

## **Growth gets Californians down, says poll**

### **Many worried about traffic, air**

By JIM WASSERMAN, Associated Press Writer

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SACRAMENTO (AP) - Californians are increasingly pessimistic about the state's growth, believing a rising population during the next 20 years means [more air pollution](#), higher home prices for their children and ever-worsening traffic snarls, according to a new statewide opinion poll.

A survey of 2,500 residents released Thursday reveals that 59 percent believe more people will be bad for them and their families, while only 14 percent say growth will benefit California.

But most have little idea that California has 36 million people and may grow to nearly 48 million by 2025. Only 16 percent of those surveyed in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean knew the state's approximate population, while another 16 percent believed it was less than 10 million.

Most optimistic about the future are Hispanics and Asian-Americans, many of them recently arrived immigrants who believe their family situations have improved, said Mark Baldassare, statewide survey director for the Public Policy Institute of California.

"Many have an optimism for themselves and future generations as immigrant populations often do," he said.

"On the flip side," Baldassare said. "Whites and African-Americans in the state are the most pessimistic. Many of them are feeling the state's best days are behind them."

Noting that whites and blacks are 80 percent of California's voters, Baldassare said the survey shows that the state's political choices on growth are increasingly driven by its most pessimistic residents.

The telephone survey, conducted between May 24 and June 8, reveals again Californians' long-held, but growing anxieties over millions more people, cars and houses in an already crowded state stumbling through a prolonged financial crisis. With a 2 percent margin of error, the results also show residents' widespread lack of confidence in state and local governments to properly manage growth, with many believing they can do better planning themselves through ballot initiatives.

In 1999, PPIC's last poll largely about growth and the future, showed Californians less concerned amid the state's economic boom, Baldassare said.

But the pollster said Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has given many voters more hope in the future, as 60 percent of those polled said they approved of his performance in office.

The state's most optimistic region, according to the survey, is a vast suburbanizing swath of Riverside and San Bernardino counties known as the Inland Empire. Compared to 16 percent of Bay Area adults who believe their region will be better in 2025, and only 15 percent in Orange and San Diego counties, 24 percent of Inland Empire residents surveyed believe better days are ahead.

Fifty-two percent of residents there see more jobs and believe schools will get better.

"We have our problems like anyone else," said Temecula Mayor Mike Naggar, adding that many newcomers from more crowded and expensive areas feel good about owning a home and seeing less traffic congestion.

"It's still an affordable place to live," he said. "When you move here you're glad you're here ... There may be a little traffic problem, but they're working on it."

Central Valley residents witnessing a similar rural-to-suburban transformation, remain the most pessimistic, with [79 percent believing air pollution will increase](#), 80 percent saying affordable housing will diminish and 86 percent predicting traffic will become more like that in Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

Bay Area residents, conversely, were the most likely to say their traffic would not worsen.

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On the Net:

Read the survey online at <http://www.ppic.org>

## **Pleasanton residents voice concerns Granite Construction's asphalt plant main complaint against city**

By Matt Carter, STAFF WRITER  
[Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, Aug. 5, 2004](#)

PLEASANTON -- A showdown is brewing over the future of an asphalt plant east of Pleasanton, after the city asked county officials to require the plant to be moved or shut down.

Critics say Granite Construction Co. was allowed to build the plant, at 1544 Stanley Blvd., two years ago with no public or environmental review. The plant was constructed in about a week, critics charge, after county officials ruled it was allowed under permits dating back to the 1950s.

Granite Construction maintains it has responded to neighbors' complaints about noise, odor, and the plant's appearance. They note the asphalt plant has the necessary permits from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, and said they have a vested legal right to continue to operate a facility in which they've invested more than \$4 million.

But Pleasanton officials said the plant is less than 1,000 feet away from a planned elementary school on Vineyard Avenue, and must be moved.

In a 3-1 vote Tuesday, the Pleasanton City Council authorized a letter from the city to the Alameda County Planning Commission, which is scheduled to meet in Pleasanton on Sept. 2.

City Councilman Matt Campbell voted against weighing in against the plant, saying its operators haven't violated any ordinances or permits. Councilman Steve Brozosky, who recused himself from the vote because he lives near the plant, addressed the council as a member of the public.

"Nobody is saying Granite is a bad company," Brozosky said. "We're just saying there's something in our neighborhood that doesn't belong here."

### **Bridge won't include fake truss**

A new bridge that will carry cars and pedestrians over the Arroyo de la Laguna on Bernal Avenue won't include a fake steel superstructure.

The superstructure originally was intended to make the new bridge match an existing steel truss bridge, which was built in 1941 and was the subject of a grass-roots preservation campaign.

Originally, the city planned to demolish the existing two-lane bridge and replace it with a single, larger bridge to handle four lanes of car traffic and bicycles and pedestrians.

But when Pleasanton residents launched a grassroots campaign to save the old Bernal Avenue bridge, the City Council agreed to keep it. City officials reached an agreement with developers requiring them to build a new bridge next to the existing one.

So the new bridge wouldn't look out of place, it originally was designed to have a steel superstructure above the bridge deck -- even though it wasn't needed to support the bridge.

In 1993, the superstructure was estimated to cost \$110,000, and the budget for the entire project was \$443,000.

The project was delayed, and the estimated cost of building the bridge has ballooned to \$2.6 million.

Eliminating the false steel superstructure could save \$1.4 million, and reduce the city's share of the project from \$800,000 to \$100,000 or less.

"I thought it was a great idea back in 1993," said Mayor Tom Pico, before joining the council in a unanimous 5-0 vote to eliminate the superstructure.

### **Bernal property goes to vote**

The Pleasanton City Council adopted a proposal by Mayor Tom Pico to place an initiative on the Bernal property on the Nov. 2 ballot.

The initiative requires voter approval of a plan being developed for 318 acres the city owns south of Bernal Avenue.

Voter approval already is guaranteed in the Bernal Property Specific Plan, but Pico said the initiative will prevent future councils from changing the Specific Plan. Councilman Steve Brozosky cast the lone vote against the initiative.

The council instructed Pleasanton City Attorney Michael Roush to draft an impartial analysis of the measure, which will be entitled "The Bernal Property Right to Vote Initiative."

## **Save money, clear the air: Trucks, buses can't idle in fight against pollution**

[Modesto Bee, Editorial, Thursday, Aug. 5, 2004](#)

When the driver of a big rig stops at a diner for lunch and leaves his truck idling, he's not just wasting fuel; he's also pumping soot and smog-forming toxic chemicals into the air.

When the state's 26,000 school buses sit idling for 15 or 20 minutes, they're not just waiting for passengers; they're also creating a cloud of toxins through which our youngsters must pass.

Diesel exhaust accounts for 70 percent of California's air pollution. It can irritate eyes, nose, throat and lungs, cause coughs, headaches, lightheadedness and nausea.

Until a year ago, drivers let buses idle because they thought it would be hard to restart them in cold weather. Now, they must shut down the engines after five minutes. Improved engines and better fuels make such idling unnecessary. So does California's weather.

There is a bill in the Assembly to give the bus rules the force of law. There is little or no opposition from school officials, who must enforce it. We think it should be passed.

A month ago, similar rules were applied to diesel-powered trucks.

In the Central Valley, it makes a great deal of sense. The state estimated that shutting down idling diesels would cut soot emissions by 166 tons a year and nitrogen oxides (key components of smog) by 5,200 tons. Violators can be fined \$100.

Idling will be allowed for running auxiliary equipment (cement mixers, refrigerators for produce in a truck's cargo bay, etc.).

In 2009, more stringent rules will bar idling to operate air conditioners, heaters, TV sets and other equipment in a big-rig's sleeper. Drivers will have to buy nonpolluting generators or plug into outlets at truck stops.

Over the life of the truck, regulators say, such equipment will save money on fuel and engine wear and tear. The state Air Resources Board reports each big-rig driver can save 125 gallons of fuel a year by adhering to the idling control measures. At \$1.80 a gallon, that's a \$225 bonus for doing the right thing.

These anti-idling rules are not some exotic California-only regulation. At least 20 other states and dozens of counties and cities have anti-idling rules, some more stringent than California's rules. They exist because they save fuel and protect the environment.