



THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

San José, CA

Trends over Time

2014



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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 2014 ratings for the City of San José to its previous survey results in 2011, 2012 and 2013. 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 eight percentage points between the 2013 and 2014 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2013 and 2014 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 2014 generally remained stable. Of the 87 items for which comparisons were available, 63 items were rated similarly in 2013 and 2014; four items showed a decrease in ratings and 20 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the facet of Mobility, two features ratings decreased and four increased. Street cleaning and bus or transit service ratings decreased, while ratings for traffic flow, travel by car, travel by bicycle and ease of walking increased.
- While ratings for services provided by the City of San José increased, ratings for San José's customer service decreased. Several Community Engagement ratings increased, including ratings for opportunities to participate in community matters, public information services, and San José welcoming citizen involvement.
- A variety of Community Characteristics ratings increased. These included ratings for the availability of affordable quality health care and food, child care/preschool and religious or spiritual events and activities. However, fewer people in 2014 than 2013 thought that San José was an excellent or good place to raise children.
- Ratings for several items within the facet of Economy increased, including employment opportunities and economic development. More participants in 2014 believed that the economy would have a positive impact on their income.
- In the facet of Safety, ratings for emergency preparedness increased and fewer people reported being a victim of crime in San José.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

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

Table 2: Governance General

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

Table 3: Governance by Facet

| | | Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good) | | | | 2014 rating compared to 2013 | Comparison to benchmark | | | |
|--------|------------------|--|------|------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Safety | Police | 61% | 54% | 51% | 46% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower |
| | Fire | 84% | 80% | 81% | 75% | Similar | Lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Ambulance/EMS | 83% | 73% | 73% | 68% | Similar | Lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Crime prevention | 38% | 28% | 33% | 31% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower |
| | Fire prevention | 58% | 56% | 52% | 54% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |

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| | | Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good) | | | | 2014 rating compared to 2013 | Comparison to benchmark | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|------|------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| | Animal control | 46% | 45% | 46% | 49% | Similar | Lower | Much lower | Much lower | Similar |
| | Emergency preparedness | 37% | 37% | 29% | 46% | Higher | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| Mobility | Traffic enforcement | 57% | 37% | 43% | 40% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Street repair | 21% | 15% | 29% | 28% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Street cleaning | 42% | 32% | 45% | 34% | Lower | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Street lighting | 42% | 35% | 46% | 40% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Sidewalk maintenance | 35% | 30% | 43% | 35% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Traffic signal timing | 34% | 37% | 42% | 43% | Similar | Lower | Lower | Lower | Similar |
| | Bus or transit services | 50% | 43% | 55% | 46% | Lower | Similar | Lower | Similar | Similar |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Natural Environment | Garbage collection | 74% | 77% | 77% | 71% | Similar | Lower | Lower | Lower | Similar |
| | Recycling | 74% | 78% | 79% | 71% | Similar | Similar | Similar | Similar | Similar |
| | Yard waste pick-up | 76% | 72% | 68% | 70% | Similar | Similar | Similar | Lower | Similar |
| | Drinking water | 51% | 53% | 53% | 52% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Natural areas preservation | 38% | 35% | 41% | 40% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Storm drainage | 55% | 54% | 59% | 53% | Similar | Similar | Lower | Similar | Similar |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| Built Environment | Sewer services | 58% | 59% | 65% | 59% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Similar |
| | Utility billing | NA | NA | NA | 50% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Land use, planning and zoning | 32% | 34% | 34% | 34% | Similar | Lower | Lower | Much lower | Similar |
| | Code enforcement | 28% | 25% | 37% | 32% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Lower | Lower |
| | Cable television | NA | NA | NA | 41% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| Economy | Economic development | 32% | 34% | 28% | 48% | Higher | Lower | Lower | Much lower | Similar |
| Recreation and Wellness | City parks | 68% | 55% | 64% | 61% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Recreation programs | 52% | 43% | 44% | 56% | Higher | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Recreation centers | 54% | 43% | 48% | 55% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |

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| | | Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good) | | | | 2014 rating compared to 2013 | Comparison to benchmark | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--|------|------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Education and Enrichment | Public libraries | 68% | 62% | 62% | 66% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| Community Engagement | Public information | 43% | 44% | 40% | 51% | Higher | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Similar |

Table 4: Participation General

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

Table 5: Participation by Facet

| | | Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes) | | | | 2014 rating compared to 2013 | Comparison to benchmark | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|------|------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| Safety | Stocked supplies for an emergency | NA | NA | NA | 49% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Higher |
| | Did NOT report a crime | NA | NA | NA | 69% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Was NOT the victim of a crime | 88% | 88% | 73% | 81% | Higher | Similar | Similar | Much lower | Similar |
| Mobility | Used public transportation instead of driving | NA | NA | NA | 48% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Higher |
| | Carpooled instead of driving alone | NA | NA | NA | 60% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Higher |
| | Walked or biked instead of driving | NA | NA | NA | 65% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| Natural Environment | Conserved water | NA | NA | NA | 97% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Higher |
| | Made home more energy efficient | NA | NA | NA | 85% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Recycled at home | 96% | 93% | 95% | 96% | Similar | Much higher | Much higher | Much higher | Higher |
| Built Environment | Did NOT observe a code violation | NA | NA | NA | 45% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | NOT under housing cost stress | 41% | 48% | 37% | 49% | Higher | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| Economy | Purchased goods or services in San José | NA | NA | NA | 98% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |

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| | | Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes) | | | | 2014 rating compared to 2013 | Comparison to benchmark | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|------|------|------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
| | Economy will have positive impact on income | 16% | 26% | 29% | 37% | Higher | Similar | Much higher | Much higher | Higher |
| | Work in San José | NA | NA | NA | 55% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Higher |
| Recreation and Wellness | Used San José recreation centers | 49% | 42% | 44% | 51% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Similar |
| | Visited a City park | 86% | 89% | 92% | 87% | Similar | Similar | Similar | Higher | Similar |
| | Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables | NA | NA | NA | 88% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity | NA | NA | NA | 89% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | In very good to excellent health | NA | NA | NA | 64% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Used San José public libraries | 74% | 70% | 68% | 63% | Similar | Similar | Similar | Similar | Similar |
| Education and Enrichment | Participated in religious or spiritual activities | 49% | 50% | 48% | 50% | Similar | Similar | Similar | Similar | Similar |
| | Attended a City-sponsored event | NA | NA | NA | 40% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Lower |
| | Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate | NA | NA | NA | 27% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| Community Engagement | Contacted San José elected officials | NA | NA | NA | 19% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Volunteered | 37% | 43% | 43% | 46% | Similar | Much lower | Similar | Similar | Similar |
| | Participated in a club | 27% | 26% | 28% | 29% | Similar | Similar | Lower | Similar | Similar |
| | Talked to or visited with neighbors | NA | NA | NA | 84% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Done a favor for a neighbor | NA | NA | NA | 71% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Lower |
| | Attended a local public meeting | 18% | 15% | 19% | 19% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Lower | Similar |
| | Watched a local public meeting | 27% | 25% | 28% | 20% | Similar | Much lower | Much lower | Much lower | Lower |
| | Read or watched local news | NA | NA | NA | 87% | NA | NA | NA | NA | Similar |
| | Voted in local elections | 66% | 66% | 66% | 82% | Higher | Much lower | Lower | Much lower | Similar |