

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Lynchburg, VA

Trends over Time
2015



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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 2015 ratings for the City of Lynchburg to its previous survey results in 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2013. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Lynchburg 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 2013 and 2015 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2013 and 2015 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 Lynchburg for 2015 generally remained stable. Of the 92 items for which comparisons were available, 63 items were rated similarly in 2013 and 2015, 12 items showed a decrease in ratings and 17 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, there were several increases and one decrease from 2013 to 2015. Fewer residents tended to give “excellent” or “good” ratings to the overall quality of new development in Lynchburg. More residents gave favorable ratings to aspects of Mobility (traffic flow and travel by public transportation), Natural Environment (overall natural environment), Built Environment (availability of affordable quality housing), Recreation and Wellness (recreation opportunities, availability of affordable quality health care, availability of affordable quality food and preventive health services) and Education and Enrichment (opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities and availability of affordable quality child care/preschool). Residents in 2015 also gave more positive ratings to the overall appearance of Lynchburg than in 2013.
- Several changes were also noted within Governance over time. Survey respondents gave more “excellent” or “good” marks to fire prevention services, emergency preparedness, drinking water and the overall direction that Lynchburg is taking. The items that decreased from 2013 to 2015 included snow removal, City parks, public information services and the customer service of Lynchburg employees.
- Two aspects in Participation saw ratings increase in 2015 and seven aspects decreased from 2013. More residents reported that they were not under housing stress and more residents indicated that they were optimistic that the economy would have a positive impact on their income. Fewer residents reported that they had recycled at home, used Lynchburg’s recreation centers, visited a City park, used Lynchburg’s public libraries, watched a public meeting and volunteered in 2015 compared to 2013. Residents also reported lower levels of importance for the sense of community in Lynchburg.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
	2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
Overall quality of life	70%	74%	73%	75%	76%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
Overall image	NA	65%	64%	62%	59%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
Place to live	78%	76%	79%	79%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar
Neighborhood	73%	76%	74%	79%	77%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
Place to raise children	75%	75%	79%	81%	80%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Place to retire	69%	64%	75%	67%	70%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Overall appearance	60%	65%	61%	58%	65%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	NA	NA	80%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	94%	91%	93%	92%	89%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	77%	79%	74%	77%	82%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	NA	NA	60%	67%	63%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Ease of walking	NA	49%	51%	50%	48%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Lower
	Travel by bicycle	NA	35%	30%	36%	30%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	22%	NA	45%	Higher	NA	NA	Much lower	NA	Similar
	Travel by car	60%	57%	57%	59%	57%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	NA	40%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Traffic flow	46%	43%	41%	36%	44%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar
	Overall natural environment	NA	NA	72%	72%	79%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Cleanliness	NA	NA	57%	63%	66%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Air quality	NA	73%	71%	74%	80%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	NA	NA	50%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	New development in Lynchburg	NA	59%	54%	61%	52%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	49%	54%	47%	44%	54%	Higher	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	NA	NA	61%	60%	58%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Public places	NA	NA	NA	NA	52%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	NA	NA	54%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	NA	NA	38%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Business and services	NA	NA	67%	62%	65%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
	Shopping opportunities	46%	56%	58%	44%	46%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Higher	Much lower	Similar
	Employment opportunities	19%	28%	36%	31%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	56%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Place to work	NA	50%	52%	54%	52%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	NA	NA	NA	67%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Mental health care	NA	NA	NA	NA	55%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Preventive health services	NA	NA	50%	59%	66%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health care	NA	55%	51%	55%	62%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Food	NA	NA	61%	62%	71%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	39%	51%	46%	46%	58%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	NA	NA	72%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	NA	81%	84%	83%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Cultural/arts/music activities	46%	43%	40%	37%	48%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
	Adult education	NA	NA	NA	NA	63%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	K-12 education	60%	65%	68%	61%	67%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Child care/preschool	41%	47%	42%	45%	54%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Social events and activities	NA	NA	57%	49%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar
Community Engagement	Neighborliness	NA	NA	NA	NA	57%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	45%	39%	46%	46%	41%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	NA	62%	56%	61%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	NA	NA	79%	77%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar

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Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
	2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
Services provided by Lynchburg	62%	65%	61%	70%	68%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Customer service	76%	74%	76%	82%	70%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	NA	46%	46%	41%	47%	Similar	NA	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar
Overall direction	53%	55%	50%	49%	56%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	56%	50%	45%	49%	45%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	NA	NA	46%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Lynchburg	NA	NA	NA	NA	54%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	49%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	NA	NA	46%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	52%	47%	40%	38%	43%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
	Police	73%	75%	75%	77%	75%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	92%	93%	91%	89%	94%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	89%	84%	89%	81%	87%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Crime prevention	NA	60%	53%	61%	66%	Similar	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Fire prevention	NA	73%	80%	67%	78%	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Animal control	52%	53%	54%	56%	56%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
Safety	Emergency preparedness	NA	NA	55%	48%	58%	Higher	NA	NA	Lower	Much lower	Similar
	Traffic enforcement	60%	64%	58%	59%	59%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Street repair	35%	42%	39%	28%	29%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Lower
	Street cleaning	NA	47%	45%	44%	45%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
	Street lighting	51%	57%	56%	52%	58%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Snow removal	52%	57%	58%	56%	45%	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Sidewalk maintenance	44%	49%	43%	47%	46%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	NA	49%	50%	50%	47%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Bus or transit services	49%	60%	60%	56%	60%	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Garbage collection	77%	77%	75%	80%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Natural Environment	Recycling	59%	59%	54%	55%	56%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
	Yard waste pick-up	63%	60%	62%	64%	61%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Drinking water	61%	58%	60%	60%	68%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	NA	NA	45%	54%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Open space	NA	NA	NA	NA	55%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	NA	60%	62%	66%	68%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Sewer services	64%	63%	65%	67%	72%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	31%	31%	33%	41%	39%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	27%	29%	27%	37%	35%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Cable television	25%	37%	46%	39%	37%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Lower
	Economic development	36%	48%	43%	42%	46%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Economy	City parks	NA	67%	68%	76%	68%	Lower	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Recreation programs	NA	62%	60%	69%	65%	Similar	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Recreation centers	47%	58%	55%	56%	61%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar
	Health services	NA	64%	64%	64%	60%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Special events	NA	NA	NA	NA	52%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Public libraries	82%	74%	82%	76%	70%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Public information	61%	64%	71%	66%	56%	Lower	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement												

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
	2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
Sense of community	56%	52%	55%	57%	50%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
Recommend Lynchburg	NA	NA	83%	81%	79%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar
Remain in Lynchburg	NA	NA	79%	73%	76%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar
Contacted Lynchburg employees	70%	63%	62%	49%	53%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar

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Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	NA	NA	43%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	NA	NA	77%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	87%	88%	90%	89%	86%	Higher	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	13%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	NA	NA	37%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	39%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	NA	NA	76%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	NA	NA	70%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycled at home	70%	69%	69%	72%	65%	Lower	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	NA	NA	49%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	NA	NA	30%	66%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Lynchburg	NA	NA	NA	NA	97%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	27%	23%	17%	15%	30%	Higher	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Work in Lynchburg	NA	NA	NA	NA	61%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Lynchburg recreation centers	47%	47%	50%	56%	47%	Lower	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Visited a City park	82%	83%	79%	86%	74%	Lower	NA	NA	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	NA	NA	76%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	NA	NA	80%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Lynchburg public libraries	71%	72%	70%	62%	49%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Lower
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	NA	NA	76%	72%	67%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	NA	NA	50%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)					2015 rating compared to 2013	Comparison to benchmark				
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	NA	NA	27%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Contacted Lynchburg elected officials	NA	NA	NA	NA	16%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Volunteered	53%	55%	56%	56%	47%	Lower	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Participated in a club	NA	NA	38%	36%	30%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	NA	86%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	NA	79%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	29%	28%	27%	26%	19%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	64%	60%	52%	48%	32%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	NA	NA	86%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
Voted in local elections	64%	66%	NA	77%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	