



**PPIC
STATEWIDE
SURVEY**

MARCH 2005

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

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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 on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

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Preface

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

This is the third in an annual series of PPIC surveys of Los Angeles County. This series of large-scale, comprehensive public opinion surveys on social, economic, and political attitudes and policy preferences is designed to provide timely, relevant, and objective information on the county’s overall adult population, geographic areas, and diverse racial/ethnic, economic, and social groups.

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

Los Angeles County is the most populous county in the nation with 10.1 million residents. The county has grown by about 1 million residents in the past 10 years. Today, the county’s population is approximately 47 percent Latino, 30 percent non-Latino white, 12 percent Asian, and 9 percent black—similar to the racial/ethnic profile that state demographers predict for California by mid-century. Reflecting the size and diversity of the county, local government is large, and governance issues are complex in this region.

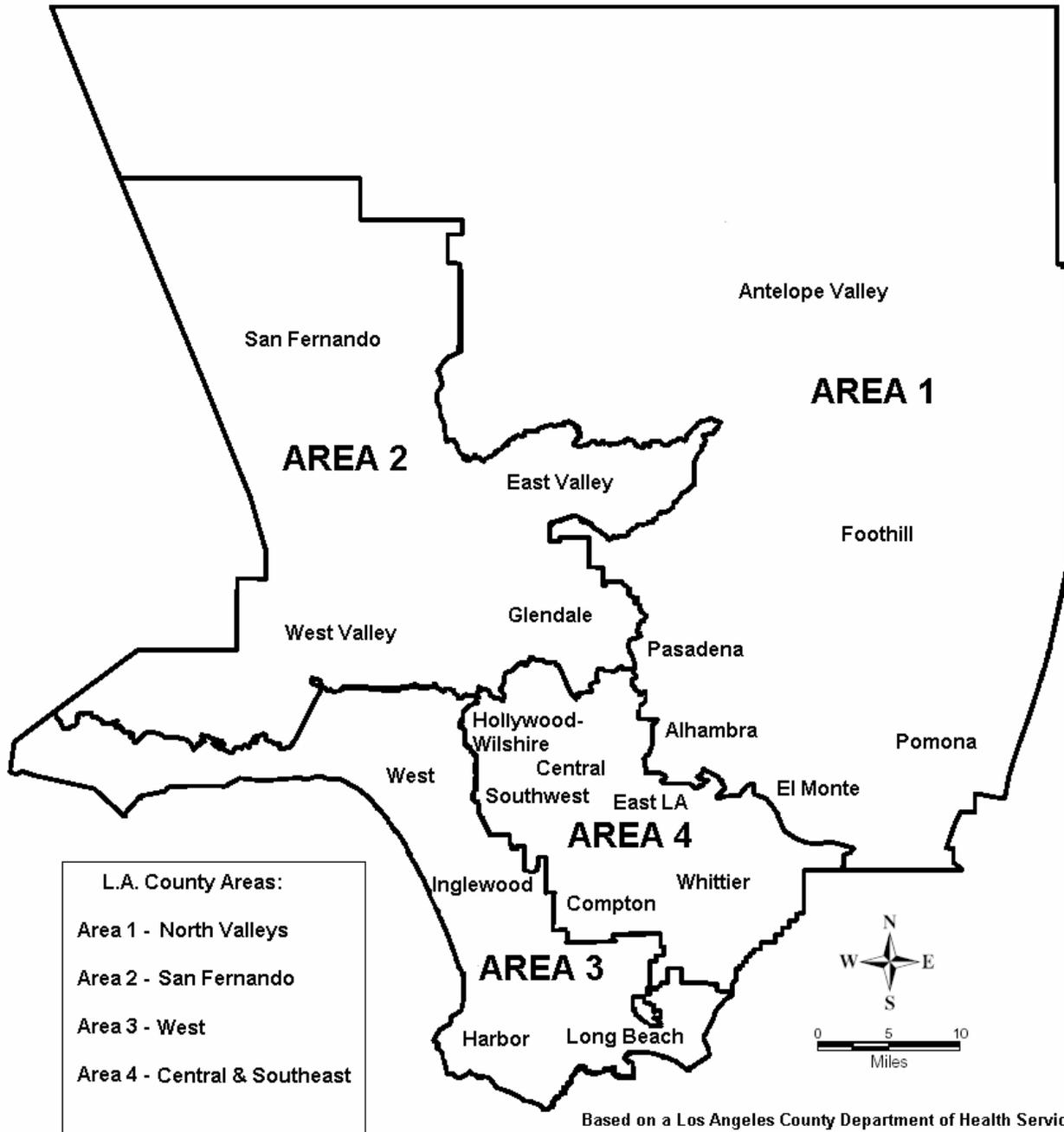
In this survey, we are interested in understanding the relationship between residents’ perceptions of current county conditions, their attitudes toward governance in the region, and their concerns and priorities for the future. Los Angeles County is expected to grow by about 1 million residents in the next 20 years, and voters will be asked to make decisions at the ballot box about how governments in the region should plan for this population growth. We also analyze Los Angeles city residents’ attitudes toward the mayor’s race and issues surfacing in this local election.

This current survey of 2,003 adult residents includes questions from earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys and *Los Angeles Times* polls for comparisons. We also consider racial/ethnic, county area, income, and political differences. The following issues are explored in this survey:

- **County Conditions**—How do residents rate the county’s quality of life and economy today, and what do they think are the most important issues facing Los Angeles County? How satisfied are residents with their local services, and what specific problems are they concerned about in their county area? What changes have they seen in county conditions, and how do they perceive the quality of schools, parks and environmental conditions in low-income and minority neighborhoods compared to other areas?
- **Local Governance Issues**—How do residents rate the performance of their city and county elected officials? How much trust do they have in their city and county governments? Are they willing to pay higher taxes to improve local public schools, transportation, and public safety? Are immigrants viewed mostly as an economic benefit or a public service burden, and how do residents perceive police treatment of all racial/ethnic groups? How do Los Angeles city residents rate their mayor and what do they think about the proposal to split up the Los Angeles Unified School District?
- **The Future of Los Angeles County**—What do residents believe is the most important policy priority for Los Angeles County over the next 20 years? Overall, are they optimistic or pessimistic about the future, and how many expect to see improvements in traffic, schools, jobs, and housing affordability? What are their priorities for transportation planning, and do they favor an expansion of infrastructure to accommodate new population growth?

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

Los Angeles County



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Press Release

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SPECIAL SURVEY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

TODAY'S WORRIES DARKEN FUTURE OUTLOOK IN L.A.

Many Residents Don't Plan to Stay in County Long Term; Candidates in L.A. City Mayoral Runoff Face Distrustful Electorate

SAN FRANCISCO, California, March 16, 2005 — Residents of Los Angeles County are increasingly disturbed by a host of local problems – from traffic to race relations – and express growing pessimism about the future of the county and their own long-term prospects in the region, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

PPIC's third annual survey of Los Angeles County finds residents stunningly unhappy with some key indicators of quality of life: Large majorities say traffic congestion on freeways and major roads (74%) and the availability of affordable housing (64%) are *big* problems in the county today, up markedly from two years ago (67% traffic, 54% affordable housing). However, more residents today than one year ago give the county's economy excellent or good ratings (32% to 25%), which may help to explain their more positive overall attitude: A majority say things are going very well (10%) or somewhat well (51%) in the county, while just over one in three believes things are going very badly (13%) or somewhat badly (24%).

Majorities of residents still rate police protection (57%) and the quality of parks, beaches, and recreation facilities (58%) as excellent or good, but their assessments have fallen considerably from their perch one year ago (67% police protection, 63% parks, beaches, and recreation). And residents are far less charitable in their rating of other public services: Only one-third give excellent or good ratings to streets and roads (32% today, 51% in 2004) and public schools (36% today, 43% in 2004). In contrast, large majorities of residents in neighboring Orange County give excellent or good ratings to police protection (83%), recreational facilities (84%), streets and roads (64%), and public schools (64%).

Los Angeles County residents are no more optimistic when they imagine the future of their region. In fact, they are more likely to believe that Los Angeles County will be a worse place (37%) rather than a better place (24%) to live in twenty years, with 35 percent anticipating that quality of life in the county will stay the same. In 2003, 32 percent of residents said the county would be a better place to live in the future. Whites (22%) and blacks (23%) are less likely than Latinos and Asians (26% each) to say the county will be a better place to live two decades from now.

One consequence of this negative outlook? Fully one-third of county residents (33%) expect to leave Los Angeles County in the next five years. The number of residents who plan to leave has grown dramatically: A similar survey question in 2003 found that 17 percent of residents did not see themselves living in the county in five years. Blacks (41%) are far more likely than whites (30%), Latinos (34%), and Asians (25%) to see themselves leaving the county.

L.A. City Voters Divided, Distrustful

Residents in the city of Los Angeles share the pessimism about their area's future prospects. "More L.A. city residents say they plan to leave the county than voted in last week's mayoral race (35% to 26%)," says PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. "It seems they plan to vote with their feet."

Indeed, candidates in the mayoral runoff race face an electorate that has little faith in their city leaders and that is deeply divided on key issues. Only one in three residents (34%) –

and 28 percent of likely voters – say they trust their city government to do what is right just about always or most of the time, with Central City residents (41%) expressing the most trust and San Fernando residents (29%) the least. Only 30 percent say their mayor and city council do an excellent or good job of solving problems in the city. Currently, 48 percent of L.A. city likely voters disapprove and 42 percent approve of the way Mayor James Hahn is performing his duties. And the proposal by former mayoral candidate Bob Hertzberg to divide the Los Angeles Unified School District is supported by a slim majority of the city’s adults (51%) and 58 percent of likely voters. Strong majorities of whites (63%) and Asians (64%) back this proposal, while blacks (42%) and Latinos (41%) are far less supportive.

Support for New Taxes Falls Short

County wide, residents are also decidedly negative about the performance of local government. Only one in three county residents (36%) gives their local mayor and city council either excellent or good ratings. And only one in five (21%) says the Board of Supervisors is doing an excellent or good job solving county problems. Blacks (12%) and whites (16%) are less likely than Latinos (28%) and Asians (27%) to give excellent or good reviews to elected county officials.

“L.A. County residents are finding little to like and even less to trust when it comes to local government,” says Baldassare. “So even if they see big problems that need fixing, they are unwilling to raise their taxes to help fund a solution.” Case in point: Crime and gangs remain the top issue facing the county (21%), followed by education (17%) and traffic (10%). But are residents willing to pay higher taxes to address these pressing problems? Public support falls well short of the two-thirds threshold required to pass a local tax increase. A slight majority of adults (54%) and likely voters (52%) say they would support a half-cent sales tax increase to provide more funds for local police. Residents are evenly split (48% each) over whether or not to increase property taxes to benefit local schools, but likely voters are opposed (57%). And only 47 percent of residents and likely voters say they would vote yes on a ballot measure that would raise the local sales tax by one-half cent for local transportation projects.

Racial/Ethnic Tensions Rise, Differences Persist

Given the vast differences in attitudes among racial and ethnic groups in L.A. County and a recent high-profile controversy involving the LAPD, it is not surprising that many residents express growing concern about the state of race relations in the region. A majority of residents (58%) believe race relations are not so good (41%) or poor (17%) in the county today, compared to the 53 percent who held this view in 2003. Blacks (70%) are more negative than Latinos (64%), whites (52%), or Asians (36%).

Blacks also register more concern about some of the social manifestations of racial tension: 50 percent of all residents – but only 21 percent of blacks – say police in their community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always or most of the time. And although 60 percent of county residents say that immigrants are a benefit to the region because of their hard work and job skills, blacks are less likely to share this perspective: 40 percent view immigrants as a benefit and 46 percent consider them a burden. However, when it comes to the issue of driver’s licenses for undocumented immigrants, blacks (68%), whites (71%), and Asians (63%) are united in their opposition, while Latinos (80%) are overwhelmingly supportive. Overall, county residents are evenly divided over this proposal (48% favor, 48% oppose); not surprisingly, noncitizens (88%) favor the idea.

Stark differences between racial and ethnic groups also exist in their political and civic behavior. Whites and blacks are more likely than Latinos and Asians to have given money to a political cause, to have worked as a political or community volunteer, and to have initiated contact with an elected official or their staff.

Facing L.A.'s Future...Together?

On a hopeful note, many county residents (61%) believe that race relations will improve in the next two decades; 30 percent expect a turn for the worse. Optimists also outnumber pessimists in expectations for public schools (51% improve, 40% get worse), but residents are evenly divided about what the future holds for the region's economy and prospects for job opportunities (47% improve, 45% get worse). When it comes to traffic and the environment, future expectations take a turn for the worse: More than three in four county residents (77%) expect traffic conditions to worsen and 65 percent say the quality of the natural environment will deteriorate.

Not surprisingly given these findings, transportation ties education (18% each) as the most important priority for L.A. County over the next 20 years. But although they agree that transportation should be a top priority in the coming years, county residents are conflicted about funding priorities for related projects: Freeways and highways (25%), light rail (22%), and the subway system (18%) receive the most support, followed by the public bus system (12%), local streets and roads (10%), and carpool lanes (6%). Sixty-three percent of residents say light rail will be very important for the county in coming decades.

More Key Findings

- **Educational, Environmental Equity** (pages 5, 6)

Majorities of county residents say low-income and minority neighborhoods are more likely than other neighborhoods to have school facilities that are in need of repair and replacement (77%) and say school districts in these communities should receive more public funds even if it means less money for other districts (60%). County residents also believe such neighborhoods are less likely to have their fair share of well-maintained parks and recreation facilities (64%) and are more likely to house toxic waste and polluting facilities (56%).

- **Carpool Lanes: Yes** (page 18)

Although county residents rank carpool lanes as their lowest funding priority when it comes to transportation projects, 70 percent favor expanding the use of carpool and bus lanes on freeways.

- **Airport and Port Expansion: No** (page 18)

When asked to weigh the environmental tradeoffs, 65 percent of county residents oppose the expansion of LAX and 61 percent oppose the expansion of the Port of Los Angeles.

About the Survey

The Special Survey of Los Angeles County — a collaborative effort of PPIC and the School of Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California — is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey, supported in part through a grant from the California Community Foundation. This is the third in an annual series of PPIC surveys of Los Angeles County. Findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,003 Los Angeles County adult residents interviewed between February 24 and March 7, 2005. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. For more information on survey methodology, see page 19.

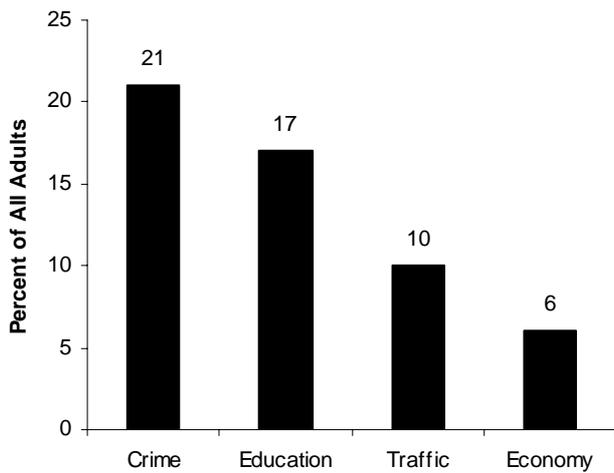
Mark Baldassare is research director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998. His book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at www.ppic.org.

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. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

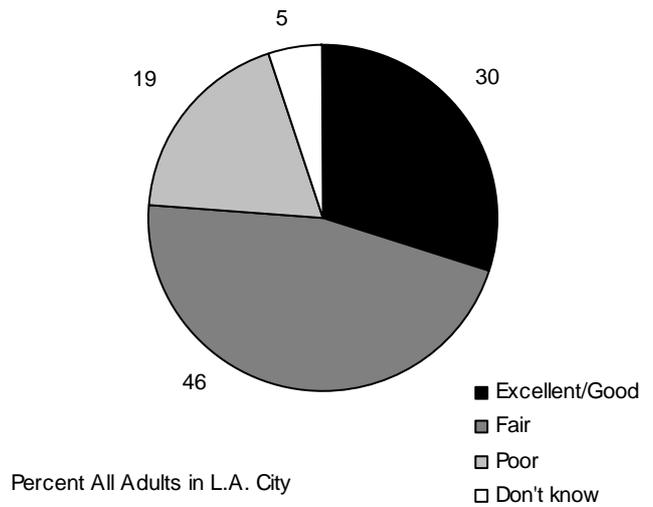
This report will appear on PPIC's website (www.ppic.org) on March 16.

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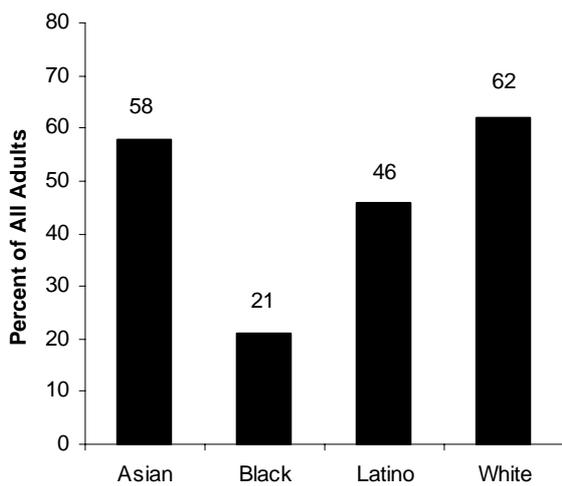
Most Important Issue Facing L.A. County



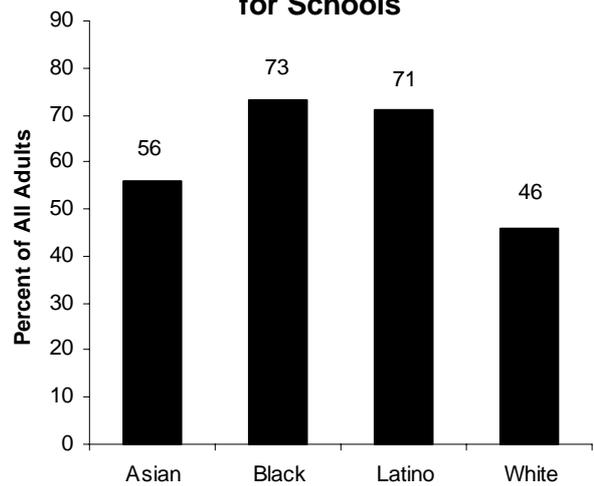
Job Ratings for L.A. City Mayor and City Council



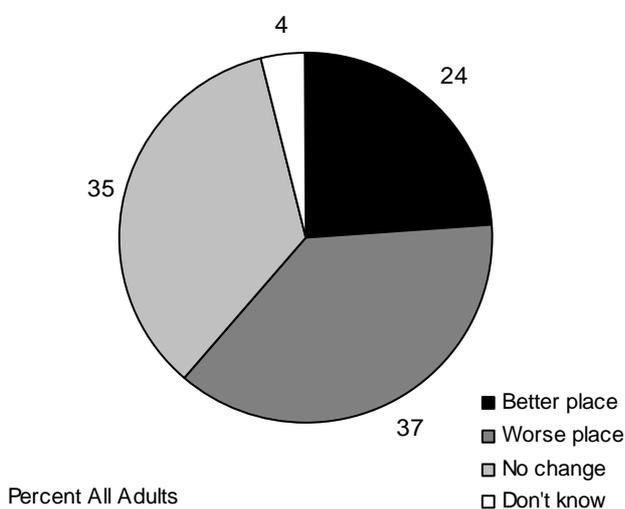
Police Treat All Racial/Ethnic Groups Fairly Almost Always/Most of the Time



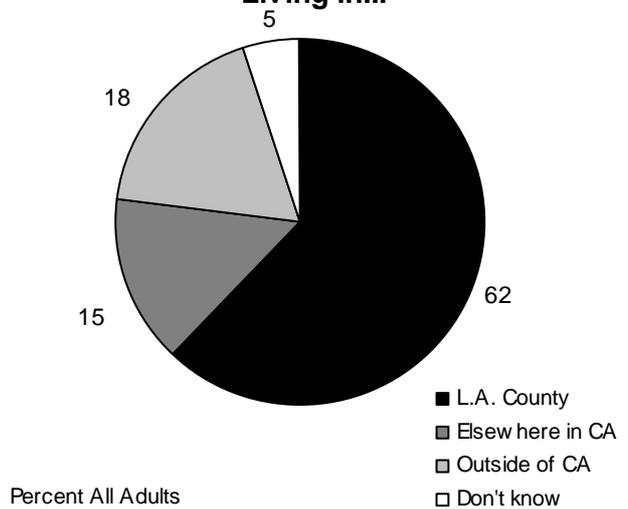
Low-Income and Minority Neighborhoods Should Receive More Public Funding for Schools



In 20 Years, L.A. County Will Be a...



Five Years from Now, Do You See Yourself Living in...



County Conditions

Most Important Issue

When it comes to the most important issues facing Los Angeles County, residents' perceptions have changed very little since 2003. Twenty-one percent of county residents still rank crime and gangs as the number one issue, down slightly from 26 percent in 2003. Education is still second at 17 percent, compared to 15 percent in 2003. And traffic and transportation rank third at 10 percent, up from 6 percent in 2003. Only 6 percent identify jobs and the economy as the top issue facing Los Angeles County today.

Central/Southeast residents (29%) register greater concern about crime and gangs than residents of other county areas. Concern also varies across population groups. For example, Latinos (31%) and blacks (21%) are much more likely than Asians (14%) and whites (11%) to identify crime and gangs as the number one issue facing the county. Asians (21%) are the most likely and Latinos (14%) the least likely to name education as the top issue. However, education is first or second on the list of important issues for all racial/ethnic groups and county regions. Concern about education declines with age and increases with education and income.

Traffic is increasingly seen as a problem in the West (14%, up from 8% in 2003) and North Valleys (13%, up from 6% in 2003). Concern about transportation is higher among whites than other racial/ethnic groups. It is also higher among those who drive alone to work (13%) than those who carpool (8%) or use public transit (7%).

In fourth place, the economy is seen as the top issue by 6 percent of Los Angeles County residents, with slightly more concern among blacks than other groups.

“What do you think is the most important issue facing L.A. County today?”

Top four issues mentioned	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Crime, gangs	21%	16%	18%	16%	29%	24%
Education, schools	17	16	15	18	17	17
Traffic, transportation	10	13	11	14	6	9
Jobs, economy	6	6	7	5	4	5

Top four issues mentioned	All Adults	Race / Ethnicity			
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Crime, gangs	21%	14%	21%	31%	11%
Education, schools	17	21	18	14	18
Traffic, transportation	10	12	9	6	16
Jobs, economy	6	6	8	5	5

Overall County Perceptions

Perceptions of the quality of life in Los Angeles County remain upbeat: 61 percent of residents say things are going somewhat well (51%) or very well (10%), results similar to those in the 2003 survey. However, the ratings differ by county region: Residents in the city of Los Angeles rate their quality of life lower than county residents overall (56% to 61%). Residents in the West area (66%) are the most likely, and residents in the San Fernando Valley (54%) are the least likely, to say things are going at least somewhat well.

A majority in all demographic groups say things are going at least somewhat well in Los Angeles County. However, Asians (72%), whites (63%), and men (64%) are more positive than blacks and Latinos (58% each) and women (57%) about the quality of county life.

“Thinking about the quality of life in L.A. County, how do you think things are going ...”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Very well	10%	9%	9%	15%	8%	9%
Somewhat well	51	52	45	51	53	47
Somewhat badly	24	21	28	23	23	26
Very badly	13	16	16	8	14	14
Don't know	2	2	2	3	2	4

When asked about the economy, the percentage of Los Angeles County residents who rate the economy as excellent or good (32%) has increased from previous years (25% in 2004, 24% in 2003). Across regions, residents in the city of Los Angeles (28%) are slightly less likely than county residents overall (32%) to say the economy is excellent or good. Residents in the West give the highest ratings to the economy (40%), while Central/Southeast residents rate it lowest (25%).

Among population groups, whites (42%) and Asians (36%) are much more positive than Latinos (26%) and blacks (19%) about the economy. Positive economic ratings increase with income, education, and homeownership, and men are more positive than women (37% to 27%). Republicans (46%) give the economy more favorable ratings than do independents (32%) and Democrats (29%).

“In general, how would you rate the economy in L.A. County today?”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Excellent/Good	32%	34%	34%	40%	25%	28%
Fair	46	42	45	43	50	48
Poor	20	22	19	13	23	21
Don't know	2	2	2	4	2	3

Ratings of Local Public Services

Local services in Los Angeles County get mixed reviews. Moreover, residents do not rate them as highly as in years past, and residents in the city of Los Angeles are less satisfied than county residents overall with these services.

Parks, beaches, and recreation are considered excellent or good by 58 percent of all county residents, down from 63 percent in 2004 and 62 percent in 2003. Ratings for local parks are highest in the West (68%) and lowest among Central/Southeast residents (50%), where ratings are on a par with ratings in the city of Los Angeles (50%). Across racial/ethnic groups, a majority of whites (70%), Asians (59%), and Latinos (53%) rate their local parks as excellent or good, compared to only 40 percent of blacks.

Police protection is considered excellent or good by 57 percent of all county residents, down from 67 percent in 2004 and 62 percent in 2003. Police ratings are higher in the North Valleys (64%), West (63%), and San Fernando Valley (59%) than in the Central/Southeast area (47%), which is again in line with ratings in the city of Los Angeles (49%). Among whites, two-thirds rate police protection as excellent or good, compared to only one in three blacks. Republicans (72%) are also much more positive than independents (52%) and Democrats (51%) about their local police.

Public schools are rated good or excellent by only 36 percent of all county residents, down from 43 percent in 2004 and 41 percent in 2003. Residents of the North Valleys (42%), West (39%), and San Fernando Valley (38%) give higher marks than Central/Southeast residents (31%), which are again comparable to ratings by residents of the City of Los Angeles (30%). By racial/ethnic groups, blacks (15%) give the lowest, while Asians (46%) and Latinos (43%) give the highest, school ratings.

Streets and roads get high ratings from only 32 percent of county residents overall, much lower than in 2003 (46%) and 2004 (51%). Ratings of streets and roads are somewhat higher in the North Valleys (41%) and West (33%) than in the San Fernando Valley (28%) and Central/Southeast (27%), although the latter give higher marks than residents in the city of Los Angeles (23%). Among racial/ethnic groups, only 15 percent of blacks give positive ratings compared to about one in three adults in other groups.

<i>Percent rating local service as "excellent" or "good"</i>	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Parks, beaches, and recreation	58%	61%	57%	68%	50%	50%
Police protection	57	64	59	63	47	49
Public schools	36	42	38	39	31	30
Streets and roads	32	41	28	33	27	23

<i>Percent rating local service as "excellent" or "good"</i>	All Adults	Race/ Ethnicity			
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Parks, beaches, and recreation	58%	59%	40%	53%	70%
Police protection	57	63	34	53	67
Public schools	36	46	15	43	34
Streets and roads	32	35	15	36	32

County Conditions

Perceptions of Issues in Los Angeles County Areas

When asked to rank the seriousness of six issues, large percentages of county residents identify traffic congestion on freeways (74%) and the availability of affordable housing (64%) as big problems in their area. In contrast, fewer than half of county residents view the availability of affordable healthcare (42%), crime (41%), the lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs (39%), and air pollution (38%) as big problems.

Residents in the city of Los Angeles rank these problems in the same order, but slightly higher percentages identify each issue as a big problem. There are, however, some major differences in perceptions of problems across county regions and racial/ethnic groups. For instance, more than half of Central/Southeast residents and blacks and Latinos say that crime is a big problem in their county area, a level significantly higher than in other regions and for whites and Asians.

Few Los Angeles County residents have noticed improvements in traffic, housing, crime, or the economy in the past few years. For instance, only 5 percent think traffic congestion and the availability of affordable housing have improved; majorities say traffic (71%) and housing (72%) have gotten worse. Residents are more positive about trends in crime and the economy, with 20 percent saying the amount of crime is less of a problem and 11 percent saying the opportunities for well-paying jobs have improved. Fewer than four in 10 adults say these problems have gotten worse.

How big a problem is _____ in your part of L.A. County? (percent saying "a big problem")	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads	74%	71%	78%	75%	73%	76%
Availability of housing that you can afford	64	63	66	66	63	68
Availability of healthcare that you can afford	42	43	43	37	45	45
Crime	41	37	35	31	55	47
Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs	39	36	35	27	49	44
Air pollution	38	38	34	33	44	41

How big a problem is _____ in your part of L.A. County? (percent saying "a big problem")	All Adults	Race/ Ethnicity			
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads	74%	68%	71%	70%	79%
Availability of housing that you can afford	64	49	66	68	62
Availability of healthcare that you can afford	42	36	46	49	34
Crime	41	34	52	55	26
Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs	39	25	47	52	25
Air pollution	38	43	42	45	30

Perceived Equity in School Facilities

Education ranks high as a county issue, and relatively few residents give their local public schools high marks. Moreover, they believe that school resources are not distributed evenly among county communities. Three in four residents believe that low-income and minority neighborhoods are more likely than other neighborhoods in the county to have school facilities in need of repair and replacement.

While majorities across demographic and political groups share this opinion, it is much more strongly held in some groups than others. For instance, blacks (89%) are more likely than Asians (78%), whites (76%), and Latinos (75%) to perceive inequities in school facilities, and this belief also increases with income and education. There is little difference in the perception of school inequities across major county regions or between residents inside and outside of the city of Los Angeles. Notably, there is no difference in attitudes between those with children and those without.

“Are low-income and minority neighborhoods more likely than other neighborhoods in L.A. County to have school facilities that are in need of repair and replacement?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more
Yes	77%	78%	89%	75%	76%	76%	79%	83%
No	14	10	7	19	12	16	14	9
Don't know	9	12	4	6	12	8	7	8

Although large majorities of Los Angeles County residents believe inequities exist in public school facilities, they are more divided about giving more resources to these neighborhoods and less to others in order to reduce the disparities. Overall, 60 percent of Los Angeles County residents support giving low-income and minority neighborhoods more public funding for school facilities. However, support for this action is much stronger among blacks (73%) and Latinos (71%) than among Asians (56%) and whites (46%). Although the perception of inequity in schools increases with income, support for increased funding for schools in low-income and minority neighborhoods decreases significantly with income. Among those who think low-income and minority neighborhoods have more school facilities in need of repair, 66 percent think that these neighborhoods should receive more public funding.

“Should school districts in low-income and minority neighborhoods receive more public funding for school facilities, even if it means less funding for other school districts?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more
Yes	60%	56%	73%	71%	46%	67%	56%	54%
No	30	34	17	21	42	22	35	39
Other (volunteered)	2	1	4	3	2	3	2	2
Don't know	8	9	6	5	10	8	7	5

Perceived Equity in Environmental Conditions

Most Los Angeles County residents believe that environmental conditions are also inequitable in low-income and minority neighborhoods. Sixty-four percent believe that such neighborhoods are more likely than other neighborhoods to have less than their fair share of well-maintained parks and recreational facilities. Only 25 percent disagree.

Although majorities across demographic groups agree with this view, it is stronger in some groups. For example, blacks (78%) are more likely than Latinos (69%), Asians (59%), and whites (56%) to believe in this inequity. This perception decreases slightly with income: 67 percent of those with a household income under \$40,000 agree, compared to 62 percent of those with a household income of \$80,000 or more. Democrats (71%) are more likely than Republicans (51%) to believe that low-income and minority neighborhoods are more likely to have less than their fair share of well-maintained parks.

“Are low-income and minority neighborhoods more likely than other neighborhoods in L.A. County to have less than their fair share of well-maintained parks and recreation facilities?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more
Yes, more likely to have less	64%	59%	78%	69%	56%	67%	64%	62%
No, not more likely to have less	25	31	14	24	29	24	27	25
Don't know	11	10	8	7	15	9	9	13

Fifty-six percent of county residents also believe that such neighborhoods have more than their fair share of toxic waste and polluting facilities, while 27 percent disagree. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (65%) and Latinos (62%) are more likely than whites (49%) and Asians (47%) to share this opinion. Fifty-nine percent of those with a household income under \$40,000 agree, compared to just over half of those with a household income of \$80,000 or more. Again, Democrats (61%) are more likely than Republicans (40%) to hold this view about environmental pollution in low income/minority areas.

Across L.A. County regions, Central/Southeast residents are more likely than others to think that low-income and minority neighborhoods have more than their fair share of toxic waste and polluting facilities (62%) and less than their fair share of well-maintained parks and recreation facilities (70%).

“Are low-income and minority neighborhoods more likely than other neighborhoods in L.A. County to have more than their fair share of toxic waste and polluting facilities?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more
Yes, more likely to have more	56%	47%	65%	62%	49%	59%	57%	52%
No, not more likely to have more	27	34	19	30	26	27	27	26
Don't know	17	19	16	8	25	14	16	22

Local Governance Issues

Local Government Ratings

Fewer than four in 10 county residents give their mayor and city council either excellent or good ratings for their performance in office, while nearly six in 10 say they are doing only fair or poorly when it comes to solving problems in their city. Across regions, residents of the San Fernando Valley (29%) and Central/Southeast (34%) give their elected city officials lower ratings than residents of the North Valleys and the West region (40% each). There are differences of opinions in local government ratings across racial/ethnic groups as well; blacks (20%) give fewer excellent and good ratings than whites (35%), Latinos (39%), and Asians (43%) when it comes to the job performance of the mayor and city council.

“How would you rate the performance of your mayor and city council in solving problems in your city?”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Excellent/Good	36%	40%	29%	40%	34%	30%
Fair	42	37	46	39	45	46
Poor	16	16	18	13	17	19
Don't know / NA	6	7	7	8	4	5

In the city of Los Angeles—where there is a runoff election between the mayor and a city council member—only 30 percent give their mayor and city council either excellent or good grades, while two in three rate their city’s elected officials as only fair or poor when it comes to solving problems. Based on city geographic areas defined and used by the *Los Angeles Times* poll, Central City residents give their city officials the most positive ratings, while South City and San Fernando residents are the most negative in their ratings. Of those who are considered likely voters in elections, only 21 percent rate their mayor and city council highly when it comes to solving problems.

“How would you rate the performance of your mayor and city council in solving problems in your city?”

<i>L.A. city residents only</i>	All Adults	L.A. City Region				Likely Voters
		Westside	San Fernando	Central City	South City	
Excellent/Good	30%	25%	25%	35%	25%	21%
Fair	46	56	46	45	48	48
Poor	19	14	21	17	23	26
Don't know / NA	5	5	8	3	4	5

Consistent with our earlier Los Angeles County surveys, county residents give more positive ratings to their city government than to their county government. Only one in five residents (21%) rate the County Board of Supervisors’ performance in solving problems as excellent or good, while seven in 10 rate their performance as fair (46%) or poor (25%). Blacks (12%) and whites (16%) are less likely than Latinos (28%) and Asians (27%) to give excellent or good reviews to elected county officials. Positive ratings decline with education, income, and homeownership but do not vary by age or years of residence.

Local Tax Increases

Are residents willing to pay higher taxes to address the problems they rank as most important for Los Angeles County today—crime, education, and transportation? In each instance, public support falls well below the supermajority two-thirds threshold that would be required to pass these local tax increases.

When asked about a half-cent sales tax to provide more funds for the local police, a slight majority of adults (54%) and likely voters (52%) say they would vote yes. In the city of Los Angeles, 54 percent are in favor and 43 percent are opposed to raising the sales tax for local police funding. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (64%) are the most supportive of a tax increase for this purpose, while fewer Asians (53%), whites (48%), and blacks (43%) are in favor of raising the local sales tax to provide more police funds. While Democrats are in favor of raising taxes for this reason, a majority of Republicans and independents are opposed. In all regions, support falls well short of the two-thirds vote needed to pass such a proposal.

“If there was a measure on your local ballot to increase the local sales tax by one-half cent to provide more funds for the local police, would you vote yes or no?”

	All Adults	Likely Voters	Party Registration				L.A. City
			Dem	Rep	Ind	Not Registered	
Yes	54%	52%	59%	46%	45%	58%	54%
No	43	45	39	51	53	38	43
Don't know	3	3	2	3	2	4	3

The public as a whole exhibits a mixed response on the question of raising property taxes to fund local public schools (48% yes, 48% no), while a solid majority of likely voters are opposed (40% yes, 57% no). A narrow majority of Democrats support a tax increase for this purpose, while Republicans are opposed. Residents in the city of Los Angeles support a tax increase for public schools by a narrow margin (51% yes, 46% no). There are major differences in support for a property tax increase for public schools across racial/ethnic groups: A solid majority of Latinos (58%) are in favor, compared to 50 percent of blacks, 43 percent of Asians, and 39 percent of whites. Outside of the Central/Southeast area, where 54 percent support a tax increase, support falls below 50 percent. Among those with children in the public schools, 55 percent are in favor and 41 percent are opposed to raising property taxes to provide funding for public schools.

“If there was a measure on your local ballot to increase property taxes to provide more funds for the local public schools, would you vote yes or no?”

	All Adults	Likely Voters	Party Registration				L.A. City
			Dem	Rep	Ind	Not Registered	
Yes	48%	40%	52%	26%	44%	59%	51%
No	48	57	46	70	51	37	46
Don't know	4	3	2	4	5	4	3

When asked about a half-cent increase in the sales tax for local transportation projects, only 47 percent of all adults and likely voters said they would vote yes on such a measure. Across party lines, Democrats (53%) are more supportive than Republicans (35%) and independents (45%). Public support for a sales tax increase for local transportation projects is similar across regions and racial/ethnic groups. In the city of Los Angeles, 46 percent of residents are in favor of such a proposal and 50 percent are opposed.

Attitudes towards Immigrants

Similar to our previous surveys in Los Angeles County, six in 10 residents believe that immigrants are a benefit to the county’s economy, while three in 10 say that they are a burden on the county’s public services. By an even wider margin, residents in the city of Los Angeles rate immigrants overall as a benefit rather than a burden (64% to 27%). However, there are stark racial/ethnic differences: Whites are evenly divided in their views of immigrants (45% benefit, 44% burden), while 81 percent of Latinos and 56 percent of Asians describe immigrants as a benefit to the county. Blacks, on the other hand, are less likely to hold positive views of immigrants (46% burden, 40% benefit). There are also partisan differences, with a majority of Democrats (57%) saying that immigrants are a benefit and a slight majority of Republicans (51%) saying they are a burden. While U.S.-born residents are divided in their assessment of the contributions of immigrants to Los Angeles County, county residents born outside of the United States have an overwhelmingly positive view of the contributions of immigrants through their hard work and job skills.

Which of these two views is closest to your own on immigrants today ...	All Adults	Nativity			L.A. City
		U.S.-born citizen	Foreign-born citizen	Foreign-born noncitizen	
Benefit to L.A. County because of their hard work and job skills	60%	48%	64%	91%	64%
Burden to L.A. County because they use public services	30	40	24	6	27
Don't know	10	12	12	3	9

County residents are evenly divided on one of the most high-profile immigrant issues in the state policy arena—48 percent favor and 48 percent oppose driver’s licenses for undocumented immigrants. A slight majority of residents in the city of Los Angeles (53%) are in favor of this proposal. While Latinos (80%) are overwhelmingly supportive, Asians (63%), blacks (68%), and whites (71%) are mostly opposed to state legislation allowing driver’s licenses for undocumented immigrants. By a two-to-one margin, U.S.-born residents oppose a state law allowing driver’s licenses for illegal immigrants, while non-U.S.-born residents are solidly behind this proposal. Democrats are divided on this issue (48% favor, 48% oppose), but most Republicans (80%) say they are against this proposal. Interestingly, the adults who are not registered to vote strongly believe that there should be state legislation allowing illegal immigrants to obtain a California driver’s license (73% favor, 23% oppose).

“Would you favor or oppose state legislation allowing illegal immigrants to get a California driver's license?”

	All Adults	Nativity			L.A. City
		U.S.-born citizen	Foreign-born citizen	Foreign-born noncitizen	
Favor	48%	32%	59%	88%	53%
Oppose	48	63	37	10	45
Don't know	4	5	4	2	2

Perceptions of Race/Ethnic Relations

County residents currently hold views about race relations similar to the views they held in March 2003, when 53 percent said that race relations in the county were either *not so good* or *poor*. Today, 58 percent express these negative evaluations, while just 39 percent say race relations are excellent or good. The ratings of race relations are very similar in the city of Los Angeles (59% negative, 39% positive).

Racial and ethnic groups have highly different perceptions. Seventy percent of blacks and 64 percent of Latinos say that race relations are not so good or poor. Whites are more positive, with 44 percent saying that race relations are excellent or good and 52 percent saying they are not so good or poor. By contrast, 64 percent of Asians give positive ratings and 36 percent give negative ratings of race relations.

“How would you rate race relations in L.A. County today?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				L.A. City
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Excellent	3%	8%	2%	3%	2%	4%
Good	36	56	23	31	42	35
Not so good	41	28	45	43	40	40
Poor	17	8	25	21	12	19
Don't know	3	0	5	2	4	2

In light of recent news and controversy about police treatment of a minority youth in Los Angeles, do residents believe that the police treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly? County residents are divided on this issue, with 50 percent saying the police treat all groups fairly *almost always* or *most of the time* and 43 percent saying they do so *only some of the time* or *almost never*. Public perceptions of the police are less positive in the city of Los Angeles (44% always/most of the time, 48% only sometimes/almost never).

However, there are large differences in perceptions of police response across racial/ethnic groups. While 62 percent of whites say police are almost always or mostly treating all racial and ethnic groups fairly in their community, only 21 percent of blacks hold this positive opinion. Latinos are considerably more positive than blacks, but they, too, are more likely to be negative (50%) than positive (46%) about police treatment of racial and ethnic groups. Asians (58%) are about as likely as whites (62%) to say that the police in their community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always or most of the time.

“Do you think the police in your community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost never?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				L.A. City
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Almost always	20%	23%	5%	21%	24%	16%
Most of the time	30	35	16	25	38	28
Only some of the time	29	29	43	31	24	30
Almost never	14	9	30	19	6	18
Don't know	7	4	6	4	8	8

Race/Ethnicity and Civic Engagement

Among the deepest divisions in Los Angeles County today are the stark differences in political and nonpolitical involvement across racial/ethnic groups. In measures of political engagement, blacks and whites are fairly similar, while Asians and Latinos lag well behind these two groups. It is not surprising to know that Asians (57%) and Latinos (44%) are much less likely to say they vote frequently than blacks (75%) and whites (84%) – in part because a much higher percentage of Latinos and Asians are noncitizens or are recent citizens – but these two groups are also much less involved in a wide range of civic activities.

On the political front, Latinos and Asians are about half as likely as whites and blacks to give money or volunteer time to a political campaign. Among whites and blacks, about one in three say they have initiated contact with a public official or their staff in the past 12 months. By comparison, only 12 percent of Asians and 10 percent of Latinos say they have made contact with a government official.

<i>In the past 12 months have you ... (percent answering "yes")</i>	All Adults	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>				L.A. City
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Given money to a political party, candidate, or initiative campaign	23%	15%	27%	16%	30%	21%
Worked as a volunteer for a political party, candidate, or initiative campaign	7	4	9	5	8	7
Initiated any contacts with an elected official or their staff	21	12	27	10	32	17

When it comes to civic engagement activities where citizenship would seem to be irrelevant, racial/ethnic differences persist. For instance, blacks (45%) and whites (43%) give more time to community service than Asians (38%) and especially Latinos (23%). On the issue of membership in nonreligious organizations, once again, whites (49%) and blacks (41%) are much more likely to be involved than Asians (25%) and Latinos (19%). When asked about donating money to charitable organizations, Latinos (48%) are less engaged than blacks (64%), Asians (75%), or whites (81%).

<i>Percent answering "yes"</i>	All Adults	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>				L.A. City
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
In the past 12 months have you volunteered your own time to work with others in your community?	35%	38%	45%	23%	43%	34%
In the past 12 months have you contributed money to any charitable organization?	65	75	64	48	81	60
Not including membership in a local church, temple, or mosque, are you a member of any organization?	35	25	41	19	49	32

Los Angeles City Mayoral Race

In the mayoral runoff race, the voters in the city of Los Angeles will decide whether to re-elect Mayor James Kenneth Hahn for another four years or support City Council member Antonio Villaraigosa.

How is the current mayor’s standing among the voters? In our survey conducted just before the March 8th primary election, 47 percent said they approved of the way that Hahn has handled his job as mayor and 38 percent said they disapproved. The mayor’s approval ratings are highest in the South City area (53%) and lowest in San Fernando (40%). There are also differences of opinion across racial and ethnic groups in the city: Hahn has significantly higher approval ratings among Asians (59%) and Latinos (55%) than among whites (40%) and blacks (41%). Likely voters have a less favorable perception of the mayor’s performance in office than does the general public (42% approve, 48% disapprove).

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way James Hahn is handling his job as mayor?”

L.A. city residents only	All Adults	L.A. City Region				Likely Voters
		Westside	San Fernando	Central City	South City	
Approve	47%	47%	40%	48%	53%	42%
Disapprove	38	32	43	37	36	48
Don’t know	15	21	17	15	11	10

A major issue for both the challenger and the incumbent is widespread distrust in city government. Only one in three residents say they trust the city government to do what is right *just about always* or *most of the time*. Those living in the Central City area express higher trust in government, while fewer than three in 10 in San Fernando say they mostly trust the city government to do what is right. Among likely voters, just 28 percent say they have a high level of confidence in their city government.

“How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in your city to do what is right?”

L.A. city residents only	All Adults	L.A. City Region				Likely Voters
		Westside	San Fernando	Central City	South City	
Just about always	10%	8%	9%	13%	8%	5%
Most of the time	24	24	20	28	22	23
Only some of the time	60	62	66	54	61	66
None of the time (<i>volunteered</i>)	3	3	3	2	5	4
Don’t know	3	3	2	3	4	2

Another challenging issue for both of the mayoral candidates will be their position on the controversial proposal to divide up the Los Angeles Unified School District into smaller, independent, more localized districts—an idea supported by Bob Hertzberg (the third top vote-getter who just missed the runoff race), as well as by Governor Schwarzenegger and others. This proposal is supported by a slim majority of the city’s adults (51%) and likely voters (58%), but there are deep differences of opinions across the city’s regions and racial/ethnic groups. Nearly two in three whites (63%) and Asians (64%) want to split up the school district, while blacks (42%) and Latinos (41%) are much less supportive of this proposal. While there is solid support in the Westside (64%) and San Fernando (62%) areas, there is much less favor for this idea in the Central City (44%) and South City (40%).

The Future of Los Angeles County

Most Important Priority

If Los Angeles County residents had to pick one top priority for the county over the next 20 years, 18 percent would choose transportation and 18 percent education. Overall, 10 percent name crime and gangs as a top county priority, while fewer name housing, the economy, and immigration. Although transportation is the top issue in the valleys and West Los Angeles County, residents in Central/Southeast areas put education first. Residents in the Central/Southeast are also more likely to mention crime as a top priority. For residents in the city of Los Angeles, education tops the list, followed by transportation.

There are significant differences across racial and ethnic groups. Asians, blacks, and Latinos all say education should be the county's top priority, but whites put transportation first. Blacks and Latinos are also more likely than other groups to see crime and gangs as a top priority. Whites are less likely than other groups to think jobs and the economy should come first.

There are also partisan differences: Education is named as the top priority for the future among Democrats (21%), while Republicans are more likely to name transportation (30%). Similarly, adults under 35 say education should be the top priority over the next two decades (22%), while those age 35 and older consider transportation the most important county issue (22%).

“Changing topics, if you had to pick one top priority for L.A. County over the next 20 years, what would it be?”

<i>Top six issues mentioned</i>	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Traffic, transportation	18%	21%	23%	21%	12%	16%
Education, schools	18	16	17	17	20	20
Crime, gangs	10	9	8	7	14	10
Housing	7	5	8	8	7	7
Jobs, economy	7	7	6	5	10	7
Immigration	5	6	8	4	4	6

<i>Top six issues mentioned</i>	All Adults	Race / Ethnicity			
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Traffic, transportation	18%	21%	14%	9%	29%
Education, schools	18	26	21	18	16
Crime, gangs	10	6	15	13	7
Housing	7	4	7	7	8
Jobs, economy	7	10	10	9	4
Immigration	5	3	2	5	6

Future Conditions: Race Relations, Education, and the Economy

Los Angeles County residents overall are optimistic about the future of race relations in the county: 61 percent think conditions will improve in 20 years; 30 percent say they will be worse. Optimists also outnumber pessimists in expectations for the public schools (51% improve, 40% get worse). However, people are evenly divided about the future of the economy (47% improve, 45% get worse).

Statewide, a similar 44 percent expect their region’s economy to improve and 47 percent think it will be worse, according to our August 2004 survey. That statewide survey also found that Californians were somewhat less optimistic than Los Angeles County residents about their schools: 45 percent said their region’s schools would be better in 2025, while 46 percent thought they would get worse. We did not ask about race relations in the August survey; however, the responses of Los Angeles County residents today are similar to responses in our statewide survey in December 1999 (61% believed race relations will improve).

Perceptions of future conditions in race and ethnic relations, the public education system, and jobs and the economy are fairly similar across regions. There are no major differences between those who live inside and outside the city of Los Angeles. San Fernando Valley residents are the most likely to think the county’s economy will get worse rather than improve, while those in West Los Angeles County are the most inclined to see good economic times ahead. Residents in the county’s other regions are evenly divided about the economy.

Blacks are more pessimistic than others about the future of race relations. Asians and Latinos are more positive than whites and blacks about the schools. Also, those with school children are more likely than those without school children to think the education system will improve by 2025 (58% to 45%).

Looking ahead 20 years from now, which is more likely to happen in L.A. County...		All Adults	Region				L.A. City
			North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Race and ethnic relations will ...	Improve	61%	60%	60%	64%	60%	60%
	Get worse	30	27	33	26	31	31
The public education system will ...	Improve	51	48	52	47	56	54
	Get worse	40	43	41	43	37	39
Job opportunities and economic conditions will ...	Improve	47	46	44	52	46	46
	Get worse	45	46	50	39	47	47

Looking ahead 20 years from now, which is more likely to happen in L.A. County...		All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
			Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Race and ethnic relations will ...	Improve	61%	77%	49%	58%	64%
	Get worse	30	15	45	33	25
The public education system will ...	Improve	51	57	45	60	44
	Get worse	40	36	49	34	45
Job opportunities and economic conditions will ...	Improve	47	56	47	46	47
	Get worse	45	38	48	49	43

Future Conditions: Traffic and the Natural Environment

The public’s views of traffic conditions and the quality of the natural environment in 2025 are considerably downbeat: 77 percent of Los Angeles County residents think traffic conditions will get worse, and 65 percent think the quality of the environment will decline over the next 20 years. They are less pessimistic than Californians in general about traffic. In our August 2004 survey, 81 percent of Californians said traffic conditions would get worse. However, they are more pessimistic about the environment. In our December 1999 survey, 60 percent of Californians said they expected the environment to be worse.

There are no major differences between those who live inside or outside of the city of Los Angeles. San Fernando Valley residents are especially negative about the future quality of the natural environment. Perceptions of the quality of the natural environment are similar across racial and ethnic groups. However, whites are especially pessimistic about the future of traffic conditions (11% improve, 87% get worse).

Democrats are more negative than Republicans about the future of the environment (70% to 59%, get worse); however, voters from the major parties have fairly similar expectations for traffic in 2025 (81% to 87%, get worse). Solid majorities in all demographic groups expect both issues to be worse 20 years from now.

<i>Looking ahead 20 years from now, which is more likely to happen in L.A. County ...</i>		All Adults	Region				L.A. City
			North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Traffic conditions on freeways and major roads will ...	Improve	20%	19%	15%	17%	26%	22%
	Get worse	77	76	83	81	70	76
The quality of the natural environment will ...	Improve	29	31	25	31	30	29
	Get worse	65	64	71	62	64	65

<i>Looking ahead 20 years from now, which is more likely to happen in L.A. County...</i>		All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
			Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Traffic conditions on freeways and major roads will ...	Improve	20%	22%	26%	27%	11%
	Get worse	77	75	73	68	87
The quality of the natural environment will ...	Improve	29	31	33	28	30
	Get worse	65	63	65	67	64

Future Outlook

Residents' expectations about the future quality of life in Los Angeles County are also relatively pessimistic. Only one in four residents expects that in 20 years it will be a better place to live than now, while 37 percent expect it to be a worse place to live, and 35 percent expect no change.

In every region, there are more residents who expect Los Angeles County to be a worse place than a better place to live in 20 years. City of Los Angeles residents are no different than others in their perceptions of overall conditions in the future (25% better, 37% worse, 33% no change). Across racial/ethnic groups, whites have the largest gap between pessimists and optimists (18 points), followed by blacks (14 points), Latinos (8 points), and Asians (2 points). Pessimism about the future of Los Angeles County tends to increase with age, education, income, and years at current residence. There are no differences in perceptions of the future between Democrats and Republicans or between men and women.

Six in 10 county residents say they see themselves living in Los Angeles County in five years, while one in three expect to be living elsewhere. Those who anticipate living elsewhere are almost evenly divided between leaving California and remaining in the state. Whites and Asians are more likely than blacks and Latinos to say that they will be living in Los Angeles County five years from now, and blacks are the most likely to say that they expect to be living outside of California.

Younger, less educated, lower-income residents and renters are the most likely to say that they expect to be living outside of Los Angeles County in five years. Across the regions, residents living in the Central/Southeast areas (36%) are the most likely to say they will be living outside of Los Angeles County five years from now. As for residents in the city of Los Angeles, 59 percent expect to live in the county five years from now, 16 percent say elsewhere in California, and 19 percent say outside the state.

“In 20 years, do you think that Los Angeles County will be a better place to live than it is now, a worse place to live than it is now, or will there be no change?”

	All Adults	Race / Ethnicity			
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Better place	24%	26%	23%	26%	22%
Worse place	37	28	37	34	40
No change	35	44	34	35	34
Don't know	4	2	6	5	4

“Five years from now, do you see yourself living in Los Angeles County or living somewhere else?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Yes, living in L.A. County	62%	73%	55%	59%	67%
No, somewhere else in California	15	14	15	17	12
No, somewhere else outside of California	18	11	26	17	18
Don't know	5	2	4	7	3

Surface Transportation

County residents have divided views when it comes to choosing the type of surface transportation that should have top priority for public funding as their region prepares for the future. The top three choices for residents in the county as a whole—and in the city of Los Angeles—are freeways and highways, followed by light rail and the subway system. Fewer say public buses, local streets, and carpool lanes are most important. Of the seven in 10 residents who drive alone to work, most also mention freeways and highways (29%), light rail (23%), and the subway system (20%) as top priorities for public funding.

In our PPIC Statewide Survey on “Californians and the Future” in August 2004, freeways and highways and light rail systems were mentioned most often and, equally, as the top funding priorities.

Whites, likely voters, upper-income, and college-educated residents are most likely to name two types of projects in equal proportions—freeways/highways and light rail—as their top priorities for public funding. Lower-income, less educated, foreign-born, and nonwhite residents more often than others mention public buses as what is most needed in Los Angeles County over the next 20 years.

While it may not be everyone’s priority for public funding, nearly two in three residents believe that a light rail system will be *very important* for Los Angeles County in 20 years, and nine in 10 adults perceive this type of surface transportation as at least *somewhat important* in their county’s future. This opinion is shared across regions, racial/ethnic groups, political groups, and inside and outside of the city of Los Angeles.

“What type of surface transportation project do you think should have top priority for public funding as L.A. County gets ready for the next 20 years?”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Freeways and highways	25%	26%	25%	27%	23%	21%
Light rail	22	26	26	23	17	19
The subway system	18	14	20	17	19	21
The public bus system	12	12	11	9	16	15
Local streets and roads	10	9	8	9	12	13
Carpool lanes	6	4	6	7	7	6
Something else	2	3	3	2	2	2
Don't know	5	6	1	6	4	3

“Thinking ahead 20 years, how important will a light rail system be for L.A. County ...”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Very important	63%	61%	63%	61%	64%	65%
Somewhat important	25	27	24	27	25	23
Not important	8	9	8	9	8	9
Don't know	4	3	5	3	3	3

Infrastructure Planning

While few residents name carpool lanes as their top priority for public funding over the next 20 years, seven in 10 favor expanding the use of carpool lanes and bus lanes as ways to reduce the number of solo drivers on major freeways. The preference for expanding carpool and bus lanes is held across regions and racial/ethnic groups, and even among those who currently drive alone to work.

When asked to weigh the environmental tradeoffs involved in growth and development over the next 20 years, there is substantial opposition to expansion of both airport and seaport facilities. Two in three residents in the county and city of Los Angeles oppose the expansion of the Los Angeles International Airport. Opposition is strong across county regions and across racial/ethnic and income groups. Almost the same level of opposition is expressed regarding the expansion of the Port of Los Angeles, with majorities across regions, racial/ethnic groups, and income saying they are against port expansion if it means more traffic congestion and air pollution in nearby communities.

“Do you favor or oppose expanding carpool and bus lanes as a way to reduce solo drivers on freeways?”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Favor	70%	71%	63%	70%	73%	68%
Oppose	27	26	34	26	24	29
Don't know	3	3	3	4	3	3

“Do you favor or oppose the expansion of the Los Angeles International Airport, even if it means more traffic congestion and noise in nearby communities?”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Favor	30%	33%	30%	28%	29%	30%
Oppose	65	64	66	67	65	66
Don't know	5	3	4	5	6	4

“Do you favor or oppose the expansion of the Port of Los Angeles, even if it means more traffic congestion and air pollution in nearby communities?”

	All Adults	Region				L.A. City
		North Valleys	San Fernando Valley	West	Central & Southeast	
Favor	34%	37%	36%	37%	28%	31%
Oppose	61	58	59	57	67	64
Don't know	5	5	5	6	5	5

Survey Methodology

The Los Angeles County Survey is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which is directed by Mark Baldassare, research director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance in research and writing from Douglas Strand, Associate Survey Director; Kristy Michaud, project manager for this survey; and Jennifer Paluch, Kimberly Curry, and Renatta DeFever, survey research associates. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the School of Policy, Planning, and Development at the University of Southern California, with funding from the California Community Foundation. The survey methods, questions, and content of the report were determined solely by Mark Baldassare. However, the survey benefited from consultation with staff at the University of Southern California, the California Community Foundation, and other Los Angeles County institutions.

The findings of this survey are based on telephone interviews of 2,003 Los Angeles County adult residents interviewed between February 24 and March 7, 2005. Interviewing took place mostly on weekday and weekend nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in Los Angeles County were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing by using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete, and each interview was conducted in either English or Spanish. We did not include Asian language interviews because the 2000 U.S. Census indicates that fewer than 1 percent of Los Angeles County adults speak any given Asian language and describe themselves as not speaking English at least “well.” Publication Services translated the survey into Spanish, and Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. conducted the telephone interviewing.

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

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,003 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in Los Angeles County were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. The sampling error for the 761 city of Los Angeles residents is +/- 4 percent. The sampling error for the 341 likely voters in the city of Los Angeles is +/- 5 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

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

In some cases, the 2005 PPIC Survey of Los Angeles County uses questions as well as a definition of four subregions in the city of Los Angeles – Westside, San Fernando, Central City, and South City – that have been used for earlier surveys conducted by the *Los Angeles Times*. We also use earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys to analyze trends over time in Los Angeles County and to compare public opinion in Los Angeles County to opinion statewide.

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

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

In this survey report, North Valleys includes the county's SPA 1 and SPA 3; San Fernando includes SPA 2; West includes SPA 5 and SPA 8; and Central/Southeast includes SPA 4, SPA 6, and SPA 7. For additional information on the Los Angeles County SPAs, see the following page on the web site of United Way of Greater Los Angeles: http://www.unitedwayla.org/pages/rpts_resource/state_spas.html.

**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY
 FEBRUARY 24—MARCH 7, 2005
 2,003 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH
 MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE**

1. We are interested in your opinions about Los Angeles County as a whole. What do you think is the most important issue facing the County today?

[code, don't read]

- 21% crime, gangs
- 17 education, schools
- 10 traffic, transportation
- 6 jobs, economy
- 4 illegal immigrants, immigration
- 4 police, law enforcement
- 3 housing costs, housing availability
- 2 health care, health costs
- 2 environment, pollution, air pollution
- 2 population growth
- 2 streets and roads
- 14 other (specify)
- 13 don't know

2. How long have you lived in Los Angeles County?

[read list]

- 13% fewer than 5 years
- 11 5 years to under 10 years
- 19 10 years to under 20 years
- 48 20 years or more
- 9 all of my life

3. Thinking about the quality of life in Los Angeles County, how do you think things are going—very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?

- 10% very well
- 51 somewhat well
- 24 somewhat badly
- 13 very badly
- 2 don't know

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

- 3% excellent
- 29 good
- 46 fair
- 20 poor
- 2 don't know

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

[rotate questions 5 to 8]

5. How about local streets and roads?

- 4% excellent
- 28 good
- 36 fair
- 32 poor

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

- 11% excellent
- 47 good
- 29 fair
- 10 poor
- 3 don't know

7. How about local police protection?

- 13% excellent
- 44 good
- 28 fair
- 13 poor
- 2 don't know

8. How about local public schools?

- 8% excellent
- 28 good
- 29 fair
- 24 poor
- 11 don't know

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

[rotate questions 9 to 14]

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

- 74% big problem
- 20 somewhat of a problem
- 5 not a problem
- 1 don't know

10. How about crime?

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

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

- 64% big problem
- 22 somewhat of a problem
- 12 not a problem
- 2 don't know

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

- 39% big problem
- 38 somewhat of a problem
- 18 not a problem
- 5 don't know

13. How about air pollution?

- 38% big problem
- 40 somewhat of a problem
- 21 not a problem
- 1 don't know

14. How about the availability of healthcare that you can afford?

- 42% big problem
- 31 somewhat of a problem
- 24 not a problem
- 3 don't know

Please tell me whether you would vote yes or no on the following proposals.

[rotate questions 15 to 17]

15. What if there was a measure on your local ballot to increase property taxes to provide more funds for the local public schools? Would you vote yes or no?

- 48% yes
- 48 no
- 4 don't know

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

- 47% yes
- 49 no
- 4 don't know

17. What if there was a measure on your local ballot to increase the local sales tax by one-half cent to provide more funds for the local police? Would you vote yes or no?

- 54% yes
- 43 no
- 3 don't know

Let's turn to the question of whether things have changed in your part of L.A. County. For each question, please tell me if you think things have improved, gotten worse, or stayed the same in the past few years.

[rotate questions 18 to 21]

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

- 5% improved
- 71 gotten worse
- 22 stayed the same
- 2 don't know

19. How about the amount of crime?

- 20% improved
- 31 gotten worse
- 46 stayed the same
- 3 don't know

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

- 5% improved
- 72 gotten worse
- 20 stayed the same
- 3 don't know

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

- 11% improved
- 38 gotten worse
- 43 stayed the same
- 8 don't know

22. Changing topics, which of these two views is closest to your own: **[rotate]** (1) Immigrants today are a benefit to L.A. County because of their hard work and job skills **[or]** (2) Immigrants today are a burden to L.A. County because they use public services.

- 60% benefit
- 30 burden
- 10 don't know

23. Would you favor or oppose state legislation allowing illegal immigrants to get a California driver's license?
- 48% favor
 - 48 oppose
 - 4 don't know
24. Overall, how would you rate race relations in L.A. County today—excellent, good, not so good, or poor?
- 3% excellent
 - 36 good
 - 41 not so good
 - 17 poor
 - 3 don't know
25. Do you think the police in your community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost never?
- 20% almost always
 - 30 most of the time
 - 29 only some of the time
 - 14 almost never
 - 7 don't know
26. Are low-income and minority neighborhoods more likely than other neighborhoods in L.A. County to have school facilities that are in need of repair and replacement?
- 77% yes, more likely
 - 14 no, not more likely
 - 9 don't know
27. Should school districts in low-income and minority neighborhoods receive more public funding for school facilities even if it means less funding for other school districts?
- 60% yes, should receive more public funding
 - 30 no, should not receive more public funding
 - 2 other (*volunteered*)
 - 8 don't know
28. Are low-income and minority neighborhoods more likely than other neighborhoods in L.A. County to have less than their fair share of well-maintained parks and recreational facilities?
- 64% yes, more likely to have less
 - 25 no, not more likely to have less
 - 11 don't know
29. Are low-income and minority neighborhoods more likely than other neighborhoods in L.A. County to have more than their fair share of toxic waste and polluting facilities?
- 56% yes, more likely
 - 27 no, not more likely
 - 17 don't know
30. Overall, how would you rate the performance of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors in solving problems in L.A. County—excellent, good, fair, or poor?
- 3% excellent
 - 18 good
 - 46 fair
 - 25 poor
 - 8 don't know
31. How much of the time do you think you can trust the county government in L.A. County to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?
- 7% just about always
 - 24 most of the time
 - 63 only some of the time
 - 3 none of the time/not at all (*volunteered*)
 - 3 don't know
32. Overall, how would you rate the performance of your mayor and city council in solving problems in your city—excellent, good, fair, or poor?
- 6% excellent
 - 30 good
 - 42 fair
 - 16 poor
 - 1 don't live in a city [*skip to q. 34*]
 - 5 don't know
33. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in your city to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?
- 10% just about always
 - 30 most of the time
 - 55 only some of the time
 - 3 none of the time/not at all (*volunteered*)
 - 2 don't know
34. On another topic, in the past 12 months have you worked as a volunteer for a political party, candidate, or initiative campaign?
- 7% yes
 - 93 no
35. In the past 12 months, have you given money to a political party, candidate, or initiative campaign? (*if yes: In total, was that less than 200 dollars or more than 200 dollars?*)
- 12% yes, less than \$200
 - 10 yes, more than \$200
 - 1 yes, exactly \$200 (*volunteered*)
 - 77 no

36. In the past 12 months, have you initiated any contacts with an elected official or their staff—either in person or by phone, letter, or email? (Please don't count any contacts you have made as a regular part of your job).

21% yes
79 no

37. In the past 12 months, have you volunteered your own time to work with others in your community to try to deal with some problem, or to provide some kind of service?

35% yes
65 no

38. Other than the things you have already told me about, in the past 12 months, have you contributed money to any charitable organization? (Please don't count any contributions that are required through your job.)

65% yes
35 no

39. There are many kinds of organizations that people join—for example, unions or professional associations, fraternal groups, recreational organizations, political-issue organizations, community or school groups, and so on. Not including membership in a local church, temple, or mosque, are you a member of any organization?

35% yes
65 no

40. Changing topics, if you had to pick one top priority for L.A. County over the next 20 years, what would it be?

[code, don't read]

18% traffic, transportation
18 education, schools
10 crime, gangs
7 housing costs, housing availability
7 jobs, economy
5 immigration, illegal immigration
3 environment, pollution
2 health care, health costs, HMO reform
2 population growth, too much development
14 other (*specify*)
14 don't know

Looking ahead 20 years from now, as I read each of the following pairs of statements, please tell me which is more likely to happen in L.A. County.

[rotate questions and pairs for 41, 42, and 43]

41. (1) the public education system will improve; (2) the public education system will get worse.

51% improve
40 get worse
3 neither, no change
6 don't know

42. (1) traffic conditions on freeways and major roads will improve; (2) traffic conditions on freeways and major roads will get worse.

20% improve
77 get worse
1 neither, no change
2 don't know

43. (1) job opportunities and economic conditions will improve; (2) job opportunities and economic conditions will get worse.

47% improve
45 get worse
2 neither, no change
6 don't know

43a.(1) race and ethnic relations will improve; (2) race and ethnic relations will get worse.

61% improve
30 get worse
4 neither, no change
5 don't know

43b.(1) the quality of the natural environment will improve; (2) the quality of the natural environment will get worse.

29% improve
65 get worse
2 neither, no change
4 don't know

44. In 20 years, do you think that L.A. County will be a better place to live than it is now, a worse place to live than it is now, or will there be no change?

24% better place
37 worse place
35 no change
4 don't know

45. What type of surface transportation project do you think should have the top priority for public funding as L.A. County gets ready for the next 20 years?

[read rotated list, then ask: "or something else?"]

- 25% freeways and highways
- 22 light rail
- 18 the subway system
- 12 the public bus system
- 10 local streets and roads
- 6 carpool lanes
- 2 something else (*specify*)
- 5 don't know

46. Thinking ahead 20 years, how important will a light rail system be for L.A. County—very important, somewhat important, or not important?

- 63% very important
- 25 somewhat important
- 8 not important
- 4 don't know

Many people say there are tradeoffs involved in growth and development issues, meaning that they have to give up some things in order to have other things. Do you favor or oppose the following as L.A. County plans for the next 20 years?

47. Do you favor or oppose expanding carpool and bus lanes as a way to reduce solo drivers on freeways?

- 70% favor
- 27 oppose
- 3 don't know

48. Do you favor or oppose the expansion of the Los Angeles International Airport, even if it means more traffic congestion and noise in nearby communities?

- 30% favor
- 65 oppose
- 5 don't know

49. Do you favor or oppose the expansion of the Port of Los Angeles, even if it means more traffic congestion and pollution in nearby communities?

- 34% favor
- 61 oppose
- 5 don't know

50. Five years from now, do you see yourself living in L.A. County or living somewhere else? (*if somewhere else: Is that inside or outside of California?*)

- 62% yes, living in L.A. county
- 15 no, somewhere else in California
- 18 no, somewhere else outside of California
- 5 don't know

53. On another topic, generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

- 23% great deal
- 36 fair amount
- 28 only a little
- 13 none

54. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote?

- 71% yes [*ask q. 54a*]
- 29 no [*skip to q. 55a*]

54a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 53% Democrat [*ask q. 55b*]
- 24 Republican [*ask q. 55c*]
- 3 another party (*specify*) [*ask q. 56*]
- 20 independent [*ask q. 55a*]

55a. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 22% Republican party
- 44 Democratic party
- 25 neither
- 9 don't know

[go to q. 56]

55b. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 59% strong
- 39 not very strong
- 2 don't know

[go to q. 56]

55c. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 52% strong
- 46 not very strong
- 2 don't know

56. On another topic, would you consider yourself to be politically...

[rotate]

- 12% very liberal
- 22 somewhat liberal
- 30 middle-of-the-road
- 23 somewhat conservative
- 10 very conservative
- 3 don't know

[questions 51, 52 deleted]

57. How often would you say you vote—always, nearly always, part of the time, seldom, or never?

- 46% always
- 19 nearly always
- 8 part of the time
- 5 seldom
- 22 never

[questions 58, 59, 60 deleted]

[responses recorded for questions 61 and 62 are for city of Los Angeles residents only]

61. Do you approve or disapprove of the way James Hahn is handling his job as mayor of Los Angeles?

- 47% approve
- 38 disapprove
- 15 don't know

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

- 51% favor splitting it up
- 36 oppose splitting it up
- 13 don't know

[63-76: demographic questions]

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