

THE NCSTM
The National Citizen SurveyTM

Albert Lea, MN

Comparisons by Geographic Subgroups

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. Communities conducting The NCS can choose from a number of optional services to customize the reporting of survey results. Albert Lea’s Comparisons by Geographic Subgroups is part of a larger project for the City and additional reports are available under separate cover. This report discusses differences in opinion of survey respondents by City Ward.

Understanding the Tables

For most of the questions, one number appears for each question. Responses have been summarized to show only the proportion of respondents giving a certain answer; for example, the percent of respondents who rated the quality of life as “excellent” or “good,” or the percent of respondents who participated in an activity at least once. It should be noted that when a table that does include all responses (not a single number) for a question that only permitted a single response does not total to exactly 100%, it is due to the common practice of percentages being rounded to the nearest whole number.

The subgroup comparison tables contain the crosstabulations of survey questions by Ward. Chi-square or ANOVA tests of significance were applied to these breakdowns of survey questions. A “p-value” of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% probability that differences observed between groups are due to chance; or in other words, a greater than 95% probability that the differences observed in the selected categories of the sample represent “real” differences among those populations. As subgroups vary in size and each group (and each comparison to another group) has a unique margin of error, statistical testing is used to determine whether differences between subgroups are statistically significant. Statistical testing was not performed on multiple response questions.

Each column in the following tables is labeled with a letter for each subgroup being compared. The “Overall” column, which shows the ratings for all respondents, also has a column designation of “(A)”, but no statistical tests were done for the overall rating.

For each pair of subgroup ratings within a row (a single question item) that has a statistically significant difference, an upper case letter denoting significance is shown in the cell with the larger column proportion. The letter denotes the subgroup with the smaller column proportion from which it is statistically different. Subgroups that have no upper case letter denotation in their column and that are also not referred to in any other column were not statistically different.

For example, in Table A below, respondents in Districts 1 (A) and 2 (B) gave significantly lower ratings to overall quality of life than respondents in Districts 3 (C) and 4 (D), as denoted by the “A B” listed in the cell of the ratings for Districts 3 and 4. The overall quality of life rating in District 4 (D) also was significantly lower than that of District 3 (C) (as indicated by the “D” in the rating for District 3).

Figure 1: Community Characteristics – General (Example Only)

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	District				Overall (A)
	District 1 (A)	District 2 (B)	District 3 (C)	District 4 (D)	
The overall quality of life in ABC	73%	74%	79% A B D	76% A B	78%
Overall image or reputation of ABC	65%	66%	69% A B	71% A B C	70%
ABC as a place to live	80%	81%	85% A B D	82% A B	84%

Three sets of Wards were tracked for comparison and the number of completed surveys for each are in the figure below.

Figure 2: Geographic Areas

Ward	Number of Completed Surveys
Wards 1 & 4	208
Wards 2 & 3	163
Wards 5 & 6	122

Findings

Notable differences between Ward included the following:

- Overall, across the pillars of Community Characteristics and Governance residents who lived in Ward 1 & 4 awarded higher ratings when differences were significant, including their neighborhoods as places to live, cost of living, K-12 education, opportunities to volunteer, crime prevention, recycling and public library services. Those who lived in Wards 1 & 4 volunteered and voted at higher levels and were less likely to report or be the victim of a crime, but indicated lower rates of using public transit in place of driving alone.
- Ward 5 & 6 respondents were more critical of the overall feeling of safety, Albert Lea as a place to work, opportunities to participate in social events or community matters and snow removal, among others, when compared to residents in other wards. These survey participants also engaged in religious or spiritual activities or attended City-sponsored events at lower rates than other Albert Lea residents.
- When differences were noted, Ward 5 & 6 respondents were less likely to express satisfaction with the amount of festivals, recreational opportunities and entertainment venues compared to their counterparts.

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Table 1: Community Characteristics - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
The overall quality of life in Albert Lea	64% C	65% C	52%	61%
Overall image or reputation of Albert Lea	46%	53% C	41%	46%
Albert Lea as a place to live	71% C	65%	57%	65%
Your neighborhood as a place to live	85% B C	69% C	45%	67%
Albert Lea as a place to raise children	74% B C	60%	55%	63%
Albert Lea as a place to retire	67% B	55%	69% B	64%
Overall appearance of Albert Lea	71%	68%	62%	67%

Table 2: Community Characteristics - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Overall feeling of safety in Albert Lea	76% C	71% C	59%	69%
In your neighborhood during the day	95% C	94% C	78%	89%
In Albert Lea's downtown/commercial area during the day	94%	91%	91%	92%

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Table 3: Community Characteristics - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	80%	82%	77%	80%
Traffic flow on major streets	72%	72%	71%	72%
Ease of public parking	68%	69%	60%	66%
Ease of travel by car in Albert Lea	77%	81%	80%	79%
Ease of travel by public transportation in Albert Lea	51%	45%	46%	47%
Ease of travel by bicycle in Albert Lea	74%	71%	68%	71%
Ease of walking in Albert Lea	82% C	79%	70%	77%
Availability of paths and walking trails	85% C	84% C	72%	81%

Table 4: Community Characteristics - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Quality of overall natural environment in Albert Lea	80%	74%	79%	77%
Air quality	88% B C	79%	75%	81%
Cleanliness of Albert Lea	78% B C	63%	62%	68%

Table 5: Community Characteristics - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Overall "built environment" of Albert Lea (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	60%	59%	60%	60%
Public places where people want to spend time	75% B C	62%	56%	64%
Variety of housing options	37%	33%	34%	34%
Availability of affordable quality housing	31%	28%	31%	30%
Overall quality of new development in Albert Lea	27%	36% C	25%	29%

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Table 6: Community Characteristics - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Overall economic health of Albert Lea	31%	27%	32%	30%
Albert Lea as a place to work	47% C	45% C	32%	42%
Albert Lea as a place to visit	49%	47%	48%	48%
Employment opportunities	29%	40% A C	24%	31%
Shopping opportunities	16%	15%	22%	18%
Cost of living in Albert Lea	53% B C	33%	38%	41%
Overall quality of business and service establishments in Albert Lea	48% B C	34%	34%	39%
Vibrant downtown/commercial area	41%	44%	35%	40%

Table 7: Community Characteristics - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Health and wellness opportunities in Albert Lea	62%	57%	52%	57%
Fitness opportunities (including exercise classes and paths or trails, etc.)	80%	82%	73%	79%
Recreational opportunities	67%	68%	60%	65%
Availability of affordable quality food	61%	51%	57%	56%
Availability of affordable quality health care	29%	32%	36%	32%
Availability of preventive health services	37%	36%	39%	37%
Availability of affordable quality mental health care	30%	29%	31%	30%

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Table 8: Community Characteristics - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall (A)
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	58%	50%	48%	52%
Availability of affordable quality child care/preschool	43%	43%	41%	42%
K-12 education	76% B C	62%	53%	64%
Adult educational opportunities	59% C	52%	43%	52%
Opportunities to attend cultural/arts/music activities	57%	50%	46%	52%
Opportunities to participate in religious or spiritual events and activities	76% C	84% C	58%	73%

Table 9: Community Characteristics - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good, very/somewhat safe)	Ward			Overall (A)
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Opportunities to participate in social events and activities	50% C	56% C	34%	47%
Opportunities to volunteer	77% B C	64% C	41%	62%
Opportunities to participate in community matters	67% C	59% C	41%	56%
Openness and acceptance of the community toward people of diverse backgrounds	35%	46%	43%	41%
Neighborliness of residents in Albert Lea	62% C	53% C	35%	50%

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Table 10: Governance - General

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
The City of Albert Lea	66%	65%	69%	67%
The value of services for the taxes paid to Albert Lea	50% B	35%	49% B	44%
The overall direction that Albert Lea is taking	37%	37%	30%	35%
The job Albert Lea government does at welcoming citizen involvement	44% C	48% C	27%	40%
Overall confidence in Albert Lea government	34%	36%	32%	34%
Generally acting in the best interest of the community	43%	38%	35%	38%
Being honest	50% C	44% C	32%	42%
Treating all residents fairly	47% C	42%	32%	40%
Overall customer service by Albert Lea employees (police, fire, recreation, receptionists, inspections, administration, etc.)	76%	72%	73%	74%
The Federal Government	62%	53%	71% B	61%
Freeborn County	66%	60%	65%	64%

Table 11: Governance - Safety

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Police services	81%	84% C	74%	80%
Fire services	94%	94%	90%	93%
Ambulance or emergency medical services	80%	76%	79%	79%
Crime prevention	72% B C	56%	54%	61%
Fire prevention and education	86% C	80%	71%	79%
Animal control	51%	49%	42%	47%
Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations)	66% B C	54%	52%	58%

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Table 12: Governance - Mobility

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Traffic enforcement	64%	57%	55%	59%
Street repair	27%	28%	31%	29%
Street cleaning	56%	46%	54%	52%
Street lighting	66% C	62%	54%	61%
Snow removal	63% C	61% C	47%	58%
Sidewalk maintenance	53%	51%	60%	55%
Traffic signal timing	50%	55%	53%	53%

Table 13: Governance - Natural Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Garbage collection	89%	87%	82%	86%
Recycling	92% B C	84%	84%	87%
Drinking water	78% C	71%	63%	71%
Preservation of natural areas such as open space, farmlands and greenbelts	61% C	62% C	45%	57%
Albert Lea open space	58%	53%	53%	55%

Table 14: Governance - Built Environment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Storm drainage	55%	54%	55%	55%
Sewer services	78%	73%	69%	74%
Power (electric and/or gas) utility	86% C	84%	77%	83%
Utility billing	79% B C	67%	62%	70%
Land use, planning and zoning	47% C	37%	31%	38%
Code enforcement (weeds, abandoned buildings, etc.)	32%	31%	26%	30%
Cable television	42%	36%	48%	41%

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Table 15: Governance - Economy

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Economic development	25%	34% C	21%	27%

Table 16: Governance - Recreation and Wellness

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
City parks	89%	87%	82%	86%
Recreation programs or classes	78% B C	64%	60%	68%
Recreation centers or facilities	70% C	60%	54%	61%
Health services	41%	35%	34%	36%

Table 17: Governance - Education and Enrichment

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Public library services	88% B C	77%	77%	81%
City-sponsored special events	67% C	66% C	52%	63%

Table 18: Governance - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., excellent/good)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Public information services	65%	57%	60%	61%

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Table 19: Participation General

	Ward			Overall (A)
	Wards 1 & 4 (A)	Wards 2 & 3 (B)	Wards 5 & 6 (C)	
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
Sense of community	58% C	51%	42%	50%
Recommend living in Albert Lea to someone who asks	74% C	69% C	57%	67%
Remain in Albert Lea for the next five years	85%	80%	84%	83%
Contacted the City of Albert Lea (in-person, phone, email or web) for help or information	37%	43%	35%	39%

Table 20: Participation - Safety

	Ward			Overall (A)
	Wards 1 & 4 (A)	Wards 2 & 3 (B)	Wards 5 & 6 (C)	
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
Was NOT the victim of a crime	92% B C	81%	82%	85%
Did NOT report a crime	86% B C	68%	69%	74%
Stocked supplies in preparation for an emergency	28%	29%	30%	29%

Table 21: Participation - Mobility

	Ward			Overall (A)
	Wards 1 & 4 (A)	Wards 2 & 3 (B)	Wards 5 & 6 (C)	
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
Walked or biked instead of driving	61%	59%	55%	58%
Carpooled with other adults or children instead of driving alone	43%	49% C	35%	43%
Used bus, rail, subway or other public transportation instead of driving	5%	11% A	15% A	11%

Table 22: Participation - Natural Environment

	Ward			Overall (A)
	Wards 1 & 4 (A)	Wards 2 & 3 (B)	Wards 5 & 6 (C)	
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
Recycle at home	98%	98%	95%	97%
Made efforts to make your home more energy efficient	80%	77%	77%	78%
Made efforts to conserve water	78%	72%	73%	74%

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Table 23: Participation - Built Environment

	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
NOT under housing cost stress	83% C	73%	70%	75%
Did NOT observe a code violation	40%	37%	47%	41%

Table 24: Participation - Economy

	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
Purchase goods or services from a business located in Albert Lea	97%	100% C	96%	98%
Economy will have positive impact on income	24%	24%	19%	22%
Work in Albert Lea	60% C	55%	44%	53%

Table 25: Participation - Recreation and Wellness

	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
Used Albert Lea recreation centers or their services	58%	64% C	50%	58%
Visited a neighborhood park or City park	85%	84%	81%	83%
Eat at least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables a day	78%	77%	69%	75%
Participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity	78% C	75% C	64%	73%
Reported being in "very good" or "excellent" health	57% B C	45%	43%	48%

Table 26: Participation - Education and Enrichment

	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)				
Used Albert Lea public libraries or their services	63% C	60%	51%	58%
Participated in religious or spiritual activities in Albert Lea	71% C	62% C	47%	60%
Attended a City-sponsored event	65% C	71% C	47%	62%

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Table 27: Participation - Community Engagement

Percent rating positively (e.g., always/sometimes, more than once a month, yes)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Campaigned or advocated for an issue, cause or candidate	32% C	27%	18%	26%
Contacted Albert Lea elected officials (in-person, phone, email or web) to express your opinion	15%	27% A C	15%	19%
Volunteered your time to some group/activity in Albert Lea	54% B C	42%	33%	44%
Participated in a club	38%	35%	27%	34%
Talked to or visited with your immediate neighbors	94%	94%	90%	93%
Done a favor for a neighbor	85%	84%	78%	83%
Attended a local public meeting	20%	24% C	13%	19%
Watched (online or on television) a local public meeting	31%	39%	29%	33%
Read or watch local news (via television, paper, computer, etc.)	86%	92% A	91%	89%
Vote in local elections	91% B C	77%	76%	81%

Table 28: Community Focus Areas

Percent rating positively (e.g., essential/very important)	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Overall feeling of safety in Albert Lea	82%	86%	89%	86%
Overall ease of getting to the places you usually have to visit	66%	68%	67%	67%
Quality of overall natural environment in Albert Lea	75%	77%	79%	77%
Overall "built environment" of Albert Lea (including overall design, buildings, parks and transportation systems)	77% C	69%	65%	70%
Health and wellness opportunities in Albert Lea	82%	86%	88%	85%
Overall opportunities for education and enrichment	81%	83%	83%	82%
Overall economic health of Albert Lea	90%	96% C	89%	92%
Sense of community	77%	81%	81%	80%

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Table 29: Question 14

Please indicate how much of a source, if at all, you consider each of the following to be for obtaining news and information about the City of Albert Lea: (Percent rating as "major" or "minor source").	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
Local TV stations (e.g., KAAL, KIMT)	94%	93%	94%	93%
Albert Lea Tribune	88%	89%	85%	87%
Local radio stations (e.g., KATE, KCPI)	81%	89% C	78%	83%
Word of mouth	85%	85%	80%	84%
City newsletters (e.g., Month-Lea, electronic Week-Lea)	70% C	67%	58%	65%
City website (www.cityofalbertlea.org)	59%	58%	60%	59%
City's Facebook page	52%	53%	56%	54%
City's Twitter feed	28%	34%	43% A	34%
Government access channel 180 (Council meetings, etc.)	42%	48%	39%	44%

Table 30: Question 15

The City could use about one-third of the Blazing Star Landing site to build a new Community Center. To what extent would you support or oppose building this facility if paying for it required a property tax increase of \$50 per year for a home valued at \$1	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
	53%	46%	53%	50%

Table 31: Question 16

To what extent do you support or oppose each of the following improvement efforts: (Percent rating as "strongly" or "somewhat support").	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A)
A new property tax increase of \$20 per year on a \$100,000 home to assist with rehabilitation of existing housing stock in the community	44%	42%	49%	45%
A new property tax increase of \$20 per year on a \$100,000 home to build more rental workforce housing apartments in the community	35%	44%	48% A	42%
A new property tax increase of \$20 per year on a \$100,000 home to attract more business, industry and jobs to the community	74%	66%	81% B	73%

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Table 32: Question 17

Please indicate how much of a priority, if at all, each of the following should be for City leadership to focus on in the next three years. : (Percent rating as "high" or "medium").	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Economic development/job creation	95%	96%	96%	96%
Public safety	87%	91%	96% A	91%
Infrastructure improvements (e.g. repaving roads, sidewalk repair, flooding/storm water control)	97%	98%	95%	97%
Creating programs designed to increase housing options	70%	80% A	76%	75%

Table 33: Question 18

Please indicate whether you feel Albert Lea has too many, the right amount, or too few of each of the following: (Percent rating as "right amount").	Ward			Overall
	Wards 1 & 4	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 5 & 6	(A)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	
Festivals, public events, etc. (e.g., Big Freeze, 4th of July, Big Island Rendezvous, Wind Down Wednesdays)	80% C	86% C	68%	79%
Art museums or public art	78%	76%	70%	75%
Recreational opportunities	76% C	77% C	65%	73%
Bars/taverns	63% B	52%	53%	56%
Restaurants	36%	29%	37%	34%
Entertainment venues	47% C	40% C	28%	39%
Retail/shopping opportunities	19%	16%	25%	20%