



Appendix C:

Public Opinion Survey

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY
PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY REPORT**

July 30, 1999

1900

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SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF METHODS

DATES AND TIMES: *Sunday, June 20 through Wednesday, June 23, 1999. Sunday interviewing hours are from 1:00 PM to 9:00 PM, weekday hours are from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM.*

SAMPLE: *600 completed interviews with a sample of registered voters in Riverside County, including 120 from each of the supervisorial districts. For the desert communities, the far eastern areas were excluded.*

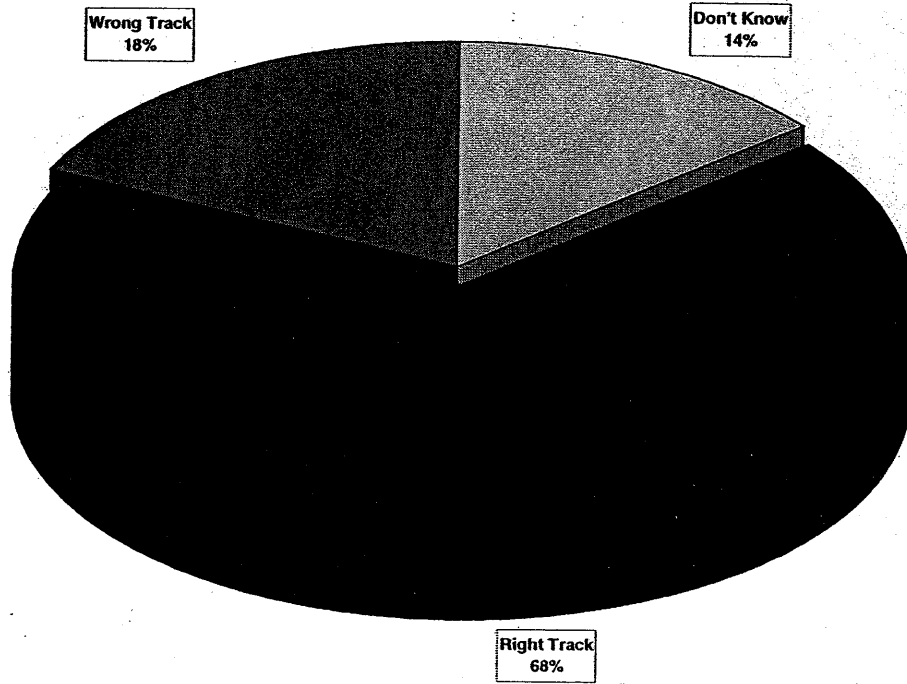
PROCEDURES: *Professional interviewers familiar with standard telephone interviewing procedures were trained specifically for this survey prior to beginning the interviews. All interviews were conducted from The Parker Group's central telephone facility and were observed by an on-duty supervisor at all times.*

SAMPLING ERROR: *In a scientifically selected sample of 600 respondents, normal statistical error is plus or minus 4% for the sample as a whole. That is to say, in 95% of all samples drawn from the same population, the findings would not differ from the findings reported here by more than 4%. Sampling error for subgroups or each Supervisorial District in the cross-tabulated analysis is greater.*

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODS: *The sampling and research procedures employed here are subject to the normal statistical and non-statistical errors in survey research. Non-statistical errors result from dishonest responses, inconsistency between expressed attitudes and actual behaviors, and misunderstood questions. Public opinion data are not meant to be predictive of future attitudes or behaviors, but are designed to measure attitudes at the time data are collected.*

THE DIRECTION OF RIVERSIDE COUNTY

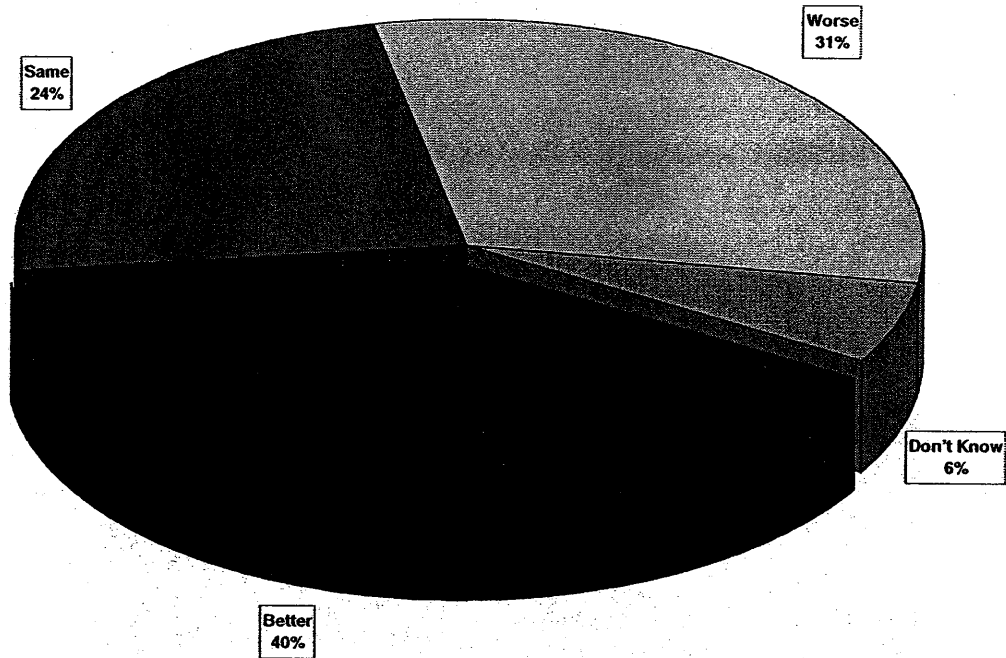
THINGS IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY ON RIGHT OR WRONG TRACK



Key Findings:

☞ *By nearly a four-to-one ratio, voters say that things in Riverside County are on the right track. This reflects a more positive view than in other areas of the state.*

EXPECTATIONS ON FUTURE QUALITY OF LIFE



☞ Riverside residents are not necessarily optimistic about the future. While 40% say the quality of life will be better, nearly two-thirds say that it will be the same or worse than at present.

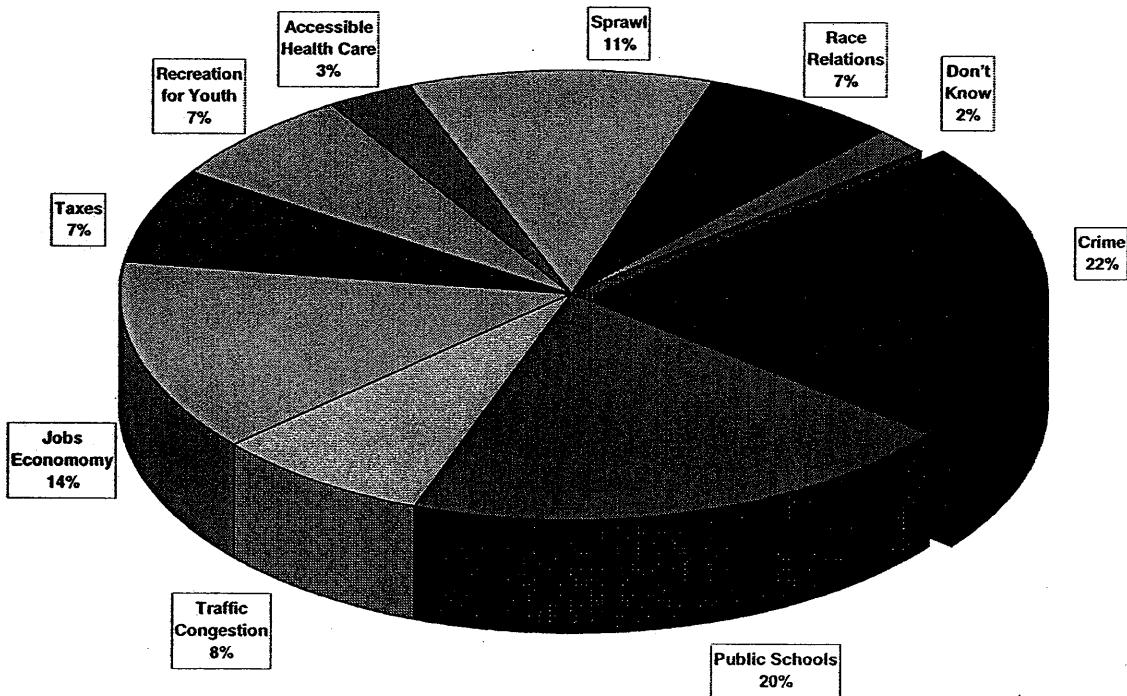
KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS
<p>People under 40 tend to be the most likely to say things are on track in Riverside County, with those in Districts 2 and 4 more likely to say things are on track than voters in the other districts. People with children are also more likely to say things are going well than are those without. Latinos and Asian-Americans are the most likely to say things are on track, while African-Americans are least likely.</p>
<p>In terms of the future, the most optimistic are younger people, including those with children, and residents of District 4, as well as those living in incorporated areas. Those most likely to say things will get worse are older, long-term residents of District 3, people who live in the unincorporated areas, those with the least education, and white/Anglos.</p>

ISSUES FACING RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Key Findings:

In an open-ended question, voters say the most important issues facing Riverside County are the rate of growth, crime, violence and gangs, schools and education, traffic congestion, police issues and jobs. Other issues ranged from children's issues to pollution to economic growth.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING RIVERSIDE COUNTY




With more limited response options, two issues dominate as the issues which should be the top priority for the county's elected officials: reducing crime, gangs and drugs, and improving public education. Other top issues are creating new jobs and strengthening the local economy, and controlling residential growth and preserving open space. Lower priorities include reducing traffic congestion and improving transportation, lowering taxes and reducing government waste, providing recreation and after-school programs for youth, and improving race relations. The lowest priority is making health care more affordable and accessible.


SERIOUSNESS OF DIFFERENT PROBLEMS

<u>Statement</u>	<u>% Serious</u>	<u>% Not Serious</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>% Net Serious</u>
Crime, gangs and drugs	87%	11%	1.75	76%
Traffic congestion	78%	21%	2.11	57%
Poor air quality	74%	26%	2.21	48%
Overcrowded public schools	67%	20%	2.21	47%
Racial tensions	70%	27%	2.36	43%
Rapid rate of growth in county	64%	34%	2.54	30%
Quality of public education	59%	31%	2.55	28%
Availability of good jobs	57%	34%	2.63	23%
High taxes	58%	39%	2.69	19%
Ensuring access to quality health care	52%	41%	2.87	9%
Protecting open space	50%	45%	2.96	5%

NOTE:

The "Very Serious/Not A Problem" and "Somewhat Serious/Not Too Serious" categories have been collapsed into the "% Serious/Not Serious" categories, respectively. Scores are calculated on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 indicating a **very serious problem** and 5 indicating no problem. Scores under 3.00 represent a serious rating, while those over 3.00 represent not serious. Net serious percentages are calculated before rounding.

 When asked to rate the seriousness of problems, there is a parallel between the issue rankings and the seriousness of the problem. Most serious was crime, gangs and drugs, followed by traffic congestion, poor air quality and overcrowded public schools.

 Somewhat less serious, although still serious, were racial tensions, the rapid rate of growth, the quality of public education, high taxes, and the availability of good jobs.

☞ *Least serious were ensuring access to quality health care and protecting open space, which nearly half said was not a serious problem.*

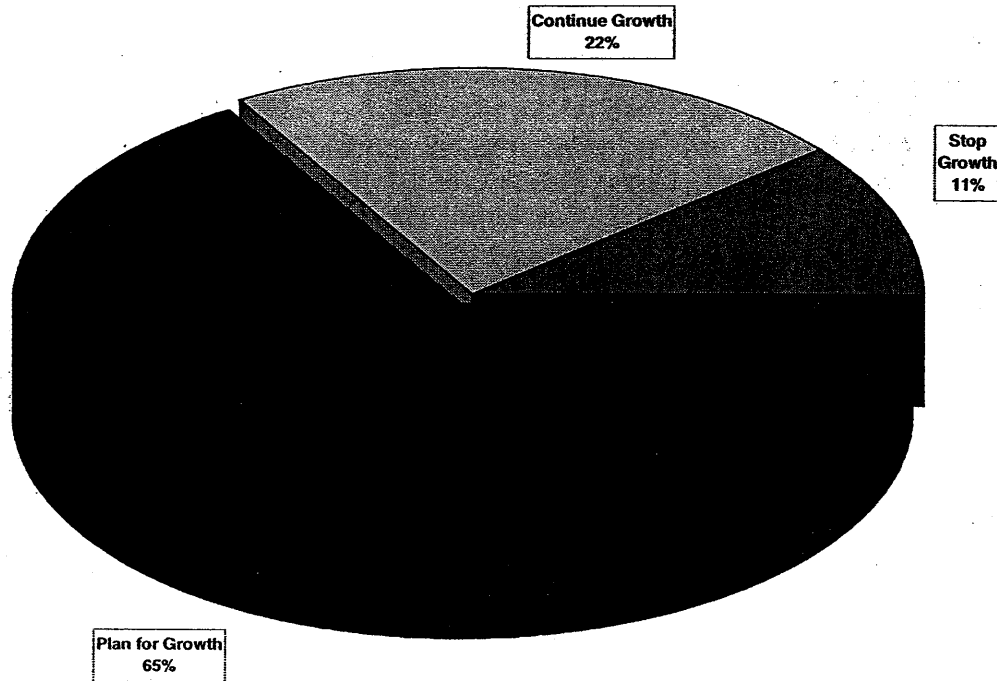
KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS
<p>Crime, gangs and drugs is a higher priority for those with less education, and for women under 40 and men 65 and older, and those in Districts 2 and 4. Although these are seen as serious problems to all voters, they are especially problematic for long-term residents, in District 5, and among Latino voters.</p>
<p>Women in general, as well as men under 40, tend to be more focused on improving the public schools than other voters. District 3 voters, as well as those with at least some college education, are most likely to point to the need to improve schools. As a serious problem school overcrowding is especially important to women under 40, those with children, Latinos, residents of the incorporated areas, and District 3 and 5 voters, with those in District 4 saying it is not much of a problem. Educational quality is more of an issue for voters under 50, long-term residents, District 5 voters, renters, and those with children, although newer residents say it is not a problem at all.</p>
<p>Creating new jobs is a special concern for men under 40, voters in District 5, those with long commutes, and African-American and Latino voters. Job availability is most likely to be cited as a serious problem by men 40-64, District 3 and 5 voters, divorced respondents, those with less education, and African American and Latino respondents.</p>

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)
<p>For women 40-64 and newcomers, as well as non-commuters, controlling growth is unusually important. Only white/Anglo voters care about controlled residential growth. The growth rate is seen as a more serious problem by women, and men 40-64, District 2 voters, renters, and white/Anglo voters.</p>
<p>Traffic congestion is more of a concern to men than women, with voters in Districts 2 and 5 most likely to see traffic as an issue. Of course, the longer the commute, the greater the concern about traffic. Minorities are especially troubled by traffic congestion. Despite the higher ranking of traffic congestion by men, women under 65 are more likely to say it is a serious problem, as are newer voters, and those in Districts 1, 2 and 5, and those with the most education.</p>
<p>Improved recreational opportunities for youth is most important to women under 65, Democratic voters, those in District 5, renters, those with children, divorced voters, and African-American and Latino voters.</p>
<p>Newcomers are the only voters unusually focused on improved race relations. As a problem, racial tensions are more serious to women than men, to voters 40-64, Democrats, longer-term residents, District 2 and 5 voters, and African-Americans.</p>
<p>High taxes are not much of an issue compared to other issues, but for independent women voters, District 1 and 3 voters, African-American and Latino voters, and those with less education, it is more of a problem. Those who are very highly educated do not see high taxes as a problem at all.</p>
<p>The longer someone has lived in Riverside County, the more serious they say is the air quality problem. District 5 voters, Latinos, and to a lesser extent, those in District 2, say it is a serious problem.</p>

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)
<p>Seniors and Asian-Americans do not say that access to health care is a problem at all, nor do newer residents or those in District 4. Health care access is more of a problem in District 5, to African-Americans and Latinos, and among renters and those with children.</p>
<p>Protecting open space is seen as a serious problem by women, but not by men, and by voters over 40, but not younger voters. Republicans say it is not a problem, while other voters see it as a problem. Districts 2 and 5 see the issue as serious, while those in Districts 1 and 4 do not. Minorities do not see the issue as serious; white/Anglos do.</p>

TRAFFIC AND GROWTH

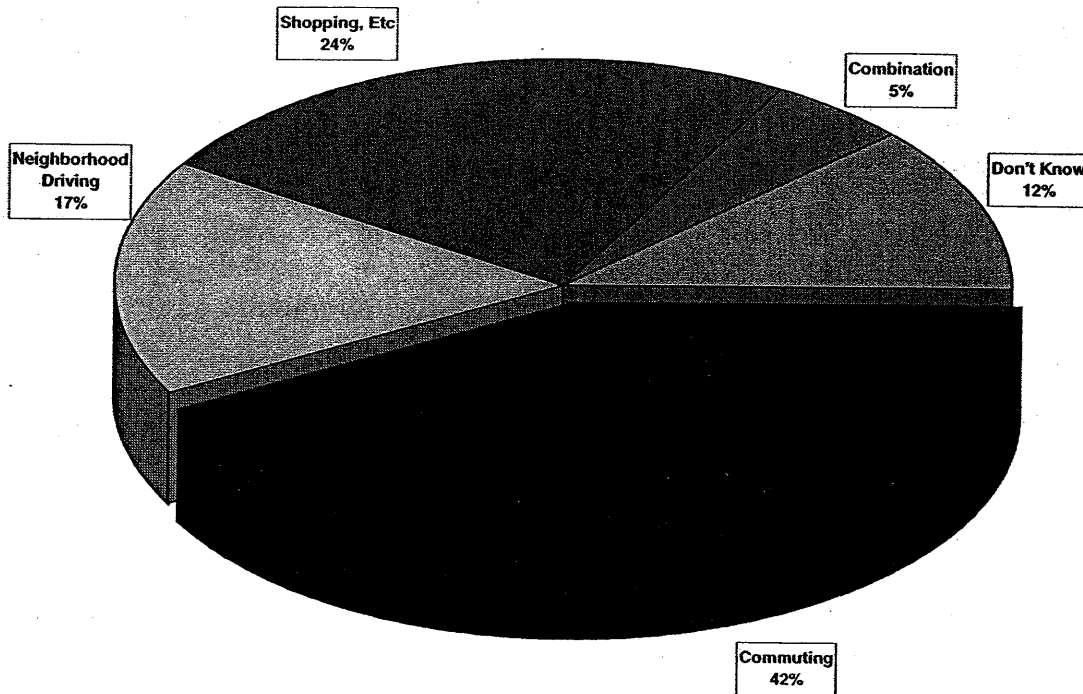
ATTITUDES TOWARD GROWTH IN RIVERSIDE



Key Findings:

There is a clear sense of a need for planned growth in Riverside County. Although twice as many voters would say that rapid growth should continue as say growth should be stopped, two-thirds want planned growth for the future.

WORST TYPE OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION



☛ Traffic concerns revolve largely around commuting, although some are concerned about traffic driving to shopping centers and recreational areas in Riverside County. Fewer people are concerned about increased traffic around their neighborhoods.

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS

Men are more aggressively pro-growth than are women, with men 40-64 more moderate than the oldest and youngest voters. Voters in District 1 and those with the least education, as well as African-American and Latino voters, are a little more likely to be pro-growth, but on balance, there is a consensus that planning is needed.

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)

There are some differences in terms of traffic concerns, with men under 65 and women 40-64, District 2 and 5 voters, those with children, and voters with long commutes focused on commuter traffic. Older voters and those living in unincorporated areas tend to focus more on traffic in shopping and recreation areas, while District 4 voters are the most likely to identify driving in the neighborhoods as a problem.

RATING RIVERSIDE COUNTY

RATINGS OF RIVERSIDE LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

<u>Leader/Organization</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Riverside County Business Community	3%	40%	31%	8%
Your Local School District	7%	36%	29%	17%
Your local Congressional Representative in DC	6%	34%	30%	18%
Federal Agencies such as Fish and Wildlife, EPA	4%	36%	31%	17%
Your Local City Council	4%	32%	30%	21%
Your Representative in the State Legislature	3%	32%	32%	13%
Local Environmental Organizations	3%	31%	32%	19%
Riverside County Board of Supervisors	2%	28%	38%	12%
Riverside County Transportation Commission	3%	24%	35%	20%

NOTE:

Leaders and organizations ranked by collapsed score of "Excellent" plus "Good".

Key Findings:

None of the groups and leaders tested are rated as doing an excellent job, although some are rated as doing better than others. Only the Riverside County Business Community is rated as doing a good to fair job. Most are rated as doing a fair to good job, including local school districts, congressional representatives, city councils, federal agencies, state legislators, the Board of Supervisors and local environmental agencies. The Riverside County Transportation Commission is seen as doing only a fair job.

RATING QUALITY OF LIFE IN RIVERSIDE

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Fire protection	22%	60%	11%	3%
Retail shopping facilities	15%	55%	22%	7%
Overall quality of life	13%	57%	26%	3%
Emergency medical care	16%	53%	17%	6%
Police and sheriff protection	14%	48%	25%	13%
Public libraries	9%	49%	26%	10%
Parks and recreational opportunities	9%	48%	29%	10%
Overall county services	3%	50%	35%	7%
Freeway Maintenance	7%	47%	27%	18%
Protection of open space and wilderness	7%	42%	31%	13%
Entertainment and cultural opportunities	10%	38%	33%	17%
Public schools	8%	36%	30%	16%
Public transit	4%	31%	30%	19%
Job opportunities	5%	29%	34%	20%
Road Maintenance	4%	30%	35%	30%
Planning for growth	4%	29%	37%	21%
Activities and opportunities for youth	5%	26%	36%	23%
Air Quality	4%	25%	31%	39%
Access to child care	2%	23%	23%	13%

NOTE:

Organizations ranked by collapsed score of "Excellent" plus "Good".

☞ *The services and amenities which contribute to the quality of life in Riverside County fare better than the political groups and leaders when voters are asked to evaluate them. Fire protection services are ranked as good to excellent. Solidly good services include emergency medical care, retail shopping facilities, overall county services and the overall quality of life.*

☞ *Ranked as good to fair are police and sheriff protection, parks and recreational opportunities, public libraries, freeway maintenance and protection of open space and wilderness.*

☞ *Other services and amenities ranked as only fair to good include the public schools, entertainment and cultural opportunities, job opportunities, public transit and access to child care.*

☞ *At the bottom of the list, ranked as only fair, are planning for growth and road maintenance, with air quality ranked as fair to poor.*

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS

There is some partisanship to criticism of the **Board of Supervisors**, with Democrats and independents more critical than Republicans. In general, long-term residents are more familiar with the Board of Supervisors, with fully half of the new arrivals unable to rate the Board. Long-term residents are also more critical of their **city councils**, while District 4 voters are most satisfied with them. Interestingly most of those living in an unincorporated area are able to rate "their" local city council. District 1 voters and African-Americans are the most critical of the **County Transportation Commission**, but there is no consistent relationship based on length of commute.

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)
Men tend to rate the business community more favorably than do women. Voters in Districts 3 and 4 and in the unincorporated areas are less able to provide a rating than are voters in other areas.
Voters 50 and older are less able to rate the school district than are younger voters, and newcomers are largely unfamiliar with the schools. Those in District 5 provide the most critical ratings, while those in Districts 2 and 3 are least critical of the schools. African-Americans are more critical of the school district than are other voters.
For the two main Congressional Districts, District 44 voters are more satisfied than are those in District 43. They are also more likely to be able to evaluate their member of Congress .
Voters in Senate District 37 are most familiar with their State Senator, and provide the most favorable ratings. Differences across the state legislative districts , however, are not significant.
Voters in District 4, those with children, and those with more education are most likely to have a good rating of local environmental organizations ; those in District 3 and with less education are most critical.
Voters 50 and older, as well as those with the most education, are much less able to rate activities and opportunities for youth than are younger voters. Newcomers are also less able to provide ratings. Those in District 3 are much more critical of the limited opportunities than are voters in the other areas. Voters in the incorporated areas are more likely to say opportunities are good than are voters in the unincorporated areas. African-Americans are very critical of opportunities for youth.

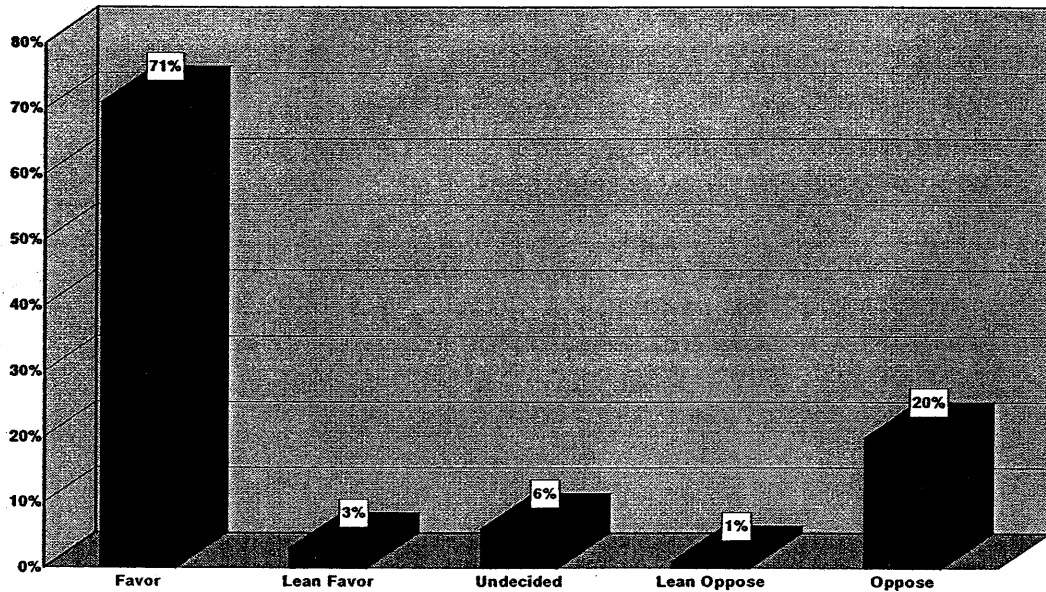
<p align="center">KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)</p>
<p>Job opportunities are seen as more problematic among voters under 30 than older voters. Those 65 and older, as well as new residents of the county, are often unable to provide a rating. Voters in Districts 3 and 4 are less able to rate job opportunities, while those in District 2 are most likely to praise local job opportunities. African-Americans say job opportunities are poor.</p>
<p>Senior citizens are most likely to rate police and sheriff services as good or excellent, with voters in District 4 especially likely to say they are good. District 5 voters were least content with police and sheriff services. City residents were more likely to praise police services than were those from unincorporated areas. African-Americans were very critical of police and sheriff protection. Fire protection was rated well everywhere, with those in Districts 4 and 5 especially likely to provide good ratings. Emergency medical care is especially highly rated among voters 65 and older.</p>
<p>Men rate parks and recreational opportunities more favorably than do women. Those under 50 are a little more critical than those 50 and older, although on balance, all see them as good. District 4 voters praise the opportunities the most, and those in the unincorporated areas are less likely to provide high ratings than are city residents. The lower the level of education, the lower the rating of parks and recreational opportunities. Again, African-Americans are most critical.</p>
<p>Younger respondents and those with children under 18 are a little more critical of the schools than are voters 50 and older and those without children under 18. Nearly half the newcomers are unable to rate the schools. Schools in District 5 are rated lower than the schools in other areas. Asian and Latino respondents rate schools the best, African-Americans the poorest.</p>

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)
<p>District 4 voters rate public transit, road maintenance and freeway maintenance better than do voters in the other areas of the district; those in unincorporated areas are most critical of road maintenance. Voters with long commutes are most likely to rate freeway maintenance as poor. In District 1, public transit is rated worse than in other areas. African-Americans provide the lowest evaluation of public transit.</p>
<p>Overall county services are rated highest in District 2, and lowest in District 1. In the incorporated areas, ratings of county services are higher than for the unincorporated areas. County services are least well-rated by African-Americans. For overall quality of life, seniors provide the highest ratings, as do newer residents, District 4 voters, and white/Anglo voters.</p>
<p>Seniors are the least likely to say air quality is poor; younger voters are most likely to be critical of air quality. District 4 voters do not have a problem with air quality, while those in District 5 say it is poor.</p>
<p>Newcomers to the area are especially pleased with shopping facilities, and in general, older voters are more satisfied than are younger voters. District 4 voters are most satisfied. African-Americans are least satisfied with retail shopping facilities.</p>
<p>Public libraries are rated best in District 4, and worse in Districts 1 and 5. Those with children tend to rate them better than those without. Highly educated respondents provided the most favorable ratings of the libraries.</p>
<p>Men rate entertainment and cultural opportunities more favorably than do women, with men 65 and older the most favorable. District 4 voters rate them best, while District 5 voters rate them the poorest. Those without children provide more favorable ratings than do those with children. African-Americans are least content.</p>

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)
Older voters know little about access to child care , as do long-term residents.
Older voters are also a little more likely to say the county has done only fair or poor job with open space preservation than are younger voters. Democrats are also less satisfied than are Republicans.
Longer-term residents, as well as middle-aged voters, are the most critical of planning for growth. Voters in District 4 generally are satisfied, while those in District 5 are least satisfied with growth planning. Voters in the unincorporated areas are less satisfied than those in the cities.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

POSITION ON PLANNING PROCESS



Key Findings

☞ There is overwhelming support for Riverside County undertaking a comprehensive master planning process.

☞ Voters who favor the planning process indicate:

- A plan is needed to deal with growth
- It is needed for the future
- It is a good idea
- Open space needs to be preserved
- It is good that the community is involved in the decision

☞ Voters who oppose the planning process say:

- It will raise taxes
- There are more important issues
- The environmentalists have gone too far
- It is redundant
- A new bureaucracy will be created
- Too many restrictions already
- It will cost too much

AGREEMENT STATEMENTS

<u>Statement</u>	<u>% Agree</u>	<u>% Disagree</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>% Net Agree</u>
Riverside needs a long-range plan	93%	5%	1.47	88%
The time is now to plan for the county's future	92%	6%	1.44	86%
With planning, we avoid problems of LA and Orange Co.	90%	7%	1.53	83%
We need other forms of transportation besides freeways	85%	12%	1.69	73%
Too often decisions made without consulting public	76%	18%	1.97	58%
It is worth spending millions for a long-range plan	66%	31%	2.55	35%
We already have a plan and don't need any more	51%	42%	2.81	9%

NOTE:

The "Strongly Agree/Disagree" and "Somewhat Agree/Disagree" categories have been collapsed into the "% Agree/% Disagree" categories, respectively. Agreement scores are calculated on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 indicating the **most agreement** and 5 indicating the **least agreement**. Scores under 3.00 represent agreement, while those over 3.00 represent disagreement (*italic red type*). Net agree percentages are calculated before rounding.

☞ There is a consensus that Riverside needs a long range plan, and that time to plan for the future is now. Voters agree that with planning, the problems of Los Angeles and Orange Counties can be avoided. Even when the price tag of planning is noted, two-thirds say it is worth spending millions of dollars to plan for the future. Despite this general support for planning, the voters say there is no need for expensive planning programs to tell Riverside residents what they already know.

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS
<p>Voters in all groups are very supportive of the planning process in Riverside County, although Republicans are less enthusiastic than others. Support is greatest in District 4, and least in Districts 2 and 3. People with children are more in favor than those without, and city residents are more enthusiastic than are those in the unincorporated areas. The higher the level of education, the higher the support for the planning process.</p>
<p>Democrats, more than Republicans, are more enthusiastic about spending the money for long-range planning, as are new arrivals, and voters in District 3, renters, and those in the unincorporated areas.</p>
<p>Women and District 4 voters are especially likely to say that the problems of LA and Orange Counties can be avoided by better planning. Young women and new arrivals, more than others, say the time to start the planning process is now.</p>
<p>Republicans and District 3 and 5 voters, as well as African-Americans and those with the least education, are most likely to say that expensive planning programs are not needed.</p>

GENERAL ATTITUDES

Key Findings:

☛ *Taking the pulse of the public is a worthwhile exercise. Voters agree that too often decisions in Riverside County are made without consulting the public.*

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS

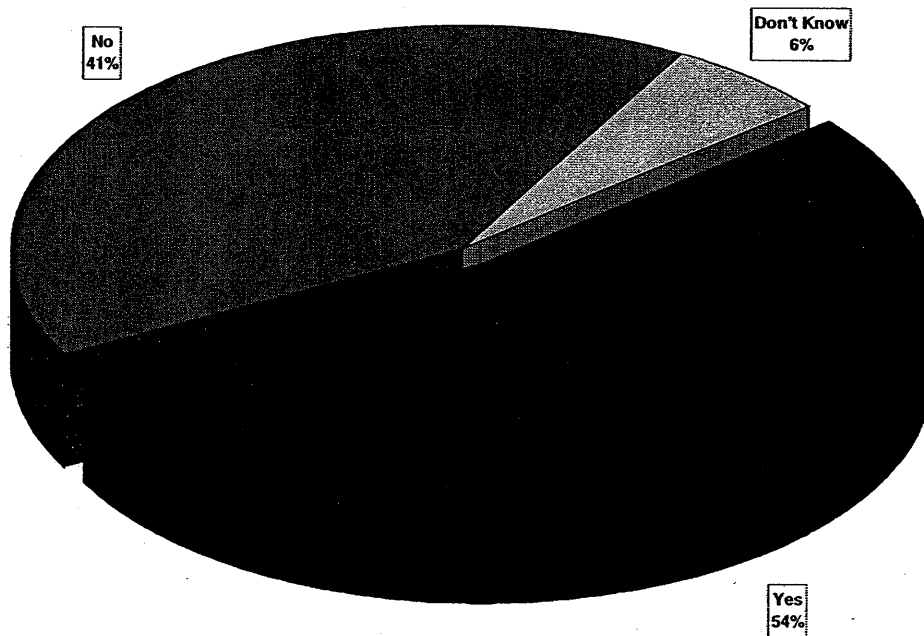
Long-term residents, those in Districts 2 and 5, African-Americans and Latinos are especially likely to say decisions have been made without consultation.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Key Findings:

Given the concern with traffic congestion, it is not surprising that voters strongly agree that new forms of transportation are needed to improve mobility in Riverside County.

POSITION ON HALF PERCENT SALES TAX FOR TRANSPORTATION

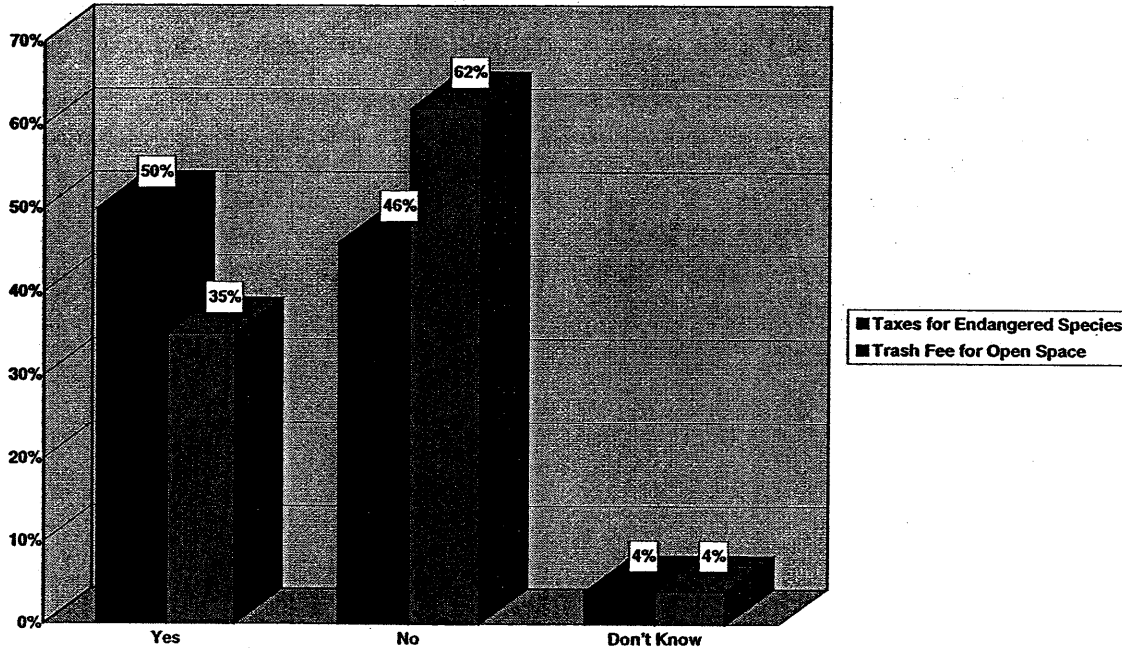


Riverside's voters indicate they would support extending the special half-cent sales tax for transportation in all counties for another twenty years.

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS
Men 40-64 are most enthusiastic about new freeways, as are those with the longest commutes and Latino and African-American voters.
Voters 65 and older are least enthusiastic about extending the sales tax for transportation, and Republicans are opposed. Voters in District 5 are also not in favor of extending the sales tax, while those in District 4 wholeheartedly support it. Those with long commutes are among the most supportive.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

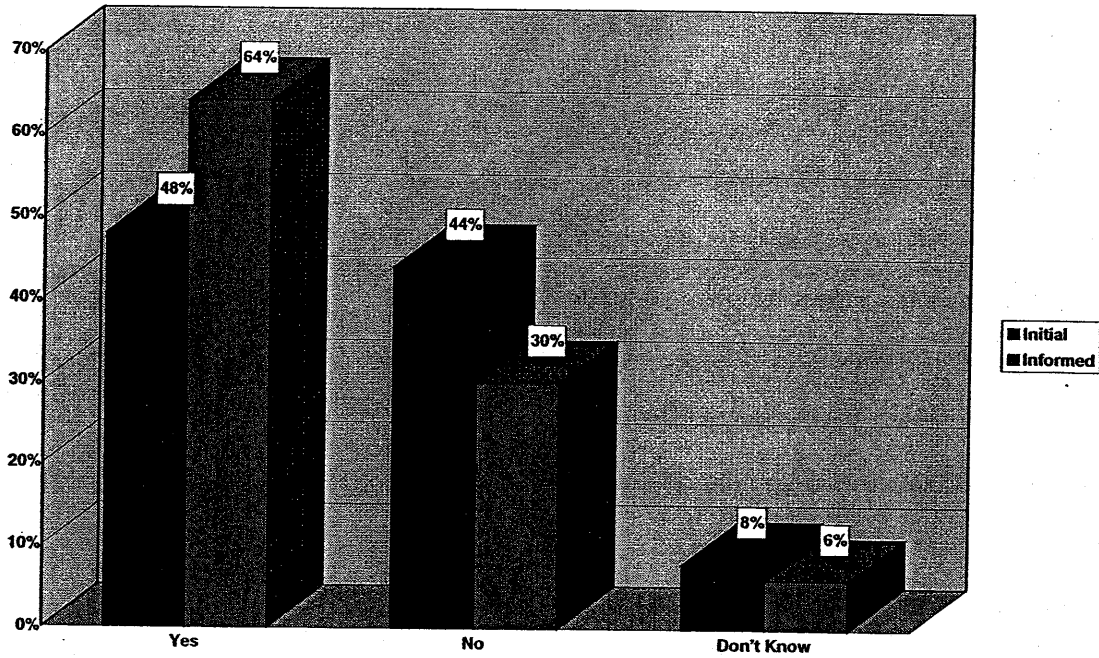
WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR WILDLIFE AND OPEN SPACE



Key Findings:

Given that voters do not find protecting open space to be a serious problem, it comes as no surprise that voters are closely divided on whether to spend tax money to acquire open space in Riverside County. By nearly a two-to-one margin, voters would not be willing to pay higher fees for trash collection to finance acquisition of open space. On balance, they disagree with the idea that they would pay slightly higher taxes to limit residential growth.

WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE TAXES—INITIAL VERSUS INFORMED



➡ Support for open space acquisition increases substantially when voters are told that it would enhance property values and provide permanent protection and recreational opportunities.

AGREEMENT STATEMENTS

<u>Statement</u>	<u>% Agree</u>	<u>% Disagree</u>	<u>Score</u>	<u>% Net Agree</u>
Planning and protecting open space only way to avoid LA's fate	83%	16%	1.87	67%
Everybody benefits from habitat and open space protection	75%	23%	2.21	52%
Obtaining fair market value is no violation of private owners' rights	72%	21%	2.21	52%
Open space protection plan will maintain air and water quality	72%	21%	2.24	51%
Protect habitats only if compensate private owners immediately	73%	23%	2.15	50%
We need to preserve sensitive areas so as not to lose them forever	72%	23%	2.22	49%
Protecting habitats will enhance property values	68%	26%	2.41	42%
Govt. should protect nature even at expense of property rights	50%	45%	3.00	5%
<i>I would pay slightly higher taxes to limit residential growth</i>	45%	53%	3.23	-8%
<i>Without govt. programs, private owners will protect open space</i>	35%	59%	3.50	-24%

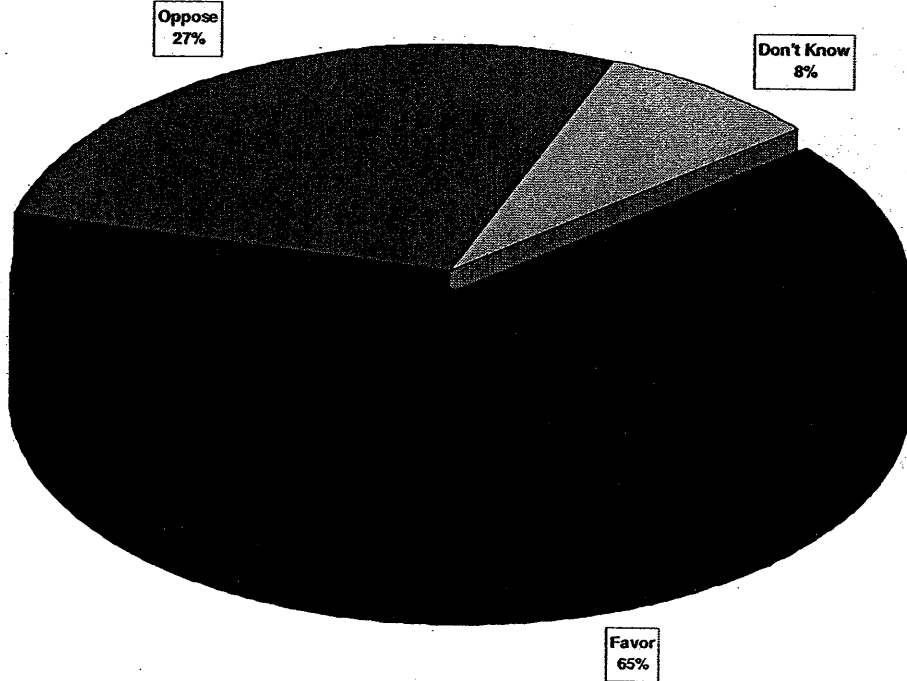
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Voters tend to offer general support for open space that is not matched by a willingness to pay for it. They strongly agree that planning and protecting open space is the only way to avoid the same fate as Los Angeles, and that everyone benefits from the protection of open space and habitat protection. They also agree that protecting habitats will enhance property values, that open space protection will maintain air and water quality, and that sensitive areas need to be preserved so they are not lost forever.

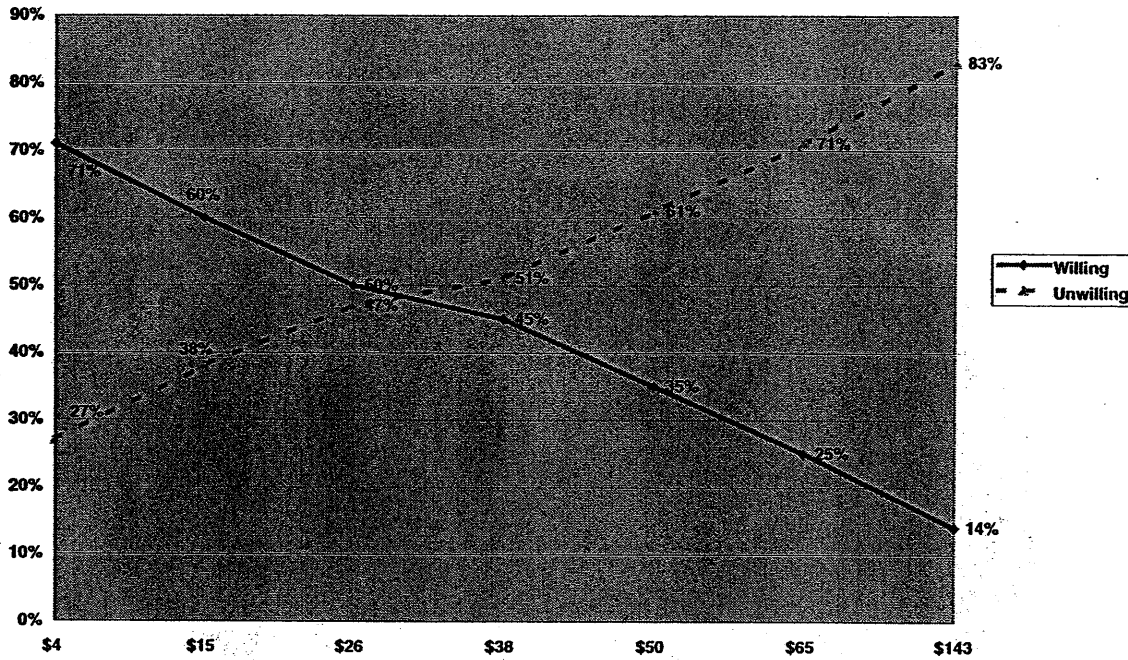
☞ *As is the case for open space, voters are closely divided on their willingness to spend tax money to protect endangered species.*

POSITION ON MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN



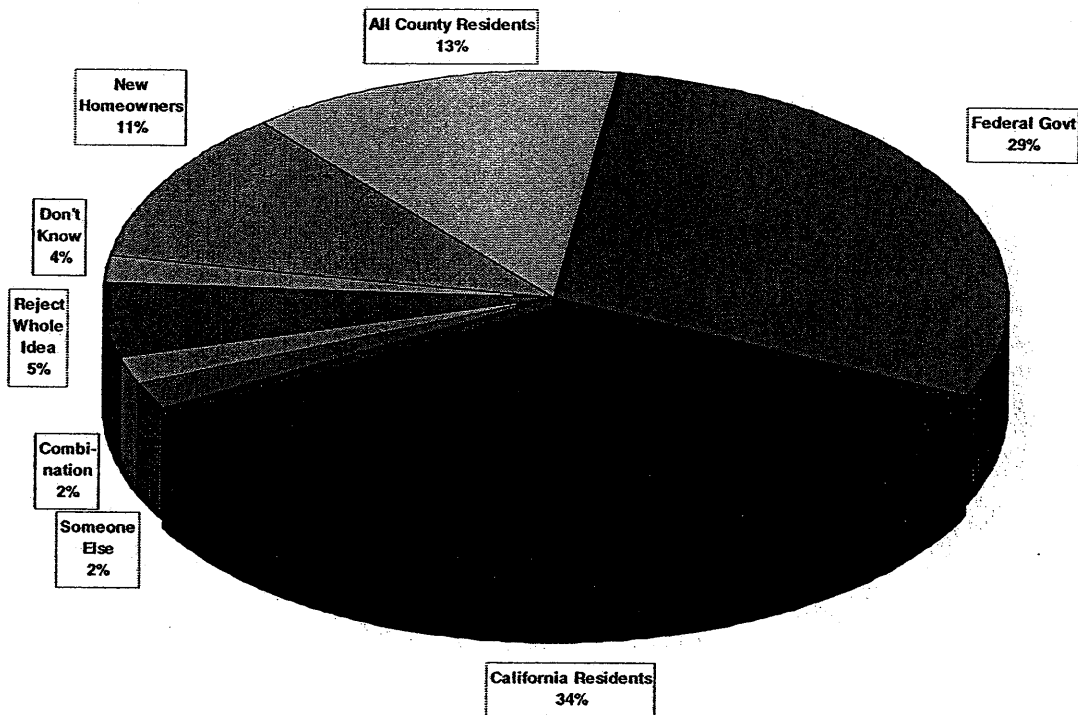
☞ *By more than a two-to-one margin, voters favor the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan when they are told what it is. However, voters are only committed to saving more popular species, such as mammals or birds, with majorities supporting spending tax dollars to protect big horn sheep and birds such as the Least Bells Vireo, but not the Coastal Sage or the Quino Checkered Spot Butterfly.*

AMOUNT WILLING OR UNWILLING TO PAY FOR PRESERVATION



There are strict limits on how much the voters are willing to pay to purchase open space to protect endangered species. Support falls off dramatically at amounts over \$25 per year, with only about one-third of the voters willing to pay \$50 more per year to purchase additional open space.

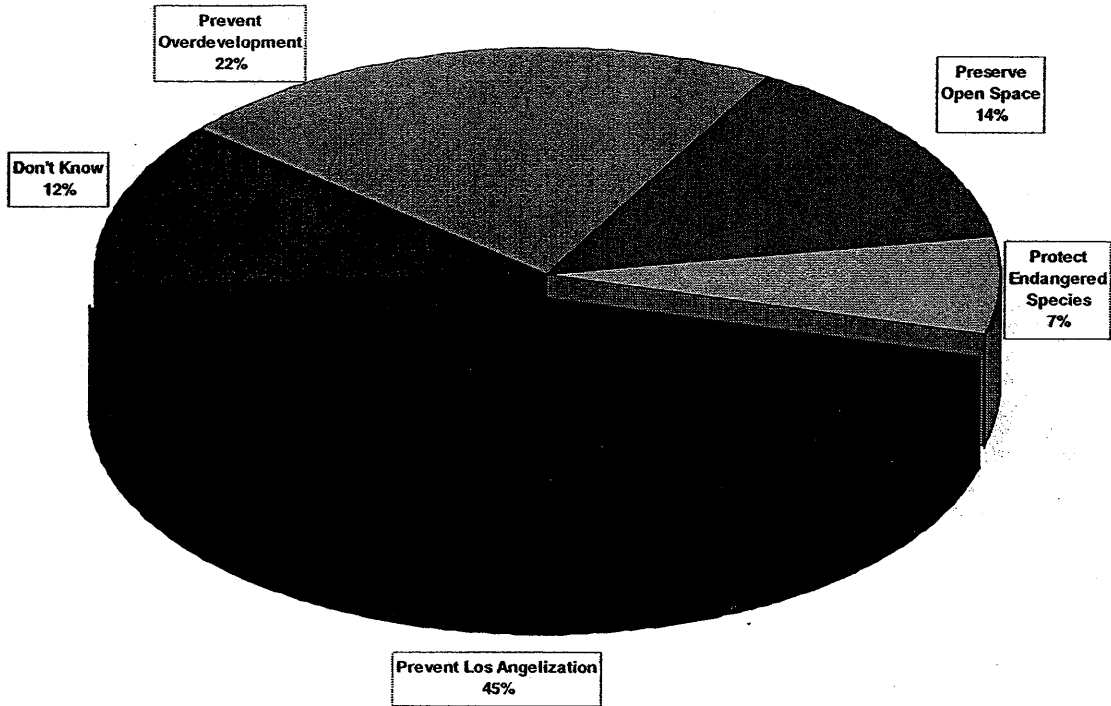
POSITION ON WHO SHOULD PAY TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES



☛ *Not surprisingly, voters say that the federal government or all Californians, not new homeowners or Riverside County residents, should pay the cost of protecting species endangered by new developments.*

☛ *Voters are sensitive to the implications of acquiring open space. While they agree that paying fair market value for private property is not a violation of property owners' rights, they insist that habitats can be protected only if private land owners are immediately compensated. They also are fairly certain that private owners would not protect endangered species without a publicly financed protection plan. However, they are divided on the question of whether government should protect natural habitat if it means restricting property rights.*

HOW BEST TO SPEND TAX DOLLARS



The vocabulary that makes voters most willing to spend tax dollars is not to preserve open space or protect endangered species and plants, but to prevent Riverside County from becoming another Los Angeles.

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS

Men are willing, but women are unwilling, to spend tax money on open space acquisition. Most supportive are men under 40. There is also a partisan split, with Republicans opposed and Democrats in favor of land acquisition. New arrivals are supportive, while long-term residents are divided. Opposition is especially strong among District 5 voters and African-Americans. These profiles shift when voters are told that property values will be enhanced through open space acquisition, although Republicans are still less willing than others to finance open space purchases.

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)
<p>Spending tax money to protect open space appeals to women and men under 40, but not to voters 65 and older. Republicans are largely opposed, while independents and others are for it. There is also a split based on length of residence in Riverside County, with newcomers in favor and long-term residents opposed. District 4 and 1 voters are in favor, those in Districts 2 and 5 are opposed. Renters are strongly in favor, while home owners are closely divided. African-Americans are opposed, white/Anglos are divided, and Latinos are in favor of the expenditures. The findings are generally consistent in terms of support for the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, with women, younger voters, Democrats, new voters, renters, those with children, and white/Anglos most in favor of the plan.</p>
<p>No one wants to pay higher trash fees except men under 40 and renters (who rarely pay the fee), with strong opposition among Republicans, voters 50 and older, and among homeowners and African-Americans.</p>
<p>Support for protecting endangered species and protecting sensitive areas now is greatest among the voters with an "environmental" profile, including voters under 50, Democrats and independents, newer arrivals in Riverside County, District 4 voters, renters, those with children, and residents of the incorporated areas. The gap between those with an environmental profile and the others is greatest with respect to the Coastal Sage.</p>
<p>In general, younger voters are more willing to pay additional taxes for open space than are those 50 and older, Democrats and independents more than Republicans, renters more than owners, those with children more than those without, city more than unincorporated area residents and newer residents more than long-term residents. District 4 voters are most willing, while District 5 voters are least willing. African-Americans are among those least willing to pay higher taxes for open space. These patterns hold whether the voters, overall, are willing to pay (under \$25) or whether they are overall unwilling.</p>

KEY CROSS-TABULATED FINDINGS (cont.)

The responsibility of government to protect open space is more supported by younger women, new arrivals, Democrats and independents, voters in Districts 2 and 4, renters, those with children, city residents, and Latinos and African-Americans. Most of these same voters are most in agreement that open space enhances the quality of life and that property values and water quality are enhanced by protecting open space and species habitats.

Older voters and Republicans, as well as voters in District 5 and long-term residents, owners and those without children, feel particularly strongly about the need to compensate owners for any protected open space. These voters, as well as minority voters, are least willing to pay slightly higher taxes to limit growth.

ANALYSIS

A. Voters Are Cautious About the Future

While things are generally seen as going well at present, voters hint at a cautious optimism about the future:

✓ At the present time, more than two-thirds of the voters say that things in Riverside County are on the right track.

✓ Despite the indications that things are moving in the right direction, most voters do not say that the quality of life will be better in the future, and one-third think things will get worse.

B. Planning for Growth is Essential

As is the case in most of California, voters in Riverside County are concerned about growth. Often there is a conflict between an ideology of free enterprise, limited government, and the desire for limits and controls on growth:

✓ In response to an open-ended question on the most important issue facing Riverside, a significant percentage mention growth and growth-related issues.

✓ Controlling residential growth and preserving open space are ranked higher than lower taxes or reducing traffic as issues for the county's elected officials to address.

✓ While voters do not want to stop growth, they also do not want unbridled growth. Voters seek better planning for growth.

✓ Despite this concern with growth, voters are not willing to pay higher taxes to limit growth.

C. Riverside's Leadership is Rated Moderately

When asked to evaluate civic leadership, none of the groups or individuals tested are rated as doing an excellent job, and none are rated as performing poorly:

✓ The private sector is rated slightly more highly than public agencies or government leaders.

✓ The Riverside County Board of Supervisors is rated as doing a fair to good job, about average in comparison to other groups tested.

D. Riverside's Quality of Life

There is a general sense that the quality of life in Riverside County is good, although there are a few areas where there could be improvements:

- ✓ Most government services in Riverside are considered to be good, with the basics such as fire, police and sheriff services, and emergency medical care generally well-regarded.
- ✓ Public facilities and amenities, such as parks and libraries, as well as private amenities, such as shopping, are generally considered good in the county, but there are concerns about the schools and cultural opportunities.
- ✓ Air quality remains a problem in most of the county, outside the desert area, and one of the most fundamental issues in the quality of life—crime—remains an issue.

E. There is Strong Support for the Planning Process

In a number of different ways, voters were asked about their level of support for the planning process, and in virtually every case they enthusiastically endorsed more planning. This is consistent with their views concerning better-planned growth in Riverside County, and a recognition that the best way to avoid the problems of neighboring counties is to plan for the future:

- ✓There is broad and wide support for the overall master planning process.
- ✓There is a sense that planning for the future should not be delayed.
- ✓Even when told of the substantial cost of the process, voters are supportive of it, although they have to be reassured that the new planning process is not redundant.

F. Transportation Remains a Complex Issue

Riverside County depends on a good transportation system, but there is no clear consensus on what makes the system good:

✓Traffic problems are generally not seen as neighborhood problems, but involve either commuting to work or to recreation and leisure destinations. Because travel patterns are so varied, different constituents have different transportation priorities.

✓Despite a constant criticism of traffic, it ranks well below other issues as the top priority which the voters want Riverside County's elected officials to address. Nonetheless, it is seen as a very to somewhat serious problem.

✓Although many voters are unable to rate public transit in the county, it is rated more favorably than road maintenance. There is a strong consensus that other forms of transportation besides freeways are needed.

✓Although voters rarely like to tax themselves, there is majority support for extending the sales tax to fund local highway and public transportation projects.

G. Voters Seek Low-Cost Environmental Protections

There is a clear consensus that preservation of Riverside's open spaces and natural environment is important. However, voters are not necessarily willing to pay for the environmental protections they seek. There are other inconsistencies in their environmental orientation, especially when environmental values come into conflict with other values:

✓ Voters are closely divided on whether or not to spend tax money to acquire open space in Riverside County, and are similarly divided on whether to spend money to protect endangered species. There is a clear hierarchy of what species to protect, with mammals and birds ahead of insects, trees and plants.

✓ When environmental protections are tied to tax and fee increases, voters become very cautious, unwilling to pay higher trash collection fees, and capping their tax increases at about \$25 per year. They would prefer to spread the cost of environmental protections around, hoping that "others" such as the federal or state government, will pay for environmental protection.

✓ One reason they may not be enthusiastic in their desire to spend money is that they do not necessarily see the need to protect open space as an especially serious problem.

✓ If environmental values conflict with other values, support for environmental protections declines. While voters do not trust private property owners to exercise good stewardship over the land, they do believe their private property rights should be strongly protected, and that owners should be compensated when their land is used for open space or habitat protection.

✓ Voters are much more responsive to the need to pay to acquire open space when they are told of the quality of life and economic benefits and value of open space acquisition.

✓ There is strong support for the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan when it is explained to the voters. Even with the explanation, however, voters are reluctant to spend significant amounts of money and would prefer that 'someone else' pay for it.

VOTER PROFILES

Although there is some variation, depending on the questions asked, the following tables describe a general profile of the voters who are more concerned or less concerned about environmental issues as evidenced by responses on open space acquisition and the planning process. Groups not listed either vary or fall in between these extremes.

<i>VOTER GROUPS LEAST CONCERNED ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</i>	<i>VOTER GROUPS MOST CONCERNED ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION</i>
Women 65 and older	Women under 65
Men 40 and older	Men under 40
Republicans	Democrats and independents
Districts 3 and 5	District 4
10 years or more in Riverside	5 years or less in Riverside
Home owners	Renters
Children under 18	Have children under 18
Middle income	Very low or very high income
African-American	Not African-American or Asian-American
Unincorporated area	Incorporated area
Not employed	Employed

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are three key findings in our research. First, our data indicate that **voters are relatively satisfied with the quality of life in Riverside County.** On virtually all dimensions of the quality of life, Riverside is given a good to fair rating, indicating that the voters are fundamentally satisfied with living in the County. While there certainly is room for improvement, there is no indication of broad dissatisfaction which requires short-term attention. Some of the areas most in need of attention, such as air quality and public education, are out of the hands of the Board of Supervisors. Others, such as growth and transportation, are being addressed through the planning process.

The second broad finding is that **Riverside County is supportive of a long-range planning process.** Although voters are always reluctant to spend tax dollars, they feel that the long range planning process is a worthwhile investment. Nonetheless, our data do suggest that the voters will have to be reassured that the long-range planning process does not duplicate other efforts. The focus of planning, for most voters, is on planning for residential growth. Aside from crime, voters tend to see increased population and overcrowding and the traffic that comes with it as the most potent threat to their quality of life.

Third, **Riverside voters have environmental concerns.** Through virtually every indicator, voters describe themselves as “environmentalists”. They are willing to set aside open space, and they are willing to protect endangered species. Our data show that there is, however, a tension between the desire of the voters to do

what is best for the environment and the limited willingness of the voters to pay the cost of environmental protection. In addition, the voters are very protective of property rights. For any environmental initiatives to succeed, there have to be assurances that property rights are protected.

In addition to the observations and recommendations made earlier in this report, the following are our key observations:

- ◆ **VOTERS PUT ASIDE THE EVERYDAY PROBLEMS TO EVALUATE RIVERSIDE COUNTY:** Voters are least content with the quality of life problems they confront every day—crime, air quality, and traffic. They appear to put these aside because they like living in Riverside County because of other elements of the quality of life. As the planning process moves forward with those elements which enhance some elements of the quality of life, such as open spaces, recreational opportunities and cultural amenities, it is important not to lose sight of the genuine concerns voters do have as they confront traffic or crime or poor schools. If voters are worried about someone breaking into their home because there are not enough police, spending tax dollars to protect big horn sheep seems like a luxury.
- ◆ **MAINSTREAM THE PLANNING TEAM:** Voters have to understand that the planning process is not driven by environmental extremists or a government mandate but by mainstream planners, business people, government officials and ordinary citizens who are looking out for the future generations of Riverside residents. For ordinary voters to buy into the process, they have to understand that this is not a “special interest” tool, but a process in which everyone can participate.
- ◆ **EMPHASIZE THE DIFFERENCE OF THIS PLANNING PROCESS:** The voters expressed a willingness to spend money on planning for the future. However, they have to know that they are not just getting something they already have, or simply a report which will be buried in a file cabinet or be placed on a shelf somewhere. They have to know that this is a comprehensive environmental plan to enhance the quality of life, not an engineering document or something useful only for developers. Voters have to be reassured that this is not redundant.

◆ **THE ENVIRONMENT IS AN INVESTMENT, NOT AN EXPENDITURE:** Taking strong environmental positions costs money. The data suggest that Riverside County is populated with "lip service environmentalists", voters who are looking for "free" environmental solutions, or solutions which are paid for by someone else. The case has to be made to the voters that environmental improvements cost money, but they are investments in the future (and in enhanced quality of life and property values), not simply expenditures. If the environment is not to take a back seat to other concerns, voters must know the case has to be made how much the future of Riverside depends on long-term environmental planning.

◆ **MAKE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMPREHENSIVE:** There are different preferences between men and women, with men disproportionately focused on open space and the recreational use of open space, and women disproportionately focused on protection of endangered species. Each has to know that a comprehensive environmental plan requires both, and that they are not mutually exclusive environmental issues.

◆ **BE ATTENTIVE TO MINORITY CONCERNS:** Minority groups all have different concerns, but our data consistently show that African-Americans feel somewhat disenfranchised within Riverside County, and point to racial tensions far more than do other voters. Consistently, African-Americans rate the County as performing poorly on key dimensions such as jobs, schools, and youth opportunities. They are less satisfied with police and other services. Environmental concerns take a back seat to these more economically based issues. Our data point to a special need for increased outreach to the black community to speak to their concerns.

◆ **RIVERSIDE IS A DIVERSE COUNTY:** Not only is there cultural diversity, but geographic diversity as well. Our data consistently show that Districts 2 and 5, and to a lesser extent, District 3 have different concerns, and lower levels of satisfaction, than voters in District 4. To be accepted county-wide, the planning process must take into account the unique needs of each area.

◆ **EXPLORE THE DIFFERENCES IN ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES ACROSS THE COUNTY:** We have presented data which show a profile of those voters who are more supportive of environmental activism, and those who are less supportive. Additional outreach and explanation to those with lower levels of environmental consciousness may be warranted.

HOW TO READ A TABLE

The tables in the main cross-tabulated tables section contain the results for the total sample (indicated by "ALL RESPONDENTS"), while examining each question on the poll by various demographic variables. The cross-tabulated data in the main cross-tabs should be read across, and compared to the total of "ALL RESPONDENTS" identified across the top of the first page of each table, and to the immediately adjacent rows for the same variable such as sex (compare men and women) or age (compare ages 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-64 and over 65).

