



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

New Braunfels, TX

Trends over Time

2019



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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 2019 ratings for the City of New Braunfels to its previous survey results in 2017, 2014, and 2012. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for New Braunfels 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 2017 and 2019 surveys, otherwise the comparisons between 2017 and 2019 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 New Braunfels for 2019 generally remained stable. Of the 130 items for which comparisons were available, 91 items were rated similarly in 2017 and 2019, 33 items showed a decrease in ratings and six showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the facet of Recreation and Wellness, ratings for recreation centers improved substantially in 2019, as did rates of use for these facilities.
- Ratings for several aspects of Mobility declined from 2017 to 2019. These included the overall ease of travel, as well as travel by car, public parking and traffic signal timing. Additionally, fewer residents reported they had walked or biked as an alternative to driving. Conversely, increases were seen for respondents' scores for traffic enforcement, street repair, and bus or transit services.
- Residents' ratings for a number of government performance measures declined in 2019, including overall direction New Braunfels is taking, value of services for taxes paid, the City welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in City government, the government acting in the best interest of New Braunfels and treating all residents fairly. Additionally, scores for sense of community and the neighborliness of fellow residents decreased since 2017 and fewer residents reported they would recommend living in the community to those who might ask. On a positive note, rates of voting in local elections increased from 2017 to 2019.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
	2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Overall quality of life	88%	93%	95%	86%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Overall image	81%	86%	89%	87%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Place to live	91%	95%	96%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Neighborhood	81%	85%	90%	85%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	89%	93%	94%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Place to retire	84%	87%	87%	82%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Overall appearance	75%	84%	87%	84%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	91%	92%	90%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	94%	95%	96%	95%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	95%	96%	96%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall ease of travel	NA	62%	75%	69%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	35%	44%	56%	53%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Ease of walking	43%	45%	54%	54%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	25%	29%	32%	29%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Travel by public transportation	NA	14%	18%	13%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Travel by car	48%	57%	67%	61%	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Public parking	NA	45%	47%	40%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Traffic flow	27%	43%	49%	44%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall natural environment	76%	84%	88%	81%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Cleanliness	77%	78%	81%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Air quality	77%	79%	82%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	62%	68%	57%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	New development in New Braunfels	68%	70%	73%	68%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	43%	45%	40%	37%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	58%	59%	60%	48%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Economy	Public places	NA	80%	85%	80%	Lower	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Overall economic health	NA	75%	78%	78%	Similar	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	65%	71%	69%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Business and services	74%	74%	77%	76%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	50%	50%	42%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	67%	75%	78%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Employment opportunities	39%	44%	48%	45%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	94%	93%	92%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Place to work	63%	69%	73%	64%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	76%	81%	78%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar
Mental health care		NA	49%	52%	48%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Preventive health services		62%	71%	73%	73%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Health care		54%	68%	75%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar
Food		71%	75%	78%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
Recreational opportunities		74%	72%	80%	79%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Fitness opportunities	NA	64%	77%	72%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Education and enrichment opportunities	NA	65%	73%	65%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	82%	88%	84%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	59%	66%	71%	67%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Adult education	NA	42%	54%	48%	Lower	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Child care/preschool	47%	58%	54%	53%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Social events and activities	70%	74%	77%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Neighborhoodness	NA	67%	74%	64%	Lower	NA	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	54%	52%	60%	58%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	64%	69%	71%	70%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Opportunities to volunteer	78%	78%	76%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	

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Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
	2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Services provided by New Braunfels	72%	79%	82%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Customer service	71%	75%	82%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	54%	48%	60%	55%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	54%	59%	67%	59%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	45%	53%	64%	57%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Confidence in City government	NA	49%	61%	55%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Acting in the best interest of New Braunfels	NA	50%	61%	55%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Being honest	NA	51%	63%	60%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	48%	62%	55%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	43%	34%	46%	41%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Safety	Police	81%	82%	86%	83%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	93%	94%	97%	95%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	93%	90%	96%	92%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	68%	71%	78%	73%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire prevention	78%	79%	83%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Animal control	61%	58%	68%	65%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	66%	71%	74%	73%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	58%	63%	58%	64%	Higher	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Street repair	17%	25%	24%	30%	Higher	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Street cleaning	41%	40%	51%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	48%	49%	52%	51%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	37%	38%	45%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	44%	47%	52%	41%	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Bus or transit services	21%	18%	19%	27%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	83%	87%	89%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	83%	84%	88%	83%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	72%	78%	81%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Drinking water	72%	75%	79%	72%	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	52%	54%	67%	62%	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Open space	NA	56%	64%	61%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Built Environment	Storm drainage	45%	53%	53%	57%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sewer services	79%	82%	82%	83%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Power utility	81%	81%	84%	81%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	73%	78%	74%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	42%	47%	52%	49%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	45%	44%	53%	46%	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Economy	Economic development	56%	63%	73%	67%	Lower	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	84%	83%	93%	89%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Recreation programs	73%	68%	77%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation centers	65%	61%	70%	84%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Health services	68%	73%	77%	74%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Special events	NA	74%	75%	74%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Public libraries	90%	88%	90%	89%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	71%	72%	77%	73%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
	2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Sense of community	74%	77%	81%	73%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Higher	Similar
Recommend New Braunfels	92%	94%	94%	87%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Remain in New Braunfels	90%	92%	90%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Contacted New Braunfels employees	46%	46%	43%	43%	Similar	Much lower	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)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
		2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	28%	27%	28%	Similar	NA	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	79%	83%	78%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	88%	88%	93%	91%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	4%	6%	3%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	37%	35%	37%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	35%	43%	37%	Lower	NA	Much lower	Lower	Lower
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	94%	93%	92%	Similar	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	78%	75%	68%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	88%	88%	91%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	48%	55%	53%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	73%	74%	73%	65%	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in New Braunfels	NA	96%	98%	99%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	24%	38%	46%	37%	Lower	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Work in New Braunfels	NA	46%	47%	49%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Used New Braunfels recreation centers	60%	61%	55%	63%	Higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Visited a City park	90%	88%	90%	89%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	82%	85%	84%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	69%	69%	67%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used New Braunfels public libraries	68%	67%	60%	62%	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	68%	69%	61%	61%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	65%	61%	61%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	26%	25%	24%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Contacted New Braunfels elected officials	NA	19%	16%	12%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	51%	48%	44%	47%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2019 rating compared to 2017	Comparison to benchmark			
	2012	2014	2017	2019		2012	2014	2017	2019
Participated in a club	36%	33%	29%	31%	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	95%	94%	92%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	84%	86%	85%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Attended a local public meeting	28%	24%	25%	27%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Watched a local public meeting	38%	26%	20%	19%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Read or watched local news	NA	85%	81%	77%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Voted in local elections	73%	81%	80%	85%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar