

THE NCSTM

The National Citizen SurveyTM

Battle Creek, MI



Trends over Time

2018



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ICMA

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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 2018 ratings for the City of Battle Creek to its previous survey results in 2015. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Battle Creek 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 2018 surveys, otherwise the comparisons between 2015 and 2018 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 Battle Creek for 2018 generally remained stable. Of the 132 items for which comparisons were available, 101 items were rated similarly in 2015 and 2018, six items showed a decrease in ratings and 25 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Within the pillar of Community Characteristics, ratings for four aspects increased and three decreased since 2015. Three of the increases were related to Mobility, including travel by public transportation, public parking and availability of paths and walking trails. Battle Creek residents also reported higher levels of community neighborliness.
- Of the 25 increases noted from 2015 to 2018, 18 were for ratings of services and amenities provided by the City of Battle Creek. Residents were particularly more pleased with services related to Mobility (e.g., street repair, street cleaning, snow removal), Natural Environment (e.g., garbage collection, recycling, drinking water) and Built Environment (sewer, storm drainage, utility billing) and City services overall. Government performance measures also improved, as more residents awarded high marks to the City being honest and treating all residents fairly, as well as the customer service provided by Battle Creek employees. No services provided by the City were rated lower in 2018.
- In 2018, more residents had recycled at home and been neighborly, and were less likely to report a crime. Conversely, fewer respondents reported being in good health, stocking supplies or had plans to remain in the City for the next five years.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark	
	2015	2018		2015	2018
Overall quality of life	33%	34%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Overall image	18%	16%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Place to live	44%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Neighborhood	57%	59%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Place to raise children	36%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Place to retire	23%	26%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Overall appearance	31%	34%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark	
		2015	2018		2015	2018
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	35%	35%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
	Safe in neighborhood	76%	80%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Safe downtown/commercial area	69%	70%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	62%	63%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	55%	62%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Ease of walking	46%	52%	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	49%	46%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	33%	41%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Travel by car	63%	67%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public parking	49%	56%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Traffic flow	55%	58%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Overall natural environment	48%	50%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Natural Environment	Cleanliness	31%	33%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
	Air quality	53%	57%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Built Environment	Overall built environment	37%	33%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	New development in Battle Creek	21%	21%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
	Affordable quality housing	36%	29%	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	36%	36%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Public places	33%	33%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Economy	Overall economic health	18%	19%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	21%	16%	Similar	Lower	Much lower
	Business and services	30%	26%	Similar	Lower	Much lower
	Cost of living	33%	32%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	31%	21%	Lower	Lower	Much lower
	Employment opportunities	20%	25%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	28%	24%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Place to work	37%	40%	Similar	Lower	Lower	
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	41%	38%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
	Mental health care	35%	35%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Preventive health services	42%	42%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Health care	40%	42%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Food	44%	44%	Similar	Lower	Lower

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark	
		2015	2018		2015	2018
	Recreational opportunities	39%	42%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Fitness opportunities	53%	51%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Education and enrichment opportunities	43%	41%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Cultural/arts/music activities	34%	33%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Adult education	45%	39%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	K-12 education	49%	46%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Child care/preschool	39%	31%	Lower	Similar	Lower
	Social events and activities	30%	31%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Community Engagement	Neighborliness	27%	36%	Higher	Much lower	Lower
	Openness and acceptance	33%	39%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	37%	40%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Opportunities to volunteer	48%	48%	Similar	Lower	Lower

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark	
	2015	2018		2015	2018
Services provided by Battle Creek	35%	42%	Higher	Much lower	Lower
Customer service	42%	52%	Higher	Much lower	Lower
Value of services for taxes paid	24%	25%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Overall direction	22%	25%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Welcoming citizen involvement	24%	23%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Confidence in City government	19%	23%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
Acting in the best interest of Battle Creek	24%	27%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Being honest	23%	30%	Higher	Much lower	Lower
Treating all residents fairly	21%	27%	Higher	Much lower	Lower
Services provided by the Federal Government	28%	31%	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark	
		2015	2018		2015	2018
Safety	Police	52%	65%	Higher	Lower	Lower
	Fire	76%	82%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	72%	72%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Crime prevention	33%	36%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
	Fire prevention	56%	59%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Animal control	38%	39%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Emergency preparedness	40%	42%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	42%	47%	Similar	Lower	Lower

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark		
	2015	2018		2015	2018	
	Street repair	7%	14%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower
	Street cleaning	20%	27%	Higher	Much lower	Much lower
	Street lighting	35%	41%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Snow removal	34%	45%	Higher	Much lower	Lower
	Sidewalk maintenance	20%	26%	Higher	Much lower	Lower
	Traffic signal timing	26%	39%	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Bus or transit services	40%	43%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	69%	78%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Recycling	59%	75%	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	65%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Drinking water	42%	50%	Higher	Lower	Lower
	Natural areas preservation	39%	41%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Open space	31%	36%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Storm drainage	40%	46%	Higher	Lower	Lower
	Sewer services	53%	62%	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Power utility	58%	63%	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Utility billing	46%	59%	Higher	Lower	Similar
Built Environment	Land use, planning and zoning	25%	25%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Code enforcement	17%	20%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
	Cable television	33%	36%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Economy	Economic development	22%	24%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	50%	59%	Higher	Lower	Lower
	Recreation programs	42%	45%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Recreation centers	40%	42%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Health services	42%	44%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Special events	39%	40%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Public libraries	73%	77%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	45%	47%	Similar	Lower	Lower

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark	
	2015	2018		2015	2018
Sense of community	22%	24%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Recommend Battle Creek	48%	46%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower
Remain in Battle Creek	72%	66%	Lower	Lower	Lower
Contacted Battle Creek employees	42%	44%	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)		2018 rating compared to 2015	Comparison to benchmark	
		2015	2018		2015	2018
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	42%	34%	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Did NOT report a crime	65%	74%	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	80%	85%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	20%	17%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	34%	39%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	46%	47%	Similar	Lower	Lower
Natural Environment	Conserved water	75%	74%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	82%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recycled at home	73%	83%	Higher	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	34%	34%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
	NOT under housing cost stress	68%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Battle Creek	95%	95%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	26%	25%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Work in Battle Creek	59%	57%	Similar	Higher	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Battle Creek recreation centers	49%	46%	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Visited a City park	69%	72%	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	76%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	81%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	50%	43%	Lower	Similar	Lower
Education and Enrichment	Used Battle Creek public libraries	67%	61%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	42%	37%	Similar	Similar	Lower
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue or cause	24%	27%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Contacted Battle Creek elected officials	18%	18%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Volunteered	42%	41%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Participated in a club	28%	25%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	83%	89%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	80%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	16%	13%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	28%	29%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Read or watched local news	86%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Voted in local elections	79%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar