



valley vision

Community Inspired Solutions

# Regional Attitudes About Civic Amenities

June 2017



American River Parkway



# Regional Attitudes About Civic Amenities

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# Report Contributions

## Valley Vision

Valley Vision empowers communities to think big and make courageous decisions to improve people's lives by providing resources and intelligence. We bring experts and leaders together from across geographies and industries to design and implement solutions to some of the region's biggest challenges. For nearly 25 years, Valley Vision has been at the forefront of generating trusted research and the interpretation necessary to inform the public, inspire them to define a more livable future, and help build capacity for action.

## Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research

Founded in 1989, Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research (ISR) harnesses the power of scientific research tools to address social problems. An interdisciplinary unit within the Capital School of Public Affairs, the ISR offers broad expertise conducting survey research, performing program/policy evaluations, and gathering/analyzing data (both quantitative and qualitative) for government agencies, non-profits, and the academic community. The hundreds of projects we have completed have provided actionable information that has enhanced public accountability, program fidelity, and the overall quality of policies designed to serve the region and the state.

## Valley Vision Public Opinion Poll Advisory Committee

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Foundation** and **Western Health  
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Sacramento Partnership/Tour De Drone; and  
Brian Mueller



# Regional Attitudes Polling Series

## A program of Valley Vision and Sacramento State's Institute for Social Research

Making informed choices is harder than ever. Life is growing more and more complicated, the pace of change is accelerating, and finding facts you can trust are hard to come by in this day and age.

That is why Valley Vision has partnered with the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at Sacramento State. Teaming together, we are using a proven, scientific method scaled to California's Capital Region to uncover the views and opinions of local residents on critical issues and share them

Bringing independent public opinion research to our region's decision-makers is just part of a set of new activities Valley Vision has launched to bring focus and new energy to our organization. We are now taking stands on priority regional issues, expanding our headquarters, updating our messaging and brand, and taking more steps to support collective action among our region's private and public sector leadership. We are gearing up for a bright future.

### Findings show that support for these amenities transcends age, gender, wealth, or political affiliation.

with local policy makers. We are the first in the state – perhaps even the country – to apply this approach to a metropolitan area, creating a stronger connection between the people and those governing.

Our first poll presented here on civic amenities has uncovered a range of insights from residents that can inform upcoming public and private investment decisions for our parks and trails, museums, art galleries, and sports and entertainment venues. Findings show that support for these amenities transcends age, gender, wealth, or political affiliation. They unite us. An overwhelming majority of residents say they are critical to their health and well-being. Now we have facts and figures to help tell this story.

Valley Vision's survey advisory group, chaired by Jose Hermocillo of Hermocillo Azevedo Strategic Communications, will soon be underway with our next research study to gauge resident attitudes and opinions on the critical issue of transportation. We plan to release new survey findings every quarter on topics that matter most to residents' quality of life.

Removing some of the guesswork out of policy making is a value that Valley Vision and ISR have been committed to since our founding. Yet this new research capability would not be possible if not for the generous underwriting from the Sierra Health Foundation and Western Health Advantage. We applaud their visionary leadership.

Read on to learn more about how residents rate civic amenities and how we can work together to improve people's lives.



**Bill Mueller**  
Chief Executive



**David Barker**  
Director



## The Focus of the Survey: Civic Amenities

Civic amenities shape daily experiences in our communities. For Valley Vision's inaugural survey we wanted to find out more and help inform our regional elected officials about people's values, priorities, and access to civic amenities; as well as explore the public's appetite for investment. We defined civic amenities as:

***Civic and cultural amenities are defined as both physical places and general activities. Examples of physical places include museums, art galleries, sports venues, riverfront attractions, theatres, parks, and recreational areas. Examples of activities include arts and cultural attractions, and community events and festivals where people like to congregate.***

The information presented about the survey findings is intended to help inform strategies, financing models, and cultural policy in order to advance plans and projects that best contribute to our residents' quality of life and the Sacramento region's economy.

The survey measured five sets of preferences:

- General attitudes about the importance of public and recreational amenities
- Preferences regarding the region's current amenities
- Individual access to and use of the region's amenities
- Preferences regarding potential amenities being planned
- Willingness to invest in different types of amenities

## Survey Administration and Method

In the first quarter of 2017, the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at Sacramento State University, as part of a new research partnership with Valley Vision, created an online panel of pre-qualified and demographically representative survey respondents for the purpose of conducting quarterly surveys of the Sacramento region. The first poll on civic amenities was fielded to 1,374 resident panelists in Sacramento County and specific zip-codes in Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties.<sup>1</sup>

After soliciting input from community stakeholders, Valley Vision created a survey to measure public attitudes regarding civic and cultural amenities in the Capital Region.

- Using the panel, ISR administered the survey from April 11-21, 2017.
- Of the 1,374 panelists, 796 completed the survey during that time-frame, for an initial response rate of 58%.<sup>2</sup>
- After deleting some responses for various reasons (suspicious times to completion, unusable identification codes, etc.), the analyzable sample size was 748.
- The average time to completion was approximately eight (8) minutes.
- The margin of sampling error for any given question, overall, is equal to or less than  $\pm 4\%$ . However, among sub-populations (e.g. among nonwhites or retirees), the margin of error can be larger.
- To ensure that the sample represents the population in the region, ISR employed random probability sampling, multiple language translations and demographic weighting by gender, race/ethnicity and age.<sup>3</sup>

1. The panel continues to grow. The panel will ultimately include 2500 citizens of the Sacramento region, who will serve for a maximum of three years and answer a maximum of six surveys per year. Panelists receive \$5 rewards for each completed survey.

2. Data collection continues. We anticipate the final sample size to be ~900.

3. For all technical details (e.g., sampling, weighting, etc.), see [www.csus.edu/isr/calspeaks/valleyvision.html](http://www.csus.edu/isr/calspeaks/valleyvision.html).

## Survey Findings

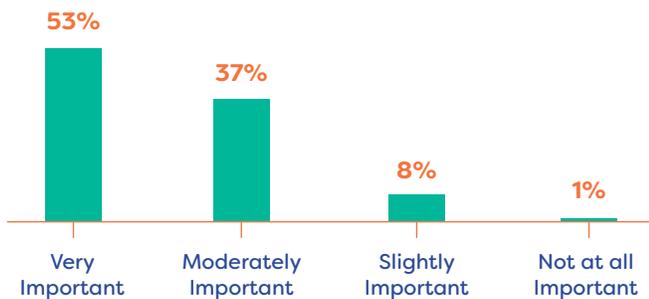
The following pages offer an overview of key survey findings. The findings below are organized by:

- Values surrounding civic amenities
- Priorities and preferences related to types of amenities
- Use of existing amenities
- Access to amenities and preferences of potential future amenities
- Investment priorities

### To what extent do residents value civic amenities and what do they value most about our region's civic amenities?

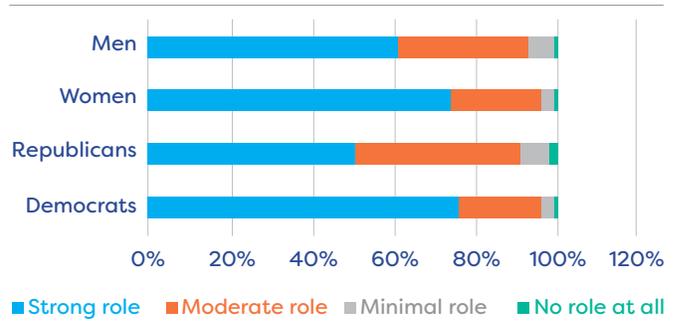
Generally speaking, 91% of Sacramento area residents consider civic and cultural amenities important to their personal well-being and quality of life. This finding transcends demographics and illustrates that civic amenities are a critically important component of people's lives.

When asked how important civic amenities are to residents' quality of life, respondents said:



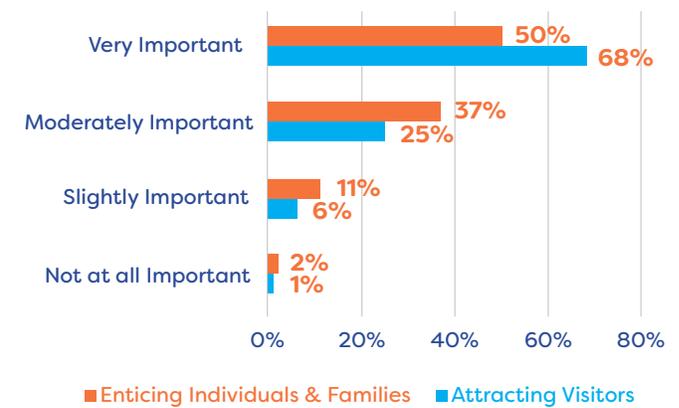
Similarly, 95% consider amenities important for the image of Sacramento to people living outside the region. Democrats and women tend to feel more strongly about this.

### How much of a role do civic amenities play in strengthening our image outside the region?



About 87% of residents consider public amenities important for attracting visitors to Sacramento, while 93% consider amenities an important factor for individuals and families to relocate to the region. Again, Democrats and women felt more strongly about this.

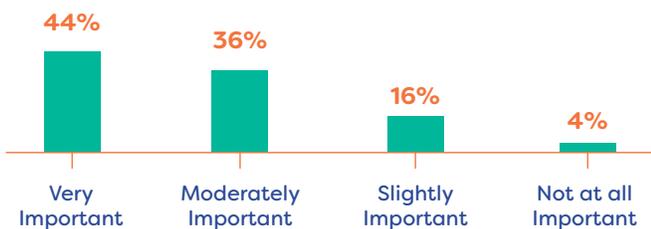
### How important are civic amenities to attracting visitors to the Sacramento region? How important are they to enticing individuals and families to relocate to the region?



A smaller but still large percentage (80%) consider amenities important for attracting businesses to the region – even more so among women and those of lower socioeconomic status.



## How important are civic amenities to enticing businesses to relocate or grow here?

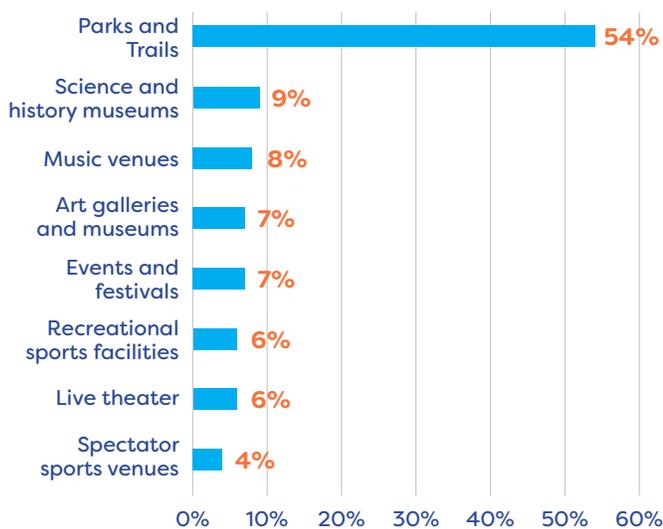


Civic amenities are a crucial part of both people’s daily experiences and a source of identity and value to the region as whole.

## What are residents’ priorities and preferences across different civic amenities?

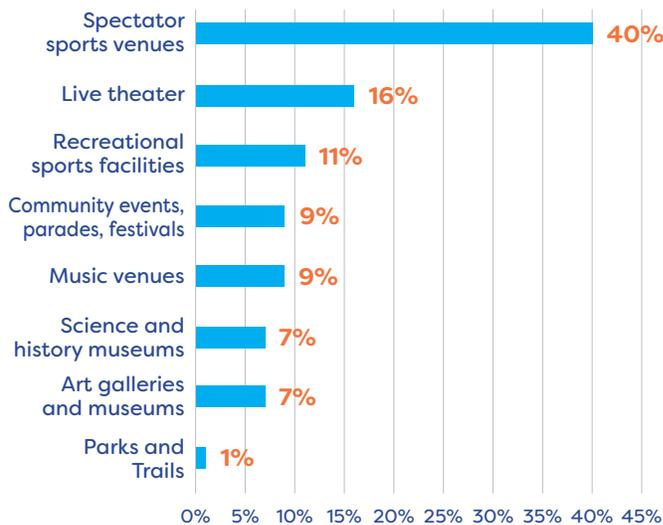
Survey respondents indicated their preferences for different types of amenities. A major finding was that residents overwhelmingly view parks and trails as the most important amenities, both in terms of their own quality of life and in terms of public investment.

When asked to rank the single most important civic amenity to their quality of life, respondents said:



On the other hand, respondents tend to view spectator sports facilities as the least important.

When asked to rank the least important type of amenities to quality of life, respondents said:



There were some ways that preferences for types of amenities changed across different demographics:

- Younger men tend to be more supportive of spectator sports venues, and recreational sports facilities. In general, men tend to be more supportive of history/science museums.
- Live theater tends to be more important to older whites, whereas community events and festivals tend to find greater favor among younger people, women, and non-whites.
- More specifically when it comes to festivals, music/visual arts/cultural heritage festivals tend to be more important among Democrats, non-whites and those of lower socioeconomic status.
- The trends described above in terms of preferences for different types of amenities tend to hold for residents’ perceptions of the region as a whole and for their specific communities.

When asked about the purpose of public amenities, 91% of residents expressed that amenities should promote the values of the region, while 96% of individuals indicated that amenities should provide a pleasurable escape from day-to-day stress.

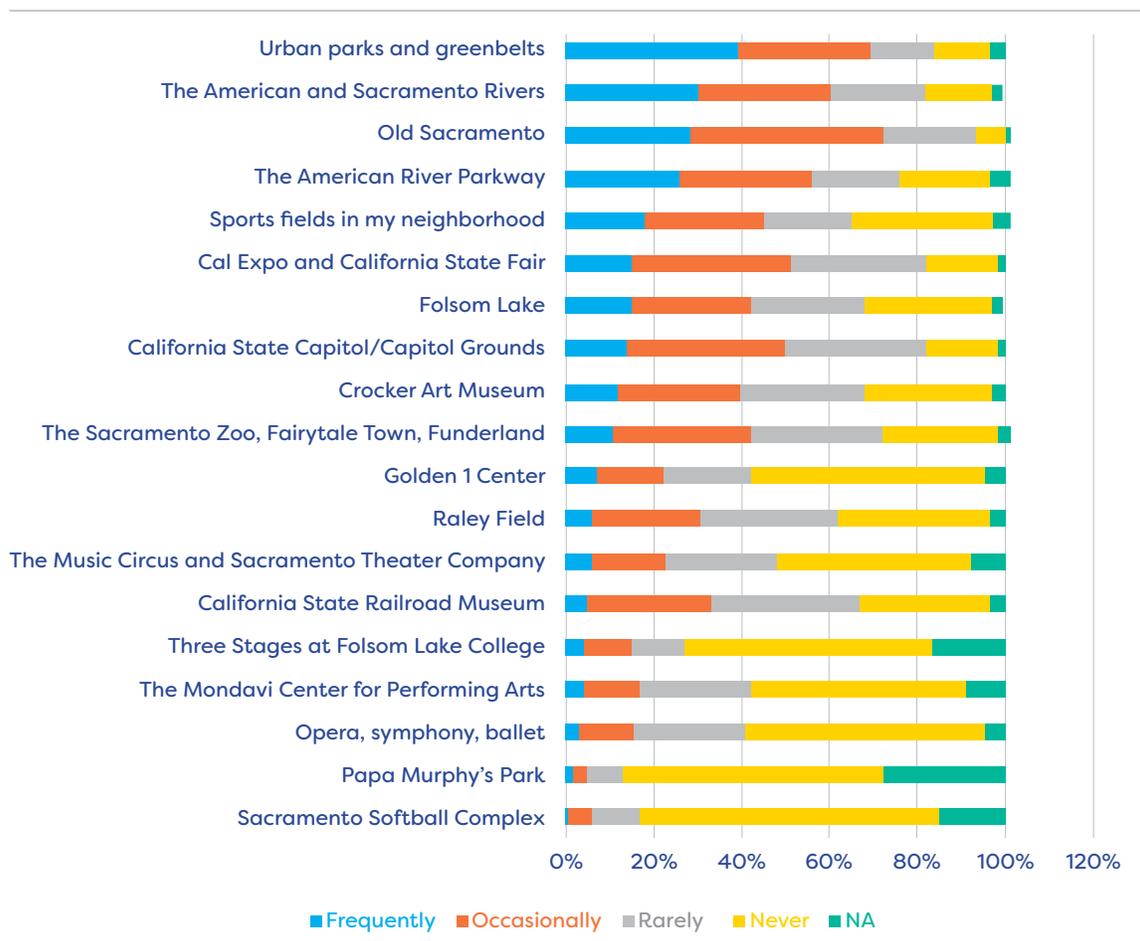
- Democrats were more likely to say that civic amenities should be educational, while Republicans were more likely to say that they should be “family friendly”.
- Democrats are generally more likely to use civic and cultural amenities, especially museums, art galleries and performing arts facilities. Exceptions to this rule include parks/trails and spectator and recreational sports facilities.

### How do residents use existing amenities?

Survey respondents indicated their use patterns for existing amenities in the region:

- Of the available public amenities, most residents visit and use urban parks and greenbelts, the American and Sacramento rivers, and Old Sacramento while the majority of people indicated that they did not use the Papa Murphy’s Park, the Sacramento Softball Complex, and the Three Stages at Folsom Lake College in the last two years.

The following table shows frequency of use of existing amenities. Amenities are ordered by most frequently used to least frequently used. “NA” indicates that the respondent is not familiar with that amenity.



When asked why respondents visit the amenities that they do, they responded:

- Majority of residents visit the American River Parkway, American River, Sacramento River and Folsom Lake because of recreational activities, accessibility, proximity, cost, and the natural environment.
- Residents visit the Old Sacramento Historic District for accessibility, shops, history, restaurants, trains, and other available activities. Additionally, it is convenient for families and pets.
- Those who enjoy the Capitol Grounds go for its hosted events. This is also similar for those who visit Cal Expo and the State Fair.
- Golden 1 Center and Raley Field are enjoyed for sports and concerts. Similarly, neighborhood sports fields are widely popular for young children and recreational activities.
- Residents enjoy local parks, urban parks and greenbelts because of cost, accessibility, recreational activities and wellness.
- The Sacramento Zoo, Fairytale Town, and William Land Park are enjoyed by many families because of their appeal to children.
- The Crocker Art Museum and the Mondavi Center are not widely visited, but residents go for visual and performing arts.
- Although rankings reflect less popularity, Three Stages at Folsom Lake College is visited for its proximity, plays, music and concerts.



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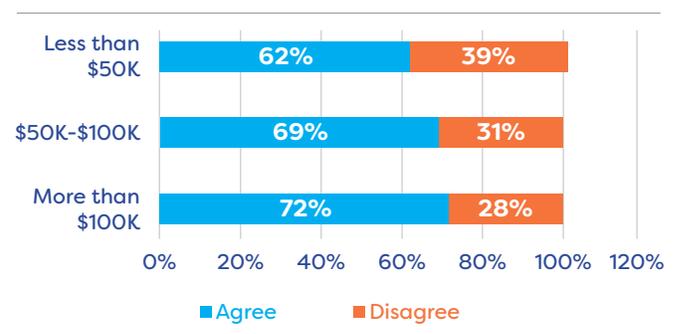
## To what extent do residents have adequate access to amenities and what are the barriers?

67% of respondents consider most public amenities universally accessible to people in their communities. However, respondents' views about accessibility changed according to their income levels.

- More higher-income respondents viewed amenities as accessible than lower-income respondents.



## To what extent do you agree or disagree that everyone in your community has equal access to the amenities they wish to visit?



85% of respondents agreed that cost was a limiting factor influencing their decision to use public amenities.

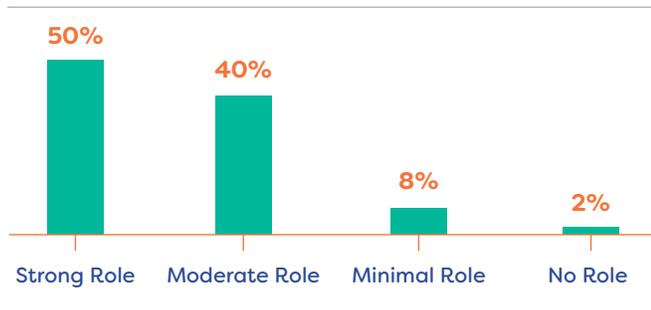
- 18-39 year olds, those making less than \$50K, those with less than a BA, non-whites, and women were most likely to cite cost as the most prohibitive factor.

- Transportation issues, such as parking, distance, traffic, and access to transportation were also cited by a majority of respondents.

### How should investments be prioritized and what role should government and private investors play?

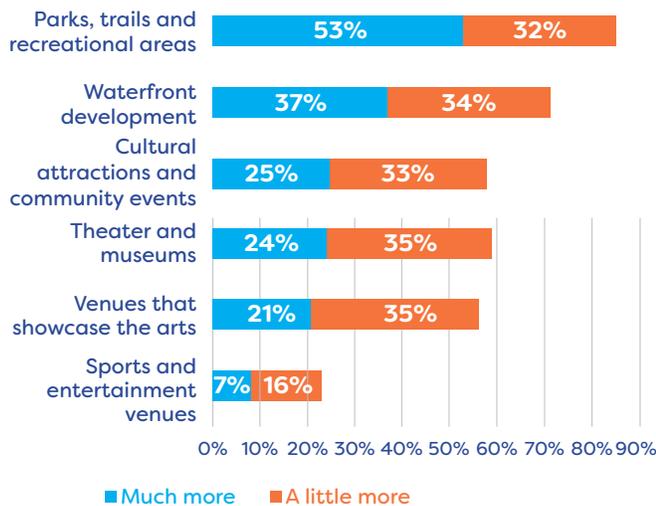
Not surprisingly, 90% support greater public investment in amenities -- especially Democrats, those who are younger, and those of lower socioeconomic status.

When asked the degree to which government has a role in funding/investment, respondents said:



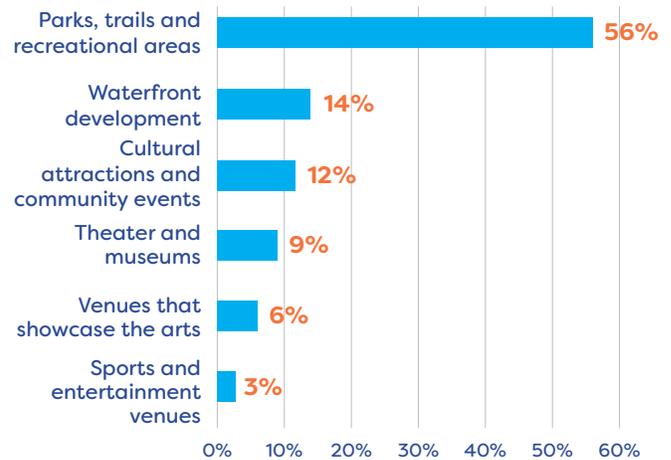
When asked the degree to which the following amenities should have more local investment, respondents replied:

56% respondents said that parks and trails were most in need of investment when asked to prioritize investment needs.

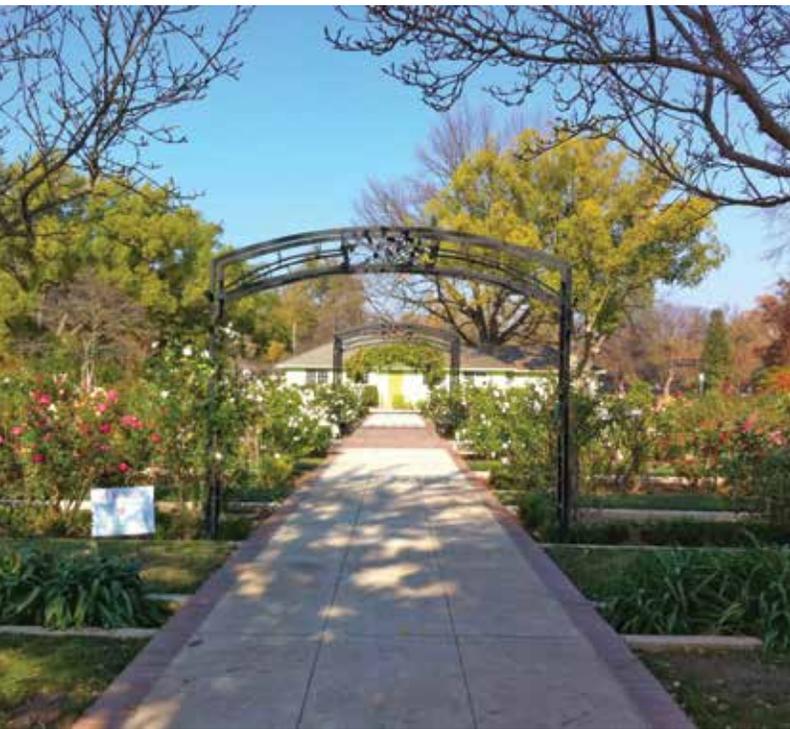


When asked why parks, trails, and recreational areas need more government investment, respondents said:

### Most in need of investment



- These venues do not generate economic growth, therefore, need support from the local government.
- They are important to preserve the environment and its natural resources.
- Parks and recreational areas are critical for promoting health, well-being and community involvement.
- Investment to these venues will make the region more appealing and attract visitors.
- These venues are accessible to all individuals and are free for residents to visit.
- Parks, trails, and recreational areas are populated by the homeless, therefore, need to be maintained and cleaned.
- Current conditions of parks and recreational areas are not safe.

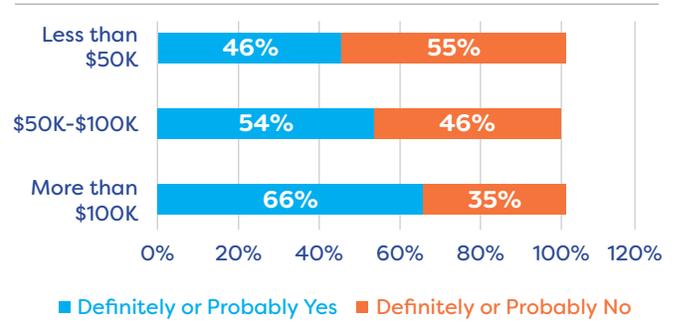


Respondents recognized that civic amenities are important enough to support from their own pocketbook. When asked which type of amenities they would be most likely to support by paying higher taxes, respondents ranked them in the following order:

- 1 Parks and Recreational Areas
- 2 Museums
- 3 Cultural Attractions (tied with #4)
- 4 Theaters (tied with #3)
- 5 Arts and Entertainment Venues
- 6 Sports

A majority of people across most demographics would pay \$21-30 in increased annual taxes. 46% of respondents making under \$50K would “probably” or “definitely” support a tax at that level.

**A majority of people across most demographics would pay \$21-30 in increased annual taxes.**



To access the full survey report go to: <http://valleyvision.org/resources/sacramento-region-civic-and-cultural-amenities-survey>.

To see the demographic make-up of the panel, see Appendix A.



## Civic Amenities Workshop Outcomes

**What:** An interactive workshop to gather insights and feedback on the civic amenities survey findings

**Where:** At the Sacramento Metro Chamber's 2017 Capitol-to-Capitol Trip in Washington D.C.

**When:** May 3, 2017

**Who:** About 60 Sacramento region leaders participated with Valley Vision and the Institute for Social Research in collaboration with the Cap-to-Cap Civic Amenities Team and sponsored by Teichert

The Civic Amenities Workshop previewed results of the Civic Amenities scientific poll results, invited reaction, and facilitated an in-depth discussion about the findings and priorities. Following a presentation of key outcomes of the survey data, Workshop participants were guided through a series of prompt questions to generate reaction to and more in-depth insights into the survey results. Following is an overview of Cap-to-Cap participants' feedback to the survey findings and prompt questions:

### 1. Residents say that parks, trails, and recreational areas are most important to them when compared to other civic amenities. Why do you think residents' value these type of amenities over others?

- Parks are the great equalizer because: (a) they are accessible to everyone and used similarly by everyone; (b) people might be priced out of other amenities; (c) they can be used daily/regularly; and (d) they advance mental health, physical health, and family.
- Participants presume that people are willing to 'pay' for parks and trails because they are perceived as being free and in need of public support. Other amenities that already have a charge for use need less investment.
- Participants support innovation in park spaces such as: maximizing accessibility and use; encouraging personal care and investment by neighborhoods or the general public, allowing people to garden in some parks; and encouraging the public to take "ownership" through community group activities.

**2. Another strong finding was that people valued spectator sports and entertainment venues the least when compared with other priorities, and were least likely to want local government to invest further. How would you explain this result?**

- Perhaps people perceive that investments in sports and entertainment venues would benefit private or for profit organizations or individuals. Investments in other type of amenities are more open and accessible to the public.
- The region just invested a significant amount in the Golden 1 Center. People would like to see more diversified investments at this time and may be fatigued by the effort to get Golden 1 funded and built and the impact of the arena on parking and other issues.

**3. Residents say civic amenities are vital to their quality of life and serve to attract people and businesses. In your opinion, what civic amenities make this region stand out from others?**

- Natural amenities of the region such as: open space, climate, rivers, trails, trees, and outdoors. The American River Parkway was specifically called out.
- Arts and cultural amenities such as the Crocker Art Museum.
- Events such as the California International Marathon.
- The fact that we are the capital city is noteworthy and attractive.
- The general quality of our amenities – there is a high degree of variety and all civic amenities are relatively accessible and convenient across the region.

**4. What was your number one “take-away” from these survey results?**

- Regional stakeholders are glad to have, for the first time, data to support the importance of civic amenities in the attraction and retention of business and talent in the Sacramento Region.
- It is an important confirmation that people are willing to pay extra to support civic amenities.
- Need to consider BOTH public funding entities/mechanisms AND private funding entities/mechanisms to support civic infrastructure.
- The poll suggests that the region has good access to a diverse set of amenities across broad areas. Investment in access should stay high.
- Access to amenities is vital to our present and future quality of life.



## Conclusion and Recommendations

The public opinion survey – the first of its kind in the Sacramento region – offers a unique look into residents’ views about a wide variety of important issues surrounding the region’s civic amenities. This information is valuable for local policy makers, funders/investors, and regional organizations involved in promoting and preserving cultural and natural amenities. Understanding residents’ perspectives should drive policy, investments, and goal-setting for the region’s current and future amenities.



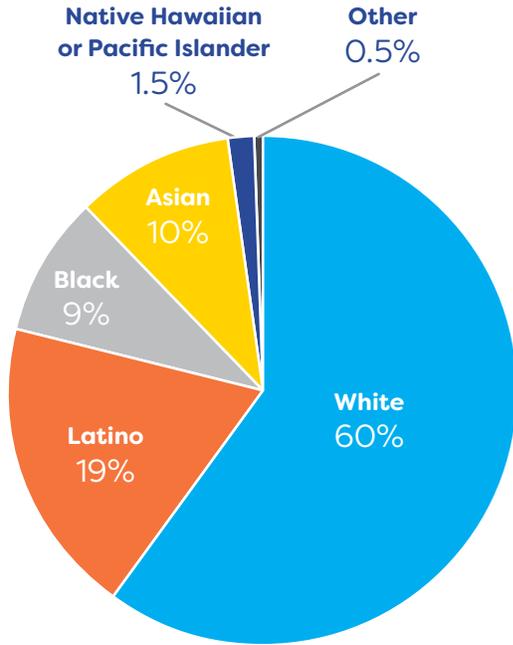
The Valley Vision Polling Advisory Committee, along with Valley Vision staff, propose the following recommendations:

1. As civic amenities are universally recognized as critically important to residents’ quality of life, promoting, preserving, and investing should be a priority for local government and other entities.
2. The Capital Region should give greater emphasis to the importance of parks when considering ongoing government investment. Should taxpayers be asked to increase their investment in regional amenities, local leaders should use the results of this survey to structure the ballot measure in accord with stated public priorities.
3. The results of this work should be factored into the Arts and Cultural Master Plan that is anticipated to be developed in the next several years.
4. Survey results should be represented in economic, transportation and other planning processes.

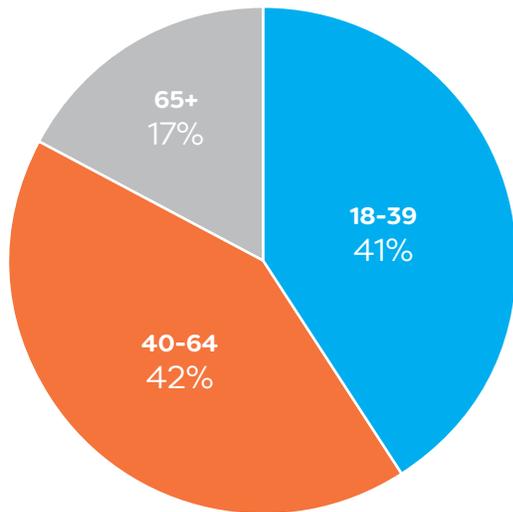
# Appendix A

## Panel Demographics

### Racial Make up



### Age



#### Geography

75%	Sacramento County
12%	Yolo County
9%	Placer County
5%	El Dorado County

#### Gender

Male	49%
Female	51%

#### Income

<\$30K	21%
\$30-50K	16%
\$50-75K	17%
\$75-100K	19%
\$100-150K	14%
\$150-200K	9%
>\$200K	4%

#### Political Party ID

66%	Democrat
10%	Independent
25%	Republican



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Community Inspired Solutions

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