



What Issues Affect the Quality of Life in San Diego?

Thank you for providing your opinions about the Quality of Life in the City of San Diego. Now...here are the facts regarding many of the issues we asked you about! It is clear that for us to remain a "City Worthy of Affection" for many generations to come, the consequences of individual actions, public policies and regional decisions must all be considered. What is your vision for the future of San Diego, and how can we work together to make that vision a reality?

Air Quality:

What is the major source of air pollution? Motor vehicles are responsible for about 60 percent of smog-forming emissions (oxides of nitrogen and reactive hydrocarbons). In 1998 the San Diego Air Basin exceeded the California standard for ground-level ozone air pollution on 54 days. The number of days declined every year through 2001 when the standard was exceeded on 13 days. In 2002 the number of days increased to 15. Data for 2003 is not yet available. Hotter days combined with car exhaust are responsible for increasing the amount of ground-level ozone. This is a health concern for those with respiratory problems, children and the elderly. More fuel efficient vehicles that are well-maintained will reduce the amount of car exhaust, and that reduces the production of ozone. Using public transportation is a big help, too!

Availability of Affordable Housing:

How much can you pay for a home? The ratio of median home price (including condos and townhomes) to median income has increased every year, from 6.8 in 1998 to 9.8 in 2002. That means that the median cost for a home is almost ten times the median annual income. Although annual data for 2003 is not yet available, the median home price continued to rise from \$361,500 in December 2002 to \$399,500 in December 2003.

The number of public housing units in the City of San Diego has remained at about 1,782 since 1998. The number of housing units produced with San Diego Housing Commission assistance, including new homebuyer programs (some new homebuyers may be double counted) each year has varied:

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
SD Housing Commission assisted housing units	1,796	943	589	1,427	1,634

Pollution of Beaches and Bays:

What pollutes our beaches? Primarily, the culprit is US! The storm drains collect runoff from roads, as well as what runs into channels, and streams from all over San Diego County. We are in a large, complex watershed, and everything flows downstream into our beaches and bays. When there is too much pollution in the water, Advisories are issued.

Several factors have affected the number of beach closure and advisory days in the County of San Diego. In July of 1999 the state legislature passed Assembly Bill 411, The Beach Safety Bill, which changed the criteria for monitoring and public advisories, thereby resulting in an increase of beach closures and advisories from pre-1999. A factor contributing to the spike in sewage-related beach closures in 1998 was El Nino. With that in mind, the result for 2002 is especially good.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Sewage related beach closure days	93	88	424	127	202	217	103
Advisory days	177	85	19	571	2137	1094	1161

Energy Conservation:

Is there a link between air pollution and turning on the light? The production of energy is not without consequences; coal and oil are very dirty and are responsible for an average of 40% of the air pollution *nationwide*. Natural gas power plants also have associated air pollution. Is San Diego conserving energy? The average number of kilowatt-hours used per account per month in the County of San Diego decreased between 2000 and 2001 in both residential and non-residential accounts. Unfortunately, after the perceived end of the “energy crisis,” the usage has slowly crept back up. San Diego imports more than 90% of the electricity that we use. The best way to create “energy independence” for our region is to CONSERVE and, when possible, install renewable energy systems such as solar power. The City has a target to install 50 megawatts of renewable energy generation within the City of San Diego by the end of calendar year 2013, and it will rely on participation of both public and private buildings.

Housing Near Transit and Retail:

Why do we care about housing near transit and retail? The benefit is that residents in those areas can either walk to the stores near them, or easily take public transit, thereby reducing dependence on cars. The percentage of housing unit building permits that are within a quarter mile of commercial parcels has varied since 1998, but consistently hovers around the 50% mark. A much higher percentage of housing unit building permits are within a quarter mile of a transit stop. However, proximity does not necessarily mean it is easy to access retail or transit from residences. The design of housing, new retail centers and the streets and sidewalks that connect them is very important. The City of San Diego recently adopted a new Street Design Manual,

which creates new guidelines for designing accessible streets. In October of 2002 the City Council also adopted the first element of a new General Plan for the City – the Strategic Framework Element. The Strategic Framework Element envisions a City of Villages, vibrant centers throughout the City that integrate housing, employment and retail, that are connected by a world class transit system.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
New Units near Commercial	44%	56%	64%	63%	52%
New Units near Transit	95%	89%	95%	91%	87%

Public Transit:

What would it take to convince YOU to take public transit? Daily ridership on the trolley and Coaster systems has increased steadily over the years. However, the number of daily passengers on the San Diego Transit (bus) system has decreased.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Daily Ridership	182,720	190,006	205,365	216,604	222,817	227,359	215,925	
San Diego Transit	118,234	118,102	123,260	123,635	125,230	122,587	120,333	107,617
San Diego Trolley	61,693	68,588	78,681	88,599	93,365	100,228	90,532	95,362
Coaster Route	2,793	3,316	3,424	4,370	4,222	4,544	5,060	

Poverty Level:

What’s the level of poverty in San Diego? The San Diego County Gross Regional Product (GRP) from 96 billion in 1998 to 100 billion in 1999 and \$110 billion in 2000, and is forecast to reach \$117.3 billion in 2001, a 7% increase (Source: California Chamber of Commerce).

While this means a significant amount of economic growth, has poverty declined, and have incomes increased? Poverty rates over the same time period suggest that the economic growth has not reduced the numbers of those in poverty, despite high labor force participation rates, and low levels of unemployment over the past several years.

Poverty Status of San Diego County

(Source: 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census, 2001-2002 ACS Survey Census Bureau)

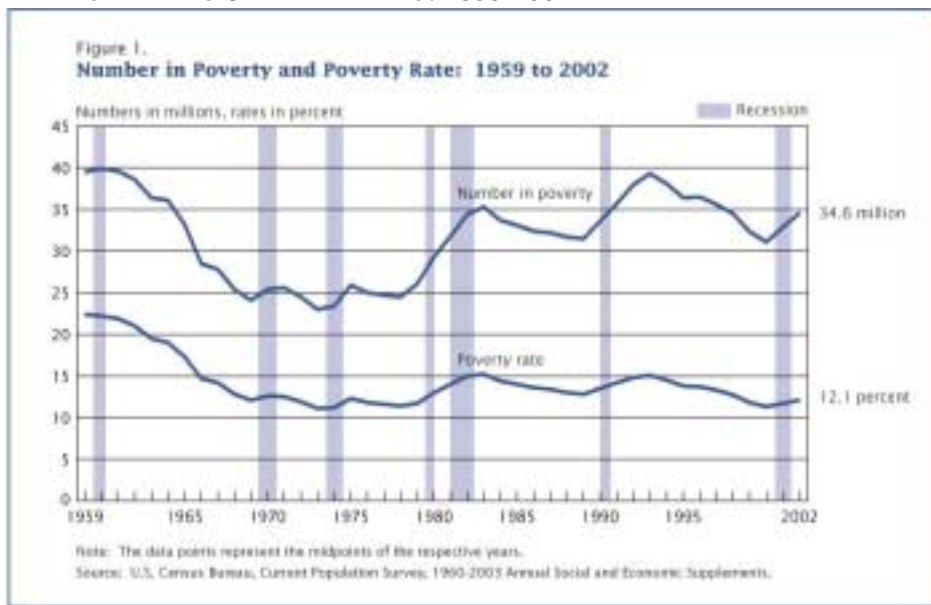
Total for the County

1990	2000	2002
11.3%	12.4%	12.1%

Poverty Rates: Related Children Under 18

1990	2000	2002
15.6%	16.5%	17.5%

NATIONAL POVERTY RATES: 1959-2002



Crime Rate:

Is San Diego one of America's safest large cities? Violent crime incidents have decreased steadily from 1995 through 1999. The violent crime level has stayed relatively constant for the past five years. Juvenile contacts have increased between 1995 and 1999, but have fallen each year since then.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Violent Crime	11,077	10,148	9,789	8,744	7,410	7,161	7,406	7,193
Juvenile Contacts	8,907	9,618	10,126	11,480	12,016	11,431	10,976	9,011

Education Quality:

How well are we preparing the next generation? The average college graduate earns about \$45,000 a year more than a high school graduate. The University of California and California State University systems require that high school students complete adequate preparatory classes with a C or better to be eligible to apply. The percentage of high school seniors in the City of San Diego that complete these classes has increased slowly since 1998.

	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Percentage of HS graduates completing UC/CSU eligible classes	41%	41%	43%	46%	47%	47%

Level of Traffic Congestion:

Do you like to sit in traffic? Both the number of registered vehicles per person and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person per year has increased steadily since 1997. For example, in the 2001, the average miles traveled per person (*man, woman and child!*) was 8,905, up nearly 360 miles per year from 1997. What contributes to this? One big reason is that where we choose to live is farther away from where we work. The other big factor is that we have MORE and MORE cars, steadily increasing from 1998 to 2001—once again, the numbers represent cars per person (*man, woman and child!*).

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
VMT/capita/year	8547	8639	8748	8812	8905
Vehicles/capita		.76	.77	.80	.81

Water Conservation:

What is clearly essential for life and very little is in the San Diego region? Water! More than 90% is imported from northern California and the Colorado River. The use per home has fluctuated between 30,000 and 35,000 gallons per year. As the population increases, so does the demand for water. While we may appreciate that water is essential to life as we know it in San Diego, many of us take it for granted. In fact, as we see greater impacts from climate change, one of the key challenges will be maintaining the availability of water.

CONSERVATION is critical on the part of everyone in the region, and new options for water sources must be explored. The City recycles water at one of its water treatment plants. The State

of California requires that recycled water be delivered through a separate system, the “purple pipes.” These are expensive to install, so despite the low cost of recycled water, only a small percentage of the recycled water is used. The unused water is released into the ocean.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Residential Gallons/ Capita	30,538	34,940	35,859	31,839	33,395	34,713	32,990	34,027
Percentage of Recycled Water Used				10.8	16.1	13.5	14.1	17.9



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