

Poll: Affordable Housing and Single-Family Homes Remain Challenging Issues for the Sacramento Region

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Majority of Sacramento Residents Regard Affordable Housing a Problem

Over 80 percent of Sacramento residents (84%) perceive the availability of affordable housing a regional problem. This is one of the findings of *The 2003 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*, conducted February 15 to March 13, 2003 by the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). Survey results indicate that 51 percent of Sacramento residents regard the availability of affordable housing as a big problem, and 33 percent perceive it as somewhat of a problem.

The percentage of people who think affordable housing is a big challenge has increased by 4 percent within one year, from 47 percent in 2002 to 51 percent in 2003 (Liu 2002). This may reflect the hot housing market in the Sacramento region in recent years. Sacramento residents (51%) are also more likely to think affordable housing is a major issue in the region, compared to Californians as a whole (44%) (Public Policy Institute of California 2002).

Housing prices in the Sacramento region have increased dramatically in the past few years. According to a recent report by the National Association of Realtors, between the fourth quarter of 2001 and the fourth quarter of 2002, Sacramento became the hottest housing market in the nation. The median price for an existing single-family home increased 26.7 percent to \$224,209 during this time frame, the largest percentage increase in the nation (Max 2003).

This study indicates that the Sacramento region and the San Francisco Bay Area are rapidly becoming similar in terms of citizen concern about affordable housing. As it is in the San Francisco Bay Area (59%), affordable housing is listed as a big problem facing the region by more than half of Sacramento residents (51%). Affordable housing in the Sacramento region is rated worse by residents than in Los Angeles (44%) and other Southern California regions (41%).

To a certain degree, the Sacramento region has become an extension of the Bay Area in recent years. During the economic boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, many Bay Area residents moved to the Sacramento region in search of their dream homes. For example, based on the Internal Revenue Service Data, Kaplan and Bazeley reported in February 2003 that 30 percent of people in California who moved to Sacramento County in 2001 were from the Bay Area.

Perception of affordable housing in the Sacramento region varies along county lines. Residents in Yolo (60%) and Sacramento counties (52%) are more likely than residents in El Dorado (42%) and Placer counties (43%) to regard affordable housing as a big problem.

Such perceptions also differ by household incomes, current housing situations, political party affiliations, and race. Residents with lower incomes are much more worried about affordable housing, with 61 percent of respondents whose household income is less than \$30,000 regarding affordable housing as a big problem. Only 35 percent of those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more think so.

Democrats (56%) and other voters (58%) are more likely than Republicans (37%) to consider affordable housing a big problem in the region. Renters (65%), those who are living in non-single-family housing (62%), and nonwhites (58%) are also more likely to think that is the case.

“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.”

Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region

	State of California ¹	Sacramento Region (2003)	Sacramento Region ² (2002)
Affordable housing ³			
Big problem	44%	51%	47%
Somewhat of a problem	25	33	33
Not a problem	28	14	18
Don't know	3	2	2

¹ Source: Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey: Special Survey on Land Use, November 2002, pages 4-5, questions 14.

² Source: The 2002 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region, June 2002, www.csus.edu/ssis/.

³ The wording in this survey is slightly different from the Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey. This survey asks about the “availability of affordable housing,” while PPIC uses “the availability of housing you can afford”.

Comparison among Different Regions in California

	Sacramento Region	SF Bay ¹ Area	Los ¹ Angeles	Other ¹ Southern California	Central ¹ Valley
Affordable housing					
Big problem	51%	59%	44%	41%	28%
Somewhat of a problem	33	23	28	25	26
Not a problem	14	17	24	33	44
Don't know	2	1	4	1	2

¹ Source: Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey: Special Survey on Land Use, November 2002, pages 4-5, question 14.

Comparison among the Four Regional Counties

	Sacramento Region	Sacramento County	Yolo County	Placer County	El Dorado County
Affordable housing					
Big problem	51%	52%	60%	43%	42%
Somewhat of a problem	33	31	23	45	35
Not a problem	14	14	16	11	20
Don't know	2	3	1	1	3

Comparison among People with Different Household Income

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 - 99,999	\$100,000 Or More
Affordable housing			
Big problem	61%	51%	35%
Somewhat of a problem	26	34	45
Not a problem	11	14	18
Don't know	2	1	2

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Others
Affordable housing			
Big problem	37%	56%	58%
Somewhat of a problem	38	32	33
Not a problem	22	10	8
Don't know	3	2	1

Comparison between Renters and Homeowners

	Homeowners	Renters
Affordable housing		
Big problem	45%	65%
Somewhat of a problem	37	24
Not a problem	16	10
Don't know	2	1

Comparison between Those Living in Single-family Detached Home and Those Living in Other Types of Housing

	Those Living in Single-family Detached Housing	Those Living in Other Types of Housing
Affordable housing		
Big problem	47%	62%
Somewhat of a problem	36	24
Not a problem	15	13
Don't know	2	1

Comparison between Non-Hispanic Whites and Other Racial Groups

	Non-Hispanic White (White)	Other Racial Groups (Nonwhite)
Affordable housing		
Big problem	47%	58%
Somewhat of a problem	36	28
Not a problem	15	13
Don't know	2	1

Nine in Ten Sacramento Residents Prefer to Live in Single-family Detached Homes

Although more than half of Sacramento residents (51%) think affordable housing is a major problem in the region, an overwhelming majority (90%) still want to live in a single-family detached home if they have their choice. This finding is very similar to the one reported in a statewide survey (86%) by Public Policy Institute of California (November 2002).

Such preference is especially strong among residents who are: in El Dorado (95%) and Placer counties (93%); homeowners (95%); married (96%); in households with two or more people (93%); currently living in single-family detached homes (97%); and those with a yearly household income of \$30,000 or more (93% for those making \$30,000 and less than \$100,000, and 96% for those making \$100,000 or more). The majority of renters (78%), those with one-person households (77%), those who are currently living in other types of housing (69%), and those with household income of less than \$30,000 (77%) also want to live in single-family detached homes if they had their choice.

This is consistent with the results of the *2002 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region* (Liu 2002). In the 2002 survey, it was found that residents in the Sacramento region preferred living in single-family housing. Seven out of ten residents (70%) wanted a single-family home close to work. Half (50%) desired to live in a single-family home in the suburbs, even with a long commute. More residents in the region (50%) wanted to live in this type of housing than residents in other major California regions, such as the San Francisco Bay Area (31%), Los Angeles (48%), other Southern California regions (44%), and the Central Valley as a whole (44%) (Public Policy Institute of California 2001). Only 43 percent preferred single-family homes in a dense neighborhood close to parks, and even fewer people (33%) would choose multi-family housing.

Although an overwhelming majority of Sacramento residents (90%) prefer to live in single-family detached housing, a large number of residents are not living in that type of housing. Only seventy-three percent of the area residents live in a single-family detached home, with a gap of 17 percent. This is close to the statewide gap of 21 percent reported in a statewide survey conducted in November 2002 (Public Policy Institute of California 2002). The gap in the Sacramento region is especially wide for renters (49% = 78 - 29), those with households income less than \$30,000 (33%), those who have never married or are widowed (26%), and Yolo County residents (25%).

“Is the place you currently live in a single family detached home, attached home, apartment, or another type of dwelling?”

“If you had your choice, in which of the following would you prefer to live: a single - family detached home, attached home, apartment, or another type of dwelling?”

Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region

	California	Sacramento Region
Currently Live in a single-family detached home	65%	73%
Want to live in a single-family detached home	86	90

Comparison among the Four Regional Counties

	Sacramento County	Yolo County	Placer County	El Dorado County
Currently Live in a single-family detached home	71%	60%	84%	86%
Want to live in a single-family detached home	89	85	93	95

Comparison between Renters and Homeowners

	Homeowners	Renters
Currently Live in a single-family detached home	94%	29%
Want to live in a single-family detached home	95	78

Comparison among People with Different Marital Status

	Married	Separated, Divorced	Never Married, Widowed
Currently Live in a single-family detached home	87%	66%	55%
Want to live in a single-family detached home	96	87	81

Comparison among People with Different Household Sizes

	One Person Household	Two Person Household	Three or More Household
Currently Live in a single-family detached home	56%	75%	80%
Want to live in a single-family detached home	77	93	93

Comparison between Those Living in Single Detached Home and Those Living in Other Types of Housing

	Those Living in Single Detached Housing	Those Living in Other Types of Housing
Want to live in a single-family detached home	97%	69%
Want to live in an attached house	2	8
Want to live in an apartment	0.6	12
Want to live in another type of dwelling	0.8	11

Comparison among People with Different Household Income

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 - 99,999	\$100,000 Or More
Currently Live in a single-family detached home	44%	79%	95%
Want to live in a single-family detached home	77	93	96

Housing Preference in the Sacramento Region (2002)

	Definitely and Maybe Yes
Single-family housing close to work	70%
Single-family housing in the suburbs with a long commute	50
Single-family housing close to parks	43
Multi-family housing close to shops, schools, or transits	33

Preference for Single-Family Housing in the Suburbs in the Sacramento Region and Other Regions in California (2002)

	Sacramento Region	SF Bay ¹ Area	Los Angeles ¹	Other Southern California ¹	Central Valley ¹
Yes ²	50%	31%	48%	44%	44%
No	49	59	46	50	48
Don't know	1	10	6	6	8

¹ Source: Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey: Special Survey on Land Use, November 2001, p4. question 17.

² The wording in this survey is slightly different from the Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey. The response categories of this survey are “definitely yes”, “maybe yes”, “maybe no”, and “definitely no.” “Yes” here includes “definitely yes” and “maybe yes,” and “no” combines “definitely no” and “maybe no.”

Survey Methods

The above results are based on computer-assisted telephone surveys of 996 randomly selected adult residents age 18 or over in the Sacramento region. The objective of *The 2003 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region* is to assess the opinions of people in the Sacramento region regarding a wide range of local and national issues. While other surveys have examined the state and the Central Valley (from Bakersfield to Redding), this is the first comprehensive regional annual survey designed to focus on residents in the Sacramento region, which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties.

Over 30 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish, from February 15 to March 13, 2003, 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. 67% in the sample in Sacramento County, 14% in the Census vs. 16% in the sample in Placer County, 9% in the Census vs. 9% in the sample in Yolo County; and 9% in the Census vs. 8% in the sample in El Dorado County). The margin of error for the survey is approximately $\pm 3\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento region findings with those from other California regions and the state as a whole. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys.

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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 eight years, including:

- 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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