

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

## Urbandale, IA

Dashboard Summary of Findings

2016



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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 summarizes Urbandale’s performance in the eight facets of community livability with the “General” rating as a summary of results from the overarching questions not shown within any of the eight facets. The “Overall” represents the community pillar in its entirety (the eight facets and general).

By summarizing resident ratings across the eight facets and three pillars of a livable community, a picture of Urbandale’s community livability emerges. Below, the color of each community facet summarizes how residents rated each of the pillars that support it – Community Characteristics, Governance and Participation. When most ratings were higher than the benchmark, the color is the darkest shade; when most ratings were lower than the benchmark, the color is the lightest shade. A mix of ratings (higher and lower than the benchmark) results in a color between the extremes.

A majority of aspects in the pillars of Community Characteristics and Governance were rated higher in Urbandale than in comparison communities. Within Community Characteristics, ratings for the facets of Mobility, Natural Environment, Built Environment, Economy, Recreation and Wellness and general Community Characteristics were higher than ratings seen elsewhere. Ratings in Governance were similarly strong: all facets except for general aspects of Governance and Recreation and Wellness were higher than the national benchmark comparisons. Levels of participation in Mobility, Built Environment and General participation also tended to be higher in Urbandale than in other communities nationwide.

Figure 1: Dashboard Summary

	Community Characteristics			Governance			Participation		
	Higher	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Lower
Overall	34	17	0	32	12	0	6	24	6
General	7	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	0
Safety	1	2	0	5	2	0	1	1	1
Mobility	6	1	0	6	2	0	0	1	2
Natural Environment	3	0	0	5	1	0	0	2	1
Built Environment	5	0	0	5	1	0	2	0	0
Economy	4	4	0	1	0	0	0	2	1
Recreation and Wellness	6	1	0	1	2	0	0	5	0
Education and Enrichment	1	5	0	1	1	0	0	3	0
Community Engagement	1	4	0	7	1	0	1	9	1

Legend	Comparison to National Benchmark
	Higher
	Similar
	Lower

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Figure 2: Detailed Dashboard

	<b>Community Characteristics</b>	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	<b>Governance</b>	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	<b>Participation</b>	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive
General	Overall appearance	↔	↑	92%	Customer service	↔	↔	89%	Recommend Urbandale	↔	↑	96%
	Overall quality of life	↔	↑	94%	Services provided by Urbandale	↔	↑	91%	Remain in Urbandale	↔	↑	96%
	Place to retire	↔	↑	83%	Services provided by the Federal Government	↑	↔	51%	Contacted Urbandale employees	↔	↔	44%
	Place to raise children	↔	↑	96%								
	Place to live	↔	↑	97%								
	Neighborhood	↔	↑	94%								
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	↔	↑	96%	Police	↔	↑	95%	Was NOT the victim of a crime	↔	↔	94%
	Safe in neighborhood	↔	↔	98%	Crime prevention	↔	↑	92%	Did NOT report a crime	↔	↑	88%
	Safe downtown/commercial area	↔	↔	95%	Fire	↔	↔	98%	Stocked supplies for an emergency	↔	↓	24%
					Fire prevention	↔	↑	94%				
					Ambulance/EMS	↔	↔	99%				
					Emergency preparedness	↔	↑	82%				
Mobility	Traffic flow	↔	↑	71%	Traffic enforcement	↔	↑	80%	Carpooled instead of driving alone	↔	↓	30%
	Travel by car	↔	↑	86%	Street repair	↔	↑	61%	Walked or biked instead of driving	↔	↔	52%
	Travel by bicycle	↔	↑	76%	Street cleaning	↔	↔	77%	Used public transportation instead of driving	↔	↓↓	6%
	Ease of walking	↔	↑	87%	Street lighting	↔	↑	79%				
	Travel by public transportation	↔	↔	44%	Snow removal	↑	↑	85%				
	Overall ease travel	↔	↑	91%	Sidewalk maintenance	↔	↑	70%				
	Paths and walking trails	↔	↑↑	93%	Traffic signal timing	↔	↔	62%				
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	↔	↑	92%	Bus or transit services	↑	↑	67%	Recycled at home	↔	↔	92%
	Air quality	↔	↑	95%	Garbage collection	↔	↑	97%	Conserved water	↓	↓	70%
	Cleanliness	↔	↑	95%	Recycling	↔	↑	93%	Made home more energy efficient	↔	↔	77%
					Yard waste pick-up	↔	↑	93%				
					Drinking water	↔	↔	86%				
Built Environment	New development in Urbandale	↔	↑	75%	Open space	↔	↑	78%	NOT experiencing housing cost stress	↔	↑	83%
	Affordable quality housing	↔	↑↑	74%	Natural areas preservation	↑	↑	78%	Did NOT observe a code violation	↔	↑	69%
	Housing options	↔	↑	81%	Sewer services	↔	↔	88%				
	Overall built environment	↔	↑	86%	Storm drainage	↔	↑	80%				
	Public places	↔	↑	85%	Power utility	↔	↑	93%				
					Utility billing	↔	↑	89%				
				Land use, planning and zoning	↔	↑	75%					
				Code enforcement	↔	↑	68%					

**Legend**

↑↑ Much higher    ↑ Higher    ↔ Similar    ↓ Lower    ↓↓ Much lower    \* Not available

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	<b>Community Characteristics</b>	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	<b>Governance</b>	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	<b>Participation</b>	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive
Economy	Overall economic health	↔	↑	89%	Economic development	↔	↑	78%	Economy will have positive impact on income	↔	↔	26%
	Shopping opportunities	↔	↔	65%					Purchased goods or services in Urbandale	↔	↔	96%
	Employment opportunities	↔	↑	64%					Work in Urbandale	↔	↓	26%
	Place to visit	↔	↔	71%								
	Cost of living	↔	↑	72%								
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	↔	↔	41%								
	Place to work	↔	↑	83%								
Recreation and Wellness	Business and services	↔	↔	81%								
	Fitness opportunities	↔	↑	82%	City parks	↔	↑	94%	In very good to excellent health	↔	↔	70%
	Recreational opportunities	↔	↔	81%	Recreation centers	↑	↔	86%	Used Urbandale recreation centers	↑	↔	60%
	Health care	↔	↑	88%	Recreation programs	↑	↔	89%	Visited a City park	↑	↔	88%
	Food	↔	↑	87%					Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	↔	↔	83%
	Mental health care	↔	↑	68%					Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	↔	↔	84%
	Health and wellness	↔	↑	84%								
Education and Enrichment	Preventive health services	↔	↑	87%								
	K-12 education	↓	↔	84%	Public libraries	↔	↑	96%	Used Urbandale public libraries	↔	↔	68%
	Cultural/arts/music activities	↔	↔	56%	Special events	↑	↔	82%	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	↔	↔	40%
	Child care/preschool	↔	↑	75%					Attended a City-sponsored event	↔	↔	52%
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	↔	↔	81%								
	Adult education	↔	↔	72%								
Community Engagement	Overall education and enrichment	↔	↔	84%								
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	↔	↔	72%	Public information	↔	↑	85%	Sense of community	↔	↑	80%
	Opportunities to volunteer	↔	↔	76%	Overall direction	↔	↑	86%	Voted in local elections	↔	↔	89%
	Openness and acceptance	↔	↔	74%	Value of services for taxes paid	↔	↑	71%	Talked to or visited with neighbors	*	↔	91%
	Social events and activities	↔	↔	67%	Welcoming citizen involvement	↔	↔	68%	Attended a local public meeting	↔	↔	18%
	Neighborhoodliness	↔	↑	77%	Confidence in City government	↔	↑	78%	Watched a local public meeting	↔	↓	17%
					Acting in the best interest of Urbandale	↔	↑	82%	Volunteered	↑	↔	34%
					Being honest	↔	↑	83%	Participated in a club	↔	↔	25%
					Treating all residents fairly	↔	↑	76%	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	↔	↔	23%
									Contacted Urbandale elected officials	↔	↔	11%
								Read or watched local news	↔	↔	93%	
								Done a favor for a neighbor	*	↔	80%	

**Legend**

↑↑ Much higher    ↑ Higher    ↔ Similar    ↓ Lower    ↓↓ Much lower    \* Not available