

KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

2007 RANDOM SURVEY

Prepared for:

KERN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The following pages summarize the results of the February 2007 Kern County random survey for the Kern Council of Governments. The results of the survey are based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 1,200 residents of Kern County. For the purpose of this study, the Kern Council of Governments defined four regions within Kern County; Kern County was divided into four logical geographical regions labeled West Kern, Central Valley, Mountains, and East Kern. The survey sample was stratified to produce 600 respondents from the Central Valley (the largest population center) and 200 respondents from each of the other three regions - West Kern (200), Mountains (200), and East Kern (200). A sample size of 1,200 respondents for a survey of this type has a margin of error of three percent with a ninety-five percent certainty that the mean will be within three percentage points of the true mean. (The margin of error will vary for specific subset analysis.)

The primary purpose of the research project was to examine public attitudes and perceptions regarding several quality of life issues within Kern County. The survey was also designed to establish a benchmark, so that in the future selected questions and variables could be analyzed over time. All of the findings in the survey were compared across various demographic variables including age, gender, length of time a respondent had been a resident of Kern County, household income, level of education, ethnic identification, and region of the county.

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

One of the most critical elements of a telephone survey is the design and development of the survey questionnaire. When developing such a questionnaire, care must be taken to insure that the instrument gathers the desired information. The following principles are a sample of the guidelines which were followed in developing the questionnaire:

- Are all of the important phases of the survey adequately covered?
- Does the questionnaire format flow smoothly?
- Does the questionnaire stimulate respondent cooperation?
- Does the wording avoid ambiguities?
- Are the response options mutually exclusive and sufficient to cover each conceivable answer?
- Are the questions relevant, interesting, easy-to-understand, and applicable to everyone in the study?

Because interviewing by telephone is totally dependent on what can be verbally communicated, considerable care was taken to ensure that the wording of the questions not only read well but also sounded well to the listener. As a result, the draft questionnaire was extensively pretested.

PRETEST

The formal pretest, which simulated actual survey conditions, was conducted February 11, 2007. To test the survey instrument, one hundred calls were completed throughout Kern County. This approach was utilized to determine whether or not the questionnaire was an appropriate interview instrument for the entire population to be surveyed.

During the pretest, frequent debriefing sessions were conducted between project staff and the interviewers to discuss the format and the content of the questionnaire. Interviewers were able to provide insight into the amount of time needed to administer the questionnaire, respondent willingness to answer the different questions, and other important elements of the questionnaire design. Based on the pretesting results, a survey schedule was determined, and questionnaire was finalized.

INTERVIEWING AND TELEPHONE PROCEDURES

In order to obtain the required information, a total of 35 experienced interviewers were selected and trained specifically for this project. Price Research interviewer training is primarily based on The University of Michigan Interviewer Manual, a comprehensive guide to interviewing techniques.

The first phase of the interviewer training involved the explanation of the purpose of the project. An understanding of the purpose was crucial, since the interviewers were often asked to explain why the survey was being conducted.

A great deal of training time was spent on the initial contact and gaining acceptance from the respondent. Each question was discussed in a group setting so that all of the interviewers were familiar with the rationale behind the inclusion of a particular question. Interviewers were also provided with specific background information concerning the Kern Council of Governments, and interviewers and staff discussed and reviewed information specific to Kern County.

Interviewing was completed February 14-17 generally between the hours of 5:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

During the interviewing phase, if a particular respondent was unavailable, the telephone number was designated as a "call back." Designated respondents to the questionnaire were determined by a screening procedure. If only a child or a babysitter were home, the residence was also designated as a "call back". Generally, all "call back" households were attempted a minimum of four times before moving on to another respondent household.

As always, Kern County respondents were eager to provide the necessary information. Some interviews lasted as long as 20 minutes, while the average interview took 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of 29 questions and 56 variables.

SURVEY SAMPLE

Using a specified randomization procedure, calls were placed to households throughout Kern County. All households with telephones within Kern County had an equal opportunity of being selected for inclusion in the study. Known business exchanges were intentionally excluded.

For this project, a total of 1,200 interviews were completed. In order to obtain an adequate sample of residents in the four regions of Kern County to be able to perform meaningful crosstab analysis, the total sample size of 1,200 was stratified so that 600 interviews were completed in the Central Valley Region, 200 interviews were completed in the West Kern Region, 200 interviews were completed in the Mountains Region, and 200 interviews were completed in the East Kern Desert Region.

The four regions were defined by a zip code map provided by the Kern Council of Governments.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed by using the software package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

The statistical tools employed in this analysis varied depending upon the type of variable being considered. For nominal level dichotomies, the measure of Phi was utilized. For nominal level polytomies, the measure of Cramer's V was used. The cases dealing with ordinal level data utilized the measure of Gamma. These measures of association, when used with a test of significance (Chi Square), enabled the researcher to identify those variables which were related to the dependent variable in a statistical sense and also provided an insight into the magnitude of the relationship.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The intent of this study was to provide a comprehensive, unbiased, statistically valid data base and public opinion survey for the Kern Council of Governments. Conclusions presented in this section are based on the findings presented in tabular form in the Appendix pages 1 thru 24.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- ... 87% of the survey respondents indicated that their community was a desirable place in which to live (very desirable: 44.1%; somewhat desirable: 43.1%).
- ... 12% of the survey respondents indicated that their community was an undesirable place in which to live (somewhat undesirable: 7.8%; very undesirable: 4.5%).
- ... 60% of the survey respondents indicated that things in their community were headed in the right direction.
- ... 21% of those interviewed noted that things in their community were headed in the wrong direction.
- ... 15% of the survey respondents indicated that things in their community were headed in both the right and the wrong directions.
- ... 39% of the survey respondents indicated that the quality of life in their community has stayed about the same during the past five years.
- ... 30% of those interviewed indicated that during the past five years the quality of life in their community has gotten better.
- ... 23% of the survey respondents indicated that during the past five years the quality of life in their community has gotten worse.
- ... 40% of those interviewed expect the quality of life in their community to improve within the next ten years.

- ... 28% of the survey respondents expect the quality of life in their community to become worse within the next ten years.
- ... 25% of those interviewed believed that they quality of life in their community will stay about the same within the next ten years.
- ... 7% of the survey respondents were unable to evaluate whether or not the quality of life in their community will improve, stay about the same, or become worse within the next ten years.
- ... When respondents were asked to identify the most serious problem currently facing their community from a list of ten options, 19% of those interviewed indicated that crime was the most serious problem; 15% of the respondents noted that immigration was the most serious problem; 13% identified air pollution as the most serious problem; and 11% indicated that population growth was the most serious problem.
- ... When respondents were asked to identify the second most serious problem currently facing their community (from a list of nine options), another 19% of those interviewed indicated that crime was the second most serious problem; another 10% of the survey respondents either selected road maintenance (10.2%), air pollution (10.1%), immigration (9.8%), or affordable housing (9.7%) as the second most serious problem facing their community, while another 9% noted that population growth (9.0%) and traffic (8.7%) were the second most serious problem currently facing their community.
- ... With respect to the third most serious problem currently facing their community, 12% of those responding indicated that crime was the third most serious problem; 11% selected affordable housing, and 9% selected either immigration (9.3%), health care (9.2%), road maintenance (9.2%), traffic (9.2%), or population growth (9.0%).
- ... 70% of those interviewed agreed with the statement that, "The population of Kern County is growing too fast."
- ... 66% of the survey respondents disagreed with the statement that, "Roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population."
- ... 78% of the respondents agreed that, "Kern County has a serious air pollution problem."
- ... 82% of those interviewed indicated agreement with the statement that, "Kern County has a major gang violence problem."
- ... 58% of those interviewed agreed that, "Kern County has a serious problem with childhood asthma," (29% unable to evaluate).

- ... 51% of the survey respondents indicated their agreement with the statement, "Kern County lacks opportunities for well-paying jobs."
- ... 46% of those interviewed believed that the loss of farm and agricultural land in the valley is a major problem.
- ... 25% of the respondents indicated that the loss of farm and agricultural land in the valley is a problem.
- ... 12% of those interviewed noted that the loss of farm and agricultural land in the valley is a minor problem.
- ... 10% of the survey respondents indicated that the loss of farm and agricultural land in the valley is not a problem.
- ... 61% of those interviewed agreed with the statement that, "In the desert region of Kern County, we should forbid or prohibit development underneath all military flight corridors where the military conducts test flights," (strongly agreed: 24.3%; agreed: 36.6%).
- ... 30% of the survey respondents disagreed with the statement regarding development under all military flight corridors (disagreed: 23.9%; strongly disagreed: 6.2%).
- ... 29% of the respondents interviewed indicated that traffic congestion is not a problem in their community.
- ... 24% of those interviewed indicated that traffic congestion is a major problem in their community.
- ... 23% of the survey respondents noted that traffic congestion is a problem in their community.
- ... 23% of the respondents noted that traffic congestion is a minor problem in their community.
- ... 41% of the survey respondents indicated that they agreed that local governments have adequate funding to provide the roads and public transportation projects needed to accommodate future population growth.

- ... 50% of those interviewed disagreed that local governments have the adequate funding to provide the roads and public transportation projects needed to accommodate future population growth.
- ... 78% of those surveyed indicated that their household had never used an emergency roadside call box in Kern County.
- ... 21% of the respondents indicated that someone in their household had used an emergency roadside call box in Kern County.
- ... 28% of the respondents indicated that on a daily basis they travel on Kern County highways with emergency call box service.
- ... 26% of those interviewed noted that a few times a month they travel on Kern County highways with emergency call box service.
- ... 24% of the survey respondents indicated that a few times a week they travel on Kern County highways with emergency call box service.
- ... 19% of those interviewed indicated that they travel on Kern County highways with emergency roadside call box service less than once a month.
- ... When respondents were presented with three call box options, 70% of those interviewed indicated that they would prefer to see Kern County maintain the current level of emergency roadside call box service; 19% indicated that they would prefer to see the call box service provided on only the most heavily traveled roads in Kern County; and another 7% of the respondents noted that Kern County should eliminate all emergency roadside call box service.
- ... With respect to motorists aid services, 83% of those interviewed indicated that it was important for Kern County to provide motorists with increased Highway Patrol enforcement (51% very important).
- ... 78% of those interviewed noted that it was important to provide motorists with traveler information such as a special radio channel; electronic message signs; and information on the Internet (35% very important).
- ... 69% of those interviewed indicated that it was important to provide motorists with a mobile freeway patrol to assist with minor vehicle problems (32% very important; 37% somewhat important).

- ... 91% of the survey respondents indicated that it was important to provide motorists with improved incident response services such as hazardous materials response, med-a-vac or air ambulance services, helicopter rescue capabilities, enhanced 911/G.P.S. location capabilities from cell phones, accident clean-up, etc. (65% very important).
- ... 61% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement, "We should forbid urban and suburban development on farm and agricultural lands," (26% strongly agreed).
- ... 76% of those interviewed agreed with the statement, " We should expand bus and public transit systems," (30% strongly agreed).
- ... 62% of the survey respondents agreed with the statement, "We should restrict future development to existing suburban and urban areas rather than expanding development into the existing rural areas," (22% strongly agreed).
- ... 57% of those interviewed agreed with the statement, "We should require local governments to provide new housing that is affordable for the workforce in the area," (40% disagreed).
- ... 70% of those interviewed disagreed with the statement, "We should forbid the use of wood burning residential fireplaces," (27% agreed).
- ... 88% of those interviewed agreed with the statement, "We should require local governments to work together to have a common plan for transportation and housing development and land use in their region," (41% strongly agreed).
- ... 33% of those interviewed provided a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B) of public transportation in their community (C - 35%; D/F - 24%).
- ... 31% of those interviewed provided either a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B) or a poor evaluation (letter grades of D & F) of affordable housing in their community (C - 35%).
- ... 36% of those interviewed provided a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B) of healthcare in their community (C - 30%; D/F - 31%).
- ... 36% of the survey respondents provided a poor evaluation (letter grades of D & F) of their community's street and road maintenance (C - 37% ; A/B -27%).

- ... 66% of those interviewed provided a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B) of the overall quality of life in their community (C - 27%; D/F - 7%).
- ... 33% of those interviewed provided a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B) of the job opportunities in their community (C - 34%; D/F - 29%).
- ... 58% of the survey respondents provided a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B) of law enforcement in their community (C - 27%; D/F - 13%).
- ... 44% of those interviewed provided a poor evaluation (letter grades of D & F) of the air quality in their community (A/B - 34%; C - 22%).
- ... More than half of the survey respondents (54%) indicated that their local government was only average when it comes to local housing and land-use policies.
- ... 29% of those interviewed indicated that their local government was below average with respect to local housing and land-use policies (below average - 16%; poor - 14%).
- ... 13% of those interviewed indicated that their local government was above average with respect to local housing and land-use policies (above average - 10%; excellent - 3%).
- ... 45% of those interviewed noted that their travel time to and from work each day was 20 minutes or less (11-20 minutes - 13%; 5-10 minutes - 10%; less than 5 minutes - 22%).
- ... 18% of the survey respondents indicated that they travel less than a mile per day to and from work.
- ... 20% of those interviewed noted that they travel from one to ten miles to and from work each day.
- ... 13% of those interviewed travel from eleven to twenty miles to and from work each day.
- ... 11% of those surveyed indicated that they travel from twenty-one to forty miles to and from work each day.
- ... 11% noted that they travel more than forty miles to and from work each day.
- ... More than half of the survey respondents (57%) indicated that they usually drive alone to and from work.

- ... 7% of those interviewed indicated that they car pool to and from work.
- ... 2% of those interviewed noted that they use public transportation to get to and from work.
- ... 43% of those interviewed indicated that on a typical day traffic congestion to and from work is not usually a problem.
- ... 17% of those interviewed noted that on a typical day traffic congestion to and from work is somewhat of a problem.
- ... 8% of the survey respondents noted that on a typical day traffic congestion to and from work is a severe problem.
- ... 32% of the survey respondents were age 65 or older.
- ... 20% of the survey respondents were between the ages of 55 to 64.
- ... 17% of the survey respondents were age 45-54.
- ... 13% of the survey respondents were age 35-44.
- ... 9% of those interviewed were between the ages of 25 to 34.
- ... 8% of those interviewed were age 18-24.
- ... 6% of those interviewed had not earned a high school diploma.
- ... 26% of the survey respondents were high school graduates.
- ... 29% of those interviewed had experienced some college.
- ... 5% of the survey respondents had completed business/technical school.
- ... 10% of those interviewed indicated that they had completed an Associate Degree (AA/AS).
- ... 14% of those interviewed indicated that they had completed a Bachelor's Degree.
- ... 9% of the survey population possessed an advanced degree.

- ... 17% of the survey population lived in a household with an annual household income of less than \$25,000.
- ... 24% of the respondents interviewed noted that their household earned from \$25,000 to \$45,000 per year.
- ... 16% of the survey respondents noted that their household earned from \$45,000 to \$65,000 annually.
- ... 13% of the survey respondents indicated that their annual household income was from \$65,000 to \$85,000.
- ... 8% of those interviewed noted that their household earned from \$85,000 to \$105,000 per year.
- ... 9% of the survey respondents indicated that they lived in households making more than \$105,000 annually.
- ... 77% of those interviewed noted that they had lived in Kern County for more than ten years.
- ... 9% of the survey respondents indicated that they had lived in Kern County 6-10 years.
- ... 11% of the survey respondents had lived in Kern County 1-5 years.
- ... 2% of those interviewed noted that they had lived in Kern County less than one year.
- ... Regarding the geographical regions of the county, 50% of the survey sample was from the Central Valley, 17% of the survey sample was from West Kern , 17% of the survey sample was from the Mountain areas, and 17% of the survey sample was from East Kern.
- ... 76% of the total sample self-identified themselves as White/Non-Hispanic.
- ... 13% of the total sample self-identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.
- ... 3% self-identified themselves as Black.
- ... Half of the total sample was female; half of the total sample was male.

GENERAL PERCEPTIONS REGARDING QUALITY OF LIFE

As part of the warm-up section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to identify the desirability of their community as a place in which to live. An examination of the data revealed that the vast majority of those surveyed (87%) indicated that their community was indeed a desirable place in which to live (44.1% very desirable; 43.1% somewhat desirable). (See Appendix page 2. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 122.) Responses were similar in the subset analysis, with the exception of those respondents living in the Mountains Region of Kern County. When specifically asked, respondents who lived in the Mountains Region indicated that they were more satisfied with the desirability of their communities (Mountains Region: 70% very desirable; 23% somewhat desirable).

This positive perception of community was further reinforced by the fact that when asked to provide a letter grade evaluation of the overall quality of life in their community, 65.8% of those interviewed provided a letter grade evaluation of either A or B (grade of A: 18.8%; grade of B: 47.0%). (See Appendix page 17. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 165.)

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate whether they believed that things in their community were headed in either the right direction or the wrong direction. Approximately 60% of the total sample respondents indicated that things in their community were headed in the right direction (59.6% right direction; 20.6% wrong direction; 15.0% little of both). Once again, specific subset analysis revealed similar responses. However, East Kern respondents were slightly more positive than the total sample, with 69.0% of the respondents indicating that things in their community were headed in the right direction. (See Appendix page 3. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 123.)

In addition, respondents were asked to indicate whether the quality of life in their community had improved, stayed about the same, or gotten worse during the past five years. An examination of the data revealed that 30.4% of the total sample indicated that the quality of life in their community had gotten better during the past five years (West Kern: 24.5%; Central Valley: 28.7%; Mountains: 35.5%; and East Kern: 36.5%). Another 39.1% of the total sample indicated that the quality of life in their community had stayed about the same over the past five years (West Kern: 42.0%; Central Valley: 35.5%; Mountains: 42.0%; and East Kern: 44.0%), while another 23.1% of those interviewed noted that the quality of life had actually gotten worse (West Kern: 27.0%; Central Valley: 29.2%; Mountains: 13.0%; and East Kern: 11.0%). (Little of both - total sample: 3.3%; West Kern: 4.0%; Central Valley: 2.5%; Mountains: 3.5%; and East Kern: 4.5%). (See Appendix page 4. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 124.)

When asked to predict what would happen to the quality of life in their community within the next ten years, 39.8% of the total sample respondents indicated that they believed that the quality of life in their community would actually improve. Slightly more than one quarter of the total sample respondents indicated that the quality of life in their community within the next ten years would either stay about the same (25.3%) or become worse (27.7%). Subset analysis revealed that respondents in the West Kern and East Kern regions of the county were more optimistic, with 50.0% of the West Kern respondents and 46.5% of the East Kern respondents indicating that they believed that the quality of life in their communities would improve during the next ten years (Central Valley: 34.5% improve; Mountains: 38.5% improve). More Central Valley respondents indicated that they believed that they quality of life in their community would become worse during the next ten years (35.2%). (See Appendix page 5. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 125.)

In an attempt to better understand respondent perceptions, two follow up questions were asked of respondents who indicated that within the next ten years the quality of life within their community would either improve or become worse. Respondents were asked to identify the single most important factor that will cause the quality of life in their community to improve or become worse over the next ten years. This follow-up was asked as an open ended question, and the respondent's verbatim response was recorded. These verbatim responses can be found in Appendix 10 beginning on page 227. The section labeled Question 4A will contain the verbatim responses for the factor that will cause the quality of life to improve; the section labeled Question 4B will contain the verbatim responses for the factor that will cause the quality of life to become worse.

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING SERIOUS PROBLEMS FACING COMMUNITIES

As communities grow, they are constantly faced with ever changing problems. In an effort to discern respondent perceptions regarding problems currently facing their communities, respondents were read a list of ten potential problems to assess: traffic, population growth, crime, air pollution, the economy, education, immigration, health care, affordable housing, and road maintenance. Respondents were read a list of potential problems and asked to identify the most serious problem currently facing their community. Their first choice was eliminated from the list of potential problems, and they were then asked to identify the second most serious problem facing their community. This process was repeated (two problems eliminated from selection), and respondents were asked to identify the third most serious problem currently facing their community. In an effort to eliminate bias, each time the question was asked, the order of the possible response options was rotated, so that respondents were not presented with the same response options in the same order or sequence.

An analysis of the data revealed that when presented with the list of potential problems, respondents from the total sample indicated that crime was the most serious problem currently facing their community (19.3%). Another 15.2% of the total sample noted that immigration was the most serious problem currently facing their community; 12.5% indicated that air pollution was the most serious problem currently facing their community; and 10.5% indicated that population growth was the most serious problem currently facing their community. (See Appendix page 6. . For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix pages 126 - 129.)

When asked to identify the second most serious problem currently facing their community, the data revealed that 18.5% of the total sample identified crime as the second most serious problem currently facing their community, followed by road maintenance (10.2%), air pollution (10.1%), immigration (9.8%), affordable housing (9.7%), population growth (9.0%), and traffic (8.7%). (See Appendix page 6. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix pages 130 - 133.)

The third most serious problem currently facing communities as identified by the total sample was once again crime (11.7%). Another 11.3% of the total sample indicated that affordable housing was the third most serious problem currently facing their communities. (See Appendix page 6. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix pages 134 - 137.)

Analysis by the various regions revealed differing perceptions. West Kern respondents indicated that the most serious problems currently facing their communities were immigration (23.5%) and health care (22.0%). Central Valley respondents indicated that the most serious problems currently facing their communities were crime (25.8%) and air pollution (20.2%). Respondents living in the Mountains Region indicated that population growth (22.0%), healthcare (13.0%), and crime (12.0%) were of greatest concern to their region. While East Kern respondents expressed the greatest concern about the issues of road maintenance (18.5%), crime (17.5%), and population growth (12.5%). (For specific regional subset analysis of these issues, see Appendix page 30 for the West Kern Region; see Appendix page 54 for the Central Valley Region; see Appendix page 78 for the Mountains Region; and see Appendix page 102 for the East Kern Region.)

ATTITUDES REGARDING ISSUES FACING KERN COUNTY

In an attempt to understand respondent perceptions with respect to six specific issues in Kern County, survey respondents were asked to respond to statements regarding growth, air pollution, roads, gang violence, and job opportunities. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with these statements. Once again, in an effort to eliminate bias, the order of presentation of these questions varied for respondents. (See Appendix page 7. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix pages 138 - 143.)

Analysis of the data revealed that more than half of the survey respondents agreed with each of the following statements:

- ... Kern County has a major gang violence problem (82.3% agreed; 37.3% strongly agreed; 45.0% agreed).
- ... Kern County has a serious air pollution problem (78.3% agreed; 41.0% strongly agreed; 37.3% agreed).
- ... The population of Kern County is growing too fast (69.5% agreed; 28.8% strongly agreed; 40.7% agreed).
- ... Kern County has a serious problem with childhood asthma (58.4% agreed; 23.3% strongly agreed; 35.1% agreed; 28.5% unable to evaluate) .
- ... Kern County lacks opportunities for well-paying jobs (51.1% agreed; 16.2% strongly agreed; 34.9% agreed).

Nearly two-thirds of those interviewed (66.0%) disagreed with the statement, "Roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population," (41.1% disagreed; 24.9% strongly disagreed).

With respect to respondents in the West Kern Region, analysis of the data revealed that their responses were similar to those of the total sample. However, more respondents from the West Kern Region (88%) indicated that Kern County has a serious air pollution problem (46.0% strongly agreed; 42.0% agreed). More West Kern respondents (87%) also agreed with the statement, "Kern County has a major gang violence problem," (45.5% strongly agreed; 41.5% agreed). In addition, more West Kern respondents (66%) agreed that, "Kern County has a serious problem with childhood asthma," (25.5% strongly agreed; 40.0% agreed; 25.5% unable to evaluate). (See Appendix page 31.)

Perhaps due to the strong oil industry located in the western portion of Kern County, slightly more West Kern respondents disagreed (48%) with the statement that, "Kern County lacks opportunities for well-paying jobs," (42.5% disagreed; 5.5% strongly disagreed). More than two-thirds of the West Kern respondents (70.5%) indicated that they did not believe that, "Roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population," (41.5% disagreed; 29.0% strongly disagreed). (See Appendix page 31.)

Responses from Central Valley respondents were reflective of the responses provided by West Kern respondents as well as the responses of the total sample. Approximately 90% of the Central Valley respondents indicated agreement with the statements that, "Kern County has a serious air pollution problem," (51.3% strongly agreed; 38.3% agreed) and "Kern County has a major gang violence problem," (43.0% strongly agreed; 46.0% agreed). More than 75% of the Central Valley respondents (76.2%) agreed that, "The population of Kern County is growing too fast," (35.2% strongly agreed; 41.0% agreed). Two-thirds of the Central Valley respondents (67.6%) agreed that, "Kern County has a serious problem with childhood asthma," (28.3% strongly agreed; 39.3% agreed; 21.3% unable to evaluate). Slightly more than half (52.2%) of the Central Valley respondents indicated that, "Kern County lacks opportunities for well-paying jobs," (17.2% strongly agreed; 35.0% agreed). In addition, more than two-thirds of the Central Valley respondents (70.0%) indicated that they did not believe the statement that, "Roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population," (41.3% disagreed; 28.7% strongly disagreed). (See Appendix page 55.)

Responses from participants living in the Mountains Region of Kern County were also similar to the responses of the total sample. An examination of the data revealed that more than two-thirds of the Mountains respondents agreed with the statements regarding gang violence (81.5% agreed), air pollution (76.5% agreed), and population growth (72.0% agreed). Slightly more Mountains respondents agreed with the statement regarding the lack of well-paying jobs (54.5% agreed), and slightly more Mountains respondents indicated that they were unable to evaluate the statement regarding childhood asthma (33.0%). In addition, more than 60% of the Mountains respondents (63.5%) disagreed that Kern County roads are safe and adequate. (See Appendix page 79.)

Respondents from the East Kern Region expressed slightly different attitudes toward the statements examined; East Kern respondents tended to disagree slightly more than respondents from the other three regions. However, only slightly more than half (52.0%) of the East Kern respondents disagreed with the statement, “ Roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population,” compared to 66% of the total sample who indicated disagreement with this statement (West Kern: 70.5% disagreed; Central Valley: 70.0% disagreed; Mountains: 63.5% disagreed). Slightly more than half of the East Kern respondents disagreed with the statements regarding air pollution (54.5% disagreed) and population growth (51.5% disagreed). Only 58.5% of the East Kern respondents agreed that there is a serious gang violence problem in Kern County. Slightly less than half of the East Kern respondents indicated that they were not able to evaluate the childhood asthma issue (48.5% unable to evaluate). However, East Kern respondents were similar to the total sample with respect to their perception of the lack of well-paying jobs (52.0% agreed). (See Appendix page 103.)

ATTITUDES REGARDING GENERAL PLANNING ISSUES

Survey respondents were asked to provide their opinions regarding several general planning issues. Specifically, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with seven statements dealing with planning for the county. (See Appendix pages 9 and 16. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix pages 145, 147, and 155 - 160.)

An examination of the data revealed that more than half of the total sample agreed with each of the following statements:

- ... We should require local governments to work together to have a common plan for transportation and housing development and land use in their region (87.5% agreed - 41.0% strongly agreed; 46.5% agreed).
- ... We should expand bus and public transit systems (76.3% agreed - 30.3% strongly agreed; 46.0% agreed).
- ... We should restrict future development to existing suburban and urban areas rather than expanding development into the existing rural areas (62.3% agreed - 21.5% strongly agreed; 40.8% agreed).
- ... In the desert regions of Kern County, we should forbid or prohibit development underneath all military flight corridors where the military conducts test flights (60.9% agreed - 24.3% strongly agreed; 36.6% agreed).
- ... We should forbid urban and suburban development on farm and agricultural lands (60.6% agreed - 26.3% strongly agreed; 34.3% agreed).
- ... We should require local governments to provide new housing that is affordable for the workforce in the area (57.1% agreed - 21.9% strongly agreed; 35.2% agreed).

It is interesting to note that more than two-thirds of the total sample (70.2%) disagreed with the statement, "We should forbid the use of wood burning residential fireplaces," (42.4% disagreed; 27.8% strongly disagreed). (See Appendix page 16.)

Specific subset analysis revealed similar results for each region. (See Appendix pages 33, 40, 57, 64, 81, 88, 105, and 112.)

Perhaps because of geographical location and higher elevation, slightly more East Kern , Mountains, and West Kern respondents disagreed with the idea of forbidding the use of wood burning in residential fireplaces (total sample: 70.2% disagreed; East Kern: 74.5% disagreed; Mountains: 78.5% disagreed; West Kern: 74.0% disagreed). (See Appendix pages 16, 88, 40, and 112.) Slightly fewer Central Valley respondents disagreed with the wood burning statement (64.8% disagreed). (See Appendix page 64.)

It is important to note that 72% of the East Kern respondents agreed with the statement, "In the desert regions of Kern County, we should forbid or prohibit development underneath all military flight corridors where the military conducts test flights," (32.0% strongly agreed; 40.0% agreed). (See Appendix page 105. For regional comparisons see Appendix pages 33, 57, and 81.)

In an attempt to assess Kern County residents' perceptions regarding the loss of farm and agricultural lands in the valley, survey respondents were asked to think of the valley portion of Kern County and indicate whether they perceived the loss of farm and agricultural land to be a major problem, a problem, a minor problem, or not a problem. Analysis of the data revealed that slightly less than half of the respondents from the total sample (46.4%) indicated that they believed that the loss of farm and agricultural land was a major problem (East Kern: 35.0%). Nearly one-quarter of the total sample respondents (24.7%) identified the loss of farm and agricultural land as a problem, while 12.4% of the total sample respondents noted that this was only a minor problem. Approximately 10% of the total sample respondents indicated that this issue was not a problem (East Kern: 13.5%). More East Kern respondents (18.0%) also indicated that they were unable to evaluate this question (total sample: 6.6% unable to evaluate; West Kern: 3.5% unable to evaluate; Central Valley: 3.8% unable to evaluate; Mountains: 6.5% unable to evaluate). (See Appendix pages 8, 32, 56, 80, and 104.)

Survey respondents were specifically asked to indicate whether or not local governments have adequate funding to provide the roads and public transportation projects needed to accommodate future population growth. Analysis of the data revealed that half of the survey respondents (50.0%) indicated that they disagreed with this statement (32.6% disagreed; 17.4% strongly disagreed). Only 40.7% of those interviewed agreed that local governments do have adequate funding (10.4% strongly agreed; 30.3% agreed). (See Appendix page 11.)

More respondents from the Mountains (56.0%) and the East Kern (64.5%) regions disagreed with the statement that local governments have adequate transportation funds. Respondents from the West Kern and the Central Valley regions were divided evenly in their responses to this statement (West Kern: 44.0% agreed; 46.0% disagreed; Central Valley: 47.2% agreed; 44.5% disagreed). (See Appendix pages 35, 59, 83, and 107.)

ATTITUDES REGARDING TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND COMMUTING

To help determine attitudes about traffic congestion and commute activities, respondents were asked to respond to several questions. To begin, respondents were asked to evaluate general traffic congestion in their community. Analysis of the data revealed that respondents' perceptions were fairly evenly divided among the four possible evaluations. Slightly less than 30% of the total sample (28.5%) indicated that traffic congestion is not a problem in their community, while 24.4% of those interviewed noted that traffic congestion is a major problem in their community. Another 23% of those interviewed indicated that traffic congestion was either a problem (23.4%) or a minor problem (23.1%) in their community. (See Appendix page 10. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 146.)

As one might predict, there were regional differences with respect to attitudes regarding general traffic congestion. An examination of the data revealed that Central Valley respondents indicated that traffic congestion is indeed a problem in their communities. Nearly 73% of the Central Valley respondents (72.6%) indicated that traffic congestion is a problem in their community (38.3% major problem; 34.3% problem). Another 17.2% of the Central Valley respondents indicated that traffic congestion is a minor problem in their community. Interestingly, more than half of the East Kern respondents (54.5%) indicated that traffic congestion is not a problem in their community, as did 48.5% of the West Kern respondents. In addition, 39.5% of the Mountains respondents indicated that traffic congestion is not a problem in their communities (Central Valley: 9.5% not a problem). (See Appendix pages 34, 58, 82, and 106.)

In addition to evaluating the overall traffic congestion in their community, survey respondents were also asked to evaluate traffic congestion as it specifically related to their commute to and from work. Analysis of the data revealed that when specifically asked, only 8.1% of those interviewed responded that traffic congestion to and from work was a severe problem. Less than 20% of the respondents (17.2%) indicated that traffic congestion during their commute was somewhat of a problem, and 43.0% of those interviewed noted that traffic congestion was not usually a problem during their commute to and from work. (See Appendix page 22. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 173.)

Further analysis regarding traffic congestion related to the work commute issue revealed that slightly more respondents from the Central Valley indicated that traffic during their daily commute was somewhat of a problem (24.7%), and slightly more respondents from East Kern indicated that traffic congestion during their daily commute was not usually a problem (58.5%). (See Appendix pages 70 and 118 respectively.)

With respect to commute activities, results of the county wide survey revealed that slightly less than half (45.4%) of those interviewed indicated that they spend twenty minutes or less per day traveling to and from work. Another 10% indicated that they spend from 21 to 30 minutes on their daily commute to and from work; 14.3% spend from 31 to 60 minutes per day commuting, while 7.3% indicated that they spend more than an hour engaged in their daily commute to and from work. (See Appendix page 19.)

Further analysis of the data by region also revealed that approximately 45% of the respondents in all four regions spend twenty minutes or less traveling to and from work each day (West Kern: 46.2%; Central Valley: 45.6%; Mountains: 44.7%; East Kern: 44.7%). More West Kern respondents (11.1%) and Mountains respondents (14.2%) indicated that they travel more than an hour to and from work each day (total sample: 7.3%; Central Valley: 4.5%; East Kern: 5.1%). (See Appendix pages 43, 67, 91, and 115.)

With respect to the number of miles traveled to and from work, the data revealed that 18.2% of the total sample have a total commute of less than one mile to and from work. Another 20.1% travel one to ten miles daily; 12.8% travel eleven to twenty miles; and 10.5% travel twenty-one to forty miles to and from work each day. Slightly more than 10% of those interviewed who work outside of the home indicated that they commute more than forty-one miles per day. (See Appendix page 20. For specific regional breakdowns see Appendix pages 44, 68, 92, and 116.)

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES

To better understand respondent attitudes and perceptions, respondents were asked to provide a letter grade evaluation for eight specific aspects of their communities. Once again, to eliminate bias created by question order, all questions were rotated so that respondents were not presented with the same questions in the same order or sequence. (See Appendix page 17. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix pages 161 - 168.)

An examination of Table 1 revealed that the overall quality of life in Kern County communities received relatively high marks (letter grades of A & B). However, it is important to note that many of the specific aspects of the communities did not receive high marks from respondents. With the exception of law enforcement, most of the specific aspects examined only garnered A & B grades from approximately one-third of those surveyed. In fact, several aspects received poor and failing evaluations from substantial numbers of respondents. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1
2007 KERN COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
COMMUNITY SURVEY
Evaluation of Specific Aspects of Local Communities
(in percent)
N = 1,200

SPECIFIC ASPECT GRADED	LETTER GRADE EVALUATIONS		
	"A & B"	" C "	"D & F"
Overall Quality of Life	65.8	26.7	6.6
Law Enforcement	58.1	27.1	13.4
Healthcare	35.8	29.9	31.2
Air Quality	33.8	21.5	44.3
Public transportation	33.4	34.9	24.1
Job Opportunities	33.1	34.3	28.6
Affordable Housing	30.7	34.7	30.7
Street & Road Maintenance	27.0	36.6	36.0

Further analysis by region revealed similar results. West Kern respondents provided the quality of life in their communities with high marks (60.0% letter grades of A & B). Law enforcement also received high marks from West Kern respondents (54.5% letter grades of A & B). However, healthcare was an issue for West Kern respondents, with only 15% of the respondents providing a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B). More than 60% of the West Kern respondents provided healthcare in their communities with poor to failing marks (61.5% letter grades of D & F). Nearly half of the West Kern respondents were dissatisfied with air quality (48.5% letter grades of D & F); 42% were dissatisfied with street and road maintenance (42.5% letter grades of D & F) and affordable housing (42.0% letter grades of D & F). (See Appendix page 41.)

Central Valley respondents also provided high evaluations (letter grades of A & B) to the overall quality of life (58.8%) and law enforcement (58.3%). However, 64.8% of the Central Valley respondents provided the air quality with a letter grade of D or F. Another third of the Central Valley respondents were dissatisfied with the street and road maintenance (33.8% letter grade of D & F). (See Appendix page 65.)

As one might expect, respondents in the Mountains Region of Kern County expressed greater satisfaction with the air quality in their communities. More than 80% of the Mountains respondents (84.0%) provided a high evaluation (letter grades of A & B) of their air quality; only 2.5% of the Mountains respondents provided a letter grade of either D or F. On the remaining aspects examined, including quality of life, opinions of Mountains respondents appeared to be fairly evenly divided with approximately one-third of the respondents providing either high, average, or low grades. (See Appendix page 89.)

East Kern respondents also expressed pleasure with the air quality in their communities. More than 70% of the East Kern respondents (72.0%) provided air quality with a letter grade of A or B (7.5% letter grade of D or F). East Kern respondents also provided the quality of life (74.5% letter grades of A & B) and law enforcement (54.5% letter grades of A & B) with high marks. More than 40% of the East Kern respondents also provided low marks (grades of D & F) to street and road maintenance (48.0%), public transportation (44.5%), and job opportunities (40.5%). (See Appendix page 113.)

When respondents were asked to evaluate local government with respect to housing and land-use policies, the data revealed that more than half of those interviewed (53.8%) provided their local government with an average evaluation. Another 29.4% indicated that local governments do either a below average (15.9%) or a poor (13.5%) job when it comes to housing and land-use policies. Only 13.1% of those interviewed indicated that local governments do either an above average (10.3%) or an excellent (2.8%) job when it comes to housing and land-use policies in their communities. (See Appendix page 18.) Regional analysis was fairly consistent with these findings. (See Appendix pages 42, 66, 90, and 114.)

EMERGENCY ROADSIDE CALL BOX ANALYSIS

Respondents were asked to respond to several questions regarding emergency roadside call box services provided within Kern County. The data revealed that when specifically asked 20.6% of the survey respondents indicated that either they or someone else in their household had actually used an emergency roadside call box within Kern County. (See Appendix page 12. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 148.) Call box usage was higher in the Kern Mountains Region where 31.0% of the respondents indicated that their household had indeed utilized an emergency roadside call box. (See Appendix page 108.)

Survey respondents were also asked to identify the frequency with which they traveled on roadways within Kern County where emergency call box service was provided. An examination of the data revealed that 27.5% of the respondents indicated that they travel on roads within Kern County on a daily basis where the emergency roadside call box service is provided. Another 23.8% indicated that they travel on roads with call box service a few times a week, and 25.5% noted that they travel on roadways with call box service a few times a month. Less than 20% of those interviewed noted that they travel on Kern roadways with call box service less than once a month (19.3%). (See Appendix page 13. For regional analysis for this variable see Appendix pages 37, 61, 85, and 109. For cross-tabulation analysis by additional specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 149.)

Because overall call box usage has declined in recent years, Kern County may consider modifying the existing emergency roadside call box system. When survey respondents were provided with three options regarding the emergency call box system, respondents overwhelmingly indicated (70.0%) that Kern County should maintain the current level of roadside call box service. Approximately 20% of those interviewed (19.3%) indicated that the county should provide the emergency call box service only on the roads most heavily traveled, and 6.7% of the respondents indicated that the emergency call box service could be eliminated from Kern County roadways altogether. (See Appendix page 14. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix page 150.) The responses were fairly similar throughout the four regions examined in this study. (See Appendix pages 38, 62, 86, and 110.)

Survey respondents were also told that Kern County may consider providing other types of motorist aid services along Kern County roadways. Respondents were read possible options under consideration, and they were asked to indicate the importance of each of the suggested services. Analysis of the data revealed that approximately 65% of the survey respondents indicated that it was very important to provide improved incidence response services such as hazardous materials response; med-a-vac or air ambulance services; helicopter rescue capabilities; enhanced 911/G.P.S. location capabilities from cell phones, and accident clean-up (64.7% very important). In addition,

more than half of the survey respondents (51.3%) indicated that it was very important to provide motorists with increased Highway Patrol enforcement. (See Appendix page 15. For cross-tabulation analysis by specific demographic characteristics see Appendix pages 151 - 154.)

When the categories of "very important" and "somewhat important" to provide were combined, analysis of the data revealed that more than two-thirds of the survey respondents were supportive of each of the enhanced motorist aid services examined in this project:

- ... Improved incidence response services such as hazardous materials response; med-a-vac or air ambulance services; helicopter rescue capabilities; enhanced 911/G.P.S. location capabilities from cell phones, and accident clean-up (91.2% important - 64.7% very important; 26.5% somewhat important).
- ... Increased Highway Patrol enforcement (83.1% important - 51.3% very important; 31.8% somewhat important).
- ... Traveler information such as a special radio channel; electronic message signs; information on the Internet (78.2% important - 35.3% very important; 42.9% somewhat important).
- ... A mobile freeway service patrol to assist motorists with minor vehicle problems such as gas, tires, batteries, mechanical break-downs, etc. (68.5% important - 31.7% very important; 36.8% somewhat important).

With respect to regional analysis, the data revealed that West Kern respondents were somewhat more interested in a mobile freeway service patrol (56.0% very important). More West Kern respondents indicated that the improved incident response services was somewhat important (48.0%). Results for the various regions with respect to these variables were very similar to those of the total sample. (See Appendix pages 39, 63, 87, and 111.)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A thorough analysis of the data presented throughout this report suggests several discernible findings:

1. Kern County residents consider their community a desirable place to live.

Nearly 90% of the respondents indicated that their community was a very or a somewhat desirable place to live. Only 4.5% of the respondents indicated that their community was an undesirable place to live. Nearly 60% of those interviewed thought things in their community were headed in the right direction. Only 20% of the respondents felt things in their community were headed in the wrong direction. Almost two thirds of Kern County residents graded the overall quality of life in their community as either an "A" or a "B". Interestingly citizens in the mountains and the desert tended to be the most satisfied. The data also suggest, with some variability, that community desirability is also related to income, age, education, and ethnicity.

2. Kern County residents consider crime a serious problem impacting the quality of life in their community.

When considering the entire survey population, crime was chosen as the first, second, and third most serious problem impacting the quality of life. The data suggest some notable variation among certain demographic groups. For example, respondents 55 to 64 years of age indicated immigration was the most serious problem currently facing their community. The data also suggest that crime tends to be a more serious problem for African-Americans and Hispanics than for Asians and Caucasians. An overwhelming majority (82%) of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that Kern County has a major gang violence problem.

3. There are major regional differences concerning what is considered the most serious problem impacting the quality of life.

Each region of the county cited something different as the most serious problem currently impacting the quality of life in their community. Respondents in the Central Valley indicated that crime was the most serious problem. Immigration was the most serious problem in West Kern. Population growth was cited as the most serious problem currently facing the mountain communities, and interestingly, given the latest results on Measure I, road maintenance was cited as the number one problem currently facing respondents living in East Kern County.

4. Air pollution is a more salient issue for Central Valley residents than for residents in other parts of the county.

When respondents were asked to identify the most serious problem currently facing their community, more than 20% of Central Valley respondents indicated that air pollution was the most serious problem currently facing their community. Only 10% of respondents in West Kern indicated that air pollution was the most serious problem facing their community, and less than 3% of the respondents in either the Mountains or East Kern believed that air pollution was the most serious problem currently facing their community. However, countywide there is a perception that Kern County has a serious air pollution problem. Nearly 80% of all of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that Kern County has a serious air pollution problem. Nearly 60% of those interviewed also strongly agreed or agreed that Kern County has a serious problem with childhood asthma.

5. Kern County residents have strong views concerning growth and the impact growth has on the quality of life.

Nearly 70% of Kern County residents either strongly agreed or agreed that the population of Kern County is growing too fast. Even more surprising is the finding that 71% of the respondents believe that the loss of farm and agricultural land in Kern County is either a problem or major problem. The majority of respondents also strongly agreed or agreed that in the desert region development should not be permitted under military flight corridors. Further reflecting the concern over growth issues, more than 60% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that urban and suburban development should be forbidden on farm and agricultural lands. In addition, more than 60% of those interviewed strongly agreed or agreed that there should be a policy to restrict further development to existing suburban and urban areas rather than expanding development to the existing rural areas. Respondents in every demographic and regional category overwhelmingly agreed that we should require local governments to work together to have a common plan for transportation, housing development, and land use. Perhaps the most telling statistic concerning growth is reflected in the low ratings that respondents gave their local governments concerning housing and land-use policies. Only 13% of the countywide sample gave local government an excellent or above average rating concerning land-use policies; 84% of the respondents rated their local government as average or below when it comes to housing and land-use policies.

6. There are regional differences concerning funding for roads.

Countywide, more than 40% of those interviewed either agreed or strongly agreed that local governments have adequate funding to provide the roads and public transportation projects needed to accommodate further population growth. However, only 26% of the respondents in East Kern and 32% of the respondents in the Mountains either agreed or strongly agree that local governments have adequate funding for roads and public transportation projects. Even more significant, is the finding that nearly 65% of the residents in East Kern do not believe that local governments have adequate funding to provide roads and public transportation.

7. Respondents have mixed views concerning traffic and transportation.

The data suggest that there are major regional differences concerning how respondents feel about traffic congestion. For example, 72% of the respondents in the Central Valley view traffic as a problem or a major problem in their community. Only 30% of the respondents in the Mountains reported traffic congestion as a major or serious problem. Less than 30% of the West Kern (27%) respondents indicated traffic was a problem or major problem. Only 13% of those surveyed in East Kern reported traffic as a problem or major problem. In fact, more than 50% of East Kern residents indicated that traffic congestion in their community was not a problem. Moreover, when respondents were asked to rank the most serious problem currently facing their community, road maintenance was considered by East Kern respondents as the most serious problem. Consistent with this finding is how East Kern respondents graded street and road maintenance in their community. Nearly 50% of the East Kern residents graded street and road maintenance in their community with either a letter grade of "D" or "F".

Countywide, 66% of the respondents interviewed disagreed or strongly disagreed that roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population. Consistent with previous data, cross tabulation analysis again demonstrates some regional variability. There is a 13 percentage point difference between East Kern respondents and countywide respondents on this question. Only slightly more than 50% of respondents in East Kern disagree or strongly disagree that roads throughout Kern County are safe and adequate to handle the current population, as compared to 66% of respondents county wide.

8. Intensity and direction of opinion is clear concerning call box emergency services.

70% of the respondents interviewed indicated they would prefer to maintain the current level of emergency roadside call box service. At least 60% of the respondents in every demographic category indicated a preference to maintain current levels of call box service. Regionally there was strong support for maintaining current levels of call box service. In all four regions examined, more than two thirds of the respondents indicated a preference to maintain the current level of emergency roadside call box service. Maintaining current levels of emergency roadside service was preferred over providing only call box service on the most heavily trafficked roadways or eliminating all call box service.

9. Support for additional motorist aid service is consistent.

The data suggest that across all demographic categories respondents were consistent in their belief that improved incident response services should be provided. Overall, 65% of all respondents indicated that such services were very important to provide for Kern County roadways.

10. Respondents have mixed views concerning the overall quality of life in their community.

A cursory look at the data would suggest that respondents are very satisfied with the overall quality of life in their community. Nearly two thirds of the countywide respondents rated the quality of life in their community above average (A or B letter grade). However, cross tabulation analysis indicates that there is significant variability with respect to how respondents rate the overall quality of life throughout the county. The data suggest that there are significant regional differences with respect to the quality of life. Respondents in the Mountains rated the quality of life in their community nearly 18 percentage points higher than respondents throughout the county. Even more dramatic is the finding that Mountain residents rated the quality of life nearly 30 percentage points higher than residents throughout the Central Valley region. Cross- tabulation analysis (see Appendix 6 page 165) clearly suggests that residents in the Mountains and East Kern regions rate the quality of life in their community significantly higher than residents in West Kern and the Central Valley regions.

A closer examination of the data demonstrate that, paradoxically, respondents rated specific measures of quality of life substantially lower than they rate the overall quality of life. 65.8% of all respondents gave the quality of life in their community a letter grade "A" or "B". However, when asked to rate specific measures (law enforcement, healthcare, air quality, public transportation, job opportunities, affordable housing, and street and road maintenance) of quality of life with a letter grade, in all cases respondents gave specific indicators much lower ratings. The mean score for specific indicators for the A and the B categories was 35.9%, nearly 30 percentage points lower than the rating respondents gave to the overall quality of life. Based on the ratings respondents provided to question 18, there are some areas that have room for improvement. These areas include: air quality in the Central Valley and West Kern; public transportation in East Kern and the Mountains; affordable housing in West Kern; healthcare in West Kern and the Mountains; street and road maintenance in East Kern and West Kern; and job opportunities in the Mountains and East Kern.

The data reported in this study provide valuable insights and trends concerning public attitudes, opinions, and perceptions on a wide variety of important planning, policy, and quality of life issues. The study has provided a baseline for gauging residents' opinions for 2007. Tracking results overtime (whether annually or some other frequency) will provide valuable information. By tracking key indicators such as overall satisfaction, quality of life, and important policy and growth issues, the Kern Council of Governments will be able to measure change, success, and failure overtime. Subsequent surveys will help planners and policymakers to elucidate and understand their constituents needs over time. Most importantly, subsequent and tracking surveys will continue to provide a significant way for the public to provide scientific and valuable public opinion input.