

Poll: Public Says “No” to A New Arena for the Sacramento Kings

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The majority of the residents (56%) in the Sacramento region do not feel that the Sacramento Kings need a new arena. If a new one were to be built, very few (1%) want to use only public tax dollars to pay for it, even though more than one-third (37%) think a combination of private and public funds is acceptable. Half of the public (51%) hope the funding will all be provided by private money, but only about one-third (32%) would vote “yes” on a ballot measure that would open up about 10,000 acres for development in North Natomas in return for landowners paying for a new arena for the Sacramento Kings. Even fewer people (26%) support a similar ballot measure of land development in exchange for landowners paying \$275 million for a generic sports facility not restricted to the Kings.

These are some of the findings from *The 2005 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*, conducted from February 15 to March 16, 2005, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

A New Arena for the Sacramento Kings Unnecessary

Only 33 percent of the public in the Sacramento region think the Sacramento Kings need a new arena, while the majority (56%) deem it as unnecessary. The highest percentage of support for the new facility comes from Sacramento (35%) and Placer counties (34%). Only about one-fourth of the public in El Dorado (25%) and Yolo (23%) counties believe a new arena is necessary.

Men are more likely to support a new arena than women. Of those surveyed, 39 percent of males and 29 percent of females think the Kings need a new arena. Among registered voters, Republicans (39%) are more likely than Democrats (32%) and other voters (28%) to think a new facility for the Kings is important.

“Now thinking about a new arena and the Sacramento Kings. Do you think the Sacramento Kings need a new arena?”

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	Sacramento Region	Sacramento County	Yolo County	Placer County	El Dorado County
Yes	33%	35%	23%	34%	25%
No	56	56	60	50	58
Don't know	11	9	17	16	17

Comparison between Males and Females

	Male	Female
Yes	39%	29%
No	51	59
Don't know	10	12

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Yes	39%	32%	28%
No	49	56	63
Don't know	12	12	9

No Public Tax Dollars Going to Pay for the New Arena

If a new arena were to be built, only one percent of the public think the funding should come strictly from public tax dollars, while more than half (51%) claim it should be paid for by private money only. Thirty-seven percent say a combination of private and public funding would be acceptable, 8 percent prefer other means, and 3 percent have no opinion. We have asked those 8 percent to explain the other means to us, and found out that more than half feel the owners of the Kings, and to some extent, the players, should pay for it. There is a strong sentiment against using public tax dollars for this project, and many other options of funding are mentioned, including private donations by rich people, fans, players, and the public, other fund-raising activities, private investment, and bond-floating.

Preferences for funding sources for the new arena don't vary that much among the four counties. However, a big difference is found between those who believe the Kings need a new facility (the first group) and those who don't or are undecided (the second group). More than two-thirds (67%) of the former group hope the new arena would be paid by a combination of public and private money, while almost an equal number (65%) of the latter group want the funds to come strictly from private money. It seems that many residents have realized that private money may not be enough to build a new arena, therefore they hope a team effort by the public and the private sectors will make it work, as long as public tax dollars are not used. This complicated feeling is reflected in many of the comments we have recorded in the survey. For example, one respondent tells us: "Ideally private money. But I don't think it would happen. But not tax money at all."

"If a new arena were built in the Sacramento region, how do you think it should be paid for?"

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	Sacramento Region	Sacramento County	Yolo County	Placer County	El Dorado County
By public tax dollars only	1%	1%	4%	1%	1%
By private money only	51	49	56	54	56
By public and private funds	37	39	31	34	30
By other means	8	8	7	6	11
Don't know	3	3	2	5	2

Comparison between Those Who Think Sacramento Kings Need a New Arena and Those Who Don't Think So or Don't Know

	Need A New Arena	No Need/Don't Know
By public tax dollars only	1%	1%
By private money only	24	65
By public and private money	67	22
By other means	6	9
Don't know	2	3

Little Support to Exchange Land for a New Arena for the Kings

Only 32 percent of the public in the four-county region report they would vote “yes” on a ballot measure that would open up about 10,000 acres for development in North Natomas in return for landowners paying for a new arena for the Sacramento Kings. More than half (51%) oppose the measure, and 17 percent remain undecided. Sacramento County has the highest support with 36 percent approval, while the endorsement from Placer, Yolo, and El Dorado counties is 29 percent, 22 percent, and 22 percent respectively.

There is not much support for this measure among the registered voters, either. Only about one-third of Democrats (35%), Republicans (34%), and other voters (30%) approve of this measure. Compared to Republicans (44%), Democrats (54%) and other voters (53%) are more likely to oppose this plan.

However, endorsement for this measure is quite different between those who believe the Kings need a new arena (supporters) and those who hold the opposite view (opponents). The majority of the new arena supporters (58%) would vote “yes” on this measure, while almost two-third of the opponents (63%) would vote “no”.

“If an election were held today, would you vote yes or no on a ballot measure that would open up about 10,000 acres for development in North Natomas in return for landowners paying for a new arena for the Sacramento Kings?”

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	Sacramento Region	Sacramento County	Yolo County	Placer County	El Dorado County
Yes	32%	36%	22%	29%	22%
No	51	48	61	55	57
Depends on the measure details	8	8	6	8	8
Don't know	9	8	11	8	13

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Yes	34%	35%	30%
No	44	54	53
Depends on the measure details	11	5	8
Don't know	11	6	9

Comparison between Those Who Think Sacramento Kings Need a New Arena and Those Who Don't Think so or Don't Know

	Need A New Arena	No Need/Don't Know
Yes	58%	20%
No	26	63
Depends on the measure details	9	8
Don't know	7	9

Even Less Support to Exchange Land for a Generic Sports Facility

A ballot measure for a generic sports facility not specifically targeted for the Kings in exchange for 10,000 acres of land development in North Natomas appears to be unpopular with the general public. The majority of the residents (55%) in the region indicate they would not support such a measure, compared to the one-fourth (26%) of those who say they would. Nineteen percent are undecided. There is also little support from Republicans (28%), Democrats (24%), and other registered voters (27%). However, opposition from Sacramento County is the lowest (53% vs. 60% in Placer, 59% in Yolo and El Dorado counties).

The drop in support for a general facility appears to come mostly from those who believe the Kings need a new arena. For this group, 58 percent are willing to support a proposal to allow land development in North Natomas in exchange for a new arena for the Kings, but only 37 percent would endorse a generic sports facility. This is a 21-percentage-point decrease. It seems that many of those supporters for a new arena for the Kings would vote “no” for a generic facility (44% would vote “no” for the general facility vs. 26% would vote “no” for a new arena for the Kings).

If an election were held today, would you vote yes or no on a ballot measure that would open up about 10,000 acres for development in North Natomas in return for landowners paying \$275 million for a generic sports facility, not one specifically targeted for the Sacramento Kings?”

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	Sacramento Region	Sacramento County	Yolo County	Placer County	El Dorado County
Yes	26%	27%	20%	23%	27%
No	55	53	59	60	59
Depends on the measure details	10	11	9	8	5
Don't know	9	9	12	9	9

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Yes	28%	24%	27%
No	48	60	57
Depends on the measure details	13	9	5
Don't know	11	7	11

Comparison Between Those Who Think Sacramento Kings Need a New Arena and Those Who Don't Think so or Don't Know

	Need A New Arena	No Need/Don't Know
Yes	37%	20%
No	44	61
Depends on the measure details	11	9
Don't know	8	10

Present Location Remains the First Choice for a New Arena for the Kings

When asked about their preference of the location for a new arena if it were built for the Kings, 38 percent prefer it next to Arco Arena. Therefore, the present location is still the most popular selection. This is specially the case for the public in Sacramento County (42% for Sacramento County, 35% for Yolo, 34% for Placer, and 25% for El Dorado). The second top alternative for Sacramento (17%), Placer (16%) and El Dorado (17%) counties is Sacramento's downtown Union Pacific rail yard. However, the second option for Yolo County is next to Cal Expo (10%) or in some other place (10%). Many residents have not formed a firm opinion yet at the time of our interviews (20% in Sacramento County, 30% in Yolo, 32% in Placer, and 36% in El Dorado).

“Where would you want a new arena to be built?”

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	Sacramento Region	Sacramento County	Yolo County	Placer County	El Dorado County
Next to Arco Arena	38%	42%	35%	34%	25%
Union Pacific railyard	16	17	6	16	17
Next to Cal Expo	7	7	10	6	9
In Waterfront	4	4	3	3	3
In Richards Boulevard	2	2	5	1	0
In another place	8	8	10	7	10
It depends on how it is paid	1	0	1	1	0
Don't know	24	20	30	32	36

Survey Methods

The above results are based on our fourth annual survey, *The 2005 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*. This study is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1002 randomly selected adult residents age 18 or over 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 regarding a wide range of important local and national issues in the Sacramento region.

More than 20 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 15 to March 16, 2005, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). The sample is representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region and comparable to the 2000 U.S. Census (68% residents in the Census vs. 66% in the sample in Sacramento County, 14% in the Census vs. 15% in the sample in Placer County, 9% in the Census vs. 9% in the sample in Yolo County; and 9% in the Census vs. 10% in the sample in El Dorado County). 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) and the Office of Public Affairs at CSUS sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley, Dean of SSIS, is actively involved in this project and has made great contributions.

This research is directed by Amy Qiaoming 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:

- 2004 Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- 2003 Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- 2002 Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment
- Marshalltown United Way Survey

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Appendix I: The 2005 Annual Survey Research Team Members and Sponsors

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