

The National Citizen Survey™

Clearwater, FL

Trends over Time

2014

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The National Citizen Survey™
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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 Clearwater to its previous survey results in 2008. Additional reports and technical appendices are available under separate cover.

Trend data for Clearwater 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 five percentage points between the 2008 and 2014 surveys, otherwise the comparison between 2008 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, the majority of ratings in Clearwater for 2014 remained stable. Of the 82 items for which comparisons were available, 45 items were rated similarly in 2008 and 2014, 15 items showed a decrease in ratings and 22 showed an increase in ratings. Notable trends over time included the following:

- In 2014, Clearwater received higher ratings than in 2008 for its overall appearance, overall image, as a place to raise children and as a place to retire. Similarly, more residents in 2014 said they would recommend Clearwater and planned to remain there.
- Of the 22 items that had higher ratings in 2014 compared to 2008, 14 were Community Characteristics, mostly in the facets of General Community Characteristics, Natural Environment, Recreation and Wellness and Built Environment.
- Within the pillar of Governance, residents rated the overall services provided by Clearwater more positively in 2014 than in 2008. In contrast, eight of the 15 items that residents rated less positively in 2014 were in the pillar of Governance, mainly in the facet of Mobility.

Table 1: Community Characteristics General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)		2014 rating compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark	
	2008	2014		2008	2014
Overall quality of life	75%	78%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Overall image	67%	72%	Higher	Similar	Similar
Place to live	83%	85%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Neighborhood	76%	74%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Place to raise children	60%	68%	Higher	Much lower	Similar
Place to retire	67%	75%	Higher	Higher	Similar
Overall appearance	67%	72%	Higher	Similar	Similar

Table 2: Community Characteristics by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)		2014 rating compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark	
		2008	2014		2008	2014
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	NA	69%	NA	NA	Similar
	Safe in neighborhood	92%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Safe downtown/commercial area	77%	68%	Lower	Lower	Lower
Mobility	Overall ease of travel	NA	57%	NA	NA	Lower
	Paths and walking trails	65%	65%	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Ease of walking	51%	56%	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Travel by bicycle	44%	48%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Travel by public transportation	NA	33%	NA	NA	Lower
	Travel by car	42%	43%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
	Public parking	NA	35%	NA	NA	Lower
	Traffic flow	29%	29%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	61%	73%	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Cleanliness	64%	71%	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Air quality	59%	72%	Higher	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Overall built environment	NA	52%	NA	NA	Similar
	New development in Clearwater	50%	40%	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Affordable quality housing	29%	46%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Housing options	55%	61%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Public places	NA	64%	NA	NA	Similar
Economy	Overall economic health	NA	54%	NA	NA	Similar
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	NA	30%	NA	NA	Lower
	Business and services	60%	59%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cost of living	NA	41%	NA	NA	Similar
	Shopping opportunities	75%	76%	Similar	Much higher	Higher
	Employment opportunities	34%	35%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Place to visit	NA	88%	NA	NA	Higher
	Place to work	50%	58%	Higher	Lower	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Health and wellness	NA	74%	NA	NA	Similar
	Mental health care	NA	50%	NA	NA	Similar
	Preventive health services	51%	63%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Health care	46%	64%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Food	59%	69%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Recreational opportunities	74%	74%	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Fitness opportunities	NA	74%	NA	NA	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Cultural/arts/music activities	62%	66%	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Adult education	NA	59%	NA	NA	Similar
	K-12 education	54%	51%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
Community Engagement	Child care/preschool	34%	54%	Higher	Lower	Similar
	Social events and activities	61%	57%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Neighborliness	NA	52%	NA	NA	Similar
	Openness and acceptance	56%	57%	Similar	Similar	Similar

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		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)		2014 rating compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark	
		2008	2014		2008	2014
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	59%	58%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Opportunities to volunteer	76%	72%	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 3: Governance General

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)		2014 rating compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark	
		2008	2014		2008	2014
	Services provided by Clearwater	70%	75%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Customer service	75%	71%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Value of services for taxes paid	48%	48%	Similar	Much lower	Similar
	Overall direction	47%	50%	Similar	Much lower	Similar
	Welcoming citizen involvement	43%	46%	Similar	Much lower	Similar
	Confidence in City government	NA	44%	NA	NA	Similar
	Acting in the best interest of Clearwater	NA	47%	NA	NA	Similar
	Being honest	NA	49%	NA	NA	Similar
	Treating all residents fairly	NA	45%	NA	NA	Similar
	Services provided by the Federal Government	40%	40%	Similar	Similar	Similar

Table 4: Governance by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)		2014 rating compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark	
		2008	2014		2008	2014
Safety	Police	76%	76%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire	92%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Ambulance/EMS	88%	90%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Crime prevention	59%	60%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Fire prevention	70%	67%	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Emergency preparedness	73%	73%	Similar	Much higher	Similar
Mobility	Traffic enforcement	59%	55%	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Street repair	51%	40%	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Street cleaning	63%	58%	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Sidewalk maintenance	57%	53%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Traffic signal timing	42%	35%	Lower	Lower	Lower
	Bus or transit services	55%	50%	Lower	Similar	Similar
Natural Environment	Garbage collection	89%	84%	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Recycling	77%	84%	Higher	Higher	Similar
	Yard waste pick-up	79%	82%	Similar	Much higher	Similar
	Drinking water	50%	52%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
	Open space	NA	53%	NA	NA	Similar
	Storm drainage	60%	67%	Higher	Higher	Similar
Built Environment	Sewer services	69%	72%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Power utility	NA	75%	NA	NA	Similar
	Utility billing	NA	60%	NA	NA	Similar
	Land use, planning and zoning	38%	43%	Higher	Similar	Similar
	Code enforcement	42%	37%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Cable television	68%	55%	Lower	Much higher	Similar
Economy	Economic development	36%	40%	Similar	Lower	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	City parks	82%	76%	Lower	Higher	Similar
	Recreation programs	74%	76%	Similar	Higher	Similar
	Recreation centers	76%	77%	Similar	Higher	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Special events	NA	66%	NA	NA	Similar
	Public libraries	88%	81%	Lower	Higher	Similar
Community Engagement	Public information	71%	63%	Lower	Higher	Similar

Table 5: Participation General

	Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)		2014 rating compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark	
	2008	2014		2008	2014
Sense of community	47%	49%	Similar	Much lower	Lower
Recommend Clearwater	70%	85%	Higher	Similar	Similar
Remain in Clearwater	76%	83%	Higher	Similar	Similar
Contacted Clearwater employees	53%	40%	Lower	Much lower	Similar

Table 6: Participation by Facet

		Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)		2014 rating compared to 2008	Comparison to benchmark	
		2008	2014		2008	2014
Safety	Stocked supplies for an emergency	NA	57%	NA	NA	Much higher
	Did NOT report a crime	NA	74%	NA	NA	Similar
	Was NOT the victim of a crime	84%	87%	Similar	Similar	Similar
Mobility	Carpooled instead of driving alone	NA	38%	NA	NA	Similar
	Walked or biked instead of driving	NA	58%	NA	NA	Similar
Natural Environment	Conserved water	NA	88%	NA	NA	Similar
	Made home more energy efficient	NA	80%	NA	NA	Similar
	Recycled at home	80%	85%	Higher	Similar	Similar
Built Environment	Did NOT observe a code violation	NA	47%	NA	NA	Similar
	NOT under housing cost stress	NA	67%	NA	NA	Similar
Economy	Purchased goods or services in Clearwater	NA	96%	NA	NA	Similar
	Economy will have positive impact on income	10%	24%	Higher	Much lower	Similar
	Work in Clearwater	NA	43%	NA	NA	Similar
Recreation and Wellness	Used Clearwater recreation centers	55%	58%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Visited a City park	86%	79%	Lower	Similar	Similar
	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	NA	83%	NA	NA	Similar
	Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	NA	88%	NA	NA	Similar
	In very good to excellent health	NA	61%	NA	NA	Similar
Education and Enrichment	Used Clearwater public libraries	76%	64%	Lower	Higher	Similar
	Attended a City-sponsored event	NA	47%	NA	NA	Similar
Community Engagement	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	NA	22%	NA	NA	Similar
	Contacted Clearwater elected officials	NA	15%	NA	NA	Similar
	Volunteered	38%	40%	Similar	Lower	Similar
	Participated in a club	32%	27%	Similar	Similar	Similar
	Talked to or visited with neighbors	NA	92%	NA	NA	Similar
	Done a favor for a neighbor	NA	83%	NA	NA	Similar
	Attended a local public meeting	24%	14%	Lower	Lower	Similar
	Watched a local public meeting	56%	31%	Lower	Much higher	Similar
	Read or watched local news	NA	90%	NA	NA	Similar
	Voted in local elections	NA	82%	NA	NA	Similar