.

None/Don't know

- Can't decide!
- Not certain.

