

The National Citizen Survey™

Duluth, MN

2014

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 Duluth to its previous survey results in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Duluth 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 2013 and 2014 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2013 and 2014 are noted as being “similar.”

Overall, ratings in Duluth for 2014 generally remained stable. Of the 83 items for which comparisons were available, 52 items were rated similarly in 2013 and 2014, five items showed a decrease in ratings and 26 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- Under General Community Characteristics, Duluth received higher ratings for its overall appearance and image in 2014 compared to 2013. Other Community Characteristics that improved during this time were spread over nearly every facet and included the feeling of safety in the downtown/commercial area, ease of walking, travel by car, traffic flow, cleanliness, new development, business and services, employment opportunities, preventive health services, health care, cultural/arts/music activities, K-12 education and child care/preschool.
- Of the six characteristics of General Governance that could be compared, half received similar ratings in 2014 as in 2013, while half improved, including the value of services for taxes paid, the overall direction of the city and welcoming citizen involvement. The quality of bus or transit services was the only service that received lower ratings in 2014 than in 2013. Seven other services across six facets received higher ratings in 2014 relative to 2013: crime prevention, street repair, storm drainage, land use, planning and zoning, code enforcement, economic development and recreation centers.
- Most measures in the pillar of Participation were similar between 2013 and 2014 surveys, however one measure rose and four measures, mostly in the facet of Community Engagement, declined during this time. Fewer residents reported participating in religious or spiritual activities, attending local public meetings, watching local public meetings and voting in local elections in 2014 compared to 2013. The number of residents who felt that the economy would have a positive impact on their income rose in 2014 compared to 2013.

Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2013
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Overall quality of life	68%	72%	73%	78%	79%	83%	Similar
Overall image	58%	65%	68%	72%	69%	78%	Higher
Place to live	78%	81%	80%	87%	85%	85%	Similar
Neighborhood	72%	70%	72%	70%	71%	74%	Similar
Place to raise children	73%	74%	74%	80%	76%	76%	Similar
Place to retire	55%	55%	53%	64%	59%	59%	Similar
Overall appearance	47%	55%	58%	60%	51%	72%	Higher

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2014 rating compared to 2013
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	70%	NA
	Safe in neighborhood	92%	92%	94%	93%	89%	92%	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	73%	72%	75%	75%	64%	73%	Higher
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	75%	NA
	Paths and walking trails	67%	74%	75%	77%	79%	85%	Similar
	Ease of walking	59%	61%	60%	67%	65%	74%	Higher
	Travel by bicycle	42%	41%	44%	43%	49%	53%	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	53%	NA
	Travel by car	53%	56%	53%	66%	60%	72%	Higher
	Public parking	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	36%	NA
	Traffic flow	48%	55%	49%	54%	63%	70%	Higher
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	82%	82%	84%	86%	89%	90%	Similar
	Cleanliness	43%	50%	55%	58%	52%	69%	Higher
	Air quality	79%	81%	83%	83%	87%	92%	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	63%	NA
	New development in Duluth	31%	39%	44%	42%	43%	62%	Higher
	Affordable quality housing	30%	39%	33%	31%	31%	27%	Similar
	Housing options	43%	48%	43%	39%	37%	38%	Similar
	Public places	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	82%	NA
	Overall economic health	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	45%	NA
Economy	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	47%	NA
	Business and services	51%	58%	59%	59%	58%	66%	Higher
	Cost of living	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	43%	NA
	Shopping opportunities	54%	58%	64%	62%	61%	67%	Similar
	Employment opportunities	14%	13%	20%	23%	25%	37%	Higher
	Place to visit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	92%	NA
	Place to work	37%	39%	49%	51%	52%	58%	Similar
	Health and wellness	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	83%	NA
	Mental health care	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	66%	NA
	Preventive health services	65%	65%	69%	68%	73%	82%	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	Health care	54%	57%	59%	61%	62%	75%	Higher
	Food	68%	67%	68%	68%	70%	71%	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	70%	68%	76%	74%	82%	85%	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	85%	NA
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	82%	81%	81%	79%	81%	87%	Similar
	Cultural/arts/music activities	NA	NA	64%	63%	64%	82%	Higher
Education and Enrichment	K-12 education	49%	49%	56%	54%	56%	62%	Higher
	Child care/preschool	32%	42%	37%	43%	35%	54%	Higher
	Social events and activities	61%	65%	66%	72%	73%	77%	Similar
Community Engagement	Neighborhood	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58%	NA

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	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)						2014 rating compared to 2013
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Openness and acceptance	45%	37%	46%	44%	44%	46%	Similar
Opportunities to participate in community matters	69%	64%	63%	64%	71%	71%	Similar
Opportunities to volunteer	85%	83%	86%	85%	86%	85%	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2013
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Services provided by Duluth	49%	56%	68%	67%	62%	68%	Similar
Customer service	68%	64%	67%	69%	72%	71%	Similar
Value of services for taxes paid	28%	34%	45%	40%	37%	44%	Higher
Overall direction	33%	43%	51%	56%	47%	67%	Higher
Welcoming citizen involvement	42%	50%	52%	56%	50%	59%	Higher
Confidence in City government	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	55%	NA
Acting in the best interest of Duluth	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	58%	NA
Being honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	60%	NA
Treating all residents fairly	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	57%	NA
Services provided by the Federal Government	37%	40%	46%	42%	39%	41%	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)						2014 rating compared to 2013	
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		
Safety	Police	79%	74%	78%	78%	82%	81%	Similar
	Fire	92%	89%	90%	93%	95%	93%	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	90%	88%	85%	89%	92%	87%	Similar
	Crime prevention	56%	54%	60%	56%	50%	67%	Higher
	Fire prevention	76%	73%	75%	75%	76%	81%	Similar
	Animal control	53%	54%	54%	56%	60%	60%	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	57%	61%	60%	66%	60%	63%	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	60%	56%	61%	55%	62%	67%	Similar
	Street repair	2%	8%	11%	17%	6%	13%	Higher
	Street cleaning	22%	32%	37%	50%	41%	38%	Similar
	Street lighting	41%	42%	48%	49%	54%	55%	Similar
	Snow removal	48%	53%	64%	63%	57%	58%	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	19%	23%	29%	31%	29%	30%	Similar
	Bus or transit services	73%	75%	70%	69%	76%	68%	Lower
Natural Environment	Drinking water	87%	89%	87%	89%	87%	90%	Similar
	Natural areas preservation	57%	59%	63%	66%	66%	70%	Similar
	Open space	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	71%	NA
Built Environment	Storm drainage	33%	46%	53%	57%	46%	55%	Higher
	Sewer services	63%	67%	69%	73%	71%	77%	Similar
	Power utility	73%	72%	76%	83%	79%	80%	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	26%	29%	39%	37%	34%	49%	Higher
	Code enforcement	18%	20%	25%	24%	22%	33%	Higher
Economy	Economic development	21%	24%	31%	32%	33%	50%	Higher
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	70%	78%	80%	81%	83%	83%	Similar
	Recreation centers	50%	59%	61%	58%	63%	71%	Higher
Education and Enrichment	Public libraries	60%	61%	66%	82%	81%	81%	Similar

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2014 rating compared to 2013
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Sense of community	53%	56%	61%	63%	63%	62%	Similar
Recommend Duluth	75%	80%	81%	84%	84%	83%	Similar
Remain in Duluth	78%	76%	75%	84%	86%	84%	Similar
Contacted Duluth employees	59%	52%	51%	43%	49%	48%	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)						2014 rating compared to 2013
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Safety	Did NOT report a crime	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	74%	NA
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	83%	84%	82%	82%	86%	80%	Similar
Mobility	Used public transportation instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	32%	NA
	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	54%	NA
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	NA
Natural Environment	Made home more energy efficient	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	63%	NA
Built Environment	Recycled at home	94%	94%	96%	97%	96%	97%	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	66%	67%	69%	68%	72%	70%	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Duluth	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	98%	NA
	Economy will have positive impact on income	7%	13%	13%	19%	20%	34%	Higher
	Work in Duluth	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	NA
Recreation and Wellness	Used Duluth recreation centers	61%	59%	61%	64%	65%	69%	Similar
	Visited a City park	92%	92%	90%	93%	92%	90%	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	82%	NA
Recreation and Wellness	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	88%	NA
	In very good to excellent health	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	65%	NA
Education and Enrichment	Used Duluth public libraries	71%	70%	69%	72%	64%	62%	Similar
	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	63%	64%	59%	59%	60%	46%	Lower
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	26%	NA
	Contacted Duluth elected officials	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	20%	NA
	Volunteered	61%	65%	66%	65%	63%	57%	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	92%	NA
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	81%	NA
	Attended a local public meeting	34%	33%	30%	32%	35%	21%	Lower
	Watched a local public meeting	54%	52%	48%	50%	51%	31%	Lower
	Read or watched local news	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	87%	NA
	Voted in local elections	90%	81%	77%	76%	92%	86%	Lower

Special Topics

In 2014 the City of Duluth included four questions of special interest on The NCS.

Figure 1: Public Approval for Mayor and City Council

Please indicate your level of approval or disapproval with each of the following:

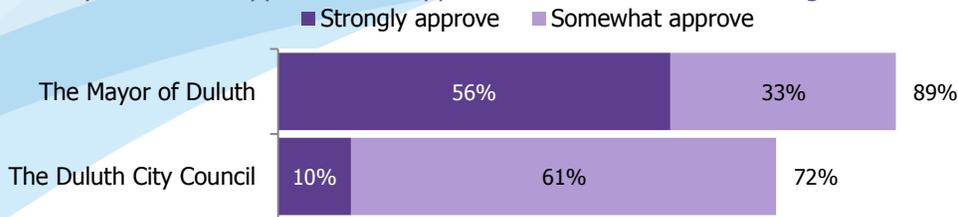


Figure 2: St. Louis River Corridor

The City is committed to investing tourism tax dollars to create a collection of outdoor recreation and environmental learning opportunities along the St. Louis River Corridor in West Duluth. Please indicate how important, if at all, it is for the City to invest in each of the following elements:

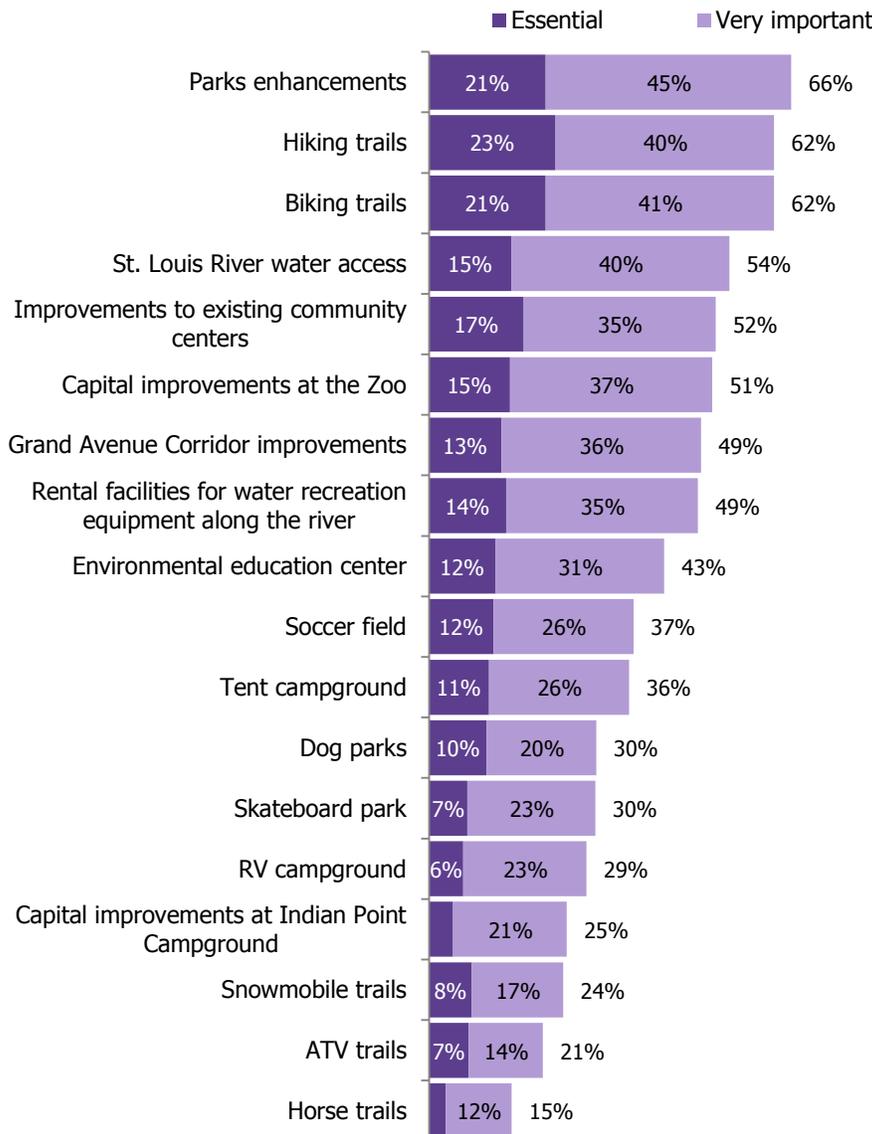


Figure 3: Visits to Lake Superior Zoo

In the last 12 months, about how many times, if at all, have you or other household members visited the Lake Superior Zoo?

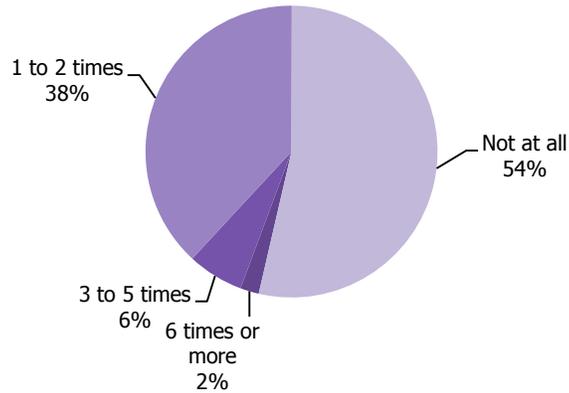


Figure 4: Improvements to Zoo Grounds

The City wishes to increase the community's utilization of the zoo and the surrounding grounds by making select improvements. Please indicate how important, if at all, each of the following improvements would be for a family-friendly recreation experience:

