

# THE NCS<sup>TM</sup>

The National Citizen Survey<sup>TM</sup>

## River Falls, WI

Dashboard Summary of Findings

2015



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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 River Falls’ 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 River Falls’ 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.

Residents of River Falls gave exceptionally high ratings to the facets of Natural Environment and Education and Enrichment within the pillar of Community Characteristics and to the facet of Mobility within the pillar of Participation. Ratings for all other facets were strong and similar to ratings in other communities. Broadly, ratings about the community’s characteristics across most of the facets were stronger than were ratings of governance or citizen engagement. This information can be helpful in identifying the areas that merit more attention.

Figure 1: Dashboard Summary

	Community Characteristics			Governance			Participation		
	Higher	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Lower	Higher	Similar	Lower
Overall	8	42	1	0	42	0	3	27	2
General	0	7	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
Safety	0	3	0	0	7	0	0	2	1
Mobility	2	5	0	0	7	0	1	1	0
Natural Environment	2	1	0	0	5	0	0	3	0
Built Environment	0	5	0	0	7	0	0	2	0
Economy	0	7	1	0	1	0	0	3	0
Recreation and Wellness	0	7	0	0	3	0	0	4	0
Education and Enrichment	4	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
Community Engagement	0	5	0	0	8	0	2	8	1

Legend	
	Higher
	Similar
	Lower

# The National Citizen Survey™

Figure 2: Detailed Dashboard

	Community Characteristics	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	Governance	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	Participation	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive
General	Overall appearance	↔	↔	87%	Services provided by River Falls	↔	↔	87%	Recommend River Falls	↔	↔	94%
	Overall quality of life	↔	↔	87%	Services provided by the Federal Government	↓	↔	30%	Remain in River Falls	↔	↔	79%
	Place to retire	↔	↔	71%								
	Place to raise children	↔	↔	86%								
	Place to live	↔	↔	92%								
	Neighborhood	↔	↔	78%								
	Overall image	↔	↔	84%								
Safety	Overall feeling of safety	*	↔	90%	Police	↔	↔	82%	Was NOT the victim of a crime	↔	↔	92%
	Safe in neighborhood	↔	↔	98%	Crime prevention	↔	↔	73%	Did NOT report a crime	*	↔	79%
	Safe downtown/commercial area	↔	↔	97%	Fire	↔	↔	95%	Stocked supplies for an emergency	*	↓↓	17%
					Fire prevention	↔	↔	86%				
					Ambulance/EMS	↔	↔	96%				
					Emergency preparedness	↓	↔	61%				
Mobility	Traffic flow	↔	↔	49%	Traffic enforcement	↔	↔	74%	Carpooled instead of driving alone	*	↔	42%
	Travel by car	↑	↔	72%	Street repair	↔	↔	53%	Walked or biked instead of driving	*	↑↑	79%
	Travel by bicycle	↔	↔	71%	Street cleaning	↔	↔	73%				
	Ease of walking	↔	↑	89%	Street lighting	↔	↔	70%				
	Overall ease travel	*	↔	86%	Snow removal	↑	↔	72%				
	Public parking	*	↔	60%	Sidewalk maintenance	↔	↔	63%				
	Paths and walking trails	↔	↑	78%	Traffic signal timing	↔	↔	62%				
Natural Environment	Overall natural environment	↔	↑	89%	Garbage collection	↔	↔	84%	Recycled at home	*	↔	95%
	Air quality	↔	↑	95%	Recycling	↔	↔	83%	Conserved water	*	↔	80%
	Cleanliness	↔	↔	86%	Drinking water	↔	↔	77%	Made home more energy efficient	*	↔	76%
					Open space	*	↔	70%				
				Natural areas preservation	↔	↔	71%					
Built Environment	New development in River Falls	↔	↔	65%	Sewer services	↔	↔	90%	NOT experiencing housing cost stress	↔	↔	70%
	Affordable quality housing	↔	↔	55%	Storm drainage	↔	↔	82%	Did NOT observe a code violation	*	↔	59%
	Housing options	↔	↔	63%	Power utility	↔	↔	90%				
	Overall built environment	*	↔	69%	Utility billing	*	↔	78%				
	Public places	*	↔	76%	Land use, planning and zoning	↔	↔	61%				
					Code enforcement	↔	↔	54%				
				Cable television	↓	↔	59%					

**Legend**

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

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	Community Characteristics	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	Governance	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive	Participation	Trend	Benchmark	Percent positive
Economy	Overall economic health	*	↔	74%	Economic development	↔	↔	55%	Economy will have positive impact on income	↔	↔	24%
	Shopping opportunities	↔	↓	27%					Purchased goods or services in River Falls	*	↔	99%
	Employment opportunities	↔	↔	31%					Work in River Falls	*	↔	45%
	Place to visit	*	↔	67%								
	Cost of living	*	↔	53%								
	Vibrant downtown/commercial area	*	↔	61%								
	Place to work	↓	↔	45%								
Recreation and Wellness	Business and services	↔	↔	61%								
	Fitness opportunities	*	↔	75%	City parks	↔	↔	87%	In very good to excellent health	*	↔	57%
	Recreational opportunities	↔	↔	73%	Recreation programs	↓	↔	77%	Visited a City park	↔	↔	92%
	Health care	↔	↔	62%	Health services	↔	↔	75%	Ate 5 portions of fruits and vegetables	*	↔	81%
	Food	↓	↔	60%					Participated in moderate or vigorous physical activity	*	↔	89%
	Mental health care	*	↔	40%								
	Health and wellness	*	↔	67%								
Education and Enrichment	Preventive health services	↔	↔	74%								
	K-12 education	↔	↑	91%	Public libraries	↔	↔	90%	Used River Falls public libraries	↓	↔	73%
	Cultural/arts/music activities	↑	↑	77%	Special events	*	↔	78%	Participated in religious or spiritual activities	*	↔	49%
	Child care/preschool	↔	↔	64%								
	Religious or spiritual events and activities	*	↔	90%								
	Adult education	*	↑	84%								
Community Engagement	Overall education and enrichment	*	↑	88%								
	Opportunities to participate in community matters	↔	↔	72%	Public information	↔	↔	77%	Sense of community	↔	↑	81%
	Opportunities to volunteer	↔	↔	73%	Overall direction	↔	↔	69%	Voted in local elections	↓	↔	76%
	Openness and acceptance	↔	↔	64%	Value of services for taxes paid	↓	↔	53%	Talked to or visited with neighbors	*	↔	92%
	Social events and activities	↔	↔	72%	Welcoming citizen involvement	↔	↔	62%	Attended a local public meeting	↓	↔	16%
	Neighborliness	*	↔	70%	Confidence in City government	*	↔	63%	Watched a local public meeting	↔	↔	21%
					Acting in the best interest of River Falls	*	↔	65%	Volunteered	↔	↑	55%
					Being honest	*	↔	68%	Participated in a club	↔	↔	36%
					Treating all residents fairly	*	↔	63%	Campaigned for an issue, cause or candidate	*	↔	21%
									Contacted River Falls elected officials	*	↔	17%
								Read or watched local news	*	↓	74%	
								Done a favor for a neighbor	*	↔	73%	

**Legend**

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