



**PPIC
STATEWIDE
SURVEY**

APRIL 2003

*Special Survey
of the Central Valley
in collaboration with the
Great Valley Center*

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***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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Preface

The Central Valley Survey – an ongoing collaborative effort of the Public Policy Institute of California and the Great Valley Center – is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey.

This is the fourth PPIC survey of the Central Valley. The first was conducted in October 1999 (published in a survey report in November 1999); the second was conducted in February 2001 (published in a survey report in March 2001); and the third was conducted and published in a survey report in April 2002. The purpose of the surveys is to provide comprehensive, advocacy-free information on the opinions and public policy preferences of Central Valley residents. The Central Valley has been of considerable interest to researchers and state and national leaders for some time because of its increasing role in the social, economic, and political life of California. The survey was co-sponsored by the Great Valley Center in Modesto, California, with support from the *Merced Sun-Star*.

The Central Valley – the inland area of California stretching 400 miles from Bakersfield to Redding – is home to 5.7 million residents and has been one of the fastest growing areas of the state. By the year 2025, the Central Valley is expected to see its population increase to 9.3 million people. Because the region is the agricultural center of the state – and because agriculture is the state’s leading industry – the urbanization of farmland in the Central Valley is of great concern to state policymakers. The impact of growth on the water supply, air quality, transportation infrastructure, economic conditions, and housing affordability is a major concern today throughout the region.

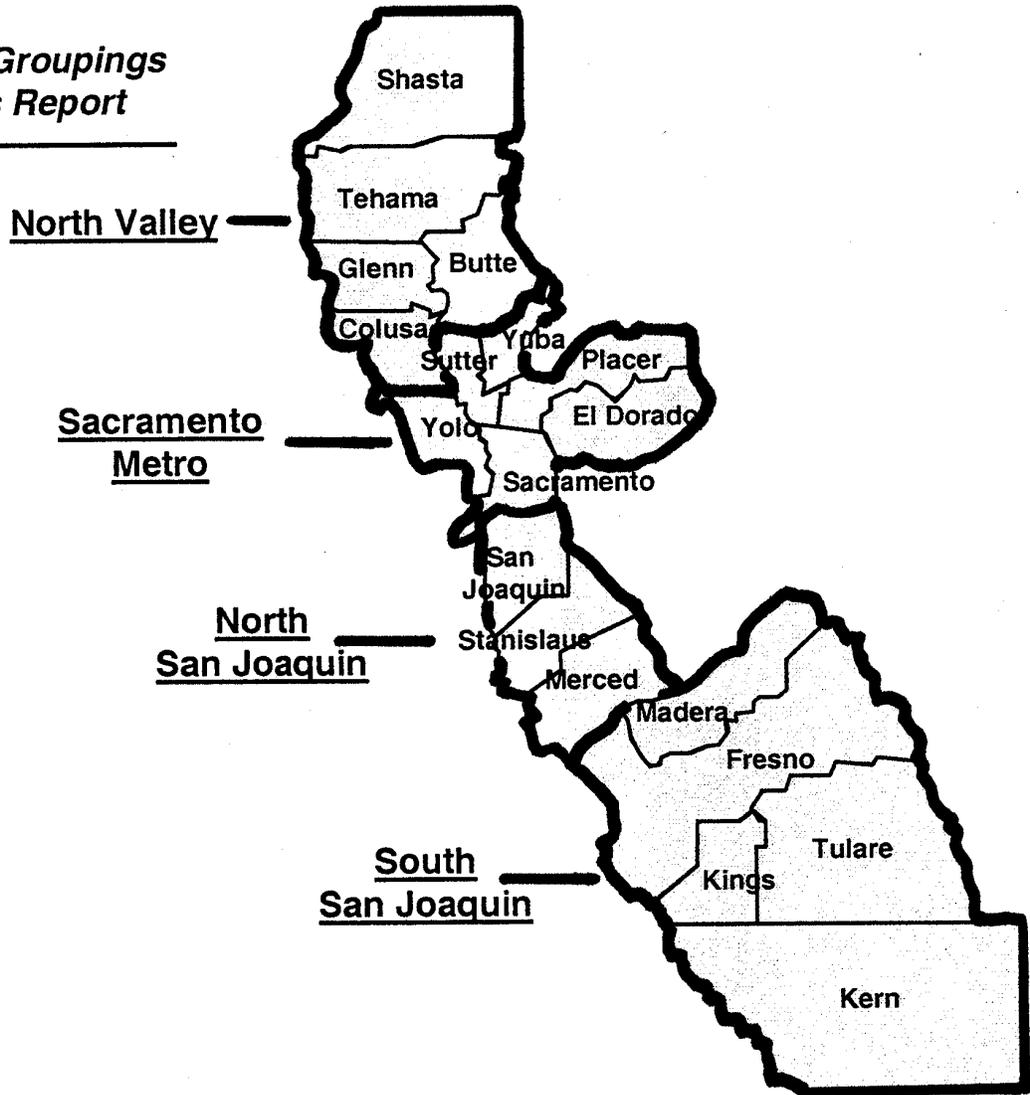
This survey of 2,000 adult residents includes some of the “tracking” questions from the 1999, 2001, and 2002 surveys in order to measure changes in key indicators over time. The survey also includes questions from PPIC Statewide Surveys, providing comparisons with other major regions of California and the state as a whole. The following issues are explored in this edition of the survey:

- Regional conditions in the Central Valley, including perceptions of the most important problem facing the region; sub-regional perceptions of specific problems such as traffic congestion and air pollution; local ratings, including satisfaction with the community and local public services; transportation conditions, including satisfaction with the commute and priorities for transportation funding; and personal opinions about economic conditions.
- Governance issues, including public concerns about the effects of the state budget deficit on the Central Valley and willingness to increase taxes for local services; air quality concerns and the public’s willingness to increase government regulations and make lifestyle changes; water supply issues, including the perceived adequacy of the water supply today and in the near future, public priorities for water use, and preferences for water conservation as a policy solution.
- The future of the Central Valley, including perceptions of the most important problems the region will face in 2025; the overall outlook for the future; preferred policies for land use, growth, and development; and the perceived roles for regional planning and local leadership.
- Trends in attitudes over time and across four different sub-regions of the Central Valley (i.e., North Valley, Sacramento Metro, North San Joaquin, and South San Joaquin); between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites; and across demographic and political groups.

Copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail (order@ppic.org) or phone (415-291-4400). This report and the November 1999, March 2001, and April 2002 reports are posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site (www.ppic.org). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org.

The Central Valley

Sub-Regional Groupings
Used in This Report



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Press Release

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

SPECIAL SURVEY OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY

AIR POLLUTION ANGST SETTLES OVER CENTRAL VALLEY

Growth-Related Worries the Focal Point When Residents Peer Into Future, But No Clear Vision About Solutions

SAN FRANCISCO, California, April 30, 2003 — Is the Central Valley fighting L.A. County's demons? The region exceeds Los Angeles for the first time in measures of public concern about air pollution, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the Great Valley Center. This concern may reflect the fact that nearly 4 in 10 Central Valley residents today say they or family members suffer from respiratory problems. But even a host of growth-related worries and a gloomy economic outlook fail to dampen residents' general contentment with their communities.

The large-scale public opinion survey of the 19-county Central Valley finds that growth-related issues top the list when residents are asked to name the most important issues facing the region. Air pollution and pollution in general (16%) are mentioned most often, followed by water quality and supply (14%), jobs and the economy (11%), population growth and development (8%), and crime and gangs (7%).

Overall, 75 percent of Central Valley residents say air pollution is a big problem (41%) or somewhat of a problem (34%) in their part of the region, up from 67 percent in 2002. In a March 2003 survey, 37 percent of Los Angeles County residents said air pollution was a big problem in their area. Consistent with air quality patterns, South San Joaquin residents (56%) are more likely than residents in other parts of the Valley to view air pollution as a big problem.

"The fact that Central Valley residents are more concerned about air pollution than people in L.A. County, the bad-air poster child for so many years, is pretty stunning," says PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. "But this problem is hitting home very directly for many Valley residents." Indeed, 63 percent say the health threat posed by air pollution is either very serious (26%) or somewhat serious (37%) in their part of the Valley. And 37 percent say that they (10%), someone in their immediate family (20%), or both (7%) suffer from asthma or other respiratory problems. For households with children under the age of 18, the number jumps to 41 percent.

Are residents willing to act on their concern about air quality? Half (51%) say they are willing to take public transit more frequently, even if it is less convenient than driving. In addition, 79 percent of residents — and 77 percent of SUV owners — say they are willing to drive a more fuel-efficient, lower-emission automobile, even if it is not their preferred type of vehicle. But while residents appear keen to make lifestyle changes that could help reduce air pollution, they are less supportive of government efforts that could have a greater effect. Although 59 percent say they favor tougher air pollution regulations for agricultural activities, support drops to 44 percent if those regulations would increase costs for Valley businesses. Similarly, strong support (66%) for federal air pollution regulations plummets (to 39%) if those regulations would hurt the local economy. Only 11 percent of Central Valley residents think the federal government should have primary responsibility for setting air quality standards in the region.

Weak Economy Can't Dampen Community Spirit

The diminished support for air pollution regulations if they interfere with economic activity reflects a growing unease about economic conditions and opportunities in the Central Valley. Only 35 percent of residents rate the region's economy as excellent or good — down from 45 percent in 2002. Although

residents in all parts of the Valley perceive a worsening economy, the pessimism is most evident in the Sacramento Metro area, where the percentage of residents rating the economy as excellent or good has dipped 19 points (58% to 39%). Nearly half (44%) of Valley residents today believe their part of the region is in an economic recession, and more expect bad economic times (48%) than good times (41%) in the coming year. Forty-five percent also see the lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs as a big problem in their part of the Valley today, up from 42 percent in 2002 and 35 percent in 2001.

Despite the economic gloom, more than half (58%) of all residents today say that the Central Valley is headed in the right direction, similar to ratings one year ago (55%). Why the positive attitude? Residents remain very happy with their own slice of the Valley: 77 percent rate their cities or communities as excellent or good places to live and continue to give positive ratings to most local services and amenities, including police (71%), parks and recreation facilities (71%), and public schools (56%).

Attitudes About Water Are Fluid

Similar to one year ago, half (54%) of all Central Valley residents today say *water quality* is at least somewhat of a problem. But concern about *water supply* has grown: 47 percent believe it as at least somewhat of a problem, up from 37 percent in 2002. Paradoxically, more residents today than one year ago (52% vs. 39%) also predict that the water supply in their part of the Central Valley will be adequate to meet their area's needs over the next decade.

In another shift, more residents today favor encouraging conservation (57% vs. 46% in 2002) rather than building new dams and reservoirs (34% vs. 41%). In fact, 55 percent support installing water meters on residences and commercial buildings as a way to promote conservation. Overall, residents believe farms and agriculture (39%) should receive greater priority in water planning efforts than homes and residents (29%) or environmental protection (22%).

2025: Growing Pains, Darkening Vision

While 31 percent of Central Valley residents view population growth and development as a big problem today, these issues dominate their vision of the future. Indeed, more residents (22%) say population growth and development will be the most important issue facing the Central Valley in 2025, followed by the related concerns of pollution (16%) and water (12%). Residents are not equivocal about the effects of population growth over the next two decades: 57 percent say it will be a bad thing for them and their families. And so they are uncertain of what the future holds, with similar numbers expecting the Valley to be a better (38%) and a worse (38%) place to live in 2025, and 19 percent anticipating no change. This ambiguity also reveals itself to some extent in the future development priorities of Valley residents:

- **Infrastructure:** School facilities (48%) are residents' top priority for public funds, followed by water systems (19%) and surface transportation (14%). Most residents view UC Merced (79%) and a proposed high-speed rail system (69%) as important for the economic vitality of the Central Valley.
- **Housing:** Valley residents prefer to see new housing built in already developed (68%) rather than undeveloped (26%) areas. But despite their consternation about growth, many residents (57%) say new development should focus on building neighborhoods with single-family detached housing, as opposed to building attached housing that would conserve land and preserve open space (35%)
- **Commuting:** Many Central Valley residents say new housing should be built near public transportation (63%) and existing job centers (59%).

“People in the Valley are very community-oriented, but there is a growing awareness of the regional challenges that require us to build consensus across neighborhoods, cities, and counties,” says Carol Whiteside, President of the Great Valley Center. “If we do this right, the future will look much brighter.” Despite the fact that 71 percent of Central Valley residents identify themselves as living in a city rather than a county (7%) or region (13%), 84 percent also believe local governments should work together to develop a common regional plan. However, they still prefer some control at the ballot box: 73 percent say local voters, rather than local elected officials (24%), should make important policy decisions.

Other Key Findings

- **State Budget Crisis** (page 7)

Most Central Valley residents (87%) are very concerned (59%) or somewhat concerned (28%) that the state budget deficit will lead to reductions in local public services. When asked to prioritize state spending, residents choose K-12 education (56%) and public health and social services (21%).

- **Raising Local Taxes** (page 8)

Despite their strong support for education, 53 percent of residents say they would oppose raising local taxes to fund their local school district. However, 55 percent would support a one-cent increase in the local sales tax for city-level services, including police, parks, and libraries; 66 percent would raise the local sales tax by one-half cent for transportation projects, including public transit.

- **Transportation and Commuting** (page 5)

While Central Valley residents express serious concern about roads and traffic generally — 41 percent consider traffic congestion on major roads and freeways a big problem in their area — most employed residents drive alone to work (72%) and say they are satisfied with their commutes (85%). Despite their reliance on cars, residents are equally likely to identify public bus systems and freeways (18% each) as top priorities for transportation funds.

- **Local Government Ratings** (page 18)

More Central Valley residents say their city government is doing a better job (excellent or good) than their county government in solving local problems (44% to 39%). A majority of residents (55%) think local government officials pay at least some attention to what the public thinks when making policy decisions, but only 13 percent believe they pay a lot of attention.

About the Survey

The Central Valley Survey — an ongoing collaborative effort of the Public Policy Institute of California and the Great Valley Center — is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey. The purpose of this survey is to provide a comprehensive, advocacy-free study of the political, social, and economic attitudes and public policy preferences of Central Valley residents. Previous PPIC surveys of the Central Valley were conducted in 1999, 2001, and 2002. Findings of the current survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,000 adult residents in the 19-county Central Valley region, interviewed from April 10 to April 21, 2003. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. For additional information on survey methodology, see page 19.

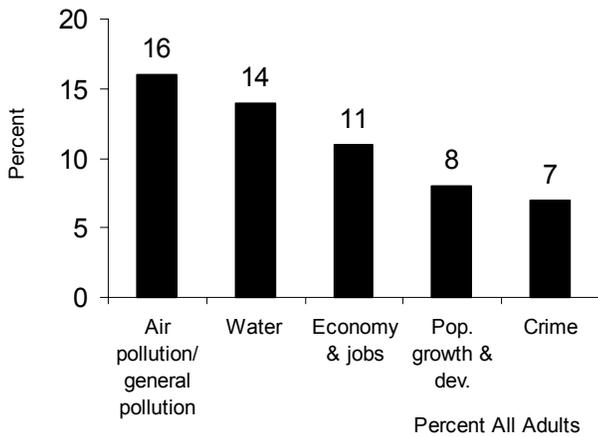
Mark Baldassare is research director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder and director of the PPIC Statewide Survey. His most recent book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at www.ppic.org.

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. The Great Valley Center is a private, nonprofit organization promoting the economic, social, and environmental well-being of California's Central Valley.

This report will appear on PPIC's website (www.ppic.org) on April 30, 2003.

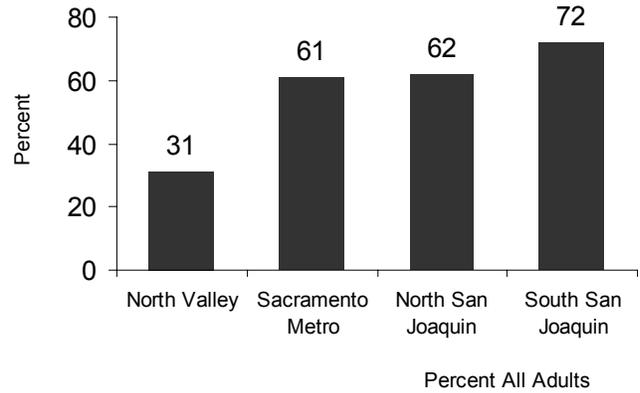
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What is the most important issue facing the Central Valley today?

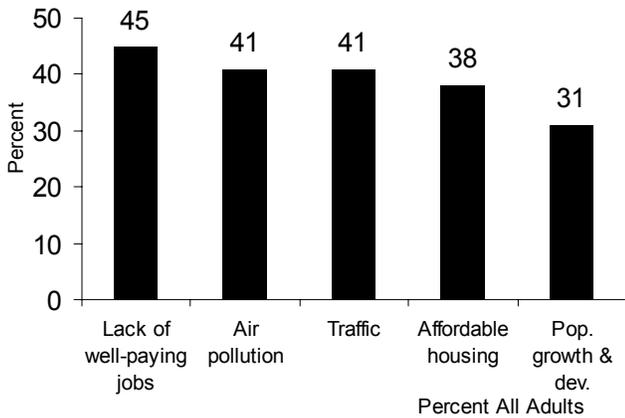


How serious a health threat is air pollution to you and your family?

(% very or somewhat serious)

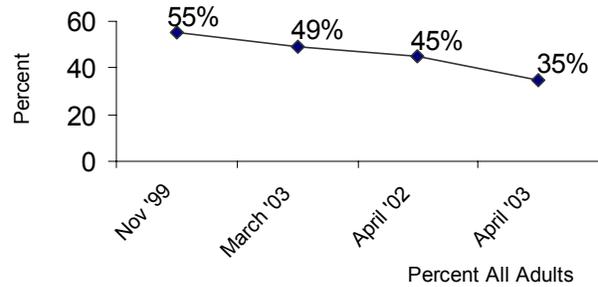


Percent seeing the issue as a big problem in their part of the Central Valley...

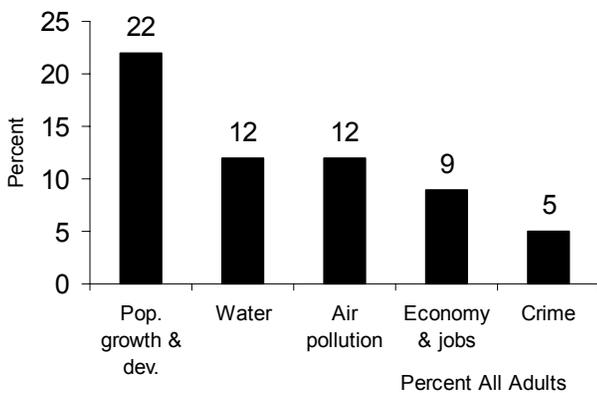


How would you rate the economy in the Central Valley?

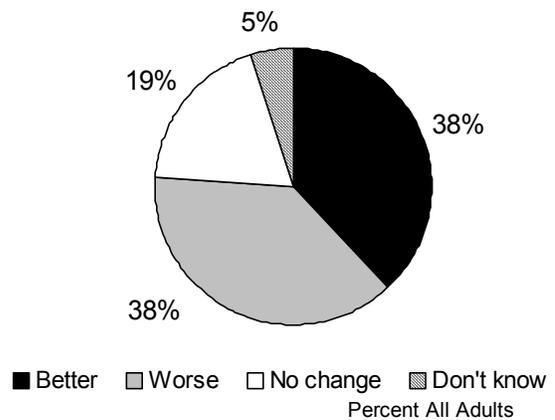
◆ % excellent/ good



In 2025, what will be the most important issue facing the Central Valley?



In 2025, will the Central Valley be a better place to live, a worse place or will there be no change?



Central Valley Issues

The Economy

Central Valley residents' assessment of the economy has turned more gloomy. This year, only 35 percent of Valley residents rate the region's economy as excellent or good, a sharp decline from their ratings in April 2002 (45%), March 2001 (49%), and November 1999 (55%). In just one year, the percentage of people saying the economy is excellent or good has declined significantly across all of the Central Valley's major sub-regions. This growing negativity is most evident in the Sacramento Metro area, where the percentage of residents rating the Central Valley's economy as excellent or good has fallen 19 points (from 58% to 39%). However, ratings of the economy have also declined in South San Joaquin (42% to 33%), North Valley (37% to 29%), and North San Joaquin (37% to 33%). Nearly half of Central Valley residents expect California to face bad economic times this year; only about four in 10 residents in every region predict good economic times for the state.

**“In general, how would you rate the economy in the Central Valley –
Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?”**

	<u>All Adults</u>			
	Nov 1999	Mar 01	Apr 02	Apr 03
Excellent / Good	55%	49%	45%	35%
Fair	35	37	41	49
Poor	9	13	12	15
Don't know	1	1	2	1

Nearly half (44%) of Central Valley residents think their area of the region is in an economic recession today: Nine percent say it is in a serious recession, 21 percent in a moderate recession, and 14 percent in a mild recession. North Valley residents (51%) are the most likely and Sacramento Metro residents (41%) the least likely to say their area of the Valley is in a recession. Comparing the Central Valley to other major regions of the state, Valley residents today are less likely to think their part of the region is in a recession than were Los Angeles County residents in the March 2003 PPIC Special Survey of Los Angeles (44% to 51%) and much less likely than San Francisco Bay Area residents in the February 2003 PPIC Statewide Survey (44% to 71%).

**“Now thinking only about your part of the Central Valley, would you say that it is in an economic recession or not?
If yes: Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?”**

	All Adults	<u>Sub-Region</u>				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Yes, serious recession	9%	12%	7%	12%	10%	11%
Yes, moderate recession	21	21	21	20	21	26
Yes, mild recession	14	18	13	15	14	14
No	49	44	53	48	48	40
Don't know	7	5	6	5	7	9

Most Important Problem

While the economy has become a growing concern of Central Valley residents, several issues related to population growth and development still top the list of the most serious problems confronting the region today. Environmental conditions continue to be among the most frequently named problems: Air pollution and pollution in general are mentioned as the region’s most important issues (16%), followed closely by water quality and availability (14%). Eleven percent of Valley residents say that jobs and the economy are the region’s most important issue, while fewer name population growth (8%), crime and gangs (7%), traffic congestion and transportation (5%), and the loss of farmlands (5%). Over time, the public is increasingly mentioning air pollution and pollution as their top issue (1999, 10%; 2001, 9%; 2002, 14%; 2003, 16%).

Adding to the challenges for regional policymaking in the Central Valley, residents across the major sub-regions and demographic groups have divergent perceptions of the most important problems facing the Valley. Nearly three in 10 South San Joaquin residents (28%) mention air pollution or pollution in general as the Valley’s most important problem, an opinion shared by lower percentages in other sub-regions. While 29 percent of North Valley residents say that water is the most important problem, fewer residents in other major sub-regions have this perception. In contrast, North San Joaquin and Sacramento Metro residents are more likely than others to think population growth and development and traffic congestion and transportation are the Valley’s most important problems. As for racial/ethnic differences, Latinos are much more likely than whites to cite crime and gangs as the most important issue (15% to 4%).

“What do you think is the most important issue facing the Central Valley today?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Air pollution, pollution in general	16%	7%	9%	11%	28%	14%
Water quality, water availability	14	29	16	9	10	6
Jobs, unemployment, economy	11	16	8	10	14	15
Population growth and development, sprawl	8	6	11	12	3	3
Crime, gangs	7	3	6	10	8	15
Traffic, transportation	5	2	9	7	1	3
Loss of farmlands, agriculture	5	2	2	7	6	4
Education, schools	3	2	4	4	3	2
Housing costs, housing availability	3	2	3	3	1	2
Drugs	2	1	1	4	3	4
State budget, deficit, taxes	2	3	3	0	1	0
Other	7	9	10	11	7	10
Don't know	17	19	18	12	15	22

Problems Across the Valley

Over time, more and more residents have perceived a variety of “big problems” in their area of the Central Valley. This year, four in 10 residents rate the availability of jobs, air pollution, traffic congestion, and the loss of farmlands as big problems in their part of the Valley, while three in 10 rank population growth and development as a big problem.

The changes over time in the perceptions of problem severity in the Central Valley are noteworthy. Nearly half (45%) of the Valley’s residents now see the lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs as a big problem, representing a steady increase over the past few years (up from 35% in 2001 and 42% in 2002). Forty-one percent of residents now rate air pollution as a big problem, which is significantly higher than the 28 percent who held this view in 1999. The percentage of residents citing traffic congestion on freeways and major roads as a big problem has also risen significantly (increasing from 23% in 1999 to 41% today). In addition, considerably more residents cite the loss of farmland and other agricultural land as a big problem in their area of the Central Valley (up from 23% in 1999 to 40% today). Although the percentage of residents that identify population growth and development as a big problem today (31%) has increased only marginally from last year’s survey (29%), it is significantly higher than it was in 1999, when only 21 percent identified population growth and development as a big problem.

“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 the Central Valley.”

<i>Percentage seeing the issue as a big problem</i>	<u>All Adults</u>			
	Nov 99	Mar 01	Apr 02	Apr 03
Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs	–	35%	42%	45%
Air pollution	28	27	35	41
Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads	23	30	33	41
Loss of farmland and other agricultural land	23	35	38	40
Population growth and development	21	27	29	31

While the assessments of regional problems are higher throughout the Central Valley than in the past, there continue to be significant differences within the Valley that reflect the diversity of population growth, demographics, and environmental conditions in the Valley’s sub-regions. The lack of well-paying jobs continues to be the most frequently mentioned big problem in the North Valley (where 58% say it is a big problem), but this issue is labeled as a big problem by only one-third (32%) of Sacramento Metro residents. As far as environmental conditions are concerned, more than half of those living in the South San Joaquin area (56%) think that air pollution is a big problem in their part of the Valley, compared to about one in three residents in the North San Joaquin (36%) and Sacramento Metro (35%) areas and only 13 percent of North Valley residents.

Similar sub-regional findings are evident for development-related issues such as traffic congestion and the loss of farmlands. Fifty-six percent of Sacramento Metro and 52 percent of North San Joaquin residents think that traffic congestion on freeways and major roads in their area of the Valley is a big problem, compared to only 25 percent of those who live in South San Joaquin and 15 percent of those in the North Valley. More than half of the residents in the North San Joaquin area (52%) say that the loss of farm and other agricultural lands is a big problem in their part of the Valley. By contrast, only 30 percent of the North Valley’s residents and fewer than four in 10 in the Valley’s other regions see this as a big problem.

Central Valley Issues

Concern about the availability of affordable housing is evident across sub-regions, although ratings of housing problems are relatively low in South San Joaquin (25%) compared to the North Valley (40%), North San Joaquin (45%), and Sacramento Metro (46%) areas. Overall, the perception that the lack of affordable housing is a big problem is most common among lower-income residents and is mentioned more often by renters than homeowners (51% to 30%). As for ratings of population growth and development per se, Sacramento Metro and North San Joaquin residents (38%) are more likely than those in the North Valley (26%) and South San Joaquin (20%) to consider the issue a big problem.

<i>Percentage seeing the issue as a big problem</i>	All Adults	<u>Sub-Region</u>			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs	45%	58%	32%	54%	50%
Air pollution	41	13	35	36	56
Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads	41	15	56	52	25
Loss of farms and agricultural lands	40	30	38	52	39
Availability of housing you can afford	38	40	46	45	25
Population growth and development	31	26	38	38	20

Problem-ratings in the Central Valley differ somewhat in degree from those reported elsewhere in the state. Concern about jobs is higher in the Central Valley (45%) than it was in Los Angeles County in March 2003 (40%), and significantly higher than it was in the San Francisco Bay Area (22%) and Other Southern California areas (31%) in November 2002. Air pollution is seen as a big problem by a higher percentage of Valley residents (41%) than residents elsewhere in the state (Los Angeles, 37%; Other Southern California, 24%; San Francisco Bay Area, 18%). The perception of traffic problems is lower in the Central Valley (41%) than in Los Angeles County (67%), the San Francisco Bay Area (59%), and Other Southern California (50%). Concern about housing is also much lower in the Central Valley (38%) than in Los Angeles County (54%), the San Francisco Bay Area (59%), and Other Southern California (41%). Ratings of population growth and development as a big problem are comparable in the Central Valley (31%), San Francisco Bay Area (30%), and Other Southern California (33%).

<i>Percentage seeing the issue as a big problem in their region</i>	Central Valley	<u>Other Major Regions*</u>		
		Los Angeles County*	Other Southern California	San Francisco Bay Area
Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs	45%	40%	31%	22%
Air pollution	41	37	24	18
Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads	41	67	50	59
Availability of housing you can afford	38	54	41	59
Population growth and development	31	38	33	30

* Results for Los Angeles County are from March 2003 PPIC Special Survey of Los Angeles; results for other regions are from November 2002 PPIC Statewide Survey.

Transportation

Although three in four residents consider traffic congestion on major roads and freeways a big problem in their part of the Central Valley, most employed Central Valley residents say they are satisfied with their commute to work: Fifty-five percent are very satisfied, and another 30 percent are somewhat satisfied, while 15 percent are dissatisfied with their commute. In general, satisfaction is lowest in areas of the Valley where traffic congestion is seen as a big problem. For example, residents in Sacramento Metro (49%) and North San Joaquin (51%) are less likely than those in the North Valley (69%) and South San Joaquin (61%) to say they are very satisfied with their commute.

“Overall, how satisfied are you with your commute to work?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Very satisfied	55%	69%	49%	51%	61%
Somewhat satisfied	30	23	29	32	31
Somewhat dissatisfied	10	5	14	11	6
Very dissatisfied	5	3	8	6	2

While three in four employed residents commute to work by driving alone, and only 4 percent take buses and public transit, many Central Valley residents appear to be open to the idea of expanding mass transit. In fact, nearly equal percentages prefer an emphasis on a variety of mass transit – public buses (18%), light rail (17%), high-speed rail (14%) – as favor an emphasis on local streets and roads (19%) and freeways and highways (18%). However, priorities vary significantly across the Central Valley: For example, while a plurality of North Valley residents (28%) think that local streets and roads should receive top priority, the light rail system received the most support in the Sacramento Metro area (27%). Although a high-speed rail system is not the top funding priority in any region, there is majority support (52%) for a proposed state bond measure calling for \$10 billion in state bonds to fund the planning and construction of a high-speed rail system linking Southern California with the San Francisco Bay Area via Central Valley cities. More than half of North San Joaquin (60%), South San Joaquin (52%), and Sacramento Metro (51%) residents say they would vote in favor of the bond measure, while a majority of North Valley residents (56%) say they would vote against it.

“Which of the following types of surface transportation projects do you think should have top priority for public funding in the Central Valley?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Local streets and roads	19%	28%	13%	19%	21%
Freeways and highways	18	20	18	17	18
Public bus system	18	15	15	15	22
Light rail system	17	12	27	19	8
High-speed rail	14	6	12	16	16
Carpool lanes	7	5	8	7	7
Something else (specify)	2	4	2	2	2
Don't know	5	10	5	5	6

Local Ratings

As in previous years, a large majority of Central Valley residents (77%) rate their city or community as an excellent or good place in which to live. While high percentages of residents across the Valley’s major sub-regions rate their cities or communities as excellent or good, residents in North Valley (40%) and Sacramento Metro (37%) are more likely than those in South San Joaquin (26%) and North San Joaquin (23%) to give excellent ratings to their communities. There is also significant variation across the region’s diverse population: Whites are more likely than Latinos to rate their cities or communities as excellent (34% to 23%). The percentage of people who give the excellent rating also increases with age, education, income, and homeownership.

“Overall, how would you rate your city or community as a place to live?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Excellent	30%	40%	37%	23%	26%	23%
Good	47	45	46	53	44	46
Fair	18	11	14	21	23	26
Poor	4	2	3	3	6	4
Don’t know	1	2	0	0	1	1

Among the reasons why so many Central Valley residents rate their cities or communities highly is the fact that they generally give high marks to the local public services they are receiving. Seven in 10 residents rate their local police protection (71%) and local parks and other recreational facilities (71%) as excellent or good. Local public schools (56%) and local streets and roads (49%) also receive high marks. These high ratings are consistent with the previous Central Valley surveys.

People across the Valley’s major sub-regions and of all ages, income levels, and educational backgrounds give high ratings to local police protection. However, while a majority of Valley residents in all racial/ethnic groups say that local police protection is either excellent or good, there is significant variation between whites (74%), Latinos (66%), and blacks (51%). There are also differences with regard to the other local services and amenities. For example, North Valley residents are the most likely to say that their local parks and other recreational facilities are excellent (25%), while South San Joaquin residents are the least likely to say so (14%). Moreover, only 7 percent of residents in North San Joaquin rate their local public schools as excellent, a significantly lower percentage than in any of the other major sub-regions (North Valley and Sacramento Metro, 14%; South San Joaquin, 13%).

<i>Percentage rating service excellent or good in their part of the Central Valley</i>	All Adults	Sub-Region				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Local police protection	71%	67%	74%	69%	69%	66%
Local parks and other public recreational facilities	71	72	77	67	66	66
Local public schools	56	56	53	54	60	63
Local streets and roads	49	43	53	46	48	57

Governance Issues

Concerns About the State Budget Crisis

While most Central Valley residents are pleased with the local services they are receiving today, many are worried that the state government’s record budget deficit will lead to future reductions in their basic services. Six in 10 residents say they are very concerned about potential cuts in areas such as city and county government and local schools, while nearly nine in 10 say they are at least somewhat concerned about this possibility. This anxiety about the potential effects of budget cuts is evident across racial/ethnic groups and demographic categories.

Concern about the future effects of the budget deficit do vary somewhat across political groups: Democrats are the most likely to be very concerned about the possibility of public service reductions (68%), while Republicans (62%) and independents (58%) are less apprehensive. Across the region, North Valley residents are relatively less worried about the possibility of cuts in services, although well over half are very concerned (53%), while residents in Sacramento Metro (61%) and North San Joaquin (62%) are the most likely to be very concerned.

“How concerned are you that the state budget deficit will lead to public service reductions in areas like city and county government and local schools in the Central Valley?”

	All Adults	Party		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
Very concerned	59%	68%	62%	58%
Somewhat concerned	28	25	25	27
Not very concerned	7	4	7	6
Not at all concerned	4	2	5	8
Don't know	2	1	1	1

When asked which public services should receive the highest priority for public spending, residents of the Central Valley overwhelmingly choose K-12 public schools (56%). In last year’s survey, a similar 52 percent said that local public schools should have top priority for state funds. The current results are similar across political parties, with 59 percent of Democrats, 55 percent of Republicans, and 57 percent of independents choosing K-12 public schools as their highest priority. Roughly half of the residents in all demographic groups agree that K-12 schools should be the most important priority for the state budget.

“Given the state’s limited funds, which of the following should be the number one priority for public spending in the state budget?”

	All Adults	Party		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
K-12 public schools	56%	59%	55%	57%
Public health and social services	21	24	14	19
Roads and other infrastructure projects	7	4	11	5
Public colleges and universities	6	5	5	9
Corrections, including prisons	2	1	4	2
Something else / Don't know	8	7	11	8

Willingness to Raise Local Taxes

Although most Central Valley residents say the state government should emphasize education when it comes to public spending, 53 percent say they don't want their local taxes raised in order to provide more funding for their local public schools. Democrats (56%) are much more likely than Republicans (34%) or independents (42%) to support a tax increase. In looking across age, education, and income categories, the age group 18 to 34 is the only group in which a majority (51%) says it would support a tax hike in order to increase funding for local public schools.

“At this time, would you favor or oppose raising your local taxes to increase funding for your local school district?”

	All Adults	Party		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
Favor	42%	56%	34%	42%
Oppose	53	42	63	52
Don't know	5	2	3	6

In contrast, the percentage of Central Valley residents who would support a tax hike to fund general local public services is much higher: Fifty-five percent of Central Valley residents say they would support raising the local sales tax by one cent to fund police, parks, roads, libraries, and other city-level services. Support for increasing the local sales tax is typically and strongly divided across party lines: Nearly six in 10 Democrats (59%) favor such a tax increase, while support is lower among Republicans (49%) and independents (54%).

“Would you favor or oppose raising your local sales tax by one cent to fund police, parks, roads, libraries, and other city-level services?”

	All Adults	Party		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
Favor	55%	59%	49%	54%
Oppose	42	39	50	44
Don't know	3	2	1	2

The strongest public support for local tax increases is evident for transportation projects: Two in three residents in the Central Valley say they would vote yes on a county measure to increase the local sales tax by one-half cent for transportation projects, including public transit. Support for this measure is lowest in the North Valley, where only 55 percent of residents say they would vote yes.

“What if there was a measure on the county ballot to increase the local sales tax for transportation projects, including freeways and highways, local streets and roads, and public buses and light rail, by one-half cent – would you vote yes or no?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Yes	66%	55%	67%	65%	67%
No	32	42	32	31	29
Don't know	2	3	1	4	4

Air Quality Perceptions, Lifestyle Changes, and Government Regulations

Three in four residents say that air pollution is at least somewhat of a problem in their part of the Central Valley. When asked whether they believe that air pollution is a serious health threat to themselves and their immediate family, two in three residents responded that it was either a very serious (26%) or somewhat serious (37%) threat. Public concern about air pollution is highest in South San Joaquin, where nearly three in four residents (72%) say that air pollution is either a very or somewhat serious threat to their health. Residents in the North Valley are the least concerned: Nearly seven in ten (68%) say that air pollution is not too serious a health threat. As for racial/ethnic variations in this perception, 34 percent of Latinos say that air pollution is a very serious threat to their health, compared to 23 percent of whites.

“How serious a health threat is air pollution in your part of the Central Valley to you and your immediate family? Is it ...”

	All Adults	Sub-Region				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Very serious	26%	11%	19%	21%	39%	34%
Somewhat serious	37	20	42	41	33	38
Not too serious	37	69	39	38	28	28

We also asked Central Valley residents if they or anyone in their immediate family suffered from asthma or other respiratory problems. Overall, 37 percent of Central Valley residents say that either they (10%), someone in their immediate family (20%), or both (7%) have asthma or other respiratory problems. Residents in South San Joaquin (39%) and North San Joaquin (35%) are the most likely to report respiratory problems. As we would expect, residents who themselves or whose family members have asthma or other respiratory problems are more likely than those who do not experience such health problems to see air pollution in their part of the Central Valley as a very serious health threat (37% to 20%). Households with children under 18 (41%) are more likely than households without children (34%) to report asthma or other respiratory problems.

“Do you or does anyone in your immediate family suffer from asthma or other respiratory problems?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Yes, respondent	10%	13%	9%	7%	10%	6%
Yes, someone in immediate family	20	14	20	20	22	20
Yes, both	7	5	7	8	7	6
No	63	68	64	65	61	69

Given the levels of awareness of air pollution in the Central Valley, and the perceptions of its adverse health consequences, are people willing to change their behavior to help reduce pollution? We asked respondents whether they would be willing to use public transit more often for the sake of cleaner air: Fifty-one percent say they would, 43 percent say they would not. In South San Joaquin, where residents hold the most negative views about the health effects of air pollution, the largest percentage of residents (55%) say they would be willing to take public transit more often. Only in the North Valley, where most residents think air pollution is not a serious health problem, do a majority (57%) say they would be unwilling to increase their use of public transit.

The willingness to change transportation habits for the sake of better air quality varies across income and racial/ethnic groups. Residents from households making under \$40,000 a year are far more willing to consider taking public transit (61%) than residents from households making \$80,000 a year or more (39%). Most Latinos (72%) are willing to use public transit more often, while only 44 percent of whites are willing to do so. While more than half of Democrats (56%) and independents (53%) would be willing to use public transit more often, only 38% of Republicans would undertake this option.

“Would you be willing to take public transit more frequently to reduce air pollution in your part of the Central Valley, even if this would be less convenient than driving?”

	All Adults	Household income		
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more
Yes	51%	61%	46%	39%
No	43	33	51	54
Don't drive (volunteered)	2	3	0	2
Don't know	4	3	3	5

An even higher percentage of respondents (79%) say they would be willing to drive a more fuel-efficient vehicle in order to reduce air pollution. North Valley and Sacramento Metro residents are most likely to support this option, while residents of North and South San Joaquin find it less appealing. Seventy-seven percent of sports utility vehicle owners say they would be willing to drive a lower-emissions vehicle.

The willingness to change vehicle types for the sake of reducing air pollution varies only slightly by income: Seventy-three percent of residents with incomes \$80,000 or higher say they would be willing to drive a lower emissions vehicle, compared to 80 percent of those with incomes under \$40,000. The willingness to drive more fuel-efficient vehicles does not vary significantly across racial/ethnic groups.

“Would you be willing to drive a more fuel-efficient vehicle with lower emissions to reduce air pollution in your part of the Central Valley, even if it were not your favorite type of vehicle?”

	All Adults	Household income			SUV Owners
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
Yes	79%	80%	84%	73%	77%
No	15	11	14	24	20
Don't drive (volunteered)	2	4	0	0	3
Don't know	4	5	2	3	0

While many Central Valley residents appear willing to consider changes in their personal behavior to improve air quality, they are more guarded in their support for new government regulations designed to ameliorate pollution. Altogether, six in 10 Central Valley residents (some with certain reservations) are willing to see tougher air pollution controls on agricultural activities, while one in three is outright opposed to increasing government regulations in this arena. Although 44 percent are supportive of increasing regulations even if it is more expensive for businesses to operate, another 15 percent are supportive only if the regulations do not increase the cost of doing business. Democrats (52%) are more likely than independents (41%) and Republicans (35%) to support specific regulations on air pollution by farms, even if the regulations raise the cost of doing business. A majority of college graduates (53%) are willing to support new air pollution regulations regardless of their potential costs, and this is the only demographic group in which a majority is willing to regulate regardless of the potential economic effect.

**“Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution regulations on agricultural activities?
If yes: Would this be true even if these new regulations made it somewhat
more costly for these businesses to operate in the Central Valley?”**

	All Adults	Party		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
Yes, even if somewhat more costly	44%	52%	35%	41%
Yes, but not if somewhat more costly	15	16	8	16
No	33	25	49	34
Don't know	8	7	8	9

Two in three Central Valley residents (again, some with reservation) are willing to have the federal government set tougher regulations on air pollution, while fewer than three in 10 oppose any increase in federal regulations. However, only 39 percent of residents say they would support new regulations even if they hurt the local economy, while 27 percent would withdraw their support if the legislation were to hurt the economy in their part of the Central Valley. Independents (52%) and Democrats (46%) are more willing than Republicans (26%) to support tougher federal regulations even if they are detrimental to the economy in their part of the Central Valley. The idea of new federal regulations on air pollution that might hurt the local economy did not garner majority support from any demographic or racial/ethnic group.

**“Would you be willing to see the federal government set tougher regulations on air pollution?
If yes: Would this be true even if these new regulations hurt the economy
in your part of the Central Valley?”**

	All Adults	Party		
		Dem	Rep	Ind
Yes, even if regulations hurt the economy	39%	46%	26%	52%
Yes, but not if new regulations hurt the economy	27	26	24	24
No	27	21	45	21
Don't know	7	7	5	3

Central Valley residents are split in their preference for the level of government that should have primary responsibility for setting air quality standards in their region. While 29 percent prefer that a regional air quality board control air quality standards, nearly equal percentages of the population favor state government (27%) or local government (26%). Only about one in 10 residents (11%) think that the federal government should have the primary responsibility for setting air quality standards in the Valley.

Water Supply and Policy Choices

Most Central Valley residents are not highly concerned about water resources in their part of the Valley. Fewer than half say that water supply is either a big problem (21%) or somewhat of a problem (26%). Two in three North Valley residents say the water supply is not a problem, compared to half of the residents in other regions.

While a majority of Central Valley residents (52%) are confident that the available water supply will meet the needs of residents for the next ten years, four in 10 are concerned that the water supply in their part of the Central Valley will not be inadequate. Residents of the North Valley are most likely to feel that the water supply is adequate (64%), while about half the residents in other regions believe that it is sufficient to meet future needs.

“Do you think the water supply available in your part of the Central Valley today will be adequate to meet its needs for the next ten years?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Adequate	52%	64%	53%	50%	49%
Somewhat inadequate	24	19	25	23	25
Very inadequate	15	9	16	18	15
Don't know	9	8	6	9	11

Central Valley residents do not agree on the type of water use that should receive highest priority in water policy: A plurality of residents (39%) believe that providing water for farms and agricultural uses is most important, but 29 percent cite water for homes and residents and 22 percent favor protecting the environment. Farm use is the top priority across all regions of the Central Valley.

When asked how the Central Valley should meet its future water needs, most residents say they prefer encouraging conservation rather than building dams and reservoirs. Overall, only one-third of residents (34%) favor building new dams and reservoirs to increase the water supply, while almost six in 10 residents (57%) prefer encouraging conservation. These preferences are fairly consistent across all sub-regions of the Central Valley. Consistent with this finding, 55 percent of residents believe it is a good idea to install water meters on all residences and non-agricultural commercial buildings in California as a way to encourage water conservation.

“To help the Central Valley meet its future water needs, which of the following do you most favor ...”

	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Increasing the supply by building dams and reservoirs	34%	35%	33%	33%	35%
Encouraging conservation by all users	57	55	59	58	55
Other (specify)	6	7	6	6	5
Don't know	3	3	2	3	5

Future Issues

Outlook for 2025

When asked to think ahead to the year 2025, Central Valley residents expressed concern about overcrowding and the strain it would place on the region’s resources. One in five residents (22%) believes that the most important issue the region will face in 2025 is population growth and too much development. Significant percentages of residents also mention air pollution and pollution in general (16%), water quality and supply (12%), and jobs and the economy (9%) as the most important issues for the future – all of which are in line with their assessments of the most important issues today. In three of the four Valley sub-regions, population growth and development is perceived to be the biggest future problem; the exception is South San Joaquin, where residents are more likely to say that air pollution (23%) will be the most important issue facing the Central Valley in 2025. North Valley residents (22%) are more likely than residents of the other sub-regions to say that water issues will be a problem. Outlook on the future also varies by race/ethnicity: Whites are much more likely than Latinos to be worried about population growth and development (26% to 15%), and whites also express more concern than Latinos about water quality and supply in 2025. Surprisingly, there are no significant differences across different generations in the issues identified as future problems, except that residents 55 years and older are much more likely than other age groups to mention water issues.

“What do you think will be the most important issue facing the Central Valley in the year 2025?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Population growth and development	22%	28%	27%	25%	15%
Air pollution, pollution in general	16	10	13	12	23
Water quality and availability	12	22	14	9	10
Economy, jobs, unemployment	9	12	6	11	11
Crime, gangs	5	3	4	5	7
Loss of farmlands, agriculture	4	2	4	6	5
Traffic and transportation	4	1	5	7	2
Education, schools	3	2	3	4	2
Housing costs, housing availability	3	3	4	5	2
Health care, health costs	1	1	1	1	1
Government regulations	1	2	0	0	1
Legal and illegal immigration	1	0	0	1	1
Other	6	1	6	3	5
Don't know	13	13	13	11	15

Future Issues

According to the U.S. Census and California Department of Finance estimates, the population of the Central Valley is expected to increase from 5.7 million residents today to 9.3 million in 2025. Most Central Valley residents not only believe that population growth will be a big issue in the future; they also think it will negatively affect them and their families. Nearly six in 10 residents say that population growth in the Valley is a bad thing, while only 13 percent say it is a good thing and close to one in four believe it will make no difference either way. Solid majorities across all demographic and political groups agree that the projected increase in population will be a bad thing. However, South San Joaquin residents (49%) are less likely than residents in the other sub-regions to see growth as a bad thing; in other sub-regions, six in 10 residents consider it undesirable. Whites are more likely than Latinos (62% to 45%), people with no children are more likely than people with children (59% to 54%), and homeowners are more likely than renters (61% to 52%) to say an increase in population is unwelcome. Residents between 18 and 34 years old are less likely than those 35 years or older to say that population growth will be a bad thing (51% to 61%).

“Do you think this population growth is a good thing or a bad thing or does it make no difference to you and your family?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Good thing	13%	13%	11%	13%	16%	19%
Bad thing	57	59	61	62	49	45
No difference	26	24	24	23	31	32
Other/ Don't know	4	4	4	2	4	4

In general, residents are divided in their opinions about the future quality of life in the Central Valley: Thirty-eight percent think that the region will be a better place to live in 2025, 38 percent think it will be worse, and 19 percent believe there will be no change. Optimism varies across sub-regions. A plurality of North San Joaquin (42%) and South San Joaquin (44%) residents say that the Valley will be a better place to live in the future, while a plurality of Sacramento Metro (44%) and North Valley (48%) residents say it will be a worse place to live. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos are the most optimistic: More than half of Latinos (52%) say that the Central Valley will be better off twenty years from now, compared to 32 percent of whites. The percentage of respondents who say the Valley will be a better place to live is highest among foreign-born residents (61%); only 42 percent of native-born residents believe it will be a better place. Forty-six percent of residents between 18 and 34 years old expect the Valley will be a better place to live, only 35 percent of residents 35 years or older agree.

“In the year 2025, do you think the Central Valley will be a better place to live than today, a worse place, or will there be no change?”

	All Adults	Sub-Region				Latino
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin	
Better place	38%	30%	32%	42%	44%	52%
Worse place	38	48	44	38	30	22
No change	19	18	19	16	20	20
Don't know	5	4	5	4	6	6

Future Infrastructure

When asked which type of infrastructure should have the top priority for public funds as the Central Valley prepares for the population growth expected by 2025, nearly half of all residents (48%) highlight school facilities. Consistent with the public’s concerns about water supply as a current and future issue, another 19 percent would like to see water systems given top funding priority. Surface transportation (14%), the sewer system (6%), and airports (3%) are mentioned by fewer residents. A higher percentage of residents between 18 and 34 years of age (61%) than any other age group say school facilities should top the list for public funding, while residents 35 or older are more likely than these younger residents to suggest the water systems should be prioritized. Across the Central Valley, North Valley (51%) and South San Joaquin (50%) residents are the most likely to place school facilities at the top of the list of government priorities. More Sacramento Metro (19%) and North San Joaquin (12%) residents than South San Joaquin (11%) or North Valley (7%) residents believe surface transportation should receive the most public funds in planning for future population growth.

“Which infrastructure projects do you think should have top priority for public funds as the Central Valley prepares for the population growth that is expected by the year 2025?”

	All Adults	Age		
		18-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 years or older
School facilities	48%	61%	47%	33%
Water systems	19	13	21	26
Surface transportation	14	9	17	15
Sewer systems	6	5	5	8
Airports	3	5	2	1
Other (specify)	6	4	6	8
Don't know	4	3	2	9

Two planned infrastructure projects designed to improve the future economic vitality and quality of life in the Central Valley are the opening of the University of California at Merced in 2004 and a \$10 billion proposal to build a high-speed rail system linking Southern California to the San Francisco Bay Area via Central Valley cities, which will appear on an upcoming state ballot. Seventy-nine percent believe UC Merced will be at least somewhat important in improving the economy and quality of life in the Central Valley, and 69 percent believe a high-speed rail system would have a positive effect on the region. North Valley residents are less likely than others to see benefits for the Central Valley in either the UC Merced campus or the high-speed rail system. Latinos were more likely than whites to say that a high-speed rail system would be at least somewhat important to life in the Central Valley (78% to 65%).

“How important is _____ for the economic vitality and quality of life of the Central Valley?”

Percent saying very or somewhat important	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
University of California, Merced	79%	68%	78%	85%	82%
High-speed rail system	69	46	70	76	68

Future Housing

Local government officials face important policy choices as they work to create a plan for future development that will meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. Residential preferences will play an important role in deciding how to plan for this future development, both at the local ballot box and as people make choices about the type of housing they live in. Today, six in 10 Central Valley residents (57%) say that new development should focus primarily on building neighborhoods with single-family detached housing because people prefer it, while 35 percent say development should focus primarily on building neighborhoods made up of attached homes and apartments in order to conserve land and preserve open space. Across the Central Valley, North Valley residents are the most likely to say they would prefer neighborhoods with attached houses that would allow for the conservation of space (41%), while South San Joaquin residents (60%) expressed the strongest inclination for single-family homes. Men prefer detached homes more than women do (63% to 52%). In general, the majority of residents in all demographic groups say they would prefer that future neighborhoods contain single-family homes.

<i>“Which of the following comes closest to your view?”</i>	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Focus on building neighborhoods with attached housing in order to conserve land and preserve open space	35%	41%	36%	36%	30%
Focus on building neighborhoods with single-family detached housing to satisfy what people prefer	57	51	57	56	60
Other / Don't know	8	8	7	8	10

Most Central Valley residents (68%) support the idea that new housing should be built in already developed areas to conserve land and space. Relatively few respondents (26%) say that new housing should be built in undeveloped areas to provide suburban-style communities. Compared to other Central Valley residents, those living in the North Valley (83%) overwhelmingly favor building in already developed areas. Whites are more likely than Latinos to say they would like to see future housing being built in already developed areas (73% to 58%). Renters are slightly more likely than homeowners to say new homes should be built on undeveloped land to offer suburban-style neighborhoods (30% to 23%).

<i>“Which of the following comes closest to your view?”</i>	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Focus on building new housing in already developed areas to conserve land and preserve open space	68%	83%	68%	70%	62%
Focus on building new housing in undeveloped areas to provide more suburban-style communities	26	14	24	26	30
Other / Don't know	6	3	8	4	8

Future Commuting

Central Valley residents also express a strong preference for locating new housing in places that would reduce traffic problems on roads and freeways. Sixty-three percent say that new housing should be built near public transportation; only 27 percent believe it should be located near freeways and major roads. While majorities across the Central Valley say they would like new housing to be near public transit, North Valley (69%) and Sacramento Metro (67%) residents are somewhat more likely than North San Joaquin (62%) and South San Joaquin (59%) residents to prefer this option. Lower income respondents (69%) have a stronger preference for housing near public transportation relative to higher income residents (59%). Renters are more likely than homeowners (70% to 58%) to say they would like the focus to be on building new homes near mass transit. Women are more likely than men to favor housing near public transportation (68% to 57%).

<i>"Which of the following comes closest to your view?"</i>	All Adults	Household income		Homeownership	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 or More	Own	Rent
Focus on building new housing near public transportation	63%	69%	59%	58%	70%
Focus on building new housing near freeways and major roads	27	22	32	30	22
Other / Don't know	10	9	9	12	8

Similarly, 59 percent of residents say new housing should be built near existing jobs in order to reduce traffic and lengthy commutes, while 33 percent would like to see new housing located in outer areas where land is less expensive and housing more affordable. Among sub-regions, North San Joaquin residents (67%) are the most likely to choose housing near jobs over less expensive housing in outer areas. Latinos are slightly more likely than whites to say they prefer more affordable housing in outer areas (36% to 32%). Younger residents are more likely than older residents to prefer less expensive housing in outlying areas, as are renters compared to homeowners (41% to 27%) and lower-income residents relative to higher-income residents (65% to 56%).

<i>"Which of the following comes closest to your view?"</i>	All Adults	Household income		Homeownership	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 or More	Own	Rent
Focus on building new housing near existing jobs in order to reduce the traffic from lengthy commutes	59%	56%	65%	64%	53%
Focus on building new housing in outer areas where the land is less expensive in order to provide the most affordable housing	33	36	29	27	41
Other / Don't know	8	8	6	9	6

Regionalism and Leadership

When local governments plan for the future of the Central Valley, residents (84%) overwhelmingly believe they should work together and create a common regional plan. Only 13 percent think local governments should work independently and each have its own plan. While solid majorities across all sub-regions would like to see a regional plan, North Valley (80%) and South San Joaquin (81%) residents are slightly less inclined than residents in the Sacramento Metro (87%) and North San Joaquin (85%) areas to say local government should work together in planning for the future. Residents across racial/ethnic groups and demographic categories believe that regional cooperation in land use planning is the best way to go.

<i>"Which of the following comes closest to your view?"</i>	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Local governments should work together and have a common regional plan	84	80	87	85	81
Local governments should work independently and each have its own plan	13	17	11	13	14
Other/ Don't know	3	3	2	2	5

A majority of Central Valley residents (55%) believe that local government officials pay at least some attention to what the public thinks when they make policy decisions, but only 13 percent believe that officials pay a lot of attention to public opinion. Another 43 percent say that local government pays little or no attention to what people think. Less educated and lower-income residents are more likely than more educated and higher-income residents to say that the government pays little or no attention to people's concerns. Republicans are as likely as Democrats to say that government pays attention to the public, while independents are the most likely to say that local government officials pay little or no attention to what people think.

Consistent with opinions about the responsiveness of local government officials, most Central Valley residents would like to maintain voter control over important decisions. Seventy-three percent say local voters should settle important decisions at the ballot box, while 24 percent say local elected officials should be providing leadership and making most of the important decisions. Across the Central Valley, residents of the Sacramento Metro area are the most likely to say elected officials should make the decisions (29%), while residents of the North Valley (79%) and North San Joaquin (76%) are the most likely to want voters to decide. College graduates are more likely than those with less education to trust local officials in providing leadership and making decisions.

<i>"Which of the following comes closest to your view?"</i>	All Adults	Sub-Region			
		North Valley	Sacramento Metro	North San Joaquin	South San Joaquin
Local elected officials should provide leadership and make important decisions	24%	17%	29%	23%	22%
Local voters should make important decisions at the ballot box	73	79	68	76	75
Don't know	3	4	3	1	3

Survey Methodology

The Central Valley 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. This project was conducted in collaboration with the Great Valley Center. The survey benefited from consultation with Carol Whiteside and Richard Cummings at the Great Valley Center, as well as conversations with other experts in the Central Valley region; however, Mark Baldassare made all final decisions about survey methodology, questions, and the content of this report.

The findings of the survey are based on telephone interviews from April 10 to April 21, 2003, with 2,000 adult residents in the 19-county Central Valley region. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers, ensuring that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in the Central Valley 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 using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete and was conducted in English or Spanish, as needed.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of the Central Valley’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to U.S. Census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted by age, gender, and region to account for any demographic differences.

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 the Central Valley were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. Sampling error is just 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.

Throughout this report, we refer to four geographic sub-regions in the Central Valley. “North Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, and Tehama Counties. “Sacramento Metro” includes El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. North San Joaquin” includes Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties. “South San Joaquin” includes Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties. Please note that these sub-regional definitions have changed this year; in prior years, Sutter and Yuba were considered part of the North Valley, and El Dorado County was not designated as part of the Central Valley. In this report, all reported changes over time within sub-regions take account of the updated county classification.

We frequently compare the results for Latinos with those for non-Hispanic whites. Latinos account for about 26 percent of the Central Valley’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing groups in this region. The Asian sample is not large enough for separate statistical analysis.

In some cases, the Central Valley Survey uses questions and/or compares results to the 1999, 2001, and 2002 PPIC Central Valley surveys to highlight trends over time, and we use the 1998-2002 PPIC Statewide Surveys to compare opinions of Central Valley residents today with those of adult residents in the state as a whole and residents of the state’s other major regions. We also use questions derived from a Gallup/CNN/USA Today poll conducted in March 2003.

**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY ON THE CENTRAL VALLEY
 APRIL 10 – APRIL 21, 2003
 2,000 CENTRAL VALLEY ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH
 MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE**

1. Which of the following best describes the city or community where you live – is it a large city, a suburb of a large city, a small city or town, or a rural area?
 (if large city: Would that be in the central part of the city?)
 (if suburb: Would that be an older or a newer suburb?)
 - 13% large city, central part
 - 9 large city, other part
 - 9 suburb, older
 - 5 suburb, newer
 - 32 small city
 - 18 town
 - 13 rural area
 - 1 don't know

2. How long have you lived in your city or community – fewer than five years, five years to under 10 years, 10 years to under 20 years, or 20 years or more?
 - 28% fewer than five years
 - 16 five years to under 10 years
 - 21 10 years to under 20 years
 - 33 20 years or more
 - 2 all of your life (*volunteered*)

3. Do you own or rent your current residence?
 - 61% own
 - 38 rent
 - 1 neither (*volunteered*)

4. Overall, how would you rate your city or community as a place to live? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?
 - 30% excellent
 - 47 good
 - 18 fair
 - 4 poor
 - 1 don't know

5. We are interested in your opinions about the broader geographic area you live in – the Central Valley, which is the inland area of California stretching from Bakersfield to Redding. What do you think is the most important issue facing the Central Valley today?
 - 16% air pollution, pollution in general
 - 14 water quality and availability
 - 11 economy, jobs, unemployment
 - 8 population growth and development
 - 7 crime, gangs
 - 5 loss of farmlands, agriculture
 - 5 traffic, transportation
 - 3 education, schools
 - 3 housing costs, housing availability
 - 2 drugs
 - 1 government regulations
 - 1 immigration, illegal immigration
 - 1 electricity costs, energy crisis
 - 1 state budget, budget deficit
 - 1 taxes
 - 1 war, Iraq
 - 3 other (*specify*)
 - 17 don't know

6. Do you think that things in the Central Valley are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
 - 58% right direction
 - 31 wrong direction
 - 11 don't know

7. In general, how would you rate the economy in the Central Valley? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?
 - 3% excellent
 - 32 good
 - 49 fair
 - 15 poor
 - 1 don't know

8. Thinking only about your part of the Central Valley, would you say that it is in an economic recession or not? *if yes: Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?*)

- 9% yes, serious recession
- 21 yes, moderate recession
- 14 yes, mild recession
- 49 no
- 7 don't know

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

- 41% good times
- 48 bad times
- 11 don't know

I'd like you to rate some of the public services in your local area. For each of the following services, please tell me if you think the services are excellent, good, fair, or poor. *(rotate questions 10 through 13)*

10. How about local parks and other public recreational facilities?

- 18% excellent
- 53 good
- 21 fair
- 6 poor
- 2 don't know

11. How about local streets and roads?

- 7% excellent
- 42 good
- 35 fair
- 16 poor

12. How about local police protection?

- 17% excellent
- 54 good
- 22 fair
- 6 poor
- 1 don't know

13. How about local public schools?

- 12% excellent
- 44 good
- 25 fair
- 11 poor
- 8 don't know

14a. *[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
- 38 good
- 38 fair
- 14 poor
- 2 not a city *(volunteered)* *[ask q. 14b.]*
- 2 don't know

14b. *[FORM 2]* Overall, how would you rate the performance of county government in solving problems in your county – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 3% excellent
- 36 good
- 43 fair
- 14 poor
- 4 don't know

15. 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 lead to public service reductions in areas like city and county government and local schools in the Central Valley – very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 59% very concerned
- 28 somewhat concerned
- 7 not very concerned
- 4 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

16. Given the state's limited funds, which of the following should be the number-one priority for public spending in the state budget? *(rotate list)*

- 56% K-12 public schools
- 21 public health and social services
- 7 roads and other infrastructure projects
- 6 public colleges and universities
- 2 corrections, including prisons
- 5 something else *(specify)*
- 3 don't know

17a. *[FORM 1]* At this time, would you favor or oppose raising your local sales tax by one cent to fund police, parks, roads, libraries, and other city-level services?

- 55% favor
- 42 oppose
- 3 don't know

17b. [FORM 2] At this time, would you favor or oppose raising your local taxes to increase funding for your local school district?

42% favor
53 oppose
5 don't know

I am now going to read you a list of problems other people have told us about. For each one, please tell me if you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in your part of the Central Valley.
(rotate questions 18 through 23)

18a. [half sample] How about traffic congestion on freeways and major roads?

41% big problem
35 somewhat of a problem
24 not a problem

18b. [half sample] How about the availability of housing that you can afford?

38% big problem
32 somewhat of a problem
28 not a problem
2 don't know

19. How about the loss of farms and agricultural lands?

40% big problem
30 somewhat of a problem
25 not a problem
5 don't know

20. How about air pollution?

41% big problem
34 somewhat of a problem
24 not a problem
1 don't know

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

45% big problem
36 somewhat of a problem
17 not a problem
2 don't know

22. How about population growth and development?

31% big problem
36 somewhat of a problem
32 not a problem
1 don't know

23a. [half sample] How about water quality?

22% big problem
32 somewhat of a problem
44 not a problem
2 don't know

23b. [half sample] How about the supply of water?

21% big problem
26 somewhat of a problem
51 not a problem
2 don't know

24. On another topic, how serious a health threat is air pollution in your part of the Central Valley to you and your immediate family – do you think that it is a very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious health threat?

26% very serious
37 somewhat serious
37 not too serious

We are interested in knowing what people might be willing to personally sacrifice in order to reduce air pollution in your part of the Central Valley.

25a. [half sample] Would you be willing to take public buses and transit on a more frequent basis, even if this would be less convenient for you than driving to places in your car or truck?

51% yes
43 no
2 don't drive (volunteered)
4 don't know

25b. [half sample] Would you be willing to drive a car or truck that is more fuel-efficient and has low pollution emissions, even if this were not your favorite type of vehicle to drive?

79% yes
15 no
2 don't drive (volunteered)
4 don't know

26a. [half sample] Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution regulations on agriculture and farm activities? (if yes: Would this be true even if these new regulations made it somewhat more costly for these businesses to operate in the Central Valley?)

44% yes, yes even if somewhat more costly
15 yes, but not if somewhat more costly
33 no
8 don't know

26b. [half sample] Would you be willing to see the federal government set tougher regulations on air pollution? (if yes: Would this be true even if these new regulations hurt the economy in your part of the Central Valley?)

- 39% yes, even if new regulations hurt the economy
- 27 yes, but not if new regulations hurt the economy
- 27 no
- 7 don't know

27. More generally, which level of government do you think should have the primary responsibility for setting air quality standards in your part of the Central Valley? Should it be ... (rotate list)

- 11% the federal government
- 27 the state government
- 29 a regional air resources board
- 26 the local government
- 2 other (specify)
- 5 don't know

28. On another topic, do you think that the water supply available in your part of the Central Valley today will be adequate or inadequate to meet its needs through the next 10 years? (if inadequate: Is that somewhat or very inadequate?)

- 52% adequate
- 24 somewhat inadequate
- 15 very inadequate
- 9 don't know

29a. [half sample] There is a limited amount of water supply available in the Central Valley. Which of the following do you think should be the most important priority for water policy in making plans for the Valley's future: [rotate] providing water for farms and agricultural uses, providing water for homes and residents, or protecting the environment?

- 39% farms and agriculture
- 29 homes and residents
- 22 protecting the environment
- 6 other (specify)
- 4 don't know

29b. [half sample] To help the Central Valley meet its future water needs as the population increases, which of the following do you most favor: [rotate] increasing the supply by building new dams and reservoirs, or encouraging conservation by all users?

- 34% dams and reservoirs
- 57 encouraging conservation
- 6 other (specify)
- 3 don't know

30. Possible state legislation calls for the installation of water meters on all residences and non-agricultural commercial buildings in California in order to charge water users for the amounts they use as opposed to flat fees. Which of the following comes closest to your views: [rotate] mandatory water meters are a good idea because they encourage water conservation, or mandatory water meters are a bad idea because it would be too costly to retrofit water mains and install the meters.

- 55% good idea
- 38 bad idea
- 2 other (specify)
- 5 don't know

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

- 18% freeways and highways
- 19 local streets and roads
- 18 public bus system
- 17 light rail system
- 14 high speed rail
- 7 carpool lanes
- 2 other (specify)
- 5 don't know

(rotate questions 32 and 33)

32a. [half sample] What if there was a measure on your county ballot to increase the local sales tax for transportation projects, including freeways and highways and local streets and roads, by one-half cent? Would you vote yes or no?

- 63% yes
- 34 no
- 3 don't know

32b. [half sample] What if there was a measure on the county ballot to increase the local sales tax for transportation projects, including freeways and highways, local streets and roads, and public buses and light rail, by one-half cent? Would you vote yes or no?

66% yes
 32 no
 2 don't know

33a. [half sample] An upcoming state ballot measure calls for \$10 billion in state bonds to fund the planning and construction of a high-speed rail system linking Southern California with the San Francisco Bay Area via Central Valley cities. If an election were held today, would you vote yes or no on a \$10 billion state bond for this purpose?

52% yes
 42 no
 6 don't know

33b. [half sample] An upcoming state ballot measure calls for \$10 billion in state bonds to fund the planning and construction of a high-speed rail system linking Southern California with the San Francisco Bay Area via Central Valley cities. How important is the high-speed rail transportation system to the quality of life and economic vitality of the Central Valley – is it very important, somewhat important, or not important?

31% very important
 38 somewhat important
 29 not important
 2 don't know

34. Changing subjects, looking ahead to the year 2025, do you think that the Central Valley will be a better place to live than it is today, or a worse place to live than it is now, or there will be no change?

38% better place
 38 worse place
 19 no change
 5 don't know

35. And in the year 2025, what do you think will be the most important issue facing the Central Valley?

22% population growth, development, sprawl
 12 water, water quality, water availability
 12 air pollution
 9 economy, jobs, unemployment
 5 crime, gangs
 4 environment, pollution
 4 loss of farmlands, agriculture
 4 traffic, transportation
 3 education, schools
 3 housing costs, housing availability
 1 electricity costs, energy crisis
 1 government regulations
 1 health care, health costs, HMO reform
 1 immigration, illegal immigration
 1 drugs
 2 other (specify)
 15 don't know

36. By the year 2025, the Central Valley is expected to see its population increase from 5.7 million residents today to 9.3 million people. Do you think this population growth is a good thing or a bad thing or does it make no difference to you and your family?

13% good thing
 57 bad thing
 26 no difference
 1 other (specify)
 3 don't know

37. Next, you may know the term infrastructure refers to a variety of public works projects. Which infrastructure projects do you think should have top priority for public funds as the Central Valley prepares for the population growth that is expected by the year 2025? (rotate list)

48% school facilities
 14 surface transportation
 19 water systems
 6 sewer systems
 3 airports
 6 other (specify)
 4 don't know

38. On another topic, the Central Valley is home to increasing numbers of people from many different racial and ethnic groups – including Asians, Latinos, blacks, and whites. On balance, do you think that having increasing numbers of people from different racial and ethnic groups makes the Valley a better place to live or a worse place to live or doesn't it make much difference either way?

- 35% a better place to live
- 12 worse place to live
- 52 doesn't make much difference either way
- 1 don't know

There are many different ideas about how to prepare for the future and the changes that are expected to take place in your part of the Central Valley between now and the year 2025. For the next set of questions, please tell me which of the following statements comes closest to your views. (*rotate questions 39 through 42*)

39a. [*half sample*] (*rotate*) We should mainly focus on building neighborhoods with town homes, condominiums, and apartments in order to conserve land and preserve open space, *or* we should mainly focus on building neighborhoods with single-family detached housing to satisfy what people prefer.

- 35% attached housing
- 57 single-family housing
- 4 other (*specify*)
- 4 don't know

39b. [*half sample*] (*rotate*) We should mainly focus on building new housing in already developed areas to conserve land and preserve open space, *or* we should mainly focus on building new housing in undeveloped areas to provide more suburban-style communities.

- 68% already developed areas
- 26 undeveloped areas
- 2 other (*specify*)
- 4 don't know

40a. [*half sample*] (*rotate*) We should mainly focus on building new housing near public transportation, *or* we should mainly focus on building new housing near freeways and major roads.

- 63% near public transportation
- 27 near freeways and major roads
- 4 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

40b. [*half sample*] (*rotate*) We should mainly focus on building new housing near existing jobs in order to reduce the traffic from lengthy commutes, *or* we should mainly focus on building new housing in outer areas where the land is less expensive in order to provide the most affordable housing.

- 59% near existing jobs
- 33 in remote areas
- 2 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

41. Which of the following comes closest to your views about how local governments should plan for the future in the Central Valley: (*rotate*) local governments should work together and have a common regional plan, *or* local governments should work independently and each have its own plan.

- 84% local governments should work together
- 13 local governments should work independently
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 2 don't know

42a. [*half sample*] Which of the following comes closest to your views about how to plan for the future in the Central Valley: (*rotate*) local elected officials should be providing leadership and making most of the important decisions, *or* local voters should make most of the important decisions at the ballot box.

- 24% local elected officials
- 73 local voters
- 3 don't know

42b. [*half sample*] When your local government officials decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what the people think – a lot, some, very little, or no attention?

- 13% a lot
- 42 some
- 31 very little
- 12 none
- 2 don't know

43a. [*half sample*] On another topic, how important do you think it is to have a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with the purpose of bringing together city and county governments, businesses, and citizens' groups to work together on issues facing the Central Valley – is it very important, somewhat important, or not important?

- 53% very important
- 35 somewhat important
- 10 not important
- 2 don't know

43b. *[half sample]* On another topic, a new university campus will be built in the Central Valley. How important is the University of California at Merced to the future economy and quality of life in the Central Valley – is it very important, somewhat important, or not important?

43% very important
36 somewhat important
16 not important
5 don't know

[44: demographic question]

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

7% very liberal
18 somewhat liberal
30 middle-of-the-road
28 somewhat conservative
14 very conservative
3 don't know

46. And how closely have you been following the news about the situation involving Iraq – very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

53% very closely
32 fairly closely
12 not too closely
2 not at all closely
1 don't know

(rotate questions 47 and 48)

47. What effect do you think the situation in Iraq will have on economic conditions in your part of the Central Valley – will the economy get better, stay the same, or get worse?

26% get better
43 stay the same
26 get worse
5 don't know

48. What effect do you think the situation in Iraq will have on terrorism and homeland security in your part of the Central Valley – will your area get safer, stay the same, or get less safe?

24% get safer
58 stay the same
14 get less safe
4 don't know

[49-50: demographic questions]

51. Do you or does anyone in your immediate family suffer from asthma or other respiratory problems? *(if yes: Would that be you or someone in your immediate family?)*

10% yes, respondent
20 yes, someone in immediate family
7 yes, both
63 no

[52: demographic question]

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

72% drive alone
15 carpool
4 public bus or transit
3 walk
3 some other means *(specify)*
3 work at home *(volunteered)* *(skip to q. 55)*

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

55% very satisfied
30 somewhat satisfied
10 somewhat dissatisfied
5 very dissatisfied

55. Do you personally own or lease an SUV (Sport Utility Vehicle)?

21% yes
79 no

[56-59: demographic questions]

60. If you were in the San Francisco Bay Area or Los Angeles and someone asked you where you live, would you say *(rotate list)*

71% the name of your city
7 the name of your county
13 the Central Valley
7 other *(specify)*
2 don't know

61. Do you or anyone in your immediate family work on a farm or a farm-related activity?

17% yes
83 no

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