

Majority of the Sacramento Region Residents Satisfied but Pessimistic: Gas prices, budget deficit, the economy, and housing market top concerns

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The Sacramento housing market has experienced turbulent times in the past year. According to California Association of Realtors (March 24, 2008), Sacramento's median home prices have dropped steeply – 30.9 percent compared to February 2007. At the same time, oil prices have soared to all-time high, and gas prices are approaching \$4 per gallon in Sacramento and many other places in California. Moreover, the state budget deficit and the economy seem to be getting worse.

Local governments depend heavily on the state to fund education, healthcare, social services, and many other essential programs. The budget deficit may adversely affect this region more than the rest of California because the state government is one of the biggest employers in the Sacramento area.

What are the most challenging issues facing the Sacramento region: gas prices, housing, the budget deficit or the economy? Are residents still optimistic about the economic future of the region? Have those problems affected the perception of their quality of life or financial situations?

According to *The 2008 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, the vast majority of residents in the Sacramento area (85%) are still satisfied with the overall quality of life in the region, with 32 percent saying they are very satisfied. This level of satisfaction (85%) has not varied greatly since 2002 (87% in 2007, 83% in 2006, 85% in both 2005 and 2004, 84% in 2003, and 89% in 2002)¹. Moreover, three out of four area residents (74%) are also pleased with their financial situation: 25 percent state they are very satisfied and 49 percent say they are somewhat happy.

However, many poor, young, non-white residents in the region are not pleased with their financial situations. More than 44 percent of those with a family income of less than \$30,000, 40 percent of those who do not own a home in the region, and 38 percent of non-white residents say they are dissatisfied. About one-third of younger people (32% for those 40 or younger) are also not content with their financial situation. This is also true for those whose family income is in the \$30,000 to \$49,999 a year range (33%) and for people living in the City of Sacramento (32%).

¹ Liu, Hayes, May, Mevy, and Scott 2007, Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

Moreover, only 49 percent of area residents believe that things in the Sacramento region are going in the right direction. This is the first time since the inception of the annual regional survey in 2002 that less than half of the people are happy with the direction the region is heading (59% right direction in 2006, 62% in 2005, 60% in 2004, 58% in 2003, and 65% in 2002). In fact, 64 percent think that the region will experience financially difficult times during the next twelve months. This represents a reverse in the trend since 2002 – with the exception of 2003. Thirty-one percent predicted a gloomy financial situation in 2006, 27 percent in 2005, 31 percent in 2004, 61 percent in 2003, and 18 percent in 2002².

When asked about 12 major issues facing the Sacramento region, respondents point to high gas prices and the state budget deficit as the two biggest problems. More than half of area residents also think the economy (56%) and the housing market (54%) are huge concerns. Traffic congestion (50%) has dropped from its position as the top challenge from 2002 to 2007 to become the 5th biggest problem in the region. Affordable healthcare (43%), carbon dioxide and other air pollution (39%), the quality of public education (38%), affordable housing (36%), city's or county's budget (31%), and crime (31%) are issues of great concern to at least one-third of residents in the region.

In the past decade, a substantial number of new homes have been built in flood-prone areas of the Sacramento region. While those homes are supposed to be protected by levees, many are still exposed to the same risks which resulted in disaster for home owners in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. If levees break due to a big storm, many of these areas would likely be flooded. In an effort to secure more state and federal funding to speed up levee repairs, Governor Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency on Feb. 24, 2006. Public awareness of the flood risk in the region increased immediately after the Governor's declaration of a state of emergency. Before Feb. 24, 2006, only 38 percent thought flood control was a big problem. After February 24, 2006, that number increased to 54 percent. In fact, flood control became the second most important regional issue (54%) in 2006 after traffic congestion (70%) and was considered more problematic than the issues of affordable housing (51%), quality of public education (46%), population growth and development (45%), air pollution (42%), and affordable healthcare (41%)³.

This year, however, flood control (23%) has become the least important issue for residents in the region. Despite this decreased level of concern, an overwhelming majority of area residents (86%) still think local government should restrict the construction of new homes in areas without adequate flood protection. These figures are very similar to the results of our two most recent annual surveys (88% in both 2007 and 2006)⁴.

² Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

³ Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006.

⁴ Liu, Wehr, and Scott 2007, Liu, Scott, and Bowerman 2006.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem...”

	Big Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know
High gas price	74%	20%	5%	1%
State budget deficit	71	20	4	5
The economy	56	31	11	2
Weak housing market	54	25	17	4
Traffic congestion	50	33	16	1
Affordable healthcare	43	27	27	3
Carbon dioxide and air pollution	39	34	21	6
Quality of public education	38	37	18	7
Affordable housing	36	26	35	3
Local budget deficit	31	28	17	24
Crime	31	43	24	2
Flood control	23	32	40	5

What follows are more detailed results from *The 2008 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 16 to March 2, 2008, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

Overwhelming majority remain satisfied with life in the Sacramento region

Eighty-five percent of residents in the Sacramento region are satisfied with their overall quality of life. Thirty-two percent state they are very satisfied and 53 percent indicate they are somewhat satisfied. The level of greatest satisfaction (32%) is very similar to those observed in recent years (36% in 2007, 29% in 2006, 2005, and 2004, 30% in 2003, and 37% in 2002)⁵.

Satisfaction with the quality of life doesn't differ significantly by gender or length of residence in the region. However, county of residence, income, race, and home ownership do have an impact. More than 40 percent of residents in Placer (42%) and El Dorado (41%) counties report that they are very satisfied with their life, whereas less than 30 percent of the public in Sacramento (29%) and Yolo (27%) counties share this optimistic view. In fact, residents in the City of Sacramento are the least likely to report that they are very happy (25%) and the most likely to say that they are not satisfied (21% are dissatisfied in the City of Sacramento, 11% in other places in Sacramento County, 13% in El Dorado County, 12% in Placer County, and 10% in Yolo County).

Those making \$100,000 or more (45%), those who own their houses free and clear (40%), and white residents (36%) are much more likely to be very pleased than people making less than \$30,000 a year (20%), people from other racial groups (24%), and non-homeowners (20%).

⁵ Liu, Hayes, May, Mevy, and Scott 2007, Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

**“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?”**

Historical Comparison

	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Don't Know
2008	85%	14%	1%
2007 ¹	87	12	1
2006 ²	83	16	1
2005 ³	85	14	1
2004 ⁴	85	15	0
2003 ⁵	84	16	0
2002 ⁶	89	11	0

¹Liu, Amy, Jessica Hayes, Saeteurn May, Saelee Mevy, and Otis Scott. 2007.

²Liu, Amy, Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith. 2006.

³Liu, Amy, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

⁴Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁵Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁶Liu, Amy. 2002.

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Don't Know
2008	32%	53%	11%-	3%	1%
2007	36	51	9	3	1
2006	29	54	12	4	1
2005	29	56	11	3	1
2004	29	56	12	3	0
2003	30	54	13	3	0
2002	37	52	9	2	0

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Satisfied	86%	87%	83%	90%
Dissatisfied	13	12	16	10
Don't know	1	1	1	0

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Very satisfied	41%	42%	29%	27%
Somewhat satisfied	45	45	54	63
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	11	12	10
Very dissatisfied	3	1	4	0
Don't know	1	1	1	0

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places In Sacramento County
Satisfied	79%	88%
Dissatisfied	21	11
Don't know	0	1

	City of Sacramento	Other Places In Sacramento County
Very satisfied	25%	34%
Somewhat satisfied	54	54
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	9
Very dissatisfied	7	2
Don't know	0	1

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Satisfied	75%	83%	86%	94%
Dissatisfied	24	16	14	6
Don't know	1	1	0	0

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Very satisfied	20%	22%	32%	45%
Somewhat satisfied	55	61	54	49
Somewhat dissatisfied	17	12	12	5
Very dissatisfied	7	4	2	1
Don't know	1	1	0	0

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Satisfied	78%	87%
Dissatisfied	22	12
Don't know	0	1

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Very satisfied	20%	36%
Somewhat satisfied	58	51
Somewhat dissatisfied	15	10
Very dissatisfied	7	2
Don't know	0	1

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgage	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Satisfied	78%	89%	83%
Dissatisfied	22	11	15
Don't know	0	0	2

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgage	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Very satisfied	20%	34%	40%
Somewhat satisfied	58	55	43
Somewhat dissatisfied	15	9	13
Very dissatisfied	7	2	2
Don't know	0	0	2

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Satisfied	87%	80%
Dissatisfied	13	19
Don't know	0	1

	White	Other Racial Groups
Very satisfied	36%	24%
Somewhat satisfied	51	56
Somewhat dissatisfied	11	13
Very dissatisfied	2	6
Don't know	0	1

More than 70 percent are satisfied with their financial situation, but many poor, non-white, and young residents are not pleased

The majority of residents in the Sacramento region (74%) say they are satisfied with their financial situation. Twenty-five percent state they are very satisfied and 49 percent claim they are somewhat satisfied. Twenty-five percent are dissatisfied, and one percent say they don't know.

However, there are big differences among residents in the region. Residents living in the City of Sacramento (32% dissatisfied) are the most likely to be unhappy with their financial situation compared to people who live in other places in Sacramento County (19% dissatisfied), El Dorado County (21% dissatisfied), Placer County (25% dissatisfied), and Yolo County (20% dissatisfied).

Those who are making more than \$100,000 (44% very satisfied), and people who own their homes free and clear (36% very satisfied) are the most likely to say they are very pleased with their financial situation. Area residents with a family income of less than \$30,000 (44% dissatisfied), those who rent (40% dissatisfied), non-white residents (38%

dissatisfied), and those who are 40 or younger (32% dissatisfied) are the most likely to claim they are not content with their financial situation.

Among the registered voters, those belonging to other parties (30% dissatisfied) are more likely than Republicans (16% dissatisfied) or Democrats (25% dissatisfied) to say they are not happy with their financial situation.

“How satisfied are you with your financial situation? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied?”

Sacramento Region	
Satisfied	74%
Dissatisfied	25
Don't know	1

Sacramento Region	
Very satisfied	25%
Somewhat satisfied	49
Somewhat dissatisfied	15
Very dissatisfied	10
Don't know	1

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Satisfied	79%	75%	73%	80%
Dissatisfied	21	25	26	20
Don't know	0	0	1	0

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Very satisfied	27%	28%	25%	25%
Somewhat satisfied	52	47	48	55
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	19	15	12
Very dissatisfied	7	6	11	8
Don't know	0	0	1	0

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Satisfied	67%	80%
Dissatisfied	32	19
Don't know	1	1

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Very satisfied	23%	26%
Somewhat satisfied	44	54
Somewhat dissatisfied	18	12
Very dissatisfied	14	7
Don't know	1	1

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Satisfied	55%	66%	76%	91%
Dissatisfied	44	33	23	8
Don't know	1	1	1	1

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Very satisfied	14%	13%	25%	44%
Somewhat satisfied	41	53	51	47
Somewhat dissatisfied	22	21	18	4
Very dissatisfied	22	12	5	4
Don't know	1	1	1	1

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Satisfied	58%	80%
Dissatisfied	40	19
Don't know	2	1

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Very satisfied	13%	29%
Somewhat satisfied	45	51
Somewhat dissatisfied	20	14
Very dissatisfied	20	5
Don't know	2	1

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgage	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Satisfied	58%	78%	84%
Dissatisfied	40	21	16
Don't know	2	1	0

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgage	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Very satisfied	13%	26%	36%
Somewhat satisfied	45	52	48
Somewhat dissatisfied	20	15	11
Very dissatisfied	20	6	5
Don't know	2	1	0

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Satisfied	79%	62%
Dissatisfied	20	38
Don't know	1	0

	White	Other Racial Groups
Very satisfied	29%	16%
Somewhat satisfied	50	46
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	21
Very dissatisfied	6	17
Don't know	1	0

Comparison among People with Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Satisfied	68%	74%	85%
Dissatisfied	32	25	14
Don't know	0	1	1

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Very satisfied	17%	27%	33%
Somewhat satisfied	51	47	52
Somewhat dissatisfied	16	17	10
Very dissatisfied	16	8	4
Don't know	0	1	1

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Satisfied	82%	75%	69%
Dissatisfied	16	25	30
Don't know	2	0	1

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Very satisfied	33%	24%	20%
Somewhat satisfied	49	51	49
Somewhat dissatisfied	11	16	17
Very dissatisfied	5	9	13
Don't know	2	0	1

Less than half are happy with the direction the Sacramento region is heading

Only 49 percent of residents in the Sacramento region believe that things in the Sacramento region are going in the right direction. The remaining 51 percent either think the region is going in the wrong direction (36%) or don't know (15%). This is the first time less than half of the area's inhabitants are pleased with the direction the region is heading since our annual survey started in 2002 (59% right direction in 2006, 62% in 2005, 60% in 2004, 58% in 2003, and 65% in 2002)⁶.

Happiness with the direction the Sacramento region is heading differs significantly depending on where people live. Residents in the City of Sacramento (42%) are the most likely to report that things in the region are going in the wrong direction (32% for other places in Sacramento County, 27% in Yolo County, 38% in Placer County, and 35% in El Dorado County).

Household income, homeownership, and age also have some impact. More than half of homeowners with mortgages (52%) and those aged 40 or younger (53%) agree that the region is heading in the right direction. Sixty-two percent of those households with an income of \$100,000 or more share a similar view. In sharp contrast, almost half of those whose household income is less than \$30,000 (48%) claim that things in the region are going in the wrong direction. More than 40 percent of renters (44%) are similarly pessimistic.

“Do you think things in the Sacramento region are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”¹

Historical Comparison

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Don't Know
2008	49%	36%	15%
2006 ²	59	27	14
2005 ³	62	25	13
2004 ⁴	60	29	11
2003 ⁵	58	31	11
2002 ⁶	65	21	14

¹This question is modified from *Public Policy Institute of California* statewide surveys. Baldassare, Mark. 2002.

²Liu, Amy, Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith. 2006

³Liu, Amy, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

⁴Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁵Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁶Liu, Amy. 2002.

⁶ Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Right direction	51%	46%	50%	48%
Wrong direction	35	38	37	27
Don't know	14	16	13	25

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Right direction	47%	53%
Wrong direction	42	32
Don't know	11	15

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non- homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgage	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Right direction	43%	52%	48%
Wrong direction	44	35	31
Don't know	13	13	21

Comparison among People with Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 or Older
Right direction	53%	49%	44%
Wrong direction	35	37	36
Don't know	12	14	20

Comparison among People with Different Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Right direction	37%	49%	51%	62%
Wrong direction	48	36	33	26
Don't know	15	15	16	12

The majority are pessimistic about the future economy

Almost two-thirds (64%) of area residents think that during the next twelve months the region will face financial instability. Only 26 percent believe that we will have good times, and 10 percent don't know. Democrats (71%), Independents and those with other party affiliations (70%), middle-age residents (71%), homeowners with mortgages (69%), and females (68%) are more pessimistic about the future.

This is a reversal of the 2006 results when more than 60 percent of the people were optimistic about the financial situation in the region (65% were optimistic in 2005, 60% in 2004, and 72% in 2002). This year, even fewer (26%) believe we will have good times than in 2003 (32%) when California faced a huge budget deficit and a weak economy due to the deflation of the high technology bubble⁷.

“Think about economic conditions in the Sacramento region. Do you think that, financially, during the next 12 months we will have good times or bad times? ¹”

Historical Comparison

	Good Times	Bad Times	Don't Know
2008	26%	64%	10%
2006 ²	60	31	9
2005 ³	65	27	8
2004 ⁴	60	31	9
2003 ⁵	32	61	7
2002 ⁶	72	18	10

¹This question is modified from *Public Policy Institute of California* statewide surveys. Baldassare, Mark. 2002.

²Liu, Amy, Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith. 2006

³Liu, Amy, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

⁴Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁵Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁶Liu, Amy. 2002.

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Good times	21%	32%	21%
Bad times	71	58	70
Don't know	8	10	9

Comparison among People with Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Good times	33%	23%	23%
Bad times	55	71	63
Don't know	12	6	14

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgage	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Good times	31%	24%	23%
Bad times	57	69	63
Don't know	12	7	14

⁷ Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Good times	31%	22%
Bad times	61	68
Don't know	8	10

High gas prices: The biggest problem in the region

As oil prices have soared to an all time high, gas prices are approaching \$4.00 a gallon in Sacramento and many places in California. It's no wonder that now fully 94 percent of people in the Sacramento region believe the high price of gas is a problem: 74 percent see it as a big problem, and 20 percent regard it as somewhat of a concern. This is an issue on which residents from all areas of the region agree without regard to the city or county in which they live or with which political parties they have registered.

When asked about 12 major issues facing the Sacramento region, respondents feel high gas prices are the biggest concern – more problematic than the state budget deficit (71%), the economy (56%), the weak housing market (54%), or traffic congestion (50%). Other areas of challenge for the region's residents include affordable healthcare (43%), carbon dioxide and other air pollution (39%), the quality of public education (38%), affordable housing (36%), the budget deficit in their city or county (31%), crime (31%), and flood control (23%).

High gas prices seem to have more impact on those with less money, non-white residents, and women in the region. Eighty-one percent of those making \$30,000 or less and 83 percent of those with household incomes between \$30,000 and \$49,999 regard the high price of gasoline as a big problem. Eighty-one percent of non-white residents and 77 percent of women have also expressed a great deal of concern about this issue.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. High gas price? ¹”

	Sacramento Region
Big problem	74%
Somewhat of a problem	20
Not a problem	5
Don't know	1

¹This question is modified from *Public Policy Institute of California* statewide surveys. Baldassare, Mark. 2002.

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Big problem	81%	83%	75%	60%
Somewhat problematic	13	15	20	30
Not a problem	5	2	5	9
Don't know	1	0	0	1

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Big problem	71%	81%
Somewhat of a problem	22	16
Not a problem	7	3
Don't know	0	0

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	70%	77%
Somewhat of a problem	23	18
Not a problem	7	4
Don't know	0	1

State budget deficit: the second most challenging issue facing the region

Ninety-one percent of area residents think the state budget deficit is a problem, with 71 percent reporting it is a big problem and 20 percent saying it is somewhat problematic. When asked about 12 major issues facing the region, respondents report the state budget deficit is the second most serious concern – more problematic than all the issues listed except for high gas prices.

The concern for the budget is widely shared by the general public, as well as registered voters, without regard to county of residence, racial background, and political party affiliation. For example, 72 percent of Republicans, 74 percent of Democrats, and 75 percent of other voters agree that the state budget deficit is a big problem. However, gender and homeownership affect opinions on this issue. Women (75%) and homeowners (75%) are more likely than men (66%) and non-homeowners (64%) to report that the deficit is a major problem.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. State budget deficit? ”

	Sacramento Region
Big problem	71%
Somewhat of a problem	20
Not a problem	4
Don't know	5

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	72%	74%	75%
Somewhat of a problem	20	19	20
Not a problem	5	4	2
Don't know	3	3	3

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	66%	75%
Somewhat of a problem	24	18
Not a problem	6	2
Don't know	4	5

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Big problem	64%	75%
Somewhat of a problem	24	18
Not a problem	3	4
Don't know	9	3

Many residents don't know whether the budget deficit in their city or county is a big issue, with the exception of the City of Sacramento

Compared to the budget situation in the state, many area residents claim to be unclear about the budget situation in their city or county. Five percent of residents don't know whether the budget deficit in the state is a problem, but, in sharp contrast, almost one out of four area residents (24%) have no idea whether their city or county budget deficit is a problem or not.

Although many people in the region say the state budget deficit (71%) is a big problem, less than one-third (31%) consider it to be a challenge for their city or county (local budget deficit). Twenty-eight percent report that it is somewhat of a problem, and 17 percent claim it is not a problem.

However, people in Sacramento County (37%) are more likely than residents in Yolo (24%), El Dorado (21%), or Placer (15%) counties to say that their local budget deficit is a big problem. Closer examination shows that people in the City of Sacramento (49%) are twice as likely as those in other places in Sacramento County (25%) to claim that the budget deficit in their city or county is a big issue. Among the registered voters, Democrats (37%) are more likely than Republicans (25%) or other voters (26%) to claim that local budget deficit is a big problem.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. Budget deficit in your city or county? ”

Comparison between the State Budget Deficit and the Local Budget Deficit

	Budget Deficit in their City or County	Budget Deficit in California
Big problem	31%	71%
Somewhat of a problem	28	20
Not a problem	17	4
Don't know	24	5

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Big problem	21%	15%	37%	24%
Somewhat of a problem	32	25	27	37
Not a problem	19	34	12	20
Don't know	28	26	24	19

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Big problem	49%	25%
Somewhat of a problem	26	28
Not a problem	6	18
Don't know	19	29

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	25%	37%	26%
Somewhat of a problem	28	28	30
Not a problem	23	12	17
Don't know	24	23	27

The Economy: The third greatest concern in the region

Eighty-seven percent of the residents in the Sacramento region believe that the economy is problematic, with 56 percent saying it is a big problem. This (56%) is the third biggest challenge facing the region, just after high gas prices (74%) and the state budget deficit (71%). This also holds true for the residents of each of the four counties in the region, including those living in the City of Sacramento and those living in other places in Sacramento County.

However, those with a lower household income, non-white residents, and women view the economy more negatively. In fact, more than 60 percent of those whose household income is less than \$50,000 (65% for those with less than \$30,000 and 62% with incomes of \$30,000 to \$50,000), non-white residents (62%), and women (61%) believe the economy is a big issue for the region.

There is also a big division in the perception of the economy associated with political party affiliation. Less than half of Republicans (44%) feel that the economy is a big problem, whereas 66 percent of Democrats and 57 percent of members of other political parties say it is a big challenge for the region.

Currently, more people believe the economy in the region is a big problem compared to 2003 (56% a big problem in 2008 vs. 40% a big problem in 2003) –the last time the state had a record budget deficit and an economic slowdown due to the bursting of the high technology bubble.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. The economy?”

Comparison between 2008 and 2003

	2008	2003 ¹
Big problem	56%	40%
Somewhat of a problem	31	47
Not a problem	11	12
Don't know	2	1

¹Liu, Amy, and Jessica Hayes. 2003.

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Big problem	65%	62%	58%	42%
Somewhat problematic	23	24	31	41
Not a problem	8	12	10	16
Don't know	4	2	1	1

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Big problem	54%	62%
Somewhat of a problem	32	25
Not a problem	12	10
Don't know	2	3

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	49%	61%
Somewhat of a problem	32	29
Not a problem	17	8
Don't know	2	2

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	44%	66%	57%
Somewhat of a problem	37	25	36
Not a problem	18	6	6
Don't know	1	3	1

Middle income residents and homeowners are more likely to say the housing market is a big problem

Housing sales have slowed dramatically, and housing prices have dropped steeply in the past year. Now 54 percent of those living in the Sacramento region believe the weak housing market is a big problem, and 25 percent think it is less of a concern. Combined, the weak housing market is a problem in the eyes of 79 percent of the area's population.

Democrats (61%), Independents and those belonging to other parties (58%), and women (61%) are more likely than Republicans (50%) and men (47%) to feel that a weak housing market is a big challenge for the region.

Unlike many other problems, this issue seems to have a greater effect on the middle class and homeowners. Those with household incomes ranging from \$50,000 to less than \$100,000 (60%) or from \$30,000 to \$50,000 (58%) are more likely than those under \$30,000 (55%) or over \$100,000 (49%) to think it is a big concern. Homeowners (57%), regardless of whether they own mortgages (58%) or have no mortgages (56%), are more concerned about the current housing market than those who rent in the region (49%).

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. The weak housing market?”

	Sacramento Region
Big problem	54%
Somewhat of a problem	25
Not a problem	17
Don't know	4

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	50%	61%	58%
Somewhat of a problem	26	24	24
Not a problem	21	12	13
Don't know	3	3	5

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	47%	61%
Somewhat of a problem	25	24
Not a problem	25	11
Don't know	3	4

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Big problem	55%	58%	60%	49%
Somewhat problematic	26	22	23	28
Not a problem	13	16	14	22
Don't know	6	4	3	1

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Big problem	49%	57%
Somewhat of a problem	25	24
Not a problem	17	17
Don't know	9	2

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgages	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Big problem	49%	58%	56%
Somewhat of a problem	25	25	23
Not a problem	17	16	18
Don't know	9	1	3

Affordable housing still considered by many to be a major challenge

With the deep drop in home sales and prices, housing has become more affordable in the Sacramento region in the past year. Currently only 36 percent still view affordable housing as a big problem, with another 26 percent considering it to be somewhat of a problem. This is a major turnaround from what happened between 2002 and 2006. During those years, the availability of affordable housing was one of the top concerns (51% in 2006, 48% in 2005, 50% in 2004, 51% in 2003, and 47% in 2002). Although this level of concern fluctuated slightly from 2002 to 2006, it consistently held its position as either the second or third highest rated problem among area residents until this year⁸.

However, many area residents still think affordable housing is a challenge. Half (50%) of non-homeowners and almost half of those with household earnings of less than \$50,000 a year (47%) report that affordable housing is a big problem. Moreover, 44 percent of non-white residents, 40 percent of those 40 or younger, and 39 percent of females also believe housing is unaffordable to them.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. The availability of housing you can afford?”

Historical Comparison

	Big Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know
2008 ¹	36%	26%	35%	3%
2006 ²	51	26	22	1
2005 ³	48	27	23	2
2004 ⁴	50	31	16	3
2003 ⁵	51	33	14	2
2002 ⁶	47	33	18	2

¹The wording in our 2005, 2006, and 2008 surveys is slightly different from our 2002, 2003, and 2004 surveys. The exact wording in the previous years is, “I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem . . . the availability of affordable housing?” However, in 2005, 2006, and 2008 we ask about “the availability of housing you can afford?”

²Liu, Amy, Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith. 2006

³Liu, Amy, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

⁴Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁵Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁶Liu, Amy. 2002.

⁸ Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgages	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Big problem	50%	33%	29%
Somewhat of a problem	26	28	23
Not a problem	21	37	45
Don't know	3	2	3

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Big problem	47%	47%	35%	23%
Somewhat problematic	23	25	29	28
Not a problem	25	24	34	49
Don't know	5	4	2	0

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Big problem	33%	44%
Somewhat of a problem	25	28
Not a problem	39	25
Don't know	3	3

Comparison among People of Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Big problem	40%	35%	34%
Somewhat of a problem	28	29	18
Not a problem	30	34	44
Don't know	2	2	4

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	33%	39%
Somewhat of a problem	24	28
Not a problem	40	31
Don't know	3	2

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	26%	43%	35%
Somewhat of a problem	24	27	28
Not a problem	47	28	34
Don't know	3	2	3

Many area residents claim affordable healthcare is also a big problem

Forty-three percent of residents in the Sacramento region think affordable healthcare is a big problem, 27 percent regard it as somewhat of a problem, and 27 percent seem to believe it is of no concern. Affordable healthcare is more problematic for those whose families have earnings of less than \$30,000 a year (54%), non-homeowners (54%), non-white residents (51%), those 40 or younger (47%), and women (47%). Democrats (51%) have also expressed more concern over this issue than Republicans (32%).

From the inception of the annual regional survey in 2002 to the present, concern about affordable healthcare in the region has fluctuated between a low of 38% in 2005 and the high of 49% in 2003 (43% in 2008, 41% in 2006, 38% in 2005, 46% in 2004, 49% in 2003, and 42% in 2002)⁹.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. The availability of healthcare you can afford?”

Historical Comparison

	Big Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know
2008 ¹	43%	27%	27%	3%
2006 ²	41	30	27	2
2005 ³	38	30	30	2
2004 ⁴	46	32	17	5
2003 ⁵	49	33	14	4
2002 ⁶	42	34	20	4

¹ The wording in our 2005, 2006, and 2008 surveys is slightly different from our 2002, 2003, and 2004 surveys. The exact wording in the previous years is, “I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not a problem: availability of affordable healthcare?” However, in 2005, 2006, and 2008, we ask about “the availability of healthcare you can afford?”

² Liu, Amy, Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith. 2006

³ Liu, Amy, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

⁴ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁵ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁶ Liu, Amy. 2002.

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Big problem	54%	49%	44%	32%
Somewhat problematic	20	24	31	32
Not a problem	22	22	25	35
Don't know	4	5	1	1

⁹ Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Big problem	54%	41%
Somewhat of a problem	22	29
Not a problem	21	28
Don't know	3	2

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Big problem	40%	51%
Somewhat of a problem	29	24
Not a problem	29	22
Don't know	2	3

Comparison among People of Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Big problem	47%	44%	38%
Somewhat of a problem	31	30	19
Not a problem	19	25	40
Don't know	3	1	3

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	39%	47%
Somewhat of a problem	28	27
Not a problem	31	24
Don't know	2	2

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	32%	51%	45%
Somewhat of a problem	32	24	28
Not a problem	35	23	22
Don't know	1	2	5

Traffic congestion drops to fifth ranked regional problem

Fifty percent of the residents in the region still think traffic congestion on major roads is a big problem, and 33 percent are slightly less concerned. This is the first time since the introduction of the annual survey in 2002 that area residents don't think traffic is the number one issue in the region. From 2002 to 2006, traffic congestion was at the top of

the Sacramento region’s list of concerns (50% in 2008, 70% in 2006, 66% in 2005, 67% in 2004, 58% in 2003, and 73% in 2002).

Several factors, including length of residence, respondent’s age, homeownership, and county of residence, appear to affect perceptions on this issue. People who have lived in the region 20 or more years (56%), people age 41 to 64 (52%) or 65 and above (55%), homeowners (53%), and residents from Placer (55%) and Sacramento (52%) counties are more likely to report that traffic congestion is a major challenge in the region.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. Traffic congestion on major roads? ”

Historical Comparison

	Big Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don’t Know
2008	50%	33%	16%	1%
2006 ¹	70	24	5	1
2005 ²	66	26	8	0
2004 ³	67	27	5	1
2003 ⁴	58	35	6	1
2002 ⁵	73	21	6	0

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

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

³ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁴ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁵ Liu, Amy. 2002.

Comparison among People with Different Length of Residence in the Region

	6 or Less Years	7 to 19 Years	20 or More Years
Big problem	36%	46%	56%
Somewhat of a problem	31	35	32
Not a problem	30	17	11
Don’t know	3	2	1

Comparison among People of Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Big problem	41%	52%	55%
Somewhat of a problem	38	34	27
Not a problem	20	13	16
Don’t know	1	1	2

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners With Mortgages	Homeowners Without Mortgage
Big problem	44%	53%	53%
Somewhat of a problem	32	34	31
Not a problem	20	13	15
Don't know	4	0	1

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Big problem	49%	55%	52%	33%
Somewhat of a problem	30	26	34	40
Not a problem	21	18	12	24
Don't know	0	1	2	3

Almost 40 percent perceive carbon dioxide and other air pollution as a big issue

Concerns about carbon dioxide and other pollution have remained quite consistent among area residents since 2002 (39% in 2008, 42% in 2006 and 2005, and 43% in 2004 through 2002)¹⁰. However, there are significant differences of opinion related to political party affiliation, household income, age, gender, and residence. Among registered voters, Democrats (48%) are more concerned about carbon dioxide and other air pollution than are Republicans (26%) and other voters (35%). Among the general public, women (43%), those under the age of 40 (43%), and residents living in the City of Sacramento (43%) or Yolo County (41%) are more likely to view air pollution as a big problem. Those with a household income of less than \$30,000 a year (48%) are the most likely to think carbon dioxide and other air pollution is a big problem.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. Carbon dioxide and other air pollution?”

Historical Comparison

	Big Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know
2008 ¹	39%	34%	21%	6%
2006 ²	42	43	14	1
2005 ³	42	46	12	0
2004 ⁴	43	45	12	0
2003 ⁵	43	42	14	1
2002 ⁶	43	42	14	1

¹⁰ Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

¹ The wording in our 2008 survey is slightly different from our 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 surveys. The exact wording in the previous years is, "I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not a problem: air pollution?" However, in 2008, we ask about "Carbon dioxide and other air pollution" instead of "air pollution".

² Liu, Amy, Lisa Hood, Debra Matessino, Angela Pyara, and Kara Smith. 2006

³ Liu, Amy, Brenda M. Hofer, and Joseph Sheley. 2005.

⁴ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁵ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁶ Liu, Amy. 2002.

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	26%	48%	35%
Somewhat of a problem	39	34	34
Not a problem	31	12	24
Don't know	4	6	7

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	32%	43%
Somewhat of a problem	33	35
Not a problem	29	16
Don't know	6	6

Comparison among People of Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Big problem	43%	37%	39%
Somewhat of a problem	34	36	30
Not a problem	16	23	23
Don't know	7	4	8

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Big problem	43%	35%
Somewhat of a problem	35	36
Not a problem	15	22
Don't know	7	7

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Big problem	36%	36%	39%	41%
Somewhat of a problem	30	31	35	31
Not a problem	29	27	19	21
Don't know	5	6	7	7

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Big problem	48%	38%	39%	32%
Somewhat problematic	24	34	37	38
Not a problem	16	21	18	28
Don't know	12	7	6	2

Fewer residents are concerned about public education compared to previous years

Currently, 38 percent of the residents in the region think quality of public education is a big problem, and 37 percent regard it as somewhat problematic. Area residents are less concerned over quality of public education (38%) this year than they were in 2006 (46%), 2005 (46%), 2004 (46%), and 2003 (50%), even though their level of concern was almost the same as in 2002 (37%)¹¹.

People from the City of Sacramento (42%), women (42%), and middle aged residents (41 to 64 years old, 40%) are more likely to perceive the quality of public education as a big issue. Democrats (43%) and other voters (43%) are also more likely than Republicans (35%) to report public education as a big problem.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. Quality of public education?”

Historical Comparison

	Big Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know
2008	38%	37%	18%	7%
2006 ¹	46	37	12	5
2005 ²	46	37	14	3
2004 ³	46	39	12	3
2003 ⁴	50	36	12	2
2002 ⁵	37	41	18	4

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

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

³ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2004.

⁴ Liu, Amy, and Joseph Sheley. 2003.

⁵ Liu, Amy. 2002.

¹¹ Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006, Liu, Hofer, and Sheley 2005, Liu and Sheley 2004 and 2003, and Liu 2002.

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Big problem	42%	35%
Somewhat of a problem	36	40
Not a problem	13	18
Don't know	9	7

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Big problem	34%	42%
Somewhat of a problem	38	37
Not a problem	22	14
Don't know	6	7

Comparison among People of Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Big problem	35%	40%	39%
Somewhat of a problem	38	37	37
Not a problem	21	19	11
Don't know	6	4	13

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	35%	43%	43%
Somewhat of a problem	38	38	39
Not a problem	21	13	12
Don't know	6	6	6

Crime is a bigger issue for the poor, renters, and those living in the City of Sacramento

Thirty-one percent of area residents think crime is a big problem, 43 percent consider it to be somewhat of a problem, and 24 percent indicate that it is not a problem. Residents today (31%) are more likely than in 2003 (27%) to report that crime is a big concern (Liu and Hayes 2003).

Those living in households with an annual income of less than \$30,000 (44%), non-white residents (42%), renters (41%), elderly residents (40% for those age 65 or older), residents from Sacramento County (38%), and especially those from the City of Sacramento (43%), are more likely to consider crime a big challenge in the region. Democrats (35%) are also more likely than Republicans (24%) and Independents and voters from other parties (27%) to feel crime is a big problem.

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. Crime?”

Comparison between 2008 and 2003

	2008	2003 ¹
Big problem	31%	27%
Somewhat of a problem	43	45
Not a problem	24	23
Don't know	2	5

¹Liu, Amy, and Jessica Hayes. 2003.

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less Than \$50,000	\$50,000 to Less Than \$100,000	\$100,000 or More
Big problem	44%	37%	29%	18%
Somewhat problematic	35	38	45	51
Not a problem	20	21	24	30
Don't know	1	4	2	1

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Big problem	13%	19%	38%	23%
Somewhat of a problem	46	39	43	44
Not a problem	37	41	17	31
Don't know	4	1	2	2

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Big problem	43%	32%
Somewhat of a problem	43	44
Not a problem	13	21
Don't know	1	3

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Other Racial Groups
Big problem	27%	42%
Somewhat of a problem	45	40
Not a problem	26	17
Don't know	2	1

Comparison between Homeowners and Non-homeowners

	Non-homeowners	Homeowners
Big problem	41%	27%
Somewhat of a problem	36	46
Not a problem	21	25
Don't know	2	2

Comparison among People of Different Ages

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Big problem	31%	27%	40%
Somewhat of a problem	41	46	39
Not a problem	27	25	19
Don't know	1	2	2

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Big problem	24%	35%	27%
Somewhat of a problem	46	46	46
Not a problem	28	17	25
Don't know	2	2	2

Flood control: now the least worried issue in the region

Twenty-three percent of residents in the Sacramento region think flood control is a big problem, and it has now become the least important of the 12 issues considered in this year's survey. Although residents in Sacramento and Yolo counties (both 26%) are more likely to believe flood control is a big issue in the region, only about one in four (23%) claim it is a big problem in the region. Even in the City of Sacramento, only 29 percent say it is a big concern.

On February 22, 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger inspected the levees in Sacramento and the Central Valley with federal and local officials. They found that many levees in California were in need of repair. On Feb. 24, Governor Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in order to obtain more funding from the state and federal governments to speed up repair work on the levees. Public awareness of the flood risk in the region increased after the Governor declared a state of emergency for the levees in the Central Valley. Before Feb. 24, 2006, a majority of the people in the region were not too concerned about flood control. At that time, only 38 percent thought flood control was a big problem, 37 percent regarded it as somewhat of a problem, 20 percent believed it was not a problem, and 5 percent didn't know. After February 24, this perception changed. A majority of the residents (54%) were very concerned about flood control and thought it was a big problem. Thirty-two percent regarded it as somewhat of a problem. Only 11 percent believed it was not a problem, and three percent didn't know (Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006).

That year (2006), flood control became the second most important regional issue (54%) after traffic congestion (70%), and it was considered more problematic than issues of affordable housing (51%), quality of public education (46%), population growth and development (45%), air pollution (42%), and affordable healthcare (41%)¹².

“I am going to read you a list of issues in the Sacramento region. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem. Flood control?”

Comparison between 2008 and 2006

	2008	Before Declaration (Before Feb. 24, 2006)	After Declaration (After Feb. 24, 2006)
Big problem	23%	38%	54%
Somewhat of a problem	32	37	32
Not a problem	40	20	11
Don't know	5	5	3

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Big problem	10%	15%	26%	26%
Somewhat of a problem	22	25	34	39
Not a problem	63	57	34	33
Don't know	5	3	6	2

Comparison between the City of Sacramento and Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places In Sacramento County
Big problem	29%	22%
Somewhat of a problem	39	29
Not a problem	27	43
Don't know	5	6

Comparison among Different Issues in 2006

	Big Problem	Somewhat of a Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know
Traffic congestion	70%	24%	5%	1%
Flood control ¹	54	32	11	3
Affordable housing	51	26	22	1
Quality of public education	46	37	12	5
Air pollution	42	43	14	1
Affordable healthcare	41	30	27	2

¹ Data collected after the Governor's declaration of emergency for flood control on Feb. 24, 2006.

¹² Liu, Hood, Matessino, Pyara, and Smith 2006.

Strong support for limiting new housing construction in flood areas

An overwhelming majority of residents still think local government should minimize flood risks in the region. Currently, 86 percent think local governments should limit the construction of new homes in places with inadequate flood protection. Only 11 percent take the opposite position, and three percent have not yet formed an opinion. These results are almost the same as we reported in the past two years (88% yes, 9% no, and 3% don't know in 2007 vs. 88% yes, 8% no, and 4% didn't know in 2006)¹³.

Very strong support for restricting growth in flood prone areas is shared by an overwhelming majority of the general public no matter which county they live in (87% in Yolo and Placer, 84% in El Dorado, and 85% in Sacramento County). This plan is also endorsed by a vast majority of registered voters in the region regardless of whether they are Democrats (91%), Republicans (85%), Independents or other voters (87%).

“Do you think local governments should limit the construction of new homes in places without adequate flood protection?”

Historical Comparison

	Sacramento Region (2008)	Sacramento Region (2007)	Sacramento Region (2006)
Yes	86%	88%	88%
No	11	9	8
Don't know	3	3	4

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Yes	84%	87%	85%	87%
No	13	11	11	11
Don't know	3	2	4	2

Comparison between the City of Sacramento or Other Places in Sacramento County

	City of Sacramento	Other Places in Sacramento County
Yes	85%	85%
No	10	12
Don't know	5	3

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters
Yes	91%	85%	87%
No	7	13	13
Don't know	2	2	0

¹³ Liu, Wehr, and Scott 2007, Liu, Scott, and Bowerman 2006.

Survey methods

The above results are based on part of our seventh annual survey, *The 2008 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*. This project is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1,200 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 the perception of the quality of life and public opinion in the Sacramento region on a wide range of important local and national issues.

More than 40 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 16 to March 2, 2008, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. The sample is quite representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region when compared with the 2000 U.S. Census (9% in the Census vs. 10% in the sample in Yolo County; 9% in the Census vs. 9% in the sample in El Dorado County, 14% in the Census vs. 16% in the sample in Placer County, and 68% residents in the Census vs. 65% in the sample in Sacramento County). The small differences may reflect the changes in the population of the region. The margin of error for the survey in the region is approximately ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for group comparisons would be higher than ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento regional findings with those from other California regions, as well as those from 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 Community Engagement Center at California State University, Sacramento, sponsored this project.

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 ten years, including:

- 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007 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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