

Wicomico County Community Panel

Survey, January 8, 2009

Process:

Part A of the survey was open-ended and asked for the five most pressing community issues in the county. This was to allow the group to suggest their own issues without pre-setting their responses to ones suggested by the survey.

Part B of the survey grouped and compiled the Part A responses for the second survey which allowed the respondents to rank and prioritize their responses.

Date conducted:

Part A open from Nov. 21 to Dec. 3, 2008

Part B open from Dec. 18 to Dec. 31, 2008

Respondents information:

The survey was submitted to the Wicomico County panel of 61 members with 36 of them responding. Of the 61, 11 are primarily identified with government, 11 identified primarily as business people, 6 from the news media, 4 from education, 4 from the faith community, and 25 as general community leaders.

Information summary:

A. Crime issues. In Part A, crime issue concerns were grouped into general increase in crime, violent crime, gangs, and the lack of coordination among agencies. All of these issues were of great concern with the people seeing them as critical or very important running from 81% for gangs, to 64% for lack of coordination among agencies, to 58% for violent crimes, and 55% for general increase in crime.

However, when comparing the issues, 35% of the respondents felt gangs were the single more important crime issue with 29% most concerned with the general crime increase, and only 13% most concerned with violent crime.

B. K-12 Education issues. One-third of the respondents felt that student discipline in the schools was the most important issue affecting our K-12 education. Second at 19% was the minority achievement and dropout gap. Funding issues finished at 16% for capital projects and 13% for

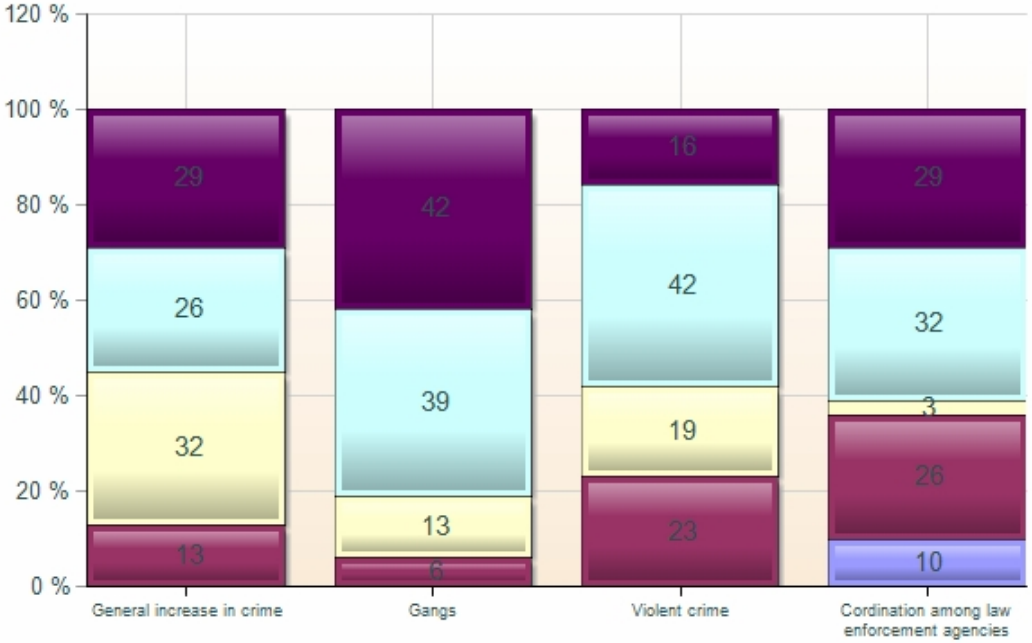
operational funding. After-school funding barely made the chart at 3%. General quality of education received 13% of the votes.

- C. Growth issues.** Lack of economic growth in the community was cited as most important by 42% of the respondents, followed by poor planning for growth at 35% and the lack of growth controls at 23%. Surprisingly, over-development received no votes in the final part of the survey.
- D. Political Leadership issues.** These issues received much comment during the Part A survey. In the final, nearly half of the respondents said that attracting quality elected officials was the most important issue in the category. Another quarter said that division and hostility within government were major problems. Also receiving some final votes were leaders not focusing on the common good and a lack of visionary leadership.
- E. Financial and Economic issues.** The declining jobs and tax base was the overwhelming key issue and received 55% of the vote. However, nearly 1/3 of the panel thought the revenue cap was the most important with 32%, followed by 13% citing poor revenue projections. Although not receiving any final votes, both the growth in residential base instead of commercial tax base and the need to reduce taxes were cited by respondents.
- F. General issues.** Several issues could not be categorized easily into larger groups and the respondents rated them as critical, very important, a definite problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. Grouping the critical and very important categories show that the key issue in this group is the water quality in the Wicomico River as indicated by 84% of the respondents. Decaying infrastructure was cited as critical or very important by 60% with 46% citing decaying downtown Salisbury.

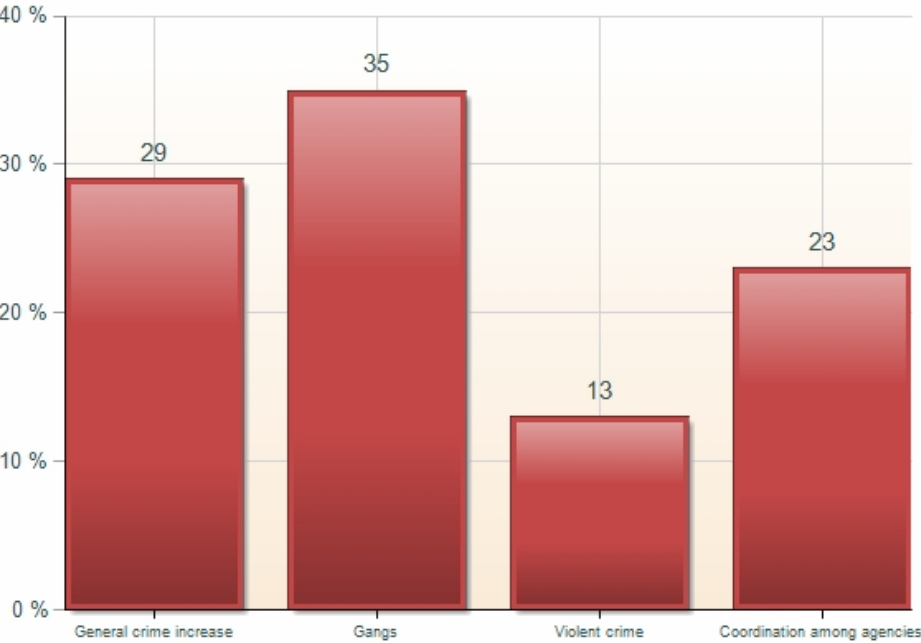
Housing blight was termed critical or very important by 45%, lack of consolidation of many government agencies by 43%, illegal immigration by 39%, crowded roads by 37%, lack of water and sewer consolidation by 35%, and transportation for people without vehicles by 32%.

For the following CRIME issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is today in Wicomico County?

■ Not a problem
 ■ Definite problem
 ■ Very important problem
 ■ Critical problem
■ Somewhat of a problem

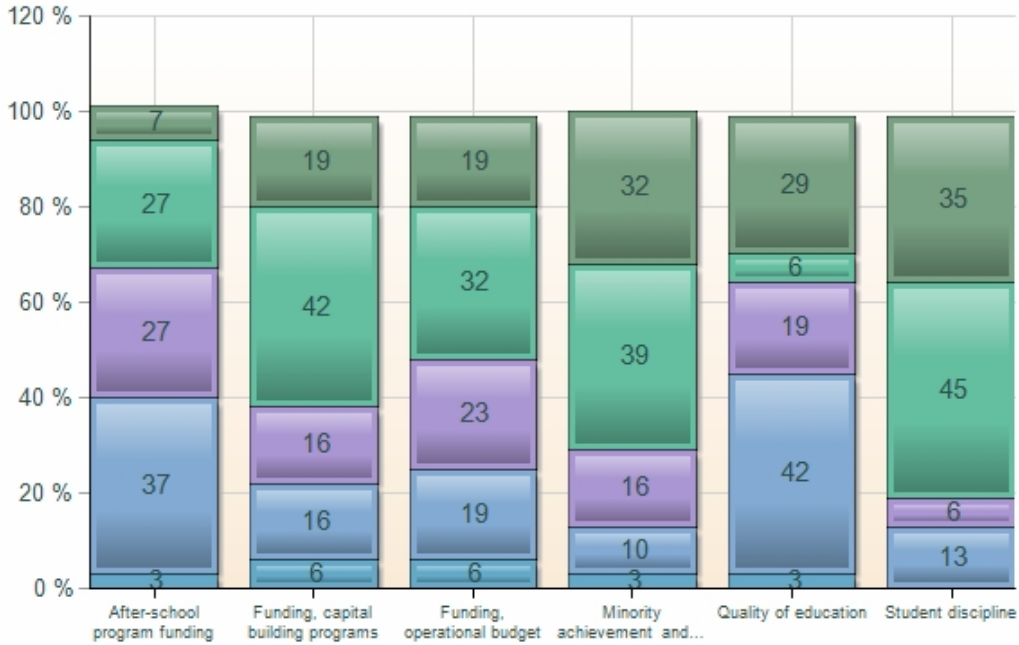


Which is the most important CRIME issue facing citizens in Wicomico County today?

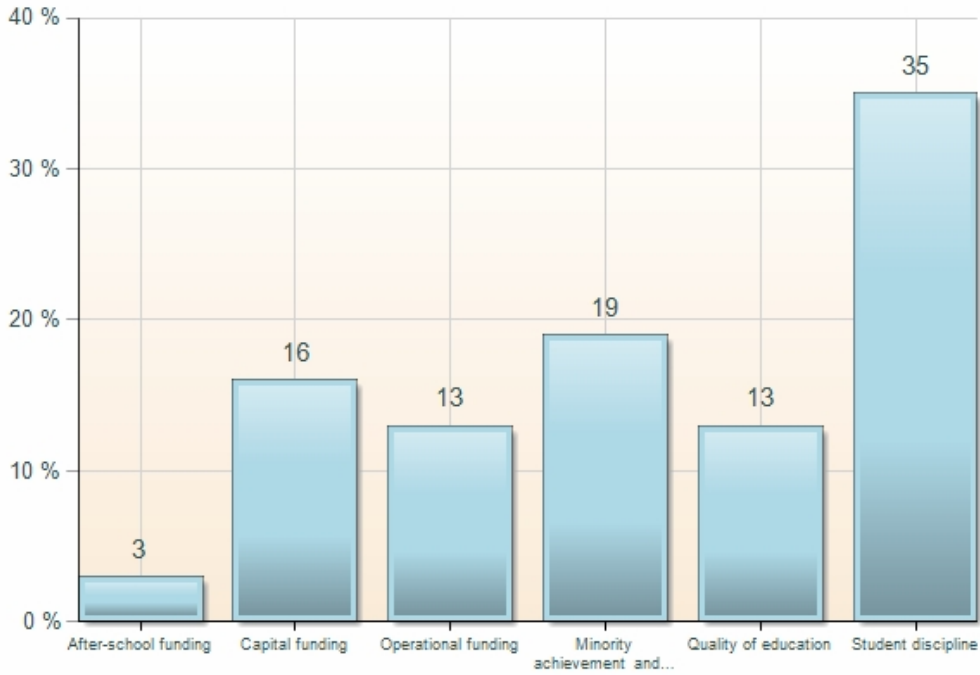


For the following K-12 EDUCATION issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is today in WICOMICO COUNTY?

■ Not important
 ■ Definite problem
 ■ Very important problem
 ■ Critical problem
■ Somewhat of a problem

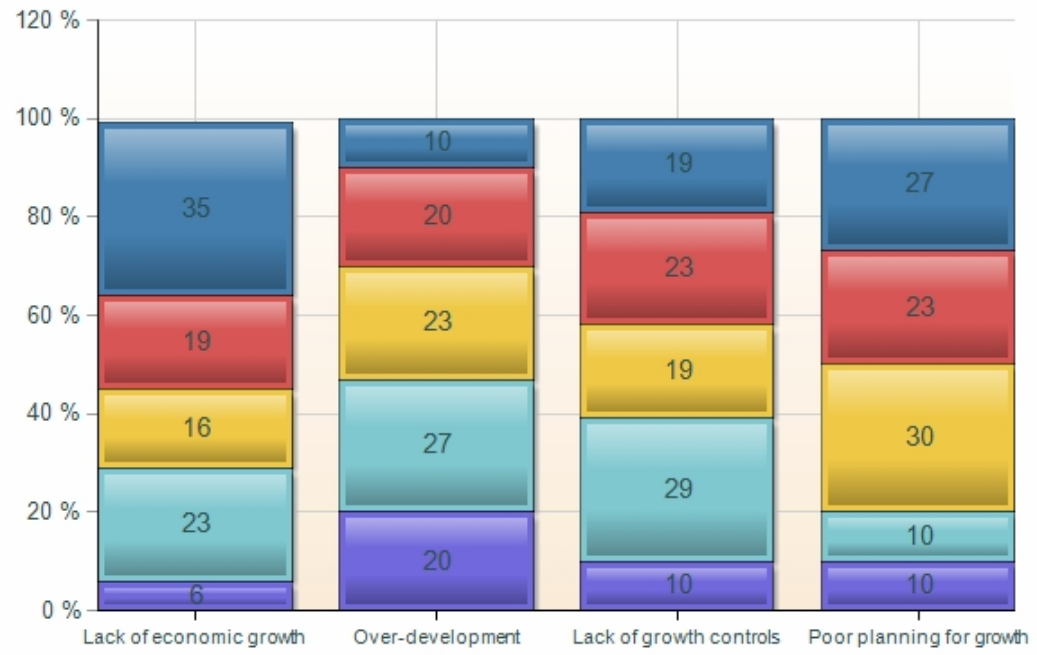


What is the most important K-12 EDUCATION issue facing citizens in Wicomico County today?

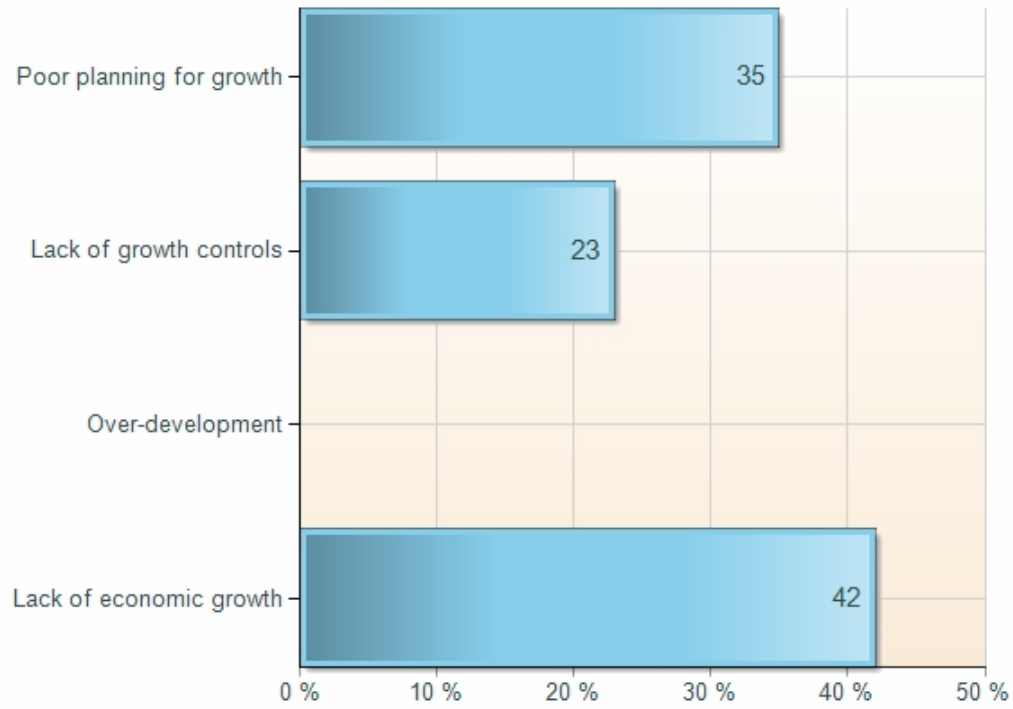


For the following GROWTH issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is today in Wicomico County?

■ Not a problem
 ■ Definite problem
 ■ Very important problem
 ■ Critical problem
■ Somewhat of a problem

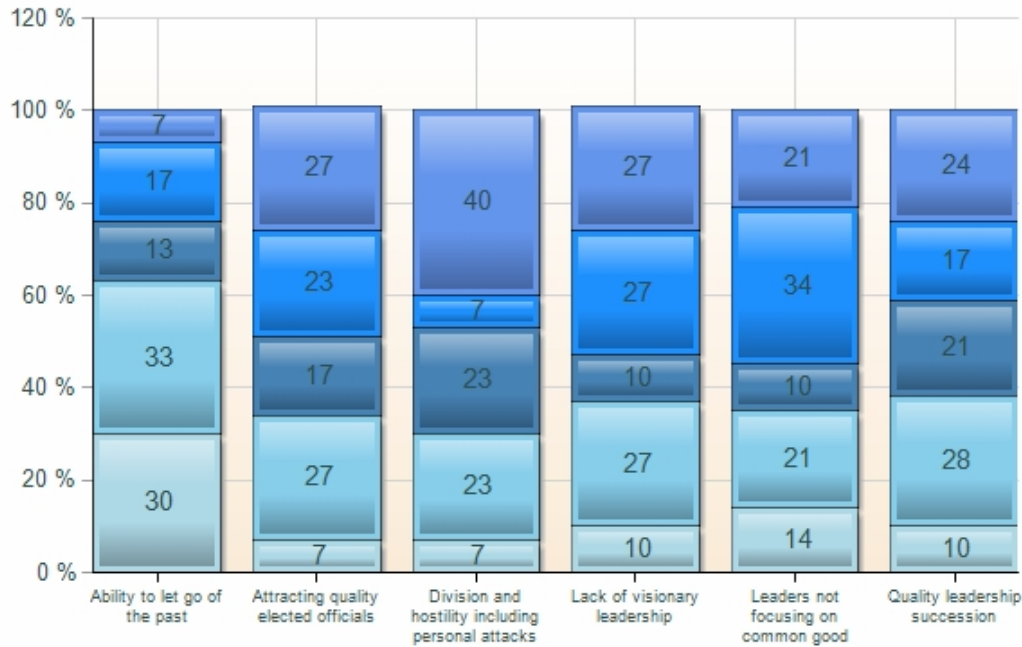


Which is the most important GROWTH issue facing Wicomico County today?

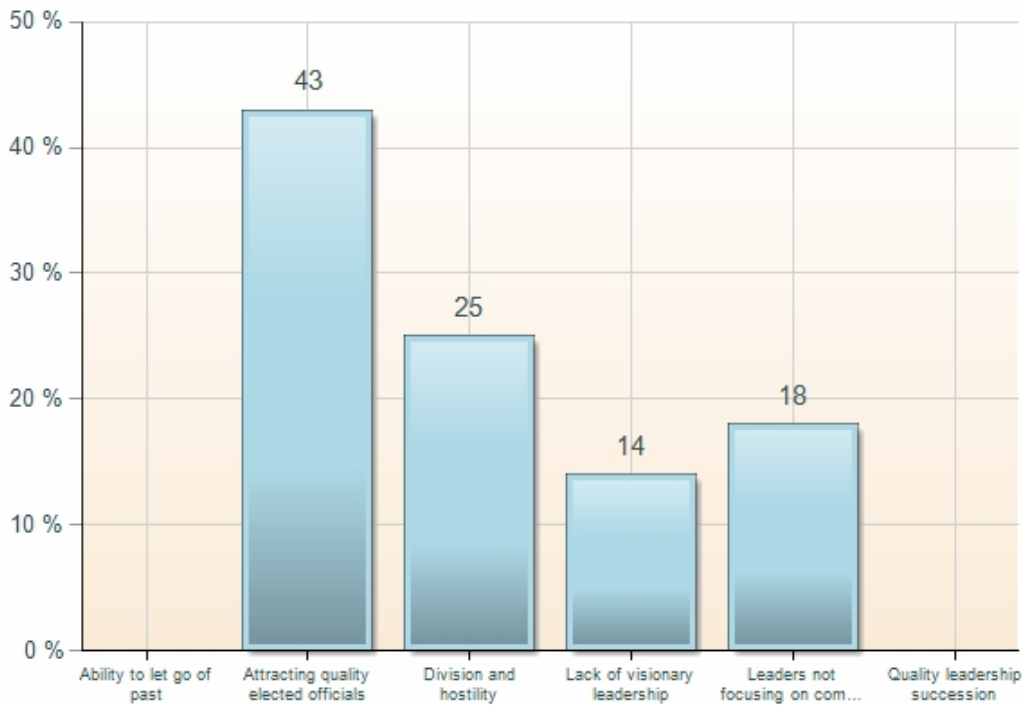


For the following POLITICAL LEADERSHIP issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is for citizens today in Wicomico County?

■ Not a problem
 ■ Definite problem
 ■ Very important problem
 ■ Critical problem
■ Somewhat of a problem

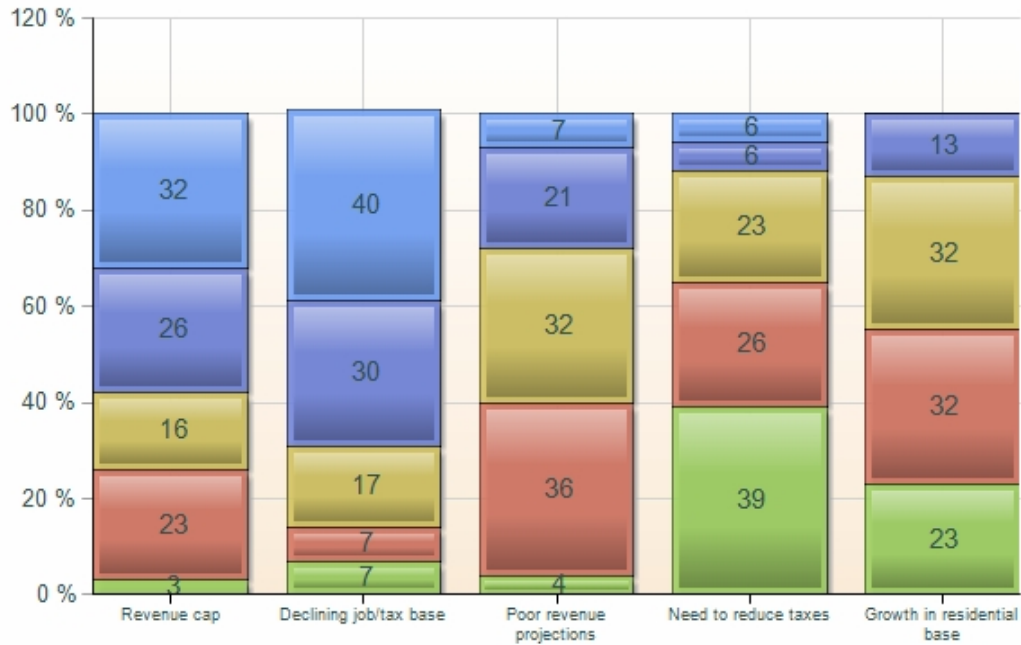


What is the most important POLITICAL LEADERSHIP issue facing citizens in Wicomico County today?

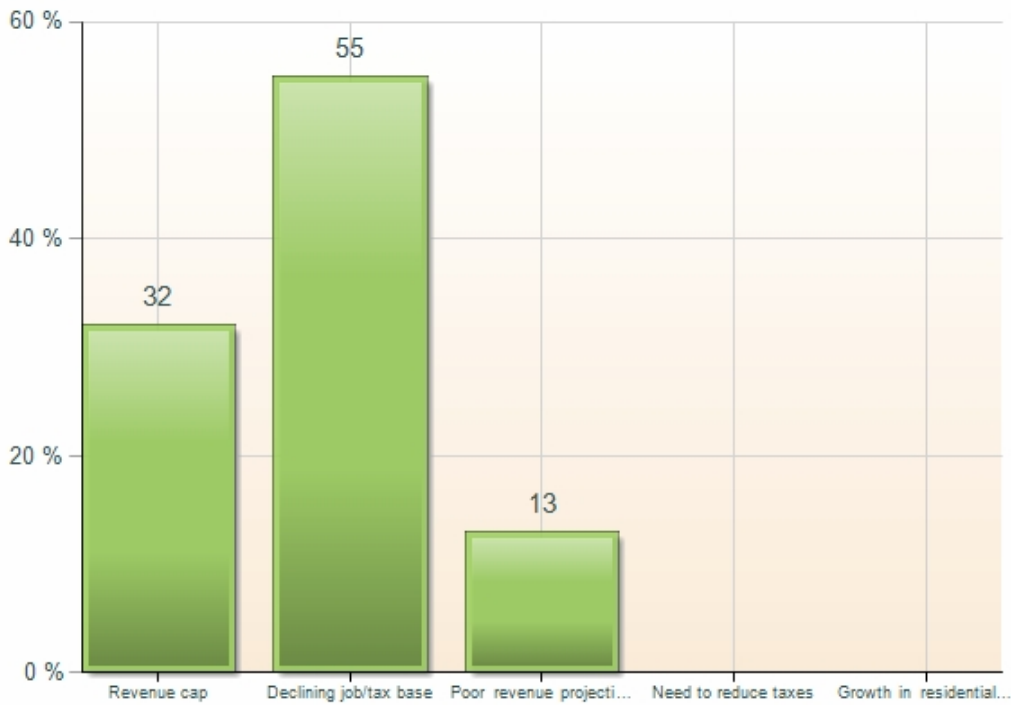


For the following FINANCIAL and ECONOMIC issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is for citizens today in Wicomico County?

■ Not a problem
 ■ Definite problem
 ■ Very important problem
 ■ Critical problem
■ Somewhat of a problem

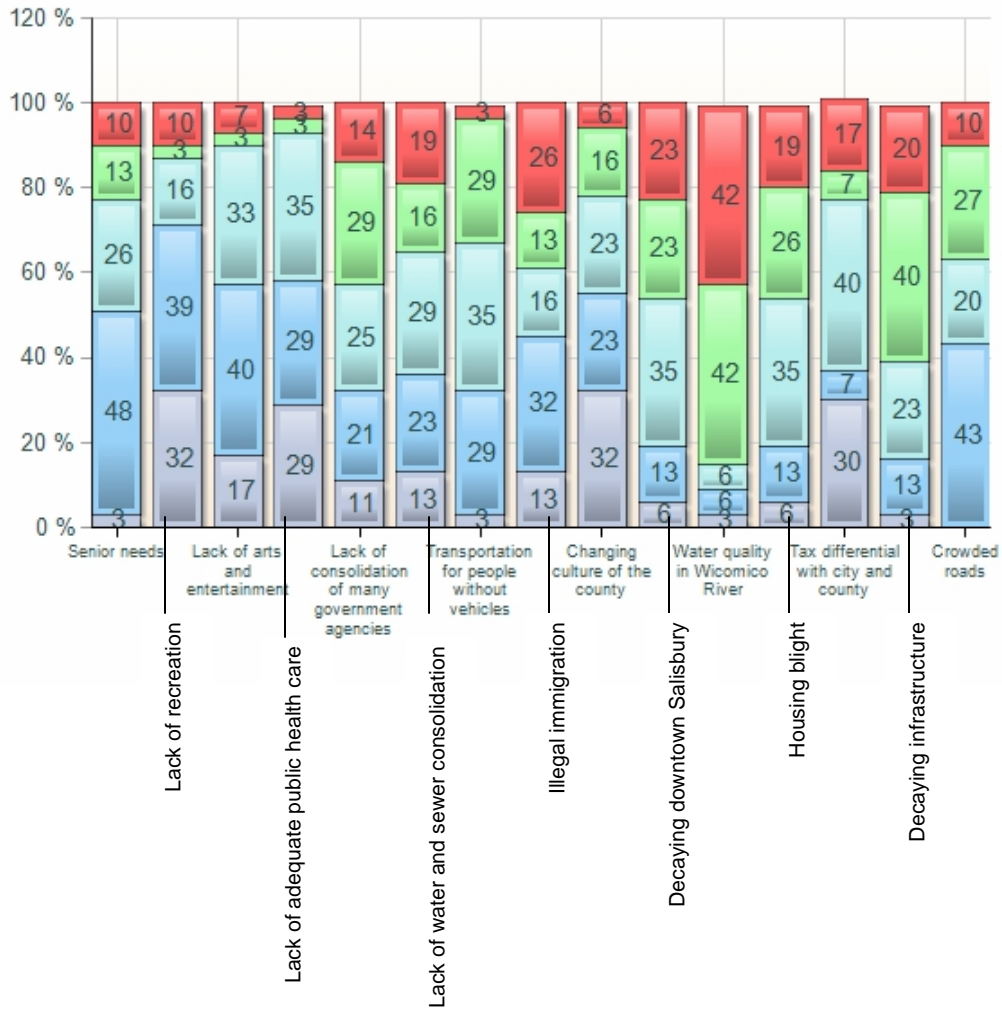


Which is the most important FINANCIAL/ECONOMIC issue facing citizens in Wicomico County today?



For the following GENERAL issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is for citizens today in Wicomico County?

Not a problem
 Definite problem
 Very important problem
 Critical problem
 Somewhat of a problem



Wicomico County Community Panel - Jan. 8, 2009 survey





Survey questions with % of responses

- 1.** For the following CRIME issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is today in Wicomico County?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Not a problem	Somewhat of a problem	Definite problem	Very important problem	Critical problem
General increase in crime	0 0%	4 13%	10 32%	8 26%	9 29%
Gangs	0 0%	2 6%	4 13%	12 39%	13 42%
Violent crime	0 0%	7 23%	6 19%	13 42%	5 16%
Coordination among law enforcement agencies	3 10%	8 26%	1 3%	10 32%	9 29%

Which is the most important CRIME issue

- 2.** facing citizens in WICOMICO COUNTY today?

General crime increase		9	29%
Gangs		11	35%
Violent crime		4	13%
Coordination among agencies		7	23%
Total		31	100%

3. For the following K-12 EDUCATION issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is today in WICOMICO COUNTY?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Not important	Somewhat of a problem	Definite problem	Very important problem	Critical problem
After-school program funding	1 3%	11 37%	8 27%	8 27%	2 7%
Funding, capital building programs	2 6%	5 16%	5 16%	13 42%	6 19%
Funding, operational budget	2 6%	6 19%	7 23%	10 32%	6 19%
Minority achievement and dropout gap	1 3%	3 10%	5 16%	12 39%	10 32%
Quality of education	1 3%	13 42%	6 19%	2 6%	9 29%
Student discipline	0 0%	4 13%	2 6%	14 45%	11 35%




4. What is the most important K-12 EDUCATION issue facing citizens in Wicomico County today?

After-school funding		1	3%
Capital funding		5	16%
Operational funding		4	13%
Minority achievement and dropout gap		6	19%
Quality of education		4	13%
Student discipline		11	35%
Total		31	100%

5. For the following GROWTH issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is today in Wicomico County?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Not a problem	Somewhat of a problem	Definite problem	Very important problem	Critical problem
Lack of economic growth	2 6%	7 23%	5 16%	6 19%	11 35%
Over-development	6 20%	8 27%	7 23%	6 20%	3 10%
Lack of growth controls	3 10%	9 29%	6 19%	7 23%	6 19%
Poor planning for growth	3 10%	3 10%	9 30%	7 23%	8 27%




6. Which is the most important GROWTH issue facing Wicomico County today?

Lack of economic growth		13	42%
Over-development		0	0%
Lack of growth controls		7	23%
Poor planning for growth		11	35%
Total		31	100%

7. For the following FINANCIAL and ECONOMIC issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is for CITIZENS TODAY IN WICOMICO COUNTY?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Not a problem	Somewhat of a problem	Definite problem	Very important problem	Critical problem
Revenue cap	1 3%	7 23%	5 16%	8 26%	10 32%
Declining job/tax base	2 7%	2 7%	5 17%	9 30%	12 40%
Poor revenue projections	1 4%	10 36%	9 32%	6 21%	2 7%
Need to reduce taxes	12 39%	8 26%	7 23%	2 6%	2 6%
Growth in residential base	7 23%	10 32%	10 32%	4 13%	0 0%

8. Which is the most important FINANCIAL/ECONOMIC issue facing citizens in Wicomico County today?

Revenue cap		10	32%
Declining job/tax base		17	55%
Poor revenue projections		4	13%
Need to reduce taxes		0	0%
Growth in residential base		0	0%
Total		31	100%

9.

For the following POLITICAL LEADERSHIP issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is for citizens today in Wicomico County?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Not a problem	Somewhat of a problem	Definite problem	Very important problem	Critical problem
Ability to let go of the past	9 30%	10 33%	4 13%	5 17%	2 7%
Attracting quality elected officials	2 7%	8 27%	5 17%	7 23%	8 27%
Division and hostility including personal attacks	2 7%	7 23%	7 23%	2 7%	12 40%
Lack of visionary leadership	3 10%	8 27%	3 10%	8 27%	8 27%
Leaders not focusing on common good	4 14%	6 21%	3 10%	10 34%	6 21%
Quality leadership succession	3 10%	8 28%	6 21%	5 17%	7 24%

10.

What is the most important POLITICAL LEADERSHIP issue facing citizens in Wicomico County today?



Ability to let go of past		0	0%
Attracting quality elected officials		12	43%
Division and hostility		7	25%
Lack of visionary leadership		4	14%
Leaders not focusing on common good		5	18%
Quality leadership succession		0	0%
	Total	28	100%

11.

For the following GENERAL issues, how much of a problem do you believe that each issue is for citizens today in Wicomico County?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Not a problem	Somewhat of a problem	Definite problem	Very important problem	Critical problem
Senior needs	1 3%	15 48%	8 26%	4 13%	3 10%
Lack of recreation	10 32%	12 39%	5 16%	1 3%	3 10%
Lack of arts and entertainment	5 17%	12 40%	10 33%	1 3%	2 7%
Lack of adequate public health care	9 29%	9 29%	11 35%	1 3%	1 3%
Lack of consolidation of many government agencies	3 11%	6 21%	7 25%	8 29%	4 14%
Lack of consolidation of water and sewer systems	4 13%	7 23%	9 29%	5 16%	6 19%
Transportation for people without vehicles	1 3%	9 29%	11 35%	9 29%	1 3%
Illegal immigration	4 13%	10 32%	5 16%	4 13%	8 26%
Changing culture of the county	10 32%	7 23%	7 23%	5 16%	2 6%
Decaying downtown Salisbury	2 6%	4 13%	11 35%	7 23%	7 23%
Water quality in Wicomico River	1 3%	2 6%	2 6%	13 42%	13 42%
Housing blight	2 6%	4 13%	11 35%	8 26%	6 19%
Tax differential with city and county	9 30%	2 7%	12 40%	2 7%	5 17%
Decaying infrastructure	1 3%	4 13%	7 23%	12 40%	6 20%
Crowded roads	0 0%	13 43%	6 20%	8 27%	3 10%

Thank you for participating in this survey.