

America likes Tampa's vibe
2/7/2009

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By [Janet Zink](#), Times Staff Writer
St. Petersburg Times

TAMPA — This may surprise some of the people who live here, but Americans think Tampa would be a pretty cool place to call home.

The city tied for fourth place with Orlando and San Francisco in a survey of 2,260 adults that asked in which of the nation's 30 largest metropolitan areas they would most like to live.

"Tampa is appealing to all education levels, and it's appealing to people all across the board at all income levels," said Paul Taylor, who directed the Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends project.

That's not the case for places like San Francisco, which is more attractive to people with a lot of money, or Boston, which is liked by people with college degrees.

Tampa also showed balance on the ideological front, scoring fairly evenly with people who describe themselves as liberal, conservative or moderate.

San Francisco and New York tanked with conservatives. Dallas, Houston and Cincinnati scored poorly among liberals.

"The advantage to Tampa is anybody can find a place where they can fit in, whether it's their political views, their religious affiliation or the type of business they want to bring in," said Henry Gonzalez, chairman of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce. "Tampa offers something for everyone."

Overall, the study showed people prefer cities in the West and South to those in the Midwest.

By a ratio of 2-1, people prefer warm cities, which boosted Tampa's profile, Taylor said. And by a ratio of 3-1, they say they like relatively mellow urban areas.

"Some of the big, better-known bustling metropolises, such as New York, Washington, and Chicago, they all kind of wound up in the middle of the pack," Taylor said. "They are identified as places with a fast pace of life. Much of the country says, 'Thanks, but no thanks' to that."

Denver, San Diego and Seattle grabbed the top three spots in the survey. Detroit ranked last.

Local Tampa boosters say the results are no shocker.

"I like that Tampa has projected such an image that people think they would like to live here without having either been here or having plans to come here," said Christine Burdick, president of the Tampa Downtown Partnership. "That says a lot."

City Council member Mary Mulhern moved to Tampa 11 years ago from Chicago and often laments that the city is slow to embrace progressive ideas.

She said it's good to hear that people think the city is a good place to live. "I do think that we're not on the cutting edge," Mulhern said, "but that's maybe why a lot of us like it here."

One other survey result of note: A slight plurality, 43 percent, would rather live in a place with more McDonald's. That compares to 35 percent who say they prefer a city with more Starbucks.

The survey was conducted Oct. 3-19. The margin of error is 2.3 percentage points.

Janet Zink can be reached at jzink@sptimes.com or (813) 226-3401.

America's most popular big cities

A new national survey shows that nearly half of the public would rather live in a different major city than the one they're living in now. Here is a ranking of the cities they might prefer to call home, including Tampa, which tied for fourth.

City	Percent
Denver	43
San Diego	40
Seattle	38
Orlando	34
Tampa	34
San Francisco	34
Phoenix	33
Portland, Ore.	31
Sacramento, Calif.	29
San Antonio, Texas	29
Boston	28
Miami	28
Atlanta	26
Washington, D.C.	25
New York	24
Dallas	24
Philadelphia	24
Chicago	24
Houston	23
Las Vegas	23
Riverside, Calif.	23
Los Angeles	21
Baltimore	20
St. Louis	18
Pittsburgh	17
Minneapolis, Minn.	16
Kansas City	15
Cincinnati	13

Cleveland	10
Detroit	8

Source: Pew Research Center. For statistically significant comparisons between cities, margins of at least 4 to 6 percentage points are required depending on the city scores.