



**PPIC  
STATEWIDE  
SURVEY**

**MARCH 2003**

*Special Survey of Los Angeles  
in collaboration with the  
University of Southern  
California*

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*Mark Baldassare  
Research Director & Survey Director*

***Public  
Policy  
Institute of  
California***

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a private operating foundation established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. The Institute is dedicated to improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

PPIC's research agenda focuses on three program areas: population, economy, and governance and public finance. Studies within these programs are examining the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including education, health care, immigration, income distribution, welfare, urban growth, and state and local finance.

PPIC was created because three concerned citizens – William R. Hewlett, Roger W. Heyns, and Arjay Miller – recognized the need for linking objective research to the realities of California public policy. Their goal was to help the state's leaders better understand the intricacies and implications of contemporary issues and make informed public policy decisions when confronted with challenges in the future. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or state and federal legislation nor does it endorse or support any political parties or candidates for public office.

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**Public Policy Institute of California**

500 Washington Street, Suite 800 • San Francisco, California 94111

Telephone: (415) 291-4400 • Fax: (415) 291-4401

info@ppic.org • www.ppic.org

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## Preface

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The Los Angeles County Survey—a collaborative effort of the Public Policy Institute of California and the School of Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California—is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey.

This is the first in an annual series of PPIC surveys of Los Angeles County. The survey is partially supported by a three-year grant from the California Community Foundation. This series of large-scale, comprehensive public opinion surveys on social, economic, and political attitudes and policy preferences is designed to provide timely, relevant, and objective information on the county’s overall adult population, geographic areas, and diverse racial/ethnic, economic, and social groups.

Los Angeles County is the most populous county in the nation. With approximately 10 million residents, it is home to about 30 percent of the state’s population. The county has grown by nearly 2 million residents in the past 20 years, including more new immigrants than any other region of the country except the New York City area. Today, the county’s population is 45 percent Latino, 31 percent non-Latino white, 12 percent Asian, and 10 percent black—similar to the racial/ethnic profile that state demographers predict for California by 2040. The county is also home to large numbers of low-income residents. Reflecting the size and diversity of the county, local government is large and complex, as are the problems of delivering local services to residents. In recent years, local governments in Los Angeles County have confronted difficult issues such as providing health care for the uninsured, reducing air pollution, improving low-performing schools, coping with racial/ethnic tensions involving police actions, and coming to terms with local efforts to secede from the city of Los Angeles. There are also housing, transportation, land use, and environmental issues relating to population growth and development.

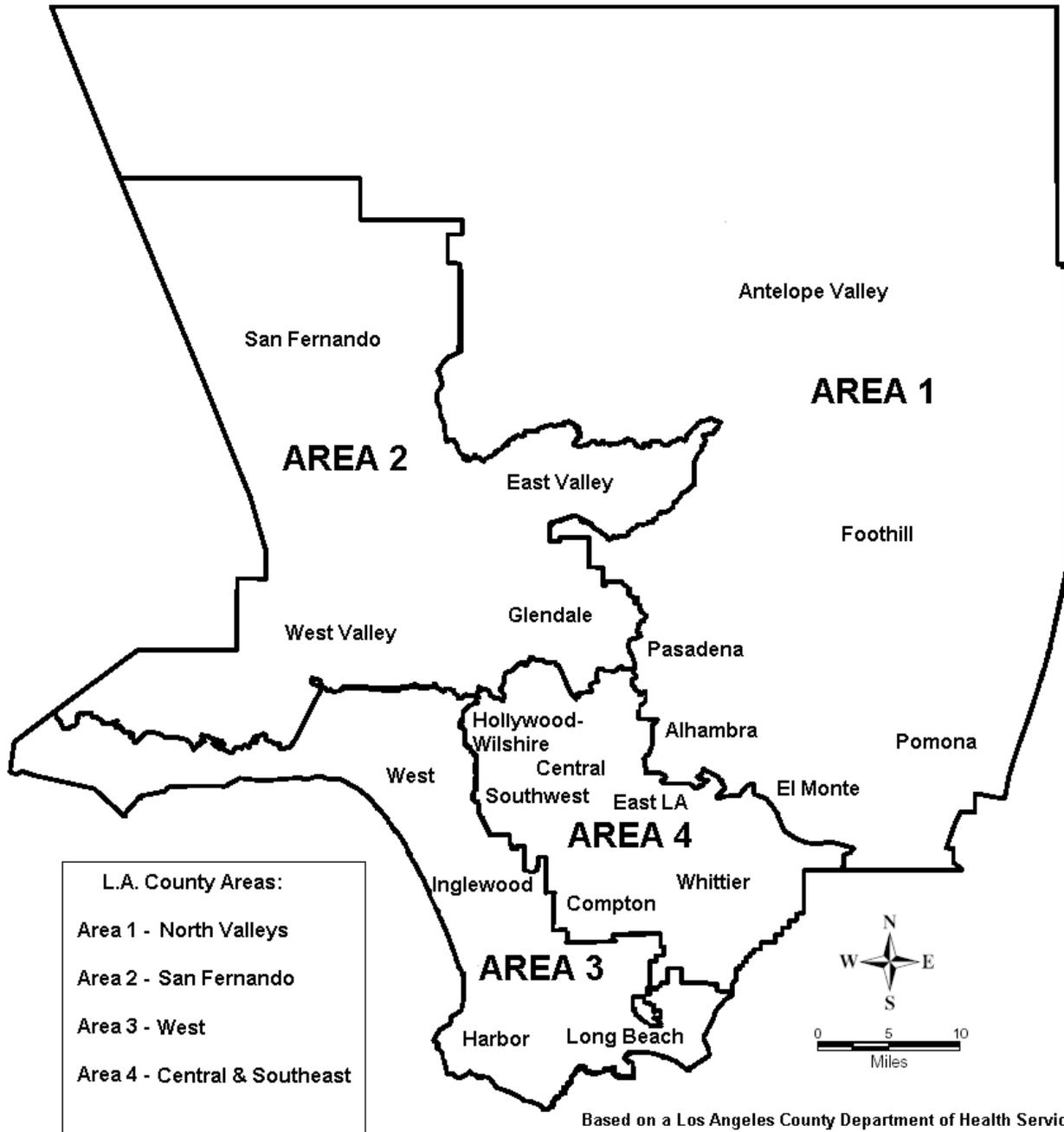
Public opinion data are critical to informing discussions on key issues and stimulating public debate. The overall intent of this PPIC special survey series on Los Angeles County is to help guide the decisions of local, state, and federal policymakers and the actions of public, nonprofit, and public-private partnerships responsible for providing services and improving the quality of life of residents.

This benchmark survey of 2,000 adult residents includes questions from earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys and the *Los Angeles Times* poll to measure changes over time. It also includes key indicators from the PPIC Statewide Survey for comparisons with other regions. We also consider racial/ethnic, income, and political differences. The following issues are explored in this Los Angeles County survey:

- **County Conditions**—What are the most important issues facing the county? How satisfied are residents with their local public services, and what specific problems are they concerned about in their part of the county? What are the priorities for local transportation projects? How do residents perceive the overall outlook for the county’s economy, quality of life, and the future?
- **Governance Issues**—How satisfied are residents with their local governments? Would they prefer to have a greater say in local policymaking? What do residents think about various efforts to reform local government, including a proposed borough system and neighborhood councils in the city of Los Angeles? In light of the state’s budget deficit, are local residents willing to increase their taxes to help pay for city and county services?
- **Social and Economic Trends**—How much do residents worry about crime? How do they perceive the state of race relations in the county? Do they view immigrants as having a positive or a negative effect on the county? How much are they concerned about health care costs, and what are their views about the county government’s system of public hospitals and health clinics?

Copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail ([order@ppic.org](mailto:order@ppic.org)) or phone (415-291-4400). Copies of this and earlier reports are posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)). For questions about the survey, please contact [survey@ppic.org](mailto:survey@ppic.org).

# Los Angeles County



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## Press Release

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<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

### *SPECIAL SURVEY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY*

## **SPECTRUM OF DISCONTENT: COMMON CONCERNS, DISTINCT REALITIES FOR COUNTY'S RACIAL GROUPS, COMMUNITIES**

### **Crime, Education Top Problems for County Residents; Post-Secession Defeat, Many Still Open to Government Reform**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, March 27, 2003 — Anxious about their personal safety and medical costs, cynical about economic prospects and race relations, Los Angeles County residents are deeply discontented, increasingly frustrated with local government, and ready for reform, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the University of Southern California (USC).

Despite the command of recent national and international events, LA County residents identify decidedly local problems as the most important facing the region. Crime and gangs (26%) are seen as the most important issue, followed by public schools and education (15%), jobs and the economy (9%), and traffic congestion (6%). In their ranking of crime and gangs as the top issue, LA residents stand apart from residents in the rest of the state. But while crime registers as the most important county issue among all racial and ethnic groups and across geographic areas, the degree of concern varies: It is higher in the Central/Southeast area (31%) than elsewhere and higher among Latinos (36%) than among others.

- 76 percent of county residents describe themselves as very (42%) or somewhat (34%) concerned that they or someone in their family will be a victim of a crime. Most Latinos (67%) and Central/Southeast area residents (54%) say they are very worried about crime victimization; relatively few whites (22%) and West county residents (34%) share the elevated concern.
- 65 percent say they are very (42%) or somewhat (23%) concerned about gangs and graffiti in their neighborhood. Latinos and blacks (60% each) and Central/Southeast area residents (55%) are far more likely than whites (25%) and residents in other areas to say they are very concerned.

County residents today are also more likely than in 2001 to view the availability of affordable housing (54% from 40%), the lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs (40% from 31%), and population growth and development (38% from 28%) as big problems in their part of LA. Concern about traffic congestion has remained remarkably strong, with 67 percent viewing it as a big problem in their area. While anxiety about traffic is high among all county residents — and far higher than in other regions of the state — whites (71%) and West (70%) and San Fernando (69%) area residents are the most likely to say it as a big problem.

### **Economy a Growing Concern**

When asked to evaluate the LA County economy today, only 24 percent of residents rate it as excellent or good, while 48 percent say it is fair, and 27 percent poor. Half of county residents report that their area is in a mild (12%), moderate (25%), or serious (14%) recession, with Latinos (58%) and blacks (57%) more likely than whites (44%) to say their area is in recession. And far more residents today (67%) than just one year ago (52%) predict bad economic times for the state during the next 12 months. This economic angst is also taking its toll on residents' overall perception of the county:

- 40 percent of county residents say that the region is headed in the right direction, and 43 percent believe it is headed in the wrong direction, with whites, blacks, and San Fernando area residents more negative than others about the county's prospects.
- Residents are divided about whether the county will be a better or worse place to live in the future (32% each), with an equal percentage (31%) expecting little change.

"LA County residents are in a funk that is not likely to lift in the near future," says PPIC survey director Mark Baldassare. The consequence of such a negative outlook? Nearly one in five county residents (17%) expect to leave the county in the next five years; younger and more educated residents are the most likely to say they intend to go.

### **Little Support for Local Government, But Residents Want More of It**

Economic and social conditions — as well as the lingering effects of recent secession efforts — are also affecting attitudes about local government. Seventy-one percent of residents say that the county government is fair (49%) or poor (22%) at solving problems, while only 24 percent rate it as excellent or good. San Fernando area residents (28%) are more likely than others to view county government in a negative light. While more residents (39%) say their city governments are excellent or good at solving problems, a majority (54%) still gives them low ratings. Residents of LA City are far more critical than others. Given their disenchantment with government, LA residents are open to a number of proposals for reform. Interestingly, many of these proposals would entail the creation of more administration rather than less:

- 89 percent of LA City residents support the system of neighborhood councils being established in the city, despite the fact that only 31 percent had previously heard of the councils.
- 68 percent of LA City residents favor a proposed "borough" system for the city.
- 55 percent of county residents and 50 percent of LA City residents support the idea of dividing the Los Angeles Unified School District into smaller, independent school districts. San Fernando residents (63%) are the most supportive, Central/Southeast area residents (47%) the least.

Why support more government? Many residents hold the view that having numerous local governments in LA County ensures that local services meet the needs of local residents (69%) and that county residents get a say in more local matters (56%). But ultimately, residents believe that local voters at the ballot box (78%), not elected officials (18%), should make most decisions about important issues. Currently, residents favor new taxes on alcoholic beverages and cigarettes to fund public health and emergency medical services (64% to 33%), but are divided about raising the local sales tax to fund city-level services (48% to 49%).

### **Race Relations Still a Sore Spot**

Given the vast differences in attitudes among racial and ethnic groups in LA County, it is not surprising that many residents are concerned about the state of race relations in the region. A majority of residents (53%) believes race relations are not so good (39%) or poor (14%) in the county today. Blacks (65%) are more negative than Latinos (58%), whites (50%), or Asians (45%). They also register more concern about some of the social manifestations of racial tension:

- 53 percent of all residents believe racial profiling is widespread in their part of the county, compared to 79 percent of blacks and 62 percent of Central/Southeast residents.
- 43 percent say they have personally experienced racial profiling or know someone who has. However, among blacks this rises to 74 percent, compared to less than half of other racial and ethnic groups.

On a hopeful note, half of county residents (54%) believe that race relations will improve in five years; 35 percent expect a turn for the worse. Non-citizens (62%) express greater optimism than U.S.-born residents (52%). Blacks (51%), whites (50%), and North Valleys residents (48%) are the least likely to say that race relations will improve.

## Many Rely on Troubled Public Health Programs

Although most county residents (76%) say they are generally satisfied with the quality of health care they receive, many (70%) also say they are concerned about their ability to afford health care when a family member gets sick. This high level of concern is evident despite the fact that eight in 10 residents report being covered by a public or private health plan. Latinos (61%) and non-citizens (63%) are the most likely to say they are very concerned about health care costs; they are also the most likely to be uninsured. In addition, many residents report that they are consumers of the county's public health care services:

- 59 percent of LA residents report that they or a family member have either previously used (46%) or could see themselves using (13%) the county's public health care system. A majority of blacks (64%), Latinos (59%), non-citizens (57%), those with incomes under \$40,000 (56%), those with children at home (53%), and adults under age 35 (52%) say they have used county health services.

“It is a real worry that so many residents rely on a public health system that is truly on the brink,” says Baldassare. Public awareness of the fiscal calamity facing the system may be one reason why a majority of county residents (61%) believe higher levels of government — including the federal (31%) and state (30%) governments — should have primary responsibility for funding county health care for uninsured residents. Most residents (93%) say it is important for government to partner with businesses, nonprofits, and foundations that can help provide health services to those in need.

## Other Key Findings

- *Ratings of Local Services* (page 4)

LA County residents are less likely today than in 1998 to give excellent or good ratings to police protection (62% from 68%) and parks, beaches, and recreation (62% from 69%). They are about as likely as they were in 1998 to give positive ratings to streets and roads (46%) and public schools (41%).

- *Transportation and Commuting* (page 5)

Most employed residents of LA County drive alone to work (74%). Fifty-nine percent support a one-half cent increase in the local sales tax for transportation projects.

- *Attitudes Toward Immigrants* (page 16)

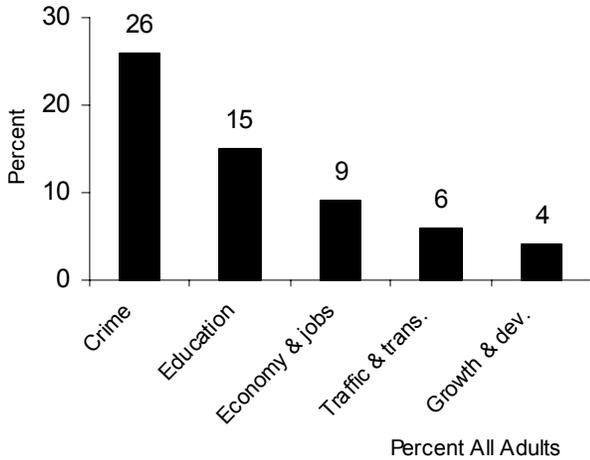
A majority of county residents (59%) considers immigrants a benefit to the county rather than a burden (31%). At the same time, many residents (84%) also see illegal immigration as a big problem (52%) or somewhat of a problem (32%) in the county.

## About the Survey

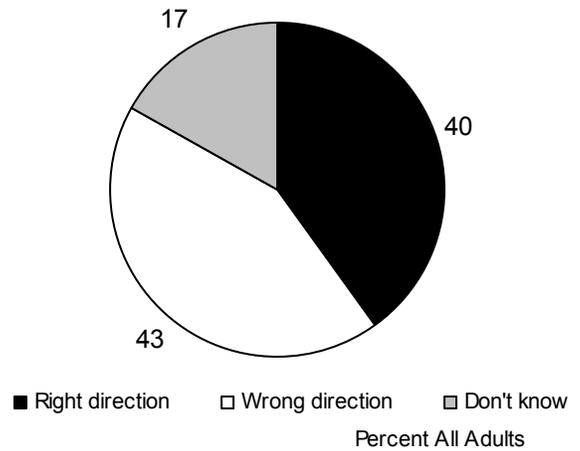
The Special Survey of Los Angeles County — a collaborative effort of PPIC and the School of Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California — is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey, supported in part through a grant from the California Community Foundation. This is the first in an annual series of PPIC surveys of Los Angeles County. Findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,000 Los Angeles County adult residents interviewed from March 6 to March 18, 2003. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. For more information on survey methodology, see page 19.

Mark Baldassare is research director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998. His most recent book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at [www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org). PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public policy through objective, nonpartisan research on the economic, social, and political issues that affect Californians. The institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or state and federal legislation nor does it endorse or support any political parties or candidates for public office. ###

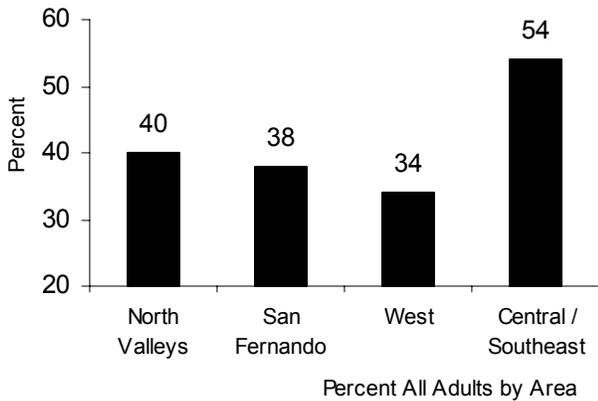
**What is the most important issue facing LA County today?**



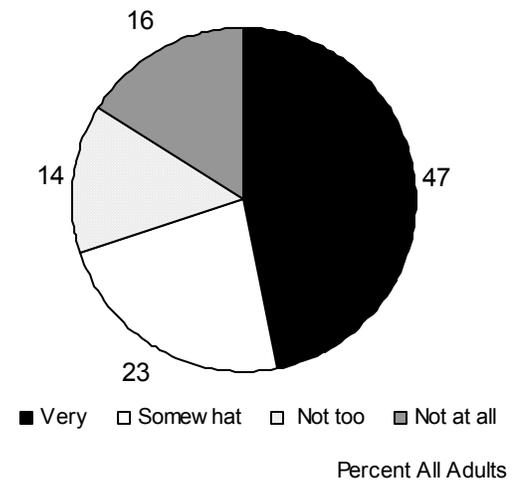
**Do you think that things in LA County are going in the right direction or wrong direction?**



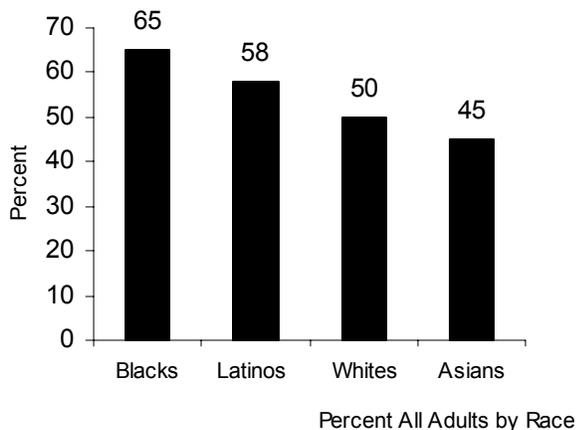
**How concerned are you that you or your family will become a victim of crime? (% very concerned)**



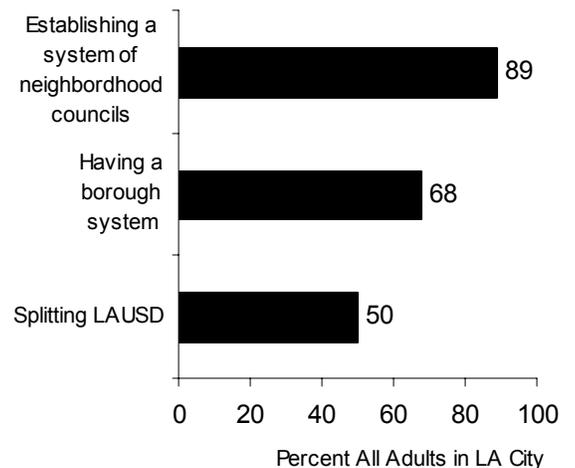
**How concerned are you about being able to afford necessary health care?**



**How would you rate race relations in LA County today? (% not so good/poor)**



**Percent of LA City residents who support the following proposals:**



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## County Conditions

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### Most Important Issue

What do Los Angeles County residents identify as the most important issue facing their county today? The top four issues are crime and gangs (26%), public schools and education (15%), jobs and the economy (9%), and traffic congestion and transportation (6%). There is less concern about issues such as population growth and development, air pollution, housing costs and availability, drugs, immigration and health care. Very few residents consider major state and national current events—e.g., the possibility of war with Iraq, terrorism and homeland security, or the state budget deficit—as the most important issue facing the county.

Although crime and gangs are identified most often as the top issue across all geographic areas, racial/ethnic groups, and age, education, income, and political categories, the degree of concern varies. It is higher in the Central/Southeast area (31%) than elsewhere, higher among Latinos (36%) than among whites (19%) and blacks (25%), and higher among the less educated and lower-income residents of Los Angeles County. Concern over other issues also varies. For example, blacks (16%) are more likely than whites (9%) and Latinos (7%) to identify jobs and the economy as the most important countywide issue.

In their ranking of issues, Los Angeles County residents differ somewhat from the rest of Californians and considerably from their near neighbors in Orange County. In the February 2003 PPIC Statewide Survey, Californians in general named the economy, the state budget deficit, and education as the three most important issues confronting the state. In the December 2002 PPIC Special Survey of Orange County, residents identified growth, traffic, and housing as the most significant issues in the county, and only 5 percent named crime and gangs.

**“What do you think is the most important issue facing people in Los Angeles County today?”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Crime, gangs</b>	26%	24%	20%	27%	31%
<b>Education, schools</b>	15	16	17	14	14
<b>Jobs, the economy</b>	9	8	9	8	9
<b>Traffic congestion, transportation</b>	6	6	9	8	4
<b>Population growth</b>	4	3	5	4	3
<b>Health care</b>	4	4	4	3	4
<b>State budget, deficit</b>	3	3	2	5	2
<b>War, possibility of war with Iraq</b>	3	4	2	3	3
<b>Housing</b>	2	3	2	2	2
<b>Immigration</b>	2	3	2	2	0
<b>Drugs</b>	2	3	2	2	2
<b>Air pollution, pollution</b>	2	1	2	2	2
<b>Other [specify]</b>	13	13	15	12	14
<b>Don't know</b>	9	9	9	8	10

### Perceptions of Issues in Los Angeles County Areas

We also asked residents to assess how serious six potential problems are in their parts of Los Angeles County. The problems were crime, traffic congestion, population growth and development, air pollution, lack of well-paying jobs, and the availability of affordable housing. Perceptions of these problems varied across the four major geographic areas of the county and differed from residents' ranking of problems for the county as a whole. These perceptions have also changed over the last two years.

Traffic congestion is considered a big problem by a solid majority of residents in all four areas. The availability of affordable housing is also a big problem for large proportions of residents in all four areas, but more so in the West and Central/Southeast areas than in the North Valleys and San Fernando areas. Crime, air pollution, and the lack of well-paying jobs loom larger in the Central/Southeast area than elsewhere in the county. And San Fernando area residents (43%) are more likely than residents in other areas to be concerned about population growth and development.

Percent seeing the issue as a big problem in their part of Los Angeles County	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads	67%	64%	69%	70%	63%
Availability of housing that you can afford	54	47	52	57	59
Crime	41	32	36	38	55
Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs	40	37	35	36	49
Population growth and development	38	34	43	37	37
Air pollution	37	30	34	32	47

Perceptions of regional problems also differ significantly across racial/ethnic groups. Higher percentages of blacks and Latinos than whites and Asians say that crime, air pollution, and the lack of well-paying jobs are big problems. Whites are more concerned than other groups about traffic congestion and less concerned, as are Asians, about affordable housing. Both whites and blacks are somewhat more likely than Latinos and Asians to identify growth and development as a big problem.

Percent seeing the issue as a big problem in their part of Los Angeles County	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads	67%	56%	63%	63%	71%
Availability of housing that you can afford	54	47	64	57	51
Crime	41	34	53	59	27
Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs	40	29	48	56	28
Population growth and development	38	30	43	35	40
Air pollution	37	31	43	45	29

There are also important demographic differences in the perception of serious problems. Higher percentages of upper-income and college-educated residents rate traffic as a big problem. Residents who are younger, less educated, earning lower incomes, and renters are more likely than others to say there are big problems with crime, air pollution, the lack of well-paying jobs, and the availability of affordable housing in their areas of Los Angeles County.

All of the issue areas except crime were included in earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys, allowing us to explore trends over time and across state regions. When we contrast current survey results with the Los Angeles County responses from two years ago, we find that nearly seven in 10 residents both then and now consider traffic congestion a big problem in their area of Los Angeles County. However, concern has increased about housing (+14%), jobs (+9%), and growth (+10%). Of the five problem areas, only air pollution is seen as less of a problem today than in 2001 (-9%).

<b>Percent seeing the issue as a big problem</b>	<b>2001*</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads</b>	69%	<b>67%</b>
<b>Availability of housing you can afford</b>	40	<b>54</b>
<b>Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs</b>	31	<b>40</b>
<b>Population growth and development</b>	28	<b>38</b>
<b>Air pollution</b>	46	<b>37</b>

\* Results for LA County residents from May 2001 PPIC Statewide Survey

We can also contrast the current responses in Los Angeles County with those from residents in the state's other major regions (from the November 2002 PPIC Statewide Survey). While public opinion about the state of the economy has deteriorated throughout California since last fall, it is notable that Los Angeles County residents today are almost as likely as San Francisco Bay Area residents were in November to say that the availability of affordable housing is a big problem, and just as likely as Central Valley residents to say that air pollution is a big problem. Moreover, Los Angeles County residents are more likely than others were in November to say that traffic congestion on freeways, growth and development, and the opportunity for well-paying jobs are big problems. Comparisons are not available for the ratings of crime.

<b>Percent seeing the issue as a big problem in their regions</b>	<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b><u>Other Major Regions*</u></b>		
		<b>Other Southern California</b>	<b>San Francisco Bay Area</b>	<b>Central Valley</b>
<b>Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads</b>	<b>67%</b>	50%	59%	34%
<b>Availability of housing you can afford</b>	<b>54</b>	41	59	28
<b>Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs</b>	<b>40</b>	31	22	31
<b>Population growth and development</b>	<b>38</b>	33	30	25
<b>Air pollution</b>	<b>37</b>	24	18	37

\* Results for these regions from the November 2002 PPIC Statewide Survey

## Local Public Service Ratings

How do Los Angeles County residents feel about their public services, now and over time? In this survey, we repeated a series of four questions from the April 1998 PPIC Statewide Survey to provide trends over time. Today, six in 10 residents rate their police protection and parks and beaches as excellent or good, while about four in 10 residents give similarly positive ratings to their public schools and streets and roads. Compared to five years ago, fewer residents give excellent or good ratings for parks and police, while positive ratings for streets and roads and public schools are largely unchanged.

The survey also found that seven in 10 county residents give excellent or good ratings to their local public libraries. Moreover, roughly four in 10 residents give similarly positive responses for their local public buses and transit services, public hospitals and health clinics, and after-school programs for youth and children. There are no comparable trends over time for ratings of these local public services.

There are no recent statewide surveys that allow us to contrast local service ratings in Los Angeles County with those in all of the state's other major regions. However, comparing the current results with the December 2002 PPIC Special Survey on Orange County, we find that Los Angeles County residents are less likely than Orange County residents to give excellent or good ratings to their police (62% to 83%), parks and beaches (62% to 82%), local streets and roads (46% to 66%), and public schools (41% to 63%).

Percent rating local service as excellent or good	1998*	2003
Police protection	68%	62%
Parks, beaches, and recreation	69	62
Streets and roads	49	46
Public schools	40	41

\* Results for LA County residents from the May 2001 PPIC Statewide Survey

Across the county's major areas, residents of the North Valleys give the highest ratings for streets and roads, police protection, and public schools. There are also racial/ethnic differences in these ratings. Generally, blacks give the lowest ratings to parks, police protection, streets and roads, and public schools. Whites give the highest ratings to parks and police protection. Latinos are the most likely to say that their local public schools are excellent or good. The excellent and good ratings of parks, police protection, and streets and roads also tend to increase with age, education, homeownership, and income.

Percent rating local service excellent or good	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
Police protection	62%	74%	60%	64%	55%
Parks, beaches, and other recreational facilities	62	68	62	68	54
Local streets and roads	46	61	45	43	39
Public schools	41	45	40	42	36

Percent rating local service excellent or good	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
Police protection	62%	63%	46%	61%	68%
Parks, beaches, and other recreational facilities	62	59	50	57	69
Local streets and roads	46	48	34	48	48
Public schools	41	36	26	48	39

### Transportation Issues

Most employed residents of Los Angeles County drive alone to work (74%). Only about one in 10 carpool (9%) or ride public bus or transit (9%). Fewer than half of all these commuters (46%) say they are very satisfied with their commutes to work. In this context, it is noteworthy that nearly half of county residents rank *public* transportation options as the top priority for government funding—public buses (20%), light rail (13%) or subway system (10%). Public buses have much more support among Central/Southeast residents and among blacks and Latinos, while light rail is more popular among residents from other county areas and whites.

Fifty-nine percent of Los Angeles County residents support a one-half cent increase in the local sales tax for transportation projects. Solid majorities across the four geographic areas and across racial/ethnic groups would support a local tax increase for this purpose. Republicans and conservatives are divided on the tax increase, but six in 10 Democrats and independent voters favor paying higher taxes for local transportation. Although 59 percent of registered voters support a tax increase, a two-thirds majority is required to pass local special taxes today. County residents are nearly evenly divided (48% yes and 46% no) on a proposed state measure that would change the two-thirds requirement to a 55 percent majority for passing a local sales tax for transportation. These numbers are similar to the percentages of Californians in the November 2002 PPIC Statewide Survey who expressed support for a local sales tax increase and a proposed measure to change the two-thirds vote requirement for passing local taxes.

**“Which of the following types of surface transportation projects do you think should have top priority for public funding in Los Angeles County?”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
Freeways and highways	28%	29%	27%	30%	24%
Public bus system	20	17	16	20	27
Local streets and roads	15	13	17	16	15
Light rail	13	19	14	14	7
Subway system	10	8	12	8	14
Carpool lanes	6	5	7	6	6
Something else	3	2	3	3	3
Don't know	5	7	4	3	4

**Overall Outlook**

Los Angeles County residents are in a sour mood when it comes to the state of the economy in California, the county, and their local areas. Two in three county residents predict bad economic times for California during the next 12 months. This is a considerably higher percentage than we found in PPIC Statewide Surveys in 2000, 2001, and 2002. These pessimistic views are shared across geographic, racial/ethnic, demographic, and political groups.

**“Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?”**

	<b>Los Angeles County Adults</b>			
	<b>Feb 00</b>	<b>Jan 01</b>	<b>Feb 02</b>	<b>Mar 03</b>
<b>Good times</b>	77%	50%	38%	25%
<b>Bad times</b>	16	39	52	67
<b>Don't know</b>	7	11	10	8

When asked to evaluate the Los Angeles County economy today, only 24 percent of residents rate it as excellent or good—48 percent say it is fair, and 27 percent rate it as poor. The low ratings are consistent across geographic areas and demographic groups.

As for their parts of Los Angeles County, half of county residents report their areas are now in a mild (12%), moderate (25%) or serious (14%) recession. The Central/Southeast area has the highest percentage of residents (58%) who say their part of the county is in a recession. Higher percentages of Latinos (58%) and blacks (57%) than whites (44%) say their areas are in a recession. Residents with lower incomes and less education and immigrants are also more likely than others to share this view.

Residents are divided about their overall outlook for the county: Forty percent say that Los Angeles County is headed in the right direction, and 43 percent believe that it is headed in the wrong direction. As for the future, 32 percent think the county will be a better place to live than it is today, 32 percent think it will be a worse place to live, and 31 percent think it will be about the same as now. Whites, blacks, and San Fernando area residents are more negative than others about the county’s overall outlook.

Concerning quality of life, 61 percent of Los Angeles County residents say things are going well, and 36 percent say they are not. More than one-third of residents in all four areas believe things are going badly. Although 51 percent see themselves living in the same neighborhood five years from now, 22 percent expect to be living elsewhere in the county, and 17 percent expect to be living outside the county. Younger and more educated residents are most likely to say they will move out of the county in the next five years.

**“Do you think that things in Los Angeles County are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”**

	<b>All Adults</b>	<b>County Area</b>			
		<b>North Valleys</b>	<b>San Fernando</b>	<b>West</b>	<b>Central / Southeast</b>
<b>Right direction</b>	40%	41%	37%	42%	41%
<b>Wrong direction</b>	43	40	49	42	42
<b>Don't know</b>	17	19	14	16	17

## Governance Issues

Los Angeles County's nearly 10 million residents are served by a myriad of governments: The county government, 88 city governments, and more than 200 special districts provide school, transportation, water, sanitation, fire, and other services. Do residents see this abundance of governments as good or bad for them? They lean toward the view that the governance system serves them well, but opinion varies depending on the questions' emphasis on efficiency, accountability, and representation.

When asked how responsive and efficient local governments are in meeting needs and delivering local services, 69 percent of county residents think that having all of these local governments is a good thing because it ensures that local needs are met. Only 23 percent of residents think that it is a bad thing because it is an inefficient way to provide local services. Across the county, residents of the North Valleys area are the most likely (73%) to think that having this many local governments is a good thing for this reason.

**“Residents of LA County are served by the county government, 88 city governments, and more than 200 special districts .... Which of the following comes closest to your views about local governments in Los Angeles County: Having this many local governments is a ...”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Good thing because it ensures that local services meet the needs of local residents</b>	69%	73%	67%	68%	68%
<b>Bad thing because it is an inefficient way to provide local services</b>	23	21	27	24	22
<b>Don't know</b>	8	6	6	8	10

We also asked county residents whether having this many local governments was a good thing because it increases residents' say in local matters or a bad thing because of potential confusion about which jurisdictions provide what local services. Fifty-six percent of county residents say it is good to have so many local governments because county residents get a say in more local matters. Thirty-four percent say that it is a bad thing because figuring out which government is supposed to provide what service is too confusing. San Fernando area residents were more likely than those in other areas to say that having many local governments is a bad thing because of confusion over various governments' roles. However, a majority of residents across most racial/ethnic, demographic, and political groups say having this many local governments is a good thing.

**“Which of the following comes closest to your views about local governments in Los Angeles County: Having this many local governments is a ...”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Good thing because county residents get a say in more local matters</b>	56%	58%	51%	62%	55%
<b>Bad thing because figuring out which government is supposed to provide what services is too confusing</b>	34	32	40	28	35
<b>Other/Don't know</b>	10	10	9	10	10

## Local Government Ratings

Despite the general enthusiasm for multiple governments in the county, most residents give the county and their city governments relatively low ratings.

Seventy-one percent say that the Los Angeles County government is fair (49%) or poor (22%) at solving problems. Only 24 percent rate it excellent or good at problem solving. Although positive ratings for county government are similar across all areas, San Fernando area residents (28%) are more likely than others and residents of the North Valleys (19%) are the least likely to say that the county government is doing a poor job. Ratings also vary across racial/ethnic groups: The county's non-whites are much more likely than the county's whites to think that the county government is doing an excellent or good job. In neighboring Orange County, 42 percent of residents in the December 2002 PPIC Special Survey of Orange County rated that county government's performance as excellent or good.

**“Overall, how would you rate the performance of county government in solving problems?”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
Excellent / Good	24%	23%	21%	26%	26%
Fair	49	53	48	47	48
Poor	22	19	28	22	21
Don't know	5	5	3	5	5

Los Angeles County residents are less critical of their city governments' ability to solve problems. Overall, 39 percent of county residents say their city governments are doing an excellent or good job. However, residents of the city of Los Angeles are much more critical than others toward their city government: Only 25 percent think their city government is doing an excellent or good job, and 24 percent rate it as poor. In contrast, 47 percent of residents in other cities think their cities are doing an excellent or good job, and only 12 percent think they are doing a poor job. In the San Fernando area, city governments get poor ratings from 21 percent of residents in contrast to the North Valleys, where cities get poor ratings from only 12 percent of residents. Opinions do not vary much by race/ethnicity or political and demographic groups. In the December 2002 Orange County Survey, 58 percent of residents in that county said that their *city* governments were doing an excellent or good job attending to problems in their local areas.

**“Overall, how would you rate the performance of city government in solving problems?”**

	All Adults	L.A. City	County Area			
			North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
Excellent / Good	39%	25%	45%	33%	41%	37%
Fair	38	44	38	38	35	41
Poor	16	24	12	21	15	17
Don't know / N.A.	7	7	5	8	9	5

## Local Governments and Their Perceived Responsiveness

Many county residents feel that their voices are not being heard in local policymaking, and this perception is greater when it comes to county-level policy than city-level government decisionmaking.

Los Angeles County residents are almost evenly split on this issue: About half say that when government officials are deciding which policies to adopt they pay a lot (8%) or some attention (44%) to what the people think. However, about half believe county government officials pay either very little (37%) or no attention (10%). These perceptions differ across areas and groups. In the West area, 59 percent of residents think that the county pays a lot or some attention; in the San Fernando area only 48 percent of residents share this view. Blacks are less likely than other racial/ethnic groups to believe that county government officials pay a lot or some attention to what the people want. The perceived responsiveness of county government increases with education and income. Fifty-nine percent of Democrats and 47 percent of Republicans think that county officials take a lot or some of the public's sentiment into account when making policy. In Orange County, 61 percent of residents in the December 2002 PPIC Special Survey of Orange County said that county government officials paid a lot or some attention to what the people think.

**“When county government officials decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what the people think?”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>A lot</b>	8%	7%	8%	8%	8%
<b>Some</b>	44	45	40	51	40
<b>Very little</b>	37	37	39	34	39
<b>No attention</b>	10	9	12	6	10
<b>Don't know</b>	1	2	1	1	3

County residents tend to rate their city governments as more responsive than county government: Sixty-one percent say that when deciding on policies, city officials pay a lot of attention, while 35 percent said they paid very little or no attention to what people think. In the city of Los Angeles, 52 percent say that city officials pay a lot or some attention; outside of Los Angeles, 65 percent think that their city officials pay a lot or some attention. San Fernando area residents are the most critical of their city officials, while residents in the North Valleys are the most positive. Whites, homeowners, upper income, and highly educated residents are the most likely to see city government officials as responsive.

**“When city government officials decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what the people think?”**

	All Adults	LA City	County Area			
			North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>A lot</b>	16%	10%	20%	11%	20%	13%
<b>Some</b>	45	42	48	46	46	40
<b>Very little</b>	29	34	23	31	26	35
<b>No attention</b>	6	10	4	9	5	7
<b>Don't know</b>	4	4	5	3	3	5

## Local Residents' Involvement in Policymaking

Many residents are not engaged when it comes to the issues affecting their localities. About half of the county's residents claim to have a great deal (16%) or fair amount (35%) of interest in local politics, while an almost equal percentage say they have little (36%) or no interest (13%). About four in 10 residents indicate they have been involved in local volunteer work (41%) or attended a meeting on local or school affairs (37%) in the past 12 months. Despite this modest level of local involvement, many express interest in a system that would potentially allow residents a more active role in local policy.

We asked county residents about their opinions of the system of neighborhood councils that is currently being set up in the city of Los Angeles to strengthen the voice of community residents in the policymaking process. Although only 31 percent of residents in the city and 23 percent of respondents living elsewhere in the county had previously heard of the councils, the response to the idea behind the councils is overwhelmingly positive: 90 percent think that neighborhood councils are a good idea; only 5 percent say they are a bad idea. About nine in 10 residents in all geographic areas, racial/ethnic groups, and demographic and political categories have a favorable opinion toward the city of Los Angeles' neighborhood council system. Ninety percent of those residents who claim to be familiar with neighborhood councils consider them a good idea.

**“A system of neighborhood councils is being established in the city of Los Angeles that is designed to strengthen the voice of community residents in city policymaking. In general, do you think that neighborhood councils are a good idea or a bad idea?”**

	All Adults	LA City	County Area			
			North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Good idea</b>	90%	89%	89%	88%	89%	92%
<b>Bad idea</b>	5	6	6	6	5	4
<b>Don't know / Other</b>	5	5	5	6	6	4

Consistent with their enthusiasm for neighborhood councils, a large majority of county residents believe that decisions about big issues should be made at the ballot box, not by local officials. Seventy-eight percent of Los Angeles County residents say they prefer to have local voters make most of the important decisions at the ballot box, and only 18 percent support leaving the decisions about big issues up to their local elected officials. Three in four residents across the four geographic areas, racial/ethnic groups, political groups, and demographic categories would prefer to have local voters decide the big issues in Los Angeles County.

**“Which of the following is closest to your views about how big issues in LA County should be decided ...”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Local elected officials should make most of the decisions</b>	18%	20%	19%	17%	18%
<b>Local voters should make most of the decisions at the ballot box</b>	78	78	76	79	78
<b>Don't know / Other</b>	4	2	5	4	4

## Reforming Local Government

On the heels of a recent ballot-box defeat for those who would like to see the San Fernando Valley and Hollywood separated from the city of Los Angeles and become new cities, the focus of civic reformers has shifted to several other proposals to reform city government and local service delivery.

One proposed reform is adoption of a Manhattan-style “borough” system for the city of Los Angeles. This system would transfer some of the authority from the mayor and city council to elected officials in smaller districts called boroughs. In the city of Los Angeles, 68 percent of residents favor this idea. In the rest of the county, 63 percent of residents think it would be a good idea. Converting the city of Los Angeles into a system of boroughs gets particularly strong support (72%) in the San Fernando area. Support for the borough system is high across political groups. It is favored more among those age 35 and younger (71%) than among those age 55 and older (50%).

**“Some people have proposed a new political system for the city of Los Angeles that would transfer some authority from the mayor and city council to elected officials in smaller districts that would be called ‘boroughs.’ In general, is this a ...”**

	All Adults	LA City	County Area			
			North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Good idea</b>	65%	68%	55%	72%	61%	69%
<b>Bad idea</b>	20	18	28	15	23	17
<b>Don't know / Other</b>	15	14	17	13	16	14

Another potential reform is dividing the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) into smaller, independent school districts. Overall, 55 percent of county residents favor this proposal. Support for breaking up the LAUSD is highest in the San Fernando area (63%), while opposition is strongest among the lower income, less educated, and non-white residents of the county.

**“Some people say that the Los Angeles Unified School District should be divided into smaller, independent school districts. Do you favor or oppose splitting up the Los Angeles Unified School District?”**

	All Adults	LA City	County Area			
			North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Favor</b>	55%	50%	60%	63%	54%	47%
<b>Oppose</b>	30	34	22	28	32	36
<b>Don't know / Other</b>	15	16	18	9	14	17

While a high percentage of county residents support increasing local authority, they also believe that a regional framework is very important for governing Los Angeles County. Asked whether local governments in the county should work together and have a common regional plan or if they should work independently and each have its own plan, nearly eight in 10 county residents (78%) say that local governments should work together. Preference for regional planning is high in all areas of the county but highest in the Central/Southeast, where 82 percent of residents think that local governments should work together.

## The State Budget Deficit and Local Tax Increases

Only 3 percent of county residents identify the state budget deficit as the most important issue facing Los Angeles County. Nevertheless, 92 percent of county residents say they are very concerned (71%) or somewhat concerned (21%) that the state budget deficit will cause severe cuts in areas such as city and county government and local schools. This concern is shared across the county’s major areas and racial/ethnic groups. Women tend to be more concerned than men that the deficit will cause severe cuts in local services: 77% are very concerned, compared to 64% of men. Majorities in all partisan groups are concerned about potential cuts. However, Democrats (78%) are more likely than independents (68%) and Republicans (66%) to be very concerned.

Los Angeles County residents are willing to raise certain new taxes to fund some local services in light of the large state budget deficit. For example, 64 percent of county residents favor new taxes on alcoholic beverages and cigarettes in order to fund county-level public health and medical emergency services. However, there are large partisan differences: 69 percent of Democrats, 60 percent of independents, and 52 percent of Republicans support new alcohol and cigarette taxes. Women (69%) are much more likely than men (60%), and those under age 35 (68%) are more likely than those age 55 and older (57%), to favor these so-called “sin taxes.” Some six in 10 residents in each of the four geographic areas would support this tax increase to fund county-level services.

**“At this time, would you favor or oppose new taxes on alcoholic beverages and cigarettes in order to fund county-level public health and medical emergency services?”**

	All Adults	All Registered Voters	Party Registration		
			Dem	Rep	Ind
<b>Favor</b>	64%	63%	69%	52%	60%
<b>Oppose</b>	33	35	28	47	34
<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	3	1	6

County residents appear divided over support for a more broad-based measure that would raise the local sales tax to fund city-level police, parks, libraries, and other public services. Forty-eight percent of county residents favor raising the local sales tax by one cent for these services, while 49 percent oppose the measure. As with the alcoholic beverages and cigarette tax measure, there is a large partisan difference of opinion: While 53 percent of Democrats *favor* the sales tax proposal, 54 percent of independents and 64 percent of Republicans *oppose* the measure. There are also large differences among racial/ethnic groups: Fifty-eight percent of Latinos favor raising the local sales tax by one cent, compared to 50 percent of blacks and 42 percent of whites. Public support reaches a majority only in the Central/Southeast region (53%). A majority of older, upper income, college-educated residents and homeowners would oppose this increase.

**“At this time, would you favor or oppose raising the local sales tax by one cent to fund city-level police, parks, roads, libraries, and other services?”**

	All Adults	All Registered Voters	Party Registration		
			Dem	Rep	Ind
<b>Favor</b>	48%	45%	53%	34%	43%
<b>Oppose</b>	49	52	45	64	54
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	2	2	3

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## Social and Economic Trends

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### Crime and Gangs

Eight in 10 residents say that crime is at least somewhat of a problem in their area of Los Angeles County, and when asked about the most important problem facing the county today, residents mention crime and gangs more than any other issue. We find that crime also has a personal side: Three in four residents say they are very concerned (42%) or somewhat concerned (34%) that they or someone in their family will fall victim to a crime. Most Latinos (67%), Central/Southeast area residents (54%), renters (52%), foreign-born citizens (57%), non-citizens (70%), households with children under 18 (54%), and those with household incomes of under \$40,000 (55%) say they are very concerned about crime victimization. By contrast, relatively few whites (22%), homeowners (32%), West county residents (34%), college graduates (26%), and residents with incomes of \$80,000 or more (24%) report that they are very concerned about being victims of crime.

**“How concerned are you that you or someone in your family will be a victim of a crime?”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Very concerned</b>	42%	40%	38%	34%	54%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	34	34	34	39	29
<b>Not very concerned</b>	17	19	21	20	11
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	7	7	7	7	6

As for public safety issues close to home, two in three residents are very concerned (42%) or somewhat concerned (23%) about gangs and graffiti in their neighborhood. Central/Southeast area residents (55%) are the most likely to say they are very concerned. Six in 10 blacks (60%), Latinos (60%), non-citizens (61%), and half of all residents with incomes under \$40,000 (54%) and with children at home (51%) say they are very concerned. In contrast, about one in four whites (25%), college graduates (26%), and those with incomes of \$80,000 or more (24%) worry a lot about gangs and graffiti.

**“How concerned are you about gangs and graffiti in your neighborhood?”**

	All Adults	County Area			
		North Valleys	San Fernando	West	Central / Southeast
<b>Very concerned</b>	42%	39%	35%	36%	55%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	23	22	26	23	21
<b>Not very concerned</b>	20	19	22	24	15
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	15	20	17	17	9

### Racial Profiling by Police

When it comes to the highly contentious issue of racial profiling—the alleged police practice of stopping motorists of certain racial/ethnic groups thought to be more likely to commit crimes—the majority of residents (53%) believe that this practice is widespread in their part of the county. A higher percentage of blacks (79%) than of Latinos (64%), Asians (49%), and whites (39%) say racial profiling is widespread. Central/Southeast area residents (62%) are more likely than residents in other localities to believe that racial profiling is widespread in their area. The belief that racial profiling is widespread is more common among younger than older residents, renters than homeowners, non-citizens than citizens, lower-income than upper-income residents, and residents with children than those without children in their homes.

**“Do you believe the practice of racial profiling is widespread or not widespread in your part of Los Angeles County?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
<b>Widespread</b>	53%	49%	79%	64%	39%
<b>Not widespread</b>	39	45	17	29	51
<b>Don't know</b>	8	6	4	7	10

Forty-three percent of county residents say they have personal knowledge of racial profiling, although most commonly among other people they know rather than through direct experience. Three in four blacks (74%) say they or someone they know has been a victim of racial profiling, compared to less than half of the residents in other racial/ethnic groups. Central/Southeast area residents (48%) are the most likely to say they have personal knowledge of racial profiling. U.S.-born residents are more likely than either foreign-born citizens or non-citizens to say they have personal knowledge of racial profiling. More than half of residents under age 35 say they have some personal knowledge or direct experience with racial profiling, while seven in 10 residents age 55 and older say they have neither personal knowledge nor experience with regard to profiling. The percentage of residents who say they have never been a victim of racial profiling, and do not know of anyone who has, declines with education and income.

**“Have you or do you know anyone who has ever been a victim or racial profiling?”  
(if yes: “Would that be you or someone you know?”)**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
<b>Yes, respondent</b>	7%	8%	18%	9%	3%
<b>Yes, someone else</b>	30	28	40	27	31
<b>Yes, both</b>	6	5	16	7	3
<b>No</b>	57	59	26	57	63

## Race Relations in Los Angeles County

While race relations may not register among the top issues in the county, many residents express concern about the state of race relations in the county today. A majority of residents say race relations are not so good (39%) or poor (14%) in Los Angeles County. A higher percentage of blacks (65%) than of any other racial/ethnic group say race relations are not so good or poor. Fewer than half of the residents in each of the four geographic areas rate race relations as either excellent or good. A higher percentage of non-citizens (61%) than foreign-born citizens (53%) and U.S.-born residents (52%) registered negative assessments of race relations. Residents who are older, college educated, upper-income, and own their homes have the most positive perceptions about race relations in the county.

**“Overall, how would you rate race relations in Los Angeles County today?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
<b>Excellent / Good</b>	44%	52%	35%	39%	48%
<b>Not so good</b>	39	39	50	37	39
<b>Poor</b>	14	6	15	21	11
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	0	3	2

While race relations may not receive glowing reviews in the county today, half of county residents (54%) believe that race relations will improve in five years; one in three expects a turn for the worse (35%). North Valleys residents (48%) are the least likely to say that race relations will improve. Asians (71%) and Latinos (57%) are more likely than blacks (51%) and whites (50%) to say race relations will improve. Non-citizens (62%) express more optimism than foreign-born citizens (53%) or U.S.-born residents (52%) about the future of race relations. Younger residents, Democrats, and liberals are more optimistic than older residents, Republicans, and conservatives. There are no significant differences across education or income groups, or between homeowners and renters or those with and without children at home. Among residents who rate race relations as not so good or poor, 43 percent think relations among the races will improve and 45 percent believe they will be worse five years from now.

**“Looking ahead five years from now, which is more likely to happen in Los Angeles County ...”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
<b>Race/ethnic relations will improve</b>	54%	71%	51%	57%	50%
<b>Race/ethnic relations will get worse</b>	35	20	39	32	37
<b>Neither / No change</b>	6	4	5	5	7
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	5	6	6

### Attitudes Toward Immigrants

While views about race relations in the county are somewhat mixed, attitudes toward immigrants are generally positive. When asked which opinion was closer to their own, 59 percent of residents say immigrants today are a benefit to Los Angeles County because of their hard work and job skills, while 31 percent say immigrants are a burden because they use public services. Solid majorities in every geographic area say that immigrants are beneficial to the county, although Central/Southeast area residents (65%) are the most positive. Still, there are some important differences: Latinos (81%) and Asians (63%) overwhelmingly view immigrants as a benefit, while whites (45%) and blacks (47%) are less convinced. A majority of Democrats (58%) and independents (55%) believe that immigrants are beneficial, but a majority of Republicans (53%) say they are a burden. Also, a lower percentage of U.S.-born residents (50%) than immigrants—both foreign-born citizens (67%) and non-citizens (86%)—believe that immigrants are a benefit to the county.

“Which of these two views comes closest to your own?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
Immigrants today are a benefit to LA County because of their hard work and job skills	59%	63%	47%	81%	45%
Immigrants today are a burden to LA County because they use public services	31	24	40	12	44
Don't know	10	13	13	7	11

While most residents believe that immigrants benefit the county, more than half of the county’s residents (52%) also believe that illegal immigration is a big problem. Majorities of residents in every area, with the exception of the Central/Southeast area (44%), perceive illegal immigration as a big problem. Similar percentages of whites (63%) and blacks (66%) say illegal immigration is a big problem, while lower percentages of Asians (48%) and Latinos (31%) hold this opinion. The perception that illegal immigration creates big problems for the county is much higher among U.S.-born residents (60%) than among foreign-born citizens (39%) and non-citizens (29%). Republicans (72%) are more likely than Democrats (55%) and independent voters (44%) to say that illegal immigration is a big problem. Among residents who think that immigrants are a benefit to Los Angeles County, three in four perceive illegal immigration as either a big problem (34%) or somewhat of a problem (40%).

“Do you think that illegal immigration is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in Los Angeles County?”

	All Adults	Nativity & Citizenship		
		U.S. Native	Foreign-born U.S. citizen	Foreign-born, non-citizen
Big problem	52%	60%	39%	29%
Somewhat of a problem	32	30	35	35
Not a problem	14	8	24	29
Don't know	2	2	2	7

## Public Concern about Health Care

Mirroring the results of recent national and state surveys, most Los Angeles residents express concern about their ability to afford health care. Seven in 10 county residents say they are very concerned (47%) or somewhat concerned (23%) about their ability to afford health care when a family member gets sick. A majority of Latinos (61%), blacks (54%), Central/Southeast area residents (56%), foreign-born citizens (56%), non-citizens (63%), residents under age 35 (52%), and those with incomes of under \$40,000 (59%), only a high school education (58%), and with children in their homes (53%) say they are very concerned about their ability to afford necessary health care. Lower percentages of whites (35%), college graduates (35%), and people with household incomes of \$80,000 or more (28%) are worried about paying health care bills, yet a majority in each of these groups expresses some concern about health care costs.

**“How concerned are you about being able to afford health care when a family member gets sick?”**

	All Adults	Nativity & Citizenship		
		U.S. Native	Foreign-born U.S. Citizen	Foreign-born non-citizen
<b>Very concerned</b>	47%	41%	56%	63%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	23	23	23	24
<b>Not too concerned</b>	14	17	10	7
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	16	19	11	6

This high level of concern about the ability to afford health care is evident in spite of the fact that eight in 10 county residents report being covered by a public or private health care plan. However, 52 percent of non-citizens report having no health care plan. Substantial percentages of Latinos (33%), residents under age 35 (28%), those with incomes under \$40,000 (30%), and those with only a high school education (30%) also report having no health care coverage. In contrast, nine in 10 whites (90%), college graduates (91%), and those with incomes of \$80,000 or more (94%) report having a health care plan. Not surprisingly, a higher percentage of residents with no health care coverage (69%) than of those with coverage (42%) are very concerned about the affordability of health care.

Although many county residents express concerns about the cost of health care, 76 percent say they are satisfied with the quality of health care they receive. Among the least likely to express satisfaction with the quality of care they receive are Latinos (72%), foreign-born citizens (68%), and non-citizens (69%). Satisfaction with quality of care increases with age, education, income, and homeownership. A higher percentage of residents with health care coverage (81%) than those without coverage (54%) are satisfied with the quality of care they receive.

**“Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of health care you receive?”**

	All Adults	Nativity & Citizenship		
		U.S. Native	Foreign-born U.S. citizen	Foreign-born non-citizen
<b>Satisfied</b>	76%	79%	68%	69%
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	21	18	29	25
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	3	6

## Public Health Care in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County’s public hospitals and health clinics are not unknown to the public: Six in 10 residents report that they or a family member have either previously used (46%) or could see themselves using (13%) the county’s public health care system in the future. A majority in every geographic area report past or possible use of the county health care system. The Central/Southeast area (54%) has the highest percentage of consumers of the county health care system. A majority of blacks (64%), Latinos (59%), non-citizens (57%), those with incomes of under \$40,000 (56%), those with children at home (53%), and adults under age 35 (52%) say they have used the county’s health care system. Those least likely to use the county system are whites, college graduates, and adults age 55 and older.

Most county residents believe that higher levels of government should have primary responsibility for funding county health care for uninsured residents: Six in 10 residents name either the federal government (31%) or the state government (30%), while one in four name the county government (24%) as the preferred source of public funding. However, among all county residents, as well as among Democrats, Republicans, and other voters, there is no clear choice about whether the state government or the federal government should bear primary responsibility for funding health care for the uninsured.

**“Which level of government should have primary responsibility for funding the public hospitals and health care system that is provided for uninsured residents of Los Angeles County?”**

	All Adults	Party Registration		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
Federal	31%	35%	26%	30%
State	30	29	34	29
County	24	22	26	24
None of the above	1	0	3	3
All of the above	6	7	5	6
Other	1	1	2	2
Don't know	7	6	4	6

Two in three residents say it is very important for public-private partnerships to be involved in providing health care for the poor and uninsured in Los Angeles County. Only a small percentage of residents believe that public-private partnerships have no role in providing health care for those who cannot afford it. Strong majorities across geographic regions, racial/ethnic groups, and political and demographic groups support public-private partnerships for addressing the county’s health care concerns.

**“How important are public-private partnerships—businesses, nonprofits, and foundations working with government to help provide public health services for poor and uninsured residents in Los Angeles County?”**

	All Adults	Party Registration		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
Very important	68%	70%	58%	64%
Somewhat important	25	22	32	28
Not important	4	3	7	5
Don't know	3	5	3	3

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## Survey Methodology

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The Los Angeles County Survey is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which is directed by Mark Baldassare, research director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance in research and writing from Jon Cohen, survey research manager, and Dorie Apollonio and Eliana Kaimowitz, survey research associates. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the School of Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California, with partial funding from the California Community Foundation. The survey methods, questions, and content of the report were solely determined by Mark Baldassare. However, the survey benefited from consultation with staff at the University of Southern California, the California Community Foundation, and other Los Angeles County institutions.

The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,000 Los Angeles County adult residents interviewed between March 6 and March 18, 2003. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in Los Angeles County were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing by using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. We did not include Asian language interviews because the 2000 U.S. Census indicates that fewer than 1 percent of Los Angeles County adults speak any given Asian language and describe themselves as not speaking English at least “well.” Casa Hispana translated the survey into Spanish; and Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. conducted the telephone interviewing.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of Los Angeles County’s adult population and, accordingly, statistically weighted the survey sample.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,000 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in Los Angeles County were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. On occasion, and where noted, we asked questions of half samples (approximately 1,000 respondents). In addition, certain questions were split into FORM 1 and FORM 2 questionnaires, and all respondents were asked either FORM 1 or FORM 2 questions. For both the half samples and the FORM-splits, the sampling error is +/- 3 percentage points. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present the results for non-Hispanic whites (referred to in the tables and text as “whites” for the sake of brevity), blacks/African Americans (“blacks”), Latinos, and Asians. We also contrast the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents. The “independents” category includes only those who are registered to vote as “decline to state.”

In some cases, we compare the PPIC Survey of Los Angeles County responses to responses recorded in national surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center and to Los Angeles County and City surveys conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*. We used earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys to analyze trends over time in Los Angeles County and to compare public opinion in Los Angeles County to opinions in the other major regions of California.

In this report, we present results by county area, dividing Los Angeles County into four geographic areas that include approximately equal numbers of residents. The four areas highlighted in the report and presented in the Los Angeles County map on page ii represent a consolidation of the county's eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs). In November 1993, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved eight regional SPAs for the purposes of planning, service coordination, and information- and data-sharing by major county departments serving children and families. At that time, the county's departments of Children and Family Services, Mental Health, Health Services, Public Social Services, and Probation were instructed to begin implementing these common boundaries for planning activities; and non-county entities were asked to adopt the same planning areas. Since then, the California Community Foundation, the United Way, and the California Wellness Foundation have also adopted the SPA boundaries to help organize and coordinate their planning. These areas, and how they relate to our county areas, are described below, including a partial list of the cities and communities included:

- North Valleys—includes Acton, Alhambra, Altadena, Arcadia, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Claremont, Covina, Diamond Bar, Duarte, El Monte, Glendora, Gorman, Hacienda-Rowland Heights, La Puente, La Verne, Lake Hughes, Lake Los Angeles, Lancaster, Littlerock, Llano, Monrovia, Monterey Park, Mt. Wilson, Palmdale, Pasadena, Pearblossom, Pomona, Rosemead, San Dimas, San Gabriel, San Marino, Santa Clarita, Sierra Madre, South Pasadena, Temple City, Valyermo, Walnut, and West Covina, as well as other cities and communities.
- San Fernando—includes Burbank, Calabasas, Canoga Park, Encino, Chatsworth, Glendale, La Canada, La Crescenta, Mid-San Fernando Valley, North Hills, North Hollywood, Northridge, Northwest San Fernando Valley, Pacoima, Reseda, San Fernando, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, Sunland, Sylmar, Tarzana, Thousand Oaks, Tujunga, Van Nuys, Westlake Village, Winnetka, and Woodland Hills, as well as other cities and communities.
- West—includes beach cities, Bel Air, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Carson, Culver City, El Segundo, Gardena, Harbor City, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lomita, Long Beach, Malibu, Pacific Palisades, Palos Verdes, Playa del Rey, San Pedro, Santa Monica, Topanga Canyon, Torrance, Venice/Mar Vista, West Los Angeles, Westchester, and Wilmington, as well as other cities and communities.
- Central/Southeast—includes Artesia, Bell/Bell Garden/Cudahy, Bellflower, Boyle Heights, Central Los Angeles, Cerritos, Commerce, Compton, Crenshaw, Downey, East Los Angeles, Hawaiian Gardens, Hollywood, Huntington Park, La Habra, La Mirada, Lakewood, Lynwood, Maywood, Montebello, Northeast, Norwalk, Paramount, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, South Central, South Gate, University, West Compton, West Hollywood, West Wilshire, Whittier, and Wilshire, as well as other cities and communities.

North Valleys includes SPA 1 and SPA 3; San Fernando includes SPA 2; West includes SPA 5 and SPA 8; and Central/ Southeast includes SPA 4, SPA 6, and SPA 7. For additional information on the Los Angeles County SPAs, see the following page on the web site of United Way of Greater Los Angeles: [http://www.unitedwayla.org/pages/rpts\\_resource/state\\_spas.html](http://www.unitedwayla.org/pages/rpts_resource/state_spas.html).

**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
MARCH 6—MARCH 18, 2003  
2,000 LOS ANGELES COUNTY ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH  
MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE**

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1. How long have you lived at your current address—  
fewer than five years, five years to under 10 years, 10  
years to under 20 years, or 20 years or more?
  - 46% fewer than five years
  - 20 five years to under 10 years
  - 16 10 years to under 20 years
  - 18 20 years or more
2. Do you own or rent your current residence?
  - 48% own
  - 50 rent
  - 2 neither (*volunteered*)
3. Overall, how satisfied are you with the neighborhood  
you live in? Are you very satisfied, somewhat  
satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?
  - 53% very satisfied
  - 34 somewhat satisfied
  - 8 somewhat dissatisfied
  - 4 very dissatisfied
  - 1 don't know
- 4a. [*half sample*] Five years from now, do you see  
yourself living in the neighborhood you now live in?  
(*if no*: Do you think that you are likely to move within  
Los Angeles County, or is it more likely that you'll  
move outside of the county? )
  - 51% yes, living in neighborhood
  - 22 no, living elsewhere in LA County
  - 17 no, living outside of LA County
  - 10 don't know
- 4b. [*half sample*] Would you say the neighborhood you  
live in has a sense of community, or not?
  - 67% yes
  - 30 no
  - 3 don't know
5. We are interested in your opinions about Los Angeles  
County as a whole. What do you think is the most  
important issue facing the county today?
  - 26% crime, gangs
  - 15 education, schools
  - 9 economy, jobs, unemployment
  - 6 traffic, transportation
  - 4 population growth and development
  - 4 health care
  - 3 state budget, deficit
  - 3 war, possibility of war, Iraq
  - 2 drugs
  - 2 housing
  - 2 immigration
  - 2 taxes
  - 2 air pollution, pollution
  - 1 government regulations
  - 1 homelessness
  - 1 poverty
  - 1 terrorism
  - 7 other (*specify*)
  - 9 don't know
6. Do you think that things in LA County are generally  
going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
  - 40% right direction
  - 43 wrong direction
  - 17 don't know
7. Thinking about the quality of life in LA County, how  
do you think things are going— very well, somewhat  
well, somewhat badly, or very badly?
  - 7% very well
  - 54 somewhat well
  - 27 somewhat badly
  - 9 very badly
  - 3 don't know
8. In the future, do you think that LA County will be a  
better place to live than it is now, a worse place to  
live than it is now, or there will be no change?
  - 32% better place
  - 32 worse place
  - 31 no change
  - 5 don't know

9. In general, how would you rate the economy in LA County today? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 3% excellent
- 21 good
- 48 fair
- 27 poor
- 1 don't know

10. Thinking only about your part of LA County, would you say that it is in an economic recession or not? (if yes: Do you think it is in a serious, moderate, or mild recession?)

- 14% yes, serious recession
- 25 yes, moderate recession
- 12 yes, mild recession
- 43 no
- 6 don't know

11. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

- 25% good times
- 67 bad times
- 8 don't know

I'd like to ask how you would rate some of the public services in your local area. For each, please tell me if you think the services are excellent, good, fair, or poor. (rotate questions 12 through 17)

12. How about local parks, beaches, and other public recreational facilities?

- 15% excellent
- 47 good
- 27 fair
- 7 poor
- 4 don't know

13. How about local streets and roads?

- 8% excellent
- 38 good
- 34 fair
- 19 poor
- 1 don't know

14. How about local police protection?

- 17% excellent
- 45 good
- 26 fair
- 9 poor
- 3 don't know

15. How about local public schools?

- 11% excellent
- 30 good
- 27 fair
- 21 poor
- 11 don't know

16a. [half sample] How about local public libraries?

- 20% excellent
- 48 good
- 17 fair
- 5 poor
- 6 don't use libraries (volunteered)
- 4 don't know

16b. [half sample] How about local public buses and transit?

- 9% excellent
- 33 good
- 25 fair
- 12 poor
- 15 don't use public buses and transit (volunteered)
- 6 don't know

17a. [half sample] How about local public health clinics and hospitals?

- 8% excellent
- 31 good
- 29 fair
- 21 poor
- 11 don't know

17b. [half sample] How about local after-school programs for children and youth?

- 9% excellent
- 28 good
- 22 fair
- 14 poor
- 27 don't know

[FORM 2] Next, we are interested in your opinions about Los Angeles County as a whole.

18a. [FORM 1] Overall, how would you rate the performance of your city government in solving problems in your local area— excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 6% excellent
- 33 good
- 38 fair
- 16 poor
- 1 not a city (Ask q. 18b, FORM 2)
- 6 don't know

18b. [FORM 2] How would you rate the performance of county government in solving problems in LA County: excellent, good, fair, or poor?

2% excellent  
22 good  
49 fair  
22 poor  
5 don't know

19a. [FORM 1] When your city government officials decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what people think—a lot, some, very little, or no attention?

16% a lot  
45 some  
29 very little  
6 no attention  
4 don't know

19b. [FORM 2] When county government officials decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what people think—a lot, some, very little, or no attention?

8% a lot  
44 some  
37 very little  
10 no attention  
1 don't know

20a. [FORM 1] At this time, would you favor or oppose raising the local sales tax by one cent to fund city-level police, parks, roads, libraries, and other services?

48% favor  
49 oppose  
3 don't know

20b. [FORM 2] At this time, would you favor or oppose new taxes on alcoholic beverages and cigarettes in order to fund county-level public health and medical emergency services?

64% favor  
33 oppose  
3 don't know

I am going to read you a list of problems other people have told us about. For each, please tell me if you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in your part of Los Angeles County. (*rotate questions 21 through 26*)

21. How about traffic congestion on freeways and major roads?

67% big problem  
25 somewhat of a problem  
7 not a problem  
1 don't know

22. How about crime?

41% big problem  
40 somewhat of a problem  
18 not a problem  
1 don't know

23. How about population growth and development?

38% big problem  
33 somewhat of a problem  
26 not a problem  
3 don't know

24. How about air pollution?

37% big problem  
41 somewhat of a problem  
22 not a problem

25. How about lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs?

40% big problem  
39 somewhat of a problem  
16 not a problem  
5 don't know

26. How about the availability of housing that you can afford?

54% big problem  
30 somewhat of a problem  
14 not a problem  
2 don't know

27. Which of these two views is closest to your own? (*rotate*) Immigrants today are a benefit to LA County because of their hard work and job skills, *or* immigrants today are a burden to LA County because they use public services.

59% benefit  
31 burden  
10 don't know

28. Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, the federal government has instituted a policy of identifying and registering immigrants from certain Arab and Muslim countries. In your view, has the government gone too far in restricting immigrants' rights and civil liberties, *or* has the government acted appropriately in response to the threat of terrorism?

65% government has acted appropriately  
28 government has gone too far  
2 other (*specify*)  
5 don't know

29. And how about illegal immigration? Do you think that this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in LA County today?

- 52% big problem
- 32 somewhat of a problem
- 14 not a problem
- 2 don't know

30. Overall, how would you rate race relations in LA County today—excellent, good, not so good, or poor?

- 4% excellent
- 40 good
- 39 not so good
- 14 poor
- 3 don't know

31. Looking ahead five years from now, which is more likely to happen in LA County: (*rotate*) race and ethnic relations will improve, *or* race and ethnic relations will get worse?

- 54% improve
- 35 get worse
- 6 neither/no change (*volunteered*)
- 5 don't know

32. On another topic, are you yourself now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan? A health plan includes any private insurance plan through your employer, a plan that you purchased yourself, or a plan offered through a government program such as Medicare, Medicaid, or Medi-Cal.

- 81% yes
- 19 no

33. Are you generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of health care you receive?

- 76% satisfied
- 21 dissatisfied
- 3 don't know

34. And how concerned are you about being able to afford necessary health care when a family member gets sick—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 47% very concerned
- 23 somewhat concerned
- 14 not too concerned
- 16 not at all concerned

35. Have you or anyone in your immediate family ever used an LA County public hospital or the public health care system in LA County? (*if no*: Do you think you will ever use the public health care system in LA County?)

- 46% yes
- 13 no, will use
- 24 no, will never use
- 16 no, don't know if will use
- 1 don't know

36. Which level of government do you think should have primary responsibility for funding the public hospitals and health care system that is provided for uninsured residents of LA County—the federal government, the state government, or county government?

- 31% federal
- 30 state
- 24 county
- 1 none of the above (*volunteered*)
- 6 all of the above (*volunteered*)
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 7 don't know

37. How important are public-private partnerships—nonprofits, businesses, and foundations working with local governments in helping to provide public health services for poor and uninsured residents in LA County—very important, somewhat important, or not important?

- 68% very important
- 25 somewhat important
- 4 not important
- 3 don't know

38. As you may know, this year the state government faces a large budget deficit, estimated to be around \$30 billion. How concerned are you that the state budget deficit will cause severe cuts in areas such as city and county government and local schools in LA County—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 71% very concerned
- 21 somewhat concerned
- 4 not very concerned
- 4 not at all concerned

39. On another topic, how concerned are you that you or someone in your family will be a victim of a crime—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?

42% very concerned  
34 somewhat concerned  
17 not very concerned  
7 not at all concerned

40. How concerned are you about gangs and graffiti in your neighborhood—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?

42% very concerned  
23 somewhat concerned  
20 not very concerned  
15 not at all concerned

41. It has been reported that some police officers stop motorists of certain racial and ethnic groups because the officers believe that these groups are more likely than others to commit certain crimes. Do you believe that this practice, known as racial profiling, is widespread or not widespread in your part of LA County?

53% widespread  
39 not widespread  
8 don't know

42. Have you or do you know anyone who has ever been a victim of racial profiling? (if yes: Would that be you or someone you know?)

7% yes, respondent  
30 yes, someone else  
6 yes, both  
57 no

43. On another topic, which of the following types of surface transportation projects do you think should have top priority for public funding in LA County? (rotate list)

28% freeways and highways  
20 public bus system  
15 local streets and roads  
13 light rail  
10 subway system  
6 carpool lanes  
3 other (specify)  
5 don't know

44a. [half sample] State law requires a two-thirds majority vote to pass any new local special tax. What if there was a state measure that would change the two-thirds requirement to a 55 percent majority vote for passing a local sales tax for transportation projects? Would you vote yes or no?

48% yes  
46 no  
6 don't know

44b. [half sample] What if there was a measure on the county ballot to increase the local sales tax for transportation projects by one-half cent? Would you vote yes or no?

59% yes  
38 no  
3 don't know

45. On another issue, have you volunteered in your community during the past 12 months? (if yes: On average, about how many hours per week do you spend volunteering—0 to 2 hours; 3 to 5 hours; 6 to 10 hours; or more?)

17% yes, 0 to 2 hours  
12 yes, 3 to 5 hours  
6 yes, 6 to 10 hours  
6 yes, more than 10 hours  
59 no, have not volunteered in past 12 months

(rotate questions 46 and 47)

46. Have you attended a meeting on local or school affairs (in the past 12 months)?

37% yes  
62 no  
1 don't know

47. Have you attended a meeting of a racial, ethnic, or immigrant association (in the past 12 months)?

7% yes  
92 no  
1 don't know

48. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in local politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

16% great deal  
35 fair amount  
36 only a little  
13 none

49. On another topic, are you familiar with the system of neighborhood councils that is being established in the city of Los Angeles?

27% yes  
73 no

50. As you may know, a system of neighborhood councils is being established in the city of Los Angeles that is designed to strengthen the voice of community residents in city policymaking. In general, do you think that neighborhood councils are a good idea or a bad idea?

90% good idea  
 5 bad idea  
 1 other (*specify*)  
 4 don't know

51a. [*half sample*] Some people have proposed a new political system for the city of Los Angeles that would transfer some authority from the mayor and city council to elected officials in smaller districts that would be called "boroughs." In general, do you think that having a borough system in the city of Los Angeles is a good idea or a bad idea?

65% good idea  
 20 bad idea  
 15 don't know

51b. [*half sample*] Some people say that the Los Angeles Unified School District should be divided into smaller, independent school districts. Do you favor or oppose splitting up the Los Angeles Unified School District?

55% favor  
 30 oppose  
 1 other (*specify*)  
 14 don't know

[*rotate questions 52 through 53*]

52a. [*half sample*] Which of the following comes closest to your views about local governments in LA County: (*rotate*) local governments should work together and have a common regional plan, *or* local governments should work independently and each have their own plans.

78% local governments should work together  
 17 local governments should work independently  
 1 other (*specify*)  
 4 don't know

52b. [*half sample*] Which of the following comes closest to your views about how big issues in LA County should be decided: (*rotate*) local elected officials should make most of the decisions, *or* local voters should make most of the decisions at the ballot box.

18% local elected officials  
 78 local voters  
 1 other (*specify*)  
 3 don't know

The 10 million residents of LA County are served by the county government, 88 city governments, and more than 200 special districts that provide school, transportation, water, sanitation, fire, and other services.

53a. [*half sample*] Which of the following comes closest to your views about local governments in LA County: (*rotate*) having this many local governments is a good thing because it ensures that local services meet the needs of local residents, *or* having this many local governments is a bad thing because it is an inefficient way to provide local services.

69% good thing  
 23 bad thing  
 8 don't know

53b. [*half sample*] Which of the following comes closest to your views about local governments in LA County: (*rotate*) having this many local governments is a good thing because county residents get a say in more local matters, *or* having this many local governments is a bad thing because figuring out which government is supposed to provide what services is too confusing.

56% good thing  
 34 bad thing  
 1 other (*specify*)  
 9 don't know

54. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote? (*if yes*: Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?)

35% yes, Democrat  
 20 yes, Republican  
 5 yes, other (*specify*)  
 12 yes, independent  
 28 no

55. On another topic, would you consider yourself to be politically very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle-of-the-road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

10% very liberal  
 23 somewhat liberal  
 29 middle-of-the-road  
 23 somewhat conservative  
 11 very conservative  
 4 don't know

[56-58: *demographic questions*]

59. (if employed) How do you usually commute to work— drive alone, carpool, public bus or transit, walk, or some other means?

- 74% drive alone
- 9 carpool
- 9 public bus or transit
- 3 walk
- 3 some other means (specify)
- 2 work at home

60. (if employed) Overall, how satisfied are you with your commute to work? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

- 46% very satisfied
- 29 somewhat satisfied
- 15 somewhat dissatisfied
- 10 very dissatisfied

[61-65: demographic questions]

66. In general, do you most identify with? (rotate list)

- 25% Southern California
- 14 your religion
- 13 the place where you were born
- 12 your racial or ethnic group
- 10 Los Angeles County
- 10 your city
- 10 other (specify)
- 6 don't know

67. Are you or is anyone in your immediate family a member of a labor union?

- 21% yes
- 78 no
- 1 don't know

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**PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA**

500 Washington Street, Suite 800 • San Francisco, California 94111

Phone: (415) 291-4400 • Fax: (415) 291-4401

[www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org) • [info@ppic.org](mailto:info@ppic.org)