

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Lynchburg, VA
Trends over Time

2017



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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 2017 ratings for the City of Lynchburg to its previous survey results in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2013 and 2015. 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 six percentage points between the 2015 and 2017 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2015 and 2017 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 2017 generally remained stable. Of the 133 items for which comparisons were available, 94 items were rated similarly in 2015 and 2017, 10 items showed a decrease in ratings and 29 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, 10 aspects increased and five decreased in rating since 2015. Four of the increases were related to Community Engagement, including opportunities to participate in community matters, volunteer, and attend social events and activities, as well as how open and accepting the community is toward people of diverse backgrounds.
- Ratings for services and amenities provided by Lynchburg largely remained stable over time with 12 increases and five decreases in 2017, though residents were more pleased with services related to Recreation and Wellness (City parks, recreation centers and programs), Education and Enrichment (public libraries and special events) and Community Engagement (public information, overall direction of the community and the government welcoming citizen involvement) in 2017 than in 2015. Decreases were concentrated in the areas of Safety and Mobility.
- In 2017, more residents reported carpooling or using public transportation instead of driving, and reported more frequently visiting City parks, attending a City-sponsored event, volunteering, and voting in local elections than in 2015. Respondents also reported a greater sense of community in 2017.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
	2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017
Overall quality of life	70%	74%	73%	75%	76%	74%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Overall image	NA	65%	64%	62%	59%	63%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Place to live	78%	76%	79%	79%	81%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Neighborhood	73%	76%	74%	79%	77%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	75%	75%	79%	81%	80%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to retire	69%	64%	75%	67%	70%	67%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall appearance	60%	65%	61%	58%	65%	68%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	NA	NA	80%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	94%	91%	93%	92%	89%	93%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	77%	79%	74%	77%	82%	82%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	60%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower
	Paths and walking trails	NA	NA	60%	67%	63%	70%	Higher	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Ease of walking	NA	49%	51%	50%	48%	50%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	NA	35%	30%	36%	30%	33%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	22%	NA	45%	32%	Lower	NA	NA	Much lower	NA	Similar	Similar
	Travel by car	60%	57%	57%	59%	57%	61%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	NA	40%	33%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower
	Traffic flow	46%	43%	41%	36%	44%	39%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Overall natural environment	NA	NA	72%	72%	79%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Cleanliness	NA	NA	57%	63%	66%	69%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Air quality	NA	73%	71%	74%	80%	82%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	NA	NA	50%	53%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	New development in Lynchburg	NA	59%	54%	61%	52%	60%	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	49%	54%	47%	44%	54%	50%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	NA	NA	61%	60%	58%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Economy	Public places	NA	NA	NA	NA	52%	63%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Overall economic health	NA	NA	NA	NA	54%	53%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	NA	NA	38%	53%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017
	Business and services	NA	NA	67%	62%	65%	62%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	64%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Shopping opportunities	46%	56%	58%	44%	46%	40%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Higher	Much lower	Similar	Lower
	Employment opportunities	19%	28%	36%	31%	38%	37%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	56%	54%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Place to work	NA	50%	52%	54%	52%	55%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	NA	NA	67%	69%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Mental health care	NA	NA	NA	NA	55%	42%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Preventive health services	NA	NA	50%	59%	66%	63%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health care	NA	55%	51%	55%	62%	59%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Food	NA	NA	61%	62%	71%	69%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	39%	51%	46%	46%	58%	70%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	NA	NA	72%	76%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	NA	81%	84%	83%	85%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Cultural/arts/music activities	46%	43%	40%	37%	48%	60%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Adult education	NA	NA	NA	NA	63%	61%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	K-12 education	60%	65%	68%	61%	67%	61%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Child care/preschool	41%	47%	42%	45%	54%	47%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	NA	NA	57%	49%	55%	61%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Neighborliness	NA	NA	NA	NA	57%	59%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	45%	39%	46%	46%	41%	49%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	NA	62%	56%	61%	67%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	NA	NA	79%	77%	72%	78%	Higher	NA	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

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Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
	2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017
Services provided by Lynchburg	62%	65%	61%	70%	68%	68%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Customer service	76%	74%	76%	82%	70%	67%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	NA	46%	46%	41%	47%	47%	Similar	NA	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	53%	55%	50%	49%	56%	63%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	56%	50%	45%	49%	45%	55%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	NA	NA	46%	51%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Lynchburg	NA	NA	NA	NA	54%	54%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	49%	52%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	NA	NA	46%	49%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	52%	47%	40%	38%	43%	39%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark						
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017	
Safety	Police	73%	75%	75%	77%	75%	77%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Fire	92%	93%	91%	89%	94%	88%	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Ambulance/EMS	89%	84%	89%	81%	87%	85%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Crime prevention	NA	60%	53%	61%	66%	61%	Similar	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Fire prevention	NA	73%	80%	67%	78%	71%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Animal control	52%	53%	54%	56%	56%	61%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Emergency preparedness	NA	NA	55%	48%	58%	60%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	
	Traffic enforcement	60%	64%	58%	59%	59%	58%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Street repair	35%	42%	39%	28%	29%	37%	Higher	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	
	Street cleaning	NA	47%	45%	44%	45%	51%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	
Mobility	Street lighting	51%	57%	56%	52%	58%	57%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Snow removal	52%	57%	58%	56%	45%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	
	Sidewalk maintenance	44%	49%	43%	47%	46%	46%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Traffic signal timing	NA	49%	50%	50%	47%	40%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Bus or transit services	49%	60%	60%	56%	60%	45%	Lower	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Garbage collection	77%	77%	75%	80%	79%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Natural Environment	Recycling	59%	59%	54%	55%	56%	45%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark						
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017	
	Yard waste pick-up	63%	60%	62%	64%	61%	56%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	
	Drinking water	61%	58%	60%	60%	68%	73%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Natural areas preservation	NA	NA	45%	54%	55%	61%	Higher	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Open space	NA	NA	NA	NA	55%	55%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	
Built Environment	Storm drainage	NA	60%	62%	66%	68%	66%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Sewer services	64%	63%	65%	67%	72%	76%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	
	Water utility billing	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	60%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	
	Land use, planning and zoning	31%	31%	33%	41%	39%	46%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	
	Code enforcement	27%	29%	27%	37%	35%	36%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	
	Cable television	25%	37%	46%	39%	37%	42%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	
	Economy	Economic development	36%	48%	43%	42%	46%	52%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation and Wellness	City parks	NA	67%	68%	76%	68%	80%	Higher	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
		Recreation programs	NA	62%	60%	69%	65%	72%	Higher	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Recreation centers		47%	58%	55%	56%	61%	70%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	
Health services		NA	64%	64%	64%	60%	64%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	NA	NA	52%	64%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	
	Public libraries	82%	74%	82%	76%	70%	80%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	
Community Engagement	Public information	61%	64%	71%	66%	56%	69%	Higher	Similar	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
	2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017
Sense of community	56%	52%	55%	57%	50%	58%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar
Recommend Lynchburg	NA	NA	83%	81%	79%	78%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Remain in Lynchburg	NA	NA	79%	73%	76%	80%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar
Contacted Lynchburg employees	70%	63%	62%	49%	53%	51%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

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Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	NA	NA	43%	41%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	NA	NA	77%	80%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	87%	88%	90%	11%	86%	89%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	13%	20%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Similar
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	NA	NA	37%	44%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	39%	37%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Much lower
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	NA	NA	76%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	NA	NA	70%	73%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	70%	69%	69%	72%	65%	68%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	NA	NA	49%	45%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	NA	NA	30%	66%	72%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Lynchburg	NA	NA	NA	NA	97%	97%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	27%	23%	17%	15%	30%	29%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Work in Lynchburg	NA	NA	NA	NA	61%	62%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Lynchburg recreation centers	47%	47%	50%	56%	47%	50%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Visited a City park	82%	83%	79%	86%	74%	81%	Higher	NA	NA	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	NA	NA	76%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	NA	NA	80%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	56%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Used Lynchburg public libraries	71%	72%	70%	62%	49%	52%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	NA	NA	76%	72%	67%	63%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	NA	NA	50%	59%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2017 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017		2004	2006	2008	2013	2015	2017
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	NA	NA	27%	30%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Contacted Lynchburg elected officials	NA	NA	NA	NA	16%	18%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	53%	55%	56%	56%	47%	56%	Higher	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Participated in a club	NA	NA	38%	36%	30%	31%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	NA	86%	87%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	NA	79%	76%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	29%	28%	27%	26%	19%	19%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	64%	60%	52%	48%	32%	34%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	NA	NA	86%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Voted in local elections	64%	66%	NA	77%	77%	86%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar