

# Gateway Selected Area Study (SAS):

## Survey of Public Opinion

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## Gateway Selected Area Study Survey of Public Opinion Results

This survey of public opinion was designed to assess the perception of Polk County residents, business owners, and other stakeholders concerning their priorities and/or issues of concern for the Gateway Selected Area Study (SAS). The survey was conducted during the Gateway Selected Area Study Community Meetings held on December 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of 2008. All persons attending these meetings were given the opportunity to participate in the survey. Of the 139 total individuals who attended these community meetings, there were 55 surveys that were completed and returned. These 55 surveys represent the first “sample” used to express the concerns of Polk County residents as to the Gateway SAS. In the following months to come, there will be additional methods used to continually track citizen concerns (such as focus group meetings, a visioning workshop, and additional community meetings).

**Total Number of Surveys Administered: 139**

**Total Number of Surveys Completed: 55**

In order for the survey to be valid, only those persons over the age of 18 and residing within Polk County (whether incorporated or unincorporated) were sampled, and only completed surveys were tabulated. Some of the highlights from this survey are:

- 62% of the respondents surveyed reside within unincorporated Polk County (11% reside within the city limits of Lake Wales, 9% reside within the city limits of Winter Haven, 5% within the city limit of Bartow, and 12% were other).
- 20% of the respondents surveyed have resided within their current location between 1 and 5 years, while 52% of the respondents have resided within their current location for 16 or more years.
- Economic Development and Environmental Preservation were the number one ranked issues of concern expressed by survey respondents; while Traffic and Density/Population ranked respectively second and third.
- 62% of the respondents answered “yes” when asked if the Community Meeting help them to understand the Selected Area Study Process.





# 1<sup>st</sup> Community Meeting 12/09/08

## Chain O' Lakes Complex, Winter Haven, FL

Number of Participants: 92

Number of Surveys Completed: 36

### Question 1: I am a citizen of Polk County and am at/over the age of 18.

Yes.....36 (100%)

No.....0 (0%)

### Question 2: I currently reside within the City Limits of?

Winter Haven.....5 (14%)

Bartow.....1 (3%)

Eagle Lake.....0 (0%)

Lake Wales.....5 (14%)

I reside in the County, not within City Limits.....21 (58%)

Other.....4 (11%)

### Question 3: How long have you been a resident of your current location?

1 to 5 years.....8 (22%)

6 to 10 years.....6 (17%)

11 to 15 years.....4 (11%)

16 to 20 years.....7 (19%)

21 or more years.....11 (31%)

### Question 4: How important are the following issues facing Polk County today? Please check whether each issue is Very Important, Important, Unimportant, or Don't Know.

#### 4a. Economic Development

Very Important.....17 (47%)

Important.....12 (33%)

Unimportant.....4 (11%)

Don't Know.....0 (0%)

No Answer.....3 (8%)

#### 4b. Environmental Protection

Very Important.....23 (64%)  
Important.....9 (25%)  
Unimportant.....1 (3%)  
Don't Know.....0 (0%)  
No Answer.....3 (8%)

#### 4c. Traffic Congestion

Very Important.....22 (61%)  
Important.....10 (28%)  
Unimportant.....0 (0%)  
Don't Know.....1 (3%)  
No Answer.....3 (8%)

#### 4d. Creating Better Jobs

Very Important.....16 (44%)  
Important.....13 (36%)  
Unimportant.....3 (8%)  
Don't Know.....1 (3%)  
No Answer.....3 (8%)

#### 4e. Water Conservation

Very Important.....25 (69%)  
Important.....7 (19%)  
Unimportant.....1 (3%)  
Don't Know.....0 (0%)  
No Answer.....3 (8%)

#### 4f. Assigning Compatible Land Uses (zoning and buffering)

Very Important.....21 (58%)  
Important.....10 (28%)  
Unimportant.....2 (6%)  
Don't Know.....0 (0%)  
No Answer.....3 (8%)

#### 4g. Overcrowding of Schools

Very Important.....13 (36%)  
Important.....17 (47%)  
Unimportant.....2 (6%)  
Don't Know.....1 (3%)  
No Answer.....3 (8%)

#### 4h. Preserving Agricultural Lands

Very Important.....17 (47%)  
Important.....13 (37%)  
Unimportant.....3 (8%)  
Don't Know.....0 (0%)  
No Answer.....3 (8%)

**Question 5: Did the Community Meeting help you to understand the Selected Area Study Process?**

Yes.....	21	(58%)
No.....	1	(3%)
A Little.....	10	(28%)
Other.....	1	(3%)
No Answer.....	3	(8%)

**Question 6: Please rank your issues of concern about the Selected Area Study Process (with 1 being your highest priority).**

- Economic Development
- Density and Population
- Traffic
- Environmental Preservation
- Infrastructure
- Public Participation
- Other

Economic Development and Environmental Preservation were the number one ranked issues of concern. The second most ranked issue of concern was Traffic; and the third most ranked concern was Density and Population.

**Question 7: Please list any additional comments about future growth concerns within this area.**

There were only 20 responses to question number 7 and include the following responses:

1. Consider buying residential areas of concern.
2. Try to beat road construction ahead of growth!!!
3. How long is the study, when can we expect improvements to Wahneta?
4. Excessive noise from additional traffic.
5. Traffic on Eloise Road and Thompson Nursery Road if CSX is developed.
6. Better make sure the road from 60 to CSX is built prior to the opening of CSX site.
7. Traffic congestion on Eloise Loop and Thompson Nursery Rd.
8. Advance Article says something about CSX but only at Q & A, did we hear of it.
9. Land Use Planning for the Area East of the proposed Clear Springs project and West of the Gateway SAS area. This area should be included in the boundary of the Gateway SAS.
10. Master plan for water resources important. Bike trails/recreation great idea-includes alternate forms of transportation. We need to practice “smart growth” to balance the economic, environmental, and social benefits.
11. Hwy 60 thru Bartow. Thank God- CSX will be bringing Jobs to our County.
12. Residents in my area (Alturas) did not receive notices of the meetings. It was mentioned that the flyers were mailed out.
13. Develop the SR 60 corridor between Bartow and Lake Wales for Industrial and Commercial use and expand the highway to support this growth and thus provide jobs and educational facilities.
14. Please make sure growth pays for itself.
15. The City of Winter Haven, we don't need them in our area, no one wanted this till CSX came in, now it's a money thing. Lake Wales is in the picture, Alturas and Bartow. Why is Winter Haven wanting it so bad? I don't blame CSX, they put the money down now you have a bunch of hungry politics with

there hands out. They can't even keep a spring training team. Polk County's road are very bad worked over the state there the far by worst.

16. I am concerned about the preservation/conservation/restoration of the Peace Creek Canal and its wetlands and floodplains. Want to see the scrub areas preserved. Want to see wild life underpasses incorporated into road plans, esp Hwy 60. This is an appropriate area for infiltration type water resource projects. Waterfowl habitats should be restored/enhanced. There should be strict lighting requirements to reduce fugitive lighting in this area as it develops. Should be good noise abatement methods for the ILC. There should be a unified vision developed for the Peace Creek Basin to create/restore habitat and wetlands to include recreational components like hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, maybe duck hunting, a TDR program could make this happen. Should conserve agriculture lands to the greatest extent possible. Look at potential for scrub and wetland mitigation banking. Integrated habitat areas should be conserved. Retain natural wetlands/floodplains to facilitate Peace Creek and Peace River restoration and MLF efforts as well as preserve flood storage capacity. Can you determine a more intense use for Sundance than permitted now, thus increasing potential value? Show phosphate mining unreclaimed and easements restricting development activities within the SAS (Development Limitations Areas).
17. Thompson Nursery road expansion concern- 4 lane in front of Lake Ashton. We have been informed that there will be no left turn lane into the Lake Ashton Gate coming west on Thompson Nursery Road. That we will have to go further west and then u-turn. There are about 150 motor homes in Lake Ashton. When towing a car you can not safely u-turn. This needs to be changed so that a west bound RV from RT 27 can turn in at the gate.
18. More notices on issues such as this meeting on this project. You have limited the times and locations of meetings for the people who work hours that do not fall in to a 9 to 5 frame. Traffic deaths, loss of water rights to larger business, the taxes on agriculture lands for use of the land (lower). Privacy from noise pollution and air pollution. Congestion of the back roads (two lane roads) oversized trucks such as dump truck, semi-trailers, and the loss of natural lands for native animals that are part of our area resources. Never having to allow the use of the already established Alturas Fire Department due to budget cuts. It's only manned by volunteers and use tax payers money to purchase a piece of property on the corner of Riffle Range Rd and Hwy 60 for a full service fire station for the CSX project. It's for their main use not to help the safety of the community of Alturas or Gardenia or even the Wahneta area.
19. Alturas is not, or should not be associated with the term "Gateway." The subject area is a gateway only in this regard: you go to or through this area only after you've been through Bartow, or Winter Haven, or Lake Wales ie. For Lake Wales it is the Gateway to WH and Bartow; for Bartow it is the gateway to Lake Wales; for WH it is the gateway to economic growth and tax dollars. The term "gateway" is unimaginative and all too common. Three project goals are expressed in Newsletter. WH will corner the market in goal #3, but does not acknowledge goal #2 as they continue to expand city boundaries. Goal #1 is the most important and cannot be ignored by all Polk Countians.
20. Why hasn't a bike trail been incorporated in the plan? I would like to see planning for a trail similar to the 400 mile trail being constructed through many Counties east of St. John River (south of Jacksonville). Winter Haven as an Amtrak stop and a trail could be easily constructed, connecting existing trails from RW along the tracks.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Meeting 12/11/08 Homeland Heritage Park, Homeland, FL

Number of Participants: 47

Number of Surveys Completed: 19

### Question 1: I am a citizen of Polk County and am at/over the age of 18.

Yes.....19 (100%)

No.....0 (0%)

### Question 2: I currently reside within the City Limits of?

Winter Haven.....0 (0%)

Bartow.....2 (11%)

Eagle Lake.....0 (0%)

Lake Wales.....1 (5%)

I reside in the County, not within City Limits.....13 (68%)

Other.....3 (16%)

### Question 3: How long have you been a resident of your current location?

1 to 5 years.....3 (16%)

6 to 10 years.....3 (16%)

11 to 15 years.....2 (10%)

16 to 20 years.....1 (5%)

21 or more years.....10 (53%)

### Question 4: How important are the following issues facing Polk County today? Please check whether each issue is Very Important, Important, Unimportant, or Don't Know.

#### 4a. Economic Development

Very Important.....9 (47%)

Important.....7 (37%)

Unimportant.....2 (11%)

Don't Know.....1 (5%)

4b. Environmental Protection

Very Important.....12 (63%)  
Important.....6 (32%)  
Unimportant.....0 (0%)  
Don't Know.....1 (5%)

4c. Traffic Congestion

Very Important.....11 (58%)  
Important.....7 (37%)  
Unimportant.....0 (0%)  
Don't Know.....1 (5%)

4d. Creating Better Jobs

Very Important.....10 (53%)  
Important.....6 (31%)  
Unimportant.....2 (11%)  
Don't Know.....1 (5%)

4e. Water Conservation

Very Important.....13 (68%)  
Important.....5 (26%)  
Unimportant.....0 (0%)  
Don't Know.....1 (5%)

4f. Assigning Compatible Land Uses (zoning and buffering)

Very Important.....13 (68%)  
Important.....4 (21%)  
Unimportant.....1 (5%)  
Don't Know.....1 (5%)

4g. Overcrowding of Schools

Very Important.....10 (53%)  
Important.....6 (32%)  
Unimportant.....2 (10%)  
Don't Know.....1 (5%)

4h. Preserving Agricultural Lands

Very Important.....14 (74%)  
Important.....4 (21%)  
Unimportant.....0 (0%)  
Don't Know.....1 (5%)

**Question 5: Did the Community Meeting help you to understand the Selected Area Study Process?**

Yes.....13 (68%)  
No.....1 (5%)  
A Little.....3 (16%)  
Other.....2 (11%)

**Question 6: Please rank your issues of concern about the Selected Area Study Process (with 1 being your highest priority).**

Economic Development  
Density and Population  
Traffic  
Environmental Preservation  
Infrastructure  
Public Participation  
Other

The number one issue of concern was economic development and density; the second ranked issue of concern was traffic; and the third ranked issue of concern was environmental preservation.

**Question 7: Please list any additional comments about future growth concerns within this area.**

There were only 10 responses to question number 7 and include the following responses:

1. Don't use all your farm land for development. It's hard to eat houses!
2. Keep us County!
3. Alturas is the armpit of Polk County.
4. Potential to include mitigation banks within conservation easements/designations in order to allow for future development.
5. We need a blueprint for growth that will occur!
6. Being a 32 resident of Alturas area my concern is preserve the rural and agricultural areas in this study area. I want to preserve our Quiet Quality of Life.
7. Do not want growth it is a rural area and that's why I love it.
8. Smart growth, not "no growth." Be proactive not reactive. Use an incentive based conservation/development program.
9. I am extremely interested in the Peace Creek Basin.
10. I moved to the "Country" for the Country! Not to live right next to a person!