



# CONCEPTS

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

## **BUSINESS LEADERS' OPINIONS OF PARKS AND RECREATION:**

### **A SURVEY OF CALIFORNIA CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE**

**2002**



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
PLANNING DIVISION**

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# Business Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation

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# Summary of Survey Findings

## Introduction

Professionals in the park and recreation field understand the benefits and values that their efforts provide to individuals, communities and to society at large. They firmly believe that the lands, facilities and programs they administer constitute a substantial public good, and one deserving of widespread community support: civic, political and financial.

Is this positive belief in the great benefits of park facilities and recreation programs widely shared outside the limited ranks of park professionals? Are these views in fact broadly shared by the general public, by local elected officials, and by California's non-elected but still influential community business leaders?

The two most recent surveys of *Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California* (1992 and 1997) demonstrate the strong positive attitudes the California public has towards park facilities and recreation programs. A 2002 survey of four sets of elected and appointed public officials, *California Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation*, similarly shows these groups of state legislators, mayors, chairs of county boards of supervisors and county executives, operating at the state, county and city level, believe the government function of parks and recreation is a valuable public asset.

The present report shows that business leaders operating on a city or community level, through a survey of California's chambers of commerce, also think park facilities and recreation programs are a worthwhile community benefit. All five groups believe their community residents hold these same positive opinions of parks and recreation.

By comparing and contrasting the views of these different groups, the park and recreation professional can learn how to best work with the attitudes and opinions of recreation professionals, with those of the public at large, and with those of the community leaders who are in a position to provide (or withhold) the critical political, civic and financial support needed to make park facilities and recreation programs better. Examining these surveys can help the park and recreation professional learn how to best develop, modify and present their organization's efforts to mesh more closely with the spectrum of views held by these various constituencies.

## Survey Methodology

The survey of California chambers of commerce opinions about parks and recreation began in October 2002. There were 411 surveys distributed and 207 respondents. The chamber respondents represent about half of the total California chambers of commerce members on the California Chambers of Commerce Web site.

The questions in this chambers of commerce survey closely followed the format of questions given out in the four prior 2002 surveys of California legislators, mayors, county supervisors and county executives.

The actual survey document appears in the Appendix.

The first of four main questions in this and the previous surveys asked the respondents to estimate the value their community residents placed on various aspects of park

facilities and recreation programs. The second asked them to prioritize various local issues, including parks and recreation, the need for open space, population growth, the economy, schools, public safety, and basic infrastructure. A third asked them to rate their satisfaction with the current condition of many of these local issues, and a final question asked for their personal opinions on various statements about their local parks and recreation facilities and programs.

After a statewide review of the findings, the survey responses were then divided into those chambers coming from large, small and non-metropolitan counties. These county divisions come from the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which considers a county to be metropolitan if it, 1) has either one or more central cities with a population of at least 50,000 or is part of a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area with a population of at least 100,000 or, 2) if it is economically linked to a core metropolitan area through such factors as commuting patterns, population density or population growth.

Large metropolitan counties are those with a population of one million or more and small metropolitan counties have populations of less than one million. OMB defines a non-metropolitan, or rural county, as one located outside the boundaries of metropolitan areas and containing city populations of less than 50,000 people

### **Survey Findings - Statewide**

Responses statewide show a strongly held consensus that park facilities and recreation programs offer **safe, wholesome and fun programs and facilities that provide for family activities** and **improve the quality of life in the community**. The California chambers were also highly satisfied with **the availability of existing park facilities and recreation programs in their community**. They indicated less satisfaction with **the available housing and controlled growth**. These combined results explain why the local issue of **population growth and urban development** received a higher importance rating than did **the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs**. In many cases a low level of satisfaction with current community conditions translated into a relatively high level importance for the corresponding community issue.

Comparing and contrasting the combined responses on a statewide basis, it is interesting that within the chambers survey, no significant differences appeared between northern and southern California responses. The two statements ranked highest and lowest for each question were consistent between the two regions, while the order of the middle statements only varied somewhat. Both regions assigned the lowest average value (a medium satisfaction level) to their satisfaction with current community conditions.

### **Survey Findings - By Geographic Area**

Although the northern and southern California responses were very similar, notable differences emerged when the chamber responses were grouped into large, small and non-metropolitan counties.

Subsequent pages combine and compare responses coming from large metropolitan counties, small metropolitan counties and the non-metropolitan, or rural, counties in California. The three geographic chamber groups made up varying percentages of the

total survey population; 74% of the replies came from large metropolitan counties, 15% came from small metropolitan counties and 11% came from non-metropolitan counties.

Chambers of commerce from large metropolitan counties had the highest satisfaction with the **current community conditions relating to crime, vandalism and public safety** and **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs**.

Small metropolitan county respondents placed a higher relative priority on **the loss of agricultural lands and open space** than did either large or non-metropolitan county respondents.

Non-metropolitan county respondents placed a higher value on **protecting cultural and historic places**, and indicated the lowest level of satisfaction with:

- **current community conditions relating to the availability of park facilities and recreation programs**
- **available housing and controlled growth**
- **the condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure**

As a group, both the large and small metropolitan counties placed a higher value on parks and recreation programs providing opportunities for **team sports, youth activities**, and **places to celebrate cultural unity** and placed a higher priority on the local issues of **crime, vandalism and public safety, traffic, noise clean air/water or similar environmental concerns**, and the **loss of agricultural lands and open space** compared to non-metropolitan county respondents.

All three geographic groups within this survey placed the highest value on **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities, strengthen the community image and create a sense of place** and unanimously assigned the highest priority to **stabilizing or improving the local economy**.

These business leader survey results paralleled those from the earlier government leaders' surveys which showed that state legislators, mayors, county executives and the chairs of county boards of supervisors all shared very positive opinions about the role that parks and recreation facilities and programs play in contributing to a high quality of life for individuals and communities in California.

### **Survey Background**

The California State Parks Planning Division is charged with collecting, analyzing and disseminating relevant data on current trends and opinions on parks and recreation. The 2002 survey of California state legislators, mayors, chairs of county boards of supervisors and county executives, combined with this survey of California chambers of commerce are intended as tools for understanding how our political and economic leaders perceive the parks and recreation facilities and programs within their communities. The inside back cover of this report includes a list of additional Planning Division publications of general interest to park and recreation professionals. The listed Web sites also provide access to more parks and recreation-related articles, surveys, presentations, plans and reports from the Planning Division of California State Parks.

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## Results from All Counties Combined

This section of the report analyzes responses from chambers of commerce from all counties in the state. Respondents made up 50% of the total chambers statewide and 76% of the 58 counties had at least one chamber respondent.

The number of chambers per county ranged from several counties with just a single chamber, three counties with over 20 chambers, to Los Angeles county, with 86 chambers of commerce listed on the California Chambers of Commerce Web site.

When asked for their perceptions of residents' value for park facilities and recreation programs over 80% of the chambers responded that residents most value:

- **the safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities**
- **the opportunity for team sports and youth activities**
- **strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place**

Respondents felt residents assigned the least value to parks and recreation programs for providing **the facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.**

Over two-thirds of the chambers gave their highest importance rating for community issues to:

- **improving the local economy**
- **the need for more and better schools**
- **the need to replace/upgrade public infrastructure**

They gave their lowest importance rating, although still a medium average level of importance, to **the loss of agricultural lands and open space.**

Over half of the chambers indicated a medium level of satisfaction with all the current community conditions listed in the survey, from **crime, vandalism and public safety to traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.** The remaining responses were evenly divided between high and low satisfaction ratings. The greatest percentages of low satisfaction scores were assigned to the current condition of **available housing and controlled growth.**

Although the largest percentage of 'high' community importance scores went to **improving the local economy**, chamber respondents, when asked for their own opinions on park and recreation facilities, more subjectively responded that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in their city.** More than two-thirds did agree with the more economically quantifiable statement that **recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property and create jobs and spending in the community, helping the economy.**

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## Sense of Residents' Value for Parks and Recreation Programs

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your community. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

### Business Leaders from All Counties Combined

Resident's Value for Parks and Recreation Programs: All Respondents	High Value =		Medium Value =		Low Value =		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2		1		
	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	
	Scores	Scores	Scores	Scores	Scores	Scores	
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	168	81%	37	18%	2	1%	2.80
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	169	82%	31	15%	7	3%	2.78
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	165	80%	38	19%	2	1%	2.80
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	131	63%	71	34%	5	2%	2.61
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	122	59%	67	33%	17	8%	2.51
Protecting cultural and historic places.	113	55%	70	34%	24	12%	2.43
Places to celebrate cultural unity (i.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	105	51%	82	40%	19	9%	2.42
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	95	46%	96	46%	16	8%	2.38
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	107	52%	73	36%	25	12%	2.40
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	49	24%	90	44%	67	33%	1.91
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	49	24%	85	42%	67	33%	1.91

The average combined response fell between the high and medium categories, although 80% of business leaders thought their community valued most highly the 1) **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities**, 2) **the opportunity for team sports and youth activities** and 3) **the strengthening of community image and creation of a sense of place** that parks and recreation programs can provide.

More than a third of the respondents believed their communities placed a relatively low value on parks and recreation programs for: 1) **creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses** and for helping develop 2) **the facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues**.

## Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues

Question: *Considering only local issues, over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for members of your Chamber of Commerce?). (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)*

### Business Leaders from All Counties Combined

Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues: All Respondents	High Importance =		Medium Importance =		Low Importance =		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2		1		
	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	
	Scores		Scores	Scores	Scores		
Improving the local economy.	171	83%	33	16%	2	1%	2.82
The need for more and better schools.	144	70%	47	23%	14	7%	2.63
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	130	63%	68	33%	8	4%	2.59
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	126	61%	66	32%	13	6%	2.55
Population growth and urban development.	124	60%	56	27%	26	13%	2.48
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	111	54%	76	37%	18	9%	2.45
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	61	30%	120	59%	22	11%	2.19
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	66	32%	82	40%	57	28%	2.04

Again, the average combined response to all the issues fell between the high and medium importance levels. Chamber respondents predictably placed the highest importance on **improving the local economy**. They placed the lowest relative importance on **the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** and **the loss of agricultural lands and open space**. Altogether, 80% of the total responses indicated either a high or medium importance rating for all the local issues.

## Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions

Question: *Again, considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your community. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)*

### Business Leaders from All Counties Combined

Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions: All Respondents	High Satisfaction		Medium Satisfaction		Low Satisfaction		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2		1		
	Number/ Percent of Scores	Number/ Percent of Scores	Number/ Percent of Scores	Number/ Percent of Scores	Number/ Percent of Score	Number/ Percent of Score	
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	95	46%	99	48%	12	6%	2.40
The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.	79	38%	104	50%	23	11%	2.27
The availability and condition of local schools.	61	30%	110	53%	35	17%	2.13
A strong local economy.	57	28%	112	54%	37	18%	2.10
Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.	56	27%	110	54%	39	19%	2.08
The condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure.	49	24%	112	54%	45	22%	2.02
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.	41	20%	124	60%	41	20%	2.00
Available housing and controlled growth.	34	17%	98	48%	73	36%	1.81

Although levels of satisfaction with these issues rated slightly lower than answers to previous questions, most ranked between medium and high satisfaction levels. The majority of respondents indicated medium to high satisfaction with the current **crime, vandalism and public safety** conditions. Most indicated a medium level of satisfaction for all the remaining conditions, from **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs** to **traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions**. The only community condition to have a lower than medium level of satisfaction was the issue of **available housing and controlled growth**. The medium level of satisfaction with the **availability of park facilities and recreation programs** was consistent with the previous question's second lowest ranking of **the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** for the five year projected priorities of community issues.

## Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

### Business Leaders from All Counties Combined

General Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities: All Respondents	Strongly Agree =		Moderately Agree =		Neither Agree or Disagree =		Moderately Disagree =		Strongly Disagree =		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2.5		2		1.5		1		
	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	
	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses	
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my city.	157	76%	40	19%	8	4%	1	0%	1	0%	2.85
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my city.	98	48%	68	33%	26	13%	12	6%	1	0%	2.61
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	88	43%	79	38%	27	13%	11	5%	2	1%	2.58
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy.	54	26%	81	39%	45	22%	22	11%	5	2%	2.38
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my community.	33	16%	86	42%	53	26%	27	13%	8	4%	2.26
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my city.	36	17%	90	43%	19	9%	41	20%	21	10%	2.19
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	21	10%	66	32%	50	24%	54	26%	16	8%	2.05
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	10	5%	35	17%	48	23%	69	33%	45	22%	1.75

These scores reflect the similar distribution patterns of the previous questions, with most responses falling between the **strongly agree** and the **neither agree or disagree** levels.

The majority felt strongly that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life**, which contrasted with findings from previous questions which placed **the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** second from last in the five year priority listing and placed only a medium level of satisfaction with **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs**. This seems to indicate a disconnect between the recognized benefits of parks and recreation, the adequacy of existing facilities and programs, and the commitment to place parks and recreation high on projected priority listings.

## Importance and Satisfaction Comparisons

### Business Leaders from All Counties Combined

Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues versus Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions			
Importance			Satisfaction
Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues: ranked from High (3) to Low (1)	Average of All Scores in Order	Average of All Scores in Order	Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions: ranked from High (3) to Low (1)
Improving the <b>local economy</b> .	2.82	2.40	Crime, vandalism and <b>public safety</b> .
The need for more and better <b>schools</b> .	2.63	2.27	The availability of <b>park</b> facilities and recreation programs.
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other <b>public infrastructure</b> .	2.59	2.13	The availability and condition of local <b>schools</b> .
Crime, vandalism and <b>public safety</b> .	2.55	2.10	A strong <b>local economy</b> .
Population <b>growth</b> and urban development.	2.48	2.08	Protected agricultural lands and <b>open space</b> areas.
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar <b>environmental</b> concerns.	2.45	2.02	The condition of sewer, water service and/or other <b>public infrastructure</b> .
The need for more <b>park</b> and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	2.19	2.00	Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar <b>environmental</b> conditions.
The loss of agricultural lands and <b>open space</b> .	2.04	1.81	Available housing and controlled <b>growth</b> .

The previous surveys compared and contrasted the ratings of importance and satisfaction with various community issues and conditions. The results above show how the two groups of questions compared to each other. The results highlight some interesting contrasts and consistencies.

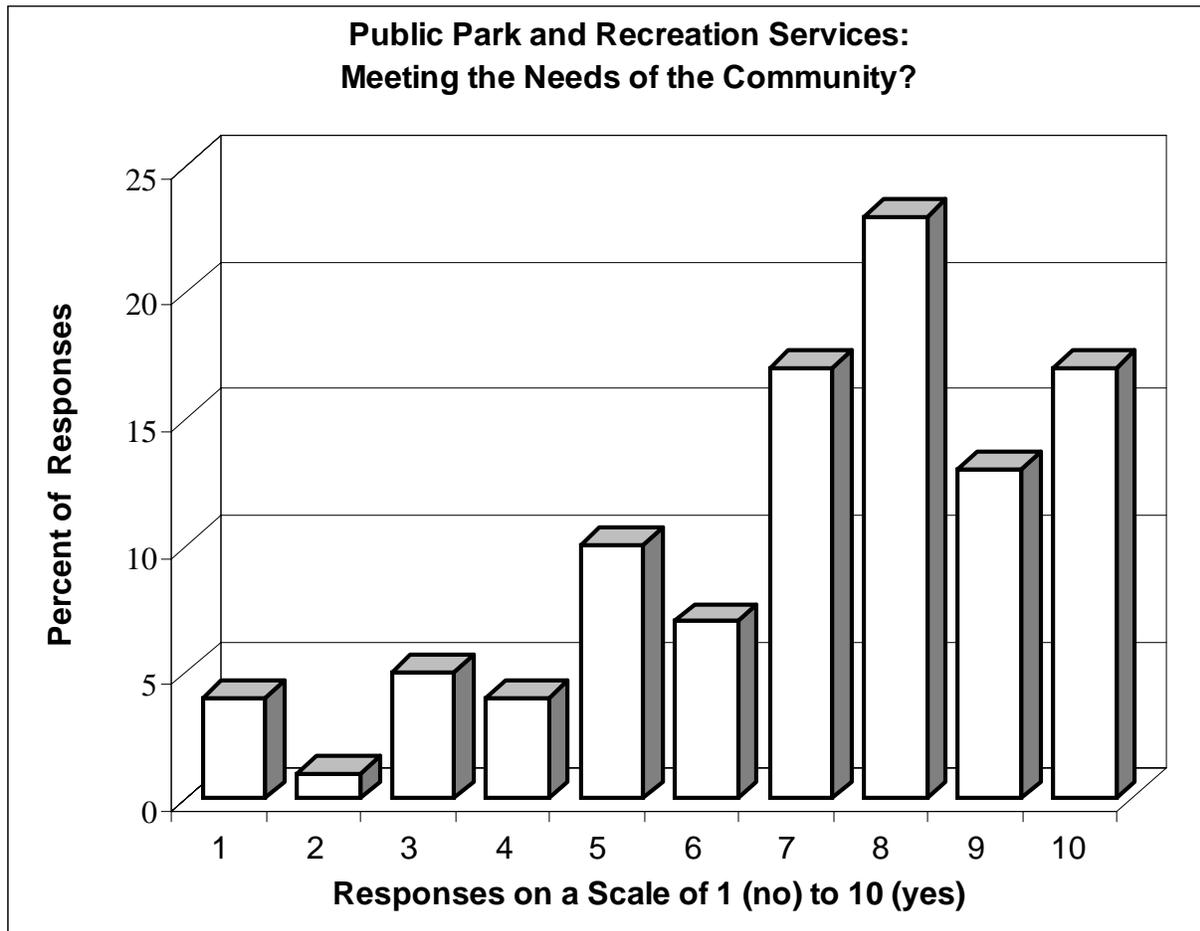
Business leaders gave their lowest satisfaction score to **available housing and controlled growth** but only gave a medium priority ranking to **population growth and urban development**. Respondents also gave only a medium level of satisfaction with the current community condition of **protected agricultural lands and open space areas** but gave the lowest priority of all to **the loss of agricultural lands and open space**.

Chambers were consistent in demonstrating a high level of satisfaction with the current local **availability of park facilities and recreation programs** while giving a relatively low projected priority for the local issue of **needing more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs**. They indicated only a medium level of satisfaction with a **strong local economy** and therefore placed **improving the local economy** as their top five-year projected priority. Respondents indicated a medium level of satisfaction with **the condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure** and correspondingly grouped it into the top three highest priority local issues.

## **Community Public Park and Recreation Services: Meeting the Needs**

Question: *On a scale from 1 to 10, do you feel the public park and recreation services currently provided in your community are meeting the needs of residents?*  
(1 – not meeting the need; 10 – meeting the need)

### **Business Leaders from All Counties Combined**



Although all respondents were asked to rank parks and recreation programs with other community issues, state their satisfaction with various aspects of local parks and recreation programs, and prioritize parks and recreation alongside other community issues, this question provided a quick gauge of the respondent's opinion on whether the current services were actually meeting the needs of the community. Grouped together, most responses to this one question fell in the higher ranges; almost 70% scored responses greater than 6 and only 14% of the chambers responded with scores less than five. It is interesting to compare these simple, but rather high results with the relatively lower satisfaction scores for the availability of park facilities and recreation programs shown on an earlier page.

## Results from Large, Small and Non-Metropolitan County Groups

This section of the report analyzes responses from chambers of commerce located within large, small and non-metropolitan counties. These county divisions come from the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which considers a county to be metropolitan if it 1) has either one or more central cities with a population of at least 50,000 or is part of a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area with a population of at least 100,000 or 2) if it is economically linked to a core metropolitan area through such factors as commuting patterns, population density or population growth.

Large metropolitan counties are those with a population of one million or more and small metropolitan counties are those with populations of less than one million. OMB defines a non-metropolitan, or rural county, as one located outside the boundaries of metropolitan areas and containing city populations of less than 50,000 people.

Not surprisingly, most of the chambers' survey respondents came from large metropolitan counties, which account for only 21 of the 58 California counties, but contain almost 29 million residents, 85% of the total population for the State according to the 2000 Census. Seventy-four percent of the chamber respondents came from large metropolitan counties:

Alameda	Napa	San Diego	Sonoma
Contra Costa	Orange	San Francisco	Ventura
El Dorado	Placer	San Mateo	Yolo
Fresno	Riverside	Santa Clara	
Los Angeles	Sacramento	Santa Cruz	
Marin	San Bernardino	Solano	

The 14 small metropolitan counties hold only a little more than 4 million people, about 12% of the State's total population. Chamber respondents coming from these counties made up 15% of the total survey respondents:

Butte	Merced	Santa Barbara	Tulare
Kern	Monterey	Shasta	Yuba
Kings	San Joaquin	Stanislaus	
Madera	San Luis Obispo	Sutter	

A relatively large number (23) of non-metropolitan counties delivered 11% of the survey respondents while representing an even smaller 3% of the State's population, a little less than 1 million people:

Alpine	Humboldt	Mendocino	Sierra
Amador	Imperial	Modoc	Siskiyou
Calaveras	Inyo	Mono	Tehama
Colusa	Lake	Nevada	Trinity
Del Norte	Lassen	Plumas	Tuolumne
Glenn	Mariposa	San Benito	

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## Sense of Residents' Value for Parks and Recreation Programs

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your community. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

### Large Metropolitan Counties

<b>Residents' Value for Parks and Recreation Programs: Large Metropolitan County Respondents (74% of total respondents)</b>	<b>High Value =</b>		<b>Medium Value =</b>		<b>Low Value =</b>		<b>Average of all Scores in Order</b>
	<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		
	<b>Number/</b>	<b>Percent of</b>	<b>Number/</b>	<b>Percent of</b>	<b>Number/</b>	<b>Percent of</b>	
	<b>Scores</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>of Score</b>	<b>of Score</b>	<b>of Score</b>	
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	127	85%	18	12%	4	3%	2.83
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	115	78%	31	21%	1	1%	2.78
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	115	77%	33	22%	1	1%	2.77
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	97	65%	48	32%	4	3%	2.62
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	93	62%	46	31%	10	7%	2.56
Places to celebrate cultural unity (i.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	76	51%	60	41%	12	8%	2.43
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	73	49%	67	45%	9	6%	2.43
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	77	52%	54	36%	17	11%	2.41
Protecting cultural and historic places.	81	54%	47	32%	21	14%	2.40
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	32	22%	66	46%	46	32%	1.90
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	30	20%	66	45%	52	35%	1.85

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

Compared to chamber respondents from small or non-metropolitan counties, respondents from large metropolitan counties placed a predictably higher relative value on parks and recreation programs **providing opportunity for team sports and youth activities** while placing the consistently same low value on parks and recreation programs **creating jobs and generating income for communities and businesses**.

## Small Metropolitan Counties

Residents' Value for Parks and Recreation Programs: Small Metropolitan County Respondents (15% of total respondents)	High Value =		Medium Value =		Low Value =		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2		1		
	Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Score		
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	34	94%	1	3%	1	3%	2.92
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	32	89%	4	11%	0	0%	2.89
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	28	78%	8	22%	0	0%	2.78
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	27	75%	9	25%	0	0%	2.75
Places to celebrate cultural unity (i.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	22	61%	12	33%	2	6%	2.56
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	21	60%	12	34%	2	6%	2.54
Protecting cultural and historic places.	21	58%	13	36%	2	6%	2.53
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	20	56%	12	33%	4	11%	2.44
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	15	42%	18	50%	3	8%	2.33
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	15	42%	14	39%	7	19%	2.22
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	13	37%	13	37%	9	26%	2.11

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

Business leaders from small metropolitan counties delivered scores roughly midway between the large and non-metropolitan respondents. Small metropolitan respondents actually placed a higher value on parks as **places to celebrate cultural unity** than did respondents from large metropolitan counties, although both placed a higher value on cultural unity opportunities than did respondents from non-metropolitan counties.

## Non-Metropolitan Counties

<b>Residents' Value for Parks and Recreation Programs: Non-Metropolitan County Respondents</b> (11% of total respondents)	<b>High Value =</b>		<b>Medium Value =</b>		<b>Low Value =</b>		<b>Average of All Scores in Order</b>
	<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		
	<b>Number/</b>	<b>Percent of</b>	<b>Number/</b>	<b>Percent of</b>	<b>Number/</b>	<b>Percent of</b>	
	<b>Scores</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Score</b>	
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	16	84%	3	16%	0	0%	2.84
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	15	79%	3	16%	1	5%	2.74
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	14	74%	2	11%	3	16%	2.58
Protecting cultural and historic places.	10	53%	8	42%	1	5%	2.47
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	8	44%	7	39%	3	17%	2.28
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	6	32%	12	63%	1	5%	2.26
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	7	37%	8	42%	4	21%	2.16
Places to celebrate cultural unity (i.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	7	37%	7	37%	5	26%	2.11
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	7	37%	6	32%	6	32%	2.05
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	4	21%	9	47%	6	32%	1.89
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	4	21%	5	26%	10	53%	1.68

Non-metropolitan county respondents placed the same relatively high value on parks and recreation programs for providing **safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities** and **strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place**. More than half of the non-metropolitan business leaders assigned a low value to parks and recreation programs for providing **the facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community issues** but placed the highest relative value, compared to all respondents, on **protecting cultural and historic places**.

## Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues

Question: *Considering only local issues, over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for members of your Chamber of Commerce?). (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)*

### Large Metropolitan Counties

Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues: Large Metropolitan County Respondents (74% of total respondents)	High Importance = 3		Medium Importance = 2		Low Importance = 1		Average of All Scores in Order
	Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		
Stabilizing or improving the local economy.	119	80%	27	18%	2	1%	2.79
The need for more and better schools.	109	74%	28	19%	10	7%	2.67
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	97	66%	41	28%	10	7%	2.59
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	89	60%	52	35%	7	5%	2.55
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	88	60%	52	35%	7	5%	2.55
Population growth and urban development.	91	61%	38	26%	19	13%	2.49
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	41	28%	91	62%	14	10%	2.18
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	40	27%	63	43%	45	30%	1.97

Despite other minor differences between large, small and non-metropolitan chamber respondents, all placed the highest priority on **stabilizing or improving the local economy**. The large and small metropolitan county respondents predictably placed a high priority on **crime, vandalism and public safety**, with non-metropolitan respondents giving the issue only a **medium importance** rating.

## Small Metropolitan Counties

<b>Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues: Small Metropolitan County Respondents</b> (15% of total respondents)	<b>High Importance = 3</b>		<b>Medium Importance = 2</b>		<b>Low Importance = 1</b>		<b>Average of All Scores in Order</b>
	<b>Number/ Percent of Scores</b>		<b>Number/ Percent of Scores</b>		<b>Number/ Percent of Scores</b>		
	Stabilizing or improving the local economy.	32	89%	4	11%	0	
The need for more and better schools.	27	75%	8	22%	1	3%	2.72
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	26	72%	10	28%	0	0%	2.72
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	22	63%	13	37%	0	0%	2.63
Population growth and urban development.	23	64%	10	28%	3	8%	2.56
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	20	57%	10	29%	5	14%	2.43
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	18	50%	15	42%	3	8%	2.42
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	14	40%	17	49%	4	11%	2.29

Chambers from small metropolitan counties actually gave a high to medium importance rating to **the loss of agricultural lands and open space** compared to either the large or non-metropolitan respondents, which gave the issue a medium or medium to low rating. Business leaders from small metropolitan counties also gave more consistently similar responses to all the questions, rating all issues between a medium and high importance. Respondents from large and non-metropolitan counties had a wider range of responses, from below medium to very close to unanimously high.

## Non-Metropolitan Counties

Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues: Non-Metropolitan County Respondents (11% of total respondents)	High Importance = 3		Medium Importance = 2		Low Importance = 1		Average of All Scores in Order
	Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		
	Stabilizing or improving the local economy.	17	89%	2	11%	0	
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	13	68%	5	26%	1	5%	2.63
Population growth and urban development.	8	42%	7	37%	4	21%	2.21
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	6	32%	10	53%	3	16%	2.16
The need for more and better schools.	5	26%	11	58%	3	16%	2.11
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	5	26%	11	58%	3	16%	2.11
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	6	32%	7	37%	6	32%	2.00
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	3	16%	8	42%	8	42%	1.74

Chambers from non-metropolitan counties placed the lowest importance on the issue of **traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns**. They also gave the lowest average scores on all issues compared to the respondents from the large and small metropolitan counties, with the exception of the issue of **stabilizing or improving the local economy**, which they rated as high or higher than respondents from the large and small metropolitan counties.

## Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions

Question: *Again, considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your community. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)*

### Large Metropolitan Counties

Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions: Large Metropolitan County Respondents (74% of total respondents)	High Satisfaction = 3		Medium Satisfaction = 2		Low Satisfaction = 1		Average of All Scores in Order
	Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		
	Crime, vandalism and public safety.	72	49%	71	48%	5	
The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.	58	39%	75	51%	15	10%	2.29
A strong local economy.	48	32%	80	54%	20	14%	2.19
The availability and condition of schools.	46	31%	75	51%	27	18%	2.13
Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.	43	29%	73	50%	31	21%	2.08
The condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure.	38	26%	82	55%	28	19%	2.07
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.	27	18%	91	61%	30	20%	1.98
Available housing and controlled growth.	30	20%	67	46%	50	34%	1.86

Chambers from large and small metropolitan counties generally agreed on their level of satisfaction with **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs** and **crime, vandalism and public safety**, indicating a relatively high level of satisfaction with each. They both also scored their lowest level of satisfaction with **available housing and controlled growth**. Large metropolitan county respondents gave a higher satisfaction rating for their **strong local economy** then did either the small or non-metropolitan county business leaders.

## Small Metropolitan Counties

Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions: Small Metropolitan County Respondents (15% of total respondents)	High Satisfaction = 3		Medium Satisfaction = 2		Low Satisfaction = 1		Average of All Scores in Order
	Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		
	The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.	15	42%	19	53%	2	
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	13	36%	20	56%	3	8%	2.28
The availability and condition of schools.	8	22%	23	64%	5	14%	2.08
Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.	9	25%	21	58%	6	17%	2.08
The condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure.	10	28%	18	50%	8	22%	2.06
A strong local economy.	9	25%	19	53%	8	22%	2.03
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.	7	19%	21	58%	8	22%	1.97
Available housing and controlled growth.	4	11%	19	53%	13	36%	1.75

Chambers from small metropolitan counties indicated the same medium level of satisfaction with **the condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure** that the large metropolitan county respondents did, but were much more satisfied with their local infrastructure conditions than the non-metropolitan respondents, who gave it the lowest rating on the survey, between a low and medium level of satisfaction.

## Non-Metropolitan Counties

Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions: Non- Metropolitan County Respondents (11% of total respondents)	High Satisfaction = 3		Medium Satisfaction = 2		Low Satisfaction = 1		Average of All Scores in Order
	Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		Number/ Percent of Scores		
	Crime, vandalism and public safety.	10	53%	6	32%	3	
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.	7	37%	11	58%	1	5%	2.32
The availability and condition of schools.	7	37%	9	47%	3	16%	2.21
Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.	3	16%	15	79%	1	5%	2.11
The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.	5	26%	8	42%	6	32%	1.95
Available housing and controlled growth.	0	0%	12	63%	7	37%	1.63
A strong local economy.	0	0%	11	58%	8	42%	1.58
The condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure.	1	5%	9	47%	9	47%	1.58

Chambers from non-metropolitan counties indicated slightly lower overall levels of satisfaction than the other two groups, although the spread of responses was much wider than that from the large or small metropolitan respondents. Non-metropolitan respondents had the lowest levels of satisfaction with the issue of **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs**, indicating a medium to low level of satisfaction for current community conditions. Business leaders from non-metropolitan counties also assigned the lowest scores of all three groups to:

- **available housing and controlled growth,**
- **a strong local economy,**
- **the condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure.**

## Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

### Large Metropolitan Counties

General Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities: Large Metropolitan County Respondents (74% of total respondents)	Strongly Agree =		Moderately Agree =		Neither Agree or Disagree =		Moderately Disagree =		Strongly Disagree =		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2.5		2		1.5		1		
	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	Number/	Percent of	
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my city.	112	75%	28	19%	7	5%	1	1%	1	1%	2.84
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my city.	74	50%	48	32%	15	10%	10	7%	1	1%	2.62
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	60	40%	63	42%	18	12%	7	5%	1	1%	2.58
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy.	33	22%	60	40%	35	23%	16	11%	5	3%	2.34
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my community.	22	15%	55	37%	44	30%	21	14%	7	5%	2.21
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my city.	23	15%	66	44%	16	11%	28	19%	16	11%	2.17
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	15	10%	47	32%	39	26%	37	25%	11	7%	2.06
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	8	5%	28	19%	32	21%	54	36%	27	18%	1.79

Although chamber responses to the earlier value, importance and satisfaction questions showed some variability between large, small and non-metropolitan counties, the responses from all three groups to this opinion question showed remarkable uniformity. All three groups ranked six of the eight questions in the same order and with similar average scores for all the questions.

## Small Metropolitan Counties

**General Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities: Small Metropolitan County Respondents**  
(15% of total respondents)

	Strongly Agree =		Moderately Agree =		Neither Agree or Disagree =		Moderately Disagree =		Strongly Disagree =		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2.5		2		1.5		1		
	Number/Percent of Responses		Number/Percent of Responses		Number/Percent of Responses		Number/Percent of Responses		Number/Percent of Responses		
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my city.	29	81%	7	19%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2.90
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my city.	17	49%	13	37%	4	11%	1	3%	0	0%	2.66
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	19	53%	10	28%	5	14%	1	3%	1	3%	2.63
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy.	14	39%	13	36%	5	14%	4	11%	0	0%	2.51
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my community.	8	22%	18	50%	7	19%	2	6%	1	3%	2.42
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my city.	5	14%	21	58%	1	3%	6	17%	3	8%	2.26
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	4	11%	13	36%	8	22%	10	28%	1	3%	2.13
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	2	6%	6	17%	7	19%	11	31%	10	28%	1.71

Chamber respondents from small metropolitan counties indicated the same level of strong agreement with the statement that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my city**. This statement stood out with a relatively much higher level of agreement than any of the other seven statements, scoring much closer to **strongly agree** with the other statements' scores falling between **moderately agree** and **moderately disagree**.

## Non-Metropolitan Counties

General Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities: Non- Metropolitan County Respondents (11% of total respondents)	Strongly Agree =		Moderately Agree =		Neither Agree or Disagree =		Moderately Disagree =		Strongly Disagree =		Average of All Scores in Order
	3		2.5		2		1.5		1		
	Number/ Percent of Responses		Number/ Percent of Responses		Number/ Percent of Responses		Number/ Percent of Responses		Number/ Percent of Responses		
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my city.	14	74%	5	26%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2.87
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy.	7	37%	7	37%	4	21%	1	5%	0	0%	2.53
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my city.	7	37%	6	32%	5	26%	1	5%	0	0%	2.50
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	8	42%	5	26%	4	21%	2	11%	0	0%	2.50
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my community.	3	16%	11	58%	2	11%	3	16%	0	0%	2.37
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my city.	7	37%	2	11%	2	11%	6	32%	2	11%	2.16
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	2	11%	5	26%	3	16%	6	32%	3	16%	1.92
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	0	0%	1	5%	8	42%	2	11%	8	42%	1.55

Chambers from non-metropolitan counties had the same neutral to low levels of agreement with the more negative survey statements:

- **recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them,**
- **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.**

Non-metropolitan business leaders had the same high levels of agreement with the more positive statement of **recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my city** although they had a slightly higher level of agreement with the statement that **recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy** than did either of the two groups of respondents.

## Comparisons Among Large, Small and Non-Metropolitan County Groups

When data from the large, small and non-metropolitan county respondents are compared and contrasted, interesting differences emerge. As a group, chambers from the large and small metropolitan counties gave more similar answers to questions than did the chambers from the non-metropolitan, or rural, counties.

Chambers of commerce from large and small metropolitan counties felt their residents placed a higher value on **the opportunities for team sports and youth activities** and **for physical exercise, social and emotional development** provided by park facilities and recreation programs.

All three groups thought their residents would place at least a medium to high value on parks and recreation programs for:

- **providing safe, wholesome and fun programs that provide for family activities**
- **strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place**
- **protecting cultural and historic places and valuable environmental resources**
- **the opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk**
- **places to celebrate cultural unity**
- **facilities and programs for special populations – elderly, disabled and low income**

Chambers from non-metropolitan counties felt slightly more strongly that **recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in the community, helping its economy** and placed a higher importance on **protecting cultural and historic places**, compared to the metropolitan county respondents. They gave a substantially lower importance score than the other two groups to the local issue of **traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns**. All three groups gave a high importance rating to **stabilizing or improving the local economy**.

Again, non-metropolitan chambers had the lowest satisfaction scores for the local **availability of park facilities and recreation programs** and the local **conditions of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure**. Large metropolitan county respondents were most satisfied with the current condition of **protected agricultural lands and open space areas** while the small metropolitan county chambers were most satisfied with the **strong local economy**.

All three groups agreed that **recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in the city** although the large and small metropolitan chambers were more likely to agree that these areas were **often too crowded when people want to use them**. Non-metropolitan had less agreement with the issue of overcrowding and disagreed the most with the statement that **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities**. All chamber respondents agreed that **recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency**, although the metropolitan county respondents gave the statement a slightly higher score.

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## Sense of Residents' Value for Parks and Recreation Programs

Question: *Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your community. (High Value, Medium Value, Low Value)*

### Comparative Results

<b>Residents' Value for Parks and Recreation Programs: Large, Small and Non-Metropolitan County Respondents</b>	<b>Large Metro.</b>	<b>Small Metro.</b>	<b>Non Metro.</b>	<b>Average Of All Scores</b>
Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.	2.77	2.92	2.84	2.84
Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.	2.78	2.89	2.74	2.80
The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.	2.83	2.75	2.58	2.72
The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.	2.62	2.78	2.26	2.56
Protecting cultural and historic places.	2.40	2.53	2.47	2.47
The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.	2.56	2.44	2.28	2.43
Places to celebrate cultural unity (i.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).	2.43	2.56	2.11	2.36
Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.	2.41	2.54	2.05	2.33
Facilities and programs for special populations - elderly, disabled and low income.	2.43	2.33	2.16	2.31
Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.	1.85	2.22	1.89	1.99
The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.	1.90	2.11	1.68	1.90

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Value is worth three points and a Low Value is worth one point.

When compared together, the chambers from non-metropolitan counties gave a relatively lower value to parks and recreation programs for:

- **providing the opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development,**
- **providing places to celebrate cultural unity,**
- **protecting valuable environmental resources,**
- **the facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues**

than did respondents from the large and small metropolitan counties. Small metropolitan county business leaders also gave slightly higher scores overall than did those from large or non-metropolitan counties.

## Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues

Question: *Considering only local issues, over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for members of your Chamber of Commerce?). (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)*

### Comparative Results

Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues: Large, Small and Non-Metropolitan County Respondents	Large Metro.	Small Metro.	Non Metro.	Average Of All Scores
Stabilizing or improving the local economy.	2.79	2.89	2.89	2.86
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	2.55	2.72	2.63	2.64
The need for more and better schools.	2.67	2.72	2.11	2.50
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.59	2.63	2.11	2.44
Population growth and urban development.	2.49	2.56	2.21	2.42
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	2.55	2.42	1.74	2.23
The need for more park and recreation lands,	2.18	2.29	2.16	2.21
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	1.97	2.43	2.00	2.13

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Importance rating is worth three points and a Low Importance rating is worth one point.

Chambers from small metropolitan counties assigned the highest relative priority to **the loss of agricultural lands and open space** but all three groups agreed that **stabilizing or improving the local economy** was their highest priority for the next five years. Again, chambers from non-metropolitan counties assigned the relatively lowest priorities to:

- **the need for more and better schools,**
- **crime, vandalism and public safety,**
- **population, growth and urban development,**

and a predictably low relative score to **traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns**. All three groups gave the same medium to high level of importance for **the need for more park and recreation lands**.

## Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions

Question: *Again, considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your community. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)*

### Comparative Results

<b>Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions: Large, Small and Non-Metropolitan County Respondents</b>	<b>Large Metro</b>	<b>Small Metro</b>	<b>Non Metro</b>	<b>Average Of All Scores</b>
Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.	2.45	2.28	2.37	2.37
A strong local economy.	2.29	2.36	1.95	2.20
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.13	2.08	2.21	2.14
The availability and condition of schools.	2.08	2.08	2.11	2.09
Available housing and controlled growth.	1.98	1.97	2.32	2.09
The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.	2.19	2.03	1.58	1.93
The condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure.	2.07	2.06	1.58	1.90
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.	1.86	1.75	1.63	1.75

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Satisfaction rating is worth three points and a Low Satisfaction rating is worth one point.

In this comparison, chambers from non-metropolitan counties indicated the lowest level of satisfaction among the three groups for:

- **the strong local economy,**
- **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs,**
- **the condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure.**

Chambers from non-metropolitan counties had the greatest level of satisfaction with **available housing and controlled growth** compared to business leader respondents from large and small metropolitan counties.

All three groups registered lower satisfaction with community conditions compared to their ratings of importance for the corresponding local community issues. This result indicates a connection between perceived community needs and high community priorities to address those needs.

## Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities

Question: *Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is your opinion? (Strongly Agree, Moderately Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Strongly Disagree)*

### Comparative Results

<b>General Opinions about Parks and Recreation Facilities: Large, Small and Non-Metropolitan County Respondents</b>	<b>Large Metro.</b>	<b>Small Metro.</b>	<b>Non Metro.</b>	<b>Average Of All Scores</b>
Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my city.	2.84	2.90	2.87	2.87
Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my city.	2.62	2.66	2.50	2.59
Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.	2.58	2.63	2.50	2.57
Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy.	2.34	2.51	2.53	2.46
The availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my community.	2.21	2.42	2.37	2.33
There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my city.	2.17	2.26	2.16	2.20
Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.	2.06	2.13	1.92	2.04
Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.	1.79	1.71	1.55	1.68

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a Strongly Agree response is worth three points and a Strongly Disagree response is worth one point.

Although the large, small and non-metropolitan responses were ordered in the same way, chambers from large metropolitan counties gave the lowest relative scores to:

- **recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy,**
- **the availability of park facilities and programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my community.**

Chambers from non-metropolitan counties gave the relatively lowest scores to the two negatively phrased survey statements:

- **recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them,**
- **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.**

## Comparisons with the 2002 Government Leaders' Survey

A survey of state legislators, mayors, county supervisors and county executives was conducted in early 2002. The *California Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation* survey asked these government leaders four basic questions:

- how they perceived their resident's value for park facilities and recreation programs **(Value)**
- their opinions of local park and recreation facilities and programs **(Opinion)**
- how they would prioritize parks and recreation among other local issues **(Importance)**
- how satisfied they are with current parks and recreation conditions **(Satisfaction)**

These same basic questions were used for the current chambers of commerce survey and this section compares the earlier government leaders' responses to the responses from this survey of local business leaders.

The perception of resident's value for parks and recreation received the highest scores of all four sets of questions in the government leaders' survey. Chambers of commerce responses also fell within the range of governmental leader responses for all eleven of the value statements for this question, receiving the highest scores of any of the four questions.

The opinion question elicited the widest range of responses from all five groups surveyed. The positive statement that **recreation areas and facilities improve quality of life** received the highest scores of any statement while the negatively phrased statement that **recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities** received the lowest score for any survey statement. The chambers of commerce responses again fell within the range of responses from the government leaders.

The following pages compare responses to both the importance and satisfaction questions, describing the differences between the governmental and business leader survey results.

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## Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues

Question: *Considering only local issues, over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for members of your community?). (High Importance, Medium Importance, Low Importance)*

### Government and Business Leaders

Five Year Projected Priorities for Local Issues: Government and Business Leaders	City Mayors	State Leg.	County Sups.	County Execs.	Gov. Average	Chambers of Comm.	Overall Average
Improving the local economy.	2.69	2.94	2.79	2.73	<b>2.78</b>	2.82	<b>2.79</b>
The need for more and better schools.	2.68	2.77	2.71	2.73	<b>2.72</b>	2.63	<b>2.71</b>
The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.	2.68	2.75	2.71	2.55	<b>2.67</b>	2.59	<b>2.66</b>
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.62	2.75	2.64	2.53	<b>2.63</b>	2.55	<b>2.62</b>
Population growth and urban development.	2.52	2.65	2.62	2.46	<b>2.56</b>	2.48	<b>2.54</b>
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.	2.42	2.58	2.57	2.43	<b>2.50</b>	2.45	<b>2.49</b>
The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.	2.19	2.58	2.50	2.33	<b>2.40</b>	2.19	<b>2.36</b>
The loss of agricultural lands and open space.	1.91	2.10	2.36	2.23	<b>2.15</b>	2.04	<b>2.13</b>

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Importance rating is worth three points and a Low Importance rating is worth one point.

Comparisons between government and business leaders' responses to ratings of importance on local issues show agreement on most issues. The chambers of commerce responses most closely paralleled those from the city mayors in the government leaders' survey while the state legislators assigned consistently higher importance to all the issues than did any of the other four survey groups. Business leaders did give a relatively lower priority to **the need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs** but did not, contrary to expectations, score **improving the local economy** substantially higher than did the other four government groups. All five groups assigned a similar relatively low importance rating to **the loss of agricultural land and open space**.

## Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions

Question: *Again, considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your community. (High Satisfaction, Medium Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction)*

### Government and Business Leaders

Satisfaction with Current Community Conditions: Government and Business Leaders	City Mayors	State Leg.	County Sups.	County Execs.	Gov. Average	Chambers of Comm.	Overall Average
Crime, vandalism and public safety.	2.49	2.67	2.38	2.33	2.47	2.40	2.45
The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.	2.20	2.53	2.14	2.23	2.28	2.27	2.27
The availability and condition of local schools.	2.20	2.53	2.07	1.98	2.19	2.13	2.18
A strong local economy.	2.19	2.51	1.86	1.95	2.13	2.10	2.12
Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.	2.14	2.51	1.86	1.90	2.10	2.08	2.10
The condition of sewer, water service and/or other public infrastructure.	2.10	2.49	1.57	1.90	2.01	2.02	2.01
Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.	2.04	2.45	1.57	1.75	1.95	2.00	1.96
Available housing and controlled growth.	2.03	2.43	1.50	1.73	1.92	1.81	1.90

Questions are arranged from the highest to the lowest overall average score, where a High Satisfaction rating is worth three points and a Low Satisfaction rating is worth one point.

The business leader scores for this group of statements were virtually identical to the responses from the earlier government leaders' survey. All five groups scored the importance of various community issues more highly than they rated their satisfaction with the corresponding current community conditions. All indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with **the availability of park facilities and recreation programs**.

When comparing the satisfaction with the importance ratings for each of the five groups, county supervisors had the largest difference between their relatively low level of satisfaction with **existing park facilities and recreation programs**, for example, and the relatively high level of importance they assigned to **providing more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs**. State legislators indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the various community conditions and a relatively high level of importance to all the corresponding community issues. Mayors, county executives and chambers of commerce all showed connections between low satisfaction levels and high importance ratings and then high satisfaction levels with low importance ratings. These results show that the local government and business leaders are making a stronger connection between understanding community needs and tailoring community priorities to address those needs.

## **Appendix**

Chambers of Commerce Survey Instrument

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## Chambers of Commerce Survey Instrument

### Survey of Business Leaders

(Your sense of Value of Park Facilities and Recreation Programs)

Responses will be completely anonymous

1. What county is your Chamber of Commerce in? \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)
2. How would you characterize your community? *<please check all that apply>*  
urban          suburban          manufacturing/industrial          rural/agricultural area
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, do you feel the public park and recreation services currently provided in your community are meeting the needs of residents? \_\_\_\_\_ (1 - not meeting the need; 10 - meeting the need)
3. Please indicate your sense of the value parks and recreation programs hold for the residents of your community. *<Please check your response>*

High	Medium	Low
Value	Value	Value

  - a. Strengthening the community image and creating a sense of place.
  - b. Creating jobs and generating income for communities and for local businesses.
  - c. Safe, wholesome and fun programs and park facilities that provide for family activities. For example, play areas, fishing piers, and pools.
  - d. The opportunity for physical exercise, social and emotional development.
  - e. Places to celebrate cultural unity (i.e., Cinco de Mayo festivals).
  - f. Park facilities protect valuable environmental resources.
  - g. The facilitation and leadership skills that can be applied to resolve community problems and issues.
  - h. The opportunity for team sports and youth activities.
  - i. Facilities and programs for special populations – elderly, disabled and low income.
  - j. The opportunity for after school programs or programs for youth at risk.
  - k. Protecting cultural and historic places.
4. Considering only local issues, over the next 5 years, please rate the following issues with respect to their importance (is this a priority for members of *your* Chamber of Commerce?). *<Please check your response>*

High	Medium	Low
Importance	Importance	Importance

  - a. The need for more and better schools.
  - b. Population growth and urban development.
  - c. The loss of agricultural lands and open space.
  - d. Crime, vandalism and public safety.
  - e. Stabilizing or improving the local economy.
  - f. Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental concerns.
  - g. The need for more park and recreation lands, facilities and programs.
  - h. The need to replace/upgrade roads, sewer, water services and/or other public infrastructure.

Please be sure to complete the other side of this survey!

6. Again, considering only local issues, please rate the following items with respect to your satisfaction regarding their current condition in your community: *<Please check your response>*

**High**                      **Medium**                      **Low**  
Satisfaction                      Satisfaction                      Satisfaction

- a. The availability and condition of schools.
- b. Available housing and controlled growth.
- c. Protected agricultural lands and open space areas.
- d. Crime, vandalism and public safety.
- e. A strong local economy.
- f. Traffic, noise, clean air/water or similar environmental conditions.
- g. The availability of park facilities and recreation programs.
- h. The condition of sewer, water service or other public infrastructure.

7. Following is a list of statements regarding park and recreation facilities. What is *your* opinion?

*<Please check your response>*

Strongly   Moderately   Neither   Moderately   Strongly  
agree   agree   agree or   disagree   disagree  
disagree

- a. There are enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use in my community.
- b. Recreation areas and facilities are often too crowded when people want to use them.
- c. Recreation areas and programs help reduce crime and juvenile delinquency in my community.
- d. Recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in my community.
- e. Recreation areas and facilities can create jobs and spending in my community, helping its economy.
- f. Recreation areas and facilities increase the value of nearby residential and commercial property.
- g. Recreation areas and facilities attract undesirable people and activities.
- h. The availability of park facilities and recreation programs plays an important part in the decision of businesses to locate in my community.

Please fax **both sides of this survey** to (916) 653-4458.

If you have questions about this survey, please contact Laura Westrup, (916) 651-8691

Thank you very much for your valuable time.

## Planning Division Publications of General Interest

### The **Concepts** series

The California Department of Parks and Recreation's Planning Division examines a wide range of issues relevant to outdoor recreation in California. Through surveys, guidebooks, articles and workshops, the Department studies current issues, trends and their implications for recreation service providers and the public. The results of this research are available to park and recreation professionals through a publication series called **Concepts: Practical Tools for Parks and Recreation**.

- **Concepts - A Parks and Recreation Professional's Glossary: 2003.** A comprehensive glossary of terms, phrases and acronyms spanning the breadth of the parks and recreation profession. <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=22226](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=22226)>
- **Concepts - California Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation: 2002 Second Edition.** Surveys of California legislators, mayors, county supervisors and county executives seeking their opinions on the values and benefits of parks and recreation areas and programs. <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=22226](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=22226)>

**The California Recreational Trails Plan, Phase 1: 2002.** Identifies 12 trails-related goals and general action guidelines to help direct future actions of the Department's Statewide Trails Office for trail programs both within the State Park System and for its wider, statewide and national roles. <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=1324](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=1324)>

**The California Outdoor Recreation Plan: 1993.** Assessment of the major outdoor recreation issues facing California and recommendations on how public agency park and recreation providers can effectively address these issues. <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=796](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=796)>

**The California Outdoor Recreation Plan: 2002.** Assessment of the major outdoor recreation issues facing California and recommendations on how public agency park and recreation providers can effectively address these issues. <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=796](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=796)>

**Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California: 1997.** The third statewide survey in this series, assessing public attitudes, opinions, values on outdoor recreation in California and measuring participation in and demand for various types of outdoor recreation activities. (2002 survey in progress) <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=796](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=796)>

**Bear Facts Newsletter.** A Planning Division newsletter published three times a year, containing articles on planning trends and information on parks and recreation in California. <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=21810](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=21810)>

Additional Planning Division articles and publications are available on the Planning Division's Technical Assistance Web page: <[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=22226](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=22226)>

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