

Poll: Majority Say Sacramento is an Exciting Place to Live
Traffic, Education, Crime, and Growth Listed as Top Government Issues for 2007

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Approximately 90 percent of residents in the Sacramento region have expressed satisfaction with their overall quality of life. Within that group, 51 percent state that they are satisfied and 36 percent proclaim that they are very satisfied. This exceptional level of satisfaction (36%) ranks among the highest observed since the inception of our annual survey in 2002 (37% in 2002, 30% in 2003, and 29% in 2004, 2005, and 2006, Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006). Moreover, fifty-nine percent believe this region is an exciting place to live.

Relative to the state's total population, Sacramento has become one of the fastest-growing regions in California, and this tremendous growth has created serious challenges for area residents. Despite high levels of satisfaction and excitement for the life in the region, Sacramento residents have voiced concerns on a wide range of issues which local governments will need to address in 2007.

The 2007 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region asked respondents to state, in their own words, the top priorities for city or county governments to contend with in 2007. Traffic, roads, and transportation related issues dominate the list (23%). Education (15%) is cited as the second highest priority, and crime was mentioned by 12 percent of the respondents, making it the third most important issue in the region. However, an examination of only Sacramento County residents shows that they believe crime (16%) and education (16%) are equally important.

Population growth and development is reported by 8 percent of area residents as the fourth biggest priority in the region. However, the problem has greater significance for residents in Placer (14%) and Yolo (12%) counties.

Other issues indicated by at least three percent of area residents include flooding (5%), environment/pollution (5%), healthcare (5%), immigration/border control (4%), and affordable housing (3%). However, immigration and border control related issues (18%) are extremely important to Hispanics and Latinos who consider it to be a top priority for local governments to address in 2007, along with education (17%).

These are some of the results from *The 2007 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 17 to March 8, 2007, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

Overwhelming majority are satisfied with quality of life in the Sacramento region

The majority of residents in the Sacramento region (87%) are satisfied with their overall quality of life, with 36 percent stating they are very satisfied and 51 percent indicating they are somewhat satisfied. The level of great satisfaction (36%) is very similar to the level observed in 2002 (37%), one of the highest since 2003 (30%), 2004 (29%), 2005 (29%), and 2006 (29%) (Liu and Sheley 2004; Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005; Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006).

Satisfaction with quality of life doesn't differ significantly by gender or length of residence in the region. However, county of residence, income, age, race, and homeownership do have an impact. Almost half of residents in Placer (49%) and El Dorado (48%) counties report that they are very satisfied with their life quality, whereas only about one-third of the public in Sacramento (30%) and Yolo (33%) counties share this optimistic view. Those making \$100,000 or more (44%), those aged 65 or above (43%), white residents (40%), and homeowners (37%) are more likely to be very content than people making less than \$30,000 a year (29%), those 40 or younger (25%), people from other racial groups (26%), and non-homeowners (30%).

**“How satisfied are you with the overall quality of life in the Sacramento Region?
Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied,
somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?”**

Comparison between 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002

	2007	2006 ¹	2005 ²	2004 ³	2003 ⁴	2002 ⁵
Very satisfied	36%	29%	29%	29%	30%	37%
Somewhat satisfied	51	54	56	56	54	52
Somewhat dissatisfied	9	12	11	12	13	9
Very dissatisfied	3	4	3	3	3	2
Don't know	1	1	1	0	0	0

¹Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith. 2006.

²Liu, Amy Qiaoming, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

³Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁴Liu, Amy Qiaoming and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁵Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2002.

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Very satisfied	48%	49%	30%	33%
Somewhat satisfied	38	41	56	56
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	6	9	8
Very dissatisfied	2	1	4	3
Don't know	2	3	1	0

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to less than \$100,000	\$100,000 and above
Very satisfied	29%	34%	44%
Somewhat satisfied	49	53	47
Somewhat dissatisfied	16	9	7
Very dissatisfied	5	3	1
Don't know	1	1	1

Comparison among People from Different Age Groups

	40 or less	41 to 64	65 or plus
Very satisfied	25%	37%	43%
Somewhat satisfied	60	50	45
Somewhat dissatisfied	11	9	9
Very dissatisfied	3	3	2
Don't know	1	1	1

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Very satisfied	40%	26%
Somewhat satisfied	48	57
Somewhat dissatisfied	9	12
Very dissatisfied	2	4
Don't know	1	1

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Very satisfied	30%	37%
Somewhat satisfied	52	51
Somewhat dissatisfied	11	9
Very dissatisfied	5	2
Don't know	2	1

Majority are excited about life in the Sacramento region

Fifty-nine percent of the public in the region thinks the Sacramento region is an exciting place to live. This perception doesn't vary considerably by length of residence, age, race, or home ownership. Excitement with the region, however, is affected by gender, household income, and political affiliation. Women (61%) feel more excited about the region than men (55%). Residents from middle income households and making between \$30,000 and less than \$100,000 a year are more likely to say that Sacramento region is an exciting place to live than those making less than \$30,000 (55%) or those earning \$100,000 or more (52%). In fact, higher income residents (41%) are the least likely to share this positive outlook. Among registered voters, both Republicans and Democrats (60%) tend to feel more excited about the region than Independents or voters from other parties (53%).

“Is the Sacramento region an exciting place to live?”

Comparison between Men and Women

	Sacramento Region	Men	Women
Yes	59%	55%	61%
No	34	38	31
Don't know	7	7	8

Comparison among People with Different Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to less than \$100,000	\$100,000 or plus
Yes	55%	62%	52%
No	36	32	41
Don't know	9	6	7

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Yes	60%	60%	53%
No	33	33	38
Don't know	7	7	9

Traffic, education, crime, and growth: Top issues for local governments to handle

When we asked respondents to prioritize the issues that should be taken care of by city or county governments in 2007, 23 percent named traffic, road, or transportation related concerns. Education (15%) and crime (12%) are the issues residents mentioned next in line for government action. Population growth and development are reported by 8 percent of area residents. Other concerns expressed by at least 3% of residents include flooding (5%), healthcare (5%), environment/pollution (5%), immigration/border control (4%), and affordable housing (3%).

Residents in the four-county region differ somewhat in their views as to where city and local governments should focus their efforts although traffic tops the list for all the counties, and education is almost the next most articulated topic.

Besides traffic and education, residents in Sacramento County (16%) are twice as likely as people in Placer (7%), Yolo (7%), or El Dorado (5%) counties to mention violence and crime in their community as a top priority for their local government in 2007. Instead of crime, people in Placer, Yolo, and El Dorado counties want their local governments to focus on population growth and development (14% in Placer, 12% in Yolo, 8% in El Dorado, and 5% in Sacramento) and environment/pollution (8% in Placer, 10% in El Dorado and Yolo, and only 2% in Sacramento).

The Sacramento region is one of the most vulnerable regions in the nation to big floods similar to the one experienced in New Orleans. However, only five percent think it should be the top priority for local governments to focus on in 2007. However, residents in Sacramento and Yolo counties (6%) mention it more frequently than residents in El Dorado (4%) or Placer (2%) counties.

When compared with the environment, healthcare, immigration, and affordable housing, flood related issues are latent concerns for many residents in the region and occupy only a small portion of public concern as evidenced by their response when asked about priorities for local governments in 2007. Flood control is ranked as a lower priority than traffic, education, crime, and population growth and development in the region.

More than two-thirds of area residents (68%) think it is important to keep the Kings in the Sacramento region, however, the Kings, parks, and other entertainment related issues barely register as a top priority for local governments to take up in 2007. These entertainment related issues are voiced by only one percent of residents in Sacramento, Placer, and El Dorado counties, and zero percent in Yolo County. Our data suggest that they are less important to area residents than many other issues such as traffic, education, crime, population growth and development, flooding, healthcare, immigration, and affordable housing.

“What issue do you think should be the top priority in 2007 for the local governments to deal with?”

Comparison between Different Sacramento Counties

	Sacramento Region	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Traffic/Road/ Transportation	23%	26%	22%	24%	19%
Education	15	10	13	16	16
Crime/Violence/Drugs/Safety	12	5	7	16	7
Population/Growth/Development	8	8	14	5	12
Flooding	5	4	2	6	6
Environment/Pollution	5	10	8	2	10
Healthcare	5	6	8	4	6
Immigration/Border control	4	6	3	5	2
Affordable housing	3	3	4	3	2
Economy/Jobs	2	6	3	2	2
Homeless/Poverty/Social services	2	2	1	3	3
Court/Prisons	2	1	1	3	1
Budget and taxes	2	1	5	1	1
Bush and the war	2	5	2	1	2
Children/Elderly	2	0	2	1	1
Infrastructure	1	1	1	1	1
Kings/Parks/Entertainment	1	1	1	1	0
Racism	1	0	0	1	1
Others	5	5	6	5	8

Voters and non-voters divided on local government top priorities in 2007

Registered voters and non-voters in the region vary in their views of top local government priorities. For registered voters, the top four priorities for city or county governments to focus on in 2007 are: traffic (25%), education (13%), crime (13%), and population growth and development (9%). By contrast, non-voters want their local governments to address education (24%), immigration related issues (12%), traffic (10%) and crime (10%). Traffic (25%) tops the list for voters, whereas non-voters mention education (24%) most frequently. Moreover, registered voters (9%) express more concern about population growth and develop than non-voters (1%). Non-voters, on the other hand, want local governments to deal with immigration/border control related issues. They (12%) are four times as likely as registered voters (3%) to say immigration related issues should be the top priority for local governments in 2007.

Moreover, these viewpoints on top priorities are much less pronounced among the registered voters: more than 20 percent refer to traffic, road, or transportation related issues, regardless if they are registered as a Democrat, Republican, or other voter. Education and crime are referenced the next most often. However, Republicans and other voters are more likely to list population growth and development. Democrats, on the other hand, are more likely to say flooding and environment/pollution. Other voters mention healthcare more frequently.

“What issue do you think should be the top priority in 2007 for the local governments to deal with?”

Comparison between Voters and Non-voters

	Registered to Vote	Not Registered to Vote
Traffic/Road/Transportation	25%	10%
Education	13	24
Crime/Violence/Drugs/Safety	13	10
Population/Growth/Development	9	1
Flooding	5	5
Environment/Pollution	5	3
Healthcare	5	4
Immigration/Border control	3	12
Affordable housing	3	3
Economy/Jobs	2	5
Homeless/Poverty/Social services	2	3
Court/Prisons	2	3
Budget and taxes	2	0
Bush and the war	2	2
Children/Elderly	1	2
Infrastructure	1	0
Kings/Parks/Entertainment	1	3
Racism	1	2
Others	5	8

Comparison between Voters from Different Political Parties

	Democrat	Republican	Other Voters
Traffic/Road/Transportation	23%	28%	25%
Education	13	13	11
Crime/Violence/Drugs/Safety	15	12	11
Population/Growth/Development	6	11	12
Flooding	7	4	3
Environment/Pollution	6	4	4
Healthcare	5	3	9
Immigration/Border control	2	4	4
Affordable housing	5	1	3
Economy/Jobs	3	1	2
Homeless/Poverty/Social services	2	2	4
Court/Prisons	2	2	1
Budget and taxes	1	4	2
Bush and the war	2	2	0
Children/Elderly	2	1	0
Infrastructure	2	1	2
Kings/Parks/Entertainment	0	1	2
Racism	1	0	1
Others	3	6	4

Hispanics, white residents, and others differ over priorities for local governments

Latino and Hispanic residents feel immigration (18%) and education (17%) deserve the most attention from local governments this year. White residents (25%) and people from other racial groups (21%), on the other hand, think local governments should focus their consideration on traffic. White residents (9%) also think population growth and development should be top priority for local governments, while other racial groups (17%) regard crime and violence as more important problems to address. Other racial groups (8%) also want affordable housing to be a priority for their local governments to handle in 2007.

“What issue do you think should be the top priority in 2007 for the local governments to deal with?”

Comparison between Different Racial Groups

	Hispanics	Whites	Others
Traffic/Road/Transportation	14%	25%	21%
Education	17	14	14
Crime/Violence/Drugs/Safety	13	12	17
Population/Growth/Development	3	9	4
Flooding	4	5	4
Environment/Pollution	3	6	2
Healthcare	4	5	5
Immigration/Border control	18	2	1
Affordable Housing	3	3	8
Economy/Jobs	5	1	4
Homeless/Poverty/Social services	3	2	3
Court/Prisons	3	2	1
Budget and taxes	0	2	3
Bush and the war	2	2	1
Children/Elderly	3	1	2
Infrastructure	1	1	1
Kings/Parks/Entertainment	1	1	1
Racism	0	1	2
Others	3	5	6

Survey methods

The above results are based on our sixth annual survey, *The 2007 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*¹. This study is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1106 adult residents age 18 and older from randomly selected households in the Sacramento region which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this project is to assess quality of life and public opinion in the Sacramento region regarding a wide range of important local and national issues.

More than 30 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 17 to March 8, 2007, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Our sample is still quite representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region when compared with the 2000 U.S. Census (9% in the Census vs. 9.4% in the sample in Yolo County; 9% in the Census vs. 10.5% in the sample in El Dorado County, 14% in the Census vs. 19.2% in the sample in Placer County, and 68% residents in the Census vs. 60.9% in the sample in Sacramento County). The differences may reflect the changes in the population of the region. The margin of error for the survey is approximately ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for group comparisons in the Sacramento region would be higher than ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento region findings with those from other California regions, the state, and the nation. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions often comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys. Nationwide data often comes from Gallup polls.

The College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS), the Department of Sociology, the Office of Public Affairs, and the Office of Community Collaboration at California State University, Sacramento sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley has been actively involved in this project and offered significant contributions to the effort.

This research is directed by Amy Liu, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Liu is an expert in public opinion polls, and has conducted over 20 surveys in the past nine years, including:

- 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment

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¹ This study was called Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region before 2006.

(http://www.csus.edu/ssis/annual_survey.htm) for other reports for 2007 and for the executive summaries and full reports for the 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002 annual surveys in the Sacramento region.

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