



**THE NCS**<sup>TM</sup>  
The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

## Denton, TX

Trends over Time

2018



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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 Denton to its previous survey results in 2015 and 2017. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Denton 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 nine percentage points between the 2017 and 2018 surveys, otherwise the comparisons between 2017 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.

It is important to note that in 2017, survey data were collected by a survey research firm other than NRC and data collection methods differed from those used in 2015 and 2018. In 2017, survey responses were collected online only and results were not weighted to population demographics; in 2015 and 2018, survey results were collected from a random sample of residents who received the survey in the mail and results were weighted to reflect the demographics of Denton as a whole. While all survey modes were self-administered, because the 2017 results were not weighted to reflect the entire adult (18 or older) population in Denton, any differences between the 2017 data and other survey years should be interpreted cautiously.

In some cases, questions that were asked in 2015 and 2018 were not included on the 2017 survey. In these cases (denoted with an asterisk in the tables below), trend data have been provided by comparing Denton's 2018 data to its 2015 data. Results from the 2018 community-wide open-participation online survey have also been included in the tables below in a separate column. These results have not been weighted to the demographics of Denton.

Overall, ratings in Denton for 2018 generally remained stable. Of the 134 items for which comparisons were available, 92 items were rated similarly in 2018 and the previous year, 17 items showed a decrease in ratings and 25 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Ratings improved for several aspects of Mobility, including traffic flow on major streets, ease of walking and ease of travel by public transportation, among others.
- Within Community Engagement, ratings for several measures of government performance increased, including the overall direction of the City, the job City government does at welcoming citizen involvement and overall confidence in City government. Residents in 2018 also gave more positive ratings to opportunities to participate in community matters and the openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds.
- Residents were more pleased with aspects of Built Environment in 2018 than previously, including overall quality of new development; variety of housing options; and land use, planning and zoning.
- Levels of Participation for many activities declined in 2018 when compared to 2017. Some of these activities included using Denton recreation centers or public libraries, visiting a City park, attending a City-sponsored event, attending or watching local public meetings and volunteering, among others. However, it is important to note that the change in survey methods from 2017 to 2018 has likely impacted some of these ratings changes; therefore, these declines should be interpreted with caution.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to previous year	Comparison to benchmark		
	2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
Overall quality of life	85%	80%	83%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall image	76%	76%	76%	73%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to live	89%	86%	86%	83%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Neighborhood	77%	82%	81%	80%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	81%	80%	79%	77%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to retire	69%	64%	58%	59%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall appearance	67%	66%	75%	60%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar

\*\*results not weighted

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
		2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	80%	78%	77%	73%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	93%	NA	94%	90%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	92%	NA	88%	89%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	58%	53%	59%	44%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Paths and walking trails	47%	40%	53%	35%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Ease of walking	52%	41%	63%	39%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	41%	32%	47%	26%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	44%	26%	51%	21%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Travel by car	45%	36%	44%	41%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Public parking	34%	24%	32%	21%	Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Traffic flow	27%	15%	26%	28%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Lower
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	71%	62%	62%	55%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Cleanliness	67%	59%	64%	54%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Air quality	56%	34%	71%	39%	Higher	Lower	Much lower	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	67%	53%	59%	41%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	New development in Denton	68%	58%	72%	60%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Affordable quality housing	48%	NA	43%	25%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Housing options	69%	46%	61%	43%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Public places	72%	76%	73%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Economy	Overall economic health	73%	64%	68%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	78%	81%	78%	80%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
		2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
	Business and services	74%	72%	78%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Cost of living	60%	49%	48%	51%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	62%	59%	63%	63%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Employment opportunities	48%	40%	55%	50%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	72%	73%	65%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to work	70%	62%	71%	61%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	72%	67%	67%	65%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Mental health care	58%	40%	64%	40%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Preventive health services	72%	63%	70%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Health care	73%	62%	66%	61%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Food	81%	78%	81%	76%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Higher
	Recreational opportunities	74%	67%	75%	67%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	76%	68%	72%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Education and enrichment opportunities	89%	83%	87%	83%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Higher
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	83%	85%	91%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Cultural/arts/music activities	87%	87%	86%	89%	Similar	Much higher	Much higher	Much higher
	Adult education	79%	76%	83%	79%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Higher
	K-12 education	68%	65%	63%	69%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Child care/preschool	44%	47%	44%	45%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Social events and activities	79%	81%	83%	81%	Similar	Higher	Higher	Higher
	Neighborliness	64%	66%	64%	63%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	64%	67%	81%	68%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	75%	73%	89%	80%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Opportunities to volunteer	81%	83%	83%	87%	Similar	Similar	Higher	Higher

\*Where data is missing for 2017, 2018 ratings have been compared to 2015

\*\*results not weighted

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
	2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
Services provided by Denton	78%	NA	83%	74%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
Customer service	73%	74%	73%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	53%	46%	50%	48%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall direction	69%	48%	64%	51%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Welcoming citizen involvement	58%	45%	62%	58%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
	2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
Confidence in City government	59%	37%	51%	46%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
Acting in the best interest of Denton	65%	39%	58%	47%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
Being honest	62%	42%	57%	45%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
Treating all residents fairly	55%	39%	59%	44%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
Services provided by the Federal Government	34%	NA	42%	31%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar

\*Where data is missing for 2017, 2018 ratings have been compared to 2015

\*\*results not weighted

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
		2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
Safety	Police	72%	78%	75%	79%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	90%	93%	92%	96%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	86%	91%	96%	95%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	69%	69%	61%	63%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire prevention	73%	80%	72%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Animal control	67%	66%	75%	67%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	66%	69%	72%	72%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Traffic enforcement	54%	55%	60%	52%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Street repair	21%	13%	19%	10%	Similar	Much lower	Much lower	Much lower
	Street cleaning	52%	46%	48%	41%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Street lighting	50%	NA	45%	47%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Snow removal	37%	NA	45%	48%	Similar*	Lower	NA	Lower
	Sidewalk maintenance	44%	27%	40%	22%	Higher	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	39%	29%	33%	29%	Similar	Similar	Lower	Lower
	Bus or transit services	68%	41%	60%	41%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Higher
	Garbage collection	89%	86%	92%	88%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Recycling	85%	86%	85%	87%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	81%	85%	83%	88%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Drinking water	85%	74%	74%	75%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	64%	62%	50%	45%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Open space	58%	56%	51%	44%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Storm drainage	61%	68%	65%	62%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Sewer services	88%	81%	81%	85%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Power utility	84%	75%	80%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Utility billing	77%	67%	73%	66%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
		2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
	Land use, planning and zoning	57%	34%	55%	35%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	51%	40%	47%	39%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cable television	64%	NA	59%	44%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
Economy	Economic development	62%	52%	63%	58%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
	City parks	89%	83%	85%	88%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation programs	80%	78%	72%	85%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recreation centers	81%	76%	68%	81%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health services	71%	65%	76%	69%	Higher	Similar	Similar	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Special events	85%	80%	77%	79%	Similar	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Public libraries	90%	92%	95%	93%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	72%	73%	78%	72%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar

\*Where data is missing for 2017, 2018 ratings have been compared to 2015

\*\*results not weighted

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark			
	2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018	
	Sense of community	68%	73%	73%	69%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Recommend Denton	89%	84%	89%	82%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Remain in Denton	84%	82%	76%	85%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Contacted Denton employees	52%	NA	52%	62%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar

\*Where data is missing for 2017, 2018 ratings have been compared to 2015

\*\*results not weighted

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
		2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
	Stocked supplies for an emergency	38%	NA	22%	31%	Lower*	Similar	NA	Lower
	Did NOT report a crime	80%	NA	86%	75%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
Safety	Was NOT the victim of a crime	86%	NA	89%	87%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Used public transportation instead of driving	27%	31%	30%	29%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	48%	52%	50%	52%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Walked or biked instead of driving	55%	54%	55%	46%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Conserved water	86%	NA	88%	87%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
Natural Environment	Made home more energy efficient	75%	NA	66%	72%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				2018 rating compared to previous year*	Comparison to benchmark		
		2015	2017	2018	2018 opt-in rating**		2015	2017	2018
Built Environment	Recycled at home	81%	NA	82%	95%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Did NOT observe a code violation	48%	NA	41%	34%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Lower
	NOT under housing cost stress	69%	73%	61%	N/A	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Denton	97%	NA	99%	99%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	35%	NA	36%	32%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Work in Denton	57%	NA	59%	59%	Similar*	Higher	NA	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Used Denton recreation centers	59%	64%	41%	54%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Lower
	Visited a City park	87%	90%	79%	85%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	78%	NA	70%	80%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Lower
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	86%	NA	72%	83%	Lower*	Similar	NA	Lower
	In very good to excellent health	55%	NA	52%	58%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Denton public libraries	68%	75%	53%	69%	Lower	Similar	Higher	Lower
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	53%	54%	41%	47%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	62%	81%	52%	76%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	30%	NA	20%	50%	Lower*	Similar	NA	Similar
Community Engagement	Contacted Denton elected officials	19%	NA	13%	37%	Similar*	Similar	NA	Similar
	Volunteered	43%	63%	37%	59%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Participated in a club	32%	43%	31%	39%	Lower	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	91%	92%	89%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	75%	85%	75%	78%	Lower	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	21%	46%	20%	41%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	22%	45%	16%	41%	Lower	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Read or watched local news	82%	NA	67%	90%	Lower*	Similar	NA	Lower
	Voted in local elections	76%	NA	60%	89%	Lower*	Similar	NA	Much lower

\*Where data is missing for 2017, 2018 ratings have been compared to 2015

\*\*results not weighted