

# PERU

## IMPERUIVING AS ONE

### PERU

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

### OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

Summary - Grouped by Themes

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NOVEMBER 12, 2018



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**About this document:**

There were eight open-ended responses included in the ImPERUving community survey. The responses have been grouped by similar themes/categories. The amenities, downtown revitalization and businesses/services were not grouped by theme.

Some respondents shared more than one theme/category in their response. For example, the following response to what do you see as Peru’s strengths has more than one theme/category: *“The natural beauty that Peru has with all of the trails around. The way the community members have a tight knit bond and are prideful of where they are from. I know I have only been here for a few years now, but I have this feeling of pride as well.”* This quote is represented under ‘small town-including the people’ and ‘location, beauty, history.’

When a quote identified a specific name of a person in a negative or attacking manner, the name or phrase has been edited with a “...”

## 2. What are your top priorities for enhancing basic services in the community of Peru?

Many suggestions (270 responses) were given to enhance basic services in the community of Peru. Water was identified by 39.6% of those that responded. Examples of quotes include:

*Figuring out and fixing the brown water would also be nice.*

*Over the 12 years I have lived here the quality of Peru's water has improved significantly but there is still a lot of improvement needed.*

*New water lines up grade water plant.*

Over 60% of those responded shared comments focused on streets (22.2%), sidewalks (18.1%), lighting (16.7%) or parking (5.2%). Examples of quotes include:

*Some of the streets have major pot holes that could really be fixed*

*The sidewalks going from campus to downtown are nonexistent/overgrown/run down.*

*I just think that there needs to be more street lights or some type of lighting so that when people are walking at night or even in the early morning they feel more safe.*

*Better parking*

Others encouraged improvement of internet (13%) and a few suggested priorities in safety (6.7%) and garbage (2.2%). Statements include:

*Better internet connection*

*safety for women on campus at night*

*Trash control*

Others suggested items not specifically related to services such as amenities (11.5%), downtown improvement (6.7%) and housing clean-up (6.3%). For example,

*Access to quality groceries and restaurants.*

*Cleaning up the main street buildings and rental properties*

*Tearing down old, dilapidated houses.*

The following chart provides a breakdown of the responses shared by the categories/similar themes.

<b>Top Priorities Services, n=270</b>		
Water	107	39.6%
Streets	60	22.2%
Sidewalks	49	18.1%
Lighting	45	16.7%
Internet	35	13.0%
Amenities	31	11.5%
Downtown Improvement - Clean-up	18	6.7%
Safety	18	6.7%
Housing Clean-up Improvement	17	6.3%
Other Comments	17	6.3%
Parking	14	5.2%
Garbage	6	2.2%
N/A, Nothing	4	1.5%

**4. What amenities would you most like to see added or improved in Peru? (Not grouped by theme).**

Note: While themes were not identified a word count on overall documents shows that food related words (groceries, grocery, food and restaurant(s) were used 336 times with grocery/groceries identified 146 times, food 106 times and restaurant(s) 84 times.

**19. What can the college and the community do to improve the quality of life in Peru?**

Over 180 people shared on how the college and community can improve the quality of life in Peru. The responses were varied and ranged from culture events (20%) to increasing communications (3.3%).

A sampling of the responses include:

- The college and city need to be more collaborative in providing opportunities for the youth of the community*
- Start regulating a standard for rental housing in the communities.*
- Increase student and community connections*
- Clean up old rundown buildings. Make the area more appealing*
- Working together to provide outside sources of business and community engagement.*
- Better water quality*
- Bring in better internet and cable options for the entire town.*
- Work together on projects for the betterment of both, not one or the other*
- ESPECIALLY in encouraging faculty and staff to live in Peru and participate in the community.*
- Communicate with each other about public events everyone can attend and encourage the attendance.*

The following chart provides a breakdown of the responses shared by the categories/similar themes.

<b>College/Community Relationships, n=184</b>		
Cultural Events and Other Activities	37	20.1%
Housing	29	15.8%
Increase Relationships	26	14.1%
Clean up community	25	13.6%
Update Business Opportunities including jobs	25	13.6%
Update Infrastructure	20	10.9%
Other	15	8.2%
Joint Efforts, working Together	15	8.2%
College Incentives Faculty Live Community	9	4.9%
Increase Communications	6	3.3%
N/A, Nothing	5	2.7%

### 23. What makes the town of Peru a great place to live, work or attend school?

Over 190 people shared their ideas on what makes Peru a great place to live, work or attend school. People (37.2%) and the Small town (37.2%) are what are the most important to the respondents. Statements that represent the people and small town include:

*People know and care about each other.*

*Friendly neighbors*

*There are many people who are easy to connect with who care about everyone being comfortable in the community.*

*It's a small community that has great potential.*

*Quiet and rural,*

*It's college with the small town feeling.*

The college (25.1%) was identified by many. Examples of comments include:

*The college*

*The college brings life and viability into the community. It creates opportunities to put down roots and invest in the community.*

Others identified the beauty, history and location as important (13.1%).

*The feeling you get from town cannot be compared anywhere else. Peru is absolutely lovely.*

*The town of Peru is in a very beautiful part of Nebraska.*

*History and natural setting*

Being progressive and safety were identified by a few and 10% shared a number of different ideas.

*The small town feel makes Peru a great. We are smaller in number, making it easier to work together in making Peru an enjoyable place.*

*Everyone is kind and seems to be working to achieve the same goal*

*Safe place to raise kids,*

*It's overall a safe community*

There were also a few (7.3%) that did not think that Peru had strengths. Examples of these comments including: "Not much at all" and "When I step off campus though I'm instantly bored and looking for something to do. I have to drive 20 minutes".

A number of comments (9.9%) are listed under other as there was not a theme that was representative. For example, "Everything" and "Community Events."

The following chart provides a breakdown of the responses shared by the categories/similar themes.

<b>Great Place, n=191</b>		
People-Relationships, Caring, Friendly	71	37.2%
Small Town (including home away from home)	71	37.2%
College	48	25.1%
Beautiful, History, Location	25	13.1%
Other	19	9.9%
N/A, Nothing	14	7.3%
Progressive	7	3.7%
Safety	5	2.6%

## 24. What do you see as Peru's strengths?

The small town (including people) and the college were the strengths identified by over one-third of the 178 individuals that responded to the open-ended question on what do you see as Peru's strengths. Quotes that represent the small town (34.6%):

*Small town feel, friendliness of residents and businesses, feeling of neighbors looking out for and helping each other  
Residents care about each other.  
A small town that feels like home.*

And, the college (30.9%) include:

*College provides great things for everyone  
The college is also a strength.  
Peru is strong as a town only because of the college, without the college Peru would likely see a drop in population. I speak from experience in a small town that closed down the town high school, the town population is below 200 people now.*

Another 20% of the individuals identified the location, beauty or history as a strength of the community.

*History!  
It's location, the college, the trail, Duck Creek, the river  
It's a quaint town with a rustic feel, it should embrace the 1000 oaks, and other countryside aesthetics it possesses, but not feel rundown or taken over by wild old growth.  
Location and beauty.*

Nearly twenty percent (18.3%) see the progressiveness of working together as a strength if the community such as:

*The Peru Impact group is trying to improve the town and I feel they are dedicated individuals who can make big change. I see that group as a strength.*

*This survey means that the collective "You" care enough about what people think of the community to make improvements. The small town vibe and the college are definitely strengths of the community.*

Specific amenities (4.7%) were also suggested. Examples of amenities include:

*Bank, eating place.*

*Recreational opportunities (trail, parks, nearby attractions (Indian cave, Brownville).*

Other comments included:

*Peru has a strong EMS responders who volunteer their time to help out the community*

*The residents have great pride in Peru, but only to keep it the same with little to no changes.*

The following chart provides a breakdown of the responses shared by the categories/similar themes.

<b>Strengths, n=178</b>		
Small Town - including people	66	34.6%
College	59	30.9%
Location Beauty History	37	19.4%
Efforts to Move Forward - working together	35	18.3%
Other Comments	10	5.2%
Amenities	9	4.7%
N/A, Nothing	9	4.7%

### **30. Please add any additional comments you would like to make:**

Seventy (70) individuals shared additional comments. Comments focused on encouragement and thanks for moving process forward (30%) were the focus of many comments. Others re-iterated the importance to strengthening amenities and services (24%), infrastructure (10%), housing (8.6%) and cleaning up community (8.6%). Others shared concerns (8.6%) and suggestions (10%).

Comments related to working together and encouragement include:

*Understand that the college and community are trying to achieve the same goal. Instead of fighting against each other, support each other's ideas. What benefits the college, benefits the community. And what benefits the community, benefits the college.*

*I am very happy to see that the city of Peru and the College are both working together to make this community better for everyone.*

Examples of statements that emphasized importance of housing, infrastructure, amenities and cleaning up community include:

*Improve the grocery store.*

*Peru needs more things to do. Being a college town, it should have more activities fit for all ages. Most students I know go home every weekend, including myself due to the lack of things to do/places to eat*

*I want the residents of Peru to take pride in their residence. I want a beautiful and clean community. The water issue is top priority in my eyes.*

*Please, do something about the water.*

*Clean up store fronts downtown, work on grants for sidewalks, property owners cut weeds, bushes, grass, rental property needs more parking on their property, remove abandon/dangerous homes/buildings.*

Others shared concerns and suggestions such as:

*Racism is a problem.*

*We would move to Peru if we could find decent housing at a decent price. Also the town members do not seem accepting of those who are not from Peru.*

*Need to develop a tax infrastructure which supports the community's needs.*

*When improvements are made, make sure they have quality and not temporary fixes, as these end up costing more in the long run.*

*Why are there no questions about city ordinances?*

The following chart provides a breakdown of the responses shared by the categories/similar themes.

<b>Other Comments, n=70</b>		
Work Together Future - Thanks	21	30.0%
Amenities and Services	17	24.3%
Suggestions	7	10.0%
Infrastructure	7	10.0%
Other Comments	6	8.6%
Concerns	6	8.6%
Housing	6	8.6%
Clean Up Community	5	7.1%
N/A, Nothing	4	5.7%