



# THE NCS<sup>TM</sup>

The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

## Davidson, NC

Trends over Time

DRAFT  
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 Town of Davidson to its previous survey results in 2007, 2012 and 2014. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Davidson 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 2014 and 2017 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2014 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 Davidson for 2017 generally remained stable. Of the 123 items for which comparisons were available, 79 items were rated similarly in 2014 and 2017, 33 items showed a decrease in ratings and 11 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, residents' ratings for shopping opportunities and the vibrancy of Davidson's downtown/commercial area increased from 2014 to 2017. Several measures in Mobility saw a decrease in ratings this year, including traffic flow, ease of travel by car, ease of public parking and the overall ease of travel in Davidson. Additionally, ratings for several other Community Characteristics declined over time, including the overall natural environment, the overall built environment, variety of housing options, recreational opportunities and opportunities to volunteer, among others.
- Within the pillar of Governance, ratings for three services increased from 2014 to 2017: fire services, snow removal and storm drainage. Ratings for several items related to government trust declined from 2014 to 2017, including the overall direction Davidson is taking, the job the Town does at welcoming citizen involvement, confidence in the Town government, the job the Town does at treating all residents fairly, being honest and acting in the best interest of Davidson. Ratings also declined over time for seven Davidson services and amenities, including recycling services, Town-sponsored special events, economic development and land use, planning and zoning, among others.
- Residents' reported levels of Participation were generally stable over time; however, there were a few exceptions. In 2017, fewer residents reported that they had made efforts to make their home more energy efficient and fewer had used Davidson public libraries. However, in 2017 more respondents were optimistic that the economy would have a positive impact on their income in the coming six months and fewer residents had observed a code violation. Additionally, a higher proportion of residents reported that they had voted in local elections, attended a local public meeting, campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate and contacted Davidson elected officials.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
	2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
Overall quality of life	92%	96%	97%	94%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Overall image	92%	95%	97%	93%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
Place to live	93%	97%	97%	96%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Neighborhood	87%	93%	92%	96%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Place to raise children	95%	97%	97%	97%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Place to retire	76%	91%	91%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Overall appearance	88%	94%	95%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	98%	97%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Higher
	Safe in neighborhood	97%	99%	98%	98%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	98%	99%	98%	99%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	82%	66%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	NA	77%	84%	75%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Ease of walking	84%	88%	91%	82%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
	Travel by bicycle	70%	73%	67%	59%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	23%	19%	Similar	NA	NA	Lower	Lower
	Travel by car	44%	69%	69%	44%	Lower	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Lower
	Public parking	NA	NA	53%	29%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Lower
	Traffic flow	27%	49%	54%	27%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	NA	91%	92%	86%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Cleanliness	NA	96%	95%	95%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	81%	70%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
	New development in Davidson	62%	82%	77%	57%	Lower	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Affordable quality housing	40%	51%	53%	36%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
	Housing options	NA	68%	67%	59%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Public places	NA	NA	87%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	84%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	68%	77%	Higher	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher
	Business and services	NA	71%	80%	78%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	45%	40%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	21%	43%	44%	52%	Higher	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Employment opportunities	21%	31%	35%	37%	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	NA	85%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Place to work	66%	73%	77%	75%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	87%	84%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Mental health care	NA	NA	58%	57%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Preventive health services	NA	72%	73%	74%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Food	NA	77%	73%	67%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	56%	73%	79%	73%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	82%	76%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	NA	87%	93%	89%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	84%	82%	88%	79%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Education and Enrichment	Adult education	NA	NA	74%	79%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Child care/preschool	36%	54%	67%	61%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Social events and activities	NA	84%	85%	78%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Neighborhoodliness	NA	NA	84%	78%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Openness and acceptance	66%	79%	70%	67%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	NA	83%	86%	81%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Opportunities to volunteer	NA	87%	91%	83%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar

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Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
	2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
Services provided by Davidson	79%	90%	91%	86%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar
Customer service	83%	83%	88%	90%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
Value of services for taxes paid	67%	66%	66%	68%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	57%	73%	77%	51%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	69%	75%	78%	70%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
Confidence in Town government	NA	NA	72%	57%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Davidson	NA	NA	76%	58%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
Being honest	NA	NA	76%	63%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	75%	64%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	43%	36%	43%	40%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
Safety	Police	86%	89%	91%	96%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Fire	95%	96%	92%	99%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	82%	91%	92%	95%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Much higher
	Fire prevention	89%	87%	90%	91%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Animal control	74%	75%	77%	77%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Emergency preparedness	NA	NA	72%	64%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	69%	79%	79%	77%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Street repair	34%	62%	58%	58%	Similar	Lower	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Street cleaning	60%	78%	75%	77%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Street lighting	61%	60%	67%	70%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Snow removal	NA	59%	54%	72%	Higher	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	55%	61%	62%	62%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	53%	73%	69%	64%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
	Bus or transit services	72%	58%	58%	52%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	86%	92%	90%	86%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	88%	87%	89%	80%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	81%	78%	80%	79%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	NA	82%	82%	62%	Lower	NA	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Open space	NA	NA	84%	66%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	77%	83%	70%	78%	Higher	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Land use, planning and zoning	49%	75%	67%	42%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar
	Code enforcement	62%	75%	74%	70%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Cable television	41%	46%	47%	41%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar
Economy	Economic development	64%	69%	71%	65%	Lower	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Town parks	78%	90%	90%	86%	Similar	Similar	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Recreation programs	81%	86%	83%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Recreation centers	NA	75%	72%	67%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	NA	93%	82%	Lower	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
Community Engagement	Public information	65%	84%	83%	77%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar

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Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
	2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
Sense of community	86%	93%	89%	85%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher
Recommend Davidson	NA	96%	96%	92%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Remain in Davidson	NA	90%	88%	85%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
Contacted Davidson employees	60%	49%	47%	48%	Similar	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	30%	32%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	88%	88%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	7%	97%	95%	94%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	8%	13%	Similar	NA	NA	Much lower	Lower
Mobility	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	51%	46%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	71%	69%	Similar	NA	NA	Higher	Higher
	Conserved water	NA	NA	79%	77%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	80%	72%	Lower	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	80%	87%	93%	95%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	69%	77%	Higher	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher
Built Environment	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	76%	80%	84%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Purchased goods or services in Davidson	NA	NA	91%	96%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Economy	Economy will have positive impact on income	24%	25%	32%	46%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Higher	Higher
	Work in Davidson	NA	NA	40%	38%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Used Davidson recreation centers	NA	45%	53%	53%	Similar	NA	Much lower	Similar	Similar
	Visited a Town park	85%	87%	84%	86%	Similar	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2017 rating compared to 2014	Comparison to benchmark			
		2007	2012	2014	2017		2007	2012	2014	2017
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	88%	92%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	90%	93%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	75%	81%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Davidson public libraries	NA	70%	71%	63%	Lower	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	NA	55%	56%	52%	Similar	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Attended a Town-sponsored event	NA	NA	76%	78%	Similar	NA	NA	Much higher	Much higher
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	30%	43%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Much higher
	Contacted Davidson elected officials	NA	NA	23%	31%	Higher	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
	Volunteered	51%	55%	49%	51%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Higher
	Participated in a club	NA	37%	37%	37%	Similar	NA	Much higher	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	97%	96%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	88%	93%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Higher
	Attended a local public meeting	35%	31%	35%	45%	Higher	NA	Higher	Higher	Much higher
	Watched a local public meeting	NA	NA	NA	18%	NA	NA	NA	NA	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	84%	85%	Similar	NA	NA	Similar	Similar
	Voted in local elections	81%	82%	84%	91%	Higher	NA	Much higher	Similar	Higher