



2024 Perdido Vision Survey

Envision Perdido is a Florida Non-Profit 501(c)(4) Corporation
10447 Sorrento Rd, Suite 100 PMB 200, Pensacola, FL 32507
Phone: 850-303-0089 | Email: info@envisionperdido.org

Executive Polling Summary

Overview

As part of our ongoing efforts to better understand the collective spirit and values of the Perdido community, Envision Perdido, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit research and educational organization, partnered with a respected national community and market research firm to conduct a survey of the Perdido community. The survey design consisted of eight questions: seven open-ended questions and one multiple-choice question. The questions, very much on purpose, never mentioned incorporation.

Specifications

The Perdido community surveyed included Perdido Key, Perdido Bay along Bauer Road and Highway 98, Old Gulf Beach Highway (west of Blue Angel Parkway), Sorrento Road (west of Blue Angel Parkway), and Dog Track Road near Ferguson Airport (south of Highway 98 and west of Blue Angel Parkway).

Fielding was conducted between May 1 and May 5, 2024, via email-to-web, targeting nearly 6000 registered voters and social-media-to-web for the community at large. Additionally, the Perdido Key Association invited 220 of its members to participate in the survey. In all, 645 completed surveys were collected at a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 4%, which is better than the industry standard (5% is typical).

Purpose

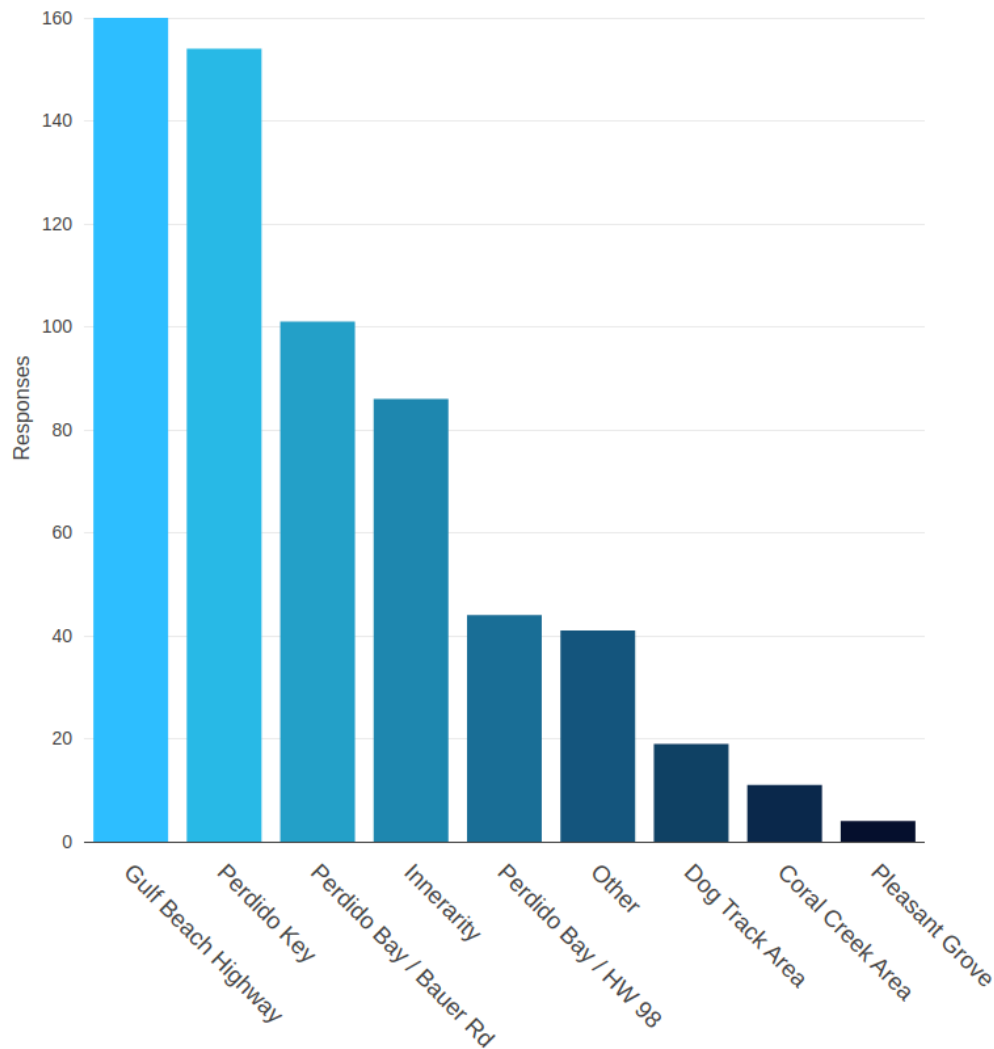
The core of the survey is rooted in Simon Sinek's Golden Circle framework, which emphasizes starting with "Why"—the fundamental belief that motivates actions and decisions. In Perdido's community development context, identifying this "Why" is crucial to align future projects and policies with its residents' intrinsic values and aspirations. The "Why" represents more than just the functional needs of the community; it encompasses the deeper reasons people are proud to call Perdido their home and what they hope it continues to represent.

Simon Sinek's concept suggests that successful organizations and communities operate in a way that communicates from the inside out, starting with the "Why" (the purpose), then describing the "How" (the process), and finally, the "What" (the result). Applying this to Perdido, we can better understand the core values that bind the community, such as preserving natural beauty, maintaining a small-town feel, and fostering local relationships. These elements are not merely desirable attributes but are central to the community's identity and drive its residents' decisions and preferences. By aligning plans, programs, and decisions with these core principles, Perdido can continue to thrive while maintaining its unique character.

Summary of Results

Perdido community values and aspirations reveal a strong desire to maintain the local charm and small-town feel that defines the area. Residents consistently express a preference for limiting development, preserving natural landscapes and public beach access, and avoiding the commercialization that characterizes neighboring communities. Concerns about overbuilding and maintaining public infrastructure to support local needs without compromising the community's character are prevalent. The community clearly prefers policies that control growth and preserve the natural environment while also nurturing local businesses and ensuring that community services meet the needs of residents. As seen in the chart below, survey respondents are residents from diverse, representative areas within the overall Perdido community.

In which part of Perdido do you live?



In a word, what do you love most about Perdido?

Overview of Responses

The spectrum of sentiments from the Perdido community paints a vivid portrait of what residents value deeply. Central themes emerged around the appreciation for the **community**, the natural beauty of the **beaches**, the **quietness** or tranquility that the area offers, and the overarching presence of **nature** itself. The word "Community" was particularly prevalent, emphasizing Perdido's tight-knit and supportive social fabric. Equally significant were mentions of Perdido's natural assets: the beaches were highlighted frequently, with many appreciating their aesthetic and recreational aspects. The appreciation for quietude came through strongly, with residents valuing Perdido's peace and serenity—a stark contrast to busier, urban environments. Additionally, numerous references to the natural surroundings, including specific locales like the protected coastal forests, Johnson Beach and the Gulf, underscore an affinity for environments that remain relatively undisturbed by human activity.

Acknowledging Diverse Voices

While most of the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, it was important to recognize less common but equally significant viewpoints. Some residents reminisced about "The way it was in 1999," evoking nostalgia for what was referred to as the "Old-Florida Charm" or "Old-Florida Feel," a longing for the simplicity and authenticity of Perdido's past before more recent developments. On another front, a few voices against municipal incorporation articulated through phrases like "Not a city" and "Incorporation-free," reflect a segment of the community wary of the changes that formal incorporation might bring. These responses highlight concerns over potential overdevelopment and a desire to maintain governmental simplicity. While incorporation remains a means for residents to preserve Perdido's unique character by managing growth more effectively on a local level, it is essential to approach this topic sensitively, understanding that resistance often stems from apprehension towards change and a potential misunderstanding of the benefits that incorporation could bring.

Reflections on the "Why"

This variety of responses ties back to the core "Why" of the Perdido community—a strong connection to a quiet, naturally beautiful, and closely-knit community. This shared value reflects a collective aspiration to preserve the tranquility and beauty of Perdido while fostering a supportive communal network. The longing for the "Old-Florida" aspect and the concerns regarding incorporation stem from a deep-seated desire to protect and maintain what makes Perdido special to its residents. This insight is crucial as it guides the community and its leaders in making informed decisions that resonate with these core values, aiming to balance growth and development while maintaining the cherished qualities of Perdido.

What would you change about Perdido if you could?

Overview of Responses

The community feedback on potential changes for Perdido was diverse, but several dominant themes emerged clearly:

Infrastructure and Traffic Management: Many responses highlighted the need for improved infrastructure, particularly better roads and traffic management to accommodate current and future growth. Suggestions ranged from widening roads, improving traffic flow, and addressing specific areas like the Johnson Beach roundabout and traffic during Blue Angels training sessions.

Development and Growth Control: There is a significant call from the community to manage growth more responsibly. This includes slowing down the construction of high-rise condos and apartments, enhancing zoning laws to preserve natural beauty, and ensuring that development does not outpace infrastructure.

Enhanced Community Amenities: Residents expressed a desire for more local *restaurants*, *shopping* options, and *community gathering spaces*. There was also a notable interest in increasing *walkability* and *bike-friendliness*, suggesting a community that values social interaction and accessibility.

Acknowledging Diverse Voices

While there is a robust desire for modern amenities and infrastructure improvement, there are again salient voices concerned with preserving the "Old-Florida Charm" of Perdido. These residents cherish the community's current state and fear that rapid commercialization might strip away its unique character. There are also those apprehensive about recent development, viewing it as a threat to their way of life rather than a protective measure against overdevelopment. This sentiment is crucial to address, as it stems from a deep-seated value for independence and a fear of losing the community's core identity amid growth and change.

Reflections on the "Why"

The desire for infrastructure improvements and controlled development directly ties back to the community's core "Why": a commitment to maintaining Perdido as a serene, accessible, and naturally beautiful place to live. The emphasis on community amenities and managing growth reflects a collective vision that cherishes both the environment and the quality of life. Understanding these nuances is key to aligning future projects and policies with the community's values, ensuring that growth enhances rather than detracts from the Perdido way of life.

In your view, what is Perdido's greatest need right now?

Overview of Responses

Responses regarding Perdido's greatest needs underscore a significant emphasis on three key areas:

Infrastructure and Traffic Management: This was the most mentioned concern, with numerous calls for *better road systems* and *traffic solutions*. Specific issues like the need to fix or remove problematic *traffic circles*, *widen roads*, and *improve traffic flow*, particularly to accommodate beach and tourism-related congestion, were frequently highlighted.

Development and Zoning Control: Many residents expressed worries about the pace and scale of development. There is a strong sentiment to implement *more stringent zoning laws*, *halt high-density residential construction* like condos and apartments, and a *general moratorium on new building projects* to ensure growth does not outpace infrastructure.

Community Amenities and Public Services: Enhancements in local services such as more *diverse dining options*, *improved schooling*, and *better local healthcare facilities* were noted. Additionally, there's a desire for *more public spaces* such as parks, better beach access, and *community centers*, which suggests a need for improved overall community infrastructure.

Acknowledging Diverse Voices

While many responses focused on the need for better infrastructure and controlled growth, there were also critical voices against further government intervention, reflecting a preference to maintain a certain level of simplicity and local control. This segment of the community shows a strong inclination towards minimal change, advocating for maintaining current conditions rather than expanding or modernizing at a rapid pace. This viewpoint reflects a possible misunderstanding of local government, as localized control in whatever form – be it a town, development overlay district, etc. – is often an effective means to protect the localized interests of citizens. Larger jurisdictions, such as counties, are often less capable of addressing localized concerns and needs.

Reflections on the "Why"

The community's feedback on Perdido's greatest needs reflects a clear "Why": a shared concern for sustaining a livable, manageable community that balances growth with quality of life. The call for improved infrastructure, controlled development, and enhanced community amenities highlights a collective vision to foster a safe, accessible, and pleasant living environment. This vision underscores the community's commitment to thoughtful planning and management, ensuring that Perdido can accommodate both current residents and future growth without compromising its unique characteristics.

What do you hope for Perdido's future?

Overview of Responses

The aspirations for Perdido's future revealed through the community responses are diverse yet centered around a few key themes:

Controlled Growth and Development: Many residents hope for well-managed and thoughtfully planned growth, ensuring that any development preserves the area's local charm and natural beauty. To maintain the character of Perdido, there is a significant emphasis on preventing overdevelopment, particularly in terms of high-density housing and commercial buildings.

Infrastructure and Public Amenities: A common theme is improved infrastructure, particularly *better roads* and *traffic management*. Residents also desire *more public spaces* such as parks, beach access, and *community centers* that enhance the quality of life without compromising the area's aesthetics.

Preservation of Community Character: A strong desire exists to keep Perdido a small, *quiet community* that remains somewhat isolated from the rapid commercialization seen in nearby areas. This includes maintaining *low-density living*, ensuring easy access to *unspoiled beaches*, and providing *local amenities* that cater to the needs of residents rather than tourists.

Acknowledging Diverse Voices

While the majority wish for controlled growth and better infrastructure, there are voices within the community that express a desire for more substantial development, similar to nearby successful areas like Orange Beach. These responses suggest a balance between development and preservation, indicating that while some residents value the small-town feel, others see potential benefits in strategic growth and modernization.

Reflections on the "Why"

The community's vision for Perdido's future strongly reflects a "Why" centered around sustaining a livable, manageable community that balances growth with maintaining the natural and community values that make Perdido special. This vision highlights a collective desire for a future where development is balanced with preservation, infrastructure improvements enhance community living, and the area's unique charm is actively protected.

Describe a moment when you felt proud to be part of Perdido.

Overview of Responses

Perdido's sense of community pride is reflected in the responses centered around natural disaster recovery, local wildlife conservation, and strong community engagement. Key moments that instill pride among residents frequently relate to:

Community Resilience and Unity: Many residents feel a deep sense of pride during and after hurricanes, where neighbors come together to help each other recover. This collective effort in facing challenges reinforces a *strong community bond*.

Environmental Conservation: Activities like Turtle Patrol, beach, park, and road cleanups, and efforts to preserve local wildlife and beaches spark pride among residents. These actions highlight a community-wide respect for the natural environment that defines much of Perdido's identity.

Military and Cultural Pride: The proximity to NAS Pensacola and the presence of the Blue Angels are sources of pride, linking the community closely with national pride and military excellence. Events involving the Blue Angels, particularly flyovers and airshows, are moments of immense local pride.

Settling in Perdido: A significant number of responses express pride simply in the act of purchasing a home and moving to Perdido. This pride stems from the satisfaction of belonging to a community that aligns with their values and lifestyle, emphasizing the allure of Perdido as a chosen home.

Acknowledging Diverse Voices

While the majority express pride through community actions and natural beauty, some outliers have not yet felt a moment of pride due to being new to the area or concerns about overdevelopment and loss of local charm. These voices highlight the diversity of experience within Perdido and emphasize the need for balanced growth and community inclusion. Additionally, finding ways to engage those who have not yet experienced such a moment is important by offering opportunities to discover and participate in activities that may foster deeper community connections.

Reflections on the "Why"

The pride residents feel in being part of Perdido clearly ties back to a collective "Why" that emphasizes community solidarity, natural beauty, and a shared commitment to preserving what makes Perdido special. This sense of pride not only enhances community bonds but also serves as a motivational force for maintaining and improving the quality of life in Perdido, ensuring it remains a place where both nature and community are valued deeply.

What does the idea of 'community' mean to you in the context of Perdido?

Overview of Responses

The concept of 'community' in Perdido is richly defined by close-knit relationships, shared responsibility, and a common vision for maintaining the local environment and community values.

Interpersonal Connections: Many respondents highlighted the importance of knowing one's neighbors and fostering friendships as central to community. This personal connection fosters a sense of belonging and mutual support, especially in times of need, such as post-hurricane recovery.

Local Involvement and Identity: There is a strong emphasis on *local involvement*, with residents *preferring decisions to be made by those who truly understand and cherish the area*. This includes support for *local businesses, community projects, leadership, and infrastructure* that benefits residents directly.

Preservation of Local Character and Environment: Many residents feel that the community should focus on *preserving its natural beauty and local charm against overdevelopment*. This involves managing growth responsibly and ensuring that Perdido *retains its unique identity*.

Community Action and Support: The responses often mentioned community actions like cleaning up after storms or participating in local events as defining moments of communal pride and cooperation. There's a notable emphasis on *collective action for the greater good*, which enhances the communal bond.

Acknowledging Diverse Voices

Engaging those who feel disconnected from or are critical of current community dynamics is crucial. Some residents express dissatisfaction with development trends or feel overlooked by broader county policies and politics. Addressing these concerns by fostering inclusive community dialogues considering diverse perspectives and needs can strengthen cohesion.

Reflections on the "Why"

Understanding 'community' in Perdido as a blend of mutual support, local pride, and shared responsibility for maintaining the area's character aligns well with the collective "Why". This encompasses a desire for a harmonious living environment that balances growth with preservation, ensuring Perdido remains a place where residents feel connected to each other and to their natural surroundings.

What about Perdido do you hope would never change?

Overview of Responses

Residents of Perdido are deeply committed to preserving the unique character of their community. The desire to maintain certain aspects of the town is strongly voiced across various dimensions, including:

Small-Town Atmosphere: The most recurring theme is the cherished *small-town feel*. Residents value the *quiet, friendly, and low-key* environment that distinguishes Perdido from more commercialized locales.

Natural Beauty and Beaches: People profoundly appreciate the natural environment, especially *beaches, green spaces, and conservation areas*. Many responses express a hope that these areas remain protected and *free from overdevelopment*.

Community Culture and Values: Respondents hope to preserve the local culture and community spirit, which they feel is threatened by rapid growth and external influences. This includes maintaining the local community's *pace of life* and its ability to *self-govern* and to do so, if possible, without the imposition of complex government layers.

Infrastructure and Urban Development: Many wish to keep the infrastructure manageable and local, with concerns about over-commercialization and high-density housing. Maintaining current traffic levels and avoiding the expansion of major roads is also a key concern.

Acknowledging Diverse Voices

In considering these responses, it's important to recognize that while many cherish the current state of Perdido, some voices acknowledge that change is inevitable and necessary for revitalization. Engaging with these perspectives can help balance conservation efforts with thoughtful development.

Reflections on the "Why"

These sentiments strongly align with the community's values, emphasizing preservation, conservation, and maintaining a community-centric approach. The responses reflect a collective desire to protect what makes Perdido special, thus supporting a "Why" that centers around preserving the community's unique character and natural beauty for future generations.

A Unique Identity and Community Autonomy

Throughout the survey responses, a prominent theme that emerges is Perdido's distinct identity from neighboring communities such as Pensacola and Orange Beach. Residents of Perdido emphasize their desire to preserve this unique character and ensure that Perdido remains a separate entity, both culturally and administratively. This sentiment reflects a broader desire for self-determination within the community, where residents express concerns about external influences and the potential loss of local control. The community's philosophy leans towards maintaining a small-town feel and more intimate environment that contrasts sharply with the more commercialized and heavily developed neighboring areas.

Additionally, there is a clear emphasis on community engagement and the desire for a cohesive local governance that aligns with the residents' values. Many responses indicate a preference for local decision-making processes that reflect the community's priorities, such as maintaining low density, protecting natural resources, and preserving the small-town vibe. The collective voice of Perdido seems to call for a future where development is carefully managed to avoid the pitfalls seen in nearby, more urbanized areas, ensuring that growth does not compromise the quality of life or the environmental beauty that defines Perdido.

Overall, these responses highlight a community deeply invested in preserving its unique characteristics and actively seeking to define its future path through thoughtful, community-focused planning.

Conclusion

The results of the polling indicate a community deeply invested in preserving its unique identity against the pressures of external growth and development. As Perdido looks to the future, it will be crucial for community planners and local government to align development projects with the community's strong values of conservation, limited commercialization, and maintaining a small-town atmosphere. Ensuring that these core values are at the forefront of any future development or policy decisions will be essential for maintaining Perdido's integrity and its residents' satisfaction.

In a word, what do you love about Perdido?

