



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Charlottesville, VA

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 Charlottesville to its previous survey results in 2012, 2014 and 2016. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Charlottesville 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 seven percentage points between the 2016 and 2018 surveys, otherwise the comparisons between 2016 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 Charlottesville for 2018 generally remained stable. Of the 131 items for which comparisons were available, 90 items were rated similarly in 2016 and 2018, 26 items showed a decrease in ratings and 15 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, there were six aspects for which ratings increased from 2016 to 2018. Several Economy ratings rose, including employment opportunities, Charlottesville as a place to work, and overall quality of business and service establishments. Ten aspects saw a decline in ratings from 2016 to 2018, including several within the facet of Recreation and Wellness (availability of affordable quality health care, food, mental health care and preventive health services). Two other aspects of affordability, availability of affordable quality housing and variety of housing options, also declined from 2016 to 2018.
- The pillar of Governance also showed a few increased ratings; these included animal control, street cleaning, snow removal, yard waste pick-up and cable television. However, there were several notable decreases within the facet of Community Engagement, including overall confidence in City government, acting in the best interest of Charlottesville, being honest, and treating all residents fairly.
- In Participation there were both increases and decreases within Community Engagement. When comparing 2018 to 2016, more residents reported having attended or watched a public meeting and having read or watched local news; however, fewer residents reported having talked to or visited with neighbors, having participated in a club or having done a favor for a neighbor.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
	2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Overall quality of life	84%	87%	82%	81%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall image	89%	85%	83%	59%	Lower	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Lower
Place to live	88%	88%	84%	87%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Neighborhood	82%	83%	79%	87%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	88%	89%	82%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to retire	77%	83%	74%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Higher
Overall appearance	84%	85%	81%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	78%	69%	76%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	94%	96%	90%	94%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	89%	90%	87%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	66%	63%	64%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	68%	65%	68%	67%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ease of walking	69%	65%	69%	62%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	46%	43%	41%	33%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Travel by public transportation	NA	42%	41%	39%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by car	48%	48%	41%	51%	Higher	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Public parking	NA	21%	25%	21%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Traffic flow	30%	23%	28%	29%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	87%	86%	83%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cleanliness	82%	80%	74%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Air quality	86%	85%	86%	89%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	63%	58%	57%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	New development in Charlottesville	62%	52%	51%	51%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	31%	29%	27%	18%	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Housing options	50%	43%	43%	30%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Public places	NA	75%	80%	75%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	65%	64%	67%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark				
	2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018	
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	76%	78%	77%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Business and services	75%	73%	70%	78%	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	29%	31%	22%	Lower	NA	Lower	Similar	Lower
	Shopping opportunities	62%	70%	71%	69%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Employment opportunities	44%	41%	49%	56%	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Place to visit	NA	85%	84%	90%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Much higher
	Place to work	71%	69%	59%	69%	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health and wellness	NA	84%	84%	84%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Mental health care	NA	51%	53%	44%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Preventive health services	74%	73%	76%	68%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Health care	68%	71%	75%	61%	Lower	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Food	72%	67%	75%	64%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	77%	73%	77%	85%	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	76%	77%	83%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Education and enrichment opportunities	NA	89%	84%	83%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Cultural/arts/music activities	80%	84%	82%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
Education and Enrichment	Adult education	NA	82%	74%	77%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	K-12 education	70%	78%	70%	73%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Child care/preschool	39%	46%	49%	38%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Social events and activities	81%	75%	76%	79%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Higher
	Neighborhoodliness	NA	62%	64%	64%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Openness and acceptance	68%	61%	59%	55%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	77%	75%	73%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Opportunities to volunteer	87%	85%	83%	84%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher

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Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
	2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Services provided by Charlottesville	81%	77%	73%	74%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Customer service	84%	76%	71%	73%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	62%	62%	54%	57%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	65%	60%	60%	52%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	64%	65%	54%	50%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	59%	58%	47%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Charlottesville	NA	58%	57%	46%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Being honest	NA	59%	55%	45%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	48%	51%	39%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower
Services provided by the Federal Government	51%	50%	46%	40%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Safety	Police	81%	77%	79%	66%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	94%	96%	92%	91%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	92%	89%	90%	94%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	61%	49%	63%	63%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Fire prevention	82%	76%	79%	80%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Animal control	66%	65%	65%	75%	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	72%	58%	61%	57%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	57%	60%	57%	56%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street repair	54%	56%	46%	49%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street cleaning	65%	63%	54%	65%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	57%	49%	55%	48%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Snow removal	58%	48%	49%	62%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	55%	55%	48%	49%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	42%	39%	40%	46%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Bus or transit services	68%	58%	60%	55%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Garbage collection	85%	78%	77%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	84%	77%	75%	72%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	73%	66%	60%	72%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
Built Environment	Drinking water	65%	67%	71%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	67%	59%	64%	52%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	66%	63%	63%	51%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sewer services	79%	78%	77%	80%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Economy	Power utility	75%	73%	83%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	74%	75%	78%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	40%	41%	46%	36%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	54%	45%	47%	38%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cable television	51%	40%	41%	48%	Higher	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Economy	Economic development	57%	57%	61%	48%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	84%	84%	83%	83%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation programs	83%	81%	80%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation centers	78%	77%	84%	82%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health services	85%	79%	82%	71%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	73%	73%	74%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public libraries	88%	84%	85%	92%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	72%	77%	77%	72%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
	2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Sense of community	79%	64%	62%	63%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recommend Charlottesville	85%	88%	85%	84%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Remain in Charlottesville	70%	72%	67%	69%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
Contacted Charlottesville employees	57%	53%	49%	47%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	38%	36%	51%	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	77%	78%	79%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	17%	88%	86%	89%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	50%	47%	45%	Similar	NA	Higher	Much higher	Higher
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	58%	56%	50%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	82%	80%	81%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2018 rating compared to 2016	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2016	2018		2012	2014	2016	2018
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	80%	81%	78%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	71%	64%	70%	Similar	NA	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Recycled at home	88%	88%	88%	89%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	60%	53%	54%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	50%	58%	61%	63%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Charlottesville	NA	96%	96%	97%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	21%	17%	26%	24%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Work in Charlottesville	NA	68%	66%	72%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Used Charlottesville recreation centers	53%	60%	65%	58%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Visited a City park	93%	89%	86%	84%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	85%	87%	83%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	87%	89%	88%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	70%	75%	71%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Used Charlottesville public libraries	65%	53%	60%	59%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	65%	73%	64%	Lower	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	23%	29%	33%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Contacted Charlottesville elected officials	NA	14%	22%	22%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	60%	59%	58%	55%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Participated in a club	37%	40%	43%	35%	Lower	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	85%	88%	80%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	77%	81%	72%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	32%	22%	20%	29%	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	45%	29%	24%	41%	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Read or watched local news	NA	80%	68%	76%	Higher	NA	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Voted in local elections	75%	76%	79%	84%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar