

**PPIC Statewide Survey:  
Special Survey of Orange County**

*in collaboration with the  
University of California Irvine*

***Mark Baldassare  
Senior Fellow and Survey Director***

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**Public  
Policy  
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## Preface

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The Orange County Survey – a collaborative effort of the Public Policy Institute of California and the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine – is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey.

This is the first of an annual series of PPIC surveys of Orange County. Mark Baldassare, the director of the PPIC Statewide Survey, is the founder and director of the Orange County Annual Survey at UCI and a former UCI professor. The UCI survey was conducted 19 times from 1982 to 2000, so the Orange County Survey collaboration between PPIC and UCI is an extension of earlier survey efforts. The current survey was co-sponsored by UCI, with local support from Deloitte and Touche, Pacific Life Foundation, Disneyland, *Los Angeles Times*, Orange County Business Council, Orange County Division of League of California Cities, *Orange County Register*, The Irvine Company, and United Way of Orange County.

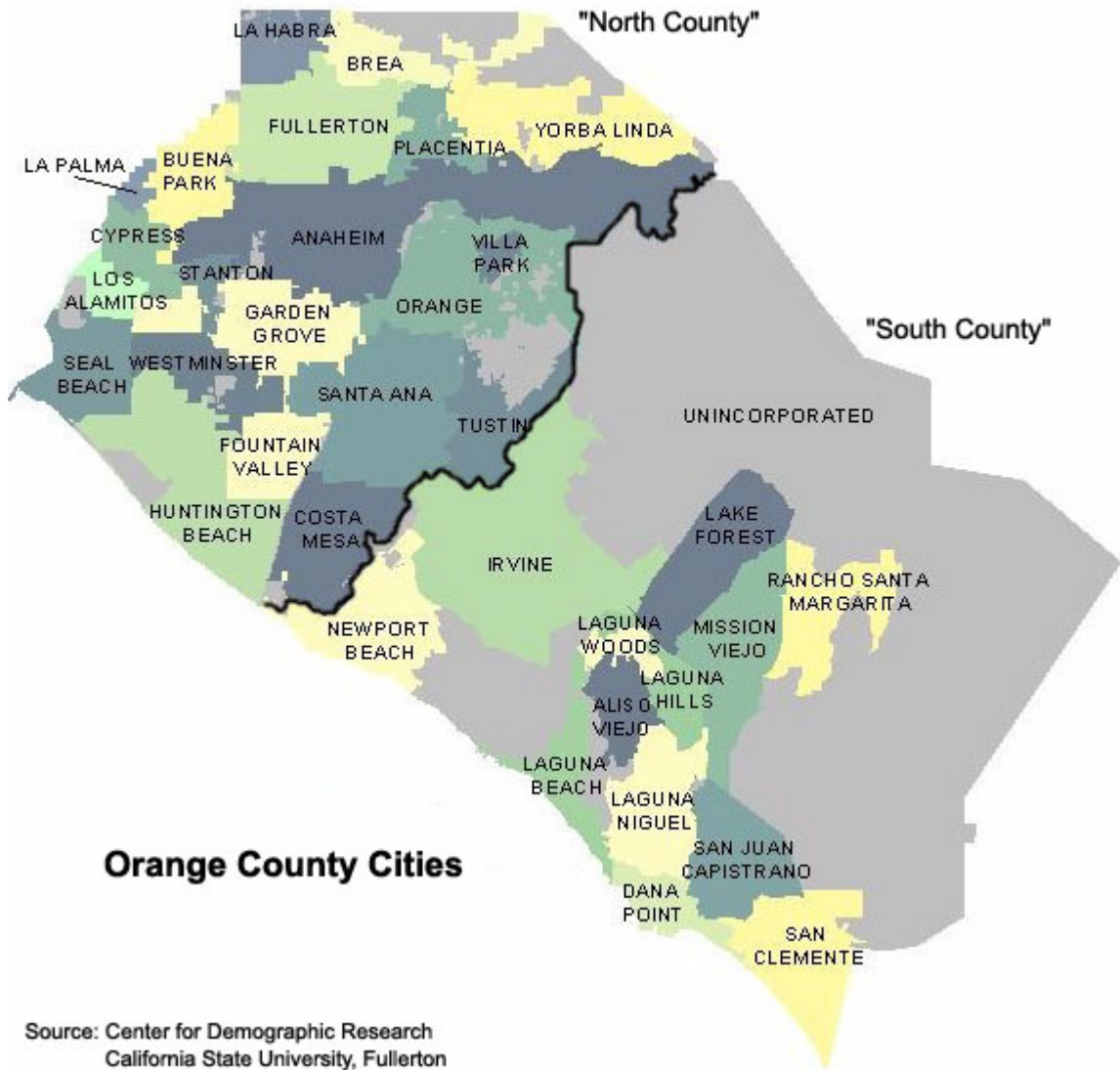
Orange County is the second most populous county in the state and one of California's fastest growing and changing regions. The county is home to 2.8 million residents today, having gained nearly one million residents since 1980. Three in four residents were white and non-Hispanic in 1980; today, nearly half are Latinos and Asians. The county's dynamic economy has become one of the leaders in the high-technology industry. The county is a bellwether county in politics and the site of many important governance issues, including a county-government bankruptcy, public controversy over a proposed airport at the closed El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, and the use and expansion of toll roads. There are also housing, transportation, and environmental concerns related to development.

Public opinion findings are critical to informing discussions and resolving public debates on these key issues. The purpose of this study is to inform policymakers by providing timely, accurate, and objective information about policy preferences and economic, social, and political trends.

To measure changes over time, this survey of 2,004 adult residents includes "benchmark" questions from earlier Orange County Annual Surveys. It also includes key indicators from the PPIC Statewide Survey for comparisons with the state and other major regions of California. We also consider how regional racial and ethnic differences affect political, social, and economic attitudes and policy preferences. The following issues are explored in this edition of the Orange County Survey:

- Local perceptions – Have two decades of growth and change led to declining residential satisfaction and public service ratings? How do residents view growth and growth policies?
- Regional issues – How does Orange County compare to the rest of the state in perceptions of traffic, growth, housing, and jobs? What do residents see as the causes of county problems, and do they think that there is enough local government funding to prepare for growth?
- Orange County issues – What are the most important issues facing the county, and what are the perceptions of the county's economy, quality of life, growth, and county government? What are the transportation trends and preferences for the reuse of the El Toro Marine Air Base?
- Economic and political trends – What are the recent trends in consumer confidence, computer and Internet use, and approval ratings for President Bush and Governor Davis?

Copies of earlier survey reports or additional copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail ([order@ppic.org](mailto:order@ppic.org)) or phone (415-291-4400). The reports are also posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)).



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## Press Releases

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### **ANXIETY ABOUT GROWTH LOOMS LARGE IN ORANGE COUNTY Residents Say Development, Housing, Traffic Are Major Problems; But Overall Satisfaction Remains High**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, September 26, 2001 – In a significant shift from one year ago, Orange County residents cite growth-related issues – not crime or schools – as the most critical problems facing the region, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and UC Irvine. Despite their concern that growth-driven problems such as housing shortages and traffic congestion will negatively affect the area’s future, the overall mood remains positive: Most county residents are very satisfied with the local economy and their quality of life.

When Orange County residents are asked to name the most important issue facing Orange County today, growth-related concerns top the list: Population growth and development (21%), the El Toro Airport controversy (14%), housing issues (13%), and traffic and transportation (12%) are mentioned most often. Only 5 percent think last year’s top issue – crime – is the county’s most important problem today. However, Latinos are significantly more likely than non-Hispanic whites to view crime as the most important issue.

Two in three Orange County residents (65%) think their cities and communities have experienced rapid growth in the past few years. Such perceptions are notably stronger in the South County (73%) than in the North County (62%). Overall, residents are twice as likely to see population growth over the past decade as a bad thing (41%) rather than a good thing (22%). However, Latinos and Asians are less negative than non-Hispanic whites about growth.

Interestingly, all racial and ethnic groups tend to be negative about *future* population growth in Orange County. Sixty-five percent of residents believe that population increases will make the county a less desirable place to live in the future. Non-Hispanic whites are more likely (73%) than Latinos and Asians (48% each) to feel this way. What negative consequences of population growth worry residents the most? High housing costs (37%) and traffic congestion (31%) are top concerns, while fewer than three in ten residents name any environmental issue as a serious downside to growth. When asked about the benefits of population growth, residents cite an improved job market and economy (41%), increased social diversity (21%), and more state and local tax revenue (15%) as most important.

#### **Public Services, Economy, Quality of Life Get High Marks**

“If people are anxious about future growth, it doesn’t appear to be affecting their satisfaction with Orange County today,” said PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. “Residents find the county as agreeable a place to live as it was in the early 1980s, when there were about a million fewer people.” Indeed, 67 percent say they are very satisfied with their housing situation, an 11-point increase over 10 years ago. Similarly high numbers (68%) say they are very satisfied with their neighborhoods. Although all racial and ethnic groups express satisfaction with their quality of life, non-Hispanic whites are more likely than Latinos and Asians to say they are very satisfied with their homes and neighborhoods.

Despite the recent economic slowdown, the general outlook among Orange County residents remains positive, with nine out of ten reporting that things are going either very well or somewhat well, and

only 10 percent saying things are going badly. Moreover, three in four residents say the county's economy is in excellent or good shape. Consistent with this upbeat mood, residents give high marks to their county's main public services – ratings as good as they were 20 years ago. Solid majorities rate as excellent or good their local police protection (82%), local parks and beaches (81%), local freeways, streets, and roads (68%), and local public schools (61%).

### **The Great Divide? North and South County**

Perceptions among residents who live in the northern and southern areas of Orange County are similar when it comes to traffic, housing, and growth but diverge considerably over economic concerns. A majority of residents in the South County (55%) do not believe that a lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs is a problem, while only 39 percent of those in the North County agree. North-South differences also emerge when residents are asked about the causes of problems facing their area. South County residents are more likely to name rapid growth as a major cause of problems in the region (62% to 52%), while North County residents are more likely to say misguided government spending is a major cause of the region's problems (55% to 44%). Attitudes about adequate funding for roads and other infrastructure needs do not differ between North and South County residents, nor do they differ across age, education, and income groups. Overall, nearly six in 10 Orange County residents believe that their local governments have adequate funding for infrastructure projects.

### **Residents Rate Local Government, Davis, Bush**

The collective mood of satisfaction in Orange County appears to play out in significantly improved ratings of county government performance from one year ago. Forty-three percent of residents believe that their county government is doing an excellent or good job in solving problems, compared to just 29 percent a year ago. Despite this general endorsement, only one in 10 residents thinks that county government pays a lot of attention to what the people think when making policy decisions, while four in 10 believe that local officials pay very little or no attention. In another criticism of local government, 83 percent of residents believe that county officials waste at least some tax dollars, with a significant portion (37%) saying they waste a lot.

While Orange County's ratings of Governor Gray Davis may reflect the county's GOP leanings, only a slim majority of Democrats are happy with Davis' performance, and a majority of independents disapprove. Overall, 53 percent of the county's residents disapprove of Davis's performance in office, while 40 percent approve. An even harsher assessment of the governor emerges when residents are asked about his handling of the state's electricity crisis: Sixty-three percent say they disapprove of his performance. Conversely, President Bush enjoys solid popular support in Orange County. A majority of county residents (57%) approve of his performance as president, while only 36 percent disapprove. Approval ratings of the president are higher in Orange County than in the nation as a whole, where 50 percent approve and 38 percent disapprove of his performance.

### **Other Key Findings**

- **Consumer Confidence (page 15)**

A decline in optimism about the national economy does not appear to have greatly influenced residents' attitudes about spending: Sixty-three percent say it is a good time to make large purchases, down only seven points from 2000. Orange County's score of 93 on the five-question

consumer confidence index – almost an exact match of the national rating – is down a substantial 19 points from last year but remains in positive territory.

- **Real Estate** (page 17)

Eighty-three percent of homeowners think that buying a home in Orange County is an excellent or good investment, likely a nod to lower interest rates. A surprisingly high number of renters (70%) also think buying a home in the county is a good investment. Like homeowners, renters rate housing as an investment significantly higher than last year.

### **About the Survey**

The Orange County Survey – a collaborative effort of PPIC and the School of Social Ecology at UC Irvine – is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey. Findings of the current survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,004 adult Orange County residents interviewed from August 20 to August 31, 2001. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%.

Dr. Mark Baldassare is a senior fellow and program director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Francis Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder and director of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has conducted since 1998. From 1982 to 2000, Dr. Baldassare directed the Orange County Annual Survey for UC Irvine. He is the author of numerous books, including *California in the New Millennium: The Changing Social and Political Landscape* (University of California Press, 2000).

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to objective, nonpartisan research on economic, social, and political issues that affect the lives of Californians. The Institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett.

This report will appear on PPIC's website ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) on September 26.

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**ORANGE COUNTY RESIDENTS NOT SWAYED BY “EL TORO LITE”  
Big or Small, Airport Proposal Still Opposed by Majority of Residents;  
Broad Support for Limiting El Toro Use to Non-Aviation Purposes**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, September 12, 2001 – Orange County residents remain opposed to transforming the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station into an international airport, even if annual passenger limits are reduced, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and UC Irvine. As the Board of Supervisors readies itself for a vote on the new airport proposal, residents continue to express disappointment in county government’s handling of the issue and again appear ready to take matters into their own hands through the initiative process.

The large-scale public opinion survey of the county found that residents feel the same now as they did a year ago about building an international airport at El Toro: Fifty-two percent oppose the proposal and 38 percent support it. Residents of the North County are equally divided on the issue (44% to 44%), but South County residents overwhelmingly oppose the airport plan (76% to 19%).

Despite recent efforts to increase public support for the airport by developing a scaled-down plan, a similar number of residents also oppose the proposal to reduce the number of annual passengers at the airport from 28 million to 18 million. Fifty-four percent oppose the smaller airport plan, while 36 percent support it. Both North County residents (46% to 42%) and South County residents (76% to 19%) oppose this proposal.

“Clearly, the county’s efforts to reach a compromise proposal are not supported by residents,” said PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. “The airport plan has been a tough sell for local leaders from the start, but with this latest effort to find a middle ground, they have actually lost support from North County residents.” The survey reveals residents’ lingering unhappiness with county government’s handling of the El Toro conversion issue: Similar to last year, half disapprove (49%), while only 25 percent approve.

On a related note, residents again appear ready to defy the will of the county by expressing strong support for an initiative that would allow only non-aviation uses, including a large park, for the El Toro Marine Air Base. Sixty-two percent of residents say they would vote yes and 31 percent would vote no. Supporters greatly outnumber opponents in both the North County (57% to 36%) and the South County (79% to 17%). Among voters, 61 percent would vote yes on the initiative and 34 percent would vote no if the election were held today.

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## Local Perceptions

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### Local Population Growth

Orange County has grown rapidly since the early 1980s, and most of its residents are very aware of this. For the most part, however, they believe their local governments are doing enough to accommodate the growth.

Sixty-five percent of residents think the population has grown rapidly in their cities and communities, and another 21 percent believe their local areas have experienced slow growth. Only 14 percent say the local population is unchanged, and no one thought it had declined. Perceptions of rapid growth were about the same as in the 1991 Orange County survey but were greater than in 1982, the year of the first Orange County Annual Survey at the University of California, Irvine. These perceptions did not vary across racial/ethnic groups or by age, income, or education. However, the perception of rapid population growth was higher in the South County (73%) than in the North County (62%).

Given the high percentage of people who believe their areas are growing rapidly, it is rather surprising to find that two in three residents also believe that government regulations aimed at controlling growth are either about right (55%) or actually too strict (9%). Only about one-third think their local growth regulations are not strict enough. These attitudes mirror those in the 1982 survey but differ considerably from attitudes in 1991. At that time, residents were much less likely to believe that growth regulations were about right, and much more likely to believe they were not strict enough.

There were no differences across regions or political party lines in the belief that local efforts to control growth are about right. Older, higher income, and college-educated residents were somewhat more likely than others to believe that local growth controls were not strict enough. Attitudes toward controls also differed by race and ethnicity: Non-Hispanic whites (40%) are much more likely than Latinos (25%) and Asians (26%) to believe that local growth controls are not strict enough. Even among those who perceive rapid growth, fewer than half (46%) say that local growth controls in their cities and communities are not strict enough.

	<u>All Adults</u>		
	1982	1991	2001
<i>In the past few years, do you think the population of your city or community has been growing rapidly, growing slowly, staying about the same, or declining?</i>			
<b>Growing rapidly</b>	57%	64%	<b>65%</b>
<b>Growing slowly</b>	23	18	<b>21</b>
<b>Staying about the same</b>	19	17	<b>14</b>
<b>Declining</b>	1	1	<b>0</b>
<i>Do you think that the government regulations aimed at controlling growth in your city or community are too strict, about right, or not strict enough?</i>			
<b>Too strict</b>	9%	7%	<b>9%</b>
<b>About right</b>	51	36	<b>55</b>
<b>Not strict enough</b>	40	57	<b>36</b>

1982 and 1991 results are from the Orange County Annual Survey, UCI, by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz.

## Residential Satisfaction

How has Orange County held up under these two decades of rapid population growth? Very well, according to its residents. In terms of housing and neighborhoods, they find Orange County as satisfying a place to live today as it was for residents in the early 1980s. They are considerably more satisfied than residents were 10 years ago, during an economic downturn when county residents were in a pessimistic mood.

More than nine in 10 residents say they are very satisfied (67%) or somewhat satisfied (26%) with their house or apartment. Only one in 12 is dissatisfied. The percentage of residents very satisfied with their housing is identical to the percentage in the 1982 survey and significantly higher than in 1991.

More than nine in 10 also describe themselves as very satisfied (68%) or somewhat satisfied (25%) with the neighborhoods in which they live. Fewer than one in 12 express any degree of dissatisfaction with their neighborhoods. Again, these results are almost identical to 1982 survey results, and residents today are considerably more satisfied with their neighborhoods than residents were in 1991.

The county's major racial/ethnic groups vary in residential satisfaction, but a large percentage of all groups are highly satisfied. Non-Hispanic whites (71%) are more likely than Latinos (55%) and Asians (61%) to say they are very satisfied with their homes. Non-Hispanic whites (71%) are also more likely than Latinos (59%) and Asians (60%) to be very satisfied with their neighborhoods.

Homeowners are more pleased than renters with their homes (78% to 45%) and neighborhoods (74% to 55%). Similarly, those living in detached homes are more satisfied with their residential conditions than those living in apartments. Residential satisfaction in Orange County also tends to increase with age, household income, and education. South County residents are more likely than North County residents to say they are very satisfied with their homes (74% to 64%) and very satisfied with their neighborhoods (80% to 63%).

	<u>All Adults</u>		
	1982	1991	2001
<i>How satisfied are you with the house or apartment in which you live?</i>			
Very satisfied	67%	56%	<b>67%</b>
Somewhat satisfied	30	35	<b>26</b>
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	6	<b>4</b>
Very dissatisfied	1	3	<b>3</b>
<i>How satisfied are you with the neighborhood in which you live?</i>			
Very satisfied	64%	54%	<b>68%</b>
Somewhat satisfied	30	35	<b>25</b>
Somewhat dissatisfied	5	7	<b>4</b>
Very dissatisfied	1	4	<b>3</b>

1982 and 1991 results are from the Orange County Annual Survey, UCI, by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz.

## Local Public Service Ratings

Residents of Orange County give their public services ratings as high as residents did in the early 1980s, indicating once again how little growth seems to have affected perceived quality of life. When the excellent and good rankings are combined, residents today are about as likely as they were in 1982 to give positive ratings to local roads (68% to 72%) and local parks and beaches (81% to 82%) and more likely to give positive ratings to local police protection (82% to 76%) and local public schools (61% to 45%).

Moreover, positive ratings of local services have improved dramatically over the ratings in 1991: Excellent or good ratings are at least 10 points higher for local roads (68% to 58%), local parks and beaches (81% to 71%), local police (82% to 59%), and local public schools (61% to 28%).

"How would you rate some of the public services  
in your local area – are they excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

	<u>All Adults</u>		
	1982	1991	2001
<b><i>Local police protection</i></b>			
<b>Excellent/Good</b>	76%	59%	<b>82%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	16	28	<b>11</b>
<b>Poor</b>	4	9	<b>3</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	4	4	<b>4</b>
<b><i>Local parks, beaches, and other public recreational facilities</i></b>			
<b>Excellent/Good</b>	82%	71%	<b>81%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	10	18	<b>13</b>
<b>Poor</b>	2	8	<b>4</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	6	3	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Local freeways, streets, and roads</i></b>			
<b>Excellent/Good</b>	72%	58%	<b>68%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	21	32	<b>22</b>
<b>Poor</b>	6	9	<b>10</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	1	1	<b>0</b>
<b><i>Local public schools</i></b>			
<b>Excellent/Good</b>	45%	28%	<b>61%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	14	28	<b>12</b>
<b>Poor</b>	8	27	<b>6</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	33	17	<b>21</b>

1982 and 1991 results are from the Orange County Annual Survey, UCI, by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz.

There are no differences across racial and ethnic groups in the proportion of excellent or good ratings given to local roads. However, non-Hispanic whites are more positive than others about local parks and local police, and Asians and Latinos are more positive than non-Hispanic whites about local public schools.

The ratings of public services do vary across regions: South County residents are consistently more positive than North County residents about local roads (79% to 63%), local parks and beaches (89% to 78%), local police (87% to 80%), and local public schools (68% to 58%).

Higher-income residents are more positive than others about local police, parks, and schools. Residents with children in the public schools give their local schools higher ratings than others do (78% to 52%).

"How would you rate some of the public services in your local area – are they excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

	Race/Ethnicity		
	Asian	Latino	White
<b><i>Local police protection</i></b>			
Excellent/Good	76%	76%	86%
Fair	17	17	8
Poor	2	4	2
Don't know	5	3	4
<b><i>Local parks, beaches, and other public recreational facilities</i></b>			
Excellent/Good	75%	76%	83%
Fair	18	15	11
Poor	5	6	3
Don't know	2	3	3
<b><i>Local freeways, streets, and roads</i></b>			
Excellent/Good	68%	68%	67%
Fair	21	20	23
Poor	11	12	9
Don't know	0	0	1
<b><i>Local public schools</i></b>			
Excellent/Good	62%	69%	59%
Fair	13	12	12
Poor	4	5	5
Don't know	21	14	24

## County Regional Issues

### County Regional Problems

Despite the general satisfaction with neighborhoods, county residents do perceive problems in their regions of the county when asked about specific issues. Most residents think that traffic and housing are at least somewhat of a problem, and about half said that traffic congestion (54%) and affordable housing (48%) are big problems. In contrast, although seven in 10 see at least some problem with growth and development, only 29 percent saw this as a big problem. Similarly, although about half see lack of jobs as at least somewhat of a problem, only 19 percent see it as a big problem.

Orange County residents give nearly identical ratings as residents statewide to problems with traffic, housing, and growth in their regions. However, 47 percent of Orange County residents think a lack of jobs is at least somewhat of a problem, compared to 61 percent of California residents. Orange County residents complain less than Los Angeles residents about traffic congestion and the lack of jobs, and they complain less than Bay Area residents about traffic, housing, and growth.

"In your region, how much of a problem is ..."

<u>All Adults</u>				
	California	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange County
<i>Traffic congestion on freeways and major roads</i>				
Big problem	60%	82%	69%	54%
Somewhat of a problem	23	14	20	35
Not a problem	17	4	11	10
Don't know	0	0	0	1
<i>Availability of housing you can afford</i>				
Big problem	47%	74%	40%	48%
Somewhat of a problem	26	17	34	28
Not a problem	25	8	24	20
Don't know	2	1	2	4
<i>Population growth and development</i>				
Big problem	29%	39%	28%	29%
Somewhat of a problem	37	40	38	38
Not a problem	32	19	31	30
Don't know	2	2	3	3
<i>Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs</i>				
Big problem	29%	18%	31%	19%
Somewhat of a problem	32	30	33	28
Not a problem	35	49	32	44
Don't know	4	0	4	9

Source for California, Bay Area, and Los Angeles is the PPIC Statewide Survey, May 2001. The phrase "part of Orange County" replaced the word "region" in the series of questions asked in Orange County.



As for differences within Orange County, 52 percent of North County residents think that lack of well-paying jobs is at least somewhat of a problem in their region, compared to 34 percent in the South County. However, the North County and South County have similar perceptions of traffic, housing, and growth.

Problem perceptions differ across population groups. Non-Hispanic whites tend to be unhappier than other groups about traffic and growth issues, while Latinos are especially likely to say that the availability of well-paying jobs and affordable housing are problematic. People with higher incomes and college education are more likely than others to cite traffic and growth as major regional issues. Those with lower incomes and less education are more likely to mention jobs and affordable housing as big problems. Older residents are more likely to mention traffic and growth, and less likely to mention housing and jobs, as significant problems in their regions.

"In your part of Orange County today, how much of a problem is ..."

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
<b>Traffic congestion</b>						
Big problem	54%	56%	49%	56%	48%	51%
Somewhat of a problem	35	33	39	36	32	39
Not a problem	10	10	12	8	19	10
Don't know	1	1	0	0	1	0
<b>Availability of housing you can afford</b>						
Big problem	48%	49%	47%	47%	52%	44%
Somewhat of a problem	28	26	30	28	25	29
Not a problem	20	21	19	21	19	23
Don't know	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Population growth and development</b>						
Big problem	29%	28%	32%	32%	23%	19%
Somewhat of a problem	38	38	39	39	36	32
Not a problem	30	31	27	27	37	42
Don't know	3	3	2	2	4	7
<b>Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs</b>						
Big problem	19%	23%	9%	13%	39%	11%
Somewhat of a problem	28	29	25	28	29	31
Not a problem	44	39	55	48	26	49
Don't know	9	9	11	11	6	9

## Causes of County Regional Problems

The survey asked Orange County residents to rate three possible causes of the problems in their part of the county. These three causes were also rated by residents of San Diego County in a July 2000 survey, one of the PPIC Statewide Survey's regional surveys. Half of Orange County residents believe that too-fast growth (55%) and the government spending money on the wrong things (52%) are major causes of the problems facing their regions. Lack of convenient public transportation was rated a major cause by less than half (39%) of the residents. Among those residents who cite traffic as a big problem, fewer than half (46%) say that a lack of public transit is a major cause of regional problems.

Despite the county's reputation for anti-tax and anti-government sentiments, Orange County residents are much less likely than San Diego County residents to say that government spending money on the wrong things is a major cause of the problems facing their regions (52% to 75%). Orange County residents are slightly less likely than San Diego County residents to rate too-fast growth as a major cause of problems in their part of the county (55% to 63%). Residents of the two counties are equally likely to see lack of convenient transportation as a cause of regional problems.

Within Orange County, there are regional differences. Residents in the South County are more likely than North County residents to consider too-fast growth a major cause of their region's problems (62% to 52%). People in the North County are more likely than people in the South County to cite government spending money on the wrong things (55% to 44%) as the major cause of regional problems.

Across racial and ethnic groups, non-Hispanic whites (57%) and Latinos (52%) are more likely than Asians (42%) to say that too fast growth is a major cause of the problems in their part of the county. Latinos are at least 10 percent more likely than non-Hispanic whites or Asians to rate government spending money on the wrong things as a major cause of their region's problems.

"Is \_\_\_\_\_ a major cause or a minor cause of the problems facing your part of San Diego County / Orange County?"

	<u>All Adults</u>	
	San Diego County	Orange County
<i>Too-fast growth</i>		
Major cause	63%	55%
Minor cause	35	41
Don't know	2	4
<i>Government spending money on the wrong things</i>		
Major cause	75%	52%
Minor cause	19	37
Don't know	6	11
<i>Lack of convenient public transportation</i>		
Major cause	40%	39%
Minor cause	56	53
Don't know	4	8

\* Source for San Diego County is the PPIC Statewide Survey of San Diego County, July 2000.

"Is \_\_\_\_\_ a major cause or a minor cause of the problems facing your part of Orange County?"

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
<b><i>Too-fast growth</i></b>						
Major cause	55%	52%	62%	57%	52%	42%
Minor cause	41	44	34	40	41	52
Don't know	4	4	4	3	7	6
<b><i>Lack of convenient public transportation</i></b>						
Major cause	39%	37%	45%	39%	38%	38%
Minor cause	53	55	47	53	52	54
Don't know	8	8	8	8	10	8
<b><i>Government spending money on the wrong things</i></b>						
Major cause	52%	55%	44%	49%	59%	47%
Minor cause	37	35	43	41	29	36
Don't know	11	10	13	10	12	17

### Preparing for Regional Growth

Most Orange County residents apparently believe that their local government has enough money to cope with growth: 58 percent say that local governments have adequate funding for the roads and other infrastructure projects that are needed. They are more positive on this question than Californians were overall in a May 2001 PPIC Statewide Survey.

On this fiscal issue, there is general agreement in the North and South County regions and across population groups. Most liberals, moderates, and conservatives and Republicans, Democrats, and independent voters believe that local governments do have adequate funding for the infrastructure projects needed to prepare for future growth. Agreement is also general across age, education, and income groups, and Latinos (65%) are even more optimistic than non-Hispanic whites (56%) that their local governments have funds for infrastructure.

"Overall, do you think your local government does or does not have adequate funding for the roads, transit, and other infrastructure projects that are needed to prepare for future growth?"

	All Adults	
	California	Orange County
Does	43%	58%
Does not	48	31
Don't know	9	11

Source for California is the PPIC Statewide Survey, May 2001.

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## Orange County Issues

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### Most important Issue

Overall, Orange County residents are most likely to name growth and development (21%) as the most important problem facing Orange County today, followed by the El Toro airport controversy (14%), housing issues (13%), and traffic issues (12%). Nearly half name three growth-related issues – traffic, housing, and growth and development as their top concerns. Other topics such as schools, crime, the economy, pollution, and immigration are each noted by less than 10 percent of residents. These figures mark a distinct shift in concerns from a year ago, when Orange County residents were most likely to mention crime (24%) and schools (17%) as their top issues.

There are, however, regional and ethnic differences in concern. In the South County, the El Toro Airport controversy is the top issue this year, as it was in the 2000 Orange County Annual Survey. Non-Hispanic whites are more inclined than others to mention growth and the El Toro Airport controversy, while Latinos are more likely than others to mention crime and education, and Asians are more likely than others to name housing as their top county issue.

Interestingly, only 1 percent of Orange County residents name the state's electricity problems as the biggest issue facing the county. In the PPIC Statewide Survey in July 2001, 56 percent of California residents named the electricity problem as the top issue in the state.

"What do you think is the most important issue facing Orange county today?"

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
Population growth and development	21%	20%	23%	25%	10%	18%
El Toro Airport controversy	14	7	30	18	2	11
Housing issues	13	14	11	12	14	20
Traffic and transportation	12	12	10	11	12	14
Schools and education	7	9	4	6	11	7
Crime and gangs	5	6	2	3	12	3
Jobs and the economy	4	5	2	2	11	4
Environment and pollution	4	3	4	4	1	3
Immigration, legal and illegal	3	3	2	3	2	0
Electricity problem	1	1	1	1	3	2
Local government	1	1	1	1	1	0
Poverty, the poor, the homeless, welfare	1	1	1	1	1	1
Drugs and drug abuse	1	1	0	0	2	0
Government regulations	1	1	0	1	0	1
Other	2	4	3	3	3	2
Don't know	10	12	6	9	15	14

## The County's Population Growth

Many county residents see the county's population growth revealed in the 2000 Census as a bad thing. In fact, they are twice as likely to see it as a bad thing than as a good thing (41% to 22%). People in the North and South County, overall, evaluate growth about the same. However, perceptions vary considerably by race and ethnicity: Non-Hispanic whites are much more likely to think that growth has been a bad thing than a good thing (47% to 18%). Latinos and Asians are more divided on the implications of county population growth, with the largest percentage saying it has made no difference.

According to demographers, births to current residents are by far the greatest cause of population growth in the state's major regions, including Orange County. However, most Orange County residents think otherwise: 48 percent believe immigration is the single biggest factor in the growth, while 34 percent name migration from elsewhere in California or from other states. Only 7 percent point to births, and 3 percent say state and local policies. Across regions of the county and racial and ethnic groups, births to current residents are overlooked as a cause of county growth. North County and South County vary in their perceptions of the importance of immigration versus internal migration. Compared to Asians and non-Hispanic whites, Latinos are less likely to mention migration from within the United States as a cause of county population growth.

"According to the 2000 census, Orange County's population grew by 435,000 since 1990 – from about 2.4 million to 2.8 million. Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing or does it make no difference?"

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
Good thing	22%	21%	23%	18%	32%	29%
Bad thing	41	40	43	47	27	26
No difference, don't know	37	39	34	35	41	45

"Which of the following do you think is the single biggest factor that is causing the county's population to grow?"

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
Immigration from other countries	48%	56%	31%	49%	52%	39%
Migration from elsewhere in California and the U.S.	34	27	50	37	19	45
Children born to current residents	7	7	7	6	10	6
State and local policies	3	3	4	2	7	4
Other/Don't know	8	7	8	6	12	6

## The Consequences of Population Growth

What are the most negative consequences of county population growth? For two in three residents, high housing costs (37%) and traffic congestion (31%) top the list. Fewer than three in 10 name environmental issues, specifically the loss of open space (16%) and pollution (11%). However, response varies slightly across regions: North County residents are more likely to mention high housing costs, while South County residents focus more on traffic and open space. Latinos and Asians are more likely to name housing, while non-Hispanic whites mention traffic and open space more often.

What are the most positive consequences of county population growth? Residents most often named an improving job market and economy (41%), followed by increasing social diversity (21%), more state and local tax revenues (15%), and improvement of services and amenities (13%). For all racial and ethnic groups and in both regions, the economic benefits of growth outweigh all other issues.

Most residents were not happy when told that Orange County is expected to gain about 650,000 people and reach the 3.5 million mark in population by 2020. Sixty-five percent believe this increase will make the county a less desirable place to live. Although this negative response was pervasive across regions and racial and ethnic groups, non-Hispanic whites (73%) were much more likely than Latinos and Asians (48% each) to say that growth would make the county a less desirable place to live.

"Which of the following do you think is the most negative consequence of Orange County's population growth?"

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
High housing costs	37%	40%	31%	32%	51%	44%
Traffic congestion	31	29	33	34	19	29
Loss of open space	16	15	20	19	9	12
Pollution	11	11	11	10	14	12
Other/Don't know	5	5	5	5	7	3

"By 2020, Orange County is predicted to reach a population of 3.5 million residents, gaining about 650,000 more people. Do you think this will make Orange County a more desirable place to live or a less desirable place to live or will it make no difference?"

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
More desirable place to live	10%	9%	10%	6%	21%	15%
Less desirable place to live	65	65	65	73	48	48
No difference	23	23	23	20	27	33
Other/Don't know	2	2	2	1	3	4

## El Toro Airport

Orange County residents feel the same now as they did a year ago about the county government's proposal to transform the closed El Toro Marine Corps Air Station into an international airport: Half oppose it and about four in 10 favor it. Residents of the North County are equally divided on the airport issue (44% to 44%), but South County residents overwhelmingly oppose an El Toro international airport (76% to 19%). Among the voters of Orange County, 56 percent oppose the airport plan, 36 percent favor it, and 8 percent are undecided.

The county's residents also feel the same now as a year ago about how the Board of Supervisors is handling the airport issue: Half (49%) disapprove, while one in four approve. Disapproval is much higher than approval in the North County (42% to 27%) as well as in the South County (71% to 17%). Among voters, 55 percent disapprove and only 24 percent approve of the job the supervisors have done.

The recent proposal to reduce the number of annual passengers from 28 million to 18 million does not generate more support for the proposed airport: 54 percent oppose and 36 percent would favor an El Toro airport if there were a reduction of 10-million passengers annually. Both North County residents (46% opposed and 42% in favor) and South County residents (76% opposed and 19% in favor) are as opposed to this idea as to the idea of the airport in general. Among voters, 34 percent are in favor and 58 percent are opposed to the reduced-passenger airport proposal.

In contrast, there is considerable support for a citizens' initiative that would authorize only non-aviation uses, including a large park, for the El Toro Marine Corps Air Base: 62 percent of residents would vote yes and 31 percent would vote no on this initiative. Supporters greatly outnumber opponents in both the North County (57% to 36%) and the South County (79% to 17%). Among voters, 61 percent would vote "yes" on the initiative and 34 percent would vote "no" if the election were held today.

	<u>All Adults</u>				
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<i>Do you favor or oppose the proposal to transform the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station into an international airport?</i>					
Favor	41%	41%	42%	35%	<b>38%</b>
Oppose	48	48	46	54	<b>52</b>
Don't know	11	11	12	11	<b>10</b>
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that county government is handling the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station conversion issue?</i>					
Approve	23%	29%	30%	23%	<b>25%</b>
Disapprove	43	43	42	49	<b>49</b>
Don't know	34	28	28	28	<b>26</b>

	All Adults	North	South	Voters
<i>The current proposal for an El Toro airport includes about 28 million annual passengers. Some have suggested an airport with fewer passengers. Do you favor or oppose the El Toro Airport if it includes a limit of 18 million passengers?</i>				
Favor	36%	42%	19%	34%
Oppose	54	46	76	58
Don't know	10	12	5	8
<i>An initiative for the March 2002 ballot would authorize the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station to be used only for non-aviation purposes, including a multipurpose central park, open space, a nature preserve, school facilities, and other uses. If an election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?</i>				
Yes	62%	57%	79%	61%
No	31	36	17	34
Don't know	7	7	4	5

### Traffic and Transportation Issues

Orange County residents have not changed their commuting habits over the past 20 years: Eight in 10 still commute to work by driving alone. In the last 10 years, the perception of traffic problems also hasn't changed: Six in 10 still say traffic congestion is a problem and two in 10 say it is a great problem on their commute to work. When asked to name their favorite transportation projects for Orange County, residents were equally likely to say building a light rail system (36%) and widening freeways (33%), while fewer named more buses or more carpool lanes. The county's toll roads are popular: 54 percent say they have been a good thing for Orange County, and 59 percent favor the construction of the Foothill Toll Road South.

	All Adults	North	South
<i>Do you think that the three toll roads – the Foothill, the San Joaquin Hills, and the Eastern Corridor – have been a good thing or a bad thing for the Orange County transportation system, or have they made no difference?</i>			
Good thing	54%	49%	69%
Bad thing	12	13	8
No difference	25	27	19
Don't know	9	11	4
<i>Do you favor or oppose construction of the Foothill Toll Road South, which will run from the I-5 south of San Clemente to the existing Foothill Toll Road along Mission Viejo?</i>			
Favor	59%	56%	66%
Oppose	26	27	23
Don't know	15	17	11



## County Government

Ratings of county government performance in solving problems have improved significantly from a year ago. However, ratings of the responsiveness and fiscal performance are unchanged.

Forty-three percent of residents think the county government does an excellent or good job in solving problems in Orange County, compared with 29 percent a year ago. The current ratings are similar to perceptions in 1998 and 1999 and considerably higher than in the years immediately following the 1994 county-government bankruptcy.

Nevertheless, only about one in 10 residents believe that county officials pay a lot of attention to what the people think when making policy decisions. About half think they pay some attention, and four in 10 think they pay very little or no attention to what the people think. This perception of county officials' responsiveness has not changed over time.

About four in 10 residents believe that the people who run county government waste a lot of the money paid in taxes. This perception has declined slightly from a year ago, but it has changed very little since we began asking this question in the 1996 Orange County Annual Survey.

	<u>All Adults</u>					
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<i>How would you rate the performance of county government in solving problems in Orange County?</i>						
<b>Excellent/Good</b>	24%	26%	38%	40%	29%	<b>43%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	52	50	46	44	50	<b>38</b>
<b>Poor</b>	20	20	10	12	17	<b>14</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	4	4	6	4	4	<b>5</b>
<i>When deciding policies, how much attention do county officials pay to what the people think?</i>						
<b>A lot</b>	7%	6%	12%	12%	7%	<b>9%</b>
<b>Some</b>	52	50	51	50	47	<b>48</b>
<b>Very little</b>	31	35	28	29	36	<b>29</b>
<b>No attention</b>	7	7	5	7	7	<b>9</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	4	2	3	<b>5</b>
<i>How much do the people who run county government waste the money we pay in taxes?</i>						
<b>A lot</b>	39%	40%	36%	35%	42%	<b>37%</b>
<b>Some</b>	45	44	47	47	40	<b>46</b>
<b>Very little</b>	9	9	10	10	11	<b>10</b>
<b>None</b>	2	2	2	2	2	<b>1</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	5	6	5	<b>6</b>

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## Economic and Political Trends

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### Consumer Confidence

In Orange County, confidence in the economy has taken a strong turn for the worse, largely because of pessimism about the national economy. The five-question Orange County Consumer Confidence Index now registers 93. This represents a 19-point drop from the 2000 Orange County Annual survey and the largest annual decline since 1990 – the beginning of the last recession. The Orange County index is similar to the national index, which now stands at 92. The national index dropped 17 points from last year.

The Consumer Confidence Index is calculated from a formula provided by the University of Michigan, which computes scores for each of 5 questions (better – worse + 100), then adjusts for the 1966 base period. The national index score was 100 in 1966. A score above 100 on the Consumer Confidence Index is considered very good, since 85 is the average national score over the 50 years the survey has been conducted.

Orange County results for the individual items that make up the index:

- There has been a dramatic decline in optimism about the national economy: 48 percent see good times in the next year, compared to 70 percent in 2000. Forty-five percent see bad times ahead compared to 14 percent in 2000.
- The long-term outlook on the U.S. economy is now mixed: 46 percent see good economic times over the next five years, while 45 percent expect bad times. In 2000, 60 percent predicted good times and 21 percent predicted bad times.
- Fifty-five percent say they are better off now than last year, and 21 percent say they are worse off. While the proportion who say they are better off is unchanged from last year, the number saying they are worse off has increased: In 2000, 13 percent said they were worse off.
- The percent who say they will be better off next year is down six points from last year (45% vs. 51%); however, the percent saying they will be worse off is only slightly higher (7% vs. 5%).
- Positive attitudes about making large purchases have declined seven points from a year ago. Sixty-three percent now call it a good time for such expenses, down from 70 percent in 2000. The percent calling it a bad time to buy big items increased from 10 percent to 26 percent.

Less affluent Orange County residents show less consumer confidence: For instance, those making less than \$40,000 per year have an index rating of 88, compared to 98 for those making more than \$80,000. Despite their lower incomes, Latinos have a slightly better index score (96) than do non-Hispanic whites (93). Men (98) have higher consumer confidence scores than women (88).

**Five-Question Consumer Confidence Index**

	<u>All Adults</u>															
	'86	'87	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	'01
<b>Orange County</b>	109	104	106	105	85	84	75	73	89	90	101	110	105	111	112	<b>93</b>
<b>United States</b>	92	94	95	96	76	82	77	75	92	94	95	107	100	105	109	<b>92</b>

Source for Orange County from 1986 to 2000 is the Orange County Annual Survey at UCI by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz. Source for the United States is the University of Michigan.

## Overall Mood

Even as talk in the nation has turned to prospects of an economic recession, overall attitudes about Orange County remain very upbeat. Ratings of the county economy and quality of life are basically the same as in the past few years.

Today, 74 percent of residents give the county economy an excellent or good rating; 21 percent say it is fair, and 4 percent say it is in poor condition. The bullish attitudes toward the economy have persisted since the 1998 survey. They stand in stark contrast to the trends of the early 1990s: When the state and nation were in a deep economic recession, only two in 10 residents gave positive ratings.

As for quality of life, nine in 10 residents say that things are going very well (36%) or somewhat well (54%), and only 10 percent say things are going badly. Prior to 1998, Orange County's quality of life ratings were never quite this high. During the early 1990s, at a low point, about 60 percent of residents said things were going well in the county.

The positive ratings of the county's economy and quality of life tend to increase with higher income. Non-Hispanic whites give higher ratings of the economy than do Latinos or Asians, but there are no differences across racial and ethnic groups in the county's quality of life ratings.

"In general, how would you rate the economy in Orange County today?"

<u>All Adults</u>										
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>Excellent/ Good</b>	19%	20%	28%	19%	44%	63%	76%	78%	79%	<b>74%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	52	49	54	50	45	32	20	19	17	<b>21</b>
<b>Poor</b>	28	30	17	30	10	4	3	2	2	<b>4</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	<b>1</b>

Source for Orange County from 1987 to 2000 is the Orange County Annual Survey at UCI by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz.

"Thinking about the quality of life in Orange County, how do you think things are going – very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?"

<u>All Adults</u>															
	'87	'88	'89	'90	'91	'92	'93	'94	'95	'96	'97	'98	'99	'00	2001
<b>Going well</b>	88%	85%	77%	75%	66%	60%	60%	71%	68%	82%	88%	91%	92%	91%	<b>90%</b>
<b>Going badly</b>	12	15	23	25	34	40	40	29	32	18	12	9	8	9	<b>10</b>

Source for Orange County from 1987 to 2000 is the Orange County Annual Survey at UCI by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz.

## Real Estate Market

In the face of a decline in the stock market and lower interest rates, Orange County residents seem to be expressing a more positive attitude toward housing as an investment.

Among homeowners, 83 percent think that buying a home in Orange County is an excellent or good investment; 11 percent say it would be a fair investment; and only 5 percent think it would be a poor investment. Since 1997, at least seven in 10 homeowners have described owning a home in the county as an excellent or good investment. This year's scores are significantly higher than in recent years and a marked improvement from the perceptions of housing as an investment in the early-to-mid 1990s.

Among renters, 70 percent believe that buying a home in the county is an excellent or good investment; 17 percent consider it a fair investment; and 11 percent think it would be a poor investment. Since 1997, roughly six in 10 renters have described buying a home as an excellent or good investment. Once again, this year's scores are much higher than in recent years and significantly higher than in the early-to-mid 1990s.

For both homeowners and renters, the positive perceptions of home buying as an investment increase with income. There are no differences across racial and ethnic groups, age categories, or regions. In general, overwhelming numbers of residents in all demographic groups see buying a home in Orange County as an excellent or good investment.

"Do you think that buying a home in Orange County is an excellent, good, fair, or poor investment?"

	<u>All Adults</u>								
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<b>Homeowners</b>									
<b>Excellent/ Good</b>	59%	57%	50%	60%	70%	75%	75%	75%	<b>83%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	26	28	31	30	23	18	19	18	<b>11</b>
<b>Poor</b>	14	14	18	8	6	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	<b>1</b>
<b>Renters</b>									
<b>Excellent/ Good</b>	53%	47%	41%	45%	56%	61%	56%	57%	<b>70%</b>
<b>Fair</b>	25	30	32	34	29	25	27	25	<b>17</b>
<b>Poor</b>	20	20	25	17	9	12	13	15	<b>11</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	2	3	2	4	6	2	4	3	<b>2</b>

Source for Orange County from 1993 to 2000 is the Orange County Annual Survey at UCI by Mark Baldassare and Cheryl Katz.

## Governor’s Approval Ratings

As Governor Gray Davis begins his bid for a second term, Orange County residents are not very happy with his overall job performance. Forty percent approve of his performance in office, while 53 percent disapprove. Davis’ low approval ratings partly reflect the strength of the GOP in the county: Only 25 percent of Republicans approve of his performance. However, his approval rating is only slightly higher among independent voters (38%) and rises to just a bare majority even among Democrats (52%).

Reflecting the Democratic leanings of California, Davis has more support statewide: In the July PPIC Statewide Survey, 44 percent approved and 45 percent disapproved of his performance. What is noteworthy about Orange County is that residents from all political groups appear to be less happy with Davis than groups statewide: Disapproval was higher in the Orange County survey than in the July statewide survey among Democrats (42% to 34%), Republicans (71% to 66%), and independent voters (54% to 46%).

Residents are also unhappy with the governor's response to the electricity crisis: 63 percent disapprove of his performance. His disapproval ratings are higher for his approach to the electricity problem than they are for his overall job performance among all political groups: 76 to 71 percent among Republicans, 68 to 54 percent among independent voters, and 55 to 42 percent among Democrats.

In the July PPIC Statewide Survey, 51 percent of residents statewide said they disapproved of Davis’ handling of the crisis. Orange County residents outside of the GOP are more unhappy with Davis than we found statewide: Democrats (55% to 41%) and independents (68% to 50%) are more disapproving in our Orange County survey than in our statewide survey, while Republicans largely feel about the same (76% to 72%).

There are important differences between demographic groups. Latinos are much more positive than non-Hispanic whites about Davis overall (55% to 34%) and on the electricity problem (47% to 24%). Similarly, there are variations across socioeconomic groups. For instance, high school graduates are much happier than those with a college degree with Davis overall (52% to 35%), and the difference is even larger for the issue of electricity (44% to 25%). Income has almost the same effect.

	All Adults	Party Registration			
		Democrat	Republican	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling his job as governor?</i>					
Approve	40%	52%	25%	38%	52%
Disapprove	53	42	71	54	35
Don't know	7	6	4	8	13
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Davis is handling the issue of electricity in California?</i>					
Approve	31%	40%	20%	27%	41%
Disapprove	63	55	76	68	49
Don't know	6	5	4	5	10

## President's Approval Ratings

George W. Bush is popular in the GOP heartland. A majority of county residents (57%) approve of his performance as president, while 36 percent disapprove. The ratio of approval to disapproval in Orange County is higher than the ratio in the national survey by CBS/*New York Times* in late August (50% to 38%) and much higher than in the PPIC Statewide Survey in July (47% to 43%).

Bush has the solid support of Republican voters, and a slim majority of independent voters like the job he is doing in office. Three in 10 Democrats approve of Bush. These results are similar to the ratings given by Democrats and Republicans in the July PPIC survey. Independent voters in Orange County, however, are more likely to support Bush than are independents in the state as a whole (51% to 42%).

Despite the signs of weakness in the national economy, President Bush appears to be taking little blame, so far. Opinions of his performance with respect to the economy are virtually identical to his overall performance ratings. Fifty-six percent approve and 36 percent disapprove of his handling of the economy. Democrats are highly negative (62%), and Republicans are overwhelmingly positive (78%). A slim majority of independent voters (52%) approve of the job he is doing with the economy. There is little in the way of demographic differences for these presidential ratings: Even Latinos, who tend to be Democratic, were just as approving as non-Hispanic whites, both overall and in terms of the president's handling of economic issues.

	All Adults	<u>Party Registration</u>			
		Democrat	Republican	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as president?</i>					
Approve	57%	32%	81%	51%	57%
Disapprove	36	62	16	43	30
Don't know	7	6	3	6	13
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling economic issues?</i>					
Approve	56%	30%	78%	52%	56%
Disapprove	36	62	16	41	30
Don't know	8	8	6	7	14

## Computers and the Internet

Orange County residents are “wired,” but no more so than a year ago, and no more so than the rest of California. Today, 80 percent of residents say they use a computer at least sometimes, compared to 77 percent last year. The same is true of Internet use: 71 percent say they use the Internet at least sometimes, compared to 67 percent last year.

A “Digital Divide” persists in Orange County: 85 percent of non-Hispanic whites use computers and 78 percent use the Internet; the same numbers for Latinos are 62 percent and 45 percent, respectively. Asians by both measures are even more tech-savvy than either non-Hispanic whites or Latinos. Furthermore, although our statewide survey shows that the gap between non-Hispanic whites and Latinos statewide is shrinking, the gap in Orange County remains the same as last year.

The wealthier and less ethnically-diverse South County differs from the less affluent and more ethnically diverse North County in having higher computer use (86% to 78%) and Internet use (82% to 67%).

Interestingly, 18 to 34 year olds are less likely than those between the ages of 35 and 55 to use computers (82% to 88%) and the Internet (74% to 79%) – perhaps a reflection of a large number of younger Latinos – while those 55 and older are the least likely to use computers (67%) and the Internet (58%).

Fewer Orange County residents use computers at home (67%) than use them overall (80%), a difference that is unchanged from last year (64% vs. 77%). The digital divide between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites in home computer use also remains unchanged from last year and stands at 36 percentage points in the current survey (37% to 73%).

	All Adults	Region		Race/Ethnicity		
		North	South	White	Latino	Asian
<i>Do you ever use a computer at home, at work or at school?</i>						
Yes, often	63%	59%	73%	68%	39%	76%
Yes, sometimes	17	19	13	17	23	17
No	20	22	14	15	38	7
<i>Do you ever go on line to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send or receive e-mail?</i>						
Yes, often	54%	49%	66%	60%	28%	71%
Yes, sometimes	17	18	15	18	17	16
No	9	11	5	7	17	6
Do not use computer	20	22	14	15	38	7
<i>Do you have a personal computer at home, and if so, how often do you use it?</i>						
Yes, use it often	48%	43%	59%	53%	24%	60%
Yes, use it sometimes	19	18	19	20	13	23
Yes, never use it	5	6	4	5	6	1
Don't have a computer at home	28	33	18	22	57	16

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## Survey Methodology

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The Orange County Survey is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which is directed by Mark Baldassare, a senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, with research assistance from Lisa Cole and Eric McGhee. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine; however, the survey methodology and questions and the content of this report were solely determined by Mark Baldassare.

The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,004 Orange County adult residents interviewed from August 20 to August 31, 2001. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers, ensuring that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in Orange County were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to five times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing by using the "last birthday method" to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of Orange County's adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,004 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 Orange County adults were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. Sampling error is just one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing. Throughout the report, we refer to two geographic regions. North County refers to cities and communities north of the 55 Freeway, including Anaheim, Orange, Villa Park, La Habra, Brea, Buena Park, Fullerton, Placentia, Yorba Linda, La Palma, Cypress, Los Alamitos, Rossmoor, Seal Beach, Westminster, Midway City, Stanton, Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Tustin, Tustin Foothills, and Costa Mesa. South County refers to cities and communities south of the 55 Freeway, including Newport Beach, Irvine, Lake Forest, Newport Coast, Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel, Laguna Woods, Mission Viejo, Portola Hills, Rancho Santa Margarita, Foothill Ranch, Coto de Caza, Trabuco, Laguna Beach, Dana Point, San Clemente, Capistrano Beach, and San Juan Capistrano. In the analysis of questions on the proposed El Toro airport, we include Newport Beach in the North County.

We also present results for non-Hispanic whites (referred to in the tables as "whites"), Latinos, and Asians because each group accounts for a substantial number of the county's adult population. We also contrast the opinions of Democrats and Republicans with "other" or "independent" registered voters. This third category includes those who are registered to vote as "decline to state" as well as a fewer number who say they are members of other political parties.

In some cases, we compare the Orange County Survey responses to responses in the 1982-2000 Orange County Annual Surveys at the University of California, Irvine, the PPIC Statewide Surveys, and national surveys by the University of Michigan and CBS/*New York Times*.





**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY OF ORANGE COUNTY**  
**AUGUST 20-31, 2001**  
**2,004 ORANGE COUNTY ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH**  
**MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE**

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1. Is the place where you currently live a single family detached home, an attached home such as a condo or townhouse, an apartment, or a mobile home?

57% single family detached  
 18 attached  
 22 apartment  
 3 mobile home

2. Do you own or rent your present residence?

65% own  
 35 rent

3. How satisfied are you with the house or apartment in which you live – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

67% very satisfied  
 26 somewhat satisfied  
 4 somewhat dissatisfied  
 3 very dissatisfied

4. How satisfied are you with the neighborhood in which you live?

68% very satisfied  
 25 somewhat satisfied  
 4 somewhat dissatisfied  
 3 very dissatisfied

I'd like to ask how you would rate some of the public services in your local area.

5. How about local freeways, streets, and roads? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

19% excellent  
 49 good  
 22 fair  
 10 poor

6. How about local parks, beaches, and other public recreational facilities? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

34% excellent  
 47 good  
 13 fair  
 4 poor  
 2 don't know

7. How about local police protection? Would you say this is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

36% excellent  
 46 good  
 11 fair  
 3 poor  
 4 don't know

8. How about local public schools? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

24% excellent  
 37 good  
 12 fair  
 6 poor  
 21 don't know

9. In the past few years, do you think the population of your city or community has been growing rapidly, growing slowly, staying about the same, or declining?

65% growing rapidly  
 21 growing slowly  
 14 staying about the same  
 0 declining

10. Do you think that government regulations aimed at controlling growth in your city or community are too strict, about right, or not strict enough?

9% too strict  
 55 about right  
 36 not strict enough

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

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

54% big problem  
 35 somewhat of a problem  
 10 not a problem  
 1 don't know

12. How about population growth and development?

29% big problem  
 38 somewhat of a problem  
 30 not a problem  
 3 don't know

13. How about the availability of housing you can afford?

48% big problem  
 28 somewhat of a problem  
 20 not a problem  
 4 don't know

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

19% big problem  
 28 somewhat of a problem  
 44 not a problem  
 9 don't know

I am going to read some of the reasons people give for the problems in Orange County. For each, please tell me if you think this is a major cause or a minor cause of the problems facing your part of Orange County.

15. What about the government spending money on the wrong things?

52% major cause  
37 minor cause  
11 don't know

16. What about too-fast growth?

55% major cause  
41 minor cause  
4 don't know

17. What about a lack of convenient public transportation?

39% major cause  
53 minor cause  
8 don't know

18. Overall, do you think that your local government does or does not have adequate funding for the roads, transit, and other infrastructure projects that are needed to prepare for future growth in your part of Orange County?

58% does  
31 does not  
11 don't know

19. Next, we are interested in your opinions about Orange County as a whole. First, what do you think is the most important issue facing Orange County today? (*Code, don't read*)

21% population, growth and development  
14 El Toro Marine Air Base controversy  
13 housing issues  
12 traffic and transportation  
7 schools and education  
5 crime and gangs  
4 environment and pollution  
4 jobs and the economy  
3 immigration, legal and illegal  
1 drugs and drug abuse  
1 electricity problem  
1 government regulations  
1 local government  
1 poverty, the poor, the homeless, welfare  
2 other  
10 don't know

20. In general, how would you rate the economy in Orange County today – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

21% excellent  
53 good  
21 fair  
4 poor  
1 don't know

21. Do you think that buying a home in Orange County today is an excellent, good, fair, or poor investment?

35% excellent  
44 good  
13 fair  
7 poor  
1 don't know

22. Thinking about the quality of life in Orange County, how do you think things are going – very well, somewhat well, somewhat badly, or very badly?

36% very well  
54 somewhat well  
8 somewhat badly  
2 very badly

23. How would you rate the performance of county government in solving problems in Orange County – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

4% excellent  
39 good  
38 fair  
14 poor  
5 don't know

24. When your county government's officials decide what policies to adopt, how much attention do you think they pay to what the people think – a lot, some, very little, or no attention?

9% a lot  
48 some  
29 very little  
9 no attention  
5 don't know

25. In general, do you think the people who run the county government waste a lot, waste some, waste very little, or waste none of the money we pay in taxes?

37% waste a lot  
46 waste some  
10 waste very little  
1 waste none  
6 don't know

26. On another topic, do you approve or disapprove of the way that county government is handling the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station conversion issue?

25% approve  
49 disapprove  
26 don't know

27. Do you favor or oppose the proposal to transform the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station into an international airport?

38% favor  
52 oppose  
10 don't know

28. The current proposal for an El Toro airport includes about 28 million annual passengers. Some have suggested an airport with fewer passengers. Do you favor or oppose the El Toro airport if it includes a limit of about 18 million passengers?
- 36% favor
  - 54 oppose
  - 10 don't know
29. An initiative for the March 2002 ballot would authorize the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station to be used only for non-aviation purposes, including a multipurpose central park, open space, a nature preserve, school facilities, and other uses. If an election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?
- 62% yes
  - 31 no
  - 7 don't know
30. What is your current work status – full-time employed, part-time employed, or not employed?
- 60% full-time employed
  - 11 part-time employed
  - 29 not employed (*skip to question 33*)
31. How do you usually commute to work – drive alone, carpool, employer vanpool, public bus or public transit, or some other means?
- 81% drive alone
  - 8 carpool
  - 1 employer vanpool
  - 4 public bus or public transit
  - 6 other
32. On a typical day, how much of a problem is traffic congestion when you travel to and from work? Would you say it is no problem, somewhat of a problem, or a great problem?
- 40% no problem
  - 39 somewhat of a problem
  - 21 great problem
33. Which of the following transportation projects do you consider to be the priority for Orange County if public funds become available?
- 36% building a light rail system
  - 33 widening freeways
  - 16 expanding the public bus system
  - 13 adding carpool lanes to existing freeways
  - 2 don't know
34. Do you think that the three toll roads – the Foothill, the San Joaquin Hills, and the Eastern Corridor – have been a good thing or a bad thing for the Orange County transportation system, or have they made no difference?
- 54% good thing
  - 12 bad thing
  - 25 no difference
  - 9 don't know
35. Do you favor or oppose construction of the Foothill Toll Road South, which will run from the I-5 south of San Clemente to the existing Foothill Toll Road along Mission Viejo?
- 59% favor
  - 26 oppose
  - 15 don't know
36. According to the 2000 census, Orange County's population has grown by 435,000 residents since 1990 – from about 2.4 million to 2.8 million. Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing or does it make no difference?
- 22% good thing
  - 41 bad thing
  - 37 no difference, don't know
37. Which of the following do you think is the single biggest factor that is causing Orange County's population to grow: (a) children born to current residents; (b) immigration from other countries; (c) migration from elsewhere in California and the United States; (d) state and local policies?
- 48% immigration from other countries
  - 34 migration from elsewhere in California and the United States
  - 7 children born to current residents
  - 3 state and local policies
  - 8 other (*volunteered*) / don't know
38. Which of the following do you think is the most negative consequence of Orange County's population growth: (a) traffic congestion; (b) high housing costs; (c) pollution; (d) the loss of open space?
- 37% high housing costs
  - 31 traffic congestion
  - 16 the loss of open space
  - 11 pollution
  - 5 other (*volunteered*) / don't know
39. Which of the following do you think is the most positive consequence of Orange County's population growth: improving the job market and economy; (b) increasing social diversity; (c) more services and amenities; (d) more state and local tax revenues?
- 41% improving the job market and economy
  - 21 increasing social diversity
  - 15 more state and local tax revenues
  - 13 more services and amenities
  - 10 other (*volunteered*) / don't know
40. By 2020, Orange County is predicted to reach a population of about 3.5 million, gaining about 650,000 more people. Do you think this will make Orange County a more desirable or a less desirable place to live, or will it make no difference?
- 10% more desirable
  - 65 less desirable
  - 23 no difference
  - 2 don't know

41. Would you say that you and your family are financially better off or worse off than you were a year ago?
- 55% better off
  - 21 worse off
  - 21 same
  - 3 don't know
42. Do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off, worse off, or just about the same as now?
- 45% better off
  - 7 worse off
  - 45 same
  - 3 don't know
43. Turning to business conditions in the country as a whole, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?
- 48% good times
  - 45 bad times
  - 7 don't know
44. Looking ahead, in the country as a whole, will we have continued good times during the next 5 years, or will we have periods of widespread unemployment or depression?
- 46% good times
  - 45 periods of unemployment and depression
  - 9 don't know
45. About the big things that people buy for their homes, such as furniture, a refrigerator, a stove, a television and things like that – generally speaking, do you think now is a good or a bad time for people to buy major household items?
- 63% good time
  - 26 bad time
  - 11 don't know
46. On another subject, do you yourself use a computer at home, at work, or at school? (*if yes: Do you use it often or only sometimes?*)
- 63% yes, often
  - 17 yes, sometimes
  - 20 no (*skip to q. 48*)
47. Do you ever go on line to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send or receive e-mail? (*if yes: Do you do this often or only sometimes?*)
- 54% yes, often
  - 17 yes, sometimes
  - 9 no
  - 20 don't use a computer
48. Do you have any type of personal computer, including laptops, in your home? These do not include game machines such as Nintendo or Sega. (*if yes: Do you use it often, only sometimes, or never?*)
- 48% yes, often
  - 19 yes, sometimes
  - 5 yes, never
  - 28 no
49. On another topic, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain you are registered to vote? (*if yes: Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?*)
- 27% yes, Democrat
  - 35 yes, Republican
  - 3 yes, other party
  - 12 yes, independent
  - 23 no, not registered
50. Would you consider yourself to be politically very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle-of-the-road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?
- 9% very liberal
  - 20 somewhat liberal
  - 28 middle-of-the-road
  - 28 somewhat conservative
  - 12 very conservative
  - 3 don't know
51. On another topic, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as President?
- 57% approve
  - 36 disapprove
  - 7 don't know
52. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling economic issues?
- 56% approve
  - 36 disapprove
  - 8 don't know
53. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling his job as governor of California?
- 40% approve
  - 53 disapprove
  - 7 don't know
54. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Davis is handling the issue of electricity in California?
- 31% approve
  - 63 disapprove
  - 6 don't know

[Questions 55-61: demographic questions]

## PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

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