

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

San José, CA

Trends over Time

FINAL
2016



NRC
National Research Center Inc

2955 Valmont Road Suite 300
Boulder, Colorado 80301
n-r-c.com • 303-444-7863

ICMA

Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

777 North Capitol Street NE Suite 500
Washington, DC 20002
icma.org • 800-745-8780

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 2016 ratings for the City of San José to its previous survey results in 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for San José 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 2016 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2015 and 2016 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 San José for 2016 generally remained stable. Of the 129 items for which comparisons were available, 79 items were rated similarly in 2015 and 2016, 38 items showed a decrease in ratings and 12 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Ratings for overall quality of life in San José and San José as a place to live decreased in 2016 when compared to 2015. However, several aspects within Community Characteristics, including the overall quality of business and service establishments in San José, recreational opportunities, availability of affordable quality food, opportunities to participate in community matters and opportunities to volunteer received higher ratings in 2016 compared to 2015.
- Within the pillar of Governance, several changes were noted from 2015 to 2016. Ratings decreased for the overall quality of services provided by the City of San José as well as several aspects within the facets of Safety, Mobility, Built Environment, Economy and Community Engagement. Ratings increased from 2015 to 2016 for recreation centers or facilities.
- From 2015 to 2016, fewer residents reported that they would recommend living in San José to someone who asked or that they planned to remain in San José for the next five years. However, more residents indicated that they had attended a City-sponsored event, voted in local elections, attended a local public meeting, campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate or contacted San José elected officials or employees in 2016 compared to 2015.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Overall quality of life	62%	60%	57%	59%	51%	44%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Overall image	51%	46%	43%	51%	41%	33%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Place to live	73%	64%	65%	71%	67%	56%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Neighborhood	67%	64%	61%	67%	63%	63%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
Place to raise children	53%	63%	63%	53%	54%	45%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Place to retire	26%	28%	28%	28%	20%	14%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
Overall appearance	54%	48%	43%	45%	34%	30%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	NA	46%	40%	33%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Safe in neighborhood	87%	84%	82%	83%	78%	76%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Safe downtown area	71%	62%	58%	64%	57%	57%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	NA	53%	48%	38%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Paths and walking trails	45%	45%	50%	56%	44%	43%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Ease of walking	46%	53%	43%	52%	47%	40%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Travel by bicycle	37%	40%	34%	44%	39%	31%	Lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Travel by public transportation	48%	41%	42%	38%	34%	23%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Travel by car	40%	50%	40%	48%	40%	30%	Lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Much lower
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	38%	27%	26%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Traffic flow	23%	26%	23%	32%	23%	17%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Overall natural environment	43%	48%	44%	50%	43%	41%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Air quality	43%	48%	42%	41%	37%	43%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	NA	46%	41%	32%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
	New development in San José	58%	53%	49%	46%	44%	37%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Affordable quality housing	20%	21%	22%	15%	10%	5%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Housing options	50%	39%	37%	34%	19%	19%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Public places	NA	NA	NA	50%	40%	32%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Much lower
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	NA	NA	54%	52%	47%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	NA	40%	33%	31%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Business and services	59%	66%	57%	58%	43%	51%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	11%	10%	5%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Shopping opportunities	76%	77%	75%	75%	70%	76%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Higher
	Employment opportunities	46%	51%	45%	61%	53%	56%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Place to visit	NA	NA	NA	49%	43%	34%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Place to work	66%	74%	68%	73%	71%	65%	Similar	Higher	Much higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	NA	61%	56%	53%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Mental health care	NA	NA	NA	42%	35%	28%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower
Recreation and Wellness	Preventive health services	NA	NA	NA	55%	47%	52%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health care	28%	44%	32%	49%	42%	48%	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Food	52%	57%	50%	60%	49%	57%	Higher	Lower	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	53%	55%	57%	54%	39%	49%	Higher	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	NA	57%	47%	52%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	68%	60%	60%	69%	64%	66%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	64%	60%	53%	60%	52%	56%	Similar	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Adult education	NA	NA	NA	53%	54%	50%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	K-12 education	NA	NA	NA	48%	39%	41%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Child care/preschool	16%	27%	20%	45%	37%	25%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Much lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	57%	46%	50%	56%	45%	50%	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Neighborliness	NA	NA	NA	41%	36%	36%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Openness and acceptance	67%	71%	60%	65%	60%	65%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	55%	53%	42%	53%	47%	60%	Higher	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	70%	61%	57%	62%	59%	71%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Services provided by San José	46%	42%	45%	54%	48%	38%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Customer service	57%	53%	64%	46%	39%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower
Value of services for taxes paid	26%	28%	32%	29%	25%	18%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Overall direction	31%	35%	37%	41%	37%	25%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Welcoming resident involvement	38%	37%	26%	37%	31%	29%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Lower
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	NA	32%	30%	23%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower
Acting in the best interest of San José	NA	NA	NA	40%	31%	26%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
Being honest	NA	NA	NA	38%	30%	28%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Lower
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	NA	38%	31%	29%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
Services provided by the Federal Government	33%	32%	34%	40%	34%	32%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Safety	Police	61%	54%	51%	46%	44%	29%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Fire	84%	80%	81%	75%	74%	75%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	Ambulance/EMS	83%	73%	73%	68%	76%	71%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Crime prevention	38%	28%	33%	31%	25%	14%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Fire prevention	58%	56%	52%	54%	46%	46%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Animal control	46%	45%	46%	49%	44%	43%	Similar	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Emergency preparedness	37%	37%	29%	46%	37%	39%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	57%	37%	43%	40%	29%	24%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Street repair	21%	15%	29%	28%	24%	12%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Street cleaning	42%	32%	45%	34%	35%	31%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Street lighting	42%	35%	46%	40%	45%	42%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Lower
	Sidewalk maintenance	35%	30%	43%	35%	30%	28%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Traffic signal timing	34%	37%	42%	43%	37%	32%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Bus or transit services	50%	43%	55%	46%	52%	36%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Garbage collection	74%	77%	77%	71%	72%	72%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	74%	78%	79%	71%	72%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	76%	72%	68%	70%	66%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Drinking water	51%	53%	53%	52%	52%	47%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Natural areas preservation	38%	35%	41%	40%	38%	41%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Storm drainage	55%	54%	59%	53%	48%	53%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Sewer services	58%	59%	65%	59%	59%	63%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	NA	NA	50%	53%	48%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Land use, planning and zoning	32%	34%	34%	34%	34%	24%	Lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Code enforcement	28%	25%	37%	32%	22%	15%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Cable television	NA	NA	NA	41%	42%	42%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy	Economic development	32%	34%	28%	48%	42%	36%	Lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	68%	55%	64%	61%	56%	55%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Recreation programs	52%	43%	44%	56%	50%	54%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Recreation centers	54%	43%	48%	55%	48%	57%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Public libraries	68%	62%	62%	66%	69%	74%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	43%	44%	40%	51%	47%	52%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Lower	Similar

Table 4: Participation General

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Sense of community		36%	42%	37%	36%	32%	27%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Much lower
Recommend San José		80%	75%	78%	71%	66%	51%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Much lower
Remain in San José		83%	81%	80%	82%	77%	69%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Lower
Contacted San José employees		32%	30%	45%	44%	40%	52%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 5: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	NA	NA	49%	51%	44%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	NA	69%	65%	59%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	88%	88%	73%	81%	79%	76%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	48%	48%	45%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Much higher	Higher
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	NA	60%	63%	56%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	65%	57%	56%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	NA	NA	97%	98%	97%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	NA	85%	81%	82%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	96%	93%	95%	96%	95%	98%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Higher
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	NA	NA	45%	43%	37%	Lower	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Lower	Lower
	NOT under housing cost stress	41%	48%	37%	49%	51%	51%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Lower
Economy	Purchased goods or services in San José	NA	NA	NA	98%	96%	97%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	16%	26%	29%	37%	37%	28%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Work in San José	NA	NA	NA	55%	52%	48%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Higher	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Used San José recreation centers	49%	42%	44%	51%	51%	43%	Lower	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Visited a City park	86%	89%	92%	87%	87%	88%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	NA	88%	84%	85%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	NA	89%	87%	86%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	NA	64%	56%	61%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used San José public libraries	74%	70%	68%	63%	64%	62%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	49%	50%	48%	50%	48%	39%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	NA	NA	40%	39%	48%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Lower	Similar
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	NA	27%	22%	29%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Contacted San José elected officials	NA	NA	NA	19%	18%	27%	Higher	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	37%	43%	43%	46%	39%	43%	Similar	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in a club	27%	26%	28%	29%	33%	26%	Lower	Similar	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	84%	82%	87%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2016 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	71%	75%	74%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Lower	Similar	Similar
Attended a local public meeting	18%	15%	19%	19%	18%	28%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Watched a local public meeting	27%	25%	28%	20%	19%	20%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower	Lower	Lower	Similar
Read or watched local news	NA	NA	NA	87%	86%	89%	Similar	NA	NA	NA	Similar	Similar	Similar
Voted in local elections	66%	66%	66%	82%	74%	85%	Higher	Much lower	Lower	Much lower	Similar	Similar	Similar