

The National Citizen Survey™

Ann Arbor, MI

Trends over Time

2013

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The National Citizen Survey™
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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 National Citizen Survey 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 2013 ratings for the City of Ann Arbor to its previous survey results in 2007 and 2008. 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 2008 and 2013 survey, otherwise the comparison between 2008 and 2013 are noted as being "similar." Additionally benchmark comparison 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 2013 generally remained stable. Of the 84 items for which comparisons were available, 64 items were rated similarly in 2008 and 2013, 17 items showed a decrease in ratings and eight showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Out of the 53 Community Characteristics measured, four characteristics ratings decreased and three increased. Decreases in ratings were found within Mobility (traffic flow and ease of car travel) and Community Engagement (opportunities to volunteer and sense of community). Ratings increased for Economy, particularly for employment opportunities and Ann Arbor as a place to work. Ratings also increased for the Built Environment (overall quality of new development).
- Overall, ratings for Economy trended upward. Not only were increases noted for within Community Characteristics (as noted above), but also within Governance and Participation. Within these two pillars, ratings increased for economic development and participants' feelings for the economy having a positive impact on their income.
- In the pillar of Governance, ratings were mostly stable; however decreases were noted in the facets of Safety, Mobility and Built Environment.
- Participation ratings declined overall, particularly for aspects of Community Engagement (e.g., talking or visiting with neighbors, voting in local elections, attendance and viewership of public meetings and volunteering). Ratings increased however for those who would recommend Ann Arbor to others and those who planned on staying in Ann Arbor for the next five years.

Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark		
	2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013
The overall quality of life in Ann Arbor	90%	92%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Overall image or reputation of Ann Arbor	93%	93%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Ann Arbor as a place to live	91%	94%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Your neighborhood as a place to live	84%	86%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Ann Arbor as a place to raise children	89%	90%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Ann Arbor as a place to retire	58%	67%	71%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar
Overall appearance of Ann Arbor	84%	85%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013	
Safety	Overall feeling of safety in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	89%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	In your neighborhood during the day	97%	98%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	
	In Ann Arbor's downtown/commercial area during the day	96%	95%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	
Mobility	Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	NA	NA	72%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Availability of paths and walking trails	NA	79%	81%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	
	Ease of walking in Ann Arbor	82%	86%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	
	Ease of travel by bicycle in Ann Arbor	63%	64%	62%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	
	Ease of travel by public transportation in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Ease of travel by car in Ann Arbor	53%	59%	51%	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar	
	Ease of public parking	NA	NA	36%	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	Traffic flow on major streets	46%	46%	39%	Lower	NA	Higher	Similar	
	Natural Environment	Quality of overall natural environment in Ann Arbor	NA	88%	92%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
		Cleanliness of Ann Arbor	NA	84%	82%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar
Air quality		86%	84%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	
Built Environment	Overall "built environment" of Ann Arbor (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	NA	NA	74%	NA	NA	NA	Similar	
	Overall quality of new development in Ann Arbor	62%	56%	63%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Availability of affordable quality housing	23%	29%	28%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Lower	
	Variety of housing options	NA	56%	52%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark		
		2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013
	Public places where people want to spend time	NA	NA	79%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Overall economic health of Ann Arbor	NA	NA	83%	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	83%	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
	Overall quality of business and service establishments in Ann Arbor	NA	81%	83%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Cost of living in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	32%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	72%	72%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Employment opportunities	52%	51%	63%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Ann Arbor as a place to visit	NA	NA	78%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Economy	Ann Arbor as a place to work	78%	80%	86%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Health and wellness opportunities in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	90%	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Availability of affordable quality mental health care	NA	NA	67%	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Availability of preventive health services	NA	76%	81%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Availability of affordable quality health care	NA	NA	78%	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Availability of affordable quality food	NA	NA	77%	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Recreational opportunities	84%	87%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	NA	NA	84%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	88%	88%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	90%	88%	92%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Adult educational opportunities	NA	NA	90%	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
	K-12 education	79%	86%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Education and Enrichment	Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	NA	NA	63%	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	NA	86%	81%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Neighborliness of Ann Arbor	NA	NA	69%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	85%	87%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	77%	77%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Opportunities to volunteer	NA	91%	84%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Higher

Table 2: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark		
	2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013
Services provided by the City of Ann Arbor	82%	84%	81%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Overall customer service by Ann Arbor employees (police, receptionists, planners, etc.)	72%	78%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Value of services for the taxes paid to Ann Arbor	58%	55%	58%	Similar	Higher	Lower	Similar
Overall direction that Ann Arbor is taking	63%	63%	66%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Job Ann Arbor government does at welcoming citizen involvement	68%	58%	60%	Similar	Much higher	Lower	Similar
Overall confidence in Ann Arbor government	NA	NA	60%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	NA	NA	64%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	67%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	66%	NA	NA	NA	Higher
Services provided by the Federal Government	37%	37%	49%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013	
Safety	Police/Sheriff services	79%	82%	80%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	
	Fire services	92%	95%	89%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar	
	Ambulance or emergency medical services	91%	94%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	
	Crime prevention	72%	75%	71%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	
	Fire prevention and education	79%	82%	77%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	
	Animal control	75%	75%	74%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	
	Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	NA	69%	65%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	
	Traffic enforcement	61%	67%	58%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Street repair	39%	30%	25%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	
	Street cleaning	65%	66%	57%	Lower	Higher	Higher	Similar	
Mobility	Street lighting	58%	61%	63%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Snow removal	65%	49%	53%	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar	
	Sidewalk maintenance	50%	53%	55%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Traffic signal timing	49%	48%	46%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	
	Bus or transit services	76%	78%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	
	Natural Environment	Garbage collection	86%	91%	88%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
		Recycling	86%	89%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
		Yard waste pick-up	77%	84%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Drinking water		77%	80%	84%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark		
		2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013
	Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	NA	75%	77%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Ann Arbor open space	NA	NA	74%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	69%	78%	67%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Sewer services	84%	83%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Power (electric and/or gas) utility	NA	76%	78%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	NA	75%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	52%	56%	54%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	66%	63%	53%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Economy	Economic development	62%	54%	69%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	90%	92%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Recreation programs or classes	89%	89%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Recreation centers or facilities	86%	87%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Health services	85%	86%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Education and Enrichment	City-sponsored special events	NA	NA	81%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Public library services	93%	94%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Public information services	77%	81%	78%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar

Table 4: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark		
	2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013
Sense of community	73%	76%	69%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
Recommend living in Ann Arbor to someone who asks	NA	83%	93%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Similar
Remain in Ann Arbor for the next five years	NA	65%	76%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Similar
Contacted Ann Arbor (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	NA	50%	37%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower

Table 5: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark		
		2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013
Safety	Stocked supplies in preparation for an emergency	NA	NA	20%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Did NOT reported a crime to the police	NA	NA	85%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Household member was NOT a victim of a crime	NA	92%	90%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar
Mobility	Used bus, rail, subway or other public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
	Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	NA	NA	52%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	83%	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
Natural Environment	Made efforts to conserve water	NA	NA	75%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Made efforts to make your home more energy efficient	NA	NA	73%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycle at home	NA	97%	95%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation or other hazard in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	59%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	NOT experiencing housing costs stress	NA	58%	63%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Similar
Economy	Purchase goods or services from a business located in Ann Arbor	NA	NA	98%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	NA	5%	24%	Higher	NA	Much lower	Similar
	Work inside boundaries of Ann Arbor	NA	NA	68%	NA	NA	NA	Much higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Ann Arbor recreation centers or their services	NA	56%	61%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
	Visited a neighborhood park or City park	NA	94%	90%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar
	Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day	NA	NA	89%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	89%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	76%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Used Ann Arbor public libraries or their services	NA	78%	70%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Ann Arbor	NA	51%	48%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	60%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	24%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Contacted Ann Arbor elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	NA	NA	15%	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Ann Arbor	NA	59%	52%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Similar
	Talked to or visited with your immediate neighbors	NA	60%	30%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower
	Attended a local public meeting	NA	20%	15%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower
	Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	NA	36%	19%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)			2013 compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark		
	2007	2008	2013		2007	2008	2013
Read or watch local news (via television, paper, computer, etc.)	NA	NA	75%	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Vote in local elections	NA	85%	68%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Similar