

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Ann Arbor, MI

Trends over Time

2018



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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. The NCS captures residents' opinions within the three pillars of a community (Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation) across eight central facets of community (Safety, Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness, Education and Enrichment and Community Engagement). This report discusses trends over time, comparing the 2018 ratings for the City of Ann Arbor to its previous survey results in 2007, 2008, 2013 and 2015. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Ann Arbor represent important comparison data and should be examined for improvements or declines. Deviations from stable trends over time, especially, represent opportunities for understanding how local policies, programs or public information may have affected residents' opinions.

Meaningful differences between survey years have been noted within the following tables as being “higher” or “lower” if the differences are greater than five percentage points between the 2015 and 2018 surveys, otherwise the comparisons between 2015 and 2018 are noted as being “similar.” Additionally, benchmark comparisons for all survey years are presented for reference. Changes in the benchmark comparison over time can be impacted by various trends, including varying survey cycles for the individual communities that comprise the benchmarks, regional and national economic or other events, as well as emerging survey methodologies.

Overall, ratings in Ann Arbor for 2018 generally remained stable. Of the 134 items for which comparisons were available, 104 items were rated similarly in 2015 and 2018, seven items showed a decrease in ratings and 23 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, ratings for ten aspects increased and five decreased since 2015. Three of the increases were related to Mobility, including the overall ease of travel, ease of walking and availability of paths and walking trails in Ann Arbor. Within Economy, employment opportunities and business and service establishments improved since the last survey administration; however, aspects related to affordability (the variety of housing options, availability of affordable quality housing and cost of living) decreased from 2015 to 2018. Other notable changes included increases in the ratings for Ann Arbor as a place to retire and as a place to raise children.
- Ratings for services and amenities provided by Ann Arbor largely remained stable over time, but eight increases and only one decrease were noted in 2018. More residents were pleased with measurements of government performance (the City welcoming citizen involvement and customer service provided by City employees), as well as crime prevention, storm drainage and City-sponsored special events, among others.
- In 2018, more Ann Arbor residents reported they planned to remain in the community for the next five years. Additionally, survey respondents also reported higher levels of using public transit, attending City-sponsored events, voting and campaigning than in 2015.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
	2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Overall quality of life	90%	92%	92%	93%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Overall image	93%	93%	92%	92%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Much higher
Place to live	91%	94%	95%	94%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Neighborhood	84%	86%	88%	90%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	89%	90%	92%	92%	97%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Place to retire	58%	67%	71%	68%	75%	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
Overall appearance	84%	85%	87%	85%	89%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Higher

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	89%	91%	93%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Safe in neighborhood	97%	98%	97%	97%	98%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	96%	95%	92%	94%	96%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	72%	71%	76%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	NA	79%	81%	80%	89%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Ease of walking	82%	86%	86%	83%	89%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Travel by bicycle	63%	64%	62%	59%	55%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	61%	61%	64%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Travel by car	53%	59%	51%	52%	57%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Public parking	NA	NA	36%	39%	42%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
	Traffic flow	46%	46%	39%	39%	43%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall natural environment	NA	88%	92%	91%	90%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Natural Environment	Cleanliness	NA	84%	82%	85%	87%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Air quality	86%	84%	88%	89%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	74%	72%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	New development in Ann Arbor	62%	56%	63%	62%	61%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	23%	29%	28%	26%	18%	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
	Housing options	NA	56%	52%	53%	37%	Lower	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public places	NA	NA	79%	80%	86%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Higher
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	83%	85%	88%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	83%	83%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Business and services	NA	81%	83%	80%	86%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Cost of living	NA	NA	32%	28%	21%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Shopping opportunities	72%	72%	75%	77%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Employment opportunities	52%	51%	63%	66%	77%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Place to visit	NA	NA	78%	81%	85%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Place to work	78%	80%	86%	85%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	90%	90%	93%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Mental health care	NA	NA	67%	71%	63%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Preventive health services	NA	76%	81%	86%	87%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Health care	NA	NA	78%	81%	80%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Food	NA	NA	77%	73%	79%	Higher	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Higher
	Recreational opportunities	84%	87%	83%	87%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	84%	85%	89%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Education and enrichment opportunities	NA	NA	94%	96%	97%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	88%	88%	91%	92%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Cultural/arts/music activities	90%	88%	92%	93%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Adult education	NA	NA	90%	90%	93%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	K-12 education	79%	86%	86%	88%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Education and Enrichment	Child care/preschool	NA	NA	63%	65%	53%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Social events and activities	NA	86%	81%	85%	88%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Much higher
Community Engagement	Neighborhoodliness	NA	NA	69%	72%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
	2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Openness and acceptance	85%	87%	83%	79%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	77%	77%	79%	84%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Opportunities to volunteer	NA	91%	84%	87%	92%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
	2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Services provided by Ann Arbor	82%	84%	81%	85%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Customer service	100%	78%	77%	78%	84%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	58%	55%	58%	57%	61%	Similar	Higher	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	63%	63%	66%	63%	61%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	68%	58%	60%	60%	66%	Higher	Much higher	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	60%	62%	63%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Ann Arbor	NA	NA	64%	63%	65%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	67%	66%	66%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	66%	62%	62%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	37%	37%	49%	52%	39%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
	2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018	
Safety	Police	79%	82%	80%	82%	84%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	92%	95%	89%	93%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	91%	94%	94%	94%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	72%	75%	71%	75%	85%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire prevention	79%	82%	77%	82%	84%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Animal control	75%	75%	74%	72%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	NA	69%	65%	76%	64%	Lower	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	61%	67%	58%	59%	63%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street repair	39%	30%	25%	21%	20%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
	Street cleaning	65%	66%	57%	59%	56%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	58%	61%	63%	67%	69%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Snow removal	65%	49%	53%	51%	49%	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	50%	53%	55%	53%	57%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	49%	48%	46%	54%	50%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Bus or transit services	76%	78%	77%	73%	78%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Much higher
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	86%	91%	88%	91%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	86%	89%	90%	90%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	77%	84%	80%	84%	82%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Drinking water	77%	80%	84%	85%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Natural areas preservation	NA	75%	77%	77%	79%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Open space	NA	NA	74%	73%	78%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher
Built Environment	Storm drainage	69%	78%	67%	71%	80%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sewer services	84%	83%	85%	85%	89%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Power utility	NA	76%	78%	80%	77%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	NA	75%	78%	78%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	52%	56%	54%	58%	56%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	66%	63%	53%	55%	66%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
Economy	Cable television	47%	54%	58%	53%	56%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economic development	62%	54%	69%	70%	68%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	90%	92%	90%	90%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Recreation programs	89%	89%	87%	86%	91%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Recreation centers	86%	87%	87%	83%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Higher
	Health services	85%	86%	87%	89%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	81%	79%	84%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Public libraries	93%	94%	91%	95%	96%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Public information	77%	81%	78%	81%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
	2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Sense of community	73%	76%	69%	73%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
Recommend Ann Arbor	NA	92%	93%	92%	94%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Remain in Ann Arbor	NA	69%	76%	77%	83%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Contacted Ann Arbor employees	47%	50%	37%	41%	42%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	20%	22%	20%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	85%	85%	88%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	91%	92%	90%	90%	93%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	61%	54%	60%	Higher	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	52%	51%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	83%	82%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	75%	78%	80%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	73%	73%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	94%	97%	95%	97%	96%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	59%	64%	65%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Higher
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	58%	63%	68%	70%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark				
		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018		2007	2008	2013	2015	2018
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	98%	99%	99%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	14%	5%	24%	28%	27%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Work in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	68%	65%	70%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Ann Arbor recreation centers	61%	56%	61%	68%	70%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Visited a City park	90%	94%	90%	94%	95%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	89%	89%	92%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	89%	92%	91%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	76%	73%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Used Ann Arbor public libraries	76%	78%	70%	73%	74%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
Education and Enrichment	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	NA	51%	48%	43%	41%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	60%	63%	72%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	24%	25%	39%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher
Community Engagement	Contacted Ann Arbor elected officials	NA	NA	15%	16%	21%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	54%	59%	52%	55%	58%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Participated in a club	NA	39%	NA	42%	40%	Similar	NA	Much higher	NA	Higher	Higher
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	89%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	77%	73%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	21%	20%	15%	16%	17%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	39%	36%	19%	19%	18%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	75%	78%	76%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Voted in local elections	73%	85%	68%	76%	82%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar